

**A Personal Journey into Ohad Naharin's Gaga Technique:
Discovering Pedagogical Applications for Engaging the Performer**

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Introduction

My first experience with Gaga technique occurred whilst completing my Masters degree at London Contemporary Dance School in 2010 through classes taken with Chisato Ohno. Initially, I was thrown by the complexity and specifics of the commands I was to respond to in this wholly improvised class. Coupled with my developing ability to experiment with abstract ideas without worrying about their acceptance or correctness, this made for an uncomfortable and unsettling initial experience. I was, however, captured by the way Ohno moved: full of sensitivity, articulation and dynamic versatility. Perseverance gradually led me to find a deep enjoyment of this person-centred, freeing, and expressive way of moving. I therefore continued to attend Gaga classes regularly while also participating in a week long training intensive in Belgium with various teachers in Spring 2013.

Over time, the technique changed the way I viewed and enjoyed my dancing body. I gained a heightened, ever-expanding awareness and sensitivity in my physicality, being aware of the sheer detail of form found within my three dimensional surfaces and the corresponding possibility for movement, both in isolate body parts and as a whole body expression. I was able to increase the amount of physical information observed and acted on at any one time, becoming overwhelmed and overjoyed by my physical facility

as I expanded my movement range away from habitual patterns. My body transformed from an object to be manipulated and observed to a luxurious playground for research and enjoyment. Becoming validated and empowered as a creative originator of movement, I was able to begin unlocking expressive potential stemming from my own valued soul without an externally imposed agenda. The overriding purpose of Gaga was to ‘take pleasure’ (“Gaga Technique”, n.d.) and this action I found in abundance.

From these rich experiences, I have become increasingly convinced that particular aspects of the technique strongly link to cultivating performance and could have further relevance for wider settings, both as a performer and teacher. This article will seek to outline Gaga technique in more detail, providing context for the discussion about its relevance to performance training. It will then propose specific classifications of the Gaga technique’s performative elements and draw out the pedagogical possibilities that they offer. To conclude, these propositions will be situated within a wider discussion around performance training in general and specifically within higher education, proposing its importance and potential applications for both teachers and performers. I hope that articulating my personal experience through the Gaga lens will provide insight and stimulus for others to begin, continue, and deepen their own research into how the skills of an engaging performer can be acquired and developed in themselves and others.

Gaga technique

Gaga technique was pioneered by Israeli choreographer Ohad Naharin (b.1952). After beginning his dance training at 22 years of age with Batsheva Dance Company, he went on to perform internationally with The Martha

Graham Dance Company, Maurice Béjart, and Bat-Dor Dance Company (“Ohad Naharin”, n.d.). In 1990, Naharin was appointed Artistic Director of Batsheva Dance Company and has since created over 20 works. Following a devastating back injury in his twenties, however, he embarked on a period of self-rehabilitation which led him to focus on discovering how his injured body could move more efficiently and how he might develop unused potential in his body parts (Holmes, 2007, 136), thus pioneering Gaga technique.

Gaga is described as “an evolving language of movement research” (Duke, Duke & Ohno, 2011) where dancers are encouraged to discover and reconnect through individual and honest investigations of how their body can move (Galili, 2008).

Gaga deepens dancers’ awareness of physical sensations, expands their palette of available movement options, enhances their ability to modulate their energy and engage their explosive power, and enriches their movement quality with a wide range of textures. (“Gaga Technique”, n.d.)

Classes last around an hour and fifteen minutes and contain non-stop movement, the majority of which is guided improvisation. The dancers are fed with language that leads them through a wide range of images and cues that provoke investigation into different places in their body anatomy, intentional impulse, spatial relationships, physical sensations, textural awareness, and energetic possibilities. Examples of these cues include: feeling air bubbles in water moving through the joints, pulling the bones away from the flesh, and catching skin surfaces in the light. Each image is developed with a continuity of instructions, providing information to open the

participant to research the quality, intention, effort, size, space, texture, form, and the involvement of different body parts, layering on areas for exploration, stimulating playfulness, and imagination to occur.

