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DANCING VOICES

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UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

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DANCE

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By

Melissa Teodoro

Thesis Committee:

Gregg Lizenberry, Chairperson

Betsy Fisher

Harriet Glass

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Chapter I. Dancing Voices. MFA Thesis Concert Proposal – September/2002

1.1 The concert

This MFA concert will be shared between Ana Paula Höfling and Melissa Teodoro. Our idea is to have a concert that showcases our choreographic work, old and new, in a cohesive concert that is more than a collage of unrelated dances. We have chosen the title “Dancing Voices” because of our interest in working with the spoken word, both in past works and new works.

The concert will be divided into two parts, one featuring each of our 15-minute pieces, created to satisfy the MFA degree requirement, and the other will feature reconstructions and restagings of older pieces (some of them revised or edited).

1.2 The dance pieces

The pieces that will be reconstructed/restaged are:

Bach ‘n’ balls—Melissa Teodoro

Three orange exercise balls chase four dancers across the stage to Bach’s *Goldberg Variations*. Cast: Christine Berwin, Kellee Blanchard, Melissa Lockyer, Noelani Goldstein.

Tchintchirote—Melissa Teodoro

Cesarea Evora sings a song about a native Cape-Verdean bird, the Tchintchirote, whose fluttering, gliding and diving movements are echoed by the dancers in an exploration of girlhood and youth. Cast: Melissa Lockyer, Janie Koontz, Jackie Nii and Courtney Brebbia.

In the Middle—Ana Paula Höfling

Three heads dance in this piece about trying to fit in. Preliminary cast: Sarah Luscomb, Larissa Marceau and Samantha DeLange. Music: First suite for unaccompanied cello by J.S. Bach (Prelude and Gigue)

Bachianas Cabeleiras—Ana Paula Höfling

A contemplative movement study about hair and bad haircuts. Cast: Noelani Goldstein and Larissa Eastman. Music by Heitor Villa-Lobos

Underwater Study – Ana Paula Höfling

An exploration of the freedom and the pleasure of swimming. The MFA performance requirement will be satisfied by our performance in this piece, since both of us are interested in being outside our own new MFA works. Cast: Ana Paula Höfling and Melissa Teodoro will alternate in this solo.

No Más! - Melissa Teodoro

Thesis requirement. A close look at war and its consequences, with an emphasis on the atrocities currently being committed in the civil war in Colombia. Cast: Kane Balbin, Arturo Mariano, Sequoia Carr-Brown, Audrey Wicklund and Larisa Eastman.

The smallest unit of meaning (working title)—Ana Paula Höfling

Thesis requirement. An exploration of musical syllables and morphemes. Cast: Kelly Del Rosario, Larissa Marceau, Sarah Luscomb and Vanessa Rodriguez

As a pre-show “performance” and during intermission, we would like to play Randy Hostetler’s *Happily Ever After*, a sound score composed of stories, sounds, syllables and musings on happiness. We will not have bows following every piece,

instead we will leave that for the end of the concert, where we will have a “company bow” with all the dancers, in order to give the concert a better sense of continuity.

1.3 Props, Set and Costume Requirements

Melissa anticipates using props for her thesis piece (see proposal). Although Ana Paula does not anticipate using any props or sets, and having in mind what is available in the costume shop, we would both need to have new costumes constructed for our new works. We will adapt to what is already available in the costume shop for our reconstructed pieces.

1.4 Production and publicity

We will start working with Kristy Miller, Director of Publicity for the Kennedy Theater, in the beginning of the Fall semester. The publicity office will be in charge of arranging photo shoots, interviews, contacting media, and any other task that involves PR, publicity and front of house.

1.5 Budget: \$1.000

\$200 music

\$500 costumes (approximately)

\$200 props (approximately)

\$100 miscellaneous

Chapter II. Proposal for MFA choreographic requirement: *No Más!*

2.1 Introduction

I do not mean to confuse any of my committee members with my new working title for my MFA choreographic piece, but things have changed since I sent you the original version of my thesis proposal: *Promise Not To Tell* (refer to Appendix A). There was nothing wrong with my previous idea and proposal: gender and sexuality. On the contrary, it was always very clear to me. Its conceptualization, its theoretical support, its methodology and even ideas of its physical product had been meticulously processed and thought out. I do want and need to develop this project someday, and I will, but now is not the time and I need to give way to another theme that has been knocking on my door for too long and requests my attention.

Tonight I am going to speak to you about a problem that has enormously preoccupied Colombians for many years. It's the violence. It is a violence that has sealed thousands of young lives, has filled with sadness many of the homes of humble people, and has made the progress of Colombia and the effort of our respectable people very difficult. It is a violence that has left us nothing but blood, anguish, and pain. (President Virgilio Barco, cited by Braun, 1994: 145)

Colombia, my home and country of citizenship, has been in a constant state of war since April 9, 1948 when the popular Liberal leader Jorge Eliecer Gaitan was assassinated on the streets of Bogota in front of his family members and thousands of his followers. At that time the rivalry and hatred between the two political parties, the Liberals and Conservatives, were the cause of many deaths, repression and violence. Throughout the years, Colombia's state of violence has remained almost intact while its

protagonists have changed. In the 1960's two Marxist-inspired guerrilla groups, the ELN (Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional - National Liberation Army) and the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Revolutionary Army Forces of Colombia) sprouted as a drastic reaction to the two traditional political parties (Liberals and Conservatives) that had monopolized the nation's government for years. In subsequent decades, powerful right-wing paramilitary groups, some with close ties to rural elites, drug traffickers and the military, have emerged to challenge the guerrilla groups, increasing the levels of terror in the countryside and violence in the nation as a whole. Today, the government, the traditional political parties, the leftist guerrilla groups, the paramilitary and the drug traffickers are all entangled in a war against each other. What started out as a rivalry between Conservative and Liberal political parties later became a battle between leftist and rightist parties, followed by a war between the government and the drug traffickers, a war between the drug traffickers and the paramilitary, a war between the paramilitary and the guerrilla, etc. Today it is not clear who is fighting against whom anymore, and the reason why they started fighting in the first place is buried somewhere deep in the Andean rainforest.

My interest in this theme does not lie in deciphering or unraveling these groups' chaotic struggle for economic and political power, but to acknowledge and reveal the cruel injustice, the violence and corruption practiced by ALL of these groups against the true victims of this unnecessary war: Colombia's innocent people.

Kidnapping is a means used by Colombia's guerrilla groups for obtaining economic and political power. The cases of Ingrid Betancourt, Francy Lorena Erazo and Marina Montoya are examples of political hostages. Ingrid Betancourt, a presidential candidate to

the recent 2002 elections who is a young, brilliant and passionate politician whose main battle has been to fight against corruption (even the corruption practiced by high ranking government officers) was kidnapped by the FARC earlier this year and has been held hostage since then.

Francy Lorena, a chubby-cheeked three year old girl was pulled out of her mother's arms by members of the FARC this past July of 2002.

Francy does not know what FARC is, but she has now been added to a list of 3,600 who have been held in the jungles of Colombia, trapped 24 hours a day in the sights of a "revolutionary" rifle. (The Vancouver Sun. Aug 3, 2002 A-9).

This act of terrorism was the FARC's way of demanding Francy's father to resign from his position as mayor of Colon, a small town in the south of Colombia. The Colombian guerrilla are slowly but surely *cleaning up* the vulnerable and isolated rural areas from any governmental power.

The following quote by Nobel prize winner Gabriel Garcia Marquez in his book *News of a Kidnapping* describes the inhumane murdering of Marina Montoya, sister and aunt of Colombian political figures by the ELN.

Thursday, January 24, the body of Marina Montoya was found in an empty lot north of Bogota. Almost sitting upright in grass still damp from an early rain, she was leaning against the barbed-wire fence, her arms extended....she was a woman of about sixty with abundant white hair, dressed in a pink sweat suit and a pair of maroon men's socks. Beneath the sweat suit she wore a scapular with a plastic cross. Someone had stolen her

shoes. Her head was covered by a hood , stiff with dried blood. The bullet holes were distributed over the skull and there was one very clean hole in the forehead. (Garcia Marquez, 1997: 126)

Political kidnappings only have a happy ending when there is an exchange of prisoners.

On April 2 of 1996, Juan Carlos Gaviria, brother of ex - president Cesar Gaviria is kidnapped ...seventy one days later he is freed following negotiations that guaranteed his captors passage to Cuba (Bergquist 2001: xviii).

