

dance across europe

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Image: 2020 Aerowaves Partners' meeting in Athens, Greece
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aerowaves
dance across europe

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years of aerowaves

How to mark an organisation's 25-year life? Its founders are here, looking to new horizons while still holding memories of the 'early days'. At the time of writing, global travel – even local meetings – have been restricted, and interviews have taken place online. Administrating them involved a constant, somewhat joyful cross-checking of time zones (CET? CEST? BST? UTC? GMT?) – appropriate for this interwoven European network.

This publication is titled Aerowaves at 25, for these articles and their enquiries – written by Springback writers – are as much a snapshot of who we are today as they are an attempt to look at how we got here. 25 features, one for each year. This publication also sits as a complement to a video documentary being made by Aerowaves collaborator, Enya Belak.

I first came into contact with Aerowaves through Springback Academy in 2016. What started as an impulse application has become a connection to a world of indefatigably curious dance enthusiasts and close friends. I have gleaned this sense of kinship, too, from the experiences of the featured writers, artists and programmers who have been involved with Aerowaves, and a shared drive to remain open-minded, productively critical, and generous.

Róisín O'Brien
Editor

Twelve years ago, when I left The Place to devote my time to Aerowaves, I wrote: "Me, I'm moving on to the best dance job in Europe." I was right, even though it wasn't really a job at the time. But the job description? Architect of castles in the air. Thanks, team builders.

Aerowaves springs forward. It does not look back. 10 years and 20 years were celebrated by little more than a T-shirt. 25 may be a big number heralding a change of generations, but more importantly it marks a bridge between our pre-Covid world and a future in which we face the climate emergency. Who better than the young writers of Springback Magazine to excavate the practices we might leave behind and the principles we must carry into the next 25 Years?

John Ashford
Director and Founder

I'm not sure whether John had a grand plan when he came up with the idea of Aerowaves – but 25 years later it all looks very well thought out. During that time we've had many challenges but also a lot of fun, working with exceptionally talented and passionate people who make up this amazing European family.

Anna Arthur
Administrative Director



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Image:
Aerowaves Meeting
in Athens, 2020
© Enya Belak

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Aerowaves partners

DANCE IN EUROPEAN TIME

Aerowaves was born of a changing Europe, a burgeoning dance scene, cross-country connections, a few hunches – and many VHS cassettes. How has the network grown up?

Róisín O'Brien

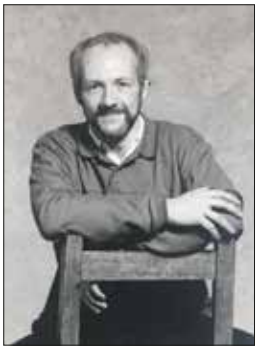


Anna Arthur and John Ashford at The Place Theatre, London, 2021. Photo: Enya Belak



In 1996, a small group of European colleagues began meeting at The Place Theatre in London. They were sorting through video tapes sent in from young choreographers across Europe. A selection of those artists would then go on to be presented at The Place's yearly Resolution festival in 1997, under the banner of Aerowaves.

Twenty-five years later, Aerowaves exists as a large Europe-wide network of 44 partners in 33 countries who select and present new artists in the annual Spring Forward Festival. Numerous projects have sprung up alongside this core activity, primarily Springback Academy and Springback Magazine, as well as live-streamed events, experimentation in new technologies and commissions for adapting work for young audiences. All administered by a light-footed administrative staff dispersed across the continent. How did we get here?



Above: John Ashford, early 1990s
Below: Tenth anniversary merch
Opposite: the classic VHS

Beginnings

These early meetings were convened by John Ashford, founding director of Aerowaves, who had moved from the experimental ICA Theatre in London to The Place in 1986. Speaking in early 2021, Ashford recalls feeling a certain betrayal moving to dance after having programmed work where "dance, performance, text, design and choreography meet afresh as equals." And yet there was a density in the moving body that he found compelling: "the physical skill of the performer, even if standing still, captured the attention in a way that many of the theatre experiments failed to do."

He worked from the beginning with Anna Scott (now Arthur), previously project co-ordinator at The Place and now administrative director of Aerowaves. The two generally see themselves as complementary opposites: if Ashford has ideas, Arthur "makes things happen". Her role encompasses nearly all of the management of the organisation – but will also come down to taking apart a sink to find something Ashford has lost (a contact lens being the most likely culprit). Arthur finds dance somewhat more democratic than theatre, and that dancers are "a bit more humble, some of the time, due to the amount of work they have to put in to be able to dance."

The contemporary dance scene in the late 1980s in London differed sharply to what we might recognise today.





25
years
of life

44
network
partners

33
countries
across Europe

There was very little demand or support, Ashford explains, for international work. The international work that was shown was primarily through the Dance Umbrella festival (founded in 1978) and was mostly American (Stephen Petronio was a regular). It was also trickier and more expensive to travel within Europe, and a stipulation by the Arts Council to spend their funding on local rather than international artists meant the team would search for private funding. If you managed to jump all those hurdles, you still had to find an audience.

In 1990, Ashford instigated a season called The Turning World at The Place to showcase, and increase the demand for, more varied international work from Europe. The programme ran up until the millennium and expanded to the Southbank Centre and Sadler's Wells Theatre. Many of those programmed artists are now well established, such as Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker in Belgium, or Rui Horta of SOAP Dance Theatre in Germany, now an Aerowaves partner in Portugal.

Ripples across Europe

Due to the success of The Turning World, Ashford started receiving video tapes with grainy footage from younger, emerging European artists who saw there was broader demand for their work in London. Struggling to discern the quality of the choreography, Ashford and Arthur invited trusted professional colleagues from other European countries to London for a meeting. Ashford attributes a self-proclaimed penchant for "casting" as instrumental to this successful recruitment. Ashford found it a comfort to know that the tapes – normally filmed on only one camera at the back of the auditorium – weren't "the end of the story".

Eleven Aerowaves artists were subsequently showcased across Resolution in 1997. Each was presented as the first act in a triple bill before two UK artists, who brought a guaranteed supportive home audience. Arthur and Ashford differ on the name's origins: Ashford recalls it being suggested



as a means to get sponsorship from a big UK confectionery company with a similarly named chocolate bar. Arthur insists it was taken from the chewing gum 'Airwaves' – the 'ir' was then replaced with 'ero' to imply 'euro'.

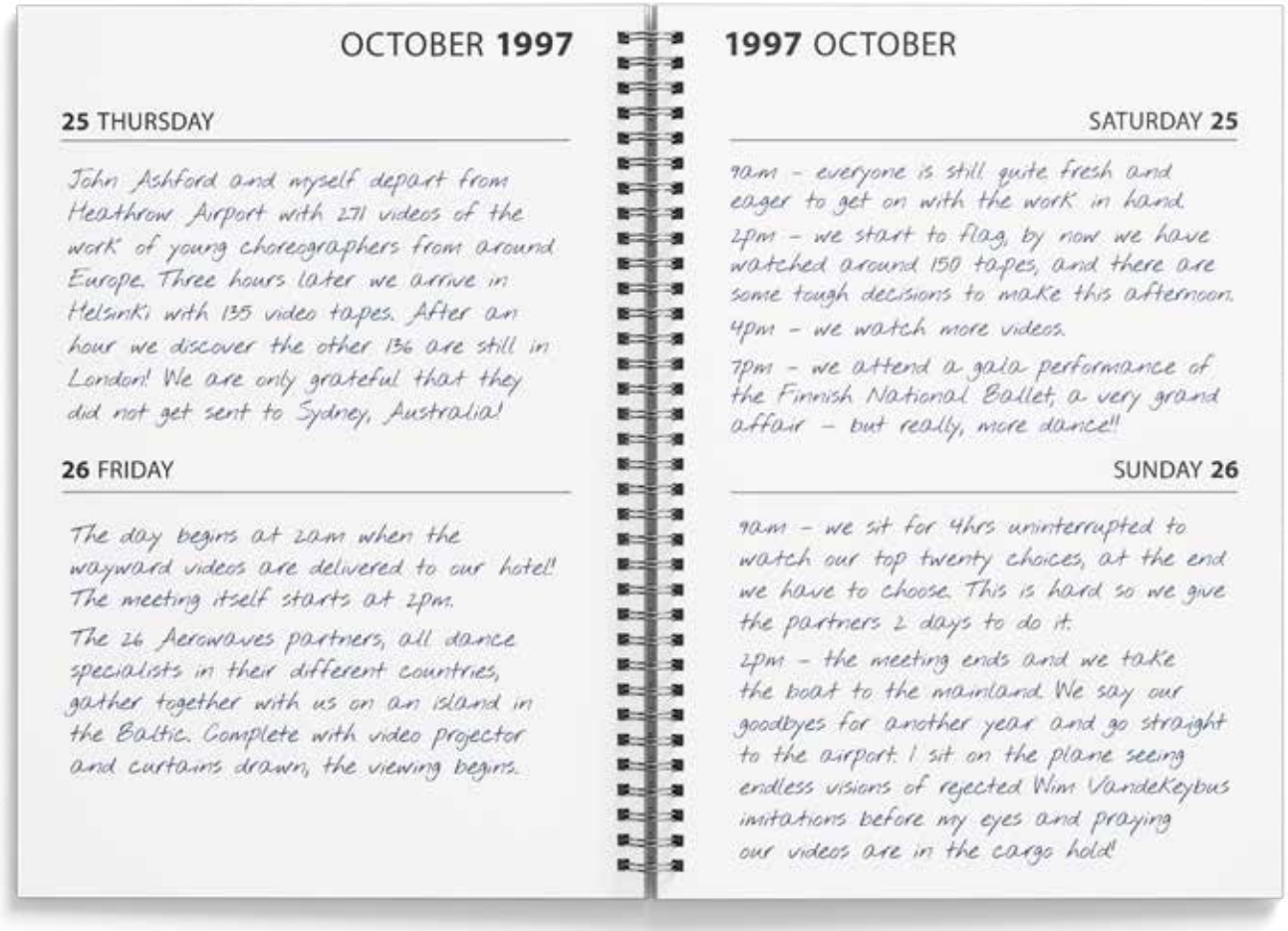
"I'm usually so careful with names," explains Ashford. "I justified it in terms of a 'ripple effect' – which was a fashionable idea at the time – which justified not having a big dance audience because there'd then be a ripple effect."

But what was in it for these transcontinental colleagues apart from advising Ashford on which artists to programme? Well, they too could put the selected artists on in their own venues. And so the idea of work being shown across Europe by Aerowaves partners was planted and subsequently allowed to grow through an invitation by Aerowaves partner Marianna Kajantie to Helsinki the following year to continue those discussions. Ashford and Arthur pitched up with flight cases filled with tapes (the cases nabbed from Richard Alston Dance Company) to their new location: a formerly Soviet-occupied vivisection laboratory on an island ten minutes from the harbour, the cages for the animals still in situ.

Which artists?

A format began to take shape: the selection meetings took place in new locations each year, and the selected artists continued to be programmed in Resolution while simultaneously being showcased to presenters from all over Europe. The list of invited partners grew: partners would remain involved with Aerowaves for as long as they wished, on an equal footing with each other, and each representing their local scene.

The bones of the selection process have remained largely the same. Ashford would watch all the videos to get a full overview, and select extracts to show to partners. In the early days, he would then select the artists to put on at The Place based on the discussion, but this evolved into a vote by partners to arrive at the final list. The number of applications has grown exponentially: from 11 artists selected from 262 videos in 1996, to 20 artists from over 700 submissions in 2020 (the number of selected artists increased to 20 in 2009). The submission



OCTOBER **1997**

25 THURSDAY

John Ashford and myself depart from Heathrow Airport with 271 videos of the work of young choreographers from around Europe. Three hours later we arrive in Helsinki with 135 video tapes. After an hour we discover the other 136 are still in London! We are only grateful that they did not get sent to Sydney, Australia!

26 FRIDAY

The day begins at 10am when the wayward videos are delivered to our hotel! The meeting itself starts at 2pm.

The 26 Aerowaves partners, all dance specialists in their different countries, gather together with us on an island in the Baltic. Complete with video projector and curtains drawn, the viewing begins.

1997 OCTOBER

SATURDAY **25**

9am – everyone is still quite fresh and eager to get on with the work in hand.

2pm – we start to flag, by now we have watched around 150 tapes, and there are some tough decisions to make this afternoon.

4pm – we watch more videos.

7pm – we attend a gala performance of the Finnish National Ballet, a very grand affair – but really, more dance!!

SUNDAY **26**

9am – we sit for 4hrs uninterrupted to watch our top twenty choices, at the end we have to choose. This is hard so we give the partners 2 days to do it.

2pm – the meeting ends and we take the boat to the mainland. We say our goodbyes for another year and go straight to the airport. I sit on the plane seeing endless visions of rejected Wim VandeKeybus imitations before my eyes and praying our videos are in the cargo hold!

Anna Arthur's diary of the Aerowaves' Partners' meeting, Helsinki, October 1997

format has moved from video tapes to DVDs and now onto online links. Processing that number of submissions and maintaining the network soon became a full-time job, and so in 2009 Ashford and Arthur left The Place to focus fully on Aerowaves.

Over the years, an 'Aerowaves style' has often been attributed to the organisation, a point Ashford finds very interesting; "that a group of 44 people from 33 countries can make a selection which is very clear artistically." Consequently, there is a self-fulfilling loop of works not being selected and artists on the fringes subsequently not finding it worthwhile to apply. This has been raised to Ashford in particular in the UK by artists working in South Asian dance and hip-hop communities, although the network is focused mainly on contemporary dance.

And yet "if anyone came to our meetings, they would realise we're interested in a wide range" he explains. Videos of live performance – not screendance – are selected that "tell him something new about the world", and a balance is struck across geographical reach (emphasising both the centres and peripheries of the continent), gender, and numbers of people on stage.

For Arthur, works shown in the early days of Aerowaves were more "rock 'n' roll". In Aerowaves' 25-year history, Ashford has noticed an increasing "academisation" of the form as artists have moved into universities and away from trying things out physically in a studio – an investigative process that can sometimes forget the audience at the other end. And while dance early on in his career generally involved the single choreographer being flown into rehearsals in order to give his piece to the dancers, now Ashford observes that when the choreographer arrives at the studio, she begins a period of research with dancers who she lists as her collaborators. Work by the former might be in service of an idea, whereas now trust and the relationships between people may come to the fore. "If Aerowaves has been influential in giving greater visibility to that work, then that's a good thing. I prefer bands not singers," muses Ashford.

The EU catches up

When Aerowaves first came into being, the EU flag had 12 stars, for 12 countries. Aerowaves already counted on more than that, so they made the decision not to apply for EU network funding, as it would have limited who could apply. For Ashford, this meant the network grew organically between individuals (not institutions), forming a basis of trust which he believes is particularly important when an artist's career hangs in the balance.

Aerowaves received its first network grant from a larger European Union in 2010. That Aerowaves grew at the same time as the growth in low-fare air travel and a concurrent ease of accessing opportunities abroad, is hardly coincidental for Ashford. It has also signalled aesthetic shifts. Once, Ashford felt he could recognise where a dance piece came from – Finland at one point produced "glacially perfect technical trios" – now he can only recognise the theatre the piece is filmed in.

Spring Forward

While the selection process has stayed the same, the need for partners to see the work live became more pertinent. And so the Spring Forward festival to showcase the Aerowaves Twenty came into being, the first edition in 2011 in Ljubljana.

