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THE DANCING BODY AS LIVING ARCHIVE:

PRESERVING THE CECCHETTI METHOD

By

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Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the master's degree in

MA VISUAL STUDIES

In the

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

March 2024

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APPENDIX – BALLET TERMS

Adage – 'slow, at ease, at leisure'. Describes the quality, tempo and dynamic of a piece of music, as well as a movement. Can also refer to a category of steps or exercises – referred to as *temps d'adage* ('time for adage' or 'steps of adage') that involve slow, and controlled movements.

Allegro – 'brisk or lively'. Describes the quality, tempo and dynamic of a piece of music, as well as a movement. Can also refer to a category of movements – referred to as *temps d'allegro* ('time for allegro' or 'steps of allegro') performed in the centre after *Adage*, mostly involving jumping steps.

Aplomb (line of *aplomb*) – 'plumb line'. Term used to describe the centre line of the body. Initially used by builders and architects to describe the line running vertically through the centre of a structure or building.

Assemblé – a jumping step where the dancer alights from one foot and descends on two feet, assembling or gathering the legs in the air.

Arabesque – Refers to an ornamental design of graceful lines and curvilinear motifs often seen in Moorish architecture. In ballet, *arabesque* is a position taken on one leg, with the other leg extended at a right angle behind the body. The arms are placed in harmony with the legs and in accordance with the theory of *port de bras.* There are many variations of the *arabesque.*

Ballet de cour – 'court ballet'. Ballets created and performed during the Italian Renaissance period. These ballets formed part of elaborate court spectacles and were reserved for the enjoyment and participation of the nobility.

Ballet royal de la nuit – 'royal ballet of the night'. A famous *ballet de cour* in which King Louis XIV portrayed Apollo, the 'Sun King'.

Ballon – 'ball' or 'balloon'. Refers to a buoyant quality or resilience in jumping steps. This rebounding quality is achieved with the controlled use of the legs, producing the illusion of hovering in the air, as opposed to being stuck on the floor. The quality of *ballon* gives the appearance of a quick ascent, a momentary suspension at the height of the jump, and slower descent and is mostly applied to jumps of medium elevation.

Barre – A horizontal pole attached to the wall of the studio, or loose standing, used by dancers to aid in establish balance and weight placement.

Batterie – 'the act of beating'. It is a collective term which refers to a variety of steps involving quick, precise actions, primarily jumps, in which the legs beat in the air from the base of the calf downwards, with sufficient force to cause them to rebound slightly before the landing. *Des temps de batterie* ('time for batterie', or 'steps of batterie') was the focus for Cecchetti's Friday *temps d'allégro* (jumping section).

Blue Bird – a virtuoso role created by Enrico Cecchetti for the ballet, *The Sleeping Beauty.*

Carabosse – a mime role created by Enrico Cecchetti for the ballet, *The Sleeping Beauty.*

Centre practice – exercises performed after the *exercises a la barre,* without the aid of the *barre,* in the centre of the room to further establish the dancer's weight placement, balance and control.

Coupé – 'to cut'. Refers to a cutting movement where the dancer's weight is transferred from one leg to the other under the body line. The working foot receives the body weight on the whole foot or *en pointe,* cutting in front of, beside, or behind, and replacing the supporting foot.

Croisé – 'crossed'. Refers to the line(s) created by, or the alignment or direction of the dancer's body in relation to the audience. The downstage leg is in the front and the upstage leg behind, therefore the legs appear crossed from the audience's perspective.

Danseur Noble – male dancer.

Downstage – close to the audience, towards the front of the stage.

En place – 'on place'. Indicates that the dancer stays on the same spot during the movement or exercise.

Enchaînements – a sequences of steps. With the vast vocabulary of classical ballet, *enchaînements* can almost limitlessly be recombined into a different sequence by the ballet teacher or choreographer.

En pointe (also *sur la pointes* or *pied a pointe*) – Refers to dancing on the tips of the toes, initially – in the Romantic era – with the assistance of merely padding the front of the shoe, and eventually with the support of a hardened pointe shoe. Can also refer to a movement or position that is taken on the toes with a fully pointed foot, as opposed to on a flat foot. E.g *changements* ('to change' – jumps that change feet) can be taken *sur la pointes.*

En tournant – implies that a movement is performed turning.

Epaulement – derived from the French word '*epaule'* – meaning shoulder – refers to the stylistic – and functional – use of the shoulders and upper body in classical ballet.

Exercises a la barre – A set of exercises performed at the *barre.* This is the first section of the class which is usually done at the *barre* to help dancers establish their balance and weight distribution before commencing with exercises in the *centre.*

Fouetté(s) – 'to whip'. A term used to describe a variety of steps that involve a strong whipping action of the working leg, at its hip, knee or both. Can also refer to a movement that involves a change in body direction, with the working leg remaining disengaged as it rotates in the hip socket – in other words, it is not carried with the rest of the body.

Giselle – a Romantic ballet created in the 19th century by Jules Perrot and Jean Coralli, and composed by Adolphe Adam.

La Bella au Bois Dormant – 'The Sleeping Beauty'. A classical ballet created in the late 19th century by Marius Petipa and composed by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky.

La fille mal gardee – 'the Wayward Daughter'. One of the oldest surviving ballets. A *ballet d'action* created in the 18th century by Jean Dauberval and composed by Ferdinand Hérold.

Le ballet comique de la reine – 'the Queens comic ballet'. Considered to be the very first ballet (*ballet de cour*), commissioned by Catherine de Medici during the Italian Renaissance.

Le roi de soleil – 'the Sun King'. A symbol or character, played by King Louis XIV, in the *ballet de cour, ballet royal de la nuit.*

Maitre de ballet – ballet master

Opera Ballet – refers to ballets created during the 18th century. Ballets that formed part of opera performances.

Ouvert – 'open'. Could either imply that a movement concludes in an open position or that the dancer is standing in an open position or direction, or creating an open line, in relation to the audience. The downstage leg is at the back and the upstage leg in front, therefore the legs appear open, as opposed to crossed, from the audience's perspective.

Pas – 'step'. A simple or composite step composed of *temps* (a single movement) similar to a word that is composed of syllables. Can also refer to a dance for a specific number of performers – e.g. *pas de trois* (step for three). Can also refer to the name of a dance sequence, *enchainement,* or choreographed work – e.g. *pas de le Mascotte* (step of the mascot).

Pas de bourrée couru – a linking step performed with quick and precise footwork. A series of very small, quick transferences of weight performed *en pointes* with the feet in *1st position* (natural turn-out or *parallel*) or *5th position,* and executed through the music.

Pas de Chaconne – 'step of Chaconne'. One of Enrico Cecchetti's *adage* studies. Chaconne is a dance and musical form that involves continuous variation, which is reflected in the *adage.* The French term 'chaconne' derives from the Spanish word, *ciaconne,* which means 'pretty'.

Pas de deux – 'step for two'. Usually a dance arranged for a male and female dancer, where the male partners the female dancer.

Pas de quatre – 'step for four'. A dance arranged for four performers.

Pied a quarte – 'foot at quarter'. One of the *movements of the foot,* where the heel is raised to *pointe* the foot at a quarter of its full *pointe.*

Pirouette – refers to a turning movement performed on one foot, either toward (*en* dedans) or away (*en dehors*) from the supporting leg, with the working leg in a variety of positions.

Premiere Danseur – principal dancer.

Retiré – 'withdrawn'. A position where the working foot is placed at the supporting leg's knee. This position is used to unfold the leg in the air and often used for turns.

Supporting leg or Supporting foot – the foot or leg that the dancer is standing on, or the foot or leg on which the dancer's weight predominantly falls during a movement or exercise.

Swan Lake – a classical ballet created in the late 19th century by Marius Petipa and composed by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky.

Temps de cuisse – 'movement or movements of the thigh'. Refers to a composite step which involves a quick *battement dégagé* (disengagement of the leg) to the side, leading into a *sissonne fermée* (sissor-like movement) which travels sideways.

The Dying Swan – originally, The Swan. A solo created by Michel Fokine for Anna Pavlova in the early 20th century.

The Manual – a handbook written by Cyril Beaumont and Stanislas Idzikowski, documenting the Cecchetti Method and exercises.

The Nutcracker – a classical ballet created in the late 19th century by Marius Petipa and composed by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky.

Traité Elémentair, Théorique et Pratique de l'Art de la Danse – 'Elementary Treatise upon the Theory and Practice of the Art of Dancing'. Carlo Blasis's work which codifies his principles of classical ballet. Published in 1820.

Troisieme et quatrieme arabesque – 'third and fourth arabesque'. One of Enrico Cecchetti's *adage* studies.

Upstage – away from the audience, towards the back of the stage.

Variation – a choreographed arrangement of steps and sequences which makes up a dance.

Virtuoso – can either refer to an individual who is highly skilled in their artistic pursuit, a performance or role that is impressive and skillfully executed, or the dynamic nature of a certain section of the class or performance. Virtuoso turns or *pirouettes* for instance take place at the end of a ballet, as part of the *coda*, or at the end of a class, where a dancer is given the opportunity to display their skills. These turns include *fouettés* and various turns *en diagonal* or around the room. Other movements that can form part of the virtuoso section of a class or ballet, include steps taken around the room (*atour de la salle*), hops *en pointe* and beats (*batterie*). These movements are also often executed in a series, which adds to the virtuosity.

Wili – a ghost of a widow, or woman that died before her wedding day. Ghostly characters in the ballet *Giselle.*

Working leg or Working foot – the foot or leg that disengages from the standing position to perform an action or movement, whilst the body weight is placed on the other foot or leg.

ABSTRACT

Dance is largely an intangible form of art and knowledge. The fleeting nature of its performance makes the circulation and archiving of this type of knowledge quite challenging. It is difficult to capture its essence in a mere text or photograph. The body, in this sense, might present itself as a fundamental form of dance knowledge preservation as it is able to embody knowledge in a way that material artefacts cannot. Despite many and continual changes that occur in the arts, the technique and traditions of classical ballet have therefore remained as dancers and teachers transfer this knowledge, through their bodies, from one generation to the next. The bodies of dancers and teachers, in this sense, become a dynamic archive of embodied knowledge. This involvement of the body in processes of knowledge acquisition, retention and transference manifests the agency of these bodies as they function both as object and subject, as instrument and agent, transgressing the boundaries between the material and immaterial worlds, the visible and invisible spaces of existence and experience, as well as the past and the present. This is the notion of the body which I use in my study; a dynamic entity, with boundary-crossing abilities, which holds great significance in knowledge transfer and preservation, hegemonic resistance, artistic expression, memory, transformation and evolution. The Cecchetti Method of classical ballet training and the Cecchetti Society, with its teachers and dancers actively participating in the learning, teaching and therefore preservation of the Method, epitomises how bodies become an archive. My study is more broadly involved in the larger academic enterprise that revisits and revises the institutional archive and questions our dependence on documentary and mnemonic practices.

Keywords: embodiment, technique, classical ballet, archive, body, knowledge transfer, Cecchetti Method

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Dancing exists at a perpetual vanishing point. At the moment of its creation it is gone. All of a dancer's years of training in the studio, all the choreographer's planning, the rehearsals, the coordination of designers, composers, and technicians, the raising of money and the gathering together of an audience, all these are only a preparation for an event that disappears in the very act of materializing. No other art is so hard to catch, so impossible to hold.

(Siegel 1972:1 in Lepecki 2006:125)

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature consulted for this study emanates from various disciplines within the field of humanities, including visual studies, archiving, performance studies, pedagogy and dance ethnography, which has roots in anthropology. The interdependence of these disciplines will be illustrated in the context of classical ballet as it is practised in the South African performing arts milieu. This study aims, specifically, to uncover how the Cecchetti Method of ballet training forms a living archive through the bodies of the teachers and students who practise the Method. Although this study explores the practise of the Cecchetti Method of classical ballet in the South African context, the discoveries and arguments made are applicable beyond the borders of South Africa, since the classical ballet community is indeed a global one with an international identity. As can be derived from Siegel's statement above, dance is often viewed as an ephemeral and fleeting art form, making it difficult to capture and preserve. An interdisciplinary methodology is required to tackle and display the complex and curiously overlapping relationships between the often too rigidly dichotomised notions of the ephemeral versus the enduring characteristics of classical ballet and between associated dichotomous notions such as the intangible and the tangible, the invisible and the visible, as well as the mind and the body.

Attaining, embracing and preserving knowledge represents a vital component of our survival, advancement and overall living experience as human beings. Key to preserving knowledge are the ways in which it is documented and transferred from one generation to the next. The fleeting nature of dance and performance makes the circulation and archiving of this type of knowledge quite challenging. The body, as will be demonstrated throughout this project, can be seen as an important conduit for knowledge transfer, especially with regard to intangible and embodied knowledge as in the case of the performing arts including classical ballet. It can be argued that

hegemonic ways[1] of documenting, preserving and transferring knowledge limit the role of the body and intangible elements in this process. As a result, that which is preserved over time is possibly subject to bias based upon its degree of tangibility or visibility. Other forms of archiving need to be explored and acknowledged to prevent the partiality, even the loss, of certain knowledge over time.

In order to capture, preserve or pass on knowledge, experiences and skills, methods of documentation and transfer need to be carefully considered. Documentation takes various forms, such as photographs, written documents and video-documentation. Dance also makes use of dance notation, which uses symbols to document dance[2]. I suggest, however, that the prime creator, possessor and preserver of dance is the human body. Classical ballet, as with any other form of dance, is not static or fixed in its nature. Rather, it is dynamic, nuanced, kinetic and always fluctuating, with its style and aesthetic changing from one era to the next as with all art and culture. It seems only sensible then that such an art form requires a kinetic form of preservation[3]; one that is able to shift with dance itself without being limited by static methods of documentation. Since dance is largely an intangible form of art and knowledge, it is difficult to capture its essence in a mere text or photograph. The body, in this sense, might present itself as a fundamental form of dance knowledge preservation as it is able to embody knowledge in a way that material artefacts cannot.

Following the philosophy of Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, among others, the body can be delineated as a dynamic entity. Andre Lepecki (2006:5) states that such philosophy promotes the idea of the body "not as a self-contained and closed entity but as an open and dynamic system of exchange". Dance, which has this dynamic body at its core, is similarly dynamic and fluctuating, fleeting in its performance, making it difficult to capture without subjecting it to static documentation and representation. Such documentation and representation might result in the loss of essences, nuances and subtleties which, as with our

[1] Dominant forms of archiving include the preservation of knowledge through text and material artefacts, which often implies that the dynamic experiences of cultures – such as the knowledge expressed through performance or storytelling – are left out of the archive. Hegemonic archives often tell and preserve stories from the dominant or Western perspective and, in turn, can exclude the oral histories and stories of indigenous communities, for instance.

[2] Labanotation and Benesh Movement Notation are examples of this.

[3] LaFrance states that "to archivists the terms *preservation* and *conservation* have specific implications about methods of maintaining records in an archive" (2013:7). I make use of the term *preservation* in this study as it is considered "an umbrella term for activities that … extend the life expectancy of" and object, collection or knowledge system, in this case (Northeast Document Conservation Center 2015). *Conservation*, on the other hand "refers more specifically to the physical treatment of individual … items" (Northeast Document Conservation Center 2015).

living experiences, often lie within its intangibilities, such as embodied knowledge, sensations and artistic expression. This study therefore argues that the archiving and preservation of artistic practices needs to account for the intangible aspects of the art.

The separation between tactile or bodily experiences, and emotional or spiritual ones, are largely constructed and upheld by dominant discourse and hegemonic knowledge systems. By contrast, this study argues that valuing both the tangible and intangible aspects of dance, and acknowledging the significance of the body in processes of preservation can play an important role in the preservation and archiving of art forms such as classical ballet. The literature introduced and the concepts discussed below all tie into the larger framework of this study.

1.2 LITERATURE

1.2.1 The Institutional Dichotomy

There seems to be a dissociation between tangible and intangible knowledge within dominant discourse and hegemonic forms of archiving and preservation. Natsuko Akagawa and Laurajane Smith (2019:2) argue that there is a knowledge hierarchy whereby knowledge with intangible aspects is associated with social, cultural and non-expert value whereas knowledge that relies on tangible elements is associated with expert or scientific values. This is because intangible knowledge is associated with expressions that involve elements of orality and performativity, which are, in turn, associated with 'lower forms' of art or cultures that are perceived as 'primitive'[4]. The tangible-intangible dichotomy therefore not only separates various forms of knowledge through a value system and hierarchy but also reasserts so-called "expert heritage values over community and other non-expert values" (Akagawa & Smith 2019:2). This is perhaps because it is much easier to capture and preserve material knowledge, such as artefacts and texts. Imaginably, it is much more challenging a task to do so with the intangible, dynamic and living expressions involved in and through the body, as with dance. Placing a value system on the different forms of knowledge might threaten the continuity and preservation of some information and wisdom that humans have come to learn and live by.

[4] Scholars recognise that "there remains a tendency in the West to view oral forms of communication as pre-literate, a characteristic associated with "primitive" cultures" (Taggart 1999:5).

Living artistic and cultural expressions are, however, precisely those which keep an art form alive as arts and culture adapt and evolve over time whilst simultaneously remaining connected to their roots and traditions. This is the relationship between history and modernity which I explore in this study. I do not approach modernity as a historical era, but I am concerned with improving and innovating alongside an appreciation for the past – an amalgamation of past, present and future ideas and experiences. Thus, history is not perceived as something of the past, but as living within us. In other words, I take a counter-hegemonic approach to historical phenomena that could remain valuable and relevant today. Diana Taylor suggests that if we think of "the past not only as chronological and as what is gone, but as also vertical, as a different form of storage of what's already here, then performance is deeply historical" (2006:83). It is precisely this continuation of the past, embracing of the present and focus on the future that makes performance transformative. Taylor (2006:83) explains that:

> …the performance event, like the historical event, both affirms and breaks with the cyclical, Hegelian pattern of again-ness. Therein lies its transformative power. One might go so far as to say that those who do not learn from performance are condemned to relive it.

This notion of modernity is not based on and in dichotomies. It simultaneously adopts beneficial change and advancements, yet pays homage to or sees the need in preserving the 'good' of the past and the great thinkers of the past (Goga 2015:91-96)[5].

1.2.2 Towards Bridging the Institutional Gap

This study aims to re-think the relationship between tangible and intangible knowledge systems. As such, the study forms part of a larger academic enterprise that revisits and revises conventional institutional archive and questions our dependence on tangible documentary and mnemonic practices. By considering the body as a dynamic and boundary-crossing participant

[5] Modernity can therefore be seen as a cultural model, a historical and an epistemic frame within which to position the historical development and identity of Europe that spread over the world by means of amongst others, colonialism. There are a plurality of modernities rather than a single model. A single model of modernity tends to only acknowledge European modernity and how the Western world came into being, whereas a plural view of modernity acknowledges different histories and developments in its conception.

in the creation of knowledge, I suggest that the gap between the tangible and the intangible (and related dichotomies) may be bridged.

Various dance forms, including classical ballet, are part of the South African arts and cultural heritage. Dance falls into the category of performing arts which in turn form part of UNESCO's definition of intangible cultural heritage which ought to be safeguarded and preserved for future generations. According to the 2003 UNESCO *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, the intangible cultural heritage of a community can be defined as follows:

> [T]he practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage.

According to this definition, intangible cultural heritage is always being "recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history" as it is transferred from one generation to the next (UNESCO 2003). This provides communities with a sense of identity, of continuity, and promotes both cultural diversity and creativity, which are manifested in the following domains:

a. Oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of intangible heritage;
b. Performing arts;
c. Social practices, rituals and festive events;
d. Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
e. Traditional craftsmanship (UNESCO 2003)

According to Alivizatou ([sa]:48), intangible cultural heritage is now associated with the "alternative heritage discourse" or the "memorial approach" that acknowledges the importance of "memory…oral tradition [and] performance" as ways to experience and comprehend the past. In this sense, the past is seen to exist among and within living people and societies, in their minds and their bodies, through memory and performance (Alivizatou [sa]:48). This perspective challenges the idea that heritage only consists of monuments, artefacts and sites – in other words, the visible and the material. It also opposes the notion of textuality or written history as the superior form of archiving. The implementation of a more holistic and inclusive approach to arts and cultural heritage, addresses the institutional gap not only between

intangible and tangible knowledge, but also between the textual and extra-textual forms of archiving and the pervasive mind-body binary.

1.2.3 Somatics and Somatic Scholarship

The next section clarifies what this study defines as the 'body' by drawing from the field of somatics. The term, *somatics*, coined by Thomas Hanna, is derived from the Greek word *soma*, meaning "the living body in its wholeness" (Brodie & Lobel 2012:10). The field of somatics explores processes which involve the body in its living and experiential form, as a holistic entity. Furthermore, somatics is grounded in the idea of the soma as "a changeable, fluid entity that responds to both external and internal stimuli" (Hanna 1979 in Brodie & Lobel 2012:10). This study draws from this understanding of the soma, as the body in all its dimensions, in describing it as a possible living archive of embodied and intangible knowledge and information.[6] The body, according to somatics, describes the entire being that consists of "body, mind, spirit, and the environment in which they coexist" (Brodie & Lobel 2012:10). This definition rationalises the idea[7] of the body as a dynamic medium with the ability to cross boundaries between the physical and the spiritual, between tangible and intangible. In turn, this promotes an understanding of the body as a site of and an active participant in the occupation, embodiment, materialisation and transmission of knowledge. In this way the body is able to engage in the process of preserving the art of dance by transferring it from one generation to the next.

The multi-dimensional body[8], as described through somatics, seems to have a number of functions. The body is both subject and object, both an instrument and an agent. The body not only embodies the knowledge that it attains; it also transfers this knowledge by means of

[6] I must clarify that my definition of the body as a holistic and multi-dimensional entity inevitably raises a number of concerns and problematics of the body and its status in society. These problematics can range from cultural to social, from gender-based to racial matters. Cynthia Novack, for instance, explores gender representation in *Ballet, Gender and Cultural Power* (1993). Jacquelynn Balacki is another author interested in the investigation of discrimination and segregation in the performing arts profession. However, the argument of the body as a living archive is not subject to its racial, cultural or gendered disposition. Any body, in its wholeness, possesses the ability to absorb, embody and transfer knowledge. It is important to note that my notion of the body, which is derived from somatic theory, has more to do with how the body *works* than how the body is *perceived* or how the body *looks*.

[7] Shared by many somatics-driven scholars, such as Deleuze and Guattari, Shusterman, Taylor and others.

[8] Viewed as mind and body, or mind, body and culture (somaesthetics), as one holistic entity which experiences bodily or physical, and mental or spiritual encounters that together make up the individual's total experience. The multi-dimensional body also has capabilities such as crossing boundaries, and acting as a site of memory or archive, as a site of resistance, of embodiment, and knowing.

performance and in this way preserves the knowledge[9]. The body also presents itself as an instrument and agent that can, by virtue of its duality and ability to transgress boundaries, materialise[10] intangible knowledge, or make visible the invisible. By blurring these boundaries, the body comes to represent a site of resistance as well as the agent itself that is able to resist. In more complex terms the body can present itself as a site and agent of resistance, of embodiment, of knowledge transfer, of materialisation, of artistic expression, of memory, of transformation and evolution. Viewing the body in this way can help us understand the way in which the body participates in the process of absorbing, embodying and transferring knowledge, and how it forms part of a living archive which can hold dynamic knowledge.

1.2.4 Somaesthetics

An important contributor to the field of somatics, and specifically somaesthetics is Richard Shusterman. Shusterman argues for the necessity of revaluing the aesthetic importance of the body. He writes that it is because of the pervasive physical-spiritual opposition that "the body is essentially omitted or marginalized in our conception of humanistic studies". He adds that the body plays a "crucial role in the realms of cognition, ethics, aesthetics, and politics" (Shusterman 2012:26 in Ciorogar 2017:52).

Shusterman explains the interdependence of body and mind through *somaesthetics.* For Shusterman, the body must be considered and recognised as a significant topic of humanistic

[9] Embodied knowledge has been described as *non-representational* and *enactive,* as part of our implicit memory (Fuchs 2016:215). The term 'implicit' refers to something internal, describing something as unspoken and subtle, as opposed to the term 'explicit' which can be described as clear, graphic or external, providing "a transparent meaning in a way that is 'fully revealed'" (Madden 2020). Embodied knowledge is therefore intangible in nature but can be enacted or performed, making it visible. The transfer thereof is made possible by materialisation through bodily performance. Performance can be defined as the way in which "humans represent themselves in embodied ways" (Zarrilli et al. in Spatz 2015:46). Ben Spatz states that all embodied technique – including dance knowledge – always has material possibilities or physical pathways through human embodiment (2015:49). Shalon Webber-Heffernan (2016:6) also mentions the capacity of bodily performance to materialise knowledge, arguing that embodied practice "can have deep affective and transformative effects on individuals leading to micro shifts in perspective and personal changes, and can temporarily counter institutional and hegemonic forms of knowing".

[10] It has largely been argued that bodies are animated whereas objects are inanimate, which not only separates the body from cultural and material discourse but also, regrettably, limits our understanding, and the potentialities of, the body and its cultural and artistic significance (Robertson 2007:141). Joanna Sofaer argues that bodies are akin to objects (in Robertson 2007:141). This argument does not reduce the body to object, but it is simply grounded in an appreciation of the body's material qualities – which are respected as being malleable and dynamic. It is precisely such a dynamic and mobile medium we require to transfer and preserve otherwise invisible, and therefore stifled, knowledge and skill. No other mode of reproduction and documentation has the capacity to generously pass on the essence, the nuances, and the dynamics of living artistic and cultural expressions.

study and experiential learning since it "is an essential and valuable dimension of our humanity" (2012:25). He maintains that the body is taken for granted in the traditional understandings of the humanities, which he believes to be susceptible to anti-somatic bias; "[o]ne striking example of such anti-somatic bias" he explains, "is the very term that German speakers use to designate the humanities – Geisteswissenschaften" [literally translated as 'spiritual or mental sciences'] in contrast to the natural sciences – Naturwissenschaften – which treat physical life (with which, of course, the body is clearly linked)" (Shusterman 2012:26). In other words, the predominant physical-spiritual or body-mind dichotomy results in the exclusion of the body within the scope of the humanities. Shusterman's somaesthetics attempts to narrow this gap and describes the relevance and inevitable coexistence of the body and the mind.

Somaesthetics can be defined as "an ameliorative discipline of both theory and practice, which concerns the body as a locus of sensory-aesthetic appreciation (aesthesis) and creative selffashioning" (Shusterman 2012:27). Shusterman (2012:27) further explains that somaesthetics:

> …aims to enrich not only our abstract, discursive knowledge of the body but also our lived somatic experience and performance; it seeks to enhance the understanding, efficacy, and beauty of our movements and improve the environments to which our movements contribute and from which they draw their energies and significance.

Because the body, mind and culture are understood to be deeply co-dependent – from the perspective of somaesthetics – the body is regarded as having a central role in both artistic creation *and* appreciation (Shusterman 2012:3). Somaesthetics thus proves to be an effective tool with which to explore the role of the living human body in knowledge possession, transfer and preservation. By explaining the linkages between the mind, body and culture, somaesthetics contributes to our understanding of the body's role in the transference of embodied cultural knowledge by rendering visible, through performance, the intangible knowledge contained in the body. This makes it possible for knowledge to be passed on from one generation to the next, which establishes the importance of the body in the archiving of human experience and information. What happens during this experience is a blurring of the artificially construed boundaries between the body and the mind, the physical and the spiritual, the tangible and the intangible as well as the past and the present. The body, being able to

transgress these boundaries, becomes the entity through which we can preserve intangible and dynamic knowledge.

1.2.5 Performance Studies

In addition to somaesthetics, the field of performance studies also emphasises the ideas of embodiment and agency. Performance studies emerged in the 1970s – often referred to as the performative turn – as the fields of theatre studies and the philosophy of language expanded to incorporate elements from other corresponding domains like anthropology, cultural studies, sociology, ethnography, psychology, cognitive science, and neurolinguistics, creating an interdisciplinary field that stretches far beyond the parameters of the humanities (Budziak, Lisowska & Woźniak 2017:1). The term "performance", derived from John Austin's theory of performatives, is used in various disciplines ranging from theatre studies to anthropology. Performance studies seems to have emerged as a reaction against the long-lasting supremacy of textuality. A radically textualist approach maintains that reality is mediated solely by language. In opposition to this approach, performance studies, like somaesthetics, suggest that the process of meaning-making is something that is, at least initially, internal. Budziak *et al* (2017:2) further explain that "meaning arises as something visceral … it starts with the way we orient ourselves in the surrounding physical environment". In other words, performance studies also promote the notion of a multidimensional body, with internal and external aspects. Embodiment, performativity, agency and enactment are all central aspects to performance studies. Both performance studies and somatics challenge the radically textual and material traditions of knowledge. From this counter-hegemonic perspective "the agency of this embodied sentient self is regarded as it is outlined in philosophy … and as it manifests itself in these arts which follow Dewey's call to abandon the shelter of the museum glass case" (Budziak *et al* 2017:4). In other words, there arises the idea of an archive of the arts as existing within the individual, not as fixed or fossilised in material or textual annals. This view is in juxtaposition to the hegemonic forms of archiving. It brings into discussion the agency of the individual whose body is involved in significant practices of performance, embodiment and the archiving of knowledge.

1.2.6 Embodiment, Agency and Counter-Hegemonic Thought

Current interpretations of embodiment are rooted in a phenomenological approach attributed to twentieth century French philosopher, Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Merleau-Ponty mentions that, when dealing with the body, we unintentionally consider it from one of two approaches, namely spiritually or materially (Budziak *et al* 2017:104). This study supports the notion that the body should be considered as a whole, in its entirety, to avoid drawing limited and partial conclusions of the body. Budziak *et al* draw our attention to the connection between the "intersubjectivity in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy and …the fact of embodiment" mentioning Merleau-Ponty's insistence "that the whole of human experience is rooted in corporeality" (2017:138). Understanding embodiment as central to experience, perception and performance, requires one to recognise "cognition … as a dynamic and changeable process, in which the mind is inseparable from the physical body and its environment, and in which the three components mutually influence each other" (Budziak *et al* 2017:156).

One of the first thinkers to pursue arguments about embodiment was French sociologist and anthropologist Marcel Mauss. Many of his ideas, such as *technique, habitus* and *apprenticeship,* have been furthered by scholars like Pierre Bourdieu and, more recently, Willeke Wendrich and Ben Spatz. Mauss also established the relevance of tradition within bodily techniques, suggesting that technique "has to be effective and traditional" (1973:75). He states:

> There is no technique and no transmission in the absence of tradition. This above all is what distinguishes man from the animals: the transmission of his techniques and very probably their oral transmission (Mauss 1973:75).

Mauss describes embodiment through the notion of *habitus,* which refers to a habit, custom, faculty or acquired ability of an individual (1973:75). The manifestation of habitus is referred to, by Wendrich, as *hexis* (2013:3). Habitus, according to Wendrich, "denotes the embodied culture, which includes such aspects as skills, habits, style, and taste, as well as one's history and experiences" (2013:3). Bourdieu's *theory of practice,* with the concept of habitus, reacts against the rigid and fixed notion of cultural rules, examining the performance of everyday practices as "sustained improvisation within a framework of schemata inculcated by the culture in mind and body alike" (Burke 1988:58). Noble and Watkins explain that "[h]abitus has been useful, with the growing interest in processes of embodiment, in countering the cognitive and representational bias in much cultural analysis, and in providing a basis for avoiding the

dualisms – of mind and body, structure and agency – that trouble social theory" (2003:520). The concept of habitus therefore helps overcome the binaries of dominant Western thinking, offering, as Noble and Watkins suggest, "an invaluable tool for exploring the interdependence of social determination and human agency, the structured and generative capacity of human action" (2003:522).

Drawing from Spatz (2015:25), this study further relies on the notion that dance is epistemic. Dance, as embodied practice is "structured by and productive of knowledge" (Spatz 2015:25). This study suggests that dancers possess knowledge which include technique, method, principles, style, musicality as well as other information and skills pertaining to dance and that they possess this knowledge by adopting and embodying it through the unique bodily pedagogy used in dance training. Parviainen similarly argues that dancers' knowledge has to do with "knowing in and through the body" (2002:13). It is also important to note the multi-dimensionality of the knowledge that the ballet body contains; it is not merely the knowledge of movement but also of the stylistic interpretations, aesthetic intentions and physical requirements of such movements. The dancer does not merely possess the physical skill or knowledge as to how a movement is to be executed, but also possesses stylistic, musical, aesthetic and expressive or emotional knowledge that pertains to the movement. Dancers' knowledge is therefore a combination of acquired bodily knowledge through dance training and self-knowledge which is acquired through experience. In this sense not only does the body engage in processes of acquiring, embodying, transferring and preserving knowledge but it also engages in processes of self-fashioning, self-expression and self-fulfilment, enabling the individual to manifest their agency in doing so (Shusterman 2012).

We see a similar counter-hegemonic mode of thought in the work of scholars such as Alan Parker and Andre Lepecki who view the body as an alternative and dynamic archive. They call for the disruption of the boundaries between the body and the mind, as well as the separation of the past and the present/future. They argue instead for the continuation of history through the body into the present, and the interconnectedness rather than a separation of the body and mind[11]. Theorists such as Francisco J. Varela, George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, and Raymond

[11] Similarly, Merleau-Ponty and Shusterman both describe the body as consisting of three, not two, coexisting components. Shusterman (2012:27) explains that "whether we speak of body-mind or body and mind, we are dealing with what is fundamentally shaped by culture" and that culture itself "cannot thrive or even survive without the animating power of embodied thought and action". Shusterman's components of body, mind and culture, echo Merleau-Ponty's components of physical, vital and human. These components respectively refer to the body as a mechanism, as a living system and a social and cultural human being (Budziak *et al* 2017:105).

Gibbs contribute to the counter-discourse on the body and its dichotomous view in traditional Western philosophy, arguing that "conceptualization, even in its most abstract forms, is very often constructed through our bodies" and that cognition "is inconceivable without embodied action" (Budziak *et al* 2017:157). Therefore, somatics, somaesthetics, performance and embodiment are all theoretical contributions to the understanding of the body as a dynamic site of cultural and artistic experience, mediation and materialisation which all play a role in the preservation of our enigmatic practices and expressions.

These processes in which the body is involved, result in the manifestation of the individual's agency. Performance, embodiment and somaesthetics emphasise the significance of the body, but more specifically the agency of the embodied and sentient human subject (Budziak *et al* 2017:3).

1.2.7 Body-as-Archive and Performance-as-History

Alan Parker's notion of the body as an *anarchive* delineates the body-as-archive, bodies-as-archive and, furthermore, conversation-as-archive which highlights the individual's agency within this process. Parker draws on Brian Massumi's description of the anarchive which sees the body as an alternative archive, able to carry with it the past. The anarchive values the body as a site of memory – the body-as-archive – which serves as an entry point into Parker's analysis of the performing body as a point of convergence, "between bodies and gestures from the past, re-enacted through the body in the present" (2020:16). In other words, the body-as-archive involves the embodiment and performance of practices and knowledge of the past in the now. This embodied practice integrates the mind, body and culture, and, as a result, becomes an ameliorative experience in which the body is a locus of sensory-aesthetic appreciation (aesthesis) and creative selffashioning (Shusterman 2012;27). In other words, the body-as-archive has the ability to appreciate and create in a sensory, or physical sense, as well as an artistic, aesthetic or conceptual sense.

Cheryl LaFrance writes on the preservation of legacies and choreography in dance. She suggests that both people and archives, whether these archives consist of material sources or bodies-as-archive, are needed to preserve knowledge and create a living legacy (2013:7). As

According to both theorists, one cannot reduce the body to one of these components and all components must be considered when speaking of the body.

Parker argues, "both the archive and the body-as-archive" are "sources of memory and knowing" (2020:8). The body, in this way, presents us with a "*way into* the archive" (Parker 2020:8). This embodied practice, or embodied act of doing, allows dancers "to engage with the archive through and with the body, where thinking can emerge in the active encounter between the body and archive and the body-as-archive" (Parker 2020:9).

The body seems to play two significant roles when it comes to the preservation of arts and cultural heritage. Firstly, the body, as described earlier, functions as the vessel or conduit which can obtain, embody and transfer knowledge. Secondly, the body, by virtue of its dual nature and ability to cross boundaries, materialises or renders visible, knowledge which is otherwise imperceptible, elusive and easily subjugated. This can help us to acknowledge and integrate the body's artifactual information. The body can be said to personify the past, embodying knowledge that had been passed on from one generation to the next and, as such, can be viewed as a valuable archaeological resource. In this view, the body is recognised as the material remains of a human past, thereby carrying and preserving the past into the present. This view seems then to also unite, rather than separate, the past from the present, forming a continuum. This ability of the body to simultaneously embody the past and the present, demonstrates the way in which it learns, retains and creates knowledge over time.

1.2.8 Learning, Apprenticeship and Knowledge Transfer

In *Archaeology and Apprenticeship: Body Knowledge, Identity, and Communities of Practice* (2013) Wendrich explores the various aspects of knowledge transfer. These aspects include the different types and functions of knowledge transfer, the various methods of skill-development as well as the different approaches to learning, gaining experience and fostering the correct attitude towards the knowledge one obtains. Maurice Bloch (in Holdaway & Allen 2013:79) makes a distinction between the acquisition of linguistic-like knowledge and the acquisition of non-linguistic, practical knowledge which involves the acquiring of skills. For Francois Sigaut, the latter type of knowledge acquisition is associated with an apprenticeship system whereas the former is associated with formal learning that occurs in a school classroom (in Holdaway & Allen 2013:79). According to Oyeja Cruz Banks (2007:12) the latter – non-linguistic, practical knowledge – can also be understood as being concerned with experiential knowledge,

having to do with "the doing and the feeling and involves switching between the positions of dancer and researcher".

Wendrich (2013:2) defines *apprenticeship* as "the transmission of culture through a formal or informal teacher-pupil relation, as individuals or groups" with the purpose of developing physical and mental knowledge and skills[12].

As will be demonstrated in this research, the acquisition of these faculties is evident in the study of classical ballet and necessarily involves the embodiment of these abilities within the bodies of dancers. The *apprenticeship* approach to teaching and learning therefore makes up the bulk of dancers' training, in addition to theoretical knowledge. Various pedagogical approaches and teaching methodologies exist within the field of dance, involving both theoretical and practical components. In dance, learning and teaching which value experiential knowledge, involve the acquisition and performance of body and movement knowledge "such as the shapes, kinetic qualities, footwork and rhythms that make up dance" (Banks 2007:11). Along with this physical knowledge there is also cognitive knowledge taught and obtained in dance training. Yvonne Daniels (2005 in Banks 2007:11) explains that "[d]ancing is a method of perceiving and understanding the human condition, and permits knowing another cultural value". Banks (2007:45) also describes the nonconformity of dance as a non-textual form of teaching and learning, arguing that "[h]istorically, we have undervalued cultural texts such as dance for exploring the self and the social world of specialised knowledge". By examining the body and acknowledging its ability to embody, learn and transfer knowledge, existing knowledge and ways in which we think may be greatly expanded.

[12] These assets include: "dexterity, skill, endurance, memory, consideration, and properness, while gaining knowledge, inspiration, and/or motivation" (Wendrich 2013:2). Wendrich goes on to define each of these faculties, and their role in the learning and transmission of knowledge: "*Dexterity* is defined as the physical ability to perform a required action. *Skill*, then, is the ability to perform the proper action in the proper sequence at the proper time, following an internalized set of rules … *Endurance* is the capability to perform a particular action for the required length of time, or the number of repetitions needed to finish a product or a workday … *Memory* involves not just the recollection of the production process but also the collective memory of the craftsmanship and the products that are the result, while *consideration* requires the full attentive focus on the work and the social context. *Properness* involves learning the appropriate behavior, the enculturation of the apprentice in the world of the group or the master, and is often characterised as "becoming a human being" within society. This is a tacit, informal function of learning that is not only part, but in many cases the most important purpose, of apprenticeship. Lastly, *inspiration and motivation* are the driving forces in the relation between master and pupil" (Wendrich 2013:3).

1.2.9 Ballet in South Africa

This study aims to uncover how the Cecchetti Method of ballet training forms a living archive through the bodies of the teachers and students who practise the Method. As such, the study will offer an overview of ballet in South Africa, in order to contextualise the Cecchetti Method in the broader landscape of South African ballet and South African ballet training.

Classical ballet has been a part of the dynamic South African dance landscape since its arrival in the seventeenth century (Meewes, 2019:7). This study draws from various sources[13] that trace the history of ballet in South Africa, including Marina Grut's *The History of Ballet in South Africa* (1981) – which provides a comprehensive history of the art form and its development in South Africa up until the late 1970s – and *Post-Apartheid Dance: Many Bodies, Many Voices, Many Stories* (2012), edited by Sharon Friedman – which addresses the diversity of the conflicting realities experienced by dance artists in South Africa. Friedman's book reflects on the politics, conflicts and tensions between tradition and modernity as well as the need for dance in South Africa to reflect these tensions in the post-apartheid era (2012:viii). Furthermore, Sarah Jessica Meewes' *South African Ballet: A Performing Art during and after Apartheid* (2019) assists in tracing the history of ballet through pre- and post-apartheid South Africa. She discusses the responsiveness of the classical ballet community to its ever-changing environment. Meewes points to the significant role of the ballet community in South African history, arguing that dancers and dance pedagogues "reflect the changes in South African society through the stories in the performances that they produce" (2019:122). This study draws from these textual sources to provide a background of classical ballet in South Africa.

1.2.10 The Cecchetti Method – Archives, Pedagogy, Embodiment and Performance

The Cecchetti Method is one of the few methodological approaches to the training of classical ballet, and it is one of the training methods which is used in South Africa. Maestro Enrico Cecchetti (1850-1927), Italian dancer, mime artist and founder of the Cecchetti method, greatly influenced the foundations of modern classical ballet training. His method of training which he developed at the turn of the nineteenth century, "is as relevant today as it was when first created" (Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing 2014). His influence on ballet has been far-

[13] Although I consult these sources and focus on the ballet scene in South Africa, the findings of my study should hopefully be applicable and useful to international discourse on classical ballet.

reaching and resulted in the creation of The Cecchetti Society and the Cecchetti Ballet Faculty of the Imperial Society[14] of Teachers of Dancing – one of the world's oldest and most influential dance examination boards. The Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD) explains that "[t]he Cecchetti principles of training continue to produce outstanding artistic and technically accomplished dancers, able to work with today's directors across a spectrum of ballet and contemporary dance companies" ([Sa]). Tony Bennett (2007:20) highlights the contemporary relevance of the Cecchetti Method, stating that its underlying somatic approach is "relevant to contemporary training" and "can be used to promote a physical understanding of movement through principles of total body integration". Bennett quotes Richard Glasstone who states that "the exciting thing about so much of Cecchetti's work is the way it can and does transcend its time and its stylistic boundaries" (2007:21). This observation links to Spatz's concept of embodied technique (2015:234), which is described as an aspect of practice that endures and remains relatively stable over time, despite stylistic or aesthetic changes. Spatz suggests that technique is knowledge and, despite alternative approaches in *practice, technique* can be viewed as knowledge which endures. In other words, Cecchetti's Method – which consists of methodological, physical and theoretical principles – remains relatively stable and endures over time[15].

Cecchetti's Method of classical ballet was codified by Cyril Beaumont. Beaumont worked alongside Cecchetti himself as well as Stanislas Idzikowski, a student of Cecchetti. Their book, titled *A Manual of Classical Theatrical Dancing* (Cecchetti Method), which captures Cecchetti's theoretical principles and practical exercises, was completed in 1922. This *Manual* was the most comprehensive textbook of ballet to be published at that time and has had a profound influence on technical classical ballet education across the world – especially in England and South Africa (Beaumont 1948:10). Further volumes were compiled by Margaret Craske and Derra de Moroda. Much of Cecchetti's training legacy can be found in *The Manual*. Besides *The Manual*, this study also draws on a other textual sources to provide a thorough analysis of the material archive available to Cecchetti teachers and dancers. Furthermore, some of the Cecchetti exercises are documented on video, by Kate Simmons and Diane van Schoor,

[14] The word *society* implies that there is a community within this organisation. The cultural identities that exist within the community are therefore multiple and not just taking shape along the historical lines that shaped ethnicity, race and nationality.
[15] The *practice* of ballet can look different depending on the time in which it is practised, but the *technique* endures. Technique here does not refer specifically to classical ballet technique, but rather the method or system of practising classical ballet. It refers to an embodied technique, which is essentially knowledge, contained within the body. It is the outcome of practice and consists of experience, ability, and the archive (Spatz 2015:231).

among others, which will also contribute to my analysis. Another source of knowledge that I will take into account is the body – my own, as well as that of my teachers, peers and own students, by observing both my learning and teaching experiences – which holds the unspoken knowledge of the Method within it and has the ability to transfer this knowledge onto another body. By considering these sources, I will investigate how dance as an embodied practice negotiates material archives alongside the embodied archives of, here specifically, the practitioners of the Cecchetti ballet training method. In doing so, I hope to demonstrate that, while these material resources play a role in preserving the Cecchetti legacy, there is a great deal of knowledge that is being exchanged in the embodied archives of the practitioners – teachers and students – of the Cecchetti Method.

