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Dance

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### **Union Hand in Hand**

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Molly McLaverty Sr. Thesis Free Write 02/26/99

#### BALLET:

Through the last four years I have learned how important ballet is. It is the basic foundation to all forms. We use all of its elementary ideals and fundamentals to grow and excel in many different ways. I think that many times the importance of ballet class can be overlooked, when you are not a "ballerina," and ballet is not your strong point. It sure is not mine now, and I will never say that it will be. Throughout my dance experience, ballet was not the niche that I fell into. I wish that I had taken it more seriously as a child had. But, I thought that jazz and tap dancing were the two "coolest" things in the world. So I would only take all the ballet classes that were required, but I did not really work at it the way that I did in my other classes. Now, how I wish I done it the other way, because back then I did not know how much its affects all of the other facets of dance. I finally seen all the benefits that ballet brings to all of the forms of dance.

According to my progress in the term of technical development, there was a lot I needed to work on. One main problem was my turnout. I turn my standing foot into parallel when I prepare for a turn or even go up onto releve, so I made the attempt to be more conscious to not turnout at my knees, but rather at my hip sockets. This work with turnout was also very important because it helped me with preparations for turns and jumps. Another problem that I encountered throughout the years was my flexible back, which stemmed from doing gymnastics as a young child. It is a part of my dancing that is a "double-edged sword." Although it had so many positive things that it did for me in performance work due to the fact that it "looks good," it limited me in other areas. One was my barre work, because I did not stand up straight from the floor and it always

threw me off. Its like I felt as if I was consistently sticking my rear out, even thought it was completely unintentional.

Ballet has and always will be a struggle for me. But in all of the frustration and the disappointment in myself and in my ballet dancing, I know that I am a better person, and a better dancer because of it.

#### MODERN:

I came to LMU with no modern dance training. I was always under the impression that when I got to college and had to take modern class, that I would have to pretend that I was a piece of cottage cheese, and figure out how the cheese felt. (Little did I know that would be in Fundamentals!!) But, through the four years, I found that I love the freedom that modern dance has. There are technical aspects, (a lot of them) but there is also the fact that there are senses of weightlessness and the usage of many efforts and forces. For me, I feel that I am able to express myself better in modern class than in the others. Modern also helped me figure out how to change tempos and work with musical rhythms. Without that, I would still be only able to count in eight's.

I found that I really love the more contemporary forms of modern dance. Much of the athleticism and power that these combinations have are incredible for me to learn.

I am very pleased that I found a form of dance that I am able to connect with so well. It taught me how importance total body connection was, as well as the idea that a woman can play many of the roles that men do in partnering.

### JAZZ CLASS:

I was always a jazz dancer my whole life. It was always what I wanted to be, and what I thought that dance really was. It never thought that I would be on a MTV music video, or commercial, but it was the only form of dance that I was really good at. When I started here at LMU, I was happy to find that the jazz classes were fun and challenging. The women that I was able to dance with were amazing, and I felt so honored to dance with them. I learned so much about how to push myself and express

myself. It could be the fact that I was getting older as well, but I learned also how to "sell it" more. I was not as timid or shy of my own body. I took jazz my sophomore year, and it was not as fun, or difficult. I became turned off at the classes, except for Andres'. I don't know, maybe my attitude began to change me, but I was not really into any of the jazz classes. I know that my jazz technique has decreased since I have not taken that class anymore. Although my leaps and turns are a bit weaker, it is mostly the physical endurance that I lack now. I just feel really slow, in learning and in executing.

#### WORLD DANCE:

I took Dunham technique, and this semester I am taking Irish dance. Lady taught me a lot about being in control and proud of the person that I am. She worked us very hard every day, and reminded us about discipline and a positive attitude. I left class always very inspired. World Dance classes gave me a feel of what is important in other areas of the world. There are dance forms that are based solely on peoples' devotion to their God, and use dance to show that love to him. It also thought me about how dance is everywhere in our society, and the positive influence that it has on others.

#### **PARTENERING**

I took Partnering class my sophomore year. It was interesting to see how it helped many of us with our skills to work together. I had never worked with partnering before, and it was such a nice feeling to know that it was a possibility. I feel that a class like this one would benefit the freshman very much. Everyone should be involved with partnering as soon as they can. It is such a positive and important part of dance, and many of the younger dancers have never been introduced to it. Lastly, it makes you get to know the women and men that you spend so much time with.

