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Living and Virtual Memory of Dance

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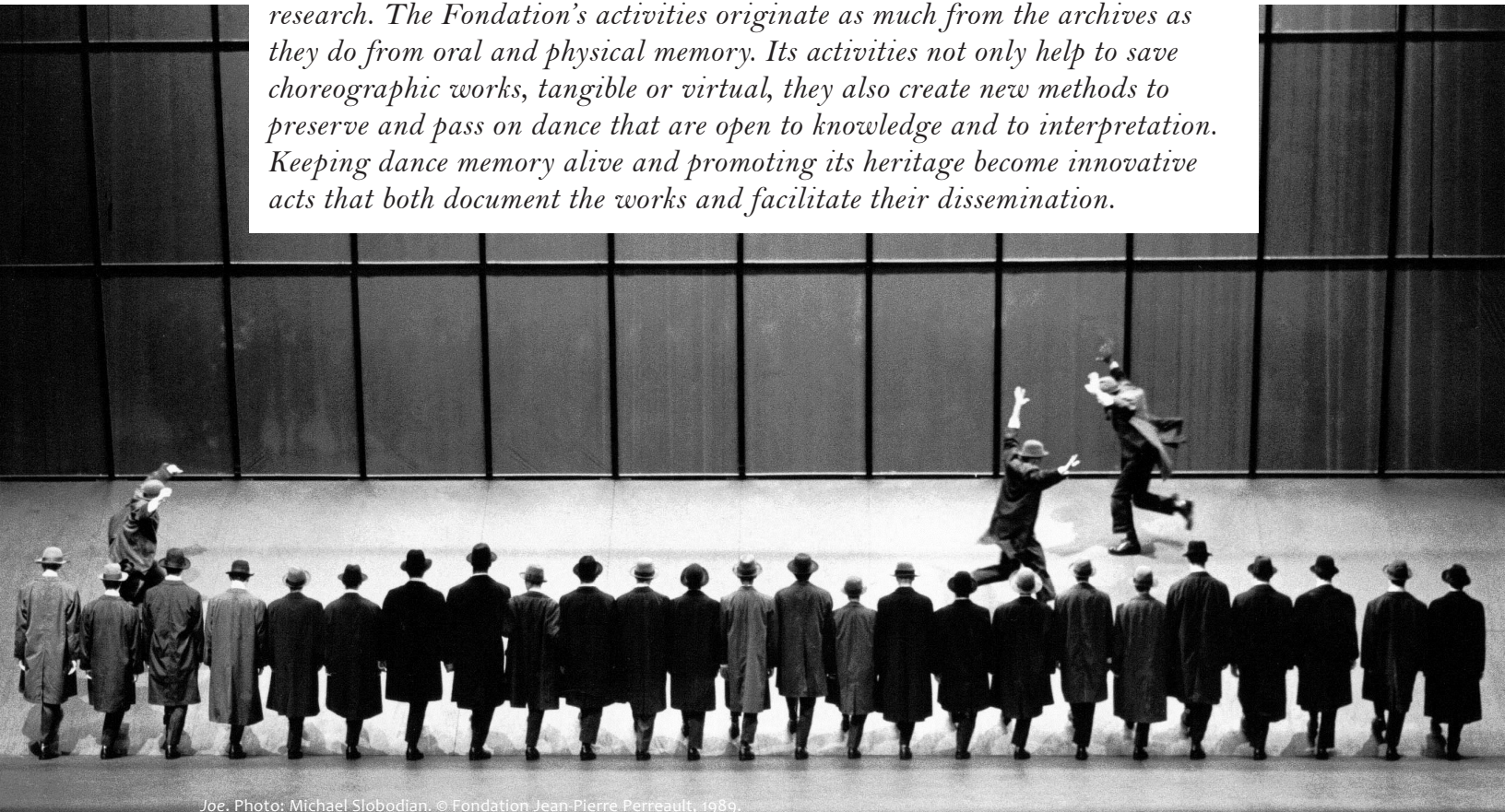
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LIVING AND VIRTUAL MEMORY OF DANCE

