

# **CHOROS**

International  
Dance  
Journal

Issue 5 / Spring 2016





*Choros International Dance Journal* 5 (Spring 2016)

## T A B L E   O F   C O N T E N T S

### ARTICLES

- 1–11 **Eva Palmer-Sikelianos Dances Aeschylus: The Politics of Historical Reenactment when Staging the Rites of the Past**  
SAMUEL N. DORF
- 12–30 **Laban – Aristotle: Movement for Actors and in Acting**  
KIKI SELIONI
- 31–37 **Cynical Parrhesia and Contemporary European Dance**  
RAMSAY BURT
- 38–51 **Capturing the Moment: Creating Hybrid Performances through Collaborative Polarity**  
ROB ROZNOWSKI, KATIA SAVRAMI
- 52–63 **Μια Φιλόξενη Στέγη για τον Χορό**  
NINA ΑΛΚΑΛΑΗ
- 64–70 **Taking the Next Step: Dance Advocacy in Greece**  
ANN COOPER ALBRIGHT

### BOOK REVIEWS

- 71–75 WALTER PUCHNER:  
*Ζουζού Νικολούδη: Χορικά,*  
της Κάτιας Σαβράμη
- 76–78 IOANNA TZARTZANI:  
*The Phenomenology of Dance,*  
by Maxine Sheets-Johnstone

### CONTRIBUTORS

- 79–82

# EVA PALMER-SIKELIANOS DANCES AESCHYLUS: THE POLITICS OF HISTORICAL REENACTMENT WHEN STAGING THE RITES OF THE PAST

SAMUEL N. DORF

## Abstract

Eva Palmer-Sikelianos (1874–1952), along with her husband, the poet Angehos Sikelianos, founded the first modern Delphic Festival in 1927 in an effort to revive the Ancient Greek rites that took place on that spot over 2,500 years before. She invited “overseers of culture” from around the globe to convene in the holy city of Delphi for a reenactment of the performance of *Prometheus Bound* by Aeschylus in the ancient amphitheater, an Olympic-styled athletic contest, and an exhibition of Greek crafts. This paper explores Palmer-Sikelianos’s choreography, music and dramaturgy for her reconstructed *Prometheus Bound* in light of her own research on ancient Greek culture and our modern theories of historical reenactment. Based on silent film records of Palmer-Sikelianos’s 1930 festival, her own autobiography, her collaborations with Natalie Barney on Greek-themed theatricals in the early 1900s, and comparisons to the movement vocabulary and other contemporary stagings of ancient Greek festivals and sport, I demonstrate how Palmer-Sikelianos blended the oldest sources on ancient Greek ritual music and dance that she could find with what she saw as an authentic “spirit” of Greek culture as observed in modern Greek society. Compared to the Ballets Russes’s reenactment of ancient Greece, Palmer-Sikelianos’s project to reenact “authentic” Greek theater and choreography illustrates that theories of theatrical historical reconstruction in the early twentieth century were heavily influenced by contemporary theatrical, political, and social events. And like the Fokine and Nijinsky models, Palmer-Sikelianos’s staging redefines ancient dance through the prisms of ancient sources and modern aesthetics.

## Keywords

Historical reenactment, fantasy, imagination, archaeological performance, Delphic Festivals, alternative archaeology

As dance scholars, we have created a soup of terms to describe the contemporary performance of works that have been danced in the past: revivals, reproductions, reconstructions, recreations, restagings, reenactments and reworkings (Hutchinson Guest, 2000, pp. 65–66). The reliability of dance notation systems as a means to reproduce a choreographer’s piece for later audiences remains debatable (Whatley, 2005). As Helen Thomas (2000, p. 130) has written, out

of fear of “the ossification of a *lived tradition*”, dance (like music) benefits from a work’s evolution, a conscious tweak to the original recipe with each successive reworking, restaging, revival, etc. Millicent Hodson and her husband and long-time collaborator, Kenneth Archer, exemplify this evolving tradition in their dance reconstructions, notably in *Le Sacre du printemps* (1913). But how much is just construction? And when material is lost, what do we use to construct the lost gestures of the past?

For Hodson, empirical evidence found in archives is vital in the revivification of the ancient past on the ballet stage. We are all familiar with the collaborative work created by Stravinsky, Nijinsky and Roerich, and most of us have seen Hodson’s 1987 reconstruction of Nijinsky’s lost choreography live or on video. She opens her 1996 edition of the reconstructed choreographic score by acknowledging a loss. Her preface begins with a section titled “Casebook for a Lost Masterpiece”, and her narrative for the reconstruction is a narrative of rediscovery, of detective work, arduous study, investigation. Hodson’s prefacing materials lay out the exhaustive research she had collected; each bold-faced section heading leads the reader through her process – “The Investigation”, “Reconstructing the Crime”, “The Evidence” –, the whole reading like a primetime police procedural. We have a crime, a twist, and then a compelling trial that lays out the evidence in a dramatic and convincing fashion (Hodson, 1996, pp. vii–xxvi).

But can we rediscover lost dances like a detective would solve a crime? What is the forensic evidence? How much has been contaminated? Can we trust the witnesses on the stand? Hodson’s “Exhibit A” consists of just a handful of photos; Exhibit B: drawings made in a darkened theater; Exhibit C: notes made on a piano score; and Exhibit D: memories. The rest is taken from the scholar’s imagination through embodied practice. To borrow terminology of Diana Taylor (2003), how much is owed to the archive and how much to the repertoire? Both the seriousness with which Hodson treats her fragmented “evidence” and her imaginative reconstruction are reminiscent of Roerich’s own methods used in the conception of *Le Sacre du printemps*: she spins creative and vibrant colors out of a few threads of surviving relics. In other ways, Hodson’s work mirrors that of another dance reenactor, Eva Palmer-Sikelianos, an American expatriate who married a famed Greek poet, moved with him to Greece, and in 1927 and 1930 founded a festival that sought to revive ancient Greek theater, dance, music, and sport for the world.

The scholar’s place within the project of performing history is the topic of my current project. Roerich, Hodson and Sikelianos are all unique in that they serve as both scholars and artists: they all seek, or sought, to bring the past back to life not chiefly through scholarly articles (they published those, too), but through works, through performances of dancing bodies for modern audiences.

Of course, separating the scholar’s passions, imaginations and fantasies from the objectivity of historical research poses a problem. In historiography, “imagination” can be used as a criticism for the writing of historical works that are viewed as an artistic and creative process akin to fiction as opposed to objective scholarship. The term “imagination” can also be used in

historiography to signify the creative process historians use to make sense of historical facts (Ritter, 1986, pp. 216–223). One might call the former “scholarly fantasy” and the latter “scholarly imagination”.

In English, “imagination” comes from the Latin *imaginare* (“to form an image or to represent”), while “fantasy” is Greek (*φαντασία*, “making visible”). Both fantasy and imagination play critical roles in our understanding of historical performance. As dancers and dance researchers, we acknowledge that “performing” is yet another form of scholarship.

In the field of archaeology, “performance” also constituted a critical methodology for late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century scholars (Evans, 2008, pp. 147–161). The three-dimensional models of archaeological sites popular in the second half of the nineteenth century provide windows into the past; the act of constructing them blends art and science, and attracted scientists and connoisseurs equally. The discipline’s interest in visualizations of the past mirrored the public’s interest. Models of sites found their way from universities to museums and private collections in the early decades of the twentieth century. These models are another method of “seeing” the past, rather than merely “reading” the past, and the scholarship of them is a critical starting point for my own work (*ibid.*, p. 157). For at least forty years the academy has looked skeptically upon those “experimental archaeologists”, who build their own fifteenth-century butter churns, Viking ships, and American Civil War uniforms, noting that experiments do not prove what was actually done at the time. In the early days of the twentieth century, as the field of archaeology began to emerge as a science rather than an adventurous sport for the wealthy, fantasy and performance of the artist played a much larger role in unearthing the past.

*Le Sacre du printemps* is an excellent example of this type of collaboration between archaeology and performance. It was not the first, nor the last, but placing it in conversation with the methodologies of other archaeological performances like Palmer-Sikelianos’s allows us to view *Le Sacre* as part of a larger project to revivify the past.

*Le Sacre* owes much to Nicholas Roerich’s archaeological passions. Roerich discovered the excitement of archaeology at an early age, helping to excavate burial mounds outside his hometown as a boy (Dechter, 1989, p. 19). As Lynn Garafola (1990–1991, p. 402) has written, “[f]rom his earliest years, he used the fragments of the real past to supply details of a legendary one”. Archaeological study went hand-in-hand with art. His earliest drawings include academic studies of ancient Greek statues (Aeschylus and Sophocles) dating from 1893. Within a few years, his paintings turned to more Slavophile subjects, namely the ancient civilizations of the bronze-age inhabitants of what would eventually be part of the Russian Empire. Many years later, Roerich described how these early childhood experiences of unearthing rusted swords and axes coincided with, as cited and translated by Dechter (1989), his “beloved history lessons, but”, he writes, “in my memory lie close to geography and to Gogol’s fantastical historical fiction as well” (Roerich, 1974, p. 84). His methods were similar to those of other wealthy scholars at the time. Roerich established a familiar process: archaeological research, often conducted in

a less than rigorous way, rendered into a work of art: in this case, a painting. For *Le Sacre*, the source material – the scholarship – is another work of art, rather than a more scholarly exegesis. Millicent Hodson (1986–1987, p. 7) describes the transfer as such:

When Nijinsky set the solo for the Chosen Maiden on his sister, Bronislava, he asked her to visualize certain Roerich paintings and told her that “the beauty of the tinted stones and the wall paintings of the cave dwellers have inspired Roerich’s own art”. [...] Among the canvases he asked her to visualize was *The Idols of Ancient Russia*.

Kenneth Archer has suggested that Roerich’s paintings were indeed the “archaeological sources” relied upon by Nijinsky in devising his choreography.<sup>1</sup> According to Nijinska, her brother had much to gain from his collaboration with Roerich. She recalled, “Vaslav often told me how much he liked to listen to Roerich talking about his studies of the origin of man, describing the pagan rites and prehistory of the tribes ‘that roamed the land we now call Russia’” (Nijinska, 1981, p. 461).

Part archaeology, part ethnography, *Le Sacre* blends Russian folk tunes with the magical realism of Roerich’s imagined past. The vibrant peasant costumes worn by the dancers incorporate iconography of the old Slavonic deities, which Millicent Hodson has argued appear in the choreography as well. If Hodson’s reconstruction is correct, the motifs on Roerich’s costumes inspired Nijinsky’s ground designs.

The result – the harsh angular modernism of Stravinsky’s music, and Nijinsky’s choreography against the bright colors and “fusty romanticism”, to quote Roger Fry (1919, p. 112), of Roerich’s design – seems incongruous. We can, however, view the scene and costumes along with Roerich’s paintings as the archaeological source material for the other two collaborators’ ritual sacrifice.

By way of comparison, I would like to turn to another example of how methods of experimental archaeology manifest in another work from the first decades of the twentieth century. The American actress and dancer Eva Palmer-Sikelianos (1874–1952) was a childhood friend of the Grecophile Natalie Clifford Barney and also one of her early collaborators on her Sapphic performances in Paris. In the first decade of the twentieth century, Palmer-Sikelianos developed an immersive embodied process to bring back the lost dance of the ancient Greeks to modern Paris. Through Barney, she met the Duncans – Isadora, Raymond and his Greek wife, Penelope. Their love of Greek antiquity spurred Palmer-Sikelianos to adopt the eccentric dress of Raymond and his wife.

---

1 Kenneth Archer interview (London, 3 April 1981), cited in Hodson (1986–1987), p. 7.

She soon married Penelope Duncan's brother, the poet Angehlos Sikelianos and resettled in Greece. With her husband, Palmer-Sikelianos founded the first modern Delphic Festival in 1927, which included a performance of *Prometheus Bound* by Aeschylus in the amphitheater, an Olympic-styled athletic contest, and an exhibition of Greek "peasant handicraft".<sup>2</sup> Palmer-Sikelianos addressed her theories of how to reproduce ancient Greek drama and music as seen in the Delphic festivals throughout her posthumously published memoirs and, after viewing other recreations of antique music and dance, she vowed to do better.

As Artemis Leontis has argued, Palmer-Sikelianos did not seek the same kind of authenticity as a war reenactor might. When praised by an archaeologist for her ability to solve "archaeological problems which [the scholar] had been working fruitlessly on for years", she responded:

I have read archaeological books only to forget them, and I have never thought of your problems. And besides [...] the performance was bristling with archaeological mistakes, but even you did not detect them, and you are not even conscious of them now. And that is because the place was moving around its own pivot; it was emotionally true, or almost true – and that was sufficient to make you feel that it was correct archaeologically. There is no such thing as archaeological correctness. There is nothing in Greek drama except the emotional truth and consistency of the performers, and the immense responding emotion of those who are present. (Palmer-Sikelianos, 1993, p. 113)

Leontis (2014)<sup>3</sup> calls Eva's process an "alternative archaeology", borrowing Bruce Trigger's term (Trigger, 1984), and argues:

Calling modern dance's extensive engagement with relics of Greece's past an "alternative archaeology" brings into view the role artists play in speculating on the lost performing arts using their peculiar talents, experience, and knowledge, and asking interesting questions about ancient space and the human activities that distributed themselves within it from an alternative perspective.

However, Palmer-Sikelianos discounted archaeological fealty in one breath and basked in the accolades of professional scholars in the next. While she took pride in convincing the scholar that she performed a "real" ancient Greek drama when she knew there were inaccuracies, that does not mean that archaeological correctness was not a concern. Her method was not to

---

2 Palmer-Sikelianos's vision never fully materialized. The festival was supposed to be a first step in founding a university and a school of music, but ultimately became a grand spectacle founded on similar conflicting ideologies as the modern Olympic movement – strident individualism and international harmony. See Palmer-Sikelianos (1983), pp. 103–119; Albright (2007), pp. 165–173; Leontis (2008); Guttmann (1992).

3 See also her forthcoming biography of Eva Palmer-Sikelianos.

merely discover how Greece was (or to reproduce a performance for the archive), but to discover how to re-embody it in the present: that is, to bring the ancient Greek past from the archive and into the repertoire (Taylor, 2003).

Writing her memoirs in the 1940s, Palmer-Sikelianos wrote about the first time she had Raymond and Penelope over to her home in Neuilly, outside of Paris, at the turn of the century. She described their "Greek" attire and their shared experimental method.

For many years, I had made ever renewed efforts to imitate the Greek clothes we see on statues, bas-reliefs and vases. [...] I had made a number of dresses [...] I had also worked in leather, and had copied some of the complicated sandals on Greek statues. Penelope and Raymond had made attempts to solve this same problem. (Palmer-Sikelianos, 1993, p. 47)

Raymond, Penelope, and Eva's conversations in these early days centered around their various attempts to solve the same problems, to recreate archaic Greek dress to wear, and live in, not to hang in a museum. Meanwhile archaeologists such as the Sorbonne Professor Léon Heuzey sought to reproduce ancient garments for the archaeologist to study (Heuzey, 1922). These problems were solved when Raymond arrived at the idea of making a loom so that they could weave a cloth that would hold the folds they desired. The Duncan couple soon moved in with the single young American woman, and Raymond began testing out his skills at ancient Greek handiwork around her home: painting ancient Greek styled friezes, making chlamyses, etc.

During all these first days in my house, Raymond had been very busy. From about the first moment, he had started to paint a little frieze in one of the rooms just under a low ceiling. He put in a terra cotta background, and silhouettes of athletes, in various postures, running all round, and looking somewhat like a black-figured vase. He had also acquired a sheet of copper, out of which he produced clasps for our chlamyses, with archaic animals chasing each other round the edge. He was evidently an excellent craftsman. (Palmer-Sikelianos, 1993, p. 48)

Palmer-Sikelianos's focus on archaeological authenticity in production of a "Greek" lifestyle led to the building of a loom to create her own fabric. In her autobiography, she interrupted her discussions of weaving and dressmaking experiments with notes on archaeological discoveries made later that validated her experimental process:

While writing this chapter, I received a letter from Mrs. Eugene Vanderpool, of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, which says: "We have just been to a lecture by the director of the American School, who said: 'While excavating a Geometric tomb we came upon evidence bearing out the theory of Eva Sikelianou.' It seems that they found an iron object which had lain against the shroud of the body buried in the tomb; and which, during the process of rusting, had picked up the imprint of the cloth. It clearly showed the pattern of the weave: a heavy warp, and an almost imperceptible weft. Mr. Morgan said that it not only proved your theory, as shown in the weaving

of the Delphic Festival, but it showed that ten centuries earlier in Geometric times, this method was used for the same reason: to produce the richness of folds seen through Greek and pre-Greek vase painting". (*ibid.*, 1993, pp. 48–49)

With the archaeologist's validation that her fabrics were indeed the same weft as those made by the ancient Greeks, Palmer-Sikelianos felt confident in her process. So, despite her disavowal of archaeological correctness, answering archaeological questions with modern practice became a dominant theme in Eva Palmer-Sikelianos's writings, most importantly in her discussions of music, dance and the staging of the first two modern Delphic Festivals with her husband in 1927 and 1930.

In resurrecting the rituals of Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*, Palmer-Sikelianos restaged the ancient tragedy at the theater of Delphi in Modern Greek, with a cast and chorus of amateur actors and dancers. Like in *Le Sacré*, the tensions between the historical sources and the requirements of a contemporary performance are evidenced in Palmer-Sikelianos's writings. Originally wishing to perform the work intoned monophonically, she acknowledged that audiences needed harmony. That is to say, the archaeological correctness would not work for her own body and the bodies and minds of her collaborators and audiences:

The Greeks knew nothing about what is now called harmony; *ergo*, although they were fine architects, fine sculptors, probably fine painters, and certainly great philosophers, great poets, and the rest of it, in music they were morons. This conclusion seemed final. There was no getting around it; no fooling oneself into believing that they did know anything about harmony; no escaping the fact that, today, music without harmony is pure nonsense, a contradiction in terms. [...] With this, my state of levitation was in decided danger. But I succeeded in steering my mind away from it; in pretending that I did not care. There were so many other things in which they excelled. What matter if the Greeks were not musicians? (*ibid.*, p. 50)<sup>4</sup>

Ultimately, *Prometheus Bound* was performed in a Modern Greek translation (so peasants from the surrounding villages could understand), outdoors, with costumes woven by Palmer-Sikelianos herself. She thought it best in the end to use Modern Greek so that peasants

---

4 Palmer-Sikelianos based her imagined ancient monophonic Greek music on a combination of Greek Orthodox Church modes and her friend Penelope Duncan's own folk singing (of which we know little about), and employed this music in numerous venues. These ideas developed when Eva Palmer-Sikelianos moved outside of Athens to Kopanas with Raymond and his wife, and ultimately formed the basis of the choruses she created for the Delphic Festivals. Palmer-Sikelianos and Penelope Duncan took up studies with Professor Psachos, a scholar of "Byzantine music" at the National Conservatory in Athens who was also named "Master Teacher of Music of the Great Church of Christ" by the Patriarch of Constantinople, and with his assistance attempted to create a modal organ, to properly accompany the melodies and ancient temperaments she believed were authentic.

could understand it, to avoid problems in pronunciation, and to prove Greek was indeed a "living" language (*ibid.*, p. 108). She took the musical instruction of the chorus on herself as well, giving lessons in "Byzantine music, alternating with gymnastic exercises [...] and [visits to] the national Museum to study, and [...] to make copies of the [...] ancient vases" (*ibid.*, p. 109).<sup>5</sup> Her technique of staging "Greek" dance closely resembled those of other scholars/artists.

I made a great quantity of sketches in the Museum with a friend who was a sculptor and then, phrase by phrase, I tried to fit the highlights, as it were, or the principal accents in means and music, with what seemed to me appropriate gestures from the vases. (*ibid.*, p. 109)

She then taught the music to the chorus of girls orally as they were not interested in learning Byzantine music notation, and she then encouraged the dancers to act like a real chorus and improvise some of their movements based on the vocabulary she taught them (*ibid.*, p. 110). In a 1930 film of her staging from the Delphic Festival one can see a plastic choreography where the chorus moves in unison akin to the frozen nymphs of Nijinsky's *Faune* – angled, heads in profile. Dancers strike poses (i.e. arms extended in front of the face with palms turned out) while moving slowly in metered time (Palmer-Sikelianos and Sikelianos, 1930a). A photograph of the 1930 production reproduced in color in *National Geographic* captured the author's impression of the dance – "like figures on a Grecian urn".

Palmer-Sikelianos believed that authentic performance was crucial to the athletic contest as well. For the Pyrrhic Dance, she had thirty suits of armor copied from sources in the National Museum, hammered out by hand, which soldiers from the First Army Corps of Greece wore to perform Palmer-Sikelianos's heavy steps. They danced in a similar plastic manner: making strong forceful gestures to hold static poses. They slowly bent down on one knee and then rose up quickly, they moved back and forth alternatively in plastic poses with their swords up and then with their swords pointed down in cross movements. They would hop, stand sentry, and then march. In the next sequence, they lifted their arms up with their swords and shields while squatting, made a little hop, and then raised their arms as they turned in profile and kneel down, oddly reminiscent of the Dance of the Chosen One in the finale of *Le Sacre* (Palmer-Sikelianos and Sikelianos, 1930b).

The verisimilitude of the amateur performers' *Prometheus Bound* captivated the audiences. Historian Robert Payne (1960, p. 102) said of Palmer-Sikelianos, "[s]he had a strange power of entering the mind of ancients and bringing them to life again. She knew everything

---

5 The reference to "gymnastic-exercises" alludes to the work of François Delsarte, whose movement styles were in vogue for "Hellenic" dances (Albright, 2007, p. 151).

about them – how they walked and talked [...] how they latched their shoes [...] what songs they sang, and how they danced, and how they went to bed". Others noted the "archaeological correctness" of the Delphic Festivals. Ernst Buschor, the Director of the German School of Archaeology, wrote to Palmer-Sikelianos praising this correctness, for which she responded (as discussed above) that it was *not* correct, he was just too blind to notice. It was the play in the outdoor theater that galvanized the archaeologist's imagination.

Ann Cooper Albright argues that the only archaeologically correct elements of the Delphic Festival were the costumes, made with Palmer-Sikelianos's hand-woven fabrics, and hand-beaten metal helmets. She asserts that authenticity in costume (Palmer-Sikelianos used silk, which was not available to ancient Greeks), music and dance was sacrificed for the drama (Albright, 2010, p. 71), but it is clear from Palmer-Sikelianos's writings that all modern concessions in archaeological correctness were painfully made. It is not that archaeological correctness should not be sought out; it is just that it is impossible in a modern world. The tensions between archaeology and ethnography, the past and the present, the archive and the repertoire continued to haunt Palmer-Sikelianos throughout her project.

How does this bring us back to *Le Sacre du printemps*? Lynn Garafola (1989, p. 63) has described the plot of *Le Sacre* as "a vast human tapestry, a vision of primal man and his primal tribe, and the human sacrifice that ensured the continuity of both". Similarly, *Prometheus* is set in a liminal period in the ancient Greek conception of history: the transition from primitive and nomadic to organized and civilized society. Rising from the muck of Titan brutishness, man emerges with a strong moral character, wit and ingenuity. *Prometheus* is also the story of brain over brawn, of rational thought, and intelligence triumphing over the crude old world. *Prometheus* is punished for aiding us (the human race – the Ancient Greeks, and the inheritors of the Western Tradition), and his suffering is laid plain for all who witness it. The parallels in plot notwithstanding, Roerich, Stravinsky and Nijinsky's *Le Sacre du printemps*, Palmer-Sikelianos's *Prometheus*, and Hodson's *Le Sacre du printemps* all lay claim to archival and archaeological sources, and blend the fragmentary historical sources with new material for modern audiences: they blend the archive with the repertoire, the archaeological with the ethnographic and the Modern. In the negotiation of the demands of archaeology and live performance, Palmer-Sikelianos, like Roerich and Hodson, had to find her own balance.

Within a generation, archaeology had adopted a strictly positivist methodology leaving the engagement with performance behind: scholars dug, performers performed. The engagements discussed in this article between modernism and modern science capture not only the evolving ways we perform antiquity, but provide models for how performance can lead to a more vibrant scholarship for disciplines outside of dance and performance studies (such as musicology).

From our current historical perspective it is easy to point out these inaccuracies and dismiss these historical projects outright. Dispelling their myths of fidelity and accuracy, however,

does not preclude the enjoyment of these works. Despite the laborious scholarly preparations to capture the ancient world, perhaps the true value of these collaborations lies in the visceral act on stage, when logic is momentarily abandoned to capture the primal, ineffable magic of a fleeting artistic moment – which transports both the performer and the audience out of time, beyond history and into mythical eternity.

### References

- Albright, A. Cooper (2007) *Traces of Light: Absence and Presence in the Work of Loïe Fuller*. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press.
- (2010) "The Tanagra Effect: Wrapping the Modern Body in the Folds of Ancient Greece", in Macintosh, F. (ed.) *The Ancient Dancer in the Modern World: Responses to Greek and Roman Dance*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 57–76.
- Decter, J. (1989) *Nicholas Roerich: The Life and Art of a Russian Master*. Rochester, Vt.: Park Street Press.
- Evans, C. (2008) "Model Excavations: 'Performance' and the Three-Dimensional Display of Knowledge", in Schlanger, N. and Nordbladh, J. (eds) *Archives, Ancestors, Practices: Archaeology in the Light of its History*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, pp. 147–161.
- Fry, R. (1919) "M. Larionow and the Russian Ballet", *Burlington Magazine*, 34 (192) (March), pp. 112–118.
- Garafola, L. (1989) *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*. New York: Da Capo Press.
- (1990–1991) "The Enigma of Nicholas Roerich," *Dance Chronicle*, 13 (3), pp. 401–412.
- Guttmann, A. (1992) *The Olympics: A History of the Modern Games*. Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press.
- Heuzey, L. A. (1922) *Histoire du costume antique d'après des études sur le modèle vivant*. Paris: Édouard Champion.
- Hodson, M. (1986–1987) "Nijinsky's Choreographic Method: Visual Sources from Roerich for *Le Sacre du printemps*", *Dance Research Journal*, 18 (2) (Winter), pp. 7–15.
- (1996) *Nijinsky's Crime Against Grace: Reconstruction Score of the Original Choreography for Le Sacre du printemps*. Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press.
- Hutchinson Guest, A. (2000) "Is Authenticity to Be Had?", in Jordan, S. (ed.) *Preservation Politics: Dance Revived, Reconstructed, Remade*. London: Dance Books, pp. 65–71.

