Letter from the Incoming Editor

We, as ethnomusicologists, live at a juncture of scholarship that samples, borrows, absorbs, and morphs ideas and approaches from an interdisciplinary feast of scholarship. Yet we are still anchored by the notions of ethnography and musical, or at least sonic, practice as a somewhat defining tenet of our field. The next set of Student News issues will highlight those junctures, and note how “music” may be combined with other keywords in a variety of ways across disciplinary boundaries. This issue, “Music & Movement,” is the first in this series; the second will highlight “Music & Affect” in the Fall of 2019.

The idea behind this construct is simple: create a space in our publication for student contributors to discuss the ideas that, well, “move” them, and animate their theoretical engagements in their research. However, by creating sets of binaries (in which “music” is always considered separate from the other term) we also hope to highlight and question the liminal space between them. As Dr. Ruth Hellier-Tinoco notes in her response to our “Dear SEM” prompt (see page 1), “‘Music’ and ‘Dance’ seem to create a Great Divide that generates anxiety and trepidation, with an awkward ‘us and them’ mentality, and an uncertainty toward those who make crossings over regulated borders or who work without recognizing such borders.” This is a notable drawback of our approach through binaries; but it is one that can also be beautifully queried by our contributors through thoughtful engagement, as we see in this issue. I hope that the binary “opening gambit” for the next few issues is an instigator for conversation that transcends categorization and leads to the discussions that drive the next wave of research in our field.

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Letter from the Incoming Editor

This issue marks the beginning of my tenure as Editor of Student News, a position I am gratefully accepting as Davin Vidigal Rosenberg steps down after an editorial commitment of over two years. The depth of creativity, investment, and malleability that Davin has modeled over this period has been inspiring (and also impossibly unattainable)—but I know that he, and the other excellent previous editors of SN, will guide my approach throughout my term, either personally or through their example in our back catalog. Many thanks, Davin; and, may I live up to the task.

Eugenia Siegel Conte
University of California, Santa Barbara

SEM Student News Archives

Over the last eight years, we have touched on many topics, including sound and sensory studies, decolonization, the job market, health, diaspora, interdisciplinarity, funding, and more. You can check them all out by visiting semsn.com.

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Student Voices
Moving with the Ears, Listening with the Body

A Student Union Column by Kevin Sliwoski (University of California, Riverside), with contributors Andrea Decker and Jessica Margarita Gutierrez Masini (University of California, Riverside)

I am fortunate to attend a university that has robust ethnomusicology and dance programs. University of California, Riverside’s Department of Dance—which features the popular PhD in critical dance studies—is intellectually close to the Department of Music (and a short walk away), and music graduate students attend dance seminars and vice versa. This cross-pollination often produces dynamic conversations, new perspectives and methodologies, and challenges to students across the arts at UCR. The critical dance studies program at UCR was one of the first of its kind in the United States, and this year celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary. The program emphasizes a blend of scholarship and performance, and students write, research, present, and perform. In this column, you will hear from Andrea Decker and Jessica Margarita Gutierrez Masini, two music graduate students at UCR, who address dance and movement in their research and fieldwork, and who have also attended and benefitted from some of the university’s dance-focused seminars. Andrea and Jessica demonstrate the kind of intellectual and methodological diversity an ethnomusicologist’s toolkit might include.

This section of Student News is administered by the SEM Student Union; as outgoing vice-chair I encourage graduate students to apply for positions opening up in the coming months (especially Chair and Vice-Chair).

ANDREA DECKER (University of California, Riverside)

I took a dance studies seminar at UCR for a different perspective of gender, the body, and dance, issues I address in my research on dangdut in Indonesia. I benefited from the seminar beyond its immediate impact on my research. Dance studies matters to ethnomusicologists because it directs our attention to the body—the physical, human body—and theory surrounding it. I found taking a course in dance studies useful for two main reasons. First, much of the scholarship applies to ethnomusicology, since most ethnomusicologists also deal with the body, performance, and related social issues, as is clear from the focus of this issue of SEM Student News. Critical Dance studies is especially useful if your research dovetails with gender issues, as it has systematically dealt with questions of gender performance in ways that ethnomusicology has only done unevenly.

Beyond the work of scholars like Susan Leigh Foster (1986, 1998, 2011) and Marta Savigliano (1995, 2003), whose work is relatively known among ethnomusicologists, lies a plethora of work related to the body, movement, choreography, gender, and race. David Gere’s “29 Effeminate Gestures: Choreographer Joe Goode and the Heroism of Effeminacy” (2001) and Ananya Chatterjea’s “Subversive Dancing: The Interventions in Jawole Willa Jo Zollar’s Batty Moves,” (2003) are two articles that I still use and cite today. While they addressed choreographed dance works from a performance studies perspective, these articles inform my ethnographic work because they lend a vocabulary and framework for writing about gendered bodies continued on next page . . .
in motion. Like ethnomusicologists, who must attempt to use language to describe sound, scholars in dance studies describe movement, motion, and bodily sensation. They also trace histories of physical postures and movements, as Chatterjea does with hip hyperextension and the fascination of nineteenth-century European men with the bodies of women brought from Africa.

Taking the seminar also provided opportunities to cross disciplinary boundaries. I found that among my dance studies classmates, most took the idea that bodies can pass knowledge kinesthetically—even over generations and without training—as given, an idea that is still relatively new and contested in ethnomusicology (see Hahn [2007] for one notable example). On the other hand, I brought to the table a more critical ear toward the sound that moves bodies, as many of them struggled to write about music. My classmates and I exchanged and contested disciplinary ideas, histories, and assumptions; ethnomusicology draws more from anthropology and dance studies from performance studies. They pushed me to trust my own understanding and interpretation as an observer, and I encouraged them to question the broader circumstances of performance.

Although I understood the value of the course when I registered, before embarking on fieldwork I had yet to experience the value of the course through my own moving body. Ethnomusicologists often frame our research in terms of sound and sight. However, these descriptors are not sufficient for placing experience in the body. Our bodies do not only see and hear. They move. They move through space and they sense the other bodies around them. What ethnographer has not learned through body language that they have done something rude, that they must be quieter or louder, that their bodily practice is somehow disruptive to the bodies around them?

In my research, that meant going along with singers as they performed and learning, in front of audiences, how to behave and perform like them. I learned to think of the way singers carried themselves in everyday life as its own choreography, one that balanced gregariousness with protecting their reputations. Seeing onstage movement, whether it involves dance or not, as a kind of choreography can give insight into the social lives of performers. For example, I worked in a setting in which several women would be hired as singers for the same band, each singing two or three songs by themselves. When not performing music at the front of the stage, these women sat in a backstage area and performed physical reticence and guardedness. Hunched over their phones, they avoided appearing too eager to perform, demonstrating ikhlas, or sincere lack of attachment. When called upon to sing, they would look up as if surprised, put on

Figure 1. Singer Ratna Antika, Lumajang, East Java, August 2018.
their high heels, and slowly make their way to the stage, where suddenly their physical performance transformed to one of openness and affability. From this snapshot of movement opened a pathway for investigating singers’ values, how they understand their roles, and how they guard their reputations.

References


Jessica Margarita Gutierrez Masini (University of California, Riverside)

As an undergraduate student, I began volunteering at University of California powwows, which commonly featured Danza (an indigenous dance with origins in Mexico) as a dinner-break performance. I could not understand how this became common practice, since Danza’s only mention in the powwow literature was as an occasional Special, or dance category that is not part of the standard powwow exhibition dances. My own visceral reactions to hearing the huehuetl drumbeats and my growing interconnectedness to these communities reveals that these two intersecting intercultural practices (Danza and powwow) had more to tell about understanding Native American indigeneity and relations to land (Gutierrez Masini 2018).

With so many scholars writing about culture, people, and bodies—including our own bodies interacting with the world around us—we should consider a holistic, perhaps more decolonized approach to ethnography. In other words, an approach that encompasses larger decolonized actions like social justice and coalition building, as well as, more personal and interpersonal approaches like unlearning, relearning, and healing. Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s (2012) *Decolonizing Methodologies* continues to be my research bible. While I am still appalled by the unethical and inhumane history of research on indigenous peoples, I use this knowledge to consider my position within a colonialist institution. For this reason, I engage myself as a collaborator and hope to use my power, privilege, and status to give voice to my communities. Ultimately, scholars need to consider decolonizing methodologies that are not only ethical and oriented toward social justice but act as bridging agents between theory and practice. In particular, I encourage understanding artistic practices, our personal lived experiences, and interconnected relations as theory. I practice this engaged, embodied, and decolonizing approach in my research and daily life.

. . . we should consider a holistic, perhaps more decolonized approach to ethnography . . . that encompasses larger decolonized actions like social justice and coalition building, as well as, more personal and interpersonal approaches like unlearning, relearning, and healing.

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I believe the best decolonizing strategy is compassionate listening. This makes learning slower, but over time, through a song, over an Indian taco, in the Native student lounge, or before Danza practice, I learn the heart of what is at stake in these communities. Listening deeply, listening widely, and listening personally affirms bodily wisdom and experience as a critical component of decolonizing methodologies, one that centers Indigenous knowledge and practice. By listening, I hear the decolonizing strategies and social justice present in Danza and powwows. I also consider how these intersections and narratives do or do not replicate structures of colonialism (knowingly or unknowingly). While the powwow space is intertribal and the incorporation of Danza hints at a shift towards Native American solidarity, there are still protective sentiments from the American Indian Movement that fail to recognize non-US Native peoples (thereby reinforcing colonialist sentiments and agendas). Navigating these contradictions has been confusing, fortunately through cultivated relations, I am able to ask and work through these questions with my friends and interlocutors. D. Soyini Madison (2005, 39–40) describes method as “a conscious enactment of learning from entering into an ethnographic domain of immense possibilities.” Now a danzante myself, I value this opportunity to let go of my researcher hat and just be in the field, letting the healing and restorative processes of dance and movement take effect.

