

19 *Whispering Birds**

Site-specific dance, affect and emotion

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Researching embodied experiences of affect, feeling and emotion in site-specific dance offers understandings beyond the visual and aesthetic aspects of performance, opening consideration of both the performers' and audiences' participatory experiences. In this chapter, I discuss embodied experiences within site-specific dance for designed gardens. I draw on over ten years of site-specific work created for a regional arts festival, for which I have had the opportunity to investigate choreographic approaches to complement and enhance specific sites through embodiment. To begin, I provide an introduction to site-specific dance and discuss how live performance events allow affect, feeling and emotion to arise. Drawing on a range of writers from varied disciplines, I discuss affect as a fluid and relational, collective experience that extends beyond individual experiences as dancers, and may be shared with and between particular audiences at particular times and places.

While theorizing offers some understanding of this experience, it is often difficult to express these embodied, collective experiences in words. Choreographic practice and research, alongside creative writing about key moments in these performances, provide an opportunity to illustrate these fleeting affective practices in words. Thus, in this chapter, moments when I felt I shared an experience with audiences, combined with written responses, recorded anecdotal comments from audience members and notes from discussions between performers, have been crafted into creative vignettes that are highlighted in italics within the text. My intent is to represent the affective experience of site-specific dances within these vignettes. In conclusion, I reflect on how choreographic approaches to site-specific performance may offer our communities an enhanced emotional experience of local sites.

Dance research

Within dance research, practical methods in which investigating movement experiences becomes central are of much value. An understanding of the notion of 'embodiment' is useful in appreciating dance as much more than a visual spectacle. I use the term embodiment to simultaneously and holistically incorporate our differently nuanced and experienced constellations of cultural, social,

intellectual, political, historical, spiritual, biological, artistic, environmental and emotional lives, as gendered, racialized, sexualized and differently functioning, fleshy and specific beings (Barbour 2011). In moving through our worlds, we experience and express ourselves as embodied. In dancing, we express an aesthetic of embodiment, as dance phenomenologist Sondra Fraleigh (1987, 2004, 2010) describes:

Because dance is in essence an embodied art, the body is the lived (experiential) ground of the dance aesthetic. Both dancer and audience experiences dance through its lived attributes – its kinesthetic and existential character. Dance is the art that intentionally isolates and reveals the aesthetic qualities of the human body-of-action and its vital life.

(Fraleigh 1987: xiii)

A particular emphasis on embodied knowledge and aesthetic experiences is useful in framing the description and interpretation of dancing. It is my contention that through dance, performers and audience members have the potential to experience and witness embodied knowledge.

Site-specific dance

Site-specific dance is generally understood as dance that is created and performed in response to a particular site, most often a site in which dance has not traditionally been performed. Site-specific dance implies a relationship between site, performers and audiences in which the embodied, emotional and sensory experiences of those present are engaged with the design, organic and structural features, as well as the social and cultural histories of the site (Hunter 2015, Kloetzel and Pavlik 2009). Drawing on understandings of embodiment, Crouch (2000) argues that people experience and engage with, embody and make sense of places and spaces in a number of ways.

First, the person grasps the world multi-sensually. Second, the body is ‘surrounded’ by space and encounters it multi-dimensionally. Third, through the body the individual expresses him/herself through the surrounding space and thereby changes its meaning.

(Crouch 2000: 68)

I understand site-specific practices in relation to our embodied actions in the world (as opposed to using textual metaphors such as texts, palimpsests or ‘writing of the space’). Thus, the ‘notion of a “repertoire” of behaviors and actions appeals to me and indicates the need to investigate movement in a place’ (Barbour 2010: 121). A repertoire is the range of cultural, traditional, personal and physical choices available, including the range of typical movement behaviors of people in the site and those suggested by the site (Wilkie 2002). Repeated visits and attendance at other events add further to the repertoire of a site. For

example as different audiences on different days respond to seasonal and other changes at the site.

Site-specific performance encourages audiences to take notice of dance in relation to specific sites or environments and may bring awareness to environmental, historical, political, social and/or cultural aspects of the site that help to reinforce a sense of identity in individuals and communities. It is the unique combination of site and performance together that further enlivens the place and has the potential to create a sense of inclusivity or belonging to place and to community.