- Leontis, A. (2008) "Eva Palmer's Distinctive Greek Journey", in Kolocotroni, V. and Mitsi, E. (eds) *Women Writing Greece: Essays on Hellenism, Orientalism and Travel*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi.
- (2014) "The Alternative Archaeologies of Eva Palmer-Sikelianos". Lecture presented at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Athens, Greece (6 May).
- Macintosh, F. (ed.) (2010) *The Ancient Dancer in the Modern World: Responses to Greek and Roman Dance*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nijinska, B. (1981) *Bronislava Nijinska: Early Memoirs*. Edited by I. Nijinska and J. Rawlison. Introduction by A. Kisselgoff. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Wilson.
- Palmer-Sikelianos, E. (1993) *Upward Panic: The Autobiography of Eva Palmer-Sikelianos*. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by J. P. Anton. Chur, Switzerland; Philadelphia, Pa.: Harwood Academic Publishers.
- Palmer-Sikelianos, E. and Sikelianos, A. (dir. and prod.) (1930a) *Prometheus Bound* [videorecording]; [based on the play] by Aeschylus (Delphi, Greece). The New York Public Library of the Performing Arts, Dance Collection (\*MGZIDVD 5-1758).
- (1930b) *Pythian Games* [videorecording]; (Delphi, Greece). The New York Public Library of the Performing Arts, Dance Collection (\*MGZIDVD 5-1758).
- Payne, R. (1960) *The Splendor of Greece*. New York: Harper.
- Ritter, H. (1986) "Imagination", in *Dictionary of Concepts in History*. Westport, Conn., and London: Greenwood.
- Roerich, N. (1974) *N. K. Rerikh: Iz literaturnogo naslediya*. Moscow: Izobrazitel'noe iskusstvo.
- Taylor, D. (2003) *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press.
- Thomas, H. (2000) "Reproducing the Dance: In Search of the Aura?", in Jordan, S. (ed.) *Preservation Politics: Dance Revived, Reconstructed, Remade*. London: Dance Books, pp. 125–131.
- Trigger, B. (1984) "Alternative Archaeologies: Nationalist, Colonialist, Imperialist", *Man*, 19 (3) (September), pp. 355–370.
- Whatley, S. (2005) "Dance Identity, Authenticity and Issues of Interpretation with Specific Reference to the Choreography of Siobhan Davies", *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research*, 23 (2) (Winter). pp. 87–105.

# LABAN – ARISTOTLE: MOVEMENT FOR ACTORS AND IN ACTING

KIKI SELIONI

## Abstract

The application of Laban's method in actor training has a long history that extends beyond his work in dance, and it is this area that this paper focuses on. Although Laban himself applied his method to the training of actors, it was mainly left to his followers to develop – often erratically, or this is what this paper suggests – Laban's insights. Practitioners such as Jean Newlove (1993), Yat Malmgren (Mirodan, 1997), Geraldine Stephenson (McCaw, 2009), Brigid Panet (2009) and others have all continued developing Laban's work by offering movement classes for actors that are based on his principles; moreover, each of these individuals has developed a specific method based on Laban's principles. It is worth noting that these methods do not differ from one another, and all of their practitioners agree in principle that the philosophical foundation of Laban's theory and practice is to be interpreted according to Platonic precepts. I will argue that this Platonic foundation underpins each of the above practitioners' own development; furthermore, notwithstanding the differences between them, it is Platonism that unifies them all under a common philosophical approach. This paper is a theoretical enquiry into the proposition that there is a strong link between Laban's movement theory and Aristotle's *Poetics*. More specifically, it proposes that Laban's analysis of human movement is inextricably linked to Aristotle's concept of *mimesis* perceived as a *ζώον* (*life force*).

## Keywords

Mimesis, kinaesthetic awareness, *ζώον*, indestructible dynamics, poetic science, logic, cube, effort

## Plato or Aristotle?

The Platonic interpretation of Laban's method originates in Laban's Rosicrucian period, during which he explored the directions of the human body in terms of the Platonic icosahedron.<sup>1</sup> It was an investigation that brought the art of dancing to a new era by breaking the *stability* of the

---

1 In *Timaeus* Plato states that the creation of the Cosmos is based on five solids, each of them representing one of the elements of nature: cube for earth, tetrahedron for fire, octahedron for air, dodecahedron for the Cosmos as a whole, and icosahedron for water. See also Newlove and Dalby (2004), where reference is made to Laban and his connection to Platonic ideas.

dancer and introducing instead the concept of *lability* or *instability*. Laban replaced the three-dimensional conception of space in dance with a “Platonic” icosahedral perspective. Until then, the dancer had been located in an imaginary cube and his/her directions had been limited to front/behind, up/down, left/right. Laban’s icosahedron opened up new possibilities of movement because it expanded the boundaries of the body’s directions by employing the full dimensions of space, in both *stability* and *lability*. This innovation led Laban to be celebrated as the father of contemporary dance.

The Platonic influence on Laban’s theory and practice was explicitly established in Curl’s “Philosophical Foundations”, originally written as a series of articles in 1966–1969 and published in the *Laban Art of Movement Guild Magazine*. These articles discuss the relation between Laban and his followers, and their pursuit of a philosophical foundation. Ullmann (cited in Curl, 1966, p. 7), Laban’s principal collaborator during the last years of his life, explains: “serious study of this kind requires a philosophical foundation”. Two other factors would dramatically influence Laban’s descendants in developing movement training for actors: firstly, Laban’s background in expressionist ideas and, secondly, the connection of his theory and practice to Stanislavsky’s work. This paper will discuss how these factors influenced their teaching methods in ways that may be considered to be working against Laban’s aims.

This paper is a theoretical and practical enquiry into the proposition that there is a strong link between Laban’s movement theory and Aristotle’s *Poetics* (Selioni, 2014). More specifically, it proposes that Laban’s analysis of human movement is inextricably linked to Aristotle’s concept of *mimesis* perceived as a *ζώον* (*life force*). Thus far, the discussion on Laban’s philosophical foundations has been limited to an assumption of Platonic influence (Curl, 1966, pp. 7–15). However, in his *Mastering Movement* (2001, p. 56), John Hodgson, perhaps for the first time, mentions the connection between Laban and Aristotle:

Laban was drawn to Greek thinking. He enjoyed Greek roots and word formations. From the classic background he devised new terms such as “choreosophie” and “choreology” and brought words like “kinetic” into more regular use and awareness. He makes passing reference to Aristotle, Pythagoras, Plato and several times refers to Lucian and his awareness of the power of dance, especially without music.

The idea that the art of dance in ancient Greece was without music is first mentioned in Aristotle’s *Poetics*. It is subsequently discussed by Lucian in his *Περὶ Ορχήσεως* [*On Dance*], written in 2 AD. Hodgson (2001, p. 60) also points out that, although Laban refers to Plato, he “does not seem to have made any detailed or thorough study of him”. It is obvious that there is a great amount of confusion concerning the philosophical foundation of Laban’s work, even amongst the people who were closest to him.

I will be arguing that Laban, in his "English period" after the Second World War, undertook a shift away from Platonic philosophy, which had inspired his initial interest in dance, to the field of theatre and an engagement with Aristotle's thinking. Valerie Preston-Dunlop (1998, p. 253), one of Laban's students during that period, argues that Laban's key text, *The Mastery of Movement on the Stage* (1950), is in fact written for actors rather than dancers. Moreover, Warren Lamb (interviewed in McCaw, 2006, pp. 86–87), Laban's disciple during the same period, supports Preston-Dunlop's suggestion of Laban's shift of focus:

All his work in factories at this time was concentrated on Effort, without much reference to shape or space harmonies. He was teaching space harmony to dancers and teachers, but it seemed that he had made an inseparable connection of work with effort.

The research of effort, Lamb continues, was based on "Laban's assertion that Effort was an indication of the character" (ibid., p. 88). McCaw agrees with Lamb; he states: "Laban thought that an analysis of effort was the way to understand human behaviour" (ibid., p. 77). In his last book, Laban (1950, p. v) states that theatre is "the mirror of man's physical, mental, and spiritual existence". I shall argue here that this statement is to be understood in direct opposition to Platonic precepts, thus undermining the idea that the art of theatre is a means of mirroring the ideal world of the Forms. By contrast, it is in full agreement with Aristotle's famous passage in the *Poetics*, which defines tragedy as the *mimesis* of human *praxis*.

Therefore, this study suggests that Laban's concepts are more in tune with the Aristotelian concept of *ζώον*, as discussed in the *Poetics*. I will use this argument to support the proposal of a new methodology for teaching movement to actors. Moreover, contrary to the conventional approaches that align Laban's concepts with Stanislavsky's, Laban is in fact in direct opposition to Stanislavsky, in terms of both their aesthetic/philosophical and practical approach, and their attitude towards psychological implications concerning character development. Furthermore, the critical analysis of Laban and Aristotle will serve as a supporting framework for a new series of classes based on Laban's theory and practice.

One should bear in mind that Aristotelian mimesis is to be understood in terms of the notion of *ζώον* – a *living organism*, synonymous to life, or *life force* – and only on this basis can it be used in relation to the training of the actor's/actress's body. Moreover, the classes will be constructed within a framework that seeks to address both theoretical and practical issues in terms of scientific methodological demands. In other words, the structure of the classes should follow a *logical order*, as Aristotle suggests when he talks about science (*first principles, middle terms* etc.); the classes should follow the methodological basis of proceeding from a first simple action to a more complex one.

My investigation, therefore, intends to establish Laban's philosophical foundation on Aristotle's work, mainly as this is developed in his famous treatise on theatre, the *Poetics*. This

paper will re-examine the conceptual basis of the philosophical systems they have in common in order to establish similarities between Aristotle and Laban's understanding of *human praxis* in theatre. More significantly, the paper will propose that they share a common understanding of the role of the performer's kinaesthetic experience, and that this experience is to be understood as possessing no psychological implications. The paper will then discuss how, for both Laban and Aristotle, the process of art making is one of intentionally creating a *world per se*, namely, a new poetic reality that does not exist in this world.

This idea is the foundation for understanding *mimesis* in terms of a process of *poetic science*, whose aim is for the performer to have a *constant presence* on the stage. In other words, the performer must constantly be attentive to his/her body's ever-changing rhythms in present time, and thus be able to continually experience what, based on Aristotle, we might call an *aesthetic time* and not merely a *physical sense of time* during the performance. This presupposes a well-trained body; the performer works under the condition that his/her training develops bodily awareness of both movement and voice and addresses the needs of dramatic art holistically. If the performer lacks that ability, his/her presentation stands as a schematic presence that reveals its inartistic character. Aristotle calls this constant presence on stage *ζώον* (a *life force*, according to Ramfos), whereas Laban describes it as *kinaesthetic experience*. Relating these two concepts, I will be arguing that Laban's conceptual framework is very close to Aristotle's.

Moreover, by linking Aristotle to Laban, this paper provides the opportunity to develop not only a theoretical approach, but also a practical one, which establishes the art of movement as a *science*. Laban's followers have often dismissed the idea of a scientific approach in movement, since they have first and foremost emphasized the emotional and expressionistic character of this method. A movement science, on the other hand, would focus on logical elaboration and a conscious intention while training as well as while structuring a character.

### A new reading of *Poetics*: Stelios Ramfos

In order to suggest a new theoretical basis and a practical training method for actors, I will be incorporating Stelios Ramfos's theoretical approach to Aristotelian mimesis as a *ζώον* (*life force*). Since mimesis is conceived as a *ζώον*, actors should live in a state of constant presence on stage. This means that during this "aesthetic time" the beauty of *ζώον* lies in the execution of the logical development of actions, which constitute the unity of a *praxis* (complete performance). Ramfos (1991, p. 201) argues:<sup>2</sup>

Time in the case of the work of art and its pleasure is to be found in the whole of its duration, from the beginning to the end, and not in some moments that require the participation of the

---

2 All quotations from the original Greek text have been translated into English by the author.

spectator's soul. [...] Indeed the poetic *synkinesis* [commotion] is not produced by assembling the external parts of the work of art, but is extracted from its existential perfection, namely its function as an energetic living whole.

Insofar as it accomplishes this, the body experiences time as a constant *vuv* (*now*), thus transforming abstract *physical time* into the *indestructible time of living presence*. Actually, the *now* has been transformed into an aesthetic time free from "the everyday world of our sufferances and gaieties" (Laban, 1950, p. 6). Laban recognizes that a body on stage experiences its effort rhythms in a constant "now", in a specific space and within a specific duration, by interrupting physical time and replacing it with the experience and fullness of its somatic energy. Thus, being on stage consists in turning physical time into a moment of *catharsis*. The actor/actress sets external reality aside and experiences the pleasure of his/her existence through his/her movement, i.e. s/he experiences time as s/he embodies it. This paper will establish links between *indestructible time* and Laban's approach to movement as a kinaesthetic experience in his *effort theory*. One issue that it aims to address is how this framework can propose a new way of applying Laban's movement concepts to movement training for actors; namely, it establishes that Laban proposes a way of "living on stage" not only in *indestructible time*, but through *effort* as well.

Aristotle provides an ontological theory for the text and its plot as an organic whole. It is important to acknowledge that, in Aristotle's time, the semiotics of speech was understood in terms of rhythms that were capable of transferring emotions; this is why Aristotle offers the principles of dramatic art in terms of text and speech. However, on a second level, he implies that the body's movement is related to his notion of *ζώον*. Having lived in a different time, where words were symbols that meant nothing specific when viewed on their own, Laban realized that body movement on stage is more capable of conveying meaning and can thus present vast nuances. Laban (ibid., pp. 132–133) wrote:

The oldest rhythms of which we have knowledge are those of ancient Greece and these in the main are related to poetry. [...] These rhythms, called measures, were arranged in verses, strophes and poems. The Greeks considered rhythm to be the active principle of vitality [...], it is reported that the arrangement of the rhythm was the first step in creating poetic and dramatic art.

Laban replaces language rhythms with the body's movement rhythms (including voice) and, like Aristotle, steers dramatic art away from all psychological implications during the training of actors. In short, when developing kinaesthetic awareness, actors do not need to identify with any character nor do they need to experience emotions. The exercises proposed in his book focus on actions and their effort qualities, thus promoting interaction between body and mind.

On this basis, Laban offers a mode of training that could function as a support to every acting method, since he establishes a practical guide for a new *poetic science*: the Art (and its

Mastery) of Movement on the Stage. In 1950, Laban (ibid., p. 130) stated that “the elements of movement when arranged in sequences constitute *rhythms*”. From this point on he developed *Eukinetics*, the study of movement dynamics. Laban calls “effort rhythms” the visible movements of the human body, which are the result of its inner attitude. His effort analysis “enables us to define our attitudes towards the factors of movement (weight, space, time, flow) on the background of the general flux of movement in proportional arrangements” (Lange, 1970, p. 5). Finally, this paper can be seen as offering a practical explanation of the manner in which the Aristotelian *ζώον* moves, thereby contributing a practical training guide for the actor’s kinaesthetic experience to Aristotle’s ontological and poetic theory.

### The roots of the problem and the case for new knowledge

In 1966, Lisa Ullmann (cited in Curl, 1966, p. 7) argued for the necessity of establishing Laban’s philosophical foundations as a means to understand his legacy:

At a time increasing demands are made on us for study in depth, it is indeed fortunate that through Laban’s investigation, through his defining and propounding the area of movement, we have an enormous treasure of material and knowledge, upon which to base these studies. But it must not be forgotten that serious study of this kind requires a philosophical foundation.

Curl’s “Philosophical Foundations” (1966–1969) and Foster (1977) can be seen as a first attempt at proposing links between Laban’s concepts and some key aspects of Platonic and Pythagorean philosophy. Curl connects Laban to “Plato and mystic metaphysics” (Foster, 1977, p. 166) and, through that connection, he establishes Laban’s Platonic philosophical foundation. Foster locates the influences behind Laban’s concepts and undertakes an investigation into the possible connection not only to Plato and the Pythagoreans, which Curl has already suggested, but to other philosophers as well, such as Fichte, Nietzsche, Rousseau, Fröbel, Aristotle, Heidegger, Kierkegaard, Hegel, Dewey, and Russell. Foster (ibid., pp. 39–69) concludes that the link between Laban and Plato (and the Pythagoreans) does not exist; yet he does not suggest a specific philosophical approach, although he concedes that it is very clear from Laban’s words that there is in fact a connection to ancient Greek philosophy.

Despite Foster’s findings, Laban’s descendants persisted in pursuing the idea that Laban’s philosophical foundation was to be found in Platonic philosophy. For instance, after Laban’s death, his close collaborators and students, Ullmann, Newlove and Stephenson, linked Laban to Platonic philosophy, based on Laban’s research on the Platonic icosahedron as a perspective for the individual’s personal space, or *kinesphere*, as Laban called it during his Rosicrucian period.<sup>3</sup>

---

3     Laban became a member of the Rosicrucian Brethren at the beginning of the 20th century while studying at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris. The Rosicrucians studied Hermes, Plato, Gurdjieff, the ancient Egyptian religions of Amon and Osiris, agnostic writings, Christian and Muslim texts (Preston-Dunlop, 1998, p. 12).

The most recent work attempting to locate Laban's philosophical foundation is by Carol-Lynn Moore (2009). Moore examines Laban's drawings and, through her analysis, tries to develop a hypothesis about the way in which the idea of *harmony* appears in his work. Moreover, she tries to connect Laban with Bergson's philosophy of movement in images (*ibid.*, p. 81) and the artistic trends of Art Nouveau and Modernism (*ibid.*, p. 90).

As mentioned above, Hodgson also attempted to define Laban's philosophical foundation, yet without reaching a definite conclusion. However, he writes that "[Laban] makes passing reference to Aristotle" (Hodgson, 2001, p. 56). The crucial point to be made here is that Hodgson refers to Laban's connection to Aristotle for the first time, albeit without providing any further information. An idea that this paper will attempt to discuss is the possibility of such a connection between Aristotle and Laban, especially in terms of the latter's engagement with the art of acting. However, what is even more important in this context is Laban's statement in his *Choreutics* that he was interested in ancient Greek philosophy, namely in Plato and his contemporary disciples, making an indirect reference to Plato's most renowned disciple, Aristotle, and his philosophy as the framework for researching scientific knowledge. Laban (1966, p. vii) states:

"Choreosophia" – an ancient Greek word, from *choros*, meaning circle, and *sophia*, meaning knowledge or wisdom – is the nearest term I have discovered with which to express the essential ideas of this book. These ideas concern the wisdom to be found through the study of all phenomena of circles existing in nature and in life. The term was used in Plato's time by the disciples and followers of Pythagoras. [...] Plato, in his *Timaeus*, and other contemporaries and disciples of the great philosopher give us a more exhaustive picture of the knowledge [...].

Moreover, the fact that Laban was considered to be a representative of expressionist dance in Germany led more researchers to base their practical teaching methods on expressionist movement (Evans, 2009, p. 33).<sup>4</sup> Gordon (1975, pp. 35–39) describes the expressionist movement as having: "muscular posturing", "intensity", "huge and pathetic gestures", "grotesque gestures", "pauses", "primitive expressiveness" and "overwhelming pressure in movement". Furthermore, while applying Laban's analysis to the field of actor training, his concepts were also connected to Stanislavsky's acting method (Newlove, Stephenson, Malmgren, Panet, Adrian), although Laban himself, according to Hodgson (2001, p. 226), "watched Stanislavsky rehearsing once in Berlin" and, in his own words, "found the experience rather boring". The connection between Laban and Stanislavsky started with Yat Malmgren and Jean Newlove, and was continued by the new generation of their descendants, such as Barbara Adrian, Brigid Panet, etc. Laban, on the other

---

4 When referring to "expressionist movement", I am using the term to describe the expressionist aesthetic that has historically existed in theatre and dance, as discussed in such texts as Gordon (1975).

hand, went on to develop and propose “his own theory and practice” (*ibid.*) of acting in the period after his arrival in England, as I will be explaining later on.

Some key questions arise here: firstly, why is Laban’s theory and practice for actors connected to Platonic philosophy? For Plato, art is a mirroring of the *ideal world*, while Laban, in the preface of *The Mastery of Movement on the Stage* (1950), argues that the stage is a mirror of man’s physical, mental and spiritual existence. Secondly, why did Laban, in his last two books (Laban, 1948 and 1950), exclude the icosahedral perception of space and replace it with cube-based directions, making no reference to his early research? Dick McCaw (2006, p. 77) affirms that “Laban thought that an analysis of Effort was the way to understand human behaviour”, as opposed to the analysis of space as an icosahedron. Moreover, Warren Lamb (*ibid.*, p. 95), one of Laban’s students between 1947–1950, explains:

Laban never talked about specific points in the icosahedron. He thought more in terms of planes or lines which divided the sphere, for example into what is called “above” from what you’d call “below”.

Is there not, in these omissions, a strong indication that Laban has moved away – during his English period after the Second World War – from his former Platonic influence concerning the analysis of space in terms of Platonic geometrical solids? As far as his *Choreutics* is concerned, it is interesting to note that he mainly refers to an analysis of space based on an icosahedral perspective; however, this is the work that has provided evidence of Laban’s connection to Plato. Laban (cited in Ullmann’s preface in Laban, 1966, p. ix) specifies that he is interested in ancient Greek philosophy and specifically in Plato, his disciples and the Pythagoreans.

It is essential to mention that Ullmann herself published *Choreutics* in 1966, eight years after Laban’s death, naming Laban as its author. In the book’s preface, Ullmann explains that the first part consists of Laban’s manuscripts, whereas the second part comprises his students’ manuscripts of notes from Laban’s classes during his German period. A third question that arises is the following: if Laban’s philosophical foundation rests on Platonic philosophy, why do his descendants teach his method under expressionism while Plato is generally considered to be a formalist? Finally, there is the question concerning Laban’s connection to Stanislavsky’s acting method: how can Platonic philosophy be connected to Stanislavsky, given that a Platonic approach would appear to be antithetical to any psychological implication in theatre?

In fact, the research undertaken here takes its initiative from Laban’s own words in his last original book (Laban, 1950). In its preface, Laban states that the logical explanation of movement is not to be found in a mechanistic approach. On the contrary, it is the understanding of the order of “ever-flowing change” of movement (*ibid.*, p. v) that is the result of the inner life of human existence. According to Laban, “man moves in order to satisfy a need” (*ibid.*, p. 1) and the body’s movement is an analogue to one’s inner life. It is precisely the principles underlying

this analogy that allow the deep understanding of human movement and its application on the stage. For Laban, the stage is “the mirror of man’s physical, mental, and spiritual life” (*ibid.*, p. v) and “has nothing to do with the world of ideas” (*ibid.*, p. vi). This statement places Laban firmly on Aristotelian ground, and not on Platonic territory. One may recall here the “great quarrel” between Aristotle and Plato about dramatic art: Plato believed that drama is a “mirror” – however badly reflective – of the *ideal world*, whereas Aristotle believed that drama is a “mirror of human praxis”.

Laban (*ibid.*, p. vi) makes a very interesting statement at the end of his book’s preface. He mentions and acknowledges the contribution of his friends and pupils during his research, yet he also takes a curious distance from them:

This book embodies the practical studies and experience of a lifetime, but I could not have written it without close exchange of opinions with my friends and pupils. [...] My thanks are therefore due to all those who have shared my work on the stage and my researches into the art of movement. [...] But all my coadjutors were present with me in thought as I wrote, and so I gratefully dedicate what I have written to all of them. In this guide to stage (and incidentally to factory) practice I have been obliged to work to my own special pattern. Why this was necessary, study of the text will disclose.

My suggestion is that, with this statement, Laban clearly dissociates himself from what his collaborators and students believe about his theory and practice. This argument is also supported by Warren Lamb (McCaw, 2006, p. 101), who states that Laban “did have the character of reserving to himself some element of his method”. Lamb (*ibid.*, p. 101) goes on to say that Laban had a different approach from his students in a way that “if ever he got angry, he would say that your knowledge was very elementary and he conveyed that he understood far, far more than you were ever going to understand”.

However, Hodgson (2001, p. xi) provides another explanation for the misunderstandings and conflicts between Laban and his students and collaborators:

The fact that he lived in so many countries, conversed in so many languages, worked under so many political regimes and became involved in so many areas of human endeavour, have made it a long and difficult task to identify patterns, recognize recurring themes and interpret basic principles.

Another important issue is that, in the original edition of Laban (1950), no reference is made to the icosahedral perspective of space in Laban’s research. Instead, his analysis of space is restricted to Aristotle’s approach regarding the issue of *personal space*, which will be discussed later on. Moreover, the same conception of space can also be found in Laban (1948), in which

Laban only included the graph of a cube and a dynamoshere when referring to space. In the present context, this strongly indicates that during his English period Laban shifted towards a different approach.

### **Poetic science – Logic in movement training for actors and in acting**

The problem becomes more complicated when Laban's method is linked to Stanislavsky and his acting method. This connection started when Laban's collaborator William Carpenter, who was interested in psychology, suggested researching the links between the four motion factors of effort – *space, weight, time and flow* – and Jung's ideas about the psychological functions of *thinking, sensing, intuiting and feeling*. Laban continued this research with Yat Malmgren after Carpenter's death. However, his collaboration with Malmgren only lasted for a short period of time. In fact, it was Malmgren who connected Laban analysis to the Stanislavsky acting method. Laban himself never mentions anything about psychological implications in acting in his last book. On the contrary, Laban (1950, p. 109) states:

All this has little to do with psychology as generally understood. The study of human striving reaches beyond psychological analysis. Performance in movement is a synthesis, culminating in the understanding of personality caught up in the ever-changing flow of movement.

Actually, it is Ullmann who adds, in the revised edition of *The Mastery of Movement on the Stage* (1980, p. 115), Stanislavsky's questions *where, when, what and how* to Laban's *space, time, weight and flow*. It is notable that Laban starts his analysis by posing four different questions and answering them. He writes:

It is possible to determine and to describe any bodily action by answering four questions: (1) Which part of the body moves? (2) How much time does the movement require? (3) What degree of muscular energy is spent on the movement? (4) In which direction of space is the movement exerted? (Laban, 1950, p. 25)

Subsequently, he gives an example in reply to the above questions: it "is the right leg", "the movement is quick", "strong" and "is directing forward". What is to be understood from these questions and answers is that Laban is more interested in the functional approach to the body's experience and less so in analyzing character in the manner advocated by Stanislavsky. Ullmann retains the paragraph in which Laban himself (*ibid.* p. 97) excludes Stanislavsky's main concept of the "Magic If" by stating:

To perform movements "as if" chopping wood, or "as if" embracing or threatening someone, has little to do with the real symbolism of movement. Such imitations of everyday acts may be significant, but they are not symbolic.

Moreover, Laban continues referring to that kind of acting as "borrowing naturalism"; this creates an "imitation of life" since it is the description of a single movement that conveys the "mood" and feelings in a superficial manner. According to Laban, *symbolic actions* are not mere "imitations" or "representations" of everyday life actions but are "silent living movements" in which actions are not the description of what we consider real life. The observation of a man's movements in everyday life reveals that there is a poetic meaning in everyday actions "pregnant with emotions", which he calls *movement sentences* or *movement sequences*; this is what renders them significant. *Movement sentences* have a specific order, are structured by an "unusual combination of movements" and convey a "coherent flow of movement" (*ibid.*, pp. 97–104). Laban (*ibid.*, p. 98) continues:

The question now arises whether any comprehensive order can be found in this emanation of silent world, and if so, whether this knowledge of orderly principles would be of advantage to the actor-dancer, and the general standard of dynamic art on the stage.

