

# LINGERING DANCE

The kinesthetic experience of time in movement

Dieter Defurne



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# LINGERING DANCE

## The Kinesthetic Experience of Time in Movement

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I, DIETER DEFURNE, HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I HAD PERSONALLY CARRIED OUT THE WORK DEPICTED IN THE THESIS ENTITLED, "LINGERING DANCE, The Kinesthetic Experience of Time in Movement"  
NO PART OF THE THESIS HAS BEEN SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF ANY OTHER DEGREE OR DIPLOMA PRIOR TO THIS DATE.

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## Introduction

**Linger:** *Middle English (northern dialect) lengeren 'to dwell,' frequentative of lengen 'to prolong,' from Old English lengan; akin to Old English lang 'long' (merriam-webster.com/dictionary/linger)*

**Lingering Dance:** *The methodic act of residing and dwelling in one's movement and oneself, connecting with what is in one's body through waiting, feeling, remembering, eventually expressing the inner conversation through moving.*

In this study, I take an in-depth look at the kinesthetic experience of time in dance improvisation, with the aim of developing a method of movement based on the notion of the Body as Archive. I will refer to this method as *Lingering Dance*. In this, the body is seen as a container of knowledge, consciously and unconsciously taking in and processing the information that is externally and internally present. *Lingering Dance* has the purpose of creating a distinct movement vocabulary and an individual rhythm in the dancer's body. This, in turn, can trigger other dancers and movement practitioners to experiment with their existing movement or dance vocabulary and allow them to embody their archive fully. The different types of 'bodies', *The Body that Holds Time*, *The Body as Archive*, *The Shifting Body* and *The Sound Body* will be discussed in Chapter 2. *Time and the Body*.

As a starting point for developing this heightened awareness of the body's archive and for the creation of *Lingering Dance* as my personal method, I will examine Mary O'Donnell's Release Technique (henceforth RT) and Open Form Composition (henceforth OFC). RT is chosen because of its take on the body-mind-duality as a whole, focused in the notion of the Experience Cloud: the individual is seen as a permeable experience cloud influenced by external factors, and is capable of influencing other Experience Clouds. Because of the parallel the cloud of experience has with the Body as Archive, which can be described as a container which is constantly receiving and sending out information, RT offers a clear frame for movement research into the kinesthetic experience of time and subsequently *Lingering Dance*. OFC is chosen because of its central notion of the open form, which leaves the responsibility of progression in composition in the hands of the performer, offering her or him room to choose and interpret the scores at hand, and allowing for structure and surprise to act in balance. The idea of the performer having a key role in the interpretation of the piece again connects to the use of the Body as Archive, as it allows the personality of the dancer to assume a prominent role in the piece.

In order to activate the archive in my body, I zoomed in on the idea of lingering, waiting, dreaming, remembering and finding time. Lingering occupies center stage in this research. It is my hypothesis that through lingering space is created that allows the inner voice to emerge. In my thesis, I explore the inner voice, which has the ability to produce and use scores that come from

the inside, conceived as everything that a person knows, as well as from the outside, conceived as everything that a person still needs to discover. These simultaneous levels of decision-making will be further discussed in Chapter 1, where I will go deeper into OFC, RT and stillness.

One of the steps into *Lingering Dance* is the creation of scores. Scores are a means to dance, as well as a result of a dance. In my method, I make use of triggers which consist of memories (internal), sound (audible, internal and external) and space (kinesthetic, visual, internal and external). These three forms of triggers can make use of a guide, which may be a technique (such as, in my case, Flamenco), an influencer (such as, in my case, Vaslav Nijinski), or the inner voice, that guides me through the score. The guide is my reason to move, and a trigger is used to surprise and keep my body in the now. In this sense, a constant awareness of the surroundings and the inner sphere is required. I will go deeper into these differentiations in the Conclusion of this thesis.

In chapter 3 I will be discussing the use of *Lingering Dance* within performance and education, through analyzing the performances *Movement #1* which I made in 2019 for the Master Theatre practices (henceforth, MTP) and *Conversation* which was made as final performance for the MTP in 2020 and in the form of a proposition on how *Lingering Dance* can be implemented in the restructuring of the dance education at MUDA Kunstsecundair (secondary school for performing arts in Gent, Belgium)

As a final note into this introduction, I conducted my research on *Lingering Dance* by leaning on an important figure that inhabits my personal Body as Archive: Vaslav Nijinski. Nijinski was a dancer and choreographer from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, who came to Europe with Les Ballets Russes, led by Serge Diaghilev. In his work, Nijinski opened up the form of dance by leaving behind the strict aesthetics of classical ballet. Through his work as a choreographer, but also as a dancer, he reintroduced a high level of technique that had - at that time - been missing in Europe. He was inspired by Greek mythology and, in the same way as Isadora Duncan, based a lot of his movement material on images that he found on vases and artwork from ancient Greece. He embodied the imagery in his movement repertoire, in other words, in his Body as Archive. More than a century later, his archive partially became *my* archive through my examination of movement for this thesis. A large part of studying movement in Nijinski's repertoire, in order to make it a part of my own archive, is based on the performance of *L'après midi d'un faune*, but the research also covered *Jeux* and *Sheherazade*, among other pieces.

Although Nijinski's work is an important element in my research, it is not the primary focus. The repertoire is part of my archive and demonstrates how the Body as Archive can be applied to influence a distinct identity in movement.

# 1. My History with Open Form Composition and Release Technique.

I chose Mary O'Donnell's RT and OFC as methods because they constituted my very first conscious steps into studying movement in-depth. Before my encounter with OFC and RT, my approach to dance was mainly to reproduce, and not to investigate. OFC and RT are the roots of the research that I have conducted over the past two years in the **ArtEZ Master of Theatre Practices** in Arnhem. As I attempted to gain insight in memory and reached an understanding of the Body as Archive, which I will explain in Chapter 2, it felt appropriate to start with methods that were a part of my personal history.

