

# **To dance or not to dance in one's own choreography**

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Intent of research

It is an alive subject in the choreographic working field: if the choreographer chooses to dance in one's own work or not. This choice does not only affect the outcome, once the choreography is finished, it affects the creation process in the first place, in the way(s) of working. Only these effects are not visible on stage.

My interest in this choreographic situation began to rise approximately one year ago, dealing with the subject myself. I started to question and challenge my ways of working and role as a choreographer and experimented with it. I also broadened my ideas by asking and observing how my colleagues think about and work in one or both situations.

A case appeared during the first year of the Master Choreography course at Fontys School of Fine and Performing Arts. A task was given to create a duet or trio, but the students were not allowed to dance in their own work. So in the group of students' questions raised: why not? What if this limit affects one's way of working concerning their personal artistic goals?

It is not just a choice of the choreographer, I believe, to be 'in' or 'out'. It includes one's vision of the work along with the effects it has on one's way(s) of creating and working. One could ask him/herself, as Jonathan Burrows (2010) implies:

*'What knowledge could be gained by embodying the process yourself?*

*What knowledge could be gained by remaining outside the physical process?'*

To dance or not to dance in one's own work is a decision or choice that is part of the creating process and can turn out differently each time one is creating a new choreography. To look at this topic closer and from different perspectives, I will not give 'the solution' or the outcome of what is 'better', because every choreographer is different and has their own reasons and ways of working. I do want to open up the subject, as there is almost no literature about it, and research this part of and influence on the creating process.

## 1.2. Methodology

For this research I will combine several methods to get an overview of the subject, concerning:

- Vision and insight to the creating process, based on experience: by interviewing choreographers who are currently active in their field.
- Further insight of the told information of the choreographers about their way of creating and working: by applying the Didactic-Democratic spectrum model of Jo Butterworth to each choreographer.
- Other perspectives: by using a questionnaire to other active choreographers and interviewing a team member of the choreographer: a dramaturge.

The perspectives of the choreographers and their roles within their processes are the core of the research (points one and two above). The third point describes two ways to underpin the core.

### Didactic-Democratic spectrum model

Professor Jo Butterworth, who received her doctorate at LCDS University of Kent and currently works at the University of Malta (where she has introduced two new degrees in Dance), created a framework model that proposes five distinct choreographic processes. Each process description identifies the choreographer's and dancer's role and skills. The model (table 1, page 5) does not show a linear progression (from process 1 to process 5), but indicates the social interaction, methods of leadership and possible approaches in participation to each individual process (Butterworth, 2009).

Applying this model to the interviewed and questioned choreographers will give an underpinned clarity in what type of choreographer they are, with what kind of way(s) of working. I look at the rationales, effects and differences of their choices and ways of working concerning being in or out their own work.

Table 1: Butterworth's Didactic-Democratic spectrum model

<i>Process 1</i>	<i>Process 2</i>	<i>Process 3</i>	<i>Process 4</i>	<i>Process 5</i>
<b>ROLE - choreographer as:</b>				
Expert	Author	Pilot	Facilitator	Collaborator
<b>ROLE - dancer as:</b>				
Instrument	Interpreter	Contributor	Creator	Co-owner
<b>SKILLS - choreographer:</b>				
Control of concept, style, content, structure and interpretation. Generation of all material.	Control of concept, style, content, structure and interpretation in relation to capabilities/ qualities of dancers.	Initiate concept, able to direct, set and develop tasks through improvisation or imagery, shape the material that ensues.	Provide leadership; negotiate process, intention, concept. Contribute methods to provide stimulus, facilitate process from content generation to macro-structure.	Share with others research, negotiation and decision-making about concepts, intention and style, develop/share/ adapt dance content and structures of the work.
<b>SKILLS - dancer:</b>				
Convergent: imitation, replication.	Convergent: imitation, replication, interpretation.	Divergent: replication, content development, content creation (improvisation and responding to tasks).	Divergent: content creation and development (improvisation and responding to tasks).	Divergent: content creation and development (improvisation, setting and responding to tasks), shared decision-making on aspects of intention and structure.
<b>SOCIAL INTERACTION</b>				
Passive but receptive, can be impersonal.	Separate activities, but receptive, with personal performance qualities stressed.	Active participation from both parties, interpersonal relationship.	Generally interactive.	interactive across group.
<b>TEACHING METHODS</b>				
Authoritarian	Directorial	Leading, guiding	Nurturing, mentoring	Shared authorship
<b>LEARNING APPROACHES</b>				
Conform, receive and process instruction.	Receive and process instruction and utilise own experience as performer.	Respond to tasks, contribute to guided discovery, replicate material from others, etc.	Respond to tasks, problem-solve, contribute to guided discovery, actively participate.	Experiential. Contribute fully to concept, dance content, form, style, process, discovery.

