Digital Echoes
What is essential in any artistic revolution, in which I would suggest digital arts practice and its linkage to live performance can be situated, is its capacity to communicate, as Heidegger suggests, ‘what is’ and ‘what matters’. Significant art practice shows ‘what is’ present and what is appearing in its historical moment and reveals ‘what matters’ and what counts within that world. In our postdigital condition, what appears is the intangible and its potentiality, virtuality and immanence. What matters is how our shared cultural heritage, our history, is constructed within that intangibility. The phenomena of the intangible, be it a human voice, which rises to be heard and then fades into silence, a body in performance splendidly isolated in time and space, or the domain of virtual communications that circulate in seeming timelessness, remain the ground upon which our current cultures are articulated and represented. This important volume, Digital Echoes, works to understand that process and those phenomena conveyed through arts practice and research, specifically in the areas of dance, performance and somatic practices.

What is of concern to the editors and contributors of this book are the phenomena of the gathering of the posthuman subject within, and in collaboration with, the grounds of technological communications and representations. These events of ‘performing subjects in the spaces of technology’ are responding to the new cultural construction that is both organic and technological, corporeal and intangible, with an increasing awareness of the seepage between these states of being. What the editors of this collection are keenly aware of, and what is lucidly acknowledged by the various authors in this fine book is the fact that at the heart of the
construction of any shared cultural heritage lie its technologies of representation. Our cultural heritage, intangible or otherwise, which is essentially, our history, and the manners in which that history is ‘recovered, transmitted, created, curated, and presented’ within a postdigital culture are inseparable and exist in a continuum. Digital technologies are not only the transmitters of our shared intangible cultural heritage, they are the cultural heritage itself. From the landscapes of social media to the portraits of technologically-enhanced dance, performance and somatic practices, this timely book addresses these phenomena in methods that are engaging, provocative, and stimulating.

Although the authors of the individual chapters represent a variety of Universities and Research Centres, much of the work contained in this volume has found its inspiration through the Centre for Dance Research (C-DaRE) at Coventry University, which has established itself as leader in the field of Dance and Performance Research. The Centre’s engagement with performance philosophy, digital culture and multiple points of contact across the spectrum of issues related to dance and somatic practices are wide-ranging and enlightening. A significant contribution to that leadership have been the series of symposia named ‘Digital Echoes’, which have served as a vital resource to the members of the wider dance, performance and somatic practices research community. This volume places in hand a portion of the output of the Centre’s and the symposia’s crucial contributions to practice-based arts research and thought.

*Digital Echoes: Spaces for Intangible and Performance-based Cultural Heritage* is an essential and informed engagement with the critical issues of postdigital culture as witnessed through the practice, research and thought of the body in performance. These lived bodies, being present in the events of performance, are the fundamental components of the situation of our lives. These bodies echo throughout the digital spaces and are the fundamental elements and the basis of the intangible cultural heritage that makes our world. The intangible is grounded on the corporeal. This book is an invitation to consider, within a reflection of the notion of an intangible cultural heritage constructed via digital technologies and performance practices, what is and what matters within this postdigital condition.

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