



Dance through Traditional Rhythms: A Practice-as-Research Exploration of Colombian Rhythms Informing and Shaping Contemporary Dance

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Practice-as-Research Exploration of Colombian Rhythms
Informing and Shaping Contemporary Dance**

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Abstract

This research employs a practice-as-research methodology to investigate ways to expand choreographic creativity by means of applying 'Colombian traditional rhythms' in dance improvisation practice. Drawing inspiration from Vida Midgelow's approach (2020), the study adopts a reflective and reflexive method, emphasizing interdisciplinary collaboration and contextual awareness. The primary research inquiry focuses on uncovering new movement vocabulary and dynamics by enriching responses to rhythmic patterns. Collaborating with a percussionist and two dancers, the methodology comprises a multi-step process involving experimentation and exploration. For this research, the rhythms that are being explored are Cumbia, Bullerengue, and Mapale. The experimentation with these rhythms reveals insights into the precise interpretation and embodiment of their accents, leading to role-swapping between the dancers and the percussionist for enhanced understanding. Furthermore, the researchers involved in the process delve, among other focus points, into deconstruction, dialogue generation, and improvisation, culminating in the development of groove, creativity, and liberation. The analysis highlights the effectiveness of structured tasks in fostering collaboration, enjoyment, and the emergence of new movement vocabulary. Through ongoing feedback and iterative refinement, the study offers a task-based methodology titled 'Ways to bring Syncopation in Movement Improvisation'. Ultimately, the research seeks to evoke a profound sense of connection to rhythm, fostering authentic movement and inner peace.

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Introduction

Theme and Motivation

This research is about combining Colombian rhythms and Contemporary Dance, to explore the potential of enrichment this could lead to. My motivation for this research started from a need to find a source of renewing stimuli to incorporate into one's dance practice, an urge to bring novelty and syncopation to movement. I reflected on those interests that have consistently excited me over the years, particularly folk music and dance rituals from various traditions and cultures. Recently, I was particularly inspired by the traditional Colombian band Songaia, which I decided to focus on.

Inspiration

Captivated by the entrancing rhythms of Colombian traditional music, particularly experienced through the mesmerizing concerts of Songaia, I have found myself filled with inspiration and an irresistible desire to move in response to these rhythms. I experienced a new sense of enjoyment, groundedness, and a primitive groove that led to the discovery of new movement vocabulary. Most importantly, my body began to take over my mind; I found myself able to allow my body to move and enjoy the rhythm without overthinking or being burdened by judgmental thoughts about the aesthetic outcome. These rhythms freed my intuition, instincts, my mind, my body, and filled my soul. These sensations led me to explore the potential new dynamics, both in movement and in body-mind healing, that these traditional rhythms could introduce to contemporary dance. Specifically, this inspiration has sparked ideas for expanding movement vocabulary and for an approach that aims to bring back the joy in dance training, often overshadowed by overthinking and judgmental critiques. Furthermore, it has become a new source of novelty for my choreographic process.

Listening to traditional Colombian music, I started noticing the interesting syncopation in its rhythmic structure. Why Colombian rhythms and why traditional? Because traditional music holds a profound connection to cultural roots (Kumar, V.,

2018), offering a primitive feeling of growth and evolution due to the power of being connected with those roots. This connection can instill a unique groundedness, strong presence, and deep emotion in movement, providing a special type of powerfulness. The rhythmic complexity found in Colombian traditions, originating from the influence of African complex rhythmicity in Colombian folk music (List, 1980), with its syncopated and polyrhythmic structures, provides a rich source of inspiration that deviates from what I usually encounter. This new precious stimulus inspired me to think that incorporating these rhythms into contemporary dance may lead to new movement vocabulary, a sense of freshness, unpredictability, and renewed movement qualities and dynamics. It can also inspire new ideas and ways of connecting or listening to music and responding to it, while simultaneously enhancing presence and performativity through an honest feeling of enjoyment and connection that these rhythms inspire.

Other practitioners' works

Watching other choreographers' works based on music from various cultures, such as Akram Khan, Hofesh Shechter, Ohad Naharin, etc., when traditional rhythms are present, I feel a more powerful groove, and sense of enjoyment. These works fill me with inspiration, combining primitive rhythms and the enjoyment of movement projected through the dancers' presence.

For example in Akram Khan's MA, which premiered in 2004 (EuroArtsChannel, 2014), I notice how he responds to the complexity of Konnakol rhythmic patterns by creating contrasts, accenting different syllables, while maintaining the powerfulness of the traditional Indian dance through his presence and hand gestures. The dialogue he generates with the musician while using his voice and dancing with his arms is similar to my methodology, as he listens and relates to the rhythmic compositions through his movement. Judith Mackrell, a dance critic for The Guardian, describes how Akram Khan explores the dynamic interplay between Western and Indian storytelling and performance on stage (Mackrell, 2004). Generally, Khan combines movement

vocabularies from different styles, especially traditional Indian dance and contemporary dance (Howlett, n.d.). Although I find this combination very interesting, I still feel the urge to focus more on the rhythm of the traditional dance itself rather than the original movement vocabulary of that dance combined with contemporary. Adding this inspiration from Akram Khan to my toolbox, I continue to explore other practitioners' perspectives.

Hofesh Shechter, for example, reveals his background in percussion through the jagged rhythms driving his works (Roy, 2009). His work *Clowns* (2016) is a great representation of the incredibly powerful connection between rhythm and movement, which amazes me. While his choices of music and the way he allows rhythm and movement to influence each other is one of my favorite sources of inspiration, I feel more inclined towards the ultimate use of traditional percussive instruments and their raw original sound. This is why I chose to collaborate with a percussionist playing Colombian rhythms on the traditional Colombian Caribbean drum called *Tambor Alegre*. Although Schechter's works are very close to what I am exploring, I am intrigued by the raw simplicity and complexity at the same time of traditional instruments, especially percussive ones, without the addition of electronic music, as often seen in Hofesh Shechter's works, such as *Unsprining* (2006). These raw sounds evoke an indigenous environment, transporting my mind and imagination to a different place and time. I am interested in exploring how this sensation influences my and others' movement and whether others experience similar sensations when exposed to these sounds.

Lastly, I looked at Ohad Naharin's works like *Deca Dance* (2000), where I resonate with his approach to embodying rhythm. Reading the chapter "Multitasking Inquiries" from the book *Embodied Philosophy in Dance: Gaga and Ohad Naharin's movement research* by Einav Katan, I relate to his concepts of coordination, effortless effort, and connection to rhythm. Katan describes:

Coordinating instructions, attunement becomes effortless effort. Thus, dancers must have physical and mental freedoms. Dancers learn to control each rhythm separately as a flow until attentiveness is there and both the flow of direction and sensation pass through movements. When the operation of each movement

is clearly and distinctly felt as an organic procedure, they can move forwards towards the integration of two varied feelings (Katan 2016: 136).

This description closely aligns with my intention to prioritize the organic development of the process, seeking effortless effort, physical and mental freedoms, and approaching rhythmic patterns separately to reach a flow and a deeper connection to the rhythm. In Deca Dance, Naharin also incorporates body percussion elements, which I include in my tasks as well because it is a great tool to release tension, foster creativity, generate dialogues, enrich movement, and contribute to different dynamics leading to powerful and healing outcomes; since body percussion also has therapeutic effects (Romero-Naranjo et al., 2014). This also connects to a re-finding-joy-process in the sense that through playfulness, when involving body percussion, along with all the above-mentioned benefits, the process results in more joy as well. These elements inspired me from this approach, and I incorporated them into my practice-based research.

Research Questions

My research questions revolve around understanding how syncopated rhythms can be embodied through dance improvisation, influence movement dynamics, and potentially expand choreographic practices through improvisational tasks that bring syncopation in movement. They are formed as follows: In what ways can syncopated rhythmic patterns from the Colombian Tradition be used through dance improvisation to expand my choreographic practice?

The potential of these rhythms to lead to new movement vocabulary guided me to develop a task-based methodology that will introduce syncopation in improvisation and enrich the choreographic creation process. While this methodology is based on Colombian traditional rhythms, it could also be applied to other cultures' traditional rhythms. Additionally, I considered how the application of Colombian rhythms in contemporary dance might alter the individual dynamics that we tend to use most of the

time in our practice.

Over the years, I have observed that each body cultivates a tendency to focus on specific qualities that may feel easier or more enjoyable. However, we all experience periods of feeling repetitive due to this tendency and seek a source of novelty. Therefore, I ask: How can new movement vocabulary or dynamics occur by enriching the ways of responding to rhythmic patterns? How can these rhythms affect the way we listen and respond to music through dance? How can the unexpected and surprising structure of Colombian rhythms influence our natural way of moving to make it unexpected and surprising as well?

In other words, I want to investigate how connecting to Colombian traditional rhythms can help us surprise ourselves by moving away from habitual movement patterns and thinking while moving, allowing the rhythms to inhabit and move our bodies in new ways. All these questions stem from a single root: a source of inspiration that seems endless which, for me, is rhythm.

Approach to Repatterning and Movement Habits

There is also another approach that focuses on moving away from movement habits and towards repatterning, developed by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, the founder of Body-Mind Centering. According to this approach, during hands-on work, using different rhythms of touch, directing attention to specific layers of the body, and following existing lines while suggesting new ones, we can harmonize with the various tissues and their associated mental qualities; Cohen (2017) states that 'acceptance and curiosity are the guides'(Cohen, 2017). By focusing our attention on identifying the primary tissues through which we express ourselves and those that are usually less active, we can allow the supporting tissues to be activated while the typically active ones rest. This shift in energy expression provides more choices and enhances body and mind connection and awareness (Cohen, 2017).