### Interviews and questionnaire

To get to know about choreographers' vision, creation processes and their choices to dance in their own work or not, qualitative research is necessary. By interviewing several choreographers about these subjects I get personal and rich answers, and I have the opportunity to interact by the answers they give and go beyond the surface. The interviews take place over Skype and take approximately half an hour per choreographer. The interviews are recorded.

To get information from more than a few choreographers by interviewing, I add the quantitative research method of a questionnaire. These questions are more limited, and underpin the answers of the interviewed choreographers, by the amount of people that agree or disagree to a choreographer's vision or choice.

Ten choreographers filled in the questionnaire in June 2012.

Adding another perspective to this research I take a written interview with a dramaturge, asking about her experiences and opinion on the subject. The choice to add a dramaturges perspective is based on the artistic relation one has to a choreographer: a dramaturge translates ideas into practice and production, facilitates feedback, discussion and research (Turner & Behrndt, 2008).

The experience of the dancers and the audience is of interest to me too, and could be taken into further research on this topic.

### The interviewees

The choreographers I interviewed over Skype are currently active in the field and differ in their experience as a choreographer. The choreographers are:

- Koen Augustijnen (1967, Belgium)  
Augustijnen works at the artistic platform les ballets c de la b (Belgium), founded by Alain Platel in 1984. He started as a dancer in 1991 and became one of the company's house choreographers in 1997 with his debut *To Crush Time*. Apart from les ballet c de la b he worked with dEUS, Toneelgroep Amsterdam and Stalker Theatre Company. His latest work is *Au-Delà* (2012).

- Liat Waysbort (1974, Israel)  
Waysbort works as a choreographer at dance production house Dansateliers in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. She started dancing from the age of 18, danced for six years at Bat-Sheva Dance Company in Israel (1994-2000) and studied the Master Choreography at Codarts, Rotterdam. Her latest work at Dansateliers is *Male version* (2010) and she is currently working on a new project.
- Ulrika Kinn Svensson (1980, Sweden)  
Kinn Svensson danced with Dance and Theatre Company T.r.a.s.h. and works with choreographer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui. She created and danced a duet together with Koen de Preter called *Sometimes it's there* (2010). Another duet she danced and choreographed was created during ImPulzTanz Festival (Vienna, Austria), after receiving the danceWEB scholarship (2004).
- Koen de Preter (1981, Belgium)  
De Preter works as a choreographer and performer. At the moment, he is working on the site-specific choreography *The House That Built Us* with Antwerps theatercollectief unm. He created several works in collaboration, such as *While things can change* and *We dance to forget* with Maria Ibarretxe, and as mentioned earlier a duet with Kinn Svensson. As a dancer he worked with Sasha Waltz & Guests, T.r.a.s.h., Keren Levi and others.
- Jesus DeVega Gómez (1974, Spain)  
DeVega is a former dancer who worked with Emio Greco and Itzik Galili. He started his career as a choreographer in 2008 at Danshuis Station Zuid (Tilburg, The Netherlands), with the solo *Disappear Here*. He is currently taking part at the Spazio program: '*A European formation and creation program for young dance makers, focused on the interdisciplinary character of the dance discipline*' (website ICK, 2012).

The dramaturge I interviewed is:

- Anne-Marije van den Bersselaar (1984, The Netherlands)  
Van den Bersselaar started to specialise herself in dance analysis and dramaturgy at the University of Utrecht (The Netherlands) on her BA Theatre, Film and Television studies. She works with choreographer Mor Shani as a dance dramaturge on different projects such as *Bebe la Sus* and *Lu Carmella*. She received her MA in Theatre Studies (Utrecht) in 2012.

