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# Healing Through Movement Dance Therapy

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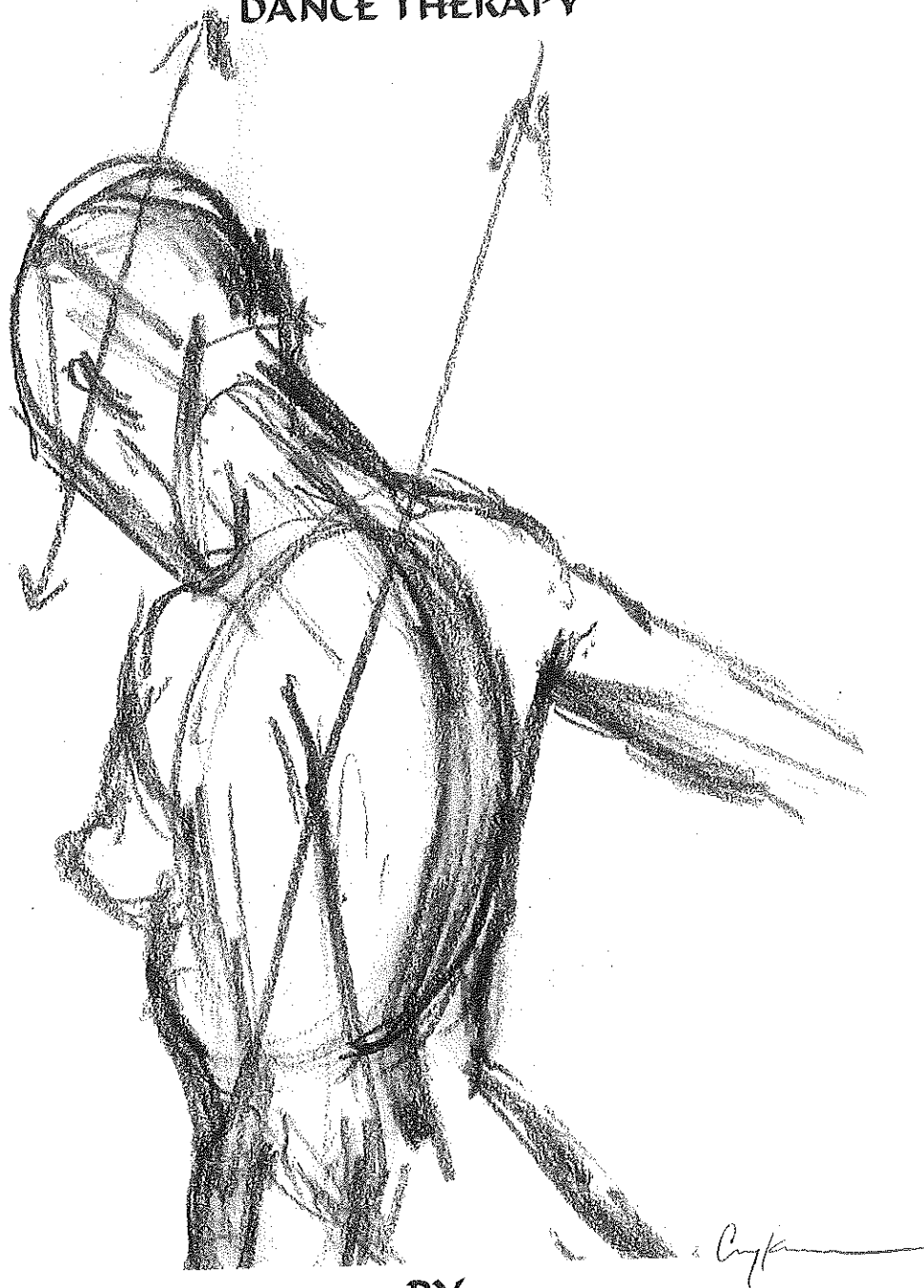
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HEALING THROUGH MOVEMENT

DANCE THERAPY



BY  
KELLY MCBEATH

My  
Senior  
Thesis

Kelly McBeath  
Senior Thesis  
Scalin, Judy  
May 1, 2001

Dance, as defined by Webster's New World Dictionary, is "to move the body and feet in rhythm, ordinarily to music".<sup>1</sup> This type of general definition briefly defines and merely grazes the surface of what it means to dance as an action in the verb sense of the word. It does not, however, embody an integrated account of the current entire entity "what is dance?" A definition, which manages to give this kind of account and which is also in constant evolution, is referred to as an "operational definition"<sup>2</sup>.

The operational definition included in a course entitled, "To Dance Is Human", states that "dance is the rhythmic movement of the body", "distinguished from everyday movements (running, shaking hands, using gesture to make a political point,) because its intention is expressive beyond the mere boundary of everyday life." Furthermore, "Dance is an expression of the human body in motion where the intention is to aspire to move beyond...the

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<sup>1</sup> Simon & Schuster, Inc., Webster's New World Dictionary. (New York: Warner Books, Inc. 1990)

<sup>2</sup> Scalin, Judy, To Dance Is Human: (course notes). (LMU: Fall Semester 1999)

pedestrian movement human beings engage in everyday."<sup>3</sup>

Dance is using your body, mind and spirit together by moving, while at the same time intending to express specific emotions and/or feelings.

