often refers to Garelick's writings, Garelick doesn't even mention Cooper Albright in her bibliography.

If I had to chose between the two books I would select Cooper Albright's study: it is narrower in many ways than Garelick's, but I like the opinionated stance that does not shirk from taking sides. As a performer, Cooper Albright also brings that kinetic quality to her analyses that makes for a fascinating and refreshing reading. Even if one does not agree with the treatment of much of the historical material, Cooper Albright's view is always decisive and clear. There is a stimulating energy that drives the book and the writing.

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NIJINSKY'S BLOOMSBURY BALLET: RECONSTRUCTION OF THE DANCE AND DESIGN FOR *JEUX*

by Millicent Hodson. 2008. Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press. 298 pp., illustrations. $76.00 cloth.

At the end of her book on the reconstruction of Vaslav Nijinsky's *Jeux* (1913), Millicent Hodson revisits her search for documentation of the lost ballet, a search that continued even after the project's premiere, in Verona in 1996. At last Hodson located a score of the Claude Debussy music with Nijinsky's annotations. Once the choreographer's notes were translated and minutely matched to her reconstruction score, Hodson decided they yielded less choreographic information than what she'd already collected. They'd been made at an early stage in Nijinsky's own choreographic process and gave few clues to his eventual "sculpted and contained" movement vocabulary. Not that the discovery of these notes wasn't significant. Indeed, says Hodson, they prove that history is an unfinished affair.

That affair has occupied Hodson and her partner, designer and art historian Kenneth Archer, for more than two decades. Since 1987 Hodson has been recovering lost ballets from the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s. In the process, with *Jeux, Le Sacre du Printemps*, and *Tyl Eulenspiegel,* Hodson has constructed an artistic profile of an almost mythological figure in ballet history. As dancer, choreographic prodigy, and vortex of successive scandals, Nijinsky today is defined by contemporary accounts, later recollections of his associates, and posthumous claims by aesthetic arbiters who never saw his work. Hodson agrees with the assessment of him as a major creative force, a forerunner if not a direct instigator of contemporary ballet. But her efforts to provide us with living evidence, supported by exhaustive research, have touched off their own controversy. Nijinsky avatars have dismissed Hodson's reconstructions with skepticism and sometimes indignation, while audiences worldwide greet the ballets appreciatively.

I can't evaluate the historical authenticity of Hodson's Nijinsky ballets, but I don't think authenticity is the crucial issue. We may never be able to identify every original step. I believe that level of accuracy is of concern only to those who monitor dance in the studio. The audience is much less discriminating. What has intrigued and inspired me about all eight Hodson recoveries that I've seen is how displaced they are from whatever is taking place on contemporary stages. In any recovered piece we want to see a convincing stage work, with an atmosphere, a look, an idea about performing, that evokes another sensibility. Hodson's reconstructions may be simulacra of the original ballets, but so are the third- and fourth-generation hand-me-downs that are deemed canonical by the ballet establishment.

Nijinsky's Bloomsbury Ballet is a companion book to Hodson's documentation of her

Sacre du Printemps reconstruction, *Nijinsky's Crime Against Grace* (Pendragon, 1996). Both books constitute a defense of sorts. With music notation, verbal narrative, and visual illustration, Hodson created a layered score for each dance. Published, the scores account for what she's put on the stage and reveal the open-spirited way she works toward reinstating a choreographer's intentions. Different ballets have evoked different methodologies, as the two books testify.

For *Sacre* Marie Rambert, Nijinsky's assistant, and the composer, Igor Stravinsky, left very explicit notes, giving steps, rhythms, and accents assigned to particular dancers in the huge cast, often bar by bar, in two musical scores. For instance, within a single measure in Act II Scene 2, Rambert writes: "A desperate leap with bent knees and tight fists." Hodson also had sketchbooks drawn consecutively during performances by Valentine Gross-Hugo, which gave her body shapes and some additional information about dynamics. After an introductory essay, Hodson's *Sacre* score comprises two hundred pages of music, with her descriptive notes, drawings, and source information inserted beneath.

Jeux premiered the same season as *Le Sacre* and was overshadowed by that bombshell ballet. Altogether smaller, sparer, and less ambitious, it was casually recorded. Even following the usual trail of secondary sources—interviews, critical responses, and other published materials—there was far less to go on than for *Sacre.* The sparse choreographic notations were more descriptive, less detailed. They tend to indicate actions rather than steps or placements or even timing. For instance, one set of instructions extends over ten measures of music: "They begin by wanting to run away, but he leads them gently and invites them again. They begin to dance" (106, my translation from the French). This doesn't really say how any of this action is to occur. Over the same ten bars, there are some other notes from a different source, refining the encounter slightly. After compiling them, with some sketches she could tie to the music, Hodson would still have to rely on her own informed choices.