Reading this made me think that if we consider the use of tissues as analogous to

movements and follow this approach, we can break free from habitual energy or movement patterns and create new links between our body and mind, potentially leading to new discoveries. I based my methodology on this thought, among others, as it addresses different parts of my research questions, especially the last one. Cohen's approach highlights the 'habit of reaction that does not allow for spontaneous response to ever-changing circumstances' (Hartley, 1995). Therefore, I began considering ways and tasks that can encourage spontaneity as a tool to lead to unexpected and surprising ways of moving, as I mentioned above. If a particular joint is habitually used in only one way, reversing the initiation pattern can significantly release tension and expand the range of motion. This process bypasses habitual pulls and resistances, the unconscious grooves which our movement has fallen into, and reawakens awareness in the entire area. As we experience a new way of initiating movement—or rather, recall an old way—the underlying mental habits that influence these patterns also begin to loosen and change. When we return to the usual way of initiating movement, we often find it has gained more freedom and support (Hartley, 1995). And if we take our thoughts one step further, and think of our well being when moving:

All genuine healing comes from within; by awakening consciousness to the inner working of our being, we can release restrictive or destructive habits and allow our innate healing potential to work for us. Any step that helps us take our healing back into our hands is a step toward personal empowerment and greater respect for our own authority and integrity (Hartley, 1995: 301).

Translated into my findings, this connects to the joy and letting go that led the dancers to their greatest discoveries throughout the practice. It is the reason that made me conclude that joy, acceptance, a healthy mental state, and presence in the moment can be the most nurturing tools for innovation and renewal.

Theoretical Framework

To form my theoretical framework, I engage with the work of several scholars who have examined the intricate relationship between music and dance within the framework of choreomusical studies. This includes the contributions of Wilson and Henley, who explore rhythm as a lived experience and emphasize its role in both educational and performance contexts. Their approach highlights creativity and kinesthetic awareness, which resonate with my practical research findings. Additionally, I draw on the insights of scholars such as Stepputat and Seye, who analyze the dynamic interplay between musical elements and dance movements, emphasizing the collaborative nature of these art forms. Moreover, I consider the perspectives of O'Connell on the concept of musical groove and its impact on dance practice, exploring how groovy rhythms characterized by moderate rhythmic complexity and syncopation enhance pleasure and movement stimulation. By reflecting on these diverse approaches and integrating them with the results of my practice-based research, I aim to develop a comprehensive understanding of how rhythm can be harnessed to rediscover joy in dance and foster innovative movement vocabulary, thus forming my own perspective.

Research Rationale

The rationale for my practice-based research project lies in the pursuit of innovation and enrichment within contemporary dance through the exploration and incorporation of syncopated rhythmic patterns derived from traditional Colombian music. Several significant scholars and practitioners have investigated the relationship between dance and rhythm. For example, Laban's effort theory examines rhythm through the analysis of how we apply effort in our movement. (Bilenko, 2019) Another example is Dunham's approach to dance as 'rhythmic motion' and the incorporation of polyrhythms in her practice (Gonzalez 2015). Gottschild's focus on the 'polyrhythmic dancing body' (Gottschild, 2004), Keersmaecker's way of creating movement based on the structure of

music (Burg, 2022), and Duncan's interpretation of rhythm as the means that connects us with the earth (Berger, 1992) also contribute to my understanding.

Drawing from these diverse perspectives, my approach to understanding rhythm and movement practice is informed by the integration of effort dynamics, polyrhythmic structures, and a deep connection to the music and the earth. I find Laban's analysis of effort useful for understanding how different qualities of movement can be rhythmically articulated. Dunham and Gottschild's emphasis on polyrhythms inspires me to explore complex rhythmic layers in my choreographic process. Keersmaeker's method of structuring movement around musical compositions guides my process of creating syncopated dance phrases. Lastly, Duncan's connection of rhythm to the natural world grounds my practice in an embodied, holistic experience and accompanies my curiosity about the therapeutic properties of movement. By synthesizing these insights, I aim to develop an approach that highlights the interplay between traditional Colombian rhythms and contemporary dance, fostering innovation and enriching the dance practice.

Observing different traditional dances, I notice that, even though there is usually a basic rhythmic pattern repeated or enriched by variations of this basic pattern, there is a characteristic joy when people dance to those traditional rhythms. Rhythm can have a great impact on dance and, emotions as it is widely admitted and discussed from researchers like Jessica Phillips-Silver, Daniel J. Levitin in his book 'This is your brain on music', John Blacking in 'How Musical is man?', and others. However, the work that drew my attention the most was Charles's Keil's on 'participatory discrepancies', which incorporates a significant focus on groove. Keil introduced the concept of 'participatory discrepancies' (PDs) referring to slight asynchronies or timing discrepancies between different instruments, that create a 'productive tension', making the music feel more dynamic and alive. This engages listeners through this joyful effect of social folk dances. According to Keil, these specific rhythmic qualities that achieve this effect go beyond mere timing and embody the emergent processual qualities of musical emotion. This phenomenon induces listeners to move, creating a feeling of joy and engagement.

Essentially, the slight variations in timing among musicians contribute to the groove, making the music contagious and prompting people to dance (Butterfield, 2010). Empirical studies have shown that these timing discrepancies, typically around 20 milliseconds, are often imperceptible as individual events but contribute significantly to the overall feel and groove of the music. This groove is what makes people feel connected and compelled to participate in the dance (Butterfield, 2010).

Therefore, in the context of social folk dances, it is these nuanced rhythmic interactions that create an engaging and joyful experience, hooking people through the dynamic interplay of instruments and the resulting groove (Butterfield, 2010). My idea lies in embracing other practitioners' approaches to the incorporation of rhythm in dance like those mentioned above, but focusing specifically on the use of Colombian traditional rhythms. I aim to explore where their vividness, curiosity-intriguing structure, and grounding primitiveness can lead, potentially discovering different ways of relating to rhythm while moving and constituting a source of renewal for our relationship with rhythm and dance. By adding to existing dance methods that spotlight rhythm, I take Colombian traditional rhythms as a 'case study' to explore the effect of these specific rhythms in movement.

In the context of my research on integrating syncopated rhythmic patterns from traditional Colombian music into contemporary dance, the additional literature-based warrant involves positioning this study within existing scholarship. The justification for this research lies in the intersection of choreomusical studies, contemporary dance, and the exploration of syncopation through the perspective of Colombian traditional rhythms. Existing literature on choreomusical studies emphasizes the interconnectedness of music and dance, delving into the collaborative nature of these art forms. As Hanna (1982) describes:

Usually dance and music occur together; patterns of relations include mirroring, oppositions, and interweaving. Dancers and musicians often engage in interplay. In some traditions like Nigeria's Ubakala, the word for dance is also the word for drum and play, suggesting the inter-relationship of the arts. (Hanna, 1982: 60)

Paraphrasing the ideas expressed in her ARTICLE 'Is Dance Music?' we could extract the following definition:

Dance is a form of human behavior that is purposeful, intentionally rhythmical, and composed of culturally patterned sequences of non-verbal body movements that are distinct from ordinary motor activities and possess inherent aesthetic value. Music shares these characteristics but primarily focuses on sound as the primary value, with physical movement serving as a means to produce this sound, while in dance, physical movement is not the means to produce something, but the goal itself (Hanna, 1982).

This description resonates in me; I like to think of movement as a means to produce sound and consider sonic and silent movement as something that can never be strictly defined. Perhaps this is where my interest in body percussion and the interconnection of rhythm and movement originates. In any case, even when dance exists without music, I believe it creates some kind of imaginary music according to the alternation of movements, dynamics, and qualities, which can create a different music composition in each audience member's imagination, making the experience even more interesting and confirming the synergistic nature of the two art forms.

However, the specific focus on syncopated rhythms from traditional Colombian music and their impact on contemporary dance seems to be a niche that allows space for further exploration. By engaging in scholarly discussions on rhythm and dance practice, I intend to carve out a distinctive space that aligns with the evolving nature of artistic expression, cultural exploration, and the symbiotic relationship between rhythm and dance. My desired contribution is to not only enrich choreographic practices based on improvisation but also contribute to the broader field of choreomusical studies by offering a list of recommended tasks to explore the interplay between traditional music and contemporary dance.

Purpose

The project's significance lies in its potential to uncover new pathways for creative expression, offering a novel perspective on the symbiotic relationship between rhythmic patterns and movement. The purpose of this research is to approach the notion of syncopation, and through this discover different ways of processing and consequently different ways of responding or translating into movement. I then analyze the unexpected elements that may occur in movement, possible new or renewed movement vocabulary, qualities, dynamics, and mood. This purpose in the form of a research question would be 'In what ways syncopated rhythmic patterns/syncopation, expand my choreographic patterns/methods using dance improvisation as the starting point?' I aim to investigate how these intricate and syncopated rhythms can inspire new dynamics, qualities, and movement vocabularies in contemporary dance and, through this process, develop a task-based methodology with proposals for a way to expand choreographic practices.

Contribution to Research

My aim is to contribute to existing approaches to the relationship between rhythm and dance by proposing a task-based methodology for movement improvisation based on rhythmic patterns. This methodology will focus on creating sources from which we can endlessly draw inspiration for novelty in our organic way of moving by enriching it through syncopation. As I observed the progress of the above-mentioned experimentation, and while looking at other opinions on the connection between music and dance, I developed my own theory-interpretation through the results of the practical part of my research, examining the 'before vs. after' of my experiments and reflecting on other scholars' existing conclusions. In brief, I would like my contribution to be this task-based methodology of movement improvisation, which can also be used for performance creation. This methodology aims to bring syncopation in improvisation and

see what this adds to a choreographic process, and how it expands creativity and curiosity.

Finally, as I embark on an exploration of three traditional Colombian rhythms, namely Cumbia, Bullerengue, and Mapale, through a practice-based research lens, I hereby present a summary of the structure that follows. Chapter 1 delves into the theoretical underpinnings shaping this investigation, while Chapter 2 delineates the meticulously crafted methodology employed. Subsequently, Chapter 3 presents a detailed analysis of the practice-based research outcomes, illuminating the intricacies of each musical form. Through this structured journey, I aim to offer a comprehensive understanding of these vibrant cultural expressions, laying the groundwork for further scholarly inquiry and appreciation.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

At the heart of understanding the potential of movement as a response to rhythm lies a robust theoretical framework that not only provides a conceptual lens but also serves as the scaffolding upon which this study unfolds. Navigating the intricate landscape of the relationship between rhythm and dance, I have chosen to explore three key axes: scholarly insights, practical perspectives from practitioners, and the interdisciplinary field of choreomusical studies. These axes guide the exploration of essential concepts and connections inherent in the combination of rhythm and movement.

