Story: A Collaborative Dance Project

by

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ABSTRACT

The intention for the dance production *Story* was to develop and explore a collaborative creative process to communicate a specific narrative to an audience. The production took place in the Margaret Gisolo Dance Studio at Arizona State University on November 18, 19, and 20, 2011. The purpose of my thesis work was to investigate how my personal inspiration from classical ballet, balletic movement vocabulary, fantasy narrative (an imaginative fictional story), supportive lighting, set, costumes and expressive sound might merge within a collaborative dance-making process. The final choreography includes creative input from the participating dancers and designers, as well as constructive feedback from my thesis committee. My reflection on the creative process for *Story* describes the challenges and personal growth I experienced as a result of the project.

DEDICATION

For my loving husband.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The original intention of creating the choreographic work *Story* was to explore the idea of audience engagement. There are two ways audience engagement is generally used in live dance performance: first, as a form of audience participation, which can be a physical interaction or conversation between the performers and the audience members; second, to create an environment in which the audience interacts with the performance cognitively, interpreting meaning from what is observed. *Story* was created to engage an audience using the latter: cognitive engagement.

The preliminary research for this project shed light on what approaches I found successful in its final execution. Experimenting with gathering audience data during a live performance in December of 2010 taught me the time and effort it can take to complete quantitative research. Also, during the 2011 spring semester, I was able to work with dancers to create a dance based on a story. This experimentation led directly to the processes I used for my final project.

The choreographic processes used in the creation of *Story* evolved for various reasons throughout the process. The first approach was a direct, traditional process where I constructed movement and dictated it to the dancers. The dancers then manipulated the movement to create variations of my choreography. The second approach was more collaborative in nature. I took on the role of a director, giving the dancers emotional prompts to create their own movement. Then, I placed the dancers' movements into a sequence that effectively told a story. At the end of the process, I utilized a combination of the traditional and collaborative approaches. I was able to apply the movement from

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the dancers and integrate it with my movement ideas, resulting in a process that focused on reciprocity.

The evolution of the choreographic processes I used was heavily influenced by my thesis committee's constructive feedback. Each time I received feedback, major changes to both the story and the movement had to be made. Every aspect, including the lighting, set, costumes, and sound, were affected by the committee's input. The continuous adaptation of the piece proved to be an essential component leading up to the final production. The constant fluctuation of choreography and story compelled me to release my control on the creative approaches I had constructed. Devising new approaches for collaboration allowed for a more harmonious creative process, positively affecting the final production.

The performance took place on November 18, 19 and 20, 2011, at Arizona State University in the Margaret Gisolo Dance Studio. The audience was primarily made up of university students, staff and faculty, as well as members of the surrounding community. I considered the final production successful based on the performance of the dancers, the almost flawless execution of the technical elements (lighting, set, sound), and the positive comments by various audience members. I was artistically satisfied watching the final performance because I could recall the processes involved in the creation of the dance piece. (The program and marketing postcard for the performance is included in Appendix C.)

The challenges I faced during this project served to further my understanding of my creative practice and myself as an artist. The importance of choosing a reliable cast became apparent when two of my dancers backed out of the project. Casting also proved to be an issue when the content of the piece

began to communicate unintentional racial and gender statements. The final obstacle I faced, time, can be attributed to the constant evolution of the piece. As time grew short, I found it necessary to discard a proposed video element of the piece, which impacted the development and purpose of the narrator character.

I found that my own self-discovery as an artist throughout the process directly influenced the approaches I used to create movement. My personal journey could be documented as an emotional roller coaster dictated by the ups and downs of the process itself. Each day brought new challenges and discoveries regarding the creation of an artistic work of this magnitude. These challenges led me to question the validity of the work. What does narrative dance offer an audience? Can a narrative dance be considered an artistic work from the perspective of established dance professionals? Are the creative ideas I have intellectual enough for my graduate studies? Does the movement constructed during the process need to meet the subjective expectations of those who experience it? How will this work be relevant to the dance field I hope to enter after my graduate studies are complete? These questions were addressed throughout the process and some were resolved through self-discovery.

Story is artistically relevant in dance from both a process and a product perspective. The process explores the collaboration of choreographers and dancers that allows for a balance of artistic input. The approach to creating choreography that emerged near the end of the process could be used by choreographers as a model for a mutually satisfying collaboration with dancers. The product examines the use of narrative in dance by putting emphasis on the uniqueness of the story itself. Although narrative dance is widely used by various dance companies, the most significant use is by ballet companies reinterpreting

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and producing the same popular ballets, such as *Swan Lake* or *Midsummer's Night Dream*. This project produced a narrative dance based on a collaboratively constructed story, which may have been recognizable in theme by an audience, but was unique in content.

My artistic aspirations are rooted in my desire to create connections with audiences that evoke both cognitive and emotional responses. I believe that the work I create essentially becomes a portrait of the people involved in the process. The creative models I constructed and employed emphasize the talents of my collaborators while considering the perspective of the intended observer. Although there were many important outcomes of this project, the most significant was the insight I gained about the artist and educator I strive to become. As a dance educator, my hope is to share with the dance world the knowledge I gained from this project of collaboration and narrative dance. Furthermore, this experience has prompted me begin work on a new project that incorporates a collaborative process with a music composer in the creation of a narrative ballet.

CHAPTER 2

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

Research for this project primarily consisted of scholarly readings and

practical research. I sought out articles based on my interests and used

performance opportunities during my second year of graduate school to try out

the ideas I formed based on these readings. This preliminary research was

essential to the creation of the project. Each time I experimented with an idea, I

learned what was and was not successful based on my preconceived

expectations. I was able to use this information to make decisions about the

approaches I would use for my final project.

RESOURCES

Process verses product?

Although I felt the process by which a dance was made is not the most

important part of that work, it was not my intention to create a dance piece by

focusing only on the product the audience would experience. I aspired to create

this project with equal focus on the creative process and the final product. In an

article entitled *Present problems of dance aesthetics,* author S. J. Cohen states

that although the creative process is important, the product the audience sees is

what matters in the end. (Cohen 16) The main weakness I find in this statement

is based on how the process and product of an artistic work are considered

separate from each other. It is typical that a dance audience may not be able to

experience the construction of a dance; however, the live dance performance is

truly a reflection of the creative process. The challenge I faced from my desire to

put equal emphasis on the process and product of this project was finding a way

to assess both of these aspects. After practical research collecting data from an

audience in the fall of 2010 (discussed in the next section of this chapter), I chose to redirect my research toward the collaborative creative processes between my dancers and myself. Although I had to stray from my initial idea, my new focus on the creative process allowed me to consider the audience and product of this project in a different way.

In the same article referenced above, Cohen goes on to point out how dance can be defined in various ways and it is the act or process of defining dance that leads to more questions about how dance is seen aesthetically. Since the nature of live dance performances is that no two are exactly the same, interpretation of each performance is also never the same. (Cohen 14) This idea of varying interpretations was important to this project because of its connection to my initial interest in the audience and the dance product it would experience. I satisfied this interest by evaluating the choreographic work at each stage of the process based on how I thought the audience would interpret what it saw. Knowing that live dance performance is ephemeral, it was vital for me to clearly portray the intention of the project (communication of a fictional narrative) through all of the project elements: movement, lighting, costumes, set, and sound.

<div align="center">Why use a story?</div>

One of the most important inspirations for this project was the use of a fictional narrative as part of the construction of dance. My interest in narrative led me to a 2010 article entitled *Understanding audience involvement: Conceptualizing and manipulating identification and transportation*. Authors N. Tal-or and J. Cohen identify two terms that make up audience involvement in narrative texts: transportation and identification.

