

Life's Gifts

by

Tanya Dimitrova Dimitrov

A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Fine Arts

Approved April 2023 by the
Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Becky Dyer, Co-Chair
Carolyn Koch, Co-Chair
Dave Fossum

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2023

ABSTRACT

This MFA project in dance involved a dance concert that fused together different socio-cultural dance forms. Goals of the project included engaging the audience members in ways that are meaningful and express cultural identity, looking at similar and contrasting values or norms between different dance styles, and seeing how that might be expressed in a Western concert theatrical space or be adapted to that space. The research explored the themes of fusion, emotional states, and engagement through collaborative processes of choreography. A series of dance sections were developed based on different cultural movement styles that were ultimately woven together into a live performance.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this achievement to my family for their unwavering support and love throughout my education. No effort on my part will be enough to thank you for the sacrifice you have made on my behalf. Without you and your encouragement, it would be impossible for me to achieve my dreams.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my professors for their guidance and support throughout my master's journey. I would also like to sincerely thank my committee members for helping me develop my dance concert and research and for providing valuable guidance and encouragement throughout my studies.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose Statement.....	6
Themes of the Research.....	6
Statement of Choreographic Intent.....	9
Definition of Terms.....	10
Delimitations.....	10
2 METHODOLOGY/PROSESSES FOLLOWED IN CREATING THE WORK....	11
Beginnings and Evolution.....	11
Process.....	15
Value and Impact.....	17
3 ANALYSIS OF THE PROJECT, CONCLUSIONS, AND FUTURE	
DIRECTIONS	18
REFERENCES	21

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I was born in Sofia, Bulgaria and grew up in the village of Petarch. A love for Bulgarian Folk Dances has always been a part of my life. I started dancing in the local Cultural Center at the early age of 6 years old. My father, Dimitar Naidenov, is one of the prominent dancers of our Cultural Center. I loved going to dance classes. If the love of dance can be inherited, then for me this is exactly the case.

Each rehearsal, each concert, each new horo (traditional Bulgarian dance) and new choreography learned, and the sweet stories and games I experienced with my friends in the dance hall, all showed me that the only thing I would really like to continue to do and study is the art of dance. So, when I was 13 years old, I applied to be a student at the National School of Dance Art in Sofia, Bulgaria. Fortunately for me, I was accepted.

The five years I spent in this school were some of the most valuable in my life. Every day, from morning to evening we studied all general education disciplines, as well as special subjects such as Bulgarian folk dance, ballet, contemporary dance, Historic dances, dances of the nations, improvisation, piano, dance history, Bulgarian folk music, methodology and practice. The friendships I built during this time are friendships that I feel will last forever. Through studies and disciplined practice with teachers we respected and esteemed, we grew as individuals to become more knowledgeable and confident.

After graduating from the National School of Dance Art in 2003, I received an offer to go to Turkey and become part of the newly created professional dance company

Hurrem Sultan. About 85 dancers participated in this production. They were of many different nationalities: Bulgarians, Turks, Caucasians, Ukrainians, English, Georgians, and Dutch. At that time I was 18 years old, and I had become a part of an international show where I was directly confronted with the life of a professional dancer. Every day was a test and a challenge for each of us. We had to learn quickly, develop and maintain our skills, and always show our desire to improve. It was not easy, we had to demonstrate that we deserved our place in the show.

The rehearsals, which were held every day from morning to night, entailed learning and maintaining different dance styles and forms. All of the traditional Turkish dances were refracted through the modern prism of Yildiz Chankaya (the main choreographer and founder of Hurem Sultan). From 2003 to 2008 I had the good fortune to be part of four different major international professional dance companies (Hurem Sultan dance company, Magic You New dance company, Sultans of the Dance company and Anatolian dance company). I developed as a professional dancer by learning, improving and consolidating my skills in different dance styles. I also had opportunities to perform several solo roles and had opportunities to be part of several big dance tours in Cyprus, China, the Netherlands, Canada, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Germany. In 2008, my last year working/performing with Sultans of the Dance, in addition to my other work as a professional dancer, I began to gain experience as a teacher.