## 2. Choreographers' points of view

In every interview I held, the choreographers shared their vision about the subject with clarity. They are all aware of their choices and the effects on their creating process. To point out and compare the points of views of the choreographers, I divide this chapter into two parts. First I give an overview of the choreographers' choices and rationales. The second part is focussed on the general effects and differences of dancing or not dancing in one's own choreography.

### 2.1. Choices and rationales

In table 2 I give an overview of the interviewed choreographers: if they dance(d) in their own choreographies or not.

Table 2: Choreographers overview

CHOREOGRAPHER	PERFORMS/PERFORMED IN OWN WORK
Koen Augstijnen	Yes
Liat Waysbort	No
Ulrika Kinn Svensson	Yes
Koen de Preter	Yes
Jesus DeVega Gómez	Yes

From the ten choreographers who filled in the questionnaire, also 80% of the choreographers danced in their own work.



Different reasons were given in the interviews, to dance or not in one's own work. The urge to dance, coming from his background as a dancer, Augustijnen points out as a very present feeling and need. This can be a strong reason to be in the work rather than choose to be out by practical matter such as having a clearer overview. He experienced being in is not necessarily more difficult to him, for example within the process working towards *Just another landscape for some juke box-money* (2002). Looking back at that period where he stayed out performing wise, it was a, if not the most, complicated process. The number of people he works with affects his decision, which he reconsiders at the beginning of every new process. To work with eight dancers and seven musicians was his reason to stay out and have better overview.

An opposite respond came from Waysbort: also coming from a career as a dancer, she felt the need to separate her choreographic work from her work as a dancer. To her opinion a choreographer should only be in the work if it truly adds and relates to the work itself. The need to dance would be not good enough for her. She was clear with this choice at the beginning of her career as a choreographer and does not need to reconsider this in every new process and work.

Although dancing in her own work, Kinn Svensson does not necessarily think a choreographer should be in the work. Her choreographies so far were based on the collaborations with the co-choreographers, being dancers at the same time. She feels more as a dancer that choreographed together with colleagues then the other way around. The interest to research and work together (again) was the purpose to create, such as with De Preter. But if she would make a new choreography by herself, she now prefers to be out. Mainly because combining the two roles can get disturbing. Focussing only on the creation gives a better outcome is what she has seen most times.

It can have a very practical rationale sometimes, to be in own work. De Preter appoints the circumstances, such as the budget: If there is little money, one way of dealing with it can be to not work with an extra dancer, but step in yourself. Also Philip S. Rosemond (1955) adds in the questionnaire that circumstances have their

influences, for example when more male dancers are needed (which can be hard to find sometimes) or when you simply get hired to do both roles at the same time.

A circumstance where a choreographer goes from in to out of the work, can happen when you get injured, experienced DeVega Gómez during *Jabberwocky* which was later named as *Shut quietly. Almost*. This was in collaboration with Jussi Novsiainen, where they both started as choreographers and dancers at the same time. During this turbulent process DeVega Gómez learned a lot, experiencing the differences of being in and out. He now prefers to be outside, as he can respond quicker to the work in process.

## **2.2. General effects and differences**

Most choreographers from the questionnaire and interviews agree being out gives a better overview. Waysbort and Soetkin Vervaeet (1982) add that a choreographer stays more objective to the work this way. But before having the overview the movement material has to be made, and here the situation changes: Most choreographers now prefer to be in, at least while creating, to feel the (other) dancer(s), give more direct input and experience the work. Only two choreographers that filled in the questionnaire don't find a difference concerning creating movement.

The differences in the relation and working with the dancers give most diverse opinions among the choreographers. Vervaeet mentioned that you might be closer to the dancers if you dance as well, although she does not prefer to be in. It affects the way of working, talking and creating during the process, and therefore the role of the choreographer as well. Marc M. Arentsen (1967) mentions that he can be a lot more 'thorough' towards his dancers if he is not co-dancing: *'I don't have to divide my attention and effort between developing the other dancers' performance and my concern for my own'* (Oetgens, 2012). In the performance you as a choreographer should forget you are the choreographer and be on one level with the other dancers, believes Josephine van Rheenen (1988). She also points out that it is sometimes easier to have authority when you do not dance along. It becomes easier to pull the dancers to a higher level in that case.