In order to dance, every human being needs to have a body. The body is the instrument of movement for mankind, animals and plants. As humans, we all have been blessed with a whole physical substance called our body with which we can move about on this earth, feeling and sensing the energies of the environment around us.<sup>4</sup> In dance, "there are no intermediaries like a musical instrument or a paint brush. Dance is performed human being to human being."<sup>5</sup> So, the body, in dance; is the instrument, in music; or the paintbrush in art. Therefore, there is nothing to fine tune and nothing to shop forever for until the right size or texture is found. One just has to take what one has and discover ways of learning which prove to be the best and most helpful for that person. Then that individual should begin taking risks, in order to step outside their comfort zone, to reach new goals that allow them to continue to

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<sup>3</sup> Scalin, What is Dance #1 (operational definition).

<sup>4</sup> McBeath, Kelly, To Dnc is Human: (Midterm paper). (LMU: Fall Semester 1999)

<sup>5</sup> Scalin, Course Notes.

grow and aspire to be all they can be. Now, in life, this is all easier said than done.

In dance, as in life, we are "stuck with what the good Lord gave us" and if we want to succeed or survive, at some point or other we're going to have to "face the music" and accept ourselves for who we are, how we are and what we are. We are also challenged to get to know ourselves more intimately, learn to trust our instincts, be honest, kind and compassionate to ourselves, not expect miracles (just hope for them!) and somewhere along the way "stop to smell the roses". This is what dance has taught me about life and love, power and truth, being healthy and strong, winning and losing and everything that involves being human.

In addition to a body, a mind that can be integrated with the body is extremely important for a dancer who wants to become a professional. However, one does not need a normal functioning brain or body in order to dance. One just needs a spirit and/or a will.

The healthy mind is more than just the brain and cognitive thinking. It involves thoughts, which are interactions from the entire body and information at a cellular level that passes to the brain. The brain

consists of three brain centers. Two lower, and one higher. The lower brain centers include the reptilian, and the paleo-mammalian or "puppy brain". The amygdala, or center of empathy and consequence in the brain, is located in the paleo-mammalian brain. The higher brain center is the mammalian, or human neo-cortex. The neo-cortex is the part of the brain, which works in bringing intention to consciousness while composing dances.<sup>6</sup>

Dance involves the interaction and integration of the mind, body and spirit. For a professional dancer, this integration has occurred throughout life and although they are the best and most beautiful at what they do, they are still human and can make mistakes or have off days. They might feel they are not focused, unable to jump because of an injury and/or feel depressed because their relative passed away. However, humans born with or those who develop Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Down syndrome or suffer from depression caused by low self-esteem or even having suicidal thoughts as a result, can also benefit from dance.

I, for one, believe this is true because, as a result of walking myself through my own breakdown, the Obsessive

Compulsive tendencies I had had growing up were suddenly magnified times ten. I was faced not only with this disorder which I had denied and ignored, but I was also physically weakened by an episode of Infectious mononucleosis followed by Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, which depleted my energy at times for any movement what so ever.

Prior to this happening, I was a very active individual at school, home, society and community. Friendships and many other things extremely important to me, which required an excessive amount of physical energy, like gymnastics, cheer-leading, dancing and choreography were things I enjoyed the most and was blessed to be naturally skilled in as well. These were the things I loved and what made me happy but, as a consequence of not facing myself and dealing with problems, the very things I lived for were taken away. So, anyone who has broken a bone or suffered any physical injuries and then rehabilitated themselves back into the activity again can empathize with these difficult times. However, those who have not encountered a mental disorder of this magnitude and dealt with it in their lives have a hard time relating. Even those who love you the most get disillusioned and

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<sup>6</sup> McBeath, Kelly, Midterm paper



strongly feel you are purposefully sabotaging yourself and meanwhile, making them suffer by having to watch you go through this. Some people think that because it involves your brain, you can reach up and just turn it off or decide not to do it anymore. Sorry to say this is not the case.

The only way that I was able to overcome this disorder was through myriad trials and errors or combination of different actions with similar intentions to understand and improve these conditions. Psychotherapy, Behavior Therapy and exercise which in my case turned out to be swimming first, then Yoga, Ballet and eventually Dance, in its fullest form. However, these were just what worked for me. There were many other types of exercises that I tried.

I tried Aerobics, Kickboxing, Tai-Bo, running and lifting weights but I found my heart beating too fast, my chest panting and myself gasping for breath not even half way into the class. I needed just movement for movement's sake, nothing, which entailed alternate motives such as enhancing my exterior physique or required exerting any extra energy because this was something I definitely did not have.

I found that the motions and movements of exercises that matched my internal rhythms were the ones, which were

easy for my body and eased my mind as well. The reason for this I found later was the result of the serotonin levels in my brain not being balanced. The exercising released endorphins, which balanced this unevenness in my brain.

Other naturally healthy things such as bananas and turkey, I learned, have something called tryptophan in them which smooth the serotonin levels in the brain as well. So, at night if I couldn't sleep because of anxiety, this is what I was told to eat in order to achieve that same balance and feel more relaxed and at ease. I had no idea that eating these foods had this effect on people.

Supposedly, if one did this, they would feel tired and fall asleep, as it was related to me by my psychologist, "that's why at Thanksgiving everybody feels full and tired," because of the amount of turkey they eat.

