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LABAN FOR THE ACTOR: THE MIND/BODY CONNECTION

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University

By

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April 2017

Acknowledgements

First and Foremost, I am extremely thankful for the support of my family and friends. Without you, I would not have been able to accomplish this work. You have all been there, near or far, New York to South Carolina, from couch surfing to phone calls, and it has not gone unnoticed.

To my mentors at VCU, thank you for guiding me through the process that is graduate school. I only hope to follow in your collective academic footsteps.

Finally, to my students, I want to thank you for experimenting and exploring with me. Your willingness to work and discover new approaches to Laban's work has made this thesis write itself. Keep breathing!

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Abstract

LABAN FOR THE ACTOR: STRENGTHENING THE MIND/BODY CONNECTION

By Margaret Corelli Buckner, MFA

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2017

Major Director: Dr. Aaron Anderson
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When it comes to actor training in higher education, an extremely strong emphasis is placed on understanding the voice and interpreting the text. While some institutions do incorporate movement courses into the curriculum of the students, many do not serve the learning actor in the most effective way. The work of Rudolf Laban is a way to strengthen the curriculum taught to actors, specifically in regards connecting actors to their bodies. This thesis discusses and analyses the use of Laban's movement theory in the movement classroom, and focuses on the most effective way of presenting the material to the student. Included is

research on Laban's theories, the structure of a Laban for the actor course, feedback from participants, exercises crafted to better suit the learning actor, and connections to other acting and movement practitioners. The aim is to provide actors with a well-rounded toolbox that will assist them in creating more dynamic and livable characters. This thesis hopes to serve as a guide for both instructors of movement and students alike, providing all with a resource to refer to when working with the body on or off the stage.

Chapter 1: How the Crystal Formed

Within his published work *Choreutics*, Rudolf Laban stated “...the impulse to move is often more influenced by what happened before than by what is to come” (Laban 149). This is most certainly true when his movement theory is explored, but can also refer to our own histories. In order to fully understand, accept, and appreciate the theories of “the dancer of the crystal” as he was so often called, one must first look at “what happened before.” Laban’s life history shaped the theories we have today and the influences he had on the people and students he came into contact with only furthered his work. By examining the early life of Laban, his involvement in the Third Reich, the establishment of many different schools and studios, his many bouts of illness, and those who continued his work after his death, his theory of space harmony harmonizes with the times. This impact continues to this day.

True Beginnings

Rudolf Von Laban was born in 1879 to a military father and vivacious mother, whom Laban often “recalled...as a friend”, though she was often gone thanks to his father’s military career (Preston-Dunlop 1). This left young Rudolf very lonely, forcing him to occupy himself with his own fantastical imagination. However, this also meant that Laban had connections with other members of his Hungarian family, including one that was looked down upon by the rest of them. His relationship with his theatrical Uncle Adolf gave him his first exposure to theatre, despite the fact that an actor’s life was looked down on by many, both in his family and in the

society of his time. This uncle gave Laban “pride of place in his imaginative play”, giving the young mover encouragement in his artistic endeavors” (Preston-Dunlop 2). This was to the dismay of the boy’s military father, who hoped his only son would follow in his regimented footsteps.

Another family member, this time a grandmother who always had a yarn to spin, encouraged young Laban to keep his imagination active. Laban often “describes her as playing the leading lady in the family theatre every evening” since the woman “had a proven talent for imaginative storytelling (Doerr 3). Laban’s creative mind “allowed [his imagination] to develop unchecked” (Doerr 3), planting the seeds that would later blossom into the theoretical work we have today. Thanks to these various family members, his sense of play - a quality much desired in actors - was not stifled but encouraged.

However, one could argue that the family member most responsible for the formulation of young Laban’s movement life was his father. Certainly his mother encouraged the playful energy in her son, his uncle proved a career in the arts was profitable though unattractive, and his grandmother kept his imagination alive. It was the push from his father into a possible military career that forced Laban to consider his true passions. Having already been exposed to so much in the artistic realm by these other family members, as well as witnessing several dance and movement forms (whirling Dervishes, Slavic sword dancers, and fencers), the patriarch of the Laban family decided his son must go to military school. His son obliged but “with difficulty since he had entered the army against his will in order to carry on the family tradition” (Doerr 7). Parts of this militaristic world did appeal to the young artist, having been

mesmerized by parades and formations as a child. These ceremonial aspects “informed his personal movement skills” and within “the parades, large colorful sweeping patterns in which the individual skills of the performers were subsumed, may have been an inspiration for his improvisational choirs later on” (Bradley 5). Much of Laban’s research focuses on what is around the individual and how it shapes their personal movement life. For him, this movement life was closely linked to the military, further supporting how his own father was responsible for making an artist out of his son, much to his own frustration.

Early Artistic Endeavors

The social and political lifestyle of an artist appealed to young Laban, who was asked to leave the military academy and take his unruly self elsewhere. The cafe life in Paris drew him in, but he was not making enough money as he bounced around Europe, spending time in Paris and Munich opening studios and teaching. The early 1900s found Laban as a widowed single parent of two children, however he was not ready to care for them, and they went to live with their maternal grandmother. By 1910, the artist was in financial distress despite having a few movement schools open and working as a freelance illustrator. This “never-ending struggle plunged Laban into a mental crisis in the spring of 1912”, and he seemed to disappear from society entirely (Doerr 24). A doctor suggested that fresh air was what his illness needed, and the dancer moved to Ascona in 1913.

Ascona became an artistic haven and a commune of sorts for movers to explore the craft in the nude. Laban felt that “the ground was to be touched, the air to be breathed, the wind to be felt on the skin, the night sky to be danced with”, and this setting provided

everything he and his students needed (Preston-Dunlop 29). This setting also provided Laban with lovers, although he had gotten remarried. This commune revitalized the artist, inspiring Laban to discover the movement choir, which were more “experiments, not products” (Bradley 13). The focus for these choirs was the journey and the process of discovery. These movement choirs involved large numbers of participants, all exploring body, effort, shape, and space together. Participants moved as one unit while having moments of individuality incorporated into the dance. They also explored how the essence of movement changed from person to person. His work in Ascona continued in the warm months, seeing the birth of two more Laban offspring, but the bliss would not last. The outbreak of WWI halted all instruction, sending students back to their home countries and away from the creative process.

Wartime Woes I

During World War One, Laban bounced back and forth from Germany to the safe haven of Switzerland as he attempted to find his footing and organize schools. Between financial hardships, five children, a never-ending stream of illnesses, several lovers, and fighting with the Dadaists, Laban struggled immensely. Yet he was still constantly working on defining his theory of choreutic and eukinetic movement. Despite his poor finances and stream of lovers, people were drawn to him and craved the teachings he had to offer. Mary Wigman, a very close follower of Laban’s work (though never a lover), had this to offer regarding the work: “Laban had the extraordinary quality of setting you free artistically, enabling you to find your own roots, and thus stabilized to discover your own potentialities, to develop your own technique and your individual style of dancing” (Preston-Dunlop 49). This is the same benefit that is

offered to an actor who studies this work today. Through his methods, the actor can come to discover what their own style is and come to discover the movement life of a character.

After the war, Laban was in no better place than when he started. He now had eight children and he refused to be the primary caregiver, though he at least offered financial support. He continued to keep working on his theories, answering many questions raised by the artistic world. He was constantly refining what the spatial affinities were, his work on dance notation, and how to better describe movement in the most concise way possible. “Laban’s system immediately raises questions relating to the meaning of life, the origins of thought and being, the essence of the world, and the place of humankind in the universe”, making it highly approachable to the philosophical and scientific boom that occurred between the world wars (Doerr 82). However, this dancer, philosopher, teacher, and scholar was continuously ill making life all the more difficult in financial crises.

The Crystal Gains Structure

Despite being prone thanks to illness, Laban was starting to discover the massive significance of movement. He saw that “the actuality of the moving body communicated dance concepts and beliefs far more directly than written or spoken words” (Preston-Dunlop 55). Being injured made teaching movement and dance near to impossible. Laban continued to battle poverty, illness, injury, and displacement until the early 1920s, when things started to turn around for him. Within this decade we see Laban’s movement work take to the professional stage for the first time at the Mannheim National Theatre. This time also saw the birth of his notation system Labanotation, a system that is still widely used today to record and

archive choreographic material. A simpler version of Labanotation exists within motif writing, a system more concerned with noting the essence of the movement instead of aiming for absolute correct recording.

1925 saw Laban on stage, though not for the first time, and the cross disciplinary connection between dance and acting became clearer. He was a marvel to behold as he moved amongst his pupils in choreographic works. It has been said that his “performance strength lay in the grotesque”, mystifying audiences (Doerr 101). Yet, his stage presence did not last long after an injury in 1926, when he “fell off the stage while performing in *Don Juan*” (Bradley 21). After a long recovery period, Laban turned his focus to legitimizing the art of the movement choir in the 1930s, and hoped to find a place for them in modern Germany. He continued to slowly build a foundation of success (a foundation that would later crumble come wartime) building schools, refining the movement choir, and constantly recovering from illness.

Wartime Woes II

The societal tension in the pre-World War Two world was not lost on Laban, who felt a sense of impending doom approaching, partially in thanks to anti-Semitic attitudes on the rise. Valerie Preston-Dunlop remarks on how the Laban family was considered anti-Semitic: “Although there is no evidence of anti-Semitic content in any document from the Laban family, Laban must have been brought up in a larger society in which those intolerances were commonly expressed” (5). This aspect of social tension should not be overlooked by the acting student. The social and political climate has an impact on the artistic community in some way, and the acting student must keep this in mind as they create. The rise in anti-Semitism as an

appropriate attitude threw Laban into certain actions that can be seen as both necessary to his survival yet detrimental to those around him. Yet this was not the only doom felt by the dancer.

More tension could be found in the advances of industrial technology in the face of modern warfare. Workers had to keep up with the demands of industry or be replaced. Laban's attitude toward this revolution could be seen as twofold, with both being useful to actors. A man ahead of his time and nearly predicting our twenty-first century obsessions with technology, Laban had a "profound anxiety that the machine would dominate man's soul to the profound detriment of human culture" (Preston-Dunlop 6). The actor in training could use some of this anxiety, as our own times are rapidly changing and technological advances threaten to push us away from our fellow man while claiming to bring us closer together. Advances in Laban's time forced him to begin finding connections, both with other parts of humanity and within the own body, aiding him in his theoretical formulations. This also forced Laban "to put his body behind his words", a concept that should not be lost on an actor, though more often than not is quite lost (Preston-Dunlop 6-7). Laban could have allowed the doom to overtake him, and it did at certain points in his life, but instead was persistent in seeking the answers in his own body, looking to find the answers in a physical sense. An actor on the stage will often be missing this physical sense, not connecting the physical life to the words being spoken.

The Third Reich

The Third Reich had a profound impact on how Laban conducted his business and how his personal choreographic style emerged. The National Socialists were quickly gaining power in Germany. Otto von Keudell, the head of the Department of Music and Visual Arts for the Third

Reich, became Laban's boss after Laban was hired by the state to help define German dance. This support from such a key member of the party meant good things for Laban, regardless of the dancer's own non-German nationality, as the demand for control swept through the artistic realm in Germany. The intense desire for structure was paramount, as dance "could only continue to function as an art if recognized by the regime" (Doerr 154). All art was all tied with the intensely proud nationalism found within Germany of this time, as the government attempted to highlight and claim what was considered the true culture of the nation. This call to German action discovered Laban at a pivotal time in his career, having endured various financial hardships as he struggled to specify what his space harmony and effort theory was. This might have been the kind of push he needed to jumpstart his creative process in the creation of his theories.

Possibly what came to be the catalyst for the Nazi push against his work was the philosophies Laban began to explore during his time in Paris and Munich. Within his research and artistic creations, Laban was concerned with "the role of the individual within the concerns of the group" (Bradley 7). He was focused on finding how each piece fit into place within a society. It is not surprising that the National Socialists originally attached themselves to this, since a nation working toward a common, unified goal portrayed a powerful and dominant society. However, Laban praised the individual and how they could contribute to a group, bringing their own strengths and weaknesses with support coming from all involved. His movement choirs, which originally caught the eye of men like von Keudell, are what eventually showcased this ideal: the parts working as individuals to create a whole work, celebrating both

group unification and what the individual brings. This is what got Laban in trouble in the mid to late 1930s.

The Fall

This ever popular concept of the movement choir quickly found its way into Nazi hands, as the Third Reich attempted to name and own what was considered German culture. Movement choirs were “renamed ‘community dance’ (*Gemeinschaftstanz*) and formalized under the Ministry for Enlightenment and Propaganda” (Kew 78). This left the door wide open for the potential of misguided interpretation of Laban’s work. The German culture was struggling to define itself, partially in thanks to the intense desire for control the Nazi party had and was quickly gaining. This included defining what it meant to be a German practitioner of dance. Laban saw a huge boost in his popularity, and a much needed financial gain thanks to it, and his "movement choirs were promoted as a way of bringing ritual-symbolic festivals back into everyday life - special occasions where people could take pleasure in a mystical merging with a mass in a cultic celebration" (Kew 77). It is no wonder, given this description of the main course of Laban's work, that the Nazi party attached itself to the movement style.

The biggest issue was the open ended nature of the movement creations Laban presented to the party. The inner/outer focus (how the inner attitude differs from what is seen on the outside and vice versa), linked with his whole/part/whole theory (the parts affect the whole and the whole affects the parts), allows for the audience to interpret the movement as they see fit. His creation for the Olympics had a juxtaposing inner/outer life. While on the outside the dance seemed to conform "to Nazi ideology, the inner reality did not sufficiently

encode Nazi martial values" (Kew 82). Laban also valued the performer's experience over that of the audience. Here is where he ran into trouble. By celebrating the power of an individual inside of a group and refusing to glorify the horrors of war, Laban placed a target on his back. Laban was beginning to be unuseful; his work could not be exploited by the Party for their own personal gain. It could not be "used as a communal bonding mechanism supporting Nazi values and as a sufficiently unambiguous communication tool", and placed yet another target on the dance practitioners back (Kew 82).

The minister for propaganda, Goebbels, puts it perfectly when speaking of Laban's work: "If he fails to accommodate his art to these new principles, then he shouldn't be surprised if life passes him by" (Kew 83). This could have ended up extremely violent in nature, considering what was happening to many non-dominant groups across Eastern Europe. Instead, Laban was simply fired and replaced. It was *Frankenburger Würfelspiel* that replaced the work of Laban for the Olympic ceremonies, a movement piece that incorporated text which drew "an analogy with Hitler in promoting the ideal of a redemptive 'good leader'" (Kew 88). This replacement piece was more in line with what the State wanted to portray and Laban was thrust back into the poverty that comes with unpopularity.

Fully Formed

In the final decades of his life, Laban fluctuated between slowly recovering from various illnesses, financial and emotional depressions, and balancing teaching his work. Between dance concerts, theatre direction, teaching at various universities, and constantly writing, Laban kept himself extremely busy from the end of the war to his death. Choreographic works remain in

the dozens in the later part of his life and his influences expand across the globe. Individuals such as William Carpenter (Jungian theory), Anne Hutchinson (Notation), Doris Humphrey (Reconstruction), and Kurt Jooss (Ballet) all cite Laban as inspiration. As his circle of influence spread, more and more universities and training programs adopted his work to be taught in conjunction with dance and movement for the actor. In 1953, he was suddenly “hospitalized with Typhoid Fever” (Hodgson & Preston-Dunlop 84), once again putting a halt to the seemingly unstoppable flow of work. Up until his death in 1958, he “continu[ed to] research and write” and give lectures and papers at various institutions (Hodgson & Preston-Dunlop 85). But there was much more than illness weighing him down.

Laban was beginning to feel “extreme guilt when contemplating his gross and life-long neglect of his children” (Preston-Dunlop 268). This guilt, when combined with the long bouts of illness and loss of independence as he aged, weighed heavy on Laban. He attempted to make amends with his many children while trying to secure the future of his work. Laban “[found] himself an employee in his last years” (Preston-Dunlop 268), a position he never really experienced in his life and one that stifled his free spirit. He eventually had to comply to being in this position, as his lifetime of illness overtook his vitality. The final lecture, given at the Conference of the Joint Council for Education, occurred in February of 1958 (Preston-Dunlop 269), just months before his death in July of the same year.

