



Moved by Shakespeare: 'natural' tempos, movement and physical expression on the ballet, opera and other storied musical stages

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This seminar proposes to reflect on the notion of 'natural' tempos, movement and physical expression in the adaptation of Shakespeare's works for the ballet, opera and other storied musical stages. We will be looking into opera, theatre and other types of dramatic performance mainly from the perspective of physical movement on stage and the physicality of the performance, and how the physical component interplays with the musical elements, the sets, lighting, etc.... We also invite scholars to reflect on whether there is a 'natural' cross-influencing of ballet, opera and other storied musical stages about arranging characters on stage, body language and gesture.

Possible topics for this seminar include:

- 'Naturally Shakespearean' movement/tempos: Are there types of movement, forms of dance (ballet, contemporary dance, contemporary ballet, Broadway jazz in musicals, hip-hop,...), musical and physical tempos, that could be 'naturally' congenial to Shakespeare's works? To what extent can we consider certain forms of physical expression organic, natural, to Shakespeare's characters, plots, and the rhythm and inflections of his words? Falstaff, Macbeth, or Romeo will not move on stage the same way, so how are movement and physical expression thought about when staging an opera for example?
- Nature and gender: what is the 'natural' gender of spirits, creatures like Ariel or Puck? What is their natural movement? More generally, how is gender 'naturally' danced on ballet stages? Since ballet training is highly gendered, how do some choreographers manage to challenge traditional balletic gendering when tackling Shakespearean elements such as cross-dressing, female roles played by men, shrewish characters and spirits/fairies? What about forms of dance other than ballet? What about opera? How are alternate genderings treated on opera stages in terms of physical expression?
- Nature on stage: how is nature depicted on the ballet and opera stages? How does a natural setting (the forest of Arden, the world of the fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ...) interact with 'natural' (and 'unnatural') movement onstage?

Keywords: dance, opera, movement, physicality, nature, gender