

28 november live and online presentation

Good evening. My name is Scott deLahunta and I am the project leader for the Motion Bank research project. Tonight we have to come together to mark a special moment and celebrate a project that's been running now for four years – and this is the moment to announce the release or publication of the Motion Bank score websites made in collaboration with and for the guest artists who were invited to participate in the project. And, except for Deborah Hay who was with us last June for the publication of her on-line material during Tanzkongress in Dusseldorf, they are all here now and will join me for a conversation when I have finished this introduction. You may or may not recognise them, but this is Jonathan Burrows and Matteo Fargion, Thomas Hauert and Bebe Miller and also joining us are Nik Haffner and Ingo Diehl representing the very important education research aspect of Motion Bank.

To give you an idea of what is going to happen this evening, I am going to start with telling you about what takes place tomorrow and on the weekend, because more than half of you have come to participate in the Live & On Line two days of discussions, workshops and exchanges on topics which relate directly to the research Motion Bank has been doing – that is artist-led research into new tools for and approaches to the documentation, analysis and transmission of choreographic practice.

And before I continue to tell this story on behalf of Motion Bank, The Forsythe Company and all of our partner institutions, we sincerely thank the Kulturstiftung des Bundes for its generous and unprecedented support for this project. We also thank the Hessische Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kunst, the kulturfonds frankfurtrheinmain and the Altana Kultur Stiftung for their generous support of the Motion Bank project. And to the Volkswagen Foundation for their support of the Dance Engaging Science interdisciplinary workshops organised to run alongside us these last three years and to link up to our research questions broadening them to a range of perspectives coming from outside arts practice. And several members of that workgroup are also here for this event.

All together we have really had unbelievable support for such a project -- support that's enabled us not only to create the materials you will see this evening – it has also made it possible for us to contribute to the development of this research community on both an international and national scale. The slides you see running behind now are photographs taken during the last four years of events. Nearly 30 separate events are documented including test and final filmings, research and motion capture sessions, workshops, guest performances, workgroup meetings, and score production sessions. These images are all taken from the print publication we have just finished. That book is subtitled Starting Points and Aspirations. These are key drivers of any research process --

questions to start with and some idea about where you want to get -- but you really don't know what it be until you get there.

The key thing is to keep asking questions to keep having a vision about where you might be going. This brings the focus to process, to things that are constantly changing. And that goes to the very heart of Motion Bank even down to our generative logo, which can constantly change.

<http://lab.motionbank.org/moba/logo/01/>

Back to the story of what is happening tomorrow and on the weekend, but first I am going to tell you briefly what began on Monday evening here in the Z Zentrum space at the back of the building. 25 artists have gathered there for the Choreographic Coding Lab to work creatively in that intersection between dance and digital media that has been a key focus of our Motion Bank research, and some of them are working with the data which has been recorded for the Deborah Hay project titled Using the Sky which is here now running up here alongside the slides.

The collaboration with Creative Coders has emerged as one of the most important developments of our work here in Frankfurt. Bill Forsythe has been really supportive of this development and wonders, in the small interview in the book, whether or not choreographic work is destined for the field of digital arts. One of the most exciting results of the work we did with Deborah Hay and her dancers, Ros Warby, Jeanine Durning and Juliette Mapp was the adaptation of her score created by digital artist Amin Weber – inspired by his deep research into her process as a part of developing her website. The interviews here are particularly revealing, I encourage you to visit later this evening the installation at the end of the hallway where it is playing large scale at full resolution.

These sites are there for your solo exploration and there is nothing stopping you from dashing home when we are done, skipping the drinks and snacks, opening up your computer and checking these materials out for yourself. And we hope you do. But right now it would be good if you're not surfing the net on your smart phones, because if half of you are on the Lab's wireless system that might slow it down too much to show up here. One thing you will need is a good fast Internet connection to view this material, but nothing more than what you need to see smoothly playing Vimeo or Youtube videos.

Now to return to tomorrow and the weekend – while this Creative Coding aspect has been a fantastic result for us and is something we will be continuing to work on in Phase Two of Motion Bank another major branch of Motion Bank and one that we planned for from the start has been the dance education research. Here in the audience tonight are 50 students from the MA and BA programmes of the Palucca Hochschule für Tanz in Dresden, The Inter-university Centre for Dance Berlin and the University of Music and Performing Arts here in Frankfurt. These

students and the teachers working with them have been exploring ideas for how to use what we are producing here at Motion Bank with the guest artists in their education practices – and this has meant working with materials and resources developed in collaboration with other choreographers, not only those we have been working with here at Motion Bank.

Both Ingo and Nik are here with me tonight to provide some insights in this what has been a super productive process. Ingo is the Course Leader for the Masters for the Contemporary Dance Education here in at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Frankfurt. That University is one of our two Education Partner Institutions. The other partner institution is the Palucca School for Dance and Jenny Coogan and Jose Biondi have travelled here with 19 students to take part in Live & On Line. Nik Haffner is a member of the International Education Workgroup, an expert group assembled at the start of the project who have already worked on bringing new approaches and tools for the documentation, analysis and transmission of choreographic practice into an education context. They will all participate in the events scheduled over the next few days, and we have a major education platform planned for nearly 5 hours on Saturday where they will open up and share the results of their research.

