

4. Movement Research Timeline

Movement Research T I M E L I N E

Leadership and Initiation of Programs

1978

- **The School for Movement Research & Construction** is founded with a collective structure & is essentially a service organization for 20 artists. It originates during a time when a number of artist-founded organizations are springing up in the U.S. Initially, it provides its founders with informal environments for dialogue & dancing together, & it evolves into a structure that supports workshops in experimental movement investigations.
- Operating Budget: \$8,811

1979

- Periodic performance presentations begin.
- First performance in April 1979 features Trisha Brown, David Gordon, Valda Setterfield & Douglas Dunn. The press calls it the concert of the decade.

1980

- **Movement Research, Inc.** incorporates as a nonprofit organization.
- First Board of Directors: co-founders Wendell Beavers, Beth Goren, Richard Kerry, Daniel Lepkoff, Terence O'Reilly, Mary Overlie, Christina Svane & Board President Cynthia Hedstrom (all artist board).
- Statement of Purpose: *The School for Movement Research & Construction is conceived as a center for new ideas in movement training & composition. The School originates from a group of dancers & artists who teach & perform independently in New York & who have decided to pool their efforts. We all know & support each other's work, but more important, sense an underlying spirit. Although there is diversity in our backgrounds, we all work directly with the experience of physical sensation, & with improvisation both as exploration & as performance. The goal is to create an environment that will allow students & faculty to focus deeply on their study & develop their own resources through consistent feedback & exchange.*
- Operating Budget: \$20,500

1982

- First year of **Studies Project**, held at Danspace Project in St. Mark's Church. Series aims to *thresh out & clarify critical issues & to bring an audience closer to the process, intention & working vocabulary of choreographers & performance artists.*
- Throughout the 1980s, participants include such artists as Mark Morris, Senta Driver, Molissa Fenley, Bill T. Jones, Steve Paxton, Spalding Gray, Eric Bogosian, Bill Irwin, David Gordon, Rachel Rosenthal, Blondell Cummings, Ethyl Eichelberger, David Cale, Pooh Kaye, Robert Whitman, Kei Takei, Joan Jonas, Dana Reitz, Kenneth King, Jim Self, Ishmael Houston-Jones, Remy Charlip, Meredith Monk & such moderators as Paul Langland, William Harris, Sally Banes, Simone Forti, Mary Overlie & Stephanie Skura.
- Of the **Studies Project**, Elizabeth Zimmer writes, *...one of the most illuminating discussions I've ever been privileged to witness... You should have been there...* & Burt Supree writes, *...The Studies Project: Providing routes into the brains of the permanent avant-garde in its protean incarnations (The Village Voice, 1984).*
- Early project directors: Wendell Beavers, Renee Rockoff, K.J. Holmes & Carey Lovelace.

1983

- First year of **Open Performance**, a monthly series that offers an opportunity for artists & students to present works-in-progress to small audiences, followed by open discussion of the work by audience & artists.
- Carol Swann hired as first paid administrator.

1984

- Movement Research moves to Ethnic Folk Arts Center (after existing in Wendell Beavers' backpack & Cynthia Hedstrom's kitchen for the previous six years). This strengthens MR's capacity to deliver programs, through affiliation with another organization.
- Jennifer Miller is Technical Director for performance series at Ethnic Folk Arts Center.
- Movement Research receives Special Citation "Bessie" Award for the **Studies Project** for *enlightening inquiries & arguments on the how & why of dance*, presented by Simone Forti.
- Movement Research initiates the Presenting Series (precursor to **Movement Research at the Judson Church** series).

1985

- Shauna O'Donnell hired as Administrator.
- Operating Budget: \$25,414

1986

- **Studies Project** moves to The Triplex after first taking place for two years at St. Mark's Church & the following two years at Ethnic Folk Arts Center.

1987

- First Executive Director, Richard Elovich hired.
 - Elovich's watch is characterized by an activist's agency, urgency & passion, restructuring the organization so as to support the economics & expand its influence & mission by relating it to the current political climate of NYC. Over his tenure, he puts in place the **Performance Journal**, the **Artist-in-Residence Program** & an expanded schedule of workshops & performances.
- Elovich hires Bob Ajar as Managing Director.
- **Workshops** are offered on a more ongoing schedule.

