

12-12-2014

I AM HERE: The Journey North for Unaccompanied Children

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DANC 461: Senior Thesis Project

I AM HERE

The journey north for unaccompanied children

Anthony Languren

Mentors:

Professor Judith M. Scalin

*

In partial fulfillment of
The Bachelor of Arts Degree in Dance
Loyola Marymount University
December 12th, 2014

I AM HERE

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I AM HERE

The journey north for unaccompanied children
Anthony Languren

Mentor:
Professor Judith Scalin

I AM HERE: The journey north for unaccompanied children is a two-part choreographic- internship hybrid thesis. The first part was a solo I choreographed for myself, with the mentorship of Judith Scalin. The second part was a group piece I set on a small group of dancers from Grand Arts High School in Downtown Los Angeles. For my thesis, I was given the privilege to experience a seven week residency at Grand Arts High School, where I had to opportunity to teach a master class, audition the dance company, and began the process of a piece for a small selected group of the dance company dancers. Both the solo and the group piece were inspired by true stories of children who fled to the United States to escape gangs and violence from their home country. Unfortunately, many of these children who flee here come alone because their parents are either unable to come or wish to send them away in hopes of their child living a happier and safer life. The main issue my thesis focused on was that many unaccompanied children face arriving to the United States and are not welcome with open arms. Many of these children end up homeless, without an education, or in gangs because they have nowhere else to turn. All because we, as a nation, do not give these unaccompanied children the support they need once they arrive. Often times, we are so blinded by labels that we see these unaccompanied immigrant children as only immigrants.

During my residency, I developed the group piece with my ten dancers. The group piece was choreographed to be an offering of hope. It was centered about being present for one another and helping each other in times of need. Each of the dancers were given one unaccompanied child who was interviewed and was then asked to keep them in their heart during the seven week process. Immediately after the piece began to take shape, my solo soon followed. The solo was directly inspired by the group piece and featured many motifs and phrases from the group piece. The solo was choreographed to be an invocation. The solo was the story of an unaccompanied child who has arrived in the United States and goes so unnoticed that he eventually begins to fade away, molecule by molecule. At the end of this seven week experience, both pieces were presented at "The Journey North: A Symposium on Immigration." The Journey North was an immigration symposium that took place at The Sisters of St. Joseph in Orange, California. The solo opened up the symposium while the group piece concluded the symposium. I was also given the privilege to share my solo once more at Artists Speak and the group piece again at the Grand Arts High School Annual Dance Concert.

For my research, I held on to true stories of actual children who fled to the U.S. to escape their home country. Choreographically, I shadowed and observed Los Angeles Choreographer and ENTITY Dance Company Co-Director, Will Johnston's, rehearsals. Will is on faculty at Chapman University and is the co-director of ENTITY. Will gave me permission to spend a few weeks attending his rehearsals with both his Chapman dancers and his ENTITY dancers to observe his choreographic process. While in his rehearsals, I was exposed to many new ways of communicating movement and new ways of exploring unfamiliar territory. I left very inspired and gained very helpful insight to guide me during my residency at Grand Arts.

At the conclusion of my residency, I had gained much more than anticipated. I learned that often times, we look at those around us and blind ourselves by labeling them. Sometimes, we even label ourselves and cause ourselves to be limited. I learned that the reason why the unaccompanied children go unnoticed and do not get the help they deserve is because many people see them as just an "immigrant". The problem is, they are not "immigrants" - they are human. In the end, my thesis focused on unaccompanied children and how our labels have taken away their humanity. I AM HERE is my senior thesis and a reminder that we are all just human. I chose I AM HERE as the title of my thesis because it is a reminder that no one should ever be denied their right of being human, - regardless of sexual identity, occupation, sexual preference, skin color, family history, age, or immigration status.

Anthony's
Journal

"I AM Here"

08/20/14

Beginning

Today, I got in touch with Diana Del Cambre, Dance Dept. Chair at Ramon Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts.

We discussed possible dates for me coming in to teach a masterclass/audition and when I'd rehearse.

She told me to teach what I feel most confident in and to be myself. I am so grateful for the support of my family, teachers, and boyfriend.

08/22/14

Scheduling

We had to push back my class and rehearsals because of my school schedule.

08/23/14

Song/Music choice

I found the song! I can see the dance now! It is "The Light" by The Album Leaf.

Can't wait to begin! Also, I plan on talking to my lovely Carlos and mom about their immigration stories.

09/02/14

Scheduling:

Diana asked to reschedule because they need extra rehearsal for a performance this week lol. But we are definitely on for next week! Might bring two assistants with me just so I can have extra help. Probably teaching something from BZ? So excited to start the piece! Already started phrases for my solo... still need a song!

09/05/14

Shadowing Will

Sooo... I got this idea and decided to try to make it happen. and now it is! I messaged Will Johnston about shadowing him for his classes and he loves the idea! He was very excited! So I will be observing two of his classes at Chapman and one rehearsal. Overall, I'd drive out there twice a week but it is so worth it. I cannot wait to learn and expand my mind. I feel so honored he said yes!

09/08/14

Talk w/ Carlos

Last night, Carlos and I talked about his family history and their story of immigration. I can tell that he's been wanting to share it and scarcely gets to talk about it. He told me of how his parents did it for a better life of their children. He said Venezuela was pretty bad when they left. It was unsafe and his dad had been robbed several times. He told me about the struggle of feeling ostracized. He said he felt like a minority even in a majority because he wasn't Mexican. It is very dear to his heart. He shared pictures.

Words:

Mountains, family, ostracized, assimilation, traditions, work, money, opportunity, "dark", roots, homey water, confused

Will left to Hong Kong for 8 days to teach so I will most likely start shadowing him next week. I'm so excited to learn and just expand. Class tomorrow and rehearsal starts Wednesday!