#### FUNDAMENTALS OF DANCE COMPOSITION 1 & 2

This was such a fun class. I think that you do not appreciate it as much when you are doing it, but it really gets you comfortable around the new people in your life. Dance is so competitive sometimes, and it was so nice to have a class that was so laid back

and open. In here we learned to let go of many of the inhibitions that we had about ourselves and being silly. I have always had a hard time not being so serious about my dancing and myself and Fundamentals did help with that. It was also the first time that I had (besides Cheerleading in highschool) to work with others in problem solving in dance. Such as with the machine studies, the sculpture studies, etc. I feel that having a partner was always a positive, if you took it seriously, because of their feedback. The only negative was that there was always like 2 weeks in a row where you just kind of sat and watched the others perform and give feedback. There has to be a way where you can get either more done in one-day, or really spread them out, and work on other things in between. Maybe you do not have to do every single one, but work the men and women on researching dance, or other elements of dance that they will have to look forward to in the coming years. This is the year where they are the most impressionable, and want to grow, that there has to be something more.

#### LABAN

This class was interesting, but many of the concepts were sometimes hard to understand. I felt that there might need to be an introduction to laban class that traced its evolution to its presence today in more depth. This is only due to the fact that much of the time when people showed their studies, there was sometimes difficulty in separating the different energies from one another. It was the same situation, where it was difficult to sit there for so many studies in a row.

### TO DANCE IS HUMAN

I really enjoyed this class. It was so different from any class I had taken before. I loved learning how dance affects American culture, as well as many others. I do not think that I had ever taken the time to sit and think how dance is part of our everyday life. It truly is. Through presentations from people from other cultures, I learned how

dance is so important to everyone. We also got to explore how other cultures affected us. For example, we made our baskets, did the basket dance, and learned about African American roots from Lady Walqueer. We were taught that the heritage of others could directly influence our own.

This class was so nice because we were able to discover what we felt culture was on our own. There are so many people in the world that want to sit down and tell everyone what they feel culture is. This way, we are able to explore many different kinds of culture and decided on the things that were felt were the most important.

#### STYLES AND FORMS

Rose was tough, but we all learned. Maybe it was out of fear, but I spent so much time in the studio for that class, it was amazing. It was like a timewarp for me though, because I went from just throwing some studies together in Laban, to practicing and practicing so Rose did not embarrass me in front of the class. She sees some incredible choreographic elements, and appreciated all of our comments. I feel that she made us look for things that we would have never seen. She also did not agree with us with all the comments that we made, and although it sometimes hurt our feelings, it made really thinking about the work thoroughly very important.

I learned how to use spacial patterns effectively, and how to incorporate motifs and themes, both things I had never thought of before. Most importantly, I learned the importance of meaningful movement sequences. Sometimes, in the heat of the moment, I just throw together some moves to fill up space. Rose taught me the importance of having a reason for doing the things that I was doing, as well as be able to explain it in words.

#### PRINCIPALS OF TEACHING DANCE

Judy Alter taught this class. She is one of the most knowledgeable and brilliant women that I have ever known. The class was a bit hard to understand at times though, and I felt we got a little misdirected. This is one of those classes that need to get out

into the field and work the concepts that we are teaching the children. IF not, they do not make much sense. As future teachers, the on-site work is the most important. You can never tell what will be successful just by laying ideas out one paper.

I did like all of the "Smart Moves" that we learned to pass on. I never knew that there were do many things that I was doing to my body that was damaging it.

#### DANCE HISTORY

I did not learn all that I was hoping to in this class. But I guess I was supposed to learn about the evolution of dance. I just think that it needs to be broken down into two sections, because there is no way you can successfully go through the entire history of dance in 3 months. I really don't remember a lot of the things that I learned--

#### KINESIOLOGY

In college, I learned that I am very good at memorization, of words that are in English. I think that all of the dancers need to take a class like this that relates to dance. I think that it is frustrating, and I can not name many dancers that enjoy it at all. This class is an absolute nightmare for me, and I can't believe that it is so hard.

- #1 I know that studying dance has only helped me in my life, in many aspects. Much of what I learn about myself in dance class truly relates to what I deal with in my schoolwork and social situations. I have the same focus and commitment problems in dance class that I have in actual textbook classes. I guess my fear of failure affects me everywhere, and holds me back. It is really hard when I know this about myself, but I still do it. I know that it only holds me back from receiving all that is being given to me by others. Dance has also given me a lot of direction. I am the type of person that is very intense, and dance gives me some area to strive for, some place to get rid of my competitive edge and tensions. I can challenge myself and manipulate myself in some sort of productive way.
  - #2 I have risked in many ways that I never thought I would have. I have

finally begun to accept myself and the body and type of dancing that I am good at.

