

Institution: University of Roehampton
Unit of Assessment: Panel D, UoA 35A Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts: Dance
a. Context

The Centre for Dance Research (CDR) has a distinctively broad and internationally renowned research base. Impact is derived from all of the four research strengths identified in RAE 2008, which include choreomusical analysis, the anthropology of dance, practice-led research, and South Asian dance studies. We have added dance and health to our profile, which assists in extending the reach and increasing the significance of our impact. Overall, the CDR seeks to raise the profile of dance, with the ultimate goal of enhancing appreciation, understanding, and application of dance practices amongst a range of communities. In pursuing this aim, our research has a range of impacts for three main types of beneficiaries: 1) institutions and people related to the professional dance industry; 2) public audiences, through popular engagement; 3) health and wellbeing practitioners and their patients in a range of settings:

1) Our research has had a significant impact on institutions related to the professional dance industry. For example, Jordan's research has shaped the way organisations such as the Mark Morris Dance Group and the Royal Opera House present dance educational materials and engage with the public (see case study 1), whilst Houston's and McGill's research has guided and enhanced service provision at the English National Ballet. Similarly, we are influencing and changing the approach of artists and teachers, and through them informing the cultural values of diasporic communities from our research in South Asian Dance (see case study 2). Our research also influences a range of museums and galleries as we contribute to their public engagement programmes. Examples include lectures by Tamara Tomic-Vajagic and Geraldine Morris for the V&A Museum and Hammond's essay in connection with the Ballets Russes exhibition at the National Gallery, Australia.

2) Furthering our engagement with public audiences, we improve their understanding of dance, and promote public discourse. As illustration, we have enhanced understanding of the social dimensions of dance through popular broadcasting, notably, the high-profile radio broadcasts by David on South Asian dance (BBC Radio 4 *Sunday*, BBC News, *Woman's Hour*) and Buckland on social and popular dance (*Thinking Allowed*). We have also been instrumental in enriching public audiences' understanding of dance through the media (see case study 1). Furthermore, we have engaged with dance audiences more directly, through popular writing, lectures, and workshops, informing their views of dance, and enhancing audience experience.

3) Our research engages non-traditional audiences for dance and provides unique perspectives to a range of practitioners, particularly around the theme of health and wellbeing. We have influenced the approach of health practitioners, therapists, and carers to their patients, improving, for instance, the quality of life for Parkinson's sufferers through the Dance and Parkinson's project in collaboration with the English National Ballet. Other innovative applications of our research comprise work with marginalised indigenous populations, including Grau's research into the healing aspect of ritual dancing in deprived Australian Aboriginal communities.

b. Approach to impact

Historically, individual researchers have had responsibility for the impact of their research. In recent years the University and CDR have taken a more active role in encouraging and enhancing such impact. By placing emphasis on the ways in which research informs our engagement with public institutions, audiences and communities, we have extended the reach and increased the significance of our impact. Throughout the cycle, we have engaged with the primary users of our research to effect change in the following two ways: we communicate our research insights to specific institutions and audiences and have been solicited by practitioners and organisations to consult with them; we have also developed and maintained collaborations and formal partnerships with the key beneficiaries of our research, and subsequently reach their public audiences. 2012 saw the launch of Roehampton Dance Network, with a dedicated coordinator appointed to facilitate further collaborations with external organisations.

We have communicated our research to the full range of users through different means, including presentations at a variety of public events, such as those organised by dance companies, theatre venues and museums. Through these events, we reach those interested in the arts generally and dance specifically. Users also invite us to speak at the events they sponsor or participate in (UK based Akademi, South Asian Dance UK and Centre for Indian Classical Dance; Mark Morris Dance Group (during its Sadler's Wells season); *Keōja-Encounters*, sponsored by the