Kidnapping for economic purposes, on the other hand, has only one purpose: ransom. Avianca flight #50 to Bogota was high-jacked by the ELN on April 12th of 1999. The forty six passengers, including women and children, were kidnapped for ten months. Eighteen year old Leszli Kalli wrote in her journal six months after she was kidnapped:

(my translation)
I am not going to allow them to kill me little by little; I prefer to die once and for all. Forgive me God but I cannot stand it anymore. No más! I hate my present situation, I hate my life, I hate breathing, I hate seeing the world from here, I hate the green, I hate the land I step on, I hate everything! I want to finish with you, life! My soul is being ripped and nobody hears me. Mom, forgive me for this, forgive me for wanting to die, but I can't support it any longer. I don't want the Lord to send me strength anymore, I don't want peace...I want to get out! Since this is impossible,...I'm fucked. Forgive me for thinking this way but....God is not here with me! (Kalli, 2000: 145).

That same year the ELN kidnapped approximately one hundred forty churchgoers in the city of Cali. The occupants of the church were completely liberated six months later after negotiations with their families, the government and private corporations.

Foreigners are a definite target for the guerrilla. Jake Gambini, an American oil executive hardly survived as a hostage of the ELN. In the following paragraph Gambini confesses his suicidal intentions when on the verge of desperation.

Close to my chair they had left a tree trunk about an inch and a half in diameter. The top was very pointed because of the way they cut it or stripped it off. It was sharp enough. I thought often about throwing myself on it, on my stomach, to let it go through me like a spear (Gambini quoted by Braun, 1994: 143).

The word masochism comes to mind when I realize that my thoughts were flooded with these images and the theme that I have chosen for my MFA choreographic requirement, but on the other hand, this theme is one which I have been needing to process, digest and flush out of my system. The fact that I am presently living as far away as I will probably ever be from Colombia, makes me think that this is the appropriate and safe environment in which I can confront the unjust cruelty that is devouring Colombia like a plague. The theme I have chosen is one that has been translated into the language of dance many times, such as in *The Green Table* by Kurt Joos or *Last Look* by Paul Taylor. Through my MFA choreography project I am presenting my story; my version of violence and war; my way of perceiving this destructive and insane disease; my way of dealing with this problem that left me no other option but to leave home. And now that I am farther away from home than I ever thought I could be, I feel it is safe to scream, as loud as I possibly can: NO MAS! .

2.2 Process

For the choreographic project I am required to create for my MFA thesis, I will begin by studying and exploring my topic in its many layers of significance. The topic of choice will be dealt with in an ample way in the beginning, and as the process of creation develops, I trust that it will narrow down to more specific aspects of this over encompassing topic.

The first phase of the project is the exploration of the topic through the existing bibliographic, photographic, videographic and choreographic documentation that deals with war, violence and kidnapping in order to have an idea of the different ways in which it has been acknowledged from a historical, creative and analytical perspective. Bibliographic sources that I am presently consulting are listed at the end of this document. Some of the audiovisual sources are *The Green Table* by Kurt Joos, *Last Look* by Paul Taylor and *Meditation on Violence* by Maya Deren. In July I will visit the Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center in New York City to further my research.

The second phase of the project will be to audition potential performers. Due to the fact that the topic of my interest can be charged with dark and unpleasant connotations, I feel the need to choose the performers, not only based on their technical skills and performance qualities, but also their willingness to acknowledge and confront the topic, and their maturity to express their personal opinions on the subject matter. I will have the dancers inform themselves on the topic by means of books, photography and film. My own experience, having lived in Colombia, will be transmitted to my dancers through anecdotes in rehearsal and through my movement and choreographic choices.

The third phase will be dedicated to the creative process in which I will search for a coherent choreographic narrative that will complement the musical score. I have chosen to work with Kronos Quartet's *Soliloquy* from *How It Happens* that combines instrumental music and recorded text. The text is written by Scott Johnson and performed by I.F. Stone. My main task as a choreographer is to interrelate movement, text and music in a way that aesthetically makes sense and highlights the subject matter. Movement will partially come from the performers who will participate actively in the creative process through improvisational and compositional exercises. My original intention was to incorporate one more element in the choreographic piece: visual projection of images that will occur simultaneous to the dance. I am leaving this idea "on hold" because I am not sure that it is technically feasible in the Lab Theater.

The fourth phase will include committee feedback, readjustments, polishing and cleaning up. The fifth and last phase will basically be dedicated to staging and production matters such as lighting, video-recording, publicity, etc.

An important challenge for me in this project is to find a safe and aesthetic way to acknowledge this topic, keeping in mind that I am dealing with university students as my performers and audience members. I will count on the dance faculty members to guide me in this aspect of the creative process and final product.

I plan to start working on the pre-composition aspects of the project (phase one and two) during Spring 2002, and focus on phases three to five starting June of 2002. At this point in the project, the use of costume, music, text, lighting and set design are still undetermined.

2.3 Music

Soliloquy from how it happens. Kronos Quartet. Text and voice by: I.F. Stone.

You know, I have so little to say here this evening, but there's so many things that have been said over and over again that need to be said again and again. We are becoming one family. We share each other's technology and culture and poetry and philosophy. And we have to begin to think of ourselves as a family. We have to begin to enjoy the differences in the human family like we enjoy the differences in a garden of flowers. And there's a race on - and the real race and the real ideological conflict is between those universalists who want to think in terms of mankind and those reversionists to barbarity and tribalism, who are still hung up in ancient, anachronistic hatreds like we see in Ulster, like we see in Israel, Palestine. That we can see in so many parts of the world. Without some system of world law we're lost. And we can't have a system of law without a sense of community. And we can't have a sense of community without the underpinning of recognition of ourselves as parts of one family. And there's very little time left to muster this broader vision against the ancient, conditioned reflexes and psychoses of mankind and his homicidal tendencies. But either we learn to live together, or we die together. Is it necessary - is it necessary to have to repeat after 2000 years all the things you people read in Sunday School?! How - how absent minded - how forgetful! (Text from a lecture given by I.F. Stone at the Ford Hall Forum. Broadcast on National Public Radio on April 12, 1983).

2.4 Cast

I will work with three female dancers and two male dancers. They are: Kane Balbin, Sequoia Carr-Brown, Larisa Eastman, Arturo Mariano, and Audrey Wicklund.

2.5 Preliminary Description

The following description is based on ideas that are in the process of being developed choreographically. This is a preliminary choreographic structure that includes hints of images, text and music. Segments will not necessarily be presented in this order.

Part 1

Fragmented rays of light pour down on five isolated bodies that rock back and forth repetitively. Something ignites one of the blindfolded dancers to react and break the monotonous mood presented until that moment. The other dancers react to this first stimulus creating amongst the entirety of the group an undulating movement sequence that takes them to their feet. Still lost and in desperate need to find a way out, they run in different directions. The dancers then find the need to protect themselves against land mines, bullet shots, slaps, punches, kicks and whips. Physical abuse and torture are practiced on the victims until they collapse from exhaustion.

Part 2

The dancers recover from the previous turmoil and discover the presence of other victims who share their same nightmare. There are instances of rest, support and community, but these are brief and always broken by aggression. Again they find themselves alone, struggling to survive and protecting their own sanity. In those ephemeral moments of coming together their hopes of freedom are stronger and their strength to stay alive are magnified.

Part 3

The presence of an undetermined powerful being represented by a bright light takes the dancers into a completely different atmosphere, one of resignation and loss. A ritual of transformation takes place where they prepare for their final journey. The unveiling and uncovering of their material personae leaves them stripped and even more vulnerable.

Part 4

Together they face their final destiny with dignity, with pride still supporting each other, still holding on, still fighting for their lives until the very last minute.

Part 5

(after applause) one minute of silence dedicated to the victims of violence and war in today's world.

Note: The structure and content of this preliminary description is a sample of what the final product can end up being. Once the creative process takes flight it is most likely going to take the piece to new places.

2.6 Preliminary Time Table

Spring/2002 semester	Conceptual/Choreographic Preparation
	Audition
	Finding Music
June/Aug	Rehearsal with dancers by groups.
	Mon & Th 5-8pm. Music 118
	Rehearsal with dancers together as a cast
	T & Th at TDB 7-9 pm/ Sat at MB118 9-12 am
September	First Showing
October	Second Showing
November	Third Showing
November 4	Start rehearsing at the Lab Theater
November 9 & 10	Technical rehearsal
November 11 & 12	Dress Rehearsal
November 13 – 17	Concert

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Chapter III. Looking back at *No Más!* Its creation, process and performance.

When I look back at most pieces that I have choreographed, I see them as finished projects that may be reconstructed in the future but not re-evaluated in their intentions. Until now, I have had no problems detaching myself from past projects and putting them aside, in order to give way to new projects. With *No Más!* it has been different. Like a child who is desperately in need of attention, *No Más!* does not want to be put away. Like a stubborn child who is angry and wants the world to know it, *No Más!* has the need to scream and yell. As a choreographer who happens to have strong maternal instincts, I cannot abandon a crying infant who is obviously in need of care and attention.