Marc Boivin and Lise Gagnon, Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault

Translated from French by Anne Newman

Since 2006, the Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault has worked unceasingly within a broad movement to safeguard and disseminate Québec's contemporary dance heritage. Having successfully preserved and promoted its founder's choreographic heritage, the Fondation is now expanding its vision to respond to the needs of the dance community. The Fondation strives to address wide-ranging issues around the promotion and dissemination of choreographic heritage. It focuses on reconstruction, education, legal issues relating to copyright, and on making the works and their components accessible for research. The Fondation's activities originate as much from the archives as they do from oral and physical memory. Its activities not only help to save choreographic works, tangible or virtual, they also create new methods to preserve and pass on dance that are open to knowledge and to interpretation. Keeping dance memory alive and promoting its heritage become innovative acts that both document the works and facilitate their dissemination.



Joe. Photo: Michael Slobodian. © Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault, 1989.



Marc Boivin – Photo: Michael Slobodian

Marc Boivin, interpreter, teacher, president of the Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault

In spring 2013, the Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault, in partnership with UQAM's Institut du patrimoine, organized a three day conference on the preservation and transmission of performance art and contemporary dance entitled "Documenting, Re-creating... Memories and Transmissions of Performance and Contemporary Dance Works". The Fondation, dedicated to the documentation, dissemination and archiving of Jean-Pierre Perreault's work (and since 2011 to that of other Québec choreographers), sought to open a dialogue on the topic. At the heart of the project was the desire to share challenges experienced by other national and international institutions and to redefine the archives and the living memory of dance, documentation and recovery, which require particular methods of recording and dissemination.¹

Theresa Rowat, Fondation board member and director of The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada, and I presented a paper at the event. Our joint presentation, entitled "The Work of Jean-Pierre Perreault, A Case for Québec's Choreographic Heritage," was one of the topics in the fourth of six areas covered in the conference, namely "Building the Archive." Jean-Pierre Perreault's death in 2004 jeopardized his choreographic heritage; a rich collection of archives risked disappearing. The need to confront the crisis led to a meeting of stakeholders ready to rise to the challenge. Theresa Rowat, archivist and I, dancer, both involved since the beginning, described the dynamic of the converging forces and the emotional dimension that made the Fondation's work possible over the last seven years. We also set forth the particular circumstances that led to a crisis resolution that is open to the future: the exceptional quality of the archival collections, the strength of the personal commitment of Perreault's close collaborators, the synergy of a community called upon to define itself regarding its history, and the willingness of governmental organizations to develop a vision for, and a lasting commitment to, contemporary choreographic creation and its place in society.

We arrived at the following conclusions:

Speaking of choreographic heritage, its documentation and promotion, there have been substantial advances in the past few years, but much work remains to be done, and the questioning continues. It is urgent that the issue of dance archives breaks free of the dance world itself and is brought to the attention of public heritage institutions. It is also necessary to have a serious reflection on the influence of choreographic works on the collective memory of a society.

In the essay "Choreographic Objects," published on his personal website, dancer and choreographer William Forsythe writes: "Choreography is a curious and deceptive term. The word itself, like the processes it describes, is elusive, agile, and maddeningly unmanageable. [...] Each epoch, each instance of choreography, is ideally at odds with its previous defining incarnations as it strives to testify to the plasticity and wealth of our ability to re-conceive and detach ourselves from positions of certainty."² The duty of memory, such as that of the Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault, begins with the premise that this memory will always be partial and subjective, but that it fits in a world where the very definition of choreography is changing and choreographic art is evolving. During the workshops, we emphasized that the conservation of choreographic heritage "should not amount to confinement to a museum, or a placing of its artefacts under a glass dome. On the contrary, it means finding strategies of sharing its components and its creative context to ensure its perpetuation by other means, whether research, writing, education, or, obviously, reconstruction. In Québec, in line with the Regroupement québécois de la danse's *Master Plan for Professional Dance in Québec 2011-2021*,³ dance practitioners, archivists, academics and arts council officials came together to reflect on preservation methods for choreographic



Figure 1. *The Pilgrimage Years*. Choreography by Jean-Pierre Perreault, performance by Marc Boivin and Sandra Lapierre. Photo by Michael Slobodian. © Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault, 1996.

heritage and the condition of dance archives.” (Boivin and Rowat 2013). Against this background, in 2006 the Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault fulfilled its responsibility to preserve and promote Perreault’s work, and in 2011, to make the transition to a broader mandate that includes Québec’s contemporary choreographic art.