Some efforts have been made to archive the Cecchetti Method of dance through videography as seen with the filming of the Maestro Enrico Cecchetti Diploma[16]. The Cecchetti Trust (2021) explains the importance of such a project:

> As well as being a vital teaching support for Cecchetti teachers and students, the DVD is intended to be an accessible resource for anyone wishing to learn more about the rich Cecchetti legacy.

Efforts to enhance and expand these collections are also slow and have been described as both "ambitious and expensive … requiring huge fundraising campaign[s] to realise the project[s]" (Cecchetti Society Trust 2021). The Trust benefits solely from the purchases of these resources – manuals, DVDs and manuscripts – and donations.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

This study explores the body as a living archive capable of obtaining, embodying, transferring and preserving intangible knowledge, specifically in the context of the Cecchetti Method of classical ballet training. Dance ethnography and somaesthetics, as theoretical approaches, suitably help demonstrate how, by pooling resources from these various fields, a holistic approach to documenting and preservation of arts and cultural heritage emerges. From the

[16] The Cecchetti Trust was responsible for this project of filming the Diploma work in a heritage DVD.

perspective of dance ethnography, somaesthetics and performance studies, this study poses the following question:

> How can the human body be seen as a living archive of embodied and intangible knowledge, specifically in the context of Classical Ballet in the South African arts and culture milieu?

Other questions that emerge and to which this study will also respond are:

- What are the various ways in which dance is and can be documented?
- Why are material and textual sources inadequate in terms of archiving and preserving intangible knowledge?
- How does dance simultaneously involve the continuity of the past and acknowledgment of the future and how does this aid our understanding of the multifaceted nature of dance, the body and human experience?
- How does classical ballet, specifically the Cecchetti Method, bridge the gap and achieve continuity between past and present, between tradition and modernity?

1.4 RESEARCH METHODS

1.4.1 Methodology

This study is largely involved in the pursuit of comprehending the artistic and cultural expressions as well as the modes of knowledge transfer and self-fashioning in South African arts and culture, specifically classical ballet. Since comprehension lies at the core of this project, a hermeneutical methodology with an interdisciplinary approach will be used. Such an approach takes into account the various contributing factors that are relevant to the comprehension, interpretation and the treasuring of South African art and culture.

Arti Nirmal explains that "[h]ermeneutics, in general, is a method of inquiry by engaging with the 'who', 'what', 'why', 'how', 'when', 'where' and 'by what means'" (2019:129). In other words, understanding, interpreting, and contextualising information is at the core of hermeneutics. Nirmal further explains that, in contrast to the natural sciences where research is conducted experientially in order to study natural patterns, humanities research is based "on the 'expression of the experiences' of those natural patterns or phenomena" (2019:129). In

essence, "hermeneutics is the study of understanding" (Nirmal 2019:130). Although this methodology existed primarily as an approach to studying and interpreting sacred texts, 'modern' hermeneutics expanded itself to comprise of two subdivisions, the first involved in the interpretation of textual artefacts and the other in the interpretation of cultural events (Nirmal 2019:130).

Jens Zimmerman (2017) identifies several points that are characteristic of hermeneutic discourse and methodology. First and foremost, Zimmerman (2017) refers to hermeneutics as "the art of understanding and making oneself understood", arguing that it is much more than mere logical analysis and general interpretation. Understanding, for hermeneutic thinkers, is an interpretive act which involves the integration of various things into a meaningful whole (Zimmerman 2017). Hermeneutics, as methodology, therefore, requires a holistic attitude or interdisciplinary approach in order to integrate all relevant factors into a meaningful and accurate whole. Secondly, he explains that the term hermeneutics is of ancient Greek origin. Hermeneutics is derived from the term *hermeneuein* which means to utter, to explain or to translate (Zimmerman 2017) which makes it rather suitable for a discussion on the translation or transference of knowledge[17].

Shusterman's (2012:25) argument that the parameters of humanities must be broadened by including the body and somatic discourse into the field of humanities, has already been mentioned under 1.2.4, with his reference to the anti-somatic bias. In the traditional understanding of the humanities, rooted in the distinction between *Geisteswissenschaften* and *Naturwissenschaften*, the omnipresent division between the mental or emotional and the bodily leads to the omission of the body in humanistic studies. Shusterman further explains that, to bridge this gap we need to recognise that body, mind and culture are deeply intertwined and require an interdisciplinary research programme to integrate their study (2012:27).

Hermeneutics can also help bridge the gap between the past and the present, as argued by Paul Ricoeur (in Nirmal 2019:138). For Ricoeur (in Nirmal 2019:138) "[t]he purpose of all interpretation is to conquer a remoteness, a distance between the past cultural epoch to which the text belongs and the interpreter himself". Hermeneutics as methodology would therefore allow for the comprehension of living artistic and cultural expressions, the embodiment of

[17] Zimmerman (2017) explains: "The ancient Greek philosopher Plato (427–347 BCE), used the word hermeneutics in dealing with poets as 'hermeneuts of the divine', and his student Aristotle (384–322 BCE) wrote the first extant treatise on hermeneutics, in which he showed how spoken and written words were expressions of inner thoughts".

knowledge as well as the creative products attached to these expressions, including the translation and preservation thereof between and among different generations.

In addition to the interpretive methodology described above, other qualitative research methods will also be used, namely studying archives and conducting an interview with Diane van Schoor, a prominent custodian of the Cecchetti Method[18]. The Cecchetti Society Trust recognises the need to preserve the Cecchetti legacy and is involved in various projects to record and circulate the Cecchetti Method in contemporary formats in order to "make the work accessible to new generations of dancers, teachers and ballet lovers" (Cecchetti Society Trust 2021). Printed resources recording the Method, such as *The Manual*, *Theory and Practice of Allegro* handbooks, syllabi and manuscripts of the music used in the Cecchetti syllabi can be found at various ISTD shops across the world (Cecchetti Society Trust 2021). Cecchetti music has also been recorded in CD format and test and grade[19] dances have been recorded in DVD format. The recent filming of the Maestro Enrico Cecchetti Diploma is perhaps the most notable attempt in documenting and preserving the Method[20]. The various Cecchetti establishments across the globe also engaged in various smaller projects and events in celebration of the Cecchetti Society's centenary in 2022. These projects include workshops and demonstrations focusing on the principles of the Method, lectures and talks on the history and work of Cecchetti, conferences, internationally live streamed classes as well as summer and winter intensives.

The key figure in the Cecchetti Society with whom I conducted an interview[21] is Diane van Schoor[22]. Van Schoor was born and trained as a ballet dancer in South Africa. She danced

[18] Future avenues for this study could involve engagement with a broader community and interviews with more people from the ballet community to give a more nuanced view of this particular archive.
[19] Today, there are eight levels of the Cecchetti training, running from Grade One up to Advanced Two. There are seven additional levels (starting from Pre-primary and leading up to Test Five) as well as the recent addition of Intermediate Foundation which leads into the Vocational levels. Tests are done in between the grades where needed to allow better progression of the student from one grade to the next. Done in order, these levels build upon one another, eventually developing into the original Cecchetti exercises and, in the Maestro Enrico Cecchetti Diploma, the culmination of the entire Method. The training of classical ballet has therefore become equated with the grading system of an academic or educational institution.
[20] This project was carried out by the Cecchetti Society Trust, involving dancers from both the Birmingham Royal Ballet and the Royal Ballet, Ross McGibbon as film director, Diane van Schoor as artistic director with her husband, Roland Thompson's accompaniment (Cecchetti Society Trust 2021). The film is available in DVD and Blue Ray formats including and Italian and Japanese edition or translation (Cecchetti Society Trust 2021).
[21] This interview was ethically cleared.
[22] Van Schoor is the recipient and holder of numerous accolades and accomplishments, including the Enrico Cecchetti Mabel Ryan Medal, Maestro Enrico Cecchetti Diploma and Fellowships of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing London and Royal Society for the Arts, the Cecchetti Dedication Award 2000 and, in 2011, the Enrico Cecchetti Gold Medal, a lifetime achievement award (Cecchetti Society Trust 2021).

professionally with Cape Town City Ballet (formerly known as CAPAB). In addition to founding her own ballet school in Stellenbosch in 1978, she held a lectureship in Movement Studies in the Dramatic Arts Faculty at the University of Stellenbosch and was the Artistic Director of the Cecchetti Society of Southern Africa (Cecchetti Society Trust 2021). Van Schoor became part of the artistic staff of the Royal Ballet Upper and Lower schools in 2000 and was Ballet Principal of the Royal Ballet School, White Lodge from 2004-2014 (Cecchetti Society Trust 2021). Apart from having taught at some of the world's most prestigious schools and companies, van Schoor also acted as Artistic Director for the film of the Maestro Enrico Cecchetti Diploma. She has served the Cecchetti Society Trust from 2014, as Trustee, and 2021, as Vice Chair (Cecchetti Society Trust 2021). Van Schoor's career and continued involvement with the Cecchetti Society make her a prominent representative of the Cecchetti Method, and therefore a valuable part of and contributor to the living archive this study explores.

Archives are indeed helpful in contextualising the content of this study, but it is also necessary to critique the current archive and its limitations. Engaging with participants in the dance community is also necessary to interpret human experience and expression through dance in order to access knowledge that exceeds the material archive. In particular, I engaged with persons involved in projects intended for preserving and documenting classical ballet, be it syllabi, method or choreography. This includes myself, as teacher as well as student, as I engage in various teaching and learning experiences – workshops, daily classes and other instances, some of which explicitly speak to the revision and maintenance of Cecchetti training in South Africa. It also includes Diane van Schoor, custodian of the Cecchetti Method, with whom I conducted an interview. This engagement and my involvement in the ballet world forms part of the qualitative research carried out during the course of this study.

1.4.2 Theoretical Framework

The research and writing of this dissertation is conducted through the lens of both dance ethnography and somaesthetics. The two frameworks overlap in many ways. Firstly, somatics and dance ethnography both place emphasis on the body and bodily experience, as well as the co-dependence of the body, mind, and culture. Dance ethnography, as described by Deidre Sklar (1991:6), recognises movement and dance as a kind of cultural knowledge. According to

Sklar, "[d]ance ethnography depends upon the postulate that cultural knowledge is embodied in movement, especially the highly stylized and codified movement we call dance" (1991:6). Sklar (1991:6) further argues that "the knowledge involved in dancing is not just somatic, but mental and emotional as well, encompassing cultural history, beliefs, values, and feelings". Such a framework provides fertile ground for the exploration of classical ballet training as a conveyor of cultural knowledge in South Africa.

The second way in which dance ethnography echoes the themes and principles of somaesthetics is through its resistance against the textual. Sklar explains that this is what makes dance ethnography unique among other types of ethnography; "it is necessarily grounded in the body's experience rather than in texts, artifacts, or abstraction" (1991:6). Helena Wulff (2013) also explains how dance ethnography exposes hegemony and presents opportunity for resistance and critique against dominant knowledge systems:

> Dance ethnography has revealed political and religious control of dance, in colonial and postcolonial settings as well as in many other contemporary situations of social inequality that can be said to lead to resistance or social critique …

In this sense, dance ethnography presents itself as a rich point of departure into the body as a site of resistance and bodily knowledge as resistant towards hegemonic forms of learning, teaching and knowing. Dance indicates social and cultural circumstances. It often identifies points of conflict and impels change and transition (Wulff 2013). The nature of the arts, such as dance, has always offered a space in which political and social ideas can be challenged, a space where attention can be called to provocative themes with a certain extent of freedom. Dance ethnography forms part of the broader field of anthropology. Wulff (2013) describes the two sides of dance ethnography, namely the systematic face-to-face research of dance and the textual presentation of the data derived from this face-to-face research. In other words, dance ethnography involves engaging with people from the dance community before translating into academic literature the experience and expression found within this community. This is why, as mentioned above, conversations and discussions with individuals from the dance community will be conducted as part of this study to form an understanding of the community. Furthermore, Wulff argues that it is vital for the dance ethnographer to take part in the dancing because this is what generates the special knowledge which can, as with any other bodily practice, only be accessed through participation (2013). As a ballet dancer and pedagogue, and a member of the Cecchetti Society, I engage in the embodiment, transference, performance and

preservation of the special knowledge of dance, and particularly Cecchetti ballet training, on a regular basis.

Dance ethnography involves producing ethnographic descriptions, which Clifford Geertz refers to as "thick" description (in Sklar 1991:6). Thick ethnographic description "takes us into the heart of that of which it is an interpretation" (Geertz in Sklar 1991:6). Dance ethnography looks beyond the movement and the dance, seeking to understand the human experience and people involved in the dance. Sklar (1991:6) explains:

> That is why we peer beyond dance toward all aspects of life and perceive dance in the contextual web of social relationships, environment, religion, aesthetics, politics, economics and history. As George E. Marcus and Michael M. J. Fischer point out about the ethnographic enterprise in general, it is a "messy, qualitative business" with its emphasis on holistic, contextualized information.

Such an approach – one that pursues understanding and interpretation from a holistic point of view – sits well with the hermeneutic methodology applied for the development of this study.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study hopes to draw attention to the issue of dichotomised modes of thought which creates and maintains a gap between embodied knowledge and textual knowledge. I hope to create a heightened awareness of the interconnectedness of body and mind, visuality and non-visuality, as well as tangibility and intangibility in the human experience of dance.

Classical ballet, as with many performing arts in South Africa, faces many challenges in the country's current economic climate. The performing arts continue to be viewed as a luxury and non-essential to everyday existence and survival. Exacerbating this situation, is an extreme lack of funding. Furthermore, as a result of the lack of funds, resources, experience and recognition, local talent, in the form of both dancers, pedagogues and choreographers, has no other option but to move their artistic pursuits abroad contributing to the fragility of the arts in South Africa. However, these artists possess significant value in the community as art makers, people who convey stories and meaning, stimulate creativity and diversity and both encourage and partake in significant artistic and cultural practices such as the transference of knowledge. The benefits of the arts can clearly be seen both on an individual and collective level. Studies have concluded

that "the benefits of the arts and culture to individuals [include] improved cognitive abilities, confidence, motivation, problem solving and communication skills" and, in terms of the broader society, the arts have "positive effects on the economy" (Holden 2018:43). This suggests that arts education outside of mainstream education is important to individuals and society[23]. It is therefore important to draw attention to and celebrate the value of such art forms in our communities and everyday experiences. Upon my commencement with this study, I realised the scarcity and fragmentation of resources and writing on classical ballet, especially in the academic field. As a result, I believe this study will further discourse on dance in South Africa, add to discourse on classical ballet and encourage interdisciplinary research in the performing arts.

1.6 OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS

Chapter One introduces the topic of this study, which is to examine the body as a primary means of archiving and preserving classical ballet, specifically the Cecchetti Method of classical ballet training. This Chapter also outlines the literature which informs the study, which ranges across various fields in the humanities. I draw primarily from the fields of somatics, embodied research and performance, including the work of scholars such as Shusterman, Parker, Taylor and Spatz. The Chapter offers a theoretical framework that grounds the research and its approaches. Furthermore, dance ethnography's anthropological foundations provide an understanding of how the body functions as a living container of history in the present.

In Chapter Two, I trace the history of classical ballet from its beginnings in Europe and its spread to the rest of the world, specifically Southern Africa. The Chapter considers the art form and its traditional, yet ever-adjusting, nature. The significant changes in aesthetics, style and purpose of ballet, as well as the endurance of its principles and traditions, demonstrates an unconventional yet valuable perspective on modernity, as simultaneously embracing novelty and preserving the value of certain traditions and principles of the past.

[23] "Arts education is widely believed to provide life skills and benefits in addition to the primary skills taught" (Holden 2018:13).

Chapter Three outlines the history of the Cecchetti Society, its formation in Southern Africa and the significance of the Cecchetti Method, locally and globally.

Chapter Four examines the current and existing archives of classical ballet in South Africa, which seem to be very fragmented across the country. These existing archives are subjected to financial, political and other predispositions which not only lead to an incomplete, but in some cases a completely discarded, archive. I also look at the sources that are readily available to students and teachers studying the Cecchetti Method. I attempt to critique this archive for its textual nature and for under-valuing the body as a means of knowledge preservation and transfer. The importance of the human body in archival processes is highlighted.

Chapter Five delves further into the role of the body in preserving knowledge and processes of learning. The Cecchetti Method, its sources – both material and bodily – and syllabi are explored, as well as the various ways in which it is being preserved, including printed materials and activities that involve the human body and its participation such as workshops and classes. This chapter looks at the Cecchetti Method and its relevance in the contemporary dance world. I engage with the textual sources and compare these to my own bodily experience of learning the art, from both the perspective of a student and teacher. I include observations from my daily classes, workshops and other events where dancers and teachers of the Cecchetti community come together, in order to provide a more intimate account of the pedagogy, learning and archiving of classical ballet in South Africa.

When evaluating the Method, it will become clear that certain aspects, principles and traditions remain pertinent and are maintained within the classical ballet community, whereas other aspects are open for adaptation, artistic freedom and aesthetic evolution. What emerges is the notion of the simultaneous preservation of tradition alongside adaptation to contemporary society as well as the creation of new works, ideas, and approaches.

Chapter Six is the conclusion of this study. Here I make some final remarks on the pedagogy of classical ballet, the insufficiency of the textual and material archives, and the body as the primary carrier of dance knowledge. I return to Siegel's quote (cited on page 1 of this study), demonstrating the truth within it – that it is impossible to capture dance in merely a fixed form of documentation – but also concluding that the body, with its dynamic possibilities, is the primary and living archive of such dynamic knowledge.

This study aims to highlight the tension between the ideas of tradition/modernity and history/contemporary and argues that preservation occurs simultaneously with creation; this is what constitutes our living experiences and modernity in itself. I explore how the Cecchetti Method constitutes a living archive that allows changes and fluctuations whilst the traditions and embodied technique endure.

CHAPTER TWO: TRACING THE HISTORY OF CLASSICAL BALLET

(From Europe to South Africa)

Each cultural expression and art form displays the historical underpinnings of its era through its techniques and aesthetics, evolving and responding to the changing environments in which it exists. The same is true for the art of classical ballet. Meewes explains that classical ballet "has constantly engaged with, and responded to, the changing South African environment" (2019:7). This chapter provides an overview of the history of classical ballet, from its beginnings in Europe, and its subsequent dissemination to the rest of the world, specifically South Africa, and argues that classical ballet forms part of the living archive of South African arts and culture.

2.1 European Beginnings

The art of classical ballet is one of the most recognisable and celebrated dance styles in the world. The art form has a long history and continues to carry with it various political and symbolic meanings, evolving and developing throughout the ages as it responds to its changing environment. Born in the royal courts of Renaissance France and Italy, it was professionalised in the national or state theatres of Europe, nurtured by the fantasy and finesse of Romanticism[24], popularised by the inception of consumerism and commercialism[25], and resurrected by the innovation and experimentation of modernism (Karthas 2012:961)[26]. While Italy is often credited with the inception of classical ballet, the French enabled it to flourish into the art we know today, and to this day, the majority of ballet vocabulary originates from the French language. When ballet began in the royal courts during the European Renaissance period[27], it

[24] One of the traits of the Romantic ballet which remains at the heart of classical ballet is its emphasis on escapism and its enduring traditional stories; both on the part of the audience and the artists themselves.
[25] Karthas (2012:965) notes: "… by the 1880s, there was an increasing moralization of the theatre and, furthermore, even the allocation of honors given to theatre women". Karthas quotes Berlanstein: " … the republican order could not even maintain the separation of public and private spheres" due to "an expanding commercial culture of department stores and mass entertainment" under the Third Republic" (2012:965-966). Ballet was now performed and enjoyed as a form of entertainment for the public's consumption.
[26] More recently, I would suggest, the art has experienced an identity crisis of sorts with the onset of postmodernism, causing the alienation of many in the ballet industry.
[27] The French term "renaissance", which translates to *rebirth*, which represents the significant cultural change following the Middle Ages (Ward 2019). The Renaissance "symbolised the beginning of a new era of art, rebirthing the classical models of Ancient Greek and Rome periods while using the modern techniques" (Ward 2019). The Renaissance period not only cultivated a new change in art, but in knowledge and culture as well

was known as *ballet de cour* – simply 'court ballet'. Ballet would form part of elaborate and politically driven spectacles and celebrations among the nobility in their lavish royal palaces and supported by wealthy patrons, such as the Medicis[28] in Florence.

Early ballet techniques in the Renaissance drew from folk dances, which were transformed into the very first ballets. As Meewes puts it, the "ballets were 'classier' versions of country dances" (2019:25). At this stage, ballet was reserved for the nobility and was performed within the parameters of the royal court. Though many courtly entertainments involved ballet, *Lé Ballet Comique de la Reine*[29] (1581) – translated to 'the Queen's comic ballet' – is recognised as the first identifiable ballet, involving elaborate costumes and scenery. This choreographic and performance style of *ballet de cour* thrived both as court entertainment and a powerful means of conveying political and allegorical messages (Durante 2018:15).

Early performances had a mystical aesthetic revolving around allusions to classical mythology and can be seen in other areas of the arts as well, such as poetry (De la Croix, Tansey & Kirkpatrick 1991:624). De la Croix *et al* (1991:624) state:

> Artists and poets at this time did not directly imitate classical antiquity, but used the myths, with delicate perception of their charm, in a way still tinged with medieval romance.

Classical antiquity's emphasis on lines, harmony and proportion, which re-emerged in the Renaissance period, certainly affected the aesthetics of dance and movement, and these remain significant principles in classical ballet today[30]. The body in movement and both realistic and transcendent action was at the heart of Greek classicism (Macaulay 2015). This is expressed in Renaissance painting, engraving and sculpture, as well as in the art of dance; "[t]he twisting of

(Ward 2019). "It changed the way the citizens thought, with first the rediscovery of classical philosophy, literature, and art, as well as the new discoveries in travel, invention, and style. This era was so important that it changed the way the world thought, with new inventions, styles, and explorations that are still influential and occurring to this day" (Ward 2019).

[28] Ballet especially gained prominence when French King Henri II wedded Catherine de Medici from Florence in 1533. France saw an explosion of Italian fashion, style and taste with her arrival as she brought with her Italian clothing, art, sculpture, architecture and furniture, giving free reign to her Italian tastes, customs and cultural interests. She held lavish spectacles and flamboyant exhibitions which were intended not merely for pleasure and entertainment but were also saturated with highly political symbolism. Soon, Italian dance masters were also brought to teach ballet in France (Meewes 2019:25).

[29] The five-and-a-half-hour work was commissioned by Catherine de Medici's daughter-in-law, Marguerite de Vaudémont, in celebration of her marriage to the Duke of Joyeuse in 1581 (Durante 2018:15).

[30] As mentioned earlier, classical ballet responded to its environment but also retained some of the characteristics of each era through which it moved.

figures through space shows the growing interest in realistic action" (De la Croix et al 1991:618). Realistic and sublime at once, the classic *Doryphoros* (Polykleitos 450-440 BCE) and its Renaissance sibling, *David* (Michelangelo 1501-1504), demonstrate that "[e]ven in relatively static positions, the implication of movement is the transfiguring achievement of these classical figures" (Macaulay 2015). These sculptures express the classically ideal body, which is thought of by many as a factor which governs the art of classical ballet (Macaulay 2015).

2.2 King Louis XIV

It was a century later, however, in the court of King Louis XIV, that ballet truly began to flourish. King Louis XIV is credited with popularising and standardising the art form. It is believed that ballet, as we know it today, began under his reign. He held a significant interest in the arts and, like Catherine de Medici, he also held glorious productions in which he performed alongside his courtiers and nobility. Louis XIV was a passionate dancer, performing many roles himself; most famously the role of the god Apollo[31] in *Ballet Royal de la Nuit* – translating to 'Royal Ballet of the Night' – in 1653, to celebrate the end of the civil war. Ballets still had political purpose during this time, devoid of narrative but constructed around a theme, both informed by classical mythology and current events (Sitarchuk 2019).

Out of his passion for dance and hunger for power, Louis XIV had ballet translated to the written page for the first time in history. He had ballet master, choreographer and fellow dancer, Pierre Beauchamp, codify the five positions of the feet[32] (Sitarchuk 2019). Ken Pierce mentions that by 1684, Beauchamp had developed a notation system which enabled the documentation of dances, ensuring that these dances were disseminated and properly maintained in the dance community (1998:287). Beauchamp was not alone in the endeavour to codify ballet using notation. By the late 1600s there were at least three other systems[33] in place with which to

[31] It is believed that Louis XIV adopted the sun as his personal emblem, the symbol of Apollo, god of peace and the arts, and would forever be immortalised as the Sun King – *le roi de soleil* – since his appearance in this twelve-hour ballet (Durante 2018:15).
[32] These positions not only laid the foundations for ballet but were also represented in artworks, with individuals often posing in the fourth position, which eventually formed part of nobility itself, demonstrating grace and majesty (Sitarchuk 2019).
[33] By Andre Lorin, Jean Favier and Sieur de la Haise.

document dance in the form of notation. Beauchamp's notation system, however, proved most effective and accepted (Pierce 1998:287).

In 1700, Raoul Auger Feuillet was the first to publish the codification of ballet. The notation system, initiated by Beauchamp, was refined to ensure the preservation and dissemination of ballet. By 1704, five volumes had been created, codifying the dances, texts and symbols used during that time as well as describing the rules of etiquette that were to be followed by dancers (Pierce 1998:291). In 1706, John Weaver translated and published these volumes in English (Thorp 1992:74)[34]. Later on, they were also translated into German. With more than three hundred of the dances recorded still in use today, Pierce affirms that the "Beauchamp-Feuillet system proved quite robust, adaptable to the styles of different choreographers and notators over the course of the 18th century" (1998:294).

France's preservation of Classicism is apparent in the refined court dances that were danced with dignity, humility and grace. Even their fencing sequences were stylised and conformed to the classical aesthetic that conveyed beautiful lines and noble salutes. It is also believed that the use of turnout – the outward rotation of the legs – began during this time. Dancer and historian Belinda Quiery ascribes this to the bulkiness of the boots they used to wear[35] which resulted in the men swinging their legs gracefully with slight turnout as they walked in order to appear more elegant and sophisticated (Royal Opera House 2014). The turnout of the legs also enhanced the dancer's range of motion, which eventually contributed to the evolution of the height of leg in ballet. When ballet progressed onto the proscenium stage in the 1700s dancers started moving more in a side-to-side manner, performing to an audience which sits on one side of the stage, as opposed to all around, as in the courts (Suzanne 2008). In order to move in a sideways motion with more ease, turnout was employed[36], and eventually became a distinguishing aesthetic feature of classical ballet[37] (Suzanne 2008).

[34] Thorp's article is on a certain P. Siris, whose background and full name remains unclear, but is also said to have translated these codifications in the same year as Weaver.
[35] Specifically, during their fencing practice. Fencing routines were also highly stylised, and it is evident that there was interinfluence between the practice of dancing and the practice of fencing, in terms of style, choreographic nature, stance and other elements (Royal Opera House 2014).
[36] Gerhard Ulrich Vieth notes: "… if a dancer presents himself *en face*, all the movements at his hips, knees, and feet occur on the same plane as the eye of the beholder as soon as he dances with his feet and knees held straight to the fore. These parts are seen foreshortened in every bend, and the beholder consequently can hardly make out the movements, which then have no effect" (1794:387-389).
[37] Today, turnout, among other aspects of dance, has become exaggerated to such an extent that the art has become athletic, losing its artistry, as some have argued. Julie Cronshaw (2021) states that "the ballet class has become a competition of physical prowess; who can kick their leg the highest? Who can do the most turns? Who has the flattest turnout? It has very little to do with the original ideals of the art of classical ballet … the intention of art

2.3 Opera Ballet

In 1661 Louis XIV founded the Académie Royale de Danse, the first dance academy in Paris, and in 1681 ballet formally transitioned from the courts to the stage. The Académie Royale de Danse, which still exists today, was led by thirteen renowned ballet masters who standardised and codified the practices in court dance (Durante 2018:15). Eight years later, the Académie Royale de Musique was established. Together the Académie Royale de Danse and Académie Royale de Musique formed a theatre, opera and dance institution which incorporated singers, musicians and dancers (Durante 2018:15). It was here that ballet dancer and master, Pierre Beauchamp, established the five positions of the feet which still form the basis of classical ballet technique in the twenty-first century (Meewes 2019:26). At this time ballet was performed in the theatre as part of opera, hence the term *Opera Ballet.* Ballet, with its expressiveness and storytelling ability, became an essential part of the opera dramatisation. It was included in operas as interludes called *divertissements*. Ballet was still very much a male domain at this time, reserved for the nobility and those with a certain social status. The aesthetic of ballet remained the same, with the addition of turnout – although to a much lesser degree than we see today.

As ballet spread to the rest of Europe during the Enlightenment, other European cities soon opened opera houses as well. Ballet companies were founded with the purpose of training dancers to perform in the operas. The first ballet company was established at the Paris Opera in 1713. The dancers made use of a quarter rise, or *pied á qautre*, during this time and the dances were still very courteous. Movements became more grand and impressive when the heeled shoe was replaced by the ballet slipper, and the big heavy Baroque skirts were exchanged for the romantic tutu, which allowed for more freedom of movement. These changes occurred with the onset of *ballet d'action*.

is not just to entertain but to move, to inspire, and perhaps even to change and to educate an audience. If ballet were purely a form of entertainment, it would be a sport, such as gymnastics or diving. Ballet is now perceived as an athletic art."

2.4 Ballet d'Action

With mime, gesture and storytelling now entwined in classical ballet, the art form grew all the more independent, able to produce drama, narrative and action without having to be combined with opera. Ballet no longer elevated social hierarchies, but started eliminating them, opening up the world of dance to the common people. In England, ballet was substantially transformed as an art form with the help of John Weaver, English dancer, ballet master and choreographer. Weaver believed that dance could translate narratives, convey significant messages and elicit an emotional response from people, and so he devised ballets that told stories through mime and movement (Durante 2018:30). He was also the first to translate Beauchamp and Feuillet's codifications to English (Thorp 1992:74). Ballets were centred around everyday life as the common people became involved, deposing the aristocratic principles that governed the dance and stripping the art of its noble and royal semblance. Ballet was no longer a merely decorative component in opera. It was finally established as an independent form of performative art, placed among the rest of the creative arts.

The emphasis on expression and meaning changed the face of ballet. It opened the doors of the once male-dominated realm of ballet, loaded with its inherent political meanings, for the first female dance celebrities such as Marie Camargo[38]. Dancers and choreographers were now creating ballets of dramatic expression, referred to as *ballet d'action* – a ballet with a narrative. *Ballet d'action* was, according to choreographer Jean-Georges Noverre, created to "copy nature faithfully and to delineate the emotions upon the stage" (Karthas 2012:962). Noverre aimed for a harmonious balance of drama, dance, music and design (Durante 2018:30). Similarly, in the other arts, "the pleasures of town life" (De la Croix et al 1991:821) were at the heart of the art of eighteenth-century France. The prominent theme of Rococo, "love, artfully and archly pursued through erotic frivolity and playful intrigue" (De la Croix 1991:823), is exemplified in Jean Dauberval's *La Fille mal gardée* (1791), one of the oldest full-length ballets still performed today, which tells the story of two lovers, a meddling mother and an unsuccessful attempt at matchmaking (Roberts-Tse 2020).

As mentioned, the dancers' attire and shoes changed during this time. The very first ballet shoe was a heeled slipper, which was not only uncomfortable but also prevented jumps and other technical movements. The heel was discarded which allowed dancers to execute more

[38] Famous French ballerina from the eighteenth century.

impressive steps, expanding the vocabulary of ballet movements. Camargo is believed to be the first dancer to remove the heels from her ballet shoes and forge the way for the soft ballet slippers dancers still wear today (Guiheen 2020). The flat ballet shoe perhaps also lend itself to the elongation of the lines created by the dancer's legs, making them appear longer when pointed, or plantar flexed[39]. Additionally, the dancers could also go higher onto their rise[40] with a soft ballet slipper. The long and elaborate Baroque skirts were also shortened and simplified to show off the dancer's lower leg and footwork, and to facilitate jumps and other movements.

The French Rococo style brought with it a more sensual and feminine aesthetic, which coincided with the emergence of the ballerina in the 1700s. De la Croix writes that "[t]he feminine look of the Rococo style suggests that the age was dominated by the taste and the social initiative of women – and to a large extent, it was[41]" (1991:821). With the emergence of the ballerina image came the first female body ideal for classical ballet. Some consider Marie Camargo to be the first dancer to set a standard body ideal for ballet (Bedinghaus 2018). Camargo was rather short – interestingly the opposite of the ballet body ideal in the 1900s – which led to an increase in short dancers within ballet companies, since it was common for companies to select dancers of the same size, shape and height in order to create a uniform look on stage (Bedinghaus 2018). Camargo was also the first to demonstrate the *arabesque*[42], a distinctive pose in classical ballet, captured in a painting by French Rococo artist Nicolas Lancret (see figure 1).

[39] "A pointed foot completes the line of the leg and can give the illusion of a longer, higher leg line" (Doudna 2017).
[40] *Rise* in ballet refers to the dancer raising their heels off the floor and balancing or moving with their body weight over the ball of the foot and eventually the toes. The extent to which the heel is raised may differ and is referred to as quarter rise (*piéd á quatre*), half rise (*piéd á demi*), three-qaurter rise (*piéd á trois quatre*) and finally so high that the dancer advances onto their toes (*sur la pointes* or *piéd á pointes*). As dance progressed and dance attire evolved, so did the extent to which the dancer raised their heels off the floor.
[41] De la Croix *et al* continue: "Women – Madame de Pompadour in France, Maria Theresa in Austria, Elizabeth and Catherine in Russia – held some of the highest positions in Europe, and female influence was felt in any number of smaller courts" (1991:821).
[42] Cecchetti remarked in an 1894 manuscript that, although there are endless creative variations of the pose, an *arabesque* "should always submit to the laws of good taste, and of theory" (Ryman 1998:7). The laws of good taste, here, refer to Classical simplicity and continuity of line, and the theory refers to the law of opposition and the Classical concept of proportion. The term *arabesque* refers to the curvilinear motifs and graceful lines of Arabic Islamic architecture, which inspired the *arabesque* poses in ballet.

Figure 1: Nicolas Lancret, *La Camargo Dancing* [oil on canvas], ca. 1730 (National Gallery of Art 2023).

2.5 Romantic Ballet

Romantic ballet emerged in the early nineteenth century. By 1820, the technical foundation of nineteenth century ballet had been defined by Carlo Blasis in his *Treatise on Dancing* (full title of the book: *Traité Elémentair, Théorique et Pratique de l'Art de la Danse*). With the establishment of the theories and principles of the art, the technical training of classical ballet gained momentum. Blasis thereby prepared the way for the development of the Romantic period of ballet.

Roundabout the same time, in the arts, the traits of Baroque and Rococo gave way to Romanticism (De la Croix et al 1991:843). "[D]amsels in distress, ghouls, and other imaginings of the darker side of the psyche" formed part of the "sensibility for sublime terror" which characterised the Romantic era (De la Croix et al 1991:844). Some Romantic themes expressed in artworks include "[h]opeless love, perished beauty, the grave, the purity of primitive life, and the consolation of religion" (De la Croix et al 1991:872). These themes also found expression in ballets. The notions of hopeless love and the grave, for instance, are reminiscent of Jean Coralli and Jules Perrot's *Giselle* (1841) which tells the story of innocent love, betrayal, grief and death. The second act opens with the image of the grave, where Giselle, after having

died of a broken heart, emerges as a ghost, or a *wili* – the haunted spirit of woman who died on her wedding night, from betrayal and a broken heart (Jutsum 2021). *Giselle* is believed to have been one of the first full-length ballets to be performed *en pointe*, another trait associated with the Romantic ballet (Jutsum 2021).

Marie Taglioni, a central figure in dance during the Romantic era, was reputed to be the first dancer to go right up onto the tips of her toes. She appeared in an opera, dressed with a veil over her head, floating across the stage on her toes – a movement called *pas de bourrée couru*. This scene on the gas-lit stage seemed magical and caused an absolute sensation among the audience, who did not understand how she managed to do it. The pointe shoe did not yet exist at this time; Taglioni darned her ballet slippers and placed some wadding inside them to give her the support to rise onto her toes. The pointe work that was done at that time was very minimal. Dancers would execute such *pas de bourrée courus* or perform a fleeting *arabesque* pose on their toes, instantly descending which gave an appearance of flight or ghostly weightlessness (Royal Opera House 2015). The veiled ghosts, with their bowed heads and curved arms, appearing ethereal in their movements *en pointe* are characteristic of the Romantic ballet aesthetic.

The feet, exposed by the calf-length skirts worn during this time, were the highlight of the movements in the Romantic ballets, along with lots of upper body movement. These movements had a floor-skimming quality[43] and involved the use of *épaulement*. The bell-shaped tutu, made from muslin, gauze and tulle, which were stiffened with starch, consisted of many layers which, with movement, gave the illusion that the dancer was floating (Hamilton 2020).

2.6 Russian Classical Ballet

During the Romantic period, Russian Classical ballet emerged[44] from a strong French influence. Peter the Great, the tsar of Russia, adopted and implemented European, especially French, culture in Russia. He even encouraged his courtiers to speak French. Western dress

[43] On Tuesdays, Cecchetti focussed on "*enchaînements* that skim the floor, incorporating *jetés battements* and a family of related steps with *terre à terre* [meaning 'floor to floor' and referring to steps that have very little elevation] quality" (Cronshaw 2021). These floor-skimming movements were accompanied by the use of *épaulement.*
[44] This transition occurred in the late nineteenth century.

was also mandated. As classical ballet came to Russia, there was a strong desire to imitate, absorb and acquire the grace and elegance, as well as the cultural forms of the French aristocracy. French-born choreographer, Marius Petipa is thought to be the father of Russian classical ballet, creating magnificent works such as *Swan Lake* (1876), *The Sleeping Beauty* (1889) and *The Nutcracker* (1892), that remain in the repertoire of classical ballet to this day. The Russian Classics were created during the late nineteenth century. Petipa composed full length productions that introduced the *pas de deux*, or dance for two, and created more than seventy ballets in his time.

Italian ballet master Enrico Cecchetti played a significant role in the development of Russian Classical ballet[45]. His presence in Russia allowed ballet to blossom in Moscow and St. Petersburg. At the height of his career, he migrated to Russia, dancing, miming and teaching in St. Petersburg. Ballet flourished in Italy, England and Russia with his involvement. The Imperial Academy of Dancing and Mime attached to the Scala, directed by Blasis, was the most prestigious ballet school of the nineteenth century – here dancers developed tremendous skill, strength, virtuosity and expressive mime. Some of the finest dancers of the century were Italian. Pierina Legnani (with her 32 *fouettés*), Cecchetti (with his virtuoso role of the *Blue Bird* and the character role of *Carabosse*) as well as Anna Pavlova (with her breakthrough performance of *The Dying Swan*) all played their part in the rapid development of ballet at the time. This was the revival period of Romantic ballet, which is also believed to represent the Classical period of ballet. This revival period in ballet coincided with the pluralism of style emerging within the arts. Traditional styles – referring to Greek and Roman antiquity, Renaissance and Baroque – were challenged and, as De la Croix *et al* (1991:865) write:

> In the course of a century, challenge was met by response, and response by new challenge, so that the modes of traditional and modern were interwoven, combined, recombined, and separated by independent artists, producing a bewildering plurality of individual styles not easily categorized.

Ballets such as *Swan Lake* (1876) and *The Sleeping Beauty* (1889) still centred around some Romantic themes, such as love, fairies and magic, and placed the idealised ballerina, the

[45] During this time, Cecchetti danced and taught at the Imperial Ballet School. Cecchetti was also very involved with Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes*, which was also established around this time. Cecchetti taught and toured with the company, influencing many Russian ballet dancers and Russian ballet as a whole. Though we speak of 'Russian Classical Ballet', the foundation of the ballet training during this time, was the Italian School, the Cecchetti Method. The Italian School later became the foundation of the development of the Russian Vaganova System of training. The Cecchetti Method can therefore be seen as the foundation of modern classical ballet, whether we look at the Russian Vaganova System, the hybridised English Style or the RAD Method.

princess in the fairytale, at the forefront of the performance with the prince as her porter. Ballet was female-oriented in the Romantic and revival era, idolising the femininity and ethereality of the ballerina. The development of the pointe shoe assisted this feminine shift in classical ballet. The advancements in technique and pointe work are what make works such as *The Sleeping Beauty* 'classical ballets'. Aesthetically, the Classicism of lines and proportion returned, with classically curved arm positions, as opposed to the exceptionally curved lines of the early Romantic ballets.

As the Italian training[46] gained momentum, across Europe and the rest of the world, there were very strong Italian ballerinas who were able to perform rather difficult steps. As a result, an Italian shoemaker developed the shoe which had a block in the front which hardened the shoe to such an extent that it enabled dancers to emulate Marie Taglioni and stand up on their toes[47]. There was a greater focus on the overall leg work and not just footwork. The length of the tutu evolved respectively. The legs were no longer hidden underneath the longer length romantic tutus. The tutu became shorter and shorter until, eventually, it was the flat 'pancake' tutu we know today. The Italian school could now push technique to the limit in order to achieve dazzling virtuosic feats. The *arabesque* was also improved, with dancers' flexibility, range of motion and technique improving – perhaps under the advanced teachings of classical ballet with Blasis and Cecchetti's pedagogical methods.

[46] As mentioned in a previous footnote, when speaking of the Italian School of training, I refer to Cecchetti's Method. He was a travelling teacher and therefore influenced other countries with his pedagogy. Cecchetti especially played a part in the development of ballet in England and Russia. His significant presence in Russian ballet often disguises his Method, style and technique as the 'Russian Style'. Some still refer to Cecchetti's ballet as the Russian style – indeed, his Method and style dominated Russian ballet during his time there – and others, as the Italian style. Though Cecchetti travelled and taught in many countries, his Method is referred to as the Italian School.

[47] The birth of the modern pointe shoe is often attributed to the early twentieth century Russian ballerina, Anna Pavlova, who was one of the most famous and influential dancers of her time. Pavlova, with her injury-prone high arched feet, is thought to have inspired the flattening of the box of the pointe shoe which created the platform-style pointe shoe we know today.

Petipa effectively unified the French elegance with the Italian virtuosity and thereby created the now famous Classical Ballet Style. This style emphasised form and design. The ballets were spectacular story ballets displaying pure classical technique – that is, pure, long and continuing lines, free from affectations and exaggerated curves and rounded lines like we see in the early Romantic style, as well as classical poses such as the *five arabesques* and the *eight directions of the body* (figures 2 and 3) as opposed to hybrid or derivative poses such as the two poses from the *adage, troisiéme et qautriéme arabesque* (figure 4).

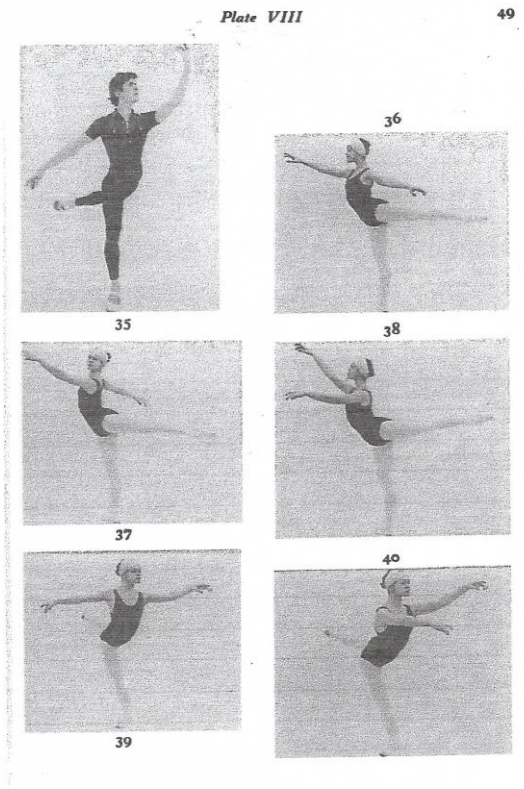

Figure 2: Excerpt from *The Manual* illustrating the five *arabesques* (Beaumont and Idzikowski 2004:49).

