

Daniel Almgren Recén

Why 'I Live'?

2010

<https://doi.org/10.25969/mediarep/22144>

Veröffentlichungsversion / published version
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Recén, Daniel Almgren: Why 'I Live'?. In: *MAP - Media | Archive | Performance*. MAP #2 Entscheidung und Augenschein, Jg. 2 (2010), Nr. 1, S. 1–5. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25969/mediarep/22144>.

Erstmalig hier erschienen / Initial publication here:

<https://perfomap.de/map/2/transf/why-i-live->

Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer Creative Commons - Namensnennung - Weitergabe unter gleichen Bedingungen 4.0/ Lizenz zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu dieser Lizenz finden Sie hier:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

Terms of use:

This document is made available under a creative commons - Attribution - Share Alike 4.0/ License. For more information see:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

Why 'I Live'?

Daniel AlmgrenRecén (Amsterdam)



I Live from Daniel AlmgrenRecén on Vimeo (<https://vimeo.com/7514162>)

In 2009 I created a performance called '*I Live*' that had this program text:

This performance is based on the historically important neo-classical ballet *LIVE* from 1979 choreographed by Hans van Manen. *LIVE* has become canonized because of its at that time innovative use of live projected video, portraying the strength and weakness of the performer.

For more info about *LIVE* please visit:

www.eenlevenlangtheater.nl/hans%20van%20manen/video/1929.html

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_van_Manen

"I always had the wish to be part of something historical" was Daniel AlmgrenRecén's starting point for his performance *I Live*.

He, him self born just a few weeks after the premiere of *LIVE* in 1979 poses the question: Can I become part of something that I never was by deciding, "*I am*"?

In *Live* he incarnates, without any formal ballet education as the female principal dancer out of the neo-classical ballet *LIVE*.

Concept: Daniel AlmgrenRecén
Choreography: 'LIVE' by Hans van Manen
Performed by: Bojana Mladenović & Daniel AlmgrenRecén
Voice: Rachel Beaujean, Daniel AlmgrenRecén
Music: Franz Liszt
Movement coach: Heidi Vierthaler
Light design: Katinka Marač
Advice: Gonnie Heggen and Johan Forsman
Special thanks to:

Hans van Manen, Rachel Beaujean, Leontien Wiering, Myriam van Imschoot, Martin Nachbar, Jeroen Fabius, Gabriel Smeets, Igor Dobricic, Dennis Deter, Anja Müller, Vicki Summers, Angela Linssen and Theresia Knevel.

program text for Sophiensaele, Berlin 2009

I'm here intending to map out and file my experience of approaching, relating to, reenvisioning and violating the historically important and canonized neo-classical dance performance *LIVE* (1979) by Hans van Manen.

But first I would like to say something about me.

I have a background in sport, not ballet.

I have a background in theatre before dance.

I have a background in observing rather than manifesting.

I have a background.

I have observed that the performance 'LIVE' and I was born and entered the dance history in the year of 1979.

Winston Churchill once said: "History will be kind to me, because I intend to write it"

With that in mind I approached the performance *LIVE* choreographed by Hans van Manen.

Some of the key aspects in my approach of *LIVE*, here listed without internal hierarchy were:

1.

To conduct an investigation of the historical ground that I'm standing on today, as a western European choreographer and dancer, in an attempt to bridge my present with a part of dance tradition (ballet). A part that I never had contact with, but in a historical perspective couldn't exist without.

2.

My approach was an existential search for a place in the canonized history. A human search and wish for playing a part in the "bigger picture".

My naive attempt to enter the history was not by creating a new piece but by trying to become part of something that already has its place in (dance) history. This attempt is in itself a contradiction since I am creating something new by default.

Live is my *Live* and the two pieces are performing a duet of ideas and manifestations around co-existence in time.

3.

Can I as a contemporary choreographer and dancer not trained in ballet, still be able to dance ballet without disregarding the original performance or my self?

Can I transmit something else than a failure? Even though I have already failed the initial steps.

4.

I became interested in LIVE specifically because I felt that the performance was in some way time-less in the personal relation between the participators different mediums. Henk van Dijk with his camera, Coleen Davis and through their dance and me, as spectator through my gaze.

