Wave: A Dance Composition and Performance

Morgan Labelle

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WAVE: A DANCE COMPOSITION AND PERFORMANCE

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of Fine and Performing Arts Honors Program

By

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The Honors College

Fine and Performing Arts Honors Program

East Tennessee State University

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Table of Contents

I. Introduction

II. What is Modern, Lyrical Dance, and Contemporary Dance?

III. Laban Movement Analysis

IV. Personal Development as a Dancer, Choreographer, and Human Being

V. Depiction of a Wave through Choreography

VI. Pulling All the Pieces Together

VII. Appendix, Journal Entries

Works Cited
I. Introduction

*Wave: A Dance Composition and Performance* is a choreographic work and performance that tells a personal narrative in comparison to a wave. I performed the modern/lyrical dance with two other dancers, Rachel Crabtree and Kate Trabalka, on the evening of November 16th, 2018 in room 205 of the ETSU Campus Center building. My previous technical dance training, and training as a dance minor at East Tennessee State University from 2015-2018 prepared me to proudly present a piece that was entirely choreographed by me. The following research of modern and lyrical dance shaped my choreography, as well as my musical choices that I carefully selected and edited. Using weight sharing and partner work, and pulling inspiration and direction from the Laban Movement Analysis, I thoughtfully created a ten-minute-long production. Through research and contemplation of my life, I dove head first into pouring my heart and soul into the choreography, and this thesis documents all of the aspects that came together to create Wave.

II. What is Modern, Contemporary, and Lyrical Dance?

Modern dance emerged during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. While classical ballet was booming in Europe and America, artists began to desire to create movement without the confines of the traditional art form. With the work of pioneers - Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham, Rudolf Laban - this form of expressive dance started to change dance history forever (Modern). Due to the fact that Modern began as a way to rebel against the confines of ballet, many different artists emerged in this field paving the way for artistic styles that shifted from one artist to the next, creating a vast vocabulary of movement. Core elements of Modern dance include movements originating from the core or central axis, use of body weight, contact improvisation, floor work, contraction and release, use of space by dancers facing all orientations, and use of breath (Wendt). Some or all of these elements combine to create organic
movement and abstract lines.

Pictured is an example of weight sharing.

Lyrical dance utilizes training from modern, ballet, and jazz to create movement that is an expression of the artist’s emotion. Little is known about the history of this dance form. This dance style focuses on more traditional lines than modern, centered motion on a central axis, interpretation of music or lyrics, and flowing or continuous movements (Wendt). Lyrical dance can be a broad range of types of movement. There has been a shift from the dancer performing about/with the lyrics of the song, to a more abstract display of emotions in the competitive dance scene where the term lyrical is often used. Some trailblazers in this field of dance are Mia Michaels, Brian Friedman, and Suzi Taylor (Lyrical). This category of dance gives room for innovation and stylized movement that is still often very technical. The main purpose of lyrical dance is to express strong feelings or emotions to the audience, which is why this dance form is highly individualized. No technical lyrical technique is established because the dancer is combining the technique of multiple dance forms. Modern and lyrical often overlap. Wave has aspects of modern technique (use of some Laban Movement Analysis, breath, floor work, and focus on the central
axis of the body), combined with the grace and fluidity of balletic movements as well, making it a very lyrical piece.

Another genre in the category of modern and lyrical dance is contemporary dance. This style of dance draws from modern, ballet, or jazz technique to make new forms of movement. Contemporary dance has a focus on oppositional moves, raw expression of emotions, shifting of body alignment, use of breath, many different styles of music (Bedinghaus, 2019). This style of dance is often done with bare feet. While modern is a specific formalized dance technique, during the mid-1940s one of Martha Graham’s students, Merce Cunningham, began to explore creating his own abstract form of dance without
sticking to any specific technique or the need to tell a theatrical story. Cunningham believed that “dance movements could be random, and that each dance performance could be unique,” which is why he is one of the developers of contemporary dance (Bedinghause, 2019). Cunningham and John Cage, who composed the music for his choreography, were intrigued by the random phenomenon, or “choreography by chance.” This meant the movement was absent of any emotional insinuations and strictly pure movement. Music was usually added after the choreography, so it seldom influenced the phrases of movement. Today, contemporary dance can be seen everywhere and has gained popularity from the show “So You Think You Can Dance.” Brenda Way, founder and artistic director of ODC/Dance, San Francisco, states her idea of contemporary in contrast to modern, “Contemporary suggests a more pluralistic aesthetic and resonates with grounded authenticity of a regional dialect – real people, really moving” (Looseleaf, 2019). Contemporary is often an extension of ballet and modern and is influenced by what is going on in the world at the time of choreographing. The lines of contemporary, modern, and lyrical are interwoven and overlap in many ways; and choreography can take on forms of each genre.