Upon receiving Behavior Therapy, I was reminded of the truth about myself. I tend to get overwhelmed by too much stimulus or information because I am so sensitive. In this therapy, I vitally learned that when my brain gets stuck, which it did quite often, for instance, at restaurants, I simply did not order anything, even though I was hungry, because I couldn't decide what to order. There were simply too many choices for my brain and its receptivity at the

time to handle. My behavior therapist taught me, for instance in this restaurant situation, to get over my fear of ordering the wrong thing, which was actually producing more anxiety, and to just order anything. She told me to let the stream of anxiety run its course and realize I was in a safe place, with my parents or people who cared about me and to see that nothing bad will happen to me no matter what I order. The risk is not liking what I get but then I will know what not to order the next time or if it's not too much trouble, I can order something else. The theory behind this is, in order to get past the fear, one has to purposefully engage the situation they fear and work through it. If it's not something one can handle then they must engage themselves somewhere else at that time. But, the point was to keep moving, make choices and change my behavior in order to gain control and not give the disorder and fear the control. This experience was very self-powering and led to expression for me in my interest in dance and movement therapy.

As I stated before, "dance is a well-defined, structured pattern of movement that is balanced and

contained.<sup>7</sup> Dance Therapy is "an art and a skill which relies upon man's basic urge to dance", promoting "an integration which is necessary for psychic and physical well-being."<sup>8</sup> It "does not deal with balanced or contained patterns, nor does it utilize the art of the performing dancer."<sup>9</sup> Dance/Movement Therapy "is a form of psychotherapy, differentiated from traditional psychotherapy in that it utilizes psychomotor expression as its major mode of intervention."<sup>10</sup> It "is rooted in the idea that the body and mind are inseparable. Its basic premise is that body movement reflects inner emotional states and that changes in movement behavior can lead to changes in the psyche, thus promoting health and growth. Helping individuals, whether those who are generally healthy or those who are emotionally, physically or mentally disturbed, to regain a sense of wholeness by experiencing the fundamental unity of body, mind, and spirit is the ultimate goal of dance therapy."<sup>11</sup>

Movement has the power to awaken the amygdala, getting in beneath the level of language preserving the

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<sup>7</sup> Lefco, Helene, Dance Therapy (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Co. 1974) p. 2

<sup>8</sup> Lefco, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Lefco, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Levy, Fran J, Dance/Movement Therapy (Virginia: 1988) p. xi

<sup>11</sup> Levy, p. 1.

heart and soul. This is where dance therapy can be powerful in healing the spirit. The spirit is the energy that's always there, but not always recognizable. People want to go beyond their mind and body, or the "material" world, but in reality are confined to it.

A body-mind-spirit acting as one whole human being working together to peacefully share the space and the control letting only one inner voice dictate the moves of the body is something that dance therapy can facilitate.

"The task of the dance therapist is to encourage a patient to move his body."<sup>12</sup> Lisa Bruno, a Registered Dance Therapist, goes into a psychiatric in-patient ward, in a "locked" psychiatric facility, the site of her state-required internship. She describes "all the patients are on medication", these are patients who have committed some crime and are in prison. It is Lisa's job to get their bodies moving and bringing them to a level which will help to raise their mood and moral, having been "locked" in cells, crammed in these small spaces for so long.

Lisa said, she uses music to warm them up, emphasizing the body, then the body parts and meanwhile allowing contact with her because they don't get much human contact.

"However, a dance therapist must discard the more disciplined techniques of a dancer, leaving specific rules of expertise to the concert stage."<sup>13</sup> She describes this as providing a place of safety, consistency and understanding. It is a place for them to look forward to coming to because it is safe and never changing. "Ultimately, through the release of dance and through the therapist's observations, the patient may gain an awareness of self and an understanding of the part that emotions play in the stance, form, and movement of his body"<sup>14</sup>

Another activity Lisa does is free-style dancing to their music that they like. She says it lifts their spirits and gives them more reason to move. "Even more important than dance training is the personality of the dance therapist. She should be sufficiently aware of other persons so that she is able to respond quickly to nonverbal cues. She must be able to remain optimistic in a deeply troubled atmosphere, for aside from her proficiency, it is her spirit and wit and heart that will enable her to lift the gloom at the start of each session."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Lefco, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Lefco, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

"It must be stressed that to be a successful dance movement therapist it is essential to engage in regular supervision with an experienced practitioner outside the setting."<sup>16</sup> So upon asking Lisa if it was possible for me to observe a class, she said usually if someone is observing another class they are also registered dance therapists or in training.

"Rather, dance therapy exists in a maelstrom of human abandonment, with the dance therapist pitting her skills against the dehumanizing effects of neurosis, psychosis, alcoholism, drug addiction, autism, and a host of behavioral problems that may affect the patient.

In terms of this diverse universe, the process of learning is different for each individual. Dance is found throughout most cultures throughout time although its role and style varies significantly.

Dance/Movement Therapy, as defined by the American Dance Therapy Association, is "the psychotherapeutic use of movement as a process, which furthers the emotional,

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Payne, Helen, Dance Movement Therapy: Theory and Practice (London and New York: Tavistock/Routledge. 1992) p. 15

cognitive, social and physical integration of the individual."<sup>17</sup>

I hope to further my knowledge in Dance/Movement Therapy in order to help others through movement the way I learned to help myself. I want to make the benefits of movement in our lives more known to let people know that there are alternate ways of healing ourselves. They start with self-initiation, belief in oneself and an attitude that says I will not live like this anymore!