Out of the questioned choreographers, 70% do not prefer to dance in one's own choreography. 10% does and 20% has no preference. Also among the interviewed choreographers the preference is to not dance along (60%), next to 40% who does.

### **3. Choreographers' role in the creation process**

This chapter reflects on how the interviewed choreographers work, being in or out of their own work. The focus lies on three stages of the creation process:

- Starting from the concept & intention of the new work
- Gathering & shaping movement material
- Structuring and working on the dramaturgy of the choreography

#### **3.1. Concept and intention**

Starting a new creation process, an interest or idea needs to be developed into a concept to make a choreographers' intention clear. How to start working is very personal to each choreographer and the idea or interest one has. The choice to dance in one's own work or not is often made in this phase. I point out some different approaches to concepts of the interviewed choreographers and look at their choreographic role within Butterworth's model.

Augustijnen starts working from an idea. For example with his performance *Au-Delà* his idea to make this work set in the after life, danced to the music of Keith Jarrett and call it *Au-Delà* was a clear start. He wanted to go 'beyond', starting from a personal point of view: his idea rose out of a family matter in combination with the life phase and age he was in.

In this early stage of the process, he started to collaborate with dramaturge Lou Cope (1971). Working with a dramaturge is important to Augustijnen: to get feedback during the whole process, hear a second opinion, clarify and monitor the concept together and gain ideas to make the movement material better and clearer. This last one especially because he is dancing in the performance too. About the collaboration in this early stage of the process Augustijnen mentions he could articulate his ideas, thoughts and choices by sharing them with Cope and together they gained clarity. This way his more intuitive way of working balanced with the analytical side of Cope. (Cope & Augustijnen, n.d.).

Augustijnen works in this early stage mainly in process 3 (choreographer as pilot), where he initiates the concept by himself and is open to discuss it, with for example his dramaturge. He is the most active choreographer in reconsidering his role to be in or out and has the most experience in both situations.

De Vega Gómez also starts working from an idea, such as with *Matter*, only his approach fits more within process 2, choreographer as author. He stays in control of the concept and content and let this relate to the qualities of the dancer(s): He starts compiling information related to the subject, to create the universe in which he will move later on, once the time in the studio begins. This information is necessary to trigger his imagery, by 'visual input' and 'aural references'. In *Matter* he shared his found information with his dancer, so she could grow into the concept too. Being in or out his creations does not change this approach in the first phase. His next step he describes as discovering 'how the body will respond to all of that stimulus'. Here he improvises a lot, finding translation towards his physicality. After that, he feels ready to get in the studio with the dancer(s), passing all information and open it up to their input, such as their qualities. Here a difference appears concerning being in or not: how to listen to the input of the dancers. Dancing along gives a more physical understanding among each other. Stepping out gives him more trust in the relation dancer-choreographer.

Kinn Svensson's creations so far were based on her interests in the collaboration itself. For example creating with De Preter again, after six years, the process was based on their friendship and history together. They wanted to research 'what would happen now'.

Working on an equal level with her collaborator from the very beginning makes her choreographic role according to Butterworth's model 'choreographer as collaborator' (process 5), where the other dancer/choreographer (for example in the duet with De Preter) is a co-owner of the work. She might be in a different role when she will start to create work from 'outside', depending how much she would like to open up her ideas with those of her dancer(s), starting with the concept.

De Preter is in his current process *The house that built us* also collaborating, but not performing himself. He created the concept together with Kyoko Scholiers, who is co-

performing. The choreography however, is the responsibility of De Preter. The concept is based on a building, where the performance takes place as well. A site-specific project where he works between processes 3 and 4 (choreographer as facilitator): he initiates the concept and provides leadership.

It seems reality is not always as black and white as a didactic model. Another example occurs with Waysbort: She is always in control of the concept, but is dynamic in her ways of working. It depends on the circumstances how she chooses to work, for example according to the time frame. She likes to discover what the right tone is (within her concept) together with (a) dancer(s). Therefore I look further into the way the choreographers work with their dancers and how they generate and shape the movement material.