The Dance Lives On

The work has never stopped being explored. Laban’s circle of influence is ever-growing postmortem after casting a wide net during his lifetime. From the aforementioned Mary

Wigman to those who gave birth to the American modern dance movement, his work helped to shape the world of dance we know today. Irmgard Bartenieff was one such pupil (and non-lover) that took these theories and revolutionized the physical therapy practice. The patient was a passive participant in therapy practices up until her work. She pushed for patients to be active in sessions and fully take ownership of their recovery. She created her nine fundamentals and a series of six exercises that added a whole new piece to the movement work Laban was doing. Now, Laban Movement Analysis and Bartenieff Fundamentals are taught in conjunction with each other, as they have become interwoven.

I had the opportunity to meet two first generation practitioners that worked with Irmgard Bartenieff at a hospital as physical therapists. Though these two women are in their late 70s, they are constant movers still dedicated to the craft, being able to out move any age. They both described Bartenieff as a very 'floaty' individual, to use a Laban term, who seemed to remain on an ethereal plane. Like a wisp of smoke, she would enter rooms and expand her presence to connect everyone together to achieve a common goal. Such firsthand accounts are becoming harder and harder to come by, as these students are aging, though they have never stopped researching.

It is the same dedication to the work that has brought Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) practitioners like me to continue to serve students. With this rich history of the work in mind, I approached the creation of a special topics course at Virginia Commonwealth University. I wanted my students to be given this small sample of the historical background of Laban, in the hopes that they would gain a deeper understanding of why it was originally created. Though his

death was nearly 60 years ago, with his body resting “under a headstone that says, simply: A life for Dance”, the work has never been stagnant (Bradley 38). Acting teachers are constantly asking their students to consider the ‘moment before’ as they work on text. Considering this moment before makes the actor more specific. Understanding Laban’s history gives the same benefit to someone studying his work. This launches us into deeper explorations and new discoveries as each new generation of movers is introduced to Laban.

Interlude 1: Laban and Chekov

The following interlude serves to show basic connections of LMA to other theatre practitioners and theories. In between each chapter, a new interlude with a different practitioner is explored. With these interludes, I hope to demonstrate the universality of Laban's work, as well as investigate various pedagogical tools the work offers students when combined with theories they might already be familiar with. The first of these explorations is Michael Chekov, followed by the works of Anne Bogard, and Patsy Rodenburg.

The work of Chekov coincides with the work of Laban extremely well. A practitioner of Laban's work is familiar enough with their own physical life that they are able to manipulate it in the ways described by Chekov. This becomes apparent when working with the imaginary body and center as described by Chekov. By focusing on a specific imaginary center, it "will suddenly or gradually co-ordinate all your movements, influence the entire body attitude, motivate your behavior, action and speech, and tune your psychology in such a way that you will quite naturally experience the sensation that the thought element is germane and important to your performance" (Chekov 89). By combining the two physical theories, an actor is better able to find the motivation and more fully experience the sensations that a character must experience. I think of this as layers: first the actor must layer on the works of Laban,

layering on space, body, effort, and shape (in that order), then they are better able to approach the work of Chekov which serves as the final layer in the creation of the physical body.

Chekov posits that the actor must explore “four qualities...Ease, Form, Beauty, and Entirety”, and I suggest that these qualities are able to line up and supplement various theories of Laban (Chekov 13). It is through the combination that the student can better grasp both of these physical acting theories and become a more engaging performer.

For Ease, Effort comes to mind. Chekhov mentions the word “heavy” often when describing Ease. He states “your *character* on the stage can be heavy...but you yourself, as an *artist*, must always use lightness and ease as a means of expression” (Chekhov 13). This idea of lightness and heaviness is certainly in the work of Laban within the realm of Effort qualities. Weight resides in the vertical plane and a movement analyst can certainly akin the incorporation of it to a quality of ease. Ease can also find a connection to Flow, in Laban’s terms being either bound or free. An actor’s character might be heavy or bound, but the actor themselves must remain free, open, able to receive, and therefore light.

Form demands specificity and for the actor to be extremely aware of how they can use their body to portray a character. Chekhov suggests that “*How* you, the artist, play [a character] will depend on how complete and perfect is your feeling of *form*” (14). This aligns with Laban’s theory of Body, in that the actor must become aware of how they utilize their parts in day to day activities. Once an individual is able to recognize their own movement patterns used in life, they can better approach what a character needs in their movement patterns for the stage. The

word *How* is often associated with the eight Efforts, giving movement the specificity that Chekhov is desiring. Both Body and the eight Efforts assist the actor with this idea of Form.

Beauty is tricky, having particular, positive connotations associated with it so the actor is unable to acknowledge the darker side of Beauty. The overarching idea of inner vs outer that dominated so much of the work Laban did can be linked with Beauty. An actor must dissociate what is beautiful on the inside versus on the outside of the characters they play. In other words, “True beauty has its roots *inside* the human being, whereas false beauty is only on the *outside*” (Chekhov 15). An actor with a clear understanding of the difference between the inner life and outer life of a character will better grasp this idea of Beauty. Laban also had a clear idea of qualities having polar opposites, as with the efforts in the platonic solid of the cube, and Beauty has the same pulls. It has “its good and bad sides, its right and wrong, its opposite and opposite”, and while Laban’s work does not consider this idea of right and wrong, the idea of the opposite and opposite is certainly there (Chekhov 15).

Finally, Chekhov has Entirety, a concept that also finds a link with an all-encompassing theory of Laban: Whole/Part/Whole. Chekhov, when describing Entirety, uses nearly identical language: “Failure of inability to relate a part to its entirety might make it inharmonious and incomprehensible to the spectator” (17). Laban saw the importance of linking the individual parts to the whole by observing factory workers. Each had a task important to the individual, with each task being vital to the overall workings of the factory. Each practitioner places importance of this relation. This also incorporates one of the original names of Laban’s work,

space harmony, and demonstrates that the harmonious connections an actor must feel in the body are paramount in character creation.

As a bonus thought, I see a particularly strong connection between Chekhov's theory of Radiating and Bartenieff's principle of Spatial Intent (moving with intention and feeling the pull as you reach into space). The simple action of reaching an arm out in front of the body can carry so much more meaning if the mover employs spatial intent. The same goes for the actor who does or does not actively radiate on stage. When combined with the work of Chekhov, Spatial Intent becomes less about physical action and more about mental intention. It becomes more focused on the energy the actor is giving and willing to receive.

Chapter 2: Looking Past the Efforts, from Dance to Acting Theory

When looking at the seemingly endless list of what Laban contributed, a majority of it rests in the choreographic realm of artistic endeavors. His work with dancers assisted in the creation of his movement theories in order to strengthen the movement being performed. While he began his career working and dancing with dancers, after he fled Germany his work took on another focus, as explained in detail in the previous chapter. His work in the industrial field brought Laban back into the spotlight after fleeing for his life. By practically applying the theories of space harmony, he was able to increase productivity of workers all while lifting morale. The management consultant F. C. Lawrence worked closely with Laban to study how “body type and predilections for particular permutations of expression and pathways played a role in the productivity and job satisfaction” (Bradley 35). The human race was evolving, in regards to our physical life, along with the new industrial technology, thus causing a new form of movement that needed to be analyzed. Injuries and muscular fatigue ran rampant in these factories, calling for a solution to the physical exhaustion. The hyper focused observational techniques that Laban’s theories offered made the predilections of the workers visible. Through discovering these personal movement patterns, applying specific Laban ideals such as exertion/recuperation, and catering to the individual, productivity and morale was increased.

Although this was a very practical and financially attractive application of his work, it should not be overlooked that the industrial boom of his time had a profound impact on the

arts and movement styles. Laban himself stated “the industrial revolution has given new concepts of aesthetical beauty to all the arts, for the newly acquired knowledge of the workers’ movements has led to a fresh mastery of movement on the stage” (Laban *Mastery* 103). Laban was already seeing the connections of the world around him to that of the stage world he so loved. Taking cues from Francois Delsarte, Laban began to truly dive into the meaning of “dealing with parts in order to deal with the whole” (Evans 22). This whole/part/whole side of Space Harmony allowed the observer to be specific and see the details as they fit together like a puzzle to create the overall picture. This also meant that the significance of the overall picture could be observed before being broken down to the individual pieces.

Applying the whole/part/whole theory further, Laban saw that work was only a singular part to the whole picture that made up the daily lives of us all. He saw “the absolute congruity of man’s working movements and his expressive movements” to be “a staggering revelation” (Laban *Mastery* 103). Each physical detail of an individual is what creates the whole physical life of who they are as a moving human and so are vital to the way we interact with our world. It is this whole/part/whole analysis that the actor can use to begin to analyze the character. This does not apply only to the physical, mental, and emotional analysis, but must also include how this one part of the production fits into the whole vision of what the playwright has crafted. Using whole/part/whole as a form of script analysis can allow the actor to be specific when it comes to relating to others and reacting to events occurring in the world of the play.

It is in the combination of the work he did with dance artists and factory workers that the application of his theories starts to make its way into the acting classroom. In Karen Bradley's book *Rudolf Laban*, his thoughts on acting are explored. He saw that

he was at the gateway of a new form of acting; one that honored the approaches of the past, but that incorporated new ways of experimentation and awareness of human growth and psyche. His approach was, and is, an entry into performance that is at once authentic, embodied, empathetic and educated.

(Bradley 51)

He was beginning to see the lack of authenticity around him being constructed by actors disconnected from their bodies. He wanted to bring attention not only to the whole/part/whole that makes up a character for an actor, but also dive into the inner/outer life of the individual, making the characters more alive and reactive to their environment. Although his theories most commonly live in the dance world, he did not feel that way. His writings revolve around *tanztheatre*, or dance theatre, combining the two with "movement study at the 'common denominator' and the 'common animator' for both" (Bradley 41). One could not exist without the other or seek to grow without incorporating elements from each. That is why, when choreographing for a dance concert or musical, I seek dancers who can act and connect the inner life of the emotion in the movement to the outer life of the dance. It creates more dynamic and rich performances that leaves the audience wanting more.

The Moving Actor

Laban himself was even writing on the importance of applying his work to actors, specifically noting various applications in his book *The Mastery of Movement*, published first in 1950. The objective and tactic oriented Stanislavski would most likely agree with the opening lines of the first chapter: “Man moves in order to satisfy a need. He aims by his movement at something of value to him” (Laban *Mastery* 1). This lesson on specificity is certainly one young actors could benefit from, forcing them to highlight the importance and need for every movement executed on stage. Further in this chapter, Laban offers a warning to the unspecific actor saying “imitation does not penetrate to the hidden recesses of man’s inner effort” and how we must “think in terms of movement” to satisfy this need for specificity (Laban *Mastery* 20).

This is where the hidden, subconscious, inner life of the actor must come to the conscious, aware, and outer realm. The connection starts to become “a bridge across their perceived internal-external divide, and finally serves as a key that unlocks unacknowledged imaginative potential”, a concept that will be continuously explored throughout this writing (Anderson 63). By expanding the perceived potential within a theatre artist, new discoveries abound, breaking through the limits someone has placed on himself. These self-created walls stifle impulses and therefore kill any chances for growth within the actor. Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) also allows for a deeper appreciation of the body you are born with, a fact that can be “initially discomfoting” to the young moving actor, who is extremely out of touch with

themselves physically (Anderson 64). Here is work that can link the mind, body, and emotional lives of the students, who can then apply such a link within characters on stage.

In Theresa Mitchell's book *Movement: From Person to Actor to Character* the purpose for Laban's work being incorporated into actor training is explored in part two. She explains "these explorations will help you develop a better understanding of your personal movement potential, your affinities as an actor, and various pathways available for creating a character and accessing expressive behavior" (63). Through the use of LMA, Mitchell suggests what Laban was delving into with his work with Lawrence: you must first understand your own movement life in order to alter it to match that of a character. This is a concept that I will keep coming back to, having found it across all areas of research. Working with this material causes a physical and emotional paradigm shift. Actors working with LMA are constantly evaluating and reevaluating themselves, the worlds they enter, and the characters they play. Such shifting should be a lifelong quest, never fully accepting that you have gained total understanding. There is always something left to be discovered as each character is played by an actor.

For Laban, it all came down to awareness. It was one thing to study, be knowledgeable, and practice the theory, but if the mover was not physically making the connections of this mental process then it was for naught. It is a very specific "two-way process of mind influencing movement and movement influencing mind...a crucial awareness which the actor must acquire" (Hodgson & Preston-Dunlop 40). This is why the instruction of LMA must be twofold: the mental side of the theories combined with physical applications and approaches to them. If one part is missing, the whole picture of understanding for the student will be incomplete.

Instructor Support

In striving to give students whole and complete training that will boost the confidence of the performer, the instructor of LMA is doing the student a disservice by only teaching them the eight efforts. Instead, instructors must find which parts of this complicated theory to include in addition to what is traditionally taught. It is said that “the whole vocabulary developed by Laban enables the theatre practitioner...to become more aware and confident about grouping and movement motivation”, which will in turn make performances live deeply (Hodgson & Preston-Dunlop 42). The instructor must give the individual the proper tools they need, to fill in the holes missing in their movement training with LMA so they will be better served when out in the world creating works on their own.

The instructor of Laban must move beyond simply running through the eight efforts. This pigeon holes the student’s understanding of the work and limits what could be explored. Instead, effort should be thought of as “a journey into the terrain of the internal range of choices each person has, the hidden as well as the outwardly expressed” (Bradley 43). This could mean thinking of effort in terms of mask and counter mask: hiding what is beneath the desired exterior until the character is unable to keep their true self hidden. An individual has an entire range with one effort, and can call upon it in various percentages to achieve the reaction desired. This begins to take the incorporation of the efforts and pushes the student to explore their own vast array of possibilities. The acting student therefore should be encouraged to understand that the “effort MODIFIES action, as opposed to BEING action” and move past playing at what the effort is to them (Bradley 119). Effort should instead fill the intention

behind the movement, and link with the actor's choice of tactic to gain the overall objective in the scene or play. When the physical life is supported by the mental struggles and emotional conflicts a character must deal with throughout the production, truthful characterization is attained. However, all must be supported by the breath, seen as the all-encompassing foundation to all theatrical work (*Figure 1*).

One such instructor and practitioner of Laban's work was Yat Malmgren, who created his own system of actor training that finds deep roots in Laban's work. This work combined the explorations being done in psychology and created a direct relation between mind and body. This meant that "the harmony of the components of physical movement was therefore an indication of the harmony of inner being" (Mirodan 32). When an actor was connected and understood their own movements, there came about a sense of ease to all movements, regardless of intentions. Malmgren, furthering what Laban had already posited, began to see a true connection between personality and how we reinforce parts of it through our daily movement lives. Physical perception of an individual plays into how we come to see ourselves. What the actor is then given is a streamlined "route to the deliberate design of a character, first and foremost as a physical process...[giving] a keyboard of acting possibilities and fingers nimble enough to" play through all of these options (Mirodan 43).

Human Instincts

The actor cannot ignore history or context while creating theatre, including how and why we came to move in the way we have. History is recorded by the winners. These winners have not usually appreciated anything deviating from the norm. In truth, "any deviation from

the main fashion or style of an epoch has been looked upon as abnormal and lacking in style” thanks to the “peculiarity of the human herd instinct” (Laban *Mastery* 92). Society tends to gravitate away from the abnormal and uncomfortable. I am most interested in this side of art and movement. Gothic architecture and works of art were compelling for a reason. They challenged the typical style of their times and captured a side of human behavior unexplored. Laban describes these works as having “every limb of the body, every finger or toe...gathering and scattering simultaneously into different directions in space, producing its own action life” (Laban *Mastery* 92). This push away from symmetrical action towards or away from the body is what makes the Gothic art figure so compelling to view. An actor must come to realize when movement is created in this way or in a pure, symmetrical way so they can fully embody the movement the production requires.

