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# Arthleticism: Figure Skating and Modern Dance in Parallel

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ARTHLETICISM: Figure Skating and Modern Dance in Parallel

By

Chiquita Limer

A thesis submitted to the Department of Dance of The College at Brockport, State  
University of New York, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Fine Arts  
December 13th, 2016

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Chair, Thesis Committee

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Date

## *Introduction*

Imagine the ice as a plain white canvas, and a pair of blades attached to the skating boots as a paintbrush. Every stroke you take while gliding with your skates creates a drawing pattern. I never had any expectations when I first stepped on the ice, I had just begun to paint my journey. Along this journey, I found my true passion in choreography. In the beginning of my skating career I was a competitive skater, and trained to learn how to do more intricate techniques, such as jumping and spinning. I was focused more on the technical rather than the performing aspect.

At the age of twelve, I experienced a major failure when I first competed at Skate Asia 2002. As a kid, I felt the embarrassment was not bearable. I decided to hang my skates and quit skating. I was certain about my decision, until one day without any intention, I watched a video of Tara Lipinski, the youngest Olympic Champion in the winter sport category. In the video, she performs an artistic piece, titled *Dreamcatcher*. It was choreographed so beautifully by Lee Ann Miller, and performed so gracefully by Tara Lipinski. *Dreamcatcher* shows both true artistry and strong techniques. Tara's performance truly inspired me, and gave me a new perspective on skating. I finally found the one thing that I never practiced before: performing.

I was too busy mastering my techniques and ignoring my performance. To improve my performance, I started taking dance classes and practicing consciousness in my movements on ice. I have gained so much maturity, both mentally and perspective, ever since I watched Tara's video. Suddenly, my choreography journey had begun and my passions have developed throughout new experiences, learning processes, and circumstances. I came to America and studied dance choreography at

SUNY, The College at Brockport, which has an accredited reputation for its dance program, particularly in modern dance. As a third year graduate student with intensive training in modern dance, I am researching the concept of the body in modern dance and examining how it influences the vertical body in figure skating.

Verticality is common in skating, mainly because some elements such as jumping require a straight vertical body position to be able to rotate in the air.

However, skating is not just about its elements or techniques. As James Hines in *Figure Skating: A History* states,

The balance of athleticism and artistry that defines figure skating has been retained as the sport has entered the twenty-first century, although, there has been some eroding of artistry since the mid-1980s, a result of the ever-increasing emphasis on athleticism, especially jumping. Because exciting technical advances will continue, skaters, coaches, and officials should monitor carefully rule changes and judging criteria to assure retention of an appropriate balance between athleticism and artistry. Figure skating must not lose its unique identity. (304)

My method of skating practice became more solid with my study of modern dance. I felt the proper balance between artistic and athletic in skating is important.

In order to study this importance I developed my own term for this combination of art and athletics. *Arthleticism* is a word to describe both artistic and athletic skills within an art. I specifically coined this term within the context of figure skating. Arthleticism means skaters can be equally artistic and athletic. However, skating is considered a winter sport in the Olympic Games, which means many people see it only in terms of athletics. One of my purposes for this thesis is to show that figure skating is both art and sport, which is based on both my phenomenology

because of the fact that many of the beliefs we hold are based on our own experience, and empiricism which means observations that are made under strictly controlled experimental conditions. (Bird & Cripe, Pg. 6)

One way this combination of art and sport can be seen is in the need for choreographed movements in skating competitions. Techniques such as jumps and spins are required in competitions, but those elements must be choreographed with music and movements. This is called a 'program,' and choreographers work closely with skaters to create them. This shows that though the competition is athletic, it requires elements of art, specifically dance. However, there is a difference between competitive artistry and entertainment artistry. In competitive settings there are rules for a program to be qualified, but in theatrical settings choreographers can explore any type of dance forms that they want.

Another way in which artistry is evident within the athleticism of skating is through the use of gestures. In particular, skating gestures are more or less similar to classical ballet. They are so similar that classical ballet is one of the most popular kinds of off-ice training for skaters, and it is believed to improve a skater's posture and arm movements on ice. However, one of the problems of this training is that classical ballet requires a turned out leg, while in skating the legs are parallel. Because of this difference, modern dance should arguably be considered as a supplemental training method for skaters, i.e. as an option other than ballet.

There are many ways modern dance can be useful as a training method for skaters. For example, in modern dance the feet are parallel for the most part, which is good for skaters. Also, modern dance values freedom and self-expression, and its exercises can be approached for many different personal needs making it a versatile training method. Another important aspect is that the groundedness and three-

dimensional movement in modern dance can challenge the verticality in skating. With the knowledge and training that I have learned from these past two-and a half years, I am attempting to find an alternative way for skaters to improve their performance on ice through modern dance practice. In this research, I will mainly focus on Single Skating. Single Skating is divided by two categories: competitive and theatrical skating. Most skaters are trained from an early age, and basic skills are the first things that are taught. This is why skaters commonly start off as competitive skaters. However, along the way they might find passion for choreography, and eventually even pursue a performing career.

I first actively put my research into practice when I went back to my country in winter 2015. I held a workshop called “Arthleticism: The Importance of Performance in Figure Skating” at BX Rink, the ice rink that I have worked with for the past 2 years. It was interesting how Indonesian skaters that are not familiar with modern dance perceived the repertoire I taught. It was an intensive 3 day workshop, and it obviously affected their perspective on skating. My goal is not to make a statement, but to offer a creative way to achieve arthleticism in figure skating.

The last sub-chapter informs the process of my thesis creative project titled *I-ce Shadow*, which is a mixture of dance, skating, and technology. Within the piece, there are performers on stage, consists of four modern dancers, one figure skater, and one musician, and off-stage crew including one projection operator and two videographers. Because this piece is a fusion between skating and dance, two separate choreographic movements were being investigated: dancer’s movement and skater’s movement. Dancer’s movement was essentially borrowed from skating’s aesthetic movement, emphasizing flow and an elongation form of extension, as well as exploring a variety of skating’s footwork to be performed on the stage with bare feet.

A dancer's sense of moving should be stimulated by the sense of gliding with parallel feet on slippery ice. To achieve this sensation, I took dancers to skate and physically experience fast gliding to help them meet this expectation. Skater's movement correlated dancer's movement, and it is purely improvisational, exploring the whole body using the theory of 3-dimensional movement with spatial awareness. It will be recorded on ice and played on the video projection throughout the dance. A piece of sheer white fabric will be used for the video projection. Furthermore, it is also a symbol, which could be interpreted as the ice, the wind, the shadow, and the flow.



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*Abstract*

The focus of this paper will address the implication of modern dance theory of the body into the form of figure skating. Figure skating is both art and sport.

*Arthleticism* is a term I coined specifically in figure skating, which means a skater can perform both artistically and athletically. However, the aesthetic verticality in figure skating was influenced by many different factors, but mainly from classical ballet.

The goal of this paper is to challenge the form of figure skating with three-dimensional body movement on ice, and the key to achieve that is the awareness and utilization of the spine through modern dance practice.

## Chapter 1. ARTHLETICISM

### i. Art and Sport



Figure 1. Olympic Gold medalist, Kim Yuna performing at the Olympic ceremony exhibition.

*Arthleticism* is based on two words: art and athleticism. *Arthleticism* is a word to describe both artistic and athletic skills within an art. I specifically coined this term within the context of figure skating, meaning skaters can be equally artistic and athletic.

After doing some personal research, I figured that art is stereotypically perceived as a human activity or a final product that is strongly related to beauty, creativity, and imagination. As Carol Press quotes, “Ellen Dissanayake (2000) and psychoanalyst George Hagman (2000a, 2001, in press) both assert that the arts connect us to our ideals, and consequently to our subjective sense of beauty” (Press, 5). But Art is broad in terms of definition, Joan Cass wrote a specific definition of art based on dance, “The fact that the medium of this art form is movement. Movement, which is the raw material of the dance art, is much more than physical activity. Our

language is clear on this point... Movement is connected to a person's deepest intellectual and emotional being, and often functions as speech without words." (Cass, 5).

On the other hand, athleticism is described as a physical skill or quality commonly found in sports. And what is a sport? "Sport is competitive play, and there is no doubt that the tension and pressures associated with competition, meeting challenges, and the pursuit of victory contribute to our interest and even our fascination with sport" (Feezell, 18), he also wrote "I suggest that one of the reasons sport attracts so many relates to this experience of freedom, understood not as choice but as self expression" (Feezell, xii), his theory recalled my understanding about self expression which is one of the aesthetic of art.



**Figure 2. Tara Lipinski, the youngest Olympic champion in figure skating history**

Other scholars see art and sport as two different things with no close relationship between them. For example, Professor Jerzy Kosiewicz, in his paper titled *Sport and Art: Differences and Theatrical Similarities*, defines art as “The fundamental objectives of art as well as the ambition of an artist are the attainment of the objective itself, the autotelic aim, the aim that represents the highest value. Artistic values are what constitute this superior aim.” (Kosiewicz, 72). Additionally, Kosiewicz’s definition of sport is “The most important goal in the kind of sport indicated is the achievement of the best possible result, the highest place in a given match, game or competition or a more broadly planned rivalry” (Kosiewicz, 74). These definitions show that Kosiewicz does not see any relation between art and sport.