### **3.2. Gathering and shaping movement material**

All interviewed choreographers feel the need to be physically active during this phase in creation process. It is a choreographer's translation from the concept or idea towards his dancer(s) instead of only using verbal language (Augustijnen), and a physical channel that connects the choreographer with the dancer(s) (DeVega Gómez). Therefore, thinking, telling and reacting physically is an important part of the creation process.

In this phase, the choreographers have diverse ways of working as well, and vary to stay within their choreographic role or shift to (an) other(s).

Working within les ballet c de la b, where choreographers create work 'with rather than on dancers' (Cope & Augustijnen, n.d.), most of the movement material comes from the dancers. When Augustijnen is in the work, he gives not only tasks to his dancers to generate movement material, but also to himself. This way they create the movement material together and in the same moment:

*'As I was one of the dancers I had to answer and improvise my own tasks. Often I showed my material last so as not to influence the other dancers too much'. (Cope & Augustijnen, n.d.)*

The tasks can be based on the concept of the piece, on a physical matter or related to the performers or their 'potential characters'. He keeps having the final decision-

making and controls the concept and responds to the input of the dancers (based on the tasks) by giving feedback. Together with the (co) dancers he works out the material. In the process of *Au-Delà* he had help working out the movement material from movement adviser Annie Pui Lin Lok, who was there 2 or 3 days a week. She could give detailed feedback 'from the inside' as she was dancing a lot of the movement material too (Cope & Augustijnen, n.d.).

Where Augustijnen tends to work from process 3 on Butterworth's model in the concept phase (initiating the concept), in this next phase he shifts to process 4: He asks his dancers to contribute to the content by creating and developing movement and intention, through improvisation and responding to tasks he gives.

Waysbort has a slightly different approach to gather movement material: she gives space to the dancers to explore themselves, and reacts to this exploration. At a certain point she sees what is dominant and what she is looking for. From there she starts to shape the movement material by giving tasks and using choreographic and composition tools. She is also very active in creating movement herself, to give the dancers raw material to work with. Waysbort uses a combination of processes 2, 3 and 4, changing her choreographer's role as author, pilot and facilitator.

De Vega Gómez sometimes need to feel what happens from inside the piece to be able to develop the work during the process. In these moments he is physically very active and creates movement material himself. But in his work *Matter* he worked with a different approach: He spend a lot of time with the dancer finding specific movement qualities that suite the piece, through improvisation. Appropriate to the concept about being inside your own head, he hid himself from the dancer but stayed in the room to give her tasks. For example about movement qualities or speed and he was interacting to what she was doing. The dancer interacted physically to this 'voice in her head' by doing or not doing the tasks: she sometimes went in opposite direction of the task, so it became a sort of dialog.

Working from certain qualities of the performer set within a structure, but with improvised movement material as creating *Matter*, he would fit into process 3, choreographer as pilot, the most. This means another shift in choreographic roles and again towards the right side of Butterworth's model. It seems that in this stage of

the creation process the choreographers are more collaborating and negotiating than in the concept and intention phase.

What De Preter looks for during the phase of creating and shaping the movement is the own physical language of the performer(s). He is also not interested in a certain style of movement for himself, but prefers to work eclectic. In all the projects where he choreographs, he wants to combine the concept, the people he works with and his intuition. With these three elements he steps into the creating process and varies in his choreographic roles 3, 4 and 5.

Being an experienced dancer, Kinn Svensson felt the step to choreograph in collaboration not that big: it is a matter of setting your own rules. She finds she has more freedom to create the movement material and the character of the piece, as she is also used to do so as a dancer, but with the tasks of the choreographers she works with. When creating *Sometimes it's there* together with De Preter, they were both looking for the same atmosphere: to go back to a basic way of being on stage, giving the most simple way of their selves. As mentioned earlier they worked in process 5 of Butterworth's model, being co-owners of the work and shared their research while creating.

