

THE LANGUAGE OF FIBERS: HOW MOVEMENT EMERGES
FROM SPACE HARMONY THEORY
AND ARCHITECTURE

by

Catherine Kamrath

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STATEMENT OF THESIS APPROVAL

The thesis of Catherine Kamrath
has been approved by the following supervisory committee members:

Sharee Lane, Chair April 19, 2016
Date Approved

Brent Schneider, Member April 19, 2016
Date Approved

Cadence Whittier, Member April 24, 2016
Date Approved

and by Stephen Koester, Chair/Dean of
the Department/College/School of Modern Dance

and by David B. Kieda, Dean of The Graduate School.

ABSTRACT

From the perspective of a choreographic artist, *The Language of Fibers: How Movement Emerges from Space Harmony Theory and Architecture* discusses the creative process through the lens of two theoretical frameworks. Rudolf Laban's Space Harmony Theory examines the relationship between the human body and the space created in crystalline forms. Architectural principles are focused on the structure of the creative space and how location influences movement. In pairing these two theories, moments of collaboration and clear difference occurred. The choreographic process was a journey to find harmony, discovering how research could provide a structure for movement. Architecture pinpoints movement within a particular location and emphasizes a dancer's change in size, movement pathways, and relationship to other performers. Harmony, as conceived by Laban, is achieved through the feeling of proportionate change in the body as one reveals both points and spatial pathways. Primarily looking at location and the body's ability to interact with space and others, the choreography emerged through the use of collaboration. Weaving together seventeen movement sections, the choreographic structure was directly developed from these theoretical points of view.

To Scott and Marie Kamrath for their unwavering faith and love.

“Movement is, so to speak, living architecture – living in the sense of changing emplacements as well as changing cohesion. This architecture is created by human movements.”

Rudolf Laban, *The Language of Movement*, 5

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This introduction will provide a structure and overall arc of the theoretical and creative research processes completed in order to fulfill this thesis.

I will describe my background as a dance artist, creative thinker, and Certified Laban/Bartenieff Movement Analyst (CLMA). This will provide context for my interest in my chosen research area and how devoting the past year to this work has developed my understanding as a mover, thinker, choreographer, and educator. It develops in sequence starting with my dance background and higher educational experiences into my studies of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) and research decisions.

I will then focus my theoretical research on architectural theorists looking at space, location, and its relationship to the body. This chapter also provides the basis for how I am using architectural terms to describe movement and choreographic processes. My research will not go in depth about the technical details of architecture, but instead will focus on how the human body inhabits and moves within an architectural landscape.

I will define the main themes of Rudolf Laban's Laban Movement Analysis and explain his Space Harmony Theory in more depth. My theoretical research will explore written documents from Laban, Laban's students, and current scholars. Figures from Laban's text as well as my own understanding of the work will accompany this research.

The language of Space Harmony Theory will be described and defined to provide context for recounting my choreographic experiences in later chapters.

The application of my theoretical practices will coalesce in the creation of ‘Fibers,’ my choreographic thesis work. I will analyze how I transferred my own understanding of theory to my seven dancers and how their understandings of space within their bodies influenced my movement. I will address the choreographic process through methods, practices, and tasks given to create the final structure of the work, the thesis performances, and subsequent performances.

CHAPTER 2

BEING A SPACE CREATURE

At the beginning of my thesis studies in January 2015, there was a strong pull to fully immerse myself into a research area I was only beginning to understand. Having just completed my intensive certification training to be a Laban/Bartenieff Movement Analyst, I needed to continue to investigate a specific area of the theory, Space Harmony Theory, because there were questions still to be answered. I found Space Harmony Theory to be both practically understandable, yet also baffling. Through integrating my certification practices and MFA thesis studies, the development of my technical, pedagogical, and creative practices has taken root in being a space creature.

Space explores the relationship between human movement and the potentials of dimensionality in nature. In some ways, my development as an artist can be seen as a journey through three distinct dimensional forms. As an artist that identifies as a blend of commercial and concert dance forms, I infuse these two into one. Thirteen years of studying all genres of dance taught me the balance of versatility. Within this balance, I also was held at a purely one-dimensional place in terms of artistry. I absorbed choreography, and then regurgitated it back while striving for perfection.

I had the opportunity to continue my commercial dance background with the addition of more mature academic and artistic lenses as a young adult living in Los

Angeles. Blending my jazz background with modern dance movement vocabulary, I developed my choreographic approach and ventured into a more two-dimensional way of thinking regarding the artistic pulse of dance. Infusing my commercial dance musicality with modern dance movements, I work in highly gestural and athletic movement phrases emphasized by rhythmic patterns. My dance background has thoroughly informed my concert dance training by giving me a basis in musicality, performance presence, specificity of details, and infusing personal identity into movement.

When I made the decision to continue my formal education for another three years to earn my MFA, I also flung myself into three-dimensional thinking. I could no longer stand behind my peers and mask my personal creativity and voice. I needed to stand on my own two feet regardless of being surrounded by the ideas of my graduate cohort. During my second year of studies, I completed the Integrated Movement Studies program, an eight-month journey into the Laban Movement Analysis theories. I chose to do this intensive process parallel to my graduate studies because I wanted to honor a seed of interest and indulge in an experience that would be unique to my studies. The demand to understand the four pillars of LMA —Body, Effort, Shape, and Space— theoretically and kinesthetically challenged my mental, physical, and emotional selves. Since completing the certification, Laban’s Space category has become the most prominent in my life.

Through maturing in my early twenties as both an artist and a person, I have found conceptual threads that drive my work and reveal themselves in different ways throughout my process: humanity, intimacy, femininity, and emotionality. I strive not to dictate what my audience chooses to see, feel about, or make meaning from my work. Yet, the intention always remains clear to all those involved within the process. It is

through every unique pair of eyes that my work takes hold of meaning, inspired by shared humanity.

I have been interested in the relationship between bodies since I began my immersive dance studies. The experiences of distance and intimacy, inhabiting the same or distant spaces, and the passing of energy from one body to the next are commonalities in my work. It is within these changing relationships where opportunities for understanding and personal relationships emerge. Working in collaboration with my dancers allowed for a creation of personal autonomy within the work, finding a way to live in their own unique bodies while also experiencing some aspects of my embodiment. In this research process, I found it vital that individuals brought their personal movement histories and experiences into the studio to discover how each person reacts and relates to inhabiting the space of their own bodies and the community.

I used my artistic preferences not as the driving force behind my choreographic thesis work, but with the knowledge that humanity, intimacy, emotionality, and femininity would remain as forming threads. My personal dance histories and movement tendencies were important in honoring my artistic perspective. However, I wanted my creative research to first be informed by my theoretical findings and then interpreted through my unique artistry. With a focus on the body and its spatial relationship, both near and far, I have crafted a new way to study and create dance, pinpointing my choreographic views into a category of vast inquiry. In embracing my nature as a space creature, I honor my unique form and artistic approach as a fully embodied being.

CHAPTER 3

CREATIVE ARCHITECTURE

In pairing Rudolf Laban's Space Harmony Theory with architectural principles, similar language bridges the two theories. In architecture, two kinds of space can be referred to as "intimate and exterior space" (Bachelard 201). Laban will later refer to these as personal and general space in regards to the body and its Kinesphere. Both of these perspectives refer to space in terms of variable distances. I have chosen to pair these two theories together to investigate movement because architecture invites movement to go beyond the body's physical form. Architecture pinpoints movement within a particular location and emphasizes a dancer's change in size, movement pathways, and relationship to other performers.

The Poetics of Space by Gaston Bachelard, a French philosopher, discusses the phenomenology of poetry and its relationship to how homes of all creatures are inhabited. The home, an architectural site, proves significant in forming identity, memory, and an understanding of physical space. In discussing the importance and common knowledge of a home, Bachelard states "[the house] maintains him through the storms of the heavens and through those of life. It is body and soul. It is the human being's first world" (7). I believe this first world, or first space of knowing, factors into the way all types of space are experienced. Being always located in some type of space, the places an individual

experiences become inscribed and imprinted as memories and physical knowing.

For dancers, Bachelard's home translates into the physical knowing of the creative space. When in the process of creating a dance work, the creative space becomes the home of the choreographic work. Its dimensions determine the dancers' range of movement. Its color and temperature alters moods and depth. The texture of the walls and floors present a stable background for the moving body. When preparing to present a work within the proscenium theatre, the work must also be made to adapt to its performance space. Although the dimensions of the creative space determine much of its influence, it must remain adaptable to change places and spaces. When changing location, the architectural aesthetic also changes. It is important to note that "to describe a building as beautiful therefore suggests more than a mere aesthetic fondness; it implies an attraction to the particular way of life this structure is promoting through its roof, door handles, window frames, staircase, and furnishings" (de Botton 72). Door handles, window frames, staircases, and furnishings are usually not found within proscenium performance spaces, but their equivalents of lights, wings, audience seating, and set design are present.

Alain de Botton, Swiss philosopher and author of *The Architecture of Happiness*, agrees with Bachelard about the feelings surrounding home and continues by stating, "belief in the significance of architecture is premised on the notion that we are, for better or for worse, different people in different places – and on the conviction that it is architecture's task to render vivid to us who we might ideally be" (13). Architecture's ability to reveal the sense and identity of the person relates in the same way dance and movement disclose information about a person's lived experiences. De Botton continues to describe the psychological basis for how buildings and architecture also provide a

vision and reflection of its human inhabitants (20). As bodies fill a space, they change its overall appearance and energy. The space shifts its chemistry and aesthetic based on how the bodies interact within its architecture.

An architectural space can take on a character of its own based on its composition. A space with more windows may be more inviting than a space of solid walls. The height of the ceiling, the distance between walls, and the shape of the room all contribute to how a space is inhabited. Aesthetics can also be formed by the color of the space, its texture, how its decorations relate to one another, and personal taste. Personal aesthetics are created by the ability to judge a space, such as “to feel that a building is unappealing may simply be to dislike the temperament of the creature or human we dimly recognize in its elevation – just as to call another edifice beautiful is to sense the presence of a character we would like if it took on a living form” (de Botton 88). Treating the space as another living element makes it more interactive and collaborative.

There is interplay between stability and mobility occurring within the dancing body, and this interplay is a main theme in the Space Harmony Theory. In Laban’s words, “Stir emerged from Stillness. Stillness follows Stir. Both are endlessly variable...” (*A Vision of Dynamic Space*, 68). The relationship between the human body and its surrounding space are built upon commonalities. Such that “the same spatial geography that provides architectural stability also enhances stability in physical actions” (Moore 116), the human body is susceptible to influence from its surroundings. An elevator’s size, number of occupants, and smoothness of its ascent or descent all contribute to an individual’s physical and psychological stability or mobility.

Jeffrey Rengering, MA in Architecture, describes movement as “the physical act of traversing through space as performed by a body and is in contrast to the static nature

of architecture” (3). As mentioned before, the qualities of the creative space set up a container for the movement. The walls and floor determine width, length, and ease of movement. In Space Harmony Theory, traversing through space refers to moving through all three of the spatial planes: Horizontal, Vertical, and Sagittal. When locomoting, or travelling, through space while dancing, the body’s ability to move transversely highlights the three-dimensionality of the moving body. As a body moves through space, it adapts and changes so “like a building, the human form must balance compression and tensile forces to remain standing” (Moore 115). The body’s ability to change its form, traverse through space, and mobilize from place to place makes it more adaptable in finding balance, unlike buildings. This three-dimensionality also allows the form to be viewed from different sides of the proscenium theatre. Each audience member sees the movement from a skewed view based on their angle and distance from the stage.

In traversing through space, it is important to note how a particular space can pattern the body and the mind. Architecture has the ability to affect sensory, behavioral, and social habits. Professor of Geography and Affiliated Professor of Psychological and Brain Sciences at the University of California, Santa Barbara, Daniel Montello, explores the partnership of spatial cognition and architectural space and states the following:

“Architectural design affects sensory access – what can be seen and heard; attention – what is looked at and listened to; memorability – what is remembered about a building; knowledge – how one reasons and makes decisions; behavioural affordance – where one walks, sits, and so on; affect – what one feels, including one’s mood, comfort level, stress and fear, and aesthetics; and sociality – with whom one interacts socially, as a function of factors such as pedestrian flows, noise levels, social distances, and body postures” (75).

Montello’s descriptions of sensory access, attention, memorability, knowledge, behavioral affordance, affect, and sociality can also apply to how the dancer interacts

with the creative space and in relationship to the larger cast of dancers.