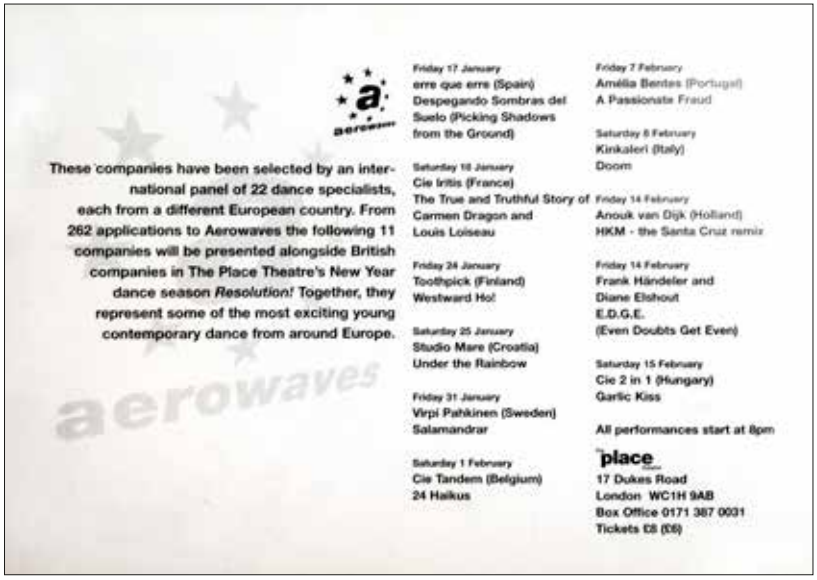
Like the selection meeting, Spring Forward is hosted in a different city each year by one partner. Until Aerowaves secured further EU Platform funding in 2014, the first few iterations involved a certain amount of scrambling for funds and a reliance on partners' generosity. For instance, after plans in 2012 to go to Puglia, Italy, fell through, partner Roberto Casarotto from Operaestate Festival Veneto devoted their B Motion festival to Spring Forward.

Planning Spring Forward is a balancing act between presenting the selected artists and working with the local partner's engagement

262

artists applied to Aerowaves in its first year





Above: the first Aerowaves programme at The Place Theatre, London, in 1997

Opposite: Spring Forward festival 2017 in Århus, Denmark. Photos © Christoffer Brekne

remits. Though it is primarily an event for dance professionals, Ashford insists on members of the public attending the festival. Not only is a room full of professionals daunting for an artist, it is also unrepresentative of the general public.

And it is a walking festival – with over twenty performances scheduled over three days, delegates move en masse between the city's different theatres. It provides that vital break from sitting in a cramped theatre all day, and ample time for networking, conversation and reflection. Spurred on, perhaps, by Ashford's own quick walking speed and incredulity at the thought of sitting still in a bus in traffic when a walk would get you there far quicker, eyes refreshed by distant views.

Growing arms and legs

Cut to the present day, and the well-oiled Spring Forward showcase sits amongst a cacophony of other projects that Ashford is equally passionate about. Springback Academy was the first offshoot ("inevitable to me," states Ashford, founding Theatre Editor at *Time Out* magazine, "surprising to everyone else") and is looked after by Oonagh Duckworth. An idea stolen from Ashford's own time at Resolution, emerging writers are mentored by experienced critics as they review the Aerowaves Twenty.

Placing reviews of platformed artists' works next to their listing on the Aerowaves website could, however, have unintended consequences. Against the backdrop of a steady decline in print journalism and a general lack of editorial guidance in online publications, Springback Magazine was launched with Springback mentor and experienced dance writer Sanjoy Roy as editor. The magazine platforms the work of Academy 'graduates'. Its gaze extends beyond the Aerowaves network, writing about other similarly experimental and emerging artists across Europe – its purpose editorial, not promotional.


SPOTLIGHT


SPRING
FORWARD
B


SPRING
FORWARD







The 2020 Aerowaves Partners' meeting in Athens, Greece
Photos © Enya Belak

Writing can be a lonely experience, and the Academy has proved a fruitful ground for writers to meet each other and discuss the works seen and their own practice. This evolved into Springback Assembly, a series of gatherings that take place at other dance platforms, such as NID Platform in Reggio Emilia, Italy, in 2019 and ICE HOT Nordic Dance Platform in Reykjavík, Iceland, in 2018 and also, increasingly, online. It is Ashford's hope that this community will, like the partners before it, grow into its own unique network.

Aerowaves has proved no stranger to new technologies, either. Initial experiments in livestreaming the festival began in earnest at the Umeå Spring Forward in 2014. In trying to find the right balance between disseminating the works and keeping the audience's attention, this morphed into different formats. Collaborations with filmmaker Enya Belak saw the 'Meet the Makers' series emerge at the 2017 Århus festival in Denmark, and Springback Live at ICE HOT in 2018: a daytime TV show, but for dance enthusiasts.

Looking forward

What next for a touring network of contemporary dance in a century that has seen Europe grapple with surges in nationalism, while the climate emergency has become ever more pressing? For Ashford, Aerowaves needs to uphold its global responsibility to reduce its carbon footprint while nonetheless defending artist mobility. Experiments with Virtual Reality have raised the possibility of touring in a more sustainable way while also focusing on local communities.

There was never a 'grand plan'. Aerowaves has always been "a response to the actualities of the situation of the artists and partners" and those artists have always been emerging artists – dealing with "acorns rather than forests," states Ashford. The organisation's future successes and failures will be determined by how it continues to support these artists in ever-changing circumstances.

Does dance ever fail? "Yes," replies Ashford, "and thank goodness it does. It is always on the edge of risk."



2000

The Lilac Ant-eater

Réka Szabó HU

The Lilac Ant-eater navigates the nocturnal musings of choreographer Réka Szabó. Half-filled inflatables inhabit the space, unidentifiable, caught in her half-waking world. In the opening section, Szabó grapples with her clothes, peeling them back to reveal pockets of pale flesh. In a fit of frustration, her arms get trapped, caught in her sleeves, binding her movement and forbidding her means of expression. The object of Szabó's convulsions turns out to be an outsized blow-up anteater. She plays provocatively with herself, worming her way into its inanimate affections, squashing herself against its plastic skin. The piece is infused with a strong sense of her own sexuality. Szabó's signature is her eloquent body language; it is as subtle as it is explicit, and articulate as it is ambiguous.

Philippa Newis
Resolution Review

2001

Körper, Terrain

Christina Ciupke & Manuela Fischer DE

The opening minutes of *Körper, Terrain* by the German duo Christina Ciupke and Manuela Fischer, where the two women lie motionless on an empty, silent stage, sent me into reflex critical mode. Hadn't they heard of Paul Taylor, who in 1957 earned a blank review for standing still in a dance show?

But as the pair finally began to move, minutely adjusting their bodies through the slowest of stretches, somersaults, crouches and crawls, I saw that they weren't reiterating the mischievous deconstructions of earlier generations, but doing a very contemporary spin on minimalism. They were doing dance as designer loft living, dance as feng shui.

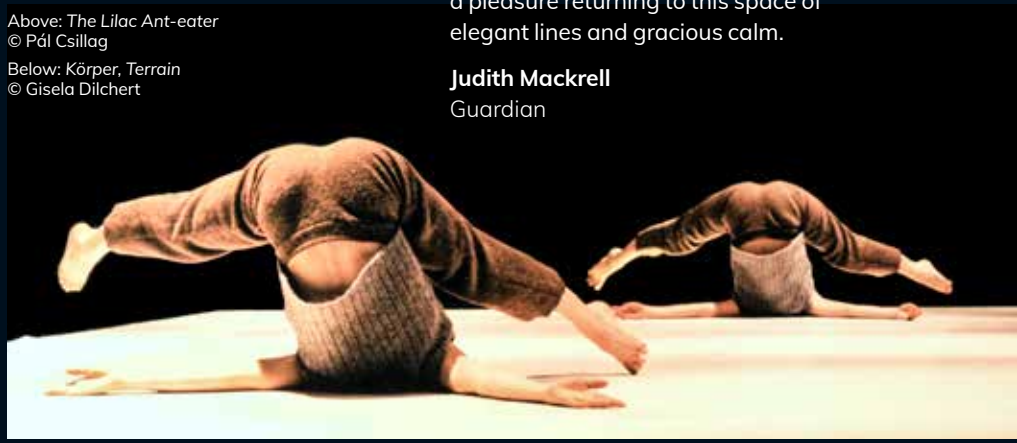
> *"We never saw the dancers' faces, but we got to know their limbs, their spines, the soles of their feet."*

Dressed in muted grey and brown and tracking around a space that was fastidiously lit, the two dancers sculpted their bodies through a sequence of beautiful and contemplative forms. Low-key music subtly altered the ambience from trance to urban. We never saw the dancers' faces, so deeply coiled and twisted were their bodies, but we got to know their limbs, their spines, the soles of their feet, the sensuous precision of their breathing. If the pacing of the work was such that our minds wandered, it was always a pleasure returning to this space of elegant lines and gracious calm.

Judith Mackrell
Guardian

Above: *The Lilac Ant-eater*
© Pál Csillag

Below: *Körper, Terrain*
© Gisela Dilchert



AH! EUROPA



"Are you from Europe?"
I had to come to the other side
of the world to be asked
the most important question.
The first time it had come up,
I answered resolutely
"No, I'm British"; but now I had
learned better and responded
with the dutiful "Yes".

Time may change us – but can we trace time? Aerowaves' founding director looks back over the years

John Ashford



Image: Krzysztof Hepner/Unsplash

AEROWAVES AT 25. What hasn't changed since those heady early days of dance discovery? Young artists are still eager to travel, especially now that the pandemic has made travel as restricted as it was back in the early '90s. Our Partners remain experts exercising generosity of judgement, still individuals rather than institutions, determined that their network will survive with or without funding. They always meet when the clocks change in October. Their selection principles and procedures are constant, refined from year to year, but guided at each meeting by the exact same criteria I proposed at the first in London:

The work is propelled by a good idea
Choreographed with an originality motivated by this idea
Which has the confidence to omit the superfluous
With a clear and sturdy structure
Danced with clarity, verve, commitment and assurance
That will look good presented under limited technical conditions
From a company that has not toured much abroad
But whose experience might be enriched through Aerowaves
And that will have a future

And what has changed? Well, my role has evolved from 'Benevolent Tyrant' of an anarchic network to Founding Director of a Platform supported by the EU through Creative Europe. For the next 25 years, Aerowaves will move its base from London to Dublin and engage new leadership. This is not simply because the UK chose to leave the European Union. It was offered the opportunity to stay as one of the 40 countries that collaborate through Creative Europe. It refused, and sought a 'domestic alternative', an ignorant folly now abandoned. So it is right that Aerowaves relocates to Ireland, a country that is an enthusiastic supporter of European values and exchange.

In the end, it is a matter of cultural identity.

That put me in mind of a piece I wrote at the turn of the century as Aerowaves was about to embark on its fifth season. Reading it now, I see that much has changed – and much hasn't. Turn the page to turn back the clock...

'Ah! Europa'. It's a good title, simultaneously invoking awe and resignation, respect and irritation, hope and despair. It belongs to a stream of work at the Polverigi Festival in Italy near Ancona, recently come of age in its twenty-first year. I've been present most years at this remarkable survivor of the European avant-garde, but not at the first, because I was living in Tokyo.

"May I help you?" My heart sank. I was quietly trying to work out if the characters written on the sign of the railway station corresponded to the ones on my map, indicating Shimbashi. Everyone in Tokyo was learning a language called American English, because that was good for business, and they wanted to practise it. "May I help you?" was the opening gambit, well articulated according to Lesson Four, Tape Two; but experience had told me that Comprehension was usually a bit less advanced. I could try out my dreadful Japanese, but that's not what was expected. I could answer in English, but it would not be American, and so whatever I said it would throw up the second disappointed question.

"Are you from Europe?" I had to come to the other side of the world to be asked the most important question. The first time it had come up, I answered resolutely "No, I'm British"; but now I had learned better and responded with the dutiful "Yes". Ah! Europa, from a distance the boundaries of hatred are less vivid, suffused within a land of abundance, ringing with common achievements; and compared to Japanese, the languages are just dialects.

"Where from in Europe?" Great Britain… no, too imperial; United Kingdom… hardly, what with Northern Ireland; the UK… sounds like the other bit of the US; Britain… but I didn't feel remotely Welsh or Scottish; England… but I didn't play cricket or know anyone from Newcastle; the British Isles… more a place where seabirds live than people…

"London" (pronounced Ron Don to avoid confusion). So there it was. I made an early discovery of my cultural identity. I was a European Londoner. And yes, it was Shimbashi because suddenly I recognised the old steam railway engine parked in the middle of the road, a rare distinguishing feature in Tokyo's manicured sprawl.

It took a good few years to learn the lesson of that conversation in Japan. The assumption that everyone in Europe spoke English was a bit before its time, but most now recognise the necessity for a common language, and English seems to have just about won out over American.

Constant visits to Polverigi persuaded me that the neighbouring cultures of Europe needed to get to know each other better, and particularly that those British Islands should be paddled closer from mid-Atlantic. Dance offered the medium of least resistance.

At The Place Theatre we started a season called The Turning World, inviting over a hundred companies during a decade, most from other European countries. Cheaper air connections between capitals and easier communications were shrinking the continent. And everybody wanted to perform in London. The biennial Spring Collection offered a showcase of British work ready for the world: last month 250 promoters watched 21 events over a weekend, and now the bookings are beginning to roll in. Yes, one of the companies choreographed by an Associate Artist of The Place will be going to Polverigi, London-trained Luca Silvestrini turns out to be a local from just up the road in Iesi. Ah! Europa…

Three years ago, experience and research finally threw up Aerowaves, a scheme which draws upon that vision of Europe's cultures which can only be seen from a distance, a satellite view of what moves people in this corner of the earth. I'm a European Londoner and Aerowaves has partners in an A–Z of cities from Athens to Zurich – now in a total of 28 nations stretching from Lapland to the Algarve, from Galway to the Urals. This veritable dance council of Europe recognises no political boundaries, and welcomes observers from networks in Asia and Latin America. It is made up of enthusiastic specialists who, like me, initially entered the arts because they promised an enjoyable alternative to proper work. Amongst this

Published in *Animated*, Winter 2001

consistent group, the youngest is 24 and the oldest 56. It is the job of Aerowaves partners to broadcast the opportunity amongst all younger dance companies in their regions, and to encourage those to apply who they believe will benefit most from showing a short work in London. A trawl of new dance activity is thus genuinely and uniquely made throughout Europe.

Each application is accompanied by a video of the work to be presented. Around 250 videos arrive from 25 countries each year. I have the rare privilege of being able to watch all of them. 25 partners meet together over a weekend (in London, Helsinki, Gent, Luxembourg, Budapest…) to consider these applications following a pre-selection process during which they are closely consulted. Despite their cultural differences, the partners come to a common agreement through video example over the ten companies they recommend for invitation to London. The need for agreement welds them into a group of new friends, sparking debates that would never arise through the more abstract agenda of a conference.

Those ten dance companies perform once each over five weekends in January at The Place Theatre alongside British artists in the triple bills of the season Resolution!, many then going home with that useful tool, an English-language review. These emerging artists benefit from the experience of performing their work in a new cultural context, usefully clarifying their difference. And in meeting each other and their British counterparts, they are able to exchange common experiences. Audiences respond with growing enthusiasm to these very varied pieces, each of its own high standard, and the weekend series has rapidly gained a following within the season.

Showing such work in London does help us know our neighbours better, since this little island is in danger of drifting out into the Atlantic again. But Aerowaves has brought other unforeseen benefits. Partners have carried news of the companies they enjoyed, and invitations to other countries have followed. Radical dance has spread like wildfire across new European territory. Young companies need no information pack, marketing materials or education programme to persuade Aerowaves partners that they are in the vanguard of dance thinking and moving. Six Aerowaves companies are now regularly presented in Amsterdam by DWA during the festival Julidans, and seven other Aerowaves partners are currently planning Aerowaves events of three or more companies – and not necessarily those selected for London. It is right that different choices are made since Aerowaves seeks to promote cultural distinction rather some dreary European conformity.

The balance between the formal structure of the network and its potential for informal adjuncts gives the partners a genuine sense of ownership. At least fifty companies get their work known across Europe. London audiences are offered a lightning sketch of the life of the continent. The Place Theatre forms early relationships with companies previously unknown that might later appear in its international seasons. And the scale of finance is modestly in keeping with the early achievements of the companies presented. Aerowaves is free of any direct funding, and thus is an idea that remains bright, undiminished by the drudgery of consultation, committees and reports. If it ceases to offer the pleasure of discovery, if it ever becomes a task, or if no one is prepared to take on the responsibility of organising the next annual meeting, we'll stop it.