1989

- Board restructuring takes place. Artist board structure becomes Artist Advisory Board. Recruitment for new board members begins with intention to more adequately address fundraising needs. Two artists remain on board.
- "Ear to the Ground," a collaborative series with music & dance, co-sponsored by Roulette & Movement Research. Roulette pays artist fees, MR provides space & both do PR. Jennifer Monson is MR curator for first year.
- "Red Herring," an improv collective formed by DD Dorvillier, Jennifer Lacey, Clarinda Mac Low, Connor McTeague & John Jasperse, receives a Movement Research space grant to rehearse at Middle Collegiate Church on 7th Street between 1st & 2nd Avenues & performs at Ethnic Folk Arts Center and PS 122.
- **Artist-in-Residence Program** launched.
 - Susan Rethorst is among the first artists-in-residence.

1990

- Richard Elovich hires Cathy Edwards as Managing Director, after the departure of Bob Ajar.
- First issue of the **Performance Journal** published. Editor: Richard Elovich, Associate Editor: Michael Sexton.
 - Editor's note: *With this first issue of Movement Research, we open a new public space for the New York performance community: a textual space in which artists can develop a critical relationship to the work being produced around us...Recognizing a real lack of opportunity for choreographers, dancers, writers, musicians, & performers to engage in each others' work analytically, we have created Movement Research as a slightly anarchic forum in which opposing ideas & aesthetics can be seriously developed & debated...In a time when the arts & artists are seriously under attack, a dialogue among artists develops both the rigorous introspection & the larger commitment of a community, creating a vision necessary for survival.*

1991

- Richard Elovich resigns as Executive Director, joins board, & serves as Chair from 1991-1995.
- Board of Directors: Cee Scott Brown, Yoshiko Chuma, Eiko & Koma, Terry Fox, Bill T. Jones, Jennifer Monson, Nina Martin, Laurie Uprichard, Guy Yarden, & Richard Elovich (Chair).
- Cathy Edwards & Guy Yarden hired as Co-Directors.
 - During their tenure, Edwards & Yarden continue momentum built under Elovich & work to expand on the critical role of the artist community in shaping programs. Office serves as meeting grounds for long conversations among artists about aesthetics, performances & classes, & a strong emphasis on multicultural programming begins to take shape, including the start of **Movement Research at the Judson Church** series, curated by Cathy Edwards & Guy Yarden, with subsequent years curated by panels in which Co-Directors participate.
- In 1991-1992, the **Artist-in-Residence Program** supports work of Irene Hultman, Dana Reitz, Yvonne Meier, Ron Brown, David Zambrano, Alexis Eupierre & the Full Moon Group (DANCENOISE, Alien Comic, Jo Andres, Mimi Goese).
- The **Workshop** series expands to include daily classes in the mornings and workshops that reach out beyond the artist community, including a new program for people living with AIDS.
- **Performance Journal #3, Gender Performance** published in August. U.S. Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC, retired) has journal delivered to each Senator's desk as he holds a copy above his head on the Senate floor & denounces the use of federal funds to produce "such filth." The following day, *The Washington Post* runs *Is it Art or is it Broccoli?* on its front page, a story that refers to a photograph of a woman's genital area in the context of a political art piece published in PJ #3 titled *Read My Lips*, created by the collective Critical Art Ensemble. Jerry Falwell, the conservative religious leader, threatens Philip Morris with a boycott & Philip Morris suspends funding of MR for years. The NEA, headed by Bush-appointed John Frohnmayer, seeks to recover funds previously granted to MR under the guise that said funds had been used to influence currently pending legislation. *Read My Lips* referred to the debate over the Supreme Court's ruling in *Rust vs. Sullivan* regarding the use of federal funds for abortion counseling. MR reaches a settlement with the NEA & returns approximately \$100 that is deemed to have been used to actually print the page on which the art piece was published. The NEA does not acknowledge that it is penalizing Movement Research in response to pressure from Helms & others who are trying to impose "decency" standards on the NEA.
- Operating Budget: \$149,193

