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Choreographing Histories: Critical Perspectives on Dance Histories in Nordic Dance Practices and Scholarship

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This text is based on a roundtable organised by the five authors at the 2022 NOFOD conference in Copenhagen. As scholars and practitioners invested in the research and teaching of dance history both inside and outside academia, we wanted to address the pressing issue of how 'history' is defined and positioned within Nordic dance scholarship and practices today. Dance, as we think of it and practise it in our everyday lives, is far more diverse than the so-called 'contemporary dance' that the white authors listed as scholars and practitioners in the conference call indicate.[1] For this roundtable, we wanted to show that dance theory and practice-led work in dance go far beyond the Eurocentric idea of contemporary dance present in the conference call, and to advocate for a more inclusive understanding of the practices of making or researching dance in the future.

Our work arises (1) from this broader understanding of dance in previous inter-Nordic research and education projects, such as the Dance in Nordic Spaces research project or the Nordic Master of Arts in Dance Studies programme, which treated different forms, traditions, and practices of dance as equally valuable and (2) from our cross-disciplinary, activist work conducted in resonance with the globally emerging domains of critical archival and critical heritage studies, in which we have focused on the precarious heritage of previously undervalued ways of dancing and people who have been entirely excluded from official (national) histories of dance. Consequently, our title shifts Susan Leigh Foster's 1995 book *Choreographing History* into the plural, indicating how, a quarter of a century later, we dance historians must question whose histories we tell, how, and for whom, as well as what kind of archives and documents these histories are based on and how they can be put in motion by our interpretative work.

Instead of a traditional academic article, the following can be considered an intervention, one in which we five authors address how dance lives and breathes in our practices and the connections between our dancing bodies and our scholarly, pedagogical and artistic endeavours. Specifically, we have been thinking of dance through the general shift in historiography from national narratives to a more comprehensive understanding of 'the Norden' as a shared geographic and historical location; as well as the shift from ethnonationalist histories towards a more inclusive understanding of locality (e.g., Vedel 2011). Addressing performance practices as inherently internationally interconnected, we ask what these intercultural discourses signify in the contexts of dance in 'the Norden'. In this way, we hope to emphasise that diversity is, indeed, a strength.

To briefly introduce our individual interests, Lena Hammergren has been working on archives of spectatorship, that is, the (historical) roles of the spectator as a constitutive part of (documenting) choreography. This is not just a theoretical interest but, rather, something that she finds crucial to

1 The names listed in the call were Susan Foster, André Lepecki, Andrew Hewitt, Mette Ingvartsen, William Forsythe, Steve Paxton, Bojana Cvejic, Ali B. Duffy and Alison Beaty. On the repercussions of such limited perspectives, see, e.g., Chatterjea 2020.

discuss with students in courses on historiographical methodology. To think of choreography as an extended concept, as we often do today, invites us to imagine what part spectators play in a performance, who they are, and also what we consider worth documenting and how spectatorship could be made part of an archive.

Elizabeth Svarstad is a dancer, choreographer, and researcher in the field of historical dance and dance history. She teaches at the Norwegian Academy of Music and at the Academy of Opera at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts. Her research in and on dance and social education in the eighteenth century has revealed the importance of dance in Norway at the time. She is concerned about a mistaken assumption that Norway has a short dance history and questions how this assumption can be changed when, for example, Norway's higher education institutions in dance have long ignored the teaching of historical dances.

Petri Hoppu focuses on the role of dance ethnography and social dance practice in historical research on Skolt Saami dance culture. He examines how local perspectives on past and present dancing can create possibilities for indigenous dissent and resistance. He is currently working to promote Skolt Saami dance culture with Skolt activists and scholars from the Giellagas Institute for Saami Studies at the University of Oulu. This work includes, for example, participation in organising a dancing exhibition with a theme of the Skolt quadrille at the Skolt Saami Museum Ä´vv in Neiden, Norway, and making archival material containing Skolts' dances available to them.

Astrid von Rosen conducts her research within a critical-heritage-studies context, a domain that seeks to unravel and shift the brutalities of dominant, white, Eurocentric history-making. She is currently engaged in combining dance practices with archival studies and digital methodologies to explore the life, work and legacy of black dance artist Claude Marchant (1919–2004). By doing so, her contribution rejects the historical exclusion of a major black artist who worked across continents and devoted over 30 years of his career to developing African-derived dance, showdance and dance theatre, in Gothenburg, Sweden.

Hanna Järvinen teaches at a department of artistic research, a field that very much struggles with its Eurocentric bias. Her work has focused on ideas of othering in art dance, specifically questions regarding the use of racist stereotypes or the construction of nationality on stage through costume and choreography. She is concerned with who get left out of hegemonic histories and why; how authorship or expertise are defined; and how colonialism, nationalism, gender and social class intersect in the various stagings of the past in the present and for the future.

