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McKenzie Cochran
Loyola Marymount University

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DANC 461: Senior Thesis Project

Dancing Between the Intangible and the Tangible:
Investigating Silence and Stillness in the Rehearsal
and Performance Process of *Tango/Rouge*

McKenzie Morgan Cochran

The Performance Thesis: *Tango/Rouge*
Created by Keith Johnson in Collaboration with the Dancers
Performed at An Evening of Concert Dance
November 19th to November 22nd

Mentors:
Professor Rosalynde LeBlanc Loo
Professor Judy Scalin

In partial fulfillment of:
The Bachelor of Arts Degree in Dance
Loyola Marymount University
Fall 2014 to Spring 2015

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THE PERFORMANCE THESIS

DANCING BETWEEN THE INTANGIBLE AND THE TANGIBLE: INVESTIGATING SILENCE AND STILLNESS IN REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE

McKenzie Morgan Cochran

Mentors:

Professor Rosalynde LeBlanc-Loo
Professor Judy Scalin, Dean of CFA



Dancing Between the Intangible and the Tangible: Investigating Silence and Stillness in Rehearsal and Performance is a transformative study of particular space of mind-body connection often overlooked in the commotion of dancing and living. This is the space of silence and stillness, both of which are undeniably valuable qualities within the creation, rehearsal, and performance process to the dancers and choreographer alike. This project aimed to observe the presence or absence of both qualities in these environments and their subsequent impact on the performance experience. In order to explore how silence and stillness allow for small yet significant sanctuaries for my performance thesis, I chose to focus on the creation and performance process of *Tango/Rouge* by Keith Johnson. During rehearsals I challenged myself to notice details such as creation occurring in silence, bodies in improvisation finding stillness, and moments in performance falling between sounds or in which stillness became the focus. I documented the entire process, then found myself seeking out moments beyond dancing where silence and stillness manifested as moments of beauty and clarity. My investigations allowed me to discover how to enhance my presence in each moment and truly listen by noticing the silence and stillness already surrounding various spaces in my life. Creating places of such peace for myself to appreciate has greatly influenced the way my mind and body move through each day, and my embodiment of the current moment in classes and onstage as a performer of deep honesty. Through the creative and performance process of *Tango/Rouge* as well as ample dialogue with fellow dancers and the choreographer, the power of silence and stillness was explored in depth to reveal the dual nature of the dancing body in these moments: *painstakingly human and vulnerable, yet embodying a form of transcendent communication.*

TANGO/ROUGE: AN INTRODUCTION

*Created by Keith Johnson in collaboration with the dancers
An Evening of Concert Dance, November 19th to November 22nd 2014*

THE CHOREOGRAPHER'S AESTHETIC

pedestrian type movement/moments contrasted with non-pedestrian; flexibility and playing with gender roles/images; creating intimate relationships via intricate partnering and weight share, usage of the full physical space, full awareness of the others around you in the piece/the other relationships developing as initiation points, creating conversations, gestural work, choreographic devices and collaboration of dancer + choreographer movement, balancing space and stillness with more chaotic, idea of silence on stage, human qualities interlaced with technical precision, eye contact, elongating space, touch and sensuality, moving from weight of bones and joints without muscular effort and with muscular effort, sudden reactions, experimentations with personal space and places of discomfort, partnering conversations with punctuation, clarity, details, and a conversational quality; experimentation with things that don't seem to make sense or haven't been done before but trying them anyways sans hesitation; letting his dancers create as he observes and offers suggestions; enthusiasm and energy; boundless ideas and knowledge and humor balanced with straightforward direction and hard work.

THE INTENTION OF THE DANCE

an eccentric, physical, playful, all female conversational tango idea that plays with ideas of male and female sensuality via costume changes; somewhat secretive and conveying shifts of power and authority; using intimacy and partnering as a way to explore both confrontational relationships and caregiving relationships; descriptive adjectives include aggressive with a

consistent underlying sensitivity regardless of dynamics of touch, manipulation and control – of both holding on and letting go with another person, quiet sensuality without being overtly “seductive”; management of places of spaciousness whether as a group or in individual relationships or solo; the detailed subtleties of relationship and partnering – where can bodies connect?; a tango-esque theme is suggested, with repetitive music as either symbolic or of non-meaning – the tango as confrontational, playful, seductive, aggressive, and more.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE DANCE

Music: Tango by Peggy Lee; La Cumparsita by Gerardo Matos Rodríguez.

Number of Dancers: 5 (McKenzie Cochran, Tina Dossa, Charissa Kroeger, Gigi Todisco, Elisabeth Wolf).

Length: 11 minutes.

Role in Dance: Member of quintet; various momentary solos, duets, and trios.

TECHNICAL STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

Strengths: creativity, intuition, deep processing of learning complex material and details, partnering/contact improvisation, improvisation in multiple facets as a tool, floorwork, inversions, details, focus/memory during creation and of choreography, connection with humans and the space around me while dancing.

Challenges: Obviously I am far from technically perfect as a dancer so there are exceedingly numerable things just regarding how my body moves and patterns and articulates that I am working on in all my technique classes, to be applied in rehearsals to movement; some things are differing my qualities of movement and speed, needing to move “bigger” or traveling more when needed, being the lifter rather than being lifted sometimes, matching my strength and my

flexibility levels to an optimal balance of both, accessing certain muscles rather than relying on others out of habit to bring choreography to a more profound place of physicality, physically taking care of myself outside of rehearsals in regards to sleep, nutrition, hydration, emotional aspects, etc. – all of which influence the physical body in how it executes technical movement and mastery of new skills, and the undoing of habits.

PERFORMANCE STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

Strengths: I embody a deep LOVE of performing, almost more than absolutely anything else, that I have been told is visible onstage in a certain presence; not somebody who gets stage fright or nervous in a inhibitory way that causes mistakes onstage (instead I feel the exact opposite – I feel both invincible and vulnerable, powerful yet even increasingly sensitive at the same time on stage which is an incredible place of being; the stage is being in another world where nothing else but what is occurring with you and those people exists, yet your body is acutely aware that people are watching and therefore everything is heightened, at least for me this is the space I attain when performing)

Challenges: I struggle with bringing the performance aspect before the performance, or at least I have in the past – doing what I can do during performance, in the studio without lights/audience/anticipation/etc. additionally, this isn't so much a challenge, but I am working on reformatting/shifting/adding and subtracting details in how I personally prepare for performance in order to keep growing and letting go of habits that no longer serve me even if they used to, all to create a more dynamic presence on stage.

WHAT DO I WANT TO LEARN?

Every rehearsal/performance process with a choreographer and other dancers teaches me a million things, most unexpected and vitalized post-experience to continue to add what I bring to such a process – to myself, to each other dancer, to the group as a whole, to the space, and to the choreographer. I want to learn so many things, but they each unfold themselves as the experience goes on – I want to learn creative process and the power of choice and freedom, as well as greater experience in choreographed partnering from Keith, I want to learn individual things from each dancer by being sensitive to where they are strong and where they struggle, and how I relate to or admire different things about each that I can be influenced by; I want to learn a deeper sense of vulnerability without words; I want to learn as a performer how to bring audiences of any size to stillness, silence, to places they didn't know existed, to the extraordinary. This list is never ending, constantly expanding and contracting as time goes on.

WHAT ARE MY GOALS?

- ❖ To enhance my natural cycle of deep and gradual processing to the point of pure clarity and discovery on stage, rather than someone who learns quick and dynamically then loses this quality as time goes on, and to not lose this natural way of learning/taking in material/erasure of the word “old” as applied to phrases and movement as everything becomes so much more new and open and clarified to me as time goes on rather than getting “old” ; BUT also being able to speed up this process when necessary which I am already getting better at than I have been in the past, regarding choreography!
- ❖ To lessen the rehearsal/performance dichotomy and bring to rehearsals the quality of presence I possess on stage, while still leaving that last bit of extraordinary for the stage because it is sacred and special and a place where I thrive; learning the balance of allowing

the mystery to still exist on stage, something of an extraordinary level to be excited about witnessing and executing in a way that is different from being in the studio, with bringing more performance quality itself to the rehearsal space.

- ❖ To become more sensitive to moments of stillness and silence (in different levels/combinations/ways) as places that require the most profound and vulnerable aspects of the self to perform - within a creation, inside the structure of a piece, during breaks in rehearsals, while learning movement, while doing new and learned movement, in the rehearsal as a whole itself – the significance of these two ways of presence (stillness and silence) in every single aspect of a process and in my life outside of the studio.
- ❖ To create and improvise without fear or hesitation, and become not more “comfortable” with creating choreography and phrases within a rehearsal as that implies a place of stagnation and all-knowing, but rather simply gaining more experience and joy with my own choreographic devices and ideas, rather than anxiety with all of the choices available, or feeling like my choreography/ideas aren’t “good” enough compared to others; breaking habits in choice making/improvisational skills; going to uncomfortable places and asking why they are so and being okay with it.
- ❖ Bringing the energy to each rehearsal that is appropriate and needed; this can vary per rehearsal as it requires sensitivity to every person in the room and the task at hand for the three hours – knowing the dynamics and qualities in energy I can bring to a space.
- ❖ To leave every rehearsal feeling some sort of combination of fulfilled, challenged, excited, creatively stimulated, in a place new and unexplored, blissfully exhausted in a way meaning that I truly devoted my entire self to the hours spent each rehearsal, holding new questions or answers or revelations or clarifications, loved and connected and joyful, more honest and vulnerable as a moving body, and more.

WHAT ARE MY FEARS?

- ❖ Not being technically talented/creative/fast enough for the process or in comparison to the other dancers in the piece, or to Keith's level of expectations – these are things I worry about with every creative process, but I have found that the more in the moment I become inside of the process and the studio, the more I let go of those fears naturally.
- ❖ I am trying to enter this process without fears. I am trying something new that turns fears into places of nonattachment/indifference (for example, becoming indifferent to the fear of comparison and failure) or places of discovery. Also, I have learned that if I state fears, create fears, they usually become reality – so therefore this examination of turning the negative connotation of “fears” into something else, a place of exploration and attention or even complete throwing it all out the window and just MOVING – is a much more successful process for me. I am challenging myself to find silence and stillness in some way when I hit a point of fear, and to deeply question this fear in a contemplative place instead of moving or making noise to dodge it. The theme of silence and stillness threads itself into all fears, challenges, strengths, questions of this process.

Personal Goals of Performance Thesis

Department of Theatre Arts and Dance
GOALS DESCRIPTION: Performance Project
September 2014

COGNITIVE/INTELLECTUAL

- ❖ What have others written about the emotional life of the human being (dancer/performer) and the work they do -- how does the body and the mind prepare a person to enable openness to discovery, alertness, etc.
- ❖ How does the mind-emotional self ignite potential and how does the mind-emotional self inhibit potential?
- ❖ What are the dancers particular gifts, challenges, opportunities, and obstacles?
- ❖ Examining the still and silent spaces of both rehearsal (rather than the vocal and directive creative process with a choreographer) and performance (the silence before the piece begins on stage, how the audience is brought to silence while watching a piece of dance, a reaction of silence rather than applause afterwards, the quiet elements of the body onstage and the relationships examined on the stage without words)
- ❖ Researching the "psychology" of silence in humanity and in the artistic process/product as presented at time

ARTISTIC

- ❖ To speak potently and clearly with different ranges and qualities of movement -- particularly focusing on "silence" and "stillness" and nuance. Silence is highly respected in many realms -- notice how we are silent when we are listening, in places such as art museums and revered spaces, an audience and the performers before a piece goes onstage/during the piece, while witnessing something profound we are often in silence -- what role does this play in how I create/interpret movement and a choreographer's process?
- ❖ Continue my history of a process of opening and discovery as the process goes on rather than everything all at once in the beginning (see mentoring report/discussion with Roz)
- ❖ Perform the details of movement as well as the gross and dramatic movement -- How do you make the audience go "wow" when you are just sitting there.
 - **More on this:** What does it take as a dancer to convey as much with stillness/near stillness as you do with complex movement? to let these moments be the most "moving" in a piece for the audience and for yourself, that speak or convey the most profound layers of a piece and of oneself? Expository stillness -- a statement of Here I Am, with no movement to shield or distract or over-interpret?
- ❖ How do I make every day new when I am working with familiar people, can I respond with more invention with people I am already attuned to work in particular ways -- letting go of habit and finding new in familiar moments.

WORKING STYLE

- ❖ Exploring "less" even more than "more" -- working smart rather than the general ambiguous term of "hard" -- as a dancer who is involved in much physically every single day, the effort should be towards working the physical and emotional self with intelligence rather than with tension and constant addition of "more"

- ❖ The “presence” of “absence” – how do I work in rehearsal when others are missing on certain weeks? How do I physically and emotionally keep their energy, their space, their role, when people are not physically with me and moving with me? How is one still “there” without being “there”?
- ❖ Letting silence (literal) – not talking or writing (sometimes) but accessing movement as total expression – tendency to overwrite (as evidenced) and overanalyze; what if I didn’t do this, experimented with a spectrum of the opposite? Constant movement/writing can create anxiety and chaotic mental state that is unnecessary; the quiet brings the peace, contemplation, acceptance.
- ❖ Being present not having to DO something – being Present as an energetic spiritual “doing” rather than action as in words and “helping out” – accepting an experience and learning from it instead of immediately taking action
- ❖ Letting inner silence be present even when I am speaking and dancing

INTERPERSONAL

- ❖ Silence by and with others; exploring the power of communication and healing it holds that is beyond what language can express and mutually exclusive to the actions/reactions of the body (both in creative/dance movement and more pedestrian situations within the piece and my own life)
- ❖ Deep and intimate communication and invention of dance language with fellow dancers in the piece whom I am both familiar with (Libby and Charissa) and less familiar with (Tina and Gigi) with both bodies (silence) and voice (non-silence) as we create and move together with Keith

INTRAPERSONAL

- ❖ Silence
- ❖ Integration of complex and profound life experiences in the past and the now and in the moment of creation during rehearsals; as well as integration into the performance quality and authenticity onstage

OTHER-CAREER

- ❖ Performance – professional modern dance company – utilizing experiences of the now/this year into tools for when I enter the professional world; a serious contemplation of reality accompanied with lightness and acceptance; how does my experience in rehearsal this semester reflect what I will take with me next year/practicing the “as if” approach rather than the “still in college” approach to deepen the process

Rehearsal and Performance Journaling

Rehearsals occurred weekly on Thursday evenings from 7:00 pm to 10:30 pm with Keith Johnson and assistant Jobel Medina. Cast included McKenzie Cochran, Tina Dossa, Charissa Kroeger, Gigi Todisco, and Libby Wolf.

Rehearsal #1: Thursday September 4th 2014

This rehearsal was mainly just getting to know our movement and selves through improvisational work (moving from the weight of bones and joints without muscular effort, introducing varying levels of contact, walking, eye contact, sudden reaction, playing with comfort level and personal space, circle of duet contact improvisation moving in and out by choice so Keith could observe how we move with each person). We also spent time on creation of individual phrases by utilizing objects and ideas physically around the room (knocking over water bottle, hitting back of head on window, drawing on whiteboard/erasing, opening the window, mopping the floor with the back, a light bulb crashing on your head, smashing bugs, listening to the floor, etc.) – this was especially helpful and eye-opening for me because as I love improvisational movement so much and have seemingly never-ending ideas within an invitation to improvise – actually setting a phrase/choreography is a place where I get stuck, unless some sort of mild direction is given as to what to pull from. This is something I will investigate this semester – why does the openness, endless possibility, and lack of “mistake” despite very committed decisions of improvisational work feel so RIGHT all the time, as opposed to phrase creation? We then did the subsequent teaching and learning of each person’s phrase, with verbal and physical cues to help with memory. This rehearsal was a beautiful introduction to Keith and the process/energy he brings to the room; I was inspired by his honesty, humility, openness, and humanness as a source of refreshment and joy to work with as it, infuses me with unlimited ideas without self doubt or criticism of making a “mistake” or not being good enough.

What do I want to work on?

Energy level (mental and physical) at rehearsal; as it is at the end of the day at the end of the week, I can feel both getting weaker and losing focus as much as I love being in the space of creation that rehearsal is. How can I keep burning the candle when the wick is almost gone? How can I reignite, or learn to work differently/more efficiently when the physical energy is wavering, but not the enthusiasm? How does the creative mind stay hungry and active, and subsequently recharge itself? In essence, how does the creative mind nourish itself and transform quickly and on command before/during/after rehearsals?