As I was a dancer for Jean-Pierre for a number of years (Figure 1), my experience of his work is a personal one. I was nurtured and shaped by it; that’s how it touched me. The preservation and promotion efforts I participated in over the past few years have enabled me to observe a possible rapprochement between the work of the dancer and of the choreographer, and the development of a choreographic heritage:

- the dancer is called to divide the body (the matter) so as to arrange it anew and to identify the essence of that which is proposed to him for interpretation and a new vision;
- the choreographer divides the time and our reference points in the matter – conceptual, esthetic and experiential – to create new ones and to organize the passage of time in “a different consciousness.”

What the choreographer seeks and what the dancer embodies, according to Boris Charmatz in his *Manifesto for a Dance Museum*, may also guide efforts to develop choreographic heritage: “... To produce a symbolic vehicle that transports everyone – artists, audiences, amateurs, professionals, teachers, schoolchildren, spectators, students, politicians, visitors, tourists, researchers, journalists, citizens – everyone above and beyond those who are usually transported” (Charmatz 2008:2, *our translation*).

Charmatz’ list of persons affected illustrates one of the Fondation’s primary values: openness to all who desire – even more than the longing for communion with the Other – an adherence to its purpose, which drives the decision-making process for activities. The concept of a work belonging to a creator is therefore constantly called into question. Clearly stated, the affirmative act of enumerating virtually

everyone taken from the *Manifesto for a Dance Museum* stimulates promotion and utilization of the artistic legacy of dance to its full potential.

In 2011, the Fondation adopted a new mission, becoming an organization dedicated to the development of Québec's contemporary choreographic heritage. It intends to play a leading role in Québec's contemporary dance and repertory works, while building bridges and strengthening connections to contemporary Canadian and world dance. To achieve its vision, it aims to "develop a unique scope of action that not only includes actors associated with any of the functions relative to choreographic heritage, but one that creates connections and partnerships with organizations committed to these functions" (Grondin 2011:11, *our translation*).

In recent years, the Fondation has taken action in four areas to ensure a diversity of perspectives and possible readings. Regarding the idea of an "absence of certainty" put forward by William Forsythe, each of the Fondation's four focal points is both a course of action and a subject to investigate and to develop. These four points are:

- promotion and dissemination of choreographic heritage to the general public;
- promotion and dissemination of choreographic heritage to a specialized public;
- management of rights and consulting services;
- documentation of choreographic heritage and research.

Since the beginning, the key was to gather the expertise to encourage this diversity. We brought together legal, archival, academic and technological expertise to ensure knowledge of the works, the environment and the various disciplines.

Despite the ephemeral nature of its public manifestations, dance itself is not ephemeral; it leaves traces behind. The Carnets Bagouet is a French association of dancers with the common goal of structuring and promoting the choreographic heritage of Dominique Bagouet, an internationally-renowned French choreographer who died in 1992. The association was among the first to act as a living memory of contemporary dance. Regarding the Carnets Bagouet, Isabelle Launay, lecturer and researcher at the Danse Department of Université Paris 8, states: "It was not a matter of abandoning the logic of an oral tradition, but of conducting an internal review of oral memory, leading to a genealogical transfer from body to body that frees itself from the ideology of 'parentage,' somehow reinventing the source or material, thereby questioning the starting point as 'the origin'" (Launay cited in Pouillaude 2009:281, *our translation*).