Rhythmic patterns permeate the natural world, evident in phenomena like the sun's rising and setting, ocean waves' movement, heartbeat, and respiratory cycles (Strogatz, 2004 as cited in Basso, Satyal & Rugh, 2021). Many natural systems, represented by cyclical waves, exhibit both rhythmicity and complexity (Ma'ayan, 2017; Strogatz, 2004 as cited in Basso, Satyal & Rugh, 2021). The brain, a complex, self-organizing system, exhibits rhythmic activity known as oscillations, encoding information, and shaping conscious experience (Buzsaki, 2006; Cebolla and Cheron, 2019; Gallotto et al., 2017 as cited in Basso, Satyal & Rugh, 2021). As naturally as in these phenomena, I posit that it informs dance improvisation, whether it is consciously present, imagined, or emerges subconsciously, whether it originates from a musical instrument and translates into movement or arises spontaneously within the movement itself. Considering our heartbeat as the primary rhythm intrinsic to our bodies, I interpret any other sounds, rhythms, or movements in relation to it, or as responses to it. Likewise, our breath can vary in speed, duration, regularity, or irregularity between inhalation and exhalation, yet it retains a rhythmic quality through repetition. I view these alternations as variations of the main rhythmic pattern it embodies. This often results in conscious or subconscious responses within movement. For instance, we may find ourselves struggling to complete a movement or feeling tense and stiff when we are out of breath, yet experiencing flow and control when our breath is steady.

Recent theoretical work in the field of Human Neuroscience, suggests a link

between movement and consciousness (Cebolla and Cheron, 2019 as cited in Basso, Satyal & Rugh, 2021). Body rhythms play a crucial role throughout life, influencing proper body and brain development from fetal movements to adulthood (Zentner and Eerola, 2010; Trehub and Cirelli, 2018; Headley and Pare, 2017; Sirota and Buzsaki, 2005 as cited in Basso, Satyal & Rugh, 2021). Motor movements drive cortical brain activity early in life, aiding the development of cognitive skills and emotional intelligence (Zentner and Eerola, 2010; Trehub and Cirelli, 2018 as cited in Basso, Satyal & Rugh, 2021). Movement continues to propel hippocampal and cortical oscillations, enhancing synaptic plasticity, inter-brain communication, and overall brain functioning from adulthood into old age (Headley and Pare, 2017; Sirota and Buzsaki, 2005 as cited in Basso, Satyal & Rugh, 2021). The bidirectional relationship between the brain and body involves oscillatory rhythms in the brain driving movement and vice versa. Dance, an innate human activity, synchronizes movements with musical rhythms, correlating synchronicity with pleasure from an early age (Zentner and Eerola, 2010; Trehub and Cirelli, 2018; Phillips-Silver et al., 2010; Trost et al., 2017 as cited in Basso, Satyal & Rugh, 2021). This synchronization is observed on dance floors, where people spontaneously move in tune with the music leading to positive emotional states (Phillips-Silver et al., 2010; Trost et al., 2017 as cited in Basso, Satyal & Rugh, 2021). Studies in Human Neuroscience, about physiology and consciousness, have demonstrated brain entrainment to visual and auditory rhythmic stimuli, influencing psychological states and brain activity (Neher, 1961, 1962; Walter and Walter, 1949 as cited in Basso, Satyal & Rugh, 2021). Various cultures use rhythmic movements in traditional dances, inducing trance states and altering brain activity (Park et al., 2002 as cited in Basso, Satyal & Rugh, 2021). Neuroimaging studies confirm that rhythmic music induces synchronization in different brain regions including auditory areas, attention networks, and motor planning regions (Abrams et al., 2013; Farbood et al., 2015; Kaneshiro et al., 2020 as cited in Basso, Satyal & Rugh, 2021). My research aims to explore the practical implications of these findings in Human Neuroscience within the context of dance and movement. Building upon these insights from Human Neuroscience, my project seeks to investigate

how the synchronization of movement and rhythmic stimuli can inform choreographic processes and enhance dance experiences. By drawing upon the bidirectional relationship between the brain and body, I aim to explore how rhythmic engagement influences cognitive processes, emotional states, and overall embodied experiences in dance.

Choreomusical studies examine the dynamic interplay between music and dance, emphasizing their collaborative nature and how these art forms mutually shape and influence each other and their relationship (Stepputat and Seye, 2020). Scholars in this field analyze the relationship between musical elements and corresponding dance movements, drawing upon theories from various disciplines such as music and dance studies, but also performance studies, psychology, cognitive science and acoustics (Stepputat and Seye, 2020). They emphasize the inseparable nature of music and dance, highlighting that movement produces sound and the way a movement is carried out is echoed in the sound, while music can be embodied, fostering a rich interaction between sound and movement (Stepputat and Seye, 2020). Choreomusical studies seek to understand how choreography and musical composition mutually inform one another, emphasizing their synergistic nature and drawing upon theories from musicology, dance studies, and related disciplines (Stepputat and Seye, 2020). Scholars investigate music and dance inter-relationships, focusing on topics such as embodied music interaction. They incorporate views from ethnomusicology and ethnochoreology, offering new potential to choreomusical research with culturally sensitive insights based on ethnographic fieldwork and practical understanding of the traditions studied (Stepputat and Seye, 2020). In this study, I focus primarily on the aspect of music concerning rhythm, delving into the approaches of several scholars in the field on this aspect.

John M. Wilson and Matthew Henley (2022), both esteemed dance educators, offer a comprehensive definition of rhythm that encompasses both educational and performance aspects. They delve into teaching methodologies aimed at cultivating students' understanding of rhythm as a lived experience, emphasizing the significance of creative autonomy. Diverging from conventional studio training, where rhythm often

revolves around synchronizing accents with a specific meter, Wilson and Henley advocate for an approach inspired by Margaret H'Doubler's pioneering perspective. In her framework, rhythms are viewed as recurring patterns of measured energy intricately woven into moment-to-moment shifts in muscle engagement and tension dynamics during dance performances (Wilson and Henley, 2022).

Wilson and Henley not only propose this definition but also outline specific teaching practices designed to encourage students to physically engage with rhythm, aligning with my own intention in designing practical tasks for this research. By prompting students to modulate their exertion levels within explored movement qualities and observe varying exertion across different periods, they argue that recognizing these recurring patterns constitutes the 'lived experience of rhythm in dance' (Wilson and Henley, 2022).

Through this study, I aim to take this thought one step further, seeking the unexpected elements that can occur after dancers encounter the lived experience of rhythm in dance and enter that state of mind and body. Wilson further develops this concept by exploring the connection between measured energy and kinesthesia through the study of muscular activity and dancer observations. He identifies four primary movement qualities that evoke empathetic responses in both performers and viewers, bridging scientific and experiential aspects of rhythm. Henley extends this perspective by incorporating Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's phenomenological description of rhythm as flows of force experienced through pre-reflective temporality (Wilson and Henley, 2022) and Erin Manning's view, informed by affect theory, of rhythm as embedded in the material and social world (Wilson and Henley, 2022). Drawing from Sheets-Johnstone and Manning's perspectives, I develop a multifaceted understanding of rhythm as embedded in both the experiential and socio-material dimensions of dance, enriching my comprehension of its manifestation in choreographic practices.

Moreover, they propose that the periodicity of movement qualities, perceived through kinesthetic awareness, serves as a framework for dancers to understand and embody the energetic landscape of a dance, thereby defining its rhythm. Acknowledging

that rhythmic patterns evolve across time and cultures, Wilson and Henley emphasize the experiential nature of this phenomenon. In their article 'Experiencing Rhythm in Dance', Wilson and Henley also provide movement exercises aiming to bridge the gap between scientific understanding and experiential exploration in the study of rhythm (Wilson and Henley, 2022).

I believe that a way to re-find joy, a missing piece I uncovered through the practical part of this research, in dance is to 'disconnect' from the mind and potential overthinking and allow the body to feel and take the lead. In my experience, rhythm is the most effective tool for achieving this, at least in the way it personally affects me. Wilson and Henley confirm my thought by stating, 'Rhythm is experiential, palpable to the senses though elusive to the analytical mind' (Wilson & Henley, 2022). This aligns partially with my inquiry into expanding movement patterns and breaking movement habits, as I found that through joy and presence, this occurs naturally. Expanding on the quote's relevance to my idea, this notion deeply resonates with my exploration of movement patterns and the quest to break habitual tendencies. While the analytical mind may struggle to grasp the essence of rhythm, its experiential nature, palpable through the senses, offers a pathway to transcend entrenched movement habits and embrace the spontaneity and fluidity inherent in rhythmic expression.

In psychological literature, rhythm is commonly studied in the context of music and speech perception, traditionally defined as patterns of 'relative durations between acoustic events' (Levitin et al., 2018 as cited in Wilson and Henley, 2022). However, as Cummins argued in 2019, these definitions overlook the ecological role of rhythm, which serves as a means for coordinating stimulus and action, known as entrainment. Entrainment extends beyond auditory stimuli to haptic, proprioceptive, visual, and vestibular systems (Levitin et al., 2018 as cited in Wilson & Henley, 2022).

Wilson and Henley also mention Philips-Silver's description of self-entrainment (2010) where an agent responds to their own rhythmic output, recognizing rhythm not as discrete events but as energetic turning points in their motion (Waterhouse et al., 2014 as cited in Wilson and Henley 2022). In dancing, rhythmic awareness involves

self-entrainment, emphasizing the dancer's coordination with their own movements (Cruz Banks, 2021 as cited in Wilson and Henley 2022).

