Preservation and Paradox: Choreographic Authorship in the Digital Sphere

Hetty Blades

Preservation and Paradox: Choreographic Authorship in the Digital Sphere

Hetty Blades

Keywords

Authorship

Circulation

Dance

Documentation

Legacy

Online Transmission

Ownership

Preservation

Score

In dance, questions of authorship and ownership are closely related to issues of documentation, preservation and heritage. The much-cited ephemerality of performance (Phelan 1993, Siegel 1972:1) and absence of universal notation system means that, as with other forms of performance based culture, documentation is important for allowing access for future generations and generating a tangible heritage. Choreographers often develop idiosyncratic and novel ways of preserving and inscribing their work (Cvejić in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012; Van Imschoot 2012). Chosen modes of documentation and transmission often become part of a choreographer's artistic identity and demonstrate, to a certain extent, the way that they view their role as an author, and relationship to their work. Choreographers restrict the transmission and re-staging of their work to varying degrees, with some exercising strict control and others allowing their work to circulate freely. Equally, some choreographers choose to publically articulate the intended meaning, stimuli and processes of their work, whilst others remain quiet. The range of approaches reveals something of the complexities of preserving dance. The form not only escapes universal inscription, but also has few standardized practices governing its production, documentation and circulation. In particular contemporary dance practitioners are frequently motivated by a desire for originality, resulting in a field rich with variety, not only in terms of choreographic style, but also in strategies for documentation, preservation and transmission.

The development of the internet and widespread access to recording technology has contributed significantly to the range of approaches used by choreographers to share and document their work. Furthermore, the circulation and apparent stabilization of dance through digital technologies requires choreographers to (re)think their relationship to their own work, foregrounding questions such as: What does it take to adequately transmit, re-perform and preserve my work? And, how will it be remembered? In response to these questions, the first part of this chapter discusses contemporary dance authorship and outlines how the relatively recent passing of some major figures in the development of western contemporary dance has ignited questions concerning choreographic authorship and cultural heritage. As dance scholar Sally Gardner points out, "[w]ith the demise since the start of the twenty-first century of several seminal choreographers, it is timely to pursue the issues and questions of the modern dance legacy" (2014: 230). In response to this situation, I discuss how the work of Merce Cunningham (1919 – 2009) and Pina Bausch (1940 – 2009) is being preserved and 'protected' through online mechanisms. The second part of the chapter considers the ways in which such issues are being handled by living artists, focusing on how Flemish choreographer Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker negotiates her relationship to her own work. I examine De Keersmaeker's authorial positioning during the 'referencing' of her choreography by pop star Beyoncé Knowles and the subsequent development of the online project *Re:Rosas! The fABULEUS Rosas Remix Project*, (*Re:Rosas!*). Both of these examples involve De Keermaeker's seminal work *Rosas danst Rosas*, which premiered in 1983 and is widely known via a film version of the work by Thierry De Mey from 1997. Furthermore, both cases highlight the role of the internet, demonstrating how the online circulation of dance pose important questions about what it might mean to preserve, author and own a work of dance art

Choreographic authorship and ownership

The role of the choreographer is littered with complexities. As dance and law scholars Charlotte Waelde, Sarah Whatley and Mathilde Pavis (2014) point out,

> the collaborative nature of the process of dance-making in which the dancers instantiate the ideas of the choreographer, but where ownership shifts as the dancers imprint their interpretation and individual artistry on the work, and shifts again as the work is performed in a public shared environment before an audience. (2014: 7)

As articulated here, dance making involves dancers, each of whom bring their own, unique body and movement style, not to mention creative ideas. This means that, other than choreographers making solos on themselves, choreography is essentially a collaborative act. However, despite its

collaborative nature, contemporary dance convention tends to isolate a single person as the 'author' of a work or set of practices. Furthermore, as dance theorist Laurence Louppe points out, even in collectives such as Grand Union, who later became known as Judson Dance Theater, [i] decisions often come down to an individual choice (2010: 179). Dance theorist Anthea Kraut further suggests that some contemporary and postmodern choreographers used strategies such as improvisation, chance procedure, a method whereby the elements of the choreography are determined by chance, rather than by the choreographer, and pedestrianism, or 'every day' movement, "to distance themselves from the modernist emphasis on authorial invention", but that nevertheless these artists continue to be recognised as the author of their works (2016: 266). Graham McFee (2013) makes a similar claim, although articulated slightly differently. He suggests that it is incorrect to refer to dancers as 'artists', not because they do not have artistic skills, but because we tend to distinguish between the dancers and the choreographer when attributing value, responsibility and ownership.