Young actors must start with themselves, learning how their own body moves and the various habits they have picked up over the years, before they can begin to understand crafting a character. The work of Laban allows for this close, personal examination. It “reveals physical idiosyncrasies to be combinations of a multiplicity of choices; thus, to overcome habit and develop a creative body, the student must radically expand his or her range of potential movements” (Bridel 46). Bringing attention to these layers of choices made by the student becomes one of the most important lessons found in LMA training for actors. It is the awareness that is often missing, meaning the subconscious choices hardly ever make their way into conscious understanding. Here is what Laban referred to as “awareness of process, of potential” within the mover (Bartenieff 13). Young actors are too focused on the end product,

of doing it 'right', instead of on the delicious exploration found in the rehearsal or classroom. LMA brings a common language to these settings and modes of communication between artists, and "with this fluency comes an almost limitless expressivity" (Bridel 46). Time is precious, and here are theories to assist with clarity and avoid wasted time within the classroom.

Importance of Fundamentals

Additionally, this expansion of the range of motion within actors can come specifically from Bartenieff's work. Her work with polio patients helped to revolutionize the physical therapy practice. Participants became active instead of passive in their own rehabilitation. The Basic Six exercises created by Bartenieff bring a specific body awareness to the bony landmarks, rotators, kinetic sequences, and breath organization. These are also heavily linked to "the developmental process of space and Effort relationships in increasingly complex body movements" (Bartenieff 87). This means that the actor with an understanding of Bartenieff Fundamentals will slowly start to gain understanding of these complex body movements. Again, Bartenieff saw the importance of bringing awareness to the "combination of kinesthetic and thought processes" within a body (Bartenieff 51). It begets a beautiful marriage of thought and movement. Actors who employ this marriage are physically and mentally connected, and therefore more compelling to watch.

In this same fashion, Bartenieff is able to explain in actor friendly terms, the often confusing LMA concept of function/expression through the idea of bodily awareness and lessons on human anatomy. An instructor with a high amount of anatomical knowledge can fall

into the trap of overwhelming the students with too much unnecessary information. Following the writing of Bartenieff in *Body Movement: Coping with the Environment* can help instructors avoid this trap, as she boils down the complexity of human construction to the absolute necessary pieces of information. The descriptions of the types of joints, bony landmarks, how the muscles connect to the bones, and the typical over dependence on the outer musculature is all written in laymen's terms. She posits that the "recognition of kinetic muscular chains - the sequence of muscles used in a movement - diminishes the exclusive dependence on individual muscle strength for movement power" (Bartenieff 21). This is the 'work smarter, not harder' concept, suggests that a simple understanding of these chains will help strengthen the mover in muscular function and give power to the expressive motions desired. She saw Laban's work as a way to empower connectivity and a person's bodily awareness through relating the function of the body part to the expression, what she called spatial intent.

The most important aspect of bodily awareness, according to Bartenieff, is the mover's connection to breath. Connecting breath to awareness is the foundation of all forms of movement, further supporting breath's placement as the support system of the pyramid in *Figure one*. Also linked with function/expression, attention to the breath brings "continuity...maintained by the relationship of breathing to awareness of muscular connections, not just as mechanical devices, but as kinetic chains, total configurations" (Bartenieff 20). Once again, whole/part/whole proves its worth. The anatomy of breathing is only a part of the whole body system, only fully understood in terms of how it affects the whole body. The pieces are just as important as the picture they create.

Unleashing Possibilities

Continuing to explore the work of Bartenieff and Laban bring up vocal applications of these theories. Though these two movement practitioners are more often than not only found in the dance studio, Bartenieff explored these dynamic physical movements with vocal quality in mind. An actor can employ the movement qualities to the voice through changing the emphasis. This is done by employing “variations in Effort elements [to] create distinctly different rhythmic phrasing” (Bartenieff 66). Specifically, Bartenieff saw this change in phrasing to be intricately linked to flow, being either bound (*Image 29 & 30*) or free. Mixing the two flows and the eight efforts can help an actor vocally color a piece of text. This can be extremely helpful when working with heightened and rhythmic text, as many drop into a sing song like quality or ignore vocal possibilities because they are overwhelmed by the language. In Chapter three, I describe using the efforts vocally as I coach actors through text, once again giving everyone a common language to work from and asking everyone to respect specificity.

I want my movement students to approach this work in terms of realizing and unleashing their full potential. Very few actor training programs at the university level, be them B.A. or B.F.A, will offer the opportunity for dance training. I see this as failing the acting student. LMA offers to fill in that massive gap in the education of young actors. Laban had very clear ideas about who could dance and who could not. He fully believed that “all people were potential dancers...not potential performers of steps, but potentially in touch with their own souls through the experience of gesture and moving” (Preston-Dunlop 64-65). It is my job to get

my students to get in touch with their true selves through movement so they are able to do the same when on stage portraying a specific role.

Interlude 2: Laban and Bogart

The Viewpoints work of Mary Overlie, further explored by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau, can be incorporated into Laban's movement theories in a multitude of ways. There is already a shared vocabulary between the two movement theories, sharing terms such as space, time, and shape. This overlap creates an overlap in understanding for the acting student when the two theories are combined into one exercise, created by the writer, described in detail below.

One activity, presented both at a freshman seminar at VCU (in a condensed capacity) and at the 2017 Southeastern Theatre Conference, combines the lanes and grid of Viewpoints with the eight efforts and spatial affinities of Laban. The purpose is to introduce concepts both movement theories for character creation to be both seen and felt by observer and participant respectively. Below is how these exercises played out and what was learned from teaching students this combination of theories.

It is better to have already introduced the lane exercise so the group is familiar with the expectations and various Viewpoints utilized. Likewise, the group needs to have been given some instruction and kinesthetically felt the difference in all the spatial pulls associated with the six words going on the cards. For this exercise, the instructor needs to create enough cards for each participant to have three. On the first set, the words light or strong are written, coming from the vertical plane (*Image 24*). The second, direct or indirect, coming from the horizontal

plane (*Image 25*). For the final, quick or sustained, coming from the sagittal plane (*Image 32 & 33*). Half of the group will receive one word or the other, creating combinations that result in one of the eight efforts. The order does not matter, as long as each participant receives one card from each of the planes, thus resulting in an effort quality. Depending on how large the playing space is will depend on how many lanes are allowed. Using four lanes is a good median for most spaces, and the participants need to be sure to understand the boundaries of their respective lane. To start, participants are only given one card and must start the lane activity utilizing this spatial affinity in all their movements. If desired, the instructor might put on some music to help focus the participants. The next card is added after the participants have explored for some time, and the activity begins again. This time, everyone must use two spatial affinities in all movements as they work through the Lanes. When ready, the third card is added, creating an effort within each of the movers. This includes: float, punch, glide, slash, dab, wring, flick, press.

As they continued moving in the Lanes, embodying the effort given to them, the instructor should add more layers found in the Viewpoints work. This could be implementing “2 up 2 down” (a Viewpoints exercise where four participants work, with two being standing and two sitting at all times) or having the lanes switch to the grid or an open Viewpoints session. Whatever the activity evolves into, the participants must stay within the effort life stated on their cards. Observers are asked to describe the various physical characters that come out of this activity, giving specific reasons why they see and feel what they describe. Participants also must dictate the emotional and mental qualities that came to exploring this specific physical

life. The idea of stereotypes, tropes, and stock characters can be seen within each participant as the discussion continues.

Based on the feedback given by participants, each of the eight efforts had one of these tropes appear. Depending on which effort they ended up with, participants fully became the character that came to them and committed to a bold and specific choice. For float, many felt whimsical, air-headed, and like a young member of royalty who has yet to discover their power. This effort was also viewed as a very laid back, easy going individual, with the indirect quality of float seeming linked to a substance user. Punch felt powerful, demanding, extremely determined, and focused on a goal. Observers specifically noted that punch seemed like a determined politician in a position of power needing to get their point across. Glide became a more focused airy attitude, many stating that they felt like a fairy or other mythical creature. The affinities that create glide make it a close relative of float, directness being the only difference, a relation that was quickly picked up on by observers. They noted the specific difference through describing the intention of the character, seeing glide as more determined than float. With slash came unhinged attitudes. Much like the float/glide relation, punch/slash are related in the same way, with the horizontal affinity being in opposition. Slash took all the power that punch contained but made it indirect and therefore more terrifying. Participants felt like they were on the hunt for their next victim while observers became very uneasy with the energy being portrayed by those using slash. Next came dab, with characters like an alert guard, ninja, or even Robin Hood coming to observers and participants. There was also a quality of needing to get somewhere fast but the character couldn't be seen running, as in a rush to the

bathroom. Wring was challenging for the groups, particularly because of the muscular effort it takes to be indirect, strong, and sustained. Participants and observers alike aligned this movement with grief, depression, and suffering thanks to the tension. One observer hit on Laban's concept of inner/outer, thinking that wring could be an inner attitude that is hidden within the character. When participants moved this attitude, monumental changes occurred. They suddenly had a secret that the audience wanted to find out, though they were closed off from discovering it. Flick remains a cousin to dab, with their difference being in the horizontal plane. Participants felt very unfocused and flighty, unable to concentrate on one thing for an extended period of time. Many mentioned becoming a character much younger than themselves, and even started to bring in animal work for this effort. Squirrels, bugs, fish, and birds specifically were brought up thanks to their quick actions and short attention spans. Finally, press contained a controlled version of the power wring had, portraying authority figures who would not budge. Business associates, judges, and ancient royalty came to mind.

While the above represents only a small portion of what was explored and discovered, it is important to note that each individual had their own reaction and connotations associated with the eight efforts. It is the responsibility of the instructor to not stifle these reactions, since they can offer the class new insight to how one could move through these body attitudes. This research is constantly in progress, seeking feedback from all ages and levels of experience. The overlap between Laban and Bogart is too great to not explore it further, striving to find where exercises could be combined like the one described here.

Chapter 3: Details from the Classroom

This chapter brings up the major component of the writing, a special topics course to conduct research while assisting in the student's exploration of Laban Movement Analysis. Students actors were the focus, specifically connecting them to their bodies through these theories. The design of the curriculum of this course was meant to supplement the training students were already receiving at Virginia Commonwealth University, thus furthering the physical connections of actors to their bodies. It is this connection that I believe to be one of the most vital parts of a young actor's education that will prepare them for a career on the stage. In this section, I describe this special topic course, but it should be noted that this work is constantly in progress as the theory is developed and my instruction style evolves. The original construction of the course was certainly not what ended up being the final product described in these pages, as the course adapted and grew along with the students and my instruction. A final version of the syllabus for this course is included in Appendix A, with details further in this chapter. Also included is the flow of the course, exercises used to teach Laban's theories, some feedback from students, and why certain readings were chosen. There are several appendices that are made up of the materials used in class: A list of texts (Appendix B), course forms and handouts (Appendix C), and images from the work explored (Appendix D). All have been

included with the hopes of archiving the work explored and allowing for others to approach teaching these concepts.

The Set Up

Once the instructor has knowledge of the baseline understanding of the students involved, learning can begin. While, to use the language of Laban, parts of the course needed to be adjusted after becoming aware of the understanding of students, the whole structure remained the same. The syllabus (appendix A) had to adhere to a very rigorous schedule due to VCU's academic calendar for the Spring of 2017. The course was scheduled for one day a week in a three-hour time slot. While the long session allowed for me to cover a vast amount of material, it did come with challenges. Meeting once a week proved to be difficult, as students and instructor alike became disconnected with the work done in the previous week. In hindsight, a course of this nature would do better in a twice a week setting, allowing for more interaction of student and instructor. Ideally, this course would be offered for at least two hours twice a week, keeping everyone connected while covering everything in a longer session. There is a vast amount of material and projects that are covered in this course, so more frequent meetings would be ideal.

Among the material of LMA covered, there are several projects that link his work with text for the students to explore. A majority of the grading was linked with their participation and attendance, but the remaining percentage was dedicated to four different presentations and two papers. These papers all dealt with observing movement on film and on the stage, specifically one of the productions done at VCU. The two shows being produced at the time of

this course were *A Time to Kill* and *Spamalot*, each providing students with unique and specific physical characters to observe and discuss in Laban's language. For the film paper, this had to be from a video chosen by the student and approved by the instructor. I provided students with a list to choose from, which included dance, physical theatre, and excerpts from movies. This list was meant to be a jumping off point showing them what I was looking for in this video analysis project.

The four projects of the course included the following: A monologue presentation, scene work, observation presentation, and an embodied poem. The monologue work came first in the semester, but only after the four pillars of LMA had been explored in some way. This allows for the student to begin incorporating the work into the text analysis and character creation. Next was the observation presentation, an accumulation of three separate field trips taken on campus during class asking students to physically embody what they had observed. Along with the embodied poem, the observation presentation came after the midterm. For the embodied poem (*Images 24-33*), students picked a text from a provided list to layer with abstract movement. This movement was inspired by the words on the page and fueled with the work of Laban. Finally, the scene work came at the end of the semester, once most of the instruction had taken place. The scenes served as an all-encompassing outlet to showcase how much of the material the student had absorbed physically. These will be described in detail further in this chapter regarding the specific material selected for this work.

Each class began with a warm up deeply connected to the breath which allowed for mind/body centering to take place. The first week, was focused on teaching the class

Bartenieff's basic six exercises. This became the foundation for our warm ups for the remainder of the semester. Depending on what is being covered that day determined how many exercises from the basic six we did. I often added in more preparatory elements to fully prepare the students for that day's work. Other preparatory exercises included short authentic movement sessions, partner stretching, Droznin exploration, tabata exercises, yoga, and full body breath journeys. After the class learned some basic scales, particularly the defense and diagonal scales, these were also incorporated into the warm up process. These scales focused on either truly feeling the spatial pulls or on the spatial affinities assigned to each pull. This got the students fully connected to their body, breath, and mind as they moved through the scales. Ultimately, the goal was to give the actor another set of tools they can use outside of the classroom. No one will be there to warm them up once they are working in this industry, so the basic six and other exercises we covered can be used to warm up.

Who, Why, and What They Know

The course was initially designed for upperclassmen, who had possibly encountered the work of Laban in a previous class. Due to the rigorous schedule VCU students must adhere to in the BA and BFA program, the course needed to be opened up to all levels. This actually worked out for the better, as the roster ended up being a mix of students who had little to no movement training and those who had already completed a few movement courses. This created a challenge for the way the course was structured, forcing me to adapt certain lessons with the novice movers in mind. The range of their abilities brought a specificity to my teaching, causing me to be as clear as possible with instruction and coaching students through activities.

Partnering became easier thanks to the wide range of experience, giving upperclassmen the chance to make adjustments and coach their peers. Inexperienced freshmen and sophomores approached the work with fresh, unbiased attitudes, allowing for a deeper understanding to take place. I discovered that students who had previous knowledge of LMA came into the class with a bias or misunderstanding of what the work and what it could do for an actor. All of these different experiences and levels of knowledge created a diverse and useful classroom dynamic.

Before delving into teaching an actor the complex theory that is Laban Movement Analysis, an instructor must first determine where the class is in terms of understanding. A simple assessment tool (Appendix C) was used to gather this information. Within the assessment students were asked what they think Laban can teach them, they viewed and described a simple movement sequence performed by the instructor, and wrote goals for themselves to reach towards as the semester progressed. It was important to review these goals as an instructor as the semester progressed to ensure that each student was receiving the instruction they craved. This is why there was a separate review done by the student once the course had come to a close, used as a reflective process and to see what might have changed for them in how they see LMA. Students also wrote themselves a letter as part of the goal making process, that was read at the end of the semester. This letter shared the same uses as their created goals, but offered the instructor insight as to how the individual saw themselves in the movement field. Such text can come into play when creating devised works, discussed in Chapter four, further connecting the students to the work while giving them ownership over their educational process.

A number of the undergraduate acting students have most likely come into contact with Laban's work, though on a rudimentary level through a simple exploration of the efforts. It is important to understand if this rudimentary understanding is present or not in each student participant. This assessment should take place before any instruction occurs, even before the syllabus is discussed, so the information given is in its purest form with only the prior knowledge the student might have. By forcing the students to think about how Laban can be influential to the actor, before instruction even takes place, it offers the instructor vital information regarding the baseline of understanding in the class. When asked this introductory question half of the twelve students responded in a way that had body as the main focus. These six students wanted a deeper understanding of how their body moves so they can better perform on the stage. Four of them specifically noted that they suspected Laban's theory could help them become more character specific. Two thought Laban could help them connect to their breath more effectively, while two others thought the theory would help them overcome and understand the various tensions in their bodies. One student, who seemed to have a large amount of prior knowledge, specifically noted the use of the efforts to assist in getting specific when creating a character. Finally, one student had no inkling as to how Laban could help them on stage, but made it clear that they were very open to learning the connection.