Sometimes more traditional dance sequences are also interspersed, such as the performance of rond de jambe, plié, and spinal roll downs. These movements continued to explore the previous images but with the addition of set form and group timing. The tempo of the class varies from quietly locating subtle internal movement to climaxes of effort, energy, exaggeration, and use of travel in space and locomotion. Gaga teachers stand at the centre of the space with the dancers gathered around, creating a leveled hierarchy of importance, with the teacher as a guide rather than a model to be replicated. The instructor moves with the dancers throughout and responds to their needs, sensing what cues will be helpful to guide the dancers to develop their awareness and movement palette. Each student is viewed as his or her own teacher and is urged never to stop moving; instead, the student is encouraged to regulate the percentage of working and movement choice according to each individual and current situation, following the stimulus in whatever way is doable and interesting. Mirrors are forbidden, with subjective, internal experience privileged; though, having a sense of external form is often referenced. Dancers are encouraged to create as they move, show different behaviors, and take pleasure in moving. This individual act of creation allows for new movement possibilities beyond held and habitual patterns.

Experience with Gaga technique triggered a significant shift in my own approach to performance preparation as a dancer, also throwing into

question how I approached performance within my pedagogical practice. The underpinnings of Gaga technique were now of utmost importance to my own experience and being, shifting my priorities and concerns as a dance artist and teacher. The sharing of my own discoveries and the potentials I found within those discoveries is the focus of this article.

Proposed pedagogical possibilities for improving performance

I propose that the movement method developed by Naharin offers rich training and pedagogical applications within a variety of settings where the development of performance training is a focus. The following section illustrates how the Gaga method and approach cultivates specific performance aspects. Specifically, I focus on how the Gaga technique increases awareness and articulation within the body while further developing expressive range and individual and personal engagement with the material one is performing. Within each characteristic presented, the practical use demonstrated within Gaga technique will be described in relation to the benefits I discovered for the performer.

Bringing awareness: specificity and sensitivity/refinement

Within the improvisatory framework of Gaga technique, there is much time given for individual performers to explore and refine their perception and awareness of their own physicality and surrounding environment. Throughout the sessions, the teacher continually layers this perceptual information while providing cues for how this exploration can bring increasing awareness to the movement possibilities in differing places of the body. The dancers are “turning on the volume of listening to our body” (“Gaga Technique”, n.d.), focusing on observing and becoming aware of physicality and all its details

from an internal, experiential perspective.

There are three key ways in which this awareness of movement possibility and refinement is developed in relation to places in the body and physical anatomy. The first is an emphasis on places in the body in relation to their movement range with a constant identification of 'micro-movements' and 'small places.' In one class for example, Ohno spent approximately fifteen minutes guiding the dancers' movement response to the stimulus of brushing a huge imaginary rubber ball on all skin surfaces. She included descriptions of every body detail, such as the top pad of the right index finger and the flesh on the inside of the left knee. When working in the Gaga method, specificity and detail is refined to the utmost, thus eliminating broad and perhaps vague references to body parts. Instead, Gaga facilitates the student's exploration of deep precision into each micro movement and shift.

A second important aspect of Gaga underlying my pedagogical interests includes how images and cues bring awareness to the often untapped possibilities within the range of movement articulation in specific body parts. For example, the image of floating the heart in a current of water is used to bring a softening to the chest and mobility to the ribcage and thoracic spinal vertebrae. This exploration can further lead the student to find subtle degrees of lateral flexion, extension, flexion, and rotation within each vertebra. Therefore, discovery of these nuanced movement possibilities can be made by the student through his or her own sense of the provided imagery: Each body provides new insights into movement rather than the entire class trying to imitate one movement phrase supplied by the instructor.

A third key element I discovered is also concerned with specificity and

refinement, but references more specifically spatial relationships or becoming aware of the distances between body parts and opportunities for moving away, towards, and around. From my experience working in Gaga, this brought to my awareness ways in which my movement patterning had become habitual, limiting my sensitivity and possibilities as a performer. This was most poignant when asked to explore the distance away, towards, and around the body of the asymmetrical elbow joints. In this process of discovery, I realised my propensity to maintain a middle, static, and frontal spatial distance. This realization emerging from my own insight, rather than one emphasized through an instructor, offered new ways for me to work choreographically and in performance. As a result of these three methods raised within the Gaga class, body image and movement possibilities emerging from the exploration of the each dancer's body become increasingly detailed with sensitivity and awareness redefined and developed. In summary, each performer develops her or his own path of discovery through the potential of the individual body and imagination.

