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Senior Dance Thesis

Sarah Romanowsky
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Sarah Romanowsky

Senior Dance Thesis

2005

Contents

- 1. Reflection: Summary of Dance Studies**
- 2. What is Dance**
- 3. Moving to a City**
- 4. Resume**
- 5. Choreographic Thesis**
 - a. Introduction**
 - b. Lyrics**
 - c. Outline**
 - d. Journals**
 - e. Notes from Damon & Paige**
 - f. Research**
 - g. Dancers**
 - h. Dancer Interview**
 - i. Publicity**
 - j. "Trip Away"**
 - k. Reflection**
 - l. Calendar**

Summary of Dance Classes at LMU

Fundamentals of Dance Composition I and II

- Understanding the elements space including path and shape
- Understanding the elements of time
- Principles of composition including form, gesture and meaning
- Learning and application of energy qualities including percussive, undulate, sustained, restrained/bound, vibratory and swing
- Construction of personal movement studies in various contexts including dance to silence, with a partner, a group and to music
- Creation of portfolio including a journaling of cognitive-aesthetic, affective and kinesthetic domains
- Increased dance vocabulary and understanding through speech, writing and reading
- Improvisational technique practiced
- Increased awareness of role as audience member

Laban Movement Analysis

- Differentiation of flow movement, whether it is free or bound
- Increased understanding of aggressive qualities including press, punch, slash, wring
- Increased understanding of indulging qualities including flick, dab, glide, float
- Introduction to LMA written symbols
- Introduction to Body-Mind Centering techniques

Dance Styles and Forms

- Expansion of creative approaches to choreography
- Increased knowledge and experience watching and listening to modern dancers and choreographers
- Development of personal dance aesthetic
- Choreographing in new contexts including group choreography, outdoor and textual
- Experimentation with improvisation

History of Dance Theatre

- In depth studies of the origins and development of ballet and modern dance
- Understanding the evolution and development of ballet and modern into the contemporary dance world
- Gaining visual understanding of influential dancers and choreographers
- Analysis of current films in context of historical dance
- Attendance of dance performances

Drumming for Dance

- Acquired knowledge of the fundamental of West African drumming including djembe, djun djun, aywah and conga
- Practice of various drum rhythms with accompanying vocals
- Increased knowledge of philosophical and contextual elements of different forms of drumming
- Learning of proper drum techniques
- Differentiation between bass, tone and slaps

To Dance is Human: Dance, Culture and Society

- Increased understanding of dance in the contexts of body, gender, storytelling, sensuality/sexuality, politics and power
- Application of personal life experience of our experience of dance
- Increased awareness of what it means to be human in today's culture
- The influence of dance in culture and society
- The value of learning and maintaining one's personal heritage and family rituals
- Various speakers addressing the topics of dance and culture and promoting discussion

Principles of Teaching Dance

- In-depth studies of injury prevention in dancers
- Construction of a 6-week course plan
- Alternatives to teaching methods to facilitate a the development of physically and physiologically healthy dancers
- Practice teaching peers
- Philosophies of teaching
- Creative exercises for children

Ballet

- Acquired knowledge on the proper execution of ballet movements
- Increased sense of musicality
- Improved alignment accompanying understanding of muscular function
- Increased flexibility and muscle control
- Linking together of steps in extended sequences of ballet movement

- Increased sense of style

Modern

- Understanding of basic fundamentals of classical modern technique
- Increased sense of various modern styles
- Application of ballet technique in parallel positioning
- Increased terminology of modern-based movement
- Increased sense of release in torso
- Work in pedestrian and organic movement

Jazz

- Increase of strength, flexibility and stamina
- Intellectual and physical expansion of approach to movement
- Gain exposure to a variety of commercial jazz styles including influences from hip hop, musical theatre, lyrical and ethnic dance forms
- Increased experience and knowledge of performance qualities
- Increased awareness and assessment of dance experience

Tap

- Increased sense of musicality
- More precise execution of tap movement
- Increased familiarity with tap styles
- Articulation of feet
- Ability to improvise tap movement

Yoga

- Built a physical practice of asana's based on Ashantanga Yoga

- Learned the benefits of the asana's from both an anatomical, cognitive and personal viewpoint
- Increased sensitivity to one's own bodily well-being
- Philosophical principles of yoga learned
- Personal tracking of growth and development through journaling of classes

Pilates

- Understanding of core engagement and application in dance movement
- In-depth work on reformer and trap table to engage and develop core musculature
- Techniques learned with physio ball, tennis ball, foam roller and thera-band
- Learning and application of mat work
- Increased upper body strength
- Breath work

The Dance of the Seven Veils: A Misunderstood Art

“No dance has been so misunderstood outside its own culture, nor so debased by commercialism.”

These words, spoken by author Wendy Buonaventura, speak volumes of the stigmas inappropriately attached to Arabic dance. The roots of Arabic dance, or belly dance, birthed from negative associations similar to that of Indian and flamenco, but unlike these dance forms, have struggled to break free of them. Now, as an Americanized dance form, there is still a discrepancy between the perceived intention of the dance and the actual dance itself. From Shakira’s hip-heavy choreography to belly dance fitness videos to Arabic-inspired fashions, everyone seems to have an opinion on the dance form and what place it has in our culture. Although many dancers still study and practice the dance from a traditional approach, many have branched off into methods incorporating new elements and costuming to create a genre of Tribal American belly dance. The truth is that any belly dance taught in the United States – no matter how traditional the approach – is going to be heavily influenced by Hollywood, which tends to hyper-sexualize anything pertaining to the body or femininity. Across the board, whether performed in the Middle East or in the States, belly dance is still incorrectly considered synonymous with stripping and prostitution.

This notion couldn’t be further from belly dances’ true origins. Hip dancing once played a major part in fertility rites as a celebration of women’s creative power. It is not surprising that an art created by women, for women, celebrating women would be so viciously attacked. It was also, and still is, an essential element to Middle Eastern family celebrations, believed to bring luck and animate the festivities. The dance form survived

over the centuries and became a sophisticated art in Egypt, where it is known as raqs bakadi, or dance of the people. There, it gave poor girls the chance to earn an independent income as well as enjoy a freedom denied to most other women. They were able to marry and begin a family life, and interestingly enough, had husbands dependent on them for a living. Most documentation of this dance in Egypt, however, is not written about by its own culture, but by Western travelers. In a culture where the female body is kept hidden from the naked eye, the sensuality and unveiled faces made these women the only females whom outsiders could freely encounter.

Within Egypt existed a group of professional dancers of gypsy blood called the ghawazee. They lived on the outskirts of society with other gypsies, Jews and immigrants and continued to practice their dance form despite opposition from Islam. They would perform outdoors to the enjoyment of onlookers who would throw coins at their feet. The ghawazee would convert these coins into jewelry and decoration for their garments. Their costume consisted of coins in their hair, scarves tied around their waist, jewelry and finger cymbals called zills. The air of the costuming and quality of movement combined to create a festive feel to a very feminine form. They were also known to perform circus-like tricks such as dancing with swords, candlesticks and trays of tea sets upon their head.

Some people found the ghawazee's open sensuality distasteful as it prompted internal religious guilt. There were many, especially refugees from the Puritanism of Western culture, that saw a beauty and vitality in the earthy sensuality of the women's movements and by the 1850s, the form could be seen outside of the Middle East, in Europe and the United States. Despite this move, the dance still received very mixed

responses from both cultures. In Cairo, the ghawazee were banished by Egypt's ruler Mohammed Ali, in an attempt to modernize the city with Western advisers. Many were sent up the Nile to Esna, and those who remained lived a very difficult life in hiding, fearful of the raids and beatings that could result from practicing their art.