Site-specific dance offers a performance context in which the ways of engaging for performers and audience – the affective practices – are different from traditional theatrical performance. The differences are not only in situating dance outside a theatre, such as in a busy street, garden, foyer, civic square, alley way or rural setting. According to Hunter: ‘By its very definition, site-specific performance challenges accepted codes and conventions regarding the presentation and the reception of performance work’ (2005: 378). There is potential, for example, for active participation of audience members moving through a space shared with performers so that embodied emotional experiences may flow between performers, audience members and elements of the site. Working in a site allows choreographers and dancers opportunities to develop the repertoire of the site using artistic strategies and tactics to engage in embodied meaning-making, along with an audience potentially also in motion. Pile (2009) suggests that affect – how we describe the motion, the embodiment of our emotions in a shared time and place – is particularly relevant to investigate in site-specific dance. Thus, I provide a detailed discussion of a particular site-specific dance, *Whispering Birds*, and investigate emotional and affective experiences.

Site-specific dance – *Whispering Birds*

The performances of *Whispering Birds* (Barbour 2012a)¹ were offered within the national Hamilton Gardens Arts Festival and the site of performance was the Chinese Scholars Garden. For this performance, collaborating musician XiYao Chen and dancers Alex Hitchmough, Patti Mitchley, Marie Hermo Jensen, Olivia Buchanan and Claire Gray joined myself as choreographer. The Chinese Scholars Garden is situated within the overall ‘ethnogarden’ approach of the Hamilton Gardens, which foregrounds the relationship between peoples and gardens in its designs (Doube 2007, Hamilton Gardens 2011). This particular Chinese Scholars Garden offers a journey or a ‘pilgrimage’ for visitors to experience, with a series of entrances, twists and turns, surprises and ‘dead-ends’, bridges to cross, a hill to climb and a destination – views from the Golden Pavilion over the garden, and surprisingly, the Waikato River behind (Sergel 2004). Arguably, a journey through this garden can represent a lifetime, during which challenges are faced, different perspectives gained and the ground underfoot becomes more challenging to negotiate as the destination nears. Throughout *Whispering Birds*, the audience members followed the pathway through the

garden, experiencing the journey of the garden and discovering dancers performing duets, solos and ensemble choreography that complimented design elements of the site as they moved.

Whispering Birds

Whispering Birds, an island of imagination, an island in the Chinese Scholars Garden. In the quietening moments, bird's wings, rustling breeze in the bamboo. Close, wrapped in the intimacy of the garden. Around a stone table, a refined flowing conversation, a gentle and unhurried grace, limbs curving, sweeping, suspending and spiralling through the luscious textured greens. Making time to gesture, to whisper and to allow the next to expression to emerge. Today, like generations past, a moment to honour relationships between people and with the garden. A simple moving reminder of the wonder of day-to-day ordinary living and the peaceful flow of time.

The Chinese Scholars Garden offers an opportunity to explore, reflect and potentially engage with sensuous and symbolic elements of garden design. Specific design elements include the use of contrast in light and texture, miniaturized wilderness created through clever use of perspective and scale, references to imaginary and mythological as well as remembered landscapes, symbolism in design and planting choices and sequencing of isolated areas through which people can wander and withdraw (Sergel 2004). In attending *Whispering Birds*, audiences also had the opportunity to experience, reflect on and engage with the dancers while wandering through the garden.

Participation in the Chinese Scholars Garden and performances of *Whispering Birds* was integral. Whether this participation was as a performer or as an audience member, all experienced elements of the design and the performance of the dance – what might be called ‘the eliciting situation’ (Salmela 2012: 42). Unlike many audiences of dance, audience members and performers participated in some of the repertoire of the garden: the movements of walking and climbing the paths and bridges, speaking quietly, changing direction, pausing to peer into or look up to appreciate details or sitting quietly to listen to sounds and experience the environment of the garden site. Moving through the garden, all engaged in affective practices that potentially stimulated reflection and recognition of other emotional and embodied ways of knowing and being. These experiences might be shared from the garden to people and from people to other people. The specific environment of the garden and weather, the music and dance, along with remembered repertoires of the site and previous affective practices, all interacted within the moment of performance and enhanced the potential for embodied knowledge to be expressed and experienced.²

Rushing water and sunlight

Dropping into the humming silence, the magic of the guzheng, tones perfectly plucked from strings in the traditions of old. Haunting tones grounding emotions in the weight of limbs, the articulation of joints. Alive, fingers dancing melodies of rushing water and sunlight, playing on the breeze, splashing into the stillness, drifting with the leaves. Enchanting flourishes and sweeping dives inhabiting gestures and lingering in traces of silk. Delving into the recesses of imagination, lifting worry, lightening steps, carrying us away through the rippling mystery of sound.