When did I feel alive? I feel alive when this space of openness, of the undiscovered, of complete creative freedom and the beginning of a journey is held in the space of a room for three hours – what is to come is just so exciting for me! I also am alive always in improvisation with other dancers and on my own as I just find the possibilities so incredibly endless and the ultimate form of self-expression, as well as an exercise for continuing to develop my intuition in and out of the studios. Time stops during long periods of improvisation and creation, and I am given control of my own creation by letting myself go out of control, in the sense of how improvisation immediately erases my second guessing, my mental insecurity about the next moment of movement (allowing me to do things I would never know I could do if “choreographed”) with a sense of complete sensory adventure, exploration internally and externally, energy of the others around me and acute attention when partnering or even just passing them by, and experimentation with the role of stillness and silence – one of my main thoughts/questions for this thesis/process.

Rehearsal #2: Thursday September 11th 2014

Structurally, tonight's rehearsal consisted of delving headfirst into creating and molding and shaping an opening of the piece as well as introducing the music/theme ideas (tango-esque music and spoken word; movement quality is creating conversations, lingering, elongating the space, eye contact, aggressive with a touch of control vs. aggressive without boundaries - 2 parts of the piece to transition between - touch and sensuality, moments of stillness to create diversity and a relatable line of ideas for the audience, human qualities rather than consistent dance-esque technical precision, the undoing and re-lacing, reformatting, questioning process that occurs once an artist has mastered and developed a certain level of technical skill, and unattainable qualities, sharp and defined but also smooth and effortless looking).

I was in deep observation/note and video taking/attention to detail mode of both the choreography itself and to the way Keith as a choreographer creates work - when he speaks, when he doesn't, where the movement comes from, how he deals with dancers in general in early stages of a work, his practice thus far of establishing a rough skeletal structure of a piece, then delving back into timing details, choreographic additions and details, aesthetic and dynamic details (see journal for much more information and the first hand notes of this experience) all of which are subject to change, be thrown away, enhanced, redone, explored deeper. This is not necessarily a topic I am exploring deeply this semester, but I found myself noticing the differences in Keith's conversations, corrections, and general way of approaching his male assistant who filled in for me today movement-wise, with whom he seems to have an experienced and intimate movement history with; much more experience than he has with us, with how each other works in rehearsal processes. (Also see NOTEBOOK NOTES + type if needed)

Rehearsal #3: September 18th 2014

I came into this rehearsal a little anxious because I wasn't able to dance the week previous and had to be in purely observation/video/note taking mode, and had review the videos and movement as best I could but didn't know what to expect. This anxiety was absolutely unnecessary. It was an intimate rehearsal, deep in both creation and lightness and collaboration, as it was just Libby, Tina, and myself as well as Keith and his assistant. I was reminded again how much I thrive while working in small intimate groups of people rather than larger groups, when the emphasis is on the process more so than the product. We began by going over individual phrase work we each created the first week a few times, then pieced them together in a big piece of continuous phrase work together, like a beaded necklace rather than just the beads scattered around. We then reviewed the basic structure and outline of 1:30 section choreographed last week, in which it helped greatly to physically walk through it and kinesthetically learn what I had been trying to pick up on from the video, and mentally made me feel more prepared and caught up. Then we created new work! We took our own individual phrases and worked with a partner to make mostly upper body/arm work phrases inspired by the movement we had already created – a more gestural work with various levels of statement and quietness, testing how we interpret movement. Libby and I created a phrase from my own phrase, her phrase, and Charissa's phrase as Tina and Jovel created out of Tina, Jovel, and Gigi's phrases. We took these and put me with Tina, and Libby with Jovel and found pathways, places of stillness and matching, places to intersect, places to make space as we did the arm movements/interpretations next to each other as a sort of playful aggressive conversation to the sound of the spoken word, which so far has turned out spectacular and dynamic, especially in finding both the speed and spaces to play with the words in the spoken phrase as they fit with the movement. Again, finding space within what previously felt like

hyper speed was incredibly interesting, a slow and speeding of time purely through timing of muscular action and intuitive choice. I left feeling creatively challenged and inspired, fulfilled, joyous, lighter, refreshed, grateful, curious and even more excited about what's to come in the process the next coming weeks. I find that I am leaving these rehearsals with questions answered, but also new questions to answer; as well as experimenting for when I do not need to answer a question, for when that same idea of silence and mystery can interplay for a new discovery or uncharted path rather than a set of structured answers. The wondering and curiosity keeps each week alive. I find that Keith's "corrections" are more so given as suggestions as which to experiment with and always surrounded by much affirmation and blatant statement of what he does like – the space never feels harsh or as if you are making "mistakes" – or maybe I am just learning to view and hear correctional vocabulary differently in my body and mind. Some challenges I am having are the recurrence of the foot blister/split/the utter annoyance of tape and feet that aren't completely solid, but I am working through it and finding ways within it to move and heal. Regarding performance, in the partner work I focused deeply on attention both outside of myself and on my partner, and I felt the eye contact and obvious connection (with differing qualities) is practice for performance. Through each rehearsal process and especially this one, I am discovering that I find comfort with the uncomfortable, discovery at every detail, lightness and playfulness even when serious creative experimentation is at work, direction with room for interpretation, qualities of intention in relationships within a piece, breaking mental and physical habits that influence each other in a way that is not productive for me, and growth within a deeper understanding and acceptance for my unique rehearsal process/pattern of creating a piece.

Rehearsal #4: September 25th 2014

Pre-rehearsal reflections:

- ❖ "Let yourself become that space that welcomes any experience without judgment." *Tsoknyi Rinpoche*
- ❖ *Who are you in this piece? What is your relationship to others? How do you shift from each "section" of mood?*
- ❖ Last week: with conscious repetition comes knowledge, with knowledge comes speed of execution, with speed comes space, with space comes places to play/linger/absorb/sink deeper into

Post-Rehearsal:

This rehearsal was comprised of much creative material generation/partner work, improvised connections, experimental movements and ideas, and a contagious energy of lightness mixed with the usual hard, smart work ethic. We began by reviewing each person's individual phrase, then moving towards a more improvisational structure of the phrases by entering and exiting the space with them as we chose, creating connections with others in the space doing different phrases, and experimenting with manipulating where connections could be had, contemplated, broken, or followed. This is my preferred type of improvisation – where there is some structured movement, but it is balanced with complete freedom of interpretation, direction, timing, quality, and the presence of other people to influence choices. We then moved into created small tango-like, precise, conversational duets with punctuation and intention, rather than a sense of complete flow through each movement. I created one with Jobel, one with Tina, and one with Gigi; and then we moved into linking them together in an order with the sound to get a feel for the qualities and conversation type, and where to add spaces and no spaces – again, a sense of experimentation, of complete creative freedom without fear of making

mistakes, of asking others and Keith for help when we were creatively stuck, a place of experience and complete non-judgment. We ended rehearsal by more experimentation with this idea of a miniature "finger tango" – using the fingers on the floor as if they were people with feet, and choreographer a small set of ideas and innovations – a thinking outside of the box that stimulated me creatively and with precise detail to what the fingers and hands could do to mimic the full human body in a way that was both comical and a special sort of entertainment. Tina and I then reviewed the partner/gesture phrase to the tango spoken word piece we created last week, and we concluded rehearsal. I am constantly discovering that I am no longer afraid of creating set movement rather than just improvisation – I just seem to get almost overwhelmed because the possibilities always seem endless, and making a distinct choice in a set of movement seems so much more difficult than my intuitive, non-second guessed choices of my improvisation spaces and "choreography." Especially when creating with a partner and seeing how many ways bodies can fit the spaces around another, manipulate, initiate, touch, suspend, support, drop – this makes me feel truly alive, when places and ideas swiftly start to fit together like a conversational puzzle. More aliveness comes when the material becomes knowledge and the partner and I begin to play with timing, going deeper, going lighter, eye contact, variations of complexity and simplicity – molding the same dough into a million different shapes and possibilities all without spoken words. Keith would watch us create and experiment in silence, observing without judgment or distinct presence – simply offering ideas and suggestions when we asked for help, or when he saw something he liked and wanted to expand upon. In this way, much of the rehearsal was our own voices rather than Keith's but it is still his overall that speaks, that outlines the shape of each of our voices in mouth and body. Technically/physically, my body has felt a little off and just exhausted from the week all day more so than just the usual tiredness at the end of the week, but the energy of

the room and the rush/loss of a sense of time that comes with creating with somebody made me forget all about the physical difficulties I was feeling. I am excited to revisit these duets next week with fresh approach and refinement, and setting details with clarity. I do have questions about the entire structure of the piece overall, as we have so many bits and pieces of things, but I am enjoying the wave of just riding each rehearsal openly without having to "know" where everything is going and when; just giving everything no matter what and knowing the structure/instruction/bigger intention will fit together in time. I always seem to leave these rehearsals feeling creatively stretched, lighter, more joyful, physically exhausted in the best way, and of a sense of surprise with myself. However, I am finding that this year I have a tendency to become very anxious and nervous before rehearsal for a reason I cannot determine, though I can speculate; it is a worry that at rehearsal I will not be good enough, creative enough, prepared enough (no matter how much physical/mental preparation I do of choreography and etc.) it will not go away, and this is something I am working on investigating as the moment I walk in the room, I realize I had nothing to be nervous or anxious about – the space is safe and open.

Rehearsal #5: October 5th 2014

This was a fantastic rehearsal – extremely productive, tactile, experimental, focused, at times challenging and at times hilarious. We began as we begin most – with review of our individual phrases using verbal dialogue/cues to help each other move through them as that is how we choreographed them – which I find interesting, that is still exactly how my brain embodies and hears/sees the movement occurring – seems as though it obviously is a fantastic memory aid, attaching locations and objects in the room with actions. Then we brought Libby and Charissa up to speed with the duets from last week (Libby learning Jobel's parts with me, Tina, and

Gigi) and myself teaching Charissa the gesture phrase to the spoken word created by Libby and I a couple rehearsals ago. The ability to have everyone at this rehearsal together was a different type of intimacy and space than created in past, smaller, rehearsals – distributed among all in a way that allowed for private conversations, moments of alone time, and both separation and enmeshing of words/bodies/movement/ideas. Our main task for the rehearsal was to create at least a skeleton for the third replay of the tango music – a section including all bodies, involving both explicitly clear/direct partnering that is more pedestrian-like, and much creation of tangled, complex, perfectly timed or else all fails type partnering, moments of speed and chaos overlapped or punctuated by moments of stillness and silence (by at least one body in the group), changes in quality throughout the choreography, lessons in patience, intuition, problem solving together, going slow for one another and allowing a step by step repetition to permeate into something able to be sped up with grace and safety, mechanics of one another's bodies, an invitation and encouragement of making choices (to an extent) throughout in which Keith would approve of (such as a place of eye contact/focus, or a slight lingering, or letting us solve the puzzle to unlock a possible next step). Working with Keith is boundless, endlessly fascinating; the movement or next steps with a person seems to come from such a quiet, intuitive place deep inside before his voice moves forward and continues what seems to be never stopping, even when it is stopping, creations of bodies moving together. I feel as though he is drawing, with a very thin black pen, a very complex work of unpredictable yet deeply satisfying direction and motion. Challenging moments arose only naturally – out of exhaustion and something not working anymore or correctly, and slight tension occurring before it dissolves as patterns are reexamined and mechanisms of partnering are cleaned and tightened to a clearer place. I feel as though mentally and physically, this is one of the most completely focused, energized, lost in time and in the studio, creative choice making, intuitively reactive in the right

moments type of rehearsals thus far, maybe even in my collection of all rehearsals throughout college. When I come to this rehearsal, though my mind is not silent; it almost seems as though it is because I am thinking of nothing else but the current moment, or the creative process is occurring, or I am technically de-puzzling a movement series, and etc. – none of the external anything I think about is there – those places are silent.

Rehearsal #6: October 9th

I recollect this rehearsal as a semi-frustrating one for me, and while there are a few reasons as to why, I also believe that it is just natural to at some point have a space in which frustration or irritation occurs within such an intense process. I did not show this frustration externally however to anybody in rehearsal; it was only afterwards that I left rehearsal with a sense of self-doubt and insecurity instead of fulfillment, that hasn't occurred within this process yet. The week as a whole was strange and off balance for me, both physically for legitimate reasons, academically, and mentally, which inevitably (no matter how much mental preparation/mindset shift you practice) carries some part of itself into rehearsal process, since the body does not forget or erase even if the mind tries to, and this can reflect in how it moves and listens.

Regardless of my own personal challenges, this rehearsal was extremely productive and exhausting in the best way. We integrated Charissa into a large piece of group material, used the duet material to structure and fulfill a basic outline for another repeat of the tango song in which our singular duets become communicable and connected to other movement occurring at the same time, structured an order of events for the showing on Tuesday to best display the amount we have been working on thus far (duets group work → second rehearsal group work → partnering group work from last rehearsal → spoken word gesture duet/finger tango) in a somewhat seamless fashion. I am ready to enter with a refreshed mindset and sense of being.

Rehearsal #8: October 23rd 2014

- ❖ Very tough rehearsal for me physically
- ❖ Productive as we completed the ending of the last piece – now just shading in transitions, details, etc. but structure as a whole is complete
- ❖ What can you bring to it? What colors? What silence? What stillness? where is your creative freedom – the balance between none and too much?
- ❖ I was quite silent during this rehearsal because of health issues then finally talking to Keith about what was going on and letting it all go
- ❖ The feeling of being in the space with these people shifts slightly every week depending on my own energy, my own perspective of the rehearsal, my own observations and focus
- ❖ Stillness as refuge for me during this time; and allowing the silence to calm me down when it gets too overwhelming and my body reacts; allowing it to wash over and calm and heal
- ❖ How to still be there for others even if you feel like you are not there for yourself?

Rehearsal #9: October 30th 2014

- ❖ Transitions and Details of overall structure was the focus and problem to solve
- ❖ Musicality of second piece; “digging your own hole”
- ❖ Group exhaustion but working with each other, supporting each other
- ❖ Libby and I opening duet – more aggressive, less subtle, more force
- ❖ Three pieces of music – “force” is driving you to keep moving (beyond structured pauses, moments to breathe); feels more like a dangerous world where any wrong step could be
- ❖ Seeing others, really seeing them, when you touch really touching them rather than the mechanism of touch – these read differently even if an audience doesn’t realize why an authentic touch takes their breath away

- ❖ Continually learning that throughout rehearsals – frustration will get you nowhere – its just dance. Just breathe through it, make someone laugh, feel light again – frustration can make me feel heavy and inflexible but it is so much easier to just let it go and move with it
- ❖ Pieces are not stagnant – do not get married to a certain timing, a movement, a phrase – if it changes in later rehearsal, this makes it easier to just let go of without getting hooked on the fact that last week it was different
- ❖ Focusing on performance qualities as we ran the first two sections but will do increasingly so next week and all of the following weeks
- ❖ Regarding silence, stillness – it is my natural tendency once I get “comfortable” in a rehearsal space (in a good way, an intimate way – not a mechanical/non-thinking way) to quickly jump to opening my mouth or to fidget when waiting for a choreographic decision, or to just make it more complicated than necessary by speaking anything at all when it isn’t needed – these are the places in which I am learning that I can just stand and be in stillness to lessen the natural chaotic energy of the room, I can exhale instead of always jumping to say something – allowing this to wash over the room instead of a sense of urgency, frustration, confusion that speaking can easily create if too many people are trying to at once (also witnessing this in senior rehearsal when they are self-run)
- ❖ No mirrors – then Saturday quote from Ohad about how mirrors need to be totally gone from the dance process and are only hurting us – how can you really be here, with these people, with this moment now, if you are focused on the visual image of you? Does not work.