Mary Louise Adams, the author of *Artistic Impression: Figure Skating, Masculinity, and The Limit of Sport*, addresses the way art and athletics make figure skating appealing. “In many ways it is surprising that figure skating ever became a competitive sport... ‘Skating is absolutely the only sport in which competitors are marked both for doing of a thing and for the way it is done, it is the only one in which grace is a factor to which such a special recognition is awarded” (Adams, 121). Artistic impression makes figure skating a subject akin to dance. Also known as *program components*, artistic impression means movement, flow, musical, and expressive quality that blends together in a skating program. Technically, we can say modern figure skating is dancing on ice. There are art layered elements with strong athletic qualities behind the performance. Given my artistic perspective with a background in competitive skating, I believe art is an outlet for human expression, while sport is a physical activity to win a game or competition. If these two perspectives were put together in the context of figure skating, they would fit perfectly.



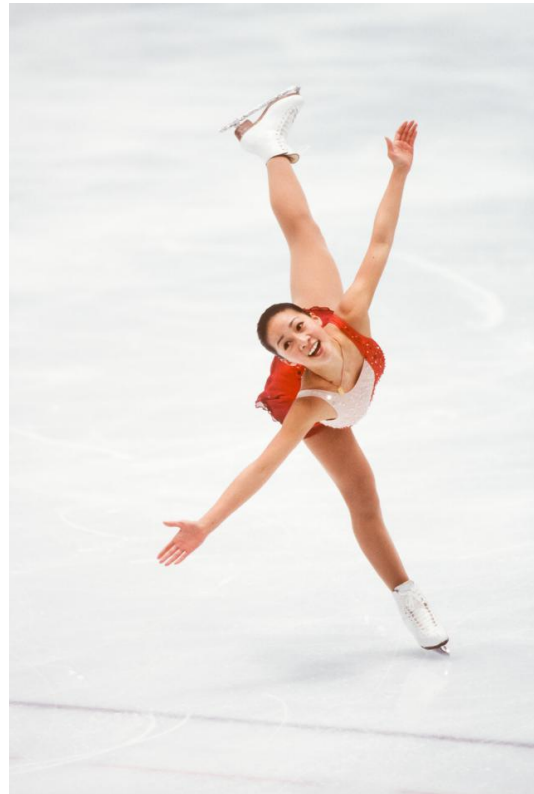
**Figure 3. Jason Brown, an uprising young figure skater that proves the quality of athleticism**

### *ii. Skating or Ballet*

When I was still teaching as a choreographer in Indonesia, I always encountered a particular perception from the general public regarding the relationship between figure skating and classical ballet. This perception was that figure skating is ballet. This opinion was most likely coming from Indonesian people when they watched a well-trained skater performing his or her program. Another encounter I had with this perception came from skating coaches and parents. They often thought you had to take ballet to be good at figure skating. As the first person who started introducing dance choreography into the Indonesian skating community, I felt curious about this common perception which is not examined by scholarly observation and research. The first thing I looked into was the body itself.

I will start my observation with the upper body, which is the skull, thorax, and spine. For many years the classical forms of skating and ballet had shown a similar upper body alignment, which can be achieved by the action of elongating the spine. Elongation of the spine allows each section of the torso to occupy the space it needs without interfering with other parts. It uplifts the sternum, and at the same time it lengthens the back of the neck and pushes the back of the head up, bringing the chin

level. “The result of this alignment is a posture that gives dancers a characteristic super-uprightness” (Paskevka, 35) and a sense of lightness on the upper body, which is highly valued in classical forms of skating and ballet. Once this basic value has been achieved, both skater and dancer will be able to defy gravity. This will happen “even before any motion occurs, by standing upright, elongating the spine, and floating atop of hip joints, the dancer defies gravity” (Paskevka, 34).



**Figure 4. Michelle Kwan capturing the audience's heart with her *spiral* and a big smile.**

Gravity tends to pull our bodies down, and defying gravity means skaters or dancers ‘appear’ light in the sense of movement. This is why defying gravity is important in both skating and ballet, and it is necessary to achieve this aesthetic especially in jumping techniques. Skating and ballet share the same idea of jumping: to give an illusion of lightness and effortlessness while holding up against the pressure of gravity. This is the part where balance takes on an important role. People’s natural action to keep their balance while standing is by contracting some group of muscles in the body, usually the legs. An improper used of muscle groups when balancing can cause misalignment or even a fall. Balance is the key to success in both skating and ballet because “falling” is not permissible in either activity, especially in competitive settings. Great balance will minimize the chance of falling.



Figure 5. A ballerina performing a high *arabesque*

In skating and ballet, the similar principles of upper body alignment, defying gravity, balance, and the theory of falling explain the verticality of the body when put together. Vertical movement means the body is often straight and barely leaning away from the axis of the body. All these similar aesthetic qualities and values I mentioned

above can be found in both skating and ballet, but there is one huge difference that distinguishes the techniques. It is the use of the lower body that makes skating and ballet distinct from one another.

While people outside the skating world think all skaters have ballet training, in reality, skaters do take ballet class, but the class is specifically designed for skaters. Posture, carriage, and musicality are considered essential to artistic expression and are identified as performance aspects. In order to enhance performance quality, many skaters engage in dance practice, commonly ballet. Because of this, many professional skaters must have taken ballet class or a specific class called ballet for skating. However, the type of ballet training is carefully structured for skaters. For example, professional skaters are highly discouraged to do *pointe* because it will damage their feet.

When utilizing the lower body in ballet, an advanced level ballerina wears pointe shoes. A pointe shoe is a type of shoe worn by ballet dancers to do pointe work. The flat tip (the box) of a pointe shoe is a hard and stiff material to support the



dancer while performing pointe work. Pointe work is a series of movements requiring a lot of balancing and body weight support by standing on the tip of the toe with fully extended feet. This technique is performed primarily by women to appear weightless and sylph-like. Before learning pointe work, a ballerina must be able to maintain strong *turnout*. Turnout is essential in classical ballet. It is an action of rotating the leg outwards initiated by the hips all the way down to the feet, causing the knee and the foot to turn outward and away from the center of the body. All ballet movements are based from the first to fifth position, and are performed turned out.

In contrast, a skater wears figure skates with a pair of blades attached to the boots. Skating boots are hard and stiff. The boot's height is usually above the ankle for ankle support. The spiked blade on the front is called the toe-pick, and it is used primarily for some jump techniques such as *Flip* jump or *Lutz* jump. The blades on figure skates can only glide in parallel. Therefore, the feet are always in parallel, and it is impossible to do a 'turnout' position as required in ballet.

Moving on from footwear, while the aesthetic upper body alignment in figure skating does look similar to classical ballet, the lower body is distinctly different. For example, in ballet technique, an arabesque is performed with a turnout standing leg. In skating technique an arabesque, known commonly as the *spiral*, is performed with a parallel standing leg while gliding forward or backward. The other example is the spin technique, commonly known as the *pirouette* in ballet. While doing a pirouette, the head must always be facing at one point to keep the body rotating. In skating, spinning can be done in many different variations because the blades provide better momentum for rotations.

### *iii. Modern Dance and Figure Skating*

I learned modern dance in my first semester as a graduate student at SUNY, The College at Brockport. I had three consecutive days of mandatory modern class. In my technique class, I always received the same feedback from my teachers; they wanted me to move freely while sensing each movement of my body. I did not know how to move ‘freely’ or if there was a set of movement instructions on how to do so. As a skating choreographer who embodied skating aesthetics for almost twenty years without a basic knowledge in a theory of modern dance, I did not know how my body should work in relation to modern dance aesthetics.

I asked myself “What is the aesthetic of modern dance?” and it took me almost an entire year to figure out the answer to this question. I kept looking for an answer from the outside, but the answer was apparently within my own aesthetic experience in modern dance. According to Dissanayake, “Aesthetic experiences transcend simple short-term self-interest, making us aware of our embeddedness or participation in an expanded frame of reference that is larger than ourselves” (Press, 1). I discovered that modern dance is about finding yourself, your inner voice, and expressing it through movements. This simple discovery explained why I always felt ‘unnatural’ in technique class, and why I stripped away my own movement aesthetic by copying my teacher’s style. Instead of embracing my own style, I was focusing on other’s bodies rather than my own body. As Loewenthal says, “In both psychological and artistic terms, the body behaved as an agent or carrier of the individual’s identity with the self and its conscious and unconscious universe” (Loewenthal, 5).

This idea about freedom of movement was spawned by Isadora Duncan, who often danced barefoot and appeared in skimpy, see through tunics, sometimes with one breast uncovered (Cass, 47). As the Mother of Modern Dance, Duncan’s belief in

pure movement arose from the soul, and not from influences of other art forms. Her theory on movement inspired my perception of skating choreography, which is typically based strongly on music and not the movement itself. By exploring movement off-ice, a skating choreographer can dig deeper into a skater's "pure" movement style and amplify that style to create his or her program and finding his or her true identity through creative processes.