In addition to discovering these assumptions about Laban's work, the students were asked to describe movement performed by the instructor. This was a very simple combination that combined aspects of body, effort, shape, and space in order to see how the students chose to describe the movement. Of the twelve involved, seven of them utilized some aspect of the

LMA language, whether they were aware of it or not. It is important to highlight this and point it out to the students. It further illustrates the practical usage of Laban's theory. Five of the students noted something specific about the body itself, be it mentioning the moving part or describing the body attitude. This concept of body attitude is one of the simpler parts of Laban's work. It asks the observer to note what connotations come to mind when viewing a body, be it still or moving, and make nonjudgmental assumptions about the individual being viewed. Although these five had no concept of what body attitude is, they already were describing the various positioning they saw the body make. Four attributed the movement to some sort of story, visualizing the *why* behind such movement, unknowingly demonstrating another practical application of this work. By seeing movement as part of the storytelling process, the actor can fully embody the character. Finally, two commented on the instructor's use of breath and how it helped in the moving of the sequence. This breath connection is especially important when working through the Bartenieff Basic Six, as all of her work is centered on the breath, the initiator for movement. Connecting an actor to their breath becomes the baseline of character creation in this work.

Body Beginnings

For the structure of this course, it was important that I started with the body, as young actors typically do not think about the specifics of their own body, let alone the body of a character. Starting with the body introduces the concepts of both Laban and Bartenieff in a practical and physical way that can then be used as a warm up for the remainder of the semester. Working closely with excerpts from Bartenieff's book *Body Movement: Coping with*

the Environment, students must first understand what the nine principles of her work are. It is essential to begin with these principles before moving on to learn the basic six, as the theory can assist with the understanding of what is going on with their body. I will keep coming back to this concept of language and the order of presenting the material. It comes down to the specific language used with an actor. It is one thing to hand them the words of Laban or Bartenieff and expect them to understand, it is an entirely other thing to boil the theory down into physical actions and verbs. The young actor is already too wrapped up in their head and busily self-commentating to effectively physicalize characters on stage. Effort theory provides them with a common language and starting with the body basics is a great way to get them there.

Instructing participants on the basic six becomes difficult when there are twelve of them and one of me, but dedicating an entire class meeting to this work ensures everyone receives the instruction and corrections needed. Careful observation is required of the instructor so that the corrections are appropriately made and this sequence can be executed properly throughout the semester by the students. Within this class it was important to ask the students to combine the nine Bartenieff Fundamentals (Dynamic Alignment, Breath Support, Core Support, Rotary Factor, Initiation and Sequencing, Spatial Intent, Weight Transfer, Effort Intent, and the Developmental Patterns) and the Basic Six Exercises (Thigh Lift, Pelvic Forward Shift, Pelvic Lateral Shift, Body Half, Knee Drop – *Image 26* – and Arm Circles – *Image 31*), which forced them to make connections across this body of work. Students found and discussed which of the basic six highlights which of the fundamentals. Thanks to the common language and the order

of instruction, the class was able to make the connections fairly quickly. After this discussion period, we went back to the floor and explored the basic six again with this deeper understanding of the logic behind the theory. A greater physical connection became clear, fully supported by the breath.

Here was where the first viewing of videos takes place, a piece of the course that was a part of nearly every class meeting. The goal here was to get the class to apply what was just learned in an observational setting, training their eyes to view movement through a Laban lens. Students were encouraged “to narrow down the number of features to those most important or most characteristic of the movement studied” (Bartenieff 39). This narrowing down was linked to whatever happened to be studied that day so a reflection of sorts took place regarding the material. If the students were able to view and articulate the theories covered in that class period, they were better able to physicalize and recognize these movements within their own bodies and each other. This was a way to ask the students to assess the work and apply it to everyday life, specifically as it relates to the use of the physical body. At this point in the semester, they had a limited Laban related vocabulary, but were still able to react to moving images in terms of the body. As we moved forward, students were asked to give more detailed verbal descriptions of what they were observing. Videos ranged from work done by those in the Laban community, dance performances, physical theatre works, athletics, and political figure interactions. Each video offered the class something different and was picked to fit that day’s lesson.

Although the basic body actions are in the overarching Body category, these were not explored until later in the semester, once all four pillars of Laban's work were explored. The incorporation of simple basic body actions was used to streamline and codify the movement creation process for an actor, especially one who has a block when it comes to the creation of movement. Working only with the basic body actions of flexion, extension, spring, change of weight, rotation, falling, and locomotion, the symbols get written on flashcards so they can be placed in any order. Students were given a basic understanding of what these seven basic body actions are and then were let loose to create their own movement phrases. This was to emphasize that although they may not be trained dancers or choreographers, they all had the ability to create dynamic and interesting movement thanks to the language of Laban. There are many different activities that can be done with body actions, including a way to devise movement that will be discussed in the following chapter.

Specifically Space

Once the theories relating to the body had been described and given to the class, the next pillar we explored was Space. In exploring the concept of Space, the specific affinities Laban assigned to the specific areas of space are most easily grasped by the novice. A good place to start is within the "platonic solids", the 3-dimensional shapes often found in a geometry class. Incorporating visual representations of the platonic solids was extremely helpful in teaching these affinities, as it offered a physical object that students could manipulate as they work through this theory. It was best to start simply, with a one dimensional pull, and work the class up to grasping the three dimensionality of the cube. Working with one

dimensionality, we have the octahedron, an eight sided solid figure resembling two pyramids on top of each other, fused by their bases. This is the simplest platonic solid due to the one dimensional pull. The basic affinities of light (high vertical space), strong (low vertical space), direct (horizontally across the body), indirect (horizontally opening the body), sustained (sagittally forward), and quick (sagittally backward) are assigned their spatial associations and physically explored. It was extremely important that the class did not remain sitting and listening to instruction, but rather physically explored the concepts as they were given.

This was a good time to check in with the class on their monologue search as they learned the spatial affinities. The presentations occurred a week or so before midterm, but it was helpful to have this check in a few weeks into the semester. Not only did it require they continuously become more and more comfortable with the text they had chosen, but it allowed for them to incorporate the physical work into some text. This exercise asked the student to choose one spatial affinity to explore as they performed the piece. While acting instructors push students outside of one dimensionality, this particular exercise challenged them to remain one dimensional. The reasoning is twofold: to force them into one specific physicality, which gets mirrored in their vocal life, and to prove to them just how uninteresting a one dimensional character can be.

Efficient Effort

Once body and space had been covered, effort was the next pillar to focus on. I made a point not to put it first because it was what most of them are familiar with. When discussing Laban for the first time with actors, they often are only aware of the eight efforts. Most

movement for the actor courses incorporate the efforts in some form or fashion, but only in the sense of the denotation of the words. The theory itself (the *why* behind the structure) is not explored or understood by the students. This creates a lack of connection within the student, thus causing a gap between the theory and body. A group of students might be able to articulate and discuss the concept of space harmony created by Laban, but this does not mean they will be able to physicalize the work. Introducing the eight efforts the first time needs a combination of the theoretical and physical for this trap to be avoided. Too much time spent on mentally processing the information will leave the physical lacking and vice versa. Too much time spent physicalizing without the mental process for what is being done will also create this disconnection. It was the purpose of this class to find the common ground between mentally and physically processing the work of Laban, with the goal of creating a more bodily connected actor.

The students had a concept of what the efforts are once we approached this portion of the course, as they covered them when discussing shape. The eight efforts fit logically into the platonic solid of a cube, correlating to the affinity assigned to them by Laban. In the order Laban assigned, these efforts are: Float (high, forward, right), Punch (low, back, left), Glide (high, forward, left), Slash (low, back, right), Dab (high, back, left), Wring (low, forward, right), Flick (high, back, right), Press (low, forward, left). The affinities associated with the dimensions found in the octahedron come together to form these efforts. This means, for example, that Dab will be light, quick, and direct, utilizing a fully three dimensional pull into space.

Working with the efforts was explored in terms of character creation so the student remained specific, avoiding the general, cliché, and indication. These fueled the character creation using text, always returning to it to back up the decision to use the specific effort chosen. Students must backup their choice of effort and have it be appropriate for the character they are playing. A character's effort life came into play as they related to others. Still using the organization of the cube, students started to see how characters who share similar qualities can work together in a scene to achieve a common goal. In contrast, if two characters shared one or none, conflict arose more easily. This meant that a character whose baseline movement quality is a punch (strong, quick, direct) found it difficult to interact with a character who is a Float (light, sustained, indirect) because they each physically approached life differently. As another example, a character with Glide (light, sustained, direct) as their baseline found much in common with a Dab (light, quick, direct) because two affinities are shared. By exploring the efforts in this fashion, more specificity can be explored by students as they crafted the physical lives of characters. Once the three concepts of body, effort, and space had been explored, the class was ready for shape.

Subtle Shape

The remaining pillar of Laban's work, shape, was left for last, as it is a difficult concept to explain and physically feel. The basic shape forms were the best place to start, as they are easily observed and physicalized by the student. These shape forms are pin, wall, ball, screw, and pyramid, and each was explored by the group together in various capacities. It was helpful to start with an 'all or nothing' approach, asking the students to fully embody the shape in the

most literal way possible. Then I was able to dial back the intensity to create a more naturalistic character. This helped them get the shape into the body first before finding a more practical application of such shapes.

A fun activity to explore these basic shape forms was the classic improvisation game of party guests. Here a host must invite various guests into their home and try to guess what kind of character they are. For the purposes of this course, the students were asked to pick one shape form and attempt to embody it as naturalistically as possible, providing the host with the challenge of observing which form they were in. Not only did this host have to discover which form their guests were in, but they had to incorporate the reveal of this discovery into a normal conversation. The host could not simply shout out what they thought a guest was incorporating. This naturally revealed specific characteristics within the guests while also dictating how they interacted with one another.

Once these shape forms had been explored, the class moved onto the more difficult side of shape. It is the modes of shape change that are the most difficult of this work, being hard to see until they are fully felt within the individual and observed on an outside other. Explained further in interlude three after this chapter, incorporating the work of Patsy Rodenburg with this aspect of Laban was extremely helpful when grasping this concept. Relating the modes of shape change to the circles of energy helped to connect the dots for acting students, especially those who had encountered Rodenburg's work in a voice class. It all came back to relating to the character's intention, desires, and how the modes of shape change assist with specificity when exploring the life of a character. There is always a reason a character moves from one

circle of energy to another, and the same is true for the modes of shape change. It is up to the actor to do their character research and discover why someone might be switching from circle/mode to circle/mode.

Malleable Monologues

Once the four major pillars of LMA had been fully explored, and students had been taken through multiple exercises, the course then shifted into fully working with text. The monologues had already been looked at once, utilizing a one-dimensionality as a challenge to the student, but were reviewed again with more specificity. Here was where the spatial affinities become a side coaching tool, providing a common language to be shared by instructor and student. By having only six words (light, strong, direct, indirect, quick, sustained) at my disposal, the side coaching became less distracting. I was able to be as specific as possible while keeping the coaching simple, keeping the student inside the moment of the text. Many actors tend to fly through monologues at a tempo that limits audience understanding. Simply asking them to be more sustained slowed them down and reminded them that the character was processing for the first time what was happening. Likewise, a character who was speaking to someone about a difficult subject might not be as direct with their focus. Giving the student the word “indirect” can help shift the focus quickly in the moment without having them drop out of the work to have you explain this concept. This also came into play when working to find the various juxtapositions inside of a text. The character might be speaking about a very dark event, but if the attitude surrounding the event was positive for the character, a lightness can be employed to create a more living moment.

Students were given the opportunity, later in the semester, to revive their monologue presentations, fully encompassing the explorations done in class. This way, we were all able to can note specific points of progress from start to finish. By exploring these pieces on three separate occasions when the student is at three different levels of LMA understanding, all involved saw how this work can assist the growing actor. The first showing highlighted one dimensional affinity, the second incorporated specified side coaching using the spatial affinities and eight efforts. For this final showing, very little side coaching took place. Instead, the student came in with distinct choices made, having had the first two experiences and been exposed to more LMA. Not only should clear choices be seen, but the student should be able to hold a discussion as to why they made those decisions, always relating back to what is within the text. Here is yet another instance where LMA moves from dance and choreography theory to acting theory and script analysis.

States and Drives

It is only after the class had fully covered the four main pillars of LMA, worked with some text, and done some close observation that we went even deeper into the theoretical aspects of the work. The concept of states and drives is not brought up often, doing the actor a major disservice. Here was more content to add to the common language and a research tool available to actors in terms of character creation, though these states and drives could be seen as overly general and might possibly pigeon hole an actor.

When it comes to drives, the class had a lot of experience with the action drive, which is made up of the eight efforts and lacks flow. This drive is extremely practical, serving a specific

purpose and, as the name suggests, keeping the mover as active as possible. The other three drives all include the effort factor of flow, giving them the name of transformation drive. Spell drive includes flow, space, and weight. This creates a very trancelike individual, with no attention given to time. As the name suggests, a character in spell drive will seem to be using magic to cast a spell as they live in their world. Passion drive includes flow, weight, and time. This drive is spaceless and filled with unchecked emotion. It is helpful to think of soap opera acting as an example of passion drive. Nothing is rational when in this drive and the character does not consider reason or logic when making decisions. Vision drive includes flow, time, and space. The missing effort factor here is weight, causing a rather otherworldly attribute to the character. This person is extremely focused putting attention completely in the sense of sight and shying away from physical action.

Where the drives use three of the effort elements, states use only two. States are linked with the internal process of an individual, and thus color the personal movement style of a character. A well-developed character will incorporate a variety of states, drives, efforts, and all other aspects of Laban's theories. There are six separate states, with no one character remaining in one state. Each has its opposite, much like the efforts have their opposites diagonally oriented in the cube. The awake state involves only space and time, focusing on intuition with very little attention given to emotion. Its opposite, the dream state, includes weight and flow. As the name suggests, this state is very much rooted in the emotions and body, producing a truly dream-like quality. The next pair is near and remote state. Near includes weight and time, which relies on the character being present and focused. Remote is

the opposite, giving a feeling of distance and deep set mental thought. The final pair is stable and mobile state, these names once again suggesting exactly what the state is used for. Stable state, weight and space, is not emotional in any way, being rooted in the body and mental thought. Mobile, flow and time, the other hand, is in constant flux and quite emotional. It should be noted that each of these states, as they include two effort qualities, contain four possible combinations. For example, stable state can be light and direct, light and indirect, strong and direct, or strong and indirect. Characters, to assist with specificity and changes in tactics, can employ these various states.

As tactics and objectives change, there is also a shift in states and drives. Calling attention to these is part of the script analysis and rehearsal process, providing information on who this character is, how they move in their world, and why they want what they want. The states and drive were taught in conjunction with text, specifically heightened text to keep the students as truthful and physically present as possible as the words demand such focus. Combining these with small snippets of text was a great way to get students to see the changing physicalization as their peers move through each state or drive, causing new discoveries to be made about the text. It was helpful to take small lines from a translation of a work that was not in the student's native language, pushing them even further into the body and away from overthinking about the words being spoken. For this class, I choose characters from Shakespeare's works that employed some sense of mystical power: Puck, Ariel, and The Weird Sisters to name a few. Students were able to focus on a character while utilizing a given

drive to convey meaning. What resulted were characters with a focus, purpose, and certain tone that a director could then further explore based on the concept of the production.

Carefully Constructed

Another portion of the class that came in the latter half of the semester was a small lesson on anatomy and kinesiology, to strengthen the mind/body connection. Once a student had knowledge of LMA, a deeper knowledge of the body occurred. This was not anything overly complex, remaining basic and relevant to a performer. Most importantly, we focused on the bony landmarks, the anatomy of breath, the foot's connection to the ground, and certain kinetic chains that flow through our bodies. While exploring, students were asked to be very hands on with each other, keeping in mind everyone's comfort levels and respecting boundaries.

This section of the course began with viewing some basic anatomy videos that easily organized a vast amount of material, presenting it in easily understood terms. I wanted the class to get a general overview of the skeletal and muscular systems, the types of joints, and the importance of fascia as it relates to their movement life. Handouts were provided so the students could refer to them in the future, becoming particularly useful when we moved into the Motion Capture Lab.

