CLORE LEADERSHIP

Clore Leadership-AHRC Online Research Library Paper

To what extent is there currently an exchange of resources, human and otherwise, between the dance profession and university dance faculties

Author: Eddie Nixon

Supervisor/s: Chris Bannerman,

ResCen, Middlesex University

Year paper completed: 2005

Leadership Content Theme/s: Hard Skills, Sector Insights

AHRC Subject Area/s: Social Dance

A note on contents:

Since 2005 Clore Leadership and AHRC have partnered to offer a diverse range of cultural leaders the opportunity to produce a piece of extended research relating to leadership and to their specific cultural discipline. These papers, published from 2023 onward on the Clore Leadership-AHRC online research library, reflect an important contribution to the field and we are extremely pleased to make them available to practitioners, scholars, and other interested parties. We recognise that this research library contains a range of terminologies and outlooks: these are reflective of the significant and ongoing changes within the cultural sector over the past 20 years. As such we urge readers to recognise that the authors' thinking and language may have shifted since completion of these papers, or may be in the process of shifting as consequence of their enquiries.

Unless otherwise stated, research papers included in the Clore Leadership-AHRC Online Research Library have not been formally peer reviewed or published in an academic journal.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 2.0 UK: England & Wales License.

Magpies Steal But They Also Sing

by Eddie Nixon

Contents

1.	Motivation	3
2.	Context	5
3.	Methodology	13
4.	Evaluation	15
5.	Summary and Conclusions	24
6.	Bibliography	30

This report was undertaken as part of a Fellowship from the Clore Leadership Programme and supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Thanks to Jane Bacon, Carol Brown, Emlyn Claid, Gill Clarke, Sally Doughty, Mike Huxley, Rosemary Lee and Victoria Marks for their time and expertise. Thanks to my supervisor Professor Christopher Bannerman for his advice, enthusiasm and positive approach and to Sue Hoyle and all at the Clore Leadership Programme for their unfailing support and patience.

1. Motivation

I am at the end of my career as a contemporary dancer. Between 1995 and 2007 I have rehearsed, taught and performed in theatres and dance organisations at home and abroad. The UK has some long established and excellent university dance departments yet only twice in all those years - at the very beginning of my performing career and now as I approach its finale - have I found myself working in projects that were somehow linked to a university. [a]

In between my work has not brought me into touch with the academy and this non-convergence made me curious. That is where this piece of work began.

I thought - and still do - that the knowledge held in those departments was vast and that the environment of discourse and enquiry must be of essential benefit to all dance practice. The body of knowledge accumulated through the study and research of performance, teaching and choreographic practice must be producing insights of value to me as a professional and to my colleagues. Yet I had neither taken nor been given much opportunity to benefit from this accumulated wisdom.

There are at least three ways this might have happened. I might have received my undergraduate education in a university but I didn't - I went to a conservatoire. I might have enrolled on a postgraduate or doctorate degree in a university but I didn't - my MA was also from a conservatoire and I have been too busy working to consider a PhD up to this point. Or I might have worked for a choreographer who was affiliated to a university in some way but this has been the case, as mentioned above, on just two occasions. What about all the years and all the choreographers in between? I have worked for some of the UK's brightest choreographic talents. Yet rarely close to the walls of the academy.

The first two being matters of personal choice or circumstance it was the third of these possibilities that interested me. I know there are choreographers working within universities - the work of some of them is well known. The names and work of others I came across were unfamiliar. In both cases I wondered how they came to be there, what enables and encourages them to continue making work in that environment and how this work relates to the stages on which I have danced?

Eighteen months ago I began a new phase of my career. I am now employed at The Place, one of the UK's most renowned contemporary dance organisations, as Associate Director. My remit is to help choose the programme of professional dance performances

[a] In 1995 I was a dancer in a work called 'Chaotic Conjunctions' choreographed by Christopher Bannerman as part of his PhD, made at Middlesex University and performed at Lillian Baylis Theatre, London. Between 2002 and 2007 I have sporadically worked on a project called 'The Suchness of Hennie and Eddie' choreographed by Rosemary Lee, a fellow of ResCen at Middlesex University.

presented in the theatre and to oversee a programme of professional development activities for dancers and choreographers. This new position has sharpened the direction of my research. Inherent in the job is a responsibility to nurture the development of talented choreographers emerging onto the contemporary dance scene. This involves understanding and providing the resources and organisation necessary to make the work happen alongside watching the resulting performances and assessing their merit.
Many of the artists I work with struggle. They struggle to find the resources to make the work. They struggle to make the work good and then they struggle to find an audience for the work good or otherwise. Many of them are young and full of new ideas and questions. Rather than being tied to any particular technical aesthetic their work is a collision of influences from dance and wider culture. They grapple to make sense of these broad influences and present them as their view of their world through contemporary dance.

My job is to help them be the best choreographers they can be. To do this they need the right resources and they need to develop skills of reflection that enable them to deepen the sophistication of their work. They need to learn to ask themselves probing questions, find the answers and then ask questions that probe still deeper. In short they need to become highly skilled researchers. I know that universities are the home of research expertise so the question arose: can they help these artists rise to this challenge?

Organisations, such as mine, and universities are not natural bedfellows - they are separated by funding, geography and aspiration. The artists with whom I work are not naturally promiscuous and rarely do I find myself working with a choreographer who is also intimate with the academy.

Dance in academia and professional dance appear to have almost parallel existences. There are only a few choreographers who successfully hop between these two worlds and understanding their experiences is obviously critical if I am to understand whether more young choreographic artists could gain from practising within the academy. What might be the benefits, what might stand in their way and what might they stand to lose? The answers to these questions might suggest ways to deepen my understanding of the relationship between HE and the professional choreographer and its future.

2. Context

Scope

In this report I am considering the work of choreographers working in contemporary dance. This is because choreographers working within universities in the UK are predominantly making work in that idiom. It may be that what is discussed is applicable to other dance genres but I will leave such deductions to the reader.

I have also chosen to write about choreographers rather than dancers. In UK contemporary dance, the choreographer as the author of the work is the leading voice of the form. The majority of contemporary dance companies in the UK are 'choreographer led', founded by and existing only as a vehicle for the work of one individual who often names the company after her or himself. By making this choice I am certainly not intending to reinforce the clichéd idea that dancers are just unthinking tools for the choreographer to manipulate. As a dancer I would regard myself as much as an intellectual collaborator as a physical one. I have simply chosen to focus on choreographers. Recently, the term 'dance artists' has been coined to account for the fact that many dancers enjoy simultaneous careers as choreographers and teachers. The scope of this report certainly encompasses multi-skilled practitioners of this sort. In fact the choice highlights a question that emerges as a theme during the interviews undertaken. Where does knowledge lie in dance – in the mind or in the body?

Where are choreographers educated?

Conservatoires and University Dance Departments

I was educated in a conservatoire. My ambition was to be a dancer and maybe a choreographer. This is primarily what conservatoires do. They train interpretive dance artists with a focus on developing technical expertise. Most also deliver training and opportunities in choreography within their curriculum and in teaching both technique and choreography the emphasis tends towards practice rather than theory. On university undergraduate courses the balance changes and in general the theoretical component outweighs the practical. The emphasis is more on developing intellectual rigour than practical prowess.

