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Senior Dance Thesis

Brandy Bickle

Loyola Marymount University

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∞ LIGHTING ∞

The lighting for *Within* were decided with an intent to echo the themes and motifs of the choreography. I wanted to keep the idea of the contrast between the Light self and Dark self by creating shadows on stage because shadows are the product of light meeting dark. Since I did not want to convey the idea of Good verses Evil, I wanted to stay away from pure bright white light. I chose to keep the blue and gray color idea that had emerged through costuming process. John Binkley was incredibly patient and helpful at the tech rehearsal with these two ideas. He suggested that silhouettes would be more effective in portraying my struggle. He also suggested putting a tint of violet in lighting color choice to avoid having the dancers drown out on stage because the costume and lighting color were too similar. The color shift of violet would still keep the cooler feeling in order to ward off any suggestion of Good verses Evil.

I chose places in the choreography that were dynamic and that could be enhanced by lighting shifts. I decided to start by focusing on the oneness by having the dancers start in a single pool of light in stage. As the differences of their characters began to emerge through the movement, I had the lighting fade up into the blue silhouettes. Once the dancers broke away into clearly separate identities during the “Stella section”, I chose to have the silhouettes taken out so that the stage was lit more fully. As the two dancers began to merge back into each other, the lights faded back to the silhouettes. Finally, as the choreography came full circle, ending in the same place on stage, the lights returned to the single pool, so that the pattern of the lighting cues echoes the circular motif used throughout the dance.

∞ COSTUMES ∞

Costumes were a dilemma for me. They usually are. I find myself so enthralled with the choreography and my dancers that dealing with costuming ends up being last on my list of priorities. At the same time, I realize how much a good costume choice can deepen the quality of a piece on stage. I usually pick the simplest, most easily accessible yet functional costume I can. For *Within*, I was originally going to use an old costume from a previous dance I had choreographed. It consisted of a black pair of pants and a shirt with a blue designed front and a solid black back. I took the costume idea to Theresa Catalfo, who was my costume coordinator. I explained to her that I thought the costume would work because my piece dealt with the inner struggle of the two sides of self. She suggested that it might not be a good idea to have both dancers wearing identical costumes if I wanted the audience to understand that they represented two very different qualities of self. She suggested having the same, or similar shirt but having one dancer in white pants and one in black pants. We decided against that choice because black and white tend to make an audience think Good and Evil, which is exactly what I did not want to be portrayed by my piece.

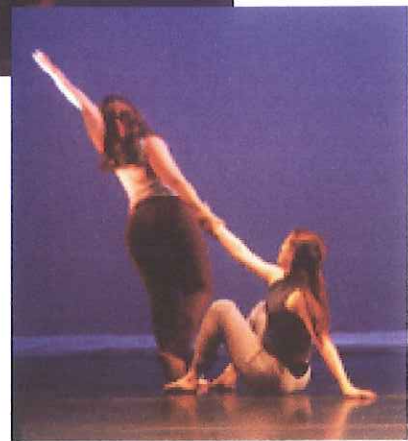
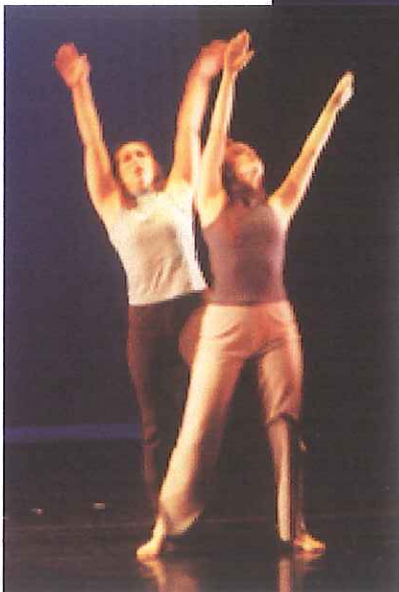
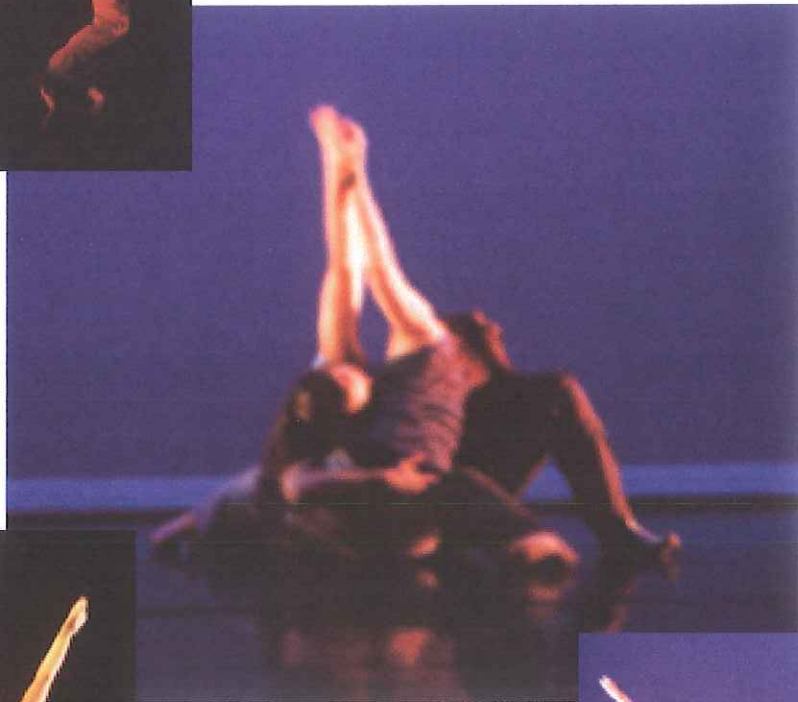
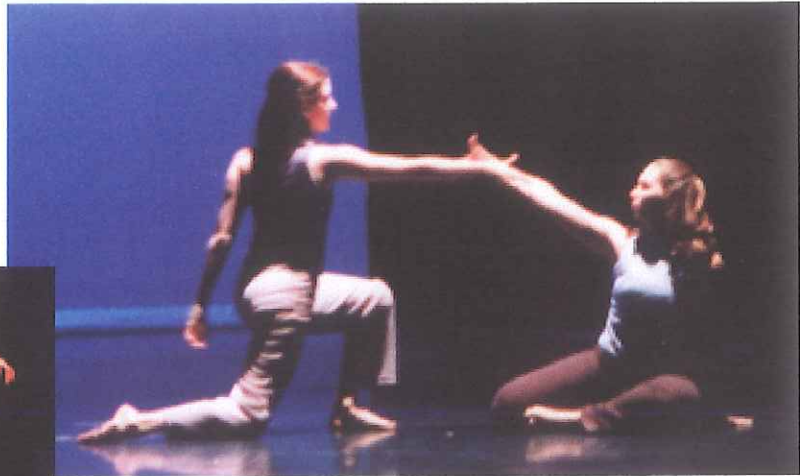
We talked a little while and went through some color options. All striking colors were tossed out as options because they send such strong images to an audience. Theresa suggested combining cooler blues and grays together. The idea of having one dancer in blue and one in gray still seemed to lead toward portraying too much of a distance between the dancers. I wanted to make sure it was clear that Sara and Jen were seen as being the same person, inseparable but not identical. The final decision was to have one dancer wearing light gray pants with a dark blue shirt and the other dancer wearing dark gray pants with a light blue shirt. The color opposition

creates a connection between the two dancers and cooler colors shy away from the extreme duality of Good and Evil.

herself over completely. She has really been finding the weighted quality in her body over the past year or so. I saw these qualities as being supportive of the Shadow Self. From this my vision began to fall into place in my own mental plan.

