

EADH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

LONDON 2021

# DANCE, DISEASE & HEALING

22-23 October 2021

BBOdance – British Ballet Organization, and online



*eadh* European  
Association  
for Dance  
History



## SCHEDULE

### FRIDAY 22 October

bbodance - British Ballet Organization, London SW18 1TA

time	room	
10.30am	Riverside	registration and opening
11am	Muir-Warden	paper 1 – Edith LALONGER (online) 'The "Filles du magasin" - health and working conditions of novice female dancers at the Palais-Royal, c.1713'
11.30	"	paper 2 – Michaela METTEL (online) 'Dance, Women and physical Education in Early Modern Italy'
12noon	"	paper 3 – Tiziana LEUCCI (online) 'Dance, trance, possession and healing : an autobiographical journey from South Italy to South India'
12.30pm	Riverside	buffet lunch
1.30pm	Muir-Warden	paper 4 – Sheila DICKIE 'Older People Dancing'
2pm	"	paper 5 – Keith CAVERS '"Let me have men about me that are fat": historical extremes of body weight and type'
2.30pm	_____	shuttle taxis to the V&A

V&A Museum, London SW7 2RL

3.30pm exhibition 'On Point: Royal Academy of Dance at 100'

Local restaurant (tbc) – South Kensington

6.30pm conference dinner

SATURDAY 23 October

bbodance

10.30am	Muir-Warden	paper 6 – Christine BAYLE (online) 'A sophisticated dance practice, in its past and future'
11am	"	paper 7 – Pilar MONTOYA CHICA (online) "'Turumbé con la turumbela; vamos bailando la tantarantela": the presence of the Tarantella dance in Spain'
11.30am	Espinosa	workshop 1 – Ricardo BARROS 'A Conceal'd Health - Country Dance'
12.15pm	Riverside	buffet lunch
1.15pm	Muir-Warden	paper 8 – Sergey KONAEV 'Trauma and disease as an engine for development of dance notation'
1.45pm	"	paper 9 – Jane PRITCHARD 'Two Topsy's - A look at the impact of serious injury on the careers of two dancers at the turn of the C19th/C20th
2.15pm	"	paper 10 – Lisa FUSILLO 'Dance as Subtext for Survival - from Ma Raine's Black Bottom to TikTok'
2.45pm	Espinosa	workshop 2 – Lisa FUSILLO 'Dances from the 1920s and 2020s'
3.30pm	Riverside	tea break
4pm	Muir-Warden	AGM (members only)
4.30pm	Riverside	demo/workshop 3 – Ilaria DE SIMONI 'The Tarantella & Pizzica'
5.30pm	"	wine reception and final address
6.30pm	"	closing

## ABSTRACTS

EDITH LALONGER -

### **The "Filles du magasin"**

In 1713, at the time when an opera hall was installed in the Palais-Royal, a private 'hotel', situated in the rue Saint-Nicaise housed the various administrative services and stores for costumes, sets and machines, as well as rehearsal space for dancing lessons and rehearsals. In several documents from the early 18th century, we find mention of the so-called "Filles du magasin" a term which designates novice female dancers at this dance academy. We also find descriptions of a state of "disorder" within this institution, and the necessity of establishing rules to address the many problems encountered in the academy. Mr. Anne-Gabriel Meusnier de Querlon was asked to establish these rules, giving birth to *Le Code lyrique ou règlement pour l'opéra de Paris* in 1743. This short work sets out the main rules of the Dance Academy, but above all helps us to understand the life of these 12 to 16 years old dancers and thereby provides us with certain clues about their health and working conditions. Each regulation is illustrated by an anecdote told by the author. This study will be supplemented by related documents.

MICHAELA METTEL -

### **Dance, Women and physical Education in Early Modern Italy**

For keeping the body in a healthy state and preserving its functionality and perfection (Giannozzo Manetti), a special physical education was needed. To gain these behavioral and medical benefits, humanistic treatises suggest various exercises such as fencing, riding, ball games, etc. Especially in courtly education, physical training was as important as mental training. Interestingly, another aspect of courtly education is known to have similar physical effects, but is not commonly included in these suggested exercises: dance. A courtier has to be able to perform in dancing as well as in fencing (Baldassare Castiglione). But why is dancing apparently considered to have a lesser health benefit than other forms of body movement? Is the recommended pastime for women also an appropriate female exercise, although it is assumed to be less beneficial than the exercises recommended for men? Do period dance treatises consider themselves as part of the physical and health education? In this paper I will take a look at the self-conception of the period dance treatises in relation to their role in physical and health education. As a second step, I will analyze how this could have affected the role of women in these treatises.