There are also differences between the type of students who enrol on a university or conservatoire course. The selection process of conservatoires favours students who already possess substantial technical ability and who have the physical attributes necessary for a career as a professional dancer. University entrance requirements are physically less stringent, yet more demanding academically. This is not to say that universities are all brains and conservatoires all brawn – most conservatoires now offer

BA degree courses and many excellent dancers are found in universities but there is a widely acknowledged polarisation**.**

In examining the education of dancers and choreographers one must also consider the world of work they enter after their formal training ceases. Dance is a physical job. Even if it is an intellectually challenging activity it does not generally involve writing. Thus even if dancers have been academically successful prior to their undergraduate training and even if they enrol on a vocational course with a strong academic component, once they start work it is likely they will no longer have to write about what they do. I can vouch for this on a personal level – this report is the first substantial written task I have undertaken for twelve years. Dancers are not used to writing. Even when choreographers write funding applications they often get administrators to help. This is important when one considers that to engage with a university choreographers will usually be required to write about what they do.

Dominance of Conservatoire Trained Choreographers - A Personal Theory

If one scrutinises the body of choreographers whose work has achieved public acclaim and determines where they trained then, a few noteworthy exceptions aside (e.g. Wayne McGregor), the vast majority of those who studied in the UK will have trained at a conservatoire rather than a university. I do not believe this to be a coincidence but a straightforward result of the difference in the focus of the training. The support and presentation of contemporary dance in the UK is largely controlled by the country's dance agencies and theatres. Many of these have platforms to present the work of emerging choreographers and it is from these showcases that talented choreographers are usually identified. Those whose work is good enough to suggest they have real potential are then helped onto the professional development ladder these agencies provide. Your chances of making an eye-catching piece of choreography are enhanced if you are collaborating with excellent dancers and as previously explained these tend to congregate in the conservatoires. So if you trained in a conservatoire your professional network gives you increased access to the best performers. Thus you have an improved chance of making work good enough to get noticed and your career taking off. In addition, successful choreographers tend to employ the most technically proficient dancers, who tend to be conservatoire trained. So these dancers are learning the skills and gaining the experience and networks that will enhance their chances of success should they choose to become choreographers later in their career. At which point they'll probably collaborate with dancers who've trained at a conservatoire and the cycle will go on.

Location is also important. Conservatoires such as London Contemporary Dance School, Northern School of Contemporary Dance and Laban are in cities with thriving professional dance ecologies - they even have a busy dance theatre in the same building. Their students are able to build connections with promoters and other professionals even before they graduate. Students on many of university undergraduate dance courses – De Montfort, Surrey, Northampton, Chichester, Dartington, and Middlesex - are not surrounded by a critical mass of dance professionals other than their own teaching

faculty. Despite some regional links and partnerships they tend to be removed from the professional dance scene.

Thus those who study at a conservatoire would seem to have an advantage over their university trained counterparts in pursuing a choreographic career because they are closer to the presentation networks and have access to some of the most talented performers. This is not to say it is a closed shop – the pathways for choreographers (funding, professional development programmes) are open to all and some university-trained choreographers carve successful choreographic careers in the professional arena. But the origination of the majority of high profile choreographers from the conservatoire set up is significant in terms of this report. Does the type of education received by most young choreographers affect their ability to engage with choreographic practice in the academy later in their career?

A Difficult Distinction: Professional vs. Academic

In reviewing literature and conducting interviews for this report, the terms 'professional' and 'academic' were comfortably used by more or less all sources to distinguish between work made within a university and that made outside. They are not the most accurate descriptors - to be a professional means you get paid to do something and clearly choreographers working in universities are paid for what they do and are therefore eminently professional. For this report I will follow the lead of others and use these terms since it is important to distinguish between these two structures somehow. In fact the distinction is drawn not by where the work is made but by who funds it. Work made within universities - 'academic' work - is funded by the department or the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) under the banner of Practice As Research (PAR) and is assessed through the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). In England, 'professional' work is funded and assessed by the Arts Council England (ACE), regional and national dance agencies, theatres, trusts and foundations or the artists themselves. All of these funding bodies and organisations use completely different criteria for deciding which individuals and work they support.

Who Funds Choreography?

The AHRC, The RAE and PAR

Universities are constructed to accumulate and disseminate knowledge. This is achieved by undergraduate teaching and postgraduate research. In the UK, the government funds university research in the performing arts through the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) [1]. Any PhD and post-doctorate choreographic practice in a university will usually be funded directly or indirectly by this public body, which is set up specifically to fund 'research'. The AHRC's definition of research is primarily concerned with processes, rather than outputs. This definition states that in order to be considered eligible for support, applications must:

- 'Define a series of research questions, issues or problems that will be addressed in the course of the research. It must also define its aims and objectives in terms of seeking to enhance knowledge and understanding relating to the questions, issues or problems to be addressed.'

- 'Specify a research context for the questions, issues or problems to be addressed. You must specify why it is important that these particular questions, issues or problems should be addressed; what other research is being or has been conducted in this area; and what particular contribution this project will make to the advancement of creativity, insights, knowledge and understanding in this area.'

- 'Specify the research methods for addressing and answering the research questions, issues or problems. You must state how, in the course of the research project, you will seek to answer the questions, address the issues or solve the problems. You should also explain the rationale for your chosen research methods and why you think they provide the most appropriate means by which to address the research questions, issues or problems.' [3]

In considering research in the creative arts, the AHRC seek to draw 'a distinction between creative activities and practice in themselves on the one hand, and scholarly research on the other. Not all creative activity and practice - even of the highest quality - constitutes scholarly research, and much scholarly research in the creative and performing arts involves no such activity at all.'[4] In establishing its legitimacy as a piece of research they maintain that 'the key requirement is that the work should bring about enhancements in knowledge and understanding in the discipline, or in related disciplinary areas……..Work that results purely from the creative or professional development of the artist, however distinguished, is unlikely to fulfil the requirement of scholarly research'.[4]

Whilst the AHRC is responsible for determining what research receives funding and what constitutes research there is a separate mechanism for assessing the quality of research produced. This is called the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and is conducted by the UK's higher education funding bodies. It's purpose is to assess the quality of research undertaken by the higher education institution and the to distribute the public funds proportionately based on those results. The higher the quality of the research the more money the university receives. Assessment is carried out by panels of academics drawn from universities across the country. The next RAE takes place in 2008 and for its purposes research is understood to be:

'...original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding. It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce and industry, as well as to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances and artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to

produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction...' [2]

This suggests it is the advancement of knowledge and the contribution of new insights to the field that are important**.** The RAE measures the quality of this contribution in terms of its significance, originality and intellectual rigour and also the extent to which it influences and benefits that field of practice and achieves recognition within it.