When an art piece reflects the socio-political issues that affect the world at a particular moment in time, its validity transcends aesthetics, and its final objective goes beyond that of entertainment. These art pieces which contain an underlying message of socio-political dissatisfaction become a window through which creators, performers and audience members can vent and express their position towards the reality in which they are immersed.

Choosing a cast for *No Más!* was probably the biggest challenge in the making of this piece. Finding dancers who were not only technically apt, but who would allow me to take them to emotional states that were many times dark and disturbing did not seem like an easy task. Through observation and conversation, I had developed a good sense of who my classmates were throughout my studies at UH, and who were potential cast members for *No Más!* This helped make the casting process easier. Obviously, I didn't find all the qualities I was looking for in each dancer. While some of them quickly

related to the theme and immediately expressed interest in sharing their thoughts and experiences, others were attracted to the technical and performance challenges of the piece. Realizing I was not going to find the ideal dancer, I decided to seek a combination of individuals that would work together in a complimentary way as a group and as a family, and I was fortunate enough to find it.

The beginning of the choreographic process was exploratory and investigative. I required the dancers to read articles and books that made reference to the history of violence in Colombia, and anecdotal texts based on the experiences of victims of kidnapping, corruption and war in this country. This textual information gave the dancers more specific references about the war in Colombia; it gave them specific stories, names and faces. It also helped them develop their characters for the dance, find intention for their movements and gave them images to support their performance. We also spent time sharing personal experiences that had taken us to the emotional and physical states of despair, abandonment, entrapment, solitude and agony. These confessional sessions brought the group closer together and built trust and support amongst them. I opened my world to them and asked them to open theirs to me and to each other in order to reach the depth of this experience. Viewing documentaries and films gave the dancers an audiovisual sense of the geography of Colombia's jungle and Andean regions where most of the kidnapped victims are hidden and where most of the confrontations between the different fronts occur. Of course, my own stories as a Colombian citizen who has directly and indirectly been affected by this civil war, served as a bridge that connected that far away land called Colombia to their home, Hawaii.

All this textual, anecdotal and audiovisual information became the backdrop when choreographing sections of the dance which placed more emphasis on expressivity, as opposed to technical skills. These were sections in which I encouraged the dancers to participate creatively through guided improvisational exercises. These were sections that enabled the development of their character portrayal as well. These structurally improvised sections which used mostly pedestrian movements such as walking, running, hiding, ducking, consoling or undressing, wove in and out of more formal dance sequences, giving texture to the dance as a whole and allowing the spectator to transfer from realistic to more abstract scenarios. It was in these more pedestrian sections where the different characters were able to tell their stories. These stories were then able to intersect and layer creating relationships between the characters.

The sections that were pre-choreographed and taught to the dancers beforehand were products of hours of my own exploration in the studio. Many of the movements I discovered departed from textual and visual images I extracted from books and films such as reacting to a bullet shot, a grenade or bomb explosion, different means of torture, or physical and psychological violations. All of these movements came together to form sequences of movements that ended up being strong sections for the audience to digest and harsh sections for the dancers to execute. At one point I felt obliged to include choreographic moments that expressed other emotions besides that of aggression or violence, such as solidarity, intimacy, dependency, friendship, support and forgiveness. Quiet moments where the choreography, the dancers, and of course, the audience members could breathe were desperately needed. Once again, I found anecdotal support in my bibliographic and videographic sources where instances of hope, prayer, play and

even romance between the victims of Colombia's war were featured. Presenting the audience with contrasting moods allowed them to weave in and out of the dramatic tension inherent in the piece. It also reminded them that life carries on even when in a state of war.

The musical score I chose to use for *No Más!* highly influenced the choreographic structure of the piece. The instrumental aspect of the musical score and the textual component helped define the narrative of *No Más!* I took into account the musical aspects of repetition, accumulation and circularity of the textual structure and used those devices as choreographic tools to develop the movement structure. I also took into account the content of the text and allowed my movement to converse with it. In some instances, the movements echoed the text, in others, the movement contradicted it or became yet another voice. In some of the sections the movements simultaneously made reference to the text, in other sections, the movement referred to the text that the audience heard moments earlier.

A significant challenge for both myself and my dancers was counting the musical score. *Soliloquy* from *How it Happens* has a multi-rhythmic structure where instrumental music frequently changes from one meter to another, and text seems to follow its own musical patterns. I juggled with three choreographic components: instrumental music, text-voice and movement. I needed to make these three elements co-exist cohesively in spite of the fact that they frequently followed independent rhythms. This was confusing and did not help the dancers when it came to movements that needed to be executed in unison. There were moments in the choreography when the dancers spontaneously chose to depend on the group rhythm instead of the musical score, and after two or three failed

attempts to keep them on the music, I finally gave up and allowed them to depend on each other's kinetic understanding of the music. This, of course obliged the dancers to be even more connected and aware of each other.

Connectedness and trust between the dancers was not an option but a responsibility, especially because they were blindfolded and their hands were tied, preventing them from moving freely and seeing clearly. Limiting their mobility and range of movement had to happen from the very beginning of the process. Learning the movements from the beginning with these physical limitations was, in the long run, choreographically more effective and honest. Improvisational exercises with blindfolds enabled the dancers to find the emotional states of solitude and despair, and also enhanced the trust between them. Learning movement phrases with their hands tied from the very start permitted the dancers to get accustomed to the limitations of using their upper limbs. This also helped me as a departing point to create new movements.

The blindfolds were cheese cloth fabric dyed dark gray that only allowed the dancers to see shadows and silhouettes on a lit stage. I had to come up with a system of tying these blindfolds so that the rough textured fabric would not rub against the dancers' corneas, causing irritation and potential inflammation. We discovered that wearing eye make up when sweating under the blindfolds was not a good idea. The darkly dyed cheese cloth did not permit the audience to see the dancers' eyes, so they never knew if the performers were totally blinded or not. The wrist ties were made out of the same fabric as the blindfolds and were tied loosely around their wrists enabling them to untie themselves during the second section of the piece.

The costumes were loose fitting clothes that did not necessarily match. I wanted them to look as if they had been held hostage in the jungles of southern Colombia for a couple of months. So, I looked for torn, muddy, layered clothing. Most of the garments were obtained at second hand stores such as Goodwill and the Salvation Army. The dancers preferred to purchase and wear their own undergarments which consisted of briefs, underwear, bras and undershirts. They also preferred to wash these garments themselves after each performance. Under the stage lights, the white fabric of the undergarments was too bright and overwhelming for the audiences eyes, so we dyed them with tea in order to bring down the glow.

Undressing and dancing in underwear was a struggle for Audrey, one of the dancers who was young and lacked body confidence especially in public. After many conversations with her about my choreographic intentions and about the reason why *No Más!* was taking that course, and after the support she received from the other cast members who embraced her youth and helped push her through, she finally transcended her insecurities and allowed her character to take charge. Towards the end of the choreographic process Audrey was finally able to understand and experience the theatrical transformation I was seeking. My poetic intentions transcended the mere act of undressing and instead looked for the unveiling of the characters' material self. Contrary to the other four dancers who I had to constantly pull back, Audrey had to be pushed beyond her comfort zone and into that state of risk and uncertainty which characterized *No Más!* She was technically a beautiful dancer, probably the most talented of the group, but she lacked dramatic presence and theatrical maturity. This, I could not give her in a few months, so I decided to use her *naivete* as a staple for her character, highlighting it

instead of hiding it. This immediately made the other dancers' characters react and respond to this new character. She became the protected one, the defenseless child, the groups' pet, the one who had to be nurtured and needed special attention. This attitude of the dancers towards Audrey became effective in and out of character, on stage and off stage.

Audrey also had a serious commitment problem that affected the course of work and the group dynamic. This obliged me to double cast her role. This was not easy for me or the rest of the group since we were already used to her presence and the piece was already in its final stage. Finding a dancer who, at that point of the semester, was available and not overbooked, and who would fit the already developed character, was not easy. I had to look for someone outside the university and in the community. I settled for someone who had very different qualities than Audrey but who had other strong performance abilities. What was most important to me was finding someone I could count on and trust. I found that person in Jamie Nakama, who was quickly embraced by the rest of the group. Jamie did not have the strong technical background that Audrey did, and struggled to learn steps and movement phrases, but she was a hard worker and was willing to challenge herself with the role. She was also a strong performer and was committed to the piece a hundred percent. After a lot of thought, I decided to allow both Audrey and Jamie to perform in the Dancing Voices concert. They alternated performances which was not the ideal situation, since the other four dancers had to adapt to the different bodies and energies of these two very different dancers each night, but I feel it was the most just thing to do.