Expanding Choreography? Theorising Spectatorship in Relation to Choreography and Historiography

Lena Hammergren

This presentation reflects on the kind of performance documentation scholars place in archives and what kind of dance histories the archives then support. It thereby adds to Hanna Järvinen's discussion, as described at the end of this article, regarding who is left out of history and what kind of documents are left behind, as well as to Astrid von Rosen's notion of transforming affect into substantial documentation.

Let me begin by posing a question: What if we would include spectatorship in the conceptualisation and archiving of 'choreography'? I ask this in relation to how dance communities today define the concept of an expanded choreography, that is, how 'the meaning of choreography has transformed from

referring to a set of protocols or tools used in order to produce something predetermined, i.e., a dance, to an open cluster of tools that can be used in a generic capacity for both analysis and production.' This is how the Expanded Choreography conference in Barcelona advertised itself in 2012. In addition, we encounter performances today, many of which include audience participation and other immersive activities. I would argue that they have situated spectators as embodied subjects, not as passive observers. However, this change of viewpoint has mostly disregarded the audience in terms of how the documentation of contemporary choreography enters the archive, as well as the domain of dance history. Thus, one could argue that the concept of choreography has not been expanded to the degree one might think given current discussions.

To reflect on the initial question, I must consider theorizations of spectatorship and the manner in which they have disrupted how we view what constitutes choreographies. Ramsay Burt (2009, 6) has argued that US dance scholarship (from the 1980s and 90s) has problematised normative assumptions about the way spectators perceive dance performances, which has, I would add, in turn, disrupted ideas about choreography as an autonomous entity. Note that this occurred before various dance communities began to discuss expanded choreography. The scholars Ann Daly (1987) and Brenda Dixon Gottschild (1996) have argued that female viewers and African-American audiences, respectively, are excluded from appreciating works by, for example, George Balanchine, because of the aesthetics of his choreographies.

It is not a question of not being able to appreciate particular dances because of their identitarian aspects but, rather, one of acknowledging the "way beholders use their embodied knowledge to process corporeal information as they watch dance" (Burt 2009, 4). Consequently, you are at fault if you consider choreography apart from its audiences or various contexts/cultural values, which interact with audience expectations. Thus, I could ask the following question: What kind of contextual information could be used to form an *integral* (not an additional) part of 'choreography'? The word 'context' is a bit tricky. When used by dance anthropologists, it is often conceived of as a stable concept, using which one can place dancing in ever-widening contextual horizons. Here, the different contexts are perceived as stable, although they are different from one another. Also, the work or the dancing itself remains static, with a stable interior.

In contrast, it is possible to conceive of context as a fluid, constantly changing concept, and Randy Martin (1998, 58) proposes that there is *no stability* between a dance's interiority and exteriority, that they are continuously interweaving. Based on this, Martin created a method he called 'overreading', a form of analysis that appropriates 'the internal movement of dance as an organizing principle in the conceptual ordering of context' (Martin 1998, 55 – in an analysis of Bill T. Jones's and Arnie Zane's *The Last Supper at Uncle Tom's Cabin/The Promised Land* from 1990).

Continuing from these perspectives, what can be said about the consequences of conceptualising 'choreography', dance history and the archive in relation to my initial question? I suggest considering ideas about fluid contexts and the meeting of the interior and exterior of a choreography and combining them with the proposal that we, as audience members, use our 'embodied knowledge to process corporeal information' (Burt 2009) as we watch a dance performance.

I will use a short example to explain this further, one situated in older dance history. In an earlier NOFOD presentation (Gothenburg, 2017), I analysed Swedish reviews of Isadora Duncan's performances in Stockholm in 1906. Instead of

repeating her canonical and 'universal' position in dance history, I read her dancing through the subtext of how it was encountered by her viewers. In short, I argued that, especially in female writings, an embodied viewing practice (i.e., the performance's exterior) could be seen, one that matched the performance's interior (Isadora's dancing), to use Martin's terminology. This leads me to question how one could conceive of this historical past. Should it be the imaginations of Duncan's dancing alone that define her choreography in the historical archive as a universal and pioneering work, or should it be placed in a geographical, locally positioned meeting point (in urban Sweden) between its interior and exterior–in my example, in its capacity to speak in a particular way to only female audiences?