I encountered OFC and RT in 2003, when I left the program of Performing Dancer in Codarts Rotterdam for that of Dancemaker in ArtEZ Arnhem. These educational programs were each other's opposites. Whereas Codarts' program was mainly build on the traditional techniques such as ballet, Graham and Cunningham, and the rather conservative aesthetics that go with those techniques, ArtEZ's Dancemaker (formerly EDDC) was about exploring personal language in dance and performance. At that time, my view of dance was based on my background as a ballet dancer, with very limited knowledge of contemporary dance and improvisation. Subsequently, when I entered Mary O'Donnell's classes early in my training at ArtEZ/EDDC, the first thing I had to overcome was the strict doctrine of dance that I had learned during my previous training. Fortunately, the way in which RT operated, and perhaps how Mary O'Donnell herself worked, did not mean that I needed to discard what was already present in my body. Instead, RT helped me to enrich my movement vocabulary, technique and body awareness by allowing me to incorporate what I already knew. It gave rise to a positive way of studying dance. I learned how to further develop my knowledge of dance by means of my history, instead of rejecting it overall. OFC offered new insights concerning choreography. Whereas, previously, choreography was a set form, now I had the option to make choices while performing the work.

## 1.1 Release Technique as Investigation Tool

RT starts from the idea that the body, as described by O'Donnell in *Release 7 zones of comprehension* is a Cloud of Experience with permeable boundaries. This cloud is composed of all the known and unknown factors that make up a being's energy of continuity (undated a, 5). O'Donnell uses the word 'permeable' because the body continually takes up information. It is influenced by a person's inner voice and intuition, as well as by events happening outside of the body. In RT, the body acts as sponge taking in and holding information as well as releasing upon activation. O'Donnell describes RT as an open-ended inquiry into the relationship between

thinking and moving. It is a technique in which thought and action are in a constant conversation with each other. Intuition activates the body into movement, and movement develops intuition.

“All that we do is a process of image creation and fulfilment. Release is an integrative technique in which mind and body are seen as completing each other” (O’Donnell, undated a, 4-5). RT became the real start of my dancing. Whereas – in the beginning of my dancing career – I had been only aware of a single aesthetic in the performance of dance, a single way of connecting to an audience, a single way of projecting intention, a single way of anything in dance, RT showed me that there are many ways to approach dance, that all experiences can be relevant for the creation of movement. Instead of approaching dance through this *single* point of view which I was trained in, I learned to approach dance in a multiplicity of ways, in a *singular* way as described by André Lepecki in *Singularities, Dance in the Age of Performance*. Singularities as he unfolds it, are bearers of strangeness and producers of multiplicity and complexity that implicate all the dimensions of the real (2016, 15). Thus, keeping in mind the integrative nature of RT and the multiplicity in the body, it seemed logical to use RT as a starting point for my research on the kinesthetic experience of time and propose RT as a basis for exploring the potential of *Lingering Dance*. The method that I developed is based in the Body as Archive with a multiplicity of choices and the idea of integrating them into a singular approach to movement. Realizing this allowed me to develop my own rhythm, by way of a conversation that I started with myself in my attempts to translate feeling into scores, scores into movement, feelings into movement, movements into scores, and so on in an ongoing feedback loop.

The first thing I did as a student in Mary O’Donnell’s RT class was to lay down on my back, arms open, knees bent in constructive rest position. I assumed this position, because it was what everyone else did, trying to blend in. Only later, I found out the real reason: to be able to remain open or permeable – as O’Donnell describes it – to influences from outside, and, at the same time, to find a deep connection with my most inner processes. The imagery presented in the process aimed to offer deeper insight in the dancer’s or mover’s awareness of her or his body. This awareness allowed the dancer to gain a greater understanding of the range of movement and implementation of affect and intent within movement. One of the key elements for me as a practitioner of RT became the time that was spent on imagery, and the rhythm with which it surfaced during the classes. The way in which the words were expressed to establish the imagery, became more important than the image itself.

When I actively revisited RT in my practice as research, I started by talking to myself and initially attempted to recreate what O’Donnell used to do: to create images based on anatomical concepts, which would develop into a more open form of imagery and were not necessarily connected to anatomical work. I looked for imagery that bore a connection to the passing of time. This brought me to certain experiences from my past, or memories that emerged and that I wanted to be part of my past. Other voices started to enter my practice, sometimes quite literally: the voice of Rutger Hauer, for example, as he speaks his final words in Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner*.

Eventually, the conversation was also joined by Nijinski, with all his physicality, and Claude Debussy, with his music. At a certain point, these voices started to move to the background and became a constant, rather than a leading presence, allowing my own voice to surface with sharpened clarity. From this point on, I started to have a conversation with myself, which did not only consist of words. I would start moving, acting on an urge, and my inner voice would question it: a multimodal conversation emerged.

## 1.2 Open Form Composition in Performance

OFC is a way of making choreography and approaching performance in which one combines the form, structure, and set material, with openness, improvised or process-based material, and freedom of choice in the performer. It is a way of composition that offers the performer a choice, a chance to make choices. Through those choices, the performer is able to influence the structure and content of the piece. O'Donnell created performances which each had a form of structure with a map to go from A to B and which were substantive, but the means to arrive at substance, however, were different each time performed. She described these works as "Open Forms, meaning paradoxical in nature, based in different and even paradoxical interpretations of imagery" (O'Donnell, undated b, 10). I chose to work with OFC as a method of examining the kinesthetic experience of time within movement precisely because of the influence a performer can have on timing and the way the compositions are performed.

The dancer, in each particular occasion, negotiates in real-time the given, pre-defined parameters of the work, which not only explicitly include the individual's history in relation to it, but also ask him, in the moment of negotiation, to open, or carve a space into and within the pre-defined form. The pre-defined form will therefore necessarily 'suffer' variations. (Cerqueira da Silva, 2010, 35)

This means that the personal experience of time on the moment of performing can have an impact on the piece itself. OFC offers the performer freedom to adjust and change whatever is necessary without sabotaging the work. I emphasize 'without sabotaging,' because in OFC the performer has a responsibility to the piece, the other performers and the audience to maintain a safe environment within the time frame of the performance. Having responsibility means that performers, each with their character, be it outgoing, risk taking, introvert or perfectionistic, make sure that there is space for each individual to act.

