

From Grounded Foot to Leaping Foot:
Practice and Pedagogy Forum

A sharing and demonstration of research by Central School of Speech & Drama Senior Lecturer, Debbie Green, and Academy of Live and Recorded Arts Movement Tutor/Director, Ita O'Brien, into the development of the leaping foot from the grounded foot. The focus of their exploration is on the actor's experience of being grounded to her/his experience of lightness through elevation from an anatomical awareness of the feet and the mechanism of leaping. They discuss various disciplines of movement that foreground working the feet and encourage a mindful approach to the use of the feet in a progressive practice.

This event took place at Central School of Speech & Drama on 26 October 2010

Panel:

Debbie Green (DG) Senior Lecturer in Movement for Actors, BA (Hons) Acting, Central School of Speech & Drama, University of London

Ita O'Brien (IO) Movement Studies tutor for Actors, BA (Hons) in Acting, The Academy of Live and Recorded Arts, and freelance Movement Teacher/Director.

Konstantinos Thomaidis (KT) Actor and PhD student in Voice Pedagogy

Pat Chan (PC) Actor Trainer

Chair:

Dan O'Neill (DO) Movement Director and Choreographer

About Debbie Green

Debbie Green trained at the Rambert School of Ballet, and moved into choreographing for theatre, film and television after a career as a professional ballet dancer. Postgraduate studies at Laban led to an interest in movement when applied to discipline of acting, and she went on to create the first ever MA in Actor Movement with Vanessa Ewan. Her teaching promotes awareness of the body through the practice of Fundamentals of Movement.

About Ita O'Brien

Ita O'Brien trained at the Royal Academy of Dancing and Bush Davies School of Theatre Arts. She worked for 10 years as a professional dancer in theatre and television before

training as an actor at Bristol Old Vic and working for 8 years as an actor. She gained her MA in Movement Studies at Central School of Speech and Drama 2006-2007 and has subsequently worked as a movement teacher at ALRA and a free-lance movement director and teacher at Drama Centre, Central School of Speech and Drama, Rose Bruford and Italia Conti. Past and ongoing personal movement practices include: Contact Improvisation, Growtowski based physical training for actors, Pilates, Roth's 5 Rhythms, T'ai-Chi Chuan, and Yoga.

About Dan O'Neill

Trained at London School of Contemporary Dance, Dan O'Neill enjoyed an extensive performing career working on many productions and with various companies including DV8, The Featherstonehaughs, West Side Story and Second Stride. As Choreographer and Movement Director he has worked in both theatre and opera with The Young Vic, Frantic Assembly, NTS and Grange Park Opera, amongst others. O'Neill has made dance films for the BBC and Channel 4. He regularly teaches at CSSD and RADA.

Dan O'Neill: Good evening, and welcome to this Practice and Pedagogy Forum. It's great you can all be here. My name is Dan O'Neill, and I think I've been asked to chair this because I'm a colleague of Ita's. We've worked together in the past, and I have training in dance myself, so I have a particular interest in seeing this Forum. Also, I now work here sometimes – with other actors and theatre makers – as a movement director, so this is for me.... I thought it would be a very interesting Forum.

I'd like to first introduce Debbie Green: she is one of the two Movement tutors here at Central on the BA Acting course. She and her colleague Vanessa Ewan offer movement on this course as Movement Fundamentals and Movement Expression, and Debbie is responsible for the Movement Fundamentals of the Movement curriculum. Ita O'Brien is a Movement Director, and a teacher of Movement for Actors. Ita trained as a dancer, and worked professionally for 10 years, before training at the Bristol Old Vic in Acting. She took an MA in Movement Studies at Central, between 2006 and 2007, and has worked since, teaching at ALRA, the Drama Centre, Italia Conti, Rose Bruford, and here, I believe, as well?

Ita O'Brien: Yes.

DO: Ita is also a massage therapist and reflexologist, and has trained through Linda Hartley's one-year course, *Embodying Self Through the Experimental Anatomy of Body-Mind Centering*. It would take one year to learn how to say that, but anyway... Konstantinos is here, he's a PhD student at Royal Holloway, and he's working with us, as is Pat Chan, who has just completed her MA studies in Acting Training and Coaching at Central. The research for *Grounded Foot to Leaping Foot* was funded by TQEF, Central School of Speech & Drama, so they're here as our demonstrators this evening.

Ita and Debbie began their research in February 2009, with a period of practical exploration by themselves, and a collation of material and writing by established

movement practitioners and practices. They propose this statement: 'Grounding is a prerequisite as the premise from which to start an exploration of work that requires leaping, within the context of fundamental movement for the actor.' Between January and March of this year, they lead a series of six practical sessions with nine volunteer actors, in which Pat and Konstantinos participated, to develop these explorations. The aim of these sessions was to develop the progression from this grounded place, through the rigour and preparation required to take the body into a jump and leap, to the strength and articulation required to land safely. This is in order to maximise choice for the actor, when it comes to physically expressive work. It is quite literally a big leap for acting students to make.

This forum is an opportunity, we believe, to observe the edited recording of the progression of the work from these series of practical sessions, as well as the work demonstrated by research volunteers, and to possibly participate yourselves in some of the activities this evening. It's not mandatory, but if you think, 'oh, actually I quite like the look of that foot massage or articulation', feel free to join in – there are a couple of moments which are particularly suited for that.

After the demonstration, which I believe will take about an hour, there'll be a chaired discussion with me and the team – and hopefully you – where we can discuss what we've seen, and ask questions, and explore more. Then after that, there'll be an informal gathering, for everyone who wants to attend, in the staff room. There are also some nibbles if you are hungry. And a drink, ok, so there's another inducement.

Some of the video clips have been slightly manipulated, by repeating or slowing them down, and that's to make a point. It's not to be filmic; it's to help demonstrate what we're trying to say. Now I will hand you over to Debbie and Ita. Thank you.

IO: Thank you, Dan. So for me, this work sprang from a question that I had during my teaching of core work, of experimental anatomy, as part of the Fundamental Movement strand of teaching at ALRA. I was using Pilates mat work to help the students to engage with alignment through their body, and to work their core. I was aware that I needed to take this work to standing, but when speaking with the then Head of Movement at ALRA, Maria Clarke, we felt that it was important not to just resort to what was both of our movement heritages, which was a ballet training. And so, with this question in mind, I contacted Debbie Green, and asked if I could come and observe some of her classes.

Debbie Green: I suppose for me, the most important thing to say is that the underlying principal is being grounded. It's the first thing to be. Grounded Foot to Leaping Foot is the journey that has to be taken to get to that point when you can actually leap, and, by jumping first of all. We saw the jump as the bridge to the leap.

The research for me stemmed from a moment that is completely etched on my mind, and it took place in one of the first movement sessions of the Autumn term with the First Years. It was also the one that Ita happened to come and observe. I realised that the acting students had to go from the grounded place that we developed from the T'ai-Chi

work that I'd been doing with them, to a jump. I saw in that moment this massive gap, or gulf between the two states - from the place of being grounded, to this moment of the jump. The actor has to be so grounded. Thinking more about that groundedness, I'm put in mind of a classical Indian dancer, and then at the other end of the spectrum, the airborne leap of the classical ballet dancer; the classical ballet dancer has an extraordinary relationship with buoyancy. The actor has to be able to access this huge span. I've written it as, 'the gamut of human physicality...and jumping, is a natural, human, physical phenomenon.' And that could be in exultation, or shock, or whatever.