09/09/14

Masterclass/Audition

This morning, I taught a masterclass and auditioned the dancers at Roman Cortines. I taught them "Grey" and was thoroughly impressed with each of the dancers. The boys were insanely good. I decided to cast a total of 3 dancers & 2 understudies. The class went great. They warmed up to me pretty quickly. I feel I did well. I taught fast so I could see who picked up choreo quickly. At first about 10 people said they were available to audition, but after learning the combo, 19 said they were auditioning. Diana said it was because they liked me...

I feel honored. The dancers were so committed. Can't wait to get in the studio with them tomorrow. On a side note, I feel that I should work on speaking slower and clearer. Energy-wise, I felt the class went very well overall. So stoked!

09/10/14

1st Rehearsal

First rehearsal! It was so exciting! In preparation, I hand wrote 8 of the children's stories so that each dancer was assigned a child. Every week, we will read them out loud. They serve as a reminder of why we are doing this dance. I got very emotional reading the stories. I felt the dancers were very open and receptive. I am happy with the skeleton we started. Definitely think it is a good start. I tend to get a little too heady and get myself stuck (esp. w/ staging). Next rehearsal, I need to clear my head beforehand, develop what I began, Drill Counts, and maybe move quicker. We got about 2/5 minutes done but I still have some editing to do! The dancers are beautiful movers but most of them do not count their music. So I need to clarify and tighten pieces first.

Dancers

Deau
Anisa
Risha

Zmny
Andrea
Alice

Dky
Enrique

Ian
Rebecca

thing next rehearsal. I could definitely start thinning out things and have them begin developing their own phrases. For next rehearsal, I plan on being more prepared since today's was sort of a play day. I think being better prepared will help me to be clearer for the dancers since they probably are not familiar with being a part of a choreographic process. I remember in high school, I needed solid material and lots of repetition.

I'm very excited for next week.

I think feeling better prepared and not sick will ensure we have a productive and amazing rehearsal.

Contemplating having them briefly journal?

I need to figure out how to draw a fire out of them and into the dances. Will be thinking more on that soon.

"I am Here"

09/17/14 prerehearsal #2

music

	?	intro	walking clump
		bums	line transition
		dings	all together x9 beau x9
117		music	map - back beau - solo
138		and bumm	4x duet forward
209		music	2 duets x 4 group - back line 1-4
229		and bumm bigger	7-8 group cool choreo 1-8 trans spread
257		music bigger	whole unison together
3:19		fade	groups unison
3:43		drum group	
4:05	?	no music	
4:22		soar	
		end	

cool group

3

1 34

224 - wheel

230

tr8

243

204 -
quintuplet
tr8

5

2

09/17/14

Brainstorming

intro - walking - embrace - togetherness

HHH III - spread to line 1x

IIII - all @ once

↑
beam stops

falls on

I III

everyone holds



walking forward
spread one by one
talking

HHH III

← everyone phrases while talking 4x

beam stops 2B IIIA

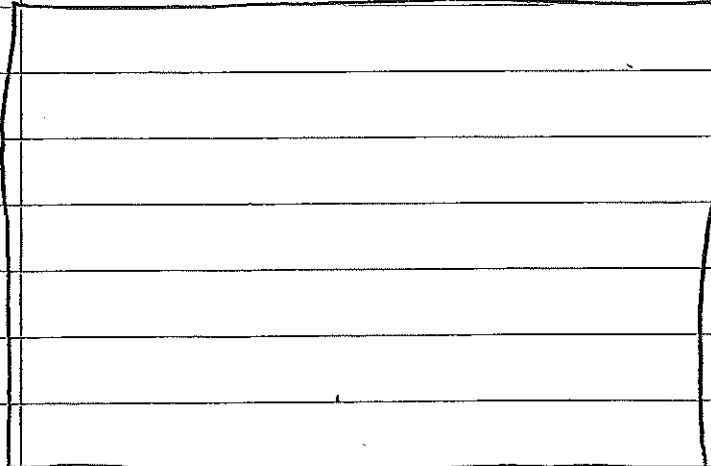
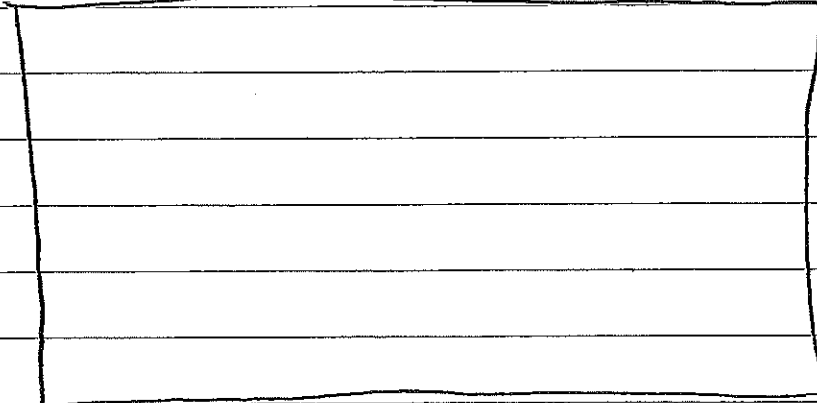
HHH III

duet forward

IIII

two duets

IIII



259 unison

HHH III

2 groups

IIII

1 group

IIII

09/17/14 Rehearsal #2

Where do I even begin?

Today was incredible. I was impressed by the piece, by my dancers, and even myself. Writing down things beforehand really really helped me. I am going to approach each & every of my rehearsals this way now. Everyone works differently and I think this may be my niche?

It was one of my few/most productive rehearsals ever. I'm so grateful how supportive my dancers are. First rehearsal, I could feel they felt shaky, but the way I approached rehearsal #2 really seemed to have them feeling confident in me and trusting me. I was more specific so they were less confused. They just go for it all out.

I say something and they say yes.

I liked playing background music the entire rehearsal... it helped me feel less anxious/self-conscious. I

enjoy where the piece is going.

