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From: Susan Bauer
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Research and curriculum goals

Travel to Turkey enabled me to compare and contrast choreographic developments of Turkish choreographers since 1990 (and 1997, 2000).

This work contributes to my current sabbatical project. The intent of this sabbatical is to design movement lab experiences that the pedestrian mover, non-dancer and dancer, finds accessible, informative and revealing of held cultural values and beliefs. This sabbatical project furthers my work in developing an educational model to increase cross-cultural sensitivity through movement analysis and concert dance. Turkey is my primary cross-cultural comparison with American concert dance and culturally patterned movements.

Travel to and research in Turkey in the middle of my sabbatical gave me time to raise questions and areas for further observation before departing for Turkey. Upon my return I have time to reflect on conversations, to analyze dance material, and to continue developing the movement lab experiences and cross-cultural connections.

Abstract

Turkish and Western choreographers and researchers continue to ask themselves what makes Turkish concert dance Turkish. The question is important because most Turkish modern dancers and choreographers have studied extensively in and been influenced by dance in America and Europe. Choreographers create concert dance pieces based on their experiences in community; hence, the movement vocabulary and the themes of their concert dance pieces often reflect the dancer/choreographer's cultural values and traditions. As Professor Arzu Ozturkmen states in her article "Dance and Identity in Turkey" in *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, "Domestic ballet and modern dance companies may choose their themes from traditional tales and legends, but they have not developed an original theme emanating from contemporary Turkish life." (Vol. 6, p. 817). This is perhaps beginning to change. Professor Ozturkmen cited several developments. First is the success Turkey has had in Eurovision competition and the hosting of several major sports venues. Turkey seems to be developing self-confidence in its

own work without the need of drawing on material from Euro-Western sources. There also is a greater acceptance of the traditional folk dance forms across socioeconomic classes. Drawing on movement material and bodily patterns from the various folk dances could begin to provide more movement choices and influence ways in which dancers move. There is also a greater sense of openness to discuss and present political and social issues in dance pieces creating a more contemporary voice in vocabulary and themes. The modern dance community also is just beginning to grow large enough to support itself and generate creative energies from within Turkey.

Further analysis of notes from conversations with the modern dance community (choreographers, dancers, teachers and administrators) and analysis of observed concert dance pieces will articulate and illustrate the developments seen in the last fifteen years. Areas for further development will also be explored.

Report Items:

1. Interviewed several generations of modern dance choreographers. Turkey's modern dance development is relatively new as first generation choreographers are still creating work and teaching. Their students and students' students are the second and third generation currently creating and teaching. I was interested in what their "lineage" was as choreographers, what they felt was important in their own work and motivated them, and what their dreams were for modern dance in Turkey. I interviewed primarily Istanbul choreographers and dancers.

2. Observation from early May through the end of June. (1) Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University Modern Dance Program student work both undergraduate and graduate. I was also invited to teach a series of classes for the students that enabled me to see their creative response to material. (2) Cihangir Neighborhood Festival took place one weekend; dance pieces presented were site-specific structured improvisations, one by university students, one by a professional choreographer, and one was a community based and developed piece. (3) Barefoot Company, one of Istanbul's young professional dance companies, developed a two-week series of classes, seminars, video showings and performances mid-June.

3. Reflections: For the last fifteen years I have been the "outsider" contributing my own teaching material and observations to first and second generation Turkish choreographers. It was satisfying to see that many of the dancers I worked with in 1990-91, 1992 and 1997 are those who influenced the third generation of choreographers and continue to develop and influence modern dance in Turkey. As I absorb what I experienced and observed, there are differences between each generation's use of movement vocabulary and choice of movement themes. I have video footage of each generation and intend to use this footage to compare and contrast vocabulary and themes. From my outsider perspective I was also began to articulate developments, current needs and directions for future development. Further writing and analysis will clarify thoughts.

Dissemination of Project/Sabbatical materials

The primary means of dissemination is the utilization of the cross cultural analysis of movement vocabulary and themes of concert dance pieces in my own classes, Movement and Dance as Cultural Expression, Movement Analysis, Movement for the Performing Artist, General Education First Year Writing related to the artistic perspective, and Interdisciplinary Fine Arts courses. Aspects of the vocabulary and choreographic themes will also be incorporated into the movement lab experiences being developed as part of the educational model to increase cross-cultural sensitivity through movement analysis and concert dance. Because St. Olaf is a liberal arts institution my classes reach students majoring in a broad spectrum of disciplines.

Connections with movement and various disciplines is encouraged and developed. I return from sabbatical February of 2006 and am scheduled to teach Movement Analysis, First Year Writing focused on the Artistic Perspective, and two Interdisciplinary Fine Arts major courses. It is important to note that movement material and concert dance is always placed in historical, political, social and religious context, thereby introducing students to Turkey and its many facets.

The second means of dissemination will be through the presentation in various conference venues. (a) The modern dance community in Istanbul expressed interest in my analysis and reflections. Turkish writers writing about dance in Turkey is not a common occurrence, although it is beginning to happen. I plan to return to Istanbul in early December for a Dance Festival sponsored by the International Istanbul Theater Festival. I will work with the dance community again at this time, presenting my findings and teaching some classes. (b) The World Dance Alliance meets in July of 2006; a proposal to present will be submitted prior to the September 15th deadline.

If you need further information or have questions regarding this report, please email me (bauers@stolaf.edu). Thank you very much for the opportunity to return to Turkey and gather material for my sabbatical project.

Sincerely,
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*Many thanks!
Susan*