Going back to my experience learning modern dance in technique class at Brockport, in addition to gaining understanding of self-expression I also noticed that most of modern dance movements are three-dimensional. This means the body tends to move away from its axis, the center vertical line. According to Rudolf Laban, the three dimensions of length, breadth, and depth are our basic elements of orientation in space. In Laban's terminology, there is an up-down dimension, a left-right dimension, and a forward-back dimension which all represent the dimensional cross (Newlove, 23). Three-dimensional body movement provides skaters the push to dance more freely on ice, and challenges the vertical body of a skater for proper balancing and total body awareness.

Being aware of your own body means knowing each part of the body. Before learning modern dance, I never thought about my skin as layering my flesh and as covering to protect the bones. My bones protect the organs, which move within my body as I am dancing or skating. One body part that is extremely important in a dancer or skater's body is the spine. The spine supports upper body weight and provides vertical posture while allowing for movement and flexibility, and protecting the spinal cord. I discovered that the spine is key for the development of upper body alignment, and in skating, skaters often force their bodies to achieve a desired upper body alignment. However, by using the modern dance approach of imagining the

spine, a skater can move away from his or her body axis without forcing the muscle to contract for balancing.

In the performing arts it is important to be aware of the body and how each body part is connected. One of the exercises I did in technique class in order to find body connectivity was the Bartenieff Fundamental. We began lying on the floor, finding our 'X' position, either with closed or open eyes. We would then turn to the right side of the body, which is initiated by body half action, and curl up into a small ball. We reached out with the fingers and toes, curled back to a small ball, and then back to the 'X.' After this we repeated the whole sequence on the left side. However, this exercise felt weird to me at first because, as I have mentioned previously, a concept of "falling" does not exist in figure skating. The goal of all skaters when they are performing is to skate clean, meaning they do not fall on ice. They will struggle hard to keep their body standing on its feet by touching the ice with their hand and bending their knees extremely low to hold their body weight and pressure from gravity. Therefore, lying on the floor like this felt strange to me.

## Chapter 2. Figure Skating



Figure 6. Ice skating in the past was not an act of performing

### *i. The Past and The Present*

Before skating became a modern recreational activity or sport, it was transportation for wintertime, an act of surviving through a rough winter. Ancient skates were made with leg bones of large animals. Holes were drilled on the bones so straps could be attached to the skater's shoes. "These primitive skates facilitated movement quickly and efficiently across ice. Both feet were kept on the surface, and poles were used for pushing. Because the bones were not sharpened, skaters could neither push off nor maintain forward motion in the modern way... but sometime before the fourteenth century the Dutch revolutionized skating by employing sharpened steel blades" (Haines, 18). The discovery of sharpened blades changed skating by allowing skaters to push themselves without using poles, and led to the most important discovery in figure skating: the discovery of edges. There are two

edges, inside and outside. Outside edge is executed with the outer part of the blades, and inside edge is executed with the inner part of the blades. These edges provide great speed and physical beauty, and maintaining a continuous and flowing motion is practical and artistic. Skating with deep edges is when skaters lean deeply on the edge of their skates. It shows skill, control, and artistry. In the era of modern skating, edges are a basic maneuver used before skaters move on to learn jumps and spins. Single skaters try to move on quickly in the phase of learning edges because it does not look as sophisticated as jumping or spinning. In my opinion as a professional skater, coach, choreographer, and judge, great edges will result in a stronger quality of technique.

Skating was started simply from gliding across the ice, but then it became a game for those with great skill and balance. Skates were improved, which allowed for the possibility of more intricate movements. This is where the competitive aspect in skating arose and how skating turned into a sport. The action of tracing a pattern on ice, creating a figure, gave birth to the name figure skating. According to Haines, England gave the sport its name because for more than two centuries England was the undisputed leader in the evolution of figure skating. No country at the time had been so important to the development of the sport (Haines, 40).

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, figure skating did not look anything like skating today. It was the era of “English Style,” meaning people skated with formality and rigidity. Jackson Haines, the father of modern figure skating, skated contrary to this stiff and rigid British form. An American ballet dancer and figure skater, he used his ballet background to incorporate the gracefulness of ballet with the athletic nature of figure skating. Creating a more artistic way of skating, he added new dance elements to his routine, which drew people to watch him skate. He was also the first person to skate with music and to create a program on ice. Additionally, Haines was the first person

to mount the blades permanently on the boot, allowing deeper edge and more difficult turns. He felt that body position was more important than tracing intricate figures. Overall, Haines was concerned with style and expression, and with using the unfettered motion of the skate against the ice to interpret the feel of the music. In these ways he concentrated on the aesthetic of movement (Adams, 99).

Too radical for the established skating scene in the United States, Haines sailed to Europe to begin his artistic journey. The first stop was England, which was a disappointment. English skaters viewed Haines's style as "fancy skating," a term used in a derogative sense to describe his pirouettes and dancing on ice (Haines, 52). However, the poor response from England did not stop him from spreading his artistry all across Europe. He gained immediate success, especially in Vienna, a musical city with a love for dance. His background in acting, dancing, and entertaining all influenced his persona on the ice. People's admiration of Haines in Vienna led to the establishment of the Vienna school, which later gave birth to the international style of skating. This was a most significant moment in figure skating history, when the new American style of skating was introduced in Europe.

American style, named for Haines American origins, required skaters to wear rigid fastened skates allowing a more intricate and challenging maneuvers to be executed on the ice. It also required a bent skating leg in order to achieve an edgier move, which is contrary to the British that required a straight skating leg and uprightness of the carriage. The English viewed the American school of skating with derision. They thought these stunts had no place in the true art of figure skating. For the British, beauty stemmed from combined skating performed with rigid body position, unison among the skaters, and smoothness of motion (Haines, 59). In contrast to these ideals, Americans and Canadians value the beauty of design instead

of manner of execution. Haines's American style of skating became international and provided a direct link to modern free skating today. These rapidly changing skating styles in the nineteenth century lead to skating becoming more serious, and international competitions began being held almost annually. Feeling the broader need to govern the rules for the international competitions, The International Skating Union (ISU) was formed.

*ii. International Skating Union*

ISU is the oldest governing body in the history of winter sports, and it holds the key to the development of figure skating. ISU governs both figure skating and speed skating, regulates skating rules for the Olympic Game, and organizes international competitions. Throughout time, ISU has been trying to create rules to challenge the unique form of figure skating by incorporating elements of the performing arts, such as interpretation and skating to music. I feel the need to have a chapter about how ISU regulates skating rules and the judging system because these aspects set up the standard of good and poor skating. They also dictate how people view skating as both art and sport. As Adams writes, "Debates over the value and place of athleticism and aesthetic in figure skating did not just take place in the pages of skating magazines, they also figured on the agendas of the biannual congresses of The International Skating Union -- as they still do, although perhaps less explicitly, today" (Adams, 174).

The judging system in earlier times was designated a 6.0 system, in which the score was divided by two categories in free skating: technical merit and presentation. Technical merit was scored according to execution and difficulty of jumps and spins. Presentation was scored based on the overall performance of skaters including footwork (step sequence), artistic impressions, and musicality. The score went from



the lowest 0.0 to the highest 6.0. However, the old scoring system was challenged, during the Olympic Games 2002 when two pairs of skating teams received gold medals. One of the judges was apparently cheating, thereby corrupting the result. Responding to this scandal, the ISU created a new judging system which was more detailed, complex, and brought figure skating to a whole new level.

The new judging system works on a point base. There are two categories of score that comprise the judging system: Technical Score and Program Components. Technical Score breaks down each element in detail. Every error and accomplishment are counted, and this makes it more subjectively difficult for a judge to cheat the score. Program Component consists of: Skating Skills, Transitions / Linking Footwork, Performance / Execution, Choreography / Composition, and Interpretation. The new scoring system is very complex but less subjective, and it almost gives an equal rewarding between technical skill and performance in competitions.

It is important to understand why figure skating fluctuates its identity between art and sport. When first admitted, beginner skaters are only trained basic skating skills, and dancing on ice is not a primary focus of this basic training. Because amateur competitive skaters commonly gain reputation through winning in competitions, technique is seen as more valuable than performance. These factors affect how skaters (and their parents) approach and perceive skating because people determine skating quality by technical skills. For example, landing a quad jump for guys has been a goal, and it is impractical for ladies. ISU has constantly instituted the rules and regulations to keep people's interest in figure skating engaged. They even recently regulated a new rule that states music with vocals is now permissible in competitions. These new rules about music intended to have the audience entertained by a diversity of music scores, not just instrumental or classical. However, many

skaters still use classical music in competitions, and some judges still prefer the classical form of skating. Despite this, changes have been made, and are a good start to expand the form of figure skating.