So, the author-concept appears to be strong in dance, indeed Louppe goes as far as to suggest that authorial signature is fundamental the concept of a dance 'work' (2010: 179 - 180). The difficulties in conceptualising a dance work with no author is perhaps due to the way that works are made and transmitted on and with the body. Whilst scores are frequently used to document and instigate movement, they do not usually hold the same work-determining weight as musical scores and texts of plays. They also vary greatly in terms of how strictly they constrain the work. Some scores might aim to document every single detail, but more often than not, they are used as a form of stimuli for choreographic action. This means that the (re)formation of the 'work' requires more than the activation of a score, it depends upon a choreographer, or proxy (such as a rehearsal director, or re-stager), making choreographic decisions to fill in the gaps in memory and/or documentation. Furthermore, dance works tend to be relatively fluid entities. Whilst some follow a 'closed' work model where each instance of the work aims toward an ideal 'original' form, many are much more 'open' (Rubidge 2000). As the work is embodied by different dancers there will inevitably be deviations to the movement vocabulary and style. Changes might be made to the work to reflect evolving cultural contexts, requiring choreographic decision-making. For a work to evolve and undergo revisions at the direction of the choreographer is relatively common.[ii]

The close relationship between a choreographer and their work means that some interesting problems arise when they die, leaving behind a corpus of work residing in the bodies and memories of dancers, and through idiosyncratic documentation. The question of what happens to a contemporary choreographer's work, and who might be qualified to oversee re-stagings has also been around for some time. [iii] Referring to a well-known dance pioneer, Gardner points out that, "[t]his has been a question,

confronted in different ways, since the death of Isadora Duncan in 1927" (2014: 231). However, the past two decades have proved a particularly interesting time in dance history, due to the deaths of key figureheads, including Martha Graham (1894 – 1991) as well as Cunningham and Bausch. Such artists were instrumental in the development of western contemporary dance, which was established in both the USA and mainland Europe in the first half of the 20th century (Jowitt 2011). Each of these choreographers were considered avant-garde and set out to challenge existing conventions (Copeland 2004; Franko 1995; Servos 1981). Although different in style American choreographers Graham and Cunningham, both challenged the traditions of classical ballet. This first wave of contemporary choreography is often referred to as 'modern' dance, and was challenged in the 1960s and 70s by the 'postmodern' choreographers of Judson Dance Theatre. Bausch was based in Germany and her style has slightly different routes, but equally questioned that which came before. She is widely credited with developing 'tanztheater' (dance theatre), drawing on theatrical narratives, characters and costuming alongside movement.[iv]

Following in the tradition of their early modern dance predecessors, such as Doris Humphrey and Jose Limon, these three artists clearly demonstrate the common singularity of dance authorship suggested by Louppe and McFee. Graham, Cunningham and Bausch are all well-known; their choreographic styles are closely related to their artistic identities and easily identifiable. In the case of Graham and Cunningham their styles evolved into codified techniques, widely taught in European and American training institutions. Although not entirely straightforward, movement idioms can be codified thorough a process of naming and standardizing specific sets of movements. This allows for certain features of an artist's choreographic practice and framework to outlive them, through the body-to-body transmission that occurs between teachers and their students. However, there is something intuitively more complex about a choreographer's relationship to their own work(s). This is perhaps due to the fluid nature of dance. Unlike the author of a book or painting, who formulates a single, relatively stable entity, which can be bought, sold, touched and physically located within the world, even if, as is the case with novels, this physical form has many instances. Choreographers, on the other hand, author more fluid entities. [v]

Perhaps as a result of this fluidity, as hinted at by Kraut (quoted above), choreographic authorship seems to be considered somehow different to authorship in other areas. For example Gardner writes:

> Inherent to issues of modern dance memory, in particular, is that individual author-
> ship, and the location of authorial value or of a work's identity in or as the bodily
> 'flesh' of works or idioms, has not been widely acknowledged or accepted. Despite
> the early twentieth-century emergence and subsequent ongoing creative production

of modern dance as an individualized rather than social dance, the idea of a dance artist in the modernist sense (as the inventor of a body) is not widely recognized (Gardner 2014: 230).

This position seems in some ways paradoxical to the previous suggestion that singular authorial signatures are common in dance practice. It seems that whilst the author-concept is strong in in terms of how we attribute ownership, the bodily, unfixed nature of dance means that the recognition of a choreographer's corpus is more complex. Louppe traces the root of the issue, suggesting that, "the act of choreography, considered as a simple spectacle, has inherited a traditional foundation" (2010: 235), and that the temporality of dance in performance has prevented the choreographic work from becoming recognized as a "fully fledged artistic act" (2010: 235). So, whilst we attribute individual authorship to choreographic works, it seems that some suggest that the nature of dance means that choreographers are not recognized in the same way as the creators of more stable works of art.

The fluidity of dance works means that their circulation is almost impossible to entirely constrain. For example, once a dancer has learned the steps, structure or concept of a dance it exists in their body. They can go on to perform, remake and teach this work. Furthermore, choreography can be copied from performances, videos and scores. This situation means that each choreographer must decide how best to constrain their works, which changes can be made, and who is allowed to perform it. During a choreographer's working life these can be decided on a case-by-case basis. For example, Cunningham, Bausch and Graham, each had their own companies, which performed works made only by themselves. A number of these works remained in the repertoire for many years, meaning that they were performed by multiple different casts. Bausch's work *Cafe Muller*, for instance premiered in 1978 and was performed until 2013. However the place of the work within the repertoire was not consistent; it was performed every year between 1980 and 1988 and then not at all between1988 and 1992 (Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch n.d.). Each restaging would have inevitably involved some minor or major alterations and revisions, which could be decided by Bausch. But what happens when the head of the company is no longer here? Can the company never perform another new work? Does it mean that the works within the repertory cannot be revised? Furthermore, who is responsible for making such decisions?