The definitions employed by AHRC and RAE refer to both theoretical and practical research. The acceptance of practice as a valid form of research in the performing arts is relatively new. Not until the early 1990s were practical PhDs permitted and elsewhere in the world they are still disallowed. The past fifteen years has seen the growth of a thriving culture of Practice As Research (PAR) in the performing arts in the UK and a brief history of PAR and the issues surrounding it can be read on the website of PARIP (Practice as Research in Performance)[5] but broadly the growth has allowed the formalising of 'an institutional acceptance of performance practices and processes as arenas in which knowledge might be opened.'[5] Nevertheless the AHRC and RAE criteria still apply to PAR. When practising choreography within the academic sector 'research' is the imperative.

Most choreographers, whether working in the professional or academic sector, will describe some stage of their process as a research phase. In her paper 'Artists in the Academy: Reflections on Artistic Practice as Research'[6] Rubidge attempts to clarify some of the different kinds of PAR that exist and the various terms used to describe it. She also adds the descriptor 'Research into artistic practice, through artistic practice' to encompass the kind of research undertaken by groundbreaking choreographers in the professional rather than academic world such as Martha Graham, William Forsythe, Lloyd Newson. There is, she argues, no doubt that these artists have 'pushed the boundaries of the discipline forward ', but they 'have never become involved in articulating their reflections in conventional theoretical terms'. I would add that most choreographers approach their work with a set of questions. All have a context – their own history and previous work – and all have a personal methodology. What many of them lack are the writing skills to translate this into a language that satisfies academic committees. Can universities themselves help choreographers develop this kind of articulacy and how else might it benefit their work and the profession?

AHRC Fellowships in the Creative and Performing Arts

The growth and support of PAR in the UK is indicative of the recognition by academia that experienced practitioners have a great deal to offer the research environment. The AHRC has developed various initiatives aimed at tapping in to experiential knowledge. In particular their Fellowships in the Creative and Performing Arts [4] are specifically aimed at supporting artists (defined for this purpose as producers of original creative work), who have no substantial track record in academic research. The fellowships pay the artists a full or part-time salary for between two and five years to work as research fellows in a university and they aim to open up the research environment to artists.

Nevertheless the basic criteria for establishing the legitimacy of a piece of creative work as research remain the exactly the same as those for other AHRC funded research described above. This leads me to question whether such a scheme is truly accessible to the majority of artists given the writing skills necessary to apply.

Arts Council of England

In the professional sector, the Arts Council of England is still the main funding body for choreographers in England looking to pursue their practice. Whenever they want to make a piece of work or develop an idea it is to ACE that they generally turn to subsidise this activity. ACE funds the work of individual choreographers through its Grants for the Arts programme.[15] This has seven strategic objectives:

- Help more people to take part in the arts
- Provide creative opportunities for children and young people
- Help the development of artists, arts organisations and the creative economy
- Involve the arts and artists in creating vibrant communities
- Allow artists from this country to work internationally, international artists to work in England, and artists from here and abroad to work with each other
- Create opportunities to promote and celebrate diversity
- Improve the performance and productivity of arts organisations and the arts sector

Applications are assessed against five criteria:

- The artistic quality of the activity or its ongoing effect on artistic practice (or both).
- How the activity will be managed and its ongoing effect.
- How realistic the activity is financially, and its future effect.
- How the public will benefit from the activity, immediately or in the long term.
- The contribution the activity makes to our aims for Grants for the arts.

Unsurprisingly these criteria and aims are entirely different from the AHRC's but the process of application is similarly stringent. Significantly for ACE applications one must describe the activity and its outcome in detail at the application stage and this outcome must have significant public benefit. One can apply to ACE to support research but since the end result must be known and there must be public benefit then this research usually must form part of a strategic artistic plan that leads to a specific outcome. ACE's Grants For The Arts scheme is therefore a product driven scheme.

Dance Organisations

National Dance Agencies, like my own, and other dance organisations are also engaged in the support of professional choreographers. This is usually either by presenting work or by offering cash or in-kind resources to support the creation of new work. Clearly in both these cases the expectation is that there will be some kind of performance outcome.

Some agencies also provide support to choreographers researching new ideas. But they can usually only afford to offer minimal resources – a short amount of time or a small amount of money. Often this research will still be attached to an expectation that the artists will bring the eventually resulting work back to the supporting organisation for performance. In general the application process to benefit from such help, if indeed there is one, will be informal or relatively simple by comparison to either the AHRC's or ACE's procedures.

Funding Driven Imperatives

Regardless of whether they are working in the academic or professional sector, choreographers need resources to make their work and that means funding. The various sources of potential funding in both sectors, as described briefly above, have different criteria to which choreographers must adhere if they are to get hold of the money they need to make their work. This leads me to wonder what effect these criteria and the restrictions they imply have on the process of making work and on the work itself? How do the different imperatives of the funders affect choreographers working in either sector?

Many choreographers already working in academia actually rely on funding from both the AHRC and ACE. The Arts Council are happy to fund projects lead by choreographers receiving AHRC support – they encourage such partnership funding. Thus these choreographers must work within the criteria of both funders simultaneously. What are the advantages this situation and could more choreographers benefit from being in such a position?

ResCen and Choreographic Lab

There are already several alternative models for curating different kind of university-artist relationships.

Established in 1999 at Middlesex University, ResCen, the Centre for Research into Creation in the Performing Arts, is 'a multi-disciplinary, artist–driven research centre. It is designed to be a bridge between academia and the practices of professional performing artists.'[16] ResCen has pioneered a completely different approach to working with artists 'placing artistic practice in the context of research' and recognising 'the investigative nature and rigour of the processes which artists employ.' Among its stated aims is the desire 'to explore and challenge traditional hypothesis-centred and critical-analytical research methodologies established within the university' and 'to redefine notions of research within the 'economies of professional creative practice' and the university.' ResCen is supported by Middlesex University, the RAE and NESTA.

The Choreographic Lab [17] was founded in 1996 a practice-centred research environment for movement based researchers. The lab provides 'a forum in which choreographic issues, creative methodologies, and individual goals can be examined, explored and

experienced. Participants are given the time, space and resources to research and a venue for sharing practice, discussion and reflection. The current project is called 'Articulating Dance' and it brings together dance and performance makers who work professionally and in higher education to think about articulating creative process.

Both these projects buck the trend in terms of the way they seek to engage with artists and challenge the existing models of PAR. The experiences of those practitioners involved might provide great insights into the benefits and challenges offered by such innovative frameworks for university-artist partnerships and their opinions have been sought as part of the research for this report and will be described later.

3. Methodology

Themes to explore

By establishing some thoughts on the educational background of many young choreographers and looking at the funding frameworks in both the professional and university sector a few themes emerged that I believe needed exploration:

Articulating work : Does the academic environment present particular challenges or opportunities in terms of reflective, verbal or writing skills?
Funding criteria : how do the requirements of the different funders affect the process and environment for making work?
University benefits : Given the developments in PAR what are the advantages for the university of the presence of artists?
Site of knowledge : To what extent is academia interested in the knowledge that is held within the body of experienced dance practitioners ?

