Artistic Anatomy: Utilizing Dancer's Individual Physicality within the Choreographic Process

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ARTISTIC ANATOMY: UTILIZING DANCER’S INDIVIDUAL PHYSICALITY WITHIN THE CHOREOGRAPHIC PROCESS

A Capstone Experience/Thesis Project
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Bachelor of Arts with Honors College Graduate Distinction at Western Kentucky University

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2013

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ABSTRACT

As curious people, we find ourselves asking “how?” My research investigates the “how” of dance by exploring the individual and natural abilities of a dancer’s anatomy and utilizing them through movement. Challenging the individual limits of the human body is a vital aspect of what makes a dancer a thinking artist. For example, recognizing the uniqueness of the hip socket as it relates to a dancer’s turn out and flexibility can help in understanding its effect on movement from one dancer to the next. This provides insight into the challenges each dancer can face when working with a specific area of the body. An exploration of how the body works gives a dancer the knowledge needed to tailor the movement to her body within her natural abilities. I researched the methods used by professional choreographers to discover various ways of approaching movement and worked with dancers on my own choreography. A better awareness of the unique anatomy of a dancer is crucial to prevent injury and safely challenge our bodies’ limits, in hopes of extending a dancer’s career. It is also important for dancers and choreographers to better understand these differences in movement in order to work in a way more beneficial for the body.

Key Words: Dance, Anatomy, Choreography, Movement, Honors College, Thesis
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

How my body moves naturally can be completely similar or different to another person. This is determined by many factors including bone structure and flexibility and strength in the soft tissues of the body. Watching people walk down a sidewalk can be a good example of natural differences in movement. Variations in articulating through the feet as a person takes a step forward, how the arms swing back and forth when walking, and the placement of the upper body either in front of or behind the legs are only a few details easily identified in different people. Dancers are responsible for figuring out these differences to improve their performance both in the studio and on stage. In ballet, turnout, or the ability to rotate your legs outwardly from the hips, away from the center of the body, is an essential skill (Clippinger 196). Ballet technique is at the core of most genres of dance; therefore, working for more turnout is a fundamental goal worked on in almost any dance form. I was not born with a large range of turnout. I have to work inside and out of class to maintain and strengthen the many hip muscles that help rotate the leg. A combination of muscular, bone, and ligament-related factors determine a dancer’s natural turnout (Clippinger 196). These simple variations combine to create a complicated structure that is unique to each individual. It is important to understand how these slight differences in various regions of the body are the cause of an influential
effect on natural performance abilities. A dancer uses these complexities to make movement seem effortless. My thesis explores how each human body’s anatomy has its own unique abilities that are utilized through the movement of dance.

Learning is limitless in the life of a performing artist. The average dancer has been taking dance classes her entire life, studying many different styles such as ballet, jazz, tap, and modern. She never stops learning phrases of movement in short amounts of time, whether it is in a class combination or in rehearsal for a performance. She has grown up with a mindset that makes her fully aware of her body, as she is constantly surrounded by mirrors. All dancers spend many hours training to be in peak physical condition, so the development and complexity of their movement continues to grow. Not only is dance extremely physical, it is a thinking art as well. Advanced dancers are always working towards a thorough understanding of the importance of various qualities of movement, and how emotion and thought can be expressed through physicality.

As a student choreographer I am constantly learning about the creative process. I use a combination of my own experiences as well as observations of other choreographers to better understand working with different dancers when creating choreography. The methodology of how a piece can be created is individual to each choreographer, and depends on the dancers chosen for the piece. Choreographers use exploration and creativity in their work; they push the limits of the human body as well as the mind, creating one-of-a-kind experiences. Adding or removing one person from a dance piece means there is a change in dancers performing which creates an entirely different experience. Because there is no exact replica of a specific dancer with the same
exact skills, emotional expression, and quality of movement, each combination of dancers is unique. Changing only one dancer can dramatically change the piece.

In order to represent the different areas of my research on the human body and dance, my thesis is constructed of two parts. The first section of my work was based on researching influential choreographers. I wanted to find out how they view the unique abilities of each dancer, how they highlight the differences and bring dancers together to dance in unison. The second portion is a dance work entitled *Full Circle*, which was inspired by the dancers selected for the piece itself; how they move individually and how they move together as one group. By manipulating the dancers’ ranges of movement, I was able to push their natural limits and compare and contrast their abilities.

Each chapter in this paper explains an important influence or process that went into the final choreographic result. Chapter one provides a brief explanation of the relationship between the human body and dance. It explains the basic qualities needed in a dancer’s physicality and describes how the kinesiology of each dancer influences the creative process.

Chapter two outlines research that helped shape my approach to the creative process. It provides information on the approach of experienced choreographers from different environments of the dance world and includes my own experiences. This chapter specifically identifies five influential artists: Dwight Rhoden, Martha Graham, Bella Lewitsky, Clifton Keefer Brown, and Sara Mearns. It gives insight on how successful artists work with individuals in order to produce their best work.

Finally, chapter three describes my piece, *Full Circle*, and the choreographic discoveries made about the movement of my dancers, highlighting strengths and
challenging weaknesses. My piece reflects the observations I made about my dancers before and during the rehearsal process. Each section in this chapter follows the timeline of how this piece came together using the individual anatomy of each dancer, what was learned, and the final outcome.

Working with different dancers will improve my understanding of the human body and how to manipulate movement. I will be able to identify how movement looks on my body and alter it in a way that enhances my abilities instead of highlighting weaknesses. My dancers will also benefit from this experience. It is my goal that at the end of the process, my dancers will improve in challenging areas and become more aware of who they are as dancers and choreographers to help them achieve their full potential.
CHAPTER 2

BALANCING STRENGTH AND FLEXIBILITY

Dance works with the complicated simplicity of the human body; how it moves physically and expresses emotion through that movement. By combining these two aspects of dance a dancer reaches her fullest potential; a dancer cannot focus on one without considering the other. Although we fully recognize the individuality of each dancer’s body, there is a defined basic alignment taught in order to structure the movement in a way that provides strength and prevents injury. Movement in dance is not only about strength but also flexibility (Watkins, Clarkson 7). Similar to the two sides of dancing, strength and flexibility are the two main influences of movement. Dancers are constantly striving to improve both aspects not one or the other. The amount of strength and range of flexibility naturally vary from one individual to the next, but dancers are trained to constantly challenge those limits by working on them in technique class (Watkins, Clarkson 7). There are three main areas of the body where dancers specifically focus on improving strength and flexibility to enhance movement. These vital areas of focus include the abdominal and back muscles, turnout muscles of the pelvis and legs, and the importance of alignment in the foot.

