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Why We Dance: Utilizing the Rehearsal and Performance Process to Understand the Effects of Our Artistry

Elise Culliton

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WHY WE DANCE:
UTLIZING THE REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCES PROCESSES TO UNDERSTAND THE
EFFECTS OF OUR ARTISTRY

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Mentors:

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Rosalynde LeBlanc Loo

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In partial fulfillment of The Bachelor of Arts Degree in Dance

Loyola Marymount University

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Table of Contents

Resume, C.V., and Headshot.....	3
Resume.....	3
C.V.....	4
Headshot.....	6
The Senior Thesis Project.....	8
Introduction.....	8
Weekly Journals.....	10
Overall Analysis.....	26
Analysis of <i>Seven</i>	26
Analysis of Self and the Embodiment of the LMU Mission Statement.....	34
Mentor Letter.....	40
Dance Perspectives Essay.....	41
Video: <i>Seven</i> performed in An Evening of Concert Dance, Fall 2014.....	48
Summary of Dance Studies.....	49
Artist's Statement.....	53
Moving to a City Search.....	58

The Senior Thesis Project

Introduction

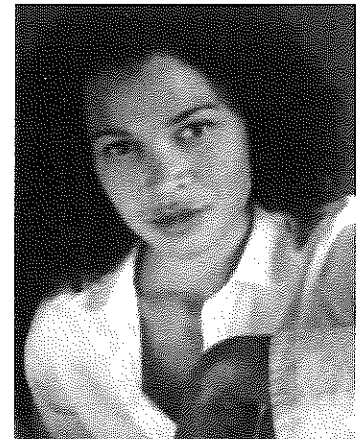
This thesis is a performance-based thesis that used the piece *Seven*, choreographed by Rosalynde LeBlanc Loo as its primary medium for investigation. It aims to critically evaluate the rehearsal and performance processes in order to gain a better understanding of the way that our artistry not only contributes to the development of a dancer, but also as the maturing of a human being and the intellectual acuity of a scholar. Through research on dance education and reflection on my own experiences, I have discovered both practical transferrable skills that dancers master through their training as well as a differing metaphysical approaches to daily tasks in their lives. Through observation, reflection, and research I have utilized this thesis to find more intersection between myself as a dancer, scholar, and human and unearthed ways to more intentionally bring my work within a studio into the other realms of my life.

The Dance I am in: *Seven* – An Evening of Concert Dance, Fall 2014

The Choreographer:

Rosalynde LeBlanc Loo

Rosalynde LeBlanc holds a BFA from SUNY Purchase and an MFA from Hollins University. She began her professional career with Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company (1993-1999), then continued on with Mikhail Baryshnikov's White Oak Dance Project (1999-2002). For the next four years she danced with the Liz Gerring Dance Company while working as a freelance dancer with various choreographers. Trisha Brown, Lucinda Childs, John Jasperse, Yvonne Rainer, David Gordon, Richard Move, Larry Keigwin, Noemi LaFrance and Charles Moulton are among the choreographers whose work Ms. LeBlanc has performed. In addition, she danced in several productions with the Metropolitan Opera Ballet, and was invited to perform at the 2006 Salzburg Opera Festival, Austria, in Joachim Schloemer's *Irrfahrten*. She has also worked with film directors, Burt Barr, John Turturro, Gretchen Bender and Matthew Rolston, and can be seen in the short film, *Roz*; the Janet Jackson music video, *Every Time*; the PBS Specials, *Still/Here*, *Free to Dance*, *Dancing in the Light*, *A Good Man*; and in the feature film, *Romance and Cigarettes*. Ms. LeBlanc has written articles about her dance career for *Dance Magazine* and *Europe's Ballettanz*. She taught dance at Long Island University for seven years while returning to work with Bill T. Jones in the re-staging of his pieces at colleges around the country. She is now faculty at Loyola Marymount University - Los Angeles.



The Choreographer's Aesthetic:

Generally, Roz describes her aesthetic as athletic and vigorous. She describes the aesthetic in this particular piece as slightly atypical in that it is more confrontational than her usual work. The confrontation is not angry, but a little more in your face and animalistic. The movement of the piece is slightly undisciplined, thuggish, and gritty.

The Intention of the Dance:

Originally, Roz was drawn to making a dance to this piece of music and had no emotional or conceptual idea behind the work music's momentum. She was attracted to the momentum of the music, inherent in bars of seven. She found that there were very specific movement implications that accompanied the rhythm.

Then, the piece was shaped by two events that in turn shaped the intention of the piece. First, Roz needed to create a piece for the Laband Art Gallery exhibit "Following the Prescribed Path." There was not enough time to choreograph two dances so she decided to use one phrase of movement for both the Faculty Concert and the exhibit. Therefore, she had the dancers draw a visual representation of the path of their life, connected the nine drawings, and created a long phrase. In the concert piece, the path is not directly injected into the work but it undeniably lightly informs the work.

The second event that shaped the piece is Josh's injury. Roz decided to keep him in the piece and accommodate injury by creating all of his movement on the ground. An inherent narrative unfolds from the visual aesthetic created from eight women standing or dancing around a man on the ground. Movement always speaks; the process of making movement is the process of discovering a narrative. While there is no particular narrative to this work, social and political implications arise from having Josh on the floor for the entirety of the piece that Roz must deal with as a choreographer.

The Structure of the Dance:

Music: Meanings Along the Edge by Philip Glass and Robbie Shankar

Number of Dancers: 9 dancers, 2 understudies

Set/Technology/Other production elements: Nothing

Length: 8 minutes

My Role in the Dance: Member of the Ensemble

The Strengths/Challenges as a technical dancer I bring to the work as we begin:

As a dancer, I have access to a lot of length in my body and it provides me with the ability to be a tall and lifted technical dancer. This is a strength I can bring to this piece because there are many shape-based moments and I have the capability to create striking lines.

I think the biggest challenge for me as a technical dancer is accessing the grounded connection to the floor. I tend to dance on top of the floor instead of trusting it with my full weight and using it to my advantage. I think this piece will help me access that side of my technique.

The Strengths/Challenges as a performer I bring to the work as we begin:

I think my strength, as a performer, is my ability to be a dynamic mover, especially on stage. I truly come alive when I am on stage and it allows me to access dynamics and excite my audience.

I believe that my biggest challenge as a performer is accessing my excitement and passion for performance throughout the entire rehearsal process. If I am able to capture the moments of coming alive, then my actual performance is greatly enhanced. I know I need to push to be engaged in every moment of every rehearsal in order to achieve my best performance at the actual show.

What do I want to learn?

I want to learn to possess strong musicality in light of difficult or complex rhythms. I also want to learn to master choreography precisely while maintaining the ability to assert my own individualism and artistry in the movement.

What are my goals?

My primary goal is to immerse myself deeply in the work and invest my mind and heart in order to come to valuable conclusions that both allow me to reflect on the impact that this work will have on my future dancing and life perspective, as well as the impact that the last four years of dance education has had on my perspectives and person.

What are my fears?

I do not possess any fears about this work in particular, I am excited by the challenge it presents and the opportunity to be on stage. I am mostly afraid of this project coming to an end because it makes the prospect of graduating LMU that much more imminent.

Weekly Journals

08.29.2014

1. What did I discover?

I have discovered that I have grown much more comfortable with the audition process and that I know how I perform best at auditions. I think this is in part because I am comfortable with many people in the room at the audition, but also, perhaps more importantly, I am become capable of separating personal value with being accepted into I piece. I know that I used to feel that I *had* to be chosen for a piece, otherwise it would call into question my abilities as a dancer. Now, having been on both sides of many audition processes, I have realized that an audition is really a dancer and choreographer trying to test their compatibility of movement and interpretation of an idea. It has helped me to attempt to be my most authentic self during auditions because I want to dance in pieces that fit well with me as a dancer and person.

2. What did I learn?

I learned that my eye is drawn to individualism in an audition, and while that is not what a choreographer always desires, it is a powerful tool to possess. It also highlights my own taste as a choreographer and as a dancer as far as the types of dancers I enjoy working with.

3. Where was I frustrated, concerned or overwhelmed?

I had a moment of concern about the fact that if I was not cast in a piece, I would have nothing for my senior thesis. But I let that concern pass because I knew that it was outside of my control and managed to stay calm and centered for the majority of the audition.

4. Where did I come "alive"?

I felt that I came "alive" when I improved across the floor by myself. I have fallen in love with the powerful feeling of embracing my own movement and the authenticity that I can express with it. It has become my favorite thing about almost every audition.

5. What questions do I have?

I would be interested to hear an outsider's perspective on my audition and hear opinions about audition skills that I could improve.

6. What are my technical challenges and strengths today?

My technical struggle today was definitely control. I can get so enthusiastic and invested in movement that I will deviate from alignment and utilizing my core strength. I think I need to focus on warming up my core more before auditions in order to prevent that in the future.

I think that I was technically strong in my command of the space. I think I was able to use the full extent of my body and I enjoyed the freedom that came with that.

7. What are my performance challenges and strengths today?

A challenge in performance today was projection. I felt I was dancing very internally and being exploratory with my movement and while that is good for class, it is not always ideal for an audition. I think I need to find a balance in my next audition between exploring and playing and making sure that I draw attention from choreographers casting work.

I think my performance strength today was being very authentic as a dancer. I had no desire to try to fit a mold or catch attention from the choreographer. Instead, I trusted that if I moved in a way that was authentic and expressed my best abilities, I would be put into a piece that would allow me to most successfully learn and grow through a thesis process.

8. What other reflections do I have?

This audition was my favorite audition to date because I feel I was able to capture and express my movement qualities and quirks as a dancer. I had a good mindset for this audition and I think, with a bit of fine-tuning, I will be successful if I carry this to future auditions.

09.08.2014

1. What did I discover?

I discovered that this piece is going to be perfect for my senior thesis exploration. I am excited that the piece has challenging phrase work that lacks any particular intention or meaning. I think this will allow me to capture my own artistry through the piece and also allow me authentically reflect on how the movement, the process of capturing the desired aesthetics, and my own thoughts while performing the work influence my other classwork and life outside the studio.

2. What did I learn?

I learned a lot of difficult but incredibly fun phrase material. I love the material in this piece and I am so excited to work on gaining ownership of the movement.

3. Where was I frustrated, concerned or overwhelmed?

I was a little frustrated with counting in sevens. I felt that each time I had a firm grasp on the musicality it would slip away from me.

4. Where did I come "alive"?

I came alive during the ling phrase of movement after I began to understand the movement in my own body. The phrase was difficult, but as my body became accustomed to the transitions and proper weight placement I found the dynamics and musicality in the movement. I feel most alive in dance when muscle memory begins to command the phrase and I am able to focus on my artistry within the movement.

5. What questions do I have?

I am really curious to see how Roz incorporates the "life graphs" that we drew at the end of rehearsal into the piece and what deeper meaning that may hold for the performance.