"Never forget the two most important days of your life... One, the day you were born. And two, the day you realize why you were born."

I love the spoken text. I would like to figure a way to bring it back... the ending? What am I gonna do for an ending anyway? Need to plan ahead again. Currently, we have a few gaps but really only have about a minute left!!!

I want to challenge myself to take more risks and do what is unfamiliar. The group clump section will be a fun learning challenge for me. Overall, I'm incredibly happy. The piece is going fantastic, my dancers trust me, and I am developing personal relationships w/ my dancers.. need to make nicknames!

I am so grateful for
Miss Skye this experience and feel
Emelly more confident than ever
Anisa that this is why I
Bischa was born. I feel so lucky.
Enrique ♡

Beau

Alice - Wonderland

Andrea - Dr Dre

09/24/14

Rehearsal

Today went very well. We got a lot done and made a great amount of progress. I'm lost on how to get the message across. I'm probably overthinking and getting too much in my head. I've never choreographed a dance on a social justice issue so I think I'm just forgetting that intention speaks and does not have to be forced. There is so much material that I could probably leave more room for breath?

10/01/14

Rehearsal

Today was sort of a play day for myself. I made a lot of changes but I am happy with them. Next week, is technically our last rehearsal since the following week, I am hoping to just run run run the piece. I felt a little weird because I feel like we technically did not get any closer to the end of the piece. It left me in a weird place but I know I have to remain patient. At least I feel like I have more clarity now, after my meeting w/ Judy. She reminded me of our purpose and intention. I got too caught up in "dancer" and forgot "human". I need to pay close attention next rehearsal...

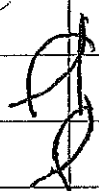
10/01/14 Chapman Rehearsal

w/ Will

Right after teaching at BZ, I headed straight to Chapman for Will's rehearsal.

The dancers were very friendly and welcoming. Will told me I am more than welcome to join in on learning and experiment with them.

I will definitely join in. Maybe next rehearsal? They are about to begin...! Hopefully the following notes make sense!



- "volume" ◦ aggressive vs. modest energy
- "take up volume" ◦ contrast between two dynamics
- dancers are talkative during the rehearsal ◦ on opposite sides of stage
- walking through piece without music! ◦ choreography that travels diagonally
- negative space as a fusion vs. partnering ◦ isolating arms from legs. stop-stop-stop.
- even when things are quick, find elongation. ◦ "spoke" - Laban
- quickness of drums but longness of voice ◦ not drilling and letting things happen
- using monotone mvmt. ◦ hand gestures (india)
- ◦ drawing idea w/ string
- ◦ "architecture of hands"
- ◦ down & open

10/01/14

Will's Chapman Rehearsal

- modest sense of focus
- posture of Chia T? the soft gaze
- "get lost" "calm before the storm"
- where can tension feel good?
- no stopping point, feel continuity
- grand pictures
- peak and then fall!!!
- "looks dreamy but feels painful" dynamic
- does the mirror obstruct the feeling?
- every ascent has an ~~an~~ inflation of the diaphragm
- "put the music back into our brains"
- contrast of everyone dancing except one person and then a few more add on & on
 - ↳ my group unison
- "full volume"
- "not too much impulse, just some muscles"
- creating on the spot & having dancers follow
- slowly improv & have the dancers follow
- don't teach counts
- Don't be afraid of diagonals & facing them! You'll see new things
- layers! layers! layers! layers!
- being organic vs. marching band

10/01/14

Will's Entity Rehearsal

- clarity!!!
- "feed up through center"
- dancers very on count w/ the music
- "the melting process"
- dancers do talk but differently than Cheppman dancers. They talk to him.
- "be still on your sitz bones and then converge"
- 1 person not doing all the unison stuff while mixed up w/ a unison group
- slow motion is very effective
- How do you carry a sympathetic dynamic?
- Will goes off of words/lyrics AND counts
- "Going through shapes" when marking w/ music
- Dancers are very attentive and focused
- Joke w/ him and have fun yet remain professional and attentive
- listen for different sections in the music and cues that prepare you for an accent
- "phrase it how you wish" - Augmentation
- When choreographing, do not be afraid to choreograph counts NOT w/ accents of the music
- Soften your hearing, find own rhythm
- Musicality is what is between the beats in music
- Don't marry the music so much

10/08/14

Rehearsal

Today was phenomenal! I felt very connected to my dancers and felt great after rehearsal. It totally took me out of my weird state I was in this morning...

I had a nightmare about an awful rehearsal so had anxiety all morning. The kids truly rejuvenated me. **THE PIECE IS COMPLETE!!!** Minus staging here and there and some developing of course. I

met my goal yay! Next rehearsal we will stage, solidify, clarify, and run in costume.

Will's rehearsal really helped me in today's rehearsal... I believe that made the biggest difference. The kids are excited!

They expressed it to me! Next week, I want Diana to watch & give feedback. Show day is right around the corner!

10/15/14

Final Rehearsal!

I don't really know how to feel. I'm overwhelmed with so many emotions. The ~~rehearsal~~ symposium is three days away. Today was the final rehearsal. I felt like I was saying goodbye even though I know it's not technically an ending. I care so much about these classes am going to miss seeing them weekly. They made me feel like I can achieve anything with their support. Today, I took the time to watch them individually. I even got to share my solo with them. It's all so real now. I already miss them. It was fate that I got to work with them for my senior thesis ♡

Three days!