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Tal-Or and Cohen describe identification as a process the audience goes through when sympathizing or empathizing with a character in a narrative to the point where it may diminish self-awareness and cause physical and/or emotional responses. (Tal-or 403) This idea was pertinent in the construction of the narrative used in this project. I struggled to find a way to help the dancers develop and embody characters that encouraged the above concept of identification. I also was reminded of the importance of identification throughout the process in feedback received by my committee. Details about this feedback and how I applied it are discussed in Chapter 3.

Transportation is defined by Tal-or and Cohen as when audience members enter the world presented in the narrative and temporarily lose access to real facts from the real world. (Tal-or 405) Since this description pertains mainly to written narratives, it was important to this project for me to find a way for transportation to happen in the absence of text. I chose to employ lighting, costumes, set, and sound production elements as a means for transportation into this project's narrative reality.

<div align="center">Why narrative dance?</div>

Narrative dance is not a novel concept: It has been widely used throughout dance history, most prominently in ballet. However, it can be argued that the use of narrative dance has greatly diminished since 19th century classical ballet. The current trend for many modern and ballet choreographers is to create works based on abstract themes and movement. One choreographer, Liz Gerring, director of the Liz Gerring Dance Company, speaks about her use of abstract choreography on her website lizgerringdance.org.

I have been creating & presenting works on my own company,

The Liz Gerring Dance Company, since 1998. In my choreography

I focus on precision, physicality & athleticism combined with

gestures that reflect universal images — all presented without

drama. The structures of my works are based on movement

narrative which evolves from cause & effect rather than

storytelling. (Gerring, "Musings of Abstract Choreography")

The idea of using narrative without resulting in storytelling is one that can

be seen in many dance performances. The movement is made with a clear

intent; however, it is up to the audience to determine the meaning from the

abstract presentation of the movement. Although this is a legitimate and widely

used approach for dance construction, I feel abstract movement can become

mundane and sometimes confusing to watch. In an effort to clearly communicate

the narrative of this project to an audience, I chose to work with representational

as opposed to highly abstract movement. Arguably all dance, including highly

representational dance, is an abstraction of a concept or intention. As I received

feedback on the movement throughout this project, the level of abstraction in the

movement increased. A detailed account of the feedback I received and how it

was incorporated in the construction of the movement can be found in Chapter 3.

Who else is creating collaboratively?

Choreographer Bill T. Jones, director of the Bill T. Jones Arne Zane

Dance Company, utilized collaboration in the creative process for his 2009 piece

entitled *Fondly Do We Hope, Fervently Do We Pray*. Jones speaks about

collaboration in a video interview published on a website dedicated to the piece.

"The collaborations try to immolate in the end what will be the truth of the

piece…" (Jones, "Collaboration"). My interpretation of this statement is that the intention of the work is the connecting element for everyone involved in the project. This is how I approached my work with the dancers and the designers collaborating on *Story*. When speaking with the dancers and designers, I made an effort to clearly articulate the importance of communicating a fictional narrative to the audience to ensure the movement, lighting, costume, set, and sound designs would support each other.

<div align="center">Who else is making narrative dance?</div>

In an article published online by the New York Times, Gia Kourlas begins a story about choreographer Twyla Tharp and her 2012 ballet entitled *The Princess and the Goblin* by saying, "The centuries-old tradition of ballets that tell stories is still beloved by audiences…" (Kourlas, "Tharp's New Tale"). Many ballet companies continue to perform production-based narratives such as *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, and *Sleeping Beauty*. My personal dance traditions were heavily influenced by classical ballet as well. As I grew older, I fully embraced how movement can be used to communicate a specific story to the audience. This project allowed me to explore a more creative way to utilize narrative in dance outside the reinterpretation of existing ballet stories. A more detailed discussion of my personal discoveries can be found in Chapter 4.

Although Twyla Tharp is well known for many of her past abstract dance works, Koursal asked her to comment on her new representational movement approach. Tharp stated, "I'm not satisfied sitting in just the world of abstract work," She continued that, "Abstract can tend to be very sterile, and the so-called narrative has the capacity for an emotional connection." (Koursal, "Tharp's New Tale") The first comment relates to my personal journey as an artist. When I

began this project, I was dissatisfied working with abstract movement and chose to instead create a dance work that was more representational. The latter comment Tharp makes about narrative dance allowing for an emotional response directly relates to my research into the narrative idea of identification mentioned earlier in this document. For me, there is a connection between being artistically satisfied and creating a work that has the potential for provoking an emotional response. When watching a dance performance, I personally want to be taken on an emotional journey so I aspired to create an emotional journey for this project. One way I evaluated this project was by how satisfied I was with my own emotional journey while viewing the dance at its various stages of construction.

PRELIMINARY ATTEMPTS

The preliminary research done for this project during the 2010-2011 academic year can be split into two main creative processes resulting in two dance performances: first was an attempt at evaluating the audience's experience after a live dance performance; second was an attempt to communicate a specific story to an audience through movement. These attempts also consisted of a choreographed dance piece performed for a live audience. The information learned from the experimentation with preliminary ideas helped me to make vital decisions about my final project such as how to evaluate the project and what type of narrative to construct.

An article entitled *Cognition and the temporal arts: Investigating audience response to dance using PDAs that record continuous data during live performance* by C.J. Stevens, et al. initially introduced me to the idea of audience engagement. The author tracked audience members' responses to live dance performance by having them record their levels of engagement and enjoyment

on PDA devices during a performance. (Stevens, et al. 800) This article sparked an inquiry about how an audience perceives abstract dance compared to a more representational style of movement commonly experienced in popular culture. To find out more about this idea I created a dance piece based on the popular video game *DJ Hero*. The piece, which premiered in December 2010, incorporated popular music, mainstream dance movement, bright colored costumes, lighting, video, and a fun character portraying a DJ.

At the performance held at the Dance Studio Theatre at Arizona State University, I attempted to gather data from my audience in two ways. The first was through a survey completed by the audience after experiencing the dance. From this survey, I anticipated I would gather evidence showing that the audience felt enjoyment and experienced an arousal of interest during the performance. The weaknesses of the survey process were that the results took an enormous amount of time to analyze and the data did not confirm or disprove any of my assumptions about engagement. The second way I gathered audience data was by videotaping the audience members during the performance. The video data was inconclusive because the audience did not display any sort of physical reaction while experiencing the dance: If the audience was physically reacting during the performance, it was not distinguishable on the videotape. Due to my dissatisfaction with the results of this experiment to gather audience data, I chose not to pursue this type of quantitative research, focusing on a qualitative approach instead.

This led to the second portion of my preliminary research, which included collaboratively creating a story and communicating it to an audience through dance. This attempt, done in the spring of 2011, involved me seeking out a

number of dancers to work with; presenting them with an initial subject for a story; creating the story with the dancers' input; constructing the choreography; and showing the results to a live audience in the Dance Studio Theatre at Arizona State University. I used various approaches while working with the dancers. Some of these approaches were discarded and some were used again during the construction of the final production, *Story*.

After holding dancer auditions and choosing a cast, I began creating a narrative that could be used for dance. I shared my initial idea with the group and we decided on the details of what would happen together. The early versions of the story were organized into an outline form with short descriptions of the events that would take place in each section or scene. A summary of the original story is as follows:

The journey begins with the appearance of an interesting man, a narrator, who will guide the audience through the woman's story from beginning to end. He introduces you to the woman and her sister who live in a world slightly magical where strange happenings are common. The young woman and her sister are traveling through a forest picking berries and nuts for their family. The woman insists her sister is not picking the berries correctly and sends her to sit by herself until the job is finished. When the sister falls asleep out of sight behind a tree, the young woman panics thinking her sister is lost in the forest.