Consequently, I argue that the approach we take will affect what we place in the archives today and how future dance histories will be narrated. In fact, I find several examples of work by dance scholars that, in different ways, approach the same or a similar topic. One example is Astrid von Rosen and her various projects on performing the archive of dance in Gothenburg. It is also addressed by Josefine Löfblad, a Swedish PhD candidate, who writes about Mette Ingvartsen's performances and how audiences have been invited to create a kind of collective body-archive (Löfblad 2018). Another example is practitioner-researcher Funmi Adewole Elliott (2020), who speaks about "choreography as a practice of cultural citizenship" and how dance comes into being in the public sphere (in an intimate connection with its audiences) when analysing work by Thomas 'Talawa' Prestø. Together, these scholars question the definitions of choreography in relation to contexts and audiences, and I see this as one step toward truly expanding the concept of choreography and asking ourselves how it can best be archived.

"Norway Has a Short Dance History"

Elizabeth Svarstad

It is a common assumption that Norway has a short dance history. This statement is used widely, without being contested or discussed.

As a teacher and dance artist in the field of historical dances and dance history, I have often encountered the statement. I have felt the need to prove and justify the value of early history in both higher education and the performing arts. Not only dance history but dance history in practice–the bodily experience of reconstructing dances based on historical sources–is undoubtedly valuable for dance students. Through knowing our history, we can understand why we are doing what we are doing as dance artists today. Therefore, the assumption that Norway has a short dance history can hamper students and artists attempting to explore and learn about our field's history. Why does the assumption that Norway has a short dance history seem to remain common?

A google search for 'Norwegian dance history' [norsk dansehistorie] leads to examples and statements like this: 'The history of professional dance in Norway is relatively short' (The Ministry of Culture and Equality, 2013), 'Norway is a young country with a short dance history' (Scenekunst.no 2014), 'Norway has a short "stage" or theatre dance history' (Arts Council Norway 2015) and 'The art of dance in Norway has a short history' (Danseinformasjonen and the CODA festival).

The statement seems to be based on the fact that the national ballet company in Norway was established as late as 1958 and, therefore, the history is short. Norway's neighbouring countries, Denmark and Sweden, have had national ballets and royal theatres since the eighteenth century. If a national ballet company should be the parameter that defines

a country's dance history and if the situation in Norway is compared to those of Denmark and Sweden, it is clear that Norway has a short dance history. However, following the theme of this article, it is high time this assumption and the way such assumptions continue to be expressed–especially the way our field is safeguarding its own history–be challenged.

It is difficult to pinpoint precisely how the assumption "Norway has a short dance history" became a common statement, and finding ways to change it is difficult.

The book *Historien om norsk ballett (The History of Norwegian Ballet)*, written in 1989 by Valdemar Hansteen, may have contributed to the assumption's establishment, or at least, it has not helped change it. He states, "we cannot discount that Norway has a less glorious ballet history than its neighbour countries Denmark and Sweden" (Hansteen 1989, 5). It is not my intention to reproach him for causing the assumption that Norway has a short history. After all, he points to the work of teachers and choreographers and the work that we do not see on stage but is necessary for the visual results presented on stage. He also mentions what he names 'the anonymous part of the tradition'–according to him, 'second-rate' dance, by which he means dance as a part of shows, theatre performances, operettas, and other types of entertainment.

Dance on rock carvings, dance in the middle ages, dance teachers in the eighteenth century and some itinerant dance troupes are also mentioned in the introduction as part of the early history of dance in Norway. Nevertheless, when Hansteen compares the history of ballet in Norway to those of Sweden and Denmark, he holds that Norway's 30 years of ballet history (as of 1989) is in an entirely different league.

Lena Hammergren points out, in her book, that it is interesting to see how dance historians have chosen to introduce and conclude their texts and what views on dance, culture and society are reflected in those choices (Hammergren 2009, 9). She also writes that it is interesting to see how obvious certain explanations for the origin of dance have been repeated in text after text. This is exactly what happened in Norway, thus showing a national example of the phenomenon.

There are few books on the early dance history of Norway. Of other books on dance history, Egil Bakka has written *Europeisk dansehistorie (European Dance History)*. In this thorough and excellent book, he includes information from the earliest traces of dance in history up to our modern day. Through the book, he provides a significant amount of information on popular dance and folk dance, alongside the social dance of the upper class and the impact of European dance in Norway. This book is the richest and most informative book on Norwegian dance history. However, it is written for the dance curriculum in Norwegian high schools, as is the case for Roy Lie Jonassen's *Dansens historie (The History of Dance)*, another book written especially for the high school curriculum. Therefore, it may not have the force needed to contest the established assumptions. Although we see new dance research uncovering more and more facts regarding the situation for dance in the eighteenth century, for example, there still is much work to be done.

Institutions in Norway should also take responsibility for how historical practices are maintained in their own activities, higher dance education, as well as the Opera and theatre institutions. We continually see examples in which the music, singing and text and, often, also period costumes in, for example, the works of Shakespeare or Handel, are performed in so-called historically informed practice. In contrast, the body and its movements and dance are detached from the setting and almost always presented without the slightest hint of knowledge about past movement practices.