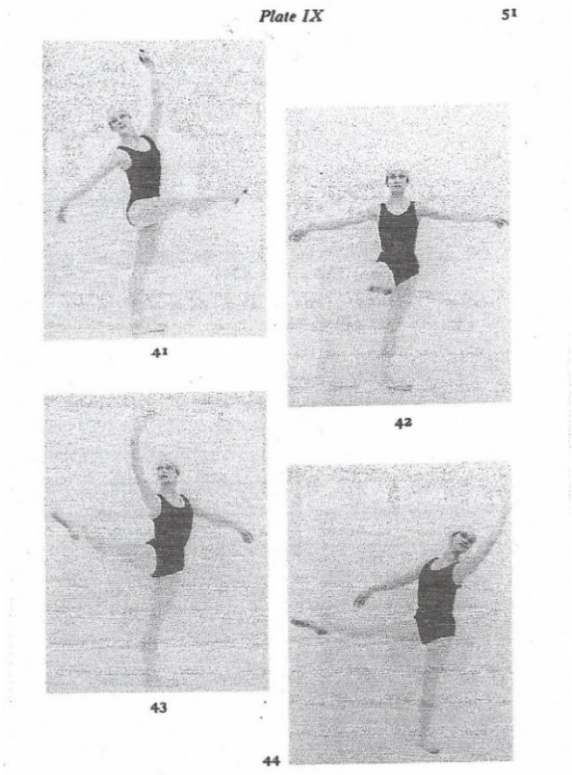

Figure 3: Excerpt from *The Manual* illustrating four of the *eight directions of the body* (Beaumont and Idzikowski 2004:51).

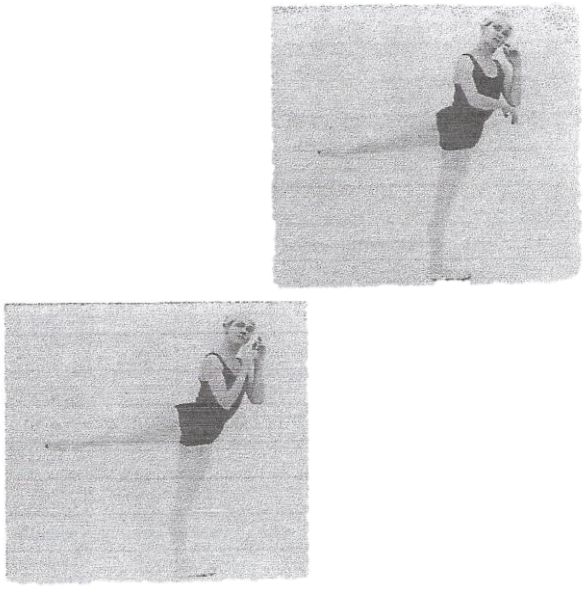

Figure 4: Excerpt from *The Manual* illustrating two poses that form part of, among other *enchaînements*, the *adage* study, *troisiéme et quatriéme arabesque* (Beaumont and Idzikowski 2004:259)

2.7 Balanchine and American Ballet

Classical ballet made its way into American culture at the turn of the twentieth century. The American Ballet Theater and the New York City Ballet were the two most prestigious ballet companies of the time. Both were created in the 1940s, four decades after ballet's inception into American society. It was during that time that the ballet world was rocked by George Balanchine[48]. Balanchine became known as the "father of American ballet." He introduced what is now known as Neoclassical ballet, an expansion on the classical form of ballet (Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre). He is also considered by many to be the greatest innovator of the contemporary plotless ballet. With no definite story line, its purpose is to use movement as the primary means of expression and to illuminate human emotion and experience (Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre). The theme was dramatised, rather than a plot, a clear nod to Renaissance

[48] Born in St. Petersburg, Balanchine also served as ballet master with the *Ballets Russes* until it dissolved in 1929. Despite his contemporariness, Balanchine was therefore also influenced by the style, method and teachings of Cecchetti, having trained in St. Petersburg and worked with the *Ballets Russes*. Though he went on to create his own style, rooted in neo-classicism, the foundations can be linked to Cecchetti, as with many other methods and styles. He traveled abroad, teaching and choreographing, eventually immigrating to America where he founded the School of American Ballet, in 1934, and the New York City Ballet, in 1948 (Williamson 2022).

ballet's classical subject matter[49]. The 'spectacle' of Renaissance ballet had returned. Au (1997:144) describes Balanchine's inspiration:

> For Balanchine music was the prime motivation for dancing – he called it the floor for dancing – and he used its elements (rhythm, phrasing, texture) to spark his choreographic ideas.

In his choreographic works, Balanchine "demonstrates how formal values may coexist with emotional qualities" (Au 1997:145). The aesthetic of ballet changed accordingly; the classical tutu was traded for minimal, tight-fitting and elastic attire to give dancers more freedom of movement.

2.8 Ballet Today

With the commencement of postmodernism the question was raised whether ballet had come to an end. Twentieth century prodigies like Balanchine, Ashton and Robbins were no more, and for a while there was no sign of their successors (Anderson 2015). The universal and individual repertoires of companies across the globe did not see many new additions, as dancers and choreographers contemplated the identity and future of ballet. Ballet entered a slow decline, as many turned to contemporary[50] dance forms, which were innovative in nature (Anderson 2015). Jennifer Homans, dance critic and writer of *Apollo's Angels: A History of Ballet* (2010) is of the opinion that "[t]oday's artists—their students and heirs—have been curiously unable to rise to the challenge of their legacy" stating that "[t]hey seem crushed and confused by its iconoclasm and grandeur, unable to build on its foundation yet unwilling to throw it off in favour of a vision of their own" (2010:541). The measured approach of ballet to

[49] Rather than telling a story, ballet – during the Renaissance, and now with Neoclassicism – focuses on themes, especially mythological and historical themes reflecting the heroism and fantasy of ancient Greek and Roman mythology. When describing Balanchine's ballets, Susan Au states: "… the outlines of a story begin to take shape without ever crystallizing into specific characters or incidents …" (1997:145).

[50] Modern ballet – 1930s, '40s and '50s – gave way to postmodernism from the 1960s onwards. Many turned to the postmodern dance form since it suggested more freedom on the part of the choreographer as well as the dancer, and fewer rules, principles and other specifications. However, some might argue that with the abandonment of these rules, principles and other specifications, ballet became far removed from the artistic and emotion-evoking form it had been previously. The postmodern ballets are saturated with acrobatic feats performed by bare bodies with poker faces, which can elicit two responses. On the one hand, it elicits no emotional response; its rejection of structure and rules rejects or escapes the traditional function of the human mind, which makes it rather complicated for audiences to feel something when confronted by it. On the other hand, these performances could be seen as "a kind of raw, unfiltered emotional expression" (Patterson 2015) which could either be wonderful or disturbing, as the form is freed from its ordinary function.

postmodernism resulted in the art remaining attached to its roots and traditions, while still transforming, intellectually and introspectively, with society, as it had been doing since its inception in the Renaissance.

American dancer and choreographer William Forsythe[52] emerged as a major choreographic star in the 1980s (Anderson 2015). Forsythe's novel approach to ballet was to deconstruct it, putting ballet steps under some pressure, taking them apart and presenting movements in a fractured and detached style (Anderson 2015). The new generation of choreographers were faced with the decision of either embracing postmodernism or risk seeming old-fashioned. Forsythe maintained classical technique[53], but proceeded in the direction of contemporary dance and conceptual art (Anderson 2015).

Today, the art of ballet is practised across the globe and ballet companies and schools can be found in nearly every part of the world. Classical ballet today, across the world, incorporates aspects from all eras of dance; the classics, traditional narrative ballets and contemporary choreographic works all form part of the repertoire of today's ballet companies. The fact that many ballet companies continue to perform original ballets along with new works suggests that audiences today seem to be both interested in new choreographic pieces – at least some – and the older narrative-style full-length ballets – perhaps because storytelling is such a fundamental part of humanity – which explains the preservation of classical works in the current repertoire. Revivals of these classics are plentiful, some well-received by audiences, some not. Romantic ballet's delight in escapism seems to remain at the heart of classical ballet and its enduring traditional stories; both on the part of the audience and the artists themselves. Testimonials of some advocates of classical ballet help explain the 'why' behind this enduring appetite for the classics. Famous English ballerina Darcey Bussell suggests it is the simplicity of the classics that makes them so appealing; "It's so lovely to go back to something that isn't overly 'designed' or clever … It's pleasurable on the eye" (Weiss 2023). As Bussell continues, she inadvertently affirms the visual culture frame of reference within which ballet is perceived: "[i]f you go back to Roman architecture, it's about the simplicity of the lines … You take a breath, because of the symmetry and the quality of it all" (Weiss 2023). Former American Ballet Theatre dancer and partner of Mikhail Baryshnikov, Cynthia Harvey, suggests that there

[52] Though born in New York, Forsythe's career unfolded in Germany. He is well-known for his involvement with the Stuttgart Ballet, his twenty-years association with the Frankfurt Ballet, as well as his own company, The Forsythe Company (San Francisco Ballet 2023).
[53] Despite the contemporary look and feel of these ballets, dancers still rely heavily on their classical ballet training to equip themselves with the technique and artistry to be able to take on such roles and choreography.

is fantasy in the experience of the classics, an escapism that fuels the survival of these ballets; "Classics should remain because it's communicating something other than what you're living today … There is an aspect of the story that they can relate to … but it's fantasy, it's entertainment" (Weiss 2023).

Regardless of the appetite for and perpetuation of the classics, there seems to be a relentless energy in the choreographic world, with new creations frequently popping up on stages all over. These works consist of experimentations, novel things, old things, and combinations thereof. Today, most companies across the world perform a combination of classics and new works. Creating new choreographic works always presents the risk of rejection by audiences, who are still getting used to the novelty of spectacles they see on stage.

Ballet has continually changed over the centuries. From its beginnings, ballet has conformed to many diverse cultures and artistic styles[54]. Ballet forms have changed from classical to more modern expressions, yet the classics remain amongst the adaptations and newer works created over time. The aesthetics and style of the art form have both adapted with time, yet reserved aspects from each era it lived through. Classical Greek lines, harmony and proportion, which was echoed in the Renaissance, remain primary features of classical ballet's visual aesthetic, despite frequent deviations seen in the Romantic curves and Neoclassical abstraction, for instance. Even the Baroque court dances, although balletic versions thereof, remain part of the classical ballet vocabulary. These dances include the minuet, polka, gallop and waltz, among many others. The Baroque movements such as the *pirouette* have been adapted into the classical ballet form. The Romantic *arabesque,* too, has stayed and evolved. Modern ballet's virtuosity and verve has endured as dancers continue to push the envelope with the number of turns and the extreme partnered lifts and leaps they perform. The art form is simultaneously associated with classical traditions and with modernity, with the past and with the future. The art form is both historic and contemporary. Ballets have reflected many historical events and have been transformed through these events. This is what Taylor (2006:83) refers to as the power of performance, the power of transformation:

> So if we think about the past not only as chronological and as what is gone, but as also vertical, as a different form of storage of what's already here, then performance is deeply historical. Its iterative, recurrent quality functions through repeats, yet breaks

[54] In the South African context, for instance, cultural elements such as gumboots and ethnic dress have been brought into classical ballet. Joburg Ballet's 2022 production, *Evolve*, for instance, showcased dancers in ethnic skirts dancing with bowls and buckets that resemble indigenous African pottery. Some other examples, where classical ballet incorporates South African cultural elements and stories, can be found in section 2.11.

> out of them – it is always alive, now. The again-ness of performance offers a different modality for thinking of the again-ness of history – which is always also made present and alive in the here-and-now. History, like performance, is never for the first time, but it too is actualized in the present (see Schechner 1985:36). The bearers of performance, those who engage in it, are also the bearers of history who link the layers past-present-future through practice.

Ballet will continue to change and we can predict that ballet will continue to adapt to its diversifying environment, as this is what all art does. Classical ballet, today, is multifaceted, bringing together classical forms, traditional stories and contemporary choreographic innovations (Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre). From *ballet de cour* with its political underpinnings, *opera ballet* with its theatricality and *ballet d'action* with its community-focused storytelling, to the evolutionary Romantics and Classics, through the revolutionary eccentricities of modernism and now the precariousness of postmodernism, it is clear that the art of ballet has constantly adapted to its context. Each era's dance demonstrates a remarkable responsiveness to the political, social, artistic and cultural milieu in which it finds itself.

2.9 The Arrival of Classical Ballet in South Africa

Ballet was first introduced in South Africa in the late seventeenth century, with the arrival of the French Huguenots[55]. Ballet was still reserved for the higher classes at this time and its emphasis on social status delayed its integration into the rest of South African society, which was only realised in the eighteenth and nineteenth century after the arrival of the British. They established the first theatre, the African Theatre – also known as the *Africaansche Schouwburg* – in 1801 (Meewes 2019:28). Similar to its development in Europe, ballet became a theatrical performance for the public during this era. According to Marina Grut, "Cape Town is the cradle of ballet in South Africa" (1981:1). From early on, a culture, a way of life and, with that, a theatrical tradition, developed. Plays were the primary form of entertainment, with ballet or

[55] During this time, King Louis XIV, with his devotion to Catholicism, ordered the persecution of the French Protestants (Huguenots), forcing them to convert, or otherwise be subjected to slavery or execution. Around two hundred thousand Huguenots fled from France to the Netherlands, England, Switzerland, Germany, America and other countries, including South Africa. An estimated two hundred families arrived in South Africa. The Dutch East India Company requested the Huguenots for the Cape for two reasons: to support of fellow Protestants in the Cape, and to assist in the growing of grapes and making of wine. The migrants were given free travel from France to South Africa and were required to reside in the Cape for a minimum of five years. Here they introduced South Africa to French culture, including dance (Hunter 2023).

dancing being supplementary or secondary to these plays (Grut 1981:1). Regardless, many ballets were created in Cape Town from as early as 1802.

At the start of the twentieth century, ballet's development in South Africa was accelerated by the arrival of Helen Webb, ballet mistress from London and pioneer of ballet in South Africa. Webb opened a dance studio in 1912. She trained, among others, Dulcie Howes, Cecily Robinson, Maude Lloyd and Frank Staff, who all contributed to establishing ballet in South Africa (Meewes 2019:45). In 1925, South African ballet saw a significant rise in popularity when Anna Pavlova paid a visit, performing *The Dying Swan*, among other roles, in Cape Town and Johannesburg (Meewes 2019:28-29). Webb encouraged her pupils to further their dance studies abroad. Howes, for instance, went on to train in London. In 1927 she earned a spot in Pavlova's company on a European tour, before returning to South Africa. In 1932, Professor William Henry Bell, Dean of the Faculty of Music at the University of Cape Town at the time, invited Howes to open a ballet school attached to the university (Cecchetti International Classical Ballet 2022). Two years later, in 1934, the ballet school officially became the University of Cape Town Ballet School, establishing a ballet company, which was eventually incorporated into the music faculty of the University of Cape Town (University of Cape Town 2004). Howes implemented the Cecchetti Method as the basis of instruction and training at this school (Cecchetti International Classical Ballet 2022).

Howes is thought to have laid the foundations for dance as a profession in South Africa (Meewes 2019:45). Howes encouraged a love of dance among her pupils, of which many were internationally and locally recognised twentieth century dancers, producers, teachers and choreographers, such as John Cranko, Richard Glasstone, Dudley Tomlinson and David Poole. In 1923, Howes and her UCT Ballet Company toured southern Africa. According to Grut, this "must have been the first tour of South Africa by a local company" (1981:21). They visited Mossel Bay, Port Elizabeth, East London, Durban, Johannesburg, Bloemfontein and Kimberley (1981:21). Howes and her company spread the knowledge of ballet beyond the borders of South Africa, to Mozambique, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Zambia and South West Africa (now Namibia):

> …for more than twenty years hers was the only company that brought ballet in the form of the classics and original works to the whole South Africa, the Rhodesias, South West Africa and Mozambique; and Howes was the first to take a South African company overseas to perform (Grut 1981:66).

2.10 Ballet and Racial Segregation – 1930s-1980s

Segregation and apartheid[56] undoubtedly had an effect on all areas of society, including the arts. However, Friedman suggests that dance companies and theatres were some of the first spaces where racial politics was challenged. This viewpoint implies that the relative insignificance the government held for certain art forms is what led to them being disregarded as potential threats in terms of having any serious or sufficient political consequence (Friedman 2012:2). In 1933, the Eoan Group[57] was established, a performing arts group within the so-called coloured community. The group's members were given the opportunity to train with dancers from the University of Cape Town. Regardless of such racial inclusion within the performing arts, the group received their training from white teachers, who remained in control of coloured people's activities (Meewes 2019:36). Despite racial segregation, which was entrenched in the 1950s with the implementation of the Population Registration Act, Howes insisted that her company would perform to multi-racial audiences. Elizabeth Triegaardt mentions Howes's persistence in this regard, stating that "from the moment of formation, [her] ballet company would give opportunity to talent, irrespective of race or colour" (in Friedman 2012:18-19). It is believed that, with Howes's influence, the performing arts was one of the first spaces to break racial stereotypes and drop the curtain on racial discrimination[58]. Triegaardt (in Friedman 2012:19) states:

> [Howes] proved to be formidable in this regard and throughout her directorship, both the ballet company and the UCT training programme gained a reputation for ensuring that opportunity for training and employment was open to all, despite the ruling laws of the time.

Other scholars contest this notion of Howes's company as racially inclusive, suggesting it was merely a façade and that racial segregation was as prevalent in the dance community as anywhere else. This viewpoint suggests that the involvement of people of colour in the ballet scene was disguised to some extent[59] and that ballet companies perhaps had to comply with the

[56] Apartheid was a social and political policy of racial segregation that was implemented in South Africa from 1948 to 1994.
[57] The name is derived from the Greek word *eos*, meaning 'dawn'. It is interesting to note that some ballet parties were referred to as groups and others as companies. Certainly, there is some type of hierarchy in the naming of ballet parties. One must consider whether these labels are imposed or chosen. Also, it is necessary to note that the Eoan Group came into existence in 1933, prior to apartheid legislation (1950s-1990s) (Samuel 2023).
[58] This does not imply that ballet in itself – its form, narrative, origins, etcetera – was completely devoid of racism.
[59] Meewes suggests that inclusion of people of colour was still subject to a "hierarchy of pigmentation" which only allowed persons of colour with light skin to participate. She quotes Glasstone: "The lighter skinned 'coloureds' tended to fare better than those of a darker hue" (Meewes 2019:106).

regulations of Apartheid in order to receive government funding. Scholars such as Meewes argue that the handful of individuals of colour, such as Poole, were tolerated because of their lighter pigmentation causing less fuss and controversy in theatres and that Black and Indian[60] individuals were not considered (Meewes 2019:48). Eduard Greyling also mentioned that "Dulcie [Howes] was against racism but played with it in order to keep the company alive" (in Meewes 2019:48). Whether it was pretence or not, Howes's company included people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds and people within the dance community "were able to challenge the laws of the time with some success" (Friedman 2012:2). When Howes retired, her successor, David Poole, continued this tradition, making the UCT Ballet Company one of the few South African institutions where multi-racial students could enrol and graduate at the time (Triegaardt in Friedman 2012:19). At the same time, the UCT Ballet Company boasted a number of successful dancers of colour, such as Mzonke Jama, Sharon Paulsen, Llewellyn de Villiers and Desiree Samaai, just to name a few (Triegaardt in Friedman 2012:19). Poole himself was the victim of the racial politics of apartheid, and when he took Howes's place, he was equally driven to open up South Africa's theatres to all races (Friedman 2012:4).

In 1953, Mignon Furnan founded the Cape Town Theatre Ballet (CTTB). Originally funded by Anton Dolin, the CTTB sought further financial assistance from the government in an attempt to promote higher artistic standards (Meewes 2019:49). It was also the aim of the CTTB to establish and promote ballet as a profession in the country and to nurture local talents, be it artists, musicians, dancers or choreographers. In 1963, the Separate Performing Arts Board was established by the government, which led to the formation of CAPAB (Cape Performing Arts Board). The UCT Ballet Company, which was founded three decades earlier, laid a solid foundation for CAPAB. CAPAB is now recognised as the Cape Town City Ballet (CTCB) and is considered to be the first professional ballet company in South Africa. The governmental grant also led to the formation of other ballet companies in South Africa. PACT (Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal) ballet[61] is considered to have been the second professional ballet company in South Africa. The third company was PACOFS (Performing Arts Council of the Orange Free State) in Bloemfontein. A fourth company, NAPAC (Natal Performing Arts Council) was founded in Durban. (Meewes 2019:34-35). The companies all experienced a

[60] These are apartheid terms and classifications.
[61] Also known as TRUK (Transvaalse Raad vir die Uitvoerende Kunste).

number of pressures, mainly financial. As a result, NAPAC shut down in 1976 (Meewes 2019:35).

The Apartheid policy of cultural separation, which positioned European arts as high art, reinforced the prevalence of European ballets in the South African repertoire[62]. Triegaardt notes that the majority of the repertoire in South African ballet companies between 1963 and 1997 consisted of "imported ballets, abstract and narrative, with little effort made to access the wealth of folklore and local topics" (in Friedman 2012:20). However, some efforts were made towards accessing certain aspects of South African culture. One of the first South African ballets was created by Frank Staff in 1967. The ballet, called *Raka,* was created for the Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal (PACT) ballet company and is considered a milestone in South African ballet history[63] (Triegaardt in Friedman 2019:20). In 1980 Veronica Paeper created another work also inspired by South African poet van Wyk Louw. Her ballet, *Drie Diere,* was set to the music of South African composer Peter Klatzow (Triegaardt in Friedman 2019:20). Though the recurring theme of these ballets – the collapse of a civilisation as a result of an evil force – was a universal one[64], these were commendable efforts in terms of creating a 'South African' ballet, or at least bring South African narratives into ballet[65].

The 1970s saw an emergence of multi-racial dance companies[66]. Johannesburg Youth Ballet, which is considered the first multi-racial ballet company, was founded in 1976. Despite the political unrest and racial politics of that time, these companies are still alive today. When Veronica Paeper entered the choreographic scene in 1974, local choreographic works began to flourish with the CTCB performing a repertoire of 87 per cent of such works created by local artists (Triegaardt in Friedman 2012:19). Triegaardt (in Friedman 2012:22) further explains the determination of the CTCB in terms of promoting and celebrating local talents and cultures:

> The CTCB is renowned throughout South Africa and internationally for the diversity of works in the repertoire, both local and international, and the dancers for their inimitable energy and style. The CTCB has also been proactive in developing South

[62] Marina Grut speaks of the beginnings of ballet in South Africa, stating that the theatrical activity of Europe was reflected in the South African theatre during these years (1800s) but that there were also many ballets that were being created by the diverse population of Cape Town, especially between 1802 and 1825 (1981:1-2).
[63] It was based on the revered Afrikaans poet, NP van Wyk Louw's poem of the same name. The commissioned score was also by South African composer, Graham Newcater. The 1941 poem, which was and still is fundamental to the Afrikaans literary tradition, was successfully translated by Staff "into a very contemporary twentieth century idiom" (Triegaardt in Friedman 2019:20).
[64] And probably not unrelated to white *Angst* in a time of African resistance against European colonialism.
[65] Although ballet technique remained quite consistent.
[66] Multi-racial companies here refer to companies that allowed access and participation by dancers of different racial backgrounds. These companies had a multi-racial workforce, in other words.

> African choreographic talent … The CTCB remains committed to the development of choreographers and to the creation of uniquely South African and African ballet.

The dance scene in South Africa in the 1980s is defined by a fusion of styles and genres. Friedman refers to this time as the "melting pot of polycultural genres" (2012:6). It was during this time that the creation of a South African style was being pursued[67]. Friedman notes that it was in the 1980s that the fusion of dance styles and genres were deliberately being experimented with, producing exciting and original works (2012:6). Dance in South Africa is now an amalgamation of the old and the new, combining western dance forms with traditional African rhythms, styles and dynamics resulting in new or hybrid forms (Friedman 2012:6). The development of the arts in South Africa is not solely attributed to European or western influence. South African artists responded to colonial ideologies by either resisting or incorporating them in their own artistic ways, successfully negating some western ideas while purposefully adopting others in such a way that they maintained their foothold in the arts by engaging either in their cultural traditions or in the new hybrid forms that arose from these creative experiments. Enocent Msinda explains that "Africans incorporated some of those ideologies into their own with the result that the product was a hybrid identity – which is not purely African or purely Western", suggesting that imposed western ideologies were not always successful (in Friedman 2012:6). Jay Pather (in Friedman 2012:6) also writes about the role of local South Africans in furthering the arts by their conscious and authoritative response toward western beliefs: "African assimilation of Western techniques, materials, ideas and forms has been creative, selective and highly original. The result is a continuous recreation of forms and styles."

Even now, it may not be possible to precisely define a South African dance identity[68]. Nevertheless, the South African dance community can be described as diverse and

[67] The 1980s saw the dismantling of apartheid, with hesitant parliamentary reform in 1983, mass protests and a resultant state of emergency as from 1985/6, the repeal of major apartheid legislation like the Act on Influx Control in 1986, negotiations with the ANC and the announcement of the unbanning of the movement, as well as the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990.

[68] Samuel (2023) suggests that we certainly have "a recognisable approach to our dance making which could be described as attempts at fusion and interculturality, an expansive and robust energy, if one wants to label this a dance style". He stresses that such a style is known for its constant change and evolution. The question rather is, who wants the unified style and why? The government? The art councils? The artists themselves? (Samuel 2023). Perhaps, we all do, as we all somehow play a part in South African heritage and culture.

multicultural, consisting of a myriad of genres, styles and techniques deriving from the various backgrounds and histories of the people of South Africa.

2.11 South African Ballet Today

Experimentation, exploration and innovation have only increased since 1994, as dancers, choreographers and academics were challenged with the need to re-evaluate dance and its subject matter, in search of a South African voice and identity[69] (Friedman 2012:7). Internationally acclaimed choreographer Vincent Mantsoe[70] explains the importance of reconnecting with one's roots in search of identity. He talks about "freeing the spirit of our ancestors", explaining that "[t]here is a final realisation that an assimilation and appreciation of other cultures will lead to personal enrichment" but that this can only be realised "when the link to your own heritage is known and restored" (Mantsoe in Friedman 2012:7).

There seems to be an increasing growth in and appreciation for such South African works in South African companies' repertoires, which now consists of both classical works and local creations. Along with new creations, classical works are also being reimagined by local dancers and choreographers. In 2008, the Joburg Ballet company recreated the classical ballet *The Nutcracker*. *Nutcracker Reimagined* re-envisions the ballet through a South African lens; the Christmas tree is represented by the indigenous baobab and cave paintings come to life as Clara is led through the Kalahari by a *sangoma*[71] (Bangkok Post 2014). Another South African ballet is the award-winning *Ingoma,* performed by Cape Town City Ballet and choreographed by South African dancer and choreographer Mthuthuzeli November[72]. *Ingoma* was inspired by South African artist Gerard Sekoto's Blue Head Series, among other artworks. The piece which

[69] Some might say that these slow but steady ongoing changes might result in the further decline of ballet in South Africa. However, as this study demonstrates, there seems to be both an embrace of the future and an enduring reminiscence of the past in the ballet community. Somehow, we always tend to go back to the roots of whatever it is we are dealing with when we are trying to transform it.
[70] Although Mantsoe's statements are referring to contemporary dance, it is applicable to ballet in South Africa. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, ballet artists turned to contemporary dance in the postmodern era in an attempt to redefine or reimagine classical ballet through a new lens, a South African lens in this case. Contemporary methods were innovative and somewhat accustomed to this experimental nature of dance in the modern era (Anderson 2015). Bearing in mind the continued prevalence and perpetuation of traditional ballets and classical works as mentioned earlier, it is likely that a combination of classics and new, South African works will persist in the local repertoire. This is a reminder of South Africa's cultural heritage, which has been rich and diverse, with cross-cultural and multi-ethnic influences.
[71] Traditional healer.
[72] November was commissioned by a company in London, Black Ballet, to create a South African work which tells a South African story (SABC News 2011).

premiered in London in 2019 and was performed in South Africa shortly thereafter, explores the 1946 Witwatersrand miner's strike[73] (SABC News 2021).

There are also various efforts towards making ballet more accessible in South Africa. Many programmes are in place for providing children in disadvantaged communities with access to ballet training. Both professional companies and ballet schools are involved in such outreach programmes. We are slowly, but surely, observing the continual emergence of a South African ballet identity, not only in terms of the stories that are being told, but also the representation thereof on stage.

The CTCB now consists of 85 per cent local artists trained in South Africa, but it continues to revel in international recognition as a world-class ballet company (Triegaardt in Friedman 2012:29)[74]. Today, dance companies across the country present dancers and choreographers with a creative platform to explore their identities, cultures, histories and ideas. The Joburg Ballet company continues to showcase new works both by acclaimed choreographers, such as Veronica Paeper and Adele Blank, as well as aspiring young choreographers within the company. The Joburg Ballet RAW initiative presents the company's young dancers with the opportunity of creating their own works. Today, we see quite a liberal involvement of South African culture and diversity in our companies, to the extent that the repertoire is almost equally saturated with proudly South African works, and re-imaginations of imported works, as it is with the classics and other international masterpieces, such as *Ingoma*[75]. New works are being created that aim to both tell South African stories and allow for the expression of individual voices. Ballet in South Africa has had various international influences which further contributed to the diverse community, productions and spaces South African ballet dancers find themselves in today.

[73] It is an interpretation of the struggles of black miners and their loved ones, focusing on migrant labour, the separation of families and their courageous strike action, specifically the suffering of the women who were often left behind (SABC News 2021).
[74] Van Schoor states that the company today still consists predominantly of local artists (2023).
[75] Joburg Ballet's first major season in 2022 brought a new showcase, *Evolve*, to the stage. This showcase involved three new works, and one classical piece. The company's 2023 programme commenced with another fresh season consisting of new works *Identity* and *Table for Two* – a piece from the Joburg Ballet Raw Project. Although classics such as *La Traviata* and *Don Quixote* are also starring in the 2023 line-up, new works are equally abundant. Cape Town City Ballet's 2022 winter season consisted of the classic *Romeo and Juliet* as well as a new triple bill, *Ikigai.*

2.12 International Influence and Methods of Ballet Training in South Africa

All methods of ballet training share similar principles, and from an audience perspective it can be difficult to tell the method in which a ballet dancer has been trained. It mostly comes down to small stylistic and technical differences which constitute the significant distinctions between these methods. The use of *épaulement* is an example of ways in which particular ballet training methods differ. In the Italian method the eye line is kept to the audience with a slight inclination of the head, whereas the French school takes the eyeline away from the audience in the direction of the inclined head. The Russian method employs a much stronger use of *épaulement* with a turned, rather than inclined, head. There are various reasons behind the different approaches to such embellishments in ballet and each method has a valid explanation for their preference. The Italians, for instance, maintain the eyes to the front for communicative purposes, keeping the audience engaged. Where the use of *épaulement* is mainly stylistic in other methods, the Italians also use it for technical or practical reasons, that is, to maintain the line of *aplomb*[76] or centre of gravity. The various methods also have different aspects and qualities of the dancer and movement that they emphasise, which is characteristic of the method. The French are known for their brisk footwork, Italians for their virtuosity, simplicity and strength, the Russian for their extensions, expressiveness and complexity, Bournonville dancers for their rounded arms and lightness, and Balanchine's dancers are recognised for their speed and unconventional lines, shapes and movements. Most of these methods could, however, be traced to the same source: Blasis, who was the first to codify the principles and technique of classical ballet. As mentioned earlier, Blasis's principles were passed down through Cecchetti's teachers and Cechetti himself. Cecchetti was therefore also the inspiration for methods to follow.

Ballet in South Africa was influenced by various methods of training. Today still, there are a variety of methods available in South Africa in which to train the technique of classical ballet, namely the Russian (Vaganova), Italian (Cecchetti Method), English (Royal Academy of Dance), and even a recently established South African method, DASA (Dance Academy of South Africa). Although the French School, Balanchine Method (American) and Bournonville Method (Danish) are not popularised as official training methods in South Africa, dance

[76] The *line of aplomb*, or plumb line, refers to the centre of gravity of a dancer. The dancer aims to maintain their centre of gravity, whether they are standing on one or both legs. The use of *épaulement* assists the dancer in maintaining this line or their centre of gravity by holding the body in dynamic opposition. The Dancer is therefore held upwards by the deep postural muscles, on the line of *aplomb* (Cronshaw 2014).

schools and companies across the country are familiar with and often practise the elements of these methods, acquainting South African dancers with the style and technique of these methods. The Bournonville Method can also more appropriately be described as a (choreographic) style rather than a method. In some cases, it uses the basic principles of classical ballet, such as the *arabesque* and *positions of the arms*, but in a different style, producing a different aesthetic. In other cases, there is resistance towards some of the principles of classical ballet – in Balanchine's neoclassical ballets for instance[77]. More recently, there has been an emergence of the Cuban Method of ballet in South Africa, with the presence of Cuban dancers, primarily in the South African Mzansi Ballet, founded by Dirk Badenhorst.

The diversity of ballet methods available in South Africa is a result of the dancers and ballet masters in the South African dance community, who received training from diverse backgrounds (Meewes 2019:29). Vaganova, RAD (Royal Academy of Dance), Cecchetti and DASA ballet schools are to be found in South Africa. However, the number of Russian training academies are scarce. Furthermore, DASA, though there have been plenty of schools established since the formation of the method in 1991, is not an internationally recognised method of training, which limits the opportunities of such schools and the aspiring dancers that train there. Perhaps the two most recognised methods in South Africa are the Cecchetti Method and the RAD Method. After all, dance teachers from both the Cecchetti Society and the RAD collaborated in the formation of the Cape Town Dance Teachers Association in 1926 (Cecchetti International Classical Ballet 2022). Many pioneers of South African ballet were associated with Cecchetti and his method. Dulcie Howes, for instance, who trained under Helen Webb and her former student Helen White, went to London to study under Cecchetti himself. Webb also visited London in the 1920s where she observed classes taught by Cecchetti. The arrival of the Cecchetti Method and its prominence in South Africa will be discussed in Chapter Three.

[77] Balanchine's *port de bras* often crosses the centre line of the body, which is not seen elsewhere in classical ballet. The free-flowing arms and broken wrists do not adhere to Classicism's emphasis on elongated lines – representative, rather, of Balanchine's Neoclassicism. The hips are frequently swayed or protruded forwards, out of anatomical alignment, requiring the dancer to depart from the Classical stance. These are all choreographic features, and not necessarily a technique in which the dancer trains – imaginably, these dancers are not practicing their daily *pliés* and *tendus* with the addition of hip thrusts. It is a debatable topic, however, whether the Balanchine style constitutes a *technique* of classical ballet. Some dancers – who primarily perform ballets such as Balanchine's – argue that a certain technique is required to be able to perform the choreography (ExpertVillage Leaf Group 2020). One must also take into account Cecchetti's presence in Balanchine's own training, as well as in the *Ballets Russes*, for whom Balanchine created many of his ballets. The strength and virtuosity of Cecchetti's dancers, and Balanchine's own training in the Cecchetti Method, most likely facilitated the development and opportunity for this dynamic style.

Locally trained dancers have proven to be versatile and have been well-received abroad. In a review of Marina Grut's *The History of Ballet in South Africa,* Jack Anderson (1983:467) states:

> Most balletomanes probably know that South Africa has produced some important dancers and choreographers: such names as John Cranko, Maude Lloyd, Frank Staff, Nadia Nerina[78], and Monica Mason[79] come readily to mind.

For many years the CAPAB, now Cape Town City Ballet, has served as a feeder school to the Royal Ballet in London (Humanitec 2015). It is believed that, during some stages in the Royal Ballet's history, more than sixty per cent of their dancers came from South Africa (Humanitec 2015). It can therefore be said that South Africa not only produces dancers of an international standard, but perhaps a small part of South Africa has been taken abroad, placing our country on the world map of classical ballet and demonstrating a mutually contingent and influential relationship between South African ballet and ballet abroad – in particular, Europe. Furthermore, South Africa is one of the major Cecchetti hubs in the world. Along with America, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom and Italy, Southern Africa has its own established Cecchetti Society, since 1928[80].

In recent years, South Africa has also become a transitional space and potential springboard for many talented dancers from Cuba, providing them with opportunity and recognition whilst enhancing the standard and diversity of South African ballet, by means of the South African-Cuban ballet partnership[81]. The mutually beneficial relationship between South Africa and Cuba is a result of the cultural exchange programme with Cuban Ballet. Some of these adopted talents remain here, while others make use of the opportunity to further their dance careers abroad. (The Diplomatic Society 2013). As such, South Africa can be seen as a multicultural ballet hub, influenced by, and simultaneously affecting, many dance cultures from the rest of the continent and internationally.

[78] Nadia Nerina is famous for the Romantic pose at the end of Cecchetti's Thursday *adage, pas de* l'Alliance. She did the pose so beautifully that the pose is often referred to as 'the Nadia' (Van Schoor 2018).
[79] Monica Mason was long associated with The Royal Ballet in London, first dancing with them in 1968. She rose to lead the company for many years to come (Clark 2012).
[80] It was the first Cecchetti Society established abroad, after the founding of the Cecchetti Society in London.
[81] In 2016 Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane gave the following account of the political history of South Africa and Cuba: "They were forged in the common struggle against apartheid and colonialism on the African continent." Former president of Cuba, Fidel Castro, "contributed both militarily and diplomatically to many liberation struggles on the African continent … Following South Africa's democratic transition, South Africa and Cuba established formal diplomatic relations in 1994 and opened resident embassies in Pretoria (1994) and Havana (1995)".

2.13 Various Sectors of Ballet in South Africa

The art of classical ballet is practised, performed and enjoyed in various spaces such as dance studios, schools, professional companies and theatres, and by many people, including the dancers themselves, ballet masters and teachers[82], as well as audiences and dance fanatics. From a young age, children are exposed to the art of dance, with many schools[83] in South Africa offering ballet as an extracurricular activity. Some schools (amongst them both art-focused and regular public and private schools) even offer dance as a formal subject. Apart from such secondary schools, dance studios also give children the opportunity to learn and study the art as an extra-curricular activity in a more professional environment. Most dance studios are focused on fostering and refining the technique of their students. A student's dancing is not confined to their teacher's studio (nor their childhood). Competitions, workshops, showcases and other opportunities allow student dancers not only to further their dance training but also to envision a future or career in dance. Dance schools often give students the opportunity to partake in examinations, which qualify them to move onto the next level in their dance career. Once all such examinations are passed, a student can continue their training to become a teacher, examiner or professional dancer. Many studios also offer classes for mere pleasure, such as beginners dance classes for adults, inexperienced dancers or dancers who do not seek to pursue a career in dance. Dance can also be studied at tertiary institutions such as universities. The University of Cape Town is known for its Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies[84]. Tshwane University of Technology also has a Dance Stream within the Performing Arts Diploma.

Professional companies offer dancers a career pathway in the world of dance. Joburg Ballet and Cape Town City Ballet are the two professional ballet companies in South Africa that are internationally recognised[85]. Unfortunately, due to the lack of opportunity as well as a lack of

[82] I use both terms – ballet master and teacher – in my study. 'Ballet master' is used to refer to ballet instructors that are exceptional at teaching the art and technique of classical ballet; they are esteemed and renowned teachers of classical ballet, in other words. Ballet masters also often teach at companies, training professional dancers. 'Ballet teacher' refers to someone who is qualified to teach classical ballet; simply someone whose occupation is teaching ballet, often to children or at a pre-professional level.
[83] Primarily referring here to schools in urban areas – where ballet forms part of the curricular or extracurricular activities. However, a great deal of community outreach is being done by independent ballet schools, ballet companies and other institutions in order to provide children in disadvantaged communities with access to ballet.
[84] Recently, the affiliated company – the Cape Town City Ballet – was separated from the University of Cape Town.
[85] Despite there only being two flourishing ballet companies, South Africa has been recognised for producing dancers, choreographic works and performances of international standard.

funding for these companies, a profitable career as a professional dancer seems almost unattainable. As a result, the few professional dancers in South Africa are motivated primarily by their passion for dance since the wages for such a career are not very high. This has also resulted in many South African artists going abroad to pursue a career in the professional dance world where there are more opportunities and better wages. Another result is an overall demotion of dance as a professional career because of the unconvincing future for young aspiring dancers in South Africa. Nicole Ferreira-Dill, principal dancer with the Joburg Ballet company explains in an interview:

> The estimated starting salary of a *corps de ballet* dancer would be around about R6000, which…is not a lot… you are not doing it for the money, you are definitely doing it for the passion and for the love of the art form (Sunday Times 2018).

Besides the sub-standard salary[86], a professional dancer's career is also not a lengthy one, as the art is quite strenuous on the body and an injury could potentially be the end of the road for many professional dancers, mostly when still quite young. While most professional dancers expect to continue their dancing career well into their forties, research has indicated that, on average, dancers stop dancing professionally in their early to mid-thirties (Jeffri & Throsby 2006:4). Furthermore, retired professional dancers are faced with the challenge of very limited options for alternative career paths once they have ended their dancing career.

There are different routes one can follow as a dancer. Some dancers pursue teaching careers once they have completed their studies as a dancer, completing teacher's examinations and joining the board or society of teachers of their respective methods of training[87]. Some teachers further their qualifications in order to join the board of examiners. The more creative or artistic individual might pursue their career as a choreographer or the director of a dance school or company. Retired professionals or renowned dance personalities might land in the position of a professional company's ballet master or mistress. There are various options, though the level of success and sustainability of these careers differ. Unfortunately, as mentioned above, many

[86] A survey done by the Statista Research Department shows the average salary in South Africa recorded in November 2018 was R22 154 per month (Statista Research Department 2022). This indicates that dancers were paid close to minimum wage, perhaps even less when taking into account that dancers often work on weekends and evenings too, for instance during a performance season.

[87] For instance, once having completed your teacher's examination in the Cecchetti Method, you become a member of the Cecchetti Society of Southern Africa which is affiliated to the ISTD in London, United Kingdom.

South Africans do not see a prosperous future in the profession of dance, and many artists rely on an additional or other primary occupation with dance being a pastime or passion on the side.

2.14 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the history and background of classical ballet, from its establishment in Europe to its dissemination to South Africa. The focus of this chapter was to contextualise classical ballet in South Africa and to affirm the art form as part of South African arts and culture. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that classical ballet has evolved over time, as it actively responds to and reflects the society and time in which it exists. This was also demonstrated in the South African context. Classical ballet has evolved in South Africa, too, responding to and reflecting South African history, during and after the apartheid years. The performing arts in South Africa have proved to be an area of immense cultural exchange and diversity. This chapter also provided an outline of the various areas or sectors in which ballet exists, and how it functions in these sectors. The following chapter will trace the history of Cecchetti and his Method and its arrival and significance in South Africa.

CHAPTER THREE: TRACING THE HISTORY OF THE CECCHETTI METHOD

(From Europe to South Africa)

Enrico Cecchetti was one of the most important influences on the foundations of modern classical ballet training. He evolved a method of training in the 19th century that is as relevant today as it was then. His influence on British ballet has been far reaching and resulted in the creation of the Cecchetti Society and our Cecchetti Classical Ballet Faculty. The Cecchetti principles of training produce outstanding artistic and technically accomplished dancers, able to work with today's directors across a spectrum of ballet and contemporary dance companies.

(Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing 2014)

3.1 Enrico Cecchetti – the Student, the Dancer, the Teacher

Enrico Cecchetti was born in Italy on 21 June 1850. He was quite literally born into the world of ballet; his mother gave birth to him in a dressing room of the Tordinona Theatre in Rome and he made his stage debut as an infant in his father's arms (The Cecchetti Council of America 2020). Both Cecchetti's parents, Cesare Cecchetti and Serafina Casagli, were distinguished dancers, having trained under Carlo Blasis[88]. Despite his parents' desire for him to pursue a career in business or law, Cecchetti was determined to follow in their footsteps, convincing them with the great aspiration and enthusiasm he showed towards his dance pursuits. At the age of seven, Cecchetti started training in the rudiments of his parents' craft and, at the age of fourteen, he began studying with Giovanni Lepri – another of Blasis's pupils – who was known for training exceptional dancers (The Cecchetti Council of America 2020). Cesare Coppini and Fillipo Taglioni – father of the famous ballerina, Marie Taglioni – were also among Cecchetti's instructors (The Cecchetti Council of America 2020). They, too, were students of Blasis. All Cecchetti's teachers were trained under Blasis. It is therefore certain that Cecchetti's early training with his father, as well as under Lepri, Coppini and Taglioni, which formed the foundations and background for the development of his own method, followed the lines of Blasis' theory and technique, as codified in the book *Traité Elémentair, Théorique et Pratique de l'Art de la Danse*, published in 1820 (The Cecchetti Council of America 2020).

