

**THE AUDIENCE FOCUS: AN ANALYSIS OF AUDIENCE INCLUSION AS
A METHODOLOGY FOR CREATING CONTEMPORARY DANCE
CHOREOGRAPHY**

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This extended analysis essay investigates audience inclusion in contemporary dance, both during the creation process and in performance. The essay argues that this methodology is effective in furthering audience engagement and development involving project-based dance companies in Toronto. This method of inclusivity bridges the audience-to-artist relationship, and creates an important connection between the audience, performers, and choreographer. The main objectives of this methodology are: to utilize audience feedback to stimulate creative impetus, to challenge the artists exploration, to learn about ones audience, to inspire audiences to become reflective spectators rather than passive spectators, and to attract a wider audience base for contemporary dance in Toronto. The results of this research have been successful in accomplishing the set goals, and this study has lead to further ideas of implementing this methodology in schools and theaters as an audience development initiative for contemporary dance.

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PART ONE- INTRODUCTION

“The theatre is the involuntary reflex of the ideas of the crowd.”

(Sarah Bernhardt 1844-1943)

The audience plays a crucial role in performing arts presentations for without spectators, the performance is incomplete. Theatre director and innovator of experimental theatre, Jerzy Grotowski, asks: “Can theatre exist without an audience? At least one spectator is needed to make it a performance” (Bennett 1). If one assumes Grotowski’s statement to be true, then audience development initiatives are exceedingly important in helping to ensure audience attendance at theatre performances. Elizabeth Burns, author of *Theatricality* written in 1972 states the following in regards to the audiences’ role:

“The position of the audience, however much its social structure may have altered, has remained constant. Although at different periods it has been less or more articulate, either vocally or in writing, it has always had the power of making or breaking a play by attendance or abstention, and has always been ultimately responsible for sustaining the performance. (Bennett 19)

Anecdotal evidence, suggests that spectatorship for contemporary dance in Toronto is marginal, and dwindling; it is therefore surprising, to me, that choreographers and artistic directors have not taken more initiative in attracting wider audiences.

Several organizations have offered suggestions for improving audience inclusivity. The Canada Council for the Arts, Toronto Arts Foundation, and other large granting foundations are responsible for providing a broad range of grants and services for professional Canadian artists and organizations. These organizations have articles, found on their web sites, which propose the following strategies to help development of audiences: community workshops, open rehearsals, pre- and post-show question and answer sessions, lectures, and online accessibility.

Although these strategies have certainly helped over the years, they remain insufficient, as statistics show that dance in Canada has the lowest percentage of spectatorship when compared to other theatrical performances and events. According to a 2012 study by Ekos Research Associates, dance holds the lowest ranking (15%) for Canadian spectatorship compared to theatre, pop music concerts, cultural festivals, heritage performances, and symphonic concerts. What is more, this fifteen percent includes all types of dance performances, although most of the viewership is for ballet and contemporary dance. In a more recent study of spectatorship on the frequency of attendance for performing arts, conducted by Toronto Alliance for Performing Arts (TAPA), dance ranked third, at 44%, behind theatre at 57%, and opera at 67%. Keep in mind only those who expressed a preference for particular genres were considered, and those who reported have attended six or more performances in the above stated performing arts. (tapa.ca 17). In this same study, people were asked to give their first choice for their preferred type of performing arts. Three-thousand five hundred and fifty one people responded and they garnered the following results: plays 50%, musicals 17%, music 18%, dance 10% and opera 5%. (tapa.ca 33) Demographic data also shows that those attending dance performances tend to be the youngest of any of the survey respondents; they are also predominately female, and have the lowest household income. (tapa.ca 30) The TAPA study agrees that audience inclusivity is of the highest importance noting that, “connecting with these audiences in new dynamic ways is a high priority” (tapa.ca 7).

Bearing this data in mind, this paper is organized around the following research questions: What would occur if audiences were the main focus in the development and presentation of a dance work? What tools can a choreographer use to effectively engage the audience, so that spectators feel a sense of belonging and purpose? And, what would entice

people to attend dance performances on a more regular basis? These three questions became the motivation for constructing a methodology predicated on including audiences in both the creative process and in the actual performance of an original choreography. It is my hope this research will help improve spectatorship figures for dance performances and also inform and enhance artists' approach to audience development.

Several people and events inspired this research, and matured its methodological development. Central here are the efforts of Andy Mckim, Artistic Director of Toronto's Theatre Passe Muraille and his creation of Buzz, a festival in honour of bridging the artist-to-audience relationship. In an article, Mckim noted that, "[his] desire for specific audience engagement in new play development led [him] to create Buzz—a transformative experience for audience and artist." The Buzz Festival occurs annually, and focuses on original Canadian plays. As their promotional material explains, "The Buzz Festival is part of a play development initiative that allows for what Mckim calls 'audience dramaturgy': the creation of new work with ongoing direct audience feedback. The presentations at the Buzz Festival are at all stages of development, from a first scene to a near-completed draft" (Andy Mckim passemuraille.on.ca). A second Toronto-based initiative that has informed this paper's approach is Series 8:08. Established in 1992, Series 8:08 holds monthly choreographic performance workshops in which local artists present works-in-progress showings to an audience that offers written feedback.