Taking into consideration Laban's own words and statements, this paper not only re-evaluates Laban's philosophical foundation on Aristotle's philosophy, but also shifts his theory and practice away from Stanislavsky's acting method in an attempt to establish the art of movement as an autonomous discipline. The method proposed aims to be both teachable and capable of providing a supporting study for all theatrical approaches and forms of acting, including acting on screen.

In order to provide a new methodology for movement training in contemporary acting, my research also takes Evans (2009) into consideration. Evans (*ibid.*, p. 145) observes that actors resist the scientific understanding of the body, a tendency that is not a commonplace attitude among dancers and sports people. The acquisitions of complex movement skills, which tend to be based on an instrumental or mechanistic approach to the body, are seen to work in tension with the actors' desire to retain a certain degree of mystery and magic in their craft:

The body as instrument or machine (even on a temporary basis) removes it as a site for physical pleasure, mystery, magic and delight. Somehow actors seem to require that some aspect of their art remains ineffable, beyond the reach of conscious rational intellect. This begs the question: What is lost if the transformative process of the actor is made conscious, rational or formulaic? (*ibid.*, p. 145)

By offering a response to Evans, this paper adopts an Aristotelian perspective to propose that knowledge, which is the main issue in both *episteme* (*science*) and art, is gained through training and therefore requires a conscious and rational approach. It is interesting to note that, for Ramfos (2008), "Aristotelian knowledge is a complete existing fact, not only an intellectual activity"; in other words, it is always a dynamic enquiry and not a *stasis* (*fixed point*).

Knowledge is linked to *memory* and is always in constant development. Consequently, Ramfos (*ibid.*) states that Aristotle's explanation of time as a *continuous* now is connected to the *nous* (*mind*) and its ability of storing, analyzing and combining the information received:

Knowledge is the ability of man to produce [the] future. The idea of producing [the] future is the idea of rejecting instinct. For instinct is the persistent return to the past.

Thus, for Ramfos, creativity in art is an intellectual activity that requires a rational process. This idea of producing art through knowledge is a crucial point; it forces us to consider what we mean by "knowledge" or "theory" in art and its relation to how we practice it. This paper attempts to bridge the gap between theory and practice according to Laban and Aristotle's definition of art as a *science*; to do so, it offers a re-evaluation of Laban's analysis and practice, which provides a means to overcome the actors' argument that rational explanation of movement leads to a static and formulaic outcome. Laban (1950, p. v) is aware of that and begins his book by explaining the difference:

The reader may be acquainted with the famous Chinese story of the centipede which, becoming immobilized, died of starvation because it was ordered always to move first with its seventy-eighth foot, and then to use its other legs in a particular numerical order. This story is often quoted as a warning against the presumption of attempting a rational explanation of movement. But, clearly, the unfortunate animal was the victim of purely mechanical regulations, and that has little to do with the free-flowing art of movement.

Additionally, this paper argues that the notion of science (*episteme*) in theatre should be seen according to Aristotle's definition: *poetic episteme* is a know-how of the productive capacity of the art of theatre.<sup>5</sup> Laban's *The Mastery of Movement on the Stage* (1950) coincides with this epistemological imperative in both its title and its resounding invitation for the actor/actress to engage in a complex understanding of the body in motion as a way of acquiring essential movement skills. In order for *poetic episteme* to evolve, a logical elaboration and the establishment of a specific order are necessary. Ramfos (2008) explains: "Logic is not a rational process, but a mechanism of transformation"; but its *order* is not a technical process that moves in a certain direction. On the contrary, logic moves in all directions and with multivalent, expansive combinations. Each possible combination is structured according to a specific order. These words echo Laban's attitude that exhorts practitioners to adopt a rational approach to movement training as a productive capacity: "a movement makes sense

---

5      *Episteme* (ἐπιστήμη/science) comes from the ancient Greek verb *ἐπισταμαι*, which means: "to have a deep understanding of something; to master it".

only if it progresses organically, and this means that phases which follow each other in a natural succession must be chosen" (Laban, 1966, p. 4). This is what Laban means by the story of the centipede cited above.

Evans (2009, p. 85) questions the efficacy of approaching the body's "spontaneity" and "play" without training the "physical resources":

[...] a function of movement training [for actors] is, through the efficient alignment of the actor's physical resources, to enable and release the imagination and assist in the integration of their faculties.

Evans (*ibid.*, pp. 14–16) highlights the need to develop the efficiency of the body in order to meet the standards that contemporary theatre places upon the actor. He suggests (*ibid.*, p. 69):

Thus the actor understandably desires a body ready for work, able to generate varied, multiple and fluid meanings; in effect a body which, within the parameters of theatrical taste at any particular time, can perform as "natural" and able to engage in an uninhibited manner with their environment [neutral body] so as to create the illusion of "naturalness".

This paper demonstrates that Laban's concepts allow for the possibility of the body to be *neutral* by "enriching" its effort ability, and *natural* by choosing the right order of actions and the right effort qualities, which are similar to those of everyday life. Likewise, Aristotle provides the constituent parts of what he calls *mimesis*, which is a *likeness* to everyday life. Moreover, the main issue with regard to the natural/neutral body is that of *indestructible time*, which Ramfos raises when he discusses *presence* on stage as "life force". Laban provides exercises aimed at training the kinaesthetic experience of the performing body's *here and now*, a notion which was first introduced, as *ζώον*, by Aristotle. Laban and Aristotle agree that what the actor experiences on stage is his *indestructible dynamics, here and now*. Namely, he experiences his existential energy, outside the context of the mundane, with every essence of his being. The emphasis is placed on experiencing the present through *praxis*, from both the actor's and the audience's perspective. It is a moment of catharsis since there is the possibility of experiencing existence in full in an aesthetic time; and this produces pleasant emotions. This is what Aristotle calls *ηδονή* (*pleasure*), a state that Laban identified as important to his work but was unable to concretise. Laban (*cited in Curl 1967, p. 16*) says:

What does one describe as the view of the dancer? Above all his infinite reverence of all dancing and the dedication to the core of all being, the well-ordered movement, the dance. This dedication is so exclusive that everything else fades away.

According to Foster (1977, pp. 47–50), this view of Laban's – also expressed in phrases such as "dance is a divine power" – led Curl (1967) to argue for an intimate connection between

Laban and Plato (and the Pythagoreans), suggesting that there is a kind of mysticism in Laban's work. In contrast to this point of view, I would argue that Laban's work, understood in Aristotelian terms – and specifically in light of Ramfos's suggestions about *mimesis* in synthesis and performance –, provides not a mystical but a logical rationale that scientifically validates his approach to presence on stage.

As DiLeo (2007) explains:

Aristotle's general description of time and his references to issues related to it in reference to living things provide a backdrop for an understanding of human happiness and governance that exhorts us to attend seriously to the events, people and things that we encounter in all their particularity because our deliberations and choices do make a difference.

By rejecting mysticism, this line of thought will allow us to reposition Laban in accordance with Aristotle's philosophy, which provides Laban's movement analysis with scientific validity and a philosophical foundation.<sup>6</sup>

Both Aristotle and Laban place particular emphasis on another characteristic: synthesis in art. They insist that there must exist a very specific *táxis* (*order*) in speech and movement, just like in the art of dance. This *táxis* (*order*) is necessary so that a specific meaning can be communicable to the audience, since any change in *order* affects the final meaning: "the most natural is the best organised" (Ramfos, 2008). As such, *λογική τάξις* (*logical order*) leads to a synthesis which Aristotle defines as *πράξις* (*praxis*) and which is perfect and important (Ramfos, 1991, p. 151). According to Ramfos, the character's actions will eventually reveal his character. Ramfos indicates Theophrastus's<sup>7</sup> book *Characters* in order to give an example of what Aristotle means by *πράξις* (*praxis*). He describes how one's character is revealed through one's own actions. One of his examples is that of the "flatterer" (Theophrastus, 1902):

He will remove a morsel of wool from his patron's coat; or, if a speck of chaff has been laid on the other's hair by the wind, he will pick it off; he will take the cushions from the slave in the theatre, and spread them on the seat with his own hands.

This coincides with Laban's idea that inner life is revealed through actions and their effort qualities, which are structured in a specific way in order to be transformed into *symbolic actions* that create a significant human *praxis*. The main goal of *praxis* is *περιπέτεια* (*anatropή*, *reversal*). Therefore, for Aristotle, a *praxis* is not informed by *necessity* (*avaykaíon*), which would make

---

6 The very word *metaphysics* came from Aristotle, although he did not characterize his work as "metaphysical". Regardless, Aristotle's name has been associated with metaphysics for over 2,000 years!

7 Theophrastus was one of Aristotle's disciples and his successor as head of the Lyceum.

it determined, but by *probability* (*εικός*), thus suggesting some measure of unexpectedness and contingency in both speech and movement. Similarly, Laban gives the example of playing the role of Eve when she picks the apple, and he implies that there are a lot of ways to execute this action. In terms of *necessity* (*αναγκαίον*), the action is that she picks the apple; in terms of *probability* (*εικός*), this action must be embodied in a way to be chosen from among a spectrum of different ways of picking the fruit in order to reveal a certain character. In reality, there are numerous combinations of picking an apple. The selection of actions does not consist in a "fact-finding device"; it is an artistic activity: the character's creator must find the best combination of actions in order to convey the meaning s/he has in mind.

Following this line of thought, *πράξις* (*praxis*) must be structured in contradistinction to the conventional approach to acting, which until recently has called for "natural" action. What I mean by "natural" action is the action that stems from *αναγκαίον* (*necessity*) and not *εικός* (*probability*). Usually, this sort of action is produced not as a carefully chosen action, but as the spontaneous reaction of the actor/actress to given circumstances. Aristotle stands opposed to this type of "naturalism" for three reasons: firstly, because it is produced spontaneously and, therefore, relies on a non-artistic capacity; secondly, it relies on psychological implication; and thirdly, it does not produce a new reality. What Aristotle proposes as an alternative is that the structure of an action be logical instead of spontaneous; understanding the logic of action is the main requirement for the character's creator. It is important to note that the standard translation of *πράξις* as "action" does not allow for such a refined understanding of the concept.

## Conclusion

What this paper proposes is a new way of approaching movement training for actors in the 21st century, based on Aristotle and Laban; a way that significantly avoids psychological implications and regards the art of acting as similar to the art of dancing – namely, requiring strict precision and clarity of performance.

The argument rests on the suggestion that, by better understanding the meaning of action as a logical form, we can grasp what is at stake for Laban. What is essential to this proposition is that the idea of creating action by *probability* – that is to say, according to a logical process – has to be considered within movement training for classical acting. As a result, the actor's/actress's preparation abandons the question: "What if I lived in the ascribed circumstances?" The question now becomes: "What if I can execute a choreographed character in specific circumstances?" For Laban, the structure of the character is choreographed by the director before the execution and is not invented by the actors through improvisations during the rehearsals. It constitutes the logical structure synthesized by the creator. In other words, the logical structure of a synthesis proceeds from the development and application of the principles of a *poetic science*.

This paper also responds to Evans's (2009, p. 85) assertion that movement training must

"enable and release the *imagination*". This statement requires a careful consideration of the concept of *imagination* because, as Evans himself points out, actors are reluctant to rationalize their approach to movement. Plato and Aristotle attribute a double sense to *imagination*. First, imagination is something that has metaphysical connotations. Plato believes that the soul exists in the upper world and that in the process of birth man represses the *memories* (*μνήμαι*) of this upper world. We can recall those memories through knowledge and, therefore, attain what he calls *avavnήσεις* (*recollections*). This recollection is *φαντασία*, roughly translated as imagination. Aristotle, on the other hand, suggests that *μνήμαι* (*memories*) are only stored depictions from our experiences in this world. Laban's approach to imagination is similar to Aristotle's. According to Ramfos (2008), "*φαντασία* (*imagination*) is an intellectual activity because if it were a psychic phenomenon it would be a delirium"; and this *φαντασία* has "infinite consequences". Thus, what precisely do we mean when we say that an actor/actress must train his/her *imagination*? What elements does this process consist of? How is it connected to the text? What kind of *imagination* can be developed and how? Therefore, are we referring to *φαντασία* in the way that Aristotle suggests? Or are we interpreting it as *imagination* like most 19th-century philosophers did?

Another issue that Evans (2009, p. 34) raises in his critique of Laban's work is that of "expressive movement":

Though Laban perceived the value of an integrated and holistic approach to posture and movement, he preferred to focus his energies and attentions on the expressive functions of movement rather than on developing a vision of the interaction between mind and body, which might allow for the successful re-education of inefficient body use.

Of course, this statement has some validity. It stems from a misreading of Platonic philosophy, and from the fact that the heritage of Laban studies has been tainted with overly expressionist overtones, which is completely contradictory to Laban's practice. Laban's work has been neglected in contemporary theatre practice in acting and is seen as outdated, partly because of what Evans sees as a lack of "vision of the interaction between mind and body". Evans, however, seems to be unaware of Laban's (1948, p. 22) own statement which suggests that the latter was in fact well aware of the problem:

It is the happy combination of mind and body developing alongside each other, without inhibition of the one or over-development of the other, for which the teacher should work.

In Selioni (2014) I proposed a methodology that explicitly addresses Evans's (2009, p. 34) statement regarding the need to review Laban's work and demonstrate the manner in which it can lead to the interaction "between body and mind" and, consequently, to the "successful education of inefficient body use". I argued in favour of a re-evaluation of Laban's theory and

practice through the lenses of Aristotle by taking into consideration the fact that Laban offered a concrete training method for actors based on fundamental theoretical and practical principles (Laban, 1950). I suggested a movement training method for actors in terms of structuring, rehearsing and performing, which is applicable to multiple theatrical approaches (classical drama, performance, musical theatre, devised theatre) based on logic, as discussed above. The research thus fills a theoretical gap by providing a systematic method of movement training that treats the body as an entity with all its aspects (emotional, physical, logical, sexual, etc.) and aims at meeting the demands of the industry.

### References

- Adrian, B. (2008) *Actor Training the Laban Way: An Integrated Approach to Voice, Speech, and Movement*. New York: Allworth Press.
- Curl, G. F. (1966) "Philosophical Foundations Part One", *Laban Art of Movement Guild Magazine*, 37, pp. 7–15.
- (1967) "Philosophical Foundations Part Two", *Laban Art of Movement Guild Magazine*, 38, pp. 7–17.
- DiLeo, D. [2007] "The Temporal Context of Aristotle's Biological, Ethical and Political Thought" [Online]. Available at: [http://research.allacademic.com/index.php?click\\_key=1#search\\_top](http://research.allacademic.com/index.php?click_key=1#search_top) [Accessed 12 June 2010].
- Evans, M. (2009) *Movement Training for the Modern Actor*. London: Routledge.
- Foster, J. (1977) *The Influences of Rudolf Laban*. London: Lepus Books.
- Gordon, M. (1975) "German Expressionist Acting", *The Drama Review*, 19 (3) (September), pp. 34–50.
- Hodgson, J. (2001) *Mastering Movement: The Life and Work of Rudolf Laban*. New York: Routledge.
- Laban, R. (1948) *Modern Educational Dance*. London: Macdonald and Evans.
- (1950) *The Mastery of Movement on the Stage*. London: Macdonald and Evans.
- (1966) *Choreutics*. Edited and annotated by L. Ullmann. London: Macdonald and Evans.
- (1988) *The Mastery of Movement on the Stage*. 4th ed. revised and enlarged by L. Ullmann. Plymouth: Northcote House.
- Lange, R. (1970) *The Nature of Dance*. Lincs.: Bartle & Son Ltd.

- Lucian (1994) *The Double Indictment; The Lover of Lies, or The Doubter; On Dance* [Δις κατηγορούμενος, Φιλοψευδής ἡ Απιστών, Περί Ορχήσεως]. Trans. Kaktos Publications Literary Team. Athens: Kaktos.
- McCaw, D. (2006) *An Eye for Movement: Warren Lamb's Career in Movement Analysis*. London: Brechin Books.
- (2009) "The Actor – A Reluctant Mover: The Genius of Geraldine Stephenson", *Movement and Dance*, 28 (1), pp. 1–4.
- Mirodan, V. (1997) *The Way of Transformation (The Laban-Malgren System of Dramatic Character Analysis)*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. London: Royal Holloway College, University of London.
- Moore, C.-L. (2009) *The Harmonic Structure of Movement, Music and Dance according to Rudolf Laban: An Examination of his Unpublished Writings and Drawings*. Lewiston, NY; Lampeter, UK: Edwin Mellen Press.
- Newlove, J. (1993) *Laban for Actors and Dancers: Putting Laban's Movement Theory into Practice – A Step-by-step Guide*. New York: Routledge.
- Newlove, J. and Dalby, J. (2004) *Laban for All*. London: Nick Hern.
- Panet, B. (2009) *Essential Acting: A Practical Handbook for Actors, Teachers and Directors*. New York: Routledge.
- Pisk, L. (1975) *The Actor and His Body*. London: Harrap.
- Plato *The Republic* [Online]. Trans. B. Jowett. Available at: <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.11.x.html> [Accessed 16 June 2013].
- *Ion* [Online]. Trans. B. Jowett. Available at: <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/ion.html> [Accessed 26 August 2008].
- Preston-Dunlop, V. (1998) *Rudolf Laban: An Extraordinary Life*. London: Dance Books.
- Ramfos, S. (1991) *Poetic Philosophy* [Φιλοσοφία Ποιητική]. Athens: Armos. [In Greek.]
- (1992) *Mimesis versus Form* [Μίμησις εναντίον μορφής]. Vol. 1. Athens: Armos. [In Greek.]
- (1993) *Mimesis versus Form* [Μίμησις εναντίον μορφής]. Vol. 2. Athens: Armos. [In Greek.]
- (2008) "Phaedo". Lecture at the Theocharakis Foundation, Athens, 31 August. [In Greek.]
- (2010) "On Poetics" ["Περί Ποιητικής"] [Online]. Lecture at the Benaki Museum, Athens. Available at: <http://steliosramfosgr.wordpress.com/category/διαλεξεις> [Accessed 2 March 2011]. [In Greek.]

- (2012) "Plato: *The Republic*" [Πλάτων: *Πολιτεία*]. Lecture at the Theocharakis Foundation, Athens, 16 February. [In Greek.]
- Selioni, K. (2014) *Laban – Aristotle: Ζώον (Zoon) in Theatre Πράξις (Praxis); Towards a Methodology for Movement Training for the Actor and in Acting*. Athens: Hellinotekniki.
- Theophrastus (1902) *The Characters* [Online]. Trans. C. E. Bennett and W. A. Hammond. Available at: [http://www.archive.org/stream/charactersoftheo00theouoft/charactersoftheo00theouoft\\_djvu.txt](http://www.archive.org/stream/charactersoftheo00theouoft/charactersoftheo00theouoft_djvu.txt) [Accessed 1 March 2009].

# CYNICAL PARRHESIA AND CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN DANCE

RAMSAY BURT

## Abstract

This paper draws on Michel Foucault's discussion of the concept of cynical *parrhesia* to explore some similarities between the kind of provocative dialogue practised by the Cynics and the provocative way in which some recent European contemporary dance pieces criticise contemporary dance as an institution. It focuses on one ancient and one modern, twenty-first century example of provocative dialogue: the meeting between Diogenes and Alexander the Great, and that between gallery visitors and dancers in *Production* (2010) by Xavier Le Roy and Mårten Spångberg in response to an invitation to create a work for exhibition in an art gallery. The purpose of provocative dialogue, Foucault argues, is not to make someone to accept the truth but to persuade them to internalise the voice of the provocateur and thus initiate within themselves a process of ethical self-criticism. This paper argues that *Production* offers opportunities for this ethical practice both to gallery visitors and to the institution that commissioned it.

## Keywords

*Parrhesia*, Foucault, Xavier Le Roy, Mårten Spångberg, cynical philosophy, contemporary European dance

Michel Foucault turned, in his later writings, to Greek and Roman philosophy in order to trace a genealogy of classical ideas about ethical practices before these were adopted and adapted within Christian theology. In October and November 1983 at the University of California, Berkeley, he gave six lectures on *parrhesia* – speaking the truth – as part of a larger project on understanding the nature of critical thinking. These lectures include a discussion of the radical, deliberately critical and uncomfortable use of *parrhesia* by the Cynics. Cynicism in the ancient Greek sense was very different from its contemporary meaning as negative, nihilistic scornfulness. As philosopher Simon Critchley (2009) points out:

True cynicism is not a debasement of others but a debasement of oneself – and in that purposeful self-debasement, a protest against corruption, luxury and insincerity. Diogenes, the story goes, was called a “downright dog”, and this so pleased him that the figure of a dog was carved in stone to mark his final resting place. From that epithet, *kunikos* (“dog-like”), cynicism was born.

The cynical use of *parrhesia* included what Foucault calls “provocative dialogue”. This kind of provocative dialogue practised by the Cynics, I will show, has some similarities with the provocative way in which some recent European contemporary dance pieces criticise contemporary dance as an institution.

The main example of “provocative dialogue” that Foucault discusses is the account by Dio Chrysostom (c. 40 – c. 115) of the meeting between Alexander the Great and Diogenes. Famously this began with Diogenes ordering Alexander to stand to one side since he had been enjoying sitting in the sun. Chrysostom states that “Alexander was at once delighted with the man’s boldness and composure in not being awestruck in his presence” (Chrysostom, *Fourth Discourse*). A long dialogue between the two ensued during which Diogenes continually provoked Alexander, speaking truth to power.

Speaking truth to power is something that some contemporary artists engage in through works that critique the forms and conventions of their art. Such works often implicitly or explicitly challenge dance institutions where the latter are responsible for supporting or perpetuating the conventions and traditions that these artists are criticising. One example of a recent dance work that does this is *Production* (2010) made by Xavier Le Roy and Mårten Spångberg in response to an invitation to create a work for the exhibition “Move: Choreographing You” at the Hayward Art Gallery in London.<sup>1</sup> In *Production*, a dancer or pair of dancers would engage in conversations with individual visitors to the exhibition that could sometimes be uncomfortable in the way they challenged normative expectations about the relationship between performer and spectator. This short essay identifies and discusses parallels between the conversations in *Production* and the dialogue between Alexander and Diogenes, doing so by drawing on Foucault’s insights into the Cynics in his Berkeley lectures.

Foucault states that the *parrhesiastes* – the one who tells the truth – is always in a less powerful position than the one to whom they are speaking: “The *parrhesia* comes from ‘below’, as it were, and is directed towards ‘above’” (Foucault, 1983, p. 5). There is often a danger that by telling the truth the *parrhesiastes* may hurt or annoy the person they are talking to. “*Parrhesia* is thus always a ‘game’ between the one who speaks the truth and the interlocutor” (*ibid.*, p. 7). Diogenes, for example, set out to hurt Alexander’s pride, at one point calling him a bastard (which was technically true) and telling him that by calling himself king he was like “a child who, after winning a game, puts a crown on his head and declares that he is king” (*ibid.*, p. 54). The reason for doing this, Foucault argues, is not to make the king recognize the truth but to inspire him to internalize “this *parrhesiastic* struggle – to fight within himself against his own faults, and to be with himself in the same way that Diogenes was with him” (*ibid.*). *Parrhesia*, thus, not only involves provocative dialogue but also has the aim of inspiring an ethical practice of caring for oneself.

---

1 *Production* has also been performed in art galleries in Munich, Düsseldorf, and Seoul.

Just as Diogenes spoke to Alexander from an inferior position, the dancers in *Production* were also inferior in relation to the gallery visitors, as the latter's entrance fees were collected by the institution that paid the dancers' wages. The dancers were not, however, in exactly the same relation to the visitors as Diogenes had been to Alexander. The dancers' dialogues were with the visitors whereas it was the gallery itself as an institution that exercised power over them. I will show that the dancers spoke truth to the gallery visitors but I will also argue that the gallery itself, as an institution, was nevertheless allowing itself to be challenged by the work and its choreographers, so that *parrhesia* was taking place in two different ways through the performance of *Production*.

The exhibition "Move: Choreographing You", curated by Stephanie Rosenthal, opened at the Hayward Art Gallery in London in October 2010, with the aim of exploring common concerns and overlaps in the practices of dance artists and visual artists since 1960. This put dance into an art gallery setting alongside films and installations, including sculptural environments in which visitors could actively engage in movement through climbing ropes or hanging from hoops. It included pieces by artists who began making work in the 1960s, such as Simone Forti, Robert Morris, and Bruce Nauman, alongside the work of a younger generation of artists like Maria La Ribot and Isaac Julien.<sup>2</sup>

A number of young dancers performed the exhibited dance works daily in the gallery,<sup>3</sup> some of whom were also involved in Le Roy and Spångberg's piece. Amanda Prince-Lubawy, who was one of these dancers, explains what happened. When performing *Production*, the dancers chose to go into the gallery and rehearse any of a set of relatively well-known post-modern dance works, most of which were performed using spoken instructions or scores stored on mp3 players. If a gallery visitor looked too long at the dancers while they were doing this, the dancer (or dancers) could choose to approach the visitor and initiate a conversation.<sup>4</sup>

---

2 The artists whose work was presented in the exhibition were: Janine Antoni, Pablo Bronstein, Trisha Brown, Tania Bruguera, Rosemary Butcher, Boris Charmatz, Lygia Clark, William Forsythe, Simone Forti, Dan Graham, Anna Halprin, Christian Jankowski, Isaac Julien, Allan Kaprow / Rosemary Butcher, Mike Kelley, Michael Kliën, Thomas Lehmen, Robert Morris, Bruce Nauman, The OpenEnded Group with Wayne McGregor, João Penalva, Yvonne Rainer, La Ribot, Xavier Le Roy and Mårten Spångberg, Franz Erhard Walther, Franz West, Nevin Aladağ, Siobhan Davies, Everybody/Générique. Performances during the run of the exhibition included Rosemary Butcher's reinterpretation of Allan Kaprow's *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*, *Schrottplatz* by Thomas Lehmen, *Llamame Mariachi* by La Ribot, Anne Colloid's reinterpretation of Anna Halprin's *Parades & Changes*, *Replays*, *Low Pieces*, and a work by Xavier Le Roy.

3 The dancers "activated" certain works in the exhibition and performed actual choreographies created for Mike Kelley's *Test Room* (1999) and Simone Forti's *Huddle* and *Hangers* (both 1961). A separate group of dancers "activated" sculptural pieces by Franz Erhard Walther, Tania Bruguera's installation *Untitled (Kassel)* (2002) and a new commission by Pablo Bronstein. Ten dancers also performed Yvonne Rainer's *Trio A* (1966) in the gallery.

4 Although I did spend a couple of hours in the exhibition, I did not know about *Production* (as it was not announced) and do not know whether I saw it or not. I did not take part in the interactive situation that Prince-Lubawy describes.

