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12°
north
Dance Company

An Exhibition

12°
north
Dance Company
12degreesnorth.org.uk

Edge Hill
University



northwestdance

THE LOWRY
YOUTH
DANCE
PARTNERSHIP



12°North is a dance company, funded by Arts Council England and specifically designed for North West dance graduates. Based at Edge Hill University, the company is managed by Karen Jaundrill-Scott, Debbie Milner, Gil Graystone and Georgio de Carolis. The aim is to provide emerging dance artists with a holistic experience of performance, creation, guided educational work and business skills. The company provides a two year, tailor-made, training opportunity for up to 12 graduates in the four following strands: performance; choreography; teaching and learning; and business and entrepreneurial skills.

High profile choreographers commissioned to work with the company include Lea Anderson and James Wilton. The company develops and strengthens partnerships, supported by a steering group comprising the regional dance agencies, dance organisations and Higher Education Institutions, with the intention of furthering opportunities for links and networks across the North West and beyond. The project serves to support the cultural economy in the North West by training and retaining talented early career dance artists whose contribution will be critical in the establishment of the Northern Powerhouse.

Dancers

Louise Gibbons
Danielle Goodfellow
Emma Hayes
Helen McCarron
Ben Manuel
Andre Miller
Rachel Parker
Lauren Tucker

Apprentice Dancer: Adam Roberts

Creative Team

Company Director: Karen Jaundrill-Scott

Company Manager: Gil Graystone

Artistic Director: Debbie Milner

Rehearsal Director: Georgio De Carolis

Following the success of this programme, all of the participants are now employed by a wide range of artistic and cultural organisations.

Renzekete Bee Zee

Choreographed by Lea Anderson

This dance is a visual translation of Kurt Schwitters's sound poem. The choreography followed the structure of the form, the shape of the sounds, and responded to the tone of his voice. The sculptures worn by the performers were replicas of one of Schwitters's own works, but here they were rendered in silks and velvet.

Soundtrack:
Ursonate (Einleitung und Erster teil:
Rondo) by Kurt Schwitters
Performed by Kurt Schwitters

Lighting Design:
Murray Smoker

Costume Design:
Tim Spooner

Rehearsal Directors:
Giorgio De Carolis, Debbie Milner

Lucid

Choreographed by James Wilton
with the dancers

Lucid was commissioned by Edge Hill University for 12°North. James worked with the dancers over 10 days to create Lucid which explores the mind and the infinite complexity of the brain. The work challenges its performers to make the most of their brains through highly detailed and physical movement.

Assistant Choreographer:
Sarah Taylor

Music:
Gazpacho

Lighting Design:
Murray Smoker

Costume Design:
Susan Burton

Rehearsal Directors:
Giorgio De Carolis, Debbie Milner

Class

Studio 3, The Lowry,
Salford Quays

Led by rehearsal directors Debbie Milner and Georgio de Carolis, the class was designed in preparation for an evening performance and focused upon strengthening and the articulation of movement through travelling. This work created a sense of ensemble as dancers considered aspects such as balance, alignment, positioning and the body in space.

Rehearsal

Quays Theatre, The Lowry;
The Grand Theatre, Blackpool

Following an initial warm up, spacing and technical runs take place, to help dancers locate a set piece within a new physical context, and to assist technical staff with the focusing and programming of equipment. This is not performance but it is an integral part of being a professional performer.

Performance

Quays Theatre, The Lowry

The company toured various venues providing dancers with the opportunity to experience differing performance settings ranging from middle scale modern venues, to old theatres which are a grand spectacle in themselves. This is experience of life on the road which is a large part of a professional dancer's career.



Helen Newall

‘We look as if we know what we’re doing!’:
The role of photo-documentation
in the development of artistry.

According to Flusser and Sontag, documentation is information, but it is never neutral, nor the whole story: there are discrepancies between capture conditions and what the image denotes: photographs frame oblongs of reality, rendering invisible what was beyond the frame. Nevertheless, we believe images: Photoshop scandals notwithstanding, we trust the camera. Capture itself is fraught with complexity: Anderson’s *Theatre & Photography* traces histories of performance photography, and notes a shift from set-ups to Roger Pic’s method in which he ‘photographed during the run of the play without additional light, and without stoppages’ (2015: 53). Set-ups take time, which I didn’t have, so I was forced to use Pic’s model in less than ideal conditions.

