Bridging the Gap: Making Modern Dance Accessible to the General Public Through Elements of Art and Entertainment

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Bridging the Gap: 
Making Modern Dance Accessible to the General Public Through 
Elements of Art and Entertainment 

by 

Samantha Russell 

A Thesis 
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The University of Southern Mississippi 
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Abstract

My senior choreographic project, *DoRaMiFaSoDoSiDo*, was inspired by and dedicated to the relationships I share with my six siblings. It was set to the song "Attaboy" off of the collaborative album *The Goat Rodeo Sessions* by Chris Thile, Yo-Yo Ma, Stuart Duncan, and Edgar Meyer. Influenced by the bright and fun atmosphere of barn dances, this seven-person concert dance was performed in the Repertory Dance Company Fall Dance Concert at the Mannoni Performing Arts Center in Hattiesburg, MS in the fall of 2015. This paper investigates different choreographic methods that I discovered through the process of creating my senior project which are available to modern dance choreographers interested in audience accessibility. These methods include content, music, devices, spacing, and movement invention.

Key Words: Honors College, undergraduate research, dance, music, choreography, relationships, family, Mark Morris, Oliver Sacks, Jacqueline Smith-Autard, Yo-Yo Ma, Chris Thile, Edgar Meyer, Stuart Duncan, *The Goat Rodeo Sessions*
Dedication

Mom, Dad, Jamie Lynn, Olivia, David, Rebecca, Emily, and Seth
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Creative Process

*Initial Ideas*

My family is unique. Unique *and* special according to my sister Rebecca. I am the second oldest of seven children. I have one older sister, two younger brothers, and three younger sisters. That alone is enough to label us unique. I might be a little biased, but I personally believe my family is very special as well. However, I did not always feel that way. Growing up in a big family caused me to experience a lot of different emotions as a child. There was discontentment that all my clothes were hand-me-downs. There was resentment that I always had to fight for the spotlight that the performer in me craved even from a young age. There was competition between me and my older sister. There was the annoyance of constantly having to babysit. As I reached middle school/junior high, a time when everything already seems to be magnified, there was embarrassment from the stares and comments that being out in public with my family always brought. There was the irritation of never having a quiet moment to myself. The list goes on. Then I graduated from high school and started college. Finally I could get away from my family and become my own person! I was free and independent.

Of course you already know where this is headed. I quickly realized that all of the positive experiences that my family created far outweighed the negative experiences. I soon missed always having someone to talk to. I missed the endless soccer, baseball, and basketball games that I used to complain about having to attend. I missed laughing over goofy jokes. I missed eating dinner together. I missed Friday night movies. I missed doing my little sisters' hair. I missed wrestling with my youngest brother and teasing my "bigger-younger brother" (David is five years younger and five inches taller than I) about
girls. In short, I realized that college was fun and exciting, but there is nothing like going home.

I will quickly fast forward through my college career (which I did not spend being homesick, I assure you). It is now the summer before my senior year and I am interning at the American Dance Festival (ADF) in Durham, North Carolina. I was there for the entire summer surrounded by amazing art and was having the time of my life. However I knew that, when the summer ended and I went back to school, one of the first things I would have to do would be to start choreographing my senior piece. I was not too concerned, though. I planned to drop in on plenty of composition classes over the summer and spend a lot of time getting prepared and inspired. Then, the next thing I knew, it was the last week of the festival, and I had not dropped in on a single composition class. I frantically scanned the last week's schedule to see if I could squeeze in anything. Fortunately, one of my favorite choreographers from the summer, Rosie Herrera, was offering a composition class.

Rosie Herrera is a Miami based dancer, choreographer and artistic director of Rosie Herrera Dance Theater. I became familiar with Herrera's work in 2013 when I first interned for ADF and I completely fell in love with her and her choreography. I am always blown away by how emotionally connected the dancers are to the movement and by how visceral the movement itself is. I immediately signed up for Herrera's composition class, and went with complete confidence that I would walk out knowing exactly what I wanted to choreograph for my senior piece. It turns out that I did not leave knowing what I wanted to choreograph, but Herrera did say something in that class that planted a seed which became the idea for my piece. She said, "Don't even bother to
choreograph unless what you're choreographing about emotionally and physically moves you to create." Instead of leaving the class knowing what I wanted to choreograph about, I left the class wondering what in my life touched me on such a deep level that I would choreograph a dance about it.

The answer did not come right away, but my thoughts eventually drifted to my family. I had not seen them all summer and I missed them. A week after the festival, my older sister and I were meeting the rest of our family in Alabama to spend vacation together at the lake. I was so excited, I could not wait to see everyone and was looking forward to the fun times I knew we would have. I was also beginning to realize that time with my family was becoming even more precious. I had plans to move away from Mississippi after graduating to pursue a career in dance. My older sister Jamie Lynn had already graduated and was living in North Carolina. My younger sister Olivia was about to start her second year of college and my brother David was about to start his senior year of high school. I had a nagging feeling that there might not be many more family vacations left in the future where I and all of my siblings would be present.

This was when I finally realized that I wanted to make a piece that celebrated my family and time I spend with them. During the week before Jamie Lynn and I left for Alabama, I began sketching out all of my ideas for my senior piece. I knew that I wanted my piece to be a celebration. I did not want to make a sad dance about leaving; instead I wanted to focus on the fun times that my family and I always have when we are together. So, with that in mind, I started looking for music. As a choreographer, I work in close tandem with my music and allow it to influence my choreographic choices, so it was important that my first step in choreographing my senior piece was to pick out my music.
I was specifically interested in something with a bluegrass/barn dance feel to it because my parents first met at a barn dance. I thought it would be fun to recognize them through the music in my piece, since I was not intending on having them physically represented in the dance.

I became familiar with *The Goat Rodeo Sessions* during my freshman year of college and ever since I first heard them, I had been interested in creating a dance to one of the songs off the album. *The Goat Rodeo Sessions* is a collaborative work between artists Yo-Yo Ma, Stuart Duncan, Edgar Meyer, and Chris Thile. The unique sound style of the album is due partly to the widely varied backgrounds of the musicians. For instance, Yo-Yo Ma is known for his classical background and is typically found playing in symphony concert halls, while Stuart Duncan concentrates more on bluegrass and is based out of Nashville. The first song on the album, “Attaboy” specifically stood out to me because of its repetitious and climactic nature. I also enjoyed the dramatic change in sound that occurred in the middle of the song. Most importantly, though, the song was a lot of fun! I could easily see dance happening to this piece of music.

After choosing my song, I started brainstorming how this piece was going to come together. First I listened to the song over and over, and then I went through and divided the song into different sections that I heard. For each section I sketched out different formations that I imagined occurring according to what was happening in the music (See Appendix A, p. 53-62). One very clear formation that stood out to me was a two dimensional line that changed and developed throughout the piece. This two dimensional line represented a Christmas tradition that my siblings and I have of always coming downstairs on Christmas morning in a single file line with the youngest leading.
(My mom started the tradition for picture-taking reasons.) I also saw a lot of circles and intersecting lines, in reflection of the barn dance theme.

I then went back and wrote out descriptions of the type of movement I saw occurring in each formation. For example, in one section I saw floor work happening in a triangle with two partnering duets occurring behind them. In my head the two different types of movement went well together because of the difference in levels. Only after sketching all of this out did I begin attempting to choreograph the actual movement that my cast would use in the piece. This process was different from my junior piece, where I began with choreographing movement and then organized it into sections. I found for my senior piece that creating the formations first helped me choreograph movement that would more easily lend itself to what I was anticipating using it for. I choreographed a phrase of movement that was very grounded, yet distal at the same time, with lots of ball-changes, skips, and step-hops to mimic children playing. I choreographed the phrase knowing in the back of my head that I wanted to, at some point, take the phrase to the floor, retrograde it, take it into the air, etc. Thus armed with choreography and a choreographic journal already half-filled with notes about movement, music, formations, and performance intent, I was ready to begin choreographing my senior project.


**Casting and Auditions**

Going into casting auditions I did not have anyone specifically in mind that I wanted to work with. I just knew I wanted seven dancers, two boys and five girls to each represent myself and my six siblings. For casting auditions, I decided that I did not want to teach the movement phrase I had created. Dancers in casting auditions can often get bogged down and overwhelmed because they are learning so many different phrases so quickly. Since I felt confident that any RDC member could fully embody the phrase I had created, given time and coaching, I decided it was not crucial that I see my movement on a dancer's body before I cast them.

Since I knew I wanted to use a lot of devices in my dance, (devices are choreographic tools used to alter/develop movement material) I decided it was more important to see which dancers were most comfortable and confident in changing up movement. Instead of teaching a movement phrase, I asked the dancers in the audition to take an eight count of the phrase they had just learned from a previous choreographer (Megan Bradberry) and device it in some way. (I received permission from Bradberry before doing this, of course!) This proved to be a smart decision. Immediately I could see which dancers were getting frustrated and which ones were open to experimenting and trying something new. This openness to play was going to be crucial for the dancers in my piece.

I ended up with an amazing cast of dancers! My cast included: Ansley Davis, Trevon Robinson, Shaquille Hayes, Hannah Kendrick, Gabby Agner-Boudreaux, Macy Morris, Terrian Seiber, and Madi Daigle as my apprentice (See Appendix A, p. 67-69). I was drawn to Davis because she is a very smart dancer. She can device movement very
quickly and remembers movement well. Davis proved to be invaluable to the piece because she is also very musical. I wanted Robinson because I could not think of anyone better to play my baby brother Seth. Robinson is a strong dancer, but smaller built with a baby face. I knew he would be perfect for my piece. Hayes is a tall dancer with a more mature look than Robinson, so I envisioned him beforehand playing my brother David. I liked Kendrick's spunk/quirkiness and Agner-Boudreaux's smoother approach to movement. I had already worked with Morris when creating my junior piece and remembered that she was a hard worker and a lot of fun to be around. I knew that I wanted to work with her again.

I was least familiar with Seiber but knew she was technically proficient, and I needed another dancer, so I went out on a limb and cast her. Early on I started to regret my decision because she was struggling with an injury at the time, but in the long run I am glad that I had her in my piece because she brought a very unique performance quality to the piece that also blended well with the other dancers. Out of all my dancers, I fought the hardest to have Daigle as my apprentice because I knew beforehand that Agner-Boudreaux had a conflict during the Repertory Dance Company Fall Dance Concert and would not be able to perform in the Friday night show. I knew that if my piece was selected for the RDC Fall Dance Concert, Daigle would be perfectly capable of stepping in for Agner-Boudreaux.

Now that I had my seven dancers and one apprentice, I had to decide which dancers would represent which sibling (See Appendix A, pg. 52). I decided that for the boys, Hayes would represent David, my seventeen year old brother, and Robinson would represent Seth, my eight year old brother. I decided this because Hayes is taller and older
than Robinson and also I could easily picture Robinson as the baby brother because of his ready smile and playful energy. For the girls I decided that, instead of trying to figure out who should represent who based on appearance or characteristics, it would be fun to simply put all of their names in a bowl and draw at random. (I also liked this idea because the Russell siblings do something similar at Christmas-time. Instead of buying gifts for everyone in our family, we draw names out of a bowl and buy presents only for the person whose name we drew.) I started with the oldest Russell sibling, Jamie Lynn. The first name that I drew was Macy Morris. Morris is a senior and one of the taller dancers in my piece, so I thought it worked perfectly.

Next I drew myself, as the second oldest girl in my family. For myself, I drew Ansley Davis who is also a senior. Besides sharing a love of dance, I did not know of many similarities between myself and Davis, but was still satisfied with the pairing. Olivia is the next oldest Russell girl and for her I drew Terrian Seiber. This pairing made me smile because Olivia is definitely the quietest Russell and Seiber is also very soft-spoken. Next I drew Rebecca, my fifteen year old sister. For her, I drew Gabby Agner-Boudreaux. This pairing also made sense in my mind because Rebecca and Agner-Boudreaux are both very goofy and laidback. That left Emily, my youngest sister who is twelve. The only name left in the bowl was Hannah Kendrick, but I was actually most excited about this pairing because Kendrick was also the youngest cast member and shares the same bubbly personality as Emily.

After I had finished drawing names I wondered why I had not simply chosen the pairings that I had ended up with from drawing out of a bowl, because afterward it seemed so obvious who should play who. But before I had begun drawing, I did not have
any leanings one way or another. It is almost like I had to see the names paired together in order to see the similarities between the people. In any event, after finishing this process I had my cast, each of them were assigned to a sibling, and I was satisfied and ready to begin rehearsals!

_First Rehearsal - First Adjudication_

I was very excited to start my senior piece with such a strong game plan. Sitting down before the semester had even begun and drafting out my dance was one of the best decisions that I made during my creative process. I personally find more freedom as a choreographer in having pre-set, strong guidelines when creating. Being faced with too many decisions at once can be overwhelming for me, so setting the framework beforehand actually freed me up to play more in the long run. As I prepared to begin my first rehearsal, I was nervous that my ideas and formations would not work in real life, but in the end all of my worry was for nothing.

For my first rehearsal, I wanted so badly to jump into movement and immediately begin setting sections. However, I made myself take time to first talk to my dancers about what was inspiring me. I told them about my experience of coming from a large family and then passed around photos of me and my siblings (See Appendix C, p. 115-118). Everyone in my cast was very excited about the theme of family and was curious about which sibling they were portraying. After I had "introduced" each dancer to their designated sibling, we spent some more time talking. I was very impressed with the detailed questions that each dancer asked about my family, and was very excited that we were starting the dance out with such a strong emphasis on background information and performance quality. (Later I wished that I had asked each of the dancers to share a little
about their family as well, so that we could have established even stronger community.)

We ended the first rehearsal by learning the phrase I had created and playing for a short amount of time with the movement in different formations to make sure that my initial ideas were possible.

For the next rehearsal, we got right to work and loosely set over a minute of the dance. I knew beforehand that my piece would be shorter (five and a half-minutes) so I was pleased with how quickly we were setting the bones of the piece, giving us plenty of time to go back and dive deeper. I say "bones of the piece" because I knew that we would eventually go back and layer other devices on top of what we had already created, essentially adding meat to the dance. I preferred working in this way because it allowed us to set a large amount of material in a short amount of time. This helped to ensure that the piece had a good sense of continuity and was cohesive as a whole.