The dancer's ability to see and hear the space, their sensory access, changes throughout the rehearsal process. The physical space may change, altering their understanding of dimensionality and distance in width and length. The studio space has more natural light and visibility than on a theatre stage. Sounds enter and exit the space through the use of silence, musical scores, and the noise created through movement. The balance between light, sound, and temperature are as characteristic of the space as its physical form. Each space takes on its own personality through these elements. Rehearsing in a known studio speaks to the dancers' memorability, knowledge, and behaviors. Not only are the four hours of rehearsal a week spent in these spaces, but are also experienced in technique and composition classes, faculty rehearsals, and personal creative time. The body knows these spaces through different lenses and becomes more adaptable in movement. The openness of the space speaks to the ability for affect and sociality to emerge. Dance as a physical art form increases awareness of the emotional self. While in a rehearsal process, dancers are often invited to bring forward their whole selves as they experience a range of emotions.

The creative space in which we often rehearsed (MCD 220) contained one wall full of windows on the north end of the space. These windows are in three rows with each row containing three to five windows of either a square or rectangular shape. The windows overlook many different species of trees and two buildings. Light pours in through these windows, illuminating the space and creating a mood based on its brightness. The floor is light grey, allowing the light to be both absorbed and reflected. The east wall is covered with mirrors, also reflecting the space to make it appear to be larger. The white brick walls and grey soundproofing both add the studio's feeling of

being light and open. This creative space was influential to the choreography and the dancers' execution of the choreography. Its ability to create an approachable environment allowed for ease in communication, visibility, and expansion.

In a sense, architecture is always present in understanding space, much like Bachelard's view of the home being the first known sense of space and location. Dancers learn about detailed movement through understanding the space in which it is created. In looking at Montello's theories of spatial cognition, it defines the whole body in its physicality, internal systems, and sensory awareness. All of these aspects of the body influence movement and should be brought into the creative process. As movement starts to develop within the same space, its qualities can be reflected in the movement choices made by dancers and the overall feeling tone of the work.

CHAPTER 4

FROM RUDOLF'S PERSPECTIVE

Rudolf Laban was a European philosopher and movement theorist in the 20th century who developed a method for observing and notating movement, especially dance. His creation of two systems, Laban Movement Analysis and Labanotation, partners scientific perspectives with physical embodiment and practice. Through placing artistic and scientific practices into a direct conversation, there is the opportunity for multidisciplinary studies and a shift of standard movement perspectives. LMA is sectioned into four main pillars (Body, Effort, Shape, Space). LMA practitioners use these pillars to analyze and interpret all forms of movement. Although all four pillars are equally important when looking at dance movement and choreography, I have chosen to narrow my focus to the category of Space, and more specifically to Space Harmony Theory. This chapter describes Laban's creation and formation of the Space Harmony Theory and defines the foundational principles of the theory. I will focus on three crystalline forms and the Space Harmony Movement Scales that Laban investigated in each of these forms.

Laban uses the word 'harmony' as a way of describing "the relationship between the skeletal architecture and spatial traceforms" (Groff 103). He refers to Traceforms as the trail of energy that remains illuminated as movement passes through space. These

harmonic concepts were influenced by theories of harmony in other art forms, such as music, architecture, and visual arts. In creating this theory, Laban looked at how the body moved in proportional relationships through the outer spatial environment. Through the development of these concepts, he discovered that “movement was both ‘sculptural’ and therefore similar in some ways to the visual arts, and also ‘temporal’ and therefore similar to music” (Groff 109). He directly applied ideas from these art forms to human movement.

Carol-Lynne Moore, a leader in the development of LMA, discusses the important qualities of Laban’s Space Harmony (choreutic) Theory, including his Space Harmony Movement Scales, by stating:

“Choreutic sequences are said to be organic phrases that can be seen to occur spontaneously in natural movements. On the other hand, the choreutic scales Laban identified are said to represent fundamental laws of space movement. Rather than replicating naturalistic movements, these sequences have been carefully constructed according to logical principles” (Moore 100).

The construction of the movement scales revolves around the use of crystalline forms, such as the octahedron, cube, and icosahedron. These forms, or platonic solids, were vital in the development of Space Harmony Theory because they “were very useful for capturing characteristic pathways used in dance and other movement arts” (Moore 113). Each of these platonic solids produces an investigation of their different structures and their balance between mobility and stability. The Space Harmony Movement Scales are created based on the mathematical proportions found in each of the crystalline forms.

In *The Language of Movement*, the American publication of Laban’s Space Harmony Theory book *Choreutics*, Laban states, “space is a hidden feature of movement and movement is a visible aspect of space” (4). Space Harmony Theory is rooted in

scientific principles applied to the moving body and its relationship to its environment. Laban used crystalline forms as prescriptive sites to investigate a person's dynamic Kinesphere. The Kinesphere, a term often used in dance classes, refers to the reachable area surrounding the body through the use of one pivot point. Kinespheres can grow in size from large to small based on movement choices in space with some areas of the Kinesphere being more accessible through movement than others. Laban emphasizes the relationship between harmony, movement, and space by stating, "in order to study harmony of movement we must consider the relationship between the architecture of the human body and the spatial structure of the kinesphere" (*The Language of Movement*, 106). With every movement, Traceforms are revealed within the Kinesphere. The Traceforms created through performing the scales become a specific and prescriptive method for experiencing the Kinesphere.

One's relationship to their Kinesphere is further developed through the LMA theme of inner and outer. These two concepts create a polarity that is navigated within each Space Harmony Movement Scale. Tracking one's inner intent while responding to outer stimuli is integral to finding continued investment in the scales. This allows for each movement scale to take on its own personality and continue changing as a person grows and develops. Laban's use of inner/outer relates to both the Kinesphere and the Dynamosphere (the inner world of Effort). The ability to shift from mood to mood, or between different Effort elements, occurs when the Dynamosphere is applied to the Movement Scales. Through psychologically shifting from mood to mood, the individual's inner "domain of thought and feelings can be inferred from the dynamic manner in which an action is performed" (Moore 110). This dynamic manner is the LMA category of Effort.

Laban used the structural points of each crystalline form to build these movement scales, and believed that “practicing particular spatial scales had a form building potential for the human body” (Groff 103). Using the inner structure of the crystalline form, these scales pattern movement to reveal each of the form’s points. These patterns challenge the body to find a specific sequence within the crystalline structure. Through developing new pathways to efficiency, the physical body has greater potential for movement, functionality, and development.

In establishing the Space Harmony scales, Laban believed “the architecture of space was congruent with the proportions of the human body and consequently could serve as models for the investigation of movement potential” (Groff 165). Each scale follows a specific pattern in space, integrates Effort and Shape Qualities, and investigates mobility and stability of the body. From various writings and comments from Laban, “the following elements of movement harmony may be delineated: (1) ratio and proportion, (2) balance, (3) symmetry, (4) unity of form, (5) interrelationship of elements, and (6) individuality” (Moore 190). The harmonious formation of each of these elements brings an identity and distinct feeling to each Space Harmony Movement Scale.

Space Harmony Movement Scales demand the use of the whole body, as they do not live only in the arms or the legs. The complex demand of the whole body is derived from each limb’s ability for “joint function, combining flexion or extension, adduction or abduction, and rotation” (Moore 191). Proportionate change does not live without feeling the integration of the whole body. Valerie Preston-Dunlop describes the performance of these scales as “engag[ing] actively with the space by treating it as a volume with some density, so that the curves and lines are carved into the space. You push it away, surround it, slice it, penetrate it. In this way, different surfaces and joints of your arm become

prominent” (10).

Space Harmony Theory recognizes “shapes and designs of energy around and through the dancer’s space, orientated on a grid of 27 directions” (Preston-Dunlop 1). The founding fundamentals of Space Harmony Theory are based on the dimensional and diagonal tensions that make up these twenty-seven directions. The Space Category of LMA contains many vocabularies that cross into other forms and, for that reason, I will define each term as it will be used in this thesis. In creating these spatial movement scales, Laban believed that, “one can conceive of a kind of dynamic crystallography of human movement in which spatial tensions and transformations are scientifically examined in a way similar to that undertaken when investigating those which occur in the building up of matter” (*The Language of Movement*, 103). Through this investigation, the human body experiences great change, as it emerges through pathways that feel both familiar and foreign to the body.

The twenty-seven directions are made through a combination of six cardinal directions: up (high), down (low), right, left, forward, and backward. These directions, or spatial pulls, when combined in equality and inequality, create Dimensions, Diagonals, Planes, and other spatial terms. Figure 1 shows the twenty-seven directions along with their symbols in Labanotation. These symbols will be seen in other figures and can be referenced here for clarity. I will use the term ‘low’ instead of ‘deep’ throughout this document; they are synonyms within the field. The purest forms of these directions are Place High, Place Low, Right Side Middle, Left Side Middle, Forward Middle, and Back Middle. In adding two of these together, the remaining twenty-one directions, or spatial tensions, will be revealed. A spatial tension “addresses the complexity of the line of motion in three-dimensional space, differentiating one-, two-, and three-directional

inclinations” (Moore 121). Each crystalline form, which Laban’s scales are created in, contains a variety of these spatial tensions. This range provides a multitude of possibilities for the body as the points continually change and do not repeat. Harmony, as conceived by Laban, is achieved through the feeling of proportionate change in the body as one reveals both the points and their connecting pathways. Each of these pathways creates a new way of moving for the body and emphasizes a different change in direction. These directions challenge the mover to go to known places of comfort and more foreign places.

Dimensions and the Octahedron

A dimensional tension is a line in space that travels in two directions, one spatial pull in each direction. There are three types of Dimensions. The line in space between Place High and Place Low is referred to as the Vertical Dimension. The line in space between Right Side Middle and Left Side Middle is referred to as the Horizontal Dimension. The Sagittal Dimension connects Forward Middle to Back Middle. Figure 2 shows how these three Dimensions relate to one another.

These dimensional tensions create the inner scaffolding of the Octahedron (Figure 3) and form its six structural points: Forward Middle, Back Middle, Place High, Place Low, Right Side Middle, and Left Side Middle. The intersection of the three dimensional tensions (Place Middle) is in proportional relationship to the body’s center (the belly button), as if the body was standing in the center of the Octahedron. The simplest Dimensional scale connects each of the six points as they pass through the center, or Place Middle. Moving from one point to the next before switching to a new dimension reveals each of the three dimensions. The most common Dimensional Scale moves from

the Vertical Dimension to the Horizontal then the Sagittal all while passing through Place Middle (Figure 4).

This scale is typically done with a Central Approach to Kinesphere. The type of movement used to navigate within one's Kinesphere is referred to as an Approach to Kinesphere. There are three codified Approaches to Kinesphere: Central, Peripheral, and Transverse. A Central Approach to Kinesphere takes a direct approach from the center out and back in. A Peripheral Approach to Kinesphere reveals the edge of the Kinesphere. A Transverse Approach to Kinesphere stirs the space between the center and the edge. With a different Approach to Kinesphere, the movement also shifts and changes. The Dimensional Scale's use of Central Approach to Kinesphere is important to its execution because it emphasizes moving from the center of the body to a specific point then back into the body's center.

The Dimensional Scale is often referred to as a more stable scale because the movement occurs with only one spatial pull. In performing the Dimensional Scale, this feeling of stability is developed through the grounding of one's feet and "the relationship of the dimensional axes of the octahedron to gravity" (Moore 115). The simplicity of moving in only one spatial pull is supported through grounding. Allowing the whole body to reveal the wholeness of one direction challenges the body into simplicity.

The addition of Shape or Effort affinities can tie this scale into the larger study of Laban Movement Analysis. It is not required to add Shape or Effort, but in doing so, one integrates the Dynamosphere and Kinesphere, and therefore achieves greater harmony and proportional change. Through accessing all four pillars (Body, Effort, Shape, Space), the whole system comes alive within one Space Harmony Movement Scale. Laban believed that the more all four pillars of LMA were consciously revealed within a spatial

scale, the more harmonic it would become. Each scale has a different balance of BESS, changing their harmonic elements and challenging the physical and emotional body. The proportionate change within the elements of Body, Effort, Shape and Space challenged the body to find harmony through balancing complexity.

