

Undergraduate Research Symposium May 19, 2017 Mary Gates Hall

Online Proceedings

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EMBODIED VOICES: NEW DIALOGUES IN MUSIC AND DANCE

Session Moderator: Juliet McMains, Dance

Meany Studio Theatre

12:30 PM to 2:00 PM

* Note: Titles in order of presentation.

Bridging the Musical Traditions of Strings and Percussion

Aidan Jeffrey (Aidan) Gold, Senior, Applied Music (Composition), Computer Science

Evan M. (Evan) Berge, Senior, Music, Political Science

Judith Yunhee (Judith) Kim, Senior, Applied Music (String Instruments)

Rebecca Irene (Irene) Putnam, Senior, Applied Music (Composition), Applied Music (String Instruments)

Mentor: Huck Hodge, School of Music

We propose to perform an original composition for an unusual quartet of instruments that blend together very different performance traditions and practices. The piece is the result of a collaboration between musicians that normally do not work together because of a lack of common chamber music repertoire. Our composition explores the timbral and compositional possibilities of strings and both traditional and non-traditional percussion instruments. It consists of two contrasting ideas that are juxtaposed: a slow, mysterious, and lyrical idea featuring various metallic percussion and high string harmonics, and a fast mixed meter fugue. These ideas conflict and transform each other, eventually coalescing asymmetrically into a dramatic conclusion. Writing and rehearsing this piece allowed us to merge together the largely classically trained basis of string instrument performance practice with contemporary percussion performance practice, each helping inform the other and leading to unique musical ideas and results. Hopefully this piece and others like it will allow for more future collaboration between musicians from these different backgrounds and performance practices.

Breakup Bench: Finding My Voice by Writing a Musical

Rheanna Francisco (Rheanna) Atendido, Senior, Psychology, Individualized Studies

Mentor: Wilson Mendieta, Musical Theater Program

Breakup Bench is an original musical about one girl's routine of breaking up with current lovers at the same park bench

before getting too emotionally involved. The pattern is challenged when her bench disappears, along with her confidence, and she is forced to navigate through her first committed relationship in years. Much like the characters in this show, I too am searching for my voice and the bravery to use it. As a composer, lyricist, and book writer, this project pushes me to practice my individual creative process in collaboration with a number of my fellow UW theater artists. Culminating in a staged reading of the script, I am exploring the career path of a writer by learning how to showcase work that reflects a universal message by way of my original story. The characters' struggle to make sense of society's passive dating culture highlights a human phenomena experienced by all: allowing the fear of pain to prevent us from taking important risks. If just a fraction of my show resonates with someone, then my work will accomplish what I believe to be the purpose of art - to make connections. Embracing vulnerability and taking a risk myself, I hope that, in sharing the early workings of my show, I will not only discover my unique voice, but inspire others to recognize the importance of finding their own.

Hypermobility in Dancers

Dolly Wei Mei (Dolly (Wei Mei)) Huang, Senior, Dance, Communication

Mary Gates Scholar, UW Honors Program

Mentor: Jennifer Salk, Dance

This research examines dancers with dance-related injuries due to hypermobility and hyperextension. Initial research has been conducted through interviews and a survey. The author interviewed students and dance instructors who have personal experience or are familiar with hypermobility and hyperextended joints. The author then conducted a survey on the topic titled, "Hypermobility in Dancers" which was distributed to the University of Washington Dance Program faculty and students (18 or older), as well as the dance community in Seattle. The final step of this initial research will consist of a movement laboratory, whereby the author will ask dancers to

perform a series of set movements in order to analyze how dancers problem solve differently depending on the presence or absence of hypermobility/hyperextension. The results of this research aims to show that dancers with this structural phenomenon are more prone to specific types of injuries than dancers without.

Individual and Collective Embodiment: Evaluating the Language of Dance

Callie Michelle (Callie) Nissing, Senior, Comparative History of Ideas, Spanish

Mary Gates Scholar

Mentor: Hannah Wiley, Dance

My research investigated how the art form of dance functions as a language, and evaluated its ability to communicate. I examined how both the individual and collective embodied experiences of dance were used to create what dance linguist Henrietta Bannerman describes as “abstract messaging”, which relies on deeper contextual and conversational relationships between the dancers and the audience, in order to communicate successfully. The implications of my study may suggest that dance is a successful tool in communicating across difference. Given our current political climate and time of social difference, communication is vital in promoting social change. The arts in general are often rooted in activism and many major dance forms were created in response to oppression. Along with comparing various theories regarding performativity, affect and kinesiology and interviewing choreographers, I organized a performance-based study. Groups of dancers were asked to create a piece of choreography that was inspired by a specific word that related to a theme of difference. Then I received responses from audience members, both dancers and non-dancers, regarding their perceptions of the content performed in order to evaluate the dancers’ ability to communicate. I then interviewed the dancers to see how their embodiment of a concept changed or deepened their understanding of it. I hypothesized that dancers would gain a deeper understanding of the concepts they worked with, and that communication would appear more successful to other dancers.

Dance Partnering: The Act of Engaging in a Physical Dialogue

Warren See (Warren) Woo, Senior, Dance

Mary Gates Scholar, UW Honors Program

Mentor: Bruce McCormick, Dance

I have observed that a significant portion of dancers who study ballet or modern dance have minimal partnering experience, and the resources that connect the concepts of contact improvisation, social partner dance, ballet, and modern dance for students are limited. With this realization, I decided to further research in the field of dance partnering pedagogy and ask what could tie these techniques together. This research

took place during the fall 2015 through spring of 2016 school year. For my methodologies, I led and documented bi-weekly sessions at the UW dance studios, reviewed related literature, conducted interviews with dance professionals, and met regularly with my mentor. For the studio sessions, I prepared movement exercises and guided participants with prompts that focused on the cultivation of trust, the body’s capacity to listen, and the development of physical skills necessary to be a versatile dance partner. Throughout this research, the theme of physical dialogue came up repeatedly. From my findings, I have come to conclude that above all else, the capacity to listen and to enter a physical dialogue is essential when dancing with a partner. This oral presentation will also include movement demonstration articulating my findings.