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***Disruptions of [In](ter)dependence as Methods for  
Choreographic Praxis: Music and Dance in Estancias  
Coreográficas 2017 and 2018***

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## Introduction: The Idea of Disruption

This article studies how different forms of disruptions of rhythm and relationships of independence, interdependence, and dependence between music and dance can be used as creative tools. These considerations result from two editions of the choreographic research project *Estancias Coreográficas (EC)* (2017 and 2018) in Oviedo, Spain.<sup>1</sup> EC as a project focuses on research in practice—with a particular focus every year—during an intensive two-week period in the summer. During these two weeks, choreographers, dancers, musicians, visual artists, and researchers work together in a series of creative sessions and discussions in different spaces across the city. A symposium with international attendees and open discussions regarding music and dance was also organised in 2017, in collaboration with Universidad de Oviedo. The two years on focus here investigated the idea of rhythm and the relationship between music and dance. The following article proposes a conceptualization of possible collaborations between music and dance as they happened in EC 2017 and 2018, and discusses the conceptual practice which, I argue, is constituted in these forms of collaboration. The idea behind the article is that by languaging these practices, and reflecting on them, it is possible to give rise to ideas which are constituted in the practice itself, and not added on at a later, analytical and more dissociated, stage.

In this context of collaboration between disciplines and across different roles, I propose the concept of disruption as an enticing understanding of these artistic exchanges: there is a sense in which the interactions between choreographers, composers, dancers, and researchers can be understood as a form of “disordering.” As an example: the choreographer has a particular plan, to which the composer responds—or vice versa depending on the format of the collaboration. This response often rearranges—or disarranges—the ideas proposed by the choreographer and these actions are likely to affect the dancers’ work. This ‘disarranging’, or disruption, generates new ways of working, beyond what one agent can achieve on their own. At a different level, these forms of collaboration often also affect the way an audience perceives the work. A musical proposal has the capacity to affect the perception of movement in a very direct way, through the

phenomenon of capture<sup>2</sup>. Capture defines the way in which a sound can make us perceive a movement differently, for example giving an accent to a sequence that is not actually there in the movement. In another form of capture, a movement can affect a sound, for example emphasizing beats or melodies with particular movement qualities. Music can also hold power over the meaning of the work. These are examples of smoother forms of disruption.

In this article, I first propose a general working understanding of different types of rhythms, including inside the practice as well as in the interaction between the project and the city. After this initial set up of rhythm, as an example of a grounding term shared by music and dance, I review the forms of collaboration emergent from the practice as developed in EC2018. I first discuss a potential spectrum between hegemonic leadership and democratic collaboration, to then explore different forms in which music and dance come together in our practice. Throughout EC 2018 choreographers and composers discussed their collaboration in terms of concept, structure, or quality/texture of the music or movement. They used ideas or concepts to base their conversations and collaborations on, or they explored qualities and characteristics of the music and dance in parallel in order to create. Structurally, in their patterns, music and dance have many ways of relating, and also many possibilities to contrast, which were also investigated and used in the creative sessions.

Collaborations in real time, such as those proposed in the context of Estancias Coreográficas 2017 and 2018, place all creative agents in a shared space and provide them with opportunities of rupture from their usual creative processes. At the same time, they offer opportunities to explore which forms these collaborations might take, what concepts might arise from the exchanges, and to find disruptions as potentiators of creative exchange. Indeed, in this project and this discussion, disruption is not seen as a negative force but a method to open creative pathways which might not have opened otherwise. Being able to gather all the creative agents for an intense period, in a space of continuous work, and without the pressure of producing a final work, facilitates this openness to disruption.<sup>3</sup>

### Rhythm, choreography, and disruption

An anecdote might serve well as an indication of the level of variation, and confusion, between concepts of rhythm. When reading the first few days of questionnaires from Estancias Coreográficas 2017, I noticed that a “special rhythm” kept appearing in the description of the dancers. When I consulted the researchers as to what this might mean, they told me that it was what it said in the questionnaires. There was a typo in the Spanish version of the questionnaire, from “spatial” to “special” (*espacial* to *especial* in Spanish), and the dancers simply assumed it was a different kind of rhythm. Of course, they did not know what exactly “special” rhythm might be, but they were using it nonetheless—and in a sense quite effectively, as a subjective understanding of personal rhythm, a form of sensation almost. Humor aside, it seems that we are not alone in this confusion regarding rhythm, as

...the American dance writer John Martin (1939) observed when commenting on the ‘vexed subject’ of rhythm: ‘Indeed as soon as rhythm is mentioned, we are likely to find ourselves enveloped in [a] dense ... fog of mysticism and vagueness...’<sup>4</sup>

A lot of variation within the definitions of rhythm was also perceived in the symposium of EC2017. Jonás Bisquert proposed in his presentation that the perception of rhythm is subject to our culture and training. For him, rhythm is understood as a succession of pulses, and responds to distribution and groupings of events in time and to the concept of cycle. According to Afonso Becerra, the dramaturgy of a work can be understood as a score of actions, which also has a particular rhythm corresponding to tension, attraction, or attention towards these actions. He also argues that rhythm is actually the meeting point between agents in a creative process<sup>5</sup>. Within the more practical side of the project, choreographer/EC 2017-18 co-director and EC founder Yoshua Cienfuegos relates rhythm in composition to the idea of intention and identity within a work. Choreographer Oded Ronen talks about exploring rhythm in movement from the chest area, relating it to emotions and to that which is “broken” inside—another form of disruption. And one more understanding of disruption is proposed by choreographer Vania Gala who works with