Movement is often captured at its apex rather than at preparation or recovery. In set-ups, both performer and photographer can rehearse capture. In Pic’s documentary mode, I missed a lot of apexes, and when I succeeded, dancers were sometimes exhibiting less than perfect technique, nevertheless there is an honesty in capturing what was actually danced, as opposed to what was rehearsed into perfection for the camera. So, the company did what the company needed to do – class, rehearse, perform – and moved on, and I followed, capturing what I could. The Class shots were taken in a small studio; the *Rehearsal* shots from an empty auditorium or from the wings

while the lighting was programmed; and the *Performance* shots from a fixed position during a performance to an audience. I ended up with camera cards full of potential shots to edit in the digital darkroom.

There is never one definitive set of images, but multiple potential sub-sets depending on who is choosing. And some images never get chosen. I wondered whether I had a responsibility to show all the images to the company, even the blurred misfires, the ones that made the dancers look crap, and the ones that made me look like a crap photographer. I made a rough edit, then Karen and a rehearsal director made selections, and their choices exemplified best dance technique rather than those I felt were the best performance shots. In an arrogant high-risk strategy, I later presented them with my selection. But there was no financial contract at play, and thus no power dynamic: feeling free to be proved wrong, I selected based on aesthetics rather than technique, and they loved them.

The images here represent a performance you have not witnessed, but your head is in a darkroom, the production is developing there, and a ‘memory’ of something you haven’t seen is invoked. In this circumstance, performance photographs, as Sontag notes, become not so much indices of the artwork, but artworks in themselves (1977). At this point, there is a shift from what might be termed diachronic attention, which watches a flow of developing moments of the dance through time, to synchronic attention, which looks at or gazes on one frozen moment – the dance photograph.

In an image-saturated world, Burgin has observed that, ‘whereas paintings and film regularly present themselves to critical

attention as objects, photographs are received rather than as an environment’ (in Wells, 2003: 130). But when located as objects, as physical prints, photographs become even more the works of art that Sontag claims them to be. They freeze dance, presenting the binary opposition between movement and stillness, the latter being so antithetical to dance as an ephemeral flow of intense corporeal physicality through time, which ordinarily cannot be stopped. Photographs of performance thus distil the flow of the ongoing into fractured stillnesses, each being a slice of time, like a cross-section of a tree trunk, or a sliver of a cell under a microscope, the slivers here being fractions - 1/200 of a second. In dance photos, in this stillness, there is tension between implied fleeting movement, presence, music, and the photographic object incorporating as it does perpetual stillness, absence, and silence... Both deal with time. Times beats through dance, and flows from beginnings to ends. Photographs speak of time passed and the past. It is this intersection between stillness and movement that offers time and silence in which dancers, looking at themselves, can deeply reflect. Photographs permit us to gaze at 1/200th of a second.

We offered the photographs as printed objects to the dancers depicted, and deployed Kuhn’s ethnographic approach to sociological and cultural engagement with photographs. This entails posing questions about the photograph requiring a discursive response. I believe such a process precipitated a repositioning whereby the dancers were located in a Lacanian mirror phase of becoming ‘other’, for as Lutz and Collins notes, both the ‘mirror and camera are tools of self-

reflection and surveillance. Each creates a double of the self, a second figure who can be examined more closely than the original – a double that can be also alienated from the self’ (in Taylor, 1994: 376). And because they are stillnesses evoking reminiscence and introspection, like mirrors they can refocus a performer’s sense of self.

Dearborn and Ross have discussed studio mirrors as disrupters of dance learning. Here, photography was a post-performance disruption of embodied memories and cognition of performance, and while the first disruption was certainly Karen’s, seeing not what she expected to see, the most powerful disruption was in the dancers, as evidenced in Karen’s film *Do You See What I See?* Here, the student-dancer’s sense of self was changed: the comment that still rings in my ears demonstrates this: we look as if we know what we’re doing. (And I hoped that the photographs made it look as if I too knew what I was doing.) Until they engaged with the images as printed art objects their embodied memories were faulty: in looking at the photographs as aesthetic truths via Kuhn’s framework, they saw themselves differently, with newfound confidence, as nascent professionals: the process engendered dancer identity and employment confidence.