When it comes to the fascia, not many movers, let alone actors, are aware of the importance it plays in our day to day movement activities. This thin layer of connective tissue

helps to bind muscles together and is usually what gets injured when a mover feels a slight pain in the body. Like a snagged fishing net, an injury to the fascia will pull and cause pain in an unrelated part of the body. I brought in several objects to demonstrate the stretchy quality of this kind of tissue, including gummy worms, deflated balloons, exercise bands, and even a kitchen sponge. The sponge was to demonstrate proper hydration. Movement and physical activity is what hydrates the fascia, just like a sponge will soak up the most water when squeezed and released. I then took the class through a variety of hands on activities to try and sense the natural movement of each other's fascia. This manifests itself as a slight, wavelike undulation just under the surface of the skin. Once an actor is aware of the fascia, they are more linked into the proprioceptive sensations needed to be fully present on stage.

Despite the simplicity of the anatomy and kinesiology lesson given to the class, everyone left with a better sense of the construction of their body. Having this knowledge furthers an actor's connection, but only if the information given remains simple. If too many technical terms are introduced, the actor is too trapped in their head with trying to remember anatomical terms, rendering the knowledge useless. This information was vital once we moved into the motion capture lab.

Motion Capture Explorations

Thanks to the resources at Virginia Commonwealth University, I was able to secure some time in the motion capture lab for the students to really see themselves explore through space and embody different characters. This transition to the digital realm has many relevant applications, the most obvious being working on movies that demand a strong mover or

movement consultant for motion capture work. It also highlights a mover's lack of focus or extreme physical details as it picks up on every movement the body executes. Some images have been included in Appendix C for reference.

Not only did the time spent in the motion capture lab offer the students and instructor valuable information while working with technology, it gave all the chance to be a part of a collaborative project. Regardless of who was in the suits, every student was part of the process, from calibration to marker placement and even acting as movement coaches. Due to the fact that I had to be at the computer running the software for two of our three sessions, I relied on my students to help make the process run smoothly.

Calibration brought an opportunity for students to explore space in a specific manner. The system at VCU required us to wave an LED, T shaped wand around in front of each of the ten cameras (*Images 9-11*). For proper calibration, the student waving the wand had to move in a very high vertical plane, a midline horizontal plane, and within the lower level of the vertical plane. By specifically coaching using these Laban terms, my students were able to perform this process more efficiently and correctly, saving time during the calibration process.

Once an individual was inside the suit, markers were placed, as demonstrated in *Images 1-4*. Proper placement was extremely important, as the system was set up to form a human skeleton based on a predetermined layout. If markers are not placed properly along the various joints of the body, then the resulting figure on the screen will be morphed. This can be seen in FIGURE #?, where there were extra markers on the back of the body, causing a disfigurement of the posterior shoulder region. Placement required the students to be hands on with one

another, feeling where the joint hinges or rotates and placing markers on either side of each. Here is where they used the knowledge of Anatomy, Kinesiology, and Bartenieff Fundamentals to assist with marker placement.

With the participant in the suit, students became movement coaches during the session, following a list of my creation of movements to capture. The first on this list was the second half of the calibration process, where the system records the range of motion (ROM) (*Image 5*) of each suit. Here is where the work of Bartenieff was really useful, as the suited individual fully explored the range of motion throughout the whole body. This included using the rotary factor, extension and flexion, specific spatial intent, and exploring crossing the midline vs reaching with the distal portions of the limbs. A more specific and fully explored ROM made the captures to follow more detailed and clear.

Other movements that I was interested in capturing included the following: defense and diagonal scales (*Images 6-7*), embodying the eight efforts, spatial intent, basic body actions, Bartenieff Fundamentals (*Images 13 & 14*) and spatial pulls. While this list was created by me, it was the class who coached each other to execute them. All coaching used LMA terminology, with coaches being as specific as possible so that the suited student could perform the movement without taking up too much time. Once these theory-heavy explorations were captured, the class moved into coaching each other in creating characters. I wanted them to create the context for each other and they came up with some creative scenarios. We explored pirates (*Image 15*), astronauts in battle (*Images 16 & 17*), and even explored some ballet moves.

Given more time, the suited participants would have performed their monologue or embodied poem to be captured. This provides both student and instructor with a model demonstrating the essence of the movement being executed. With this kind of information, the movement life of each actor can be analyzed, which allows for more tailored coaching to take place. Additionally, an actor who has an awareness of their own movement life will be able to better adapt to characters. This personal movement life also got picked up by students as we explored together. Some additional images (*Images 18-23*) have been included to demonstrate the work we explored, including one image where the system could not properly capture the human form. This was due to the actor in the suit going into a full body layout split on the floor, which caused too many markers to be covered.

Deeper Textual Explorations

With the visions of their bodies digitized on screen, the students switched to working on scenes. The course was far enough into the semester that students had no problem working with the material and applying it to their scenes. As with the monologues, the language of Laban was how I coached them, putting us all on a universal understanding of what I needed from them in a scene. This allowed us to move quickly through a coaching session, making my feedback extremely specific and their questions fully understood. Everyone was familiar with this process by this point, further quickening the sessions and keeping language precise. This was vital considering the style of text I eventually landed on for the students to explore.

Selecting text for this portion of the course was, at first, extremely difficult. I did not want them to be constrained by any specific period piece, as each come with a very particular

movement life, but instead wanted something that could be both universal and challenging. Shakespeare came to mind, particularly since the work we had done with states and drives included the Bard's work, but still felt that this wasn't the right choice. We had already explored his text, through the embodied poem assignment and through our exploration of states and drives, so I wanted to broaden their experiences. This is how I came to land on the works of Samuel Beckett, Gertrude Stein, Sarah Kane, and Amiri Baraka. The stream-of-consciousness style of their writing, absurdist construction, and characters out of touch with reality were exactly what the class needed to remain inclusive for this kind of exploration to flourish.

When students began to work with these given scenes, they were only allowed to read through it once. I wanted to try and capture their initial reaction to the strange texts, asking them to jot down anything that came to mind after the first read through. These reactions could be anything at all: a feeling, a gesture/action, a Laban term, a sound, or even something as specific as a tactic they could play. These initial words served as a jumping off point to help get them started, and forced them to get up, move, and try things out. Allowing them to over think was not beneficial.

The final three class periods were dedicated to preparing their final projects of the embodied poem, scenes, and observation presentations (Appendix C). As a start to this work, students were asked to create cheat sheet of sorts to help them stay connected to this material. This was compiled by me and handed out to them in the form of a worksheet that they filled out specifically for their scenes. Everyone also received a blank copy to keep for their own records to use in the future, so they may continue to use LMA as a resource. During this

time, we also devised and organized the final production described in detail in the next chapter. This required gathering feedback from the class to see what pieces of the work they thought would be most interesting for the performance. Many felt that the most useful pieces of the work involved text, though many felt compelled to also show the more abstract and choreographic aspects of LMA.

Classroom Bottom Line

The culmination of all the work described in this chapter is what made the special topics course what it was. Some of the original concept and goals for the course ended up changing significantly once I recognized the needs of the class. Having a class made up of both experienced and novice movers not only forced me to be more specific with my teaching, but caused me to reevaluate my original ideas of why this work needs to be taught to actors. Seeing students who had no previous movement training approach this work and make connections to their bodies was astounding.

Interlude 3: Laban and Rodenburg

Continuing to discuss Laban in relation to other theorists, work of Patsy Rodenburg comes to mind. Rodenburg's circles of energy are one way to assist in the explanation of the modes of shape change in the movement theory. As discussed, these modes are often the most difficult to see within the body and discuss among movement students, making it almost essential to bring in outside work to the theories of Laban to assist in the explanation and teaching of this section. Rodenburg's work with the three circles correspond directly to shape flow, directional, and shaping/carving. By relating the three circles to these three concepts, students were able to pick up on the use of shape as they conducted observations. The following interlude describes the link of these two theories and how it assists in students grasping both concepts.

Starting with Rodenburg's first circle, the Laban concept that follows is shape flow. Both are extremely internal, with a self-focus and very little interaction with the outside world. Rodenburg describes a person in first circle energy as the following: "lonely, but you also feel safe and don't have to engage, share or take responsibility for your presence in the world" (Rodenburg 29). A person in first circle does not want to be noticed or take notice of their environment, natural or otherwise. Someone primarily in shape flow will do the same, keeping focus on their own body and behavioral gestures only relating to the self. This includes

scratching an itch, breathing, or undulating in a way that is pleasing to the self and not taking in any outside stimulus. Shape flow is the self relating to itself, much as first circle energy is directed inward and closing the body off. Linking the two together assists the observer because it specifies what the body attitude of the observed could be. First circle individuals for whatever reason need to feel protected, therefore they might execute some of the described shape flow movements to settle themselves. Laban saw the “shapes and rhythms of our movements” to give “strong generating energies which give rise to reactions that carry beneficial or disastrous consequences” (Laban *Mastery* 120). Someone in a leadership position cannot perform their duties in a first circle energy, only utilizing shape flow movements. That would bring about those “disastrous consequences” Laban was noting. Both theorists use of the word energy become helpful to the actor when the theories are combined together.

Moving into second circle brings up directional movement. This is the body relating to something in the environment and, according to Laban, could be either spoking (straight) or arching (curved). Rodenburg sees this circle as the most effective use of energy. She states “equal power, and meaningful, life-changing human connection and communication, happen when two people or a group of people are in second circle energy together” (Rodenburg 30). This is the kind of energy actors need to have on stage, existing in their environment but not overtaking it and overfilling the space with their energies. This is the circle of sharing, since no one member of a group who is all in second circle is attempting to gain control. Likewise, Laban’s version is goal oriented and motivated towards accomplishing a task, actions that are better suited for second circle energy if one wants to succeed. It is heavily set in the desires and

wishes of an individual. Combining these two creates a character who is focused yet not overbearing, determined yet not pushy, and is reaching towards success without stepping on anyone's shoulders to do it. This is the circle and mode of shape change that begets teamwork, if done properly, but can certainly be taken advantage of. In that case, the character has moved into the final circle of energy: the third circle.

This final circle of energy corresponds to shaping/carving in Laban's language. Here the body is influencing the environment rather than just existing (first circle and shape flow) or interacting (second circle and directional) with in it. The third circle links with the shaping/carving of Laban in a way that connects the body to the world. The body is manipulating or joining the world in some fashion. In Laban's terms, it can be an interaction that is positive, negative, or simply existing in the environment. It is through incorporating Rodenburg's third circle that shaping/carving gets specific. She sees the third circle as being "a dehumanizing, brutal way of power and control", but also as a way to "stop an unwanted conversation or intrusion and defend your privacy (Rodenburg 32). You can be pleasant and enthusiastic without fully committing to people" (Rodenburg 19). This energy allows the individual to mold the environment, interactions, and events to their own means, still fulfilling a goal but purposefully unaware of the consequences. Here is a character that takes over a room with their energy, forcing everyone to conform to their own desires, someone who might think they are utilizing a second circle energy but instead are extremely domineering.

Each of these energies and modes of shape change are yet one more way an actor can analyze their given character. It forces a deep, between the lines textual analysis to back up the

physical choices. This combination of theories can also assist with crafting the inner/outer life of a character, since it is “the struggle of effort impulses within ourselves [that] is part of the drama” (Laban *Mastery* 120). Audiences want to see a character process and discover in the moment solutions to problems, and here is a constructed tool to help them accomplish just that.

Chapter 4: Creating Devised Work - An Evening of Laban

It was my desire to not only explore the LMA theory in how it applies to the actor, but also to see how this course could showcase the explorations done by the students into an evening of Laban for an audience. Demonstrating the discoveries of the students was first on the list of pieces to include in this devised production, with movement choirs and original work done by myself taking a secondary position. This was not only for the students to gain ownership of what they had learned and the theories that were now in their bodies, but to also receive some audience feedback on the work. Since LMA is highly theoretical, I was interested in exploring what aspects of the work could be interesting for an audience to view. His movement work offers up something different to the viewer, as “gestural and spatial interaction of bodies provides a different language from that of words, for the audience to decipher”, therefore providing an evening of work that would challenge an audience (Heddon 189).

Laban’s work is no stranger to the creation of devised theatre. One example is Joan Littlewood’s Theatre Workshop of the 1930s. This company made a point to include the work of Laban into the training of its actors. This “daily routine of the company involved physical training, using Dalcroze exercises and Laban Movement, and improvisation, as well as the pragmatic tasks of running and maintaining the theatre”, giving the company members a strong

connection to their physical selves and the physical make-up of the theatre (Heddon 31). This kept everyone in the same flow working towards a common goal together: the parts working with the whole of the company while still focusing on their own parts and how they moved. Such practices are my own, as I begin to explore the devising possibilities Laban brings to a group, both as a whole and each unique individual.

The Process

Working with my class of twelve students, I aimed to use the practices, exercises, and projects they have explored throughout the semester as “a process for creating performance from scratch, by the group, without a pre-existing script”, remaining true to the craft of devised theatre (Heddon 3). While it was a showcase of sorts, I wanted to work with the class to create a sense of flow to the evening, specifically one that is linked to a passion of the group and highlights an issue close to them, but also give them the chance to present a few of the semester projects. The process of selection for what made it into this evening was dependent on their performance in class of the projects and what they deemed most interesting to include in this evening. It was no surprise that many of them felt that the work with text would be the most compelling to view as an audience member, since this is where the actor feels most comfortable. However, after working in class through prepared and improvisational movement choirs, they all were completely on board to do the same for the performance.

This thought of a live movement choir came to mind as I taught the lesson on basic body actions. Having asked the students to write the actions on cards, I then dictated the order to put them in. Students were given five minutes to create a movement phrase using each of the

cards at least once, being able to explain the movement and their process after showing the movement to the class. Within this devised evening was a live, improvisational movement choir, with the audience getting involved to create the order of the actions and the students taking a small amount of time to prepare what comes to mind. This allowed for on-the-spot quick thinking that forced participants to go with their first instinct, while demonstrating the concept to the audience.

Layering on specific intentions also helped to specify the movement done by the participants. This was something as simple as giving participants a tactic to work from or a goal to reach for with the created movement. They were also told given circumstances, ones that are all different from one another, and we saw many different things play out in their movement selection. The movement choir explored all these realms in the area of realism, but also pushed the participants to remain as abstract as possible. By using two more layers of Laban's work, was a challenge. While the thought of exploring these possibilities live and in front of an audience excited me, such pressure became too much for a few of my students who were not as comfortable with the work, though they rose to the occasion and created very interesting pieces. These more complex choirs, that included many layers, were rehearsed outside of the performance setting, using collaboration to create a movement work. Companies dedicated to creating devised works, like The Living Theatre and the Open Theatre, "all employ fragmented and multi-layered structures, whilst still retaining some sense of 'narrative'", highlighting just how useful layering Laban can be to the performer (Heddon 221). However, layering is only useful when those involved remain true to the narrative and goal of the work.

Incorporating Text

In addition to movement choirs, the project where the students worked with poetry and sonnets was explored in a collaborative way. Although this is asking participants to work with a text, the movement created was born out of the intentions, feelings, and imagery found within. This portion of the showcase was taken in many different directions. Groups of two worked on the same text, each being inspired by different things, and were woven together after their initial creation of the movement. This is where having a director or leader when creating devised theatre is recommended, someone as the outside eye who is able to shape what the participants create into the vision the group is aiming for. For this discovery process, the rehearsal room became an experimental chamber focused on the reactions happening between individuals. There's no telling what will spark a moment of movement inspiration in another performer and Laban's work helps give the common language to work inside, making the process more streamlined and faster when creating devised work.

Though the scene and monologue studies revolved around specific texts, I saw the benefits for audiences and student performers alike in their inclusion in this showcase. Described in chapter two, the use of Laban's spatial affinities as a way to side coach an actor through a monologue proved to be extremely helpful. The six affinities allowed for a quick shorthand exchange between instructor and student, keeping them focused on their objective and intentions. Many young actors do not understand the importance of contrast within a small piece of text like a monologue, often performing in a one note fashion in regards to tempo, focus, and attitude. These pieces were presented to an audience after the actor has learned

these theories, providing a chance for the actor and myself to get live feedback from audience reactions. Performers recognize the energy, or lack thereof, of an audience during a performance, and presenting the works created for this course offered the students invaluable information as performers.