### Breakdown of marks [\[edit\]](#)

Berezhnaya & Sikharulidze	RUS	CHN	USA	FRA	POL	CAN	UKR	GER	JPN
Technical merit	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.7	5.8	5.8	5.7
Presentation	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.9
Placement	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	2
Salé & Pelletier	RUS	CHN	USA	FRA	POL	CAN	UKR	GER	JPN
Technical merit	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.9	5.8
Presentation	5.8	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.9	5.9
Placement	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	1

I

Figure 7. The old scoring system

Rank	Name	Nation	Starting Number	Total Segment Score	Total Element Score	Program Component Score (factored)	Total Deductions									
1	Yuzuru HANYU	JPN	12	192.31	98.95	93.36	0.00									
#	Executed Elements	Info	Base Value	GOE	The Judges Panel (in random order)							Ref	Scores of Panel			
1	4S		10.50	2.57	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	2		13.07	
2	3T		4.10	1.00	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	2		5.10	
3	3F		5.30	1.40	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2		6.70	
4	FCCoSp3p4		3.50	1.00	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		4.50	
5	StSq4		3.90	1.40	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2		5.30	
6	3Lz+2T		8.03 x	1.10	1	2	1	2	3	1	3	1	1		9.13	
7	3A+2T		10.78 x	2.14	2	2	2	2	3	1	3	2	2		12.92	
8	3A+1Lo+3S		14.52 x	2.00	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		16.52	
9	3Lo		5.61 x	0.90	1	1	1	2	2	0	1	1	2		6.51	
10	3Lz		6.60 x	0.80	1	1	1	1	2	0	2	1	1		7.40	
11	ChSq1		2.00	1.30	2	2	1	2	3	1	3	2	1		3.30	
12	FCSSp4		3.00	0.86	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1		3.86	
13	CCoSp3p4		3.50	1.14	2	3	2	3	2	2	3	2	2		4.64	
			<b>81.34</b>												<b>98.95</b>	
<b>Program Components</b>			<b>Factor</b>													
Skating Skills			2.00		9.25	9.50	9.25	9.25	9.75	8.50	9.50	9.50	9.50		9.39	
Transition / Linking Footwork			2.00		9.00	9.50	9.00	9.00	9.25	8.75	8.50	8.75	9.25		9.00	
Performance / Execution			2.00		9.25	9.50	9.50	10.00	9.75	8.50	9.50	9.50	9.75		9.54	
Choreography / Composition			2.00		9.25	9.75	9.25	9.75	9.50	8.75	9.25	9.00	9.50		9.36	
Interpretation			2.00		9.00	9.75	9.25	9.50	10.00	8.75	9.50	9.25	9.50		9.39	
<b>Judges Total Program Component Score (factored)</b>																
																<b>93.36</b>
<b>Deductions:</b>																<b>0.00</b>

Figure 8. The new judging system

### *iii. Competitive & Theatrical*

I still remember my first competition when I was seven years old. I did not feel nervous until I started growing up, both physically and mentally, and consciousness and self-awareness are still my worst enemies. I was scared I would perform badly, falling or stumbling upon my feet, and losing the competition.



**Figure 9. Chiquita Limer's first competition in 1998**

However, one must participate in competitions in order to become experienced skaters. Because of this competitive nature skating is partly sports. Competitive skating is what beginner skaters are trained for, and the purest form of competitive skating can be seen in the Olympic games. Winning the Olympic games is the most prestigious achievement a skater can have in his or her competitive career. The reason why skating is proven as one of the hardest sports in the world is because in the few minutes a skater has in a program, there is a high chance for error.

There are two main events in Olympic competition for Single skating: the Short Program and Free Skate. The short program is the first event occurred in the Olympic Games and is technically-oriented, is very intense because skaters must complete all the required elements without permission to repeat the element in a short period of time. The time is limited to two minutes and forty seconds for both men and women. On the other hand, Free Skate or the Long Program is a final event that determines the winners in competition. It is called 'free skate' because of the freedom; skaters or choreographers have to choose how they structure their program and elements. There are no required elements, however, there is a standard for a well-balanced program based on the new judging system. The duration of Free Skate is limited to 4 minutes for women and four minutes and thirty seconds for men.

Competitive skaters are divided into two groups: amateur and professional skaters. Amateur skaters compete in international competitions, whereas professional skaters compete not for title, but to entertain in a show or exhibition. Usually amateur skaters that already won a title, especially the Olympic, turn professional and start performing on tours. Once a skater turns professional he or she will no longer qualify in amateur competitions. Amateur skaters have noticeably made progression in their performance when they turn professional. The purpose of turning professional is to enjoy skating as an art not as a sport.

Theatrical skating can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century, from individuals showing off on local ponds to itinerant professionals. It was called skating carnival, where all skaters from all levels could perform. Carnivals extended and intensified the art aspect of figure skating through performances, which successfully caught public interest in show skating. By establishing professional touring, ice shows are now called exhibitions.

Charlotte Oelschlagel was the skating world's first theatrical star, and she was also the first to appear in cinema. Her musicality was extraordinary, and her brilliant skating electrified audiences with her white boots and very short skirt as costume. What she did was art, but beyond her artistic moves, Charlotte was a very athletic skater. For example, she was the first person who included the Axel jump in a program. Her breakthrough made figure skating into an immediate art form, and the shape and overall look were taken into account. Many skaters were challenged to have an artistic quality to their skating because audiences easily fall in love with graceful moves and the elegance of performances. As important as technical skill is, performance is a definite part of figure skating. Referring to Haines theory about the history of theatrical skating:

From club carnivals to professional touring companies, ice shows had long provided entertainment to audiences that did not appreciate the technical aspects of figure skating. Then during the 1960s, television began taking competitive skating into the homes of millions of viewers. The advent of World and Olympic events broadcast with expert commentary by former skaters such as Dick Button gradually led to a more savvy audience that could understand the sport's difficulty as well as appreciate its beauty. This more knowledgeable audience grew to expect technically difficult programs skated artistically by star performers, first as amateurs and later as professionals... Show led by and featuring skating's superstars would eventually supplant the traditional large-cast ice shows" (Haines, 290)

These days we have a few skating companies such as Ice Theater of New York (ITNY) that preserve the aesthetic form of classic figure skating style. They embrace the elegance and the beauty of figure skating movement, and most of the

time when they choreograph they use classical music. The founder and artistic director of Ice Theater of New York, Moira North, feels the need for skating artists to have a way for making creative works that challenge skating's definition and perspective. Ice Theater of New York has performed all around the country while proposing a variety style of skating. They even hold an open master class every week purposely to involve people from all backgrounds and levels, and they educate them to experience skating through performing art. In summer of 2016, I had the opportunity to skate with the main casts of Ice Theater of New York. I worked closely with them during their rehearsals. Outside of rehearsal time, I also had conversations with Moira North and The Executive Director of Ice Theater of New York, Jirina Ribbens. They both saw the passion I have for dancing on ice and encouraged me to continue.

Before summer break ended, I flew from New York to Los Angeles to meet the founder of American Ice Theater, Jodi Porter. As opposed to Ice Theater of New York, American Ice Theater (AIT) is a revolutionary figure skating company that explores figure skating in contemporary or modern style, and it stretches the stereotype in skating. Porter thinks the relation between skating and contemporary dance is still raw. She believes in education and connection within the artistic world in figure skating. She also wants to show the people outside the skating world that there is much more outside competitive skating. Porter and I had a conversation about the meaning of performance in skating. It is truly empowering when people with the same passion creatively exchange thoughts.



**Figure 10. Chiquita Limer and Moira North, the founder and artistic director of Ice Theater of New York**



**Figure 11. Chiquita Limer and Jodi Porter, the founder and artistic director of American Ice Theater**

#### *iv. The Indonesia Figure Skating*

I did not know exactly when my passion for choreography arose. It goes back to my blunders at Skate Asia competition in 2002, as I mentioned in the Introduction chapter. I decided to quit skating after experiencing a failure in the Skate Asia competition in 2002, but then I realized I am not a quitter and decided to start everything fresh from the beginning. I practiced all basic skills such as *stroking*, *crossovers*, and *edges*. At the end of 2002, an annual skating exhibition was held in Jakarta that I decided to perform at.

One of my best skating friends did not have an exhibition program to skate in. She had a technical program, but it was not sufficiently entertaining to be performed in an exhibition. She asked me to choreograph a program, along with edited music, and I agreed. It was my attempt to choreograph a skating program at the age of twelve. I taught her every day on and off the ice, and she performed well in the show. When my fellow skater friends and their parents noticed my choreography was unique because it was strongly influenced by dance, they asked me to choreograph and teach them. I started teaching my close friends and gradually people I barely knew. Seeing people's interests in my choreography, the ice rink management tried to make it fair between the official skating coaches and me. I was restricted from accepting too many choreography requests from skaters or parents in that particular ice rink, or at least until I became a legal official skating coach.

At the age of fourteen, I was honored to choreograph a huge ice show called *Little Mermaid On Ice*, which was inspired by the Disney movie, *Little Mermaid*. I established myself even more as a skating choreographer, after the success of *Little Mermaid On Ice*. I officially became a coach at the age of sixteen. According to the Indonesian Constitution, it is not legal to have a part time job before eighteen years



old. They gave me an exception because the rink needed me to choreograph for skaters to compete at an upcoming Skate Asia competition. I choreographed up to forty programs in one competition, from solo, couple, to group numbers. I began to emphasize practice in performance, and a few people in the Indonesian skating world seemed to appreciate choreography more than before. I choreographed many programs for both competition and exhibition. I also watched many skating videos of skating champions to get inspiration; it was hard to get skating sources because skating is not popular in a tropical country like Indonesia.