Consultation

Some writing has already been undertaken on this subject, mostly under the umbrella of investigating PAR. The pursuit of 'practice as research' grew in importance in the UK throughout the 1990s and the various academic bodies wrestled with its scope and definitions throughout the decade. In 2000 a five-year project named PARIP – Practice as Research in Performance – received support from the AHRB to investigate the issues that had emerged. Research accumulated by PARIP has proved an excellent source of material, in particular, the interviews conducted with choreographer/academics about their PAR activity during 2004. [7,8,9] The first section of Rubidge's article, 'Artists in The Academy', [6] also contains some interesting reflection on the legitimacy of creative practice as research.

Of those professional choreographers who practise their craft within universities or are engaged in university-funded projects there is writing on their creative results but I was not able to find any reflection on the practicalities of the experience. In order to attain a better understanding of the differences and benefits for any choreographers practising in universities I have sought out the opinions of some of these practitioners by interviewing them myself. Five choreographers were chosen – Jane Bacon, Carol Brown, Emlyn Claid, Gill Clarke and Rosemary Lee. All have experience, to varying degrees, of working in both the academic and professional sector. The interviews were conducted without a fixed questionnaire but instead by encouraging the interviewees to reflect on the themes above and on their journey towards and practice within the academy. In addition I have used interviews conducted by PARIP mentioned above.

Youth versus Experience

My interest is to consider how younger, talented choreographers might benefit from working in the academic sector but those I've interviewed would not, I believe, necessarily consider themselves young choreographers. I chose this group because they have substantial experience in both the professional and academic sector and are well positioned to reflect on both environments. This might seem a contradiction – seeking out the opinion of the older generation and hoping it applies to the young and I am aware of this pitfall. Unfortunately I do not believe there are presently many young choreographers, possessing both professional significance and substantial academic experience, to have offered a more youthful perspective. Perhaps the report will offer a clue as to why this is the case.

My own role in evaluating the material is also underpinned by direct professional experience. My career as a dance artist enables me to offer reflection on making work in a professional context. This experience was gained both with young and talented and the mature and renowned, and occasionally, as mentioned in Section 1, with those dabbling in the academic context. More recently my role as a curator and facilitator for young dance artists affords me an acute understanding of their skills and their concerns, enabling me to speculate about how they would respond to the challenges of working in a different context.

4. Evaluation

The interviews and other research yielded many ideas and reflections on the complex relationship between professional choreography and its practise within HE and outside it. In this section I have sought to collate these ideas under distinct themes that seemed to emerge.

Research Questions, Context and Field of Knowledge

In the introduction, the criteria used by the AHRC to classify work as research were outlined. The ongoing discussion around Practice as Research within academic circles and the work of projects like PARIP has also been highlighted. The guidelines and much of the debate are concerned with identifying what turns a creative act into a piece of research.

For choreographers working within academia this sometimes presents a problem. Brown[12] observes that to satisfy the research imperative in the way the AHRC demands you have to identify a theoretical and conceptual question. Yet creatively the act of choreography 'is a much more personal thing – it is about where your life is and what is going on.' Any question might be original for you at that point in your artistic life but this doesn't necessarily give it academic credence. For her, this creates a kind of 'paradox' where you need to explain how work is innovative and contributing to the field of knowledge yet the work 'creates its own universe of rules, feelings and context.' The work must 'communicate with the canon for academic validity yet speak to an audience on its own terms' [12]

This need to formulate questions, theorise and contextualise the work highlights a question over exactly where knowledge resides in dance practice. The AHRC is keen to promote PAR in the performing arts because it provides a way to access 'experiential' knowledge. In the case of dance, much of this 'experiential' knowledge is contained within the actual bodies of dancers and choreographers. One of the possibilities of practical research in dance is to tap into this. As Bacon puts it – ' You are contesting the normal field of knowledge by trying to articulate new knowledge that resides in the body.' [14] To translate this physical knowledge into the vocabulary of academia is a significant hurdle that is discussed in the section on language below.

Other choreographers seem less concerned about this conflict between creative and research questions. Rubidge is adamant that 'artistic questions can be research questions and these can just be mediated through an academic institution. There doesn't have to be a difference.' [7] She considers her research to be artistic. Rubidge classifies research under two banners; 'hypothesis' led research, in which you test a pre-formulated question and 'discovery' led research which has a speculative question, problem or idea but no defined pathway to the answer and only professional experience as a guide. She believes that her research and that of many other choreographers falls into this second category. [6] Here questions emerge gradually as the creative journey progresses and a specific focus eventually emerges. Clarke describes artists as tending to behave like 'magpies' stealing

from anywhere without needing to understand the source. [11] This contrasts with the academic demand to pursue one source until you know every detail – it is, Clarke says, a clash between popular and academic cultures. [11] Appropriating something, intuitively, without fully understanding it is seen in academic circles as a superficial approach. But Rubidge argues that it is, in fact, a very scientific process. Intuitive observations, decisions and responses are not irrational but shaped by prior experiences. Their implications become conscious later. This allows a research process where ideas form and are tested, which gives rise to new ideas and questions which are then, in turn, also examined. [6]

Does the type of work done by artists in the professional world sit comfortably within these academic models of research? Whilst dance artists might not be formalising their research questions and context, both Claid and Rubidge are adamant that the work of mature professional choreographers is valid and valuable research. Claid says:

'They are incredibly brilliant people. Thinking and writing about their work in a way that is utterly and completely academic. It is in the work itself. The theories and philosophies that are in our bodies because of how we move, if we are given the chance to look at that ……it is really exciting' [10]

Rubidge goes further:

'I take the position that professional artists of this calibre who work outside the confines of academe are undertaking artistic research which is of equal, perhaps greater, value to the 'advancement of knowledge' and/or 'generation of significant insights' in the art form as the creative research of those who work within academic confines….I believe that, as artistic practice as research is corralled into the circle of academic research, we are in serious danger of marginalising genuinely innovative artistic practice which takes place outside the confines of the academy. The institutional context in which artistic research takes place should not be a criterion of worth. I would argue that it is this mode of research which lies at the centre of the development of genuinely new modes of artistic practice and genuinely new artistic insights.' [6]

Nevertheless, for the present, the AHRC demands the formulation of specific research questions. So what purpose do they serve in the studio? Most of those interviewed seemed to prefer to leave the questions outside the door as otherwise they can tend to stifle what goes on inside. Brown thinks that 'in the studio it is about the people and that a research imperative is not the best way to approach what you do there.' [12]

Claid extends this caution to the use of theory:

'You can have core ideas and core theories but never take them into the studio. The mistake people make when they go into academia is that they get obsessed with the theories and when you try and take these into the studio you are working with a deadness straight away. You are not working with what is in the studio. Try to get people to work

with what is in the studio – performers, images and ideas. Outside of this find the parallels there might be with the theory.' [10]

This is not to say that those interviewed are suggesting questions are a waste of time. There was a unanimous feeling that the process of learning to articulate work in the verbal and written language of academia was enormously beneficial to them as artists and that it 'deepens your thought process in the studio.'[13] Brown thinks that 'the calling to account of research questions and demand to legitimise research might be a good thing – it focuses the mind.'[12] Rather it is the process of pinning work down to specific questions and the relevance of these to what happens in the studio that is more problematic.