Legacies

Dance scholar Carrie Noland discusses how the Cunningham Dance Foundation started establishing a 'Legacy Plan' a couple of years before the choreographer's death (2013: 85). The way that the plan was put into place before Cunningham's death is important for example arts writer Lizzie Feidelson

points out that the plan had Cunningham's 'blessing' (2013). The strategy for preserving Cunningham's legacy involves, "a set of initiatives intended to preserve while making available to other companies over fifty years of choreographic production as well as a unique method of training dancers" (Noland 2013: 85). The foundation, under the direction of Trevor Carlson, felt that the company should not continue without Cunningham. Therefore, upon his death it was decided that it would cease to exist on 1st January 2012. The Legacy Plan included a two-year Legacy Tour, which involved eighteen works and toured to fifty cities around the world (Noland 2013: 85). It also involved the development of Cunningham's 'Dance Capsules', a form of online archive.

The capsules document 86 of Cunningham's works. They are arranged in reverse chronological order on the homepage. Selecting a capsule leads the user onto a new page, which includes metadata concerning the credits for the choreography, music, décor, costumes, lighting and the date and venue of the first performance. The Cunningham Company archivist David Vaughan provides a brief synopsis for each work. In the right-hand corner of the screen are scrolling images of the work in performance. Below is a catalogue of 'assets' divided into 'public' and 'private'. Full access must be obtained via written request to the foundation, whereas limited sources are openly available. Public assets include detailed production credits, such as the original cast lists and information about the running time, music and so forth. Sometimes excerpts of the music is also available, as is footage from Cunningham's film series, *Mondays with Merce.* The private assets include extensive choreographic notes (55 in the case of Cunningham's 1983 work *Roaratorio* for example), alongside video clips, reviews, production notes and so forth.

The distinction between the public and private assets can be understood as distinguishing between those assets (public) that merely provide enough information to reference the work, and catch a glimpse of its aesthetic, and private assets which might enable a staging of the work. The capsules have clearly been developed to allow for Cunningham's works to be re-instantiated, Feidelson suggests that the 86 works were selected depending on whether there was enough material about to allow for it to be re-performed (2013), yet these re-stagings are tightly controlled by the Cunningham Trust.

Noland points to the paradoxical relationship between preservation and the ideal of the avant- garde. She writes that,

> The notion of "legacy" presupposes the perseverance of an essential core, and preserving this core requires technologies of storage, reproduction, and trans- mission as well as institutional support. The impulse to preserve, however, comes into conflict with the structure and ideology of the avant-garde itself, which demands the rejection of the recent in favor of the new, a fundamentally self-sacrificial and open

attitude toward the future as a blank unknown. (Noland 2013: 86)

Such paradoxes are at the heart of dance preservation. The 'essential core', seem particularly relevant in relation to Cunningham's 'dance capsules', which are described as containing 'complete documentation of a Cunningham work' (Merce Cunningham Trust n.d.). The notion of completeness suggests that even though moments of performance cannot be exactly replicated, the work has a set of essential properties, which can be fully captured. The implication is that the transmission of these properties will allow for the work to be 'authentically' re-enacted. The strategy of the Merce Cunningham Trust to gather the relevant information to enable the works to live on, yet to keep this information gated, generates another paradox whereby the circulation of the work is both enabled and restricted.

A similar claim for completeness is found in the description of the Pina Bausch archive, which claims to include, "Pina Basuch's complete artistic legacy" (Pina Bausch Foundation, n.d.). At the time of writing the archive is still under construction and exists only as an outline on the website of the Pina Bausch Foundation, however the strategy and framework for the development of the archive is interesting. The collection appears extensive; materials will be organised into 18 categories, such as; 'Moving Image/Audio-Visual Material', 'Workbooks', 'Props', 'Costumes' and so forth. The introductory text explains, "After her death, her son Salomon established the charitable Pina Bausch Foundation on August 3rd, 2009 in which he has placed her entire artistic legacy in accordance with her wishes." (Pina Bausch Foundation 2009). Reprised here are the notions of completeness or entirety, and the foregrounding of Bausch's role in the decisions made about the continuation of her work

Unlike the Cunningham Company, Bausch's company, Tanztheater Wuppertal remains active. The company continue to perform Bausch's works, and in 2015 for the first time the company commissioned three new works by Tim Etchells, François Chaignaud and Cecilia Bengolea, and Theo Clinkard (Dancing Times 2015). However, despite opening up the repertoire, the preservation strategies are repeatedly framed in relation to Bausch, indeed the archive project is titled, 'An Invitation from Pina' (Pina Bausch Foundation, n.d.). It is logical and respectful to emphasise the wishes of the choreographer and also perhaps has underlying political implications. Recalling the suggestions quoted above it can be argued that foregrounding the choreographer is a way to combat or overcome the lack of acknowledgment for authorial value that Gardner (2014: 230) and Louppe (2010: 235) suggest is inherent to dance.