6. What corrections and coaching suggestions and what commendations did I receive?

Roz told me to be really careful about the counts and to be responsive to the accents in the music with my movement. She also told me to work on staying grounded and releasing my head in my movement so that I can access a fuller range of movement.

7. What are my reflections or responses to those corrections and commendations?

I know that the musicality of the piece is something that I will have to continue to work on, but will come with time as I continue to familiarize myself with the music, movement, and the way that they fit together.

The grounded-ness and release of tension are both things that I am working on throughout my experience in Modern V and in the rehearsals for the Senior Piece. Roz paired me with Chloe in order to find her sense of the floor and so she could find my sense of length, so now whenever I feel that I am not accessing the full capacity of the movement I look at how Chloe or other very grounded dancers are performing the movement and incorporate their successes into my own movement. I think it is helpful to have so much time with Roz's style this semester in order to successfully attain her desired movement qualities.

8. What are my technical challenges and strengths today?

I feel like everything that we did today was technically challenging for me. I felt that I had to push myself to achieve the movement, especially to obtain the proper musicality and dynamic. I did not feel like my technique was particularly awesome during this rehearsal, but I think that I will work on accessing it more next rehearsal.

9. What are my performance challenges and strengths today?

I think my biggest challenge as a performer was that I was exhausted, sore, and had huge blisters on the bottoms of my feet by the end of rehearsal. It can be difficult to insist that I perform my best work every time I do it, despite the extraneous variables, but I know that if I keep pushing and working hard that my performance will only improve as my endurance does.

I think that I was able to capture the dynamics of the movement well in this rehearsal. The movement is fast and complex; it ranges from grounded to light, sharp to sustained, and sharp to soft. Though not perfect, I think I was able to do a good job of capturing the movement qualities that Roz desired.

10. What other reflections do I have?

I am excited and awed by this cast of dancers. Each dancer brings such amazing qualities to the piece and they are all such inspiring artists. I am so excited to work with each of them and learn from them in order to improve my dancing.

09.15.2014

1. What did I discover?

Today I discovered that Roz is planning on using the life graphs that we drew in multiple ways: through walking patterns, through the creation of phrase material, and patterns for potential interactions between the dancers. It seems to allow me to engage more personally to the piece when I feel as though I am moving in the trajectory of my own life.

2. What did I learn?

We learned a long phrase that was created through the combination of five of the life graphs drawn by the different dancers. The phrase is dynamic and reflects the changes in levels and directions of the drawings made by the dancers.

3. Where was I frustrated, concerned or overwhelmed?

I did not feel frustrated, concerned or overwhelmed this week. I felt that I had a good handle on all of the material and this rehearsal was not as physically demanding as the last one.

4. Where did I come "alive"?

I really enjoyed setting all of the contact work at the beginning of the piece. It is nice to have the opportunity to relate physically to the other dancers and I like the concept that we experience collisions with others as we move along the trajectory of our lives.

5. What questions do I have?

This rehearsal did not really inspire any questions for me, but I am incredibly intrigued to see how Roz continues to pursue the the themes that are beginning to develop.

6. What corrections and coaching suggestions and what commendations did I receive?

I didn't really receive any coaching corrections this week. We mostly just worked on creating and thus we did not really focus on qualities movement itself, rather just formed a skeleton with it.

7. What are my technical challenges and strengths today?

I feel like I have begun to be a lot better at trusting other dancers with my weight in movement that requires contact. I am used to being the base of lifts and managing the weight of others so it is a challenge for me to learn where to place my weight for those that lift me. Roz told me last week that I was being too active in my attempt to help the people lifting me, so I focused on allowing others to lead me in the lifts and it has helped a lot in making partnering more successful.

My technical challenge that I would like to work on for next week is incorporating my head into the rest of my movement. I feel like my body moves but my focus remains

stationary because I am focusing and attempting to control the movement. In Modern V on Tuesday, we worked on a combination that incorporated the focus into allowing for momentum and freer movement. It felt much more natural and genuine and I would like to get better at adding that concept into the rest of my movement.

8. What are my performance challenges and strengths today?

I feel like I became much better at identifying and dancing to the sevens in the music. The music is becoming more familiar to me and therefore negotiating it is becoming much more comfortable. I think this is allowing me to perform the phrase work better because I do not have to focus so much on the technicalities in the music.

A performance challenge that I would like to improve on is performing phrases to the best of my abilities immediately after learning that phrase. I perform new material well, but it definitely takes me a while to become comfortable with the movement and apply my best performance. I would like to lessen or eliminate the time it takes for me to give a strong performance of new movement. I think I can achieve this by treating the learning of new phrases more like play and less like a focused activity.

9. What other reflections do I have?

I think, due to different injuries in the cast, that the way this piece is going to be performed will vary widely from one week to another. Incorporation of new dancers and thus new energies will always keep the moments of contact and the duets, trios, and groups within the piece changing and evolving. I am interested to see how next week will be different and how the change of cast members will impact the performance of the work.

09.29.2014

1. What did I discover?

This rehearsal reaffirmed my love for dance and the magic of being transported in a performance, even if it is really just rehearsing spacing. I know that I am on the right path as far as what I want to do with my future, but the thought of not having the ability to dance as much makes me slightly anxious.

2. What did I learn?

I learned a lot about Roz's process as a choreographer and the aesthetics she values through completing the performance thesis' introductory materials. I think it is interesting that Roz keeps the intention of a piece to herself in order to ensure that the dancers do not layer meaning. I understand the value in being the dancer of such a piece that I am responsible for the completion of the task at hand, and allowing the meaning of the piece to develop authentically for both the movers and the audience.

3. Where was I frustrated, concerned or overwhelmed?

I do not feel frustrated, concerned or overwhelmed in this process. I am really enjoying the process and while I can find the movement challenging, I enjoy being pushed in a new way and I like using the rehearsal process to explore movement.

4. Where did I come "alive"?

This week I really enjoyed putting the phrase into the Laband Art Gallery. I thought it was valuable to learn about the other works in the gallery and the way it informs how our movement fits into the rest of the installation. I loved have the opportunity to dance and perform and I am excited for the performances in the upcoming weeks.

5. What questions do I have?

I am curious, especially in light of what I know about Roz's intentions about the piece about how the piece will progress and the current dynamics created by the special relationships. I do not want to investigate this too intensively until after the performance however, because I want to focus on the task at hand and avoid fabricating meaning.

6. What corrections and coaching suggestions and what commendations did I receive?

My corrections were mainly about doing the phrase for the Laband Art Gallery. I need to take more time with some of the movement and make sure that the paths I am tracing are clearly intentional.

7. What are my reflections or responses to those corrections and commendations?

I am realizing that it is easy to go on auto-pilot with movement that I am comfortable with and therefore the driving intention behind why the movement is occurring is something that I must always hold in the forefront of my mind, especially during performance.

8. What are my technical challenges and strengths today?

Technically, I felt strong today. My body felt good and I thought that I was able to invest and investigate in the movement. I also felt that I had a good handle on the new movement that we learned.

9. What are my performance challenges and strengths today?

I think my biggest performance challenge was rapidly switching energies from rehearsing the Laband show to rehearsing for the faculty concert. Though the movement is similar, the speed and energy required to execute the movement properly is on opposing ends of the spectrum. It was definitely a challenge to switch energies that rapidly.

I think that I had a good performance in the Laband Gallery however. The atmosphere created by being surrounded by art and ambient noise had an interesting

impact on my dancing and allowed my performance to be very meditative. It was easier to stay in the performance in such an environment.

10. What other reflections do I have?

I had an interesting conversation with Roz the other day, while finishing up my introductory materials, about the value of exposure to the arts and she put forth the idea of accountability. She talked about the way that artists create work and put it into the world, and then must stand accountable for their ideas to the public that views it. I think this is a fascinating concept and cannot help but reflect more on the nature of accountability that we possess as dancers. As choreographers, performers, teachers, and dancers, we become responsible for not only our ideas and choices, but also the bodies that we put those choices on. I think dancers are some of the most committed and responsible people that I know, and I think it has something to do with the nature of our work and training. Every choice we make has a visible and tangible impact on the people that we come in contact with in our dance space. We are held accountable for those choices within a community of other dancers.

10.6.2014

1. What did I discover?

I discovered that I do not really enjoy the process of learning new movement, but I really love the process of refining movement. I like the moving and exploring choreography until I feel comfortable in it and like I am adding my full self to it. Sketching is a necessary step of the choreography, but I am really engaged in the crafting of the choreography.

2. What did I learn?

I learned about a choreographic tool that Roz used that I thought was really interesting. She connected pieces of phrases to a number and then gave each dancer a set of 4 numbers. We as dancers then pieced our unique phrases together, which Roz tweaked slightly as needed. I thought it was an interesting way to manipulate movement.

3. Where was I frustrated, concerned or overwhelmed?

I did not feel particularly frustrated or overwhelmed this rehearsal.

4. Where did I come "alive"?

I really love the duet that Libby and I do together. The music switches to 8s and becomes big and powerful. The movement feels good on my body and aligns closely with the way that I like to move which is always fun. I also love dancing with Libby because she has so much energy and power. It inspires me to dance better.

5. What questions do I have?

I need clarification on the counts of the duet section. I don't quite hear it yet.

6. What corrections and coaching suggestions and what commendations did I receive?

This rehearsal was mostly about adding new movement and sketching the choreography, so I did not really receive specific coaching or corrections besides moving some sections spatially closer together or adjusting the counts of certain movements.

7. What are my reflections or responses to those corrections and commendations?

They are usual processes of creating a dance, I focus on completing the tasks at hand and not analyzing why Roz is making those decisions until I am able to see the piece on video.

8. What are my technical challenges and strengths today?

I think that I had a bit of a challenge at maintaining control over all of my movement. There is a lot of fast movement that has quick shifts in weight and I need to make sure that my core is solid so that I can move freely without worrying about falling off balance.

9. What are my performance challenges and strengths today?

I felt that, even though this rehearsal was a tough and physically demanding, that I did well at maintaining my energy and intensity of performance.

I think that I need to make better use of my breath. The music is fast, driving, and demanding and I think I get caught up in the energy of it. I want to work on breathing and find the moments of suspension and space in the movement so that I can make my movement more dynamic, even at the fast pace. I think this will not only enhance my performance but also help me maintain better control of the movement.

10. What other reflections do I have?

There are about three minutes left of the piece and I am excited to see how it concludes. I know that once it is done it is going to challenge my stamina so I need to start cross-training so that I can maintain my level of performance and not get tired.

10.13.2014

1. What did I learn/discover?

I discovered that, especially in this music, I am much better at maintaining steady and familiar pace of movement and recognizing accents as landmarks in the music than I am straight counting beats of seven. I think that I should develop a stronger ability to count, because it would help me pick up the timing faster, but I think it is still a useful skill because I relate to the music and the group rather than relating to counts. In order to really establish the movement in accordance to the counts, I need to count under my breath while dancing and I feel like it pulls my attention away from performing the movement genuinely.