10/22/14

Will's Entity
Rehearsal

- Dancers reviewing rehearsal video of choreography all counted out
- "Arc" "Arch"
- Breathing together in plie for partnerwork
- "Find the floor w/ your hands"
- Will & Marissa partnerwork improv to create the duet
- "Dive through" "Swim-through"
- "Spoke" your arm
- "Indulge" in the prep so it doesn't look "preppy"
- "Scoot your skull away from the mirror"
- Choreographing duet w/o music then setting it to the music.
- Manipulation of partner.
- Marking choreo w/ music then making adjustments where needed
- "We will find it"
- Will & Marissa counting music
- Rebound of arm
- "less linear and more flowy"
- "more frequent jumps"
- "scoopy and chugs"

10/22/14

Will/Marissa Entry Rehearsal

- "pull"
- "lead her around the space"
- "Prioritize" - what is the primary?
- Dancers on contract. Idea conceptualized last ~~month~~ January. 5 dancers dropped out so they are having to plan smart.
- Marissa counts out loud while recording
- "Try not to hit a position" "breathe through"
- Seeking a judge because people ~~are~~ are busy auditioning and touring
- During filming, Courtney had to get into that place so she wants to watch it before the show to get back to that place
- Marissa counts all music
- Some dancers are wearing socks and some bare foot. One is wearing Nikes
- Other dancers working during their downtime. Courtney going over solo
- Doing sections w/ counts and cleaning
- Marissa & Will step in for people as they choreograph their roles
- "Light and quirky but still intentional"
- "Make sure your focus is not gray"

10/22/14

Will & Marissa's Entry Rehearsal

- "Make it for yourselves"
- CONVICTION! INTENTION!
- COUNTS! counts! counts!
- Keeping energy up from the beginning
- Choreographing group around 8/8/16
- "unaffected" "follow w/ eyes"
- start a little movement in silence
- "more gradual"
- "More aggressive"
- "Don't be blind with your head down"
- Facing the back
- 3 lines and 3 sections
- Working with duet and group separately
- "less height, more saily"
- "perch yourself"
- "timing is ambiguous"
-

I AM HERE

Post- Reflection

A part of me still does not believe it is all over? When this semester began, I was looking forward to the end and was hoping I would survive my senior thesis, but now, I want to go back and re-experience it all over again. The things I learned, the people I met, the experiences I gained, all of it engrained on my heart and a part of who I am now. I grew immensely as a leader, teacher, and most importantly, as a person.

I woke up around 5am to prepare for the symposium. I was very nervous to share both pieces and have an audience to finally see the completed result. I felt like I was dreaming of something that was going to happen but it was taking forever to actually begin. It didn't quite feel real until we had arrived to the theater and I began having the dancers mark their spacing on the stage. As they were marking the piece, something dawned on me that has stuck with me since that moment. I called the dancers in for a little words of encouragement and told them that it finally had hit me like a ton of bricks. We were all so nervous and were hoping that both pieces would be well received, that we forgot what the entire purpose of my thesis was about. My thesis was about

being human. Perhaps it was the adrenaline of knowing we'd be "performing" soon or that many of us had loved ones who drove out to support us, whatever it was, we all fell into this "zone" and started getting so tangled up in our heads. We began worrying about not being a good enough dancer or a brilliant enough choreographer that we forgot that those labels should be secondary; being a human should be the first and foremost label we give to those, including ourselves, around us. After having shared this with the dancers, we all bonded over what we took from the process and realized that we all wanted to be seen as human rather than anything. Then the real magic turned on.

When it came time to finally share the pieces, all of us held the true stories of the unaccompanied children in our hearts and moved as humans, not dancers. Yes, we danced and we utilized our technique, but it was not about us. These pieces were about being human and dancing for other humans. I remember getting emotional as I watched the dancers perform the group piece. I got emotional because they were always beautiful in the studio, but this time was different. The piece was alive. They were breathing and feeling. They moved through each other and felt each other, just as all humans should. I was touched and completely floored by the vulnerability they shared with us while they

were onstage. It was one of the most unforgettable six minutes I have experienced thus far because I was privileged enough to discover what it meant to be human with them by my side. It should never ever be about labels. Whether it is a label we put on others, such as “immigrant”, or one we put on our self, such as a “choreographer”, those labels should only come after human. I now understood, stronger than ever, how important it is that we treat everyone as a human, even if we cannot exactly identify with him or her.

While I learned so much about organizing, time managing, immigration, and being a leader, most importantly, I learned a valuable lesson I want to keep sharing with those around me. After the symposium, my dancers and I went to lunch and I saw them in a whole new light. They were no longer young adults getting through high school instead they were just human to me. While my circumstances might vary from theirs right now, we are exactly the same. I am the same as every single person I have met and will ever meet. Learning that has been perhaps the most valuable lesson I can carry with me from now on. I am so grateful that this was my thesis because it has changed my perspective on the strangers and friends around me. It has even changed my perspective on myself because I no longer feel like I have to

try and keep up with things I, or others, label me as. I plan on graduating and entering the world as a blank slate. I will not allow myself to be limited by labels I have put on myself or that others see me as. Being human connects us all to each other and it is something that is worth embracing. A part of me feels so much more confident now about the post-college world because first and foremost, I am human and what a privilege it is to be human.

LMU Mission Statement

The Loyola Marymount University Mission Statement about Faith and the Promotion of Justice is something I had heard about well before my academic career here at LMU. I was raised in both a Christian and Catholic home and have always had a strong calling towards spirituality. Between those three parts of me, I have always felt a little blurred in how I would define my faith. What was very clear to me though is my passion for humanity and those around me. I have a strong calling to help others. In my senior thesis, I believe I was able to experience the LMU Mission Statement of Faith and the Promotion of Justice.