The work that I performed for this study was solo work, which, according to O'Donnell, makes it difficult to use OFC. She says: "Solo work is extremely difficult to present as Open Form, since

the possibility for paradox in presentation is difficult to achieve within only one source” (undated b, 11). She prefers to call these works process-based works. Nevertheless, she states that Open Form is possible if the performer is capable of being in a dual positioning, for example, the body performs one thing, the mind thinks of something completely different. This creates a multiplicity in the body allowing for choice making to occur. The train of thought on OFC as I perceive it through her writings, focuses on the performer, as major carrier of the composition or performance. It seems that multiplicity in OFC, according to O’Donnell, can only occur within the performer or simultaneous decision-making between other performers influencing each other. O’Donnell does not seem to explore the potential of an audience as possible influencers of the set structure, of the form, so to say co-composing Open Form.

When I created *Movement #1* (2019) for the closing performance of my first year at ArtEZ, I considered the audience as part of the composition, acknowledging the responses of this unpredictable partner in the work just as My own responses were acknowledged by it. I made my acknowledgement visible to the audience by means of a smile, a repetition of a movement, an exaggeration of intent, a prolonged movement, or other gestures. The audience’s acknowledgement unfolded by way of laughter, boredom, a certain posture or other subtle and not so subtle responses through sound or movement. The solo was substantively the same as the first time that I had performed it in front of a small audience, but due to a difference in my mood, elevated stress levels and an entirely different audience, the way to get to substance was different. Other choices were made, and so my awareness of the passing of time changed. The screen dance *Conversation*, for its part, created during the corona crisis and in want of a live performance and an audience, became a closed form as product. All the material in *Conversation* was generated through open form decision-making, but as it had to be recorded, the form was closed. When I started editing the material, however, I tried to keep OFC in the back of my mind. I had a recipe for the soup that I wanted to make, and I had an idea of how I wanted the soup to taste in the end, but how I was going to get to the final result depended on my choice making with the material at hand. In the end, though, *Conversation* as presented in its current form was not OFC. The only option I can see to keep it in line with the principles of OFC would have been to live-VJ the material on the spot, in order to keep open the possibility of choice making in the now.

### 1.3 Active Stillness in Movement and Performance

*16/03/2020 At this juncture, my time is grinding to a halt. There is no more rush, no more must-do's, no more having to be somewhere in time. The current state of society, the result of the COVID-19 outbreak, has come to a complete standstill. The spread of coronavirus over the globe is achieving what I was seeking for myself through dance. It is forcing a whole community to slow down, reflect and contemplate. I feel that slowing down is needed in a world dominated by achieving, success, productivity, likes, views and subscribers.*

*Excerpt of Reflective Studio Practice Notes, Dieter Defurne.*

Am I to act in order to fulfil an image, or should I be still and let the image flood the stillness? Or can I be still with an image while moving, and acting? The body is moving in order to give the mind room to think. According to Ruth Zaporah in "A Body with a Mind of its Own" in the Dance Improvisation Reader *Taken by Surprise*, dance is silent, dance is thoughtless. She states that "It doesn't follow anything and it does not lead anywhere. It is not about gain or absolution. Dance, dances itself" (2003, 22).

Still, I disagree in part. Dance does lead to somewhere, even when this is stillness or nothing. It is a stillness or nothingness achieved through the focus on the movement itself. After all, nothing is also a place. It may not lead to anything practical, or tangible, in some cases, but this exactly constitutes the beauty of it. The dance is allowed to be *nothing*, which evidently is *something*. Thus, being active in dance, while at the same time being still, offers possibilities for exploration through the nothingness. When there is nothing, there is a lot of room for something to appear.

The dance removed the chaos in my mind, which overwhelmed me and which pushed me forward in time. By removing the chaos, it removed the rushing ahead which has become inherent to our time(s). Once I had reached this active stillness through dance, I could then start focusing on whatever task I had given myself to do. The task itself by then was internalized and started merging with the movements. Or did the movements merge with the task? In any case, out of the active stillness arose a clarity in movement.

## 2. Time and the Body

The following chapter discusses the body in relation to time. I will distinguish between the Body that Holds Time, the Body as Archive, the Shifting Body and the Sound Body. Referring to the body means to also refer to the mind, as the two are one entity. Zaporah argues that the body and the mind know one another through each other and are inseparable (2003, 21). Nonetheless, I will talk about the mind and the body as two separate entities. The implication is that the body is understood as non-linear, that movement and thought can happen simultaneously. They can have the same goal or they can function independently (while still integrated). For instance, movement happens concomitantly over time while thought reflects on something. As Han writes:

The good time is accessible for a mind that has emptied itself of all things 'useless'. It is particularly the emptiness of mind, freeing it from desire, which deepens time. This depth connects every point in time with all of being, with its fragrant intransience. It is desire itself which makes time radically transient by causing the mind to rush ahead. Where it stands still, where it rests in itself, there occurs the good time. (Han, 2017, 59)

In O'Donnell's RT, stillness is the starting point for the coming about of exploration. The stillness is there to create awareness and is considered something with nothing at its nature (undated a, 3). Practically, stillness is implemented for twenty minutes at the start of the RT class. Following these twenty minutes, the imagery that is presented provokes movement and investigation. These twenty minutes, however, appear to be indicative, because with some practitioners of RT in some occasions, a RT class can consist in mere stillness. The imagery that follows the stillness and in turn creates investigation is there due to a desire that feeds on emptiness. This desire is awakened by the idea that the Cloud of Experience recognizes gaps of understanding, lapses of readiness, insufficiency and curiosity (O'Donnell, undated a, 5). Following the view of O'Donnell this seems to imply that desire is inevitable or necessary for the coming about of movement in RT.

In view of O'Donnell's conception of desire as a necessity for the occurrence of movement or exploration, I came across a paradox when I considered Han's description of 'the good time'. Is there such a thing as a useful desire? Is there such a thing as an actual urgent desire? I ask these questions, because desire seems to activate and speed up the passing of time as stated by Han. Desire is at odds with prolonging the dance, moment, movement, thought, or memory. Can *Lingering Dance* create a state of stillness that moves without a desire to move? Is being without desire even a possibility and what kind of practices can overcome desire? Can *Lingering Dance* have O'Donnell's "Desire" and Han's "good time" coexist?

