EVERYBODY CAN DANCE!

15.10.2022 - 14.04.2023

Workshop ARCHIVE & Schoolbook

BY VICTORIA MCCONNELL

BASED ON THE WORKSHOP BY
IRINA PAULS & SARA
WILNAUER / DASCOLLECTIF



08.03 - 15.03.2023: Workshop

16.03.2023: FINAL SHOW

17.03.2023: Roundtable - feedback & conclusions

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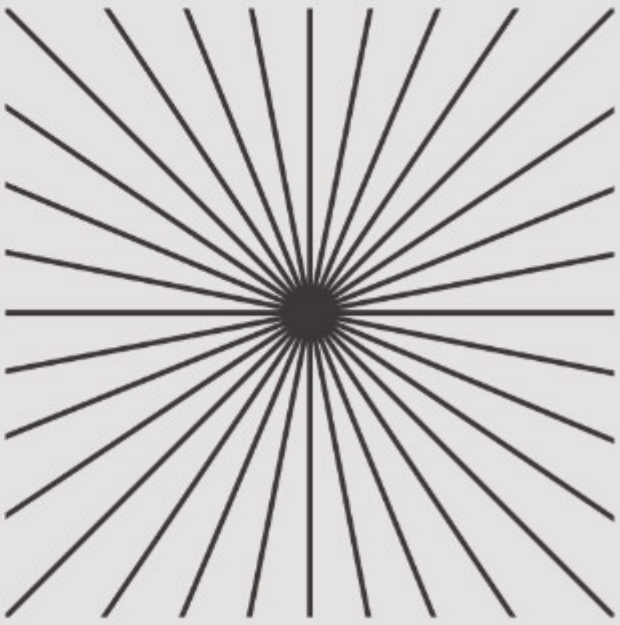
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EVERYBODY CAN DANCE PROJECT

Workshop ARCHIVE *& Schoolbook*

BY VICTORIA MCCONNELL

BASED ON THE WORKSHOP BY IRINA PAULS & SARA WILNAUER / DASCOLLECTIF



MARCH 8-17, 2023

EVERYBODY CAN DANCE!

ARCHIVE *& schoolbook*

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Thank you to everyone who made the project and workshop possible.

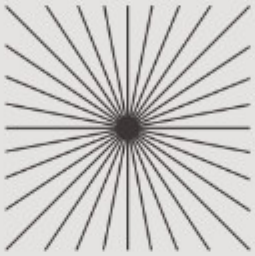
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EVERYBODY CAN DANCE!

ABOUT THE PROJECT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Everybody Can Dance! is a collaboration between the Teatrul Muzical Ambasadorii (Bucharest, RO) and DasCollectif (Vienna, AU). The project started from a desire to improve the professional skills of the artistic staff of the theater, acquire new skills, and harmonize the artistic relationships between vocal soloists, actors and dancers. The main event was a 10 day workshop from March 8-17th, 2023 at Palatul al Copiilor, in Bucharest with 25 members of the artistic team of Teatrul Muzical Ambasadorii. Led by Irina Pauls and Sara Wilnauer, the workshop was based on Pauls' practical implementation of Laban Movement Analysis and enriched by the Sound and Voice practice from Sara Wilnauer.

Through the recommendation from director of Off Europa Festival Saxony, Knut Geißler, Teatrul Muzical Ambasadorii first contacted Irina Pauls because of her work's focus on the interaction of dance and music. Cătălin Cătană, as project leader, reached out to Pauls explaining the need to bring together a diverse group of actors, dancers and singers. As her artistic work with DasCollectif focuses precisely on the synthesis of these artistic disciplines, Pauls suggested that DasCollectif, with Sara Wilnauer, as a particularly suitable partner for this cooperation. Both organizations came to a partnership agreement and moved forward with the project and its implementation.

Timeline of preparation, planning and implementation of workshop

- January 2023 - First Planning and Exchange Visit

Key representatives from Bucharest visit Vienna and meet with DasCollectif. They attended exchange and organizational meetings, as well as an open rehearsal and performance of DasCollectf's piece "tohuwabohu" a piece for young audiences at Dschungel Wien.

- February 2023 - Second Planning and Exchange Visit

Irina Pauls and Sara Wilnauer came Bucharest for a venue visit, further workshop planning and meeting the Bucharest ensemble. Together with Cătălin Cătană, they finalized the planning for the workshop and the work-in-progress showing.

- March 2023 - Workshop and Conclusion

Pauls and Wilnauer, with documentation assistant Victoria McConnell, traveled to Bucharest for the 10 day workshop and conclusion period. Together with Cătană, they implemented the planned workshop and work-in-progress showing for a live and live-streamed audience.



EVERYBODY CAN DANCE!

WORKSHOP PROCESS + INSIGHTS



Beginning by touching on Laban's social context, the workshop introduced Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) as a tool to appreciate and understand different aspects of movement, not only through sensing, but also through observation. Through the different embodied practices, the intention is to clarify the connection to one's own body and, in turn, the body's relation to the environment around it. Irina and the participants discussed the organization of the body and breaking dance down to its essential elements through the terminology of LMA: body, space, shape, effort, phrasing, and relationship. Through the warm-up, vocal session and movement practices in different spaces, we cultivated deeper awareness of the body in space through exercises with the body, with the voice and working with architecture.

Focus for first day was on the body and spatial directions both inside and outside. Inspired by Laban's icosahedron, or *cubo lui Laban*, participants used this and imagery of one's own kinosphere to access the body's three dimensionality. Embodying Laban's concept of the 8 directions, group exercises explored individual and group direction, body facings while beginning to play with structure and rhythm. The vocal session began connecting breath to voice and voice to spatial directions through imagery and simple movements. Bringing these process-oriented approaches outdoors, the tasks gave participants time to notice their surroundings, observe their body's reactions, and to relate to the unique architecture of a public passageway and park. Walking and using everyday movements while experimenting with different pathways and energy, participants activated the space around them as they related to the built environment and to each other.

INSIGHTS & DISCOVERIES

Morning Movement Practice:

Giving one's weight in to gravity (rolling on the floor) is not so easy. How can we release tension in the muscles, while still using/activating them in order to move as we need?

Outdoor Afternoon Session:

In my positions, I felt a sense of safety or security. – Sergiu

While I was waiting for the signal, I noticed I was adjusting my pathway to be closer to my positions. – Cosmin

Others' positions affect me: I based one of my points on their position. When they were slightly different, I realized I was also off. – Octavian



We are learning by playing. Learning by observing directions and energy, rather than specific details or gestures. Rather than copying, we are trying to embody, to physically catch the essence of another body's way of sitting, standing, moving. – Irina

Seeing and translating movement into the body is not automatic. It is a skill honed with time and practice. While watching the task, Group 2 understood it, could 'read' it from the outside, but when it was their turn they could not do it themselves. Observing is not only about seeing but also about activating a kind of body 'empathy', or feeling with what you are seeing.



The second day of the workshop already set the focus through the morning movement session on the themes of effort and shape without leaving behind directions in space. Using weight to play with effort and shapes, participants later connected to chosen architectures physically with the body, and through sensations. Returning to the chosen outdoor space, participants began a new process of generating and shaping ideas. Relating their body to a particular piece or place in the architectural space, participants each created a small movement sequence. Honing their observational skills, they reflected on where their center of gravity is in relation to the particular architecture and used considerations of on or off-balance; the texture of surfaces; and which points of the body contact objects to clarify their phrase. Next began a process of translating the small movement phrase into another space and finally to share it with others.

Returning to spatial relations and effort through the voice, workshop participants pulled the tones out from the body and gathered it back and sent vocalizations to different directions and other people in the room. Challenged to cultivate deeper listening skills through no talking, participants played with creating new sounds with different body parts and creating sonic ‘calls’ as communication signals. Exploring group dynamics and the difficulties of singing as a unit rather than as individuals, we worked in various constellations while vocalizing and creating body percussions,

Opening up the concept of pathways, Irina then introduced Laban’s basic ideas on transcribing moving through space onto paper. Beginning with a square, participants could break down the space into smaller parts and trace the routes onto the paper.



Then it becomes simpler to translate the path on paper to any stage, no matter what the shape and the ratios of distance between people and architectonics should remain.

The workshop then moved inside and everyone work to recapture their specific positions and clarified the pathways they had previously created in the public passageway. Connecting Laban's mapping ideas to their own creative process, everyone then drew their three positions and the connecting routes on paper. To deepen the process of observing shapes and movements through space, participants then exchanged maps with their colleagues. As they worked to decipher the other person's positions and movements, these exchanges showed the challenges of understanding proportions and how a different perspective can completely alter movement perception.



INSIGHTS & DISCOVERIES

Morning Warmup

Already a softer/better connection to floor and rolling, but it is easy to become impatient, move too fast and lose the quality of the movement.

There isn't a wrong or right, it's about asking questions and learning by observing your body or the body of others –Irina

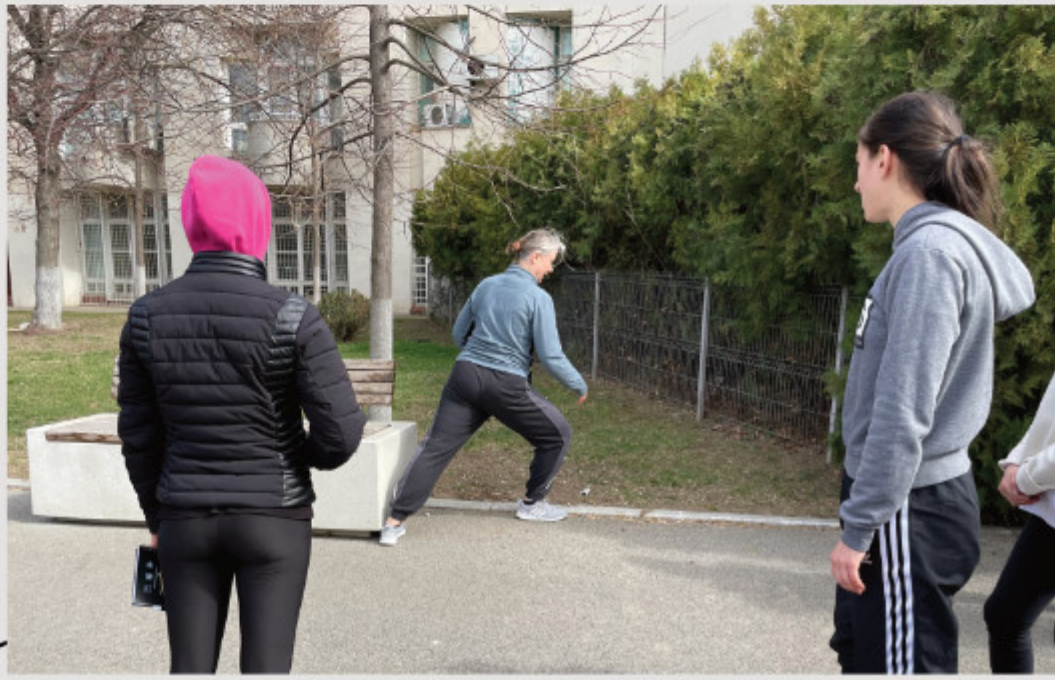


Morning Outdoor Session

Changing fronts when watching creates a more active audience. Or having the audience move in space also creates a kind of engagement.