The questions about legacy raised by the deaths of Cunningham and Bausch can be seen as having a direct impact on living choreographers, who have also turned their attention to questions of how best to document, transmit and protect their work. 'Postmodern' artists such as Yvonne Rainer and Trisha

Brown, have taken active steps to ensure that their work is transmitted in accordance with their wishes. [vi] Gardner discusses Yvonne Rainer's approach, suggesting, "Rainer is still active as a choreographer but she is also self-consciously aware of her own mortality, and of what that mortality might mean for her body of work" (2014: 230). Gardner draws comparisons between Graham and Rainer. She suggests that, "Graham was known as having an uncompromising approach to authorship or her works and was notorious for seeking to govern the broader lives and thoughts of her dancers" (2014: 233). On the other hand, Rainer's approach was initially more open. For example, her seminal work *Trio A* was choreographed in 1966, during Rainer's time as a member of Judson Dance Theatre. Judson's postmodern framework often focused on pedestrian movement, performed by people without dance training. Gardner suggests that Rainer was initially happy for *Trio A* to be handed over to others, in the "democratic spirit of the times" (2014: 233). However she goes on to say that Rainer's 2009 essay, 'Trio A: Geneology, Documentation, Notation', demonstrates a shift in thinking, suggesting that the essay shows that Rainer has become 'obsessive' and more like Graham in her control of the work, "after realizing how far the transmission of her dance could take her work away from its intended values" (2014: 233). Rainer's response to this realization was to qualify a number of dancers as 'custodians' of the work, who are trusted by Rainer to handle its transmission by overseeing restagings. This situation further highlights the complex set of paradoxes at the heart of dance preservation and transmission. At its very core *Trio A* was democratic in spirit and a challenge to hierarchical structures, yet in its careful preservation is has become a precious or fragile entity, trusted only in the hands of experts.

Importantly, Rainer's strategy preserves the centrality of body-to-body transmission. Handing over the custody of the work to a small number of dancers means that the circulation of *Trio A* can only be 'legitimately' learned directly from these authorized 'transmitters'.[vii] The method of handing works down from dancer to dancer is common in dance practice. Whilst some companies use codified notational systems to inscribe works, this practice is relatively rare. Conventionally dance works are circulated through dancers and choreographers teaching movement material to new dancers. The widespread use of video recording has shifted this practice somewhat, as companies now often rely upon a combination of living memory and recorded representation to restage works. By removing the possibility for dancers to 'authentically' stage *Trio A* via the notated score, or a video recording, Rainer is re-establishing the central role of body to body transmission, and consciously limiting the potential for the work to circulate.

Rainer's approach is interesting partly because this moment in the history of contemporary dance, in which key figures are negotiating questions of legacy, coincides with the expansion of the internet, a

tool which many choreographers are utilizing in order to negotiate the slippery terrain of preservation and heritage. The potentials of the internet for dissemination have ushered in multiple new ways to share and preserve work. Yet these potentials also pose a unique set of problematics.

De Keersmaeker's online offering

In 2011 Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker was at the centre of a plagiarism row with pop star Beyoncé Knowles, whose video for the song *Countdown* (2011) features movements that are strikingly similar to sections of De Keersmaeker's works *Rosas danst Rosas* (1987) and *Achterland* (1990). De Keersmaeker claimed that Knowles had plagiarized her work, and threatened legal action (Yeoh 2013). However, Adria Petty, the co-director of the music video strongly denied this claim, explaining how she showed Knowles multiple videos as inspiration (McKinley Jr 2011). Indeed the *Countdown* video is made up almost entirely of 'references' to other cultural icons and dance routines, Knowles is quoted as claiming, ""I was also paying tribute to the film, 'Funny Face' with the legendary Audrey Hepburn" and ""My biggest inspirations were the '60s, the '70s, Brigitte Bardot, Andy Warhol, Twiggy and Diana Ross" (in McKinley Jr. 2011).

This is not the first of Knowles's videos to use existing choreography. The movement in the video for *Single Ladies (Put a Ring On It)* (2008), for example derives directly from Bob Fosse's *Mexican Breakfast* (1969).Cultural theorist Philippa Thomas points out that this caused outcry amongst the public when the similarities were revealed, despite the fact that the use of Fosse's work was publically acknowledged by Knowles (2014: 293). It seems that the practice of borrowing, referencing and reusing is common in music video production, and that slightly different rules seem to apply to those governing more traditional artistic practices. Music videos are developed to illustrate or support a song, rather than being an individual work in their own right. Whilst they often contain choreography, the choreographer is rarely considered the author of the video, which is usually referred to as belonging to the singer or group whose song it illustrates. Furthermore, as a form that was invented for mass circulation, music videos have always engaged in a process of transmission, re-embodiment and re-enactment. [viii]