Taking on this thesis, I was nervous because I did not feel very confident on the topic of immigration. After a little bit of reading, my heart immediately knew this was the thesis for me. Having friends and family who are immigrants, I connected with immigration rights directly and felt a calling to share the story of these unaccompanied children. I did not want to over fabricate the piece and make it literally about the children but rather, about believing in that there is still hope in humanity. My thesis was very much about the promotion of justice because it was about immigrant children who are not treated as human but rather, as immigrants. While I learned very much about immigration, it deepened my awareness of the lack of understanding that humans have for others who are not quite like them. It is not because they have bad intentions, but rather because they might find it harder to relate to them. By the end of my thesis, I learned that it is easy to relate to anyone anywhere when you bear in mind we are all human. This new realization helped me to see that promoting justice should not be hard if we come to understand that

everyone, regardless of race, immigration status, or sexual orientation, is the same as us. I feel that learning this through my thesis has helped me to understand the LMU Mission Statement because now I know can fight for justice for other groups that I previously might not have understood or necessarily related to. We should not pick and choose who gets justice and who doesn't. We should not be allowed to fight for justice for one group but not another. Experiencing my thesis, along with the mission statement, has taught me that I want to fight for every group of people to receive justice, even those I cannot completely relate to or be considered a part of. I may not know much about the transgender community, or the Asian community, or the Aids community, but I should not have to know much about them because what should matter most is that they are human, just like me. All humans deserve justice and I now see that fighting to promote it should always be a must.

Summary of Dance Studies

Mount San Antonio College:

Modern I

- Learn proper alignment in coordination with modern technique
- Apply traditional modern-forms; such as Graham, Horton, and Limon
- Explore the varying dynamics between modern and other forms of dance

Modern II

- Develop upon the foundation established in Modern I
- Explore off center and returning back to center
- Expand the possibilities of level changes and how to shift quickly between different levels
- Understand modern warm up and its purpose on the body

Modern III/IV

- Continue exploration of modern techniques/styles
- Develop a strong sense of awareness
- When to place versus when to use momentum?
- Strengthen the relationship between dancer and floor
- Incorporate traditional modern, and contemporary modern, into combinations/ improvisation based activities
- Gestures and clarity
- Isolation of the torso from the lower body

Jazz I

- Learn how ballet applies to jazz and how they differ
- Develop a strong core and utilize it
- Explore the use of space while maintaining a low level
- Gain more control over small and quick movement
- Strengthen jazz fundamentals

Jazz III/IV

- Many styles of Jazz: Lyrical, Contemporary, Fosse etc.
- Gain the ability to be versatile between various forms of Jazz
- Performance quality and Projection
- Explore dynamics in Jazz and use them for story- telling
- Develop a strong sense of musicality
- Solo work on stage as a performance

Ballet I

- Learn the fundamentals of ballet
- Understand ballet/classical music
- Appreciate the difficulty of ballet
- Understand the opposition required in ballet
- Proper ballet etiquette
- Correct placement and alignment

Ballet II

- Build upon ballet fundamentals
- Gain flexibility and control
- Improve the body's alignment

Ballet Performance/Classical Ballet

- Challenge the mind body connection in quick movement
- Repertoire
- Guest teachers
- Understand the artistry of ballet with classical music
- Performing ballet versus doing ballet
- Completion of every step with clarity and precision
- Intentional movement

Dance Teaching Methods

- Explore various pedagogy of teachers
- Hands on experience with teaching class
- One on one feedback with peers
- Develop lesson plan for each style of class
- Compile a portfolio to market dance workshops
- Create a warm up based on the planes of movement
-
- Creating lesson plans for children

Improvisation

- Discover unfamiliar movement through “improve games”
- Task-oriented improvisations
- Utilized text to create textures
- Create with eyes closed and no mirror
- Pick up improvisation on other dancers and use it for movement ideas
- Mirroring and reversing
- Incorporate props and inanimate objects into improvisation

Choreography

- Development of phrase work and how to elaborate on a phrase
- Collaborate with other choreographers to create movement hybrid
- Teach movement quickly and effectively using words
- Be able to incorporate several dynamics into one phrase of choreography
- Quickly be able to change a phrase simply with dynamics or levels
- Create solo work based solely off poems/texts

Repertory

- The audition process
- Learn to work with guests and gain an understanding of their movement
- Gain experience and versatility
- Experience a longer choreographic process
- Push outside of comfort zone to explore new potential
- Commitment and time management

Student Concert

- Meet strict deadlines to present work
- Create a work that is to represent the department on stage
- Hold an audition process
- Develop piece weekly to work towards a final product
- Work with dancers to collaborate new ideas and generate possibility
- Audition final piece into show program

Yoga

- Find inner stillness/inner calm
- Understand how inner stillness creates outer stillness
- Incorporate breathe to find ease and bliss
- Learn to have balance versus control

Loyola Marymount University:

Laban

- Learn personal movement signature
- Learn personal movement signature of peers
- Find inspiration in every day events and objects
- Notice movement outside of dance
- Learn about body halves, upper lower, cross lateral, head tail relationship
- Understand Laban notion and how to utilize it to notate choreography
- Explore/Experiment in other dancers' movement signature
- Use of effort in movement
- Breathe in dance and outside of dance
- Personal journaling
- The life and history of Rudolph Laban

Styles & Forms

- Utilize Laban to begin phrase work
- Explore unfamiliar ways of moving using choreographic devices
- Learn to expand a phrase through use of choreographic devices/guides
- Use of augmentation, diminution, and repetition in group work and pieces
- Site specific work and how various locations can affect a piece
- Create and present a solo to a song picked at random
- Develop a duet to a specifically assigned song
- Culminate a group piece with several dancers

Dance History

- Understand how dance today is influenced by the dance pioneers
- Create scholarly work for dance research
- Obtain research through library databases
- Gain knowledge on beginnings of ballet, modern, jazz, tap, hip hop
- Many dancers and choreographers are connected in several ways through parallel stories or crossed paths

To Dance Is Human

- Dance as a call to social action
- Dance around the world
- How is dance used in various cultures?
- The importance of gestures in particular types of world dance
- Using dance to heal and as therapy
- Using dance to raise questions and make a statement

Careers in Dance

- The importance of networking
- Understand Be, Do versus Do, Be
- Utilize who you already know to meet who they know
- The importance of asking questions and stating what it is you are seeking
- Set up a 3 year plan, 5 year plan
- Various careers in dance
- Refinement of resume, headshot, and reel
- Submitting to agencies for representation
- Understand the different worlds of concert dance and commercial dance
- Create a "steps plan" on how to achieve a set goal

