UPSIDE REVERIE
A DANCE CONCERT

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I AT MĀNOA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF FINE ARTS
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By
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Keywords: dance, escapism, projection design, multimedia
In memory of my grandparents:

Anna Maria Venere Rocco
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ABSTRACT

_Upside Reverie_ is a multimedia dance concert that explores the theme of escape. Five choreographers question the “ordinary” ways in which we escape from our reality and the personal and social implications these attempts may have. Six different works weave together to shine light on the subtle conflicts that we experience but often ignore in contemporary society. The performance features a mixture of original music, video projection design, and dances by Sami L.A. Akuna, Faith S. Im, Ruby MacDougall, Mareva Minerbi, and Camille Monson. The concert took place at the Earle Ernst Lab Theatre at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa on October 3, 4, 10 and 11 at 11pm, 2015.
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PREFACE

My interest in contemporary dance, devised theater, improvisation, video design and my fascination with the theme of escapism all influenced my choices for the research of my thesis project. My background in dance began with ballet and later modern dance as a teenager. Though my training includes practices in several dance forms, such as hula and hip-hop, the movement used in my thesis would be best described as contemporary.

My ballet training includes Balanchine, Cecchetti, Russian Vaganova, French and American techniques. My training in modern includes: Graham, Cunningham, Limón and Release technique. I have studied and danced predominantly in Honolulu, Hawai‘i, Milan, Italy, and at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. My pursuit in video design started soon after I received my undergraduate degree at the University of Iowa and took classes in film and photography as well as worked as a production assistant in Iowa City for City Channel Four. In addition to continuing my dance practice and studies at the University of Hawai‘i, I also continued with visual media in my video and projection design classes.

The title of my thesis show was *Upside Reverie*. I was interested in the theme of escapism because it was a broad theme that touches on what people do to cope with life’s challenges. I have experienced that some of the ways in which we escape are frowned upon by society and others are not. This led me to ask a question, why are we trying to escape? Why do we feel a need to escape from our work and daily lives?

Chapter one of my thesis document is my original thesis proposal, which was submitted to my committee before I was given the green light to begin my thesis work. Chapter two goes into detail about my choreographic process and the different aspects I had to consider as the producer, director and choreographer. Chapter three is my evaluation of the dance concert, which examines challenges that I faced in my process and reflects on my experience putting together *Upside Reverie*. In the appendices you will find the supplemental material including the audition flier, *Ka Leo* newspaper article, the Hawai‘i Public Radio publicity, the show poster, and the program. This paper is interlaced with documentation photos of my thesis project taken by Henry Mochida and myself during the tech rehearsals.
CHAPTER 1. THESIS PROPOSAL

This chapter includes the thesis proposal for *Upside Reverie*, which I submitted to my thesis committee. It begins with the overview describing the logistics of the show. I explain the purpose of my thesis, why I was interested in the theme of escape, which choreographers were involved, the duration of the dance concert. I explain the choreographic techniques I anticipated using, the musicians I planned to work with, the audition process, description of media required to put on the show, and my ideas for: costume, lighting, projection and scenic design. Also included is a detailed rehearsal and production schedule.

OVERVIEW

In partial fulfillment of the thesis requirements for the Master of Fine Arts degree in Dance at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, I will be directing a Late Night Show. In this show, I will be choreographing original choreography that will be 15 minutes or more. This work will be presented on October 3, 4, 10, and 11, 2014 at 11:00 PM in the Earle Ernst Lab Theater. I will fulfill the performance requirement by dancing in my own work. This choreography combines dance, new media technology, and video projection design. The following thesis proposal outlines my concepts and descriptions of choreography, media, music, costuming, casting, and unresolved needs. I also have a timeline for production.

PURPOSE

The theme of the show is escapism. The show explores the motivations that push us towards a desire to escape our reality. Furthermore, I see this project as a way to demonstrate how the desire to escape from one reality can serve as a catalyst in creating alternative options for difficult situations. It is an evening length show, which transitions seamlessly through a composite of vignettes choreographed by several Master of Fine Arts students: Faith S. Im, Sami L.A. Akuna, Ruby Macdougall, Camille Monson, and myself.

By providing a creative platform to investigate the theme of escape, I hope to shed light on some of the subtle social conflicts we experience in contemporary society and on possible
ways we can use dance to resolve these conflicts and reshape our reality. The title, *Upside Reverie*, refers to the upside of a dream, the happy or good side, but the underlying question is, what prompts us to escape our reality? What is it about the world we are living in that makes us want to escape?

**DIRECTOR:**
- Mareva Minerbi

**CHOREOGRAPHERS:**
- Mareva Minerbi
- Sami L.A. Akuna
- Faith S. Im
- Ruby Macdougall
- Camille Monson

**DURATION OF DANCE CONCERT**

This Late Night show will run approximately forty-five minutes without an intermission. Within the allotted time for each choreographer, there is some flexibility for a choreographer to produce more and another to produce less as long as we collectively meet our minimum goal of time.

- 15 minutes: Mareva (Required amount of time for thesis)
- 7.5-9 min.: Sami L.A. Akuna
- 7.5-9 min.: Faith Im
- 7.5-9 min.: Ruby MacDougall
- 7.5-9 min.: Camille Monson

Estimated duration of entire show: 45 minutes
CHOREOGRAPHIC PROCESS

One of my main interests is how movement is created and developed into a final piece. I have always had a big interest in choreographic process. In generating movement, I will use a combination of choreographic processes that I have learned from experience as well as from my research. This includes the following:

1) TASK BASED INSTRUCTIONS
Task-based instructions for my dancers include the use of word and gesture associations to develop movement. Dancers will learn choreographic movement phrases that I develop. Over the summer of 2014, I developed several movement phrases along with Ruby Macdougall and Camille Monson. Together we have approximately six minutes of choreography, which I have recorded digitally and plan use for my work.

2) CHOREOGRAPHING MATERIAL FROM DREAMS
I will also pull material from the dreams of the dancers. This is a process I learned in my theatre work with Greta Seacat¹ and Ian Belton². I will pull text and or situations from the dreams to create movement.

3) USING WRITING AND MOVEMENT ANNOTATION
Other devised techniques that I will use I learned from workshops with Tim Miller³ and master class with Liz Lermon⁴, such as the use of writing and movement annotation to produce a devised and theatrical dance piece.

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¹Greta Seacat is an acting coach and daughter of Sandra Seacat who uses dreams and the subconscious to develop character work.
²Ian Belton is a director and acting teacher who uses Seacat’s dream work.
³Tim Miller is a performance artist and one of the National Endowments of the Arts Four.
⁴Liz Lermon is Artistic Director of Dance Exchange and creator of movement annotation.
MUSIC

Musicians have been invited to prepare music for the show. These are: Art Koshi, a Hawai‘i based musician and composer and Sven Britt, a New York City based musician and to composer. I have asked the choreographers to be open about music. They are free to work with whatever music they feel will inspire them, but I have asked that they be open to the possibility of substituting their music with original music or live music for the show.

DESCRIPTION OF MEDIA

Over the summer I gathered some footage of Waikiki and developments that were happening on the island. This will be used as a video projection design for the show. I would like to have 5 minutes of projected video. I envision the projection on the cyclorama and on the dancers dancing in front of it. I expect to have 5 minutes of projection in my section. I plan on rehearsing with the projection in the studio by projecting on walls. I envision the projection design to be a scenic element because it adds depth to the proscenium space and it is necessary in my section to depict Hawai‘i as an escapist destination. I also intend to gather other footage around the island for the pre-edited video. I would also like to incorporate and use the software Isadora for the show.

1) FOOTAGE CAPTURE LIST WAIKIKI

- Developments/construction
- Underwater
- Rainforest
- Beaches

2) TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

- Projection Design
  - Cyclorama
  - Projector
  - Isadora
- Camera
- VGA cables
- Computer

Figure 1: Rainy Kalākaua Avenue in Waikiki. Photo by: Mareva Minerbi.
LIGHTING DESIGN

There are limitations when working a Late Night show. Only six additional lights to the existing light plot may be used. I am considering having the dancers use flashlights to light up the stage as needed. I envision the color palate for the lighting to include blue. I also envision the blue as a theme to tie the entire evening together. The lighting design will help guide the audience’s eye to different parts of the stage. I have submitted an email announcement and personally asked people to participate. Several of the choreographers are prepared to assist in the roles listed below if necessary.