In addition to the above, Gaga technique also focuses on the specificity and refinement of the imagination of physical sensations, that is, precision and particularity about the quality and dynamic of movements emerging from a response to provided imagery. Examples of this from the Gaga intensive in Belgium (2013) include an internal earthquake gradually coming to the surface, being in a cold shower, yawning the body, licking the surrounding air with the skin, and allowing bubbles to pass through the dancer's body. Ohno's instructions use images to guide the dancers to spend time improvising and refining the quality of a particular idea within one specific body part. This is

then gradually transferred to multiple places in the body and finally to the body moving as a whole, with every body part consciously and decisively involved in expressing the particular idea.

In undertaking refinement of each concept, Gaga encourages the individual to also perceive subtle variations and details within the qualities or textural features in movement. Naharin describes how Gaga explores the space between two extremes (“Gaga Technique”, n.d.); for example, how a heavy and light movement quality results in finding diverse movement responses. In this exploration, the aim is to increase awareness of the range of possibilities by then actively perceiving and then clarifying through movement the differences between similar and different qualities. To facilitate this process, Gaga’s improvisatory form, sense of expanded time, and gradual layering of cues is key. The dancer is given the gift of enough time to explore and research with complete focus in order to discover and refine a specific idea and its resulting movement. This action happens away from any aesthetic consideration imposed by the instructor.

For performance training, this ability to increase range of movement potential is vital, allowing performers to have greater expressive possibilities in which image and movement are linked. Ruthy Alon (1996) describes this process by emphasizing that, “you increase your competence only when you look for those small details which make all the difference in quality” (26). Dance artist Rebecca Yates reaffirmed Alon’s summary during an informal conversation with the author when she shared how the effort scale used in Gaga classes helped her to cultivate the two extremes of high energetic muscle use and minimum effort, and made her better able to access the

whole range in between (personal communication, August 20, 2011).

Challenging habit and opening possibilities

This notion of heightened awareness and articulate ability means the performer will have a wider range of choice when deciding how to move both physically and dynamically. The first impact of this is that the dancer is encouraged to “change their movement habits by finding new ones” (“Gaga Technique”, n.d.). As the dancers are drawn to explore their dynamic and anatomical range using the above cues, their habitual movement patterns and preferences are revealed with an awareness also enlivened about the possibilities of movements that are new, unfamiliar, and remain relatively un-researched. This enables the dancers to then know where they are limiting their physical and expressive capabilities and how to extend these limitations. For example, an instruction given by Ohno to “imagine that somebody is watching you from below” (personal communication, March 10, 2012) changed my use of the lower limbs, bringing greater articulation and awareness. As a result of this exploration, I became aware of my habitual avoidance of three movement patterns: the articulation of the pelvis on top of the hip sockets, the rotation of the spine, and, finally, the use of the full range of the lower limb joints. The instruction helped me to recognise my habits and equipped me with the resources I needed to begin expanding my movement into more unfamiliar and creative territory. Alon (1996) expresses that a lack of movement options can inhibit performance when she discusses how habits aid and limit us. She states how the development of habits mean . . .

we do not have to waste time and energy preparing novel responses to the multitude of changing circumstances, habits serve

us well and we become hooked on them. But the trade-off is that we forsake our rich capacity for creativity . . . closing off access to refinement, sensitivity and diversity.’ (xvii)

Gaga technique, therefore, offers a means by which habitual patterns can be brought into awareness and then explored in order to open new possibilities and capabilities for the performer’s greater expressive range.

Secondly, having greater possibilities for movement and dynamics at their disposal will help heighten the performer’s ability to engage and remain interested in their material as they are able to see it from numerous angles and colour it with greater diversity and difference. This resulting engagement will then transfer to a watching audience. Pawit Mahasarinand (2007) describes that Gaga enables the performer to develop multidimensional ways of movement, with performers accessing an ever-expanding range of physicality and increasing their palette of available movement options. Naharin speaks of the enriched movement quality, energetic and textural range, that Gaga technique cultivates, increasing movement choice for performers and connecting to a sense of endless possibilities.

The Gaga priority of expanding movement range is useful for performers as it can assist them to continuously engage with set material, thus equipping them with resources and ability to stay creative despite repetition. With the tools that Gaga provides, the performers have multiple methods for noticing and exploring, keeping the material original and interesting to them and the audience as this curiosity and expressivity with the body translates to those watching. A performer could, for example, notice the micro movements of a particular body part through space, the distances

towards, away, and around the body or pathways through their kinesthetic sphere. Gaga technique encourages performers to expand their physical possibilities and continually be creative and original with their bodies instead of working within entrenched ways of moving. Deborah Friedes Galili (2009) suggests that: “All of Naharin's works are colored by a seemingly endless palette of vibrantly textured movement, which stretches from razor sharp to silky smooth with everything in between [...] bringing such captivating qualities to their performances.”