Diagonals and the Cube

A diagonal tension is a line in space in two directions with three equal spatial pulls, such as combining a direction from each of the dimensional tensions listed above. There are four Diagonals and eight points that create the inner scaffolding of the Cube. Each point is created through adding one element from each of the three Dimensions, such as Right (Horizontal) Forward (Sagittal) High (Vertical). The Diagonals of the Cube connect opposing corners. Right Forward High would be connected to Left Back Low. The other three Diagonals include Right Forward Low to Left Back High, Right Back Low to Left Forward High, and Right Back High to Left Forward Low. Figure 5 depicts each of these Diagonals in relationship to one another.

The Cube (Figure 6) is the “three-dimensional form composed of height, breadth, and depth, which is the easiest to visualize” (Laban 11). The four Diagonals, which support the cube’s structure, intersect at the center of the body. The Diagonal Scale has a “flying and falling” quality or character. A standard Diagonal Scale reveals each of the four diagonals by starting with a High point and moving to the oppositional Low point (Figure 7). Travelling up to a High point inspires a ‘flying’ quality as the body expands up into space. Descending into a Low point highlights “falling” qualities based on the oppositional nature of travelling from High to Low. According to Moore, “all movement in three-dimensional space involves a brief loss of balance followed by a momentary

regaining of equilibrium. Laban discerned a pattern in how equilibrium is regained” (205). The flying and falling nature of the Cube follows this pattern of balance and off-balance.

It can be seen how the four Diagonals of Figure 5 fit into the Cube of Figure 6. Laban states these ‘flying’ and ‘falling’ feelings occur because “our whole body can be moved into a purely diagonal direction only for a fraction of a second” (*The Language of Movement*, 144). The Diagonal Scale is the most mobile, or labile, because of its proportionate change in three parts in space. As with the Dimensional Scale, this scale can be studied with a trio of Effort or Shape affinities. The pairing of Effort or Shape affinities with the Diagonal Scale further challenges the body and illuminates space.

Planes and the Icosahedron

The Planes (Figure 8), as Laban investigated them, were rectangular. The planes, therefore, contain two unequal spatial pulls, meaning there is one prominent pull in two directions with diminished pull in another two directions. When two Dimensions are combined in an unequal form, it creates a primary and secondary relationship. Because of their rectangular nature, “displacement from the center of the plane to the corner will not be equal; that is, there will be more movement in one direction than in the other” (Moore 122). The three Planes of movement intersect with one another (Figure 9). Each Plane is made up of four points. The Planes are named based on their primary dimension. The Vertical Plane is primarily Up/Down, but adds some sided-ness to the Right and Left. The Horizontal Plane is primarily Side-to-Side, but adds movement forward and back. The Sagittal Plane is primarily Forward and Back, but also adds height up and down. Cycling through a Plane transforms the rectangularity of the Plane into more of an oval.

The twelve points of the three Planes combine to make the crystalline form of the Icosahedron (Figure 10). The Icosahedron contains twenty triangular sides connecting the twelve points. It appears similar to a sphere, but with clear sides instead of one smooth form. The planes can act as a bisector to the Icosahedron, splitting it into three sets of two sides. Laban created many Space Harmony Movement Scales in the Icosahedron, such as the Axis, Girdle, Transverse A, Transverse B, and the Primary.

As Laban investigated the Icosahedron, he found that “standard degrees of range of motion in flexion, extension, abduction, adduction, and rotation for various body parts [...] were identical with or proportional to a variety of angles found in the icosahedron” (Moore 128). The commonalities between the proportions of the human body and the Icosahedron aided in his creation of multiple harmonic scales. The twelve points provided many possible pathways to explore and find harmony. The imbalanced nature of each spatial pull, due to the rectangularity of the Planes, also invited a new investigation of equilibrium. Laban made a direct connection between the Icosahedron and the Kinesphere. “The angular relationships between diameters, peripheral edges, and transversals as prototypic lines of movement are congruent with angular range of motion of the joints of the human body” (Moore 128) inviting the mover’s Kinesphere to become more alive within the Icosahedron.

I will focus on describing the Transverse A scale as it more directly applies to my choreographic work described in the latter chapters of this thesis. The Transverse A scale (Figure 11) gets its name from its Transverse Approach to the Kinesphere. This scale also travels along pathways called Transversals. A Transversal is a line in space that travels from the corner of one plane to the corner of another plane while passing through the third. For example, the Transverse A begins in the Vertical Plane at Right Side High and

then travels to Back Low in the Sagittal Plane. The pathway between these two points crosses through the Horizontal Plane. There is a continuing pattern of going from the Vertical Plane to the Sagittal Plane to the Horizontal Plane. In developing this pattern, Laban looked again to equilibrium: “if a dancer leans too far to the side, he or she will begin to fall. A compensatory movement, stepping either forward or backward, can prevent the fall by introducing depth, or the spatial tension that is ‘missing’ in the two-dimensional vertical plane” (Moore 205).

Passing from each point to the next also gains another description of being Steep, Suspended (Flowing), or Flat. When passing from the Vertical to the Sagittal Plane, the pathway is Steep because it changes the most along the Vertical Dimension. When passing from the Sagittal to the Horizontal Plane, the pathway is Suspended because it changes the most along the Sagittal Dimension. When passing from the Horizontal to the Vertical Plane, the pathway is Flat because it changes the most along the Horizontal Dimension.

In experiencing the Steep, Suspended, or Flat nature of these pathways, there is a full change in one direction with half changes in the other two. As I move in a Steep pathway, such as from Right Side High to Back Low, I am experiencing both directions of the Vertical Dimension in the same transversal. I add a Sagittal Direction and subtract a Horizontal Direction. Their minimal change emphasizes the full change from High to Low. The same is true when travelling from Back Low to Left Forward Middle, but I am emphasizing the Sagittal directional change from Back to Forward. The unequal nature of the Planes allow for these extremes to occur.

There are two ways in which to phrase the pathways between the twelve points. This change in phrasing is important to me because they speak to an individual’s

assessment of harmony. Some prefer a smoother ride that feels very circular and sweeping. Others enjoy the rebounding feeling from one point to the next. Each type of phrasing invokes a different physical and emotional response, meaning that each individual will relate to them in a personal way. They each contain six combinations of three points. For example, the first three points on this version of Transverse A are Right Side High, Back Low, and Left Forward Middle. These three points would be phrased together to create one Volute. A Volute is “a 3-dimensional curve made by rounding the angle between two choreutic units” (Preston-Dunlop viii). The smoothness and roundness of Volute phrasing is created because the two transversals deflect off of different diagonals. The Diagonals of the Cube intersect the Icosahedron (Figure 12) and the twelve transversal pathways are a reflection from one of the four Diagonals. Steeple phrasing has more of a jagged feeling in the body, a direct contrast to the above Volute phrasing. Figure 13 shows the difference with a linear depiction of the pathways. A Steeple is “a sharp V-shape made by joining together two choreutic units connected by a narrow angle” (Preston-Dunlop viii). The sharpness of a Steeple phrasing is created because the two transversals deflect off of the same diagonal, sending the body in a similar, yet opposing direction.

I am more attracted to Volute phrasing because it allows me to find the wholeness in the change in the Steep, Suspended, or Flat nature of a transversal. In Volute phrasing, I am able to create a rounder Traceform as I experience the spatial change from High to Low, Back to Front, or Right to Left. I relate my preference for Volutes to my need to have control over gradual change. When I complete the Transverse A scale with Volute phrasing, I can feel the whole journey from Right Side High through the other eleven points. I have a very different experience with Steeple phrasing than with Volute

phrasing. Steeple phrasing often leaves me feeling unsettled and I struggle to find the ease in pairing the Body, Shape, and Space categories. As I practice with Steeple phrasing, I often get stuck pausing after each transversal. Finding the connection between the entire Transverse A scale, instead of each transversal separately, is an area of difficulty for me in my Space Harmony Movement Scale studies. I struggle to find the movement harmony in Steeple phrasing; however, there were members of my certification cohort that had the opposite opinion. With all scales in the Icosahedron, there is play between balance and off-balance due to the unequal nature of the Planes. When I apply phrasing to the Transverse A scale, the off-balance nature is emphasized when I am in Steeple phrasing. Phrasing transforms the Transverse A scale through physical embodiment, but also connects to one's emotional and personal preferences. It is within these choices and differences that one can fully investigate the meaning of harmony.

The options for movement within the Icosahedron hold greater potential for the human body. The unequal change between points while maintaining a Transverse Approach to Kinesphere challenges the body to carve and craft the space. Shape affinities can also be added to this scale and can help to clarify the proportionate change within the body. Shape affinities change in threes, but do not equally change as in the Diagonal Scale. With the Planes' unequal spatial pulls, there is a primary, secondary, and tertiary Shape Quality change. This change also relates to the occurrence of Transversals and the Steep, Suspended, or Flat nature of these pathways.

Laban discusses the need for movement in space by stating, "movement is the life of space. Dead space does not exist, for there is neither space without movement nor movement without space" (Laban 94). Studying the space located outside the body is also

important in the formation of identity and an individual's understanding of their body. The process of organizing a fundamental view of personal body image allows for "locat[ion] [of] our bodies inside a three-dimensional boundary. This boundary surrounds the entire body and demarcates our 'inside' personal space from our 'outside' extrapersonal space" (Bloomer 37). This demarcation offers an investigation into the scope of both inner and outer space.

In the creation of Space Harmony Movement Scales, Laban believed the crystalline forms to be dynamic and interactive. This invites a unique collaboration between the moving person and the crystalline architecture. The dynamics of the space are moved and changed through the investigation of pathways that connect the points. In developing harmonic principles, the dynamics of the space played a vital role. As the Dynamosphere and the Kinesphere intersect, each crystalline form finds a unique balance. In exploring how harmony is different in each platonic solid, the definition of harmony is malleable. This exploration is not limited to locations or points within the form, but to how these locations are experienced by, and within, the body. Challenging the body's architecture, each pathway creates traceforms that are full of potential and change. These pathways hold dynamic content, stirring emotions, physicality, and relationship in different ways.