I want to work on integrating these two abilities more efficiently so that I can place movement in music faster, but still maintain my ability to be responsive to a group dynamic.

2. Where was I frustrated, concerned or overwhelmed?

I realized that I want an opportunity to work on my skills as a partner. I have always been the base of lifts or partnering movements so I am really comfortable in that role, but it is frustrating to realize that once I am the one that is being lifted I am really don't know what to do with my body in order to help the lifter but also stay out of their way. I need to become more comfortable in giving my weight to others.

3. Where did I come "alive"?

Today we spent the first half of the rehearsal cleaning the movement. I loved being able to do the work repetitively because, while tiring, I feel like I finally began to have the chance to establish connections to the movement and investigate the more performance-based aspects rather than just sketching large chunks of choreography. I am getting really excited to put this piece on stage.

4. What corrections and coaching suggestions and what commendations did I receive?

- The movement needs to be more confrontational and less pretty. It's more gritty than round and full.
- In the duet, the movement stays the same and I relate to Libby without actually making contact
- In the skipping step, the 4 needs to be sharper, more aggressive and completed swiftly in one count.
- As the movement and tasks get faster, we must remain calmer. The tasks are not driven by our own internal energy because it gets too frantic, but rather it is dictated by an intimate connection to the music.
- The traveling jumping phrase needs to remain more grounded.

5. What are my reflections or responses to those corrections and commendations?

I think the correction about relaxing into the speed of the movement and allowing it to dictate the movement rather than a frantic internal energy is really helpful. Because the music maintains its constant, driving pace, I can feel my body tensing and trying to force myself to create the energy to keep up with it. I think it is a much more valuable skill to allow the music to dictate the speed and keep the energy calm. I was struggling to accomplish some of the technique in the piece tonight and I really think that if I can use my breath and maintain a calm internal energy, I will not struggle with the technical aspects.

6. What are my challenges and strengths today?

I think my biggest challenge was effectively controlling my movement and performing the technical aspects of the dance to the best of my abilities. I think Roz's correction about using the music as the driving energy will really help me keep my movement grounded, up to speed, and well executed.

I feel that my stamina is improving as we are starting to run over half the piece multiple times in each rehearsal. I also feel that my body is becoming more comfortable with the movement and the pace so my overall performance, independent of the few wobbles I have in a run, is improving.

7. What other reflections do I have?

I believe that this piece is the most challenging work physically that I have done while at LMU, but this challenge is exciting and helping me to improve overall in my other classes. I think that Modern V gives me the opportunity to work out the technical challenges of the work at a slower pace. I think the piece has shifted my mental while I am in class. I think I am much more competent at simply accomplishing the tasks at hand in a focused manner, rather than being intimidated about a difficult combination or over-analytical about something that I do not feel I fully understand. This also helps me with my own style of self-correction. The changes I want to make to my dancing are not dauntingly conceptual, but rather about achieving one physical task at a time that will improve smaller components of the movement that lead to measureable improvement.

10.20.2014

I was frustrated today because I felt that I did not have the full capacity of my body. I ran a half marathon on Sunday morning and I was sore and physically tired for Monday rehearsal. It was a challenge for me to remain focused on learning the choreography and performing it to my best abilities. I love running and the race was a lot of fun, but I wish there was a way to recover faster. I would like to become better at rehearsing and taking class more effectively when tired. I am usually careful to get a lot of sleep and to take care of my body so that I am mentally and physically prepared to dance, but on the occasions that I do not I really struggle to be at my best. Overall, it was a frustrating rehearsal that I did not feel like I was really able to be invested in, but rather just kind of got through.

Today, we watched the video from a previous rehearsal and I was able to see the piece from a third party perspective for the first time. It was interesting to watch the patterns emerge and to see the parallels in movement between Josh on the floor and the other movement performed by the women. Also, the constant shift between duos, trios, solos, and quartets through the choreography makes the phrases seem both cohesive but interestingly dynamic and constantly shifting. I appreciate the way that there are strong, resonant movement motifs that occur throughout the piece. The piece is fairly chaotic with the constant momentum and shifting staging, but the motifs make the movement feel manageably familiar. It is a really exciting piece and watching it helped me better understand my specific tasks in the context of the whole piece and motivated me to perform it better. I think there is a lot of improving that I can do with my own personal

performance and I would like another opportunity to review the videos of rehearsal in order to make more concrete corrections to my technique.

10.27.2015

1. What did I discover/learn?

I discovered that I think I need to be better at staying in the moment and deeply investigating the project at hand. I have a hard time shifting my focus between large-scale projects, I tend to stay really invested in one thing. My first 20 pages of my Political Science senior thesis are due on Wednesday, and I found it was difficult to get into rehearsal when my mind was so focused on the research I still needed and wanted to do. I have just found senior year generally difficult in the fact that I feel like I have a lot of significant "finishing out your LMU career" type moments, projects, research, and activities to do and the pressure on each of these activities has made it harder for me to switch my mindset from one thing to another. It is especially hard when I know that I love everything that I am doing, but find that reprioritizing my life has become a necessity because all of my interests also lend to a sense of being overwhelmed with the difficulty of this year.

2. Where was I frustrated, concerned or overwhelmed?

I still feel like I am struggling with maintaining control and not being rushed or overwhelmed by the tempo. I need to listen to the music more so that I can relax into the pocket of the music and I think it will help me execute the piece. I feel like I have had a few rehearsals of not great dancing and I would like to get back to a place that I feel I am able to attack and execute the work.

3. Where did I come "alive"?

I really enjoyed completing the piece. It is always an exciting moment when the long process of creating work culminates in a complete sketch. It is exciting to watch how the piece has taken shape and how the dancers' hard work has been put into action. It also means that we are really close to opening night and getting the piece on stage, which is my favorite part of the process and I cannot wait to perform this work.

4. What corrections and coaching suggestions and what commendations did I receive and what are my reactions?

Roz encouraged us to really study the music. She said that the only way we would be able to pull off this piece was to be deeply connected to the music. The connection to the music needs to be as instinctive as the movement and being comfortable with the music is the only way that this piece won't feel like chaotic and stressful on stage. I think this is a valuable recommendation and I have been listening closely to the music to be able to hear the sevens. The last part, where the music becomes very complex is still difficult for me to hear.

5. What are my challenges and strengths?

I am still finding it difficult to connect to the music in the final section and thus I am having a hard time executing the movement as well as I would like to. I am good at connecting to the other dancers, especially when I lose the sevens, but I know that I will feel too overwhelmed onstage if I am unable to find and keep the rhythms.

11.3.2014

1. What did I discover/ learn?

I discovered that I need to focus on the task at hand and get myself to a good mental state before rehearsal because when I do that my rehearsal goes really well. I have been really stressed and tired over the last two weeks and tonight I finally felt like myself and I think that my dancing flourished because of it. I was able to be really present today at rehearsal and the piece felt so much easier to execute because of my mental and emotional state. Ensuring that my life outside of rehearsal is going well is the best way for me to ensure that my mental state inside of rehearsal is at its best.

I also think it was helpful that I started running again and went for a long run on Sunday. I think that because my weekends are long and pretty devoid of dance causes me to lose a little bit of the connection with my body and then Monday rehearsals are particularly difficult. The run helped me stay in my body and work physically, while allowing my mind to relax.

2. Where was I frustrated, concerned or overwhelmed?

I managed to avoid feeling any of these negative emotions. Today was a positive rehearsal and I finally felt like I was connected with the piece and the dancers in a new way.

3. Where did I come "alive"?

Today was really exciting because I feel like I have finally got it. I was able to let go of counting the strict sevens and allow myself to just listen to the music and find the ways that the movement and music weaved together. It was really satisfying to run through the piece and not feel overwhelmed or rushed in the movement. I can't wait to be onstage!

4. What corrections and coaching suggestions and what commendations did I receive and what are my reflections?

- Angles for Libby and I's duet
 - First arabesque – toe to upstage right
 - Second arabesque – toe to downstage right, maintain diagonal for a la seconde extension
- Watch the spacing in the duet – aim to be about on center for the last 10
- Watch the timing on the series of 10

- Allow the rhythm to drive the crossing jump series
 - On the jump, bring knees closer to the chest
 - More energy at the end – it is worth it to push through it and remember that the crazy section is followed by a period of rest
 - Allow Sydney and Sam to exit before the final crossing
5. What are my challenges and strengths today?

I felt like my main strength today was really being able to connect with the other dancers. I felt like as a collective, we were able to do more than just dance to the music and complete a task, but to feed off of one another's energy and enthusiasm. I was able to really pay attention to the movement that was surrounding me, rather than being isolated in my own patterns, and I think it helped contribute to my better understanding of the music and the timing.

I think my biggest challenge right now is stamina. This piece is really tough and I can feel my energy levels drop by the end. I think that it will improve with more consistent runs of the piece, my continued running, and being prepared for the challenge mentally and forcing myself to push through the end in order to give the piece the care and energy that the choreography needs.

11.9.2014 - Spacing

This rehearsal was pretty "light and friendly" (as Roz would say) really just to get us oriented in the space. Everything felt comfortable, though my cold kept my energy level a little lower than I would like. It was exciting to finally be in the performance space and I am looking forward to getting the piece lit because I feel like that always is the moment that the piece transforms from work to a performance.

11.10.2014 - Tech

Tech and the actual lighting of a piece are always both exciting and disorienting. The blindingly bright lights coupled with the darkness of the wings makes crossovers and the travelling phrases more challenging, but after the second run of the piece I felt that I was a lot more comfortable in the space. I am nervous about being able to be adequately warm for this piece during the show. Warm-up will be able to get my body ready for Andrew's piece, because it is second, but then I have to wait until the end of the second half to perform this piece. This piece is so physically demanding that I cannot execute it to my desired level without being warm. During show week I know I will need to be disciplined in making sure that I warm up enough in order to perform the piece well.

11.14.2014 – 2nd Half Dress Rehearsal

Today was the first day on stage that everything felt like it really came together. As a group, our timing was much better and there was a higher collective energy during the performance. Personally, I felt that my own performance was much better tonight and I felt

that I am finally starting to be able to feel like I am confident enough with timing, spacing, and being synchronized with the others in my pattern to stop needed to think so much and just be able to perform. It is exciting to be in costume and under the lights and this last rehearsal left me feeling ready for opening night. This was also the night that it hit me that I was a senior. I walked into the senior dressing room and I couldn't help but realize how soon graduation is and how this is one of my last opportunities to be onstage with all of wonderful people that I have met over the last four years.

11.17.2014

Today was the first full run through of the show I have never been more ready to get a piece on the stage and in front of an audience. I think the energy of tonight shook the performance a little bit. My timing in a few parts was a little bit off and from my conversations with the other dancers they also felt that everything wasn't quite as tight as it needs to be. I think I had so much excitement at the beginning of the piece that I didn't focus enough on the dynamics of the movement. I need to spend tomorrow focusing on my timing and breath with the other dancers, not allowing my energy to get ahead of me in properly executing the technique.

