

# Nordic Journal of Dance

– practice, education and research



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## Editorial

Dance research and dance practice are developing steadily in the Nordic countries. *Nordic Journal of Dance: Practice, Education and Research* reflects this development and takes part in it by offering a forum for discussion and exchange. Practitioners and researchers representing various dance forms seem to be increasingly willing to engage in self-reflective processes and to share their reflections with others. Reflective practice and sharing experiences are first steps towards formal research. This issue illuminates this gradual process from practice to research quite clearly. The first article, a practical paper by Charlotte Füst titled "The Possibilities of Ballet and Floor-barre in Expanding Dancers' Potential" illuminates an approach to ballet training that the author has developed during many years of professional practice. She has developed her approach based on her personal experiences and extended it towards supporting other dancers who have faced various challenges, including injury. Dancers' comments are included and their experiences broaden authors' perspective. This approach resembles the strategies used in practice-based qualitative research, where data collection can be very similar. The main difference between this kind of reflective practice and practice-based research is that in the latter data collection and analysis happens in a more systematic manner, and the inquiry process is set up by a research question and consequent methodological choices.

The second paper by Paula Salosaari, titled "Perception and Movement Imagery as Tools in Performative Acts Combining Live Music and Dance", illuminates a more systematic approach to practice-based research in the field of ballet. Here, the focus is also in expanding possibilities, now in the artistic and choreographic realm. In Salosaari's project, data has been gathered during a series of workshops, and the author has used the participants' feedback in developing her artistic approach. This article illuminates how practi-

tioners can be researchers within their own professional practice. An academic institution and heavy theoretical or philosophical emphasis are not always focal in practical, or artistic research. It can take place in artistic or pedagogical contexts and include a lot of contextual, practical description. This kind of research is accessible and relevant to practitioners.

The third article, titled "The Embodied Teaching Moment: The Embodied Character of the Dance Teacher's Practical-pedagogical Knowledge Investigated in Dialogue with Two Contemporary Dance Teachers" is also a practice-based research paper by a dance practitioner, Tone Pernille Østern. Here the systematic approach extends also to data analysis and use of literature, greatly informed by phenomenological philosophy. The author carefully leads the readers through her process of arriving at a thematic structure, based on the participants' experiential accounts. This article shows how it is possible to generate deep understanding of a phenomenon through qualitative approaches to research with few participants. It also illuminates the connection between philosophy and embodied practice.

All articles in this issue are in English. This is the authors' choice, and the editorial board will continue to discuss the need to publish dance related articles in Nordic languages. This issue also includes a book review by Cecilia Olsson, and information about exciting online resource, that is, conference proceedings of a global summit "Dance, Young People and Change" that took place last summer in Taipei, Taiwan. These brief contributions are vital connections to the international dance community that I believe Nordic dance professionals appreciate greatly. I think that the scope of these articles touches our exciting field broadly and I sincerely hope that the readers find this issue interesting and stimulating.

Eeva Anttila  
Issue Editor

## The Possibilities of Ballet and Floor-barre in Expanding Dancers' Potential

Charlotte Fürst

### ABSTRACT

With proper and helpful anatomical alignment, ballet could be of use to many more dancers. Applying the principles in Zena Rommett and Maggie Black's teachings of many years could help dancers of all styles with their growth and development. Many dancers suffer from tension and injuries and do not have enough awareness of their personal anatomical structures. Ballet can be of use to anyone if properly taught, especially with regard to placement of the pelvis. One focus here is on tucking the pelvis under. It is commonly taught in ballet, but prevents the natural movement of the body. If teachers were taught a more helpful functional ballet, many more dancers and dance students of all kinds could benefit from the simple basic support and pleasure ballet can give.



**Photos:** Hans Nilsson, former dancer from the Royal Swedish Ballet

### SAMMENDRAG

Ballett och floor-barre och deras möjligheter till expansion av dansarens potential.

Med hjälp av korrekta och stödjande anatomiska linjer, kan ballett vara till nytta hos många fler dansare. Principerna i Zena Rommett's och Maggie Black's mångåriga undervisning skulle kunna hjälpa dansare inom alla stilar med både utveckling och förbättring. Många dansare har problem med skador och för mycket spänning och är inte medvetna om sina egna anatomiska strukturer. Ballett kan vara användbart för alla dansare när det lärs ut korrekt, speciellt med tanke på bäckenets placering. "Tucking under" som vi bla fokuserar på här lärs ofta ut i ballett och hindrar en naturlig rörlighet i kroppen. Om lärarna fick lära sig, och ha tillgång till, en mer konstruktiv funktionell ballett, skulle många fler dansare och danselever av alla slag dra nytta av det grundläggande stödet och glädjen ballett kan ge.

**Photo 1.** Preparing for the photo shoot.

## The Possibilities of Ballet and Floor-barre in Expanding Dancers' Potential

Charlotte Fürst

*A way of converting the classical training to become more ergonomic and natural for the entire body. It is the wisest way of working, using your tool, your own individual body, this way.* (Ayline Piltaver, freelance dancer, Sweden)

As a dancer and teacher, I am influenced by the ballet and the floor-barre techniques developed and taught in New York by Maggie Black and Zena Rommett respectively. I often visit my teachers and their followers to be in touch with and maintain their methods of working – methods that give ease and freedom to all styles of dancing. Periods of injuries drew me to these teachers. They supported the functional ballet technique that made it all work for me. That became my long-term choice in order to stay free of injuries and to take care of my body. There are alternatives, but many dancers choose ballet and floor-barre.

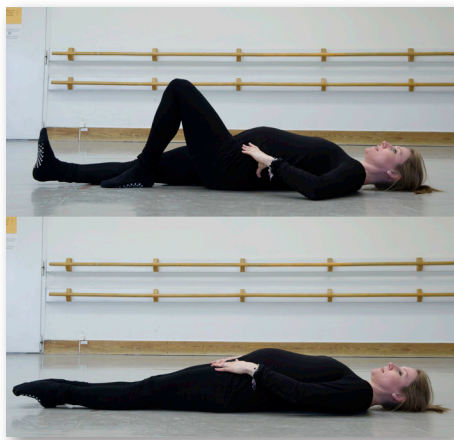
Most dancers in New York have contracts for a single season or one production at a time. It is important to stay in shape and free of injuries to get the next job. Dancers often choose teachers who support healthy ergonomics and wholesome anatomical thinking in ballet and floor-barre training for their daily classes and maintenance. Ballet and floor-barre can give freedom and ease to every dancer's body, as well as support to all styles of dance and movement, using the techniques of Maggie Black and Zena Rommett.

An interesting group of dancers took part in Zena Rommett's classes (Thompson 2008;

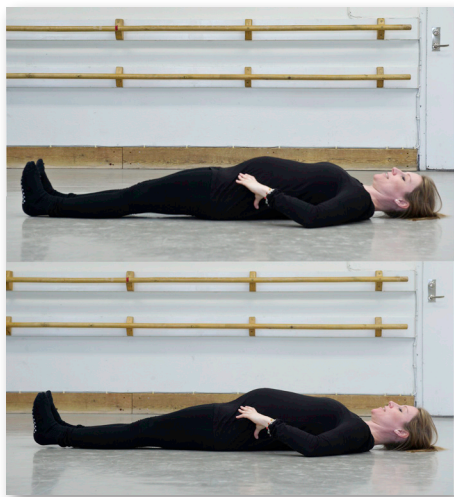
Stafford 2012) and in Maggie Black's studio (Zeller 2009; Strauss 2012). They came from world famous companies such as New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Alvin Ailey, Merce Cunningham, Martha Graham, Lar Lubovich, Paul Taylor, Twyla Tharp, José Limon, Broadway, Joffrey Ballet and others. Everyone was there for the same reasons: to be able to go on stage at night, or to improve their technique, to remain free of injuries, to rehabilitate or to prepare for varied assignments in dance and on stage.

### Floor-barre

In the Zena Rommett Floor-Barre® Technique the dancer is lying down, preparing the body for the standing positions in ballet. The dancer develops awareness of his or her body and its abilities, and through understanding and respecting the body, improvement comes quickly. The technique is clear and simple, gentle and effective, and brings the dancer to know and to trust his or her body and its qualities. Floor-barre combines ballet with anatomical principles of alignment. Using the floor, the dancer strengthens and corrects the placement of the pelvis, spine and legs, (also so important in Maggie Black's teachings). This, in combination with very calm simple lengthening movements through the spine and legs, will allow the dancer to access the full range of movement he or she is genetically given. The mind and the body are beautifully focused and engaged to work together in this process and that is in itself relaxing.



**Photo 2.** With a neutral pelvis (as much as possible during pregnancy), the dancer lengthens the spine and the legs in two directions, tying the body into a single unit.



**Photo 3.** Tucking under shows how the knees are slightly bending. The shoulders and the neck are changing, creating more space underneath them. The bottom picture shows correct pelvis position with a long spine and legs.

## Standing up Correctly

The training offered by Maggie Black was a neutral ballet technique based partly on inspiration from Mr. Vincenzo Celli, an Italian Cecchetti teacher

in New York. Many teachers who are followers of Maggie Black's principles work according to these thoughts today. We are talking about ballet and floor-barre, but mostly about standing up correctly according to basic anatomical and mechanical principles. Many dancers that I have worked with through the years have clearly been taught to tuck under in order to try to access more turn out. This locks the muscles passing in front of the hips down to the legs (Grieg 1994; Melton 2011), creating tight gluteus, psoas and quadriceps muscles. The small turn out muscles from the sacrum and the ischial tuberosities (sitz bones), to the greater trochanter, (side of the hips in line with the crease of the hips) are pulled so tight that they cannot do their job properly. This creates bulky seats and thighs and will pull you back on your heels, preventing the dancer from moving with speed and lightness. Many dancers that I have worked with have lower back, knee and feet problems due to this. In floor-barre, when we are lying down on our backs, we more easily lengthen the back of the thigh and the spine, and through this the pelvis will be helped in correcting itself.

Or the other way around: when the pelvis is corrected, and the sitz bones are put into place, we can lengthen the back of the thighs and we can gradually allow the spine through the chest to become neutral and taller. This gives us a functional body to work with. I find that the dancers are relieved to let go of the tension created due to misconceptions about their postures.

*To understand that I could turn out and keep my own natural curve in the low back was a relief. That is, keeping the posture that was mine instead of trying to take the shape of someone else's body and form.* (Karolina Brock, freelance dancer, trained at the Royal Swedish Ballet School)

When I help dancers to let go of their tucking under, they also eventually let go of shoulder tension and limited breathing. Tucking the pelvis under will instantly cause the dancers to hunch their shoulders forward. (Allen 2009) The sternum is pulled down, and a compromise in the space for the lungs is created. The dancer will then try to lift the sternum and pull the shoulders back, and there you have a chain of added tension to the upper body and some unnecessary restriction of breath.



**Photo 4**

4a. Ylva tucks the pelvis under, the thighs are bulging, the sternum is pulled down. As a result the shoulders hunch forward and the chin sticks out. The weight of the body is moved back onto the heels.

4b. I instructed Ylva to counter-move to correct the previous posture. The sternum is pulled up and the shoulders are pulled back. A lot of tension is brought to the upper body and she is brought even further back on her heels.

## Strong Center

With the strong support of the low abdominal muscles, you can more easily pull the spine out of the hips and lengthen the upper body. At the same time, the low abdominals are the force behind pushing the feet into the floor. As Zena Rommett would say: "You have to work from a very strong center." A sense of wellbeing then enters the body and mind. Peace and quiet takes the place of physical, mental and emotional struggle.

*Not just external training, but also a feeling of a deep inner practice. It is like medicine.*

*I experience peace and quiet and a more natural way of working. The dance has become more unfolding.*

*Through floor-barre I realized how to let the deep abdominal muscles take part in every movement. That automatically transfers to the standing positions and stays with me. This has allowed my face and jaw to relax and I actually feel a beautiful harmony from within.* (Cecilia Canemyr, dancer, Royal Swedish Ballet)

The point is to stand up in a way that won't overwork the muscles or hinder the freedom of movement and breath. This comes before the variety of styles in classical ballet, or the styles of other techniques. When I guide the dancers this way, they let go of the struggle to fit into "the form" and they can instead move, breathe and improve their technique and wellbeing.

## A Foundation for Further Work

Dancers are expected to know their own style for repertoire, choreography and other kinds of work. During class instead the dancer uses technical principles that allow him or her to use ballet and floor-barre as a foundation for further work, just as a pianist practices his scales on the piano, and then plays jazz, classical or modern music. Training the instrument - the hands - no matter what style of music is important to the musician. In ballet and floor-barre the dancer has the possibility to develop his or her instrument - the body - in the best way, and this is made clear. That is why many styles of dancers were drawn to Maggie Black and Zena Rommett and their teachings, and still, today, to their

followers. It is about finding the dancer's own natural functional possibilities when it comes to placement and movement.

The main rule is that each dancer must respect his or her own personal conditions, abilities and options and continue to work and grow from there. This way everyone can draw the good benefits from ballet, no matter bodies, structure or style of dancing. From there freedom and strength in the muscles and movement can be created. This is important since the majority of all dancers don't have 180 degree turn out, and it is not the turn out that creates the dance. Ballet training can give advantages, as more people would realize, if the turn out wasn't overworked. Excessive turn out creates both upper body and lower body problems for many bodies. I find that the flexibility of the hips is increased when dancers work from a neutral spine and their own honest body. The dancers tend to turn out a lot more than they think they can once the pelvis is in the correct place. When the placement is "honest", the muscles let go of the hindrance of gripping.