Perhaps it is just a question of reframing how you approach the work for a different audience – you have to play the game. In the same way that work has to be described in a particular way to satisfy the Arts Council's criteria and priorities, so it must be framed in a specific way for the AHRC. As Brown says ' the work of the heart is not the thing to put in a research proposal anymore than an ACE application. But you mustn't lose touch with it else what are you doing.' [12]

Language and Articulacy

The difficulty in formulating research questions and contextualising work reveals one of the biggest challenges for choreographers when engaging with the academy. To many, the language of Higher Education is a foreign one but one that is necessary to learn in order to communicate with bodies like the AHRC and the rest of the academy.

Bacon suggests that this is a particular problem for dance artists – they spend all of their lives dancing, not learning to talk about it. Often they have less formal education than contemporaries in other disciplines and this process of learning to articulate what you do can be intimidating for those whose focus has been on using their bodies. [14] Academia is also filled with preconceptions about dancers and their ability to engage intellectually with their subject. Claid says 'There is a stigma attached to dancers in academia, a snobbery about dancers in university because dancers don't think and the people who think about dance are writers.' [10]

Part of the complication in articulating choreographic practice lies in the act itself, where so many decisions are based not on theorising but on intuition. Even if we accept Rubidge's ideas that this is a rational process (see above) one still has to be able to explain it in words for the purposes of the AHRC's assessment criteria and this is difficult. Helen Bailey observes that 'sometimes the point at which you are being most creatively productive is the point you can articulate the least – it is instinctive.'[9] The danger is that increased articulacy and theorising might encourage a more intellectual approach and less intuition. For Rosemary Lee it 'can take work into the world of words that might not be relevant to it.' [13]

In trying to learn a language that speaks to the academy and is still rooted in their practice, the reaction of choreographers engaged in PAR has been to play to their strengths. As Bacon puts it:

'It's not about making sense of things but finding other models of articulating creative process. You can work with the body to develop an articulation that produces a much richer language than dry, logical theorising.'[14]

Clarke also describes a process of trying to find a language to talk about work that is closer to the human experience of doing it than traditional theoretical language. [11] Traditionally, part of the purpose of a PhD is to train researchers so that people can develop their writing skills over three or more years and practice based PhD's are no exception. Universities are geared up for this by running research-training courses. But for artists like Lee, her engagement with academia has not been through the usual research degree model but as a member of ResCen at Middlesex University. She has had to learn to 'write philosophically about the work and unpick the mystery of instinct'. [13] Along with Clarke, who also has no doctorate level degree, she has found this process enormously beneficial. Clarke claims that you can 'learn to articulate practice in a confident way without compromising or losing the intuitive aspect of what you do. This makes people better advocates for dance, which is to the benefit of the whole field.'[11] This process of learning to write and speak fluently can also feed the work itself. Bacon observes that 'finding strategies to talk about the work actually helps people when they are back in the studio. It can reignite something.' [14]

Those choreographers and academics already versed in the language of the academy are able to play a role in helping those that aren't. Both Bacon and Brown mentor other artists through the process of writing applications or locating the context for work in the way higher education demands. As Bacon says, they can 'facilitate the journey from 'doer' to 'thinker and doer' by asking the right questions. Through their experience they can help other choreographers name the cultural experiences that shape them and relate them to the world of theory where there are often already models to describe what they are doing.

Process

The academy may throw up challenges to choreographers in terms of research questions, context, theory and language. Yet these are all somehow outside of the actual practice itself. They are concerned with the intellectual space around the work but not what is actually made and how this is achieved. There are, it seems, other more 'material' benefits to making work within the academic framework. For younger artists these might be especially significant given that early in their careers resources are so hard to come by.

Resources and Collaborators

Perhaps researching in a university might conjure up an image of a scholar perspiring over piles of books in a silent library but it seems that at least in the creative arts, universities foster development of something more co-operative. Lee feels her experience at ResCen has lessened the sense of isolation and insularity she feels in the dance world. She feels 'part of a larger community exploring the human condition and creativity.'[13] Brown has found that becoming part of networks outside of dance has been intellectually stimulating. Universities actively support the kind of interdisciplinary work that results from this kind of intellectual meeting place. Often this work can be incredibly resource heavy even at the developmental stage but technical equipment, expertise and the spaces to try ideas are all readily available to those working within universities. [7,14] These are the kind of resources to which it is very hard to gain access as a freelancer, especially when you just want to experiment.

Time

Perhaps the greatest difference between the professional and academic environments for choreographers are the timescales involved in making a piece of work. In academia, three years is not an uncommon amount of time for a research project and the same timeframe often applies to university-based practical research in the performing arts. In the professional world three months would be seen as a long rehearsal period. This is not to say that professional choreographers only spend three months on a piece from idea to completion or that academic choreographers spend three years in a studio with dancers. The difference is that choreographers developing a piece within the academy are paid and have other resources at their disposal during the research and development phase of a project. There is also no certainty or pressure that whatever they make will be made public allowing them to be much more adventurous in their exploration.

Funding for research in the professional world is rare or frugal. Commonly, it consists of a couple of weeks where the studio may be provided free but the choreographers and dancers will usually be working for nothing. Even the best-funded dance companies can only afford very short periods for choreographers to try out ideas before they get down to a rehearsal/production period.

All of those interviewed during this research mention time as the single biggest advantage of creating within the academic context. As Brown puts it 'being part of a university doesn't necessarily make the work better but the extra time does.' [12]

Questions not Answers

The advantage of this extended time frame for creation is linked to the model of research that universities encourage. You have to start out with questions but not product or answers. Thus 'you can pursue one avenue of enquiry over an extended period of time.

You don't need to know the outcome at the beginning. You have a set of questions and they set you off on a route.' [11] The process is about the line of enquiry and not the product. The demands of funders' and promoters' in the professional world usually means that any kind of creative enquiry has to be packaged with a view to a product. The academic research model means that it is the practice that determines the outcome rather than the pre-determined end result. Universities simply 'provide time for proper artistic research.' [6]

Within our UK arts culture, pressure to make work for commercial or instrumental ends is becoming increasingly prevalent and the status of an artist is uncertain. The academic model seems to offer a healthy opposition to this by not demanding a fixed product or outcome but by placing a premium on the quality of investigation. Lee feels this is a huge vote of confidence in the individual – 'you get paid to be who you are. It values your work and what you think. This raises self-esteem.'[13]

Funding

Listening to artists speak about the work leads to the unsurprising conclusion that the situation for making work is determined not by them, or even by the organisations and educational institutions that provide the facilities, but by those who fund it. In a sense this is a model of arts patronage that is hundreds of years old. In the case of the two biggest patrons considered in this report – the AHRC and ACE – their criteria for support are very different (see Section 2). The contrast felt by artists seems to centre on the product driven imperative of the Arts Council versus the research driven model of the AHRC. In ACE applications you need to know what you are going to make before you start and you have to do what you say you were going to. Even if you are fortunate enough to secure support for 'research' it will be for a very short period and will almost certainly have to be linked to a long-term strategy with a specific goal in mind. If the working process of professional artists does fit under the banner of 'discovery' led research, as described above, then the 'discovery' element generally has to happen quickly and cheaply. This is entirely different from the AHRC funded research, driven model. Rubidge describes how she starts with "I wonder what would happen if….' [7] but has no idea where she is going. Clarke also found that during her two years with Choreographic Lab at Northampton her research led has led her very far from the place she originally expected [11]. The academic world is the only place where you can go on such a journey over such a length of time. If you know what you are going to make before you start then is it really the iterative process of research?