Wednesday November 19th 2014: Post Opening Night Journaling

The past two weeks have been rigorous – emotionally, physically, mentally – it feels like we spun so quickly from cancelled last rehearsal to spacing to tech to dress rehearsals the past two nights, to tonight under the lights beginning it all over again. Every single part of me has been in conflict and all over the place during the past two weeks of process from feeling such deeply embedded joy to unexplainable physical and mental exhaustion to passionate frustration to ecstasy to even nothing at all. For a person like myself, and all other people whose bodies are their craft and seemingly under their control, when things weave in and out of your control is when a sort of torturous process begins – I want nothing more to push myself past all limits right now and to feel like myself again, but my body keeps incessantly speaking with a firm no, a hitting of the wall over and over again no matter how mentally strong or prepared I try to be. This affects performance obviously – when I am trying to so hard to ignore such a deep physical exhaustion and sense of inner chaos in order to be fully present on stage, it is a duality of want and need. I either don't know what's going on, or I don't want to accept what's going on – neither are working. Every day it becomes more layered and tangled – I am realizing that I need to stop trying to find myself underneath all of the bullshit going on, and instead be the layers and the tangles and the bullshit as I perform – its about growth, isn't it? Performances aren't always going to be squeaky clean and perfect and exhilarating – there is little to no growth in that. What happens when you're hanging off the edge of a cliff? When you fall off the cliff? How do you run with it anyways and say hey – I'm falling off a cliff in life and in dance, watch anyways. While you can push and jump and scurry around hurdles in front of you in a difficult piece using various forms of strength and community support, pushing past the hurdle of yourself, your body, seems somewhat violent and bound for consequence despite how mentally frustrating it is to not be able to do so. Even in a question of silence and stillness: the

body cannot be silenced, it will always talk to you and tell you what is necessary – especially mine, a stubborn being who persistently demands often in contrast with my equally stubborn mind. Perhaps I am seeking onstage the next few days to find not silence of my body, but stillness of it from an internal sense, finding a way to move as passionately as I do onstage and have the capacity to and usually the energy to, but using this stillness inside as an energy to move me through space rather than what I previously “relied” on. It is a growing space, a space to learn that not every performance is going to be to perfectionist standards where everything goes your way. It is a space for me to honor where I am at right now, where I am at onstage, who is with me onstage, this entire beautiful stunning loving process spilled out and spun around onstage, and who I am right now on that stage – not what I wish wasn’t going wrong physically with me. A space of strength differently perceived than physical exertion to a maximum potential, as right now I feel as though I am constantly maxing out my level of exertion doing things that previously would not have been a big deal. However just thinking of the piece last night and tonight, and how dangerous, creative, open, risky it feels onstage in comparison to our skeleton structure in the studio – it feels absolutely surreal onstage. Time speeds and slows and stops for me – I notice Charissa’s baby curl as she walks away from me, the tip of Tina’s nose, Gigi’s fingernails during the finger tango, the blue of Libby’s eyes during our intense contact in the beginning, the fabric of the jacket, the space my body is inhabiting as the lights pour down on us. There is the energy onstage – I am not in this world – I am in the divine. And it is not perfect, everything is not blissful, but it is divine. It feels like a movie, and the transitions have become so meaningful to me and such a space to play with the very ideas of silence and stillness – it feels breathtaking just doing it let alone watching it. I am just so intensely grateful for this process with these dancers I have worked with for years (namely Charissa and Libby) and where we are today, each night, with Keith, I could have stayed in the

studios working with all of them for hours and hours more than we have already done, and loved every minute of it. It is that point where you start finding moments within the performance – the stage becomes a playground of sorts rather than a set solid ground – every time we do it begins to ask a question of where are we today? Who is Libby today? What if I didn't take my time there, but what if I did? A constant inner dialogue improvised alongside the constant external dialogue of the body with others and alone. There is truly nothing like performance, and nothing like the silence and stillness within a performance – it is a space of higher self, almost transcendent at times because of how human it is.

Thursday November 20th 2014: Post-Show #2 Journaling

The shift from last night's emotional tone post concert to right now is transitional, a state of maturity, of realization that everything really is okay, that I do have power behind what goes on in my head though it does not feel like it sometimes when the perfectionistic qualities, comparison tendencies, the self doubt messages are on eternal repeat...there is the intellect in myself to hear that, say thanks but no thanks, and move on. I forgot that I am allowed to do that. Tonight was spectacular, exhilarating, exhausting in the way that only settles in when you have given so much of yourself willingly. Onstage in Keith's tonight was mesmerizing – we discussed beforehand our usage of eye contact and realized that each of us felt as though we never even see the audience, we are too busy noticing each other in different ways each night, paying that close of attention to detail – this is one of my absolute favorite things, there is truly nothing like noticing a stray eyebrow or a sweat bead on someone's forehead while onstage with them, its another dimension of existence and vulnerability, of exposition. Roz and I talked beforehand about the rough emotions I've been experiencing around concert as a whole – anxiety, displacement, lack of fulfillment, feeling as though I am not perfect and therefore not

good at all, restlessness – and how to utilize these, rather than work against them, to move into a state of total vulnerability onstage with whatever is going on, even the physical fatigue – as this is what audiences connect to deeply, what moves people to tears and they don't even know why. She discussed to me, reminded me, of how “dance” and “your life” are not separate things – dance is your life. Life is not always rainbows and boundless energy and sparkling rainbows where everything is going right. Often it hurts, it makes you cry, it makes you want to shatter windows – this is the dance. This is the maturity that takes one from amateur happy loving dance 24-7 always bouncing around because it is always EASY, to surpassing amateur in the realization that not every concert, performance, rehearsal is going to be perfect and feel wonderful and loved every minute – but this is the life of dance, which often demands more than someone can give, as in my situation right now. Tonight however I felt as though I worked with it, rode the wave of it, rather than turning my back and pretending it wasn't hitting me in the back until it knocked me over full force. I let it be. I relaxed. I took a breath and looked around, felt my skin in the light. There was a moment in Keith's in which I was stripping off my shirt/pants to reveal my slip offstage before going back on, and I managed to somehow do it faster than ever and there was this quick moment where I was darting between people and curtain to get back on and have time, and I just stopped before I went onstage and smiled without thinking. It is just one of those moments I will keep with me in some sort of back pocket forever, that fleeting glimpse of I fucking love this even when I can't love it. I'm not in control of the loving it anymore, it moves me anyways. And then in a flash I was back on again, following charissa's hair, glancing back at libby, falling into space after Tina, getting lost in it all. That is the beauty of it – the dance is a map, the choreography is directions, but true artistry comes from getting lost without losing directions or dropping the map. Knowing the map and directions so well that you can afford to get lost because you know right where to be

found again. Keith was here tonight, and he was so, so happy. I can't describe how grateful I am for him – I never knew I would ever be working with him, after seeing his work on Paul and Charles my freshmen year when I was ASM at fall concert and couldn't even breathe during that piece. I never thought I would be here, or dancing the way I do now, seeing the way I do now, being as vulnerable and willing and open as I am now.

Friday November 21st 2014: Pre-Show #3 Journaling

I woke up feeling brave today, I woke up wanting to draw today. I haven't drawn in months. I woke up thinking that dance hurts, the silence afterwards hurts, the silence before hurts, trying to be still often hurts – it is like nothing else. It is being enveloped and living it so forcefully and fully that it hurts from the intensity of it, it redefines a negative context of hurt. You want it to do this – where is the growth in being numb? In not feeling anything from it? In feeling only one emotion towards it? I do believe this week and this entire semester I have felt the entire spectrum of emotions possible towards dance – everything now is so rich, so complex, so primed for excavation during future experiences – there are places to pull needles out from that stuck their way in during a rehearsal in September, a bruise to watch transform colors from when I had to sit down and watch instead of do, a teardrop on my toe that I didn't tell anybody had fallen, a space between my elbow and wrist where I remembered that I am powerful – this is so much more than I carried at the beginning of the semester. I woke up this morning and instead of thinking "I am so excited to dance tonight" I laughed at myself and thought, I am already dancing.

Friday November 21st 2014: Post-Show #3 + #4 (closing night) Journaling

Last night was a reminder of how good it can feel, why I feel in love in the first place, why everything is still okay: spectacular, animalistic, intuitive, intelligent, wickedly creative, beautiful and not, supercharged with energy, a cool breeze, an absence of numbness, a slap in the face, a shove upstage to knock the now into your reaction:

- ❖ Quietness but surpassing communication – noticing the differences pre-concert in which my energy results in laughter and speaking and social interest, and when my energy is quiet and contemplative, yet explosive all the same in its preparation – I am preparing to speak later rather than now, when the curtain goes up and there are things to stay
- ❖ Feeling my heartbeat on ground in senior piece
- ❖ “get lost in an art form for days at a time”
- ❖ Beyond thinking, beyond structure, we knew it, it was a language of fluency with room to play
- ❖ Why are words the default communication? Why do we speak different languages? What came before this?
- ❖ Things are often stunning
- ❖ Balance through performance of imbalance
- ❖ Hasn't been perfect and has therefore been the most growth producing week of my life for the way it has already shifted where my dancing resides, and why it resides
- ❖ Contemplation without words surrounding concert times, often I just sit, and find it hard to DO a lot more during this time – I am already doing so much, have given so much, the body wants patience and stillness
- ❖ What people do I hold relationships with, that are better off without words? With other forms of communication?

ADDITIONAL POST-CONCERT JOURNALING

Monday November 22nd 2014: Modern IV (with Kevin Williamson) Connections and Reflections

- ❖ The body – is it livid or Confused or Sad or Hopeful or less or still aggressive or Exhausted or neither – what is going on? how does this move me now and today?
- ❖ Improvisation in modern today – ran in with Austen quickly and had no chance to really “think” or look in mirror or evaluate appearance – movement felt so explorative, so nonjudgmental, so experimental – usage of adjective pairs and singulars to work with, moving with Libby, group with tedious and luscious
- ❖ How do you interpret a word/text/adjective to work with? Are you holding it, being it, feeling it, walking on it, running away from it, tasting it, rolling in the air of it, hearing it? There are so many variations and it is just so, so, so good to move. It brings me to tears these days more often than not. Words used in improvisation: tenacious, loquacious, tedious, aggressive, delicate, courageous/sparse duet with Libby, tender and big, copper heavy relaxed, dancing as colors, endless – synesthetic influence.

Tuesday November 23rd and Wednesday November 24th 2014

I need space to myself. I need silence. I need stillness – more than I have ever truly realized after this process of examining these qualities interwoven into peace during the day.

Everything today makes me freak out and I go from bored to overwhelmed in an instant, I’m not looking at anything. This is the introverted part of me – post concert which is such a giving experience, takes so much energy out of it (even with how much it gives you back) that it sucks me dry for a few more days than I want, if I don’t acknowledge and honor the need for space right away – I did not do that this year. Everything goes on burnout for a set of days

because I just cannot give anymore. I just can't. it is a type of post-concert grief this year as well – I haven't felt all that I was "expecting" to feel after the last show – something of sadness and loss and longing for the past or something – but maybe this is the body speaking that instead of the mind determining "Hm. I think I am nostalgic." Instead, my ribcage hurts and I can't keep my eyes open and everything feels like the last straw.

Friday November 26th to Wednesday December 3rd 2014

I have had four peaceful days alone, quiet, focused, loving, and I feel as though I can breathe again, like water again, like I can move again without shattering.

Modern IV Connections and Reflection

- ❖ energy – improvisation – voices – text – stream of consciousness – I had to move and couldn't stop moving – but everybody else moved as little as possible – I needed to run around in circles or something – but different than an uncomfortable restlessness, more like a force of this is what your body does so you should do it, keep moving – eye contact improvisation with Kevin: I thought of nothing. I wasn't thinking. I wasn't thinking about not thinking. How often does that happen for me? Onstage, every time. It can happen in the studio as well. I still keep expecting some deep wave of grief and nostalgia to hit me deeply about concert, about my last time dancing in Strub Theatre for Fall Concert, about this ending of something, but it hasn't – or it already did – or it won't – or it doesn't need to because there is so much more to happen, nothing is really over. You can keep banging on a door that is quietly closed and completely miss a wide open door across the way!
- ❖ Nothing but the simplest of things makes sense – silence, stillness, coffee and walking and talking with someone, simple direct sunshine, simple rain, simple foods, water, showers. I am so complex right now and so buzzing with energy and ideas and movement and writing

that I can't seem to handle any exterior chaos and complications with a sense of timely grace – hence the theme of this week. I cannot sleep peacefully or on a consistent basis. I feel as though I found spaces of silence and stillness on stage and left them there.

Saturday December 6th

I want to cancel the idea that crying in front of others or in public is embarrassing or unacceptable or inappropriate or unprofessional and also the weird necessity and impulse to hide the fact that you just cried, and trying to cover it with make-up or an lie//excuse as to why your eyes + face are that unique shade of pink and watery and you're sniffing. Why can't we just say we were crying? I spent most of my life stopping myself from doing it because I couldn't and holding it back, so then I just naturally developed a response to always just hold it back and stop myself even if I wanted to cry, and since this summer i've finally gotten rid of that and man, it is so nice to not feeling like you're made of stone because you're incredibly emotional but yet you can't get the damn tears to come out. Now they do at all kinds of moments - ecstatic, angry, distraught, overwhelmed, joyful, grateful, when alone, when with others, about dance, about not dancing, about art, about life, about the situations of other people, the earth. It is beautiful. Crying is in my opinion is one of the most beautiful expressions of genuine emotion permitted by the body as a natural reaction. Crying and laughing are just so damn wonderful as physical reactions to situations before we even THINK. Literally water, perfect droplets of water, stream out of your eyes and can be hot or cold or lukewarm or fast or slow or extreme or individual or all at once. "Heaven knows we need never be ashamed of our tears, for they are rain upon the blinding dust of earth, overlying our hard hearts. I was better after I had cried, than before—more sorry, more aware of my own in gratitude, more gentle." (Dickens)

Every year at senior blessing, everyone has been crying, and I have wanted to cry, but I just can't. Instead I would stand there and hug and feel someone else's tears on my cheek and squeeze them hard enough that I could pretend they were mine. Leaving feel like I wasn't emptied, like I was holding back, like I didn't love enough or put my heart outside of me enough. Unaffected – the worst feeling I can ever experience – because I am so constantly over affected by everything. When I hit something that leaves me unaffected as if I wasn't really there – I know I have something in a lock box that I keep telling to be quiet. Still there, but kept quiet.

This year at senior blessing, I cried. I cried so much and it felt so wonderful. Surreal and so real – the words I wrote in my notebook in an instant right when I sat down. Miranda placed her head on my shoulder and I cried. I lit my candle and I cried. I lit josh's candle and I cried. I sent out a blessing of love and honesty and courageousness and I cried. I hugged and cried. I told people they weren't sad tears they were happy emotion tears full of everything i've experienced in that room yet people's first reaction to crying is to offer a suggestion of – not doing so. "oh don't cry!" And every time I was like NO I am crying and it is good and it is human please just let me cry this is necessary and so incredibly right, so in the moment, crying is so in the moment. You are just physically reacting without thinking about it – I can't think hard about crying and then make myself cry – it just springs up in your eyes like a sweet relief that the body is recognizing what the emotional brain, the limbic system, is pulsating with. Allowing the full self to express – without words – and saying so much that you just can't put into words. You can't put that water into words. I will never tell myself not to cry, or a friend, or anybody at all. I will actively, gently, be with them as they do.

Thursday December 4th – Reflections on: NPR TED Radio Hour - Quiet.

John Francis: How do years of silence change someone? Why would someone choose silence?

- ❖ Inner voice changed as well as outer voice after not speaking for 17 years.
- ❖ STOPPED speaking to avoid arguments; but then other things began to peak interest on not speaking
- ❖ Decision to start again after one-year on birthday; each morning didn't have to decide whether or not he was going to speak – continued for 17 years and went through college + PHD while silent; improvised his own clearly communicated sign language of gestures and facial expression
- ❖ Started to get quiet inside his head...started listening.
- ❖ Is the mind clear? Catches himself in long periods of time of “non thinking” instead just being and breathing – until obviously started thinking again and noticing he hadn't been thinking
- ❖ Became “Planetwalker” without using his voice – garnered attention without the voice
- ❖ Who would you be if you changed? There's another place for you to go...leave the security of who you have become and go to the place of who we are becoming.

Susan Cain: Why do we undervalue introverts?

- ❖ Half of humanity; but society and culture places a higher value on extroverts in schools, workplaces, job opportunities.
- ❖ Man of action vs. man of contemplation – man of action is what western society is built upon
- ❖ Magnetism and charisma became important; to stand out in a crowd and attraction attention

- ❖ Gaining energy from being alone; gathering it from around you; nervous systems that react more to stimulation of all kinds – social, noise, everything – RUSSELL GEENE STUDY: math problems with background noise of normal background chatter or leaf blower loud sound – introverts needed less background noise to work at their best
- ❖ Introverts are susceptible to being pulled out of their heads easily and become overwhelmed and distracted easily; have too much stimulation already so adding more causes this feeling of overwhelmed exhaustion; whereas as extroverts are the opposite – need more stimulation to reach a productive level therefore noise and crowds are energizing
- ❖ Creativity and productivity: the most creative people are good at both exchanging and advancing ideas but have strong streak of introversion in them so that they can tolerate the solitude that creativity requires
- ❖ Cannot really know what you and you alone think unless you are willing to be by yourself for a little while
- ❖ Value measured in how charismatic we are? Certainly in sectors of the dance world.

