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Laura Karreman

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# Repeating *Rosas danst Rosas*

## On the transmission of dance knowledge

LAURA KARREMAN

This article explores how connecting choreographic ideas with dancers' articulations of embodied experience may help us better understand practices of dance transmission. Using the multimodal publication *A Choreographer's Score* as an analytical framework, I propose to combine the inside knowledge of Belgian choreographer Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker with a series of in-depth interviews that I conducted with dancers of the Rosas dance company on their experience with the performance and transmission of the iconic choreography *Rosas danst Rosas*.<sup>1</sup> My goal here is to propose an expansion of the notational endeavour of *A Choreographer's Score* by adding testimonies of the dancers' corporeal 'enunciation'. As such, this article is a further investigation of 'performance-style', which performance scholar and musicologist Bojana Cvejić distinguishes as one of the main thematic parameters that runs through the four scores of Rosas' Early Works. It connects the repetitions within De Keersmaecker's work with the question of how these practices themselves can be repeated by dancers in their long-term engagement with the company's repertoire. These considerations also tie into the present debate in dance studies on how 'dance knowledge' could be shared beyond the boundaries of its own discipline.

Under the influence of technological developments and changing social attitudes towards dance, the history of dance notation has undergone several shifts in what dance features are designated to be written down. When dance notation emerged in the Renaissance, it was common to use alphabetic letters and other visual symbols denoting the spatial pattern of

the dance. The writing of dance, *choreography*, did not (yet) refer to the embodied dimension of the dance. Mark Franko observes:

Like writing itself, notation was divorced from the expressive realities of what linguists call *enunciation*; that is, the act of producing sounds or movements in real time and space are separated from their essentially 'oral' character. Treatises in which notation occurred are notorious for providing no insight into the physical dynamics and stylistic detail of movement. (Franko 2011: 322–3)

Even though, as Franko notes, 'the historical evolution of notation increasingly highlights corporeality' (328), both dance research and practice are still influenced by the logocentric heritage of choreography. Written scores may highlight limited features of dance, for example its spatial distribution and the alignment of movement phrases with musical scores, and downplay others, such as the corporeality or the 'enunciation' of the dancing body.

Recent experimental approaches of notational practices continue to grapple with the problematic epistemological status of dance and they all contribute partial answers to the question of how 'dance knowledge' can be shared across research disciplines. William Forsythe has been an important instigator of the need to articulate and publish expert knowledge about dance practice through his projects *Improvisation Technologies* (1999), *Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing, reproduced* (2009) and the digital scores of *Motion Bank* (2010–2013). Other projects, such as the digital dance archive Siobhan Davies RePlay (2009), the research project Pre-choreographic Elements and the online platform Oral Site, to name some

<sup>1</sup> The series *A Choreographer's Score* consists of three volumes that were co-authored by Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker and Bojana Cvejić: *Fase, Rosas Danst Rosas, Elena's Aria, Bartók* (2012), *En Attendant & Cesena* (2013) and *Drumming & Rain* (2014).

significant examples, offer new perspectives on dance and performance by creating multimodal interfaces to access the work.<sup>2</sup> Texts, sounds or (interactive) graphics are designed to enable a reflection on the work as an addition to the experience of viewing the work itself, thus providing alternative perspectives of how dance may be known. A broad spectrum of 'dance knowledge' thus becomes apparent. In this respect these projects aspire to what Dwight Conquergood distinguished as the 'constitutive liminality' of performance studies: 'its capacity to bridge segregated and differently valued knowledges, drawing together legitimated as well as subjugated modes of inquiry' (2002: 151–2).