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<sup>17</sup>American Dance Therapy Association. ADTA Website. Computer Solutions GSD Inc., 2000.



Summary  
OF  
Dance Coursework

## Fundamentals of Dance Composition I

- I. Dance Concepts:
  1. Elements of Dance
    - A. Space
    - B. Energy(force)
    - C. Time
  2. Vocabulary
  3. Intentionality
  4. Aesthetic Perception
- II. Dance Studies
  1. Sculpture Solo
  2. Machine Study
  3. Momentum Study
  4. Partner Study
- III. Written Work:
  1. Journal Entries
  2. Sculpture Solo
  3. Partner Study
  4. Machine
  5. Video/Concert Report

## Fundamentals of Dance Composition II

- I. Group Studies:
  1. Haiku
- II. Solos:
  1. Quality Study
  2. Music Study
  3. Music Study II
  4. Dance Narrative
- III. Written Work:
  1. Portfolio

World Dance (Dunham Technique)

I. Objectives:

1. Gain knowledge as to whom Katherine Dunham is
2. Know her contribution to dance
3. Understand the necessity of her technique in this day and time
4. Have a sensitivity for other cultures through dance
5. Increase endurance, sensitivity and spiritual awareness through dance
6. Realize the healing process through the movements, rhythms and concentration
7. Improve balance, strength and rhythm

II. Method of Presentation:

1. Breathing Techniques
2. Barre stretches
3. Variations of leg control via extensions, stretches, placement, etc.
4. Position stretches via body placement, pre-ballet positions, within the Dunham technique
5. Center floor (standing): balancing, rhythms, undulations, isolation, etc.
6. Stretching and isolation: body parts, floor exercises via torso movements, strengthening stomach muscles, etc.
7. Dance progression via choreography, dance history, etc.

Dance Styles and Forms

I. Objectives:

1. Promote the recognition and development of multiple approaches to dance composition
2. Promote deeper understanding and implementation of Laban's Effort Concepts
3. Promote deeper understanding of music and dance related to dance composition
4. Promote the development of the individual student's personal dance aesthetic

- II. Requirements:
1. Journal Entries
  2. "30 seconds of movement"
  3. Space study
  4. Time study
  5. Energy study
  6. Group Music Study
  7. Final Study Presentation
  8. Final Oral Presentation
  9. Final Written Paper

Laban Movement Analysis

- I. Objectives:
1. Identify the core concepts and principles of LMA
    - A. Body
    - B. Efforts
    - C. Shape
    - D. Space
  2. Develop movement observation skills utilizing:
    - A. LMA terminology
    - B. LMA symbols
  3. Develop choreographic skills by exploring:
    - A. LMA concepts
    - B. LMA language for expression
  4. Ability to apply concepts to written descriptions of movement
- II. Requirements:
1. Journal-to aide in Final written paper
  2. Attendance/Participation
  3. Choreographic Studies
  4. Written Studies
  5. Quizzes
  6. Final (comprised of movement and written)

Music for Dance (Drumming)

- I. Songs:
1. Sunu-From Nankama (Mamady Keita)
  2. Gombay
  3. Rude Reality: Words and music: Monti Louis Ellison
  4. Song from "Boucher"

To Dance is Human

- I. Objectives:
1. Study of the bodymind when investigating the history and culture of peoples-familiar and unfamiliar.
    - A. To study the body as universal and to investigate the significance of it's varied expression culture to culture.
  2. Value the American experience as the point of departure and the point of frequent return.
    - B. Emphasizing dance and dancing that is alive in Los Angeles today.
  3. Introduce the skills and sensibilities necessary when observing the physical movement of people.
  4. Cultivate interest in the stories of people engaged in the human experience.
  5. Research in multiple disciplines in order to arrive at desired insight.
  6. Validate personal experience as a source for research.
  7. Develop skills to investigate written texts as well as dance and dancing.
  8. Develop observation and listening skills so that daily events and storytelling can be used as source materials for investigation.
  9. Cultivate resourceful strategies for both primary and secondary research.
  10. Develop skills for presenting research, which uses and integrates written, media and aural formats.
  11. Develop content knowledge in the area of dance as human phenomena and dance as culture.

12. Cultivate curiosity where no previous question existed.
13. Build connections with what may be "foreign" cultures so that the works and values of those cultures shed light, pose challenges and otherwise ignite restlessness within the student as he or she experiences his or her own life.
14. To make the less familiar intriguing and establish the point of view that studying self is essential and that studying the "other" is also of primary importance.
15. Investigate the connections that happen between people of different cultures and how these connections influence the dance and how the dance influences those connections.
16. Encourage learning of significant things through the mode of moving, sensing and viewing as well as from reading text, speaking, listening to words and writing.
17. Develop ability to speak and write about movement and cultural issues.
18. Develop a classroom that becomes a miniature community of its own kind.
19. Respect individual differences and expect to respect the expectations of the course.