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Culture Programme of the European Union, with dance partners coming from the Nordic countries and Baltic states; and the Friends of Pacific North-West Ballet in the US). Direct engagement with public audiences includes *The Sleeping Beauty Insight Afternoon*, a Royal Ballet Education Event (2008); *Rephrasing the Ballets Russes* (2010), lectures and workshops linked to the exhibition *Diaghilev and the Golden Age of the Ballet Russes, 1909 - 1929* at the V&A, and *The Ballets Russes: The Art of Costume* (2010-2011) at the National Gallery of Australia. This latter received some 100,000 visitors, and its catalogue, which sold over 6,000 copies in its first printing, was reviewed as a 'noble monument' to the company. Popular writing enables us to reach wider audiences and transform our research findings into easily accessible texts, from material written for children through to reviews in professional magazines. For example, our research expertise influences the content of dance professionals' engagement with public audiences (Frederick Ashton Foundation, Shobana Jeyasingh Dance, The South Asian Diaspora Literature and Arts Archive): within articles for magazines (*Dancehouse Magazine*, Australia, *Dancing Times*, *DANCE Magazine*, *CONFLUENCE – South Asian Perspectives*; *Pulse*) and programme notes (DV8, Royal Ballet). Through this work we enhance the experience of dance audiences. We have also reached wider public audiences through broadcast media, (e.g. BBC Radio 4, BBC News) and have raised issues around identity, ethnicity, and religion through the lens of dance. More focused audiences are targeted with in-depth discussions, for instance on the *Ballets Russes* (e.g. Radio 3 Proms webcast).

Moreover, the users of our research frequently consult with us. We have been solicited to work with their Boards (Sonia Sabri Company, Mavin Khoo Dance) and to report on their activities (Akademi, South Asian Dance UK). We facilitate and contribute to discussions with artists and their publics in high profile dance venues - e.g. our participation in the *Artists-In-Conversation* public panel discussion at the Toynbee Studios, London (2011); in *Just Wandering – A conversation between artists* as part of *Footfall*, at Siobhan Davies Studios for *Big Dance 2012*; and *Blurred and the future of dance*, Chisenhale Dance Studios (2012). After the workshop *The Forsythe Company at Work: Perspectives on Practice from the Inside* at Roehampton University, Tomic-Vajagic led a pre-performance discussion with the artists at Sadler's Wells Theatre (June 2013).

Our approach has increasingly emphasised collaboration and formal partnerships with the key users of our research, through whom we directly engage with those who benefit from the research and reach public audiences. The expansion of our practice-led research and development in applied dance science has enabled us to be proactive in this area. For example, Houston's 'Dance and Parkinson's' project, in collaboration with the English National Ballet, has delivered health benefits to Parkinson's sufferers and influenced their carers and clinicians. It was awarded the prestigious *Vitality for LifePrize* by the BUPA Foundation (2011) to allow further development following its pilot phase. The work attracted a great deal of popular attention (including on BBC 1, Channel 4, *Evening Standard*, *Mail on Sunday*, *Daily Express*, *Saturday Telegraph*) and more specific recognition from dance and practitioner audiences (*National Parkinson Foundation*, *Mark Morris Dance Group*, *Foundation for Community Dance*). This led to Houston's representation on the Advisory Board for the Dance for Parkinson's Programme at Queensland Ballet, Australia. Such media reporting also inspired Parkinson's sufferers and their carers to contact Houston to share their experiences, extending the reach of the project, and also providing unanticipated feedback to the research team. We are increasing our capacity in building collaborative relationships through Roehampton Dance Network, which facilitates our engagement with professional practitioners and organisations through on-going dialogues. This work is building the foundations for future research impact by ensuring flows of people and expertise between CDR and external organisations.