So the work of Movement Fundamentals is to bring awareness to the feet, and this is done in many, many, many ways by those of us who are actually teaching actors. It includes practical work, floor work, standing work, somatics, visualisation, imagery and use of props. We've got some props over there for walking on: a rope, feeling your balance, feeling your feet working; rolling on tennis balls; walking over sticks, etc.

This research is about the progression of how to propel yourself off the floor. Much of this work at the beginning looks very inflexible and very earth-bound. It's certainly not yet leaping through the air. But what it is, is a very decisive start to the process of the body being able to lift itself into the air. The result of the preparation work is that the joints feel very worked, and sort of zingy, and there's a real sense of the support that the feet develop for that progression into the air.

I ask myself, has there ever been a Golden Age of actor's feet? Well, I haven't noticed one in 20 years of being here; I still think the actors that I teach work hard in the way that they've always worked to connect with their feet. I'm sure there are differences that are there, that we could discuss over the years, in terms of footwear, etc, but my task, year on year, is to develop the articulation of the feet. And here, in London, it's not our habit to walk on the sand, or to crouch, so that kind of muscularity of the feet, or the relationship of the feet to the pelvis doesn't exist. But even so, I wonder if even feet like that would also find it quite hard to jump.

IO: So, in this journey we felt, as we were working through, that we hadn't created anything new. But what we have done is curate work from many different disciplines and practitioners to develop the progression of the use of the feet. We've looked at ballet, yoga, Pilates, reflexology, Body-Mind Centering, experiential anatomy, aerobics, T'ai-Chi, Suzuki, Butoh, Indian dance from Anusha Subramanyam, and the work of Andrea Olsen, Litz Pisk, Trish Arnold, Christian Darley, Grotowski, and Jane Gibson, to name a few.

We have developed a progression that takes a first year acting student from connecting with their feet, physically, to exploring the anatomy – walking, and connecting with the floor; exploring weight into their feet; articulating the feet; training the feet through to the jump and leap; and then to the landing. Finally, drawing from Jane Gibson's work, which I experienced in December last year, we apply the principals. The workshop was 'An Investigation into Lightness and Heaviness in Relation to Movement, Music, and Specific Dances'. And we apply the principals of the groundedness, and the essence, or quality of the leap, in a peasant dance and an aristocratic dance, respectively. This is shown at

the end as an example of how this work can be applied both in creative movement, and later on in an actor's training.

What I feel is new, is what came out of the progression of the different modes of movement, and in particular, in the application of the Body-Mind Centering work. The first realisation was the application of the understanding of the ankle-foot, and how this clarity gives an understanding of the progression of the line right the way through the leg to the pelvis. We realised how the power of the ankle-foot is applied right the way through the work. The second realisation was in the connection of the toes to the pelvis, and how this gives a visual image of the internal connection of the feet to the pelvis, particularly when working in turn-out, which allows for a more varied vocabulary when working with a ballet technique, rather than just ballet terms. And thirdly, the final thing that wasn't so much from Body-Mind Centering, was just really grasping all that the jump and the leap gives to the body in practical terms, as well as in the emotional landscape for the actor, when expressing the whole gamut and extremes of human emotion.

DG: I think the anatomy, the pelvis-feet connection, transition material, muscular developmental work are really rich. Having for many years started my whole Movement Fundamentals term off with a session on the skeleton, I just found it very enlivening to hear the anatomical detail that Ita brought to probably the first session we ever had. I thought it made sense, and I thought it was inspiring. Yes, I'm just going to quote from Grotowski, because there's a really nice quote here. It says, 'The earth finds us. When we jump into the air, it awaits us.'

We thought the time taken to really experience the working of the feet slowly, and in a calm way, was very valuable. The infant developmental work, which we're going to look at, for me, was very bold and thrilling, filling that gap moment, between the grounding and the leaping. We both of us come from the ballet world of 'up-ness', and we both found a way of getting 'down', but whilst having travelled a distance from ballet, still recognise that the technique has a potency. It's a dance technique that's so versed in the jump – petit allegro, grande allegro – that it seemed that it must provide something in its lexicon for this progression. We've continued to use ballet terms, and that might be something that we talk about afterwards.

The movement practitioners that we looked at have devised certain exercises, and specific work for the feet, and we just want to offer what we've explored, and discuss your thoughts that have been triggered through that work.

In a conversation I had with Scott Handy, an alumnus of the BA Acting, we talked about the foot, and a form of South-East Asian theatre, but how, in the West he thought it was a psychological aspect that the actor uses for acting. He suggested that somehow the foot was forbidden territory. This is some years ago, as well. Unspoken about like death, he said. As an actor, he said he'd never developed strong-weightedness, or really got into his feet and used his own particular light-weightedness. He acknowledged that the difference between groundedness and buoyancy was dramatic. Feet have been a no-no area, but it's accepted that what clothes the feet – the shoes – give the character, or

help towards a character.

IO: So this question of, why does an actor need to learn to jump? This is something we've re-asked ourselves right the way through this – why do we need to get an actor to jump? An actor has to take on the whole gamut of human physicality, and thus, jumping is part of that natural human extreme; on a physical level, but also, on an emotional level. Jackie Snow, Head of Movement at RADA, says, 'an actor needs to have at their disposal an instrument that, at all times, expresses their dramatic intention.' The actor's training is similar to that of a musician, practising with an instrument to gain the best possible skills. It is the fine-tuning of the body and voice that enables the actor to achieve the highest level of expressiveness in their art. Equally, Grotowski says, 'I would like to make some observations regarding the work on the body: one can resolve the question of the obedience of the body through two different approaches. The first approach is to put the body into a state of obedience by taming it. It is possible to compare this approach with the classical balletic treatment of the body, or that of certain types of athletics. The second approach is to challenge the body. To challenge it by giving it tasks and objectives that seem to exceed the capacities of the body.' I feel that the work that we have collated covers both aspects – the rigour of the training, as well as challenging the body by taking them into a jump, and into a leap.

Linda Hartley describes the courage, commitment, and the trust it takes to leap wholeheartedly into the unknown territory beyond the safety of our personal space. This place of the leap can take you to that heightened place both of emotion and physicality.

DG: We just kept saying: jump or leap for joy, out of exuberance or with pleasure; jump with a shock; leap out of the way. And leaping away from something is very, very different from that childlike jump for joy. So a jump or, leap is always dynamic. And we said that, there's also a leap of faith, somewhere in there.

Going to Dan...

DO: Yeah I just read this. You see, I've got the script, I'm following along...

DG: He said that it takes 10 years to train the legs and feet of the dancer, and so does not go there with actors. However in the role of teaching Movement Fundamentals, we've got the scope to go some way in addressing this matter. We cannot take years, but think there is some investment that can be made in developing leg and foot work to expand the visual and internal awareness of the workings of the foot which achieves a greater clarity when working with the foot.

Geraldine Stephenson talks about the process of the jump as being lengthy. In a seven-day workshop she attended on leaping, it took six days to prepare, and only on the seventh did anybody leap. Joan Littlewood – so we're tracing back into theatre – likened the training of an actor to that of a classical ballet company. She wished to train a company to the picture perfection expected from a ballet company or a great orchestra. That's always repeated by Ewan MacColl, who worked with her. Then Andrei

Droznin from the Moscow Art Theatre School talks about actors' bodies being a Stradivarius. This work that we're dealing with is the beginning of the actor's journey to this end, so it's helping the actors to get in tune with the bodies that they actually have.