**III. Laban Movement Analysis**

Rudolf Laban (1879-1958) was a dance and movement theorist from Hungary, and is often referenced as the father of European modern dance (Rudolf Laban). Laban was a visionary and teacher whose theories connected science and movement in new ways. Laban created a language for describing human movement called, Labanotation. The passion and work of Laban was to construct the art of dance equal to its sister arts by creating its own literacy, which the cultural elite saw as admirable. Laban dedicated his work to understanding movement to create a language that describes how the body moves throughout space and time. Laban described the area surrounding the body as a “kinesphere” that shifts as an individual shifts their weight. He viewed the center of the kinesphere to be the center of the body that can extend equally into all directions. Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) is another profound contribution to the arts and is used by actors, dancers, and musicians (Grimes). Using the Laban Movement Analysis, movement is categorized into four categories: body, effort, shape, and space. Body describes all the way the body moves, how the body is connected/connected to others, patterns, etc. Shape
describes the static shapes the body takes, like a ball, or shapes that change. “Carving” is an example of shape change that represents how the body is three dimensionally working with the environment. Miming would be an example of carving. There are also shape qualities, like rising, spreading, retreating, and shape direction, spoke-like (punching, pointing) and arc-like (swinging). Space describes human movement, its patterns, lines, and paths, and how it is connected with the environment. This is where the focus of kinesphere lies, in addition to special intentions (where the individual is moving towards in the space), and geometrical observations (where movement takes place). Lastly, effort is the way Laban described the dynamic ways and intention that drive the body movement. There are eight efforts and four components. The eight efforts are punch, dab, press, glide, slash, flick, wring, float; and the four components are space/focus, time, weight, and float. These are the ways that Laban summarized all human movement (Grimes).

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By applying some of practices of Laban Movement Analysis to my own choreography, especially the efforts, I came up with choreography that was intentional to represent my narrative through dance.

IV. Personal Development and formation of “Wave”

When thinking of my thesis, I knew the concept of a wave was going to be incorporated somehow. My college experience has been full of ups and downs, just as any other college student. I have experienced my lowest of lows, but have also felt academic, personal, and creative growth unlike any other time in my life. When I think of my thesis, my mind kept redirecting to the concept of a wave.
Waves are caused by friction, wind, and gravitational pull from the sun and moon (National Ocean Service, 2017). I could not help but connect this to my life experience during college, and even before college. “Friction” and “wind” in comparison to the mental, emotional, and spiritual battles I have fought during college: depression and anxiety, loneliness, confusion, and even past battles with an eating disorder. The sun represents the joy I have experienced; personal growth and passion for mental health and helping others that have all flourished due to working on myself and having opportunities in college. Both the dark and the joyful times have made me the person I am today. I see both of these contradicting times working together to create something like a wave – something that can be powerful like tidal waves, or gentle and peaceful like a capillary wave (MI News Network, 2019).

Music has always been very important to me; I think it usually is for choreographers and dancers. Shortly after this thought of a wave was circling in my mind, I discovered the song that became the basis of my piece, “Atlas: Two” by Sleeping at Last. When I heard the lyrics, it put into words exactly what I wanted to portray through this choreographic work.

The chorus states:

“like a force to be reckoned with,

a mighty ocean or a gentle kiss,

I will love you with every single thing I have.

like a tidal wave, I’ll make a mess.

or calm waters if that serves you best.

I will love you without any strings attached” (O’Neal, 2017).

The lyrics inspired my choreography, and I was able to demonstrate the power of a wave in relation to life through movement. Little did I know when I picked this song that the lyrics would have such a profound impact on me. As mentioned before, college has been a struggle of going through intense depression and anxiety; with this, has come feelings of uncertainty about my life and very low self esteem. I have always poured all my energy into others, and never really learned how to pour the same amount of energy into myself. Slowly, but surely, I began to get professional help, open up to my friends and family, and figure
out what I needed to do to feel better. Mid fall semester of my senior year, I went through a terrible heartbreak that made me question who I was and what I truly wanted. Not to mention, all of this was happening during the time period of choreographing for my thesis. The lyrics of “Atlas: Two” began to mean so much more to me now because I was in a period of learning who I was apart from any other person and what I wanted out of my life. The lyrics of the song began to demonstrate the power that comes from loving myself.

