

- SHADOWS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

IN

DANCE

AUGUST 2007

By
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Thesis Committee:

Gregg Lizenbery, Chairperson
Betsy Fisher
Paul Maley

We certify that we have read this thesis and that, in our opinion, it is satisfactory in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Dance

THESIS COMMITTEE

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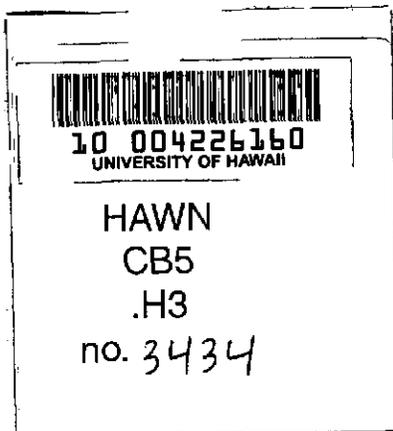


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Chapter 1 Introduction

Returning to school was not an easy decision. It elicited many questions: Why? What is the purpose? Is the achievement necessary? Is the time right? Now, as I am finishing my last year at the University of Hawaii, I begin to understand the process and I revel in it. There have been many changes in my life during the past two and a half years and my thesis project embraces and reflects them.

My background in dance began with classical ballet, not in a rigid, structured format but in a small, let's-have-fun school. This naturally developed my love for dance – the friendships, the physical exercise, and the ecstatic joy of moving through space. I later progressed to more structured ballet classes and became thoroughly involved with the ballet world in Hawaii and never strayed until college. While completing my BFA, I found myself exploring the world of jazz (not hip-hop) and my presented piece at the Kennedy Lab Theatre was a piece that included both ballet and jazz. I continually fought the modern dance concepts and dismissing them as nonsense and crazy. I was young. Now my life is completing a circle and I finally understand 'modern dance' concepts and fully embrace them.

During my MFA studies I re-visited Labanotation concepts, learned about Laban Movement Analysis and found them to be very useful tools in teaching ballet and modern technique classes. I have many uses for the LMA concepts and find ballet dancers can benefit by incorporating them into ballet technique. Labanotation is a very useful tool

when 'cleaning' and rehearsing ballets and choreographed pieces. It is helpful when describing directions and use of body parts. I will use these concepts within my thesis work. My proposed thesis project is in four parts represents my journey through dance – my career in dance and teaching.

Chapter 2 - Master Thesis Performance Proposal: Shadows

Music: Corvus Corax – Qui Nous Demaine
Dancers : Mayuko Ayabe, Celia Chun, Bridget Noguchi, Maryann Peterson, Carolyn Wilt, Shannon Yamamoto
Costumes: Dark unitards with full chiffon skirts, pointe shoes

The first section of the Thesis Performance will be a classical ballet piece with 4 – 6 dancers on pointe. I will choreograph the dancers using the structured formations and patterns from a typical ballet format. Throughout the piece, one dancer will consistently find discord with the movement and try to break out of the set structure only to be swept up by the other dancers and carried along.

Music: Corvus Corax – Ovum Prandii Deum Septime Die & Mille Anni Passi Sunt
Dancer: Celia Chun
Costumes: Dark unitard (chiffon skirt is removed), pointe shoes

As the music changes, the dancer will explore space using shape and time. The other dancers encircle curiously, then leave the stage. The one dancer is left on stage alone. In this solo I would like to explore the more difficult, unusual positions a dancer can make with the human body and the many different transitions that can be used.

Music: Corvus Corax – Bucca
Dancers : Mayuko Ayabe, Tiana DeBell Maryann Peterson, Carolyn Wilt, Shannon Yamamoto

Costumes: Dark unitards with hoods, pointe shoes

The third piece will explore the use of pointe shoes; not through a conventional classical way but one that attempts to defy gravity. This piece was worked on in the Fall 2006

Footholds but may be re-choreographed to different music.

Music: Corvus Corax – DansMix (Mit Dans is all die Welt genesen)

Dancers : Mayuko Ayabe, Celia Chun, Bridget Noguchi, Maryann Peterson, Carolyn Wilt, Shannon Yamamoto

Costumes: Dark unitards with partial skirts, pointe shoes

The final piece will be a collage of the many forms of dance that I have taken and will be performed on pointe.