[88] Blasis and his influence on the codification of dance has been mentioned in Chapter Two under the section on Romantic Ballet.

After his official professional debut, at La Scala in 1870[89], Cecchetti began to tour as a dancer and mime. He visited Denmark, Holland, Norway, Germany, Austria and Russia before returning to La Scala (Beaumont 1948:3). In 1885, Cecchetti performed at Her Majesty's Theatre in London, in Manzotti's ballet *Excelsior*, where he was acclaimed by *The Daily Telegraph* as "one of the best male dancers that we have seen in this country for many years" (Beaumont 1948:3-4). Subsequently, Cecchetti paid a number of visits to London, dancing in ballets, such as *Orfeo* (1891)[90], at the Empire Theatre, where he received excellent reviews and accolades (Beaumont 1948:4) The Cecchetti Council of America (2020) notes that "[t]hroughout his career, he received excellent appraisals and accolades and was considered the finest male dancer of his time".

Cecchetti reached the peak of his performing career in St. Petersburg, captivating the Russian audiences with the brilliance of his *batterie*, multiple *pirouettes* and gravity-defying leaps (The Cecchetti Council of America 2020). According to Beaumont, "[h]is success was such that he was engaged as *premiere danseur* and instructor at the Mariinsky Theatre" where he continued to triumph (Beaumont 1948:4). Cecchetti was not only a technical sensation, but also displayed prodigious gifts for mime[91], which led him to create and perform many virtuoso roles in famous ballets. The virtuoso role of the Blue Bird, which is now a 'classic', and the mime role of Carabosse, "the malignant fairy with dragging gait", in Petipa's *La Bella au Bois Dormant* – otherwise known as *The Sleeping Beauty* – are among the many of Cecchetti's masterpieces (Beaumont 1948:4). It is believed that the Blue Bird *pas de deux* "owes its inception to Cecchetti, who insisted that the male dancer must emerge from the semi-obscurity[92] to which he had so long been relegated by the attention focussed upon the ballerina" (Beaumont 1948:4). Thanks to Cecchetti and his admirable interpretation of Blue Bird the status of the *danseur noble* saw a promising revival in Russia and beyond (Beaumont 1948:4).

Cecchetti relinquished his vocation as *premier danseur* in 1896. He became ballet master with the Mariisnky Ballet, teaching at the Imperial Ballet School in St. Petersburg from 1896 to

[89] In full, *Teatro all Scala*, meaning "Theatre at the stairway" in Italian. The theatre is based in Milan. It is the principal opera house in Italy and one of the most renowned opera houses in the world (Elsa 2022).
[90] This is believed to be the very first opera, written by Claudio Monteverdi and first performed in 1607 (Thomason 2023).
[91] "Mime is used in Classical Ballet to communicate the essence of the story without the need to speak. Through the careful use of gestures and facial expressions, dancers are able to convey ideas, actions and emotions to each other as a conversation and to the audience" (Sumaylo 2020).
[92] In the Romantic era, the ballerina was idolised. Gebelt (1995:5) states: "Male danseurs began to find themselves porters of female sylphs, Wilis, peris, and other weightless creatures, and their roles became overshadowed by the increasing dominance of the ballerina and her corps".

1902 (The Cecchetti Council of America 2020). It was eventually suggested that Cecchetti should become a Russian citizen, which would make him eligible to earn a pension in Russia. However, Cecchetti was riled by the proposition[93], which he rejected, resigning straightaway. He became ballet master with the Imperial School of Ballet in Warsaw, where he remained from 1902-1905 (Beaumont 1948:6). After three years in Poland, he returned to St. Petersburg, opening his own school there. The celebrated ballerina Anna Pavlova[94] was a great admirer of Cecchetti's ability as teacher and she persuaded him to close his school and devote himself entirely to maintaining and developing her technique (Beaumont 1948:6). From 1907–1909 he taught Pavlova exclusively. However, he re-opened his school in St. Petersburg when dancers from the Mariinsky, many of his past pupils as well as aspiring students, pleaded with him (The Cecchetti Council of America 2020). His pupils included many successful dancers whose names are listed in the final section of this chapter. Beaumont (1948:4) makes mention of Cecchetti's far-reaching influence on Russian ballet: "There are very few Russian dancers living to-day, and eminent during the Imperial regime, who did not at one time or other study under him."

It was during this time that the ballet impresario Diaghilev established his company, *Les Ballets Russes.* Diaghilev soon realised Cecchetti's status as a teacher to his dancers and arranged for Cecchetti to tour with the *Ballets Russes*, both as their ballet master and as mime artist, performing numerous mime roles created especially for him by the choreographers of the company (The Cecchetti Council of America 2020). Ballet was not the only art driven and advanced by Diaghilev. Artists from various fields were associated with the *Ballets Russes*, including painters, and set and costume designers such as Bakst, Picasso, Cocteau, and Matisse, and composers like Debussy, De Falla, Prokofiev, Ravel, and Stravinksy (The Cecchetti Council of America 2020). Cecchetti's involvement with the *Ballets Russes* was significant; he was among the revolutionary artists who contributed to the birth of modern art, and modern classical ballet (The Cecchetti Council of America 2020). The *Ballets Russes* toured abroad, throughout Europe, the United States, South America, and Australia (The Cecchetti Council of

[93] This would have meant renouncing his Italian citizenship. Cecchetti seems to have had a great loyalty to his home country of Italy to which he returned in his last years.
[94] "As a student graduated into the Imperial Ballet, Pavlova had at first found Cecchetti's classes too difficult for her frail physique. However, as a newly-made ballerina in 1905, Pavlova was anxious to overcome her weaknesses. Convinced of Ceccetti's ability to improve her, she earnestly appealed to him to become her private tutor" (Dance Australia 2023).

America 2020). By 1916 Diaghilev's company was "the most famous private dance company in the Western world" (Järvinen 2010:79).

Eventually, Cecchetti grew weary of travelling, which led him to settle in London where he opened a dance school (The Cecchetti Council of America 2020). This school was later handed over to Margaret Craske[95] who continued to teach Cecchetti's Method. During their London seasons, he continued to work with the *Ballets Russes*[96]. Considered the technical luminary of the ballet world, it was said that no one could be a finished ballet dancer without having passed through Cecchetti's hands (The Cecchetti Council of America 2020). During this time, he was in poor health and in 1923 he returned to Italy to retire[97] (Beaumont 1948:6). His presence there, however, was simply too tempting for dancers to resist; they hankered for his unique knowledge. He was invited by Arturo Toscanini to resume his teaching career at La Scala, his lifelong dream. In 1928, he passed away, due to illness, while teaching at La Scala (Beaumont 1948:1). Yet, his legacy lives on. Beaumont (1948:6) recalls: "… he died as he had lived, renouncing his repose, even his life, in the service of the art he loved so dearly."

3.2 Cecchetti the Artist – Dance and Other Arts

Cecchetti was also a keen musician[98] and his Method also become known for the superb choices of musical accompaniments to his exercises[99]. It has also been recorded by some of his pupils

[95] Craske suffered a foot injury which led to the end of her dancing career with the *Ballets Russes*. She first became Cecchetti's assistant and took over his studio when he left for Italy.
[96] It was then that he revived the mime roles he had long since made famous – Pantalon in *Le Carnaval*, the Chief Eunuch in *Schéhérazade*, Marquis di Luca in *Les Femmes de Bonne Humeur* and the Shopkeeper in *La Boutique Fantasque* just to name a few.
[97] "After the Russian Revolution ended in 1923, the new Soviet Union dictated a strict socialist realism style for the arts. Ballet companies like the iconic Bolshoi Ballet (founded in 1776 and one of the world's oldest ballet companies) staged ballets such as 'Ivan the Terrible' to fall in line with the new rules. However, many Bolshoi dancers such as Mikhail Baryshnikov fled to the west in the 1960s in search of creative freedom. They began spreading the distinct Russian ballet style [greatly influenced by our Italian ballet master, Cecchetti] around the world" (Birtles 2021).
[98] "In 2000, a young Canadian teacher (and musician), Candice Helm, chose to research the history of the 'set' music for her 'Fellowship' paper… [W]hile she was in London, Candice also obtained copies from the Theatre Museum of a 68 page manuscript in Cecchetti's own hand entitled 'Musique Pour les Exercices de Danse Methode Cecchetti' which he had given to Anna Pavlova in 1908 (the dedication reads: Mlle. Anna Pavlova. Souvenir de son Professeur Devoué Enrico Cecchetti 1 Aôut 1908)." (Alley 2002:6). The manuscript consists of 84 numbered pieces of music, and a few additional unnumbered selections (Cecchetti International Classical Ballet 2016). Furthermore, the identity of the composer of several other pieces of music which had previously remained anonymous, was finally discovered (Cecchetti International Classical Ballet 2016). The composer was Cecchetti himself.
[99] Cecchetti's musical accompaniment for his exercises sometimes have a chord, sometimes only a single note, and sometimes no introduction – which trains the dancer's anticipation for movement. In some cases, he also has

that he often taught ballet class with no musical accompaniment whatsoever; instead, he whistled and beat time with his cane on the floor. For Cecchetti, the dancer ought to be an accomplished and sympathetic musician (Cecchetti International Classical Ballet 2016). Cecchetti, like his predecessors[100], expressed strong beliefs in the study of the sister arts, such as mime, music, painting, drawing and sculpture (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:20). An excerpt from *The Manual* (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:20) reads:

> The first [mime] will enable you to compose your features in accordance with the sentiments expressed in your dance. The second [music] will train your ear to distinguish the rhythm and cadence of the accompaniment so that your movements will be in strict harmony with the measure. The third [painting] and fourth [drawing], and fifth [sculpture] will acquaint you with the style and manners of an epoch and will reveal to you the beauty of line, form, and composition.

Cecchetti especially encouraged the study of music as a means to inspire the dancer with the emotion required to embody the spirit of the piece to which they were dancing. He also urged dancers to "[v]isit the famous art galleries of the world" (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:20) to discover the meaning of grace and beauty[101], and to be able to apply the same principles to the art of ballet (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:20).

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various accompaniments for the same exercises. The alternatives of the musical accompaniment for an exercise gives options for different dancers to suit their individual bodies and physical abilities (Van Schoor 2018). The music is, like the exercises, very simplistic, which aids the dancer in their simplicity of movement as well. The music and movements reflect one another; for instance, Cecchetti would use a strong 3/4 time signature when a movement is performed *soutenu* – 'sustained', meaning with a stretch and a bend of the legs before executing the next movement (this helps to establish the centre of gravity of the dancer) – which greatly assists the movements to flow into one another, with the dancer exhibiting a bouncy quality (*ballon*). This not only creates the appearance of *ballon* which makes the dancer appear light and unstrained, but it also helps the dancer in a functional way, establishing their centre of gravity (line of *aplomb*) and training the muscles and tendons in the legs to be supple and strong. Cecchetti's musical choices therefore assist the dancer's technique as well as the quality of movement and artistry exhibited by the dancer.

[100] I am referring to pupils of Blasis here. Blasis was a resourceful student and teacher, having also studied music, architecture, drawing, geometry and anatomy. Although his dancing was the best of his time, he incorporated various aspects of his knowledge into his ballet codification – the laws of anatomy, geometry and the beauty of line, for instance. Blasis, as will be mentioned later on, acquainted himself with artistic luminaries in various fields of the arts, including sculptors and musicians. As such, he really endeavoured to expand his artistic knowledge to his fullest potential.

[101] What grace and beauty entails differ from one context to another. Grace and beauty have a different 'look' in the Romantic style of ballet as it does in the Classical style and the Modern style. However, the ballet dancer ought to understand and convey these differences in their dancing appropriately with respect to what they are performing. De la Croix *et al* write about artists 'speaking the language' of their art. For dancers this also entails conveying the message to their audience. "Art may be more than a form of communication, but it is certainly that" (De la Croix et al 1991:3-4). For the dancer this means learning the 'languages' of their art of the many different periods, "as they are embodied in the monuments of their respective times" (De la Croix et al 1991:4). Classical ballet, therefore, does not have one distinct style or aesthetic, but borrows from its previous eras as it continues to develop.

Cecchetti's precise technical, theatrical and theoretical Method, together with the abovementioned artistic skills aim to create an accomplished dancer who is equipped with technical excellence, great artistic quality and the theatrical presence which can instantly capture and hold an audience.

3.3 The Development of Ballet Pedagogy: From Blasis to Cecchetti

As previously mentioned, Carlo Blasis[102] played a momentous role in Cecchetti's understanding of ballet as well as the subsequent development of his Method. Blasis held the status of *premier danseur* at La Scala in Milan, as well as the title of Director of the Imperial Academy of Dancing and Mime attached to La Scala – it was here that he laid down his theoretical principles. Blasis' legacy[103] lies in the training of classical ballet and his codes of dancing – he structured the ballet class as we know it[104], with the routine of *barre* and *centre practice* and he detailed theories of *port de bras* and the line of the body. He was not only a pupil of dance but also studied music, mathematics, painting, sculpture, and anatomy. His understanding of these disciplines played an important role in his approach to ballet. He is considered to be the first pedagogue of classical ballet and his already-mentioned book of 1820, *Traité Elémentair, Théorique et Pratique de l'Art de la Danse*, was the first was the first to formally codify[105] the principles of classical ballet. The most important principle codified by Blasis is "the reiterated insistence on the value of line[106]" (Beaumont 1948:14). This value and beauty of line is one of the most important elements of classical ballet and is preserved in

[102] Carlo Blasis was born in Naples, in 1803.
[103] Blasis was also the choreographer of more than fifty ballets and is credited with the creation of the position of *attitude* with inspiration from Giambologna's statue of Mercury, among other things.
[104] The structure of a ballet class commences with *barre* work, then continues to *port de bras* (movements of the arms), centre practice, *adage* (slow movements on one leg with the other leg extending *en l'air,* or in the air), *pirouettes* (turns), *allegro* (jumps), *en diagonale* steps (movements travelling down a diagonal line from corner 3 to 1 or from corner 4 to 2) and *autour de la salle* (sequences travelling 'around the room') concluding with men's steps and *pointe work*, for the women.
[105] Although King Louis XIV had ballet translated to the written page for the first time in history, the technique and movements of classical ballet were first converted into a formal system, or codified, by Blasis. Therefore, King Louis XIV is responsible for documenting dance for the first time, whereas Blasis is credited with codification of ballet and acknowledged as the first to categorise and systemise ballet technique, rules, steps and positions. Later, Cecchetti would be the first to develop a *method* of training, building upon and significantly advancing the principles and technical system laid down by Blasis.
[106] The concept of the value and beauty of line is based on Classic aesthetics. Lines are always extending beyond the extremities, and there is an emphasis on geometric figures, harmony and proportion (Beaumont 1948:14).

Cecchetti's Method[107]. Beaumont explains that "[t]he pupil is taught to appreciate this important quality by geometric figures which are afterwards expanded into delineations of the human body in dance positions" (1948:14).

Blasis wrote many other books including *The Code of Terpischore* (1828)[108] and the principles of his teaching were passed down to his pupils, amongst them the Giovanni Lepri, who, as mentioned previously, later became one of Cecchetti's ballet masters. Blasis's codification of ballet technique involves the description of all the steps and positions that are still in practice today (The Royal Opera House 2014). However, his treatise "contains only a tithe of the *practical* technique" which is described in much more detail and elaborated on in the Cecchetti Manual (Beaumont 1948:12). Cecchetti took these principles further, creating and nurturing a Method of classical ballet training that seems yet to be surpassed, in terms of technical and artistic richness. Building on Blasis' foundation, Cecchetti significantly influenced the development and training of ballet technique. He was the first to develop a *method* of classical ballet, which subsequently influenced the creation of other ballet systems, methods and syllabi. Mery Lynn Morris quotes Mary Stewart Evans, who states that "virtually all dancing bodies trained in ballet are inheritors of a particular Blasis-driven codification; thereby, dictating how the body should look and move" (2015:249). Blasis and Cecchetti's approaches to classical ballet technique, training and pedagogy therefore persist, despite inevitable developments in dance. Morris (2015:249) states: "Despite various changes over time which have challenged ballet pedagogical history, the balletic ideal of 'perfection' persists as an echo of Blasis's original teaching as it still pervades much of dance training practice, inscribing and indoctrinating a particular way of seeing and moving."

Morris (2015:249) notes the development of ballet with Cecchetti's involvement and its long-lasting effects:

> Strides have been made during our own times in the methods of teaching dancing, notably by Cecchetti, who was Blasis's direct artistic descendant, but the fundamentals laid down by Blasis himself are unchanged and the ideals and traditions established by him during his intendancy at the Imperial Academy in Milan find their echo in every well conducted present-day school of dancing.

[107] Cecchetti inscribed the title page of his 1894 manuscript with the motto "Nulla dies sine linea", no day without a line (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:19).
[108] Terpischore refers to the ancient Greek goddess of dance.

The traditions, principles and fundamentals of classical ballet training therefore remain, despite certain developments, such as aesthetics and choreography. Many aspects of classical ballet technique and training today can therefore be traced back to Cecchetti and further back to Blasis.

3.4 Cecchetti the Anatomist – The Cecchetti Method

With his experience and prestige Cecchetti was not merely a master of the technique of classical ballet with an ability to train both the most elementary student and perfect the technique of a renowned ballerina. He was also capable of teaching the dancer how to adapt their technical knowledge for the purpose of stage presentation (Beaumont 1948:8). It was towards the end of the nineteenth century, while teaching in St. Petersburg, that Cecchetti first developed his Method. He transcribed his Method as a *Table of Daily Exercises for the Week* (Cronshaw 2014). From there, Cecchetti insisted upon strict adherence to his Method and his set of daily exercises until his death in 1928 (Cronshaw 2014). Beaumont (1948:14) defines the Cecchetti Method as follows:

> A rigorous system drawn up with careful regard for the laws of anatomy, [that] is designed to endow the human body with all those qualities essential to the dancer – balance, poise, strength, elevation, elasticity, *ballon* and so forth.

The Cecchetti Method embraces a satiated vocabulary of movement with eight *port de bras* and nearly forty *adages* composed by Cecchetti himself for the development of graceful and co-ordinated arm movements, and the development and maintenance of balance and poise, respectively (Beaumont 1948:16).

Beaumont compares Cecchetti's system to the skilled construction of a machine for a particular purpose, whose engineer had taken into account the work the machine[109] had to perform as well as the varying strains of pressure, friction and so on to which the smallest component part would be subjected (Beaumont 1948:9). Beaumont explains his ambition to codify the Method as follows:

[109] Beaumont, having been brought up in the environment of mechanics – his father was an engineer – was captivated by the mechanics of dancing which came to light through Cecchetti's training (Beaumont 1948:9). It is interesting to note how Beaumont's language speaks to a particular modernist sensibility as we read Cecchetti through Beaumont's lens here, which is informed by a particular time and place.

> The more I thought of Cecchetti's training and the more I became acquainted with those who were his pupils, the more I felt it to be imperative to preserve this method of training for the benefit of all dancers.

Cecchetti's goal was to produce well-rounded dancers that were equally proficient in all areas of the ballet class[110] (Cronshaw 2014). Cecchetti devised his Method in such a way that every dancer, regardless of their physical form[111], would be seasoned in every section and every aspect of the dance. Each exercise plays a definite and planned part in the dancer's technical development (Beaumont 1948:9). Nothing was random about Cecchetti's system of teaching, and little was left to the teacher's discretion, or dependent on the teacher's mood of the moment[112] (Beaumont 1948:9). Slight adaptations to differing physiques in students, and unset classes, which consist of unseen *enchaînements*, or 'unset' exercises[113], are some of the areas where a teacher might use their personal discretion and originality. A teacher might also require some imagination with analogies or teaching devices. A teacher might describe a light jumping sequence as resembling the bubbles in a glass of champagne that trickle and burst lightly to the rim, where another teacher might liken the lightness of the jump to a bout of hiccups.

The Cecchetti Method is grounded in a number of principles: theoretical, physical, and also methodological. The theoretical principles, which are discussed in *The Manual* and which will be examined later on in this Chapter, describe the fundamental functioning of the entire body. The physical principles are informed by anatomy, physiology and practice, and are demonstrated in Cecchetti's *Days of the Week*[114]. The methodological principles are not specifically articulated by Cecchetti himself, in the sense that they are not written down or recorded in *The Manual*. However, Cecchetti's methodology and teaching approach have been transmitted from one generation to the next, and it is evident, when looking at the pedagogy across the Cecchetti societies, that they all maintain Cecchetti's methodological structure of and approach to classes and exercises.

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[110] Typically, every dancer has certain strengths and weaknesses; some are more effective and confident with their *allegro* than in their *adagio* technique, or the other way around. Of course, this is often a result of the differences in the build and the body of a dancer.

[111] Physical form here refers to differing proportions of limbs, the shape of the legs – bowed legs or hyper extended legs, for instance – the height of an individual, etcetera. This study acknowledges the limitations of dance to able-bodied individuals. This study acknowledges that it refers to specific types of bodies-as-archives that are trained and maintained in a prescribed way.

[112] At appropriate times, there is room for the artistic licence of the teacher, and perhaps the dancer, too. For instance, with the creation of unseen exercises, or with options for dancers with different bodies and physical abilities – such as the timing or musicality, as mentioned in a previous footnote.

[113] Unset work consists of exercises outside the formal syllabus.

[114] Each day of the week focuses on a particular physical principle.

3.5 Theoretical Principles

There are fourteen theoretical principles that are described in the first pages of *The Manual*. Van Schoor explains that these principles make up the entire practice of classical ballet, that these are the rules that govern what dancers do and how they do it (2022). The first three principles cover the movement and functioning of the lower body – the positions of the feet, the movements of the foot, and the study of the legs. The fourth through eighth principles cover the upper body – the study of the hand, the positions of the arms, the theory of *port de bras,* the positions of the head, and the movement of the head. The ninth covers the stylistic principle of *épaulement,* and the final four, namely *attitudes, arabesques,* movements in dancing, and directions of the body are the principles that cover the choreography, of a *pas, enchaînement,* a *variation,* or other arranged dance sequence. The study of the body, which is the tenth principle, describes the body's movement and functioning as a whole.

These principles not only assist the teacher or choreographer with the necessary tools to invent a dance, but also help the dancer to better understand what the teacher or choreographer is trying to create. It forms the basis of any dance and offers a shared language of ballet for the dancer and the choreographer. Additionally, Cecchetti's *eight points of the room* assist the dancer with spatial orientation. Cecchetti's principles offer a shared foundation for the dancer and the choreographer and can be applied in varying ways to suit a particular choreographic intent.

3.6 Cecchetti's Physical Principles and the Days of the Week

There are six physical principles, which coincide with Cecchetti's six *days of the week*. These principles, and the way they are structured within a week of ballet practice, cover the full range of steps, movement qualities, dynamics and spatial planes, establishing a so-called "science"[115] behind Cecchetti's Method (Cronshaw 2021). Although these physical principles are key to all classical ballet, Cecchetti was the first to apply them in a structured manner and in a logical progression in a cycle of six days. Cecchetti applied these principles in a meticulous way to create an anatomically safe Method which is functionally effective and artistically responsive.

[115] Science is often associated with exactitude or precision.

By the end of the week, nothing was left untouched (Royal Opera House 2014). Cronshaw (2021) explains that "just as Da Vinci applied scientific methods to his art, so did Enrico Cecchetti to classical ballet". Van Schoor (2023) mentions that Cecchetti worked musculo-skeletally and that every day, a different set of muscles were targeted. Furthermore, Cecchetti greatly contributed to the repertoire of ballets during that time, which he also divided up into the six days; each day focusing on different repertoire and physical properties to develop different movement qualities and dynamics in the dancer (Van Schoor 2023).

Cecchetti's *days of the week* are based on these six physical principles, namely *aplomb, épaulement,* turnout, weight transference in the air, suspension (working within the aerial plane) and *ballon* (Cronshaw 2014). The first three days are focused on principles applied to the dancer standing in space – equilibrium, dynamic opposition and turnout – whereas the next three days are focused on principles applied to the dancer moving in space (Cronshaw 2021). Although the six principles are mostly concerned with the steps contained in the jumping (*allegro*) section of the class, Cecchetti prepared the dancer for these movements by incorporating similar movements in his *adage* section. In the *adage* section these movements would be executed in a steadier and more controlled manner, and later, in the *allegro* section, the dancer would then perform these same movements with a more vigorous dynamic in their jumping steps. Van Schoor (2018) illustrates this idea with reference to the *renversé* movement: "You will find that Cecchetti often gives us something in the *adage* section, and then it returns in the *allegro* section later on with a different quality."

What follows here is a brief summary of Cecchetti's *days of the week* and some examples that demonstrate the precision of his Method. On Mondays, Cecchetti focused on the line of *aplomb* or plumb line[116], through movements contained within the category *Des Assemblés*[117]. When the dancer establishes and maintains their line of *aplomb,* the weight of the body is not shifted onto the ball of the standing foot when the working leg is disengaged. Rather, the dancer will hold the vertical line through the centre of the body. The engagement of deep postural muscles, as well as the use of *épaulement* – which creates dynamic opposition in the upper and lower body – helps the dancer to remain secure on this line without having to shift their weight onto

[116] The notion of the line of *aplomb* was originally used by architects and builders to establish a vertical line through a structure. For dancers, it implies their centre of gravity or centre line, which should – at least, in the Cecchetti Method – always be maintained, regardless of whether standing on one or both legs.
[117] *Assemblés,* in their most basic form, involve the dancer disengaging the working leg from the *fifth position* and springing off the standing leg, bringing the legs together in the air and alighting on both legs.

the standing leg (Cronshaw 2021). Cecchetti therefore used elements like *épaulement* in a functional way[118], which simultaneously added artistry to his dance. This allows the dancer to maintain their centre line, which trains strength, balance, control and efficiency in movements and ensures that the dancer is always ready to move in any direction. At the same time, his use of these functional and artistic elements produces less strained, effortless dancing as well as increased strength and control within the core or centre of the body. The line of *aplomb* is established through the execution of *barre* exercises, where, with the aid of the *barre*, the dancer can find their equilibrium, or centre of gravity.

On Tuesdays, Cecchetti focused on *des petits battements* – small percussive steps, involving brisk footwork and displaying a floor-skimming quality, in other words, steps with low elevation.

Wednesday emphasises the use of turnout, or rotation of the legs. The category, *des ronds de jambe*, contains circular movements of the leg in an inward and outward direction. The shapes and spirals which are already present in the body by now – through a strong sense of equilibrium (Monday) and dynamic opposition (Tuesday) – begin to manifest, extending outwards to their natural extremities by using *en dehors*[121] – the outward folding of the leg – and *en dedans*[122] – the inward folding of the leg (Cronshaw 2021). Here, Cecchetti's rule of the head – which is anatomically and functionally justified[123] – also applies. In some instances, the head moves in the same direction as the body and at other times away, depending on the type of movement, to assist the dancer in executing the movement with more ease. When the dancer advances across the stage – in other words, any forward moving action – the head inclines towards the side of the foot that makes the step forward; contralaterally (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:28). Contrariwise, when the dancer retreats across the stage – that is, any backwards-moving step – the head inclines towards the opposite foot that makes the step

[118] If the dancer were to shift the weight, rather than hold their body upright in a dynamic position, all the work performed by the dancer would be redundant; all the weight is now on the standing leg and, with the increased downward pull of gravity – which should be countered with the upward pull within this vertical line – it produces strain through the whole body since the dancer now requires more effort and force to push themselves off the floor (Cronshaw 2021).
[121] The *en dehors* movements are initiated from the front of the torso, with the inclination of the head over the supporting leg helping the dancer to move outwards (Cronshaw 2021).
[122] The *en dedans* movements are initiated from the back of the torso, with the front shoulder of the *épaulement* helping the dancer to move inwards, or towards the standing leg (Cronshaw 2021).
[123] The weight of the head assists the dancer's weight placement and balance. Placing the weight of the head over the supporting leg helps the dancer to remain secure and balanced when holding a position on one leg. Contrariwise, placing the head over the extended or working leg, with the addition of *épaulement*, creates a balanced and secure position through opposition. The use and weight of the head assists the dancer's movements and positions.

backwards; homologically (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:29). This not only helps with the appropriate distribution of weight but also, consequently, enhances ease of movement.

Thursdays are concerned with the transference of weight in the air. Thursday movements are contained in the group, *des jetés*, which are jumping movements that involve the transference of weight from one leg to the other.

Fridays are all about suspending the body in the air. This is seen in *des temps de batterie* – both *petit batterie* and *grand batterie* – where the dancer needs to sustain themselves in the air while performing beats with the legs, as well as in *des temps de pointe,* or pointe work, where the ballerina sustains herself in the air on her toes, and also *des temps en tournant,* or turning steps, where the dancer needs to sustain themselves in the air during a turn before alighting to the floor.

Lastly, Saturdays focus on the principle of *ballon*, displayed through *des grands fouettés sautés.* These movements display the quality of bouncing like a ball. The week's principles culminate in the Saturday *enchaînements* – which are the most challenging and diverse of all the six days (Cronshaw 2021). The dancer employs the line of *aplomb* (centre line), *épaulement* (dynamic opposition), turnout, weight transference, suspension in the air and *ballon* (efficient use of the muscles in the legs), which are full of exciting movements for the dancer to take pleasure in their dancing. These *enchaînements* call for "a mastery of dynamics, speeds, change of direction, and use of all the spatial planes" (Cronshaw 2021) and develop *grand* elevation and power (Herbst 2022). Both large and small muscle groups are used together during these exercises, engaging the entire body in these dynamic exercises.

3.7 Methodological Principles

This Chapter has already identified some of Cecchetti's methodological principles, namely cycles, repetition and variation (Cronshaw 2014), which one can identify in The Days of the Week, for example. Two additional principles that govern his Method, are simplicity and beauty of line, which constitutes the Cecchetti aesthetic[125]. These methodological principles

[125] Cecchetti's aesthetic had no definite style, but always adhered to the simplicity and beauty of lines as required by Classicism. Both Classicism and Romanticism, however, influenced Cecchetti's aesthetic, whilst it is also contemporary in a way. The aesthetics of each of the artistic movements – Romantic, Classic and Modern – are

govern the structure of Cecchetti's classes and will be elaborated on in Chapter Four. Furthermore, Cecchetti's Method is developed with the muscular and anatomical functioning of the human body in motion, in mind. Cecchetti understood the principle of opposition, the physics and anatomy of the human body, and natural movement. This, and his knowledge of music, enabled him to create his Method, as a structured methodology, not to mention he did so with creativity and artistry[126], ensuring that the movement mechanics he established could operate in such a way that it created art, beauty of line, to the most complementary musical compositions. In this sense, the Cecchetti Method strives towards the co-ordination of the whole body[127] through opposition, equilibrium and harmony[128]. It is also based on anatomical and physiological principles, which allow the dancer to execute the most complex steps with ease and economy in the form of an artistic and creative presentation. Repetitive and cyclical training is another foundation of the Method. *The Manual* (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:103-104) states:

> The principal benefits resulting from the performance of exercises in accordance with a set programme are as follows: 1. Regular practice enables the student to memorise the *adages* so that, not being forced to concentrate on the sequences of movement, he can devote all his attention to the proper distribution of weight, and the development of a sense of line and a correct feeling for quality of movement. 2. In the case of *allegro,* regular practice ensures that every type of step is used during the week. This is important because, when the work of the class depends on the whim or mood of the teacher, weeks may pass before a certain type of step is encountered.

The principles of repetition and cyclical training therefore help to achieve good muscle memory and build strength, stamina and endurance which help the dancer to perform with ease, avoiding fatigue mid-performance. In turn, this allows the dancer to direct more of their efforts towards

evident in the various styles of Cecchetti's *enchaînements.* Cecchetti's Tuesdays were, for instance, centred around the Romantic style.

[126] Cecchetti would often change the timing or *port de bras* according to the individual dancer, in order to suit the dancer's body or physical ability. An example would be the musicality in a dancer's virtuoso *pirouettes* like *fouettés* or *á la seconde* turns. Some dancers appear more musical and perform their turns technically better when taking their *fondu,* or bending of the supporting leg, on the strong beat of the music and performing the turn on the weak beat of the music. Alternatively, other dancers might take the *fondu* on the weak beat which would help them execute the turn more efficiently, having the strong beat of the music driving the turn.

[127] This forms the basis of any somatic or embodied practice and demonstrates the somatic approach of Cecchetti's Method.

[128] In ballet, harmony refers to the coordination of the body parts in a pose or movement. When there is coordination, the movements are executed more efficiently and with ease. Proportion, which derives from the Classical ideas of lines and shapes, refers to the symmetry of the body parts in a pose or movement. Whenever there is asymmetry, the dancer holds on to the position using *épaulement,* to counterbalance the imbalance. In accordance with the *theory of port de bras,* when the arms are held or moved in opposition with each other, it creates symmetry, which assists both the dancer's equilibrium and contributes to the harmony and beauty of line created by the dancer.

their artistic interpretation and performance, focusing less on the technical and physical aspects which are well-established through these principles of training.

3.7.1 Repetition

The element of repetition can be seen in many areas of Cecchetti's work that are still in practice today. The *exercises á la barre*, for example, are based purely on repetition, and are still taught today as Cecchetti taught his pupils. A fundamental feature of Cecchetti's *barre* work is the repetition of the same action numerous times in succession (Glasstone 2000). This is, according to Glasstone, "more beneficial than combining a number of different actions within one exercise" (2000). Repetition, as mentioned, is intended to train muscle memory[129], and, since most of Cecchetti's *barre* exercises were directly related to the mechanics of jumping steps and other *centre practice,* it is evident that the purpose behind the repetition of these *barre* exercises was to establish and foster the correct timing, precise accents and proper dynamics of each movement which would train the body to easily repeat these timings, accents and dynamics when executing more difficult, but similar, actions (Glasstone 2000). Furthermore, Cecchetti's *centre practice* was almost an exact repetition of the exercises taught at the *barre,* with the purpose of repeating the proper actions and training the muscle memory, now without the aid of the *barre*, allowing the dancer to further enhance their technique whilst developing better equilibrium. The element of repetition can also be seen in Cecchetti's *port de bras* during which the dancer executes a series of each of the eight *port de bras* in a logical sequence. Cecchetti nevertheless stressed the importance of executing the exercises once or twice with precision and exactitude rather than numerous times with carelessness and indifference. Quality, rather than quantity, is the guiding rule (Beaumont 1948:15).

3.7.2 Variation

Although Cecchetti insisted upon the strict adherence to his system of daily practice, he also valued the element of variation, advocating the incorporation of 'unseen' sequences – sequences that are not practised daily like the syllabus work, which can be integrated into any

[129] Muscle memory forms an important part in the study of classical ballet technique. Anand Lunkad explains that "[m]uscle memory is a type of procedural memory" (2020:28). This will be expanded on in Chapter Five.

section of the class. *The Manual* states that while the Method "insists on the strict observance of a set weekly programme, it requires with equal force that, as the pupil progresses, he shall be given new *enchaînements* daily and … new *adages*" composed by Cecchetti himself, so that "the student may develop and quicken his power of analysis, and his aptitude for assimilating new sequences of movement" (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:104). Unset or unseen *enchaînements* would be composed by the teacher, with the purpose of developing the dancer's competence in quick study as well as their ability to absorb and engage with new steps and new *enchaînements* (Beaumont 1948:16).

3.7.3 Somatics, Simplicity and Beauty of Line

Cecchetti wanted his pupils to think of the movements of their body parts – the foot, leg, arm and head – in relation to one another, and in relation to the entire body, rather than as separate entities (Beaumont 1948:15). In this way, the dancer not only achieves utmost coordination, but the movements are executed with ease and precision, creating (and always feeling) the beauty of line in the dance. Glasstone points out that the concepts of balance and flow are undoubtedly the key concepts in Cecchetti's class – the structure of his lessons, his avowal to the beauty of line and coordination of the different parts of the body, as well as his emphasis on the many different qualities of *allegro* steps (2000).

Cecchetti's Method is characterised by its clear-cut style. The Method is acutely opposed to extravagance and fussiness of movement (Beaumont 1948:16). This is another Cecchetti principle: simplicity. Cecchetti's *enchaînements* are simple and clean in their movements, and movements always adhere to the strict laws of physics and the beauty of line[130]. The addition of the arms in a movement is, for instance, limited unless the arms assist the mechanics of the movement in some way or contribute to the line of the movement or pose. This is especially true for *allegro enchaînements* where a movement is executed numerous times consecutively, such as *temps de cuisse.* The beauty of line might be disrupted with superfluous arm

[130] Cecchetti's *port de bras,* for instance, demonstrates this simultaneous emphasis on both technique and artistry. Technically, the arms are used and moved in such a way to aid the dancer in the execution of a step. For instance, the use of the arms, with well-timed coordination, could assist the dancer in attaining high elevation during a jump. If not used for a technical purpose, the arms may also add to the clarity of the lines created by the dancer's movements. The natural lines created by the arms in relation to the rest of the body are still, however, based on the laws of opposition, which not only create beautiful lines but also assist the dancer's equilibrium – an important factor in the harmony and proportion of the Classicism of ballet, as well as the physical execution of *enchaînements*.

movements. Glasstone (1997) quotes Michael Clark, who comments on Cecchetti's simplicity and insistence on the beauty of line:

> What I got out of my study of the Cecchetti work was an understanding of the continuity of movement … The movement between shapes is very simple. There's nothing added, it's not necessary to add anything.

Cecchetti's work is free from mannerisms and other unnecessary idiosyncrasies. It is complete in the sense that he based his *enchaînements* on only the necessary principles required for the functionally and expressively optimal execution of each movement, providing the dancer with everything that he or she needs to execute a movement effectively, without jeopardising the beauty of the lines, the artistry. The Method emphasises technicality and artistry equally, without the one dominating the other.

3.7.4 The Cumulative Effect of The Method

To ensure effective and even development throughout the body, Cecchetti would practise leading with the left side of the body the one week, and the next he would practice the right side[131]. This supports the idea that the various movements and all the steps are effectively practised in a calculated sequence, stretching and contracting each set of muscles in turn and to a carefully calculated degree, and working both sides of the body equally (Beaumont 1948:15). This produces dancers that are well-versed not only in all areas of the class – preparing them to perform any demanding repertoire – but also to be equally strong and capable on both legs. If the dancer achieves the coordination throughout the body, which is fundamental to the Method, they will produce dancing that, as Fokine said, "appeals not merely to the eye but to the emotions and the imagination" (Cronshaw 2014). The dancer will then "dance naturally, without the strain and artificiality that has in recent years tended to obscure its intrinsic power and beauty" (Cronshaw 2014).

The cumulative effect of this Method results in the development of well-rounded and versatile dancers. Not only this, but the Cecchetti Method is designed to strengthen the body in ways that are anatomically safe, which enables dancers who train in this method to enjoy long, healthy and injury-free careers. Despite the claim that dancers today have greater technique

[131] Today, it remains important to practice both the left and right side of the body equally to ensure an even and balanced development of the muscles, flexibility and strength in the body.

than ever before, many of the steps danced in Cecchetti's time are not performed anymore because they are believed to be "too difficult" (Cronshaw 2014). Cronshaw notes that ballet dancers today often push beyond anatomical limits to achieve the appearance of technical brilliance. With this athletic and boundary-pushing approach to ballet, dancers are in actual fact lacking in many areas of technique and movement possibilities, despite the introduction and advancement of sports medicine[132] in dance. Cronshaw (2021) notes that "fashions in choreography come and go, but a method based on universal principles, is timeless". This is what makes the Method relevant today.

Cecchetti pursued a ballet pedagogy that would develop sustainable good technique paralleled with good artistic ability, through consistent, safe, and anatomically sound practice.

3.8 Beaumont – Codifying the Method

Cyril Beaumont was responsible for codifying the Cecchetti Method. With the assistance of Stanislas Idzikowski (a student of Cecchetti), Beaumont was introduced to "the mysteries of the art" (Beaumont 1948:9). In 1920, Beaumont, with Idzikowski's cooperation, began to explore, study and transcribe Cecchetti's mastery. Beaumont (1948:9) describes his engagements with Idzikowski:

> Sometimes we met at my place of business, sometimes at Idzikowski's rooms in Bloomsbury, when, with a chair-back or the rail of a bedstead for [*barre*], he demonstrated certain movements for my instruction. I soon learned that dancers are the outcome of much toil and sweat.

The challenge was overwhelming for Beaumont; "the difficulties seemed insuperable", and he considered abandoning the project altogether (1948:9). He then pursued the help of Cecchetti, and started working alongside the Maestro himself, who demonstrated his Method as well as supervised and assisted Beaumont in recording the Method in writing. Beaumont assembled his notes and perfected his descriptions as he worked ceaselessly with Cecchetti until the book *A Manual of Classical Theatrical Dancing* (Cecchetti Method) was completed two years later, in 1922 (Beaumont 1948:10). The *Manual* will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four.

[132] "High rates of musculoskeletal injuries and their associated monetary, physical, and psychological costs of injury have led to the emergence of dance medicine and science as a discipline of sports medicine, with the goal of helping keep dancers healthy" (Williams 2017).

Further volumes were compiled by Beaumont with the help of Margaret Craske and Derra de Moroda (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:14). With Craske, Beaumont recorded many *temps d'allegro* and *enchaînements*. This book, titled *The Theory and Practice of Allegro in Classical Ballet,* was published in 1930 (Beaumont 1948:12).

3.9 Cecchetti's Influence

Cecchetti greatly influenced ballet on a global scale. The new generation[133] of dancers and teachers took The Method abroad and it became an integral part of the work of many major companies and schools all over the world. Most notable amongst Rambert and Craske's many famous pupils, and the most important link through them to Cecchetti, was Sir Frederick Ashton, renowned choreographer of the twentieth century. He wrote:

> If I had my way, I would always insist that all dancers should daily do the wonderful Cecchetti *port de bras*, especially beginners. It inculcates a wonderful feeling for line and correct positioning and the use of head movement and *épaulement*, which, if correctly absorbed, will be of incalculable use throughout a dancer's career (Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing 2014).

The significant influence of Cecchetti and his Method on British ballet led to the establishment of both the Cecchetti Society and the Cecchetti Classical Ballet Faculty (Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing 2014). The ISTD (2014) notes that the "Cecchetti principles of training produce outstanding artistic and technically accomplished dancers, able to work with today's directors across a spectrum of ballet and contemporary dance companies".

In 1922 Beaumont went on to establish the Cecchetti Society with the purpose of preserving and promoting Cecchetti's work. Today, there are several societies established across the world, honouring and promoting the Cecchetti Method.

[133] After the first World War, in 1918, Cecchetti opened his own ballet school in London (Cronshaw 2014). Dame Ninette de Valois and Dame Marie Rambert, two pioneers of twentieth century British ballet, were among his pupils there. When Cecchetti retired to Italy, they continued to work with Cecchetti's Method (Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing 2014).

3.10 The Cecchetti Society and The Cecchetti Classical Ballet Faculty of the ISTD

The Imperial Society of Teachers in Dancing (ISTD) was established in London, in 1904, making it one of the oldest and most influential dance examination boards[134] in the world (Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing 2014). The Cecchetti Classical Ballet Faculty is one of the twelve faculties affiliated to the ISTD – its twelve faculties make it the most comprehensive examination board in terms of the genres and styles offered. Constantly keeping pace with the latest developments in the world of dance, the ISTD is focused on educating people in the art of dance in all its forms as well as to disseminate the knowledge of dance, keeping technique updated with the times, and upholding and upgrading teaching standards across the world (Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing 2014). The Cecchetti Classical Ballet Faculty has a rich heritage and history.