1992

- The **Artist-in-Residence Program** evolves to include commissioning funds, work-in-progress showings on **Judson** series, co-production at other spaces, class & workshop opportunities, subsidized & free rehearsal space, fiscal agency, use of MR office & 'emotional bolstering'.
- **Improvisation Festival/New York** launched, initiated by Sondra Loring (MR artist-in-residence) & Julie Carr, with MR cooperation.
 - Over the years, the Festival draws artists working in a range of approaches to improvisation from throughout the U.S. & internationally (Spain, Ireland, Germany, Italy, Australia, Canada, Netherlands & France). The two-week long festival provides a stable structure for the exchange of ideas, & a meeting point for artists working with improvisation, teaching & performing.
- In 1992-1993, **Artist-in-Residence Program** supports work of Jennifer Lacey, Lucy Guerin, Javier De Frutos, Vicky Shick & David Rousseve.
- One of NYC's most beautiful studios is lost as MR is evicted from Ethnic Folk Arts Center, & the space is leased to a nightclub. On a tip from Bebe Miller, MR collaborates with Context Studios on Avenue A to establish an office & two studios, creating a 'home' for artists.

1993/1994

- Anja Hitzenberger begins documenting **Movement Research at the Judson Church** series. She remains the primary photographer through 2000 & photographs performances several times a year through 2003.
- Audrey Kindred is hired as Associate Director.
 - At Movement Research, Kindred formalizes a work-study program, develops Dance Makers in the Schools & Move to Heal, a free series of classes for people dealing with health struggles, such as AIDS & HIV, & their partners & care-givers.
- **MRX/the Movement Research Exchange** begins.
 - Over the years, domestic partners include Painted Bride, Philadelphia, PA; Diverse Works, Houston, TX; Dance Umbrella, Austin, TX; & The Wagon Train Project in Lincoln, NE. International partners include Dans Centrum, Stockholm, Sweden; Certamen Coreográfico, Madrid, Spain; Japan Society, New York, NY; Japanese Contemporary Dance Network, Kyoto, Japan; & Centro Nacional de las Artes, Mexico.
 - Highlights of **MRX** programs over the years: **Danza Sin Fronteras**, a **Studies Project**, co-produced with Dance Theater Workshop in October 1994, features Ivonne Munoz, Raul Parrao, Marcella Ortiz Broughton, Jaime Ortega, Merian Soto, Evelyn Velez Aguayo, Jeremy Nelson, Linda Austin, Luis Lara, Jennifer Monson & Patricia Hoffbauer, among others; **Improvising Across the Border: Movement Research Exchange/Mexico**, in which Linda Austin, Hank Smith, Sondra Loring, John Jasperse & Teri Carter travel to Mexico, collaborate with artists Vincente Silva, Ruby Gamez & Talia Leos, & work at the Centro Nacional de las Artes; & a two-week residency in Texas in November 1994, in which John Jasperse, Scott Heron, Sondra Loring & Sarah East Johnson lead group workshops & show work on shared performance programs.
- **Town Hall Meeting** on June 14, 1994 provides catalyst for discussion on authority, diversity & community in the context of the arts. Discussion focuses on role MR has in defining cultural exchanges, growing out of divergent opinions on the issue of cultural imperialism as manifested through international MRX exchanges.

1995

- Co-Directors Cathy Edwards & Guy Yarden resign, are then elected as board members, & remain on board until 1997 & 1998 respectively.
- Operating Budget: \$284,625
- Audrey Kindred serves as Acting Director for five months, then is hired as Co-Director. Search initiated for second Co-Director.
 - Kindred's tenure is marked by a great openness to working creatively with artists & by an intellectual engagement with pressing aesthetic, political & social issues. Kindred organizes dynamic panels around contemporary issues including those of diversity & cultural difference.
- George Emilio Sanchez elected Board President & serves through 1999.
- Board adds diversity policy to by-laws.

1996

- Anya Pryor hired as second Co-director.
- Peter Larose hired as Associate Director.

1997

- **Dance Makers in the Schools** begins to receive NYSCA funding.
- Audrey Kindred & Anya Pryor resign.
- Catherine Levine hired as Executive Director in October 1997.
 - Levine's tenure is characterized by the continuation of all MR programs & initiation of MELT Intensives, which have served both as key revenue generators & entry points by which student artists from around the country & abroad are introduced into various experimental approaches supported by MR.

1998

- 20th Anniversary issue of **Performance Journal** (Issue # 17) co-published with Danspace Project. Editor: Anya Pryor, with Carol Mullins, Danspace Co-Editor.
- First **MELT Summer Intensive** offers four weeks of workshops.