It was during these early rehearsals that we also set the "signs" which ended up being a significant part of the piece. The back story on these signs/gestures involves a game that my siblings and I love playing. Appropriately, the name of the game is Signs. In Signs, every player has a unique gesture, such as pulling on his/her earlobe or thumping his/her nose. The game starts with one player sitting or standing in a circle of players and counting to ten with his/her eyes closed. During this time, the other players pass the sign to each other as quickly as they can. The sign is passed by performing your own sign and then performing the sign of the person you want to pass it to. That person can then accept the sign by performing his/her sign back to you. After the player in the middle finishes counting to ten, he/she can open his/her eyes and try to figure out who has the sign. While he/she is doing this, all the other players can continue to sneakily pass
the sign to each other with the objective of not getting caught with the sign. The game is highly addictive and very fun to play in a large group!

For my dance I assigned a sign to each dancer. For some of them, the sign was significant because that particular sibling had a "signature sign" that they always used when playing the game. For example, I always swipe the tip of my nose with my right index finger when playing Signs. This movement became Davis' sign that she did throughout the piece. Other signs were simply representational of a sibling's characteristic. For example, my brother David had the infamous "Bieber Hairstyle" for many years and was constantly brushing it out of his face. I asked Hayes to mimic this movement for his sign. Each of the dancers' signs were repeated and developed throughout the piece.

One thing that we work-shopped in choreography class was finding unified or connected ways of moving as a large ensemble. We experimented with flocking, which involves a group of dancers alternating being the leader depending on who is in the front as the group changes facings/directions. Another idea we explored included staying connected by simply holding hands. One formation that I wish I had been able to fit into the dance somewhere was a long line of dancers, all holding hands and traveling rapidly throughout the space, that would suddenly halt and ripple as a result of someone in the line changing directions. Something we did end up using was a spatial pattern where the dancers appeared to randomly walk about the stage, but had actually picked out someone to follow with the intention of remaining undiscovered. I loved all of these ideas for their playful, game-like quality.
About halfway between first rehearsal and first adjudication, we had a class showing. The feedback I received from the showing was mostly positive (See Appendix A, p. 75-77). People said that the family unit was clear, they enjoyed the playfulness of the piece, and appreciated the interactions between individuals. Some things I was encouraged to work on for adjudication included coaching my dancers' running (specifically not looking lazy or winded), and to explore other facings besides frontal. As I watched the dancers perform for class showing, I also jotted down things that I specifically wanted to work on, including lengthening the duet between Agner-Boudreaux and Kendrick, as well as tightening up the beginning formation and amplifying the group lift with Robinson (See Appendix A, p. 78).

I was extremely nervous for first adjudication. We were showing the first two minutes of the piece and ending right as the music dramatically changed. I was pleased with what we had to show, but I was also afraid that the dance would stand out too much. I had chosen to choreograph to very atypical music for a modern dance. Instead of choosing something moody or emotional, I had gone with a selection that was bright, playful, and slightly over the top. The dancers' movement and performance quality was also much happier and more playful than what is typically seen in a modern dance. I figured making a piece that stood out so strongly would either have a really positive or really negative outcome.

Fortunately, the outcome was extremely positive (See Appendix A p. 80-81)! I received a lot of good feedback after first adjudication. People wrote that the relationship between the movement and the music was clear, and one person even made a reference to Mark Morris, a choreographer that I had drawn a lot of inspiration from. People found the
piece to be cohesive and light-hearted. Some wrote about the enjoyable elements of surprise, and also the use of focus and dynamics which helped establish fun relationships. I was very excited to hear that my piece had an established sense of community and was inspired to maintain that even as I moved forward with my piece.

One of my questions for adjudication was "What do you see the dancers wearing?" and the feedback I received included: simple, denim, brown, teal, light, airy, flowing fabric, and pedestrian. I liked all of these ideas and wrote them down to reference later. I also received feedback to consider ways to keep the piece spontaneous and not allow it to stagnate. Another person encouraged me to keep the movement inventive and to consider my use of range/the size of my movement. (As a mover/choreographer, I do not naturally enjoy moving small.)

After adjudication I found out that my piece would be performed in the Repertory Dance Company Fall Dance Concert (See Appendix D, p. 123-130). I was very excited about this because I had been envisioning my piece on a proscenium stage as opposed to being performed in the more intimate setting of the Studio 115 Concert. I felt that the piece's use of space and formations would translate more clearly to my audience if it was viewed from a greater distance. However, this also meant that we had less time to finish the piece, because the Repertory Dance Company Fall Concert happened in November. I was not too worried though, and knew that if we continued at the rate in which we had started, we would finish in time.

As I prepared to finish the rest of my piece, I stopped to journal about what I was intending for the second half of the dance (See Appendix A, p. 79). Throughout the first half, the piece mostly focused on the family as a unit and established strong bonds
between performers. For the second half I was craving a dynamic shift that would match the change in music, so I decided the next thing I wanted my audience to see was the dancers as individuals. I wrote down ideas for a quick succession of solos that traveled across the stage and intermingled with other passing solos. After this, I knew that the next thing I would tackle would be my infamous barn dance section. I was inspired and ready to start rehearsing again.

Second Half of Rehearsals - PAC Showing

Before rehearsals restarted after first adjudication, I took some time to journal about my dance and what I was beginning to envision my senior thesis being about (See Appendix A, p. 82-83). I wondered whether my dance was really about relationships or if it was merely inspired by relationships and if there was a difference between the two. Also, I wondered if I was researching relationships through my choreographic process, or if I was actually researching how a dance could be entertaining to an audience while still maintaining artistic intent. After I wrote this in my journal, I wondered if perhaps I had found my thesis question!

This sent me down a path of writing and reflecting. I began writing about how I, as an audience member, have a hard time emotionally connecting to a dance that is "movement for movement's sake" and does not necessarily have a theme or driving intent. I had seen many dances like this at American Dance Festival in past summers. However other dances I saw at ADF I was able to connect to very deeply, such as Analogy/Dora: Tramontane by Bill T. Jones or Make Believe by Rosie Herrera. What set these dances apart for me as an audience member was how the dancers as well as the choreographer appeared to be clearly informed and focused on the goal of conveying an intent to the audience. Then I began thinking about dances by companies that I had seen
and enjoyed, but not necessarily connected to, such as *Thresh/ Hold* by Pilobolus or *Nearly Ninety* by Cunningham. The movement in these pieces was intriguing and the dancers' facility was impressive, but I remained remote as an audience member when viewing these dances. I was never able to get passed being merely impressed. How was I going to make sure that this did not happen when my audience viewed my senior piece?

Lastly, I wrote in my journal about wanting to figure out a way to create a sense of family in rehearsals. It was important to me that my dance not be just a group of dancers pretending to be my siblings. I wanted the dancers to really connect with one another on stage and not simply play a part. I wondered if this meant that I was more interested in portraying my artistic intent than I was in simply entertaining my audience. One thing that I think helped clarify this was a conversation I had with Davis, one of the dancers in my piece. She said that I was doing a good job of not making her feel pressured to solely represent one of my siblings throughout the entirety of the piece (See Appendix A, p. 84). Instead she felt free to bring herself into the character, which was exciting for me to hear!

Rehearsals began again and before I knew it, it was time for another in-class showing. We had been working in rehearsals on a section of mini-solos that traveled directly across stage from wing to wing and overlapped with other dancers' solos. I was pleased with this section and felt it did a good job of highlighting each dancer individually while still maintaining a sense of community and family dynamic. The section I was having trouble with was my barn dance section, which came right after the solo section (See Appendix A, p. 64-65). I received feedback from in-class showing that people wanted a more extreme abstraction of the barn dance (See Appendix A, p. 85).
classmates also worried that the formations and movement were too predictable and wondered how the dancers could surprise the audience more. I received suggestions on developing different modes of traveling throughout the section such as sliding, galloping, and jumping.

Originally when I set out to create my barn dance section I did not want my audience to recognize the movement for what it was. I had begun creating the section by teaching the dancers a barn dance off of YouTube. I did this for authenticity's sake. The video was uploaded by Geoff Groberg, a bluegrass musician who often accompanies for barn dances. I wanted to make sure that the movement in my dance stemmed from a genuine place and did not, through ignorance, make a mockery of what I was trying to convey to my audience.

After we learned the dance from YouTube, we took the movement and flipped the facings so that the dancers were facing away from each other the majority of the time. This caused there to be a large opening in the center of the stage which made me decide to change the choreography so that the dancers, who were originally taking turns running off stage, could instead take turns running to the center of the stage and doing a developed version of their motif/gesture. This was interesting to me, but I and my classmates soon saw that having the dancers face away from each other was quickly becoming boring to watch. What had originally made the dance fun and interesting (interaction between dancers) had been taken away. So I added it back in, but in my own way.

The dancers went back to facing each other, and then I went through the section and replaced most of the walking with other types of movement like my classmates
suggested. I also re-ordered some movements and asked the dancers to remain separated from each other instead of weaving in and out. This way the space in the center of the stage remained and the solos could still happen. Thus, while my dancers were probably ready to strangle me after all the changes I made, and even though the barn dance section ended up being more recognizable than I had originally intended, I was satisfied with the development of the section. In the end I decided that the section did not need to be extremely abstracted because I actually did not mind the audience recognizing the movement as something similar to a barn dance. Before, I had been a little hesitant to step too far outside of the modern dance realm. Now, however, as we were drawing nearer to performance week and as I was able to see the development of the overall dance more clearly, I became more confident and comfortable with moving away from typical modern dance choreography and owning my dance for what it was.

The PAC showing was drawing near and we needed to finish the piece! I sketched out what I wanted to happen for the ending and we got to work (See Appendix A, p. 86, 89-90). After the barn dance section I decided I wanted a section that retrograded the original phrase I had created. I chose to retrograde the phrase on my own time prior to rehearsal because retrograding is the most intimidating device for me to use as a dancer. A dance is retrograded when the movement is reversed so that it looks like you are watching the original movement being re-winded in a video. It is a difficult way for me to approach movement so I provided myself with an opportunity to improve at it.

After retrograding the phrase, I divided the seven dancers into three groups (two groups of two and one group of three) and gave each group a different starting point in the phrase. I then asked each group to cycle through all of their material twice. This was a
choreographic method I had learned in my modern technique class when learning an excerpt from *Assemble the Ensemble* by Stacy Reischman Fletcher, the Chair of our department. However, once I saw all of the dancers performing the different phrases together, I immediately saw two things: it was too much movement to watch and there were no level changes.

So in the next rehearsal, I assigned each group sixteen counts of movement to take to the floor. Each group was assigned sixteen different counts: the first group deviced counts one through sixteen, the second group deviced counts seventeen through thirty-two, and the last group deviced counts thirty-three through forty-eight. Doing this created an organic-looking phrase with lots of level changes. I also gave each of the groups permission to edit out anything they wanted to while devicing their phrases to the floor, as long as their movement still filled out the entire phrase. At first the dancers hardly edited anything out because they enjoyed moving in a fast and full-bodied way. I had to ask the dancers to edit at least twice more before the phrases were simplified enough that my eyes could comfortably follow everything that was happening. Even so, we still jokingly referred to this section as the fast and furious phrase.

After the fast and furious phrase, we were less than a minute away from completing the dance. I just had three more sections to do. The first one was what we called the leaving section. In it the dancers strolled around the stage doing an arm gesture phrase derived from the retrograted phrase. While this happened, Morris, Davis, and Seiber each deliberately walked downstage and off into the wings, one after another. As each one left, someone else in the group would perform their sign after them. We referred to this section as the leaving section because it was inspired by my older sister, my
younger sister, and I all moving away and going to college. After this, the four remaining
dancers spread apart, creating a diamond that faced out towards the audience, and
performed their group version of the retrograded phrase while traveling in a circle. The
last eight counts of the section, I asked the four dancers to all pick up Kendrick's phrase
and do it in unison while traveling to a diagonal line, in preparation for the final section
of the dance.

The last section of the dance we referred to as coming home from college because
that was exactly what inspired the ending. Seiber, Davis, and Morris all took turns
running back on stage and down the diagonal line the other four dancers created while
interacting with them. The dancers in the diagonal line responded by performing each
dancer's sign to her as she passed. The phrase naturally led into a ripple effect where, as
the next dancer was running down the diagonal line, the first dancer was grabbing
someone from the diagonal line and running to a new place on stage and starting a new
movement phrase. This happened until all three groups had caught up to one another and
then, as the music played out the last resounding notes, the dancers all ran forward in a
straight line and performed their sign directly to the audience in a ripple, held their sign
for a moment, and then relaxed and turned to walk upstage, still interacting and playing
with each other as the music faded.

Finally the dance was done! It was time for PAC showing. I was so proud of what
we had and could not wait to hear feedback. The two questions I had for PAC showing
were: "What about this piece is entertaining to you?" and "How do you feel about three of
the dancers leaving?" (See Appendix A, p. 92). At the time I was still focused on the idea
of entertainment and how it fit into my piece. Also, I was curious to see if anyone in my
audience would feel sad about the dancers separating. I received a lot of good feedback from PAC showing (See Appendix A, p. 92-94). Someone said that the barn dance had been "transformed!". Everyone loved when Robinson was lifted by all of the other dancers and enjoyed the solo moments throughout the piece. Someone else wrote that the leaving "makes me sad but loved ones must part ways." Another person wrote that the dancers were "having a great time dancing together and we as an audience appreciate it!"

People applauded the musicality of the piece, the use of focus, and the joy that stood out from the dancers.

I was also encouraged to continue to push the spontaneity factor and break up anything that felt predictable to help keep the dancers' energy up. Someone else wrote that I needed to "ham it up!" but also that it still needed to be authentic. All in all, I was very satisfied with the feedback that I received and was happy that most of what we needed to improve on was performance-based. Now that the dance was finished we had time for the next couple of weeks to do nothing but clean and work on performance. Also, I planned on spending at least one full rehearsal letting my apprentice Daigle run the dance in place of Agner-Boudreaux, who would not be able to perform for the Friday night performance of the PAC concert. I could hardly wait to move into the theater and start spacing!
Final Rehearsals - Production Week

As my dancers and I prepared for spacing week, we spent our remaining rehearsals in the studio cleaning and running the dance while alternating between Agner-Boudreaux and Daigle my apprentice. Mostly our cleaning consisted of smoothing out transitions between sections (See Appendix A, p. 95-96). As the dancers became more familiar with the movement, they began to rush the transitions, so we spent some time talking about relaxing and making everything feel playful and organic instead of a checklist to mark off.