Upon noticing the gaze, we would ask, "Are you looking for something?" When confronted with this question, an attentive visitor would respond in their own way, and the seemingly separate roles (performer and spectator) could now be perceived as a border that shifts. (Prince-Lubawy, 2011, p. 18)

It didn't matter whether the conversation stalled immediately or went on for hours. As Le Roy (*ibid.*, p. 29) observes:

*Production* is successful as it transforms and acts on the time that the visitor spends with the work. The way each one engages with the work doesn't depend only on them but is negotiated between them and the participants.

The actual words exchanged did not constitute the work, although they were part of it. What mattered was the fact that some sort of exchange was initiated.

The resulting conversation questioned the separation between performer and beholder, turning the latter from a passive consumer into an active participant with the potential to make a creative contribution to the performance. It was an opportunity for both to be productive. *Production* does not, therefore, set out to be provocative. However, as Prince-Lubawy (*ibid.*) explains: "The interaction with the viewer becomes the opportunity to notice oneself through the relationship with the other". Noticing oneself, or engaging in a process of self-examination, is a goal that Foucault identified in the cynical use of *parrhesia*. As Spångberg (*ibid.*, p. 22) observes, "in *Production*, the execution is constantly challenging the participant, addressing quite unorthodox modes of responsibility, exposure and ability to negotiate". This provocation to rethink the way they approach dance is an instance of *parrhesia*.

Prince-Lubawy, in her discussion of *Production*, applies methodologies that seem perhaps partly to draw on ideas about the gaze developed by feminist scholars, as she seeks to account for the ways in which the work troubles and subverts normative modes of spectatorship. In an art gallery, the visitor looks at objects. So, if a dancer performs in a gallery, they may become objectified. The spectator, Prince-Lubawy suggests, "engages in an act of looking to satisfy their need for enlightenment" (*ibid.*, p. 23). She describes some encounters during *Production* where she and a gallery visitor had long, interesting exchanges during which the dancers were definitely not reduced to objects of the spectators' gaze. Other encounters that she mentions were evidently quite alienating, characterised by misunderstandings, and limited by the visitors' narrowly restricted expectations. For example, in one instance, a pair of visitors, who had been approached by three dancers, said that, rather than talk to them, they wanted to see the dancers do some more of the dance movement they had been performing before their approach. Prince-Lubawy describes, with some irritation, occasions when visitors evidently expected the performers to provide a service for them by dancing.

On these occasions, the dancers' provocative relations with the gallery visitors would have resembled that of Diogenes with Alexander. Just as Diogenes targeted Alexander's pride, the dancers challenged the visitors' preconceptions about performance. These preconceptions resulted in an expectation that the dancers would perform a form of emotional labour. This, in Rachel Lara Cohen's useful definition, "comprises the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display" (Cohen, 2010, p. 198) which produces the appropriate state of mind in the person for whom the service is being delivered. What is alienating about emotional labour, Cohen argues, is that, within a capitalist economy, the customer's response "is owned by the capitalist who reaps the rewards" (*ibid.*). At the Hayward Art Gallery, the visitors bought their entrance ticket from the gallery ticket office and, in Prince-Lubawy's account, some of them expected to get their money's worth from watching the performers dancing for them.

What emerges from Prince-Lubawy's account is the way that *Production* enables this group of dancers to resist the process through which their emotional labour is turned into a commodity circulating within a market. When visitors had narrow expectations, *Production* challenged and disrupted these. When dancers and visitors had a more felicitous encounter through the piece, they were offered opportunities to have an experience that was not governed by normative expectations produced in a market economy in which dance functions as entertainment or spectacle. It is useful in this context to note Xavier Le Roy's observations about the dance market. In a much earlier piece, *Product of Circumstances* (1999), he observed that the funding system for dance enabled him to research new ways of making dance but channelled the resulting products in particular ways:

I had integrated the economic dynamics of dance production because I wanted to be able to make a living with what I had decided to do. But, even though I was very careful not to find myself under that particular logic, and simultaneously aiming for acceptance and resistance, I was not always completely convinced by my decisions. (Le Roy, 1999)

This degree of autonomy from the effects of the market is what the dancers in *Production* were aiming to achieve. For the latter, *parrhesiastic* provocations were a means to achieving this.

I have been arguing that, through a search for new ways of thinking about choreography, the dancers in *Production* were challenging beholders to reconsider their preconceptions. Beholders were invited to engage in a *parrhesiastic* self-examination not only about their own position as they watched dance performances but also about what theatre dance is meant to be. *Production*, I believe, goes further than this insofar as it draws attention towards normative ideas about the boundaries of what dance is meant to be and, by doing so, challenges the institutional context of theatre dance. The different parts of the dance world as it is institutionalised, including the practices of theatres, production agencies and arts centres, funders, critics,

conservatoires, dance scholars (myself included) and dance journals (like *Choros International Dance Journal*), produce and maintain these norms but also sometimes challenge them through the ways in which they interact and work with one another.

An institution serves and promotes a particular purpose; in the case of an art gallery, this is the appreciation of art. The institution organises the way people engage with this by ordering and regularising means of access and forms of behaviour. What is remarkable about *Production* is that, by challenging gallery visitors to engage in an active, productive way with a dance performance, it offers ways of rethinking the means of access and forms of behaviour that the institution organises. By initiating conversations with gallery visitors, *Production* animates the gallery in each moment that the dancers register on the consciousness of the gallery visitor. In principle, institutions function through such interactions, but *Production* initiates these in ways that challenge and, to a certain extent, disrupt the normative function of the gallery – to offer visitors opportunities to appreciate two- and three-dimensional works of art.

On an institutional level, the shift from solely displaying material art objects to also presenting immaterial art will have necessitated organisational readjustments – changing rooms for the performers, health and safety assessments, insurance, and so on. At another level, it involved rethinking the modes of engagement with art works and their appreciation, which challenged both its aims and practices. The provocative dialogue that *Production* had with the Hayward Art Gallery as an institution was one that had the aim of inspiring an ethical practice of self-questioning. By commissioning *Production*, the exhibition organisers presented a work that had the potential to critique institution. There is a parallel here with the way that Alexander welcomed Diogenes's provocations. One could argue, however, that the commission for *Production* was in line with the kinds of adjustments and restructuring that have been central to recent capitalist production.

Philosophers associated with the Italian Operaist movement have pointed to shifts in the nature of work to new kinds of production which they have labelled "post-Fordism".<sup>5</sup> The use of mass production assembly line and standardisation known as Fordism that developed in the early twentieth century was transformed through the Neoliberal restructuring of capitalism that began in the 1970s. As production focused on smaller, specialised markets and on immaterial production, the focus shifted from material goods to adding value to products and services through the use of social skills and emotional rather than physical labour. Pascal Gielen and Paul De Bruyne (2009) observe that this requires vitality, creativity, flexibility, and communication skills so that the artist has become the model employee of the new post-Fordist work ethic. By showing immaterial art works and presenting performances in art galleries, the institution could be said to be conforming to these shifts in the nature of capitalism. To function within the art

---

5 This is also known as the Autonomist Movement, in Italian *Autonomia Operaia*.

world, the gallery as an institution needs to be integrated into the economic dynamics of capitalist production. But as Le Roy suggests in his solo *Product of Circumstances*, it is possible to try to resist being completely taken over by the logic of such production. This, I propose, is what the Hayward Art Gallery was trying to do through commissioning *Production*. Such commissions represent a *parrhesiastic* process of critical examination.

Simon Critchley (2009) argues that “[t]he cynic’s every word and action was dedicated to the belief that the path to individual freedom required absolute honesty and complete material austerity”. I have argued that *Production* offered opportunities to have an experience that was not governed by normative expectations produced in a market economy in which dance functions as entertainment or spectacle. The gallery was therefore offering its visitors opportunities to be active participants with the potential to make a creative contribution to the production of an immaterial artwork. I noted earlier that Foucault argued in his lecture on *parrhesia* that Diogenes’s aim was not to get Alexander to accept the truth but to internalise the provocative voice and engage in an ethical practice of caring for himself. *Production*, I have argued, inspired both the gallery visitor and the institution to engage in this kind of ethical practice. As the piece’s name implies, *Production* engages in the process of production itself – on becoming something – rather than focusing on the value of the finished object. Cynical *parrhesia* offers ethical ways of behaving in response to the demands of post-Fordist times.

## References

- Cohen, R. L. (2010) “When it Pays to be Friendly: Employment Relationships and Emotional Labour in Hairstyling”, *The Sociological Review*, 58 (2), pp. 197–218.
- Critchley, S. (2009) “Cynicism We Can Believe In”, *The New York Times* [Online], March 31. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/01/opinion/01critchley.html> [Accessed 20 April 2016].
- Foucault, M. (1983) *Discourse and Truth: The Problematising of Parrhesia*. Michel Foucault Info [Online]. Available at: <http://foucault.info/doc/documents/parrhesia/foucault-dt4-praticeparrhesia-en-html> [Accessed 20 April 2016].
- Gielen, P. and De Bruyne, P. (2009) “Introduction: Fresh Air and Full Lungs”, in Gielen, P. and De Bruyne, P. (eds) *Being an Artist in Post-Fordist Times*. Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, pp. 7–16.
- Le Roy, X. (1999) “Score for *Product of Circumstances* (1999)” [Online]. Available at: <http://www.xavierleroy.com/page.php?id=63e83a12f776477d633187bdfbdb1c24c130da87&lg=en> [Accessed 20 April 2016].
- Prince-Lubawy, A. (2011) “Speak, Listen, Look, Move: Art Talks”, *Dance Theatre Journal*, 24 (2), pp. 17–25.

# CAPTURING THE MOMENT: CREATING HYBRID PERFORMANCES THROUGH COLLABORATIVE POLARITY

ROB ROZNOWSKI, KATIA SAVRAMI

## Abstract

This article-essay documents and explores a recent devised and site-specific theatrical piece created at the Department of Theatre Studies, University of Patras, Greece, between February and April 2016. The reasoning for this documentation is that it has revealed tangential and important reflections related to subjects as varied as cultural identity, communication, public versus private education, pedagogy, the participation of guest artists in educational and professional settings, discoveries related to devising, student and faculty interaction, goal setting and much more.

## Keywords

Autoethnography, devised, site-specific performance, guest artists, public versus private education, best practices

## Introduction and method

This article-essay draws on the qualitative method of autoethnography (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, pp. 413–414; Anderson, 2006, pp. 378–379) in an attempt to reflect on and connect the cultural differences that existed between the codirectors as scholars, educators and artists with the broader context of teaching in Higher Education institutions, theatre and dance practices, and student learning. In this formulation, autoethnography had four main features; it was: based upon the researchers' involvement in the experiment; analytically reflexive; visible in the research; committed to a critical realistic discussion by pointing out all of the issues revealed. Through this collaborative autoethnographic methodology (Warren, 2011, pp. 140–143), information was collected during the project by documenting and critically discussing the codirectors' lived experiences.

This process revealed a polarity related to cultural identity, communication, public versus private education, and aesthetics. It also raised numerous points for examination in terms of pedagogy, the participation of guest artists in educational and professional settings, strategies for devising, and student and faculty interaction that brings together the personal and the social through performative acts. It therefore felt important to document the whole process, as the multitude of experiences covered a wide range of possibly shared academic practices that could inspire further examination of the collaborative process for others in the

academy. Moreover, this creative collaborative project has also uncovered how a performative act of teaching (McLaren and Kincheloe, 2007; Liew, 2013, pp. 262–264) becomes consequential in a multitude of ways (Liew, 2013). Like critical pedagogy, autoethnography emphasizes reflexivity and the questioning of subjectivity and objectivity (Atkinson, 2006, pp. 400–404; Warren, 2011, pp. 140–143).

### **Background**

Rob Roznowski (Associate Professor, Michigan State University, USA) was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship for spring 2016 to teach and complete several projects while at the University of Patras in Greece. His initial directing project was to be a production of Arthur Miller's *A View from the Bridge* that fused ancient Greek theatrical techniques (the use of Chorus, themes, and some of the writing structures) with contemporary theatrical exploration of the common man in relation to the "American Dream" found in several Miller texts.

Upon arriving at the University of Patras, Department of Theatre Studies, several issues were raised by Katia Savrami (Assistant Professor, Choreologist, University of Patras, Greece) and students regarding this project. The first insurmountable one was the students' fear of working solely in English with the chosen text. Roznowski's rudimentary understanding of the Greek language also posed issues regarding the need for translation throughout any theatre-making process. Savrami also mentioned the lack of dependable commitment modeled on an American rehearsal process in a department that focuses on Theatre Studies rather than practical performance. The final issue was actually a pleasant one to discover, as there seemed to be high student interest in getting involved in the production: nearly forty students expressed interest in voluntarily participating in the project. This was a unique situation for the Department, and high student interest was unexpected for a purely voluntary project (sans academic credit).

It was during Savrami's early discussions and exchanges with Roznowski, before the beginning of rehearsals, that information was shared about the student actors' past experience, training and language skills, which necessitated an alteration of the initial idea of Roznowski's proposal. The project would transform from a scripted performance narrative to a more flexible and open process of devised and site-specific theatre to allow students to develop a personal motivation by emphasizing creativity and collaboration. It was also decided that devised work might better fit the unknown process that lay ahead.

In order to address the various issues mentioned, the Miller text was scrapped in order to create a theatrical experience uniquely addressing the infrastructure of the University of Patras to utilize the talents and resources available. This devised performance might best match the disparate schedules, capabilities and strengths of all involved and create a more flexible experience for the participant. The site-specific element was also important as "understandings of space as fluid, changeable and responsive to the situation of bodies, has prepared the ground for radical concepts and uses of space with implications for how we conceive of contemporary lived

reality" (Hunter, 2016, p. 65). But given the limited rehearsal time, the usual lengthy discovery process of a devised theme or subject was jettisoned while Roznowski sought to identify a topic that might offer the impact required for the Fulbright experience. While traversing the rolling campus, he was drawn to various landmarks that made this campus unique and different from those in America – they all fell within the category of public art. The thematic examination of public art on the campus was identified as a possible way to solve the aforementioned variances related to the original proposal.

The public art on the campus would be defined in three broad categories: approved public art sanctioned by the university, the ubiquitous graffiti on campus buildings, and the breathtaking natural landscape with the snow-capped mountains on one side of the campus and the Ionian Sea on the other. Students in various performances, happenings and installations throughout the campus would examine these three categories. Since most campuses contain public art in some form, this subject seemed to a) offer a uniquely personalized performance for this campus and b) become possible inspiration for future devised performance topics for others to showcase the uniqueness of campuses globally.

It would be the job of codirectors Roznowski and Savrami to coordinate the event and offer critique throughout the process. Being a choreologist, Katia Savrami volunteered her services as codirector, choreographer and translator. She had recently worked collaboratively at the University of Surrey, during her sabbatical in 2014. Roznowski and Savrami had not been connected before, so their partnership was forged within the first days of the former's arrival. This was due to two possible reasons: a) the structures and hierarchies of the Theatre Studies Department dictate that the Chair must contact and coordinate guest teachers and b) the difference in disciplines (Dance and Theatre) might not immediately predict natural collaborators. Had discussions begun beforehand, many of the issues chronicled later in this essay could have been solved through keen planning.

Based on the hierarchical structures in a public institution in Greece, university and departmental approval was needed for such a project, which would encompass quite a swath of real estate within the university. Roznowski was asked to present his plan to the Department of Theatre Studies faculty and staff, and once approved his plan was presented by the Chair to the Dean of the University for final support. Despite the approval from all involved, more than a simple change of production required other adaptations throughout, based on educational, foundational and communication challenges.

### **Project description**

Here was how the show was described in a press release:

A new theatre piece called a "A Private Response to Public Art" will take place at the University of Patras on Thursday, April 21st, at 6:00 PM. The show is a devised and site-specific piece created

by Fulbright Fellow and guest of the Department of Theatre Studies, Associate Professor Rob Roznowski, from Michigan State University, faculty member Assistant Professor Katia Savrami, and numerous undergraduate students. The piece examines the various types of public art on display around the campus, including donated and university approved work, the various graffiti on display, and the unique elements of the surroundings that can be categorized as public art. The show begins at the Theatre Studies building, where the audience will be given maps to explore the various acts or “installations” around the campus, culminating in a final performance celebrating the public art of the campus.

After an initial meeting with students, where the codirectors revealed the theme of the show (taking the time to explore how public art can move or madden someone), students were tasked to find something related to the three definitions of public art on the campus that inspired or angered them. They were then to share those findings with the cast and codirectors to create possible reactionary theatrical events or installations.

The project would then be bookended by an opening and a closing sequence devised by Savrami and Roznowski, which would showcase themes of the performance and utilize the unexpectedly large cast. Between the opening and closing sequences the audience would be given a map to find the various acts throughout the university and watch the work in reaction to the “public art” found at the numerous locales.

For example, students responded to graffiti that bemoaned the refugee situation by reciting ancient Greek poetry about the beauty of the land while actors playing the discarded refugees rolled in the ashes of a recent brushfire in a natural setting. An actor created a sequence regarding the current non-theatrical uses of an abandoned amphitheater on campus. Students wrote a scene about two unrelated statues placed across the street from each other, sending messages back and forth over time. A well-dressed young woman sitting by a modern fountain washed her fancy clothes and sang traditional Greek songs. Even faculty got involved, such as Special Teaching Staff: Yianna Roilou wrote a monologue that was performed by a student, reimagining a modern-day Antigone as a homeless woman eating from the trash next to the relatively posh eating quarters for students on campus. Each installation was created by the students and enhanced by faculty involvement.

Some installations required no actors and were ironically titled, such as the empty frames which showcased the view of the mountain and sea surrounding the campus, titled, *Best Public Art on Campus*. Others included an imported Italian olive oil bottle placed among a grove of olive trees and called *5 Euros*, and an unflattering graffiti of the current Dean of the University entitled *Washing Day* with a nearby bucket and scrub brush.

The project ended up consisting of over twenty acts of various designs created by the students and overseen by the codirectors. The map used nearly one half of the sprawling university campus and took over an hour to traverse. The audience would follow the path by following marker balloons indicating travel directions and installation locations.

The bookends to the project were the opening and closing sequences at two very prominent statues on the campus. The show would begin at the Theatre Studies Department building, which has at its entrance a statue seemingly inspired by Aeschylus's *The Persians* (as it contains a quote from the play). The trapezoid-shaped marble stone at its center could be interpreted to be an actor surrounded by some trappings from ancient Greek theatres. Upon further research, it was revealed that the statue had no title and its rather nebulous shape was open to a wide spectrum of interpretations. The opening sequence would set the tone for the rest of the show and focus the audience on more deeply inspecting the public art on campus and looking for unique interpretations.

The final act revealed itself through a stroke of luck. During an interview with the Public Relations Director at the University, Andromache Chrisafi, regarding public art on campus, it was discovered that one of the pieces on the tour was created and donated by a prominent doctor, Kostas Spiropoulos, from the University hospital on campus. The doctor then agreed to appear at the climax of the show to share with the audience the title of the piece and also what he hoped any viewer of the work might feel. The idea of actually having the artist tell the audience what to feel and how to interpret seemed fitting to end the evening journey of artistic exploration in a unique fashion.

Despite the completion of the structure of the event, along the way there were many challenges concerning educational and artistic issues.

### **Challenges**

Creating a schedule for a diverse group of students not used to attending regularized rehearsals and the fact that these rehearsals were hosted by the Theatre Studies Department, also lacking infrastructure based on past performances, were major issues at the top of the process. Finding a time to match the students and codirectors' free time also proved challenging. It was decided that twice a week for nearly three months would offer a tight but sufficient time to create a devised theatrical piece. Extra rehearsals were offered by appointment but were rarely asked for by students.

From the first moment, communication regarding all elements of the event appeared problematic, as communication between codirectors and students could not be fully expected to reach students through email, given that many did not have email accounts or lacked regular access to computers. File-hosting sites like Dropbox, a common communication method for the United States, were initially used for the project but then discarded because students lacked the knowledge of how to use it. Communication about rehearsals were posted on the Department callboard and spread through limited means, which were also unreliable. It is unclear how many students never completed the project because of lack of communication.

Similar communication and language barriers existed in relation to the rehearsal process. These vocabulary impediments (Scott and Hoggett, 2014, pp. 5–8) expanded beyond the

obvious Greek and English translation-less vernacular or metaphors, and extended to unexpected differences in discipline related to expectations in creating theatre. Definitions of devised theatre (Lerman and Borstel, 2003) and/or the judgment or use of aesthetic criteria were notions unfamiliar to students (*ibid.*). More effective communication channels and definitions should have been created earlier in the process to clarify the context and streamline the process.

Other challenges include the limited time to create a devised piece, as usually a devised piece is forged through a unified and collective mission to discover, reveal or expose a subject through ensemble-building exercises. In this context, the limited rehearsals did not allow for such exploration. However, the thematic of examining public art throughout campus was identified as a way to allow students to still have ownership and artistic license within a broad structure.

### Culture

Both communication and cultural differences affected the whole process. Cultural differences were certainly evident, but educational expectations, political leanings, and other gaps were also exposed. Each issue brought unique challenges and demanded unique solutions in order to best traverse the gestating production. Cultural identity is a firmly held personal value, and learning to respect those differences and allowing the process to be flexible enough without diminishing personal artistic integrity for all involved was key (Cherry, Ellis and DeSoucey, 2011, pp. 236–238).

Culturally, there is a more relaxed relationship to time in Greece, as compared to the strict standards of time management of the United States. While these are broad stereotypes, the reprimands imposed on professional and academic actors in the United States who miss or are late for rehearsal or class are commonplace. These deadlines ensure the disciplined and dependable artist who will thrive in that culture. The Greek students and actors normally arrive thirty minutes late to class or rehearsal and do not respond well to such rigidity of schedule. Students also did not know how to allocate time effectively to prepare the work they had to share for commentary, as they had no experience doing so. Savrami notes that there is also a cultural understanding of waiting to the last minute for deadlines; in addition, it was notable that, whenever students had to prepare for another class, they were not participating in rehearsal.

Academically, the Department has a distinctly Theatre Studies focus: "The four-year undergraduate degree (BA) granted by the Department is primarily theoretical in orientation, with special emphasis being given to the study of ancient Greek theatre".<sup>1</sup> While there are practical courses offered in Acting and Directing, the students tend more easily toward critique and examination rather than invention and creativity. Theatre Studies students' lack of academic or

---

1. See <http://www.theaterst.upatras.gr>

professional performance and practical experience, rehearsal background and understanding of crafting performance within a given structure created the need to teach artistic standards during the rehearsals. Rather than diving immediately into the process of creation, initial rehearsals were largely spent on rehearsal etiquette and expectations.

Related to the students' inexperience, there was an absence of understanding of critique as a chance for positive growth. Receiving critique normally turned into what from an American perspective could be described as heated argument and on the Greek side as a healthy debate. The students' "defensiveness" or lack of understanding of the criteria on how to evaluate their work was a constant barrier when offering feedback to their projects.

Unexpected for Roznowski were religious, geographical or national customs and holidays, unknown when creating the schedule, which impeded the momentum necessary for the project. There was "Meat Day", a religious custom, "Clean Monday", a national religious holiday after the weekend of Carnival, and "March 25th", a political national holiday to commemorate Greek liberation. All impacted the already tight rehearsal schedule.

When entering any new culture / university department as a guest, there is often a new "vocabulary" to learn. This is an expected element of residency. But rarely does one become aware of the necessity for a holistic shift of expectations and explanation in one's area of expertise and one's practical approach to performing it. When visiting a department within one's own country, there is an expectation of rehearsal etiquette, shared language, and a shortcut of explanation based on mutual understanding. For, despite a common outcome (the fact that truth in performance is related to a cathartic journey), the aesthetic between Greek and American theatre is quite different. Theatrical training and lauded performances in Greece seem to combine a realistic approach with a peppering of Grotowski and Meyerhold physicality when compared to American acting. The American approach seems too naturalistic and avoids dramatic stakes compared to Greek performance. These diverse approaches to theatrical training and aesthetic required circumvention, reexamination and reinvention to create a hybrid aesthetic of performance.

This transformation of past practices demands a thoughtful and consistent recalibration of work in order to best communicate and connect with students certainly through a refined communication, but more importantly through a tightly held (in this case, Greek or American) theatrical cultural barrier. Approaching the discipline from an American-centric (not purely Western) method for playmaking contains the hubris that American theatre is the nexus for all things theatrical. Similarly, the Greek approach needed transformation related to its stylized and physical method to offer a more globally engaging entrance to the work. The adaptation created a hybrid approach and used the best of both acting methodologies.

The Fulbright Foundation also makes it quite clear that all projects should avoid political commentary, and as such this directive limited the scope of the project. Understandably, students wanted to respond to two very political issues connected to the graffiti around campus

and national concerns. This included Greece's economic austerity measures as well as the refugee crisis, which appeared to reach its breaking point during the spring 2016 rehearsal process. Other, more university-based political projects proposed for the show included the high price of bus fare and the "worthlessness" of the degree from a Greek university. Great care was taken to shape these works into projects that offered more balanced or even humorous commentary on these subjects.

However, perhaps the most glaring disparity between cultures occurred in the vast difference related to learning approaches and expectations between the tuition-based American universities and the mostly free public education within the university system of Greece. In particular, public higher education in Greece is operated and funded by the government and, therefore, the students do not have to pay tuition or fees as opposed to the higher education model currently existing in the United States, where the students are making a deep financial investment by paying tuition even though the university is supported in some measure by the government. While the Greek higher education system offers numerous degree-granting programs that vary from university to university, students are often assigned a major or area of study not necessarily related to their interests, based on standardized placement testing. This shaded the entire approach to the project, which affected regularized rehearsals, classes and expectations for and from the Greek university student. The little to no cost education brought with it an approach unlike the consumer-based American educational system, where students relate experience to cost.

### **Oversights**

Rather than bemoan challenges and cultural differences, an educator must also take ownership of oversights they have made in any project in order to grow and offer alternative ways to future problem-solving. This project exposed many oversights or shortcuts to student learning based on hubris, impatience and rigidity related to the non-production-based culture of the Department.

Hubris came into play when the project's outline and theme were chosen without student consultation. This extended to the rehearsal schedule, where it was decided in consultation with department faculty and staff rather than student input. The belief that the shared experience of theatre and dance professionals and academics would know best how to build a project without student consultation lacked the forethought necessary.

That lack of forethought was also born from a lack of patience due to the limited rehearsal schedule. Entering into a collaborative and devised process with an eye on the clock created a timetable that did not match the way in which the students worked. The impatience was evident each time students missed a deadline, lacked understanding of an expected concept or missed a rehearsal. No matter how masked the codirectors believed they were being, that frustration was present throughout (Guyotte and Sochacka, 2016). Ironically, the impatience usually resulted from a need to educate the students – either on expected understanding

of best practices or theatrical understanding.