Each of my dancers has elements within her dancing that holds her back. Jen has a fear of being wrong. She is afraid to fully investigate an idea unless she is confident that she will do it “right”. She really needs a supportive and warm atmosphere in order to thrive. She can become timid her movement during showings because she feels she is being judged. She also has a hyper speed device that activates when she feels uncomfortable or unsure (a.k.a. she speeds up). Sara has a problem of head talk that makes her insecure and timid. She is a very introspective person, which makes her comfortable inside her own body. Often her movement stays in a close kinesphere rather than reaching out into far space. This creates a tendency to not finish her lines or follow through a movement energetically.

My dancers share a few wonderful qualities. They both shine on stage. All the timidity they expressed in earlier situations melts away when the lights come up on stage. They each have a personal love for dancing that runs deep and which they long to share with an audience. They find a commitment in each moment that is compelling. Sara can make the world melt away for an audience once she stops listening to her head. Jen looks angelic on stage when she dances completely for the sake of that. Both of my dancers started dancing later in their lives and have found an artistic quality that makes up for technique that they might have missed. This gives them a flavor and a genuine life on stage that cannot be faked or imitated. I believe it is these dancers that can breath life into *Within*.



∞ DISCUSSION OF DANCERS ∞

It was suggested from the beginning of our meetings about the Senior Thesis project that each choreographer should try not to just ask friends to be in their pieces. Judy noted that in the past that has made it hard to keep a serious work atmosphere. I chose to have two of my closest friends to be my dancers for specific reasons.

I know Jen and Sara well. We trained together before coming to LMU, we have the same hometown, we all graduated from the same high school, and we all ended up being dance majors at LMU. I know how they dance, how they react to choreographers, what their strengths are and where they find challenge technically as well as emotionally. Because I have heard so many horror stories in the past about dancers not showing up to rehearsals and not being dedicated, I felt safer entrusting my piece to Jen and Sara because I know that they are extraordinarily responsible and respectable people. I knew that we could have open dialogues in rehearsal and that they would be willing to stick with me as I struggled through my challenges. They have both worked under my choreography before and so were familiar with my style. They also know me on a personal basis so that my intention would be better understood in their our minds.

Another large factor in my decision to have Jen and Sara play the respective parts of the self was how I understood their individual dance aesthetics. Jen is a lyrical dancer. She enjoys the emotional involvement and the fluid movements. She has trouble moving quickly but has a beautiful quality when she feels comfortable enough with a dance to own it. These were qualities that I thought would bring the Light Self to life. Sara has an ability to be so in the moment that she can make any movement powerful once she gives



PUBLICITY





CONCERT PROGRAM





NEWSPAPER REVIEW OF
CONCERT





JOURNALS



Today was my first rehearsal. I have been thinking about this piece for a while now. I picked the music this summer and have developed the theme with detail lately. I want to express the struggle inside between the darker half of self and the lighter half of self. But I want to make clear that it is not a struggle between good and evil. Its about the pull inside to do good and the pull to do bad. I find it in specific in my own personal struggle with sins like pride. It is so easy to get pulled into doing what feels good for me and makes me look impressive. I forget about others. In Philippians 2, Paul says, "let each of you regard one another as more important as himself." In John when Jesus washes the disciple's feet He repeats that He came to serve. Jesus is God and He humbled Himself, not only becoming a man, but also coming as servant, to be an example to us. If I am to carry the name of Christ, my desire must be to become more and more like Him. This piece is about that struggle inside me. But it has to go beyond the walls of my skin. I think that every person, Christian or not, struggle in a similar way. Romans 3:23 says "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." We all struggle in that way.

Rehearsal went fine, I guess. It was a first rehearsal. I didn't set anything. I tried teaching Jen and Sara a little phrase I had made up earlier. It didn't fit on their bodies the way I had expected. That was a little frustrating. But it is exciting to begin working.

Today at rehearsal I played with a little mirroring exercise that I thought about all week. I didn't feel as prepared for rehearsal today. I had a crazy week and didn't get to spend much time working on my choreography. But I did work out the mirroring section with Jen and Sara. I didn't have it exactly choreographed, which was weird. I am used to coming in with material ready to go and then just giving it to dancers. Then if it doesn't work we fix it a little. But today all I had was an image in my head. Some neat stuff happened. We found this section where Sara presses against Jen's back and then lowers to the floor. I was really impressed with that section.

The piece that happens before that wasn't what I wanted. I had Sara standing right behind Jen. Jen started walking and Sara followed. They were very close together. The two of them just couldn't seem to work with each other. It felt like there was a disconnection between them. I hope that will get better as they work together more.

I had another crazy week so I felt unprepared again today. But even though I felt unprepared it was a really good rehearsal. We worked together on some improv today. I have been trying to take time to listen to my music and think about my theme every night before bed. This week I have been falling asleep before anything starts really happening. What I did do this week was to brainstorm in my scratch journal. I wrote down all the words I could think of to describe the dark side and the light side. Then I took those words and wrote down energy qualities that would express those things in non-verbal way. I talked to my dancers a little bit before we started moving to explain the brainstorming I had done. Then we took a few of those ideas along with my desire to make it clear that they were representing one person through the duet. What developed were some beautiful places of melting into one another as they moved. I really felt like it was a beginning to a connection between Jen and Sara as dancers. The movement still was not as connected as I would eventually like, but the movement discovered had places of rolling off of the other person and created a necessary dependence. I think today was the real beginning of my piece!

