

## Documentary review: A Dancer's comically pretentious autobiography — “Grace Fury”

Posted on [April 21, 2021](#) by Roger Moore



No sense uh, *tiptoeing* around it. “Grace Fury,” an autobiographical dance documentary by dancer-choreographer Laura Carruthers, is the worst dance doc I’ve ever seen.

After thorough analysis of Roger’s lies, errors, and abuse, I can say that his opening statement comes as great relief and credit to my film. I’d be most concerned if *Grace Fury* were appealing to such a gross incompetence and dishonest nature.

**For starters, do the above scenes from *Grace Fury* really scream “documentary” by any ordinary understanding of the word?**

**Unless one has a very broad, flexible notion of the genre, *Grace Fury* is not a “dance doc”.**

To be autobiographically inspired does not automatically make a “documentary”, no more than any fiction, derived from personal experience, would be called a “documentary”. In fact, *Grace Fury* draws as much from other fictional concepts that I put to film, years before.

**She is films within a film!**

Maybe Roger didn’t read or comprehend those press memos sent with my “performing arts film” or notice how *Grace Fury* bridges concert and cinema to offer core insight and challenge paradigms.

***Grace Fury* is not just about dance, and she’s not just about me or her own making.**

Anyone who suggests as much either misrepresents the film...or didn’t really watch it.

**Not that the dancers aren’t terrific and the choreography — a hybrid of ballet, modern and Scottish dance — at least a little interesting.**

In his very next sentence, Roger uses the words, “terrific”, “hybrid”, and “interesting” to describe *Grace Fury*’s dance and choreography.

Keep that in mind and watch where he goes.

**It's a life story cryptically, quasi-“poetically” related in dance and endless, eye-rollingly pretentious voice-over narration.**

***Grace Fury* is neither standard narrative -- nor standard “narration”.**

I knew it would be an edgy move.

**Very few films rely entirely on *interior monologue*.** Those are the better terms to use here.

***Grace Fury's* verbal communication had to complement and connect scenes from older film projects, each moment off stage, having an intensely private and pensive, near mystical quality to it.**

Walking desert roads alone, standing in front of castles, prepping mind and body in studio, kneeling before ancient stone carvings ...These moments called for an “inner voice” that wouldn't overpower or overdramatize them, one that could *settle* the dueling, light and dark energies of the film.

**With a voice, soft and calm - I chose to be authentically *in character*,  
“whispering in the wind.”**

But I get it. So much of what we see and hear now, what we're conditioned to expect is mostly literal, plain-spoken, matter-of-fact communication that, to put it politely, leaves little to the imagination. Some want films spelled out in straightforward terms and in ordinary fashion for quick, easy consumption. *Grace Fury* doesn't comply.

To watch *Grace Fury* is simply to catch me in a moment, musing the places and perspectives that have not only shaped *me* to the very doubtful, pivotal point of her making and mission beyond – but have also revealed *us*, how we both favor *and* fight each other, our freedom, and potential for progress.

She's an open window to my mind in recollection and reflection. There, various subjects of interest bond and overlap. From my mix of fascinations, well beyond dance, ***Grace Fury*** emerges romantic and raw, cryptic and candid. She's my delight in layered depth, symbol, metaphor, and word.

**She's not pretentious, Roger – She's just artistic.**

**“I have outgrown my simple faith,” Carruthers intones, “given up fantasy for truth.”**

I'm not sure why Roger pulls this line from my script, **out of context and with no set-up**, but ***Grace Fury's*** introductory chapter reveals her doubt about chasing dreams – She alludes to her *practical experience*, creating and directing for over two decades.

Feel free to visit my website that highlights some of those [projects](#).

**In between dances, which are sampled not-quite-randomly with no set-up, she hints at conflicts in companies, competing agendas, being dismissed and fleeing Arizona for Scotland.**

**This statement marks Roger's first lie about *Grace Fury*.**

I spent years on this project, between projects, for a reason - every image, every word, every movement carefully placed.

The dances unfold in a deliberate order to create a dynamic flow. The styles and energies in use all have purpose and personality, relative to the elemental "moods" and ideas in mind at that moment.

**The dances are both introduced and referenced - cradled - by words and scenes, before and after.**

**Incidentally, I was never "dismissed".**

I left the ballet and Highland dance cultures, all on my own.

**My words, "Let's get lost...beyond these shores..." were apparently lost on Roger.**

"I mean, look at here. That's what she's here for!"

This is illustrated by her walking an Arizona desert highway, narrating about how "hot" it is (she's wearing a leather jacket) only to be picked up by a 1975 MGB Midget. The '70s vibe spreads to the score, twinkly primitivesynthesizer Muzak with digital whistles and bagpipes.

**Here, Roger lies again and misquotes *Grace Fury* for the first time.**

These words do not "illustrate" the particular scene he describes.

He's brazenly applying phrases (with wrong words) to different sections.

The more rigid, "earthly" dances just prior to this scene end with me lifted into the light. I speak *poetically* of my years, lauded in traditional dance realms...in the warmth of *that light*.

**I do not use the word "hot" and I'm not talking about a "hot" desert.**

Incidentally, Roger, did you know that sunny deserts in the winter get cold too?

**Also, no digital bagpipes here.**

“Here we go again,” she introduces in a dance number featuring sword and scabbard, venturing “somewherebetween fire and grace.”