Although private and sometimes subconscious, the most tangible traces of dance are first and foremost in performers' bodies. However, they are also found elsewhere – in the bodies of spectators, of those who receive the work. Other traces, both on the periphery of human experience and essential to the creative and communication processes, are documents containing the information surrounding and at the very heart of creation. The spectator is also a de facto participant in the living memory of a work, as the live performance takes place in his eyes, body, subjectivity and imagination. Consequently, he is imbued with a larger sense of the work.

In his book *Le désœuvrement chorégraphique. Étude sur la notion d'œuvre en danse*, Frédéric Pouillaude states, with respect to the work undertaken by the Carnets Bagouet: "Two things stand out in an archive's material concern: first, the relativity of the physical source (because the archive is often that which reveals and overcomes blanks in memory); and second, after 13 years of verbal dissemination, the need to record memories in entries outside the subject, to lighten memory by disseminating its impressions" (Pouillaude 2009:284, *our translation*). Any new person ready to make contact with the memory of a work (rather than having experienced it in the context of its creation) is called to bring forth a new reading

of it, with a new impact. Specific actions to take regarding documentation must be determined by the possible use of the archives, a long-term perspective that dictates the short term, a perspective that also stresses the importance of documentation in the creative process. Protection of the artistic legacy and interpretation of the heritage must be treated separately, but with a shared vision. The question of dance heritage must evolve in parallel with the archival and heritage domains, outside of a tightly-closed environment. Since the work belongs to all those who witnessed it, from the inside or the out, everyone has his own relationship to it and thus possesses part of the truth that eludes someone else. The Fondation upholds this relationship of the work to the Other.

Once the decision was made to entrust the preservation of Jean-Pierre Perreault's archival documents to the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, the Fondation turned to developing and utilizing this heritage, while respecting the nature of the relationship between archive and interpretation. The purpose was to:

- divide matter from its interpretation;
- protect content and ensure access to information, to stimulate interpretation and usage;
- gather the necessary expertise to cover additional areas in order to render the memory "living."

In my experience, memory is a biological and mental activity that allows information to be stored, preserved and restored. It is a function considered to be an abstract place where concepts are recorded; a collection of past events that stays in the memory. A living memory is a place where the functions of life occur (as opposed to the absence of life): that which breathes, survives and expresses the life force, and gives a strong impression of it. The virtual, long before it was associated with the digital domain and adopted by it, defined that which is only power, which is mere possibility (as opposed to that which is in action), and which contains in itself the conditions for its realization: the potential, the possible. Thus the virtual applies exactly to the Fondation's mandate: take the potential of what constitutes memory and render it living, living in all its complexity, in the balance of its possible means of expression and research. Though intrinsically related, dance and choreographic art are two distinct things, but the two are mirrors often too truthful for our contemporary societies. Dance raises the curtain on the absence of absolute control, on the ambiguous relationship that we maintain with the body as both subject and object. As Forsythe points out in his essay, choreographic thought reflects this absence of certainty often so difficult to accept in a world driven by the fragility of economic markets. Erin Manning, research chair in philosophy and relational arts at Concordia University, whose work focuses on Forsythe's concepts, states: "Choreographic thinking is the activation, in the moving, of a movement of thought" (Manning cited in Nicely 2014). Our societies have a lot to learn from dance and its relationship to the body, and also from the power of choreographic thought and act far beyond the so-called ephemeral nature of dance. A living and virtual memory is a clear commitment in a world in need of new ways of thinking and interacting.



Lise Gagnon – Photo: Emmanuel Gagnon

Lise Gagnon, executive director, Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault

The mission adopted by the Fondation is intrinsically linked to the mission of preserving contemporary dance heritage successfully undertaken by others in the cultural milieu, including the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, the Vincent-Warren dance library, and the education resource centres at Tangente, the École de danse contemporaine de Montréal and university dance departments. The Fondation is interdependent on members of this young, fragile and dynamic ecosystem, because without preservation, there can be no dissemination.

Our mandate involves various questions: What heritage should we disseminate? How should we disseminate it? What perspective should we favour? These questions are as relevant from a dissemination point of view, which results from oral and physical memory (thus a heritage recorded in the body), as they are in regard to dissemination on the Internet, which proceeds from the archive by means of items and documents. We are not employed in the gathering of information or in access to the archives; we are concerned with dissemination, encounter and experience. In this sense, the work of disseminating is necessarily subjective and is similar to creative work.