In 2008 I returned to Bulgaria, where I started practicing Street Dance (the name of the new Hip Hop style I was studying). In the same year, I became a part of a dance group called Akadamus. It was very interesting and challenging for me to start learning a

new form of dance like Hip Hop. After my return from a dance tour in Finland with Akadamus, I started working as a choreographer for the Voice Academy, the first professional private music school in Bulgaria. The Voice Academy was the place where I created my first unique dance steps and took my first step into becoming a choreographer. For the next 6 years, I had the opportunity to work together with a very creative team of dedicated artists and to create and realize many wonderful art projects with them.

While working as a choreographer at the Voice Academy, I started teaching Bulgarian folk dances to children in the kindergarten of my village, Petach. During this time, I also received an invitation to be a teacher and choreographer of all of the dance groups at the Cultural Center in Petarch, from which my whole dance journey had begun. I also started teaching Bulgarian folk dances in the local school of the village of Petach and choreographed for a modern dance group in a neighboring town.

A few months later, in 2013, I received an invitation to become a teacher at the private vocational school and high-school "Drujba" in Sofia, where I led several dance groups. I led and was responsible for groups that specialized and performed Ballet, Modern Dances, Bulgarian Folk Dances, Turkish Folk Dances, Balkan Folk Dances. During this period I formed a performance dance group to learn and perform Belly dance. After living in Turkey and learning Belly dancing from professionals, I fell in love with the style. I felt a sense of intuitive resonation/connection with the dance style because I was able to explore and express my femininity through Belly dancing. This connection was developed because the teachers used narratives/stories to make meaning out of the

physical form of movement.

In 2015 I registered my own dance company, TDS DanceArt, which was based in Sofia, Bulgaria. My husband and I moved to the United States of America in 2016. He loves to dance. We created the Bulgarian folk dance company in Phoenix. My husband named the dance group “Balkanik”, and I have served as the company choreographer since its inception. The company was founded in October 2016. First, we had only a children's folk dance group. Then, a few months after the start of the children's group, we formed an adult dance group. The Bulgarian community in Phoenix is quite active. There are Bulgarian people located all over Phoenix, especially in northern Phoenix. Balkanik performs at 2 to 4 different festivals every year. Balkanik also produces an annual concert every year in May.

In October 2017, my husband and I founded the first Bulgarian Folklore Festival "Tupan Bie" in Phoenix. Two years later, I started teaching ballet and modern dance to children, and teaching ballet and belly dance to adults at the dance studio NRG Ballroom in Tempe. Even though I had started my own dance group and taught at a few other places, I still missed working with professional dancers (as I had been used to working with dancers of various levels even before I came to live in the United States). That was one of the reasons I started researching universities in the area and that's how I came across the dance program at ASU. When I found the dance program I felt great excitement because professionally the stage I was in had reached a point where I wanted and had a lot to give from my professional experience and knowledge. Subsequently, after the research I did, I realized that in order to be able to impart my knowledge to

university students, it is desirable to have a degree from the United States. So in 2020, I enrolled in a grad program at Arizona State University because I wanted to be able to teach as a professor at universities in the United States of America.

I am a curious person who loves to learn new dance forms and new techniques. My first interaction with Somatics was through the Creative Practices I class with Mary Fitzgerald and Eileen Standley. Their method of teaching made me aware of the unconscious ways in which I was working with Somatics even before I came to know the actual term. Later, in Becky Dyer's Movement Practices I class, I was reading the book *My Grandmother's Hands* by Resmaa Menakem in which the author talks about trauma and how to deal with it somatically. I was also exposed to the Laban Movement Analysis methods in Becky Dyer's course, which expanded my awareness of my body and how I interacted with the world around me. The experiences from Creative Practices and Movement Practices courses strengthened my relationship with Somatics, which was unconscious before, and my intuitive ways of choreographing and teaching were reinforced. Now graduating with an MFA in Dance at ASU, I can say that I have definitely furthered my knowledge and feel more than ready to dive into the life of a dance educator at the university level.