Whilst those viewers familiar with the references used might see the *Countdown* video as an intertextual pastiche, unfamiliar viewers will perhaps assume that the choreography, styling and so on is original to Knowles and Petty, raising complex issues around ownership, copyright and dance (See Kraut: 2016; Waelde, Whatley and Pavis: 2014; Yeoh 2013). However, leaving these questions aside for the time being, I want to highlight the central role of the internet in this scenario. *Rosas*

danst Rosas was originally made as a stage work. It is a dance for four women; De Keersmaeker danced in the original version, alongside Adriana Borriello, Michèle Anne De Mey and Fumiyo Ikeda, who are credited as co-creators (Rosas n.d.) It was De Keersmaeker's third work and the first one for her company Rosas, which went on to become hugely successful. In 1997 De Mey and De Keersmaeker developed a film version of the work, which is set in an empty architectural school (Rosas, n.d.). Multiple sections of this film exist on YouTube, thus allowing viewers around the world access to the work, in a way that was unimaginable at the time of its conception. It seems safe to assume that it was this film that Petty showed to Knowles, indeed the scenes in the *Countdown* video take place within a similar setting.

De Keersmaeker's response to the challenges of the internet, foregrounded by the *Countdown* case, was particularly interesting. In 2013 she and Rosas teamed up with *f*ABULEUS, a Belgian arts production organisation to develop *Re:Rosas!.* This is a website featuring specially recorded films in which De Keersmaeker, and Samantha van Wissen, who features in the film version of the work, lead viewers through a simplified version of the 'chair section' or 'second movement' of *Rosas danst Rosas* (Re:Rosas, 2013), one of the sections that appears in the *Countdown* video. In stark contrast to De Keersmaeker's response to Knowles, this site encourages viewers to develop their own versions of the work. These can then be submitted to the site, which houses a large collection of the videos. The project was originally created to coincide with the thirtieth anniversary of the work in 2013. It was intended to be a temporary project in order to collect videos for an exhibition in the Kaaitheater in Brussels (Artslant n.d.). 250 films were gathered for the event (Impulsetanz, n.d.), and the huge response to the project meant that they chose to keep the site active, at the time of writing there are 372 videos on the site and they continue to be added.

The homepage articulates the premise of the site, telling users, "it's your turn. Dance your own *Rosas danst Rosas*, make a video film of it and post it on this site" (Re:Rosas 2013). Below are four YouTube videos, titled, 'Welcome', 'Movements', 'Structure' and 'Choreography'. In the first video De Keersmaeker speaks to the camera to introduce the work and explain the instructions to users. The 'Movements' video entails van Wissen teaching the five phrases that make up this section of the work, labelled A, B, C, D and E. Each movement is articulated in detail. The camera work contributes to the level of detail; close-ups are used to demonstrate the position of the hands, van Wissen's focus and so on. The 'Structure' video demonstrates how the five phrases are organised in the work. De Keersmaeker joins van Wissen to show how the dancers interact with one another. Lastly, in the 'Choreography' video van Wissen is accompanied by three more female dancers, who enact the entire section, whilst text, inscribed over the top of the video demonstrates how the components come

together to form the choreography. On another page the background and structure of the work is briefly articulated, illustrated by photographs, diagrams and three films. In the first film De Keermsaeker outlines the original, more complex structure of the section, using a chalkboard to help her communicate the arrangements. Below this film is an interview with De Keersmaeker and a clip of this section of the work in performance.

This project functions as a form of choreographic score by breaking down the movement and structure, the choreographic elements are extracted from other performative components, such as costume and staging. The original music is also provided. The introductory text reads,

> Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker and dancer Samantha van Wissen will teach you the moves, step by step, from the second part of the performance. After that it becomes your dance: *you dance Rosas*. In a different setting, with a huge number of dancers… any way you like! (Re:Rosas n.d.)

This proposition, combined with the nature of the information given, means that the framework, although implicit, is quite clear: the movement, music and structure are set, suggesting that these are the "essential core" (Noland 2013: 86) of the work, but that creativity is invited in relation to context, cast and other components, such as the camerawork, costumes and so forth. Picking up on the site's subtitle, Claire Frisbie, marketing manager at Brooklyn Academy of Music, suggests that the project is, "[m]odeled after the practice of so many musicians who upload parts of their songs to the internet for DJs to remix" (2013). However, users are not entirely let loose, there are some features of the work that must be maintained.

Another important difference to musical remixing is that unlike DJs, who can use direct recordings, anyone wishing to remix the work must first activate the movement through their own bodies, opening the work up to vastly varied corporealities. Whilst the practice of learning choreography from video is commonplace, this inevitably leads to questions about the importance of bodily transmission, who has the authority to 'transmit' such knowledge (Gardner 2014) and whether recorded version of the work are 'authentic'. The practice of learning dance routines from music videos, on the other hand seems not to face such questions, perhaps because of the way that they are developed to circulate via digital media, and exist wholly in digital form thus avoiding the apparent dichotomy between 'live' and recorded performance that exists for dance and other performing arts that have a tradition of being instantiated on stage. [ix] For example, the wide circulation of the *Single Ladies* (2008) video is discussed by Thomas (2014), who explains how the choreography was re-perfomed in multiple social contexts. This was encouraged by Knowles's record label, Columbia Records, who held a

competition in 2009, in which members of the public competed for a cash prize by submitting their own versions of the dance routine from the video (Thomas 2014: 295). The rules very clearly stipulated that entries must copy the choreography exactly (Thomas 2014: 295). Although there is no prize on offer in the *Re:Rosas!* project, other than the posting of each participant's video on the site, the project clearly echoes the call of Columbia Records. The transmission of contemporary dance works online mean that they enter into a new form of circulation, differences in genre or style between music videos and contemporary dance works do not mean that they will be treated differently by viewers.