What does it mean to “listen” with your whole body? Listening is not simply an isolated process that happens when sound waves reverberate through the ear and are interpreted by the brain. Listening is much more powerful. When creating ethnographies we should carve out time to pause and reflect on our own positionalities and worldviews that we bring into our ethnographies; we are not empty, objective, perfect beings in our own self-contained worlds (Csordas 1993; Taylor 2003; Cruz 2006; Skinner 2010; Belcourt 2017). This includes listening deeply to our spiritual, emotional, physical, and psychological thoughts and reactions, and framing them as embodied knowledge that can inform our research (Conquergood 1991; Sklar 2001; Facio and Lara 2014). Much like Deidre Sklar’s (2001, 2) approach, one should use bodily intelligence, “the ability to articulate isolated muscles, to discern the structural and dynamic patterns of performers’ movements, and to think/feel the relation between technical manipulation and somantic affect.” This qualitative movement analysis bridges the dancer (who

Figure 2. 4th Annual Mexica New Year Celebration hosted by our Danza group, Kalpulli Teuxihuitl, in Baldwin Park, CA. Photographed by Richard Buettner with permission on March 16, 2019.
learns via kinesthetic sensation) and the fieldworker (who learns via visual apprehension) and reveals that “ways of moving are ways of thinking” (4).

Danza grounds me and my chaotic life. Thinking about embodiment as a paradigm (i.e., methodological orientation), I have been writing sensually—mindfully and sensorily-engaged—about this time and space, particularly how it transforms and transcends our lives. Sometimes my thoughts and emotions come out in fragments, but the more I write, the more I capture this ephemeral experience as evidence of the powerful healing, decolonizing, learning, and celebrating efforts taking place in my local Native communities.

Through deep listening, I honor this time/space and respect those who have opened their minds and hearts to me practicing with them. Through feedback processes with my interviews, fieldnotes, and transcriptions, participants can intervene, reshare, or check in on my listening. I am forever indebted to these communities and take my responsibility seriously. What danzantes bring into Danza is what they get out of Danza. So, every Wednesday evening I enter ceremony with an open heart, mind, and spirit (sometimes tears), and give myself to this group, to this space, and thank the land, the elements, the stars, and our ancestors. This only scratches the surface, but I am still learning and listening . . .

References


Audiovisual Frames: INOUÏ

Le Patrimoine Musical des Nanterriens

By Diego Pani (Memorial University of Newfoundland)

Ethnomusicologists continuously engage with media production. Starting from recording music making, using audiovisual technologies pushes our field toward new narrative forms, where audio and video outputs integrate not only into writing but become the very core of research projects. This column provides a space for thinking on the politics of audiovisual representation in ethnomusicological research by exploring the work of researchers who seek to overcome the limits of written scholarly production via documentary filmmaking, photo reportage, audio recording, and online platforms.

INUÏ is an audiovisual web documentary project developed by the University of Paris Nanterre’s department of anthropology, within the master’s program in Ethnomusicology & Anthropology of Dance (EMAD). The name INOUÏ refers to the French word for “incredible,” “unheard-of,” or “amazing.” The project focuses on the musical and dance traditions of Nanterre, a Paris suburb of 90,000 individuals, and is the culmination of a wider project called Le Patrimoine Musical des Nanterriens. The latter explores the musical practices in and around Nanterre, in the immediate vicinity of the University. A small team of master’s students in EMAD began working on the project in 2010, guided by professor Nicolas Prévôt and trained by filmmaker Alexandre Leborgne. This web documentary aims to represent the diversity of the musical life of Nanterre through personal histories of musicians and dancers.

Le Patrimoine Musical des Nanterriens (“The Musical Heritage of Nanterre’s Inhabitants”) was initially inspired by the application of ethnomusicological techniques within the nearest cultural environments surrounding the University. Initiated in 2010, it is also a training program for the master’s students in EMAD that teaches essential skills in ethnographic writing, interviewing, archiving, recording, shooting and editing (Prévôt 2016:139).

The core of Le Patrimoine Musical des Nanterriens project is the web documentary INOUÏ, a French-language website that combines documentary video, photography, and texts and is based on an interactive authorial narrative. After a visual introduction, the user can start a sonic exploration of Nanterre (exploration sonore) on an interactive map (fig. 1).

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1 The project, developed as a collaboration between the University of Paris with Nanterre’s municipality (that offers the main funding for the web documentary), is supported by the Centre de Recherche en Ethnomusicologie (CREM-LESC CNRS) and the Société Française d’Ethnomusicologie (SFE).

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Each geographic area is related to a different musical route that identifies the area sonically and presents the profile of a musician, musical group, or community that lives there through photographs and short videos (fig. 2).

In realizing the project, a deeper research has concerned six musicians and dancers that are represented through video portraits (fig. 3). Each video-portrait starts and ends with a photograph of a musician at home surrounded by their musical instruments, recording or listening devices, records, etc. It depicts each musician’s “musical world” through an ethnographic methodology that uses objects to spark conversation with each interviewee.

For each video portrait, users can find other media elements related to additional video, musical performances, photography, informative texts about the history of a community, about organology and instrument construction, and so on. A side menu offers access to the additional content related to the biographies of the musicians involved and the project credits (fig. 4).

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INOUI represents a new hybrid media format that uses interactive online technologies to create non-linear web productions inside a compelling and unified product. Contemporary communicative technologies ushered in a phase of media hybridization: hypertexts, photographs, audio tracks, and videos can be put into communication with each other, recombining and generating new content. INOUI increases the value of each participating medium, offering new representations of musical repertoires, life histories, instruments, routes, and neighborhoods.

As cross-boundary ethnomusicology, INOUI provides a sonic cartography of the Nanterre suburb, a montage of discourses incorporating many voices and inviting multiple representations of the meanings of the project itself, directed by the viewer as they participate. INOUI aims to represent the musical life of Nanterre—its vitality, vibrancy, and intercultural diversity. The life histories of the musicians are animated inside the map. Producing an intercultural dialogue between the people of the area with the researchers and the musicians involved, INOUI demonstrates the musical complexity of the city.

In the digital age, the world of documentary film is no longer exclusively associated with the big screen or television. The internet offers fertile ground for a new type of documentary explicitly created for online consumption, allowing the hybridization of new technologies and enabling the birth of new formats. Online hypermedia offers links between various types of interactive multimedia, which allows room for new narratives driven by the user’s engagement with these materials. Through selective navigation of its content, the user directs a documentary’s narration, generating a personalized narrative of discovery and comprehension (Pink 2011).

References
Dr. Ruth Hellier-Tinoco  
(University of California, Santa Barbara)

For almost forty years, one of my framing attitudes to studying, performing and teaching Music and Dance has encompassed an embedded and embodied idea that these two seemingly innocuous five-letter words are—at best—decidedly vague due to the breadth of applications and—at worst—deeply divisive and problematic. Of course, all language is value-laden and all classifications are problematic. However, in the US academy, “Music” and “Dance” seem to create a Great Divide that generates anxiety and trepidation, with an awkward “us and them” mentality, and an uncertainty toward those who make crossings over regulated borders or who work without recognizing such borders. In my own experiences, after careers as a performing artist, high school teacher and arts facilitator, since (re)turning to academic institutions in the late 1990s, I have dealt with a plethora of occasions that have required me to explain to colleagues (and students) that my approaches do not fit with the model of “music” and “dance” as fundamentally different practices. As a broad alternative, I engage a more holistic set of approaches that focus on the features and elements of specific activities and processes in particular contexts. This involves understanding conventionally labeled music-making and dancing practices as necessarily and inherently implicating human bodies:

bodies involved with moving, sounding, vibrating, experiencing, interpreting, communicating, and representing (for example). To engage an explanatory notion from my recent work, I seek to interpret (“musicking-dancing”) bodies as palimpsests and as forms of embodied repertorial archives, containing multiple trans-temporal traces, remains and iterations through coexistence and entanglement (2019).

Returning specifically to the prompt, I suggest that the very notion of “the interrelationship between music-making and dancing” sets up a false binary through the implication of two sets of discrete practices: Music and Dance. These two five-letter words are not only divisive and unhelpful, but they are also profoundly misleading and deeply flawed as indicators of fields of embodied human experiences involving sounds, movements, waves, temporalities, rhythms and spatialities (to give labels to a few qualities). In recent years and in diverse contexts, there have been myriad productive and inclusive shifts that not only recognize the limitations of binaries, but also give value to plurality, multiplicity and ambiguity, generating fluidity and blurring boundaries. Perhaps it is time for more deliberate and active moves in our own practices, as teachers and students, to shift away from the binary—the interrelationship between this and that—towards fluidity, inclusivity, complexity and multiplicity. By focusing on components, characteristics and elements, and by engaging a non-binary approach,

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Dear SEM,  

perhaps we might move towards removing anxiety and judgement that come with disciplinary divisions and open up possibilities for richer understandings of diverse human practices not constrained by simplistic linguistic labels.