Dancing Voices was lucky to have a very talented lighting designer, Kelly Berry. For *No Más!* I had very specific lighting ideas. I needed to use the cyclorama, many specials, and front lights. Kelly was very helpful and respectfully listened to my non-technical descriptions of the dramatic moods I was seeking. Horizontal light corridors that traced angular pathways on the stage, vertical pools of light that isolated the dancers from each other, and strong, frontal white light that exposed the dancers' most desperate moments, were examples of lighting choices for *No Más!* For the section of the piece where the dancers undress, I had the apron placed as a downstage extension of the performance space. I wanted this very intimate act of undressing to filter in to the audience. I wanted the audience to be intimately exposed to the vulnerability of the dancers. I wanted the audience to smell the odor of despair, to feel the heat emanating from their bodies, to see the dampness of their skin, to hear their silent cry of rage and disappointment. This moment was enhanced by bright white lights that shined on each of them, exposing their frailty even more.

No Más! had many potential endings. One ending consisted in having the lights slowly fade out as the dancers, in their death line, reacted against gun shots. Another ending image featured a drastic blackout after the person on top of the pile of bodies slowly reached up as if hanging on to that last breath of life. The third potential ending, where one dancer rolls off the pile of bodies as the lights fade out, is the ending I chose because of its connection to the music. I am aware that this ending might have left the audience with a sense of sadness and hopelessness. Some audience members mentioned that they were left empty and exhausted while others were left guilty and mad. There were others who were charged with enough energy to go fight a battle themselves. The

fact that the audience was left with some kind of taste in their mouths, whether it was sweet, bitter, sour or salty gave me the satisfaction of having created a piece that touched the audience.

I had my committee members come to rehearsals and evaluate my creative process twice. First I had them come in individually so that I could give them my full attention and concentrate on only one point of view. I worked on the piece for a couple of rehearsals taking into account the committee member's feedback, before asking the next committee member to come in. After the piece was structurally finished, had a beginning, middle and end, costumes, props, and a certain degree of performance level, I asked the three committee members to come to a rehearsal together. They all agreed to the fact that one section seemed too "pretty" or too "dancey" for a piece about terrorism and war. This had been a problem from the beginning especially for Professor Lizenbery. I had already tried "toughening up" the dance phrases, but it was not enough, and this section still stood out in comparison to the rest of the sections. What did I want to express through these movements? Was I trying to express something concrete? Do I need to express something concrete at all? Was it wrong to include a section of pure abstract movement? I went back to the points of departure for the movements of this problematic section, and re-evaluated my original intentions. I finally decided to keep the structure of the phrase and change the intentions of each movement. So instead of creating circular and diagonal lines with their arms, I asked the dancers to slice and punch an imaginary enemy attacking them. Instead of tilting back with one leg in *attitude*, I asked them to react to a slap on their right cheek that threw them off balance. Situational imagery was a more effective point of departure than just physical movement.

Professor Glass was drawn to the more dramatic sections, as were the other two committee members, and suggested that I highlight these more. This is when I decided to repeat the section where the dancers stand in their death line, holding hands while being shot from a distance. Audience members later supported Professor Glass' preference towards the physically subtle, but in many instances stronger, moments in the piece. I still question if these physically subtle, but emotionally charged moments were theatrically effective and valuable to the audience only because they were preceded or followed by the "dancier" sections. Would these sections have been as strong if they weren't inserted within "dancier" sections?

Professor Fisher, my third committee member, was most concerned about the dancer's quality of performance. She wisely stated that the performance had to be at the same level as its topic. One cannot address war and dance half-heartedly. *No Más!* was a piece that required technique, fitness, emotional commitment and soul. I needed to push the dancers even more towards that dangerous state of body and mind that characterizes the atrociousness of war. "Tension" and "intention" were the two concepts that Professor Fisher insisted was lacking. Muscular tension, not only for technical purposes, but as a means to demonstrate fear, uncertainty and survival was then incorporated to the dancers' performance. Following both Professor Lizenbery's and Professor Fisher's advise, intention of movement was re-evaluated and re-instated in the choreography. It was beneficial for the dancers to be reminded of these lost intentions which, after months of rehearsals, had been buried under layers of other choreographic information.

The time to conclude the process and focus on the final product was near. The dancers were still insecure about certain technical aspects of the piece. Getting lost in the complex music structure, disconnectedness between dancers, not being able to see through the blindfolds were problems that needed to be acknowledged. After questioning, re-evaluating, re-choreographing and adjusting, I came to a point in the process where I said to myself: “*No Más!* can continue growing and evolving some other time, I am closing this first chapter now!” Professor Glass supported my decision by stating that at this point of the choreographic process, it does not matter if they are not in unison throughout the dance, if they are not at the exact right spot on stage, or if a leg was not lifted high enough. The topic I chose to dance about, and my interpretation of this topic does not require the dance to persistently dwell on order, clarity and clean technical virtuosity. There is a certain, random and chaotic ethos to war. If anything, *No Más!* was a reflection of the complex political systems in countries where corruption, insanity and violence are means for injustice. There was no need to present anything differently if my goal was to somehow reconstruct this insane scenario that does not necessarily follow any logical order.

Chapter IV. Learning and Performing Underwater Study. MFA Performance Requirement.

I was lucky to learn *Underwater Study* from its original source, Ana Paula Höfling, who gave me the original images, intentions and movements of the dance first hand. Having the choreographer's full attention, enabled me to grasp the important aspects of this solo dance and allowed the choreographer to focus on every detailed aspect of my performance.

Learning *Underwater Study* was, overall, an easy process. Due to the fact that I had experienced its creative process and watched its final product many times, I was familiar with this piece's form, intent and content. The first step towards reconstruction was transferring what I had experienced visually to physical and kinesthetic information. The movements themselves were familiar to me since the choreographer and I share a compatible dance background, a similar movement vocabulary and dance aesthetic. It was just a matter of putting the choreographic choices together. Direction, level, speed, energy, balance, change of weight, were a few of the elements most used in *Underwater Study*.

West End Blues, interpreted by Louis Armstrong was the musical score used for *Underwater Study*. The trumpet's deep, textured sounds and provoking melody inspired the movements to be sustained as if moving through a mass of dense waters. Other musical qualities inherent in the score helped emphasize qualities such as lightness and buoyancy in movement as when one floats. The music, which was composed in 1928 and contains many stylistic aspects of popular music of that time, enhanced the time period inherent in the dance.

The costume, a black and white bathing suit that was designed to look like a fashionable swimming costume from the 1920's and 30's transported the dance to a specific period in time. A white textured swimming cap that looked like something my grandmother would have worn when she was a young woman, complimented the swimming suit. A long white robe which was demurely taken off by the performer at the beginning of the piece was the introductory statement of a story line which followed. Having a non-generic costume which immediately took the performer and the audience to a specific period of time, forced the performance stance and gestural attitude to take a particular direction. I was a character in a story and I was revealing many aspects of my personality and life style through my dance and my character.

Since the costume and music transported me to a specific period of time and inspired me as a performer to create a specific character, I found myself unintentionally putting choreographic elements, such as gestures and movements, into the dance. This was a problem for the choreographer since she wanted to reconstruct the piece as close as it was to its original form. This relatively detailed piece was a challenge for me. There was a segment that I was not able to grasp. After trying to approach this segment in different ways the choreographer finally allowed me to come up with my own version. I think it should be part of the reconstruction process to allow for slight changes to occur specially when there is a change in the cast. As the concert date came closer, I gained confidence, and I was making the dance my own. The dance was more and more in my hands and out of the choreographer's. Once I stepped onto the stage, the dance was mine and it was my responsibility to transmit this dance to the audience. It was my choice to smile at this moment or the other, as it was my choice to arch my back more or less, and

it was my choice to look out into an audience member's gaze and wink. I am thankful to the choreographer for letting me go when performance time came, and handing me the choreography for it to be mine during those few minutes of performance.

Chapter V. Reconstructing and re-staging Bach 'n' Balls

For this second version of *Bach 'n' Balls*, I had a completely new cast. Two of the three main cast members were very skilled gymnasts. The third cast member was a Capoeira specialist who was familiar with inverted movements, floor routines and tumbling. The fact that I was not performing the dance this time allowed me to step back and direct the reconstruction from the outside. Having once participated as a dancer and having kinetically experienced *Bach 'n' Balls*, allowed me an inside perception of the dance.