Dance as Social Action

- Teach dance to younger children
- Undergo a rehearsal process with a guest
- Perform at various schools and have a discussion with the students after
- Guide younger students in having a more critical eye while watching live performance
- Ask post-performance questions to encourage discussion

Kinesiology I

- Proper nutrition for dancers
- How nutrition affects a dancer's performance
- The body's process of breaking down food and turning it into ATP
- The importance of water and production of Glucose
- Carbohydrates, proteins, fats, lipids
- Adipose tissue and why the body stores it

Kinesiology II

- The bones, muscles, and joints
- How several parts of the body work together to produce movement
- The force of gravity on the body
- Proper alignment of the pelvis to avoid a posterior or anterior tilt
- Knee valgus and Knee Varus and its effect on dancers
- The numerous types of joints and their ranges of motion: Synovial, Ball & Socket, Hinge joint
- The origins and insertions of muscle commonly used in dance

Pilates

- Widening the 52 bones of the feet
- Preventing misalignment and bad habits
- Engaging the sitz bones and widening them to increase pli 
- Closing the ribs to avoid flaring them open
- Neutral pelvis and avoiding tucking under
- Proper care of a dancer's body
- Correct alignment to improve dancing
- Engagement of muscles that are unfamiliar
- What is fascia?

Jazz V

- Quick movement of the feet
- Use the floor to move more effectively
- Energy extending out from hands and feet
- Pick up choreography very quickly
- Performance Quality in class
- Adjusting to various styles of jazz from class to class

Jazz IV/V

- The origins of Jazz dance
- Jazz dance pioneers
- The influence of music on Jazz dance
- Dynamics in jazz- sharp, impulse, impact, sustained
- Adding more energy to a phrase so that it builds
- Dancing to unfamiliar music and finding a connection between the given choreography and that song

Ballet II

- Importance of working slowly to improve clarity
- Proper alignment
- Applying pilates to inform ballet technique
- Deeping our pli  to increase our jumps

Ballet IV

- The artistry of ballet
- Dancing ballet versus just doing it
- Strengthening our releve
- Falling and weight shifting
- Trusting the barre, but not relying on it

Advanced Ballet

- Increasing self – awareness
- Equal control of both upper body and lower body
- Higher jumps
- Importance of closing back to fifth position
- Increasing rotation
- Gaining strength of hold leg without hands

Modern III

- Using imagery to move
- Releasing into the floor
- Spiraling and circling to find a center
- Breath and inner stillness in movement
- Find bouyancy
- Using other forms of art for dance

Modern IV

- What is Countertechnique? Who what when where why?
- Using the floor as a partnering
- Countering two parts of the body away
- Composing a toolbox upon which to pull from
- The use of imagery to guide textures
- Moving from the skeleton versus the muscle
- Avoiding the habit of watching self in mirror
- Opening eyes to entire room and other dancers
- Eating space

Contact Improvisation

- Schluffing into partners
- Rolling points and how to use them
- Pivoting points and the advantages
- Surfing on your partner
- Improvisation with several partners
- Round Robin and its origins
- Improving with the floor
- Lifting without the use of hands
- Partner repertoire
- Partnering with someone for the first time
- Softening for your partner

Modern IV

- Engaging the core
- Working through the arches
- Using traditional Modern repertoire to create new phrase
- Understanding specifics of which modern pioneers had which specific movement signatures
- Falling into the floor

Music for Dance/Drumming

- Difference between types of drums
- Musicality
- Counting versus listening
- Playing as a soloist
- Ensemble work
- Learning music from an unfamiliar culture

Theater in Los Angeles

- Set Design
- Importance of a cohesive piece of art
- Choreography outside of dance
- Understanding the decisions of everyone involved with the show
- Dissecting intention

Anthony Languren

DANC 459

December 11, 2014

Sr. Thesis: Project

The Invisible Children

It's the first day of high school. You made sure to wake up extra early so that you could look good, be wide-awake, and make a great first impression on your peers. Butterflies are doing laps in your stomach while you begin the walk to your first class. The teacher looks friendly; the desks autographed and signed by the students who came before you, and the bell louder than anything you've heard. Finally, class begins and your teacher begins speaking a completely foreign language that only you do not understand. Welcome to the first day of your four years here at this school. Every day, many children experience this struggle of a language barrier in their classes in school. Often times, it is more than just a language barrier. Some of these children have to endure being bullied by other students, experience depression and anxiety, and sometimes face having to support themselves because they do not live with their parents or guardian. These children go unseen and unheard but are still very present around us. They are children who immigrated here alone and are trying to assimilate to life in our country. Not only do they face being invisible in school, but also they often times go unnoticed in our society. These children face many interpersonal and intrapersonal issues while trying to grow accustomed to a new home away from their family. With the number of unaccompanied immigrant children increasing every year, action must be taken so

that these children receive the support they need. Art is a perfect way in which attention can be brought to this matter.

