

Editor's Note

This issue of *Dance Research Journal* (40.1) features the work of authors from several countries on a variety of topics: Graham and autobiography, emotion in the workplace, hula as a dance ecology, and salsa dancing in the United States and in Northern Ireland. A shared concern among these writers is dance as a means of initiating or warding off personal, social, and cultural change. While not all authors use the word *loneliness*, all nonetheless discuss experiences of disconnection and isolation from former selves, from colleagues, and from traditional communities. Some dance to find communities that are more open and vibrant and that offer new social opportunities

Victoria Thoms, a British dance practitioner and philosopher, opens this issue with her "Martha Graham's Haunting Body: Autobiography at the Intersection of Writing and Dancing." Thoms explores the autobiographical possibilities of Graham's dancing, writing, technique, and image on film, richly using theory to discuss how these emanations inform and haunt each other. In this article loneliness is discussed in connection with Graham's longing for her own physicality. Thoms quotes Graham as saying, "I miss the animal strength, the beauty of the heel as it is used to carry one forward into life. This, I think more than anything, is the secret of my loneliness."

Finnish scholar Teija Löytönen contributes "Emotions in the Everyday Life of a Dance School: Articulating Unspoken Values." Löytönen opens her article by discussing the nature of emotions and various connections between the arts and emotion. Having established this groundwork, she then moves to interviews, conducted as part of her doctoral research, that explore emotions experienced by faculty teaching in Finnish ballet schools. One emotion expressed by faculty is loneliness, especially experienced as a longing for more connection and support among faculty members. Löytönen concludes that this need for connection is tempered by the "local moral order," which emphasizes maintenance of hierarchy and privacy and keeps institutional moves toward cooperation and connection at bay.

In the opening pages of her essay "We Dance for Knowledge," Sharon Māhealani Rowe offers a number of identities for hula:

Hula is a moving encyclopaedia inscribed into the sinews and postures of dancers' bodies. It carries forward the social and natural history, the religious beliefs, the philosophy, the literature, and the scientific knowledge of the Hawaiian people. It is, therefore, more than the dance form of a particular Polynesian people, more than swaying hips and talking hands, more than competitions, vacation entertainment, or a weekly workout routine.

Rowe compares the transformation in hula—from an embodiment of cultural knowledge to a form of entertainment or exercise—to the transformation occurring in Western court dance in reaction to the Enlightenment, as dancing moved from a way to embody the values of kings and courts to a pared down, visually ordered art form. While Rowe does not use the word *lonely*, she does caution that scholarly investigation, like other interventions, may leave hula bereft of the knowledgeable bodies, contexts, and belief systems that give it purpose.

American ethnomusicologist Joanna Bosse investigates a salsa formation team—an exhibition team that combines salsa, ballroom, and theatrical dance—in central Illinois in her “Salsa Dance and the Transformation of Style: An Ethnographic Study of Movement and Meaning in a Cross-Cultural Context.” The dancers Bosse interviewed joined the team to become better dancers, seeing this as offering entrée to local Latin dance communities and as an opportunity for personal transformation. Again, dance provides a solution to disconnection from others and from self.

The final article, “Women Dancing Back—and Forth: Resistance and Self-Regulation in Belfast Salsa,” is by social anthropologist Jonathan Skinner. His article employs a series of duets between the author and the women he interviews, and his findings and the writing of Leslie Gotfrit (“Women Dancing Back: Disruption and the Politics of Pleasure” published in the *Journal of Education* [1988]). Skinner’s work reveals how women use social dancing to push at gendered norms for personal safety and sexual freedom and to self-regulate, determining their own stance within established boundaries. Within the context of Northern Ireland, salsa dancers also step across traditional religious/political boundaries, sometimes ignoring religious strictures about dancing and/or easing social contact by disregarding Catholic/Protestant, nationalist/unionist tensions.

The articles are followed by book reviews and tributes to beloved members of two dance communities: African dancer Alice Dinizulu and dance scholar, educator, and Congress on Research in Dance (CORD) board member Dixie Durr. Included in this issue are images of contra-tiempo, a “Salsa-based urban-Latin dance theatre” based in Los Angeles (www.contra-tiempo.org). Many thanks to artistic director Ana Maria Alvarez and photographer Briana Blasko for use of these images.

I look forward to the next two issues of *Dance Research Journal*. The Winter 2008 issue, edited by Paul Scolieri, will feature selected articles from the fortieth anniversary CORD conference (Choreographies of Migration: Patterns of Global Mobility), held in New York City in November 2007. The following issue will be edited by Mark Franko and feature a collection of papers about “Dance, the Disciplines, and Interdisciplinarity.”

This issue is my opportunity to thank those who have made my years as *DRJ* editor enjoyable. Many thanks go to the individuals who serve CORD as members of the board of directors and editorial and advisory boards for their work for *DRJ* and their continued belief in *DRJ* as central to the organization and to dance scholarship. Editorial board chairs Julie Malnig and Michael Huxley and reviews editor Rebecca Kowal have been wonderful partners in this project. Thanks go, too, to my colleagues at the University of

North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG), who saw the editorship as a valuable use of my time and of departmental funds; to Jill Green, with whom I served as co-editor from 2003 to 2005; to the UNCG graduate students who served as *CORD* office staff over the years; and to the excellent authors and manuscript readers who have made the *DRJ* editorship a pleasure. Congratulations to Mark Franko, who becomes *DRJ* editor in January 2009. I look forward to the changes Mark will make to *DRJ*, and to the impact his editorship will have on *CORD* and on dance scholarship.

Finally, I would like to correct errors made in our last issue in identifying images of contact improvisers from Oberlin College. Many thanks to Ann Cooper Albright for supplying the images. The images were made by photographer John Seyfield.

Ann Dils
Editor, *Dance Research Journal*