The impact made by time on the dance gains in clarity and focus through allowing my body to be still, to hang around and linger, it allows time to pass before engaging with movement. Lingering or prolonging the moment gives room for the inner conversation to take place, which consists in myself going over my scores and tasks. It is emptying my head, browsing conversations that I had, wishing I had done them differently. It is thinking ahead of time, imagining how things will be, how my dance will look, how my feet will move. It is me imagining myself, it is me being me. The inner conversation permits me to access what is already there, to travel through my memories, my personal history, as well as the history of dance that became my history through research and training.

*23/03/2020 In the past few days, I have had my moments of stillness: sitting on the roof of my house, as it is the only place I can work alone, and waiting for a score to come, so that I could activate my body. One score that appeared looked as follows:*

*- Bear with yourself*

*- NOW*

*- DANCE*

*- please*

*Excerpt of Reflective Studio Practice Notes and Score Diary, Dieter Defurne.*

## 2.1 The Body that Holds Time

*30/03/2020 I experience acute doubt about the validity of my work. But then again, I am always in doubt of my work. What is different now, is that the corona crisis - I really resent to call it so - is pushing my doubt into the negative end of the scale. Still, I keep thinking there may be a way to turn it around again. Maybe this unplanned, extensive standstill can actually create something, not just keep me in (one) place. Maybe it can generate a greater awareness in my body. Maybe the state of being isolated is what is needed to truly come to a sense of being in the now, to arrive at a heightened awareness of the performing body and its background. In other words, it seems I am finding myself not stilled but in a still, Lingerin Dance.*

*Excerpt of Reflective Studio Practice Notes, Dieter Defurne.*

The body can be seen as a living sculpture. Every experience, every movement, even every non-movement, is carved into one's physical presence. The body holds time through its physicality. It is a form that holds time by passing through time. It accumulates information and experiences and stores it all over the body. The body holds time because it can travel through space without losing its identity. At the same time, its identity is altering. It takes the knowledge from its surroundings and sculpts them into memories. As the body holds time through memory, it is with the memory of the body that a dance can emerge. Meg Stuart describes it as follows:

Dancing memory is composed of a myriad of fragments and tiny moments – like a gesture, a feeling, a smell. It is always detailed never something general. A whole body of fictional memories lives in the studio and on stage. There is a container of memories you can travel back to, like moments from real life, but also from your training, dancing experiences, fictions and stories you created. – These memories have a life of their own, detached from their source. You can claim and own them, or just try them out and discard them. It all has movement potential. (2014, 133)

Keeping in mind what Stuart says, that the danced memories are detailed and fragmented, the body that dances its memories suggests a certain rhythm in their performance. It suggests that the body is capable of traveling through time inside the body from fragment to fragment. Apart from the fact that it is a recall of memories, the rhythm itself becomes an expression of time. Stuart says that memories are invariably detailed. I believe, however, that a memory in the body can also be a

general feeling of something and that this general feeling can find an expression through dance. Memories in the body can be vague, when nothing more than a feeling remains. Yet I do agree that something very detailed can emerge when the memory is performed. The dancer's body holds time through memory and expresses time through the dance.

In addition, the body that holds time does this through its actions. There is the activation of the inner body, one of which are the personal memories, but there is also the expression of time itself. One form of expression of time that I was specifically intrigued by, is the aging body. To be able to perceive the aging body, one would have to perform for a very long time. In the work by Tehching Hsieh, in his various one-year performances (he created five one-year performances since 1978 and one thirteen year-long performance) the passing of time has been documented because of the near impossibility to actually witness such a performance in real time, due to the duration and the commitment needed for this witnessing to take place. The question is also, if you would be a witness of someone aging, do you actually perceive it? Adrian Heathfield unfolds that "Extended duration lacks the distinction that separates the event from the mundane" (Heathfield and Hsieh, 2015, 22). Hsieh's work needed a different medium than his original yearlong performances to become perceivable and step out of the mundane. Hsieh's work became an event anew through the body that is the book *Out of now* (2015). When looking at the aging body in relation to my own work, the aging body is a very intriguing body that holds time as it became an object persisting through time. But from a practical standpoint in connecting the aging body to *Lingering Dance* it is impossible to implement this into a method as an active practice due to a lack of both time and necessity when training to be a dancer.

### 2.1.1 The Body as Archive

*27/04/2020 I stand on the roof of my house, waiting for a score to settle in my body, so that I can activate my Body as Archive. I move around on the roof, waiting for external impulses to be internalized and externalized through the medium of my body. These moments happened to me after a period of rushing, or rather, being pushed forward by a mass of things that I needed to do. As it turned out, I needed to find a new rhythm in which I could function.*

*Excerpt of Reflective Studio Practice Notes, Dieter Defurne.*

In *Movement Research*, Eleanor Bauer describes the Body as Archive as a dirty container (2018, 176). She calls it a dirty container because of our subjective interpretation of the received information, which is conscious or unconsciously stored in our bodies. This understanding of subjectivity with respect to knowledge stored in the body, allowed for my personal dance to emerge. It could also be described as a signature, based on the history that is present in my body.

The history includes all dance techniques, skills, habits and quirks acquired over time, combined with the subjective output of the stored information. The Body as Archive is not only a dirty container because of the input, but also because of the output. In the Michael Maurissens' documentary *Body as Archive*, Gerald Siegmund explains it as follows: "The things you put in are not the same as you put out, you may never retrieve them (the information) as you may retrieve a document from an archive" (Maurissens 2020). This notion of never having the same output is an indication that the moment and conditions for the retrieved information are crucial to the interpretation and output of that information. For my study of the kinesthetic experience of time, these conditions were created through the use of scores that emerged by waiting for an impulse to arrive or lingering within a moment, prolonging it in order to arrive at a better understanding of the feeling at hand. Lingering allowed for moments of reflection on certain physicality that are part of my Body as Archive.