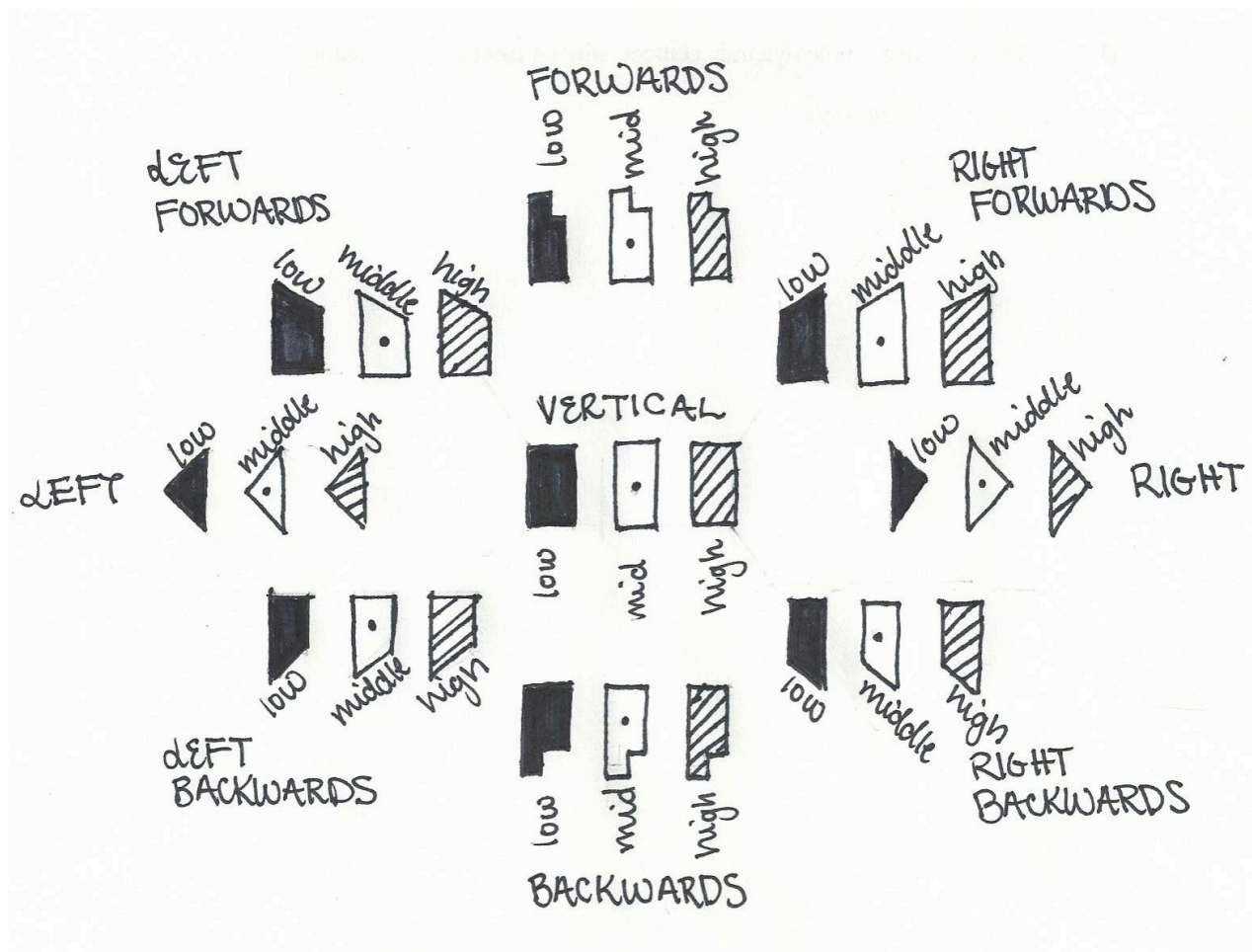


Figure 1: 27 Directions, drawn by Kamrath, adapted from Preston-Dunlop ix

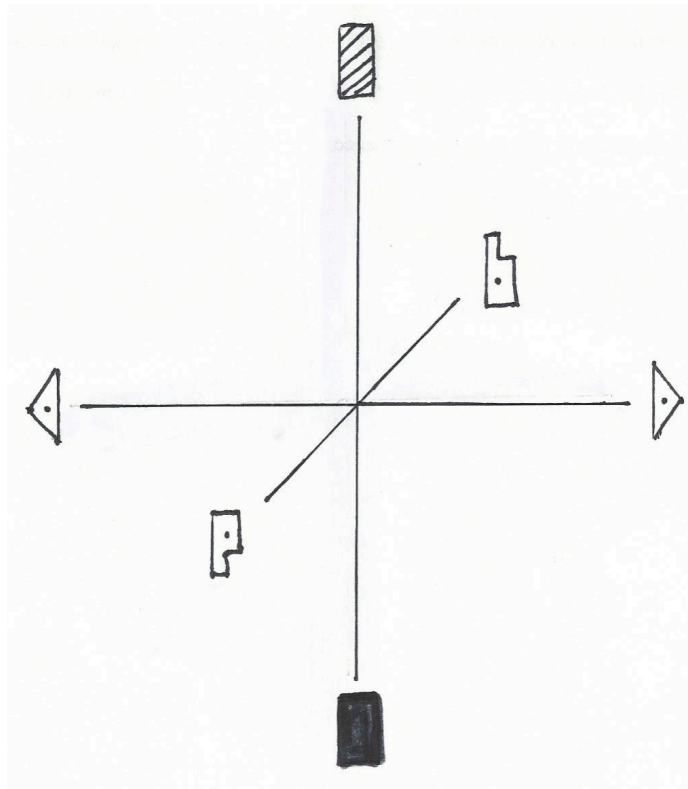


Figure 2: Dimensions, drawn by Kamrath, adapted from Preston-Dunlop 15

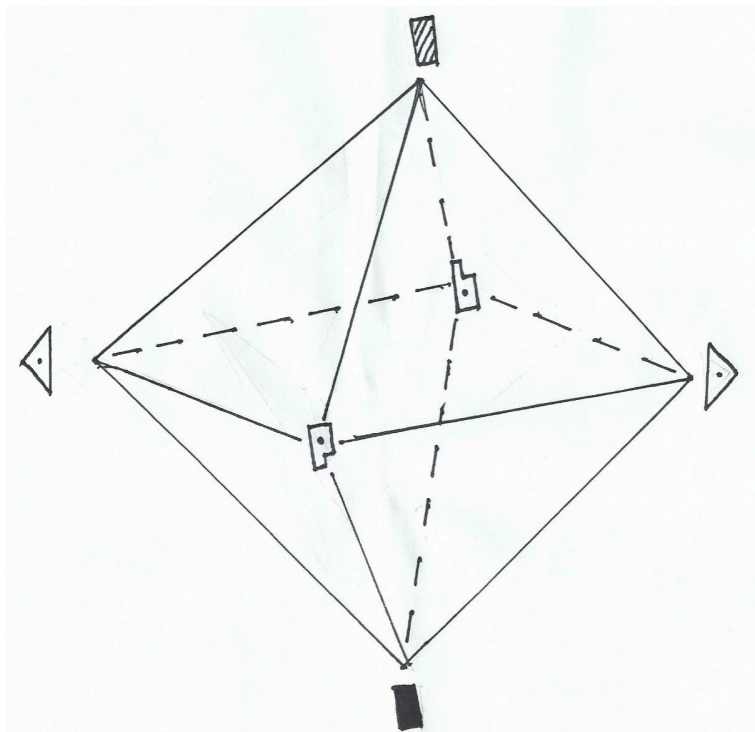


Figure 3: Octahedron, drawn by Kamrath, adapted from Laban,
The Language of Movement 103

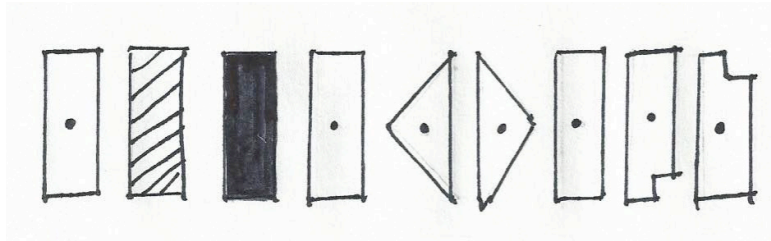


Figure 4: Dimensional Scale, drawn by Kamrath as taught by the Integrated Movement Studies Program

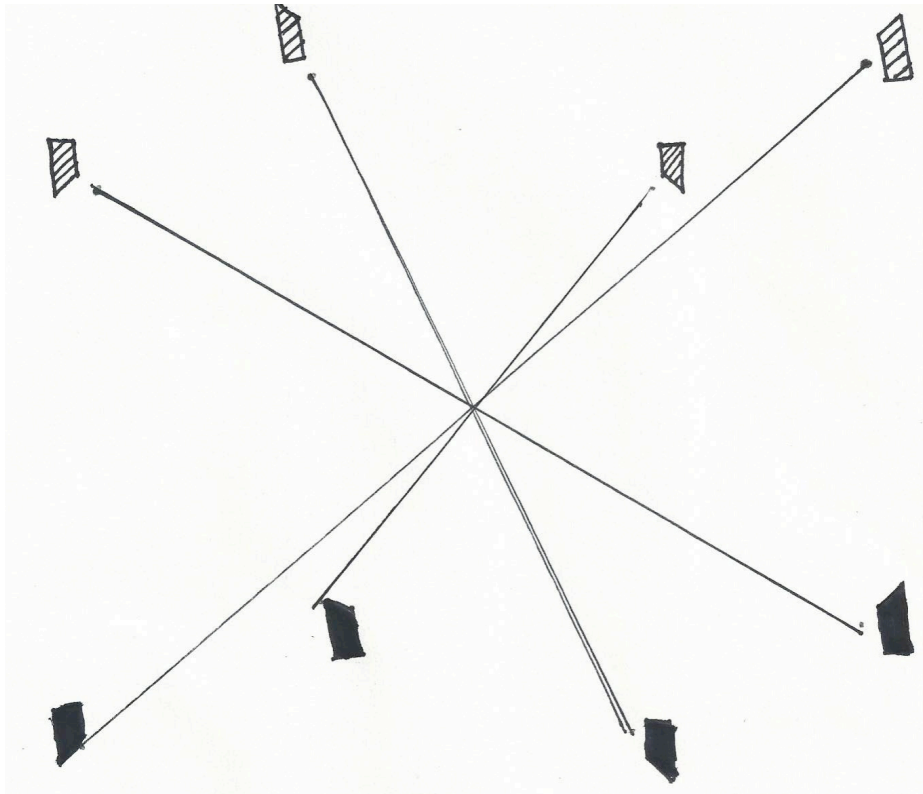


Figure 5: Diagonals in Space, drawn by Kamrath, adapted from Preston-Dunlop 17

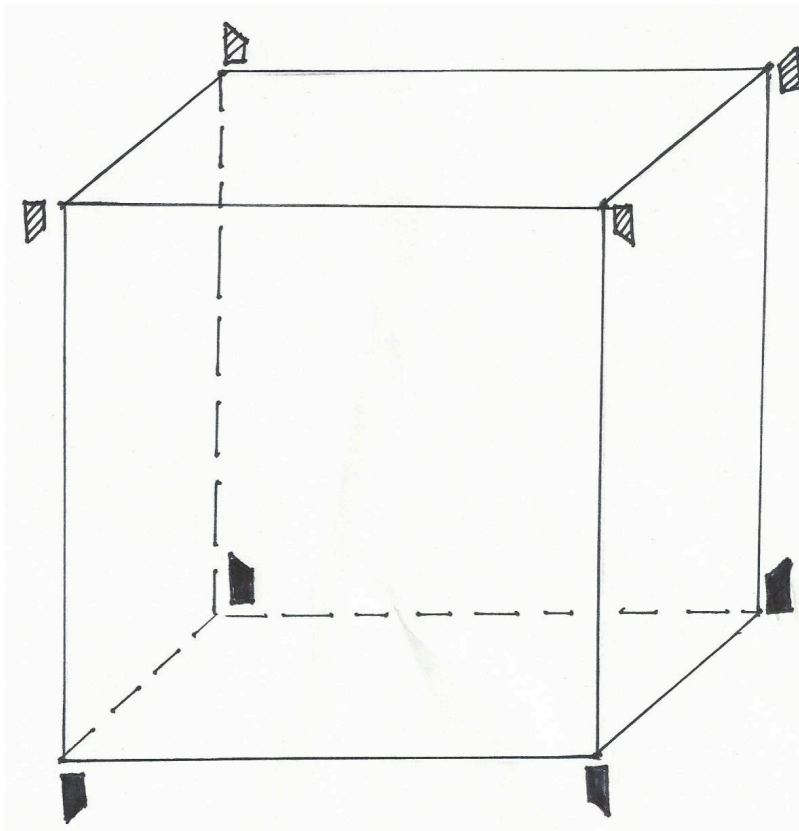


Figure 6: Cube, drawn by Kamrath, adapted from Laban,
The Language of Movement, 104

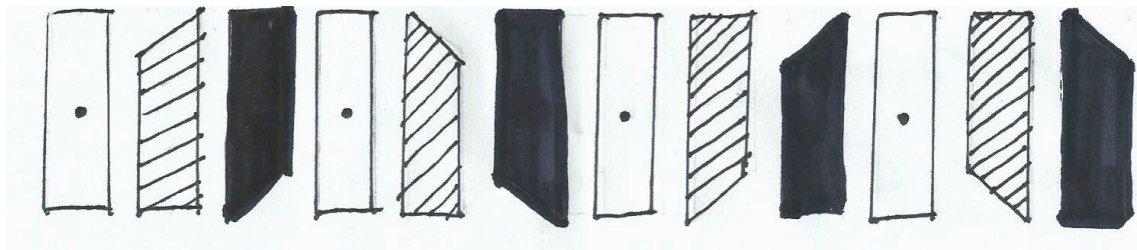


Figure 7: Diagonal Scale, drawn by Kamrath as taught by the
Integrated Movement Studies program