Individual Performers, Group Process, and Possibilities

Devising an evening of Laban “is entirely dependent on the various contributions of the creators; each devised product is therefore also unique” (Heddon 222). Once again bringing in Laban’s theory of whole/part/whole, changing even one member of the company would bring about drastic changes to the whole collaborative process.

The basic body actions are not the only parts to LMA that can find a home in devised works, the twenty-seven spatial pulls Laban highlights can be combined with specific body parts to portray meaning. This can be done with the meaning already given to the performer or discovered and evolve as the process continues. By giving the performer intention or meaning to explore, they can begin to assign their own associations with these points in space that can later be recalled as they form a narrative together. Working in the opposite fashion, the performer can be given specific points in space and asked what intentions and feelings come to them as they move through what’s given. Here is just one-way story can be discovered by a group through movement. Adding in physical objects and furniture pieces can offer a useful layer to the work. Power dynamics come into play if one performer must stay connected to a chair at a low level and the other remain standing or perched on an acting block. Spatial pulls remain the same in this situation but are modified thanks to the use of layers. It all can be part

of the discovery process for performers as they work together to create a devised piece of theatre.

I wanted this evening to strive for the true aims and goals that surround devised work. I wanted my students and the audience alike to view this work as “an escape from theatrical conventions; a challenge for theatre makers; a challenge for spectators”, to use Laban’s theories as “expressive, creative language; innovative; risky; inventive; spontaneous; experimental; non-literary” (Heddon 5). Far too often I encounter students who are unable to explore text in the various ways described by Heddon. They are often extremely literal when such linear thinking is unnecessary to the work. This is why I decided to incorporate non-realistic texts into the scene study, to force them out of the literal thinking trap and realign their thinking to the body.

The aim of this devising process, within the works of the absurdist and stream of consciousness writers, was to also prove how dependent on text an actor can be. More often than not, movement starts to only “reinforce what has been said verbally”, which makes the actors “[say] things twice” (Graham & Hoggett 177). The work of the physical theatre company Frantic Assembly can very much be linked hand in hand as groups devise work through LMA. Movement should supplement, support, or even dominate over what is being said in order for total communication to occur. This sense of total communication should not just be between those on stage, but also with the audience. Actors are constantly being asked to search for the subtext, to locate what they are “not saying to each other” in order to find the truth of a scene (Graham & Hoggett 178). Laban’s work offered them the outlet to explore physically without

the hindrance of words. This is not to say that the words being spoken are not the driving force of a production, rather that movement must be specific enough to defend its inclusion within a devised piece of physical work.

Additional Components

To speak briefly of music, Anne Bogart offers up extremely helpful suggestions in her Viewpoints book that are absolutely applicable here. Bogart suggests keeping music choices simple, without lyrics, and that are atmospheric in nature. This keeps the mover focused on the body while allowing the music to offer a foundation to work from. Music that contains lyrics or that is extremely popular will trap the mover into preconceived connotations. Though I have found that popular music with lyrics can be useful when teaching the efforts, this association trap is very difficult to avoid. What Bogart calls “erratic music” can be extremely helpful to a group of more advanced students. The instructor can ask for more from the class in terms of what kind of flow, effort, state, or drive the constantly changing music evokes. For this devised performance, we gravitated towards the ambient. This made the improvisation easier and kept the audience’s attention on the bodies instead of the erratic music.

Incorporating the work of Frantic Assembly, one exercise titled Phone Numbers, a group of movers combined the vision of a key pad with the spatial points dictated by Laban. The exercise created “a way of making the learning of complex choreography seem less daunting”, a task that can be made even more simple when Laban is added in (Graham & Hoggett 149). This process links the complex, everyday movements that we are already executing and likens it to choreography, a concept explored by Laban as he developed his theories. Participants imagined

a telephone keypad in front of them in space, dialing out a number by reaching their arm to 'touch' the imaginary numbers. To aid an unexperienced mover with this exercise, the spatial pulls introduced by Laban was utilized. My students were able to approach their created sequence with much more confidence when told they could combine it with the work of Laban they were familiar with. Meanings within the simple movement changed when layering on an effort, state, or drive. When asked to focus on one part of the nine Bartenieff Fundamentals, new discoveries were made. I had to keep steering the class away from considering the final product. It was essential that they "think of the devising process as malleable...meaning does not come from the process. It comes from the context in which you place the work created by the process." (Graham & Hoggett 151) Nevertheless, we ended up with some very interesting final products, which added one more exciting piece to our showcase.

Likewise, Frantic Assembly's work with observation, though not stated explicitly in their writings, is closely linked with the observational work inside LMA through the eight efforts. Meaning changed for the participants of their exercise once observation came into play: "We got them to watch each other as they did it again and they realized that they did this in quite different ways" (Graham & Hoggett 169). This realization is extremely important to actors, as they often will realize things about themselves only after witnessing them inside others.

Final Thoughts

I am most interested in exploring LMA in terms of the creator's words: "meaning is conveyed by movement" (Laban *Mastery* 97). Through moving, I hope to help actors discover what the true meaning of a text, feeling, or character could hope to become. Funneling it all

into a performance such as this is a way to apply this work to a useful setting. It all comes down to being a willing participant in physical explorations, while keeping in mind the ultimate goal of finding an end result. While this end result is important, the student should not be overly concerned with it. Instead, the focus must be on the process, the possible lightbulb moments that can occur when totally physically engaged. This is what will make devising in a Laban context successful.

As I have explored Laban's work, especially during this past semester, I have found the most influential application of the work to be in how I coach my acting and movement students. Those who are familiar with the work have a baseline of language to work from, making my side coaching more effective and the actor more specific. It lays a foundation for specific character creation that the student can constantly come back to, giving them a list of reminders for when something seems off on stage. Once the rehearsal process is deep underway, especially when technical rehearsals have started and the director can no longer focus on the actor, this list can be returned to again and again. The Bartenieff Fundamentals and LMA can keep the actor focused on staying in the world of this character, physically, mentally, and emotionally.

This work also forces the participant to incorporate full body listening and a total kinesthetic awareness. An actor completely aware of and engaged with their body creates a more living character. This hyper-focused presence draws audiences in and keeps them wanting to watch. Working in conjunction with other theories, like Chekhov's radiation, the actors on stage are connected to themselves and their environment. This is a body oriented system, not a

mental one, though the initial learning does involve a large amount of heady theory processing. Once the 'table work' has been accomplished, what comes after is integrating it into the body, where it remains to grow.

As I continue to explore Laban's work and evolve as an instructor of higher education, I will refine and specify the work described in this writing. My work with motion capture is nowhere near to completion. I want to develop an even more streamlined system, stemming from the work of Laban and Bartenieff, which coordinates with the motion capture side of the film industry. Here is a movement language that can save time (and therefore money!) all while producing an even better and more specific product to layer with animation. Laban never stopped exploring, and those who have come into contact with his work continuously further his explorations.

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Kew, Carole. "From Weimar Movement Choir to Nazi Community Dance: The Rise and Fall of Rudolf Laban's 'Festkultur'." *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp 73-96.
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Laban, Rudolf. *The Mastery of Movement*. Braintree, MacDonald and Evans, 1971. Print.

Mirodan, Vladimir. "Acting the metaphor: the Laban-Malmgren system of movement psychology and character analysis." *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp 30-45. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19443927.2014.999109> Accessed 27 March 2017. Web.

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Rodenburg, Patsy. *The Second Circle: How to Use Positive Energy for Success in Every Situation*. New York, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2008. Print.

Appendices

Appendix A - Course Syllabus:

Laban for the Actor: The Mind/Body Connection

Spring 2017 - 491

Meg Buckner

megcbuckner@gmail.com

Location: B72 Fridays 9:30-12:30

Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description

The course involves a large amount of movement and safe, physical experimentation, as the students move through the theories and practices of Laban. It serves as an advanced movement technique course, which acts as a continuation of the work some of you have already experienced. This course allows for deep exploration and discovery to take place while learning the complex side of LMA. We will delve into the theories and physical practices of LMA with a focus on how this work can be relevant to actors. We will incorporate text through a Laban filter, as well as develop tools students can take into the rehearsal room to create more dynamic, living characters. This work also strives to connect the mind to the body through various exercises that can be practiced outside of the classroom.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Analyze and interpret Laban's theories as they relate and supplement various acting theories
2. Apply the aspects of time, space, weight, and flow to physical work
3. Apply the physical techniques of Laban to scenic work
4. Design authentic, abstract movement inspired by personal experiences and incorporating LMA work
5. Deepen the connection and understanding of your individual body through the use of LMA and BF sequences
6. Practice a basic understanding of the anatomical construction of varying sections of the human body and how to accurately move them safely
7. Accurately sketch and use LMA symbols while viewing movement
8. Willingly experiment with LMA theories while working with text

9. Discuss, explain, and express thoughts connected to readings done both in and outside of class
10. Accurately articulate a written analysis of movement viewed in and outside of class

Course & Performance Requirements

- Spiral bound notebook or loose leaf paper
- Three ring binder for handouts
- Sketchbook and crayons/colored pencils *optional*
- A full water bottle
- Throughout the semester, students will be given handouts of readings that supplement the work done in class. It is the responsibility of the student to read the given material by the date the instructor provides when the handout is given.

- Students are required to see the VCU productions produced in the semester: *A Time to Kill* and *Spamalot*. Theatre students have the opportunity to receive discounted tickets or see the show for free if they usher, making attendance of these productions feasible for all. Students are expected to fully participate in an in class discussion of the production and turn in a movement analysis paper, described further below.

Grading

- **Attendance, Dress Code, and ACTIVE participation - 40%**
 - Active Participation means: Being fully engaged (physically, mentally, emotionally), Focused, Positive and Enthusiastic, Respectful of others and the work, Emotionally available, Participating in Class Discussions, Volunteering, and Learning and actively completing the Daily Warm-up in each class. This also means fully committing to all in class exercises and mini presentations of findings and movement. This classroom is a place to learn and grow with each other, a place for experimentation and a lot of constructive observation. Anyone not remaining supportive and constructive will be asked to leave.
 - This is a very active class. We will be moving frequently both on the floor and around the room. You may wish to bring a mat or blanket to work on if that is more comfortable for you. Most days will involve bare or socked feet, so please plan accordingly.
 - Don't be late. Each class builds upon the last, so it is vital you are there for everyone! This also means returning from breaks on time. There will be a sign-in sheet provided. A "late pen" will be switched as class starts. If you arrive after the scheduled class time, you must sign with the late pen. It is your responsibility to sign in at the beginning of each class period. This is not negotiable. Besides adversely affecting your own learning process - arriving late for class disrupts the learning process of fellow students. Therefore, tardiness in excess of 20 minutes will be considered a complete absence, and **every two instances of tardiness** - of whatever duration - will equate to one absence for grading purposes. I reserve the right to declare a "no lateness" policy

should the need arise. This means that if the door to the class is shut and you are not inside by the time class begins, you are absent. You are allowed **1 absence!** With any additional absences, your final grade will automatically drop one FULL letter and will continue to drop one letter grade with each additional absence.

- **Embodied Poem - 10%**
 - Choosing from a given list of poetry, you will create a movement piece inspired by the text. Movement will be informed by the work done in class.

 - **Video Analysis paper - 10%**
 - Throughout the semester, we will be viewing different performances and having discussions of the movement driven by Laban's work. You will then pick one clip to write a detailed analysis of, specifying theories posed by Bartenieff and Laban. At least two pages, double spaced. Rubric provided at a later date.

 - **Observation Presentation - 10%**
 - We will take many field trips to different locations on the VCU campus to conduct observations. These observations will form into a movement presentation, utilizing Laban/Bartenieff theories, specifically training your eyes as an observer.

 - **Production Movement Analysis Paper - 10%**
 - You will choose one character to analyze from one of the VCU productions. This analysis **must** include the vocabulary and theories discussed in class, articulating the actor's choices employed to create the character. This should **NOT** be the same kind of analysis you do for another class, be specific to Laban! At least two pages, double spaced. Rubric provided at a later date.
- Due week after production closes!**
- **Scene Presentation - 10%**
 - At multiple points in the semester, we will be introducing text to this work. These scenes will both be given to you and ones you choose, consisting of pairs, triplets, and groups of four. You will be challenged to incorporate Laban's practices into the rehearsal and performance of said scenes.

 - **Monologue Presentation - 10%**
 - You will also be asked to incorporate the coursework into preparing a monologue. This is a 60 to 90 second piece of text selected by you, with specific, Laban/Bartenieff filtered choices.

Grading Scale

A 91 – 100

B 81 – 90
C 71 – 80
D 61 – 70
F 60 & below

Weekly Breakdown

Subject to change

Week One January 20th

- Syllabus review and Movement Introductions
- Introduction to LMA - B.E.S.S
- History
- Goal Setting
- Body attitude
- *Assign Monologue Presentation*
- Begin Basic 6 if time

Week Two January 27th

- Body - Bartenieff Fundamentals
- Basic 6 - Warm up Introduction
- 9 BF Principles inside the Basic 6

Week Three February 3rd

- Space - Platonic Solids
- 27 Space Symbols
- Plane and Icosahedron Exploration
- Defense Scale
- *Monologue check in*

Week Four February 10th

- Effort
- Diagonal Scale
- Effort graph
- On campus field trip 1
- *Assign Observation Presentation*

Week Five February 17th

- Shape
- Basic forms and elements
- *Monologue Presentations Due*

Week Six February 24th

- Basic Body Actions - creating choreography

- Transition to the stage
- Specifying Relationship
- On campus field trip 2
- *Assign Embodied Poem*

Week Seven March 3rd
NO CLASS - SETC

Week Eight March 10th
NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK

Week Nine March 17th

- *Observation Presentations Check in - from field trips*
- *Monologue Revival*
- States and Drives

Week Ten March 24th

- States and Drives Continued
- A & K Overview/Review
- Spatial Awareness
- Psoas discovery

Week Eleven March 31st

- Motion Capture Day
- Full B.E.S.S Exploration

Week Twelve April 7th

- Scene work
- Incorporating B.E.S.S. Into acting intent

Week Thirteen April 14th

- Movement Choir
- *Embodied Poem Due*
- On campus field trip 3

Week Fourteen April 21st

- *Final Observation Presentations*
- TBA

Week Fifteen April 28th

- *Scene presentations and discussion*
- *Final papers and analyses due*

Appendix B - Course Reading List

Basic 6 Details

Bartenieff, Irmgard. *Body Movement: Coping with the Environment*. Gordon and Breach Science Publishers Inc, Philadelphia, 1980. Print.

Rodenburg Circles of Energy

Rodenburg, Patsy. *The Second Circle: How to Use Positive Energy for Success in Every Situation*. W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 2008. Print.

Observation

Bartenieff, Irmgard, et al. *Four Adaptations of Effort Theory in Research and Teaching*. Dance Notation Bureau Inc, New York, 1973. Print.

Chekhov

Chekhov, Michael. *To the Actor*. Harper & Row, New York, 1953. Print.

Mastery of Movement

Laban, Rudolf. *The Mastery of Movement*. MacDonald and Evans, 1971. Print.

Body Architecture

Bartenieff, Irmgard. *Body Movement: Coping with the Environment*. Gordon and Breach Science Publishers Inc, Philadelphia, 1980. Print.

Beyond Dance

Davies, Eden. *Beyond Dance: Laban's Legacy of Movement Analysis*. Sussex Litho, England, 2001. Print

Effort Theory

Bartenieff, Irmgard, et al. *Four Adaptations of Effort Theory in Research and Teaching*. Dance Notation Bureau Inc, New York, 1973. Print.

Appendix C: Course Documents

Laban 491 – Pre-course Self Evaluation

What do you think you will learn the most in this course? (don't just repeat the title!)

What are you excited for?

What are you nervous about?

Come up with three goals for yourself that you hope to accomplish in this course:

1.

2.

3.

To the best of your ability, describe the movement you see. I will repeat the sequence many times. Be as clear as possible in your description.

Write a short letter to yourself on the **back** of this page. Keep in mind all you have said above and expand on it. This is a chance for you to reflect on the work about to be done, a reflection that can be reviewed once we reach the end of the semester.