Two travelers stumble across the woman's path, tangled together in a web of vines and clothing. In her effort to help the travelers become untangled, she learns the importance of not taking the things she loves for granted. However, her selfishness and stubbornness continue to be an obstacle in her

search for her sister. To overcome this obstacle, the woman has to face herself by recognizing and acknowledging her weaknesses.

The sister awakes from her nap behind a tree in the forest and the woman, in a new spirit, greets her sister with love and joy. When they return to their task of gathering food, the woman invites her sister to work with her collaboratively, balancing their relationship with love and respect.

The process involved in the movement invention for this preliminary attempt was what I consider to be a traditional approach. I began by making a phrase of movement and taught it to the dancers. I then gave the dancers tasks based on the events happening in the narrative, which would encourage them to manipulate the movement, resulting in variations on the original movement phrase. I then placed the dancers' variations in a sequence dictated by the narrative and set the finished choreography to music. Although the resulting dance for this preliminary research was successful in communicating the intended story, I did not feel the process was truly collaborative. What I learned from this initial attempt directly influenced the creative process for my final project. Although many alterations were made to the characters and the narrative, I continued to work with the same dancers and used the preliminary story summarized above as a starting point for the final project.

CHAPTER 3

CREATIVE PROCESS

<u>THE NARRATIVE</u>

The evolution of the narrative throughout the project can be attributed to the dancers' character development and the incorporation of constructive feedback. My personal assumptions of how the story would be created for this project had to be completely discarded after the process began. I believed the narrative would be completed near the start of the project and remain the same throughout the duration. It actually began its evolution from the beginning and did not finish transforming until the very end.

As the dancers developed a deeper understanding of the characters they were portraying, the narrative had to adapt. In turn, the story's organic nature allowed for the continued incorporation of the dancers' creative input. This cycle between the dancers' characters and the narrative was most obvious in the evolution of the main sister character.

In the narrative at the beginning of the project, the main sister had to conquer an internal struggle that resulted in personal growth. However, as the conflict in the narrative became external (discussed further in the paragraph below), the main sister character became stronger willed and virtuous. In turn, a scene where this character was originally undergoing a self-realization had to be moved in the sequence of events and replaced with a scene where she was distraught by the thought of her sister being lost forever. This newly adapted narrative event added another layer to the personality of the main sister character, which inevitably affected the narrative once again.

At each stage in the process, I also received feedback from my thesis committee regarding the progress of the narrative. Each time I attempted to address the feedback by integrating the new ideas into the piece, I found it was necessary to adapt the narrative. The most influential feedback I received about the story was regarding the need for conflict and resolution. I was initially opposed to having overly dramatic conflict and a dark/evil antagonist in the narrative. However, as the project progressed, the need for an external, observable conflict increased, making antagonists inevitably necessary. The final conflict was that one of the sisters was stolen away by the newly developed antagonists, the mischievous and now nefarious Travelers.

Externalizing the conflict was probably the most significant change in the narrative; however, the most problematic part of the narrative was the resolution. Although the final scene of the narrative showed the sister characters reunited, there was no event before this to show why the Travelers released the captive sister. As the performance dates neared, the resolution for the conflict was still unclear. In the absence of a set resolution, I resorted to having the narrator force the resolution on the characters. Essentially, the narrator (moved by the main sister's despair over the loss of her sibling) called the Travelers back and instructed them to release the captive sister. Although this strategy was not the most insightful way to find resolution to the conflict, I feel it was fitting for the narrator, who already had control over the story, to take on this role as well. Since the narrative went through so many stages during the project, I have included them in Appendix A.

CHOREOGRAPHIC PROCESS

       The feedback received from my thesis committee heavily influenced the trajectory of the piece; most significantly in the choreographic approaches. All the feedback I received, whether about movement, narrative or other elements in the piece, affected the processes used for movement invention. At one pivotal time during the process, I found it necessary to create a written response to address the accumulation of feedback I had been given. Excerpts from this response are scattered throughout the following discussion of the choreographic processes I constructed for *Story*.

       The first major concern brought to my attention was how my use of narrative was affecting the movement invention. The movement constructed during the beginning of the project was highly representational, even including pantomime. In an effort to help me find a more abstract use of movement, it was suggested that I change my intention from communicating a specific story to commenting on the role of narrative in my life. My written response to this suggestion was as follows:

> I still strongly feel that using the story as the overall theme for this piece can be successful. I will be keeping the story for this project, but will adapt the content and movement in an attempt to find a balance for the piece. My original intention for the piece was to communicate a specific story to the audience. In the process I may have veered off in a direction that relies too heavily on acting, but it is still important to me that the product of the process communicates the story. (Allen, "Project thoughts")

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Since the representational movement style I employed was not well received by my committee, I was consistently instructed to find a way to abstract the movement. The main concern seemed to be that representational movement in narrative dance required a high level of acting ability that my dancers did not possess. My written response to this concern was as follows:

> I fully understand the concern about my dancers acting ability. In an effort to satisfy the intention of communicating a story without relying on acting, I will get rid of any props being used by the dancers, cut the pantomime style of movement, and revisit the movement material in an attempt to abstract it. (Allen, "Project thoughts")

To follow through with the plan described above, I adapted the choreographic processes in an effort to elicit the invention of movement that was less representational than the previously created movement. Part of this new process was to evaluate what movement that had already been created was relatively abstract, while still representing the important events in the story. After determining what movement I could continue to use, I worked with the dancers to expand on those movement ideas to create new phrases.

Another concern that emerged through the feedback was the style of movement vocabulary I was utilizing. Based on my personal movement background, as well as the backgrounds of my dancers, three distinct movement styles were evident in the choreography: ballet, modern, and urban. I was asked if I intended to create a fusion of these styles for the project and I responded with the following:

As for the movement in the piece, there seems to be three styles

that stand out, the narrator's urban style, a more

contemporary/PMC style, and ballet. It is not my intention to

create a 'fusion' of these styles although my background tends

toward a mixture of ballet and modern. I feel that abstracting the

movement will help alleviate much of this separation. However,

the urban style may still stand out more. (Allen, "Project thoughts")

To find a way for the distinct movement styles mentioned previously to

coexist in *Story* without feeling out of place, I approached the use of movement

differently. Instead of bringing elements of all three movement styles into each

character's movement vocabulary, I assigned a movement style to each of the

three types of characters. The first type consisted of the sister characters whose

movement was based in the balletic style, which supported their ethereal

characters. The second type consisted of the characters I called the Travelers,

and had movement based in the modern style to support their grounded,

mischievous personalities. The last type consisted of the narrator character

whose movement style was urban. The urban style, being the most distinct,

supported the narrator's role as a liaison between the audience's reality and the

fictional reality presented on stage.

Although a significant portion of the choreographic process evolution can

be attributed to my committee's feedback, the dancers' ideas about how their

characters would behave in specific situations also inspired how movement was

created. The strongest example of this was experienced when working with the

narrator character. As we constructed movement for his role, we discussed what

meaning the movements portrayed and why. His reasoning for using a particular

ape-like movement (bent knees, arms diagonally down to his sides, shifting his weight back and forth to each hand) in one section was to show that he was commenting on the nefarious characters (also known as the Travelers) in the story. My interpretation of the movement was parallel to his, but I also felt the movement was humorous. This realization sparked the development of the narrator character to include an element of humor, and in turn instigated a change in how we approached creating his movement. I feel that allowing the dancers' decisions to directly affect both their characters and the processes by which movement was created was vital to the project as a whole. The ability of the dancers to make these types of creative decisions strengthened their connection to their character, and in turn to the final performance.