I just mentioned that these students have been working with other resources and this points toward another very important frame within which Motion Bank positions its work. That is the Community of Practice that has already been developing artist-led research into sharing choreographic ideas and processes with a diverse audience. This means that Motion Bank kind of opens up with our results into an already existing growing pool of materials – other resources coming out of dance and choreographic practice. Like our materials, these resources make use of varying combinations of moving image, visualisation, graphics, text and some also working with more open-ended digital tools and platforms to record, explore and share these choreographic ideas and ways of thinking. They are also reaching out to interact with other disciplines and practices in new ways. And we have invited nearly a dozen individuals, listed in the flyer for Live & On Line, who have been working on these projects, here for this event to open up and share their work with us – also for discussion and debate about the future of this kind of research work. And at the Books on the Move stall set up in the Lobby and on the workstations assembled there you are invited to check out some of these materials later this evening.

Finally, I will close this introduction speech on the topic of Phase Two of motion bank that I mentioned earlier. A second phase is in the early planning stages and we are looking closely at several lines of further development including on-going education research, opening up of Motion Bank data and more collaborative artistic projects with creative coders, the release of the score website system, and the further development of both the existing and new choreographic resources. One reason I say 'existing' resources is that for example we are still working on Deborah Hay's material, there are still things to do, some things to

fix, and more content to publish. So part of the future will or could be continuing to work on materials that we are now releasing.

That is also the nature of publishing on the Internet. I read an article in a journal not long ago titled 'always in beta' and that seems to capture not only something practical about our times – with technologies constantly changing so revision and maintenance has to be planned into any on-line project – but also something nearly philosophical – that things being in constant instability is no need for panic, but is a stimulus for developing the general conditions within which constant change is accepted and actually looked for. That is also the basis for our ongoing arts research and practice.

Practically speaking though the future horizon for Motion Bank will embrace and continue the development of two systems for publishing these choreographic resources on line – one of these is what we call the 'backend' publishing system for the materials you are looking at now. This was invented by digital artist Florian Jenett who joined Motion Bank from our score partner institution Art and Design Academy Offenbach at the start of the project alongside Amin Weber and it has been recently reprogrammed by MESO Webscapes – we intend to continue to develop it and release it to the research and education community as part of Phase Two. With this system anyone, or any team, can publish the same sorts of materials on line as we have. In addition we can invite someone to come in for example – Adrian Heathfield a close colleague of Jonathan and Matteo's who joined them when they gave their motion bank workshop last spring -- using existing recordings and adding his own – Adrian could put together another page in Jonathan and Matteo's website.

The other technology is Piecemaker a tool for annotating video material. Originally developed as a research project by David Kern, long time performer with The Forsythe Company who had the desire to invent a means to help organise the highly creative output of the whole company. Piecemaker has been used in the development of our on line score websites with Deborah, Jonathan and Matteo and we will continue to use it in future work of this kind. But additionally a user-friendly version meant for any choreographer or dancer, student teacher or professional to use in the dance studio has been reprogrammed by a team at the Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences another one of our score partners. This version of Piecemaker will be offered for the first time in the Emerging Tools workshop tomorrow – and it will be available for free to download and use at the end of the year. A third score partner here in Frankfurt, the Fraunhofer Institute for Computer Graphics Research has successfully published their research results, lately given the best paper award in the proceedings from the International Symposium on Virtual Reality, Archaeology and Cultural Heritage.

So this brings you up to date with the full scope of the Motion Bank research project, its broader aims and objectives, interconnected with other networks,

associates and partners. And to close this introduction and get into the much looked forward discussion here on the stage, I want to thank firstly Norah Zuniga Shaw and Maria Palazzi at The Ohio State University who worked so closely with Bill Forsythe on the pilot website project for Motion Bank Synchronous Objects, and as one of our institutional score partners, they have continued to work with Thomas and Bebe on the TWO project – and we will be discussing some of their questions and that process in a few minutes.

I want to thank Bill Forsythe especially for leading us into this project, for his creative vision, trust and inspiration. And all the guest artists – Deborah, Jonathan, Matteo, Thomas and Bebe – for their inspiring creative work, their trust and willingness to embark on this research work with us. Thanks also need to go out to The Forsythe Company for continuous support from the technical and administrative staff. And lastly I have to thank the small team who have worked so closely with me in Frankfurt these last four years: Marion Rossi, Florian Jenett & Amin Weber, Martin Streit, Célestine Hennermann, Jessica Schäfer, Anna Berger and Angelika Haus. Without all of you... well I don't need to say it.

So, thank you for listening and now we will begin the next part of the presentation -- a discussion with the artists who were invited to take part in this first phase and about some of the related education research.

END PART ONE NOW OVER TO THE DISCUSSION