JEAN-PIERRE PERREULT, CHOREOGRAPHER

The online exhibition *Jean-Pierre Perreault, Choreographer* (Figures 2-3) was made possible thanks to the invaluable support of the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, the exhibition's main partner, which scanned more than 600 artefacts from the Perreault archive collections (notebooks, photos, posters, etc.). As tangible archives, these items made the online exhibition a unique and remarkable initiative, given the Fondation's resources.

Ginelle Chagnon, the project's artistic director and Perreault's close collaborator, selected the works and artefacts featured. She also invited other collaborators of the choreographer to give interviews. In doing



Figure 2. Homepage for the *Jean-Pierre Perreault, Choreographer* online exhibition. © Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault.



Figure 3. Nuit page for the Jean-Pierre Perreault, *Choreographer* online exhibition. © Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault.

so, she created a narrative by choosing the documents and the people that gave shape to the exhibition. Their memories and emotions at the time they worked on the project penetrate the exhibition, colour it, construct it.

The online exhibition necessarily touches on the question of the archive's interpretation, its perspective and selection. One can nonetheless ask: What does the online exhibition leave in the shadows? What does it give light to? What story did it create? The online exhibition, grounded in impermanence and a meeting space, is inevitably subjective. It is an appropriation of the past, yes, but also an encounter between the real and the imaginary.

EDUCATION PROGRAM

The education program that complements the online exhibition *Jean-Pierre Perreault, Choreographer* constitutes an unprecedented initiative for the dissemination of heritage (Figures 4a, b). The Fondation gratefully acknowledges the commitment of Nicole Turcotte, visiting professor at UQAM's dance department, who designed this program with the help of Ariane Dessaulles, today a member of the Fondation's team.

The educational records provide an open and creative exploration of the exhibition. They invite students to look – and often to look again – at video clips of choreographies or interviews, to analyze photos or drawings, and to pay close attention to the work of the choreographer. The activities enable students to enter Jean-Pierre Perreault's world, to understand his artistic approach and choreographic language, to discover his esthetics, and to be inspired to create and develop personal critical reflection. The teaching materials guide the teacher in his role as a conveyor of culture to his students, who are able to fully experience this choreographic heritage because they are given the time and the space to do so.

JEAN-PIERRE PERREAULT | EDUCATIONAL RECORDS FRA

Que nous donne à voir l'oeuvre de Jean-Pierre Perreault?

Le parcours dirigé est une invitation faite aux enseignants et à leurs élèves à mieux connaître l'oeuvre de Jean-Pierre Perreault.

L'immense legs chorégraphique de cet artiste est exploré à travers une sélection d'extraits d'oeuvres, d'images et d'écrits puisés à même le fonds iconographique de l'exposition virtuelle Jean-Pierre Perreault, chorégraphe. Les propositions pédagogiques de ce parcours inspirent l'enseignant dans son rôle de passeur de culture auprès de ses élèves.

L'offre pédagogique se décline en deux types d'activités : appréciation et création.

Des fiches pédagogiques téléchargeables procurent à l'enseignant le matériel nécessaire à une utilisation immédiate en salle de classe ou en studio. Les propositions peuvent être adaptées en fonction de la spécificité de chaque classe.

L'enseignant trouvera, à l'intérieur des fiches, des pistes stimulantes lui permettant de répondre aux exigences de formation du programme de danse du ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS).

« Un homme seul regarde le monde »

Intentions éducatives poursuivies

- accéder à l'univers du chorégraphe Jean-Pierre Perreault
- comprendre sa démarche artistique et son langage chorégraphique
- découvrir son esthétique hautement singulière
- s'en inspirer pour créer
- développer une réflexion critique personnelle quant à son oeuvre

SEE RECORDS »

Figure 4a. Homepage for the educational records. © Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault.