As a choreographer, my dance works are very much connected to the emotional states I am experiencing at the moment of creation. With the knowledge I have gained throughout the years, I created my Applied Project Concert exploring traditional Bulgarian folk dance and music, postmodern-contemporary dance, and oriental dance (belly dancing), using somatic approaches while working with my dancers. The

knowledge I gained during my studies at ASU has brought me to a level where I have grown enough to reach a point where I can present on stage all the dance styles that pique my interest. Presenting such a complex work was a challenge that I set for myself, and for which I am grateful that it was realized.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of my MFA Applied project was to investigate how I may fuse together different socio-cultural dance forms, to develop my unique process of choreographing, to engage audience members in ways that are meaningful and express cultural identity, to look at similar and contrasting values or norms between different dance styles, and to see how that might be expressed in a Western concert theatrical space or be adapted to that space. A secondary intention was to continue building the Bulgarian folk dance community I have been working to establish in Phoenix since 2017.

Themes of the Research

I chose to explore the themes of fusion, emotional states and engagement through collaborative processes of choreography. I chose to develop a series of dance sections based on different cultural movement styles that were ultimately woven together into a live performance.

Fusion

Traditional dance forms serve a society's need for stability, while dance

innovations serve to revitalize a society. Traditional dance forms such as Bulgarian folk dance and oriental dance (belly dancing) carry within them the cultural values, norms, and expectations of the society from which they originated. I believe that traditional practices and folklore need to be saved because they provide people with a basis to understand where they come from. This includes understanding and valuing the customs and rituals practiced, clothing worn, music, dance, and oral traditions. I believe that creating a fusion between multiple art forms is a sustainable, innovative, accessible, and interesting pathway that will both reduce the loss of folklore traditions and help me to connect with a global audience.

Somatic practices provide opportunities for individuals to explore an interaction between their physical and spiritual selves, and to strengthen the inherent connection(s) between body, consciousness and soul. Through my studies in graduate school, I discovered a strong relationship between Bulgarian folk dances and somatics, postmodern-contemporary dances and somatics, and between what is known in Turkey as oriental dance (belly dancing) and somatics.

I value the connection between somatics and Bulgarian dance (horo). The movement of the Bulgarian horo, seen from above, shows very clearly how the dance breathes, in a pattern of expanding and condensing. Dancing the horo gives dancers a feeling of freedom, a feeling of unity. Bulgarian horo gives energy, peace and joy to the dancers. They feel relaxed within the group, trusting and relying on each other; there is a sense of belonging. It is as if an invisible force enters into, heals and transports the dancers to a better and calmer place. The natural connection between culture, character,

temperament and dance has an important role to play in somatic practices as well.

Postmodern-contemporary dance is another dance style that I feel is closely related to Somatics because it provides free expression of emotions, a sense of sharing and storytelling. For me abstraction, ease and openness are closely related to postmodern-contemporary dance. Every movement performed by the body breathes and moves in its own space, regardless of the characteristics of this movement. It is important to pay attention to the origin and essence of a movement in order to reach the essential source of energy and the meaning each movement carries. For example, somatic practices support the expressive movements of Turkish oriental dance (belly dancing) and the feminine, intuitive and personal emotions experienced by the dancer.

Emotional states

No matter our nationality, no matter the color of our skin, no matter what language we speak or what we believe or refuse to believe, we all experience feelings. The emotions evoked in us are felt very deeply inside our bodies. Our emotions and feelings are caused by what is happening in our lives. I value the emotional part of human nature, the seat of the feelings and sentiments. I view my fusion of Bulgarian folk dance, postmodern-contemporary dance, Turkish oriental dance (belly dancing), and somatics as a way to emotionally connect with diverse groups of people. For instance, by presenting the emotion of love through the Turkish oriental dance (belly dancing), and by presenting sadness through postmodern contemporary dance, I wish for my project to create a bridge between the emotional states, the audience and the art forms. And, because people

usually remember how they feel, I hope this emotional experience connects the audience with traditional folklore and demonstrates the value of preserving traditions.