## Equal Weight

To be free and functional in training, the use of "equal weight" is important. The dancer is muscularly so very "lifted up, mainly in the

spine, and pelvis" that the weight of the body is, in a sense, taken off the legs, allowing them to move freely. The dancer distributes the weight evenly over both feet in fifth position as much as possible in closing from all sides, countering the tendency to keep the weight too far back, or even on the heels, hanging at the barre helped by the hand. Keeping the weight too far back leads to a muscular struggle. No one can move forward with their weight, or most of it, on his or her heels. It is important to keep the weight balanced over the forefoot in order to allow freedom of movement. The dancer still lengthens and uses solid energy through the heels, in contact with the sitz bones and the turn out muscles.

Through standing straight up and down parallel, the dancer should push through the base of the big toe, the base of the smallest toe and through the heel, (a triangular shape). S/he will find energy and lengthening from the lower abdomen down through the sitz bones, inner thighs legs, heels and forefeet. At the same time s/he will find energy from the lower abdomen lengthening upward through the spine. The opposition of pushing down through the triangle will lift and lengthen the spine out of the hips. This takes care of a lot of postural problems and prevents arching or tucking. This creates a strong stance in the center and is the foundation for good balance and all the turns and jumps. This is Newton's third law: For every action there is an opposite and equal reaction.

Then the dancer should pull the armpits down, through pushing down and out of the

### Photo 5.

5a. Charlotte with the triangle under her foot. The base of the big toe, the base of the little toe and the heel.

5b. Cecilia and Ylva are instructed to push down through the three points of the foot. The weight is balanced over the foot and the spine is lengthened.



### Photo 6

6a. The dancers use their abdominal energy to push down through the three points of their feet as well as pulling the armpits down and out through the heel of the hands. This lengthens the spine and keep you steady on the floor.

6b. Continuing the same energy.

6c. Through the use of the lower abdominal energy the body is supported through the push down the legs to the feet, as well as upwards through spine out the arms.

heel of the hand. This engages the latissimus dorsi, a stabilizer of the entire arm and back of the dancer. The arms will have a tremendous freedom and strength through this. It is the same energy as of the Martha Graham dancer. The energy, or force, is always coming from the center moving out through the heels of the hands and feet. Always connecting the feet and hands to the lower abdomen. Zena Rommett used to have us round the arms in first position, and then make fists. It creates a similar strong connection with the arms, latissimus and the abdomen.

## Freedom of Movement

The principle is to stand up in a way that allows freedom of movement at any moment and in any direction. To be so lifted and lengthened in the body that the legs can do whatever they want brings lightness to the allegro. This creates ease and speed, but is not really new in the history of dance. This concept attracts all styles of dancing with great conviction, and it is a neutral way of strengthening and training the body. In every plié, you need to keep the elasticity and strength,

**Photo 7.** Continuing the energy of pushing down through the triangle, armpits, heel of hands, we just move the spine up and forward into turn out and relevé, Strong, secure and with ease.



in order to be able to jump at any given time. Plié is not a stretch, but an energetic preparation for jumping.

After a back injury and this type of dance rehabilitation, a female dancer from The Royal Swedish Ballet ended up jumping lighter, quicker and higher than some of the men in the company. She was so lifted out of her hips, so very lengthened in her spine and legs, both in her jumps and in her landings, that she had the freedom to move and to use the legs with as much energy as she wanted. It all became simple, beautiful and fun. Many dancers and teachers I have worked with through the years say that they had no idea that it could be so simple and easy to teach or to dance. To find such options of joy, ease and pleasure in the dance is very welcome.

**Photo 8.** *Leading with the heel, the dancers turn out just as far as they can go without shifting the hips. You feel the leg solid in the hip and you easily control how far to go when the hips supported by the floor.*



What they mean is that it is such a relief to be able to focus on one thing alone: how to be lifted and lengthened, up and forward, and how they therefore are able to distribute the weight evenly. Then it all falls into place.

*Floor-barre and the style of ballet represented by Zena Rommett and Maggie Black was a major experience in my life. Finally I had just a few general things to focus on while dancing. Earlier I had my head filled with "stretch the toes, turn out, pull up, lift the inner thigh" etc. I finally understood what it really meant to be lifted and lengthened. To balance and to turn became a conscious result of my work, not a coincidence, and by chance. To me, because of this, ballet became something whole, and not bits and pieces and demands.* (Karolina Brock, freelance dancer, trained at the Royal Swedish Ballet School)



**Photo 9.** *Lengthening through the standing leg and spine, hips and heels forward to secure the turn out.*

When ballet is used this way the dancer can have pleasure, fun and freedom in movement. Using ballet for ballet, or as a basic neutral technique, either way all styles of dancing can draw support from it, and the resulting possibility of artistic freedom is beautiful.

### Rehabilitation after Injury

I worked with several seriously injured dancers at The Royal Swedish Ballet. One of them was a principal dancer, close to the end of his career. By putting him on the floor after knee surgery and teaching him how to lengthen through the legs with a correct pelvis, he was able to stand up taller and with more freedom in his legs.

Through using the parallel movements of floor-barre in order to correct the line of the legs, his joints were strengthened and straightened.

*After a serious knee injury with major surgery, I started dance rehabilitation through floor-*

*barre and the more modern principles of ballet. Lying down, getting the weight off my knee, enabled me to start the process early. This corrected and refined my movement and lengthened the muscles in such way that it changed my entire dancing. This new knowledge has kept me free of injuries and gave me curiosities that lead to a renewal of my dance training. I feel with certainty that this simple and specific training prolonged my career.* (Hans Nilsson, principal dancer, Royal Swedish Ballet)

The same happened with a female dancer in the middle of her career.

*After an accident with a major foot injury, a spiral fracture on my lower leg, I was told I might not dance again. I started with floor-*



**Photo 10.** Long legs pulling out of the hips. The entire standing side is first of all lengthened in two directions. Turn out with the heels forward without tucking the pelvis. The spine grows out of the hips as the leg is lowered.

*barre and I instantly felt that this filled a void in my regular ballet training. I learned to isolate and to be more detailed and specific in how to use my muscles. I ended up more functionally trained and with a greater knowledge. Through my career it has supported me through vacations, and, oddly enough, it enhances my coordination.* (Karin Forslind, soloist, Royal Swedish Ballet)

Her body lengthened tremendously. She became lifted out of her hips and the legs and the feet had room to work freely. Her weight was moved forward to lessen the muscle work of the lower leg.

After floor-barre, you start some exercises at the barre with the preparation of a parallel relevé, lower, turn out and keep the weight forward, lifted in the hip. This relevé will help you correct the pelvis and the legs and support remaining lifted in the hips. This is very important.

By working with parallel legs you strengthen

the inner thigh muscles. They bi-function as turn out muscles and will assist your turn out better when you lift yourself up and forward. The dancer will thus be less inclined to be “sitting” on the legs.

*The use of floor-barre and the placement of the neutral ballet gave me better qualities and more beautiful lines. I learned to dance without forcing the movement and felt strength coming quickly. Early in my career I got a stress fracture in my foot. I understood something was wrong in my training and realized something needed to change. It is easy as a dancer to think of doing the steps instead of how to do them. Through floor-barre I could lie down and feel the movement*

*instead of just doing it. You learn how to listen and how to understand your own body, without cheating or forcing, or being judgmental about yourself.* (Cecilia Canemyr, dancer, Royal Swedish Ballet)

## Basic Principles

### 1. Triangle.

Push down through the base of the big and small toes, and through the heels, a triangular shape.

### 2. Armpit.

Pull the armpits down through pushing the heel of the hand down. This engages the latissimus dorsi and stabilizes the center and entire back of the dancer. The arms will have a lot of freedom and strength through this.

### 1. and 2. Triangle and armpit.

This takes care of a lot of postural problems. This creates a strong stance in the center and is the foundation for good balance and all the turns and jumps. This is the third law of Newton: For every action there is an opposite and equal reaction. By pushing down, you will be pulled up through the spine.

### 3. Spine lifted.

Always engage the lower abdomen and lift and move the spine out of the hips, before anything else. Moving and leading with the spine through space, the feet and legs will follow. The other way around, you are in trouble.

**Photo 11.** Spine leading the movement forward with the legs following. Energy through the center pushing down through the legs.



#### 4. Neutral spine and pelvis.

Neutral placement helps the body function mechanically correct. This enhances technique and prevents injuries.

#### 5. No tucking under.

Tucking under creates tight gluteus, psoas and quadriceps muscles and prevents movement. Tucking under will instantly pull down the sternum and give the dancer shoulders that hunch forward. Letting go of tucking under will eventually release shoulder tension.

#### 6. Give the lungs full space.

With a neutral pelvis, the lungs have full space. We need access to full breath for good circulation and stamina.

#### 7. Deep abdominal muscles

Through floor-barre we develop the pelvic floor and deep abdominal muscles, transverse abdominis. This use of the muscles in floor-barre automatically transfers to the standing steps and stays with the body in the movement. This keeps a strong center and allows other areas to relax.

#### 8. Wellbeing.

A sense of wellbeing enters the body and mind when there is less to focus on and the body lets go of excess muscle work. Peace and quiet takes the place of physical, mental and emotional struggle.

#### 9. Turn out.

Allow the turn out to follow each dancer's natural facility. The rotation comes from the hip joints - out of a neutral spine. Leading with the heel creates a solid and good lever. This gives better lines and a more correct footwork. It leads to healthier joints, less muscular tension and artistic freedom.

#### 10. Turn out muscles.

The six main turnout muscles appear from the sacrum and the ischial tuberosities, the sitz bones, and attach to the greater trochanter, (side of the hips in line with the crease of the hips). The inner thighs assist the turn out. With a neutral pelvis all the muscles and joints work together without strain. The hips, knees and ankles as well as the entire spine will work strongly and efficiently.

#### 11. "Equal weight".

When you are on two feet, you need equal weight on both feet. You are lifted in the pelvis and body so that the weight of the body is, in a sense, taken off the legs. This makes it easier to distribute the weight evenly, giving us the allegro, the lightness and speed.

With these principles and guidelines, ballet can be of use to every dancer, teacher and student. It is wonderfully simple. Of course there is a lot more to say, but this is a part of it all.



**Photo 12.** Charlotte and Cecilia finishing the photo session.

#### Appendix:

Ylva McCormac and Cecilia Canemyr, (pregnant), dancers of the Royal Swedish Ballet appear on the pictures as well as Charlotte Fürst.

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#### BIOGRAPHY

**Charlotte Fürst**, Stockholm, Sweden, is a ballet teacher (dance pedagogue) and a Physical Therapist. Charlotte teaches the Zena Rommett Floor-Barre® Technique since 1978 and is a Master teacher at the yearly seminars in Florence Italy, and in New York. Worked with and taught Pilates since 1975. Interested in the physical and emotional wellbeing of humans, Charlotte also works as a Rosen practitioner and a Rosen Movement teacher.

## Perception and Movement Imagery as Tools in Performative Acts Combining Live Music and Dance

Paula Salosaari

### ABSTRACT

In this article I discuss movement imagery and perceptual strategies as tools in enhancing performative acts of playing music and composing performance material combining music and dance.

In my earlier research I have introduced the concept of multiple embodiment in classical ballet and developed co-authored choreography with dancers. The concept of multiple embodiment in ballet suggests treating the fixed vocabulary as qualitatively open and therefore a basis for interpretation, improvisation and composition of new dance material. Directing the dancer's experience in an open-ended way with movement imagery and perceptual strategies gave the performer new, sometimes surprising information about performance possibilities and thereby enhanced interpretation of dance material. (Salosaari 2001) Movement imagery has helped creating open-ended tasks in dance and thus enabled co-authoring in dance making projects. (Salosaari 2007; Salosaari 2009).

Not only dance, but other art forms as well, are embodied. In playing a musical instrument, the sound is made using body movements. In workshops with a musician and a dancer, reported in this article, I ask whether the tools created for dance creation would work also in music making. I ask whether movement imagery and perceptual strategies can initiate music interpretation and improvisation?

### TIIVISTELMÄ

Havaitseminen ja liikemielikuvat musiikkia ja tanssia yhdistävien esittävien tapahtumien työkaluina.

Tässä artikkelissa keskustelen mahdollisuudesta käyttää liikkeellisiä mielikuvia ja havainnoimisen strategioita keinoina tukea musiikkia ja tanssia yhdistävien esitysten luomista. Aikaisemmassa tutkimuksessa olen esitellyt klassisen baletin 'multiple embodiment' käsitteen ja kehittänyt yhteistoiminnallista koreografiaa baletin pohjalta yhdessä tanssijoiden kanssa. Edellä mainittu käsite ehdottaa, että baletin määriteltyä liikesanastoa käsiteltäisiin laadullisesti avoimena ja siten pohjana tulkinnoille, improvisaatiolle ja uuden tanssimateriaalin luomiselle. Tanssijan kokemuksen suuntaaminen avoimesti liikemielikuvien ja havaitsemisen avulla antoi esiintyjälle uutta, joskus yllättävää informaatiota esittämisen mahdollisuuksista ja siten edisti tanssimateriaalin tulkintaa. (Salosaari 2001) Liikemielikuvat ovat edistäneet avoimien tehtävien luomista tanssiin ja siten edesauttaneet yhteistoiminnallisia tanssiprojekteja (Salosaari 2007; Salosaari 2009).