PRODUCTION PERSONNEL

- Lighting Designer
- Stage Manager/Rehearsal Assistant
- Sound Technician
- Lighting and Projection Design Technician
COSTUMES

Given that Late Night shows are considered poor theatre, the costumes for my thesis choreography and the other pieces will have to come from my closet or the dancers’ unless the choreographers wish to buy out-of-pocket. Since I anticipate using projection design, my idea is to have white shirts, which would help to make the projections visible on the dancers. The costumes for my thesis will be as simple as t-shirt and jeans.

SCENIC DESIGN

I envision that we will be using a table and some chairs and cocktail glasses for a section of my piece. I plan to have access and secure these items through the prop shop, which Late Night Theatre shows have permission to use.

CASTING

The audition is organized for August 27, 2015 from 8:00-11:00 PM. An audition flier has been sent out through the department to call for interested, actors, dancers and musicians to attend. The audition will consist of a brief warm up, followed by choreographed movement, improvisation, and solos for those auditioning who would like to showcase their talents in an alternative way. Following the audition, the choreographers will consult each other and select seven dancers from the dance department. This is the limit required by Late Night. The choreographers may also use each other as dancers.

As part of my thesis, I would like to ask for permission to cast additional dancers as needed. This might include dancers from outside the department. I would like to work with at least seven dancers for my piece. I hope to cast dancers with strong technical ability, improvisational skills, and a theatrical presence; but I am prepared to work with what dancers or actors will be available in terms of scheduling.
REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

AUDITIONS

- Wed. Aug. 27th 8:00-11:00 PM Auditions
- Thurs. Aug. 28th Announce cast 1st day of rehearsal

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE: Thurs. Aug. 28 - Fri. Sept. 26

- Mon. Sept. 22 rehearsals will move into the Lab Theatre
- Mon./Wed. 8:00-11:00 PM: Mareva/Ruby Rehearse (NDB Studio)
- Tues./Thurs. 8:00-11:00 PM: Faith/Camille Rehearse (NDB Studio)
- Fri. 8:00-11:00 PM: Sami/Review (NDB Studio)
  Sept. 12th Final Video Edit Complete/Music Near final

COMMITTEE VIEWINGS

- 1st Committee Viewing: Mon. Sept. 10th
- 2nd Committee Viewing: Sun. Sept. 28th

TECH REHEARSALS: Sept. 27th – Thurs. Oct. 2

- Sat. Sept. 27th Tech
- Sun. Sept. 28th Tech
- Mon. Sept. 30th Run
- Tues. Oct. 1st Run
- Wed. Oct. 2nd Run

PERFORMANCE AND PICKUP RUNS

- Fri. Oct. 3rd Opening Night Show
- Sat. Oct. 4th 2nd Show
- Wed. Oct. 8th Pickup run
- Thurs. Oct. 9th Pickup run
- Fri. Oct. 10th 3rd Show
- Sat. Oct. 11th Closing Night Show/Strike Show
PUBLICITY SCHEDULE

Audition Announcement sent via email Aug. 18, 2014
Press Release draft sent Aug. 23, 2014
Publicity Photo Shoot immediately after casting Aug. 30, 2014
Cast Bios submit 7 weeks before opening
Draft Poster submit 6 weeks before opening
Facebook Event submit 6 weeks before opening
Poster Draft Final Approval 5 weeks before opening
Finished Poster 4 weeks before opening
Poster out 4 weeks before opening
Program copy 4 weeks before opening
First draft Program 3 weeks before opening
Program Draft Out 2 weeks before opening
CHAPTER 2. THE PROCESS

This chapter explains my choreographic process in creating the dance show, *Upside Reverie*. I explain the selection of dancers through the audition process, my rehearsals and choreographic process as well as the feedback I received during my two committee viewings. Sections include descriptions of the different components that go into the show such as: music, projection, lighting design and costumes. We had a pre-show of two dance films projected outside of the Lab Theater. I also describe the publicity I received for the show and a description of the photo shoot. Lastly I describe my experiences as a performer in the pieces *Elapcity* choreographed by Sami L.A. Akuna and *Psycho-Tropics* choreographed by Ruby Macdougall.

MEETING WITH THE CHOREOGRAPHERS

Over the summer of 2014 before we conducted the audition, I met with Ruby to discuss my ideas; then again I met with the rest of the choreographers. The question that arose from the choreographers was more clarification on my theme for *Upside Reverie*. In this meeting I showed them drawings and sketches of the kind of vignettes that I envisioned for the show. I was open to the possibility of the choreographers having other ideas. Some of the vignettes of escaping that I described was escaping through music, escaping through indulging in food, escaping in drugs, alcohol, sex, dance as an escape, Hawai‘i as a place of escape, and the biggest escape of life itself, death. We discussed other ideas of escape such as escaping through religion and meditation, escaping from the rain or weather. Through this lens, it seemed almost anything could be viewed as an escape, while some methods are socially frowned upon and others are not. What each method shares is a desire to escape. I played a draft of the music that Art Koshi was working on for me. I told them about a track that Sven Britt in New York was working on.

Choreographer Faith Im had the inspiration of working on the issue of self-help. I wanted to understand how she viewed this as escape. Through our discussion it became clear that it could be viewed as trying to escape from oneself out of dissatisfaction with oneself. It was something that resonated well for me and I though would resonate well with other women and dancers. Camille Monson had the idea of escaping through delusions of grandeur. At first it was unclear for me how this was related to the theme of escapism. It seemed possible to view
deception of oneself as a way of not coming to terms with oneself. What was important to me was that the choreographers were excited about their ideas and wanted to investigate them further. I remember asking Sami if he would work on food as escape and a slice of cake made it into his piece.

**AUDITIONS**

Late Night requires open auditions, which is a great way to discover new talent inside and outside our department. I scheduled Late Night auditions the first week of school when students were back in town. I picked Wednesday because it was mid-week and would give students the first two days to adjust to their new schedules. The first set of emails were sent out about the auditions on August 16, informing the Department of Theatre and Dance students and faculty about the audition. On the audition flier I encouraged actors, dancers and musicians to attend. The day of the audition we had 15 people. It was a successful turnout.

The audition consisted of choreographers Camille, Faith and myself teaching dance phrases and Sami leading an improvisation exercise. At the end, we invited those who wanted to sing a song, perform a monologue or dance solo. Several of the performers sang and one dancer recited a monologue. Audition forms were distributed to the dancers, and on the white board I wrote the dates and times designated to each choreographer, and the dancers wrote their names when available. We then cast according to availability and the number of dancers each choreographer wanted to work with. I wanted to work with a cast of seven or eight dancers. Part of the thesis requirement is that M.F.A. candidates perform in their dance concert. I would be performing in the works of Sami L. A. Akuna and Ruby Macdougall. The final cast included the following:

**DANCERS IN UPSIDE REVERIE**

Mareva Minerbi  
Khadija King  
Alexis Harvey

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5 Please see the program located in Appendix C for more details.
Mitsuko Horikawa*
Jenny Mair
Ruby Macdougall*
Camille Monson
Katie Patrick*
Kanani Rose*
Emi Donato*
Terry Slaughter*
Corbett Stern*
Philip Kapono Aowahi-Kim
Erin Whelan
Erica Wong*
Angela Rae Valdez
*Dancers in my pieces

REHEARSALS

All I was armed with for my rehearsals were eight dancers, two drafts of music, a theme and title for the show, not a clue who would do lighting or who would run sound, what the projection was going to be, and just a few good jumping-off points and the camera on my computer. This was not the traditional process of an M.F.A. thesis student, whose work is generally featured in the undergraduate and graduate dance concert Footholds. One of the main differences between the annual student dance concerts, the Footholds concert, and Late Night productions has to do with production support and capability. Footholds is a fully produced production and the student work is supported by full stage lighting, access to costumes in the costume shop, a stage manager, lighting operator, sound operator, and stagehands. In Footholds, students audition their complete dances and have a faculty advisor mentor them in the final rehearsals to fine-tune the pieces before the show opens. The Late Night show is a venue that is designed for student-run work that is experimental and unlike what is generally presented in the Prime Time or Main Stage shows. There is minimal production support and students must submit detailed proposals of their show. The Late Night board then chooses two productions for the
semester. This is the spirit of Late Night, and my goal was to do my best to adhere to the Late Night’s mission while also fulfilling my thesis requirements.