The proper alignment for a dancer is a complicated system involving many aspects of the body including the difference between posture and placement. The posture of a dancer is the dancer’s natural stance (Grieg 26). It is where the body is naturally
placed. Each dancer’s posture is individual to her. Placement is the relationship of one part of the body to another. Often times, dancers spend years learning to fully dissect and understand their own bodies and how to place them in the best alignment (26). “Stacking” is an image commonly used in dance classes to achieve the best placement. Stacking parts of the body from the feet and ankles to the head and neck are vital in keeping the dancer’s weight in the center of the body (27). When a dancer knows how to use correct alignment (Fig.1.1 A), the movements performed, no matter the genre, are executed in a safer more aesthetically pleasing way (Welsh 44). This is of primary importance in creating the dancer’s strength and balance. Stacking the parts of the body refers to placing the shoulders directly over the hips and hips over the balls of the feet (Fig. 1.1 C). This allows a dancer the most balance and control of where her weight is distributed. It also helps improve range of motion in the body by lengthening the spine and making room for movement to flow easier through the body. For example, if a dancer’s shoulders are leaning back behind her body (Fig. 1.1 B), then the weight of the body is also towards the back. This incorrect distribution of weight does not provide the space needed in the spine to move properly and makes it very difficult to balance. By working in the correct alignment, a dancer can better maintain a strong balance in any position. The muscles of a dancer will naturally engage in order to maintain this placement. Coordinating the activation of different areas is a fundamental skill in dance. It requires the alternation of activating multiple parts of the body at any given time to properly perform the movement.

The main job of skeletal muscles is to move bones (Grieg 2). The biceps move the forearms, the quadriceps move the femur and lower leg bones, the tibia and fibula.
Muscles all over are contracting and releasing in order to manipulate the body. One essential group of muscles to strengthen for a dancer is the core, which includes the muscles of the abdomen and back that provide support to the trunk of the body (Grieg 32). As seen in Fig. 1.2, the abdominal muscles include the internal and external obliques, transversus abdominus, and rectus abdominus (Haas 52). They span from the ribcage to the lower portion of the trunk, and wrap around to the back (Grieg 31). The abdominals are the center of all movement in dance; almost everything a dancer does is initiated from the core or incorporates it in some way (Haas 51). For example, core muscles initiate the lift of the leg in any direction. The core also helps a dancer with all weight changes such as switching from one foot to the other, and helps support the spine. When engaged, these muscles lengthen the lower portion of the spine thereby preventing injury in creating proper alignment as opposed to the natural posture of an individual (Diagram 1.3; Haas 31).

Since the core is responsible for centering and control, it is a basic requirement for dancers to have strong abdominals. The stronger the core is the better control and balance a dancer will have (Haas 51). Not only does the core help with strength but with flexibility as well. When a dancer performs any type of cambré (“the body is bent from the waist, backward or sideways, the head following the movement of the body” Grant 28) the back needs to be flexible and engaged; alternately, the abdominals need to remain engaged while stretching and lengthening at the same time. It is this combination of flexibility and strength which makes the abdominals central to a dancer’s success in movement.
Overall strength in the torso not only depends on the abdominal muscles but also the back muscles. All back muscles are important; some most often mentioned in dance class are the latissimus dorsi, erector spinae and quadratus lumborum (Fig. 1.4A & B). The back is used in many ways similar to the core. It helps maintain alignment and lengthens the spine to improve range of motion (Haas 51). The erector spinae is an extremely important muscle group located deep within the trunk. These muscles are actually a group of smaller muscles located “along the spine, on both sides…and runs from the base of the skull to the sacrum” (Grieg 30). It is these muscles which are responsible for supporting and lengthening the spine, as well as bending the spine in different directions (30), especially derrière (“behind, back [of the body]” Grant 38).

In basic alignment, the energy in the torso should be extending out of the back, through the sacrum and lumbar spine; another way to think about it would be to feel the sensation of pulling your back muscles and abdominals to your spine. By working with this idea the back remains engaged enough to keep the torso strong. Back muscles are used in many areas of dance including balancing on one foot, transferring weight, and extending the leg derrière (Haas 51). For example, in order to properly perform movements such as an arabesque (“a movement where a dancer stands on one leg, while lifting the other leg up and back behind her” Grant 2; Fig. 1.5), the back needs to be strong enough to lift the leg as well as use resistance in preventing the trunk from dropping forward. It needs to be strong enough to support the added weight of the leg behind it as well as maintain an upright position with the upper body. This coordination of movement is reason to show these muscles need to be strong and flexible. The combination of strength in muscles and natural flexibility in both spine and soft tissues
allows for a greater range in motion. Someone with a naturally flexible back has a
tendency to maintain a higher leg in *arabesque* as well as a strong resistance to stay
upright in the upper back. Someone with less natural flexibility will have a more difficult
time, and will have to overcome this challenge by strengthening the muscles used.

The pelvis and hip joints work cohesively to form a very complicated and
challenging area to master in dance. The pelvis is considered the control center of the
body; it is the heaviest part of the body, essentially the division between the upper and
lower halves, and most responsible for control and stability. It houses the origin and
insertion of muscles associated with the upper leg, abdominals, and back (Haas 101).
There are many areas to consider such as the pelvic bones themselves, the hip joints
where the femur meets the pelvis, and the elaborate layering of muscles that surround the
pelvis. There is a constant goal in dance to keep the pelvis “still”. Tilting the pelvis too
far forward or backward is a common incorrect occurrence known as anterior and
posterior pelvic tilts (Clippinger 177-178). Instead, a dancer works for a neutral pelvis,
one where the left and right sides are level, and the top bones, the iliac crests, are stacked
on top of the bottom area of the pelvis, the ischia bones (Fig. 1.6).

As previously mentioned, dancers strive to lengthen the spine. Karen Clippinger,
author of *Dance Anatomy and Kinesiology* explains that forced couples are “two forces
that are equal in magnitude and opposite in direction and are located at a distance from
the axis such that they produce rotation” (56). Focusing on the concept of forced couples
allows the dancer to incorporate this idea of lengthening the spine, and helps improve the
coordination between muscle groups for proper placement. In terms of the muscles of the
human body, there are combinations of lengthening and shortening of muscles that
require the same amount of force in order to work safely and efficiently (Roberston n.p.). The forced couples determine the tilt of the pelvis. If the pelvis has an anterior pelvic tilt, the muscles that need to be lengthened are shortened and the muscles that are shortened are the muscles that need to be lengthened. When tilting anteriorly, the gluteal muscles and hamstrings are lengthened and not engaged (Roberston n.p.). The lower back, quads, and hip flexors are shortened due to the arching that occurs in the lower back. In contrast, the abdominals relax and lengthen. In proper dance alignment, a dancer should have engaged and shortened gluteals and hamstrings (Roberston n.p.). The erectors and quadratus lumborum in the lower back should be lengthened, as well as the quadriceps and hip flexors. Lastly, the abdominals should be short and engaged (Roberston n.p.).