Drives and States

Drives

Effort Drives – Combining 3 effort factors – Foundation of the effort system

- Action Drive – space, weight, time – Flowless, practical actions
 - 8 Efforts – Float, Punch, Glide, Slash, Dab, Wring, Flick, Press

Transformation Drives – transformed by flow, still 3 effort factors – flow is more pronounced as it replaces one of the effort factors

- *Spell drive* – flow, space, weight – Timeless – trance-like, hypnotic, spellbound, outside of time
- *Passion drive* – flow, weight, time – Spaceless – absence of focus, no rational thought or logical reason
- *Vision drive* – flow, time, space – Weightless – out-of-body, other worldly, non-physical

Effort States

Inner attitudes – two effort factors, incomplete in comparison to the effort drives – defined as much by what is included and what is not included

- *Awake state* – Space & Time - Thinking and intuition in the absence of emotion and bodily sensation – wakeful quality, opposite of dreaming quality
 - *Sustained and Direct* – squeegee – waiting for a light to turn green
 - *Sustained and Indirect* – star gazing – trying to avoid a bee but can't find it – searching for the source of music
 - *Quick and Indirect* – swatting at the bee that you've located but can't catch
 - *Quick and Direct* – quickly looking at someone who shouts your name
- *Dream state* – Weight & Flow - Emotional feeling and bodily sensations in the absence of thinking and intuition – dreaming quality, opposite of wakeful quality
 - *Free and Light* – Running fingers through hair
 - *Free and Strong* – Beating or shaking out a heavy, dirty rug
 - *Bound and Light* – Rocking a baby to sleep
 - *Bound and Strong* – Playing tug-a-war, walking up a hill in the snow

- *Near state* – Weight & Time – Bodily sensations and intuition, excluding thinking and emotion – Near, physically present quality, opposite of the remote and distance quality
 - *Light and Sustained* – Soothing a fussy baby, patting face dry
 - *Light and Quick* – Splashing face with water, epiphany, triangle playing
 - *Strong and Sustained* – Rowing, cracking knuckles, labor contractions, massage
 - *Strong and Quick* – Waxing, smashing fist to make a point, pounding drum

- *Remote state* – Space & Flow – Emotional Feeling and mental thought, excluding intuition and bodily sensation – remote, distant quality, opposite of physically present quality
 - *Free and Indirect* – Blow drying hair, bubbles, throwing confetti
 - *Free and Direct* – Ice skating, braille, throwing darts, bowling
 - *Bound and Indirect* – Scratching someone’s back, locating a bad smell
 - *Bound and Direct* – Putting on mascara, painting toe nails, microscope

- *Stable state* – Weight & Space – Bodily sensing and mental thought, in the absence of intuition and emotion – stable, steadfast quality is the opposite of the mobile, ever-changing quality
 - *Light and Indirect* – a kite flying, butterfly, juggling
 - *Light and Direct* – Blowing on a leaf, catching a butterfly, petting a kitten, reaching high for china
 - *Strong and Indirect* – Claiming land, warrior gazing at enemies
 - *Strong and Direct* – Taking a firm stance, hitting a tent spike, firm no

- *Mobile state* – Flow & Time – Emotional feeling intuition in the absence of mental thought and body sensing – mobile, ever-changing quality, opposite of the stable physical quality
 - *Free and Sustained* – floating on your back in water, drawn out sigh
 - *Free and Quick* – first moment of a race, finally finding a bathroom
 - *Bound and Sustained* – trying not to sneeze, right before yelling SURPRISE!
 - *Bound and Quick* – quick gasp, holding it while running for bathroom, running through sprinklers

Video Analysis Paper Guidelines

- From the list emailed to you, pick one video clip to analyze
- Decide on one ~15 second portion of your chosen clip – This will help force you to be specific and really look at what is happening. Keep the section between 15-30 seconds.
- Back up your thoughts with what you are seeing. Make a strong case for the drive/state you've chosen or the effort you are seeing.
- Include in your analysis WHY the performance was powerful and how applying Laban/Bartenieff terms is helpful to an observer.

- With this 15 seconds, discuss how the actor/dancer/mover used the following terms to create the character:
 - 9 Bartenieff Fundamentals
 - The 27 Spatial points
 - Basic Body Actions
 - 8 Efforts – Float, Punch, Glide, Slash, Dab, Wring, Flick, Press
 - Body, Effort, Shape, Space
 - Inner/Outer, Function/Expression, Exertion/Recuperation, Stability/Mobility
 - Time (Sagittal Plane), Weight (Vertical Plane), Space (Horizontal Plane), Flow
 - States - Dream (Weight & Flow), Awake (Space & Time), Rhythm/Near (Weight & Time), Remote (Flow & Space), Stable (Weight & Space), Mobile (Flow & Time)
 - Drives - Action (Weight, Space, Time), Spell (Weight, Space, Flow), Passion (Weight, Time, Flow), Vision (Space, Time, Flow)

- Format:
 - 12 pt font, double spaced
 - At *least* two, full pages in length
 - One inch margins

Monologue Presentation

Due: Feb. 17th

Revival: March 17th

Using the theories of Laban, you will create a specific character that matches the text you are working with. Think of this as building the body, specifying the tactic, and analyzing the character's reactions through a Laban lens. When rehearsing, try out different answers to the following questions to see what is discovered. Try out the opposite effort, a different body organization, attending to one area in space, employing one spatial affinity, or even try not moving much at all and see what comes to you. I'm looking for clarity of your choices (can I see what parts of the theory you've put into this character), evidence of rehearsal (have you rehearsed what you've chosen enough that it has a solid foundation), commitment to the choices (don't second guess yourself), connection to the text (do the words support the physical life you've created), ability to articulate your choices (can you justify why you did what you did), and a willingness to take direction (I'll throw other things at you once you're up and performing, so be prepared to change). Also consider the following:

- What is the body attitude of this person?
- What BF principles are they mainly using? Are there developmental patterns they like the best?
- Which areas in space are most un/comfortable for them? Planar attitude?
- What is their effort life? Which do they tend to employ? Does this change along with their tactics? How is this related to their overall goal?

Observation Assignment Guidelines

For this assignment, you will become three different people based on the notes you took on our field trips. On April 21st, we will present these people and discuss our findings. The presentation should follow this format:

- Perform all three with a brief pause of silence in between
- Perform all three again, this time discussing one aspect of their movement using Laban/Bartenieff terminology before moving on to the next one

A short written description of each of these individuals will be turned in at the time of the presentation. This is a bulleted list, and information for all three combined needs to be about a page. Don't over think. This write up should look a bit like this for each of the 3:

Observation 1/2/3 – (name this person and give location of observation)

- Brief, simple description of what it is you saw – think laymen's terms
- Describe the movement in Laban/Bartenieff terms
- How is this person's movement life different from your own?
- What nonjudgmental assumptions could you make about this person, based on your observations?

Embodied Poem/Sonnet Assignment

- From the following list, pick one poem or sonnet to physically and vocally

Embody:

- Sunset – Rainer Maria Rilke
 - Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening – Robert Frost
 - Sonnet 106 – Shakespeare
 - Sonnet 18 – Shakespeare
 - Sonnet 116 – Shakespeare
 - Sonnet 130 – Shakespeare
 - Ozymandias – Percy Bysshe Shelley
 - I, Being Born Woman and Undone
 - Remember – Christina Rossetti
 - Sonnet 1 Astrophil and Stella – Sir Philip Sidney
 - Death, Be not Proud – John Donne
 - Changeling – Hieu Minh Nguyen
 - As a Possible Lover – Amiri Baraka
 - Cat Morgan Introduces Himself – T. S. Eliot
 - The Ad-Dressing of Cats – T.S. Eliot
 - Woman Work – Maya Angelou
 - Life is Fine – Langston Hughes
 - Lady Freedom Among Us – Rita Dove
- You will create a movement sequence inspired by the imagery and essence of this piece of writing. This can be connected to how you feel when you read it, what comes to mind, what it makes you think of, or even what the words exactly mean. Try to figure out what the author wanted to portray. Be inspired! Be creative! Try to avoid realism!
- **Consider the following when creating your movement sequence:**
 - 9 Bartenieff Fundamentals and the Basic 6
 - Platonic Solids
 - The 27 spatial points
 - Spatial affinities

- 8 efforts
- Basic Body Actions
- Body, Effort, Shape, Space
- Inner/Outer, Function/Expression, Exertion/Recuperation, Stability/Mobility
- Time (Sagittal Plane), Weight (Vertical Plane), Space (Horizontal Plane), Flow
- States - Dream (Weight & Flow), Awake (Space & Time), Rhythm/Near (Weight & Time), Remote (Flow & Space), Stable (Weight & Space), Mobile (Flow & Time)
- Drives - Action (Weight, Space, Time), Spell (Weight, Space, Flow), Passion (Weight, Time, Flow), Vision (Space, Time, Flow)
- Be prepared to discuss your movement sequence and how you incorporated the above points. Don't feel like you need to include all of these points, but be ready to discuss them regarding the movement you create.
- Create first from your initial inspiration, then worry about applying the fine tooth comb to it. What I don't want is you thinking you need to create movement that looks a certain way or viewing the points above as a check list of sorts.
- You will first perform the movement without speaking, then with the text over it. This means you will need to memorize the text and choose when to say certain lines. After we've looked at the two versions, you will discuss the movement.
- **Grade Breakdown:**
 - Performance of movement - 20 points
 - Performance of movement with text - 25 points
 - Discussion of movement - 35 points
 - In class visual project - 20 points
 - Total - 100 points
- **DUE: April 14th**

Appendix D – Images and Figures

Motion Capture



Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4



Image 5

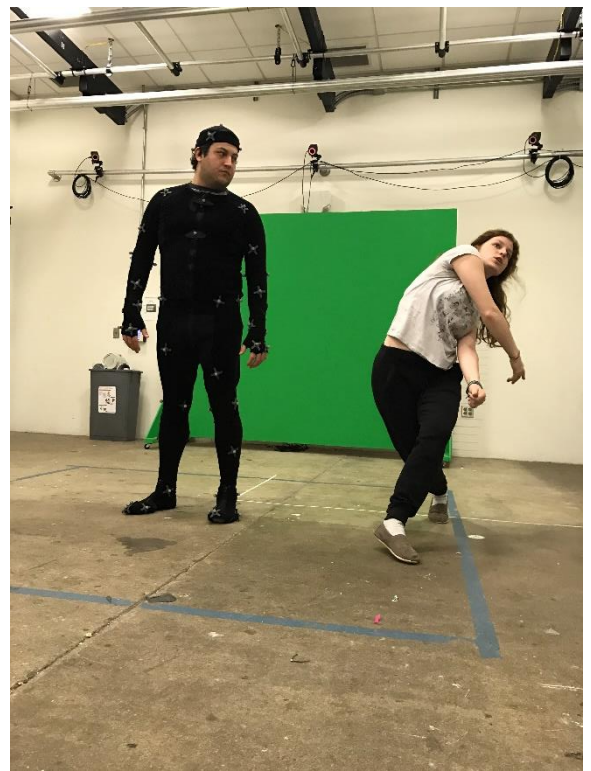


Image 6

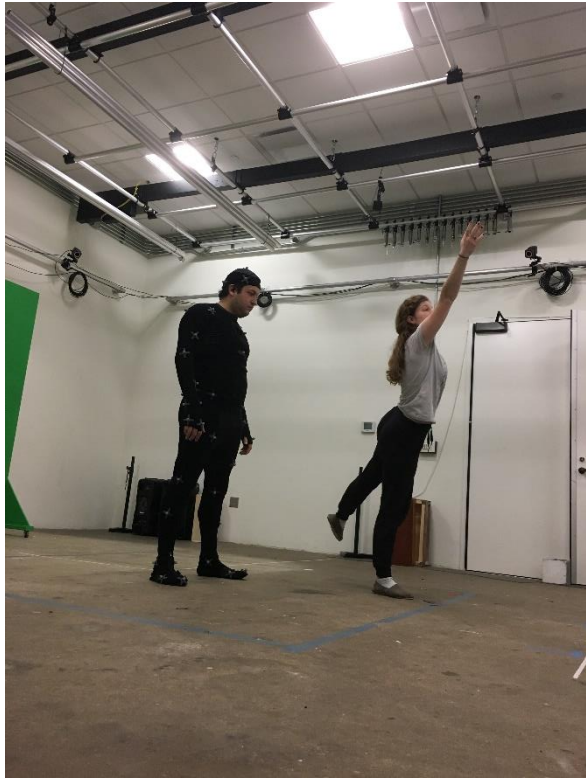


Image 7



Image 8



Image 9



Image 10

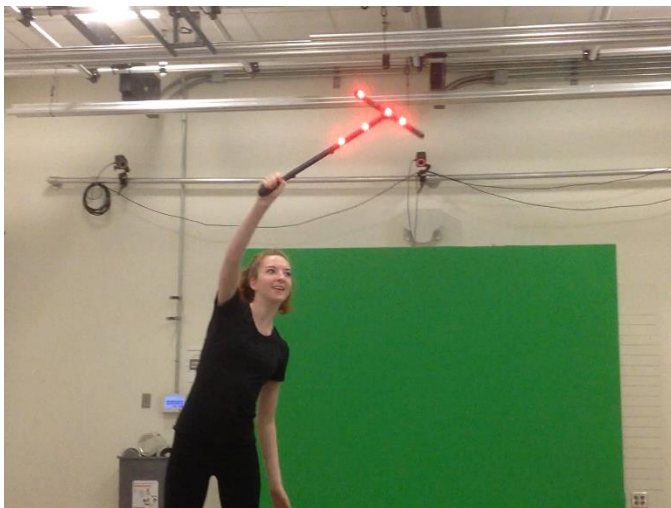


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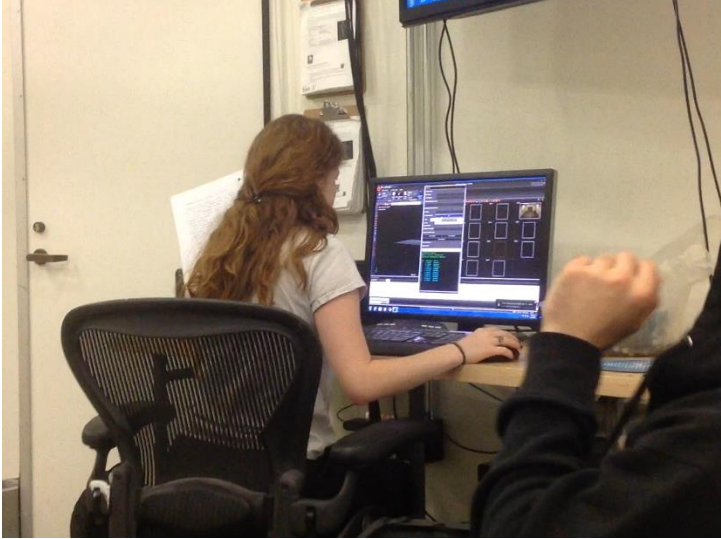


