

Proposal IDOCDE 2016 “The Importance of Being [Un]Necessary”

Name: Gabriela Suarez

Telephone number: 0031(0)20 7372533 / 0031(0)640238564

Title: “Gender, transference and subjective body in the contemporary teachings of tango practice”

Content Description:

The presentation of my lecture and practice revolves around the contemporaneity of the tango dance as an evolution from a popular urban dance form till almost a contemporary style. I will show this evolution, in my attempt to approach a political dance form that belongs to a marginalized Argentinian sub-culture which possesses an enormous potential.

At this stage, I am not particularly interested in the sole development of its technique but I am rather interested in the teaching method and the learning process of dance for the new dancers' generations. At this point I want to emphasize cultural and political factors which are playing a huge role in this development of the tango. The intrinsic process of the tango dance in itself has been rather encrypted and obscured till now. The tango dance has been world renowned through an extreme commercialization of the form which has undermined the essential construction of the dance in the local communities and its identity.

My concern as dance dramaturge is to look at the construction sources of the tango dance in order to rescue its valuable intrinsic structures and stand points not only for the sake of the teaching methods but also for the sake of the learning processes of the dance and the development of a contemporary art form crossed by the interaction of social and political lines in Argentinian society.

Summary:

Lecture followed by a tango practice oriented to contemporary dancers. My main concern as dramaturge is to look at the construction sources of the tango dance in order to rescue its intrinsic structures and pillars. That in order not only to revise teachings/learning processes of the dance but their application to the development of the tango as a contemporary art form crossed by the cultural interaction in Argentinian dance community.

Target group:

Contemporary dancers. Maximal 15 couples (30 participants) There is partnering work.

Biography:

Born in Buenos Aires and based in Amsterdam. I am (BA) dancer, teacher and maker rooted in contemporary dance and ballet while studying, as well, somatic practices. I have been practising intensively traditional and new Tango forms. After my graduation, I pursued theatre training with masters Vladimisky- Pasik becoming part of their theatre company in Buenos Aires. I did post-graduate studies in new dance at the EDDC, HKA Arnhem. During last 13 years, I advocated to Yoga practice becoming Yoga teacher whilst in 2012 I got a MA in Theater Studies as dramaturge at University of Utrecht. Actually, I am developing a concept of tailored modern dance trainings under the name *Danzalterna*.

Time request: 90 minutes

Lecturer: 30 minutes

(20 minutes for the lecture; 10 minutes for the video exposition; 10 minutes for questions)

Practice: 50-60 till 90 minutes

(90 minutes is preferentially to work out some improvisation and partnering)

Technical requirements:

-Beamer

-audio

-studio sized minimal 120 m2

Gender, transference and subjective body in the contemporary teachings of tango practice

My proposal for this symposium is a lecturer with a power-point presentation followed by video samples and as part of my proposal, I would also like to give a tango practice oriented to contemporary dancers where to visit the technicalities of the dance and issues.

The presentation of my lecturer and practice revolves around the contemporaneity of the tango dance as an evolution from a popular urban dance form till almost a contemporary style. I will show this evolution, in my attempt to approach a political dance form that has belonged to a marginalized Argentinian sub-culture which posses an enormous potential. At this stage, I am not particularly interest in the sole development of its technique but I am rather interested in the teaching method and the learning process of dance for the new dancers' generations. At this point I want to emphasize cultural and political factors which are playing a huge role in this development of the tango. The intrinsic process of the tango dance in itself has been rather encrypted and obscure till now, when the tango dance has been world-wide known through an extreme commercialization of the form which has undermined the essential construction of the dance in the local communities and its identity.

My concern as dance dramaturge is to look at the construction sources of the tango dance in order to rescue its valuable intrinsic structures and stand points not only for the sake of the teaching methods but rather for the sake of the learning processes of the dance and the development of a contemporary art form crossed by the interaction of social and political lines in Argentinian society.