Friday December 5th

I haven't held onto crawled back to waited on felt less without someone since late summer and it's the sensation of pulling a piece of glass or four or five out of all over even underneath your skin because they weren't holding anything together they were just making you bleed and lose and bleed and sigh - then one day realizing you don't feel them missing from you anymore and someone has thrown away the shards you kept of each hidden you thought, on accident on a wednesday but you didn't even notice – I can't tell if I like it or not, but it is transformative, the self being on its own without a distraction, without a stack of open books nearby – I can say I know every cell of myself more than I ever have, in all decibels and speeds. Here and there. Every week is different and I learn.

I'm so tired of conversations about "accepting your flaws" or being okay with "imperfections"
I'm so tired of popular culture messages and "deep" conversations in which people just say the
same shit over and over again and call it profound because they are high. I'm tired of the same
wheel spinning over and over again. I don't want answers anymore I just want questions I
don't want settled and known, I want but what if? How come this didn't? Where did that go?
Where does this become subtracted? I want to rearrange language to say things intentionally.
To structure questions intentionally – to do everything with intention. To ask why to
absolutely everything – to keep moments interesting – to notice, intake, question, share, accept.
On exterior physical flaws – back to this societally constructed concept – by still
acknowledging that features or aspects of yourself are flawed or imperfect continues to
perpetuate this idea that we are all trying to combat – the glossy, two dimensional image of a
person who is seemingly an idea of "perfect" – by distinctly characterizing yourself as "well i'm
not that perfect image that still exists and i still compare myself to, but it's okay, because i
accept these flaws! Flaws are great!" How about this: there is no flawed. You are not flawed.
There is a functional body doing exactly what it is supposed to do. There is no comparison.
There is no judgment of external apparent "shortcomings" and there is nothing to measure up
to. There is this: you are radically exactly who you are and look like and at any given moment
you are perfect for that moment you are purposeful and purposeless – it does not matter. It is.
And so, you dance.

Be dedicated to energetic control of your own education, Be dedicated to intentionality of time
spent, and with whom. I can be intentional in every single thing I do including who I spend my
time with, time that you cannot get back, the most valuable thing you can give a person
because our notion that it is limited, our life only has so much of it. To share it is a form of love
– to share time with someone in silence and stillness even more so. It shows that you are not

with the person to prove something, to argue, to talk over, to listen to your own voice, because you like the way their body moves, because the movement is a distraction from just being with them. To sit with someone, to really just sit and keep the mouth closed and let the air finally breathe on its own – the intimacy shared in that type of space and the level of closeness is more immediate and profound than hours of meaningless banter and gossip with a person can ever be. It shows who they are without, what they sound like without, how their physical self is without – this necessity of distraction – don't look at me, give attention to me, my words carry nothing but at least we don't have to worry about nothing hanging between us and what to do about it.

Silence and stillness are not voids that need to be filled. They are plenty.

Saturday December 6th 6:49 pm

I am overwhelmed and then I remembered to read this:

"It's not self-pity that keeps me returning to that place.

It's the conviction that there is something valuable in the body-memory of slamming up against a biological limit – of running out of second, third, and fourth chances – something we all need to learn. Hitting the wall didn't dispel my belief in healing and recovery. It just taught me that these gifts require a special kind of nurturing, and a constant vigilance about the limit beyond which life cannot be pushed.

Because the truth is that humans are marvelously resilient, capable of adapting to all manner of setbacks. We are built to survive, gifted with adrenaline and embedded with multiple biological redundancies that allow us the luxury of second, third and fourth chances. So are our oceans. So is the atmosphere.

But surviving is not the same as thriving, not the same as living well. And as we have seen, for a great many species, it's not the same as being able to nurture and produce new life. Just because biology is full of generosity does not mean its forgiveness is limitless. With proper care, we stretch and bend amazingly well. But we break too – our individual bodies, as well as the communities and ecosystems that support us."

Naomi Klein, This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate

Sunday December 14th

An Email from Roz:

"No worries on not getting the emails. And I can't meet you tomorrow so let's dialogue through email for now.

I understand everything you have written here. It all makes perfect non-sensical sense. To me that is artistic sense. And I get it!!

My main thought, and I share this with both sympathy and empathy, is a question. And this question is not necessarily to be answered, just contemplated: does the last 5 months of not drawing coincide with the timing of the assault, if not chronologically, then cognitively? And if you are such a responsive, reactionary artist, is there a fear of letting things (someone) in, in the aftermath of that extreme violation? And by "letting things (someone) in" I mean both the emotional and physical sense. After a sexual violation the porous-ness of the body and soul can be so uncomfortable, maybe even repulsive. Especially as a woman. And I wonder if regaining the beauty and sanctity of a porous, vulnerable body (a sexual body) is the path to finding both the artist and dancer who got lost this semester.

I don't want you to answer me. These are just words to consider. Perhaps you are already considering them. Perhaps not. But I throw them out there because allowing, inhaling, accepting, being gorgeously concave, is the strength of women, is the realm of the artist, and is exactly what is tarnished in a sexual violation.

When the finals are done, give yourself time, TIME. Find stillness, silence, inhale, exhale for a while, days maybe, before staring to draw. I am getting the impression that time and space are not what you have right now in the midst of this academic intensity you have taken on. So take time while you have the chance this winter break. Surround yourself with patience...before you put that pen to the blank paper. Listening, allowing, porous, penetrable, accepting, concave..."

Background Research: Choreographer Profile and Additional Resources

Choreographer Profile: Keith Johnson

From Keith Johnson/Dancers Online Resource:

"Keith received his MFA from the University of Utah. He has danced with Ririe/Woodbury, Creach/ Koester, Bill T. Jones /Arnie Zane Dance Company, and Doug Varone and Dancers. He continues to perform with Nancy Bannon as well as Colleen Thomas. He has received funding support from The Choo San Goh Foundation, The Utah Arts Council, St. Joseph Ballet New Works Festival, Dance USA, Scottsdale Community College, and California State University, Long Beach. Keith's choreography has been commissioned by The Ririe/Woodbury Dance Company, D9 Collective, Sierra Repertory Dance Theatre as well as universities and solo artists throughout the United States. Keith has received The Dee R. Winterton Award For *Excellence in Dance, Most Valuable Professor* in The College of The Arts at CSULB, and Lester Horton Award for *Outstanding Choreography (Long Form)* in 2007, *Outstanding Choreography (Small Ensemble)* in 2008. Keith was honored with the *Distinguished Alumni Award* from the Department of Dance at the University of Utah in 2012/2013. He continues to teach and choreograph both nationally and internationally, and is the Co-Founder and Co-Director of Fist Bomb Films."

From CSULB Dance Department Faculty:

"Keith Johnson is originally from Tempe, Arizona. He was a competitive gymnast and team captain at Brigham Young University before he became interested in dance. He received his MFA in dance with an emphasis in choreography from the University of Utah in 1991 where he received the Dee R. Winterton Award for Excellence in Dance. While in Salt Lake City, Keith danced in the Ririe/Woodbury Dance Company working with such choreographers as Alwin Nikolais, Murray Louis, Shapiro and Smith, Kei Takei, and Loa Clawson. In New York City he joined the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, touring the widely acclaimed work *Still/Here* both nationally and internationally. He also danced in the companies of Creach/Koester and Doug Varone and Dancers. He has also done pick-up work dancing in the companies of Spencer/Colton in Boston and Janis Brenner in California. As part of Doug Varone and Dancers, Keith performed with The Denver Opera and in a site-specific work *Neither*, which took place in The Lower East Side Tenement Museum in New York City. As a performer he has performed in major festivals and concert halls worldwide including the Joyce Theatre, Jacob's Pillow, the Redcat Theatre, Tokyo International Festival, The Melbourne Festival, and Queen Elizabeth Hall in England.

In 1998, Keith formed Keith Johnson/Dancers. The company received favorable reviews from the Los Angeles Times. Since 1998, the company has performed in California, North Carolina, Utah, Minnesota, New York City and Arizona. He is the recipient of two Lester Horton Awards (2007 and 2008). Keith continues to perform, most recently with Colleen Thomas Dance, Bill Young/Colleen Thomas and Dancers, and Victoria Marks. Keith also performed in The Pod Project by choreographer/director Nancy Bannon. Keith is currently on the faculty at California State University in Long Beach. He is a Full Professor who teaches both composition and contemporary dance techniques. He is an advisor to the MFA candidates and the BFA students. In addition, Keith has been a guest teacher at the following institutions: NYU's Tisch School of the Arts Summer Program, The Julliard School, Dartmouth College, LaSalle College of the Arts in Singapore, The Ririe/Woodbury Summer Dance Intensive, Doug Varone and Dancers Summer Workshop, University of California at Santa Barbara, Scottsdale Community

College in Arizona, Brigham Young University, Cal Poly, Virginia Commonwealth University, St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, University of South Florida, Ballet Pacifica Summer Intensive, Southern Methodist University in Texas, Velocity Dance Center, Strictly Seattle Festival, The Beijing International Dance Festival, Malashock Summer Intensive, 5 x5 Summer Intensive, and the University of Utah. In 2005, the Outstanding Graduate Student Recipient, Rogelio Lopez Garcia at CSULB, named Keith Most Valuable Professor. Keith received the Choo San Goh Award in 2002 for emerging choreographers and has had support from the Dance/USA Foundation. His work has been shown in various venues including the University of Utah (with Stephen Koester), The LIT Series, Joyce Soho (with Colleen Thomas), The Rose Wagner Theater in Salt Lake City, The Center Stage Theatre (with Stephanie Nugent), Commuter Festival (CalArts), Breaking Ground Festival and The Diavolo Space. His work has been commissioned by the Ririe/Woodbury Dance Company, d9 Collective, CONDER/dance, Contemporary Danceworks, various solo artists, and universities. In 2012, Keith has two works represented at the National ACDFa conference at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC. The performers from Loyola Marymount University were chosen as the Outstanding Student Performer Award for their work in Unscripted/Riptide Into Me. Keith also makes dance films with collaborator Gregory R.R. Crosby and together they have formed Fistbomb Films. Their film, Life In Security, has been screened at the Breaking Ground Festival and Film Bar (both in Arizona), Westfest (New York), Dance For The Camera Festival (California), Conversations at the Flea (New York), and American Dance Festival's International Screendance Festival. Keith was awarded the 2012/13 Distinguished Alumni Award from The Department of Modern Dance at the University of Utah. In addition, Keith has explored visual arts in areas of printmaking, art installations, sculpture, and costuming and hopes to further his studies in the visual arts."

Additional Resources and Inspirations

"We have come to be danced
Not the nice, invisible, self-conscious shuffle
But the matted hair flying, voodoo mama shaman shaking ancient bones dance
The strip us from our casings, return our wings
sharpen our claws and tongues dance
The shed dead cells and slip into the luminous skin of love dance." Jewel Mathieson

"Instructions for living a life.
Pay attention.
Be astonished.
Tell about it." Mary Oliver

"There is something maddeningly attractive about the untranslatable, about a word that goes silent in transit." Variations on the Right to Remain Silent by Anne Carson

"The first language humans had was gestures. There was nothing primitive about this language that flowed from people's hands, nothing we say now that could not be said in the endless array of movements possible with the fine bones of the fingers and wrists. The gestures were complex and subtle, involving a delicacy of motion that has since been lost completely."
Nicole Krauss, *The History of Love*

"During the Age of Silence, people communicated more, not less. Basic survival demanded that the hands were almost never still, and so it was only during sleep (and sometimes not even then) that people were not saying something or other. No distinction was made between the gestures of language and the gestures of life. The labor of building a house, say, or preparing a meal was no less an expression than making the sign for I love you or I feel serious. When a hand was used to shield one's face when frightened by a loud noise something was being said, and when fingers were used to pick up what someone else had dropped something was being said; and even when the hands were at rest, that, too, was saying something. Naturally, there were misunderstandings. There were times when a finger might have been lifted to scratch a nose, and if casual eye contact was made with one's lover just then, the lover might accidentally take it to be the gesture, not at all dissimilar, for *Now I realize I was wrong to love you*. These mistakes were heartbreaking. And yet, because people knew how easily they could happen, because they didn't go round with the illusion that they understood perfectly the things other people said, they were used to interrupting each other to ask if they'd understood correctly. Sometimes these misunderstandings were even desirable, since they gave people a reason to say, *Forgive me. I was only scratching my nose. Of course I know I've always been right to love you*. Because of the frequency of these mistakes, over time the gesture for asking forgiveness evolved into the simplest form. Just to open your palm was to say: Forgive me." Nicole Krauss, *The History of Love*

"I think of my frowns. Of my lack of appetite. Of my shaking fingers and twitching mouth. I think of all the things that silence says, and not one of them is "yes." Silence Is Not A "Yes" by Lora Mathis

"Just because you don't say much doesn't mean people don't notice you. It's actually the quiet ones who often draw the most attention. There's this constant whirlwind of motion and sound all around, and then there's the quiet one, the eye of the storm." Amy Efaw

"To look at life without words is not to lose the ability to form words- to think, remember, and plan. To be silent is not to lose your tongue. On the contrary, it is only through silence that one can discover something new to talk about. One who talked incessantly, without stopping to look and listen, would repeat himself ad nauseam. It is the same with thinking, which is really silent talking. It is not, by itself, open to the discovery of anything new, for its only novelties are simply arrangements of old words and ideas." Alan Watts

"The physical body is acknowledged as dust, the personal drama as delusion. It is as if the world we perceive through our senses, that whole gorgeous and terrible pageant, were the breath-thin surface of a bubble, and everything else, inside and outside, is pure radiance. Both suffering and joy come then like a brief reflection, and death like a pin." Stephen Mitchell

Movement and Performance Analysis of Tango/Rouge

The curtain rises to a snapshot of confrontation, as if the audience has opened the door on an unspoken battle for power as intensity threads the air. Libby and McKenzie stand facing each other mid-stage, blue eyes locked together with a surge of energy beaming between. Charissa grasps her jacket upstage left in a confident stance she confronts the audience face-on, in contrast to the two other dancers with their jacket on their bodies. All appear ready for intense conversation – beginning in a gestural expression series by Libby and McKenzie. As the music begins (*La Cumparsita* by Gerardo Matos Rodriguez) Libby's body speaks the first sentence with a sharp placement of her right hand on McKenzie's opposite shoulder, and quickly with eyes locked, McKenzie grabs Libby's left upper arm in response as if to say "Not so fast." Swiftly Libby reaches to place McKenzie's right arm on her shoulder in a fierce intimacy which McKenzie intensifies by willingly ducking into the tangle of arms to reach a chokehold for a moment of stillness, before it is broken seamlessly as McKenzie swivels outwards in line with Libby's stance. Arms remain connected at the shoulder for the image of a bubble of friendship just almost brushing against the needle of betrayal and questioning – a still moment allows for the audience to wonder, "What will happen next and where will this relationship go?" After such a pause, Libby arcs her right leg into an attitude position at McKenzie's hip bones, the catalyst for McKenzie's gaze to attentively swivel back to Libby as support is created and subsequently destroyed by McKenzie ripping Libby's leg off of her body to escape into a deep lunge towards Charissa – still mid stage in direct conversation with the audience as she slowly has been putting on her jacket in a sensual manner. Pointedly focused towards Charissa, McKenzie rises from the lower level lunge to gently reach out and graze the texture of Charissa's jacket, either in admiration of fabric or callous compliment. Libby does not allow for McKenzie to get away for long as she immediately grasps McKenzie's arm to spin back to facing eye to eye – the moment between them is not yet over, just clenched with pauses

and anticipation. McKenzie turns her back as Libby swipes the texture of McKenzie's jacket, forcing her swiftly backwards and to the floor as though semi supported yet at the same time demolished by Libby herself, and McKenzie returns at Libby's feet to bring her down alongside. The dancers then mirror each other to end this snapshot of conversation with hands slapping the ground along side each other as glances do the same, and then they simply leave and move onto other things, and the piece has begun with a startling slap in the face that leaves one feeling curious for more.