Similarly to the Egyptian ghawazee, the Ouled Nail dancers of Algeria enjoyed a confidence and authority as breadwinners. The home of the Ouled Nail dancers was Bou Saada, where young girls followed the custom to becoming dancers handed down from mother to daughter. Girls left home around puberty to begin their life as entertainers, where they would perform in cafes or rooms attached to houses. Once they had earned enough for their dowry, they would return home to marry.

The Ouled Nail dancers received a reputation for being prostitutes because of their ability to make men fall in love with them, but Buonoventura maintains that they were entertainers first, and any monetary benefit they gained from their affairs with was purely incidental. Considered to be no more of wife material than the ghawazee, the dancers were branded with the negative taint of promiscuity and a potential danger to men. An old Arab proverb even speaks of the dancers, saying, "The man who sleeps with an Ouled Nail will first lose his soul, afterwards his wealth, and finally his life." The truth is that if anyone was in danger, it was the dancers. Dancers would at times be physically harmed or even murdered at the hands of a jealous ex-lover, who either evaded jail or received relatively short prison sentences.

Unfortunately for the dancers, dangers such as these resulted from their position as outsiders, a status that did not offer them a great deal of protection. These dancers risked everything to be entertainers who could independently support themselves in a

culture that so severely limited women's rights. The names by which dancers were known by in North Africa and the Middle East implied their freedoms and general perception of them, such as the chikhat. Traveling from village to village to entertain at family festivities, these dancers were known as "women who do not want men to tell them what to do." As risky as the life of a ghawazee, Ouled Nail or chikhat may have been, they were revolutionaries in their financial and personal independence – freedoms unknown to other women in Muslim society.

Another way in which Arabic dancers rebelled against societal norms set for women was their refusal to veil themselves. While Western culture constantly displays and eroticizes the female body, the Muslim East hides the female body to take away a woman's identity and remove a presence that may distract men from a virtuous life. This concept implies the inability for men to control their urges and for women to refuse men's advances. Oddly enough, Hollywood has created a cliché image of veiled Arabic dancers while the most enduring stereotype of this dance is the removing of such veils.

In North Africa, the removing of veils was taken to an erotic extreme when European travelers began expecting and demanding dancers to dance nude for them. It was not a custom, but a practice some dancers agreed, though they did not want to. Several accounts describe dancers who would make their musicians turn away because it would have been too shocking to dance nude in front of their own men. They were also described as fixing their gaze above the audience's heads in disdain.

Arabic dance has retained this stigma in Western culture, where belly dance is often aligned, however incorrectly, with stripping. In the Middle East, however, such alignments couldn't be further from the truth. The most famous performers in the East

are praised for their skill in reflecting the emotion and passion reflected in the music. Lightly clad or stripping women within the origins of the dance itself, was never considered normal, and would have been shocking to audiences. It was only when Hollywood glamorized Middle Eastern dance in silent films that cabaret dancers began trying to satisfy Western expectation of them by altering their dress. This new attire consisted of sequenced bras, gossamer veils and skirts slit to the thigh. Despite the romanticized image of the 'seven veils,' the only veil attached to this costume was the one held above the head upon entering and circling the stage.

Up until the 1930s, Middle Eastern dance was mostly improvised, lacking the formalities of professional training and performance space. Egyptian women had mostly danced using the intricate movements of the hips and torso in private or for their own entertainment. It was the thirties that transformed the dance from performing on a space as small as a single tile to one that needed to fill a large stage. Suddenly, the form began to incorporate traveling movements, extended arms and linear movements. Some even transitioned from the traditional, earthy barefoot stance to a high-heeled one. Eastern and Western notions of belly dance began to merge as a largely improvised form was starting to be choreographed and new kinds of music were being formed to accommodate this transition.

Traditional Eastern dance employs a sense of subtlety, reflecting internal emotion and passion while Western dance more typically explores aggressive, full-body movement that utilizes movement of the limbs, employing a sense of conquering the stage. These contradictory forces resulted in Western dancers lacking the heart of the original intention behind the movement and Eastern dancers lacking the formal training

to fulfill the expectations of a Western audience. This new hybrid, which was being sold in the Hollywood film and commercial industry, gained influence from social dance, musicals and ballet and included whirling, twirling and wafting with veils.

Despite the unfortunate changes made to the traditional form by Western influence, it has actually been the embracing by Hollywood that has allowed the dance to survive and thrive both in the East and West. In the thirties as well as today, it is the dance that celebrates the restraint of female power, ballet, which remains prestigious while the form celebrating female sensuality and freedom struggles for artistic appreciation and respect. Even in the Muslim world, it has become nearly impossible to open schools for belly dance as religious fundamentalist groups have campaigned to remove female dancing from the public eye. Similarly to the fates of the ghawazee and Ouled Nail, lesser-known dancers in Egypt have been threatened or flogged while more well-known, celebrated performers have been bribed into early retirement. Dance in the Arab world still exists, but while still is one of the few ways in which a woman can make an independent living, it is only those who have find fame that are safe from fundamentalist regimes. So, oddly enough, it is the Western world that has been keeping the dance alive through heightened interest towards developing it into a theatre art

While Middle Eastern belly dance has suffered under negative stigmas, been eroticized by Western culture, and has pushed Eastern women to become outsiders of society, it is a form that however misunderstood, has managed to endure despite violent opposition. It is no coincidence that a form so celebratory of female empowerment would struggle for artistic validation in both the East and West. It is a form that is becoming more and more popularized, but the hypersexual nuances being laced into the

dance is questionable in terms of its original intent. Over time, one hopes that the integrity of the work will be matched by cultural and societal respect for the feminine and the form.

MOVING TO A CITY

Montreal, Canada

prepared by: *Sarah Romanowsky*

Fall 2004

Loyola Marymount University

Dance Program

DANCE, YOGA, PILATES and OTHER TRAINING STUDIOS

Use these sources:

Go to www.google.com/local and type 'dance,' 'Pilates' or 'yoga' into the box entitled "What" and 'Montreal, QC' into the box entitled "Where."

SPECIFIC RESOURCES IN THIS CITY:

Centre Pilates de Montreal

5065 Chemin Queen-Mary

Montreal, QC

(514) 735-9506

www.centerpilatesdemontreal.com

Prana Centre Bien-etre Holistique

209 Rue St. Paul

Montreal, QC

(514) 287-9642

www.healthclubdirectory.com

Academie Flamenca de Montreal

24 Avenue De Mont-Royal

Montreal, QC

(514) 284-6392

www.quepasamontreal.com

Sea of Tranquility – La Mir de Tranquillite Inc

3513 Avenue Swail

Montreal, QC

(514) 789-0160\

www.yogamontreal.com

Centre de Meditation Siddah Yoga

7399 Laurent Blvd.
(514) 735-4494
www.siddahyoga.org

Yoga on the Park

5582 Sherbrooke W
Montreal, QC
(514) 712-9642
www.yogafinder.com

Conservative de Danse de Montreal

215 Rue Jeon-Talon O
(514) 272-7727
Montreal, QC
www.cdmh.org
Teaches classical ballet, jazz, modern, tap and hip hop.

LaLaLa Human Steps

5655 Avenue de Pare
Montreal, QC
(514) 277-9090
www.lalalahumansteps.com

Grand Ballets Canadiens de Montreal (Les)

4816 Rue Rivard
Montreal, QC
(514) 849-8681
www.criticaldance.com

Arthur Murray Dance Schools

4847 Rue Jean-Talon
Montreal, QC
(514) 733-3040
www.amdancestudio.com
Teaches ballroom.

Academie de Danse Tropicalissimo

20 Boulevard Cremazie
Montreal, QC
(514) 284-4877
www.tropicalissimo.com
Teaches Latin dance.

Ecole de Danse Capoeira Bresilienne

2069 Boul Des Laurentides

Montreal, QC
(514) 270-8128
Teaches martial arts.