I am passionate about educating people around me about how skating is not just about techniques, especially jumping. Eventually, choreography also takes a huge part in skating. The lack of appreciation from Indonesian people about the art of skating, especially in choreography is understandable. The skating scene in Indonesia from 1996 - 2010 was scarce. As source of study, most coaches learnt from textbooks or video footage. Every once in awhile, professional guest coaches from outside the country were invited for workshops, and gave private lessons for coaches and skaters.

Indonesia figure skating started to develop strongly within the community and became a member of International Skating Union (ISU) in 2013. Soon after becoming official, the Indonesian National Sport Committee finally opened the opportunity for figure skating and speed skating to be listed as part of their organization, and to be recognized as a sport in Indonesia. Because of this, the Indonesia Skating Council (ISC) was formed to administer ice skating sports in the branches of figure skating and short track speed skating, and it also operates under *Persatuan Olahraga Sepatu Roda Seluruh Indonesia (Porserosi)*, or The Unity of Indonesian Roller Skates.

Currently there are three affiliated ice rinks from 2 major big cities in Java island; Sky Rink, Garden Ice, and BX Rink.

BX Rink is the newest and biggest rink that opened in late 2013. It is located in the Tangerang area, which is the outskirts of the capital city, Jakarta. BX Rink had successfully sent two Indonesian junior skaters to compete in the ISU competition. I had the honor to choreograph both of our junior skaters' short programs and free skates. It was my first time choreographing ISU programs, and I did extensive studying and research to learn all the rules and regulations in ISU. After the competition, I was listed as the first choreographer from Indonesia in the ISU database. One of the biggest missions for the Indonesia Figure Skating organization, as well as myself, is to send our skaters to the Olympics.

		<b>MEN</b>									
Date of birth:	<b>26.01.1997</b>	<b>Dwiki Eka RAMADHAN INA</b>									
Place of birth:	<b>Jakarta</b>										
Height:	<b>173 cm</b>										
Home town:	<b>Jakarta</b>										
Profession:	<b>student</b>										
Hobbies:	<b>skating, reading, running</b>										
Start sk. / Club:	<b>2007 / BX Rink Tangerang</b>										
Internet / Social Media contact:	<b>Website, Twitter, Facebook</b>										
Coach:	<b>Johny Sesanto</b>										
Choreographer:	<b>Chiquita Limer</b>										
Former Coach:											
Practice low season:	<b>16 h / week at Tangerang</b>										
Practice high season:	<b>16 h / week at Tangerang</b>										
Music Short Program / Short Dance as of season 2014/2015											
<b>Deep Shadow by Tying Tiffany and Lorenzo Montana</b>											
Music Free Skating / Free Dance as of season 2014/2015											
<b>Kung Fu Panda (soundtrack) by John Powell and Hans Zimmer</b>											
Personal Best Total Score	65.39	14.09.2014	<a href="#">ISU JGP Nagoya TV Cup 2014</a>								
Personal Best Score Short Program	20.01	12.09.2014	<a href="#">ISU JGP Nagoya TV Cup 2014</a>								
Personal Best Score Free Skating	45.38	14.09.2014	<a href="#">ISU JGP Nagoya TV Cup 2014</a>								
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07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15				
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Olympic Games											
World Champ.											
European Champ.											
Four Continents											
World Juniors											
National Champ.											
S=Senior; J=Junior; N=Novice											
International Competition	Year	Place	International Competition								
<a href="#">ISU JGP Nagoya TV Cup 2014 Aichi</a>	2014	21. J									
<b>Ramadhan is, together with Maciko Audrey Chan, the first skater to represent Indonesia in ISU competition (ISU Junior Grand Prix 2014/15).</b>											
<a href="#">Personal Bests (new)</a>   <a href="#">Competition Results</a>											
© copyright by: International Skating Union, Chemin de Primerose 2, CH - 1007 Lausanne last update: 01.10.2014 12:43:20											

Figure 12. ISU's data for the first Indonesian delegations competing at ISU competition

### *Chapter 3. Modern Dance*

#### *i. Not a Common Dance in Indonesia*

“Modern dance is a type of dance that is seen in pop music videos like those of Britney Spears or Christina Aguilera.” This is the implicit description of modern dance based on Indonesian people’s perceptions, but it is also known as a derogatory form of mixed dance styles. Instead of modern dance, Indonesian people are more familiar with the term contemporary dance. However, the term ‘contemporary’ in Indonesia does not share the same concept as the term does in American contemporary dance.

Indonesian contemporary dance is strongly influenced by the diversity of Indonesian cultures, especially its classical form of traditional dances. Unfortunately, contemporary dance is only known by a few people within dance academia who have experiences of learning abroad, typically in western countries. After learning the American modern dance theories and techniques, these people came back to Indonesia and created their own version of contemporary style. They called it “*new creation*”, which was innovated from their traditional dance background. Because of this, “new creation,” or Indonesian contemporary dance, values the unique shaping of the upper body, musicality, and a sense of ritual. It is also influenced by Indonesian martial art or *pencak silat*. Sadly, older generations that still keep the pure form of classic traditional dances, do not support the innovation of traditional to contemporary or “new creation.” On the other hand, young artists strive to find ways to preserve the traditional heritages by innovating their forms while still keeping the norms.

As a young artist in Indonesia, I started taking dance to the next level when I pursued my undergraduate study at Jakarta Institute of The Arts. This is the only art institute located in the heart of Indonesia’s capital city, Jakarta. Academically, Jakarta

Institute of The Arts has proved to be the pioneer in art development and industry in Indonesia and the world, by becoming the main site of ideas, development, and growth in tradition, as well as contemporary art in Indonesia.

Before studying dance at Jakarta Institute of The Arts, I did not have any knowledge or interest in learning traditional dance. As a figure skater, my interests in dance are limited to jazz, hiphop, and dances in the television show *So You Think You Can Dance*. However, I had to take at least four different traditional dance classes to finish the program and graduate. Learning traditional dance is very difficult for me because of its groundedness, a contrary discipline from the uprightness in skating. I took traditional dance classes such as Javanese, Sundanese, Minang, Balinese and Aceh dance.

Jakarta Institute of The Arts is the most sourceful place to learn about dance, and yet modern dance was not part of its program. This is very unfortunate because one of the most important revolutions in dance history was the era of Isadora Duncan, and yet the Indonesian students barely know of this revolutionary moment or its originator. In Indonesia, dance as a study is still in its infancy. Currently, there is only one university in the capital city, Jakarta, which incorporates contemporary dance and traditional dance in bachelor degree programs. Other performing art institutions only offer classic traditional dance studies based on their origins. I believe the art scene in Indonesia will keep on growing, and it has been proven by the emergence of Indonesian young artists in the film, fashion, and music industry in the world. Dance is still making progress to keep up with these accomplishments.



Figure 13. Indonesian traditional dance, *Klana Udeng* from Indramayu



Figure 14. World Culture Forum's rehearsal in Bali, 2013



Figure 15. Indonesian contemporary dance style

*ii. The Idea of The Body*



Figure 16. Isadora Duncan, The Mother of modern dance.

From her own experience, Isadora Duncan was convinced that movement arose from the soul. The movement comes from within oneself; it is called “pure movement.” Duncan’s most important experiment was to find the first movement, not

by stimulation from other art forms but directly with personal emotion. As Magriel wrote in the last chapter in his book *Nijinsky, Pavlova, Duncan*:

How to start the motor in the soul, as she once phrased the impulsion to move? Her own chief means was music--Wagner, Beethoven, all the great romanticists of the nineteenth century-- music, which stirred with emotions; but she knew that this was not the solution and said so... But most important of all her approaches to the subject were the experiments she made not with stimulation by other arts but directly with personal emotion. (6)

This idea will help skating choreographers to find the aesthetic movement of a skater, and choreograph a program based on the skater's aesthetic. The concept of elegant and pretty in skating is perceived by defined shaped as in ballet. In response to this perception I will refer to Paul Magriel's statement that "Those who like to see pretty dancing, pretty girls, pretty things in general will not find much pleasure in contemplating the art of Isadora." Duncan movement is not just pretty, it is monumental, not just a series of moving body, but an expression of soul. A few skating companies such as American Ice Theater and Le Patin Libre have started to break the stereotype of elegant and pretty skating by exploring choreography with different influences of various art forms.