Tango/Rouge is brimming with these complex wordless conversations through duets, trios, solo movement, gestural movement, finger dancing, full group connections, swift entrances and exits, structural reformations, dramatic changes in plot, and a sense of deep understanding between each dancer about the current moment in every single movement. The dancers ooze an air of smirk alongside their cooperation with each other and knowledge of each other's movement, always returning to trust even among what may look like a walking away. The piece is composed of a beginning section with suits and a repeat of the same music three times, a middle section composed of a gestural duet conversation by Libby and Tina with Gigi, Charissa, and McKenzie experimenting with a finger tango on the diagonal for two separate spotlights, and an ending section of feminine bodies expressing being in love or fervent anticipation of a kiss through a dramatic change of lighting and costume. To complete the piece and yet linger their presence, a final glance back towards fallen rose petals and confident strolls of stage leave the audience in completely entranced and wanting more of this conversation.

The music in this piece was utilized through acts of repetition, verbal exposition, a surprise ending, and spaces between filled with silence. It opens with Tango by Peggy Lee, which repeats three times in a row with quiet transitions of mood in between to set up for the next tableau of confrontational movement. The repetition of the same piece of music with a

different scene of dancing and atmosphere each time provokes the idea of developing relationships between the dancers, and allows the audience to immerse themselves in their own storyline weaving it all together. The air of Tango is sensual and luscious, lingering on certain notes for dramatic appeal almost as if it is gazing at you before running away, but sharp like a knife at other times in contrast. If the sound was color, it would most certainly be scarlet red and the image of the most beautiful red rose comes to mind with all of its thorn intact. The movement of the piece to Tango travels through various duets, trios, solos, and group sections of confrontational conversation and secrets withheld and told to each other, and aligns deeply with the rhythm. In order to promote group synchronization in certain parts and the safety of dancers for contact and lifts, counts as well as intrinsic knowledge of the music's ebbs and flows were discussed and utilized by Keith and the dancers. Knowing the music this intimately allowed for space to play, tangle, and stretch places of the music, following along with the choreographed yet slightly improvised nature of the entire piece each night. All dancers were in a relationship with this particular song by the performance of the piece and could expand upon ideas involved with being in such a position with a piece of music – falling deeply into it, avoiding it, lingering in a warm glow of it, running quickly next to it, advancing the sound forward or refusing to play along. Clearly, dancing to the same piece of music over and over again in an 11 minute piece can become negatively repetitive, but also provides a challenge to each dancer to find something new in it every single time within the piece each night. This challenges the dancer in process on stage rather than just between nights of performance – the performer in Tango/Rouge must be so deeply in the moment onstage that they can manifest these refreshing clarifications and insights while moving through the piece at the same time and make this visible in their expressions.

The second piece of sound used was a verbal exposition in the form of spoken word. The sound was of the lyrics of Peggy Lee's Tango spoken with sensuality and sharp intention, stunningly annunciated, which were removed from the instrumental version played in repetition earlier in the piece. In this sense, layers of the same music were lifted apart and spread throughout the piece for a multidimensional essence of Tango. The movement was gestural duet and designed in such a way of taking earlier phrases translated into only upper body diminution. The two dancers tangoed side by side to the spoken word with gestural phrasework that was the poetry and words itself, interweaving sentences and letters together with every switch of the hip and stall of the arm. Together, the spoken word and its relation to the gestural duet provided a full painting of poetry, like a uniquely designed art song, for the audience to read with their eyes and ears.

The dangerous and suggestive nature increased in intensity because of this separation of layers, instrumental and spoken word, to culminate finally in the piano keys of the final song as the dancers also removed their coats, jackets, and shirts to reveal silky ruby hued slips on skin. A shedding of excessive drama and material both in sound and clothing was conceived as dancers reentered the space with the new music and new outfits, which had been underneath their suits all along – perhaps a metaphor underlying the movement. An air of lightness and romantic giddiness invaded the space provided by La Cumparsita by Gerardo Matos Rodriguez further emphasized later in the song when rose petals fell gently upon dancers skimming the floor in rapid succession. Dancers let their hair down and loosened up their movements in relationship to each other, the music allowing for hints of flirtation and the warmth of blushing cheeks. Movement danced on the ribbon of the music, spinning dizzingly, running across the space in flushed energy, rolling on the floor in joyousness, to fill it out completely with sass and fervor until fade out with a final look to the audience.

Though the music was an undeniably potent force in the atmosphere of the piece, all was sewn together by transitions of silence and stillness in which the dancers moved subtly if at all through the space, making small connections with each other or choosing none. Emptied of speaker-produced sounds, the space shifted atmosphere in the silence. It was in these pauses between each musical piece that I found the deepest essence of engagement onstage both internally deep inside of my heart and externally with the other dancers. To truly look someone in the eye during this silence, or to lay in stillness on the stage during the pause allowing the transition to take its absolute time, catapulted me gently into another realm each time. Being onstage with this kind of energy and awareness of surrounding truly invited me to embody the state of flow. Additionally, the spaces of silence and stillness between each piece of music allowed the audience to take a breath and reflect upon the dynamics of movement that just happened, and to arouse naturally questioning and contemplation. In Tango/Rouge, both fervent energy from rich musical scores and stunningly softening energy from the spaces of silence found balanced interplay for dancer and audience member alike.

Costumes were visualized by Keith Johnson and designed by Leon Wiebers to successfully transition from traditionally masculine to traditionally feminine quicker than audience comprehension could decipher. For the first three repetitions of Tango by Peggy Lee in the instrumental fashion, dancers were outfitted head to toe in powerfully masculine suits, buttoned up to the collar with a burst of red tie and crisp white button up providing structure underneath heavy layers of semi-restricting black fabric. The intention of semi-restricting movement because of the suits played a metaphorical role in the dancing itself – confrontation and conversation occurred in passionate yet almost held back glances, as though dancers bit their tongues on each closing argument to keep the ending a constant guess.

A series of dramatic changes occurred costume wise in the last quarter of the piece. First, in a transition of silence and locked gaze at the audience, McKenzie stands upstage right with her jacket removed and arms bare to the light, and slowly loosens her tie and unbuttons her shirt to the last moment before lingering and disappearing offstage. The audience hardly has time to question before the lights shift to a rosy, romantic warm glow and the dancers one by one remerge in just blood red feminine slips revealing skin unseen in the first three quarters of the dance. Dancers let down their hair and shook out all the drama and heavy confrontation, moving through phrasework onstage as if bathing in love. This costume change was designed by Keith to playfully examine gender roles with the sudden switch and to provide a juxtaposition of moods for the audience. The lighting with the suits was powerfully mysterious in deep hues of blue and violet swirling the space and juxtaposed with harsh beams of bright white spotlight pouring downwards. In between during the silent transitions, dancers appear almost just as shadows on the stage as the bright beams retracted and only a deep ocean blue hued the stage, like watching silhouettes in a silent film. An additional unique and experimental production element of the piece was the use of choreographing a finger tango to be danced by McKenzie and Gigi, lit by Charissa holding a mini disco ball over the hands like a shrunken dance floor. Johnny lit a spotlight perfectly aimed at the disco ball so that, small but mighty, light powerfully invaded the space like confetti in vivacious disco ball fashion. The hands were illuminated as though telling a story within a story and took a micro look at the bodies onstage – both full body movement and miniscule isolations took part in the language of the piece. Additionally, in the last section of playful romance and flirtation, red paper appearing as rose petals was sprinkled lovingly over the dancers from left to right as they crawled backwards across the front of the stage. This added an air of delicacy and lingering as the pieces took their

time to reach the floor, and remained throughout the rest of the piece and as the dancers exited the stage at the end of the piece – a reminder of the stories that had just fallen on the stage.

The style of this piece was undeniably modern and embodied both typically masculine and feminine ways of moving, as Keith pushed the dancers to reach extremes and juxtapositions of quality. This physically intense, contact heavy, and constantly moving piece of modern dance was rich with dancer/choreographer collaboration of movement as well as space for improvisation and character development from night to night. Connections and tasks were exact, and yet the movement could play within on exactly how one got to one where needed to be. Over and over again, Keith stressed the non-importance of perfection and the vital importance of connection and discovery, eliminating the idea of mistakes and instead bringing to light the amount of adventure that could occur if the dancers let it all go, finding flow space rather than analytical thinking space. Though the choreography was a mesh of the dancers and Keith, its overall physicality and quality embodied Keith's artistic statement that he holds to the pieces he creates:

"...the places we go within ourselves and do not tell about: the desires we hold down, the struggles we hide subtly, in gusts of ups and tumbles. A portrayal of intimacy so finely nuanced it could only be called post-modern romanticism. KEITH JOHNSON/DANCERS dares to mine the impossible, to shuffle bodies with a process that precipitates astonishing grace and even unthinkable flight, and to dream of forms and motions that conjure within the viewer knots and whirls. These stirrings leave an imprint within one's self of a possible past, inviting rich empathy if not direct sympathy, like a warm hand on your shoulder suggesting, "someone can imagine what you've felt and meld it into flesh and sweat and place it right before your eyes, allowing you to breathe in humanity as you watch each moment, spellbound." Ultimately, each gem glistens with the luster of humanism."

In this piece, dancers often defied physicality and did the unthinkable, and yet bared their full human selves through the motion and stillness – a thread unraveling and tangling it self over and over again never neatly tied in to a conventional bow. The dancers needed to be extremely adept at partnering and contact improvisation, and carrying the weight of others with confident support, and quick moving and able to catapult through space as delicately as a

hummingbird yet with the emotional and physical prowess of tigers and lions in acts of intimidation and negotiation with each other. Movement transitioned from sharp and demanding to softened and whimsical throughout the piece, required that the dancer could both technically execute a high level of modern dance while performing various shades of themselves and others at the same time. Because of the level of contact with the amount of improvisation freedom, dancers were pushed to be more fully in the moment of performance than ever before so that bodies and minds knew exactly when to play and mold time, and when to pinpoint themselves on top of it. Overall, this piece in its creation and performance mode required wholehearted and dedicated artists, willing to cooperate and problem solve together, as well as be beyond a level of being simply taught choreography as some of the movement was of the dancers own solo making. It was truly a collaborative process requiring the full self at every rehearsal and performance, with a body in physical excellence of expression and a mind able to handle complex creation situations and improvise at a moment's notice. Additionally, dancers had to be able to not just perform the movement to their highest capabilities and awareness, but also recognize the silence and stillnesses within the piece and become just as captivating in the quiet with nothing to hide behind – if not more captivating in the surrender to simplicity.

Self Analysis of Performance Qualities and Artistic Growth

The rehearsal and performance process of Tango/Rouge existed in a tumultuous and ultimately deeply transformative time in my life. I was heavily dealing with both emotional and physical ill health from stresses and traumas in life that had not yet fully processed themselves into spaces of growth. Instead, much of my full self felt stuck and frustrated, but the many moments of creative joy and relationships with the other dancers and Keith were the most healing medicine I could have asked for during this time. I continued to dance through all of the restraints holding me back, but became even more immersed and hungry for the spaces of silence and stillness in rehearsal and performance when I could cradle my soul in peace without external stressors invading my river of thought. Every single rehearsal, whether I emerged afterwards in complete frustration or a temporary place of tranquility and exhaustion, was a wringing out, a catharsis, and a learning experience.

I utilized conversation with the other dancers, with Keith, with Roz, and with Judy to reach a place of honesty in my dancing that I had previously been terrified to commit to. In this way, though the physicality regularly left me bruised and worn down where I previously would have been exhilarated, I developed my performance quality to a much more mature level – of dancing when it does not feel like ecstasy and miracles, of dancing because you are in a place of darkness that you can share honestly in the audience by standing and proclaiming with the body, “Listen. Here I am, in all of my brokenness and laughter and healing and hurting and grace of this moment. Here.” Whereas previously in performances, I have relied so heavily on the superficial aspects of mastering technical perfection and pre-show routines and overall needing to feeling perfectly ready for every single step on stage, all of which did not allow me to reveal a true and honest self through my movement – instead, a beautiful restraint yearning for more. I greatly strengthened my communication skills with other dancers and Keith by communicating pain and frustration when it existed rather than hiding it away to be alone with

later. Additionally, if I found myself alone with it later, I slowly began to sit next to it and honor the space of these painful things I had not allowed myself to feel earlier in my dance career. I started a journey of saying hello to these fears and frustrations, of taking a breath before responding in a stressful reaction to them, and ultimately have felt a peace within myself that I had not uncovered before the stress of last semester which now translates into my dancing and performances qualities. I know now that in all areas of life, when things become overwhelming and hope starts to fade, I can focus on finding silence, on finding stillness, and becoming more in the flow of this task than anything else at that moment to ultimately respond with deeper thought and intention to the stress at hand.

Though unconventional and not a Concert that I would consider my "best" performance yet technically and otherwise, it was an entire process of difficult lessons to learn and beautiful moments of clarification and shattering walls guarding a light within me so that now, when called upon, I can fully embody the light in rehearsal and performances more stunningly than ever more. My journaling from this period of time harshly reveals the nuances of all of these discoveries, and greatly stirs me in reading it at this later point in my life – the spring, a time when I feel anew and invigorated beyond comprehension. Specifically, my journaling from the performances themselves elegantly and candidly captures the catalysts of change occurring at this time, and I can find no more accurate way to reflect upon this time other than revisiting them here yet again:

Wednesday November 19th 2014: Post Opening Night Journaling

The past two weeks have been rigorous – emotionally, physically, mentally – it feels like we spun so quickly from cancelled last rehearsal to spacing to tech to dress rehearsals the past two nights, to tonight under the lights beginning it all over again. Every single part of me has been in conflict and all over the place during the past two weeks of process from feeling such deeply embedded joy to unexplainable physical and mental exhaustion to passionate frustration to ecstasy to even nothing at all. For a person like myself, and all other people whose bodies are their craft and seemingly under their control, when things weave in and out of your control is when a sort of torturous process begins – I want nothing more to push myself past all limits right now and to feel like myself again, but my body keeps incessantly speaking with a firm no,

a hitting of the wall over and over again no matter how mentally strong or prepared I try to be. This affects performance obviously – when I am trying to so hard to ignore such a deep physical exhaustion and sense of inner chaos in order to be fully present on stage, it is a duality of want and need. I either don't know what's going on, or I don't want to accept what's going on – neither are working. Every day it becomes more layered and tangled – I am realizing that I need to stop trying to find myself underneath all of the bullshit going on, and instead be the layers and the tangles and the bullshit as I perform – its about growth, isn't it? Performances aren't always going to be squeaky clean and perfect and exhilarating – there is little to no growth in that. What happens when you're hanging off the edge of a cliff? When you fall off the cliff? How do you run with it anyways and say hey – I'm falling off a cliff in life and in dance, watch anyways. While you can push and jump and scurry around hurdles in front of you in a difficult piece using various forms of strength and community support, pushing past the hurdle of yourself, your body, seems somewhat violent and bound for consequence despite how mentally frustrating it is to not be able to do so. Even in a question of silence and stillness: the body cannot be silenced, it will always talk to you and tell you what is necessary – especially mine, a stubborn being who persistently demands often in contrast with my equally stubborn mind. Perhaps I am seeking onstage the next few days to find not silence of my body, but stillness of it from an internal sense, finding a way to move as passionately as I do onstage and have the capacity to and usually the energy to, but using this stillness inside as an energy to move me through space rather than what I previously "relied" on. It is a growing space, a space to learn that not every performance is going to be to perfectionist standards where everything goes your way. It is a space for me to honor where I am at right now, where I am at onstage, who is with me onstage, this entire beautiful stunning loving process spilled out and spun around onstage, and who I am right now on that stage – not what I wish wasn't going wrong physically with me. A space of strength differently perceived than physical exertion to a maximum potential, as right now I feel as though I am constantly maxing out my level of exertion doing things that previously would not have been a big deal. However just thinking of the piece last night and tonight, and how dangerous, creative, open, risky it feels onstage in comparison to our skeleton structure in the studio – it feels absolutely surreal onstage. Time speeds and slows and stops for me – I notice Charissa's baby curl as she walks away from me, the tip of Tina's nose, Gigi's fingernails during the finger tango, the blue of Libby's eyes during our intense contact in the beginning, the fabric of the jacket, the space my body is inhabiting as the lights pour down on us. There is the energy onstage – I am not in this world – I am in the divine. And it is not perfect, everything is not blissful, but it is divine. It feels like a movie, and the transitions have become so meaningful to me and such a space to play with the very ideas of silence and stillness – it feels breathtaking just doing it let alone watching it. I am just so intensely grateful for this process with these dancers I have worked with for years (namely Charissa and Libby) and where we are today, each night, with Keith, I could have stayed in the studios working with all of them for hours and hours more than we have already done, and loved every minute of it. It is that point where you start finding moments within the performance – the stage becomes a playground of sorts rather than a set solid ground – every time we do it begins to ask a question of where are we today? Who is Libby today? What if I didn't take my time there, but what if I did? A constant inner dialogue improvised alongside the constant external dialogue of the body with others and alone. There is truly nothing like performance, and nothing like the silence and stillness within a performance – it is a space of higher self, almost transcendent at times because of how human it is.

