

October 2013

Dear LUTSF,

I am writing to express thanks for supporting my attendance at ImPulsTanz (Vienna July 10th- August 14th) festival where I participated as a DanceWEB scholarship recipient. I was not successful in my other applications for funding from the UK to support this trip, so as you can imagine the LUTSF support was extremely welcome.

Please find my report attached.

Best wishes,

Janine Harrington

DanceWEB 2013 at ImPulsTanz festival, Vienna.

For five weeks this summer I was one of 67 artists aged between 22 and 37 from 30 countries who gathered in Vienna to take part in the ImPulsTanz festival scholarship programme, DanceWEB. I travelled from Venice where I had been performing in the Biennale with Tino Sehgal and arrived 12 hours later fresh from the night train.

I had applied to take part in the programme because I felt that I needed to enrich my understanding of what was happening in the broader European dance scene, to gain more contextual understanding of my own and others' work in the UK and to make connections with peers working in dance in different contexts. My overriding hope for the time of the scholarship was that it would give me the boost needed to take the next steps in my artistic career and, in the simplest terms, that I would be energised by the experience. I made the application before I knew that I would be spending most of 2013 outside of the UK working as a performer (for 10 years I have been living and working in London, mainly originating my own projects, leading workshops, developing a physical writing process, making books, supporting others' works as collaborator and performer).



Initial meeting of the DanceWEBbers at Kasino.

Through the scholarship I was able to curate my own programme of activity, selecting from a huge range of workshops, research projects, master-classes and performances. Over the course of the five weeks I took part in classes which I thought would support my existing practices, and those which would help me to develop into new areas: political yoga classes (with Sri Louise, US); voice and rhythm workshops (Charmaine LeBlanc, CA); composition classes exploring rhythm (Matteo Fargion, UK); house dance (Gabriel Francisco); a workshop exploring contemporary folk dance (Fabre/Kasebacher AU); contemporary technique and improvisation (Francesco Scavetta, IT); performing queer workshop (Keith Hennessy, US); philosophy classes (Jassem Hindi); and two week-long research projects: Performance Research Hell (Jerome Bel and Trajal Harrell FR/US) and empathy, care, parasitism, camouflage and cannibalism (Alice Chauchat and Alix Eynaudi FR). Throughout the weeks I was reflecting on where I am as a performer/ choreographer/ artist/ writer in relation to each workshop offering.



Cannibalising text: research with Alice Chauchat & Alix Eynaudi and small concertina book I made during one day of the research project.

In addition to my workshop choices, every DanceWEBber took an initial three-day workshop exploring dance review writing with Gia Kourlas, New York Time Out and New York Times dance writer. This was organised by the mentor, Ivo Dimchev, to prepare the group to undertake what turned out to be an enormous task: reporting on all the performances that we were to see in the evenings of the festival (I saw 38) and uploading them to a collective blog. I didn't manage to write about everything I saw, but the intention framed my viewing in a way which I appreciated- and probably supported a lot of our late night discussions about the works. The task also generated a great deal of discussion about its value as an offer - what could we, as young artists, add to the dance scene by offering our critiques, what qualifies an opinion, who asks who to write and why ... This debate is quite similar to what has been happening in the UK in terms of the support of, and also backlash against, BellFlop online magazine (a repository of interviews, articles and reviews by a small group of predominantly young female artists that I have occasionally contributed to).



DanceWEBbers. Photo: Louise Tanoto.



We cycled around Vienna on the pink ImPulsTanz bikes.

Exposure to the performance program was really important for me as a maker. Most strikingly I noticed that the programming at ImPulsTanz was nearly entirely of (traditional) theatre-based work and that there were no works for outdoor spaces and only a gesture toward programming work for alternative spaces. I make choreographic work that places the bodies of the audience and their agency at the centre of the constructed performance situation, work that happens predominately in outdoor and alternative spaces. In Vienna I felt a lack of this kind of work in comparison with the UK, which might be explained by curatorial decision-making, difference in scene or vision. In either case, this has given me a lot to think about - about the construction of such an important (and well- resourced) festival and where my practice might be in relation to that. In addition, I have a new appreciation for the quality of professional work with young people, integrated companies and different communities on offer in the UK compared with what I saw in Vienna and the discussions around the works.

In the months since DanceWEB ended I have continued to feel enriched by the people I met there. I feel part of a multi-tiered international extended family. We are currently thinking about organising our own small festival/ research period next year, and I am hopeful that I will work with many of the group again in different contexts. Finally, in 2014 I am part of Independent Dance's pilot mentoring scheme and will have an exchange with Alice Chauchat, who I met through the ImPulsTanz festival workshop programme. This is a pairing that I hope will support me in the next steps.

Janine Harrington