Another important person who brought a significant innovation to the performing arts was Rudolf Laban, a German theorist who found Laban Notation. This is a formulated system of movement notation to objectify that a dance can be reconstructed exactly from the written form (Thornton. 6). For Laban, movement is a reflection of a man's body and mind, and therefore, a study of movement is a study of man. Thornton's interpretations of Laban's principles of movement are:

Movement, even to the relatively unskilled observer, may be unconsciously or deliberately expressive and in either case it can be analysed into the *motion factors* in terms of its strength or lightness (*Weight*), its directness or flexibility (*Space*), its suddenness or sustainment (*Time*) and its bound or free quality (*Flow*). It was a person's attitude to these four components of movement that Laban called *effort*. The shape and the rhythm of movement "show a special attitude to meet the situation in which the action takes place. It can characterize the momentary mood, or the personality of the moving person." and those unconsciously expressive movements... make each person readily distinguishable from his neighbor. This cannot be otherwise, for each person has a mental and physical make-up which is unique, and movement being a compound of mental and physical involvement, is bound to be highly individualistic. (39)

People are often unconsciously moving, such as when they are walking, eating, or holding a cup. This kind of disconnection between the body and the mind sets off movement awareness, which results in "a lack of harmony going about their everyday actions and are considered 'clumsy'" (Newlove, 22). For a skater, communication with the audience happens through movements, and for that reason the movements must be articulated coherent with its purposes so the audience can receive the intended message clearly. It is even harder to communicate just through movements because in skating there are 2 purposes: reflecting an aesthetic experience through dancing on ice, and accomplishing technical ability through elements such as jumping and spinning. However, elements are also part of movement, but they are not intended as a tool for expression or communication. It has even been problematic for skaters to



be fully aware of their movements while doing a program, especially in competitions that require many difficult elements in a program.

Laban's concept of *effort* can support a skater to make deliberate choices on movements by allowing the choreographer to give detailed instruction of the *motion factors* that include weight, space, time, and flow. These *motion factors* can support skaters to perform their programs with a consistent choice of movement quality, for example: the use of weight can be either an active or passive weight, the relation between the body and the space can be direct or indirect, the timing of movements can be sustained or sudden, and the movement's flow can be a free flow or a bound flow. The skaters can make all these choices with their mind prior to moving, resulting in a consistent movement quality that develops into embodiment.

These concepts of Laban's theory are supported by the Bartenieff Fundamentals exercise for the body. "Bartenieff Fundamentals is an approach to basic body training that deals with patterning connections in the body according to principles of efficient movement functioning within a context which encourages personal expression and full psychophysical involvement" (Hackney, 33). If the Laban concept trains the mind, Bartenieff exercise facilitates the body to express what is in the mind. Expressing the inner-self outwards through bodily movements cannot be successful without the inner connectivity within the body itself. To find this connection within the body, Bartenieff Fundamentals is one of the closest exercises to achieve it.

The Bartenieff Fundamentals were named after one of Rudolf Laban's students, Irmgard Bartenieff, "who brought the perspective of her own work from physical therapy to the Laban Framework, the Laban work lacked a *full body* component. Emphasizing the importance of internal body connectivity in making movement come alive both within the individual and out in the world was Irmgard's

unique contribution to this work” (Hackney, 1). She believed that the fundamentals begins with action and moving with intention, but most importantly, the very basic form of movement itself starts from a baby within the womb.

Irmgard Bartenieff discovered three fundamentals in movement: *change, relationship, and patterning body connection*. For the purpose of this paper, I will focus on one of the fundamentals in movement. Citing from Peggy Hackney’s *Making Connections: Total Body Integration through Bartenieff Fundamentals*:

The Fundamental Pattern of Body Connectivity, which consists of breath, core-distal connectivity, head-tail connectivity, upper-lower connectivity, body-half connectivity, and cross-lateral connectivity. Each fundamental patterns of total body connectivity represents a primary level of development and experience, and each is relational. Each organizes a way of relating to self and to the world... We confirm our relation to the life-giving basic flow of the breath as we lie in bed and yawn, taking in large amount of new oxygen, filling us with energy (Breath pattern). We stretch out away from our navel and come back into it with our whole body (Core-Distal pattern). We explore our spine, as we wriggle and sense our flexibility returning for the day’s ventures (Head-Tail pattern). We push to sit up. We reach our legs to the floor and push to stand (Upper-Lower pattern). Or perhaps we dip down with one side to assist in putting on slippers (Body-Half pattern). And then we walk (Cross-lateral pattern). All of this we probably do without even being consciously aware of it. (15)

Many of the Bartenieff exercises are floorworks, as I mentioned in *Part I*, Subchapter *iii*. Floorworks places the body closer to the center of the earth, gives a sense of groundedness, and allows our mind and body to tune-in on a horizontal line.

The exercise begins with lying down on the floor while breathing and activating the core. When the core is activated, the next step is utilizing the spine to find head-tail connection. After that, the exercise will continue to strengthen the upper and lower body's muscles separately, initiated from the core. After all these procedures were completed, the final and complex phase of the exercise is finding the diagonal connection in cross-lateral connectivity. I will deliberate the exercise that I practiced in a skating workshop I held in *Part 4, Subchapter ii*.

The concept of movement awareness by Rudolf Laban combined with Bartenieff Fundamentals body connectivity led me to perceive movement with a deeper level of understanding. Specifically this understanding is that movement speaks louder than words, and if the eye is the window to the soul, then movement is the outlet of the soul. These powerful combinations of movement analysis developed the theory of three-dimensional movement, which will bring my endeavor to a conclusion; challenging the verticality of a skater's body on ice by using the theory of three-dimensional movement.

### iii. Three-Dimensional Movement

The aesthetic of figure skating can be seen from the verticality of the upper body alignment, which is supported by the elongation of the spine and defying gravity. All these characteristics are influenced by the standard elegance of figure skating, which is the uprightness of the upper body with movement fluidity and flow. As Ellyn Kestnbaum writes in her book *Culture On Ice*, "The preference for easy movement as opposed to visible effort, or for erect upper body carriage, are choices based on earlier skaters' and especially skating officials' ideas about the image they wanted the sport to cultivate" (Kestnbaum, 127). The erect upper body carriage is

highly influenced by the jumping techniques, which require the body to be upright and *square*. In figure skating, *square* means the shoulders must be inline with the hipbones to keep the squareness of the torso. This verticality is beneficial for jumping, but it is a disadvantage in movements.



**Figure 17. The verticality to keep rotating in jumping**

In figure skating, a skater's hard work and many years of practice are shown in his or her program. A program is the final package to perform all the skills and abilities both artistically and athletically. Within that few minutes of performance, jumping covers about forty percent of the program in a competition and less in an exhibition. Jump elements are essential in a competition, but not in theatrical settings. Within a program, sixty percent is movements, such as stroking, crossovers, edges, and dancing. Performing on ice is dancing on ice. Skaters perform for those who are watching, particularly for the audience. "For some skaters performing for audiences

or performing for judges are at best necessary evils to allow one to make any sort of career out of what they love to do for its own sake. For others the very processes of showing off skills, striving to outdo rivals, or communicating an artistic vision through the medium of skating provide pleasures even more intense than the mere quotidian of practicing repetition skills on practice ice” (Kestnbaum, 253). To challenge the form of figure skating and its verticality I use the theory of three-dimensional movement in modern dance.

Three-dimensional movement happens when the body tends to move away from its axis, the center vertical line. “Our bodies are constructed in 3 dimensional form. The supporting leg acts as a pedestal whether we are in a vertical position or leaning into the horizontal. It is essential to reach as far as possible into each of the six directions and work for a fluid interchange of pathways. We will become aware of high, medium and deep levels, of flexibility and freedom in space and its opposite, which leads to a more direct use of space because it is much more restricting to move across the body” (Newlove, Pg. 31). In Laban theory, there are three dimensions of spatial study; Up-Down Dimension, Left-Right Dimension, and Forward-Back Dimensions. Unlike modern dancers that move with barefoot, skaters have a barrier moving sideways because the shape of the skating blades can only move or glide forward and backward. Because of this difficulty on ice, I approached the three-dimensional movement by the utilization of the spine.

My skating coach used to give me an instruction for visualizing the tip of my skull all the way down to the tip of my feet, this imagery is often used for correcting the posture and attempting non-vertical movements. However, after learning modern dance and its theories about the body, the spine is actually the key for three-dimensional movement and upper body alignment. The spine holds an extremely

important role in a human's body; without the existence of the spine, a person will not be able to sit, stand, walk, run, and even dance. The spine has no boundaries moving in all directions; therefore the mobility of the spine itself is three-dimensional. While on the ice, skating choreographers or coaches can train the skaters by using the imagination of the spine. This method will give the skaters awareness about their own spines, and they can have access for three-dimensional movement's exploration with their own embodiments. For off-ice training, skaters can learn the Bartenieff Fundamentals exercise to find body connectivity (Head-Tail connectivity, which is fundamental in three-dimensional movement, because leaning away from the axis requires mastery of the body, and body connectivity is the key to achieve that).



**Figure 18. Johnny Weir taking figure skating performance to the next level**

## *Chapter 4. The Practice*

### *i. The Workshop*

After one year living and studying in America, I decided to visit my home country for a while during winter break 2016. While there I held a skating workshop at the ice rink that I currently work for, BX Rink. I was curious to bring my research theory into practice, and analyze how people from the skating world in Indonesia perceived my new method of training. I made a proposal for this workshop and sent it to the manager of BX Rink, Wiwin Salim. We were having a lot of discussions through email about the purpose of the workshop and how it can make a positive impact within a short period of training. He agreed to support me with my workshop.