One small change that was extremely effective was shifting Kendrick's focus in her solo that occurred downstage left. At first her focus had stayed out towards the audience but because I was worried about split focus I asked her to keep her focus on the other dancers, even as they moved away from her, so that the audience could still see the connection between her and the other dancers. Another small change was using imagery when explaining a transition to Davis, Robinson, and Seiber. After these three dancers finished their floor phrase, they were supposed to run offstage right. It was looking labored so I asked them to race each other to be the first one offstage. This not only sped up the transition (which fit the music in this instance), but also added heightened performance and playfulness. After this small change, Davis, Robinson, and Seiber could not help but grin at each other as they sprinted across the floor.

During tech and dress rehearsal, I had minimal notes for my dancers. The feedback I gave them mostly involved spacing and lighting (See Appendix A, p. 100-104). I encouraged Kendrick to find her spotlight during her solo and stay there until Agner-Boudreaux joined her. Another issue we had was with the dancers not standing far
enough behind the curtain when they were waiting come on stage. After I pointed out specific moments where this was happening, the dancers were much more conscious about staying in the wings. I also asked Hayes and Robinson to be careful during their duet to not travel onto the apron of the stage because this caused them to travel out of the light. We also worked on keeping the spacing in the barn dance section very even and symmetrical. Now that we were on a big open stage, any lagging or rushing from any of the dancers became very obvious from where the audience was sitting. Lastly, I encouraged the dancers to really use their plié any time they were jumping, because the stage floor in the PAC is concrete. I wanted to make sure that the dancers did not injure themselves.

I was not performing in any of the pieces in the PAC Concert, so I was able to sit with the audience every night. As a choreographer I enjoyed being able to see the audience's reaction around me as they watched my dance. My favorite performance nights were the nights that my family came to watch. My mother and younger sister Olivia came on Thursday night and the rest of my family came on Saturday night. I had kept the content of my piece a secret from my family as a surprise, so it was extremely gratifying to watch their reaction as they realized the piece was about them. Honestly, it was a good thing my piece was last in the concert, because my siblings could hardly hold back their questions and comments as the piece ended. They were determined to figure out which dancer they were!

On other nights/performances, I continued to receive audience feedback. Laughter would ripple throughout the audience as the dance unfolded. If they knew I was the choreographer, audience members would often turn to me as the piece ended and exclaim
over how fun the piece was and how much they enjoyed it. One night my friend Katie Barnes stopped to give me a hug after the concert and say that my piece "was so funny...but also really beautiful!" That was one of my favorite comments I received from an audience member. I loved that Barnes saw the beauty as well as the playfulness in my piece.

It was also enjoyable on the nights that the people sitting around me did not know I was the choreographer and started talking to one another as the piece ended. I overheard comments such as "Way to end on an upbeat!" and "That one stood out for sure!"

Another memorable audience moment was when I was in the foyer during intermission and a mother of one of the dancers performing in another piece came up to me. We started talking and she mentioned that she had been at every single performance. (It was now the final Sunday matinee performance.) She asked if I had choreographed the last piece and I said yes, how did she like it? She replied, "Well, of course I'm here to see (my daughter) but I have to tell you, I look the most forward to watching your piece! It's so fun and I don't feel dumb when I watch it. I normally feel pretty dumb when I come to one of these concerts." This comment convinced me that I had achieved my goal of making a piece that was accessible to all audience members. As I watched the final performance, I was filled with joy and satisfaction.
Production Elements

Costumes

Costuming my dancers for my senior piece was a fairly simple process. I toyed briefly with the idea of clothing the dancers in more traditional western wear to compliment the barn dance theme (I imagined the women in fluffy patterned dresses with full skirts and the men in various shades of denim) but quickly abandoned the idea. I felt it would come off as contrived to the audience and I also had no way of obtaining such costumes. Also, because this dance was about the relationship I shared with my siblings, I felt that it would be betraying my intent to put my dancers in something that I and my siblings would never wear. After receiving feedback from PAC showing that affirmed my desire to dress the performers in pedestrian clothing, I began envisioning exactly what I wanted them to wear. I ended up printing out a picture that was taken of me and my siblings while on a family vacation in Georgia and bringing it to one of our final rehearsals (See Appendix C, p. 118). I passed it around and asked the dancers to bring anything they owned that was similar in color or style to our next rehearsal. I also brought some of my own things, so that we would have plenty of options to choose from.

During the next rehearsal, I started laying out clothes and matching them to different people. My cast was very obliging in that they did not mind sharing their clothes with each other, which made creating seven cohesive outfits even easier. Robinson ended up in his own faded red cargo shorts, a solid grey tank top borrowed from me, and his own yellow button-down shirt worn open with the sleeves rolled up to give the look a casual vibe. Hayes wore all of his own clothing: khaki shorts in a similar style to
Robinson's and a darker yellow V-neck with a light blue button-down short-sleeved shirt worn open over that.

Kendrick wore a flowy teal tank top borrowed from Agner-Boudreaux and her own jogger-style jeans. Morris wore her own dark pink t-shirt dress and Kendrick's denim vest over it. Agner-Boudreaux wore Davis' white t-shirt along with her own bright orange cardigan layered on top and drawstring jean shorts that had a simple white pattern on them. Davis wore all of her own clothes: a bright orange circle skirt and a light pink bralette with a denim shirt tied over it. Seiber also wore all of her own clothes: a red, flowy button-down tank with some simple gold studs on the breast pockets and cut-off denim shorts. On the night that she performed Daigle, my apprentice, wore a denim circle skirt borrowed from Kendrick, a navy tank top borrowed from me, and a dark pink cardigan borrowed from Agner-Boudreaux.

It made me giggle inside to see my dancers swapping and sharing clothes. Coming from a big family, hand-me-downs were a staple in my closet. This tidbit of information, even though probably not recognized by the audience, gave me a lot of satisfaction as a choreographer. For hairstyles, I gave the women permission to wear their hair however they liked as long as it was out of their faces. Morris, Daigle, and Kendrick all wore their hair half-up half-down. Davis wore her hair in a ponytail. Seiber wore her hair down with the sides secured away from her face. Agner-Boudreaux wore her hair in two pigtails.

The overall effect of the dancers' costumes was bright and colorful with plenty of denim. I enjoyed that the costumes showcased each dancer's individuality, but that the clothes all still coordinated well with each other, much like a family photo. The bright
colors went well with the playful quality of both the music and movement in the piece, and the denim ended up giving a subtle nod to the barn dance aesthetic. I was very pleased with how everything looked onstage from the audience's perspective and felt that the costumes did a good job of supporting my overall choreographic intent.

Lighting Design

It was during our final rehearsals that I started thinking about lighting. As I watched my dance I began writing down moments that I thought would make good lighting cues (See Appendix A, p. 99-100). Altogether I wrote down eighteen moments where I envisioned the lights changing. I then went back through and thought about what kind of changes I wanted to see. One look that I wanted to play with throughout my dance was silhouettes. I felt that silhouettes would go nicely with all of the formations that my dance contained. For example, I knew that I wanted to start the dance with a slow fade up into a colored cyclorama with a silhouette to compliment the dancers' shapes as they moved through a straight line formation (See Appendix C, p. 120). As the dancers broke apart and began the first full bodied dance section, I envisioned the side lights fading in to illuminate the dancers' faces as they turned to face their audience.

Another lighting cue I pictured was a downstage spotlight on Kendrick during her solo and a silhouette on the rest of the dancers as they traveled in a clump offstage. When the music drastically changed and the traveling solo section began, I pictured the color on the cyclorama also changing drastically. During the leaving section, I hoped that a silhouette on the whole stage, barring a channel of light far downstage, would be possible. That way the dancers who were leaving the stage would be highlighted when they stepped into the channel of light and the rest of the dancers would be in the
background. I was not sure if this was possible, but fortunately we had an awesome lighting designer for our show, Anthony Guy, who made all of my lighting dreams a reality.

I also had a very clear vision for the lighting at the end of my piece. I envisioned, as the dancers turned to run forward, a quick fade in of front light to illuminate their faces and then a slow fade out to dark as they turned to walk upstage. This also proved to be feasible. The only small lighting issue we had was trying to light the second line formation, where the dancers chased each other in a snakelike fashion in between the other bodies on stage. At first, Guy was having trouble making sure that everyone's faces were light, but then Professor Early suggested slightly staggering the line which instantly fixed the problem (See Appendix A, p. 98). I also had very few issues with the timing of the cues being called. Sophomore dance major Katie Pinkard was the Stage Manager for the PAC Concert and she did a fantastic job calling cues. After the first full run with lights and costumes, I was extremely excited and knew this piece was going to be a great closing number for the show.

Music

The music I chose for my senior piece was "Attaboy" off of the collaborative album The Goat Rodeo Sessions by musicians Chris Thile, Yo-Yo Ma, Stuart Duncan, and Edgar Meyer. The term "goat rodeo" comes from an aviation term that describes a situation in which one hundred things need to go right to avoid disaster. In an interview conducted by John Shafer on Soundcheck Radio, Yo-Yo Ma describes a goat rodeo, saying "If there were forks in the road and each time there was a fork, the right decision was made, then you get to a goat rodeo" (qtd. in Shafer). Thile, Ma, Duncan, and Meyer
used this term as the title of their album in acknowledgement of the fact that a partly composed, partly improvised collaboration between four solo artists attempting to create a unique and genre-breaking sound is bound for either complete success or complete failure. I often empathized with Thile, Ma, Duncan, and Meyer while creating my senior piece in that I too often felt like my dance was a bit of a goat rodeo!

I would describe "Attaboy" as a very joyful piece of music. It features a string quartet that includes a cello, mandolin, fiddle, and bass. The time signature alternates between 12/8 and 6/4 which was very difficult for me to count at first. For organizational purposes, I mentally divided the song into four sections: A, B, C and D. The song begins with a two measure phrase featuring the mandolin that repeats itself eight times (Part A), gradually getting louder and louder until it breaks into what I referred to in rehearsals as the "chorus" (Part B) which is six measures long, features the cello, and is what inspired my original movement material. After the chorus, there is a two measure interlude and then the song goes back and repeats the opening phrase (Part A), this time allowing the fiddle to take over the melody. The chorus (Part B) is repeated, and then the fiddle leads into Part C, which features a soaring melody that inspired my large group lift.

The next section of music is thirteen measures long and features a mandolin solo while the rest of the instruments keep time and support the mandolin in a muted fashion. About halfway through the phrase, the cello joins in with the mandolin and the two instruments share a duet. This section is what inspired Kendrick's solo that led into a duet with Agner-Boudreaux. Next the song goes back to Part A, with the fiddle again taking lead. After that there is an audible pause in the music and then Part B reoccurs bigger and louder than ever, before the music dramatically shifts to a different key and 4/4 time for
forty-eight measures of what I referred to in rehearsals as the barn dance section (Part D). The 4/4 time lent itself very well to the walking patterns often found in barn dances and that is what this section mostly consisted of.

After the barn dance section, the dance went back to Part B and repeated itself three times. The first time it sounded not very different from how it occurred in the first half of the dance. The second time it was much slower, softer, and more indulgent. The third time it had a very urgent sound to it. This section is when three of my dancers left the stage and the four dancers remaining on stage reacted to this happening. The song winds down with Section B and then all four instruments play sixteen resounding notes to conclude.

The music was integral to my choreographic process and influenced almost every choice that I made in rehearsal. Because of this, my dancers were able to clearly relate to the music in their performance and my audience was able to more easily follow what was happening movement wise on stage. Listening to the music while watching my dance during performance week, I was filled with satisfaction by how clearly I was able to see the relationships between dancers and music and how the movement and music fit together like two puzzle pieces. Even now, over five months after my piece was last performed, whenever I hear "Attaboy" playing, I instantly begin envisioning the movement and spatial patterns that will forever in my mind be as much a part of the song as the instruments playing the notes.
Post-Performance Evaluation

My original intent when creating my senior piece was to create a dance that was inspired by the relationships I share with my six siblings and explored the relationships found both between dancers and between movement and music. My intended cast size was seven people and one apprentice, with the dancers sharing equal responsibility in performance and in movement. My preliminary title was DaRaMiFaSoDoSiDo and my proposed music was “Attaboy” off of the album The Goat Rodeo Sessions. My original idea for costuming was pedestrian and the intended length of my piece was 5.5 minutes. What can I say? I like to make a plan and stick to it.

There is very little that changed from beginning to end of my piece. Everything that I planned out happened almost exactly how I wanted it and almost everything that we attempted in rehearsal proved successful. It truly was a goat rodeo experience! The only thing that was a little bumpy and took time to develop was the barn dance section. Originally, I wanted more abstraction, but the more I tried to abstract the section, the less I liked it, so we eventually went back to a similar version of the original phrase. Later on, after completing my dance, I watched the documentary Mark Morris: The Hidden Soul of Harmony, and Morris himself confirmed why I was not attracted to abstraction in my dance: "The question of abstraction, I think, is ridiculous in dancing because they're people doing it" (qtd. in Mark Morris). I do not believe, like Morris, that there is never a place for abstraction in dance. However, in my senior piece, where it was so imperative that my cast look and feel like actual people on stage, I came to the conclusion that extreme abstraction was not needed to convey my intent.
The creative process I utilized in my senior piece (deciding on an intent first, choosing music second, sketching out spatial formations third, and creating movement last) actually proved to be a very successful process for me. In my junior piece, I worked in almost the exact reversal of this. I still picked the music out first, but then I immediately began creating/devicing movement and waited till later on to start putting the movement into different formations. This was a lot harder for me to do, because I had not created the movement with any specific devices or formations in mind, so it became challenging for me to “tame the movement” so to speak. Because I did a lot of preparation before I began creating movement for my senior piece, I was able to create movement that I knew would lend itself well to what I was planning to do with it.