Scott came to rehearsal today for the first time. He is mentoring me. I showed him a couple of the phrases I had taught to Jen and Sara. He gave some pointers on how to coach as I watch them move. He took one of the phrases (I call it the roll down phrase) and coached Jen and Sara as they did it saying things like, “now crawl into that negative space and take her weight.” Jen and Sara seemed very uncomfortable working like that. I think they are both still getting used to each other and neither of them really likes improvisation. But I understood what Scott was trying to show me. It was really hard for me to do that. I explained to Scott that I have always just taught movement to dancers that I was choreographing for. The improvisational and experimental movement choreography I have done has been on my own body. It is going to take a while for me to really get to know how to work in this kind of “coaching” way. And I think it will take my dancers a while also. I will try using this technique next week at rehearsal.

Wow! Today was just plain frustrating! I looked at my calendar before rehearsal and realized that I only have two more rehearsals until the first showing. That started to put the pressure on to begin with. My goal originally was to have the entire piece choreographed before Christmas break. But I don't even have the first half set.

Today I tried to take Scott's advice and tried coming in with themed ideas and just playing like he demonstrated last week when he came to rehearsal. It just was not working at all. I don't think I was giving clear instructions to my dancers. I wasn't sure what I wanted them to do actually. They were confused and the process was utterly foreign for all of us. By the end of the hour and half, we were all out of motivation. A couple of good ideas came out of it, but nothing really tangible.

I started thinking today about why I am doing this piece. I really wanted to bring to light the issue of sin-of dark places- inside all of us. I wanted people to hopefully see a need for God. But here I am, trying to do this all on my own. I am not handing it God. I really need to start praying for His guidance. I am so bad about not having faith in Him. He created all things and is sovereign of all things. He said he knows the number of hairs on my head. Nothing can be done outside of Him. Maybe learning to hand this piece over to Him will help.

I was going over my notes from my meeting with Scott earlier this week. He said I should really be clear about giving permission to my dancers. He said I need them to really believe they are free if I want to provoke meaningful play in their movement. He said they both seem a little worried about doing it right instead of experimenting. So I tried employing these ideas in rehearsal today. I came in with a new beginning in my head, kind of in outline form.

Then I took a few minutes to pray. I kind of felt like this was not something God really had time or interest in dealing with. Then I realized He is in control of all things. The frustration this piece has been causing me has been getting in the way of my relationship with Him. After praying I felt this heavy burden go away and I was free to work. It was like God guided every step of this rehearsal. I have a new beginning set now (and I like it so much more! I think it clarifies the theme and leaves room to build out of also.) I am still planning on showing the old beginning at the showing in two weeks. Today was good =-). Thanks to God.

I remembered that I forgot to mention in my last journal that Scott was scheduled to come to rehearsal last week but didn't show up. I think he forgot and went home. I think was God's work. Scott makes my dancers very nervous. They don't like to improv in front of him. They feel they are being judged. If Scott had showed up, I don't think we would have had such a productive rehearsal.

I added an extra rehearsal on Saturday this week because the showing is Monday. I decided to write about them together because they were on back-to-back days. I prayed again today and yesterday before starting. Both rehearsals seemed to be productive. Yesterday (Friday) we worked together to add a little more onto the beginning piece we had discovered at the last rehearsal. It involved more weight sharing. Jen and Sara seem a little tense with that, but it got better as we practiced so I think it will work. That went well but it went slow. It took us most of the rehearsal to set a small piece of choreography. I am not sure it fits with where I want to go, but it is something put down for the showing. Progress has been so tedious that I am willing to show anything to have some kind of a product to display on Monday.

Today at the extra rehearsal (which was only an hour) we spent some time clarifying weird moments and filling in little blank spots in the beginning section. Then we went over the old material and put together a showing order for all of it. Then we spend about ten minutes doing free contact improv. I had taken a few moments before rehearsal to explain to my dancers what some of my frustrations were and I asked what they felt they needed to help get over the bump. Jen suggested that she Sara have time just to get used to each other moving. So we tried the improvisation in the dark (I shut off the lights and let them do what they wanted. It was interesting to see how they chose

11-10-00 and 11-11-00

to move together. I got some good ideas as well to play with after the showing. I noticed that Sara seemed very timid about the partnering, probably because it is new to her since she is a freshman. Jen seemed a little too aggressive-not quite in tune with what Sara was experiencing. I told them to talk to each other as they worked, that really made a big difference.

There was no school last Friday, so missed a rehearsal. I never wrote about what happened at the showing last Monday so I am going to start with that.

I really didn't feel ready for a showing in front of my peers. I think I, and my dancer would have felt better having only the faculty and other student choreographers in the room. My dancers said they felt like they were under the microscope and that their individual dancing abilities were being judged. I think they were more nervous than I was. I did get some good comments though. I was told to think about the weight values. When so I want weight to be gentle? Harsh? How do I make that read? Judy gave a wonderful new way of wording my theme that works so well for me: the shadow self verses the light self. It works because it is softer than evil verses good but still presents the struggle in a real and clear way.

Rehearsal today was frustrating again. I don't think I ever prayed about it and it is our last rehearsal before break and finals are coming up. I think all three of us were just out energy and low on creative juice. We did some partnering, playing with diagonal movement and tension in the partnering. I had a list of ideas I wanted to experiment with, but at the rehearsal, we were just stuck. So I let them go about fifteen minutes early. Both of them said they were really sore and tired. Neither felt confident taking other's full weight for fear of dropping her. So we went home. We schedule a rehearsal on the Saturday before we come back from Christmas break. I hope to be able to work with the ideas I had then.

Happy New Year and Merry Christmas. I had an amazing break with God. But I don't feel too rested. We met today to have a rehearsal before school starts again on Monday. I just took my notes from my rehearsal before the break and we worked with them. I felt out of the swing of things. I had this big plan to have the entire piece choreographed in my head, but it just does not work like that. I am so used to doing the choreography on my own, giving it to my dancers, and then working out the kinks. This process is tedious and annoying for me. I feel like I am getting nowhere fast. I only have six more rehearsals until adjudication. Scott has not come to rehearsal since the first time and has forgotten more than one in office meeting. I know he doesn't mean to flake. I am sure he just has his mind other places. But I feel like I don't have mentor. I guess God knows what He is doing, so I will choose to trust Him.

Nothing sparked my interest at rehearsal today. We worked with most of the ideas I had from before the break. Nothing was flowing though. Well at least this rehearsal got us back into the swing of things before starting school again.

Oh, wait! There was one highlight. We tried this running jump thing today where Sara runs to Jen and hugs her waist. Jen holds Sara around her waist as she turns. We had a funny conversation about Jen taking the Sumo wrestler stance before Sara jumped. It was a good time.