A big surprise for me was the fact that my dancers did not grasp the original movements as easily as I thought they would. Learning *Bach 'n' Balls* meant a lot of bruises, wounds and a lot of complaining on their part. This made me question why the movements of *Bach 'n' Balls* didn't seem that damaging or challenging to the three original dancers whose training was mostly in modern dance and not gymnastics. Could it be that modern dancers are taught to roll, tumble and fall on hard surfaces as opposed to gymnasts whose movements are supported by sprung and padded floors? After struggling with the movements and dealing with the wounds and bruises, we finally found alternative ways of performing the movements. A couple of new movements that the dancers came up with were also incorporated into the dance.

The second section of the dance was originally a one minute solo. For this second version of *Bach 'n' Balls* I had a second dancer come in a few seconds later, and then, a third dancer. This accumulation of dancers in space added layers and complexity to the

choreographic structure. This choreographic addition would probably have not occurred if I had not been looking at the dance from an outside perspective.

The most problematic aspect of this piece was the manipulation of the exercise balls. It was my intention to make it seem as if the relationship between dancer and ball was smooth and easy. In reality it was complicated and required skill, organization within the cast, and preparedness to improvise in case the balls decided to take a different path in performance that night. In the first section of the piece, the audience was presented with four dancers chasing and being chased by balls. They never realized how chaotic the back stage area became at that point in the piece. Every ball was thrown across the stage and received at the other side. This had to be choreographed in such a meticulous way, that if one person made a mistake, the entirety of the first section would not become a disaster.

Bearing weight on the balls, which was emphasized in the second section of the piece, was challenging as well. External factors such as room temperature, humidity, dust, dancer's attire and hair, affected the manipulation of the balls. After working with the balls for a significant period of time, they lost their fullness and roundness, and this affected the rolling of the balls in a straight line which was needed in the first and fourth sections of the dance.

Another problem I had to solve, which slowed down the reconstruction process, was having to double-cast Melissa Lockyer, who was in a nearly fatal bike accident four weeks before the performance. I asked Larisa Eastman, who was already involved in the concert, to learn the part just in case Melissa was not fully recovered by the concert. This meant more work for me and the rest of the cast, but fortunately, by dress rehearsal,

Melissa, stitched from her neck to the crown of her head, miraculously found the strength and will to join us and dance *Bach 'n' Balls* and *Tchintchirote*. Everybody was very proud of her and she taught us all a lesson about strength and drive. After Melissa's heroic return, I did not hear another complaint about bruises or muscle aches from other members of the cast.

In the end, when performance time came, I had to step back and trust the dancers to do their best and enjoy the art of improvising. And they did. *Bach 'n' Balls* was, by far, the most complicated piece in the concert, and I would think twice before reconstructing this piece again.

Chapter VI. Reconstructing and re-staging Tchintchirote

This piece was created in the Fall of 2001 and first performed in Spring Footholds of 2002. I created this piece knowing who my dancers were since I had auditioned and chosen them beforehand. Knowing the dancers , their technical qualities, their strengths and weaknesses, is an advantage when creating a dance. I was able to teach material that was technically apt for them and I only pushed them as far as I knew they could go.

Reconstructing and re-staging *Tchintchirote* for the Dancing Voices concert was a different experience all together. First of all, I lost the two dancers who had reached the qualitative level of performance intended. After auditioning dancers, I chose two performers who were technically at the level the dance required, but did not have the expressive qualities needed for a dance like *Tchintchirote*. In the end I had four dancers who were beautiful technicians but who lacked expressiveness. This made *Tchintchirote* a dance that was choreographically pleasing, but that lacked spice. The problem, undoubtedly, lay in the casting. I should not only have chosen my dancers based on their technical abilities but also on their capacity to transcend the movement and take it to the intended mood.

In the re-staging process I also found myself making adjustments in the choreography in order to adapt the original movements to the technical abilities of my new dancers. The original dance piece required particular movements which the new dancers were not able to grasp stylistically and technically. These changes in the choreography allowed the dancers to perform with ease, feeling comfortable and confident about themselves. The movements practiced by the two original dancers were

left almost untouched. This gave them more security, allowed them to perfect their dance and perform fully.

The costumes, on the other hand, especially made for the reconstructed version of *Tchintchirote*, worked beautifully and enhanced the light and undulatory qualities of movement that characterized the dance. Loosely fitted tunic-like blouses and pants in shades of deep green and blue chiffon lightly floated and glided giving the dance the sense of flight.

Appendix A. Promise Not To Tell (first thesis proposal)

Introduction

Mario Bermudez was a tall, handsome and very distinguished looking man in his late twenties when he paid his first visit to the picturesque, Caribbean city of Cartagena de Indias. In the 1930's Cartagena was still very much a little town and when someone new arrived from the Andean capital city of Bogotá it was a big deal. Mario Bermudez soon became the heart throb and potential groom for all the young ladies from respectable families who were in that age range between fifteen and twenty three, the right age to be married. My abuela MaríaTeresa was lucky to have spotted The Andean Adonis before any of the other available *senoritas* did. She was sitting in a wicker rocking chair with her younger sisters in the balcony of their two story colonial house that overlooked the Plaza de Bolivar, a popular gathering point for young people at the time. Mario Bermudez made his first appearance at the Plaza de Bolivar in a black *coche* drawn by two black horses that made his white suit and classy straw hat stand out even more. It took them one look, three months of courtship, and the family's blessings before Mario and María Teresa were married, had four beautiful children and lived happily ever after.

The previous fairy tale is my grandmother's version of her romance with Mario Bermudez. The truth is that Mario Bermudez, my grandfather, was a homosexual and needed to hide behind that "family-man" facade in order to pursue his professional goals as a diplomat and as a government representative abroad. This truth, I did not confirm until a few years ago when I myself confronted my mother and confessed to her that I too had homosexual tendencies. My mother, for the first time in her 57 years of age,

verbalized the little she knew about my grandfather's sexuality. She had not once talked about this issue to her own mother, siblings or close friends. My grandfather's sexuality and sexuality in general still is a taboo within my family and within most Colombian families. I have asked many family friends and other people who had known my grandfather about his sexual tendencies, and out of respect, demure or shame, they denied it.

Sexuality was such a mystery for my family and now that I think about it, I was never really told about the hormonal changes my body was going to experience at puberty. I did not know what puberty meant! From puberty on, I mostly just followed my restless instincts and educated myself sexually. This is who I am, and now I need to find a means to process what was experienced, to conceptualize what was ignored, to express what was silenced. For this occasion: my MFA thesis project, I choose to approach and explore gender and sexuality issues through choreography.

Process

“How one moves, and how one moves in relation to others, constitutes a public enactment of sexuality and gender. This is true whether we are considering Nijinsky's leaps or dancing at the local bar” (Desmond, 6).

For the choreographic project I am required to create for my MFA thesis, I will begin by studying and exploring the topic of gender, sexuality and its many layers of significance. The topic of choice will be dealt with in an ample way in the beginning, and as the process of creation develops, I trust that it will narrow down to more specific aspects of this over encompassing topic.

The first phase of the project is the exploration of the topic through the existing bibliographic and choreographic documentation that deals with gender and sexuality in order to have an idea of the different ways in which it has been acknowledged from a historical, creative and analytical perspective. Bibliographic sources that I am presently consulting are listed at the end of this document. Also, during this semester (Spring of 2002), I will approach my chosen topic - gender and sexuality - in two of the courses I am taking which are Theory and Criticism and Dance History. In the latter course I will propose to research and write about sexuality and eroticism in dance from both a historical and ethnographic perspective. Theory and Criticism taught by Dr. Peggy Hunt on the other hand, will expose me to writings of renown feminist theorists that deal with topics such as gender and sexuality applied to dance.

The second phase of the project would focus on auditioning potential performers. Due to the fact that the topic of gender and sexuality can be charged with personal and intimate connotations, I feel the need to choose the performers, not only based on their technical qualities, but also their willingness to acknowledge and confront the topic, and their maturity to share and express their personal experience of the subject matter. During the Spring semester/2002, before I begin rehearsals with the dancers, I will ask them to write down any experiences they might want to share that make reference to gender and/or sexuality issues. This testimonial data will help me in the pre-creative and creative process, and will inspire me to explore choreographic, movement and music ideas. During this phase I also plan to spend time listening to pre-recorded music for the piece.

The third phase will be dedicated to the creative process where I will search for a coherent choreographic narrative where I intend to include movement, text, personal testimony, gesture, live voices, partnering, music and silence. Text and movement will partially come from the performers who will participate actively in the creative process through improvisational and verbal exercises. My main task as a choreographer is to interrelate movement, text and music in a way that aesthetically makes sense and highlights the subject matter. My original intention was to incorporate one more element to the choreographic piece: visual projection of images that would occur simultaneous to the choreographic development. I am leaving this idea on hold because I am not sure that it is technically feasible in the Lab Theater.