Thursday November 20th 2014: Post-Show #2 Journaling

The shift from last night's emotional tone post concert to right now is transitional, a state of maturity, of realization that everything really is okay, that I do have power behind what goes on in my head though it does not feel like it sometimes when the perfectionistic qualities, comparison tendencies, the self doubt messages are on eternal repeat...there is the intellect in myself to hear that, say thanks but no thanks, and move on. I forgot that I am allowed to do that. Tonight was spectacular, exhilarating, exhausting in the way that only settles in when you have given so much of yourself willingly. Onstage in Keith's tonight was mesmerizing – we discussed beforehand our usage of eye contact and realized that each of us felt as though we never even see the audience, we are too busy noticing each other in different ways each night, paying that close of attention to detail – this is one of my absolute favorite things, there is truly nothing like noticing a stray eyebrow or a sweat bead on someone's forehead while onstage with them, its another dimension of existence and vulnerability, of exposition. Roz and I talked beforehand about the rough emotions I've been experiencing around concert as a whole – anxiety, displacement, lack of fulfillment, feeling as though I am not perfect and therefore not good at all, restlessness – and how to utilize these, rather than work against them, to move into a state of total vulnerability onstage with whatever is going on, even the physical fatigue – as this is what audiences connect to deeply, what moves people to tears and they don't even know why. She discussed to me, reminded me, of how "dance" and "your life" are not separate things – dance is your life. Life is not always rainbows and boundless energy and sparkling rainbows where everything is going right. Often it hurts, it makes you cry, it makes you want to shatter windows – this is the dance. This is the maturity that takes one from amateur happy loving dance 24-7 always bouncing around because it is always EASY, to surpassing amateur in the realization that not every concert, performance, rehearsal is going to be perfect and feel wonderful and loved every minute – but this is the life of dance, which often demands more than someone can give, as in my situation right now. Tonight however I felt as though I worked with it, rode the wave of it, rather than turning my back and pretending it wasn't hitting me in the back until it knocked me over full force. I let it be. I relaxed. I took a breath and looked around, felt my skin in the light. There was a moment in Keith's in which I was stripping off my shirt/pants to reveal my slip offstage before going back on, and I managed to somehow do it faster than ever and there was this quick moment where I was darting between people and curtain to get back on and have time, and I just stopped before I went onstage and smiled without thinking. It is just one of those moments I will keep with me in some sort of back pocket forever, that fleeting glimpse of I fucking love this even when I can't love it. I'm not in control of the loving it anymore, it moves me anyways. And then in a flash I was back on again, following charissa's hair, glancing back at libby, falling into space after Tina, getting lost in it all. That is the beauty of it – the dance is a map, the choreography is directions, but true artistry comes from getting lost without losing directions or dropping the map. Knowing the map and directions so well that you can afford to get lost because you know right where to be found again. Keith was here tonight, and he was so, so happy. I can't describe how grateful I am for him – I never knew I would ever be working with him, after seeing his work on Paul and Charles my freshmen year when I was ASM at fall concert and couldn't even breathe during that piece. I never thought I would be here, or dancing the way I do now, seeing the way I do now, being as vulnerable and willing and open as I am now.

Friday November 21st 2014: Pre-Show #3 Journaling

I woke up feeling brave today, I woke up wanting to draw today. I haven't drawn in months. I woke up thinking that dance hurts, the silence afterwards hurts, the silence before hurts, trying to be still often hurts – it is like nothing else. It is being enveloped and living it so forcefully and fully that it hurts from the intensity of it, it redefines a negative context of hurt. You want it to do this – where is the growth in being numb? In not feeling anything from it? In feeling only one emotion towards it? I do believe this week and this entire semester I have felt the entire spectrum of emotions possible towards dance – everything now is so rich, so complex, so primed for excavation during future experiences – there are places to pull needles out from that stuck their way in during a rehearsal in September, a bruise to watch transform colors from when I had to sit down and watch instead of do, a teardrop on my toe that I didn't tell anybody had fallen, a space between my elbow and wrist where I remembered that I am powerful – this is so much more than I carried at the beginning of the semester. I woke up this morning and instead of thinking "I am so excited to dance tonight" I laughed at myself and thought, I am already dancing.

Friday November 21st 2014: Post-Show #3 + #4 (closing night) Journaling

Last night was a reminder of how good it can feel, why I feel in love in the first place, why everything is still okay: spectacular, animalistic, intuitive, intelligent, wickedly creative, beautiful and not, supercharged with energy, a cool breeze, an absence of numbness, a slap in the face, a shove upstage to knock the now into your reaction:

- ❖ Quietness but surpassing communication – noticing the differences pre-concert in which my energy results in laughter and speaking and social interest, and when my energy is quiet and contemplative, yet explosive all the same in its preparation – I am preparing to speak later rather than now, when the curtain goes up and there are things to stay
- ❖ Feeling my heartbeat on ground in senior piece
- ❖ "get lost in an art form for days at a time"
- ❖ Performance with these dancers is beyond thinking, beyond structure, we knew it, it was a language of fluency with room to play. We knew it within.
- ❖ Why are words the default communication? Why do we speak different languages? What came before this?
- ❖ Finding a balance through performance of imbalance
- ❖ This week hasn't been perfect and has therefore been the most growth producing week of my life for the way it has already shifted where my dancing resides, and why it resides

In conclusion, I am left with more questions than I started with, but additionally a different response to these lingering and emerging questions. I respond with an embrace and openness, and an intuitive knowing of the answers to play with in this life. During my days I am still constantly asking myself "Where is the silence here? Where can I be still?" simply as a way of returning from distraction, of calming the ocean in my head, of catching my breath when I think there is none left, of healing a heart that is broken, and overall of finding a sanctuary

within myself and body that is always here for me when I seek it out. My body has always been my home and my artwork to move through life in every since I started dancing, but now rather than just movement as refuge, I as a whole being just being in stillness and silence am a refuge who can sit with pain and negative emotions until they are transformed into something useful again. I question where will my performance range go next with all of these experiences since my love of performing is even more immense than its gargantuan presence in the past; I question how many different tools and tasks I can find within my next creative process to harness silence and stillness among chaos and physicality; and I question what adventures are next – my full heart and full body are patient and ready for the next burst of extraordinary discovery through dancing.

The Loyola Marymount Mission: Reflections

THE LOYOLA MARYMOUNT MISSION: A REFLECTION ON VALUES

The four years I have spent immersed in the culture of Loyola Marymount University have ignited a spark within me that continually inspires me to love my way through a life of acts of kindness, giving of myself, listening to all human beings, and full bodied artistic expression. My body, mind, and soul have been exceedingly enriched with the resources and experiences that I have energetically cultivated on this bluff. My eyes have been opened to the injustices of the world in the neighborhoods right around the corner as well as cruelties across the globe, and no longer do I hold my thoughts quietly in my head in fear of being judged for speaking passionately. Now, I speak loud and clear with educated information sought out and a drive to learn solely for my own body of knowledge to carry with me each day. I speak with my voice, my words, my body, my hands, my ears, and my heart about justice issues that resonate deeply with me: domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, systematic injustices and racial inequality, and powerful feminist issues. I am unafraid to get my hands dirty and to let life be messy in order to speak up and stand up for what is injustice – to recognize that injustice often lies in the direction the children throw rocks at rather than sit small and cowardly in a bubble of privilege ignoring the rocks of pain.

Loyola Marymount has facilitated my lifelong hunger to learn all that I can and then *use* the knowledge in action by allowing me to take an almost impossible amount of classes in an incredible range of subject matters, to stretch my arms as wide as I can and then have the support of others when I cannot reach anymore, and encouraging me to take my education into my own hands and fully mold it the way I choose each day. I am confident that the learning in life never stops within or outside of a classroom, a dance, studio, and an office and know that every single day is a spectacular series of lessons to embody. My education of my full self will

continue throughout each experience beyond LMU, and I offer deep gratitude for the people and communities that have embraced me and lifted me up into this space of elevated existence.

Spiritually, I have grown rich and reached a growing space of tranquility deep within myself that is less disturbed by external events, and instead pulsating with an inner joy and love of life that is more stable than shaky. Much of this finding of an inner peace, silence, and stillness while still fervently expressing and communicating my artistic self outwards has come from mornings and nights of introspection on the bluff looking out to the ocean and life buzzing below – a place that I fell in love with freshmen year as a spiritual sanctuary for me equivalent to how I feel when the ocean water is kissing my feet or the light drops on my shoulders when standing beneath gargantuan Redwood trees up north. It has been a safe haven for personal development and reflection after almost every lovely and shattering event experienced these past four years, and there have been many different types of intense heartbreaks throughout them. Additionally, my spiritual growth has occurred with professors and faculty members such as Judy Scalin, Rosalynde LeBlanc-Loo, Melanie McGray, Donna Gray, Tom King, Teresa Heiland, Damon Rago, as well as with interactions with service workers, crossing guards, janitorial employees that I have been humbled to share space and words with on campus. Each soul has been a part of this giant puzzle, ever expanding with moments both glorious and terrifying.

I offer gifts as a whole-heartedly kinetic and critically thinking person from studying a dual major, Dance and Psychology, as well as additional subjects in the arts, sciences, and ethics. These gifts are only valuable in that I share them with others through acts of service – both formally in volunteer organizations and in how I act lovingly and with kindness towards people in my everyday life and subsequently shape the air of the world around me. I dedicate myself to service and the promotion of justice simply in how I live my life day to day.

Experiences such as Community Dance Project, in which Kristen Smiarowski gave us the gift of sharing artistic creation and classes with kids at schools in Los Angeles and learning from these awesome kids in return, and my time in Belles Service Organization surrounded by spectacular yet humble women and moderated by Donna Grey with service at places like Richstone Family Center, Lange Animal Foundation, and Midnight Mission among others have powerfully influenced me to reach out far and wide in order to help others in less fortunate situations. I have been challenged out of my zone of comfort and understanding to see the world in a hard light and confront problematic issues, which only further pulls me into acts of service beginning at the now. There is constant injustice in life, but also constant beauty and my experiences remind me in turn to respond intelligently and with my full heart of gifts.

My future career as a professional modern dancer and immersed in other artistic mediums as well will always be an act of giving and sharing with others rather than a narcissistic drive for perfection, and I know that I will aspire to work with companies who spread their art by investing in outreach programs in caring for all walks of life rather than just the artistically privileged in fancy concert halls. As a dancer, I am my artwork at all times and have the enormous luck of therefore getting to expose humanness and possess transcendence all in the same moment with every single breath.

I summarize my thousands of minutes of cultivating the LMU mission through dancing and learning with the translated poetry of Friedrich Halms and words from Alexis Pauline Gumbs that help guide me each day, and a lifelong mission to *love, create, give, and care deeply* by infusing artistic passion to move with the disruption of injustice:

"Self-care includes holding each other accountable because we are interconnected. Loving ourselves includes learning how not to harm each other. Loving ourselves includes disrupting violent patterns in our homes and community-building spaces."

Alexis Pauline Gumbs

"Happiness means different things to different people.
But if I were asked to point the way, I would say:

First love: someone, something of your choice and pleasure. But love it with passion;
engulf yourself with that love, give totally of yourself.

Then create: anything of your liking and inclination in any field or realm. But do it with
ardor and enthusiasm; with zeal and fervor; to the limits of your strength and ability.

Then give: the more you give, the richer you will be, in the eyes of others."
- *Freidrich Halms*

I courageously leap now to other adventures, with gratitude for this place as the elevation
beneath me, lifting me in all directions.

Mentoring Reports and Letter of Assessment

Mentors: Rosalynde Leblanc-Loo and Judy Scalin

Mentoring meetings were conducted with Rosalynde LeBlanc-Loo.

Date: Friday September 5th

Objective: an introduction to the mentoring process; filling out the mandatory reporting sheet

Things Discussed: the basics - How much do I need from a mentor? Are these meetings of discussion, discovery, and reflection; or more focused on the tangible/due date aspects of my thesis?

Work to Do: first rehearsal – begin journaling and just jump right in; reevaluate in a week

Date: Thursday September 11th

Objective: rehearsal discussions – observances as Keith as choreographer, dynamic and energy of the group during rehearsals; discussion of me in rehearsal vs. as a performer; interpretation of my Goals; the idea of Discovery and how it applies uniquely to how I handle the creative and performance process

Things Discussed (stream of thoughts):

We mainly discussed Roz's observation of me in both rehearsal and performance of Spent Days Out Yonder, as it relates to my Goal of examining the unique body-mind experience in entering rehearsal and performance with alertness and the openness to discovery that continues to break open as time goes on, rather than it losing energy and newness with time. Two years later, how does this fit into my process with Keith, and relate to the way I still work? Essentially, I still work in this manner but differences have arose as I have gained maturity and experience. In the beginning SDOY rehearsals with Roz, I appeared (and felt) somewhat hesitant, a little closed off, a struggle of fitting into the piece, and an uncertainty as whether or not I even deserved to be doing such choreography. I have to be careful, as this can come off as not just quiet/introspective/curious, but closed-off, defensive in taking corrections because of my knowledge of how movement permeates my body with time (aka not wanting the correction at that moment, because I know how I work), and possibly even arrogant or disinterested – none of which I want to be perceived as especially in the beginning of creation with a new choreographer. How have I transformed this, is a question I will be examining. In a positive light, this is more so a deep curiosity I have of observation and further reflection, and a intuitive need to observe and examine all possible entryways before I choose one, or a couple, to open up the rest of the process with – a hesitance to give it all away right in the beginning – I like an essence of mystery and wonder and curiosity. As time progressed, my small point of entrance, of quiet intuitive observation, widened into a huge, growing space of discovery, openness, and profound understanding in which the essence and intention of the piece fully permeated me (especially) in performance onstage. The playfulness, ingenuity, and surprises mixed around with punctuations of highly (almost) perfected and detailed phrases of movement to move in and out of came to life deeper in the rehearsal process and then culminated in the performance itself. Rather than figuring it all out in the beginning, I experimented and found joy in finding different details in the piece every time onstage that both surprised audience, the Roz, and myself, despite doing and viewing this piece many times before. This is seemingly where my way of "working" shines and is just who I am as a performer – but is this process fast enough? I am wondering as to as if this is just "how I work" consistently – this almost backwards process of discovery and openness that Roz generally sees the opposite of: entering a work incredibly open and welcoming discovery without hesitation; learning quickly, but as time goes on and choreography is embedded and becomes comfortable, this initial sense of playfulness and endless discovery is lost as said dancers fall into the habit of taking the

movement and bringing it to a place of habitual comfort for them and what they are used to - essentially becoming stuck and not offering the even deeper possibilities of never-ending discovery on the stage itself in cumulative performances - essentially this looks like starting the process at the wide base of a triangle, and through time moving towards the narrow tip of it and hitting boundaries narrower than the ones before along the way, hindering any chance of discovery and newness to explore within the work as the basic mechanics and sequencing of the choreography becomes somewhat second nature - the deeper understanding is stunted. I do not work like this nor have I ever worked like this, and I want to discover ways to slightly alter and embrace my own way of processing as completely mine, enhancing the details. This type of processing I do from first rehearsal to performance is similar to starting at the top point of a triangle (the opposite of the former description) where it is seemingly more narrow with boundary lines and less undiscovered space, but I soon assimilate and discover all of the space in the rest of the triangle as it gets wider, and beyond to the wider bottom of the triangle itself, as the material becomes less about comfort/memorization and more about mind/body discovery along the way to truly understand why I am moving the way I am, why I am onstage at all, why performance of this movement at all?

Work to Do:

- Questions to reflect/bring to next rehearsal: How have I transformed my discovery process over the years with maturity and experience? What parts do I always keep, and should these be looked upon as a space of transformation? What do a sense of silence, curiosity, and deep processing with time access in a rehearsal for myself and the other dancers, and the choreographer? How can I respond to corrections with more openness and view this too as a space of discovery?
- Continuing to refine and add detail to goals as time continues and this same deeper understanding permeates
- Continuing to work on Research for the essay

Date: Friday October 3rd 11:30-12 pm

Objective: discuss rehearsal process thus far; how overall Goals of thesis (updated) are weaving into my experience inside and outside of rehearsal; general update of work load, progress, and etc.