When considering the effect of the evolution of the project, it is important to note that the adapting choreographic processes did not affect the movement invention alone. Each element of this project was influenced by changes in the other elements. The cycle of change that emerged is illustrated below (see fig. 1). Although the image does not show how each element can also affect every other element directly, it is a helpful visual aid for understanding the constant fluctuation that occurred during each stage of the developing project.
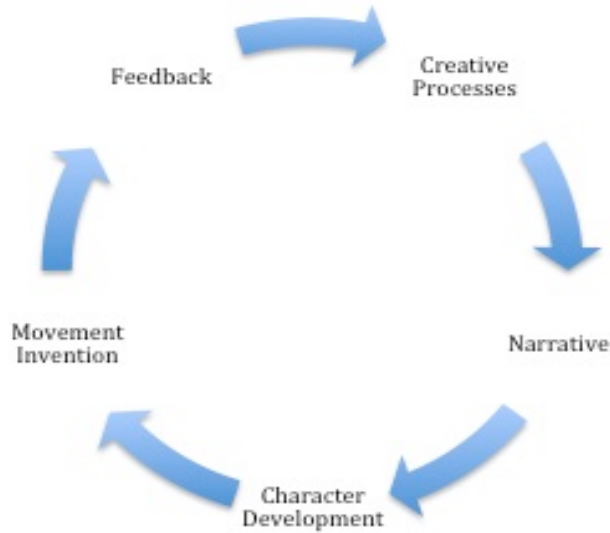
Figure 1: Process Evolution Cycle

PRODUCTION ELEMENTS

      The design and construction of the lighting, sound score, costumes, and set for *Story* were not part of the collaborative process with the dancers. However, it was essential to the piece as a whole that each production element support the overall intention. I did not feel confident that quality lighting, costumes, sound, and set could be created without delegating the responsibilities to people who specialize in these areas. Although the choreographic process for *Story* was collaborative with the dancers, I oversaw the design and construction of the other production elements with little input from them. I realize that this approach is less than collaborative; however, my work with the enlisted designers was cooperative in nature and was appropriate for this project. Due to the evolving nature of both the narrative and choreography, the unchanging lighting, costume, and set designs were a needed fixed point in the process.

      In the case of the lighting and costume designers, I found myself in lengthy conversations with each respectively near the beginning of the project.

These conversations included information about my vision for the work, the intention of the project, and other considerations such as color and mood. The collaboration with both the lighting and costume designers successfully produced designs that supported the finished narrative, needing only minimal changes near the end of the project.

Unlike the lighting and costumes, I created the set design myself. A large tree obtained from a discarded theatrical set inspired the set design for *Story* even before the project officially began. The colors and two-dimensional shape of the tree elicited thoughts of a fictional storybook, which I felt was appropriate for this project. The design included the large tree, two smaller trees, a fallen log bench, and five bushes. I initially placed the set pieces in a way that would represent a forest clearing and to draw the observer's perspective toward the rear of the stage area. The final placement of the set pieces was slightly altered from the original design to add a more realistic layered look.

Similar to the set design, I also created the sound score for *Story*. When choosing the music at the beginning of the overall creative process, I spent hours listening to various artists' music, searching for sound that supported the events of the story. I chose music that was overall less expressive as to not overwhelm the movement. After showing the piece with this music and receiving feedback from my committee, I found myself searching for music again. This time I was looking for sound that would drive the events of the story forward, allowing the movement to play an equal role. I discovered a series of shorter fantasy-themed musical pieces, which I layered against forest and magical sound effects. The resulting sound score helped to create an auditory environment that transported the audience into the fantasy.

CHAPTER 4

REFLECTION

OBSTACLES

Some of the obstacles I faced during the creation of *Story* included

casting issues, unintentional statements expressed in the choreography, and

time management. During the beginning of the project, two of my cast members

decided to quit for various reasons; however, the loss of these cast members

was manageable. It created a need for adjustments in both the narrative and the

character assignments, but over time the advantages of having a smaller cast

outweighed the initial frustration. One advantage of the smaller cast was that it

allowed for stronger development of each character. The detailed characters

created a more cohesive narrative that resulted in a clear communication of that

narrative in performance.

My casting choices also unintentionally created both racial and gender

statements in the piece. My final cast included four Caucasian women and one

African-American male. The male dancer was assigned the narrator character

and, in the end, had control over all the events in the story. The separation

between characters was also magnified by the movement styles embodied by the

dancers. The three styles of dance were ballet (two of the female dancers),

modern (two of the female dancers), and urban (the male dancer). Oblivious to

these issues in the beginning of the project, my committee made me aware of

them. I shared the concerns with my dancers and we tried to consider them

during the rest of the creative process. Since these statements were

unintentional, I did not want to address them directly by incorporating them into

the final project. However, I also did not want to continue to make the statements

stronger, so the issues became an idea on the peripheral of the piece, never fully being resolved.

The final obstacle I faced was time. It seemed that regardless of how organized my project was at the beginning, time was limited and passed very quickly. With the amount of adjustments I had to make to this continuously changing piece, I didn't have enough time to incorporate all of the proposed elements in the end. The original project idea included a video element that supported the narrator character. Near the end of the project, I decided to discard this idea because of the time constraints. I feel this was the best choice for the piece overall. The quality of a video that would have been produced in such a short amount of time would have weakened the piece instead of making it stronger.

PERSONAL JOURNEY

The obstacles I encountered undoubtedly helped me make personal discoveries throughout the project. Although the intention of this piece was based on my original interest in audience engagement, I learned that this project was also an exercise in self-exploration. My greatest discoveries from this venture have begun to shape the type of artist and educator I hope to become.

It was evident to me from the beginning that my choices for this work were made based on my personal preferences and aesthetic. My use of balletic movement, fantasy story, and classical production elements can be attributed to my admiration for and personal background in classical ballet. My evolution as an audience member over my lifetime has heavily influenced my personal journey as well. Some of my enthusiasm for live dance performance can be attributed to my young age and limited experience with live performing arts; yet, as an adult I

still find joy in this activity. However, now I find that my experience as an audience member is strikingly different. I experience dance in a more thoughtful way, not able to take what I observe at face value. This influenced the way I evaluated each step of this project, allowing me to consider how an audience would interpret what they were observing.

One of my biggest discoveries throughout this process was my faltering sense of confidence. Constantly receiving feedback caused me to question the validity of my artistic choices. Reflecting on my decisions for *Story* allowed me to solidify the practices that were sound and discard or adapt those that were not serving me. The difficulty I had finding the balance between my personal aesthetic and the collaborative process was another test of my confidence. I discovered that inside of the collaborative process, I still had to make aesthetic choices for the piece as a whole; however, all of my decisions also had to support the original intention of the piece regardless of my personal aesthetic.

Overall, I feel that the finished production of *Story* was successful. The advantage of watching the performance was that I had the opportunity to disconnect from the process. I was able to experience the work more from an outside perspective because I essentially had to relinquish control to the performers and technicians during the performance. I found myself satisfied with the emotional journey I was taken on as an audience member, which relates back to my early research interest in identification. This final shift in perspective from choreographer to audience member was appropriate because my initial research interests were in audience engagement.

After the production, I was asked various questions about whom or what the dancers represented in *Story*. I countered these questions by asking what

story the inquirer thought the piece was meant to communicate. Many of the responses described the characters in three distinct ways. The characters I labeled as the Sisters were usually described as birds, flowers, or some kind of ethereal, auspicious beings. The characters I labeled as the Travelers were described as toads, garden weeds, or evil, mischievous creatures. The narrator character was usually described as a storyteller or puppet master. All of these descriptions were in line with the personalities constructed for the characters during the process.