Beaumont founded the Cecchetti Society in 1922, and two years later, in 1924, the Cecchetti Society merged with the ISTD, where it remains active to date (Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing 2014). The founding committee included Craske, de Moroda, de Valois, Rambert, Beaumont, as well as Jane Forestier and Molly Lake (Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing 2014). Cecchetti served the committee as president and Giuseppina de Maria, his wife, as vice president until 1923, when Cecchetti returned to Italy. Beaumont then took over and held the position of chairman until his death in 1976[135]. The chairpersons, together with their vice chairpersons, committee members and secretaries have made an exceptional contribution in terms of leading the Cecchetti Faculty of Classical Ballet, both promoting the Cecchetti Method and preserving the Cecchetti heritage, whilst simultaneously responding to the ever-changing face of dance (Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing 2014). These members offer their time and effort voluntarily, which indicates the great interest in the Cecchetti Method, its preservation and endorsement. The Society, as the ISTD mentions, also has the support of a number of esteemed patrons, including current patrons, South African Dame Monica Mason DBE (Dame of Most Excellent Order of the British Empire), David Bintley CBE (Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire), Lesley Collier CBE and Kevin O'Hare

[134] Other dance examination boards include the Royal Academy of Dance (previously called the Association of Teachers of Operatic Dancing) which was founded in 1920, the International Dance Teachers Association (IDTA) founded in 1967), the British Ballet Organisation (now referred to as bbodance) which was established in 1930, the National Association of Teachers of Dancing (NATD) founded in 1906, and UKA Dance (previously known as United Kingdom Alliance) established in 1902 (Dancewear Central 2018).
[135] Regarding the position as chairperson, Beaumont's successors were Diana Barker (1976-1990), Mary Jane Duckworth (1990-1999), Linda Pilkington (1999-2005) and Elisabeth Swan (2005-date) (Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing 2014).

(Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing 2014). Branches of the Cecchetti Society have since developed in all parts of the world, including Southern Africa. The ISTD (2014) notes the success of the Cecchetti Faculty of Classical Ballet:

> In the 90 years that Cecchetti classical ballet has been affiliated to the ISTD it has evolved and expanded and now provides a very wide range of training and performance opportunities for children, students and teachers. With nationally and internationally recognised ISTD examinations and qualifications, Cecchetti classical ballet is now taught across Europe and beyond. Branches of the Cecchetti Society have also been formed throughout the world and flourish in Australia, South Africa, Canada, Italy and the USA. Together with the UK, these countries are the founding members of Cecchetti International Classical Ballet (CICB), working together to promote the Cecchetti method. Building on this rich legacy the purpose of Cecchetti classical ballet today is: 'Recreational, Vocational, Professional – a Training for the Future'.

In 2022, the Cecchetti Society celebrated its centenary as Cecchetti's work continues to thrive across the world.

3.11 The Formation of the Cecchetti Society of Southern Africa

In 1928, Craske invited Howes[136] – who was studying under her at the time – to participate in the formation of the ISTD Overseas Branch (Cecchetti International Classical Ballet 2022). The branch, which was the first to be established overseas, was founded in Johannesburg on 16 August 1928. The founding committee consisted of Audrey Grosse (chairperson), Pearl Adler (honorary secretary) and Agnes Bergen from Johannesburg, Nancy Hooper from Durban, and Dulcie Howes and Maude Lloyd from Cape Town (Cecchetti International Classical Ballet 2022). The Cecchetti Society of Southern Africa (CSSA) was briefly transferred to Cape Town in 1931, but permanently returned to Johannesburg in 1933 (Cecchetti International Classical Ballet 2022). Howes went on to establish the Cape Town branch. Adler was responsible for organising the first general congress of the ISTD Cecchetti Branch in 1936, and in 1956 this group became the Southern African branch of the ISTD Cecchetti section (Cecchetti International Classical Ballet 2022). Hooper, who went to study under Rambert in London, was a member of the ISTD since 1925 and was responsible for bringing the Cecchetti Method to

[136] Howes travelled to London to study at Cecchetti's studio. Cecchetti soon left for Italy and handed over his studio to Craske, who continued to train Howes. She returned to South Africa in 1928 to establish the Cecchetti Society of Southern Africa.

Durban, where the first ISTD examinations were conducted in 1927 (Cecchetti International Classical Ballet 2022).

The CSSA celebrated its ninetieth birthday in 2018. The current council of management consists of Gail Myburgh as chairperson, Yvonne Barker as vice-chairperson, and Elesia Ceronio, Jennifer Louw and José Pretorius as council members. The Method, which reposes both in material and bodily archives, has been circulated around the world through the mechanism of a society, the Cecchetti Society. The Cecchetti Society now consists of a whole community of dancers, teachers and custodians of the Method. The following Chapter analyses the various sources, both material and bodily, that preserve the Method.

CHAPTER FOUR: ARCHIVES AND SOURCES ON CLASSICAL BALLET AND THE CECCHETTI METHOD

This Chapter provides an overview of the archives[137] and source materials on classical ballet and the Cecchetti ballet training method that are available in South Africa. These include the University of Cape Town's former ballet school[138] archive, as well as the available source material for Cecchetti students and teachers that can be found at the Cecchetti Society of Southern Africa's headquarters. This Chapter critically reflects on the adequacy and completeness of these archives and materials in preserving ballet knowledge, specifically the Cecchetti Method. This study argues that in addition to these relatively stable archives, the dancing body actively participates in knowledge exchange and preservation of knowledge that is inherently intangible, dynamic and performative. Although video can record the moving body, this form of archiving has limitations as it is unable to capture the essence of the embodied experience of the learning, teaching and preserving of ballet. I suggest that the dancing body, by virtue of its ability to acquire, embody and transfer knowledge, is the primary carrier and source of the technique, principles, style and dynamics of classical ballet. The unique experience of teaching and learning ballet in a studio with others – the teacher who materialises and translates and the student who acquires and embodies – cannot be replaced by video, photography or printed books. Cyril Beaumont (1948:16) describes this exchange of knowledge in the dance studio:

> The prime purpose of the Cecchetti Method is that the student shall not learn to dance by trying to imitate the movements executed by his teacher as a model for him to follow, but shall learn to dance by studying and imbibing the basic principles which govern the art; in short, to grow and develop from within out, to become completely self-reliant.

Cecchetti wanted his dancers to fully *embody* the principles, style and technique of his method. This embodiment is contingent upon the mind-body connection. Teaching and learning ballet can be described as an embodied practice. Drawing from somaesthetics, it can be argued that ballet teachers and students are powerful carriers and activators of culture and knowledge. By learning, carrying and transferring artistic and cultural knowledge, dancers and dance

[137] When speaking of archives, or the archive, of classical ballet in South Africa, I do not imply a single location which holds the collections of physical, material and textual documentation of classical ballet in South Africa, but rather the scattered and fragmented collections of these materials across the country.
[138] Now part of the UCT Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies.

pedagogues are active agents in the practice and preservation of ballet. This notion is explored from the vantage point of the Cecchetti Method of classical ballet.

4.1 Archives of Ballet in South Africa

The history of classical ballet has been documented in various ways. Photographs, interviews with artists and audience members as well as reviews are a few examples of material archiving that have been used for the documentation of dance (Marini 2009). There are a number of library collections and archives at institutions that contain such material sources on ballet. The University of Cape Town's ballet school – now part of the Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies – for instance, has one of South Africa's richest ballet archives. Since 2008, Gerard Samuel has been involved in maintaining this archive. Among the materials are "collections of old photographs, posters and programmes that go back as far as the 1930s" (Humanitec 2015). The South African State Theatre also has a rich ballet archive, which includes the archives of its former classical ballet school, the Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal (PACT). Similar councils existed for the Free State, the Cape and Natal Provinces. Other sources are also maintained within companies, schools and libraries internationally, such as The Royal Opera House in London. The Royal Opera House is known for its significant collection of archives and objects dating back as far as 1732. However, it could be said that these collections are limited and fossilised, thereby not reflecting the dynamic and nuanced art of dance. Francesca Marini (2009) argues that:

> These types of documentation have many limitations and their effectiveness is constantly questioned and discussed in the artistic, scholarly, and information professionals' communities; some artists and theorists reject the idea of fixed-form documentation. [139]

Chapter Two demonstrated the dynamic nature of ballet knowledge; that it fluctuates, evolves and responds to its changing environment, yet remains connected to its traditions and roots. In order to capture, hold and preserve such dynamic knowledge, we cannot rely on fixed and

[139] As mentioned in Chapter One, systems such as Laban Movement Analysis or Labanotation, and Benesh Movement Notation, have been developed with precisely the intention to notate the moving body.

static archives. The preservation of the Cecchetti Method, through dynamic engagement with sources – both material and bodily – and embodiment, shows how such knowledge can be preserved outside of conventional forms of archiving.

4.2 Archives of the Cecchetti Method

As discussed in Chapter Three, Cecchetti played an important role in the development and codification of classical ballet technique. Poesio writes that Cecchetti is "the man who perpetuated the principles of a tradition which otherwise might have been lost" (1994:117). This study specifically considers the sources that document Cecchetti's Method, as an important archive of classical ballet training in South Africa. These sources are scattered and, according to Poesio, there is no comprehensive collection of sources which may be directly related to Cecchetti and his work (Poesio 1994:118). Some of the most significant items pertaining to Cecchetti and his life's work are in The Dance Collection at the New York Public Library (NYPL) (Poesio 1994:118). These items, which once belonged to Cia Fornaroli – one of Cecchetti's last pupils at La Scala – include the manuscript of his daily classes as well as a substantial number of ballets, programmes, photographs and clippings documenting Cecchetti's artistic activities (Poesio 1994:118). There are fifty-one Cecchetti items in this archive. Other archives exist elsewhere in the world. The Royal Opera House in London also houses materials related to Cecchetti's work which had a profound impact on the development of ballet in Britain. One must also, perhaps, take into account that sources that specifically document the Cecchetti Method might not be considered historical and worthy of archiving, since the Method is still implemented and practised today. One would not easily find sources on the Cecchetti Method hidden away in these archives – which seem to be capturing and telling of concluded epochs of the past[140]. Cecchetti's legacy is therefore a living one, which students and teachers of Cecchetti ballet maintain through their continuous and active engagement with these sources. This is what constitutes *preservation* according to LaFrance (2013:7).

The available materials that specifically document Cecchetti's technique and Method include syllabi, sheet music, DVDs documenting the syllabus and set variations, CDs recording the

[140] It is precisely its enduring legacy that affords the Cecchetti Method a place, not only on every dancer and teacher's personal shelf, but in their bodies, too, as opposed to a special collections area in a library or museum.

music for the syllabi, manuscripts, manuals, dictionaries and handbooks. The following textbooks on the Cecchetti Method are available at the headquarters of the Cecchetti Society of Southern Africa, for teachers and students studying in the Method: *The Manual – The Theory and Practice of Classical Theatrical Dancing* (2004) by Cyril W. Beaumont and Stanislas Idzikowski (which is the primary handbook of the Cecchetti Method); *The Theory and Practice of Allegro in Classical Ballet (Cecchetti Method)* (1996) by Margaret Craske and Cyril W. Beaumont, *The Theory and Practice of Advanced Allegro in Classical Ballet (Cecchetti Method)* (1997) by Margaret Craske and Derra de Morroda, *French-English Dictionary of Technical Dance Terms* (1980) compiled by Cyril W. Beaumont, and *Ryman's Dictionary of Classical Ballet Terminology (Cecchetti)* (1998) by Rhonda Ryman.

The primary handbook is *The Manual* written by Beaumont and Idzikowski. Since its original publication in 1922, *The Manual* was reprinted in 1932, 1940 and 1947. New impressions came out in 1951, 1955, 1961 and 1966. There was a revised edition published in 1977, which was reprinted in 1985, 1995 and 2004. These editions differ in that the more recent edition contains photographs whereas the earlier editions had sketches.

In Chapter Five, I analyse the Cecchetti Method and its descriptions and teachings from various sources, including *The Manual* by Beaumont and Idzikowski, *Notes for a Dancer* by Sheila Kennedy, the two *Allegro Manuals* by Beaumont, Craske and De Moroda, the *Ryman's Dictionary of Classical Ballet Terms (Cecchetti)* by Rhonda Ryman, *The Enrico Cecchetti Diploma* DVD (which documents Van Schoor's teaching of the Final Diploma work) and some other video clippings of teachings by Diane Van Schoor, Julie Cronshaw and Kate Simmons. I also draw from my own observations during workshops, courses, daily class and interaction with the Cecchetti Method as a teacher and dancer. By examining the descriptions found within the textual sources, I will critically reflect on the accuracy and adequacy of the material sources as a documentation of the Method, its exercises and principles. The next section offers an understanding of the notion of description by drawing from Ludmilla Jordanova's *description process*.

4.3 Description

It is necessary to look at the process of description, documentation and preservation in order to establish how well and how accurate something has been archived and preserved. With regard

to the archives of the Cecchetti Method, most of the records are textual (written or printed) materials, with the exception of materials such as photographs, video recordings as well as music recordings. In other words, the majority of these sources *describe* Cecchetti's Method in textual format. The effectiveness of preservation depends on two factors; the literary quality of the texts, and the different ways in which the description could be interpreted.

Jordanova (2012:19) discusses description and its requirements, arguing that "[d]escriptions act as bridges between sources and interpretation". Indeed, *The Manual*, as a description of the Cecchetti Method functions as a bridge between a source – Cecchetti – and interpretation – by teachers and dancers training in the Method. Therefore, the description ought to be detailed and precise so much so that, even today, it can still be interpreted accurately.

Jordanova further offers five functions of description. The written account of the Cecchetti Method adheres to these five functions of Jordanova's description method. Firstly, it produces an account which enables the interpreter to identify interesting and important features and renders the object in question of scholarly value. *The Manual* is the account of the Cecchetti Method. It identifies the important features of the Method and frames it in such a way that one can read or examine it from an academic perspective. Secondly, it evokes the object of study in the mind of the reader to allow for a dynamic engagement. Descriptions in *The Manual* offer a depiction of the movements, exercises, poses or other objects that form part of the Cecchetti Method in the reader's mind, helping them to visualise the object. The reader of *The Manual* is able to study the descriptions in a scholarly way, identifying and absorbing the important features – principles, rules and instructions – as well as envisioning the functioning of these principles and how they can be harnessed in the movements, exercises, positions and poses that are described. Thirdly, it conveys the materiality of the object in question, establishing its physical features. This can be seen in *The Manual*'s description of the human body and how it moves and looks. The fourth function is that it draws attention to, and makes explicit, the salient features that are integral to the reader's understanding of the object. These are all the guidelines, details, definitions and instructions that are outlined in *The Manual*. Lastly, it is a form of sharing and accumulating a common understanding, conceptualisation and explanation of the object. In other words, *The Manual* provides a common understanding of the Cecchetti Method to its readers. *The Manual*, which describes the Cecchetti Method, therefore acts as a bridge between the creator or source of the Method, Enrico Cecchetti, and the practitioners engaging with it (Jordanova 2012:19).

But how do dancers and teachers know how to translate this knowledge into and through their bodies? How can practitioners take what they understand from the descriptions in *The Manual* and practise or perform them? After all, the object in question is the human body in motion and not an inanimate relic.

Jordanova (2012:19) also argues that such a written account must begin with the description of the physical properties of that which is described. *The Manual* does indeed commence with the theoretical principles of the Method, which lays down the physical requirements of movements and exercises prior to their further description. In other words, these theoretical principles are the guidelines for *how to* approach, interpret, and ultimately replicate, the exercises in *The Manual. The Manual* introduces the set of exercises, how they ought to be executed, the quality and intent of the exercises, as well as how the body ought to function during the execution of these exercises. *The Manual* provides us with these guidelines to aid our understanding of the descriptions of exercises and movements. The fourteen theoretical principles have been covered in Chapter Three. They cover each aspect of dancing and the parts of the body which work together to create a well-rounded and competent dancer. These principles are unique to the Cecchetti Method, although they have been incorporated into other systems of training that have subsequently been developed; and are of utmost importance to comprehend the further description of movements which follows. If the dancer has a good understanding of these principles, it makes the rest of the textual sources simpler to comprehend. These principles are theoretical and physical at once, including all components of the moving body from head to toe and the precision with which the body must control and carry itself. These principles equip dancers with an all-encompassing vocabulary – both a theoretical and corporeal vocabulary – to assist them in their study and execution of the exercises laid down in the second part of *The Manual*. Detailed descriptions of these principles are provided in the first fifty-something pages of *The Manual*, indicating the density of the theoretical underpinnings of the Cecchetti Method. The rest of the 265 pages are dedicated to the description of the exercises, the *practice,* of the Method.

Cecchetti's *eight imaginary fixed points* of the room, for instance, help us to understand the body and its movement in and through space by assisting the moving body in knowing from where to commence a movement, in which direction to move or direct the different parts of the body as well as where to conclude a movement. (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:83). It also helps to make sense of the textual description of exercises and movements in *The Manual.* The

reader can now better interpret the exercises and movements which are described using these points of the room. *The Manual* also guides us in understanding how to 'read' the descriptions of the exercises. The movement of the head, arms, legs and eyes, for instance, can occur at once and in coordination with one another. Such simultaneous movements are marked by a vertical line (figure 5), whereas movements that ensue one after the other are written in a numerical order. This helps the reader, and the dancer, to better understand the description.

NOTE.

In the present new edition of this book, the instruction that several movements are to be done at the same time is now shown by a vertical line in the margin. A comparison of the former and present descriptions of, say, the second section of the First Exercise on *Port de Bras* will make the change clear.

OLD STYLE.

2. Open the arms to the *second* position, so that the *right* arm points to 1 and the *left* arm points to 3, **at the same time** :—
Gradually incline the head towards 1 (see Fig. 57).

NEW STYLE.

2. Open the arms to the *second* position, so that the *right* arm points to 1 and the *left* arm points to 3.
Gradually incline the head towards 1 (see Fig. 57).

Figure 5: An excerpt from *The Manual* explaining the format of description of the exercises (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:84).

The outlining of the principles, as well as the direction given to the reader as to how to interpret the descriptions that follow, provides a sensible and well-written account of Cecchetti's exercises that is easy to understand despite their intricacy. *The Manual* is therefore a precise, detailed and satisfying textual description of classical ballet practice. For the reader[141], these descriptions provide satisfaction in that they offer what is needed to understand the theory, principles and exercises of the Method.

4.4 Description in *The Manual*

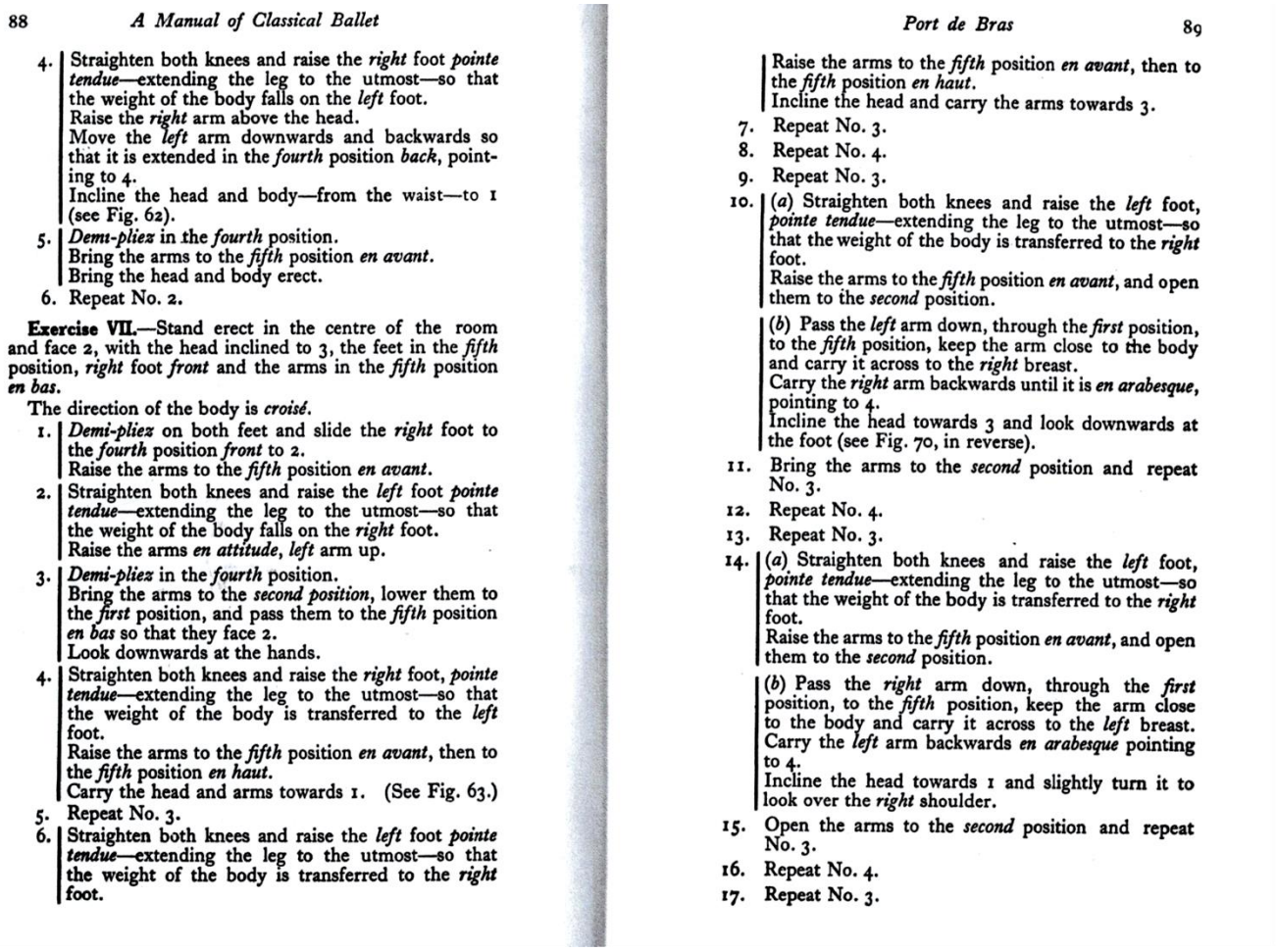
Jordanova emphasises the importance of *attention* in the process of description. Attention involves "sustained careful looking, mental focus, concentrated reflection and consideration,

[141] Not necessarily for the dancer.

and thoughtful, self-aware writing" (Jordanova 2012:20). These requirements are all the more important when describing a dynamic visual art form such as the dancing body. It was at the instigation of Beaumont that the Cecchetti Method was codified and preserved for generations to come. With the assistance of Idzikowski and Cecchetti himself, who demonstrated and explained the Method, *The Manual* was the outcome of thorough observation and concentration, as well as consideration and attentiveness in the writing process.

The importance and role of the body in the process of knowledge transference can be observed in Beaumont's process of documenting the Method. Idzikowski's already-mentioned physical involvement in the process (Beaumont 1948:9), through demonstration, contributed substantially to the precise and exact documentation of the Method. It took two years for Beaumont to complete the handbook. He toiled each day, "assembling [his] notes and perfecting [his] descriptions, ready to submit them to Maestro Cecchetti at night" Beaumont (1948:10). further recalls: " … everything was swept aside by the insatiable demands of this work, which became more and more exacting."

Beaumont's recollections indicate a vast amount of attention, time and effort from Cecchetti, Beaumont himself and, initially, from Idzikowski as well, that went into the codifying and describing of the Cecchetti Method. There was involvement of pupil, teacher and archivist in this process, and it resulted, according to Beaumont, in "certainly the most comprehensive textbook to be published up to that time" (1948:10).



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4. Straighten both knees and raise the *right* foot *pointe tendue*—extending the leg to the utmost—so that the weight of the body falls on the *left* foot.
Raise the *right* arm above the head.
Move the *left* arm downwards and backwards so that it is extended in the *fourth* position *back*, pointing to 4.
Incline the head and body—from the waist—to 1 (see Fig. 62).
5. *Demi-pliez* in the *fourth* position.
Bring the arms to the *fifth* position *en avant*.
Bring the head and body erect.
6. Repeat No. 2.

Exercise VII.—Stand erect in the centre of the room and face 2, with the head inclined to 3, the feet in the *fifth* position, *right* foot *front* and the arms in the *fifth* position *en bas*.
The direction of the body is *croisé*.

1. *Demi-pliez* on both feet and slide the *right* foot to the *fourth* position *front* to 2.
Raise the arms to the *fifth* position *en avant*.
2. Straighten both knees and raise the *left* foot *pointe tendue*—extending the leg to the utmost—so that the weight of the body falls on the *right* foot.
Raise the arms *en attitude*, *left* arm up.
3. *Demi-pliez* in the *fourth* position.
Bring the arms to the *second position*, lower them to the *first* position, and pass them to the *fifth* position *en bas* so that they face 2.
Look downwards at the hands.
4. Straighten both knees and raise the *right* foot, *pointe tendue*—extending the leg to the utmost—so that the weight of the body is transferred to the *left* foot.
Raise the arms to the *fifth* position *en avant*, then to the *fifth* position *en haut*.
Carry the head and arms towards 1. (See Fig. 63.)
5. Repeat No. 3.
6. Straighten both knees and raise the *left* foot *pointe tendue*—extending the leg to the utmost—so that the weight of the body is transferred to the *right* foot.

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Raise the arms to the *fifth* position *en avant*, then to the *fifth* position *en haut*.
Incline the head and carry the arms towards 3.
7. Repeat No. 3.
8. Repeat No. 4.
9. Repeat No. 3.
10. (*a*) Straighten both knees and raise the *left* foot, *pointe tendue*—extending the leg to the utmost—so that the weight of the body is transferred to the *right* foot.
Raise the arms to the *fifth* position *en avant*, and open them to the *second* position.
(*b*) Pass the *left* arm down, through the *first* position, to the *fifth* position, keep the arm close to the body and carry it across to the *right* breast.
Carry the *right* arm backwards until it is *en arabesque*, pointing to 4.
Incline the head towards 3 and look downwards at the foot (see Fig. 70, in reverse).
11. Bring the arms to the *second* position and repeat No. 3.
12. Repeat No. 4.
13. Repeat No. 3.
14. (*a*) Straighten both knees and raise the *left* foot, *pointe tendue*—extending the leg to the utmost—so that the weight of the body is transferred to the *right* foot.
Raise the arms to the *fifth* position *en avant*, and open them to the *second* position.
(*b*) Pass the *right* arm down, through the *first* position, to the *fifth* position, keep the arm close to the body and carry it across to the *left* breast.
Carry the *left* arm backwards *en arabesque* pointing to 4.
Incline the head towards 1 and slightly turn it to look over the *right* shoulder.
15. Open the arms to the *second* position and repeat No. 3.
16. Repeat No. 4.
17. Repeat No. 3.

Figure 6: An excerpt from *The Manual* describing the *7th port de bras* (Beaumont and Idzikowski 2004:88-89).

As a written account of very intricate movements, *pas* (steps) and *enchaînements* (sequences), *The Manual* gives vivid descriptions of every single detail; exact placement of the hand and the arm, the direction in which the body must face at each moment during the execution of a step, the precise eye line accompanying each head movement, even the number of inches which the foot must be raised above the floor. An excerpt from *The Manual* (figure 6), shows the description of one of the eight set *port de bras* exercises from the Cecchetti Method. Every movement of the body is described in great detail and in the correct sequence, across nearly three pages. *The Manual* (2004:90) even describes the quality of the movement, stating that "[t]he whole character of the movement partakes of a broad circular sweep, pivoted at the waist". In order to comprehend the *port de bras* exercise, one must be acquainted with the physical and theoretical principles mentioned earlier – the eight points of the room, the positions of the feet and arms, and so forth. In other words, one must be conversant with the satiated vocabulary of the Cecchetti Method in order to understand and execute every

movement and sequence. In most cases, the description of the technical aspects is detailed and precise, leaving little room for variation. However, readers of *The Manual* are often left with just that, a technical description. These descriptions sometimes lack information on the musical and artistic aspects, such as the style and quality of movement. It is interesting to note how the boundary between the visual and non-visual is transgressed here, through the teaching and practice of classical ballet. In a sense, these descriptions are visual as they describe, in a non-visual way, what the teacher and the audience must see, or what the dancer must visually demonstrate.

The amount of time spent on description and documentation is also a determining factor of whether the description is effective or superficial. Jordanova (2012:21) states that:

> Attention implies time spent looking, and, if possible, repeated visual engagement with objects of study. It is possible to see features on second or third inspection that were simply not noticed initially. Each session of looking takes time. The spectator is likely to move around, especially when viewing three-dimensional objects. The challenges of generating a verbal description are especially great when there is no single vantage point.

In other words, verbally or textually capturing a three-dimensional object[142] such as the human body is a challenging task. Now add movement – the dynamically moving body – and intent – how does the body move and why, and where does each movement originate from within the body? – and quality – how do the movements appear, what should they *feel* like or portray? Despite Beaumont's efforts in capturing the Method, one could argue that aspects such as quality and intention of movements are better shown than described, better *felt* than verbalised, through the interaction between teachers and pupils. These aspects of movement are difficult, if not impossible to describe in language. Wendrich (2013:14), for example, argues that language can only be used to describe the theory behind a craft and that this "covers only part of the process". Bennett (2007:29) similarly critiques the textual format of documentation for its lack of accuracy:

> The three Cecchetti manuals … are also very problematic … More seriously, the texts are sometimes incomplete (for example omitting detail found in the oral teaching

[142] Be reminded that the body, as discussed in this study, is not merely an object but, by virtue of its boundary-transgressing nature, it is both object and subject. In other words, the body is the object of discussion, the archive itself in this study, but it is also the subject that participates in the process of preservation, the instrument or agent that does the archiving.

> tradition) and mostly lack important timing information[143]; they are, therefore, not very useful for a revealing analysis or reconstruction.

Bennett further suggests that oral teaching traditions greatly supplement textual sources, generating "a fuller picture of Cecchetti's enchaînements and their style of performance" (2007:30). Beyond verbal teaching traditions, I would add that non-verbal conversation between the teacher and student – hands-on corrections and demonstration for instance – contributes greatly to the understanding and studying of classical ballet. The concept of a conversation (both verbal and non-verbal) between teacher and student as an archive emerges here, which ties in to Parker's (2020) notion of the body-as-archive or, in this case, bodies-as-archive or community-of-practice-as-archive. The bodies of teachers and students therefore function together as a living archive, containers of knowledge passed on through generations. This demonstrates the notion that knowledge is circulated across bodies of practitioners, and that the circulation of practices across bodies involves participation (Spatz 2017:196).

4.5 Beyond Description – Limitations of the Material Archive

The question remains whether such written accounts of visual phenomena are adequate in their explanations. Following Jordanova, when sufficient attention and time are put into the process of description, it can produce a comprehensive account of the visual aspects of dance. This we see with *The Manual*, which Beaumont, Idzikowski and Cecchetti put together in great detail. However, what happens when that which is described is an object in motion? What happens to the visual elements, the aesthetic elements of an object when it is translated into words? Does this hinder the ability to properly describe the movement of the object or does it merely require additional consideration, attention, time and effort? In my view, *The Manual* is a description of the Method of classical ballet training, of the exercises and the rules or principles which govern the Method. The aesthetic and artistic components of classical ballet, although equally important as the physical and the technical, are not described in *The Manual.*

The fixed form of written or symbolised systems used for documenting dance – though helpful material which supplements the training and studying of classical ballet – cannot capture the

[143] Other places in manuscripts where the musicality, timing and dynamics are explicitly explained and precisely notated contest this.

dynamically moving body, or the nuances, qualities and dynamics of movement. The moving, communicative and interactive human body, which is involved in a process of *apprenticeship* with another body, as well as the embodied practice of knowing, is required in order to appropriately translate, embody and preserve such intricacy across generations. As Parker argues, we make use of "both the archive and the body-as-archive as sources of memory and knowing" (2020:8). The body, in this way, offers a "*way into* the archive" (Parker 2020:8). This embodied practice, or embodied act of doing, allows dancers "to engage with the archive through and with the body, where thinking can emerge in the active encounter between the body and archive and the body-as-archive" (Parker 2020:9).

As will be discussed below, both the material archive – the written accounts, manuals, photographs, and other documented records – and the bodily archive – the body of representatives of the Method, the dancers, teachers and members of the Cecchetti society – are required in the process of preservation. And so, preserving the Cecchetti Method occurs by way of material and living archives. I will therefore look at both material and embodied sources of the Cecchetti Method.

4.6 Towards the Body as Archive – A Somatic Approach

This section discusses the body and intangible forms of knowledge transfer that occur in the ballet studio which, I argue, must be considered as part of the archiving and preservation of dance. Diana Taylor (2006:69) writes:

> The historian, like the performance studies scholar, needs to be mindful that the archival source bears a relationship to the event, but it is not the event, just as a description and analysis of a dance is not the dance itself. Historical studies cannot stabilize the "live" event any more than performance studies can.

In other words, that which is fleeting can most accurately be captured by the very thing which produces it, which is the body and its interaction and exchange with other bodies. The knowledge is therefore stored within bodies, but also between bodies as they interact, participate and collaborate. This area, between bodies, where knowledge is kept, is even more intangible than the body itself. It is the practice, or technique as Spatz argues, that provides the relative stability for this knowledge to be kept in these intangible areas; the body itself, and between bodies. The materialisation of dance is fleeting, but its knowledge and embodiment is

enduring. Although the dance itself, as it is performed, vanishes, the technique and body knowledge remain within the dancer's body, enabling them to perform it once again. Visually, it is fleeting; embodied, it endures, and this is how the art of dance continues to exist over time. Therefore, the perpetuation of that which is otherwise fleeting, happens through the body. Taylor (2006:69) continues:

> The status of the object in performance studies is more transparently constructed. We can argue that scholars look at objects-in-the-world such as dances, rituals, and political rallies. These practices are not "texts" in the conventional literary sense, and thus lack textual stability, but they are more or less recognizable as discrete events (objects of analysis).

It is important to note here that experiences and events involving the body, and not always merely the body itself, are carriers of knowledge. This confirms the need for participation, interaction and collaboration of bodies for the transference and preservation of knowledge. If there is no interaction, there is no transference, which implies that the knowledge is not preserved. The knowledge embodied within the individual can only be preserved upon the interaction with and transference of this knowledge onto other bodies.

The body, though it has some material or physical aspects, can transgress this boundary to the immaterial or intangible world, and therefore has the ability not only to hold both tangible and intangible knowledge but to materialise the intangible, and embody the tangible. The body, in its multidimensionality, can therefore translate immaterial knowledge into material form but also translate material knowledge into immaterial form. The body becomes the vessel that contains the knowledge of classical ballet, and, through interaction with other bodies, they become the medium through which all of this is transferred, making it possible for this knowledge to be passed on from one generation to the next.

4.7 Preservation and Living Legacy

The term *preservation* seems to be a provocative one, with many debating whether we ought to preserve the past, or merely learn and grow from it. It can, perhaps, have some negative connotations in discourse centering on historical phenomena that might be viewed as

undesirable to some[144]. However, that is not the way in which the term is used in this study. Although I mainly address the endurance and propagation of a historical concept – the Cecchetti Method and classical ballet technique and pedagogy of the early 1900s – I equally acknowledge the positive change that has occurred in this field. LaFrance notes that "the dance community's focus on how and what to archive, preserve, and conserve is different from that of a collecting institution in that dancers are concerned predominantly with methods of fostering a legacy of living dances" (2013:11). In other words, as mentioned earlier, the dance community preserves knowledge that was created and developed by dance masters of the past – through embodied practice[145] – which they pass on from generation to generation in order to create and preserve a lasting or living legacy of this dance, choreography or method.

When there is an interaction between archives and practitioners, it results in the subsistence of what is contained in the archives. In other words, when people engage with the archival material of Cecchetti's Method – the manuals, handbooks, manuscripts, sheet music or musical accompaniments, people and footage documenting the Method – it leads to the preservation thereof, maintaining Cecchetti's legacy. This legacy becomes a living legacy when we not only engage with the sources but use, employ and recreate that which is contained within the archives. For LaFrance, *preservation* entails both people and archives, and people as archive. The interaction of people with the archives allows for the preservation of that which is contained within the archives. A *living legacy* extends beyond this, entailing the actual reconstruction and preservation of that which is contained within the archives (LaFrance 2013:7). This means that, for Cecchetti's Method to be maintained, we require three things: archives, people and process. The archive now refers to material documents, as well as bodies containing knowledge. The people refer to both the persons who translate and the ones who undertake the acquisitioning, understanding and learning, in other words, the community of teachers and dancers. The process, which requires the participation of both parties – transmitter and inheritor – involves the embodied practice of acquiring, containing, presenting and transferring the knowledge contained within the archives, both material and living.

[144] For instance, groups that have been socially or culturally affected by it.
[145] Which involves a way of knowing within the body and a way of producing knowledge through the body, through technique – "*technique* [and practice] *as knowledge*" (Spatz 2015:23).

4.8 Technique

There is Cecchetti, the man, and then Cecchetti, the Method, which arguably includes the living legacy of many voices and bodies that pursue the knowledge, produced by Cecchetti, as well as the preservation thereof. Spatz's understanding of practice and technique offers a valuable theoretical frame. Spatz (2015:38) states that "[t]here is a fundamental problem with practice theory" which he describes as follows:

> ... "practice" has two distinct meanings: first, it refers to concrete instances of action; and second, to the patterns that link such instances together. What does it mean to "share" a practice across time, space, and bodies? What is it that links together different instances of farming or cooking? Clearly, if two people are cooking the same meal in different places, they are not literally cooking the same meal. For that matter, when I cook the same meal on several days, it is also not literally the same meal. What then does it mean to suggest that various groups or individuals, in different times and places, are or were doing the same thing? What kind of "thing" were they doing and in what sense can it be the same?

Spatz attempts to resolve this problem "through the retheorization of technique" (2015:38). For Spatz, technique is knowledge; it is not innate but acquired, it is learned (2015:29). Spatz's concept of *technique* demonstrates how the practice of classical ballet, for instance, which is bound by time and space, can be separated from the technique of classical ballet "which is not merely a repeated pattern or set of rules but an area of practical and technical knowledge" (2015:40). In this sense, the technique of classical ballet remains quite stable whereas the practice thereof might be approached differently, by different people and in different contexts. This implies that Cecchetti's technique is carried, as it were, and acquired as such in the bodies of dancers and teachers today still. The tradition and principles of classical ballet are therefore preserved through the teaching and learning of technique (Mauss 1973). The practice of the work, however, is carried out by different bodies, translated through different voices and personalities who now make up Cecchetti's living legacy. In other words, the Method, which was developed by Cecchetti – the technical aspect – endures and remains stable throughout the years, whereas Cecchetti's philosophy of practice is carried out in various contexts, spaces, places and times, by countless individuals who make up the community and living legacy of his practice of classical ballet.

4.9 Felt Senses – Knowing in the Body

Through my own dancing I can only compare the execution of some movements to a feeling that one experiences in one's body – not a feeling in an emotional sense, but a feeling within the entire body when the movement is executed successfully. It is this feeling which the body becomes accustomed to, which eventually makes it possible for the dancer to *feel* what the teacher and the audience will *see*: that they are executing a movement correctly or incorrectly[146]. I draw here on the embodied concept of a *felt sense,* which is described as "an embodied experience of a whole situation" (Cornell and McGavin in Tantia 2020:30). A *felt sense* can be understood as an embodied, wordless, 'knowing' within the body, "out of which actions can emerge, and which can guide and correct those actions" (Cornell and McGavin in Tantia 2020:30). Two qualities of *felt senses* are of relevance here; they are holistic and have a "more than words can say" quality (Cornell and McGavin in Tantia 2020:34). In other words, this feeling in embodied practice, involves "all aspects of a situation that is lived at once" (Cornell and McGavin in Tantia 2020:34), or otherwise, all the movements, intentions and actions of the body that are performed together to create a whole movement or feeling within the dancer's body. Furthermore, such a feeling is intricate and contains considerable non-verbal information (Cornell and McGavin in Tantia 2020:34). Such feelings, which might contain the aspects of dance that are difficult to describe – quality, dynamic and other nuance – are direct experiences of embodiment. Cornell and McGavin state that this concept of a *felt sense* allows us "to understand and talk about embodiment as an emerging process of meaning-making, rather than as an objectified entity" (in Tantia 2020:38). Freedman and Mehling (in Tantia 2020:71) quote Yasuo Yuasa who reminds us of the necessary mind-body connection in order to fully acquire, embody and translate knowledge:

> To put it simply, true knowledge can not be obtained simply by means of theoretical thinking, but only through 'bodily recognition or realization'… that is, through the utilization of one's total mind and body.

[146] A *pirouette* is a wonderful example here. Executing a single turn involves the simultaneous activation and perfect coordination of various movements within the body as well as various degrees of push and pull actions, resistance and opposition within the body, along with correct timing, speed, dynamic and quality of these actions. It takes multiple attempts in order to find and feel this coordinated working within the body, but once you do, it just *feels* right. Continually practicing this multi-faceted action results in this correct feeling being ingrained within the muscle memory of the dancer. When the dancer would execute the turn with ever so slight incoordination, it will throw them off balance and the turn will fail. However, if the dancer is used to the *feeling* of a well-coordinated and successful *pirouette,* they will immediately recognise what went wrong where, because they simply feel it within their body; perhaps there was too much force put into the turn or the whipping action of the head was not timed correctly.

Wendrich argues that "[e]ven adding visual means of knowledge transfer (e.g. drawings, photographs, video), although helpful, ultimately does not bring across the tactile and social elements that are essential in apprenticeship" (2013:13). The intrinsic, embodied elements of any practice – referred to as *procedural knowledge*[147] – can only be translated through apprenticeship, according to Wendrich, with participation, observation, imitation, repetition and experimentation being key procedures in the overall process (2013:4). According to Wendrich, the emphasis on these various procedures reveals the agency of both the pupil and the master (2013:4). Both pupil and teacher are required to engage collaboratively in the transmission and acquisition of knowledge in the teaching and practice of classical ballet. The participation of both parties in processes of observation, imitation, repetition and experimentation – which are essentially reciprocal – is required. The participation of both pupil and teacher implies that they are mutually dependent in this process and, by engaging in it, they provide each other with agency. In these communities of practice, all members of the group are allowed agency (Wendrich 2013:5).

4.10 Living Legacies

The bodily archives consist of the ballet community, dancers, teachers, audience members and all other relevant parties who participate in the perpetuation of the art form. The ones who actively make up the intangible archive, are those persons who embody special knowledge – which is not documented elsewhere – and transfer this knowledge in some way to preserve its legacy. During a visit to the University of Cape Town, I met with Dr Gerard Samuel, Director of the university's School of Dance and Head of the Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies. He had been busy organising the archives of the ballet school when I visited him. From my understanding, he had taken over from Eduard Greyling who had recently retired from this position. It seems there had been considerable damage to the archive due to a fire in one the buildings at the university, where the archives were kept[148]. Samuel took it upon himself to sort and safeguard the rest of the documents and files in his office and a small storage room adjacent

[147] Wendrich states that, "[k]nowledge that is not or is poorly verbalized [is] termed *procedural knowledge* by Warnier (1999, 2007)" (2013:5). This type of knowledge is, in Western thinking, "not given the same appreciation as discursive knowledge" (Wendrich 2013:5) which makes for a problematic understanding of learning and knowledge transfer in its totality.
[148] This demonstrates the fragility of material archives, discussed in more detail further on in this chapter.

to his office. Samuel stated that, if it were not for funding[149] from the university, and access to this additional space – which was coincidentally right next door – it would be impossible to properly maintain the archives[150] (2023). It was Samuel's concern to decide what to keep and what to let go of. For Samuel, the archive's purpose is to tell the stories of our South African dancers, especially those whose stories have not yet been told (2023). Samuel decided to primarily preserve the photographs and programmes of performances (2023). Many material archives are struggling with funding and adequate space to preserve *everything*. Samuel has therefore commenced with digitising the archives, slowly but surely transferring the documents, photographs and other files onto a digital platform which would not only safeguard the archives from damages, but also allow more people to access them from across the country, and abroad.

Samuel was part of the South African ballet scene during the 1980s. He can thus recall those among whom he had danced and the historical narratives that had been left out from the current archives – for example, the narratives of dancers of colour in South African ballet. As a dancer who has lived through some of the events that are documented and contained within the archives, Samuel can provide information that has been omitted from these archives, such as the names of dancers of colour. Samuel, who can remember his peers and his experiences as a dancer of colour during apartheid, can therefore provide information that cannot be found in these archives. His goal is to disseminate this knowledge to the public, for instance, through exhibitions. According to Samuel, his intention is to build a factual "verifiable account" of ballet in South Africa (2023). Such an account is not subjected to singular, dominant-perspective storytelling but provides plural accounts and alternative versions of the various histories that occurred in various communities. Countering hegemonic forms of knowledge preservation, such an account involves active engagement with the materials and the people who form part of ballet in South Africa. Samuel therefore forms part of the *living legacy* of ballet in South Africa, embodying knowledge and information which is not written down or documented materially, and engaging with the materials in the archive, drawing attention to

[149] Lack of funding remains a concerning matter among the arts organisations in South Africa.
[150] Patricia Mitchinson writes: "Lack of storage space is a universal problem and it must be assumed that it is not uncommon for local source material to be moved from one archive to another" (1994:84). When materials are moved from one archive to another, it could also lead to the loss or damage to some of these files and other artefacts.

the voices of those who have historically been omitted from the archive, for example dancers of colour in South Africa.