1999

- **Improvisation Festival / New York** becomes official MR program, curated by Amanda Loulaki from 1999 to 2003. Loulaki continues a vital festival approach that includes U.S.-based & international improvisers who perform, teach & exchange ideas.

2001

- Barbara Bryan elected Board President.
- Movement Research takes on annual lease of Eden's Expressway, which is owned by Frances Alenikoff, who over the next five years allows MR critical leeway in its rent payment schedule.
- Movement Research moves offices into 648 Broadway, after moving six times from 1997-2001.

2002

- First **MELT Winter Intensive** is held for one week.
- Operating Budget: \$293,493
- Carla Peterson hired as Executive Director in June 2002.
 - During her tenure, Peterson assesses the need for MR's continuation & its structure, re-engages the artist community around the mission of experimentation, expands artists' voices in programs & policies, rebuilds & revitalizes the board, institutes first ever Strategic Plan, & addresses serious financial challenges, including elimination of a substantial accumulated deficit that threatens the survival of the organization.

2004 - 25th Year!

- **Artist Town Hall Meeting** takes place on February 2, 2004. Purpose: To engage in peer discussion on MR, its programs, & short & longer-term strategies for survival & viability in advancing its mission in the current ecology.
- Movement Research begins administrative residency & moves its office to Dance Theater Workshop in March 2004.
- Publication of 25th Anniversary Celebration issue of **Performance Journal** (Issue #27/28). Editor-in-chief: Clarinda Mac Low.
 - As Mary Overlie, one of Movement Research's founding artists, writes in this Journal: *I am awed but not surprised that Movement Research has managed to make it to its twenty-fifth birthday. Awed because Movement Research is a maverick in the field of organizations & therefore difficult to find funding for, requiring by the nature of its objectives great donations of time & energy on the part of the dance community. Not surprised because Movement Research represents a small but necessary voice in support of a new perspective in art, philosophy, science & politics...Because Movement Research is designed to serve a community of artists who believe in non-exclusive art, particularizing the study of the body, non-hierarchical structures in choreography & the connection of movement to the earth, it has an implicit reason to survive.*
- **Performance Journal Online** project begins with issues #23-26 available online to date.
- **25th Anniversary Celebration GALA Benefit "MR@25"** honors longtime supporter Micki Wesson & MR's founders. Performances by Meredith Monk, Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton, Julie Atlas Muz, & Ann Liv Young, with Jennifer Miller of Circus Amok as MC.
- Launch of **Movement Research Festival** (evolved from IF/NY) entitled **Improvisation is Hard**, & implementation of Curatorial Team structure. First Curatorial Team: Jonah Bokaer, DD Dorvillier, Miguel Gutierrez, K.J. Holmes, Ishmael Houston-Jones, Isabel Lewis & Yvonne Meier. Over 150 artists participate in performances & discussions in 11 venues.
- First-ever **Strategic Planning Process** initiated.
- Three **Faculty Town Hall Meetings** held June 27 & October 16-17, 2004. Purpose: To create a dialogic space for discussing emerging dance & movement-based forms & teaching methodologies, & to foster a sense of community among teaching artists & enable community feedback to inform MR's future.
- Fifty-one videotapes documenting **Studies Projects** from 1983 to 1994 donated to the Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center.
- **Movement Research at the Judson Church** series takes place at Dance Theater Workshop while Judson Church is under renovation; **Open Performance** held in the DTW Studios.

2005

- Launch of Editorial Team structure with publication of **Performance Journal #29, Improvisation is Dead; Long Live Improvisation**. Editorial Team: April Biggs, Kimberly Brandt, Levi González, Isabel Lewis, Alejandra Martorell & intern Layard Thompson.
- Ishmael Houston-Jones elected Board President.
- **2005 GALA Benefit "Becoming"** honors Laurie Uprichard, Executive Director of Danspace Project. Performances by Ann Carlson, Philip Hamilton, Eleanor Bauer, Juliette Mapp, Yvonne Meier, Stephen Petronio & Reggie Wilson/Fist & Heel Performance Group, with Jennifer Miller of Circus Amok as MC.

- **Movement Research Festival 2005: Open Source** expands to three weeks featuring over 300 artists in 11 venues throughout the boroughs. Curatorial Team members DD Dorvillier, Margit Galanter, koosil-ja & Michelle Nagai bring together nationally & internationally acclaimed improvisers in a Festival that critiques presentational aspects of performance & festival formats, & offers alternative & emergent practices.