De Keersmaeker's invitation seems to recognize this transition. *Rosas danst Rosas* is explicitly relocated, away from its full-length stage and film versions and into a space of fragmentation and reconfiguration. However, this is not necessarily a radical act on behalf of De Keersmaeker, rather it can be understood as an acknowledgement of the new space in which dance works find themselves. As dance scholar Harmony Bench suggests,

> social media enable the emergence of new social dance practices defined not by music genres or by movement vocabularies, but by modes of composition and circulation within social media environments. (Bench 2010: 184)

This is an important articulation in relation to *Rosas danst Rosas,* as the case with Knowles demonstrated, videos that exist online are treated equally. Distinctions between conventional 'high' art such as theatre dance and popular culture forms are reconfigured in the neutralizing sphere of the virtual.

Bench focuses on the way in which online choreographies are inherently social, articulating the concept of 'social dance-media', suggesting that some online choreographic works utilize the participatory nature of the internet in order to "reconfigure dance as a site of social exchange and engagement by providing the vehicles for sharing and circulating dance" (2010: 184). She draws a clear distinction between these choreographies and those developed for the stage, suggesting "[a]s a hybrid form, social dance-media differentiates itself from stage-based choreography by insisting upon public engagement and participation" (2010: 184). However *Re:Rosa!* muddles this distinction by re-situating the stage work *Rosas danst Rosas* as a work of social dance-media. This is not the case for any stage work that is documented online; in social dance-media the choreographic component must reflect social media strategies, insomuch as the choreographer must integrate users as collaborators, rather than merely commentators (Bench 2010: 185). This framework is very evident in *Re:Rosas!* which depends essentially upon interaction from participants.

Whilst *Re:Rosas!* is not the first online project to engage the public in choreographic activity, it does have some unique features due to De Keersmaeker's positioning. Bench articulates three forms on online choreography; 'crowdsource', 'flash' and 'viral' (2010: 184). Of these, 'crowdsourcing' seems to be the concept that most closely relates to the site. Although including the public, or non-professional dancers in performance work is not a new phenomenon, Bench suggests that crowdsourcing choreography offers something different insomuch as it is a "process of harnessing the knowledge and creative input of a widespread population rather than an expert few" (Bench 2010: 187). She suggests that whilst performers who are in work for the stage or screen operate under the direction of a choreographer, crowdsourcing has a more democratic process. *Re:Rosa!s* can be understood as reliant on crowdsourcing, as it depends on participation from public groups. Yet, Bench's articulation that crowdsourcing decentralizes power is problematized by De Keersmaeker's strong authorial stance. In some ways the participants are entirely free from De Keersmaeker's command once they have learned the steps, and in this sense the project can very much be read as a process of harnessing knowledge and creative input. Yet, the participants are working under direction from De Keersmaker and van Wissen. The very precise choreography is articulated in detail. De Keersmaeker and van Wissen are very clearly 'experts', meaning that a hierarchical structure is maintained.

Yeoh suggests that, "choreographers are more concerned with the proper re-presentation of their works rather than its economic exploitation" (2013: 99). But how can 'proper re-presentation' be maintained when works are circulated and re-embodied around the world? De Keersmaeker's project offers an innovative way to preserve the work. Rather than gating the choreography, and protecting its essential core, De Keersmaeker fragments the work, and scatters its pieces into the virtual sphere, allowing the choreography to be replanted in numerous bodies. Yet, perhaps paradoxically, the project allows her to articulate the movement in accordance with her wishes. Although this site offers a form of score, the articulation of movements are not removed from the subjectivity of the body. Users learn to mimic van Wissen's corporeality rather than an 'objectified' or removed rendering through notation or inscription. De Keersmaeker's release of the work can be understood not as a form of surrender, but a way to exercise control. Furthermore, the interactive nature and usability also allows the work to circulate, reaching new audiences and perhaps eclipsing its status as 'the work Beyoncé stole'.