Myös muut taidemuodot, tanssin ohella, ovat kehollisia. Musiikki-instrumenttia soittaessa ääni syntyy kehon liikkeiden avulla. Tässä artikkelissa kerron musiikkia ja tanssia yhdistävistä työpajoista. Kysyn, toimivatko tanssin tekemiseen luodut työkalut myös musiikin luomisessa. Tutkin sitä, voivatko liikemielikuvat ja havainnoimisen strategiat olla musiikin tulkinnan ja improvisaation lähtökohtia?

## Perception and Movement Imagery as Tools in Performative Acts Combining Live Music and Dance

Paula Salosaari

In this article I look at what kind of effect movement imagery might have on the music player's experience of creating live music with his or her instrument and how this imagery might facilitate musical interpretation and improvisation. Having looked at this I create co-authored performance combining dance and music through creating mutual tasks informed by movement imagery for both dancers and musicians. By doing so I approach making dance and music performance material in a way that gives an alternative to conventional methods of making dance and music performance material, such as choosing a piece of music and choreographing on it or making choreography followed by having a composer composing music which goes well together with the already choreographed dance movements. My intention is to describe and discuss the process, where perceptual strategies and open-ended movement imagery were used as tools in enhancing performances of playing live music and dancing. Finally, the process led to live performances treating both music and dance as embodied theatrical art forms and therefore performative acts (Preston-Dunlop & Sanchez-Colberg 2002, 202).

This research can be seen as an application and enlargement of my earlier research in which I introduced the concept of multiple embodiment in classical ballet and the tools for its implementation in practice. In multiple embodiment ballet is understood as a

qualitatively open form, in which a movement in the vocabulary can be actualized by the performer in many, qualitatively different ways (Salosaari 2001). The tools used to achieve this in practice remained the same in the present research.

The first tool of implementing multiple embodiment into practice is concerned with the performer's perception. Gibson (1966) has suggested that rather than waiting passively to perceive ourselves and the environment, we search for information. We can change the mode of perception choosing for example from paying attention to the visual, auditory, articular, muscular or cutaneous (touch) information in our environment and ourselves. Preston-Dunlop says in the spirit of Gibson, "We miss most opportunities to experience, because we select what we will attend to. ... To make use of our opportunities to perceive our own dancing, we need strategies to help attend to what can be felt" (Preston-Dunlop 1998, 42). As we cannot pay attention to all modes at once, we need to make a choice. In multiple embodiment of ballet this choice can be made both in terms of the perceptual mode as well as the structures or qualities of movement derived from the analysis of the medium of performance (Salosaari 2001, 34-35). Sometimes changing the way of paying attention can surprise the person and open out to new ways of experiencing and creating (Salosaari 2001, 56).

The second tool of multiple embodiment

is paying attention selectively to the qualitative structures of movement. Dance researchers Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg describe the acts of performing arts to exist in a four stranded medium. The different strands; dancer, movement, sound and space, create meaningful chiasms, which they call nexus. In the movement strand we find the structures that make movement meaningful for instance spatially, dynamically, relationally and so forth. One example of movement's dynamic is its flow. Flow describes how one movement continues to another, that is, how movements are tied together by the performer. The flow fluctuates between free and bound. It can be simply continuous or more easily flowing, like liquid, to go towards the free end. On the other hand, the flow can be restrained, ready to stop, on the bound end. This movement quality was one used in the experimentation I will give examples of later. In terms of space, the movement can send energy or continue a form, line or curve, into the surrounding space. Preston-Dunlop has named this effect spatial projection. This was one quality also used in the workshops. It is not possible to describe all the concepts in the model in detail here. The possibilities given by movement analysis are huge, but I hope that this short description gives the reader an idea of the structures that I have had in mind and some of which, one by one, have informed the performers' movements and given the possibility to create open tasks for the performers. The multiple embodiment theory is described in Salosaari (2001, 88-94), and the performance analysis tools in Preston-Dunlop & Sanchez-Colberg (2002) and in Preston-Dunlop (1998).

The third tool for multiple embodiment of movement is understanding and treating movement content as open-ended rather than

predetermined or fixed. Perceptual strategies and movement imagery help creating open movement tasks. While responding to open questions, the performers create new interpretations and solutions rather than copy the pre-existing or predetermined movements.

One of my sources of inspiration for this research was when I read Kimberly Powell's article about the process of learning and performing Japanese Taiko drumming (Powell 2004, 183-196). The practice of drumming and performing are disciplined acts in which attention can be paid among other things to the alignment of the body, to breathing, to the form created by the drummer's movements into the surrounding space, the movement's projections or directionality into the surrounding space and so forth. Sometimes the seeing of the sound was emphasized by playing without sound and by imagining colorful Chinese ribbons which the drummer's movements sent into the air and which the drummers followed in their imagination. Powell describes this as the blurring of the boundaries of one's body, the musical instrument and borders of the surrounding space. This creates an esthetic and spiritual oneness which creates meaning. All in all metaphors, images and repetition

...help us to develop a perception of blurred boundaries between instrument, self and space, shifting the view of the self, in which person and instrument are bound as a single entity within a spiritual and aesthetic framework of meaning. (Powell 2004, 187)

The above mentioned means to become aware of the body, its movements and the surrounding space reminded me of the tools that I used as open imagery to interpret movements and create

in dance composition. Reading the article gave the sense and trust in that the instrument and movement could be one with the dancer's body and that movement qualities have meaning in making music.

My interest in the present research has been aroused from my background as a dance teacher, my doctoral research into creative ballet teaching (Salosaari 2001) and my recently started interest in playing the cello. In my dissertation I discuss the use of perceptual strategies and open movement imagery as creative tools in performing and composing in ballet. A conventional movement or series of movements was repeated while the dancer attended to it using a different perceptual channel or structural movement image each time. The dancer's experience of the performed movement changed and either subtly or more obviously new interpretation of the same movement emerged in performance. The structural movement imagery gave me the means to create open tasks in dance and thus served as a tool for creating co-authored choreography with dancers (Salosaari 2007, 41-55; Salosaari 2009).

When beginning to play the cello as an adult, I was compelled to ponder whether the before mentioned tools would be meaningful in the act of playing the instrument. To investigate the idea I started to do workshops with a musician and a dancer trying out imagery to both playing music and dancing and creating for the performers tasks to follow that combine the two. In the following paragraphs I will continue to discuss this process, including some of the results from the workshops.

## Formulating the Research Question

As Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg suggest, the strands in a performance are never alone. The movement is always mediated by a performer and related to sound and performance space (2002, 43). We could also say that the sound in music is mediated by the performer and related to movement and performance space. These nexus are part of performance whether we pay attention to them or not. Therefore we can begin to think of a live music performance as a performative act combining the before mentioned elements of performance.

When a musician plays an instrument, we tend to pay attention mostly to the sound. But performer and movements are also present. In this research I ask what if we begin to pay more attention to the quality of movement in a musical performance? I look at how the multiple embodiment tools; movement imagery and perceptual strategies introduced in an open-



**Photo 1.** Performer: Johanna Partio. Photo: Paula Salosaari.

ended way, may initiate and perhaps enhance music interpretation, improvisation and composition?

### Practical Method and Analysis

As an art educator, research for me is a natural continuation of my work: a practice-based investigation into my field (dance, performance). Research is a way to keep developing my practice in art education, trying its boundaries and keeping it alive and gaining new knowledge. The joy of discovery keeps me enthusiastic about education and all its possibilities of creating art. Following Jarvis (1999) one could say that I am a practitioner-researcher doing practice-based, practice-informed investigation into my field.

The research material was collected in connection to workshops with three music and dance practitioners. The focus was first on how perception and movement imagery affect the playing of a musical instrument. Later in the process we began to create performance material through open tasks informed by movement imagery. Experiencing movement qualities was hoped to have a creative function in both dance and music. I first worked with a cellist asking her to play a tune with a movement image in mind and later to improvise making new sounds with the image alone. After playing using the agreed image we discussed the performer's experiences while playing – what happened, did this change her playing or its results in any way? Later we began experimenting with a dancer and musicians present. I was one of the performers but also acted as a choreographer or director, who created the tasks through which the forthcoming demo performances emerged. The performances can be seen as examples of what might happen when working in the previously described fashion.

Discussion between the participants served as group interviewing method. Participants of the workshops talked about their feelings and notions of their experiences whenever they felt so during the process. At the final stages of the process, the demo was performed to an audience of researchers and students. At the end of each demonstration, discussion with audience was promoted. Sometimes spectators were also given the opportunity to give written comments if they wished. Some of the audience comments, both written and spoken, are included in the text and have influenced the forthcoming performances.

Our first experiments were extensions of an ordinary music lesson. I would suggest to my cello teacher paying attention to some way of attending through perception or using some movement quality image while playing an easy piece of music. I might suggest that the player thinks about touch while playing, or perhaps pays attention to the spaces between body parts or body and its surroundings, such as the instrument or perhaps the floor. This image is called spatial tension and sometimes referred to as negative space. Right afterwards we would discuss how the idea affected the musician's feelings about playing or the sounds created at that time.

We experimented with music improvisation with the support of a movement or perception image so that the musician improvised creating her own sounds. Sometimes the two ways came together so that in the background of playing there was both a movement or perceptual image, as well as the possibility to use musical themes and vary them as the imagery or given theme suggested to the performer. She might repeat musical themes or parts of them, rearrange them changing their place in relation to each other, varying the timing or dynamics of the

sound, and so on. When a dancer joined our team, we did the same adding dance and using the same imagery and themes. We mixed performer roles. I might ask the musician to dance and the dancer might create sound using her voice, body percussion or instrument or through dance movements. Next I will discuss the experiences created by these ways of working with performers.

In the beginning, when inviting the musician to think about some movement quality while playing, she might reflect that using the image would take thoughts away from paying attention to the quality of sound. For instance, while paying attention to the spaces between body parts (spatial tension), the player might say: *"If I for instance change the place of the bow to adjust the space, the sound of the music may easily suffer."* Or while paying attention to touching while playing, she might say:

*"Then I try to force myself to pay attention to for instance how the dress feels against my shoulder or how the feet feel on the floor or other such things. That takes my attention away from the playing into other things."*  
(Workshop 21.7.2010)

I believe that things began to work better when we agreed that the quality of sound is what matters most. The image is always a tool and a means, never an end in itself. Our objective is to create music. Gradually attention was directed to musically important happenings in result of perception and movement imagery. Later while practicing for a demonstration of our work, the image of touching brought the player to touch the cello with as many parts of her body as possible at once. The sound of the cello became



**Photo 2.** Performer: Joanna Rinne. Photo: Paula Salosaari.

muffled. Instead of feeling that the sound was spoiled or suffering, the musician found it an interesting sound in improvisation.

Paying attention to touch while playing was for both players in the workshops an important experience. "...makes playing considerably easier." Both players agreed that feeling touch is removed from the hand to the end of the instrument held. In this case playing the cello to the place where the bow touches the string. For me it gave a better feel of the instrument and a wish to play every tone clearly and longer. That slowed down the tempo at least for a while. The sound became deeper and the bow was more attached to the string. This was especially important for me as a beginning cello player. My colleague as well noted a change in my playing. She said: *"The tone changed, it sounds different now."* In my left hand I paid more attention to in what angle the fingers

touched the strings. I separated the notes clearly from one another and I believe the articulation of playing improved.

Paying attention to touch is close to noticing transferences of weight and sometimes going beyond your center of weight causing you to lose balance. The player described those ideas in the following way:

*I got more the feeling of weight in this arm holding the bow. The same as in touching. Now the bow is more attached to the string. . . I usually make this transfer quite light, so a little bit got the weight here (shows). What frustrates me a little is that there is a pause here, but cannot help it now I guess. But I think that it (the sound) is not so thin.*

Movement qualities had an effect in the playing in a way that I would call interpretive. The player described the difference between playing with the image of spatial tension or spatial projection in the following way: *"The piece is colored by which of the images the player is thinking."* Discussion and exchange of experiences of playing (or dancing) is often given scarce attention. In the workshops we told each other of our experiences. Some notion might begin to interest another member of the group so that she wanted to try out the other's way of paying attention or playing.

*I paid attention to how the left hand fingers push the strings. . . the idea of projection came to mind. . . I started to visualize the weight as if going in a direction, the left hand fingers into the strings or (shows also the direction of the bow in the right hand). It is worth thinking into which direction it is projecting both on the string and the bow. . . aiming at strait down on the string*

*I could try that idea now.*

From listening to musicians talk, I have understood that classical musicians seldom improvise and that often it is not natural or easy for them. Beautiful pieces have been composed and notes to the music are available. At least I immediately compared my first attempts to create music through improvisation to the beautiful existing master pieces and felt mine to be modest. So why improvise? While using movement quality images and directing perception improvisation was started as if without noticing. Thinking of touch, transferences of weight, spatial tension, projection and so on, one can begin to play with the sound created.