Things Discussed: Roz and I jumped directly into discussing how the rehearsals were going so far, and how a structure/choreographic settling of sorts is beginning to establish itself to clear a "storyline" of the piece, as well as how the group and Keith is working together thus far. We then went directly to my goals - more specifically looking at my recent additions about silence and stillness:

- Examining the still and silent spaces of both rehearsal (rather than the vocal and directive creative process with a choreographer) and performance (the silence before the piece begins on stage, how the audience is brought to silence while watching a piece of dance, a reaction of silence rather than applause afterwards, the quiet elements of the body onstage and the relationships examined on the stage without words)
- Researching the "psychology" of silence in humanity and in the artistic process/product as presented at time
- To speak potently and clearly with different ranges and qualities of movement - particularly focusing on "silence" and "stillness" and nuance. Silence is highly respected in many realms - notice how we are silent when we are listening, in places such as art

museums and revered spaces, an audience and the performers before a piece goes onstage/during the piece, while witnessing something profound we are often in silence – what role does this play in how I create/interpret movement and a choreographer's process?

- Perform the details of movement as well as the gross and dramatic movement – How does a performance stun an audience even when you are still, silent, etc.
 - o **More on this:** What does it take as a dancer to convey as much with stillness/near stillness as you do with complex movement? to let these moments be the most “moving” in a piece for the audience and for yourself, that speak or convey the most profound layers of a piece and of oneself? Expository stillness – a statement of Here I Am, with no movement to shield or distract or over-interpret?

Another question we brought up is - when is there silence without stillness, and when is there stillness without silence? The consideration of silence and stillness (together and apart) as more than voice and movement; rather than less; as well as the negative connotations of silence through different generations, and different terms/sayings that convey silence as negative – “break the silence” and etc. how can silence be a weapon, but how can it be more powerful than anything else? When does silence in a rehearsal process or with a choreographer (the dance world) cause problems, and when does it solve them? We wanted to continue our discussion, but I had to go to Pilates. Overall, I am on track and working efficiently everyday on various aspects of my thesis, and feel the Goals I have been setting and shifting permeating how I convey words and actions.

Work to Do: intro materials due 10/7; rough draft due 10/9; continue journaling and dialogue with Keith

Date: Friday October 31st 11:30-12 pm

- ❖ Not so much concrete “thesis” things, but instead we discussed life things affecting me at this very moment/past few weeks which in turn affect the thesis, the rehearsals, the processing, and more...how to institute this in to my journaling, if I am comfortable with it? How does one perform and dance and create when the physical self is not cooperating with the emotional and mental self – proves that the body rules all, all stems from the body in the end.

Dates: Month of November → Concert Week Dialogue

- ❖ More “life” discussion as relates to thesis rather than concrete thesis topics – but what is the topics if they do not apply to my life and life itself? Due to concert craziness, Roz and I followed less of a every-other-week 30 minutes on Friday schedule, and engaged in constant unscheduled dialogue post-rehearsals, before performances, and via email sharing links, ted talks, and things to chew on. We have discussed a myriad of things – transformation through performance, vulnerability onstage, dance demanding more than the body can literally give, using silence and stillness to heal, using art forms other than dance to heal, directly into my own personal struggles withholding zero emotions, dissecting what this week was for me – a place of deep, maturing growth to take one past an “amateur” dancer and into reality – dance is not separate from your life and therefore is not 24/7 love and rainbows – it hurts (see more on all of this in my journal), and the future – what it holds past all of this while this pain becomes various tools.

Work to do: continuous reflection of concert and my body/mind/emotions this week, completion of Dance Research essay, continuing to be explorative in my investigations at any point of the day not just when “researching” on my computer. Also meeting with Keith within

the next coming weeks (joint with Libby) to discuss in person some key things about process and creation, post-concert.

Date: January 22nd 2015

❖ Meetings: every 2nd or 3rd Friday at 11:00 am

❖ **Things to do:**

- Begin re-watching video and taking notes
- Revisit performance for performance analysis
- Continue journaling
- IMPORTANT: ATTACHING DVD/FLASHDRIVE SECURELY TO NOTEBOOK
- ARTIST STATEMENT: BRAINSTORMING!
- Performance meeting thesis next week
- Meeting with Keith in Long Beach next week!

Date: January 23rd 2015

Objective: check on thesis progress; life discussion and post-grad ideas; revisit topics of silence and stillness as manifested in life this semester, this day; discussion of what is coming next!

Things discussed: SEVEN/ACDA situation and emotions – progressing past it with honesty and letting it go, letting it be still and at peace; academic/psych classes and balance with everything dance-wise; post grad ideas (summer programs, locations, growth of LA concert scene and possibilities here; keeping moving after graduation with any kind of experiences!) – summer programs @ Bates, ADF, ate9, BodyTraffic, Backhaus, more!

Work to do: finishing DRE by 1/30 and meeting with Kristen; contact Robbie or Leslie for new headshots; artist statement ideas.

*MENTOR ASSESSMENT FOR THE PERFORMANCE
THESIS OF MCKENZIE COCHRAN
PROF. ROSALYNDE LEBLANC LOO*

As McKenzie's mentor for her performance thesis, I met with her fairly regularly throughout the fall and spring semesters of her senior year. She explained her thesis as an investigation of stillness and silence in dance, using the rehearsal and performance processes of Keith Johnson's piece, *Tango/Rouge*, as a case study. I found this to be a unique and fascinating inquiry as dance is largely defined by moving in relationship to sound. So to examine silence and stillness in dance would be to look most closely at the places where it seemingly isn't. Would this then help define the border of dance, making it clearer what dance actually is? Or would studying the outer edges of this art form foster a desire in McKenzie to dive back in to the center of it – a center that had gotten lost for her in the kerfuffle of life events and academic pressures?

Since McKenzie was dancing in *Tango/Rouge*, this research was auto-ethnographic. Her exploration of silence and stillness in dance was guided by her own experience while creating and performing *Tango/Rouge*. I was not in rehearsals with her so I experienced this aspect of her thesis by talking with her in person and reading her journal entries. What I saw unfolding over the course of the year was not a student going into a profound investigation of her two majors of dance and psychology through this dissection of silence and stillness – these pregnant underbellies of both disciplines; I saw a student who was going deeper into her self by forcing the inclusion of silence and stillness in her own incredibly compacted life. Because how *does* one study silence and stillness without embodying it? For those to even be recognized one has to stop. And listen. And that is exactly what I saw McKenzie doing more and more as the year progressed.

McKenzie is a compelling performer. She has been since I first met her three years ago. She is the type of dancer who brings a universe of contemplation with each gesture. She pulls the audience's eye, not with flashy technique, but with an extraordinary mix of intellect and soulfulness that radiates just as evenly from her limbs, core, hands and feet, as it does from her face. She is truly unique among students of dance to already have access to such a cultivated and full-bodied expression. Watching her on stage there is already the suggestion of a core of silence and stillness inside her that spurs such a remarkable level consciousness in her performance. What she still needs to cultivate is the rapid response system inside her body – the ability to fire strength, stamina and vigor without a blend, or injections of silence and stillness. This is the instinctive ability we all have as living creatures to privilege the physical intelligence of the body and not feel the need to mitigate it with analysis or doubt from the mind. It is the moment that we as human beings are no different from the snail recoiling from the touch of salt, or the cheetah in full flight towards the gazelle. It is also perhaps the moment when silence and stillness remain on the outside of movement and not within and throughout it.

In McKenzie's future as a dancer, she will be able to bring rich experiences to her audiences being a performer who has found the coexistence of movement and stillness, and sound and silence. I encourage her to also find the dance that only begins and ends with stillness and doesn't retain it anywhere in between. I say to this young dancer, unrivaled in her mindfulness while she is dancing: "Be still and silent until you truly feel the *call* to dance, *compelled* to dance, McKenzie. And then, don't stop."

Artistic Statement

STATEMENT OF ARTISTRY

"We do not grow absolutely, chronologically. We grow sometimes in one dimension, and not in another; unevenly. We grow partially. We are relative. We are mature in one realm, childish in another. The past, present, and future mingle and pull us backward, forward, or fix us in the present. We are made up of layers, cells, constellations."

Anais Nin

"Dance disappears almost at the moment of its manifestation. It is an extreme expression of the present, a perfect metaphor for life. Dancers sculpt space in real time, working inside a form that is constantly in a state of vanishing. We have no artifacts. I find it strangely beautiful to be creating something that is made of us – made of our breath and blood and bones and minds. Something that is made of the space we occupy and made of the space between us. We embody both the dance and its disappearance."

Crystal Pite

I am an extraordinary and effervescent young woman who is dedicated to her artistry in every single moment of this stunningly complex life. Dancing, whether still or in movement, is a sanctuary of processing and communication. My spirit is kinetic, lending itself wholly to a body of constant artwork that must move in order to communicate at its most honest level. Since the body is the tool and the artwork of the dancer as well as the home of all love and fear, I am always dancing in and outside of the studio and stage because my body is how I travel through the world. This is shown in empathy and kindness towards others, in deep awareness of the moment and the details of this earth, in seeing spaces as opportunities to create and experience, in embracing the world as a playground that I am so blessed to move through joyfully, in noticing flower petals and cracks in the floor and the sound of water falling outside. As someone whose dancing body is hungry for knowledge in additional subjects such as psychology, physics, anatomy, Buddhism, musical genres, world history, ethics, and a thousand more topics, I infiltrate what I bring to the process of creation with a range of experiences and questions about issues larger than myself. This feeds into my drive to infuse artistic passion with the disruption of and conversation about injustices in the world, and to use my skin, bones, and muscles as a remarkably powerful tool of communication who embodies a hundred other

lives. I am somehow out of myself while being in the very deepest center of my self simultaneously. My art is affectionate, delicate, mindful, and inquisitive through my loves of improvisation and contact improvisation in which all past and future falls away and I embody a sense of awareness that is simply and completely here – both for myself and for whoever I am dancing and giving with at that moment. I am enamored by skin on skin and the possibilities of two bodies together making connection, and develop the deepest relationships with those I am blessed to move with sans words. Dancing lovingly drops me off the cliff on a daily basis. Why? To embed playful fearlessness and risk-taking into my bloodstream, to develop a saying YES to being scared and tumbling into the open door anyways, alongside laughter and support systems deeper than you can imagine. Dancing infiltrates my cells with so much light that I find no other gift but to become the light itself, exposed. I am so grateful to be on this earth with this lifetime of study in front of me that repeatedly invites never-ending curiosity, to demolish the limits of perfection and inhibition, and instead to run towards all possibilities with open arms. I surrender to the dance fully, I surrender to the dance with all of my heart and soul, both when body is destroyed and tired, and when body is healthy and vibrant, and know with certainty that I will always and always be dancing.

Dance Perspectives Essay

*"They missed the point. There's no such thing as silence."*¹

The Existence of Silence and Sublimity in Dance Performance

McKenzie Morgan Cochran

The Dance Thesis: Dance Research Essay

Professor Kristen Smiarowski

January 29, 2014

The dancing body is the ultimate paradox: it is deeply vulnerable and painstakingly human far more so than any other form of artistic expression or linguistic communication, and yet is powerfully transcendent beyond human boundaries of comprehension. This extraordinary combination invites creators, performers, and audiences of dance to the realm of the sublime, the overwhelming sense of awe mixed with fear that immerses one when true greatness is present.

Beauty fails to provoke fear and largely requires symmetry and balance, but the sublime “is the quality of greatness, whether physical, moral, intellectual, metaphysical, aesthetic, spiritual, or artistic. The term especially refers to a greatness beyond all possibility of calculation, measurement, or imitation.”² Philosopher Immanuel Kant defines this quality as a triecta of the noble, the splendid, the terrifying³ within his writings on *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*. Articulated in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is Kant’s differentiation between the beautiful and the sublime: “Whereas the beautiful is limited, the sublime is limitless, so that the mind in the presence of the sublime, attempting to imagine what it cannot, has pain in the failure but pleasure in contemplating the immensity of the attempt.”⁴ This limitless presence and immensity of feeling is most profoundly experienced in utilization of silence within aspects of dance performance.

Silence removes the barriers of human language to reach understanding between even the most diverse individuals, surpassing limits of human comprehension. It refuses traditions that dictate an expectation of music to accompany the expression of dance and replaces these expectations with the unknown. When choreographers, performers, and audience members articulate their expressions in silence, dance becomes this “notion of absolute greatness not inhibited with ideas of limitations”⁵ that is the sublime. Silence does not define itself as the opposite of speech or noise, especially for dancers who rely on the spectrum of kinetic

expression rather than utilizing spoken language. "It is asserted that silence is a form of precise articulation of things which direct language cannot express."⁶ This statement posed by writer Gwendolyn Alker suggests that silence resides in its own category of language and detailed sound that requires the idea of *heightened listening*.⁷ This type of listening becomes necessity in artistic performances that contain silence.

Alker takes inspiration from Cage's "deep understanding"⁸ of silence to further explore the invitation of *heightened listening* within performers and audiences in her interview with performance artist Deb Margolin:

"Silence reveals the body of the listener making sound. Silence, after such detailed investigation by Cage and others, can no longer be heard as absence, but instead as a heightened listening. When one listens to silence, one realizes how the body is complicit in making sound. Silence, while seemingly passive and defined in opposition to speech, undermines its own ontology through performance and reverses the roles of activity and passivity between she who acts and she who listens."⁹

Legendary composer John Cage introduced the concepts behind *heightened listening* as well as the shift of passive and active roles in the 1952 premiere of his controversial yet celebrated three-part score of *4'33"* in Woodstock, New York. *4'33"* simply instructs that the performer arrive in the space and sit quietly throughout the three measures instead of playing their instrument as one would expect. Writer Peter Gutmann further describes the uniqueness of Cage's score in his article *The Sounds of Silence*:

"Most music is trivialized by attempts to describe it...that is not a problem with *4'33"*. Here's how one performance went: A tuxedoed performer came on stage, sat at a grand piano, opened the lid, occasionally turned some music pages but otherwise sat as quietly as possible for 4 minutes and 33 seconds, then rose, bowed and left."¹⁰

The instructions above are carried out in every performance of *4'33"* yet no two silences are alike. Within the score's simplicity is room for immense variation. Cage completely shatters traditional boundaries "by shifting attention from the stage to the audience and even beyond the

concert hall”¹¹ to redefine who is performing. The audience member is blatantly invited to create and experience their own performance while becoming “aware of a huge amount of sound, ranging from the mundane to the profound, from the expected to the surprising, from the intimate to the cosmic.”¹² When unencumbered with the sounds of instruments, all in attendance of 4’33” are invited to participate in *heightened listening* to the silence around them. Eventually one can discover that nothing is ever truly silent. The choreographer who chooses silence expands upon the ideas introduced by Cage in 4’33” and enhances it further with the additionally silent instrument of the dancing body.

The expression of dance can create a relationship with silence in examples of intentional choreographic choice. Rejecting the use of recorded or live sound in order to intensify the sounds created during the moments of performance is a decision made by a choreographer for purposes of going beyond what already exists. The performer of dance is captivating precisely because the art form by definition speaks through the body rather than through the voice. This silent expressive body is the distinction from other types of human communication which require words or voice. Silence can also present as a performance tool for dancers through the use of meditation. Nancy Alfaro of Dance Magazine investigates the power of meditation on professional dancers for the purposes of enhancing performance quality and states “meditation allows the mind to become calm and focused. It produces physical relaxation and states of grace that enhance performance skills.”¹³ An audience reaction of silence to a dance performance can convey a deep stirring of emotion that traditional applause would profoundly disturb. Eliminating the traditional concept of music occupying a dance space challenges each participant in various ways, some of which may present as uncomfortable but ultimately is opportunity for one to experience the extraordinary sublimity of *heightened listening*.