It is clear that when an anterior pelvic tilt is present in a dancer’s placement, the opposite combination of lengthening and shortening of muscles occur. If a dancer was to perform in such incorrect placement, the chances of injury strongly increase. By working with the proper forced couples and knowing which ones need to lengthen and shorten, the entire body works together to promote proper placement and safer movement for the dancer (Robertson n.p.). Forced couples create an ideal alignment of all body parts to increase range of motion and proper muscle use. This is crucial in training because the pelvis serves as an initiator of movement in other parts of the body due to the many muscles with origins and insertions in the pelvis (Haas 101). If the alignment of the pelvis is incorrect, the rest of the body will be affected.

The hip joints are the areas where the upper leg attaches to the pelvis. The head of the femur rotates in the hip joint. This type of joint, ball-and-socket, provides a large range of movement (Clippinger 161). The degree of this movement is dependent on the
anatomy of each dancer both in muscle and bone. The hip flexors play a vital role in proper extension of the leg in any direction (Grieg 33). Hip flexors and other muscles of the hip can be stretched to increase flexibility and strength to facilitate correct technique in movement. Flexibility helps when lifting the leg in any direction, as well as stabilizing the lower body while the upper body bends and rotates. Strengthening these muscles again helps when lifting the legs. With this strength and flexibility, a dancer will be able to lift her leg correctly as well as have the flexibility to increase the range of motion.

When considering the bones of the hip sockets orientation can differ greatly. The socket can range from deep to extremely shallow (Fig. 1.7). The degree of natural movement from the hips increases with the shallowness of the hip socket (Grieg 51). Natural movement can always be improved with an increase in muscle strength and practice in the right alignment. But there are limits to this range of motion in the hip socket because although muscles can be manipulated bones cannot. The way the femur is placed into the ball-and-socket joint of the pelvis allows a large range of motion in comparison to a hinge joint of the ankle or knee (51). When a dancer extends a leg in any direction, devant (“to the front”), à la seconde (“to the side”), or derrière of her trunk, she will eventually reach a point where the bones of the pelvis will prevent the bones of the femur from extending higher into the air (Grant 40, 106). Dancers should work to push their natural limits, but when “bone is obstructed by bone” there is little else that can be done (Grieg 51).

Another way of increasing range of motion in the hips is to turn out the legs. Turnout is the outward rotation of the legs initiating from the hip joint and associated muscles (Clippinger 196). It requires the use of the deep rotators of the hip, gluteus
muscles, and adductors and abductors of the leg (Grieg 55-58). Turnout began in court dances when dancers would perform for Kings and Queens. It was considered proper etiquette to stand with toes away from royalty. Turnout began as an aesthetic part of dance; but in time was understood to help dancers with quicker movement. Eventually it became a fundamental basis to help increase the boundaries of movement. Turnout allows dancers to engage muscles other than the quadriceps to lift the leg *devánt*. This creates an aesthetically lengthened line and more efficient movement (Grieg 50). It is physically easier to lift the leg in *à la seconde* while keeping the pelvis in neutral if the legs are turned out. It is especially important for dancers to work the rotation from the hips, as opposed to a very common bad habit of turning out from the knees. If the knees do not go over the toes, it causes misalignment (Fig.1.8), and over time, over stretching of tendons and ligaments in and around the knee, especially the Medial Collateral Ligament (MCL) and Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) (Haas 126).

At the foundation of an advanced dancer is a set of strong ankles and feet. The feet serve as an important factor in many aspects of dance, all of which help a dancer gain control of their movement whether it is landing a jump, sustaining a pirouette or articulating through the twenty-six bones that make up the ankle and foot (Clippinger 298). The foot can be divided into three main areas; the tarsus, metatarsus, and digits of the foot (Grieg 100). The tarsus includes the bones located in the heel of the foot; the largest is the calcaneus or heel bone (299). The metatarsals are the long bones of the foot, located between the heel and digits. The digits are the bones of the toes (Grieg 100). All three areas are made up of a combination of small bones that work together to create movement. The many bones of the foot form other joints that allow for more movement.
Such joints include gliding and modified ball-and-socket joints (Clippinger 301). The ankle is a hinge joint responsible for the flexion and extension of the foot, while the bones of the foot work together to create other ranges of motion such as circular and sideways motion such as inversion and eversion of the foot (Grieg 96). Having a strong yet flexible foot is important in many ways to help enhance a dancer’s performance.

Having flexibility in the foot and hinge joint of the ankle helps a dancer achieve a deeper plié (“bent, bending; a bending of the knee or knees” Grant 88). A deeper plié increases the amount of force a dancer has available to push off of the floor in a jump or a relevé (“a raising of the body on...pointe or demi-pointe” Grant 94) (Grieg 97).

Being able to pointe the foot is a vital skill in dance. It not only gives the desired aesthetically pleasing line seen at the heart of ballet, it also helps in providing momentum or force similar to the ankle joint, and supports the weight of a dancer relevé or on pointe (Grieg 97). The more flexible the foot is, the more force dancers have at their disposal to help them jump off of the floor.

The foot has motion-determining factors similar to the hip. The ligaments can only stretch a certain extent until mobilization is inhibited. While this range of motion can be improved upon by stretching, bone-to-bone contact cannot. This is the true limit to a dancer’s capabilities in mobility of the foot and ankles (Grieg 97).

The foot has three different arches that contribute to the range of motion. The longitudinal arch (Fig. 1.9) consists of two sides, the lateral and medial arches. This arch is responsible for giving a dancer the arch of the foot when pointing. The transverse arch runs across the metatarsals (Grieg 101). If this arch is not strong a dancer can be seen “rolling” her feet inward, meaning the arches of the feet flatten, and the weight of the foot
falls inward. This creates misalignment and increases the risk of injury. It also lessens a dancer’s ability to work through the feet and move quickly (Grieg 101).