As a dancer and a person inspired by experimentation, I was interested in creating new sounds with the cello, such that could perhaps not be notated. While working with a dancer and another cellist, I asked in one workshop the musician and the dancer to forget their roles. Everyone could move and/or create sounds from the cello. That is why, in hindsight, the workshop where I gave the dancer and cellist the freedom to create any kind of sound from the cello, feels naïve. I noticed afterwards that the sound of my cello had suffered and felt that it was because I knocked it onto the floor, even if lightly, during the improvisation. Luckily the sound of my cello improved with time. I noticed, however, that the cello, like many other instruments, is a sensitive musical instrument not meant for just any kind of sound creation. Later I thought that it is better to concentrate on the kinds of sounds and handling that the cello is meant for.

In our next meeting I discussed this also with my cellist. I was thinking aloud how it is possible to get many kinds of sounds from the

cello in ways that it is meant for. That makes a wide playing field for the player and the dancer. The cello is not a percussion instrument but meant for a certain kind of handling and sound. The musician's thinking aloud strengthened my own thoughts – *"the cellist can stay calmer while taking part in the activity"*.

### **Open tasks and their significance in collaborative creation**

Open tasks in dance are a pedagogical tool to interpret known movement material or to create new movements. An open task is the opposite of learning through imitation or rote. (Mosston & Ashworth, 1994) There is no one right answer to questions. The performer is given a possibility to solve tasks with different, personally meaningful ways. Such ways of working are nowadays common amongst dance choreographers. They do not necessarily give the dancer ready-made movement material. While making choreography myself, I have noticed the importance of a good task and its limits. Sometimes creating a task that works 'well' feels creative. While teaching, these tasks slowly evolve. In ballet I often ask the dancers to listen to and to emphasize balancing and falling off balance in their own movements. In an improvisation workshop using ballet as a starting point, I realized that expanding the task into listening, manipulating and playing with the pairs' balance, caused changes in the movement. Many dancers and spectators felt that this created meaning to their dance in a significant way.

In a sense using an image or perceptual strategy already is an open task, as it brings new solutions to mind. An open movement task gives a possibility to find new solutions. In principle

the amount of answers is limitless. In theory all answers are 'right' when they answer the question or solve the task (Mosston & Ashworth, 1994). This creates the aha-experiences when new ways of moving in repeating the same movement are found or when the dancer is creating her own movement language. In our recent dancer-musician workshops I also tried out open tasks found from other artists' workshops. We found fruitful, for instance trying out open tasks borrowed from Sten Rudström's actors' workshop with sound. In pairs or trios we played or danced in turn, so that as one player/dancer became still, the next one continued the improvisation seamlessly. This created an intensive atmosphere. At the end of one's own moving/playing it was not possible to cut oneself out of the action, but it was necessary to keep holding the concentration and listening to other participants, being involved with the whole person. It was necessary to be able to continue as soon as the other person suddenly, without warning, stopped. In the beginning of the work the taking turns happened according to the task. Gradually as the action continued, the participants might move or play at the same time with the others. Even then the intensive atmosphere of listening to others was preserved.

It was clear that the movement tasks eased out improvisation also with an instrument. It was easy to start creating sound with some kind of movement instruction. Working in pairs sensitized one to other's playing. Special comments created humor and new trials. Sometimes I missed a musical theme to the playing. We might use the recently played melody or piece as background. It might, as if by itself, appear in the playing.

## Audience response

The demonstration performances created were a few possible examples of resulting co-authored performances. The first performance of the group of three dancer-musicians happened in a research seminar for MA and doctoral students. The music used as basis for improvisation in the demo was a folk song from the Swedish-Finnish tradition. We performed it interpreting it with different movement qualities (projection, touch, transference of weight) and through improvisation with the cello, human voice and movement and by mixing the dancer-musician roles. After the performance, time was given for discussion and comments from the audience. The performance initiated a lot of conversation and thoughts in the spectators. Written feedback was also collected from those spectators who chose to share their ideas that way. One theme in the conversation was that while changing roles, the performers had to necessarily act in roles uncomfortable for them: the musician as dancer, the dancer as musician or using her own voice. The musician also mentioned being uncomfortable when the two cellos' voices mixed by chance in ways that broke the classical harmony of music. While discussing these uncomfortable areas, we started to call them cracks. Some of the written feedback strengthened these thoughts about "cracks".

*The most interesting parts, as came out in discussion, were the 'cracks'. I would have liked more of those. I feel the cracks express something very personal – private.*

and

*Just have courage to be 'professionals in non-professionalism', proudly your own*

*level in your uncomfortable areas => that is interesting!*

The second demo was performed in a university school of music in an artistic research seminar for post-doc researchers or doctoral students. In this performance I had invited the audience to follow the performance in the same space as the performers, taking their place in a seat or on the floor as they liked in-between and around us performers. Afterwards in the discussion an audience member said that she would have liked to come and sit next to me on the same seat as I was playing the cello, touching my back to listen to the sound resonating through my body. She had not dared to do that but wondered how I would have reacted. I thought about it and therefore in our next performance in the Colloquium on Artistic Research in Performing Arts at the Theatre Academy, Helsinki (3/2013), I placed audience seats here and there in the middle of the performance space (dance studio). The performers moved amongst the spectators. The spectators only had a partial view of the situation at a time. Performers and spectators were close but not actually touching, back to back, side by side or in different angles towards each other. This changed radically the usual way of following a performance from a distance, getting a full frontal view at once. In a discussion following the performance, an audience member reflected on this close proximity and was fascinated by feeling the resonance of the music close by, being so close to the performer. This is how discussions with audiences keep giving ideas and developing performances becoming part of the research.

## A performance in the flow of time

A performative act can be seen as a historical and tradition-bound event or activity. That is true of both dance and music performances, which both have strong traditions giving guidelines for performance. Perhaps that is why I am fascinated by Victor Turner's (1992) ideas of experience as time process in which the person is living through a chain of events – as in a ritual, life experience or an artistic process. Experience means risky experimentation, trial, exposition to danger. In an artistic process this danger is often experienced and described as a leap to the unknown. Creativity is not knowing in advance, something that is exposed as a new possibility in the process.

When initiating this work, analyzing the practical creative work in the dance studio was enough for me. It was not necessary to take it further into performance. Turner suggests that a performance is a natural part of the process. Through performances art communicates with the audience and the community sometimes renews its performance culture. For Turner, the process is incomplete unless it is in, some instances, tied to a performance, a creative retrospection in which activities and pieces of experience are given meanings. That is how experience is both 'lived through' as well as looking back. At the same time it creates objectives and models for future experiences, hopefully avoiding past mistakes or risks. I interpret Turner so that in the moment of performance cultural memories and new insights opened out by perception meet in the performer. At that presence one is looking at both past and future. While the process continues, the situation is again opened to new possibilities which the next performance fixes and communicates.

Such a moment is incomplete unless one of its 'moments' is 'performance', an act of creative retrospection in which 'meaning' is ascribed to the events and parts of experience – even if the meaning is that there is no meaning. Thus experience is both 'living through' and 'thinking back' It is also 'willing' or 'wishing forward' i.e. establishing goals and models for future experience in which, hopefully, the errors and perils of past experience will be avoided or eliminated. (Turner 1992, 17-18)

Working in an artistic field has shown in many instances how making art and being skillful and knowledgeable, taking part in tradition and its evolution is not a private matter or neutral. Cultural groups in art want to define amongst themselves who have a say or who are allowed to experience or create in the field. A strong position in a cultural community gives emphasis to actions. Therefore, I feel more comfortable in dance than in musical contexts. However, I take a risk and apply my earlier knowledge about movement and its perception into a new context, feeling in my being the uncertainty of my position.

For some reason in artistic experiencing, when the maker is open to his or her experience, an insightful vision or feeling of something being good for the maker may emerge. As a maker I simply and unexplainably know that something is working 'right', being good, or perhaps beautiful. Culturally something good is being created together and at the same time cultural limits are defined. As a person and art maker I suggest continually new ways while the spectators 'answer' by liking or disliking. Also this process needs performances, communication with members of the group or culture. (Salosaari 2006)

## Thoughts about the process

On the basis of workshops, demonstration performances and movement and music experiments, I feel that movement imagery is one way of facilitating the player's insightful experiences of playing and handling the instrument as an interpreter of music. Open movement or perceptual tasks may help in creating personally meaningful interpretations or sound.

When beginning to give open tasks in dance workshops during my earlier research in dance making, I followed as closely as possible Mosston's idea that after giving the freedom to create one's own movements, the teacher or coach cannot evaluate correctively or even positively the material created. After giving the responsibility to the performer, he or she restrains from evaluating the produced material. This enhances the production which otherwise may be inhibited or even stop altogether. Trust in the teacher or coach also enhances production that brings forward the maker's set of values instead of the teachers' when the maker or performer understands that the teacher or coach really wants to promote the finding and presenting of the maker's own values.

With time I have slightly compromised with this principle and think that mutual production is communicative making in which all voices are heard. As a choreographer I understand that the choreographer takes the main responsibility of the work and therefore has power over the result. When discussing with a musician about the freedom given to a music teacher student, I understood her thinking that the student cannot decide for instance of how to use movement improvisation in his or her own playing, that the student does not have enough – perhaps sense of style – understanding – or perhaps skill. Those

reasons mentioned are just my guesses of why a player could not decide for him- or herself. Instead the teacher, coach or perhaps orchestra conductor makes the decisions. How far is the player or dancer an agent and owns his or her music or dance? It is not possible to discuss the question thoroughly here but it needs continual attention in teaching and co-authoring situations.

Directing perception and using different kinds of movement qualities as means to improvisation made it easy and natural to begin improvising in music. In the final rehearsals for a demonstration, I noticed how listening to the other members of the group had become easier. Working in a group with the movement themes had taught me to listen to others better while being part of the group. Getting personal artistic experiences of what 'works' or what feels 'good' is a way to open out dated ideas of making art. Discussion between team members and listening to audience views became important in developing future performances. Inspired by small insights the work continues.

This process has investigated what it could mean to a music performance that it is seen as, not only sound, but a performative act. Seeing it as such and understanding the possibilities of its medium, it is possible to focus in new areas in the process of creating performance. In this research process the focus was first in the performers' movement qualities that are part of the performance and create the sound. Seeing it like that and reflecting on the demo performances, the boundaries between music and dance begin to blur.

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## BIOGRAPHY

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## The Embodied Teaching Moment: The Embodied Character of the Dance Teacher's Practical-pedagogical Knowledge Investigated in Dialogue with Two Contemporary Dance Teachers

Tone Pernille Østern

### ABSTRACT

### SAMMENDRAG

In this article the author dialogues with two contemporary dance teachers about how the practical-pedagogical knowledge of the teacher is embodied. The focus is on how the dance teacher functions as a *lived body* (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/2002) while in the teaching moment. The analysis of the empirical material shows that there is a continuous exchange between the dance teachers' bodily experiences, inner dialogue and teaching choices while teaching. It is argued that it is not wrong to say that all these two dance teachers do as teachers is bodily grounded. The ways in which the practical-pedagogical knowledge of the two contemporary dance teachers is embodied can be summarized as a *bodily listening*, *bodily tutoring* and *bodily ambiguity* surrounded by constantly and rapidly changing *body tunes* throughout their teaching. These larger themes are divided into nuances which are presented and discussed in the article. The study is also a method study in how to study *in* and *with* the arts. The research process is understood as an *iterative cyclic web* (Smith and Dean 2009), where practice and theory take place in every sub-process of the study. Outcomes of the study are both theorisation as this article and artwork in the form of choreographies by the two dance teachers. These can be seen at <https://vimeo.com/40433953> (Mari) and <https://vimeo.com/40075211> (Ingeborg).

I denne studien undersøker forfatteren i dialog med to samtidsdanspedagoger hvordan lærerens praktisk-pedagogiske kunnskap er kroppsliggjort. Fokus er på hvordan dansepedagogen opplever og agerer som *levd kropp* (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/2002) mens hun underviser. Analysen av det empiriske materialet viser at det skjer en kontinuerlig utveksling mellom dansepedagogens kroppslige opplevelser, indre dialog og pedagogiske valg mens hun underviser. I denne studien er det ikke feil å si at alt de to dansepedagogene gjør som lærere er kroppslig grunnet. Måtene som deres praktisk-pedagogiske kunnskap er kroppsliggjort, kan tematiseres som *kroppslig lytting*, *kroppslig veiledning* og *kroppslig tvetydighet* omgitt av stadig og raskt vekslende *kroppsstemninger* mens de underviser. I artikkelen blir disse større temaene delt inn i nyanser som presenteres og diskuteres. Studien studerer også hvordan man kan forske *i* og *med* kunsten. Forskningsprosessen er forstått som ett *gjentakende syklisk nettverk* (iterative cyclic web, Smith og Dean 2009) hvor praksis og teori skjer i hver underprosess av studien. Resultater av studien er både teoretiseringer som denne artikkelen og kunstarbeid i form av koreografier av begge dansepedagogene. Koreografiene kan sees på <https://vimeo.com/40433953> (Mari) og <https://vimeo.com/40075211> (Ingeborg).