The most successful moment of my process was seeing my vision come to life so clearly. One of my biggest fears in doing a lot of the prep work so early on was that once we began rehearsals none of my ideas, formations, or movement would work or look how I wanted them to. It was extremely satisfying to see exactly what I had envisioned come to life through my dancers. I credit this to thoughtful planning on my part, but I also have to give a lot of the credit to an awesome cast of dancers who were open to trying anything I came into rehearsal with!

The riskiest decision I made in creating my senior choreographic project was choosing to make a happy dance. I knew that by choosing to do so, everything about my piece was going to stand out. The music, the movement, and the dancers’ expressions in my piece were all extremely different from the more subdued atmosphere typically found in a modern dance piece. Needless to say, I was extremely nervous for first adjudication! I was worried that my dance would not fit in anywhere and would stand out in a bad way.
But ultimately, I am very glad that I went with my original intent. My dance stood out, but in the best way possible. It was fun and quirky but not over the top. I was very pleased with the finished result.

I had an interesting role to play as rehearsal director of this piece. I wanted to create a very relaxed and fun rehearsal environment to help foster strong, yet playful relationships between cast members. This was a little bit of a challenge because usually I am all business in rehearsal. I want to start on time, follow a plan, and complete the checklist. For this piece however, I tried to relax, step back, and let each rehearsal start with conversation. How was everyone’s week going? Was anyone hurting from class? Every rehearsal I would try to find out something new about a cast member.

I also tried to keep a dialogue going throughout each rehearsal that involved stories about my family. I never wanted to force a performance quality on any of my cast members so instead of saying “Shaq, I want you to act like a cocky teenage boy” I would say something like “David (my brother) is so smooth with the ladies. I tease him about girls all the time.” Then, Hayes (and others) could take this information and freely interpret it in their performance without over-thinking it. I think approaching my role as rehearsal director in this manner helped contribute greatly to the performance aspect of my piece.

If I were to do this all over again, there is very little I would do differently. I was satisfied with what my dancers and I created and I was equally satisfied with the creative process we went through to create the finished product. The only thing I would really have liked to have been able to spend more time on would be clarifying spatial patterns. Watching Mark Morris’ dancers perform *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso Ed Il Moderato*, I was so
inspired by the clarity in their movement and their complete synchronization with each other as well as the music. If I had watched this dance during my creation process instead of after the fact, I would probably have shown an excerpt of it in rehearsal as inspiration for clarity in spatial patterns.

I feel that, during the creation process of my senior piece, all of my research stemmed from my family and the piece of music I had chosen. Every choreographic choice that I made was influenced by how my siblings and I interact, as well as what I heard happening in the music. For example, at one point in the music, I heard a bright, high pitched mandolin solo occurring while the rest of the instruments in the quartet played in muted unison behind the mandolin. As I heard this, I also envisioned a resilient solo occurring downstage while the rest of the dancers performed a repetitive and subdued unison phrase behind the soloist upstage.

Drawing upon my experience with my siblings, as I listened to this section of music I also envisioned my youngest sister Emily, who is easily the most bubbly and fun-loving person I know, babbling on about her day over the phone while I interject with "uh-huh" and "oh really" at the appropriate times. Thus, when approaching this section in the creation process, I knew that Kendrick, who represented Emily in the piece, would be the one to do the resilient solo while the rest of the dancers physically "uh-huh-ed" and "oh really-ed" behind her.

Something that I put off until the last minute was costumes. I originally wanted pedestrian, but then I kept thinking about the costumes that my professor Kelly Ferris-Lester used in a piece she created my freshman year. The dance was entitled Ode to Dolly and was a reflection of the many different aspects of Dolly Parton. Ferris-Lester clothed
her dancers in dramatic western wear, complete with poufy skirts and bright, patterned fabric. I wondered if I wanted to go to that extreme in my piece. It might have made sense with the music, but I also kept thinking that my siblings would never dress up like that. Plus, I had no way to get costumes like that for my cast, so I ended up going the pedestrian route. In the long run I am glad that I did because it kept the piece accessible to the audience, which was important to me.

Something I talked to my dancers about a lot was spontaneity. Towards the very end the rehearsal process, I went back and looked at each section of the dance and whenever I saw anything that looked too task-like, I would ask my dancers to find something spontaneous to do during that section. For example, during the coming home from college section I originally told the dancers to simply run down the diagonal line past the other dancers already on stage. Watching it, though, I did not see any interaction or playfulness. So I asked Morris, Davis, and Seiber to each play some kind of prank on one of the other dancers as they ran past them. This instantly brought playfulness and interaction to the section! Leaving some of the decision-making up to the dancers as opposed to dictating exactly what I wanted helped to create a sense of real play that was evident in the final performance.

I enjoyed this creative process so much! I had so much fun making the piece with my dancers, I loved being able to artistically recognize my family in this way, and I am visually satisfied with the final result. Ironically enough, after making this dance, I now have a strong desire for the next piece I create to be extremely serious. I would like to utilize the same choreographic formula I used in my senior project (1. Music 2. Formations 3. Qualities 4. Movement) and see if I can create something that looks totally
different through the same process. As I prepare to graduate and hopefully continue choreographing, I look forward in the future to continuing to put a piece of myself in everything I make.
Contextual Research

If you have not guessed by now, my siblings are my favorite people in the whole world. I lovingly refer to them as my number one fan club. They have been at every dance recital, show, or concert I have ever performed in. In turn, I would have to say that I am also my siblings' biggest fan. I am so proud of all of their accomplishments and their individuality. When it came time to create my senior piece I decided I wanted to make a dance that was dedicated to and reflected the relationships I share with my brothers and sisters. However, as I began the choreographic process of creating my senior piece, a comment that I have often heard from my siblings after a modern dance concert kept running through my head: "I didn't get it."

I have heard this comment many times throughout my modern dance career and not just from my siblings. My parents, while they might phrase it more gently, often have similar feelings. My youngest siblings sometimes make up their own meanings to the dances they see, but my older siblings and parents are often frustrated by how disconnected they feel towards what they are viewing. In talking to my classmates I learned that this feeling of disconnect was common with many of their family members as well. Oftentimes modern dancers' families and friends will attend dance concerts simply to support their loved ones who are performing, but might walk away dissatisfied or confused. Because my senior piece was in honor of my siblings, I knew that I did not want this to be the case when they viewed my dance.

As I began choreographing my senior piece, I also began making discoveries and goals. I discovered that, as an artist, it is important to me that my works are accessible to
my audience. I want my dances to be relatable and easily understood by those who view them. My art enables me to send a message to my audience and I want to make sure that message can be read loud and clear. My overall goal for my senior project was to make a modern dance that was accessible to the general public through elements of art and entertainment. Through creative process and literary research, I discovered choreographic choices available to choreographers, such as content, music, devices, spacing, and movement invention, that can help foster audience accessibility in a modern dance work.

The first choreographic choice I will share from my research is how a modern dance choreographer can enable his/her audience to access his/her dance more easily by choosing content that the audience can relate to. This can be done by using commonly shared experiences, such as family and relationships, as the content of a piece. Next, I will discuss how choosing music with a unique and memorable sound, as well as allowing music visualization to aid in movement invention, can enable a choreographer to help his/her audience members further access his/her piece. Lastly, I will delve into how the use of motifs, repetition, and shapes in space are all excellent ways for a choreographer to clarify his/her content to an audience and help the audience follow the development of the piece.

For my literary research, I focused on four different areas. First, I researched choreographic methods that are available to modern dance choreographers and how these methods can be used to make a dance more accessible to an audience. Next, I researched music and its effect on the human mind. Because my choreographic process relies heavily on music, I wanted to have an understanding of how the music I chose could potentially influence my audience's perspective of my senior piece. Third, I researched
autobiographies, interviews, and documentaries of choreographers that I believe have aesthetics and choreographic goals similar to my own. I wanted to see what inspired them to create, challenges they faced when choreographing, and how they overcame those challenges. Lastly, I researched dance content and how it can effect audience accessibility.

A source that I drew from quite heavily when creating my senior piece was *Dance Composition: A Practical Guide to Creative Success in Dance Making* by dance educator and author Jacqueline Smith-Autard. I read *Dance Composition* this past summer while at American Dance Festival, specifically in preparation for my senior piece. I wanted to refresh my thoughts on choreography while rejuvenating my creativity towards dance making and found Smith-Autard's book helpful in doing so. I appreciated the simplistic and straightforward manner in which Smith-Autard presented her choreographic principles. In Section Two of the book, Smith-Autard discusses repetition as a constructional element and names seven different methods of repetition: restating, reinforcing, re-echoing, recapitulating, revising, recalling, and reiterating. After reading Smith-Autard's chapter on repetition, it became my plan to use repetition throughout my senior piece in order to make it more accessible to my audience.

In her book Smith-Autard also discusses the use of motifs in dance making and how they can be used to further drive home the choreographer's intent to their audience. An interesting quote from Smith-Autard's book concerning motifs suggests that "The opening motif starts to communicate the idea and the next few phrases need to go on saying the same thing as further qualification of the statement" (Smith-Autard 43). To me, a motif is like the choreographer's thesis statement. The more ways it can be restated
throughout a work, the better the choreographer's intent is revealed. My senior piece was built strongly around the use of motifs/signs in order to clearly reveal my intent to my audience.

The last thing that Smith-Autard discusses in her book that contributed to my choreographic process was creating shapes in space. Smith-Autard states: "Some composers may actually map out a floor pathway for the dance before composing the movement. This might ensure that the dance makes the fullest use of the space and with interesting patterns" (Smith-Autard 54). This is the exact approach I used when choreographing my senior piece and it was highly effective for clearly organizing the movement that was happening on stage.

Last semester I took Music Appreciation as part of my general education requirements and one day during class my professor showed an interview on YouTube of psychologist Oliver Sacks talking about music and psychology. I strongly connected to what Sacks was saying about how music can be used to treat Alzheimer's disease. In the interview, Sacks says, "It's amazing to see people who are out of it and dull sort of suddenly respond to a familiar song. First they will smile, and then perhaps start to keep time, and then they will join in and sort of regain that part of that time in their lives and that identity they had when they first heard the song...that sort of lucidity and pleasure (on the patient's part) can last for hours afterwards" (Sacks). Afterwards my professor mentioned that Sacks had written a book called *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain* so I jotted down the title and made a note to look it up in the library later.

I had already made the song selection for my piece when I read Sacks' book, but because music is such a large driving factor in my choreographic process, it was still very
intriguing to read about how music effects a person's memory, especially when considering this effect from an audience's perspective. Sacks describes the process of remembering music in this quote: "When we 'remember' a melody, it plays in our mind; it becomes newly alive...We recall one tone at a time and each tone entirely fills our consciousness, yet simultaneously it relates to the whole. It is similar when we walk or run or swim---we do so one step, one stroke at a time, yet each step or stroke is an integral part of the whole, the kinetic melody of running or swimming" (Sacks 147). The idea of music causing memories to come flooding back, in a fashion similar to swimming or riding a bike, was something that greatly influenced the music choices I made for my senior piece.

In reading Musicophilia I also found a connection between what Sacks was saying and what I had read in Smith-Autard's Dance Composition. One example that stood out to me was when Sacks discussed repetition in music: “There are, of course, inherent tendencies to repetition in music itself. Our poetry, our ballads, our songs are full of repetition; nursery rhymes and the little chants and songs we use to teach young children have choruses and refrains. We are attracted to repetition, even as adults; we want the stimulus and the reward again and again, and in music we get it” (Sacks 321). I found this particular quote extremely interesting. I was so focused on the use of repetition in the movement of my piece that I had not even stopped to consider the repetition in the piece of music I was using. Also, because my goal was to create a piece that was accessible to my audience, I was inspired to read about how repetition appeals to the human psyche.

In the fall of 2014, as I was choreographing my junior piece, I watched an interview with Mark Morris who talked about how music inspired his choreographic
process. In the interview, Morris says, "Every dance I make up, I make up because of the music I'm working with. I have some ideas, I have opinions about the music, and I study it and I go from how I feel about a piece of music to how I think about a piece of music" (qtd. in Mark Morris). I was greatly impressed by Mark Morris' words and after the completion of my senior piece I drew a lot of parallels between my senior project and Morris' work L'Allegro, Il Penseroso Ed Il Moderato (1988).

I love L'Allegro, not only because it is so colorful and joy-filled, but also because of its extremely close-knit relationship with the music of George Frideric Handel. I watched a documentary on the making of L'Allegro and found it very informative. In the documentary critic Suzanne Weiss describes Morris' use of music visualization in L'Allegro in this way: "A dancer flutters her fingers in time to a soprano's trill and the entire company will prance across the stage in time to a measured figure. Midway, there is an astonishing fugue, in which couples come together, embrace and separate in such a way as to make the music almost become visible" (qtd. in Mark Morris). While viewing L'Allegro I was able to draw parallels between Mark Morris' spacial patterns and simplistic movement vocabulary of walking, running, and falling and the movement vocabulary in the second section of my Senior piece.

Encouraged by Professor Early to not only research Morris' use of music visualization, but also his style of movement and how it was similar to mine, I went back and re-watched a section of the documentary entitled "Folk Dance Influence." In this section, Morris talks about how he did not grow up dancing classical styles, but instead studied what he termed "ethnic dances" such as flamenco and Israeli folk dances. It was not until later that he began studying ballet. Morris says in the documentary that "I have
gotten a whole lot of information that's changed my work personally from different ethnic
dance forms that I think are much, much more interesting in general than concert
dancing" (qtd. in Mark Morris).

As I watched the dancers in his piece moving around the stage, I saw how some
of their movement mirrored the movement in my senior piece. It was then that I was
struck with the realization that, while I had never considered it in that way before, barn
dancing, the style of dance that inspired a lot of the movement in my piece, is in fact a
type of ethnic dance. It was then that I was able to conclude that the similarities between
my dance and the work of Mark Morris stems from our use of community style dances
with a focus on relationships. Morris said it best in the documentary: "When you're
allowed to watch a dance of another culture, you watch something happen between
people as a community" (qtd. in Mark Morris).