Chapter 3 – Production Information

The dancers I have asked to perform in this piece are:

Mayuko Ayabe, Bridget Noguchi, Nicole Lam, Maryann Peterson, Carolyn Wilt,
Shannon Yamamoto. I will also perform.

The music I have chosen is all performed by Corvus Corax. This is a German band that is known for playing medieval music with authentic instruments.

The total length of the piece will be approximately 15 minutes.

The costumes will be a simple dark unitard. My thought is to attach a full skirt with Velcro for the first section, remove the skirts for the second and third, and attach a half skirt (just in the back) for the final piece. The full skirt symbolizes the classical background of ballet that is integral in my dance and life. The skirt is removed as the solo dancer goes through the transitions in the second section and other dancers explore the different levels and shapes in the third piece. A unitard has always been a 'modern' look to me and it symbolizes individuality. The body cannot hide and conform to a corps de ballet look in a unitard. The dancers are forced to accept themselves for who they are when they have 'no clothes' to hide behind. Their individual movements and qualities become obvious. The final piece ends with each dancer wearing the skirt piece in her own individual way – whether it is draped over the upper body or just over the backside.

Lighting and Sets

I envision the first section of the piece to be 'moody', not too dark with green and lavender highlights. The second and third sections become rather dark and mysterious with the last section brightening up as a resolution.

This Lab Theater Production will not include any set pieces. I have asked Michiko from Hawaii Stage and Lighting to be my lighting designer and am working with fellow MFA candidate Chansri Green on finding our Stage Manager. The dance will need the Marley flooring.

Chapter 4 - Proposal deadlines

First Draft of Thesis	December 15, 2006
First Revision of Thesis	January 5, 2007
First Viewing	January 27, 2007
Second Viewing	February 24, 2007
Third Viewing	March 24, 2007
Photo Shoot	March 31, 2007
Program Deadline	April 2, 2007
Concert dates: Spring Footholds	May 2 – 6, 2007
Completed Performance Thesis	May 18, 2007
Written Comprehensive Exam	March 19 – 23, 2007
Oral defense of Thesis	April 2007
Submission to Graduate Division	?
Graduation Date	?

Chapter 2 Creative Process

Shadows

The initial process began in January 2006. My goal was to work with movement first, then add the music later. I decided to use music by Corvus Corax. The idea was loosely based around a solo I started in the Advanced Choreography class with music by *Ovum Prandii Deum Septime Die & Mille Anni Passi Sunt*. It has always been my belief to use the same composer throughout a piece of choreography so I decided to find two other compositions that would work with the solo. I started the first piece with a group of three dancers. I had fully intended to add the other dancers to the original three but once we started working, it became obvious that it should be a trio. The dancers – Mayuko Ayabe, Maryann Peterson, and Shannon Yamamoto worked extremely well together. We played with the idea of not counting and taking movement changes from each other. This was the first time that I ever asked the dancers to come up with movement of their own. My experience with choreography has always been the choreographer giving the movement sequences and timing to the dancers with not much input from the dancers. Once the movement was set, we played with inverting the combinations, changing the time/tempo and using unison verses canons and solos. Two weeks into the rehearsal process, I added a fourth dancer – Jacqueline Nii. She danced well with the original three and helped create more of a symmetrical structure to the choreography. The structure of this piece was easily finished and we began the last dance. The last section was difficult. I envisioned the dancers wearing jazz sneakers that would allow dancing on pointe. The music for the third section was from the techno genre and the energy generated by the

music propelled it in a particular direction and style. The movement and tempo challenged the dancers and they rose to the challenge. We completed half of the third piece before the first showing on January 27, 2007.

The comments from the first showing (Gregg and Betsy were present) tested my choreographic abilities. Not only was the movement a challenge to envision but the music became an issue. My committee liked the movement and praised the dancers but suggested that I change the music. I was unsure if changing the music would work with the choreography. I took the suggestion as a challenge. The committee reminded me, some choreographers use one piece of music to obtain movement and then ultimately use another piece of music for the final product. I have never done this before but felt that I was in a 'safe' environment. The University of Hawaii's Lab performances are generally known for student choreography where experimental works are welcomed. I also had a committee who would help me through the problems and help me brainstorm solutions.