Studio Sharqui

550 Avenue Beaumont
Montreal, QC
(514) 271-755
www.studiosharqui.com
Teaches bellydance, oriental dance, raks sharki and modern Egyptian dance.

Ballet Allegro International

7101 Anevue Du Parc
Montreal, QC
(514) 875-9969

Urban Element Dance Center Gp

370 Rue Jean-Talon E
Montreal, QC
(514) 273-7080
www.urban-element.com
Teaches hip hop and house dance.

Dancing Mocha Jo (Le)

5175 Avenue de Parc
Montreal, QC
(514) 277-5575
www.mochajo.com

Tango Mylio

80 Rue St-Viateur E
Montreal, QC
(514) 278-8781
Teaches Tango.

Premier Studio

4710 Rue St-Ambroise
Montreal, QC
(514) 934-6078
www.premierstudio.ca

Ashtanga Yoga Studio

372 Rue Ste-Catherine O
Montreal, QC
(514) 875-9642
www.ashantamontreal.com

Centre Jeunesse YMCA International

5550 Avenue de Parc
Montreal, QC
(514) 270-1685
www.androdissement.com

Chakrasana Yoga Studio

5122 Sherbrooke O
Montreal, QC
(514) 489-0862

Studio de Ballet Jazz Celine

3870 Rue Jean-Talon E
Montreal, QC
(514) 722-9305

Ballet Divertimento de Montreal

3505 Rue Durocher
Montreal, QC
(514) 285-2157
www.balletdivertimento.com
Teaches ballet, floor barre, jazz, modern, flamenco, tap and pialtes.

Café Danse

2362 Avenue Charland
Montreal, QC
(514) 823-0864

Dance Aesthetic

As a performer, choreographer and viewer of dance, there are specific elements that must be present and actively utilized within a piece of work for me to find it beautiful and engaging. Upon taking several steps back and squinting to observe the largest concentric circle of my aesthetic, one can see that my background and influence in dance includes ballet, tap, modern, hip hop, musical theatre and ethnic, but the genre in which my aesthetic most cleanly fits into is jazz. I will discuss the role jazz plays in my ventures in the world of performing, choreographing and viewing the art of dance.

The main discrepancy which arises when the average dance aficionado hears the word “jazz” is the association one makes with cliché movement and concepts. Although hard to find, especially beyond of the stimulus of Los Angeles, jazz has the potential to be brought to a high level of artistic achievement. The impetus for this strain of artistic jazz comes from a number of different directions. Jazz in Los Angeles and New York is fusing with ethnic forms, becoming influenced by modern dance and stretching its malleable skin to accommodate changing fashions and world events. It is retaining and expanding upon its high level of codified skill while testing the boundaries of new movements and concepts.

The static nature of forms such as ballet contrasts sharply with the ever-changing face of jazz. As an artist, this element is key. My aesthetic is one that I would want to reflect, however subtly, an evolution of world events, fashions and music as well as a personal evolution. In terms of personal evolution, I can enjoy work that is light or dark as long as it is authentic, honest and not a catharsis for the performer or choreographer. Unlike some, I do not find the concept of darkness to necessarily equate depth in a piece

of work. It sometimes seems as if happiness portrayed in a work is perceived as shallowness, but I would personally prefer to experience an organic sense of joy than a contrived sense of inner torture.

Surrounding an honest intention should be movement representing a culmination of diverse dance background as well as life experience. The choreographic styles I most enjoy find fusion with other movement forms and reflect wisdom within movement. Examples include the African/modern/ballet influence of Alvin Ailey, the post-modern/martial arts (I specifically see Wushu) influence of Holly Johnston, the modern/jazz influence of Terry Beeman, the hip hop/funk/jazz influence of Tovarish and the Turkish folk/Persian/flamenco/jazz influence the work my sister Hannah Romanowsky professionally engages in. The quality that many of these ethnic forms bring to Western dance is a sense of community and earthiness reflected by many African and folk forms. The fusion of modern and jazz is hugely important in my opinion as it allows an emotional/presentational content to fuse with experimentation/artistic movement. As for the quality of wisdom, it is a difficult thing to effectively outline, as there is no clear-cut formula. An audience member feels wisdom when they are moved by an organic and innately human quality of a piece of work.

As for use of music, I support use of music with or without lyrics. I appreciate work done without music, to non-musical sounds, and to live music. There is dispute as to whether music with lyrics is valid for a piece to be considered a work of art. When using a piece of music with lyrics, I think it's important to take into consideration the amount to which the song may be available to the general public. It is preferable not to use music—lyrics or no lyrics—to a piece of music that anyone could hum the tune to.

The reason for this is because the average audience member will already have pre-conceived notions of the song and what it means and may already have an opinion as to whether or not they like the song or if the song is worthy of dancing to. If the piece of music is being played on the radio, in the grocery store, in elevators, it is usually better not to use it. There are exceptions to this rule. For one, using a well-known piece of music can be very effective if the intention of the choreographer is to convey a sense of familiarity. Using an older, well-known piece of music can very effectively bring the audience to a certain time, place and state of mind. Using popular music can also be effective if the motive is to make a commentary on pop culture, embarking on a new and different way of interpreting the music, as reflected by the choreography.

As an artist, I appreciate the exploration of new movement possibilities and concepts in dance, shown most explicitly in modern and contemporary dance. I think experimentation provides fertile ground for growth and development of the choreographer and dancer. What is important for me, though, is that there is a purpose, a reason for it. This is where my aesthetic diverges from that of many modern dancers and choreographers. Sometimes, especially in post-modern dance, I experience a feeling of loss or absence in movement when the work has no direction. As a writer, I tend to think in terms of plotlines and elaborate sentences instead of incongruous moments or phrases. My mind likes for things to make sense through patterns, developed motifs or congruous symbolism. I think the average audience member responds similarly as these approaches to choreography provide an anchor from which one can begin to understand the work.

Providing accessible work for an audience to understand is imperative. As in writing, there are “Poets’ Poets” and “Peoples’ Poets” and I much prefer the latter as a

writer and choreographer. What use is the creation and presentation of art if only a small percent of the population can comprehend it? I want my work to have layers—elements that the average person can access and appreciate as well as elements that can appeal to the intellectual. Some people experience dance for the sake of exercise, a spiritual practice, visual art, arousal, discipline, advertising, social activity, cultural expansion, musical accompaniment or to access the memories within muscles. My ideal experience of dance brings me closer to my primal nature, innate wisdom and sense of humanity.