I found it interesting to feel the sensation of my body on the object, the texture or surface of the material and how it affected my movement. – Sas

Seeing the first version of someone's relation to the architecture seems simple, maybe even boring. But then seeing the second one, the translation, it suddenly becomes interesting.
– Sergiu



INSIGHTS & DISCOVERIES

Vocal Session

Creating a space of listening requires concentration. Keep the ears clean. – Sara

Afternoon Outdoor Session

Translating proportions from paper to real spaces is not simple, therefore having a clear front or starting orientation is essential.

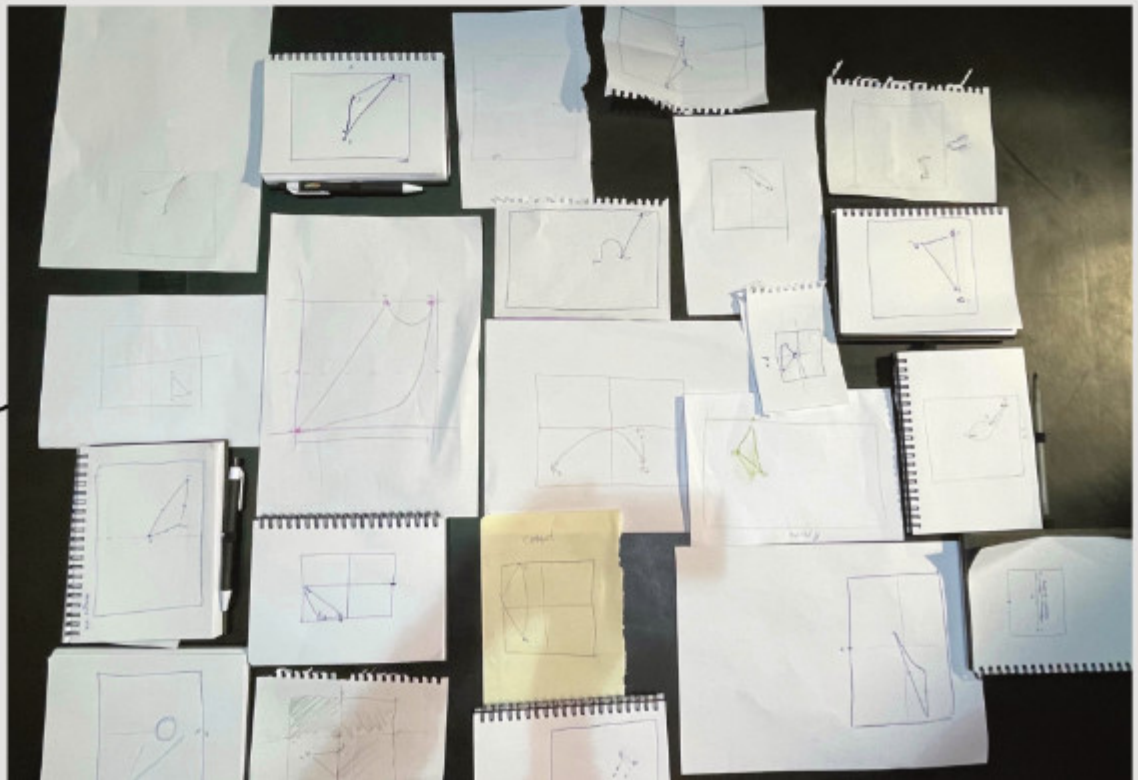


Looking at all the paper pathways side by side, I see how not many people are using the whole space for their movements and that so often a triangle is formed. – Cosmin

Tuning into those around me, both when moving and singing, is not so simple. How can we come together as a group, listening to the other bodies supporting without competition?

Take what is useful for yourself and include it in your daily practice as an artist. Translate it into your own artistic viewpoint. – Irina

It would be interesting to see all the maps or all the routes stacked on top of each other to create a 3D bird's eye view of how the space is activated. – Victoria





Overall, the focal point of the day was on building connections: how the spine connects head and tailbone; how to relate and work together while developing a group dynamic; and how to connect different spaces. Opening the day, the morning movement practice centered on the spine through mobilizing the pelvis, releasing the head into the floor and finding spirals through the whole spine. Using everyday movements, we checked how the body organizes itself. Adding creative input to the movement, participants worked with a head/tail improvisation across the floor and started to develop awareness of the other through partner “dialogues” in lines across the space.

Moving outdoors once again, participants revisited yesterday's exercises, found ways to resolve problems as a group, and adjusted their energetic input for a given position. After reviewing the Architecture in Space solo or group fragments, another layer was added (Position Watchers) which further emphasized relationship. By having viewers take a clear spatial position in relation to the motionless movers, the performance space was redefined by the focus and position of those not actually dancing.





After the break, the vocal session picked up the traces from the previous days and added tasks for cadence, body percussion and group work which honed focus and started to unify the participants in new ways. Continuing to build ideas of volume and length with the voice as well as returning to the themes of relationship or connection, we developed vocal “calls” and played with how to use them in the group.

In the final session of the day, Irina deepened the concept of translating by having everyone begin to transpose the outdoor passageway space to the studio room. This opened up dialogues on proportions and how to share the smaller space with various groups of people. The second layer of translating began by introducing a new task, with four steps to it, to evolve the quality of the movements which participants had already created. First, they individually analyzed and separated the elements of their given phrase. Then participants defined the important movement qualities (between 3 and 6). Thirdly, participants improvised with those chosen qualities in order to develop variations in volume, in weight, in size or direction. The final step was to begin setting a score, or creating an order, including repetition, of the roughly 4 defined movement qualities. The search for specificity and choreographic material is about asking questions and deepening. This is best supported when participants embraced ideas of playing and testing out movement ideas without pressing to quickly set material.



INSIGHTS & DISCOVERIES

Morning Warmup
Be in contact, not only with your eyes! With your awareness, feel yourself and the body of the other person. – Irina



First Session Outside
It requires focus and practice to estimate the distance and speed (amount of time) one needs to get in and out of the position without losing the whole rhythm of the line. The position itself should tell you what kind of energy and how much is needed to arrive in it.

And how long of a pause is needed to make a position clear?

The distance between people is important, timing and connection to each other and the position. Without having music or input from the outside.

but the real task is to feel the energy that is required for the

How can we make our start visible to the whole group?

Clarity of starting energy – Sergiu

A clear direction – Simona

Changing the position or moving to a new space
– Octavian

The energy decides what is happening next!
– Irina



INSIGHTS & DISCOVERIES

Vocal Session

Everything needs to flow in through the body to find a beat and rhythm together. – Sara



Adding steps to the "Ja Dan Duia" song helped us be more precise in the rhythm, to move together as a group.

Sometimes we were too caught up in the relationships in the inner circle and didn't pay enough attention or listen enough to the outer circle. – Octavian and Anastasia

Afternoon Session Indoors

While transposing the outdoor space inside, we see everyone's memory can be different or influenced by outside input

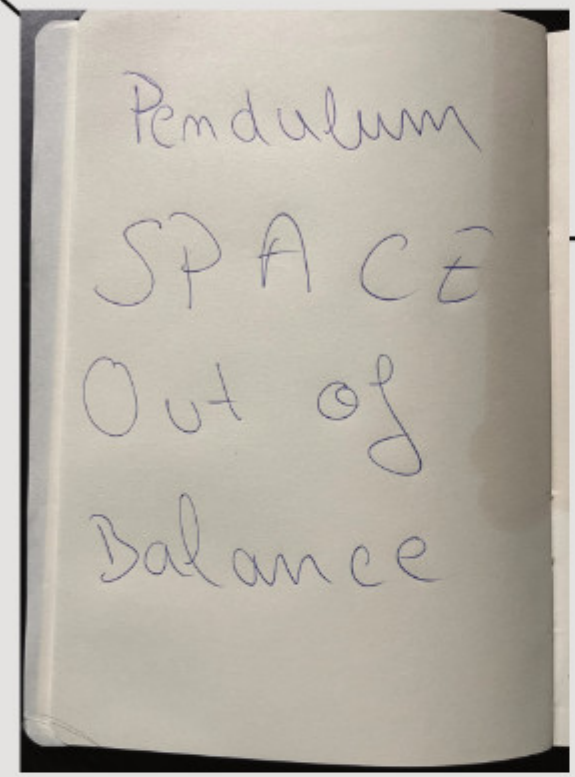
"Sara, you're in the trash! Again, you are in the trash."
– Simona