Engage and Collaboration

When I started my master's program at ASU, I knew that I wanted to collaborate with other artists who were at the university. My Applied project was the perfect opportunity for me to realize this desire. I contacted Takela King, an undergrad dance student who also writes poetry. She agreed to write a verse that inspired the project. I also collaborated with a percussionist musician, Dr. Sonya Branch, who is an accompanist for the postmodern contemporary dance class at ASU I was previously enrolled in. The opportunity to collaborate with different artists in this project was inspiring and very valuable.

Statement of Choreographic Intent

The reason why I decided to include so many facets to my choreographic project, such as building from different dance styles and multiple art forms (dance, visual arts, multimedia, music and poetry), was because it represented all of my interests that excite me as an artist and educator. I sought to interweave the sentiment I feel for the culture from which I come and to develop collaborative relationships with the dancers and the artists I worked with in the process. I also wanted to integrate my knowledge of video recording and editing into the work in order to expand my creative practice skills and approaches. For me, it was the perfect opportunity to bring together artists I've worked

with for years and those I've only known recently, combining both professionals and amateurs, in order to test my abilities as a leader of such a complex project.

Definition of Terms

Horo: is the name of various Bulgarian folk dances, which are performed in a rotating circle or a line dance.

Somatics: Somatics is an inquiry into our “lived body” by observing and exploring ourselves through sensing and moving.

Postmodern-Contemporary dance: Postmodern-contemporary dance is a style of expressive dance. Postmodern-contemporary dancers strive to connect the mind and the body through fluid dance movements.

Emotion: is the feelings I live with, the feelings that fill my life. These include joy, happiness, sadness, admiration, love, anger, strength, passion, delight, despair, pride, gratitude, control, bliss, helplessness, power, sexuality, respect and tenderness.

Formal dance background: is when the dancer received their dance education from an accredited institution (eg a dance school/university).

Non-formal dance: is where the dancer has not received their dance education from an accredited institution (eg a dance school/university).

Delimitations

I decided to work with dancers who are come from very different dance backgrounds. I decided to work only with three dance forms/styles (Bulgarian folk dance, Turkish oriental dance (belly dancing) and postmodern-contemporary dance).

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY/PROCESSES FOLLOWED IN CREATING THE WORK

Beginnings and evolution

I wanted to create an artistic work with two groups of dancers with contrasting backgrounds, dancers coming from both formal and non-formal dance backgrounds. I decided to work with undergraduate and graduate students-dancers from ASU as well as dancers from the Bulgarian dance group, "Balkanik", the dance company which I lead. I ended up working with 22 dancers from ASU and 6 dancers from Balkanik in the project. All dancers had a chance to try an unusual way of moving, and a different way of expressing their emotions.

Traditional dancers who only had experience dancing Bulgarian folk dances were given the opportunity to explore new ways of moving. Additionally, the contemporary and hip hop dancers were able to explore unusual ways of moving and to use different dance vocabulary to represent diverse emotions and to express ways emotions pass through their bodies.

I wanted to work with a diversity of artists from different areas. I collaborated with Sonya Branch, a musician who played a drum solo for my solo choreography. I worked and collaborated with Petya Dankova, a sound and music designer, singer, and amazing artist and friend, who I have known for 10 years. I had been working with Petya when I was living in Bulgaria and was pleased that I had a chance to collaborate with her for this project. Nadejda Stoilova, a singer, sang one of the authentic Bulgarian songs for the project. Abbas Karacan, a Turkish musician, composed and played a part of the Belly

dance music for the project. Theodosii Spassov, a Bulgarian musician, played kaval (Bulgarian folk instrument) and “Bulgara” (Bulgarian music band).

My work with the other artists was very interesting and productive. Collaborating with the musicians was extremely motivating. Abbas Karacan lives in Turkey and is a professional musician whom I have known for many years. Over several months and countless phone conversations, we were able to realize the vision I had for some of the Belly Dance music in the project.