From a choreographic perspective, an artistic choice of silence can further define dance as the most complex art form by capitalizing even further on its ephemerality. The exact movements and sounds created by dancer and audience in silence exist only in that moment of performance. The creations within this particular period of time are never to be exactly the same again as their moment of existence is followed by their moment of destruction as soon as the next second arrives. Crystal Pite, renowned artistic director for the groundbreaking professional modern dance company Kidd Pivot¹⁴ articulates this cycle of creation and destruction in dance performance:

“Dance disappears almost at the moment of its manifestation. It is an extreme expression of the present, a perfect metaphor for life. Dancers sculpt space in real time, working inside a form that is constantly in a state of vanishing. We have no artifacts. I find it strangely beautiful to be creating something that is made of us – made of our breath and blood and bones and minds. Something that is made of the space we occupy and made of the space between us. We embody both the dance and its disappearance.”¹⁵

When performing in silence the dancer has the power of not only creating and destroying movement over and over again, but shares this power with choreographer and audience of creating and destroying organic sound constantly. Essentially the dancer is gifted with the task of constantly performing a premiere of the same piece even during multiple showings of a particular work. This never-ending possibility of creation is exciting to choreographers even as they vary in personal reasons for choosing silence. Amidst the uniqueness of each choice, two broad and predominant reasons emerge to summarize all. The first is an interest in the inception of sound by interaction of dancers, audience, and space at the moment the piece is performed, while the second is an interest in silence as a necessity deeply inherent to the meaning of the piece. In the first example, silence is chosen for the distinct purpose of hearing the dancers audibly through their punctuations and dynamics in breathing, the reverberations of skin on skin contact, or the effect of weighted body parts on the actual performance environment such as the

stage or walls. The second example distinctly rejects usage of sound as a statement of vulnerability – the stage and space is only inhabited by the dancing bodies. There is nothing to hide behind. Therefore in both categories one finds that pieces performed in silence continue to be in creation mode every time they are presented, as the sounds made and heard throughout the piece are not in physical existence until conception onstage. Creation is never complete or fully discovered, a tremendous feat in a field that demands intense importance on repetition and rehearsal in the pursuit of perfection. The dance creation itself exists nowhere tangible until performed again in different time and space. The silence chosen enhances this transcendent quality of being neither here nor there and heightens the dancing into sublime experience, especially for the audience in witness.

Silence utilized within a dance performance has a profound effect on audiences. This is evidenced in how audiences interpret performances that contain silence as well as the reasoning behind an audience reacting at the end of a performance itself with a collective silence rather than applause. Alker references “the impact of the performer vividly embodied in moments of silence” within Deb Margolin’s performance art on the audience as well as what questions arise in this space. It is described vividly:

“Margolin and Shaw’s performances included moments of utter silence, moments in which I felt utopia rising with the hairs on the back of my neck...the image is intuitive, animalistic, far from the boundaries of rationality and the ability of a critic such as myself to fully explain. What it also suggests is that performed silence still holds a quality of undefined possibility...”¹⁶

Furthermore, Alker as an audience member questions, “Who is implicated in these silences? How does it impact the performances as a whole?”¹⁷ both of which have limitless answers. This undefined possibility of performed silence allows the audience to access the definition of sublime usually only felt within nature. Forces such as earthquakes, lightning storms, witnessing

the immensity of the ocean, balancing atop a dizzyingly high mountain, an unfathomable hurricane all provoke the noble, splendid, terrifying awe of the sublime. An innumerable number of dance performances have induced this greatness as well; one of the most notable and recognizable is Alvin Ailey's 1960 premiere of *Revelations* at Kaufman Concert Hall in New York City.

Revelations stunned the audience into silence at its premiere. "The end of the first performance was met with total silence, followed by a rousing standing ovation."¹⁸ The audience's communally instinctive reaction was to be and not do (in the form of applause) in order to express emotion in the face of the sublime. Before long arrive a desire for the equally communal joyous celebration of all greatness that *Revelations* represents.¹⁹ The witnessing of the sublime within *Revelations* provides reasoning for its unprecedented longevity and praise from audiences across the world over decades of revivals. Alvin Ailey dancer Jennifer Dunning explores this audience reaction from a performer's perspective and its historical significance: "The first reviews of *Revelations* were generally positive, but the audience's rapt silence said most about what the new dance was and the classic it would become. *Revelations* would one day be performed in theatres around the world. Night after night after night it would draw tumultuous applause, cheers, foot stamping, and general mayhem in even the most circumspect of cultures."²⁰ The relationship of dance and silence as a gateway to the sublime for creator, dancer, and audience alike is powerfully evidenced in *Revelations* in thousands of personal experiences. Audience reaction reveals much about contemporary humanity's fears and places of discomfort with a surprise silence as evidenced in the audience of Cage's 4'33" premiere.

4'33" became the precedent for purposeful and practically defiant silence as the performance itself was stunningly offered to audiences and critics. Set almost immediately in

motion post premiere was the introduction of artistic, intelligent, emotional conversation about what the rejection of sound truly means as well as what an audience's reaction to a lack of performed sound reveals about humanity in the space and time of performance. The silence asks the audience to reconsider their notions of art and entertainment as a place to practice active sensitivity within a heightened place of being rather than an excuse to passively consume.

James Pritchett contemplates what occurs when audiences are faced with the unexpected silence: "Confronted with the silence, in a setting we cannot control, and where we do not expect this kind of event, we might have any of a number of responses: we might desire for it to be over, or desire for more interesting sounds to listen to, or we might feel frightened, insulted, pensive, cultured, baffled, doubtful, bored, agitated, tickled, sleepy, attentive, philosophical, or, because we "get it", a bit smug."²¹ Witnessed was audience members storming out of the space in frustration and anger at the misconception that they had paid to hear nothing – deliberately leaving the performance as though they had been insulted or let down by the silence. John Cage eloquently and unapologetically responded to this reaction:

"They missed the point. There's no such thing as silence. What they thought was silence, because they didn't know how to listen, was full of accidental sounds. You could hear the wind stirring outside during the first movement. During the second, raindrops began pattering the roof, and during the third the people themselves made all kinds of interesting sounds as they talked or walked out."²²

The audience's fear of this silence protectively manifested itself as reactions of anger and annoyance, or blatant refusal to understand or reflect on what sounds existed in the space. Silence in this context reveals the discomfort experienced when modern humans are without provided distraction and/or easy entertainment, especially in situations of performance art in which an obvious focus of attention is expected.

Ultimately, silence within artistic performance but particularly that of dancing wholly reveals the human experiencing it without distraction or place to hide, creating something uniquely personal for anyone involved. Writer Peter Gutmann articulates 4'33" and other silent performances including dance by stating, "This is a deeply personal music, which each witness creates to his/her own reactions to life... Concerts and records standardize our responses, but no two people will ever hear 4'33" the same way. It's the ultimate sing-along: the audience (and the world) becomes the performer."²³ An audience in witness of silent dance performance is no different – the movement, both deeply human and transcendent, will be seen and felt and heard in emotional variation by every single person involved. Silence invites the opportunity to experience what is both the most human and vulnerable yet indefinably limitless and transcendent. The power of silence within dance performance is of immense greatness, awe, fear, and beauty. The words can only be found as written by poet T.S Eliot as he defines dance by what it is not, as the words do not exist: only the silence speaks such a sublime language:

*At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;
Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,
But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,
Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards,
Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,
There would be no dance, and there is only dance.
I can only say, there we have been: but I cannot say where.
And I cannot say, how long, for that is to place it in time.²⁴*

¹ Richard Kostelanetz. *Conversing with John Cage*. New York: Routledge, 2003. 71.

² "Sublime (philosophy and aesthetics)." Wikipedia. 2015.

³ Immanuel Kant. *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*. Trans. John T. Goldthwaite. University of California Press, 1961, 2003.

⁴ Immanuel Kant. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. by Paul Guyer (Ed.) and Allen W. Wood (Ed.). Cambridge University Press, 1999. First published 1781.

⁵ Immanuel Kant. *Critique of Judgment*. Trans. J.H. Bernard. Macmillan, 1951.

⁶ Gwendolyn Alker, "Why Language Fails: Deb Margolin's Reclamation of Silence." *TDR: The Drama Review* 52, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 118-133. *International Bibliography of Theatre & Dance with Full Text*, EBSCOhost.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Alker, 118-133.

⁹ Ibid.

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- ¹⁰ Peter Gutmann, "The Sounds of Silence." *Classical Notes Columns*. 1999.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Gutmann, 1999.
- ¹³ Nancy Alfaro, "Meditation: How Stillness Improves Performance Skills." *Dance Magazine* 80, no. 11 (November 2006): 28. *International Bibliography of Theatre & Dance with Full Text*, EBSCOhost.
- ¹⁴ "Company and Crystal Pite." Kidd Pivot Online. 2015.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Alker, 118-133.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ "Revelations – 50 Years." Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre Online. 2015.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Jennifer Dunning. *Alvin Ailey: A Life in Dance*. Da Capo Press, 1996.
- ²¹ James Pritchett, "What Silence Taught John Cage." *The Piano in My Life: James Pritchett on Music and Writing*. 2009.
- ²² Kostelanetz, 71.
- ²³ Gutmann, 1999.
- ²⁴ T.S. Eliot. *Four Quartets*. Faber & Faber: 1959.

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"Revelations – 50 Years." Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre Online. 2015.

"Sublime (philosophy and aesthetics)." Wikipedia. 2015.

Career Research:
A Resource Guide to
Dancing in Los Angeles

RESOURCES AND AUDITION LISTINGS

Dance Resource Center

<http://www.danceresourcecenter.org/>

Dance Plug

<http://www.danceplug.com/>

Dancing Opportunities Online

Main website:

<http://dancingopportunities.com/>

Audition Opportunities: <http://dancingopportunities.com/index.php/category/auditions/>

LA Choreographers and Dancers

<http://www.lachoreographersanddancers.org/LAChoreographersAndDancers.org/index.html>

DANCE USA Audition Listings

<https://www.danceusa.org/auditions>

GotDance Los Angeles

<http://gotdancela.com>

SoCal Dance Performance Calendar

<http://socaldance.org/>

Los Angeles Theatre Guide

<http://www.los-angeles-theatre.com>

National Dance Education Organization

<http://www.ndeo.org/>

Dance Anywhere Organization

<http://www.danceanywhere.org/>

ArtsMeme

<http://artsmeme.com/>

COMPANIES

Ate9 Dance Company
Director: Danielle Agami
<http://ate9dancecompany.com/>

BodyTraffic
Directors: Lillian Barbeito and Tina Finkelman Barkett
<http://www.bodytraffic.com/>

Los Angeles Contemporary Dance Company
Director: Kate Hutter
<http://www.lacontemporarydance.org/>

Los Angeles Dance Project (Benjamin Millepied)
Director: James Fayette
<http://www.ladanceproject.com/>

szalt
Director: Stephanie Zaletel
<http://www.stephaniezaletel.com/szalt.html>

Kevin Williamson+Company
Director: Kevin Williamson
<http://www.williamsonkevin.com>

Keith Johnson and Dancers
Director: Keith Johnson
<http://keithjohnsondancers.com/>

MAKedance
Director: Melanie King McGray
<http://www.melaniemcgray.com>

No) one. Art House
Director: Christopher Bordenave
<http://www.no1arthouse.org/>

DanceArt
Director: Benita Bike
<http://www.danceart.org/>

Royal Flux Dance Company
Director: Jaci Royal
<https://www.facebook.com/RoyalFluxDance>

Diavolo/Architecture in Motion

Director: Jacques Heim

<http://www.diavolo.org/>

JazzAntique Dance & Music Ensemble

Director: Pat Taylor

<http://www.jazzantiqua.org/>

PTERO Dance Theatre

Director: Paula Present

<http://www.pterodance.org/Pterodance.org/Home.html>

The Union Project Dance Company

Director: Mariana Oliveira

<http://www.tupdance.com/>

SoleVita Dance Company

Director: Joelle Martinec

<http://www.solevitadance.com/solevitadance.com/Welcome.html>

BARE Dance Company

Director: Mike Esperanza

<http://www.baredanceco.com/>

Nickerson-Rossi Dance

Director: Michael Nickerson-Rossi

<http://www.nickersonrossidance.com/>

Lollieworks

Director: Lindsey Lollie

<https://www.facebook.com/lollieworks>

DATUGANDANCETHEATRE

Director: Ken Datugan

<http://www.datugandancetheatre.com/>

Regina Klenjoski Dance Company

Director: Regina Klenjoski

<http://www.rkdc.org/>

Invertigo Dance Theatre

Director: Laura Karlin

<http://www.invertigodance.org/>

PROJECT21DANCE

Director: Maura Townsend

<http://www.project21dance.org/>

Rosanna Gamson/World Wide
Director: Rosanna Gamson
<http://www.rosannagamsonworldwide.org/>

KIN Dance Company
Directors: Frit and Frat Fuller
<http://kindancela.wix.com/downaroundbrowntown>

Lula Washington Dance Theatre
Director: Lula Washington
<http://www.lulawashington.org/>

BrockusRED
Director: Deborah Brockus
<http://www.brockusred.org/>

Contemporary Modern Dance Cooperative
Director: Chelsea Asman
<https://www.facebook.com/CMDCLA>

KDC
Director: Kenji Yamaguchi
<http://kendancecompany.weebly.com/about.html>

Clairobscur Dance Company
Director: Laurie Sefton
<http://www.clairobscuredance.org/>

Alex Little's Escape Artists
Director: Alex Little
<https://www.facebook.com/EscapeArtistsLA>

Backhaus Dance
Director: Jennifer Backhaus
<http://www.backhausdance.org/>

Barak Ballet
Director: Melissa Barak
<http://barakballet.org/>

Los Angeles Ballet
Directors: Thordal Christensen and Colleen Neary
<http://losangelesballet.org/>

Pennington Dance Group
Director: John Pennington
<http://www.penningtondancegroup.org/>

SPACES/STUDIOS/THEATRES

Electric Lodge

<http://electriclodge.org/>

Live Arts Exchange

<http://liveartsexchange.org/home/>

Arabesque Ballet Studio (location of Ate9 Open Classes)

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Arabesque-Ballet-Studio/176667015791683>

The Moving Joint

<http://themovingjoint.com/>

MiMoDa

<http://www.mimodastudio.com/>

Los Angeles Live Arts

<http://www.liveartsla.com/>

Art Share Los Angeles

<http://artsharela.org/>

Think Tank

<http://www.thinktankgallery.org/>

Pieter Performance Space

<http://www.pieterpasd.com/>

Brockus Project Space (Brewery Arts Complex)

<http://www.brockusproject.org/brockusproject.org/BPStudio.html>

The Sweat Spot

www.thesweatspotla.com

Westside Ballet

www.westsideballet.com

Yuri Grigoriev School of Ballet

www.yurigrigoriev.com

Your Neighborhood Studio

www.yourneighborhoodstudio.com

3rd Street Dance

www.3rdstreetdance.com

Valley Performing Arts Center

<http://www.valleyperformingartscenter.org/>

SUMMER 2015: LOS ANGELES INTENSIVES AND WORKSHOPS

Ate9 Summer Workshop @ Los Angeles Live Arts (July 7-10)

<http://ate9dancecompany.com/classes/>

BodyTraffic Summer Workshop @ Loyola Marymount University (July 13-August 1)

http://bodytraffic.com/summer_program/index.php

Backhaus Dance @ Chapman University (July 13-August 1)

<http://www.backhausdance.org/summer-2015/>

LACDC Summer Intensive and Audition @ Brockus Project Space (July 27-August 7)

<http://www.lacontemporarydance.org/summer-intensive-audition>

Additional Resource: Dance Life Summer 2015 Intensive Guide

<http://blog.discountdance.com/2015-summer-intensive-guide/>

UPCOMING CONCERTS

The Next Dance Company @ Redcat (May 8-9)

James Kidd – GATEWAY @ Pieter Performance Space (May 11)

Mark Morris Dance Group @ Irvine Barclay Theatre (May 15)

Tania Perez-Salas Compania de Danza @ Ahmanson Theatre, The Music Center (May 15-17)

szalt presents F L W R S @ HNYPT LA (May 23-24)

Available Light (Lucinda Childs) @ Walt Disney Concert Hall (June 5-6)

Eifman Ballet of St. Petersburg @ Dorothy Chandler Pavilion (June 12-14)

Appendix

CHOREOGRAPHER RESEARCH

<http://keithjohnsondancers.com/>

https://web.csulb.edu/depts/dance/faculty_staff/full_time_faculty/johnson_keith/index.html

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Please See Attached for:

- ❖ *Rough Draft Process of Dance Perspectives Essay*
- ❖ *An Evening of Concert Dance Fall 2014 Official Program*
- ❖ *Flash Drive of Performance Media, including Full Piece Footage and Rehearsal Footage*