As for the story's plot, it was clear that those I spoke with had recognized that one of the good characters had to go searching for her friend who was stolen away by the evil characters, and in the end the narrator made the evil characters release their captive, resulting in a happy ending. One young female audience member commented on how she was glad that the pretty fairy got her friend back in the end. Admittedly, the responses I received were biased since much of the audience knew me as a friend, family member, colleague or instructor, but the overall reception of the piece seemed positive. Most importantly, I personally felt I had accomplished what I had set out to do at the beginning of the project. I used a collaborative creative process to communicate a specific story to an audience through live dance performance.

ARTISTIC RELEVENCE OF *STORY*

Story is relevant as a work of art in the professional dance world for two major reasons: first, it promotes the dancer as an artist through the collaborative process; second, the content of the piece questions the use of narrative in the creation of dance. The project examined both process and product from an internal perspective and allowed for connections to be made between the two.

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Also, the narrative component of the project connects the process with the product in its use and purpose.

The relationship between dancer and choreographer is one that has been examined various ways and has evolved throughout the history of dance. The idea of the dancer as the choreographer's tool is common; however, this is arguably harmful to both the creative process and the dancer. A more favorable relationship would be where the dancer and choreographer are collaborators, cooperating in harmony during the creative process. I find this type of relationship not only equitable, but also advantageous to my personal creative practice. This is why I chose to use a collaborative approach for the creation of *Story.*

The narrative used in *Story* played many roles in the creation of this project. Although it served as an organizational tool, as well as a means of collaboration, the narrative's intended purpose in this project was to serve as a tool for audience engagement. Professional dance companies still use narrative pieces in their repertory alongside abstract movement pieces. I speculate that this is due to the narrative's appeal to audiences. Professional ballet companies continue to produce classical ballets, maybe out of tradition, or perhaps because the public continues to pay to see those productions. Of course, this is only speculation, but I feel there is a correlation between popularity and narrative dance productions.

The method in which the narrative was used during this project is also dissimilar to the way narrative dance is commonly used. Many narrative dances produced by professional dance companies, most notably ballet companies, are pieces that were originally created a number of years (sometimes centuries) ago. These pieces are reinterpreted and reconstructed for performance years after its

original premiere, but the narrative generally remains the same. In contrast to this method, my project incorporated the cooperative construction of a narrative as part of the creative process. Much of the plot in the completed narrative used in *Story* is recognizable as an imaginative account of fictional events happening to characters in a fantasy reality. However, the content of the narrative was unique in that the characters and events of the story were cooperatively created. This novel collaborative process is an option for creating narrative dance without having to work inside the constraints of established, traditional ballet stories, and one that I will most likely use again in future projects.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

ARTIST STATEMENT

My initial interest in audience engagement led me into an exploration of how narrative can be used in a collaboratively created dance project. From these original ideas the creative process began for *Story,* which premiered in November 2011. Although I was prepared to gain knowledge throughout this project, I was not prepared for my own personal growth throughout the process. My various collaborations with dancers and designers, the constant insight from my committee, and self-observation all contributed to my self-discovery as an artist. I am able to make the following artistic statement due to my work on this project:

Through playful, expressive movement investigation, theatrical stage elements, and choreographic structures, I create dance works that consider the interaction between the observers' perspective and the material they observe. My movement is created primarily from inspirations, such as trends found in American popular culture, various music styles, and other visual art forms. I choose to create work for traditional performance spaces using theatrical elements such as sets, lighting, music, and costumes to support the communication of an idea to an audience. I make movement based on unique collaborative frameworks that encourage creative equality between me and my dancers, but that are rooted in traditional choreographic models, such as theme and variation. The resulting movement phrases are organized into each dance, combining or adapting them to better suit the intention for the piece.

The work I create is primarily based in movement, from gestural to full-bodied, but always focused on a body moving in relationship to the performance space and always in line with the intention of the work. When I work with an idea, I consider the observers' perspective during the creative process. I seek out ways to use movement to provoke cognitive interactions with my audience and aspire to create works that elicit meaningful responses, allowing for personal interpretation.

Although being able to articulate who I am as an artist is a significant result, it is not the only fruition of this project. My professional aspirations are to teach dance in a college or university setting, where the student population includes both highly skilled dancers as well as those with little or no experience in dance. As an artist teaching in this type of setting, my prospective student population is similar to my prospective audience population. This project served as a stepping stone to the work I intend to make in my future professional career. I had the privilege to create this project with highly skilled, artistic dancers and present the work to an audience from various backgrounds. Future projects I create will be influenced greatly by my experience creating *Story.*

FUTURE GOALS

My aim for future projects is to continue exploring ways to consider the audience's perspective during the creative process. I also intend to continue investigating the collaborative processes constructed during this project and the use of narrative dance. In fact, this project has created an opportunity for me to work collaboratively with a local composer on a narrative ballet entitled *Figment,* which is scheduled to premiere in spring 2013. Although it is advantageous to have new opportunities to apply the knowledge I have gained, the most

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significant discovery I foresee affecting my future creative projects is the idea of staying true to the original intention of each project. Creating movement and supporting elements that directly relate to a specific intention, serves to create a final product that clearly communicates that intention to an audience. This idea may arguably seem elementary; however, it proved to be difficult to remember with a project, such as *Story*, that was in constant state of flux. Just as this entire project was constantly evolving, I hope to continue growing as an artistic educator always contributing to the field of dance.

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APPENDIX A

THE STORY

Scene one:

- Tableau, lights up on Girl, Villain enters and exits,

- Sister enters light with Girl as the rest of the stage enlivens

- Sister and Girl dance with cousins, end by excluding the Girl in the play

- Villain enters again for the Girl then exits

Scene two:

- Enters fantasy land looking for the Villain with her sister

- Finds the mother sitting enclosed in vine or cobb webs sad and mourning. The Mother is now a character that has lost her heart. The Girl tries to help her find it but the Mother gets mad and storms off at the end.

Scene Three:

- Girl confronts Villain in the Villains lair.

- The Mother is there with the villain looking over the sister.

- The aunt is there as the villains wife.

- The Cousins are with the Girl as support.

- When the girl confronts the Villain they try to sway her into staying with the Villain and the sister. All join in except the Villain.

Sway Dance – (Tango – Santa Maria) as filler music

Step left circle right toe front back step, swipe left foot behind,

Grapevine left right left right in passé circle arms back up

Lunge right out to side elbows pull side step L

Step R, attitude left side fall cross forward

RDJ left leg around to deep lunge left arms scoops

Hop on Right left in retire, left step side, right cross in front, left step back, right

rdj en'lair turn to right, step R

Pique left, Right leg envelope, hop left up

Step back turn to left jump arabesque pdb turn, lunge forced arch, right arms

circle back to third postion

Teeter back to step front together, two feet jump back land on right foot, turn to R

Twist pose with L foot back, plié chasse chaine arms up, drop to flat and drop

arms

Crease forward drop sissone left, right foot in out (quick) pdb turn back R, swipe

left foot

Partnerships 1/26

Hannah and Allison (twins), Xela and Amanda, Whitney and Ashley

First Scene Structure Draft 1/29

Lights up on Tableau of people in back yard party space all still then others to

silhouette and only Whitney is seen.

new Whitney – solo where Anthony begins to be seen

Sister duet at the end Anthony disappears *extend with Whitney and Anthony*

Unison all but Anthony – ends by splitting into 2 duets

2 duets at the same time: Whitney and Ashley reworked w/out Anthony and

Amanda and Xela.