Reference


Drs. Esther Viola Kurtz (Washington University in St. Louis) & Elyse Carter Vosen (The College of St. Scholastica), Co-Chairs, SEM Dance, Movement & Gesture Section

Studying music-dance and sound-movement practices holistically poses numerous challenges. Some are disciplinary, as academic fields often specialize in one sensory mode over others, at the expense of a “holistic analytic and experiential perspective” (Hahn 2007, 2). For example, music studies privilege the auditory, dance studies the kinesthetic, art history the visual, and so on. We still struggle with inherited Cartesian concepts that locate thinking in our minds, not in our bodies, rendering sensory analysis seemingly inapplicable in many disciplines. Indeed, “the body,” “dance,” and “the senses” are often used as metaphors, with little attention paid to the sensing and feeling of actual bodies. Practical concerns also pertain. Describing sounds already takes so many words. Add to that thick descriptions of movement and sensation, and texts may become unwieldy. Yet, foregoing this breadth and depth risks producing only partial analyses that fail to evoke practitioners’ lived experience. In other words, at its most extreme, scholarship that isolates and prioritizes one sense over another may also reproduce (settler) colonial, racist and patriarchal regimes of knowledge.

This is why we argue that holistic approaches to sound-movement practices have the potential to decolonize knowledge. Engaging with moving, sounding, sensing bodies necessitates attending closely to their lived realities. Studying “bodies” therefore demands a rigorous approach to ethnographic ethics: grounding our analysis and theory in the embodied experiences of cultural consultants and co-performers, taking full account of the ways in which race, gender, sexuality, ability, and other factors impact how we all move and sound through the world.

How do we continue developing tools for sound-movement-body work?

First, many scholars have laid interdisciplinary groundwork for these inquiries, though some of their contributions may be underappreciated and underrepresented in curricula. These scholars and practitioners think across the fields of dance studies (Hanna 1979; Savigliano 1995; Desmond 1997), anthropology of the senses (Stoller 1989; Mendoza 2000, 2015), anthropology of the body and embodiment (Csordas 1993; Mascia-Lees 2011), sensory ethnography (Pink 2009), music cognition and psychology (Lesaffre, Maes, and Leman 2017), philosophy (Welsh-Asante 1994), choreomusicology (Damsholt 1999), sound and performance studies (Kapchan 2013, 2017), and more. Yet more work remains to be done. This is why we echo Imani Kai Johnson’s call to attend to “the simultaneity of sound and movement” and keep developing ways to translate it into text, or to “write the aural-kinesthetic” (Johnson 2012). To aid and stimulate this project, we have posted a collaborative bibliography first compiled by the Dance, Movement, and Gesture Section of SEM in 2013 (thank you Joanna Bosse!) and supplemented by the bibliography of the choreomusicology task force convened by Kendra Stepputat and Elina Seye for a special forthcoming issue of World of Music. The bibliography is now available here as an editable Google doc and we hope it will be widely shared, consulted, and expanded.

Second, given these diverse approaches and points of entry, we advocate creativity and flexibility, a willingness to move across disciplinary boundaries and follow the lead of artists and communities. Which bodily, sensory, theoretical, and conceptual factors do performers prioritize? Rather than seek a

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Dear SEM,

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single, static endpoint to this challenge, we encourage scholars to experiment with ideas, practices, and methods. What new perspectives may be revealed by incorporating movement and bodies into our work on music and sound (and vice versa)? As we expand our approaches, whose voices and ways of knowing will be amplified, and how? In what ways can attending to bodies and movement inform our course design, as we integrate theory and embodied learning? How can it inspire engaged, applied, or activist research, or public scholarship aimed at effecting change?

Finally, if you seek a community of scholars working on these issues, please consider joining the Dance, Movement, and Gesture Section at SEM and entering your paper for the Clara Henderson Award for students (deadline November 30, 2019). Through these efforts and suggestions, we aim to cultivate a diverse, intergenerational community of scholars and practitioners committed to integrating music and dance, movement and sound, in their research, teaching, and practice. We look forward to hearing from you.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments:

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References


At SEM Student News, we try to address the most pressing issues and diverse research fields for our student body and broader readership. Want to get advice and insight from our network of peers, colleagues, and mentors? Please email your questions to semstudentnews@gmail.com.
Methodological Considerations
For Choreomusicology Influenced by Music Cognition

By Caitlyn Trevor (The Ohio State University & The University of Zürich)

Choreomusicology, the study of the relationship between music and dance, is increasingly influenced by the field of music cognition, especially by work on music and motion (Jordan 2011; Veroli and Vinay 2017). Music and motion studies provide foundational theories on audiovisual perception that can inform choreomusicologists’ analyses (Jordan 2011). These studies also demonstrate scientific methodologies that can be altered and adapted for research on music and dance. Given this influence, it may be useful for students and emerging researchers in choreomusicology to learn about common methodological weaknesses to avoid. Here I will outline two consistent methodological obstacles in music and motion work, particularly in a music performance context. I will also walk through a methodology built to overcome these common issues and pitch possible future methodological directions for choreomusical work inspired by music cognition.

Two methodological issues persistently plague research on music and motion in performance. One is the presence of superficial visual elements (e.g., race, gender, or attractiveness) in experimental designs. These superficial elements have a well-established influence on the overall perception of a musical performance (Goldin and Rouse 2000; Howard 2012; Ryan and Costa-Giomi 2004). Therefore, it would be ideal to eliminate these from study designs to prevent them from clouding results. Another hurdle is separating music and motion into two distinct, alterable variables (e.g., being able to alter body movements without impacting the sound or being able to alter aspects of the music without changing the physical motions of the musician). Both of these issues often occur in studies using videos of musical performances. For example, in a study on the impact of visual elements on performance judgments, researchers used footage of different conductors dubbed over the same recording and found that participants rated the performance as more expressive when paired with more dramatic conducting (Morrison et al. 2009). While this study managed to separate visual and audio elements into separate variables, they were unable to erase superficial visual influences, potentially muddying their conclusions. Another study investigating the impact of visual and audio features in performance judgments asked participants to predict the winners, out of three finalists, of ten separate concerto competitions (Tsay 2013). Participants were exposed to recordings of the performances in three conditions: sound-only, video-only, and combined audio-visual. These separate conditions enabled the researchers to test the overall impact of visual information on performance evaluations. However, this study design does not allow for more specific questions on the cause-and-effect relationships because the variables themselves, visual and aural, cannot be individually manipulated (e.g., changing the facial expression of one of the performers would not be possible).

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Methodological Considerations

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While these two issues are common, there are ways to overcome them. For example, David Huron and I devised a new methodological approach with an aim to 1) eliminate all superficial visual elements that often have disproportionate influence on viewers, and 2) manipulate motion while keeping music constant (Trevor and Huron 2018). Our solution was to use motion capture and animation to create adjustable videos.

Why motion capture and animation? The beauty of capturing motion data and audio recordings is that it enables you to effectively distill performances into a more measurable set of variables of visual and aural data. In real-life experience, motion and music are inseparable. But for an experiment, this method allows the researcher to at least nominally separate them for design purposes. Of course, how one chooses to animate the motion capture data recalls the issue of superficial visual elements once again. In fact, this could be explored as another area of manipulation for a study design. However, in the spirit of our first design goal, we chose to use skeletal stick figures with no superficial visual characteristics. One of these animations is available in example 1 below.

Example 1. Clarinet excerpt.

Motion capture and animation also satisfied our second design goal since it allowed us to manipulate the motion of the performers separately from the corresponding audio recordings. In MotionBuilder, a motion capture data-editing software, it is possible to hand-edit motion-capture data without impacting the original timing of the recorded motions. This ability is demonstrated in example 2.

Example 2. Flute lyrical excerpt; hand editing augmentation and diminution of secondary motion.

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Methodological Considerations

In the video, the flute player bends her knees up and down during her performance. The experimenter then pauses the playback and is able to hand-edit the motion data by clicking on a spine marker and dragging it up or down to create a more or less pronounced knee bend. Remarkably, the software accommodates the alteration of the motion data while keeping the timing of the motions the same. Therefore, the altered motion data can still be layered with the original audio recording.

In addition to using motion capture and animation to accomplish our second design goal, we also use a method-of-adjustment study design. In this design type, participants are able to directly adjust a variable rather than being limited by a set of options. In our study, we used the gaming software Unity to present videos of musical performances in which participants were able to use a slider to adjust the overall magnitude of performer motion in real time. A video demonstrating the slider in action is in example 3.

This method-of-adjustment design allowed us to take our separated variables (music and motion) to the next level by making one of the variables, performer motion, a continuous data collection tool. Our data collection was thereby focused directly on preferred magnitudes of performer motion given exactly the same audio recording throughout.

Interestingly, this method-of-adjustment design also essentially “gamified” our experiment. Gamifying study designs is becoming a popular way to incorporate citizen science in behavioral research. Citizen science is the practice of using so-called citizen scientists, or volunteers, to collect data (Dickinson, Zuckerberg, and Bonter 2010; Silvertown 2009). Recently, researchers have been recruiting citizen scientists by presenting their studies as online games. These types of online citizen science studies are widely accessible and could potentially cross language, culture, and age boundaries to expand studies into different spheres. Additionally, online citizen science experiments can collect huge amounts of data at little cost. Motion capture, animation, and method-of-adjustment study designs are all potentially useful tools in creating online citizen science studies for researching music and dance.

Example 3. Cello lyrical excerpt; original, augmented, and diminished motions and slider demonstration.

These types of online citizen science studies are widely accessible and could potentially cross language, culture, and age boundaries to expand studies into different spheres.

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Methodological Considerations

Music and motion work can provide choreomusicologists with many powerful tools. However, it is important to be aware of potential methodological caveats before relying too much on these projects, and the strategies outlined above can be adapted and used for further choreomusicological projects. As motion capture technologies become more accessible, and software for editing motion capture data, animating, and creating games further develops, modes of scholarship may also change. Perhaps choreomusicology will gravitate toward using more of these technologies, gamified designs, and citizen science should its relationship with music cognition continue to deepen.