The Buzz Festival and Series 8:08 have provided motivation to investigate other methods of audience participation, and research suggests that there are many artists, writers, companies and past events that include the audience's inclusion in performance. A book entitled *Audience Participation: Essays on Inclusion in Performance*, edited by Susan Kattwinkel, presents fourteen essays written by a variety of authors, on this very subject. These essays have played a

crucial role in inspiring and validating the findings of this research.

A particularly important essay in Kattwinkel's collection was Katherine Adamenko's, "Reaction Tactics: Redefining Postmodern Spectator Response and Expectations." A former dancer, Adamenko's essay highlights the importance of redefining the role of an audience member as a postmodern spectator: "I ask the postmodern spectator to enter a new kind of contract with the makers of new performance. I ask this new postmodern spectator three things: investment, to engage in an interaction the performer is asking you to do; complicity, to act without self consciousness in that activity; and discipline, to commit to opening yourself to a new form of audience interaction" (Adamenko 15). Adamenko's essay provides courage to those seeking to place these expectations on their audiences, knowing that some might not embrace the expectation to participate; in my opinion this approach is vital for the development of a kinesthetic relationship between the audience and the performer.

Judith W. Fisher's contribution, "Audience Participation in the Eighteenth-Century London Theatre," provided a historical context to this research, describing a time when the community ran local theatres. Members of the general public decided what plays would be presented; they determined if a certain play was successful or unsuccessful, they participated in each and every performance. Fisher notes, "The documentary evidence, compiled from contemporary reviews, commentary, letters, pamphlets and plays, suggest that the participation of the audience did as much as, perhaps even more than that of the 'star' players and powerful managers to direct the course of theatre throughout the eighteenth century" (Fisher, 56). This, argues Fisher, offers proof that audience inclusion can be effective, especially in engaging the audience.

Fisher's work dovetails with the subsequent essay chapter, "The Challenge of

Participation: Audiences at Living Stage Theatre,” by Susan C. Haedicke. This essay conveys the importance of making audiences feel indispensable, and it introduces the idea that, according to scientists, people have a natural urge to create. This natural creative impulse motivated The Living Stage, a dance company founded in 1966 by Robert Alexander, to develop performances based on a “creativist” strategy:

Empowerment is a term that is very difficult to define, it is closely tied to notions of self-esteem and self-reliance, to the belief that one has worth and that one can make things happen, either on the individual or the community level... What distinguishes human beings, these scientists argue, is the urge “to fulfill our creative potential in ever newer ways (Haedicke, l 76, 77).

A final source of research inspiration was The Panta Rei Dance Theatre based in Norway. This company is dedicated to “developing audiences for contemporary dance through educational programs, collaborations and keeping the audiences experience in focus — all without losing sight of the fact that the performance of professional works of contemporary dance is the core activity” (Embla, danceaudiences.com). The key point in this statement is the emphasis on, “keeping the audience experience in focus.” This has become the central focus of my MFA research and this paper: placing audiences at the forefront of any decisions involving the creation and performance of original choreography.

PART TWO – THE METHODOLOGY

This extended essay analyzes the process and results of audience inclusion research with respect to the following three choreographed pieces: *This & That*, an autobiographical solo; *SNaP*, a self-produced dance film; and, *Grand Act(s)*, a fifteen minute production, curated by the

Master in Fine Arts Dance Department at York University¹. The objectives of this research include:

- Creating meaningful work inspired by a theme, motif, or physical exploration
- Making the audience the focus throughout creation and performance
- Attracting, engaging, and stimulating, the audience in different ways
- Linking the artist-to-audience, and the performer-to-audience, relationship
- Considering the audience as a collaborator in the work
- Challenging the theatrical dance experience by breaking the fourth wall in a traditional theatre setting
- Stimulating an immediate response from the audience
- Stimulating the artistic process through this unique way of informing creativity
- Empowering one's audience by offering them ownership through participation

The procedure for this method involves the following steps (Note: not all the projects encompassed every single step in their exploration. Details will be indicated in the latter part of this essay):

- 1) Provide an online questionnaire involving questions related to the proposed choreographic project.
- 2) Gather the results and distinguish what contributions inspired creative development.
- 3) Create movement in the studio via an artistic process utilizing the devices of improvisation, shaping, reflection, dissecting, and revising.
- 4) Brainstorm and decide how a performance can and should incorporate the audience as participants.
- 5) Create a post-show questionnaire with questions that will be helpful to the further development of the piece, as well as audience development.
- 6) Present the work to an audience. (Live or via film)
- 7) Distribute post-show questionnaire
- 8) Gather results from post show questionnaire
- 9) Create a progress report

In approaching this research, the choreographer must question how this method and process might influence the choreography itself? What can be gained – and perhaps lost – in this practice? The remaining bulk of this essay will be in the form of a personal reflection, comprised of a detailed description and analysis on the process and outcomes of the three choreographic

¹ See appendix 4, 5 and 6 for the show programs.

studies. The writing will also include artistic reflections regarding creative decisions made, and will propose ideas for improving the process.