So we've looked at this old-fashioned training, and we've been sifting back through it. We originally started thinking that we'd organize a remedial plan of work that was outside the work that we did in the class. We then realised that actually, we could flesh out what we were gaining by placing it within the curriculum, although not by making it any longer, because what we're having to do, is shorten our courses hour by hour. So whatever we did we had to really concentrate on the delivery.

From investigating Trish Arnold's work, we respond to Sue Lefton. She talked about the swing, the drop, the follow-through, and the suspension of this work, as being a place that's alive, and heightened, and not in the naturalistic world. And it reminds me of an answer to the question I was asked by a gifted, but very movement-shy student, as to whether being grounded makes a better actor. Because being truly grounded gives her, the potential to find and offer something more heightened than is possible in the naturalistic world.

IO: Here again we go from the heightened – the extremes of the groundedness – right the way through to the leap, and the leap also gives us heightened quality. This is the essence of what I believe we can take from Trish Arnold's work in our exploration of Grounded Foot to Leaping Foot. Trish's statement: 'We can't go out of the floor without first going into the floor.' We can help people to be grounded by swinging. In our progression, we experience the swing in the tai chi warm-up. The release into the floor from the swing, encourages more of an abandon and release in the joints, which is a quality required for the abandoned leap.

This links with the release of weight, and giving a weight a gravity that I experience in Jane Gibson's work – in her workshop, again, which investigated the Lightness and Heaviness in Relation to Movement. Of course, Jane Gibson's work is part of a progression from Trish Arnold's work.

So, that's a brief introduction of what this forum will take you through. So, yes, we're now going to show you some of this work – obviously not all of it, because we've only got 45 minutes left. We hope you enjoy the journey.

DG: This is just us. We'll just watch it for a moment, because it's come up.

IO: Should we just move on?

DG: This was in our workshops, and we've only just got to the jump. This may be the first session we did the jump. But I'm going to move on, because we wanted to look at this.

IO: We're supposed to be playing that, while we've talked about all the jumps, so...we

missed it.

DG: So here we have, very clearly, a dancer's feet. And it's really where we started from – connecting with the foot. We said it takes 10 years to get to that sort of level of the articulation of the feet, but what is so clear here on this slow-motion version of this is the pushing into the heel-ball-toe, going back to the floor, toe-ball-heel. Beautiful.

Ita: So that connection with the foot started our progression - from that first place of the T'ai-Chi into the leap. We then came right back down to fundamentals, connecting with the foot, and now I'd like to invite Konstantinos and Pat into the space. And if anybody here would like to join us as well, if you'd like to take your shoes off and just connect with the feet. You don't have to; it's just an invitation if you feel like it. Just take hold of your foot, make the connection with it; getting to know your foot. So, first of all, just feeling the foot; just feeling up and down your foot. Where is hot? Where is cold? Where feels malleable? Where feels unknown? Where it feels familiar? Where feels nice? Do you like your foot? Do you not like your feet? Has someone got really nice feet?

And inviting you, then, just to massage around your toes, and along the top of your foot, right up to your ankle. Don't rush it. And also the invitation is to massage the underside of the foot. And just gradually take some time to experience your foot, the top, the ankle, the underfoot, the plantar foot. And allow these words to wash over you, as you make connection with your feet. Vanda Scaravelli, a yoga practitioner, says, 'The soles of the feet and the palms of the hand are centres of vitality, and by spreading, they also meet and receive energy from the Earth. This flow of life from the Earth, from the heels, through to the top of the head, brings energy and order in our brain, in us, and consequently, around us. This is essential. This connection is of greatest importance. It is a connection of the Earth to the sky; of matter to brain; the link from the human to the divine; and also from heaviness to lightness in our bodies.' Connecting there with Jane Gibson's words of the heaviness to the lightness in the body, and also Grotowski's about the journey through the spine from that heaviness to that lightness. Scaravelli again, 'Gravity is like a magnet attracting us to the earth, but this attraction is not limited to pulling us down, it also allows us to stretch in the opposite direction towards the sky. This is a natural process, ever-present not only in human beings but in all upright living things, in trees, in growing flowers and in plants.'

And at this point, I invite you to finish with that foot, and go on to the other foot.

And again, the same thing, just connecting with that foot, allowing yourself to feel that foot. Does this foot feel the same? Do you have the same connection with this foot as your other foot?

And again, inviting you to go through the same massage, connecting with the toes, the upper foot, the ankles, and the plantar foot. Again, you let these words wash over you: Andrea Olsen says, 'The feet are a base of support, and connection to the ground. They contain many nerve endings for sensing and responding. Shoes, concrete, flat pavements, lifts, escalators, encourage us to lose the articulation and sensitivity within

our feet. In the insect world, the feet are the mouths; are the tongues for the moth. Our feet receive and express our connection to our environment. They spread the weight of the body to the ground, giving stability and mobility to our base, absorbing shock, and the impact of motion. They give articulation refinement to our movement and gesture. Our feet constantly inform us of our stability, of our connection to the Earth.'

So once we've had that initial connection, we move on to the connection with the anatomy of the foot. And again, this is something that we constantly asked ourselves: how much anatomy does an actor need to know? And the conclusion that we came to is very much that the clearer internal visual awareness you have inside yourself, knowing how things work, the clearer you'll be able to use and articulate those places. And so we come to looking at the anatomy. And so, if you want to feel – those of who are feeling your feet – down from your tibia, you come to your talus, this fantastic huge bone that takes most of the weight and spreads it forward to the navicular and the three cuneiforms. It spreads out to the first part of the foot, called the ankle-foot that we'll look at in a bit, and then to your first three toes, or your phalanges; phalanges one, two and three.

And then, coming to the back side of your foot, feeling what's called the calcaneus, the big bone that you think of as your heel, and this comes forward to your cuboid, and then the outer two metatarsals, and finally to your fourth and fifth toes. Lovely, thank you.

So after looking at the bones of the foot, we encourage the actors then to draw around the foot. And really looking at the structure of the foot. The foot does not rest flat on the floor. It has this fantastic arrangement that allows for these arches through the foot. So you have the medial arch, the arch on the inside of your foot that comes from the calcaneus, lifting forward to the talus, and the navicular, the cuneiform, and then forward, it touches the head of metatarsal one. So this line here is a medial arch.

And then at the outside of the foot – if Mr Skeleton will allow me to turn his hip...

DG: He's got a funny head, as well.

IO: So we have the arch on the outside of the foot, again, coming from the calcaneus, this time forward to the cuboid, and then fifth metatarsal to the head of metatarsal one.

These are the three main points of weight, at the point of heel, the posterior inferior tuberosity of the calcaneus, and then the head of metatarsal one, and the head of metatarsal five. You can see where Debbie's pointing them out with this lovely red laser. The green triangle there is the triangle of weight going into the foot. And then there you can see the medial arch that connects from the calcaneus forward to the head of metatarsal one; the lateral arch, coming forward through to the head of metatarsal five. So again, helping the actor to really feel the sense of the beautiful architecture of the foot.

Looking at the bones and ligaments and tendons of the foot that form this fantastic

cathedral-like arch, lifting the foot away from the floor, that allows for shock absorption, and that fantastic propulsion through the foot.

The next point that we've helped the actor to see is how the weight very beautifully separates across the foot. The medial arch – the whole of the inside – can also be called the ankle-foot. And the ankle-foot receives most of the weight of the body, taking it forward. It is involved in the major propulsion of the body through the foot. Then you have the heel-foot, and it comes from the calcaneus forward to the cuboid and the fourth and fifth metatarsals. The heel-foot is more involved with absorbing weight, and maintaining the fine balance and articulation along with the fibula.