References

Flamenco Por La Vida

Based in Phoenix, Arizona, Flamenco Por La Vida’s mission is to build an understanding of and appreciation for flamenco in Arizona by presenting festivals and professional flamenco performances, engaging diverse communities, and offering classes to students of all ages, races, and economic backgrounds.

Learn more about Flamenco Por La Vida at [flamencoporalavida.com](http://flamencoporalavida.com) and [facebook.com/flamencoaz](http://facebook.com/flamencoaz).

You can hear and see them perform on KJZZ, Phoenix’s Tiny Desert Concert and every Saturday at Tablao Flamenco PHX at the [Crescent Ballroom](http://www.crescentballroom.com) in downtown Phoenix.

Angelina Ramirez (right), dancer, founder, and artistic director; and Olivia Rojas (left), singer, music director, and administrative manager. Image courtesy of FPLV.
In my study of somatic-based research practices I investigate how we can, through self-directed processes, attend to stimuli inside and outside our bodies as they shape us. In much of my movement-based research over the past fifteen years, I have used the concept of patterns to identify this information as a kind of pre-colonized way of knowing that affects the choreography of our actions. As an artist, I work with my body as it is, or rather, how it feels in the moment; and in performance I have likewise found that training movers in the sensual recognition of emerging patterns incites empathic engagement and agency in both audience and performer, providing tools for working toward social change.

Patterns, in the way I interrogate them here, are arrangements organized in a system, perceivable (but not always perceived) through time and space. They do not need to be regular; in other words, they need not be equivalent in shape, size, or ratio, nor do they need to be repeating. G. Evelyn Hutchinson (1953, 3–4) works through different “arrangements” found in ecological systems, defining a pattern as “the distribution of organisms in, or from, their interactions with, their environments,” and as “related to the arrangement of the inanimate world in which it developed.” While science often presents disordered systems as disorganized, “as opposed to placed in a particular order, such as that of a crystal lattice,” for Hutchinson, pattern never reaches equilibrium and yet still represents a kind of organization (2).

In Mind and Nature, anthropologist and systems-theorist Gregory Bateson (1979) describes the dynamic relationality of patterns:

We have been trained to think of patterns, with the exception of those of music, as fixed affairs. It is easier and lazier that way but, of course, all nonsense. In truth, the right way to begin to think about the pattern which connects is to think of it as primarily (whatever that means) as a dance of interacting parts and only secondarily pegged down by various sorts of physical limits and by those limits which organisms characteristically impose. (13)

In his introduction, Bateson focuses not only on articulating a multitude of patterns but also on their arrangement in accordance with (their) nature. This hones our ability to perceive the status of living and/or non-living co-conspirators in unintentional arrangements. Further, we must consider how tools and formal structures constitute intentional arrangements. Examining continuities from “intentional” to “unintentional” allows us to reflect on the relationships between our choices in our art practices and our environment.

**Intentional Arrangements**

Design, Hutchinson (1953, 3) writes, is “the structure which organisms may impose on material systems.” Likewise, design comprises “human artifacts of all sorts, including works of art,” and can reach equilibrium (i.e., maintain a stable position) when imposed by tools in systems.1

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1 Hutchinson (1953, 3) describes how designs (implemented by organisms with tools) can reach equilibrium, unlike their more amenable pattern cousins: “A sentence written with appropriate materials is still the same sentence . . . though the organization of the man that wrote it and the pattern of the community in which he lived, could not survive.”

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Composing with Living

Charles Seeger (1977, 19) proposes that communication is a “transmission of energy into form.” For Seeger, the “precepts to concrete experience” are media that communicate through the “tactile, auditory, and visual” (20). Furthermore, he suggests that, like language, these precepts (media) are constructed through socio-cultural tradition making.

For Hollis Taylor, a composer, musician, scholar, and zoologist who composes with birds, those conditions are not exclusive to humans. In her scholarship, Taylor (2013; 2016) advocates for the ability of birds (and other animals), to compose with intention, and using Wheeler’s biosemiotics, argues that “communication and semiosis are ‘synonymous with life’” (2016, 61).

Taylor asserts that not only are non-humans, in this case birds, capable of performance behavior (here singing and dancing), but also that our interpretation of this behavior is not so much anthropomorphizing—which suggests that animals cannot express without a human invention of the mind—as it is reading sign communication across species. Ethology, she states, is an entire field that studies animals’ ability to transmit and learn via cultures, systems, and practices (2013, 293). Taylor proposes that music and dance performance are a part of nature, in nonhuman species, and what we regard as “art” (music, dance, etc.) is perhaps another way of responding to the environment and community similar to what occurs among other species. Understanding this can change how we recognize our art-making and instigate a reconceptualization of how we move in the world.

In music, Taylor suggests, “animal sounds have the potential to illuminate more than perceptual principles—they could also lead to creative insights into creative practice” (298).

Unintentional Arrangements

Bateson (1979, 8) asks, “What is the pattern that connects all the living creatures?” Is pattern the way living creatures enact their living? He finds that, in the human entity, as in the animal, there are “corresponding sets of relations with corresponding parts.” These patterns, which he calls “correspondences” in the body, extend in a series:

The anatomy of the crab is repetitive and rhytmical. It is, like music, repetitive with modulation. Indeed, the direction from head toward tail corresponds to a sequence in time. (10)

We can see Bateson’s point reflected in Hutchinson’s (1953, 4) argument that structures of living things can be seen at “transition points” in their arrangements, as “the art of living consists fundamentally of just crystallizing or just going into solution at the right time and place.” Hutchinson suggests that living things are in a constant state of change because of their interrelation.

Interrelations

Environments shape bodies. This is true whether or not they are perceivable by human or non-human actors. Ethnomusicologist Bell Yung (1984), analyzing performance practice on the Chinese zither notes that although sometimes tones cannot be heard, the detail with which practitioners execute the “choreography” of the tableture is precise. Yung writes that, in practice, “while the tones might not be physically audible, they are nevertheless kinesthetically perceived, or imagined, through the hand movement and the tactile sense of the finger” (512). He argues that the consequence of

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Composing with Living

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tactile choreography is auditory, that “in any music, a tone makes musical or aural ‘sense’ in the context of tones that come before and after” (507), and that the performer, “whether consciously or not, experiences this pattern and rhythmic flow both kinesthetically and visually” (510). The space between the player and the zither, the string’s qualities and micro-relations, and the relationship between the players hands—the environment—all relate to the patterns that emerge. Furthermore, in both the player’s and the instrument’s reverberations, we see the reception of the patterns played. Using Yung’s framework, I could be described as playing my body without sound when I move.

A classic structure for an improvised dance class proves to be a useful example of how movers regularly work with the direct sources of their changing body and the environment. In a “come as you are” dance, a dancer tries on their body anew as part of their daily practice. An improviser moves from one section of the room to the other while they study their own body in the moment. Then, the mover may begin to move their focus of attention outward into the space of the room. They notice what they see, feel, hear, and attend to how this information might be affecting their movement and how their movement might affect their environment. The dance then comes from the ability to be receptive and—at least within Seeger’s (1977) framework—communicate. The materials at work, or tools (Hutchinson 1953), come from noticing a shifting self in conversation with the environment, both externally and internally.

In a sense, the line between intentional arrangements and unintentional arrangements becomes blurred—or in conversation—and the question becomes, am I just enacting my living? And if so, what does my living enact?

*Special thanks to Stephen Nachmanovitch, Henry Spiller, Alicia Puglionesi, and Joe Dumit.

References


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Even as I type these words, I find myself performing a little dance in my seat, shifting and bouncing, rocking my head in time to the voice that I can hear saying the things I am writing, a voice that does not seem to stand before them as their source, but to be sung out by them. The voice does not merely possess phonetic measure and pattern; it works to confer a dynamic shape on my whole body. (Connor 2000, 10)

When I am writing, be it for academic coursework, dissertation preparation, or for publication, I often find myself including substantial chunks of quoted text—a habit I have struggled to break. Perhaps I am convinced that, as Steven Connor puts it, the very act of writing in an individual voice “works to confer a dynamic shape on [the] body.” Connor singles out “voice” to understand the juncture between body and mind; and the ways in which the thoughts and feelings generated by the mind and body can be transferred through embodied movement in space. Though it may seem that I am using the words “body” and “mind” as a binary in this article, really this refers to movement, as Connor refers to voice, as a juncture between the external movement in space and internal workings of intellect, affect, and viscera. I am enthralled by the ways in which academic authors can transcend minutiae, cold fact, and bare description through frames of experience and observation that, in some way, infuse their rhythm, vocabulary, and phrasing with something that evokes a symmetrical reaction in me, their reader. As an unlocked bonus addendum to every campus writing center’s adage, “show, don’t tell,” these authors viscerally tow the reader through their, and their interlocutors’, thoughts and experiences.

My reticence to dislodge authors’ materials from their quotation marks may be due to my own embodied enjoyment of the writing process. Cadence and punctuation translate into lopsided rhythm. Pause for thought invites shifting posture and a newfound meditative stillness that pervades my body and soaks into the floor. And, when ideas come swiftly, unevenly, as they often do, the way in which my fingers strike the keyboard (aggressively, I am told) beats a tattoo commemorating the process. The physical pleasures of movement through creation, even when the created material is predominantly conceptual, is one of my favorite aspects of the process. I want to think that, embedded in all evocative authors’ prose, lies some aspect of their physical experience in writing it. And, by leaving their words intact, I am (perhaps a little preciously) affording it new varnished context, incorporated as bricolage in my own writing.