Ah! Europa. A war zone, a resigning European Commission, the threat of a Benetton in every town, and Britain poised primly on the edge of a single currency. As usual, at least the arts are ahead of the game.

John Ashford
The Place Theatre Director
5 December 2000

PS. The words 'development', 'strategy', 'access', 'initiative' and 'scheme' do not appear amongst the 1300 of this article









Can you spot the Aerowaves artist?

Is there such a thing as an 'Aerowaves artist' today? Anna Kozonina searches for shared traits among recent Aerowaves works

Anna Kozonina











Opposite page, left:
Masako Matsushita, *Un/dress*. Photo: Paolo Paggi

Opposite page, right:
Roza Moshtaghi, *Bouncing Narratives*. Photo: Josh Lake/Ben Pender
Markéta Stránská, *FLY!* Photo: Vojta Brtnický
Ginevra Panzotti & Enrico Ticconi, *Harleking*. Photo: Dieter Hartwig

This page, left:
Paweł Sakowicz, *Jumpcore*. Photo: Maciej Rukasz
Dagmar Dachauer, *The Feline Project*. Photo: Shananeir
Collectif ÈS, *Jean-Yves, Patrick & Corinne*. Photo: Jean-Louis Fernandez

This page, right:
Inés Belli, *Postmodern Cool*. Photo: Tale Hendnes
Premier Strategème, *Forecasting*. Photo: Yelena Remetin

Next page:
Ingrid Berger Myhre & Lasse Passage, *Pan Flutes and Paperwork*. Photo: Sara Anke

When I was asked to reflect on the image of the contemporary Aerowaves artist, I thought: oh God, that would require profound research and take a significant number of pages. Because there is no such thing as a 'typical' Aerowaves artist. They come from different countries, stretching from Greece to Norway. They have various dance backgrounds: from classical training and contemporary dance techniques to street dance, jazz, and traditional folk dancing, they vary in styles and aesthetics, and approaches to creating pieces. And, more importantly, they have different ideas of what dance is.

Aerowaves artists are never well-established choreographers with big dance companies and consistent support: often they are highly professional enthusiasts still fighting for wide recognition. Their pieces stick to a minimalist setup and involve a small number of performers. They are bold in their interpretations of what dance is, and that leads to a variety of aesthetics and genres and pushes them to continually collaborate with artists from different media.

But if we look deeper, we might find three seemingly meaningful things which today distinguish a collective image of the very 'Aerowaves artist'. I would venture to assume that they are: (self)-reflection, (self)-irony, and reimagined virtuosity.

(Self)-reflection

Despite the highly sustainable myth of dance being 'just' the art of bodily expression, for the last hundred years choreographers, apart from developing different genres and styles, have been reflecting on the boundaries of art and the pressing issues of the outside world. From essentialist feminist sentiments of early modern dance to Cunningham's musings on the body which would be denaturalised, dismantled, and then reassembled 'by chance' in an inhuman logic; from the urge to find the extraordinary in the mundane and push the boundaries of classic stage dance in the 1970s to ironic deconstructive gestures of 'non-dance'; from Tanztheater to gallery performances – dance has always been here to give feedback to the world. Against this backdrop, Aerowaves artists are likewise smart and pretty passionate about the world around them, be it the theatre world or wider global issues.

Aerowaves artists are usually competent in the dance techniques they are practising but they don't take them for granted. Being entangled in histories, fashion and even politics, dance styles themselves are often scrutinised by choreographers. In Inés Belli's brilliant *Post-modern Cool*, five dancers recreate the common expectations of theatrical jazz, reflecting on and constantly deconstructing its rules and aesthetic regimes. Paweł Sakowicz's energetic *Jumpcore* explores different types of jumping, ranging from ballet to rave, to question the politics of 'lightness'.

Iris Karayan's *Unauthorised* reflects on pop-cultural representations of the body, dance, and movement. And in her powerful solo *Babae*, Joy Alpuerto Ritter refers to Mary Wigman's *Witch Dance*, exploring how vocabularies of contemporary dance techniques, Philippine folk dance, classical training, hip hop, and voguing in her body become part of one big heritage praising mysterious female power.

This self-reflection goes beyond deconstructing and reassembling different techniques and styles and extends to the dance world in general. In the hilarious *Jean-Yves, Patrick & Corinne*, Sidonie Duret, Jeremy Martinez, and Emilie Szikora cast doubt on the concept of originality in dance. The slow, almost still *Drift (I, II)* by Mario Barrantes Espinoza and Thomas Bîrzan blurs the borders between dance and sculpture, questioning the common understanding of dance as the art of mobility.





And then there's an urge to analyse the outside world and the role of dance in wider events. The hypnotising *Harleking* by Ginevra Panzetti and Enrico Ticconi masterfully examines how seemingly 'natural' human emotions are always being constructed through relations of power and control in society. Markéta Stránská's *FLY!*, 'a physical life experience with one leg, one prosthetic leg and two crutches', is a strong statement on how dance can empower people by discovering new opportunities for moving and living. And Premier Stratagème's *Forecasting* explores our contemporary relationship with technology, revealing that, although in old-school media theory technologies are seen as extensions of the body, today our bodies are rather laptop extensions themselves.

(Self)-irony

Though (self)-reflection may come first, it doesn't mean that Aerowaves choreographers necessarily produce highbrow art. A good portion of this analytical work usually comes with a pinch of self-irony, if not with a big dose of exquisite humour.

In *Long Time No See!*, humour appears in the language of proximity between two cultures. Through never-ending riffs on national identities and traditions and mutual in-jokes, Beatrix Simkó and Jenna Jalonen explore similarities between Hungarian and Finnish lifestyles.

The Feline Project by Dagmar Dachauer is as serious as it is hilariously absurd. It's about cats. About internet cats. The performance transforms an abstract internet pet into a fleshy uncanny creature and makes you laugh and cry in a soul-touching 'meow-meow' song.

If like me you've always thought that cheerleaders are more scary and aggressive than encouraging, Kristin Ryg Helgebostad, the author of *Cheers*, thinks likewise. This performance both celebrates and distorts cheerleading dance, showing its ability to empower but also enslave its practitioners.

Thus, irony becomes a handy tool to address many issues inside and outside of dance, with fun and joyful inspiration.

Virtuosity reimagined

Aerowaves artists are usually virtuosos. They are virtuosic not only in the usual sense in terms of craft and formal qualities: they also push other aspects of their craft – their somatic awareness, ability to conduct research, or their dramaturgical choices – to new levels. There is a wide range of what can be considered 'virtuosity' here, and it gives us an insight into how diverse the field of contemporary dance is.

Compare two virtuosos: Anne-Marie Van in *Cellule* and Chiara Bersani in *Gentle Unicorn*. Both are personal performances of high intensity, the first based on explosive krump, the second on super slow movement and eye contact. Or compare two pieces with strong somatic awareness: James Batchelor's *Hyperspace* and Lina Gómez's *Restraint*. The first is hypnotising, self-immersed, calm, concentrated and poetic, while the second becomes more intense the more it puts the body into a state of tension and alertness.

Or compare dramaturgical choices in Masako Matsushita's *Un/dress* and Roza Moshtaghi's *Bouncing Narratives*. The former unfolds its feminist narrative through playing with pure form and semantics of clothes; the latter, being a mix of dance and installation art, develops its dramaturgy by means of the specific organisation of spaces for movement and watching. Overall, Aerowaves artists reimagine contemporary dance virtuosity by pushing it out of its own old-school boundaries.

There is no such thing as a 'typical' Aerowaves artist but the whole spirit of that community could be caught in a few phrases: smart but welcoming, reflective but ironic, and, in its broadest sense, virtuosic.

2004

Together

Helle Bach DK

There's global warming, weapons proliferation, gene cloning, economic summits – all the socio-economic-politico-technological turmoils of our biosphere – and then there's these two women on stage playing footsie. It's just one moment in *Together*, a clever and captivating work by Danish choreographer Helle Bach in which four dancers wobble, shudder and flail through a barrage of news bulletins and special reports, intent on their own lives and blithely oblivious to the bigger picture. The piece opens with them in a row, manically stepping and spinning on the spot, like human specimens in a rat-race driven by their own incessant mental treadmills. Later they cluster and scurry about the floor, before one makes a bid for individual attention, flappily executing clichéd show-stopping turns, to the others' supreme indifference. *Together* is lightly comic on the surface and faintly chilling underneath, nowhere more than in the finale, a long sequence in which the deadpan dancers do nothing more than jiggle their hands, knees and boompsy-daisies to cheesy easy-listening music. They end by climbing into the audience and merging with the mass of spectators. We share the same global context but, like the performers, we're more intent on the moment and our experience. We jiggle our hands in appreciative applause.

Sanjoy Roy
Resolution Review

> *"There's global warming, weapons proliferation, gene cloning, economic summits – and then there's these two women on stage playing footsie."*



Helle Bach, *Together*
Above right:



Icebox Fly
© Rui Ribeiro

2005

Icebox Fly

Sónia Baptista PT

Sónia Baptista reminds me of Audrey Hepburn reincarnated as an elongated Portuguese eccentric. In *Icebox Fly* this skinny, close-cropped young woman in a 50s-style dress examined female madness. Her influences were both Asian and avian. A film backdrop, cued to peculiar poetic texts delivered live with nasal breathiness, varied from Baptista's face close-up but partially concealed by blurry bird shapes, to pretty animations of rain or snow falling on trees and plants. Movement was minimal but deliberate: fluttering, twitching arms; rotating jerks of the head; backstepping while shaking each foot in turn; fingers whisking across flared skirt as if it were an instrument. She also sang a coquettish lament. Baptista's delicate, creeping dementia made demands on our patience. For me her presence tipped over from oddly charming to irritatingly precious. Yet something about her carefully-plotted dottiness rang true.

Donald Hutera
Dance Europe

2007

This is a picture of a person I don't know

Pere Faura NL/ES

This is a picture of a person I don't know sought a softer poignance via a fresh, endearing wit. Its creator, the Netherlands-based Spaniard Pere Faura, is a small fellow possessed of a cuddly kind of Hobbit-sized cuteness. His bittersweet post-modern solo drew upon a love of musicals, particularly on film, by showing just how easily life and fantasy can bleed and blend together. It was a beautifully judged piece of heart-on-its-sleeve conceptualism, using live and pre-recorded performance to deconstruct what some dismiss as escapist entertainment in order to point out and play with the genre's genuine emotional underpinnings.

Donald Hutera
Dance Europe



This is a picture of a person I don't know. © Giancarlo Ceccon

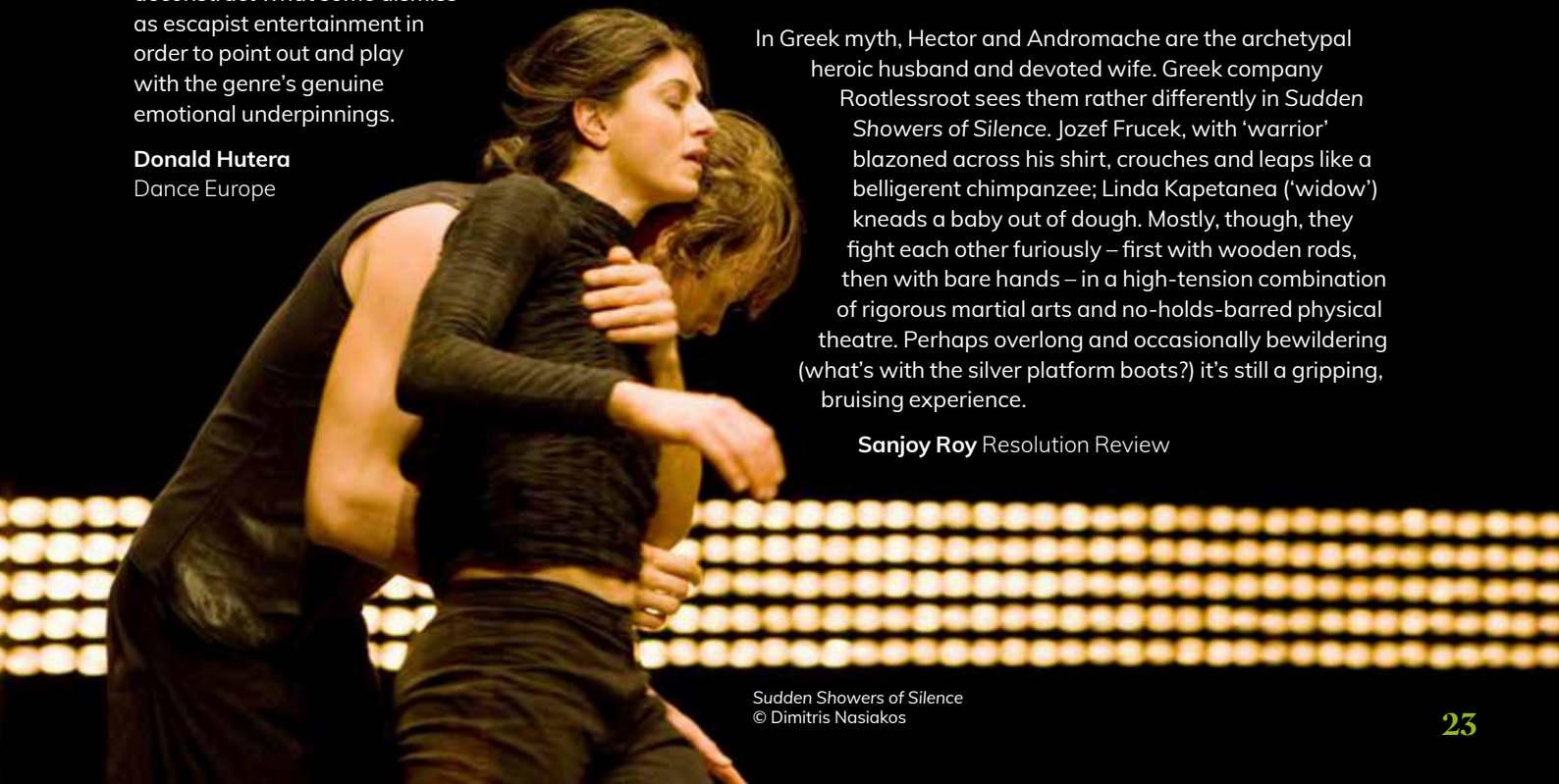
2008

Sudden Showers of Silence

Rootlessroot GR

In Greek myth, Hector and Andromache are the archetypal heroic husband and devoted wife. Greek company Rootlessroot sees them rather differently in *Sudden Showers of Silence*. Jozef Frucek, with 'warrior' blazoned across his shirt, crouches and leaps like a belligerent chimpanzee; Linda Kapetanea ('widow') kneads a baby out of dough. Mostly, though, they fight each other furiously – first with wooden rods, then with bare hands – in a high-tension combination of rigorous martial arts and no-holds-barred physical theatre. Perhaps overlong and occasionally bewildering (what's with the silver platform boots?) it's still a gripping, bruising experience.

Sanjoy Roy Resolution Review



Sudden Showers of Silence
© Dimitris Nasiakos

Local Area Network

How does a local scene interact with an international one? Hungarians recall their experience of Aerowaves

Lena Megyeri



Before I applied to Aerowaves' Springback Academy in 2016, I had already heard a lot about Aerowaves in Hungary. Dancers and choreographers from our country had been well represented in the annual Aerowaves Twenty selection for years – from Ákos Hargitay at the beginning in 1997, to Réka Szabó, Adrienn Hód, Ferenc Fehér and more recently Emese Cuhorka, Csaba Molnár, László Fülöp, Rita Góbi, Beatrix Simkó and Máté Mészáros.

In a local scene that doesn't shower its artists with awards and recognition, being selected had become an important acknowledgement for creators and their productions. Beyond that, Aerowaves had a great role in promoting Hungarian contemporary dance throughout Europe and helped many artists and dance professionals enter the international dance scene and become part of a vibrant network. I talked to some Hungarian members of the 'Aerowaves family' to find out how a local dance scene can benefit from a European network like Aerowaves.