Therefore, it makes everyday a risk. I think that I have learned how to trust people more with partnering, as well as know that I can be successful with others. I have also taken risks with performance qualities. I am not shy out on stage anymore, and I have learned how to not get embarrassed

- #3 The one thing that I wish is that I took more advantage of the resources outside of school. There are so many places that I could have gone and danced as well to further my education. I also would have tried harder, but I think that I would say that no matter how hard I ever really worked!
- #4 The fact that I like to try new things and I can't day no. I feel that many of the dances that I have been in concert-wise have helped me grow as a person. I am not afraid of people anymore, and I am definitely not afraid of stretching myself in ways I have never before. I think that the positive support from both my academic and technique teachers have really brought me along.
- by my body not working the same way that my mind wants it to. I think that is such a bad habit of mine, and I need to get past the point that I am not "perfect" and work as hard as I can to feel confident and secure in my ability. I guess that I let my mind get in my way some times, with negative thoughts about what I am doing...and I really shouldn't. For all I can do is work hard and try as best as I can. Then I think that I would be more accepting of what there is for me to learn. Many times I think that I do not work to my full potential because I get scared of trying something that I could fail at. So I get inhibited, and do not take all of the risks that I could to become a better dancer. This is something that I know that I have been trying to work on, but also that I have so much more to work to do.
  - #6 see #3
  - #7 That there is a lot of support from the other students. There are so many

things that help you grow as a person.

#8 Dance has always been my outlet, a place to vent my frustrations and disappointments of the "real" world. Often times, I will come to class upset, and throughout the workout, I can work through all that is hurting me. Dance is so good for me, for it teaches me that to receive anything that I want, I will have to work. It is not just handed to me, and the happiness that I feel when I dance well is a predecessor to what is possible in life.

# Career Plot

As graduation quickly approaches, I find myself still trying to sum up the last four years in a word, a statement, or even just one paragraph. But, I can't. All I can think of is, what a ride. It has been incredible. The day that I stepped onto this campus my senior year of highschool all the way through to this very day, has been the happiest and most meaningful days of my life so far. I think that is why I look towards my future with such high hopes, aspirations, and excitement. You see, taking the first step away from the home that I lived in for 18 years and the friends and lifestyle that went along with it, makes taking this next one that much easier. I have grown so much here, and in such a positive way. I feel so different from when I first arrived, so young and timid. I am almost ready to take on the entire world.

After graduation, I am the most excited to try all of the things I never had time to while I was in school. I want to take walks at sunset, have a weekend free of tedious bookwork, clean the house until it shines, read a book I want to, watch TV after getting home without feeling guilty that I should be doing something else, and learning how to cook. My life sometimes feels as if it has been one long day, and I am looking forward to enjoying my life one-day at a time.

I know that it will not be as easy as I am portraying it to be, but I don't mind working and I can be thrifty if need be.

There will be bills, dirty kitchens, and long workdays, I know that. These things are all things that I am afraid of, I mean, I can barely balance my checkbook. But, I am more scared of being alone all my life than of some silly bill.

It has taken me my whole life to figure out that the one thing that has always terrified me the most, really does not scare me now. I will not fail. I know now that there is only failure when you let yourself believe in it. I do not have to be the best at something as my only judge if I have failed or not. I will not always be the best at everything I do, but as long as I try as hard as I can, failure is not an option. The idea of it is more of a learning experience.

In my four years here, I have changed my mind over and over again about what I want to do in this next step. Ever since I was a young child, people have made suggestions to me about what I should be when I "grow up." They have always been the same; a teacher, a lawyer, and a dancer/performer. Of course, if I had my choice I would be the best darn superstar you have ever seen. But, sometimes I am a bit to practical, and the idea of me struggling to support myself as well as pay back my loans forces me back into reality. I do not even have a car yet, for gosh sake! Yes, I do have a financial cushion, my mother, but

there is something inside me that cringes everytime I think of that option. My mom has spent her entire life providing for me. All I want to see is for her to take herself out, splurge a little, have some fun. She has paid for me to for the last four years. I want to show her that all that she has sacrificed for my well being has paid off. So, I know that I can always run home, and the door will be wide open for me, but I don't want that. I am ready for my independence. (hopefully!)