I listened to music by composers: Uakti, Kevin Volans and Ryuchi Sakamoto. The primary problem was that I was trying to stay with the same composer through out all three pieces. This would not be possible with Corvus Corax (the composer for the solo) because the committee liked the music for the solo but not for the remaining two pieces. I then tried to find one composer for the remaining two pieces. The recommended composers were totally different from the original compositions I had chosen. Eventually, I narrowed the music to five different pieces. The dancers and I settled in the studio for a long lunch/rehearsal of open-minded exploring of the choreographed

movement to the different pieces of music. I followed the dancer's instinct and opinions and decided which piece of music should accompany the second section. It was a good choice. We ended up using Matthias Ziegler's *Quarters*, which was interesting because there were only sounds, as opposed to instruments, and the music had no distinctive counts. The dancers had to rely on each other as well as musical cues to initiate the movements. The music intrinsically bound the dancers together and enabled them to innately follow each other's timing. We also agreed that *Quarters* would actually open *Shadows* so that the dancers could use my solo as a costume change in order to get out of pointe shoes and unitards.

The last segment was a question mark. I could find not one piece of music that fit the choreography and made me feel comfortable. We initially worked with Matthias Ziegler's *Rättägt (For Samuel)*. I still tried to work with the same composer. The music was interesting but did not feel right. *Shadows* needed a conclusion, a piece that would bring the opening section and transition into my solo. I felt that *Rättägt* actually created more questions and left the viewer hanging. After two rehearsals I changed the music to *Palms Down (Afro-percussion Music) Shirley then Pearl*. I used this piece of music in my ArtsBridge work with Elementary school children to cool down the students and get them back to a neutral state to return to regular classroom activities.

I have been working with ArtsBridge since the Fall of 2006. It is a program that allows a graduate student to work in the public schools to gain and exchange experience with the teachers in the system. ArtsBridge scholars bridge the fine arts with students other core curricula enabling them to have a more holistic learning experience.

I felt this music had been right in front of my nose and it was quite obvious that it was what I needed for the dance.

The second showing was held on March 19 with all three committee members present. I was able to show the completed first section and half of the solo and half of the third piece. I was looking to thread the pieces together to see how they worked as a unit. There were positive reactions from all committee members but, I still felt something was wrong. The last piece of music did not feel right.

I then reflected on *Shadows* – the original dance choreographed for Fall Footholds 2006. I choose the name *Shadows* for my thesis because I intended to use the themes of the original piece and expand on them. Upon further reflection, I felt I needed to include the original work in the thesis project. If this was to happen, several sections had to be re-worked. I had taken movement from the original piece and interspersed it throughout the first and third sections. I would need to change different sections so there weren't obvious repeats of choreography. It wasn't until the third and final showing on April 22 (with Gregg) that the pieces came together. Gregg recommended starting with the original *Shadows*, followed by the solo and concluding with the group. Voila.

Chapter 3 Performance and Reflection

Shadows

I have staged many ballets by other choreographers and have always had the choreography and dancers ready one to two weeks before moving on stage. (The process of finding music for *Shadows* proved to be more difficult than expected.) I had only one rehearsal with the actual music before moving into tech week. The dancers were very patient and supportive and I don't think I could have asked for a better cast.

Costumes. I chose to keep the original unitards that were used for the first *Shadows*. I continued the 'look' for my solo as I needed a costume that would accentuate the lines and shapes I was trying to make. I decided to make brown-textured, tie-on pants for the last piece that the dancers wore over a black leotard; an evolution of sorts.

The Lighting was a disappointment. During the initial production meeting with Peggy Gaither (Undergraduate Dance Advisor), I mentioned I had an interest in bringing in a lighting designer for my piece. She recommended that we all use one lighting designer to keep the plot simple. It sounded like a good idea but the lighting designer we ended up with was not as experienced as I hoped. The performance also had a first-time stage manager. As a former professional ballet mistress, it was very frustrating to see the mistakes that happened, but this is a learning process for all. This is what the University Footholds performances are about and I support the learning process. The University of Hawaii offers the Performance Degree to give the dancers/choreographers the learning

experience of producing and dancing performances of their own creation. This allows the students a safety factor of making mistakes with a faculty mentor who will help them through the process.