> *We in Hungary are not very good at recognising our own talent. There's a sense that if you are successful abroad, then you are someone.*
>
> **Emese Cuhorka**

"When John Ashford asked me if I wanted to take part in Aerowaves' work, I felt honoured. It was a kind of professional recognition," says **Gergely Talló**, director of Workshop Foundation, Aerowaves' partner organisation in Hungary since 2006. It was founded in 1992 to provide support for independent artists and to encourage their artistic development, as well as the development of the whole field of contemporary dance in Hungary. "I think it's a great platform to meet professionals from other countries and exchange information and ideas. At the annual meetings there is always time to tell partners how things are going in our country and local dance scene, and we have the chance to introduce Hungarian artists to forty to fifty other professionals. Also of great value, as part of the Aerowaves Twenty selection process we have access to videos of hundreds of performances every year, by both well-known and emerging artists. As a member of Aerowaves, I also learnt a lot about how to operate a network while keeping it very personal. We all know each other, and I look forward to the meeting every year."


© Dániel Dömölky


© Emese Cuhorka

The chance to make connections and be part of a network is something that Aerowaves artists appreciate as well. **Beatrix Simkó**, whose performance *Long Time No See!* with Jenna Jalonen was part of the Aerowaves Twenty19 selection, had been following Aerowaves' work for years before she applied. "It looked to me like a European community that is good to be part of," she says. "It represents a certain quality, and is a springboard for creators to get into the international bloodstream. During the Spring Forward festival you are able to meet people that you wouldn't necessarily meet otherwise. Nowadays, when the distribution of performances is such a challenge, it's invaluable that people can connect a face to a production and see your work live. It's worth more than any video material or email by managers, because producers have to take much bigger risks if they invite you without seeing you live first." She and Jalonen received several international invitations after their festival performance.

Emese Cuhorka was part of the Aerowaves Twenty three times as a dancer in the Hodworks company, with *Basse danse* (2012), *Dawn* (2013) and *Conditions of Being a Mortal* (2015). (According to Talló, after Hodworks' third inclusion, members made a rule against being selected a fourth time.) As a choreographer, Cuhorka was invited for the first time in 2017 with *Your Mother at My Door*, her co-creation with László Fülöp under the company name Timothy and the Things. And she's back in 2021 with *Masterwork*, a duet with Csaba Molnár, another long-time Hodworks dancer.

Cuhorka's impressions of the network and Spring Forward have always been very positive. "Everyone who works there, from the members who make the selection through to the stage-builders to the critics of Springback Academy, make it feel like it's the most important thing in the world that these performances take place, and that treasures are discovered and shared. Each festival I attended felt like it had a mission."

13

times in 25 years Hungarian artists have been selected for the Aerowaves Twenty

She also talks about what it means to be included in the selection back home: “We in Hungary are not very good at recognising our own talent. There’s a sense that if you are successful abroad, then you are someone. The early pieces of Hodworks were mostly received with confusion at home, and so it was great feedback that many international professionals regarded it worthy of note.” Cuhorka believes it is good for a show’s local reputation if it has been selected for the Twenty. She also feels that presenters around Europe are eager to invite productions that were included in the selection.

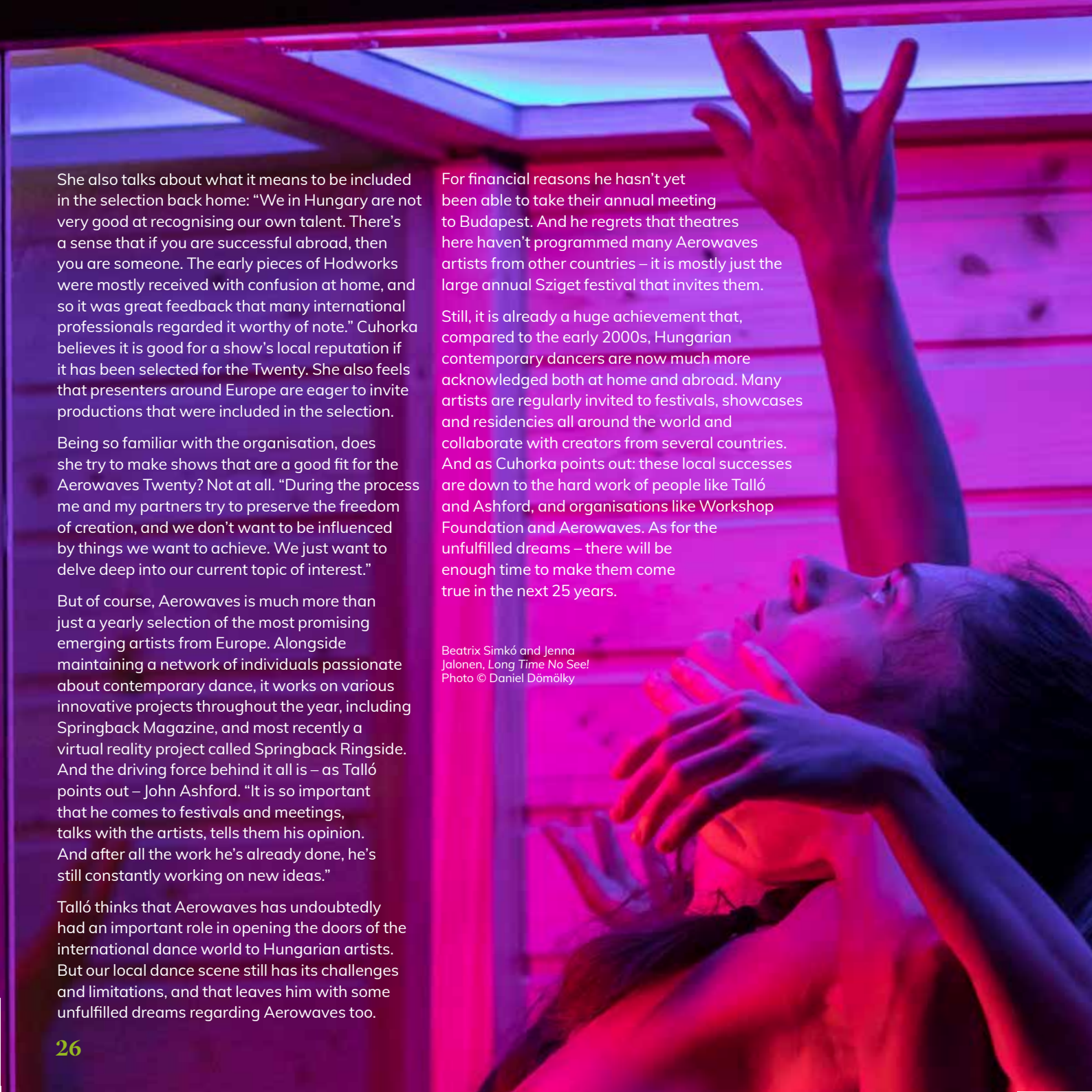
Being so familiar with the organisation, does she try to make shows that are a good fit for the Aerowaves Twenty? Not at all. “During the process me and my partners try to preserve the freedom of creation, and we don’t want to be influenced by things we want to achieve. We just want to delve deep into our current topic of interest.”

But of course, Aerowaves is much more than just a yearly selection of the most promising emerging artists from Europe. Alongside maintaining a network of individuals passionate about contemporary dance, it works on various innovative projects throughout the year, including Springback Magazine, and most recently a virtual reality project called Springback Ringside. And the driving force behind it all is – as Talló points out – John Ashford. “It is so important that he comes to festivals and meetings, talks with the artists, tells them his opinion. And after all the work he’s already done, he’s still constantly working on new ideas.”

Talló thinks that Aerowaves has undoubtedly had an important role in opening the doors of the international dance world to Hungarian artists. But our local dance scene still has its challenges and limitations, and that leaves him with some unfulfilled dreams regarding Aerowaves too.

For financial reasons he hasn’t yet been able to take their annual meeting to Budapest. And he regrets that theatres here haven’t programmed many Aerowaves artists from other countries – it is mostly just the large annual Sziget festival that invites them.

Still, it is already a huge achievement that, compared to the early 2000s, Hungarian contemporary dancers are now much more acknowledged both at home and abroad. Many artists are regularly invited to festivals, showcases and residencies all around the world and collaborate with creators from several countries. And as Cuhorka points out: these local successes are down to the hard work of people like Talló and Ashford, and organisations like Workshop Foundation and Aerowaves. As for the unfulfilled dreams – there will be enough time to make them come true in the next 25 years.



Beatrix Simkó and Jenna Jalonen, *Long Time No See!*
Photo © Daniel Dömölky

2009

Perro

Daniel Abreu ES

Madrid-based Daniel Abreu is a fascinating performer, his compact, wiry frame and alert, anxious visage ideal vehicles for mimetic dance. His Aerowaves solo *Perro* (Dog) was a sombre yet sneakily witty depiction of the pained animal lurking inside contemporary man. Gradually shedding like an old skin his corporate-ready uniform of white shirt, black tie and trousers, Abreu was a self-punitive tease whose ambiguous actions begged the question, When you let go of the mechanics of human behavioural norms, what's left? His aesthetic devices were envelopingly dim lighting, a supremely well-chosen instrumental soundtrack, a few select props (wall-mounted antlers, a phallic stick) and his own body. I didn't always 'get' what he was telling me, nor did I wholly agree with the extended length and repetitions of certain movement passages, but I respect Abreu as the provocative messenger of some pretty dark and demanding tidings of the soul.

Donald Hutera
Resolution Review



2010

A corpo libero

Silvia Gribaudi IT

Above: *A corpo libero*
© Samanta Cinquini
Below: *Perro*
© Javier Paz

In *A corpo libero* Silvia Gribaudi bore the pressures of, to quote a programme note, 'the female condition' with breezy comic grace. Captured in a spotlight that kept changing size, the busty, stout Italian started out in a self-conscious slump of imperfection. She tugged at the hem of a multi-coloured dress slightly too short and tight, trying to brush away discomfort. A shot of vintage Lou Reed* helped her make the transition from anxiety about self-image to increased self-confidence, while Callas (I think) singing *La Traviata* accelerated the speed of her moves. After running in place Gribaudi stripped down to her underwear, fanning and then jiggling – celebrating, really – her flesh. Her state of exposure thus became not just tolerable, but a liberating pleasure. For us, too. This small, simple but smart piece was a triumph for its immensely likeable creator. How refreshing, too, to see a full-bodied woman in an art form that ometimes places too much emphasis on cookie-cutter notions of beauty.

Donald Hutera
Dance Europe

*It was in fact Iggy Pop!



> *Her state of exposure thus became not just tolerable, but a liberating pleasure. For us, too.*

Euro-Asian dance alliances



Sung Im Her, *NUTCRUSHER*
Photo © Ok Sang Hoo



Five Asian dance professionals reflect on past, ongoing and future Aerowaves collaborations

Jonas Schildermans

NOVEMBER 2020. European media consumers feast on the elections of a country half way across the globe: the United States of America. We witnessed this change of power with a great sense of involvement and even emotion, perhaps even more so than in our own countries. Where does this obsession with the USA come from? If it was due to our interdependence in economics, technology, safety, and environmental health, wouldn't we pay just as much attention to what is happening in East Asia? Culture and language are key. One moment they are like a bridge, the next – a barrier. They make our relationship to North America and Asia essentially different. And even though Taiwanese films, Japanese novels and K-pop songs are increasingly becoming part of European mainstream culture, they remain poorly represented compared to other imported cultural goods. Non-verbal art forms like dance are less prone to that problem, and lend themselves to help us close the gap.

Despite its undeniable remit of facilitating cross-border connections within Europe, Aerowaves doesn't shy away from transcontinental thinking. Armed with dance and with John Ashford at its helm, the organisation commits to giving more visibility to emerging European choreographers in Asia, and vice versa, and to deepen understanding among the individuals involved in these exchanges as well as among their audiences and communities altogether.

Taiwan

The earliest of those partnerships dates back to 2009, when Ashford met Gwen Hsin-Yi Chang at the selection panel of the Taishin Arts Award in Taiwan's capital Taipei. "I really appreciated John's perspective and his openness to Asian art. He had very profound conversations with Taiwanese artists at the time," Chang recalls. With a shared ambition to support young artists in a sustainable way, they established a structural collaboration in 2017 when Chang became Head of International Partnerships at National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts (Weiwuying), a state-of-the-art performance centre in south Taiwan.

Their agreement with Aerowaves is threefold. First, both organisations have agreed to exchange programmes every two years between their respective presentation platforms: Weiwuying's Taiwan Dance Platform, a biennial showcase of independent and mainly Asian dance, and Aerowaves' Spring Forward Festival.

A second component focuses on dance criticism. At Spring Forward 2018, Chang was invited to attend Springback Academy, Aerowaves' intensive writing workshop, as an observer, resulting that same year in a Taiwanese spinoff called Writing about Dance, conducted by Sanjoy Roy and Stella Tsai in English and Chinese during the Taiwan Dance Platform. "We reached a young generation of local writers for whom reviewing in English was a big step, but also a strategic step for the future," says Chang.

Third, Chang represented Weiwuying in Aerowaves' annual partner meetings, to exchange opinions and to vote in the selection procedure as a European partner. "Within this network everything is open for discussion without any presumption or limitation: not only trends and the art, but also the situations in different countries, difficulties, practices from companies, artists, producers, presenters and so on," she says. Chang recently left Weiwuying to relocate to Europe, but she is convinced that the alliance between Weiwuying and Aerowaves will only intensify, even without her as its driving force.

I particularly pursued an international evaluation, in order to prospect which works could have a life outside of Korea.

Ahram Gwak

South Korea

In South-Korea, several Aerowaves artists have made stage appearances at Jong-Ho Lee's SIDance (Seoul International Dance Festival), following the director's visits to most Spring Forward events. Ahram Gwak, current Head of the Programming & Production Teams at Korea National Contemporary Dance Company (KNCDC), was formerly active in international programming at SIDance.

"My job at SIDance was to promote international activities for Korean independent choreographers and dance companies. So I studied Aerowaves as a model," says Gwak. After making the switch to KNCDC, the same questions remained pertinent: "How to introduce our domestic choreographers to a world stage?"

In 2018, the company initiated their STEP UP commissioning programme, with the aim of further developing existing works by emerging Korean choreographers. Gwak invited three international jury members to be on the jury panel, including Ashford from Aerowaves. "I particularly pursued an international evaluation of the candidates, in order to prospect which works could have a life outside of Korea," she says. After being selected and developed inside the framework of STEP UP, *A complementary set_Disappearing with an Impact* by The Choi X Kang Project was scheduled for Spring Forward 2020, but could only be presented online due to Covid-19. But KNCDC and Aerowaves didn't let that spoil the fun. "We plan to keep this collaboration going. I even dream of one day inviting Aerowaves choreographers to Korea for dance creations with our local creatives," says Gwak.



Japan

Another collaboration in the pipeline is with Kinosaki International Arts Center (KIAC) and Yokohama Dance Collection (YDC) in Japan. The foundations for this partnership were laid at TPAM2020, the performing arts meeting in Yokohama, where Ashford, Yuichiro Yoshida (Program director at KIAC) and Shinji Ono (Director at YDC) put their heads together.

"We envisioned an exchange in which Mr Ono and I would select an Aerowaves artist from Spring Forward Festival, let this choreographer use the facilities of the residency centre in Kinosaki to create a new work, and finally present the final result in Yokohama. In return, Spring Forward Festival would include a Japanese artist in their programme," says Yoshida. "The Japanese dance scene is fairly weak compared to the one in Europe. Our goal as a residency centre is to connect with partners outside of Japan, to provide opportunities for domestic artists to present their work internationally. That is why our connection with Aerowaves is so important." After years of preparation, the three partners hope to finally kick off the first residency in 2022 with the Finnish artist Jenna Jalonen.