The other music choices I made for my thesis were very carefully picked to match the intensity of a wave. I wanted the performance to have a slow rise, peak, and crash at the end; which demonstrates a wave pattern. I wanted all the songs to sound uniform and blend nicely, so all of the songs were by the artist, Sleeping at Last, except the second song which was by Steffany Gretzinger. I wanted the song choices to be decided on and edited before beginning the choreography. I cut a lot of the music and blended it together to make a playlist that was around ten minutes in duration. After this was decided, I began choreography.

V. Depiction of a Wave through Choreography

I began dancing when I was five years old at a local studio in my hometown. I am trained in ballet, tap, jazz, hip hop, pointe, modern, and musical theatre. I knew that I wanted to go to ETSU because I wanted to extend my dance training. Learning from new teachers has expanded my horizons and given me new perspectives on dance. I have learned about contact improvisation, Laban analysis, and different ways to choreograph. I started the choreography with “Atlas: Two” because I knew that it would be what the whole piece was centered around. I began with listening to words of the song repeatedly and improvising. Through this I formed the choreography that I would teach to the other two dancers I asked to be in the piece. Throughout the choreography, I focused on using cyclical movements to represent the cyclical movement of a wave. I also focused on making shapes that demonstrated a wave and the use of breath in the dance. I wanted the dancers to use an audible exhalation to represent the release of a wave on the shore and my emotions of letting expectations of myself go. I used Laban’s eight efforts to guide movement to match the intensity of the lyrics. A lot of the choreography came out of
improvising in the studio with the other dancers and combining words form Laban’s efforts to come up with moves, and then dancing it with music. I really focused on the time of movements, “quick and sustained,” and the weight of the movements, “heavy and light” to represent the emotions of the piece.

My intention for the choreography was the same as it was for the music choices, a slow rise, peak, and descent at the end. I chose to demonstrate this by starting out on the stage by myself which represents the dark time of my life of feeling alone, then in “Atlas: Two” two other dancers would join me to represent all the people in my life who have helped me during college. In the end, I would be left on stage alone to represent accepting and loving myself and moving forward with independence into my next phase in life. Starting with a solo and ending with a solo rounded out the performance and brought it full circle. I wanted the last dance to represent the crash of a wave, which reflected reaching the end of college and who I am today. The mood I wanted to capture in this piece was “melancholy”- a feeling I feel towards the end of my college experience.

The genre of this performance was lyrical/modern. There were modern techniques used through focus of breath, movements originating from the core, and contraction and release. Laban analysis shaped most of the choreography in the second and last dances. Through researching the Laban movement analysis, I had more focus on the way our bodies dynamically move and what I wanted the driving force of the movement to be. The choreography was also lyrical because the intent was to tell a story and move the audience in an emotional way. The choreography has strong influences of ballet technique, through traditional lines and continuous movement. Highlights of the choreographic elements can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DolmNWo56ew.

VI: Pulling All the Pieces Together

I knew that I wanted a visual representation of wave and spoken word at the beginning of the piece. I wanted something that exemplifies what the piece was about, and also adds another visual element for the audience. I have always enjoyed when dance performances have another visual element included. When researching more about waves, I found the quote from the National Ocean Service that captured the essence of a wave:
“Waves are created by energy passing through the water, causing it to move in a circular motion… Waves are most commonly caused by wind. Wind-driven waves, or surface waves, are created by the friction of the wind and surface water. As wind blows across the surface of the ocean or a lake, the continual disturbance creates a wave crest… The gravitational pull of the sun and moon on the earth causes tidal waves… The ebb and flow of waves and tides are the life force of our world ocean” (National Ocean Service, 2017).

This definition became the inspiration behind the choreography and put into words how waves are formed. This quote became the definition that I drew from when creating movement, so I thought having this spoken at the beginning of the piece would set the tone for the entire performance. I used this quote as the voiceover for a video of a wave compilation I found online. The song I added was called “Phase” by Beck, which really sounded like a wave with a repetitive rise and fall of instrumental music. Video can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38B4AIM5JMw&t=1s.