3 more duets and a solo: Ashley and Amanda floor duet placed diagonally away

from one another and Hannah and Allison sticky duet center. Whitney solo

original phrase upper back SL and Xela/Anthony duet made from sister trio (Xela

replaces Whitney)

Move into duet with xela and Anthony

Unison again with a *new trio* where Whitney is trying to keep Anthony from

taking Xela and loses

Whitney tries to get the others attention but they continue to dance repetitively

without responding *rework unison to be more robotic and face different

directions

*Whitney attempt for attention is based on movement from the last trio

Whitney goes after Xela (others still dancing)

Lights out

<u>Version #2</u>

Title: Story

This is a story about a young woman that has to overcome her own

weaknesses to find her sister who she loves but has always taken for

granted.

Characters:

- Narrator (Anthony)

- Woman (Amanda)

- The woman's sister (Ashley)

- Two tangled travelers (Hannah and Allison)

Pre show: Trailer - on video

Introduction – on video transition to stage

- Narrator describes the magical world that they live in - video

- Narrator explains that a woman must learn to overcome her weaknesses

  in order to find her sister - video

- Narrator transitions to stage – the woman and sister enter

Possible text: "Welcome, I am the narrator. This is a story about a woman and her sister. They live in a world that is not like yours. It is a world where strange happenings are common and magic is all around. The woman and her sister have a relationship much like many siblings have. I will be your guide as you watch the story unfold of a woman that must learn the importance of not taking the things she loves for granted."

Scene 1: Woman takes her sister for granted

- Woman is collecting roots and berries for the family (not happy about it)
- Sister tries to help but does it in a way the woman doesn't like (sister is happy about it)
- Woman tells sister to stop and dismisses her
    - Shadow of Woman shows up on the cyc (through projection)
- Sister goes to investigate the trees and bushes close by
- Sister tries to get woman's attention
- Woman dismisses sister again
    - Shadow of Woman shows up on cyc again (through projection)
- Sister wonders off distracted
- Woman can't find her sister and panics
    - Shadow of Woman shows up again (through projection)

Video Interlude 1: Sister falls asleep behind tree

- Narrator explains that the sister wondered off and falls asleep by the tree – sister is on video, narrator on stage
- Narrator explains that the Woman must learn a lesson – narrator transition back to video

Scene 2: Woman meets the tangled travelers

- Woman and a shadow of her (through projection) are on stage

- The tangled travelers enter, and the shadow disappears

- Tangled travelers ask Woman for help

  - The tangled travelers are always fighting because they got tangled together and can't get apart - tangled up in each others lives to the point of no return

- The woman tries to help

- The tangled travelers can't agree on whether or not to listen to the woman

  - Shadow shows up (through projection) when the woman gets frustrated

- The tangled travelers struggle to get apart from each other and can't - they agree to accept the woman's help

- Woman feels sympathy - helps them by untangling them from each other

- The tangled travelers celebrate their independence, and mourn it as well

- The tangled travelers reconcile and work together but independently

- Woman gets ignored by the tangled travelers, no "thank you"

- Shadow shows up (through projection) as the woman gets angry and the travelers leave

Video Interlude 2: Narrator checks for understanding

- Narrator asks: Did the woman not learn from her experience with the tangled travelers?

- Narrator asks: How does it feel to being taken for granted, unappreciated?

Scene 3: Woman is confronted by herself

- Woman and her shadow are together on stage

- See's the shadow in the projection and begins to investigate its relationship with her
- This interaction escalates into woman trying to grab Shadow and finds herself facing a series of mirrors
- Woman signals that there has been a change –
- The travelers shows up again and help the woman see that instead of running away she needs to face at her reflection
- Because the woman faced herself in the mirror she can now recognize how she took her sister for granted – shadow disappears
- The narrator pops up on video

Video Interlude 3: Sister is awakened "found"

- Narrator wakes sister up - on video
- Was the sister always sleeping behind the tree?
- Why couldn't woman see her sister sleeping?
- We see the sister waking up on stage

Scene 4: Woman shows her sister appreciation, respect, and love

- The woman sees her sister and greets her warmly
- The sister is confused that the woman is happy to see her
- The woman invites the sister to pick berries with her again
- Sister and woman work together, and head back for home

Video Interlude 4: The Wrap Up and Credits

- Narrator on stage: What a day for the woman?
- Where did her shadow go?
- How did the woman learn her lesson?
- Credits roll on the video, bows on stage

Title: Story

This is a story about a young woman that has to overcome her own weaknesses to find her sister who she loves but has always taken for granted.

Characters:

- Narrator

- Woman

- The woman's sister

- Traveler 1

- Traveler 2

Pre show: Trailer - on video

Introduction: Anthony on video

- Narrator describes the magical world that they live in - video

- Narrator explains that a woman must learn to overcome her weaknesses in order to find her sister - video

Scene 1: Woman takes her sister for granted

- Woman is collecting roots and berries for the family (not happy about it)

- Sister tries to help but does it in a way the woman doesn't like (is happy about it)

- Woman tells sister to stop and dismisses her

- Sister continues to try to help

- Woman gets frustrated with the sister

- Woman and sister have a confrontation

- Sister wonders off upset

- Woman can't find her sister and panics

Video Interlude 1: Sister decides that being mad is not helpful, Travelers find treasure in the forest, Sister falls asleep behind tree

- Narrator explains that the sister wondered off but decides to go back and help
- Narrator introduces the travelers
- Narrator explains that the sister falls asleep behind a tree

Scene 2: Travellers enter stage fighting over the new treasure, the Woman meets the travellers

- The tangled travelers enter
- Tangled travelers fight over the treasure
- The woman tries to help
- The tangled travelers intimidate the woman and then ignore her
- The tangled travelers continue to struggle until they become tangled
- Woman feels sympathy - helps them by untangling them from each other
- The travelers reconcile and work together but independently
- Woman gets ignored by the tangled travelers, no "thank you"

Video Interlude 2: Narrator checks for understanding

- Narrator asks: Did the woman not learn from her experience with the tangled travelers?
- Narrator asks: How does it feel to being taken for granted, unappreciated?

Scene 3: Woman is angry and must face herself

- Woman goes through two cycles of emotion, anger, frustration and sadness

- The travelers come back to help her during her times of sadness

- The travelers help the woman see herself in a new light

- Woman signals that there has been a change – instead of running away she looks at her reflection

Video Interlude 3: Sister is awakened "found"

- Narrator says it is time to wake up

- The sister wakes up

Scene 4: Woman shows her sister appreciation, respect, and love

- The woman sees her sister and greets her warmly

- The sister is confused that the woman is happy to see her

- The woman and sister tell each other about their journeys

- The woman invites the sister to pick berries with her again

- Sister and woman work together, and head back for home

Video Interlude 4: The Wrap Up and Credits

- Narrator sums up how the sisters' relationship has changed

- Narrator states the moral of the story

- Credits roll on the video – dancers bow on stage

Final Version (Summary)

A narrator appears from out of nowhere and shows you a portal that leads to a fantasy world. He introduces you to the characters in the story he is about to tell, two sisters seemingly of the air and sky, and two travellers more of the trees and earth. The narrator moves the characters into their starting positions and lets the story begin. The sisters play in the forest with one another. The chase and run happily through the trees. The narrator pauses the story and resets the

stage. You now see the travellers move through the forest. They are aggressive with each other and the things around them.

The narrator again pauses the story and brings you back to the sisters at play. They begin a game of hide and seek but as the older sister hides the travellers enter their play area. The travellers are curious and a bit mischievous so they lull the younger sister into a stupor and steal her away. The older sister, see her sibling taken away and does not know what to do. She builds up the courage to go after the travellers and finds herself being chased by them. When they finally catch up to her a battle of wills ensues. The Travellers try to hypnotize the older sister as they did with the younger one but in a moment of distraction she gets away.