Today was frustrating again. Trying to plug forward and still having my mind spinning from break. I am just not seeing where to go from here. Sara was really sore from her rehearsal last night. We talked about moving rehearsal to another time, but there just is no other time. I understand that Jen and Sara are tired by Friday afternoons. I am too. I dance for almost four hours before my rehearsal starts on Fridays alone. I am drained too. But I do my best to have energy and to make things positive and productive. I feel like my dancers just don't care sometimes. It probably had something to do with being drained from the first week back at school. I know everyone is trying to get used to new schedules. Jen is getting ready to add another late night rehearsal on for Kenny Long's piece and Holly's rehearsal on Thursday nights really takes a toll on Sara. I will pray for patience and understanding to know how to motivate them and to understand where to go choreographically from here.

Stephanie always says you got get through a lot of crap to get to the jewels. Well today we went through a lot of crap. Maybe next week we'll get some jewels =-)

Today was productive. I have been prayer more during the week to learn to hand this whole thing to God. It just works to trust God. I need to have faith in God, not just believe in Him. Faith involves action. Well anyway, I have been getting some mental understanding of where I need to go next with this piece. I have two official rehearsals until the next showing, which is on the 29 of January. I talked to my dancers today about having one extra rehearsal on a Saturday before the showing to rehearse and fit together any scary loose ends. So I think we finally decided on a rehearsal the afternoon of the 27.

I outlined my music again this week, looking more for the division of musical sections and moods this time than counts. I came in expected my envisioned choreographic intents to fit into certain pre-counted sections. Everything seemed to take a lot more time than expected. I think part of that is that the energy qualities are very unclear. I really feel and see a need in this piece for cleaning up the energy. I feel like the qualities are being dragged down by the calmness of the music. But I felt like I started to get a flow going today and really did not want to hinder it by being nitpicky. My dancers were experimenting and working with each other (and with me) and God really made things happen. I am starting to see my piece grow. Besides, adjudication is coming up quickly and I have to be finished with the piece by then. I will ask Scott about it if I ever get to talk to him again. I need to know where my focus needs to be: cleaning and clarifying or finishing.

I had a meeting with Scott in his office this past week. I think it was in Wednesday. We talked more about the written part of the thesis because he hasn't really been at my rehearsals to help with choreography. He is going to come to my rehearsal on February 2, which is after the showing but before adjudication. He suggest I not forget to include other works I have done or choreographers I have worked with who might have had some part in the inspiration for this piece. I had not thought of that before.

Rehearsal went well again today. Things are moving along now. I still see a real need for detail cleaning as well as energy and intention clarification. But I want to go with the flow. I can go back and fix those things after adjudication. I feel so rushed it is ridiculous. It seems like I have been working my butt off on this thing for such a long time and I have so little to show for it. I feel like I haven't got anything accomplished yet. And now that I am finally starting to understand how to communicate with my dancers and to get us to work as a team I am so busy rushing to meet some quota that my head is going spin off my neck before I get a chance to enjoy the experience and soak it all in. But, I am one of those people who knows how to get stuff done under pressure. Unfortunately am just now getting to the place where the piece is motivation enough for me. That makes the added "false motivation" of adjudication little more than an annoyance. Nevertheless I see the need for it.

Today was our extra Saturday rehearsal. Usually I put this journal in with the Friday journal, but I forgot this time so I am writing now. We spent most of the rehearsal today talking about parts that my dancers were confused about, filling in sticky transitions. I could have added on, but I chose not to. My dancers had so many questions because we have been working differently since we got from break. I don't think I have talked about how, specifically things are different, and so I will give an overview now. Instead of trying to have all the movement done in my head and instead of coming expecting one thing, I have been leaving it up to God for guidance. I just have a loose idea of what direction the next section needs to go in and we (me and my dancers) do our best to work it out together. We are pretty clumsy about it most of the time because it is new to all of us, but I am seeing more authentic movement coming out of it. It seems to work better for my dancers to. But I still have not been able to clean it up all. Which drives me nuts because I am a detail perfectionist. It will get done eventually I suppose.

I normally don't write a whole journal on a showing, but I felt it was necessary this time. This showing was open to students again. We got comments from those watching afterwards. I was really disappointed with the comments I think I only received one comment that was choreographically helpful. I was talking to Jen and Sara afterwards and they both- independently and on their own- told me they felt like the comments were all directed toward their dancing abilities. Sara said she never wanted to do a showing again because she felt like she was a horrible dancer by the time people were done with comments. I did notice that all the comments were performance focused- , which in my opinion was inappropriate for this showing. I have not cleaned my dancer and I know that and my dancers know that. One comment after another dealt with the same issue of "more into the floor" and "more authenticity". I know the comments were meant for good. But I was disappointed to hear how people gave the comments. In Comp class we were taught to give a positive with the negative, and I wasn't hearing that. It didn't bother me that much until I found out how much it had hurt my dancers. They were worried that they had made a mockery of my work. I might be taking the comments too much to heart. I have a tendency to do that. But it would have been more helpful to hear if my theme was clear or if my choreography was readable rather than that my dancers need to use more energy. It did confirm my belief that much cleaning and clarification is needed.

Scott was scheduled to come to rehearsal today. I waited for an hour and he didn't show up. I finally went to his office and he was still there. So he was there only for the last half hour. I just explained to him where I was going, what I had been working on for the day. He told me I was going in the right direction. He really makes my dancers nervous. They do not feel comfortable around him at all. They say he makes them feel less than. They feel like he thinks "student dancers" are not as valuable as professionals. They get nervous when he is analyzing the dance.

Well what I did in rehearsal today was out of context but ended up being wonderful. In Principles of Teaching we had an assignment to lead the class in a five-minute improvisation exercise. I did mine yesterday in class. I was so pleasantly surprised at the movement that developed from the coaching that I gave it to Sara and Jen as an exercise. I developed it a little more than I had in class. I gave the assignment and let them go to work. It ended up giving two wonderful little segment of dance. I think they portray the intention well. It was exciting. Scott liked what had developed as well. He suggested that I turn the facing from a diagonal to a strait line upstage facing the audience. That gave the movement a new and interesting perspective that twisted the intention of struggle all the more. Today was good. Now I just need to fill it into the work I already have and where I want to go.

We decided to add another rehearsal for Saturday February 9. God was good to me again today. I linked in the work that developed from the improvisation last rehearsal into the piece. I took Damon's advice on giving a moment of pause in my piece. I decided to have the two just walk across stage together in a quiet moment and then break into an opposing energy of the struggle improv. The energy qualities are still really jumbled, but I think the movement works. I asked Scott last rehearsal if I should worry about cleaning or finishing choreography and he said to finish. So I am going to leave the fuzziness alone for now and plug onward. We got a lot done today though. The phrases ended up taking up more of the music than expected. I was both happy and disappointed by that. I was glad to be closer to the end of the music, but it left less time to wrap up the intention. I loved the progression that the movement created so I don't want to cut more. But I need to find a way to get a little more musical time to complete the piece emotionally. I need to think about what I want to leave in the audience. The goal for next week will be that.