Emotion, affect and embodied knowing

Consideration of emotions and affect in research has growing momentum, emotions being appreciated as significant and embodied in everyday life 'as ways of knowing, being and doing' (Pile 2009: 6).³ While initially a psychological term referring to an individual's private experiences such as happiness, sadness and anger, more recently within the context of cultural studies emotions have become understood

as culturally constructed and permeating all levels of personal and social experience and, in this sense, as undermining any clear and fixed division between the public and the private.

(Harding and Pribram 2002: 408)

Emotions have become understood as 'part of an intersubjective process' in which the 'distances between "us" are always relational, and indeed that we are intimately subjected by emotion' (Thien 2005: 453). In this sense, emotions contribute to our interactions and relationships with others and with places in public as well as private experiences (Harding and Pribram, 2002). Thus:

An emotional subject offers an intersubjective means to negotiating our place in the world, co-produced in cultural discourses of emotion as well as through psycho-social narratives.

(Thien 2005: 453)

As a consequence, the experience of live site-specific performance has the potential to stimulate personal emotions that contribute to understanding of our relationships with others and our place in the world (such as represented in the vignettes about *Whispering Birds*).

In relationship to this shift in understandings of emotions, the term 'affect' has arisen and encompasses intersubjective emotions and feelings experienced beyond an individual (Anderson and Harrison 2006, Anderson and Smith 2001,

Thien 2005, Wetherell 2012). Affect can be 'attached to things, people, ideas, sensations, relations, activities, ambitions, institutions, and any number of other things, including other affects' (Sedgwick 2003: 19). Mikko Salmela (2012) makes the argument that, within an encompassing 'affect',

participants of all shared emotions must experience the same type of emotion, such as joy, pride, fear, or sadness, and they must share the constituents of emotion: appraisal of the eliciting situation, physiological changes, facial expressions, action tendencies, and subjective feelings, whose synchronization among individuals is capable of giving rise to a more or less intense shared affective experience among them. Moreover, [these are] emotions that people experience together in contexts in which individuals can be mutually aware of sharing the same emotion.

(Salmela 2012: 42)

While there are a range of definitions and interpretations of affect, what is significant

is the sense that affect is the how of emotion. That is, affect is used to describe (in both the communicative and literal sense) the motion of emotion.

(Thien 2005: 451)

Affect, as the motion of emotion, is a transpersonal capacity in which a person is affected through or within their embodiment and may in turn stimulate affect flowing between themselves and others (Pile 2009). In places of heightened emotion, such as artistic performances, rituals and celebrations, and spaces for mourning, the motion of emotion can be experienced as transferring, shifting between and infusing groups of people (Anderson and Smith 2001). Researching affective experiences in places of heightened emotion may offer an appreciation of how emotions are shared, produced and reproduced in place, as well as of social and cultural relationships with place. Extending these social, cultural understandings of heightened and everyday shared emotional experience, Margaret Wetherell articulates an interdisciplinary notion of affective practice as 'embodied meaning-making' (2012: 4). She argues that

Affective practice focuses on the emotional as it appears in social life and tries to follow what participants do. It finds shifting, flexible and often over-determined figurations rather than simple lines of causation, character types and neat emotional categories.

(Wetherell 2012: 4)

Further, Wetherell (2012) clarifies that affective practice is a dynamic, flowing activity with different durations of intense experience and varied connections with broader social influences, such as media and movements of social change. The notion of affective practice

certainly pushes more towards habit than the uncanny, but it is elastic enough to guide thinking about the patterning of extraordinary, spontaneous and one-off affective activities.

(Wetherell 2012: 23)

Affective practices may be thus about patterns in experience, or repertoires, as well as moments of spontaneity such as dancers may experience during live performances.

Drawing on these varied and interdisciplinary articulations, I understand affect and affective practices as fluid and relational collective experiences that extend beyond individual embodied experiences as performers, to being shared with and moving within particular groups at particular times and places. Thus, affective practices can mobilize shared embodied emotional experiences.

