

Editor's Note

Our current issue of *DRJ* leads off with a piece by Ann Daly, which in many ways, I think, sets the tone for how we might think about dance in the twenty-first century: an engaged and vital part of our everyday existence. Daly's cogent remarks about the role of dance in culture opened an illuminating panel discussion at the New School in November 2001. Called "Dancing Democracy," it featured choreographers Leah Kreutzer and Liz Lerman and political philosopher Benjamin Barber. As Daly notes, "I don't think that dance needs to be *created* as a civic space. It simply needs to be *actualized* as the civic space it already is." She highlights several cultural and artistic trends that have brought ideas of dance and democracy to the fore: the concern by many social scientists about society's loss of civic associations; a shift from text-centered to space-centered approaches to dance (defined not only geographically, but as the creative process or as the relationships and dialogues fostered around performances); and the preoccupation of many choreographers with social concerns and community-based dance enterprises that involve audiences. Empathy, imagination, tolerance, and debate, says Daly, are just some of the qualities the dance experience offers that link it to civil society as a whole.

In many ways, our featured section on dance and global issues underscores some of Daly's central insights. At a time when global barriers are breaking down and dance traditions are being imported and exported around the world, the meaning and role of dance in the public space takes on renewed significance. As old and new traditions collide, for example, choreographers are often asked to rethink the lineages of their own dance forms, thus raising questions about gender, race, nationality, and culture. Barbara Browning, whom I asked to guest edit this special section, has culled three papers from the highly successful October 2001 Congress on Research in Dance (CORD) conference that she chaired: "Transmigratory Moves: Dance in Global Circulation." Revised for publication, these essays, by Shanti Pillai, Halifu Osumare, and Martha Eddy, cover a range of forms—bharatanatyam, global break dance, and Western and non-Western somatic practice—and explore how global, political, cultural, and economic forces shape and inform their development. As more indigenous dance forms begin to circulate on the global stage, questions of "authenticity," "appropriation," and "commodification" dominate public discourse. It is our hope that these essays, while varied in scope, will prompt renewed dialogue about the role of dance in global contexts.

Another major topic addressed in this issue is that of homosexuality and dance. In his eye-opening essay, Doug Risner reflects on the experience of gay men and boys in the dance field today. Despite the *seeming* acceptance of homosexuality by the dance profession, Risner points to what he calls a "muted discourse" that prevents more serious discussion and reflection. Risner asks, "How do heterosexist assumptions and actions in the studio/classroom unnecessarily and unintentionally create an environment of shame, humiliation, or embarrassment for gay dancers? How do we as dance educators unknowingly reaffirm narrow gender stereotypes? As teachers and mentors, how might we use our authority and power to support students who are questioning their sexual orientation?" Risner's essay charges dance educators, in particular, to stop and look seriously at the underlying assumptions and biases at work in the dance profession and the academy and to take action.

Judith Alter's essay will interest those dance educators at the forefront of efforts to revamp traditional dance pedagogy and develop alternate measures for evaluating student learning. Alter proposes a specific method for evaluating the work of students in studio dance classes whereby the "doing" of the dance work itself is coupled with reflective understanding on what students have actually learned. In this more student-centered approach to learning, employing a performance-based (or authentic) assessment design, verbal tools and exercises complement the nonverbal dance teaching and learning and enhance students' own understanding of their progress. With these important kinds of self-appraisal techniques, Alter contends, students take increased responsibility for their learning and "move toward becoming their own teachers."

Also in this issue we are pleased to feature a Dialogues section "Dance Studies, Gay and Lesbian Studies, and Queer Theory." This illuminating discussion emanated from the 2001 Society for Dance History Scholars Conference and has been edited by Susan Manning, the panel's organizer and moderator. And, finally, we feature reports on two seminal events: a symposium on dance in South Asia (which addressed the relationship between the modern and global as advanced in Shanti Pillai's essay), and an exciting workshop at the University of Chicago, "Ephemeral Evidence," that promoted rich exchanges between dance practitioners and scholars.

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With this issue, I complete my three-year term as Editor of *DRJ*. I have had a remarkable and rewarding experience working with the diverse and fascinating group of scholars and writers who form the thriving dance studies community. While I can't name you all individually, I deeply thank each and every contributor for what has been for me a highly rewarding process of collaboration and exchange. I hope that during my editorship readers have been stimulated by the work of our authors and the exciting developments occurring in many areas of our field, including dance and technology, cultural studies of dance, popular dance, feminism and dance, and global dance studies, to name just a few. To all of the outside readers and evaluators who graciously and generously gave of their time with their thorough and carefully crafted comments: your work sets the standards for *DRJ*'s peer review process, and I thank you all.

I am delighted to turn over the editorial reins to Professors Jill Green and Ann Dils, colleagues in the Dance Department of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, who will serve as co-editors. Many of you in the dance community already know of the significant contributions of both of these dance scholars; most recently, Ann Dils, along with Ann Cooper Albright, edited the landmark dance anthology *Moving History: Dancing Culture*; Ann is also a dance historian and a former president of The Congress on Research in Dance. Jill Green, who has coordinated the dance education program at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, is a specialist in the field of dance somatics, and her pioneering work in post-modern and feminist approaches to the body has been widely recognized. Both Ann and Jill have published in *DRJ*, and I know their familiarity with the Journal, the field of dance studies, and with *CORD*, will make them ideal editors.

In concluding my work with *DRJ*, I am reminded to what extent journal editing is a truly collaborative effort. Therefore, I must thank several individuals personally: Lynn Matluck Brooks, my predecessor, at Franklin & Marshall College, who was a superb mentor and whose sage advice carried me through many an issue; Sally Ness, an ideal editorial board chair, who consistently supported my ideas and goals for the Journal and whose long-range planning and

foresight have been instrumental in shaping the current *DRJ*; and Mary E. Edsall and Cara Gargano, past and current CORD presidents, and Rima Faber, editorial chair during my transition as editor-designate, for their faith in my work and their unwavering commitment to *DRJ*. I have also had the pleasure to work with two superb reviews editors, Lori Salem and Kate Ramsey, and I am pleased to introduce our new reviews editor, Rebekah Kowal, Assistant Professor of dance history and theory at the University of Iowa. And, of course, I want to thank my impeccable staff who made the day-to-day work of *DRJ* possible: copy editor Barbara Palfy; proofreader/copy editor Nadine Covert; graphics designer Mandy Harris; Robert Hershon of the Print Center Inc., in New York City; and my invaluable Gallatin School graduate assistants Vanessa Manko and Cristina Huebner. Finally, I would like to thank all of the members of the newly constituted *DRJ* Advisory Board for their outstanding service and support.

I wish the new editors well, and I hope that readers will continue to turn to *DRJ* as a vital home for the best in dance scholarship and for continued and vigorous inquiry and debate.

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