

Theatre, Dance and Performance Training (TDPT)

Special issue on Training Places: Dartington College of Arts to be published October 2018. Call for contributions, ideas, proposals and dialogue with the editors.

Guest editors: Dr Bryan Brown, University of Exeter, Dr Libby Worth, Royal Holloway, University of London, and Editorial Consultant Professor Ric Allsopp, Joint Editor *Performance Research*

The *Training Grounds* section of the issue (see below) will be guest edited by Dr Simon Murray, University of Glasgow and Dr Dick McCaw, Royal Holloway, University of London

Background and context

This will be the ninth Special Issue of [Theatre, Dance and Performance Training](#) (TDPT) following issues on sport, Michael Chekhov, politics, Feldenkrais, showing/writing training, interculturalism, popular performance and immersive, interactive and participatory performance. TDPT is an international journal devoted to all aspects of 'training' (broadly defined) within the performing arts. The journal was founded in 2010 and launched its [own blog](#) in 2015. Our target readership is both academic and the many varieties of professional performers, makers, choreographers, directors, dramaturgs and composers working in theatre, dance and live art who have an interest in and curiosity for reflecting on their practices and their training. TDPT's co-editors are Jonathan Pitches (University of Leeds) and Libby Worth (Royal Holloway, University of London).

Dartington College of Arts: pedagogies, contexts, people, performances and experimentations.

This is the first time that a place of performance training has been taken as the subject of a TDPT special issue and although it and other centres of performance training have been addressed in specific articles, this singular focus for a whole issue calls for some explanation.

Why Dartington and why now?

Over the near 5 decades of its history, Dartington College of Arts, established an international reputation for innovation in performance making, spawning new directions in dance, theatre, devising, music and visual performance that continue to influence current artists and scholars. Based on an 800-acre estate on the River Dart near Totnes in rural Devon, its staff and students explored ways of working that emphasised learning through doing and questioning, working across arts disciplines, paying attention to the social impact and context of their artistic output and encouraging robust and engaging international contacts and exchanges.

The publication date for this special issue (2018), marks ten years since the college merged with Falmouth University, resulting eventually in a controversial move from the Dartington Hall estate to a purpose built complex at what was then University College Falmouth in 2010. This, perhaps, is a good time therefore to re-examine Dartington's ecology, its people, its sites and its continuing influence within the arts world. In the current national and international climate with political uncertainties, the rise of nationalism and the new right, and the steady undermining of the arts in UK educational curriculum, it could be the appropriate moment to re-assess what Dartington College offered and its legacy continues to offer. Those who participated in the life of Dartington College of Arts are

active internationally and continue to develop new working practices inspired and influenced by the “Dartington ethos”. Articulating how places inform training (pedagogy, practice, conversations, ways of being) through the fostering of a complex ecology and ethos is what this special issue aims to attempt.

Echoing Dartington’s fluid approach to training that positively encouraged experimentation in form/structure to better reflect artistic concepts and practices, this issue welcomes a variety of ways of responding to the call and actively encourages co-authoring, embedding of images, diagrams, drawings within critical articles. These could include offering additional visual/audio media on the TDPT blog or directly linked to an article. The issue aims to include writing/images representative of all the College’s training disciplines (theatre, dance/choreography, music, performance writing and visual performance) and of its different eras.

We are particularly interested in (but not limited by) responses to the following set of questions:

- How did the social/political context of each of the College’s eras contribute to the training ethos?
- In what ways did the college ascribe to a form of ‘un-training’ or ‘de-training’ and how was this structured? What did it generate?
- How might have the environment of diverse buildings and countryside influenced the type of training that happened at Dartington College of Arts? And how did this geographically isolated experience sit with student international placements and commitment to international artists’ residencies?
- What were significant strands in Dartington Hall’s history that contributed to the philosophy and practical components of the College programmes?
- What was left out in the training offered at the College and why?
- What remains important of the mystiques, fantasies, hauntings and residues triggered over the life of the college?
- What was shared within the training processes but not articulated?
- What has gone missing that matters outside of this community?
- If Dartington College is seen as an ecology and not merely a place, how is this still growing?
- What roles did Dartington College take in nurturing innovative practices – New Dance for instance?
- What sources from the college’s history might be timely to reprint in order to generate contemporary responses?
- What were the cultural, economic, pedagogical, political and psychological circumstances of the College’s closure in Devon and the merger with University College Falmouth in Cornwall?
- What are the legacies and implications of the DCA educational experience for other performance training ecologies?