The fourth phase will include committee feedback, readjustments, polishing and cleaning up. The fifth and last phase will basically be dedicated to staging and production matters such as lighting, video-recording, publicity, etc.

An important challenge for me in this project is to find a safe and aesthetic way to acknowledge this topic, having in mind that I am dealing with university students as my performers and audience members; I will like to count on the Dance Faculty members to especially guide me in this aspect of the creative process and final product.

I am planning to start working on the pre-composition aspects of the project (phase one and two) during Spring of 2002, and focus on phases three to five starting June of 2002.

At this point in the project, the use of costume, music, text, lighting and set design are still undetermined. I anticipate using props for the first part of the piece (see preliminary piece description).

Cast

I am ideally seeking three female dancers and three male dancers. Performers that I have in mind are Kane Balbin, Sequoia Carr-Brown, Arturo Mariano and Larissa Eastman.

Preliminary Description

The following description is based on ideas that have not yet been developed choreographically. This is a preliminary choreographic structure that includes hints of images, text, music, and silence. Segments will not necessarily be presented in this order.

Part 1. Remembering

Stage and house lights are off. In the dark, a deep masculine voice starts telling the audience about his childhood. In the beginning the story doesn't give out much information on gender or sexuality issues. The spoken text could be something like this,

Santiago: I was the fifth son to be born when my mother decided to stop trying for a girl.

There was Jose, Juancho, Ramón, Pedro and myself, Santiago. Our amah would dress us all alike. Khaki shorts for everyday and a blue and white sailor suit for special occasions. One day a package from the tailor arrived with brand

new clothes for all of us. To my surprise, my four older brothers all got long pants. I was again given khaki shorts and the blue and white sailor suit.

As the story evolves, lights slowly come up and the narrative subtly incorporates hints of gender and sexuality issues.

Santiago: Now that I look back at pictures and old photo albums, I realize that I was different from them; and it wasn't necessarily because of the age difference. I was treated different, I was punished less, I was always protected when my brothers picked on me. Protected by my amah, mother and of course (referring to the doll) by Leon.

As lights illuminate the stage even more, Santiago's physical persona is exposed. He is a very masculine looking man in a very masculine looking suit holding a clown doll. Around him are other adult characters also holding their favorite childhood toy..

Music: fast, confusing, could be sounds mixed with music. Santiago and the rest of the cast dance with their toy as a prop (airplane, machine gun, hobby horse, pillow, book, etc.). The movement of each dancer departs from the manipulation of the prop. In the beginning, the dancers move individually. As the music progresses, their movement comes together until it is a strong physical statement in unison. Movement abruptly stops when they all detach themselves from the prop as if not wanting to deal with their childhood memories.

Part 2. Promise not to tell

Female dancer A picks up her toy and starts telling her story in place. After two sentences (approximately) another dancer joins in overlapping first dancer's voice with his story; then another, and so on until all the dancers are telling their story at the same time. All the dancers except dancer A are moving in space as they talk. At this point most of the text is incomprehensible with only a few words that escape from the verbal mesh such as: climax, sweaty, masturbation, touch, orgasm, skin, wet, scared, stop! All dancers except dancer A and B exit, still talking until they are fully off stage. Dancer A and B's stories start weaving into each other until they become one shared story. As their narrated story finishes, their dance begins. Music slips in supporting the mood that is created by the dance. The dance ends with a kiss.

Part 3. Just one kiss

Music: playful and light.

A dance about kissing that starts out as a heterosexual game (3 heterosexual couples) and slowly evolves into a dance of couples of mixed sexual tendencies (boy-boy/girl-girl/boy-girl).

Part 4. (Inspired by Joe Goode's *29 effeminate gestures*)

The whole cast comes back to their individual overlapped stories that make some reference to a kiss. One by one, the dancers transform their words into gestures combined with full body movements. Sexual and gender based gestures combined with previous

movement using childhood toy (this time without the prop) will characterize this last segment. So, dancer A stops vocalizing and starts moving; then dancer B; then C, and so on. Dancer's previous individual movements start to connect and respond to other dancers movements. Movement is danced to text. Dancers accumulatively exit, leaving dancer F to close the piece with a last sentence. Black out.

Note: The structure and content of this preliminary description is a sample of what the final product can end up being. Once the creative process takes flight it is most likely going to take the piece to new places.

Preliminary Time Table

Spring/2002 semester	Theoretical/Choreographic Preparation
	Audition
	Finding Music
June to August 20 (approximately)	Rehearsal with dancers by groups
August 20 to November 10	Rehearsal with dancers together as a cast
September 6	First Showing
October 4	Second Showing
November 1	Third Showing
November 13 – 17	Concert

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Appendix B. Dancing Voices Concert Program

Cover Page



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MĀNOA

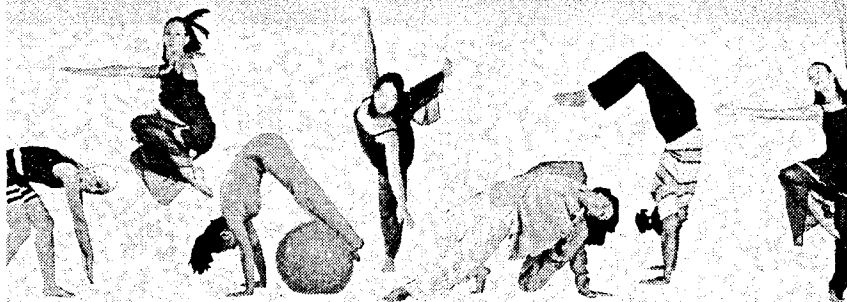
Kennedy Theatre

Primetime Theatre
2002-2003 SEASON



dancing voices

mfa dance concert by Ana Paula Höfling and Melissa Teodoro



November 13-16 at 8pm, November 17 at 2pm

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Inside Left-Hand Page

10 Minutes to Curtain: The Making of *Dancing Voices*
Pre-show video by Colleen Murphy

Bachianas Cabeleiras (2001)

Choreographer: Ana Paula Höfling

Dancers: Noelani Goldstein and Larisa Eastman

Music: "Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5" by Heitor Villa Lobos

In the Middle (2002)

Choreographer: Ana Paula Höfling

Dancers: Larissa Marceau, Sarah Luscomb and
Samantha DeLange

Music: "Suite for Unaccompanied Cello No. 1" by J.S. Bach

Bach'n'Balls (2001)

Choreographer: Melissa Teodoro

Dancers: Kellee Blanchard, Christine Berwin, Melissa Lockyer
and Noelani Goldstein

Understudy: Larisa Eastman

Ball Thrower: Yoshika Miyashi

Music: "Goldberg Variations" by J.S. Bach

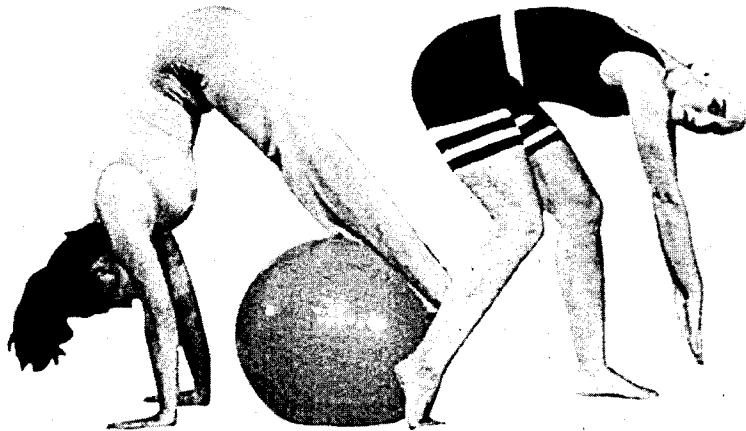
The Smallest Unit of Meaning (premiere)

Choreographer: Ana Paula Höfling*

Dancers: Kelly Del Rosario, Vanessa Rodriguez,
Larissa Marceau and Sarah Luscomb

Music by Doug Dunston, S. Kaasinen and J.E. Gramani

INTERMISSION



Inside Right-Hand Page

Underwater Study (2002)

Choreographer: Ana Paula Höfling

Dancers: Ana Paula Höfling* (November 13, 15, 17),
Melissa Teodoro* (November 14, 16)

Music: "West End Blues" by Louis Armstrong

Tchintchirote (2002)

Choreographer: Melissa Teodoro

Dancers: Janie Ewing, Jackie Nii, Courtney Brebbia and
Melissa Lockyer

Understudy: Melissa Teodoro

Music: "Tchintchirote" by Dany Carvalho

No Más! (premiere)

Choreographer: Melissa Teodoro*

Dancers: Kane Balbin, Sequoia Carr-Brown,
Larisa Eastman, Arturo Mariano, and
Jamie Nakama (November 13, 15, 17),
Audrey Wicklund (November 14, 16)