“This year, a record number of unaccompanied minors are expected to be caught at the border by immigration officers—74,000, as many as all the kids in Dallas’ middle and high schools.”¹ Ian Gordon, author of “Children Crossing”, writes that 2014 will set a new record for the amount of unaccompanied minors fleeing into the U.S. Every year, the numbers spike and more children cross the border into the United States. Often times, these children arrive with nothing and nowhere to go. Why so many children and why do they come alone? There are several reasons as to why there are such a high number of unaccompanied immigrant children living here in the U.S. and some of these reasons include: to flee from high violence in their country, to gain better jobs and support their family members, to escape abuse in their home life, to search for family already residing in the U.S., or unfortunately, because they were brought here by human trafficking rings. With increasing violence in other countries due to drugs, poverty, and gangs, it is no wonder that many parents in other countries send their children away to the United States, where our crime rate is significantly lower, and where their young children have a more likely chance of being safe and staying alive. Gang violence in the countries these children are fleeing from has been on the rise for years. The violence includes gangs who require public buses to pay a “safety fee” so the gangs will leave the passengers alone, gang members who force girls to be their girlfriend, gangs that loot and burglarize homes and stores, gangs who manipulate young adults to join their gang or face being an enemy to them, and even gang members who force

young children to deliver their drugs for them. In El Salvador alone, an estimated 60,000 Salvadorians are involved with violent gangs and most of them are younger than 20.ⁱⁱ Raul Mijango, a violence prevention worker in El Salvador says, "The influence of gangs is so pervasive that kids have two choices- join or flee."ⁱⁱⁱ More often than not, these gangs do not receive punishment from their country's government for the acts of violence they are committing. Both corruption and abuse within the government has made it easier than ever for gangs to elude the justice system and routinely commit their crimes, so they continue to grow in numbers and commit violence. With no help from the government, or the police, parents are forced to think of the safety of their children and are forced to make the difficult decision of sending their babies off to countries with less corruption and violence. With much regret and remorse, the parents say farewell to their children as they begin their journey to freedom and a safe home. Unfortunately, once the young children arrive to the United States, they are not always welcomed with open arms.

One of the main offices that provides support for unaccompanied children seeking asylum in the United States is the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). ORR currently has their program, the Unaccompanied Alien Children's Program (UAC) that is specifically for unaccompanied minors who are seeking refuge here in the United States. The program aids the children in helping them return back to their home country or by assisting them to assimilate and become integrated our country. Since 2003, the program has taken in approximately 90,000 children total. Though this program does make a difference, many other factors do come into play that make life very difficult for these children in their new home. Often times,

schools do not send letters home that are inclusive of non-English speakers. Furthermore, you are assigned the high school you are to attend based on your neighborhood and which school is closest to you. The issue that rises with this mandate is that immigrant children who flee here are left having to reside in communities in which a strong educational foundation may not be provided by their local high school. Several countries allow students to select a high school that they believe would provide them with opportunity and an education, but that is not the case in our schooling system. Having to attend the local high school also enforces segregation because the child will remain with other immigrant children in their neighborhood and other children receiving the same quality of education as them, which based on poverty in their community, may not be the best. ^{iv} Getting lost in our schooling system, many times the children may drop out off school, barely graduate, or graduate and not pursue a college education because of the difficulties they experienced in high school. Not attending college will then put them behind others at "better" schools and will disqualify them from numerous jobs based solely on not having a college degree. Essentially, what happens is the child becomes an adult and remains invisible, struggling to get by and find work. This process happens over and over to the children seeking opportunity and safety in our country. Many programs are being offered but what is truly missing is the dialogue of how, as a society, we can help these unaccompanied children in receiving the highest quality of life they deserve. After all, they are not just immigrants- they too are human.

In Laura Perez', "Rethinking Immigration with Art", Perez writes of Los

Angeles artist, Diane Gamboa. Perez chose to write on Diane Gamboa because Gamboa's art raises the question of why only "Mexicans are called aliens while others are called immigrants." ^v Perhaps there is a stigma in our society attached to those who immigrated here from South America or Mexico, but not to immigrants from other countries or continents? Gamboa, most famously known for her series "Alien Invasion: Queendom Come", creates portraits in hopes of raising more awareness towards immigration and helping children seeking asylum. Her portraits famously depict beautiful, androgynous, paintings of blue "colored" people. Her intention is to point out the humor in the fact that people who immigrate here are called "aliens" and often dehumanized in our culture. She further talks about how we often forget that they too are human and dehumanize them, which in turn, really dehumanized us as well. ^{vi} Gamboa raises a very strong point in her portraits of "colored" people. Simply by painting these immigrants as aliens and giving them a sense of mystery, she pokes fun at this idea of our society believing that immigrants and unaccompanied children are any different than us. Many other artists create art all around the world in hopes of opening up a door for communication on immigration and how to help those seeking asylum. Using dance can be another sensational way of opening up that door. The use of gestures, the idea of disappearing, the aspect of a community on stage, and the emotion of closing yourself off can all be choreographic ideas in which a dance maker could embody the emotions of an immigrant or unaccompanied children and ideally, place the viewers into that child's world and have them understand what it feels like. With the number of unaccompanied children seeking asylum in the U.S. increasing at a very

high rate, there is no better time than ever to create art which might open up the heart of audiences to dialogue about unaccompanied children and helping them before they become yet another invisible child in our society.

¹ Ian Gordon, "Children Crossing", *Mother Jones* (2014): 60- 63

² Danielle Mackey, "Victims and perpetrators: Gangs of El Salvador", *Aljazeera America* (2014),

<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/9/9/victims-and-perpetratorsgangsofelsalvador.html> (accessed October 7, 2014).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Richard Alba. "Conclusions and Recommendations", *The Children of Immigrants at School* (2013): 262-264.

⁵ Laura Perez, "Rethinking Immigration with Art", *Immigration* (2013): 38- 41

⁶ Ibid.

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Artistic Statement

It's probably a dancer's least favorite question, "Why do you dance?" I typically never know where in the world I am suppose to begin with my answer. If you dare to throw that question at me unexpectedly, I might begin speaking gibberish or even become speechless. If I had to verbalize it, I guess a great place to start is with the reasons that I do not dance. I do not dance for attention. I do not feel the urge to move so that I can show off in anyway. I do not feel music moving inside of me because I want to prove anything. I dance because I am a human. I dance because I enjoy making mistakes. I dance because I will never be perfect. Often times, we will cross dancers in our artistic journey who are in it for fame or money. I want to be rich, but I don't seek money. I crave to be rich with relationships. I want to be rich with experience and advice I could pass onto others. I have heard that what you know dies with you, but what you teach others, lives on forever.