In an interview published on the Danseinformasjonen website, journalist Thea Ericson Aarnes (2022) asked what position historical dances have in the field of dance. One of the facts that was pointed out is that, while music students in Oslo and elsewhere in Norway have lessons in baroque dance, dance students are no longer taught dances from early dance history. She points out that it is interesting to see how the field of music appreciates dance in education, while paradoxically, it appears as if the field of dance is undermining its own past, which is interesting and sad at the same time.

How can we hope for the assumption to change? More research must be done, and the field must take collective responsibility for strengthening and acknowledging history and, likewise, refer to, use and increase respect for events and activities related to dance, beyond highlighting institutions such as the national ballet companies.

Skolt Saami Dance and Scholars' Role

Petri Hoppu

Nordic national dance narratives leave Saami[1] groups almost totally beyond their scope. Typically, it is stated that the Saami do not have any dance history of their own (e.g., Bergholm 1977, 26). Skolts' dances have been admitted to be an exception to the dominant narrative, but even their dance culture has been ignored.

Skolts are one of the three Saami groups in Finland. Since the second half of the nineteenth century, they have danced popular couple and group dances, mainly of Russian origin, as an essential part of their culture. Traditionally danced by four couples in a square, the quadrille is the best-known of the Skolts' dances and was prevalent until the Second World War (Hoppu 2020, 29–30).

Skolts' cultural and social reality changed gradually throughout the nineteenth century, when the surrounding colonial powers, Sweden, Norway, and Russia, began to draw and close their borders in Sápmi, the land of the Saami. Skolts' territories were among those that hit the hardest (Linkola and Sammallahti 1995, 48–51.) In 1920, the border between recently independent Finland and Soviet Russia was drawn as a straight line through the Skolts' homeland, and half of them came under Finnish jurisdiction, in the Pechenga region, and the other half came under Soviet rule (Lehtola 2002, 66). Finally, as a part of the peace treaty between the Soviet Union and Finland after the Second World War, the Pechenga Skolts were evacuated to the west and settled in the eastern parts of the municipality of Inari, in Finland (Lehtola 2004, 44–62).

After the war, the Skolts' dance culture faded because they did not want to stand out from other ethnic groups in their new places of residence. However, as a part of the Saami cultural renaissance that began in the late 1960s, they started to revitalise their dances (Hoppu 2020, 32–33). Two performing dance groups emerged in the 1970s, and initially, most of their dancers had been born in Pechenga, so they knew the dances since their early childhoods (Rausmaa 1978/1979).

The biggest questions, in the 1970s and today, concern the struggle for survival: How can the Skolts avoid complete assimilation into the dominant Finnish culture? How can such a small but distinct ethnic group survive in modern society? What is Finnish scholars' role in this development?

1 There are several options for the spelling of the word Saami in Saami languages. The Giellagas Institute for Saami Language and Cultural Studies recommends "Saami" in English because this spelling is considered neutral, that is, not emphasising any particular language.

For researchers of Saami culture, it is extremely important to be aware of the biases that emerge from one's background if one is a member of the dominant culture. Michael Hart (2010, 5–11), a Cree nation scholar and indigenous rights advocate, points out the states dominating indigenous peoples' territories inevitably destabilise their worldview, for example, through research and education. To counter this development, he maintains that it is necessary to integrate the indigenous perspective into research, recognizing local values and aspirations, and to secure real opportunities for participation and influence among the members of such communities. Researchers Lydia Heikkilä and Tuuli Miettunen (2016), from the University of Lapland, emphasise that the Saami have the right to influence the production of information about themselves and their public image. Saami research is never neutral, but it has consequences for the Saami people, and these must always be taken into account.

Regarding the survival of Skolt Saami dances and the research related to it, I will turn to Guillermo Bonfil Batalla's (1996) ideas about how Mesoamerican culture has survived. He refers to three modes of struggle in Mexico. The first of these modes is resistance, in which the subaltern aim to preserve one's own decision-making capacity and cultural patrimony (Bonfil Batalla 1996, 132–135).

The resistance against the dominant culture has most clearly taken place in the form of prohibitions against the use of Skolts' documented folklore material that is preserved in the most prominent Finnish tradition archive in Helsinki. To explain the background of these prohibitions, I must clarify that, at the end of the 1970s, the Skolts' traditional dances were documented in detail by Finnish researchers. However, when the material was stored in the archive, it was stated that it was not allowed to be used for folklorist purposes. This prohibition still exists today. This ideological position was supported by many Skolts and Finnish scholars who feared that the cultural products of the Skolts would be abused by, for example, Finnish folklore groups. This had already happened in neopaganism at the time, so there were very concrete reasons for this fear. The resistance to outsiders using the Skolts' folklore material is still apparent today, though the essentialist stance has weakened significantly. Nevertheless, the Skolts still find it awkward that, for example, Finnish folklore groups with no Skolt members would perform the quadrille because the dance is seen as strongly connected to Skolt culture, especially when performed in Skolt costumes. (Hoppu 2020, 34–35.)