I wanted to be very intentional about the costumes for the piece. I wanted something simple with some flow, so I chose a blue leotard with a sheer dress over top. I wanted myself and the two dancers to be wearing the same thing to be uniform and look professional. When it was time for the night of the performance, we ran through the choreography once, and then I heard people filing in the room as I waited backstage. The performance went abundantly better than I could even imagine.

VII. Conclusion

Choreographing a ten-minute piece for three dancers, creating a video, and choosing costuming and music was the greatest accomplishment in my dance career so far. This research project pushed me out of my comfort zone creatively and gave me the opportunity to create something that was wholeheartedly mine. After the performance, I was overwhelmed with emotion from seeing all of my friends, family, ETSU faculty, and peers that have been beside me throughout my time in college. Although there is always room for improvement, I was incredibly satisfied with the work that I presented
because I knew it was what I had envisioned. I feel that *Wave* demonstrated the mood and message I wanted to portray, but still left room for individual interpretation of the piece.

The research I found on Modern, lyrical, and contemporary dance had a great impact on the piece and shaped choreographic elements. Learning more about the origins and elements of modern and lyrical gave me insight on what I wanted to include in *Wave*. Knowing the purpose of the movement and where it was originating from (the central axis of the body) sculpted the movement differently than if I would have chosen a different dance genre. Using Laban Movement Analysis gave me a different perspective on how the body moves and is connected to other dancers. Using his efforts and four components, I had a new understanding of human movement because I really got to see and feel the driving force behind the movement. Choreographing my thesis gave me such a new perspective on dancing and choreographing because I had to dive deeper than just throwing some dance moves together. Deliberately planning choreography with intention behind each move gave me even greater appreciation for this piece and the art of dance in general.

Choosing the music for *Wave* was more of a thoughtful and creative process than expected. I learned a lot just by choosing the music and thinking about how I wanted the piece to look and feel for the audience. I kept in mind the cyclical pattern of a wave and the continual rise/fall of the wave to come up with the songs that I found. I really wanted the performance to have the feeling of coming full circle, and the music had a large part of that. Including a visual element of the wave video with voiceover was also a new experience that I have never incorporated into a dance performance. Having complete freedom to choose the visual elements of the choreography, costuming and makeup, spacing on the stage, and auditory elements was not only overwhelming at some points, but completely exciting.

The impact of this creative research experience as a whole has taught me so much about myself, others, and dancing. I have learned ways that work for me when choreographing and how I teach other dancers the choreography. I think that this performance came at the exact right time in my life to display the wide range of emotions I was feeling. The process was a therapeutic experience for me and gave me closure and peace about a lot of things in my life, which is something I did not expect walking into this
project; through this, it has reiterated my need to dance. I need to dance because I can process my emotions in healthy and healing ways, whether it is by myself or in front of a crowd. Having all of my friends and family support me on the night of performance gave me an appreciation for this experience and my life itself. With incredibly challenging life circumstances taking place around the time of the performance, I was able to use movement to process these emotions, and in turn, share my story with others. I never would have anticipated how much I would need to create something like this. As waves continually rise and fall, I know that my life will repeatedly do the same, but dancing through it all will always be the answer.

**Links for Thesis Performance:**

Highlights: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gSM2ls4xxYA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gSM2ls4xxYA).

Appendix

Wave: A Dance Composition and Performance

Journal Entries

October 6th, 2018

Today I started on my thesis choreography even though the idea of what it would look like has been swirling around in my head for months. Sometimes the hardest part is actually beginning the choreography because what it looks like in your head is often better and unrealistic to what can actually happen on the floor. I began choreography with the song “Atlas: Two” by Sleeping at Last, which will provide the bulk of the performance and main inspiration from what the dance is about. I discovered this song back in the Spring after I had already written my thesis proposal about my choreography being about a wave. I had learned of the enneagram this year as well (a personality test) that describes 9 personality types labeled numbers 1-9 based on specific personality traits. I had been researching this and using it for my own self discovery; so when my friend mentions to me that Sleeping at Last wrote songs about all the enneagram types I jumped completely on board. She played the type two song (I am an enneagram type 2, by the way) for me, and I was in tears. I knew immediately that I HAD to dance to this song. It felt like every single word was written for me and what I have gone through. I read the lyrics, “like a force to be reckoned with/ a mighty ocean or a gentle kiss” and “like a tidal wave, I’ll make a mess / or calm waters if that serves you best” and I was in shock. How could these lyrics be matching the theme of my thesis, a wave, so obviously? The decision was made. I was using this song in my thesis.