11.18.2014

Night #2 of dress rehearsal! I feel like the overall excitement and energy of the room has risen because of the actual audience in the room (the alumni and arts school students). Practicing performance is key in that as dancers we engage in patterns and habits to ensure a smooth run of a show, but it can never be truly meaningful until there is an audience in the house and the connection between performer and viewer is established. The performance of Roz's piece felt much better tonight. Libby and I met with Roz after class to go through out duet to fix some issues with timing and angles. I love dancing with Libby because we have danced together so much in the pieces we are in. I feel like I relate well to her sense of timing and can watch and match her timing easily. This meeting also reminded me that I need to be smart about how I allow Libby to watch and match my timing. I know that I need to suspend my movements and make transitions more intentional instead of abrupt so that our sense of togetherness can be maintained.

11.19.2014

Opening night was, and always is, invigorating. We were fortunate enough to have an incredible audience tonight that was vocal in their support and appreciation for our work. Opening night is the night that all of the work and effort finally accumulates and I remember, despite the tiredness and piles of unfinished homework, why I am in love with dance and being on stage. It is the most incredible place to be. It also came to be incredibly poignant and reflective for me. Because of my pursuit of a JD, this show may be my last opening night ever. I don't know how dance will figure into my future career and it is a scary realization that my many years of performances have been such a fleeting privilege. I am in love with the LMU dance community and the juxtaposition between the celebration and sadness that accompanies this opening night made my performance feel both absorbed

with my own thoughts while on stage and like I was giving my self and joy to an audience that happily reciprocated.

11.20.2014

I feel like 4 shows in I have begun to solidify my habits and show patterns. It is funny how dancers maintain the same habits each night as a form of superstitious belief in luck and maintain good performance. I get dressed during Keith's piece and then warm up during the two before Roz's in Foley 110, walking backstage at the same point and running through my duet with Libby backstage. These little tasks accumulate into almost a dance of their own amongst the cast. Josh always forgets his kneepads and runs downstage to get them. Chloe braids Tina and Gigi's hair and similar jokes are exchanged. Half the cast grabs a chocolate covered pretzel before going backstage "to keep our energy up." These small quirks create the dynamics of the show and the relationships behind the pieces, which contribute to the richness of the community that the audience can sense, but is never actually privy to.

11.21.2014

When opening the pre-warm up meeting, Roz talked about being halfway through the run of shows. She talked about seeing the show many times, but the performers to this point have always been able to show her something new. She encouraged us to do the same. My goal for tonight was to be on stage and actively look around and really see, to notice new things and to connect to people more intentionally. I was fortunate enough to have had a restful day without class or rehearsal so I felt refreshed and newly engaged in the show. I also felt that I was successful in my pursuit of new perspectives on stage. During the "crazy section" I always had a difficult time finding the 5 in the sevens to make sure that my timing matched Chloe and Tina, and tonight I realized that I had the time and freedom to shift my gaze to watch them. It was special because when I shifted my gaze, I made eye contact with Chloe from across the stage and there was sense and connection in the crazy inter-weaving patterns. As dancers we too often look and fail to see, and tonight was a good practice in becoming more human in my dancing by using my focus to connect with the space, the dancers that surround me, and the members of the audience.

11.22.2014

Closing night both comes too soon and not soon enough. I know the cast of the entire show is exhausted and looking forward to having a restful break but at the same time knows that we will never again share this space in this way with these specific people. We both push through the show, giving it every last ounce of energy, but also try to linger within the moments - taking pictures, talking, joking, and already pensively reflecting on the end of this show and the next steps. I think this tension is aggravated for the seniors and is the epitome of the emotions that accompany this year in general. We are excited to get out of school, to pursue our next steps, and to be done with this stage of difficult work and time commitments. At the same time, we have grown so much here and have been shaped by our experiences and by one another. The conclusion is the scariest part of any

journey for me. The work along the way is exciting and allows me to focus on the narrow picture, but the end calls into question the big picture learning and achievements. It also forces me to reflect on the next steps and pursuing my academic career in an entirely new way and be confident that all of the work that I have done up until this point has prepared me adequately to continue to succeed.

Overall Analysis

Analysis of Seven

The music begins as the curtain opens to reveal three figures, two female dancers downstage splitting center and one male dancer upstage right, bathed in blue light lying on their backs. Their legs are perpendicular to the floor and their feet are flexed. The blue light offers stark contrast to the all white costuming. The dancers begin a walking motion in unison, with each step taking about seven counts. As the music shifts, the two downstage dancers roll to standing. The three dancers begin a phrase, the two standing in unison and the other matches the movement but it is transposed into floor work, a theme that emerges throughout the piece. As the phrase continues, three more dancers briefly break the wings with a slow and deliberate walk before exiting the stage. These dancers break the wings twice more in the same manner, the next times slightly faster. As the music begins to build, more dancers begin to enter the stage. Two in the far upstage corners resume the walking motif. The remaining dancers weave in and out of duos and trios that alternate between floor work and standing phrases. The stage seems to become crowded with the immediate onslaught of building movement but as quickly as the stage fills, it empties.

The scene settles with four standing dancers framing the male dancer on the floor in a trapezoidal shape. The standing dancers begin a complex series of gestural arm movement in Light Weight with a fairly Indirect approach to the space surrounding them. The energy shifts immediately as the four dancers begin to move downstage, away from the

male dancer, with a series of chasses and sharp, strong upper body contractions and high releases. The male dancer on the floor begins to shift abruptly between a series of shapes on the floor.

As the four dancers reach the front of the stage, they begin a skipping phrase that is used as a theme throughout the dance. The dancers utilize Free Flow to skip in a relaxed manner, flicking their foot across their body until count four when their arm forcefully swings overhead towards the audience, causing a contraction in the upper body. More dancers begin to file into the stage until the entire cast is on stage, using all different facings, and the energy of the skips seems to fill the space with a touch of organized chaos. The male dancer juxtaposes this Free Flowing energy and movement by continuing to utilize Bound Flow in creating his series of shapes on the floor, abruptly shifting from one to the other.

The chaos settles as music reaches a brief lull. The dance shifts to feel almost abruptly tamed due to both the use of the space and the emphasis of shape in the movement. A series of related duos and trios emerge on stage that all enhance the dominant phrase work that occurs as a duo in the middle of the stage. This phrase work plays with the tempo of the sevens in the music through the use of Suspended extensions and lines that are interrupted by Sudden movements and grounded lunges or contractions. The playfulness of this standing phrase is accented by a trio in a line along the back of the stage. This trio uses Bound Flow, a very even timing, and movement themes from the main phrase to accent key moments within the main phrase work. The final accent in this section is the floor work that is being executed by a trio in a deep triangle on the stage, with the male dancer as the upstage point and two downstage female dancers. This trio is a

repetition of the series of shapes that the male dancer has been moving through on the floor throughout the past few sections, but the movement is brought to the forefront of the audience's attention with the trio's performance of it.

The music begins to build and the dancers use a series of deep chasses and slicing arms to clear the stage, leaving two dancers facing the audience on stage. The male dancer is still upstage, but faces away from the audience and remains immobile through this section. The two dancers on stage begin a dramatic and dynamic duet that is driven by the new intense energy of the music. Each contraction, kick of the foot, and jump accentuates a drumbeat or a crash of cymbals. The dancers command the space, traveling back and forth across the space in unison, until they exit the stage with a series of quickly spinning emboités.

As the duet exits, a new female dancer enters the stage using repetitive, gestural arms coupled with running chainés to create a circle around the stage before ending in downstage center. The previously immobile male dancer reacts to her entrance and adopts her gesture into his movement on the floor. Three dancers, two from stage left and then one from stage right, cross the stage and divide the space between the female and male dancers with a series of traveling jumps. Suddenly, the male and female are alone in the space and begin their duet. This duet also marks the beginning of the subtle storyline and weaves itself through the piece. The movement of the duet is extremely fast, yet a conversation appears to emerge between the two dancers. Each dancer's movement parallels the other, though the male dancer transposes the movement to floor work and they perform the movement on opposite sides so that they are constantly crossing back

and forth. As their duet comes to a conclusion, the two dancers finally find a brief meeting point in both movement and spacing.

This resting point only lasts a second, however, as it is soon interrupted by the onslaught of movement as the rest of the cast crosses the space. The female lead in the prior duet is swept up in the movement of three entering dancers as their momentum carries them to upstage left. Other dancers cross the space, leaping and turning, using their movement to carry them offstage again. The male dancer is left isolated in the upstage left corner of the stage.

From the series of crossing emerges a trio. They face one another in a triangle in the middle of stage and engage in an interweaving pattern to trade positions in the triangle with movement motifs from prior sections. The trio is broken apart as the female dancer cuts a diagonal pattern through the center of the stage and slides to rest with the male dancer on the floor in the upstage right corner. Again, this moment of connection between the two dancers only lasts a second before a member of the previous trio pulls the female lead to her feet and, with long strides, the female lead runs and leaps into the waiting arms of the other two members of the trio. She is then carried off stage, leaving the male dancer alone onstage.

The male dancer's solo begins as the music shifts to an even 4/8 time signature. On the floor, he travels along the path that the female lead just ran. Then, for the first time in the piece, he finds his way to his feet. His movement engages his full body through a series of extensions, lunges, and rolls. His movement, while dramatic in its use of space, is very controlled and focused. The use of Bound Flow throughout most of the solo seems to fit easily with the even and more tempered bars of eight in the music, and the control of his

movement almost seems to momentarily bring the driving sevens to heel as well. As his solo progresses, two lines of women enter from either upstage wing with slow deliberate walks. Almost like a closing curtain, these women narrow the frame of the male dancer's solo and the focus of the audience until they meet in the center, effectively ending the male's solo as they begin to progress forward. The male lead retreats to the upstage left corner.

The line of women creates a wall from one wing to the other. The women progress forward slowly but deliberately with movement that intentionally embodies the music. Slight shakes of a tambourine cause the dancers to produce small vibrations in their movement. At one point, the line divides into two groups. One group sinks into a deep parallel plié and slides forwards into a low plié in second. Their movement is slow, continuous and low, reflecting the low, smooth tones of the primary melody. The other group remains tall and upright as they accentuate the crisp beats of the tambourine with sharp, sudden movements. The groups merge once again, blending the two aesthetics to finish out the phrase of music.

The unison of the dancers in the line breaks again as the music shifts back into a 7/8 time signature for six bars. This time, the movement reflects different orders and patterns of theme phrase work from earlier in the piece. Each dancer's individual phrase connects with another dancer's on the line for a few counts, only to break off and reconnect with a different moment of another dancer's phrase. The weaving intricacy of this section reflects the brief encounters and interruptions that the two leads had experienced in their duet work. The line rolls upstage, the female lead scoots to the upstage left corner and sits with the male lead observing the movement on stage, and all other dancers exit except two.