It is necessary to note the complexity and fragility of material archives. As mentioned, because of a shortage in funding and a mere lack of space for such documents, people like Samuel – who are in charge of these archives – are compelled to scale down, in some cases even completely disposing of the documents and artefacts[151] contained in such archives. Material archives are also at risk of damages due to their material nature[152]. While we are fortunate to have people engaging with the materials and presenting us with the living legacy of ballet in South Africa, the material archive itself, due to its complexity, fragility and fragmentation, remains inadequate. The interaction and engagement of people with the archives make them valuable and enlightening. Such dynamic processes of archiving are necessary for safeguarding knowledge.

4.11 Bodies-as-Archive – Embodying Ballet and History

In order to describe the embodiment and knowledge transfer that occurs in the studio space, I turn to Parker's notion of the body as *anarchive*. Parker's anarchive delineates the body-as-archive, bodies-as-archive and furthermore conversation-as-archive[153]. The anarchive highlights the individual's agency within these systems and values the body as a site of memory as the performing body becomes a point of convergence, "between bodies and gestures from the past, re-enacted through the body in the present" (2020:16). The body-as-archive involves the embodiment and performance of practices and knowledge of the past in the now, which integrates the mind, body and culture, and, as a result, becomes an ameliorative experience in which the body is a locus of sensory-aesthetic appreciation (aesthesis) (Shusterman 2012:27).

[151] Samuel noted, for instance, that they had to get rid of countless pairs of pointe shoes for which they no longer had the use or the space (2023).
[152] Physical force or mishandling of artefacts, theft and vandalism, neglect, fire, water, pests, pollutants, over-exposure to natural or artificial light, incorrect temperatures, as well as incorrect humidity are some of the agents of deterioration we see in archives (Smithsonian National Postal Museum).
[153] Wendrich's *apprenticeship* also clearly encompasses this concept of conversation-as-archive, of collaborating bodies in the process of knowledge acquisition and translation.

The body-as-archive, therefore, is able to appreciate and create in a sensory, or physical sense, as well as an artistic, aesthetic or conceptual sense[154].

Transferring and embodying knowledge requires not only the engagement between student and teacher but also a community of dancers and teachers who acquire, embody and then transfer this knowledge from one generation to the next. This social aspect of the ballet knowledge system and of apprenticeship demonstrates this embodied practice's epistemic nature, which Spatz argues for[155]. Furthermore, this knowing within the body and the circulation of such knowledge "take place at the social rather than the individual level[156]" and "[s]uch processes include those of disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity, specialization and dissemination, transmission and pedagogy, research and training" (Spatz 2015:25). Jaana Parviainen (2002:13) argues that dance "is hardly less rational than conceptual thinking", although its medium differs from it. In other words, there is an acknowledgement that dance consists of knowledge and that dancers grasp this knowledge. This suggests that dancers possess knowledge which include technique, method, principles, style, musicality as well as other information and skills pertaining to dance. They possess this knowledge by adopting and embodying it through the unique bodily pedagogy used in dance training. We also see the body is multi-dimensional in terms of the knowledge that it contains; it is not merely the knowledge of movement but also of the stylistic interpretations, aesthetic intentions and physical requirements of such movements. It is both technical and physical movement, which are tangible aspects, as well as artistry, quality and style, which are intangible components of dance. Parviainen (2002:14) quotes Sondra Fraleigh in this regard:

> Indeed, we commonly speak of skill in dance as a form of knowledge and also speak of kinesthetic intelligence as an aspect of skilful dancing. But dance involves more than just knowing how to do a movement. It also involves knowing how to express the aesthetic intent of the movement and how to create aesthetic movement imagery. All of these forms of knowing how are forms of bodily lived (experiential) knowledge. As such, they are avenues for self-knowledge.

[154] Because the body, mind and culture are understood to be deeply co-dependent – from the perspective of somaesthetics – the body is regarded as having a central role in both artistic creation *and* appreciation (Shusterman 2012:3).
[155] Dance, as embodied practice is "structured by and productive of knowledge" (Spatz 2015:25). For Spatz, "an epistemological account of embodied practice" delineates the active encounter and acquaintance with phenomena, specifically through technique and practice (2015:25).
[156] Spatz continues: "… although individuals and small groups play important roles as researchers, teachers, and students" (2015:25).

In other words, the dancer does not merely possess the physical skill or knowledge as to how a movement is to be executed, but also possesses stylistic, musical, aesthetic and expressive or emotional knowledge that pertains to the movement. Once again, we arrive at a holistic notion not only of the body but of movement as well. Dancers' knowledge is therefore a combination of acquired bodily knowledge through dance training and self-knowledge which is acquired through experience. In this sense the body not only engages in processes of acquiring, embodying, transferring and preserving knowledge but it also engages in processes of self-fashioning, self-expression and self-fulfilment, enabling the individual to manifest their agency in doing so (Shusterman 2012). Mauss and Shusterman both bring up the idea of the body as the primary instrument. As Shusterman argues, the body is "the basic instrument of all human performance, our tool of tools, a necessity for all our perception, action, and even thought" (2012:26). Mauss similarly argues that some techniques work "not through tools but through embodiment itself" and that the body is the primary tool for many techniques (Spatz 2015:31). Spatz (2015:31) explains:

> … Mauss believed that most techniques are "characterised by the presence of an instrument," and he catalogued them accordingly: techniques of fire, basketry, pottery, weaponry, cooking, hunting, agriculture, building, etc. (2006: 100). But he also devoted an entire essay, now canonical, to *les techniques du corps*: "techniques of the body," sometimes translated as "body techniques" or "bodily techniques." These are techniques that take the human body itself as the "first and most natural instrument" (83), a notion that returns us to the fundamental question of what bodies can do.

The essentially intangible body knowledge is transferred through its embodied practice, and by being rendered visible through performance. It is then absorbed and acquired through the same embodied practice and performance until the new body comes to fully *know* this knowledge. Sonja Carlson (2019:10) explains that it is precisely the intangibility, ephemerality and embodied nature of dance that makes capturing, describing and preserving the art form so challenging. Because of its multidimensionality, classical ballet – specifically a particular method – might require more than one form of documentation to preserve it properly. This is because dance exists in space as well as in time and because the body itself is capable of so many simultaneous modes of action (Hutchinson in Carlson 2019:11-12). By combining various forms of media to describe and archive classical ballet methods, "they create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts" (Carlson 2019:4). What becomes evident is that a mere written description of the Cecchetti Method does not suffice in meticulously describing this extremely dynamic, nuanced and essentially intangible art form. The absence of the visual

within textual description further undermines the extent to which the textual format can document and preserve. Although *The Manual* does contain some images for reference, these are static poses and positions rather than movements which still make for a challenge to fully understand the quality and the intention of a specific movement. Beyond studying *The Manual*, Cecchetti also encourages that dancers seek out the tutelage of a ballet master to enhance their understanding of the art and all the nuances – such as musicality, breaths, quality and intention of movement that could be explored and mastered. *The Manual* therefore suffices in describing the exercises and principles, but a ballet master is required to teach the artistry, dynamics, qualities and other nuances.

4.12 The Body as Primary Means of Archiving

Bennett suggests that the textual sources, which often lack intricate details, can be supplemented by oral teaching traditions, which generates "a fuller picture of Cecchetti's *enchaînements* and their style of performance" (2007:30). It is my argument that the preservation of the Method relies to a great extent on its embodiment in each generation of pedagogues and students. Because of classical ballet's multidimensionality, and its embodied nature, we must consider the value of preserving the art through physical involvement with it, absorbing and embodying not only the theoretical knowledge provided by the handbooks, but also the bodily knowledge learned through watching, practising, demonstrating and transferring it. Carlson (2019:8) explains that "the act of archiving often requires physical documentation". However, the intangible nature of dance resists the physicality of archiving. It therefore comes down to the physicality of the human body – which is capable of transgressing boundaries between tangible and intangible phenomena – to embody and translate the nuances, intentions and details of the art.

In this way, even though the experience and performance of classical ballet is ephemeral, the value of the Cecchetti Method is enduring. This is what Carlson (2019:9) argues: the embodied knowledge and kinetic memory of dance "are passed down through years of apprenticeship and mentoring". This form of knowledge transmission and acquisition, through apprenticeship, is often a lengthy process, as the pupil's body becomes ingrained with knowledge, which requires indispensable investment and time dedicated for the pupil to become "a full member of (a segment of) society" (Wendrich 2013:15), the Cecchetti Society, in this case.

The material archive – the written accounts, manuals, photographs, and other documented records – and the bodily archive – the body of representatives of the Method, the dancers, teachers and members of the Cecchetti society – are both required in the process of preservation, as LaFrance (2013) suggested. And so, preserving the Cecchetti Method occurs by way of material and living archives. I will therefore look at both material and embodied sources of the Cecchetti Method. For the Cecchetti Society, it is not only crucial to promote the work of Cecchetti, but also to revisit the Method ever so often. With countless Cecchetti-based schools and associations it is necessary to review what is being taught and trained at such institutions. Over the years, the Method is inevitably exposed to individual interpretation, with minor alterations, adaptations and affectations posing the Method with certain duplicities. Some Cecchetti custodians might view personal preferences as detrimental to the authenticity of the Method. Despite possible distractions, it seems dancers and teachers keep returning to the basics, the traditions and principles, as we see with the continual workshops and courses being offered by the Cecchetti Society. I would suggest that this demonstrates the value of these fundamentals to the art form and the underlying technique which endures (Spatz 2015), despite having been methodised in an earlier time.

CHAPTER FIVE – ANALYSIS: THE CECCHETTI METHOD

As a creative activity, dance can convey visual images and impressions that arouse the aesthetic sensibilities of an audience. Indeed, classical ballet's insistence upon beauty of line derives from the aesthetic values of this visual art form. In addition to the emphasis on the aesthetic, however, the Cecchetti Method was designed with the mechanics of the human body as well as the laws of both anatomy and physics in mind. The fact that the Method is based on physical, anatomical and scientific principles, makes it indefinitely relevant to the practice of classical ballet, despite changes in aesthetics and taste. *The Manual*, and other sources, describe in careful detail Cecchetti's Method – ensuring that, a century later, we are still able to comprehend, teach and dance accordingly. In this Chapter, I investigate the Cecchetti Method and its description(s) within various resources available to the dancer and the teacher, to demonstrate the insufficiency of the textual archive in the preservation of the Method. These resources include:

- *The Manual* by Beaumont and Idzikowski (2004)
- *Notes for a Dancer* by Sheila Kennedy (2020)
- the two *Allegro Manuals* by Beaumont, Craske and De Moroda
- *Ryman's Dictionary of Classical Ballet Terms: Cecchetti* by Rhonda Ryman (1998)
- *The Enrico Cecchetti Diploma* DVD (2018) (which documents Van Schoor's teaching of the Final Diploma work)
- a YouTube video (2022) (documenting Kate Simmons's teaching of the Final Diploma syllabus)
- as well as my own observations from workshops, courses, daily class and physical interaction with the Cecchetti Method as I both practise and teach it.

Despite the elaborate descriptions in *The Manual*, the Method remains, albeit marginally, subject to individual interpretation. As such, workshops, intensives, master classes and lectures are held from time to time to eliminate minor irregularities that arise over time. Special courses and workshops are arranged for teachers, also, for revision of the work, ensuring that they adhere to the Method. These workshops are usually presented by a more senior ballet master or mistress, a creditable member of the Cecchetti Society who is dedicated and exceptionally

knowledgeable in the Cecchetti Method. In some cases, we are fortunate to learn from a teacher who was a former pupil of one of Cecchetti's very own students[157].

This is not to say that the art of classical ballet has no space for individuation. Be reminded that the Cecchetti Method lays the foundation for a good dancer, in a technical and artistic sense. It equips the dancer with the knowledge, know-how, musicality, skills, artistry and other key factors to dance any role, variation or choreographic piece with its required technical and stylistic elements. The principles of the Method are embodied, allowing the dancer to use their body and mind for further thought-processes, imaginations and development, such as transforming into a character, or expressing oneself. As mentioned, the technical aspects of the Method are quite precise, and their descriptions are detailed enough to ensure a good understanding of what the body must do in each exercise. However, the qualities of movement, the style, artistic response and, in some cases[158] the musicality and dynamics, are often left open for interpretation. Where it differs in terms of the product or outcome of each individual student or dancer, is in the freedom that allows the individual to interpret the steps from an artistic perspective. Van Schoor (2023) states, "you know, we all hear music differently … I think the Method is quite flexible in that … the timing[s] would be slightly different and … the societies are very flexible as long as it is musically phrased". Alley also states: "[i]t is important to recognize that Cecchetti varied his enchaînements to suit the particular attributes of some of his students. He also revised and developed many of the exercises during his lifetime. It is only natural, therefore, that his use of music to accompany the sequences of movement was similarly flexible" (2002:6). We see therefore that, although the Method is very strict in its principles, it does allow for freedom of expression in an artistic sense. *The Manual* also encourages the student to seek guidance from a ballet master, who could nurture their artistry and musicality and help them to better understand these nuances, beyond simply executing the steps. Once this is cultivated within individuals, they become artistically competent and responsive to their dancing, and they can freely enjoy artistic interpretation and response with some *enchaînements.*

[157] However, younger generations of teachers and students are studying and absorbing this knowledge, continuing the living legacy of Cecchetti as it keeps getting passed on from one generation to the next. When speaking of sufficiently informed teachers, I mean those who have fully embodied the Method in its entirety, such as in the Final Diploma and Fellowship levels.
[158] A number of exercises or movements do have particular timings, accents and dynamics. See for instance the excerpt from *The Manual* which demonstrates the accent and timing of the *battement frappé* (figure 7).

5.1 The Cecchetti Philosophy

The Cecchetti philosophy epitomises somatic learning and teaching. The emphasis is not only on visual learning and teaching but also on physically, mentally and theoretically understanding each movement and how the body must precisely know and execute them. This helps students to "grow and develop from within" and "become completely self-reliant" as Beaumont (1948:16) explained. This implies an internal or implicit initiation, and an external or explicit product, which aligns with ideas related to performance studies and somaesthetics, suggesting that the process of meaning-making is something that is, at least initially, very internal[159]. The knowledge exists internally and, through performance, becomes an external realisation or materialisation.

Christopher Sexton notes, when speaking of Craske's teaching, that such technique and teaching style demands total detail, discipline and precision, "that one could not expect a student to emulate conceptual instructions" and that Craske "demonstrated every movement" (Cecchetti International Classical Ballet 2022). It is in this manner, through embodied practice and demonstration, *apprenticeship*, and the anarchival – or body-as-archive – that teachers and dancers in the Cecchetti Method continue to transfer, obtain and embody the technical, practical, theatrical, physical and theoretical knowledge that classical ballet entails. In this way, dancers and dance teachers engage in a process of learning, teaching and knowledge transfer which can only occur when both parties are physically and mentally involved and invested. Such degree of knowledge transfer – be it the physical execution of technical movements, the cognitive understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of these movements, or the theatricality, artistry and sentiment behind each movement – can otherwise not transpire, at least not entirely. It is therefore a requirement for the perpetuation of the Cecchetti Method that both teacher and student are involved in the exact process of apprenticeship, like Craske and her students in Cecchetti's studio.

The primary means of knowledge transfer in the practice of classical ballet occurs, therefore, through apprenticeship and somatic practice. This is why it is so crucial for other forms of preserving the Cecchetti Method, besides textual archives. The type of knowledge transfer that occurs in workshops, classes and intensives where dancers and teachers physically come

[159] See the discussion on Budziak *et al* (2017:2) in Chapter One.

together in-person to discuss, teach and learn, cannot be matched by even the most insightful description in any book.

5.2 Observations – 2022 Workshop: Diane van Schoor on Rediscovering Technique, Style, Principles and Dynamics

In 2022 the Cecchetti Society celebrated its hundredth birthday. As part of the centenary celebrations, the CSSA hosted, among other events, a workshop with Diane van Schoor, an expert in the Cecchetti Method. On 10 April 2022 Van Schoor presented a lecture which was followed by four classes: an Intermediate level class, an Advanced One and Two combined class, and *pointe* classes in each of the levels. The purpose of the workshop was, as the title of her lecture announced, to rediscover the technique, style, principles and dynamics of the Cecchetti Method; aspects which, as mentioned, are at risk of depreciating, or being forgotten over time if not carefully revised and retrained at regular intervals. These are, according to Van Schoor, the primary aspects of the Cecchetti Method. Technique refers to *what* we do, and *how* we do it (Van Schoor 2022).

In the master classes, Van Schoor placed great emphasis on the technique of classical ballet. One of the most emphasised technicalities on which she focused was turnout, the outward rotation of the legs. Dancers and teachers tend to forget that the rotation of the legs derives from the hip joint, and often force the turnout of the feet and lower legs, which not only causes injury but deprives the student of the knowledge and understanding of turnout, how to use it and how to maintain it. The technical precision and physiological reasoning behind the Cecchetti Method are what makes it unique. Some examples besides the use of turnout, are the *movements of the foot*, the use of the *plié* and weight placement. The valuable use of the movements of the foot seems to have been forgotten in modern ballet[160]. When looking at Balanchine's dancers, for instance, they would disengage the working leg from the *fifth position*, in a *battement tendu* or, from the *cou-de-pied* in *battement frappé*, to the extension, instantly pointing, without moving through the metatarsals and the movements of the foot.

[160] The aesthetic evolutions, as well as changes in the shoes available to ballet dancers, led to dancers rising higher onto their toes. Today, dancers rarely use the quarter and demi pointe but either rise all the way up onto a high three-quarter or full pointe. As such, these inbetween positions are not trained or strengthened anymore. This unfortunately means that dancers are lacking strength and stability in their ankles when – often meaninglessly – moving through these positions when rising onto pointe or even just performing a *battement tendu.*

Cecchetti's use of the movements of the foot was intended to strengthen the metatarsals and to train the feet to move through these positions when jumping, which results in a more explosive ascent, and more controlled descent, which in turn reduces the stress on the joints. Balanchine, for instance, also allowed his dancers to lift their heels in a *demi-plié*, whereas Cecchetti insisted on keeping the heels on the floor in order to stretch and strengthen the Achilles tendon. Cecchetti's *plié* is also executed more evenly, and slowly, to strengthen the muscles and joints in the legs, whereas Balanchine's *pliés* are done more dynamically, in just two counts. Both ways are perhaps beneficial in their own right. A more dynamic *plié* trains the body for jumps, however this is only applicable to *demi-pliés* for the dancer would never perform a jump from the depth of a *grand plié.* The strain on the legs would be too great.

Cecchetti's weight placement, which is enforced through the use of *aplomb*, is also somewhat unique to his Method. Other ballet styles might shift the weight rather than retaining it on the centre line, as Cecchetti preferred. The positions from which the dancer turns are, for instance, quite narrow and small in the Cecchetti Method, which enable the dancer to maintain their centre line and find their turning position without having to drastically shift their weight, whereas Balanchine's dancers turn from very wide and open positions. Van Schoor also noted that she participated in a seminar, titled *Cecchetti meets Vaganova*, where she and the head of the Vaganova Academy compared their methods[161]. Here, Marina Aleksandrovna Vasilieva[162] – classical ballet and *pas de deux* teacher at the Vaganova Academy – solicited some input from Van Schoor as to how they could bring the Cecchetti *temps lié*, which is all about weight placement and transference, into their system of training. Perhaps these instances affirm the value of the Cecchetti Method as well as the significance of returning to the foundations of dance as they were established in the past by the great ballet masters such as Cecchetti.

Posture or stance was another key theme. Van Schoor (2022) reminded students and teachers of the principle of *aplomb*, of the centre of gravity, correct pelvic and spinal alignment as well as correct weight-placement. Being aware of one's centre of gravity[163] is essential for

[161] Vaganova was greatly influenced and inspired by Cecchetti. Vasilieva mentioned that they have two very big portraits at the Academy; one of Petipa, and one of Cecchetti, and that Cecchetti is greatly revered at the Vaganova School. Furthermore, Vasilieva noted that they still practice *adagio Italiano*, a Cecchetti *adage* study.
[162] Born in 1939, Vasilieva graduated as dancer from the Vaganova Academy in 1957, performing *Giselle* with the then-young Rudolf Nureyev. She is currently a professor at the Vaganova Academy, teaching the eighth course of study in classical ballet. (Van Schoor 2023).
[163] Specifically, how it is used in the Cecchetti Method. Not all ballet academies use the line of *aplomb* in the same way Cecchetti did, often shifting the weight rather than retaining it on the centre line when standing on one leg. Using the line of *aplomb* greatly strengthens the deep postural muscles and it holds many physical benefits for the dancer.

equilibrium and the correct execution of any movement. Some students merely attempt a movement with the hopes of decently executing it, rather than understanding the way in which their bodies need to operate to execute the movement successfully, and they do so every time. Comprehension, on the other hand, not only contributes to a student's technique but also allows them to execute all their dancing with *ease of movement.* The correct weight placement is not static, but always dynamic, and allows the dancer to be ready for movement at all times (Van Schoor 2022).

Van Schoor also discussed style, which refers to the artistic response or approach to movement (2022). She argues that the specific style of a movement comes from the choreography (Van Schoor 2022). Despite the possible critique of the Method as being old-fashioned, especially stylistically, the Cecchetti Method has no specific style[164] (Van Schoor 2022). Rather, it is designed in such a way as to prepare dancers to perform movements in various styles, be it a nineteenth-century romantic *Giselle*-inspired *pas,* or a purely classical step suggestive of the virtuosic *Paquita variations.* The Cecchetti Method even equips the dancer with the technique, artistry and ability to execute some contemporary dance styles, through the practice of off-axis balances and turns, as well as the transference of weight during turns such as the *tour en dedans de pirouette renversé*[165]. This is perhaps one of the most difficult movements in the Cecchetti syllabus, yet it trains the body to be able to attempt dances which require elements such as asymmetry and off-balance movement. The Method prepares the dancer to be able to perform a wide range of choreographic works or roles, regardless of style or technical complexity. These are perhaps some of the reasons why the Method has survived and remained relevant today.

Revisiting the principles of the Cecchetti Method, and demonstrating their continual relevance in classical ballet, was key to Van Schoor's workshop.

[164] Style here refers to the characteristics associated with a particular art movement, such as Abstraction, Romanticism or Modernism. Although Cecchetti is no style, from a technical standpoint, one might be able to recognise a Cecchetti-trained dancer by the meticulousness of their technique, such as the way their fingers are grouped, or the eyeline and contact with the audience.

[165] During the *renversé* the dancer performs a circular motion of the upper body from the one side, to the back and across the other side, all while executing a *pirouette*. The weight placement is therefore shifted three times during one turn and the dancer ends, off-axis, *en pointe* with the working leg extended *á la seconde en l'air* – in other words, the dancer ends the turn with a balance on the supporting leg, with the working leg held to the side in the air, maintaining the balance with the countering of the upper body away from the raised leg.

5.3 Observations – 2023 Advanced Two Syllabus Revision (Diane van Schoor)

In February 2023, Diane van Schoor presented a workshop at various Cecchetti branches across South Africa. The purpose of the workshop was to acquaint students and teachers with the revised Advanced Two syllabus. This workshop and its subject matter are relevant to this study because it demonstrates the simultaneous preservation and evolution of the Method. Whereas the Cecchetti society continues to uphold the principles and traditions retaining the philosophy of the Cecchetti Method, updates and revisions are still made to the syllabi to ensure its relevance in classical ballet today. The traditional exercises remain the staple of Cecchetti examinations and syllabi, however, some additional or supplementary exercises were either modified or added to the Advanced Two syllabus, which is now divided into two options for candidates to choose from. It is the candidate's choice to either perform all option A exercises for their examination, or all option B exercises, with the obvious addition of all traditional exercises in both cases.

Van Schoor (2023), who was responsible for the revision of the syllabus, explained her reasoning behind the arrangement of the exercises and emphasised that she adhered strictly to the principles and philosophy of the Method in the development thereof. Yet, the revised syllabus displayed some progressive thinking on Van Schoor's part. This is evidence that ballet masters today propagate the Method for the valuable training it offers, but they are also openminded in the way they approach the syllabi, style and aesthetic of classical ballet, building on the ever-accumulating benefit of human experience. The changes to the syllabus, though they are relevant to postmodern aesthetics, do not disrupt the Method itself; the technique and pedagogy endure, with aesthetic and stylistic adaptations ensuring that the Cecchetti society remains relevant and up to date with current trends in the artistic sphere.

The following are examples of the revised or new elements within the syllabus and the intention behind the revision:

At the *barre,* the duration of certain exercises was lengthened, some of which immediately continue on the other side[166] without stopping the flow of movement or music. This helps to build the stamina required for the demanding Advanced Two work. Some exercises also incorporate the element of *en tournant* at the *barre* which hasn't previously been seen in the

[166] The dancer usually holds onto the *barre* with on hand, exercising one side of the body at a time. They repeat the same exercise on the other side, working both sides of the body equally.

Cecchetti syllabus. Although there are many *en tournant* exercises in the *centre* there are few to none in the traditional Cecchetti *barre* work[167]. Van Schoor implemented *en tournant* movements at the *barre* to help the dancer prepare for the *en tournant* movements in the *centre.* After all, the *barre* is a prelude for the rest of the class, and ought to establish the dancer's equilibrium before advancing to the exercises without the aid of the *barre*. As such, it is a valuable addition to the *barre* work to incorporate the movements that would come later in the class to help the dancer establish their equilibrium with movements involving changes in direction. Not only does this prepare the dancer for *en tournant* exercises in the *centre* but it also incorporates the directions of the body at the *barre,* which are usually based on the three basic body positions. This is not to say the basic body positions are not fundamental to the dancer, but that the more advanced dancer ought to have established not only the basic positions but also their derivative positions by this level, enabling the dancer to showcase all these directions of the body from the onset of *barre* work.

Another added element is the ending of exercises in dynamic poses, such as a balance in an open position or a dynamic *penché*. Although not entirely new to the Cecchetti work, ending exercises with a test of balance prepares the dancer for various movements in the *centre* such as *pirouettes* in open positions or exercises that end with a dynamic pose such as a *relevé* with a balance. It helps the dancer to train the principle of a dynamic ending, maintaining the energy and line at the end of an exercise, rather than finishing an exercise and subsequently relaxing, losing all the strength and poise in the muscles and body. The four-count circular *port de bras* is also new to the Cecchetti *barre*. Earlier at the *barre,* at the end of the *plié* exercise, the dancer performs an eight-count circular *port de bras,* which is intended to stretch the body in a slow and gentle movement. Rather than repeating an eight-count circular *port de bras,* Van Schoor incorporates, for the first time, the four-count *port de bras.* This allows the dancer to train different dynamics of the same movements; dynamics that would be required for other exercises to come in the *centre* and *allegro* sections. For instance, the four-count *port de bras* trains the dynamics required for Cecchetti's *eighth port de bras,* which consists of a series of circular *port de bras* performed in a swift and dynamic sweeping motion rather than a slow, gentle stretch. In the *adage* exercise at the *barre,* Van Schoor integrated a movement from *premiére et seconde arabesque,* one of the traditional Cecchetti *adages* which has proven to be

[167] Cecchetti's traditional *barre,* as mentioned, is focused on repetition, training the muscles for sustainable and good technique. The traditional *barre* exercises remain within the syllabus, for they have many benefits. The additional, more choreographic exercises that now supplement the traditional work, also have many benefits; enhancing artistry for instance, which is imperative for dancers at this (pre-professional) level.

quite a challenging movement for dancers to execute, creating a build-up for the dancer to better execute the movement in the *centre* once having performed it with the aid of the *barre* first. Previously, the *barre* work was very academic and technical. However, the revised exercises allow the dancer some artistic freedom, as well as an enhanced sense of their equilibrium as they move away from the *barre* and start tackling the direction-changing, weight-transferring, dynamically-concluding movements in the *centre.*

All revised exercises were developed from the Cecchetti perspective and display the principles of the Method: simplicity, variation, repetition, the theoretical principles such as the *eight directions of the body, movement of the head, attitudes* and *arabesques.* Although both options are based on the principles and philosophy of the Cecchetti Method, Van Schoor asserted that option A is more simplistic, seemingly more appropriate for the mature candidate or a teacher taking the examination, whereas option B exercises are more artistic and perhaps more suitable for a dancer aspiring towards a professional dancing career. The division of the exercises into two groups, A and B, allows for an enhanced experience for the candidate in two ways. Firstly, it narrows the extremely vast number of exercises for candidates, allowing them to prepare fewer exercises better, rather than moderately preparing a sundry of exercises for their examination. Secondly, it allows the candidates freedom to choose their preferred group of exercises that best display their strengths and personality as dancers. The academic dancer would perhaps decide on option A to demonstrate their technical proficiency whereas the more artistic dancer would decide on option B to display their aesthetic merits and subjective artistry (Van Schoor 2023). Van Schoor would urge any candidate aiming to become a more resourceful dancer to practise all the exercises from both sets. Having been responsible for the revision of the syllabus, Van Schoor concedes that it is impossible to incorporate everything a dancer ought to practise into a single syllabus. During the workshop she encouraged teachers to incorporate other movements that might not have been included in the syllabus, into unseen *enchaînements* in their classes. Van Schoor often speaks of the idea of a 'curriculum', which includes a more saturated vocabulary of ballet movements, to maintain the practice of steps which, for instance, might be in the syllabus one year but absent the next, or steps that might not be covered in the syllabus at all[168].

[168] Van Schoor gives the example of hops *en pointe,* which is not done in the Cecchetti syllabus but is a familiar step in many classical variations. Students would therefore benefit from practicing hops *en pointe* should they perhaps need to perform such a variation some time during their dance career. This is not to say that the Method doesn't prepare the student to be able to perform hops *en pointe*. The *battement relevé* exercise, for instance – which forms part of the traditional *barre* work – technically and physically prepares the dancer for hops *en pointe*

Van Schoor covered the new and amended exercises in this workshop, where teachers physically engaged in the work. By insisting that all teachers, regardless of their age or physical ability, should "get up and do the work", even if only marking[169] it, so that they would remember the content and changes better, Van Schoor explicitly affirmed my argument in this study about the incomparability of bodily participation to passive reading from texts. As Van Schoor was leading the workshop, pianist Roland Thompson offered the musical accompaniment. Pianists from Cecchetti-based studios also attended the workshop to listen and learn the accompaniment for the new and revised exercises, ensuring that the dancers perform their work in harmony with the dynamics, rhythms and gradations in the music. These musicians also require perceptive and visual discernment, observing the dancers and how they move, in order to better understand the accompaniment required by the dancer. In this way, there is also collaboration between dancer and accompanist, for an enhanced technical and artistic product.

The key observation made here was the adaptation and small changes being made to ensure that the syllabus remains relevant to ballet today, but that the foundation, technique, principles and philosophy of the Method remain. Once again there is the simultaneous preservation of the fundamentals of classical ballet technique alongside some aesthetic and stylistic changes, which demonstrates the Cecchetti Method's disruption of the dichotomous ideas of the past and the present, and of tradition and modernity.

5.4 Observations – 2023 Intermediate and Advanced One Revision (Gail Myburgh)

In March 2023 Gail Myburgh, national chair of the Cecchetti Society of Southern Africa (CSSA), presented a course revising the Intermediate and Advanced One syllabi. As opposed to the Advanced Two syllabus, nothing was added or changed in these two syllabi. Instead, the purpose of this course was to brush up on the syllabus, ensuring that all teachers are on the same page in terms of what the examiners expect. Similar courses are held for the Grades, often

by strengthening the foot and ankle in the unfamiliar position in which it would be kept during the execution of hops *en pointe.*

[169] *Marking* is a term used by dancers when they partly do the exercise, either using their hands to imitate the actions of the legs or casually 'walking through' the movements without fully executing them. This helps the dancer to get the exercise in their head and body or recapping the sequence, using minimal energy. *Marking* is one of the key principles, especially in unset work, to help the mind and body with quick comprehension, learning and execution.

referred to as a 'pre-exam course' or mock examination. Such courses are of utmost significance to teachers entering students into examinations as they are presented with a type of memorandum and are familiarised with the standards required from students in their examination. These courses also ensure that all teachers and their students are performing the work correctly, not deviating from the important details in the syllabus. Some teachers can, over time, develop idiosyncrasies or stray from the syllabus as a result of subjective interpretation and preference. This is especially so with details that are not specified in the handbooks, such as the use of *épaulement.* These details are not always specified because they are considered general rules in the Cecchetti Method. However, some grey areas exist where they may or may not be applicable. For instance, the general rule is that when the dancer moves forward, they must use *épaulement* towards the leg that is executing the forward action. However, with certain exercises this is not appropriate. An example would be the *retirés* exercises at the *barre* in the Intermediate syllabus. Here the dancer executes a series of *retires* passing to the back and front, alternatively. This is a preparation for *pirouettes*[170], and therefore *épaulement* would not be appropriate in this case, because when executing a *pirouette,* the head must remain erect and the body straight.

In many cases, some artistic license is permitted. In contrast to individually, and perhaps improperly interpreting the principles and exercises of the Method, artistic interpretation does not take away from the science of the Method. Cecchetti, and many Cecchetti teachers today, encourage such artistic freedom as well as the various and diverse ways in which an exercise can be done. There are, for instance, various options for timings, endings and *port de bras* (use of the arms) in certain exercises. More significant deviation from the work is sometimes permitted – if the teacher is a competent and knowledgeable member of the Cecchetti Society. Such a person will most likely remain considerate of the Cecchetti philosophy with their preferences or nuanced variation. A few examples will be discussed shortly under the section, *Steps, movements and enchaînements – comparing sources and descriptions*. Teachers enjoy such artistic freedom and encourage their students and fellow colleagues to do the same, within reasonable limits; as long as it adheres to the technical and artistic principles of the Method as well as sensible musicality. Van Schoor (2023) states that, musically and artistically, the

[170] The swift action of the *retiré* in the exercise implies that it is a preparation for the swift action required in a turn on the *retiré* position. There is no indication thereof in the syllabus, however, and some teachers might think of the *retiré* as an *adagio* movement, and subsequently employ the use of *épaulément.*

Method and the Cecchetti societies are quite flexible. They allow, for instance, different timings and musical or artistic responses, "as long as it is musically phrased".

Teachers who often present courses and instruct other teachers, require a great deal of knowledge on the Cecchetti Method and the various ways certain exercises can be done. Not only must they be able to inform other teachers of these options, but they should also be able to acknowledge the variety they might see in examinations and not base their marks on their own preferences. In some cases, dancers and/or teachers in training are taught by one ballet teacher throughout their career, which means they would only learn to do exercises and *enchaînements* the way their teacher prefers to do it, regardless of and unaware of other acceptable possibilities that exist. Van Schoor (2023) also mentions that a dancer or teacher's understanding of the timing and musical interpretation of an exercise, for instance, depends on the teacher who taught them the exercise. As such, many young or new teachers are unaware of the variations that exist with certain *enchaînements.* Courses and workshops are wonderful ways to broaden one's scope and knowledge of the many ways in which we can dance and teach. In this way, we also grow to become more open-minded in our dancing and teaching, when we see, try and teach the various ways in which one can do things.

Gail Myburgh is a Fellow of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing, London (Cecchetti Society Faculty), and holds the Maestro Enrico Cecchetti Diploma. She has also been on the examining board of the CSSA since 1991 and examines all levels through to Vocational and Qualifying. She is therefore a respected teacher who enjoys reasonable artistic license when presenting such courses. However, if there are, for instance, various options with an *enchaînement,* Myburgh would inform us of all the acceptable ones, regardless of her personal preference. She would also correct the teachers and students where they would deviate in areas where there is a specific way of executing a step or exercise, demonstrating this properly, correcting any possible irregularities, and explaining the reasoning behind it.

An example would be the Intermediate *retiré* exercise at the *barre.* Many debate whether it should be allowed to use a head and shoulder movement on the *retirés passés.* According to Cecchetti's rule of the head, one could argue that on the *retirés* passing to the back, the head should incline over the standing leg, and on the *retirés* passing to the front, the head should incline and the same shoulder should advance forwards, over the working leg. However, Myburgh explains the intention behind the movement: the quality of the *retiré* is sharp and dynamic, which implies that it trains the leg action for a *pirouette,* and therefore the addition

of head and shoulder inclination seems inappropriate (2023). The quality and intention of the movement are reflected in the music as well.

Another example is the positioning of the head at the start of the *port de bras* exercise. In some handbooks there is an option of either starting with the head inclined upstage *or* downstage. Traditionally, according to *The Manual*, the head is inclined upstage. The description of the *first port de bras* reads: "Stand erect in the centre of the room and face 2, with the head inclined to 3…" (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:84). This implies that the dancer is standing with their body facing the downstage corner, with their head inclined to the nearest upstage corner. Some teachers prefer their students to start with the head inclined downstage as that appears more confident and audience-engaging. Myburgh confirmed that there is indeed an option for the placement of the head. However, the placement of the head is only optional for vocational students, whereas in the grades the dancers must place their heads upstage, as traditionally done (Myburgh 2023).

Another instance, where Myburgh allows for some freedom and personal preference on the teacher's part, is at the end of the *petits tours en diagonal*. Any suitable ending would be accepted in the examination[171]. Myburgh argues that the ending is not as significant as the exercise itself; the examiner is evaluating the student's execution of the series of *petits tours* and not the position at the end.

The various options that exist are all functional, and not optional for mere aesthetic preference. Although, if a movement is functional, it also tends to appear more aesthetically pleasing. The dancer seems more graceful and effortless in their movement when the body moves in more natural and sensible ways. Therefore, various options exist so that individual dancers may functionally and technically perform the step better, which results in an effortless and aesthetically pleasing execution[172]. With the *positions of the arms*, and their distance apart from one another in the three *fifth* positions, a dancer with longer arms might need to cross the wrists in the *fifth* position. This not only aids the dancer functionally, because their weight

[171] Traditionally, Cecchetti ended his *petits tours* with an *echappé* to *fourth position.* This ending is seen in many of the Final Diploma *enchaînements* which commonly adhere to the traditional ways of Cecchetti. Another ending might be a *chassé* to end in an appropriate *direction of the body* such as *effacé* or *croisé derrière.* More advanced diagonal *enchaînements* might conclude with a *chassé relevé* to an *arabesque en l'air.* There are many creative possibilities. What is meant by 'suitable' is an ending that suits the exercise in terms of style and dynamic, and that which adheres to Cecchetti's emphasis on simplicity; further extravagance is not necessary if the dancer executed a brilliant series of *petits tours*.
[172] Within the demands of classical ballet.

displacement is now improved and their position is more secure and compact, but it also appears more aesthetic, creating the illusion of good proportions. Similarly, a dancer with shorter arms might need to increase the distance between the arms allowing the dancer to stand upright and strong. Bringing the arms together too closely might close the dancer's chest and rotator cuff which leads to a weak position and disadvantageous posture.

The use of the head and *épaulement* on *battements tendus* going backwards or forwards is another example which demonstrates the functionality of such options. The general rule, as mentioned, is that the head inclines towards the foot that executes the move forward, along with the use of *épaulement* towards the same foot. On backward movements, the head inclines towards the standing leg, or away from the foot that does the backward movement. There is, however, no specific indication as to whether the inclination of the head and *épaulement* happens on the extension or on the closing of the leg. Both versions have some purpose behind them. Inclining the head and employing *épaulement* on the extension could be seen as training for steps such as *jeté battements* where, on the landing, the dancer's working leg is extended outwards – therefore the head and shoulders are inclined on the extension. However, other steps, such as *assemblé* require an erect head on the extension – which is in the air, and therefore helps the dancer attain elevation – with the inclination of the head and shoulders happening on the landing, when the legs close in *fifth* position. Therefore, training the use of the head and shoulders as erect on the extension, and inclining on the closing action, is also functional and prepares the dancer for certain movements to come.

What we see here is the commitment to propagating the Cecchetti Method and upholding the standards thereof. As a Founding Corporate Member of Cecchetti International Classical Ballet (CICB), part of the CSSA's responsibility is to ensure that the international standards of Cecchetti are upheld in South Africa, and to ensure a certain degree of uniformity among South African dancers and dancers abroad[173].

[173] The CSSA website states that the "Cecchetti Society of Southern Africa is … committed to upholding CICB's mission statement of improving the professional profile of Cecchetti and the Cecchetti method of training" (Cecchetti Society of Southern Africa 2023).

5.5 Observations – From a Student's Perspective

Although I am a qualified and active Cecchetti classical ballet teacher, I remain a student as I pursue the work of the Maestro Enrico Cecchetti Diploma – also referred to as the Final Diploma. This section entails my perspective as a student of the Cecchetti work, my interaction with my teachers[174] and my experience of learning, acquiring and embodying the Cecchetti work and Method. Having completed my Cecchetti examinations up to Advanced II in 2017, as well as my Associate[175] examination in 2021, it could be said that I currently embody the principles and ethos of the Method. The Final Diploma, however, is the culmination of all the original exercises developed by Cecchetti, which are not included in previous grade or vocational syllabi[176]. Internationally, the Final Diploma, as the title suggests, is "the highest award of the Cecchetti Society" (The Cecchetti Society of Southern Africa 2015:52). The Final Diploma examination "demands a full and complete knowledge of the entire Cecchetti Method" (The Cecchetti Society of Southern Africa 2015:52). It is both a privilege and a great challenge to study the original Cecchetti work, and it is fascinating to observe how the past two decades of my classical ballet training are finally culminating in my acquisition and knowledge of the Cecchetti Method in its entirety.

The nature of my classes is very organic and collaborative, consisting of physical exercise and both verbal and demonstrative contemplation as my teachers and I engage in the process of materialising (demonstrating), transferring, acquiring and embodying the Cecchetti work. Although the exercises are documented in *The Manual* and two *Allegro Manuals*, as well as other handbooks, my teachers rely largely on their embodied knowledge of the work, teaching by demonstrating and explaining the exercises to me, finding the acquired knowledge within their own bodies and translating it onto mine, which mostly occurs through their demonstration, and my imitation and repetition or practice. In this manner, I obtain a visual understanding of what the movements should look like, as well as verbal cues and thoughts given during class.

[174] Although they gave consent to my using their input, and my observations during class with them, they prefer to remain anonymous.
[175] The first qualifying teacher's examination of the Cecchetti Society. Cecchetti teachers' qualifying examinations are: Associate, Associate Diploma, Licentiate Assessment, Licentiate Examination, Fellowship Assessment and Fellowship Examination.
[176] The Cecchetti grade syllabi were later developed as a build-up for the Final Diploma work, which consists of the original exercises created and taught by Cecchetti. The vocational syllabi consist of the traditional exercises of the Cecchetti Method, however some of these exercises are shortened in terms of the number of repetitions. The Advanced One and Two syllabi contain a few of the original *adages*, however the vast majority of these syllabi remain a build-up towards the original work. The Maestro Enrico Cecchetti Diploma is therefore the culmination of the Cecchetti work.

This helps me better understand the quality, style, dynamic or intention of a movement – aspects which are difficult to capture and comprehend if not demonstrated, discussed and practised. It often requires multiple attempts[177], with the assistance and direction of my teacher, to be able to execute a step or movement with the correct quality, dynamic, style and intention. Eventually it is correctly *felt* within my body, as I come to know the intention, muscle use, coordination and force which must be replicated every time I execute the movement. This demonstrates Cornell and McGavin's concept of nonverbal 'knowing' within the body, through *felt senses* (Tantia 2020).