## The Embodied Teaching Moment: The Embodied Character of the Dance Teacher's Practical-pedagogical Knowledge Investigated in Dialogue with Two Contemporary Dance Teachers

Tone Pernille Østern

The research project presented in this article started from my curiosity about how the practical-pedagogical knowledge of the dance teacher is embodied. How does the dance teacher experience and make teaching choices as a *lived body* in the practical teaching moment? The concept *lived body* refers to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1962/2002) phenomenology, which my pre-understanding is informed by and which the analysis in this research study dialogues with. I ask myself: What role does a bodily listening play as the dance teacher is living the meetings between dancing bodies in the dance studio, and losing herself in the teaching? How does a bodily listening guide the dance teacher's actions and choices as she is in the heat of the teaching moment? How is the teaching moment embodied? This wonderment was the impulse that set off this study, and which eventually led me to the formulation of two research questions:

1. In what ways does the practical-pedagogical knowledge of the dance teacher have a bodily character?
2. What is the exchange between the teacher's bodily-sensory experiences, inner dialogue and teaching choices while teaching?

In the following I describe the background for my wonderment and discuss the methodological design of the project, including the background and frames for the project. I then go on to discuss

themes that describe how the dance-teacher's practical-pedagogical knowledge is embodied, based on an analysis of the empirical material in this project.

### Introducing an impulse of curiosity

Based on my own experience and on numerous colleagues' statements like "I am completely worn out after today's teaching" or "I feel energized after today's class", one can infer that teaching seems to be a powerful experience. It seems like teachers in general are being moved in and by their teaching, feeling for example excited, exhausted or insecure. It is common for such conditions that they are felt in the body. A narrative about a teaching experience which I experienced as a failure, can serve as an example. I wrote this, having taught an improvisation task which did not go very well:

I deeply lived the energy drop during this [teaching] process. Frankly, I felt terrible. While it was happening I asked myself how I could come up with such a bad idea. Instead of lessening the distance between the different dancers, this task increased it. I wondered whether anybody would actually turn up for the next class, because I experienced the task as such a failure. (Østern 2009, 212)

In this teaching moment I vividly lived the experience of failure while teaching. It was most

definitely a bodily sensation. The same is true for more positive teaching experiences: they are felt in the body. It is my experience that these sensations have importance as I am teaching.

I suggest there is a need to investigate, articulate and discuss how the teaching moment is embodied and what role the bodily listening plays for the teacher in the teaching moment. I believe this is needed both in dance pedagogy and in pedagogy generally, since my impression is that *general pedagogy generally* describes teaching as a primarily cognitive and verbal act. In this article, though, I do not direct attention towards pedagogy in general but stay focused on dance pedagogy. In dialogue with the two contemporary dance teachers and artists Mari and Ingeborg, I investigate how the teaching moment is embodied.

This research focus, although positioned within dance pedagogy, pushes this piece of research into dialogue with a wider field often

called embodied pedagogy. In the last decade, the research on embodied education, learning and teaching has grown. Due to the limits of the size of this article, I will not present different research contributions, but only mention Diane P. Freedman (2003); Tina Kazan (2005); Mary Dixon and Kim Senior (2011); Michalinos Zembylas (2007); Margaret Macintyre Latta and Gayle Buck (2008); and Eeva Anttila (2003; 2007) as a limited selection of those conducting research within the realm of embodied pedagogy. This study relates to the work of these and other scholars in focus and the underlying understanding of embodied pedagogy.

### Idea generation and background

The empirical material for the study was generated over a period of two years in 2009-

**Photo 1.** Mari teaching in the Dance Laboratory.  
Photo: Jøran Værdahl, Klipp & Lim



2011. I followed Mari and Ingeborg as they were the artistic leader and dance teacher for an improvisation based community dance company called the Dance Laboratory<sup>1</sup> one year each. This is a group with adult *differently bodied dancers* (different ages, different experience with dance, professionals and non-professionals, with and without disabilities) that I developed as part of my PhD study in dance (Østern 2009) in the period 2003-2009. The development of the Dance Laboratory has been a central and important part of my work as a dance artist and teacher, and I have over the years engaged myself deeply in the group. Both Mari and Ingeborg had taken part as dancers in the group during some periods in those years, and therefore knew the group well. When I started in my new job at the university, somebody needed to take over the group. Mari then led the group in 2009-10<sup>2</sup>, and Ingeborg in 2010-11 (and she still did when this article was written).

Both Mari and Ingeborg are trained as dancers and as dance teachers.<sup>3</sup> They were at that time active as freelance dance artists combining choreographing, performing and teaching in a way typical of the dance field in Norway. To be the artistic leader of the Dance Laboratory was artistically and pedagogically interesting and challenging for them. The work of the group can be positioned within the realm of contemporary dance, contact improvisation, movement research and performance. The dancers in the group are always co-creative in the choreographic material created. This is a dance approach that both Mari and Ingeborg were interested in. They were (and are) also close colleagues, working together as dance artists in many different projects.

They were also both close colleagues to me. They are both about 10 years younger than me.

**Photo 2.** Ingeborg (in pink) teaching in the Dance Laboratory. Photo: Jøran Værdahl, Klipp & Lim.



and they both had worked with me in different projects, usually with me in a leading role as choreographer, teacher or chair. The character of our relationship can be defined as professional friendship, meaning that we had a feeling of friendship, but that our meeting points mainly were in professional settings. When I asked Mari, and the following year Ingeborg, to take part in the research project, they both agreed with enthusiasm. They both expressed great interest in this project and in dance research more generally.

### The research process as an iterative cyclic web

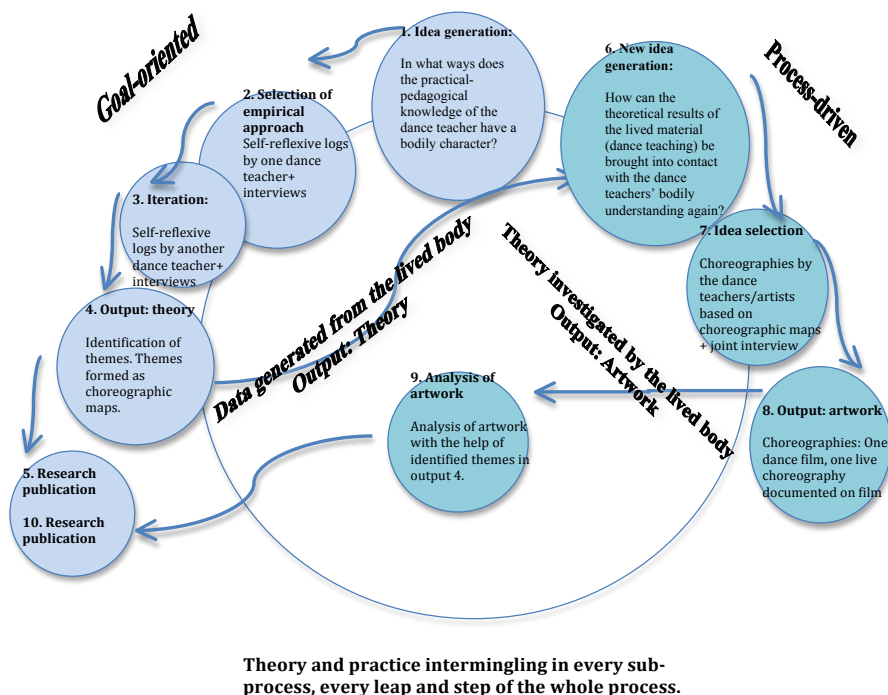
The design of the research process was guided by the formulation of two research questions. Figure 1 shows the research process, as I have understood it retrospectively.

The model used in figure 1 is modified

from Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean's (2009, 20) iterative cyclic web, which is an approach to how practice-based, research-based and more traditional academic research often alternates within a research process informed by work with the arts. Their model<sup>4</sup>

combines the cycle (alternations between practice and research), the web (numerous points of entry, exit, cross-referencing and cross-transit within the practice-research cycle), and iteration (many sub-cycles in which creative practice or research processes are repeated with variation). (Smith and Dean 2009, 8)

**Figure 1** (Østern 2013). *The research process in the project illustrated as an iterative cyclic web, modified and based on the model for an iterative cyclic web of practice-led research and research-led practice by Smith and Dean (2009, 20). Bullet number 5 in the figure represents this article.*



As I have modified the model of Smith and Dean (2009, 20) to this research process, I have kept the concepts goal-oriented and process-driven to show different phases of the process. The process-driven way of working has no clear starting point or end, whereas the goal-oriented usually has an initial plan and an intended outcome. I have not found it useful to use the distinction between “research” and “creative practice”, “practice-based” or “academic”, as I define the whole process as academic research. I instead want to stress that practice and theory take place in every sub-process, and in every jump and leap in the whole research process. In most sub-processes the dance teachers and/or I myself are involved both in practice, reflective *and* reflexive thinking. With “reflection”, I here mean the cognitive act of thinking about actions. According to Anthony Giddens (1991), “reflexivity”, on the other hand, means to pay attention to what you pay attention to. This implies a deep inward gaze, and for the reflexive teacher, a search for a critical connection between experience and pedagogy. Giddens emphasises how reflexivity of the self extends to the body, an understanding that this research project rests on:

The reflexivity of the self extends to the body [...], where the body is part of an action system rather than merely a passive object. [...] Awareness of the body is basic to ‘grasping the fullness of the moment’, and entails the conscious monitoring of sensory input from the environment, as well as the major bodily organs and body dispositions as a whole. (Giddens 1991, 77)

Reflective knowledge about practice has a more normative state, while reflexiveness about what you experience because of where you look from and with what intentions, opens for change. In

this research project, the dance teachers and I conduct both reflection and reflexiveness. The reflexiveness is directed especially towards the body. How do the dance teachers experience their teaching when they direct attention to bodily sensations while teaching? What connections between their sensations, thoughts and actions do they enact while teaching? I have chosen to call the dance teachers’ logs reflexive logs, although they write both reflectively and reflexively.

The outcomes of this research process that intertwines different modes of attention and different kinds of activities are theorisations in the form of articles written by me, and also artwork by the dance teachers in the form of choreographies. Still, both the theorisation and the choreographies are the result of a continuous dialogue between the dance teachers in the position of research participants and me in the position of researcher. I find it accurate to call the dance teachers research participants, but being so, they are in a role close to co-researchers. In the following I will circle around figure 1 as I describe the different steps of the research process.

### Empirical material and research approach

Mari constructed research material together with me on her teaching through the teaching year 2009-10 (two semesters). Ingeborg did the same the following teaching year 2010-11 (two semesters). The empirical material generated in this period consists of:

- One in-depth interview with each teacher individually before they started their teaching year<sup>5</sup>, and one after they had finished.<sup>6</sup>

- b) 12 self-reflexive logs with each of the teachers, written throughout their year of teaching.
- c) Choreographic maps and the dance teachers' choreographies about their teaching experiences.
- d) One joint interview with the dance teachers about the process of choreographing their teaching experiences.<sup>7</sup>

In the analysis presented in this article I am using the individual interviews and the self-reflexive logs, while the choreographies and joint interview will be the material for a second article about the *embodied teaching memory*.

I also participated as dancer, co-choreographer and researcher in the company during the two years when Mari and Ingeborg were teaching. My own participation, in addition to my previous teaching in the group, offers a resonating ground for my analysis and interpretation of the empirical material. I took part in the group as a dancer partly for the pleasure of it, partly in the role of researcher who wanted to sense the teaching processes affecting my own body. We also agreed that I would have the role of co-choreographer both years. This made it possible for us to work with smaller groups (there are around 15 dancers each year in the Dance Laboratory) to make different choreographies.

It seems clear that the fact that I was present must have influenced the dance teachers. Since they often had worked with me as a leader of projects, I am quite sure that for the dance teachers I represented a dominant presence in the classes. Even though neither Mari nor Ingeborg mentioned this in their logs or interviews, surely my presence has affected their experiences. Still, I believe that the fact that

I lived through the classes that they wrote about in their reflective logs made it easier for me to understand their sensations and reflections. I could have considered only observing the classes, but I do not believe that that would have made my presence less dominant (probably the opposite), and I would have missed out on the sensation of how the teaching processes they wrote about affected my own body. I also wrote logs myself after the classes I participated in. I have not directly used them for the analysis, but they serve as background for my interpretation. One example can be this part of a log<sup>8</sup>, written by me after the first class with Mari in August 2009:

Beforehand it felt nice not to have to teach, not to have responsibility. I felt joy for just dancing. When I entered the studio, though, I dressed myself in Mari's feelings. I received blushing cheeks like her. Soon felt warm in the body. I sensed the space as full of feelings. Light energy, with many new people meeting each other.

In the role of researcher, I was very focused on the dance teachers during the classes. Knowing the teaching responsibility they were carrying, I probably noticed well the different states that the dance teachers went through. I often lived through these states myself, and I could easily relate to the experiences the dance teachers wrote about as I read the logs.

In the individual interviews I used the same interview guide with both Mari and Ingeborg. I used the same guide both before and after the teaching year, including some additional questions in the second interview, relating to what they had written about in their logs. The interviews and the self-reflexive logs support each other in the analysis.