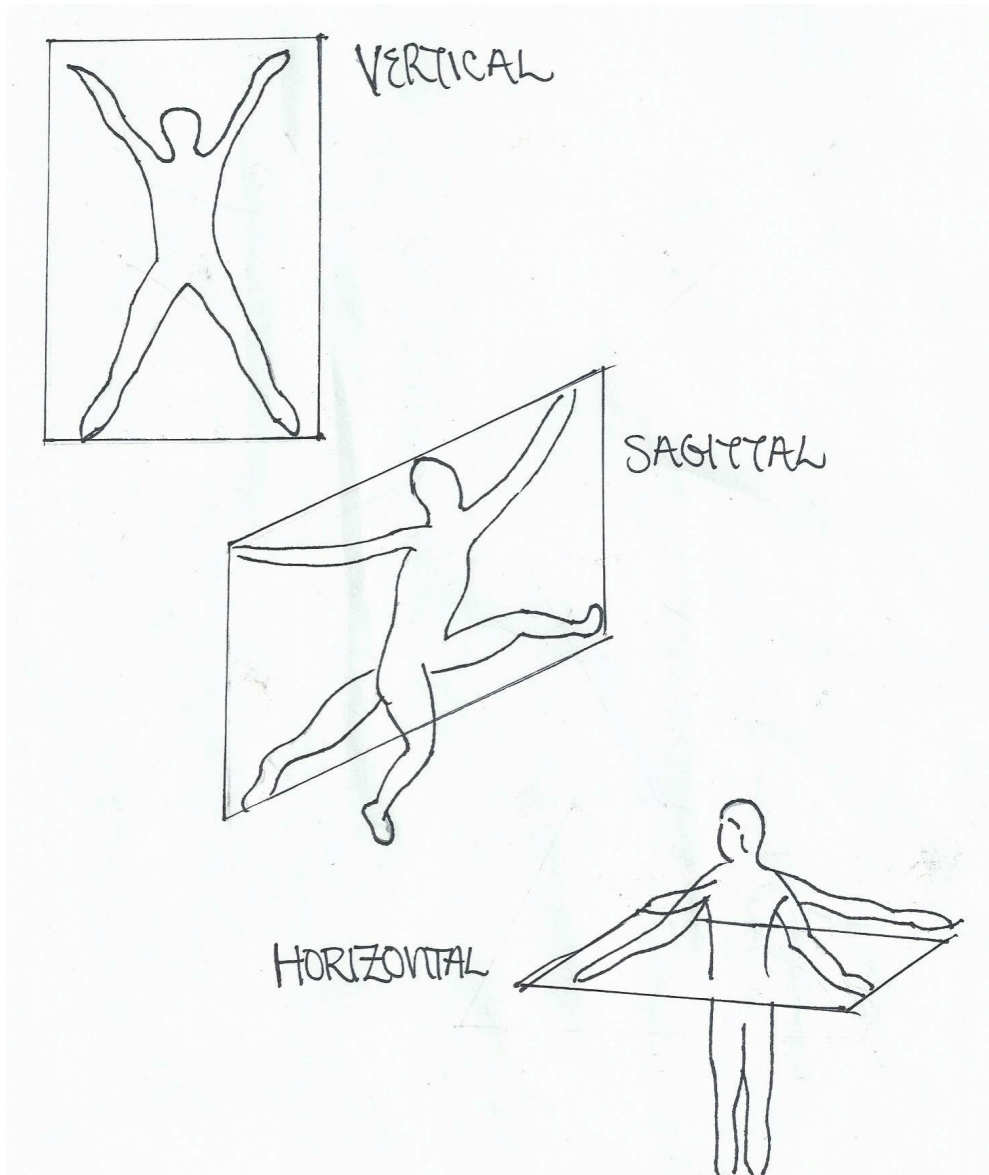


Figure 8: Movement of the Planes, drawn by Kamrath, adapted from Laban, *The Language of Movement*, 141

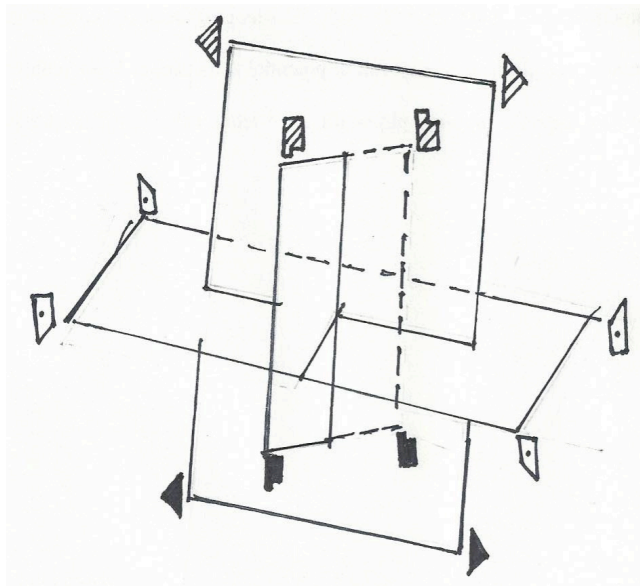


Figure 9: Planes in Space, drawn by Kamrath, adapted from Laban,
The Language of Movement, 142

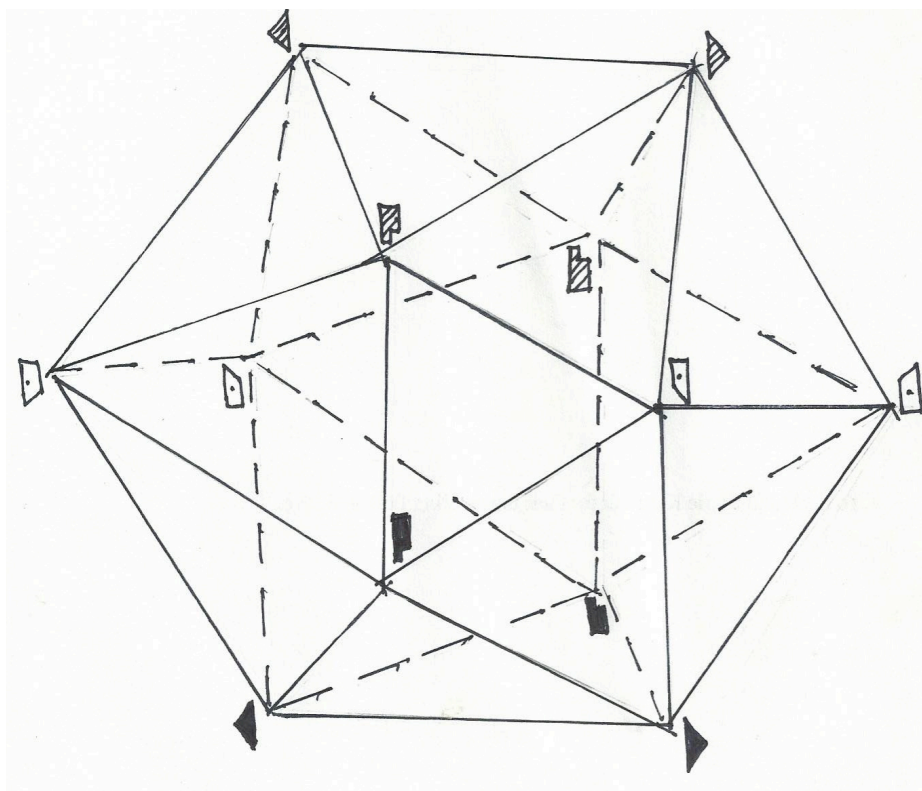


Figure 10: Icosahedron, drawn by Kamrath, adapted from Laban,
The Language of Movement, 186

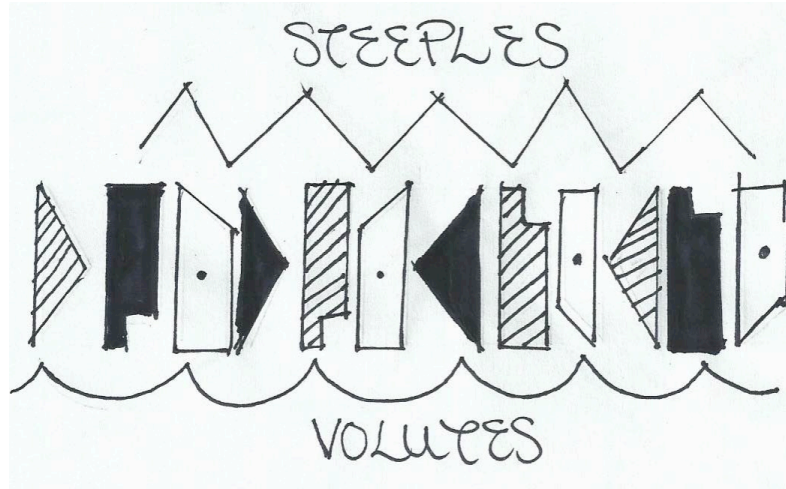


Figure 11: Transverse A Scale, drawn by Kamrath as taught by the Integrated Movement Studies program

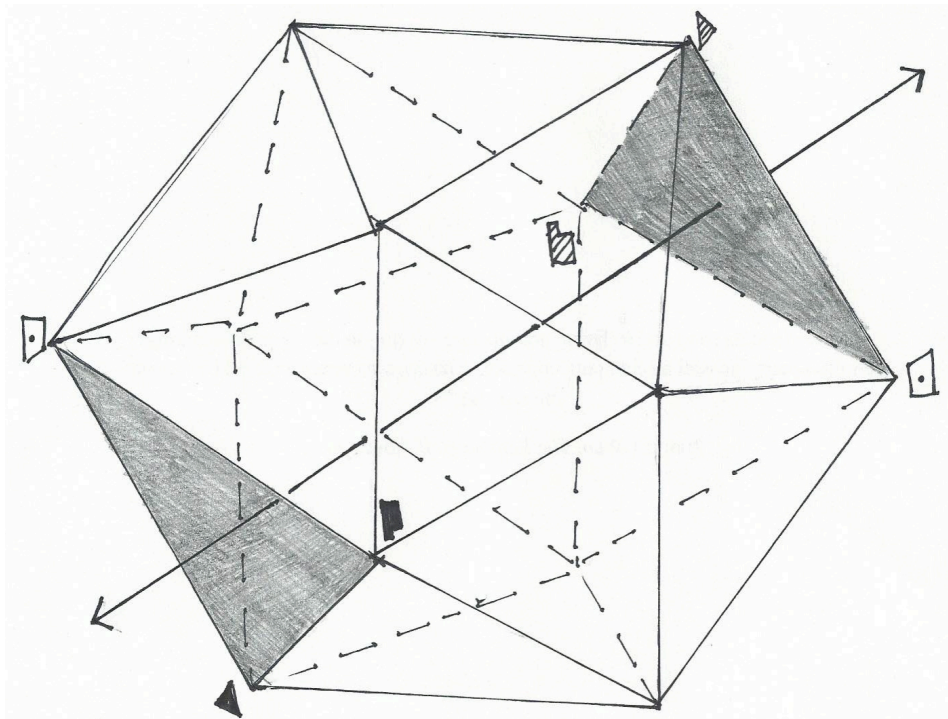


Figure 12: Icosahedron with Diagonal, drawn by Kamrath, adapted from Laban, *The Language of Movement*, 144

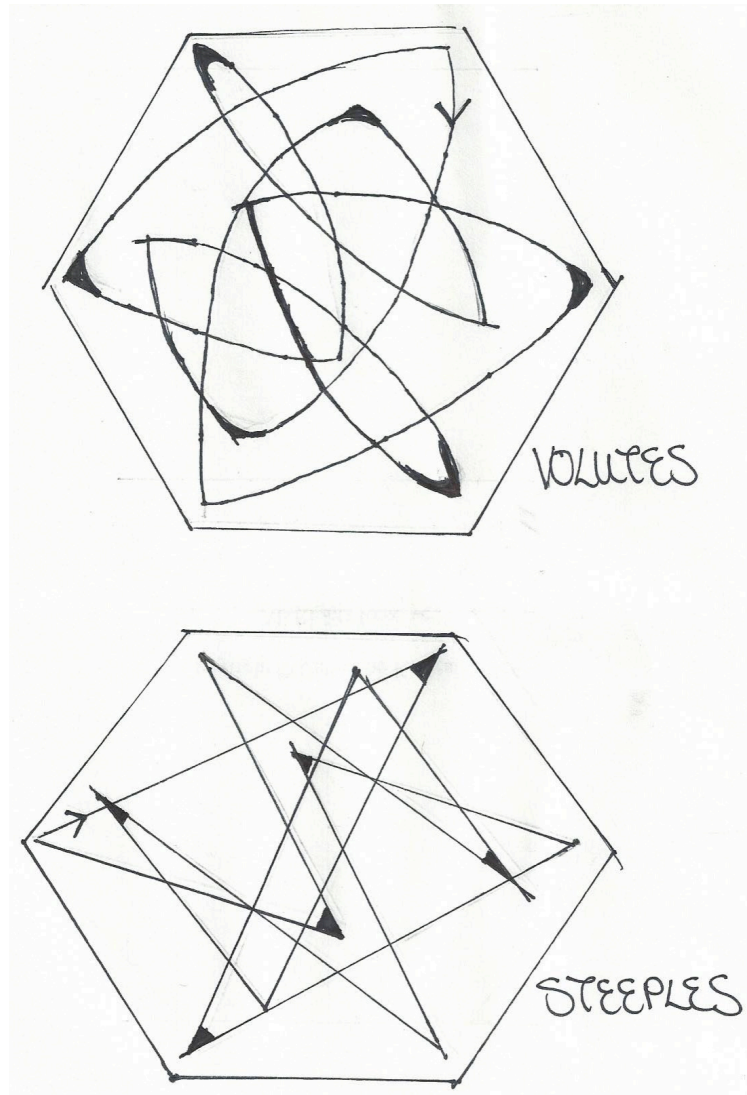


Figure 13: Steeple and Volute Phrasing, drawn by Kamrath, adapted from Preston-Dunlop 65

CHAPTER 5

THREADING FIBERS

In approaching my choreographic process, I desired to tie together my theoretical knowledge and physical practice into a present for my dancers and myself. I did not want to sink into already known patterns of making a choreographic work. Referring to his preference in creating architecture, Alain de Botton states, “to design means forcing ourselves to unlearn what we believe we already know, patiently to take apart the mechanisms behind our reflexes and to acknowledge the mystery and stupefying complexity of everyday gestures like switching off a light or turning on a tap” (247). The act of crafting the creative component of this final thesis work through blending Space Harmony Theory and architecture presented both simple and complex patterns.