This does not mean, however, that these projects have stopped struggling with one of the central questions they engage with: How to represent dance experience that resists being put into words? As Stevens and McKechnie point out, dance involves different types of knowledge:

Complex dance vocabularies challenge the view of human memory as a storehouse of linguistic propositions. Creating and performing dance involves knowledge that is procedural (implicit knowledge or knowing how to perform various tasks) and declarative (explicit knowledge or knowing about states of affairs such as dance and phrases of dance). (2009: 44–45)

Whereas the embodied, mnemonic role of the dancer's body, 'the body as archive', has received significant attention in dance studies (for example in recent research on re-enactment practices (Lepecki 2010; Stalpaert 2011)), other features of the 'procedural' or performative knowledge of the dancer have been largely neglected. The dancer's breathing is a prime example of a feature that has not received much scholarly attention.<sup>3</sup> Even though the entanglement of performative and choreographic knowledge is often acknowledged, recent examples of innovative notational endeavours tend to ignore the notion of the breath in dance as an important structuring, expressive and rhythmical device.<sup>4</sup>

Taking the choreography *Rosas danst Rosas* as my main case study, I first of all analyse how this iconic work is 'performed' by *A Choreographer's Score*. I then describe the company's practice of transmission of the choreography. Finally, I look at dancers' experience with performing the work. By showing how they breathe life into the complex choreographic architecture of the choreography, dancers provide a deeper understanding of the information that is made available in *A Choreographer's Score*. On a different level,

<sup>2</sup> Siobhan Davies RePlay (2009): [www.siobhandaviesreplay.com](http://www.siobhandaviesreplay.com), Oral Site: [www.oralsite.be](http://www.oralsite.be), Pre-choreographic Elements: <http://www.ickamsterdam.com/index.php?id=4,5>. Pre-choreographic Elements is a continuation of previous research projects around documentation, notation and transmission of dance: Inside Movement Knowledge (2008–10) and The Notation Research Project (2004–7), of which results were discussed in *Capturing Intention* (deLahunta, Scott: 2007).

<sup>3</sup> A notable exception is the section on breath in Louppe (2010: 54–62).

<sup>4</sup> A relevant exception is the incorporation of the *gesture follower* application by IRCAM researcher Frédéric Bevilacqua in the Double Skin/Double Mind installation, which was developed by dance company Emio Greco|PC as part of the research project Inside Movement Knowledge. In this installation the *gesture follower* produced breathing sounds in response to dance movements.



■ *Rosas danst Rosas* by Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker in 1983. Third movement. Dancers: Adriana Borriello, Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker, Michèle Anne De Mey, Fumiyo Ikeda. Photo Jean-Luc Tanghe.

through a discussion of the role of embodied, performative knowledge, I aim to contribute to the present debate on what is and what is not validated as 'dance knowledge'. This question should be a central focus of our attention, taking into consideration the ongoing concern of the contemporary dance field with topics such as dance legacy and the legitimization of dance expertise both within and beyond the limits of the field's disciplinary boundaries.

#### ROSAS DANST ROSAS: FROM CONTROVERSY TO CANON

The founding performance of the Rosas dance company, and in many ways an iconic example of its oeuvre, *Rosas danst Rosas* was created in 1983 during an intensive, four-month rehearsal process during which Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker – 22 years old at the time – collaborated with dancers Michèle Anne De Mey, Adriana Borriello and Fumiyo Ikeda. At the time of its premiere the audience was both impressed and provoked by the rigour of De Keersmaecker's choices. Most audiences in Belgium and other places in Western Europe where the performance initially toured were not yet familiar with American postmodern and minimalist dance (Verstockt and Dierckx 2009). Many of De Keersmaecker's choices were ground-breaking: her use of everyday movements as a basis for her choreography, the demanding contrapuntal structures, the exhausting repetitive movements, the seductive confidence that the young dancers expressed and the demanding start of the performance during which the performers danced on the floor, in silence, during forty minutes. All these elements were unprecedented in contemporary dance in Flanders and it instantly turned the Rosas company into one of the key representatives of the 'Flemish dance wave' (Laermans 2010). Following the success of *Fase: Four Movements to the music of Steve Reich* (1982), *Rosas danst Rosas* established the international reputation of the young dance company.

Since its initial success, the history of *Rosas danst Rosas* is also one of repetition and revival. It was the first of her early works

that De Keersmaecker was able to revive when she became resident choreographer in 1992 at the Brussels opera house La Monnaie. The choreography has been taught from the beginning as part of the curriculum of the Brussels-based dance school PARTS to introduce students to De Keersmaecker's choreographic ideas and dance techniques. More recently, *Rosas danst Rosas* played an important role as part of the revival project of the Early Works (2010), during which it was presented together with three other key choreographies: *Fase* (1982), *Elena's Aria* (1984) and *Bartók/Aantekeningen* (Bartók/Annotations) (1986). The tour was followed by the publication of the first volume of *A Choreographer's Score* (2012).