The muscularity of a dancer and how she moves depends on a proper knowledge of aligning the body and maintaining strength and flexibility. By focusing on the areas previously discussed a dancer will improve her technique and push the limits of her natural abilities. As dancers we are always striving for more. Constantly working towards correct placement as well as strength and flexibility increases a dancer's range of motion and technical possibilities. The stronger and more flexible a dancer is, the more successful she can become at performing more challenging movement. The more possibilities in movement a dancer has presents more options for a choreographer to use in a piece.

[See attached photo index for more example of differences in musculature in these fundamental areas of dance.]
Fig. A- Dancer C (left) shows less strength in her back compared to Dancer B (right).

Fig. B- Dancer E has less flexibility in the back than Dancer B; The pelvis is higher off the ground (Left) than Dancer B because Dancer E is unable to achieve a certain degree of bend in the back without moving the lower body.
Fig. C- Dancer B has less natural rotation in the hips than Dancer D.

Fig. D- The degree of turnout in Dancer A is less than the degree of turnout in Dancer D.
Fig. E- Arch of the foot occurs on many different planes. Dancer B has a weak longitudinal arch. Dancer G has a strong longitudinal arch, but notice on her left foot that her transverse arch is weak because of the rolling inward of her foot.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGIES OF CREATING MOVEMENT

There are many ways to create a dance piece, and no one way is considered right or wrong. Just as a teacher determines how to teach material based on the students participating, a choreographer identifies the dancers he or she is working with and alters methods or movement accordingly. One of the most important parts of the choreographic process is how well a choreographer can convey to their dancers the message he or she wants to share, so that the audience can experience the voice of the choreographer.

Throughout dance history, choreographers have created dance pieces by recognizing each dancer’s abilities and using those abilities to communicate what they want the movement to look like. Each choreographer uses what he or she knows about the creative process and through trial and error as well as practice, decides on a personal way of communicating movement to the dancers.

There have been many influential artists in the world of choreography. Their work can be seen performed in many different locations such as studios, schools, conservatories, universities, and performance stages. These choreographers have found methods of communicating through dance that work for them individually.

Dwight Rhoden is the co-artistic director and choreographer of the Complexions Contemporary Ballet Company. He previously performed for and mentored under Alvin
Ailey. Rhoden uses his pieces as a means of expressing his own personal emotions and thoughts. His co-director, Desmond Richardson, performs much of Rhoden’s work (Eichenbaum 121-123). They work cohesively; Rhoden is able to express his visions and ideas for movement accurately to Richardson, but leaves room for Richardson to personalize the movement to his body and particular opinions on the message. Rhoden has explained their abilities to produce movement effectively by saying,

“He (Richardson) takes my words, which are the steps, and gives them inflection and resonance. Sometimes he may change my words, but he never changes my meaning. Desmond reinterprets movement through brilliant phrasing (of movement), and that comes from a deep understanding of the way movement works. He sees his body as a tool for communication and continuously strives to increase his range, move beyond himself, and become more expressive” (Eichenbaum 123).

The two have been working together for over thirteen years; it took time for their communication to become as effective in movement as it is today. Both artistic directors pull from the genres they have experience with; ballet, modern, jazz, funk, musical, theatre, and lyrical (Eichenbaum 122). Dwight explains that the dancers and their bodies are first priority. They constantly challenge them in technique and artistry and work with the “how of movement, not the what” (122). Many times the movement of Complexions’ dancers highlight the pathway of the legs, arms, and body; how the arm or leg gets from point A to point B, what shape the torso makes when moving from one side to the other, and how to express the emotion or reason behind the action. The idea of “how” instead of
“what” allows a dancer to focus on the purpose of each step instead of only thinking of the technique behind it. This creates a more dynamic dancer and more interesting piece.

Martha Graham was a choreographer who strove to create movement with a purpose or motive not simply movement for movement’s sake. Graham is considered a pioneer of modern dance in the United States. She studied under such influential artists as Ted Shawn and Ruth St. Denis of the Denishawn School for dance (Au 119). Her movement was based around the core of the body; using contractions and releases of the core to initiate movement of the extremities as well as other parts of the body (Au 120). She was a dancer and choreographer for nearly seventy years, and produced famous works such as *Lamentation* (1930), *Appalachian Spring* (1944), and *Acts of Light* (1981) (Au 120-122). She believed choreography was a vital way of expressing her thoughts, ideas, and emotions. She often used ideas about psychology, politics, sexuality, and Greek mythology as inspiration for her pieces. Graham explains the essence of her process when she says, “[I] wanted to begin not with characters or ideas, but with movements . . . I wanted significant movement. I did not want it to be beautiful or fluid. I wanted it to be fraught with inner meaning, with excitement and surge” (PBS n.p.). The movements she created for her dancers had purpose and meaning; they were created to express one of her many inspirations. She chose a method of working with movement first, then placing it on the dancers to see how it worked on their bodies. Graham was an artist who preferred working only with a certain group of dancers; she rarely set pieces on dancers other than the ones in her company (Jonas 207). She believed her dancers were instruments of choreography, and by using the same dancers could get the results she expected to see.
Methods are always changing. Throughout the years choreographers have explored many different ways of creating dance works. Bella Lewitsky was a renowned choreographer of modern dance on the West Coast. Lewitsky founded Dance Theatre of Los Angeles along with modern dance pioneer Lester Horton, who created the Horton technique (Eichenbaum 251-252). When asked how she began a piece, she simply stated, “It was not formula-ridden… you never know where it is going to come from or when” (Eichenbaum 30). Lewitsky approached choreography differently with each piece. No matter the method Lewitsky chose movement that spoke to her, whether it was spontaneous in the moment or created before rehearsal (Eichenbaum 31). Lewitsky believed her creations were important for both dancers and audiences of the time, not meant to be performed in later years for new generations. Each piece was a way to help the dancers involved grow and develop. She says, “My repertory lives on in the bodies of the dancers who performed it. I hope my students take what they’ve learned and develop it” (Eichenbaum 31). Lewitsky viewed her pieces as important ways of expressing what was meaningful to her in her life; in thinking this way, she felt her pieces have a certain time to be performed, and then she must move on to something else.

Working with different dancers can be challenging. A choreographer has to decide whether to work with or against the natural abilities of a dancer depending on the desired performance style of the piece. Clifton Brown is an Associate Professor of Dance at Western Kentucky University. Working in a university setting there is a constant change in students as dancers graduate and new students enroll in classes (Brown n.p.). This offers Brown an ever changing environment to work in since dancers are only with him for a limited time. When asked about working with dancers who have different
abilities, Professor Brown said, “I think it is good to work with all types of dancers. Working with dancers who are too similar can sometimes make a boring piece” (n.p.). Brown works with dancers to push their natural abilities. In challenging these abilities he is lessening the limitations of dancers and the movement. Brown further explains choreographing to his dancers’ abilities when saying, “I try to work against a dancer’s natural abilities in order to push them to become better athletes. In that way, I am always highlighting what they do well as well as pushing them to do more” (n.p.). By working to challenge his dancers, he acknowledges the differences in anatomy of individuals and provides an environment where dancers want to improve their natural ability.