Choreographic Thesis

“Trip Away”

The Beginnings of “Trip Away”

There are not a great many things I have held onto from my childhood, beyond memories. I do not experience, as some do, nostalgia from the clothing or toys of my early years (I am still in early years, I know). More than anything, it is the books and stories of my childhood that have endured countless shedding of skin—cleaning frenzies intended to “clean up” my life, clearing space so I can think freely. Among my most cherished are Stephen Cosgrove’s *Serendipity Books*, Andrew Lang’s various *Fairy Books* and *Lady Cottington’s Book of Pressed Fairies*. Favorite films from childhood—the ones I still rent today—seem to follow a similar vein with *The Last Unicorn* and *The Labyrinth*. Similarly to many young children, I held an affinity for stories of an ethereal, magical nature. Something about unicorns, mermaids and fairies were incredibly appealing and attractive to me. So much so that I would spend hours reading and memorizing stories, often making up ones of my own.

Silly as it may sound, I still hold this world near and dear to my heart. My room holds pictures such as Edward R. Hughes’ “Midsummer Eve.” Of the Shakespearean plays I have seen and read, “*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*” has always spoken loudest to me. I have seen four different productions and participated in a high school production in which I played Titania, Queen of the Fairies. Now, in my senior year of college, I have chosen a choreographic thesis working with the theme of the world of the fairies. Yes, it is silly and a little immature, but I feel there an underlying meaning beneath the color and lightness of such a project and does it somehow function for me as an artist and a person.

The books I was so absorbed by as a young girl created a hunger within me for another world, another life. Stories, especially otherworldly stories, provided an escape

Lyrics to “Trip Away”
from William Shakespeare’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”

Now until the break of day
Through this house each fairy stray
 Trip away, make no stay
 Meet me by the break of day
 To the best bride-bed will we
 Which by us shall blessed be
 Trip away, make no stay
 Meet me by the break of day
 Trip away, make no stay
 Meet me by the break of day
With this field-dew consecrate
 Every fairy take his gait
And each several chamber bless
Through this palace, with sweet peace
 Trip away
 Trip away, make no stay
 meet me by the break of day
 Trip away, make no stay
 meet me by the break of day
And the issue there create
 Ever shall be fortunate
So shall all the couples three
 Ever true in loving be
With this field-dew consecrate
 Every fairy take his gait
And each several chamber bless
Through this palace with sweet peace
 Trip Away, trip away
 Trip away, make no stay
 Meet me by the break of day...

Baz Luhrman’s “Something for Everybody”

Choreographic Thesis Outline

I. Intention

To portray a world of fairies inspired by Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

II. Approach

- A. Choreography: My intention will be accomplishment through creation of theatrical jazz movement, choreographically inspired by Baz Luhrman's song "Trip Away" and thematically inspired by the lyrical content which is derived from this play's epilogue. The choreography will be playful and will include elements of modern and hip hop and will include a certain amount of partering.
- B. Dancers: I plan on having 8-10 dancers cast in my piece who are preferably of an intermediate or higher level of jazz technique.
- C. Costuming: Costuming will assist in the depiction of fairies – they will be colorful, flowing and loose.

III. Plan

- A. Music: The music is the prime influence for the movement in this piece. It is energetic and ethereal in sound. The lyrics provide a direct connection to the epilogue of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," which is the motivation for the theme. I plan to develop a strong relationship between the dancers and the music, both structurally (breaking down the music) and artistically (discussion of the themes of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and how they relate to the song).

B. Dancers: I'd like the dancers to create relationships to one another in the choreography. I will achieve this through partnering work, inward-facing movement and lots of eye contact between dancers.

IV. Product

This piece of music is four minutes long. In four minutes, I would like to feature movement and relationships to space that are cognizant of my intention. I would like the stage to appear visually full of bodies and color, but not too busy that the audience's eye is lost. I would like the costumes to flow and be complimentary to the choreographic style and intention. I would like two groupings of costumes amongst the dancers, which are similar in flow and coloring, but differ slightly in style.

Journals

Journal #1 10/5/04

Tonight from 8-9pm, I held the audition for my piece. About fifteen dancers attended, which I felt was a good turnout. I appreciated that the majority of dancers were first-years because I like the idea of working with new people and having fresh faces on the stage. Also, first years are less likely to be overwhelmed with campus activities or other dances, so they will hopefully be able to focus more on mine. Also, I love the excitement and motivation that tends to accompany first-years. One major element of the dancers that will greatly determine my decision-making is their personality. They need to have a personality that will translate into stage presence and they need to be flexible, easy-going and open to experiment. This is something that is difficult to sense from a mere hour-long audition, but I will ponder further during the rest of the week before I decide. One thing I will do differently in the future when I hold auditions is to spend more time sitting out and watching instead of dancing with them to make sure they aren't lost. I taught two combinations of four counts of eight each that I plan on using in the piece. I taught to the music I am planning on using—Baz Luhrman's "Trip Away."

Journal #2 10/19/04

Today I held my first rehearsal from 8-10pm. The dancers I decided to invite to this rehearsal were Leslie Kleiman, Deborah Porto, Melinda Ritchie, Cherie Tanabe, Emily DePauw, Jacqui DeFranca, Brigit McNally, Ashley Hellen and Allison Moodie. I am also going to be in the piece to make a total of 10 dancers. There were many things I learned from my experience choreographing last year. One is that I like to be in my own

work so that the dancers can absorb the energy and intention I bring to the piece. Second, I need to make time to sit out of the dance to really watch the others. Last year, I had nine of us in the piece, which filled up the Foley stage very well and my vision for this piece is to similarly fill the stage. In this rehearsal, I took the choreography I already taught and reviewed and cleaned it. I then reshaped the formations with the work and set which dancers are doing which section.

Journal #3 11/2/04

Today, I added a short accumulation section between Emily, Ashley and I. This transitions into a diagonal coming from upstage left that took four movements and interspersed them in different orders among five dancers. I also began to set the opening to the piece, where I'm going to have the girls all lie in a clump on stage as if asleep. This beginning section is the first of many which will focus on theatrics over choreography. I am giving the girls some freedom and individuality which some are not used to having. This opening is a sketch right now, and I know I will have to solidify it further next week. In general, I am trying to be especially warm to the first-years so they feel comfortable to explore in a new setting than they're probably used to working in.

Journal #4 11/9/04

Today we are preparing for the 1st concert showing on Thursday. We spent more time working on the opening, which is a little difficult in terms of timing because we're working against the music at this point. This introduction is also introducing a theme that I hope to be developing into a motif: the act of whispering. I also added more

choreography after the accumulation and diagonal sections. I am adding my whispering motif in a movement traveling upstage right. I also added another pedestrian gesticulation of a “shush” motion between the introduction and first chunk of choreography. I spoke a little to the dancers about intention today since we are showing it for the first time this Thursday. We reviewed what we have so far a few times and I think we’re ready for the showing.

Journal #5 11/16/04

The showing on Thursday went well. I decided not to have rehearsal today because a couple people couldn’t make it and I wanted time to myself in the studio think and choreograph. I first worked on the section which I feel will be a kind of climax in terms of the speed and energy of the movement. I want this to be the first and maybe only time the dancers are dancing directly to the front, towards the audience. In order to find more original movement, I tried to think of seemingly incongruous concepts that I could fit together and find a through-line with. Some of these movements were inspired by activities as drumming, archery, baseball, etc. I also worked on a section that will precede it which is softer, and incorporates movement which feels especially sprite-like in intention.