My first rehearsal was scheduled for September 1. However, since Sami was out of town, I managed to do an impromptu rehearsal on August 23 and meet with Katie Patrick, Terry Slaughter and Emi Donato. This was beneficial because these were the dancers that were new to me. We discussed what it was like for them to come to Hawai‘i, what their expectations were, and what their reactions were. I wanted to know if Hawai‘i lived up to what they imagined. I gave them 15 minutes to write. In this writing exercise I asked them to circle the words that resonated with them. From these words, I asked the dancers to develop movement phrases. Before doing that, they read each other’s writings and I asked them to emphasize anything they might have similarly felt. I was developing the first impression for the piece Blue Rainbow while also observing how the dancers moved and worked. Mitsuko Horikawa, a dancer I worked with for my qualifying piece, Night Rain, later joined the group, so with now four dancers to work with I asked them to do their movements in pairs and I recorded them with my webcam.

I had my first proper rehearsal with the entire cast on September 1st. I had an hour and a half to work with them, but I did not want to omit an improvisational warm up that would speed up their decision-making skills and reinforce their autonomy as dancers. I wanted to work in a way that would utilize each dancer’s creativity and development of movement through task-based instructions and improvisation. I wanted the dancers to see how I would pull from their movements. They would not simply be executing choreographic movement that I gave them. They would collaborate and be instrumental in the choreographic process.

I incorporated various methodologies. We did a movement exercise in which everyone wrote their names in space using a point on their body, an exercise I created utilizing ideas William Forsythe’s Improvisational Technologies (2012). I had worked this way the previous semester while working on my qualifying piece, Night Rain, performed at the University of Hawai‘i Lab Theatre in January 2014. Several of the choreographed phrases were devised from William Forsythe’s dance writing techniques. The improvised movements were interrupted by a filler. The filler was an interruption of the dance phrase with pedestrian movement such as walking. From this I also introduced ways transferring movement from one dancer to another through copying. This was another improvisational task I used in Night Rain. The purpose of this as an exercise was to get the dancers aware of what was happening around them. They had room
for improvisation in their movements and they could always fall back on the walking filler or their phrase. Although I ended up not utilizing the same improvisational structure we practiced in the rehearsal, it was an important step in getting the dancers accustomed to improvising.

One idea I had while working on my piece, *Lifeline to Somewhere...*[^6] was to create a wall that would rotate using the dancers. They had to form a line and walk with the people on the outside moving quickly and those closer to the center moving slowly. Maintaining a line while rotating proved to be more challenging than I anticipated. I wanted to perfect my idea right away but time was pressing so I decided to drop the idea and move forward. I started calling out instructions to my dancers while Art Koshi’s music that was still in its draft phase, played in the background. This was beginning of my intuitive process for creating *Lifeline*. I instructed the dancers to create formations that moved them through space. A pattern began to emerge of line formations representing a wall with the dancers in stillness, and the dancers breaking out of the formation with quick and free movements. There was a repetition of formation and break. I felt like I was onto something, that I was seeing the skeleton of the piece. The natural and architectural imagery that was inspired from the publicity photo shoot at Kaimana beach was making its way into the piece. The wall, the rocks, the water, the danger and risk involved when standing against a hard surface when the unpredictable waves came crashing against were embodied in the dance. Despite the possible risks of slipping during the photo shoot, I am a very cautious person; I felt a sense of safety in numbers. This idea of safety in numbers became an underlying feeling that I used as motivation behind the movement.

In my subsequent rehearsal I continued to work on *Lifeline* drawing inspiration from Kaimana beach. I had a memory of us against the wall getting washed over by water that I wanted to include in the piece. I had the dancers creating a wall by standing in line, but this time I wanted the dancers to support each other while walking across the floor. As each dancer stepped over the others’ feet, they would fit it into the line to form a human wall that moved across the stage.

I wanted the movement quality to change into something less rigid and more wave-like. I began to call out instructions to the dancers. I wanted to see them standing in a clump. I had one dancer run to the downstage corner and the group following them. Then I instructed them to make a line that moved to the upstage corner and one over the other the hardened like rocks and

[^6]: I will abbreviate and refer to *Lifeline to Somewhere...* as *Lifeline*. 
the others rolled over them. After the last dancer crossed, I wanted stillness. Seeing these human bodies still for an extended period of time evoked sadness. It reminded me of petrified bodies from volcanic eruptions of Vesuvio in Italy. It was a strong image and seemed to simultaneously represent death, nature, and our inevitably limited existence. But the piece could not end there; I wanted them to break away out of that formation again. This represented for me ongoing change and a collective effort to make it through a difficult situation. This had to be a struggle, and I needed it to build up again so that it would break. I instructed them to hold hands and spin around rapidly until their hands inevitably slipped apart. Half of the partners were flung off the stage. At that point the music ended and there were no more instructions to call out, so we reviewed the unison phrase I taught them at the audition. This would be the only phrase that I would use from the choreography I developed over the summer, despite having approximately seven minutes of material.

Figure 3: Dancers in *Lifeline* holding on to each other. Photo by: Mareva Minerbi.
I felt confident of the structure of Lifeline. The broad strokes were done, but it was Blue Rainbow, my second piece, that would close the show, the piece I needed to get started on. I wanted to have two separate pieces that would frame the show. LifeLine would open the show and Blue Rainbow would close. I would use the music by Art Koshi and Sven Britt whom I commissioned to compose. I wanted there to be a connection between the two pieces. One way I thought of connecting them is through the title. The song, Somewhere over the Rainbow, was sampled in Blue Rainbow, which started as a working title between Sven and I, and it stuck. Lifeline to Somewhere... Blue Rainbow, for me this created an arch and connection between the two pieces.

I began Blue Rainbow by giving the dancers a list of words such as landscape and freedom that were evocative and meaningful to me and paired them up against movement qualities, colors such as blue or Rudolf Laban’s movement efforts: strong, light, that could add to the texture and quality of the movements. From this each dancer had a unique set of movements. I paired them in groups of three and they taught each other their movements. This gave me three sets of unison phrase material.

I was pleased with what I had developed in Lifeline through an instinctual process and now I was so pressed with time that I needed to work the same way for Blue Rainbow. It was the rehearsal before my committee came to see the piece when I created the structure for Blue Rainbow. I was calling out, “Terry enter from stage right with the floatie and sit down, scratch your stomach and act like you are chilling on a floatie! Erica, enter now! Terry you notice her and check her out on the floatie then get up and go towards her and give her the floatie like an awkward guy that has no social skills!” I felt like a theater director shouting blocking cues and this was how I shaped the beginning of the piece.

**FIRST COMMITTEE VIEWING**

My committee was comprised of Dr. Kara Miller, Prof. Peggy Gaither Adams and Dr. Markus Wessendorf. My committee’s first viewing of my piece was on September 10, just over a week since we had begun rehearsing. I met with Peggy and Kara after the viewing and met with Markus the next day to receive feedback. Comments I received were that the images in the Lifeline piece were evocative. At one point, I had all the dancers doing one of my movement
phrases in unison. Feedback I received included the thought that unison movement did not fit, because there had been no unison moments anywhere else in the piece. Part of this was because I had just taught them the phrase material and I did not have a chance to manipulate or reorganize the phrase, but it was something I would keep in mind. Eventually I would keep the phrase and create movement canons, so that even though everyone was doing the same movements their time varied. The wall was a strong image as was the dancers breaking away from the wall. The advice was not to remove anything, but keep going with the strong images.

When discussing Blue Rainbow, there was an interest in the duet conversations that were happening between Terry and Erica. The question was why was there a trio when the other dancers that crossed the stage dropped off Ruby? I knew I wanted a new dancer to enter and I also wanted the two dancers with the inner tubes to dance together. I decided the dancers crossing the stage could drop off Ruby and pick up Terry as they exited the stage. This would give me the duet with the inner tubes. The section with unison movement with the three groups of three also was not working. Again it was a situation of unison movement that was not fitting logically. The challenge I encountered was that I did not have the time in such a short rehearsal period to play with formations and manipulations of the phrase material in a sophisticated way.

Other committee reflections that impacted my decisions included the feedback that the images were strong and the idea of escaping was clear in the pieces. There were questions about intent and facial expression in the dancers and moments that could be more pronounced, such as the delicacy in which the dancers step over each other’s feet. One of the major questions was how would Lifeline end? It would have to be as powerful and as monumental as the images presented. I did not know the answer, nor did I want to make an immediate decision. I decided not to force an ending and trusted that it would come in time. I did have a projection image in mind. I wanted a calligraphy-like drawing of black ink on white paper but I was not sure of what, and it needed to be stark. For a while I thought it would be of a bird flying. I knew that whatever the final image was, it would need to fade into a dark pink, reddish color.