Re:Rosas! stands in contrast to the more conventional archival approaches by the Merce Cunningham Trust and Pina Bausch Foundation. Firstly, the work is not 'complete'; it is only a small section that is released for 'remixing'. Although mentioned briefly, the site does not feature much contextual, choreographic and production detail. The multiple categories present on the Bausch archive, and

extensive metadata in Cunningham's Dance Capsules are not needed, as the aim of this site is not intended to allow for an exact reconstruction, but instead to invoke further choreographic acts, which stand in relation to De Keersmaeker's. Thomas suggests that the internet facilitates partial knowledge of 'texts', such as music videos, and that, "this partiality is what allows discourses of "authenticity" back into a space of fracturing and mutability" (2014: 290). The complexities of the notion of authenticity in dance are highlighted here, as the work is not reproduced in accordance with its original form, yet each new version is authentically a version of the work. But why is it that these instances have a different relationship to the work than Knowles's version? I suggest this is due to De Keersmaeker's authorization. Her invitation to 'remix' the work allows for it to be authentic without being complete. De Keersmaeker's invitation gives these versions a different weight to non-authorized enactments of the choreography. The closer an instance of the work is to the choreographer, the more likely we are to consider it authentic. The way that the authorial invitation legitimizes the remakes intuitively seems to provide them with a unique ontology and relationship to *Rosas danst Rosas,* thus demonstrating the centrality of the choreographer in contemporary dance practice.

Conclusion

Re:Rosas! demonstrates crucial features of De Keersmaeker's authorial positioning. She encourages creative re-workings; liberating the work from its original context and structure, yet somewhat paradoxically, this centralizes her role in the work. It allows her to articulate a correct version of the work in great detail, limiting the potential for mis-renditions.[x] Rather than resisting the circulation and use of the choreography in the populist sphere of the internet, De Keersmaeker places the work within the online culture of transmission and re-embodiment. The project both preserves and transfigures *Rosas danst Rosas*. This approach offers a novel approach to the cultural heritage of dance, instead of following a conventional archival approach, which aims to exhaust the features of the work, documenting it in its entirety, *Rosas danst Rosas* is documented and constrained, yet simultaneously released from its original form. Its heritage formed through fragments and remnants of the work, preserved in the bodies of the site's participants.

In various ways, each of the cases discussed in this chapter demonstrate a drive to position the choreographer at the centre of their work. This can be understood as response to the situation described by Gardner (2014: 230) and Louppe (2010: 235), who suggest that choreographic corpuses are under-

recognized, due largely to the temporality of performance and the ontological fluidity of dance. Fixing features of dance works through archiving and the authorization of experts, allows for the choreographer to maintain some control over the persistence and re-performance of their work. Furthermore, the use of technology enables preservation and transmission to be approached in an ever-increasing variety of ways. It is clear that choreographers think about their relationship to their work in different ways, meaning that as the drive to preserve continues, so too does the inherent idiosyncracy of dance documentation. Furthermore, technological strategies for the preservation of performance based cultural heritage reveal the paradoxical nature of dance preservation; the desire to enable the work to live on is coupled with restrictions, and the open transmission of choreography is simultaneously an act of constraint.

Bibliography

Artslant. "Open call for Re:Rosas!". Accessed 20 April 2016. http://www.artslant.com/la/articles/show/35542

Auslander, Philip. *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture.* London: Routledge, 1999

Bench, Harmony. "Monstrous Belonging: Performing "Thriller" after 9/11." In *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and the Popular Screen,* edited by Melissa Blanco Borelli,393 - 411. USA: Oxford University Press, 2014

Bench, Harmony. "Screendance 2.0: Social Dance-Media." *Participations* 7, no. 2, 2010

Climenhaga, Royd. *The Pina Bausch Sourcebook: The Making of Tanztheater*. Routledge, 2012

Copeland, Roger. *Merce Cunningham: The Modernizing of Modern Dance.* New York and London: Routlege, 2004

De Keersmaeker, Ann Teresa and Cvejić, Bojana. *A Choreographer's Score: Drumming and Rain.* Brussels: Metacarfonds, 2014

De Keersmaeker, Ann Teresa and Cvejić, Bojana. *A Choreographer's Score: En Atendant and Cesena.* 2013

De Keersmaeker, Ann Teresa and Cvejić, Bojana. *A Choreographer's Score, Fase, Rosas danst Rosas, Elena's Aria, Bartok.* Brussels: Metacarfonds, 2012.

De Mey. *Rosas danst Rosas* [film]. Produced by Avila & Sophimages, 1997.

Dancing Times "Tanztheater Wuppertal Commissions." Accessed October 29, 2015. http://www.dancing-times.co.uk/dance-today-news/item/1813

Fiedelson, Lizzie "The Merce Cunningham Archive: The Dancer or the Dance?", *N+1 Magazine*, 2013, issue 16, accessed October 29, 2015. https://nplusonemag.com/issue-16/essays/the-merce-cunningham-archives/

Franko, Mark. *Dancing Modernism/Performing Politics*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press

Frisbie, Claire. "The Internet Danst Rosas: Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker for the YouTube Generation." *BAM blog,* accessed 29 October 2015, http://bam150years.blogspot.co.uk/2013/10/the-internet-danst-rosas-anne-teresa-de.html, 16 October, 2013.

Gardner, Sally. "What is a transmitter?." *Choreographic Practices* 5, no. 2, 229-240, 2014.