TIZIANA LEUCCI -

## **Dance, trance, possession and healing: an autobiographical journey from South Italy to South India**

In my presentation, I will deal with the therapeutic effects of the dance for both the mental and the body health. For my analysis I have selected here two examples : the first one taken from my native South Italy, and the second one from South India, where I spent several years for my dance studies and researches. In both of them we find the dance associated with forms of trance involving rituals of spirits' possession, by a spider in the Italian case, and by a snake in the Indian one. In order to help the affected persons to feel relieved from their sickness' physical pains and psychological troubles, some complex rituals are organized by the distressed people's families and the local specialists, in which the dance plays a leading role in the healing process, also helped by the music and the chanting of magic spells. The first example has given birth in the past to the well-known musical and dance form named '*Tarantella*', which in the 19th century got somehow 'crystallized' and defined the Italian 'national' dance, in the music repertoire and in the classical ballet productions as well. I will finally show as those forms of rituals have been very important in my own training as a performer and a dance historian and anthropologist

SHEILA DICKIE -

## **Older People Dancing**

During the last 30 years there has been a rise in the number of older people taking part in various forms of dance. What do we mean by older dancers? It used to mean perhaps a ballet dancer aged 30 plus but our expectations have changed. This paper will take a personal look at my work with people who on reaching the age of 60 years decided to take part in dance workshops for the first time and how this changed their lives and our perceptions of older dancers.

KEITH CAVERS -

## **Let me have men about me that are fat**

The relative build of the "average" dancer, possibly of any era, is considered as universally thin – but this is, or was, not always so. My paper investigates some historical extremes of body weight and body type to examine the accuracy of this prejudicial view and questions its utility. My starting point was an intriguing drawing of such a fat dancer, hitherto unidentified. Is it reportage? Or is it a caricature? And can we make any guess as to the subject depicted (or caricatured)? In an age when almost all the subjects of portraiture received some professional tuition in deportment and dance can we ever tell the amateur from the professional just by looking?

CHRISTINE BAYLE -

### **A sophisticated dance practice, in its past and future – French sources 1550-1750**

The close observation of documents dated 1550 to 1750 pose many questions. Varying from group dances through to those of the Royal Court, the instructions seem to integrate aesthetic concepts and societal notions. Are these indications just stylistic details (*maniera*), or do they reveal an underlying concern for the dancer's health in every *mouvement* and gesture?

As we study the recommendations of some of the French Dancing Masters, we perceive their concern to be not exclusively the recognition of physical competence, but also the increasing influence of recreational dancing on the ballet, leading to what would be called classical dancing. We take into account the *motion* (*élan*), all the complexities of *mouvement*, the various historical ideas of beauty, and primitive and analytic methods of describing *mouvement*, which upon close inspection are not far from present-day analytical tools.

PILAR MONTOYA CHICA -

### **“*Turumbé con la turumbela; vamos bailando la tantarantela*”: the presence of the Tarantella dance in Spain.**

This writing aims to be an approximation to one of the most emblematic dances in southern Europe, the Tarantella. Although Italian in origin, phenomena of a political and geographical nature, as well as claimed to be a healing remedy associated with its interpretation, fostered the reception of these repertoires in Spain. The connection of the Kingdom of Naples with the Spanish Crown until 1861 and links between Naples with the important Mediterranean harbors such as Mallorca, Valencia or Barcelona, were decisive events that promoted the practice of the Tarantella in the Iberian Peninsula.

To deepen into the process of immersion and assimilation of this dance in Spain that led to the so called "Tarantismo", historical dictionaries, choreographic, musical, theatrical and iconographic sources, as well as studies of contemporary authors specialized in this matter will be consulted.

The analysis of the Tarantella will focus on parameters such as musical characteristics, instruments used, texts, prototypical characters involved in its execution, more recurrent body movements, contexts and places where it was developed or the possible relationships with other dances such as the jota, the zapateado or the fandango.

SERGEY KONAEV -

### **Trauma and Disease as an engine for development of dance notation**

The paper traces the pivotal role of injuries and confinements in a development of the principal dance notation systems. Some were institutionalized by the ballet companies to soften the impact of choreographer's diseases on the repertory. In 1890s, Russian Imperial Theatres rushed to implement Stepanov notation system because Marius Petipa suffered from lingering illness caused by the death of his daughter Evgenia. Contrary, other dance notation systems were shaped when, being injured or confined, their co-creators didn't lose courage but channeled their creativity the other way. Kurt Jooss' significant contribution to the Kinetography Laban in 1927 partly originated in his knee injury and forced break in his dance career. In 1983, the same trauma became the starting point for William Forsythe's long-lasting experiments with Labanotation. My paper also explores how dance notation systems historically aimed not only to document the dance but to heal the diseases. In the preface to his treatise (1892), Stepanov stated that the system is able to describe "the complex movements of a disabled person" thus improving their treatment. Rudolf Benesh also was proposed to improve his system for the neurological disorders treatment.