Today I played the song and read the lyrics again. My goal was to just move in a way that would feel natural, and that is what I did. The choreography began to flow out of my body as I thought about the words, “sweetheart, you look a little tired / when did you last eat?” This hit home hard because of my struggles with an eating disorder in my past. This song is singing to an enneagram type 2, but also singing from an enneagram type 2 perspective. Sometimes I struggle with taking care of myself, or past thoughts about food creep back into my head. I put a lot of pressure on myself and I have been through extremely trying times, especially in college. My thesis is for me, I am vowing to release the pressure off myself to
move and choreograph something that feels good to me and tell my story. Although, I know this is a research project, and I am and will be researching further, I want to be proud of what I create. I want it to be authentic. I’ve struggled in the past with choreography because I think it has to be full of “wow” factor, like leaps and turns, but that just isn’t me. I like the grace of ballet, and the freedom of modern. The choreography I have created so far has emphasis on the words of the song because I really want the dance to portray the words, since they mean so much to me. Plus, this will be the only song in my thesis that contains words. I videoed what I came up with so far so I can teach it to Kate tomorrow. I have about 50 seconds done. It is daunting to think of what I have to create and whether I will create a work I am proud of in the end. I am slowly learning to let this pressure go though because I know this can be a therapeutic process if I let it.

October 7th, 2018

Today I came in with 50 seconds of choreography done, and walked out with ~2 minutes. Today I met with Kate and we got so much done. I have never danced with Kate before, but I have seen her dance and I knew I wanted her to be a part of it. I am excited for a new friendship and to be working with such a completely talented, beautiful dancer. Kate opens up the choreo and I join her on the word “words.” This is direct/ indirect contact with her. I see her in this dance as my “self” in some ways, but also the people in my life. We start off facing each other with our bodies but not our eyes. I quickly turn away from her to represent someone not being able to find the right “words.” The next bit of choreography flowed through collaboration work and glancing at Laban’s movement list. We end with Kate running off stage making room for dancer 3 to enter. I am surprised at how easy the choreography glowed and how good it felt to dance with just another body. I can be so difficult in life, especially in dance, to be the best. I am realizing I feel so much less pressure for this, even though it is the biggest “project” I have ever done, due to letting myself release myself from unrealistic expectations and perfection. I can definitely see how this reflects to my experience over the last 4 years for me, and where I have reached as a person. I am tired of
living up to unrealistic expectations, but I am ready to just experience ME and what working, living, dancing, looks like when I do what feels right to ME. I feel peace.

October 20\(^{th}\), 2018

Today I created the wave video and edited all of my music together. I changed one of the songs of my solo from “almost idyllic” to “sing my way back” because it felt like the right thing to do considering all that has been going on in my life recently. I also reviewed choreography and came up with a little bit more for the studio on Monday. Watching videos of wave over and over, is giving me some choreography ideas. Watching a dance about a wave on SYTYCD is giving me inspiration as well. As funny as it sounds, a lot of my inspiration came from one of my favorite songs, “Emoji of a wave” by John Mayer.

October 22\(^{nd}\), 2018

I do not know how I am going to continue on and finish this project in time. I feel so completely overwhelmed, heartbroken, and rejected. I need to dance and it is the only thing that feels right to me right now, but the overwhelming task of finishing this and presenting in front of everyone scares me considering I am barely holding it together. My boyfriend broke up with me a week ago today over fall break. He was my boyfriend of going on 3.5 years. Everything was going great. I feel so completely blindsided and hurt and confused. I never in a million years would I have expected this to happen in the midst of THE BIGGEST, MOST IMPORTANT semester of my life. I have extremely difficult classes, huge projects, grad school applications, my thesis all coming up within a month. I am holding on by a thread right now, going through the motions trying to stay alive. I have never felt such deep pain that has stemmed from the actions of someone else. That may make me sound fortunate, but I have been hurt multiple times by others… but this is a new multitude of pain. I feel like a completely empty shell of a person. Dancing is what is going to keep me going. I know I will make it.
It is kind of insane how everything is working out. I have been on a path of self-discovery this year, working through the enneagram, going to doctors, going to psychologists to get myself better mentally because I have struggled with deep anxiety and depression. Right when I have felt I have made some progress, I feel like I get knocked back down in the worst way possible. I cannot let myself spiral into a path that I have already taken before, but I fear so deeply for myself and that I will not feel better.