In my classes, there is an ongoing 'conversation' between my teacher and I, sometimes spoken and at other times unspoken. The idea of conversation-as-archive relates to Parker's notion of body-as-archive[178] which is taken further by Wendrich's *apprenticeship*[179] as well as LaFrance's suggestion that the dance community pursues a living legacy through interaction[180]. While I am performing an exercise, my teacher might verbally articulate details or nuances, such as "use more body" implying that I need to enhance the movement in my upper body or "a little softer with the *port de bras*" suggesting a more flowing and willowy quality in my arm movements, perhaps when I am displaying too much academic rigidity[181]. In the video documentary of the Diploma work, Van Schoor also applies such corrections many times. When 'walking' and 'talking' through an *adage* with one of the dancers, Van Schoor corrects the placement and direction of the body on a rise; "the *relevé* should happen here" she states as she demonstrates the movement. The dancer proceeds to show the movement, attempting to apply the correction; "exactly," Van Schoor (2018) comments, "a little more feeling of *fouetté* in the torso and the hip" she says, in this ongoing dialogue between herself and the dancer, which combines verbal cues and visual demonstration. In another instance, she adjusts a dancer's arms in an *alongé* pose; "cross the arms a little more over … as if someone's holding your fingertips" she says, continuing to walk over to the dancer and adjusting her arms accordingly, "perhaps … here" she suggests. Such corrections, which are an intricate

[177] Repetition is intended to train muscle memory. It refers to the maintenance of motor abilities (Lunkad 2020).
[178] Refers to the body as a site of memory which has the ability to *know*.
[179] Which involves both pupil and master who actively engage and act as agents in this process of transferring and acquiring procedural.
[180] A living legacy requires a community of teachers and dancers who study the Method. They actively engage with one another – as body archives – and with the available source material, to absorb and retain the knowledge within these (bodily and material) archives.
[181] The lack of quality, dynamic and nuance of movement within the written descriptions of exercises often lead to such an interpretation, resulting in a very abstract understanding of the movements. Despite the absence of qualities, style and other nuances in the movement description, dancers must learn to add these elements to their dance, to make their movements equally artistic and technical.

combination of verbal cuing, demonstration, observation and adjustment, sometimes through touch, make up the nuanced process of learning between teacher and pupil that cannot be replicated by the learning from or reading of a book. Some corrections, as we can see, can only be given once the teacher observes the dancer's movements, and sees where adjustments can be made. These adjustments are not always given verbally, but with touch or through demonstration, as shown above. It is a nuanced element of teacher-pupil engagement which cannot be replaced by another means, such as a handbook or self-practice.

Furthermore, in some classes we work together with a pianist. It is wonderful to work with live accompaniment as they did in Cecchetti's day, as opposed to recorded music. The live pianist also adds nuances to my dancing which would not be possible otherwise. It becomes clearer to me why Cecchetti had different pieces of music, as well as various timings and counts for his *adage* studies. Dancers are not all the same, even an individual dancer is different from one day to the next. These individual nuances cannot blossom if one were to use the exact same music, timing and tempo every time. The pianist's presence in the studio means that we can try various timings and speeds to see what works the best for me, making use of sensible *rubato*[182], allowing me to indulge in a *développé* before catching up with the tempo on a brisk *pas de bourrée*. With the pianist present, I am able to develop my individual artistry and artistic response to the music and choreography. The pianist keeps a keen eye on the dancer as they try their best to meet each other's dynamics, highlights, lowlights, breaths, pauses and so forth. Not all dancers move at the same speed, for instance, with their virtuoso turns. In such cases, the pianist is required to observe the dancer from the corner of their eye to ensure they adjust their timing accordingly[183]. The use of *tempo rubato* is not always appropriate in classical ballet. The pianist often keeps with the strict tempo of the music so that the dancer doesn't have to adjust their speed of movement. This is important in the *allegro* section, for instance, where

[182] *Tempo rubato* is a term used in music. Fuller Maitland describes *rubato* as consisting of "a slight *ad libitum* slackening or quickening of the time in any passage, in accordance with the unchangeable rule that in all such passages any bar in which this licence is taken must be of exactly the same length as the other bars in the movement, so that if the first part of the bar be played slowly, the other part must be taken quicker than the ordinary time of the movement to make up for it; and *vice versâ*, if the bar be hurried at the beginning, there must be a *rallentando* at the end" (in Gatty 1912:160). Franklin Taylor describes *rubato* as expressing "the opposite of strict time, and indicates a style of performance in which some portion of the bar is executed at a quicker or slower tempo than the general rate of movement, the balance being restored by a corresponding slackening or quickening of the remainder" (in Gatty 1912:160).

[183] The pianist is, however, required to strictly maintain the timing. This observation occurs on the introduction of the dancer's exercise. The pianist therefore observes the tempo of the dancer's preparation so that they can play the music accordingly. If a dancer's preparation is slow, the pianist will play slowly, accommodating the slower moving dancer. If the preparation is brisk, the pianist will, accordingly, play fast to accommodate the increased speed of the dancer.

the dancer needs to retain their *ballon.* It is also important for the dancer to be able to move, jump and turn at various speeds, and so the accompaniment cannot always adapt to the dancer. Many times, it works the other way around, with the dancer learning to work with varying speeds and adjusting their movements accordingly[184]. In *adage* studies, as Cecchetti also believed, the movement can be more free-flowing and artistic, as long as it is musical[185] and doesn't affect the technique of the dancer. The movements of the dancer reflect the dynamic, quality, tempo and style of the music, and *vice versâ.* In relation to his *adage* studies, Cecchetti (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:104) advises:

> … it must be stated that though by careful study of the text and diagrams you should be able to execute each exercise correctly, it is advisable that at this point your studies be supplemented by a master of repute in order that he may direct and control the varying speed at which each movement should be performed.

The full statement in *The Manual* brings us back to the idea that there are certain details and nuances that simply cannot be described in a handbook, that must be transferred onto a pupil through the teachings of a master, who has come to embody the knowledge of their predecessors, and of Cecchetti himself. Van Schoor (2023) also argues that there is a need for a ballet master to teach and convey the nuances of the Method:

> I think the writings are enough to inform generation upon generation of what the work encompassed, however … you have to be very clever to read between the lines because there's nothing stated about the quality of the work. Very often, in *The Manual*s, he gives you the score … so the counts and the timings and the rhythms are very specific[186]… but … regarding the nuances, I think that this work must be learned from a master because, like any ballet, you can read the choreology, you can get the steps, but to have the characterisation, the qualities, the whole intent of a piece, of a solo, of a variation, I think you need to learn that from a master. It needs to be passed down from teacher to teacher.

[184] Certain exercises have purposeful strict tempos. Some movements have specific and intentional dynamics and rhythms which need to be echoed in the music as in the dancing. For instance, one cannot practice *grand allegro* at a quick speed, for the purpose of *grand allegro* is to train the height of jump, hovering in the air and performing movements with power and explosiveness. On the other hand, we cannot practice *petits allegro* at a slow speed, for the purpose of *petits allegro* is to train speed and brisk footwork. Such tempos are necessary for the dancer's training.

[185] In other words, as long as it also celebrates the inflections that can be found within the music. The music used for ballet accompaniment is largely classical, but still saturate with artistic nuances, dynamics and subtleties which ought to be mirrored within the dance.

[186] Figure 7 shows the precision of dynamics, timing, accent and rhythm described in *The Manual* for the *battement frappé.* The dynamics, accents, timings and rhythms of many exercises are described in such precise manner.

Observations.

The action of the foot in ***battements frappés*** is very similar to that of the foot in ***battements tendus***, performed ***quickly***, except that instead of the whole leg swinging on the pivot of the hip, it is only that part of the leg from the ***knee to the foot*** that moves, and it is pivoted at the ***knee***. (Fig. 54b and c.)

The ***demi-pointe*** of the foot strikes the ground firmly as it rises into the air, and returns ***sur le cou-de-pied derrière*** without touching the ground. Take care that the ***right*** foot does not strike the base of the calf when returned from the ***dégagé*** position either ***sur le cou-de-pied devant*** or ***derrière***. This is a waste of effort. The foot should be returned quickly but quietly.

If we consider the movement as being composed of four measures, the rhythm may be expressed thus :—

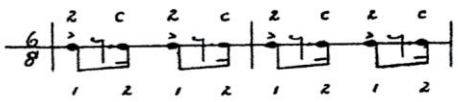
Count 1, as you pass the foot from the ***cou-de-pied devant*** to the ***second*** position, ***pointe tendue***, and release it from the ground.

Count 2, as you return the foot ***sur le cou-de-pied derrière***.

Count 3. See movement as you count 1.

Count 4. See movement as you count 2.

The rhythm may be expressed in musical notation thus :—



The top numbers refer to the position of the feet at the movement of the beat. C= *cou-de-pied*. The lower numbers correspond to the count.

Figure 7: An excerpt from *The Manual* describing the precise dynamic, accent, timing and rhythm of the *battement frappé* (Beaumont and Idzikowski 2004:78).

Van Schoor goes on to suggest that this is another point which makes the Cecchetti Method unique. The Cecchetti Method is very specific, there are rules and subtleties that require transference or passing down from teacher to student, in order to be preserved (Van Schoor 2023). The perpetuation of these rules, principles and details does not imply that Cecchetti's work is fixed or static, but rather that it endures, despite changes in aesthetics, and other elements of ballet[188]. Though the Method was born in the Romantic era, Romanticism does not

[188] This highlights the relevance of the Method despite the changes and artistic developments of the time in which it is practised. From a technical point of view, the Method was as relevant in the early 1900s as it is now in the postmodern age. It also implies a detachment of the Method from the time in which it was developed, meaning that the Method is not branded by Romanticism; various aspects influenced, and continue to influence the aesthetic of the Cecchetti work in a wide embrace of stylistic and choreographic elements that range from the early Romantic ballets to postmodern abstract pieces. In Western dichotomised thought, which clearly distinguishes between the old and the new, the past and the present, the conservative and the progressive, inevitably rejecting such a term might be problematic. There is a definite crossing of boundaries here which enables a counter-hegemonic view of the concept of modernity. The Cecchetti Method is therefore a boundary-crossing and enduring philosophy, pedagogic system and training Method, that continues to flourish.

define it, but is merely incorporated and celebrated in some of Cecchetti's work – as with the subsequent influences of Classicism and Modernism. Cecchetti's work incorporates stylistic and aesthetic aspects from Romantic, Russian Classical and Diaghilev's Modern ballet. Van Schoor (2023) notes that there is certainly a realisation among Cecchetti teachers, dancers and custodians, that we are currently in the 21st century. As dancers and teachers in the 21st century, we acknowledge the aesthetic changes in the arts and, though we maintain our principles and Method of training, we also adapt aesthetically. Van Schoor (2023) also states that, "from an aesthetic point of view" she has "made an effort to also try and incorporate change", respecting yet the traditions and philosophy of the Method.

As a student of the Cecchetti Diploma work, in addition to my physical class, I do sometimes draw on *The Manual* and two *Allegro Manuals* to verify the work, ensuring that I study the Method precisely and correctly. One of my observations in this learning process is the difference between learning from the textual material versus learning through embodied translation. The manuals, as mentioned, are extremely detailed and precise in their descriptions of the movements and exercises. Sometimes, however, the manuals do not have the answers I am looking for. I found that certain nuances and artistic elements can somehow only be described and articulated by means of teacher-student interaction. These nuances and artistic elements are not personal preferences of teachers, but intricate details carried on by Cecchetti's pupils, through their teaching, rather than through the handbooks[189]. Diane van Schoor, for instance, was taught by Cecily Robinson and Jennifer Louw. Louw also trained under Cecily Robinson, among others[190]. Robinson trained under Helen Webb and Marie Rambert who were pupils of Cecchetti himself. UK-based Kate Simmons is also a prominent custodian of the Cecchetti Method, teaching at the level of the Final Diploma. Simmons was a pupil of Glasstone who received his training from Howes, also a student of Cecchetti.

These individuals represent the living legacy of Cecchetti, carrying the Method through their bodies onto the next generation of dancers. Certain details and nuances concur across these

[189] Descendants of Cecchetti spread the Method across South Africa: "Among the first South African teachers of the twentieth century were two who were trained in London by R.M. Crompton: Helen Webb, who went to Cape Town in 1912, and Madge Mann, who went to Johannesburg in 1914. From Webb's studio came Dulcie Howes. Madame Rovodna (Ray Espinosa) also came from London to teach in Johannesburg. Further influence came from London when Webb's pupil Maude Lloyd taught with Webb for two periods (1927-30 and 1932-34) producing dancers such as Cecily Robinson, Alexis Rassine and Frank Staff." (Grut 1981:335). Audrey Grose and Pearl Adler were the main exponents of the Cecchetti Method, conducting the first ISTD examinations in Durban in 1927 (Grut 1981:335).
[190] Also Delysia Jacobs, Faith de Villiers, Florence Reid and Irma Dyer (grade four) (Van Schoor 2023).

individuals in their teaching of the Diploma work; details which are not defined within the textbooks of the Method. As such, it is plain to see that *The Manual*, despite its detailed descriptions, doesn't have the capacity to describe and translate the nuances of the Method like the human body is able to. Van Schoor echoes this standpoint, that the Method, in its entirety, can only be translated by a ballet master.

5.6 Observations – From a Teacher's Perspective

When studying to become a ballet teacher in the Cecchetti Method, one must undergo teacher training. This involves in-person classes with a qualified teacher[191] as well as attending the students' classes in order to observe the principal teacher and for teaching opportunities under the guidance of the principal teacher. In addition to this, I studied *The Manual*s, and other handbooks, containing information on the Method, exercises and syllabi. My associate training was initially limited with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, restricting me to self-study and taking and giving class via Zoom calls. Four months later, I returned to the studio, fully equipped with the knowledge I had acquired by studying my textbooks and manuals. However, I lacked the deeper knowledge and understanding required to teach and transfer this knowledge onto students. It was here that I realised the importance of demonstration in the ballet class. It was also difficult to evaluate and correct the students, whose dancing was minimised into little windows on my computer screen. Once we returned to the studio, the effect of online teaching was evident in the lack of spatial awareness and deteriorated technique and stamina which had crept in. On my part, I had to relearn how to work with the students in a hands-on manner, using touch, verbal cues and demonstration to teach them. This confirmed the significance of visual demonstration, as well as teaching and learning in person, in the studio.

The first thing I notice in my classes is the collaborative nature thereof. As a teacher, I tend to involve my students in their own practice of ballet. I often encourage them to ask questions and be curious about what they are learning. As opposed to just teaching them the steps and movements, and trying to refine their technique, I want them to understand why we do certain exercises, which muscles to use and how, and to recognise the feeling and intention of a movement, regardless of the level or age of the student. I want them to be in tune with their

[191] At the minimum, a teacher ought to have the Licentiate qualification in order to train other aspiring teachers.

bodies and understand their art from a young age. Some of these things I only discovered as an advanced student, or perhaps only in my teacher training – such as the reasons behind certain exercises. For example, *fondu* movements train the coordination of the arms and legs needed in *allegro,* and *battements dégagés* train the footwork for small jumps. Van Schoor also mentions the importance of being clear in your teaching, as well as patient, making sure that the student fully understands the intent behind a movement as well as why they are doing what they are doing (2023). In this way, I try to enlighten my own students as to why we do these exercises and the purpose behind certain movements, so that they not only understand the importance of doing them but also how to do them[192]. This creates a different feeling and understanding of the intention of movements within the student's mind and body.

Such teaching creates a learning environment where the student can learn by cueing – one- or two-word corrections, as opposed to lengthy comments and elaborate instruction – and later on become completely self-reliant, remembering the cue, and its intended or associated modification in the body. I think of when I teach my students not to 'roll' or pronate[193] their feet. This is a common occurrence when trying to turn out the legs beyond their capacity, and leads to weakness in the ankles, knees and legs, as well as injury. I take some time to explain what it means to pronate the feet, and what it does to the body. Then I physically correct, through touch and by telling my students to put their little toes on the floor or make sure all five toes are on the floor. Eventually turning into a concise assertion, such as "little toes", this results in the immediate self-correction and ultimately, as their feet strengthen and the corrections fizzle out, they come to embody this physical correction.

Using analogies or imagery is an important part of teaching. It helps the student to better understand the intent behind a movement. This aspect which forms part of the *apprenticeship,* (knowledge transference and embodiment in the ballet class), is researched by Tanya Berg (2017). The concept, which is referred to as Image Tech for Dancers (ITD), consists of visual cues and imagery that aid the dancer's understanding and *feeling* of movement in their bodies. It is one of the ways in which the dancers use their minds to connect to their bodies and *vice versâ.* It helps the dancer to understand the intention, quality and dynamic of a step, movement

[192] For instance, instead of just *telling* my students to turnout their feet, or "make a better fifth position", I explain to them the anatomy and function of turnout. I use imagery to represent the structure and functioning of the leg in the hip socket, showing them my forearm – which imitates the femur – and my fist – which imitates the head of the femur, which I cover with my other hand – which imitated the hip socket. I demonstrate to them that the head of the femur can move within the hip socket, to help them understand the anatomy of turnout. This helps the student to think of turnout as coming from the hip, rather than just thinking of turning out their feet.
[193] Pronation in the feet occurs when the ankle is rolling inwards, collapsing the bridge of the foot.

or pose, and what to *think* about as they *move*. *The Manual* stresses the importance of this mind-body connection, stating that the pupil needs to have the knowledge of "the *why* and *wherefore*" of each movement in order to dance confidently (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:19). Most simply, having the students imagine they are wearing long dangly earrings helps them elongate their necks. Some of my own analogies include the imagery of whisking and pulling thick caramel or melted cheese when trying to explain the quality of a *double rond de jambe en l'air.* The movement has a quick stirring action on the two circular motions of the leg and a resisted extension of the leg *a la seconde.* The quick circular motion is the whisking of the cheese and the resistant outward action is the pulling of the cheese. To help my students understand the feeling of *épaulement* in their *arabesque epaulé* without turning the whole body in the direction of the shoulders, I use the analogy of wringing out a soaked towel. The upper body twists in one direction and the lower body in the opposite direction, like one would wring out a towel.

An interesting observation made in my own dancing and teaching, as well as the teaching of others, is the involvement of my own body in the learning and teaching process. There are some aspects of the art which one can remember better through the body than other forms of documenting it, such as making notes. When at a course, I rarely take notes and when I do, I rarely go back to them for reference. It is through my body that I remember what was taught at the course. Whenever I feel like I forget something, the timing, arms or head, for instance, I simply *do* the exercise or step, and my body instantly gives me the answer which felt so far away when merely pondering about it. It is interesting also, whenever I give an unset class, how my body remembers. I often prepare the exercises in advance so that the flow of the class is maintained. On a few occasions, I would write down the exercises that I prepared so that I would remember them the next day for the class, only to find these notes undecipherable once I read them. What I found works best is *doing* the exercises, even if just marking them with my hands and arms, and listening to the music as I do so. Not only does the music help me envision the exercise I constructed earlier, but my body also remembers these movements, even by just having done them once. This is one of the key ways in which the body is involved in learning, acquiring and recollecting knowledge; acting as a dynamic archive that can absorb and preserve knowledge. As previously mentioned, Van Schoor emphasises the importance of the body's involvement in learning by asking teachers, young and old, to "get up and do it" – even if just marking the exercises – so that they can remember what she teaches better (2023). This emphasises the importance and role of embodied knowing within the learning, remembering and teaching of dance. We come to *know* things within and through our bodies, and it is here –

within and through the body – where we again can find or recall the knowledge that we've come to know.

Another observation from my own teaching is the process of demonstration and knowledge transference and the importance thereof. The goal is always to transfer the knowledge onto the student in such a way that they come to embody it, that they are autonomous and self-reliant, as Cecchetti also wanted. At the beginning of each year the students are taught new exercises which, towards the months of August and September, they will be examined on. The goal therefore is to get them to fully know and do the exercises by themselves by the time of the examination. At the start of the year, however, these exercises are new to them. My teaching style therefore adapts throughout the year to accommodate their learning process. The first few weeks I introduce them to the new syllabus, demonstrating carefully, talking through the exercises as I demonstrate so that my students can see what they look like. These classes are very measured, and I am quite hands-on with my students in this initial phase of learning new steps, movements and sequences. During the initial stages of learning these new steps and exercises, I often stand beside my students at the *barre* or in the *centre,* first demonstrating and instructing without the music, and then doing the exercises with them with musical accompaniment – the tempo is also sometimes slowed down for these first attempts. Following Wendrich's *apprenticeship* values, during these first few weeks I focus on developing the students' *dexterity* – their "physical ability to perform a required action" – and *skill* – their "ability to perform the proper action in the proper sequence at the proper time, following an internalized set of rules" (2013:2). Although important aspects throughout the year, initially – when students might feel overwhelmed or uncertain about new steps – I give them the appropriate *inspiration* and *motivation,* which are, according to Wendrich, "the driving forces in the relation between master and pupil" (2013:2).

After a few weeks, when the students are starting to comprehend the movements and exercises, I am less hands-on and more focused on verbal cuing and demonstrating, from the front of the studio and in mirror-image to the students; here I can discern with which exercises to assist through demonstration and with which exercises to leave them on their own without demonstration to start developing their *memory* – which is "not just [their] recollection of the production process but also [their] collective memory of the craftsmanship and the products that are the result" (Wendrich 2013:3). Through verbal cues and some demonstration, I slowly begin to familiarise the students with their own thinking about the movements and exercises.

After a few months of demonstration, verbal cuing and being hands-on with the students, I slowly start to remove myself from their practice, allowing them to start drawing on their own capacity for embodied knowing, and developing their *consideration* – which "requires the full attentive focus on the work and the social context" – and *properness* – which "involves learning the appropriate behaviour, the enculturation of the apprentice" in the ballet studio, and can be characterised as becoming a dancer, at their level of training, by gradually acquiring the relevant technique, ability and features (Wendrich 2013:2). According to Wendrich, this enculturation "is a tacit, informal function of learning that is not only part, but in many cases the most important purpose, of apprenticeship" (2013:2). Here and there, I give verbal cues, corrections, instructions or helpful pointers to ensure they continue to develop their technique and understanding.

As the examinations draw near, I present the class either seated or standing still, only observing, and allowing them to embody and perform the work entirely on their own, giving feedback afterwards and not interrupting this process of self-reliant practice. During these classes they develop the *endurance* – "the capability to perform a particular action for the required length of time, or the number of repetitions needed to finish a product" (Wendrich 2013:2) – required to dance their syllabus work. By this time, they have fully acquired the skills and motivation to execute their exercises, fully embodying the knowledge which was new and unfamiliar at the beginning of the year. The exercises and movements are now embodied within their muscle memory. Muscle memory, according to Lunkad, "is a type of procedural memory that includes solidifying a particular motor task into memory through reiteration, which has been utilized interchangeably with motor learning" (2020:28). Lunkad (2020:28) continues to state that:

> At the point when a development is rehashed after some time, a drawn-out muscle memory is made for that task, in the end permitting it to be performed with almost no cognizant exertion. This procedure diminishes the requirement for consideration and makes most extreme productivity inside the motor and memory frameworks.

Repetition therefore allows the body to memorise the movements and sequences, allowing the student to eventually perform them without much consideration. The student is now able to put their mindfulness towards additional refinements, such as artistry and enjoying their dancing. As discussed in Chapter Three, such learning through repetition, and developing of muscle memory is what Cecchetti (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:103-104) had pursued.

Learning through repetition and developing muscle memory form a significant part of apprenticeship. According to Wendrich (2013:4), "[a]pprenticeship is for the most part extremely hard and repetitive work, focused on gaining body knowledge, a physical memory embedded in muscle and the central nervous system, so that in many phases of the work the body simply seems to 'know' what to do".

Once the examination is finished, the process starts again with a new set of exercises, steps and movements. The students retain the knowledge of the year's work in their bodies, and build upon that, embracing and embodying new knowledge in the next year. This lengthy process of apprenticeship and learning[194], "facilitates enculturation by exposing novices to the norms that structure" the environment (Wendrich 2013:15).

Furthermore, repetition and habit play a significant part in this learning process, as students repeat their exercises daily, weekly, yearly, progressively adding on to the knowledge that they come to memorise in their bodies. Wendrich (2013:15) states:

> Endless repetition is a major element in all forms of apprenticeship, to enhance kinesthetic skills and also to build endurance, create habits, and engrain the movements, actions, and work order in the body. The result is what I have called body knowledge: the mastery of dexterity, skill, and endurance …

It is therefore an ongoing process of knowledge transference and embodiment which occurs over many years of training. In these final stages it culminates in "the apprentice finishing a product from beginning to end" (Wendrich 2013:10), having the full knowledge and embodiment of the Cecchetti Method in the Final Diploma level. The culmination of the Method with the absorption of the Final Diploma work represents the achievement of what Wendrich refers to as *hexis,* the manifestation of what Pierre Bourdieu refers to as *habitus,* which implies the full embodiment of the culture and philosophy of the Cecchetti Method (2013:3).

[194] As described in Chapter Four.

5.7 Steps, Movements and *Enchaînements* – Comparing Sources and Descriptions

To reveal the more nuanced form in which teachers demonstrate and transfer the Method, I compare a number of *allegro enchaînements* below, as described in *The Manual, Allegro Manual* and *Advanced Allegro Manual,* as well as Sheila Kennedy's *Notes for a Dancer,* to the teachings of the same *enchaînments* in my own classes, as well as the demonstration and teaching thereof in recorded classes by Simmons and Van Schoor.

Some movements, steps and *enchaînements* are difficult to describe or comprehend in text, for various reasons. Firstly, it is challenging to describe the *dynamics* and *intent* of a movement. I will look at two complex movements in the Cecchetti work, the *renversé* and the *crescent bend* to demonstrate the intricacy of describing and understanding the dynamics and intention of such movements. Secondly, the *quality* and *style* are two complicated aspects to explain verbally or textually. These aspects require demonstration and other means of translation, such as singing, visual analogies and onomatopoeic words to express the sensations, character or mood of an *enchaînement.* The *enchaînements* I will be examining in this regard are the following: *temps levé chassé croisé, coupé dessous, ballonné, grand jeté en tournant en avant* (Saturday), *pas de bourrée couru jeté en attitude …* (Thursday), *relevé petits battements,* and *temps levé chassé en arrière …* (Saturday). The third element which can only be translated and understood through demonstration and apprenticeship, is the *nuances* of an *enchaînement.* The nuances I refer to here can be thought of as unspoken details which the student can pick up in the teacher's demonstration. The teaching of two *adage* studies, namely *dèveloppé Cecchetti* and *rond de jambe dèveloppé,* reveals such nuanced demonstration and non-verbal details. Lastly, the various options or variations that exist are not always indicated in the manuals or handbooks. Observing various teachers, their pupils and their demonstration expose the subtle variations that exist in Cecchetti's work. *Enchaînements* such as *jeté relevé tombé coupé* or *jeté relevé posé coupé* (Thursday), the *brisé volé* step (Friday) and the *adage* study, *huit relevé,* demonstrate these variations, and why they exist.

The *renversé* movement demonstrates the challenge of translating dynamics and intent of movement. It is a very difficult movement with a very specific rhythm, dynamic, quality and *feeling* which is difficult to describe and understand from mere textual description. The term means to "upset" or "overturn" (Ryman 1998:155). It refers to a movement where the dancer's equilibrium appears to be momentarily lost as the working leg sweeps around in one direction,

and the body and arms sweep around, or arch in the opposite direction (Ryman 1998:155). It can be better understood as a quick sweeping circular bending of the upper body from one side to the back and across to the other side, all while executing a turn either on one leg in a *pirouette* or on both legs in a *pas de bourrée.*

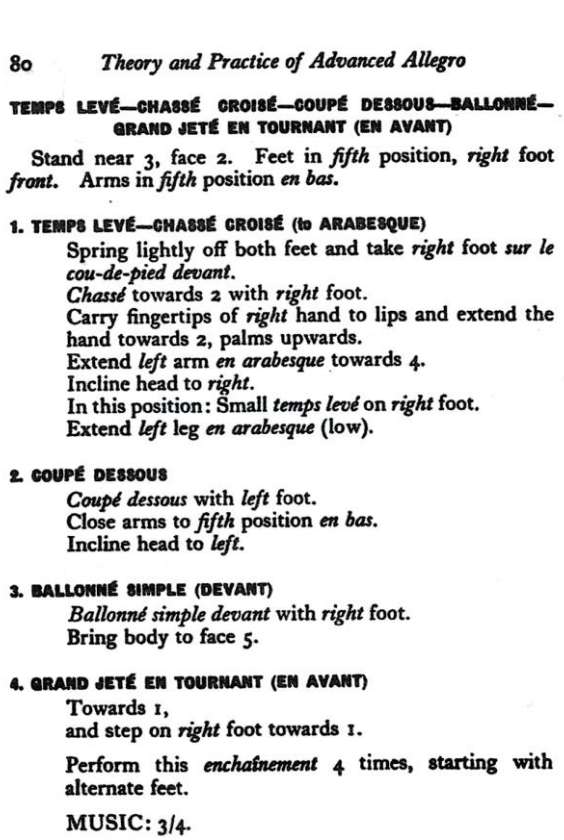
The Manual simply explains the movement as an inclination of the arms, head and body – from the waist – from the one side, to the other side with the arms moving through the *fifth* position *en avant,* on the first inclination, through the *fifth* position *en haut* in the upright position, and opening very quickly to the *seconde* position on the second inclination (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:159). This description does not seem to explain the circular motion or upper body movement required in the *renversé.* The Ryman's dictionary vaguely explains the dynamic of the movement, merely stating that it "ends abruptly" or "forcefully" and that it has a "continuous sweeping action" as well as the appearance of being momentarily "off-balance" (1998:155,156,184,185). This does not fully capture the dynamic quality and aesthetic of the *renversé* movement, which does require a lot of force, but also speed and a flourishing ending. If done correctly, the movement is spectacular and unexpected with a slight pause or delay before the sped-up spin which concludes in harmony with a vibrant ascending arpeggio in the music. It is one of the movements that Cecchetti dancers find the hardest to execute and to do so consistently, as they try to integrate the precisely required and coordinated speed, dynamic, quality of movement and swift circular bending of the body in one continuous sweeping motion, remaining on balance off the perpendicular and *en pointe* at the end of the turn, in most cases.

Dancers do need the verbal explanation, but also the demonstration of the movement, in order to understand what they are trying to achieve, often having to execute the movement a great many times – often also practising the movement without the use of the legs, simply trying to master the use and dynamic of the torso and arms – until they grasp the quality, dynamic, style and intention of the movement, and how it ought to *feel.* The turn should, as Ryman (1998:185) and *The Manual* (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:159) state, end quickly and with force, with the arms opening to the *seconde position* (palms facing upwards), the leg unfolding to the *seconde position en l'air* and the body and head inclining away from the raised leg, all at once. Teachers have tried to instil this flourishing ending in their dancer's bodies by having them 'smack' their – the teacher's – hands on the opening of the arms to *seconde position,* just to

understand the *feeling* of 'forcefully' opening the arms[195]. This movement is found in many of Cecchetti's *enchaînements*, including *adage* studies, *pirouettes* and *allegro*, where it takes on various forms. I have experienced that this movement, with its momentary loss of equilibrium and off-axis ending, is often thought of – by dancers and teachers – to be contemporary[196] and at odds with classical technique during Cecchetti's time. This is another indication that Cecchetti was forward-thinking and essentially laid the foundations of modern dance.

The *crescent bend* is also, like the *renversé*, a complicated movement to describe or comprehend through text. *The Manual* describes the movement of a crescent bend but does not use the term to refer to the movement. This might be an indication that the movement was first created and used by Cecchetti, after which it was named and adopted by other ballet masters. The *crescent bend* is, according to my understanding from my teachers' descriptions, an *adagio* movement where the dancer stands on one leg, the other raised and bent behind the body in an *attitude* position, and bending the body sideways and backwards so that the arms – which are raised above the head – reach the raised foot, creating a C-shape on the horizontal plane, or parallel to the floor. *The Manual* describes the movement as an inclination of the head and body from the waist as far as possible to the opposite corner in which the dancer's body is directed (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:187). Furthermore, it states that the "body should be well-curved and the head thrown backwards" (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:187). My teachers taught me to initiate the movement with a slight forward motion in the arms – which are held either in *fifth en haut* or with one arm in *fifth en haut* and the other in *fifth en avant* – before bending sideways. This is arguably an artistic tendency – the slight forward motion into the bend – which creates a more circular impression and adds more movement to the crescent bend. Van Schoor also teaches the *crescent bend* with a slight forward arc before bending sideways and backwards: "slightly forward, and then think of this as a *penché de côte*, on an oblique line, the head back, the eyes out front" (2018). Nowhere in *The Manual* does it specify the shape of the position made, the eye line or the circular motion described by Van Schoor and other teachers. These additional details are presented by the teachers, who perhaps have inherited these artistic and aesthetic touches from earlier generations of teachers. It is helpful to have an aesthete of a teacher to improve the poses, positions and movements of the dancer.

[195] The term 'forcefully' could perhaps be substituted with a better descriptive word such as *vigorously* or *powerfully*, to better describe this dynamic to a dancer. Many methods and analogies are still being devised for the teaching of this peculiar and challenging movement.
[196] Referring to 'contemporary' here as the dance genre which only developed in the mid-twentieth century.



80 *Theory and Practice of Advanced Allegro*

TEMPS LEVÉ—CHASSÉ CROISÉ—COUPÉ DESSOUS—BALLONNÉ—GRAND JETÉ EN TOURNANT (EN AVANT)

Stand near 3, face 2. Feet in *fifth* position, *right* foot *front*. Arms in *fifth* position *en bas*.

1. TEMPS LEVÉ—CHASSÉ CROISÉ (to ARABESQUE)

Spring lightly off both feet and take *right* foot *sur le cou-de-pied devant*.
Chassé towards 2 with *right* foot.
Carry fingertips of *right* hand to lips and extend the hand towards 2, palms upwards.
Extend *left* arm *en arabesque* towards 4.
Incline head to *right*.
In this position: Small *temps levé* on *right* foot.
Extend *left* leg *en arabesque* (low).

2. COUPÉ DESSOUS

Coupé dessous with *left* foot.
Close arms to *fifth* position *en bas*.
Incline head to *left*.

3. BALLONNÉ SIMPLE (DEVANT)

Ballonné simple devant with *right* foot.
Bring body to face 5.

4. GRAND JETÉ EN TOURNANT (EN AVANT)

Towards 1,
and step on *right* foot towards 1.

Perform this *enchaînement* 4 times, starting with alternate feet.

MUSIC: 3/4.

Figure 8: Excerpt from the *Advanced Allegro Manual* describing the Saturday *enchaînement, temps levé chassé croisé, coupé dessous, ballonné, grand jeté en tournant* (Craske and De Moroda 1997:80).

As Van Schoor stated earlier, the quality and style of *enchaînements* are difficult to capture in textual description. It requires a ballet master to fully translate such nuances as character, quality and mood. *Temps levé chassé croisé, coupé dessous, ballonné, grand jeté en tournant en avant* is a step from the Saturday *allegro* section. An excerpt from the *Advanced Allegro Manual* above (figure 8), outlines the description of the step as it was written down by Craske and De Moroda. It explains a step on the right foot towards corner one, but provides no indication of the eye line, arm movement, head movement or other details such as upper body movement. When taking into regard the natural movement of the body, and the laws of opposition on which Cecchetti's work is based, one could perhaps assume that the left arm would move forwards in relation to the right leg stepping forwards. However, the quality of this action – which is described by Simmons as flowing and free, as if whirling a long skirt around the body, and demonstrated similarly by the dancers in the footage of the Diploma work by Van Schoor – is not explained in the *Allegro Manual.*

When learning this *enchaînement*, my teachers described the step forward with a twist in the upper body over the standing leg, with the arms swaying past the body and the head turning to look backwards before swooping the body, arms and head into the first step on the other side. I was disappointed to find no clarity when I double checked in the *Allegro Manual*, only to find no reference to this nuance in the description of the exercise. Kennedy's book doesn't describe such a movement either. On the other hand, Simmons describes the same movement and use of the upper body and arms. She explains that there is a lot of movement during this step (Cecchetti International Classical Ballet 2022). Van Schoor (2018) explains some of the nuances of the step and provides her pupils with some context in terms of the quality and feel of the *enchaînement*:

> It comes from a French opera *comique* and what she [the character] is actually doing in this *enchaînement*, is having a one-sided duet because she is dancing with her shadow. So if you go from the *fifth* position, you can either start with a *chassé* or you can start with a *temps levé chassé*, and you are going to really show your back … and then *tombé* onto the leg, and follow your shadow. Just a little inflection as you do that … try not to make two movements out of that … if the skirt were longer, it would be going *woosh* around you and you would be looking outside the periphery of your skirt … it really has that feeling.

There are a number of significances in Van Schoor's explanation as she demonstrates the movements. Firstly, she provides the intent and character of the step, by explaining that it is as if to dance with one's shadow, acknowledging where it falls behind the body and looking there to connect with it[197]. Secondly, she gives the dancer some sort of visual analogy with the image of the skirt, to translate this nuance in the movement. Van Schoor not only demonstrates and verbally explains, but also sings the steps musically as she demonstrates, articulating the nuance in the music as well, which should be reflected in the movements. The music is more *staccato*[198] or detached during the first few movements, and on the *grand jeté* and step forward, the notes flow a little more into each other, creating a more *legato*[199], smooth or flowy melody. There is also a slight feeling of *fermata*[200] on this step, which is resonated in the music, giving the dancer time to indulge in the swinging around of the skirt and upper body, and gazing

[197] It is a common characteristic of ballet; where the dancer looks, there too the audience will look. Directing the eyes behind the body allows the audience to 'see' the duet between the dancer and her shadow. Instead of simply looking at the steps and technique, the audience now engages imaginatively, experiencing a feeling, or a story, behind the steps.
[198] *Staccato* means detached and it refers to notes that are played separately with short, crisp and detached articulation. "To show staccato in music, composers write dots above or below the notes" (Ayush 2020).
[199] *Legato* means connected or tied together and refers to notes that are played with a smooth articulation. "[C]omposers write a curved line above the notes, called a slur" (Ayush 2020).
[200] *Fermata* is a sign above a note indicating that it should be held for longer than its actual duration.

behind themselves. Van Schoor therefore uses sounds – like *whoosh* – and singing to translate the character, quality and inflections of the *enchaînement.* These nuances are not being described elsewhere.

The next step which demonstrates the transference of quality and style through apprenticeship, is the *pas de bourrée couru jeté en attitude* step. The *Advanced Allegro Manual* describes the step in detail – the explanation takes up more than three pages – but does not indicate any stylistic details (figures 9 and 10). Whereas this description does indicate that there are inclinations in the head and body, there is no suggestion of the quality of these inclinations. The only indication we have that this a Romantic *enchaînement* is that the prescribed music is the Mazurka from *Les Sylphides* by Frederic Chopin. From this information we can gather that the step has its origins in the Romantic era and therefore requires the appropriate style and quality of Romantic ballet.

Van Schoor elaborates on this point in the *Allegro Manual,* stating that because the *enchaînement* is from *Les Sylphides,* we must remember that "originally it was done on a [raked stage], so whilst we are not on a [raked stage], you still want to have, stylistically, the weight forward" (2018). When describing the Romantic *arabesque* at the end of the *enchaînement,* Van Schoor states, "it is really soft, as if you have your head on a pillow" (2018). As she talks and sings through the steps, Van Schoor demonstrates the movements with a continuous soft *port de bras* originating from the lift of the elbows as opposed to the lengthened lines from the fingertips we see in more Classical ballets. She encourages the dancer to "really listen to the orchestra" as "there's lots of inflection in the music" (2018). Van Schoor imitates these inflections in her tone of voice as she counts and describes the movements, which ought to be imitated in the movements as well. When one of my teachers described this *enchaînement* to me, she stated that the arms are not in fixed classical positions but rather flow in between them, softly and subtly, keeping the elbows and wrists 'easy' and curved. On the *pas de bourrée couru en tournant* Van Schoor turns and inclines the head over the one shoulder. These small details in the head movement are not described in the *Allegro Manual* or in Kennedy's book. My teachers also emphasise the subtle head movements and use of the upper body, which are not indicated elsewhere.

Van Schoor explains the *port de bras* on the *pas de bourrée couru* and *jeté en attitude* as having a circular sweeping motion. The *Allegro Manual* and *Notes for a Dancer* provide us with the classical positions of the arms, stating that they move through the *third* position, on the *pas de*

bourrée couru, and through the *fourth* positions *en avant* and *en haut* to the opposite *fourth* position *en avant.* An excerpt from the *Allegro Manual* (Craske & De Moroda 1997:43) reads: "Carry arms to *third* position, *left* arm *front* ... Sweep the *left* arm through *fourth* position *en avant – fourth* position *en haut – seconde* position to *demi-seconde* position. Sweep the right arm through *seconde* position to *fifth* position *en haut.*" Kennedy (2020:196) provides us with a similar description, with a condensed vocabulary[201]: "[arms] gradually to *3rd position*, LA *fwd., head inclined R (4)…sweep LA thru 4th en avant, 4th en haut, 2nd pos. to demi-2nde, RA through 2nd pos. to 5th en haut (4th en haut).*" These are very academic explanations of the movement of the arms. Such description lacks details regarding the quality of movement, dynamic, style and artistic response. The details which make up the nature, style and character of the *enchaînement* are not indicated explicitly in the *Allegro Manual* but are rather translated and demonstrated in the studio between the teacher and student.

[201] LA, RA, LL and RL used to refer to 'left arm', 'right arm', 'left leg', and 'right leg', respectively. Kennedy provides the reader with a list of these abbreviations in the beginning of the book, such as *Pos.* – position; *Thru* – through; *Fwd.* – forward.

4. ENTRECHAT SIX

With a small *Assemblé* close feet in *fifth* position, *left* foot *front*, face 5, lower arms to *fifth* position *en bas*, and perform an *Entrechat six*.

Perform this *enchaînement* 4 times, starting with alternate feet.

MUSIC: Strong 2/4 or 3/4.

PAS DE BOURRÉE COURU—JETÉ EN ATTITUDE (four times)—UN JETÉ—PAS DE BOURRÉE—TOUR À LA SECONDE (sauté)—PAS DE BOURRÉE EN TOURNANT, RELEVÉ EN TROISIÈME ARABESQUE (élancée)—PAS DE BOURRÉE—GRAND JETÉ EN TOURNANT—DEUX TOURS DE PIROUETTE EN DEDANS finishing en CINQUIÈME ARABESQUE—PAS DE BOURRÉE—GRAND JETÉ EN TOURNANT—DEUX TOURS DE PIROUETTE EN DEDANS finishing en CINQUIÈME ARABESQUE (P)

Stand near 3, face 1. Feet in *fourth* position, *right* foot *back*, *pointe tendue*. Arms in *fifth* position *en bas*.

1. PAS DE BOURRÉE COURU

Pas de bourrée couru toward 1, ending with weight on *right* foot.
Raise *left* leg behind, slightly bent.
Carry arms to *third* possition, *left* arm in *front*.
Incline head to *right*.

2. JETÉ EN ATTITUDE

Spring upwards into the air off *right* foot, allowing the feet to pass each other in the air.
Come to the ground on *left* foot, raise *right* leg behind, slightly bent.
Sweep *left* arm through *fourth* position *en avant*—*fourth* position *en haut*—*second* position to *demi-second* position.
Sweep *right* arm through *second* position to *fifth* position *en haut*.
Incline head and body to *left*.

3. PAS DE BOURRÉE COURU

Repeat No. 1 but add the following arm movements:
Carry the *right* arm through *fourth* position *en avant* to *fifth* position *en bas*.
Lower the *left* arm to *fifth* position *en bas*. Both arms must reach *fifth* position *en bas* at the same time.
Carry the *right* arm to *demi-second* position. The arms are now again in *third* position.
Incline head to *right*.

4. JETÉ EN ATTITUDE

Repeat No. 2.

5. PAS DE BOURRÉE COURU

Repeat No. 3.

6. JETÉ EN ATTITUDE

Repeat No. 2.

7. PAS DE BOURRÉE COURU

Repeat No. 3.

8. UN PETIT JETÉ EN ATTITUDE

Repeat No. 2 and perform one more *jeté en attitude*.

9. PAS DE BOURRÉE

Pas de bourrée en arrière with *left* foot towards 3.
Open arms to *demi second* position.

10. TOUR À LA SECONDE (sauté)

(*a*) Spring upwards into the air off *left* foot.
Raise *right* leg *à la seconde position en l'air* towards 3.
Sweep arms through *fifth* position *en bas*—*fifth* position *en avant* to *fifth* position *en haut*.
Turn to the *left* to face 5.
(*b*) Come to the ground on *right* foot, allowing the knee to bend.
Open arms to *second* position.

11. PAS DE BOURRÉE EN TOURNANT

Relevé on *left* foot *sur la pointe*.
Lower *right* foot to front of *left* foot, *sur la pointe*.
Close arms across chest.

Figure 9: Excerpt from the *Advanced Allegro Manual* describing the Thursday *enchaînement, pas de bourrée couru jeté en attitude (four times) etcetera* (Craske and De Moroda 1997:43-44).