Two female dancers remain in the space as the music's time signature shifts once again to 4/8, one on far stage left and the other on far stage right. The dancers travel to the downstage right corner with swinging, arcing extensions. There is an interesting juxtaposition in the initial energy of the two dancers; the one on stage left aggressively travels through space to meet her partner while the dancer on stage right uses the limited space to exhibit softer and more feminine movement qualities. The two meet upstage and travel in unison back towards center and the duet becomes more of a conversation, with two dancers reacting to one another. As the duet continues, the male and female leads exit and two more dancers enter on opposite sides of the stage. They begin the soft and Indirect gestural phrase that the four women use at the beginning. In contrast, the duet is concluding with sharp, slicing gestures with the arms and legs in Strong Weight. The duet dancers turn to face one another and exit as the music shifts back to its 7/8 time signature.

The dancers that performed the soft gestural phrase cross the stage and exit and the male and female lead emerge from the wing on the upstage left. He is lying on back and she is balanced on his feet. Her back is initially arched in a high release which she slowly releases as she begins to reach down for him.

This moment is interrupted almost immediately by a cacophony of movement. The music reaches its apex with swirling notes competing for attention that almost immerse the once clear cut sevens. The cast moves quickly onto the stage in a series of movement patterns that connect, break, and seem to swirl around each other. There are brief moments of unison; at the beginning of the section the dancers throw their arms in Free Flow in circles away from their body with their gaze to the ceiling. This moment particularly stands out because the athleticism paired with the almost reckless abandon is

captivating to behold in such stark unison. However, most of this section occurs in duos, trios, quartets that seem to connect almost by happenstance and the dancers depart from these groups to quickly merge into others, each moment competing for the audience's attention. For the first time, the lights shift from the blue to blackness and a deep red runs down the scrim. The shift in color adds to the shift in intensity and energy that remains on stage for the rest of the piece.

The organized chaos resolves as the musical themes reemerge and the dancers fall back into unison with the motif of the skipping step. The energy and intensity remains however and the step begins to move the dancers around the space. The dancers suddenly spiral to the ground and begin the motif of the slow walks on their backs. The energy of the stage seems to settle and the dancers reorganize themselves in one straight line down the center of the stage, dividing into two halves. One half is occupied by the female lead, the other by the male lead.

The male and female leads begin their second duet of the piece, which is a reprise of the male lead's solo. This time, true to the driving nature of the sevens, the movement uses almost exclusively Free Flow. The interaction between the two dancers, separated by the barrier, feels almost desperate with their use of space and the long reach of their arms. They conclude the duet splitting center, rolling upstage and reaching for one another through the barrier.

This moment is, again, interrupted. Two dancers emerge from opposite sides of the stage in a fast-paced and dramatic duet. They cross the stage, scattering the barrier of women and the two leads to opposite sides of the stage. The other dancers remain seated, watching the duet unfold and only move occasionally as if to give the duet more space to

maneuver through. As the duet concludes, the dancers slide along the floor and exit the stage. Suddenly the two leads are alone on the stage, isolated within a pooled spotlight in the middle of the stage. Their duet is a series of actions and reactions. As one reaches towards the other, he or she backs away from the approach. They never quite touch, but there is palpable tension in the minimal space between their bodies that is created through the use of Bound Flow and Sustained Time. Scarcely lit figures cross the stage. They skirt the pool of light that holds the two leads but never enter the space.

The duet between the two leads begins to repeat as three dancers enter the stage. They create a barrier along the top half of the pool of light, almost shielding the duet from the view of the audience. Their minimal lighting ensures that the duet that is occurring within the bright spot is still the primary focus of the audience and the obstruction feels like another interruption of the connection of the two leads. The trio drops into a low fourth position plié and begin a series of gestures that epitomize the aesthetic of the dance: Strong Weight, Free Flow, and Sudden Time while maintaining some Indirect Space qualities.

As the trio continues, a quartet enters the space and frames the central action. They begin to perform a minimalist version of the primary phrase work, maintaining a Near to Medium Kinesphere in order to support the movement in the center of the stage without overpowering it. The music ends abruptly and, to reflect that, all of the dancers except the two leads simultaneously stop what they are performing and spiral suddenly to the ground. They end in the way that the dance began, laying on their backs with their legs perpendicular to the ground and their feet flexed as if ready to take another step, but their

backs are arched to allow their gaze to be on the leads. The leads end in the pooled spotlight, the female laying flat on her back and the male sits next to her, leaning over her.

Analysis of Self and the Embodiment of the LMU Mission Statement

Choosing a performance-based thesis was instinctive because, to me, there is no greater space than the stage. Leaving the dark protection of the wings to enter the brilliant stage lights is nerve-wracking yet enthralling and it is in this space that I feel most authentically myself. It is a space that enables discovery and the perseverance through challenges because no matter what, the show must go on. The journey through the rehearsal and performance processes for the piece *Seven* has been a microcosm of investigation that in many ways reflects my cumulative development over the past four years at Loyola Marymount University. *Seven* demanded much of me as a dancer and the challenges it presented began to allow me to finally discover the cohesion between my artistry, my scholarship, and my daily life.

The first major challenge that I needed to overcome in order to successfully execute the piece was managing the complex rhythms and the timing of the movement. As the name denotes the majority of the piece was counted in sevens, however there were several breaks in which the bars shifted to be counted in eights. I knew that the music was a major source of inspiration for the movement that Roz created and the inherent driving energy that music in sevens possesses was reflected in the athleticism of the piece. As a dancer I was used to the rolling energy of sixes and eights, so even hearing and being able to count the sevens in my first rehearsal proved to be difficult for me. However, as the rehearsal process progressed, counting the music and feeling the rhythm of the piece began to be more natural and my movement began to consistently fall on the correct counts.

Despite this initial success, I soon realized that counting the music correctly and being able to understand the musicality of the piece are two very different challenges. The first implies an academic exactness and understanding of the structure of the time signature of the piece; the second requires the establishment of a relationship with the music – investigating its subtleties and accented qualities in order to bring the music to life within your body. Roz pushed the cast to listen to the music constantly and to become invested in bringing the musicality to the forefront of our movement because in this way the piece begins to feel like art instead of remaining a frantic exercise in staying on count. Although it felt much more insecure, I slowly gave up counting out the repetitive sevens in my head through the entire piece. Instead I searched for the accents and the way that I could logically reconcile the movement I had learned with the things that I was hearing. By the time I reached the stage, my timing was no longer predicated on the counts but rather on the shifts in the music's energy and my relationship to the dancers around me. It was liberating and exciting to not only feel like I had managed to understand the rhythm and timing of the piece, but also to find play and life within the music in order to know I was able to engage my audience with this integral relationship.

The next major challenge that *Seven* presented was its demands of my technical abilities. The fast tempo and the non-stop physical effort of the movement coupled with the difficult transitions between standing and the floor, the necessity of a strong head-tail connection, and the contrast between the spatial pulls when creating lines with the grounded and aggressive energy made this piece one of the most technically demanding of my dance career. I soon found that the only way that I would be able to reconcile the technical demands with the proper achievement of the aesthetic was to abandon caution

and push my technical ability as far as I could. When rehearsing, my goal was frequently to try to command more space or to establish more extremes in my movement choices and try to find my technique to control this energy the best that I could. Eventually, although it took all semester and well into the rehearsal process for ACDA, I finally felt like I had found the balance that I was seeking. I felt in control of the movement and knew what was required of my body and alignment in order to execute the technical elements, even in the most extreme instances of the piece. This realization was an important one for me because it highlighted the idea that my technique will eventually grow to support the demands I am placing on my body, but I cannot be afraid to consistently place high demands on myself, even if it feels out of control at first, because my technique needs this opportunity in order to learn to support new types of movement.

The last significant challenge that *Seven* presented was its unique aesthetic. The high physical demands of the piece promoted a very athletic, grounded, and almost gritty aesthetic. In sharp juxtaposition to this athleticism was the very feminine aesthetic of release and almost reckless abandon to the driving force of the movement. As a dancer, I tend to gravitate towards Strong Weight, Bound Flow, and Direct Space – those that are considered to be more masculine movement qualities. This piece was particularly challenging because its aesthetic required the disruption of my comfortable movement patterning in that I had to maintain Strong Weight for most of the movement, but I needed to incorporate more Free Flow and an Indirect approach to the space around me. This aesthetic was crucial, however, to maintain the emotional tension of the piece. Mastering the required aesthetic was something that I felt I grew into as the rehearsal and performance processes progressed. The aesthetic developed alongside my technical ability

because the more I began to understand the limits of my technique, the more I was able to layer the intention of the piece and pull the aesthetic into the movement I was putting on my body. Though unfamiliar, I found that the incorporation of the aesthetic allowed me to honor the movement that Roz created to establish the meaning that was intended for the piece.

While *Seven* presented many challenges to overcome within the studio and on stage, Roz also introduced many themes to investigate that began to translate to other aspects of my dancing, scholarship, and daily life. Through the first half of the rehearsals, Roz kept the cast very focused on one motto: do the task. As a performer, I am used to the choreographer opening the rehearsal process with a concept or emotion that they are exploring and this concept will be infused throughout the piece. In contrast, Roz gave us movement, patterns, and instructions that summed to a very clear task that we were to complete. She believed that her job as a choreographer was to create meaning through the staging and the interactions of the dancers. The dancers do not need to know this meaning; in fact it was better if they did not know the meaning because then they could not add theatrics that make the piece feel less authentic to the audience. I found the "do the task" concept to be fascinating because it allows me to create some of my best and most believable work, while approaching it in a very manageable way. I felt that this approach allowed me to eliminate some of my doubts or fears in my other technique classes as well as become more productive as a student in my other classes. It is easier to complete a necessary task when eliminating the additional emotional baggage that may accompany that task.

About halfway through the rehearsal process, as we began to prepare for ACDA, Roz began to encourage us to reincorporate some of the emotional elements. We had managed to execute the task of the piece in *An Evening of Concert of Dance* in the fall, and now the piece needed to transcend to the next level. Roz revealed the intention that had emerged for her as she created the piece and encouraged us to transcend the task, not dramatically, but enough to allow the emotional elements to color our movement. Earlier in the year, we had discussed the way that dance was not distinct from our real lives, but rather a part of it. Too often, dancers are told to leave our baggage at the door of the studio. Instead, Roz encouraged me to dance tired if I was tired, angrily if I was upset, and joyously if I was happy. The studio is not distinct from the rest of the real world, but rather a part of it and a place that we as dancers are able to enter in order to live as we are and make sense of the emotions and thoughts that we experience in our daily lives. While “doing the task” allowed me to be successful at that task, allowing myself to reconcile my affective state with my physical self allowed me to breathe life and my own individuality into the piece. I felt as though I was able to find reciprocation between the artistic, intellectual, physical, and emotional spheres of myself that were usually distinct. Through this holistic approach, I felt I was able to accomplish some of my best dancing as well as the necessary maturation of my artistry.