JEAN-PIERRE PERREAULT | EDUCATIONAL RECORDS FRA

SEE INTRODUCTION

ACTIVITÉS D'APPRÉCIATION

Au gré des propositions, de manière active et créative, les élèves construisent leur appréciation de l'univers chorégraphique de Jean-Pierre Perreault en adoptant différents regards.

D'une attention fine à leurs réactions esthétiques, en passant par l'analyse des principales constituantes de l'oeuvre et l'exploration des diverses significations des choix chorégraphiques ou scénographiques du chorégraphe, les élèves développent un jugement éclairé et critique sur l'oeuvre de Perreault. Leurs découvertes pourront être réinvesties dans des activités de création ou d'interprétation.

1 SANS DOMICILE FIXE

La thématique aborde des sujets chers à Perreault soit l'anonymat, l'identité, l'appartenance collective. Les pistes d'analyse et de réflexion proposées invitent les élèves à comprendre le regard porté par l'artiste sur le monde et plus particulièrement sur la condition humaine.

NAMES OF ACTIVITIES

1. Les ombres
2. Joe

- FOLDERS -

ACTIVITÉS DE CRÉATION

Les activités de création sont imaginées en cohérence avec les activités d'appréciation. Ainsi, les connaissances acquises par le visionnage des extraits d'oeuvres et par la réflexion que suscitent les questions proposées pourront inspirer le processus même de création des jeunes. Il est aussi possible de choisir le chemin inverse.

Les propositions de création sont inspirées tout autant des thèmes chers à Jean-Pierre Perreault que des qualités plastiques, esthétiques, gestuelles qui caractérisent son oeuvre. Adaptées aux préoccupations et au niveau des élèves, ces activités leur permettent d'exprimer un point de vue original sur des problématiques actuelles.

1 JEUX D'ESPACE

Ici, l'espace se conjugue à tous les temps: espace physique, espace imaginaire, espace à construire ou à habiter, autant de lieux où les idées chorégraphiques des élèves peuvent prendre forme.

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY

1. Les ombres et Joe

Figure 4b. Activities of the education program. © Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault.









CHOREOGRAPHIC TOOL KITS

Dissemination of dance heritage also extends to the creation of *choreographic tool kits*. UQAM dance professor Michèle Febvre, who reflected on the makeup of this mnemonic tool, explained: “Disseminating choreographic heritage involves a pedagogy of dissemination able not only to ‘make’ the dance, but also to ensure esthetic, social, historic and human understanding of it – in other words, to give meaning (not ‘the’ meaning) to the ‘reconstruction’ of a work” (Febvre 2011:3).

The choreographic tool kits dedicated to Danièle Desnoyer’s *Duo pour corps et instruments* (2003) and to Paul-André Fortier’s *Bras de plomb* (1993) gather together the elements that led to the creation of these works – elements imbued with meaning and those that perpetuate dissemination, i.e. all elements necessary for their reconstruction (Figures 5-6). They allow anyone with access to them to share in the creation of the work with the choreographer. Each of the tool kits assembles tangible items, such as choreographic notations, lighting plans, costume cards, prop sheets, rehearsal videos without lighting, videos of the show, press kits and other more subjective elements, such as the source of inspiration in the form of notes, drawings, notebooks, etc.

1.2 NOTATION CHORÉGRAPHIQUE

LÉGENDE:
QL: règle de la lumière
QS: règle du son
QV: règle de la vidéo
T: indice de temps du déroulement de la pièce (0m 0s = QL2)
V: repère de la vidéo du 21 janvier 2014, Claudia ChanTak