Image 12



Image 13

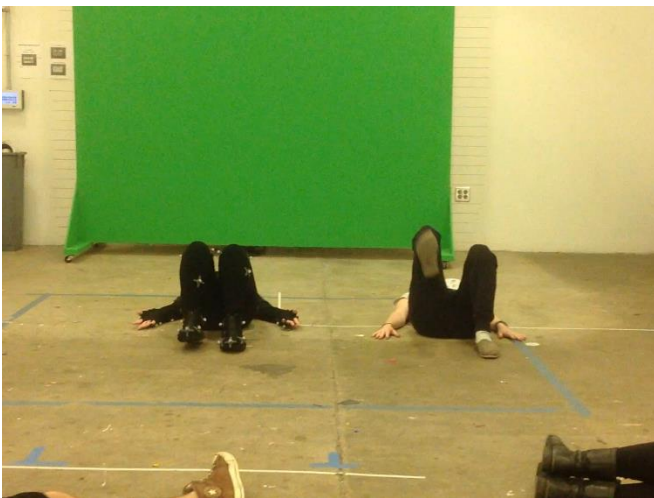


Image 14



Image 15



Image 16

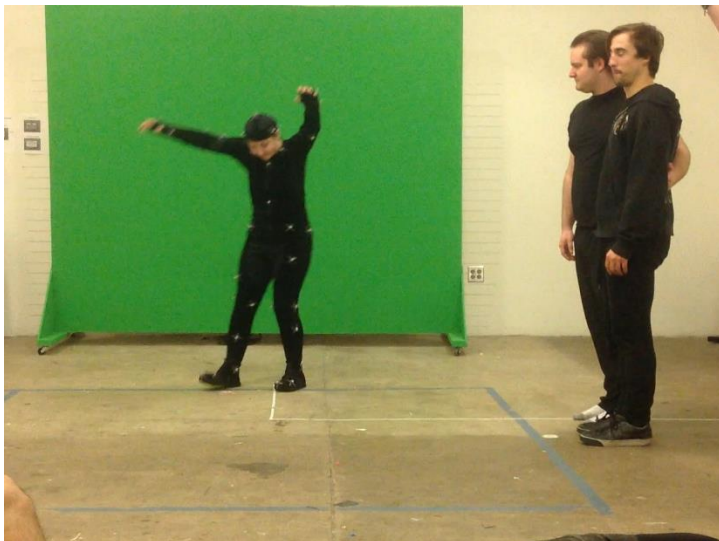


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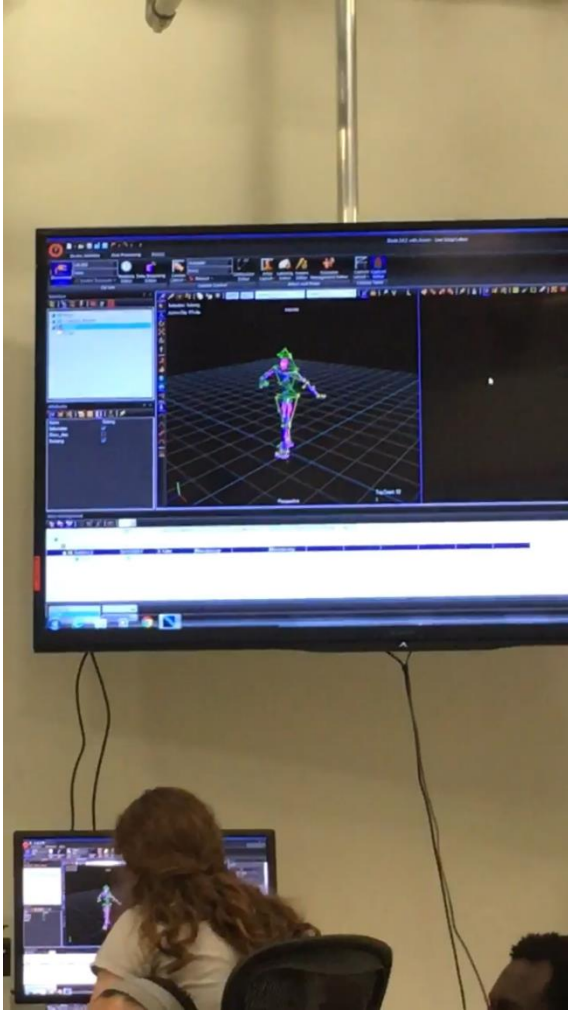


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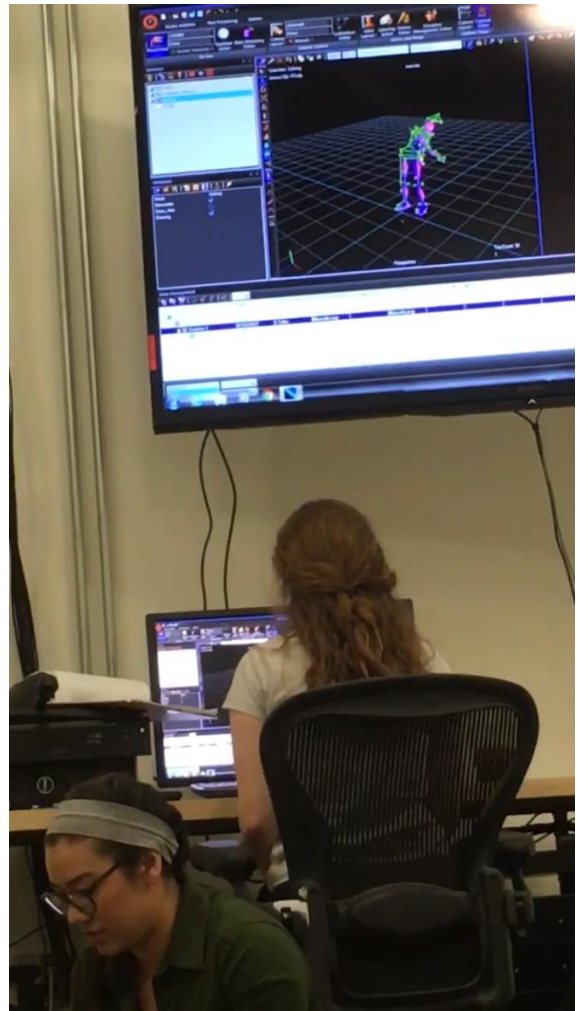


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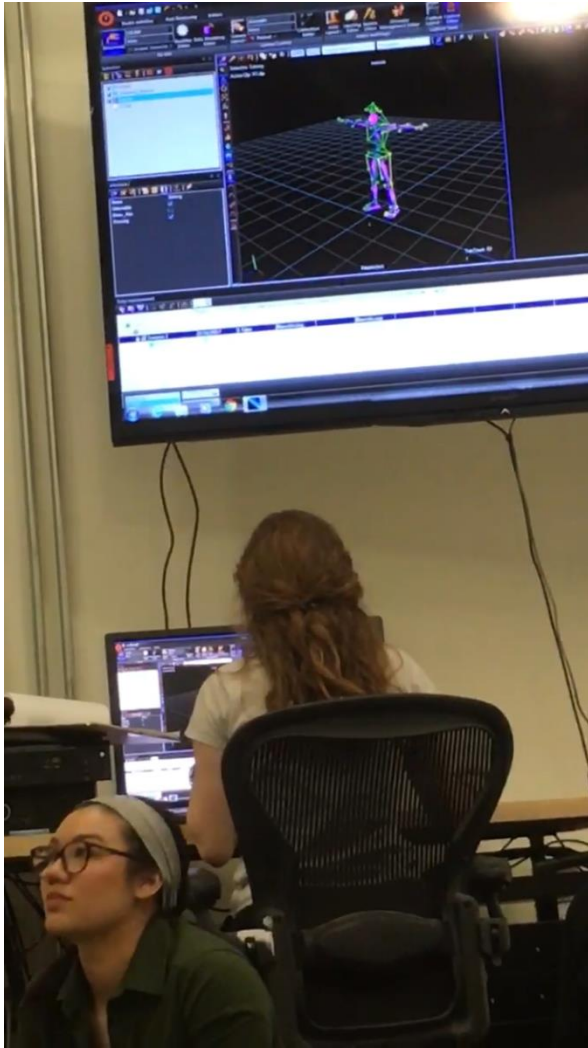


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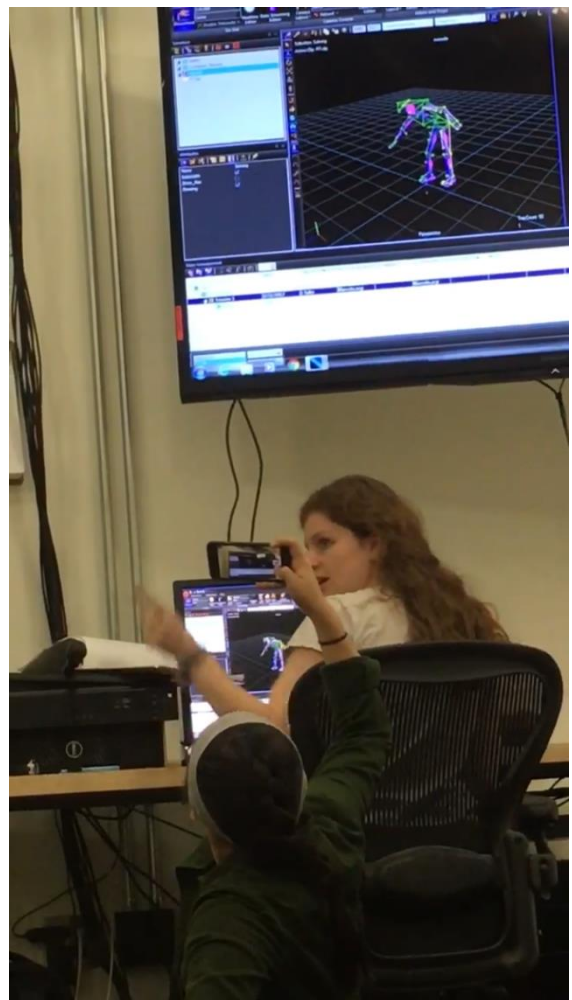


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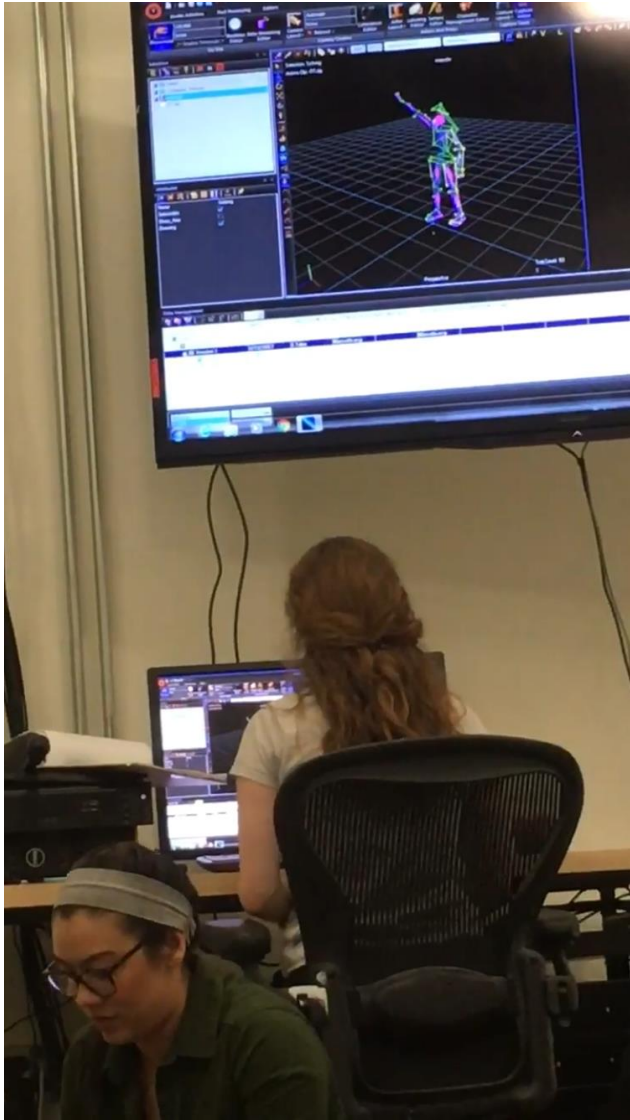


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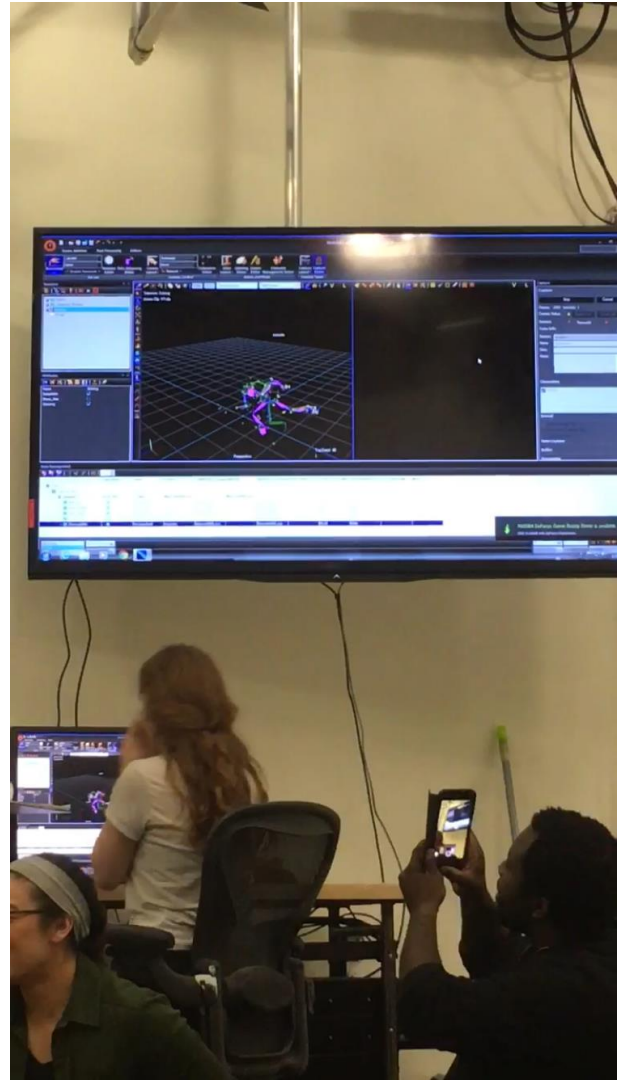


Image 23

Embodied Poems



Image 24



Image 25



Image 26



Image 27



Image 28



Image 29



Image 30



Image 31



Image 32



Image 33

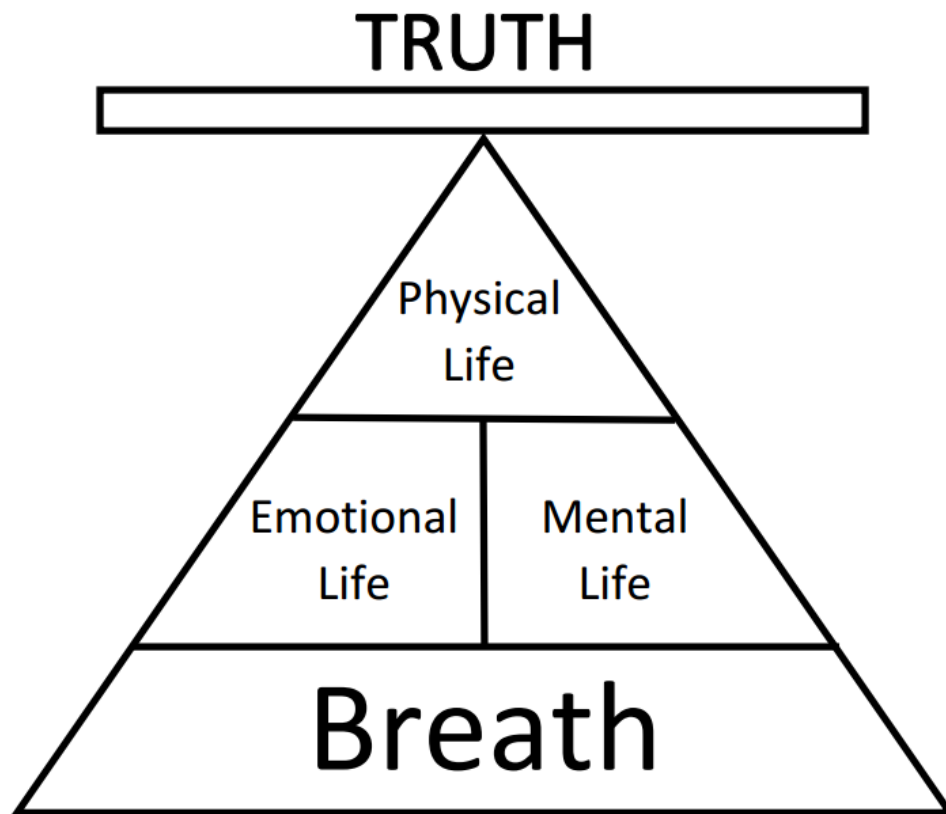


Figure 1

Vita

Margaret C. Buckner was born in Greensborough, NC on April 10th, 1990. She received her BA in Theatre and English and her BS in Secondary Education from The College of Charleston in 2013. She is currently working towards her MFA in Theatre Pedagogy, with a concentration in Movement, at Virginia Commonwealth University, anticipated May 2017. As a choreographer, movement coach, and fight director, Margaret has worked in many different settings with a wide range of actors. Her work has been featured across the nation through The Hampstead Stage Company. She is also currently pursuing becoming a Certified Movement Analyst through The Laban Institute of Movement Studies, expected January 2018.