Working through the rehearsals and performances of *Seven* has challenged my cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development in a unique and engaging way. The LMU Mission Statement states that the school aims to educate the whole person and while many of my educational experiences have challenged me to develop individual aspects of my person, this piece allowed me to investigate all aspects of myself in tandem and

understand the connections between these aspects of myself. I found this to be valuable in that using a single medium and simultaneous investigation enhanced my understanding of my different abilities.

Cognitively, I was able to understand rhythmic structures and a dancer's crucial relationship to the music. I was able to assess the desired aesthetics in different parts of the score and work to understand how these aesthetics enhance the musicality and the storyline of the piece. Affectively, I was challenged to both distance myself emotionally from the work and then to allow my affective state to be woven into the movement. Initially, I simply had to do the task and I learned a lot about how my work can develop without the emotional barriers or motivations that often begins the rehearsal process. However, because dance is not exclusively a series of physical tasks, I was challenged to begin to incorporate my emotional response to the piece into the movement and began to understand how the intention of the piece does not always need to be overpowering, but rather an authentic reflection of the self at any given moment. Physically, I was challenged by the intensive physical demands of the piece. I learned to push my technique to its limits and to trust that the understanding of my body in space would grow to accommodate the new demands. I learned that the development of my technique requires a lot of patience with myself, but the process of placing high demands and approaching my physical practices fearlessly will eventually reward that patient persistence.

Being able to grow and explore all of these different facets of myself simultaneously made the process of performing *Seven* incredibly life-giving. This piece was by far my favorite piece of my dance career and I believe that it is primarily due to the challenges that it presented and the way it demanded the engagement of my whole self to be successful.

Seven allowed me to mature intellectually, emotionally, physically, and artistically through the challenges and lessons that it presented and, in that sense, this process was the ideal representation of the Jesuit values in the LMU Mission Statement.

Mentor Letter

Elise Culliton in *Seven*: The Choreographer's Evaluation By Rosalynde LeBlanc Loo

I was already interested in working with Elise even before the Faculty Concert auditions in which I selected many of the dancers for the dance that would become *Seven*. I had seen Elise perform in other faculty and student work. She is a striking and intelligent performer and I wanted to work with her.

When I began making the dance, I began with pieces and interruptions. Not only did I not have a title, I did not have a concept, or a structure, or even a plan for how to begin. What I did have was the music – “Meetings Along the Edge” by Phillip Glass and Ravi Shankar. I also had one phrase of movement that I had selected from a video of me improvising; eleven dancers in the studio waiting for me to tell them what to do; and another choreographic project that had a more pressing deadline. It was this other choreographic project that gave me a pathway into *Seven*, and a glimpse of what Elise would end up bringing to this dance.

Following the Prescribed Path was an exhibit in the Laband Art Gallery in the fall of 2014. Laband director, Carolyn Peter, had approached the dance department's music director, David Karagianis and me, the previous spring about creating pieces in our respective disciplines that dealt with the idea of travelling prescribed routes, be they in urban, suburban, rural or natural landscapes. I chose to interpret the prescribed path as a life-journey and wanted to explore the idea of drawing one's life and then using the drawing as a score or “prescription” for the choreography. This project had a performance date weeks earlier than the Faculty Concert so I had to turn my attention to it first. I employed the eleven dancers I had already chosen for the Faculty Concert. On the first day of rehearsal I asked them to draw their lives on a piece of paper, allowing their hand to react to memories of high points, low points, times of confusion, doubt and happiness, as they traced the paths of their 18-22 years of living so far. I then taped their drawings together and made a choreographic manifestation of what I saw drawn on the papers. I taught this 10-minute phrase to all of the dancers.

Elise stood out immediately when learning and rehearsing this material. She executed it with the sense of maturity and importance that it needed. It was, after all, eleven different people's life-journeys so far. I wanted the choreography to feel like a collective 220 years of lived experience. That's a difficult concept for a young adult to embody, but I felt that Elise

comprehended it right away. She inherently understood that inside of this very abstract representation of lines drawn on pieces of paper, was the reference to life's triumphs and tragedies, simple joys and boredoms. This ability to marry cognition with physicality is what makes Elise so unique as a performer and as a student. On stage and in the studio she dances with an active mind that is clearly considering, at once, the ideas she is conveying to the community around her, and the private mechanisms of her own body.

Elise was one of two other dancers whom I chose to perform this choreography as a solo. The solo rotated amongst the three of them for ninety minutes -- the entire length of the gallery installation. This solo proved to be a feat of stamina and concentration for the dancers. Elise was gorgeous and powerful in it. And she lingered in that role for me as I turned my attention back to the making of the other dance. I now saw Elise as a woman who could reference in her body and in her performance, the journeys of many women, and therefore, in some ways, the journey of all women.

Most of the movement for *Seven* was derivative of the solo material for *Prescribed Path*. But as I took that movement and experimented with it - transposing it to different parts of the body; altering the speed, rhythm, facing, and level of the movements; imposing musical composition devices such as theme and variation, rondo and canon; dividing solo material into interactive duet material; and employing chance methods - *Seven* began to evoke the underbelly of what *Prescribed Path* had been about. The great effort to make this movement of life-journeys conform to the demands of the Glass/Shankar score began to suggest the forbidden passions of the individual as they wrestle within the constraints dictated by the voice of the culture. And, for me, that spoke to a largely female experience that is both centuries old and entirely current. In the end, *Following the Prescribed Path* and *Seven*, two dances that are seemingly opposite in tone, quality and rhythm, ended up with a through line that Elise's role inadvertently carried.

The weighted intelligence and intrinsically feminine and warm undertone that Elise exhibits as a performer and as a person are highlighted in *Seven*. This is most indicated in a duet that happens in the middle of the dance for her and another woman. I challenged Elise to turn up the volume on her inherent qualities in this duet. The choreography is comprised of fast transfers of weight and swift arcing of the legs through space. But it is danced to, what I consider, the most lyrical and even-keeled section of this otherwise formal, minimalist, and uneven score. Breaking through the oddball 7/8 time signature, and bodies rolling all over the stage, is a regular 4/8 time signature when Elise and her partner begin their duet. They unfurl long legs and arms in unison and in conversation with one another. The result is a moment that both screams and sighs. And there is where one can see how Elise really rose to the challenge of this dance and found a ring of unbridled passion along the edge of her self-assuredness. As I make a dance, I write notes to correlate the choreography with the musical score. In my notes for *Seven* I referred to this portion of the music as Elise's Theme.

AN EDUCATION IN THE ARTS: WHY WE NEED TO DANCE

In 1926, Margaret H'Doubler established the first university dance degree in the nation at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. This formalization of the degree program established dance as not only a physical and artistic endeavor, but also an intellectual pursuit. Dance is a specific medium through which arts education can be approached that enables a holistic education of an individual. An art's education, particularly the study of dance, is an irreplaceable asset because it provides a valuable skill set, a deepened understanding and embodiment of abstract concepts, and the establishment of community and cultural identity.

While many important lessons students take away from the arts can be learned through imitation and the process of participating, Donald Hodges, in "Why Study Music?", argues convincingly for the need for a formal arts education, specifically in music. Formal education establishes a history and structured language pertaining to the subject being studied. This intensive study allows for the creation of complex human knowledge systems. Hodges argues that these systems are the only way that students are able to "[unlock] and [realize] all kinds of talent"ⁱ and "achieve maximum human potential."ⁱⁱ The study of dance is similar to the study of music because dancers, like musicians, are required to be active participants in their education and the formal study of dance has established a rich history with codified language. Artists, like dancers and musicians, require formal education because it allows them to build upon their histories and excel in their field, thus providing society with the ability to reflect more fully "on the human condition."ⁱⁱⁱ

A rigorous and structured education in dance allows individuals to develop practical skills, applicable both in the studio and in all other aspects of a dancer's life. In the article "The Power of Dance in Society and Education," Paulette Côté argues that dance provides the opportunity to acquire a holistic education because it develops a "child's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills equally."^{iv} Through this holistic education, children are able to utilize a single medium in order to cultivate creative and critical thinking skills, group communication and collaboration, and an elevated sense of confidence through successful achievement of performative goals^v.

The culmination of this skill set is most prevalent in what Côté classifies as "appreciating dance"^{vi} and is most able to be applied across various educational disciplines. In this aspect, students are taught to observe work critically and create an in-depth analysis of its implications. Students hone the ability to create connections between physical aesthetics and symbolic meaning in order to "formulate objective statements about the dance works of peers and professional artists."^{vii} The ability to identify and communicate constructive criticisms both within peer groups and of established figures in an industry is a crucial skill in any future profession.

The advantages of a dance education extend further than the establishment of practical skills, but into the development of the emotions and spirituality by providing the opportunity to embody the abstract. Jeanne Broadbent postulates, in the article "Embodying the Abstract: Enhancing Children's Spirituality through Creative Dance," that dance is unique because it allows a point of intersection between the mind and the body that allows individuals "to embody abstract ideas and concepts and then interpret them in expressive and symbolic ways."^{viii} In 2002, Broadbent utilized a series of six dance

workshops at a Liverpool Roman Catholic primary school with classes of Y3 children to explore themes related to the Creation story in Genesis.^{ix} The children were asked to visualize imagery from the story that was painted by a teacher and were then given the opportunity to explore themes through movement, eventually resulting in the establishment of themes that the children could perform as individuals, in duos and trios, small groups, or as a whole class.^x

The journals produced by each of the children after the dance workshops show some insight into their development and exploration. When discussing the theme of the earth, its creation, and the movement they used to represent this theme, Broadbent found that "Many...related to family and friends, both of which represent security and safety and the children had a clear idea of those things which 'grounded' them... A few of the responses showed a developing spiritual awareness connected to the creation of new life, and one child wrote: 'I felt like I was going to be a new person. Like I was going to be reborn.'"^{xi} The ideas that emerged from the exploration of these themes were reflected and visible in the qualities the children chose to infuse in their movements. The opportunity to establish a connection between emotion and spirituality and the movement of their bodies in space is valuable. It creates balanced and integrated individuals that have a higher awareness of their physical body and its connection to their mental and spiritual presence in the world, rather than allowing them to hold these spheres of self as separate.

This exploration of emotion and the human experience is what distinguishes a dance education from other forms of education. Dance students are some of the few students that are regularly provided with "opportunities for engagement with the senses and emotions which can evoke... a feeling or feelings which transcend the ordinariness of

everyday life."^{xii} Dance, because it is a nonverbal medium, is particularly valuable in allowing an individual to express those ideas, like spiritual awareness, that are impossible to fully express in words.^{xiii}

The study of dance is not only a medium for the internal development of an individual, but also informs the identity of a community and the place of an individual within that community. Dance and movement are at the center of a variety of modern day social gatherings including weddings, festivals, church socials, carnivals, and dinner dances. It is an ideal medium for connecting people because it has existed for the entirety of human history and therefore has developed cultural, social, and political significance.^{xiv} This significance that dance has acquired is mainly due to the establishment of group identities and aesthetics.