Journal #6 11/23/04

Because of the Faculty Concert, my rehearsals have been a little more sporadic. However, I have had to stay on top of it despite people’s schedules due to the 2nd showing which is the week before finals; on Dec. 7th. This past Sunday, I met with Jacqui,

Melinda, Cherie and I thought Ashley to teach the slower section to, but Ashley told me today that she will not be here next semester so she'll be stepping out of the piece. It's fine and I appreciate her telling me in a professional manner. I don't plan on finding a replacement at this time; I kind of like odd numbers on stage anyway. Today, I taught the faster section to Emily, Leslie, Deborah, Brigit and Allison after they were done at the theatre.

Journal #7 11/30/04

I held an hour-long rehearsal tonight after everyone was done with at the theatre to prepare for the showing, which is a week from today. What is very important for me, beyond accurate execution of the choreography, is for the dancers to be present when they perform. This presence should be reflected within the work on their faces and body language. I would like them to be having fun while they dance because that energy is such an integral element of the work. I spoke to them about A Midsummer Night's Dream and how the play has influenced my choreography and intention for the work. I also brought in a shirt that I found recently at Hi Fashion that I'm considering for a costume. At this point, before showing the piece a second time, I want their understanding to become more 3-dimensional. Because an entire week will pass before we show it, I'm having us meet just to run the piece 2 or 3 times this Friday, to keep it fresh.

Journal #8 12/17/04

The showing a week ago Tuesday went well. I have since received written and verbal comments from Damon and have had Paige look at the dance. Damon told me that the beginning seemed generic, but he suspected it was on purpose as a way of creating a norm from which to break from. He said he wanted me to clear out the space more because some of the movement was getting lost in the formations, entrances and exits. When I met with Paige and she watched my piece, she said that her biggest concern was the dancers' intention and presence while dancing. She said that when she watched me, she "got it," but some of the other dancers are either misinterpreting the movement or not present on their facial or bodily expressions. I think this was partly because we showed it after a 2-hour jazz final, but nonetheless, it is still something we definitely need to work on. She said that she didn't think I needed to clear out the space because it's important for the energy of the piece, which is whimsical and high-spirited. She said that it seems too symmetrical and that I need to further develop the pedestrian gesticulations. I have a lot to consider over during the winter break.

Journal #9 1/19/05

We had our first rehearsal today since the break, and alas, we have lost another dancer. I don't know why, but Leslie has left LMU. Now, I have decided I would like to find a replacement. I've asked Amy Sakowski, as she is someone I've worked with before, understands my work and has a great presence on and off stage that I think the group will benefit from. There is a floor section that I taught today that we all execute in a circle facing one another. I really have an affinity for floor work, but have not done very much of it thus far in the piece. I like this section because it's playful while still being different

and somewhat athletic. I like the idea of us facing one another because this kind of dance really merits inward energy, a more of a fishbowl effect for the audience to look in on. I think developing a sense of community and friendship is important for the development of the characters of fairies.

Journal #10 1/26/05

We had a showing yesterday at convocation hour for those dances considered to be in the jazz genre. The showing didn't go great, but I know it's because we've only had one rehearsal in over a month, are minus two dancers and Amy hasn't been properly inserted into the piece yet. The energy was a little disjointed, but it was more important to get as many comments as possible than have a perfect showing. In rehearsal today, I made some changes to the beginning of the piece to allow the intention to read better to the audience, and to the dancers themselves. If they don't feel a sense of congruity, then the audience definitely will not. The first thing I did was separate the initial clump on the floor into four separate clumps which forces the dancers to really move in order to wake each other up. I think this is a good change to have made because it forces the dancers to become more immediately engaged in the energy of the piece. I also taught a four counts of eight of floor choreography that is executed in a circle with everyone facing outwards and repeated. During this movement, I'm having individuals and groups separate from the circle momentarily to pursue contrasting movement before returning to the floor. This section took a great deal of experimentation and I could sense resistance from some of the dancers to this choreographic approach. This is too bad because I feel like many choreographers adhere to this kind of approach much more strictly than I, and so I'm

unsure as to where this hesitation is coming from. It was mostly the non-seniors, so I suppose it can be chalked up to lack of experience.

Journal #11 2/2/05

I had Amy as well as Allison come to rehearsal early today—Amy, to try and catch her up and Allison because she missed last week. Amy tried best she could to pick up as much as she could during rehearsal without interrupting the flow of needing to still push forward despite the recent addition. She is doing well adapting to the dynamics of the group and exhibiting a strong sense of professionalism. With the group, I took elements of the beginning section and tried to “color outside the lines,” as Paige would say. I did this by switching dancers from one section to another and having them switch back. I also broke people away from moments that seemed to regiment and had them pursue contrasting movement. I also loosely taught the ending duet sections which will lead into the conclusion of the piece. I taught a transitional section that is fairly simple, but I feel an important element to bringing the dance to a close. In the duets, it is important for me that the movements are intimate and playful and I’m giving the dancers choreography, but I want them to work together with their partner to really bring their own uniqueness to the work. For this section, I am having the upperclassmen lead the first-years off stage. As it is an odd number of dancers, I plan on ending the piece alone on stage, doing something similar to what I do in the beginning, but I’m not sure exactly what that will be yet.

Journal #12 2/9/05

I've received written comments from Paige and have also met with her to review these comments. Overall, she is very encouraging and supportive of the work. In her written comments, she said that some of the choreographic choices can be more definitive to make the intention read better. When I met with her, she elaborated by saying that when she watched me dancing my own movement, she understood, but when she would watch some of the other dancers, the movement seemed less definitive and less aligned with the intention. The way she put it made sense to me because I felt something similar, but was unable to previously verbalize it. My reaction to this comment was to take the section that I felt was most prominently reflecting this quality and ran it again and again, each time asking the dancers what felt different, telling them and showing them the difference between what I see and what I need to see. I asked some of the dancers who were not in that particular section (and who happened to be the other seniors) and asked them to comment, since sometimes it takes hearing the same comment from a different person for it to sink in. Paige likes the staging and patterning, but wanted me to consider more intricacies and intimate interaction between the dancers. I will be working with this thought a great deal for the ending. Her last comment was to nurture the dancers to bring more energy to the movement. This is also something I'm going to continue to explore as we are in the final stages of the piece.

Journal #13 2/16/05

Today we cleaned and ran the dance several times. Sometimes, when the dancers seem too comfortable in the movement, I try to give them images or qualities to work with that

might help them better feel as well as communicate the intention in their bodies. The adjudication is next Wednesday, and I am happy with their hard work and dedication.

Journal #14 2/23/05

The adjudication was tonight and I feel good about our performance and the level to which the execution of choreography has reached.

Journal #15 3/2/05

We found out Monday that the piece made it into the concert ☺ and is opening the show ☺, which is very exciting. Today in rehearsal I had them try on some costume ideas which are very colorful, flowing shirts and skirts of two different styles. I actually found these months ago and went ahead and bought them knowing that I would be showing this dance publicly whether or not it made it into the concert. I had them dance in their costumes, and I think it helped them go deeper into the performance quality of the work.

Journal #16 3/9/05

I met with Paige on Friday, and together, we thought of some more minor changes that could bring the dance even closer to its potential. I went ahead and implemented these changes tonight. For one, I changed the ending so that the fairies on the floor are in a clump together opposed to being spread out. Paige said this would allow for a moment of simplicity, which is needed for the audience to breath and prepare some closure. This also allows the dancers a few moments together before exiting the stage, which makes sense for the nature of this piece. The other change we came up with is incorporating the

shush motion at the end when the dancers exit the stage. Paige said that when dancers exit the stage at the end of a piece, there should be a reason for it and incorporating this motif will bring closure as the “secret” is representative of the place to which the fairies are bringing one another.

