

Redefining Artistic Methodologies – Movement Studies

How can aspiring artists be equipped to navigate the diverse challenges of the twenty-first-century dance industry? Challenges, that increasingly demand technical virtuosity and artistic versatility. The artistic versatility becoming a professional dancers movement identity, an autonomous approach that establishes the distinction between a step, and a step in movement, and where or how the movement can be transported through corporeal expression.

How can young dance artists develop such a movement identity in order for it to be viable for eclectic choreographies and a modern choreographer's approach? Modern choreographers of today each have their own artistic methodologies and tools to create and transfer concepts into performance material. Artistic methodology encompasses a constellation of possibilities that may serve as scores, poems, philosophy, images, manifestos, digital media, music, notation, songs, sounds, improvisation and many more. Each choreographer adopts their own methods based to their spheres of influence, personal experience and the factors that have shaped them into the artist they are at that given point in time. Artistic methodology is not just the process for an artistic or pedagogical project, but also a journey for both the choreographer and the dancers to connect, evolve and create with. In his book *The Pleasure in Drawing*, philosopher Jean Luc-Nancy describes in several ways about how one must look deeper into the layers of what may lie embedded, under or in between the traced lines and vivid colours in paintings and drawings. In fact, the image can undergo a significant transformation after one attempts to interpret its journey. (2013, p. 91). Nancy calls this "Purposiveness without Purpose" (2013, p.91). *Purposiveness* representing the journey (the choreographer's artistic methodology), and *purpose* representing the destination or aim.

Drawing wants to show the truth, not of what has appeared or its appearance but of the coming into appearance that subtends it and that "itself" does not appear or show itself. Thus, it is about showing *what* does not show itself. (p.92)

Every movement traced in choreography just like the lines in a drawing becomes a representation of a physical participation of emotions, ideas, desires and responses from both the choreographer's artistic methodologies and the dance artist's creative contribution. A journey that shapes both artists into creator and co-creator.

To explore the above questions further regarding the challenges aspiring young dancers may face, I will first step into the role of a choreographer. What are my artistic methodologies? How can these methods be transferred into a journey of creation. To create a conceptual dance piece, my artistic methodologies would involve using scores and images. The score could range from keywords and synonyms to researched information - images may differ between paintings, photos, drawings or digital media. To implement this artistic methodology, I would begin by initiating a brainstorming discussion with the dancers about the score. Then, I would guide them through structured improvisation tasks and short phrases, allowing them to experiment and connect emotionally and physically with the keywords. The improvisational tasks intend to be a journey of discovery and a tool to re-direct the dancer's motivation of movement and to reflect from the score through action. Such methodologies, however, require versatile artists with the capacity to adapt and explore with an open mind. This brings me back to the young aspiring dancer: how can they be prepared for such a complex and diversified process?

Key Methodologies for Movement and Identity Development

To prepare and enhance an aspiring artist's movement quality, versatility, and artistic identity, my research introduces three key artistic methodologies that combine modern dance concepts with historical movement analysis. These methodologies aim to deepen the dancer's understanding of movement, both physically and emotionally, and provide tools for creative exploration. The three main concepts are:

- Modern Dance Concepts
- Effort Factors (Laban Movement Analysis)
- The Delsarte System of Dramatic Expression

Modern Dance Concepts

I believe in the transformative power of vocabulary in understanding both the mechanics and aesthetics of movement. The language of modern dance offers valuable insight into physical responses and movement quality, making it a powerful tool to integrate into creative processes. By engaging with this language, dancers can gain a clearer understanding of the nuanced relationship between technique and artistic expression, unlocking new ways of approaching movement. Inspired by Anna

Paskevka's publication *Ballet Beyond Tradition* (Routledge, 20015), the first artistic methodology concentrates predominately on implementing definitions and notions that lie behind the terminology of modern dance concepts. Such concepts from Paskevka include *weight, suspension, fall, recovery, succession, and release*. These concepts serve as the foundation for building a more conscious and intentional approach to movement.

However, rather than adhering strictly to their traditional definitions, I aim to reshape and expand these concepts, allowing them to evolve into a broader array of keywords that dancers can experiment with. By altering and reinterpreting these terms, dancers are encouraged to shift their focus, exploring how each concept can be applied in different contexts and with varying physical qualities. This approach enhances the expressive quality of their movement, encouraging the dancers to approach each phrase with greater awareness and creativity. Through this process, the vocabulary of modern dance serves as a powerful tool for altering perspective, enabling dancers to redefine their connection to movement and fully unlock its potential.

Effort Factors (Laban Movement Analysis)

To reinforce the modern dance concepts, I will also incorporate Laban Movement Analysis' Effort Factors, Space, Weight, Time and Flow. Inspired from Cecily Dell's publication '*A Primer for Movement description using effort-shape and supplementary concepts*' (Dance Notation Bureau, Inc, 1970), these Effort Factors and their elements provide a detailed framework for analyzing spatial pathways, explore strong and light weight efforts, play with a movement's dynamic potentials, and explore movements that are bound or free.

To translate these theoretical concepts into tangible, corporeal exploration, the Effort Factors will be integrated into structured improvisational tasks. Through these tasks, dancers will experiment with different qualities of movement and explore how the Effort Factors influence their expression. These principles will also be implemented into the layers of choreography, helping dancers to not only refine their technical skills but also deepen their understanding of movement dynamics and emotional expression. By engaging with these Effort Factors, dancers will develop a heightened awareness of how internal choices shape external movement, ultimately enhancing their versatility and creativity within both improvisation and choreographed work.

The Delsarte System of Dramatic Expression

In contrast to the first and second artistic methodologies where the primary focus concentrates solely on the physical efforts and notions of movement, the third artistic methodology explores how the inner emotions of the mind correspond to the external expression of the body. Inspired by Genevieve Stebbin's nineteenth-century publication *Delsarte System of Dramatic Expression* (Edgar S. Werner, 1886), this historical and systematic method, created by François Delsarte, is grounded in the principle of the law of correspondence. According to this principle, every facial expression, gesture, and posture of the body is a direct outward manifestation of an inner emotion or state of mind. Delsarte's approach suggests:

Every expression of the face, every gesture, every posture of the body corresponds to, or is but the outward expression of, an inner emotion or condition of the mind, be it one of beauty or one of ugliness (Warman, 1892, p.23).

To apply Delsarte's principles alongside Stebbins' theories, this artistic methodology will be adapted into a workshop-based class that allows dancers to explore and internalize the connection between emotional expression and physical movement. The methodology will be integrated into structured improvisational tasks designed to encourage dancers to engage with and assimilate the emotional nuances of their movement. The focus will be on fostering a deeper awareness of how emotions manifest in the body, helping dancers develop the ability to consciously express internal states through gesture, posture, and facial expressions. By exploring these principles, dancers will gain a nuanced understanding of the symbiotic relationship between mind and body, enhancing both their technical and emotional range as performers.

In conclusion, these artistic methodologies aim to serve as a guiding tool for corporeal expression, fostering creative thinking and promoting autonomy within a movement phrase or choreography. They have the potential to help aspiring dancers to not only achieve versatility in their approach to diverse choreographic processes but also to discover and refine their unique dancer identity.

References:

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