In some ways, this physical experience is gratifying in that it does translate thought into movement, providing a physical experience of the stuff of thoughts and words that actualizes the process of composition in a tangible way. On the other hand, the physical aspects, gestures, and movements of music-making make up a photographic negative image of this process. The physicality of “musicking” (Small 1998) is the originating source of sound, rather than the circumstantial byproduct of writing composition. The posture, breath, dexterity, percussion, all that is visceral about playing or singing—creating some form of controlled vibration—is as pleasurable as it is diagnostic for the player or singer. We feel, as well as hear, music. The process of responding physically to those “material vibrations” (Eidsheim 2015) uses the body as a diagnostic entity to curate musicking efforts, to shape embouchure or change hand position, to adjust breath, to play to the “nosebleed seats” or the “back row,” to whisper or shout as needed.

But further than simple physical engagement with our bodies and the sonic, there are numerous other planes of experience that inform how we move our bodies to create music. Insofar as the body itself contains overlapping and ever-shifting multitudes, the physicality of “musicking” is the originating source of sound, rather than the circumstantial byproduct of writing composition. The posture, breath, dexterity, percussion . . . is as pleasurable as it is diagnostic . . . .

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The physicality of “musicking” is the originating source of sound, rather than the circumstantial byproduct of writing composition. The posture, breath, dexterity, percussion . . . is as pleasurable as it is diagnostic . . . .
so does a body’s interaction with sound—which is informed by memory, emotion, intelligence, cultural understanding, as much or more than by physicalized sound waves—and how we understand and curate sound within space. These other dimensions can contribute as much, if not more, to our embodied experience of space and sound, and the ways in which we adjust to both.

I often think about how the body and the mind are mutually constitutive, and mutually reassuring, when I observe semi-professional and professional choirs in rehearsal, a key element of my fieldwork. When recently participating in a rehearsal with Voices21C, a social justice-focused choir based in Boston, I noticed that many of us were using our bodies emphatically as we worked through a particularly tricky new work. This rehearsal was solely focused on woodshedding through the piece, which incorporates unvoiced sibilance as well as layered, changeable rhythms and some difficult key shifts that lead to awkward tuning. Many of us were conducting small patterns to ourselves; or tapping toes; or bobbing-and-weaving our upper bodies with triplet rhythms; or emphasizing breath in pickup beats before a new phrase. As much as each of these movement cues were indicative of a group investment in helping others succeed musically—as these moves are visible to other singers, and therefore useful landmarks for anyone who had somehow strayed from the musical material in the score—these movements made our musicking emphatic and assertive, overly-alert, as we interpreted the written score as accurately and effectively as possible.

Though Voices21C does a great deal of choreography for performance, these small movements are just as memorable. They indicate some of the connections between what we physically spatialize and the inner machinations leading to, and supported by, that movement. Prior experience, affect, and diagnostic engagement combine in artistic creation, in part because of the process of moving in space. As much as we focus on the words we and our interlocutors use to speak (or write) about making music, the ways in which we move within that process, for a variety of purposes, lends new depth to observation and participation that can, perhaps, guide our thoughts and fingers to write evocatively about musicking from an embodied perspective.

References
Secret knowledge is always embodied knowledge. Lucian of Samosata, a Syrian writing in Greek during the Roman Empire, asserted that “not a single ancient mystery-cult can be found that is without dancing” (Lucian 1936, 229). As often as not, the idea of a secret dance inspires prurient interest among outsiders, as when King Pentheus hides in a tree to witness the Dionysian rites in The Bacchae. Much closer to home, a so-called “Secret Dance File,” written in 1921, claimed to contain the lascivious details of sacred Pueblo Indian dances and was used to spread lies and innuendo about Native American religious practices and ultimately to further restrict their political sovereignty (Wenger 2009, 140–59).

Spiritual movements of the twentieth century, especially those falling generally under the rubric of “New Age,” alternate between a rhetoric of knowledge democratization or dissemination—arguing that once-suppressed pagan rituals should be practiced openly—and one that values secrets for the preservation of old wisdom and group solidarity. One of the forerunners of the New Age was George Ivanovich Gurdjieff (1866?–1949), whose teachings, called “The Work” by his followers, melded a modern doctrine of self-realization with ideas resembling Sufism and Indian religion (fig. 1). Gurdjieff, too, embraced a dialectic of openness and secrecy, simultaneously making esoteric wisdom “of the East” available to educated, moneyed Europeans, while restricting public access to his group’s practices. Chief among these secret practices were the “Movements,” dances and exercises that, with rare exceptions, could be performed or observed only by initiates. Gurdjieff claimed to have learned them from secret societies who had preserved them for thousands of years. For decades, the Movements have been a source of fascination to outsiders, in large part due to their inaccessibility. Much existing work on the Movements, indeed, has been carried out by scholars who are also practitioners of the Gurdjieff Work (Azize 2012). A new archive in New York, however, makes publicly available for the first time a wealth of documentation on the Movements, promising secret wisdom, without, one hopes, the risk of King Pentheus’s tragic fate. In this article, then, I outline some of the challenges involved in the critical study of esoteric practices, while demonstrating how such research can add nuance to conventional histories of the New Age appropriation of world religion.

Little is known with certainty about Gurdjieff’s early life before he showed up in St. Petersburg in 1913 (Moore 1991). He presented himself as a man of mystery, entering occultist circles and acquiring a reputation as a formidable hypnotist (see P. D. Ouspensky’s bestseller In Search of the Miraculous [1949] for these early years). Escaping the Bolshevik Revolution with his followers, Gurdjieff moved first to Tbilisi, then Istanbul, and finally Paris. Along the way, he met Jeanne de Salzmann, a French-Swiss expatriate who had studied with the famous music educator Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, creator of a system of rhythmic and movement exercises he called Eurhythmics. The first public presentations of the Movements took place at the Tbilisi Opera House in 1919, on a double bill with de Salzmann’s Eurhythmics students. De Salzmann became one of Gurdjieff’s most devoted followers and fiercest defenders, taking over leadership of his group of followers in Paris after Gurdjieff’s death and driving the posthumous publication of his writings. In memoirs, members of the Paris group always recall de Salzmann as a diligent instructor, though she always insisted that it was Gurdjieff who created...
The Gurdjieff Movements

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the dances, without any input from her or ideas from Dalcroze. Nevertheless, scholars have pointed out striking similarities between the specific Dalcroze exercises and the Movements, arguing that Gurdjieff’s work should be considered not in relation to ancient rituals but in the modernist context of experiments in kinesthetics that were going on in literature and the performing arts at this time (Sirotkina and Smith 2017) (fig. 2).

The precise meaning and purpose of the Movements within the Gurdjieff work is a matter of endless debate. In several places, Gurdjieff suggests that the physical movements themselves operate as a kind of language, a code containing messages of ancient wisdom. Describing his never completed ballet, The Struggle of the Magicians, he explains: “In the strictly defined movements and combinations of the dancers, certain laws are visually reproduced which are intelligible to those who know them” (Ouspensky, 1949, 23). In a scene from the book and film Meetings with Remarkable Men, discussed below, members of an ancient monastery are trained in precise bodily positions which are combined in movements that can then be read “like books.” As Joseph Azize points out, however, Gurdjieff himself never explained how to “read” these movements, or even “what the alphabet and its language consisted in” (2012, 312).

As a result, much of the emphasis among Gurdjieff practitioners has been on the effect of the dances not on the observer, but on the practitioner herself. To this end, the Movements, with the challenging isolations of different body parts and requirements for precise coordination with fellow dancers, have the goal of interrupting the “mechanical” habits acquired in the course of modern life. The “harmonious development of man,” in Gurdjieff’s words, demands dance and movement as a way of “combining the mind and the feeling with movements of the body and manifesting them together” (1973, 182).

The archive donated by Dushka and Jessmin Howarth to the New York Public Library offers the possibility of answering many questions about the Movements. Jessmin Howarth was a professionally trained dancer and member of Gurdjieff’s Paris followers in the 1920s. Her daughter, Dushka, is frequently referred to as Gurdjieff’s child, though it is unclear whether he publicly acknowledged her as such. Mother and daughter saw it as their special duty to transmit and preserve knowledge of the Movements. To this end, they amassed thousands of pages of diagrams, photographs, descriptions, lists, and personal memoirs, attempting to document each

![Figure 2. Public presentation of the Movements at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, Paris, 1923. Reproduced in Gordon (1978).](image-url)

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The Gurdjieff Movements

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of the hundreds of Movements created by or attributed to Gurdjieff. In the process, they also indexed the conflicts and disagreements among the different branches of the Gurdjieff Work.

The archival material has already shed light on one of the most interesting pieces of art directly inspired by Gurdjieff: Peter Brook’s 1979 film, *Meetings with Remarkable Men.* An adaptation of Gurdjieff’s outlandish, picaresque autobiography of the same title (1964), the film contains the only sanctioned audiovisual presentation of the Movements (Cusack 2011). Brook sets the final ten minutes of the film in a distant monastery, where the young Gurdjieff witnesses five sacred dances, each of which corresponds to one of the Movements. Exactly which Movements they are, however, has been a matter of conjecture, since Brook and other insiders have been reticent to go into too much detail about how these dances came about (Brook 1998, 180). By comparing the dances in Brook’s film with diagrams, drawings, and piano scores of Gurdjieff and de Hartmann’s music, I have been able to confidently identify three of the five Movements, while further archival work would clarify the rest.