Similarly, the codirectors' reliance on structure created rigidity within the process that did not mesh with the approach to the project from the students who had volunteered to be part of a "fun" experiment during their already over-burdened schedules. The students believed they had come on board for an experiential extracurricular activity while the codirectors were hoping to create a polished product that offered a more professional experience. However, it was important for students to take responsibility in order to transform education and gain from the experience (Cook-Sather, 2010, pp. 562–564). Despite the oversights from the educators, there were several unexpected positives that affected both student and teacher learning.

### **Positives**

There were several moments at which the project positively affected all involved through collective good will and shared purpose. Throughout the process the codirectors recognized and addressed the oversights previously mentioned and were constantly experimenting with content delivery, relaxed artistic approaches, and reformulated expectations.

A residual byproduct to this constant adjustment of approach resulted in a reinvigoration within teaching and directing, as past approaches were augmented based on the demands of current needs. It forced a re-evaluation of the definition of "guest artist" which may have been understood as meaning that an invitation to a new department was solely an invitation to share the guest's version of the artistic process. In practice, a clearer examination of the needs and culture of the host's environment could result in a transformative and shared approach by both. So rather than a condescending approaching of, "Let me show you how it's done", the work in this case began to be about: "What do we need to do that would benefit all involved?"

The process also forced two rigid teachers to find a more fluid approach to production. The Theatre Studies students needed to approach this performance work as they had been trained – through their theoretical base. Once that was explored, the more practical approach of how that head-centered work could transform to affect an audience relied on a less rigid directorial manner. For any educator, a transformation of the personal process could similarly yield new personal discoveries.

The codirectors engaged in problem-solving (Greiff, Holt and Funke, 2013, pp. 72–73) and had to allow for these students' unique learning structure by handling all elements of the production. The codirectors took away from the students most of the infrastructural tasks, such as publicity, logistics, clearances, supplies, so that the latter could only focus on their acting and designing. Each time students would voice a concern or remind the codirectors of possible issues, the codirectors volunteered to address it immediately or, in most cases, had already handled it in order to avoid excess strain to the students' work.

Discovering a like-minded artist (Roznowski and Savrami) also allowed their similar

approaches to transform in tandem in an utterly unique experience. While certainly many discussions, questions and complaints occurred during the process as students missed rehearsals, “wasted time”, or were unprepared, the codirectors worked together to transform their combined goals by reminding each other of their similar rigid tendencies. This shared transformation created a strong bond of collaborative honesty.

The scope of the project also created good will and a collaborative spirit between the Department, administration and the campus as it spilled out beyond the confines of the Theatre Studies area and traditional performance venues to affect a wider population. Students, faculty and staff without any previous knowledge of the Department’s work now observed public rehearsals and performances.

### **Process**

The process of doing any devised or site-specific production already augments the traditional theatrical or dance production model as new approaches are introduced related to expected performance and directorial approaches. This production (for all of the reasons mentioned above) had other layers that colored the rehearsal experience. Mutual understanding between codirectors and cast was paramount and achieved sporadically.

As previously mentioned, Roznowski first toured the campus to find the artwork that inspired him. He found numerous statues and the best views of nature on campus. He took pictures of graffiti (written in Greek) to be translated by others in order to share with students. The first rehearsals were spent doing preliminary work related to the artwork that Roznowski had identified on the campus. Being a guest to campus paid off in this instance, as he experienced the campus with fresh eyes and identified elements that others may have taken for granted. While students were initially enthusiastic with the creative collaborative project, they also showed a lack of understanding of the project’s themes. When the codirectors asked them to identify a sculpture, graffiti or site on the campus to theatricalize with, they did not understand that process. It seemed that students had not been exercising the tools of imagination and creativity in their current education, so both codirectors would have to teach them how to approach the work in this context.

Preliminary exercises included ways to inspire creative thought related to the images the codirectors shared. In one exercise a graffiti mural of a woman with three faces inspired talk of id, ego and superego, three sisters, confusion, depression and much more. One successful exercise was to visit a statue on campus and examine it in various ways: first as the character of the statue, then as the artist creating it, the man posing for it, the man decades later looking at this younger form, and finally a dog on campus observing this “strange” statue. Students were also asked to present and defend their favorite piece of art (movies, book, music, painting etc.) to the directors, who “dismissed” their choices in order to engage the students in an artistic debate and help them better understand the personal connection and more deeply value their artistic integrity. Throughout, the

goal was to create a shared understanding of a) how an artwork can inspire a reaction and b) how that reaction can be theatricalized.

In early rehearsals students offered ideas for installations that had little or nothing to do with the actual public art. They wanted to comment on things that irked them but not by using the artwork or graffiti but simply based on their own sense of outrage. So, while interesting and mostly from a political slant, the ideas lacked any true connection to the environment. This pattern was repeated throughout the early phase of the process and students were reminded of the message of the show by short exercises reminding them how inspiration can be found through locale and artwork. To solve this, the codirectors toured the campus with students assisting them in seeing things in unique ways reminding them of the original directive.

The locations for the various projects were finally identified and a pathway revealed itself throughout the campus. This route would easily allow the audience to experience, at their leisure, the various installations. This path also prescribed the need for more installations in long stretches of the walk where performances did not appear. The student company walked the path of the audience and offered various ideas to expand the content throughout. It was at this point that the students embraced the concept and understood the themes of the show.

One consistent problem was the actual beginning of the piece. The Aeschylus-inspired statue where the show would begin caused a debate that raged throughout the process. The first idea was to give a nod to the classical theatre studies traditions within the Department by creating an opening act that had the student actors explore the statue's possible theatrical inspiration and included cleansing their hands in the ceremonial bowl at the statue's front. Students would share inspirational quotes from ancient Greek plays, philosophers and even ancient graffiti to set up the themes of the show. Following the first rehearsals of this version, students complained that it seemed too "lifeless" and they then offered suggestions of how to make it more "authentic". The codirectors gave them time to create their version. Authenticity resulted in a group of Greek teenagers talking about life around a statue that lacked any compelling dramatic tension. Compromises throughout led to revision after revision of the opening. Finally, the codirectors interviewed the student actors about public art and shaped those stories in a less classical theatrically-based opening. This compromise still laid out the themes of the show but also allowed students more personal identification inspired by the use of their actual interviews.

Throughout the process, the codirectors set deadlines and gave clear expectations of what was necessary for the next rehearsal. Despite this fact, students constantly came unprepared, so that the rehearsal process became work sessions with students and codirectors pitching, experimenting and refining ideas. This transformed process was necessary to improve the twenty installations to be included but lacked further exploratory ensemble exercises.

As the project continued, students began to change their work ethic and the rehearsals became more fruitful. They arrived at the appointed time for rehearsal, they worked outside of

the appointed rehearsals and began to offer deeper feedback to their peers while gracefully accepting suggestions from the codirectors as the opening performance drew near.

During the final rehearsals, it was clear that the project had achieved a rare devised hybrid by embracing polarity – American and Greek acting, and the blend of the codirectors' organization with the students' freedom. Implicit in each performance were the political and financial tensions so prevalent in Greece, a true understanding and examination of the environment of the campus and all that connotes, and the work which now combined the theatre studies propensity for examination in conjunction with the aesthetic of academic professionals. It became clear that this project could only be created at this moment, in this place, with these people. Despite the barriers, the work began to feel free of constriction – an entirely personal public statement. The project in its final form perfectly encapsulated all elements within this essay by accepting the polarities to create a hybrid performance. It captured the moment.

### **Performance**

The performance of the piece was presented on April 21st, 2016, with over seventy people in attendance.<sup>2</sup> The thirty-member ensemble who had never worked with an audience showcased their work and ideas well. The ambition of the project and its sprawling nature was praised by audiences, who saw the campus in a new way. Audiences understood the contextual framing device of public art and embraced the nuances throughout. It also created more active audiences, who, while searching for the next installation, were residually forced to look at all of the campus's artwork while seeking the next installation. Despite the occasional confusion of the process, the resultant product offered sharp and focused commentary.

### **Summary**

Although the project's findings are promising, as they uncovered several issues that took place during this creative collaborative teaching-learning setting and performance, the codirectors agreed that a cooperative leap forward is necessary in order to develop and expand the transformative learning and outcomes. This creative collaborative approach, which took place at the Department of Theatre Studies, University of Patras, has been beneficial for all the participants, as it was an honest shared process which revealed issues of understanding and dealt with differences in cultural identity, the importance of a shared vocabulary, public versus private education, pedagogy, the participation of guest artists in educational and professional settings, issues related to devising, student and faculty interaction that brings together the personal and the social through performative acts.

As Geertz (1973, pp. 10–13) has argued, a "good interpretation of anything [...] takes us

---

2 See [www.theaterst.upatras.gr/events/1/](http://www.theaterst.upatras.gr/events/1/)

to the heart of that of which it is the interpretation". The dialogical process that our autoethnographic narrative embodies illustrates this.

## References

- Anderson, L. (2006) "Analytic Autoethnography", *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 35 (4), pp. 373–395.
- Atkinson, P. A. (2006) "Rescuing Autoethnography", *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 35 (4), pp. 400–404.
- Cherry, E., Ellis, C. and DeSoucey, M. (2011) "Food for Thought, Thought for Food: Consumption, Identity, and Ethnography", *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 40 (2), pp. 231–258.
- Cook-Sather, A. (2010) "Students as Learners and Teachers: Taking Responsibility, Transforming Education, and Redefining Accountability", *Curriculum Inquiry*, 40 (4), pp. 555–575.
- Ellis, C. and Bochner, A. P. (2000) "Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject", in Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (eds), *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 2nd ed. London: Sage.
- Geertz, C. (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Greiff, S., Holt, D. V. and Funke, J. (2013) "Perspectives on Problem Solving in Educational Assessment: Analytical, Interactive, and Collaborative Problem Solving", *Journal of Problem Solving*, 5 (2) (Spring), pp. 71–91.
- Guyotte, K. W. and Sochacka, N. W. (2016) "Is this Research? Productive Tensions in Living the (Collaborative) Autoethnographic Process", *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 15 (1) (13 April), pp. 1–11.
- Hunter, V. (2016) "Radicalizing Institutional Space: Revealing the Site through Phenomenological Movement Inquiry", in Shaw, D. B. and Humm, M. (eds) *Radical Space: Exploring Politics and Practice*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield International.
- Lerman, L. and Borstel, J. (2003) *Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process: A Method for Getting Useful Feedback on Anything you Make, from Dance to Dessert*. Takoma Park, MD: Dance Exchange.
- Liew, W. M. (2013) "Effects beyond Effectiveness: Teaching as a Performative Act", *Curriculum Inquiry*, 43 (2), pp. 261–288.
- McLaren, P. and Kincheloe, J. L. (eds) (2007) *Critical Pedagogy: Where Are We Now?* New York and Oxford: Peter Lang.

- Scott, G. and Hoggett, S. (2014) *The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre*. London: Routledge.
- Warren, J. T. (2011) "Reflexive Teaching: Toward Critical Autoethnographic Practices of/in/on Pedagogy", *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, 11 (2), pp. 139–144.

# ΜΙΑ ΦΙΛΟΞΕΝΗ ΣΤΕΓΗ ΓΙΑ ΤΟΝ ΧΟΡΟ

NINA ΑΛΚΑΛΑΗ

Όταν το 2009 η οικονομική κρίση άρχισε αργά και σταθερά να γίνεται ορατή, κανείς δεν φανταζόταν τη βαθιά και διαβρωτική επίδραση που θα είχε στους πιο σημαντικούς τομείς της ελληνικής κοινωνίας, όπως στην υγεία, την παιδεία και τον πολιτισμό. Οι τέχνες, όπως συμβαίνει συνήθως, ήταν ένα από τα πρώτα θύματα της περικοπής δαπανών. Το 2010, το Εθνικό Κέντρο Θεάτρου και Χορού (Hellenic National Centre of Theatre and Dance), ένας κρατικός φορέας που είχε ιδρυθεί μόλις δύο χρόνια πριν, με στόχο την υποστήριξη, την ανάπτυξη και την προβολή του θεάτρου και του χορού εντός και εκτός συνόρων, καταργήθηκε με απόφαση του υπουργού Πολιτισμού. Ταυτόχρονα, σταμάτησαν και οι κρατικές επιχορηγήσεις στις ομάδες χορού και θεάτρου. Σε αυτήν τη συγκυρία, σε μια χρονική στιγμή που ο χορός και το θέατρο βρέθηκαν αίφνιν στο κενό, εμφανίστηκε σαν από μυχανής θεός η Στέγη Γραμμάτων και Τεχνών του Ιδρύματος Ωνάση (Onassis Cultural Centre).

Η Στέγη, το κέντρο πολιτισμού του Ιδρύματος Ωνάση, άρχισε να λειτουργεί τον Δεκέμβριο του 2010 με στόχο την προβολή της σύγχρονης πολιτιστικής έκφρασης, την υποστήριξη των Ελλήνων δημιουργών, την καλλιέργεια διεθνών συνεργασιών, την εκπαίδευση και τη διά βίου μάθηση, τη συνύπαρξη και τη συνομιλία των επιστημών και των ιδεών με τις τέχνες. Στον έκτο ήδη χρόνο λειτουργίας της, η Στέγη ακολουθεί με πάθος και επιμονή αυτούς τους στόχους και έχει καταφέρει να καλύψει ένα σημαντικό κενό στο άγονο τοπίο της κρατικής πολιτιστικής πολιτικής. Στους πολυτελείς και φιλόξενους χώρους της Στέγης συναντιούνται χορογράφοι, εικαστικοί, αρχιτέκτονες, κινηματογραφιστές, σκηνοθέτες, μουσικοί, συγγραφείς και εκπαιδευτικοί. Διεθνώς καταξιωμένοι αλλά και νεότεροι καλλιτέχνες που εκπροσωπούν την παγκόσμια δημιουργία βρίσκονται στη Στέγη.

## Θέατρο – Χορός

Τον Μάρτιο του 2016, πήραμε συνέντευξη από τη δρα Ιστορίας της Τέχνης και θεατρολόγο Κάτια Αρφαρά, καλλιτεχνική διευθύντρια θεάτρου και χορού στη Στέγη του Ιδρύματος Ωνάση.

*Choros Journal: Στη Στέγη είσαι υπεύθυνη και για το θέατρο και για τον χορό. Τεράστια ευθύνη και τεράστια πρόκληση. Αναρωτιέμαι αν αυτό καθρεφτίζει και τη σχέση του μεταμοντέρνου χορού με το θέατρο.*

Κ. Α.: Ακριβώς! Είναι ενδιαφέρον αυτό γιατί, όταν αρχικά προκηρύχθηκαν οι θέσεις της Στέγης, ο χορός ήταν μαζί με τη μουσική. Στην πρώτη συνάντηση, όταν μου ανακοίνωσαν ότι θα αναλάβω τον Τομέα του Θεάτρου, τους είπα ότι δεν είναι δυνατόν να δουλέψω με το θέατρο χωρίς να έχω και τον χορό μαζί μου. Νομίζω ότι από το 1970 και μετά, ίσως και νωρίτερα, τα όρια θεάτρου και χορού είναι πλέον δυσδιάκριτα. Και αυτό που έχει ενδιαφέρον, από τη στιγμή που έχω την καλλιτεχνική διεύθυνση και στους δύο τομείς, είναι ότι μπορώ να προσκαλέσω παραγωγές που δεν μπορούν να χωρέσουν σε καμία από τις δύο κατηγορίες. Και θεωρώ ότι το συγκεκριμένο στοιχείο χαρακτηρίζει το πρόγραμμα θεάτρου και χορού της Στέγης. Προσπαθεί να υπερβεί επικέτες, να ξεφύγει από επικέτες, να προσκαλέσει κοινό και από τους δύο χώρους, γιατί νομίζω ότι ακόμη παραμένουν χωριστοί αυτοί οι δύο κόσμοι.

Αυτό είναι ίσως ένα από τα στοιχήματα που έχουμε κερδίσει. Σιγά σιγά και με την επιμονή και τη στήριξη των Ελλήνων καλλιτεχνών, έχουμε καταφέρει να έρχεται κοινό και από τις δύο πλευρές, για να δει θέατρο και χορό τόσο στη Μικρή (220 θέσεων) όσο και στην Κεντρική Σκηνή (880 θέσεων) της Στέγης. Μάλιστα, έχουμε και μια νέα κατηγορία στο πλαίσιο της υποβολής προτάσεων που δεχόμαστε κάθε χρόνο: την κατηγορία «μεικτά μέσα». Σε αυτή την κατηγορία μπορούν να βρουν τη θέση τους όλα αυτά που ονομάζουμε «interdisciplinary projects».

*Choros Journal: Το Φεστιβάλ Νέων Χορογράφων, που άρχισε το 2014, είναι ήδη στον τρίτο χρόνο του. Είστε οι μόνοι αυτήν τη στιγμή στην Ελλάδα που στηρίζετε έργο δημιουργών που δεν είναι ακόμη αρκετά γνωστοί. Τα έργα αυτά είναι ήδη έτοψα ή πρόκειται για προτάσεις που σας υποβάλλονται;*

Κ. Α.: Να το πάρουμε από την αρχή. Ένας από τους πιο ευαίσθητους χώρους του προγραμματισμού της Στέγης –πέραν της σύγχρονης μουσικής, για την οποία όμως δεν είμαι αρμόδια να απαντήσω— ήταν ο χορός. Και αυτό, επειδή ο χορός έχει ένα πιο περιορισμένο κοινό, ειδικά ο σύγχρονος ελληνικός χορός. Πέραν κάποιων πολύ σημαντικών ονομάτων που έρχονται στην Ελλάδα, είχαμε πολύ περιορισμένη επαφή με τον σύγχρονο ελληνικό χορό, ενώ μόνο μέσω του Διεθνούς Φεστιβάλ Αθηνών, μετά το 2006, άρχισαν να δίνονται ευκαιρίες και σε Ελλήνες χορογράφους. Το Διεθνές Φεστιβάλ Χορού Καλαμάτας, αν και σε πιο τοπικό επίπεδο, έπαιξε επίσης σημαντικό ρόλο, καθώς μας εξοικείωσε με το έργο κάποιων Ελλήνων δημιουργών.

Το Φεστιβάλ Αθηνών, το Φεστιβάλ Καλαμάτας και η Στέγη, η οποία έχει μια συνεχή και συστηματική αντιμετώπιση ως προς το θέμα της χορευτικής παραγωγής, είναι οι φορείς που υποστήριξαν τον ελληνικό χορό. Αυτό, ποιοπόν, που θέλαμε από την αρχή ήταν να κάνουμε νέες παραγωγές Ελλήνων χορογράφων στην Κεντρική Σκηνή. Να μη φοβηθούμε δηλαδή να βάλουμε ελληνικό χορό στην Κεντρική Σκηνή των 900 θέσεων. Γιατί, με την εξαίρεση του

Δημήτρη Παπαϊωάννου, μέχρι πρόσφατα ο ελληνικός χορός αφορούσε παραγωγές μικρής κλίμακας σε μικρές μέχρι μεσαίου μεγέθους αίθουσες. Βάλαμε, λοιπόν, τον ελληνικό χορό σε μεγάλη κλίμακα, χωρίς να εγκαταλείψουμε και τη Μικρή Σκηνή. Αυτό, βέβαια, συνοδεύτηκε από μετακλήσεις και διεθνείς συμπαραγωγές· είναι πολύ σημαντικό να υπάρχει όσμωση. Έτσι, στη μεγάλη, Κεντρική Σκηνή μας δοκιμάστηκαν ομάδες νεότερων δημιουργών, όπως της Πατρίσιας Απέργη (Aerites Dance Company) και των Rootless Root.



Χάρης Κούσιος, *lacrimaI*, Μάρτιος 2016 (Φωτ.: Ιωάννα Χατζηανδρέου)

Πέρα από αυτό, όμως, ένιωσα την ανάγκη να βοηθήσω και κάποιες από τις πολλές προτάσεις που έρχονται κάθε χρόνο στη Στέγη. Σκέφτηκα την ιδέα του φεστιβάλ χορού. Ένα φεστιβάλ πάντα δίνει τη δυνατότητα να προτείνουμε νέα ονόματα· ένα φεστιβάλ επιτρέπει τους πειραματισμούς με νέους δημιουργούς. Δεχόμαστε προτάσεις από καταξιωμένους και νεότερους δημιουργούς. Και από τις προτάσεις αυτές επιλέγονται κάθε χρόνο τρία-τέσσερα έργα για να παρουσιαστούν στο πλαίσιο του διήμερου Φεστιβάλ Νέων Χορογράφων.

Καθώς οι επιχορηγήσεις του κράτους για τον χορό έχουν σταματήσει πλέον και ο χορός βρίσκεται σε δεινή κατάσταση, ένιωσα την ανάγκη να βοηθήσω με κάποιον τρόπο τα νεότερα παιδιά που δεν μπορούν να μπουν στις τρεις παραγωγές Ελλήνων χορογράφων που

κάνουμε κάθε χρόνο. Ήταν πολύ σημαντικό ότι και το Φεστιβάλ Αθηνών έδωσε χώρο τα τελευταία χρόνια σε νέους Έλληνες δημιουργούς. Έτσι, σε συνδυασμό με τη Στέγη, γίνεται μια συντονισμένη προσπάθεια. Αυτό που είναι σημαντικό είναι ότι κάποια έργα τραβούν σιγά σιγά το ενδιαφέρον και ξένων επιμελητών. Κάποιοι έκαναν το ταξίδι να έρθουν και είδαν, μεταξύ άλλων, έργα της Παναγιώτας Καλλιμάν (Contreplongées) ή της Γεωργίας Βαρδαρού (Phénomene). Κάποια μικροπράγματα ξεπόδησαν μέσα από αυτό – μικρές συνεργασίες, έτσι ώστε τα έργα να παρουσιαστούν και εκτός Ελλάδας. Γι' αυτό νομίζω ότι είναι σημαντικό να υπάρχει μια συνέχεια σε ό,τι καθιερώνουμε. Το να γίνει ένα πράγμα μία φορά δεν έχει νόημα. Είναι κάτι που αυξάνεται με τα χρόνια.

Φέτος σκέφτηκα ότι, επειδή μέχρι τώρα κάναμε παραγωγές μικρής κλίμακας για τη Μικρή Σκηνή της Στέγης, γιατί να μνη δώσουμε την ευκαιρία εμφάνισης στην Κεντρική Σκηνή; Αυτό για μένα είναι ένα πολύ μεγάλο βήμα και, γι' αυτό, φέτος, τα έργα στο φεστιβάλ ήταν τρία και όχι τέσσερα, καθώς οι ανάγκες αυτής της παραγωγής ήταν πολύ μεγαλύτερες σε σχέση με μια παραγωγή της Μικρής Σκηνής. (Τον Μάρτιο του 2016, στην Κεντρική Σκηνή παρουσιάστηκε το έργο του Χάρη Κούσιου *lacrima!*). Και επίσης, φέτος, μπορεί κάποιος να έρθει και να δει σε μία μέρα και τα τρία έργα, επειδή συνήθως οι επιμελητές του εξωτερικού δεν έχουν χρόνο.

Προχωράμε και, κάθε χρόνο, εξελισσόμαστε ανάλογα με τις ανάγκες. Οι νέοι δημιουργοί δεν χρειάζονται απλώς την προβολή, αλλά και τις δυνατότητες και τα μέσα. Η Κεντρική Σκηνή έχει τεχνικό προσωπικό και τεχνικές δυνατότητες. Έτσι, οι νέοι δημιουργοί μπορούν να δοκιμάσουν τις δυνάμεις τους σε ένα εξαιρετικό περιβάλλον που υποστηρίζει τις απαιτήσεις κάθε έργου. Η τεχνική ομάδα της Στέγης είναι νομίζω από τις καλύτερες στην Ευρώπη, οπότε τα παιδιά μπορούν να δοκιμάσουν τα πάντα – με τον κίνδυνο βέβαια της αποτυχίας. Εάν όμως δεν υπάρξει το ρίσκο, δεν προχωράμε.

*Choros Journal: Η οργάνωση και η φιλοξενία του διεθνούς φεστιβάλ Unlimited Access το 2015 στη Στέγη αποδεικνύουν έμπρακτα τη φιλοσοφία σας. Ποια ήταν η πρόκληση στο επίπεδο της οργάνωσης; Θα το συνεχίσετε;*

Κ. Α: Ήδη από τον πρώτο χρόνο λειτουργίας της Στέγης, πιο διστακτικά στην αρχή αλλά πιο σίγουροι από τον δεύτερο χρόνο και μετά, υπήρχε πρόθεση να συνεργαστούμε με επαγγελματικές ομάδες χορού και θεάτρου οι οποίες συμπεριλαμβάνουν περφόρμερ με κάποια αναπορία. Ήταν σημαντικό για μένα αυτό να μνη αποτελέσει μέρος ενός φεστιβάλ αλλά να ενταχθεί στον καλλιτεχνικό προγραμματισμό της Στέγης. Γι' αυτό και ήρθαν το Theater HORA με τον Jérôme Bel και η αυστραλέζικη ομάδα Back to Back Theatre με το έργο *Ganesh vs The Third Reich*.

Το φεστιβάλ Unlimited Access είναι κομμάτι ενός ευρωπαϊκού προγράμματος. Το αν θα επαναληφθεί αυτό το φεστιβάλ θα το δούμε, δεν ξέρω πότε. Βεβαίως, οι τρεις Ελληνίδες χορογράφοι θα συνεχίσουν τα εργαστήριά τους [για άτομα με νοητική υστέρηση, για άτομα με προβλήματα όρασης, για άτομα με κινητική αναπορία]. Προσωπικά, θα προτιμούσα να έχω, αντί για ένα φεστιβάλ λίγων ημερών, ένα πιο μακρόχρονο πρόγραμμα στον ετήσιο προγραμματισμό.

Σίγουρα υπάρχει πρόθεση να συνεχίσουμε να δουλεύουμε σε αυτόν τον χώρο, ανοιχτοί και περιμένοντας και νέες προτάσεις. Στην Ελλάδα έχουμε ακόμη λίγο δρόμο μέχρι να φτάσουμε, ως προς αυτό το θέμα, το επίπεδο των Άγγλων ή των Ελβετών, αλλά σιγά σιγά εξοικειωνόμαστε ώστε να μη θεωρούμε ότι οι άνθρωποι που δεν είναι ακριβώς όπως εμείς πρέπει να μείνουν στο περιθώριο της κοινωνίας.

*Choros Journal:* Έχετε προχωρήσει στην υλοποίηση των επόμενων στόχων; Σε συνέντευξη στο *Dancetheater.gr*, στις αρχές του 2015, είχες θέσει ως επόμενους στόχους την πρόσκληση χορογράφων από το εξωτερικό για να δουλέψουν με Έλληνες χορευτές, διεθνείς συμπαραγωγές που θα στηρίξουν τη δουλειά Ελλήνων καλλιτεχνών από την πρώτη στιγμή της διαδικασίας και ακόμη μεγαλύτερη στήριξη των νέων ανερχόμενων Ελλήνων χορογράφων· επίσης, την ένταξη σε ευρωπαϊκά δίκτυα που θα επιτρέψουν την κινητικότητα και την ορατότητα των νέων Ελλήνων δημιουργών, καθώς και τη δυνατότητα υποστήριξή *tous* σε *residencies*, ώστε να πλουτίσουν τις εμπειρίες *tous*.