space and tools breaking hierarchical understandings of the elements of dance. The difference between what is metric—related to intellectual reflection—and what is rhythm—related to intuition—was proposed by researcher Maria Rodriguez following Jacques Dalcroze. This binary does not seem to hold true in the practice of EC2017, however, due to a much more embodied understanding of choreography where the separation between intellect and intuition is not marked. Finally, EC2017 proposed musical rhythm (patterns of sound and music), spatial rhythm (visual organization of the choreography), and bodily rhythm (movement qualities as performed by the dancers) as three possibilities for composition and performance, and these were used throughout the sessions by all participants, although I cannot review them in depth here. EC2017 proposed another two spectra of rhythms which demonstrate the imbrication of theory and practice in choreographic research and are worth discussing in depth. These are what I termed the inside spectrum, including personal, imposed, and shared rhythms, and the “outside” rhythm, based on rhythmanalysis. These are explained in the following sections.

#### Inside: personal | imposed | shared rhythms

Some of the most energetic discussions of the project—and concepts which produced most confusion in the questionnaires—had to do with imposed, shared, and personal/ natural rhythms. These responded to a more social dimension of rhythm, connected to interpersonal relationships, and generally related to processes during the working sessions. So they mainly responded to the human aspect of the project—although obviously this is in turn constrained by the structural aspects.<sup>6</sup>

**Personal rhythm** is understood as the manner in which a dancer will tend to move when not prompted in any particular way. This is the reason way it is sometimes considered “natural”, meaning, in a way, “unmediated”. Of course, it was quickly understood from the researchers’ point of view that this rhythm is much more heavily conditioned by training and circumstances than the dancers seemed to recognize. The concept, however, is very clearly important for dancers in practice. They speak about the natural rhythm in the body. When dancers are given a rhythm from outside—understood here as a pattern to follow,

whether in sound/music, visually, or as a bodily quality—they need to internalize it. In this way they make it theirs, and then their rhythm conflates with, becomes, that imposed or external rhythm.

Movement scholar Helena Ferrari talks about “organic rhythm” in the work of movement analysis theoretician Marta Schinca as follows:

Physiological rhythm or internal rhythm. It is based in the contrasts of tension and relaxation, in all degrees of speed, in the impulses of movement which develops in pathways through the joints, in the experience of the vital force which presides human actions and in the becoming of the psychical states of the individual (My translation)<sup>7</sup>

This rhythm relates very strongly to bodily rhythms, as indicated by the renewed use of tension and relaxation in Schinca’s understanding. Furthermore, the link between the “internal space” or “internal rhythm”—space and rhythm here often conflated—and the psychological aspects of the dancers’ work was also present in our research throughout EC—it seems that this relationship is assumed by all, embodiment taken as a given in the work of dancers<sup>8</sup>. This is not unexpected, as it is generally accounted for in the extant literature: Goodridge talks about physiological or natural features of rhythms, stating that “[a]ll human rhythms are rooted in co-ordinated physiological processes”<sup>9</sup>. Choreographer Flores talks about the importance of the “emotional rhythm” of participants as well as audience as his most important reflection throughout EC2017, and my own research focuses generally on rhythm as an important element towards the emotional work of a dance performance. Philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre states that

Th[e] human body is the site and place of interaction between the biological, the physiological (nature) and the social (often called the cultural), where each of these levels, each of these dimensions, has its own specificity, therefore its space-time: its rhythm<sup>10</sup>

Lefebvre also speaks about how “[r]ational, numerical, quantitative and qualitative rhythms superimpose themselves on the multiple **natural** rhythms of the body (respiration, the heart, hunger and thirst, etc.) though not without changing them”<sup>11</sup>.

In fact, the next two understandings of rhythm in this social spectrum have to do with the origin of the rhythm as located in people other than the dancers themselves. These are the kind of rhythms that would be both more important and more affected by collaborations such as those in the particular project under scrutiny, both because rhythm is an important concept to root the interactions between music and dance, and because collaboration with other agents in the same space would necessarily imply shared rhythms, and likely imposed/external rhythms as well. It seems to be understood that **imposed rhythm** comes from the choreographer and is given to the dancers to follow. In this sense, according to Lefebvre “there is a struggle between measured, imposed, external time and a more endogenous time”<sup>12</sup>. This was very common in the case of Flores, who would often propose as rhythm one of the Flamenco *palos*, or other choreographers using particular pieces of music. But it also appeared in exercises of the contemporary choreographers, which often related to other than musical rhythms, such as constrains or props for spatial rhythms, or scores for bodily rhythms. A choreographer could also choose one of these external rhythms and fight against it.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, **shared rhythm** is understood as not imposed from outside but negotiated—explicitly or not—between the dancers as a group. Goodridge understands that different personal rhythms are present in performance:

In performance events, cultural diversity in rhythm is evident in a number of performance features—in the style of performing, use of preferred tempi, style of dance steps and patterns, and use of gesture in acting’<sup>14</sup>.

In this sense, some form of negotiation must exist for dancers to work together. In practice, this can be likened to the idea of “listening”, used often in improvisation and contact-improvisation contexts, but also in moments when a group of dancers have to move in unison, especially in instances when there is no imposed musical rhythm. Lefebvre speaks about rhythms “of the other”, that is, “rhythms of activities turned outward, towards the public” and rhythms “of the self”, “linked to ... private life”<sup>15</sup>. These types of rhythm, as discussed, seem to be present within each individual’s experience in the choreographic process.