We welcome submissions from potential contributors, both inside and outside academic institutions, who may have been students, academic and non-academic staff, and visiting artists/tutors at the College over its 50 year history in Devon. Equally, we welcome potential contributions from anyone associated with Dartington or who has been influenced by its history in one way or another.

To signal your interest and intention to make a contribution to this special issue in any one of the ways identified above please contact Bryan and Libby for an initial exchange of ideas/thoughts, **or** email an abstract (max 250 words) to: Bryan Brown at b.brown@exeter.ac.uk and Libby Worth at libby.worth@rhul.ac.uk Our first deadline for these is **20th April 2017**.

Training Grounds sections for Dartington College of Arts special issue.

Training Grounds (TG) is, and has always been, an alternative space within the journal to encourage contributors to use the kind of languages and forms that seem most appropriate to their own practice. It is a space for shorter contributions which may experiment with different writing registers, and be passionate, provocative, poetic or rhetorical. A space for lists, for saying awkward things and offering up difficult and perhaps unfashionable ideas. A place, nonetheless, for generosity and big-heartedness. TG editors for this special issue are Simon Murray (Simon.Murray@glasgow.ac.uk) and Dick McCaw (Dick.McCaw@rhul.ac.uk).

For this special issue we are looking for contributions to cover all the Dartington fields (Music, Theatre, Visual Arts, Performance Writing, Choreography/Dance, and Cultural Management) within each of the following categories:

1/ **POSTCARDS 1**: A description of a startling/challenging/rewarding moment of teaching or learning from your Dartington experience. Possibly, a Eureka type moment, or one of clarity, astonishment, insight or understanding. A sense perhaps of the feelings generated by the experience. 125 words or image/graphics to fit into a postcard size space.

2/ **POSTCARDS 2**: A contribution which succinctly describes (without comment, analysis or evaluation) a particular teaching exercise you used or experienced. 125 words or image/graphics to fit into a postcard size space.

3/ **ANSWER THE QUESTION (ATQ)**: For this area we are suggesting either of two (inter-related) questions.

Question 1 (for ex-Dartington teachers and other staff): *What was Dartington training or educating for?*

Question 2: (for ex-students of Dartington): *What in retrospect do you feel the Dartington experience trained you for and what did it leave out?*

With these two ATQs we would aim to carry 4 or 5 examples for each question and as far as possible these would reflect the different subject areas and timelines over the College's history. You could either send us a draft of your response to one of these questions, or arrange for a conversation with either Dick McCaw or Simon Murray. This might be in person or via Skype or phone. We would transcribe and edit your responses and agree any text with you before publishing. Responses to ATQs should be between 500 and 750 words (max).

4/ **IMAGES**: We are planning to carry at least one photo-essay and will be commissioning this for Training Grounds. However, we would welcome other photo images, sketches, paintings and drawings from contributors. In the first instance please contact either Simon or Dick, briefly describing the image(s) you are proposing. If you have enough to constitute

an interesting and revealing photo essay please do write to us and we will have a conversation with you. All images must be at the appropriate resolution: 1200 dpi for line art, 600 dpi for grayscale and 300 dpi for colour.

Please contact Simon Murray (Simon.Murray@glasgow.ac.uk) and Dick McCaw (Dick.McCaw@rhul.ac.uk) if you wish to contribute to this section or have other ideas and suggestions. Either of us will then discuss your possible contribution as we begin to curate Training Grounds. The final deadline for this initial conversation is **August 30th 2017**, but let's start the exchange going as soon as possible please. Some materials and contributions may be more appropriate for the TDPT blog and we will encourage these to be developed for the lead up to the special issue as well. The deadline for final delivery of all TG materials is **January 31 2018**.

Approximate timelines for this issue

January 2017: Call for papers published

20th April 2017: Abstracts and proposals sent to Bryan Brown and Libby Worth

End June 2017: Response from editor and, if successful, invitation to submit contribution

July to mid December 2017: writing/preparation period for writers, artists etc.

August 30th 2017 – deadline for discussing TG contributions with Dick and Simon

Early December to Early Feb 2017: peer review period

January 31 2018 – deadline for submission of all TG material to Simon and Dick

Mid Feb – end April 2018: author revisions post peer review

End April to June 2018: All main articles into production with Routledge

Early July 2018: Training Grounds articles into production

July to September 2018: typesetting, proofing, revises, editorial etc.

October 2018: publication as Issue 9.3.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Ric Allsopp, Bryan Brown, Dick McCaw, Simon Murray & Libby Worth