I have spent hours in and out of the career center thinking of all of the jobs that I would love to have and deciding how I would get them. Practically speaking, I could be a teacher, and I know I would be a wonderful one. But that is a career that I want down the line, when I could give more to the children after I have given myself the things that I need. My favorite teachers have always been those with the stories of far off lands ..... I have always been interested in a career in design, either interior, clothes, or advertising as well. I know that with all of my creative energy a job like one of these could challenge me daily. What fun-all the hustle and bustle!!

I went from wanting to become something that meant something to others, to something that made money, to something that had some sort of status to it. I think that I was afraid of what others thought, as well as selling myself short. I also was struggling with the idea that there were people out there

that were set on the path that they wanted, and I had no clue. I did not want to be left behind.

It took a while, but I think that I have made my first real career choice. I found it while thinking of myself behind a desk or a counter everyday, and how unhappy that would make me.

I found it when I also found it when I finally realized that others were in the same boat that I was, confused, scared, and without a true direction.

I have to be honest when I say that I want to be a superstar. I know that you are probably rolling your eyes, or laughing, but I has taken me a while to say that sentence and mean it. I have always wanted to be a movie star since the day that I was born, but I guess that I thought that it would never be possible. But, I know that it is, and I would be mad at myself every day of my life if I never tried. I really do not care what kind of superstar that I become, but mostly dance or an actress. I just need to take the time to really pursue it. I could never land a part, but just knowing that I was there is satisfaction enough for me. So, that is my career plot, or a least the one that is down the line. I have to be a bit realistic first.

I am probably in the worst shape of my whole life. The college life has killed my body. I went through highschool with no shape at all, and right as my shape began to form, I entered

college. Here, I added some other elements that contributed to this problem, bad eating habits and drinking. I never ate badly at home, nor did I think that runs to Del Taco at three in the morning after going out all night, would have been a possibility. But, they were, and I am now paying for it. Sometimes I feel bad, but I had a great time and really enjoyed the social time I had here, it was a blast. I am ready now to take care of myself physically, that is first on my list.

I can only look into the future so far right now, but I do know that I have some contacts that I can pursue in the business world up in San Francisco. But, even if I lived there right now, I am not ready yet to take on that kind of position. I want some of my newfound freedom. I do not want to be married to a job quite yet, unless it is my superstar one.

In all seriousness, I know that I will be returning home for the summer, working out, taking dance classes in the city, and vacationing in Europe with my mom. Most likely, I will stay up there for the following year, and live in the city or at home (to save money) and work as an intern in a design firm or help out with programming at USF or Berkeley. I will either then return back to Los Angeles to dance and become a superstar, or fly out to New York for a year to live a dancers life in downtown, meet new people and work any fun place that will hire me, ( preferably a dinky little restaurant where I know the

regulars and they call me "honey)." I will come back to Los
Angeles again, try my luck again for a year or so, while taking
some education courses and working. I would love to spend a
year with my hostfamily in Europe, as well as working in a
volunteer program such as JVC or the Peace Corps.

I am so excited for the future (as if you could not tell!!). I once thought that I would never be able to do all of the things that I wanted to, that there would never be enough time. But, I see now all of the things that I have done in 21 years. Jeez, I can not even remember what I did when I was 11, so you think that when I am 41 I'll know anymore of what I am doing now? There is so much reality in the world, but the reality is, I am a very hard worker. I don't do drugs, I don't drink a lot, and I am generally a good kid. I am willing to give my all to whatever I do, but I know my limits, I was not raised in a dream world.

## A Career Reflection Sheet:

What am I most excited about after graduation?
What am I most afraid of? - bring able to pay back loans, et
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Everything I wish but think can not come true:
How to Prepare:  What have I actually started or nut in motion of the band - uner
Personal and professional contacts: MT Sammann Andrea personal New York ( )
Where will I live: LA Snow morrer (sort of)
Where will I live: La Snow  Morrer (sort of)  Morrer (sort of)  Morrer (sort of)  Paying back loans  - paying back loans  - paying back loans  - paying back loans  - paying back loans
what will be my financial obligations? - COC
Do I have a car? — not now
Will I need a car? - 123 What else will I need? a suit (butsness one)
What else will I need? a sucit Chutsher
Where will I study dance? - any where & every men
Dance support system: Fennifer that from home  LMU support mechanism: Tyvette  And At grais mat  Holly township less have granded
LMU support mechanism: Tyvette an Ap girls mat
Alumni Contacts: Stephanie Kanzler have granded
Other support system: Andrea Fank
Practical Job three options: & Greek Holvisore Interior Design/ Cloming Interior Tencher
Desired job (three options): Alpha Phi National Pres. J
The Professional materials  Resume Photos  "Portfolio"