### Outside: disruptions of the city rhythms

Henceforth you will grasp every being [cheque être], every entity [étant] and every body, both living and non-living, ‘symphonically’ or ‘polyrhythmically’. You will grasp it in its space-time, in its place and its approximate becoming: including houses and buildings, towns and landscapes<sup>16</sup>.

My last point of discussion, the rhythms of the city, relates in a way to the previous spectrum of social rhythms, but extends beyond it. I base my ideas here on Lefebvre’s rhythmanalysis<sup>17</sup>. Oviedo is a small city, with a current population of approximately 220000 inhabitants. It is the capital city of the Principality of Asturias, in Northern Spain. It is neither a seaside city, nor a very strong tourist destination. Lefebvre argues that in cities, life is organized in every exchange<sup>18</sup>, and that wherever “there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is **rhythm**”<sup>19</sup>. He includes in his analysis “repetition (of movements, gestures, action, situations, differences)”, interferences of processes, and a cycle of “birth, growth, peak, then decline and end”<sup>20</sup>. My next question is then: *what are the rhythms of Oviedo and how does EC affect them?* Or indeed, *how do the rhythms of the city affect those of the project?* This is asked specially in relation to the spaces we used, and what interaction this use might have with the city and its inhabitants.

The project was mainly developed in **Teatro Campoamor**, the nineteenth century proscenium theatre—the main theatre of the city—which seats about 900 people and is often occupied by opera and zarzuela productions and formal ceremonies, only occasionally hosting theatre performances. It is understood as a formal, grand space. Dance, represented by international guest companies, is presented three or four times a year in the Dance Festival of the city. This is directly related to what EC is trying to do: bring more dance, and specifically more contemporary dance, to more people in the city. Within the theatre we used two rehearsal rooms, the foyer, and the stage for rehearsals and performances, and in the 2017 edition we also used the square in front of the theatre. We affect the rhythm of the city not merely by occupying an iconic city space, but also by taking our breaks and eating our lunch outside, sitting on the floor, wearing no shoes; by



offering a show of contemporary dance for free; and also by making people question what exactly is dance research. Some of the looks and reactions of passers-by indicate that this is indeed understood as a form of disruption for the city.

Other spaces used in EC include the **Auditorio Príncipe Felipe**, a big conference center in a different area of the city. The project used the rehearsal rooms as well as the “chamber music room” in this building. We also used the studio of **Elisa Dance School**, a local dance school, whose director is part of the production team of EC, and a major pillar of dance in the region. And finally, we used **Sala Paraíso**, an independent performance space which is in fact a converted garage, where we held rehearsals but also part of the performances for the emergent choreographers. The use of all these spaces meant that the project was much more visible within the city. In a city like Oviedo, dancers do call attention to themselves and their ways when walking in between rehearsals<sup>21</sup>. People speaking in languages other than Spanish and Asturian would also call attention to themselves in Oviedo and affect the work of the people in shops and restaurants slightly, as they would generally, although not always, struggle to communicate in languages other than Spanish or Asturian. Another set of rhythms and disruptions which is interesting to consider in order to understand the impact of this type of projects and collaborations.

Finally, but very importantly, we also used the **historic building of the Universidad de Oviedo**, which was sponsored by the University to hold the symposium on Dance and Rhythm. This was, as far as we understood, the first symposium on dance to be held at that institution<sup>22</sup>. We had an internationally acclaimed specialist on dance and music as keynote for the symposium, Professor Jordan as explained above, as well as guests from different European universities. The event attracted a lot of interest from local media—TV, radio, newspapers—and people were made aware of the project also through these media.

Through Lefebvre’s ideas, it is possible to suggest that the city itself is already a polyrhythm, formed by all the interacting activities, people, institutions, and spaces, with “public space ... theatralis[ing] itself” through the “rhythms of the people”<sup>23</sup>. Some of the routine rhythms of the city include little movement in the early morning and at lunch time,

food shopping mid-morning, and leisure shopping and social encounters in the late afternoon and evening. EC was a separate rhythm that integrates itself within these activities, people, institutions, and especially spaces. EC participants arrive to the theatre early and go out of the theatre for lunch, counter-timing the calm moments of the city. They then go out in the height of the social time: late afternoon. In this way, the movement, clothing, and language of the participants offers a different rhythm to that of the city. The project, then, proposes a further cross-rhythm which in turn potentially disrupts, or at least varies these city rhythms and calls attention to itself because of its contrasting force. Further to this, Lefebvre explains that we can speak about secret rhythms—physiological and psychological; public/social rhythms—ceremonies, celebrations, calendars; fictional rhythms—eloquence, the verbal, elegance, gestures; and dominating-dominated rhythms—made up rhythms like in music or speech<sup>24</sup>, which resonates with the disruptions provided by EC, as explained above. In this way, the analysis of the cities' rhythms links back to the social spectrum as found in the research within EC: in internal, imposed, and shared rhythms.

I now move to explore what could be considered yet another understanding of 'rhythm': the different forms of collaboration between music and dance within the creative sessions of the project.