I stumbled across dance after having to quit acting to focus on my academics in high school. I was passionate about acting and felt some strange calling to dance immediately after. Looking back, I have realized that dance is another form of storytelling, just like acting. Both art forms take the audience out of their present situation and gives them an escape. We, as storytellers, are being given the privilege to take our audience to somewhere else. We have the opportunity to provide a release for those who are watching. This is where my personal mission stems from as a choreographer and dance artist. Whether I am the dancer, or the choreographer, I am being entrusted with the opportunity to connect with an

audience member. In our day in age, human connection is a virtual world of emojis and abbreviated text messages. Where has the real human connection gone? Everything has become so impersonal and distant. It is the way in which our generation was raised and it will continue to get colder with each generation after. At what point is it that we are taught to keep our distance from others? It is human nature to feel a sense of belonging and connection yet, we are afraid to show it. Why is it that people are so afraid to relate to each other? This is where the artist comes in. As a creator of dance, I hope to take my audience out of what they are use to. I want them to see me, or my piece, and feel the vulnerability being shared onstage. Even if that vulnerability is only for a few minutes, I hope that they too feel vulnerable while watching. I aim to get my audience to feel and be okay with feeling.

One of my favorite teachers once said, "I loved music so much that I decided to become a dancer so that I could become the music." Music heavily influences my decisions, but I do not rely on it to carry my work. I am very inspired by music and am constantly listening to it everywhere I go. I have playlists of music and lists of songs I am planning on creating to in the near future. While music heavily inspires me, I enjoy taking music and changing the meaning of the song with the movement or choreographic decisions I make. Music is an art form of itself, but the marriage between music and dance is one of bliss when paired correctly. Lyrics do not have to be interpreted literally, but musicality is feeling what it is the singing artist is feeling and what it is the author of the lyrics is trying to communicate. Musicality is the way in which an instrument is played and the moments in between. It is the silences and the breaths that go unnoticed by others singing the lyrics. It is the stirring of your

insides that is left behind once the song has ended. That is where music influences me. I find music that pulls at my heartstrings and I succumb to it. It is both a blessing and a curse to feel music so heavily. Sometimes, it can be rather overwhelming but I use it to inspire my pieces.

Dance should never be a well-sequenced math problem with perfect structure all the time. Coloring outside the lines is a must. Technique is very important, but technique has been around since the beginning of dance. The dance world is waiting for choreographers who are excited to push the limit and break the boundaries. The dance world needs people who are oozing with excitement to break the rules. I want to be one of those people. Starting dance late, I self-taught myself most of what I knew in the beginning of my training. Ever since then, I never saw a reason to do anything the way it was "supposed" to be done. I have never agreed with following the rules and doing what everyone else has done to be a "successful" or "good" dancer. I aim to be the one who defies the rules and did it all on my own individual terms. I do not do it solely because I want to be a rebel, but because I want to prove to other aspiring dancers and choreographers that everyone has their own individual path and they have to absolutely have the courage to find it. By confidently taking my own path to achieve my goals and reach my happiness, I hope to encourage others to do the same and set their own path. I want to do things that make people think I am crazy or that I am setting myself up for failure. If you have your heart in the right place, anything can be achieved. I commit my entire heart to all that I do and I am letting it guide me to my individual happiness.

So ask me again why it is that I dance. I might not exactly know how to verbalize it perfectly, but I will do my best to ensure you understand. I may not have the best choice in words to explain it, but I have no doubt that I can communicate it. It all boils down to one main goal: the need to feel. I don't believe it is okay to go about our every day lives not feeling. I crave to be affected by the sounds of the wind, I ache to see the colors the sunset paints, I reach to the sky in hopes I will get to feel just a little more warmth from the sun. I do not want to be afraid to be vulnerable. I never want to fear being open or feeling. I hope to set the example of being fearless by sharing myself onstage. I hope others see me and decide they too want to break the rules and set their own path. I want people to know it is never too late to feel excited and to indulge in your passion. The world needs more passion and people who are excited – people who are excited to take chances, people who are excited to bear their soul, people who are excited to connect with a stranger. It is time for a change and who else better to start the change than us? I dance because I want to be fearless and show others it is okay to do the same. I want others to follow their dreams and be speechless when asked why it is they love to do what they believe to be their calling.

Anthony Languren
Moving To A New City

San Francisco, California

Housing/Jobs in San Francisco

- <http://www.sfgate.com/homeandgarden/article/From-considering-a-different-neighborhood-to-5746314.php> - Helpful information re: SF Housing advice
- http://www.trulia.com/for_sale/San_Francisco,CA - Housing Listings
- <http://www.snagajob.com/job-search/w-san+francisco,+ca/q-part+time> - Jobs

Dance in San Francisco:

- <http://www.odcdance.org/>
- <http://www.dancetheatresf.org/>
- <http://www.sfconservatoryofdance.org/>
- <http://www.dancemission.com/>
- <http://ecstaticdance.org/sf/>
- <http://www.dancerepertory.org/>

Universities of Dance/Upcoming Intensives in San Francisco:

- <http://summer.linesballet.org/about/>

Theaters in San Francisco:

- <http://www.san-francisco-theater.com/>
- <https://www.shnsf.com/Online/default.asp>
- <http://www.act-sf.org/home.html>

Cross-training and Fitness:

- <http://www.yogatreesf.com/>
- <http://www.bikramyoganobhill.com/>
- <http://www.wheelhouse-sf.com/>
- <http://www.sf-pilates.com/>
- <http://www.worldgym.com/sanfrancisco>

Helpful Information on Everyday San Francisco:

- <https://www.graylineofsanfrancisco.com/helpful-tips>
- <http://www.sfheritage.org/resources-links/researchguide/>
- http://www.baycityguide.com/visitor_information.html
- http://tripplanner.transit.511.org/mtc/XSLT_TRIP_REQUEST2?language=en
- <http://police.ucsf.edu/emergency-management>