The attributes used such as the camera, the projection, the minimal skirt, the ballet vocabulary is not standing in the way, they rather help me to connect and engage in the relations created. What intrigued me were the personal, private, professional aspects of a public relationship that exists in this performance.

My sincere intention as dancer was to come as close as possible to the original out from my own abilities, by submerging my self in the original choreography and emerge as part of something historical.

And what did I do?

I tried to see what would be the points of interaction between the performance I was creating and *LIVE*.

In a great conversation with Martin Nachbar we came across the terms "Flirting with" and "*Gender swaps*" as metaphors for my intuitive and instrumental desiccation of *LIVE*.

The term "Flirting with", reefers to the original *LIVEs* internal and external relational aspects, here enumerated like ingredients.

What is Hans van Manen/*LIVE* flirting with?

new media
ballet
Coleen Davis as dancer/person
life
art
presence
absence
past
present
future
the audience

the following is an enumeration of what I'm "*Flirting with*" in *I Live*.

ballet
history
Coleen Davis
Hans van Manen
the audience
new media
old media
presence
absence
past
present
future

The term "gender swaps" symbolizes the constructed relational aspects between *LIVE* and *I Live*. I tried to create a practical relation between Hans van Manen and my work to see it clearer for my self.

In the list below I try to write the "*Gender swaps*" in the form of (*I Live*) **swapping with** (*LIVE*).

Me **swapping with** Coleen Davis as dancer.
TV monitor **swapping with** original projection.
Live recording video camera **swapping with** live projected image.

Life *swapping with* art.
Art *swapping with* life.
Female ballet dancer and male choreographer *swapping with* male contemporary dancer/Choreographer.
Bojana Mladenovic *swapping with* Henk van Dijk as camera wo/man.
Objectification *swapping with* subjectification
Person *swapping with* dance technique.
Me messing with the history *swapping with* history messing with me.
History lending itself to me *swapping with* me lending myself to history.
Mediator *swapping with* mediated.
Layering *swapping with* simplifying.

The four (4) last “swaps” can be reversed or read as observations on the process of trying to relate.

I decided to apply the original choreography to my own body by over and over again watch the video recording of *LIVE* performed by the original dancer Coleen Davis. Learning every step by the method of trial and error.

I also met with Hans van Manen who kindly gave me the permission to use *LIVE* in the way I chose and he recommended me to interview Rachel Beaujean who was the understudy of the original performance in 1979 and today is the “Head of artistic staff” at the Dutch national ballet. A part of this conversation is the soundscape of the first part in *I Live*. In this conversation we are together trying to figure out and remember the original stage setting for *LIVE* when it was first performed in Theater Carré, Amsterdam.

During the process of creation I made the decision to only relate to the first part of *LIVE*, before the second dancer Henny Jurriëns enters, but to keep the original over all time frame of 26 minutes for *I Live*.

For the filming section I chose to use a small hand held camera in *I Live* as a reference to the personalized media culture of today in contrast to the original professional high-end equipment. This was for me to better own the media and impose the self-organizational atmosphere that comes with the small hand held camera. "If no one ask you, do it your self." Which has become a common structure in publishing music and literature (now more on the Internet and in the form of communities.) Another displacement of time in *I Live* is the choice of recording video live but only project it in the end of the performance. When I'm projecting the color recording of my self on the backdrop of the theatre and try to synchronize the original recording of *LIVE* together with the projection. The original recording of *LIVE* is being displayed on a 20 inch, black and white TV-monitor, to frame it as history coming to us through the televised media.

My collaborator Bojana Mladenovic recently said something like this (sorry for my clumsy interpretation of your words):

During the performance *I Live* Daniel AlmgrenRecén is playing with the notion of time by constantly zapping between the past (original video recording from 1979) and the future (projecting my attempt in to the future history books) through the present moment of performing *I Live*. He is able to fluently cover and create time gaps over and over again during the length of the performance.

I see *I Live* as an attempt and proposition to view the relation of time and history as a constantly negotiated “partnership in crime”.



Foto: Nellie de Boer

Daniel AlmgrenRecén is a Swedish Choreographer graduated from SNDO, Amsterdam who except creating his own work, has been performing in among other Keren Cytter, Steve Paxton and Ivana Müllers work.

For more info about him and his work please visit:
www.daar.se and www.grossundstark.com