II. Requirements:

1. Participation in class and Misc. smaller assignments.
2. The Story and the Basket
3. Visit to the Field
4. Mid-term definitions
5. The Final

Dance History

- I. Objectives:
1. To learn about the history of Ballet
    - A. King Louis XIV
    - B. Baryshnikov
  2. How Modern dance evolved
    - A. Katherine Dunham
    - B. Martha Graham
    - C. Merce Cunningham
    - D. Bill T. Jones
  3. Jazz Dance: Bob Fosse
  4. Dance Crazes of the Times:
    - A. Jitterbug, Charleston, Lindy-hop
    - B. Ballroom dances: Waltz, Fox Trot, Two-step
    - C. Break-dancing, moon-walk, electric slide
  5. Demonstrate understanding of the interrelationship between music, visual art, costume, architecture and the socio-political pressures that influence societies and their cultural expressions.
- II. Requirements:
1. Reading Assignments
  2. Participation in class discussions of reading
  3. Quizzes
  4. Mid-term Exam
  5. Final Exam

Principles of Teaching Dance

- I. Objectives:
1. Examine the theory and practice of teaching dance
  2. Why dance is important for education of human beings
  3. What dance education means.
  4. How do people teach and learn dance
- II. Requirement:
1. Attending and participation in class
  2. Completing readings with written questions to discuss
  3. Self-appraisal record
  4. Teacher interview, student survey, class plan, course plan and 3 appraisal analyses

Ballet

I. Objectives:

1. Demonstrate a growing appreciation for the art of ballet
2. Demonstrate ease and skill performing ballet technique
3. Show eagerness to meet new demands and challenges of ballet
4. Display heightened practice of appropriate ballet class discipline
5. Have a deeper appreciation of music as an integral component of ballet
6. Expansion of ballet vocabulary and terminology

II. Requirements:

1. Barre Work
  - A. Proper alignment and consistent articulation of the turnout
  - B. Use of arm and head positions in an integrated way
  - C. Musical and rhythmic precision
2. Center Work
3. Tendue Exercise
  - A. Epaulment and body directions used consistently and eloquently
  - B. Maintaining turnout and placement established at the barre
  - C. Energy in the use of feet and legs
  - D. Musical precision
4. Adagio
  - A. Stability and control in changes of position and direction
  - B. Clear articulation of arms, head and body directions
  - C. A sense of fluidity and smoothness in execution
  - D. Phrasing and "breath" throughout the combination
5. Pirouette
  - A. Precision and stability in all preparations and endings of turns
  - B. Clear articulation of linking steps
  - C. Clear and flowing use of upper body and directions



- D. Generous and energetic movement through the space throughout the exercise
- 6. Petit and Medium Allegro Work
  - A. Strength of foot and leg work
  - B. Control and precision in take off and landing
  - C. Energetic use of feet and legs into the jumps
  - D. Clear body, head and arm directions
  - E. Rhythmic clarity and phrasing
  - F. Strength in petit batterie (beats)
- 7. Grand Allegro Work
  - A. All elements described in petit and medium allegro
  - B. Height and dynamic in jumps
  - C. Proper form both in the air and in the landing
  - D. Generous use of space and expansiveness in the movement
  - E. Fluid and clear articulation of all linking steps

### Modern Dance

- I. Objectives:
  - 1. Obtain a working and accessible understanding of your body- in dance and everyday life.
  - 2. Learn to trust, listen and respond to your body.
  - 3. Give a foundation of technique in the originating principles of modern dance.
  - 4. Give exposure and skills, which are relevant to today's modern dance community.
  - 5. Perform an increased body awareness and alignment
  - 6. Perform focus and direction to clarify use of space.
  - 7. Perform musical rhythm and phrasing associated to dance performance
  - 8. Increase Flexibility and Spatial Awareness.
  - 9. Participate in improvisational process
  - 10. Observe and discuss dance as an art form.
  - 11. Acquire Affirmation and Enjoyment in the class work.

- II. Requirements:
1. Participation
  2. Attendance
  3. Viewing Dance
  4. Midterm Exam
  5. Midterm Collage
  6. Final Exam

Dance 497

- I. Software:
1. Microsoft FrontPage 2000
  2. Photoshop 5.0
  3. Microsoft GIF Animator
  4. Iomega Buzz Video
  5. Sound Forge
  6. Real Publisher
  7. Microsoft Media Services
- II. Requirements:
1. Class participation and attendance
  2. FrontPage Quiz
  3. Treatment & Rudolf Van Laban Website Production  
Schedule
  4. Media Schedule
  5. Final Project

2.

In response to what I am learning as a dance major, I simply reply, I learn how to be vulnerable with myself and with other people while at the same time learning to trust the two as well. I also use certain spatial, kinesthetic, musical, intra-personal intelligence in class usually for improvisational learning as well as memorization of choreographic sequences, patterns, weight distributing or balancing and formation transitional changes.

I have learned so much about trusting others with my emotions, which tend to surface when in such constant physicality as dance allows one to be in. It has given me ideas and insights into what I feel there is a need for in this world, and that is Movement/Dance Therapists. I have had a great need for dance in my life as a source of expressing pleasure, pain, grief, overall emotional well being and livelihood. It served as a way for me to deal with emotions and feelings I simply could not find the words to explain. Being a gymnast since I age two, physical movement has always come naturally.

3.

As a dancer, I have learned many things about my life and living in general from dance. I have learned to be confident and comfortable in myself in front of a mirror for however long dance requires me. That is a life challenge not only for other dancers and I but for humans as well. I have always been a perfectionist and for this reason I feel this a huge accomplishment to learn how to deal with that fact and not run away from it or deny it. I think everyone in the world can benefit from dance in this way because it forces the individual to really take a good look at him or her as they move, behave and feel. I also feel that in looking at these things one automatically, even if they dislike the dancing, is forced to look deeper into their lives and deal with emotions which surface as a result of the movement. Therefore I believe dance not only teaches dancers how to dance but also teaches individuals about themselves and teaches people about others.