### **3.3. Structure and dramaturgy of the choreography**

A structure of a choreography can be seen as an outline of rules to follow in a certain order while improvising the movement material (as in Matter from DeVega Gómez). Another way to look at structuring is to make the connections between the movement material and the concept to a whole. There are also more practical matters within this, such as finding the balance between the amount of people on stage and making the right order: Augustijnen and Cope were jiggling cards around which had colour codes: *'red for solo, blue for group sequence, grey for text, etc'* (Cope & Augustijnen, n.d.).

One way or another, all choreographers find themselves in the phase of decision making. It is the time to zoom out. When a choreographer is 'out', one can observe easily, but dancing along creates a contrast, because this is the phase where the dancers grow into their role and the piece as a total. They become performers, who

are getting ready to share the work with an audience. Therefore, the choreographer has to be able to switch between his roles of choreographer and dancer. This can be difficult sometimes. Augustijnen and Cope decided to deal with this situation by occasionally setting aside one of the roles: for a few days he would 'only' be a choreographer, or a few hours he would 'only' be a dancer. According to Van den Bersselaar a choreographer can also benefit from this 'switching': adding both ways of thinking and experiencing can give extra input to the choreography, and may improve because of it. In *Au-Delà* Augustijnen could sometimes give immediate feedback on improvisations and rehearsals he was in, from what he had experienced himself and/or what he had seen by peeking on the others while dancing. Although these moments happen, overall the dancers wanted more immediate feedback to know if they were on the right track. Augustijnen chose to watch all videos of the day in the evening, so he could respond to the dancer the next day. This way he could not give immediate feedback that often, but went more into detail later. This was a time consuming approach, where Cope encouraged him to take decisions and speed things up now and then.

Besides Augustijnen, Kinn Svensson and De Preter also mention the importance of working with a dramaturge, especially when they are dancing in their own work. Without a dramaturge you are depending on the videos of the rehearsals, which give another view of the work than seeing it live, De Preter says. All choreographers tend to use video as a tool to reflect on their processes and contents, but not everyone has the opportunity to work with a dramaturge in each process. However, having such collaborator on board is not a luxury to Augustijnen. He adds that a dramaturge has important influence in the process and working together is based on good collaboration and trust. Dramaturge Van den Bersselaar also notices, from her point of view, that a choreographer who is in the work relies more on extra observations of the dramaturge and this situation asks for more trust in each other.

Van den Bersselaar experiences that most choreographers choose to be out their own work to keep the overview. Working with a dramaturge in this situation gives more room to dialog about the experience of the audience, another way to approach the choreography. Cope also asks her general question as a dramaturge to each choreographer she works with: What do you want to give your audience?



More observations by Van der Bersselaar working with choreographers dancing in own work versus choreographers who stay out are gathered in table 3.

Butterworth’s model does not mention working with a dramaturge. I believe there is most room for a dramaturge to add one’s skills in process 3, 4 and 5. Cope likes to work in these kinds of collaborative and devising processes, ‘*where the choreographer leads without being in control and where the work is both authored and created by those who perform it*’ (Cope & Augustijnen, n.d.). She finds herself most useful ‘*when the choreographers can be necessarily blinded by their own proximity to the work*’ (Cope & Augustijnen, n.d.). In these kinds of processes the content, form and structure are determined as the process unfolds. Here the dramaturge can seem to be a connecting force, involved in all aspects of creating the performance and finding cohesion in the artistic work (Turner & Behrndt, 2008).

In processes 1 and 2 of Butterworth’s model a dramaturge might need to simplify or shift attention in one’s own role: by giving more focus to the discussions and structure/wholeness of the work and being less actively involved in the creation part itself.

Table 3: Observations by Van den Bersselaar

CHOREOGRAPHER - DANCING	CHOREOGRAPHER – NOT DANCING
<p><i>In early stage of the process (experimental phase)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emphasis lays on the way the choreographer moves.</li> <li>- This has influences on the other performers.</li> <li>- There is less talking, more doing and observing.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Overall</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Less time needed to dialog: dramaturge had to share less observations and this gives time to go into other aspects.</li> <li>- Process is more focussed on the whole of the piece: the dramaturgy of the work and the relations between the performers.</li> <li>- Video is still used for the overview and what happens in the process, but the focus is more on showing/sharing it to the dancers to make them aware of the material and/or their performance.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Structuring phase</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The choreographer has to go deeper into his role as a performer.</li> <li>- One has difficulties with keeping the overview in the choreography and on the dancers individually.</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Overall</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The choreographers relies more on the external observations of the dramaturge.</li> <li>- Video is a choreographer’s tool to keep the overview and be/stay aware of what happens in the process.</li> </ul>	