Introduction

The presentation of my lecturer and practice revolves around the contemporaneity of the tango dance as an evolution from a popular urban dance form till almost a contemporary style. I will show this evolution, in my attempt to approach a political dance form that has belonged to a marginalized Argentinian sub-culture which posses an enormous potential. At this stage, I am not particularly interest in the sole development of its technique but I am rather interested in the teaching method and the learning process of dance for the new dancers' generations. At this point I want to emphasize cultural and political factors which are playing a huge role in this development of the tango. The intrinsic process of the tango dance in itself has been rather encrypted and obscure till now, when the tango dance has been world-wide known through an extreme commercialization of the form which has undermined the essential construction of the dance in the local communities and its identity.

My concern as dance dramaturge is to look at the construction sources of the tango dance in order to rescue its valuable intrinsic structures and stand points not only for the sake of the teaching methods but rather for the sake of the learning processes of the dance and the development of a contemporary art form crossed by the interaction of social and political lines in Argentinian society.

Subject

One of the most mysterious things in the traditional Argentinian tango dance is the fact that the ephemeral conformation of the dance happens between two dancers: female and male. I mean ephemeral because originally the tango is always being improvised as a dance. There is no choreography set in the dance unless for the stage tango what Argentinians name: 'tango fantasia'. Let's agree that this last type of tango is only recognized in certain festivals (mostly mainstream environments) but stage tango does not represent the essential core for the dance.

The originally improvised tango dance works on the base of two spatial structures and a few step patterns for the female and male role (both subjectively different). Here the mutual 2- bodies complementation is based on the traveling through the walk, the main pattern leaded by the male, while in an interaction and alteration of axes, planes, and contact points of two bodies makes the tango dance blooming during improvisation.

In this technical explanation the position of gender has a big impact in the dance, though in current times that gender position has been won by the term 'leader' instead of male dancer and also known 'queer tango', but still the gender difference is playing an important role of energy, drive and intention in both cases; as well both bodies measures; as well the mutual empathy of both dancers and the emotion: pulsionality and emotion are in the tango dance a basic. Without this last element the tango dance risks to become just an acrobatic ball-room dance, missing its essential emblematic intimacy.

As a contemporary (and tango) dancer, the learning of tango was rather difficult for me and it traced a long process with a Argentinian masters to reach first
-to execute the movements as female role properly (because my background as dancer interfered with the subject of tango rather than helping)

- being open to the sensitive information that the male dancer is offering and transferring me, inviting me to move with him;
- the intimacy of the dance proposal
- to focus and follow the male dancer rather than taking the initiative myself;
- to enable my body to behave in this type of movement which is being shared while dancing

As well, the development of tango in the salons has had an ongoing long process, because the tango could not be isolated of the social environment for the sake of its own development. So that means that on one hand, there is a 'technical' process of the dance different for male and female and on the other hand there is an evolution of the dance that occurs during the movement improvisation in the social salon within other dancers. The last anchor of these chain of development would be the development of dance language in the tango in its different styles

Every 'body', every tango couple looks different while they could be executing the same movements, every dance couple acquires its own identity as couple moving and as dancing couple which may differ enormously from one to another: that is not so visible in the stage tango.

The development of dance language in the tango is something that belongs strictly to every couple; it is a very hermetic and intricate development with an extraordinary result.

But what triggers me as dramaturge is how the tango is becoming a contemporary dance form without losing its natural essence and without falling on an homogenized shapes of contemporaneity.

My interest centers as well about the process of learning the tango dance. Amazingly the tango dance challenges my knowledge as movement analyst and choreographer digging me far from the regular scholastic dance tendencies applied to improvisation and composition. At the same time the tango dance appeals to academic knowledge as perfectly applicable; for example the Labanian concept of planes or the early modern concept about the sixth position where to find the middle axes in the body.