A broad range of support is now in place to facilitate impact and ensure good practice. External training on engagement and impact has been provided for researchers since 2012. In addition, one-to-one training and advice is provided on an *ad hoc* basis from a Senior Research Officer appointed to help with institutional development of impact, who chairs the impact advisory group. The Centre has appointed a Research Facilitator who provides guidance and supports the research-led engagement and partnerships. We have included impact in individual research planning and formally recognise it in the university's criteria for appointments and promotions. It also features strongly in the department's annual business plans and workload models. In addition, departmental funds are made available for this area of work, and for seed-funding of research activities with significant impact potential. Individual researchers are supported by an impact

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mentor and other senior academic staff in the peer-review of project plans and funding bids, with a particular focus on outlining of 'pathways to impact'. The Dance Research Advisory Group is also responsible for monitoring impact and advising on strategies for its development.

c. Strategy and plans

With research excellence at the core of our work, the CDR's future impact strategy will focus on actively seeking opportunities to engage the public outside of academia with our research, and will proactively address increasing our capacity in this area. Additionally, the University is developing a bespoke research activity database that, combined with the support of the Research Facilitator, will assist the evaluation of impact on a continuous basis. At CDR level, our core plans to extend the reach and increase the significance of our research include:

1. Enhancing the profile of our research strengths through more targeted communication through a variety of means, to specific audiences. This will allow us to initiate a significantly greater level of engagement from potential users of our research. The benefits of this type of engagement have already been felt by, for example, the Ballet and Parkinson's project. Initial findings were shared with health professionals, charitable and local government organisations (e.g. Wellcome Trust, Westminster Council), which subsequently led to collaboration with the English National Ballet and a large amount of media attention. We will build on these foundations by expanding our targeted engagement with health and wellbeing practitioners. For example, a project by Claid on falling has already engaged Gestalt Psychotherapists and will be part of the Independent Dance Winter Laboratory (Winlab) at the Siobhan Davies Studios (December 2013), and is aimed at invited practitioners from across different disciplines. We will also pursue a more active media engagement strategy across all of our research strengths, to ensure maximum impact.

2. Finding innovative applications for our research through new external and internal research and impact collaborations, and external and internal partnerships. We will employ to our advantage the recently constituted Roehampton Dance Network as we consolidate links with existing users of our research and take a more strategic and ambitious approach to engaging new users. For example, bringing together a number of the constituencies we have been working with for a long time (Akademi; Sonia Sabri Company), reinforcing long standing relationships (Youth Dance England; V&A), and forging relationships with new partners (DanceXchange, Birmingham; Irie! Dance Theatre, London), we will optimise further research in dance pedagogy and widening participation, responding directly to the needs of the stakeholders throughout the research process. Similarly, building on Geraldine Morris' engagement with AKCT (the charity wing of Akram Khan's company), we are investigating a variety of collaborations, including the creation of an iPad app, as the choreographer is interested in this aspect of Morris' work. We plan additionally to foster interactive links with selected regional museums and galleries (e.g. Brighton Museum and Art Gallery), in order to embed wider appreciation of the social and historical role of dance within schools, colleges and the general public.

We also seek to increase our capacity in relation to the heritage of dance. The research discoveries of Jordan and Morris, both scholar Associates of the Frederick Ashton Foundation, will contribute to the future preservation of the choreographer's work, in particular, informing the work of répétiteurs engaged in future revival of the Ashton repertoire. Morris has agreed with the Foundation to develop an iPad app exploring *Daphnis and Chloe*. This will bring the work to a wider, younger audience, making Ashton more accessible to those unused to visiting the theatre.

d. Relationship to case studies

The two selected case studies highlight our breadth of impact in dance:

1. *Seeing and Hearing: Education In Dance and Its Music*. The work of a single scholar, Jordan, centres on engaging with the western theatre dance profession, drawing from analysis of the relationship between music and dance. Her case study fits with our work in Western theatre dance and with our strategy to enhance and influence the practice and understanding of artists, dance companies and their audiences. Her development of the impact of her research on broadcasters has fed into future strategy plans.

2. *South Asian Dance: An Art Britain no Longer Ignores*. The collaborative work of a team of scholars, led by Grau, focuses on the genres comprising South Asian Dance. It engages with their complex histories, documenting their positions in Britain and their struggles for recognition in a culturally diverse society. It fits with our interdisciplinary approach, our strategy to broaden the understanding of dance in the general public, and actively supports dance organisations and artists.