### Real-time Collaborations as Disruption

Having focused on understandings of rhythm, and potential disruptions of the way the project was organized, I now investigate the different forms in which collaboration, mainly between music and dance, took place and was emphasized during these two editions of the project. The aim of this review is to explore how different forms which collaboration can take indicate whether, or to what extent, disruption can take place. On an extreme there would be a strong leadership style, in which one of the agents takes the lead and proposes a task which the others would have to follow. The absolute extreme of this side of the spectrum would be a hegemonic direction from one particular agent—potentially the choreographer/director. There are very limited possibilities for disruption of the artists'

usual modes of work here, especially of the director's. In the other extreme of the interaction continuum there would be a democratic style, where there is no hierarchy, and all agents are invited to propose and discuss tasks. This type of conversation when devising approaches invites disruption from everyone and is often more creative. For example, Coventry's Belgrade Theatre-in-Education Company describe their practice as an "internal democratic management structure" where "[e]verything is regarded as everyone's responsibility, so that each company member is committed to and caring about all areas of work"<sup>25</sup>. In a similar structure of devising, Forced Entertainment talk about how one of their directors (Robin Arthur) is the person to go to if you want your idea "pulled apart," that is, he is the person most likely to provide creative disruption, but always within a process of democratic management by their two directors<sup>26</sup>. In more traditional forms of direction, i.e. with one agent leading—the director—and all others following, it is difficult to provide the necessary space for agents other than the director to give feedback or ideas. Indeed, it might be argued that the word "agent" in itself needs to be understood as having a different weight in more traditional management structures. Although I do not have space to go in depth into this side of the discussion, dance scholar Jo Butterworth speaks about the Didactic-Democratic spectrum in choreographic work, where in the didactic extreme the choreographer is the expert and the dancer is merely an instrument, whereas in the democratic extreme they are collaborators and co-owners<sup>27</sup>. In this sense, the most creatively productive—disruptive—forms of collaboration seem to be ones where music and movement, and their respective agents, can continually feed and disarrange each other, that is, the most democratic management structures, where there is no hierarchy of opinions.

Movement > music | music > movement | movement <> music

In her chapter about choreographers and composers' collaborations, Stephanie Jordan speaks about a continuum within collaboration<sup>28</sup>. On one side of the spectrum there would be a sort of collaboration, where a choreographer works with a score. This gives more time for the choreographer to work on, and understand, the music. Commissioned

work—where the composer is given a concept and brings back a full product, also sits on this side of the continuum<sup>29</sup>. On the other side there would be what we understood in EC2018 as democratic collaboration, beyond the modalities, either dance or music, leading. Artists here are given “enough leeway for their own structures and ideas to develop” and where “there is agreement about leaving space for each medium, to be more sparing with density of information in a cross-modal situation”<sup>30</sup>. Democratic collaboration here would mean that in each session choreographer, composer, and researchers could discuss anew what to do, with all opinions having the same weight<sup>31</sup>.

In the context of EC2018, but also seemingly quite common in dance/music collaborations, often either the movement or movement idea took the lead. This was then followed by the music, or vice versa. Even in those moments of more effort towards creating without one discipline leading, the working session often seemed to verge towards one or the other option. For example, Jordan describes as follows a session in which she worked with composer Renzo Spiteri and myself as choreographer:

The session with Lucía and Renzo involved using blocks of music as a basis for developing movement that the dancers constructed. The music had a strong pulse. We experimented at one point accenting the movement so that it did not sit right on the pulse but was just before or after it and considered the effect of this and the tendency for this activity to alter the nature of the movement (Jordan, EC2018 report).

This task was a form of disruption in itself, albeit a very generative one, feeling freeing and creative for all of us in that session. This is mainly due to the difficulty it imposed on the movement side, that is, on the dancers, but also because it implied watching in a different way to perceive this different nature that the accents gave the movement. As Jordan indicates, we made an effort to disrupt the dominance or hegemony from one of the forms. However, questions still emerge as to how much you can actually disrupt the process once the first medium is set:

I did feel that the music could have led to or supported a very different kind of movement, which raises questions about the openness of material to different meanings. Does the medium that comes first, either music or dance, set the tone? Does the background of the dancers affect their

understanding of the music? Can there be irony from more oppositional relations? (Jordan, EC2018 report).

In my own experience as a choreographer I kept hearing how we were not managing to leave much space for the musicians/composers to participate. Apart from the question of whether we could involve them in the vocabulary creation phase—on which I expand below—there was a questioning also of some choreographers’ capacity (and even interest at some point) to open the space for real democratic collaboration. By way of exploration, but also being aware of the issues arising through the questionnaires of the participants and comments of the researchers, I went into an afternoon session with Luis Miguel Sanz—Viola da Gamba player/composer—and researcher Carmen Gimenez Morte. I did so with the idea of switching roles: Sanz would be the choreographer, then I would try and suggest some musical ideas. This was one of the most creative sessions I ever had with a composer. Sanz started by using musical terms to propose changes to the dynamics of the choreography—which was a solo I created with Edoardo Ramirez Ehlinger. Some of these indications were quite new from a choreographic point of view: a form of “swing” in the dynamic, but one which starts with a more intense energy and then softly changes texture after the tipping point; or a “tear” in the texture of the music—because of how it is played with the bow—which translates into a sudden change of intensity and quality in the dance, which become more forceful and raw. Ramirez Ehlinger recognized it was a challenge to perform these ideas while keeping the original choreographic instructions (which at the end we let go of). These disruptions of vocabulary, of understanding, and of knowledge, however, gave us much deeper ideas to work with, putting both disciplines to the test and offering alternative ways of thinking about their work. Once again, moments when the process is both clearly democratic and open to disruption seem to be the most obviously creative ones, and the most exciting for everyone involved. As opposed to moments when creativity is dictated by approaches in one of the disciplines, these democratic, disruptive moments create new meanings, new possibilities, even new languages for the participants. But above all, and very obviously in this section, they create new questions.