My last source was an article by dancer and scholar Ann Cooper Albright entitled
"Dancing Bodies and the Stories They Tell." In the article Albright discusses how dance
can be viewed as an autobiography of the choreographer. This can be useful because it
enables the audience to see themselves in the story or theme. Albright explains:
"Although it is self-referential, autobiography nonetheless assumes an audience, engaging
in a reciprocal dialogue in which a story about my life helps you to think about your life"
(Albright 119). By telling the audience about personal experiences, the choreographer is
able to connect to his/her audience and to get the audience thinking about their own
personal experiences. I found this article to be extremely relevant to my senior piece in
that the work I was creating was autobiographical because it represented my feelings
about growing up in a large family.
In her article Albright highlights two choreographers who are known for their use of autobiography in their dance works: Blondell Cummings and David Dorfman. These two choreographers made for interesting comparisons in that, while their autobiographies are very different from one another, the essence of their work still resembles each other. Albright says, "It would be much too tidy (not to mention boring) to argue that as an African-American woman, Blondell Cummings creates a personal narrative that is reflective of a marginalized group consciousness and that as a white man, David Dorfman presents an autobiographical voice that echoes the privilege of an unencumbered (by the bodily markings of gender, race, etc.) universal self. In fact, both choreographers deal with the potent interconnectedness of individual bodies and cultural subjectivity" (Albright, 126).

In reading about Cummings' work as well as Dorfman's, I found that, even though both choreographers were somewhat similar in their work, I shared more commonalities with Cummings' choreography than with Dorfman's. Albright states in the article that Cummings "uses performances as a formal means to explore more general cultural and psychological influences (friendships, relationships, working, money) that shape her life. Yet specific movement material often reappears in subsequent solos. These repetitive gestures combine with an underlying narrative thread to create a woven fabric of dancing and autobiography" (Albright, 128). I found this quote to be extremely insightful. I, like Cummings, was interested in exploring how my personal experiences fit into the bigger picture of society. I also loved Albright's mention of repetitive gestures because that was something that I also relied on heavily in my dance. It is always a good feeling when you read about someone else successfully carrying out work that is similar to your own!
Now that I have highlighted my literature, I would like to share how all of this contextual research sifts into the main points of my thesis. First, I will discuss content choices and how a modern dance choreographer can enable their audience to access their dance more easily by choosing content that the audience can relate to. This can be done by using commonly shared experiences, such as family and relationships as the content of a piece. Besides Cummings and Dorfman, another choreographer known for doing this is Rosie Herrera, a Miami based dancer, choreographer, and artistic director of Rosie Herrera Dance Theater. Herrera has choreographed dances involving commonly shared experiences such as: feeling isolated, struggling with growing old, and chasing after a goal. Herrera says that the trick to choreographing is to find out what you are passionate about sharing with your audience and letting that fuel your choreographic process. This idea of coming from a place of emotion and authenticity is what inspired me to choreograph a dance about growing up in a large family.

Creating a dance about growing up in a large family was, in a sense, a way for me to share my autobiography with my audience. As mentioned previously, dancer and scholar Ann Cooper Albright discusses this content-based choice in her article "Dancing Bodies and the Stories They Tell." In the article Albright argues that dance can be a way for a choreographer to share his/her autobiography with an audience, which is useful because it enables the audience to see themselves in the story or theme. This goal of audience reciprocation is exactly what I had in mind for my senior piece. Part of my autobiography is growing up with six siblings, and that aspect of my life is what I chose to share with my audience through my senior piece. By sharing a personal, yet commonly shared experience from my autobiography with my audience (shared relationships), I was
able to help them better access my senior piece. Even though not all of my audience members grew up in large families, they do all have people that they share close relationships with, and thus could appreciate the aspect of shared relationships in my piece.

My second main point suggests that by choosing music which has a unique and memorable sound, and through the use of music visualization, a choreographer can help his/her audience members to further access his/her piece. In his previously mentioned book *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain*, author and psychologist Oliver Sacks discusses how strongly music affects the human brain. An example Sacks used is how music has been a successful form of therapy for patients with Alzheimer's and dementia. According to Sacks, a patient with Alzheimer's is more likely to recall information while listening to music specifically from their childhood and teen years.

The idea of music causing memories to come flooding back was something that greatly influenced the music choices I made for my senior piece. I chose music that was reminiscent of a barn dance because that was where my parents first met. I hoped that listening to music with a similar theme while watching my piece would bring back many happy memories for them. I also hoped that other audience members would also recognize the music for what it was, and enjoy the sounds associated with a widely known social dance. Even if they had never personally participated in a barn dance themselves, I hoped that the music would bring back some other happy memory regarding community, and thus help create an environment of nostalgia.

Music is always a big part of my choreographic process, and using a choreographic tool such as music visualization in my senior piece made my process much
easier. It also helped my audience to further access the finished dance because what was seen and heard agreed with one another. Music visualization is exactly what it sounds like: visualizing the music through movement. When using music visualization, the movement that is created for the piece perfectly matches the sound score in tempo, quality, and range. A good example of a choreographer who successfully uses music visualization is Mark Morris. Morris is known for using music as a reoccurring foundation for all of his works, as well as including folk dance styles and community-based movement in his choreography.

One of his pieces that specifically stands out to me is previously mentioned L'Allegro, Il Penseroso Ed Il Moderato. This dance is known for its movement sharing a close relationship with the music of George Frideric Handel, with the dancers often physically representing the words or sounds heard in the music. Like Mark Morris, I was able to make my dance more accessible to my audience by allowing them to follow the dance through what they both saw and heard. One example of this would be how Robinson was lifted up by his fellow dancers as the melody reached its highest peak. Another example is when the metric structure of the music shifted from 12/8 and 6/4 to 4/4, the dancers also adjusted how they were traveling to reflect a more pedestrian manner (walking instead of skipping and running).

My last main point involves three choreographic choices: the use of motifs, repetition, and shapes in space. These are all excellent ways for a choreographer to clarify his/her content to an audience and help the audience follow the development of the piece. Previously mentioned author and dance educator Jacqueline Smith-Autard discusses these three choreographic choices in her book Dance Composition: Creative Success in
Dance Making. Smith-Autard and I both agree that a motif is like the choreographer's thesis statement. The more ways it can be restated throughout a work, the better the choreographer's intent is revealed. My senior piece was built strongly around the use of motifs. Each dancer had their own unique motif or gesture that they repeated and built on throughout the dance. This helped the audience to identify the dancers as characters who told the story of the piece.

Smith-Autard addresses the choreographic choice of repetition in her book by presenting her "Seven Forms of Repetition" which are: restating (to say again exactly), reinforcing (making part or the all of the material more emphasized), re-echoing (something of the material which has passed returns into the new content), recapitulating (the statement occurs again in a shortened or telescoped manner), revising (to go over again with a specific detail in mind), recalling (new material reminds the onlooker of old material), and reiterating (stresses the fact of repetition through accumulation). Each of these forms represents a different aspect of repetition and, when skillfully used, can help clarify the choreographer's intent to their audience, thus fostering accessibility. I used this choreographic method in my senior piece and found that it worked well in conveying my intent to my audience.

Because each dancer had a clear, individual motif it was relatively simple to find ways for the dancers to repeat the movement in different ways throughout my dance. Two examples of this was my dancers' use of "reinforcing" and "reiterating" their motifs. In her book Smith-Autard defines "reinforcing" as "making part or the entire motif more emphasized" (Smith-Autard 44). The motifs in my dance were reinforced when I asked my dancers to repeat their motifs in a more full-bodied manner. Smith-Autard defines
"reiterating" as stressing the fact of repetition, perhaps by several continuous repetitions. My dancers reiterated each other's motifs at the very end of the dance when they stood in a line and performed in a ripple the other dancers' motifs as they ran down the line.

Lastly, Smith-Autard discusses the choreographic choice of creating shapes in space. Smith-Autard says: "Some composers may actually map out a floor pathway for the dance before composing the movement. This might ensure that the dance makes the fullest use of the space and with interesting patterns" (Smith-Autard 54). This is the approach I used when choreographing my senior piece and it was highly effective for clearly organizing the movement that was happening on stage. For each section that I heard in the music I used for my piece, I sketched out different formations that I imagined occurring according to what was happening in the music. One very clear formation that stood out to me was a two dimensional line that changed and developed throughout the piece. I also saw a lot of circles and intersecting lines, in reflection of the barn dance theme. Through creative uses of space, my audience was able to better follow and connect to what was happening in my piece because they could clearly see what was happening on stage, and also because they could perhaps recognize common formations found in social barn dancing.

Now, amazingly enough, I have to begin drawing this paper to a close. I have created a dance, done extensive research on audience accessibility, discovered choreographic choices that are available to modern dance choreographers, and shared them with my readers. So what happens next? Very likely one of two things will happen. One option is that choreographers who are interested in audience accessibility might utilize some of these methods and see if any of them are suited to their particular
choreographic style. The other option is that choreographers who are not interested in audience accessibility will bypass these methods and concern themselves with other choreographic choices that they find more pressing. My closing argument, however, is that if someone is a choreographer, or any kind of artist for that matter, he/she should on some level be concerned with audience accessibility. To those who disagree I ask, for whom if not your audience are you creating?

Many might respond back that they create art purely to satisfy themselves. And by all means, I agree that the art we make should personally satisfy us. We as artists should follow our curiosities and passions when choreographing, because that is how good art is made. However, while we are creating about our curiosity or exploring our passion, we need to also be considering how we are going to effectively share the information we discover with an audience who will only see the finished product of our work, and not the hours and hours of experimentation and reflection that went into it. Regardless of if we have ten minutes or two hours with our audience, we need to be wise with our time and resources and put something on the stage that is going to connect to our audience in some way, whether it is by spreading joy, raising awareness, or encouraging personal reflection. If we as choreographers only consider ourselves and what is going to satisfy us as artists when we make art, we might soon discover that we are the only audience we have left. We have to also consider what is going to nourish our audiences and help them to grow more in their artistic participation. And that is why we need to consider audience accessibility when making choreographic choices.
Works Cited

Albright, Ann Cooper. "Dancing Bodies and the Stories They Tell." Choreographing 
Difference: The Body and Identity in Contemporary Dance. Middletown, 

Mark Morris: The Hidden Soul of Harmony: Mark Morris: The Hidden Soul of Harmony 

Sacks, Oliver. Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain. New York: Knopf Doubleday 


Smith-Autard, Jacqueline M. Dance Composition: A Practical Guide to Creative Success 
Appendix A:

Choreographic Journal
12 is a lift!  "Attaboy"

38-2 03
a unison crowd heel/waltz

parents met
at a barn dance.  7 dancers

begin rehearsal
with a game of signs...

5 girls  (ideally)
2 boys

challenge:  5:42 long

doing a line dance with 7!

each dancer represents
a sibling....

this is a happy
dance.

inspiration from
Paul Taylor's "Esplanade"
and country line dances

"Sound of music"

Do Re Mi Fa So Do Si Do

HA!!

Seven brides for
Seven brothers
Song begins with 8 sets of G

on
dancers begin stage in a line
B-G faces offstage. A faces B.

Each dancer has a "sign" moves through
As first phrase starts, A goes down the line doing everyone
Sign to them* and appears on stage on the
End of the first phrase
This continues 8 times to get everyone on stage

1) A
   BCDDEFG

2) BCDEFGAB

3) CDEFGAB

4) DEFGABC

5) EFGABC

6) FGABCD

ends as it begins.

* dancers do the sign back
to the traveling letter
Breakaway Section: 3 sets of 8
(can't fast backbeat)
Last set of 8, E & F breaks away from group and runs/travels forward doing a solo.

BCDEFGA

While this is going on, B, D, and G are traveling around C, E, and A so that the two sets switch places.

2nd sets of G comes out/breaks away and shadows F who repeats solo

CBEDA
While this is going on, B and D retrograde/reverse around B/D, and A runs all the way around to set up for origin.

CEDEBA

G F

and G and F rejoin group on retardando:

ABCDDEFG

and we're ready for a reprise!
Next: 4 sets of G

As F/G rejoin the group, G begins to wind through the group who in turn flash their sign at her as she passes.

1. \( \text{A B C D E F G} \) (ps. A-F are facing \( \leftarrow \))

As G arrives, she sends A back in her place, and everyone else jumps to face the other way.

2. \( \text{G A B C D E F} \)

3. \( \text{B C D E F G A} \)  
   (third time, F joins in to finish out phrase, G does sign at A before starting the last time when they pick up B)

4. \( \text{G B C D E} \)
Next: 5 sets of 8

As G emerges, she begins the solo again; as A, F, B, C, D, E emerge, they pick up with her. After the original 2 8's of movement, the movement is repeated as an inversion (or some other device).

As G does her solo, she needs to travel diagonally downstage to make room for friends.

For the last 8, F (or whoever is furthest stage R) turns and begins running in a half circle upstage, everyone else clucks around and behind her.
Next: 4 sets of 8

as the next phrase begins and the dancers come around the corner, one of them gets swept up by the masses (preferably D or A) (aka a guy).

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 (musicality of lift)

everyone disperses out of the lift and into groups of 2 or 3 and do: 1st do, chase, link arms for 3

G/F E/D A/B/C

not satisfied with this...

* Each group makes up an 8 count phrase to do together

1. E/D's set @ 8 facing 4 doing 2nd 8 of inverted phrase *(at a low level??)

2. A/B/C @ 8 facing 6 doing 1st 8 of original phrase*

3. G/F @ 8 facing 6 doing 2nd 8 of original phrase*
Next: 7 sets of 8's

First half of first 8 everyone runs to a dump upstage right:

starting 2nd half of first 8 and continuing offstage the group starts a half-time toe/heel movement that takes them offstage.

meanwhile, B steps up and begins a diminished version of the original solo (doesn't travel) that lasts for 2 1/2 8's.
* it's 2 8's long but she starts at the end of her solo and then begins on the new 8.

Right before the group exits and as B is finishing up her solo for the first time, C breaks away from the group and begins a 2 8's count version of the original solo that is augmented and travels back to where B is (who repeats her solo while C is traveling back to her).

For the 2nd to last 8, they both do the first half of their solos to reach each other, then run off together stage right.
Next: 4 sets of 6's

Pairs

Blue enters from stage R, from X over-stage, runningavery. Doing small weight shares that replace each other.