PLAN LARGE	DÉTAIL	DESCRIPTION	REPÈRES
 entrée du public	 Anne est à son ampli	Avant l'entrée du public, Anne installe son instrument sur son mollet gauche, ouvre son amplificateur, ajuste les différents réglages et teste le son. Lorsque les spectateurs entrent dans la salle, le QL-1 de lumière est déjà allumé, Anne est en place et déjà active sur son amplificateur.	QL-1 : avant l'entrée en salle T : 15 ou 10 min avant le début de la pièce
		Le temps de l'entrée du public n'est pas calculé dans ce document. Les repères de temps débiteront avec le Q de lumière suivant. Le fil de son instrument est très fragile, il faut faire attention à ne pas l'accrocher, le tirer ou plier dessus.	le temps de l'entrée du public n'est pas calculé précisément ici
« ENTRÉE DU PUBLIC », SOLO D'ANNE			
		Consignes. Anne produit des <i>feedbacks</i> avec son instrument et contrôle les sons émis en éloignant ou en rapprochant sa jambe de l'amplificateur, ou en changeant l'angle entre l'instrument et l'amplificateur par une rotation de la jambe. Les <i>feedbacks</i> émis sont différents et variés. Les variations sont obtenues en jouant entre les fréquences (basses à plus aiguës), en jouant avec l'intensité du son, les longueurs des sons émis et les silences.	
		Anne est en relation directe avec le régisseur son. Lorsqu'il envoie des interstices sonores, Anne lui répond avec son instrument. Pendant que le public entre, Anne doit produire un minimum de trois montées sonores plus intenses de <i>feedbacks</i> de basse fréquence. Les sons émis s'apparentent alors à des grondements de moto. À d'autres moments, Anne cherche à émettre des sons très doux qui s'apparentent, pour leur part, au souffle du vent. Par le regard, Anne peut entrer en relation directe avec les spectateurs, leur sourire. Tout au long de l'entrée du public, elle oscille entre cette relation aux spectateurs et la relation aux sons qu'elle produit. Son attention passe de l'une à l'autre, ou aux deux conjointement. Son attitude est ouverte, réceptive et accueillante vis-à-vis le public. Mais elle peut aussi, par moments, s'abandonner complètement aux sons qu'elle produit et s'y engager physiquement. À ces moments-là, son jeu s'apparente à celui d'une musicienne rockeuse qui « tripe » avec son instrument. Les effets de rupture entre l'abandon aux sons et l'ouverture au public par le regard sont recherchés.	

20 - DUOS POUR CORPS ET INSTRUMENTS © Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault

Figure 5. Excerpt from the choreographic tool kit for *Duo pour corps et instruments* by Danièle Desnoyer. Text: Sophie Corriveau and Anne Thériault. Design: Ginelle Chagnon. © Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault, 2015.

3.2 Tableau I: « Bras blanc »

Gilet boutonné, pantalon, chaussures et chaussettes



Le gilet est porté boutonné. Le pantalon, les chaussures et les chaussettes sont les seuls éléments du costume qui ne sont jamais remplacés pendant la pièce. La patine blanchâtre que le port du maquillage produit sur le gilet s'accumule autour de l'épaule et sur le devant du gilet. Chaque jour, il faut l'essuyer un peu pour éviter l'accumulation.

Par contre, il faut faire attention de ne pas patiner de blanc le pantalon.

Maquillage blanc sur les bras et les mains



Le maquillage blanc est appliqué avec une éponge et de l'eau sur l'entière surface des mains et des bras. Il faut s'assurer que l'épaule et l'omoplate sont bien enduites de maquillage, tout comme l'aisselle et le devant de l'épaule afin de ne pas voir la démarcation du maquillage lorsque le danseur porte la veste.

© Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault

BRAS DE PLOMB - 7

Figure 6. Excerpt from the choreographic tool kit for *Bras de plomb* by Paul-André Fortier. Text and design: Ginelle Chagnon. © Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault, 2013.

The challenge of the choreographic tool kit consists in preserving the work without putting it in a box – without shutting it up or making it stiff. It is critical to include subjective items to contextualize the work and make room for intentions: interviews with the choreographer and the performers, notes that preceded the birth of the work, etc. The diversity of elements that make up the tool kit helps to update the work, to disseminate it, to show its complexity and to keep it alive.