### Forms of collaboration

Several discussions emerged during EC2018 regarding forms that collaboration might take. For this discussion I will focus on three aspects: (a) a range of concept-structure-texture in the concepts or ideas grounding the relationship between music and dance, (a) improvisation vs set material, and (c) vocabulary vs scene. As a further point, I reflect on some of the concepts which emerged throughout our discussion as rooting the collaborations—or disruptions—between composers, choreographers, dancers and researchers.

#### *(a) Based on concept, structure, quality/texture*

The first of these aspects is more a compilation of possibilities than a clear categorization. Throughout EC2018 choreographers and composers discussed their collaboration in terms of concept, structure, or quality/texture of the music or movement. For example, Ravid Abarbanel, choreographer of EC2018, worked from the concept of “home,” Cienfuegos worked from a score of qualities and timings, Marco Flores, choreographer of EC2017, from rhythms of the “palos” of flamenco. In terms of concept, there was an understanding of a subject matter—not necessarily narrative—which guided participants when creating material, such as the concept of ‘home’ as explained above.

Structurally, music and dance have many ways of relating, and also many possibilities to contrast. In this sense, Jordan’s seminal work can easily help illuminate the possibilities. Jordan proposes “a theory of interdependence and interaction between music and dance”<sup>32</sup>. This is because whether sound and movement are created together, in integration, or completely independently, the reality for the spectator is that inevitably they are experienced together, as a whole<sup>33</sup>. Within her proposal concerning structural categories for relating music and dance<sup>34</sup>, Jordan speaks about parallelism<sup>35</sup>, counterpoint in conflicting rhythms, or rhythmic conflict between music and dance<sup>36</sup>. Another type of relationship between music and dance would be the case of dance anticipating or reflecting the music, with music accentuating elements of the dance<sup>37</sup>. Syncopation—a musical category that choreographers can relate to—basically implies accenting a weak beat instead of a strong one, avoiding a regular sense of rhythm<sup>38</sup>. There are also different modes of

playing which are useful for conceptualizing relationships between music and dance, for example pieces of music joining the notes—*legato*—and those which are meant to be played with clear differentiation between notes—*staccato*. Although musical terms, these words can also be applied to the way the dancers move, being informed by the music<sup>39</sup>. Accentuation (emphasis on particular notes) is also an option to relate music and dance structurally as accents in the music emphasize—or are emphasized by—movement. Finally, Jordan acknowledges that “[c]horeographers can, of course, devise material that rides freely across the musical pulse”<sup>40</sup>. Generally speaking, choreographers and composers do not use these terms or categories explicitly when working to communicate with one another, and although it is possible to perceive certain tendencies—for example Cienfuegos towards counterpoint, or Flores towards parallelism—there are many variations and factors which come into these forms of creating for each choreographer. The possibilities of structural relationships between music and dance are many, as discussed, and are very generative and clear ways of working in collaboration.

Finally, many times participants related in terms of the qualities—dynamics or characteristics—or textures—appearance, or feel—of the movement and sound materials. In this sense, they define whether music and dance work with the same quality/texture, with opposing ones, or varying between these two options. Using qualities or textures, instead of technical vocabulary, brings the practitioners closer and still allows for interpretation according to the type of material, and even personal interpretation. As an example, Cienfuegos uses a score which indicates timing and quality, and he gives this score to both the musician/composer and the dancers—in Cienfuegos’s case qualities are codified through previous research, so all participants have clear indications of what the characteristics of each quality are. This indication of quality is then “translated” or interpreted both in sound and in movement, relating the qualities of both aspects, or integrating the disciplines into one defined quality. In his own reflections, Cienfuegos indicates that at times this interaction results in an integration of sound and movement qualities, whereas at other points the result is more “dualistic,” where there is no integration but more of a co-existence—though at no point this indicates a value judgment. The results within this continuum between integration and co-existence, then, depend on the

composer's interpretation of Cienfuegos's score, which supports the idea that potential forms of disruption also depend on the relationship established between all agents involved in the creative process.

Example of a score as developed by Cienfuegos:

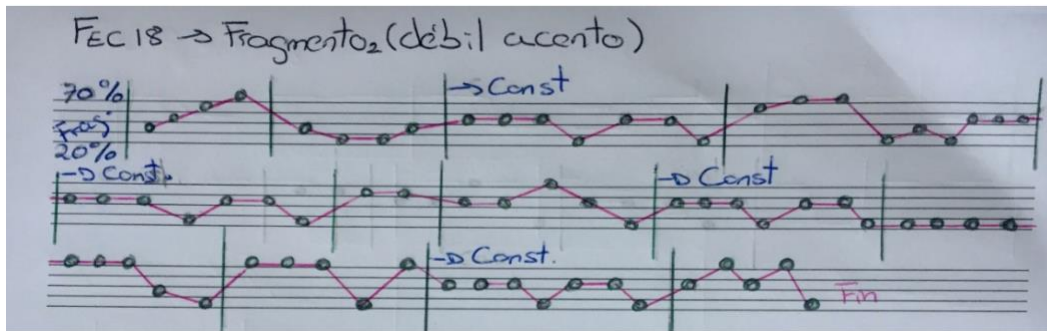


Figure 1 Cienfuegos's score, EC2018, "fragmented quality with soft accent"

All these ways of relating the forms of music and movement were present in the practical work and ensuing discussions of EC: part of the conceptual practice that I argue for.

