

Editor's Note

The articles in this issue present a variety of topics and thematic concerns, ranging from the alignment of Cuban ballet dancers in the 1960s with the ideals of the industrial “New Man”; to the neo-liberal consequences, intended or otherwise, of Israeli choreographer Ohad Naharin’s dance training system, “Gaga”; to Quebec-based choreographer Zab Maboungou’s contemporary African dance philosophy, heritage, and practice to training and performing that challenges choreographic Eurocentrism in Canada; to a comparative analysis of Lynn Seymour’s “rebellious,” “de-classifying” ballet performance as Juliet in Kenneth Macmillan’s *Romeo and Juliet* (1964–1965) and the subsequent “re-classification” of Juliet performed by Margot Fonteyn, and to conclude, a qualitative research assessment of the responses of military personnel to British choreographer Rosy Kay’s highly acclaimed work *Five Soldiers: The Body is the Frontline* (2015 tour), which represented soldiers.

In the first article, Lester Tomé begins by noting what at first sight may seem to be an incongruous billboard poster near Havana airport that presents a teacher busy in a classroom, farm workers laboring in the fields, and two ballet dancers striking a familiar balletic pose, with the caption “organization, discipline, and exigency.” By asking what these three groups have in common, Tomé commences to set out his analysis of Cuban ballet’s contribution to the ideology and implementation of the conscientious, hard-working, “New Man,” promoted by Fidel Castro in the early years after the Cuban Revolution of 1959, which in turn benefitted the dancers in Cuba. Drawing on primary sources, archival material, and interviews, Tomé shows how Ballet Nacional de Cuba actively propagated ballet by giving performances across Cuba, along with offering “outreach events” for workers in farms, factories, etc., and by embodying the importance of the notion of “physical labor.”

Meghan Quinlan’s article provides a case study of Gaga/dancers’ training, informed by both her embodied experience of classes and critical inquiry of the pedagogical premises that underpin Gaga training, which has become increasingly popular in many countries. Gaga does not promote or teach an existing technique, such as Graham or ballet for example, but rather, is designed to enable students to utilize and discard formalized techniques to generate their own movement formation. However, in Note 12, Quinlan points out that the classes (wherever they are held in the world) tend to use the terminology of ballet, as opposed to other well-known techniques. She proposes that Gaga can be characterized as a “metatechnique,” as defined by Randy Martin. She argues that the Gaga “pedagogical model of a metatechnique,” which trains dancers to “shift between choreographer, dancer, and improviser,” has significant consequences for “understanding their agency.” Moreover, she considers that this approach has strong resonances with the neoliberalist economic model, whereby flexibility, multitasking, and efficiency in the labor market are key.

The third article, by Melissa Templeton, analyzes the philosophical approach to the “self” that constitutes the foundation of Zab Maboungou’s Contemporary African Dance training and practice. Templeton’s analysis of the artist’s pedagogical and choreographic method, which she terms an “embodied Africanist metaphysics,” is based on her ethnographic experience of participation in classes, along with an interview with Maboungou and other participants. The discussion of

Maboungou's 2009 dance, *De/Liberate Gestures*, for Templeton, illustrates how the artist "reimagines ontological ideas about being and time by playing with speed, duration, and 'deliberate' action." Likewise, Maboungou's pedagogical approach asks "dancers to contemplate their most seemingly intuitive movement choices while offering insightful aphorisms that encourage deep personal reflection." Maboungou's work, as Templeton, evidences, "has productively challenged Eurocentrism in Canada."

Brandon Shaw's article seeks to demonstrate that Shakespeare's depiction of Juliet in his *Romeo and Juliet* tragedy, as set out in the first Quarto published in 1597, and Kenneth MacMillan's Juliet, as performed by Lynn Seymour, in his *Romeo and Juliet* ballet (1964–1965), is "a revolutionary character inveighing against immediate patriarchal machinations." However, as Shaw shows, Juliet's feisty character inscribed in the first Quarto (1597), labeled as the Bad Quarto, was rejected in favor of the later second Quarto (1599), which was considerably toned down by the editors of the Folio edition of Shakespeare's tragedies (1623) to such an extent to render her acquiescent to "patriarchal will." By drawing on recent historical reassessments of the first Quarto, visual archival material, Benesh notation, and movement analysis, Shaw shows how Seymour's "revolutionary" Juliet challenged the fundamental balletic conventions of femininity. This de-classification of Juliet was not to endure, as the re-classification of Juliet was secured by the (hegemonic and patriarchal) powers that be, ensuring that Margot Fonteyn, not Seymour, performed the role of Juliet in the premiere of MacMillan's *Romeo and Juliet* (1965) and the film that was subsequently distributed internationally.

The final article, by Matthew Reason, shifts the emphasis toward a consideration of how an audience, in this case soldiers and veterans of the British army, responded to Rosie Kay's theatrical dance performance, *5 Soldiers: The Body Is the Frontline* (2015 tour). A work in four parts, *5 Soldiers* includes aspects of military training, waiting around for the call to action, parachuting into the war zone, and then an attack and explosion in which one soldier is seriously wounded, and finally, the rehabilitation process as a consequence of life-changing injuries. Reason's audience research included telephone interviews with army and ex-army personnel, and a post-performance focus group with soldiers. The article draws on "discourses of authenticity" and addresses the question of "the impact of representing soldiers to soldiers, through dance?" Reason analysis shows that the responses of the military audience reveal a complex, critical engagement with the performance that is personal on the one hand and on the other hand, "is closely related to the lived experience of the dance."

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