These ideas of self-entrainment shed light on the intricate relationship between rhythm and movement, highlighting how dancers respond to their own rhythmic output as dynamic points of reference rather than isolated events. This perspective inspires me to consider the dancer's internal rhythmic dialogue as a pivotal aspect of my project, emphasizing the importance of cultivating rhythmic awareness and coordination with one's own movements. By synthesizing these concepts into my research, I aim to delve deeper into the experiential dimension of rhythm in dance, exploring how self-entrainment can inform and enrich the exploration of movement patterns and the breaking of habitual tendencies within choreography and improvisation.

Finally, in considering my choice of Colombian rhythms, I was drawn to their inherent groove, a quality I believe holds significance in redefining the joy within dance practice. I aim to find sources of inspiration and novelty for dance practice, for which I believe that the strong presence of joy is essential and requires effort to be maintained due to the tendency to be overshadowed by overthinking and judgmental critiques as discussed earlier; elements that can act as obstacles within the creative process. Reflecting on existing literature, particularly the insights of O'Connell (2021), I explored indicators that serve as predictors for experiencing musical groove, focusing on rhythm and accent perception. Previous studies, such as those by Matthews et al. (2019) and Witek et al. (2014) as cited in O'Connell (2021), highlight the connection between groovy rhythms -characterized by moderate levels of rhythmic complexity and syncopation- and heightened pleasure and movement stimulation. This aligns with my urge to rediscover the joy in dance practice or have the means or tools to regain access to that instinctual joy, and sequentially welcome new movement vocabulary that may emerge or new senses of freedom. By delving into the concept of groove, I aim to gain deeper insights into the relationship between music and dance, ultimately enriching my understanding of how rhythmic elements can influence movement and enhance the dance experience. In summary, these studies reshaped my thoughts and provided me with a way to

address my research questions concerning novelty in movement vocabulary by exploring the ideas of groove and rhythm as the means to re-access the feeling of joy during dance practice and to allow space for discoveries, all while fostering a healthier mental state to fully enjoy the process of dance exploration.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Based on an exploratory and experimental structure, the methodology involves a multi-step process. Initially, a collaboration group was formed, comprising a percussionist from the band Songaia, proficient in Colombian traditional music, and two dancers familiar to me for their characteristic way of moving and improvising.

The formation of these tasks is also influenced by other scholars' approaches as discussed above. For example, Laban's and Duncan's approach to rhythmic embodiment informs the task design by emphasizing the integration of rhythm with physical movement. Hartley's and Cohen's views on healing effects and repatterning of habitual movement guide the exploration of therapeutic potentials. Hanna's view on movement as a way to produce sound underscores the synergy between movement and rhythm. Charles Keil's approach on groove through 'participatory discrepancies' enriches the understanding of syncopation. Naharin's notions of effortless effort and physical and mental freedoms influence the approach to improvisation and creativity.

The theoretical framework established in this study draws from three main axes: Human Neuroscience, choreomusical studies, and insights from scholars such as John M. Wilson and Matthew Henley. Within Human Neuroscience, research suggests a profound link between movement and consciousness, with rhythmic engagement influencing cognitive processes and emotional states (Cebolla and Cheron, 2019; Zentner and Eerola, 2010; Trehub and Cirelli, 2018). Choreomusical studies provide insights into the

collaborative nature of music and dance, emphasizing the inseparable relationship between sound and movement in various cultural contexts (Stepputat and Seye, 2020). Additionally, the work of Wilson and Henley offers a comprehensive understanding of rhythm as an experiential phenomenon embedded in dance practice, highlighting the importance of creative control and rhythmic awareness (Wilson and Henley, 2022). These theoretical perspectives directly inform the design and implementation of research tasks in the methodology chapter, shaping practices that aim to explore how synchronization of movement and rhythmic stimuli can enhance dance experiences, foster rhythmic awareness, and facilitate the exploration of movement vocabulary and joy in dance practice.

The methodology encompasses three categories of tasks in each session: precise interpretation of simplified rhythmic patterns, generating a dialogue between basic patterns and varied responses to them, and encouraging free alternation between sensations discovered during the previous stages or sessions of our practice. These three methods chosen for this project—precise interpretation of rhythms, dialogic generation, and free alternation—are now proved to be particularly suitable for exploring the relationship between rhythmic patterns and movement improvisation. These methods allow for a detailed examination of how dancers internalize and respond to rhythm, facilitating an understanding of both conscious and subconscious movement changes.

Documentation

Through documentation, including personal notes during practice, video recordings, reflective writing, ongoing feedback, and analysis, the study aims to observe changes in the movement, identify unexpected elements, and develop a task-based methodology named ‘Ways to bring syncopation in movement improvisation.’ The percussionist and dancers play crucial roles, contributing ongoing openness, curiosity, and feedback, which are taken into consideration when shaping or adjusting the tasks to facilitate an enjoyable and enriching journey for all of us.

Overall, it is an experiment aimed at stimulating curiosity, creativity, and analyzing the impact of each task on the dancers' movement. To deepen the analysis, details, comments, and further observations are extracted by watching the video recordings and describing the resulting changes in the dancers' movement. Video recordings provide a visual and temporal record that can be analyzed in detail, while reflective writing offers insights into the dancers' subjective experiences. Furthermore, video recordings allow for detailed post-session analysis, which is crucial for capturing the nuances of movement changes. These methods are complemented by movement analysis tools such as Laban Movement Analysis (LMA), which provides a framework for systematically describing and interpreting movement patterns. This combination of methods ensures a comprehensive approach to addressing the research questions.

This project employs practice as research to explore the combination of Colombian traditional rhythms and contemporary dance. As in Vida Midgelow's approach, Practice-as-Research (PaR) can be a departure from conventional knowledge formation, involving reflective and reflexive methods with interdisciplinary and contextual awareness. Its experiential and embodied nature, and the embrace of uncertainty it carries, allows it to become a transformative process (Midgelow, 2020).

Structure

The structure of practice, aiming to understand how syncopated rhythmic patterns from Colombian tradition inform dance improvisation, is based on the selection of three rhythmic patterns: Mapale, Bullerengue, and Cumbia. An initial meeting with the percussionist was held to present discoveries about Colombian rhythms and preferences for specific patterns. We discussed elements and rhythmic patterns that had drawn my attention while listening to Colombian music or researching Colombian dances. Considering both suggestions and his cultural input, we agreed to work on Bullerengue, Cumbia, and Mapale. The selection criteria were based on the desire to have a variety of speed, complexity, and potential for dialogue generation within the chosen patterns,

providing the dancers a range of stimuli to draw inspiration from and potentially influence their movement. This selection is also informed by the work of scholars like John M. Wilson and Matthew Henley, who emphasize the importance of rhythmic diversity in dance improvisation (Wilson & Henley, 2022), as mentioned earlier.

The next step involved a pilot practice with one dancer and the percussionist, proposing some improvisational tasks using the basic rhythmic pattern of Cumbia. This marked the beginning of the practical aspect of experiential research and analysis, based on on-the-spot observation during practice and further analysis of the documented material.

Task Categories

The structure of practice consists of three categories of tasks:

1. **Precise Interpretation:** Tasks focus on the precise interpretation of simplified rhythmic patterns, divided into parts, through movement and body percussion. This involves experimenting with the dancers' movement responses, improvising while staying loyal to the patterns' accents and nuances.
2. **Dialogue Generation:** Tasks aim to generate a dialogue between the basic patterns and varied responses. Both the percussionist and dancer experiment with "playing around" the patterns, generating a dialogue between rhythm and movement. This involves practicing ways to listen and respond while keeping the simplified pattern as a base to return to when needed. Meaning by "playing around" the patterns, that they can choose to accent different beats, add layers, pause, subdivide, or suspend the time, following their instincts while connecting between them (musician and dancer or between dancers), and connecting with what they see or listen. This happens first with either the musician or the dancer playing around the pattern and the other one responding and, gradually, both having the freedom to do so at the same time. In detail, using a "call and response" approach or having the percussionist's and dancers' inputs evolving at

the same time, I present instructions for both such as following, pausing, adding, or reducing accents, interrupting each other, creating contrary qualities by listening to each other's contributions and more that are explained further in the next chapter.

3. **Free Alternation:** Tasks encourage free alternation between the most interesting sensations discovered during practice, moving towards free improvisation informed by previous tasks. This gives a clearer idea of the changes these experiments bring to the dancers' movement.

Analysis

The analysis focuses on observing changes in movement and identifying unexpected elements, resulting vocabulary, dynamics, energy, and mood. My way of analyzing the dance improvisation experiments is to observe which instructions are effective and lead to a change in the way the dancer is moving and specify and describe that change. For instance, I pay attention to the moments that the interaction between music and dance brings enjoyment and novelty, and I keep notes on the instruction or set of instructions that contributed to this outcome. This way I build a set of instructions-based tasks that meet my criteria, expectations, and goals and I form my methodology through this list of tasks. Other than that, my role in the process is also to facilitate the explorers' journey by creating tasks based on my research questions that awaken curiosity and creativity, while ensuring a playful and enjoyable environment. Throughout the process, I am observing and noticing the changes that each task brings in the way of moving and analyzing the unexpected elements that may occur in movement, possible new or renewed movement vocabulary, qualities, dynamics, and mood. By recognizing which tasks or rhythmic patterns yield the most interesting results in movement, and analyzing what were the resulting changes and why and how these changes happened, I choose the tasks that set my task-based methodology.

Research Methods and Tools

The research methods and tools encompass:

1. Conversations with the percussionist to share discoveries and preferences, collaborating on the selection of rhythmic patterns.
2. Improvisation through task-experiments, drawing inspiration from research questions.
3. On-the-spot observation during practice sessions to understand responses to tasks and patterns.
4. Documentation through notes and video recordings of each task.
5. Reflective writing to analyze and extract insights from documented material.
6. Ongoing feedback from dancers and the percussionist to make adjustments ensuring an enjoyable and enriching journey.

Finally, the methodology is shaped by a careful selection process, where tasks are either retained or discarded based on their impact on the dancers' movements. This process ensures that the final set of tasks effectively addresses the research questions and objectives, forming a coherent and impactful toolbox.