Working with different dancers can be just as beneficial as working with different choreographers. Sara Mearns is a principal dancer for the New York City Ballet Company. She has been in the company since 2004, and has performed a multitude of works from different choreographers such as George Balanchine, Peter Martins, Jerome Robbins, and Twyla Tharp (Mearns n.p.). Mearns explains that, “Working with a choreographer is 100% a collaboration. Most of the time they will come in with material…and start giving you ideas and steps, but you as the artist have the ability and obligation to build on that” (n.p.). She recognizes the responsibilities of both choreographer and performer when creating a piece. When both sides know their jobs the process becomes more cohesive. All advanced dancers are aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Mearns knows that when working with a choreographer, they already know your abilities, and if they do not, they will find out quickly (n.p.). Just as beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so are the strengths and weaknesses of a dancer in the eyes of the choreographer. Mearns points out the abilities a dancer sees as a personal weakness, a
choreographer may see as a strength. On the other hand, an ability a dancer sees as a personal strength can be viewed as a weakness by the choreographer (n.p.). This difference in opinion of ability gives insight to what different choreographers are looking for in a dancer to provide certain aesthetics, design, and quality, and to convey a message through their piece.

As a student of choreography I am trying to find what choreographic method works best for me and what methods do not come naturally. I have experimented with creating choreography before a rehearsal and coming up with movement on the spot. I appreciate both methods for different reasons and understand there is a time one is more beneficial than the other. Planning choreography ahead of time allows me to spend time in the studio by myself and exploring material without worrying about wasting my dancers’ time. On the other hand, working with people to create something on the spot has advantages too. When I create phrases during a rehearsal instead of before, the movement seems more natural in the moment. I get to see my dancers performing the movement and personalizing it; each dancer’s body works differently and seeing those variations helps identify the movement qualities I want expressed throughout the piece. I am always open to feedback and opinions throughout the creative process. Simply asking my dancers which direction they feel momentum is taking them or seeing how they create a natural rhythm can be better than what I had originally planned.

There are infinite possibilities in producing movement through dance. It takes a strong recognition of dancers’ abilities as well as how best to convey a message through movement. Throughout history choreographers all over the world have created dance pieces inspired by both personal and social concepts, and given dancers movement with a
purpose and message. Some creations continue to inspire the dance world throughout generations, others are used as inspiration for the performers to grow and develop. Each time I work on a dance piece, I better understand the methods I gravitate towards, those I struggle with, and how to more efficiently convey messages when working with different dancers. There are no formulas in creating movement; the options are limitless and the learning never ends. Both dancers and choreographers continue learning and discovering about the human body and its natural abilities in order to better illustrate the motivations behind the movement.
CHAPTER 4

FULL CIRCLE

My research on the balance of strength and flexibility in dancers and how choreographers create dance pieces using dancers of various facilities led me to create my own choreography. I constructed a dance piece entitled Full Circle that was inspired by the unique anatomy of specific dancers. The main goal for my piece was to acknowledge the similarities and differences among the dancers and express these similarities and differences in movement. I wanted the audience to see how well my dancers move together and also individually. My piece has been performed in Last Chance to Dance 2012 and The Dance Project, two student choreographed shows at Western Kentucky University. In order to most successfully create a piece inspired by the different ranges of natural facility, I centered my creative process around the strengths and weaknesses of my dancers, made my own observations to better understand their bodies, and created movement phrases inspired by their abilities.

The Creative Process: Getting Started

The approach to my performance thesis was seemingly simple. I wanted to create an abstract dance piece that highlighted my dancers’ abilities to perform together while maintaining their individuality. I cast my eight dancers based on individual performance in dance technique classes, auditions, and rehearsals for Western Kentucky University’s Dance Company. As a member of Western’s Dance Company I have spent many hours
working with my dancers, and because of this experience I have gained insight into their individual work ethics and the natural movement of their bodies. Two of the dancers were double-cast in order to give more dancers an opportunity to perform, and also to reaffirm the idea that each group of dancers is a unique combination in which every dancer offers different talents to the piece. Each dancer possessed a certain energy in his or her movement quality that I wanted to incorporate into my final piece. One area I looked at was how the dancers continued the energy of the body when extending the limbs. I wanted dancers who knew the importance of lengthening the line of their limbs by fully engaging the proper muscles from the trunk to the tips of the fingers and toes. I also wanted dancers who could use their energy in both staccato and legato ways. Some of the dancers naturally move in sharper, staccato qualities, and I knew I could use that energy in different movement phrases of my piece. Other dancers move in a more fluid, legato movement quality, and I used that energy in other movement phrases. No matter the energy, all of the dancers chosen for my piece had a strong understanding of the importance of using not only staccato or legato movement qualities but a combination of both qualities in one dance piece to enhance the movement and create more dynamics throughout.

Although each dancer was unique, I needed the group to have an overall similar athletic trait. *Full Circle* was going to be physical, with very little pedestrian movement; therefore I needed dancers who could maintain the proper technique of the movement. For this piece, dancers need a strong technical background with a large vocabulary of dance steps they can successfully perform. Knowing these basic guidelines of how to create my piece, deciding my inspirations behind the movement, and understanding the
dancers I was looking for established a more organized and focused creative process all together.

The first step was meeting with my dancers to discuss their opinions on personal strengths and weaknesses in movement. We considered the technical aspects of dance as well as quality of performance. Challenging aspects of performing include musicality, facial and body expression, and proper energy use. I had them write down as many strengths and weaknesses as they wanted, and made sure I was the only one who saw them. I did not want their answers influenced by the thought other dancers were able to read them. I used what they wrote as well as my own observations as inspiration for my choreography. The dancers had an assignment at the beginning of the rehearsal process to come up with a dance phrase that showcased challenging areas of movement. We looked at the phrases in the next rehearsal, and I made adjustments to fully enhance their weaknesses through dance steps they were comfortable performing. Using a combination of planned choreography and collaborative decisions produced better movement variation within the choreography.