*Rosas danst Rosas* has now been danced by several generations of dancers, and even though there tends to be a relatively stable cast, in the case of injury or other circumstances interpreters from earlier generations occasionally return to performing the work. The choreography has a special status within the company, and being given the opportunity to perform the work is considered to be a rewarding challenge. The rigour and stamina that the performance demands certainly contribute to this intense experience. With its total duration of almost two hours, De Keersmaecker describes *Rosas danst Rosas* as a 'paroxysm of dancing, dancing, dancing without counting, over and over again, a kind of *dépense*', referring to Georges Bataille's notion of 'expenditure' (De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012: 82). Cvejić further explains: 'In the case of *Rosas danst Rosas*, Bataille's *dépense* could be understood as relentless repetition and endurance which engenders an excessive expenditure of erotically charged energy' (ibid.).

The endurance that the performance requires contributes to the special status of *Rosas danst Rosas* in the company's repertoire. 'With other performances I manage to pace myself to avoid injuries, but with this performance I can't resist, I always want to give 100%. I feel that the audience would not feel ecstatic if I give less than 100%' (Loemij 2014). In addition to the intense physical dimension of the dance,

dancers remain challenged and inspired by their ongoing, detailed exploration of the rich movement material of the choreography, even after as many as 100 performances. 'This show is physically difficult and so challenging because there is so much space to keep on looking for movement, for quality. It is a never-ending search, not for the right way, but for how else it can be' (Penkova 2013b).

A CHOREOGRAPHER'S SCORE: HOW  
DE KEERSMAEKER WRITES WITH  
MOVEMENT

'My main field is writing with movement. But how do you make a dance and give it to younger generations?' (De Keersmaecker and Linehan 2014). This was the main question that motivated De Keersmaecker to start creating the publication series *A Choreographer's Score*, in which a selection of Rosas' work is notated in multimodal 'scores' that offer detailed insights into the choreographic craftsmanship of these dances. The project was seized as an opportunity to produce specific categories of De Keersmaecker's choreographic knowledge, which were translated to appropriate presentational modes. The notion of 'score' in this particular project, then, is primarily conceived as an analytical framework that opens up the choreography for further research and interpretation.

Elaborating on Derrida's notion that 'the archivization produces as much as it records the event' (Derrida 1995: 17), Philip Auslander has pointed to the 'performativity of performance documents' (Auslander 2006; 2014). In this section I take on Auslander's notion to explore how *A Choreographer's Score* 'performs' *Rosas danst Rosas*.

De Keersmaecker has stated that Forsythe was an important inspiration for creating *A Choreographer's Score*: 'Remarkably few texts on the craftsmanship and on the compositional tools of dance exist. Forsythe taught me you should share this knowledge, even though it is rather normal for choreographers to keep it to themselves' (De Keersmaecker and Linehan

2014). In a similar vein, Cvejić, with whom De Keersmaecker co-authored *A Choreographer's Score*, comments: 'The painstaking explanation of detail [in the score] serves to make choreography's poetics and *episteme* accessible outside the hermetic boundaries of self-referential disciplinary knowledge (of dance) and within other disciplines' (Cvejić and De Keersmaecker 2012: 18).

Foregrounding the complex contrapuntal structures and geometrical patterns as the basis for her choreography, De Keersmaecker's handwritten scores play a prominent role in the book. In her dance writing, she uses letters to refer to movement cells, accents to indicate movement qualities and geometric figures and arrows to point out movement trajectories across the stage. De Keersmaecker's scores are printed in juxtaposition with text in which her choreographic ideas are articulated. Because of the first-person perspective that is maintained throughout the textual layer of the score, the text is in danger of being misinterpreted as a close transcription of the interviews on the accompanying DVDs. A closer comparison reveals that the text is edited to fit the requirement of the detailed written score the authors envisioned. Cvejić explains:

This is why the text, still sourced from the video, diverges to some extent from the video; the discrepancy between *la parole* and *l'écriture* is also conditioned by the two different media. The written word compensates for a precision that the spoken word sometimes lacks; the video demonstrates the movement that can't be described enough, but has to be performed. The choreographer's *parole* fleshes out the account with affective tones of storytelling that the text is numb to. (12)

The choice to maintain the first-person perspective in the text produces an oral quality that creates a common ground between the printed score and the interviews and thus ties them together.