I am looking for a way to be able to access this feeling of ultimate connection to the rhythm. This moment when you close your eyes, and the rhythm vibrates inside your body, empties your mind, and moves you authentically. This moment that mutes any negative or noisy thoughts and the rhythm takes over your body, leading it to the absolute state of inner connection, enjoyment, powerful inner silence, and peace, where presence in the very moment is the only option.
(Marmaritsaki, 2024)

Chapter 3: Analysis of Practice-Based Research

Drawing upon insights from human neuroscience, choreomusical studies, and practical perspectives from esteemed dance educators, this practical analysis aims to explore the intricate relationship between rhythm and movement. By incorporating theoretical frameworks into practical exploration, I seek to uncover new dimensions of rhythmic expression and enhance the dance experience. The practical aspect of this research has been the greatest source of inspiration and future aspirations on how to continue implementing similar elements as groove, rhythm, and joy in my upcoming choreographic processes and improvisation practice. This chapter immerses readers in a vibrant exploration of rhythmic embodiment and dialogue within the diverse landscape of Colombian traditional rhythms. Collaborating with fellow artists, we meticulously delved into three distinct Colombian rhythms—Cumbia, Bullerengue, and Mapale—carefully selected to encompass a broad spectrum of characteristics, including speed, complexity, and energy.

From the precise embodiment of rhythms to fluid improvisation, each step reveals the symbiotic relationship between movement and sound. Our reflection on these findings aims to unveil the intricacies of rhythmic dialogue, nurturing mutual understanding, creativity, and joyful interaction.

By delving into the nuances of each rhythm and employing techniques such as role reversal exercises and spatial exploration, we illuminate the transformative potential of rhythmic embodiment. This process fosters meaningful dialogue and enriches the improvisational experience, inviting readers to join us on a journey of discovery and celebration of rhythm's myriad forms. Through the lens of Colombian traditional rhythms, we explore the dynamic interplay between movement, music, and collaboration. Our aim is to inspire readers to translate these insights through their own unique perspectives, encouraging a broader exploration fueled by personal curiosity and creative passion.

3.1 Cumbia

Our exploration commenced with Cumbia, a quintessential rhythm of Colombian music that intricately weaves together the cultural influences of African, Indigenous, and European traditions. Originating from the era of slavery in the late 17th century, Cumbia finds its roots in the melding of diverse cultures, with its name stemming from the African word 'cumbe', meaning dance.

Through centuries of evolution, Cumbia has blossomed into the vibrant musical genre cherished today, particularly gaining prominence in Colombia during the 1950s and 1960s. Traditional Cumbia music showcases a rich ensemble of instruments, including the resonant bass rhythms of the Tambora, the rhythmic foundation of the tambor Alegre—utilized in our exploration—and the pulsating backbeat of the lamador drum (Cumbia - The Rhythm of Colombia, 2021). Here's the notation of the pattern we employed:

(Cumbia Sheet Music Drums, n.d.)

The basic pattern of the Cumbia rhythm, as depicted in the notation, served as our starting point due to its simplicity. However, beneath its apparent simplicity lay endless variations and opportunities for enrichment, as we discovered throughout our exploration.

Our research commenced with a focus on embodying rhythm and interpreting its accents with precision. We began by deconstructing the rhythmic pattern into layers. The process began by playing a basic beat akin to a metronome, aptly described as the 'heartbeat' by Sebastian, the percussionist accompanying our research. In response, Tuuli, the dancer involved in the experiment, was tasked with moving on each stroke, concentrating on individual body parts sequentially.

As I was asking from the musician to gradually introduce additional accents, Tuuli, one of the two dancers that participated in this experiment, was challenged to incorporate these nuances into her movement, freely navigating between strokes while accentuating each movement according to its corresponding accent. This dynamic

process resulted in a slow, fluid motion punctuated by accents, evoking a powerful sensation akin to a growing groove as the rhythmic complexity expanded. As Tuuli engaged in rhythmic exploration, her movements resonated with the insights from human neuroscience, highlighting the bidirectional relationship between the brain and body. Through experiential exploration, she tapped into the rhythmic patterns embedded within her body, fostering a deeper connection between movement and consciousness.

However, as the number of strokes increased, accentuating each one individually became more challenging, leading to a focus on dominant strokes while maintaining fluidity. This realization prompted adjustments in instructions to ensure an organic progression in task complexity and refine communication to convey precise exercise goals. These adjustments were driven by my commitment to prioritize curiosity, foster a desire to engage deeply in the process, and cultivate joy, while mitigating overthinking and frustration. My intention was to provide a nourishing journey for all involved. Furthermore, these realizations informed decisions about whether to continue exploring the same tasks with another rhythmic pattern later or replace them with new ones, ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in the research process.

The accentuation of non-dominant strokes proved instrumental in introducing new dynamics and movement elements to the improvisation. However, it was challenging up to the point that the dancer became familiar and found freedom within the process. To address this challenge, I proposed a role reversal exercise. Here, the dancer assumed the role of the percussionist, initiating movement from the heartbeat accent and gradually incorporating additional accents to construct the complete rhythmic pattern in real-time.

The objective was to 're-teach' and 'show' the rhythm to the musician through movement, guiding him to play it as if he was unfamiliar with it. As the dancer executed each accented movement, the musician responded with corresponding strokes, progressively building the entire pattern. This exercise not only deepened understanding of rhythmic intricacies but also emphasized the importance of collaboration and mutual

learning in the research process. Furthermore, it yielded valuable insights for both participants. The dancer discovered that stabilizing one movement or body part for each sound facilitated delivery of the rhythmic pattern, a technique not initially part of the instructions. With her permission, I incorporated this approach into the final methodology, enhancing the effectiveness of role reversal exercises. This strategy proved helpful for the percussionist as well. During her repetitions, he had the time to get familiar with each movement or body part that the dancer was linking to each accent, which was making it easier to follow her, while the dancer could focus on the precise accents she wanted to deliver without thinking a new movement to choose to do so every time. Additionally, this helped her avoid overthinking and focus on the raw interpretation of accents. Moreover, for the percussionist, following the dancer's lead proved both challenging and enjoyable, creating a playful mood from both throughout the process. It also encouraged him to experiment with different sound qualities between the dominant strokes, adapting his playing to complement the nuances of the dancer's movements. Soft, low, or loud sounds, sustained textures, and other variations were introduced, enriching the auditory landscape of the improvisation. The dancer adopted a systematic approach to interpretation, focusing on one body part at a time and gradually incorporating complexity. Repetition emerged as a valuable tool for familiarization with the pattern and effective accentuation of each element, aided by the drum's feedback on movement clarity. The exchange of roles not only deepened understanding of rhythmic structure but also provided clarity for the dancer in executing accented movements.

This exploration revealed a diverse range of techniques for accenting strokes without relying solely on staccato movements. Concepts such as throw and catch, rebound and drop-release, and a balance between minimalistic and expansive movements emerged as effective strategies for alternation between dominant and non-dominant accents. Additionally, breaking the pattern into smaller parts facilitated embodiment, allowing for incremental progress toward mastering the entire rhythmic sequence. The symbiotic relationship between movement quality and sound texture

became apparent, with each influencing the other in a continuous feedback loop. Furthermore, establishing eye contact between the dancer and musician enhanced communication and synchronization, contributing to a more cohesive outcome.

As our exploration progressed, the dancer encountered the challenge of returning to her previous role of following the drum rather than leading. Conversely, the percussionist found it intriguing to play only in response to the dancer's movements, approaching each stroke with fresh ears despite his familiarity with the rhythmic pattern. Yet, he instinctively infused anticipated sound textures with each subsequent stroke, enriching the musical dialogue.

To facilitate mutual understanding and synchronisation, the dancer implemented a strategy of repeating each movement several times, allowing the percussionist to familiarize himself with the rhythm and establish a connection between each added stroke and corresponding movement. Within these repetitions, adjustments were made to ensure clarity of intention, with the dancer refining certain movements to maintain precision as complexity increased. This interplay encouraged an exchange of textures, with both the dancer and percussionist interpreting each other's nuances while improvising. Having the option to interpret the duration of the pattern through fluid movement or the accents isolated through fragmented-staccato movements led to a dynamic interaction that allowed for the exploration of contrasts, enabling the creation of dialogues characterized by alternating dynamics and qualities. The option to prioritize duration over fragmented accents added depth to the performance, fostering a sense of freedom in the interplay between following and guiding, agreeing, and disagreeing – metaphorically through movement and sound. This contrast between the body and the drum contributed to the richness of the improvisational experience. The dancer now had the freedom to select which accents to embody, allowing for a fluid flow of alternating dynamics and qualities. This interplay between contrasting elements enhanced the sense of dialogue and spontaneity, enriching the exploration of rhythmic improvisation.

3.1.1 Second Exploration of Cumbia With Two Dancers Now

In the second exploration of Cumbia with two dancers, we began by immersing ourselves in a slow heartbeat, pausing with each stroke to deepen our connection to the rhythm by absorbing its effect on the body and mind. Conversely, we explored the opposite approach, with movement occurring only on the strokes, punctuated by moments of silence to signify pending strokes yet to be introduced, ultimately completing the pattern- an approach that elicited a distinct effect on movement.

What emerged was particularly fascinating. The participants entered a flow state following the organic evolution of movement and music. Stillness and pauses were gradually replaced by suspended, slow, fluid movements, indicating a seamless transition between states of rest and motion. Additionally, they alternated between accentuating all strokes with staccato movements and embodying the duration of strokes through fluid motion, sometimes even incorporating both approaches within the same cycle of the rhythmic pattern. This deliberate selection of accents contributed to the exploration of different levels of fluidity, smoothness, and emphasis within the improvisation.