> *"Our goal is to connect with partners outside of Japan, to provide opportunities for domestic artists to present their work internationally. That is why our connection with Aerowaves is so important."*
>
> Yuichiro Yoshida

Europe

But we don't always have to look far for meaningful connections to Asian culture. Among the many selected Aerowaves artists who work in geographic Europe are some with a deeply rooted connection to Asia, which they put at the centre of their work. Italian-Japanese Masako Matsushita (selected in 2020) uses taiko drumming to explore questions of cultural heritage and biculturality. Joy Alpuerto Ritter was raised in the USA and Germany, but was immersed in Filipino traditions by her mother. Her work *Babae*, a solo that invokes ancestral stories, was selected for Spring Forward Festival 2020.

"Right now I really want to connect with my roots," says Ritter. "Filipino folk dance is still in my body because I did it for such a long time. The witch dances with their feminine specificity have a quality that I see rarely in other styles. This is all defining my personal voice as a choreographer."

Korean dancer and choreographer Sung Im Her moved to Belgium in 2004, but her work and her Korean background stay inseparable. Her work *NUTCRUSHER* was selected for Spring Forward 2021. "This piece deals with my experience of being an Asian woman living and performing in Europe, and the Western male gaze that makes obedient and quiet stereotypes of us," she explains. Because Ritter and Her's work has only been shared digitally inside the Aerowaves network due to COVID-19, they are impatiently waiting to return to the stage, to continue enchanting and disenchanting live audiences with both old and new forces of the Far East.

Left: Choi X Kang Project, *A complementary set_ Disappearing with an Impact* © Mok Jinwoo

Below: Joy Alpuerto Ritter, *Babae* © Katja Renner



WHERE TO PUT

Experimental stage set-ups call for new ways of documenting dance – and for applying to Aerowaves

Beatrix Joyce

Every year, Aerowaves receives hundreds of dance videos from hopeful applicants from all over Europe. These are then watched by the Aerowaves partners, who together form a many-headed jury and vote for their top choices. Founder John Ashford, who in the last three years has watched well over 1500 application videos, once told me that he actually keeps tabs on every single artist who applies. The whole process makes it ever more attractive for aspiring choreographers to fill in the relatively simple application form and click send. There is only one essential thing they need to have at hand: a recording of their performance from beginning to end.

For artists working with conventional stage set ups, or in any proscenium style setting – standards that touring models often implicitly favour – this is a relatively straightforward task. It is a matter of two main concerns: firstly, finding a skilled camera person, and secondly, finding an angle, usually at the back of the auditorium, from which the camera can capture the whole performance. But for those working outside the theatre, with experimental stage set ups where there is no single 'front', or for those creating interactive relationships with their audience where people might be moving around and unwittingly blocking the view, documentation becomes less of a box to tick and more of a problem – both practical and artistic.

In Berlin, dance has claimed a multiplicity of spaces and formats. It is not uncommon for audiences to be invited to galleries (New Fears, Julian Weber), former warehouses (Meg Stuart), streets, playgrounds and bookshops (Let Me In Festival), or to be guided through multiple rooms (Sergiu Matis), to engage with the performers on stage (Maria F. Scaroni/Claire Vivianne Sobottke), or even to be the sole spectator of a piece with seven performers (Mineralwasser Kollektiv).

Roza Moshtaghi *Bouncing Narratives*
Photo © Josh Lake/Ben Pender


THE
CAMERA?

> *If touring networks can maintain an openness towards these hybrid performances and their non-conventional documentation videos, they too can make their way across the globe.*

Some artists, often working between mediums such as the visual arts and installation, offer their audience an active role in shaping the performance. For *Aeon*, a work presented as part of production house Tanzfabrik's Tanznacht 2020, multimedia artists Sandra Man and Moritz Majce brought their audience by bus to two abandoned suburban locations, where they were free to meander through the industrial wasteland and encounter the wandering performers. It was a hyper-specific experience for each audience member, dependent on a whole list of factors, from the moments they witnessed to the weather conditions on the day.

Working with self-designed light objects, Dutch choreographer Niels Weijer also explores multiple perspectives. *The Quality of Being in Colour* was shown in 2020 at Kunstquartier Bethanien, a nineteenth-century training hospital turned art space. Under the open arches of the building's central chamber, two dancers manipulated hula-hoop-sized rings of LEDs across multiple hours, the audience staying as long as they wished. With its interplay of light and shadow, slow-moving shifts in colour and ambience and the phasing of tones in its sound score, the performance operated along a sensory dimension as well as a visual one.

When asked to document events or experiences like these, even the most skilled camera person is met with a challenge. It is up to them to decide what to frame, what to focus on, and when to do so. With a panoply of both practical and artistic choices to be made, the act of recording is not simply one of observation but a practice of engaging with the unfolding events and becoming part of the performance.

Aerowaves, too, has opened up to this new form of performance documentation. Artist Roza Moshtaghi's 2020 selected work *Bouncing Narratives* sits somewhere between installation, choreography and art in public space. Two dancers bounce on a trampoline high above the ground, which forms the roof of a robust container, where the audience can witness the performance from below. They are given sunglasses, so they can look up at the sky without squinting in the sunlight. The container is encircled by a curtain of long blue ropes which can be touched and moved by curious passers-by, or by the wind – the sounds of which contribute, along with the bouncing on the trampoline, to the work's immersive sound score.

In the video documentation of *Bouncing Narratives*, by Josh Lake and Ben Pende, the piece's signature perspective from below is sensitively intercut with shots of the audience moving around and interacting with the installation. The film, aired as part of the digital edition of Spring Forward in 2020, tells the story of the performance by meeting the divergent needs of the project. By focusing on the choreography as well as the sensory, auditory and interactive layers of the work, a perspective from the audience emerges, one that even when the viewer is absent, allows them to feel like they are there.

In this way, the video of *Bouncing Narratives* is less focused on linearity – filming the work from beginning to end – and more on the interactive and sensorial experience of the performance. It craftily and aptly represents the project, and it in turn gives the work the opportunity to be shown at Aerowaves and further afield. Likewise, Aerowaves has in recent years selected other site-specific, non-theatre pieces, such as Satchie Noro and Silvain Ohl's 2017 *Origami*, an outdoor piece for dancer and shipping container, and Máté Mészáros's 2020 *Mechanics of Distance*, which spilled over foyers, stairways and beyond the building itself. Dance, both in Berlin and across Europe, is evidently pushing its way into new spaces and alternative formats. If touring networks, like Aerowaves, can maintain an openness towards these hybrid performances and their non-conventional documentation videos, they too can make their way across the globe.

The SPRING FORWARD Experience

Ka Bradley
Evgeny Borisenko

How do you showcase twenty emerging artists from different countries to as many European programmers as possible? You create a three-day long festival, cram in back-to-back performances alongside critical debates, writing workshops and live broadcasts, and you book out the city's performance venues and march your audience between them.

Spring Forward might be the only dance festival where the audience move as much as the performers. On paper, it's a highly efficient pitch session. In reality, it's an almost alchemical weekend where artists, writers and industry insiders rub shoulders in the auditorium, while queuing for the buffet, or at a late-night disco.

Here, Springback Magazine associate editor Ka Bradley and Springback writer Evgeny Borisenko recall some favourite (and not so favourite) Spring Forward moments from the last few years.

All images:
Spring Forward 2017, Århus
Christoffer Brekne

KB: Every Spring Forward festival, I engage deeply and emotionally with two things: the dance, and the food. Every year there's a performance that leaves a permanent impression on me – some examples are Viktor Černický's *PLI* from 2020's online festival, *Harleking* by Ginevra Panzetti and Enrico Ticconi the previous year at Val-de-Marne, Oona Doherty's film of *Lady Magma* in Sofia in 2018 and *Elvedon* by Christos Papadopoulos in Pilsen in 2016. All of these performances, and more, have unsettled and resettled the way I think about expression, narrative and the permeable category of 'dance'.

Equally, there's been food at Spring Forward that has reshaped me. Czech beer at Pilsen made the pints of the UK seem like ugly water; the lavish and creative feasts provided by Bora Bora in Aarhus introduced me to a whole fresh continuum of vegan food. And as for Bulgaria...

EB: Spring Forward 2018 in Sofia was the first one for me. When landing into snow-stormed Sofia airport I could hardly believe my eyes. Spring, really? But I agree, dance and food were fundamental elements. Too much dance, and too little food – after the late night shows people were stampeding to the dinner buffet, a plate in one hand and a fur coat in another.

I was hungry all the time, we had to walk ten kilometres each day between theatres through heavy snowstorms, and I severely lacked sleep, because after watching seven shows during the day I had to write reviews at night, and early in the morning we had to moderate panel discussions! Now I rediscover the programme and can hardly remember most of the works: "Ah, I've seen it? Must have been nice!"

KB: Did any shows stay with you?

EB: Oh yes, quite a lot actually. The memories of Barbara Matijevic and Giuseppe Chico's *Forecasting* are still as fresh and vivid as if I saw it yesterday. And in Val-de-Marne, the first show I saw upon arriving was *Harleking*, which you mentioned already. It was such an aesthetic and intellectual shock that I have seen it several more times.

KB: The compact review response we have to provide at the festival is probably the most challenging format I've written in! For *Springback Magazine*, we have the luxury of longer word counts – phew. It's been such a privilege to be part of that. Because we are editorially independent, we have the creative freedom to choose which dance works we want to cover and think deeply about. I've edited some superb articles for the magazine, they've been real learning experiences for me. Don't tell Londoners, but London is not the world.

> *"What viewers don't know is that I habitually sneak a small flask of whisky onto the set."*

Springback Magazine and Spring Forward expose me to European dance I'd never see otherwise, and so encourages me to think about new waves of dance much more expansively. The festival also allows me to experience the vibrant creative cultures of other cities. At Val-de-Marne, I spent a lot of time staring out of taxi windows with my mouth hanging open, admiring the Brutalist architecture.

EB: I remember discussing French brutalist architecture with you, Ka, when we were waiting for one of the morning shows in front of Maison des Arts de Créteil. Somehow it saved us! At the outset of the Springback Live show at Ice Hot in Reykjavík, 2018 (a sort of 'daytime TV' format but for dance), something went wrong with the pre-recorded videos. The producers asked us to just keep talking until everything went back to normal. I don't know how, but the architecture subject suddenly surfaced, and we had a nice chat, although we really look super stressed on the video!





KB: I'm always bowled over by how professional the Springback TV format looks when I watch it afterwards. I think we have the director and producer Enya Belak to thank for that. What viewers don't know is that I habitually sneak a small flask of whisky onto the set. I promise you we don't drink all of it – it's just a comfort to know it's there at all, although, at Val-de-Marne, I did accidentally leave it visible in one of the shots.

EB: I spent less than two days in Val-de-Marne, but they were so full! One early morning we went to see Beatrix Simkó and Jenna Jalonen's *Long Time No See*, as they were scheduled to appear in our live show that same night and I was asked to interview them. I was severely short on sleep and at the end of the show, one of the dancers grabbed my hand, dragged me onto stage and jumped on my neck, asking me to carry her across the stage. I certainly collapsed, to the crowd's cheerful laughter, and – covered in ridicule – started to concoct vengeful phrases for the interview with Beatrix and Jenna. The moment when I opened the door of La Briqueterie that night to welcome them on the set, and saw their faces saying "It's you?!" was priceless! But finally we had a very insightful and nice interview. I'm not resentful, and those two days put me in brighter spirits!

KB: I don't work in the dance world on a day-to-day basis – I don't believe you do either, Evgeny. I work in publishing, which means that I have ample opportunity to talk about my other great love (books), but very few people to talk to about dance. Especially contemporary dance – I think it's often regarded as a specialist art form with obscure and mysterious processes.

EB: Same here, Ka. I even had to overcome some kind of impostor syndrome during the first Spring Forward festival, as I was totally new to this world of dance platforms and dance writing professionals. Back then, in Sofia, and later on, in Paris or Reykjavík, I discovered a community of like-minded people, with whom you can talk dance for hours. But most importantly, many of them have become my close friends. My friendship with Irina Glinski, for example, started with night-long discussions about hauntology and dance, and by watching our writing mentor, Donald Hutera, joyfully waltz through the snowstorm singing *The Sound of Music*!

> *Like being in a pressure cooker where all the ingredients are dance.*

KB: There's no experience in my life quite like the Spring Forward festival, which is like being in a pressure cooker where all the ingredients are dance. You can turn to anyone at the festival and immediately begin a conversation about a piece you've just seen. Sometimes the setting can be inspiring too – at the Springback Assembly in Reykjavík, where we did the first Springback Live, I had some very interesting dance chats in the steam room and heated pools of the public baths.

EB: But what keeps striking me each time we all get together, offline or online, is that even our perception of time changes. The trips and festivals we are talking about here were quite short, two to five days maximum. But it always felt like a long journey, an adventure packed with conversations, chats, chilling in heated pools or drinking negronis under the sun, watching dozens of shows and running from one venue to another under the rain. I cherish the friendships I have made during these festivals and assemblies, and I feel we all now possess some kind of secret knowledge. These bonds are definitely helping us to get through our current times of uncertainty.

2014

The Dog Days Are Over

Jan Martens BE

Thank you Jan Martens for a welcome escape from dull grey and black dancewear in *Dog Days* – eight bright young things wearing very bright, very skimpy things wait impatiently as we enter. These are thoroughbreds anticipating a punishing marathon. In a 70-minute show they cease jumping for 15 short seconds. This is an empathy marathon too as the audience are encouraged to feel pleasure at the simplicity of jumping for joy, curiosity about endurance and concern for the strain on clearly superfit but not superhuman bodies. The profundity in this epic work lies in its sense of belonging. When the agony of repeated impact is unbearable we (they) turn to each other for strength and agony is transformed into ecstasy.

Morag Deyes
Springback Academy Pilot



The Dog Days Are Over
Photo © Piet Goethals

> *Eight bright young things wearing very bright, very skimpy things.*



2015

Relic

Euripides Laskaridis GR

Can a bust be used as a loo? Can a speech be delivered in an invented language and still be understood? In Euripides Laskaridis' *Relic*, the answer is yes. At the beginning one feels as if peeping into a neighbour's living room. We are smoothly drawn into a room with cables and switches all over the place and objects collected from the trash and recycled. Laskaridis, disguised as an outsize caricature of a humanoid sculpture, inhabits the room, which becomes his stage, leading us through a neatly knitted set of vaudeville sketches.

Laskaridis masters simple but effective movements and a colourful range of vocal sounds. His sharp imagination messes with our expectations on any familiar gesture or attitude he undertakes, transforming them into dreamlike connections. Again and again, each amusing twist makes one feel more and more at home in *Relic*'s bizarre atmosphere.

Clàudia Brufau
Springback Academy



2016

Elvedon

Christos Papadopoulos/ Leon and the Wolf GR

Either it grabs you, or it loses you: *Elvedon* does not compromise, it is a feat of persistence on both the audience and performers' part. Six dancers painfully yet tantalisingly pattern the stage, their relationships frustratingly random. Their bodies move constantly and repetitively, but only a little, a continuing bounce, a slight swing of the arms and short steps of the feet. At times a duet seems imminent, or the possibility of variation peeks slyly at us, only for us to be denied such overt development. The soundscape gestures to the minimalism of Steve Reich, a scraping, pumping, and industrial accumulation of rhythms. The ending builds to a collapse, but stillness is still denied: the dancers twitch in their fallen places, before slowly rising to begin again.

An admirable piece that demands and rewards an attentive audience.