Having that sense of how the ankle-foot is the main canoe – taking the main weight of the body – and how the heel-foot is like the out-rigger that finds stability and balance.

With all of this in mind, in those few short minutes, I invite you, those who would like to, to stand.

Just feel those three points of weight. You might just want to play around with those three points, feeling the ankle-foot, the head of metatarsal one, the head of metatarsal five, the calcaneus. Circulate around those points, really sending your mind's eye there. I hope, even from that short journey into bone, you can have a sense of how the visual image helps you to send your mind's eye right into your feet and feel the connection in the feet, and the points of weight.

Then really send your weight into the ankle-foot, bringing that in, and send it further out into the heel-foot, just feeling how the weight comes through your thighs, from your pelvis, right the way down to the ankle-foot, and the heel-foot. Now just spend time circling with your knees, and feeling the connection of the fibula; that fine balance as you come to the outside. Perhaps you can feel as the weight comes from the tibia, right the way down to the talus, into the ankle-foot. Lovely. Thank you.

I invite you now to sit, as I take our two demonstrators into the space and ask them to walk through that space sending the heels away. Really engage with the ankle-foot and, as you push through the foot, allow yourself to pick up the pace a bit, sending the heel away. Now, feeling the ankle-foot by pushing away, right the way through from the head of metatarsal one through to the toes. Really engage with the walk and, as you walk, pick up the pace slightly. As you send the heels away, feel how the hamstrings get involved. Feel the strength through the core muscles and the abdominals. Really feel the feet taking your pelvis, your thorax and your skull through space. Play with taking your weight into your ankle-foot, feeling what this does through the body. Feel how it affects the legs and the pelvis, the line of the stomach, the chest, the breath and the line of the head. Then take the weight right out onto the heel-foot. How does this affect the gait? A tension runs through the calves, the thighs, the pelvis. Then coming back to just walking; what you might consider your natural walk. This is really getting the actor to connect clearly with how they might walk through the foot, what mixture of ankle-foot, heel-foot movement that they engage in, as they walk through space.

We also looked at MBT shoes – the shoes that have that rock – and realised that when you walk properly, sending your heels away and really pushing through the ankle-foot and pushing off through the toes, this is actually what MBTs are doing. They help you to engage the feet with correct use and find propulsion right the way through. Lovely Debbie, thank you.

DG: I don't know whether you saw that as they were going, but we just looked at walking backwards. Again, you get a sense of time to really feel that heel descending into the ground, and its connection right through the body to the back of the neck. The pull of gravity under our feet makes it possible for us to extend the upper part of the spine. Walking slowly like that gives people an ability to really feel the feet working through into the floor, and then experience that ricochet in movement, going up the back. It's a very still, quiet moment.

We're going to come on to the articulation of the feet now. This is about muscles, joints, and really strengthening the feet and the muscles around the shins and the calves. This was just starting – we were using the pointing of the foot, and then the snatch-back of the flex-foot. So we're really articulating through to the end. The next exercise we did holding underneath the thigh, was flexing the foot. We'd start curling, pointing, lifting the toes, flexing the feet, pointing, pointing the foot, curling the toes, flexing the foot. And then we went to a chair. So I don't know whether you want to just grab a chair...?

So, sitting on the edge of the chair now, we're just going to look at the rotation of the ankles. You're just going to lift your foot up. This is what we really like to keep practising – lifting the foot up, drawing the foot from the ground, articulating up from the ground on an out-breath, breathing in, flexing the foot. So, breathe in, lift the foot, breathe in, flex the foot, and then start rotations. Start going inside, so you do it with an out-breath, rotating the ankle four times, breathing in as you flex, and then breathing out, rotating the other way. Use your other foot whenever you like, when the first one gets tired. And then, you're going to just flex the foot, breathe in, and on the out-breath, just moving the top of the foot without losing the flexion. So you try and keep the flexion as much as you can and just rotate in the ankle.

Then, keeping the flexion, and breathing in on that flexion, just rotate the toes, the top of the feet, just see if you can rotate the toes inwards, in a circle, and then outwards. This one, again, is really looking at the muscles of the shins.

IO: If you ever want to try an exercise, this is a very good one to try.

DG: Turning your feet in, you're going to keep the knees facing the front, and off you go, tap. One, two, three, four, five... (*tapping*) And breathing in, lifting the feet, trying to keep the knees facing 12 o'clock. This is from Litz Pisk's work, by the way. And! (*Tapping*) Trying to keep the knees... and then, straight ahead. And! (*Tapping*)

IO: Anyone feel the burn?

This is really helping the actor just to start getting into those fine articulations of the foot, and waking up all the fantastic muscles and tendons around the lower calf which often just stay unused and unarticulated.

DG: What happens at the same time – I love this exercise, because it's called a Dragon Stamp and it's taken from the T'ai-Chi warm-up – you breathe out, and on the in-breath you rock on to the heels. Try not to go backwards, then breathe out. Now, have the sense of coming up... And because you take your time there, you can really allow the pelvis to respond. The student will begin to feel the work of the abdominal muscles – and also this whole hip pelvis mobility. So just rocking back on the heels on the in-breath, and rocking up on the out-breath. This is beginning to give the student this sense of this incredible line from the thigh across the pelvic region, and into the torso. I think that's a lovely exercise that we keep repeating, it goes on for two terms so the student will experience that. Again, that's using the articulation of the feet. It comes in very simply, and it's slow, so there's time to really notice what's going on.

Ok, next image.

IO: This image is from *Anatomy Trains* and looks at the muscular line that lifts from the feet, across the legs, and then incorporates the psoas, and lifts up. Debbie and I love this image from Miranda Tufnell. It is essential to help the actors to engage with the feet and encourage them to really feel the strength of the feet across the psoas, lifting in to the top of the ribcage. It allows them to let the strength come from here, and keep the chest and the upper body open, so the emotions can flow freely. Miranda Tufnell says that the psoas muscle connects the inner thigh up to the spine as high as the floating ribs, and the lower border of the diaphragm. The legs begin high up in the centre of the body. This is something we keep reiterating, yes, that finding the strength and articulation in the legs comes from here. When the strength isn't developed here, then you end up trying to jump from this place (indicating the upper chest). Again, this is trying to really get the strength and articulation through the body, so that you keep the release really open, and the breath free. For the actor to stay in connection with their breath and with their emotions, they need to keep everything as free and as open as possible. Lovely.

The next part that we brought in and this is from Body-Mind Centering, is this idea of connecting the toes to the pelvis. So again, we'd like to invite Pat and Konstantinos to come and sit on the floor.

So again, this is quite an ethereal connection through to the belly, but one that we felt was vital. This work comes from BMC and we found it in Andrea Olsen's *BodyStories* book. I have also attended workshops with Mark Chandlee Taylor, and so I contacted him, and we've had further discussions about it. We've also had discussions with Karen Fisher-Potisk, a Body-Mind Centering practitioner who's here, on this concept of the toes to the pelvis. Also, looking further at the *Anatomy Trains* book by Thomas Myers, which looks at lines of connections through the body.

It's perhaps easier to see it visually. So I'm going to ask Pat and Konstantinos to squeeze their big toes together. The big toe then has a connection right the way through to the pubic symphysis. If anybody wants to get on the floor, you're welcome, please do.