Availability to spontaneous interpretations

The technique also offers dancers opportunities to practice and improve on their phenomenological interpretation of the information observed. Alongside having a wide capacity for different movement options, the dancer is encouraged to continually, authentically, and spontaneously make decisions about how they will move, as they move. Gaga technique calls the dancer to “become available” (“Gaga technique”, n.d.). This is expressed as a state where throughout the class the dancer is aware and open to respond to events as they occur within each moment. This approach is not a conscious and deliberate action in which decisions are rationalised and planned. Instead, the performer focuses on availability in mind and body in order to, as Ohno describes, “let things happen” without exerting conscious thought or choice. As Hartley (1995) also describes, the dancers “act in spontaneous response to the ever-changing flow of life” (122). The dancer may notice particular things of interest within the body and choose to follow those preferences. The environmental events the dancer may respond to include visual or sensory stimulus from one’s surroundings such as music. This may

also include choosing to move in relation to others in the space or towards or away from a point of interest. Often during class improvisations, Ohno talks about using one's eyes to notice the surrounding environment and register stimuli as one moves, "letting ourselves be affected and influenced by them" (personal communication, September 12, 2012). Lastly, personal events are called to shape the movement choices made such as one's own emotional feelings, intentions and reactions.

This notion of 'being available' aims to create a state where performers are constantly open to change and therefore are authentically guided through a new and unpredictable journey every time they move, reacting to the particularities of that moment which will be different from any other. This availability encourages the performer to undertake impulsive decision making during performance which, it can be argued, is a key performance skill. Mark Reese clarifies when describing that: "in the reversible action we are capable of exercising choice at any moment ... every instant or stage of an act can be stopped, withheld from continuing, or reversed without any preliminary change of attitude and without effort" (as cited in Feldenkrais, 1985, p. xvi). For performers, it is important that they cultivate a sense of reversibility, the idea that every moment requires an impulsive decision to do something and anything could come from or go to anywhere else. This helps performers engage with their body afresh and will, hopefully engage relatable connections to their watching audience. Gaga's improvisatory structure is vital in allowing development of this performance skill, enabling a focus on responding and interpreting while moving, as opposed to performing predetermined choices. The dancers are constantly and phenomenologically

engaged in spontaneously creating movement based on observations for every moment of the class.

Subjectivity and individualism

Further, Gaga technique cultivates and celebrates the personality and involvement of individuality within movement improvisation, linking the soul and emotions to physical action. It takes a highly personal and subjective approach to performance skills and how they can be cultivated. Within Gaga technique, the individual is seen as the “inventor of movement” (Perron, 2006) and is empowered as the source of discovery. During a Gaga class, whilst all dancers receive the same stimulus, individual interpretation is encouraged with no right or wrong advocated. Knowledge and expression is viewed as being inside the body rather than imposed from an outside source. As Yaa’ra Moses explains, “keys to unlock what God gave you” (personal communication, May 4, 2013). Reese echoes this, saying “we all hold extraordinary capacities. All that we need is the proper method and a little application to unlock our full potential” (as cited in Feldenkrais, 1985, p. ix).

Within Gaga technique the dancers are encouraged to “take pleasure in moving” (“Gaga Technique”, n.d.) and enjoy their bodies and abilities of interpretation and creation as they perform, something which can then be recaptured as performers in order to create audience connection. Yaniv Abraham (personal communication, May 3, 2013) talks of dancers as ‘behavior artists’ with the ability to become anything at any time, exploring and creating a world of different fantasies that captures the audience and dancer. .

The implications for this subjective outlook are extensive and resonant, meaning that performance skills can be cultivated by the individual and further

nurtured and perpetuated by suggestive tools from a teacher. This approach contrasts with more traditional approaches within dance education and practice which often view knowledge as learnt from an external source or arising from watching and replicating another's correctly performed movement. This skill of imbuing movement with individual charisma, character and enjoyment becomes of utmost importance as the performer translates these internal feeling to the audience. Gaga technique focuses on each dancer as a sophisticated interpreter and creator giving much artistic license for connecting performance with personality, individualism, imagination, and enjoyment. Performers, therefore, have the freedom to observe, interpret, and indulge in whatever way they may choose: they are, therefore, constantly creating and practicing the act of giving their own artistic license to movement material.