4.

As a dancer, I think I have rediscovered my center and myself, which because of certain circumstances, I had lost. Energy and a person's health are terrible things to waste especially when one is so young in life. It is something I definitely took for granted and assumed it would always be with me and never disappear, until it did. In retrospect, it has taken me several years to get over this chronic fatigue that I continued to carelessly use until there was nothing left. Soon this strong healthy body I had acquired as a result of my gymnastics, became a weak and fragile skeleton, which did not protect me from the world I lived in any longer.

As a result, I had to learn how to defend myself in other ways that my body no longer communicated to other people such as speaking.

5.

Dance, however looked at, I believe serves people especially in today's society and world. In my view, there seems to be a great need for alternative means of expression, healing within their bodies and minds as well as great exercise. Therefore I feel Dance is an essential department at any University in order to build a growing knowledge of its resourcefulness in each community.

6,7,8.

Dance has its place and importance in a University and community just as English, Philosophy and Math do. Others feel it is not necessary, however it is not a core requirement of our University and therefore students and people are not forced to come join the dance and really see what dancing can do for a willing and open person. Granted just like in English, Philosophy and Math there will be people, who upon trying, will not like to move. However, everybody needs physical release in order to balance the bodymind and the interest might not be in dance but at least it can encourage opening doors to other forms of physical exercise to ensure health.

Resume  
&  
Head Shot

**KELLY MCBEATH**  
E-mail: [REDACTED]

**Local Address**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Permanent Address**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Education**

**LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY**  
*College of Communication and Fine Arts*  
Bachelor of Arts, Theatre Arts & Dance Major, May 2001

Los Angeles, CA

**Computer Skills**

Word processing/Microsoft Word, FrontPage, Media Player, Internet  
Search and download experience, Web page creation.

**International Experience**

Summer 2000

**LMU DANCE in PARIS, FRANCE**

Montpellier & Paris, France

- Studied French Language and Dance.
- Performed for public in Paris.
- Traveled to French coast, Montpellier.
- Performed for French Press and public in Montpellier Dance Festival.

**TRAVEL**

- England, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, Scotland, Mexico, Italy, Holland, Caribbean Islands (Turks and Caicos).

**Work Experience**

Feb. - Aug. 1999

**NOAH'S BAGELS**

Palos Verdes, CA

- Worked as solo female member of crew.
- Provided friendly, efficient service to customers.
- Worked register, food preparation.

Aug. 1998- Jan. 1999

**CREATIVE CAKERY**

Redondo Beach, CA

- Decorator of flavored cakes for holidays, birthdays, etc.
- Helped customers in store, on telephone with orders.
- Delivered brochures in neighborhoods door to door.
- Performed other in-store jobs.

Jan.- May 1997

**PALOS VERDES PENINSULA HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASTICS**

*Assistant Coach*

Palos Verdes, CA

- Helped supervise girls at practice, competition.
- Assisted in choreography of beam, floor routines.
- Coordinated floor music during competition.

Sept. - Dec. 1996

**PALOS VERDES PENINSULA HIGH SCHOOL PEP SQUAD**

*Freshman Team Choreographer*

Palos Verdes, CA

- Choreographed dances, attended competition, mentor to younger girls.

Feb. - Aug. 1996

**GUESS?**

*Sales*

Torrance, CA

- Customer advisor for apparel, shoes, watches, sunglasses (sizes, colors combinations, etc.)
- Modeled merchandise.
- Maintained friendly attitude when working in storefront.
- Developed customer relation skills.



My  
Career  
Reflections



May 4, 2001

A Career Reflection

I am most excited about really diving into a dance therapy internship or job in which I can experience what a typical class is like. I'm also looking forward to doing teacher training to be a Yoga instructor and get back into the movement because it is something I have missed on a daily basis. After graduation, I'm really excited to get out in the world and see what is needed, see what I need and where my skills are needed the most. I am also anxious to be dealing with people rather than my computer. I'm anxious to see what I can find in terms of what I would love to do and what is available and always take one step at a time.

After graduation, I am most afraid of not trying to do what I love and just settling for something that will pay well. However, I'm not too worried, because at this point in my life, I don't think I will settle for a job without joy. If the circumstance is one in which I really need the money, for instance, if I get married and have someone else

to worry about other than myself, I plan to live out my dream and if not then at least be able to say I tried.

Things people have told me to do after I graduate are starting to make money and save it, go to Europe, enjoy my job and get in touch with old friends.

The only thing I wish for but think it can not come true or highly doubt it is to dance on stage and to be part of a company and travel the world. This is not impossible, but I just think the Lord has other plans for me and I would much rather serve him than my own selfish desires. However, if the one happens to come as a result of the other in the process, I would most definitely take advantage of the chance.

**Skills Analysis:**

I feel my gifts in dance are my athletic, gymnastic body being flexible as a result of that background, my creativity of original choreography and my ability to put my whole self into my dancing.

Some challenges I face are my dyslexia in transferring new choreography onto my own body. I also face resistance in moving past a difficult movement in order to learn the rest of the dance. Another struggle I have is shutting down negative voices in my head as well as maintaining my

endurance levels, so as to avoid fatigue from happening too soon.