2-10-01
Sat rehearsal

Well as I talked about in yesterday's journal, I had to deal with finding a way to condense the work we added on without losing its integrity. That is what we toiled on at rehearsal today. I gained a little more time by changing the energy and punctuation points in the movement and by shortening on segment by a little. This rehearsal was only an hour long, so that took most of our time. We spent the last bit of time running the dance a couple of times.

One rehearsal to go till adjudication! AAAAAHHHHH!

We had a meeting on Thursday about adjudication. It made Jen really nervous. She seems to be convinced that her senior thesis dance is the one who will be cut from the show. I can see her worry in how she was dancing at rehearsal today. They are both nervous about Monday's adjudication. Sara is afraid people are going to think she is a bad dancer because that is how she felt last time. I think it helped her a little to know this time the showing would be closed to dancers so that only the adjudicators would be watching. They are still nervous. I can understand that. I have no problem being cut. That is not why I dance and it is definitely not why I chose to choreograph this piece. I tried to convey that to them, but I could not tell if it helped or not. As a matter of fact, if it was an issue of only one dance being cut, I am ready and willing to volunteer to be the one. It's in God's hands not mine. Thank goodness!

In rehearsal we developed the ending. After much thought, I decided to end the piece in a not-completely-resolved way. I think the struggle between the two selves goes on and on. So I did not want to end in the way we began. I wanted some resolve, but to still create tension. I think the music confirmed my decision. It has an odd ending. It doesn't feel like it is done yet. Everyone keeps asking me "is that the real ending or did you cut it?" The ending brings back the tension and the pull but then ends in an entwined pose where both entities are clearly seen, but it is hard to tell where one ends and the other starts. I want a little more tension in the final pose, but that is for later. The piece is done in a fragile nutshell sort of way. Now I wait.

I think Sara and Jen did a good job performing at adjudication considering we thought we had until 6:20 but were asked to go on at 6:05. Not to mention I finished choreographing two days earlier. I had a meeting with Scott Yesterday (Tuesday) and I found out today that everyone made it into the show. I was really excited that no one was cut. I had praying that God would either cut me or no one. I was so excited for Jen! All that worrying for nothing.

My meeting with Scott was just an overview of what everyone had said needed work on my piece. Most of the comments went with my awareness that I need to clean big time. I need to clarify and intensify energy and quality through the piece. My dancers need to be more engaged in the piece. Moments of tension and release need clarification. Scott said the main concern overall was that my dancers were not dancing my piece. I need to find a way to bring out bravery and directness. They need to grow in physicality and risk taking. He said I need to be brave and demanding. I knew most of this already. The work is still very new to my dancers and I can't expect the performance level to be at its height when they are worried about remembering what step comes next. But this is the next frontier to conquer with my piece.

Scott also mentioned that he was not seeing enough of the polarity. It was hard to tell who was what self. He suggested I look at how I might make that clearer choreographically. I need to really be aware of how to use laban qualities to clarify this issue.

This is our first rehearsal after adjudication and the last before spring break. Once again my dancers are exhausted and in desperate need of a break. I shared with them what Scott had suggested and where I thought we needed to go. Then we started cleaning. I took the first little section- probably thirty seconds. I went over details and really tried to pull the work to a new level. It was hard to do considering we are all emotional, physically, and mentally drained after this week.

Sara seemed excited and very responsive to the suggestions, but Jen looked unhappy and not engaged. If that does not get better I think I might talk to her personally. I know both of my dancer on a personal level. I know where each one is emotional and physically. Jen needs to feel confident about herself and her progress in order to dance at her full potential. Most of the time with Jen the outside encouragement needs to be present. Especially with me because we are so close outside the studio. I am one person who is supposed to help lift her up. It will be tricky and a great experience to learn how to address her needs while still producing from her a level of advancement in performance quality that meets my expectation. I pray God will give me wisdom to do that and that He would be at work in her.

It has been a while since I have written. The last two weeks have been nuts! Last week was our first week back after spring break. We had tech rehearsals for the faculty show for the first week. I had to cancel my rehearsal last Friday because we had a dress rehearsal that night and I had a tech before the dress rehearsal. I tried to get together with Jen and Sara to run it once during the week, but it never worked out. So today is our first rehearsal since getting back from spring break.

Sara hurt her wrist during dress rehearsals earlier this week. She mentioned that it was bothering her before spring break, but it has been getting worse and worse. So, I we started discussing what parts of the dance would not work with Sara's injury so that I can rethink the sections to work around her wrist.

The main focus of this rehearsal was clarification of characters. Scott mentioned that that was one of the dominant comments about the piece after adjudication. I changed the tight rope section a little so that Sara's movements are more aggressive and Jen's are more passive. We talked about and played with energy qualities a little. Then we started reworking the beginning choreography so that Sara did not have to use her wrist. I think the rehearsal was productive. I was also pleasantly surprised that neither of my dancers had lost the information we had worked on before the break. That was a huge relief for me because I was afraid I was going to spend the whole time going over choreography and such.

I talked to Damon about moving my rehearsals to an earlier time on Fridays now that the faculty rehearsals are over. He said that was fine so my rehearsals have been moved from Fridays 5:00-6:30 to Fridays 2:30-4:30. I think that should help with energy in rehearsals a little.

Scott came to the last half hour of rehearsal today to see if I am progressing in the right direction and to give some pointers on where to go from here in the last few weeks before the show. We spent the first hour and a half cleaning a little more, going over old corrections to refresh their memories, finishing up the changes so that Sara does not hurt her wrist, and re-choreographing the pinwheel section.

The parts of the dance that where changes because of Sara's injury look great! The changes add to the feel of the dance as well as clarifying the characters a little more. I tried to choreograph those changes with the characterization issue in mind. My dancers were very helpful with this. I felt we were all working like a team.

The pinwheel section was exciting and frustrating to work on. We had a big discussion on Laban's energy chart and what emotions the different energies provoke. Then we tried to use that to build the section. Sara was going to use the percussive side of the chart to show she is the heavier shadow self. Jen was going to use the lighter side of the energy chart to show that she is the light self. I think the section will work, but more coaching is needed. I am not feeling the qualities as clearly as I need to for the section to read. Jen is having trouble not carving and Sara is having trouble finding the ends of her movement so as to make them read as being percussive. Scott emphasized that.

Scott said things are heading the right direction. He said I might want to start paying attention to the details and the energy and intention throughout the piece. We worked together to fix the ending. I was rushed to finish before adjudication and knew the ending needed work. We added a breath and a lift at the end to complete the moment and it works much better now. Timing with the music is still a little iffy. But I am sure

the player in the theater will be a little slow or a little fast anyway. But I want to them to be more comfortable with the music before hand so that when we run into issues on stage the can be dealt with more easily.