The enneagram song means a whole new meaning to me now. When I went into the studio tonight I have maybe 75 seconds done, out of a 4-minute song. Although emotions were running high, we finished the dance and I feel very satisfied with it so far.

One of my inspirations for the choreography as a whole is recurring movements because of the repetitiveness of the pattern of a wave. Which means the chorus in the dance is repeated a few times and the motions are the same. Some words in the chorus are “mighty ocean, and gentle kiss” that repeat a few times. I used dance moves like a leap while tossing arms to “thrown and be quick,” while on words like gentle kiss I wanted something sustained. I also wanted to include a lot of partner work in the piece because of the lyrics. We worked on three different phrases where either Kate, me, or Rachel gets supported in the “lift.” My mind went in with different expectations for a lift than what I came up with, but it is one of those things we had to work on together to see what works for us. A lot of the moves we are doing have a quick moment, leading into a sustained moment. Most of the moves are also “light” in the weight category of Laban Movement Analysis. This was not particularly intentional, but the song makes me want to dance light. Because of how I want repetition in the piece we pulled certain moves and I thought about how can I tweak this move in a tiny way to make it the same but different? This could be as simple as where our eyes are looking, or whether our foot is on the ground or not. When I started the choreography I began writing out the moves for memory purposes, which is not uncommon for me as a choreographer. Considering this is such a long piece of work, focusing on the choreography and then filming it has been less stressful for me. This way I can spend more time focusing on the dance, film it at the end of rehearsal, and then watch it back. Sometimes I think “I am not a real choreographer”
without writing anything down, but it stressed me out more when I began to write out each move, so I let it go. Another perk of videoing is that the dancers can watch back as well for memory.

October 23rd, 2018

Today we met with Cara in the aerial studio to show her what we have been working on. I felt very nervous, even though I am proud of the work I created so far. Practice was weird for me because I was struggling mentally just remembering anything at all. My brain felt so fried and emotionally I am spent. Kate, Rach, and I danced the dance for the first time again since last night, and even though timing was off, it was the best it had ever felt. Cara did not have any specific remarks at this time; but she thought this one dance was the entire piece, but I have 5 more minutes of choreography I want to accomplish. After dancing this today in front of someone who can watch the whole thing, I felt encouraged. I am amazed I came up with such a long piece in a matter of days, and I am proud of it???. I think with all that has happened I am choosing to pour my all energy into this, more than I was capable before I was experiencing this pain.

November 4th, 2018

Today we worked on the last piece of the dance titled, “moon (instrumental).” I thought the title itself was fitting for the performance due to the connection of the moon and sun and waves. I love this song though and if I had one word to describe how it makes me feel it would be “melancholy,” which is exactly what I want to portray through this piece. I am at a happy, but sad time in my life nearing the end of college. I look back on all the people who have helped me along the way and I am overcome with gratitude. I want to express that through this dance. We finished it. I edited the music, so it is only about 2 ish minutes long. This piece is the last of what the audience will see of the performance so I had a few criteria: I wanted the girls to be on stage alone at first – this represents the people who surround me, I
wanted to end with them breaking off of me – this represents my independence of growing up, but also realizing I am my own person and it is time to start living to make ME happy, and I wanted to end with me alone – this represents me accepting the good and the bad in myself, and moving forward into the next phase of life confidently because of the people who built me up along the way. Ultimately, I want the dance to make a full circle. I want me to start the entire performance alone and end the entire performance alone. The dancers in the beginning come out and do a “glide movement” back and forth, and do some leg extensions. I run out and begin to repeat the beginning of what they did to represent me learning from them, and the choreo all together starts. One thing I included in this piece, and will include more in Two is the use of breath. This is something I had never been taught previous to coming to college, but I find it very interwoven with dance and yoga now as my study of dance and yoga have progressed. It was also gives the body a connection to itself and the movement in a new way. When I think of the concept of a wave too, it makes me feel peace and that feeling of exhaling my worries. I want to show this through the choreo. When we added the use of audible breath it took whatever we were doing to a new level. I am so excited about this piece so far, I just need to work on polishing it. Every move is selected to look like a wave in this piece. We have a moment of leg extension that falls like a wave through a peel off, we have moments of throwing our arms in shapes to resemble a wave when we all come together. If possible, I can include pictures into my thesis paper to show this because it is hard to describe. I really want the three bodies in this piece to work together closely in space and contact to portray a wave.