Feeling that connection in a line, from the big toe right the way through to the pubic symphysis, and then, squeezing the second toe. Feel how the second toe connects right the way through to your sitz-bones. It's quite intricate to try to isolate that line right the way through. Squeezing it in, so you connect it with your fingers, and then see if you can take the fingers away and keep that connection. See if you can feel as it shifts down to your sitz-bones. Then, squeezing in your third toe, can you feel this connection a bit further out, to your hip socket? There, that's in green on the image. So that is the ankle-foot. Feeling and seeing how the ankle-foot has its stability within the pelvis, from the pubic symphysis, dropping down to the sitz-bones, out to the hip sockets. You have that main body of the ankle-foot, linking to that main body in the centre of the pelvis. Then you come to what would be the heel-foot. So, pressing the fourth toe together, see if you can feel that line. You may feel it coming to the outside of the hip, to the centre of the outside of the sciatic notch, and lifting up – do you want to show them where the sciatic notch is, Debbie...? Next, lifting into the sacroiliac joint, and then finally the fifth toe. Squeeze the fifth toe, and feel how that connects to the rim of the ilium and comes right the way through to the anterior superior iliac spine. Now with that connection in our minds, we're going to go back to the chair work.

This is Olsen's work, but taking this mind's eye view of how the pelvis connects, find the strength and the line through the foot first of all. Then, taking our fingers down, and running a line up, so the centre of the ankle-foot is the second toe, and running up from the second toe, following the line up the talus, from the knee, where it comes in, and then dropping down into your sitz-bones. Allow yourself to press into the top of the foot whilst lifting the heel off, and feeling the line, taking the energy right into the ankle-foot. And down. Then take that off the floor. And down. So as you lift, pushing the sitz-bones into the floor – sorry, into the pelvis – and feeling how the sitz-bones become the feet of the pelvis. And then, from there, pushing both feet off.

This imagery helps the actor to understand the line of the foot clearly. So many people, if this imagery isn't there, end up coming to a rise here, where they're really opening out towards the fourth and fifth toe, which doesn't give stability to the ankle. For me, the revelation was following this line through the body; having this imagery really clearly fixed. This line goes right the way through the plié and the tendu. Then we see where the strength comes from in the leap. And then from there, just feeling your greater trochanter and lifting, and, as it were, corkscrewing. Next, just allowing yourself to move, first of all from the fifth toe, from the fourth toe, from the third toe and feeling how the quality of movement changes, and the connection to the pelvis. From the second toe, with the sitz bones, and finally to the big toe, the connection goes right to the centre of pubis symphysis. Lovely.

This is all work from Andrea Olsen. And then, finally, taking that exploration to the wall.

Yes?

DG: See if you can find a bit of wall. You can watch while Konstantinos and Pat demonstrate. I'm just very aware of time, so we'll move fairly swiftly.

Just getting the students to have the legs up the wall. Just flexing the feet on the out-breath, and pointing the toes on the in-breath. Obviously, with all this work, it isn't just to do with the feet in this exercise, there's masses of teaching that would need to be done, but we're not going to concentrate on that now, just looking at the feet work.

So, creeping up the toes, creeping up the wall with the toes. Really getting the toes to work.

IO: So perhaps allow ourselves to take it slow, so you really think about where you are working the articulation of the foot.

DG: You've got the floor supporting the back. Then, this is where we start; you can push into the wall, push away from the wall. Push into wall, jump away. Then, pressing into the wall when you're ready, push away from the wall using the articulation of the feet. It starts the jumping.

From there, you're going to do this lovely thing, which I thought was very exciting. We developed this. I'm going to skip this slide ...and then, pushing away from the wall into the space, you get that length here; this wonderful line through the torso and into the thigh. You're really getting that sense of gathering the body to go into the jump. Good.

IO: As we were reviewing the work, we came to what we call the first jump. We realised that actually we have got the action of jumping right from the chair, and off the floor to here from here, and off the wall. We realised we're really developing the correct use of the feet with that movement right the way through the work, right the way from the chairs.

Then, integrating the Body-Mind Centering work, so taking that pressure off the wall into, first of all, the homolateral push. The Body-Mind Centering allows the actor to feel that sense of the push off through the body. The actor feels that beautiful lengthening as the leg comes and drops into that parallel line through the body.

So, in Body-Mind Centering, we have the infant development progressions, and we would use two of these. You have the homologous push first, which is the frog leap that we're going to get to in a minute. So, taking that feeling of a push from the wall, then turning forward, and pushing through the space. Lovely, thank you, Pat. So again, having that baby mind, looking forward, and really pushing forward, and really pushing off, trying to reach and pull.

Lovely. So seeing there, that lovely connection right the way through, giving that strength through the foot.

Lovely. And connection. And allowing, again, that reach and pull. Lovely. So again, allowing the actor to really feel that sense of the push-off, and the strength from the toes. Lovely. And then taking that into the homologous push, which is the frog-leap. And this is where we're first of all in the upright position, getting the actor to really push off through the toes and finding strength right the way through the toes and just playing inside their kinesphere. Once you feel comfortable there, really having that pushing off through the toes feeling, then allow it to start taking you through space. This is the first point at which – in a baby's development – the leap is an act of faith. Then, taking you beyond your kinesphere... That's lovely, Konstantinos... Now really pushing out with the hands, pushing yourself out...

KT: OK! (*Laughter*)

IO: That's it. Lovely. So this is the first time that the actor's really in more of an upright position and really feeling that extension right the way through the legs from the toes. Lovely. And then feeling that same push, in pairs.

DG: It's also very clear on the video as well, if you can see it through the pair working.

IO: And that connection through the foot... lengthening, lifting... that sense of pushing yourself through space.

DG: Recreating that line at the front of the body, that sense of gathering up, that sense of buoyancy.

IO: Lovely.

DG: Yes, that's really lovely. Then we come to standing. We made a very clear decision to look at 'movement practice'. We've looked at Body-Mind Centering, we've looked at T'ai-Chi and we've just come back into the ballet technique very unapologetically. We're going to move briefly through this.

I suppose the first thing we need to say, very briefly, is when we come to the ballet technique, we're obviously talking about turn-out. The work that Ita was describing with the pelvic connection made a huge difference, in terms of the actor being able to understand how to turn the feet out. Why does an actor need to turn her/his feet out? There are many answers. It gives them the full range of movement and incredible stability. It opens up having to work in that lateral space, which takes a lot of muscularity and takes a different kind of energy. So by the time you come back to a closed position, you've also experienced that openness. When we watched Anusha Subramanyam's class, she was very, very clear when she talked about that posture, about this inner smile, so that the little toe was connected with this opening. Also in T'ai-Chi, one of the amazing images is the big ring from the hip bone to the pubic bone, to the hip bone. So you've got this wonderful Halloween grin, which again, helps that sense of openness.

We would start very clearly with the plié, which we're going to ask Pat to do. Pat's very

clear and has studied ballet.

And we looked at the progression of how we might use the plié – I'm just going to speed through it very quickly, Pat. So just a demi-plié, with the feet together, and then she'd come up, so we could talk about breathing. So she's going to go right down to a full plié here, and she's going to come on and come up, so she's pushing her heels down here, and then she's going to just do a demi-plié. So she's using the feet to push into the ground as preparation for the jump, and then a full plié. What do you think of that? Fantastic seeing that body work like that. Then... pushing up, and then finally coming to the first position. So here we are for the first time in turn-out, and for her this is a familiar place, but we're talking through that inner smile work with the pelvic girdle. Then into the full plié. And there's something about this plié – pushing, and back down again – which not only is a preparation for the jump, but is also, I think, preparation for landing. We were thinking about jumping from a very strong height and, by experiencing that work of the plié, your body's actually understood how to receive your weight, how to push your weight both up and take it downwards. I can see the benefit of the plié from both aspects. We then come from the plié into the tendu, and the glissé.