Today was our last rehearsal before tech. I spent time playing with the energy in the pinwheel section and cleaning up more details like Scott mentioned last week. I tried coaching Jen on her energy first for the pinwheel section. She got really frustrated telling me that she just could not do what I was asking. She took a break and came back better. It is a hard section for her. She gave herself a visual of being Isadora Duncan. That helped a lot. One of the main issues is that Jen has a tendency to rush, not melt to the full extent of the movement. What helped with that was discovering the "I have a figurine and you don't" song. Jen has an obsession with Disney figurines. Every time we go to Disneyland, (which is at least four times a year) she gets a little figurine at the end of the day. She gets fierce about getting her figurine. One time she almost knocked a poor little kid over because he was standing in front of the self. She walks so fast all day so that we can get everything done so that we can get her figurine. Last time we all went to Disneyland, we decided to try something new. We had Jen get her figurine first thing. We put her in a locker and she walked around all day happy as a Jaybird. So, I took that idea of a happy little girl with a figurine, humming around Disneyland as a visual to see if it would make Jen loosen up. It did. I had her sing the little teasing tune to the song. It also gave her an internal tempo that was more relaxed and gave a different focus than the movement itself. And it was really funny.

Then I worked with Sara for a while on bringing out the percussive quality in her movement. We experimented with finding the end of her movement instead of focusing on the in-between moments. Then we talked about holding the end for a moment before moving on in the choreography. The section was better by the end of rehearsal, not where I want it, but closer.

I had my tech rehearsal tonight. I was nervous about it because I have never done lighting before, I was not sure what kind of person John Binkley was, and I was the first person to be teched. I showed up early and John talked to me a little before about what I was looking for. I told him about my idea of using shadows and working circularly. He was so patient and helpful. I was relieved. I was afraid that the lights would just end up getting in the way of my choreography, but I was really pleased to see how much they added to the piece.

Scott was there, which was reassuring also. He liked what John and I had worked out with the lighting. John and Scott suggested that I switch the costumes because the colors would be more complimentary if they were on reverse dancers. So, I tried it, and I liked it better. But now I have to go and get a smaller size and different style of pants for Sara. That is ok because I liked the change and it is worth the trouble.

4-10-01

First dress rehearsal

Tonight was the first dress run. Jen and Sara had a little trouble getting to the final position on stage at the tech rehearsal. We marked the stage at the end of tech. If they missed the mark, then they would be in darkness for last part of the dance. But they made it just fine. I am really starting to see them perform. Rehearsals had a tendency to feel a little heavy because they were late on Friday afternoons. I started to feel them break through that barrier I felt at rehearsal. It was really exciting, and nerve racking all at once! I cannot believe the show is here! It seems so soon, but at the same time, I feel like I have been waiting forever for it.

I am still a little worried about poor Sara. I know her wrist is still bothering her. I tried to play with the choreography so that she used her wrist as little as possible. But I am still worried about her. I can tell she is upset and worried about it too. She felt really bad about "making me change the dance". I think the changes turned out to be blessings. The changes seem to work much better than the original choreography. I tried to explain that. I hope it got through. I know Sara well enough to know she lives with a guilty conscience. I just hope she does not overdue herself. She still has three more years here. I do not her body to be messed up the whole time.

Tonight's run went really well I thought. The little stuff is falling into place. I am so pleased with how my dancers have taken full responsibility for the piece. They have made it alive. I feel like each of them are beginning to own the dancing in bigger way. They seem to be enjoying it as well as being challenged by it. It might have helped them performance wise to know that they had an audience. A group of our dancer friends from home came to the dress rehearsal tonight because they have a show the same weeks as ours and could not come to any of the concert nights.

Both Jen and Sara seem to be too caught up on the pinwheel section. I think that is my fault. It was the section I have been most flustered about. I had the intention of the section showing the differences in the characters of the Light self (Jen) and the Dark self (Sara). Sara's choreography was to be percussive and bound. Jen's was to be light and sustained. They both struggled with the section. We have spent a lot of time rehearsing it- maybe too much. I can sense their hesitation on stage when they get to that part of the dance. Jen seems to be starving to get it right. This is the same section she got really frustrated with during rehearsal a few weeks back. She has really come a long way with it. It is so close to having the feeling I am looking for. She just needs to let go. If Jen would stop wanted to do it right- whatever that means- and just did it, I think it would be exactly what it needs to be. I think the pressure I put on this section being clear created a complex for Jen. I told her just to forget about it. Unfortunately, words like that are easier said than done.

I think every one really needed the break we had this past weekend for Easter.

Jen, Sara and I all seemed to have more energy tonight. The run was the best yet. They were really working on extending through the lines and playing with off-balance sections. It was exciting. The pinwheel section looked so much better tonight. They looked a less worried. I still sensed a little hesitation, but I saw a glimmer of what I want shining through tonight. That was exciting.

Jen is sick. She said it felt like a really bad run for her. But she told me she really tried to think about being happy and even hummed the "I have a figurine and you don't" song while she did the pinwheel section. I pray she dos it for her and not for me. It looked different- more real tonight than before.

Sara said she was not feeling too well tonight either. But I thought it was the best run yet. Funny how that happens. I think having kooky things to think about on stage can very often be helpful. Jen said she was trying not to pass out and Sara said she was thinking about not going to the bathroom on stage. They stopped worrying so much, stopped doing the steps and danced. Bringing the reality of whom they were to the stage created a sense of authenticity, which might have been why the run went so well tonight.

We had a little audience tonight. One of the English classes from on campus came to watch the show tonight. It was nice to have an audience. It feels like this concert has been going on for eons. This is our third full week. I feel drained.

Regardless of being tired, Jen and Sara did a great job again tonight. There are some moments that take my breath away on stage. It is all because of how they have invested themselves in this piece. We were all talking a while back, when Sara's wrist first got hurt, that there is no way I could fill in for either of my dancers in this piece. I simply do not know the choreography. They have earned an ownership of this creation that is equal to my own. I actually feel like the program should read, "Brandy Bickle, Jen Solum and Sara Kay" as choreographers. I hope the audience gets a glimpse what they have invested here.

Tonight before the rehearsal, Judy brought up the issue of our intention statements. She said they were confusing and she and Scott had decided not to include them in the program. She asked if the choreographers were ok with that. I really wanted my intention statement included. I felt bad because most people did not care. But Judy decided to include them. She reworked the wording of the intentions so they were not confusing. I was disappointed when I read the changed version of mine. The rewording was fine- it still conveyed my meaning. But she edited the entire section about God's love through Christ. That was the disappointing part. I really wanted this piece to be for God. I wanted to offer Christ with the message of the inner struggle presented in this piece. I guess I should have mad a bigger deal about it. But God's will be done. There was a reason for everything. I pray He was still glorified in this process well as the product.