Impulsetanz. "Dance Your Own 'Rosas danst Rosas'". Accessed October 29, 2015. https://www.impulstanz.com/en/news/aid1643/

Jowitt, Deborah. "Introduction" in Bremser, Martha, and Lorna Sanders, eds. *Fifty contemporary choreographers*. Taylor & Francis, 1 – 18, 2011

Kraut, Anthea. *Choreographing Copyright: Race, Gender and Intellectual Property Rights in American Modern Dance.* USA: Oxford University Press, 2016

Louppe, Laurence. *The Poetics of Contemporary Dance.* Translated by Sally Gardner. Hampshire: Dance Books, 2010

McFee, Graham. *The Philosophical Aesthetics of Dance: Identity, Performance and Understanding.* Hampshire: Dance Books, 2011

McFee, Graham. *Understanding Dance.* London: Routledge, 1993

McKinley Jr, James, C. "Beyoncé Accused of Plagiarism Over Video", *New York Times,* October 10, 2011, accessed October 29, 2015. http://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/10/10/beyonce-accused-of-plagiarism-over-video/

Merce Cunningham Trust. "Merce Cunningham Dance Capsules." Accessed 29 October, 2015. http://dancecapsules.mercecunningham.org/?8080ed

Noland, Carrie. "Inheriting the Avant-Garde: Merce Cunningham, Marcel Duchamp, and the "Legacy Plan"." *Dance Research Journal* 45, no. 02, 2013, 85-121

Pakes, Anna. "The Plausibility of a Platonist Ontology of Dance." In *Thinking Through Dance: The Philosophy of Dance Performance and Practices,* edited by Jenny Bunker, Anna Pakes and Bonnie Rowell, 84–101. Hampshire: Dance Books, 2013

Pavis, Patrice. *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture.* London: Routledge, 1992.

Phelan, Peggy. *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance.* London and New York: Routledge, 1993.

Pina Bausch Foundation. "Archive." Accessed 29 October, 2015. http://www.pinabausch.org/en/archive

Rosas. "Rosas." Accessed 29 October, 2015. http://www.rosas.be/en/rosas

Rosas and fABULEUS. "Re:Rosas: The fABULEOUS Rosas Remix Project." Accessed 29 October, 2015. http://www.rosasdanstrosas.be/en/

Rubidge, Sarah "Identity and the Open Work." In *Preservation Politics,* edited by Stephanie Jordan, 205 – 215. London: Dance Books, 2000.

Servos, Norbert. "The Emancipation of Dance: Pina Bausch and the Wuppertal Dance Theatre." *Modern Drama,* 23 no. 4, 1981, 435-447

Siegel, Marcia. *At the Vanishing Point.* New York: Saturday Review Press, 1972.

Thomas, Philippa "Single Ladies, Plural: Racism, Scandal and "Authenticity" within the Multiplication and Circulation of Online Dance Discourses." In *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and the Popular Screen,* edited by Melissa Blanco Borelli, 289 – 303. USA: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Trisha Brown Company. "Company: About." Accessed October 29, 2015. http://www.trishabrowncompany.org/?section=6

Van Imschoot, Myriam. "Rests in pieces: On scores, notation and the trace in dance." 2012. Accessed 29 October, 2015 http://www.make-up-productions.net/media/materials/RestsInPieces_Myriam%20VanImschoot.pdf.

Varney, Denise, and Rachel Fensham. "More-and-less-than: liveness, video recording, and the future of performance." *New Theatre Quarterly* 16, no. 01, 2000, 88-96

Waelde, Charlotte, Sarah Whatley, and Mathilde Pavis "Let's Dance! But who owns it?" 2014. Accessed 26 April 2016, https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/handle/10871/16903

Whatley, Sarah. "Dance identity, authenticity and issues of interpretation with specific reference to the choreography of Siobhan Davies." *Dance Research.* 87-105, 2005

Yeoh, Francis. "The copyright implications of Beyoncé's choreographic 'borrowings'." *Choreographic Practices* 4, no. 1, 2013, 95-117

---

[i] Judson Dance Theatre were a group of dance artists working in New York in the 1960s and 70s who were instrumental in the development of western contemporary dance, including artists such as Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton, Deborah Hay and Lucinda Childs, amongst many more.

[ii] Sarah Whatley (2005) discusses this process in the work of UK choreographer Siobhan Davies.

[iii] For example, Helen Thomas (2000) discusses the restaging of early modern dance pioneer Doris Humphrey's work.

[iv] See Climenhaga (ed.) (2013) for an extensive overview of the development of tanztheater.

[v] See McFee (1992, 2011) and Pakes (2014), amongst others, for considerations of dance ontology.

[vi] In 2013 it was announced that Brown was to retire and that her company would commence a three-year tour, as well as establishing archival practices (Trisha Brown Company, n.d.).

[vii] The idea of a dance 'transmitter' is explored in depth by Gardner (2014).

[viii] Bench (2014) discusses this phenomenon in relation to Michal Jackson's *Thriller* (1983).

[ix] The notion of 'liveness' has been considered by Auslander (1999), Pavis,(1992) Phelan (1992) and Varney and Fensham (2000), amongst others.

<hr />

^x It is important to mention that between 2012 – 2015 De Keersmaeker collaborated with performance theorist Bojana Cvejić to publish three detailed 'scores', each of which document a total of seven works in great detail.