IO: It's on the barre. So, taking this articulation that we've worked with, with the act of (she's putting her socks on to make it easier) extending the foot. First of all, just coming to the ball of the foot, and having that sense of the fan-like splay of the big toe and connection with the pubic bone; the second toe to the sitz-bones; the third toe with the hip socket; the fourth toe with the sacroiliac joint; and the fifth toe with that beautiful arch that comes out, connecting right the way through, and then just pulling the heel back. Thank you, Konstantinos.

And now, really connecting with the floor and getting that sense of Vanda Scaravelli and the connection of pushing into the floor to push away from the floor. I feel that finding the internal connection of the pelvis with the toes is what helps an actor to feel the turnout, rather than just talking about the turnout. Thank you, Konstantinos. Do you want me to join?

Now, going to the ball of the foot again, and then pushing the toes off, as we had done in the homologous push; then, coming back to the ball of the foot and then pulling the heel back; then going to the other foot; now, finding the connection with the floor, pushing into the floor, just coming to the ball of the foot and then coming back. Then from there, go to the ball of the foot, taking that into the tendu. Then – obviously we're going through a lot quicker now – you go from the tendu into the glissé, which then allows us to extend off. It's about the idea of asking and of trying to get an actor not to tense. It's about the idea of letting that push from the toes elongate, rather than lift. You're not using muscle to lift, just the strength from the toes to push. We don't get overly clenched buttocks, overly clenched thighs, but we think about elongation and the connection with the pelvis. Lovely.

We're doing this very quickly here, but in a term's work, you would be doing this every week, which builds the strength.

And again, just starting off the pliés in parallel, taking it right the way down, extending through the pelvis, squeezing the inner thigh... Feel that connection of the inner thigh and fifth toes and the inner thigh psoas. Lifting now, experience the openness through the chest and use the breath... Breathe in and push into the floor. As you rise, turn it out in that plié, pushing in, and pushing into the floor. And again, feel that sense of connection from the toes spreading into the pelvis. Find that line through the turnout. Pushing into the floor as you rise, and then into the tendus and then finally into the glissé.

So, two and two, and then one each; and one, and two, and three, and again. Find that connection with the psoas. From the inner thigh through to the psoas, which allows the mid-line to be held, rather than rocking from side to side. Fantastic. Lovely. And then taking that, Debbie?

DG: We've got another useful exercise here – Pat, if you don't mind – the relevé, where you're going from the plié, tendu, into that halfway house, on to the balls of the foot, then pulling up. That might be an exercise that we could develop, because you get that sense of the jump, but it doesn't actually take you into the air yet. That was one stage that we looked at. And then, we come to the first jump.

IO: So we're more or less on day six now. We've only got day seven to go.

DG: One of the most difficult first jumps that we found was in Pisk's book, but we thought it was worth looking at. I'm just going to talk it through. Konstantinos and Pat know it. Starting off with the feet close together... Off you go, and... Rise, jump. Rise, jump. Rise, jump. Rise jump. Feet in parallel. You're rising on straight legs, lowering into the bend, and then jumping. So... Rising up, and lower. Jump. Rise up, lower, jump. Rise up... Rise up. And then, the thing at the end? Feet together. Ok, rise and jump. Rise and jump. Rise and jump. And then just bouncing – straight legs. So that was the first point we actually got off the ground, into the jump. That's fine, lovely, thank you very much.

I think this is worth talking about a little bit. This is what Ita was talking about before, where we get the sense of the jump; that incredible excitement about jumping, and that desire to jump high. In fact, what happens, is the student starts putting the chest out, and actually doesn't go high at all. They've lost that lovely buoyancy which they found throughout the work, and which we can bring back a little bit by looking at the aerobic jumping, which is much more dexterous. I do think there is something about that pushing forward, which leads you into a very arched jump. It's always that thing of balance, so something very light, and buoyant, or bouncing, is very important. Ita showed you with her hands.

IO: As I had my hands there, really encouraging her to feel that lift through the psoas; engaging the psoas helps lift the ribcage over the pelvis, like a mushroom. It means the actor still has that full breath. In my journey from a dancer to being an actor, I keep that sense of holding the frame really tight but have come to understand, through Body-Mind

Centering, the correct posture comes from softening and releasing this area. This hyperextension here, (indicating the line of the diaphragm) forms part of the startle or Moro reflex [demonstrates a gasp, throwing the head and arms back], which finds completion in the embrace of a source of comforting contact, such as a hug from the mother. You've seen babies, when they're frightened, they [gasp], but then when nurtured, they come here [demonstrates position, bringing the arms into a hugging gesture]. And that's the same with the actor. They do a roll up and they come to a sense where they feel this – nicely pulled up and correct. But actually they've gone into hyper-extending through the diaphragm. They need to just bring that softness in. It softens the chest and allows us to be open and released, lengthening through the back of the neck, and finding that place where you can truly take the in-breath without tension. Lovely.

DG: There are all sorts of jumps that you can look at. Pat, I don't know whether you would like to show the sautés, just very briefly. We're looking now in turnout, so she's just going to do sautés. And then she might do some in second position. Then échappé... So, closing and opening. Yes, that's right. And then, the other – would you mind doing some hopping – the jetés. That's it Pat, just continue hopping on one foot, so you're really pointing the foot. There's a series of different jumps.

IO: This is where, even for a trained dancer, the articulation goes when you get tired. That's really, really hard work, yes? To keep that articulation going, having the strength right the way through the calf muscle, through the thigh, into lifting the whole body off the floor. It's difficult.

But, as Grotowski said, taking an actor to that place outside their comfort zone; taking them to a place of risk. Yes? There is a rigour in the training that takes them to something beyond themselves, beyond where they feel they are safe.

DG: I think we're just going to play this...

IO: fine. We're not going to talk...

DG: There, we've reached the leaping moment.

IO: You're not going to talk...?

DG: Konstantinos is just going to walk in slow motion. And you're going to take that walk into a quicker-paced walk. Yes. And now you're going to move through the space and you're going to take that walk into a run. Then, when you're ready Konstantinos, just take that run, really allow yourself to run in the small space that you have, and then take yourself into a leap whenever you like. Really letting yourself, yes, just leaping through the space whenever you like. Taking that into a run again, into a walk; and then taking it down to slow motion; and then building up the same thing again. Konstantinos, in your own way... Yes. So it goes through a slow walk, into a walk, into a run, and then into a

leap.

IO: And when we were exploring this – really exploring the journey – well, we found the leap is something that is gorgeous. It is the moment of that up-lift, and that release. It is that moment of amazement; the moment of having the feet off the ground; the communing with the air. The leap for joy, exuberance, pleasure. That leap is about the achievement of something. Yes! I've done it! Yes? The energy through the body and the excess energy that can take you easily off the floor; the flying through the air; the element of risk. Yes, and feeling [gasp] – this is everything that a leap is. Not just physically what you do, but more – what it gives the actor, emotionally – that sense of a place of freedom, release, edge.

DG: And when you move into something like a leap, and then come very clearly into landing, the difference in the leap is that you land on one foot very often. I think more or less all the time. We talked about leaping as opposed to jumping. And so, through the work, really understanding how the foot comes back into the ground, and how safe we need to make the muscles round the ankles to protect the foot when it actually comes back into the ground. So we thought that the landing was a very important area to look at.

IO: We're going to show the video now.

DG: This shows very clearly that landing into the ground, followed by the soft padding into the ground.