Journal #17 3/16/05

We had a choreographer meeting on Thursday where we were assigned our lighting designer. Mine is Kevin Christopher, which I think is great because I saw him in LMU’s production of Midsummer and he genuinely seems very excited about designing the lights for my piece. He did, however, express concern that he’s never done it before, so I think I’m going to have Alyssa be my eyes when it comes to my tech rehearsal because she has a good eye for lighting and understands the intention of the piece well. This will also allow me to run the piece with my dancers more. I also submitted my costume ideas to Judy on Friday. Today is our last rehearsal before Spring Break, so I’m going back and addressing any questions or concerns any of the dancers have about any section of the piece. I wanted to make sure they feel really comfortable in their bodies before the break, so we can get back and feel the utmost preparation.

Journal #18 3/30/05

Today was our first rehearsal since the break and I had Kevin come in to watch the dance while I had the dancers wear their costumes. I solidified any parts of the ending that seemed sketchy and also created a bow, which I feel is properly reflective of the energy of the piece.

Journal #19 4/5/05

I met with Gwyenne yesterday and dyed skirts with one of her student helpers. I also organized all my dancers' costumes and hung them up downstairs in the respective places. Today was our tech and Alyssa came as planned, which was very helpful. It was a little nerve-racking to see the piece finally upon the stage, and the first time it was run, I was a little frightened by how it looked. Every time it was run, however, it improved dramatically. I think the dancers just needed to acclimate to the new space. I also like what Kevin has brought to the piece with his lighting design. One thing we both learned is that green doesn't look good on the dancers' skin!

Journal #20 4/11/05

The last two days consisted of dress rehearsals that were a little stressful having just come back from ACDF, but they went pretty well. Tonight was opening night, and it went well except that Allison couldn't dance and we had to make some quick changes to the choreography and spacing in order to accommodate the vacancy. Emily has to do one section alone now, and came up with her own movements to fill the void. I thought it would be better to give her carte blanche to do this instead of trying to set something on her myself. Despite this sudden change, I think opening night went well. I am very proud of the dancers.

Sarah-

It is clear the intention is based in pure movement.

The beginning is generic, is that by design?

There are many potentially rich elements at work here, but each needs to be creatively developed or the dance will become “add-a-pearl,” rather than becoming a fully developed dance.

There is more to be said than simple formation changes and the restaging of known material. You are more inventive than your dance demonstrates at this point. Clear out the space a bit. Some moments of large group work, but when everyone is always moving, the details get lost.

The motifs you are beginning to develop have potential, but go deeper with all of them so that there is contrast and variety on a deeply felt level.

Keep inventing!

STUDENT CHOREOGRAPHY NOTES
FROM SHOWING OF 1/25/05

Sarah,

Here are some initial thoughts. I'm sure they will need further explanation. Come see me for more feedback.

****The playfulness is coming across better with this 2nd viewing. Still think your intent needs to come across more through the dancers interpretation of the movement. I think your choreographic choices (specifically in individual movement, not your staging) could be a little more definitive.***

****Great job with staging and patterning. Consider more intricacies and intimate interaction between the dancers. Interested to see it with the 3 dancers who were not there.***

****Try to nurture dancers to bring more energy to the simplistic movement- dynamics could use a boost. (Contrasting even more)***

Hope this is a helpful. We need to sit down, since I am mentoring you and discuss this more in depth. Great job overall!!

Paige

Research for “Trip Away”

The majority of my research was accomplished through attending live performances during the early stages of my choreographic process. My goal was to observe as many different kinds of performances as possible that be able to inspire me within my creative process. Since my aesthetic is a brand of fusion incorporating themes and vague storylines, I wished to observe work that was classical in nature, contemporary in nature, thematic or storytelling in nature, expressive in nature and anything that might portray a world of fairies. I think I found the perfect mix.

The first performance I saw was “The Vanishing,” which was a blend of theatrics, ballet and jazz. The performance used all music from the band Evanescence and depicted a story about vampires. It really was not a great show, but it did allow me to take note of the kind of theatrics I do not respond well to. They also made some interesting costumes choices which began to turn some wheels in my head about how strong of a role I would want my costumes to play in my piece.

The second performance I saw was Lyons Ballet at UCLA. Lyons is a classical/contemporary ballet company who are internationally known and acclaimed, opposed to the last performance I saw which was a local group of dancers coming together for the one show. Lyons were completely beautiful and mesmerizing. My favorite piece of theirs was the one in which the lighting consisted of several visible light bulbs upon the stage. It was a piece about love between a man and woman, and the human element that was brought to it was what prompted me to be so drawn to it. It is a high priority for me to incorporate a sense of humanity within my work, including the piece “Trip Away,” even though it is supposed to be about fairies. I feel this human

element is what anchors the audience and allows a feeling of connection, kind of like a distant memory to their childhood.

The third I saw was Tongue at Highways. Because my piece surrounds a world within nature, it was my aim to create work that had moments of flight and moments of grounding, as if on a forest floor. The work of Stephanie Guililand feels incredibly grounded to me and as I am generally very attracted to floor work, I felt that this would be a good performance to observe for their earthy qualities.

The fourth performance I saw was A Midsummer Night's Dream at LMU. I was genuinely very pleased with the performance and what our theatre program was able to bring to the show stylistically. The lighting, makeup and costuming was colorful, bright and stimulating; it inspired thoughts of a color palette that would best convey the energy of a fairy world. Their color palette was perfect for their interpretation of the play being in a rave setting, but I wanted my coloring and energy to be up without being glittery or over-the-top. I wanted a little more subdued palette with pastels and softness. This performance was very sharp and defined while the intention of my piece was to be a little more of a soft focus.

The fifth performance I saw was Ballet Preljocaj at UCLA. What spoke to me most from this performance was the quiriness and edginess of the choreography, which made the performance interesting a different to watch. As any choreographer, it is always a goal to find movement and stage patterning that creative and unique. I strive for that in my own work, but only to a certain degree. At a certain point, when it's so weird that it can alienate an audience, it's just too much for me. That was how I felt during certain moments of this performance, such as when a huge ball of red yarn rolls onto the

stage and a man crawls out covered in shaving cream. Of course I understand it on an intellectual level within the context of the work, but I don't want the only people who understand my work to be college dance graduates or dance aficionados. I want to welcome people into dance, not turn them away by alienating them. This performance helped solidify my feelings on this issue.

The sixth performance I saw was *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Redlands University. How a school that is so close to Los Angeles can seem so sheltered, I do not know. Everyone wore flannel and jeans; it was really weird. Their performance, to be honest, was quite bland. Juxtaposing LMU's and Redland's performances against each other makes them appear to be two entirely different plays. I'm unclear as to whether Redlands has a religious affiliation and what it might be, but everyone seemed to be dressed like Quakers, with conservative tops, black ankle-length skirts and those square black shoes. The fairy world was a little more colorful but couldn't hold a feather to LMU's vibrancy. This performance made me think how LMU's performance was very reflective of Hollywood glitz and glamour, with a fast-paced *Mulan Rouge* feeling to it. I knew I didn't want the same glitz, but I definitely wanted color and energy.