The workshop was titled “*Understanding Choreography: The Importance of Performance In Figure Skating.*” it was a three-day intensive on-ice skating combined with off-ice training. The purpose of this workshop was to share and give knowledge to choreographers, coaches, parents, and skaters in Indonesia about athleticism. This workshop will reinforce skater’s overall performances on ice in both technique and artistic aspects by integrating skating practice with modern dance theory of the body, such as; self-expression, movement awareness, imagining the spine, and three-dimensional movement.

#### *Day 1*

On the first day of workshop I began with introducing the theory about the body based on modern dance perspective, such as the idea of Isadora Duncan’s self-expression, Bartenieff Fundamental’s body connectivity, and Rudolf Laban’s three-dimensional movement. The idea of self-expression is unconventional for Indonesian people, especially kids. It threads back to the common parenting system in Indonesia

that kids must obey authority figures such as parents or teachers with no exception. As a result, Indonesian kids hardly discover or show their personal interests because of the pressure from the authority figures. After sharing the idea of self-expression, I instructed them to express any response that came naturally, that there is no right or wrong, and all movements will be given and perceived without judgment.

The second idea I introduced besides Isadora Duncan's self-expression was Bartenieff Fundamental exercises to find body connectivity. This off-ice training exercise can help skaters to be more grounded and strengthen their core. This exercise is also the process for three-dimensional movement. Bartenieff Fundamentals exercises are usually begun by lying on the floor, placing and sensing the body closer to the core of the earth. Floor work or floor exercise is very unusual for Indonesian skaters because modern dance has never been practiced or introduced. In addition to that, from a cultural standpoint, Indonesian people have never laid on the floor without some type of mat. This happens because tropical weather with a high level of humidity produces dusts, especially on the floor. Most Indonesian parents will not let their kids to sit or lay on the floor, and this cultural norm has psychologically affected Indonesian people's perception and their relationship to the floor.

After introducing the idea to the skaters, I started the off-ice workshop with Bartenieff Fundamentals floor exercise. I set the class into 5 categories: first was the breath. It started off by the skaters lying on the floor, feeling the back of the body melting to the floor while releasing all the tensions in the muscles. With the eyes closed, the body is tuning-in to the breath. Along with this process, I told the skaters to imagine calming scenery such as the sound of the ocean wave, the smell of dew on a leaf, the breeze in the mountain, and the sense of lying on a sunflower field. This visualization was meant for the mind and body to go deeper into relaxation. After ten



minutes of tuning-in and breathing, I instructed them to slowly open their eyes and acknowledge the space around us. Once the energies came back to the studio, I proceed to the second phase of the exercise.

The second was Bartenieff Fundamentals exercise to find body connectivity. It started off with *heel rocks* while the skaters were still lying with their back on the floor, from slow gradually to energetic rocking with the heels. The rocking sensation activates the kinetic chains through the whole body and releases all the unnecessary tension in the body. The next movement sequence after *heel rocks* was Bartenieff Fundamentals floor works; it started off by finding the 'X' position. Once the 'X' is performed, the next move was the body half action by turning to the right side of the body and curl up into a small ball, and then reaching out with the fingers and toes to activate Core-Distal connectivity, curled back to a small ball, and using body half action, back to the 'X,' and repeat the whole sequence on the left side. This sequence was performed in 6 repetitions on each side. The body should feel a significant sensation of a long spine and a harmony with the surrounding space.

Moving forward from the Bartenieff Fundamentals floor works, the third phase was partnering, which involves a lot of touching and physical contact with other bodies. Partnering is highly uncommon in single skating, mainly because they are trained in private by their private coach or choreographer. Especially for Indonesian single skaters, partnering was never a part of the off-ice training. I instructed the skaters to grab one partner and work in pairs. Person A will stand up and close his or her eyes, and person B will trace person A's spine with his or her fingertips. Both person A and B will switch role so person B can feel the traced spine by person A's fingertips. This partnering exercise accentuates the touching sensation

while tracing the spine; it is because receiving touch from another person gives a different sensation than self-touch.

The final phase of the class was a movement phrase that I choreographed based on the previous exercises we had done. The movement phrase was incorporated with Bartenieff Fundamentals, which includes *tondues*, *plies*, diagonal reach, cross-lateral pull, and inversions. All these movements were done in parallel feet like skaters do on ice. This movement phrase was choreographed for combining the whole exercises into a harmony that creates flow, the continuity of movements relates deeply with body connectivity and its relation to the space, and this phenomenon is called the three-dimensional movement.

Once the off-ice training in day one was done, we moved onto on-ice session with a brand new perspective and bodily experience. The warm up was set to ten minutes of stroking, edges, and anything that the skaters need to prepare their body. Everybody gathered in a circle. The spine was still the key of this exercise on ice. To keep the skaters aware of their spine while on ice, I instructed them touch the top of their spines, which are the *cervical* with the fingers and touch their tailbones with the other fingers, and feel the spinal movement in between their two hands. While doing this action, the next thing was feeling the spine while gliding on ice for fifteen minutes, and gradually moving freely within the space. We gathered back to a circle and discuss the sensation that each person experienced. Workshop Day 1 was wrapped up with on-ice session for *move in the fields* by paying attention to body posture and alignment, and also practicing basic skills, edges, and flow.

## *Day 2*

Day 2 of workshop was the extension of Day 1 and still focused on the spine, but with a different approach. Day 1 of workshop was about acknowledging the body and playing with movements. In Day 2 of workshop, the approach was more traditional: skating practice for endurance and strengths, which was focused more on technique and less on performance. The off-ice training started with a basic yoga class: roll-ups and roll-downs to feel the spine, downward-dogs, rocking with the hand and feet, planks, and a lot of stretches. After yoga and stretching, the next training was a typical off-ice skating training for endurance and strength; they are mainly for technical skills.

The on-ice session in Day 2 was mainly focused on jump and spin variations to achieve a desired level. In International Skating Union's competition rules, there are four levels of variations for each element: jumps, spins, and step sequences. Each level has a different *scale of value* that will add onto the basic point value of each element. Skaters often personalize basic jumps or spins to be part of their signature styles, and also to get extra points in competitions. Jump variations are very difficult because the most important thing in jumping is to land smoothly standing on one leg. It is risky to add jump variations such as: altered arm positions while rotating in the air or adding connecting steps prior jumping. Many skaters attempt to do connecting steps or jump combinations to be rewarded with higher points in competitions, and add artistic value in performances.

Day 2 on-ice session began with individual warm ups, and moved on to jump variations and spin variations. The purpose of this training was to find each skater's own aesthetic postures or motivations while jumping or spinning, with a clear

instruction of utilizing the spine. Day 2 on-ice session was wrapped up with a cool-down and off-ice stretching.

### Day 3

Day 3 of workshop was about choreography: exploring individual movements and working within groups to choreograph a movement phrase. The purpose of Day 3 of workshop was to educate the Indonesian skating community regarding the importance of performing quality in choreography and stimulates skaters' creativities in the creative process of making a program. Unfortunately, a tragedy happened in the heart of Jakarta. A bomb exploded and caused people to stay at home. The last day of workshop was cancelled.

**FIGURE SKATING WORKSHOP**

**UNDERSTANDING CHOREOGRAPHY: THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESENTATION**

**JAN 15-17, 2016 AND JAN 22-23, 2016**

**BY: CHIQUITA LIMER**

**CHIQUITA LIMER**  
is a figure skating coach and choreographer with more than 14 years of experience in teaching and creating programs. Now she coined a term "Arthleticism" in figure skating, which means the art within the sport. She believes that performance is a good manifestation for skaters to bring the best of their presentation on the ice. Currently, she is in her 2nd year of Master's degree at SUNY Brockport, NEW YORK.

By understanding the aspect of choreography, it will enhance the understanding of movement. It doesn't have to look "pretty", but the energy that is emitted from the inside reaching to the judges and audiences from distant. Executing a smoother and more flawless jumps and spins with the help of muscle support and embodiment.

This workshop will cover 3 major areas in Figure Skating:

**DAY 1**  
**MOVES IN THE FIELD: ARTHLETICISM**  
Covering the art aspect within the sport. The focus would be on the posture, carriage of the arms and upper body, and presentation in general. To move flawlessly on the ice, while doing a sequence of edges, footwork, and performances.

**DAY 2**  
**VARIATION IN TECHNIQUES: JUMPS AND SPINS**  
Practicing the possibility of variations in jumps and spins. Learning how to use the correct muscular mobility to prevent injury.

**DAY 3**  
**CHOREOGRAPHY 101: BEHIND THE CHOREOGRAPHY**  
Step by step learning about choreography. Giving guidance to create a piece from scratch, and how to incorporate the dance with other supporting factors.