A runs in on the last 6 by himself to signal the next section. (might be just 5, 6) B/C (3)

Once pairs get to their spots on stage, they do rotating teeter-totter weight shares A (4)

F/G (1)

D/E (2)

F/G

B/C up D/E? (maybe breaks)

D/E
Next: 4 8's

D/E/A do the original solo and then the inverted solo downstage center while

B/F and G/C pair up and do a partnering version of the phrase upstage

1) F

2) F/B

* Maybe D/E/A also switch up facings?
* and take it to the floor!
also, I've learned that I'm very creative at night and very functional in the morning.

I'm 21.

21 of insanity.

"Big change."

Then the predictable and negative.

What do Esplanade-born do in common?

1. Fun to do

2. Entertaining to watch

3. Musical

4. Krewe-sounding formations

5. Predictable and negative
Barn Dance Ideas

- walk forward 1, 2, 3 and bow, back up 5, 6, 7, 8 2 x
- Do Si Do R elbow (8) then L elbow (8) 2 x
- two hands circle clockwise 8 x
- back to back, R + L 2 x
- In with the R, out with the L; at the back, turn and pony out; peel the banana and follow the leader 2 x
- go under the bridge and we have a two-headed couple into a circle 2 x
- weave in and out for 8
- all turn (4) and pony together in the same direction 2 x

All together should equal 12 x 3

... So repeat it?
* but do the whole thing facing away!!
1. I love Section
2. Leaving Section
3. Longing Section
4. Reunion Section
5. Ending

Run forward to straight line
Each person does sign last beat
Gabby AB
Deana
Hannah
Sar
Nadie
Whitney
Carrie
Nugget
Megan W
Megan B
Blake
Amanda
Macy
Shael
Sisera
Rianva
Ansel
Abby
Cory
Brittan
Cass
Lexie
Tara
Desha
Gena M.
Brooke
Kaylin
Kristen
Leslie
Destiny
Trevor
Jamel
Desa
Maddie
Reid-Lee
Carley
Tessina
Ansel
Maddie
Trevor
Shaq
Hannah
Sisera
Kaylin
Macy
Gabby AB
Sisera
Hannah
Maddie (Appt)
Tessina
My Cast

✓ Ansley (5-6:30 Wed)
✓ Trevor (can't do 9:30-11)
✓ Shower 2-3:30
✓ Gabby no conflicts!
✓ Karron
✓ Macy (can't do 2-5:30
✓ Terrian
✓ Appt. Maddie

Maddie

Free Sunday
Free Friday 2:30-5
Free Wed 7-11:30
Free Tues 9:30-11/6 midnight

Whitney!!!

Appt)

Conflicts

Shop (Sat 11-5
Sun 11-3
Sat 9-12
Sun 9-11 a.m.

Terrian available 6-9 Tues
5-10 Wed
2:30-5 Fri
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**Cast!**

- Ansley
- Trevor
- Shara
- Gabbe
- Hannah
- Macy
- Terran
- Angelina

**Tues - 6-7:30**

**Sun 1-2:30**

**Wed 2-3:30 Whitney**

**Fri 2:30-4:30 Whitney**

**Fri 4:30-5:30Classic**

**Sat 4:30-5:30 Classic**

**Site Specific**
Class: 8/24/15

Thesis Statement Brainstorming:

BE BROAD:
- Relationships
- Family
- Fun!!
- Music
- Use of Repetition...??
- Use of phrasing
- Devices
- Music Study Inspiration

Using inspiration from my relationships with my six siblings, I plan to make a dance that explores relationships between dancers as well as the relationship between dancers and the music.
I'm so excited to get started on my senior piece with such a strong plan. Sitting down before the summer was over and drafting out my dance was the best decision I ever made. I was nervous that all my ideas and formations wouldn't actually work in real life, but so far so good!

Auditions went well. I knew I wanted 7 dancers from the start. I asked in my audition that everyone take the phrase that Megan taught and devise it in some way. It was a good choice because I saw immediately which dancers were willing to put themselves out there and try something they weren't 100% comfortable with and not be afraid to look silly. This mindset is the most important thing I look for at auditions. I like risky dancers.

First rehearsal was good. I was missing three of my seven dancers so I didn't set anything. I just taught my phrase and then experimented with different formations that I knew I wanted to make sure they would work. And they did!

Second rehearsal we cracked down and got to work. We set over a minute of the dance and I'm really pleased with how it looks. I know this is going to be a shorter dance (5½ min) so I feel like I can breathe easy and know that this piece will come together. I like this method of setting something "simply" with the knowledge that I will go back and add layers.
Sept 11-13: Mississippi Dance Festival
Fri 1-9 pm.
Sat all day Times that the studios will be in use
Sun 8 am - 2 pm
Rehearsals can be rescheduled
look into a later Sunday time for 13th

Contracts due Sept 2nd!! (Wednesday)

Homework:
Due Monday, August 31
* 2 sources (contextual) "Push Comes to Shore"
  Citation and paragraph

* reading responses: Hard copy ONLY!
  1) Citation
  2) Chapter Summary
  3) Response

  Twyla Tharp: Spine

* Group 1: Me, Cassie, Whitney
  Have a movement question for us to explore in class
Flocking - opposite of flocking!

pushing through each other

staying connected/arms/circular

cannon/snake/v

worn with a sudden stop connected by hands

following someone and they don't know it.
Rehearsal moved back on Sundays 2:30-4
Should we cancel Labor Day weekend?
We can clean what we have
Layer more on?
Add on just in time to lift it?

I need one more rehearsal till showing.

13th
Shaq's
B-Day weekend
clean!!
add on to up to the end of lifts
check about Sunday
showing tomorrow!!

√ email Justin

showing →3:30 - Made DD

individual but cohesive
- family unit is clear

unison movement - should they lose their mottos or keep them?

running looks lazy and winded
DoRaMiFaSoDoSiDo

Gebby + HANNAH

Cute, playful;
Music - in the Shire;
Flashing
Interactions/focus is clear!
Trevor's Little brother
Mothes interact differently each other

Beginning line needs to be tighter and start more forward
Work lifts!

A unit as a relationship
What do you see coming next?
Relationships among them?
More general
Unfolding successful
Running coach ground more

Dear individuals at times it's lost
Frontal - play with other facings
(maybe the diagonal becomes straight to the side?)

Think about questions to ask for adjudication!

Trevor's lift
Either own it or bring it way
Chill out in the shade
Trevor has time....

Ansley needs something else before Nancy comes
Beginning line - tighter and starts more downstage
Transition into phrase - start sooner and spread out more, anticipate
Running in general needs to be more grounded!
- Slow down the snake, you have more time than you think.
- Ansley - add on before Macy gets you diagonal phrase - make flat to the side, maybe switch halfway through?

Trevor's lift - own it or chill it out
Gabby/Hannah duet - longer/count it out
Terrin breaks partnering now.
Work lifts - needs to exit offstage
Last Rehearsal Before Adjudication!!

Snake - signs
Work lift section to go off!

Garth Fagan
- choreographed in the modern aesthetic
- later choreographed for Broadway
  *The Lion King*
WHAT HAPPENS NEXT ??

We've been focusing on the family as a unit thus far - establishing bonds.

Now it's time to see the individuals that make up a family.

I WANT TO SEE SOLOS a quick succession of introductions/highlights.

Solos are derived from signs in the beginning of the dance.

THEN we go into a group walking barn dance.

AHA!
FEEDBACK

playful - nice movement
movement/music relationship is working
playful/clear
very musical
mark morais/music visualization
windmill like movement, very appropriate
very cohesive
- keep it spontaneous
- light hearted
- a romp
- good use of focus and dynamics
to establish fun relationships
- costuming - simple, denim, brown, real
- light airy flowy/old style
- - great work!
- keep movement inventive
- fun exciting passion
- keep pushing playful
- nice moments of surprise
- consider the range
- big vs small
- runs - how do they change??
movement/music - perfect!
cute/love happiness
the dancers are letting the music move them
like the chain of movement down the line
relationships of family is clear
like seeing the wave in other choreographic choices

nice established sense of community
how can you maintain this??

child's play
like little rascals in the beginning
gestures are fun!

personality in the beginning sets up relationships
clarice's expressions are clear and happy
movement follows the smooth and frantic rhythms
movement long and extensive - fit music
THESIS

THOUGHTS

Is my Dance about relationships or is it inspired by relationships?

Wait... I really mean...

Am I really researching relationships??

OR am I researching how dance can be both entertaining to my audience while still maintaining artistic intent? (thesis question)

Subpoints

- I can't emotionally connect to a dance that is just movement for movement's sake.
- Examples: dances I saw at ADF
- I CAN however, be entertained by them.
  - Examples: Cunningham, Pilobolus.
- The dances that I emotionally connected to included: Bill T. Jones, Rasie Herrera.
- These dances focused on relating their artistic intent to their audience.
- AHA!!
- Virtuostic performance vs. emotional performance.
Also, exploring how to create/recreate a sense of family in rehearsals.

It's very important to me that this dance isn't just about a group of dancers pretending to be a family/My siblings.

I really want them to actually connect with one another and not just play a part.

In this way, I'm reinforcing artistic intent, and not merely pursuing the entertainment factor.

HORRAY

FAR AWAY!

Conversations about art just make my day.
Ainsley:
  Staying away from that cookie cutter:
  I'm always representing a sibling all the time.
  In the piece, I, as a dancer, can bring myself
  into it.

Whitney— not spoon-feeding me, the audience.
  the choreographic intent; let the audience
  figure it out for themselves.
more EXTREME abstraction
levels in circle.

Movement from 2nd section comes into list section maybe?
predictable - how can the people on the sides surprise your audience

ways of traveling evolves from walking to sliding, galloping, jumping, etc.
distal arm circling stood out
transitioning in and out of solos in walking section
touching each other to initiate dancing in center
Analyzing Music

III = 24 "8's" of "born dance"

III = 4 "8's" of "assemble the ensemble" (layer on floor device)

"inst 1 lost middle 2 8's two 8's take it to the floor"

reposition H/T edit any unnecessary movement

III = 6 "8's" of "loving and leaving"

"inst 2 "8's" Mary leaves (Gabby/Trevor)
2nd inst 1 "8's" Andley leaves (Shaq)
last inst 2 "8's" Terrian leaves (Hannah)

During this, everyone walks around doing the augmented arm phrase. After each person leaves, the people from their group take turns doing that person's sign.

III = 4 "8's" of "revised A.I.E."

8 "12's" of ending (I think it's 12) * revisit beginning line

layer something else over it

"I hear two things happening in the music - ends with dancers running to edge of stage, a ripple of signs, a leap, a drop, and a wash off!"
I originally set out in this section to abstract a barn dance. I didn't want my audience to recognize that section for what it was. I started out with teaching my dancers a barn dance that I got straight out of Vermont. Next rehearsal, we devised it by changing the formulas for everything so that the dancers were facing away from each other the majority of the time. This device caused there to be a large opening in the center of the stage. So I changed the dancers, who were originally taking turns running off stage, to run to the somewhere in the center and do a developed version of their own. This was interesting to me, but I also quickly saw that the version of the barn dance where the dancers were facing away was quickly becoming boring to watch. What had originally made the dance fun and interesting (interacting between dancers) had been taken away. So I added it back in, but in my own way:

So, while the dancers were probably never to stand me after all the changes I made, and even though the "barn dance" came almost completely full circle, I'm glad I went through this whole process with it because now it's my own and not this thing I pulled out of YouTube.
I'm very proud of the retrograde section of my dance. Retrograding is one of the most intimidating devices to me. That's why I decided to use it. That's also why I retrograded the phrase myself and then asked it to my dancers. Hopefully after this I won't be so intimidated to retrograde.

After retrograding the phrase, I divided the seven dancers into 3 groups (2,2,3) and gave them a new starting point in the phrase. I then asked each group to cycle through their material twice. Watching them all dance together, I immediately noticed two things: it was too much movement and there were no level changes.

So, next rehearsal, I gave each group 16 counts where they devised their movement to the floor. Each group had a different 16 counts to do to the floor: first group: first 16 counts, second group: middle 16 counts, last group: last 16 counts.

The original phrase was 32 counts long, so this created a really organic-looking phrase with lots of level changes.

I also gave each group permission while they devised their phrases to the floor, to edit out anything they wanted, so long as they still filled the whole 32 counts. I was surprised by how little they took out. I'll probably have to edit more next rehearsal.
maybe they don't snake.
audience has already seen that.
maybe they just run down the line.
would make as soon as they get through, she starts new phrase. As others join her, they start at the beginning of the phrase so that it's a natural cannon.

clear and mon. (hurr-hurr)

Once Terrion gets through, Trevor, who's at the back of the line, starts to snake through and join MAT.

By the time Shaq gets to the end of the snake, everyone else should try to be shallowly spread out so they're ready to run forward to do their sign.
after MAT leave
THGS spread out
to create a diamond
facing away from each
other.

each do their
own E.T.A. phrase
(maybe last 1 or 2 "8s"
everyone comes together
and does 1 person's
E.T.A. phrase)

(maybe last 2 "8s" also
travel onto the diagonal
to get ready to
welcome MAT back)
CLEANING

Partnering

Get into it! Beginning
Gabby is good

Floor  

Make transition exciting
Good run! Arms!

Gabby don't play tag

Get ahead

Put Trevon down sooner

In line

Get tighter in clump

Look back as you leave

Get off stage before walks!

Macy - out of solo

Hannah - don't choose

Macy take a "litte more" time
QUESTIONS FOR ABDUCTION #2

1. How are you entertained by this dance? Is there anything in this piece that entertains you and if so, what? What about this piece is entertaining to you?

2. How do you feel about the dancers leaving at the end? *race each other

[Handwritten notes]
- Good mood
- Why do they leave?
- Twinge of sadness?
- Leaving the floor
- Opening line
- Poor sibling's clothing...? Still there!
- Performance
- Clear intent
- Connection to each other
- Balance...
Feedback

bright colors, faded denim
pedestrian - yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes
how to cut the best dancing?

man - no one enough, too much

good explanation, everyone people involves
walks create potential
End all together when possible ring in "up""look - a take out cleaning, losing, future date

money 50%  buy

influence on others related in,
dancers

sell this

The kind most liked quality
keep track of early return

other's feel better, possible return
influence on others, social media

keep playfulness
lasted - it made me feel out of place.

like that one time with the band.

like the feeling of shapes in waiting.

always be in character.