**Indeed, here we go again. We get a 2<sup>nd</sup> misquote from Roger.**

He backs up and references an opening scene, out of context, and with the wrong words.

Somewhere between modern dance and “Riverdance,” between *pliés* and highland flings, Carruthers finds her dancing “voice.” If only she’d kept that pretentious narrator’s voice to herself.

Once again, Roger basically affirms the complexity of *Grace Fury’s* choreography.

He acknowledges that I’m working across dance forms, expressing my own “voice” in a hybrid style, bound to produce *dynamic* or “interesting” variations -- in energy, in phrasing, in the use of space and music, and of course in technique, from intricate and very fast to minimal and very subtle.

**When Roger writes, “If only...” he implies the “narrator’s voice” is the problem for him – not the choreography, not the dance performance.**

Again, keep this in mind, as he continues.

**Otherwise, Roger provides a wonderful example of the insecure psyche and its treatment of the artist.**

He has no room for *that* voice that might challenge him intellectually, in content and/or in manner of speaking, that might identify and confront such diminutions and demands made of artist to “shut up and dance” for his simple-minded pleasure and control.

**“Look at her. That’s what she’s there for.”...“She should know her place”.**

***Grace Fury* speaks right to this familiar confrontation, and Roger steps right up to prove her point.**

Too many confuse undeterred delight in experimentation and play – from years of study and hard work in the arts and film – with inauthenticity and arrogance.

Ironically, those most offended or threatened by that confidence and freedom project their own darkness – *their* ego-centrism and false air of authority - onto others, they would call “pretentious” or “self-absorbed”.

Those words suggest that *Roger* somehow *knows* me. *He’s* going to tell everyone who I am. He also feels entitled to re-write my work. By maligning and misrepresenting my art without check, he fabricates a straw man for easy attack.

Too harsh? Consider this — *“With each ending, you slip under in a way, pulling me further and further out to sea...now adrift, alone with thoughts that sway between giving up and treading more uncertainty, more of these amplified ups and downs. And I think I’m a little seasick.”*

Perhaps you can’t be a dancer to hear how howlingly agrammatical, self-absorbed and “slept through English class” that sounds. Apparently nobody in her circle told her.

**Roger continues with a 3<sup>rd</sup> misquote and more disregard for context.**

He dismisses and re-writes my struggle and pain, my state of mind, “adrift” and alone with familiar thoughts and doubts about continuing... about riding the waves of a self-made journey.

**I was not writing for an essay award when developing this scene.**

**Moreover, creative writers are *not* necessarily bound to the rules of grammar.**

They bust them all the time - deliberately. We reserve the right to play with language, particularly when developing dialogue or interior monologue – and *vocalizing* inner feelings and states of mind, with efficiency.

**Maybe I shouldn’t be surprised that Roger doesn’t know this by now.**

**Those same people neglected to suggest maybe knowing nothing about how to film dance and a direct a movie about dance should give one pause.**

“...neglected to suggest maybe knowing nothing about how...” -- Talk about an abuse of language!

**Here, Mr. “slept-through-English-class” removes all doubt that he’s unfit to assess serious work.**

**We go from his targeted dislike of my interior monologue to this sweeping, poorly constructed, and flawed insult, in defiance of the facts -- *and* his own assertions but a few sentences before.**

**His unsupported claims, asserted as absolute fact about *me*, do absolutely nothing for him.**

In one fell swoop, they discredit his assumed “authority” in dance, film, and the written word.

**They make his film review – a *personal* attack**

**Gene Kelly, Kenny Ortega, Twyla and Fosse were rare birds.**

**\*\* My deepest apologies to Gene, Kenny, Twyla, and Bob.**

Obviously, Roger likes to use and abuse people at will, all industry-ass-kissing piety and praise notwithstanding.

**I, for one, wouldn’t want to be on Roger’s list of “rare birds”.**

**The dance here has a local PBS affiliate taping a visiting dance company feel — pedestrian, static.**

Nonetheless, he persists.

As we're left to doubt Roger's authority and background in dance and choreography, he doubles down on his lousy syntax and self-contradiction.

**This poor troll suffers a very short memory, or he just cannot keep his puny list of comments straight.**

**\*\* Remember when he wrote:**

**“Not that the dancers aren't terrific” and the choreography at least “interesting”?**

**\*\* Remember when he noted the various dance styles involved and then wrote:**

**“If *only* she had kept that ...narrator's voice to herself”, implying the rest was “terrific” dancing?**

We go from those affirmations all the way to “The dance here” is “pedestrian and static”. Suddenly within a few lines, it's all uninspired and unchanging -- a claim easily shut down.

**Obviously, Roger doesn't like to be cogent and consistent - or correct - when harassing artists.**

**And “we'll meet again to share this thirst” sounds like a threat.**



**The *only* thing Roger does consistently with my film is re-write it and re-arrange it, finishing it off with a 4<sup>th</sup> misquote.**

Roger just makes it up as he goes, rendering a fool's attempt to tackle an artistic work, literally.

Maybe bad ratings from this character – a lazy mind and lousy writer, at best – are to be expected. Who cares, right?

**Maybe Roger's attack would be almost bearable, if it weren't so carelessly enabled and normalized by other rotten tomatoes with greater responsibility.**

**-- That's a problem for all of us.**

**Anyway, I cannot rate his performance here on a scale of one to five because it simply doesn't qualify.**

**It reads like familiar schoolyard aggression faced years ago - nothing close to skilled, professional critique.**