In summary, the methods and priorities of Gaga technique are closely tailored to how dancers constantly practice and develop many essential performance elements. Perception of body image and dynamics is refined with detail in awareness increased. Dancers are empowered within their own creativity and expression, are constantly free to interpret as they wish, are practicing the momentary spontaneity of phenomenology, and are having a wide range of movement choices at their disposal with which to play. This skill of observing and reacting to stimulus is what is transmitted to the audience. It is a new way of thinking about and practicing performance. Within the Gaga practice, everyday human qualities become the basis of art rather than a predetermined aesthetic.

Potential pedagogical applications for performance training

Having experienced the benefits of Gaga technique myself I will now endeavor to situate this discussion around performance training before moving on to talk about pedagogical applications. I will begin by addressing more broadly what constitutes an engaging performer, seeking to further define and expand on the specific skills mentioned above and their importance to performance training. Further, I will suggest implications for dance training in higher education based on my own experiences. The notion of defining specific universal skills which constitute an engaging performance is unrealistic; however, I will seek briefly to identify some common features that I find deemed necessary within Gaga technique and then discuss how these might enhance dance training within a higher education setting.

In his investigations into performance in the context of dance theatre, Morgan Cloud (2008) proposes that an engaging performance is one where the “spectators are thoroughly immersed in the performance” (2). To achieve total absorption, the performer needs to be able to engage, excite, and interest the audience, journeying them into meaningful and lasting involvement with the concept they are portraying. Dancers, therefore, should have the ability and skills to physically communicate their movement ideas clearly.

Some have suggested that it is the clarity in intention and motivation for moving which engages an audience. When I participated with Hakeem Onibudo in *Delve Dance*, I found him constantly challenging the choreographer and performers to clarify. This clarification was posited as not the intention itself, but rather the concept of being genuine and intentional in

movement. It is the genuineness which then communicates to an audience (personal communication, August 20, 2012). This means it is vital for the dancer to have a sense of purpose about why they are moving, as a result of something being interesting, intriguing or necessitated by the performer's learned performance – it is the why behind the intentional performance.

Eric Franklin (1996) further describes that the audience “sees what you feel” (xiii) and therefore can decipher whether the dancer is genuinely connecting with the intention as opposed to ‘pretending’ and going through the motions of the repetitively rehearsed piece. Mark Morris (2001) states during the rehearsal and performance process with his company, “I encourage people not to lie” (as cited in Roseman, 61). The ability for the performers to find for themselves what constitutes a genuine performance becomes pivotal. It is about continually bringing to life the sense of discovery found or conjured first in rehearsal.

Pippa Buckingham (2005) proposes that by being genuine and authentic, the performer engages an audience in performed elements of common humanity, namely spontaneous decision making. Within real life, events happen as a reaction to external or internal stimulus, for example, crossing a road or having a conversation. Buckingham suggests that the primary way an audience can become absorbed in a dance work is by observing dancers who are able to capture this quality of everyday life decision making within their performance (Buckingham, 2005, 1). Edward Villella (2001) describes of his performances: “I couldn't differentiate between the dance, the dancer and the person” (as cited in Roseman, p. 8), demonstrating how performance is an extension of one's life as opposed to

changing to a different mode. Anna Halprin (2007) describes “the self that unfolds on stage – the routinized selves of every day actions, encounters, exchanges” (as cited in Ross, 161).

In replicating every day life, the performer therefore needs to be able whilst they are performing to constantly observe internal and external stimulus, allowing them to undertake spontaneous decision making as they react to these observations. In order to demonstrate these qualities a phenomenological mindset is key, that is, one is fully aware of each moment. As Linda Hartley (1995) states, this engaged moment is “the capacity to be both mindful of the present moment and willing to let go and change in the moment” (124). Dancers need to have the ability to observe what is happening within physicality, emotions, and environment, making choices in response, dissuading thoughts away from anything but each present moment. Mackrell describes this happening in the performance of dancer Laurie Booth (1992) when, “part of the unpredictability and excitement of his performances is the fact that he never hides that he may not know what is going to happen next, he is always thinking on his feet” (58).

It seems, therefore, that many dance artists and viewers of dance, sense a desire for the performer to create a moment to moment sense of unpredictability in which balance, dynamics, texture, direction, and spatial relationships are happening in the moment and in which the “skilled dancer can detect these subtle alignment/movement changes and adjust accordingly in both dynamic and static states” (Franklin, 2001, 40). Josette Féral (2009) observes when analysing movement training for actors that the pursuit of technique is “not to achieve virtuosity...but to become sensitive” (21). Lloyd

Newson further illustrates these performance needs when he states, “What is important in dance is people finding a way of movement that is specific to them and allows them to say what they want to say” (as cited in Mackrell, 1992, 59). Within the Gaga technique this skill of moment to moment observation also needs to be in relationship to the world and the external stimulus of people and place. These shifting relationships then bring the performance to life for the audience.