#### 4. Discussion & conclusion

The choreographers have clear visions about the topic to (not) dance in their own choreographies and are aware of the effects within their own processes. Despite this, it does not always seem to be the most logical or efficient choice to be in or out in certain cases. For example when one works with a large group, which is more difficult to manage from inside, but feels such a big urge to dance too, that one decides to be in the work. But since the choreographers work on an intuitive level, the priorities are not always set by logic or efficiency. It is more about one's priorities. As a choreographer I would ask myself at the beginning of a new process: Where lies the most value? Is it a personal reason to be in or out, a statement as a creator or is the piece itself the element that needs to be served? I agree with Waysbort that the most value to the decision would be if it truly adds and relate to the work. When starting a new work, it is not only yours anymore. It is a piece by itself, where others are involved, such as the dancers and maybe a dramaturge, and for sure an audience. No one mentioned how or if it would make a difference to the audience or not (since the focus was on the process), with exception of Van den Bersselaar, by her approach as a dramaturge. Would one change in perspective or approach considering the position of the audience (more)?

The perspective of the audience would be interesting to take into further research, and the perspective of the dancers as well.

To create an overview of my research, I go back to Burrows' questions and answer them with my findings among the participated choreographers.

*'What knowledge could be gained by embodying the process yourself?'*

A choreographer might add the most direct translation of the concept or idea with his/her own physicality and the expression that comes along. One can pass it on to other dancers, but can have an important role in the work itself. The connection with the dancer(s) will be very close and can make the process richer. It can be the reason to create the work, as the collaboration itself can be the inspiration: to work on an equal level together in creating and performing, researching each other's dance language and physicality. If the urge to dance is very present, one gains satisfaction to perform along. In practical matter, one could save or earn money, depending on the budget and conditions while creating the work. If the possibility is

there to work with a dramaturge, the collaboration is based on trust. The dramaturge is the choreographers' third eye and adds another perspective to the work. Being in the work appears to gain mostly one's own physicality and the way to collaborate.

*What knowledge could be gained by remaining outside the physical process?*

The choreographers experience a better overview when not dancing in their own work. It is possible to respond quicker and more objective to the work in process. One does not have to divide attention and effort between the other dancers in the performance and oneself (one's concerns as a performer). Time and energy is saved by not switching between the role of the choreographer and dancer. This way the focus in the process stays clear. One might gain more authority if this would be an important matter, for example while working in process 1, 2 or 3 of Butterworth's model. When working with a dramaturge, there is more time or space for other aspects of the performance than the movement material and dramaturgical line: for example to dialog about the audience experience.

Being outside the work appears to gain mostly overview and focus with room for other perspectives, which a dramaturge can imply.

When you would like to know which way of working suits you the most in which situation, it could be interesting to try all possible roles. I researched my choreographer's position over the last year (2011-2012) and gained from every step of the way. From being in I experienced my own physical translation and expression of the concept as a strong tool within my way of working. When being out and not allowing myself to create any movement, I experienced I missed this physical translation a lot, but I also learned more about other ways to work from and with the performers: to see what happened in the moment and respond to it immediately, and to go deeper into the development of the performers. I now know my urge to dance does not come close to my urge to create and serve the work itself. I prefer to keep my physicality during the process, but use it only as a translation to the dancers and the work, not towards the audience. This does not mean my way of working is set: every process is new and needs consideration, but by doing this research on my choreographer's role I gained from the experiences and am more aware what tool to use, change or put aside.

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## **6. Appendix**

Interview recordings with Augustijnen, K.: spraak 003 – 009.

Interview recordings with DeVega Gómez, J.: spraak 30.

Interview recordings with Kinn Svensson, U.: spraak 21.

Interview recordings with Preter, de, K.: spraak 22 – 29.

Interview recordings with Waysbort, L.: spraak 012 – 020.