They let me be intangible.

dancers having a good time.

dancing together and me as an audience.

be appropriately demanding about how and why.

- Meredith

AW.. IT UP!!
TRANSITIONS

1. Transition into opening phrase
   - step in unison
   - add counts?

2. Transition back into line (runs become something else?)

3. Line - Trebon: slow down! too early

4. Transition into Trevon's lift - clear pathways!

5. Trevon's lift - don't linger!

6. Transition into trios more direct walking? more spaced out?

7. Hannah's focus in saig (needs to shift forward?)

8. Gabbe and Hannah's run off needs to become something else.

9. Transition off-stage after floor lifts
10. Hannah - after walks maybe run around to the front of two lines for solo?

11. Macy: develop the "linger"

12. From doside, gallop or chassé into trio section

13. Spacing in loving/leaving section
   - talk about performance intent behind it
   - explain lighting
1. Ansley enters / signs
2. Terran enters / Ansley's dancing
3. Shaq gets Ansley / Terran dances
4. Macy enters / Trevor gets Terran
5. Hannah and Gabby join Macy
   (goes for 3 reps?)

6. to all run forward to straight line

    sign ripple, stop, drop, turn and
    walk off!!
Stagger 2nd line
Lighting Cues

1. Slow fade up to silhouette - with music
2. Ansley comes forward - add in sides - make bright
3. Make a new line - channel of light from wing?
4. Unison phrase - add in overheads
5. Put Truen down - fade back lights to front lights
6. Solo vs. photobooth - back to silhouette with spotlight for Hannah
7. Miki, Matt, Gabby diet - add in light for them
8. Mushroom hops - side lights
9. Floor/partnering - add in overhead
10. Everyone runs off - lights fade 50%
11. Solos/walks - side lights (such becomes pink) - that travel back
12. Da. si. do. - all side lights plus overhead
13. Fast and furious - take out side lights
14. leaving - back to silhouette with panel of light
15. diamond - add in overhead
16. straight lines coming home - add in side
17. run forward - bring up front most light
18. walk back - fade out

Lighting Issues
- call Ansley's cue sooner
- call passes sooner so they don't walk in shadows

Dancer Issues
- stagger 2nd line
- Hannah find your light in solo
- I can see you prepping for mushroom legs
- Shaq, Trevon don't travel past apron in do si do
- watch spacing in do si do
- Don't start so far back in Trevon's lift
Andy - faster fade up

Hannah - stay up in solo

the mushroom hops - I can see you prepping

call walk passes sooner
so they don't walk in shadow

Shaq/Trevor don't travel
so much!

watch spacing in walks

Shaq you come too for forward

2 changes -

pass the sign around during do si do

don't pose sign at end - move through it then pose
Sunday Run

Arsk's two ass!

beare of cettain s!

energy

Dances do the signs!

(seems (in do si do!)

low

Trevon/Shaq looks good in travelling

costumes

looks Maddie Shasay good to fast and furious
Macy tape

Music seems quiet

good use of the

[Shaq - watch]

Spacing

Getting into

do si do

Fast and furious looks great
Termin off-stage.
Radio Interview

I started thinking about my senior piece this past summer. I went to American Dance Festival in Durham, NC, and was there all summer surrounded by all this awesome art and I knew when the summer ended I would have to do is start choreographing my senior piece. While I was at ADF I sat in on a choreography class with this choreographer named Rosalyn Harris whom I read about. She's done some amazing work. So I went into this class thinking that I would get some great inspiration for my senior piece. And, the thing that stuck the most with me from that class was when she said, "Every choreographer is about Don't even bother to choreograph physically and emotionally unless you're choreographing about something that justifies that. If it hits you here, you know it'll be good." And I immediately thought about my family because there's nothing on this earth I love more and also as a senior, I feel like my time with them is becoming more and more precious because after I graduate I'll move away, get a job, and will see them significantly less.

So I got back to school knowing my senior piece was going to be all about my family. And because it was going to be about my family I knew I couldn't be making a serious dance
Because when my family goes together, we have so much fun. A trip to Walmart can become an adventure if you're shopping with my siblings.

Plus I knew I was getting a little bored with the whole serious modern dance aesthetic. I wanted to take it and shake it up a little bit and show the fun, silly side of it. I mean, we as dancers do this all day everyday, we wouldn't do it if it wasn't a little bit fun!
1st Draft for Presentation

Can a Dance be both entertaining and artistic at the same time?

1. Inspiration for my piece
   - Ronnie Herrera's choreo class at ADF
   - "Don't even bother to choreograph unless what you're choreographing about physically and emotionally moves you to create."
   - Family (time with them is precious)
   - Bond with dancer
dances

2. Freedom in the Planning
   - I wanted to be able to enjoy the process as I did the bulk of my planning ahead of time
   - Formula: 1. Music  
                2. Formations  
                3. Qualities  
                4. Movement

3. Foster meaningful relationships
   - Authenticity is key
   - By fostering real relationships in the rehearsal process, my dancers were able to present themselves as a true family on stage
Appendix B:

*Project Proposal*
**Project Description**

- A dance that explores the relationships found both between dancers and between movement and music
- Performed in a concert setting, either in the Mannoni Performing Arts Center or at the Theatre and Dance Building in Studio 115
- A cast of seven dancers and one apprentice, with the dancers sharing equal responsibility in performance and in movement
- Preliminary Title: *DoRaMiFaSoDoSiDo*
- Music: "Attaboy" by The Goat Rodeo Sessions
- Costume Ideas: Pedestrian clothing
- Lighting/Set: No special set required, theatre lighting
- Length of Work: 5.5 minutes

**Project Narrative: Artistic Research**

This piece is inspired by my relationships with my six siblings. For the most part, I have greatly enjoyed growing up in a large family and, as I prepare to move out of Mississippi and into the next stage of my life, I find myself craving to choreograph a piece that summarizes the love I have for my family and the joy I receive from them on a daily basis. As my siblings and I do nothing but entertain those who around us with our foolish antics, I hope to entertain my audience with this piece and leave them with a sense of satisfaction and happiness from experiencing the dance itself.

My movement vocabulary for this piece is fairly simplistic--thus far in rehearsals we have been working with one phrase that is only three eights long. The phrase is grounded and distal at the same time, with lots of ball-changes, skips, and step-hops to mimic children playing. In this dance I am more interested in formations and groupings that travel around the space than I am in movement invention, because I feel that this will help to better signify the relationships between the dancers.
The piece of music I'm working with is *Attaboy* by the Goat Rodeo Sessions. I've been familiar with this song for a while now and have always wanted to choreograph a dance to it. I think this particular piece is ideal for this music because the song is very joyful sounding and also because it has a bluegrass/barn dance sound to it. My parents met at a barn dance in Kentucky, so this song is the perfect way to pay homage to them without having actual dancers in the space representing them. The timing of my piece relies directly on what is happening in the song, which will hopefully demonstrate clearly to my audience the relationship found between movement and music.

It's fairly obvious, but worth stating that the reason I require seven dancers for my piece is because there are seven children in my family. I've assigned a specific sibling to each of my dancers, but at this point, outside of giving each of them a gesture that is significant to the sibling they represent, I haven't asked the dancers to exactly personify or imitate my siblings. I don't want my dancers to feel like they have to be anyone but themselves in my piece. Assigning each of my dancers to a specific sibling is more so that I can make choreographic choices and form groupings based off of who my dancers represent. Essentially, it helps me keep everything and everyone straight.

I am taking a back to basics approach with this dance. I picked out my song first. Then I sketched out formations and groupings according to what I heard happening in the music. Next I wrote in devices that I thought would look good in the different formations. And only then did I begin creating movement. This was actually extremely helpful because by this time I knew what all I wanted to do with the phrase I created, so I was able to invent movement that would lend itself well to what I already had planned. I also am starting at the beginning of my dance and working chronologically through. I didn't
do any of these things when I choreographed my Junior Piece and already I can tell that the process is easier and my dancers are more confident in the movement.

Project Narrative: Scholarly Research


I read *Dance Composition* this summer, while at the American Dance Festival, specifically in preparation for my senior piece. I wanted to refresh my thoughts on choreography and spark my creativity. I appreciated the simplistic and straightforward manner that Smith-Autard used to present choreographic principles. In Section Two of the book Smith-Autard discusses repetition as a constructional element and names seven different methods of repetition: restating, reinforcing, re-echoing, recapitulating, revising, recalling, and reiterating. I plan on using repetition a lot in my senior piece and was interested to read about how to do so in a skilled and thoughtful way.


I also read *Push Comes to Shove* this past summer at ADF. I was very interested in reading biographies on some of my favorite choreographers, to learn more about their backgrounds: how they grew up, how they first started choreographing, challenges they faced, and what gave them inspiration. Reading about how Tharp dealt with people accusing her of being too entertaining and
caring too much about pleasing her audience was especially useful to me. I'm interested in making a dance that is very pleasing to my audience and breaking the mentality that something cannot be simultaneously entertaining and artistic.


I first utilized this book in Dance Composition and it is an excellent read. Similar to Smith-Autard's *Dance Composition*, it breaks down choreography in a way that is easy to understand and that focuses more on the actual mechanics of choreographing and less on finding intent when choreographing (although intent is also addressed in the first chapter). I chose this book specifically for my annotated bibliography because it dedicates an entire chapter to Abstraction, which I am very interested in using for my Senior piece. It's one of my goals to have an entire section in my piece that abstracts a country barn dance. Hopefully this book helps me reach my goal!


I'm taking Music Appreciation this semester and during class my professor showed an interview on YouTube of Oliver Sacks talking about music. I strongly connected to what Sacks was saying, and afterwards my professor mentioned that Sacks had written a book about music. I wrote the title down and found it in the library later. I think this book is going to be the one out of my bibliography that helps me the most with intent. So much of my piece relates back to the music that
I'm using, and being able to delve more deeply into that relationship using psychology I think will be very helpful as I choreograph my senior piece.
Appendix C:

*Photos*
Family Photos
Performance Photos

Photography credit: Danny Rawls
Dance Cast and Russell Siblings
Appendix D:
Concert Program
SOUTHERN MISS
DEPARTMENT OF
DANCE

REPERTORY DANCE COMPANY
FALL DANCE CONCERT

NOV. 12-14, 7:30 P.M. | NOV. 15, 2 P.M.
MANNONI PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
$15 GENERAL/$10 SENIORS AND MILITARY/$6 STUDENTS
The Southern Miss Repertory Dance Company was established to provide opportunities for dance majors and to promote excellence in dance performance among our students. As company members, students gain high insight into the protocol and standards of professional dance as they prepare for careers in performance and choreography. Dancers are accepted into the company by auditions; any student taking technique classes within the Southern Miss Dance program is eligible to audition. The Southern Miss Repertory Dance Company performs in all major dance events within the Department of Dance and is available for performance-based community outreach.

The Southern Miss Department of Dance is an accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Dance.

**PRODUCTION PERSONNEL**

REPERTORY DANCE COMPANY DIRECTOR  Meredith Early  
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR  Kelly Ferris Lester  
POSTER/PROGRAMS  Elizabeth Leitz-Hill and Meredith Early  
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR  Anthony Guy  
STUDENT CHOREOGRAPHIC ADVISOR  Meredith Early  

**STAGE PERSONNEL**

STAGE MANAGER  Kaito Pinkard  
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER  Krista Ometz  
LIGHT BOARD OPERATOR  Jessica Eugene  
SOUND OPERATOR  Jennifer Klofas  
GEL CHANGERS/BACKSTAGE RUNNERS  Gerald Archard, Hannah Blaylock, Delores Collins, Debra O'Meara  
WARDROBE MISTRESS  Aubrey Whitney  
HOUSE MANAGER  McKenney Stone  
USHERS/LOBBY DISPLAY  Chacona Riley, Alex Spoon, Erin Ingram, Shelby Suber  
VIDEOGRAPHER  Mark Spoon
Welcome!

The Southern Miss Repertory Dance Company (RDC) is proud to present works created by faculty and student choreographers of the Southern Miss Department of Dance. So far this semester, RDC has performed site-specific works on campus at Lake Byron, in Downtown Hattiesburg, and in a Dance for Film screening. Tonight's performance will be experienced in a traditional, concert dance format, highly informed by the grand surroundings of the Mannoni Performing Arts Center. It is our desire to continually offer you new experiences in dance that evidence the learning and artistry taking place within our program.

Rebecca McArthur's quartet, *Separating the Strand*, is heavily focused upon a motif of a "strand," symbolizing the bearing of a burden that is not meant to be carried alone. Kelly Ferris Lester choreographed *Etched Breath*, a piece that investigates the complexity of rhythm and vocal styles in conjunction with the "Wall Drawings" series by Sol LeWitt. In my work, *And Still All Remains*, I sought to accentuate the relatedness of a community in balance with individual strength and diversity.

This performance also includes four senior choreographic works by Shaquille Hayes, Sarah Macaluso, Alex Robinson and Samantha Russell. These works were selected through a highly rigorous adjudication process, successfully revealing the quality of work set forth in their studies of dance composition and choreographic research.

Your continued support of USM Dance inspires us to create, perform and share our artistry with the community. Please join us for the Studio 115 Dance Concert in the Theatre and Dance Building December 3-5. Thank you again for experiencing this evening of dance with us and enjoy!

Best,

MEREDITH EARLY
REPERTORY DANCE COMPANY DIRECTOR
CONCERT PROGRAM

Please refrain from using any recording devices, laptop computers, cell phones or handheld devices during the performance. Please turn off all cell phones prior to the concert. Thank you.