On the DVDs, in response to Cvejić's queries, De Keersmaecker draws choreographic structures on a blackboard, provides voice-over comments to recordings of performances and occasionally



■ *Rosas danst Rosas* by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker in 2009. First movement. Dancers: Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, Cynthia Loemij, Sara Ludi, Samantha van Wissen. Photo Herman Sorgeloos.

demonstrates short excerpts from the dance. This presentational mode, which allows De Keersmaeker to simultaneously describe *and* show movement material, also provides the viewer with some impressions of the actual transmission process in the studio. For example, De Keersmaeker lays down on the floor to demonstrate movement cells from the first movement, first laying down on her belly and then pushing herself up from the ground by her elbows and then gently shifting her head to the side, whilst she explains how she associates these movements with sleeping and with talking to your lover who is lying next to you.

To return to our question, then, how does *A Choreographer's Score* perform *Rosas danst Rosas*? The publication provides valuable inside knowledge into how De Keersmaeker 'writes with movement'. The explanations on how the choreography 'works', both in a structural and in a dramatic sense, are expressive and clear. Even though at this time it is too early to accurately map different ways in which readers in and beyond the dance field will actually engage with this score, the publication invites further analyses of these performances and may also inspire new notational endeavours or dance creations.

The primary goal of *A Choreographer's Score* differs from those of recent projects in the dance field that aim to create a documentation

of dance works by offering concrete tools for reconstruction or reinterpretation. Notably, the *Score* excludes references to other documents that could have particular value in future reconstructions, such as the existing Labanotation of the first movement of *Rosas danst Rosas* (De Keersmaeker and Hardillier 2000). Rather than creating exhaustive documents of the work that would facilitate revivals, however, Cvejić strived for 'the articulation of De Keersmaeker's methods and intuitions into a *poietics*, a more or less coherent set of ideas, concepts and methodological parameters' (Cvejić forthcoming). In this respect the project's intentions are different from those of the recent 'Legacy Plan' by the Cunningham Dance Foundation, which includes the digital preservation of eighty-six dances by Merce Cunningham in so-called 'Dance Capsules' that 'provide an array of assets essential to the study and reconstruction of Cunningham's choreographic work' (Merce Cunningham Trust 2012: 46). If reinterpretation or reconstruction would be of interest to the reader, Cvejić points at the importance of consulting performance recordings and the dancers' knowledge, which is 'indispensable to any transmission of their roles' (De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012: 18). De Keersmaeker's stated goal to 'give the work to younger generations', then, is more directed at the articulation of her choreographic ideas than at supplying tools and documentation that would facilitate future revivals of the work. That being said, it is nevertheless clear that in case of such attempts this publication would be an invaluable source.

#### BUILDING A PRACTICE OF DANCE TRANSMISSION

Since its premiere more than three decades ago, *Rosas danst Rosas* has been interpreted by several generations of dancers (De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012: 115). When the performance is taught to new dancers, the company primarily relies on a combination of physical demonstration and verbal explanation by experienced dancers in the studio. As in

many other dance companies, video recordings of previous stagings can be important mnemonic devices when a work is revived. This was the case when Rosas revived *Elena's Aria*, for example. But *Rosas danst Rosas* has been transmitted on such a regular basis that consulting videos is hardly necessary. To learn the choreography, dancers rely on a document containing the choreographic structure, which provides the skeleton of the dance. The rehearsal process itself takes up to two months, but is shorter when a new dancer joins a cast in which the other members are already trained. The main challenge for a new cast is to figure out a shared timing. As dancer Samantha van Wissen points out: 'Dancing *together*, that is really something that needs to grow. You need to try, and then try again. And when there are changes in the cast you need to adapt to new personalities' (2014).