November 6th, 2018

Today I worked on my solo choreography. I changed the music to the song “Sing my way back.” This song has been helping me through a lot lately and it feels so right to choreograph to it during this time. Even though, my plan was to have only instrumental music - I know I have to dance to this song. Plus, it still fits my theme of a wave. A wave represents (as cheesy as it sounds) the highs and lows of life. This song is about coming back to who I am and what grounds me in the midst of the highs and lows. The choreography I came up with was surprisingly harder to create in comparison to choreograph
for the trio. I usually find it harder to choreograph for others, but through this experience I am finding I prefer it. I like dancing alone, but dancing with others is a rewarding experience to share with another person. I need to tweak my solo a bit more in the studio over the course of the week until it feels right. The first song I run out on stage to is called “opening” by sleeping at last, which will help round out the performance since it is ending on an instrumental sleeping at last song. The difficult thing about this piece is the timing – there are no specific counts so I get confused on when I should run out on stage. A lot of what has come out of the dance has just been from improving to the song over and over.

November 7th, 2018

Reviewed choreography and changed around my solo some.

November 9th, 2018

Met with Rach and Kate. Ran through the dances over and over, and choreography Lady marmalade. Made a few small changes for timing sake, other than that I am feeling good about the choreo. The hardest part is just remembering everything because my brain is so completely dead from school and life. I am exhausted.

November 11, 2018

My solo is changing a little bit every day and I am just letting it happen. If worse comes to worse and I forget it, I can always improve. I know I will be happy with the final result though. I have been doubting my choreo and it is hard not to compare it with Rachel’s and think mine is less than. I have to just keep affirming myself that it is what I need it to be. This is typical though. Every time I do any creative project it is hard for it to feel like it is enough, finished, or to be satisfied at all with it. With my thesis though, I want to be satisfied with the work on the night of the performance, I just need to get out of my own head.
November 12th, 2018

The show is coming up in 3 days!!!!!! We ran through everything at the CPA studio today. It is starting to feel real.

November 13th, 2018

Today we rehearsed in room 205 in front of Cara. She gave us a few helpful pointers on sinking deeper into my partner work with Rachel and holding my ending pose longer to stay in the moment. It is so helpful to have someone watch it. I am still completely emotional all the time and I cried when Rachel was doing her dances. I had to leave the room, but I know I will be okay. Life is so hard and I am so mad at my ex for making me this way the week of my performance. It is not fair. It is also nice to practice in the room we will be performing in. Luckily, it didn’t change anything too much.

November 14th, 2018

Dress rehearsal!!! Rach and Kate and I wore the costumes I bought us. I love them and they were exactly what I dreamed for this dance. Blue in color with a sheer dress. We filmed the dance quickly, and I wish we could have filmed it again. I am still struggling with the stress and anxiety of my choreo not being good enough, but I know it must be pre show jitters. Also, it is such a vulnerable thing to put this thing out into the world in front of my closest friends, peers, and teachers. It is so much scarier dancing your choreography in front of an audience, rather than works that others have choreographed for you.

November 15, 2018

Today we rehearsed for the final time in the studio. I am feeling ready and anxious for the performance. I hope the video looks good and that the choreo makes sense. I have been sending out texts all day long trying to tell people about the performance and getting in touch with those who have to travel to come see it. My dance teacher that I grew up learning everything I know from is coming and it makes me SO excited to show her something I created. Friends from my nutrition class are coming and all of
my close friends and family. My ex was coming but today I told him not to, which was a big step for me accepting it is time to put myself first…which is something I have been learning throughout this entire process.

November 16th, 2018

The performance was everything I dreamed of and more. I am so proud of myself and proud of the work of choreography I shared. I needed this and I also needed close friends and family around me during this time. It was a gift to have everyone I loved in one room, sharing what I love. I will never forget this night.
References


US Department of Commerce, & National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. (2018,