



Undergraduate Research Symposium **May 17, 2019** Mary Gates Hall

Online Proceedings

BRIDGING IDENTITIES: PERFORMING ARTS RESEARCH INTERVENTIONS

Session Moderator: Juliet McMains, Dance
MGH 389
12:30 PM to 2:00 PM

* Note: Titles in order of presentation.

On the Social Ecology of Environmental Dance: Fostering Community Dialogue and Environmental Action

*Madison Rose Bristol, Senior, Dance, Environmental Science
& Resource Management*
UW Honors Program
Mentor: Rachael Lincoln, Dance

At present, there is a disconnect between people’s awareness of environmental crises and their motivation to act on this knowledge. Novel ways of fostering a sense of connection with the environment are currently being explored to address this problem. Dance, among other artistic disciplines, has the potential to motivate pro-environmental actions because it appeals to people’s emotional centers through empathy-inducing experiences, community building, and non-traditional communication. Using members of the Seattle dance community as a case study for environmental dance, this research explores whether and how environmental activism through dance is manifested in Seattle, if barriers exist to engaging in environmental dance, and if current forms of environmental dance effectively motivate action. To execute this exploration, I will conduct several one-on-one semi-structured interviews with members of the local dance community; interviews will last between 0.5-2 hours. Interviewees will be selected to represent varying degrees of participation in environmental dance—from minimal to explicit environmental dance activities—and will include internationally recognized dance creatives to rising entrepreneurs. These discussions will inform a qualitative analysis of how dance has or has not been used as tool for promoting environmental action locally. Furthermore, they will provide the context for my own choreographic pursuits on environmental dance. Based on relevant research and my 10+ years of involvement in the Seattle dance community, I predict that environmental dance can be identified as choreographic productions, site-specific explorations, embodied knowledge, sustainable prac-

tices in the arts, and collaborations between scientists and dancers. The results will be communicated to a performing arts audience through creative demonstrations of key research findings and through excerpts of my choreography. I hope, by engaging with both the environmental science and dance communities, to promote a dialogue within and between these communities and to inspire further environmental dance endeavors beyond the scope of Seattle.

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Finding Freedom in Jazz: Bebop as the Bridge Between Rhythm Tap and Beat Poetry

Rachel Lauryn Zuraek, Freshman, English
Mentor: Juliet McMains, Dance

Beat poetry and rhythm tap are two interests I have had for several years. Through my separated exposure to and analysis of both, I noticed a similarity in their manifestations of improvisation and rhythmic complexities. Initially, I assumed these resemblances were due to the heavy influence of jazz music both beat poetry and rhythm tap dance underwent in their formulations. However, when examining the jazz music more closely, it became clear that the characteristics of the specific form of jazz beat poetry emulated (bebop jazz) purposefully opposed the characteristics of the form of jazz rhythm tap was danced to (big band swing). This research henceforth sought to find how the rhythmic complexity and improvisation in rhythm tap and beat poetry could manifest themselves so similarly despite their rootedness in fundamentally contradicting forms of jazz music. Through analyzing the historical shift from swing jazz to bebop jazz, it was found that the contrasts between the genre were actually essential, as they allowed for a different relationship with jazz music to develop per art form: rhythm tap integrated itself into swing music, while beat poetry emulated bebop. Because of this, rhythm tap had the autonomy to add improvisation and rhythmic complexity atop mainstream swing music’s lack of both, while beat poetry could echo the improvisation and rhythmic complexity of

bebop without losing its individuality. This resulted in both having sonic similarities to bebop: the unintentional musical bridge between beat poetry and rhythm tap which resulted in the two mirroring one another.