In articulating embodied ways of knowing, I suggest that we are able to value our experiential and emotional ways of knowing when we recognize that knowledge is constructed, contextual and embodied. With this recognition,

we can work towards reconciling knowledge gained from these experiences with knowledge gained through other strategies, in a personally meaningful way as we live out our lives.

(Barbour 2011: 95)

Thus, through affective practices we weave together our personal emotional, passionate and embodied experiences with the existing knowledge we receive from other sources (such as socio-cultural processes, media and research), and with shared affective experiences, in a meaning-making process that is dynamic, flowing and embodied. I suggest that there is a relevant and obvious synergy between the argument that 'embodied ways of knowing foreground knowing as creatively living in the world' (Barbour 2011: 96) and Wetherell's (2012: 4) articulation of affective practices as 'embodied meaning-making' that is useful for understanding the affective experiences of performers and audiences in site-specific dance. The process of choreographing and performing *Whispering Birds* offered embodied understandings, both to me and to the other dancers.

A humming seldom heard

Quietening in the morning sunlight, humming sounds of nature seldom heard, a slight breeze sailing through the Arbour of Lingering Fragrance. Rustling bamboo, birds cooing in the distance. The breeze lifting a silk costume, flaming red silk against the dark of the arbour, a delicate fragrance wafting on the air. Breathing, beginning in the Blossom Court as one, peacefully, silently. Movement carving through the sunlight, a sense of gentle unhurriedness, grace, taking time to come together as one in the here and now. Subtle, haunting guzheng tones, floating in softly,

completing moments, inviting and softening us all. Swaying together, enjoying the caress of sun and shade on skin, brushing air over bodies in motion, performers and audience together.

Revealing experiences of affect

As performers in dance, we are able to reflect on, discuss and describe (at least partially) the motion of our emotions and our shared experiences of embodied meaning making (Thien 2005). Additionally, our ability as performers to observe and sense what the audience might be feeling as we perform (through observing 'physiological changes, facial expressions, action tendencies' (Salmela 2012: 42)) allows some general insight into audience experiences. In *Whispering Birds*, we shared our performers' insights together through informal discussion, recorded reflections and insights in a journal and wrote our own evocative descriptions of personal experiences. However, we also wanted to encourage audience members to reflect further and describe their experiences in their own words, and so we deliberately invited them to respond in writing (to attempt to understand 'subjective feelings' (Salmela 2012: 42)). A verbal invitation to 'share your experiences with us' and formal invitation letter was offered to audience members following each performance.⁴

Drawing on performer and audience written responses, discussions between performers and my own memories, I have utilized autoethnographic methods to represent the 'findings' throughout this chapter in vignettes of key moments, attempting to reveal embodied affective practices (Ellis 2004, Ellis and Bochner 2000, 2006, Richardson 1997, 2000). These vignettes offer a written form that is intended to be evocative and to 'feel real' to readers.⁵ As Carolyn Ellis comments, 'validity means that our work seeks verisimilitude; it evokes in readers a feeling that the experience described is lifelike, believable, and possible' (Ellis 2004: 124). I also seek 'reliability' in terms of drawing on emotional experiences described by audience members and performers that resonate strongly with my embodied experiences. In the following section, I draw on the evidence collected from written responses from audience members and performers in sharing short vignettes and briefly summarize some of the affective experiences in *Whispering Birds*. I also refer to the other short vignettes of key moments woven throughout this chapter, integrating a range of sources to represent sensory, embodied, affective experience (Ellis 2004, Pink 2009).

Watching dances, listening to music and feeling emotions are all embodied experiences, and words can never fully capture embodied experience. While it is difficult to express the nuances of differences in embodied experiences and affective practices (Pile 2009, Salmela 2012), where related words were used to describe feelings, emotions and moods, I grouped these together. However, I resisted defining or reducing affective experiences to 'neat emotional categories', as Wetherell comments (2012: 4), preferring these rich, poetic and 'messy' vignettes (Ellis and Bochner 2006). I also combined performers' and audience

members' comments to offer an experiential representation of affective practices that reflects both dancing and watching dancing. In each vignette, there is description of the multi-sensual and multi-dimensional aspects of the garden, as well as embodied expressions that draw attention to the shifts and movement of emotions of performers and audience members (Crouch 2000).