Κ. Α: Κάποια από αυτά έχουν προχωρήσει, κάποια άλλα δεν έχουν υλοποιηθεί. Δεν έχω ακόμη προσκαλέσει χορογράφο να δουλέψει εδώ, αλλά γίνονται ήδη μικρά βήματα, καθώς το φετινό έργο της ομάδας *Rootless Root* ήταν διεθνής συμπαραγωγή. Υπάρχει και κάτι άλλο σημαντικό, το οποίο όμως δεν μπορώ να ανακοινώσω ακόμη. Αυτό που έχει προχωρήσει και που, κατά τη γνώμη μου, έχει ιδιαίτερη σημασία είναι ότι μπορούμε πια να βρούμε συμπαραγωγούς για ελληνικές παραγωγές. Την επόμενη χρονιά, θα ξεκινήσουμε ένα είδος *residency* για έρευνα και δουλειές που δεν θα παρουσιάζονται μέσα στην ίδια χρονιά αλλά την επόμενη. Δουλεύουμε τώρα σχετικά με το θέμα του χώρου για τα *residencies*, ο οποίος δεν έχει ακόμη ετοιμαστεί.

Γενικά, στηρίζουμε τις παραγωγές στην περιοδεία *tous*—όχι μόνο τις δικές μας παραγωγές, νεότερες ή παλαιότερες, αλλά και παραγωγές νεότερων ή καθιερωμένων δημιουργών με τους οποίους συνεργαζόμαστε, συνεργαστήκαμε ή θα συνεργαστούμε και τους οποίους θέλουμε να στηρίξουμε στην πορεία *tous* στο εξωτερικό. (Στα πέντε χρόνια πλειουργίας της Στέγης, περισσότερες από είκοσι ελληνικές παραγωγές θεάτρου, χορού και μουσικής έχουν ήδη ταξιδέψει εκτός Ελλάδας.)

*Choros Journal:* Πέντε χρόνια πολύ έντονα και γεμάτα. Τι θα ήθελες κυρίως να δεις να υλοποιείται στη Στέγη τα επόμενα χρόνια;

Κ. Α: Νομίζω ότι πρέπει να καθιερώσουμε το πρόγραμμα των *residencies*, να προσκαλέσουμε ξένο καλλιτέχνη να δουλέψει με Έλληνες δημιουργούς, κάτι που μέχρι στιγμής γίνεται μόνο μέσα από τα εκπαιδευτικά *workshops* και τα *masterclasses*. Οι διεθνείς συμπαραγωγές έχουν προχωρήσει ούτως ή άλλως. Κάνουμε ήδη αρκετές διεθνείς συμπαραγωγές.

Θα κάνουμε κάποιες παγκόσμιες πρεμιέρες —όλο και περισσότερες, ελπίζω—, και το σημαντικό είναι να μπορέσουμε να στηρίξουμε τα νέα παιδιά και στην έρευνα και στη δημιουργία

έργων μεγάλης κλίμακας. Θα ήθελα ενδεχομένως το Φεστιβάλ Νέων Χορογράφων να μεγαλώσει, και ίσως να μπορούσαμε να κάνουμε κάτι σε συνεργασία με άλλους φορείς του χορού, όπως το Κέντρο Ντάνκαν την Κινητήρα. Δεν έχω βρει ακόμη τον χρόνο να το οργανώσω, για να κάνουμε κάτι σαν πλατφόρμα Σύγχρονου Χορού, αλλά και με τη δική μας συνδρομή, όχι μόνο του Σωματείου Ελλήνων Χορογράφων.

Ήμουν πρόσφατα στη Γερμανική Πλατφόρμα Χορού, η οποία γίνεται κάθε δύο χρόνια· δεν χρειάζεται να γίνεται κάθε χρόνο. Συνεργάστηκαν όλα τα θέατρα της Γερμανίας για να παρουσιαστούν δώδεκα δουλειές – δεν είναι πολλές – και ομοιογόνως πως ζήλεψα, ήταν πολύ σημαντική στιγμή. Ελπίζω να μπορέσουμε να το κάνουμε κάποια στιγμή και στην Αθήνα. Αυτό προϋποθέτει καλή συνεργασία, αλλά απαιτεί και κάποια βοήθεια κρατική. Είναι αδύνατον να γίνονται όλα από τη Στέγη. Πρέπει να υπάρξει και επαναφορά κάποιας κρατικής επιχορήγησης – του πλάχιστον για τον χορό, που είναι το πιο ευαίσθητο κομμάτι, για την ανάπτυξη της έρευνας στον χορό. Προς αυτή την κατεύθυνση, θα μπορούσε ίσως να υπάρξει και συνεργασία με το Φεστιβάλ Αθηνών, το οποίο πρέπει να συνεχίσει να υποστηρίζει τον χορό, γιατί αν εκλείψει και αυτό τα πράγματα θα γίνουν ακόμη πιο δύσκολα από ότι ήταν.

Το Φεστιβάλ Καλαμάτας δεν ξέρω σε τι κατάσταση βρίσκεται. Ούτως ή άλλως, δεν είχε τη δυνατότητα να κάνει παραγωγές τα τελευταία χρόνια και, επομένως, η κατάσταση είναι λίγο απελπιστική. Είναι όμως κρίμα γιατί υπάρχει δυναμικό, το οποίο φεύγει. Οι χορογράφοι, ειδικά οι νεότεροι, αν μπορούν φεύγουν. Να μείνουν στην Αθήνα, να κάνουν τι; (Στις 9 Μαρτίου 2016, οι επαγγελματίες του χορού – χορευτές, χορογράφοι, δάσκαλοι – έκαναν μια «οπισθοπορεία» διαμαρτυρίας, περπατώντας προς τα πίσω για να διαμαρτυρηθούν για την αδιαφορία της πολιτείας και τα βήματα «προς τα πίσω» που επιβάλλει η έλλειψη πολιτικής για τον χορό.)

Το σημαντικό βήμα είναι ότι, μετά τόσα χρόνια εξωστρέφειας και διεθνών συνεργασιών, τον τελευταίο ενάμιση χρόνο βρίσκω συμπαραγωγούς και για νέες παραγωγές, χορευτικές ή θεατρικές, από την αρχή της διαδικασίας, και όχι μόνο για μετακλήσεις. Συνοδοιπόρους από την αρχή. Οι συμπαραγωγοί είναι όλοι εκτός Ελλάδας. Ακόμη δε και αν πρόκειται για ένα μικρό χρηματικό ποσό, τη δυνατότητα μιας παρουσίασης ή ενός residency, νομίζω ότι η εξέλιξη αυτή είναι καθοριστική. Νιώθω ότι κάτι κτίζεται. Χρειάζεται ένα βάθος χρόνου για να τολμήσουν να εμπλακούν περισσότερο.

Γενικά, θα έλεγα ότι το κοινό του χορού αναπτύχθηκε σταδιακά, και είναι συγκινητικό στις παραστάσεις Ελλήνων χορογράφων να βλέπω οικογένειες, και όχι μόνο τους γνωστούς φαν, να γεμίζουν την Κεντρική Σκηνή. Για μένα αυτό είναι το μεγαλύτερο κέρδος: να μπορούν όλοι να αποδιάύσουν μια βραδιά σύγχρονου ελληνικού χορού στην Κεντρική Σκηνή, ύστερα από μια παράσταση του Akram Khan, για παράδειγμα. Βλέπω μια διεύρυνση του κοινού του χορού.

Από τον Δεκέμβριο του 2010 έχουν παρουσιαστεί στη Στέγη του Ιδρύματος Ωνάση 35 παραγωγές Ελλήνων και ξένων χορογράφων. Από αυτές οι 11 ήταν παραγωγές της Στέγης ενώ σε άλλες 8 η Στέγη ήταν συμπαραγωγός. Επίσης, από το 2014 έχουν πραγματοποιηθεί 3 Φεστιβάλ Νέων Ελλήνων Χορογράφων (11 ακόμη παραγωγές). Συνολικά, μέχρι στιγμής, η

Στέγη έχει αναλάβει την παραγωγή 14 έργων Ελλήνων χορογράφων και ήταν συμπαραγωγός σε 7 έργα Ελλήνων χορογράφων.

### Εκπαίδευση

Η φιλοσοφία και η εξωστρέφεια της Στέγης καθρεφτίζεται όμως και στην εκπαίδευση, που αποτελεί βασικό μέλημα του Ιδρύματος Ωνάση. Η υπεύθυνη για τον σχεδιασμό και την υλοποίηση των εκπαιδευτικών προγραμμάτων, Μυρτώ Λάβδα, με σπουδές στη Διδακτική της Τέχνης, πιστεύει βαθιά στην ενοποιητική και μετασχηματιστική δύναμη της εκπαίδευσης μέσω της τέχνης. Μέσα από ένα εξαιρετικά πλούσιο και εμπνευσμένο πρόγραμμα εκπαιδευτικών προτάσεων για τον χορό, τη μουσική, το θέατρο και τα εικαστικά, η Στέγη κάνει πράξη την άποψη ότι η τέχνη δεν είναι πολυτέλεια αλλά ανάγκη και ότι η επαφή με την τέχνη μπορεί να ξεκινάει από νωρίς και να μη σταματά ποτέ. Σε πρόσφατη συνέντευξη που μας παραχώρησε, η Μυρτώ Λάβδα μάς μίλησε αναλυτικά για τα εκπαιδευτικά προγράμματα της Στέγης του Ιδρύματος Ωνάση.



Στιγμιότυπο από το πρόγραμμα «Χορεύω, άρα επικοινωνώ» (Φωτ.: Σταύρος Πετρόπουλος)

*Choros Journal:* Είσαι υπεύθυνη του Τμήματος Εκπαιδευτικών Προγραμμάτων της Στέγης του Ιδρύματος Ωνάση, τα οποία αυξάνονται με εντυπωσιακό ρυθμό κάθε χρόνο. Αυτό καθρεφτίζει τη φιλοσοφία της Στέγης, αλλά και τις δικές σου αναζητήσεις σε σχέση με αυτό που ονομάζουμε «συνεχιζόμενη εκπαίδευση». Θα ήθελες να μας μιλήσεις λίγο σχετικά με αυτό;

Μ. Λ.: Ακολουθώντας πιστά τη φιλοσοφία της Στέγης «...η εκπαίδευση για τα παιδιά και η διά βίου μάθηση για ανθρώπους κάθε ηλικίας, σε έναν χώρο ανοιχτό και προσιτό σε όλους», τα εκπαιδευτικά μας προγράμματα απευθύνονται σε όλες τις ηλικίες, με θεωρητικά σεμινάρια και βιωματικά εργαστήρια μικρότερης ή μεγαλύτερης διάρκειας. Τα εκπαιδευτικά προγράμματα ελκύουν γονείς που θέλουν να δοκιμάσουν κάτι δημιουργικό μαζί με τα βρέφη τους, άτομα άνω των 65 ετών με χρόνο και διάθεση για νέες εμπειρίες, άτομα με αναπηρία, φοιτητές, επαγγελματίες, καλλιτέχνες και μπ. Επίσης, κάποια προγράμματα της Στέγης πραγματοποιούνται «εκτός των τειχών», καθώς απευθύνονται είτε σε σχολεία είτε σε ειδικές ομάδες κοινού με περιορισμένη δυνατότητα μετακίνησης, όπως ασθενείς, ηλικιωμένους, έγκλειστους ή κατοίκους ακριτικών περιοχών.

Από το 2011, η Στέγη διοργανώνει προγράμματα χορού για τα οποία το κοινό έχει δείξει αυξανόμενο ενδιαφέρον, από το ξεκίνημά της έως και σήμερα: τόσο για τα masterclasses και τα εργαστήρια-σεμινάρια χορού για επαγγελματίες (χορογράφους, χορευτές, δραματουργούς) όσο και για τα προγράμματα χορού για εφήβους, τα οποία στην αρχή ξεκίνησαν δειλά και έφτασαν προοδευτικά στο σημείο να έχουν μεγάλη ζήτηση και συμμετοχή (π.χ. εργαστήρια χορού για εφήβους με επίκεντρο τη σωματική έκφραση τα σαββατοκύριακα, το πρόγραμμα χορού για σχολεία δευτεροβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης «Χορεύω, άρα επικοινωνώ» κ.ά.). Σημαντικό είναι επίσης το πρόγραμμα Unlimited Access για άτομα με και χωρίς αναπηρία, καθώς και τα εργαστήρια χορού για άτομα άνω των 65 ετών.

Αυτά τα προγράμματα μάς δείχνουν ότι ο χορός είναι για όλους, δεν κάνει διακρίσεις, αλλά ταυτόχρονα μάς υπενθυμίζουν τις απελευθερωτικές δυνάμεις του. Είναι ενδιαφέρον το πώς αυτά τα εργαστήρια ξεκίνησαν ως μεμονωμένες προσπάθειες και εξελίχθηκαν τόσο δυναμικά σε μεγάλες συμπαγείς ομάδες συμμετεχόντων, με συνεχή και εντατική παρουσία στη Στέγη. Παρακολουθώντας την πορεία αυτών των εργαστηρίων όλα αυτά τα χρόνια, παρατηρεί κανές πώς με αφορμή τον χορό, άνθρωποι άγνωστοι και διαφορετικοί μεταξύ τους παίρνουν ρίσκα, βοηθάνε ο ένας τον άλλον, εκτίθενται, δημιουργούν και μεταμορφώνονται... Τέλος, είναι σημαντικό να τονίσουμε ότι σε αυτά τα προγράμματα συνδυάζονται η εκπαιδευτική και η καλλιτεχνική αξία, καθότι στόχος πολλών εργαστηρίων είναι να οδηγήσουν σε παραστάσεις που δεν έχουν τίποτε να ζηλέψουν από επαγγελματικές παραγωγές.

*Choros Journal: Πες μας λίγα λόγια σχετικά με τα εκπαιδευτικά προγράμματα για τον χορό που υλοποιούνται αυτήν τη σεζόν στη Στέγη.*

Μ. Λ.: Για τρίτη χρονιά υλοποιούνται τα εργαστήρια για άτομα με και χωρίς αναπηρία που είχαν αρχίσει στο πλαίσιο του διετού προγράμματος Unlimited Access. Παρ' όλο που ολοκληρώθηκε το διεθνές διετές πρόγραμμα, στο οποίο συνεργάστηκαν η Στέγη, το British Council, το Vo' Arte (Πορτογαλία) και το Croatian Institute for Movement and Dance, η Στέγη συνεχίζει στην ίδια κατεύθυνση, δίνοντας τη δυνατότητα σε άτομα με και χωρίς αναπηρία, επαγγελματίες χορευτές

και μη, με έντονο ενδιαφέρον για τον χορό και την κίνηση, να δουλέψουν μαζί ανακαλύπτοντας την τέχνη του χορού.

Με τίτλο «Χορός χωρίς διακρίσεις», τρεις καταξιωμένες Ελληνίδες χορογράφοι σε συνεργασία με δύο περφόρμερ με αναπηρία και έναν μουσικό συντονίζουν τρία βιωματικά εργαστήρια: για άτομα με νοντική υστέρηση και χωρίς, για άτομα με προβλήματα όρασης και χωρίς, για άτομα με κινητική αναπηρία και χωρίς. Οι ομάδες αυτές εμβαθύνουν στις διαφορετικές ποιότητες της κίνησης, εξερευνούν τη σχέση της κίνησης και του λόγου, καθώς και της κίνησης και του ήχου, δοκιμάζουν wearables και χορεύουν στο σκοτάδι, ανακαλύπτουν πώς το χιούμορ μπορεί να παίξει τον ρόλο του σε μια παράσταση χορού...



Στιγμιότυπο από το πρόγραμμα «Χορεύω, άρα επικοινωνώ» (Φωτ.: Σταύρος Πετρόπουλος)

Για τέταρτη χρονιά, η Στέγη φέρνει τον σύγχρονο χορό στα σχολεία με το εκπαιδευτικό πρόγραμμα για εφήβους «Χορεύω, άρα επικοινωνώ». Το «Χορεύω, άρα επικοινωνώ» βασίζεται στο διεθνές πρόγραμμα «Dancing to Connect», το οποίο έχει φιλοξενηθεί σε περισσότερες από 30 χώρες του κόσμου. Η Στέγη, σε συνεργασία με την ομάδα Battery Dance Company της Νέας Υόρκης (ομάδα η οποία και εμπνεύστηκε το πρόγραμμα) αιλλά και με την υποστήριξη της Πρεσβείας των ΗΠΑ στην Αθήνα, έχει εκπαιδεύσει Έλληνες χορευτές, ώστε να υλοποιούν οι ίδιοι το πρόγραμμα.

Το «Χορεύω, άρα επικοινωνώ» πραγματοποιείται και στην ελληνική περιφέρεια. Φέτος, μαθητές δέκα σχολείων, πέντε της Αθήνας και πέντε των Τρικάλων, είχαν τη δυνατότητα να παρακολουθήσουν εργαστήρια χορού από την ομάδα των επαγγελματιών χορευτών στους χώρους των σχολείων τους. Στο τέλος του προγράμματος, οι μαθητές των Τρικάλων ταξίδεψαν στην Αθήνα και χόρεψαν μαζί με τους μαθητές των σχολείων της Αθήνας σε μια εξαιρετικά επιτυχημένη, επαγγελματική και βαθιά συγκινητική παράσταση, η οποία μας απέδειξε ακόμη μία φορά τη σημασία και το μέγεθος αυτού του προγράμματος, το οποίο, μεταξύ άλλων, ενίσχυσε τη δημιουργικότητα, την αυτοπεοίθηση, τη συνεργασία και την επικοινωνία των μαθητών μέσα από την τέχνη του χορού.

Αντίστροφα, ακόμη μία χρονιά, η Στέγη προσκαλεί μαθητές σχολείων στους χώρους της, προκειμένου να παρακολουθήσουν παραστάσεις σύγχρονου χορού ενηλίκων· παραστάσεις που σε συνεννόηση με τους συντελεστές παίζονται, πέρα από το βράδυ, και πρωινές ώρες, ειδικά για το νεανικό μας κοινό. Οι μαθητές, μετά το τέλος των παραστάσεων, συνομιλούν με τους συντελεστές, σε μιαν ανοικτή συζήτηση όπου μπορούν να θέσουν τις δικές τους ερωτήσεις και να μοιραστούν την εμπειρία τους αλλά και τις εντυπώσεις τους. Με αυτόν τον τρόπο έχουν μια πρώτη επαφή με τον σύγχρονο χορό και τις προβληματικές του. Μπορεί να τον απορρίψουν, μπορεί να τους μπερδέψει, αλλά μπορεί ταυτόχρονα να τους μαγέψει και να τους γεννήσει ερωτήματα, καλλιεργώντας σε κάθε περίπτωση την κριτική και αισθητική τους ικανότητα. Και, φυσικά, όλα αυτά είναι θεμελιά...

Επίσης, συνεχίστηκαν για τρίτη χρονιά στη Στέγη τα θεωρητικά σεμινάρια ενηλίκων για τον μεταμοντέρνο χορό. Στόχος των σεμιναρίων είναι να εξοικειώσουν το κοινό του χορού με τις εξελίξεις και τις ανατροπές που συνέβησαν στον τομέα του χορού κυρίως τη δεκαετία του '60, έτσι ώστε να μπορούν να κατανοήσουν καλύτερα και να εκτιμήσουν τους κώδικες του μεταμοντέρνου χορού. Μέσα από οπτικό υλικό με έργα Ελλήνων και ξένων χορογράφων, οι συμμετέχοντες παρακολούθουν και συζητούν τους τρόπους με τους οποίους ο χορός εκφράζει την ανθρώπινη εμπειρία μέσα στην κοινωνία και την εποχή μας.

Επιπλέον, πραγματοποιήθηκαν για τέταρτη χρονιά τα βιωματικά εργαστήρια χορού για τους «Νέους χορευτές 65+», τα οποία απευθύνονται σε όσους πιστεύουν ότι ποτέ δεν είναι αργά για να χορέψεις. Τα εργαστήρια αυτά δίνουν τη δυνατότητα σε ανθρώπους που αγαπούν τον χορό να εξερευνήσουν τις κινητικές τους δυνατότητες μέσα από καθοδηγούμενες ασκήσεις αυτοσχεδιασμού, να ανασύρουν αναμνήσεις μέσα από το σώμα τους και να δημιουργήσουν τα δικά τους κινητικά μοτίβα. Οι συμμετέχοντες σε προηγούμενα κινητικά εργαστήρια είχαν φέτος τη δυνατότητα να συμμετάσχουν και σε ένα διαγενεακό εργαστήριο, φέρνοντας μαζί τους ένα ακόμη άτομο, διαφορετικής ομως γενιάς! Το παιδί ή ένας νεότερος ή μεγαλύτερος φίλος γίνεται ο παρτενέρ σε αυτήν τη δημιουργική καλλιτεχνική διαδικασία που συνδυάζει εμπειρίες και βιώματα διαφορετικών ηλικιών.

Τέλος, συνεχίζουν φέτος να πραγματοποιούνται οι παράλληλες δράσεις του καλλιτεχνικού μας προγράμματος, δηλαδή εκπαιδευτικά εργαστήρια ή μεμονωμένες δράσεις

που αντλούν τη θεματική τους από τις παραστάσεις, τις συναυλίες, τα φεστιβάλ και τα εικαστικά projects της Στέγης. Δραττόμενοι της ευκαιρίας να φιλοξενήσουμε πολλούς σημαντικούς καλλιτέχνες στην Αθήνα στο πλαίσιο των εκδηλώσεών μας, σχεδιάσαμε masterclasses και εργαστήρια-σεμινάρια για επαγγελματίες χορευτές και χορογράφους, φοιτητές σχολών χορού, οι οποίοι βιώνουν τη μοναδική εμπειρία να γνωρίσουν από κοντά «ιερά τέρατα» του χορού, να εμβαθύνουν τις γνώσεις τους και να διανθίσουν τις τεχνικές και τις μεθοδολογίες τους.

*Choros Journal: Τα εκπαιδευτικά προγράμματα προσέλκυσαν σύντομα σημαντικό αριθμό ατόμων διαφορετικών ηλικιών και εμπειριών. Ποια είναι τα επόμενα σχέδιά σας στον τομέα της εκπαίδευσης, ειδικά σε ό,τι αφορά τον χορό;*

Μ. Λ.: Μετά την επιτυχημένη ολοκλήρωση του διετούς ευρωπαϊκού προγράμματος Unilimited Access (2013–2015), που είχε στόχο την αναθεώρηση του τρόπου αντιμετώπισης των ανθρώπων με αναπηρία στον χώρο του πολιτισμού και την προσβασιμότητα-συμμετοχή τους σε πολιτιστικές δράσεις, διερευνάται η δυνατότητα ενίσχυσης αντίστοιχων προγραμμάτων μέσω της ανάπτυξης νέων συνεργασιών και ευρωπαϊκών δικτύων.

Επιδιώκουμε με ενεργό ενδιαφέρον τη σύσταση ευρωπαϊκών δικτύων, αλλά και την εδραίωση επιτυχημένων συνεργασιών που προωθούν τον χορό για άτομα με και χωρίς αναπηρία. Στόχος μας και για την επόμενη σεζόν είναι ο σχεδιασμός και η υλοποίηση προγραμμάτων με θέμα την εκπαίδευση εκπαιδευτών/εκπαιδευομένων γύρω από τη διδασκαλία χορού για άτομα με αναπηρία («train the trainers/trainees»). Οι δραστηριότητες αυτές θα επιτρέψουν την ενίσχυση των δεξιοτήτων και της απασχολησιμότητας, καθώς και τον εκσυγχρονισμό των συστημάτων εκπαίδευσης επαγγελματιών που δραστηριοποιούνται ή θα επιθυμούσαν να δραστηριοποιηθούν στον τομέα της ανοιχτής πρόσβασης στον πολιτισμό (εκπαίδευση, τέχνη-χορός-χορογραφία, αναπηρία). Επιθυμούμε θα είναι οι συνεργασίες με φορείς όπως το British Council, τη Holland Dance Company, τη StopGap Dance Company (UK), το χοροθέατρο Skånes κ.ά. Προσβλέπουμε σε τέτοιους είδους συνεργασίες, που ευνοούν την κινητικότητα και τη δημιουργική ανταλλαγή απόψεων σε διεθνές επίπεδο.

Η δημιουργική έκφραση για όλους –και για τα άτομα άνω των 65 ετών– θα εξακολουθεί να αποτελεί τον πυρήνα των εκπαιδευτικών μας προγραμμάτων, τα οποία θα εμπλουτιστούν με νέες θεματικές, καλλιτεχνικές μέσα και είδη χορού. Φυσικά, θα ταξιδέψουμε και του χρόνου στα σχολεία, συνδυάζοντας τον χορό με τη δημιουργική μάθηση, κάτι που, δυστυχώς, συχνά λείπει από την εκπαιδευτική διαδικασία.

Στο ίδιο πλαίσιο, για τη σεζόν 2016–2017, προτείνεται κύκλος εργαστηρίων-σεμιναρίων για εκπαιδευτικούς σε μνηματικά βάσο στην Στέγη, με θεματικές και συνεργάτες που θα εναλλάσσονται. Μία από αυτές τις θεματικές θα είναι σίγουρα και ο χορός. Βασικός στόχος μας, μέσα από τη διεξαγωγή τέτοιων εργαστηρίων-σεμιναρίων, είναι η παρουσίαση σύγχρονων παιδαγωγικών προτάσεων, απόψεων και κατευθύνσεων για τη δυναμική σχέση Τέχνης και Σχολείου, καθώς και η ανάπτυξη ενός ουσιαστικού διαλόγου μεταξύ λειτουργών και στελεχών

της εκπαίδευσης, καλλιτεχνών, ειδικών παιδαγωγών-επιστημόνων, αλλά και ερευνητών-διδασκόντων από τον χώρο των Τεχνών και της Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης.

Συνεπώς, θα συνεχίσουμε το πρόγραμμα χορού «Χορεύω, άρα επικοινωνώ» και την επόμενη χρονιά στην Αθήνα και στην περιφέρεια, προβλέποντας όμως και ένα καινοτόμο σεμινάριο για εκπαιδευτικούς σχετικά με το πώς θα μπορούσε να διδάσκεται ο χορός στα σχολεία. Το σεμινάριο θα πραγματοποιηθεί από την ομάδα χορευτών του προγράμματος, ώστε οι ίδιοι οι εκπαιδευτικοί να αποκτήσουν τις γνώσεις και τα εργαλεία εκείνα που θα τους επιτρέψουν να συνεχίσουν αντίστοιχες δραστηριότητες με τους μαθητές τους μέσα στη σχολική τάξη. Το σεμινάριο θα είναι κυρίως βιωματικό και οι ίδιοι οι εκπαιδευτικοί θα κληθούν να «φτιάξουν κάτι δικό τους» υπό την καθοδήγηση των χορευτών-δασκάλων.