# Aesthetic Statement

My dance aesthetic can be summed up within a quote by an anonymous author,

# " I have made my world, and it is a much better world than I ever saw outside."

I have been taught throughout my performance career to dance for the audience, to give them what they want to see, to dance bigger, to smile more, to "sell it." I completely understand these comments, and I think that everyone who has ever told me these things is right. But for myself, there is more.

I want to dance for people so they feel the way that I do.

I do not want the audience to try and figure out how I am

feeling or to try and feel what I am feeling for me--but to feel

it with me. I think that is the most important gift that a

dancer can give to an audience. I see it like this. If the man

of my dreams wanted to take me on a gorgeous ride through the

countryside, what would I think? Would I sit in the car and try

to figure out what it is about the countryside that he loves so

much, or would I try to feel his love for the scenery?

Personally, I would not do either of those things. I would love

the scenery with him. I would enjoy the hills, the trees, and

the grass with him, whether or not we love them for the same

reasons. That is what makes dance for me. I want to show people

how beautiful the it can be to experience dance with me.

Some of my favorite dance companies follow this aesthetic in their dances. Alvin Ailey is one such company. Now, I know that many of the dances they perform are geared toward

entertaining the audience. But, a majority of the dances, as well as the dancers, inspire the audience to come with them on their journey through history or personal sacrifice. I mean, look at dance like "Cry." Every time I see this piece, I feel right along with the dancer. Once again, I do not feel for her, but she makes me feel what she feels too. That is dancing to me. For a dancer to have enough influence on an audience so that they can feel just what she/he is feeling -with them- is incredible. It is almost like a magic power.

There are many talented dancers in the world that dance completely for the audience. One such example would be the Rockettes. Now, I love watching them, and there is no doubt that I would be one if they asked me to. But, they do not complete me the way that someone like Martha Graham does. They do not have the capability to bring me along with them. Although many of the movements that Martha Graham does are not as aesthetically appealing to me as the Rockettes, the way she makes me feel and the emotional ride that she takes me on is way more important.

The most important aesthetic that I possess is that of connection. The connection between two dancers, the connection with the audience. I want people to connect with me, to connect with what I can give to them all I have recieved through dance.

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your strongest other artistic your strongest the dance form the part of the part of other areas of abilities which abilities as a abilities as a dance that is mainly YOU technique class technique class dance which you relate to: comp, history, kines, affect your dance performer technician -- classical ballet, you love the most you do not relate taste or dance modern, postto making modern, jazz, music, etc. musical theatre and the style within the form that most resembles your work -- or descriptors Molly Julia Megan Andrea

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# Partemer Aesthetic

If Megan Ray were to be a dance style, she would be sassyjazz. I do not think that there is any other way to explain it. Jazz and hip-hop dance make Megan Ray. it fits her personality, her body type, but mostly it fits her attitude.

Although Megan is very talented at all of the other disciplines, she has no patience for them. She gets bored very easily, and is always ready for a new challenge. Jazz dance gives her that outlet. She is high energy and unpredictable. There is no other form of dance that could ever suit her as well.

She even looks like a jazz dancer. With her long blond hair, gorgeous eyes and pouty mouth, she is a choreographers dream. She has leg extensions that go from here to Timbucktu, and she can turn all night long. She has the ultimate jazz facility.

If Megan were to choreograph a piece, it most likely would be sassy-jazz. It would include a lot of sexy walks, head throws, turns and jumps. It truly comes naturally out of her body. I have seen it for the last four years, and thinking about how perfect she is when she does jazz still makes me smile.

Basically, Megan is suited for any dance form that can keep up with her. But, she moves fast, she makes rash decisions in a snap, and she'll take down anything that is in her way. If that is not the jazz dance aesthetic, I do not know what is. I'd love to see her doing something like Diavolo. She'd blow them straight out of the water with her intensity and strength.

"Dance for yourself. If someone else understands, good. If not, no matter. Go right on doing what interests you... and do it until it stops interesting you."

-Louis Horst

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