Merleau-Ponty's (1962/2002) ideas of embodiment, understanding of self and understanding of others as expressed in his phenomenological philosophy serve as the theoretical stand, through which I look at the empirical material. "The body is the vehicle of being in the world", Merleau-Ponty says (ibid.), and not only for being in the world, but for understanding the world. It is through our own embodied consciousness that we gain access to other people and our environment. In his later work Merleau-Ponty (1968) uses the metaphor of the chiasm, or the criss-crossing, to suggest that a kind of corporeal reflexivity is the ground upon which both personal identity and understanding of other people rests. As, in this study, I ask myself what the exchange between the teacher's bodily-sensory experiences, inner dialogue and teaching choices while teaching is, I seek to direct attention to the dance teachers' embodied consciousness. According to Merleau-Ponty (1962/2002) the body is immediate in its way of experiencing, as a lived entity. The immediacy of the body entails both a silence and reflexivity. The latter allows its processes to reach our awareness to a degree. In line with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, the body has an immediate meaning-making power, it interprets itself and it senses and moves itself in the world as a lived entity. In this project, the dance teachers and I seek to direct attention to how the teaching body interprets the teaching situation, senses and moves itself through the teaching, and in this way we seek to articulate some of the ways that the dance teacher's practical-pedagogical knowledge is embodied.

### The self-reflexive logs

I asked Mari and Ingeborg to direct attention to their sensory experiences and dialogue with

themselves while teaching, and to write their logs immediately after class. I asked them to focus on one or several of the following aspects:

1. Sensing and experiencing
2. Thinking and observing
3. Seeing dialogue and connections

Both Mari and Ingeborg wrote 12 logs each, spread throughout their teaching year. I find the logs rich and informative. A glimpse into one of Mari's self-reflexive logs gives some insight into the bodily engagement that seems to be at stake in the dance teaching moment, and into the kind of written material that I have been analyzing:

Warm after the lesson, dry in my mouth. Energy discharge, no power left. But still excited. I notice that my nervousness leads to a rather rough body attitude, as though I am bodily compensating for the hesitancy I am experiencing inside. Maybe in this way I try to create a balance. I become warm in my body right away, even though I am not moving as much as the others.

Just in these few lines Mari touches on a range of ways that the body makes meaning, processes and actively takes part in the pedagogical space created between her and the dancers. At the moment the students step inside the dance studio, Mari's teaching body starts to work. She easily becomes warm, even if not moving as much as the dancers. Just the effort of teaching quickly raises her body temperature and dries her mouth. This implies an energy boost, and Mari tells about how she has no power left after the lesson, an experience I think is recognizable to many teachers. The energy discharge does not come from a very high activity level, because as

the teacher of the class Mari does not move as much as the others, and she frequently interrupts her moving with supervising. Instead, the energy release comes from the effort that the teaching itself demands. Her body is heavily involved in listening, sensing and decision-making: it functions like a filter in the meeting between dancing, affective bodies. Red cheeks and a dry mouth are bodily expressions for high presence in the situation. It is exactly this connection that calls for the need of reflexivity about how the teaching moment is embodied, and about the importance of the body for the teacher in the teaching moment.

Based on Merleau-Ponty's (1962/2002) phenomenological thinking, the surface of the body can be understood more like a filter than a stable boundary. Inner states and the surrounding space leak in and out through the body. According to Merleau-Ponty (ibid., 408), "the body is a constant movement towards the world, and the world is the body's point of support". When Mari leans on the world around her as support for the pedagogical moment she is creating, the dancers' expectations and attention hit her and flow right through her. Merleau-Ponty (ibid., 61) defines sense-experience as the body's vital communication with the world, and the thickness of Mari's experiences is gained from the intentional tissue (ibid.) that connects her with her students in such vital communication. Margaret Macintyre Latta and Gayle Buck (2008) dialogue with Merleau-Ponty's notion of "flesh" when they point out that the gap between student and teacher is enfleshed through embodiment. Merleau-Ponty's (1968, 130) metaphor of flesh embraces an intertwining, where neither body-subject nor otherness is understood as bound entities. Instead, the other and I intermingle and

relate in a deeply embodied way. With this study I look into that enfleshed gap between the dance teacher and students (dancers). As a result, I suggest that awareness about this enfleshed gap is ripe with possibilities for the forming of a teacher role that includes sensitivity towards an understanding of how the teaching moment is embodied.

### **Self-reflexiveness through a mild phenomenological awareness**

The bodily processes that take place in the teachers' bodies while they are teaching, are from a subject position only available to themselves. These bodily processes include sensations and thoughts, since their thinking is a part of the teacher-body, which cannot be separated from their sensations and feelings. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1999, 6) claim that because our conceptual system grows out of our bodies, meaning is grounded in and through our bodies. When asking the teachers to direct attention to their sensory experience and inner dialogue while teaching, I was interested in investigating how the actions and choices (which I define as meaning-making) they do as teachers are grounded in and through their lived bodies, from a subject position.

My pre-understanding is that the experiences of the dance teachers happen from within a context of motives, expectations and perspectives based on their understanding of what it means to be a contemporary dance teacher. Experience is always interwoven with the body, and it is conscious and culturally ingrained (Rouhiainen 2003, 131, in dialogue with Merleau-Ponty 1962/2002). Accordingly, this project also tells about what contemporary dance teachers pay attention to and what their

culture is like. It is clear that what the dance teachers experience and pay attention to can be related to the socio-cultural practices of contemporary dance. In their logs, Mari and Ingeborg pay attention to such aspects as listening with the whole body, the skin as a sensory organ, the importance of breath, and touch as a means of exchanging information with others. These aspects are by no means their individual, random points of focus. Rather, they must be understood as their dialogue with the shared practice and values of contemporary dance, which they already relate deeply to.

These focuses; that the body is already interwoven with culture and the subject position, are central in the phenomenological approach formulated by Merleau-Ponty (1962/2002). Pierre Vermersch (1999, 20) describes *introspection* as a suspension from our everyday way of relating to our experiences as taken for granted into being in one's experience with a more focal awareness as mild phenomenological awareness. This is, in short, attention towards the task as one is doing the task, and this is also in short what I asked the dance teachers to do. In a research project similar to the one I am discussing here, Eeva Anttila (2007, 85) describes introspection as directing one's attention to one's experiences in a situation, trying to "record" them to remember them and write them down immediately afterwards. In practice, Mari and Ingeborg experienced this as being difficult. In a joint interview<sup>9</sup> about the research process, they explained that the mild phenomenological awareness of their experiences and inner dialogue easily slipped away in the heat of the beat. The teaching itself demanded their full attention. At the same time both Mari and Ingeborg explained how being a teacher includes always having an observing eye

on oneself in the teaching moment. This seems to be an aspect of being a teacher.

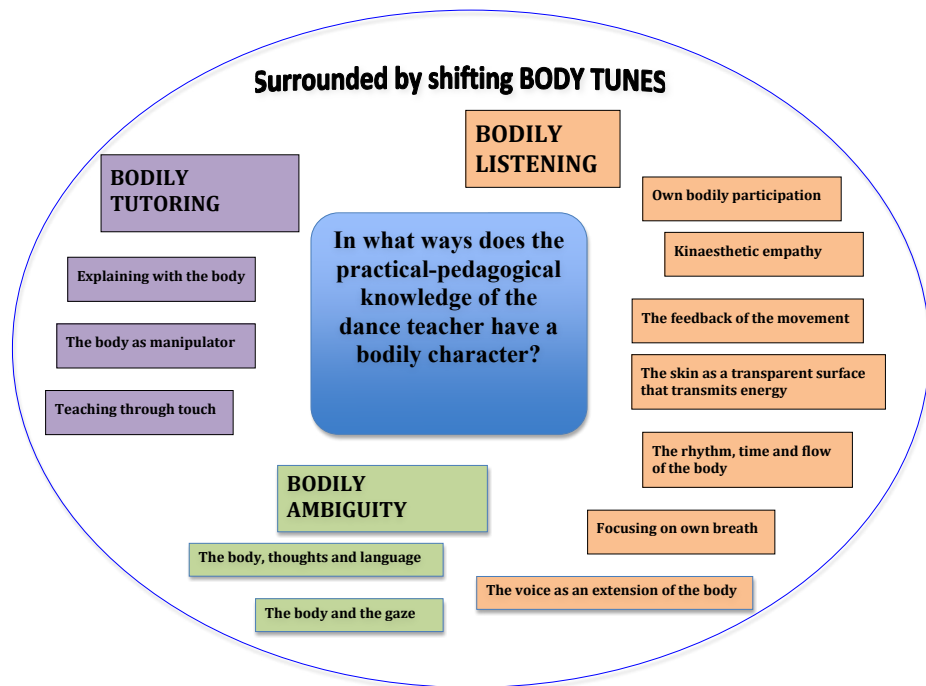
### **The analysis process including choreographic maps**

The dance teachers sent me their logs by e-mail immediately after they had written them. As I read their logs, I started to condense the content in their logs into themes that carried meaning. As I constructed and clustered the meaning themes around the research questions on the paper, I was engaging the choreographer in me as well. When I had finished my first definition of meaning themes and looked up from the paper, I realised that I had simultaneously created choreographic maps (attachment 1 and 2) that I wanted to give back to Mari and Ingeborg. This led to a new idea generation, artwork outcome in the form of choreographies<sup>10</sup> by Mari and Ingeborg based on the choreographic maps, and a new analysis in a forthcoming article about the embodied teaching memory (see figure 1). In this article, I will stay with the embodied teaching moment.

### **The embodied character of the dance teachers' practical-pedagogical knowledge**

Even though the dance teachers experienced a *mild phenomenological awareness* while teaching as demanding, I still find the logs they produced rich. It seemed that the dance teachers were capable of using their embodied memory to develop language with which they could share their embodied practical-pedagogical knowledge.

Figure 2 (Østern 2013) shows the themes I have defined to articulate how the dance teachers' practical-pedagogical knowledge is embodied, based on an analysis of their self-



reflexive logs and individual interviews.

In both Mari's (M) and Ingeborg's (I) teaching, it is clear that their body is crucial for how they work and structure their teaching while in the teaching moment. They express how their whole body system is at work as they teach, which is something the log writing made them more aware of. It is a well known fact that a research project also influences the phenomenon being studied. In this study, the dance teachers are explicit about the fact that the log writing has made them much more aware of how deeply their bodies are involved when they teach. In other words: just the fact that I asked them to pay attention to how their practical-pedagogical knowledge is embodied probably also created an awareness or even a connection which otherwise may not have been there, at least not articulated:

**Figure 2** (Østern 2013). Themes defined to describe how the dance-teachers' practical-pedagogical knowledge is embodied, based on an analysis of the reflexive logs and individual interviews.

The log writing has made me understand how deeply involved the body is. The body senses, feels and works all the time. That is why I can be physically completely worn out afterwards (M).

This bodily work, which Mari writes about, does not consist of the actual dance movement in the lessons. Instead, it is the practising of the practical-pedagogical knowledge consisting of choices and decisions, which involves the whole body so deeply, that energy like in exhausting physical efforts is created. The teachers easily sweat, get warm, get dry in the mouth or it feels like the head is boiling from thinking. Again: these are bodily expressions for high presence

in the situation. The dance teachers emphasise how they all the time use their senses in order to understand situations and make pedagogical decisions. And they are all the time, throughout the lessons, accompanied by constantly shifting *body tunes*.

### Accompanying body tunes

As a background to, or more precisely surrounding, all the experiences, choices and actions that the dance teachers make in class, they write about how they go through different *body tunes*. These tunes seem to be there all the time, changing rapidly in relation to the class as a whole. These tunes are firmly bodily, and the only way to sense them is in the body. Everything that happens in class is sensed in the body, not in an abstract and un-bodied way, but concretely and firmly in the body. At the same time, these shifting tunes are immediately "layered" with thoughts, and actions. Body tunes, thoughts and choices of action stick together as a layered accordion, where all tones play together. The teacher-body inhabits these tunes, at the same time as the teacher-body produces them in relation to other bodies in the shared space.

In Norwegian, Mari uses the word "kroppsstemning" when she describes how she goes through these different body tunes. "Kroppsstemning" can be translated to "Körperstimmung" in German, a concept that leads my thoughts to Martin Heidegger's (2000) "Stimmung". Heidegger writes about how fundamentally human it is to be tuned towards everything in the world, and how fundamentally *bodily* this tuning is. Based on Heidegger, Kirsten Fink-Jensen (1998, 20) describes how, in an immediate way, one's own body moods are in constant exchange with those of others. This is similar to Merleau-Ponty's (1962/2002; 1968)

thought that it is through our own embodied consciousness that we gain access to others, and that this happens like a chiasm, a criss-crossing, between the other and me. When teaching, the whole classroom lives "within" the teacher-body. As the teacher teaches, she extends into an area of what Mary Dixon and Kim Senior (2011, 482) defines as a "bodily between" with her students. As a teacher, on the one hand, you create and influence the classroom in a bodily way. On the other hand, you are in a bodily way being informed about, influenced by and actually "bodied by" that same classroom.

I have gathered the ways that the dance teacher's practical-pedagogical knowledge seems to be embodied into three larger themes, which I will present in the following. These are *bodily listening*, *bodily tutoring* and *bodily ambiguity*.