Donald Hodges argues that music creates inclusive and exclusive group identities.^{xv} Dance possesses the ability to form these types of group identities because it also "helps cement the bonding of those members of a group who share common ideas, beliefs and behaviors, and...helps isolate and separate one group from another."^{xvi} The process of engaging in dance creates a specific and unique community that Karen Bond, in her article "Personal Style as a Mediator of Engagement in Dance: Watching Terpsichore Rise," describes as a "group relatedness...a collective style of movement."^{xvii} This collective style is generated as individuals engage in movement with one another and is visible through "shared sensory and aesthetic values,... heightened group relatedness,... reciprocal communication,... celebration,... and the emergence of synchronous and congruent patterns of nonverbal communication."^{xviii} This formation of group identity is unsurprising to most dancers because it is a process that is so frequently repeated throughout their training.

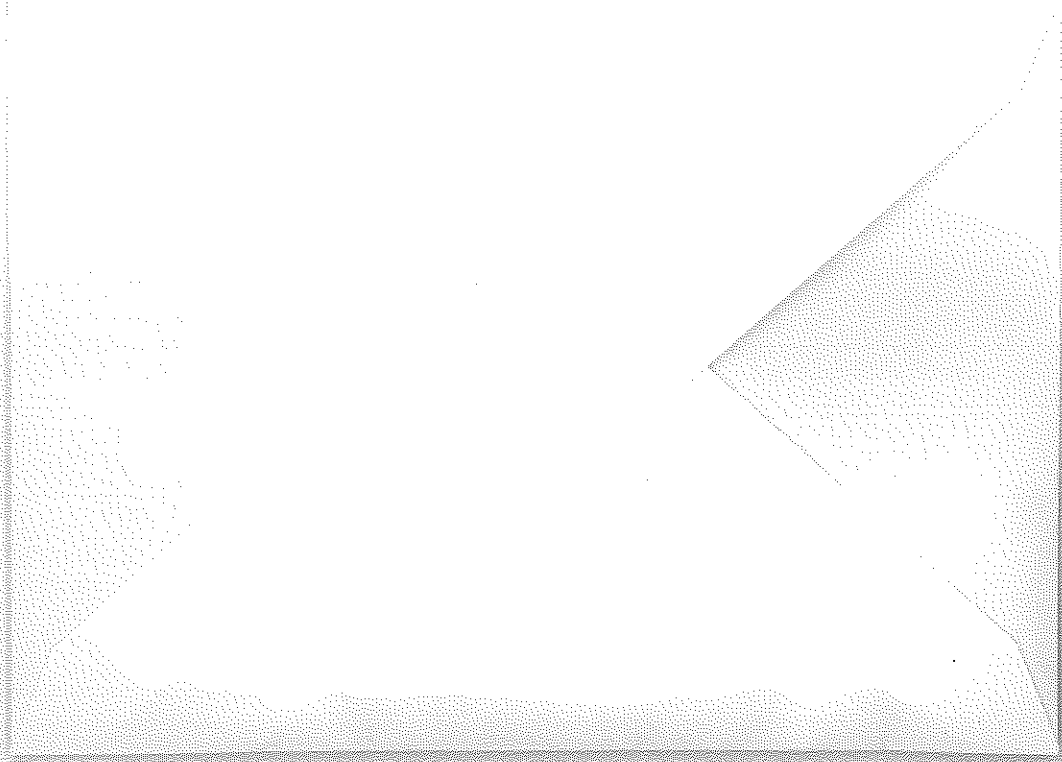
Formal dance education can play a key role in helping students to examine the way their movement patterns reflect their learned identities and provide a space for critical reflection on the ways these patterns inform their understanding of their culture.

Culture and cultural identities cannot exist without established patterns of movement that are replicated throughout a community. Bond defines cultural style as patterns of learned behaviors that are repeatedly engaged in that allow for cultural expression and clear definition of the boundaries of the culture.^{xix} Dance, therefore, is a critical element of cultural identity because it is “a symbolic reenactment of crucial behavior patterns upon which the continuity of a culture hangs.”^{xx} The formal and informal movement patterns that a community engages in informs both those within the culture about their history and role in the society as well those outside of the culture about the traditions and values that the community holds. Education is an investment in individuals that should produce citizens that are able to engage in and contribute to their community, upholding important values and denouncing injustices. A dance education offers an alternate view on the systems that surround students daily, allowing them to critically assess their own culture and better equip them to initiate change from the foundations of those systems.

A formal education in the arts, especially in dance, provides a valuable system of knowledge that should be implemented throughout students’ educational careers. Dance provides the opportunity for students to grow individually, both through the accumulation of key life skills and the engagement in embodying the abstract. It also better positions students to critically reflect on the systems of movement that delineate cultures, the values that are inherent to that culture, and establish their role in accepting or denying these

aspects of their culture. A holistic education must contain these intellectual, emotional, and social developments that an arts education provides, for without them, students are robbed of the opportunity to experience their human condition in a valuable and poignant way.

Video: Seven performed in An Evening of Concert Dance, Fall 2014



Summary of Dance Studies

Fundamentals of Dance Composition I and II

- Expand authenticity of movement through play and improvisation
- Learn to utilize improvisation to craft choreography
- Gain confidence in performance, both as a soloist and in a group
- Acquire the ability to engage in long improvisation
- Learn to utilize improvisation as the pathway to exploring and expanding individual movement vocabulary
- Utilizing powerful imagery or ideas to influence the choreographic process
- Expand ability to make effective creative choices, both in structured improvisation and in set choreography
- Create a sculpture study, thus learning the value of drawing inspiration from outside resources and the influence of shape on movement and meaning
- Learn to effectively communicate desired movement aesthetics to third parties while setting choreography
- Learning to treat the choreographic process as an "open-ended" process in which manipulation, play, and creation is ongoing

Dance Styles and Forms

- Expand musical knowledge in terms of time signature, instruments, composers, and genres
- Learn to research music and apply it effectively to a work
- Introduce the concept of site specific work and ways to effectively incorporate environment into a work
- Introduce and practice the choreographic process
- Exhibit ways to manipulate movement, such as retrograde or diminution, in order to create varying and interesting phrase work
- Illustrate the importance of themes in a work and ways to create themes
- Offer experience in different choreographic processes - as a single choreographer, within a small group and within a large group of choreographers

Laban Movement Analysis

- Become familiar with Labanotation and Laban Movement Analysis and understand the differences between the two
- Analyze my personal movement signature and movement patterning and understand its implications for me as an individual
- Gain access to new patterns of movement or patterns of movement that feel contradictory
- Understand the associations that are held with specific patterns of movement
- Acquire the ability to notate the Body, Effort, Shape and Space within movement that I create
- Understand and effectively utilize Space Effort, Weight Effort, Time Effort, and Flow Effort and their polarities

- Expand knowledge about Rudolf Laban: his life, belief systems, development of Labanotation, and the implications of his work

Drumming for Dance

- Acquire basic drumming skills and techniques
- Understand the principles of drumming
- Improve the ability to learn, analyze and execute rhythmic patterns
- Increase the capacity to keep tempo
- Increase individual musicality and understanding of complex polyrhythms
- Become more aware of rhythms and rhythmic structures in all forms of music
- Learn proper hand coordination for drumming and master bass-tone-smack

To Dance is Human

- Investigate the bodily expression utilized by different cultures and understand the significance of that expression
- Develop the capacity to speak and write about cultural issues and the ways that dance can relate to them
- Create connections between studies in dance and knowledge about individual experience, cultural experience, and social justice
- Cultivate interest in other cultures and the individual experiences of others
- Expand knowledge of dance as a human phenomena through rituals, rites, entertainment, art, tributes and therapy
- Learn about dance through a variety of mediums: video, improvisation, spoken word, guest presentations, and therapeutic methods
- Explore areas of interest independently in order to expand knowledge and present the knowledge in a scholarly manner
- Investigate philosophical, cultural-anthropological, and aesthetic concepts and their significance and application to dance

History of Dance Theatre

- Create a context for the current period of dance in relation to the history and development of dance
- Recognize important historical figures in dance and their seminal works
- Become familiar with the beginnings and development of ballet, modern dance, tap, jazz, improvisation and musical theater
- Create thoughtful and intellectual research that seeks to make an argument about a specific subject within dance history
- Expand knowledge about dance research, campus resources, citation styles, and critically examining and writing about dance
- Watch dance and increase the ability to recognize the styles and influences within the work
- Read and learn to write effective criticism and analysis of dance

Kinesiology for Dancers I and II

- Gain knowledge of the body through the examination of anatomy, biomechanics, and psychological mechanisms
- Learn origins and insertions of a majority of muscle groups relevant to dance
- Understand the role of macronutrients and the nutritional needs of dancers
- Apply anatomical knowledge in a laboratory setting in order to increase knowledge of the individual body, its muscular capacity, and the way this knowledge can be applied to dance
- Acquire an understanding of injury prevention and treatment
- Understand force vectors, moment arms, and their application to movement
- Learn the action of a majority of major muscle groups relevant to dance and thus understand the initiation required at a muscular level to create movement
- Understand the role of the nervous system and electrical impulses in creating movement
- Acquire knowledge of the joints, particularly the synovial joints and the movement they allow through their shape and function
- Understand alignment in terms of a plumb line and the importance it holds in protecting the dancer from injury

Principles of Teaching Dance

- Design standards-based instruction that meets CA VAPA standards and represents best practice in instruction and lesson design
- Apply the cognitive processes used in dance/arts: creating, performing, and responding
- Demonstrate the ability to structure a dance class and create lesson plans
- Understand and develop effective assessment tools
- Establish an understanding of the experiences that are integral to a well-balanced dance curriculum in various educational settings

Philosophy of Arts – Buyer Behavior

- Introduce key concepts, terms, and theories being studied and developed in psychology, economics, sociology, cultural studies, and anthropology and the relationship to buyer behavior
- Utilize buyer behavior concepts in order to enhance the ability to design marketing strategies
- Increase real world applications of buyer behavior and the capacity to observe marketing strategies objectively and accurately
- Explore the diversity of buyers and their needs nationally and internationally
- Create thoughtful, scholarly research relevant to current buyer trends
- Establish professional behaviors and work ethics while engaging in group work

Careers in Dance

- Prepare for a successful professional life by acquiring necessary skills and creating a portfolio of paperwork to assist with finding employment
- Create effective introductory and follow-up emails to potential employers

- Create an effective and flexible biography
- Create an effective and flexible resume
- Create a business card template
- Expand self-awareness and understanding of necessary organizational skills in order to establish a successful professional career

