

LEAP STOCKHOLM

Local Meeting Newsletter by Pavle Heidler



*Ladies and Gentlemen,
welcome to LEAP STOCKHOLM, the Local Meeting Newsletter by Pavle Heidler.*

Local Meeting Newsletter aims at satisfying two primary functions: (1) Local meeting Newsletter is local administrator's way of documenting meetings. These documents function as a reminder and an informer - depending on whether you attended the meeting in question; or not. (2) Local Meeting Newsletter is to inform you of future meetings taking place.

Local Meeting Newsletter wishes to be informing, inspiring and reader-friendly.

Stockholm's second LEAP meeting took place at Danscentrum Stockholm on May 24, 2014. The meeting was organised with the Support of Danscentrum Stockholm and Francesco Scavetta, whose Vitlycke Center for Performing Arts functions as LEAP's Swedish partner.

Our second meeting consisted of an introduction, conversation, a couple of cups of

coffee, some cinnamon buns and a friendly visit from Nadia Arouri, the Founder of YANTE – Youth, Art and Levante, the community dance movement in Palestine, who presented us with her work.

In my introduction to our second meeting I posed a question that to me seemed crucial: How can a LEAP meeting, and what can a LEAP meeting facilitate for the local teacher? What does a Stockholm teacher need (today) and how can LEAP support that as specifically as possible?

The question didn't give birth to an immediate answer.

Participants took the question in attentively but with a look on their faces that left me with an impression of having asked too specific a question too soon into the conversation. Upon further reflection I came to think I might have made explicit a question that another facilitator wouldn't have made explicit in the first place; explicit or public, one could say. Another facilitator, I imagine, would have kept this question "secret" and used it as some sort of a personal motivation, a "behind the scenes" *raison d'être*.

Here's the thing: I don't know what it means to facilitate a meeting in a conventional sense; which is why I sometimes feel slightly insecure when proposing guidelines that haven't been thought through "mathematically". This is to say: I do not pose my questions with a specific goal in mind; I do not pose them so as to get to an answer I want to hear. I pose them because I think them necessary but (!) also because I see them being "as of yet: unanswered".

As I opened for reactions that would serve as a warm up for our upcoming discussion, I sensed the group as still un-focused around an un-clear subject. This is exactly when I wouldn't want convention to take over. Instead of solving the un-clarity by coming up with "an answer" that would "solve the problem" myself, I decided that a sense of clarity can be achieved through conversation, through mutual effort that would, as we worked through it, bring us to a space of shared interest.

I could summarise our first conversation with a quote from Charlotta: "That's the difference between why you start dancing and why you **continue** dancing."

When talking about dance education in general, we first tried to outline specific

knowledge territories offered to their students by different European dance schools; we also tried to define operations by which these knowledge territories became defined. Examples were noted of many a definition existing in its positive form: schools (and other institutions) define themselves publically and otherwise by the spectrum of dance related knowledge they do teach, never by the spectrum they don't. It follows that the impression many schools (and other institutions) give is that of being open-minded, inclusive and offering variety, meanwhile disregarding the fact that practically what they offer is an insight to what is essentially an aesthetically, topographically and temporally defined knowledge, however open-minded, inclusive and varied in itself.

A part of this argument was concluded by the following. Since we are talking about dance education, specifically education of contemporary dance: Which contemporaneity are we talking about? Which dance? Which dancer?

We continued by defining the dancer we were talking about as that dancer who was rarely given the institution-supported chance to experience a one-to-one relationship with a tutor, teacher, mentor and/or supervisor. We noted that if given the chance, the chance was higher, the higher the education. In comparison, we noted the opposite was often true: the younger the dance student, the larger the group s/he was studying in.

Another attempt at defining the dancer we were talking about was through a comparison with the choreographer: the choreographer was awarded with the freedom to think. The dancer was, in comparison, awarded with the freedom to reproduce.

Not that there is anything wrong with reproduction, as long as it was used within an appropriate context (as defined by the question: which contemporaneity are we talking about?) and even then: as long as it was used consciously and purposefully.

From the efforts put into defining the institution, we continued to invest in the question of the student, more specifically: what age does the dance student receive his or her dance education? Even more specifically: at what age is a dance student (in this day and age) most likely to receive what kind of dance education? At what age is a dance student most likely to have access to which kind of information? And where?