### Bodily listening

#### *Own bodily participation, kinaesthetic empathy and the feedback of the movement*

It is crucial to participate myself as I teach. Own participation makes me feel safe and I understand the bodily processes that the dancers go through. (M) As soon as I listen into my body while I lead the group, I feel what we need to do. I rapidly construct movement themes, which I build up as I am listening to my body. (I)

Their own motional participation makes the dance teachers feel safe, since movement has a calming, well-known effect on them. One of the largest values with their own participation is that the teachers in an immediate way understand the bodily processes which the dancers go through. This makes it easier for them to know how to

develop the class further. Ingeborg mentions kinaesthetic empathy, and defines this as a form of knowing which is about *bodily sensing where the other person is*. This is close to dance researcher Jaana Parviainen's (1998) definition of kinaesthetic empathy as how a dance teacher (or other movement teacher) uses her own bodily experiences to understand the dancers' experiences and based on that help them develop knowledge. Both teachers emphasise how important it is for them to listen inwards to their own body as they teach. The movement has a special power, which influences them. When they allow the movement to influence them, it is exactly as if the movement feeds itself. Movement creates focus, and movement feeds more movement.

### ***The body as a transparent surface that transmits energy***

I lightly run through the dance studio in order to provide energy with my body without saying a word. (I)

The teachers characterize the body as a subtle and sensitive surface, which senses the energy level in the studio and by individual dancers with almost painful precision. Negative or tired energy is sensed immediately and creates the experience of heaviness and resistance. The stomach gets heavy. In such situations, the teachers either give up and withdraw and go through the class with a feeling of failure, or compensate by contributing with all the energy that the dancers do not have. The teachers also describe how they follow the energy level of the dancers, and work on giving them new suggestions (new tasks), which can keep the energy level balanced throughout the lesson.

### ***Rhythm, time and flow created by the teacher-body***

I try to listen to what the rhythm in my body needs. I have to listen especially to the time, how the time works on my and the others' bodies. (I)

Both teachers, but especially Ingeborg, emphasise a listening to the body's rhythm, time and flow as an important aspect of their practical-pedagogical knowledge. I understand these as dramaturgical elements, which are sensed and structured in the teacher-body and then negotiated through the ongoing, inner dialogue as choices for the further structuring of the lesson. When the teacher is successful with making the right choices regarding the timing, the lesson can reach a state of flow, where both dancers, teacher and the lesson itself "float away". The time dissolves itself as a regular ticking and instead is experienced as a circular, floating sensation of moments of heightened meaning-making.

### ***The breath as a way of listening***

I need to listen to the body and get into my breath while I lead the dancers. (I)

Breath is given big attention by both teachers, especially by Ingeborg. They emphasise how their own breathing is influenced by the experiences they go through. They are also aware of how they can use their breath to calm themselves and gain more confidence. This focus on breath shows the connection between contemporary dance and eastern body-mind philosophy, where breath, body and mind often are considered inseparable aspects of the same whole: the human being.

### ***The voice as an extension of the body    The body as manipulator***

I need to enter my voice and sense how the voice influences the group and me. I need to find a voice and a rhythm in my way of talking, which creates an atmosphere and makes me clear. (I)

Ingeborg often mentions the importance of the voice. She emphasises how she propels the lesson forwards through conscious and bodily use of her voice. The voice is understood as an extension of her body, and she describes how her contours become clearer as a teacher when the voice is integrated as a bodily component in the teaching. The voice then gives her a musicality with which she can *tune* the lesson.

### ***Bodily tutoring***

The body is not only important for listening, but also for tutoring. This bodily tutoring happens in different ways.

### ***To explain with the body***

When somebody asks me a question, and I step forwards to show with my body, I sense a kind of caring feeling spreading out in my body. My body widens and lengthens; I become concrete, clear and underline with my body. (M)

The teachers often answer questions in a bodily way. With their bodies they give suggestions, point to possible directions and open for new movement explorations. They share their own bodily knowledge, which the dancers then can try out and re-form in their own bodies.

I can press, direct, manipulate and lead with the help of my body. The way I walk, in what tempo, how hard I put my heels to the floor, the way I turn around and the ways I use my voice are ways that I can use to lead the dancers. (M)

Without any physical contact, the dance teachers can still push their dancers into the direction they wish. Through the use of bodily power, energy, tempo and direction accompanied by the use of direct gaze and voice, the dance teacher can show that there is no doubt that she is the leader. This is a way of teaching that usually appears at specific times in a teaching year, typically in the end of the choreographic phase when a performance is approaching. The pressure of accomplishing the performance enhances, and the teacher takes a clearer grip around the dancers and the teaching.

### ***Touch as a way of mediating knowledge and experience***

I provide the embodied knowledge I have through the use of touch, but I don't lead. (I)

A lot of knowledge sharing in an improvisation based dance class happens through the use of touch, both between teacher and dancers, and between dancers and dancers. Touch is used both to listen, and to lead. The knowledge that is shared, goes in both directions, since this is how the skins function. You cannot touch without being touched yourself (again, this can be related to Merleau-Ponty's (1968) notion of the chiasm). You show yourself in another way through touch. Thereby, also the teacher

becomes vulnerable through the use of touch, as well as the dancers. They exchange information about who they are, in an embodied way. Ingeborg underlines that through the use of touch, she also provides the dancers with a kind of bodily security. Her own bodily experience and security is exchanged with the dancers by the use of touch. This bodily experience and security cannot be verbally mediated, but only felt and shared from body to body. This exchange can only happen if the dancers are open to it, and therefore the use of touch as a way to mediate knowledge and experience can be understood as a two-way “transmission” or exchange.

### **Bodily ambiguity**

The dance teachers understand the relationship between body, thoughts, language and visual information as both negative and positive. This creates bodily ambiguity.

### ***The insecure, cognitive body***

I become very cognitive when I become insecure. I lose contact with my skin and the body. I compensate bodily for my inner insecurity by becoming rougher in my body attitude. When the inner dialogue becomes too strong, I don't manage to stay present in the situation. In my inner dialogue then, I am ahead in the teaching, thinking about my next step. (M)

Opposite to moments where the experience of bodily flow is strong in the teaching, an analytic-cognitive element emerges and disturbs the teaching in situations where the teacher becomes insecure (which can happen because of difficult questions, comments or attitudes by the dancers). She starts analysing as she is in the

teaching moment. The cognitive aspect becomes so apparent that she no longer manages to trust her body, breath and sensations. The experience of time changes as well, and instead of being in the moment, she becomes ahead of the moment, planning her next move. Both dance teachers underline the experience of losing contact with the body, especially with the skin when they think too much. The skin becomes numb, a sensation I think recognizable to many when they are in difficult emotional situations. However, the attention towards the skin as a sensory organ also must be understood within the context of contemporary dance, as this is a typical somatic approach to the body practiced by many contemporary dance teachers today. They are sensitive towards the sensations of the skin.

However, the on-going inner dialogue and thinking is also focused on as necessary and redeeming by the dance teachers:

The inner dialogue solves problems and resistance in myself, and my inner dialogue also gives me new teaching strategies as I go along. (M)

### ***The body and visual information***

Sometimes when I observe the dancers, I am too much in my head, and not in the body. Then I don't quite manage to really see the dancers. This creates a feeling of chaos. Sometimes I also see too much and don't manage to filter the information. This becomes easier if I have quite clear learning goals for the lessons, which then can guide me in what to look for. (I)

The switch between a teaching position of stepping out and observing, instead of being inside the dance, sensing and feeling through own bodily involvement, creates the same ambiguity as between thinking and sensing. The dance teachers' relationship to visual information as a way of observing and understanding is ambiguous. They discuss their teacher gaze in both positive and negative terms. The gaze can pull the teachers “out of their bodies” so they lose their bodily grounding. When they see too much, they do not manage to really *see* the dancers. In other words, they also need to see the dancers through the use of their kinaesthetic empathy through their own participation and through the use of touch. Too much visual information and too little bodily grounding create a feeling of chaos. But they also underline the importance of switching between own participation and observation:

I mustn't disappear into myself. I open my eyes. Gradually I withdraw from the dance and observe the dancers from the outside. Then I at once see where they are. (I).

The analysis of the logs gives the impression that the dance teachers constantly carry out an inner dialogue, based in their sensations, with themselves while teaching. Probably, the dialogue is less verbal and clear than the logs give the impression of, since the log writing itself also creates a distinction between “thinking” and “sensing” which maybe is not there in the actual teaching moment. However, these “recorded” bodily memories as the dance teachers wrote them down, give insight into a practical-pedagogical work that clearly is embodied, including sensations, feelings and thoughts.

## **The criss-crossing teacher-as-body**

With the analysis made in this article, I have searched to answer the two research questions

1. In what ways does the practical-pedagogical knowledge of the dance teacher have a bodily character? *and*
2. What is the exchange between the teacher's bodily-sensory experiences, inner dialogue and teaching choices while teaching?

The ways in which the practical-pedagogical knowledge of the two contemporary dance teachers in this study is embodied, can be summarized as a *bodily listening*, *bodily tutoring* and *bodily ambiguity* surrounded by constantly and rapidly changing *body tunes* throughout their teaching. *Bodily listening* in their case means their own bodily participation, use of kinaesthetic empathy, listening to the feedback of the movement, awareness of the skin as a transparent surface that transmits energy, the bodily development of rhythm, time and flow, a focus on their own breath and an understanding of their own voice as an extension of the body. *Bodily tutoring* for these dance teachers means to explain and answer questions in a bodily way, to manipulate and press with the body if needed in order to reach a certain aim and to teach through touch. *The bodily ambiguity* is created in a tension between sensing and thinking when teaching, as well as between bodily and visual information as a basis for their pedagogical understanding while teaching.

Based on the analysis made in this article, I conclude that there is a heavy exchange between these dance teachers' bodily-sensory experiences, inner dialogue and teaching choices while and

after they teach. This connection is articulated, or even becomes visible, as the dance teachers write reflectively and reflexively in their logs after their teaching. On the basis of this, it can be argued that all Mari and Ingeborg do as dance teachers is bodily grounded. The analysis of their self-reflexive logs from their teaching shows that as dance teachers, they go through continuously shifting body tunes in rhythm with the lesson, as the class unfolds and advances. Different body tunes come and go and the teacher-body shifts and produces new tunes in response to the experiences of success, resistance or failure in class. Whatever actions and choices the dance teachers do as they teach, these are surrounded by body tunes. When experiencing and understanding the dancers' learning processes, the teachers rely deeply on a bodily listening. When leading the dancers, they rely heavily on the body as tutor. When they experience difficulties and conflicting situations, they experience bodily ambiguity. The teacher-body participates, feels and senses all the time. The act of teaching implies heavy bodily work, even if the teachers sometimes move very little.

Engelsrud (2006, 92) leans on Merleau-Ponty's body phenomenology when writing *it is through the body that I gain access to others*. This is true also for the dance teachers in this study. It is through their own body that Mari and Ingeborg understand how their students feel, if and how they learn and what they struggle with. In the teaching moment they are criss-crossing (Merleau-Ponty 1968) with their students in a gap enfleshed through embodiment (Macintyre Latta and Buck 2008); sensing, moving, interpreting and acting as lived teacher-bodies as they seek to understand and teach their students. I find it interesting how Engelsrud (2006) writes about the little child's interaction

with the world and points out that the way the baby learns, happens from and with the body. As grown-ups, the relationship between the body and the surrounding world is as important, but the obvious connection is easily forgotten. The body is forced into the background and is instead replaced by a new understanding of the grown up – including the teacher – as primarily cognitively, verbally and logically structured. According to Engelsrud (ibid.) the body's complex, holistic and multidimensional logic still creates the ground from which the grown up understands, interprets and exists in the world. In this study, this seems to be very true for the dance teacher as she is in the teaching moment.

Based on phenomenological thinking, in this project the teacher-body is clearly articulated as the meaning-making grounding from which teaching processes including thoughts, actions and choices spin out. When the contemporary dance teachers in this study teach, it happens in and through their meaning-making body. The teaching moment is embodied. In dialogue with Giddens (1991, 77), I suggest that the teacher's awareness of her bodily I is basic to grasping the fullness of the teaching moment. I suggest that awareness about the lived, meaning-making teacher-body is ripe with possibilities for the forming of a teacher role, which includes sensitivity towards how deeply the practical-pedagogical knowledge of the teacher is embodied.

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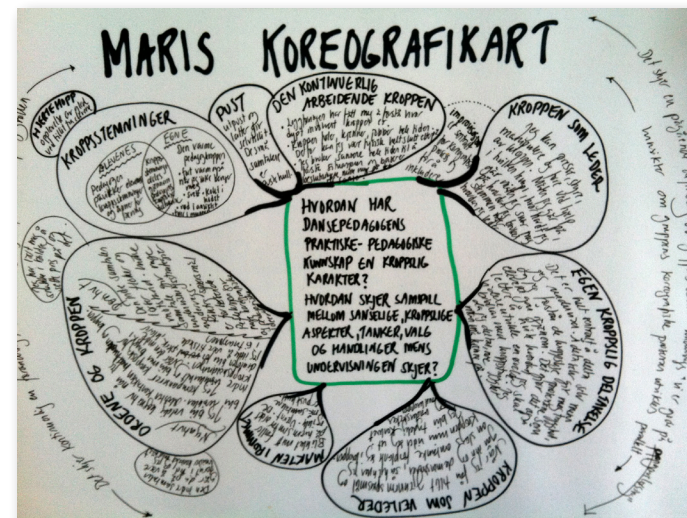
## Endnotes

- 1 See [www.danselaboratoriet.no](http://www.danselaboratoriet.no)
- 2 Mari went abroad for a longer freelance project in the autumn of 2010 and therefor could not continue as the artistic leader of the group.
- 3 They both told extensively about their background and why they wanted to work with the Dance Laboratory in a research interview that I did individually with each of them before their teaching year in the group.
- 4 The model of Smith and Dean is clearly influenced by the Deleuzian *rhizome* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), which is “an *intermezzo*, an interbeing, always between things, with no beginning or end” (ibid. 25).
- 5 With Mari in August 2009, with Ingeborg in June 2010.
- 6 With Mari in June 2010, with Ingeborg in June 2011.
- 7 In December 2011.
- 8 Written by me after Mari’s class on 31st of August, 2009.
- 9 In December 2011.
- 10 The choreographies are outcome in the form of artwork in this study. Mari’s choreography can be seen at <https://vimeo.com/40433953> (produced as a dance film) and Ingeborg’s at <https://vimeo.com/40075211> (produced as a live choreography, documented on film).