LIGHTING DESIGN FOR ALL DANCES BY ANTHONY GUY

SEPARATING THE STRAND

CHOREOGRAPHER  Rebecca McArthur (Faculty)
MUSIC  “Overlook” and “Transportation” by Julia Kent
DANCERS  Britain Allgood, Reanna Martinez, Destiny Purville, Alex Robinson
COSTUME DESIGNERS  Rebecca McArthur, Alex Robinson

CAUSALITY

CHOREOGRAPHER  Shaquille Hayes
MUSIC  “Motions” and “Thespian Voices” by Shaquille Hayes
DANCERS  Britain Allgood, Noelle Billings, Ansley Devis, Jaminus Marion, Trevor Robinson, Dolovitt Rogers, Derrick Williams
APPRENTICE  Brooke Jerome
SOUND ENGINEER  Shaquille Hayes
COSTUME DESIGNER  Shaquille Hayes

TWO BETWEEN THE STORY

CHOREOGRAPHER  Sarah Macaluso
MUSIC  “Threnody” by Goldmund; “Sweet Thing” by Van Morrison
DANCERS  Jamal Franks, Reanna Martinez
APPRENTICE  Brooke Jerome
COSTUME DESIGNER  Sarah Macaluso
ETCHED BREATH
CHOREOGRAPHER  Kelly Ferris Lester (faculty)
MUSIC "Courante" by Roomful of Teeth
DANCERS  Brittain Allgood, Megan Bradbery, Sierra Howard, Sarah Macaluso, Macy Morris, Alex Robinson
COSTUME DESIGNER  J. Theresa Bush, Kelly Ferris Lester

INTERMISSION

AND STILL ALL REMAINS
CHOREOGRAPHER  Meredith Early
MUSIC "Trioon II" by Alva Noto and Ryuichi Sakamoto
DANCERS  Brittain Allgood, Jamel Franks, Dejanelle Gleaton, Sarah Macaluso, Destiny Poville, Cass Simmons, Kaylin Wilson
COSTUME DESIGNER  J. Theresa Bush

UNWILLINGNESS
CHOREOGRAPHER  Alex Robinson
MUSIC "Keep" and "Says" by Nils Frohm
DANCERS  Dexter Givens, Sierra Howard, Lexis Nicoll, Blaire Koeling
APPRENTICE  Kristen Artigue
COSTUME DESIGNER  Alex Robinson

DO RA MI FA SO DO SI DO
CHOREOGRAPHER  Samantha Russell
MUSIC "Attaboy" by Goat Rodeo Sessions
DANCERS  Gabrielle Agner Boudreaux (performing Nov. 12, 14-15), Ansley Davis, Shaquille Reyes, Hannah Kendrick, Macy Morris, Trevor Robinson, Terrian Seiber
APPRENTICE  Madi Daigle (performing Nov. 13)
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MANIONI PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
$15 GENERAL ADMISSION/$10 SENIORS AND MILITARY/$6 STUDENTS

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DECEMBER 3-4, AT 7:30 P.M.; DECEMBER 5, AT 2 AND 7:30 P.M.
STUDIO 115, THEATRE AND DANCE BUILDING
$5 GENERAL ADMISSION

STUDENT DANCE ORGANIZATION SHOWCASE
DECEMBER 6, AT 2 P.M.
STUDIO 115, THEATRE AND DANCE BUILDING
$5 GENERAL ADMISSION

DEPARTMENT OF DANCE FACULTY AND STAFF
STACY REISCHMAN FLETCHER
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KERRY WARD JESTER
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, BSMT

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INSTRUCTOR

ERIN SESSIONS
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

ANGIE SIMMONS
VISITING INSTRUCTOR

JULIE WHITE
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

SANDRA WHITTINGTON
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE OF ARTS AND LETTERS
FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF DANCE, VISIT WWW.USM.EDU/DANCE OR CALL 601.266.4727.
Appendix E:

Curriculum Vitae
Name: Samantha Russell

**Education**

College: The University of Southern Mississippi  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi  
B.F.A. Dancer Performance and Choreography  
Minor in Biology

*Modern Technique:* Kelly Ferris Lester, Julie White, Shellie Nielsen, Meredith Early, Elizabeth Lentz-Hill, Rebecca McArthur  
*Rhythmic Analysis:* Kelly Ferris Lester

*Ballet Technique:* Shellie Nielsen, Elizabeth Lentz-Hill, Rebecca McArthur, Meredith Early, Julie White  
*Methods in Dance Education K-12:* Julie White

*Senior Capstone:* Elizabeth Lentz-Hill  
*Repertory Dance Company:* Julie White, Kellis McSparrin, Rebecca McArthur, Meredith Early, Kelly Ferris Lester

*Bartenieff Fundamentals:* Shellie Nielsen  
*Junior Choreographic Project:* Coco Loupe

*Laban Movement Analysis:* Shellie Nielsen  
*Senior Choreographic Project:* Meredith Early

*Dance History:* Shellie Nielsen, Meredith Early  
*Dance Composition:* Stacy Reischman Fletcher, Kelly Ferris Lester, Elizabeth Lentz-Hill

*Dance in Culture:* Shellie Nielsen  
*Production:* Kelly Ferris Lester, Rebecca McArthur, Julie White

*Thesis Writing in Dance:* Meredith Early

*Dance Improvisation:* Elizabeth Lentz-Hill

*Freshman Repertory:* Elizabeth Lentz-Hill
Additional Training

2016

**Ad Deum Dance Company Spring Intensive** Houston, Texas  
*Modern Technique*: Vincent Hardy, Durell Comedy, Steve Rooks, Shizu Yasuda  
*Ballet Technique*: Shizu Yasuda, Lysion Vieira, Steve Brule  
*Repertory*: Randall Flinn, Shizu Yasuda, Dani Stringer

**Master Classes** USM, Hattiesburg, Mississippi  
*Jazz Improvisation*: The Pillow Projects with Pearlann Porter and John Lambert  
*Modern Technique*: BioDance with Missy Pfohl Smith and Courtney World

2015

**American Dance Festival** Durham, North Carolina  
*Modern Technique*: Loren Davidson, Angie Hauser  
*Ballet Technique*: Elizabeth Corbett  
*Hip Hop*: Teena Marie Custer  
*West African Dance*: Sherone Price  
*Partnering/Improvisation*: Jennifer Nugent, Chris Aiken

**Master Classes** USM, Hattiesburg, Mississippi  
*Modern Technique*: ARENA Dances with Matthew Janczewski and Kimmie Allen

**Ad Deum Dance Company Spring Intensive** Houston, Texas  
*Modern Technique*: Vincent Hardy, Randall Flinn  
*Ballet Technique*: Caleb Mitchell, Fara Bowen  
*Hip Hop*: Lezlie Clay  
*Repertory*: Randall Flinn

2014

**Master Classes** USM, Hattiesburg, Mississippi  
*Jazz Technique*: Rhonda Cinotto  
*Hip Hop*: Aysha Upchurch  
*Modern Technique*: Colleen Halloran, John Allen  
*Impact Dance*: BoneDanse/Breakbone DanceCo. with Atalee Judy, Janna Barta, and Cheryl Cornacchione

**Ad Deum Dance Company Summer Intensive** Houston, Texas  
*Modern Technique*: Durell Comedy, Bill Wade, Randall Flinn  
*Ballet Technique*: Laura Valentin, Betsy McMillan, Laura Morton  
*Hip Hop*: Lezlie Clay  
*Repertory*: Randall Flinn, Betsy McMillan
Arrows International Edmond, Oklahoma  
*Ballet Technique:* Elizabeth Agre  
*Modern Technique:* Natalie Lewis  
*Musical Theatre:* Jeff Lewis  
*Hip Hop:* Natalie Lewis  
*Jazz Technique:* Jeff Lewis and Natalie Lewis

2013

**Master Classes** USM, Hattiesburg, Mississippi  
*Modern Technique:* Kellis McSparrin, ClancyWorks  
*Vogue:* Darrell Jones  
*Devised Theatre:* Jeffrey Fracé  
*Diaspora/Samba:* Michelle Gibson

American Dance Festival Durham, North Carolina  
*Modern Technique:* Gerri Houlihan, Pamela Pietro  
*Ballet Technique:* Elizabeth Corbett  
*Hip Hop:* Teena Marie Custer  
*West African Dance:* Sherone Price

American College Dance Festival Association Belhaven College, Jackson, Mississippi  
*Modern Technique:* Cynthia Newland, Krista Bower, Steve Rooks  
*Ballet Technique:* Caleb Mitchell, Ravenna Wagnon  
*Improvisational Partnering:* Bill Wade  
*Repertory:* Randall Flinn

2012

**Master Classes** USM, Hattiesburg, Mississippi  
*Modern Technique:* The Dance COLEctive with Margi Cole, Molly Shanahan, Peter Carpenter, The Chicago Moving Company

**Choreography**

**The Rest is Safe** (Restaged 2016)  
Music by Olafur Arnolds  
Concert Dance, Studio 115, USM Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS

**Turnstile** (2015)  
Music by Andy McKee  
Concert Dance, Studio 115, USM Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS
DoRaMiFaSoDoSiDo (2015)
Music by The Goat Rodeo Sessions,
Concert Dance, Mannoni Performing Arts Center, Hattiesburg, MS

Artefact (2015)
Music by Moby,
Dance for Film, Woods Theatre, USM Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS

What is Brought to Light (2014)
Music by Balmorhea,
Concert Dance, Studio 115, USM Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS

Modern American (2014)
Music by Antonin Dvorak,
Concert Dance, Studio 115, USM Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS

....the Rest is Safe (2014)
Music by Olafur Arnolds,
Concert Dance, Studio 115, USM Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS

Performance

Whispers: The Internal Forum (2016)
Choreographed by Shaquille Hayes
Student Dance Organization Concert, Studio 115, The University of Southern Mississippi Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS

Where to Now? (2016)
Choreographed by Brittain Allgood
Student Dance Organization Concert, Studio 115, The University of Southern Mississippi Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS

Turnstile (2015)
Collaboration with Shaquille Hayes
Student Dance Organization Concert, Studio 115, The University of Southern Mississippi Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS

<ILLUMINATE:CREATE> (2015)
Choreographed by Whitney Nabors
Studio 115 Dance Concert, Studio 115, The University of Southern Mississippi Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS
Infinite Youth (2015)
Choreographed by Cassie Zaremba
  Exchanging Innocence: Site Specific Dance, Lake Byron, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

Spaces Between Sound and Silence (2015)
Choreographed by Megan Bradberry
  Sophomore Dance Concert, Studio 115, The University of Southern Mississippi Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS

Time Heals but One (2015)
Choreographed by Brittain Allgood
  Repertory Dance Company Spring Dance Concert, The Mannoni Performing Arts Center, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

Underneath the Woodburied Forrest 1921 (2015)
Choreographed by Jay Marion
  Studio 115 Dance Concert, Studio 115, The University of Southern Mississippi Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS

Factored Intimidation (2014)
Choreographed by Ericka Stieber
  Repertory Dance Company Fall Dance Concert, The Mannoni Performing Arts Center, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

The Distorted Memory Collection (2014)
Choreographed by Taylor Krupp
  Repertory Dance Company Fall Dance Concert, The Mannoni Performing Arts Center, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

Evolution of Dance (2014)
Choreographed by Britney Kuehn
  The University of Southern Mississippi Dance Student Showcase, Studio 115, The University of Southern Mississippi Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS

The Mystery of Other Lives (2014)
Collaboration between Artists
  Devised Theatre, The Lucky Rabbit, Hattiesburg, MS

Poor Reception (2013)
Choreographed by Kelsey Guy
  Mark'd in Time, The Thirsty Hippo, Hattiesburg, MS
Perpetual Motives (2013)
Choreographed by Kenmekia Stanton
Studio 115 Dance Concert, Studio 115, The University of Southern Mississippi Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS

Twist, Drop, Toss (2013)
Choreographed by Kelly Ferris Lester
Chi Tau Epsilon Informal Concert, Studio 115, The University of Southern Mississippi Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS

I Understand Dance (2012)
Choreographed by Elizabeth Lentz-Hill
Chi Tau Epsilon Informal Concert, Studio 115, The University of Southern Mississippi Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS

To Coexist (2012)
Choreographed by Shaquille Hayes
Chi Tau Epsilon Informal Concert, Studio 115, The University of Southern Mississippi Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS

Production Experience

2016: Women In the Arts Concert
Light Board/Sound Operator, Studio 115, The University of Southern Mississippi Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS

American College Dance Association Adjudicated Concerts
Assistant Stage Manager, The Mannoni Performing Arts Center, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

2015: High Def Dance Crew Concert
Light Board Operator, Studio 115, The University of Southern Mississippi Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS

Hub Dance Collective Concert
Videographer, Studio 115, The University of Southern Mississippi Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS

2014: Studio 115 Spring Dance Concert
House Manager, Studio 115, The University of Southern Mississippi Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS

2013: American College Dance Festival Association Formal Concert
Assistant Stage Manager, Belhaven University, Jackson, Mississippi

Studio 115 Spring Dance Concert
Stage Manager, Studio 115, The University of Southern Mississippi Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS

American Dance Festival
Stagecraft Apprentice, Durham Performing Arts Center/Reynolds Industry Theater, Durham NC

2012: **Studio 115 Fall Dance Concert**
   Assistant Stage Manager, Studio 115, The University of Southern Mississippi Theatre and Dance Building, Hattiesburg, MS

**Company Affiliations**

2012-2015: **USM Repertory Dance Company**, choreographer and performer
2014: **Arrows International**, performer

**Service**

2014-2015: Dance Writing Tutor

**Awards and Recognitions**

2015-2016: Arts and Letters Ambassador, The University of Southern Mississippi
   Awarded "Most Memorable Senior Piece" by Student Dance Organization, The University of Southern Mississippi
   Selected to present Dance for Film in the Juried Showcase at the 2016 Undergraduate Research Symposium, The University of Southern Mississippi

2014-2016: President's List, The University of Southern Mississippi
   Awarded The University of Southern Mississippi Dance Department Scholarship

2011-2016: Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant
   Senior Honors Program, The University of Southern Mississippi
   Phi Eta Sigma National Honors Society
   Golden Key International Honour Society
   Awarded Academic Excellence Scholarship, The University of Southern Mississippi

2014-2015: Presented with The Academic Excellence Award by the Department of Residence Life, The University of Southern Mississippi
   Presented Research at the 2015 Undergraduate Research Symposium, The University of Southern Mississippi
   Recognized as Outstanding Junior in The University of Southern Mississippi Dance Department
   Awarded Grant for Eagle Scholar Program for Undergraduate Research
   Represented The University of Southern Mississippi Dance Department at Black and Gold Day for High School Seniors

2011-2014: Dean's List, The University of Southern Mississippi

2011-2012: Awarded Honors College Scholarship, The University of Southern Mississippi