**PRICING FOR HIGH LEVEL CAMP (3 DAYS)**  
3 Days Package : IDR 2.400.000,- (recommended level Freestyle 3 and up)  
Daily : IDR 800.000 (Day 1), IDR 800.000 (Day 2), IDR 1.100.000 (Day 3)

**PRICING FOR LOW LEVEL CAMP (2 DAYS)**  
2 Days Package : IDR 800.000,- (recommended level Freestyle 2 and Below)  
Daily : IDR 500.000,- Per Day

Figure 19. The workshop's advertisement

ii. I-ce Shadow

*I-ce Shadow (I See Shadow)* is an integrated play of figure skating, modern dance, music, and technology. This piece investigated the relevance of a theory in modern dance about three-dimensional movement to challenge the vertical aesthetic of a figure skater, and mutually performed the skating sensations such as flow, lightness, and suspension into a modern dancer's embodiment. There were four dancers on stage, one skater in the video projection, and one musician on the day of the performance. Behind the scenes, there was a projector operator during rehearsals to play the video and move around the projector, a cameraman to shoot a video of the skater on ice, and a video editor to edit the video footage into clips with a specific timing and duration.



Figure 10. The opening scene of *I-ce Shadow*

*I-ce Shadow* was performed in one of Brockport's dance department biannual concerts, *Strasser*, which was named after the Rose L. Strasser studio. The space in Strasser studio reflects a similar atmosphere to an indoor ice rink: the big empty space

on the stage, the pale colors in the studio, the white Marley floor, and the audience seating in three different angles (front, left side, and right side). In addition to that, the background of the stage is a huge mirror covered in brown velvet curtains. The curtains were opened during this piece because the mirror gives the silhouette of a bigger space, and it can also reflect the video projection so it can be seen from both front and backside.

The video projection was another important part in this piece because it projects the skater dancing on ice, exploring the three-dimensional movement with improvisation, and performing some of the movement phrases that were performed by the dancers on stage. There was a connection and relationship between the skater on ice and the dancers on stage, and the video projection was the mediator for them. The video was projected on a two-and-a-half yard piece of stretchy, flowy, and sheer white fabric that was being moved all across the space on stage. The fabric was a symbol that could be interpreted as the shadow, the ice, the wind, or the flow; it depends on the people's perspective and their experiences during the dance. Technology has become a part of human life, and I personally appreciate the practical accessibility in utilizing technologies. However, my appreciation of handmade art is instinctive, a creation made solely by human without a machine feels raw and vulnerable to me. Because of this, I decided to have live music.

One musician played the music live with instruments: piano, glockenspiel, congas, and cymbals. One person played all of those instruments, and he basically improvised throughout the dance. The process of composing the sound was truly exciting, during rehearsals I asked for the musician's permission to explore with the instruments. I cannot play any of those instruments, but I knew what kind of sounds that suit the movements, and I used to play an organ when I was little. The musician,

the dancers, and I worked very well together, although live music add-on was a last minute decision. Although music and technology are important within the piece, the language of dance is central to the movement itself.

I was interested in performing movement phrases on stage that were rooted in skating's footwork patterns, while at the same time exploring three-dimensional movement on ice. The movement was choreographed by exploring and practicing basic skating steps on the ground: stroking, crossovers, three-turns, and mohawk, and developing the steps into a dance phrase without taking away its aesthetic. Based on this development, movements were branched out into two groups: dancer's movement and skater's movement.



**Figure 21. All four dancers taking a leap before falling to the ground**

The dancer's movement emphasized flow and an elongated form of extension. The sense of gliding on ice with a pair of thin blades while the wind brushed off the

body was the essence of moving on stage with bare feet. To achieve this sensation, I took my dancers to go ice skating at the rink on campus. Luckily, all four of them had tried ice skating before, so it was not difficult for them to glide on ice. I instructed them to feel the sensation of the blades abrading the ice, the wind going against the body, and the continuity of motion to travel the space within the arena. On top of that, I took them one by one and skated around for some laps at full speed, so they could feel the same sensation as I did. Besides this, the studio rehearsal processes were taken step-by-step, starting by visualizing the floor as the slippery ice, the feet supported by a pair of thin blades, and the energy radiating toward the direction of travel while the body stood still. After imagery, the next step was teaching the dancers the basic steps in skating and their functions: *stroking*, *crossovers*, *three-turns*, and *mohawk*. Developing from those steps, I incorporated the upper body movements to create the phrase for both the dancers and the skater. Dancers have more possibilities in moving on the ground, more than a skater has on ice.

The skater's movement emphasized three-dimensional movement by utilizing the spine. Most of the movements were improvisational, which meant they were not choreographed, but mainly inspired by the inner pulse in the same manner as Isadora Duncan's theory in self-expression. The challenging part in this process was the video shooting. Shooting a skating video is difficult for inexperienced people and those who barely watch figure skating on screen. I was lucky enough to get support from the owner of the campus rink, so I could have the rink closed one hour to the public. I only had one chance to get the rink privately, which means I only had one shooting opportunity. However, before the video-shoot session, I had already made a concept for each video clip that would be incorporated in each section of the dance. In





addition to that, I showed some skating videos to the cameraman and the video editor to give them visual examples of my desired results.

**Figure 22. The moment of 'physical' contact between the skater and the dancer**

Both skater's and dancer's movements were bonded strongly with each other. The video that was projected on the white sheet enabled this relationship. The scene that showed the connection between the skater and the dancers was the part where the two dancers were holding and spreading the sheet from the left back corner of the stage while the video was playing. As the two dancers walked closer towards another dancer in the middle of the stage, the other dancer started to walk slowly towards the screen, seeing the skater was trying to reach her palm out of the screen. Responding to that, the dancer slowly raised her hand and reached out to the screen where the palm of the skater was. Their palms were touching for a split second before the video stopped. That moment was the only 'physical' connection that happened between the skater and the dancer.

The shadow could be interpreted in many different ways: the dancers as the shadow or the skater as the shadow, and maybe the sheet was the shadow. The relationship between the dancers and the skater was arbitrary in terms of the shadow role. Based on the title of the piece, *I-see Shadow (I See Shadow)*, the sheet was not just a property in the dance, but it was a symbol and mediator between the performers. The video was projected on the sheet, showing the skater dancing on ice; in this way the video took the part of an opening scene to the dance. It was displayed from the right back corner of the stage in black and white monotone color, showing a skater in black leggings, a black flowy top, with her hair tied in a ponytail, while a soft piano tune started to play ever so slightly, which virtually gave the audience a sense of reminiscence. The skater in the video performed an *illusion spin* combination; she slid down onto the ice, touched the ice with her fingers, and finally kneeled down on ice. The video was paused. A dancer immediately entered the stage from the opposite corner and danced diagonally to approach the sheet on the other diagonal across the stage. The dancer was dancing in front of the sheet and kneeling down as the skater did. The video resumed playing and they both, the skater and the dancer, were dancing in harmony for a split second. They rose up and danced until the dancer tore down the sheet to the floor. All the other three dancers appeared, and all four of them danced together in navy blue long-sleeve leotards, flowy asymmetric mini satin skirts, with their hair braided in a bun.

The ‘tearing down the sheet’ moment by the dancer was the ending of the first clip out of five skating clips. Projection was the trickiest part of the dance because technical error is beyond people’s control. There were two projectors used in this piece; the first projector projected the first, second, and third clip, and the second projector projected the fourth and fifth clip.

The first and second clips were projected to the sheet from the right back corner of the stage. The third clip was projected to the sheet from the left back corner of the stage with the same projector. To make this happen, the projector was moved soon after the second clip finished and pushed in a rover from the right to the left back corner with very long extension cords in the backstage. The first, second, and third projections were projected on the sheet held by two dancers on each side. Because of its sheer material, the video could be seen from both sides of the sheet, and the mirror at the background reflected the video on the sheet, letting the audience watch clearly from any angle.



**Figure 113. The skater and the dancer move in harmony for a split second**

The fourth and fifth clips were projected to the background of the stage from the second floor inside the studio. This was the most challenging situation because the second projector was only used in tech and dress rehearsal prior to opening night for Strasser. I did not have the opportunity to explore the second projector during rehearsals. The video could only be projected on the backdrop of the stage. Because

of this situation, I decided to adjust the ending part of the dancer's movement in response to the video playing in the background. All four dancers moved with the sheet by pulling and stretching it in a slow tempo, while the skater spun rapidly and appeared like a spinning top. The spin that the skater did in the video gave an effect like it was swirling the sheet, and pulled all the dancers together in a clump. The lights went off and ended the dance.

The process of this piece was thrilling to me. As the choreographer, I discovered new things to be explored and altered. I gained experience in flexibility in making decisions, adaptability in conducting different situations, and maturity in facing problems and unexpected occurrences. Though the process was short for a thesis piece, I had faith in all the people around me, the universe, and my determination to make it happen.

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Figure 9

Limer, Chiquita. Personal Collection

Figure 10

Limer, Chiquita. Personal Collection

Figure 11

Limer, Chiquita. Personal Collection

Figure 12

Limer, Chiquita. Personal Collection

Figure 13  
Limer, Chiquita. Personal Collection

Figure 14  
Limer, Chiquita. Personal Collection

Figure 15  
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Figure 19  
Limer, Chiquita. Personal Collection

Figure 20  
Limer, Chiquita. Personal Collection

Figure 21  
Limer, Chiquita. Personal Collection

Figure 22  
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Figure 23  
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