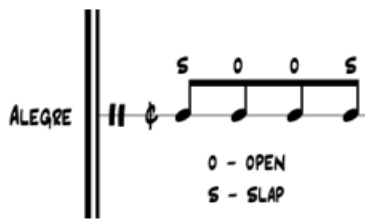
Guided by teaching practices that prioritize the experiential aspect of rhythm, participants immersed themselves in movement exploration, aligning with the approach advocated by Wilson and Henley (2022). By encouraging creative autonomy and lived experience in rhythm exploration, dancers delved into new movement vocabularies and broke away from habitual tendencies.

The rhythmic groove inherent in Cumbia rhythm that resonated deeply with me before, was now resonating deeply with both the dancers and the percussionist, eliciting tangible changes in their expression and connection to the music. As an observer familiar with their way of moving, I could discern the impact of these rhythms on their bodies clearly, witnessing those differences even when they were not consciously aware of them. Even amidst moments of initial difficulty and contemplation, the inherent groove of Cumbia rhythms remained palpable, inspiring the emergence of new

movement vocabulary and textures, and spontaneity as a natural response to the rhythmic stimuli.

By exploring the concept of groove and its connection to joy in dance practice, participants tapped into the inherent pleasure of rhythmic expression. Drawing upon previous studies by O'Connell (2021), Matthews et al. (2019), and Witek et al. (2014), dancers embraced the rhythmic pulse of Colombian rhythms, fostering a sense of empowerment, passion, and fulfillment in their movement exploration.

Building upon the rhythmic pattern, we introduced the instruction of one fluid movement for each half of the pattern by each dancer. This initiated a dialogue between the dancers, with one 'speaking' through movement during the first half of the pattern:



(Cumbia Sheet Music Drums, n.d.)

and then pausing while the other responded through fluid movement during the second half (the rest of the pattern). Later, we maintained the same idea but increased the duration available to each dancer for one whole cycle of the pattern. This approach expanded their movement vocabulary and encouraged spatial exploration and play with proximity between them, emerging from the intention to have a dialogue.

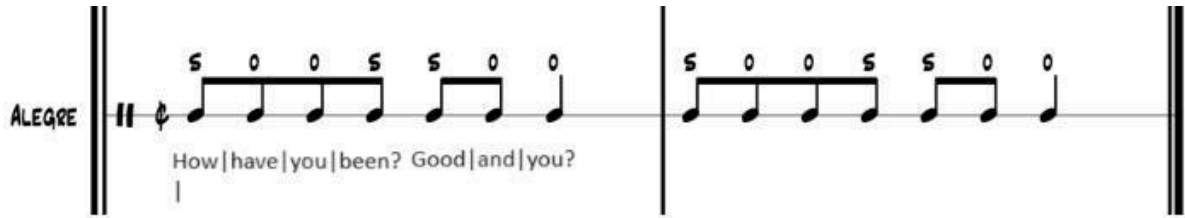
Vocal interpretation of the patterns became essential for establishing a common understanding, facilitating clear communication and synchronization by indicating specific divisions of the pattern and detailed instructions about their embodiment. We linked specific syllables to indicate divisions of the pattern, such as "pa" for dominant strokes and "ra" for the rest, vocalizing the pattern as "pa-ra-ra-pa pa-ra-ra-pause" to ensure mutual understanding of the division and which stroke we refer to each time. In order to facilitate the process, I provided reminders, indicated whose order is to move

every now and then, and vocalizing the pattern each one had to focus on to maintain clarity and guidance.

As the pauses between strokes diminished while layering up towards the full pattern, and the available duration designated for each dancer to improvise was changing, we focused on maintaining clarity during moments of stillness and transitioning back into motion. The change in available duration brought more flow and pleasure to the dancers. As a result, the moment they had to stop often took them by surprise prompting spontaneous responses and opening new avenues for exploration. For example, it would require them to stop their flow before finishing their movement, giving them an unexpected starting point for their next input.

This alternation of movement input to their conversation, the exchange of movements instead of words to create their dialogue, where each new input was influenced by each previous one, fostered enjoyment and reduced overthinking related to the aesthetics of movement or planning movements to continue with. They alternated between taking inspiration from each other and asserting their individuality. More confidence and precision, especially on the pauses, arose, while this element of surprise proved to be precious and formed a new idea to reform the task. Also incorporating eye contact later and an intention for silent verbal communication, shifted their focus towards interaction, resulting in greater freedom of movement and the emergence of new vocabulary.

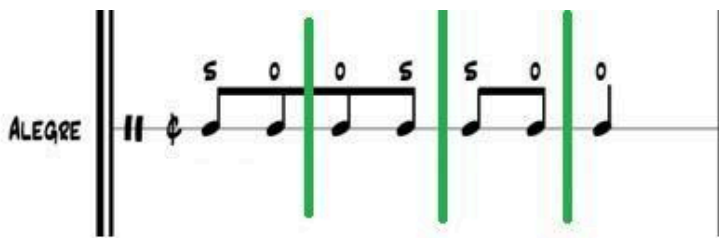
Viewing the strokes as words, which was the next instruction, added depth to their improvisation, enriching interaction and fostering creativity. Now, the dancers had to think of an actual phrase they want to convey to each other and fragment the syllables according to the rhythmic pattern; task that carried influences from a choreographic process with Paula Guzzanti a few months ago. For example, if the wanted to say 'How have you been? – Good and you?' It would follow the rhythmic pattern like this:



(Cumbia Sheet Music Drums, n.d.)

These instructions appeared to be a great tool to generate dialogue, find more pleasure through their interaction, and allow the body to move instinctively without also having the pressure to constantly move-‘speak’. Furthermore, it led to an exchange of ideas and influences, resulting in moments when they would use similar qualities and size of movement, but also created contrast, by revisiting the idea of agreeing and disagreeing. Their main instruction was to think of an actual phrase they would say through their movement to each other, which shifted their focus from thinking about how to move; instead of pre-planning their movement, they were now allowing space for their movement to be informed by their interaction.

Progressing to a slower speed with the pattern divided into four segments:



(Cumbia Sheet Music Drums, n.d.)

increased their alertness and readiness, while role reversal, so that not only one of them initiates the conversation, allowed for exploration from different perspectives. As they alternated more frequently, the dancers became more precise with their accentuated movements, focusing on a smaller number of strokes. We exchanged roles each time so

that both tried each instruction with every different division of the pattern. Emphasizing the precise embodiment of each stroke led to the emergence of syncopation and personal interpretation atop the pattern. The next task involved deviating from the original pattern and creating their own variations, exploring new textures and dynamics while occasionally mirroring each other's qualities while maintaining individuality.

Changing the initiator of phrases mixed dominant influences and introduced sonic and silent movement, expanding their repertoire, and providing fresh inspiration for both the dancer and the percussionist. Up to this point, we were using a metronome to support the process until everyone became comfortable with the rhythm and tempo. Removing the metronome allowed for more spontaneous sounds from the dancer and minimalistic ideas from the percussionist, enriching the improvisational dialogue.

As our exploration deepened in the task of having a conversation while rhythmically completing each other's phrase, we gradually removed the option of solely following the duration of the pattern, shifting our focus towards the precise embodiment of each stroke. This emphasis led to the emergence of more staccato, isolated, and minimal movements, fostering even more interesting interaction. We progressively increased the speed of execution, challenging the participants to maintain clarity and precision amidst a heightened tempo. With this intensified focus on precise embodiment, individual syncopation began to emerge atop the rhythmic pattern. This syncopation occurred by the instruction to focus on what they wanted to communicate to each other, so occasionally the strokes proved restrictive while they were trying to 'talk' through their movement. In response to this, I suggested the option to add supplementary movements or pause selectively, to enhance the rhythmic dialogue.

Expanding upon this concept of generating dialogue, we now continued with the same idea but this time between one dancer and the percussionist. Each one had the interpretation of half of the pattern as the starting point, and subsequently, they were encouraged to add their own embellishments or pauses. A process that fostered creativity as they were creating their own variations of the initial pattern according to the given timeframe. For this exploration, the dancer also had kungrus (bells) on her

ankles, as a form of feedback for the rhythm that occurs from her movement and its clarity. This process yielded new textures and dynamics from both, characterized by a playful exchange of ideas, including copying, ignoring, agreeing, disagreeing, and influencing each other's input.

To maintain coherence and clarity, we incorporated techniques such as counting the silence to ensure accurate duration, especially when the percussionist varied his playing pattern. Additionally, periodic returns to the original pattern helped to anchor the improvisation and prevent drift. The use of the metronome helped facilitate experimentation and maintain the agreed structural framework by indicating the four-beat duration. In this way, each artist could improvise and find more freedom to deviate and use their imagination inspired by the initial pattern, without needing to worry about counting to maintain the agreed duration.

The participants' interactions revealed intriguing dynamics as they occasionally mirrored each other's stroke qualities without replicating the exact pattern, whether consciously choosing it or not, or even by accident as they were trying something that came out differently in the end. Shifting the location of kungrus from the two ankles to one ankle and one wrist of the dancer introduced new possibilities for movement exploration. They continuously exchanged ideas while maintaining the freedom to follow, complement something they heard, or lead in new directions. The movements of the percussionist's arms, hands, and fingers were also a great source of inspiration for me and the dancer.

To further mix dominant influences, we kept changing the initiator of the rhythmic phrases within the dialogue, as in some previous tasks as well. In the cases where the dancer was leading the first half, I maintained the role of the metronome to anchor the structure since she could choose if she would use sonic movements or not. However, whenever she incorporated body sounds, blurring the lines between sonic and silent movements, the improvisational vocabulary of both participants was significantly enriched. This shift enriched their improvisational vocabulary, adding depth and complexity to their movement and sound interactions. Their movement was becoming

more determined, and habitual patterns started to disappear.

Later, removing the metronome and indicating only the first beat of each rhythmic cycle created more space for sounds from the dancer, since there was more silent space to cover perhaps, and inspired, subsequently, more minimalistic ideas and pauses from the percussionist, which again brought a different dynamic to their dialogue.

