

Institution: Royal Holloway, University of London
Unit of Assessment: 35A: Music, Dance and Performing Arts (Drama)
Title of case study: Recreating lost dances
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Research by Emeritus Professor Richard Cave and Professor Elizabeth Schafer into modernist dance drama has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produced a methodology for the restaging of lost repertoire, which has widened programming within the professional dance world; • Enabled a re-creation of the initial production of W.B.Yeats's 1934 dance play, <i>The King of the Great Clock Tower</i>, by using research to re-imagine the largely lost choreography of Ninette de Valois; • Inspired the Royal Ballet School to apply the same methodology to a project on the choreography of de Valois' protégée, Robert Helpmann
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Professor Richard Cave joined Royal Holloway in 1984 and has been researching Yeats and dance theatre since the 1970s. During this REF period Cave edited hitherto unpublished manuscript material relating to <i>The King of the Great Clock Tower</i>, the last of four collaborations between Yeats and de Valois. Cave transcribed both the verse and prose versions of the play and identified the importance of women as muses for Yeats; the prose <i>King</i> was inspired by de Valois and Yeats wrote the role of The Queen for her. Meanwhile de Valois established the School of Ballet for Yeats at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin. Cave argues that the performance text of <i>The King</i> is distinct from the written text and that, through the use of music scores, set designs, photographs, revisions to the script, reviews, correspondence and reminiscences by other performers, the lost performance can be re-imagined.</p> <p>Professor Elizabeth Schafer joined Royal Holloway in 1991. Her research into the early history of the Royal Ballet, especially at the Vic-Wells during the 1930s, emphasizes the importance of theatre in de Valois' dance practice as well as the way in which the physical material conditions at the Vic-Wells theatres influenced de Valois' choreography in this period. Schafer was invited to be a consultant for Royal Ballet's symposium, 'Ninette de Valois: Adventurous Traditionalist' (April 2011). This three day, international, public event, set out to re-evaluate de Valois' achievements on the tenth anniversary of her death, with the purpose of emphasizing the links between dance and theatre in her work. Cave's research on re-imagining the 1934 staging of <i>The King of the Great Clock Tower</i> resulted in the Royal Ballet School commissioning him to restage the lost piece for their symposium. This collaboration brought together Schafer's research on de Valois in the 1930s, Cave's textual research, and Cave's research into the set design, photographs, etc. with practice-based research, in order to re-imagine de Valois's lost 1934 choreography, working with Royal Ballet choreographer Will Tuckett.</p> <p><i>The King</i> was an appropriate test case for the methodology of re-imagining as it is hard to engage with this dance play – which requires extensive choreography, mime and sustained tableaux - via the literary text alone. The recreation of the choreography particularly emphasized the profound impact of the danced role of The Queen, who is still and silent for the first half of the play. The re-imagining revealed that the stillness of The Queen unnerves the audience almost as much as it</p>

unnerves The King, creating a build-up in tension as the audience anticipates the moment The Queen will finally move. Then throughout the second part of the play, The Queen's dancing with the severed head of The Stranger marginalizes The King's bluster and violence. The methodology of bringing together Cave's manuscript work with practice-based exploratory research enabled the performance of a dance play, the precisely calculated choreographic impact of which had been lost to audiences for nearly eighty years.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. Richard Allen Cave (ed.), *W.B. Yeats: Selected Plays*, London: Penguin, 1997. (edition)

Cave's edition is by 'one of the astutest critics of Yeats's drama', Richard Russell, 'Talking with Ghosts of Irish Playwrights Past: Marina Carr's *By the Bog of Cats*' *Comparative Drama*, 40 (2) 2006, p.159

2. Richard Allen Cave (ed.), '*The King of the Great Clock Tower*' and '*A Full Moon in March*': *Manuscript Materials*', Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2007. (edition)

Demonstrates 'exemplary clarity and scrupulous precision' and 'Cave shows his subtle understanding of the complex interaction of word and image, action, song and dance in the conception of these plays' - Nicholas Grene in *Yeats Annual*, No.18, February 2013, pp.331-4: <http://www.openbookpublishers.com/product/194>

3. Richard Allen Cave, *Collaborations: Ninette de Valois and William Butler Yeats*, Alton, Hants: Dance Books, 2011. (monograph)

'Cave's mastery of his vast and varied material resources and the decisiveness of his arguments and conclusions, has resulted in a work that is admirably complete in its scholarly evocations of his chosen theme', Kathrine Sorly Walker, *Dance Research* 30 pp.100-102.

<http://www.eupublishing.com/doi/pdfplus/10.3366/drs.2012.0037>

4. Richard Allen Cave, 'Re-Staging the 1934 Abbey Theatre Production of Yeats's *The King of the Great Clock Tower*: An Evaluation and Critique', *Studi Irlandesi: A Journal of Irish Studies* 2.2 (2012)

5. Elizabeth Schafer, *Lilian Baylis: A biography*, Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press/ Society for Theatre Research, 2006, (monograph), especially Chapter 9 'Baylis and the Ballet'.

'Schafer's study is highly unusual - a piece of serious scholarship which, however, reads like a novel', Nicola Shaughnessy, *New Theatre Quarterly* 24, pp.300-1.

6. Elizabeth Schafer, 'An Irish Jig? Edris Stannus, Ninette de Valois and the English Royal Ballet' in Richard Cave and Ben Levitas (eds.) *The Irish Theatre in England*, Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2007, pp.143-156. (essay)

Research Grants

The collaboration between the Royal Ballet School and Royal Holloway to stage *The King* at the de Valois conference generated significant funding from private donors in excess of £17,000. The Vic-Wells Association made a grant of £1000 to pay for the construction of masks for the production.

