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DANCE MANIA 2019 - WITH THE CHANGING EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE

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Dance is an art about human connection both from within the experience as dancers and teachers and from the audience's point of view. During the COVID-19 global pandemic all dance institutions had to take a unique challenge to change to move from in-person classes to remote teaching. This global and abrupt change was pushing dance to initiate different ways of learning and performing. That happened because dance has lost one of its main characteristics: dance is happening in time and space. The digital space allows all participants to share within a common time but not a common space and this was problematic for dance. The lack of synchronization and coherence of time and space affected the way dance was taught in face-to-face interaction with students in the studio and on stage.

The in-person classroom demands concentration, communicative and collaborative skills, from both teacher and learner, in all practical aspects of dance studies and they take place within the appropriate space. Yet, we all understood as dance educators that there was no other way considering the circumstances than to figure out how to make it work. In general, great effort has been made by dance teachers to maintain high quality instructions with a high touch to students while delivering coursework remotely. Staying flexible to adapt to the limitations of being online and clear communication were key factors in meeting the challenges of remote learning by maintaining the class structure and expectations and solving problems. Moreover, what we realized by teaching remotely it was the necessity to incorporate and share with the class, work material that came from YouTube, video, and other internet sources. Particularly the use of video was one of the most important components in learning process as the students would record themselves doing a dancing exercise or a choreography and seeing, analyzing, and discussing it afterwards. The method of processing visual information had included more students in the learning process (Theory of multiple intelligence) and offered another method than the traditional way, by looking in the mirror in a studio. Also, application of video in the learning process, exposed students to a broader range of



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choreographers and of the dance forms that perhaps they didn't know while they were studying. In this way diverse modes of learning that switching from the practical and experiential to more conceptual and analytic approach, introduced. However, the problem of sharing sound through Zoom was and still is problematic, as very often copyrights are not allowing to share sound between many participants in a digital class simultaneously. Another issue of remote teaching was to find a balance between the voice of the teacher and music accompaniment, as well as the technical issue that delays the transmission of music through the computer that does not permit the work on rhythm in a dance setting. As already mentioned, the use of space, and in particular the change of directions in solo and duets and assemble work was hard to be practiced remotely and needed much more in detail information and instructions.

All the above are challenged all us in new ways for approaching educational modes that perhaps will develop new methodologies and new skills of teaching and learning dance in the future and consequently will influence performance and composition. In addition, many students nowadays are familiar with electronic devices and we, dance educators must not neglect the skills that they have. Instead, we have to use them for creating positive outcome in dance classes. An example of that is that some students becoming less introverted online. Yet, in countries like Greece were not all students have access to computers this situation is still tricky and delays the overall educational process as for example when readings are placed on a website instead of the library. In addition, during covid period we realize that information was shared, and communication occurred between students and teachers by digital teaching ,email, Facebook, Instagram and video/Vimeo. This kind of reality that we are living in has already shift our teaching as well as the educational process to a hybrid approach of processing dance. In this transitional moment that we are all facing, is not seem enough, to get up and dancing every week despite all the literal obstacles in the way.... However, dance cannot be separated from human life as both has to do with corporeal experience, emotions, feelings in a specific context.



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In place of Suggestions

The words of the choreographer Alonzo King (born in Georgia to civil-rights activists Slater King and Valencia King Nelson; American dancer and choreographer based in San Francisco) are perhaps not solving the problem as technology and dance nowadays are still in the making of forming a new relationship within the new circumstances that Covid 19 imposed, but are offering a clear lens for re-thinking the notion of “becoming” that encapsulates ephemerality of dance and place sit at this moment in time!

“Dance training can't be separate from life training. Everything that comes into our lives is training. The qualities we admire in great dancing are the same qualities we admire in human beings: honesty, courage, fearlessness, generosity, wisdom, depth, compassion, and humanity”.



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Recommendations for the implementation of digital technology in the education of performing artists

The following recommendations for the implementation of digital technology in the education of performing artists have ensued following the collection of best practices, the round of exchange in the consortium, and finally the experience collected as educators during the lockdowns caused by the COVID-19 global pandemic.

- students and artists should have knowledge and be able to operate digital technologies with application in the creative process as well as in at the administrative level with the online presence and possibilities for revenue.

At the level of the creative process:

- ideal is an exposure of the student bodies to several technologies that involves 'low budget' technologies (such as the possibilities contained in a smartphone, videocamera, basic images and video-editing softwares, ...) to then move to technologies that require the acquisition of tools, softwares or advance skills and require the collaboration with an expert (such as Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), motion capture, 360° cameras, green screen, machine learning, ...)
- exposure to a collection of best practices of artists already working with several digital technologies

At the level of administration:

- the students need to be introduced to and understand the importance of online presence (website, adverting, branding, ...)
- the students need to be introduced to and understand possibilities for revenue such as e-commerce, fundraising, and sponsoring