*(b) Live/improvisation vs set/fixing from a dialogue*

A discussion which was brought up and included more clearly the dancers' voice constitutes the second level of my discussion here. Some of the choreographer/composer pairings developed material together through improvisation—creating spontaneously with either agent/discipline following the other or through a sense of dialogue between the two. The first issue within this discussion arose here: it is not a dialogue between choreographer and composer, but a conversation, as it necessarily includes a third agent type, and a vital one: the dancers. This issue was indeed raised by the dancers but more obviously articulated by researcher and visual artist Vicente V. Banciella<sup>41</sup>.

The second issue raised by the dancers was that once the material is set, fixed, or even replicated through a score, the sense of conversation is lost, it is not real any longer. This was also discussed in terms of the collaborative aspects of the project: in EC, because of the nature of the project, at one point choices need to be made with respect to the material



presented in the closing gala, effectively stopping the peer to peer collaboration—this does not imply, however, that the research is not valid, only that it necessarily stops at one point<sup>42</sup>. Jordan gives William Forsythe and Thom Willems as an example of playing with this idea of dialogue into the live performance:

Both are committed to liveness, including components of improvisation, with Willems re-mixing scores while Forsythe, also in the sound booth, and crossing the usual boundaries between choreographer and musician, ‘conducts distortion effects and musical cutoffs’ (Vaas-Rhee, 2010: 398)<sup>43</sup>

This is an example of another very direct, albeit seemingly welcome, form of disruption. This aspect of live conversation would be very interesting to develop, not only through improvisational techniques in all disciplines, but through open conversations between disciplines during performance, that is, through performances of interdisciplinary disruption. Carmen Gimenez Morte relates this topic also with the idea of authorship in contemporary dance and the relationship between agents, linking it to the extensive debate about the role of each creative agent in dance works. If a work of dance is presented as an improvisation on stage, is it true to say that the work is “by” the choreographer? Where is the agency of the dancers considered? If movement is created via tasks, also, can it be considered the choreographer’s? What aspects of each work are “created” by whom? These and other aspects of authorship in dance have been debated repeatedly in dance studies. And the discussion on these topics as it developed throughout EC provides another example of conceptual practice emergent from choreographic praxis.

*(c) Vocabulary vs scene*

One of the questions which emerged in EC2018—for me particularly, but also for other participants—was whether democratic collaboration was possible only at the level of creating a scene, or whether it was also possible to develop this kind of collaboration at the level of generation of vocabulary. In this context, vocabulary is understood as the material in its raw form, that is, before being organized in space and time. A scene, however, would be a defined part of a work in which all elements are already designed. This question emerged clearly for me during a session of work with Spiteri and Jordan, as explained above. These are Jordan’s notes on this topic from that particular session:

By the end of the day I was really questioning how making dance vocabulary could involve musicians as anything other than as observers or to provide a basic stimulus. Lucia had wondered early on whether there could be an element of collaboration in the making of vocabulary, and perhaps there are certain stylistic features of choreomusical behavior that could have been developed in these sessions, like non-synchronous relations between movement and musical beat (Jordan, EC2018 report).

In her own chapter, Jordan explains that choreographer Wayne McGregor has a first phase in which he creates vocabulary without the final music of the work, to then start working on structure and rhythmic relations with the final music later on<sup>44</sup>. Once again, collaboration is not done here at the level of vocabulary, but this beginning of a discussion can provide material for further practice-as-research projects to question its possibilities in practice. The questions opened by this line of research are extensive, though. For example, how would you start creating shared vocabulary that does not put one of the disciplines first? Can there be a shared starting point for both disciplines that then is put together in a form of “clash”? What are the positions of the different agents then? Especially of the dancers who, arguably, would embody the coming together of material from the different disciplines? These and other questions can be researched in further projects and should prove very generative.

*(d) Concepts to root collaborations/disruptions between music and dance*

Certain concepts emerged through the practice in EC2018, and, although perhaps not so clearly articulated or defined by the participants, they seem to frequently set not only their practice, but also their collaboration. Although I can only review them briefly, they serve as indication of emergent forms of languaging artistic practice in music-dance collaborations, and demonstrate once again the conceptual practice that I try to capture in this article.

- *Vibration*, the first of these concepts, emerged clearly in the sessions with choreographer Carmen Muñoz, where she proposed a force coming from the floor up, as well as from the inside of the dancer’s body and which related clearly with the rhythm and the footwork—Muñoz is a contemporary flamenco artist.

- *Imagery* is the next concept which was widely used in EC, and which is very common in dance practice in general, and also has been widely studied. Oded Ronen's work in EC2017, for example, was heavily based on imagery, using visual images to generate movement, and imaginative relations between bodies. Some of these ideas, it was noted by the dancers, included sound-related imagery, or images which included sound—such as a train, for example.
- *Resonance*. This term was used both in the more sound-related understanding—a sense of reverberation and/or of depth—and a way to think of the relationship between music and dance. In this relationship, a diffuse sense of synergy between the forms of dance and music material is perceived, not enough to be characterized as structural or quality-based, but still clear enough to be of importance. Although this is quite a vague term, it can be seen perhaps as an indication of both the willingness to relate the different artforms and the difficulty to language this.
- *Pulse*. According to researcher Bisquert, pulse is a unit of time that can be experienced immediately, physically and corporeally, and which is both stable and predictable, to a certain extent. Pulse, then, is a good grounding concept for music-dance collaborations, and according to Jordan's observations, emerged frequently as a way to bring together work in music and dance, even implicitly without clear discussion between agents, in the practice of EC2018.
- *Rhythm* was also used by the participants continuously, and a discussion of the classifications and uses of this term was proposed earlier on.