In the film, the Movements are presented like staged folklore, with the dancers dressed either in white linen tunics, Isadora Duncan-style, or wearing a turban or fez, to appear like a Sufi from Afghanistan or Anatolia. One dance, which corresponds to the Movement known in the archive variously as “Trembling Dervish” or “Warrior Dervish,” features a semicircle of men bouncing on their toes in rhythm and swiftly changing the position of their head, arms, and gaze every six beats (fig. 3). In the middle of the semicircle, a single figure with arms crossed also

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1 Owing to copyright restrictions and the early stage of this research, I am not including any images from the archive.
2 Osho, the charismatic and controversial religious leader who started the Rajneesh Movement and was the subject of the 2018 Netflix documentary *Wild Wild Country,* reportedly saw Brook’s film and decided to incorporate the Gurdjieff Movements into his followers’ practice ([https://www.oshonews.com/2011/01/23/gurdjieff-movements-ivank](https://www.oshonews.com/2011/01/23/gurdjieff-movements-ivank)). Many public workshops and performances of the Movements (derided by some Gurdjieffians as degraded versions of the teaching) are led by persons associated with Osho in one way or another.
3 The dance in question may be viewed [here](https://www.oshonews.com/2011/01/23/gurdjieff-movements-ivank), beginning at 2:58.

Figure 3. “Trembling Dervish” Movement. Screen shot from *Meetings with Remarkable Men* (1979).

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The Gurdjieff Movements

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bounces in place, slowly rotating in a full circle over the course of the dance. Partway through, another solo dancer emerges, hopping on one leg and freely flailing his arms and torso as he orbits around the central figure. Material in the Howarth archive not only helped me identify this dance; it also raised two particularly fascinating questions about the dance’s origin and meaning and Brook’s process of adaptation.

First, the archive suggests that this Movement was not originally all-male, as it appears in the film. In fact, the role of the figure who freely moves among the others was typically danced by women. (Jessmin Howarth, in a note, recalled her aversion to this role, as it made her feel like an “epileptic”). Is the gender exclusion in the film an effort on the part of Brook or de Salzmann—who consulted on the film—to make the dance more “authentic” by appealing to the notion of a Sufi brotherhood? Second, a note in the archive quotes J. G. Bennett, a renegade follower of Gurdjieff, who describes this Movement as being of “Shia origin” and the freely moving figures as representative of women mourning Hussein’s death at the Battle of Karbala. Whatever the truth-value of this claim of origin, the idea of lamentation is absent from the filmed dance, as is the direction (present in notes by Bennett and others) to recite “lā ʾilāha ʾillā llāh,” the Muslim testimony of faith, during the Movement. Brook’s film thus seems to toe a line between the presentation of cultural specificity and the claim to universal wisdom. Thus, items of dress like turbans or musical arrangements featuring instruments such as the ney and tombak are helpful for validating Gurdjieff’s travels and the authenticity of the cultures he drew from, even as reciting “There is no God but Allah” is too specific, a sectarian distraction from the doctrine that all religions are one.

The Gurdjieff Movements and the Howarth archive pose problems that seem particularly well suited to an ethnomusicology in dialogue with dance and religious studies. On the one hand, the archive offers outsiders ways to better understand a practice that was integral to a major twentieth-century spiritual movement and to evaluate some of the claims of cultural origin made by Gurdjieff practitioners. On the other hand, the Gurdjieff Work as a whole is not an ancient or extinct practice. There are still many groups worldwide for whom the prohibition on sharing the Movements is taken quite seriously, and ethnographic ethics would likely argue for respecting this wish for privacy. And yet, it is also possible to develop an argument in which the Gurdjieff Movements are part of larger historical processes of Orientalism and the mystification or objectification of non-Western cultures. Obfuscation of origin and appeals to underlying universal principles are classic tools for the erasure of local traditions and the co-opting of these traditions in projects of self-improvement or spiritual awakening for subjects of “modernity” (i.e., middle- and upper-class Europeans and North Americans). The Gurdjieff Movements, then, as a heterogeneous body of corporeal practices, inhabit interstitial zones between dance and ritual, therapy and indoctrination, transmission and invention, and warrant further investigation as a nexus of twentieth-century ideas regarding religion, the body, and the integration of the modern subject.

The Gurdjieff Movements, then, as a heterogeneous body of corporeal practices, inhabit interstitial zones between dance and ritual, therapy and indoctrination, transmission and invention, and warrant further investigation as a nexus of twentieth-century ideas regarding religion, the body, and the integration of the modern subject.

4 The music accompanying the Movements was originally written for piano by Gurdjieff in collaboration with his disciple, the Russian composer Thomas de Hartmann (Mangan 1996; de Hartmann 1964).

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The Gurdjieff Movements

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SEM Student Union Blog

The SEM Student Union (SU) is composed of the society’s student membership and serves as a resource and voice for students in the society. In this blog, we share our experiences of music, education, and life. Please join us and share your musical stories at semstudentunion.wordpress.com, and email us at semsublog@gmail.com.

The SU Blog also features a variety of series, including:

- Ethnomusicology and Parenthood
- In Discipline: Talks from the European Side
- From the Field
- Textbook Review
- Ethnomusicology Student Groups
In 2016, I received a Fulbright Award to study at the University of Roehampton London for a yearlong master’s degree with dance anthropologists Andrée Grau, Theresa Buckland, and Ann David. It was also during this time that I started to participate in circle dancing classes. When the Meher Baba Association (MBA) in London—a multicultural group of 350 local members including Parsi Indians, Indians, British Indians, British, Europeans, and Americans—was looking for an activity that would create a devotional atmosphere appropriate to their spiritually oriented community, I reached out to the Circle Dance committee and was invited to a meeting to convince the Board that circle dancing would fit the bill.

This meeting served as my introduction to devotional circle dancing at the MBA. At the meeting, Margarete, a long-time community member, advocated for circle dancing classes to be included in the upcoming season of events. I briefly described a form of circle dancing that I had experienced—Dances of Universal Peace (DUP), developed in San Francisco in the 1960s, which had a connection to Meher Baba, the silent Parsi Indian spiritual master (1894–1969), who had established a Sufi order there. Next, Kitty, another long-time community member, discussed a different style of circle dancing developed at Findhorn Ecovillage in Scotland in 1976, Sacred Circle Dancing (SCD). Like Margarete, she found the dances to be spiritually uplifting. Board member Arjun asked if these circle dances were like the ones he had recently seen on a trip to the Krishna temple in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, India, where, according to him, the gopis (devotees of Krishna) chanted and danced in circles ecstatically in the streets. I discovered, during my year of research in our transnational community, that there was quite a bit of difference between circle dances in the US and UK, not to mention those at the Krishna Temple in Mathura! These community dynamics would play an active role in shaping which circle dances worked best for the community’s devotional needs.

As anthropologist Vered Amit describes, the ethnographic field “must be laboriously constructed, prised apart from all the other possibilities for contextualisation to which its constituent relationships and connections could also be referred” (2000, 6). My field was no exception—my roles overlapped and shifted. At first, like the others, I was a student in a circle dancing class offered by the MBA. After a while, because I was a master’s candidate in dance anthropology, I was considered an “authority” on circle dancing by other participants. Later, when we decided to make our own circle dances to selected songs from the Meher Baba songbook with Margarete’s support, the group relied on my and my colleague Delia’s expertise in dance. We became the circle dancing choreographers and teachers. This role in particular added an unexpected level of complexity that destabilized my status as a participant observer. However, by carefully defining my role as a “facilitator” rather than an “expert-author” along the contemporary choreographic spectrum detailed by dance studies scholar Jo Butterworth (2009, 186–89), I directed our process away from being a sole expression of my or anyone else’s personal aesthetic. Rather than the classic, somewhat distanced participant observer, my role as choreographer/facilitator embedded me in the field, offering a means for “correspondence” through mutual creative action with my fieldwork cohort . . .
As choreographers/facilitators, Delia and I invited others to choreograph. Rather than invent movements, I borrowed from our circle dance teacher’s repertoire. I also incorporated ideas from others’ choreographic styles. As the project was in its early stages, I allowed myself to arrange dances that I found to be devotional as a starting point. I presented the dances as works-in-progress to be refined by the group in practice. Improvisation games as warm-ups reinforced the idea of play and the possibility of adding variations. After my initial studio session, I had a playlist of three Meher Baba-centered dances, plus the DUP “Hu Allah” to try out at our first session.

Music had been an important aspect of Meher Baba’s ministry (Kalchuri 1986). I canvassed members about their favorite Meher Baba songs and discussed them with MBA guitar player William, realizing live music would draw more people to participate. A singer and percussionist himself, he preferred devotional music like the Hindu bhajan and Urdu ghazal, as well as popular favorites like Cole Porter’s “Begin the Beguine.” After Meher Baba died, young hippies from America, Europe, and Australia, including Pete Townshend of The Who, flocked to his tomb near Ahmednagar, Maharashtra State, India, to offer songs of their own creation at arti (prayer time). These songs coalesced into a songbook of around 150 favorites. Their structures generally worked well with the SCD’s regular and repetitive choreographic patterns, but the chant-based music presented difficulties because rhythmic units were cumulative and improvisatory. Because of this, we could not simply repeat one basic choreographic pattern. However, it was our priority to include popular Indian chants (in Gujarati, Hindi, or Marathi, translated and screened for appropriate usage by group member Bal, originally from India) by creating modular groupings that were cued by musical changes. This solution demanded a level of attentiveness that led to heightened group focus. The chant-based songs also tended to be longer than those included in the songbook. We noticed that this focus and length “grows”—Margarete’s word—a devotional attitude. This modular dance with its mindful and durational aspects was our first success in articulating what felt devotional for the group.