Eventually, with continued work, the answer did come. It was tech week, as I was cleaning the final phrase that it made sense; the dancers would pull each other off the stage and leave the stage bare with the music playing. The audience left with an ambiguous image that looks like snow, a city, a field or rocks that slowly morphed into a reddish pink color.
SECOND COMMITTEE VIEWING

My second committee viewing occurred September 28, 2014, the Sunday before our opening performance. This was the first time that I saw all the pieces from the different choreographers performed live together. Before the committee viewing, the choreographers whose pieces I wasn’t in, Camille and Faith, sent me video recordings via YouTube of their choreography. Something I had to consider was how the show would flow. Factors that went into deciding a show order were: the number of dancers in each piece, the mood of the piece, costume changes for dancers in multiple pieces, and how each piece could help build the arch of the show. The show order that I chose was *Lifeline, Self Help Self Hurt, Delusions of Grandeur, Elapcity, Psycho-Tropics*, and *Blue Rainbow*. The show started off serious and mysterious with *Lifeline* and gradually moved in a comical direction with *Self Help Self Hurt, Delusions of Grandeur,* and *Elapcity,* which reached its peak in dark humor with *Psycho-Tropics* and then gently eased into the tranquil *Blue Rainbow*. The transitions between the pieces were not set yet, but I did have a rough edit of the projection design for my two pieces.

The projector still had not been mounted nor had we been able to work with our lighting designer. What the committee would view were the pieces in order, unlit, without the transitions, and a rough edit of the film, projected from a table in the center of the audience.

My committee gave me feedback on the dancers’ performance. There was a section in *Lifeline* where the dancers needed to give more weight in the wave like movements. It was something I had tried to accomplish in rehearsals but still needed work. Another question that arose was what I would do with the transitions connecting one piece to the other? That was still something I needed to work out and would do so during the next tech rehearsal.

I wanted the transitions to be like little vignettes. Sami and I brainstormed some ideas. We had to consider what props needed to be set for the different pieces and know which dancers did not have a costume change. For Faith’s piece that required two chairs to be set, the dancers played a little musical chairs bit while one of our dancers seated in the audience shined a flashlight on them and complained that she could not see. After the piece we had one of the dancers read one of the books that was left on stage and get sucked in, while two other dancers begrudgingly set the stage for Camille’s piece. I tried to create a relationship with the transition and the piece. Moving into the last piece *Blue Rainbow* I had a dancer carry a small suitcase across the stage, after a few moments of empty stage a large group of dancers came running...
across the stage with big suitcases like tourists trying not to miss their flight to Hawai‘i. The suitcases were not used for any of the pieces but that transition and it gave the idea of escaping to somewhere.

**MUSIC**

For my thesis, I knew that I wanted to have original music for my choreography. I also encouraged the other choreographers to seek out composers for original music or experiment with creating their own sound scores. I contacted Art Koshi who was the accompanist for the beginning ballet and modern dance classes I was teaching and the advanced dance classes I was taking. He is a very talented improvisational piano player and composer. I explained to him my proposal and this idea of escapism. I wanted the music to have a dreamy quality with dark undertones. He was right on board with my ideas and interested in experimenting.

I also asked Sven Britt, a musician I had met in New York City during the summer of 2014 who composed music for dance, to also compose a piece. I wanted the music to evoke a dreamy, nostalgic and romanticized Hawai‘i. The kind of Hawai‘i a tourist would want to escape to. I wanted it to have an Elvis Presley-like, old-timey, underwater quality reminiscent of old Hawaiian slack key guitar music, but there had to be a layer of darkness to it, because I wanted to capture through music an imperfect Hawai‘i—the kind of Hawai‘i that someone who lives here experiences with traffic, homelessness, pollution, and water issues. I thought having Sven sing a contemporary warped version Elvis’s *Blue Hawai‘i* with an old-timey voice would be perfect. The song was roughly three minutes long and I wanted the piece to be nine minutes. As it turned out, he had previously made a recording of *Somewhere Over The Rainbow*, which he sent to me. He connected the two tracks *Blue Hawai‘i*, which he composed for me, with his version of *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*. I remember at first being somewhat skeptical about the auto tune voice effect, but it started to grow on me and I realized it was fitting for the piece: combing new and old, human vs. electronic. It replicated in the music the contrast of natural and artificial that I wanted to juxtapose in the piece.

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7 This song was originally written for the 1939 movie, *The Wizard of Oz*. A version of the song is also sung by Hawaiian musician Israel Kamakawiwoʻole's on his album *Facing Future*, released in 1993.
PROJECTION

I knew from the time I submitted my late night proposal that I would be using projection. I enjoy filming and editing film, and using projection design in my classes in visual media, and I wanted to incorporate that work in a fully produced show. I was very excited by the possibility of integrating the two media. I decided that if for any reason the projection detracted attention from the dancing I would not use it.

For *Lifeline* I wanted a still image that would eventually turn into an animation. As I mentioned earlier, I wanted the projection to be a black drawing on an ivory background. I had envisioned a drawing of a bird that would be still for the entire piece, and the audience not paying to much attention to the backdrop that was not changing, could focus on the dancers. Then at the end the bird would fly away unexpectedly. I realized animation was going to be more work than I had time for. Early on in my process, I had the idea of having the audience put on rose-colored glasses. Instead, a cheaper way to create that effect without having the props was to make the image turn pink. While the audience would not get to literally put on their rose colored glasses, it would alter the image in an unexpected way. When I shared my idea to my friend and photographer, Jessi DeVera, she offered to do a drawing for me and help with the video for *Blue Rainbow*. 
In *Lifeline* I ended up using a lithograph by artist Donna Louise that Jessi came across in the art department. The print was ambiguous. It looked like houses covered in snow, a city or cattle by the river. There was also a tower that resembled construction. The print was black on ivory paper, just what I was looking for. Donna was generous to let me use her image. Jessi took a photo of it, and I imported the photo into Final Cut Pro editing software. Towards the end of the piece I played with the colors of the image making it turn slowly, in the course of 15 or so seconds, a brighter red to give it an eerie quality. My desire was to make the background come to life. This symbolized that the surrounding landscape had energy and life that would continue even without the presence of the people.

Jessi was interested in helping me capture the footage for *Blue Rainbow*. She knew my ideas, which oscillated back and forth between showing an urban setting of Hawai‘i with development cranes or just the ocean. The cover photo of Yi-Fu Tuan’s book *Humanist Geography* inspired me. It was of a man floating in clear blue water on a neon-green air mattress. The image itself made me want to jump in the waters. I did some test shots in the Duke Kahanamoku Lagoon. Jessi said that the photo I liked was probably taken from a far distance using a strong lens. I rented a lens and lens extender from Hawai‘i Camera and we borrowed my friend Henry Mochida’s Canon DSLR camera. The challenge for me was editing the film, going through all the footage and seeing what was usable. It needed to both fit with the music and at the same time not be so distracting to pull attention away from the dancing. I edited the footage by laying down the music track in Final Cut Pro, first. This gave me the duration of the piece. Since I was editing the video after the piece was choreographed, I knew when and where there would be solos and duets or group sections. I ended up using a simple image of water as the background. Once in a while a dolphin would jump into the frame. I put the dolphin in during the duet. We also captured images of palm trees. I wanted to distort the colors of the palm trees so that they would look artificial. An initial jump cut in my editing turned into a recurring editing device I used during that section when the music picked up in a swell of tempo with Sven Britt wailing in the background. The distortion of color and the abrupt cuts disrupted the otherwise peaceful images of palm trees and the ocean. This all happened before the music transitioned to the line, “Somewhere over the rainbow,” and I cut to people swimming, then disappearing, in the pool as I dissolved from one image to another.
LIGHTING

Late Night shows have very limited lighting options. The students must use the light plot in place from the previous show, and the light plot may change during the show depending on what is used for the following show. We were given seven lights to use for our show. Securing a lighting designer for the show was challenging. Falcon Aguirre, who was the lighting designer for my qualifying piece Night Rain, volunteered to help. She created a fixed look for each piece, which was the maximum we could get with the resources we had. There was not much possibility of having light changes within the piece. Initially the lights were set up so the lighting designer could improvise with the lights. This turned out to be too complicated a process for my lighting operator. It was her first time operating lights so it made more sense to have the lights set cue-to-cue for each piece. Kim Shire jumped on board as Stage Manager the last week of the show. Up until then, I was stage-managing. Her skills with lighting came in very handy as she set the lighting cue-to-cue which were much easier to operate and additionally made the lighting more consistent.