The second mode of struggle is the constant and selective appropriation of foreign cultural elements (Bonfil Batalla 1996, 135–137). The formation of folk dance groups in the 1970s was already a form of appropriation because the Skolts incorporated folklorist dance activities from the Finnish culture to revitalise their dances, whose original contexts had disappeared. At the end of the 1990s, children at the Sevettijärvi elementary school began learning the quadrille. Thus, despite once being the primary fortress of the dominant Finnish culture, the local school became a source of cultural learning for the Skolts. They could now use the educational system in a way they never had before. Moreover, the quadrille was one of the themes in the workshops held during the international Skolt Saami language and culture conference in Inari, in June 2012. During the last few years, the Skolt quadrille has been rehearsed in courses that the Skolts living in the capital region have arranged in Helsinki (Hoppu 2020, 35–38). Recently, activists have also published an instruction manual for the quadrille (Saxholm, Moshnikoff and Gauriloff, 2022).

The third mode, innovation, refers to creativity, which allows the forging of new elements and the modification of older ones, enabling subtle cultural adjustments to changes in the framework

of oppression and aggression within which the minorities live (Bonfil Batalla 1996, 138). Contemporary Skolts develop new hybrid forms of culture, fusing, for example, traditional forms of Skolt singing and rock music (Oksanen 2005). The quadrille is now danced in more versatile contexts, and it may be done in different compositions, for example, with two couples. Traditionally, the dance was accompanied by mouth organ or accordion. Today, however, accompaniment by bands with violins, electric guitars, and other instruments are common. Music and dance can be combined in forms that have never been seen and heard before.

Through the modes of resistance, appropriation, and innovation, local perspectives on past and present Skolts' dancing can create possibilities for indigenous dissent. Scholars from the majority culture can support this development, for example, by providing material with which to revive Skolt dance traditions. As a tiny community, the Skolts need support from Finnish scholars, but development must occur in terms of the Skolts' conditions. It is essential to let the formerly silenced voices of the Skolt Saami be heard in defining how to develop their dance culture. This can be achieved through a constant dialogue between the Skolts and scholars, recognising the Skolts and as the agents and experts in their dances.

Caring for Claude Marchant: Practising Black Dance History-Making in a Very White Context

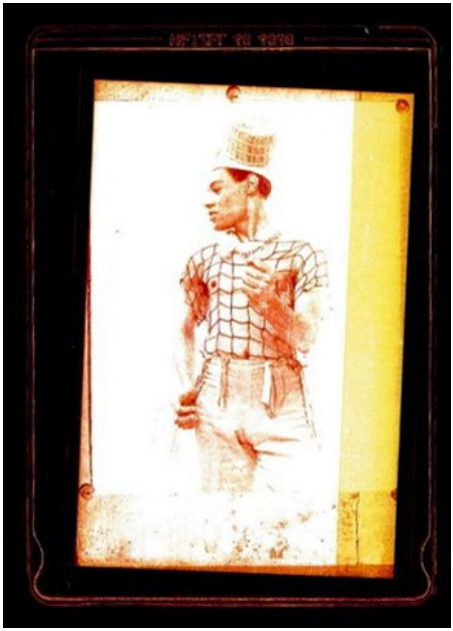
Astrid von Rosen

My contribution to this roundtable concerns activist ways of practising black dance history-making in an equally Swedish and international (e.g., cross-continental) context. Together with local (Gothenburg) practitioners, I have explored the life and legacy of international black dancer, choreographer, singer, actor and costume maker Claude Marchant (1919–2004). Addressing the critical historiographical issues brought forth by Hanna Järvinen in her section of this round table, Marchant exemplifies 'people and dances that have been *excluded from histories*' (For my previous scholarly publications on Marchant, please see von Rosen 2021b and 2022).

My research aims to reject the historical exclusion of a major black artist–one almost completely excluded from history–by posing asking how to best unravel and shift the lack of substantial black dance histories in our Nordic context and beyond. My contribution is both critically (in order to instigate change) potent and innovative in how it combines recent critical archival theory (Caswell and Cifor 2016; Gilliland, McKemmish and Lau 2017; von Rosen 2017a and b) and black dance history (Burt 2020; Clarke and Johnson 2006; DeFrantz 2002; Johnson 2016; Sharpe 2016) alongside participatory approaches (Findley 2017; Flinn 2011; Flinn and von Rosen 2023, Sexton 2015) to dance history making. Since 2013, my research has been engaged in developing activist and Dig Where You Stand (e.g., participatory history making from below) approaches to dance archives and archiving (von Rosen 2017a; von Rosen 2020b; von Rosen 2021a and b; von Rosen 2022).