The conversation moved into the field of decision making. As we worked through this topic, we isolated an interest in the operation we referred to as: making an informed decision. This we superimposed to questioning the teacher and student alike, and arrived at the next series of questions: Who is, and at what stage, adjusting to

whom? Does education change (and how) if everyone involved is (or becomes) a conscious participant capable of moving by making informed decisions? When do we learn to make informed decisions? What does it mean to make one?

These questions brought us to two more sets of questions.

First was concerned with the limits inherent to the educational system. An example of such a limit would be an assumption of progressivity intrinsic to the system (is progressivity intrinsic to traditional systems at large?). This example was paired with the following question: is dance something which should be learned progressively?

Second was concerned with the question of what is essentially an institutional confirmation: should one need to be confirmed by the institution in order to be confirmed in a wider social context? Why and when does a student choose to enter an institution and what is a good time for a student to leave the institution? What of leaving the institution before the time is right? What does refusing the institution mean? What are the ways in which one can refuse the institution and what are the possible effects of such action?

We imagined these questions appropriated by the thinking dancer at about the same time in their personal development at which we imagined the dancer choosing to *continue* dancing. We imagined this dancer emancipating him or herself from that which is institutionally and habitually imposed by choosing *to continue* dancing; this we saw as a choice to engage with the problematics of being a part of the (or any) existing institutionalised and/or social system.

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Not that there is no value in submitting oneself to a specific system; assuming the submission is performed consciously and purposefully. To submit oneself to a specific subject would be, in this case: to subject oneself to incorporating a specific experience. Then, and only then, the process of subjection is not to be questioned whilst within. The process of subjection is to be incorporated and experienced wholesome-ly. Only after the experience has been collected - is it to be taken apart, contextualised and finally: analysed.

The conclusion of this discussion was found in the concept of temporality. An example of which would be the following. We were saying that the learning process is (or should be) about temporally submitting oneself to something you don't question – whilst inside. In this context, submission was to be paired with absolute criticality; noting that these were different experiences and should be kept as different: each taking its own time, one coming after the other.



second LEAP meeting was attended by:

Cristina Caprioli
Anna Grip
Pavle Heidler
Charlotta Ruth
Francesco Scavetta

It was after all these discussions that we came to the initial question: How can a LEAP meeting, and what can a LEAP meeting facilitate for the local teacher? What does a Stockholm teacher need (today) and how can LEAP support that as specifically as possible?

The follow-up question came from Cristina: Can LEAP help out with opening // setting up // facilitating a space to speak not in terms of: “I am a choreographer” or “I am a dancer” but in terms of: “I work with choreography” or “I work with dancing” – about – recognising the dancer as the choreographer without removing the choreographer from the dance practice?

I have decided not to, in this letter, give further insight into the discussion that

followed, which was our last discussion of the day. I decided to do so for several reasons. One being: I would have to account for many concepts which it doesn't feel appropriate to account for by myself, and specifically not just yet. Also: in order to continue, I would have to give insight into many questions that wish to inspire thoughts on future plans – none of which have been pushed past the point of only being imagined by the people present in the meeting. Lastly: as different from giving an account of a personal impression of a shared conversation, giving an account of ideas and thoughts related to planning movements would put me in a much more sensitive relationship to the owners of these, as of yet, non-materialised ideas.

I will hopefully leave you hungry for more, which will have you ready for when the time is right and further information about facilitating a space to speak about recognising a dancer as choreographer without removing the choreographer from the dance practice, and what that means more specifically – is made available.

To conclude the day, we were visited by Nadia Arouri, the Founder of YANTE – Youth, Art and Levante, the community dance movement in Palestine. Nadia introduced us to the work of her organisation and the efforts she, together with local and international colleagues, was putting into educating young Palestinian dancers and dance teachers.

The next local LEAP meeting is expected to take place in the fall of 2014.

LEAP participants will be coming together this summer at the LEAP Symposium that is to take place in Vienna. LEAP Symposium is organised with support of ImpulsTanz Dance Festival.

Thank you
Danscentrum Stockholm
for stable support!

and all of the attendees
for your presence, participation and invested effort.



LEAP

LEARN, EXCHANGE, APPLY, PRACTICE

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