The first night with an audience! Finally. It did not feel like the audience gave much energy tonight though. I do not know if there was just a small turn out or what. Jen and Sara agreed that they did not really feel the energy from the audience for some reason.

I gave Jen and Sara their gifts tonight. I got each of them a little stuffed cow. We have this running joke that we are proud members of the heifer's club. It is not a derogatory thing; it is a little inside joke against the stereotypes of how dancers should eat. I also gave each of them a letter to say thank you for all they have done for me. I taped 5 pennies to the outside of their envelopes and told they are officially professional dancers now cause they have been paid to dance. That is another inside joke from our pasts.

I saw the piece from back stage for the first time tonight. It was interesting to see the dance from that angle. It actually looks really neat from that angle. After thinking about it, it would be really cool to see this piece performed in the round. I think it might work that way. That was a feel good realization. It means my piece is three-dimensional, alive at all angles. Jen and Sara do not lose their qualities of movement when they do not face the audience. They are still in the moment when all there is to look at is the backdrop. It is like they make the surroundings disappear and they live in the world of the dance. I give them props for that. I am so thankful for all they have. I hope God was at work. I get the feeling He was here- if He was not this dance never would have pulled together.

4-19-01
Second concert night

The show went well again tonight. The audience was more a part of the performance tonight than last night. That was nice. I do not really know what to write about today. I am feeling kinda drained. I wish I felt more connected to what is going on. This is my last dance concert at LMU. I feel like I am numb. I guess it is because so much is going on and it has been hard to find to be quiet and still so that I can ask God to teach me what I need to learn from all of this. It is just not soaking in the way I feel it needs to. There are only 2 nights left and I want to live in them.

4-20-01

Third concert night

Tonight was another good run. Sara and Jen told me that last night they bumped into each other in the pinwheel section. I must have been standing at the wrong angle back stage to see it or they recovered really well. I did not even notice it. Tonight went well. Jen looked like she felt a little better. Sara's wrist was really bothering her tonight though. She thinks she overdid it in her modern class yesterday. But she worked through it nicely. I just hope she holds up through the semester.

I cannot believe tomorrow is closing night. It feels like this has been going on forever, but I am not ready for it to be over. I feel like I am finally performing and I get the sense that my dancers are feeling the same way. We are just now getting in tune with what we are a part of. There is just so much going on everywhere and no time to do that we all felt out-of-body. Now we are starting to get the hang of how to balance everything out and it is almost over. It's heavy knowing tomorrow is the last time this dance will be performed. All that process, all that work and investment is all over now. It is that performance drop thing happening. After the high of performance, the first few days of real life seem depressing. But it is just the beginning of another journey. Time to marinate in all that has happened now.

Closing night. Wow. Tonight's run had quite a few bobbles. I kinda liked some of them. It brought the dancers back to a place of surprise and attentiveness to each moment. It is easy to get used to things being predictable when a dances always runs smoothly. My dancers have such a wonderful level of performance integrity. Sara's hair fell out, Jen almost lost Sara on the off-balance walk around, they stumbled over each other's feet on the slow walks... but through out the whole dance they stayed focused and brought the energy right back to the center. I never felt like either of them was cussing inside about a mess-up. They just accepted everything and moved forward. Afterwards they acknowledged that it had felt like the least successful performance. But I thought it felt real. Of course, I might be biased because I am right in the middle of all that came before the stage. At this point I am not sure my dancers could do anything wrong in my eyes. *Within* is theirs now, not mine.

∞ PARTNER POST-CONCERT REFLECTION ∞

Teresa Henderson's piece, *A Simple Woman?*, embodied many of energies of life. From rising rage that is born of fear, to the sorrow born of trials, to the longing for freedom from those sorrows, to struggle to find strength and acceptance of self, to the power that comes with that discovery, into the joy of embracing life. The dancers brought with them the remembrance of those emotions from their own lives. Their commitment in unison with the expressive ability of the choreography allowed the dance to speak

A Simple Woman? Was recreating itself throughout the concert time. Teresa kept herself open to what her dance had to say. During the last dress rehearsals, one of the dancers forgot to bring up her white dress for her costume change. So she performed the last section in her solo costume, which was a long brown dress, while all the other dancers were wearing white dresses. The mistake added a lovely link through the dance as a whole, providing an insight into the choreography that formerly was unseen. Teresa took notice of that discovery and was bold enough to keep the change, making the decision on opening night. The change allowed the audience to connect the sections of the piece by being reminded of an earlier idea. Because Marjani did not change her costume, the audience could identify with her character. They followed her through the sections of the dance, from the soulful cry of longing in *I Been Buked*, into the powerful statement of self in *Phenomenal Woman*, and ending in the freedom and joy of *Fly Away*. They watched her character develop, noticing with more clarity the complexities of her

being. Teresa's sensitivity to the moment in her choreography allowed that unexpected but beautiful tread to be added.

∞ POST-CONCERT REFLECTION ∞

The process of creating *Within* has been so exhausting and involved that I did not quite know what to do with myself once the concert was over. On the way home after Saturday's show, I did not turn the radio on in my car. It was one of those moments where I felt unreal. I had spent the last nine months living in the bubble of choreography. To have it be over all the sudden was not comprehensible. All the struggles to find movement that spoke about my intention, the weeding out of unnecessary choreography, the puzzle play of making the piece read for an audience, the endless hours of wondering if it was ever going to be done, the weariness of my poor dancers, the moments of epiphany, the moments of revelation, the moments of success, the product with all its triumphs and failures- it was all so full. To have only the memories of all that vivacity after feeding off it for so long made me feel unfamiliar to myself. I sat behind the wheel of my car in silence, wondering if my skin was really my own.

Everything was new again, as if I had never touched the steering wheel before, as if I had never driven on 405 at night before, as if I never heard my own breathing before. I often get that reawaken sense of living after a good performance. It's the hang over of being absolutely full in those moments on stage when you are so much bigger than yourself yet at the same instant so aware of your smallness in relationship to the vastness of creation and time, which all sit in the palm God's hand. But this hang over was more powerful than any other I had experienced before. This time it was overwhelming. I think the reason the moment of suspension was so acute this time was because I had never been more alive, more aware of myself and my journey through life than I was

when *Within* was being created. Not only that, but the closing night of the student concert was not only the culmination of a dance for me, but also of an era. The show was the embodiment of writing this thesis, creating *Within*, preparing to graduate, wondering about the future, remembering the past- it was the last twenty-one years of my life, the last twenty-one years of me, in a culminating moment. But it was not just an end. It was a foundation laid to be built upon. And as I sat in my car driving home that night, I became so aware of the possibility that was alive in that realization that I did not know how to take it all in.