JANE PRITCHARD -

### **Two Topsy - A look at the impact of serious injury on the careers of two dancers at the turn of the C19TH/C20th**

It is just chance that the two British dancers I am looking at took the same stage name 'Topsy'. Both came from stage families and worked with their siblings, beginning as child dancers appearing on stage from the age of six. They had similar careers dancing in pantomime, musical shows, music halls and ballets; careers that took them to London and regional theatres and, after their accidents that kept them off the stage for long periods, both benefited from public support (a benefit and funds sponsored by the *Era* respectively) for help.

The two dancers are Topsy [Jennie] Elliott, a pupil of Leon Espinosa active in the 1870s and 80s whose career took in the Surrey, Crystal Palace, the Metropolitan and the South London where, in November 1877, she received ¾ degree burns when her costume caught fire. A decade later she was dancing as second ballerina at the Alhambra.

The second is Topsy [Harriet] Sinden (1878 – 1951), trained by Malvina Cavallazzi, Katti Lanner, Signor Francesco and Signor Leprez whose early career in the 1890s and 1900s was at the Empire and in George Edwardes' musical comedies. Her accident, an injury to her knee while in Christmas pantomime at Liverpool 1912, kept her off the stage for four years, and her career never recovered its former lustre.

The paper will look at the impact of accidents on dancers' careers at the time and acknowledges that we probably know more about these dancers than some of their contemporaries because of the



publicity the accidents brought about. It also looks at how ‘crowd funding’ to help those in need worked a century ago.

LISA FUSILLO -

## **Dance as Subtext for Survival - From Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom to TikTok**

Popular social dances have often challenged moral restrictions and societal structures and no dances did this more dramatically than the dance crazes that began in the 1920s. From the 1920s Black Bottom dance, as recently referenced in the film *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom*, and up to the 2019 ‘Renegade’ dance on TikTok, dance crazes have had a significant impact on how each generation related to and participated in social dances.

The Jazz Era of the 1920s and 1930s in the United States was rich with infectious new music and new dances that became widespread successes. Dances like the Black Bottom, the Charleston and the Lindy enlivened and invigorated a nation emerging from social, political and economic traumas (WWI, pandemic, pre-WWII, etc.). From ballrooms to beaches, dances crazes ignited a new national spirit. Later, dances like the energetic Jitterbug and the iconic Twist were followed by Break dancing, Hip-Hop, and many internet dances such as the Cupid Shuffle and the first Tik Tok dance challenge, the Renegade.

Examining one trajectory of 20<sup>th</sup> century American social dance crazes from the Jazz Era up to today, this paper will discuss the argument that specific dances are, in fact, dances for survival. The dances/dance crazes investigated were, and are, subtext for survival in a variety of ways – survival of identity, survival from suppression and marginalization, and survival of contributions to the national culture of dance. The research considers that In a country of multiple dance traditions, none of which establish a national dance identity, popular social dances have provided a cultural legacy that encompasses dance as a mechanism for survival.

## WORKSHOPS

RICARDO BARROS -

### **A Conceal'd health – Country Dance**

A country dance with relatively complex figures (and undoubtedly a puzzling name), 'A Conceal'd health' stands alongside 19 others in Thomas Bray's book of Country Dances (London, 1699). A man of the theatre (having worked at Drury Lane, Dorset Gardens and Lincoln's Inn Fields) Bray worked with - and eventually replaced - Josias Priest, not to mention numerous French dancers who were a common feature in those theatres. The complexity and unusual nature of the floor patterns employed in his country dances suggest they might have been inspired at least by theatrical dancing (if not used on stage), as Bray's dances certainly stand out from his counterpart John Playford.

LISA FUSILLO -

### **DANCES FROM THE 1920s & 2020s**

To complement her paper, Lisa Fusillo offers a lively workshop on the Black Bottom, Charleston, Lindy and the Cupid Shuffle dances, followed by a 2020 TikTok dance!

ILARIA DE SIMONI -

### **THE TARANTELLA & PIZZICA**

The Tarantella originates from both paganism and the Greek mythology which had been influenced for over 2000 years by the different Mediterranean cultures, including North African traditions, Greece and Albania.

According to some researchers the name 'tarantella' finds its origin from 'taranta', a term used in Southern Italian regions to describe the tarantula spider. According to tradition and local beliefs, the tarantula's poison caused different symptoms, including melancholia, seizures, mental health issues, anxiety and physical and emotional pain. To overcome this, the tarantella dance became linked to the healing process from the pinch of the tarantula, and came to represent both lightness and alliance with 'Mother Earth', simplicity and complexity, and earthy as well as ancestral rhythms. Tarantella styles can vary from region to region, but my interpretation focus primarily on two Italian regions: Salento (in the South of Puglia, with both traditional and modern Pizzica), and Campania (with Tammurriata).

## **VENUES**

### **bbodance – British Ballet Organization**

Ensign House, Battersea Reach, Juniper Drive, London SW18 1TA

### **V&A - Victoria & Albert Museum**

Cromwell Road, South Kensington, London SW7 2RL



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Next conference: Čezký Krumlov (Czech Republic) October 2022