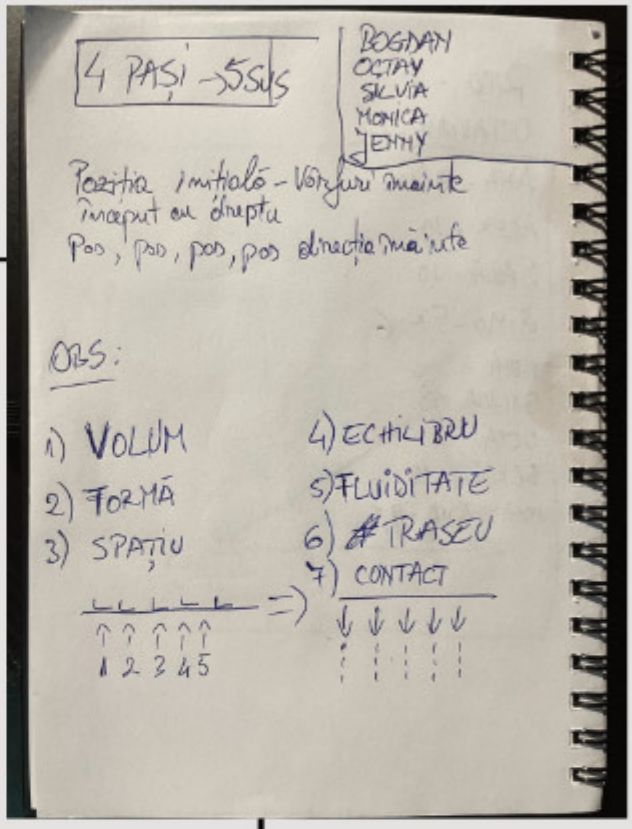


INSIGHTS & DISCOVERIES

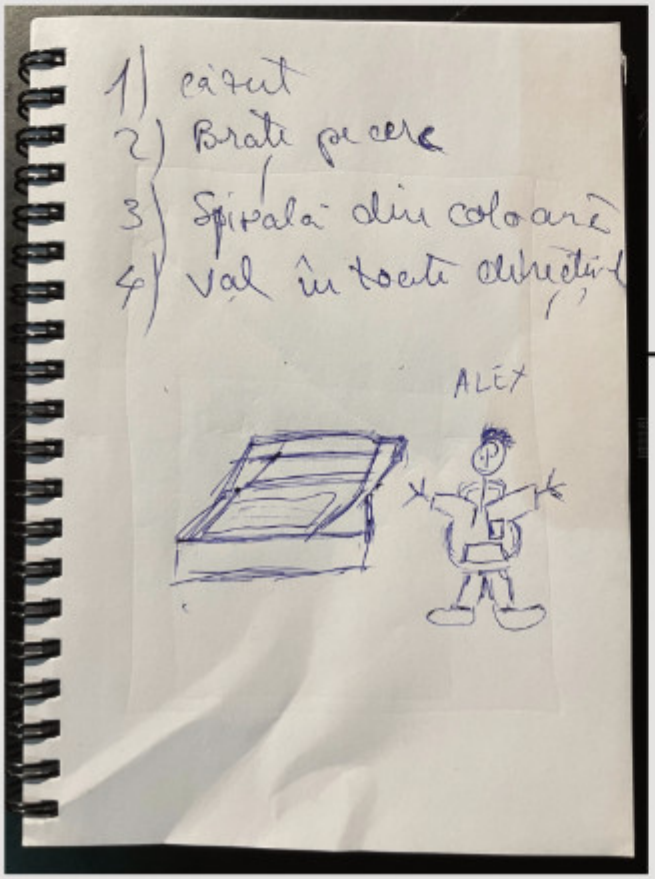
Afternoon Session Indoors

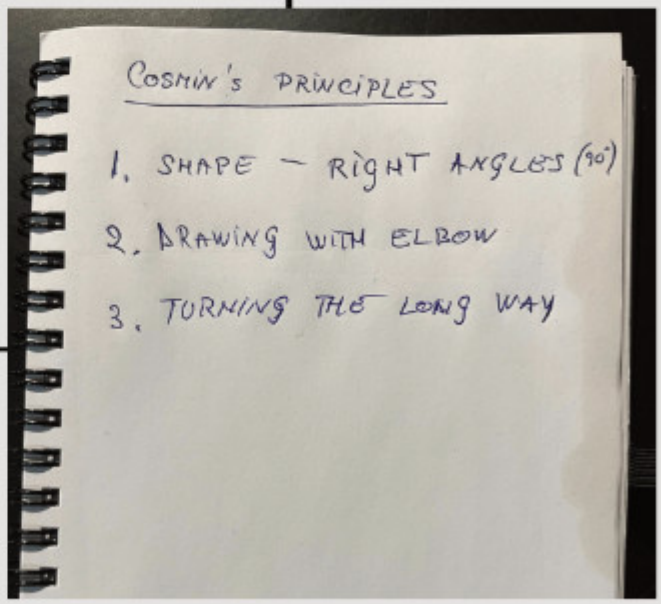
What's the main idea of your movement element? What is the important quality? Whatever it is, go into it. Dig into it. – Irina





Choreography can be both a structure for movement as well as fixed material.
Everything can become choreography.







DAY 4

During the fourth day, alongside beginning to formulate a performative structure, the workshop expanded themes from previous days, namely: spinal mobility, developing consistent rhythm and group communication, while continuing to translate ideas from one space to another.

Releasing weight into the floor and emphasizing the head-tail connection, the morning movement practice added the task of folding and unfolding the joints. This continued through exercises and improvisations in which participants worked to sequentially move their spines across the floor including curves of upper and lower back and spirals.

In the morning session, Irina gave participants the chance to experience a process-oriented way of developing a scene. Combining ideas of proportions, imagination and illustrating space together with scene-building, two people stepped into the stage space and discussed, described, argued, or agreed on where the transposed dimensions of the outdoor architecture were. Learning by doing, participants noted what topics and questions were important to them and what might make the scene intriguing, not only for them, but for an audience. Some questions included: where are the edges of our chosen space? Do we shrink the objects or our movements since the performance space is proportionally smaller than the original outdoor one? The topic of conflict also came up and was questioned. Is conflict necessary to create a scene? Who, within the various group dynamics, feels comfortable to play with uncertainty and potential disagreement for the sake of the scene? Through lively discussion and observation participants began to understand Irina's perspective and the tools of scene-building. Irina clarified that, for the purposes of translating the workshopped material into artistic material for a stage, the intent of this exercise was to: generate a scene from a given starting point through defining a process, involve memory, and then



DAY 4

allow the players to interact and see how they solved the problem or not.

After the break, the vocal session picked up the trail of the previous day's work, opening with sending consonants into space and connecting those sounds to specific body parts. Participants revisited the body percussion they had already learned and not only did Sara include new patterns, but she also had them play with fragmenting elements of the patterns.

Remembering one's position in space and the observation that memory is changeable, first emerged as topics in the morning session, but again appeared in the final session of the day as participants recreated their placement in space for "Position Watchers". Referencing LMA's 8 Points or directions in space, everyone clarified their particular placement as well as their angles in space. From here Irina continued adding layers to the sequence, unfolding ideas for a possible performative structure. Integrating fragments of the body percussion into "Position Watchers", participants used their 8 Point direction in space to determine if they made a particular sound or not. As transitions were built, from one constellation to another, the performers experienced the importance of either, energetically crossing the space, or having a clear movement decision when signalling a change or starting a group body percussion.

INSIGHTS & DISCOVERIES

Morning Indoor Session

It's easy to comment from the outside, but the players inside the scene need time to understand what it is they themselves are doing. Give them time and respect their process before jumping in to comment or correct.

Whether or not one understands the language that the 2 people are discussing and defining the space in, one can still follow through body language and perhaps even better tune into gestures and facial expressions.

Memory of one's position in the room or where certain structures exist in space, is dependent on connecting to details of the original place: a wall, a tree. This is interesting - what do we catch in order to remember?
– Participants plus Irina



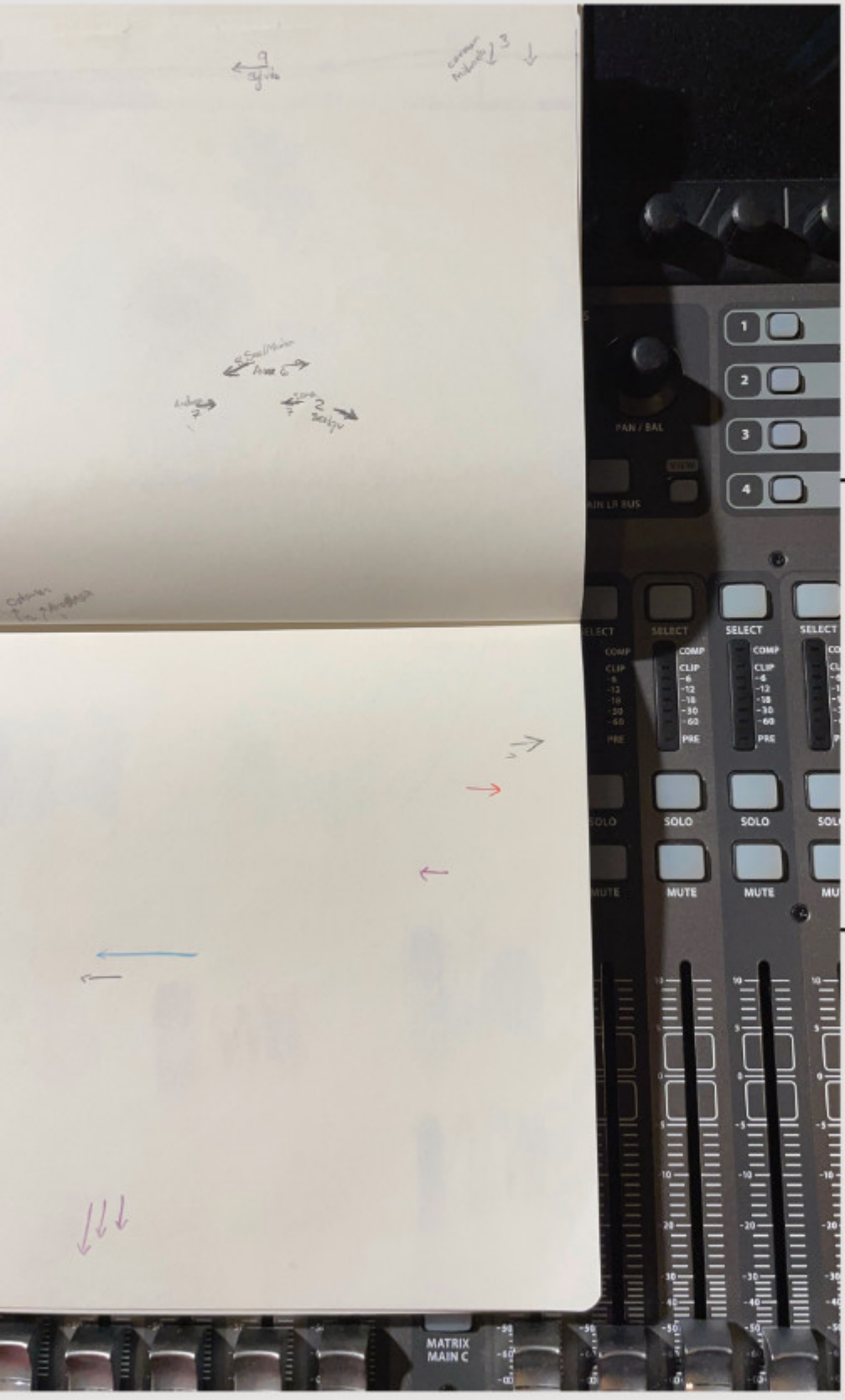
We are not just cooperating. Sometimes a conflict came up, we were a bit against each other. Sometimes one person avoided conflict and agreed; sometimes they didn't. How they resolved the conflict makes it interesting. Conflict exists anyway, so it all depends on how we solve it.
– Sergiu plus Irina

Asking clear questions, also writing down the questions was a useful way to create a specific rhythmic type of speaking. Repetition of specific terms, which the audience won't know, creates an aura of expertise and therefore a certain character starts to emerge – Simona plus Victoria

Sometimes, the scene **is** the discussion and the conflict or resolve.