In my research, I approached body as an archive, as a time machine, as a storage of faulty and beautifully distorted information. The information is distorted because of the subjective nature of its interpretation, which becomes a source for investigating movement. Instead of only searching for the 'new' in the now or in the unknown of what is to come, I realized that I could use my past, and use what is already there to get to the 'new'. In *Taken by Surprise*, Susan Leigh Foster says that improvisation is working with all one knows and what one could not know before, that the unknown needs the known to be able to be "taken by surprise" (2003, 4). When considered from my understanding of the Body as Archive, all that is done in the body is to become aware of knowledge previously stored or acquired at the given point in time. This means that movement research, as well as improvisation, involves more than focusing on the spontaneous arousal of movement. It means that improvised movements or dances have a history and constitute more than pure freedom, free from the 'burden' of the past and free towards the 'excitement' of the future (Cerqueira da Silva, 2010, 3). The Body as Archive embraces the past as well as the now and the future, and it allows for intent and affect connected to those time frames to surface in the dance, at least from the dancer's point of view.

As stated before, the body consciously accumulates knowledge, such as the movement material of Vaslav Nijinski's *L'Après midi d'un faune*, or provides for me access to the not-yet-conscious part of the archive in my body. For being able to express my thoughts through movement, I felt that I needed an external motivator or guide. Intuitively, I came up with Vaslav Nijinski, who was with me at PAF (Performing Arts Forum) in France. He was there in the form of his diary and of the image of him performing *Sheherazade* on the cover of the book. Through *his* form, I was able to connect to *my* Body as Archive. He offered a window into the past, the beginning of what contemporary dance is today and into my own past. Using and acknowledging my past and present, and accepting my background as a person and more specifically as a dancer, permitted me to gain a better understanding of my own dance and its rhythm. In other words, self-awareness emerged as time and timings in my body. It granted greater nuance over

the dance, higher complexity in the movements, and clearer intent in relation to the audience. It opened up a space for me as a dancer to linger in my own physicality, making room for reflection on the issue of the passing, traversing and blending of time.

### 2.1.2 The Shifting Body

The Shifting Body is a body that travels through time from within the body, by way of the individual's memories and experience. The Shifting Body is the between-step to *Lingering Dance*, the activation through physicality of the body as archive.

A body *is* because it is *another* already. Bodies (forms) are always in a process of alteration, altering and being altered. A body is also a cluster of forces or an energy field cultivated with seeds of otherness. It surrenders and resists and in surrendering and resisting it creates a rhythm. In its abandonment, the body is here and there, now and then, so intimately so that the feeling of distance and separation seems to disappear, to collapse, and in this (un)real proximity an uncanny distance appears, a strangeness perhaps so unbearable that only death would equal it. How to deal with finitude? When does a dance finish? (Cerqueira da Silva, 2010, 1)

The body is one thing and many things at the same time. It has the ability to alter and adapt, based on the surroundings. Through its energy and force, it is capable of altering its surroundings. The Shifting Body shows these alterations through movement, gesture and projection of intention. It brings forward the conversation that dancers have with themselves when translating scores into movement. The Shifting Body connects dance techniques that are stored in the Body as Archive with each other. This shifting between parts of the archive of the body creates a specific dynamic and a distinct rhythm in the body.

The idea of the Shifting Body involves a body that puts its lived archive to use and is capable of shifting from one expression of information to another. It is a body that can travel from memory to memory, from skill to skill, from technique to technique. It is a body that shifts between these things without causing an interruption in the flow of things. Yet at the same time, it is capable of showing that a shift has happened. The aim of the Shifting Body is not to hide the shift or to hide the origin of the performed movement, gesture or dance. The Shifting Body allows for the act of thinking to be visible. It brings forward the transition from one place in the body to another and gives it a prominent role within the dance. By allowing the shift to be there, by showing, as it were, the behind-the-scenes of the movements, it adds a more personalized rhythm and a greater dynamic range to the dance. The Shifting Body gives space to the performer to flow from one

intention to the next. At the same time, it allows for 'anticipation on'. This space for anticipation functions as a waiting room in which the dancer can actively wait for external triggers, such as sounds from the surroundings, certain accents or notes played in the music, or visual or kinesthetic stimuli, such as another dancer passing by or a member of the audience scratching the hair in a specific way.

At a certain point in my research, I started recognizing the moment when I passed from one memory to the next. Obviously, I was aware of it in my thoughts, because of the score through which I was talking myself while moving. Most importantly, however, it also showed in my body. For instance, when I connected to my early background as a ballet dancer, my posture immediately shifted. Through the shift in my posture, my intent changed and this in turn enriched my movement vocabulary. It allowed something to surface that was not part of the contemporary dance signature: lifted chest, slightly dramatic presentation, yet integrated in the dance and thus not out of place. I did experiments where I tried shifting from Nijinski's movement quality over Jean Claude Vandamme's typical high-tension karate moves to a Slovenian folk dance which Matevz Dobaj invented during one of the rehearsals for a duet that I made a few years ago. While shifting from one form to the other, I tried to make the shift apparent without making the movements fall out of place. I did this by talking myself through the score. The inner conversation became the rhythm on which all three distinct movement patterns merged.

### 2.1.3 The Sound Body

Let us consider sound now: sound as in what one hears, sound as in what one feels, sound as in what one sees, sound as in what is safe or solid. The Sound Body is a multiplicity, but to me it is first and foremost a sound that reflects on the dance that emerged. It is an expression of the time that is spent moving and experimenting with the scores that were generated. The Sound Body is an extra voice emanating from the Body as Archive. The embodied responses to sounds and music as a whole rise from the connections that the body makes with its archive. Certain atmospheres, instruments, or noises, activate a certain physical response. At first, I would have described the Sound Body as an invisible body, because sound is something that you cannot see literally. The vibrations that sound causes in the air are too small for human eyes to detect:

The acousmatic is fundamentally based upon conditions of the unseen, of not looking, or looking elsewhere, into sound, and locates us within spaces of shadows, dimness, a dim light, and at times, even total darkness. (LaBelle, 2018, 33)