Figure 5: Silhouette in Lifeline. Photo by: Mareva Minerbi.
For the first piece I had front-lit projection so it was optimal to use side lights and keep the front lights low as not to wash out the projection image. We were not able to set booms in every wing and the FSR wing had no light. This happened to be the wing where the dancers were entering from. Interestingly, what this created was a silhouette since the bottom of the projection image was a variegated black. It worked for the choreography since dances would jump out of the line being fully lit.

![Figure 6: Lifeline costumed in white tops and jean cut-offs. Photo by: Mareva Minerbi.](image)

**COSTUMES**

The $100 budget provided by Late Night was not going to cover much, and whatever costumes purchased would be kept by the costume shop. The question was, will we do these pieces again? Will we want to have our own the costumes?

For the piece *Lifeline*, I was inspired by the photo I took in Copenhagen.\(^8\) It was summertime, and in Denmark people do not get much sun throughout the year, and they were soaking it in like it was rare gold. Men and women were sitting barefoot along the wall of the

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\(^8\) The photo is on the audition flier in Appendix A.
canals in tank tops and swimsuits. Coming from the warm climate of Hawai‘i, I was wearing long jeans and brought a jacket. I loved how much they appreciated the sun and I liked their look. The men were wearing tank tops and cut-off jeans. This was the photo I used for the audition flier and it would be the photo that also inspired my publicity photo shoot. I knew from the start that I wanted to work with projection. I also knew that I would not have back projection so the images would bleed on to the dancers and what they were wearing would be crucial. I like the beach, carefree, everyday look, so I had them wear white shirts and cutoff shorts. The white shirts worked really well for Lifeline, it looked as though the dancers became a part of the projection.

I created a link between my two pieces through the titles, since they would frame the concert as an opener and as the closer, and I also wanted to do so through the costumes. The dancers wore the same cuff-off shorts in both pieces, but their tops would change to reveal a bikini top, or to a bright colored tank top. All but one dancer had a different top. Mitsuko Horikawa was the only one wearing a special t-shirt with a bikini painted on it. It was a caricature of a woman’s body: muscular, tan, with exaggerated breasts; in short, a very unrealistic body. She symbolized the dysfunction of body image issues that are so prevalent in our society.

The props I used in this piece were neon-yellow green inflatable water mattresses and two inner tubes: one neon-pink and the other neon-orange. The inner tubes were both prop and costume. Terry, the first dancer to enter, sits on it like he is floating in the water. It later become a costume, a tutu, for two of the dancers, Erica and Ruby. The inner tubes were not fully inflated, which gave them a softer look.
Figure 7: Mitsuko Horikawa in bikini printed T-shirt. Photo by: Mareva Minerbi.

PRESHOW DANCE FILMS

The Lab Theatre is housed in a large building with white walls well suited for film projections. Since our show was following the main stage production of *Blythe Spirit*, I wanted to catch the attention of those passing by to come see *Upside Reverie*. The previous semester Ruby and I worked on a film *AutoBodies* (2014) that she choreographed and I performed in that I wanted to feature. Her film re-envisioned the parking lot as a performance space. We danced inside the car and around the virtually empty parking lot. Henry Mochida who offered to run the projector outside also had a film *Lumen Lux* (2014) to show. His film exposed the digital process and the illusions of projection created through light. His great-aunt Aileen Miyo took a collection 35mm Kodachrome slides that are used in the film. The film is both an exploration of digital projection and a commemoration for her. Projecting on the side of the Lab Theatre was delightful way to showcase our dance films and engage the audience that was waiting outside for the show to begin.
PUBLICITY

I was lucky to receive great publicity for the show. Chris Vandercook from Hawai‘i Public Radio’s The Conversation had seen the short blurb about Upside Reverie on the Kennedy
Theater website and contacted publicity manager Kevin Berg about doing an interview with me. I went to the station to do the interview and it was aired live on Hawai‘i Public Radio on October 18 at 9AM.

Ka Leo, the University of Hawai‘i’s student college newspaper, also wanted an interview for the show. Ka Leo contributing writer Tricia Khun wanted to interview me as well as another choreographer or dancer, so I invited Sami L. A. Akuna, who was choreographing a piece I was dancing in to come with me. The interview was printed on September 30, 2014. We were very fortunate to get the front page of the Ka Leo and the article in the centerfold. This was great publicity as the newspaper is distributed on and off campus in the surrounding neighborhoods: Manōa, Kaimuki, Mō‘ili‘ili and McCully.

I created a Facebook page to invite friends. For the duration of Late Night I was also granted administrative access to the University of Hawai‘i’s Late Night Facebook page so that I could also help publicize the show through that website.

My friend, fellow student and Late Night Board Member, Michael Donato designed the *Upside Reverie* poster. We had worked together in the past and I liked his work. I sent him seven images from the photo shoot and he used four for the poster. This would also become one of the images used on the Kennedy Theater website for our show.

**PUBLICITY PHOTO SHOOT**

My inspiration for the photo shoot came from the image I took in Denmark. I had the dancers wear bikinis and cut-off shorts. We started off exploring underwater photography using the Go Pro, a small underwater camera. The challenge with using this camera is that you cannot see the image you are taking. I test shot in a pool to see how it would work and how wide the image would be. It turned out the image was very wide almost like a fish-eye lens. I originally thought that I would be taking the photos, but George Botsko, my friend who was a diver, volunteered to go with me and took the underwater photos. Since I only had three dancers with me—Ruby, Mitsuko and Ivy Hsu—I decided that I too would be in the shoot to have more

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9 A copy of the Ka Leo paper is located in the Appendix B.
10 The copy of the poster is located in Appendix B.
bodies. The location I wanted was Kaimana Beach. I wanted enough bright light shining in the water but not directing overhead, so we went in the afternoon around 3:00 PM.

I wanted to recreate the image in the Denmark poster so I thought that we would go take more photos along the wall of Diamondhead, but we would lose one of my dancers, instead my impromptu decision was to stay at Kaimana and shoot from the pier and along the lava rock wall. Henry joined for the remainder of the shoot. This was perfect. I had one of them filming and the other taking photos at the same time. The light was changing and we did not have much time before one of my dancers had to leave.

I wanted to make a short trailer that I could post on Facebook for our show. Ruby and I took a clip from George’s video and music from the draft of music Art was working on for my piece, and edited it into a short trailer. It starts with us walking along the lava rock peer towards the ocean. A wave comes to submerge the camera and that is when the video dissolves to the title of the show and ticket information.

PERFORMING IN PSYCHO-TROPICS AND ELAPCITY

In addition to creating my own choreography, I was dancing in two pieces: Elapcity, choreographed by Sami L. A. Akuna, and Psycho-Tropics by Ruby Macdougall. Ruby and I split our rehearsal times. We both rehearsed one hour and a half on Monday and Wednesday alternating who would take the earlier time. We decided that instead of one three-hour long rehearsal we preferred having two one and a half hour rehearsals.

The piece was about prescription medication. When we discussed the piece prior to rehearsals, she expressed her desire to use pill bottles as a prop that would make sound. Something I had suggested to her was to teach us a rhythmic movement pattern that we could learn and work off of. We started by learning simple pill shaking patterns and a few movement phrases. The dancers also made short movement phrases that were incorporated into the piece. Corbett, Erin and I were the housewives dressed in robes and Katie and Kapono were the doctors. There was a general feeling of giddiness and excitement about getting into character that we channeled in our movement.

My desire to make Ruby and the others laugh by moving crazily across the stage three times as I shook the pills became a fixed moment for the piece. I started improvising lines to help
myself embody the bored housewife as well as try to make the group laugh, “Champagne? Boring. Summers in Paris? Boring. Ménage à trois? Boring.” The other dancers chimed in with text and this eventually was incorporated as dialogue in the music composed by Art Koshi.

I enjoyed performing in *Psycho-Tropics* very much. Embodying a character that was affluent and still dissatisfied who turns to drugs to escape the boredom was fun. It was perfect for the theme of escapism and touched on one aspect that even with all the material wealth one can have there still can be dissatisfaction in life. On a social level, I liked it because it addressed drug use and addiction through prescribed medication. The piece shined light on those issue in a very humorous and accessible way.