2006

- **Faculty Town Hall Meeting** is held. Purpose: To provide a forum for faculty/artist feedback on MR programs; short-, mid- & long-term concerns; & next steps prior to completion of the planning process.
- **2006 GALA Benefit "Saturn Returns"** honors Marion Koltun Dienstag, Executive Director of Dance Theater Workshop. Performances by LAVA, Susan Marshall & Company & David Parker with Marion Koltun Dienstag.
- Movement Research continues to rely on individuals in its **Work-study & Intern Program**, who learn & contribute skills in not-for-profit management in exchange for access to classes & workshops. In 2006, 26 work-studies & interns keep classes, workshops & MELT intensives running smoothly & provide critical support in office management, marketing/publicity, development, operations, archives & special events.
- With a grant from the Danish Arts Council, MR's Executive Director travels to Denmark to meet artists, see performances, and research possibilities for **MRX: NYC/Denmark**, an exchange between New York and Danish artists. The trip results in a partnership agreement with two Danish organizations, Dansens Hus and Dansescenen.
- Launch of two-year Artist-in-Residence Program as pilot project. MR expands its commitment in response to the critical need of artists for an ongoing base of support within a community of peers and a laboratory structure.
- After four years as Executive Director, Carla Peterson accepts post of Artistic Director at Dance Theater Workshop. Optimistic about the organization's current & future direction, board initiates a search process for her replacement.
- Launch of **Critical Correspondence** on MR's website, spearheaded by editors Alejandra Martorell & Guy Yarden.
- The **Critical Correspondence** website is re-launched in September with a new blog structure that allows users to participate in the site by posting comments and dialoguing. The first of several special projects is also launched, with writings from Hope Mohr and Michelle Nagai from their collaborative residency, "The Language of the Listening Body," at iLAND.
- The **Judson** series returns to the Judson Memorial Church, which has undergone renovations and now has a wood dance floor, with a celebratory Opening Night event featuring performances by Deborah Hay and Juliette Mapp, and a send-off party for Carla Peterson.
- Movement Research hires Barbara Bryan as Executive Director and Kim Doelger as Managing Director.
- With **Movement Research Festival 2006: Part One**, MR's annual festival returns to Danspace Project from December 8-10, 2006. Curated by Programming Director Amanda Loulaki, three nights of stellar performances bring together adventurous choreographers and improvisers from New York, Philadelphia, Montreal and Melbourne. This festival marks the implementation of a new split format, with the second part of the festival to follow in the spring.

2007

- Operating Budget: \$330,881
- In April 2007, Movement Research brings on arts consultant Suzanne Callahan, founder of Callahan Consulting for the Arts, to conduct gather feedback from artists via two focus groups, lead a final meeting with MR's Board of Directors, and produce the final version of the Strategic Plan.
- MR holds its **Spring 2007 Gala** on May 14th, honoring Yvonne Rainer and celebrating its 28th Season, at Judson Memorial Church. Featuring dinner prepared by celebrity chefs Tere O'Connor and Guy Yarden, and special performances curated by Pat Catterton and Patricia Hoffbauer, the evening is a huge success, raising \$21,500 for the organization.
- The annual festival continues with **Movement Research Spring Festival 2007: Reverence (Irreverence)**, from May 29-June 7, 2007, which offers various formats for critical dialogue and exchange that are both intellectually rigorous and playful. The four-artist Curation/Production Group (Rebecca Brooks, Beth Gill, Erika Hand, Isabel Lewis) in collaboration with MR staff, produced performances in alternative venues and in unusual public spaces, video screenings, classes and workshops, and Studies Projects.
- A **Summer Internship Program**, designed to provide college credit and experience in non-profit administration to talented students, is launched and from June to August 2007.
- As part of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs' redesigned Cultural Development Fund process for FY08, Movement Research receives \$50,000 in program support, a huge increase from the \$7,500 MR was granted in FY07.
- At the close of Fiscal Year 2007, Movement Research successfully eliminates its accumulated deficit, and thus enters the first year of its Strategic Plan as a fiscally stable organization that is strongly rooted in the artistic community and is poised for a promising future.

2008-2009 - 30th Anniversary Season!