Yet, sound can have another output than the vibrations that it causes in the air. Although based in the unseen, it can be made visible. One of the most traditional ways of bringing sound into the visual plane is by translating the music through dance. Sound can be made visible through movement and dance, by accentuating music notes, spatial use, pattern creation, repetition of physical actions based on the rhythm of the music and projection of intention through physical action. In my work *Conversation*, I translate Claude Debussy's *Clair de Lune* in this way. The rhythm of the music guides the movement or dance from point A to point B. I accentuate certain tones with my hands, fingers or head. I follow the dramatic line of the music, the tension sphere, by adjusting my dynamics accordingly. At the same time, I try to comment on the music through movement, by making fun of and embracing the overly present romantic and nostalgic atmosphere that the music creates. Alternatively, I comment on myself when I indulge too much in the drama of the music by adding pauses after the drama occurred in my embodiment. Moving on the music in this way creates a certain feeling of togetherness, even when it is just oneself and the music. It is a feeling of 'this is right', it shows a Sound Body that is secure, connected and in flow. Another way of approaching sound is through feeling the vibrations that it causes, since these can cause a physical or emotional response. The response is in turn expressed by the body. I experimented with this at PAF, where I used the death scenes in Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982) to create a soundscape from the feeling of disappearing, of experiencing the pressure of time as it moves to an inevitable end. While the soundscape was running I did nothing more than sit, as I was being watched, opening up my awareness, sometimes responding in movement to the sound because it was what I had planned, it was my score. What happened was that the sound triggered an emotional state in me, which was projected on my audience, which projected their emotional state back on me. Thus, a progressive projection of emotion going back and forth arose, adding layer upon layer, eventually ending in an overload or overflow of emotion, with tears as a final result. The sound and the vibrations created affect that visualized through my body.

In a second try with a slightly different soundscape, I removed my body, because it felt as if my body got in the way for the audience to actually hear the soundscape, its speed, rhythm, and content. The feedback that I received about this was that the soundscape became something visceral, in some cases violent, as if the gunshots, which were part of the soundscape, were felt and the screaming caused fear. The corny synths that were present in the background of the clips chosen for the soundscape added humor to the whole. By removing my body, I removed a filter, which in turn made it possible for the soundscape to become a Sound Body with a certain emotional range, through the bodies of the audience. Both forms, the soundscape and the translation of *Clair the Lune*, were externalized forms of a Sound Body.

There is also the internalized sound, which is connected to one's Body as Archive. After hearing *Clair de Lune* so many times, I noticed that I was unconsciously following the song when working without music or sound. Sometimes, because of a failing memory, the song was stuck in repeat mode, and so did my movement or dance. At times, there was my voice talking to me,

commenting on movement, questioning and reflecting. In the end, I even started talking aloud to myself. The talking and the music turned into responses to the dance, which I then proceeded to integrate in *Conversation*. It resulted in cycles such as the following: Linger → Reflect → Score → Movement → Reflect → Respond → Linger, and so on. The idea of the sound that I created is to be able to connect it to the physical work. At the same time, however, it is sound that can be disconnected and be placed in the unseen. When it is placed in the unseen, it can be used to imagine what could be there.

### 3. The Kinesthetics of the Passing of Time in Dance

Chronos and Kairos, external and internal time: how does time pass and how does time feel? And how does the passing of time feel when moving through time? My main concern in this research is not the actual passing of time, the time one can read from a clock. It is not Chronos that concerns me, the one that keeps track of the ticking of time and who is unforgiving. What concerns me is the way in which time feels through moving, the manner in which time is stored and remembered, and the fashion in which time can be used in dance. When I refer to time, I refer to history, memory, movement dynamics and rhythm in the body. Dance is considered to be a thing of the present, the now. Once it has been performed, it is gone. Once the action is produced, it is over. However, is there not such a thing as the performer's projection of the future as well? Does dance really unfold exclusively in the now? After all, since it has passed, it must be in the past as well. The event that happened, the movement, and the dance are stored in memory. It may not be the same when it is repeated, but by remembering it, it has become a thing. If you consider Heidegger's following question and answer: "Is the now at my disposal? Am I the now? Is every other person the now? Then time would indeed be I myself" (Kisiel and Sheehan 2007, 202-203). If time equals me, then everything that I feel is time. When I make a movement and that movement makes me sad, can I then consider this sadness as a feeling generated by the passing of time? When I am moving and thinking of time, I feel impatience, I feel time is slow, or I feel no time at all, as if I am moving inside a vacuum. When I feel no time at all, I seem to lack a connection with my Body as Archive. I seem to lack a grounding and to lose interest in movement or dance at a rapid pace, very often resulting in my coming to a standstill with no intention of digging deeper. When I am overwhelmed by information, this is where I go. From a productive point of view, this state is not so helpful, as I need to generate movement, because I want to communicate something. Then, moving into a state in which feelings/time generate movement, and movement generates feelings/time, because I feel these things are interchangeable, have the ability of generating a flow of movement that can push forward a process of creation.

#### 3.1 - The Poetics of Time in Dance Performance

In this section, I will describe the poetics of time in the performance of dance as I perceive it by zooming in on *Movement #1* and *Conversation*, my two pieces created for the ArtEZ Master's Program Theatre Practices in Arnhem, which are outcomes of my research as subject of reflection. In *Movement #1*, I used Nijinski's repertoire as the basis for my movement material, mobilizing bits and pieces of *his* Body as Archive to purposefully implement in *my* Body as Archive, placing *Movement #1* in a contemporary context. Taking the movement material of Nijinski out of its

historical context and placing it in a contemporary context was a form of visualizing time. Lepecki states that, “In re-enacting we turn back, and in this return we find in past dances a will to keep inventing”(2012, 46). Arguably, the re-enacting in the case of *Movement #1* was not a true re-enactment. When I analyzed and used the Nijinski material, I did not aim to reconstruct or repeat the repertoire, but rather I explored its “will to keep inventing”. I used the repertoire to generate something ‘new’ or different. I looked back into the past to be able to invent.