However as has already been discussed, all of those choreographers interviewed for this work life live a double life as clients of both ACE and the AHRC. If the long process of research allowed by the AHRC leads an artist to the place where they are looking to produce a performative outcome of some sort then usually choreographers turn to ACE for supplementary support during the production phase of a project. The resources offered by the AHRC and university – studio space, technical resources and a wage for the choreographer provide excellent evidence of cash support that strengthens an Arts

Council application. Both Brown [12] and Rubidge [7] frequently fund their work in this way, and the Choreographic Lab is supported by the Arts Council of England and Northampton University [14]. This is basically partnership funding between professional and academic bodies although there is little evidence that they collaborate in any kind of strategic way to deliver it. At present, this potential to get the best of both worlds is only utilised by those few choreographic artists already working in academia. I would suggest it is only attainable by those who have achieved sufficient recognition within academia to secure the AHRC support that then allows them to write strong ACE applications. As discussed above, the writing and theoretical skills necessary to succeed in academia take time to acquire and many choreographers do not have the kind of educational background to do this without help. So this framework of dual support is not accessible to all. It is a position of privilege that most artists dream of. Rubidge in considering her situation as an academic practitioner says:

" I do what I do and I get paid to do it in the academy. I wouldn't get paid as much to do it outside but I'd do it anyway.' [7]

Outcomes, Assessment and Audience

The evidence accumulated suggests that funding source exerts a strong influence over the outcome and the way it is assessed. For a project funded by the AHRC the outcome from a practical research project can take many forms. It might be a performance, a DVD, a website, a paper, a seminar or conference or any combination of the above. The breadth of dissemination is important because this helps ensure the work has the opportunity to influence other practitioners working in the same field – a key requirement of AHRC funding. This evidence of the work must also be accompanied by a three hundred word written statement outlining the research questions, methodology and the significance of the work.

This extensive documentation is different from a project in the professional sector that is Arts Council funded. Here the performance need only be supplemented by a simple activity report. The Arts Council's objectives are underpinned by their remit to prove public benefit for what they fund. The degree to which the project meets their objectives is largely assessed at the application stage. So usually it becomes important to commit to a public performance outcome and describe it in substantial detail (what the piece is about, where it will be shown, what resources are needed) before you start in order to be a funding priority. In a practical, academic research project the outcome is not known before the project commences and a performative event is not necessarily what the funder expects. They want evidence that a useful and valid piece of research has taken place and that it has been disseminated. The proof of this might, as described above, take a variety of forms.

Whilst writing three hundred words might not seem too onerous a task, this need to document and justify the work is a big difference between the professional and academic contexts. On the one hand, Lee feels that the requirement to present your work in many

different formats can be beneficial to your practice and make you reconsider what is really important to you in performance.[13] On the other, Brown is concerned that 'you have to keep convincing academic committees of the legitimacy of research which means you have to keep going back to research questions.' Once again the concern is that obsession with research questions might have a tendency to 'flatten' the work.[12]

The two environments also differ significantly in terms of audience and assessment. Work that arises from practice as research within a university might be presented to an audience but the strength of its public appeal is not an important criterion in measuring its academic worth. The AHRC and RAE use committees of peers for assessment. The outcome, in the professional context, is judged by an audience of critics, fellow professionals and the public, for whom research questions, context and contribution to the field of knowledge might be of interest but are not usually the primary concern. Success might be measured by numbers of tickets sold, by newspaper reviews, by the extent of the subsequent touring opportunities, by the enthusiasm of the audience response and by the immeasurable 'word of mouth' interest created.

This does not mean it is impossible to achieve both academic validity and sit in the public arena. In recent years a few choreographers – Emlyn Claid, Rosemary Butcher, Carol Brown – have successfully straddled both worlds. Bacon points out that many 'academic' choreographers don't want to dissociate from the public context because it is acceptance there that 'gives them artistic validity.' [14] Once again, it seems that for those artists able to achieve this academic/professional balancing-act there is enormous benefit. For even given the demanding necessity to constantly document and legitimise for research purposes the advantage of making work in a university is that it is process, not outcome driven. This means that by the time an audience gets to see the result they are witnessing something that has developed organically rather than something that was described on paper before anyone set foot in a studio.

The Presence of Artists and Benefits to The University

Those interviewed spent a good deal of time discussing the differences and relative benefits for artists working in either sector. The enthusiasm of academic funders to support PAR and artists as researchers suggests that some benefit to the institutions themselves have been identified.

The historical acceptance of PAR as a valid form of research was discussed in the Context section above. Among the criteria used in the RAE to rate the quality of research output the degree of international significance of a piece of work is important. Thus choreographers, such as Carol Brown [12] whose work is presented and known internationally make a valuable contribution to the departments who support them and this can help to secure future funding.

There are other less measurable contributions choreographers can make. They provide an opportunity for academic dance writers to see someone in the throes of making work.

Claid says that ‘the creative work of dance writers is creating writing about the work. It is a parasitical and creative relationship to the work.’ [10] But they do need work to study and the presence in their department of practising choreographers provides it.

Choreographers also bring other artists – dancers and collaborators with them. As Brown says, they make the inward looking world of the campus ‘porous’. [12] This influx of artists bring with them a different kind of knowledge that is not just intellectual but experiential. They have a knowledge about the body and within their bodies that is very different from the theories of academics. Their presence enables practice to influence theory in a way the AHRC is keen to promote.

As discussed above, this also exerts an influence over the language used to discuss dance. Clarke has observed that the presence of ‘professionals without academic background can refresh the dialogue of those that have one.’[11]

This meeting of academic and practical dance cultures seems to be viewed as not just healthy but somehow vital. It questions a western European cultural certainty that any knowledge of worth must be held in books or the minds of those who write them. Clarke asks ‘Will dance in academia increase the amount of conversation about the knowledge in the body?’[11]

5. Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this report was to consider what the benefits might be for young dance artists when practising as choreographers within a university and what might be the barriers and risks involved in locating themselves within the academy. By interviewing mature choreographers who have worked in both the academic and professional sector and examining papers and interviews from other sources a number of themes have emerged.

Benefits

Not product driven: In a university, research is the driver not a performance production. There is no pressure to know what you are going to make before you start work. This allows for a proper journey of creative twists and turns that may lead the maker off in an entirely unexpected direction. This might be of benefit to the art form as a whole – the freedom potentially leading to genuinely new ways of working. That is not to say this doesn't happen in the product driven, professional sector, but one could speculate that having to pre-determine your outcome might lessen the likelihood of a truly unexpected result. Tours are booked, publicity is produced and budgets allocated before a day has been spent in the studio.

