

## **Centre for Dance Research, University of Roehampton Research Seminars 2012/13**

### **Evoking the Natural in Dance** (performance and research seminar)

**Meytal Blanaru, Katja Nyqvist, Kirsty Alexander**

14 November 2012, 6pm

Solo work by two artists, Meytal Blanaru and Katja Nyqvist, with a panel discussion on 'evoking the natural in dance' led by Kirsty Alexander, Associate Editor of the Journal for Dance and Somatic Practices. Meytal Blanaru's work AURORA arose from the stories of wild children or 'Feral children' - children that spent the first few years of their life without human contact, that were either raised by animals or secluded by abusive parents. While dealing with this subject, Meytal began seeking alternative physical and performative states that led to the development of AURORA, a wild introverted lonely figure. Meytal Blanaru, an Israeli choreographer based in Brussels, worked as a dancer with Lisi Estaras/ Les ballets C de la B, Damien Jalet, Samuel Lefevre and more. UNDERFOOT is rooted in the embodied experiences of performer-choreographer Katja Nyqvist in relating imaginatively and boldly to the ground: as a surface of support, as a frame of composition, and as an animate and intimate presence. It draws on, challenges and becomes part of the extensive history of dance in relating to the ground, from early tribal dances to the choreography of Duncan, Wigman and Graham among others.

### **Soma-Science Scores and Choreographic Research** (performance and research seminar)

**Dr Carol Brown**, University of Roehampton

27 November 2012, 6pm

A reflection on the interactive performance REVOLVE (Body Festival 2011), this research seminar addresses the complexities of dramaturgies of art-science collaborations and the role of agency when spread across multiple collaborators.

### **Dancing Around the Issues: Prospects for an Empirically Grounded Philosophy of Dance**

**Dr David Davies**, McGill University

11 December 2012, 6 pm

To what extent can knowledge of empirical and theoretical progress in cognitive science further philosophical attempts to refine aesthetic theory and answer particular questions about the arts in general and dance in particular? I explore the potential and the limitations of 'experimental philosophy' in the philosophy of art/dance. I survey recent empirical work - much of it relating to so-called 'mirror-neurons' - which, it has been claimed, can make a significant contribution to our philosophical understanding of dance. I argue for a moderate pessimism concerning such claims. In the first place, scientific opinion is mixed at best as to the import of the empirical work cited. In the second place, even if the empirical work has the scientific import accorded to it by those who wish to bring it to bear on philosophical questions about dance, most of these questions have an irreducible normative dimension that can be engaged by appeal to empirical work only if the latter reveals as mistaken a presupposition upon which the philosophical discussion rests. This is not to say that normative philosophical

questions are to be addressed from the 'armchair' much derided by proponents of experimental philosophy, but that empirical input into the answering of such questions comes from greater attention to our artistic practices, and from attempting to bring such practices and their presumed goals into a rational equilibrium.

### **Giving up on practice-as-research**

**Dr Simon Ellis**, University of Roehampton

21 March 2013, 6pm

It has been just over six years since the end of Practice as Research in Performance (PARIP), the AHRB funded project at the University of Bristol that was instrumental in bringing to attention the possibilities and problems of practice-as-research. What has changed in practice-as-research since then? What questions remain the same? And is practice-as-research more than an excuse for artists to get a gig in a University? In this seminar I will draw on my experience 'performing' practice-as-research as an artist supported by the University, and as a reluctant academic testing the edges of how and what we might understand through and by practice.

### **Theater, Dance, Performance, and Time**

**Professor James Hamilton**, Professor of Philosophy, Kansas State University

29 April 2013, 4:30pm, Adam Room, Grove House. Booking required. Refreshments served. Co-hosted with the Centre for Performance and Creative Exchange, Roehampton

A central feature of any artistic performance – and most non-artistic performances as well – is that they have duration, they occur in time. This import of this simple fact for the study of the *reception* of the content of a theater or dance performance has not been well understood by philosophers or performance theorists and, in many cases, not even acknowledged. In this presentation, Hamilton suggests a way of taking the temporal dimensions of these forms into account in a plausible story about the acquisition of the contents of performances.