Another layer relevant to the piece was playing with time, stretching images into boredom, placing movement forms (Nijinski’s repertoire) in different realms of sound, going from pop, to blues, to romantic music. This allowed me to transform the material, based on the rhythm and dynamics of the sound. The timing that was presented through the sound introduced a different affect. In *Movement #1*, I was clearly more concerned with external time. Consequently, I tried to give time a visualization through the composition of the space, the set-up of the audience and the lights, and the continuous circular movement that occurred in the piece, both in the body and in the light cues. From the performer’s point of view, this piece offered a particular rhythm, dynamic and speed. The pace at which the piece was moving forward permitted me, as a performer, to respond to an audience. It offered a form of calmness and generated a connection with the audience. Although only forty minutes long, the piece created a durational impression. Heathfield states that

Duration will often be accompanied by the spatial senses of expansion, suspension or collapse or by reverential, chaotic or cosmic phenomena, as notions of temporal distinction are undone. (Heathfield and Hsieh, 2015, 22)

Especially the first part of Heathfield’s description of the spatial feeling covers what I felt when performing the piece. The second part, concerning cosmic phenomena, is perhaps slightly exaggerated with regard to *Movement #1*. *Conversation* has no live component in its final presentation, but in the process of realizing the final product, I generated movement from the scores that arose from waiting, moving, reflecting on the now and on how the now felt. I generated movement through waiting, through keeping my awareness open to my surroundings. Nijinski’s material too was still there, as were resonances of Debussy’s *Clair de Lune*, but no longer as the driving force to invent. The movements started to arrive through the rhythm of my own inner voice, the environmental sounds and the visual surroundings. My roof, where all the material for *Conversation* was researched and recorded, became a time bubble, a refuge in search for the good time. Accidentally, the location of the piece, keeping in mind the idea of spatial expansion related to duration, was perfect. The backdrop consisted of the city’s skyline and very clearly translated this temporal feeling of spatial and temporal expanse. I tried bringing forward my inclusive approach to movement, by allowing all of the techniques and skills that are part of my

archive into the final product. I attempted to offer insight into my personality as a mover and the ways in which the different actors evolved, devolved, faded or came to the foreground throughout my research.

### 3.2 The Use of Lingering Dance in Professional Dance Training

*(undated) At first, I had serious doubts about the relevance of my artistic research. What is the point of showing the passing of time through physicality and visualizing it through sound, scenography, video or other media? What is the point of finding ways to reflect and contemplate within or with dance through OFC and the Body as Archive, which contains a strong presence of Nijinski and Debussy's Clair de Lune, when there are much more important issues, such as COVID-19's social and economic impact on our society's or the rest of the world's less fortunate?*

*Excerpt of Reflective Studio Practice Notes, Dieter Defurne.*

I was asked to flesh out what exactly would give my research a pressing, urgent nature. My first attempts to come up with an answer ended in naked doubt. To me, at first glance, urgency implies importance, which would mean that I would think my opinion to be important to someone else. Since doubt is a part of me, I sincerely doubt that my opinion or idea actually matters. Although I am aware that my opinion matters, since my students seem to listen and learn when I teach, I recoil from the idea of importance to someone else. Since looking at it from the perspective of importance to someone else did not result in a useful answer, I reduced the question to what was important to me, to how I would reroute this importance into becoming useful for someone else? This brought me to what I do: I dance, I move, I create, I teach, I teach dance, I teach how to be a dancer, I teach teenagers how to express themselves through movement. I teach them to move, to travel through space, to eat space, to maintain a flow, to embody all that they learn in every single movement. I teach them to be patient, I teach them to wait, absorb, reflect and respond. The idea of waiting and taking time has always been part of my teaching. Because taking time and timing is key to the performer's capacity for communication with an audience. When my students perform an exercise, I never stop telling them to never be in a hurry, since it is not a competition. I want my students to indulge in the movement, to enjoy it, to get lost in it, to release into it. To me, dance consists in moving images, expressions of the inner conversation. If the image that is presented does not get enough time to settle, it might as well not be presented at all. This, however, is very difficult to explain to sixteen-year-old children, especially when they are used to be able to jump from image to image with one swipe of their finger. Taking time and waiting are very difficult tasks for sixteen-year-olds who are constantly

confronted with competition. Perhaps *Lingering Dance* could be useful to them, to my students. It could teach them how to communicate clearly with their dance and movement, to help them in reflecting on what they have already learned, to assist them in exploring movement from their own Body as Archive.

A few months ago, the principal of MUDA Kunstsecundair (MUSIC DANCE Secondary Art School), the school where I teach, stated that the dance department needed to change. Her motivations were based on the fear of losing students to other educational programs. Which is a reasonable fear considering a school does not receive support based on the quality of its educational programs, but on the number of students. Every single student represents a certain amount of money, or, more precisely, a certain amount of hours to spend on teaching, money on infrastructure, cleaning personnel, etc... According to the principal, the school would attract and keep more students by being more open to dance forms that reside in the commercial spectrum of dance. She might be right, but I would prefer to see change happening based on the needs of the students, based on what they will need to continue their study in dance and based on what will make them stronger and more complete as performers. Could *Lingering Dance* be the bridge to provide both? Could it become a basis for rethinking the dance training, enabling a more varied input of dance techniques that can be brought together and connected, bringing forward dance artists with strong self-awareness and access to a large amount of techniques which complement and support each other through the Body as Archive? In this new perspective, the different techniques no longer belong to a specific spectrum of commercial or contemporary dance, and so on. The techniques would just be tools into which dancers could shift, to use when necessary or wanted. This approach to dance is already present in creation processes of choreographers in the field. The work of Wim Vandekeybus is one of the most obvious examples, as he combines hip hop, breakdance, tricks, partnering and the now more conventional floorwork into a piece. Another example is Akram Khan, who combines Western and Eastern dance forms. An example of an educational program that is attempting this is found at the Academie voor Theater en Dans Amsterdam (AHK) called Expanded Contemporary Dance. The Bachelor's program is a combination of what once was Moderne Theaterdans and Urban Contemporary. How exactly this new approach at the AHK works would need further investigation. It will be interesting to see how (the idea of) *Lingering Dance* could become the web that holds together the curriculum of the dance department at MUDA Kunstsecundair. For the idea of *Lingering Dance* to become successful in this role, the notion of a permeable curriculum is needed. With permeable curriculum I mean that all of the techniques given in the school are connected and that the teaching body of the school is aware of this. The idea of different techniques belonging to different realms, be it the realm of entertainment or the realm of high art, needs to disappear. Allowing the boundaries within the body between the techniques to dissolve, will make it easier for the students to have access to a larger range of movement, intent and affect. *Lingering Dance* as a method would need to have a place within the curriculum in order for the students to have a space to explore these different forms, to enable them to open these forms and integrate them in their own Body as Archive.