Time to make work: The creative space offered by the underlying difference in imperative is reinforced by the timescale. The duration of a choreographic research project carried out within a university is significantly longer than is usually encountered in the professional sector. A rough guide might be three years in the academy as opposed to three months outside it. This means there is time for real research, experiment and risk. Of course, choreographers working outside of the university are also in the business of experimentation and risk taking – they are inherently creative. Yet I have seen this drive to discover the new compromised by the pressure to get the thing finished in time for the first night. I would venture that beyond the academy, experimentation is usually curtailed by production deadlines or because the time allocated to research is too short. If the experiment into a new approach cannot be completed to the point where a finessed outcome is achieved, then the tendency is to abandon the experiment and go back to what you normally do best. It comes as no surprise that some of Europe's most innovative and acclaimed choreographers of the last two decades – Lloyd Newson, Anna Theresa De Keersmaker, Wim Wandekeybus often take six to nine months in the studio to create work. Whilst not on a par with academic research in terms of time it has clearly enabled the creation of work that pushes the boundaries of the form. The young choreographers I work with never have the luxury of this amount of time – the financial resources at their disposal don't allow it. It seems odd that at the moment when we are expecting young artists to learn their craft the lack of resources means they have to rush their process.

Develops articulacy: The environment of the university and its institutional demands push artists to increase their verbal and written articulacy in relation to their work. Those

interviewed have observed this can feed the work itself but more significantly also benefits the profession as a whole. It places dance artists in a better position to advocate for their work.

Access to resources: As well as time, universities provide artists with a whole range of other practical resources. Studio space, theatre space, video equipment, computer equipment, technical expertise and access to other collaborators have all been readily and freely available to those interviewed. Freelance choreographers working elsewhere spend a great deal of energy trying to secure these type of resources.

Access to more funding: The evidence seems to suggest that although AHRC funding is evidently difficult to secure it is a financial source unlike any other in the UK. In essence, it pays a choreographer a wage to do their work as a creative artist – where research is the imperative rather than production. This is opposite to the major funder outside of academia, the Arts Council, which has an outcome driven agenda and increasingly sees itself as an investor in a product. Several of those interviewed research work using AHRC grants and then make it with the support of the Arts Council. Given the growing demand for partnership funding this is potentially an enormous benefit for those who can secure the support of a university.

Barriers

Academic demands: Making work under the banner of research within a university creates a set of demands unfamiliar to choreographic practice elsewhere. To satisfy the academic committees that your work constitutes real research you must formulate research questions, detail methodology and contextualise the work. This requires a substantial amount of theoretical knowledge and thorough understanding of academic language. I would suggest that because of these hurdles it is often academic prowess that has enabled individuals to reach a position where they can then practise as a choreographer in a university. If good writing skills are essential to get through the door then the implication is that professional success or talent are seen to be of less value. This is hugely significant when one considers, as described in Section 2, that many choreographers in the public arena are conservatoire educated. A conservatoire education is not about an academic, theorised approach to dance and so the majority of choreographers are just not equipped with good enough writing skills to engage with academia. One could gain the tools necessary by 'training' as a researcher through a PhD, but as practical PhDs involve a substantial written component then this solution may in itself present a hurdle. Few artists can afford to commit 3-5 years of their life to a PhD at the moment they are trying to establish a secure career. The skill and knowledge of many talented choreographers is contained and expressed within their bodies and the constructs of academic research still seem at odds with this despite the legitimisation PAR.

Maturity and type of work: Several interviewees indicated that maturity was a key requisite for choreographers practicing within the academy. Academia demands the unpicking of practice, looking for the sources and references hidden within. Clarke feels that dance is not very good at this process of 'acknowledging that we are not original'

and that there are ‘threads and connections in all we do’. [11] Bacon feels that many choreographers are afraid to look for these connections for fear of losing their creative spark.[8] Logically one must be fairly confident in one’s approach to avoid the act of unpicking it becoming destructive and perhaps mature choreographers are better placed to do this. As has been previously mentioned, searching for interviewees for this report has highlighted the lack of ‘young’ choreographic voices with significant experience in both the professional and academic sector. Maybe it is the forensic demands of the academic approach that are a deterrent for younger choreographers.
It may not only be the experience of the choreographer but also the ‘type’ of work they make that affects the ease of academic engagement. Brown feels that work which is more considered and less anarchic is more suited to academia.[12] If one (contentiously) assumes that young choreographers may have a tendency to be more anarchic than their older colleagues, then perhaps there is a connection between this and the idea of maturity. As one gets more experienced perhaps the focus of the work becomes more specific and intense and thus lends itself better to the rigour of a research environment.

Risks for Young Artists

The perceived obstacles that surround choreographic practice in universities may be surmountable and thus the highlighted benefits attainable to more choreographers but are there any threats to their practice posed by immersing themselves in this different environment.

Several of the interviewees suggest that over-theorising your work is a real risk. Lee [13] feels that theory doesn’t necessarily help you as a maker and that it can ‘take you in to a world of words that might not be relevant to your work’. Her fear is that ‘ young artists might be pressurised to explain something and you can’t always explain it.’ By forcing people to articulate the moment of spark there is also the risk that they become too aware when it is not happening and this creates a pressure that is creatively stifling. The danger is that PAR and academia will pull choreographic practice to far in the direction of theory and that this might kill the intuition of the individual. The work can then become removed from the physicality of both the performers and the audience.

The extra time offered by the academic research environment may also present a challenge. Brown [12] thinks one ‘can have too much time to think’ and that the ‘temporality of performance benefits from doing something quickly and not being too obsessed by one area.’ Whilst time to properly research a creative idea was identified as a key benefit of the academic research model, Brown’s concern is that the extended time can dull the urgency which can sometimes lead to good work. These two concerns are closely linked – the extra time allowing for a tendency to theorise at the expense of just getting on with making the work. This possibly illustrates a cultural difference between the educational values of a university versus those of a conservatoire. Claid feels that in academia students are taught how to question before they actually learn to dance - ‘questioning becomes the rigour rather than the physical aspect.’[10] The questioning culture in academia arises from the previously discussed need to continually convince

academic committees of the legitimacy of your research. In academic terms you are a researcher not a choreographer. Claid feels that she has had to make a difficult trade off. Whilst the AHRC has provided an environment for her to carry on working she has had to make sacrifices. She has had to give up on touring and be ‘constantly doing research and never making a product.’[10]

The research environment does not demand a performance outcome so it is possible to avoid subjecting work to public examination. For the AHRC, it is the quality of research that is assessed not the creative standards. Without the litmus test of a paying audience there is a danger that the quality of performance, production and even choreography itself can be eroded in favour of satisfying research criteria.

These risks all seem to revolve around the difficulty inherent in trying to locate and capture choreographic instinct in the written word. This is not because it is fragile or enigmatic (although like any creative act it may be) but because the knowledge that informs this instinct is located in the body and so resists translation to the page. Accessing the potential benefits of working in a university demands an engagement with the frameworks constructed to validate research by the likes of the AHRC. But these were not designed to measure research into the kind of knowledge rooted in the body. In order that the most physically articulate choreographers can be included into academic research alongside their verbally gifted peers then the already ongoing debate into understanding the value of corporeal knowledge will need to yield alternative frameworks for choreographers to practice within.