Μέλημά μας, και για τον επόμενο χρόνο, είναι η δημιουργία νέου κοινού για τα προγράμματά μας, αλλά και η συνέχιση και η εξέλιξη των ουσιαστικών σχέσεων με το ήδη υπάρχον κοινό μέσα από τη μαθησιακή και καλλιτεχνική διαδικασία, σε έναν διαρκή διάλογο με ανθρώπους όλων των ηλικιών και εμπειριών. Θα κινηθούμε εντός και εκτός της Στέγης και το 2016–2017, με κάποια από τα αγαπημένα μας προγράμματα, αλλά και με πολλά νέα.

# TAKING THE NEXT STEP: DANCE ADVOCACY IN GREECE

ANN COOPER ALBRIGHT

## **Abstract**

At the beginning of June 2015, Athens was the site of an international dance studies conference entitled "Cut and Paste: Dance Advocacy in the Age of Austerity". This event drew dancers, choreographers and scholars from around the world and was jointly produced by the Society of Dance History Scholars and the Congress on Research in Dance in collaboration with the Hellenic Centre of the International Theatre Institute. This essay reflects on that event, recounts its backstory, and proposes a series of future "next steps" that might help build a platform for dance advocacy in Greece.

## **Keywords**

Arts advocacy, austerity, economics, Greece, activism, contemporary dance

There is a small poster for "Cut and Paste: Dance Advocacy in the Age of Austerity" hanging in my office. On my desk is the program with one side in English and the other side in Greek, a folder with various versions of the conference budget, assorted lists of panels, dance classes, and performances. There are published conference proceedings, business cards, and thank-you notes as well. Excel sheets of registrants and conference proposals, the Call for Papers, and the link for the [athensdancing2015](http://athensdancing2015.com) website (which now has photos documenting those three days in June 2015) still fill the desktop on my computer. These tangible pieces of paper, conference details, and registration numbers are easier to grasp than the more intangible memory of gathering with colleagues new and old last summer to support a dance community in crisis.

The archival materials surround me, proof that something happened, and yet I am wrestling with how to write the story of that intense event – trying to trace its reverberations across the distance of oceans and another busy school year. Breathing deeply and calling on the gods to give me patience, I sort through a slew of emails documenting the organizational labor. I listen to the various transcriptions of interviews with scholars and dancers profiling different approaches to dance advocacy from across the globe. I am trying to make sense of it all with an eye towards continuing the work that has begun.

Although I can articulate my experience in proposing, organizing, and producing this international dance studies conference on dance advocacy, it seems decidedly awkward to suggest the possible next steps for Greek dancers and dance scholars. How can I assess the broader impact of this event in Greece when I live in America? And yet that is precisely what I will attempt to do over the next pages, albeit with a sense of caution. Still I forge on: because I care deeply about the state of dance in Greece; because we have come this far in the conversation, it seems a shame to give it up now; because sometimes an outside perspective is useful, especially in a small community; because we have to keep trying to connect, network and advocate on behalf of an art form that takes movement (both aesthetic and political) as its soul.

Flashback to spring 2010. An ash cloud from Iceland has seriously disrupted air travel and I am late arriving in Athens for the “Dancing Bodies: Practices and Politics”, an international dance studies conference hosted by the Association of Greek Choreographers and the Department of Theatre Studies, University of the Peloponnese. I get picked up at the airport and am whisked away to the shiny new Megaron building, where the conference is taking place. I present a talk, “Finding Hope in a Fall”, and teach a class on Contact Improvisation to over fifty eager dancers in the opera ballet studio, where the marley floor has so much rosin that I rip my dance pants (and the skin off my knee) trying to slide across it. Yet, despite the blood, I am hooked by everybody’s enthusiasm. I meet various people with whom I have had correspondence, including the first of multiple Marias. It is utterly inexplicable, but somehow I feel completely at home in this chaotic Mediterranean city. The next two days pass in a blur of jet lag and, before I know it, I am back in the Midwest. Somewhere over the Atlantic Ocean, I have a hunch that I will be back – that my work in Greece has just begun.

Fast forward to spring 2012. I have returned to Greece for seven weeks of intensive teaching – my own dancing version of “doctors without borders”. In exchange for housing and food, I volunteered my services as a dancer and a thinker. I offered to teach groups of people ranging from amateur theater enthusiasts to dance professionals, in situations as diverse as a small private ballet studio, a university department, pre-professional schools, and a YMCA. Although it is a mere two calendar years later, much has transpired in Greece. The atmosphere is chaotic; the austerity measures enacted by the Greek government in response to European Union bailout demands were met by a political reactivity that had on several occasions turned violent. Walking across town to where I am teaching a workshop, I pass by burned-out buildings and homeless folks, public demonstrations and police lines, tourists and high-class shoppers carrying large designer bags.

As I mentioned in the last piece I wrote for *Choros International Dance Journal* (Spring 2013), I arrived in Athens committed to supporting the Greek dancers who were working under crisis conditions. I wanted to see if the intentional somatic and improvisational training I had begun to craft would help Greek dancers both mobilize and heal. That year I had been working

on a book about bodies surviving the anxiety and fear of things falling apart in America, which was entitled *Gravity Matters: finding ground in an unstable world*. I was curious to see if the physical practices I had developed in the US context would translate to this growing economic instability and sense of groundlessness within the Greek context. Overall, I was impressed with the resourcefulness in the face of draconian cuts in arts funding. Many of the Greek artists I encountered were continuing to work even without a regular paycheck from their government. Of course, as an American dancer, I had already survived the austerity measures imposed by the culture wars of the 1990s that had pretty much gutted the National Endowment for the Arts' support for individual artists. Not, of course, that we had much funding for dance to begin with in the United States.

Back in America that summer, I was asked to consider becoming President of the Society of Dance History Scholars (SDHS). Weighing the possibilities with the labor involved, I thought that as President I might be able to channel institutional support in order to bring an international dance studies conference to Greece. I reasoned that, if there were no longer governmental funding to travel abroad, we could at the very least bring a big dance conference to Greece. Thus began a consistent lobbying effort to get both SDHS and CORD (the Congress on Research in Dance) to sponsor a conference on dance advocacy in Athens in June 2015.

Given the media's sensationalized coverage of that turbulent period, when politicians were resigning and banks were failing, it was particularly difficult to assure certain skeptics on the board of directors that the situation was not dangerous, even if it was volatile. In the end, I was able to persuade the major stakeholders in both organizations that this event would be a significant intervention for the Greek dance community and would create the possibility not only of addressing an important and timely issue (advocacy), but it would actually be doing something practical as well. The presence of scholars and dancers from all around the world would mean something (I hoped) to the Greek dance studies community. Through my connections' connections (that is how it works in Greece), we found the Hellenic Centre of the International Theatre Institute, a Greek organization with the space and an administrative infrastructure to help us co-sponsor the event. We even applied for European Union funding. Little did I realize the amount of bureaucratic quicksand into which I was about to wade.

May 2014. I am back in Athens for 10 days of organizational meetings and visits to possible conference sites and hotels. Everyone is very nice, but there are clearly a lot of competing agendas (not to mention egos). I was presented with various hospitality presentations that included an elaborate, but closed, network of hotels, taxis, and restaurants. It all felt oddly claustrophobic and overly managed. I wanted open air spaces, not generic windowless rooms with white tablecloths and managed service. I was happy when the weekend came and I could teach a movement workshop to re-connect to the dance community and the reality of bodies in space. I left Athens feeling hopeful, enthusiastic, and yet in the back of my head I had a

sinking feeling that this was all going to be much more complicated than I had originally imagined. Little did I know what was in store for me over the next year as I scrambled to secure funding and a conference venue for this event. Fortunately, I had assistance in the form of a number of wonderful volunteers from both sides of the ocean. I could never have survived the year leading up to the conference without their help.

May 2015, exactly one year later. I arrive in Athens a week early and get to work shoring up the details of how, what, where, and when. We fill bags for registration, set up information tables, train the student volunteers. Somewhere in those first few days I find out (almost accidentally) that the conference venue is also hosting another conference on Friday (surprise!). I run my first SDHS board meeting Thursday afternoon, and then in the evening the conference begins with a reception and the plenary panel on "The State of Dance Studies in Greece". We were off and running.

Here are some of the numerical facts concerning "Cut and Paste: Dance Advocacy in the Age of Austerity" collected in my final report: the conference registered over 330 participants (excluding the 40-plus volunteers); 35 countries were represented, including every continent except Antarctica; we offered 34 free dance workshops; two evenings of curated work by contemporary Greek dance companies; and we collectively donated 104 dance books to the music and dance library in the Megaron in Athens. The panels in this joint conference addressed issues surrounding dance advocacy on a local as well as a global level, and student researchers interviewed participants about dance advocacy in their home countries (including Malta, Colombia, Brazil, Denmark, India, South Africa, Canada, the United States, and Greece).

On one level, the conference was a huge success. Dance scholars from all over the world convened and networked. Dancers performed in the courtyard and in the hallways, as well as in the theaters. We were profiled on local television and had media coverage in a dozen different countries. Both during the conference and after, via email, scores of people thanked me for envisioning a conference where participants could take a dance class and then attend a scholarly panel, engaging both body and mind in their study of dance. Nonetheless, I have to wonder if anything had changed once the weekend was over.

Before I left Greece last summer, I met with the core group of dancers and scholars about possible next steps, but the dire economic situation (that was the moment when banks were limiting cash withdrawals to 60 euros a day) overshadowed any sense of potential coming out of the "Cut and Paste" conference. In the fall, my student assistant Alana Reibstein and I conducted follow-up interviews with Petros Gallias and Maria Tsouvala as part of our "Dance Advocacy in an International Context" research project. Having spent several months digesting these materials, I am now prepared to lay out some "next steps" that might help mobilize the dance community in Greece. Again, I recognize that I am an outsider and, as such, my

perspective is limited. But as I contemplate my next trip to Greece in the fall of 2016, I figure I might as well offer a few suggestions as a way of continuing the conversation about dance advocacy in Greece. My research into arts advocacy over the past year makes me aware of the rhetorical use of directives in these types of policy papers, and it is in that spirit that I propose the following next steps.

### **Step #1: Community and coalition building**

Activate a sense of community among dancers and dance scholars by creating a national network that intentionally crosses over the current divisions between contemporary and traditional (including folk) dance; between Theater Studies and Education departments in universities; and between professional and amateur dance groups. Use established events (such as the yearly festival of the Association of Greek Choreographers or other annual events) to create more town-hall open forums where participants get to hear one another and be heard. It is true that someone has to mediate these public events so that they do not just become big bitch sessions, but it is also valuable to try and get all the stakeholders in the same room. Try to create a generous and activist culture in which folks are not fighting over pieces of the funding pie (since most of that pie is gone anyhow), but understand there is strength (political, social, economic) in numbers. Communities do not have to all hold the same aesthetic or pedagogical values in order to work together. Coalitions, in fact, have specific frameworks to preserve the autonomy and individuality of different groups while also opening up the possibility of collaborating with one another.

### **Step #2: Access**

Use the existing dance studios and performance venues imaginatively to bring in dancers, both professional and amateur. In her 2014 essay, "Embodying the Crisis: The Body as a Site of Resistance in Post-Bailout Greece", Ioanna Tzartzani mentions the aggregated power in the current popularity of dancing (both adult and children's classes), the social choreography of protesting bodies in the streets, as well as the increase in all kinds of physical activity. She writes: "Besides the apparent antidepressant role of exercise, at hormonal level, taking action and regaining control over one's body also appears as a (semi-)conscious reaction to the surrounding chaotic reality".<sup>1</sup> I recommend that people build on that energy to activate access to dance classes throughout the country. For example, universities, independent dance studios,

---

1      *Choros International Dance Journal*, 4 (Spring 2014), p. 43.

and the state school system could open one class a day on a sliding fee scale to anyone who wants to participate. The teachers could volunteer to offer that class for free, and I guarantee that they would get a lot (food, energy, volunteers to help with their next show) in return. Just think what it would be like to have a packed dance class everyday, not to mention a full audience for the performance. Extending access in this way would bring people into the studios and help keep professional dancers training in Greece instead of running off to PARTS in Belgium or SEAD in Austria. There should also be a pro-active effort on the part of concert venues and producers to offer cheap tickets to performances in order to ensure that the audience is filled with a range of people from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

### **Step #3: Space**

*Theater space.* I came of age as a dancer in a time when small arts organizations were retrofitting abandoned schools and factory buildings into dance studios with the help of a little bit of funding and a lot of volunteer labor. These spaces, such as PS 122 (a former school) and St. Marks Danspace Project (housed in a former church), not only provided cheap venues in which to showcase dance, but they also were instrumental in creating arts districts and revitalizing neighborhoods. If there were a good dance network in place in Greece (even a website with internet postings for teachers, dancers, etc.), then organizations and private studios could call on people to help produce dance events, contributing both physical labor and developing audience participation. If the only performance venues for dance are big theaters, there will necessarily be intense competition to be produced by those select venues. But if smaller places (even bars, outdoor cafes, etc.) start to produce dance events, then dance artists (including emerging artists) will be able to show works in process. As an independent choreographer in Philadelphia and New York City, I was always willing to barter time for space, whether to rehearse or to perform. Like urban green spaces and city gardens in which the participants hold a stake, this kind of exchange builds a sense of ownership and a commitment to a place.

*Outdoor space.* One of the greatest assets that Greece has is amazing weather much of the year. That allows for all kinds of imaginative uses of outdoor space for dancing. It would be fabulous to stage a day of dancing all over Athens, including in gardens, plazas, and the streets. One of the places I once had the good fortune to stay in had an outdoor deck (rooftop garden) which could be used to stage dancing that could also be seen by other rooftop gardens and cafes in the area. There seems to be a lot of potential in site-specific venues in Greece, which would help to create a greater visibility for dance in Greece and help sponsor audience development. (Everyone loves to watch dance outside with a glass of wine in hand.)

### **Step #4: Dance publications and research collections**

A publication like *Choros International Dance Journal* is a fabulous asset to the Greek dance community, and its pages could be mobilized to both broaden and deepen the exchange of ideas within that community. For instance, how about doing a special focus issue around the topic of advocacy and invite a range of short editorial essays from across the field? This would create a much-needed outlet for critical exchange and increase the readership of the journal. Indeed, it might be possible to do this special edition of the journal in newsprint (very cheap) and have that “newspaper” available at many of the crucial dance events in town. I am thinking of something like *Movement Research Journal*, which periodically publishes theme issues that are stacked outside workshop venues, performances, studios, etc., where people can grab a free copy and read it while waiting for a class or the performance to begin.

If a dance community begins to take responsibility for sponsoring and contributing to the discourse about dance, it can have a real impact on the field. I realize that resources are very tight these days, but sometimes it is possible to get sponsorship for one issue that is specially targeted on advocacy and promises to reach a broad audience. I find that when dancers and choreographers take the responsibility to write about their work or the work that they see being done around them, their reflections serve to deepen the critical discourse around dance. The same is true for developing Research Collections on Dance – there has to be a sense of ownership and engagement.

### **Some final thoughts on resources**

I realize that what I am outlining here requires considerable resources of time, energy, and some (although not as much as one might imagine) money. But many of the necessary resources are human resources that are already in place and often underutilized. The real challenge is in finding ways to organize and consolidate the labor of training dancers, making work, documenting trends, and creating community. Advocacy fertilizes all of these fields, whether we are talking about K-12 dance education, folk dance or contemporary multimedia work. Of course, this necessarily has to be a grass-roots project, not a top-down directive. Advocacy happens best in person – face to face. Like dance, it is a physical action, one that requires continual bodily effort and the perseverance to try again and again. Fortunately, as dancers we are invested in the pleasures of coming back to the studio day after day, year after year. So when I return to Greece this fall, I invite you all to put me to work in helping to imagine the next steps in advocating for dance in Greece.

# Book REVIEWS

KATIA ΣΑΒΡΑΜΗ (2014) *Zouζoύ Nikοlούδη: Χορικά*. Αθήνα: DIAN (Σειρά: Τέχνες – 7). 210 σ. (με εικόνες και χορευτικά σκίτσα). ISBN 978-960-7222-59-6. Χαρτόδεκτη έκδοση. 16€.<sup>1</sup>

Η Κάτια Σαβράμη είναι επίκουρη καθηγήτρια Χορολογίας στο Τμήμα Θεατρικών Σπουδών του Πανεπιστημίου Πατρών και έχει ήδη δημοσιεύσει αρκετές μελέτες στη σειρά «Τέχνες» του εκδοτικού οίκου DIAN: μεταξύ άλλων, σχετικά με την ελληνική Κρατική Σχολή Θρησκοτικής Τέχνης και τους καλλιτέχνες του χορού Ντόρα Τσάτσου και Χάρη Μανταφούνη. Το χοροθέατρο εξακολουθεί να αποτελεί ένα από τα σημαντικότερα ερευνητικά πεδία των ελληνικών θεατρικών Σπουδών, αφού δεν θεωρείται ακόμη αυτονότο ότι αποτελεί μορφή ισότιμη του θεάτρου, του μουσικού θεάτρου, του σωματικού θεάτρου, του κουκλοθέατρου και της περφόρμανς, η οποία εντάχθηκε πρόσφατα στο πλαίσιο της επιστήμης του θεάτρου (βλ. W. Puchner, *Mía εισαγωγή στην επιστήμη του θεάτρου*, Αθήνα, 2011, σ. 59–70). Κατά συνέπεια, διάφοροι παλαιότεροι ιστορικοί του θεάτρου αγνοούν παντελώς, για παράδειγμα, τη χορογραφική κληρονομιά που άφησε στην Ελλάδα η Ισιδώρα Ντάνκαν, μια μοίρα που το χοροθέατρο τη μοιράζεται εν μέρει με το μουσικό θέατρο ή ακόμη και με το θέατρο σκιών, το οποίο οι ιστορικοί του θεάτρου άρχισαν να το θεωρούν ακαδημαϊκά σημαντικό μόλις κατά τις τελευταίες δεκαετίες (βλ. W. Puchner, *Das neugriechische Schattentheater Karagiozis [Το νεοελληνικό θέατρο σκιών του Καραγκιόζη]*, Μόναχο, 1975· επανέκδ. Βιέννη, 2014). Στον κατάλογο μιας έκθεσης που οργάνωσε στις αρχές του αιώνα το Τμήμα Θεατρικών Σπουδών του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών υπό τη διεύθυνση της Ελένης Φεσσά-Εμμανουήλ, μια ομάδα μεταπτυχιακών φοιτητών, ύστερα από επιτόπια έρευνα στην ελληνική χορευτική σκηνή, εντόπισε τουλάχιστον 80 καλλιτεχνικές ομάδες χορού (Ε. Φεσσά-Εμμανουήλ [επιμ.], *Χορός και θέατρο. Από την Ντάνκαν στις νέες χορευτικές ομάδες*, Αθήνα, 2004· βλ. και το σχετικό άρθρο μου στο *Παράβασις* 6, 2005, σ. 394–396). Ένα άλλο έργο που είχε αναλάβει το Τμήμα Θεατρικών Σπουδών στην Αθήνα ήταν

1 Το παρόν κείμενο αποτελεί ελληνική μετάφραση της βιβλιοκρισίας του Καθηγητή Walter Puchner, η οποία δημοσιεύθηκε στο επιστημονικό περιοδικό *Παράβασις/Parabasis* του Τμήματος Θεατρικών Σπουδών του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών (τόμ. 13/1). Το κείμενο, σε μετάφραση του Κοσμά Κοσμόπουλου, αναδημοσιεύεται εδώ με την άδεια του συγγραφέα του γερμανικού πρωτοτύπου.

η επεξεργασία και συνοδική παρουσίαση του αρχείου της Ραλλούς Μάνου, την οποία και υποστηρίζει ο Χρυσόθεμις Σταματοπούλου-Βασιλάκου έπειτα από μακροχρόνια έρευνα και εργασία, από κοινού, και πάλι, με μια ομάδα μεταπτυχιακών φοιτητών (*Αρχείο Ραλλούς Μάνου. Η ζωή και το έργο της*, Αθήνα, 2005, με πολυάριθμες εικόνες). Ως εκ τούτου, πρέπει να χαιρετιστεί ιδιαίτερα το γεγονός ότι μια επιστήμων της Χορολογίας αναλαμβάνει τη μελέτη και τη συστηματική επεξεργασία των αρχείων και άλλων σημαντικών προσωπικοτήτων της ελληνικής χορευτικής σκηνής του 20ού αιώνα.

Η ανάπτυξη της τέχνης του χορού συνδέθηκε ποικιλοτρόπως με την εξέλιξη των παραστάσεων έργων του αρχαίου ελληνικού ρεπερτορίου, της αρχαίας τραγωδίας και ιδιαίτερα των κωμωδιών του Αριστοφάνη – διαδικασία η οποία γνώρισε σημαντική άνθηση κατά τη διάρκεια των Δελφικών Εορτών της Εύας Πάλμερ και του Άγγελου Σικελιανού, που αργότερα οδήγησαν στον θεσμό του Φεστιβάλ Επιδαύρου. Στις παραστάσεις του 20ού αιώνα το αρχαίο δράμα έχει να αντιμετωπίσει μια σειρά από προβλήματα: το ζήτημα της μετάφρασης, το ζήτημα της καλύτερης ορατότητας κατά τις βραδινές παραστάσεις με τεχνητό φωτισμό, το ζήτημα που έθεταν οι μάσκες και η απαγγελία, ιδίως δε ο επιτονισμός των χορικών και η κίνηση του Χορού. Ενώ, τελικά, στην υποκριτική τεχνική των πρωταγωνιστών επικράτησαν κατά το μάλλον ή ήττον ρεαλιστικά, τελετουργικά ή λαογραφικά πρότυπα, η απόδοση της κίνησης του Χορού και των τραγουδιών του παρέμεινε σε μεγάλο βαθμό προβληματική, αφού δεν μπόρεσε να διασαφηνιστεί μέσα από αρχαιολογικές ή φιλολογικές μελέτες. Οφείλουμε να δείχνουμε έντονη επιφύλαξη όταν συσχετίζουμε με αρχαίες παραστάσεις τις εικόνες που βλέπουμε πάνω σε αγγεία (βλ. τις σχετικές μελέτες του Oliver Taplin και του Σάββα Γώγου) και, επίσης, οφείλουμε να περιοριζόμαστε μόνο σε πολύ συγκεκριμένα παραδείγματα, αφού οι χορευτικές φιγούρες αφορούν κυρίως τελετουργικούς χορούς ή, όπως θα τους ονομάζαμε σήμερα, κοινωνικούς χορούς (κυκλικούς χορούς κ.λπ.). Ο Χορός όμως της αρχαίας τραγωδίας αναπτύχθηκε κατά τρόπο ανάλογο με άλλες μορφές έντεχνου χορού· διαμορφωνόταν κάθε χρόνο εκ νέου μέσα από ποδύμηνες πρόβες και ασκήσεις Αθηναίων ποδιτών υπό τη διεύθυνση ενός χοροδιδάσκαλου ενώ, επιπλέον, έπρεπε σε κάθε παράσταση να επιδεικνύει ιδιαίτερη πρωτοτυπία, αφού οι φιγούρες του Χορού αποτελούσαν ένα από τα κριτήρια της βράβευσης των έργων.

Μέσα από αυτόν τον προβληματισμό, που αναδείχθηκε κυρίως στο Φεστιβάλ της Επιδαύρου και αργότερα σε άλλα μέρη για να καταστήσει σε ετήσια βάση απαραίτητη την εύρεση μιας πρακτικής λύσης, αναδύθηκε μια γενιά Ελλήνων χορογράφων, οι οποίοι ανέλαβαν να αναπτύξουν μια νέα προσέγγιση, εφόσον δεν υπήρχαν κάποια αξιόπιστα πρότυπα. Ισως δεν είναι τυχαίο ότι, από την Ύστερη Αρχαιότητα και μέχρι τον 19ο αιώνα, τα χορικά παραθείπονται τελείως, δεδομένου ότι αποτελούν, χωρίς αμφιβολία, το πιο δύσκολο μέρος κάθε έργου. Μέσα από την ενασχόλησή της με αυτόν τον προβληματισμό διέπρεψε και η Ζουζού (Καλλιόπη) Νικολούδη (1917–2004). Η χορευτική της ομάδα, τα «Χορικά», ανέπτυξε τη δραστηριότητά της από το 1966 μέχρι το 2003, ιδίως δε από το 1966 μέχρι το 1975, οπότε η λειτουργία της έπρεπε

να σταματήσει για οικονομικούς λόγους. Από το 1988 μέχρι το 1990 συνεχίστηκε προσωρινά η δραστηριότητα της ομάδας, ενώ η πληρέστερα τεκμηριωμένη περίοδός της ήταν από το 1995 μέχρι το 2003. Λίγο μετά τον θάνατο της Νικολούδη, εκδόθηκε ένα πλεύκωμα αφιερωμένο στο έργο της, ενώ στη συνέχεια ακολούθησε σιωπή. Το αταξινόμητο αρχείο της φυλάσσεται στο Μουσείο Μπενάκη στην Αθήνα.

Έχοντας κατά νου αυτές τις πληροφορίες και αυτόν τον προβληματισμό, αρχίζει κανείς να διαβάζει το κύριο μέρος του βιβλίου της Κάτιας Σαβράμη, το οποίο χωρίζεται σε δύο μέρη: το πρώτο μέρος σκιαγραφεί τη χορευτική παιδεία της Νικολούδη και την επιρροή που δέχτηκε από άλλες χορογραφικές προσωπικότητες και τεχνοτροπίες, καθώς και τις απόψεις που ανέπτυξε η ίδια σχετικά με την ένταξη του Χορού σε παραστάσεις αρχαίας τραγωδίας. Στο δεύτερο μέρος παρουσιάζονται οι πληρέστερα τεκμηριωμένες φάσεις και παραγωγές της ομάδας «Χορικά», κατά τις περιόδους 1966–1975 και 1995–2003. Ακόμη και μέσα από αυτό το διάλειμμα των είκοσι ετών διαπιστώνει κανείς την απουσία κρατικής υποστήριξης προς την τέχνη του χορού. Κατά το χρονικό διάστημα που προηγήθηκε της συγγραφής της εξεταζόμενης μονογραφίας, εμφανίστηκαν μόνο μία μεταπτυχιακή διπλωματική εργασία στο Πλανεπιστημίο του Surrey, της Στερειανής Τσιντζιλώνη, με τίτλο *Zouzou Nikoloudi: A Greek Choreographer. Her Artistic Vision and Contribution to the Greek Dance Theatre* [Ζουζού Νικολούδη: Μια Ελληνίδα Χορογράφος. Το Καλλιτεχνικό της Όραμα και η Συμβολή της στο Ελληνικό Χοροθέατρο] (1997), καθώς και ένα τιμητικό πλεύκωμα, με τίτλο *Zouzou Nikoloudi / Zouzou Nikoloudi, 1917–2004* (Αθήνα, 2005). Όλες οι άλλες πληροφορίες της μετέπειτα προϊόνθαν απευθείας από το αρχείο της Νικολούδη και τη διεθνή βιβλιογραφία για το χοροθέατρο του 20ού αιώνα, όπου ιδιαίτερα ο εκφραστικός χορός [Ausdruckstanz] και η ρυθμική γυμναστική [rhythmische Gymnastik] έδωσαν πρωτοποριακά ερεθίσματα στο σύγχρονο θέατρο.