INSIGHTS & DISCOVERIES

I love to have them [the viewer] lost, to open their fantasy through what they see on stage, even if they don't completely understand it. –Irina



<u>Afternoon Indoor Session</u>

It's not necessary to perfectly rebuild the space, but to create a scene or fantastic situation where the audience is drawn in.

We take our direction from the 4 points, of the shoulders and hips, to find our direction in space. If there is a spiral, take it from the hip points. – Irina, plus Laban Movement Analysis

We want to bring together movement, sound, and the human being! Let it all go in and through your body. –Irina and Sara



On the fifth day, with new contact exercises, the morning warm-up set the first focal point: connecting to another person or group and building trust from within, rather than by reliance on music, counts or a choreographer's command. The second theme of the day was on devising together (consisting of improvising, observation round, new decisions, more movement, repeat). This particular process for creating material, which participants could experience and try out through Irina's teaching, is drawn from Laban concepts, post-modern dance practice, somatic practices and ideas of democracy.

The day began with movement practice as usual, however with a new starting point today. This time we used a hands-on partner release guided series to release and warm-up the body. The gentle contact brought together the continuing themes of spinal mobility, engaging the whole nervous system, finally leading to improvisation and building trust with another person through physical touch.

Returning from a brief break, Irina immediately brought everybody back into movement. Starting to move with swings, circles and spirals, she guided participants through an improvisation which led into finding ones' kinosphere, expanding the personal bubble three dimensionally through movement. Creating body architectures with legs, arms, and spine, as individuals, participants traced the edges of their body-sphere with extended arms and traveled through space. Eventually this led to closer proximity with other movers and their personal bubbles. The movers then overlapped their kinospheres with other peoples', using negative space to create new body sculptures. Through observing the other's movement, partners also added new ideas and qualities of movement to create dynamic duets which boosted everyone's sense of connection and trust.

Before reviewing and building more of the performative structure, Irina shared some of her perspective on the difference between workshopping material or



deepening movement qualities versus how the requirement to have a showing changes any creative process, from exploration to production.

Rather than separate sessions, Day 5 integrated vocal and movement ideas throughout the process. This choice was useful as we reviewed and built upon the choreographic ideas. Revisiting the Position Watchers scene, Irina and Sara collaboratively added transitions with movement and voice, including parts of the percussion loops and fragments of the “Ja Dan Duia” song and members of the workshop were immersed in the process of building up transitions. Irina and Sara, as workshop leaders, had a list of possibilities and choosing one, they tested it, discussed and decided. Both the transitions and the positions began to come to life as the body percussion, gestures, different speeds or dynamics, and spoken text came into play. However, in some cases, it became clear that the intention and quality of certain transitions, such as the vocal call-and-response, needed more clarification in order to function.

In the afternoon session, participants returned to the task of developing their basic elements they extracted from the Movement in Architecture exercise. Working in solos and groups, everyone reviewed their small phrase and were given time to develop it. This way of working was new for most and the complexity of the compositional layers meant that they needed time, explanation, and personal assistance. Rather than continuing with verbal explanations, Irina chose to open up several ‘working’ examples. By modelling the devising process for the group, Irina offered a different learning modality and eventually the idea became clear for most. The steps of this particular approach to choreographic translation were:

1. analyze a movement phrase, break it down into it's basic elements or parts
2. define important movement qualities of the essential parts
3. add variations or layers (from Laban’s principal categories of movement)
4. create a score, such as an ABBACACA format



As participants worked on their own, Irina, Sara and Victoria engaged individually to help clarify the process and ask reflecting questions. Through this multilayered process, it was clear that this way of working is new for the participants. Even with support from the workshop leaders, it was challenging to think in such new directions and not immediately make a narrative or force emotionality onto a movement. The neural pathways of old habits and familiar ways of doing things are deeply ingrained in everyone, but change and trying out new ideas is possible. This particular way of devising and creating takes a lot of concentration from everyone involved, not just one leader or choreographer. Additionally, we observed that a whole day of working with new concepts in a foreign language takes a lot of energy and should not be underestimated.

LMA deals with theory and pure form. Only through the recent influence of somatic practices that contemporary dance, and Irina's particular choreographic sensibility, consider both the exterior form and spatial relations of the body as well as the interior landscape and the effect personal sensations have on movement. Despite the processes Irina and Sara shared in the workshop being challenging on multiple levels, participants were generally willing to come, to be open to new ideas while engaging with new ways of dancing, vocalizing, and of making choreography.

INSIGHTS & DISCOVERIES

Warmup

After, I felt so free and I trusted my body –Rico

Morning Indoor Session

Creating your own space bubble first, then let yours overlap with someone else and see what is going to happen. It's not about "you do this" and then "I do that", it is about observing what kind of spaces open up between your overlapping bubbles –Irina

We started to be really connected. We found a common rhythm and I felt we could start to anticipate each other's movements –Jennifer



I could find my partner through my body, if I let it move, let it lead me – Cezara



I observed my range of motion, the movements I made were affected by the distance to my partner. When I was far away, my movements were more diverse. When we were close, I felt less quality of movement. –Simona

Through the eye contact and movement, I felt I was longing, was drawn to be in your kinosphere. And, without talking, I think you felt it too. –Sara and Mihaela

INSIGHTS & DISCOVERIES

Afternoon Session:

You have to choose from your moves what is most important to you. It is from your perspective, only you have the inside perspective –Irina

Synchron [moving together] happens by describing what you want to do! By deepening, through discussing and searching for precisely what it is you want. Not from counts. –Irina

Normally, I never count, but the choreographer in front always counts, so I have to count too. –Rico



We have never worked like that, it's interesting but we just have never done it before. –Octavian

The "zwischenmenschliche" (interpersonal, between humans) moments are always the most interesting.



Day Six of Everybody Can Dance!, focused on grasping and practicing foundations of the creation process, through further building of the performative structure as much as through participants discussing, considering, and developing choreographic ideas in a collaborative way.

After the warmup time, the morning session occurred in a new, indoor space where participants were asked to again use architectural features, but this time to work in small groups. After reviewing Laban's categories, participants collaborated to create three positions, with three different keywords, in relation to the chairs. Practicing a process of proposing-testing-observing-discussing (and repeating as necessary) they set three precise body shapes in the architecture. Through this they improved their powers of observation and use experimentation to generate ideas. Here it became important to not only consider fine details, such as angles of the head, but to recognize the difference between an imprecisely described position and simply having differently proportioned bodies in the group. After solidifying the shapes, the next layer of the task was building an order with repetition of their 3 positions. Finally, each small group shared their structure and exchanged observations in the round. Integrating the vocal session into the morning's work, Sara led the group through familiar breath and consonant/vowel exercises in the new space. The better acoustics of the foyer supported the voice and helped as participants focused on refining the call and response task. Beyond the new space, the work of previous days began to be audibly integrated, with more clear rhythms and unified singing as a group.

Returning to the studio space for the afternoon session, the workshop picked up the compositional thread with Irina and Sara continuing construction of the Position Watchers scene with movement, sound, and transitions.



The participants repeated the sequence of particular formations with input and observations from Irina. The more they did this, the more they recognized their own travel pattern as well as their relation to the placement of others. Through this, a net of awareness began to grow. By repeating the Position Watcher series, clarity of pathways and spatial organization evolved. As focal intention and different kinds of text were added, the space came to life in new ways. Using these variations, Irina built up scenic repetitions while challenging the participants to be clear in their directions and movements. After hearing insights into the choreographic practice from Irina, the workshop participants were asked to try out ideas and trust the process.

Moving on to create other scenes, participants translated the 3 Positions & Traces task into the studio space. Themes from previous days reappeared and were further excavated. Ensemble members, once again, needed to agree on translating proportions and to consider how to organize their body quickly into a position or with people in their path. As variations to the scene were developed, participants touched on LMA theory while estimating the amount of impulse energy needed to complete their positions and run the traces between them with a partner. Even as the workshop material was transformed through an artistic lens for the showing, the content continually asked participants to tune into the relations around them through space, position, shape, and time.

INSIGHTS & DISCOVERIES

Morning Session on Red Chairs

Make it [the order] logical for you! – Irina

Build by doing and discussing. Too much of one or the other and, either there won't be depth to the material, or material will never get made.

The more complex the position, the more time it takes to discuss it, to understand what it is and get the whole group together.

Transitions in and out of the positions are important! It either makes or breaks the image.



Give the call to the person. Really send it. – Sara



Through the grounding of the neutral position and repetition of the three shapes, a kind of story starts to develop. The audience can start to add their own ideas or imagination.
– Irina

INSIGHTS & DISCOVERIES



What is dance? I can tell you. For me... the intentional/conscious movement is where it begins. – Irina

If it is dance or not, this starts with the relation to oneself: your awareness of your whole body in any given moment, position, movement.
– Victoria

Afternoon In-studio Session

Find connections with your partners in your positions. – Irina

Remembering from the other day, the more we repeat the 3 positions the more I can go with confidence – Sergiu

Asssphalt – Alex

Knee-high Wall – Simona

a doua bancă – Natalie

Put the fantasy bench away, Cosmin. – Irina

I found it at first, harder to remember my positions without the sound or gesture connected to the position. Once I made a mistake: too late I realized was standing in the garbage position.
– Octavian





The physical theme of the day centered on activating a grounded connection to the floor through the feet in order to shift the center of gravity through space. The creative motif was duration and precisely utilizing tempo in composition.

Bringing a tactile focus to the bare foot, the morning warmup established a rooted connection to the ground. The practice progressed with activated feet and participants began shifting their center of gravity to move through space. With larger and larger movements, the session culminated in a weight-shifting improvisation. Having more awareness and sensitized feet, participants were better able to transfer their weight in various ways while locomoting through the room.

Moving to the red chairs for the morning session, participants reviewed their small group compositions from the previous day and began adding the element of



duration, or length of time, to their structures. What seemed a simple task at first: choosing one speed of slow, medium, or fast, for each of their 9 positions, confronted participants with much more. Tempo, as one of the basic elements for transforming the everyday into dance, also requires specificity and precision. The observation rounds after each group shared their phrase offered the opportunity to become more precise in their movement as participants could reflect andintegrate information from the discussion. As soon as a group could clearly define and enact an accurate slow, middle, and fast speed, new parts of the movement were visually highlighted. Through repetition and experimentation, participants grasped the possibility of using different tempi for the same movement. They discovered what creates visual interest as well as how varying speeds emphasize the journey from A to B, or any unclarity in the position.