Róisín O'Brien
Springback Academy

> *"There is a love story going on. But it gets tougher."*

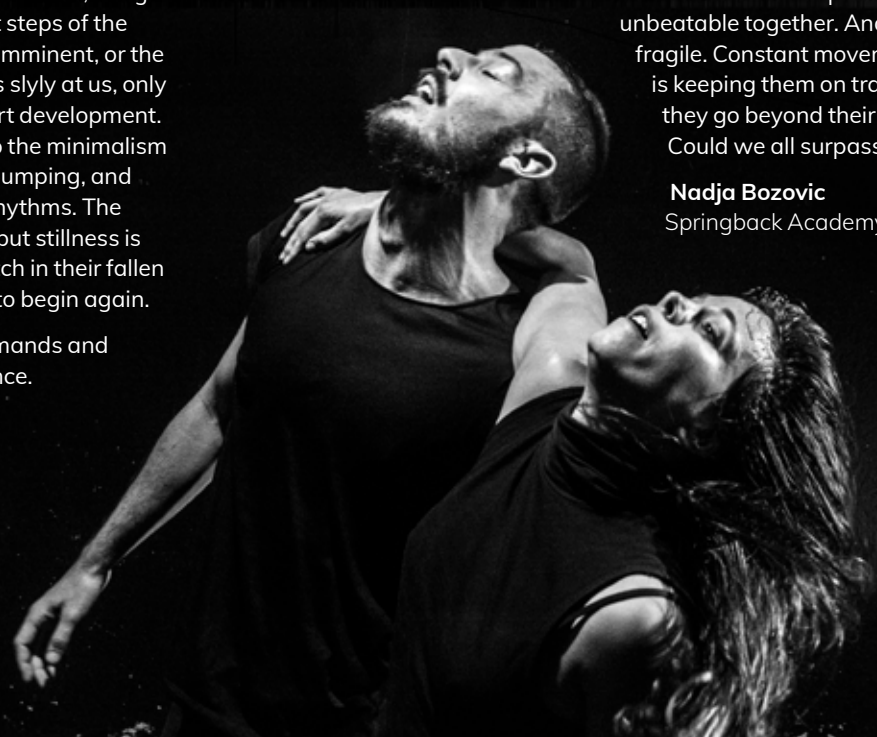
2017

Bolero

Jesús Rubio Gamo ES

Bold and self-confident, two dancers enter the stage. Ravel's Boléro begins. As the music evolves, so does their relationship. At first, their moves are fluent and rapturous. There is a love story going on. But it gets tougher. They start pushing themselves to the extreme, with a lot of energetic flow, frequent rotation, and repetition, turning themselves into a dancing perpetuum mobile. They get angry, confused, sad. And then exhausted, stressed out, tired. The smooth transition from the soft body moves to the vigorous burnout unfolds in front of our eyes. Over and over again. Coinciding with Ravel's instruction to finish Boléro's interpretation as loudly as possible, this choreographic poem leads dancers to the overwhelm. They want to quit, but there is no giving up. If one lags, the other one lifts the enthusiasm up. They seem unbeatable together. And yet so fragile. Constant movement is what is keeping them on track. Can they go beyond their limitations? Could we all surpass ourselves?

Nadja Bozovic
Springback Academy



Above: *Elvedon*
Photo © Patroklos Skafidas

Right: *Bolero*
Photo © Gaby Maciel

SPRINGBACK
An initiative with an initiation



What's the word on Aerowaves' Springback project? Find out from graduates of the 'reviewing bootcamp'

Oonagh Duckworth
Anastasio Koukoutas
Stella Mastorosteriou
Kosta Karakashyan


© Elliott Laub

Why words

In dance we need words. However physical a dance performance might be, there is always something cerebral going on too. Words create a link between brain and body, between the sensation of watching movement and the experience of attending a performance. Words can close the gap between the intention of the artist and the response of the audience. Words can offer soothing answers to questions like: "Is what I am I feeling or thinking about this performance real or relevant?"

140

Target wordcount for a Springback Academy review

Springback is a one-of-a-kind programme that takes the relationship between words and dance very seriously. It's where words, and those who write them, are given as much care and credence, encouragement and criticism, as the dancers and choreographers who make the movement that is the writers' subject.

But mainly Springback is special because of the people who become part of it. From different backgrounds, countries and professions, they are joined by their desire to write about performances as reflections of themselves and our world. They like to talk about dance, to make sure that dance can be shared and can act as a seeding ground for ideas that go way beyond the walls of a studio or theatre. Springback nurtures those people whose creativity, ingenuity and imagination is expressed through observation, analysis and translation rather than the production of an oeuvre.

Since its beginnings in 2014, sixty writers have passed through Springback Academy. We first get to know each yearly intake of ten through their short, written application. They then pass through the initiation of a 'reviewing bootcamp' during the Spring Forward festival. Sleepless, but sustained by adrenaline, they write reviews about all twenty or so performances under the mentorship of experienced critics. After that, they can participate in the expanded programme that now includes attending Springback Assemblies, writing for Springback Magazine and other activities – contributing to this commemorative Aerowaves at 25 publication, for example.

Increasingly connecting online, these occasions, and most notably Springback Assembly, provide a pride-inducing snapshot of just how unique bringing such a diverse collection of bright and brainy people together to think, talk to each other and write is. I hope and imagine that it's over the next 25 years that the value of these special encounters will be measured in full.

Springback began as a hunch, probably because John Ashford, in his first professional incarnations, was a words man from the theatre and then a journalist. Springback Academy is the European version of his own original idea Resolution Review, developed at The Place in London. I continue my role with enthusiasm because I was a dancer and words came to my rescue when the body let me down. Writing still provides a bridge to, or back to, dance.

We named our programme Springback 'Academy' with deliberate, tongue-in-cheek affectation. But in fact, Springback has now evolved into something that resembles a big, voluble, blended family. I hope it will continue to grow up in the way it has since the outset, organically, with flexibility and in constant forward momentum.

Oonagh Duckworth
Springback Academy Director

> *Writing still provides a bridge to, or back to, dance.*

Springback Academy 2017, Århus, Denmark
Photo © Lars Kjaer Dideriksen



On counting words and countless experiences

Among the things one has to master when writing about dance is how to adapt to multiple formats: short and punctual reviews, extensive and analytical essays, concise and inventive reflections on dance within different media. But for Springback writers, there is one persistent element that goes hand in hand with experimenting in every possible format: the word counting challenge. No matter how easily words are pouring out into blank documents or, conversely, how much you struggle with extracting the right word from the mine of your head and how each sentence becomes a Sisyphean task, you cannot avoid thinking of the 'ticking' of words. 102 so far, 38 to go! Every now and then you glimpse into the word clepsydra * at the bottom of your page, a kind of typing angst that writers must learn to survive.

However, what may initially appear as an obstacle, later reveals itself as a benefit. Word counting is like text shaping: instead of approaching it like a limit, think of it more like a container, a playground of thoughts which can expand into page long stages or be condensed into a sentence long capsule. Just as the moving body can take giant leaps to express grandeur or settle into minor gestures to capture delicacy.

** Look it up!*

Anastasio Koukoutas
Springback Academy 2015



I'll get my hat

On my first day with Springback Academy, back in 2016, I remember attending an introductory lecture by Sanjoy Roy on dance reviewing. At some point in the lecture there was a hat metaphor: a dance writer has to keep changing from 'wearing the hat' of the audience member, to the hat of the writer, and then to the reader of their text. In the following years, Springback would keep offering me more 'hats' and skills to exercise – notably through writing for Springback Magazine. Entering Springback Academy as a non-professional dance writer, the magazine has challenged me to take my dance writing more seriously. Having the opportunity to receive feedback on my texts and to share them with a wider audience has been an enriching experience.

Learning to write and communicate better about contemporary dance has for me opened up new ways to watch dance – or more correctly, to experience dance as a multi-sensory experience and attend to aspects of it that might go unnoticed. My notes from that first day lecture read: "What does the dance smell like? How does it feel?" Also (while watching), "open your eyes, your ears, your body, your mind, your heart." I still keep these prompts in mind every time I enter a performance space.

Stella Mastorosteriou
Springback Academy 2016


© Boris Urumov

The buzz on Zoom

Being part of the digital edition of Springback Academy 2020/2021 was an exercise in entertaining and anticipating a variety of alternate scenarios for how the Academy would function. F. Scott Fitzgerald famously said: “The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposing ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function” and our cohort of bright Springback writers did just that. Without knowing whether we would meet each other face-to-face in Rijeka, Elesfina, or anywhere at all, we forged a community founded on curiosity. I was surprised and relieved that even on Zoom, coming together and looking at the same performances still generated most of the buzz and excitement that comes with seeing, talking, and writing about dance. Our collective focus online still had the power to inspire reflection and to allow us each to identify what we found moving.

> *Learning to write and communicate better about contemporary dance has for me opened up new ways to watch dance – or more correctly, to experience dance*
>
> **Stella Mastorosteriou**

I found our cohort bold and open to tackling the challenging question of how the online viewing experience would affect our criticism, and our reflections were as varied and enthusiastic as the pieces we saw. In a year in which a global pandemic brought live performance to a halt, digital dance suddenly became a field we could all explore together and with excitement.

Kosta Karakashyan
Springback Academy 2020

6 years of Springback Academy at Spring Forward

2015 Barcelona, Spain
2016 Pilsen, Czech Republic
2017 Århus, Denmark
2018 Sofia, Bulgaria
2019 Val-de-Marne, France
2020 online from Rijeka, Croatia

4 Springback Academy writing programme spinoffs

2017 Certamen Coreográfico, Spain
2018 Certamen Coreográfico, Spain
2018 Taiwan Dance Platform, Taiwan
2020 Onassis New Choreography Festival, Greece

6 collaborations with festivals

2018 Ice Hot, Reykjavík, Iceland
2019 PT19, Montemor-o-Novo, Portugal
2019 NID, Reggio Emilia, Italy
2019 B Motion, Bassano del Grappa, Italy
2021 Re-Think, Umeå, Sweden
2021 CODA Oslo International Dance Festival, Norway

FUTURE DIGITAL

Digital video, live and on-demand streaming and virtual realities are merging ever closer with the physical world of live performance

Suzanne Frost

Images: Viktor Černický, *PLI*
© Enya Belak





Collectivity is key. The performances are to be experienced as a group watching a show together in virtual reality.



A few decades ago, everybody believed the future would be digital. New devices and inventions, from iPods and digital cameras to smart phones and social media, changed our lives significantly and for the better, we mostly believed. Dance has flirted with digital elements for years, with video projections, AI technology and social media finding their way into otherwise analogue performances, and cinema or open-air screenings reaching audiences in faraway places and from different cultural backgrounds. We embraced these new possibilities and collectively agreed that nothing could ever replace live performance. The digital world could, however, enhance our experience, broaden our audiences and create interactions with artists and new contextualising content around the actual performance.

Live streams

Aerowaves first started livestreaming the 2014 Spring Forward festival in Umeå, Sweden, through a company set up specifically to develop live streaming for the arts, at a time when this seemed to have a commercial future. The high-quality live stream they produced was then deemed very avant-garde, and was fairly expensive for the small uptake from audiences. Nevertheless, for the opportunity of wider circulation of artists' work, it seemed an experiment worth continuing. "Facebook put an end to all that," explains Aerowaves director John Ashford. With anyone now able to stream from their phones, the average attention span drops – making it harder to justify the expense or effort.

When Enya Belak joined the Aerowaves team in 2017, fresh from an MA in film-making and working at the intersection of dance, choreography and film, Aerowaves' use of digital media turned towards contextualising the festival performances through a series of interviews called Meet the Makers. Other discussion formats followed such as the 2018 Ice Hot live stream in Reykjavík, Iceland, which was set up to mimic daytime TV but for dance.

It was thanks to this early research and learning that Aerowaves was in a position to respond quickly to the new reality of Covid, and pull off Spring Forward 2020 in April of that year – an entirely digital festival hosted online.

At that time, most of us were still relatively new to digital meeting platforms such as Zoom. "Before, I used to hate Skype meetings, I would always prefer to travel just to meet face to face," remembers Belak. "I stumbled into digital producing because Aerowaves had that need to take the festival online – but I didn't really have a clue what exactly it was I would be directing. A week before we went online, I realised what a big responsibility I actually had!"

The experiment worked: 1400 people signed up, with an average of 200 people watching at any one time. Alongside the artist presentations and Q&As, 'The Foyer' was an online space to facilitate the casual connections and conversations people might strike up at the live festival. More than a year later it lives on, participants still meeting once a month for an international catch-up.

Still, Ashford is adamant that this format of festival will never happen again. "It was spot on for the moment in time," he says, "but now that everyone is putting everything online, the last thing we want to do is livestream another festival."

Springback Ringside

Now, in its 25th year, the emphasis of Aerowaves' digital activities is directed towards Springback Ringside, which researches the possibilities of virtual reality (VR). Currently, the VR camera is used purely for documentation, to capture existing performances that cannot tour for various reasons. The process of filming with the VR camera is elaborate, and while the technology

offers a new field to play with, it also has its own limitations. Performances have to be recorded in a single take, which requires a lot of preparation in advance: on average, thirty minutes of rendering is needed for just one minute of footage. The VR camera that Aerowaves uses has stereoscopic vision, like the Mars rover, which creates an image very similar to what the human eye sees. When performers get very close to the lens, they appear as if you could touch them, without any distortions. The technology is not yet, however, as advanced and crisp as HD TV: the longer the distance, the less sharp the image becomes.

Audiences, often discovering VR technology for the first time, have described their experience as 'having the best seat in the house' or feeling 'as if the performer is there just for you'. It is an interesting hybrid between film, performance, an immersive personal experience and a collective event.

This collectivity is key. The filmed performances are not intended for individual use. They are to be experienced as an event, a group of audience members watching a show together in virtual reality and then meeting the artist on a two-dimensional screen in a Q&A with a Springback writer, with the opportunity to ask questions or share thoughts and ideas.

This new technology allows performances to travel across borders without anybody actually crossing borders. For works that require a big cast or crew, for countries that aren't well connected or where travel is too expensive, VR offers artists an opportunity to be presented in places that would not otherwise have been accessible.

Ashford is convinced. "There are towns all over Europe where there is no facility for dance, but there is a venue where you can put twenty people in a room to watch a VR performance. As a first step into communities with limited mobility, as well as schools, hospitals, prisons or old people's homes, VR is genuinely useful."

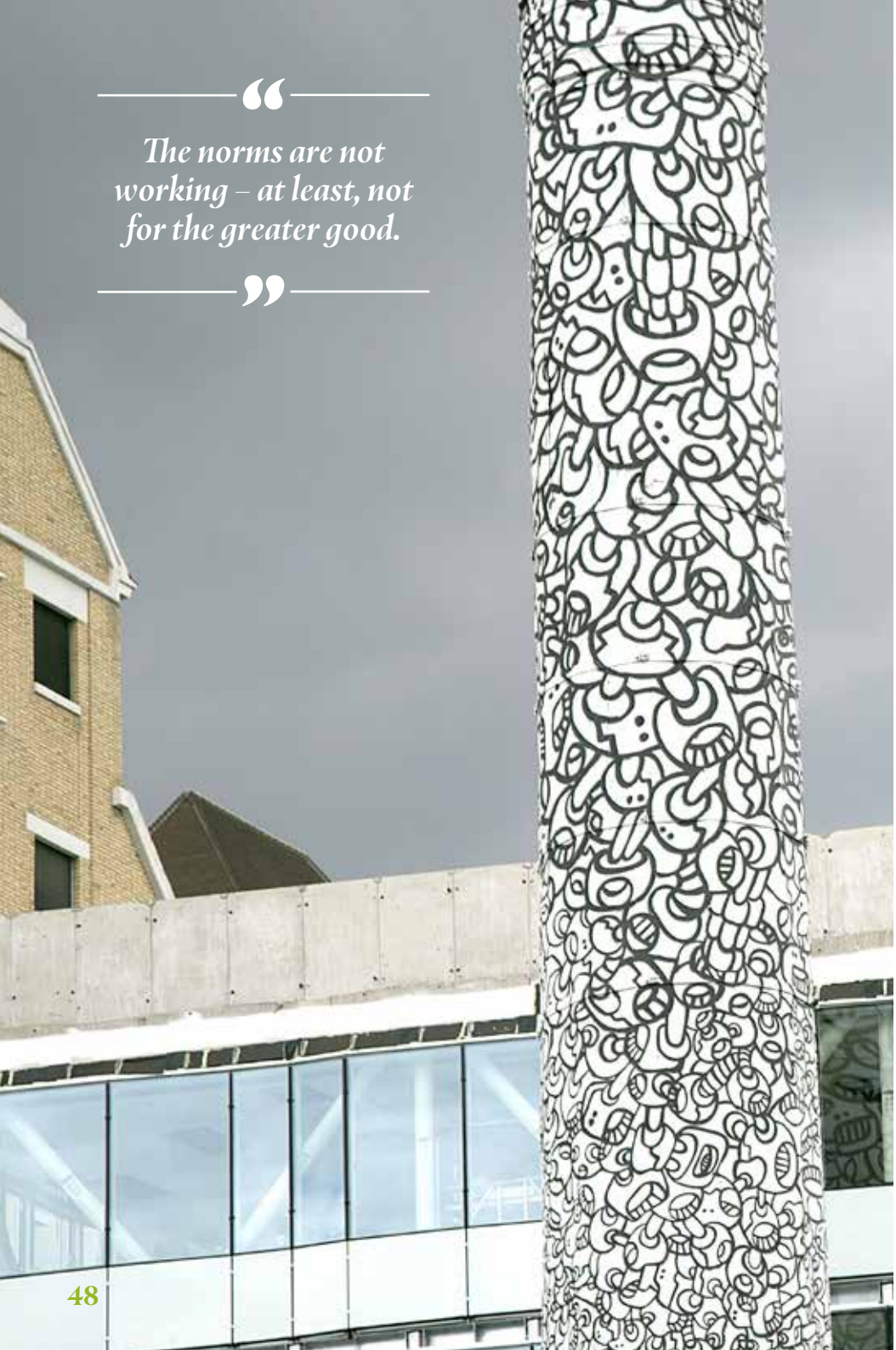
Digital accessibility may also answer some of the urgent ecological questions we are facing. The twenty Aerowaves VR goggles cannot go on their journey completely unaccompanied – someone needs to be on hand to help the venue partner set up and instruct the audience – but one trained expert has a significantly smaller carbon footprint compared to a bigger cast or crew needed for a live show.