Delight, pleasure, wonder and awe

Something greater, wilder and more beautiful than myself

On Willow Bridge, a curving stone arch, a dancer alone moving and delighting in the musicality and beauty of line and form. Expressing a profound spirituality, at one with the garden, the music, the wind and the sun. Reaching up, giving thanks. Reaching down, connecting to the earth with humility and love. Connecting to spirituality felt. Forgetting the ordinary, dancing into the divine, becoming one with something greater, wilder and more beautiful. Joy in dancing, present in the moment, everywhere at once, always at the destination and always on the journey.

The affective practices within *Whispering Birds* invoked shared emotional experiences of *delight* and *pleasure* for us dancers visiting, rehearsing and performing in the garden. Audience members also used the words *delight* and *pleasure*, as well as *wonder* and *awe*, in describing their emotions, feelings and moods. In most responses, these emotions seemed to arise in experiencing the combination of the dance, music, sound and the garden in creating an overall embodied aesthetic. For one audience member, this sensory combination resulted in a *performance where dance and music communicated without words like no other*. One performer wrote that *on the day of this performance, I truly feel that nature, culture, audience and performers came together harmoniously as one, each accepting the other for nothing more than its sheer existence*. *Delight, pleasure, wonder and awe* were also represented in other vignettes of key moments.

Grief, sadness and compassion

Precious burdens

A slow passage reflected in water below, glimpses of gold as small fish dart amidst the green, floating silk and ripples marking the passing moments. Bending over from the waist, moving slowly with a heavy and precious burden, carrying another on her back across the bridge. Placing one foot after the other, savouring the weight shifts, confident in her strength and

inevitable progress. A timeless, compelling journey, triggering images of women the world over carrying children, heavy loads of wood, fresh food, or belongings on their backs. A weighty responsibility and a rising sadness and grief for personal losses and for the losses of people throughout the world, for people needing to be carried. Sadness and yet simultaneously, compassion and hope, for there are people who do carry others, who do heal others and who do carry precious burdens.

One particular key moment within the performance mobilized shared emotional experiences of *grief, sadness* and *compassion* – one dancer moving slowly across a bridge carrying another dancer on her back. During our choreographic process when working on this bridge, I recall sighing and hearing sighs from the other dancers watching when the dancers first tried carrying each other. We dancers experienced a deep, shared sense of the relevance of the image created and wanted to watch the slow movement for a long time. In responding to this moving image, audience members described emotions evoked as *grief, sadness* and feeling *troubled*, as well as sense of *compassion*. *This slow carrying movement evoked a great sadness in me but at the same time, hope and compassion, because there are people who carry others and work to heal life*, wrote one audience member. The vignette above encapsulates some of the affective practices.

Peace, calm and quiet

I am a white dove

Whispering Birds, engaging us all in the ancient art of serenity. Floating in the light breeze, a subtle scent, spinning leaves and a dragonfly spreading magic as it skims the water. Settling on the edge of the lake, a white dove watching, sharing this place with people moving, dancing, meandering through the garden. Present in the now, in a stretching wing, a spiraling spine, a look into the distance. Breathing slows, thoughts flow easy, reflected and rippling with the water. Bones resting in place, skin soft and listening. Occasional bird calls, light notes in the air, languages unknown but meanings sensed. In this moment, I am a white dove.

It was my experience working in the Chinese Scholars Garden that time appeared to slow down: we dancers breathed more deeply, found moments of sensual pleasure in the contrasts of light and texture, in the caress of the breeze and the sun on our skins. I found space for reflection, *peace, calm* and *quiet*, words audience members also used to describe their experiences of emotion,

feeling and mood within the performance. From the opening moments of *Whispering Birds*, the motion of emotions amongst the group of performers and audience changed, and arguably, deepened. A member of the festival crew discretely located behind the dancers during the performances commented on the complete quiet, focus and attention of the audience, who appeared calm and captivated by the unfolding images. Perhaps, as Jennifer Lea writes, 'taking the body away from the "everyday" opened up to attention to the body itself, foregrounding its connections to the world' (2008: 95). A dance reviewer of the performances expressed something of this sentiment when she wrote: *I am reminded of that exact moment when the breath slows; the mind melds with body as both surrender to sleep* (Kidd 2012: 6). An audience member commented that *the overwhelming feeling for me was peacefulness. The music and dance had an almost hypnotic effect that was very relaxing. I also felt very grateful. The dance was a reminder of life's beauty and connectedness*. As performers, there were moments during performances in which the movement harmonized with the reflective mood of the surrounding garden and evoked a meditative and peaceful state. In these performance moments, we dancers felt a sense of connectedness with the environment and experienced, even if only momentarily, something of the practice of breathing in dialogue with the garden.

