

Report on Dancing off the Page

Final Project Report

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Dancing off the Page constitutes research incorporating new directions in scholarly study of choreographic and performance style, and pedagogical research into the integration of theory and practice in dance studies. As such, it addresses itself both to the dance scholar and to the dance student.

This project arose out of many discussions about teaching, in particular about ways of integrating practical and theoretical strands of study through notation. The PALATINE Development Award allowed the two main collaborators, Rachel Duerden and Neil Fisher, time to develop ideas and materials into this book, which is to be published by Dance Books. Bonnie Rowell and Sarah Whatley have contributed scholarly essays on choreographic and performance style, which provide an important research dimension to the project as a whole, underpinning and unpacking some of the important concepts that are central to the project as a whole.

The first part is a practical workbook, primarily for use in the studio. Notation is the unifying thread, extending into performance, choreography, documentation, and critical analysis, and the book demonstrates how these strands can be effectively integrated in Dance studies, in the studio as well as in the classroom or private study.

The second part includes three scholarly essays, each of which addresses key research issues that emerge in the preceding section: philosophical issues in choreographic style and in performance style, and the nature of the relationship between performance, choreography and documentation.

Part I

The obvious feature of this book is the set of notation studies with accompanying music. Prefacing the studies are detailed explanations of ways of using the studies:

- as practice reading material in notation
- as choreographic themes or strings of themes to be explored in workshop
- as scores to be analysed for their structure and choreographic detail
- as reference points for discussion and explanation of choreographic style in relation to professional choreographers

Each study is supported by:

1. A glossary of notation symbols and terms to aid the novice reader (and teacher)
2. Notes on the structure and style in general, and in relation to the work of a specific choreographer (on whose work it is based)
3. Pointers to other choreographers to explore by way of comparison
4. A list of references for further research into these choreographers
5. A commissioned music score designed to accompany each study (score and CD)
6. A list of alternative music suggestions to experiment with
7. Ideas for working with the studies choreographically, performatively, analytically

Part 2

The second part of the book constitutes three essays and an annotated bibliography, the latter focusing on useful notation texts in particular.

The essays focus on:

- Philosophical issues in choreographic style (Dr Bonnie Rowell, Roehampton University)
- Philosophical perspectives on performance style (Dr Sarah Whatley, Coventry University)
- Philosophical issues in performance, choreography and documentation (Dr Rachel Duerden, Manchester Metropolitan University)