IO: That sense, there, of the articulation of it. So again, really feeling that softening, releasing, dropping down into the earth.

DG: Then we had a very clear idea that once you've experienced that sense of up-lift, that you're still all the time working with the grounding. Each of us as a movement tutor will find our own way of doing that. My work takes on some of the tai chi work that I've already talked about, where you're absolutely in this very rooted position, and just swinging from the front leg to the back leg. Because you've had that experience of the ankle-foot and heel-foot, you can really apply those experiences or visualisations or sensations through that work. It would go into a slow walk, where you're using that awareness of the foot as it moves through the space. Knowing that it's actually articulating in order to take the weight, so you're still building up the strength. Pat and Konstantinos have studied some Suzuki, so we looked at stamping. I've done classical Indian dance myself, and studied this thing about really taking that energy down through the ground through the stamps. It's actually going underneath the hip. Then coming back the other way, with that lovely walk. But to really know – with classical Indian dance, for instance – how to stamp, it's really important to relax the foot. That needs consideration, because there can be a lot of gripping of the top of the foot, which, if you are doing that for a long time, could be really dangerous.

IO: Stamping actually gives great strength to the body. As you stamp into the floor, you

have to hold your body strongly. It reverberates right the way through your whole body, right the way through your bones. It absolutely wakes the feet up, it makes you tingle with aliveness and vibrations. To have such an absolute communication with the floor, through sound as well, is fantastic. There is nothing delicate or conceptual about it. It is a complete connection. Taking it back to the leap then, it's that sense of having connected with the feet, finding the leap and then coming back down to find a really deep, strong articulation with the floor. It puts me in mind of the work that Butoh does around the belief that the Gods live in the Earth. Butoh dancing is performed down towards the Earth, with low posture. It also reminds me of the Native American Indian dancers around a Totem pole, stamping into the Earth, to connect with the Earth's energy.

DG: I think we just need to move along. It's just that real sense of being able to just release and drop into your feet, into your body.

IO: This is part of the work that we did with Jane Gibson – finding the heaviness through the body. Gibson talked about the quality of matter in the body. Using the decaying exercises of Butoh to get grounded, we explored ways in which you allow yourself just to release. Give in to gravity, feel your whole body release from the skin, through to the muscle, right the way through to the bone. Letting go, and finding that complete release through the body.

DG: Having found that grounded place, what we also looked at was play-time for the feet, where we were talking about that light-weighted, buoyant aspect of the feet, which could go towards the aerobic area.

IO: Shall I put the music on?

DG: Yes, we're just going to put a bit of music on, to liven things up. [Dancing] Ok. Play around using petit jeté stuff, bring points, all that kind of work, keeping it very lifted. And we're going to finish. [Music] We thought this was a useful example of something light – a minuet – which we wouldn't, obviously, do with first year actors.

IO: In Jane Gibson's work we found that release and that groundedness. Now find that lightness. Use the music. Just listen to music. Allow yourself to let the music permeate you. I'll carry on playing it in a minute. I'd invite you now to close your eyes, and just really listen to the music. [Music] Allow the music to permeate you. Feel how that is affecting you. What is it doing to you? Now, if you'd like to open your eyes... And allowing yourself just to move through the space. Beautiful, thank you.

DG: We've rushed it through to the end, but that's where we felt we wanted to finish. Tapping of the Earth. Leap into the air. Just very briefly, before I hand over to Dan, I just wanted to say that it felt that it was a journey worth exploring. We had a good time on the way, but we felt that there really was a gap for the actor. I really saw it. We recognised it. And, well I'm just going to say it again it seemed that we needed to fill in the gap that was huge, in front of my face, in the class.

DO: Thank you very much, that was very intriguing. They've obviously done a huge amount of work, and they wanted to demonstrate what they've discovered, so it's a bit later than planned but that's ok. What I suggest we do is take questions from the floor to any of our protagonists here, and, yes, will you all come and sit in the lights a bit more? I realise some of you are probably just thinking, 'oh, I really need to get going, I don't want to be rude, but I want to hear something,' so we'll try and crash through a question time, and then we'll sojourn to the staff room for more personal interrogations. So first of all, anything you want to inquire more about? Anything that you thought, 'Ooh, I didn't know that,' or, 'I don't believe you?' Anything? Yes, Hello!

Audience Member 1: I wondered why you chose to put the actors in the trainers at the end?

DG: Some of that was barefoot, but there's something about the freedom of the aerobic trainer which supports the foot. We thought that – certainly from a stamina point of view – you're protecting the foot. That's why.

Audience Member 1: I think that's really exciting. That you went from such detail, and then...

DG: It wouldn't necessarily be in the same class.

Audience Member 1: Sure. I think it's great that they then get that fine quality of movement with the trainers.

IO: At that point, it's a case of really raising the stamina, having done very fine detailed repetitive work. Aerobics is about building that stamina, so you can actually raise that energy in the body.

DO: Yes.

Audience Member 2: You spoke about creating a safe environment so that the actors can take the risk – physically, as well – but, I noticed something that you didn't speak of, but you demonstrated in a way, about the language you used. I was wondering how conscious that is, and if it's a choice? The positive language you keep using when commenting on the actor's exercises: saying it was 'lovely', 'brilliant', 'a very brilliant leap,'. And I was thinking, how much is that part of your facilitation in creating a safe environment, for taking the risk?

DG: No. I think you create it when it's genuinely exciting. And the students may offer that response. And when something works, then you can celebrate it.

Audience Member 2: Yes, but there are different ways, let's say, to push someone, or guide someone to take that risk, and go beyond their physical boundaries. From what I've seen, you didn't actually push someone, but you allow it to happen, and so the actor can find this freedom, from his side. I don't know, I mean, how did you feel?

KT: Can I jump in?

IO: Yes, please do.

KT: From a participant's perspective, it's not that it was always positive feedback, it was factual feedback. That work creates a language of saying, 'this is what your bones do, this is what your muscles do, so here, you will need *that*.' So it's never negative, of course, it's just, 'that's what we need to do.' It's factual.

Audience Member 2: Did that make you feel more safe?

KT: Of course! Because it's one task I have to do, it's nothing supernatural. Sometimes you have directors that say, 'jump.' Oh, ok, I'm jumping. 'Oh, I don't like it.' 'And?' 'I don't like it!' That's not the language here.

IO: Going on from what you said there, Konstantinos, it seems very detailed, and, as we went through it just now, it very much felt like the main body of the time is given to this early work. When you get those foundations clearly put in place – when you get those visual images in place and when you go through each movement – then when you come to standing, finally, and doing the pliés, into the tendus, and then taking that into the centre, that everything has been put in place. It's one thing after another, yes? So then when it comes to the leap, you hope that you have created a physicality that is safe for the actor, because their body has been placed in the correct way.

DO: Yes?

Audience Member 3: You mentioned all the different disciplines from which you drew and they have very different ideological and historical premises. I was wondering whether you found, through the practice, those ideologies clashing with each other, and whether that affected the work in any way. Or did you just concentrate on the mechanics each of these techniques offer, and the point where these mechanics meet?

IO: Yes, our focus was the feet. From all the books that we've been looking at, we extracted, very specifically, the workings of the feet. They affect the whole body, the breath, everything. Through our understanding of our own training, and our different heritages, we've brought together stuff that we understand, and we've created a progression from all the different movement practices. I feel there wasn't a conflict.

DG: We were trying to find important links. We didn't talk about some of the amazing images from those martial arts practices that seemed to link very wonderfully. So, no.