Continuing into a vocal session, participants moved through activating the breath, humming, adding tones and rhythms, then into singing with different consonants and harmonies, finally playing with shifting the weight to free the body. Revisiting the call and response compositions developed the day before, Sara had participants add pauses to their score to challenge everyone to keep counting internally. Reuniting the small groups into a choir with a final song, participants built up listening skills while continuing in a given harmony.

After the break, the workshop moved directly into composition mode as everyone reviewed the 3 rounds of Position Watchers sequence with the added texts, body



percussion and singing. In keeping with the theme of tempo and timing, participants tackled transitions and worked to improve the unison of the stamps and claps while also cultivating a more sensitive way to introduce the voice. With Sara's coaching, the group worked on leaving space to listen and respond, rather than producing or forcing a sound. After this instructive group work, the next task concentrated on the Architecture in Space Improvisations (in small groups and solos) and participants once again needed to grasp the structure for a creation process using Laban Movement Analysis-inspired tools.

Expanding their movement material, some participants were able to create an order and add different durations to their four movement elements layered with Laban categories. For others it was enough to expand their structured improvisations and clarify what the movement qualities were. The observation and discussion rounds continued to bring up polishing questions such as: what exactly is the body doing here? In what size of space? What kind of tempo does the movement have? Does the movement change direction or level? Describing a movement is not about explaining what the mover may be feeling, or what kind of story they are in; it is about observing the body and analyzing the elements of the movement as precisely as possible. With lucidity and understanding that come through reflection and feedback, one sees how the movement can be developed and where it may want to go.

INSIGHTS & DISCOVERIES

Warmup

The story is about shifting weight and traveling. That's the whole story. – Irina

Morning Session with the Red Chairs

Tempo ist ein wichtiges Mittel. Tempo is an important tool! – Irina

Think like an orchestra – Irina



It's easy to use a medium speed, but to think you are going fast. Challenge yourself to move outside your comfort speed zone.

I want to feel the difference between the position and the zero position, what tempo you have to return to zero. – Cezara

INSIGHTS & DISCOVERIES

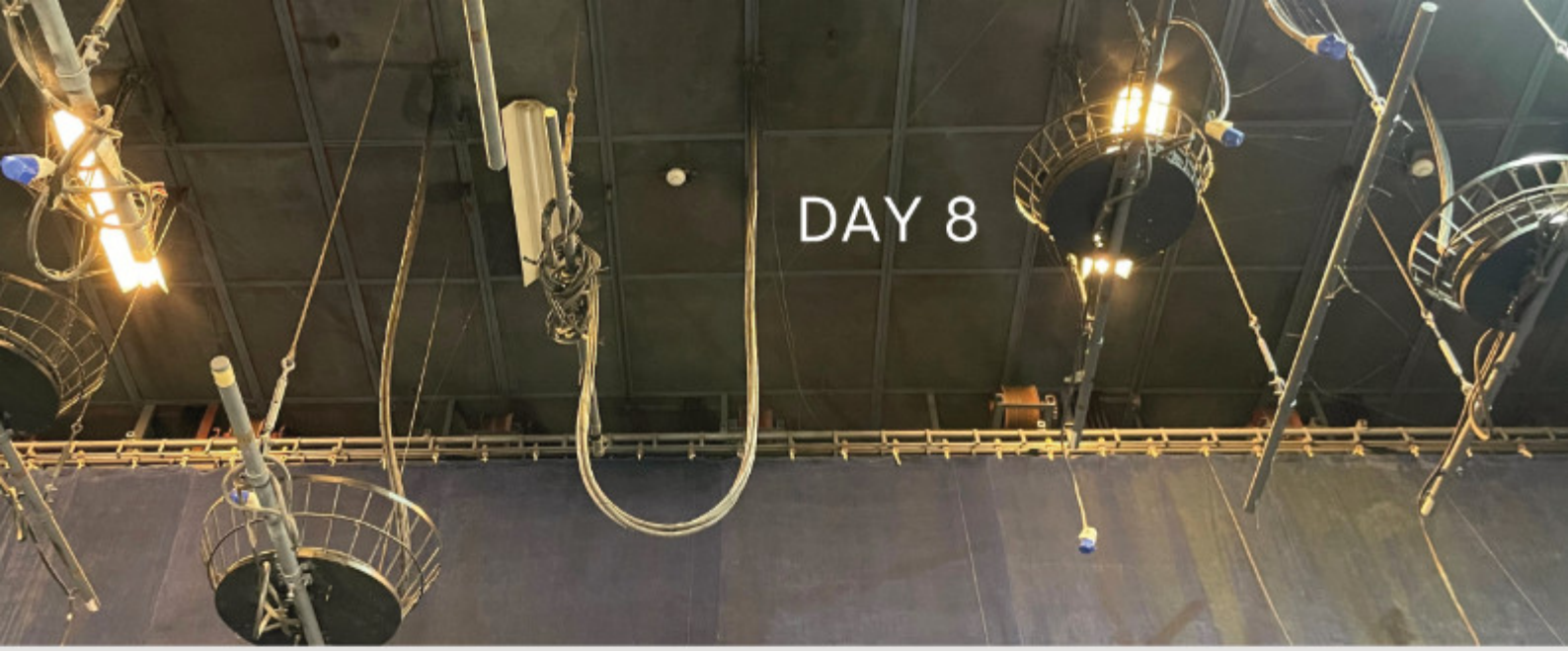


It would be nice to play with contrasting tempos on the same movement and see what happens. Even if we are working with different timings, it still needs to make sense for the given movement. – Irina

Afternoon Session in the Studio

Don't produce or force a pendulum or whatever idea you have. Let it come out of the instrument, from your body, from the action itself.

Placing versus Spacing: placing means movement happening on, or mostly on, the same spot in place. Spacing would mean movement which is traveling through space.



The workshop began with the daily movement practice and focused on grounding the feet while activating the core in order to shift the center of gravity throughout the room. Participants worked on allowing the pelvis swing through under and over-curves with active feet, so that they could travel across the floor with balance and off-balance movement phrases and also in different tempos, with and without a partner.

In preparation for the work-in-progress showing, the morning and afternoon sessions took place on the small stage space. Yet again, participants needed a group consensus on proportions and how to convert the studio room onto the stage. As the performers reviewed their positions in space as well as their placement, they took initiative to define their particular gestures and orientation in the new room. As Irina organized the performative structure for the workshop showing, the participants worked to coordinate their pathways and solidify cues. Maintaining concentration for the work was not always easy. The various scenes require clear intention in order to function and participants considered this; sending their words into space, using their gaze during the positions. While elaborating and distilling the different Position Watchers actions, participants practiced how and when, in a creation process, one can offer proposals or potential solutions. In the last task before the lunch break, Irina placed various combinations of groups and solos from the Architecture in Space





Structured Improvisations together on stage. Through these simple compositional choices, participants who were not dancing could witness their peers' own, small creations and observe how the Laban elements refined, structured, and enlivened the movements on stage.

Returning to the stage for the afternoon, Sara worked on linking voice and body once again and worked with participants to layer two different rhythmic structures. With the main group using vocal tones to make background sound tapestry, a group of five added their call and response rhythm circle on top. Recalling the organic connection between voice and body, which creates a strong performative presence even if the sound material is simple, while layering such different rhythmic structures was not an easy task. Back in composition mode, Irina and the participants transcribed the Red Chair material into new constellations in time and space. Lastly, while Irina worked on a two-person scene onstage, the rest returned to the studio and together with Sara and Victoria dug deeper into the concept of duration. With a clearer understanding of duration, participants used pen and paper to sketch their overall timeline and then determined how long they would stay in each movement quality or section of their particular structured improvisations.

INSIGHTS & DISCOVERIES

Morning Session on Stage

Over the course of the workshop, a stronger sense of unity within the group has grown. Nevertheless, with one undisciplined moment or side comment, the group still quickly loses the sensitive focus and fragments into individuals.



Creating a choreography or structured improvisation, and translating it into a performance space requires not only concentration, but also respect from everyone involved, dancers to technicians. What is happening onstage between the choreographer and the performers is important, deserves respect, and takes time. – Victoria



INSIGHTS & DISCOVERIES

<u>Afternoon Session</u>

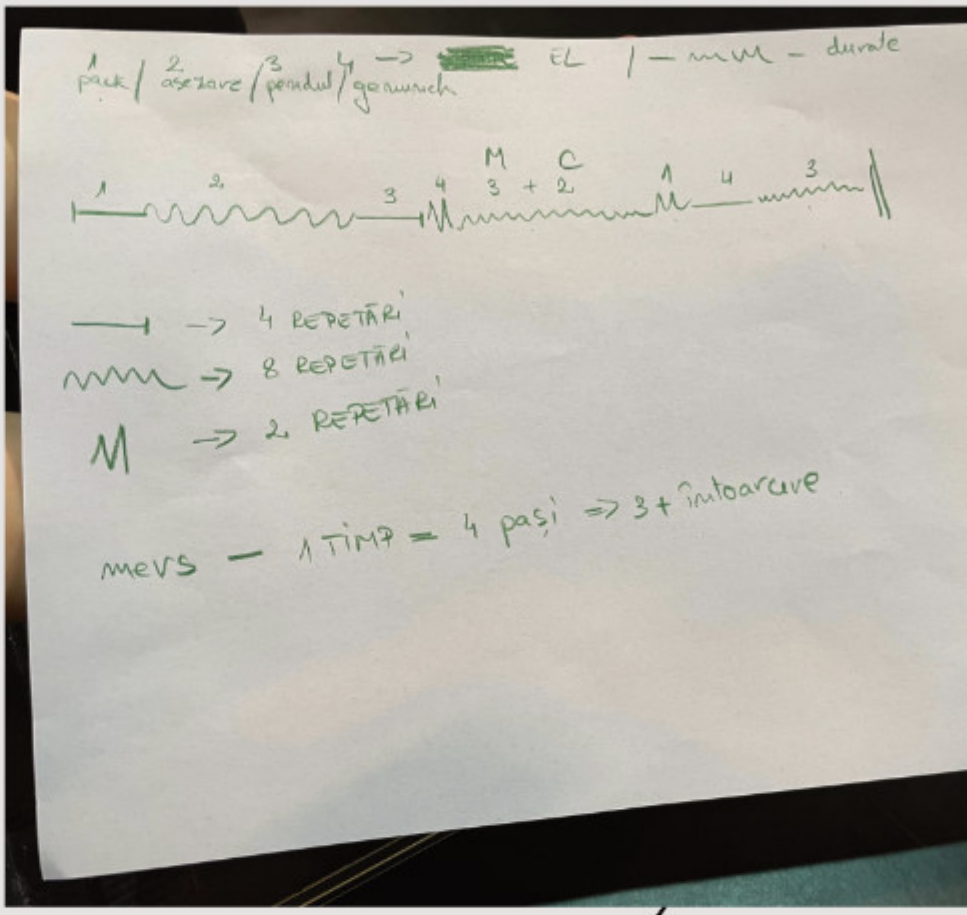
Duration is not about speed but, rather how long a given task or movement should last.