The seventh performance I saw was a dinner theatre burlesque show of Terry Beeman's at El Sid on Sunset Boulevard. This work was not typical of what I usually see in his performances, but it is this versatility that I appreciate in him as an artist. The element that really stood out to me in this performance was the expressiveness of the dancers. Their faces did not read as "sexy," but sensual and coy, which I think is much harder for a performer to pull off successfully. What I took from this performance was

the concept of encompassing the essence of a particular character and bringing it to the stage.

The eighth performance I saw was completely different from the burlesque show, but gave me inspiration in a similar vein. I saw a flamenco performance at the ODC in San Francisco by Yaelissa and her company and students. The thing I love most about flamenco is the commitment and ownership the dancers engage in, especially in terms of expressiveness of the body and face. Although a completely different genre of dance, this commitment was something I strove for throughout the rehearsal process.

In terms of visual ideas, I also looked to the photography of Aiusdfl, in her book, *Book of Fairies*. What this book includes are photographs of women dressed in elaborate, high-quality fairy costumes, then they are made up with earthy colors and glitter and are placed in an area outdoors that coincides with their costumes. The costuming and photography are quite beautiful and some of the poses the women were in inspired certain choreographic concepts.

There were also other areas of inspiration that did not necessarily result from research, but were very influential in my approach to choreography as well as rehearsal and performance. In terms of rehearsal approach, I was very much inspired by the teaching style of Loretta Livingston when I was in her piece last semester. She has a wonderfully effective way of providing criticism while still respecting each individual's learning process. I also appreciated her "no questions" approach because I feel the same way about dancers asking questions in rehearsal. What I gained from her, though, was a better way of asking my dancers to refrain from asking unnecessary questions.

Also, I was inspired by the teaching style of Ramaa in Dance of India. She has this magical ability to quiet and calm a room without yelling and while maintaining a smile on her face. She always seemed completely in control and while commanding a respect from the room. She also has a keen ability to perform with her face, which I tried to communicate to my own dancers.

Discussion of Dancers

Jacqui DeFranca: Jacqui was someone who I hesitated on accepting into the piece at first because I didn't think her technique was strong enough based on my first impression of her. I am so glad that I did take her, though, because she really brought such a sweetness and vitality to the group dynamics and performance. She works very hard, takes directions well and has a maturity and professionalism I appreciate.

Brigit McNally: I also had hesitations on Brigit, but for completely different reasons. Jacqui seemed weak technically and in terms of picking up choreography quickly, but she improved at such a speed, I completely forgot that I ever felt that way. Brigit, on the other hand, was clearly advanced enough in these areas, but her general energy and expression seemed somber, which concerned me for this particular dance. I am also glad I took her because both her and Jacqui are incredibly amiable and hardworking dancers. Brigit was also able to access the playfulness that I was looking for.

Allison Moody: Oddly enough, Allison was someone I chose more for what I thought was going to be a fun, "up" personality over her technical ability. Once again, I read this dancer incorrectly. I know she has some medical issues, but there were a number of rehearsals that she missed for reasons having nothing to do with her health that she not only failed to inform me of prior to rehearsal, but she would text message me afterwards so she wouldn't have to tell me herself. I was disappointed by her lack of commitment and professionalism and I think it worked out fine that her energy was vacant from the piece on stage.

Deborah Porto: Deborah was someone that I immediately wanted to take based on the audition because she came across as very graceful and fluid. I was not proved incorrect,

but she did struggle with movements that were fast and didn't pick up choreography as fast as I would have liked. She was very responsible in that she would always respond to my emails and would make sure I was kept abreast of any possible conflicts that she may have, but she also was somewhat immature in her reactions to some of my approaches to choreography. I am sure this will change as she becomes more immersed in the program.

Emily DePauw: I worked with Emily in my piece last year and know that there are ways in which she struggles with some of my movement. My priority, however, is personality over technical ability and I have seen a lot of growth in Emily's approach to my rehearsals since last year, which I find quite admirable. She is a sweet girl who I'm sure will grow even more into her own during her senior year.

Cherie Tanabe: Cherie was someone who, before this year, I had never really danced with or spoken with on any kind of personal level. She was an unexpected, wonderful addition to my piece as she has a grace about her that filters into her facial and bodily expression. She captured the intent of the piece very well and was incredibly easy and fun to work with.

Melinda Ritchie: Melinda was someone I worked with last year—someone I did not originally know on a personal level, but asked out of a gut feeling for the dynamics she would bring to the group. Her health concerns made it somewhat difficult at times, both last year and this year, but she has a spirit that perseveres and is willing to work.

Melinda's process of learning is unique and there are times when I feel she isn't aware of how her body is moving. I have come to this conclusion through experiences when I've made a group correction several times that was directed towards her, but spoken to everyone out of respect for the individual learning process. However, Melinda seems to

need to direct approach as she will not always execute a step correctly until I take her individually and really press her for it. When I do, the result is always successful; I have just had to find the correct approach, as with any dancer who has their own process of learning.

Amy Sakowski: Amy was someone who was in my piece last year, but did not originally intend on being in the concert this year. When two of the original freshmen cast members dropped out of this piece, I asked her in, once again with the gut feeling that she would be a fabulous addition to the dynamics of the group. I was proved correct. Amy adapted to the choreographic energy of the piece so well and so quickly I soon forgot that she was ever not in the piece. She has a lovely, organic, playful presence on the stage.

Written Interviews: The Cast of Fairies

What are you in this dance?

fairy; pixie; sprite; nymph

If you could name the dance, what would you name it?

On a Summer's Night or One Summer's Night; Make No Stay; A Midsummer's Night or Secrets; Close Your Eyes and Dream

What do you imagine you would be whispering to each other in the dance?

I love fairies, nice wings, smile; fabulous, rise and shine, peace; purple, pixie dust; fabulous; ooh-la la, superstar, fairies rock; this is fun, yippee!

What do you think about while you are dancing?

being a fairy in the woods and having fun with my other fairy girls; being animated like a cartoon: crisp and exaggerated; being in a magic pixie/fairy world and playing in our wonderful realm of secrets and mystery; showing the story through my actions, trying to move like a fairy would—lightly and playfully; playing in the meadow, reverting back to childhood; flying, heaven, silliness, fairies

What do you think the intention of the dance is?

to become the character of a fairy and take ownership in its playful, flirty and happy sprite-quality throughout the movements of the dance; to let a nonspecific audience “spy” on a group of playful, fun and giggly fairies, to excite and please them with energy, vitality and spirit; to create a world to show the audience, to play with lyrics, movement, Shakespeare and the dance department’s philosophy of being a dance major; a playful, lighthearted dance made to entertain an audience and portray a story (not necessarily Midsummer, but whatever the audience interprets it to be); to entertain, to show

friendship at work; to have fun, present a different kind of piece, allow audience to see a
new art form

Publicity

I contributed to the publicity of the Student Dance Concert by requiring my dancers to each sell at least five tickets while I sold a total of fifteen. I told everyone I knew about the concert and hyped it up to my non-dancer friends, many of which ended up coming, who could obtain tickets. I also visited the Loyolan office and had a meeting with the current Arts and Entertainment Editor of Music and Dance, Jean Luc Renault, to arrange for a photographer to take pictures on the Monday dress rehearsal. We discussed what kind of photo spread would be created, when it would appear (Wednesday of the run) and the names and details needed to arrange it successfully.

