

Redefining Artistic Methodologies

Quick ideas for “Train the Trainer” Workshops

How can aspiring artists be prepared for the twenty-first century’s diversified challenges of the dance industry? Challenges that increasingly demand technical virtuosity and artistic versatility. The artistic versatility becoming a professional dancers movement identity, an autonomous approach that establishes the distinction between a step, and a step in movement, and where or how the movement can be transported through corporeal expression.

How can young dance artists develop such a movement identity in order for it to be viable for eclectic choreographies and a modern choreographers approach? Modern choreographers of today each have their own artistic methodologies and tools to create and transfer concepts into performance material. Artistic methodology, characterizing a constellation of possibilities that may serve as scores, poems, philosophy, images, manifestos, digital media, music, notation, songs, sounds, improvisation and many more. Every choreographer adopts their own methods according to their spheres of influence, their personal experience and based on what shaped them into the artist they are at that particular point in time. Artistic methodology is not just the process for an artistic or pedagogical project, but also a journey for both the choreographer and the dancers to connect, evolve and create with. In his book *The Pleasure in Drawing*, philosopher Jean Luc-Nancy talks in several ways about how one must look deeper into the layers of what may lie embedded, under or in between the traced lines and vivid colours in paintings and drawings. In fact, the picture can significantly change its appearance after one’s attempt to decipher its journey (2013, p. 91). Nancy calls this “Purposiveness without Purpose” (2013, p.91). *Purposivness* representing the journey (the choreographers artistic methodology), and *purpose* representing the destination or aim. “Drawing wants to show the truth, not of what has appeared or it’s appearance but of the coming into appearance that subtends it and that “itself” does not appear or show itself. Thus, it is about showing *what* does not show itself” (p.92). Every movement traced in choreography just like the lines in a drawing becomes a representation of a physical participation of emotions, ideas, desires

and responses from both the choreographer's artistic methodologies and the dance artist's creative contribution. A journey that shapes both artists into creator and co-creator.

To research the above questions further regarding the challenges aspiring young dancers may encounter, I will step into the shoes of a choreographer. **What are my artistic methodologies? How can these methods be transferred into a journey of creation?** In order to create a conceptual dance piece, my artistic methodologies consist of scores and images. The designed score can vary from keywords, synonyms, or researched information. Images may differ between paintings, photos, drawings or digital media. To deliver this artistic methodology further, I would first open up a brainstorming discussion with the dancers concerning the score; I would then lead the dancers through structured improvisations and short phrases giving them the opportunity to experiment, connect emotionally and physically to keywords. The improvisations intend to be a journey of discovery and a tool to re-direct the dancers motivation of movement and to reflect from the score through action. Such methodologies would nevertheless require versatile artists with the capacity to adapt and explore with an open mind. **For that reason, this brings me back to the young aspiring dancer and how can they be prepared for such a ripened and diversified process.**

Therefore to prepare and enhance an aspiring artists movement quality, versatility and artistic identity, my research introduces artistic methodologies that focus on employing and developing modern dance concepts collectively with historical movement analyses.

First Artistic Methodology

Inspired by Anna Paskevka's publication *Ballet Beyond Tradition* (Routledge, 20015), the first artistic methodology concentrates predominately on implementing definitions and notions that lie behind the terminology of modern dance concepts. Such concepts from Paskevka include, *weight, suspension, fall, recover, succession, and release*. Reshaping some of these concepts, the vocabulary and how each can additionally be altered into a myriad of keywords, intend to shift the dancers focus and enhance the quality of movement.

Second Artistic Methodology

To reinforce the above modern dance concepts I will also combine *Effort Factors; Space, Weight, Time and Flow*, from the Laban Movement Analysis. Inspired from Cecily Dell's publication '*A Primer for Movement description using effort-shape and supplementary concepts*' (Dance Notation Bureau, Inc, 1970), the effort factors and their elements will analyze spatial pathways, explore strong and light weight efforts, play with a movements dynamic potentials, and explore movements that are bound or free. To transfer these movement concepts from an artistic methodology into a corporeal exploration, they will be integrated into structured improvisational tasks, set combinations, and explored within the layers of choreography and repertoire.

Third Artistic Methodology

In contrast to the first and second artistic methodology where the primary focus concentrates solely on the physical efforts and notions of movement, the third artistic methodology explores how the inner emotions of the mind correspond to the external expression of the body. Inspired by Genevieve Stebbin's nineteenth century publication *Delsarte System of Dramatic Expression* (Edgar S. Werner, 1886), this historical systematic method created by Francois Delsarte was founded on the principle of the law of correspondence where:

(...) Every expression of the face, every gesture, every posture of the body corresponds to, or is but the outward expression of, an inner emotion or condition of the mind, be it one of beauty or one of ugliness (Warman, Edward Barrett, 1892, p.23).

To transfer the principles of the Delsarte System of Dramatic Expression concurrently with Stebbins theories, this artistic methodology can be adapted and transferred through a workshop-based class or contemporary technique exercises and then progress into structured improvisational tasks with significant focus on assimilating expressive and emotional nuances.

The abovementioned artistic methodologies intend to become a guiding tool for corporeal expression, helping to develop creative thinking skills and initiating autonomy within a movement phrase or choreography. They will potentially enable the aspiring

dancer to not only achieve versatility in their approach to the diverse choreographical processes, but to also discover their dancer-self.

References:

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