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Releases Techniques and Contact Improvisation in Contemporary Dance: A Somatic Approach

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Abstract

Since the beginning of the 20th century new theories and practices, have paved new paths to a phenomenological approach to dance, reuniting body and mind. Release techniques and Contact improvisation are two of the most important ones among these practices and are connected or influenced from the theory and practices of Somatics. Somatics, approach the body as a whole, featuring dynamics and leading participators to experience an integral and continuously changeable body, unpredictable and open to experience. Dance artists having been trained with Somatics and having questioned dance as an artform, researched for new tools. They put emphasis on the actual dancer, considered the body as a thinking and embodied process, thus creating a new chapter, that of self improvisation. Release technique uses images to enrich dancer's availability in the moment of dance and Contact improvisation uses the laws of nature, as the dancer is always connected with the context he acts. The aim of this study lies in the very proof of the Release techniques and Contact improvisation's efficiency, as well as their relationship with Somatics, so as to promote the rethinking of the contemporary dance-training status quo and to shift the attention onto experiential, embodied knowledge, as this cannot always be taken for granded. Using the bibliographic review as our methodological procedure we cocluded that Release techniques and Contact improvisation have been strongly influenced by Somatics and they can promote the dancers' quality and potency of movement, enabling dancers to experience the delicate qualities and nuances of movement, creating a new approach in dance education field.

Key words: embodiment, flow, Paxton