Music: "Soliloquy" from "How It Happens"
by Scott Johnson, text by I.F. Stone

*In partial fulfillment of the Master of Fine Arts degree requirements in Dance

THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Betsy Fisher, Marcia Sakamoto-Wong, Harriet Glass and
Gregg Lizenbery

SPECIAL THANKS:

Yukie Shiroma, Kenny Endo, Byron Moon, Dennis Carroll,
Gerry Kawaoka, Tana Marin, Hannah Schauer Galli,
Angela Mangano, Marty Myers, Kellee Blanchard,
Quala-Lynn Young and Jennifer Radakovich

**THERE WILL BE A POST-SHOW DISCUSSION IMMEDIATELY
FOLLOWING FRIDAY'S PERFORMANCE.**

*Please turn off or silence all pagers, phones and digital watches.
No photography or video recording is allowed. Please refrain from
eating, drinking or smoking in the theatre.*

*For large print programs, program information in alternate formats,
or any other accessibility needs, please contact the House Manager,
or call the Kennedy Theatre Box Office at 956-7655 (v/t).*

Back Page

PRODUCTION STAFF:

Lighting Designer: Kelly Berry
Stage Manager: Michelle MJ Coats
Assistant Stage Manager: Lara Bowles
Assistant Lighting Designer and Master Electrician:
Daniel Sakimura
Crew Coordinator: Cora Yamagata
Lab Theater Costume Coordinator: Megan Patton
Lab Theatre Technical Coordinator: Cristian E. Ellauri
Lighting Board Operator: Sonja Kleiner
Sound Board Operator: Meghan Fink
Dresser: Christopher Quiocho
Wardrobe Supervisor: Kathryn Bishop
Costume Designers: Ana Paula Höfling and Melissa Teodoro
Costume Crew: Anna Maria N. Höfling, Nita Oliveira and
the UHM Department of Theatre and Dance Costume Shop
Stage Crew: Marissa Yogi, Ofeibia Laud-Darku,
Kiplinn Sagmiller, Jessica Womack and Sharyn Maeda
Dance Faculty: Judy Van Zile, Gregg Lizenbery, Betsy Fisher
and Peggy Gaither-Adams
House Manager: Daniel Akiyama
Assistant House Managers: Helen Lee and Allie Fishburn
Box Office Supervisors: Michael S. Lee and Tim Wiler
Box Office Staff: Daniel Akiyama, Tanisha Franquez,
Jennifer Norton, Lei Sadakari and Danielle Williams
Graphic Designer: Lauren Forsythe
Website Assistant: Kenneth Yeung
Kennedy Theatre Resident Staff: Gerald Kawaoka,
Marty Myers and Hannah Schauer Galli
Program Editor: Sylvia Zietze
Department Chair: Dennis Carroll

MAJOR SUPPORT FOR EARLE ERNST LAB THEATRE FROM WOMEN'S CAMPUS CLUB

We wish to acknowledge with gratitude the generosity of the Women's Campus Club for a \$5,000 grant award for a new light board console system in the Ernst Lab Theatre. In addition, the faculty of Theatre & Dance would like to thank the Student Organization of Theatre & Dance for their initiative in applying for the grant, and the organization's President, Debra Jean Zwicker, for successfully writing it. The new system will ensure optimum artistic and educational support for all those who design, run crew, direct and act in the Ernst Lab Theatre for many years to come.



Appendix C. Dancing Voices Poster (reduced from original 81/2 x 13)



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MĀNOA

Kennedy Theatre

Primetime Theatre

2002-2003 SEASON



dancing voices

mfa dance concert by Ana Paula Höfling and Melissa Teodoro



Earle Ernst Lab Theatre ♦ Nov 13-16 at 8pm, Nov 17 at 2pm

Post Show Rap following the Nov 15 performance

TICKETS ON SALE NOV 12

\$9 REGULAR \$7 NON-UHM STUDENTS, SENIORS, MILITARY, UH FACULTY & STAFF \$3 UHM STUDENTS W/VALID FALL 2002 ID

All seating in the Earle Ernst Lab Theatre is general admission. Latecomers will be seated only during the breaks in the program.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHARGE-BY-PHONE, OR DISABILITY ACCESS,
CALL THE KENNEDY THEATRE BOX OFFICE 956-7655 (V/T)**

www.hawaii.edu/theatre

Ka Leo O Hawai'i
FEATURES

Editor: Mikoy Campbell | Associate Editor: Jason Paz | (808) 956-3218 | featurekings@yahoo.com

Wednesday, November 13, 2002 | Page 3

Getting footloose with 'Footholds'

By Jason Paz

Ka Leo Associate Features Editor

"Dancers take place," a voice echoed through the vibrant halls of the Earle Ernst Lab Theatre. The light faded to black, until a montage of melancholy strings signaled for the red lights to slowly return. The dimly lit light revealed five shadowy figures encircled by full moon spotlights. The following 13 minutes exploded with grenades of intensity until the exasperated dancers finally took their final step under a balloon of sweat and heavy breathing.

Director Melissa Teodoro belated a well-deserved compliment to the cast and crew at last Saturday's technical rehearsals for the University at Hawai'i at Manoa Theatre and Dance Department's production of "Footholds I: Dancing Voices". The production features dance pieces created, choreographed, and directed by MFA candidates Melissa Teodoro, and Ana Paula Hofling, along with a slew of performances by other UHM students infatuated with modern dance.

According to Teodoro, Dancing Voice's theme is a partnership between various cultures and modern dance. The pairing is most evident in the production's use of musical scores composed in different languages of different cultures.

The show features 20 dancers participating in a 7-piece production, which Teodoro claims audiences will identify with. "I guarantee that they will like at least one piece." She declared.

While Dancing Voices focuses on the physical prowess of UHM dancers, the underlying theme of "multiculture" is a pervasive element in the production.

"We are integrating text and voice in different ways to make movement, text and voice communicate with each other by using recorded scores in various languages." Said Teodoro.

These elements resulted in a sudden gush of applause by the

impromptu audience after the conclusion of Teodoro's piece "No Mas!" at the tech rehearsal. Noelani Goldstein, a senior dance student, turned around and noted the particular difficulty of performing a piece like No Mas. "It's a long piece" she whispered, "It's also very physical. They have to keep the aura and energy going for 13 minutes. How they do it is amazing."

The gaze of the well-defined bodies on stage, that would put any football player to shame, is a testament to the fitness of the dancers, not to mention the strenuous rehearsals that preceded their upcoming performance. While the strenuous rehearsals perked the perfection of the piece, it was the concept that created the piece.

For Teodoro, it was no problem finding the perfect concept. She used the influence of her native Colombia and decided to apply her experience into "No Mas!" loosely translated as Spanish for No More.

1. Ka Leo O Hawai'i: Getting Footloose with Footholds Wednesday, November 13, 2002. Page 3.

The title implies a call for “no more war”, an underlying theme which Teodoro’s production is based on. “There is a climate of fear and hopelessness in Bogotá,” she explained, “This is due to the civil war between the four fighting fronts, drug lords, the government troops, the paramilitary and leftists rebels. The true victims are the innocent civilians who are only trying to survive. The dancers portray these victims.”

After Teodoro’s concept evolved, and she chose her set of dancers, she embarked into a series of “movement exercises” which she hoped would transport her dancers into the mood of hopelessness and fear that would eventually lead to the actual dance.

“Sometimes a piece begins as an idea, rather than movement” she said “That’s why I ask the dancers to help out, to transform an abstract idea to movement. Composing a dance piece is like cooking saimin. You start with your basic noodle, and then add seasoning as you go along.”

Creating movements out of scratch, Teodoro employed cameras to capture her dance sequence, but a dancer’s intuition, they call muscle memory, primarily kept the sequences in memorized order. Relying heavily on improv, and her own Afro-Colombian influence, Teodoro eventually structured a story based on movement and music.

She explained the use of music saying, “The story has to be coherent with the music, so the music pattern and structure must feature the color and climax of the story.” Choosing a piece that featured a chopped-up lecture of author I.F Stone layered over a composed number, “No Mas!” was ready for “Dancing Voices” fame.

For Sequoia Carr-Brown, portraying a kidnapped rebel in the production, rehearsals weren’t all fun and games. “We had to prepare by reading accounts of kidnap and rape, and absorb movies with themes like being taken against your own will.” She said “We had to take all this in, and feel that terror. We had to explore our character and take it to the edge. In a production like this you have to find the breaking point between beautiful dance and the intensity of being attacked.” In order to keep up with the emotional level of playing a hostage for 13 minutes, Carr-Brown immersed herself in a workout of push-ups and stair running, which took the term “athlete” to a new level.