Turn to the left twice with small *pas de bourrée courus (sur place)* ending with *right* foot in front facing 5. Lower both heels to the ground, allowing the knees to bend.

12. RELEVÉ EN TROISIÈME ARABESQUE (élancée)

Keeping knees bent, slide *right* foot forward towards 1. *Relevé* on *right* foot *sur la pointe* (*élancé*) *en troisième arabesque* with both hands turned up. Turn body to face 1.

13. PAS DE BOURRÉE

Pas de bourrée en arrière with *left* foot towards 3. Carry *left* arms to back *en arabesque*.

14. GRAND JETÉ EN TOURNANT (en arrière)

At end come to the ground on *right* foot, facing 1, allowing the knee to bend.
Extend *left* leg to 3 and carry it towards 4, bring it to *fourth* position at *back*, lower heel, allowing the knee to bend.
Bring arms to *fourth* position *en avant*, *right* arm in *front*, across the body.
Turn the body to face 2.
Incline head to *left*.

15–16. DEUX TOURS DE PIROUETTE EN DEDANS finishing en CINQUIÈME ARABESQUE

(*a*) *Deux tours de pirouette en dedans* (*sur le cou-de-pied*).

(*b*) When the body returns facing 2 for the *second* time, turn body to face 1.
Lower *right* heel to the ground, allowing the knee to bend.
Extend *left* leg to 3 *en arabesque*.
Carry both arms forward to 1 *en arabesque*.
The position is now *en cinquième arabesque*.
Repeat this *enchaînement* to left side, starting near 4, facing 2.

17. PAS DE BOURRÉE

Repeat No. 13.

18. GRAND JETÉ EN TOURNANT (en arrière)

Repeat No. 14.

19–20. DEUX TOURS DE PIROUETTE EN DEDANS finishing en CINQUIÈME ARABESQUE

Repeat Nos. 15–16, but turn body to face 8 and extend *left* leg to 6 *en arabesque*.

MUSIC: Mazurka from *Les Sylphides*, F. Chopin, Op. 33, No. 2 (repeat last 4 bars or improvise 4 bars).

PAS DE BOURRÉE COURU—JETÉ EN DEUXIÈME ARABESQUE (performed four times) followed by PAS DE BOURRÉE COURU—GRAND JETÉ EN TOURNANT, EN ARRIÈRE

Stand near 3, face 4. Feet in *fourth* position, *right* foot *back*, *pointe tendue*. Arms in *fifth* position *en bas*.

1. PAS DE BOURRÉE COURU

Run with small steps (*sur la demi-pointe*) towards 4.

2. JETÉ EN DEUXIÈME ARABESQUE

(*a*) Spring upwards and forwards off *left* foot towards 8. Raise *right* leg to *quatrième position devant en l'air*, allow *left* leg to rise to *quatrième position derrière en l'air*.
Extend the arms to *arabesque*, *left* arm in front.

(*b*) Come to the ground on *right* foot, allowing the knee to bend.

3. PAS DE BOURRÉE COURU

Repeat No. 1, starting with *left* foot.
Lower arms to *fifth* position *en bas*.

4. JETÉ EN DEUXIÈME ARABESQUE

Repeat No. 2 on *left* foot.
Extend arms to *arabesque*, *right* arm in front.

5. PAS DE BOURRÉE COURU

Repeat No. 1.

6. JETÉ EN DEUXIÈME ARABESQUE

Repeat No. 2.

Figure 10: Excerpt from the *Advanced Allegro Manual* describing the Thursday *enchaînement, pas de bourrée couru jeté en attitude (four times) etcetera* (Craske and De Moroda 1997:45-46).

The Saturday *enchaînement, temps levé chassé en arrière etcetera,* provides us with another example of apprenticeship-style transference of qualities, stylistic nuances and character of a step. Van Schoor's video exhibits this *enchaînement* with lots of upper body movement as the dancer sweeps the arms around his body, allowing the head and eyes to follow their movement. One of my teachers also described this *enchaînement* as having lots of upper body movement, and that one should feel as if the fingertips are nearly touching the floor on the two *chassés*

backwards. The arms move together with the legs and body in the same direction[202] – one of the very few times where the limbs are not moving in opposition to one another – creating big sweeping sensations and arc-shaped movements. The *Advanced Allegro Manual* merely describes the inclination of the head, but no arm or upper body movement (Figure 11). Kennedy, on the other hand, does indicate body movement, explaining the movement of the arms as "reaching to the floor" (2020:207). Despite this indication of "reaching to the floor" with the arms, the circular sweeping movement of the upper body and arms are not described adequately to give the reader an understanding of this sweeping sensation in the *enchaînement.*

TEMPS LEVÉ, CHASSÉ EN ARRIÈRE (performed twice)—TEMPS LEVÉ —POSÉ—TEMPS LEVÉ—POSÉ—JETÉ ELANCÉ EN ATTITUDE—PAS DE BOURRÉE RENVERSÉ — ASSEMBLÉ COUPÉ DERRIÈRE — ENTRECHAT SIX

Stand near 3, face 1. Feet in *fifth* position, *left* foot *front*. Arms in *fifth* position *en bas*.

1. TEMPS LEVÉ, CHASSÉ EN ARRIÈRE

Spring off lightly on *right* foot.
Chassé en arrière with *left* foot.
Incline head to *left*.

2. TEMPS LEVÉ, CHASSÉ EN ARRIÉRE

Spring off lightly on *left* foot.
Chassé en arrière with *right* foot.
Incline head to *right*.

3. TEMPS LEVÉ—POSÉ

Temps levé on *right* foot.
Raise *left* leg to *quatrième position devant, en l'air* towards 1 (as in *Grand Battement*).
Carry fingertips of *left* hand towards lips and extend hand towards 1, palm upwards.
Extend *right* arm *en arabesque* towards 3.
Come to the ground on *right* foot, allowing the knee

Figure 11: An excerpt from the *Advanced Allegro Manual* outlining the first section of *the temps levé chassé en arrière, temps levé posé (twice), jeté élancé en attitude, pas de bourrée renversé, assemblé coupé derrière, entrechat six* step (Craske and De Moroda 1997:78).

In order to demonstrate the significance of non-verbal nuances in the studio, I look at two *adage* studies, namely *développé Cecchetti* and *rond de jambe développé.* The first *adage* study involves a simple movement; a rise on the supporting leg, followed by a lowering and bending of the supporting leg and a *pas de bourrée renversé* which then leads into a *pirouette* ending. The simplicity of the legs, however, is accompanied by a subtle but intricate motion with the top arm – which is *en attitude croisé. The Manual* describes the movement as a semi-circular

[202] This is one of the instances where the weight of the head assists the movement of the body in a homologous body organisation as opposed to contralateral.

sweep, outward and backward toward the back corner (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:131). Kennedy explains the movement as an outward movement which circles back to its original position (2020:53). These descriptions, though they aim to be detailed, are vague, leaving the movement up for interpretation by the reader. How big should the circular motion be? What part of the arm executes the movement? My teachers tried to explain this movement to me as a calling gesture, as if the hand is making a wave towards the audience sitting high up in the corner in which the dancer is facing. They also demonstrated the movement multiple times, as I tried to imitate them. Van Schoor's DVD shows this movement as follows: the upper arm, which is curved in front of the dancer's face, is extended by the elbow, as the wrist pivots outwards, moving through the position which could be called *fifth en haut ouvert* (figure 12), before the wrist pivots back inwards, and the elbow curves, into the *fifth* position *en haut.* The arm then continues downwards to the *fifth* position *en avant* where it meets the other arm, before the dancer performs the *pas de bourrée renversé.* This movement, though subtle, is characteristic of the *adage* study. Although it is a widely recognised nuance of this *adage,* it is so complex to explain or describe. It is through my teachers' and Van Schoor's demonstration that the movement makes sense to me, and I can try to perform it, drawing on their visual demonstrations thereof.

The next *adage* is *rond de jambe développé.* The focus of this *adage* study is the *rond de jambe balancé* movement, where the dancer quickly circles the leg from the *derriére* position, through *á la seconde* to the *devant* position, and in quick succession back to the *derriére* position *en l'air. The Manual* (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:127) describes the movement as follows:

> Execute quickly **one grand rond de jambe en l'air en dedans,** then **one grand rond de jambe en l'air en dehors.** The arms remain in the *second* position.

Figure 12: Image from *The Manual* depicting the *fifth en haut ouvert* position of the arms (Beaumont and Idzikowski 2004:259)

Kennedy describes the movement in a similar fashion, as two *grand rond de jambes en dedans* and *en dehors* with the arms held in the *seconde* position. Van Schoor's dancers add a subtle head movement on each of these *rond de jambes*, inclining towards the raised leg as it moves to the *devant* position, and over the standing leg as the raised leg moves to the *derriére* position. Van Schoor does not mention this subtlety verbally, but demonstrates it, and so the dancers pick up on this nuance. Such non-verbal nuances are adopted by dancers, sometimes without even noticing that they are mirroring the teacher's nuances. This comes to show the significance and power of demonstration and visual learning. In the same way, students might also learn to mirror visual subtleties and nuances that are not as aesthetically pleasing, such as mannerisms in the hands, broken wrists or bad posture[203]. This emphasises the importance of correct demonstration on the teacher's part, so that the students mirror subtleties and nuances that are appropriate and valuable. Visual learning and imagery are significant aspects of absorbing knowledge. We pick up on such subtleties, consciously or unintentionally, and replicate what we see.

[203] Anecdotal information and observations from some teachers demonstrate an interesting example of this. Some teachers who have carried children described and experienced how their students learned visually and by mirroring. During pregnancy, one's posture adapts to the weight that is carried in the front of the body. To counter this, one would adjust the spine, and lean slightly backwards, in order to accommodate the additional weight in the front of the body. These teachers noticed that, during their pregnancies, their students adopted similar postures, carrying their weight too far back, imitating through visual learning the teacher's stance and movement. Visual learning and mirroring are therefore a significant part of ballet training and it is of utmost importance that the teacher demonstrates each movement meticulously and correctly to prevent the embodiment of unfavourable qualities among their students.

The significance of imagery and visual learning also displays itself in the analogies used to describe movements and *enchaînements.* Some movements are best described through visual analogies. Some *enchaînements* have been nicknamed according to their aesthetic manifestation. Others have stories or sentiments behind them, which are reflected in their performance. Many of Cecchetti's *enchaînements* have also adopted descriptive nicknames which relate to the visual imagery the dancer has in mind when performing a step.

Some examples include the 'champagne step', the 'bell step', the 'ragdoll step' and the 'Degas pose'. The Tuesday *jeté battement* exercise is affectionately known as the 'champagne step' referring to the quality of the jumps which can be likened to the bubbles in champagne lightly bursting and popping upwards to the rim of the glass. Having this imagery in mind, the dancer understands the intention and quality behind the movement better, to ascend and descend lightly and frivolously with low elevation but with brisk and sharp footwork. Another example is the Saturday *cabriole enchaînement* which is also known as the 'bell step'. The dancer executes three *cabrioles devant* alternating sides, with the opposite arm swinging upwards as the leg is flung into the air. If done with lots of energy, high elevation and well-coordinated swinging of the opposite arm and leg, the dancer conveys the look of a large church bell swinging from one side to the other. Likening the step to the swinging of a church bell can help the dancer to understand the intention, feeling and aesthetic of the movement. The *temps levé fouetté gargouillade vole* step from Cecchetti's Saturday selection is better known as the 'rag doll step'. The dancer appears to flop around like a rag doll during this *enchaînement.* A difficult step to execute without help of the arms as they are kept in *fifth en bas* during the entire exercise, the movements might appear laborious with strain in the upper body to assist the height of jump required for Saturday *enchaînements.* Explaining to the dancer that they must look like a rag doll, wilting across the floor, helps to convey the feeling and intent of the exercise. Cecchetti's *adage* study, *glissade de mami* is another example where visual imagery is used. At the end of the *adage* the dancer extends the leg to the back as high as possible before quickly performing a *pas de bourrée renversé.* The extension of the leg is thought to represent the tail of a cat. The *adage* is named after Cecchetti's cat, and so the study has an apparent feline character – long sensual lines, slow slinky steps leading into a sudden twist and turn and an unexpected bound in the middle of the sequence. Van Schoor (2018) explains, as she uses her hands to portray the catlike movements,

> Cecchetti named this after his cat, which I believe was a Tabby cat. I would like you to think about the feline qualities and movement, like the *glissade,* you know how cats

> have got that sort of quality about their landings … but also we need to try and see the cat's tail later on.

The so-called *Degas position* is another example. It refers to the pose at the end of the *adage* study, *pas de chaconne,* which is affectionately known as the 'Degas position', as it resembles one of Edgar Degas's paintings, *Trois danseuses a la classe de danse (Three dancers at a dance class)* c.1888-90. One of the dancers in the painting is shown to tie the ribbons of her ballet shoe. The dancer bends down from the waist so that the arms and raised leg can meet in the air at a low position *en l'air,* giving the appearance of the dancer tying her shoe. *The Manual* describes the movement as follows: "standing on the right leg, allow the left leg to bend slightly in the *fourth* position *front* at half height, the arms held in a low *fifth en avant* and the head inclined over the standing leg" (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:161). This description does not, however, explain the bending of the body over the raised foot which makes it look as if she is tying her ballet shoe.

Although part of the learning process, visual learning is only an entry point to the embodiment of knowledge. Wendrich argues that, although pupils "can develop their skills by observing and imitating" the teacher, their skills are mostly "honed by practice" (2013:12). Cecchetti also believed that the student should learn not always to imitate the teacher but should come to absorb and embody the knowledge and become completely self-reliant. Cecchetti emphasised the importance of physically, mentally and theoretically understanding each movement and how the body must precisely know and execute them. As Beaumont (1948:16) explained, this is one of the main purposes of the Cecchetti Method[204].

[204] "The student shall not learn to dance by trying to imitate the movements executed by his teacher as a model for him to follow, but shall learn to dance by studying and imbibing the basic principles which govern the art; in short, to grow and develop from within out, to become completely self-reliant" (Beaumont 1948:16).

Figure 13: Edgar Degas, *Trois danseuses a la classe de danse* (Three dancers at a dance class) [oil on cardboard], ca.1888-90 (Qagoma 2021).

Cecchetti's work is also defined by its diversity and variation[205]. There are many *enchaînements* that can be done in various ways to suit various dancers. Below, I discuss some examples of *enchaînements* where variations are acknowledged. Bennett (2007:30) mentions an example where Cecchetti brought in variations:

> An example of one of Cecchetti's own adaptations may be in the enchaînement *Temps levé, développé, temps levé, fouetté, jeté en attitude, gargouillade volée, deux jetés* (Craske and de Moroda, 1979, 29-30). In the written record, and in most of the oral tradition, the arms are held in fifth en bas throughout the enchaînement. However, a version reported to be from the teacher Molly Lake (1899-1986) has 'Pavlova arms' when, at the end of the *gargouillade volée*, they uncurl from the shoulders and reach forwards as the head and upper back reach backwards.

This is one of many instances where Cecchetti adapted artistic or stylistic elements of an *enchainment* to suit the individual dancer. Kennedy mentions that her notes "are merely offered as a beginning" and that the purpose of her handbook "is not to restrict the diversity that has

[205] "It is possible that some of these differing versions may have their origin in Cecchetti's own adaptation of the *enchaînements*, either over time or to suit different dancers, whilst others may have developed since Cecchetti's time; the distinction is important as the former may provide more information about Cecchetti's own approach whilst the latter may obscure it." (Bennett 2007:30).

been handed down from Maestro Cecchetti and his many pupils" (2020:i). Van Schoor also mentions this point, that there are diverse manners in which some exercises can be done, and Cecchetti also taught his own exercises in these various ways. The first example is his *adage* study, *huit relevé.* This exercise is based on the *eight directions of the body,* with the dancer performing one *développé* in each of these directions, followed by a test of balance on the quarter rise. Cecchetti originally composed the *adage* with two tests of balance; one on the *cou-de-piéd,* as the working leg is drawn up to the knee, and another on the extension of the leg before closing and moving into the next direction. When Cecchetti came to teach in London, there was no heating in the studio, and so he omitted the first rise, considering it to be "too much of a strain on the pupil in a damp climate" (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:229). Although both these variations exist, most teach the *adage* with only the one rise in each direction.

Other *enchaînements,* such as the Friday *brisé volé* step, show the variations in arms which are accepted in some exercises. The arms can either open to *demi-seconde* on the first *brisé volé* (*en avant*) and close to *fifth en bas* on the second *brisé volé* (*en arriére*), or the other way around. For the *grand pas de basque* the dancer has various options for the arms; either they can be carried to the *offering position* (*fifth en avant* with the palms turned upwards), or with the palms to the floor, or to *demi-seconde* (Kennedy 2020:199). Van Schoor presents another variation, where the wrists cross in the *fifth* position *en avant* with the palms to the floor. There are also various options for the detail in the legs. On the extension of the leg, to the front and the back, the legs can either be straightened on both extensions, or straightened on the extension to the front, and taken to the *cou-de-piéd* at the back. Another option is either to perform the second *brisé* with a *rond de jambe* or circling of the leg outwards and backwards, or to brush it through the *first* position to perform the beat. There are also two pieces of music for this *enchaînement,* a 2/4 or 3/4 time signature. The different music creates a different dynamic which could suit different dancers. These variations exist to accommodate various dancers and their personal inclinations, as well as their physical and artistic disposition.

Another example, where slight variations have been observed, would be the *douze ballonnés piqués* step from the Tuesday *allegro* section. After completing the *ballonnés, tombé* and *pas de bourrée* the dancer raises the leg *en attitude devant en fondu* before performing eight *emboîtés en tournant.* Widely accepted by teachers and examiners, there are two options for the use of the arms on the *emboîtes* – the arms can either commence in the *fifth position en haut* and open through the *second position,* or the arms can start in the *fourth position en haut* and

move through the *second position* to the opposite *fourth en haut.* On the raising of the leg to *attitude devant* Simmons adds a hop on the supporting leg. This raising of the leg is not described with a hop elsewhere. Simmons admits that it is a personal preference and that she is simply enjoying some artistic license here (Cecchetti International Classical Ballet 2022). Such deviations are permitted only when it adheres to the fundamentals and principles of the Method, for instance, that it still be executed musically and that it adds, rather than subtracts, from the technical and artistic execution of the movement. It is imperative for any deviation not to be detrimental to the technical or artistic elements of the exercise and of Cecchetti's Method. In the above-mentioned example, Simmons's decision to add a hop does not take away from the technique or principles of the Method. In such a case, not many would object to or disapprove of Simmons's personal preference of performing the step with a hop. Simmons (Cecchetti International Classical Ballet 2022) explains: "Now in the notation it says *fondu* here … I was taught … to do a *temps levé* to get me going. So when I examine, I do accept either."

Van Schoor, Kennedy, my teachers and the *Advanced Allegro Manual* also describe the movement without the *temps levé.* That is not to say that Simmons's variation of the step is by any means incorrect. Simmons – who is herself a respected custodian of the Method – was taught, among others, by Glasstone, who received training from Howes – a student of Cecchetti himself – and is a revered connoisseur of the Cecchetti Method. It is therefore possible that this version of the *enchaînement* had been done by Cecchetti and his pupils, especially when acknowledging the fact that Cecchetti had many adaptations for some of his *enchaînements.*

Some changes have been made, according to changes in aesthetics. These changes are, for instance, the taking of turns in the *retiré* position as opposed to the *cou-de-piéd.* This fits the aesthetic of today's ballet, with the emphasis on higher legs, more expansive positions and greater movement. Also, all steps are not taken on the half or *demi pointe,* as it is written. Dancers have grown to acquire a better range of motion in the feet and ankles, allowing them to go higher onto their toes. Most movements are now taken on the three-quarter or *piéd á trois quatre,* unless of course, if the steps are taken *en pointe.* Other changes include the aesthetic of the *penché.* The *penché* is a well-known movement or pose in classical ballet, where the dancer raises the leg at the back, tilting the pelvis to allow the legs to reach a full split, or flat vertical line, as they stay on balance on their other leg. *The Manual* describes this movement as the bending of the body from the waist downwards until the fingertips of the front hand – which is

en arabesque – touch the ground, while the raised leg moves naturally upwards so that the front arm and back leg are creating a straight line (Beaumont & Idzikowski 2004:167). As dancers' flexibility and range of movement increased[206], the *penché* is now attempted while keeping the body as upright as possible, as the leg is raised. In other words, the body is no longer dropped down so far that the front hand can touch the ground, but the dancer tries to maintain the upright position of the back and arms as far as possible, moving them only the slightest to accommodate the lines created by the dancer. There is also an overall lengthening of lines in the art of classical ballet. Romantic curves are extended to create the illusion of longer limbs, extensions and broader movement. As Van Schoor (2023) also speculates, if Cecchetti were to live until today, he too would have taken into account the new and evolving tastes and aesthetics in the arts:

> I think if Cecchetti were here, he would have acknowledged ... he was such an aesthete ... he would have recognized the changes in the broader world around him and would have made his own changes. Whether he would've changed the method and the *days of the week*, I think is probably unlikely.

In other words, the Method of training developed by Cecchetti and the technical, methodological aspects of his teaching remain pertinent to classical ballet. Aesthetically, ballet might have changed over the years, but Cecchetti was prepared for that, encouraging his students to study and be aware of the artistic landscape around them. Though the aesthetics of ballet continue to change, the technique has endured, from Blasis through Cecchetti to teachers and dancers today. The technique of classical ballet therefore, as codified and developed by Blasis and Cecchetti, cannot be described as old-fashioned or outdated, for it remains the foundation of classical ballet today. The endurance of technique and principles might be attributed to their sound anatomical underpinnings. Cecchetti developed his Method with the human body's functioning and biomechanics in mind: working each part of the body in such a way that it produces a coherent and coordinated whole. The relevance of the Cecchetti work is demonstrated in its continued practice by many dancers across the world today. Van Schoor (2023) argues that the Cecchetti Method allows dancers to perform the demanding choreographic works of the postmodern age:

[206] With advancements in sports medicine, the aesthetic evolutions in dance and the athleticism associated with dance today, dancers' bodies became more facile, flexible and strong. Dancers are capable of much more now, such as raising their legs higher. In terms of aesthetics, ballet's lines have become more elongated in the Modern era. Whereas the arms were very curved and the legs were quite low in the Romantic era, dancers broadened their movements and positions with the aesthetic changes of modernity. Van Schoor mentions that she was taught to place the *fifth en haut* over the hairline – more forwards – whereas today she teaches it over the crown of the head – which gives a more upright and lengthened look (2023).

> If you can do all of this work, up to and including Cecchetti's Diploma – in other words, his whole Method … you are prepared to do anything in a company. From a physical, a technical, a musical, a theatrical, and stylistic point of view.

The pertinence of the Cecchetti Method was further demonstrated by the 2022 centenary celebrations, involving a myriad of workshops, lectures, classes and conferences held across the globe, promoting and re-examining and commemorating the Cecchetti Method and the network of Cecchetti Method-based schools and associations all over the world.

5.8 Learning in the Studio

The type of learning, embodiment, transference and acquisition of knowledge in the study of classical ballet can be explained through *apprenticeship* which echoes the concept of bodies-as-archive and conversation-as-archive. Learning, in the form of apprenticeship, requires a ballet master and a student. Through participation of both teacher and student, knowledge is conveyed through a process of observation, demonstration and experimentation – on the teacher's part – and acquired through a process of observation, imitation and repetition – on the student's part. Despite the critique on ballet, for its alleged authoritarian teaching style, apprenticeship requires both student and teacher to actively participate in this process, and subsequently reveals the agency of both parties. The type of learning that occurs in the ballet class is focused on counter-hegemonic ideas of embodiment, body knowledge and learning from the ancestors, or enculturation of tradition and culture. Although many fields and disciplines have strong elements of such apprenticeship, Wendrich laments that there is "a general Western attitude toward learning that ranks academic (explicit) knowledge higher than practical (tacit) knowledge" (2013:5). Wendrich (2013:12) asserts the importance of such transmitted, embodied knowledge from one generation to the next: "To our Western minds, learning from the ancestors may not be a valid educational principle, but the participants who are involved take the lessons as seriously as other forms of teaching."

And it ought to be taken seriously as it forms part of our very human experiences. To learn anything requires a source of knowledge and a pupil, and in many cases in our lives – especially when it comes to learning physical skills – the source of knowledge can be seen as the master, be it in the form of a parent, schoolteacher, mentor or other instructor in one's life. The dissociation between tangible and intangible, or explicit and tacit, knowledge lies within

dominant discourse and hegemonic forms of learning and preserving. Somatics and somatic approaches to matters such as learning, emphasise the body as a multi-dimensional entity, opposing hegemonic ideas that often delineate, and clearly separate, binary configurations of any phenomena. In opposing these binary configurations, scholars such as Shusterman view the body as consisting of multiple and co-dependant dimensions. This helps remove the value, and therefore hierarchy, which is often bestowed unto knowledge – with intangible aspects being associated with social, cultural and non-expert value whereas tangible elements are associated with expert or scientific values ascribed to knowledge. This integrated view of the body and human experience establishes the body as a dynamic entity; "an open and dynamic system of exchange" as opposed to "a self-contained and closed entity" to recall Lepecki's words (2006:5) mentioned in the opening paragraphs of this study.

As mentioned, learning in the studio culminates in the manifestation of *habitus,* in other words, the acquisition and embodiment of habit, technique or skill. Embodiment has been fully realised when the individual not only possesses the knowledge but becomes it. In other words, conscious knowledge develops into unconscious knowledge over time:

> Long-term education and training result in the sedimentation of conscious into unconscious knowledge. In the initial moment of learning, one "has" or possesses knowledge. Later on, one comes to "be" it (Spatz 2015:52).

Beyond learning through practice and *apprenticeship,* we also learn through experience. Both through practice and technique the individual manifests their agency. Through experience, the individual's agency is increased by being involved in the self-processes according to Shusterman (self-fashioning, self-expression, self-fulfilment).

CHAPTER SIX: CRITIQUE, COUNTERARGUMENT AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

6.1 The pedagogy of ballet – Critique and Counterargument

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the commencement of postmodernism questioned whether ballet had come to an end. The prodigies of the twentieth century had passed and, for a while, there was no sign of their successors (Anderson 2015). Homans states that dancers seemed to struggle to fill the shoes of their heirs (2010:541). The universal and individual repertoires of companies across the globe did not see many new additions, as dancers and choreographers contemplated the identity and future of ballet. Contemporary dance forms seemed more appealing with their experimental nature and emphasis on freedom, breaking rules and abandoning traditions.

Some have argued that Cecchetti's Method of teaching is rooted in the Romantic style of ballet, and that it represents old-fashioned ways of teaching and practising ballet. Scholars such as Tony Bennett view the Cecchetti Method as rooted in the past, with only some potential benefits for ballet dancers today. Bennett (2007:20) states:

> … ballet has changed remarkably since the 1920's, and Cecchetti's teaching was likely to have been rooted in an even earlier romantic style from his native Italy. In addition, surely we have been able to develop more effective teaching practices than Cecchetti's over the intervening years!

Ballet has indeed changed remarkably from the early 1900s, having in some ways become more athletic, with dancers being driven to push even beyond anatomical limits. Recently, there is a return to the so-called 'old-fashioned' ways of dancing, that promote physiologically and functionally sound ways of moving, emphasising the balance of artistry and technical prowess. Geraldine Morris (2022:17), for instance, argues that traditional ballet pedagogy has many benefits for today's dancers. She writes:

> … incorporating the values of the past into the classrooms of the present … would provide a better understanding of ballet and break the hold that the present-day ballet community has on values and ideals. It could also give dancers more choice, more agency and lead too to a better understanding of the past; an embodiment of history, demonstrated through its earlier classes and choreography.

The fact that, according to Morris, practising according to the *danse d'école* of earlier pedagogues leads not only to a disruption in idealistic aesthetics, but also to enhanced agency for the dancer, confirms the continued relevance of ballet methods such as Cecchetti's.

As demonstrated in this study, Cecchetti's Method is not informed by Romantic ballet alone. His work was as much influenced by Modernism as it was by Romanticism. Chapter Two discussed how the Italians were at the forefront of the unique virtuosity and strength that took over ballet at the turn of the century. Cecchetti's involvement with the *Ballets Russes* is also a demonstrable indication of his role in the launch of Modern ballet. It can be argued that it was precisely his Method, his philosophy and principles which aided dancers in achieving the level of dance demanded by Modern virtuosic choreography. Cecchetti also worked alongside some of the avant-gardist composers, painters, musicians and other artists, and it is evident that they influenced one another reciprocally. Cecchetti's Method not only prepared dancers technically to perform any given choreography, but also equipped them stylistically with the artistic proficiency to dance any part or style, for instance the softness and elegance required in Romantic ballets and the dynamism required in Modern works. Glasstone (in Bennett 2007:21) comments on the perpetuity of Cecchetti's work: "… the exciting thing about so much of Cecchetti's work is the way it can and does transcend its time and its stylistic boundaries."

Raymond Luckens, another well-known Cecchetti teacher, states that "the method is based on universal principles[207] that transcend the specific stylistic boundaries of romantic, classical, neoclassical and even contemporary ballet" (in Bennett 2007:21). This study has emphasised that Cecchetti's Method was not a style but a means of training. Certainly, aesthetics change over time: a Cecchetti dancer did not look exactly the same in 1920 as a dancer trained in this Method looks today. These aesthetic changes have more to do with classical ballet's overall aesthetic and technical transformation and less to do with the Method itself[208].

It is my argument that, although many view the latest developments in the ballet industry as progressive, innovative and "more effective teaching practices than Cecchetti's", ballet dancers

[207] The term universal is potentially problematic. Here, 'universal' implies: shared by those belonging to the ballet community at large.
[208] As dancers became, for instance, more flexible, so too did dancers studying the Cecchetti Method today. Similarly, as the use of turnout increased, so did the use of turnout by Cecchetti dancers. This does not take away from the Method nor from its principles or benefits – Cecchetti trained dancers are as equally focused on technical and artistic aspects as they were a hundred years ago.

and teachers continue to return to Cecchetti's Method – a safe, anatomically sound practice of ballet, focused on bringing out the potential in any aspiring dancer.

The present ballet scene consists of the past juxtaposed to the future, and despite individual attempts at new works and adaptations, there seems to be a universal need to hold on to and preserve the past. Ongoing efforts for progress and innovation often prove retrospective rather than inventive. The concept of making things new has been superseded; "[i]n dance as in so much else, we have entered an age of retrospective (Homans 2010:541). Homans (2010:542) states that:

> The current generation of dancers and choreographers faces a more difficult situation. They are far removed from the nineteenth century and know it only secondhand. Hence, perhaps, their anxiety to preserve the past, as if the tradition were at risk of ebbing away. There is a palpable desire to hold on: slippage and erosion are acutely felt and much discussed today. The result, however, is ironic: the world's major ballet companies—companies that built their reputations on new work—have now become museums for the old. The ubiquitous presence of reconstructors, notators, and directors—ballet's curators and conservators—rather than choreographers is further evidence of this obsession with preservation.

The same could be said for the Cecchetti Method. People seem to always return to and continue the traditions and principles of the past. As French writer, Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr once wrote, *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose* – "the more things change, the more they stay the same" (1849). It could be argued that some of the 'innovations' in the ballet world are nothing new, but rediscovered traditions that have been lost over time.

The pedagogy and training of classical ballet has been described by some as unfulfilling to the individual, as it is rooted in authoritarianism. Berg, for instance, states that the 'recent' "application of somatic knowledge to ballet pedagogy", has "shifted the power dynamic between teacher and student to foster the students' internal authority, which allowed them autonomy and subsequently reduced the autocratic and often authoritarian teaching practices present in traditional ballet class" (2017:148).

By contrast, it has been argued by scholars such as Eddy, Mangione and Bennett that dance pedagogy and somatics have long been integrated. The holistic view of the body in somatics is related to Cecchetti's Method, which also emphasises the whole body and the neuromuscular awareness Cecchetti ingrained in his dancers through his Method. Bennett (2007:28) not only

states that the Cecchetti Method is a somatic pedagogic practice, but also that the Method has contemporary relevance:

> I am interested in the rise in various 'somatic' practices in much dance teaching (particularly in contemporary dance), which emphasise approaching the body as a whole, and investigating its connections in movement. The analysis I have presented here suggests that certain principles of Cecchetti's technique are doing the same thing. I suggest, therefore, that this is an area in which the study of Cecchetti's principles can make a real contribution to teaching of ballet in line with contemporary ideas about dance training.

Berg also states that it is a new approach to teach students to be able to "self-correct in an informed way that would facilitate safe dance practices" (2017:151).

As demonstrated in this study, this was also the main goal for Cecchetti a hundred years ago: for the dancer to "develop from within out" and become completely self-reliant. Van Schoor (2023) also argues for the importance of developing the individual as opposed to the teacher simply imposing their own ways onto the student: "I think you have failed as a teacher if you are trying to make every student a clone of yourself". Ballet pedagogy and training has long been a collaborative process. This allows for the student's autonomy and agency, for it requires the agency of the individual to actively engage their mind and body in the learning process and practice of classical ballet. The manifestation of the dancer's agency and knowledge is what enables them someday to translate this knowledge onto a new generation of dancers. This process has occurred successfully over the last century, as the Cecchetti Method continues to be taught and learned today.

This brings us back to the epistemic conceptualisation of dance, as it deals with the notion of body knowledge. Corresponding with Wendrich's apprenticeship and Shusterman's somaesthetics, Praviainen's argument that dancers' knowledge has to do with "knowing in and through the body" (2002:13) was discussed in Chapter Four. It is the somatically approached, multi-dimensional body, within the process of apprenticeship, which contains this knowledge; it is not merely the knowledge of movement but also of the stylistic interpretations, aesthetic appreciation and artistic response, intention and physical requirement of such movements, as well as philosophy – or what could be called the culture of classical ballet. To recall Fraleigh's explanation discussed in Chapter Four, dance is a form of (self-)knowledge, which not only involves the kinesthetic intelligence of skilful dancers, but also the dancers' knowing of "how

to express the aesthetic intent of the movement and how to create aesthetic movement imagery" (in Parviainen 2002:14).

Dancers' knowledge is not only acquired bodily knowledge through practice, but a combination of such embodied knowledge and self-knowledge which is acquired through experience. Such knowledge acquisition further manifests the individual's agency, providing them with knowledge gained through experience. In this sense the body not only engages in processes of acquiring, embodying, transferring and preserving knowledge but it also engages in processes of self-fashioning, self-expression and self-fulfilment, enabling the individual to manifest their agency in doing so (Shusterman 2012).

6.2 Concluding Remarks

In this study I attempted to demonstrate how the human body acts as an archive, through processes of learning and embodying knowledge. Furthermore, I demonstrated how this body-as-archive can perform this knowledge and transfer it onto other bodies, thereby engaging in the process of preserving knowledge. In this process the body can be said to hold knowledge of the past, containing and performing history in the present. In this way, the body transgresses multiple boundaries that are upheld and enforced in dominant discourse and hegemonic practices of documentation.

As demonstrated through my observations, traditions and principles of the past continue to exist and form the foundations of ballet technique in the present. This was approached and demonstrated using Mauss and Spatz's concepts of technique. Classical ballet technique has endured, despite aesthetic changes. Spatz's argument for the transmissibility of technique substantiates this perpetuation thereof: "technique is transmissible; it moves across time and space" (2015:30). Mauss's suggestion that technique and the transmission thereof cannot occur without tradition (1973:75) emphasises the relevance of keeping traditions alive within practices. Classical ballet seems to be always rooted in history and tradition, yet it has the ability to respond to change and adjust, without discarding its fundamental principles. This, I argued, is the true definition of modernity; the embrace of beneficial advancements, without letting go of traditions and principles. This is one of the ways in which the Cecchetti Method demonstrates a disruption of binary thinking, with its community of dancers and teachers

bridging the gap between past and present, between tradition and (Western) modernity[209]. This affirms Taylor's remarks used in Chapter One, in the opening argument for this study: that the past should be considered as both chronological and vertical, "as a different form of storage of what's already here" (2006:83). Through performance it can be reactivated in search of solutions for our own time.

Despite possible criticism that the Cecchetti Method is rigid and doesn't allow for individuation, I have demonstrated the purpose and benefit behind the exactness of the Method, as well as the areas where individuation is freely allowed, such as with the dancer's artistic response and interpretation of musical inflections which are reflected in movement and artistry. This highlighted how the Cecchetti Method epitomises the simultaneous perpetuation of tradition/history and its openness to change, especially aesthetically, as dancers artistically respond to the exercises, music and movements of the Method. I also revealed the agency and autonomy of the student in the process of apprenticeship and Cecchetti's emphasis on the self-sufficiency of the student which situates the Cecchetti Method in the field of somatics and counter-hegemonic thought, where the body is viewed as a multi-dimensional agentic entity.

The material documentation of the Method is successful in translating the exercises, but there is a need for a ballet master, who embodies the principles, qualities, styles, musicality, dynamics and other nuances of these exercises and of this Method to fully transfer Cecchetti's work and philosophy to the next person. In other words, although *The Manual* provides a rich account of Cecchetti's work and methodology, we must acknowledge dance pedagogues and dancers across the globe, who by interacting with the work actively participate in the archival process through embodiment. It is through the integration of both material archive and dancers as active agents that the Cecchetti Method is preserved. It is through *apprenticeship* between student and teacher that the Method is transferred, embodied and sustained.

This study demonstrates how the body, from a somatic and counter-hegemonic perspective, works as a multi-dimensional entity, able to engage in processes of knowledge acquisition, embodiment, transference – through materialisation, or demonstration – and preservation. The multi-dimensional body becomes a site of resistance[210], as it defies the binaries and boundaries

[209] I use the term 'modernity' here as standing in opposition to tradition, and not to refer to the modern era. Goga speaks of modernity as historical era, preceding postmodernity. It is necessary to note that my use of 'modernity' here refers to the ongoing change which continues in postmodernity.
[210] A shared idea by scholars such as Mauss (technique), Butler (performativity), Bourdieu (habitus), Shusterman (somaesthetics), among others (Spatz 2015:50).

maintained in dominant discourse. Performance, embodiment and somaesthetics emphasise the significance of the body, but more specifically the agency of the embodied and sentient human subject (Budziak *et al* 2017:3). The outcome of somatic approaches to a holistic body and the recognition of the mind-body connection, is a narrowing in the gap between dichotomous notions such as physicality and spirituality, body and mind, and tangibility and intangibility, which so often rank arts and culture in terms of their relation to materiality. As Budziak *et al* (2017:3) argue, such recognition has ameliorative effects which both liberate the self from discursive paradigms and empower the embodied human subject to transform these paradigms. The holistic body is at the core of the struggle to narrow and close the institutional gap, or rather gaps, alluded to throughout my argument. Because the body can resist its discursive confinement, the human subject is able to manifest their agency. Simultaneously, the body has the ability not only to transgress the boundary between body and mind, but also to translate the embodied knowledge obtained from this mind-body learning experience into visual meaning, through bodily performance, and thereby engage in intricate archival practices which preserve valuable knowledge of the past. Mauss and Bourdieu's concept of habitus further emphasises the disruption of dominant thinking by clearly emphasising the relevance and importance of human agency within the process of acquiring body knowledge. This study, as mentioned, relied on Mauss's emphasis on tradition as key characteristic of technique, to demonstrate the transmission of knowledge and tradition, through the learning of technique.

The body, in this sense, becomes a primary means for archiving and holding knowledge, opposing hegemonic forms of documenting and archiving. This acknowledgement is especially necessary for knowledge systems that are intangible, such as the performing arts. These forms are as much visual in their performance as they are fleeting. As a result, despite the art's aesthetic value, it is not simply defined by its visuality; another way in which we counter dominant thoughts surrounding aesthetics and aesthetic-based value that have long governed the hierarchies of the arts. Emphasising only the aesthetic aspect of ballet would deny the life and existence of the art once it vanishes in performance. In other words, if the art were to suspend at the moment of its invisibility, its physicality, its performance, there would be a denial of life and existence to the message behind the movements, and thus the meaning of dance as medium for embodying and expressing would be denied. It is my argument that dance actually captures the two ends of a number of dichotomies; it is both art and science, both physical and spiritual, both visible and invisible or tangible and intangible. Dance, as a form of artistic expression and physical activity or bodily practice, epitomises the coexistence of the

multiple dimensions of human experience. Thus, in more complex terms the body can present itself as a site of resistance, a site of embodiment, a site of knowledge transfer, a site of materialisation, a site of artistic expression, an archival site, a site of transformation and evolution[211].

This counter-hegemonic perspective acknowledges the interconnectedness of bodily elements and culture. Such an approach recognises the ways in which individuals engage with and manifest their agency as they themselves play the significant role of embodying, transferring and preserving the past into the present. In the case of dance as subject of preservation, individuals come to embody, transfer and preserve the skills, aesthetics, method, principles, technique, nuances and overall essence of that specific dance form. As such, it could be argued that individuals, societies, or groups engage in enriching processes of self-fashioning, self-expression, and self-fulfilment as they are able to simultaneously embody the past, embrace the future, evolve with time, and manifest their agency. Fraser McNeill (2011:158) explains that "[p]erformance thus constitutes the search for an autonomous social and political sphere, a created space able to connect notions of the past and the present, and through which new ideas are spun and contested". There is a great deal of possibilities for discourse on arts and cultural heritage, its preservation, and the significance of the body in this archival process, that remain buried underneath the dichotomies of the dominant discourse. Textual and extra-textual worlds, tangible and intangible worlds, physical and spiritual worlds, are in fact intimately connected. Identifying that these realms are not binary oppositions but rather intricately intertwined is integral to the interpretation of human behaviour and understanding the archival significance of the human body. Classical ballet today, its technique, principles and traditions, and the preservation thereof remain at risk with the ever-evolving aesthetics and tastes of the constantly progressing postmodern world.

This study proposes the idea of a conversation between bodies – both verbal and non-verbal – as an archival practice. The type of knowledge in ballet – bodily, mental and cultural – forms part of non-linguistic, practical or experiential knowledge acquisition. I demonstrated that Wendrich's *apprenticeship* style of learning and teaching best describes the way in which dancers and dance teachers work together to engage in processes of learning, teaching and

[211] The transformations that occur form part of the concept of modernity as I have explained earlier. It does not imply a detachment from tradition or doing away with the past. It is the simultaneous perpetuation of tradition alongside the adoption of beneficial advancements in the present, with a keen eye always on the future and where one is headed.

knowledge transference. Cecchetti's emphasis on visual learning and teaching, as well as his integrated approach to the study of ballet, which involves the physical, mental, theoretical and emotional involvement of the individual, demonstrated the somatic underpinnings of the Method and of classical ballet. The body was demonstrated as an archive in itself, and as part of a larger archive which consists of many bodies and some material archives, which integrate effectively to preserve classical ballet.

While tracing the history of classical ballet, I demonstrated how the aesthetic of the art form is largely informed by the era and its accompanying art movements. In terms of style and aesthetics, "[t]he time in which a work of art was made has everything to do with the way it looks" (De la Croix et al 1991:3). That is to say, the aesthetic or style of a work of art "is a function of its historical period" (De la Croix et al 1991:3). The same is true for classical ballet, which has, since its inception, been responsive to its environment and era. While responding and adapting to its changing environment, classical ballet has also preserved certain characteristics of the earlier eras, culminating in a generous art form which consists of, and portrays, the past and the present at once.

Although the dance itself, as it is performed, vanishes, the technique and body knowledge remain within the dancer's body, enabling them to perform it once again. Visually, it is fleeting, but embodied it endures, and this is how the art of dance continues to exist over time. I opened this paper with a quote that describes the visual experience of dance and the near impossibility to capture this experience:

> Dancing exists at a perpetual vanishing point. At the moment of its creation it is gone. All of a dancer's years of training in the studio, all the choreographer's planning, the rehearsals, the coordination of designers, composers, and technicians, the raising of money and the gathering together of an audience, all these are only a preparation for an event that disappears in the very act of materializing. No other art is so hard to catch, so impossible to hold (Siegel 1972:1 in Lepecki 2006:125).

What became evident throughout my study is both the truth and limitation of this statement. It is true in that, visually, we cannot seem to capture dance in all its authenticity, but also offers a limited view on dance, since the art form is in fact held, quite firmly, within the body and endures, in this way, through time and space. The experience of dance is made visible and existent, only momentarily, to the eyes of our spectators for aesthetic appreciation – as we perform history, present and future, at once – but continues to exist within our bodies. This is where dance lives eternally.

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