My gifts and abilities as far as my academics are concerned are in my writing skills and my perseverance and persistence on succeeding in all my classes if not by grade than by effort. My challenges in academics come in my test taking and management of my in class test anxiety, which has been getting progressively better over the years along with my confidence level.

My interpersonal gifts and abilities are my sensitivity to others feelings, my overall concern for everyone's well being, my ability to be the "glue" in many relationships as well as cherishing and keeping true, old and new, friendships close no matter where I am. I also strive to be honest and truthful in all that I do and am blessed to have the gift of insight into people's hearts and the ability to discern their true purpose in life, even if they aren't aware of it themselves. I also can see ways to go about bringing this good out, as long as the person and God are willing, and also help them find the emotional strength to believe in the indispensableness of their gifts in this world. My challenges involving interpersonal relations are in trusting the communication of my feelings

with others and having a tendency of being too honest and unaware of the harsh effect of my words on the other person.

My gifts and abilities concerning my intrapersonal skills are, knowing my limits, my challenges, my skills and myself. Some of these skills are my tranquil and safe demeanor concerning emotional or uncomfortable situations and my emotional maturity and selflessness in certain situations. I also am a good listener and an extremely patient person because I know what it's like to be rushed. I also know what it is like to be an outsider, an insider, a follower and a leader. I know what it means to be an example to others as well as a curious student. I have experienced being at the top and being at the low, low bottom. I know I have a lot to give and try to always be conscious of staying open minded to diversity. I am aware of the gray shadows as well as the purity in white and darkness of black in life. I have experienced being the winner and being the loser as well as made mistakes only to make the same mistakes again in order to really learn from them. I have been to the dark side of my soul faced and conquered the demons in my closet and felt my heart break as well as heal. I have achieved enlightenment in my

bodymind and soul as well as heard the angels cry and sing at the very same time in my spirit. I am proud of my accomplishments and not embarrassed to say so. I also love myself for who I am and what I believe because it is unique and it is I who choose to share myself with the world and not vice versa.

I am in constant evolution with myself and continue to always have something to work on and master in my life. Whether it be from the simplest skill to the most complex, I strive to be the best person I can be in my life and allow for mistakes, for I expect no more and no less from others in my life.

**How to Prepare:**

My plans for my first year out of LMU are to further explore my interests in Dance Therapy by doing an internship or any other assistant job related to this specific field of study. I also plan to keep dancing and reap the benefits of Yoga as an instructor after completing a teacher-training course at the end of May. This will give me more time to discover my goals for the next 3 years.

Upon living my next 3 years, I plan to have a better sense of direction in my field of interests in bodymind and

spirit health. Depending on my discoveries, I will either decide to attend Graduate School to receive further knowledge and necessary training for what I wish to do as a career in the future. This will then help me to determine long range plans from here.

Possible long-range plans are to either have my own practice or partnership in providing alternate ways of healing the self through movement and proactive of dealing with mental, physical and spiritual problems in peoples lives. I also hope to experience other things in life such as marriage, a house, kids, and a close-knit extended family as well as old and new friends I have acquired in my life.

I have actually already started or put in motion plans for working as an assistant to a special education program in the Palos Verdes area where I grew up. I know a variety of people working in the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District who are personal friends of the family or friends of friends that I can contact and receive guidance and help of one kind or another very easily. I have also worked for the PVP Unified School District as an assistant Gymnastics Coach to the high school team for a year. So, my files are already on record. I have already taken advantage of

having hands-on experience with hearing impaired children. I spent the day with my mother's friend who drives to Downey everyday visiting a list of students at different schools in the area to check out their hearing devices, if they need batteries and also to test the students. She would facilitate doing this with conversation in a noisy area or read books with them while then having them repeat the story as well as using tape recorded sounds and having the child repeat these sounds. She would only take 30 minutes of their class time at school and get back in her car to drive to the next place.

However, I have also been talking to a dance therapist who understands my desire to have hands on experience with kids and/or teens in an internship or aide situation involving movement of any kind. This girl is a friend of the Laban Movement Analysis professor at LMU, whom I have been helping build a web-site dedicated to Rudolf Van Laban's invention of movement notation and use of Effort qualities. These effort quality relationships are also used in Dance Therapy as a way for the therapist to describe or remember movements, which have been done during a session with a client.

I will live in a house close to LMU because my roommates will still be attending LMU next year for their senior year. So I will be in the area.

I have wonderful and supportive parents who have and will be my financial cushion until I can provide solely for myself.

My financial obligations will be to help pay what I can with my rent, but definitely pay for my telephone, credit card, gas, entertainment and personal miscellaneous purchases for myself and friends.

I have a car that I will need in order to access my job or internship needs as well as summer school.

I plan to study dance either by joining in on some classes at LMU, like Pilates, Ballet or Modern techniques or take some more classes at Body Kinetics with Marie Jose.

My dance support system as long as it has to do with my career future is supported by my family and of course always with the Dance Department at LMU for further information or contacts. I continue to keep in touch with the web-site project because I am interested in seeing its completion as well as to keep learning these necessary skills which are cutting edge knowledge in today's technology. I plan to sit in on a Kinesiology class that



Marie Jose is teaching in order to relearn and remember concepts we briefed in class but never developed because the class did not get to some important topics.