In a series of essays and lecture scripts, Hodson discloses where the gaps were and what she did about them. She uses the term "intervention" to account for how she connected the evidence; this is another way of talking about getting into the choreographer's head and then inventing what he would have done. In other words, choreographing. I suppose the credibility of Hodson's Nijinsky depends on how much you trust her to know him.

She does more than choreograph the gaps. *Jeux,* like Nijinsky's other ballets, was antinaturalistic. He adopted artificial ways of carrying the body and conveying relationships, borrowing from popular dances and sport, and avoiding the different but equally artificial postures of classical ballet. Using Claude Debussy's scenario of romantic encounters between a man and two women, Hodson creates a sort of expressive narrative, quite modern in its psychological assumptions. But then she goes on, as the choreographer might have done, to re-physicalize the story into an abstract movement scheme, with help from photographs and contemporary graphic art. She understands that even though the movement is compacted and strange, the audience reads in a conventional narrative as it watches.

Hodson was trained as both a dancer and a dance historian. In addition to the research and directing results of her reconstruction efforts, she's an accomplished lecturer and writer. The *Jeux* book is less a definitive description than a compendium of information and sources, with Hodson's direct commentary on her journey. She's committed to the conventional process of scholarly research—combing through archives, interviewing surviving participants, pursuing

clues. But she also practices choreographic research—the trying out of movement ideas to see how they fit the music, experimenting with the possible pathways and interactions to which these ideas could have been subjected. And like the most interesting scholars, Hodson cycles these discoveries into the dance and out again, to generate new questions and new avenues for research.

Hodson is a person who thinks about dance. It's exhilarating to read someone who gets past the received opinion and rehashed mythology that informs and imprisons many other historians. It doesn't matter if you agree with her conclusions: she makes you look at the dance again. In her introductory chapters she traces the chronology of *Jeux,* looking at the interplay among the major characters: Debussy, Diaghilev, Nijinsky and his sister Bronislava, the dancers Karsavina and Scholar. She downplays gossip but tries to sort out the personal claims and biases that inform the various sources: the conservative resistance of Grigoriev and Fokine, who perceived Nijinsky as a threat and an interloper; the conflicted composer, who thought Nijinsky choreographed his music too literally; the Nijinsky loyalists Bronislava Nijinska and Richard Buckle.

Evaluating alliances and rivalries, determining whether a witness was seeing with loving eyes or political myopia, weighing careless remarks against well-founded observations—all this is basic to good historical research, but it's often skipped over as scholars pursue a predetermined conclusion or argument. One of the reasons Millicent Hodson's career has been so productive is her embrace of the historical project in all its ramifications: tracking down the story, assessing the evidence, making her own storyline in words and drawings as well as movement, and sharing her insights in lectures, workshops, and rehearsals. Whether doing research or crafting the project to life with dancers, Hodson is making astute interpretations and putting her own stamp on the ballet. Reading *Nijinsky's Bloomsbury Ballet,* it almost seems that conceptualizing and internalizing her subject is as satisfying to her as restoring, choreographing, and directing the ballets on live dancers. She doesn't seem to consider any of her reconstructions definitive, and she bills them as "after" the original choreographers. Perhaps there will be Nijinsky reincarnations after hers. I don't think she'd be surprised.

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THE BODY ECLECTIC: EVOLVING PRACTICES IN DANCE TRAINING

by Melanie Bales and Rebecca Nettl-Fiol. 2008. Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press. 264 pp., notes, works cited, and index. $70.00 cloth; $30.00 paper.

In *The Body Eclectic: Evolving Practices in Dance Training,* editors Melanie Bales and Rebecca Nettl-Fiol focus directly on "the practices . . . that thread through the jumbled collection of experiences that comprise late twentieth- and very early twenty-first century dance training" (ix). They remind us at once of the centrality of training to the art of dance *and* to its cultural and epistemic potency. Bales and Nettl-Fiol begin with the premise that training practices are not only skill builders—they are sites for the invention, discovery, and development of dance (viii). As such, they are generative sites of art and knowledge production. Of greatest significance, Bales and Nettl-Fiol develop a framework for making sense of the current context of eclectic, self-styled dance training. The framework consists of two contrasting concepts: *bricolage* and *deconstruction.* These two concepts carry broad cultural currency

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