This was an heuristic process with, at the outset, no sense of utility bar the provision of useful marketing and portfolio shots. Additional value emerged in self-reflexive engagement with shots in which looking like they know what they’re doing rewrote perceptions of conditions, and captured Goffman-esque performances of being professional dancers.

Karen Jaundrill Scott

Making Do you see what I see?

I have been directing 12° North since it began in 2011, during which time, by engaging in a discourse located within employability, I have captured the group in a self-reflective process, highlighting the role of identity in a 'real world' perspective. My aim was to explore professional development through planned activities at key stages. My brief was to support individuals in their transition from graduates to autonomous artists, and I analysed our collective experiences in a series of filmed interviews. In adopting an auto-ethnographic approach, and observing the impact of discursive practices, my enquiry has led me to redefine my own pedagogic landscape as the themes of 'truth' and 'struggle' entered our narrative. Through coaching emerging artists I have found that truth can be found in the dancers' ability to assess their own individual capability within a range of dance practices, and struggle is often measured when building a capacity for resilience.

My relationship with the group was as mentor, rather than choreographer, and I often felt that my role was at times distant. Owens speaks of a rerailing process: and in order to do so I contemplated the mediation between my Self and the dancers as emerging artists, and me not being as they expected (Owens: 2016). Day demonstrates how power exists in research relationships, and recognises, "the dual problematizing of identity and positionality" (2012: 62). I thus decided to reposition myself as film maker, thereby acknowledging how Foucault describes the subject as moving through a

process of temporary states, through historical periods, to upgrade knowledge and increase 'knowing' (1990). This changed my working identity from teacher to artist, and brought me closer to the group. A self-critical position then emerged and questions followed, beginning with my own history: was articulating my experiences relevant for dancers in the 21st Century? Tactically there were benefits for both parties, for this position of self-artistry allowed for co-development, and as Reeder states, "Our memories are rejuvenated: Coaching young artists to expand their ideas requires us to be increasingly critical of our own efforts. The prior knowledge of our craft and early career awareness becomes current" (2007: 17).

At this stage in their programme, the graduates valued performance highly presenting a challenge, as the professional training elements were classroom focused. For the entrepreneurial learning to happen more effectively, I considered the work of Bourdieu as to how I might position myself in the work and established a creative space where we could handle and discuss imagery (2004). Where and how we would interact was critical to the process, for, as Tosey states, "we may not need to create 'creativity' so much as generate the conditions in which it can flourish" (2006: 29). I introduced Kuhn's methodology centred on imagery, and asked the dancers to comment upon the photographs. I asked them to find a language which could frame identity and establish a sense of place as working artists; for being able to discuss their work and locate its impact within the North would be critical in advancing their employability.

Filming this process served as my point of reference to the effectiveness of my own teaching. By moving out of the classroom, I cultivated a fundamental and exciting pedagogical rediscovery of my own practices. The film came after the 12° North team and I had seen contact sheets and made selections based on what we thought were the best technical shots of the dancers. The set that Helen came back with was different, unexpected and stunning. We made the film in one afternoon in August 2014 to accompany what would become an exhibition of the photography. A series of provocations was delivered to pairs of dancers as images were revealed, and included: What are your first thoughts about seeing yourself as an individual and within a company? What do you think that employers/funders are looking for within your portfolio of images? Which images do you think best reflect you as an artist in rehearsal or performance? These provocations were the only direction given, and the film of their responses was not edited. Johnson observes, "The artistic practitioner must invest in giving substance to what occurs. The substance can be discarded or used to inform, disrupt, enhance, refine or ultimately transform current practice" (2007:19). These responses thus informed the self-awareness of their substance as artists and I began to witness a transition happening.