![Image](image.jpg)

**Figure 10**: The doctors and housewives in *Psycho-Tropics*. Photo by: Henry Mochida.

The other piece I performed in was *Elapcity* by Sami L. A. Akuna. We had worked together on his B.F.A. in Dance senior project *The Calm, The Storm, The Dark, The Light*, performed at the University of Hawai‘i Lab Theatre. I was familiar with his process, which was
to choreograph very quickly in a short amount of time. He used task-based instructions and improvisational structures. The costuming for this piece consisted of nude colored slips, large colorful printed skirts, tank tops and shorts. Some of the movement he used was Butoh, inspired by his many years of working with Iona Dance Theater in Honolulu. In one section we sang while moving slowly in flocking dance unison. In another section we stood at the end of the stage to proclaim something we loved or hated. The piece was very theatrical with imagery that shifted from intimate to dark and moods that also shifted from serious to humorous.

Figure 11: Elapcity. Photo by: Henry Mochida.

DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR AND SELF HELP SELF HURT

Camille Monson piece Delusions of Grandeur focused on the exactly that, the false impressions of one’s own importance. When I approached her to choreograph a piece, she began to consider the ways in which she personally engages in escaping and also what images and experiences come to mind. She was also interested in ideas of nostalgia and the longing and
romanticizing of the past. The model she chose for her piece was the fictitious character from the film *Napoleon Dynamite* (2004) directed by Jared Hess. Her work was influenced by the choreographer Jérôme Bel whose work *The Show Must Go On* (2001) we both saw while attending the À Corps festival in Poitiers, France in April 2014. Instead of working with original music or creating a sound score, Camille chose music with lyrics to explore the comedy within a literal and didactic presentation of the theme. Her piece has four distinct characters: the cowboy, the gymnast, the cheerleader and the aerobics instructor, who each embodies stereotypical characterizations and have strong feelings of self-importance.

![Figure 12: Delusions of Grandeur. Photo by: Mareva Minerbi.](image)

One similarity Camille’s piece and my piece *Blue Rainbow* had was the use of music with lyrics. I was also inspired by Jérôme Bel’s music choices and the literal relationship the dancing had to the music. In *Blue Rainbow* I played with the literal and use of double entendre. When the line “somewhere over the rainbow” was sung, the dancers turned their heads as if they were looking up at the rainbow, and on the line “way up high” the dancers dropped down to the ground and moved as if they’re floating in the water or literally “high.”
Faith Im’s duet *Self Help Self Hurt* explored women’s obsessions with self-improvement. The two women scrambled through self-help books: to be more attractive, to feel self-empowered, and to be physically fit. They were so caught up in themselves that they failed to notice the world around them; hence the door knocking at the end of the piece that they do not hear until it gets very loud.

![Dancers in Self Help Self Hurt. Photo by: Mareva Minerbi.](image)

The piece exposes women’s continually feeling a sense of deficiency. The self-help books promise a path of awakening or change while revealing the women’s insecurities through the book titles. The dancers read out loud from the books and exercised the instructions offered inside. Their costumes—peach camisoles and shorts indicate an intimate space. On a deeper level the piece is also a critique of consumer driven capitalist society we live in and want to escape. Many of my beginning ballet students who went to see the concert, chose her piece to discuss in their reflections. The concept of the piece resonated strongly for them. The voice-over at the
beginning of the piece stating, “We don’t need any more anger, we need more self acceptance and self love…” was at once empowering and hypnotic.
CHAPTER 3. EVALUATION

In this chapter I consider the challenges that I faced putting on the concert *Upside Reverie* and I reflect on what I discovered in the process of creating my thesis that I would take into future projects. I also bring escapism as a theme into a broader context of the arts in film and literature and explain how the choreographers approached escapism in each of the choreographed pieces.

CHALLENGES

Choreographing a Late Night show as my thesis proved to be a great deal of work. I was the director, producer, choreographer and a performer. With no assistance with lighting design, costumes, stage managing and while having to oversee the entire production, working very late hours and having very limited rehearsal times made it an especially challenging experience. With the pressure of it being my thesis with the minimum choreographed minutes required, and feeling that it had to be my magnum opus added to the stress.

Other challenges included not being able to rehearse in the Lab Theater the week of tech until 11:00 PM at night because of Main Stage rehearsals for the play *Blythe Spirit*, which ran three hours long. Several dancers involved were also in other productions juggling school and work. Two weeks into rehearsals I needed to add an extra two-hour rehearsal on Saturdays to complete the piece, and it was tough getting all the dancers together with all their other obligations. It was also challenging for the dancers to perform late: one of my dancers was pregnant and the other had to bring her young children to the rehearsals. Thankfully there was a great sense of camaraderie within the group and a genuine interest in the theme and material we were creating.

Coming up with a show title and doing the publicity before the show was conceived was inconvenient but necessary to meet Late Night’s publicity schedule. As a dance maker, I like to explore movement, and I often more fully understand my work when it is complete, and that is when I am able to give the piece an appropriate title. In this case, I had to have the title *Upside Reverie* from the start due to production deadlines.
Finding a lighting designer was difficult. I had worked with Falcon on lighting my qualifying piece *Night Rain*. She said she could help me but she was very busy with multiple productions and was not able to set any lights until the Monday of the week our show opened. Camille, Faith and I helped her set up the trees and lights in the wings. I stood on the stage as she focused lights. Although the lighting available was limited, I was delighted to have something other than work lights.

I had originally planned for Jessi to edit the video for *Blue Rainbow*. I had given her a timeline with minutes and second time markers to edit. As we approached the week of the performance, it became necessary for me to do the editing. With her permission I went ahead and edited the film. This was probably for the best since I was familiar with the music and choreography. I knew when I wanted to keep the projection simple to not detract from the dancing and when I wanted to create a sense of chaos by using color distortions and jump cuts.

Another obstacle was having to re-cast a dancer for my pieces *Lifeline* and *Blue Rainbow*. Laurie Hubbs who was originally cast had an injury a week before we were to open. Thankfully Erica, who was only in *Blue Rainbow*, was able to learn the part very quickly and I just had to make few modification to the piece *Blue Rainbow*.

Up until the week of the show, I still needed someone to run sound. It would be difficult for the dancers to have to do this since several of us were in multiple pieces. The week of my show, Kim Shire, who was on the Late Night board, stepped in to help. She had worked as Assistant Director for two theater shows that I was in at Kennedy Theatre: *La Strada* and *Big Love*. She saw the amount of work that I was doing: producing, directing, choreographing and performing, and wanted to help. This was a great relief for me. The last thing I wanted to be thinking about was running sound, and having to run up and down the stairs to the soundboard between pieces.

**REFLECTION**

Escapism is not readily distinguished as a theme in itself in cinema, art and dance. However, utopian and dystopian themes are abundant. Dystopian fiction includes films such as *Blade Runner* and the *The Matrix* and George Orwell’s novel *1984*. In each scenario life is threatened and controlled by higher forces. Utopian fiction began as early as Plato’s *The
Republic and The City of the Sun, which describe idyllic and visionary societies. The otherworldly is however prevalent in early 19th century Romantic ballets such as La Sylphide (Anderson P.79). The fascination of dreams as an escape in dance is evident in La Bayadere and The Nutcracker.

Escapism occurs in many shapes and forms throughout humanity and everyone engages in it in some form: a house protects and escapes the environmental factors of wind and rain; imagination is an escape; culture is an escape (Tuan P.5). The critique surrounding escapism is that it suggests one is subdued in a fantasy world instead facing problems and taking action. On the upside, escapism allows us to daydream new possibilities creating a blueprint to forge a brighter future. Philosopher Ernst Bloch acknowledged the importance of escaping though daydreaming, fairytales, film, theater literature, and the arts in general because it, “…Provides emancipatory moments which project visions of a better life that put in question the organization and structure of life under capitalism (or state socialism)” (Kellner). Through our choreographic explorations in dance we embodied different ways of escaping.

Faith Im’s piece Self-Help Self-Hurt touched on insecurities and the need for self-improvement. The preoccupation with oneself becomes an escape from one’s surroundings. When looked at on a deeper level can be a critique of our consumerist society, which thrives on making women feel insecure by creating a false need for material goods. This is the very society we often wish to escape.

Ruby’s piece Psycho-Tropics displayed bored housewives and their doctors escaping through the use of prescription medication. It is relevant in the context of the continued “war on drugs.” Criminalization of drug use is rampant while at the same time patients are overdosing on legal prescription drugs; a form of escape reserved for people that can afford them.