<u>Observations on 3 Positions and their Traces:</u>

When we arrive to the position, how we place our feet is important. – Rico

The eyes are important, where we are looking.
– Cosmin

Maybe more energy, and everyone having the same amount, is needed as we trace the pathways. – Anna



It's interesting to ask the question of which comes first:



the feeling, and then you make movement from that?

Or, do you move first and observe what feelings arise?



DAY 9

The day of the showing began with a final movement practice together. On performance days, warming up body and voice, while grounding oneself and connecting with the group is even more important. After activating the skin and energetic meridians of the body, we returned to the X movement series across the floor, which participants knew from the very first day and on the last day, there was a difference in how they organized their bodies in relation to the floor. From slow full body movement and spirals on the floor, we gradually progressed through mid-level exercises and mobilized the spine while activating feet and legs. Struggling with energy and discipline, the participants eventually, through encouragement, managed to gather their focus and generate more power so the class could culminate in rhythm, jumps and partnered exercises.

Going directly to the stage with the final ideas to be tried and performance structure to be solidified, the ensemble as well as workshop leaders worked quickly under the pressure of time. In order to be more precise in the musical sections and transitions, Sara led the group through tasks for synchronizing rhythm, specifically working on leaving sonic space for Andreea and Ayona's singing. When the ensemble struggled to think like an orchestra, Irina and Sara led a guided exploration to sense the others around them physically, to feel spatial relations without moving, and to connect across space through sound. After this, the group was able to more sensitively sing together.





Next, to bring all performers onto the same metaphorical page, Irina, Sara and Victoria talked through the order of the various scenes with the participants. Discussing and trying out a few of the transitions, while Victoria and Sara created a visual reminder of the scenes on side stage, gradually brought the ideas together for the participants. This process was not, however, without rough patches. While working on the 3 Positions and Traces scene, it became clear how difficult it is to convey what it really means, in theory and practice, to be present with each other on the stage. In order to function, the scene requires those who are not running or moving to be watching actively.. For many participants, it may have been their first time performing on a stage where there are no side curtains, where they are on stage and, in a sense, 'performing' or visible at all times. In this case, being present means actively seeing each other and taking interest in the other humans sharing one's space. Observing is not just about looking and reacting only when it is your turn, but about paying attention to the others, so much attention as to be able to describe their pathways and positions of the other performers. After several rounds of feedback from the workshop leaders, the idea began to transmit and then the rehearsal could continue.

After lunch and back on stage, the ensemble ran through the Structured Improvisations which Irina had composed. After this, we had a final talk-through of cues and the workshop leaders broached the topic of common respect of the stage and space. From not walking in shoes on the dance floor to not talking on the sides, the workshop participants encountered again aspects of paying attention and engaging their performative self, even when not actively dancing.



At last, perhaps with the help of time pressure and the arrival of audience members, the ensemble found their common energy. As they entered the stage and began the work-in-progress showing, focus finally arrived. Through their movements, through moments of silence and quiet music, under the lights and connected with each other, the participants not only showed what they had learned, but also what they themselves had created. With great reactions from the audience of children, teachers and other members of the theater's team, the participants-turned-performers finished the showing and took a bow.



INSIGHTS & DISCOVERIES

Morning Session

Day by day, I feel this (my spine) more. Like a rope from head to tailbone. – Sas

Onstage

Unison came through the clarity of the task and the feeling of connection in the group; through a growing awareness of each other in space and as equal partners. The more defined the task, the more open to each other you all were, the more in unison you could sing, clap or move.
– Victoria



These ideas we worked on helped me for my choreography to put an A-B-C, to structure my movements better. – Sas





The concluding day of the workshop focused on feedback and informal exchange between Irina, Sara and Victoria and the participants. After such an intensely focused time of learning and developing for 10 days, including the work-in-progress showing, it was refreshing to reflect together.

As Irina and Sara offered up so much knowledge and ideas over the course of the workshop, it was important to hear from the participants to see what they absorbed, what they valued and thoughts on the showing. For some, the physical sensations and experiences from the morning movement sessions stayed with them and are already being integrated into their own performance or artistic practice. For others, the analytical structure from Laban Movement Analysis, alongside Irina's approaches to composition, offered them new tools and ways of thinking about choreography. Finally others gained new observational skills and awareness of their own body in space and the spatial relations around them. Perhaps most significantly, the participants generally shared they felt a new sense of ensemble, of team spirit and connectedness between them, regardless of whether they were singer, dancers or actors. In light of these experiences and the reflections shared on the conclusion day, we observed that movement and breath can indeed become sources of connection between people and confirm that, yes, every body can dance.

REFLECTIONS

I remembered on stage the feeling the body has after the movement practices. This good feeling of more freedom. – Anna

It seems to me that the process of translating one space to another got easier. We learned through observation and experience. The first time, translating the outdoor space into the studio was complicated and confusing. But then when we moved from the studio to the stage it was no problem, even though it was smaller than the studio. We simply did it without much difficulty. – Octavian

I observed we are navigating the space or tasks with more purpose. To look at people, to see, to understand what the situation or problem to be solved is, not just to say "you're wrong" or ignore it. – Cosmin



Everything is always moving, even if it doesn't show. – Anastasia

I noticed that, in the beginning of the workshop, no one was comfortable without shoes or at least socks. Then over the time, with the movement practices, gradually people became more comfortable to dance in socks and their connection to the floor increased. Then more and more people tried dancing without socks and began feeling the floor in a different way. Finally in the showing, everyone was barefoot. It was clear how much more grounded everyone one and unified, in the sense of literally having a common connection to the ground and how this barefoot contact to the floor helps or shapes movements. – Victoria

REFLECTIONS

For me, I feel more connected with everyone (the ensemble) more than ever before. I feel a whole new energy! – Ayona

The silence and the moments of stillness brought a new kind of focus for the show. I think this is why we could feel a more connected energy on stage. For me it was a new way of experiencing performance.
– Octavian



[During the showing] I felt I was part of something artistic. I was focused in a different way, I felt a different energy myself and also from my colleagues and I felt the energy from the audience.
– Sergiu

While we were doing our group's composition, I could really feel Sas Marian's kinosphere. His energy and concentration were so strong, like a bubble all around. But not only that, in general, I could better sense my colleagues and how we moved together, even with my back when I could not see them, I knew when we were switching from one section to another. – Octavian

Reflecting on this experience, for me it was about freedom and barriers. I needed to take into account the others, my colleagues, where they are in space. I felt much more freedom of movement and in my body, but only so far as the bodies of the others. It was about finding this soft balance for me, this is a kind of cooperation. – Silviu



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APPENDIX + RESOURCES

Laban Movement Analysis Synopsis

Workshop Description

Written & Visual Reference Material

LABAN MOVEMENT ANALYSIS SYNOPSIS

Theory - Laban Movement Analysis
The Laban Movement Analysis system (LMA) is a widely used system for the description of human movement. The studies consist of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) and Bartenieff Fundamentals (BF), and are continually being developed. This is a system which describes movement precisely thereby enabling clarity when teaching movement. Every movement can be described through the following categories: Body, Effort, Space, Shape, Phrasing.

The Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) system, originally developed by Rudolf Laban in the context of performing arts, has been recognized and applied in numerous fields and particularly when dealing with movement creativity and computation. LMA is an empirical observational and analytical system based on knowledge acquired through somatic and embodied practice. Though LMA has emerged from movement observation in dance, it has been applied to numerous other domains such as factory labor, robotics, and therapy.

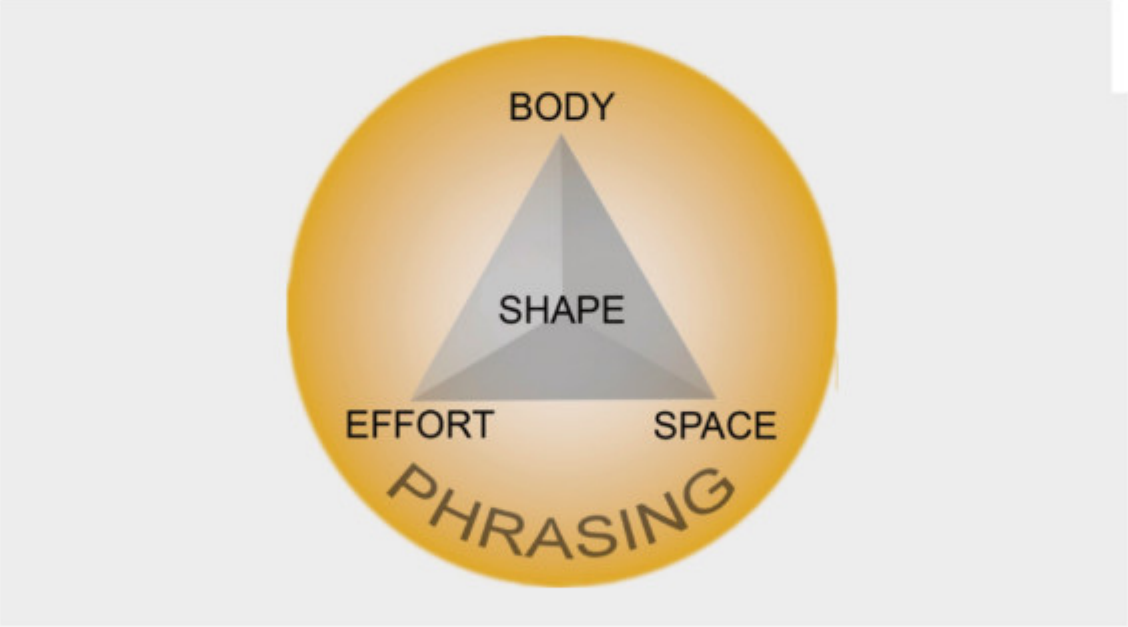


Figure 11-2: Diagram of LMA Catagories

The goal is to appreciate and understand different aspects of movement not only through experiencing and sensing but also through observation.