My Dancers

Throughout my year of research and choreography, I have spent much time with my dancers. I have learned a lot about each one of them; how their movement is similar and different. Dancer A has strengths in flexibility and fluidity of movement. He has a high leg extension because the head of the femur has more mobility in the hip socket than other dancers. Other contributing factors include the flexibility of the leg and hip muscles, strength of the pelvis, and rotation in the hip sockets as discussed in chapter one. His body naturally moves with a smooth, continuous energy. He is able to release tension
and work with the momentum of the body to produce rounder movements. Because he is naturally successful in legato movements, performing sharp, muscular movements can be a challenge. For example, a quick arm “slicing” through the air from one side of the body to the other, or fast footwork which requires a large amount of muscular control, specifically the initiation from the core of the body, and proper placement can be difficult unless he is really focusing on those qualities. In the technical aspect of dance, *pirouettes* (‘whirl’ or ‘spin’; “a complete turn of the body on one foot, on point or demi-pointe” Grant 84) come naturally to Dancer A, meaning he can consistently complete multiple turns or rotations in his *pirouettes*.

Dancer A shows both strength and weakness in the foot. He has a strong longitudinal arch both in the lateral and medial aspects of his foot, but a weak transverse arch, causing him to “roll forward” in his arches instead of maintaining proper support of the ankle. This causes misalignment of the joints which leads to difficulty performing steps properly as well as increased chance of injury. Although his longitudinal arch is strong, he has difficulty consistently remembering to pointe the foot to its full extent. In this way, his natural ability is both a strength because he can perform it well and a weakness since he struggles with executing to his full potential. Dancer A’s assignment was to create a beginning phrase using isolated movements that require control and engagement of the muscles as well as a staccato quality. Presenting him these challenges gave Dancer A more opportunity to practice working with his weaknesses so that he could improve them.

Dancer B possesses strengths in her back, executing sharp movement, and in *pirouettes*. Her back is both flexible and strong. She is able to maintain an *arabesque*
position with a more upright thoracic region of the back because of the ease of bend in her spine and the strength her back muscles possess in order to achieve a higher extension of the leg. Unlike Dancer A, Dancer B naturally succeeds in sharp, quick movements with high energy. Examples of sharp movement would be a quick *battement* of the leg (“a beating action of the extended or bent leg” Grant 15) or a fast isolation of a certain body part. Dancer B also possesses the ability of successfully performing *pirouettes* just like Dancer A. However, her *pirouettes* differ from Dancer A because of her sharp quality in movement; she is able to *pirouette* quickly. Out of all eight of my dancers, Dancer B possesses the strongest ability of improvisation. The ability to improvise movement “on the spot” without planning or thought is a quality many choreographers look for in performers. Dancer B truly knows what it means to let go of the thought process of dance and just move. Improvisation allows a choreographer to give the dancer some freedom in the piece and show off the dancer as an individual. She was extremely helpful in my own choreographic process. When I wanted to know where the dancers' natural momentum was, she was able to provide opinions on ways of transitioning into the next steps on her own body.

Some weaknesses for Dancer B involved areas of the hips and feet. Her extensions in *devant* and *á la seconde* are low, which can be a combination of strength and flexibility from the hip socket and the surrounding muscles such as the hip flexors, specifically the iliopsoas, or muscles used in turnout. Her feet naturally have a shallow longitudinal arch making it difficult to achieve the desired pointe of the foot. I incorporated movements in the piece where the dancers have flexed feet, or instead of rolling through the feet, I have my dancers place their foot down flat on the ground.
These movements showed the foot in different shapes which helped enhance Dancer B’s weakness as a strength. Her assignment for a beginning phrase was to come up with fluid, round movement that incorporated breath. I gave her the example of a run on sentence; there are no punctuation marks in her sentence, only one fluid sentence from beginning to end. Thinking this way allows Dancer B to understand the fluidity of the phrase, and prevents her from stopping in between dance steps which would create staccato effects.

Dancer C possesses a strong muscular energy throughout her movement that creates a staccato quality. She is able to confidently move her torso and limbs using the strength in her muscles. Many times dancers concentrate only on the limbs or distal portions of the body from the trunk, when in reality the trunk is the center for initiating movement throughout the limbs. The combination of both power and range of motion in the torso are desired in choreography so a dancer is using his or her entire body to perform each movement to its fullest. Dancer C’s strength in movement in the center of the body fully illustrates the movements created for a dance piece. She also succeeds in staying grounded. Being grounded is when the energy of the body is in contact with the floor; it means the dancers weight is attached and connected to the floor. Dancer C’s ability to get low and use the floor helped when choreographing movement for my piece such as sliding the foot across the floor using resistance, or getting low in a lunge.

Dancer C has weaknesses in the back, feet, and hip flexibility. While her back has an average range of flexibility, her strength is lacking. She struggles to maintain an upright position in movements with the leg extended towards the back of the body such as an arabesque. The natural longitudinal arch in her foot originates at a higher area of the bottom of the foot. Her arch is closer to where the heel meets the sole of the foot as
opposed to the middle or lower parts of the foot such as the middle of the sole or the metatarsals. Hip flexibility is another area Dancer C struggles with, specifically the range of motion of her legs from the hip sockets. Her hips are “tight”, meaning the soft tissues of the hip lack the flexibility to release the tension of the muscles surrounding the hip socket that prevent her from loosening the joint enough to improve range of motion.

Dancer C’s assignment was to come up with movement working through the hips, and using flexibility within the limbs. She performs movement such as isolations of the hip, or phrases where the hip initiates movement through other parts of the body. By allowing the hips to begin movement that will travel through the body, I was able to enhance her weakness by incorporating her strength of rippling movement. Because she successfully moves through her torso, she is able to use the idea of continuing movement through the body to help improve her fluid movement through the hips.

Dancer D has a large range of motion in her hips and flexibility in the legs, strong musicality, and the ability to incorporate the entire body in movement. Having extremely shallow hip sockets gives Dancer D a high amount of flexibility in her extensions of the leg as well as a large range of motion in natural turnout of the legs and rotation of the head of the femur in the hip sockets. She naturally works in a more turned out position and possesses both the strength to hold the leg in an extended position, as well as stretching the legs from the hips. These abilities provide an aesthetically pleasing line both exciting for the choreographer and audience. Not many non-dancers have the flexibility and strength to hold the leg in the air, meaning an audience seemingly enjoys witnessing athletic feats they cannot themselves accomplish. Along with her high range
of motion in the hips, Dancer D can consistently stay on the music with the appropriate
counts. There are dancers who depend on counts when learning a piece, and there are
dancers who focus on the accents in music and movement. Dancer D is able to hear the
many different rhythms heard in music. She is able to understand the different layers of
rhythms in music, and helps highlight the different rhythms through the accents in her
movement. This helps create a dynamic piece.

