

**Interview Questions for The Hot One Hundred Choreographers
From STUDENTRY
Singapore International Festival of Arts (SIFA) 2016**

Could you briefly describe your piece and the inspiration behind it?

The starting point - and inspiration - for this creation was the work of Scottish artist Peter Davies, who created a multicolored *text-painting* that lists one hundred artists/works of his preference, entitled "*The hot one hundred*". My idea was to investigate how to transport this procedure of listing to my choreography environment. By doing that, I "devoured" various dance icons, choreographers and pieces that instigate(d) me.

The Hot One Hundred Choreographers can be presented as a "choreographic game" of tendencies that accompany me. My attempt is to reveal the nuances of, how the moving body negotiates with its own patterns, repertoire, desires and memory. It is also an open invitation for the audience to accompany me, activating their own collections, knowledge and perceptions about dance and dance history. I am more interested in the gaps and distortions of it, in the impossibilities and transformations of this game.

How do you approach choreography? Is there a specific process that you use?

Choreography for me starts by creating dispositive to dialogue with the environment and history around me. Each creative process is in search of its relatives and holding hands with a previous work.

This solo piece was for me, and still is, almost like a manifesto. The intentions behind it were very personal, having as subject my own dance education. But, it inevitably touched the dance scene I am part of, dance education/training systems and dance history as collateral effects. But, only during the process I realized that echoing. In the beginning, it felt more like saying YES to a huge amount of information I was rejecting in my practice as a dancer and maker. Then, I had to generate a context where I could (re)visit not only all dance materials/techniques I trained, but also those I wished to have trained. How they exist or could exist in my body and the dance I was making or that I wished to be making? How different types of virtuosity and aesthetics could coexist in my archive? And then I thought HOW a dance piece could problematize those issues, and HOW to bring those questions to the scene? Those were the type of questions I was posing to myself for this creation.

I was also quite contaminated by the book "Vertigine della lista" by Umberto Eco. Then, the listing process I was creating, oscillated between a practical and poetic list. The practical list was a textual list. Therefore, it was possible and finite: to define one hundred choreographers and one hundred existing pieces. But, to exchange-translate-transpose the list to a body in motion, that could take shape as a choreographic formulation, it needed to divorce from any attempt of representation and to be understood as a list-index: a collection of *et ceteras* that would favor the in-betweens, the switching tonalities, maneuvers and articulations that happen when passing from one reference to (an)other.

I will start to refer sometimes as WE since during this creation I had the presence of artist Rodrigo Andreolli as collaborator. His presence not only made this solo to be less solo, but it gave me the right amount of tension to be clear and precise on my choices. Actually, I will oscillate between WE and I, since a lot of the problematics

are tightly based on my personal experiences.

As a strategy for studying, we organized the list contents in casts by choreographers-shows based on our understanding of coherence between them, or affinity of language, or time/context. The casts received nicknames, such as: primordial cast, Judson cast, impro cast, modern cast, companies cast, among others. These casts have become objects of study, which later made me understand that they were also clues or ignitions, something more complex and intangible.

With a series of casts in hands, I threw myself into a dance studio, in a virtuosity of fragmentation, which in addition to providing me with hours in front of a computer, also launched me into space, made me move, sweat, be more elastic in my possibilities, either physically and conceptually, and it was within this vertigo, watching videos, fragments, pieces, crops and trying/tasting them, that we visualized a form.

The form we found for the practical list, dialogues with the colorful work of Peter Davies, but earned a radial format which lists the contents by color, without assessment by numbers and with unfixed places. The 100 color buttons with the choreographers/works-listed are repositioned at every entry in the webpage that hosts the radial list. Each button leads to a choreographer/work/link or site that was found on the internet (youtube, vimeo or similar). We did not upload any content. Our hot list is made by the already existing links in the virtual scene, and because of that it needs constant maintenance as the virtual scene is quite volatile and contents are deleted quite often.

What I call poetic list is the performance itself.

There is an enlightening text by Brazilian dance critic and PhD Professor Helena Katz entitled "The Dancer is a Dj" - it serves as a great reference to understand one aspect of how I function in this solo piece.

What were some challenges you face with regards to this piece?

This creation raised two clear challenges as starting point:

First, how to make a *dance-list* that it is not a representation of excerpts from works by other choreographers? Secondly, who are the one hundred?

About the choice of one hundred: The criteria adopted for making the list was to define the choreographers and shows that, somehow, I have experienced and (in)formed my dance education. Some of the shows listed I had the opportunity to attend live, which makes my relationship with the choreographer/piece more complex in this quantitative puzzle. Other choreographers/works either I knew from books and other archives, or I met along our research in the virtual environment. Thus, another criteria was absorbed along the process - to list only the choreographers who had their work available in the virtual network (youtube, vimeo or similar). Hard work, because in some cases, we could only find the choreographer but not the piece I wanted to include in the *hot-list*. When this happened, we had the following options: to choose another work extract; to remove it from the list; to seek the chosen piece in another type of collection/platform. The latter option was chosen. In my list, there's not only choreographies. There is a festival and a Performing Arts Forum for example. Therefore, a very personal list began to be developed, which allowed me to recognize and think about my aesthetic choices. During the process, the *hot-list* showed some flexibility, gaining the status of a *provisional-list*, a list that could

always be changed, and therefore always becoming (an)other list.