Observation practice in Laban Movement Analysis
The observation practice of LMA is an "embodied" practice. This means that during the movement analysis, the observer is focusing on their internal physical perception. The underlying principle is to observe the self in order to observe the other. This process leverages on the observer's "kinesthetic empathy" and ability to relate to their own body

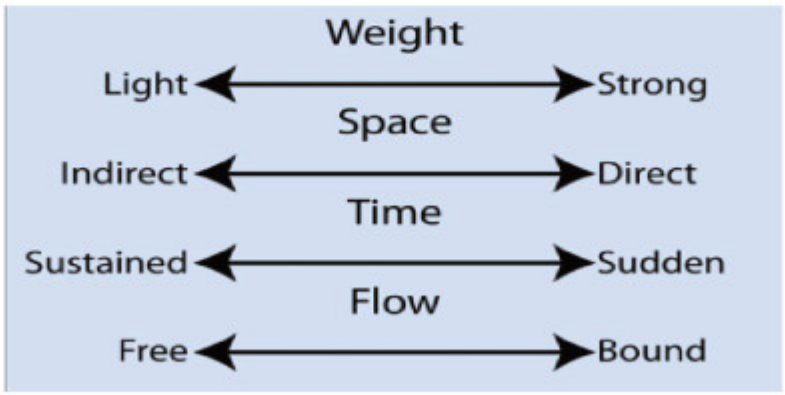
BODY

Looking at the movement of separate body parts and their relationship to one another enables us to recognize the body's structure and organization. The goal is to be able to use one's body like a tool and to be able to describe movement. On the one hand this gives us the means to understand physical preferences, on the other hand it facilitates a certain amount of objectivity when observing movement.

The interplay of body parts and the role they play in movement can be illustrated by looking at an example: observing a person's gait. Some important questions are: Which body part initiates the movement? In what way are the different body parts involved in the movement? Are parts of the body being held?

EFFORT

Laban succeeded in describing the dynamic aspect of movement objectively. The appearance and style of a movement changes depending on inner involvement and personal preference. The underlying attitude towards the factors weight, flow, space, time,
as well as their numerous combinations result in a wide variety of expressions. These are the dynamic qualities of a movement and Laban called them EFFORT. In dance therapy for example, analysis and conscious use of effort is an important tool to observe, label and expand nonverbal expression. There are aspects from the categories SPACE and SHAPE, which are discussed in Laban's the ory of spatial harmony.



Effort Factors

SPACE

With his theory of space harmony, Rudolf von Laban, explores the relationship between people and their surroundings. Similar to architecture, he structures space one-, two- and three-dimensionally and uses the five Plato solids as models for personal space (the kinosphere). Within these models he created movement scales (similar to musical scales), which follow clearly defined pathways. These scales teach a harmonic awareness of space and they challenge us to move in previously unused areas of our own kinosphere. The goal is a better understanding of the use of space and more options for three-dimensional movement.

In his theory of space harmony Laban connects movements in space to the EFFORT and SHAPE categories.



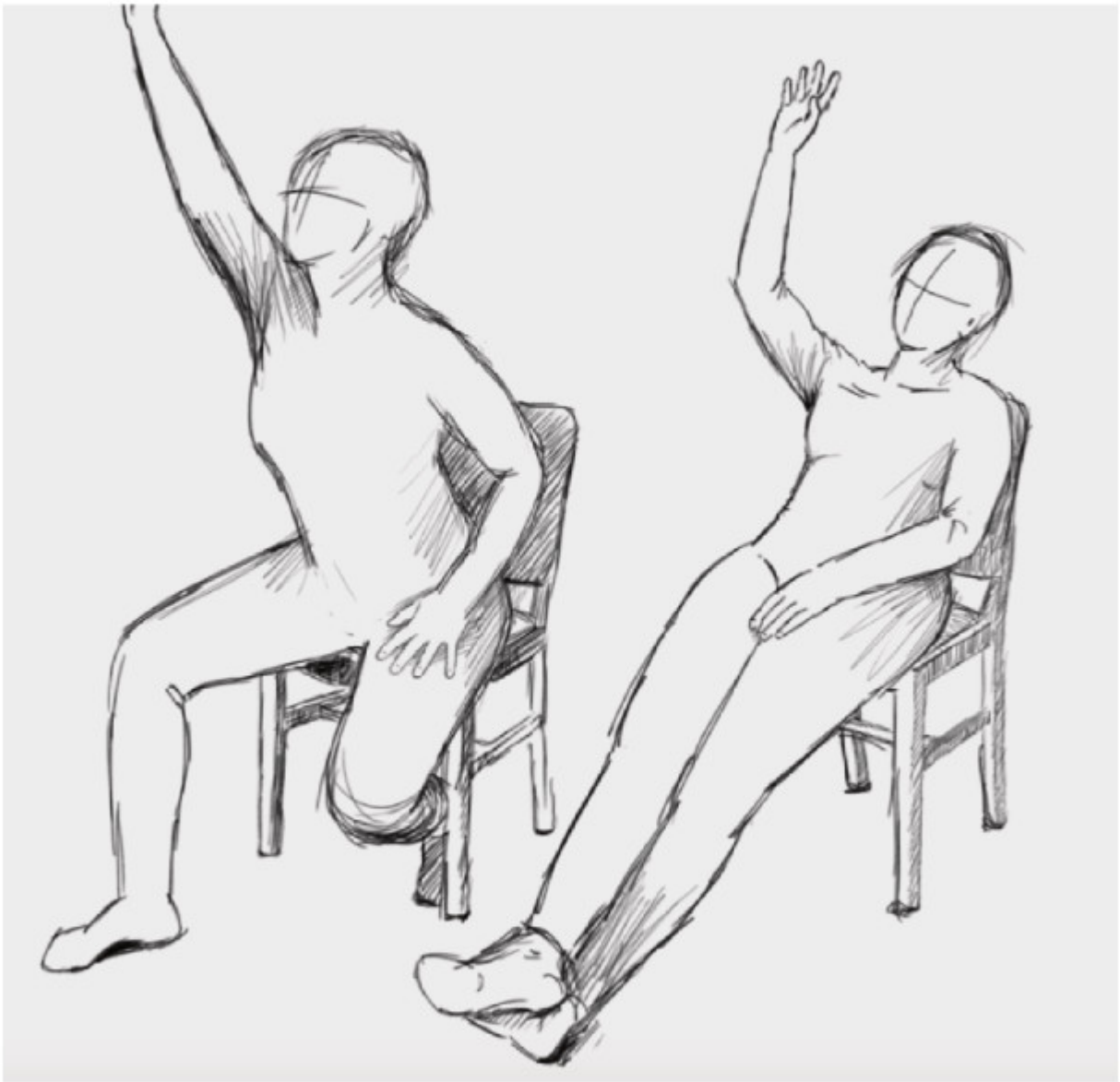
Roland Watkins. Photograph of Valerie Preston-Dunlop in an icosahedron at the Art of Movement Studio, Manchester, 1947–1949 (Laban Library and Archive).

SHAPE

With each movement, the SHAPE of the human body changes in relation to itself and its surroundings. Observing the shape aspect of movement, one aims to describe the process of the body's shape change in space. This is based on the natural process of breathing.

We get in contact with or withdraw from our environment by changing our body's shape. Through posture and shape change in space, the shape of our body is a strong nonverbal component of communication. For example: extending a hand in greeting, the effect is altogether different if the person simultaneously draws the torso back or leans forward.

Our body's changes in shape are linked to aspects of space through affinities and dissimilarities. In the movement scales (see also SPACE) Rudolf von Laban clearly defined this.



PHRASING
Only when we consider the PHRASING of a movement with reference to the four aspects that were already mentioned, can we discern the characteristic patterns of a person's movement. This is the way in which a person structures and stresses a movement. With a bit of practice, this individual pattern can be observed clearly.

RELATIONSHIP
Whether people (two or more) have a conversation, dance, go for a walk or eat together - they always position themselves towards, next to, or away from one another. The category RELATIONSHIP deals with this aspect. It is purely about the characteristics of relationship that are expressed in movement

- of people
- of different body parts to one another
- the relationship of objects and people

In classical ballet, for example, the relationship between men and women is clearly defined in movement: the man supports the woman in a lift. In modern dance a man could also be supported by a woman, therefore the active part of this relationship has changed.

Credits & Bibliography

Photos and diagrams, unless otherwise noted in the text, are from Leslie Bishko.

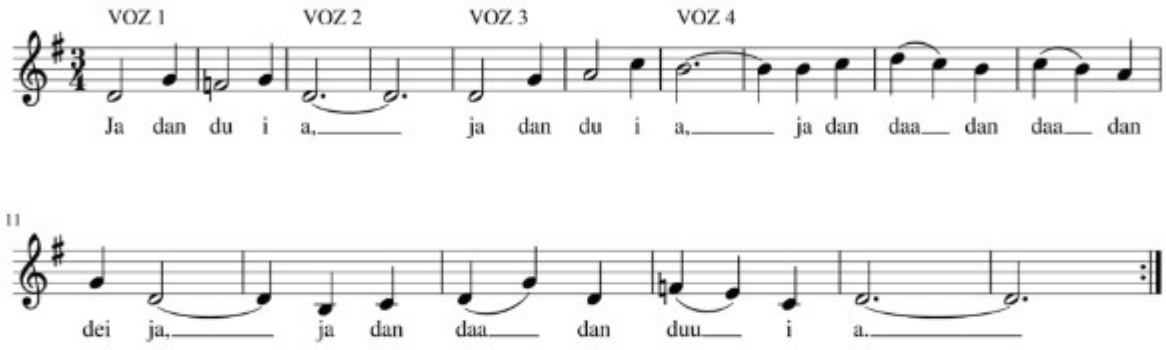
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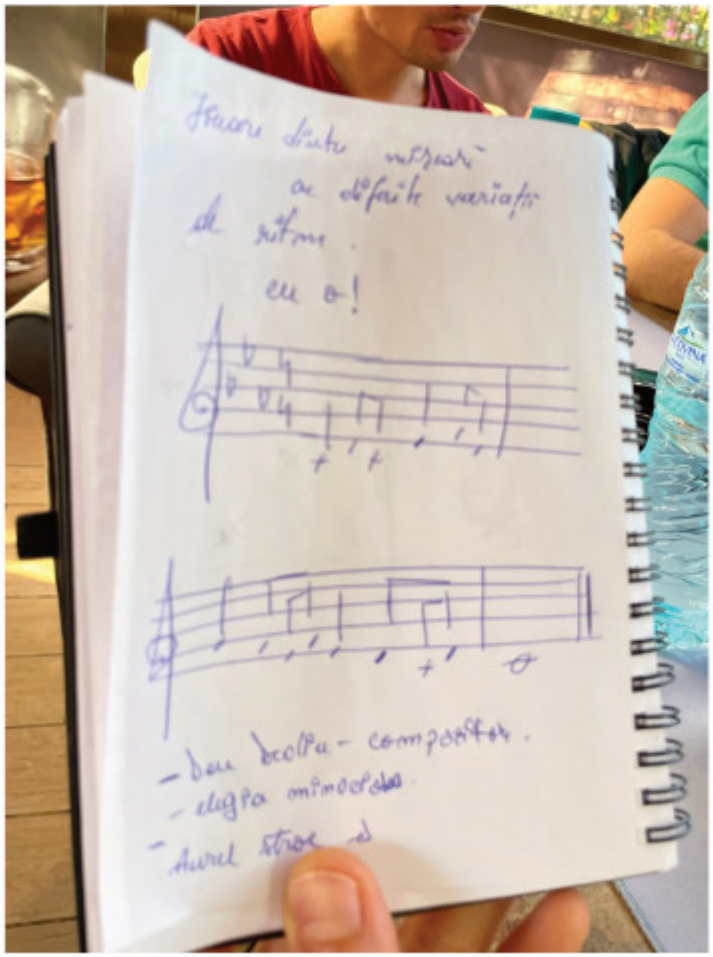
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MUSICAL REFERENCE MATERIAL