An important method applied throughout the Marchant project has been to purposefully juxtapose his personal life stories, as well as the stories told and dances conducted by his dancers and other collaborators, with the results derived from in-depth archival explorations and scholarly analysis. This is what my research proposes: in including Marchant's own writings and the voices and movements of a selection of dancers and collaborators, the exploration becomes a critical montage that can set ethnonationalist and simply unfair dance heritage history in motion.

To provide an overview of the extensive, cross-continental research endeavour I am conducting, first, the research explores Marchant's path to dance



Practice example 1: Claude Marchant and the Canon. Dance artist Claude Marchant is featured in this experimental collage. Courtesy of the Claude Marchant Archive. © Bo Westerholm.

and early career in a poor, racist and homophobic United States. He danced with the legendary Katherine Dunham and starred on Broadway before touring South America, the Middle East and Europe with his own dance group and conducting cross-genre work in Italy. Second, I draw on international exploration to demonstrate the relevance of Marchant's work in Sweden from 1967 onwards. Marchant employed African-derived dance, political dance theatre and show dance to give dancers a career outside the elitist ballet world. Taken together, my research has an overall objective of making a significant contribution to the interconnected domain of globally oriented critical archival studies and performing arts historiography.

As space here is limited, in the following, I will contribute three examples from the frontiers of my networked research practice. Let us enter the archive and begin grappling with the canon in relation to the practices of black dance history-making.

Here, I present an image representing how the non-canonical history of the performing arts emerges from the archive, in this case the private archive of Claude Marchant and Bo Westerholm, Marchant's partner in life (see also von Rosen 2022, 132–134). While the image contains no date or other details explaining its context, it has a vibrant quality, featuring an artistic moment from Marchant's extensive career. If more closely examined, the image is clearly an experimental montage featuring a young Claude Marchant in warm red and brown hues, wearing a net top, trousers decorated with ribbons and a pill box hat. The background is very light, as if overexposed, and on the image sides, we see yellow and orange-brown sections, some heads of screws and an outline reminiscent of a slide. In particular, it is a type of image that falls outside of canon, an image that will not be selected for theatre exhibitions featuring predominantly white theatre histories. In other words, the image is layered with reasons for it being excluded from the canon. Tellingly, this image was rejected by the organisers of a talk on independent performing arts in a Swedish context. Instead, they wanted a picture featuring white actors from a canonised theatre group wearing pig masks and pink tutus (this is discussed more extensively in von Rosen 2022, 134–135). In an ongoing exhibition on the independent performing arts at a major museum, only one photo of Marchant (whose legacy and contribution to dance are huge) was included, without any additional information. Tellingly, the canonised, white theatre group was extensively featured in the marketing, as well as the exhibition space.

This example shows how the canon operates, or weaves its fabric, via the repetition of images (e.g., those of the white theatre group), that is, via aesthetics. How, then, can this thick fabric be cut up and rearranged in new, more just and more inclusive ways? I suggest that, by exploring the choice and circulation of images, we

Practiced example 2: Speculative Futures Seminar and workshop to activate Claude Marchant's archive, November 12, 2019 at the University of Gothenburg. © Astrid von Rosen

can expose how the canon operates and pinpoint what scholars and other history makers can address when they want to change history. Now, I will move on to the second example from my networked, collaborative, practice-inclusive archival and activist research.

This colour photograph shows participants dancing during a research seminar and Dig Where You Stand/Dance Where You Dig archival activation workshop (this method is further described and analysed in von Rosen 2019b). These activities took place at the University of Gothenburg, on November 12, 2019, as part of an extensive celebration in memory of Claude Marchant (1919–2004). The scholarly seminar was led by me, and Bo Westerholm led the practice-based workshop, which was aimed at physically testing some of Marchant's dance movements. Old bodies, as archives, were activated, and dance knowledge, in various ways, was transmitted to new bodily archives (the bodies of the participants not previously acquainted with Marchant's dance).

On a large screen, a black-and-white photograph (see p. 41) was shown featuring Marchant and some of his first students at the Ballet Academy in Gothenburg. Marchant's frozen movement seen in the photograph, functioned as a source of inspiration for the workshop. As shown in the colour photograph, the participants engaged vividly in the bodily research activities.