Reflections

The Chinese Scholars Garden is already an evocative site, a therapeutic landscape (Lea 2008), designed to take visitors on a journey of discovery, to slow their progress and to enhance moments of reflection. Working in this site helped to deepen my own, the dancers' and audience members' attention to embodied emotional experience, stimulated awareness of site, self and others and a sense of belonging, connection and community. As performers and audience members, we added embodied layers of movement and gesture that stimulated further emotional experiences, in this sense adding to the repertoire of this site. While experiences of peace, calm and quiet might be anticipated to arise as a response to this garden, I feel we added embodied layers that encompassed a breadth of emotional response from delight, pleasure, wonder and awe, to the stimulation of grief, sadness and compassion. These experiences of affect, feeling and emotion drew on embodied, aesthetic responses as dancers to the environment of this particular garden.

Supporting the ways in which audience members remember and expand their repertoire of this site, one person wrote that *from now on I will think of your dance whenever I go into the Chinese garden, just like I remember you [in the other gardens] . . . the memory adds another layer to the ongoing enjoyment of the space*. One of the performers also described

the way the garden stays with us as performers. As rehearsals go on there is a relationship forming where you get to know the garden. Then after the performances are over and we visit the space there is a remnant [and reminiscing] of what has been.

I also feel a sense of home in the space . . . once I have worked with a space it will always have a significant meaning to me.

A further written response from an audience member stated that *the dances and music of 'Whispering Birds' brought the Chinese Scholars Garden to life for us; your performance will be recalled on each future visit.*

Site-specific performances create embodied experiences and offer affective practices that mobilize shared emotions, feelings and moods, all of which may be stimulated in returning to the site again. Subsequently, the repertoire of the specific site grows and accumulates emotional and embodied experiences as remembered by those visiting the site again. However, different sites have very different features and affective practices may mobilize entirely different, and not necessarily always positive, emotional experiences. Thus, artists should create ethically, taking care to consider the potential impact of site-specific performances on audiences and performers.

Finally, experiences as site-specific performers and as audience members reinforce a sense of enriching the repertoire of, and adding emotional experiences to, particular sites through affective practices in performance. I reflect that site-specific performances may offer audiences an enhanced emotional experience of community sites. Perhaps an opportunity for reflection, a sense of retreat from everyday life, an experience of reconnection with community and a reminder of the wonder of the world may arise.

Notes

- * This chapter is based upon a journal article (Barbour & Hitchmough 2014), re-written for this book with permission from Alex Hitchmough and the journal.
- 1 With appreciation as choreographer and researcher, I acknowledge all those involved in *Whispering Birds* and specifically the dancers Alex Hitchmough, Patti Mitchley, Marie Hermo Jensen, Olivia Buchanan and Claire Gray. I acknowledge the artistry and guidance of collaborating musician XiYao Chen in researching and working in a culturally sensitive manner in the Chinese Scholars Garden.
- 2 Over the last ten years, I have been involved in site-specific, contemporary dance performances in the Hamilton Gardens Arts Festival. I focus in this chapter on affective experiences rather than choreographic methods and creative processes, discussion of which can be found in Barbour (2008, 2010, 2011, 2012b, 2014).
- 3 Also see Anderson and Smith (2001), Davidson and Bondi (2004), Davidson and Milligan (2004), Harding and Pribram (2002), Sedgwick (2003), Thien (2005), Wetherell (2012).
- 4 Audiences and performers were invited to respond in writing voluntarily. I note that responses reflected predominantly perspectives of New Zealanders of European ancestry, and that interpretations by Chinese or Asian New Zealanders were not offered. However, in the context of a community arts festival and ethical research processes, compelling or requiring audience members and performers to respond is unreasonable. Voluntarily given, the tenor of these responses was positive. Sixteen written responses were received and one performance review published.
- 5 Throughout the performances there were a range of emotional experiences that seemed to be shared by audience members and with performers. I have focused on key, shared affective experiences we consider unique to these site-specific performances of *Whispering Birds* rather than relating general pleasure in watching dance.

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