Κυρίαρχη μεταξύ των αρχικών επιρροών της Νικολούδη στάθηκε η μορφή της Κούλας Πράτσικα, μαθήτριας του Jaques-Dalcroze στο Χέλερδου της Γερμανίας και της Christine Bear στο Λάξενμπουργκ, κοντά στη Βιέννη. Η σχολή της Πράτσικα επικεντρωνόταν στη ρυθμική, ασκώντας καθοριστική επιρροή στη σύνθεση των χορικών από την Εύα Πάλμερ κατά τη διάρκεια των Δελφικών Εορτών («φως, ρυθμός και πνεύμα»). Καταγόμενη από γερμανοϊταλική οικογένεια (Fix, Scassi) και μεγαλωμένη με Δυτικά εκπαιδευτικά πρότυπα και κλασική μουσική παιδεία (ο πατέρας της είχε ζήσει πάνω από είκοσι χρόνια στο Παρίσι), η Νικολούδη, ήδη παντρεμένη και μπέρα τεσσάρων παιδιών, επισκέφτηκε το 1951 τη Ζυρίχη για να συμμετάσχει σε ένα χορευτικό σεμινάριο όπου θα δίδασκαν η Mary Wigman, η Rosalia Chladek, ο Harald Kreutzberg, η Anna Sokolow και ο Kurt Jooss. Εκεί μυήθηκε στα μυστικά του εκφραστικού χορού και του γερμανικού εξηρεσιονισμού, ο οποίος, όπως είναι γνωστό, βασίζεται στις γενικές αρχές της ύπαρξης ενός καθολικού ρυθμού. Έτσι, ένα ξεχωριστό τμήμα του πρώτου μέρους του βιβλίου (σ. 27 κ.ε.) αποτελεί μια συνοπτική αναδρομή στις εξελίξεις του χορού κατά το πρώτο μισό του 20ού αιώνα (όπου γίνεται λόγος για τη M. Graham, τον É. Jaques-Dalcroze, τον

R. Laban, τον K. Jooss, τον H. Kreutzberg και τη R. Chladek). Από το 1959 μέχρι το 1965 η Νικολούδη δίδαξε στη σχολή χορού της Κούλας Πράτσικα, όπου και δημιούργησε τις πρώτες της χορογραφίες για παραστάσεις αρχαίου ρεπερτορίου του Καρόλου Κουν και του Τάκη Μουζενίδη, καθώς όμως και στην Αμερική. Αργότερα, το 1966, ιδρύθηκε η χορευτική της ομάδα «Χορικά». Μαζί με τον συνθέτη Νικηφόρο Ρώτα ανέπτυξε μια ερευνητική διαδικασία βασισμένη στην αρχή της «Πρακτικής ως Έρευνας», με σκοπό τη σύνθεση των τμημάτων του Χορού των αρχαίων δραμάτων. Στηριζόμενη στο τρίπτυχο «Πλόγος – μουσική – κίνηση», η διαδικασία αυτή εντάχθηκε στο εκπαιδευτικό πρόγραμμα της Νικολούδη, το οποίο παρουσιάζεται λεπτομερώς στο εξεταζόμενο βιβλίο (σ. 50 κ.ε.). Μέσα από τη συνεργασία της με τον Dalcroze, τον Carl Orff, την Πράτσικα και την Chladek, η Νικολούδη εντρυφά στη θεωρία της κιναισθητικής ενσυναίσθησης, όπου οι ρυθμοί του σώματος (καρδιακός παθμός, αναπνοή, κίνηση, ομιλία, βηματισμός) πρέπει να εναρμονίζονται με τους φυσικούς ρυθμούς (ημέρα, νύχτα, παλίρροια, άμπωτη). Ο χορός γίνεται «ενσάρκωση» της μουσικής, στο πλαίσιο της οποίας η μεν σωματικότητα του χορευτή μεταμορφώνεται σε οπτική παράσταση της μουσικής έκφρασης, η δε κίνηση σε μουσικό περιβάλλον. Από πολλές απόψεις, οι συναισθητικές αυτές θεωρίες σχετικά με την αρμονία των ρυθμών είναι αντίστοιχες της αντίληψης του Πλάτωνα και των αρχαίων ποιητών περί μουσικής (Thrasybulos Georgiades, *Musik und Rhythmus bei den Griechen* [Μουσική και Ρυθμός των Ελλήνων], Αμβούργο, 1958). Ωστόσο, το σύστημα κατάρτισης της κίνησης του σώματος στα χορικά της Νικολούδη βασίζεται στη Δυτική μουσική παράδοση.

Στο δεύτερο μέρος της μονογραφίας παρουσιάζονται οι μεμονωμένες χορογραφίες του Χορού σε ορισμένες παραστάσεις αρχαίου δράματος (σ. 69 κ.ε.), όπου τα μέλη του Χορού εξασκήθηκαν στον συγχρονισμό και την ερμηνεία του κειμένου, του τραγουδιού και της μουσικής σε συνδυασμό με τον χορό και την κίνηση του σώματος, κατά τρόπο ομοιόμορφο και συναισθητικό. Αυτό έγινε, φέρ' ειπείν, στην περίφημη παράσταση των αριστοφανικών *Ορνίθων* του Κουν το 1962. Όσον αφορά την απαγγελία, η Νικολούδη χρησιμοποιεί μια μορφή του άσματος, αλλά με διαφορετικούς στόχους από ό,τι ο Ροντήρης: η ομαδική απαγγελία ή το ομόφωνο τραγούδι αποτελούσε για αυτήν απλώς ένα μέσο για την επίτευξη μιας σωματικοποιημένης ενσυναίσθησης γύρω από την έννοια των πέξεων και της μουσικής. Ο επιτονισμός αναπαράχθηκε με τεχνικά μέσα, ενώ δεν χρησιμοποιήθηκαν άλλοι μουσικοί ή ζωντανή μουσική. Λόγω οικονομικών δυσχερειών η ομάδα «Χορικά» δεν κατάφερε να παραγάγει κάποιο έργο από το 1975 μέχρι το 1988 και από το 1990 μέχρι το 1995. Από το 1995 μέχρι το 2003 επιχορηγήθηκε από το Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού. Στη συνέχεια της μονογραφίας, ποιόπον, αναλύεται η μεθοδολογία των μεμονωμένων έργων (σ. 86 κ.ε.) –*Αγαμέμνων* (1968, με μουσική του Νικηφόρου Ρώτα· 1988), «Μορφές από την Ορέστεια» (1968, 1988), *Ευμενίδες* (1967, 1988), *Βάκχες* (1968, 1988), *Ορνίθες* (του Κουν, το 1960 και συχνά κατά τα μετέπειτα χρόνια) – συσχετίζοντας την εμφάνιση του χορευτή/ηθοποιού (ως προς το φύλο, τη μάσκα, το κοστούμι), τη χρήση σκηνικών αντικειμένων, της σκηνογραφίας και του φωτισμού, σύμφωνα με τις λεπτομέρειες των κινητικών ακολουθιών (κινήσεις, στάσεις), της μουσικής και της οπτικής της έκφρασης

μέσω της κίνησης του σώματος. Τα αποτελέσματα αυτών των αναδύσεων συνοψίζονται στη συνέχεια του βιβλίου (σ. 114 κ.ε.).

Ακολουθεί το τρίτο μέρος του βιβλίου, το οποίο καταλαμβάνει σχεδόν το μισό της πεπτής έκδοσης. Περιλαμβάνει μία ενότητα «Αντί επιλόγου» (σ. 119 κ.ε.)· φωτογραφίες των παραστάσεων (σ. 122 κ.ε.), οι οποίες είναι αποδύτως απαραίτητες για να μπορέσει κανείς να πάρει μια ιδέα από τη μαγεία της χορογραφικής έμπνευσης παράλληλα με τις προηγούμενες αναδύσεις· τη βιβλιογραφία (σ. 139 κ.ε.), η οποία χωρίζεται σε αρχεία, καθώς και σε ελληνική και ξενόγλωσση δευτερογενή βιβλιογραφία [εδώ δεν παρατίθενται εκτενώς όλες οι βιβλιογραφικές υποστημειώσεις]· και, τέλος, ένα παράρτημα στο οποίο παρουσιάζονται: 1) η εργογραφία της ομάδας «Χορικά» κατά τις περιόδους 1966–1975 (παραγωγές, παραστάσεις, περιοδείες, σύνθεση της ομάδας), 1988–1989 και 1995–2003 (συντελεστές, περιοδείες, παραστάσεις) (σ. 153 κ.ε.)· 2) παρτιτούρες του χορού σε σχέση με τη μουσική και τον λόγο στα χορικά των τραγωδιών *Αγαμέμνων* και *Βάκχες* (σ. 160 κ.ε.), οι οποίες δίνουν μια ιδέα για τον τρόπο εργασίας και προσέγγισης της Νικολούδη· 3) συγκεκριμένα ρυθμικά σχήματα από τα αρχαία μέτρα που χρησιμοποίησε η Νικολούδη στη χορογραφία των χορικών (σ. 178 κ.ε.)· 4) κριτικές από τον ελληνικό και τον διεθνή Τύπο (σ. 180 κ.ε.)· 5) μία επιστολή της Mary Wigman προς τη Ζουζού Νικολούδη (1956)· 6) άλλη αλληλογραφία· 7) κριτικά σχόλια και φωτογραφίες από ρεσιτάλ χορού της Ζουζού Γαζή (Νικολούδη) με τραγούδια του Schubert και του Schumann (1955) στο θέατρο Κοτοπούλη «Rex» στην Αθήνα.

Πρόκειται για μια επιστημονικά και εξαιρετικά τεκμηριωμένη μονογραφία με πλούσια βιβλιογραφία γύρω από ένα κεφάλαιο της σύγχρονης ελληνικής ιστορίας του χορού και της θεατρολογίας που δεν έχει ακόμη αξιολογηθεί δεόντως, αφού το πρόβλημα του σχεδιασμού του Χορού στις παραστάσεις αρχαίων δραμάτων, στο οποίο είχε επικεντρωθεί η Ζουζού Νικολούδη, αποτελεί ένα από τα πιο ευαίσθητα ζητήματα. Κατά συνέπεια, είναι προφανής η συμβολή της Νικολούδη σε σημαντικές παραστάσεις του αρχαίου ρεπερτορίου σε θέατρα κατά το δεύτερο μισό του 20ού αιώνα. Στις μεθόδους της καθηλιτεχνικής της κατάρτισης, όπως και στις χορογραφίες της, αντανακλάται η διεθνής ανάπτυξη του εκφραστικού χορού μετά τον Β' Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο. Οι χορογραφίες της συνέβαλαν αποφασιστικά στην επιτυχία θρυλικών παραστάσεων, όπως ήταν οι *Ορνιθες* του Κουν, έργο το οποίο μπόρεσε να παρακολουθήσει ο μισός πλανήτης. Η ιστορία της ομάδας «Χορικά» αντικατοπτρίζει σαν ρέκβιεμ την ελληνική εκπαιδευτική και πολιτιστική πολιτική. Χάρις στην πρωτοβουλία της Κάτιας Σαβράμη, μιας καταρτισμένης επιστήμονα του χορού, μπορεί κανείς να ελπίζει ότι θα συνεχιστεί η προσπάθεια αξιολόγησης της σύγχρονης ελληνικής ιστορίας του χορού, χωρίς την οποία κάθε ιστορία του σύγχρονου ελληνικού θεάτρου παραμένει ελλιπής.

WALTER PUCHNER  
UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS

MAXINE SHEETS-JOHNSTONE (1966, 1979, 1980, 2015) *The Phenomenology of Dance*. Fiftieth Anniversary Edition. Foreword by Merce Cunningham. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press. 140 pp. ISBN 978-1-4399-1261-4. Hardcover. £61.00.

The third re-edition of *The Phenomenology of Dance* celebrates the book's fiftieth anniversary, since its first publication in 1966. The volume contains the original Foreword by Merce Cunningham, as well as Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's Preface to both its second (1979) and present editions.

By now a classic read for dancers, students, theorists, educators and choreographers alike, *The Phenomenology of Dance* has introduced phenomenological methodology as an analytical tool offering insights into the "lived experience of dance". Moving beyond the description of dance as "movement in time and space", Sheets-Johnstone examines dance as a "complete and unified phenomenon", a dynamic flow of force, which generates (and dissolves) its own space and time as it is being created.

Divided into eleven chapters, the book explores the importance of a phenomenological study of the consciousness of movement for the creation, performance and study of dance. The analytical focus is on dance "as a totality with intrinsic structures" and as a "global phenomenon", as well as on the "immediate encounter with dance as both a formed and performed art" (p. 5). As Sheets-Johnstone notes in her Preface to the Second Edition, the book mainly focuses on symbolic dances, which dominated the field at the time of its writing, while her subsequent works also tackle later evolutions in dance. Still, its core concepts are pertinent to the developments in dance, from the 1960s, with Merce Cunningham and the Judson Church's experiments, to the vast scene of today. Perhaps this was also what prompted Cunningham to write a foreword to the initial edition, underlining the book's importance for a better understanding of dance "in its own necessity, not so much as a representation of the moving world, rather than as a part of it with inherent springs" (p. ix).

Starting with a brief discussion on the perception of dance, in Chapter 1, Sheets-Johnstone distinguishes the lived experience from a reflective account of the dance and introduces the dancer as the "implicitly aware moving center of the form" (p. 3). This idea is further elaborated in Chapter 2, giving a phenomenological account of spatiality and temporality, as inherent structures of the human consciousness-body, founded on the "pre-reflective awareness of oneself as he lives" (p. 12). As an *ekstatic* being, the consciousness-body comprises a temporality and spatiality in itself, always in flight from its presence. In the same way, dance is (or should be)

perceived intuitively as it unfolds in front of the spectator, before any attempt for reflective analysis and critical evaluation of its form.

Departing from Susanne Langer's description of dance as an *illusion of force*,<sup>2</sup> Sheets-Johnstone discusses, in Chapter 3, dance as a virtual force, particularized by its very specific organization of spatiality and temporality. Chapter 4 further elaborates on the interrelated and mutually influential qualities of virtual force: tensional, linear, areal and projectional qualities constitute its *plastic components* insofar as they are freely created and developed according to the demands of the form (p. 39).

Chapters 5 and 6 focus on abstraction and expression, "inherent in the creation of a symbolic form" (p. 47). Abstraction of feelings and of movement, in symbolic dance, gives it significance "in and of itself". The meaning of the symbolic dance, intrinsic to it, can neither be "read" in distinct gestures nor in their cumulative sum. Since dance appears as a dynamic form in-the-making, at the moment of its creation and presentation, its import is similarly dynamic, acknowledging the diasporic nature of the form. There is no division between form and expression: a "cohesive meaning is reflected by a presentationally cohesive form", created, performed and intuited as a "perpetual revelation of sheer force" (p. 64).

Having elucidated the qualities or plastic components of symbolic dance, comprising an illusion of force, Sheets-Johnstone revisits the discourse on temporality and spatiality as bound to one another in and through movement, in reference to the dynamic structure of the dance. In Chapter 7, the dynamic line is conversed as an overarching projection, or flow, of force(s) from a beginning point (p. 71), unique to each dance and shaped by the dance's particular organization of forces. As spatially unified and temporally continuous, the dynamic line can be evaluated by the dancer/creator as mirrored in a vocalized or inwardly heard dynamic line (pp. 70–71). The role of breathing is also acknowledged in the chapter, although in her Preface to the Second Edition the author has expressed her intention to further reflect upon it in her more recent inquiries. Chapter 8 advances the discussion on the role of the vocalized line in relation to rhythm. The vocalized dynamic line reflects the changes that occur in the qualitative structure of the movement with each revelation of force. While the rhythmic structure is reflectively perceived, the dynamic line is intuited (p. 86). As the author argues, even as a set, specific structure, the rhythmic structure – its tempo, durations and accentual patterns – is subordinate to the dynamic line (pp. 87–88).

Returning to the spatialization of force in dance and its emergence as a visual-kinetic phenomenon, Chapter 9 reflects on the imaginative space of dance, as "an intentional object of

---

2 Susanne K. Langer, *Feeling and Form*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953.

consciousness": an intentional mental representation of an absent (unreal) object of an "immediate and absolute appearance". In that respect, the mental image of the body in movement differs from the body schema, through which we apprehend the spatial presence of our bodies. Furthermore, the imperative for a scientific distinction between proprioception and kinesthesia, as well as the problematic alliance between bodily schema and pathology and their implications on the art and study of dance are discussed in the Preface to the Fiftieth Anniversary Edition of *The Phenomenology of Dance* with reference to the author's later research.

Throughout the book, Sheets-Johnstone expresses her acute interest in dance education (as well as in the role of dance within education) and the ways in which phenomenology can highlight dance's intrinsic educational values and enhance its inherent creativity, rather than "sacrificing" dance in the altar of education. The final two chapters make a case for the value of creative intelligence and the need for dance to be seen (and evaluated) as an aesthetic activity, an end in itself, rather than as a means to individual growth, productive living, socialization and so on (p. 118). The author underlines the need for closer interaction between dance educators and professional dancers, and highlights the role of a phenomenological analysis in distinguishing dance from movement, reinstating the first in academia, as a formed and performed art.

This anniversary edition offered the author yet another chance to revisit her original text. While her latest preface offers her readers an insight into Sheets-Johnstone's broadened interests, as well as on refinements and even re-evaluations of her early work during her career – often in accordance with wider shifts within the dance field, both creatively and epistemologically –, it seems important to still have the original study intact. As the author herself notes, it testifies of a very different time in dance affairs and literature. However, as her peers have repeatedly stated, *The Phenomenology of Dance* has been a book ahead of its time, still a key-read today, not just about what phenomenology can contribute to dance, but also about what dance has to offer in any philosophical study of the lived experience.

IOANNA TZARTZANI  
DANCE RESEARCHER

# CONTRIBUTORS

**Ann Cooper Albright** is a dancer and scholar, Professor and Chair of Dance at Oberlin College and President of the Society of Dance History Scholars. Combining her interests in dancing and cultural theory, she is involved in teaching a variety of courses that seek to engage students in both practices and theories of the body. She is the author of *Engaging Bodies: The Politics and Poetics of Corporeality* (2013), which won the Selma Jeanne Cohen Prize from the American Society for Aesthetics; *Modern Gestures: Abraham Walkowitz Draws Isadora Duncan Dancing* (2010); *Traces of Light: Absence and Presence in the Work of Loïe Fuller* (2007); *Choreographing Difference: the Body and Identity in Contemporary Dance* (1997) (to be published in Greek by Nissos Press in September 2016, titled *Χορογραφώντας τη διαφορά. Το σώμα και η ταυτότητα στον σύγχρονο χορό*); and co-editor of *Moving History/Dancing Cultures* (2001) and *Taken by Surprise: Improvisation in Dance and Mind* (2003). The book *Encounters with Contact Improvisation* (2010) is the product of one of her adventures in writing and dancing and dancing and writing with others. Ann is founder and director of Girls in Motion, an award-winning after-school program in the Oberlin public schools, and codirector of the digital humanities website Accelerated Motion: Towards a New Dance Literacy in America.

**Nina Alcalay** studied Political Science at the School of Law, University of Athens, as well as Dance in Athens, Israel, Belgium and London (MA in Dance Studies, Laban Centre, City University London). Since 1986, Nina has been actively and variously involved in dance, as a dancer, contemporary dance teacher, and writer. In 1987–2010, she was a member of the editorial board of *Xopós* magazine. She has also worked for the Publications Department of the Kalamata International Dance Festival, the Athens and Epidaurus Festival, the Athens Concert Hall, the Thessaloniki Concert Hall, and the Onassis Cultural Centre, Athens. Her book *Κρατική Σχολή Χορού: Παρελθόν – Παρόν – Μέλλον* [State School of Dance: Past – Present – Future] appeared in Greek in 2002 (Dian Press). In 2008–2010 she was Head of the Dance Sector of the National Hellenic Centre of Theatre and Dance. Since 2013, she has designed and taught theoretical seminars on Postmodern Dance at the Onassis Cultural Centre, Athens.

**Ramsay Burt** is Professor of Dance History at De Montfort University, UK. His publications include *The Male Dancer: Bodies, Spectacle, Sexualities* (1995; revised 2007), *Alien Bodies: Representations of Modernity, "Race" and Nation in Early Modern Dance* (1997), *Judson Dance*

## CONTRIBUTORS

---

*Theater: Performative Traces* (2006), with Valerie Briginshaw, *Writing Dancing Together* (2009), and *Ungoverning Dance* (forthcoming). In 2013–2014, with Professor Christy Adair, he undertook a two-year funded research project into British Dance and the African Diaspora, which culminated in an exhibition at the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool. With Susan Foster, he is founder editor of *Discourses in Dance*. In 1999 he was Visiting Professor at the Department of Performance Studies, New York University. Since 2008 he has been a regular visiting teacher at PARTS in Brussels. In 2010 he was Professeur Invité at the Université Nice Sophia Antipolis.

**Samuel N. Dorf** is Assistant Professor of Music at the University of Dayton in Dayton, Ohio. He received a PhD in Historical Musicology from Northwestern University in 2009. He has published articles dealing with the performance and reinvention of ancient Greek music and dance in fin-de-siècle Paris, and queer music reception. He is currently working on a book for Oxford University Press about collaborations between the scholars and performers of Greek antiquity in Paris around 1900.

**Kosmas Kosmopoulos** graduated from PARTS, Brussels, in 1998, completing both its courses (Training and Research), as well as from the Cultural Management Department, University of Basel (Master of Advanced Studies). He works as a choreographer, dance teacher and manager of cultural and educational programmes in Germany and Greece. He has presented stage works and dance films at major theatres and festivals in Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland, Portugal, and Greece. His research is focused on the correlation between artistic creation and political-economic and social conditions. Since 2013, Kosmas has organized educational arts programmes for children in Berlin, co-financed by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and Deutsche Telekom. He has also conducted research workshops about modern methods of performing and choreographing for professional dancers and dance students. He has presented several group performances with the LUNA PARK organisation.

**Walter Puchner** studied Theatre Science (Theaterwissenschaft) at the University of Vienna, where he was also nominated Doctor of Philosophy (1972), with a dissertation about the Greek Shadow Theatre, and Dozent für Theaterwissenschaft with a Habilitationsschrift on the evolution of theatrical forms in Greek folk culture (1977). Since then, he has permanently lived in Greece; yet, for thirty years, he also taught Theatre History at the Institut für Theaterwissenschaft, University of Vienna. He taught Theatre History at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Crete, and he was elected President of the Department of Literature, Rethymnon, in 1987. Over the same period, he was Visiting Professor (Gastordinarius) at the University of Graz, Austria (*Ethnologia Europaea*). In 1989 he started teaching at the University of Athens, first

## CONTRIBUTORS

---

at the Department of Literature and then (1991) at the Department of Theatre Studies, where he was also elected President and Deputy President of the Department. In 1994, he became a Corresponding Member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. In 2002, he was elected first Vice President of the Greek Folklore Society. He has published 80 books, over 300 studies and about 1,000 book reviews.

**Rob Roznowski** is Associate Professor at Michigan State University (MSU), where he serves as the Head of Acting and Directing in the Department of Theatre. His publications include books (*Inner Monologue in Acting* and *Collaboration in Theatre: A Practical Guide for Designers and Directors*, both published by Palgrave Macmillan), plays (*The Summer Circle* [Brooklyn Publishers], *Arts or Crafts* [Norman Maine Plays], and *Comfort Food* [Original Work Publishing]) and articles, including a recent one in *Theatre Topics*. He worked as the National Outreach Education Coordinator for the Actors' Equity Association and has appeared extensively throughout the US as actor and director. He has directed internationally in Colombia and Greece as a Fulbright Fellow. Rob served on the faculty of Marymount Manhattan College, American Musical Dramatic Academy, SUNY/Stony Brook and Stephens College. At MSU he was awarded the "Mid-Michigan Alumni Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching" and the "Michigan Professor of the Year".

**Katia Savrami**, choreologist, holds an MA and a PhD from the Laban Centre, City University London. She is Assistant Professor at the Department of Theatre Studies, University of Patras, Greece. Her publications include books in Greek and in English (*Zouzou Nikoloudi: Ancient Dramatic Chorus through the Eyes of a Modern Choreographer* [Cambridge Scholars Publishing; forthcoming in 2016]) and articles, including a recent one titled "Contemporary Dance in the Age of Austerity: The Paradigm of Greece" (in *Choreologica: Journal of the European Association of Dance Historians*, published by Dance Books). Katia worked at the State School of Dance and the Professional Dance School of the National Opera in Athens, Greece. She has also worked as a writer and critical reader for the Hellenic Open University, Patras. She is a member of the International Editorial Board of *Research in Dance Education* (Taylor and Francis Group, UK). Recently she was Visiting Professor at the University of Surrey, UK.

**Kiki Selioni** is a movement teacher and acting coach in various drama and dance schools in Greece and the UK. She studied Dance Theatre at the Laban Centre in London (BA and MA, City University London). She holds a PhD in Movement for Actors and in Acting, awarded by the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (University of London), where she is currently Affiliate Research Fellow conducting a postdoctoral project on a complete acting method based on

## CONTRIBUTORS

---

Laban's works and Aristotelian theory (Biophysical Acting). She is the author of the book *Laban – Aristotle: Ζώον (Zoon) in Theatre Πράξις (Praxis); Towards a Methodology for Movement Training for the Actor and in Acting* (Hellinoekdotiki Publishing, 2014).

**Ioanna Tzartzani** holds an Honours degree in Sociology from Panteion University, Athens, Greece, and a degree in Dance Teaching (Ballet and Contemporary Dance) from the Greek Ministry of Culture. She has been awarded an MA in Dance Studies from the University of Surrey, UK, where she also completed her PhD thesis, titled: *Interplays of Ethnicity, Nationalism and Globalisation within the Greek Contemporary Dance Scene: Choreographic Choices and Constructions of National Identity*. She has taught Dance Research Methodologies, Somatics, Dance History and Critical Theory at the Department of Theatre Studies, University of the Peloponnese, AKMI College, and the D. Gregoriadou Professional Dance School. She has been a member of the editorial board of *Xopós plus* magazine, and has written articles and dance critiques for *Athens News* and *Choros International Dance Journal*. Ioanna is a qualified Body Control Pilates and Aerial Yoga instructor, and has taught in Athens since 2004.