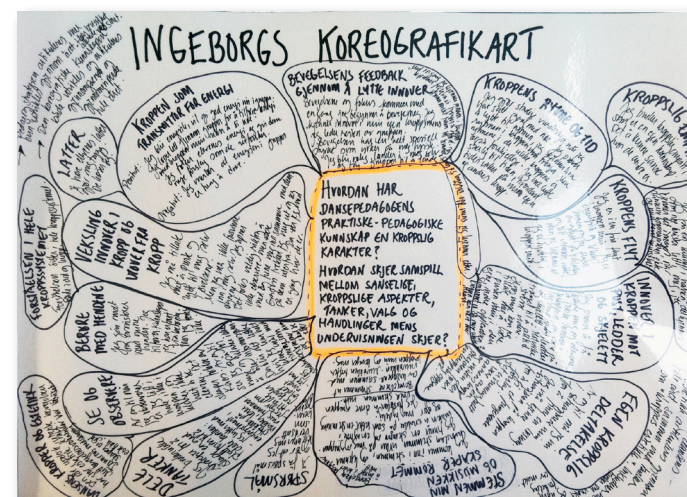
## Acknowledgements

**Mari Flønes** ([www.mariflones.no](http://www.mariflones.no)) is a freelance dancer, choreographer and dance teacher from Trondheim. She has a BA in dance pedagogy from The University of Stavanger, and one year with practical studies in contemporary dance at Studio Harmonic in Paris. She has extensive teaching experience as a dance teacher for a wide spectrum of groups. She is also active as a dancer and choreographer in projects and performances both led by others and as an independent dance artist.

**Ingeborg Dugstad Sanders** is a freelance dancer, choreographer and dance teacher from Trondheim. She has a BA (Hons) in dance from the Laban Centre of Movement and Dance in London and a teacher qualification from Oslo Art Academy. She is also a Certified Movement Analyst from Laban-Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies in New York. She leads the improvisation collective VIB (Workshop for improvised movement) together with Mari Flønes and Luis Della Mea. Since 2010 she has been working part-time as a dance development officer at DansiT ([www.dansit.no](http://www.dansit.no)), the regional dance agency in Trondheim. She currently is the artistic director of the Dance Laboratory ([www.danselaboratoriet.no](http://www.danselaboratoriet.no)).



Appendix 1. Mari's Choreography map

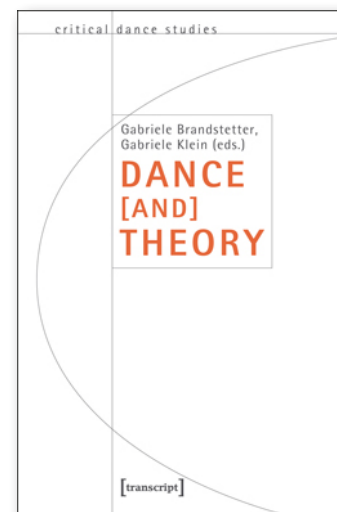


Appendix 2. Ingeborg's Choreography map

## BIOGRAPHY

**Tone Pernille Østern** (Dr. of Art in Dance) is an Associate Professor in Arts Education at the Program for Teacher Education at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim, Norway. Østern is also a dance artist, choreographer and dance teacher producing and teaching on the independent dance field in Norway. She is the artistic leader of

Inclusive Dance Company ([www.dance-company.no](http://www.dance-company.no)), which has produced and performed its own repertoire since 2001. In her PhD study (2009) at the Theatre Academy in Helsinki, Østern explored the meaning-making processes among differently bodied dancers as she was establishing and developing the Dance Laboratory ([www.danselaboratoriet.no](http://www.danselaboratoriet.no)).



## Book: Dance [and] Theory

*Edited by: Gabriele Brandstetter and Gabriele Klein, 2013.*

*Reviewed by: Cecilia Olsson*

*Dance [and] Theory* is not a book to review in a traditional sense. It resists such a treatment. Mainly due to the numerous and manifold issues raised: Issues that demand time and space, contextualisation, as well as many mental and physical moves among complex subjects and questions. In fact, subjects and questions which reach far beyond the immediate field of focus, and easily could be subjects for conferences of their own. The reader finds herself theorising on theorising, reflecting on reflections, turning and returning in different directions and circles. This is because *Dance [and] Theory*, in itself pinpoints discourses, agencies, and theories, practices of which of course you can argue and

present opinions — however not review. To put it simply it is all about what are we talking about when we talk. What are we doing when we do, create, think, and act? What are the relations between dance and theory, what happens when these intertwine? Positioned in the middle of crisis, the need to define and redefine who we are and what we do in a world of global capitalism seems urgent.

*Dance [and] Theory* is a collection of texts derived from an indeed ambitious conference held at Uferstudios in Berlin in 2011, and organised by Gabriele Brandstetter and Gabriele Klein, the editors of the volume. The conference, which started a year ahead with a workshop

followed by further discussions and planning within the panels, “was designed to open up a broad field of thought, to pose new questions and to develop flexible structures and open systems” (Brandstetter and Klein 2013, 13). From various themes and perspectives, well renowned and experienced artists, scholars, dramaturges, archivists – or why not label all researchers – active within the field of dance take a closer look at fusions, confusions and contradictions, politics and politicisation, theory and practice/critical practice, when identifying, defining and discussing what is currently debated. How paradigms shift, negotiate, relate, disconnect and disrupt. How educational, political, cultural and economic structures change and “the field” becomes part of these structures, either as advocates or as possible adversaries, or keeps alive by resisting being categorised. Each theme, and/or topic, begins with a lecture, followed by an introduction, a panel, and concludes with a response. Lectures give historical backgrounds like Susan Leigh Foster’s enlightening opening “‘Dancing and Theorizing and Theorizing Dancing” that takes us back to Antiquity, from where she follows complex trajectories of notions and understandings of theory within different structural bodies over time, showing the complexity of a concept continuously reshaping. The panels hold a wide spectrum of discussions related to and within dance [and] theory, choreography, politics, geopolitical mobilisation and social change; the multitude of angles that alter the conditions for artists and scholars.

The choreographers/dancers in their lived contexts and social relations, the body/subject in its own corporeality and materiality is at core (even if not vocally so). The book depicts how emerging new formations where authorship has vanished in favour of the collective have

broken the old hierarchical modes of working. *Dance [and] Theory* raises questions strongly connected to politics and society, not least with neoliberalism and late-capitalism as backdrops. In “A Few Remarks about Research in Dance and Performance or — The Production of Problems”, Bojana Cvejić brings forward among other things production practices, “knowledge production” and differentiation among artistic forms. What are the relationships between research and presentation? How are we dealing with new forms of institutionalising? Other matters concern how dance theory can take place and define itself as critical practice by for instance critical inquires in defining implications and present propositions.

I catch myself smiling when finding references to persons who strongly have been a factor in developing “dance studies” like Randy Martin, who in the late 90s, introduced and formed “critical dance studies”. Post-Fordism, bio-politics, Rancière and Agamben are central, however, none of the authors relate “critical theory” to for instance Marxism and Marxist theory. In the Post-Fordian era production is not locked in the factory any more, production is everywhere in society. We produce within an immaterial sphere, where subjects turn exchangeable objects in the circuit in which we all participate. I keep on recalling for instance Paolo Virno, who in *A Grammar of Multitude* argues, “capitalists buy the capacity for producing as such, and not simply one or more specific services” (Virno 2004, 82). What we are “selling” is a possibility rather than a product. This means that capitalism has to engender potentiality, which is at the same time dangerous - as it is it cannot be conducted. This dynamism is necessary for social movement, for the productivity to continue.

What materialises in my mind is that we are producing a “commodity” that never survives its own production and forms a rather depressing image, which contours get sharper and sharper: we all work in the social factory, which has no outside (or inside).

*Dance [and] Theory* offers an important addition to current discussions that encourage further debate. *Dance [and] Theory* opens up to continue debates, questionings, and problematizing. It brings forward the social/historical/cultural/performing backgrounds wherein lies the present. Whether it goes towards the future as well is left open.

An approach is to read the volume from cover to cover, by doing so it turns into a thriller where the reader becomes the detective. The themes and topics are clearly separated, yet critical readings across as well as within the sections make the volume an almost never-ending reading. It generates more nodes or spaces, making possible new encounters in creative and intellectual networks.

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## BIOGRAPHY

**Cecilia Malmström Olsson**, Ph.D. is a free lance scholar, writer, lecturer, advisor and has been active within the field of dance, culture, education for 25 years in Sweden, Scandinavia, Europe and the US. Her main research focus has been dance and politics from various perspectives.

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**The 2012 Global Dance Summit: Dance, Young People and Change, was held at Taipei National University of the Arts (TNUA) in Taiwan 14 – 20 July 2012. The summit was organized collaboratively between Dance and the Child International (daCi) and World Dance Alliance (WDA) and hosted by TNUA. The conference proceedings are published online, thanks to the Australian Dance Council – Ausdance.**

The summit attracted more than 1500 delegates of all ages, from over thirty countries. The program included performances and workshops for and by young people and adults, as well as presentations of research papers and panels and professional projects. In response to the large number of abstracts submitted for the conference, the organizers developed a new category designated as 'Project Dialogues,' adding to the menu of more traditional research papers and panels. These dialogues allowed dance educators and artists to share professional projects focusing on young people. Project presenters were paired and urged to communicate with each other prior to the conference in order to plan discussions linking the projects. Both research papers/panels and project dialogues are published in the on-line proceedings, organized by the themes under which they were identified in the conference program; each appears in the language (English and/or Chinese) chosen by the author(s).

The proceedings can be found here: <http://ausdance.org.au/publications/details/dance-young-people-and-change>

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# Nordic Journal of Dance

## Call for contributions – Nordic Journal of Dance, vol. 4 (2), 2013

Present your work in the newly founded publication Nordic Journal of Dance: practice, education and research.

The first issue of Nordic Journal of Dance (NJD) was published in March 2010 by Dans i Skolen on behalf of Dance in Education Nordic Network – DENN. Volume 2 and 3 were published respectively in December 2010 and January 2012. Volume 1–3 have had loosely addressed themes within dance practice in the Nordic countries. Volume 4, published in 2013 with two issues, does not address any specific theme, but presents recent reflections and findings within research and practice in dance and education from our Nordic perspective.

Volume 4 (2) will be published in December 2013. Nordic Journal of Dance invites practitioners and researcher to submit a variety of texts in two categories:

### Research articles:

NJD expects these articles to present research, findings and theoretical argumentation related to diverse dance practices and artistic processes as well as learning and teaching dance/movement in the Nordic context. The maximum length of the submitted article is 5 000 words including possible endnotes and references. Please include two abstracts of a maximum length of 200 words: one written in the language used for the article and the other in a Nordic language (for articles in English) or in English (for articles written in native language), and a 100 word biography.

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NJD expects these articles to document and reflect upon the work being done within dance and education in the Nordic countries in different artistic and educational settings as well as with different age groups. The purpose is to introduce the experiences and conceptions of dance practitioners and educators. The maximum length of a submitted article is 10 pages or less including footnotes and references. Please include two abstracts of a maximum length of 200 words: one written in the language used for the article and the other in a Nordic language (for articles in English) or in English (for articles written in native language), and a 100 word biography.

### General guidelines:

Articles can be written in English or one of the Nordic languages. In creating the document, type text and headings use 12 point font size and line-spacing 1,5. Mark references using Chicago Manual of Style (author-date system, see: [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)). For specific details on formatting and other guidelines please contact Dans i Skolen (DiS) at [dis@dansiskolen.no](mailto:dis@dansiskolen.no).

### Deadline for submitting full papers and pictures is September 1<sup>st</sup> 2013.

Send submission to [dis@dansiskolen.no](mailto:dis@dansiskolen.no)  
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**Volume 4 (1), 2013**

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*Charlotte Füst*

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**Research Papers:**

Perception and Movement Imagery as Tools in Performative Acts Combining Live Music and Dance

*Paula Salosaari*

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The Embodied Teaching Moment: The Embodied Character of the Dance Teacher's Practical-pedagogical Knowledge Investigated in Dialogue with Two Contemporary Dance Teachers

*Tone Pernille Østern*

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**Reviews:**

Dance [and] Theory

*Cecilia Olsson*

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