Pathways of the Dance in Relation to the Music, Costumes, Stage and Lighting

The piece begins with somewhat dark lighting to imply the early morning. There are clumps of dancers lying on the floor in sleeping positions, some resting on top of others. A single dancer enters running in from the left, seemingly chasing something like a dragonfly or idea as the music begins a pulsing, mysterious quality. She catches it, looks at it, and decides to pass it on as a secret to a dancer lying on the floor. Together, as the space begins to lighten, they begin waking the rest through secret whispers and they joyfully rise to join in on the play. The concept of “trip away” is introduced as the words are repeated again and again while the dancers shush each other, not to be quiet, but as a youthful gesticulation meaning “we have a secret; don’t tell.” The dancers are wearing colorful, flowing costumes that show their legs and bare feet, suggesting they are outdoors on a sunny day. Their hair is half-up, half-down to convey a youthful, earthy quality and their makeup consists of simple, neutral shades. At this point, it is beginning to become apparent based on the costuming and playful quality of the dancers, that fairies are being depicted.

As the first verse begins, the staging transitions outward into independent movement sections reflecting the concept of a house through which these otherworldly beings stray. The space is alive with movement and color from both the lighting and costumes and it seems a little carnivalesque in energy. The space suddenly clears as the eye focuses on a diagonal traveling upward towards stage right, echoing the dragonfly step of the beginning and leaving one dancer behind. Throughout this section, the music continues to press forward unrelenting. She begins an accumulation that two other

dancers join in on before greeting each other and holding hands like ring-around-the-rosy before falling to the floor. While on the floor, they engage in secrets while a diagonal of dancers enters from the lower stage right. There is a musical and lighting transition here as the lyrics say “With this field-dew consecrate, every fairy take his gait.” At this point, a setting of a forest floor is materializing as the colors upon the stage darken a bit and the dancers travel low to the floor, looking from side to side as if searching the area for their friends. A couple of dancers spot the three on the floor and invite them to join their play. There are more secrets told through gesticulations.

This clump of dancers travels upstage left and lower to the floor to exchange more shushes and secrets as another group enters, passing through them. This sections accesses a sense of release and surprise as the dancers engage in more pedestrian, playful movements also reflected in the music. As they move and separate upstage, they create a box, a “house,” which the other group decides to explore. This section employs a juxtaposition of the “house” of dancers who are moving and undulating slowly, showing only their backs, as the inside group executes the first section of fast, sharp movement that invites the audience to join on the play. Every section of the dance thus far only frequents the audience indirectly. There is no direct communication to the audience up until this point, but now they face front and engage directly. The movement is reflective of activities one would engage in for play; this includes drumming, baseball and archery. There are also shades of stylistic moves reminiscent of Indian and Middle Eastern Dance. The lighting here is bright to suggest excitement and high energy.

From here, there is another musical and lighting transition as the piece seemingly travels deeper into the forest, and onto the forest floor. Now the lighting seems to create

one large circle. The dancers create their own circle in which they face one another and execute floor work. They back towards one another and commence a floor pattern that suggests gazing at the stars in wonderment while individuals and groups break off and express a uniqueness and vitality through contrasting movement. There is a musical transition as the dancers shush one another, take hands and lead each other to a wide horseshoe where they lift their sternums up then crouch on either side to share one last secret. They come towards the audience, chasing one last thought or dragonfly before coming to the floor and joining together to observe sets of partners exiting the stage. The lights start to dim as the last dancer upon the stage rushes to the upper left corner of the stage and within a tiny pool of light, catches the idea, looks at it and hides it away.

Post Concert Reflection and Analysis

I was overall quite pleased with the outcome and performance quality of “Trip Away.” One thing that meant a great deal to me was that several of my dancers confided in me during the last rehearsals that my piece is the one they worried about the least and the one they felt most prepared to perform. This is very important to me because it suggests that I created a bond of trust between the dancers and myself. I value this notion of trust because it is in this state that I feel a dance can reach its utmost potential. The choreographer and dancers have to meet each other halfway and if the choreographer doesn’t hold up their end of the bargain, the dancers usually will not either. At least, they probably will not want to.

What this trust can also help foster is a safe atmosphere for each dancer to bring her own unique voice to the work. There were moments within the dance that I did not want to choreograph too specifically because I knew it would not look its best until it morphed into the dancer’s body and melded with her own personal voice and aesthetic. Some of my favorite parts of the dance were the moments when what was I originally taught became something more interesting and beautiful than I even imagined.

Within this safe atmosphere, the dancers could also engage in play, which was clearly important for this work. Although it would not have been appropriate to do this onstage, oftentimes in rehearsals I would actually say something into the dancers’ ears that would be the “word of the day” intended to get them smiling and boost their energy. Usually I would say something encouraging like “fabulous” or “rock star” or “nice wings.” Also, we would enter the stage several minutes before the curtains went up and together we would play games intended to prepare us to perform and experience

congruity on the stage. These will be some of my most cherished moments in the entire experience.

Another quality that dancers owned and practiced was the ability to self-rehearse. Some dancers really do not know how to do this or are never inclined to, but this cast not only had an ideal dynamic personally, but also professionally. When I was working with Kevin on the lighting during my tech rehearsal, I didn't have to spend a great deal of time giving them corrections because they had the self-awareness to correct themselves and rehearse with one another.



Close Window

October 2004

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	1 8p Lyons Ballet	2 8p Tongue at Highways
3	4	5 8p Audition	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26 8p Rehearsal	27	28 9a Meeting with Paige	29	30
31	1	2 8p Rehearsal	3	4	5 8p A Midsummer Night's Dream at LMU	6

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November 2004

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31	1	2 8p Rehearsal	3	4	5 8p A Midsummer Night's Dream at LMU	6
7	8	9 8p Rehearsal	10	11 12p First Showing	12	13 8p Ballet Prelocage
14	15	16 8p Rehearsal	17	18	19 8p A Midsummer Night's Dream at Redlands	20
21	22	23 8p Rehearsal	24	25	26	27
28	29	30 8p Rehearsal	1	2	3	4

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December 2004

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30 8p Rehearsal	1	2	3	4
5	6	7 12p Second Showing	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16 10a Showing for Paige	17	18
19 8p Flamenco at ODC	20	21 8:30p Trans- Siberian Orchestra	22	23 9p Terry Beeman	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1

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YAHOO! Calendar

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January 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 8p Rehearsal	20	21	22
23	24	25 12p Jazz Showing	26 8p Rehearsal	27	28	29
30	31	1	2 8p Rehearsal	3 2p Meeting with Paige	4	5

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

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YAHOO! Calendar

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February 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	31	1	2 8p Rehearsal	3 2p Meeting with Paige	4	5
6	7	8	9 8p Rehearsal	10	11	12
13	14	15	16 8p Rehearsal	17	18	19
20	21	22	23 6p Adjudication	24	25	26
27	28	1 12p Meet with Thereisa	2 8p Rehearsal	3	4 2a Meet with Paige	5

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YAHOO! Calendar

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March 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	1 12p Meet with Thereisa	2 8p Rehearsal	3	4 2a Meet with Paige	5
6	7	8	9 8p Rehearsal	10 3p Choreographer Meeting	11 12p Costume Idea to Judy	12
13	14	15	16 8p Rehearsal	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30 8p Rehearsal	31	1	2

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YAHOO! Calendar

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April 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30 8p Rehearsal	31	1	2
3	4 12p Meet with Gwyenne	5 6p Tech Reharsal	6	7	8	9
10 7p Dress Rehearsal	11 7p Dress Rehearsal	12 8p Performance	13 8p Performance	14 8p Performance	15 8p Performance	16 8p Performance
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

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