However, the ease in this transmission process was not in place right from the beginning. The first replacements in the cast had already been made before teaching the choreography to an entirely new cast in 1992. As a member of the original creation and the rehearsal director of the current cast, Fumiyo Ikeda is one of the main authorities on *Rosas danst Rosas*, a position second only to De Keersmaecker herself, who remains in charge of final decisions. In dance practice the role of 'transmitter' (Gardner 2014) is often entrusted to dancers who were part of the work's creation, as is asserted by Pina Bausch researcher Norbert Servos:

Every person involved in the creation of a piece stores a vast wealth of detailed information in his or her physical and mental memory, and knows about the system of their complex connections. Only those who know how to create this complex richness and its interactions can revive the spirit of a piece.  
(Servos 2007: 189–90)

When the first replacements in the cast had to be made, Ikeda and De Keersmaecker were forced to shift to an outside position with regard to the work. Ikeda remembers that it was only at this point that she became aware of the

precise structure and much of the details of the performance:

Because I was part of the creation process, the performance was so evident for me. I *thought* I knew many things, but I didn't. In the beginning I didn't know how to teach it and I had to analyse the piece first. Then I got used to explaining it.  
(Ikeda 2014b)

Although there are multiple dancers who are able to teach the choreography, each of them is bound to teach the dance in a slightly different style. When watching a stage recording from the 1990s, Penkova comments: 'You can see that this generation learnt the dance from a different dancer. Because you see her power, you can see a little bit of Roxane [Huilmann] in all of them' (2013b). De Keersmaecker therefore now relies on Ikeda as the sole rehearsal director, to give dancers the same basis. However, Ikeda and De Keersmaecker's interpretation is also different and even they may not always agree on what the 'essence' of the work is that should be preserved (Loemij 2014).

#### BREATHING WITH INTENTION

To gain more insight into the dancers' experience with *Rosas danst Rosas*, I conducted a series of interviews with five Rosas dancers from different generations of performance casts. All dancers had performed the work more than 100 times. They also all had experience with teaching the choreography to other dancers in various contexts: as part of the curriculum at PARTS, in workshops in Belgium or abroad or within the company itself. The questions in the interview were not scripted in detail. Instead, I invited the dancers to address the following question in accordance with their own insight: How would you describe your experience with dancing *Rosas danst Rosas*? As a follow-up, I asked more specifically about their experiences with learning, remembering and teaching the choreography. In addition to these interviews I attended several *Rosas danst Rosas* workshops for external dance students and a day of the rehearsal process with a new performer within the company.

Even this fairly modest exploration yielded many striking insights into the dancers' experience of *Rosas danst Rosas*, of which a thorough analysis would far exceed the constraints of this article. Instead, I focus here on what dancers' accounts reveal about the way movement qualities described in *A Choreographer's Score* physically take shape as part of the performance style that is typical for Rosas. Furthermore, I address how dancers deal with the radical repetition of movement cells, which is a defining aspect of the work. How do dancers keep the movement alive?

An initial, revealing observation was made during a workshop taught by Rosas dancer Elizaveta Penkova, during which she introduced the first movement of the choreography to an external group of dance academy students. Penkova demonstrated the movement whilst simultaneously adding an explanatory layer of speech, which further informed the details of the dance:

Move your hands away from each other as if you're stroking a water surface, then lift them up and let the water fall from your fingertips. Now you put pressure on your arms and you move upwards. Not only your breath is moving, all your muscles are breathing. Your arms keep pushing into the floor. Then your head suddenly moves: 'Somebody turns on a light'. Then you realize: 'Nothing is there' and you sink down, while letting go of the breath. (Penkova 2013a)

The figurative language of this description is very powerful. However, what stood out most during this workshop is the emphasis Penkova put on the breath. The first movement of *Rosas danst Rosas* is performed in silence for the duration of thirty-five to forty minutes. The dancers need to use their breath to tune in together, to be able to move in unison and to establish the right rhythm. 'I think the breath really is the key of the first movement. It enables us to stay together' (Youn 2013). By learning to attune to each other's breathing, the dancers are able to make the timing of their movements more precise. Indeed, whilst instructing the students Penkova often repeats sentences like 'You are breathing one breath', and 'There

are no counts here, you only have the breath to stay together.' Moreover, the breath is not only used by the dancers to synchronize, it also plays a crucial role in shaping the expression of the movements. In the demanding, repetitive structure of the choreography, breath plays an important role in avoiding a mechanical repetition of the movements. It is the instrument that keeps the expression alive. Penkova says, 'The breath gives the color to the whole scene. The breath communicates that it is something more than movement.'