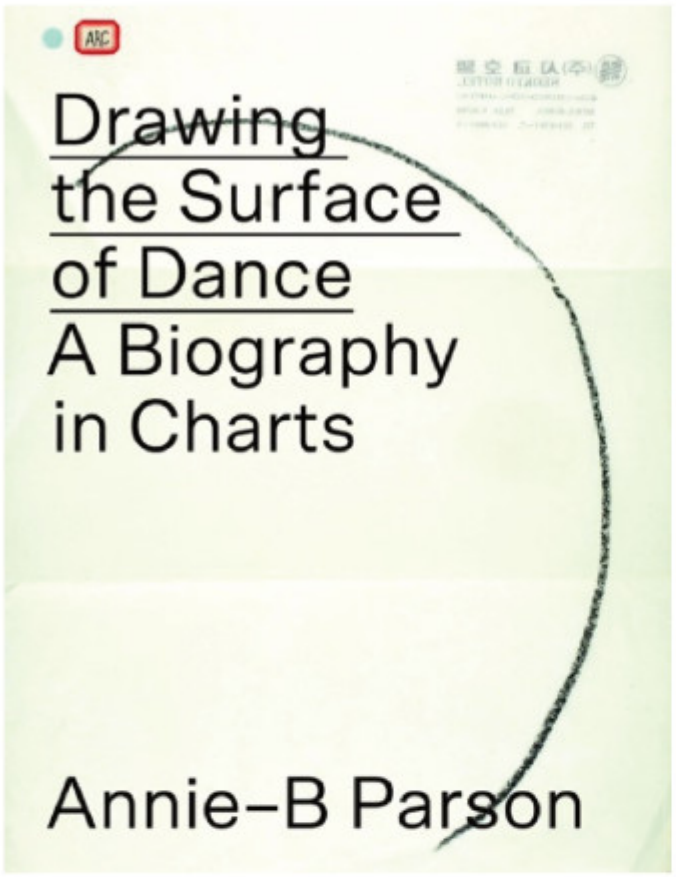
Ja dan duia

Soili Perkio

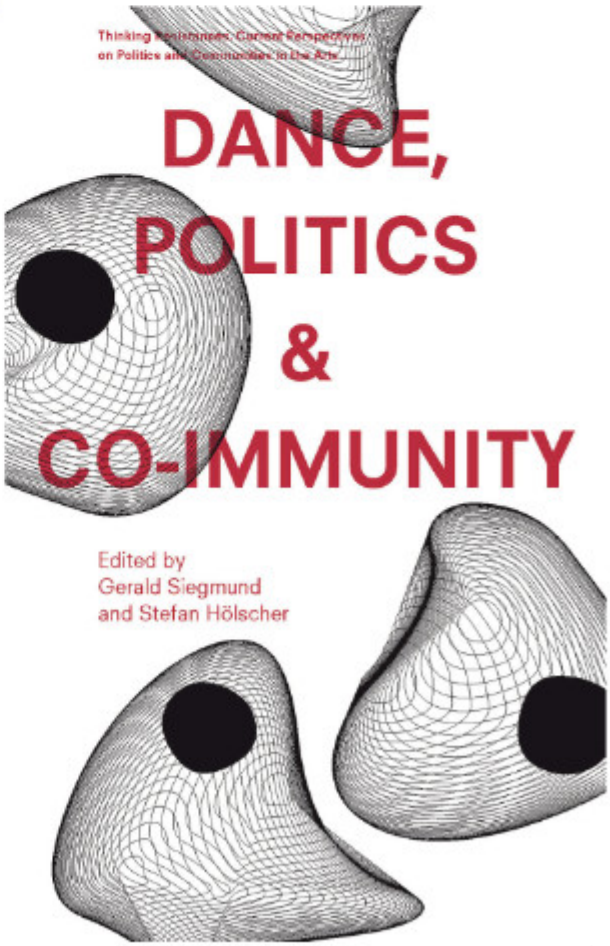




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Publisher: diaphanes, 2013



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BIOGRAPHIES

PARTNERS

DasCollectif

DasCollectif is a group of artists with diverse backgrounds who are interested in collaborative ways of creating. We are dancers, musicians, singers and choreographers living and working in Vienna, Salzburg, Leipzig and Hanover. The group was founded in 2007 by lecturers and students of the Orff-Institute of University Mozarteum Salzburg. The incentive was to explore the process of integrating movement, music, voice, and speaking in our artistic work. The key defining features of DasCollectif's work are a focus on the special relationship between dance and music as well as the dynamic dimensions arising from combining the unique expertise of the performers' varied backgrounds and training.

The first collaboration with choreographer Irina Pauls took place in 2009 and has continued ever since. In the productions up to 2016 DasCollectif, under Paul's direction, has dedicated itself to the artistic work of Carl Orff in an original way. New artistic perspectives have opened up since DasCollectif founded their new base in Vienna and cooperated with new partners such as the theater Dschungel Vienna and the Vienna Boys' Choir.

www.dascollectif.com

PARTNERS

TEATRUL MUZICAL AMBASADORII

Teatrul Muzical Ambasadorii

The Ambasadorii Musical Theater, one of the newest public institutionsfor performance under the Ministry of Culture, has established itself in the last 3 years as a center of culture, art for education lovers and has consolidated its role in the cultural life of Bucharest through complete art programs, diverse repertoire and sold out performances.

The mission of Ambasadorii Musical Theater is to promote Romanian and universal artistic values, through musical performing arts, through ballet and music, in order to educate children and young people to cherish these values nationally and internationally, thus developing a taste for and offering access to culture and art among children and adolescents.

The Ambasadorii Musical Theater offers full performance seasons and artistic programs for young people and children. The offer ranges from opera, ballet, musical, folklore performances, to improvisational performances played exclusively by children. The institution develops educational programs for kids and teenagers, focused on cultural diversity, cultural access as well as digital or urban culture and regeneration.

The Ambasadorii Musical Theater's home is the National Children's Palace in Bucharest and has an ensemble of specialists in entertainment and performing arts, visual arts, including nationally and internationally acclaimed vocal soloists, musical players, dancers and actors. Since the beginning, the Ambassadorii Music Theater has taken on the role of a launching pad for young graduates of artistic vocational education and offers them a place to show their creativity, talent and knowledge of performing arts.

www.teatrulmuzicalambasadorii.ro

TEACHING ARTISTS



Jana Mila Lippitz

IRINA PAULS
CHOREOGRAPHER

Irina Pauls lives and works as a freelance choreographer and director in Leipzig. She studied dance at the Palucca Schule Dresden and choreography at the Theaterhochschule Hans Otto in Leipzig. During her career, Pauls has created over 90 world premieres including numerous dance pieces, performances in public space, music theatre and stage plays.

In 1990, she founded the TanzTheater at Schauspiel Leipzig thus establishing this art form in Leipzig. During this working phase, she cooperated with the vocal quintet “amarcord”, a famous name in the world of vocal ensembles. After this, Pauls headed the divisions of dance and dance theatre at various theatres in Germany and has performed as guest on national and international stages and festivals. In her hometown Leipzig since 2009, she now develops mostly site-specific performances and offers workshops. As artistic director of the group DasCollectif (based in Vienna), she emphasizes the interaction of dance, music and text in her new creations.

Pauls teaches at the University for Music and Theater Leipzig, the Mozarteum Salzburg and was visiting professor at the Institute for Theatre Studies at University of Leipzig in 2017. She is a member of The Saxon Academy of Arts.

www.irina-pauls.de

TEACHING ARTISTS



SARA WILNAUER
MUSIC & DANCE

Sara Wilnauer works as a freelance musician and dancer. After studying at the Orff Institute at the University Mozarteum Salzburg, she deepened her focus on singing and dance in artistic projects. She has been performing on stage with the group “DasCollectif” since 2011 and was nominated for the STELLA* Award in the music category in 2021 with the “Tohuwabohu” show. Since 2017 she has been working with Schallundrauch Agency as a musical consultant and assistant director. As part of the vocal duo “Dua Plicity”, she is also active as a composer and instrumentalist.

2022 she performed her first solo “Into Pieces” in Vienna. There have also been further collaborations with the Schäxpir Festival, the international Impulstanz Festival, Tanz*Hotel (Bert Gstettner) and the Pink Noise Camp.

TEACHING ARTISTS



Sophie Meuresch

VICTORIA MCCONNELL

DANCE & DOCUMENTING

Victoria creates, performs, and teaches movement-based experiences which are grounded in relationships, research, and humor. Raised in California, she earned a BFA in Dance from Belhaven University in 2008 and afterward worked with several dance companies in Seattle, Washington. Since 2015 she is based in Berlin and works throughout Germany and Europe.

Collaborating across mediums and genres, she has created with performer Rodolfo Piazza Pfitscher da Silva; with puppeteer, actress, director Nathalie Wendt; with musician Ruth Kemna and composer Katya Sourikova. As a dancer, Victoria has performed for Irina Pauls (DE), Sommer Ulrickson (DE), Joachim Schloemer (DE/CH), Tanz Company Gervasi (AU), Sara Angius (IT/DE), the Staatsoper Berlin and more. She also performs for film and TV as well as her comedy alter ego, The One & Lonely Kelvin. As a curator, she has curated dance-based events at Abbey Arts in Seattle from 2011-2015 and at ada Studio in Berlin from 2018-2020.

www.victoriamcconnell.com

NOTES

NOTES

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