Delia’s method was to find music that inspired her to move. She made a dance to an upbeat cross-cultural favorite that used the Hindi word for “thanks” and taught it in the style of expressive Modern dance, attaching a motivation to each movement. The first movement featured a quick dip of the knees and, according to Delia, represented obedience, an important devotional precept in Meher Baba’s spiritual lexicon. At first, I had trouble relating the movement to obedience until I associated it with bobbing an English curtsy. I noticed that Bal, originally from India, added a double bounce to these dips. I thought he might eventually copy Delia’s version, but was interested to note that he persisted with his own version of the movement. In circle dancing, unlike much virtuosic

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stage dancing, being “close enough” to accomplish the dance is standard practice. I enjoyed trying both variations—choosing which felt more devotional was up to me. This relaxed attitude towards precision in choreographed movement in circle dancing made experimentation possible.

Circle dances also allowed for multiple conceptions of devotional mood. Minta offered a dance she had made to calm down her children. The dance used an accented stepping pattern while chanting Meher Baba’s adage, “Don’t worry, be happy, I will help you” (used by Bobby McFerrin in his 1988 hit). As a therapeutic element, she had taught her children to change the speed and expression to match their mood—anxious or angry—in order to let off steam. Due to its simple repetitive nature, the Don’t Worry dance was easily mastered and could be done in a circle or line. The dance offered agency from within the dance to match timing with an emerging articulation of group mood, allowing dialogue about which tempo felt appropriately devotional. At the MBA Christmas party, as we snaked into the area where they were seated, the older chair-bound Parsi women Korshed and Shireen whistled and clapped. This energetic response upset some for whom devotional meant meditative. However, it also suggested that the dances might express and evoke differing devotional attitudes.

Over time, we developed tastes for different types of devotion, guided by each other’s contributions to the practice. At a celebration for Meher Baba’s birthday, during circle dancing, an older Sufi man taught his toddler grandson to clap to the rhythm, while younger Indian men joined in with infectious enthusiasm. Their energy transferred to all of us, travelling around the room and building as more people joined in. In this way, we learned to take advantage of each other’s habituations of devotion, ranging from contemplative to ebullient and fervid. As theorized by anthropologist Thomas Csordas after John Blacking (1977), we shared “somatic modes of attention[,] . . . culturally elaborated ways of attending to and with one’s body in surroundings that include the embodied presence of others” (Csordas 1993, 138). Theology scholar Rebecca Norris likens this attention to a kind of “bodily knowledge” shared through “sympathetic identification” rather than “external explanation” (2001, 115), often experienced in worship or dance practices (111). By sharing our tastes, we came to expand our palate of devotional dances.

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Making Room for Difference

Circle dancing’s acceptance of a multi-embodied approach adapted well to the MBA’s demographics and purposes. Through our sessions, we discovered specific elements that contributed to our various ideas of devotional atmosphere; besides a basic familiarity with the movements, these were focused attention, group rhythm, long duration, and tempo. As a result, I tuned my playlist to encourage the development of a devotional atmosphere and, as a group, we “developed a nose” for bringing it into being. Circle dances provided us with a petri dish for experimentation with devotional states and attitudes across the MBA’s dynamic population.

References


Hamill, Michelle, Lesley Smith, and Frank Röhricht. 2012. “‘Dancing Down Memory Lane’: Circle Dancing as a Psychotherapeutic Intervention in Dementia—a Pilot Study.” Dementia 11 (6): 709–24.


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The Importance of Dance at Kurdish New Year’s Celebrations

Challenging the Analytical Framework

By Jon Bullock (University of Chicago)

For most of the year, Chicago’s DanDana restaurant on North Kedzie Avenue is known for offering familiar Middle Eastern dishes in an energetic environment and hosting live music every Friday and Saturday night. On the night of March 26, 2017, just days after spring’s welcome arrival, members of Chicago’s Kurdish community gathered in DanDana to celebrate Newroz (the Kurdish New Year). They transformed the space into a distinctively Kurdish one, if only for one night. Visual markers of the restaurant’s transformation included a large Kurdish flag draped to one side of the stage, small triangular banners honoring the YPG and the YPJ (in Kurdish, People’s Protection Units and Women’s Protection Units, respectively, most widely known for fighting the Islamic State in northern Syria), and a large banner featuring the words “Newroz Pîroz Be” (“Happy New Year”). The event’s special guests included a Kurdish singer and saz performer flown in from Turkey, but the real highlight of the evening seemed to be the govend, the traditional Kurdish circle dance that continued for hours on end. As the dance unfolded in cyclical fashion, the dancers gradually increased their speed until finally, at fever pitch, they moved as fast as they dared, some shouting or waving Kurdish flags in the air while others recorded the dance on their cell phones. After the end of each cycle, the musicians played slower songs, allowing the dancers a much-needed break during which to eat, drink, and relax for just a few minutes before the cycle started again.

Given the historical importance of music and dance at celebrations of Newroz, we might understand these celebrations as a form of communal and temporal organization via ritual acts (Leach 1966, 46–47). Like the celebration of Christmas for the English inhabitants of Milton Keynes that Ruth Finnegan describes, Newroz has come to provide the opportunity for Kurdish communities to build a calendar of celebratory events around already-existing festivals (Finnegan 1989, 322). Furthermore, insofar as it highlights the mythic rebellion of the blacksmith, Kawa, against an evil tyrant who demanded the brains of local children, Newroz also reinforces important ideas surrounding the national origins of the Kurds and provides an interpretive framework for understanding the past with a view toward the future. Both myth and national origin seem particularly salient for community organization among diasporic Kurdish communities, whose members often hail from different regions of Kurdistan and speak different languages. In the 2017 celebration of Newroz

1 Although Newroz is the Kurdish variant of the holiday’s name, it is also known as Nowruz, particularly in Iran and among Iran’s global diaspora. Despite its apparent origins in Zoroastrian practice, the holiday itself is celebrated by various ethnic and religious groups stretching from the Balkans in the west to Central Asia in the east. As the rest of the article suggests, however, I focus my attention here on celebrations of Newroz insofar as they have come to play a particularly important symbolic (and often nationalist) role among various Kurdish communities.

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in Chicago, it was the govend that connected the diverse members of the crowd with one another—quite literally as they danced with joined pinkies (little fingers) and touched shoulders as the dance floor overflowed, but also figuratively as it framed the shared celebration of the Newroz myth and provided a sense of ebb and flow to the evening’s festivities.

In Kurdistan proper, there has been a large-scale revival (or reinvigoration) of Newroz celebrations among Kurdish populations since the 1970s. By and large, this resurgence seems to have resulted from local reactions
to state policies aimed at the cultural or political suppression of Kurds in various nation-states. In Turkey, for example, the celebration of Newroz has become an essential component of “Kurdish national liberation discourse,” and “the construction of the relations of difference” between Kurds and the broader Turkish majority has relied upon varying interpretations of the Newroz myth (Gunes 2012, 254). In the 1990s, the Turkish state decided to promote the celebration of Nevruz, imagined as a Turkic alternative to Newroz, “as a tool of social cohesion” (Yanık 2006, 285–86). In the most dramatic cases, reactions to this policy at celebrations of Newroz (rather than Nevruz) led to a series of widely publicized cases of protesters starving or burning themselves to death in protest against state policies (Gunes 2012, 260–61).

Given the differences in local politics from one Kurdish region to another, as well as differences regarding the use of the Newroz myth by both state and non-state actors, how might we begin to analyze the role of music and movement at Newroz celebrations? At first glance, the typical analytical frameworks utilized within choreomusicology seem ill-suited to such an endeavor, primarily since these frameworks most often seem to privilege particular kinds of staged performance. For example, dance scholar Stephanie Jordan (2011) decries the tendency of scholars to set up music and movement as a sort of binary; nevertheless, her analysis includes only staged examples such as choreographed works based on the music of Stravinsky or works by choreographer Mark Morris. Likewise, in “Current Trends in Contemporary Choreography: A Political Critique” (2013), Alexandra Kolb cites only examples of choreographed works drawn from Western theater. Limited examples and comparisons in both these works seem to be related to each author’s focus on particular choreomusical problems, whether the problem of how to understand and describe the relationship between music and movement (Jordan), or the problem of how to understand music and movement’s potential for challenging the status quo (Kolb).

While I am not suggesting that shifting our collective analytical focus to more popular or participatory dance forms such as govend would solve these problems, I do believe that such a shift has the potential to reorient the

![Figure 4](image-url) Throughout the evening, as the dance floor filled to overflowing, members of the govend formed concentric circles to accommodate everyone who wished to participate.

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The Importance of Dance at Kurdish New Year’s Celebrations

The performance of *govend* at Newroz celebrations seems to challenge each of these four characteristics in productive ways. For example, it would seem irresponsible to attempt an analysis of any single performance of the dance without acknowledging its association with reforms in practice and public discourse regarding the role of music and dance in Newroz celebrations over the past few decades. Such an analysis would also seem to render irrelevant ways in which celebrations of Newroz mark communal time, both in terms of its annual celebration, and in the ways in which the Newroz myth frames particular understandings of the Kurdish past, present, and future. Likewise, the shared tradition of particular dances within the broader genre renders authorship less important than in cases in which the choreographer is well-known. This, of course, does not imply that intentions or even movements themselves no longer matter, but rather that they are not the main focus at events where participation is more desirable than correct form. Third, the typical “audience” at *govend* performances during Newroz is constantly changing as performers join and leave the circle multiple times during any one

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The Importance of Dance at Kurdish New Year’s Celebrations

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set of songs. Finally, the performance of govend at Newroz celebrations demonstrates the “ambiguities of the choreographic identity” (Franko 2011, v), not only as Kurds celebrate particular identities during the dance, but also as some choose to leave these identities aside when the dance is over.