Camille’s Delusions of Grandeur touched on an individual’s sense of self-importance, to be a winner perhaps without taking in consideration at what cost? Happiness or contentment is not sufficient in just material wealth but in the need of recognition by others.

Sami’s piece Elapcity had dancers proclaiming to the audience things they hate or love — the very reasons we wish to escape. The movements in the piece ranged from mechanical— moving like we were a part of a machine, to the organic—evocative of shedding ones skin and escaping the body.
My piece *Lifeline* embodied camaraderie surrounded by an environment of tension created by the projection, mood of the music and the dancers performance. The running and hiding in a line was itself a representation of escape. Individuals can hide in the majority when being an individual is tiresome (Tuan P.82).

My last piece *Blue Rainbow* embodied Hawai‘i as place of escape. It can be interpreted as having a critical view of tourism in Hawai‘i, or as one of my students noted in their reflection, the need that everyone has to escape from time to time and go to the beach. The projection of the pool in *Blue Rainbow* hinted at the irony that many hotels in Waikiki have pools and Jacuzzis while being walking distance from the ocean. The tourist in Waikiki does not have to leave the hotel, but relaxes in the confined bubble out of touch with the existing problems of traffic, pollution, homelessness that surround the island. This kind of escape can be viewed as one of privilege since this type of escape is predominantly consists white middle-class (Desmond P. 254). The title *Upside Reverie* suggested something dreamy and uplifting. It is ironic since each dance piece ended up leaning towards the dystopian with its dark underpinnings.

This was the first fully produced production where I included projection design, and I know I would like to do it again. As producer, director, choreographer and performer I was constantly juggling many hats and also filling the gaps that were needed: gathering costumes, preparing rehearsal and tech schedules which was challenging with such a large group. Thinking about publicity and organizing all took a great deal of time and energy. Getting people involved early on to help with lighting, sound and stage-managing would be very helpful and while I enjoy filming and editing, having someone take over those tasks would give me more time to focus on the choreography.

In this process I discovered how far I could go drawing inspiration from a photo and from my memories. The photo from Copenhagen inspired costume choices, the location for the photo shoot, which in turn inspired movement and formations. The choreography was a testament to how much our surroundings and environment can inspire.

Having a theme had its benefits. It created an anchor for me throughout the process. This kept me on track and forced me to stick with my theme. The limited rehearsal time for the amount I was choreographing forced me to be efficient. I had to make decisions instinctually without second-guessing myself. I would compare this process to calligraphy, making broad strokes quickly, as opposed to a process with more time would be more like an oil painting were
you have the luxury of time to rework material over and over again and refine it. Even though the pieces had a rough edge to them, the ideas behind them were strong. I am very happy with the dance concert as a whole: the choreography, the dancers’ performance, and the challenges we set for ourselves as choreographers.

Using task-based work such as I discussed earlier in my thesis proposal proved to be a great way to generate movement and to involve the dancers in the choreographic process. Using improvisational structures allowed me to give my dancers more freedom while at the same time forced me to give up some control of what happened on stage. The risk was that sometimes the improvisation was interesting and other times less so. However, it did heighten the dancers’ awareness requiring them to be present and make decisions on stage versus just relying on muscle memory. In the very last performance the dancers took bigger risks and were more playful in their improvisations partially due to the fact that they felt more comfortable in the unknown. If I had more time I would have worked on refining the movement in *Lifeline*, but the structure was solid. *Blue Rainbow* had a strong beginning and ending. There were moments of improvisation in the middle of the piece, which were intentional and utilized choreographed dance phrases, but with more time I would have either set more of the choreography or restricted the improvisation.

The performances were well attended considering it was an 11:00 PM show. Each night the house was about 75% full. I know some people did not attend because the show was so late. People laughed and were moved by the dances. My beginning ballet students that came to see the show said they had never seen a dance show like it. It was a multimedia theatrical event, combining music, projection design, text and dance. In order to bring the concert into the community and reach a wider audience and also find an earlier show time, I decided to bring a modified version of the show to the O‘ahu Fringe Festival on Friday February 13, 2015. A new and perhaps more appropriate title for the show *Psychotropics* was used. Putting on a show and taking on so many responsibilities was a great deal of work but it was rewarding, and I know that I would like to put on more dance concerts like *Upside Reverie* in the future.
Figure 14: Erica Wong performing a backbend in Blue Rainbow. Photo by: Henry Mochida.
APPENDICES
Seeking Dancers, Actors and Musicians!
*Upside Reverie*

**LATE NIGHT AUDITIONS!**
An evening of dance exploring themes of escapism...

Directed by: Mareva Minerbi  
Choreography: Sami L. A. Akuna, Faith Im, Ruby MacDougall, Mareva Minerbi & Camille Monson.

**Audition Date:** Wed. **August 27, 2014**  
**Time:** **8PM**

**Location:** **New Dance Building** (NDB) Studio, Upper Campus.  
Bring a solo, song or monologue, and be prepared to improvise and learn choreography.  
Show dates: Oct. 3, 4, 10 & 11.

*Email: mareva@hawaii.edu* for questions. RSVP is appreciated.
APPENDIX B: PUBLICITY MATERIALS

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 10, 2014

The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa’s Department of Theatre and Dance opens its 2014 Late Night Theatre season with “Upside Reverie,” a 45 minute dance concert directed by M.F.A. Dance candidate Mareva Minerbi. Performances will take place at the Earle Ernst Lab Theatre on October 3, 4, 10, and 11 at 11:00 p.m.

In this 45 minute dance concert, reality serves as a spark to create alternative options for difficult situations. When asked why she chose to pursue “escapism” as the main theme, Minerbi said that she was drawn to escapism through the idea of dreams. “I think dreams are important as a catalyst for change, but there is also risk of not dealing with the present in desiring a utopian world,” she said. In this line, MFA choreographers will explore the motivations that make us desire escape from our reality, shedding light on the sometimes subtle social conflicts we experience in contemporary society and on possible ways dance may be used calm and reshape reality.

The performance features a mixture of original music, video projection design, and dances by Sami L.A. Akuna, Faith Im, Ruby MacDougall, Minerbi, and Camille Monson. This will partially fulfill Minerbi’s thesis requirement. She selected the theme for the show with an eye toward the mission of the Late Night Theatre: to present new and experimental theatre to Honolulu audiences.

-MORE-
Late Night Theatre is a student-driven low-tech program that promotes original or new works to the UHM campus community and beyond. The next Late Night Theatre production is "30 Neo-Futurist Plays from "Too Much Light Makes The Baby Go Blind (30 Plays in 60 Minutes)" and will be performed Nov 14-22.

Tickets for “Upside Reverie” will go on sale at the box office one hour before show time each performance night. Prices are $10 for general admission; $8 for UH faculty and staff, seniors, military, and non-UHM students; and $5 for students with a valid Fall 2014 UHM photo ID (subject to availability). All service fees are included in the ticket price. Latecomers will not be admitted once the performance has begun. For more information, please visit hawaii.edu/kennedy or call the theatre at (808) 956-7655. For disability access, please call the theatre.

EVENT: “Upside Reverie”
PRESENTED BY: UHM Department of Theatre and Dance, Late Night Theatre
WHEN: October 3, 4, 10, and 11 at 11 p.m.
WHERE: UHM’s Earle Ernst Lab Theatre, 1770 East-West Road, Honolulu

TICKET PRICES: $10 general admission
$8 seniors / military / UH Faculty and staff / student
$5 UHM students with valid Fall 2014 UHM photo ID

PURCHASE INFO: Tickets will be at the Kennedy Theatre box office one hour before showtime on performance nights.

###
Upside Reverie

2014 Late Night Theatre season opener focuses on escapism
p.16

PAY BACK STIPENDS, UH SAYS
Some students must pay back money awarded to them while working in volunteer positions.
p. 6

TEN YEARS LATER
Manuscript restoration and infrastructure construction continues a decade after the worst disaster to hit campus.
p. 10-11

'BOWS USE BYE WEEK TO BREATHE
Unsatisfied with their season so far, the Rainbow Warrior football team uses a week off to strategize.
p. 29

CHECK THE WAVES
Get the Surf Report for free on our Mobile App
Search "Kaleo Hawaii" in the App Store or Google Play

NOW HIRING!!!
‘Upside Reverie’ explores escapism

Dance, original score complement performance

TACIA KIHUN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The University of Hawai‘i at Manoa’s Department of Theatre and Dance will open its 2014-15 Night Theatre season with “Upside Reverie,” a 45-minute dance concert directed by M.U.A. dance graduate Majami Mirebi. The performance will feature a combination of original music as well as a compilation of unique video projection designs and contemporary dances by choreographers and performers Semi-L.A. Akuna, Faith M., Ruby McDonald-J, Mirebi, and Camilla Moxon. The performance consists of a series of individually choreographed vignettes. Within each of these vignettes, each choreographer utilizes a different approach to capture the overall theme of escapism through the idea of dreams.