What I want to suggest here is that the physical activation of movements in and beyond the black-and-white photograph in a very direct way opens up space for speculative futures regarding Marchant's legacy. Our actions demonstrated that it is possible to give space to people and dances excluded from mainstream performing arts history, such as Claude Marchant, including the thick fabric of African-derived dances, dance theatre, choreography for gymnastics, fashion and night club shows, disco competitions, singing, acting and people he worked with. As dance scholars and other engaged persons, we must also understand the value of Marchant's huge networks, friendships and many hours of teaching dance classes and making costumes. As space is very limited here, for more information and data on Marchant, please visit my Expansion and Diversity project's open access research database: https://expansion.dh.gu.se/organization/361 (accessed 2022-11-21).

The next colour photograph (see p. 42) shows

Claude Marchant and students in the Gothenburg Ballet Academy's dance studio, late 1960s. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Claude Marchant archive. © Bo Westerholm.

an outdoor Dig Where You Stand/Dance Where You Dig archival activation on the evening of November 12, 2019, in memory of Claude Marchant. We danced the conga in Kungsgatan Street, at number 15, where Balettakademin had its first studio, which was used from 1967 to 1968. The participating dance and research activists were as follows: Bo Westerholm, Barbro Carelius Hallgren, Pia Thörngren, Anita Synnestvedt, Marie Apelberg, Kristina Klausson, Mayvor Thorin, Ami Skånberg Dahlstedt, Gun Lund, Astrid von Rosen, Eleonore Lind and Eva Ingemarsson, who took the photograph and, therefore, is not visible among the conga dancers. These cross-border and collaborative participants represented Claude Marchant's family and colleagues, academic researchers and first- and second-generation students who danced for Claude Marchant.

Theoretically, this quotation from the critical archival research domain helps to sum up my scholarly stance, as practically demonstrated above: 'Radical empathy offers a way to engage with others' experiences that involves discarding the assumption that we share with them the same modal space of belonging in the world' (Caswell and Cifor 2016, 31). What emerged during the project of creating a history of Marchant can be understood as a 'network of care' (Dekker 2023; von Rosen 2020a; von Rosen 2019a). Such a network of care is fluid, as in moving and living, but quite sustainable. Within it, collaboration across time, place and practice, as in dance and academic research, can continue to craft powerful histories beyond the canon.

While the 'network of care' only represents a sliver of all the theory invested in my project, I believe that the concept manages to sum up what is at stake as we strive to forge a new dance history path involving very diverse practices and heritages. For those directly involved in canon critique and research, my goal is to work together in a network, keep digging, keep transforming affect into substantial data, and keep making the findings publicly accessible. My experience is that the digital realm is useful because it facilitates this process to a great degree. I argue that every research-based dataset, no matter how tiny, that

Practiced example 3. Archival activism Dance activation of Claude Marchant's archive by way of a Conga at Kungsgatan, in Gothenburg, November 12, 2019. © Eva Ingemarsson.

is added to a relational, open access, post-custodial database contributes to an apparatus that, now and for future stakeholders, will help challenge the canon. To accomplish the desired change, I believe we have to deliberately explore dance that has not been archived in major institutions. We must care about archival fragments, archival mess, and all sorts of bodies as archives. To have an inclusive dance history, we must make a firm and brave decision not to begin with the safe and familiar, namely canonised white theatre groups that are loved by the media, audience members with strong voices, and archival institutions that willingly care for their own legacies.

My research represents the first comprehensive study of Marchant encompassing his entire cross-continental career and lasting relevance. I demonstrate that, by choosing the relatively unknown but nevertheless major dance artist Marchant as an exemplary case study, a new performing arts history for a globalizing world emerges, one capable of unravelling and changing increasingly irrelevant white, Eurocentric dance and cultural heritage narratives. I argue for the crucial importance of understanding as many diverse aspects of Marchant's life and work as possible. Therefore, I strive to examine different kinds of dances and dancers, diverse practices of performance making, pedagogy, marketing, friendships, business relations, and funding.

To conclude, I find it urgent to problematise performing arts history's failure to include extensive, cross-continental–and always local–histories, such as Marchant's. A vital asset of my activist history-making practice is that it makes accessible unique archival materials and hitherto unpublished life stories pertaining to dance lives. This matters because it is evident that the voices and bodies of practitioners, such as Marchant himself, his students, and collaborators, have relatively low status in canonization processes. Now, let us move on to Hanna Järvinen, who will further explain why this roundtable is critical.

Histories of Exclusion and Inclusion

Hanna Järvinen

First, a simple recommendation not invented by me. In fact, I actually cannot remember where I first heard of it.

Instead of speaking of the dances of 'minorities' or 'the marginalised' or even the entire Global South, speak of people and dances that have been *excluded from histories*.

