

Dance Studies Association Early Dance Working Group

2019 Meeting Minutes

Overview

Eleven members attended the working group meeting, which was held at the Orrington Hotel in Evanston, IL, on August 8. Discussion was lively and productive. Everyone was pleased with the energy and enthusiasm the working group has generated since its revival in 2017 and relieved that dance history and historical dance did not disappear entirely when CORD and SDHS merged to form DSA, as many feared. We also accomplished a lot since our last meeting (see below), including making our Resources website ever more useful. (And Emily is always eager to receive your additions, corrections, and suggestions for the website.)

Nevertheless, historical methods, perspectives, and dance forms still feel marginal and tangential at the DSA and in dance studies more generally. The group discussed diverse strategies for increasing visibility and participation, and for helping our dance colleagues see that our work connects in so many ways with theirs. (See below for details.) However, this is an ongoing discussion, and more input and ideas are needed.

One of the directions the discussion took was to consider our group's name, "Early Dance," and to ask whether a new name might be more inclusive and less marginalizing. New name suggestions included "Dance in Deep Time" and "History/Memory/Practice." What are your thoughts and suggestions? Along those same lines, we talked about updating our mission statement. (See below for our current goals and a link to the current description on the DSA website.) Your feedback is warmly welcomed!

We are also excited about two new initiatives to facilitate and extend working group discussions beyond the annual meeting: 1) In between meetings, we will collectively read and discuss an article of general interest to early dance scholars, and 2) we will test new virtual discussion formats for organizing conference panels, asking and responding to research questions, and otherwise making it easier to share and benefit from our collective wisdom and experience.

Finally, the next DSA conference will be in Vancouver, October 15-18, 2020, and the 2021 DSA will be in New Jersey, October 14-17, 2021. Stay tuned!

-- Emily Winerock and Karen Silen, co-conveners

Accomplishments since last year

- Doubled our membership!
- Substantially expanded our "micro-site": <https://earlydance.wixsite.com/resources>
 - Added recommended reading lists, links, experts section, archive with past meeting minutes
 - Please send Emily your additions, corrections, and suggestions
- Sponsored panels for this year's conference -- one cross-period, one entirely early dance:
 - Friday, 10:30am - 12pm Un/common Un/grace: Grace and the Grotesque in Early and Modern European Dance
 - Saturday, 8:30-10am On Stage, At Court, and On the Road: Revisiting the Common Repertoire and Dance Conventions of Early Modern Europe

- There was a healthy showing of early dance scholarship at this DSA in addition to our sponsored panels:
 - Friday, 10:30am - 12pm Historical Specificities Across Time
 - Friday, 12:30-2pm (Counter)publics and the Commons
 - Saturday, 10:30am - 12pm The Archive: Common Ground from Past-to-Present and There-to-Here
 - Saturday, 2:30-4pm Travels of the Common French Contradance
 - Sunday, 10:30am - 12pm Mobilizing (Un)Common Identity: Dance and Poetry
 - Sunday, 10:30am - 12pm Early Choreographic Commons: Race and the Longue Durée
- We also circulated Calls for Papers for other conferences, and organized dance panels for the Modern Language Association (MLA) and the Renaissance Society of America (RSA) conferences for 2020.

Goals and Resolutions

- For the next conference, we will try to schedule a meeting time that does not conflict with other working group meetings since many of us would like to participate in more than one.
- We will also reach out to, and possibly consider merging with, working groups that overlap with ours, such as Dance History Teachers and Dancing the Long Nineteenth Century.
- For proposals, the title should include some indication that it's sponsored by the working group and/or related to our other proposals we're sponsoring.
- To facilitate discussion in between annual meetings, we will try out the new DSA Forum and/or create a Google group list-serve, and we will read and discuss an article of general interest.

Panel Ideas for DSA 2020

Note: We'd like to sponsor 2-3 proposals, and welcome both entirely early dance and cross-temporal and interdisciplinary proposals. We'd also like to sponsor a mix of formats (roundtable, workshop, panel, etc.).

Some Ideas (and more sought):

- Technology and Research Methods Roundtable -- topics might include reconstruction, the physicality of early dance manuals
- "Deep Time" Research Methods Workshop
- Early Dance and _____
- Temporalities, medievalisms, etc.
- Gesture and Expression

Current Early Dance Working Group Mission and Methods

- Ensure visibility of early dance in the DSA and beyond
 - Sponsor panels
 - Resources website, <https://earlydance.wixsite.com/resources>
- Build our field
 - Support members, foster collaborations, and aid and encourage scholars in related fields to investigate dance
- Working group description: <https://dancestudiesassociation.org/resources/working-groups/early-dance>