Dancing. I think my dancers were wonderful. They adapted to every change I gave them with no complaints. They were open to any adjustments up to the curtain opening and I applaud them tremendously. I came to the University of Hawaii as the older and wiser dancer but I think we all learned through this process. The dancers taught me to expand my movement vocabulary and offered up movement of their own that enhanced my choreography. The dancers always said they felt challenged physically and mentally with my choreography. I take this as a compliment.

Choreography. I really liked how the final dance came together and I could see the dancers' movement clearer with the new music. I saw the movement rather than listening to the music with dancing. I don't think it is easy to choreograph on your self. The concentration level and the dedication to rehearsal time are much easier when there is someone else to direct.

I do admit that creating dances does interest me now and I am intrigued with producing more. (I still feel inadequate in knowing what good choreography is and if it is presentable.) I am pleased with this product and very proud that it was produced. I would like to re-stage it but I don't know if someone else could step into my solo. Part of my current job at Mid-Pacific Institute includes choreographing for student productions.

I hope to be able to use the knowledge I have gained from my MFA experience as I accept the challenge. I can hear my committee laughing and encouraging me onward!



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MĀNOA

Kennedy Theatre

PRIME TIME
EARLE ERNST LAB THEATRE
2006-2007 SEASON

**Post-show Rap*
May 2, 3, 4*, 5 at 8pm | May 6 at 2pm

SPRING Footholds

*Featuring MFA Thesis works by
Chansri A. Green & Celia Chun
and BEA Culminating project
by Jennifer Sherburn*

Department of Theatre and Dance | College of Arts and Humanities

PRODUCTION STAFF

Lighting Design: Justin DeLand

Stage Manager: Lisa Orig

Master Electrician: Daphne Velasques

Lab Theatre Technical Director: Justin DeLand

Light Board: Donald Quilinquin

Sound Board Operator: Lauren Ballesteros

Patch Panel Operator: Julia Rinegar

Floor Crew: Mikaela Brady, Travers King, Amanda Weaver, Carolyn Wilt, Shannon Yamamoto

Staff Technical Director/Facilities Coordinator: Gerald R. Kawaoka

Assistant Technical Director: David Minkoff

Lighting Design Consultant: Stephen Clear

Staff Costume Shop Manager: Hannah Schauer Galli

Costume Construction Crew: Katherine Greenway, Aya Ohara, Kat Pleviak, Priscilla Stafford,
students from THEA 221

Wardrobe Supervisor: Jami Torres

Earle Ernst Lab Theatre Costume Coordinator: Katherine Greenway

Scene Shop Staff: Nina Buck, Daphne Velasques, Justin DeLand, Dean Bellin, Ulu Mills,
Daniel Sakimura, Josh Greenspoon

FRONT OF HOUSE INFORMATION

- For large print programs, Assistive Listening Devices or any other accessibility requests please contact the House Manager or call the Kennedy Theatre Box Office at 956-7655 (voice/text).
- To arrange a Campus Security Escort from any two points on campus, please see a House Manager.
- Please silence all pagers, phones and digital watches. No photography or video recording is permitted. Please refrain from eating, drinking or smoking in the theatre.
- Visit us on the web at <http://www.hawaii.edu/kennedy>.

We invite you to participate in a post show discussion with choreographers and dancers following the Friday, May 4th performance.

FRONT OF HOUSE STAFF

Staff Theatre Manager: Marty Myers

Box Office Supervisor: Jessica Holman

Box Office Staff: Ashley Gagabi, Stefannye Slaughter, Max Talley

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Kennedy Theatre House Manager: Mitch Mattson

Lab Theatre House Managers: Kyle Klapatauskas, Jorik Loeffler

Department Office Staff: Tana Marin, Lori Ann Chun

Department Chair and Director of Dance: Gregg Lizenbery

SPECIAL THANKS

The UHM ticket program is supported in part by a grant from the Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i and the Student Activities and Program Fee Board.