I started my movement research before I even entered the studio by investigating how movement is embedded within these two theories. When I begin a process, I like to have a basic outline to work from, instead of a rigid structure that does not invite change or growth. I began by first exploring the concept of ‘space.’ Laban defined space by stating, “‘space’ refers to the body’s relationship to the spatial environment, the directional orientation of the body in three-dimensional space” (Groff, 72). In the dance field, theories and perspectives about space have become common discussions in the classroom and the studio. What space means to different people and how the body moves

in space become individual lived experiences. This causes an established personal lens of viewing that is brought into witnessing a work based on ‘space.’ In knowing my approach and understanding of space, I could begin working with a set of dancers. Through creating a container of my spatial understandings, the emerging work was more approachable as it narrowed in on a common definition of ‘space.’

With the term ‘space’ having multiple meanings, the act of distilling down my personal definition as a basis for this research was at times challenging, as there was a wide breadth of approaches. Emily Dritz, MA in Architecture, states, “the relationship between a person and his or her experience of space emerges from the degree of interaction shared through occupation” (1). Through daily life, the space an individual experiences impacts their understanding of ‘space.’ Different approaches to space allow for further exploration in the room and also speak to how personal identity, history, and embodiment can enter into the creative process. This was a delicate balance to discover as I transitioned from working by myself to creating with seven dancers.

For the process of generating material, I continued with practices from my thesis proposal process by looking at scales from Space Harmony Theory, architectural elements of the creative space, and exploring the inner textures of the body. I wanted to use different entrance points to create movement material in order to partner theoretical ideas with physical embodiment. I also chose to work collaboratively with my dancers because it invited each individual’s physical lived experiences into the creative process. Desiring to put theory into action, I also wanted to honor the answers each body held deep within.

I decided to work with seven dancers because I wanted to see many perspectives. De Botton, although not discussing the creative process, writes about the effect of

multiplicity by stating, “when buildings talk, it is never with a single voice. Buildings are choirs rather than soloists; they possess a multiple nature from which arise opportunities for beautiful consonance as well as dissension and discord” (217). My seven dancers were selected based on my previous experience working with them either in the studio or the classroom. Dancers A, D, T, J, and O were each involved in one of my previous choreographic processes. I had observed Dancers B and L in classes and invited them into this process because I believed they would add more creative depth to the ensemble. With Dancer L primarily focused on ballet, she would also add physical depth to the primarily modern focused group.

Seven dancers gave me the ability to play with the number and locations of bodies occupying the space. I did so in an alternating fashion so that each section would flow together like scenes from a movie. The number of bodies, their location, and their movement had “a favorable volume because of its harmony” (Bachelard 193). By constantly changing this volume, the structure of the work was able to take form and create different possibilities for harmonic relationships. I crafted the structure by looking at the areas of space that had not been enlivened by movement and by experimenting with how the numbers of dancers changed the dynamics of the space. Each of these elements acted as a puzzle piece as the movement continued to develop, allowing them to be moved around until they fit with another piece.

The final picture was made up of seventeen puzzle pieces: a solo on stage right; a trio on stage left; two duets that flow into the whole group dancing in canon; a duet downstage; a solo moving through the whole space; all seven dancers in unison along the diagonal; a trio downstage left with a quartet upstage right; a duet in opposite corners; a duet moving along center from downstage to upstage; a solo center stage; a duet in the

upstage panel; all dancers adding in two at a time; the whole group in the Transverse A scale; a trio; a quartet; a solo in the downstage left corner; all dancers sweeping across the stage. The use of solos, duets, trios, and quartets allowed for different relationships to emerge that were then further revealed within the large ensemble sections. As more bodies began to move through the space in different ways and relationships, the movement required “the body to orchestrate the play of tensions and countertensions through the center of gravity to effectively navigate the shifting equilibrating and disequilibrating forces” (Groff 122). In creating movement, not only was it important to focus on what our physical bodies were doing, but also how we could treat the overall space as a body itself.

In approaching the space as its own body, it could take the form as another collaborator instead of a static element. Jeffrey Rengering also states “as bodies pass through space, movement is created in architecture, thus infusing the dynamic into the typical rigid forms” (11). As the dancers’ Kinespheres began to stretch beyond themselves and to merge with each other, the Kinesphere of the space was formed. As the dancers shared and merged their Kinespheres with other dancers, they also maintained their own unique Kinesphere. This ability to preserve their Kinespheric identity allowed the movement to adapt to different locations and relationships.

As we created movement collaboratively, I gave the dancers tasks based on the architectural space or Space Harmony Movement Scales. When approaching each of these tasks, I reminded my dancers of the following quote from one of my Laban Certification mentors, Peggy Hackney: “how I move affects my environment and my own environment is in interaction with my inner experience” (44). Through framing these experiences with the need for personal autonomy, my dancers had the freedom to create

their own movement based on their unique bodies and reactions to the spatial environment.

Creating with Architecture

I discussed earlier how I used the location of bodies in space as a deciding factor in the final structure of the work. These locations were based on how the movement could be seen and understood from the audience perspective. I placed dancers further upstage when the movement was larger, or more legible, at a distance or if I wanted the movement to remain more mysterious. When choosing to have more than one movement phrase occurring at the same time, I often decided to put distance between them, setting up a foreground and a background. Bachelard continues this thinking by stating, “beauty of substance is added to beauty of geometrical form” (125). Using the geometrical form as a basis, the substance of the material can emerge and be manipulated.

Location does not only refer to a place in space, but also to how the movement relates to the height of the space. Levels (high, medium, and low) further craft the space through revealing its third dimension. Ignoring its height would omit an important element of the space, just as if the movement only contained the legs and the torso but not the arms. In creating variations of phrases, levels were revealed through the method of transposition. By varying levels, the audience absorbs the dimensions of the space more because of the relative change throughout the movement.

The windows in the dance studio inspired the first task I gave each dancer. Solos were created based off of looking out the same window and interpreting what is seen through movement. This task allowed dancers to see and create through their own eyes. Each dancer chose their own approach to making movement. Some chose to see the

whole picture and tried to reveal each element seen. Others focused on only one element, such as the details on the tree located closest to the window. Decisions were made based on color, texture, distance, and size. Using the window as an architectural portal between spaces allowed for a common thread to emerge from each individual solo. To further clarify and refine these solos, I asked each dancer to consider their spatial intent (where they were being pulled in space), where their focus was being drawn, and how the movement transitioned from one part to the next. After the dancers clarified their movement for their own bodies, I started to pair them together to create duets and trios.

Dancer J's solo begins the work and is a combination of movement material I created for my thesis proposal and her window solo. I wanted to begin with a solo to acclimate the audience to the intention of the work. Pairing together two movement phrases allowed not only for duration, but also established a connection and fluency between movements generated on my own body and by my dancers. Through setting up this precedent from the beginning, there was a seamless transition as the movement changed its primary voice. To further develop Dancer J's solo, we clarified timing and energy qualities so that it did not become too static in feeling. Sharper moments of quickness were juxtaposed with more lingering qualities as the movement traveled sequentially through the body.

As Dancer J's solo concluded, she crossed the front of the stage to reveal a trio positioned together in a tableau that slowly began to morph. The solos of Dancers L, A, and B were combined to make a trio. Their direction in making this trio involved looking at dance composition elements as well as deeper thinking regarding their relationship with each other. At least two dancers had to be in a direct relationship with each other throughout. It was up to them to interpret this compositional directive. This led to the

creation of duets within the trio. The dancers began physically connected, but transformed to a partnering duet of Dancers B and A with a solo by Dancer L. This relationship then shifted when Dancer A joined Dancer L to dance in unison while framing Dancer B in a solo behind them.

For continued development of their solos, I focused on level changes, as well as group and individual clarity of spatial pulls, location, and intention. After combining the movement, it was then important for it to possess meaning. They each had to define when they impacted the space and when space impacted their movement. An example of impacting the space would be how Dancer L clearly followed the shape of a tree seen through the window to shape the space around Dancers B and A. Dancer A has space affect her as she was moved by Dancer B. This helped to clarify the overall intention and connection between the trio because their role within the group was defined.

As Dancers T and D combined their solos to create a duet, I asked them to look at levels, dynamics, and how they were interacting with each other. As the structure of the whole work continuing to develop, I gave them additional directions to move only in the most downstage panel and to add locomotor movement that travelled the width of the stage. They also experimented with the vocabulary of pushing/pulling and distance/closeness. These extra descriptors helped to craft a duet that pushed forward the movement development of the piece as a whole. As we continued to develop this duet, the dancers needed to find a deeper relationship to the floor to increase stability. With more stability, they were then able to support their partner and share their weight.

Dancer O's window solo morphed into a final trio of Dancers O, A, and J. Her movement remained the same, but was further defined in terms of speed, direction of movement, and clarity of form. In finding more clarity in her movement, she was able to

expand her Kinesphere beyond just the skin of her body. When looking at the two trios that occurred before this in the sequence of the work, I wanted this to stand apart because there was no physical contact and all three were not dancing in unison. Dancers A and J watched Dancer O's solo and pulled out key moments to interpret in their own bodies. Their task was to act as magnets that orbit around Dancer O, dancing as two opposing elements in a cause and effect relationship. With Dancer O as the lead, Dancers A and J travelled around her in both linear and circular pathways. They acted as reflections, adding extra emphasis to her movement through timing and expansion. In creating this trio, the theme of cause and effect became the most pronounced. Although this theme also arises in other partnering sections, it is shown with the most clarity because of how Dancers A and J are effected by Dancer O's movement.

The first time all seven dancers are seen dancing at the same time is in a section affectionately named by my dancers called 'Diagon Alley.' In this section, the dancers performed the same movement phrase, but began moving at different times. This allowed for a variable canon to occur. The movement phrase was developed directly from the studio space. Each movement took inspiration from an element in the room, either its architecture or decoration. I used the linearity of the space in its structure. The patterns of the ceiling with the round lights, air ducts, and triangular scaffolding allowed for other changes in movement. The decoration of the musician's drums and piano, the sound system, the ballet barres, and the whiteboard also served as inspiration for movement. I created as I saw elements, building the movement phrase by starting in one place and recreating the sequence in other locations until it flowed well. This phrase was later transposed to the floor for a trio in unison in the downstage right corner.

My intention behind using one task to create multiple solos, duets, trios, and

group phrases was to find a common language within the collaboration. With seven dancers' and my own voice, the piece could have easily felt disjointed. However, by working from common principles, I paired similar movement qualities and intentions to create these solos, duets, and trios. A collective voice emerged through both honoring unique interpretations while also remaining rooted to the larger theme. By using the architectural elements of the dance studio as inspiration for movement and relationships, the dancers crafted the architecture that became the choreographic structure. Each of these pieces developed a more embodied whole.