The film location was significant: I chose an enclosed space to focus attention on the photographs as objects, for as Bohm states:

Real perception that is capable of seeing something new and unfamiliar requires that one be attentive, alert, aware, and sensitive. In this frame of mind, one does

something (perhaps only to move or handle an object) and then one notes the difference between what actually happens and what is inferred from previous knowledge. From this difference, one is led to a new perception or new idea that accounts for the difference. (2004: 5)

An informed dialogue emerged: their narratives demonstrate a growing awareness of how to position themselves within the art form and the industry. I believe this came from the formal self-consciousness of being filmed, the smallness of the space, the provocations. By working in pairs they established a rhythm to their language with words such as 'skill', 'risk', 'challenge' and 'power' being centred in the individual perspective. The dialogue often considered the movement aesthetic as the images provided some truths and a final confirmation that their struggle to reach performance standard had been realised.

Using documentary as a research tool supports my measurement of the effectiveness of pedagogy through the power of storytelling (Nicholls: 2002) and I am able to explore whose story this is. Is it mine as the filmmaker in empowering realisation and change within the subjects? Or does it belong to the subjects of change in their process of developing an embedded presence in the regional dance ecology? What I can measure is the artistic growth of the dancers in relation to employability. As the dialogue progresses, each individual acknowledges that this is very much the beginning of their journey, and begins to view the images through the eyes of potential employers and audiences who await them.

Biographies

Karen Jaundrill-Scott

is the Director of External Affairs and Employability in Performing Arts at Edge Hill University. Her research into employability has developed her work in this field nationally as part of many Arts Council initiatives. She was lead consultant in the ACE consultancy research Towards a Graduate Company (2009) written with Lisa Cullen (University of Salford) and presently the Project Director of 12°North. Karen has excelled in the area of Dance in Education and Community Arts over a period of three decades and is an advocate for artist development in the North West.

She began working as an Arts Officer across the region before moving to Munich, Germany to become Dance Development Officer at the Gasteig Arts Centre, and then the Artistic Director of Dance Companie Huber. Karen returned to undertake a consultancy as a site specific choreographer for Granada TV's Celebration Arts Programme before becoming Artistic Director of Dance in Education undertaking commissions for the Everyman Theatre, Royal Exchange Theatre, the Bolton Octagon and the Donmar Warehouse. She has a research interest in heritage and multigenerational re-enactment. More recently Karen has received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to complete five publications with community events in local landmarks.

Biographies

Dr Helen Newall

is a Reader in Performing Arts at Edge Hill University, and a professional playwright, photographer and digital artist. Her plays include: *The Spring Stone*, an opera, Chester Cathedral; *Alastair's Cat*, the Millennium Dome; *Light of the World: New Mystery Plays*, JC 2000 Millennium Project; new libretto for *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, Carl Davis, The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra; *A Thousand and One Nights*, *The Icarus Game*, *The Glastonbury Tales*, Cheshire Youth Theatre; *Big Nose*, *Beowulf*, *Frankenstein*, The Chester Gateway Theatre; *Remote Control*, HTV-West Television Workshop; *Dumisani's Drum*, Action Transport; *The Great Gromboolian Plain*, Hampshire County Youth Theatre; *Anthem for Doomed Youth*, *Grimms' Tales*, *Shoah*, *Another Sun*, The Nuffield Theatre, Southampton.

She is currently Writer-in-Residence for TiQ Theatre Company for whom she has written *Sweet Sixteen*; *Silent Night*; *Home For Christmas*; *James*; *Forgotten Fortress*; and *A Jacobean Christmas*. Her digital scenography and performance projections include: *Orpheus*, *The Book of the Dead*, Edge Hill University; *A View from the Hill*, Brindley Arts Centre; *Sounds & Visions*, Munich; *Illumination Glossolalia*; *A Christmas Carol*; and *The Snow Queen*, TiQ, Chester. Installations include: *The Ghost of Someone Not Yet Drowned*, Victoria Baths, Manchester; *Blodeuwedd* and *A Fairy Tale Not Yet Written*, Picton Castle, Pembrokeshire; *Silence*, Pound Arts, Wiltshire; *Remember Me*, Liverpool; *Lost Morecambe*, Winter Gardens, Morecambe.