Perhaps, flexibility is a strategy to deal with the difficulty of making choices. Perhaps, flexibility is in me, to be able to find over a hundred shows and choreographers that I consider hot, or perhaps my concept of hot is quite flexible. In some cases, I found hotter the choreographer rather than the work listed, because of my perception of his trajectory, mode of existence, assemblage of what he/she has done or was still doing. In other cases, the work would be hot even if it were anonymous.

Some names and performances got in and out of the list a few times. The legitimacy of the *hots* was based on coherence in relation to my experiences, memories and perception as a dance artist at that time (2011). I found myself in many contradictions, but I decided to understand such contradictions as part of a reflexive process, part of what put me in a state of doubt, and that could expand possibilities and experiences in my artistic journey.

Making a list also means making a cut that separates what is outside/outcasted from inside/casted. Therefore, this list is also a reminder that there are much more, so many more hundreds that could produce many other lists. The list I present in this solo, crops and demands, at the same time, a series of *et ceteras*, for the selected references and for what has remained off the list.

What do you hope audiences will take away from the show?

I believe after seeing this piece one can get either irritated for not recognizing most of the 100 references, or, hopefully, they will get away vibrating for being engaged with one body moving uninterruptedly for approximately 50 minutes, in a battle of sweating references.

Were there interesting/funny memories to share with regards to this piece?

The t-shirt I use as costume for the piece is from China. For real. It is from Beijing. I was there in 2010. Not thinking about the solo yet. So, I passed in front of a shop that had a mannequin wearing a t-shirt with Chinese handwriting. I asked for the price. The woman in the shop started to show me lots of other t-shirts. Then, I understood the one I wanted was not on sale. It was an advertisement for the shop. It says they produce them in quantities for schools, hospitals, etc, or something like that. Finally, I succeeded in buying the one from the mannequin. Only later I started the solo creation, and it felt just right to be wearing a real made in china t-shirt. It feels like I am wearing an authorization to be dancing this archive-piece.

Why do you think the arts is important, both for you personally and for society in general?

For me art is as important as medicine, or farming, fashion, engineering, politics and so on. It's knowledge production. It makes human brain to exercise. It modulates our existence and perception in a river of contradictions. Like water. When we think of water, we picture it as liquid and with no clear shape, or in many shapes. Not as ice or vapor. Just water. Maybe in a glass. Or, maybe, just the glass. There we go! You can't hold water itself in your hands. It runs through your fingers.

What advice would you give to your younger self with regards to dance?

A quote from Brazilian dance critic and PHD Professor Helena Katz: "Dance is the body thinking" and "Dance is what stops movement from dying of cliché."

What are some projects you would like to work on in the future?

My notion of future is pretty much now. It's related to how I grew up in Brasil - not knowing so much how next day would be in terms of financial support to make work and live. What I am engaged in now, defines what my future can be. Each work carries bits of the previous, and that sets one life of investigation.

EXTRAS:

A quote that was an important insight for me during the process of The Hot One Hundred Choreographers:

"In its own way, the practical lists represent a form, because they give unit to a set of objects that, even seeming nonconforming among themselves, they follow a contextual pressure, or because they are related or are expected all in one place or constitute the end of a particular project ... A practical list is never incongruous, since it identifies the inclusion criterion that governs them". Umberto Eco in The vertigo of lists.

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Questions from Lisabel.

1. Both your works at The O.P.E.N., The Hot One Hundred Choreographers and BIOMASHUP, deal with the notion of one's personal history and choreographic journey. Why do you think that this is important?

I was not working with it because I think it's important. I started to work with it because I was intrigued by so much questioning about dance education and training I was hearing around me. I started questioning myself about my own dance education. Then, I thought to generate a context where I could look at all dance materials and techniques I trained, but also those I wished to have trained. How they exist or could exist in my body and in the dance I was making or that I wished to be making? And then I thought: how a dance piece could problematize those issues, and activate those questions in the scene? Immersed in those questionings the idea of the solo *The Hot One Hundred Choreographers* emerged. *Biomashup* brings another aspect of this research. It relies on the movement sensation of archives, and I play a different role - directing other bodies to unveil their stabilized patterns to perform what is yet to (be)come.

2. In both works as well, there is a focus on the audience. In the first, audiences are invited to active their own memories, and in the second, the possibility of passing the knowledge on to the audience is explored. As a performer, what is your relationship with the audience? How important do you think it is to have a strong connection with them?