Aside from the physicality of the role, Carr-Brown contends that the cast also had the double duty as dancers and actors. “You have to ask who you are to identify with your character. I played a Che-like rebel taken hostage. I had to put myself into those shoes, and ask myself, how would a rebel act minutes before his death. The other



ANDREW SHIMABUKU • KENNEDY THEATRE

Dancers Janie Koontz, Jackie Nii and Melissa Lockyer perform in “Footholds I: Dancing Voices,” which melds cultures through modern dance.

actors had to ask the same question, except how would a librarian act, or how would a child act.”

While the intensity of a piece like “No Mas!” may shake some potential viewers off, Teodoro resurfaces her guarantee that everyone will find something to identify with. “No Mas is not pretty because it confronts the audience.” She admitted “but there are others that are less confrontational. A piece like “Chitchintchirote” is beautiful, sensual and pretty while “Bachianas Cabeleiras” is a lot more theatrical and comedic.”

Stripping all the theatrics and artistry of Dancing Voices, one factor remains that should be enough incentive to attract even the manliest of men to check out the production; good looking women dancing, to which Teodoro slyly replies “Guys dance too.”

PHOTO: ANDREW SHIMABUKU



Looking back at *Dancing Voices*

For one weekend, voices spoke loud and clear within the intimate Earle Ernst Lab Theatre of UH-Mānoa. *Footholds: Dancing Voices* fused expression, substance, whimsy and tradition in this year's annual student dance concert.

Unhindered by trends or commercial obligations, M.F.A.

candidates Melissa Teodoro and Ana Paula Hofling choreographed seven thoughtful and creative works. Using a black-box theater, pedestrian costumes, classical music and movement, Teodoro and Hofling added nuance and surprise to their treatment of contemporary dance. Facial expressions and the staging of single dancers apart from the group suggested themes of difference,

Rising & Falling

of inclusion and exclusion.

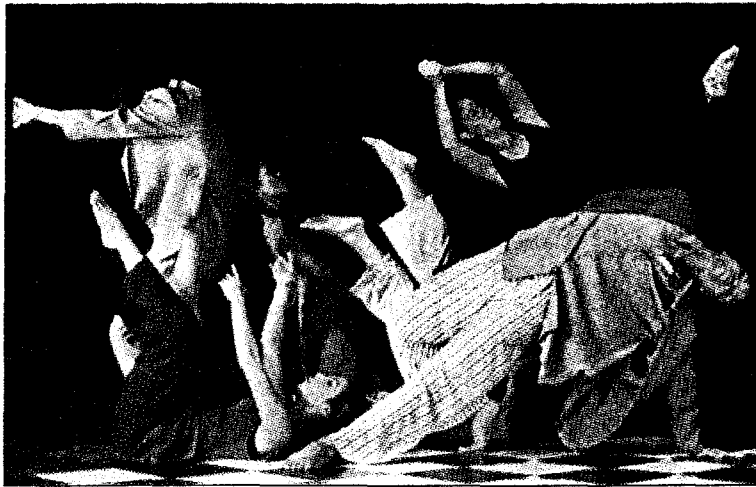
Another piece used yoga balls playfully as inventive props for grace and athleticism. "No Mas!" was rich and multi-layered. Blindfolds, frenetic movements, a word-infused soundtrack and an ending stripped bare — all reflected a feeling of loss and discovery, innocence and invasion.

Teodoro and Hofling are a needed addition to Hawai'i's medley of dancing voices.

—Stephanie Chang

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2. Honolulu Weekly. *Rising and Falling*. November 27 - December 3, 2002. Page 39.



Andrew Shimabuku

Expression through dance

A collection of seven dance pieces emphasizing both the theatrical and the physical aspects of contemporary dance will be the subject of "Footholds I: Dancing Voices," a concert presented by the University of Hawai'i-Mānoa's Department of Theatre and Dance. Showtimes are 8 p.m. Wednesday-Nov. 16 and 2 p.m. Nov. 17 at Earle Ernst Lab Theatre.

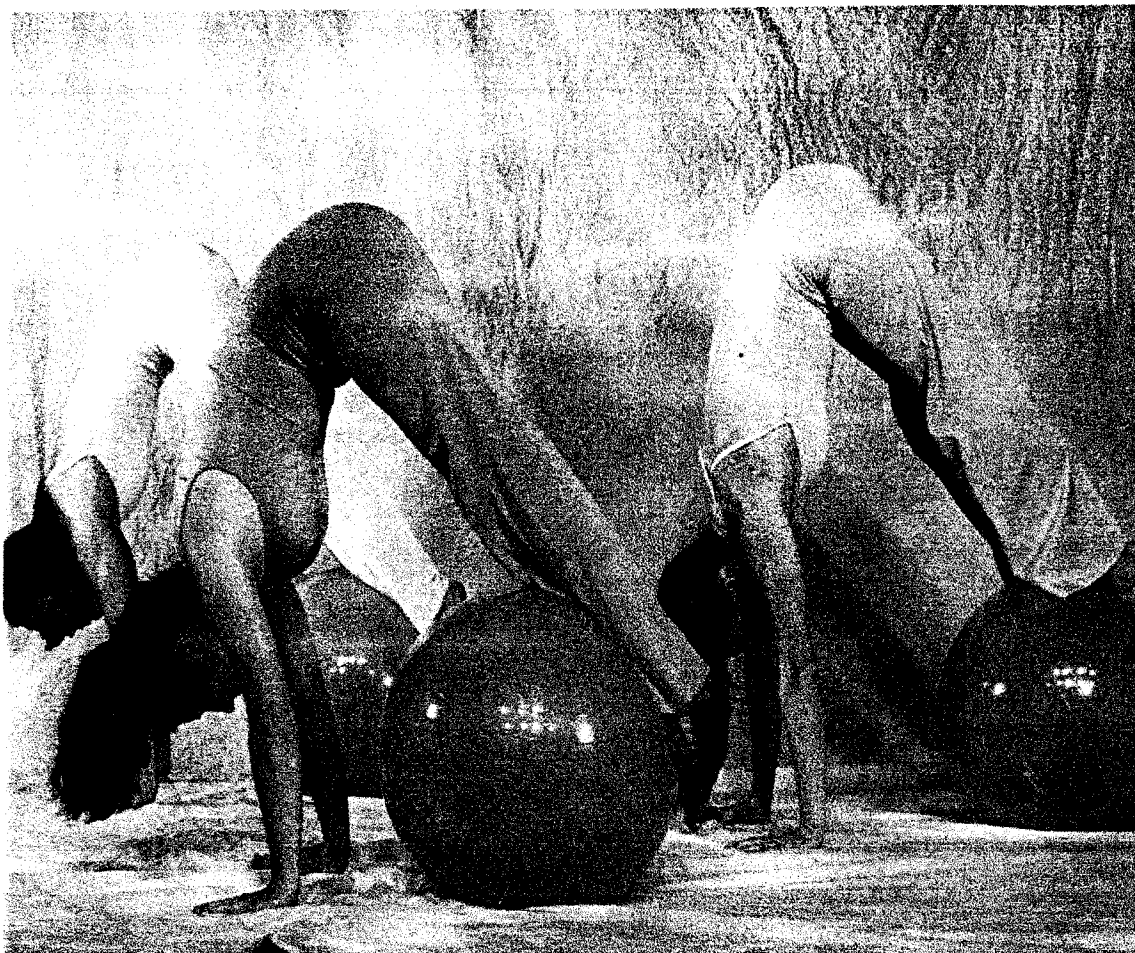
The show is directed by Melissa Teodoro and Ana Paula Höfling, who reviews dance for *The Advertiser*, with all pieces choreographed by the two during their M.F.A. studies at UH.

Tickets are \$3 for UH-Mānoa students; \$7 for other students, seniors, military and UH staff; and \$9 for all others. Tickets may be purchased at the Kennedy Theatre box office or by calling 956-7655.

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3. **The Honolulu Advertiser TGIF. *Expression through Dance.***
Friday, November 8, 2002. Page 7.

Photographs



4. **Bach 'n' Balls.** Photograph by Andrew Shimabuku. Christine Berwin, Kellee Blanchard and Melissa Lockyer.



5. Tchintchirote. Photo by Andrew Shimabuku. Dancers: Jackie Nii, Melissa Lockyer and Janie Ewing.



6. **No Más!** Photo by Angela Mangano. Dancers: Arturo Mariano, Sequoia Carr-Brown, Larisa Eastman, Kane Balbin and Jamie Nakama.



7. **No Más!** Photo by Angela Mangano. Dancers: Arturo Mariano, Sequoia Carr-Brown, Larisa Eastman, Kane Balbin and Jamie Nakama.