Distraught and alone the older sister cries in the forest. The narrator appears and is moved by her sadness. He calls to the travellers and instructs them to give the younger sister back. When the younger sister is returned, both sisters celebrate and eventually resume their playing in the forest. The narrator then returns to end the tale, showing that the sisters are back together and all is well. He closes the portal to the fantasy world and disappears from where he came.

APPENDIX B

COSTUMES, SET DESIGNS AND BUDGET

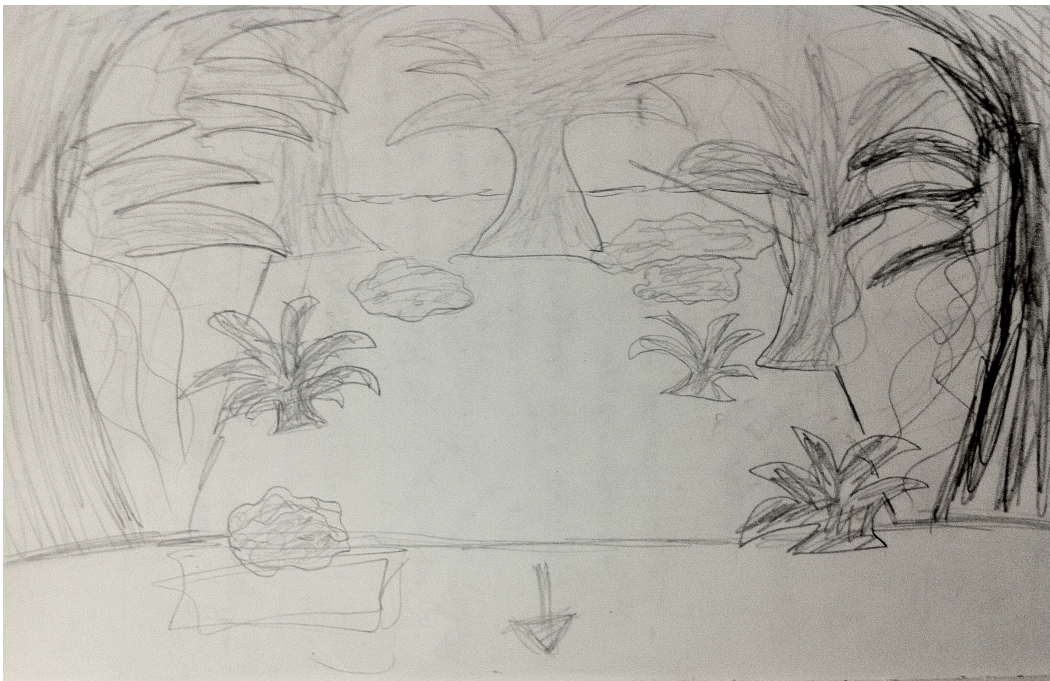Costume Designs by Rhianna Rheardon
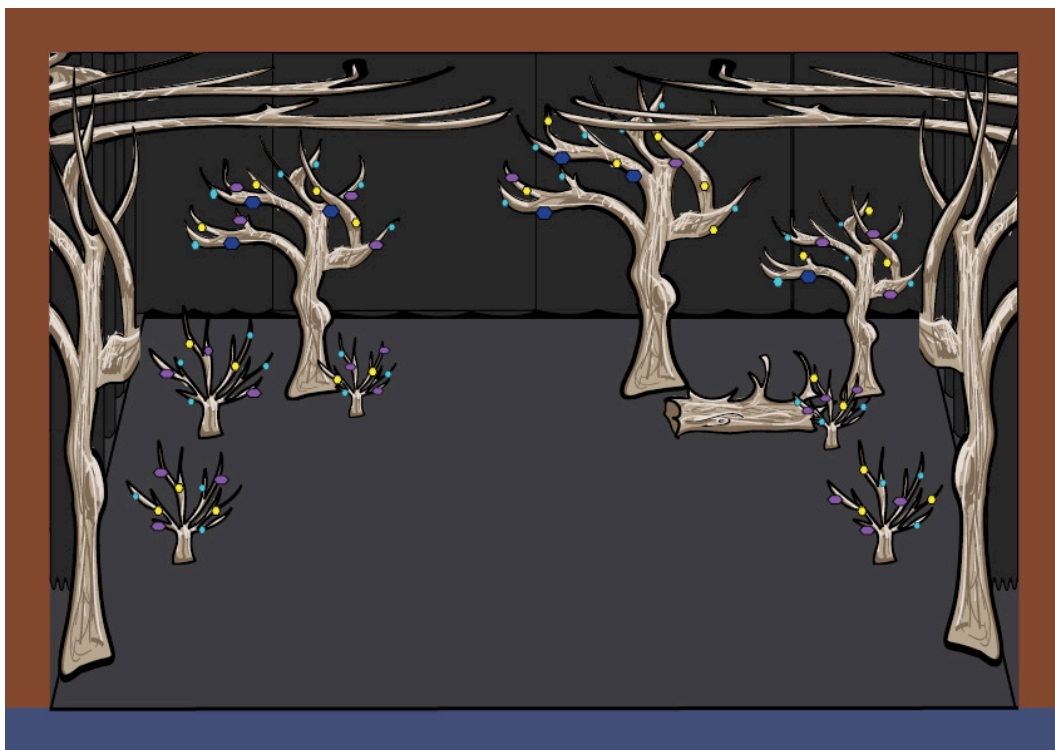
The Narrator