The key thing is to see that spectators do not just experience a performance in time but also reason about it in time. To account not only for spectators' experiences but also their reasoning, Hamilton makes two suggestions. The first is simply to treat spectators to these kinds of events as "learners" who are attempting to discern the causal structure that leads them to the experiences they have. And the second is to think of the mechanism by which that discernment is exercised, in time, as adequately modeled using Bayesian learning theory.

### **The Mature Performer** (performance and research seminar)

**Jennifer Jackson, Amy Howard, Sara Houston**

21 November 2012, 6pm

Does the dancing stop when the body ages? Ballet is closely associated with youthful beauty and as a means of achieving athletic virtuosity. How then does ballet offer creative provocation for the older dancer? How might 'mature' dance challenge the established dance aesthetic? 'Late Work', conceived and directed by Surrey Lecturer Jennifer Jackson, explores such questions through performance as research by older professional dancers with rich careers as dancers and choreographers with the Royal Ballet and Sadlers Wells Royal Ballet. 'Late Work' is a live music and dance event that interweaves set and improvised dances and discussion about aging and dance. Alongside a sharing of a community project led by Amy Howard, London Broncos Rugby League Dance Officer (Roehampton dance alumni), and a discussion and talk led by Dr. Sara Houston, this evening will engage the audience in questions about maturity, aging, beauty and dance.

### **Negro Spirituals (Tamaris)** (research seminar and performance)

**Dr Jean Johnson Jones**, University of Surrey

6 February 2013, 6pm

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## **Revaluing classical dance mentorship and the dialectical constitution of the student artist**

**Dr Christina Kostoula**, University of Roehampton

28 February 2013, 6pm

Dr Kostoula, a member of Roehampton Dance faculty, will present a paper based on her recent work with dancer/choreographer Mavin Khoo, currently on the Dance Faculty of the University of Malta.

## **Baroque dancing in search of choreo-musical relationships (research workshop)**

**Kimiko Okamoto**

18 March 2013, 6pm

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## **Culture, Gender, Identity**

**Anita Ratnam and Sheila Ghelani**

17 October 2012, 6pm

Roehampton Dance is excited to welcome Sheila Ghelani to talk about and show her work as a performance and interdisciplinary artist. This lecture demonstration is followed by a discussion with Dr Jennifer Parker-Starbuck (Senior Lecturer in the Drama Theatre and Performance department of Roehampton University) and Anita Ratnam, an internationally renowned bharatanatyam performer who weaves through the many disciplines of dance, theatre and feminist issues. Sheila Ghelani originally trained in dance before moving over into the world of Live Art/Performance. As an artist she makes work that manifests in a range of media (video, object, participatory event, performance). Her work addresses ideas that stem from notions of mixing or mixity (informed in part by her own experience of being mixed heritage). She is interested in the relationship between art and science with particular focus on hybridity, crossings, blood, skins, skinning, carefully controlled experiments, colour, genetics and love.

## **Reconstructing Rag Time Social Dancing**

**Dr Danielle Robinson**, Associate Professor of Dance, York University, Canada

11 October 2012, 6pm

Despite being one of the first modern dance forms, we know relatively little about ragtime dancing. The little we do know addresses only the codified and commodified dance practices of professional performers and their elite audiences. My project is to reconstruct the ragtime dancing of a wide range of cultures and classes--to ask ourselves how immigrants and migrants danced ragtime, for example. The goal is to maintain the diversity of ragtime dancing and recognize the opportunities for creative choice built within the practice, rather than homogenize primary sources into a single universal historical dance object called ragtime dance. By embracing the difference within dance forms, I argue dance researchers can better access the multiple meanings, pleasures, and intrinsic power of the dancing we study. Danielle Robinson (PhD in Dance History and Theory, University of California, Riverside) is an Associate Professor of Dance at York University in Toronto, Canada, where she is cross-appointed with the graduate programs in Theatre Studies and Communication and Culture. Her scholarly work on the intercultural movement of African Diasporic popular dance has been published in *Dance Theatre Journal* (UK), *Dance Research Journal* (USA), *Dance Chronicle* (USA), *Dance Research* (UK), and *Research in Dance Education* (UK). From 2011-2012 she was a Leverhulme Trust Visiting Fellow at the University of Chichester (UK).