When I realized that the process of making *Within* had become part of the dried foundation instead of wet cement in my hand, time stood still. I had so much grief and so much joy inside me that all I could do was be there, not crying or laughing, but just breathing and living. Trying my best to just soak in all that had been accomplished, learned, given, taken, received, lost and found. It was so wonderful to see my dancers blossom on stage and own this dance. I felt that my idea had come across, not to everyone, but to some people. I know my dance was not the most entertaining piece of the night, nor was the overall favorite. This time, it didn't matter what the crowd thought. What mattered were the process and the completion. I don't know that the audience or the critics could ever have guessed what kind of growth and discovery had been made through the creation of this piece. It doesn't really even matter because the value of *Within* lives in a deeper place. It was the means by which so much was changed in my dancers as well as myself. My dancers found more detail in their dancing voices and they challenged themselves. I found a new process for creating choreography

through investigation. I can't judge this dance on an A-F scale. But I can say with full confidence that it served its purpose in full. And fulfilled it was.



FUTURE



∞ INTRODUCTION ∞

It is always a little nerve wracking to think about what I am going to do after school. I have spent the last eighteen years of my life in school; it is hard to imagine not having that as the center of my life any more. Thank God, that with the sadness of every end comes the excitement of a new beginning.

∞ MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE FUTURE ∞

My ultimate plan for the future is to join a Christian missionary group that serves and offers Christ's love to Native Americans, especially those on reservations, here in the United States. God has been, and still is, leading me through a long and difficult journey to bring me to the place where I am willing to give my life completely to His mission of spreading the truth of His plan of redemption through the sacrifice of Jesus. During this process, I have discovered a newly awakened passion to be a part of the reconciliation between the Native Americans and our current American culture. I have a particular desire to reshape the misconception of Christianity that has been born into the American Indian culture through the atrocities of former "white men" and missionary groups that aimed to devastate their identity and culture rather than truly offering the love of the God of the Bible.

I am planning to continue my teaching education. If God wills, I will be able to teach elementary age children on reservations, where education is often times desperately needed. I am also enthralled with Native American dancing and how it can be, and is, used to praise God. I have recently spoken to several different American Indian Christians who are following Christ through their culture, not despite their culture. I would love to see that happening more often. I would also like to offer the dance I know as an outreach to and an outlet for the communities. Dancing might offer itself as an alternative to alcoholism, drug abuse, suicide, and violence that plague so many reservations today. But, exactly what God has in store for my dancing is still a mystery. I leave it in His hands and wait in faith.

∞ CAREER PLOT ∞

First year plan

Live at home with my parents. Keep my dancing technique up by taking classes at Moorpark Community College, Dance Creations, Westside Ballet, and possibly Tongue's company rehearsals. Work to pay off loans, aiming first to get rid of my credit card debt. I will be leaving resumes at local dance studios/magnet schools (Dance Creation, Dancer's Studio, Pam Rossi's Dance Ten, Rosalie's School of Dance, Dance Unlimited, Santa Susana Magnet School, Simi Dance Center, etc) to either be a substitute or permanent teacher for ballet, modern, lyrical, choreography. I will be doing office work for C & R Development and working as a nanny for the first bit of time after graduation. I am also considering taking up a paper route (no I am not joking). I have always wanted to be a waitress, which is something I might try after my time at C & R. I will also be doing research on different missionary groups, such as American Indian Bible Ministries, Eagle's wing Ministries, Wesleyan Native American Ministries, Flagstaff Mission to the Navajos, etc. I will be looking into what the requirements are for teaching on reservation in different states, studying Native American History, studying the bible and theology, and praying for direction, vision and provision from God.

Three year plan

Work to pay off my loans as quickly as possible. I pray I will have decided on a missionary group and be working on being connected with the group. Gotten started or finished any left over education needed for teaching and being part of a missionary group. Start learning the language and the culture of whatever tribe I will be working with.

What I have actually started in motion

I have been researching missions groups, gotten in touch with the missionary intern at my church, started looking into biblical training options, creating contacts in the missionary world, set up my jobs for after graduation, arranged to live with my parents, and have set up a week long visit to New Mexico to work with AIBM in June. I have also been hired to teach at summer arts program for youth in Westlake for a week in August.

Personal and professional contacts

I have collected contact information from John Pennington, Heather Stewart, Holly Johnston, Stephanie Gilliland, Mark Lopez, Judy Alter, Judy Scalin, Joanna Santor, and a list of fellow dancers from LMU. I also have a list of missionary contacts and church contacts. I have address and e-mail info for all of my friends that I want to keep in contact with from LMU also.

Where will I live?

With my parents in Simi Valley, CA.

Do I have a financial cushion?

God.

What will be my financial obligations?

Car payment each month. Car insurance each month. Paying off \$3,000.00 in credit card debt the first six months out of school. Approximately \$23,000.00 in school loans. To be 100% out of debt, not including future education costs, about \$40,000.00

Do I have a car?

Yes. 2 years old with 31,000 miles. Will need new tires soon.

Will I need a car?

Yes.

What else will I need?

Gas, car insurance, health insurance.

Where will I study dance?

Moorpark College, Dance Creations, Westside Ballet, possibly with Tongue at company rehearsals.

Alumni contacts

Teresa Henderson, Tawna Crone, Amanda Niksa, Sara Templeton, Jen Solum,
Melody Morris, Jaime Pinner

Three practical job options

Target, waitress, day care center

Three desired jobs

Waitress, full time dancer/dance teacher, care provider

∞ SELF REFLECTION ∞

What am I most excited about after graduation?

I am excited to discover how God will choose to use me, how all these things I have experienced and learned will come into play with what He has planned for my future. I am also excited about meeting new people and challenging myself to push out of my comfort zone to grow as person and in my relationship with God.

What am I most afraid of?

I am afraid of loosing dance completely. I am afraid I do not have what it takes to do what God will ask of me. I am afraid of loosing my family to do what God calls me to do.

Everything everyone has told me I should do after graduation

Be a teacher, be a dancer, choreograph, get a "real" job

Everything I wish- but think cannot come true

To be a missionary who is never short on money. To be debt free. To keep dancing in a real way and that God could use that to help Native Americans to understand who Jesus really is.

Plans to address challenge areas or to build new skills

God has recently helped me to discover that I carry on negative conversations in my head about myself. I think about how others do not want to hear what I have to say, that people do not want me to be around, that I am not good enough, etc. Those things hold me back and make me timid. They stop from giving myself fully to what I am doing. I am working on being aware of those conversations and telling them to stop. With God's truth about me and His love, I am making slow progress.

I want to work on how I communicate with others. Being more outgoing, more willing. I want to stop being so wishy-washy in order to please others. Stop trying to always be safe. I want to step out of my comfort zone.