Mirebi said that she has always been very much interested in the variety of ways people escape from the chaos of everyday life, which prompted her to choose the theme of escapism.

“Kana, you have a bad day at work or are being given some bad news, and you just want to unwind and drink a cup of coffee, you are escaping,” Mirebi said. “But what does that idea mean? It’s very intriguing.”

Mirebi also wanted to explore the different ways people escape, but also to understand some of the things that people do so because I think it is important to temporarily break away from one’s reality,” Mirebi said. “It’s necessary, it’s an important catalyst for change, although it’s also a big risk not dealing with the present.”

WHERE FANTASY MEETS REALITY

The performance addresses some of the heavy, turbulent social conflicts that currently exist in contemporary society. To lighten the overall tone, a mixture of dream-like music and a few humorous moments will be utilized. This dreamy effect will allow audiences to fully immerse themselves and participate in questioning the idea of what it means to escape. The performance will take the audience to a place where fantasy meets reality.

The performance will also showcase the different ways dance may be used to calm and reshape reality. Many people, both the young and the young-at-heart, consider dance as another form of self-expression.

“Dance is an international language that not only unifies diverse people and poses a sense of community, but it also provides a space where people can be creative and experimental,” Mirebi said. “In addition, dance can be used as a form of meditation or exercise to release the daily stress and pressures from work, school, family responsibilities, and other interpersonal relationships.”

PERFORMERS TAKE ON “ESCAPISM”

Although most of the choreographers and performers have some kind of professional dance experience, they had to find a somewhat difficult to accurately capture the nature and essence of escapism. This was especially challenging considering the time constraints of getting the production set up.

“Much of the production was still being sorted out and all the choreographers and performers are still doing last minute rehearsals,” said Akuna, a dancer in the performance. “So far, we’ve had two weeks of rehearsals and when we do have rehearsals, not everyone is present on the same day which is somewhat challenging at this point. It’s difficult to see the big picture of what the entire show will actually look like.”

However, Mirebi said that “when under this much pressure and not given a lot of time, it forces you to come up with quick solutions.”

“(We are) working hard. People are going to work in a short amount of time. Mirebi and the entire production team continues to remain hopeful.”

The production team wants to use the Kennedy Theatre stage as a platform to showcase each of the creative processes. They also want it to be a platform for additional exploration and experimentation to go beyond the conventions of the existing styles of dance and to broaden, as well as to question both their own and the audience’s senses of the meaning of escapism.

Mirebi defines the production as being “collaborative, conceptual and experimental.”

LOCATION

EARL IRVIN LAB THEATRE

WHEN

OCT. 3, 4, 10 AND 11 AT 7 P.M.

COST

$5; 10 HANA STUDENTS; $10 GENERAL;

WEB SITE

HAWAI’I.EDU/KENNEDY
Pedestrian Evacuation Analyst; "Upside Reverie"; Hawai’i State Hospital Update; Sovereignty Lecture

By BETH-ANN KOZLOVICH & CHRIS VANDERCOOK

Thursday, September 18th – from HPR2, it’s The Conversation

Listen

53:20

Full Show

USGS Pedestrian Evacuation Analyst Tool: Nate Wood
(http://www.usgs.gov/newsroom/article.asp?ID=40022

Listen

9:54

Nate Wood

In recent years, flood zones have changed and affected neighborhoods and this has inspired many communities to do all they can to prepare. But if someone were on foot and had to evacuate because of an imminent tsunami, how long would that take? A new mapping tool released this week by the US geological survey could help in planning for that scenario. Nate Wood is a research geographer with the USGS Western Geographic Science Center and joined the show via phone from his Portland office.

Intro Music: Runaway Hague by Up, Bustle and Out

Outro Music: Magnetic North by The Red Sea Pedestrians

Dance Concert “Upside Reverie”: Mareva Minerbi

Listen

8:34

Mareva Minerbi

We’re all encouraged to dream. Dreaming can be the best way to take our aspirations beyond the ordinary, just as long as we can take our dreams as inspiration and use them to guide our reality, and not retreat into them. But at what point do dreams become mere escapism? And if they do, is that so bad? Mareva Minerbi is the Director of an upcoming dance concert called “Upside Reverie” that asks us to explore the nature of escapism. “Upside Reverie” will be performed at the Earle Ernst Lab Theatre on October 3, 4, 10, and 11 at 11:00 p.m. Mareva Minerbi is a Master of Fine Arts
UPSIDE REVERIE POSTER
APPENDIX C: CONCERT PROGRAM

PROGRAM COVER

Acknowledgements

A special thanks to the choreographers, dancers, musicians and artistic collaborators for jumping into this creative journey with me. It has been truly special to work with such an amazing group. Big mahalo to my thesis committee: Peggy Gaither-Adams, Kara Miller and Dr. Markus Wesendorf for your guidance and support. Additional thanks to all the faculty members in the Department of Theatre and Dance. Grazie per tutto to my family for all your love, support and continuous encouragement in my artistic endeavors.

Enjoy the Show!

Mareva Minerbe*

Front of House Information

For large print programs, assistive listening devices or any other accessibility requests please contact a House Manager or call the Kennedy Theatre Box Office at 956-7655.

To arrange a Campus Security Escort from any two points on campus, please see a House Manager.

As a courtesy to your fellow audience members and to our performers, please remember that eating, drinking, photography and use of cell phones and other electronic devices is not allowed inside the theatre. Please take a moment to turn off any sound or light emitting devices.

Lost and Found, call the Box Office at 956-7655.

* In partial fulfillment of the thesis requirements for the MFA degree in Dance at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

The performance will be performed without an intermission.

Program design: Ruby Macloungall Mochida
Upside Reverie
Directed by Mareva Minerbi*
Choreographer: Mareva Minerbi
Music by: Art Koshi
Dancers: Emi Donato, Laurie Hubbs, Mitsuko Horikawa, Ruby Macdougall Mochida, Katie Patrick, Kanani Rose, Terry Slaughter & Corbett Stem
Artwork: Donna Louie

Self Help (Self Hurt)
Choreographer: Faith S. Im
Sound Design: Faith S. Im
Dancers: Khadijah King & Camille Monson

La Nostalja in Delusions of Grandeur
Choreographer: Camille Monson
Music by: Middle Brother and Band of Horses
Dancers: Faith Im, Jenny Ma, Camille Monson & Corbett Stem

Elagacy
Choreographer: Sami L. A. Akuna
Dancers: Emi Donato, Alexis Harvey, Khadijah King, Mareva Minerbi, Katie Patrick, Terry Slaughter & Angela Valdez

Psychic-Tropic
Choreographer: Ruby Macdougall Mochida
Music by: Art Koshi
Dancers: Philip Kaponi Awohi-Kim, Mareva Minerbi, Katie Patrick, Corbett Stem & Erin Whalen

Bliss Rainbow
Choreographer: Mareva Minerbi
Music by: Sven Britt
Dancers: Emi Donato, Laurie Hubbs, Mitsuko Horikawa, Ruby Macdougall Mochida, Katie Patrick, Kanani Rose, Terry Slaughter, Corbett Stem & Erica Wong
Projection Designer and Video Editor: Mareva Minerbi
Filmed by: Jesi Devera

* In partial fulfillment of the thesis requirements for the MFA degree in Dance at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa.

Late Night Theatre

Director's Note
The theme of escapism is something that has always interested me. How do people escape to cope with life's challenges and what is it that they are escaping? I felt this was an engaging and broad enough theme for the choreographers to explore and it embodied Late Night Theatre's mission. With minimal time and resources, we have experimented with our creative processes working with text, actors, producing original sound scores, generating movement from our dancers and collaborating with visual artists and musicians.

Mareva Minerbi

"In a sense, every human construction, whether mental or material, is a component in a landscape of fear because it exists in constant chaos. Thus children's fairy tales as well as adult's legends, cosmological myths, and indeed philosophical systems are shelters built by the mind in which human beings can rest, at least temporarily, from the siege of inchoate experience and of doubt." Yi Fu Tuan

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