Audience Member 4: One of the things that I noticed was that the feet are so completely and utterly linked to rhythm. This was an area that wasn't particularly explored, am I right? Whilst looking at the anatomy and the placement of the bones, the weight, the sense of heaviness, the sense of lightness, the stomping, there is a whole language of rhythms with feet. Is that your next step, or...?

DG: Come and join us?

IO: We were very clear that we were working within the realm of Movement Fundamentals, not creative movement. And, therefore, to be very clear that we're preparing the physicality of the actor, then taking that into all those rhythmic explorations. We were taking it into animal work, into work with Laban, into character work. And this is also very much, aside from the period dance, first-term's work. Yes? That laying down very clear anatomy, and connection with the line through the body. In this first term, exploring that whole progression from being grounded to leaping. So absolutely, rhythm is huge, but we're very clear that this is Movement Fundamentals, not creative movement.

DO: Yes, hi.

Audience Member 5: I was thinking all the way through, as you were doing it, 'I think I'm doing a lot of this,' but I'm doing it from a rhythmic perspective. I'm trying to develop work using the African aesthetics of performance. For example, one of the basic warm-ups within an African dance class would be walking rhythmically from flat-foot to heel to ball, to outside, to inside, to shuffle, to toes grabbing. I think I saw practically all of that there. I don't have a question, I'd just like to observe that I think there is some possibility in terms of looking at Movement Fundamentals, to bring that rhythmic element in. Today has been fantastic because, perhaps I'm not looking at it in the fine detail that you have, and I think you've opened up, for me, the way in which that rhythmic work can be more finely tuned.

DO: Yes?

Vanessa Ewan (Senior Lecturer and Course Leader, Movement Studies at CSSD): I wondered if you'd found, in your research, any successful jumpers with no feet? There are a lot of animals whose feet have evolved into being on their toes, like ballet. Then they grow a hoof, and they don't have feet, but they run and jump just on that, with their knee joints. So I just wondered if you found any humans that have a way of jumping that have our modern flat-foot?

IO: No, but we did discuss how some people have a natural balance without having trained, articulate feet. It might come from their physical make-up and their strength through their thighs. So they can jump in the air, but what they probably won't have, is the quality of being able to articulate, and the ability to land safely. If you ask them to jump repeatedly, then they probably wouldn't be safe. But we discussed the whole question of flat feet as well, looking through the research. Some of this Pilates work really helps the articulation through the feet. Doing the tendus and toe grabbing helps to re-engage the tendons and the muscles of, particularly the medial arch that have given up the ghost. You can re-energise them. But absolutely, you can jump and have that supreme balance without the articulation.

VE: I suppose I'm just wondering if we're going the way of the other animals, because I know that our feet are not doing as much any more. I was asking what is the future?

IO: Partly this work comes out of the fact that we don't articulate our feet as much as we did, we don't work out in the fields as we did. We're sitting most of the time. These are the muscles that are getting the work these days. But for an actor to show a Greek person, or someone from the mid-century or whatever, they need to have this whole facility. And, yes, somebody through this research did say, 'did you know that apparently the next thing to go is a fifth toe?'. There's a suggestion that we're going to lose our fifth toe because we're no longer articulating through our feet. So we're trying...

Audience Member 6: Then I must tell you this. Apparently it has come through that our thumbs have never been stronger due to our tapping on our phones. Thumbs were never used like that.

DO: So this is partly a mission to save the fifth toe, everybody.

DG: It's a big task.

DO: I take your point, absolutely, that there is, through the process – whether it's a creative process, or a cultural going somewhere – already some of this stuff innately in there. But what I found, personally, just seeing that, was that it re-confirms things that I'd innately been playing with. It gives you the technological backup that academic research gives you. I'm definitely going to go away and sort through some of these bits of information. As you said, that concentrated delivery I think is a very key part of this, where you've collated this information. One of the core things is how to articulate that easily to people, in a short space of time. For me, just looking at the diagrams of the feet and going, 'oh, right', and then playing with my foot... I'll remember that forever now. I can take that away. And so, in defence of the thing you slightly misquoted, it takes 10 years to train legs, therefore I won't *bother* with actors.

DG: Sorry, Dan.

DO: The context was BATP, and it's a two-hour session. Hopefully, by stealth, you're still going to train the legs and the feet by involving the rhythm, or getting them to move another way, or getting them to pick somebody else up. Having this sort of back-up would make me think, well, maybe... Intellectually, you are allowed to bring the turn-out into an acting class, briefly. It's not going to freak them out. But the language thing, I think is important. How do we get away from the French? I don't want to hear about a vague, pirouette-y changement. They're not words that we need to know, in this language. So, are you going to come up with a means of expressing ourselves, too?

DG: I don't know what you think about that...?

DO: Do you know what I'm saying? Because I think that's such a blocking thing.

IO: Well I think, for me, there's a very simple answer. If you don't come from a ballet background, you do things on your tippy-toes, and you use your...

DO: ...Bend your knees, rather than pli .

IO: Exactly! So you use an innate vernacular, really, to communicate the same actions. I find the language less problematic, I think that's very much about people, from their different practices, re-defining their terms, and making sure that that communicates amazingly clearly to the people in front of them.

DO: That you're dealing with.

Audience Member 7: I don't have a problem with language at all, but I did just want to comment on what's so glorious about seeing such tight research. It's just that sense of how, by focussing on one thing very, very explicitly, it allows you to really re-connect to the whole body. Thinking about the feet, and the leap in relation to weight, for example. We haven't really talked about weight, but weight is implicated in everything that's been on offer. It's implicated in the structures that you put in place for an actor to be able to leap, to walk. The leap is a slightly more extraordinary kind of state of being, so I just wanted to say it's a lovely portal to the whole body. I didn't find it un-holistic at all. I suppose there's a question in that... In your observations of the group that you worked with, was weight something discussed, or understood? How was people's rapport with abandoning weight to space, and landing? Were they changed by the work?

Audience Member 8, Stephanie Schonfeld, (one of the volunteer actors who participated in the six practical sessions, January – March 2012): It didn't come into it. It was just this joy of leaping. I was probably the dunce of the group. I was the only one who wasn't ballet trained, and I take your point, the vocabulary – the pli , and all the rest of it, and also some of the anatomy, did fox me, some of it, but I've taken away basic stuff like the heel-foot and the ankle-foot, which I find so helpful. Also the turning out, the smile of the pelvic region, I found terribly helpful as well. I think you can channel it. The weight didn't come into it really. With that joy of the leap, you forgot weight.

PC: I'd like to say something. When we did the research, I used to concentrate – because I'm ballet background-based – and I used to think about my top. But, when I was doing the research for them, I started to think about my legs. It actually gave me more groundedness than before. I actually walked with my chest like that, but later, when I discovered the legs, I really took care of my legs, and I think I understood them better. It wasn't about weight.

DO: Are there any other observations or offerings? Ok, well I would just like to conclude then, and say it was absolutely fascinating work. We feel really privileged to be invited, and to come and see all this, and not to have to buy a ticket. It seems so generous, having put all this time in. So I want to thank you doubly for that. I really hope that whoever the powers that be are will help support you to keep on going, to investigate. Clearly it's in really good hands, and you've made some confirmations and clarifications. Portal is a really good word, I think. It also gives one the confidence to be very, very technical. It requires it. I just love the idea of saying what's going on, and flagging it up. I think sometimes we forget the consequences of what we're being asked to do. And

there are lots and lots of consequences for new people who are moving. So thank you very much indeed. Will you join us, those of you who've got time, upstairs?