If anything can be extracted from this conceptualization of forms of collaboration, it is precisely that such foundational issues within artistic practice are hard to grasp and they escape strict categorization. Thinking through these options, however, indicates some customs in which disruption can be localized and even potentiated as a creative force in interdisciplinary processes. Although it is possible to narrow down options, the possibilities brought by encounters of disruption are endless. Of course, this is the beautiful nature of artistic collaboration. The proposal here is, as will be seen in the conclusion below, that the more we propose opportunities to both experience and reflect on these forms

of collaboration, the more we will be able to understand and strengthen them. And that it is exactly this type of projects which will allow a conceptual practice to emerge.

### Conclusion

This article proposed a series of possible conceptualizations of collaborations between contemporary forms of music and dance, and through them a conceptual practice which is constituted in this interdisciplinary collaboration in itself. First, I explored rhythm as a fundamental grounding term in music-dance collaborations. Rhythm, however, does not seem to respond to a universal understanding in our practice within EC. Hence, two spectra of rhythm were explored in relation to the project, i.e. emergent from it. The first of these had to do with the practice in the studio itself, and the person/s that the leading rhythm originated from: natural (dancer), imposed (outside of the dancer, usually from the choreographer), and shared (the rhythm is collaboratively created, or once more agents adopt the same rhythm). The second type of rhythm proposed was outside of the practice itself, but related to the how the project interacted with the city, the spaces where it happened. This second type of rhythm is less emergent from the practice itself, but it still indicates the impact of this type of projects.

From these spectra of rhythm the article moved into a discussion of the practice itself, in the studio, with focus on forms and understandings of collaboration between music and dance. This exploration necessitated both of a more general approach—not just on one concept such as rhythm—and a more particular attention to the different grounding ideas and approaches of collaboration which were used in the creative sessions during the process. Democratic encounters were found to be the most generative in EC, since they allow the most potential for disruption of each other's practice, hence potentiating the emergence of new ideas. That said, these were also problematized in themselves, as what exactly constitutes a democratic collaboration can be the subject of extensive discussion. The forms which these collaborations could take were varied—through concept, structure, quality, or texture—and generated many questions. The difficulty of performing a live conversation while fixing material, or whether it is possible to collaborate at the level of

vocabulary, are examples of these. Relational concepts within music and dance also emerged in the particular practice of each choreographer.

The moment of exchange in itself emerges as a conceptual practice. The exploration appears as somewhat vague, as it produces a double entanglement of attempting to conceptualize a practice and understanding the practice itself as conceptual. In the moment of collaboration, however, this distinction seems irrelevant: conceptualization and practice come together in the instant. As Petra Sabisch indicates, “relations are experiences that participate in the constitution of knowledge, but these relations are quite peculiar ones; they are difficult to seize since they also defy knowledge in forming”<sup>45</sup>. This, at the same time, makes research in practice the most appropriate context to conceptualize both collaboration and disruption. The interactions between choreographers and composers, as well as those between choreographers/composers and dancers, or researchers and practitioners too, can be understood as a form of “disordering”. Projects such as EC allow different elements and styles to come together in harmony or disruption. Gimenez Morte proposes that analysis of these kinds of practices pushes compositional possibilities at the same time as it breaks barriers between theory and practice.

Through this article I have tried to propose the idea of disruption as a useful way of understanding forms of collaboration between music and dance, and to explore collaboration in itself as a conceptual practice through different levels and the elements which emerge from each of them. Through the concept of rhythm, as a particular focus, I explored the imbrications of these kind of intensive research projects as branching out both outwards—towards the city—and inwards—towards individual or shared experiences. The discussion itself defies closure. But it also allows me to propose that, through concepts such as disruption or rhythm, artistic research could be argued to reach beyond the studio walls. The generative possibilities of these types of encounters are vast, and they translate more readily into praxical understandings.

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<sup>1</sup> The office of the mayor of Oviedo supports this project and frames it within its summer festival, which aims to activate the city's cultural scene during the summer holidays. Other supporters of EC 2017 and 2018 are the University of Malta's Research Grants, School of Performing Arts at the University of Malta, Universidad the Oviedo, and other local and national institutions which provide support in kind. The final sharings were free to an audience of about 700 people. Due to its structure and support, EC also offers an opportunity to introduce dance to new audiences, and also to introduce them to the—somewhat still unknown—idea of research in dance.

**EC Team 2017-2018. Main choreographers:** Yoshua Cienfuegos, Lucía Piquero, Marco Flores, Oded Ronen, Ravid Abarbanel; **emergent choreographers:** Maynor Chaves, Gaby Davies, Vania Gala, Dana Raz, Fernando Trujillo, Xián Martínez, Carmen Muñoz Jiménez, Beatriz Del Monte (coordinator Yoshua Cienfuegos); **Researchers:** Prof. Stephanie Jordan, Vicente V. Banciella, Afonso Becerra, Jonás Bisquert, Carmen Gimenez Morte, Begoña Muñoz, Giuliano Parisi, María Rodríguez, Katherine Valera, Joahn Volmar (coordinator Lucía Piquero); **Composers/musicians:** Vadim Yukhnevich, Luis Miguel Sanz, Renzo Spiteri; **Research assistants:** Himagini Puri, Natalia Muñoz; **Cast:** Maynor Chavez, Edoardo Ramirez Ehlinger, Emma Louise Walker, Stefania Catarinella, Keith Micallef, Paloma Galiana Moscardó, Jesús Perona Ruiz, Sara Cano, Melanie López, Gaizka Morales, Moritz Zavan Stoekle, Sara López, Ariadna Llussa Sanza, Úrsula Mercado Campos, Luna Sánchez Arroyo, Rocío Sempere; **Production:** Jesús Mascarós, Elisa Novo; **Direction:** Yoshua Cienfuegos, Lucía Piquero; **Original project idea:** Yoshua Cienfuegos

<sup>2</sup> S. Jordan, *Mark Morris. Musician-Choreographer*. (Hampshire: Dance Books 2015): 115

<sup>3</sup> There are caveats to this: a) the project did need to present some outcome in a gala, which limited the ability to be completely open throughout, and b) being realistic, not everyone in a process involving so many people is equally open to disruption.