If artists are to be given a home in the academy then as Rubidge says ‘we must guard very carefully against allowing the bureaucratisation of artistic research in the academy to taint the pure research being undertaken by those artists we invite into our domain.’ [6]

Reflections and Ways Forward

In researching this subject I have a professional agenda. I hope that by offering young dancemakers a different environment to practise within, individual creative development might result that gives rise to significantly better pieces of work. I and others can present these for a public audience in our theatres. Can we gauge whether the benefits provided in a university actually lead to better work? Even if those I have interviewed think their practice has improved as a result of working in the academy this is not really evidence – they are unlikely to say the opposite. Anyway they are not ‘young’ choreographers and so might be less susceptible to the risks mentioned above. I suggest that this question of change in quality is still too hard to measure in contemporary dance. PAR is still relatively young. More importantly it seems that very few young, gifted and publicly acclaimed choreographers have been drawn to undertake, PhDs or Research fellowships. Either the barriers identified are too off-putting or they are just too busy carving out a successful career to consider it.

The idea that one must have a certain degree of maturity to benefit from practising in a university troubles me. When last century's iconic choreographers were making their first works there were no dance academics to study them and the dance history books about them have all been written retrospectively. Today, the opportunity exists for universities to forensically observe tomorrow's icons as they find their voice. Their freshness and 'anarchy', combined with the time and resources offered by working in a university, might be a pathway to new, groundbreaking work. They might find new insights and knowledge that will be disseminated in the public arena. I would suggest that at present this chance is being missed. The majority of the resources offered by the universities and the AHRC are being spent on academics or older, less 'fashionable' choreographers. Younger choreographers who engage in PhD and post-doctorate studies have frequently been drawn to academia because their work has failed to arouse sufficient interest outside it for them to sustain a professional career.

If there is a genuine belief in academia that valuable knowledge resides in experience then in the case of dance some of this experience is within the bodies of practitioners. Young choreographers already hold significant amounts of experience and knowledge. After working in a studio with the likes of Rosemary Lee, Chris Bannerman, Lloyd Newson, Lea Anderson, Luca Silvestrini and Robin Dingemans my observation that their creative processes share as many similarities as differences. If anyone of these is considered a legitimate researcher then so should they all be regardless of maturity or academic experience. In other fields age is no barrier to becoming a researcher. At the age of 20 after completing a BSc. in Chemistry I was offered the chance to undertake a PhD. I can categorically state that I had no concept of what research was or how to go about it yet my university thought I was a good enough chemist to offer me a research career.

I would challenge universities to actively seek out the most promising young choreographers regardless of whether they have the educational attributes to slip easily into academic frameworks. AHRC Fellowships in the Performing Arts are a significantly positive step since they are intended to reach practitioners without a track record in research. But the application procedure still involves meeting the AHRC's definition of research. To many young practitioners without academic experience or writing skills this is an insurmountable hurdle. They would need significant help to overcome this - it is so alien to their normal way of approaching work.

Relatively recent, alternative models like ResCen and Choreographic Lab have offered genuine opportunities for artists to develop their practice in the university on their terms. They mediate between artists and the academy – helping to write applications, contextualise or legitimise the work by articulating practice through artistic rather than academic language and encourage a creative reflection on process. The leadership of both programmes offer exemplars of the way in which those with a mixed academic and professional dance background can shield artists from the bureaucracy of academic institutions and funders in the same way managers and administrators often do in the professional sector. However both also focus on mature choreographers and artists rather than younger ones and neither programme gives rise, as a matter of course, to theatrical

performance outcomes. Can more programmes of similar innovation be developed at other institutions that will draw more young choreographers into the academy and allow them to enjoy the benefits whilst preventing them from being 'tainted' in the way Rubidge describes? [6]

The selection of artists for these existing schemes sits entirely within the university. Do universities necessarily have enough contact with the professional sector to ensure they know who the most talented young artists are? Perhaps there is scope for increased collaboration between universities and some of the dance organisations and agencies that are the traditional home of upcoming choreographers to share 'intelligence' over the identity of the icons of tomorrow. Can professional research programs, such as Choreodrome at The Place, be formulated in partnership with universities in such a way as to attract AHRC support? Such partnerships and newly formalised schemes might also serve to help develop the articulacy of choreographers should they want to pursue an academic programme further.

Maybe there is also a need for conservatoires to employ more faculty with university research experience in order to raise their own standards of research. Can they gain sufficient academic recognition to allow them to compete for AHRC funds? Might this also encourage the development of an increased articulacy in students of the kind necessary should they want to practise in a university later in their careers.

In my own theatre, despite our position as the leading discoverer of young choreographic talent in the UK, we have no links to any UK university dance department. This report has led me to see this separatism as unhelpful and perhaps even negligent. Beyond the control of either sector the spectre of another funding squeeze looms and in the current climate, governmental agendas are shrinking resources for universities and arts organisations alike. This alone should be a driving force to persuade university dance departments and dance organisations to work together. Where such partnerships exist they are more often based on personal friendships than any formal structure. The future health of both arenas depends on having a pool of interesting choreographers who will present their work for the public to watch or for academics to study, but as resources decrease there is a danger that the pool will become a puddle. There is a shared responsibility in both sectors to find and properly resource enough gifted young choreographers to ensure a mutually healthy future. To do this I believe we need to establish or expand networks that link the two sectors. Could this allow the false divide that results largely from the design of funding frameworks to be bridged? Working together might we find ways to enable more young artists to enjoy the best of both worlds?

6. Bibliography

1. http://www.hero.ac.uk/uk/research
2. Research Assessment Exercise 2008 Panel Criteria and Working Methods : Panel O, Annexe 3 *available at* http://www.rae.ac.uk
3. AHRC Funding Guide 2007 Section C No. 81 *available at* http://www.ahrc.ac.uk
4. AHRC Fellowships in the Creative and Performing Arts FAQ's 2007 *available at* http://www.ahrc.ac.uk
5. Angela Piccini (2003) 'An Historiographic Perspective on Practice as Research' *available at* http://www.bris.ac.uk/parip/artexts.htm
6. Sarah Rubidge (2004) 'Artists in the Academy : Reflections on Artistic Practice as Research' *available at* http://www.ausdance.org.au/outside/resources/publications/rebooted/rebootedpdfs/Rubidge2.pdf
7. Sarah Rubidge(2004) – Case Study interview by PARIP available at http://www.bris.ac.uk/parip/casestudies.htm
8. Jane Bacon(2004) – Case Study interview by PARIP available at http://www.bris.ac.uk/parip/casestudies.htm
9. Helen Bailey(2004) – Case Study interview by PARIP available at http://www.bris.ac.uk/parip/casestudies.htm
10. Emlyn Claid (2005) interviewed for this report. CD recording attached.
11. Gill Clarke (2007) interviewed for this report. CD recording attached.
12. Carol Brown (2007) interviewed for this report. CD recording attached.
13. Rosemary Lee (2007) interviewed for this report. CD recording attached.
14. Jane Bacon (2007) interviewed for this report. CD recording attached.
15. ACE grants for The Arts scheme
16. ResCen - http://www.mdx.ac.uk/rescen/home.html
17. Choreographic Lab – http://www.choreographiclab.org/Main/