The Sisters

The Travellers

Set Design

Concept Drawing

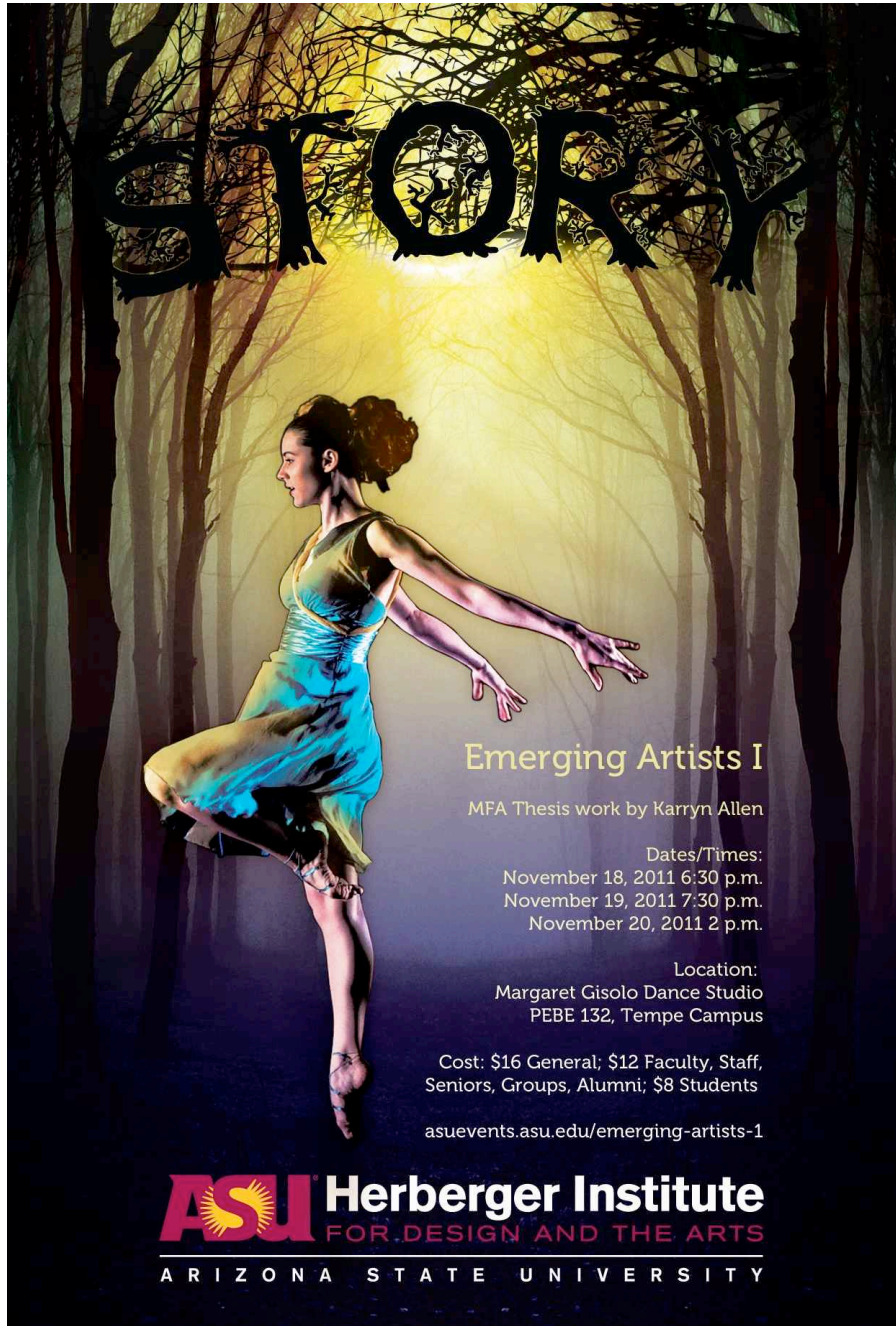Initial Configuration

Final Configuration

BUDGET

SET/SCENERY		
Muslin	Dharma Trading Company	$265.67
Styrofoam Balls assorted	Michaels 9/22/11	$31.94
Styrofoam Cutter & Batteries	Michaels 9/22/11	$19.98
Paddle Green Floral wire	Michaels 9/22/11	$1.99
Craft smart 15pc foam brushes	Michaels 9/22/11	$3.99
Styrofoam Balls assorted (minus coupon)	Michaels 9/26/11	$11.57
Stryofoam Balls assorted	Michaels 8/31/11	$4.99
INT Paint	Home Depot 9/16/11	$10.34
Paint Brushes	Home Depot 9/16/11	$7.27
GLN INT FL Paint	Home Depot 9/14/11	$25.32
Paint brush	Home Depot 9/23/11	$4.97
GTL PRPL or AQ BLU paint	Home Depot 9/23/11	$44.90
COSTUMES		
Costume Designs	Rhianna Reardon	$110
2 dresses (sisters) 2 shirts, 1 vest (travellers)	Last Chance	$47.93
Shorts	Amazon.com	$17.45
Pieces of fabric, leather and ribbon	SAS Fabric	$14.25
Elastic headbands	Safeway	$14.18
Pants for travelers	Walmart 8/24/11	$10.93
Pants for travelers	Walmart 8/16/11	$10.70
2 shirts, jeans, and coat	Goodwill 9/1/11	$25.53
LIGHTING		
Lighting design	Laura Atwood	$200
MUSIC		
Music Rights	Audiojungle.net	$333
TOTAL		$1216.90

The School of Dance, Arizona State University, reimbursed me $200.00.

APPENDIX C

PRODUCTION POSTCARD AND PROGRAM

of Arts in Dance Choreography. She has performed with X-Factor Dance, Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, Jan Van Dyke Dance Group, John Gamble Dance Theatre, Even Exchange Dance Theatre, as well as numerous other independent artists. Kathryn was a guest artist at Appalachian State University in 2007 and received the Affiliate Artist Grant from Meredith College 2008. She has performed and presented her work in North Carolina, West Virginia, New York, Washington D.C., and Arizona. Kathryn's current artistic inquiries are focused on sensory awareness within the creative process and what makes a space a place.

Concert Production Staff

School of Dance Production Staff

Director/ Artistic Director	Simon Dove
Production Manager	Carolyn Koch
Technical Director	Melissa S. Rex
Costume Designer	Jacqueline Benard
Sound Engineer	William Swayze

Emerging Artists I

Artistic Director	Becky Dyer, Eileen Standley
Production Stage Manager	Jessica Bartholomew
Assistant Stage Managers	Kristopher K.Q. Pourzal
Light Board Operator	Denise Stein
Sound Board Operator	Juan Rodriguez
Stage Crew	Members of DCE 260, THP 201/301

Upcoming Events:

Emerging Artists II	Dec. 2-4
Dance Lab, FAC 122	

ASU Herberger Institute
FOR DESIGN AND THE ARTS
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

School of Dance

Emerging Artists I

Friday, Nov. 18, at 6:30 p.m.
Saturday, Nov. 19, at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, Nov. 20, at 2 p.m.
Margaret Gisolo Dance Studio Theatre
PEBE 132

Program Inside

Story

Choreographer:	Karryn Allen in collaboration with performers
Music:	*Fantasy* by lollipop music, *Piano 01* by SparrowArt, *Tale* by barpaff, *Inside the Cave* by soundroll-music, *Pondering the Problem* by Adam Captured, *Magical Madness* by BeatheBeat, *The Loss* by TitovSergey, *Magical Tiptoe* by bitwerx, *Mystical Adventure* by r-mafi, *The Fairy Tale Beginning* by Patrick Honda, *Demonicon* by mrFuby, *Believe in Yourself* by stompbox, *Glockenspiel* by kai-ser, *Forest Village* by Benjamin Tibbetts, *Becoming* by bluegestalt
Lighting Designer:	Laura Atwood
Costume Designer:	Rhianna Rheardon
Costume Construction:	Jacqueline Benard
Set Design:	Karryn Allen
Performers:	Ashley Lauren Barnard, Hannah Marie Cooper, Allison Marie Edwards, Anthony James Kelly, Amanda Beth McFarlane

This piece was a collaborative effort between the performers and the choreographer. *Special thanks for kind permission from Jevgrni Chernov for *Magical Spell Effect 05*.

20 minute intermission

A Sense Of

Choreographer:	Kathryn Ullom
Composer:	Robin Vining
Lighting Designer:	Melissa S. Rex
Costume Designer:	Jacqueline Benard, Kathryn Ullom
Set Designer:	Melissa S. Rex, Kathryn Ullom
Video Editor:	Laura Pellegrino
Performers:	Anthony Gonzales, Michaela Konzal, Laura Pellegrino, Ashlee Ramsey, Laurel Wall MacLane

Biographies:

Karryn Allen has been a dance student and instructor in the Phoenix, AZ area since 2001. She has years of experience teaching dance to a wide range of ages in the studio, school, and community setting. Karryn has earned an Associates of Fine Arts Degree: Dance from Scottsdale Community College, a Bachelor's Degree in Secondary Dance Education from Ottawa University, and is currently working on her Master's of Fine Arts in Dance as a third-year graduate student at Arizona State University. Karryn has had the opportunity to choreograph for two ASU Main Stage productions, *Dreaming Darwin* directed by School of Theatre and Film professor Lance Gharavi and *The Skriker* directed by MFA candidate Joya Scott. She has also collaborated on movement for Scottsdale Community College's *Midsummer Night's Dream* with director Randy Messersmith. Her current professional interests include the use of somatic movement practices in dance pedagogy to further student embodiment and understanding of dance technique.

Kathryn Ullom is a third year graduate candidate in the School of Dance. She graduated from the University of North Carolina, Greensboro in 2004 where she received a Bachelors

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