<sup>4</sup> Goodridge, J. 1999. *Rhythm and Timing of Movement in Performance: Drama, Dance and Ceremony*. United Kingdom: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 15

<sup>5</sup> A. Becerra *Estancias Coreográficas 2017*. Accessed August 13, 2017. <http://www.artezblai.com/artezblai/estancias-coreograficas-2017.html>

<sup>6</sup> The project is based in a particular institution and, in that sense, depends on that institution's constraints to develop the working rhythms within each session and overall.

<sup>7</sup> Original quote: '[r]itmo fisiológico o ritmo interior. Se basa en los contrastes de tensión-distensión en todos los grados de rapidez, en los impulsos del movimiento que se desarrolla en recorridos a través de las articulaciones, en la experiencia de esta fuerza vital que preside las acciones humanas y en el devenir de los estados psíquicos del

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individuo'. Ferrari, H. 2017. *Marta Schinca. Precursora del teatro de movimiento, vol. I: Manual del método Schinca de expresión corporal*. Madrid: Editorial Fundamentos, 95

<sup>8</sup> I don't think this can be assumed so easily, but further discussion on this topic is beyond the scope of this particular article.

<sup>9</sup> Goodridge, *Rhythm and Timing of Movement in Performance*, 28

<sup>10</sup> H. Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time, and Everyday Life*. Trans. Elden, S.; Moore, G. (London and New York: Continuum 2013): 88-89.

<sup>11</sup> Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis*, 18-19

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 105

<sup>13</sup> Arguably, just another kind of imposition of rhythm.

<sup>14</sup> Goodridge, *Rhythm and Timing of Movement in Performance*, 31-32

<sup>15</sup> Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis*, 101

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 89

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 88

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 98

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 25

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>21</sup> Mostly because of our, let's call it, "particular sense of fashion".

<sup>22</sup> Dance is not a discipline in public university in Spain, although conservatoires do give degrees and are in continuous fight for equivalence to university degrees, and there are also private universities which offer degrees on dance or dance-related subjects.

<sup>23</sup> Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis*, 102.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>25</sup> A. Oddey, *Devising Theatre. A practical and theoretical handbook*. (London and New York: Routledge 1994): 45.

<sup>26</sup> Oddey, *Devising Theatre*, 45.

<sup>27</sup> J. Butterworth, "Too Many Cooks: A Framework for Dance Making and Devising." In *Contemporary Choreography. A Critical Reader*, by J. Butterworth and L. Wildschut. (London and New York: Routledge, 2018): 89-106.

<sup>28</sup> S. Jordan, "Choreographers and Musicians in Collaboration, from the Twentieth to the Twenty-First Century." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Creative Process in Music*, by N. Donin. (Oxford and New York: Oxford Handbooks Online 2018).

<sup>29</sup> Jordan, "Choreographers and Musicians in Collaboration"

<sup>30</sup> Jordan, "Choreographers and Musicians in Collaboration"

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<sup>31</sup> The focus on this expression of “democratic collaboration” throughout the paper responds to a real belief in the importance of this type of space and collaboration. Although it is still an ideal, and democratic situations need to be examined carefully in order to understand all underlying factors—such as the people’s characters, project-related positions such as someone being director and someone being a guest, experience, need to create a final product, etc.—I still think the ideal is worth pursuing.

<sup>32</sup> S. Jordan, *Moving Music: Dialogues with Music in Twentieth-Century Ballet*. (London: Dance Books, 2000): 63.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 65.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 73.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 74.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 92.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> H. Cavalli, *Dance and Music: A Guide to Dance Accompaniment for Musicians and Dance Teachers*. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001): 5.

<sup>39</sup> S. Jordan, *Music dances: Balanchine choreographs Stravinsky*. (New York: George Balanchine Foundation, 2010).

<sup>40</sup> Jordan, *Moving Music*, 93

<sup>41</sup> Often in this project the dancers constitute their very own, and most welcome and necessary, form of disruption, sharing issues such as this one. Their lack of individual mention here responds only to their functioning most often as a collective voice, rather than an individual one.

<sup>42</sup> I consider this the moment when the research stops because the democratic collaboration is not possible any longer, and neither are more experimental or improvisational forms of work. It does not follow that the rest of the work is less valid, only that it is different and responds to other questions and needs.

<sup>43</sup> Jordan, “Choreographers and Musicians in Collaboration”

<sup>44</sup> Jordan, “Choreographers and Musicians in Collaboration”

<sup>45</sup> P. Sabisch, *Choreographing Relations: Practical Philosophy and Contemporary Choreography in the Works of Antonia Baehr, Gilles Deleuze, Juan Dominguez, Félix Guattari, Xavier Le Roy and Eszter Salamon*. (Munich: Epodium Verlag, 2011): 7