**Practical Job:**

- 1) Dance teacher
- 2) **Special education Teacher**
- 3) Health and Fitness Specialist

**Desired Job:**

- 1) Dance/Movement Therapist
- 2) Movement Specialist in hospital or health field.
- 3) Any jobs helping others integrate their whole self.

**Letters of Reference:**

Judy Alter

Judy Scalin

Megan Reisel

Mg

Aesthetic

May 4, 2001

My Aesthetic Survey

My personal dance aesthetic, to my knowledge at this point in time, is a combination of contact improvisation and modern "Tongue" dance technique. Being of an acrobatic gymnastic background, I've found that these two styles of dance both come more naturally to me than Ballet, for instance, which is a more strict technique than my body is used to encountering and therefore, is much harder to emulate.

I feel, ability wise, I am particularly better at the contact improvisation and modern "Tongue" technique, as mentioned above, compared to the Lester Horton modern technique and Ballet regime which I am also exposed to right now as well.

The part of technique class I love the most is an inspiring teacher who offers spiritual encouragement instead of constant criticism throughout class so I then feel like I'm doing something positive for myself rather than negative.

In contrast, the part of technique class I do not relate to is Ballet technique where freedom for movement of the torso is limited. I understand it is a traditional technique which is part of culture but in my body it feels unnatural, unrealistic and therefore, hard to relate to.

Other areas of dance, which I feel I relate to, are dance composition or choreography and Kinesiology. I love to experiment with movement and discover odd and different ways to move. I also like knowing what is making me move, for instance, which muscle groups am I using or, in other words, how am I moving from the inside?

The company of my dreams from history and which still exists today is and forever will be Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre. From the first time I witnessed their dancing and until the most recent, I fall in love with their passion and ability to awaken the audience to the point of a standing ovation with applause after the performance. I feel they actually make the audience rise out of their seats to this ovation with the energy they project from stage. That is how powerful their dancing is to me.

Alvin Ailey is one of my most admired performers because of his dedication and commitment to dance. Just by

witnessing the dances he created, one would know how dedicated this man was to his art. It is represented in concert even after his death. Therefore his legacy lives on through the tradition and appreciation for his work.

The only kind of dance which I can say I really do not respond to still is my experience of a specific abstract post modern dance piece. This particular piece included absurd nudity, not to mention it was performed involving speech in another language making it seem even more foreign to me. I did not relate to this material because I could not see the ingenuity of it. It appeared to me as something that anyone could throw together at the last minute and call it meaningful. I could not disagree more. It seemed more haphazard to me than cleverly creative. In fact, I was rather disappointed with such little use of the body to express a feeling or emotion. Instead, the performers of this piece improvised with chocolate pudding, silly string, neon balls, and anything else at hand to make them look more interesting. I think a more difficult challenge is to achieve this state by just using emotion felt in the body. I feel anyone can clearly make a mess of things around them and call it "chaos" but only a dancer

can create an authentic, emotional presence of it on stage using energy and the body.

In conclusion, I hope to keep building on my personal aesthetic my whole life to further deepen my knowledge of what I think my aesthetic is and what it will be.

My  
Partner's  
Aesthetic

## Aesthetic Statement of Teammate

Amanda Niksa

Amanda and I have worked very closely with one another over the last 2 years in which we have attended LMU. Both Amanda and I arrived here together, in a way, because both of us were transfer students not knowing anybody and also both shared the aching desire to dance. So, it made sense that we were teamed up for this requirement as well as being partners in many classes and having very similar schedules throughout our 4 semesters here. So, Amanda and I know each other pretty well, and so I feel as though I have been a witness to the kind of progress she has made in terms of dance discovery and style to form her personal dance aesthetic. Along with this process, Amanda has also engaged herself in combining dance with another passion in her life, which is that of the Lord Jesus Christ and the practice and study of the Catholic faith.

Having begun this journey of investigation at Boston College as being part of the Boston Liturgical Dance Ensemble and feeling that this was her calling. However,



not feeling like Boston College had the diverse schedule of dance classes she was looking for, she packed up and moved to California and joined LMU as a Transfer student Dance major so she could all kinds of dance. But her love for the liturgy and passion to express this became one in the same when campus ministry appointed her coordinator of a group of potential dancers called the Sacred Dance Ensemble.

This new group provided Amanda with the facility to do what she loved as well as use it to express her love for God and Jesus. From this experience Amanda has culminated her dance aesthetic from these two avenues, Dance and Theology.

In her dancing, Amanda emphasizes faith, hope and the spiritual with her gaze constantly up or looking at something beyond the earth and in a higher place. This is where all the effort of her choreography emanates to whether she does this consciously or unconsciously is unknown.

Her movements usually start from the self, from within and radiate out through the arms all the way to her fingertips. She lives in the literal when choreographing for dancing at Mass and this shows in her other work as well. She has beautiful arm gestures, which she makes use

of constantly in her choreography or as she dances other choreography. Her intention is always clear and concise with her perfect alignment as she makes angles and lines with her body. She embodies a liturgical dancer ministering to the people how awesome her God is whenever it is her turn to express.

Amanda's aesthetic in dance terms I would say is a combination of lyrical and modern dance with a touch of the missionary in that it is her desire to always strive to make meaning of her dances, so that those who experience her work are left blessed with something.