The Irish Arts Council supported a film screening of *The King* on 14 October 2012 at the Abbey Theatre Dublin as part of a celebration of the work of de Valois.

The Consortium for Drama and Media in Higher Education awarded a grant of £5700 to The White Lodge Museum and Royal Ballet School to enable the completion and dissemination of a DVD, entitled *Re-claiming the Past*, that will include all the various types of recreations that have been completed - involving work by de Valois, Helpmann and Ashton - together with critical assessment of the methodologies deployed.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The major long-term impact of the Yeats/de Valois work had been through **generating new ways of thinking that influence creative practice** and **creating, inspiring and supporting new forms of artistic, expression**. In the first instance, the restaging of *The King* allowed an audience of 250 at the Margot Fonteyn Studio at the Royal Ballet School (RBS) to see the danced components of a play which had been lost since the 1930s. This performance was filmed and then screened at a Friends of Covent Garden Study Evening devoted to de Valois' legacy (Royal Opera House November, 2011, audience 150) and at the 'Come Dance with Me' conference presented by the Irish Ballet Forum at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin (14 October 2012, audience 300). The book which arose from the symposium, *Ninette de Valois: Adventurous Traditionalist*, edited by Cave and Royal Holloway Senior Lecturer Dr Libby Worth (Dance Books 2012) has an accompanying DVD which includes the performance.

The project's most significant impact, however, is in its **developing a new methodology for dance theatre** that the RBS have now revisited. The creative but carefully researched re-imagining of *The King* convinced the RBS to apply the research, recreation and revival process to other works from the first decades of the Company's history and Cave, Schafer and Worth have all been invited to contribute to the research process as the RBS now seek to recover, re-stage and document the dance works of de Valois' protégée, Robert Helpmann (1909-1986), a dancer, choreographer and actor, notable for the theatricality of his dance.

The first stage of the RBS revisiting and adapting Cave's methodology occurred when David Drew (former Principal dancer at the RB, currently a teacher at the RBS) organised a study day (19 November 2011) on Helpmann's ballet *Miracle in the Gorbals* (1944). The aim for this day was the reconstruction of a ten-minute scene, where the body of 'The Suicide' is discovered in the Clyde river, and she is revived by 'The Stranger'. Drawing on the memories of several dancers from the original performances, the work was directed by Gillian Lynne, who performed as 'The Young Lover' in *Miracle* in the 1950s. David Bintley, Artistic Director of the Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB), was so impressed by the performance of this scene that he commissioned Gillian Lynne to develop a reconstructed choreography of *Miracle* with the BRB for staging in 2014. All of this work on *Miracle* was directly the result of Drew being inspired by the performance of *The King* and the creative approaches taken to dance reconstruction in the production of Yeats's dance play. This is noted by White Lodge Museum Curator, Anna Meadmore, who writes in April 2013 *Dancing Times* (p. 37) 'the idea to attempt a revival of the ballet was inspired by Richard Allen Cave's reconstruction of the W.B. Yeats/Ninette de Valois collaboration, *The King of the Clock Tower*'.

The impact of the de Valois symposium has also meant the Royal Ballet School is keen to organise another event around restaging Helpmann. Cave is chair of the steering committee for this project; the first study day was on 18 February 2013, focusing on *Adam Zero* (1946). The next stage in the process is a symposium, 'The Many Faces of Robert Helpmann', to be held on 21 October 2013.

The impact of the research will continue to grow as a book based on the RBS April 2011 conference (*Ninette de Valois: Adventurous Traditionalist*, outlined above) reaches wide distribution. This volume is remarkably wide-ranging and includes contributions from dancers, academics, choreographers, dance notators, museum archivists, curators, journalists, reviewers, historians, film makers, and luminaries from the world of dance. It includes a DVD of *The King*, allowing those interested in Yeats, de Valois, ballet, and modernist dance an opportunity to see *The King* in performance. A similar volume, edited by Anna Meadmore and Richard Cave, is planned to follow the Helpmann symposium.

The project has also had an impact on the **educational work** of the Royal Ballet School. The DVD of *The King* is used in the GCSE Expressive Arts course at the School to teach mask work. The teacher has replaced former material with that from *The King*. However, the most significant impact remains the project's influence on the RBS's programming and events and the change in the school's approach to re-imagining historic choreography.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Reports on the impact of the research on RBS's programming and events. This corroborates the impact of Professor Cave's research about Yeats to revivals the ballet by the Royal Ballet School.

1. Anna Meadmore, 'The Many Faces of Robert Helpmann' in *Dancing Times* (April 2013), p. 37. www.royal-ballet-school.org.uk/rhsymposium/media/Dancing_Times_Article_April_2013.pdf
2. www.royal-ballet-school.org.uk/rhsymposium/programme.php

Report on the 'Ninette de Valois; Adventurous Traditionalist' conference to corroborate the range of professional interest in the research:

3. www.royal-ballet-school.org.uk/dvconference/conference.php

Report on Dublin screening, corroborating public and professional interest in the research:

4. www.danceireland.ie/events/event.php?id=1133
5. www.independent.ie/regionals/braypeople/lifestyle/abbey-hosts-tribute-to-dame-ninette-de-valois-28831042.html
6. 'Abbey Event to Celebrate royal Ballet's Irish Founder' by Deidre McQuillan, *Irish Times* 9 October 2012 (This document is available on request).

Reports on work on *Miracle* workshopping ('inspired' by Cave's work) and commissioning of re-creation of the choreography, and the interest of choreographers David Bintley and Gillian Lynne.

7. <http://londondance.com/articles/news/olivier-awards-at-the-roh/>
8. www.whatsonstage.com/west-end-theatre/news/04-2013/oliviers-gillian-lynne-i-thought-theyd-all-forgott_401.html