3.2 Bullerengue

Our exploration's next step delved into the intricacies of Bullerengue rhythms, employing a structured approach to embodying their complexities. Originating from the Colombian Caribbean village of Rincon del Mar in the department of Sucre, Bullerengue serves as a powerful expression of cultural resistance and preservation within Afro-Colombian communities. Combining captivating melodies with rhythmic dances, Bullerengue represents a form of political resistance against historical injustices and social inequalities. The music's rhythmic foundation, characterized by instruments such as tambor llamador, tambora, maracas, guaracha, and cununo, sets the stage for the sung dance, also known as 'baile cantao', capturing the essence of everyday life, oral traditions, and cultural knowledge of the region. Bullerengue's significance lies not only in its artistic expression but also in its role as a form of cultural memory, documenting stories and experiences amidst the backdrop of historical violence and armed conflict. (Bullerengue: The Sound of Resistance and Tradition in Rincón Del Mar, n.d.)

The notation of the rhythmic pattern we used is:



(World Music Method, 2023)

In our exploration of Bullerengue rhythms, dividing the pattern into three parts,

and keeping the rest of the pattern's duration silent, allowed the participants to focus on each segment individually, resulting in a sense of deconstruction, breath, and varied dynamics and narratives. Reassembling the parts brought a heightened sense of powerfulness and freedom, with the dancer able to play with different combinations in each repetition, influenced by the diverse textures of the drum's sounds. So, the dancer now had the freedom to choose during which of the three parts she would move or pause.

As we transitioned towards more free improvisation, the previous tasks laid a solid foundation, enabling the dancer to experiment with accents and grooves while maintaining coherence. Therefore, even though she had the option not to be as precise with the accents, the previous elements and tasks had fed the process leading to more precision in her choices and even more groovy movements, as she was now very familiar with each part separately, allowing her to even mix elements from different parts freely and inform, for example, part three with elements of part one. The initial instructions and restrictions were fostering newfound freedom within the exploration now. This thought is being supported by an extract found on Pete William's review of the book 'I Want to Be Ready: Improvised Dance as a Practice of Freedom' by Danielle Goldman:

Simplistic notions of freedom as a goal to achieve or an open space at which to arrive only encourage an inflexible position toward change: if only a particular set of restraints can be overcome, then all problems will be solved, as this simplistic position would have it. Such conceptions of freedom discount the many different and historically contingent forms of constraint. (Goldman, 2010)

This book presents improvisation not as a spontaneous escape from constraints, but as a practice that thrives within them. Goldman redefines improvisation as the skilled and imaginative negotiation with boundaries, where freedom is achieved through the ability to navigate and stretch these limits. Her work argues that true improvisational freedom requires extensive preparation and an acute awareness of the shifting constraints of society, history, and personal identity. This nuanced understanding shows that improvisation is not about breaking free from structure but about creatively moving within and against it. Goldman argues that true freedom in improvisation often emerges

from the establishment of limits and constraints. By navigating these 'tight spaces', dancers can explore the boundaries of their movements and create new forms of expression within a structured framework. This idea aligns with Michel Foucault's and Houston Baker's theories, which suggest that constraints can inspire creativity and innovation. Goldman's analysis of improvisation highlights how the discipline required to adhere to certain limits can lead to powerful and meaningful performances. In the context of dance, these constraints might include physical space, social norms, or the specific rules of a dance style. By working within these boundaries, dancers engage in a dynamic process of negotiation and adaptation, which allows them to push the limits of their creativity and explore new possibilities within the given structure. This concept can be applied broadly to understand how limitations, rather than hindering freedom, can actually foster a deeper, more profound sense of creative liberation (Goldman, 2010b).

Going back to the task, incorporating elements of completing each other's phrases added a playful, game-like element to their interaction, fostering concentration, alertness, and creative spontaneity. As the tasks evolved, all previous elements coexisted and informed each other, resulting in a new sense of groove. Maintaining the game of completing each other's phrase, we later introduced the option for the percussionist to stop randomly at any moment, challenging the dancer's reflexes to continue the rhythmic phrase until the percussionist decided to 'take it back.' This introduced the option of interrupting each other, enhancing enjoyment, playfulness, and reflexive responsiveness. It shifted their tendency from thinking to allowing instinctive movements to arise; to allow the body to respond reflexively. At the same time, concentration, alertness, and readiness were heightened while the focus shifted towards interrupting each other, leading to a very enjoyable and creative interaction.

To address arising challenges, the first beat of each rhythmic cycle was still indicated, and the option of repeating a choice was added so that they both get a second chance to improve their reflexes. For the same purpose, specific moments as options for stopping were designated to facilitate the other person's continuation of the phrase. We agreed that the moments of stopping should be not random but in the end

of one of the parts as divided previously.

Finally, we kept exchanging the initiator of the rhythmic cycle, and we focused even more on interrupting each other, rather than allowing space for the other person to 'talk'-continue the phrase. The dancer had the option to interrupt with sonic or silent movement. Overall, these tasks required attentively listening to each other while also led to a very enjoyable and creative interaction and lots of laughs. Interestingly, the dancer instinctively stabilized movements for different parts of the rhythmic pattern quite often, inspiring me to form movement composition tasks. The environment and mood created through this playfulness were precious.

In summary, the second session encompassed an exploration of Cumbia and Bullerengue rhythms, focusing on moving until or on the beat, fluid duration patterns, and interacting with each other in dialogue, call and response, and improvisation. Tuuli, who had the experience of the first session was, since the beginning, much more precise and comfortable while Antea, the dancer who participated as a third body, was adapting rapidly. Lastly, the intention to translate actual phrases into movement brought significant insights, as the context of those phrases was effortlessly influencing the qualities of the movement.

3.3 Mapale

Mapalé is an Afro-Colombian dance rhythm that exudes a festive and lively spirit. It features a dynamic performance with rapid, short steps, an accelerated beat, and continuous clapping. Originating from the Colombian Caribbean Coast, it emerged from the cultural influence of African slaves during the colonial period. Traditionally performed at night after daily labor, the dance starts with men and women forming two lines opposite each other. The men showcase individual moves to impress their partners, who then respond with their own dances. The rhythm is fast-paced, culminating in an energetic climax with pelvic movements and foot dragging to the percussion beat.

Women's movements are more sensual, adding an erotic touch to the performance. The dance is marked by exaggerated gestures and sudden, unexpected motions that enhance its intensity. Overall, mapalé is a vibrant and expressive dance that highlights the African roots in the cultural tapestry of the Colombian Caribbean, celebrated for its energetic rhythm, sensual choreography, and colorful attire (Golfo de Morrosquillo, n.d.).

The notation:



(Mapale Colombian Drum Rhythm, n.d.)

In our third and last session, our exploration of Mapale rhythms unveiled a plethora of new possibilities, emphasizing spontaneity, adaptability, and creative expression. The whole team was present for the whole session this time. Participants embraced the ethos of dealing with whatever comes without an issue, hesitation, or over-analysis, so a big part of my goal was achieved; the body had taken over the mind. More novelty occurred, even from the need to find ways to rest amidst continuous movement.

We experimented with various prompts to inspire movement exploration including the use of different body parts, eye contact, diverse ways of walking, incorporation of stomps, and spatial dynamics. Throughout the session, laughter filled the room as participants navigated challenges with focus and listening, revealing the joy of creative interaction. Eye contact facilitated enjoyment and mental freedom, allowing movement to flow effortlessly with the rhythm.

Unlike previous experiments, where the focus was not on spatial use, this session prioritized it. The dancers were tasked with walking around the space while the musician played the Mapalé rhythm, stopping randomly to embody parts of the rhythm using one body part at a time. The musician was instructed to alternate the speed throughout.

Additionally, after a while, the dancers were instructed to maintain eye contact most of the time, and when they felt ready to try and maintain the walking while embodying the rhythm with one body part instead of stopping and doing it on the spot. As they progressed, it became easier to maintain eye contact most of the time, eventually exploring different ways of walking and varying speeds, inspired by each other's movements.

Then, we moved into an exploration of different ways of walking. Eye contact helped to enjoy the interaction, let go of thinking, and just allow the body to move according to the rhythm allowing mental and physical freedom as in Naharin's words. More groovy walks, from more pedestrian to more dance-like, and movements occurred through their attempt to walk on the rhythm, while they were having fun and getting inspired by each other. Simultaneously, surprising changes in speed and accidental choices of the same body part at times and exploring different potentials at the same time made the task even more playful and prompted me to form a task for my final methodology. This last prompt involved instructing the dancers to consciously explore the possibilities of the same body part at the same time. The more we continued the process, the more novelty in movement emerged abruptly.

The use of space also introduced the factor of proximity within the exploration. Embracing physical closeness and intuitive reactions facilitated a sense of playful spontaneity, shifting attention from rigid aesthetics and expectations to instinctive engagement with movement and simple enjoyment; shift of focus once again from mind to body.

Later, they could choose their way of following the speed of the musician. The musician had the freedom to challenge them by pausing while the dancers had to maintain the rhythm with sonic or silent movement for as long as the pause of the drum was lasting. What I had previously asked them to experiment with, such as accenting different strokes, was now happening naturally. Furthermore, interesting contrasts were occurring among them with one of them going slow and the other fast. The highlight of the task was when both dancers and the percussionist were speeding up at the same

time without losing the interaction between them but letting go and enjoying all together. Those moments were the most powerful ones.

As the session progressed, compositions of walking styles emerged, with dancers exploring animalistic and unconventional movements. Their instruction was to also use hands or other body parts to walk, to merge different walking patterns, and jump every time the musician started playing again after a pause to create a collective dynamic at those moments. They also had to maintain a fast-paced shake during pauses, to refresh, release, and restart with a different quality while remaining attuned to the music's groove. More and more dynamics were occurring as the time was passing. The shakes started becoming sonic as well and there was a playful mood as the musician was challenging them with pauses of different durations and frequencies. The dancers were constantly coming up with new discoveries following the groove of the rhythm and creating a playful environment; curiosity and creativity were at a pick. The more creative the dancers were getting, the more the musician was trying to challenge them by pausing in 'difficult' moments, resulting in very interesting forms of shaking as they had to figure out how to increase speed being in 'weird' positions. Each pause became an opportunity for innovation, with dancers inventing new gestures and navigating unexpected positions with ease. Interestingly one dancer tended to produce sound and move through space when increasing speed and the other to shake whatever body part she had available repetitively while on the spot, both of which were options they had through the instructions but naturally they stuck to one each. The musician was also influenced by whatever movement was coming up and was either following or challenging them while the texture of the drum's sounds was also influenced by the quality of the movement.