In the solo *The Hot One Hundred Choreographers* the audience is challenged to activate their own repertoires and knowledge about dance. But, also, to abandon them, since I do not propose a game that seeks exclusively for identification of references. I am an object-subject matter in this piece. I am mainly functioning as an index that is capable of activating those references in someone's mind, and it's always distorted since I worked with my memory based on material I was watching in the network. I exhaustively watched the references allowing my observation to capture tonalities of movement, performativity, acting, textures and, of course, some forms. Then, I gave myself the task to practice for one hour moving uninterrupted, passing through the 100 references I selected. It was then that the concept of *mashup* most used in music appeared as a tool for movement. In very general terms, *mashup* in music is defined as taking elements of two or more pre-existing pieces of music and combine them to make a new song.

In *Biomashup* I was interested in the dancers archives, their personal collection of dance. During the process I chose to restrict the research and focus in one part of the body. I chose the legs as a source to look at very primary dance material, ranging from ballet to ordinary daily moves (walking steps, kicks, stretching, pliés, passés, relevés, turns, jumps, and so on). That restriction gave us a very minimalist approach towards their collections. I asked them to make the material available in space for others and not to produce them as their personal possession. That request significantly changed HOW they were producing their moves. I was directing them to a field of contamination, where they would start to create their own "culture" by delivering and taking in/from space all the information that all of them were delivering. It was different than copying because I was not interested in identical. I was interested in different angles of the same. More of the same in this case is different than repetition. The idea of different angles led us to create a space where audience is inside this field, and information is not only in front, but around them. This condition reveals that experience is always partial. We miss a lot of information in many situations and I wanted to portray that, not as a problem, but as a simple fact. I propose with this piece a time to contemplate different angles of the same. Delve into details and soften expectations. I also

wanted to create a space that could tension the frontal aspect that an audience is commonly offered to be in. I am not fond of making life easier. I wanted to stimulate the audience from inside the convention. So, all chairs are facing same direction but spaced differently. Audience is free to look around, as much as they are free to sense around. *Biomashup* offers some time to exercise perception.

I am always interested in the audience. I like to think that I invite people to travel with me when I perform, and not that I explain the trip. I am more seduced by the gravity of questions rather than answers.

3. How did you select the 100 choreographers to feature in The Hot One Hundred Choreographers? Who are some of the more significant ones, and how have they influenced you? How did you bring this across in the work - will you be performing segments sequentially? Will you be creating a whole new work amalgamating all the influences?

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About the choice of one hundred: The criteria adopted for making the list was to define the choreographers and performances that, somehow, I have experienced and (in)formed my dance education and pushed me to follow dance as my profession. Some of the shows listed I had the opportunity to attend live, which makes my relationship with the choreographer/piece more complex in this quantitative puzzle. Many others, either I knew from books or other types of archives, or I met/found along our research in the virtual environment. Thus, another criteria was absorbed along the process - to list only the choreographers who had their work available in the virtual network (youtube, vimeo or similar). Hard work, because in some cases, we could only find the choreographer but not the piece I wanted to include in the *hot-list*. When this happened, we had the following options: to choose another work extract; to remove it from the list; to seek the chosen piece in another type of collection/platform. The latter option was chosen. In my list there's not only choreographies. There is a festival and a Performing Arts Forum for example. Therefore, a very personal list began to be developed, which allowed me to recognize and think about my aesthetic choices. During the process, the *hot-list* showed some flexibility, gaining the status of a *provisional-list*, a list that could always be changed, and therefore always becoming (an)other list.

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The address for Peter Davies text-panting: <http://www.lote24hs.net/hot100/peter/>

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4. What was the process of creating BIOMASHUP like? How closely did you work with the other dancers while creating it?

Biomashup started first as a practice and slowly oriented towards a piece. I call it a dance concert, as the Russian instrument Theremin, played live by musician and composer Tom Monteiro plays a fundamental role in it. I invited Tom Monteiro to be creating and performing it live in every rehearsal at the very beginning of the research. His presence and way of working was also in constant dialogue and interaction with our movement investigation. Considering the specificity of this instrument - notes are reached in the air without physical contact with the instrument - I see him as a dancer too. He is dancing his music. Music and choreographic scores were intrinsic created.

We were not improvising in order to select material. Actually, I was asking them not to improvise. I asked that each movement they were delivering should be already it. We were not looking for an ideal movement. Each decision should be treated as the ideal design. In this sense, I was asking for a lot of details and modulation of physical tonalities. I wanted them to approach their archives in a constant process of contamination between them.

I proposed from day one to be all together moving for one hour with this in mind, including musician. During this practice I felt a bit like how I imagine is the making of sculpture. My notes and observations were given while they were moving. I would ask them not to stop moving and include my observations/notes while they were doing it. I was running around them, talking to them, sometimes looking at their eyes, and sometimes looking at their neck. This strategy is very different from giving notes after the experience. We had both. *Inside-experience* notes and *after-notes*. Both played different roles in the understanding of the making and performing.

Cristian Duarte

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