Sonia Branch is an outstanding professional musician. My work with her took my creativity in new directions I hadn't explored before. Several of our rehearsals were based on improvisation, which created a highly emotional environment and foundation upon which we built our piece together. Having the opportunity to work with Sonia definitely enriched my process and challenged my creativity and desire to discover new opportunities to realize my vision. It's hard to put into words what it feels like to collaborate and create with an artist of such stature. During my work with Sonia, I only had to open my senses, trust and reveal my soul. Then the magic of art making happened. We had conversations where we discussed the emotions I wanted to convey through our piece and talked about the typical uneven Bulgarian musical rhythms, which she subsequently interpreted in her own way in the work. Sonia was unable to participate in the live concert in the same space, so we ended up recording her music and broadcasting it through multimedia. I danced live to her multimedia recording. The connection between the live performance and pre-recorded performance was powerful and fascinating to me.

I was honored that Theodosii Spasov, a world-famous musician who plays the kaval (Bulgarian folk instrument), gave me permission to use a fragment of his work for the second time. He is a very talented artist who creates exceptional works, some of which are a fusion between traditional Bulgarian folklore and jazz.

Working with Petya Dankova was perhaps one of the most exciting processes in the realization of the musical part of the project. During the entire month of June, I was able to travel to Bulgaria (where Petya lives) and work with her. She designed the whole musical layout of the project. She also sang two full songs for the project and some of the vocal parts. Even before I left for Bulgaria, Petya and I had several conversations, during which I explained in detail the overall concept of the project and what I would like to achieve. After I returned to Bulgaria, we met for a few days and spent time engrossed in a full-day creative process. This was extremely fruitful. Besides the musical concept for the project, we also worked with Daria Mitusheva, who recorded her voice reading the lyrical text I had written. Thanks to everyone's professionalism and organized work, we were able to get things done extremely quickly in the little time we had. With Petya's help, we were able to realize phenomenal results. We used the music studio in the building of "Voice Academy", (School of Contemporary Music Education) of which Petya is co-founder and artistic director. Petya is a friend of mine who I have known for many years, and for me it was very emotionally important to work with her on this project.

While I was in Bulgaria, I also worked with Nadezhda Stoilova, who recorded the Bulgarian Folk Song. I had the honor of working with one of the up-and-coming Bulgarian actresses, Daria Mitusheva, who recorded the voice and gave life to the

monologues I wrote for the project. My stay in Bulgaria also allowed me to record the video and do the editing for the multimedia, which I was very excited about. I was thrilled to be able to work with so many interesting artists and professionals who helped to strengthen the craft and message of my Applied Project.

Cari Smith and Snezhana Ivanova were the costume designers who added even more glamor and beauty to the project presentation. Cari Smith helped me a lot with the realization of the Belly Dance costumes and helped bring life to the vision I had for the project. Reflecting on the belly dance costume for the piece, I realized it was important for me to be able to show female strength, grace and energy, not only through the choreography and music, but also through the costumes. The costume and accessories were made in two stages. During the first stage, I decided to start with the costumes of the main soloists in the dance, and for them, in addition to costumes, huge accessory wings were made. This helped to depict even more clearly the grace and strength of the woman, her passion and femininity. The dance movements were completely aligned with the wings, which enhanced the performance effect of this dance even more. In the second stage of preparation of this costume, fans with veils were made. They were intended for the second group of soloists and the main dancers. The overall concept of this fragment of the project was extremely well thought out and executed.

Snezhana Ivanova lives in Bulgaria. She designed the costumes for the Bulgarian piece and sent it to me in Arizona. I know her for many years, she is one of the dance costume designers I was working with when I was living in Bulgaria.

Finally, Carolyn Koch is a technical production professional, who helped me to

capture the emotional expressiveness of the work through her lighting design. And last but not least, I would like to acknowledge the uncompromising work of the production crew who ensured the smooth and successful conduct of the Applied Project Concert.