Keeping the focus on ways of walking and moving through space, now they had the instruction to not have both their feet on the floor at the same time. The potential was endless and the amount of movement vocabulary that occurred was beyond any expectation. Having previously explored similar improvisational tasks myself without the soundscape of such rhythms, I tended to explore mentally resulting in very slow

movement without dynamics' alternation. Drawing upon the interdisciplinary field of choreomusical studies, scholars have examined the dynamic interplay between music and dance, emphasizing their collaborative nature and mutual influence (Stepputat and Seye, 2020). Therefore, now I could confirm the great impact of this rhythmicity in improvisation.

Along with the instruction to not have both their feet on the floor at the same time, participants had three options for embodying rhythm. They could either accentuate the dominant beat at its normal speed, so to have one accent per rhythmic cycle, either double the speed for two accents per cycle or quadruple the speed for four accents per cycle. Surprisingly none opted for the easy option of just walking normally when two feet are not simultaneously on the floor. Their curiosity and creativity were very awakened. Even moments of imbalance were embraced, leading to spontaneous discoveries rather than a pursuit of stability; just playing and enjoying, as the task was meant to be.

Moving forward, we explored the 'popcorn' quality as another way to produce rhythmical movement in conversation with the percussionist. The 'popcorn' refers to irregular explosive movements that can be generated from any body part, akin to popcorn in a pot while cooking. For this task, the dancers were also instructed to keep their eyes closed as long as they felt comfortable, while I would ensure their safety if they decided to move through space. The purpose of this instruction was to detach even more from conscious or subconscious aesthetic concerns. The result was rewarding this choice and the 'popcorn' quality encouraged irregularly explosive movement, revealing another way to follow different accents of the rhythmic pattern. The percussionist was still alternating between different speeds that they could follow or create contrast with. Even more physical and mental freedoms occurred and interestingly, one of the dancers happened to stick to the floor because she felt that there were more potential discoveries in that level while the other one kept alternating between levels. My initial intention was to guide them through this task to a throw-and-catch quality by gradually adding instructions. The first dancer's discovery though proved this unnecessary, as it

occurred to her naturally. She started exploring the pop-corn quality not only from her core but also from her limbs and other body parts, which combined with the irregular explosiveness of the movement led to the throw-catch quality. Both dancers embraced challenges posed by the musician's pauses and changes in tempo, inspiring creativity, and adaptability.

Finally, as I was processing all the insights from the practical research, I started forming possible conclusions that I wanted to confirm through tasks. Therefore, for the last part, I gave even more emphasis to the interaction between the dancers and the musician. Simultaneously, putting everything together, I proposed an alternation between the three rhythms we encountered, while playing with influences from previous tasks as options or tools that they could use. Lastly, I added an instruction that for the first time deviated from the rhythmical aspect and investigated the concept and context of the improvisation. The instruction was that I would indicate if they were dancing in a party or dance performance context. At this point, both the dancers and the musician were improvising. The performance context was taking them back to movements they were used to, and more 'aesthetic' ones. On the contrary, the party context was freeing them completely, bringing joy as their priority and fostering more creativity than their usual way of dancing at parties, with which I was familiar with. Participants embraced the freedom to experiment with sonic and silent movements, responding to the musician's challenges with curiosity and creativity. Adding the element of 'free' interaction between the three of them prompted interesting contrasts, connections, and releases, fostering a dynamic and enjoyable environment

In conclusion, our journey through Mapalé rhythms and the combination of the three rhythms, transcended boundaries, celebrating interaction, passion, and fulfillment. The ever-shifting nature of the music provided fertile ground for dynamic improvisation, effortlessly infusing the movement with fresh inspiration. The fact that the performance aspect evoked familiar movements, while the party atmosphere liberated them to explore new realms of creativity and joy, confirmed my premise that the more the dancer enjoys their movement and connect to it by being present in the moment

without external concerns, the better the aesthetic result is. I realized that there is nothing more important than the projection of the dancer's enjoyment through movement. Previous studies by O'Connell (2021), Matthews et al. (2019), and Witek et al. (2014) have highlighted the connection between groovy rhythms and heightened pleasure in movement stimulation, suggesting that the strong presence of joy is essential in dance practice. I have also come to realize that what truly captivates me is the ability to have tools that can keep an improvisation dynamic and avoid stagnation. The nature of this music where the rhythmical patterns continually shift between variations of the initial motif, adds nuanced layers to the movement and provide inspiring stimuli for diverse dynamics to emerge at a captivating frequency, effortlessly.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research project has meticulously explored the intricate relationship between rhythm and movement improvisation, focusing on Colombian traditional rhythms and contemporary dance. Drawing upon a theoretical framework which established the significance of rhythm in various domains such as neuroscience, psychology, and choreomusical studies, this study delved into how enriched responses to rhythmic patterns can catalyze the emergence of new movement vocabulary and dynamics in dance.

Rooted in the principles of Practice-as-Research (PaR), the methodology outlined in Chapter 2, sets the context for an experiential and embodied exploration of rhythm and movement. Through collaborative experimentation approach involving a percussionist and dancers, the research methodology sought to uncover the transformative potential inherent in the interaction between rhythmic patterns and dance improvisation.

The collaborative approach involved a multi-step process, encompassing precise interpretation of rhythmic patterns through movement, generating a dialogue between basic patterns and varied responses, and encouraging free alternation between sensations through collaborative exploration. Each step was meticulously designed to foster curiosity, creativity, and joy among participants while generating insights into the impact of rhythmic patterns on movement dynamics.

The analysis of the experimental process, as detailed in Chapter 3, involved on-the-spot observation, documentation, reflective writing, ongoing feedback, and selective retention of tasks based on their effectiveness in eliciting changes in movement. By systematically examining the results of each task and identifying unexpected elements, such as new movement vocabulary, qualities, dynamics, and mood, the research aimed to refine a task-based methodology titled 'How to Bring Syncopation in Movement Improvisation'.

Through this iterative process of experimentation, analysis, and refinement, the research project contributed to gain a deeper understanding of the embodied experience of rhythm in dance. It highlighted the importance of rhythm as a catalyst for

authentic expression, inner connection, and enjoyment in movement practice. By integrating insights from both theoretical literature and practical experimentation, the study offers a comprehensive framework for exploring the potential of rhythm as a creative force in contemporary dance.

The exploration into Cumbia, Bullerengue, and Mapale rhythms delves deep into the dynamic relationship between movement and music, revealing the intricate interplay that emerges during improvisational dialogue. Emphasizing the importance of establishing connections, exploring contrasts, and fostering spontaneity, this journey underscores the richness of interaction between dancers and musicians.

Structured exercises and playful experimentation guided participants to explore rhythm in its various dimensions, from fluid duration patterns to dynamic accents. Techniques such as completing each other's phrases and exploring different levels of fluidity enrich the improvisational experience, allowing for a deeper connection between dancers and musician. Incorporating insights from scholarly literature, such as Danielle Goldman's perspective on improvisation as a negotiation with boundaries, added depth to the exploration. Embracing constraints and navigating them creatively enabled participants to push the limits of their expression creatively and discover new forms of movement.

Transitioning through Cumbia, Bullerengue, and Mapale rhythms signified a progression in complexity and depth, culminating in a vibrant fusion of movement styles. Particularly, the exploration of Mapale rhythms highlighted the joy of creative interaction and the importance of presence and spontaneity in improvisation.

Overall, this research project, this journey through these rhythms underscores the profound interplay between rhythm and movement, emphasizing their symbiotic relationship and the transformative possibilities that emerge when approached as interconnected phenomena. It also reveals the transformative power of improvisation as a practice of freedom and creativity. By continuing to explore and refine methodologies that facilitate this exploration, dancers and practitioners can unlock new avenues for artistic expression, innovation, and joy in dance practice.

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Appendices

Formation of Methodology

'How to Bring Syncopation in Movement Improvisation: A task-based methodology'

Embodying Rhythm and Interpreting Accents:

- Deconstruct the rhythmic pattern into layers.
- Start with a basic beat resembling a metronome ("heart-beat").
- Gradually introduce additional accents.
- Dancer moves on each stroke, focusing on one body part at a time.
- Incorporate nuances into movement as complexity increases.
- Experiment with accentuation of dominant and non-dominant strokes.
- Role reversal exercise: Dancer becomes percussionist and vice versa.
- Facilitate deeper understanding of rhythmic intricacies through collaboration.
- Utilize instant movement composition as a tool for embodiment.

Exploration of Cumbia Rhythms with Two Dancers:

- Start from slow heart-beat, pausing with each stroke.
- Transition between stillness and motion.
- Accentuate strokes with staccato movements or fluid motion.
- Generate a dialogue between dancers using fluid movements.
- Incorporate eye contact for enhanced communication and synchronization.

Exploration of Bullerengue Rhythms:

- Emphasize embodying rhythm through movement exploration.
- Divide the pattern into segments for focused exploration.
- Generate dialogue between dancers through call and response.
- Experiment with different walking styles and spatial dynamics.
- Integrate pauses and shakes to refresh and restart movement.
- Explore variations in speed and duration of rhythmic phrases.

Exploration of Mapalé Rhythms:

- Experiment with different prompts to inspire movement.
- Focus on use of space, eye contact, and diverse ways of walking.
- Explore walking patterns and spatial dynamics while maintaining eye contact.

- Introduce 'pop-corn' quality of movement to follow rhythmic pattern.
- Explore the use of different body parts and levels.
- Experiment with varying speeds and rhythms in movement improvisation.
- Integrate interaction between dancers and percussionist.
- Alternate between different rhythms, influences, and improvisational contexts.