The breath also has a crucial function in articulating the contrasting movement qualities 'attacked' and 'suspended' that play a key role in the choreographic structure. A description of these movement qualities is included in *A Choreographer's Score's* 'Short glossary of frequently used technical terms' (Cvejić and De Keersmaecker 2012: 244–5). Here, 'attacked' is described as 'quick, intense, dynamic, accented as by a vigorous beat; analogous to *sforzando*, a strong, sudden accent on a note or chord, "suddenly with force"' (244). 'Suspended' is described as

pulling out, slowing down, without accent, and defying gravity by arresting a movement or a position; analogous to *legato* (a smooth, slurred effect on notes, leaving no audible spaces between them) and *tenuto* in music (holding or sustaining a single note). (245)

The analogy drawn here between movement qualities and musical instructions is striking. 'Holding a note' also invokes 'holding your breath', although this analogy is not made explicit here.<sup>5</sup>

In the interviews dancers usually indicate the movement quality 'suspended' with the term 'slow'. They associate 'slow' with terms like 'resistance' and 'a feeling of endlessness'. 'Attacked' is not just fast, but both fast and very precise: you should be able to see every movement that also appears in the 'slow' version. The 'attacked' movement quality is also characterized by an accelerated movement that ends in a sharp 'stop', a moment in which both the breath and the movement briefly come to a halt.

<sup>5</sup> However, this analogy is all the more apparent in the recent Rosas performance *My Breathing is My Dancing* (2015), a duet performed by flautist Chryssi Dimitriou and De Keersmaecker, who dances 'in the steps of the flutist's breath' (Rosas: 2015).

Ikeda relates the 'attacked' quality to the concept of 'pulling and releasing', an important motive in Rosas' oeuvre that can be traced back to the influence of Fernand Schirren.<sup>6</sup> During a rehearsal, Ikeda explains 'attacked' by using the metaphor of a bow: 'The more you pull, the faster you go. If you don't pull it is not strong enough' (2014a). 'Pulling' is not the only principle, Ikeda points out; it is a combination of 'pulling' and 'twisting'. She picks up a towel and twists and pulls it to demonstrate the idea:

It's not only straight, there is also a spiral. Only pulling is not strong, turning makes it much stronger. [This spiral] is everywhere in the body. Also in the breathing; it doesn't only go up and down, there is a spiral in the breath as well that gives it much more depth. (Ikeda 2014)

At the time of the first revival of *Rosas danst Rosas* in the early 1990s, De Keersmaecker explained: 'I adhere to the writing itself, the sovereignty of the structure that persists, independent of the particular performers' (2012: 115). Here, we recognize once more the central role that is assigned to the 'logos', the written score, in the transmission process. Whereas interviews with dancers acknowledge this 'sovereignty of the structure', they also reveal other aspects that allow us to perceive the performance as a constantly changing, living tissue. As dancer Cynthia Loemij remarks: 'It's not a choreography in which you try to do the same each time, it's alive, it's very much alive.'

#### DANCERS' VOICES AS A SOURCE OF DANCE KNOWLEDGE

In the analysis of his experiences as rehearsal director of a Pina Bausch performance, Stephan Brinkman underlines the highly creative aspect of working on a reconstruction: 'Although ostensibly a reconstruction may seem like a repetition of the past, precisely what it demands is to discover something new in the repetition, and to accept the challenge of extracting something unique from the familiar' (2014: 95). Sally Gardner expresses a similar point when she writes about dance transmission

in terms of a continuous process of translation by the dancer: 'The dancer's role in translating, but also in mistranslating, spurs repetition and, potentially, insights and discoveries, allowing future dancers to be writers' (2014: 236). Indeed, dancers' accounts of the transmission and performance of *Rosas danst Rosas* show how deeply creation remains embedded in dancing the choreography again and again. To keep the repetitive patterns that are so characteristic for this choreography alive, a constantly shifting translation of the score to the stage is required. As choreographer Jonathan Burrows has remarked: 'Any piece of choreography, any score, can work only if it enables the dancers to rediscover their own internal dance and let them take flight. Without that there is no life' (2000: 32).