Variations of Space Harmony Movement Scales

The choreographic works that preceded my thesis process each involved the use of Laban Movement Analysis. This approach has become embedded in the way I see movement, and therefore, the way I create movement. Continuing to work with dancers from previous projects, they entered in with baseline knowledge of my expectations and vocabulary. I wanted to continue using Effort, Shape, and Body principles as foundations for making, describing, and finessing movement. However, I desired to hone in on Space Harmony Theory because it had been the least used category in my previous processes. As I tried to shape and enhance my view of the Space category, I was also faced with the need to have my dancers understand the formation and specifics of the theory. In doing so, I introduced them to the crystalline forms and Laban's perspectives when approaching his movement scales. Ed Groff states,

“It is this crystalline conception of space as a matrix of directional tensions that are combined in various ways to create central, peripheral, and transverse pathways through the kinesphere that Laban conceived as the architecture of space that was congruent with the proportions of the human body and consequently could serve as models for the investigation

of movement potential” (Groff 165).

As my dancers gained more knowledge about the Space Harmony Theory, they applied it to their own body proportions and potential. I focused on two of Laban’s movement scales to create movement: the Diagonal Scale and the Transverse A Scale with Volute phrasing.

In approaching the Diagonal Scale, I created movement phrases that captured the ‘fly and fall’ feeling of the scale. I began with Right Side High and revealed each diagonal around the Cube in a counter-clockwise pattern. I used level changes to emphasize the Diagonals. The four High points of the Diagonals were revealed using the limbs or by jumping through the air. The four Low points were shown through movement on the floor. I taught my dancers this Diagonal phrase by only focusing on movement first. I wanted them to feel moving from one extreme to the next before I layered on my theoretical perspective. This allowed them to follow their natural instincts during transitions. Only after the movement was in their bodies did I further explain to them the details in the movement choices. I specified each Diagonal one at a time before combining the four together.

The final version of the Diagonal Scale appears about halfway through the final piece. The dancers enter from the upstage left corner to form a staggered diagonal. This formation bisects the stage in a new way. They perform in unison, highlighting each of the four diagonals because there are seven bodies moving in the same directions. Finding unison was difficult because of the specificity of the different directions. By the time of performances, this phrase had been rehearsed, dissected, and clarified enough times to allow the dancers to find group unity.

For the Transverse A Scale, I took a different approach. I reminded my dancers

about the three planes: Vertical, Horizontal, and Sagittal. Using diagrams and pictures, I was then able to help them imagine the Icosahedron as a three-dimensional form extrapolated out from the points of the three planes. I focused on the patterning of the Transverse A Scale on the right side with Volute phrasing. This was an important decision to make because each scale and phrasing would offer a different feeling. The roundness of the Volute phrasing was more inviting with many bodies moving at the same time. I wanted there to be a slight feeling of chaos, without there being an overwhelming amount of movement.

The Icosahedron has twelve points and the Transverse A Scale has six volutes. I assigned each volute to a dancer. In doing so, the first and third points of their volutes would overlap with another dancer. These six overlapping points were created together so that each dancer would have the same movement if they passed through the same point. Each dancer created their own movement for the pathways between each of the points. For example, Dancer L started at Right Side High then moved to Back Low and Left Forward Middle. Dancer A started at Left Forward Middle. Dancers L and A would do the same movement when it was their time to be at the point, Left Forward Middle. In creating the movement at each of these points and the transitions in between, I asked the dancers to emphasize if they were High, Low, or Middle; Right, Left, or neutral; or Forward, Back, or Middle. Through asking for specificity, these points could be revealed in similar ways to Laban's original creation of the Transverse A Scale.

Once each of the six volutes had been choreographed, it came time to decide the best way to organize having six bodies moving in different directions and levels all at the same time. Many of these decisions came from their starting positions and the structure of the final work. This phrase occurred after Dancers O and D finished a duet. I set

Dancer O in the middle of the space, a marker for the other dancers to weave the Icosahedron around her as if she was the center of its Kinesphere. Dancer D initiated the scale with others adding in after movement cues. Dancers B and J were the next two to begin because Dancer D's movement had him pass through the space between the two of them. Other dancers added on in the same fashion. As we wove the web of the Icosahedron, I moved each person one by one as if players on the chessboard. It was important to allow their pathways to continue to be clear. This meant timing had to be adjusted at certain points to permit other dancers to pass. I also added moments where two dancers' movement mirrored each other to increase their relationship to the whole. An example of this was when Dancer L jumped over Dancer T who was doing a similar movement, but on the floor. Stringing these six threads together was a visually stirring moment because it is the first time they are seen inhabiting the same space without doing the exact same pattern of movement.

A solo at the start of the second section foreshadowed this pivotal moment. Dancer O strings together the movement from each of the six volutes so she can reveal all twelve points. As the sole dancer onstage, she had the ability to take up the whole space. This helped to reveal the changes in direction and level, mobility and stability that identify the Transverse Scales. With the chance to use the full stage, instead of staying in relationship to the distance of five other dancers, she highlighted the potential and proportionality of her own body. A physically demanding solo, Dancer O had to balance clarity with fatigue.

My choice to use the Diagonal and Transverse A scales helped to root my choreographic research directly in the Space Harmony Theory. Focusing on the cube and icosahedron also allowed the relationship between the body and gravity to shift "in

moving along or balancing in alignment with dimensions, planar diameters, or cubic diagonals” (Moore 122). The complexity of the theory and all of its components helped to push the choreographic themes forward because there was a distinct language in which to create. The theory created a container from which the choreography could emerge.

The Finishing Touches and Performances

After the choreography was finished and the final structure decided, all that was left to do leading up to performances was to decide on the title of the work, final music score, lighting, and costumes. The easiest decision was picking out costumes. I often associate a piece with colors first and then choose a fashion style as inspiration. For this work, I chose the colors black, grey, and fuchsia. I chose a more neutral palate while also adding a pop of color. The fuchsia color was bright, yet also sophisticated and mysterious. In terms of style, I wanted a pedestrian, yet polished, nature to their costumes. Each dancer had a costume made up of different pieces and patterns ranging from pants to dresses. This allowed for each dancer to be seen as an individual while also remaining tied to the group as a whole.

Throughout my rehearsal process, I played a range of music as background noise. I would make notes on songs that worked well with the movement and those that were too contrasting. As I continued to make more notes, I found certain songs or artists were repeatedly added to the list. When forming the final music score, I started with these notes and began to play these songs again with the movement. Using the structure of the movement to guide the music score, I decided to approach it through three sections with moments of silence in between each to let it settle.

The first piece of music I chose was Kodomo’s “Concept 10” for the first section.

Of the electronic genre, I appreciated that its beats had a driving force to them. They also varied often, which let the movement fit into its development. There is an opening resonant tone that I edited to repeat multiple times. I chose to begin the piece this way to set up an air of mystery while also forming a container for the space. The music naturally faded out with the end of Dancers T and D's duet. Dancer O's solo begins in silence as the second soundtrack slowly fades in.

Finding the right score for the second section was difficult because I wanted something softer and simpler. Music that included cello or piano brought an emotional element to the work through their tones and composition. Although music always changes the way movement is interpreted by the audience, I found that this style of music added emotion that was not already embedded within the movement. I did not want to impose Effort choices on my dancers that were not inherently there in the movement. Through a random search, I discovered Patrick O'Hearn's "Beyond This Moment." A piece of acoustic guitar, I found that it not only filled the space through its simplicity and repetition, but also continued threads from the first score. The song develops along with Dancer O's solo so their growth of complexity occurs alongside each other. O'Hearn's work, along with the silence which follows, creates a wash over the space and settles into the heart of the work.

Following twenty-five seconds of silence that features a duet between Dancers B and A, Dancer L's solo occurs with the driving beat of Modeselektor's "Godspeed." This electronic piece amps up the volume, speed, and energy. There is the same underlying beat throughout with other rhythms entering in and out. By having one element stay constant while others change, this song continues to play with its development through simple and complex phrasing. The increase in intensity and more upbeat atmosphere

pushed the dancers to match its energy while also performing the most physical sections of the dance. As the dance fades at its conclusion, the music also fades.

In approaching the lighting process, it came easily because many of the answers were embedded in the movement. I wanted the dancers to be visible, while also allowing the intensity of the light to grow and fade with the movement. My lighting designer and I decided on three distinct color schemes that aided the development of the music. We also highlighted certain areas of the stage while keeping the rest dark to convey the feeling of the space moving and changing. To pair with the repeating opening tone in the music, the lights faded up slowly to reveal Dancer J walking into the space. Warm lighting marks the opening sequence from Dancer J's solo through Dancers T and D's duet. The backlight is an amber tone that sections off the space starting on stage right then fading to stage left. A soft grey fades up at the bottom of the cyc as all the dancers appear. When the dancers exit downstage left leaving Dancers T and D onstage for their duet, the whole stage dims to only the sidelight from the front two wings. This sidelight allows for the dancers to be fully seen while also closing off the space.

The start of Dancer O's solo signals the beginning of a long fade to an icy blue theme. The backlight and the bottom of the cyc both emerge to their final intensity throughout the first minute of Dancer O's solo, allowing the space to grow as her dancing and the sound score match it. There is very little change between the first and last look of this section. This look brightens as more dancers enter the stage for the Diagonal Scale. As they separate into a quartet upstage right and a trio downstage left, a deeper saturate blue highlights their location.

As Dancers A and B enter downstage from either side at the end of the second soundtrack, the lights change into their final color scheme: bright purple. Lit only from

above and highlighting the center panel running the length of the stage, their bodies take on purple shadows. This look stays for Dancer L's solo and Dancers O and D's duet. As more dancers enter the space, the purple washes up to the bottom of the cyc leaving the rest of the stage only lit by sidelight and front light. This saturates the color behind them while leaving the dancers and their movements visible. The purple grows to reach the top of the cyc while the other lights also brighten to their full intensity at the peak of this section, the Transverse A scale. With each subsequent section, the lighting drops in intensity until Dancer D's solo in the downstage left corner. The light traps him in a small rectangle, containing his movement and the space. This allows for the last look to emerge, three horizontal patterns of white light acting as pathways for the dancers to pass. The lights then fade to black with the end of the sound score.

Determining the title of the work was my most difficult decision. I often choose titles that hold meaning to the cast and the final work, but may not be as evident to the audience. It is part of my artistic statement to not dictate what my audience sees in my work, and I hold the same value when it comes to a title. The title should set up a frame for approaching the work, but should also invite interpretation from the audience. I considered pulling from my research, but my options all spoke too literally of the work. I then looked at the work itself and was drawn to its "parts to whole" qualities. I had started thinking of these parts and my dancers as threads that wove together the final work. When I searched synonyms for 'thread,' I found 'fiber.' When I thought deeper about this word, I realized that fibers not only make up elements that surround us, but are also a part of our physical anatomy. This tie between the internal and the external spoke the most purely of the work and so, "Fibers" was branded.

The first performances of "Fibers" were in the graduate thesis concert, *Honest*

Bodies, November 19-21, 2015. With the costuming and lighting now complete, the dancers were in control of how the work progressed. Over five months, we had crafted over seventeen minutes of material and spent many rehearsals refining the choreography. Before every performance, we came together as a group to prepare. I led the group through a warm-up that involved grounding, finding stability on one leg, and locomoting through space. The dancers also had the opportunity to connect with their partners and practice any lifts or movement sequences before they went on stage. The dancers came alive in their performance, finding deeper clarity in their movement and their role within the work. With each night, the piece developed further as they grew more comfortable with the space and tempered the natural anxiety that arises with performing.

At the start of the spring semester, we were invited to perform ‘Fibers’ again in the Utah Museum of Fine Arts’ ‘Long Live Art’ Celebration. The opportunity to reinvest in the movement was a welcomed gift. When we started rehearsals in January, I was surprised by how easily the movement came back to all my dancers. There were a few fumbles in terms of partnering, but the overall shape and feel of the work was instantly revived. Performing in the Great Hall of the UMFA was a very different performance platform to our previous experiences in the Hayes-Christensen Theatre.