SUITE (Premiere)

Choreography: Beth McKee Elliott

Costumes: Beth McKee Elliott

I. Partita

Music: Johann Sebastian Bach

Dancers: Mayuko Ayabe, Jacqueline Nii

II. Sonata

Music: George Frideric Handel

Dancer: Sarah Hartley

III. Suite

Music: Johann Sebastian Bach

Dancers: Mikaela Brady, Maryann L. Peterson, Carolyn Wilt, Shannon M. Yamamoto

TOWING IN (Premiere)

Choreography: Lisa Orig

Movement Invention: Lisa Orig and Dancers

Music: Franghiz Ali-Zadeh

Dancers: Beth McKee Elliott, Rebecca Ann Frank, Jacqueline Nii, Amy Redmond, Jennifer Sherburn

CHAOS IN AND OUT (2006)

Choreography: Chansri A. Green

Music: Underworld

Dancers: Mayuko Ayabe, Mikaela Brady, Daniela Chan, Jamie Fogelhut, Sarah Hartley, Becky Helfert, Maya Iida, Travers King, Tiana Krohn-Ching, Allison Lee, Maryann L. Peterson, Amy Redmond, Julia Rinegar, Lauren Santos, Dana Sollinger, Carolyn Wilt, Shannon M. Yamamoto

EINE KLEINER SCHNELLER TANZ (Premiere)

(Little Fast Dance)

Choreography: Chansri A. Green

Music: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Dancer: Chansri A. Green

DANCING ME TO THE END OF LOVE (Premiere)

Choreography: Chansri A. Green

Costumes: Celia Chun

Music: Louis Armstrong, Patsy Cline, Harry Connick, Jr., Etta James, B.B. King, Madeleine Peyroux, Sarah Vaughan

I.

Full Cast

Dancers: Mikaela Brady, Travers King

II.

Dancer: Jacqueline Nii

III.

Dancers: Mikaela Brady, Travers King, Jacqueline Nii

IV.

Dancers: Michael Files, Maryann L. Peterson

V.

Dancers: Jacqueline Nii, Travis Santiago

VI.

Dancers: Full Cast

INTERMISSION

SHADOWS (Premiere)**Choreography:** Celia Chun**Costumes:** Celia Chun**Music:** Matthias Ziegler, Corvus Corax**Dancers:** Mayuko Ayabe, Celia Chun, Tiana DeBell, Jacqueline Nii, Maryann L. Peterson, Carolyn Wilt, Shannon M. Yamamoto

"Shadows" explores movement through the use of different genres that have constantly influenced me. Ballet has always been a part of my life and will be my main structural support in everything I do. Jazz and modern dance have added nuances to my perception of movement quality. I no longer see just the steps, shapes and lines of pure movement but want to explore the energy and intensity. There are shadows of my past in my present life that will continually shape my future.

SEPARATION (Premiere)**Choreographer and Dancer:** Amy Redmond**Music:** Ludwig van Beethoven

"Separation" is a dance that expresses my personal experience growing up with divorced parents. The essence of this work focuses on the confusion and frustration associated with wanting to please two people who you love equally.

WHIRLWIND THROUGH CITIES (2006)**Choreography:** Jennifer Sherburn**Costumes:** Katherine Greenway, Hannah Schauer Galli, Jennifer Sherburn**Music:** Terry Riley**Dancers:** Mayuko Ayabe, Malia Bowlby, Beth McKee Elliott, Jennifer McGowan, Michele Painter, Lauren Santos, Jennifer Sherburn, Carolyn Wilt**AS I LAY (Premiere)****Choreography:** Becky Helfert and Dancers**Music:** Trent Reznor**Dancers:** Mikaela Brady, Chansri A. Green, Maya Iida, Lauren Santos, Shannon M. Yamamoto**DAWN (Premiere)****Choreography:** Celia Chun**Music:** Ryuichi Sakamoto**Dancers:** Nicole Lam, Michele Painter**SHAKE THE EARTH AND WATCH THE SKY FALL (Premiere)****Choreography:** Malia Bowlby**Dancers:** Mayuko Ayabe, Malia Bowlby, Tiana DeBell, Rebecca Ann Frank, Tiana Krohn-Ching, Lauren Ballesteros, Maryann L. Peterson, Lauren Santos, Amanda Weaver, Carolyn Wilt

The work of Celia Chun and Chansri A. Green is in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the Master of Fine Arts degree in Dance.

Jennifer Sherburn's work is in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Dance.