Process

One of my major questions was: How might my audience be affected by the emotions conveyed through my Applied Project? I was hoping that everyone would be able to experience a diversity of emotions such as joy, happiness, sadness, admiration, love, anger, strength, passion, delight, despair, pride, gratitude, bliss, helplessness, power, sexuality, respect, and tenderness. I wanted the audience to emerge with softer hearts. I desired for them to emerge with a sense of how much they have in common with each other. I wanted to remind people in the audience to value their lives, to appreciate their loved ones, to appreciate the little things in life, to smile, and to appreciate being alive in the here and now. I hoped my work would help them remember how colorful and diverse life can be, to think about what is important for themselves, and to realize what is not so important.

The feedback I received immediately after the concert through informal conversations, filled me with extremely strong emotions, which definitely made me feel proud of the achieved result. People from the Bulgarian community who attended the concert shared with me how emotionally affected they were, how they cried watching the concert. Watching the concert helped them to recall their own kind of family roots and their nationality, and to be more proud and interested in their background. Students from

the university expressed how emotionally different parts of the project affected them and how they felt a deep meaning and message.

One of the most exciting and interesting experiences for me was the feedback I received from the dancers. Each one of them shared with me the emotions they were overcome with throughout the process of the project. There were tears of happiness, shared emotions, gratitude, dreams fulfilled, goals realized, young people trembling with excitement, and revealing their souls to the audience. After the feedback from the dancers, I realized that what we had created is much more than a concert. For my Defense video presentation I asked my dancers to share their thoughts from the experience they had being part of the project and being able to work with me. Here are some quotes from them. Isabella Leep said, “My most memorable moment was learning the solo part that I had, and the passion that Tanya passed on to me...it was really unique”, “I feel very honored to have been able to work with her, and I hope we get to again soon”. Shayla Eshelman stated, “ Working with Tanya was absolutely amazing, she has such a big hart, such big ideas and pictures and it is amazing that she doesn’t do it alone, she loves to include people, I loved all the time I got to talk with her one o one and her ideas and her giving me advise, so I thing that was one really important part for me. I pray to work more with you in the future”. Lourdes Loera said “For me this show was very emotional impactful experience, ...the fact that she was willing to work with such a broad range of people and put this together the way she did. I really appreciated and enjoyed the way she incorporated teaching non-professional driven dancers and incorporated us into the show. . . that was also very admirable”. Honestine Mbuyenge said, “I have never had a

choreographer be as caring throughout of all process, I never been threaded as kindly, I field like I was a person who is part of the project rather just another dancer. She had individual connection, care, though, concern for every person. Tanya is just an amazing person to work with . . .she celebrated people's individual bodies instead of saying 'you have to do exactly what I am doing' especially in the form that not all of us are familiar with. Tanya, thank you for the first time in my life, making me feel seen in the rehearsal process, and making me feel valued as an artist myself , as a human being, as a friend, as a student, literally of the things". Jaquelin Raygoza said "Tanya is kind, patient and welcomes all with open arms and an open heart".

Value and Impact

For me as an artist, choreographer and educator, it was extremely important that my dancers felt comfortable in their bodies, and that they could convey the emotional energy that reflected their personal essence. The questions I often asked myself throughout the process was whether my dancers were comfortable with the atypical dance styles they encountered in this project. Do each of them feel valued and seen? How do amateur dancers who have never danced and gone on stage really feel? Fortunately for me, I found that it was all worth it, every effort, every rehearsal, every difficulty overcome was just a stepping stone on the path we built together.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS OF THE PROJECT, CONCLUSIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

After the realization of the concert and the feedback I received, it is difficult to express in words the satisfaction and emotion I feel. It was very important for me to hear the opinion of both my professors and friends (professional dancers), as well as people from the Bulgarian community, my personal friends, and my dancers. The way in which each of these people was touched is unique to each of them. The personal emotion that I wanted to convey, the thrill that I wanted to awaken, and the moment of a deep sigh or pause of breath, reflected the soul of the audience.