Phygital futures

However, now in 2021 after more than a year of forced virtual life, enthusiasm for the screen is fading. "As we come out of Covid, I don't think anyone will want to see anything on a screen ever again for a long time. They will want to experience the congregation, the social joy of being in the same space rubbing shoulders," believes Ashford. Live performance, and the feeling of collective communal experience, seems almost more irreplaceable than ever. Where will the scales tip or balance themselves out between live and digital?

"I think digital is likely at its best when it is most interactive," says Ashford. "I believe in VR, and I don't see anybody else doing it yet. We're ahead of the game again, like we were in 2014 for the first livestream, and in 2020 with Spring Forward online. It's all about staying ahead of the technological game."

The future, it seems, is 'phygital' – the best of both worlds, a dual model born of necessity but growing up nicely.



> *The norms are not working – at least, not for the greater good.*

In 2020, the global Covid pandemic put normal life on pause. Or did it put an end to it? Perhaps it is more accurate to say that the competing impulses to return to or depart from normality continue to drive our thinking, and feeling, during these transitional times. At the same time, it is has become clear that we are nevertheless also adapting – slowly, incrementally, often unwittingly and always provisionally – to our evolving circumstances.

Different as these processes are, each puts the idea of normality itself into question, and it is perhaps for this reason (alongside, of course, massive mobilisation in the volatile field of digital communications) that we have witnessed such widespread, simultaneous and interlinked movements around social inequality and climate justice. The norms, they argue, are not working – at least, not for the greater good.

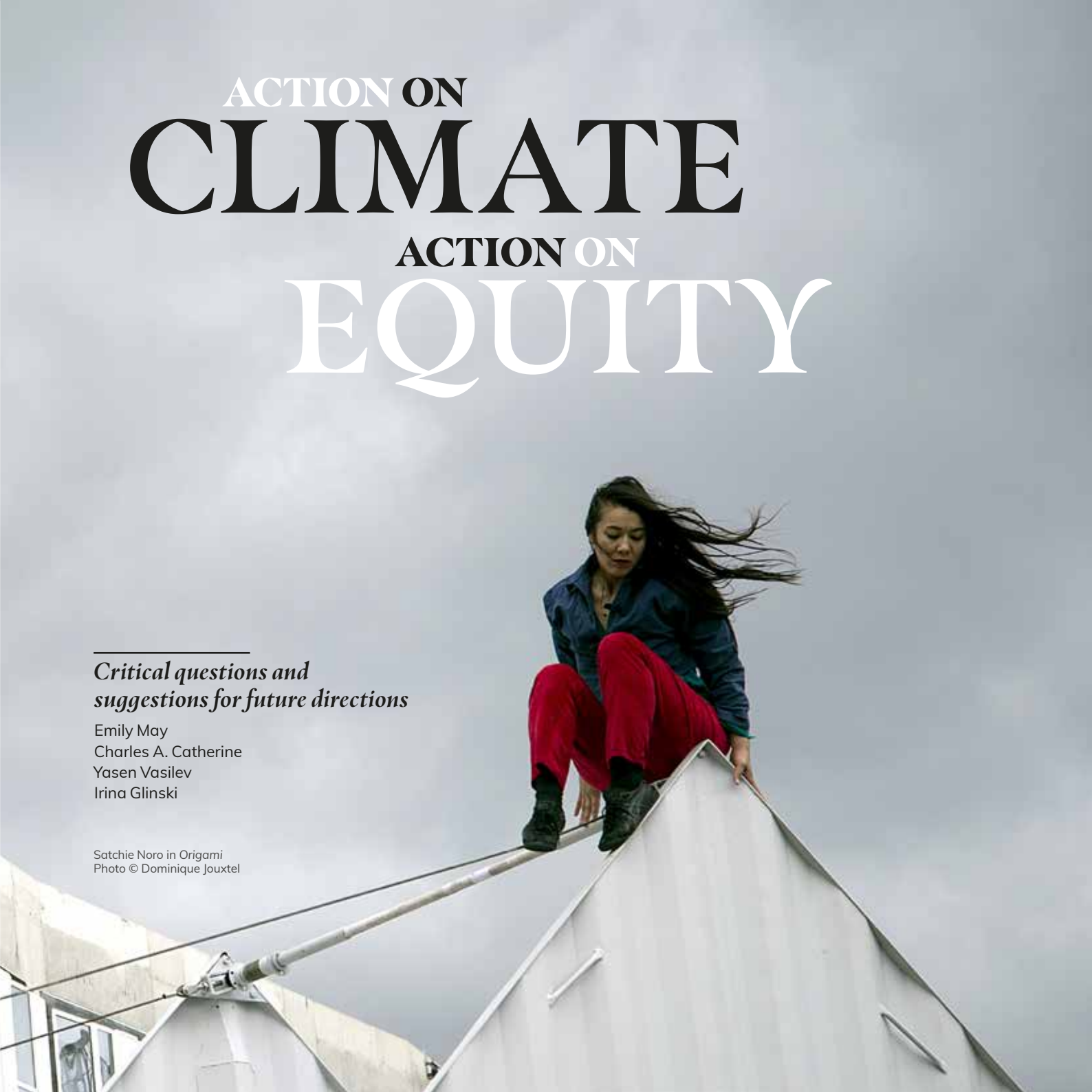
Against this backdrop, Aerowaves set up two working groups, each meeting over three sessions during the spring of 2021, and tasked to come up with recommendations in relation to two areas: climate and equity. Board member Rose Fenton chaired the first, Aerowaves Partner Roberto Casarotto the second, and both were written about by Springback writers, of a younger generation.

It is early days still for this process, but in the following edited extracts from the writers' responses you can get an idea of the ideas in play.

ACTION ON CLIMATE ACTION ON EQUITY

Critical questions and suggestions for future directions

Emily May
Charles A. Catherine
Yasen Vasilev
Irina Glinski



Satchie Noro in *Origami*
Photo © Dominique Jouxtel

Green is the new gold

Emily May

The truth is... I can't lie. While I recognise and support the urgent need to take action to save our planet, as a 24-year-old at the beginning of my career, this doesn't come without a pang of jealousy. Perhaps selfishly, I often feel unlucky that I just missed out on a glamorous 'golden age' where performers, journalists and producers could jet around the world to attend dance festivals, discover new work, and converse with like-minded people, without the guilt of wondering how many cubic metres of ice their flights were melting, or what marine life would be killed by the plastic straw in their Aperol Spritz.

In contrast, my generation is faced with countless sociopolitical dilemmas, an increasingly digitised dance scene, and fewer opportunities for international touring and exchange due to the need to reduce air travel. Or is there a way to be 'greener' without sacrificing all of the things that attract people to the dance sector in the first place?

Questions, suggestions, directions

Over the three 90-minute sessions of the Action on Climate inquiry, six Aerowaves Partners discussed potential steps to help the organisation become more environmentally conscious, from everyday actions like banning plastic cups and straws in venues, to larger structural changes, including the ideas of requiring Aerowaves Partners to establish environmental action plans and audits.

It was interesting to hear the Partners discuss the importance of communicating the plan of action: whether through detailing our climate policy online or developing a logo and green 'kite mark' highlighting our commitment, and hopefully inspiring others to respond in equal measure.

Some proposals did threaten to incur the sacrifices I was initially scared of. However, with compromise and lateral thinking, these 'sacrifices' could be turned into benefits. For example, while reducing aviation-induced carbon emissions is necessary, it also threatens the internationalism and diversity that is desperately needed in a political climate where many promote divisive ideologies over cohesion and exchange. Replacing air travel and in-person experiences with digital platforms is also problematic, particularly for a network dedicated to an inherently physical artform. So it was agreed that travel for the annual artist selection meetings and live Spring Forward festival is necessary. However, more emphasis could be placed on encouraging train travel over flying, for example.

> *While they might not be definitive answers, now is the time to test them out, see what works, and regroup to discuss new approaches if necessary.*

Aerowaves also shows selected artists from East and Southeast Asia, giving a view from outside the European bubble and creating connections with Asian organisations. These in turn offer international residencies to European artists – who have no other option but to fly. In such cases, flying in artists from outside Europe should be permissible, but only when they come for multiple performances or conduct an accompanying residency, to make the trip more 'carbon effective'. Once in Europe, they could travel using less polluting modes of transport.

Issues surrounding equity and diversity inevitably arose. When discussing environmental action plans, for example, it was made clear that not all partners could set and plan the same targets due to differing infrastructures and finances. Therefore, developing a set of Aerowaves values which Partners could use for their own action plans seemed more equitable than lobbying for identical environmental commitments.

Less is more

Should Aerowaves reduce its number of annual artists to lessen carbon emissions? Some worried this would affect diversity, and discourage risking

the more experimental, 'wild card' creators. Yet less can be more. Aerowaves might be able to build deeper relationships. More funding for fewer artists might enable longer tours and seasons, allowing choreographers to connect with the places they visit. It is also more 'carbon effective' than being flown across Europe for one show.

Ashford proposed testing out selecting two Aerowaves artists from each cohort as Artists in Residence, who would receive extensive support over a two-year period. While some may see this as creating an inequitable hierarchy between artists, I – as a contemporary dance graduate who has been met with an array of short term opportunities – think long-term programmes like this would help young artists establish sustainable careers.

Gains, not losses

Considering all the challenges and compromises I was predicting at the start of the inquiry, I was pleasantly surprised by how many of the proposed changes were actually exciting. Establishing touring clusters, where artists plan a performance series around a geographical area using environmentally friendly modes of transport was a particularly interesting idea, as were proposals for Aerowaves to start commissioning and producing work, to proceed with its innovative virtual reality initiative, and to encourage applications from artists with innovative ideas for environmentally conscious touring built into their work.

In my opinion, many of these exciting prospects would be beneficial for the dance sector even if we weren't facing an environmental crisis. While they might not be definitive answers, now is the time to test them out, see what works, and regroup to discuss new approaches if necessary – and they did help to abate my pining for the age of carefree, airborne, international arts touring. Now, I'm looking forward to a new golden – or should I say green? – age filled with hope, ambition, innovation, and optimism for both the dance sector and the planet.

With green power comes green responsibility

Charles A. Catherine

When it comes to green issues, we're overwhelmed. By facts, by numbers, by images. By the overrunning adrenaline of acting here and now and the deep sorrow of feeling helpless. What can dance do about this? What can theatres and festivals do? A dance network?

Art and artists

My experience of dancers and choreographers indicates a high level of climate awareness. Many know about global warming and overconsumption, and are making small steps personally and professionally. What more can they do? Belgian performer Cassiel Gaube said that if he wanted to reach green goals, he shouldn't be an artist any more. Is art a superfluous pleasure, a polluting luxury?

If we consider art to be necessary, then artists are necessary. So, then, are rehearsals, studios, creation, performances, theatres, festivals, communication, audiences, programmes, the whole package. What should we adapt, what should change? First, we need to protect artists and their working conditions. Even while opting for train over plane, choosing natural food and eco-conscious hotels, we must focus on something else to gain ground in the green revolution. Less is more, for sure – but let's think wider.

Joined-up thinking

In 2020, a group of French artists, venues and producers founded the ARVIVA network, offering information and actions to help theatres and festivals in their ecological transition. Their motto: "no performing arts on a dead planet."

This Aerowaves inquiry led to a different point: though most managers and programmers are aware of the need for change, they feel unable

to influence much beyond reducing their printed materials and plastics, or recycling unused merchandise. These are indeed useful – but why do these professionals feel disempowered from taking more action? Mostly because they don't own the buildings they work in, and because the most significant choices are made by other decision-makers: local, regional and national councils.

Change needs information

The conversation on the dance network focused on the tip of the iceberg: touring. The question was answered only broadly, with strong recommendations but no pressure. My impression was of the speed with which the climate question was reduced to transport, with flight reduction as the response. Local audience travel seemed less significant than the international artist travel. But what about digital sobriety? Shared information? How can a venue or a network act on that?

We need more facts, more figures. Most of us know that electricity, heating and transport have the heaviest impacts on climate. But what do we *really know*? Do we know that the pollution created by private cars is higher than all other modes of transport combined (so maybe action on public transport is more effective than on flights for artists)? Do we know that by 2025 the greenhouse gas emissions of the digital world may surpass those of the car? Do we know which of a Zoom meeting and an online performance has the biggest climate impact?

We need structured knowledge for concerted action; hence, evaluation tools. These are available online (for example ADEME, Julie's Bicycle or Good Planet Foundation). Online tools such as Carbonalyser, Framasoft or The Shift Project can give information about data stocking and streaming to plan your greening strategy. We also need to think what we use our resources for. Lighting a building all night may use less power than a two-hour outdoor performance, but which is more useless?

Soft power

A network is a place of collaboration, but can't it be a political force too? Let's talk about soft power.

Culture-sector actors often think they're helpless, unable to carry weight in decision-making. Yet in France, we were astonished a few years ago to discover culture was more profitable than the car industry. That more people were working in live arts than in agriculture. That bookshops were more important to people than clothes stores. These are weapons to remind our political representatives when setting policies.

Dance is a small sector in the cultural economy – which is why acting within a wider network may give us more power. Venues and festivals could act on their local or national levels. Encourage authorities to develop public transport for the audience. Take training in ecological practices. Finance green energy, local recycling plants or tree planting. Write a national charter for greener culture. Promote tools to measure carbon footprints and waste. It is possible, so it is necessary.

All this may just sound like grand words, but Aerowaves has an empowering ability that each member can benefit from. Some artists have succeeded through Aerowaves: Jan Martens, Christos Papadopoulos, Jann Gallois, Marco da Silva Ferreira, Meytal Blanaru and many others have used its power to nurture their speech and develop their career – and they are thankful for it. Theatres and festivals can surely do this too.

All together – now

Let's go on sharing good practices, let's co-ordinate our efforts, let's make decisions together – theatres, festivals, producers, artists. The main question of this inquiry was: what can we do as a network? The answer is: do everything you can, as soon as you can.

Forward steps are wider steps

Yasen Vasilev (BG)

The three sessions of the Action on Equity inquiry focused respectively on gender and financial equity, disability, and race and ethnicity, posing questions about the future of the network and how to diversify the artists it represents; how to reach, empower and make visible marginalised communities; and to question power structures, access and language. The main question that comes up is: is contemporary dance diverse enough in the first place, and if not, what can we do to encourage change?