INTERNSHIPS AND WORKSHOPS

Educational activities are also at the heart of the Fondation's mandate to disseminate choreographic heritage. In February 2015, through the Regroupement québécois de la danse's professional development program, the Fondation created an internship for professional dancers inspired by Perreault's *Choreographic Installation 1: The Instinct* (1994) (Figure 7). The Fondation also organized several workshops for the uninitiated, an activity first completed in collaboration with the Agora de la Danse (Figures 8-9). In both cases, dissemination depends on the transition from one body to another, in particular the bodies of Ginelle Chagnon and Marc Boivin. Dissemination passes through their bodies and bears witness to their experiences with Jean-Pierre Perreault. In her workshops, Ginelle extensively describes Perreault's words and actions; through her memory, participants are able to imagine the choreographer.



Figure 7. Young dancers participating in Jean-Pierre Perreault's *Choreographic Installation 1: The Instinct* (1994) during an internship of Perreault's repertory for professional performers. Image courtesy of Ariane Dessaulles. © Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault, 2015.

Deriving from memory, dissemination is by necessity encounter and experience. The past meets the present, the past is not a fixed state; it lives in new bodies that appropriate and update the transmitted forms. Transformation is therefore inevitable in the work of dissemination.

DIGITAL PLATFORM ON QUÉBEC'S CHOREOGRAPHIC HERITAGE

As part of the necessary redefinition of its identity, the Fondation is working on creating a new web portal for the promotion and dissemination of Québec's choreographic heritage. But how can a digital platform become the live memory of dance? As artist Sanford Biggers stated:

So the nature of our engagement with the word is fundamental. Look at the virtual word we live in – a hypermediated, virtual reality. [...] Yes it's faster, but at the same time it's so detached that you can sort of do it without investing yourself. We treat communication like a video game: clicking, typing, cutting, pasting, switching back and forth... instant messages, e-mailing, cell phones, all these digital means... it's detachment. Whereas experience is more of an analog form. It takes on a different pace and a different resonance. You have to find a balance between the virtual and real realms. (Biggers cited in Jacobs 2004:2010)

The challenge for the portal is to integrate the temporal experience; to play with time in order to engage the body and the emotions, which runs counter to our digital habits. The question of dissemination involves the creation of narratives, and we need to examine the dissemination process. How the virtual experience is conducted affects the proposed content, comprehension and updating of the past.

So how do you bring already existing archives to life? How can a portal become a space for reflection, development and dissemination of Québec's dance heritage? Using the portal, how do you participate in the creation of Québec's choreographic heritage? First and foremost, without networking and connecting to the dance community and the larger cultural community, all that will be impossible. The portal must be a space for dialogue, a laboratory for memory dependent on ongoing research and experiments, and a laboratory for memory enabling visitors to become actors in dance memory. For memory to be alive/living, it must also encounter the visitor's memory and unconscious.

This desire is not fanciful. The dematerialization of dance is a very old phenomenon. In fact, capturing dance on film is as old as cinema, with the Lumière brothers making the first films of dance in 1895. Dance memory can be both living and virtual at the same time. The portal must be infused with dance, with the movement of dance. It must encourage slowness and deepness. It must provide space for reflection, conversation and connection – a meeting space for people in the dance community and beyond.

Through online exhibitions, web portals, choreographic tool kits and repertory workshops for professional or amateur performers, disseminating dance means giving life and blood to dance. To disseminate dance is to call upon time, impressions and the body, to accept the inherent transformation brought about by all acts of dissemination, and, above all, to recognize the necessary subjective nature of such an adventure.



Figures 8-9. Uninitiated performing excerpts from *Joe* (1983) during the “Vivre Joe” workshop at the Agora de la danse. Image courtesy of Ginelle Chagnon. © Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault, 2014.

NOTES

- 1 The conference brought together some 20 speakers from diverse disciplines and countries: historians, curators, art critics, publishers, professors, doctoral students, artists and researchers from Montreal and Ottawa (Canada); from Lyon, Paris, Strasbourg and Rennes (France); and from Chicago and San Diego (USA).
- 2 See <http://www.williamforsythe.de/essay.html> (accessed September 12, 2014).
- 3 The Master Plan may be viewed at the following address: http://www.quebecdanse.org/images/upload/files/MasterPlan_final_web.pdf (accessed September 14, 2015).

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