As part of my reflection process, I have thought about what I would do differently if I were to do this project again. I am grateful for the things I learned from this process. For the limited time I had, I feel proud of what the dancers achieved both on technical and emotional levels. For future similar projects, I would plan for a longer period of rehearsal time with the dancers. The rehearsals are always a factor in the preparation process of this kind of project. My MFA co-chair Carolyn Koch offered, “You always want more, but you have to do what you can with what you have”. The number of rehearsals I had available was a big factor in my decision-making when preparing the choreography for the project.

My philosophy is to invite everyone into the dance experience. I emphasize inclusivity, and I like to work with a variety of artists. For me, this project proved to me how important the art of dance can be in the lives of those who touch it. It helped me recognize how dance can change the worldview of artists and the audience and help them

look at life in a different way, often filling them with sincere happiness.

Working with a diverse group of artists was not an easy process. It was challenging and at the same time energizing. Collaborating with the artists awakened my creativity and my critical thinking as a choreographer. While it was not always easy to balance all aspects of the project, it was satisfying and educational for all in the end. As a choreographer, this process will serve as a future inspiration for me and food for thought in moments of creative blockage.

After becoming a mother, my world changed, I felt new and unknown emotions and qualities. I looked at life with renewed eyes and got inspired as an artist. The last part of the project, related to the relationship between the mother and the child, became the initial stage of research. Throughout the process, this theme increasingly fascinated me and provoked my interest. I plan to develop this part of the project in my future work and add increased emphasis on research surrounding this topic. Another future research direction inspired by this project is to investigate the relationships dancers have with each other when coming from different backgrounds. I plan to continue to give professional dancers the opportunity to perform on the same stage alongside amateur dancers. In my opinion, this is a mutually beneficial opportunity for both parties that teaches each participant different values.

This process allowed me to confirm something that I have discovered about myself in recent years. It is my desire to work with artists of different levels and backgrounds within the field of dance. I find joy when I have the opportunity to pass on my knowledge and skills to dancers who, like me, are passionate about this art. I

discovered that I like to challenge myself. I gained great satisfaction as a result of completing this project and had the privilege of working and collaborating with outstanding professionals across different fields.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, J. (2021, May 26). Anna Halprin dies at 100; choreographer committed to experimenting. *The New York Times*. Retrieved February 2, 2022
- “Балканска Сватба” - Ансамбъл „Коло”, „Ликио Елинидон’ и „Филип Кутев’; Зала 1 На НДК, 20.04.2019г.” YouTube, YouTube, 27 Mar. 2020
- Dean, L. (Choreographer and performer). (1981). *Tympani (Modern Dance)* [Motion Picture].
- Hanna, Thomas, 1995. “What is Somatics?” from *Bone, Breathe & Gesture: Practices of Embodiment*, ed. Don Hanlon Johnson, North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, CA. and The California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, CA.
- Kloetzel, Melanie, and Carolyn Pavlik. *Site Dance: Choreographers and the Lure of Alternative Spaces*. University Press of Florida, 2011. Print.
- Koenig, Martin, et al. *Sound Portraits from Bulgaria: a Journey to a Vanished World 1966-1979*. Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 2019.
- McCarthy-Brown, N., & Amin, T. N. (2017). *Dance pedagogy for a diverse world: Culturally relevant teaching in theory, research and Practice*. McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.
- Menakem, R., & Renee, S. (n.d.). *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*. Amazon.com. Retrieved February 11, 2022
- “Mothers and Daughters Film with Vic Marks.” Margaret Williams Director, 30 Apr. 2019
- “Men.” Margaret Williams Director, 30 Apr. 2019
- The Technology of Film*. New York, N.Y: Infobase, 2006. Film.
“AMDA Dance Theater.” YouTube, YouTube, 22 May 2019
- Vissicaro, Pegge. *Studying Dance Cultures Around the World: An Introduction to Multicultural Dance Education*. Kendell Hunt, 2019.