## Conclusion

This thesis and the practice as research resulting in the work *Conversation* are the starting point for the development of *Lingering Dance* as a method that allows the dancers to reside and dwell in their movements and themselves, connecting to the Body as Archive through waiting, feeling, remembering, eventually expressing the inner conversation through moving. The method has Lingering in Movement at its core, the space where the body is waiting and residing in the movement. It is where the body tries to connect with the inside and the outside, where the body allows intuition to take over, while at the same time questioning the take-over. Emphasizing the Lingering in Movement is the engine that enables active Stillness, which leads the dancer to a place of Awareness. This deepening of Awareness is crucial for the ability to use *Scores*, *Triggers*, *Guides* and *Reflection* or *Questioning*.

Combine

The form of

Nijinski

With the form of

Jean-Claude Vandamme



Blend it

With Slovenian

Non-existent

Folk



Be serious

Score # 4 available from <https://vimeo.com/423599198>, Dieter Defurne.

*Scores:* A set of written instructions with the purpose of challenging the body to arrive at expressions of the score in movement that are both 'new' and increasing awareness of what is already known in the body at the given moment in time. Scores are created through reflections on intuitive movement sessions, responses to performed scores, triggers or questions. Scores can also appear through automatic writing based on an open, nuanced and detailed reflection. The preferred way to activate the score is through memory: you write the score, you read the score once, you perform the score based on what you remember.

*Triggers:* Can consist of memories (internal). The internal trigger can appear through a score which might lead the performer to a memory that in turn connects with a feeling. Movement can then offer a reflection on the feeling, or a memory may simply manifest itself through the movement. Sound (audible, internal and external) could be the sound in the body, the inner voice commenting on something or a conversation you remember having done a replay in your head or a catchy song or...external sound can be music, noise, sounds coming from your surroundings. Triggers can come from the space in which the body finds itself (visual, internal and external). This space can be an imaginary space in the performer's head or it can be an actual place with people, animals, wind, plants, and so on... Triggers are somewhat unpredictable in use, they appear and they spark an interest or create a response in the body. The performer needs to wait for triggers, with an open awareness of the surroundings and the body. Potential triggers can become triggers when the performer responds to them, yet this is invariably a choice.

*Guides:* Can act as a motor for movement. For now, I distinguish between three types of guides. It could be a dance technique, and preferably multitude of dance techniques, such as Flamenco, Flying Low and Classical Ballet. There is no need to be an expert in any of the techniques chosen as guide. It suffices when they are part of your Body as Archive. Another type of guide is an influencer, maybe a historical figure with a clear movement repertoire such as Vaslav Nijinski was for me. Such a figure or influencer should then become part of one's Body as Archive. The third kind of guide is an external voice, which guides the movers through a score, the past, triggers or guides them to other guides. The external voice offers things for reflection or creates openings for reflections to happen. It takes the body or bodies with them in their time, through keeping a steady rhythm and speed in the offered voice.

*Reflection/Questioning:* Reflection/questioning happens instantly and offers a means to go back and forth between movement. The movement becomes clearer through repetition. Reflection and questioning are not only performed internally, they also have an external expression. With Reflection/questioning, the performer is in a constant *why?-condition*, without ever letting this condition stop the dancing. The *why?-condition* may often cause negative doubt that freezes the dancer in her or his tracks. Here, doubt is used as a movement instigator that allows visible movement investigation to take place. Reflection/questioning can also be referred to as the *Inner Conversation*.

These four concepts are the push and pullers in *Lingering Dance* and each of them can facilitate each other. When I began thinking about a method, my initial thoughts concerned something linear. For example: stillness comes first, bring the body to an active stillness through meditational movement then start reflecting on the space you are in, then let triggers influence your being, your time or movement, then create a score in response to the dance that just happened, then respond to the score through movement. In my view, however, this linearity clashes with the idea of open form, which involves the possibility of choice. Conceiving the method in terms of linearity seems to shut out a certain amount of choices and possibilities. The current idea is to work with a circular system, in which linearity, simultaneity and multiplicity are all a possibility. Such a circular system, in which everything is interchangeable, bears a closer connection to the notion of the kinesthetics of the passing of time. The idea is that Lingered Movement forms the center, while the four push/pullers are positioned in a circle around it. Lingered Movement combined with the four push/pullers become *Lingering Dance*. From Lingered Movement, it is possible to engage with *reflection/questioning* to come up with a *score*, which in turn can activate a *trigger* or follow a *guide*. Having Lingered Movement at the core does not entail that movement is always the initiator of the practice. It is a possibility to start with a guide or a score that will propel you into movement. Therefore, movement is not always the starting point, but it is the central medium. The goal of *Lingering Dance* would be in this, *Lingering Dance* has the purpose of creating a distinct movement vocabulary and an individual rhythm in the dancer's body. This, in turn, can trigger other dancers and movement practitioners to experiment with their existing movement or dance vocabulary and allow them to embody fully their archive. *Lingering Dance* can be used as a method to connect a diverse training in techniques to help young dancers fully understand and embody the training that is offered, to support them to become singular artists within the dance community.

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## Appendix

Final performance for MTP ArtEZ 2020 *Conversation* available from <https://vimeo.com/419540327>. Available for download.

Final performance for MTP ArtEZ 2019 *Movement #1* available from <https://vimeo.com/364815434>. Available for download.

Soundscapes available from <https://www.dieterdefurne.com/lingeringdance/project-three-gh88j>.