Differently of other dance techniques where the pelvis cage is so important for the generation of movement; in the Tango dance the movement is produced from the chest center rooting through legs and ultimately the feet in contact with the ground. Here the aesthetic of body has its impact because the torso is very prominent as the case of Grahamian dancers and that is an 'modernist' aspect that I link and relate as well during the tango practices because it helps the student understanding about the use of the torso for example.

Other difference is that the tango as dance is generated through sensation and sudden transmission of information from one body to another body, that is what makes to create the movement flow and ultimately what makes to create the language.

Another character of the tango dance is that proposes roles of leadership and follower during the dance itself (which could be exchangeable) where the role of gender has huge influence in the chemistry of the dance couple that determines the 'difference' factor either in the form of the tango (how it is projected) or in the behavior of the tango language as such.

There are two other aspects that are 'subversive' in the way I look at the tango dramaturgy to say:

- the body type suitable for a tango dancer is not necessarily a trained dancing body rooted in ballet or modern techniques. Contrarily, a highly trained body in formal techniques might go against the natural movement proposal of the tango dance. So here there are some issues about efficiency, structure, high performance (in the professional field) that needs to be revised
- It is a dance style which grows with the age, when it is well conducted.
- It is a dance style that is crossing the boundaries of modernism actually because it is becoming a subject of contemporary dance scene. So tango is winning the space of contemporary art though tango is still within the frame of the 'popular urban dance' being program in schools for popular dance in Argentina.
- the gender issue is important in how the dance is being shaped, all these goes about the cultural aspect of gender and Argentinian couple relationship which cross through the tango dance in its heart. The Argentinian couple relationship is an anchor in the society and it is the anchor of the dance as well. The couple is the stone-core from where the society is built up (with its extension to collectivity, group and family).

My proposal for IDOCDE 2016:

- 1) a lecturer with a power-point presentation followed by video samples and;
 - 2) a tango practice oriented to contemporary dancers where to visit the technicalities of the dance and issues about:
 - the circular spacing of the dance and of the dancer's movement
 - revision of the dance structure
 - the main pedestrian character of the dance through the walking
 - the relation between grounding- tempo (again addressing to the pedestrian character of the dance)
 - the relation between the leading & follower role in the movement production
 - the gender explorations in terms of what are the tasks and rules for the mutual production of the dance
- As a closure I would like to show some new contemporary tendencies of tango- works through video recordings.

Time-line for the lecturer:

20 minutes for the lecture

10 minutes for the video exposition

15 minutes for questions

Time-line for the practice

90 minutes (preferentially to work out some improvisation and partnering) or

50-60 minutes (the practice can be shortened to an approach about the technique and structures)

Bibliography

Sources:

-Coggiola, M.G (2011) *Subjectivities and identities in Contemporary Dance -Cultural Studies Perspective-*

-Ferrer, H. (1999). *El Tango, su Historia y Evolución, Buenos Aires- Argentina: Edigraf*

-Carretero, A. (1999). *Tango, Testigo Social, Buenos Aires- Argentina: Edigraf*

-Göttling, J. (1998) *Tango, Melancólico testigo, Buenos Aires- Argentina: Ediciones Corregidor*

Sources websites and webpages:

-Cambalache Festival editions from 2006 till 2011, Buenos Aires Argentina. [Online].[Accessed 15 February 2015].

Available from World Wide Web:<<http://www.2xtango.com/festival-internacional-cambalache-2011-la-fusion-del-tango-la-danza-y-el-teatro/?lang=en>

-Perform.Artes, Programacion Jornada Tango en Escena, Buenos Aires Argentina.[Online].[Acceded 15 October

2015].Available from World Wide Web:<<http://www.performartes.blogspot.com.ar/p/programacion-jornada-tango-en-escena.html>>

Secondary sources:

-R. Buikema-Van der Tuin, I. (2009) *Doing Gender in Media Art and Culture*. New York: Routledge