This new space was not only wider than we were used to, but the ceiling extended far above us. Its height was emphasized by an installation piece of pink ribbons hanging from the ceiling until about seven feet off the floor. This installation allowed for the space to come back into eye level, but without closing it off into a tight container. The immensity of the space was intimidating for myself and my dancers, especially since the regular museum lights would be on to illuminate the whole space. Bachelard discusses how to manage a large space by stating, “immensity is within ourselves. It is attached to a

sort of expansion of being that life curbs and caution arrests, but which starts again when we are alone. As soon as we become motionless, we are elsewhere; we are dreaming in a world that is immense” (184). In knowing that we are the source of immensity, the dancers’ performance at the UMFA enhanced the movement. The dancers were able to stretch their bodies to become wider and longer in every dimension because the space invited and demanded a wider breadth of movement. The experiences of these three distinct spaces were important to the dancers’ development of the movement material. Clarity was found through the ability to adapt to new dimensions and relationships to the audience members.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Growth occurs in every choreographic process. I strive for physical, emotional, and creative growth when I spend a prolonged amount of time with dancers. Who shows up to the space is as important as the work that is made. A new collective voice is found in honoring the individual. As my theoretical and creative work began to intertwine, my seven dancers supported its development with their unique personalities and movement propensities. *Fibers* became a representation of how these seven people were woven together by the thread of space. As physical relationships came together and faded away, they each remained spatially connected to the whole. Each was a distinct puzzle piece that shifted space and form through fluctuating relationships.

As structure emerged, so did the humanity of *Fibers*. These dancers were not only identified as movers, but as real people investigating their relationships to others and the environments they inhabit. The interconnection of these relationships was integral to the performance of the work. Much like the ability to walk down the street and encounter strangers, acquaintances, and good friends, each dancer found a range of connection. They each had moments of intimate partnering, merging Kinespheres and intent. They each interacted with an empty, or almost empty space, allowing them to contemplate their place, size, and meaning within the space. Each had moments of nearing a relationship

with another, only to let it dissipate.

The parallel and divergent journeys of the dancers created harmony. In speaking of Laban's philosophy on movement, Ed Groff states, "harmony is expressed in movement in the degree to which the outward manifestation is an honest and integrated expression of inner intent" (106). Balancing the individual voice with the collective focus allowed for this inner intent to emerge. The movement, music, lighting, and costuming layered emotion and feeling into the environment, further facilitating the inner intent of the choreography to be revealed.

The dancers' physicality also influenced their environment. Swiss art historian Heinrich Wölfflin states that, "the elements of architecture – material and form, gravity and force – can convey a feeling because we are able to project our own physical experiences into these elements" (Moore 203). In each changing architecture, from the studio to the stage to the UMFA Great Hall, the physical experience of the dancers shifted as the architectural elements altered. The color tones, materials, and amount of natural light provided different information to the dancers. The digestion of this information integrated with the outer manifestation of movement, Effort life, and intent.

As dancers interacted and passed others in space, the dynamic environment was directly impacted. Entrances and exits, partnerships and the full ensemble shifted the dynamic environment and spatial harmony. In crafting the order of the work, balance was necessary to find harmony and "the same difficulties that architects face when attempting to cantilever a mass in space obtain in dance" (Moore 203). Bodies can balance the space in many different ways. Movement and location contribute to finding equilibrium through changing the ratio of mass in the space. When applying Space Harmony principles, these ratios were already provided and their specificity of location grew in importance.

Fibers became a new crystalline form, its pathways expanding and collapsing its shape. Through creating this new object, driven by space, the whole of the performance became energized. Carol-Lynne Moore states, “the stylized geometry of movement pathways that Laban uses in his choreutic theory and notation system serves as a cognitive map for the mover, a crystalline abstraction through which the flowing biomorphic curves of natural movement may be conceptualized, recorded, and reconstructed” (100). This movement mapping was incredibly important to the creation of the final work because it allowed it to continue to progress forward, instead of staying stuck in the same space.

As the parts found their belonging within the larger whole, no part was of lesser value. From the production elements of lighting and costuming to the music selection to the application of Space Harmony or architecture, each was a key component to the development of *Fibers*. The engagement within my own artistic philosophy (humanity, emotionality, femininity, intimacy) increased the spatially oriented work into one that also had emotional layers. As movement becomes living architecture, it increases meaning, potential, and relationships. As movement reveals space, it also reveals inner intention, personality, and identity. When movement becomes living architecture that reveals space, it is elevated to a level of full embodiment and energetic demand.

As I progress forward in my research beyond this thesis process, I am interested in continuing to explore how Laban’s prescribed Space Harmony Movement Scales can offer different in-roads to movement. I solely focused on the Transverse A and Diagonal Scales, but there are many others to explore. In my personal life as both an artist and a LMA practitioner, space has become more enlivened in every aspect. It has influenced my teaching, both in my movement material and in how I am interacting with my

students. I have the ability to take in the entirety of the space while also focusing in on the individual students. My focus on architecture has been allowed me to take advantage of how the movement can fill the full space and the ability to adapt to a smaller classroom. This has been beneficial in my training as a dancer, choreographer, and educator.

In looking at the larger whole of the LMA community, it is important to continue to progress Laban's theories forward into 21st-century thinking. If the theory remains stuck in Laban's 20th-century European male perspective, then it will stay stagnant and lose its applicability. I want to be a part of this conversation and development. By staying within the vocabulary of LMA, possibilities emerge to consistently redefine their meaning. This comes from every individual within the system as well as the leaders and members in the smaller community of practitioners. If the theme of stability and mobility is applied to how LMA is learned and integrated, then it opens many paths to relevancy.

At the end of this process, I have grounded myself within the Space category of LMA and can feel its aliveness percolating in my daily life. The creative process has opened my eyes to possibilities that have always been there, but lacked attention. I desire to continue my work in the same capacity because my relationship to space will continually change as I change residences, dance studio spaces, and collaborators. The process of unlearning and relearning can continue to be applied in my development as an artist.

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ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following annotated bibliography describes all work produced in the Modern Dance Master of Fine Art's program that played a significant role in my artistic and theoretical development. This is a list of citations to choreography, performances, screendances, and teaching experiences that were vital to my growth within the program. A brief description will follow each citation and will explain their importance to my three years of graduate studies. An online portfolio (www.catkamrath.com) accompanies this written portion, providing videos of the full-length works, photos, and detailed descriptions.

Choreography:

Fibers

Hayes-Christensen Theatre, November 2015

Presented in the Graduate Thesis Concert, *Honest Bodies*, my choreographic thesis work, *Fibers*, explores the relationship between Space Harmony Theory and architecture. Created in collaboration with seven dancers, this piece is the pinnacle of my creative work over the past three years of study. It played a vital role in the development of my thesis research and in the continuation of my artistic perspective. Lasting seventeen minutes, *Fibers* was performed at the Hayes-Christensen Theatre in the Marriott Center for Dance and in the Great Hall at the Utah Museum of Fine Art. This work has also

influenced further creations and collaborations with the dancers. I have also used many of the choreographic tasks as guest lectures in composition classes.

Swims Our Blood

Hayes-Christensen Theatre, December 2014

Presented in the second-year Graduate Salon, *Swims Our Blood* was created in parallel to my certification in Laban/Bartenieff Movement Analysis. Created through the lens of Laban/Bartenieff Movement Analysis, *Swims Our Blood* explores Body, Effort, Shape, and Space theories and their relationship to choreographic methods, personal movement style, and collaboration. Performed by five dancers, this nine-minute work is the first time I used LMA as inspiration for a dance work. Although there are elements of the work I wished I had more time to develop, the overall structure of this work and my experience in guiding my dancers influenced my thesis process. Having completed this work, both of my dancers and I had a foundation to approach my thesis process and a baseline understanding of my research.

Caulfield

Marriott Center for Dance Experimental Theatre, November 2014

A remix of the previously presented *Holden*, *Caulfield* acts as a prequel of events. This trio, created by the weaving of three solos, represents the road to and catalyst for change, chosen isolation, and the effect of imbalance. Performed in the Marriott Center for Dance's Experimental Theatre during the Department of Modern Dance's Student Concert, the more intimate space created a different relationship between the performers and audience. In creating this work, I was able to revisit past inspirations and re-interpret

them in my current perspective. This experience revealed many of my artistic values that are a continuation from past works and how some have developed.

Performance:

My Head, My Hands

Hayes-Christensen Theatre, December 2014

Choreographed by Kelly Bruce, *My Head, My Hands* was presented in the Graduate Thesis Concert, *The Theory of...* This trio was a collaborative process regarding our individual sense of identity and how it was formed. We discussed how identity could be brought into a collaborative process with many voices. The structure of the work involved two short trios and three longer solos. This work was also presented at the American College Dance Association Conference at the University of Northern Colorado. My experience in this process allowed for a growth in my understanding of the thesis process. It also influenced ideas that are of personal value and how to continually reinvest in the development of self.

What's in a Name?

Hayes-Christensen Theatre, March 2014

Choreographed by Meghan Durham Wall, *What's in a Name?* was presented in the Performing Dance Company Spring 2014 production. A quintet, this piece ranged from detailed modern dance movement to dance theatre. The use of voice was an important element of the work. Through the journey to discover oneself in relationship to identity was crafted through personal reflection and group discussions. Being involved in this work taught me a lot about collaboration and how to invite personal differences to

live within the same container. New elements were added to the piece during each of the six performances, allowing it to be unpredictable within a malleable container. Wall's approach to her dancers and the development of the work was easeful, creating a positive and safe creative environment.

Red Light, Green Light

Hayes-Christensen Theatre, December 2013

Choreographed by Laquimah VanDunk, *Red Light, Green Light* was presented in the Graduate Thesis Concert, *Multitudes*. This piece was created collaboratively with seven dancers and revolved around how the collaborative process could be formed through the use of play and games. The structure of this work involved solo, duet, and small group work as well as the entire ensemble. Remaining onstage for the duration of the piece tested stamina and performance qualities. This work was also presented at American College Dance Association's conference at Arizona State University. As my first experience with the thesis process, it was interesting to see how VanDunk directed the dancers to be both true to themselves and the work as a whole.

Technology:

Inside the Dancer's Studio: The Life of a Modern Dance Freshman

Screendance Documentary

Created during the Screendance course in Fall 2014, *Inside the Dancer's Studio: The Life of a Modern Dance Freshman* is a documentary that follows five students through their days in the Department of Modern Dance, their reasons for dancing, and their dreams for the future. I filmed five interviews all using the same questions and a

modern dance and ballet technique class. I also followed students around the department to capture them interacting with one another. This project was important to my studies as a Screendance Certificate student, but also because I enjoyed capturing the essence of people through film. This film has been featured at departmental recruitment events such as the High School Workshop and Utah Dance Educator Association conferences.

Seasonal Bloom

Screendance

Created during the Screendance course in Fall 2014, *Seasonal Bloom* is a screendance that follows one dancer through her physical and mental preparation for performance. Starring Megan O'Brien, the film switches between her application of stage makeup and performing on the stage. Phrasework from the choreographic piece, *Caulfield*, was used as the basis of the movement and was filmed from multiple angles. The dance footage varied between match and jump cuts, creating both continuity and disorientation. As my first Screendance, this film taught me a lot about how to make a dance film. Filming and editing techniques were developed as well as broadening my artistic perspective through film.

CounterSpace

Installation, Collaboration with Allison Shir

CounterSpace was created as an installation project integrating movement, video projection, original sound score, and set design. All elements were explored based on the simple concept of accumulation and the questions of: how does layering of simple motifs create a specific environment? how do rhythm, timing, and dynamics accumulate to

create complex geometrical patterns in space? how do these geometrical patterns guide the development of movement to create architectural landscape as defined by the physical installation? Using a collection of physical shapes, a dance phrase developed by varying the numerical patterns. We explored the effect of repetition on the performance body and what characters or emotions are derived. As the only installation created during my three years, *CounterSpace* has given me insight on how to create an experience through the use of many mediums.

Teaching:

Lead Teacher: DANC 1022: Hip Hop; DANC 1111: Movement Fundamentals

Assistant Teacher: DANC 2420: Intermediate Choreography; DANC 4571/6350: Movement in Culture; DANC 4711/6360: Dance History

Guest Lecturer: DANC 1013: History of Hip Hop; DANC 1015: Dance Appreciation; DANC 1075: Dance as a Creative Process; DANC 1111: Movement Fundamentals; DANC 2420: Intermediate Choreography; DANC 3009: Dance Appreciation; DANC 4711/6360: Dance History

My experiences as an educator over the past three years are important to my growth because they have helped to craft my teaching philosophy. The opportunity to teach many different disciplines further developed my perspective as a teacher, but also gave me experience in leading students of varying dance education and ages. In the development of my personal point of view, it was important for me to have access to teaching classes that are within my specialties. During my guest lectures, I was able to find how I could meet course expectations while also offering a new approach to the material. I highly value the teaching opportunities I have received because they have prepared me to teach in many areas in the future.