Although her hips are naturally open and flexible, Dancer D has a rather flat foot
with little arch in almost all directions. Her longitudinal arch both medially and laterally
is very flat compared to Dancer A. As a result she ends up curling the toes under in a
“scrunched” position when pointing the foot. She also “rolls forward” in the transverse
arch, misaligning her ankles and reducing the strength and stability of her movement.
Because her weakness of a less pronounced arch seemed to be a trend among my dancers,
I incorporated foot sections where the dancers switch their weight from the balls of the
feet to the heels. Articulating through the feet will help the dancers focus on the different
parts of the foot instead of thinking of the foot as a whole. Dancer D’s assignment
focused on using the feet and keeping the hips parallel. A typical challenge for dancers is
turning the legs out as much as possible to work towards the perfect 180 degree from
heels to toes. Because her natural range of turnout is higher than most, I wanted to
incorporate parallel positions so that she could use the angle of rotation of the legs in
different ways.

Dancer E is successful in working through his entire body with either a fluid or
sharp energy. Not only is he successful with fluid, legato movements, he has the ability to
naturally add dynamics to his movement by also incorporating sharp movements.
Choreographers want dancers who can perform not one quality of movement but many to keep the dance piece exciting and unpredictable. Anatomically, Dancer E’s feet have a strong longitudinal arch both medially and laterally, which extends the line of his legs and makes his legwork more aesthetically pleasing. He also has a strong transverse arch in the foot, helping to maintain the proper alignment of the ankle and prevent injury. I choreographed several sections of isolations in the upper and lower body such as a sharp movement of the hips and ripples through the arms and upper torso using a fluid motion of the trunk to show off his strengths.

Dancer E is a good example of different ranges of motion in the hip because he has a high range of motion in the hip socket when extending the leg in a tilted position (the leg is extended out from the hip and the torso is in a diagonal position from the top of the pelvis to the neck) but lacks the strength and flexibility to extend the leg in a high range of motion derrière or devánt. Although Dancer E possesses a strong arch of the foot in multiple directions, he lacks the ankle strength needed to perform high balances on one or two feet. When watching him dance it is apparent how low his relevé is. The lower the relevé, the more challenging sustaining a balance can be for a dancer. Dancer E’s assignment for his beginning phrase included long balances and battements so he could work on the strength needed to balance and battements in different facings of the body so that he can work through the various ranges of motion from his hips.

Dancer F was one of the dancers who was double cast. She possesses a large amount of flexibility throughout her body. Her anatomy consists of long, thin limbs with the ability to stretch and extend at a higher degree than Dancer C who struggles with flexibility throughout her body. Her shallow hip sockets allow her to extend the leg in
higher positions than someone who has narrow hip sockets. Because Dancer F has a higher range of motion when lifting the leg, the options of where to set the movement increase. She also possesses a strong flexibility in her trunk, specifically her back. Having a flexible back can help dancers achieve the desired line in certain positions, specifically when the dancers lie flat on the floor in one line, arching their backs up towards the audience.

Although Dancer F possesses a large range of motion in the hips and flexibility in the back, she lacks the strength to maintain these positions to her fullest potential. Many times, dancers who have an extremely large range of natural flexibility have a difficult time strengthening the very flexible muscles they possess. Because of this, she has to work harder to achieve a balance between strength and flexibility. Dancer F also struggles with completely straightening her legs and using movement of the upper body in proper alignment. She has difficulty finding the proper placement of positions and working through them. For example, in an attitude derrière (“a position on one leg with the other lifted in back, the knee bent at an angle of 90 degrees and well turned out so that the knee is higher than the foot” Grant 8) she struggles finding the proper alignment of the leg from the knee to the foot. Dancer F’s assignment was to create a phrase using engaged muscles with resistance and suspension. I worked with enhancing her flexibility by creating movements of the hips and legs that required slow, sustained suspension to engage her muscles and control the movement as opposed to a sharp lift of the leg or quickly moving through the position. We also spent time assessing her positions. She would sustain a movement, and I would adjust her body to the appropriate position. The
repetition of performing these steps helped reiterate the proper placement in her muscle memory.

Dancer G has a strong arch of the foot and a flexible back. Her arch is one of the most defined arches of the eight dancers I used. She shows strengths in longitudinal and transverse arches. Her arch not only starts where the heel meets the sole of the foot, but continues the line through the middle of the foot and into the balls of the feet, extending through the toes. It is important to have a strong arch because it extends the line of the leg and is more aesthetically pleasing. She performs many articulations of the feet throughout the piece so that her strength can be seen. Dancer G can also maintain an arch in the back very easily while manipulating the lower body. She performs slow cambrés in the beginning of the piece to show her control and flexibility in the back. Overall she works hard to push the natural limits of her body. She is aware of her strengths and weaknesses and is constantly pushing to manipulate those natural boundaries.

Some of Dancer G’s weaknesses are flexibility in the pelvis and hips. It is apparent her legs are unable to extend in a high range of motion similar to Dancer D because of the tightness in muscles and bone-to-bone attachments in and around her pelvis. I was able to enhance her flexibility by giving her leg extensions that worked better with her hips. She also struggles with sharp, staccato movement. Her assignment for her beginning phrase was to use the flexibility of the hips and sharper movements. She performs several quick leg extensions where her leg “swipes” across the body. This fast motion allows her to depend on the momentum of the leg to create a longer, stronger, and higher line of the leg. To draw less attention to the lack of extension of the legs, I
kept her from performing high leg movements next to dancers who have a higher range of motion in the hips than she did such as Dancer A or D.

Dancer H has strengths in back flexibility, musicality, and has a naturally fluid quality to her movement. Her back is very flexible. She is able to isolate movement in her lower body while keeping her upper body strong and upright. Dancer G has a strong sense of musicality and her naturally fluid quality is similar to Dancer A and E. Having multiple dancers who can easily recognize various rhythms and successfully perform fluid movement allowed me to create choreography my dancers could perform together.