The difference is subtle but important. First, stressing that history is as it is written *separates the general pastness of the past from history*, which is a construct in the present narrating that past. By this, I mean that, as a historian, I know that even the most boringly conservative of archives contain materials that directly contradict textbook versions of history. Archives are full of surprising opinions, chance encounters, people and dances one has never heard of before. Any history is always *post factum*, created with 20/20 hindsight and never neutral.

Second, stressing exclusion points to how these histories are *quite deliberately* selective and always authored by certain interested parties – not always historians in the sense of the academic discipline but, for example, politicians, teachers and journalists. The people who are historically excluded are the *majority*, not the minority, of people. In dance, they are the *mainstream*, not the margin (e.g., Dodds 2011, especially 18–21; Chatterjea 2020, 1–23).

Thus, speaking of those people and dances that have been excluded from histories also draws attention to how history places value on and privileges only what, in the Global North, is labelled 'art' and, even within that, a tiny fraction of the people who created that art. My earlier research has focused on authorship and canonisation, the process by which only certain people and certain kinds of dances are elevated as having a particular kind of worth and value. Like histories, canons of art always seek to represent themselves as neutral and unchanging when, in fact, they are constantly renegotiated – the haroldblooms and jeffreyblacks of this world simply refuse to admit that this is the case. From the perspective of dancers, it is also notable that practitioners have relatively little say in who are selected as the canonical or vanguard artists; rather, canonisation is a complex networking process involving private money, funding bodies, relationships to critics and journalists and, importantly, scholars and historians (e.g., DeNora 1995, 4–8, 186–91; on dance, Dodds 2011, especially 18–21).

Those histories and canons, however, perpetuate themselves in various institutions, including dance festivals and universities. The Nordic countries are no exception in elevating the marginal few into dogma about the greatness of geniuses. Questioning local histories and canons, however, is fraught with tensions deriving from the distance between the local and the centre of whiteness (whether the festival circuit in Central Europe or Anglo-American dance literature), or when the local interpretation of a practice is quite different from how the audience of (privileged, white, Euro-American) connoisseurs 'reads' the dance in a theoretical framework for analysis or discourse that reflects only their connoisseur concerns (e.g., Mensah 2005; DeFrantz 2007). In other words, I am troubled by the hegemony of a tiny fraction of largely foreign pundits in 'Nordic' dance studies.

This concern is the more pressing with the internet and social media making all kinds of dances more available. Availability, however, does not translate to understanding, not of the complex histories and contexts of these dances nor of who can claim authority over these dances and why (e.g., Banerji & Mitra 2020). Taught in peer groups online, the new generation of dance makers is growing up with an unprecedented variety of values; they are

exposed to different aesthetics and ideas about what is desirable in dance. This shift should influence who and what institutions include: Who count as dancers? What kinds of bodies do we see dancing and teaching dance? What kinds of dances are 'art' dances, and who gets to decide where the borders of that category lie?

If dance is to have meaning, find new audiences and inspire new makers, we who seek to discuss dance must seriously rethink our histories and canons–who we remember, what names we repeat, and why those particular names are repeated and not others. In view of what dance is becoming, globally, the overwhelmingly white narratives of greatness are increasingly irrelevant to practice because they can no longer explain or analyse that practice in a meaningful way. Yes, it is typical of white people to claim expertise in whatever is not working within the white paradigm–this is the practical legacy of colonialism, after all. However, I claim that, increasingly, the new and interesting in art dance is not coming from the white institutions resisting change and that, as a consequence, expertise that is reliant on recounting the names of white predecessors in the narrow field of art dance is also going the way of the dodo. However, that is all right; that is even laudable. After all, is it not the point of all histories to stress change? It is not the point of all canons to praise the vanguard and new?

Conclusion

As noted, these five short texts all stem from a deep concern for diversity in what we understand as dance in the Nordic context. The presentations reflect our daily professional struggle to find alternative ways of responding to current concerns in teaching, researching and practicing dance histories. For us, history is very much present in dance practice, and we all argue for the importance of understanding different kinds of dances and dancers–not merely what is understood as 'art', let alone the 'vanguard' in dance. What kind of dance–and whose dancing–is deemed significant for future generations of dance makers and scholars alike is of increasing importance in a globalising world.

As historians, we are also concerned with documentation and archival practices and the uses to which these are put in choreographing dance histories. Dance is both indicative of and formative for broader trends in culture and society; how bodies, gender, social status, ethnic or political alliance, or aesthetic value come together in moving corporealities. Present-day practices directly result from past precedents and what of the past gets selected as worthy of retelling. We hope that our short presentations not only criticise what seems to us as excluded from the NOFOD discourse but highlight the richness of dance as a field and the many directions dance scholarship can take in the twenty-first century.

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