Point of application

The data Aerowaves collects currently reflects only its selected artists, so the picture of its applicants in relation to gender, class, race, (dis)ability and training is blurry. Collecting and thinking about this information at the point of application is a first step to ensure more just representation. Subtitled video and audio versions of the open call and the option to apply with a video or audio file will also make the application more accessible to artists with disabilities. Translating the call to other languages can help non-English speakers get to know the network and apply.

Reaching potential new applicants is a challenge because of the already overwhelming number of applications – twenty artists selected annually from 600 –700 applicants. This extreme competition should also be softened and artists made to feel more welcome, while the benefit of applying even if not selected should be made clear.

How you look at what you see

What standards do we use in relation to 'contemporary dance'? Maybe the network has to be more open to practices from different subcultures, communities and people with non-formal training; their work can still be 'contemporary'. Diversifying the selection committee, including Springback writers and previous selected artists as recommenders, and decolonising the understanding of 'contemporary' are steps that could encourage openness to wider varieties of forms and disciplines.

Sustaining engagement

Aerowaves' Springback Academy is a good example of how the network can build a community. The writers are invited every year, creating a sense of a group and an opportunity to really know the Partners over time. Whereas an Aerowaves artist often comes for one or two days of the Spring Forward festival, and is too busy to figure out who to talk to, and how. Maybe another networking event without live performances should be included, in the form of pitches, one-on-one meetings with producers, or a longer residency with the network.

Quality and inequality

Artists from poorer regions with less infrastructure have fewer resources to develop professional paths. Support from Aerowaves might be instrumental in giving them a boost in international visibility. It's easy to look at North European artists as professional and Eastern Europeans as amateur, but they often have to work much harder than their peers in the North to make one production possible. When quality is judged, inequality should be taken into account.

Outside the box

In all three cases (gender, race, disability) a distinction has to be made between the artist's identity and the artist's work to avoid pushing people into boxes. Gender non-conforming people do not necessarily make work about oppression, disabled artists do not necessarily make their bodies the central topic of each piece they make – and so on. When choosing a topic unlimited by these identities, minority artists can feel that festivals and programmers try to

put them back into a box that's marketable. Often they question their own abilities and the quality of their work because they think they might be selected just to tick the right box.

Live(d) experience

Invite people with both lived experience and expertise on these problems to contribute to solutions together with artists and audiences. In relation to disability, the compromises and commitments artists can make can't be taken for granted, and should be discussed on a case-by-case basis. The same is true for audiences with disabilities, who deserve to be offered at least two different ways of translation and experiencing a work, so that they have a choice rather than a single option that is imposed on them. Dialogue, honesty, care and trust are of crucial importance.

Integral, not additional

Dance artist Chiara Bersani pointed out that educational programmes are often inaccessible for disabled artists, and these artists feel the professional circuit is not open to their work. This is reflected in the number of choreographers who collaborate with disabled performers as a form of social and artistic practice, as opposed to the number of disabled choreographers and makers who actually have the space, recognition and resources to make their own work.

Forward, wide

I want to finish quoting the guest speakers Chiara Bersani – "coolness is not cheap, coolness is important" – and Freddie Opoku-Addaie: "widen the centre, decolonise the programme". When the exceptions become part of the norm, when they're not sticking out, when they're not questioning their place and capacity, when they own their identities and positions, when they're not used as proof of inclusion – a word that already reveals existing divisions and exclusions – that's when we will know we have made the step forward.

'Tokenism, tickbox, tolerated' – How do we widen the centre?*

Irina Glinski

In her introduction to *Hold On: Diversity and Managing in the Arts*, Amanda Parker suggests that in the UK, we have "a long tradition of maintaining structural inequalities, while simultaneously wringing our hands about it." She suggests that we are held back from making change by a lack of imagination, and by fear – of losing status, of stepping out of line.

I recognise that fear. Many of us do. And as I interweave some themes from the Action on Equity inquiry with personal reflections and recommendations, I will sometimes ask open-ended questions of 'us' – by which I mean both Aerowaves and the wider dance community.

Aerowaves selection

Why do some people not apply to Aerowaves? Is it time to reconsider the way we look at work when making selections? Demystifying the application – for example, by being transparent about who is involved in decision-making at each stage of selection, and the criteria to which they make their judgements – could work towards dismantling the belief held by some that Aerowaves is 'not for me'.

In the session on disability, it was agreed that the application process should be made as accessible as possible. Consideration should be given to the possibility of audio application, subtitling videos and social media materials, and to a visually accessible website. Best practice guidance in this area can be sourced from other arts organisations where available; there is no need to 'reinvent the wheel'.

* The '3Ts' set out by guest speaker Freddie Opoku-Addaie, who challenged the Inquiry, and the wider dance world, to push beyond the three Ts of diversity.

Widening the centre

Invited as a guest speaker, dance artist Chiara Bersani spoke of being considered "an exception within the world of professional dance", and still feels pushed to represent disability at every turn. Images of her body have been used in promotional material for a piece she had choreographed but was not performing in; her body and disability becoming the 'hook'. She also referred to the necessity of compassion and care: for her, it is not possible to work quickly. It is essential to consider different paces of working when commissioning and programming.

All of the Partners at the inquiry expressed the desire to form more meaningful relationships with artists, as a means to build trust in the network. This would provide opportunities to give individualised and responsive support, and encourage applications that are more representative of our wider dance communities.

Addressing issues of inclusion is not cheap: financial precarity and economic inequality are spectres that haunt all discussions on equity. For example, Bersani spoke of the financial implications of making sure that venues were accessible, for both performers and audiences. Similarly, having space for a more reflexive and responsive development and rehearsal process simply costs more.

Aerowaves as a cultural institution

Guest speaker Anthea Lewis suggested that some artists deliberately create work outside the scope of the 'institution' because they have historically felt othered by it. Can Aerowaves be seen as a place for these people? Competitive entry might put off anyone who simply does not have the energy to go through that process, and developing deeper and longer-lasting relationships with artists might go some way to dismantling this barrier. There were multiple references to the barriers inherent in traditional training paths, which have an impact on the range of work put forward for Aerowaves selection.

Of course, Aerowaves cannot be responsible for implementing the sector-wide reforms that would be required to redress these structural inequalities, but the network does have the opportunity to look beyond formal dance education programmes, and to work with performers from more diverse backgrounds.

Brave action

It is understandable that these discussions can prompt feelings of defensiveness or hesitance; sometimes we are frightened to ask difficult questions because we are afraid of how the answers will reflect on us, and of the perceived workload that these answers might bring. However, I believe this can be reframed as an opportunity to take compassionate, brave action.

> *"This can be reframed as an opportunity to take compassionate, brave action."*

Aerowaves may have been born of anarchic roots, but it now has an opportunity to set out a stall for deep-rooted and sustainable change. I believe it is possible to compile a toolkit or manifesto that is both specific in its recommendations and guidance, and also has the capacity and nuance to account for country-specific contextualisation. It is essential that we take guidance on these matters from people with lived experiences of these barriers at every stage of the process.

Aerowaves has the potential to become the vehicle for change: I can envisage a future where organisations feel able to turn towards Aerowaves for guidance and best practice on equity. As Parker states, imagination takes courage – but surely now is the right time to be brave.



2018

Forecasting

Premier Stratagème CR

Our daily routines can be banal and unexciting, our quirky hobbies and fetishes well-hidden and laughable. And yet we are here, on the web, breathing and sweating. How to make a show out of our dreary lives? Barbara Matijević and Giuseppe Chico opted for a shiny laptop which the former manipulates as her own extension, waltzing around with it, carrying it across the stage, and virtually introducing her body parts into the kinkiest YouTube amateur videos on earth. Matijević is, by turns, a cat lady, a gun lover, or an SM addict, among many other temporary identities.

Constantly distorting the narrative frame, she offers an incredibly funny and thought-provoking result, garnished with tongue-in-cheek acting and flawless execution. Witty, hybrid and profoundly humane, *Forecasting* is a perfect anti-depressant. On a side note, it will teach you how to choose the best boxing gloves!

Evgeny Borisenko
Springback Academy

> *When they frame their eyes with spread fingers you'd rather not be in the focus of that reptilian gaze.*



2019

Harleking

Ginevra Panzetti & Enrico Ticconi IT

Harleking is like a demonic lifeform that possesses the black-clad bodies of Ginevra Panzetti and Enrico Ticconi, who imitate human emotions in exaggerated gestures and grotesque grimaces with seemingly sinister intent. Crouched on the floor their shoulders shake, whether from laughing or crying, accompanied by the guttural sounds a human voice might make when giggling – or getting water-boarded. A ritualistic warm-up sequence feels meditative and unsettling at once, like a creature summoning its power for dubious means. When they frame their eyes with spread fingers you'd rather not be in the focus of that reptilian gaze. They perform gestures and poses taken from commedia dell'arte, pantomime symbols of emotions – love, hate, sadness, violence – presented with the grandeur of a circus clown, yet manipulative and artificial. Many people have uncomfortable feelings about clowns – the clinical term is coulrophobia – and *Harleking* very effectively hints towards what toying with emotions for control and power can do.

Suzanne Frost
Springback Academy

FAMILY AFFAIR

Asked to reflect on Aerowaves at 25, the partners had many and varied responses. Editor Róisín O'Brien wove them into a single composite voice.

Aerowaves is my favourite family among the European networks. It gives you roots and headaches, yet every time we meet, I feel fondness towards my colleagues. Our shared passion for promoting good artists holds us together. There is never any animosity. Being at the Aerowaves meetings helps me to encourage artists to keep applying and to keep working, because the day when a work from my country gets selected might come. Aerowaves generates a context of learning, encountering, exchanging and sharing experiences. It invites us to see where dance is going next and how many possibilities can arise from shared visions, actions, and passion.

All the places we meet bring something special. Zürich had an intimate and concentrating environment, while a provocative programme in an otherwise conservative Pilsen stands out. The 'weirdest' place (but one of the best) was Madrid, where the annual meeting happened in the vault of a former bank. Ljubljana succeeded due to its limited geography and fantastic ambience, and the conditions provided in Århus (accommodation, food) were amazing.

I try to meet as many artists as possible during Spring Forward, and to exchange at least a few words about their works. I stay available and open to their approaches, questions and ideas. This is not always extensive due to the limited time between shows. I also really like the morning coffees and breakfasts in the hotels – before the work starts. I have fond memories of discussions about work in small groups, including struggling with hard drive formats and finding strategies of how to work, being caring, loving and harsh and direct at times. Remember when Anna danced in Igor and Moreno's piece? I do also love the final parties... And then there's John's watch: wearing a digital watch with a monochrome display, John leads the discussions, meetings or even the rush between two performances with the help of this watch. When this small black watch is placed on the table everybody hisses and pulls themselves together.

Although the network has expanded greatly, it has not lost anything of its in-depth approach, its freshness and rigour, and alertness to the radical changes of our times through proposing actions and solutions faithful to its initial vision. In my opinion the aesthetics of the chosen pieces have become more varied and appear to be more representative of the diversity of both European culture and of social awareness in general. The quality of the pieces have always been high.

Aerowaves never grew into 'old age' and rigidness. By evolving all the time, Aerowaves proves to be a very alive and fulfilling format for doing what it does because of a light and firm leadership that is going to change now. That is a big challenge: will the future leadership go on 'making sense'? I feel the network is still working because John had an idea 25 years ago, and that has stayed the same: finding a way to provide the best opportunity for young choreographers to introduce themselves and their work. Aerowaves may have to be more open to versatile forms of presentation, and to include a wider selection of works in terms of aesthetic and contemporary art making. But I see its future as bright, splendid, never ending...

Words
Inta Balode
Elisabetta Bisaro
Roberto Casarotto
Liz King
Yvona Kreuzmannová
Vicky Marangopoulou
Jesper de Neergaard
Róisín O'Brien
Gergely Talló
Alexis Vassiliou

Where we have met

Annual Meeting

1996	London, UK
1997	Helsinki, Finland
1998	Gent, Belgium
1999	Luxembourg
2000	Budapest, Hungary
2001	Tallinn, Estonia
2002	Amsterdam, Netherlands
2003	Prague, Czech Republic
2004	Cork, Ireland
2005	Montemor-o-Novo, Portugal
2006	Malmö, Sweden
2007	Zürich, Switzerland
2008	Madrid, Spain
2009	Vilnius, Lithuania
2010	Moscow, Russia
2011	Poreč, Croatia
2012	Lemesos, Cyprus
2013	Lublin, Poland
2014	Ljubljana, Slovenia
2015	Paris, France
2016	Sofia, Bulgaria
2017	Oslo, Norway
2018	Limerick, Ireland
2019	Zürich, Switzerland
2020	Athens, Greece
2021	Eisenstadt, Austria

Spring Forward Festival

2011	Ljubljana, Slovenia
2012	Bassano del Grappa, Italy
2013	Zürich, Switzerland
2014	Umeå, Sweden
2015	Barcelona, Spain
2016	Pilsen, Czech Republic
2017	Århus, Denmark
2018	Sofia, Bulgaria
2019	Val-de-Marne, France
2020	Rijeka, Croatia / online
2022	Elefsina, Greece

Who we are now

Albania	Gjergj Prevazi	Albania Dance Theater Meeting
Austria	Liz King	D.ID Dance Identity
Belgium	Charlotte Vandevyver	P.A.R.T.S.
Bulgaria	Atanas Maev (Nasko)	Derida Dance
Croatia	Petra Glad	San Vincenti Festival
Croatia	Edvin Liverić	Croatian Cultural Centre (HKD)
Cyprus	Alexis Vassiliou	Dance House Lemesos
Czech Republic	Yvona Kreuzmannová	Tanec Praha
Denmark	Jesper de Neergaard	Bora Bora
Denmark	Hanne Svejstrup	Dansehallerne
Estonia	Kaie Küünal	Kanuti Gildi Saal
Finland	Pirjetta Mulari	Annantalo Arts Centre
France	Elisabetta Bisaro	La Briqueterie
Germany	Yvonne Whyte	PACT Zollverein / Choreographisches Zentrum NRW
Germany	Bruno Heynderickx	Staatstheater Darmstadt
Greece	Frosso Trousa	Dance Centre Unitiva
Greece	Victoria Marangopoulou	Freelance
Hungary	Gergely Talló	Workshop Foundation
Iceland	Ólöf Ingólfsdóttir	Freelance
Ireland	Jenny Traynor	Dance Limerick
Italy	Roberto Casarotto	Operaestate Festival Veneto Bassano del Grappa
Italy	Francesca Manica	RomaEuropa
Latvia	Inta Balode	Latvian Dance Information Centre
Lithuania	Gintarė Masteikaitė	Lithuanian Dance Information Centre
Luxembourg	Bernard Baumgarten	Centre de Création Chorégraphique Luxembourgeois
Netherlands	Suzy Blok	ICK Dans Amsterdam
Norway	Un-Magritt Nordseth	Freelance
Norway	Samme Raeymaekers	Dansenshus
Poland	Joanna Leśnierowska	Art Stations Foundation 5050
Poland	Anna Kalita / Konrad Kurowski	Lublin Centre of Culture
Portugal	Rui Horta	O Espaço do Tempo
Portugal	Rui Torrinha	Centro Cultural Vila Flor
Romania	Carmen Cotofana	National Centre for Dance
Russia	Elena Tupyseva	Ballet Moscow
Serbia	Marija Popovic (Zmaja)	SKCNS
Slovakia	Miroslava Kovářová	Bratislava in Movement Association
Slovenia	Iztok Kovač	EN-KNAP/Španski Borci
Spain	Marc Olivé	Mercat de les Flors
Spain	Laura Kumin	Paso a 2 / Certamen Coreográfico de Madrid
Sweden	Johannes Öhman	Dansens Hus Stockholm
Sweden	Lars Eidevall	Dansstationen
Switzerland	Catja Loepfe	Tanzhaus Zürich
Switzerland	Philippe Saire	Théâtre Sévelin 36
UK	Eddie Nixon	The Place

aerowaves at 25