Ann Albright (2009) suggests that this ability of continual awareness is unusual and discouraged within our culture and dance practice; she states that “it is rare that I am committed to my current place” (144). Instead, reflecting on what has passed, planning for the future or continuing along a set pre-defined movement pathway, transcends our modern-day thinking. As Else Gindler further expresses, “we do everything in order to be finished with it” (as cited in Johnson, 1995, 06). Yet, it seems this ability to live within the unpredictable is precisely the quality performers must capture in order to engage the audience. Performer Karen Graham (2008) describes this process further when she states that, “my training ... was more about performance than about physical training. It was about opening myself as a person on stage and being available to be truly present in that moment of performing the movement that I had learned to do” (Bales and Netti-Fiol, 192).

Wendy Perron (2006), when reviewing the Batsheva Dance Company, who use Gaga as their primary training method, states that Naharin’s “dancers look [...] human, rather than highly polished due to their exploratory feeling and quality of vulnerability.” Sulcas (2008) expresses that the company has gained an international reputation for consistently

communicating moving and memorable performances. This suggests that Batsheva dancers are effectively and consistently able to engage an audience through the Gaga techniques as they reveal their humanity, immersing themselves in the moment to moment act of observing and interpreting as they perform.

When considering pedagogy, I propose, therefore, that performance training needs to include and even be heavily structured around the development of the skills emerging from the Gaga technique. Training should prioritise the practice of refined perception of kinesthesia within a relationship with the environment and a sense of an embodied self. Training should empower dancers to be able to react freely and creatively, finding each movement and moment afresh as though they are composing it for the first time. Space, time, ownership, and discussion needs to be brought to life within each moment as it captures the everyday quality of decision making.

Within higher education specifically, the development of performance skills is often viewed by students as a vital and necessary part of study with each student desiring to learn how to capture and excite an audience in performance. However, instead of vague commands often heard in a dance training situation, (e.g., show stage presence, ownership of the space; project and colour your movement, fill the space), could the specific and detailed practices found in the Gaga technique provide ways to for the student to grasp with real movement possibilities how these commands might emerge from their bodies?

Within my own training I found difficulty in deciphering these repeated phrases; I tended to mimic outside sources for what I thought these should

look like. The ability to be a good performer seemed like something I had to discover outside of my own body. It was not viewed as a subjective expression accessible to all with the right nurturing. The question, therefore, once again becomes whether the skills practiced in the Gaga technique might be one way to bring performance back to the subjective learning of each performer. This return to the performer's body is where engaging performance happens.

I believe Gaga technique offers some considerable tools to the debate of performance training within higher education. Two particular aspects are key to this belief: Firstly, the predominant foundation of improvisation as key to the dancers' own sense of space and time determining performance parameters rather than the needs of specific, set material. The detailed and gradual commands in Gaga raise students' awareness and their ability to notice what is going on in the body, environment and emotions, making them better able to communicate these actions to an audience. This awareness also assists new insights and playful possibilities within the performance of differing human textures; the students are in a constant state of exploration as they express and reveal their humanity. Secondly, complete ownership of their moving bodies is given over to the dancers who also have the right to take pleasure in moving.

Conclusion

This article has sprung from my own personal experience with Gaga technique and its benefits within my own performance training. I hope I have outlined how Gaga Technique can provide many useful tools for pursuing presence within performance and has opened further discussion for how this

training might reconsider current dance training methods. Gaga technique empowers the performer as the subjective source of performance, providing time and space for them to develop their physical specificity and interpretive range; it engages spontaneous and momentary creativity. After an initial encounter with Gaga technique in my own higher education training, its methods and approaches have transformed many parts of my practice in both teaching and performance, providing much joy and many rich physical explorations as a performer. As Franziska Boas describes, “the purpose is to perfect the instrument and prepare it so that we may play on it’ (as cited in Lindgren, 2012, p. 168). It is hoped that personal experience with Gaga technique will lead others to investigate its methods and consider the question of what makes an engaging performance through the lens of Gaga technique. This consideration will then hopefully further open new methods for dance teaching and training.

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