Dancer H struggles with the energy of her body, finding the desired quality of movement, and lacks a strong arch in the feet. Her energy tends to be lower than desired. This can make a piece look less interesting if the audience cannot see the emotion or the intent behind the movement. Not allowing her body the full range of motion inhibits improvement in range of motion in natural abilities. For example, she has a flexible back and therefore has a large range of motion in cambré derrière. But, if Dancer H continues performing her movements smaller than desired, her true range will be difficult to work from and improve. Her phrase assignment was to come up with movement that was sharp and defined. I gave her specifics on what I wanted the movement to look like, and even over exaggerated the steps at times, knowing she would not perform them to the extent that I showed. This helped her focus on sharper movement that had precise pathways. I did not want her performing round, fluid movement. Discussing the phrase and practicing it in detail helped keep the pathways of her limbs and torso efficient and sharp.
End Results

I used a combination of planned choreography, improvisation, and input from my dancers to create Full Circle. I also based different phrases of movement on their strengths and weaknesses. For example, one section is all about feet; showing the different ways feet can move. Another section shows off how the backs of all the dancers have different ranges of motion and different degrees of strength. This process of creating movement continued throughout the development of the piece. Working this way helped me stay focused on my inspirations and gave me a lot of material to use as options in the dance piece. I learned to quickly recognize and understand how dancers’ bodies work, and how to incorporate those natural abilities in a piece.

It was important for the design of the piece that their qualities meshed well together. I wanted my dancers to perform the same steps with the correct musicality and technical accuracy but still maintain their individuality by showing their personalities through the movement. Each one of them catches my eye with either technique or quality of movement. Previously mentioned Dancer C has such a strong fluidity to her movement. She can move her torso so that the movement ripples from the shoulders, all the way down to the ankles and feet. This quality adds breath and smooth transitions between movements. Two other dancers (Dancers A and B) have natural sharp, staccato qualities. They use their powerful, sharp energy to emphasize the position and specific shape of the movement. This can be exciting, and when used with a fluid quality creates a dynamic in the piece; it keeps the audience guessing and engaged, and helps the choreographer establish phrasing within the dance piece.
A strong technique is at the center of a strong dancer. I wanted to use very little pedestrian movement and more technical, athletic movement. I envisioned using dancers who could properly execute the dance steps I saw for the piece. I wanted *pirouettes*, high jumps, and strong leg extensions. My dancers needed to use the space around them, and push their own limits. Every one of them is stronger in an area of technique that others may not be. Dancer D has very high extensions in almost any position. Her natural ability gives me more freedom to show off the shape of the leg. Dancer F has a large range of motion in her body. She has flexibility in her spine and legs. Because I had someone who could *cambré* back farther than most, I was able to use her natural ability to create some really great movement to show the beauty of a flexible back.

*Full Circle* has two sections and took two semesters to complete. After many rehearsals and revisions, I am pleased with the final result. Choreographers are always working to improve choreography. Although I am pleased with the complete piece, I know there are still things I would work on improving. The overall musicality and ability of dancing together is one area I would work to improve. I would also be interested in switching dancers around to see how influential the individual assignments were on certain phrases. Each dancer performs a solo that they helped create. If Dancer B performed Dancer A’s phrase of weaknesses, she would actually be performing her strengths. Switching spots in the piece would show the importance of individuality and the influence each dancer had on the end result.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The more we know about the human body and its individual physicality the better we can push the limits of dance and safely create a new standard of technique. These improvements in knowledge help shape the fundamentals of dance to improve a dancer’s strength and flexibility as well as prevent the dancer from injury.

Creating movement is a process individual to each choreographer. Just as creating movement is individual, performing movement is unique to each dancer. Successful choreographers accept and acknowledge these differences and work with dancers of ranging abilities to convey a message through movement.

Throughout my college dance education I have come to truly appreciate the uniqueness of each dancer’s body; how choreography can enhance and inhibit a performer’s natural movements. Throughout the casting and creative process I was able to recognize the unique anatomy of each dancer, and through trial and error, was able to create movement that best illustrated each dancer’s abilities. This process allowed me time and hands on experience with different dancers to help improve my understanding of the mechanics behind movement in my own capabilities as a performer and choreographer.

*Full Circle* provided a good opportunity for my dancers to achieve a better self-awareness of who they are as artists and what skills they can depend on more than others.
By putting down on paper what they thought about their talents, then using that as inspiration for a dance piece, they better understood their strengths and challenged themselves to sharpen skills that require more thought. I surveyed my dancers after the process was finished. Each experienced some form of growth in personal awareness of his or her own body. Dancer F says participating in this piece,

“Taught me about my own strengths and weaknesses, both by emphasizing those of which I was already aware and highlighting others that I had previously missed. I knew that flexibility was a strength of mine but muscular strength was a weakness… I learned a few things about different movement qualities that I did not know before… sharp, powerful movements were not as natural to me as flowy, more organic movements” (Bizianes, et. al. n.p.)

Many dancers pointed out they learned from one another because they could see their weaknesses being performed as a strength. Dancers E enjoyed working with others. He enjoyed how the process allowed him to see the strengths and weaknesses of others, as well as working together to help each other improve (Bizianes, et. al. n.p.). Overall there was much growth in knowledge of personal anatomy as well as an increase in ability to identify weaknesses and push to make them strengths.

The world of dance is constantly evolving, and with this comes better understanding of the art form. The more familiar dancers and choreographers become with the concept of unique anatomy the more boundaries of performance can be manipulated in a safe and natural way while still pushing dancers to reach their full potential.
**APPENDIX**

![Figure 1.1: Upper Body Alignment (Welsh 53)](image)

**Fig. 1.1- Upper Body Alignment (Welsh 53).** A) Ribcage is lifted forward and pelvis possesses an anterior tilt. B) Ribcage is too far back, pelvis is correct. C) Proper alignment of ribcage and pelvis.
Fig. 1.2- Abdominal Muscles (Haas 52). Muscles of the abdominal wall include internal and external obliques, transverse abdominis, and rectus abdominis.
Fig. 1.3- Neutral Spine (Clippinger 94). A) Proper alignment by lengthening the curvatures of the spine. B) Curvatures of the spine are exaggerated. C) Curvatures of the spine are overcorrected.
Fig. 1.4A- Back Muscles (Haas 53). Muscles of the back include the erector spinae and quadratus lumborum.

Fig. 1.4B- Back Muscles (Haas 78). The latissimus dorsi is an important muscle in dance.
Fig. 1.5- Arabesque (Clippinger 210).
Fig 1.6 Pelvic Alignment (Clippinger 178). A) Proper alignment. B) Anterior and Posterior tilts of the pelvis. C) Lateral tilts of the pelvis.

Fig. 1.7- Hip Sockets (Grieg 51). Variations in depth of hip socket can range from extremely shallow (left) to extremely deep (right).
Fig. 1.8 - The Knee (Clippinger 240). The Medial Collateral Ligament (MCL) and Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) are two ligaments of the knee easily injured in dancers when proper alignment of the knee joint is not used.

Fig. 1.9 - Arches of the foot (Grieg 104). Both the longitudinal and transverse arches create the arch of the foot seen in many dance forms.
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