Whilst *A Choreographer's Score* offers many insights into De Keersmaecker's choreographic craftsmanship, it does not shed much light on the entanglement of choreographic devices with the physical reality of the dancer's experience. Interviews with dancers offer an inside look into the transmission practices of choreographies. As a source of dance knowledge, interviews necessarily involve incompleteness and inadequacies. However, their value lies in making accessible experience that would otherwise have remained unarticulated outside the studio. As is observed by Ikeda, kinaesthetic and verbal communication play a dominant role in the dance studio:

There is no use in making notes about things that are said during the rehearsal apart from the formal structure of the choreography. The things that are said about the movement quality, those are things that your body should learn and that should be stored inside your body. You shouldn't write them down.

(Ikeda and Blomqvist 2014a)

The strategies and techniques that Rosas dancers use to translate De Keersmaecker's choreography to the stage constitute a singular performative knowledge that offers opportunities for new analytical perspectives on this work. As a key aspect of De Keersmaecker's poetics, complex choreographic structures

<sup>6</sup> Schirren was De Keersmaecker's rhythm teacher at the Mudra dance school and in the second half of the nineties De Keersmaecker invited him to teach at PARTS (Schirren 2011).

typically are the focus of discussions of her work. However, as Renate Bräuninger recently suggested, further study of Rosas' work could benefit from an 'alternative approach – one that highlights its performative impact' (2014a: 58). Dancers' accounts offer a deeper understanding of the work when it comes to issues of how to perform certain movement qualities, how to dance together and how to keep the repetition of movement cells alive. Their observations can be used to reinterpret dance material and other existing sources, thus expanding the realm of what is recognized as 'dance knowledge'.

As part of the larger project advocated by *A Choreographer's Score* to 'take dance seriously', then, a new frontier in dance research may be found in the acknowledgement and further investigation of the craftsmanship and 'dance knowledge' of the performer. Because of academic discourse's reputation of discarding the study of corporeal-experiential realms that escape written description, this is not an unproblematic endeavour. Conquergood, for example, warned of the dominance of propositional ways of knowing in the academy:

What gets squeezed out by this epistemic violence is the whole realm of complex, finely nuanced meaning that is embodied, tacit, intoned, gestured, improvised, coexperienced, covert – and all the more deeply meaningful because of its refusal to be spelled out. (2002: 146)

Indeed, a core belief in dance practice is that the complexity of the combination of oral and kinaesthetic communication cannot and even *should* not be captured in writing. Whilst writing may indeed be counterproductive as a tool in dance practice and may undoubtedly fall short in capturing complexities of performative knowledge, this should not make us refrain from further investigating the 'corporeal enunciation' of choreographic ideas. The embodied nature of this knowledge does not imply that it is wholly beyond the reach of the dancer's declarative abilities. Nor does the idiosyncrasy of dancers' experiences necessarily result in an incoherent collection of subjective findings. In the dance field's efforts to make dance knowledge public, the importance of the

connection between choreographic ideas and performative knowledge may be a blind spot because of its self-evidence for practitioners. However, if the explicit aim is to share and validate dance expertise with other areas of research – both in the arts and sciences – it seems that it is especially this connection that could generate new insights. What happens when radical repetition of movement cells and other choreographic devices, as articulated in *A Choreographer's Score*, are mapped onto the dancers' bodies that carry out such repetitions? How can we reflect on the embodied reality of choreographic concepts of repetition and duration, not just within a single dance, but in a long-term repertory practice during which injury, aging and cast changes will inevitably affect the performance? By making connections between choreographic ideas and dancers' voices, we gain a deeper understanding of what strategies they use to learn, to perform and to transmit dance, and, in the specific case of Rosas' oeuvre, how dancers deal with repetition to make the score come alive – again and again and again.

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