If a focus on dance as choreographed works of art has produced certain problems within choreomusicology, I have suggested here that reorienting the frame of analysis by turning toward studies of popular participatory dance forms such as govend may represent an important step toward the refinement of future analytical frameworks. After all, when dance is celebrated as a commemoration of the self-inflicted deaths of political prisoners (as in the case cited above), an insistence on music and movement as objects or units of analysis seems absurd in comparison with broader questions related to human rights, trauma, and collective memory. My point here, therefore, is that to separate music or dance from lived experience can be a dangerous pursuit, particularly in cases where dancers’ choice to participate means their very presence “becomes an act of resistance” (Karakeçili 2008, 32).

References

2 We might additionally understand the “audience” in the case of celebrations in 1990s Turkey to include local government agents who supervised Newroz celebrations from a distance. This practice reflects that, even after the softening of the Turkish government toward celebrations of Newroz, government officials maintained control over public celebrations in the southeast of the country through registration requirements and even through their own attendance. Each of these was enacted in varying configurations to ensure that Newroz celebrations did not turn into shows of support for Kurdish nationalist groups such as the PKK (Kurdistan Workers’ Party).

3 Several of my interlocutors in Chicago who moved to the U.S. from Turkish Kurdistan never learned the Kurdish language as children due to their parents’ fears of retaliation from local government agents. Instead, they chose to learn govend as adults as a way of reconnecting with their Kurdish roots, choosing dance rather than language as a way of expressing this identity.
Music and Movement
An Annotated Bibliography

By Wangcaixuan (Rosa) Zhang (University of Pittsburgh)

While music has been studied intellectually for a long period of time, performance, movement and dance did not capture intellectual interest until the 1980s. And it was only recently that ethnomusicologists joined this conversation. Instead of resulting in a more “holistic analytic and experiential perspective” (Hahn 2007, 2) to describe, understand, and interpret the embodied experience of music and dance, scholars, as pointed out Kurtz & Vosen as well as Hellier-Tinoco in the “Dear SEM” column of this issue, both dance studies and ethnomusicology tend to privilege one sense over another—aural over the kinetic, or vice versa—failing to capture lived experience and even running the risk of reiterating colonial and hegemonic views.

To redirect the field onto more multi-sensorial, intermedia and decolonial paths of scholarship, this list aims to provide a variety of work with these interdisciplinary intentions and approaches. Here I include general texts and collective writings which underscore interdisciplinary methods and theoretical framework; two ethnographies in ethnomusicology that carry out such methods and theories present the sensing and feeling of the musical and performance experience; and some recent works at intersections with studies of trauma, aging and cognitive science. By highlighting literature regarding movement in various disciplinary contexts, I hope this list will offer researchers who are interested in studying music and movement some places to begin their investigations.

You can find a complementary, more extensive resource list at semsn.com, including additional selected publications as well as online resources, and a separate online bibliography compiled by SEM DMG. If you have any additions to our resource lists or any suggestions for this column, please contact us!

Handbooks, General Texts, and Collective Writings

Gibbs, Raymond W. 2010. Embodiment and Cognitive Science. New York: Cambridge University Press. Written by Raymond Gibbs, Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Santa Cruz, this book discusses the relationship between people’s body and the fundamental development of human cognition and language. The author argues that cognition or cognitive systems, instead of being purely internal and disembodied, are developed and shaped by embodied action. Or in another word, embodied movement and performance serve as an essential resource for people’s understanding of abstract concepts. This book can provide grounding for scholars across disciplines who are interested in the topics relating to movement and cognition.

Jordan, Stephanie. 2011. “Choreomusical Conversations: Facing a Double Challenge.” Dance Research Journal 43 (1): 43–64. Jordan’s article lays a solid foundation for a critical discussion of future directions for choreomusical studies. Tracing the historical development of both music and dance studies, the author points out that both fields have a considerable body of work in analyzing specific structures pertaining to music as well as dance in specific cultural contexts. However, she notes, these two art forms have been treated separately. While music scholars have started moving away from the “purely musical” elements since 1980s, the separation between two disciplines is still prominent in terms of methodologies and theoretical perspectives. Through the presentation of her own work on Western theatre dance with the music of Igor Stravinsky and choreography by Mark Morris, the author showcases an example of intermedia research by analyzing and comparing rhythmic patterns in both art forms. This article presents a reflection on both music and dance research and paves ways for intermedia and choreomusical work in future scholarship.


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Music and Movement

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array of scholars, this collective volume tackles a wide range of topics, including dynamic music theories and concepts, expressive gesture, social music interaction, sociological and anthropological approaches to musical embodiment, physical empowerment through health and well-being, music interaction as a research methodology, and music- and gesture-capturing technologies and applications.

Nor, Mohd Anis Md, and Kendra Stepputat, eds. 2017. Sounding the Dance, Moving the Music: Choreomusicological Perspectives on Maritime Southeast Asian Performing Arts. New York: Routledge. With diverse case studies of regional performing art genres from Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, this book investigates how sound and movement interact and interrelate in the context of Maritime Southeast Asia. This collection of writings not only introduces various forms of performance arts in the region but also offers new approaches for analyzing and studying performance arts from an emerging field of ethno-choreomusicology, stressing the inseparability of music and dance and posing interdisciplinary, intermedia perspectives.

Veroli, Patrizia, and Gianfranco Vinay. 2017. Music-Dance: Sound and Motion in Contemporary Discourse. New York: Routledge. Music-Dance is another recent collective work featuring choreomusical approaches. Gathering scholars from dance studies and performance studies as well as specialists in cognitive science, this book serves as a vital resource for researchers who are interested in how sound and movement interact and how such interaction influences and shapes embodiment, emotion, and cognition.

Selected Ethnographies

Hahn, Tomie. 2007. Sensational Knowledge: Embodying Japanese Culture Through Dance. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press. This intimate and reflexive ethnography chronicles Hahn’s experience learning a genre of classical Japanese dance named *nihon buyo* at the main Tachibana school in Tokyo. Through a close-reading of her own journey transforming into a *nihon buyo* dancer and developing a dear master-disciple relationship with Tachibana Yoshie, the current *iemoto* (head-master) of the Tachibana school, Hahn explores the “embodiment of culture via sensual orientations and lived experiences of transmission” (7). By focusing on how cultural knowledge is unfolded and embodied through the process of learning and transmitting *nihon buyo*, Hahn illustrates the ways in which Japanese cultural and aesthetic values were transmitted through the body. Hahn argues, through Master Tachibana’s words, that cultural transmission is a “[k]now with your body” process (1).

Kisliuk, Michelle. 1998. Seize the Dance: BaAka Musical Life and the Ethnography of Performance. Oxford: Oxford University Press. “Seize the Dance!”, one of the classic texts on performance in ethnomusicology, challenges pre-existing understandings of research and fieldwork. Diverging from previous scholars who had similar interest in the music and dance of the forest people, such as her teacher Colin M. Turnbull, Kisliuk expands the concept of performance, shifting the focus on the performance of solely musical events to that of practices in the daily lives of people in BaAka communities. Kisliuk structured the book diachronically according to her research experience in order to put an emphasis on “the particulars of time and place, the variability of social situations, the possibility of internal contradictions, and the immediate, multiple consequences of power politics” (12). This book is a good read for people who want to know about BaAka culture, and also provides an inspiring example of experimental ethnography.

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Music and Movement

Voices from Various Disciplines

Hamill, Michelle, Lesley Smith, and Frank Röhricht. 2012. “‘Dancing Down Memory Lane’: Circle Dancing as a Psychotherapeutic Intervention in Dementia—a Pilot Study.” *Dementia* 11 (6): 709–24. This journal article introduces preliminary research on how circle dancing can serve as a psychotherapeutic intervention for people with dementia. The researchers hosted weekly group therapy for ten consecutive weeks with eighteen participants (including eleven people with moderate-to-severe dementia and seven family carers), tracked each person’s progress with measurement sheets and interviewed participants for their opinions. The pilot experiment concluded that circle dancing, as an approach of therapeutic intervention, has a positive impact on the participants’ general well-being, enhancing their level of concentration and improving their communication. This work will benefit scholars who are interested in music therapy, medical ethnomusicology or applied ethnomusicology.


Warburton, Edward C., Margaret Wilson, Molly Lynch, and Shannon Cuykendall. 2013. “The Cognitive Benefits of Movement Reduction: Evidence From Dance Marking.” *Psychological Science* 24 (9): 1732–39. Marking, a rehearsal practice in which dancers perform an attenuated version of the choreography, is a strategy used in dance rehearsals to save energy and prevent injury while learning new moves. This work suggests that this energy-saving movement-reduction strategy in rehearsal may serve a cognitive function as well. Conducting an experiment with two groups of dancers, one group using dance marking and one that does not, this study discovered that performance was superior in the dancers who had marked, indicating cognitive benefits for dancers. This finding opens up questions concerning other movement-reduction systems, such as whispering, gesturing, and subvocalizing; and creates new areas of inquiry for embodied cognition as well as cognitive studies on music and dance.

Extended Resource Lists

Check out our collection of resources on SEM’s website and at [semsn.com](http://semsn.com). These include:

- **Music and Politics**
- **Sound and Sensory Studies**
- **Reading, Decolonizing**
- **Navigating the Job Market**
- **Music and Diaspora**
- **Music, Medicine, Health, and Cognition**

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