Ballet

- Increase strength, flexibility, and endurance
- Create a better understanding of alignment and body in space
- Increase articulation of the feet
- Learn to deepen and utilize plié as an asset for control and balance
- Expand ballet vocabulary and familiarize the spelling of ballet terminology
- Increase precision of skill and technique
- Reflect critically on goals, personal technique, and progress through conversation and written work
- Learn to refine technique in order to capitalize on artistic expression
- Increase musicality through controlled and dynamic movement
- Establish a strong work ethic that is motivated by focus and discipline

Modern

- Increase strength, flexibility, stamina, and expressivity
- Increase strength in the core while increasing mobility of the extremities
- Gain deeper understanding of musicality through complex counts, uneven measures or moving counter to the beat of the music
- Increase comfort with and capacity for controlled floor work
- Enhance knowledge of important modern dance choreographers and be exposed to their staples of their styles
- Explore various schools of thought on movement and movement patterning, including Bartinieth Fundamentals, Feldenkrais Technique, and Counter technique
- Improve improvisational capacity
- Develop understanding of movement that is initiated through different parts of the body
- Become comfortable with contact improvisation and partnering work

Jazz

- Expand knowledge about the history of jazz, seminal choreographers, dancers, musicians, and works, and the movement qualities inherent to each form of jazz
- Gain an expansive vocabulary of jazz terminology
- Increase knowledge of successful audition strategies in the commercial world
- Exposure to multiple styles of the jazz world, both older and up-and-coming
- Work with individuals in the commercial industry and form networks and connections
- Increase strength, flexibility, and endurance
- Understand the differing aesthetics inherent to different styles

- Increase my abilities to improvise in multiple genres
- Gain confidence in performing in large groups, small groups, and as a soloist

World Dance (Dance of Hawaii and Yoga for Dancers)

- Acquire a basic understanding of terms in Hawaiian dance
- Learn the Hawaiian alphabet and gained proficiency in speaking and writing Hawaiian dance terms
- Learn the foundations and basic movement, both hands and feet, of Hawaiian dance
- Gain confidence in choreographing and performing Hawaiian dance
- Introduce yoga positions and concepts
- Create a deeper sense of self-awareness and connectivity of the mind and body
- Engage in conscientious work that reveals information about the self and inherent patterning in the body
- Increase focus, balance, strength, flexibility, and control in movement
- Understand the power of stillness and breath in overcoming discomfort

Pilates

- Become confident and capable in using Pilates equipment, including: reformers, chairs, foam rollers, balls, magic circles, and trapeze table.
- Gain strength and flexibility
- Acquire the ability to lead a series of Pilates exercises and create an individualized exercise plan to address personal weaknesses
- Gain understanding of my individual body, including: strengths, weaknesses, and asymmetries.
- Acquire increased core stability and the capacity to initiate movement from the core
- Increase knowledge and ability to care of my body and prevent injuries in my dance career.

Artist's Statement

In order to experience change or progress, there must be movement. Thoughts, emotions, and ideologies offer nothing to the world unless some action is taken. As dancers, we are called to study movement. We seek to analyze movement patterns and assess their meaning, to embody the intangible in order to move an audience in a significant way, and to offer insight and critique on the macrocosm of human experience in a single evening of work. My four years at Loyola Marymount University and my lifetime as a dancer and artist have allotted me the time and tools in which critically assess movement and the crucial role that it has played in my life. As an artist, I seek to use and to continue to

develop my knowledge of dance and movement as a way to understand, to impact, and to offer critical assessment.

The majority of communication, and perhaps the most authentic forms of communication, are not verbal but rather use body position, movement patterns, and facial expressions to convey meaning. The body and the subconscious patterns that it has accumulated throughout our lives is a wealth of information that reveals much about a person's past experiences, their personality, and message they desire to portray to the world around them. Rudolf Laban created Labanotation and Laban Movement Analysis to investigate these very concepts. Labanotation is valuable because it establishes a concrete language through which dancers can notate and talk about movement. This is advantageous in many ways. First it allows for more extensive and successful collaboration. For example, Rudolf Laban was able to choreograph the opening ceremony for the Olympic Games in Germany in 1936, even though it was later cancelled by Hitler due to Laban's controversial ability to mobilize so many individuals. Laban sent the script for the piece, notating each dancer's individual part, to 1,000 performers in sixty different movement choirs, a feat that was previously unimaginable.^{xxi}

The other major advantage that Labanotation provides us, as the era of digital media has replaced the necessity of notation to preserve dance, is the ability to utilize the motif notation in order to assist us in recognizing and analyzing movement patterns - whether on a stage or in our daily lives. I believe that a dancer possesses a unique capacity to understand patterns of movement thoroughly, whether that be through the recognition of frequently used patterns and their common meanings and implications or the assessment of seemingly contradictory Effort Qualities to understand the true intent or

purpose of the movement. This drive to understand movement is what allows dancers to transcend from athletes that perform a physical craft, to artists that are able to utilize their physical craft to create something much more meaningful.

Dance possesses the capability to impact an audience in a significant way, whether that impact is emotional, spiritual, or political. I believe this impact comes from two facets of the art form: that it is fleeting and that it is living. Dance, although it can be captured by film, is most authentically experienced in person. A piece is never performed the same way twice – cast members change, the dimensions of the space is altered, the energy of the audience shifts, and the piece develops as the performers do. Performance is a truly intimate moment between the dancers and the audience that will never be replicated. A dancer knows this and thus treats their stage as a sacred space, giving the gift of themselves and their art to impact the experience of each new audience that enters the house.

Dance is also explored through live bodies. I believe that dance has an advantage over other art forms in this sense because the medium of presentation is not separated from its creator. Even in the case of a choreographer setting movement on dancers, the dancers are still utilizing their artistry and the piece grows and adapts to the members of the cast. The work is not a mere representation of facets of human life, it is in fact humans living and exploring these very themes through set patterns of movement. Martha Graham argues that we should not create movement in order to represent a feeling, but that the movement we create should be so authentic that feeling is evoked from it.

Dance has an honest vitality that emerges in its creation and presentation, and this frankness engages its intended audience and generates genuine human connection in a way

that is impossible through any other medium. This connection, though the relationship may be brief, enables a dancer to meaningfully impact their audiences. As an emerging artist, I desire to utilize my understanding of the powerful potentials of movement to establish meaningful connections and offer the impact I hope to have in the world in an authentic manner.

Through the combination of the understanding and analysis of movement with the desire to connect to and impact an audience, we are able to reach what I believe the most significant aspect of what dance has to offer the world: the ability to create thoughtful and frank assessments, critiques, and celebrations of our society and cultural norms that will, in turn, shape the culture, institutions, and individuals that surround us. Through the mastery of their craft, dancers have the ability to create and present revolutionary work.

One of my idols in this capacity is Isadora Duncan. In her autobiography *In My Life*, Duncan states that she felt as though she were in an active state of revolt against the societal pressures and norms that surrounded her. Duncan argues that society felt restrictive and binding in its narrow-mindedness.^{xxii} Her pursuit of liberation from the narrow social role that her gender prescribed was evident throughout her aesthetic and lifestyle choices. She rebelled against the normative expectations of dance during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through the foundation of early modern dance. She provided dancers with the opportunity to free themselves from the technical expectations and movement restraints of classical ballet. She also utilized her art to question and critique the gendered expectations of this time period, allowing her movement to be free and playful, her costuming to be innocently revealing, and her lifestyle of creation to reject social conventions of the time. Isadora Duncan helped to open the door

to feminist ideals of female liberation and the celebration, rather than the restriction and shaming, of the female body. She had a successful impact on society because she was able to effectively utilize dance to create a statement about the world in which she lived and pursued that statement fearlessly in her work.

I believe that in this way dancers, and all artists, can and should play an instrumental role in the progress of society. The arts offer a liberal environment in which individuals are able to play with new ideas and explore important concepts. Artists are assumed to be a little out of left field and their ideas and beliefs, even if highly unconventional or highly controversial, are often encouraged rather than suppressed as they would be in other environments. The arts, and especially dance, also offer a medium through which these ideas can be presented in a non-threatening way. The intimacy between a dancer and their audience invites those viewing the work into investigating the themes presented in the work both cognitively and affectively. The work inspires conversation and personal reflection that may otherwise be avoided and can push even the most conservative to more open-minded thought. The powerful capacity of dance to reflect the values that we hold as a culture and to shape the world we inhabit is a capacity that I believe should be capitalized on. Dance is an art form that translates ideas and abstract concepts into embodied movement and, as such, should aim to maintain its momentum off of the stage and into the daily realities of society.

The study of dance and the maturation of artistry push us as dancers to understand our medium through constant investigation of movement and to enhance our drive to create and perform work that resonates with our audience. This knowledge and ability also comes with important social responsibilities. As a dancer and an artist, I seek to continue to

understand, impact, and critically reflect on my social reality through movement and the recognition that dance has the capacity to meaningfully permeate every aspect of my daily life.

Moving to a City Search

The following links were found to be useful as tools to locate affordable housing in my journey of moving off-campus in Los Angeles for the first time:

http://www.zillow.com/homes/los-angeles_rb/

<http://www.apartmentguide.com/neighborhoods/California/Los-Angeles/Palms/>

http://www.trulia.com/for_rent/Los_Angeles,CA

<https://law.ucla.edu/student-life/ucla-campus-and-services/housing/>

<http://www.apartments.com/los-angeles-ca/>

<http://www.padmapper.com/search/apartments/California/los-angeles/>

ⁱ Donald A. Hodges, "Why Study Music?" *International Journal of Music Education* 23, no. 2 (2005): 113. <http://ijm.sagepub.com/content/23/2/111.full.pdf+html>.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Paulette Côté, "The Power of Dance in Society and Education," *Journal of Physical Education Recreation, and Dance* 77, no. 5 (2006): 28. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07303084.2006.1059787>.

^v Ibid.

^{vi} Ibid., 27.

^{vii} Ibid.

^{viii} Jeanne Broadbent, "Embodying the Abstract: Enhancing Children's Spirituality through Creative Dance," *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* 9, no. 1 (2010): 98. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/VA0sDxYznzL>.

^{ix} Jeanne Broadbent, "Embodying the Abstract: Enhancing Children's Spirituality through Creative Dance," 99.

^x Ibid., 100.

^{xi} Ibid., 102.

^{xii} Ibid.

^{xiii} Donald A. Hodges, "Why Study Music?" 112.

^{xiv} Paulette Côté, "The Power of Dance in Society and Education," 26.

xv Donald A. Hodges, "Why Study Music?" 113.

xvi Ibid.

xvii Karen Bond, "Personal Style as a Mediator of Engagement in Dance: Watching Terpsichore Rise." *Dance Research Journal* 26, no. 1 (1994): 22. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1477708>

xviii Ibid.

xix Ibid., 21.

xx Ibid.

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