This & That: The Process

The composition of the “I AM” autobiographical solo, and the incorporation of this thesis research, proved to be quite challenging. In offering the audience a chance to be co-creators, I solicited audience opinions via an online questionnaire hosted on the website, ladyluckproductions.ca, under the “Research Blog” heading. Traffic was directed to this page via the following social networks: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre, as a part of their “Adopt an Actor Scheme” have used similar methods in audience inclusion. *“In the past this [online] programme has facilitated the incorporations of suggestions by the students into the rehearsal process. For example one actor asked for ideas for a hobby that the actor’s character could pursue...the process created not just a sense of involvement in the production, it gave real power to the students to see their ideas enacted.”* (Carson 189) For this process I asked my friends, students, and peers to visit the website and offer descriptive words or phrases that best described me as a person.² Then, I took those words and phrases, highlighted the ones that stood out, brought them to the studio and used them as impetus to begin developing movement. This process explored the majority of these words through movements that were thought best embody their meaning. After this, different soundscapes and music tracks were experimented with, to expand the movement into phrases. Soon after beginning the studio research, it became clear that the movements had formed into three very dissimilar vignettes, and were thus presented as three separate vignette solo pieces. This, for me, was a novel approach,

² See appendix 1A & 1B

and possessed a certain sense of choreographic challenge. After repeatedly rehearsing the three vignettes it became clear that the choreography had the theme of flow: staccato flow, bound flow, and free flow. Following this realization, flow became the choreographic focus, and the piece became centered on embodying and performing these states of flow.³ After the movement was complete, a further element of audience interaction was introduced to the actual performance, as it was important to find a way to speak to the audience, without verbally speaking at them. Living in an age of technology, texting and emailing for immediate communication are prevalent, and the piece took advantage of these technologies in order to communicate with the audience in performance. The idea of projecting the typing to the audience came after seeing a portable Bluetooth keyboard at a local Macintosh store. This keyboard was utilized in the choreography as a performance gateway with which to communicate with the audience. Phrases and prompts were projected on the back curtain as they were typed live on stage⁴.

The solo was structured as follows,

Vignette # 1- Staccato flow

Typing *In an effort to break the ice and make the experience more personable, I introduced myself, and inserted a little joke about my name. After which, without sugar coated anything I told them that I was interested to know their thoughts of the previous vignette they had just seen. I asked them to allow their thoughts to flow onto their page and I added a short poetic phrase to hint to the audience that the choreography was made to embody the dynamic of flow, “Flowing Inward Flowing Outward, This & That.” After taking advice from a colleague I later decided to add, “what are you thinking now,” at random points in the latter half of the solo.*

Vignette # 2- Bound flow

Vignette # 3- Free flow

³ See appendix 1D

⁴ A questionnaire was placed as an insert into each program see appendix 1C

This & That: The Outcomes

The first lesson I learned in experimenting with this method was that this process can be quite unnerving, and those artists who choose to use audience inclusion involving a choreographic project, must have thick skin. By no means did I think that this research would be easy, however, I had no idea what I was about to put myself through emotionally. My immediate reactions were of physical and emotional strain, and I often felt as if I was being stabbed in the heart and beaten-up at the same time. It was very difficult to not take the opinions regarding my work personally. Each night, after reading the questionnaire responses, I had the impulse to change my solo in an effort to improve the responses. There was already the sense that the solo would evolve and grow from show to show, but not for reasons of discontentment.

The negative and constructive criticism really affected me, and I began to doubt my work, this methodology, and myself. However, after taking everything into consideration, the results of my findings were actually very positive. Out of two hundred and thirty-seven questionnaires completed by the audience members, one hundred and fifty-three said that they found the piece engaging. Eighty-four people said that they believe that the experience will make them more aware of being reflective spectators in the future. Common responses included: “refreshing”, “innovative”, “engaging”, “creative”, “inspiring”, “considerate”, “clever”, “fun”, “cool”, “honest”, “breathtaking”, and “effective.” Many people were pleasantly surprised by the arrangement of the piece, as it was not conventional and not what they expected. Here are a few examples of participants’ responses:⁵

“What I liked best is that you created a dialog with the audience,”
“Made me feel involved and connected to the piece.”

⁵ See appendix 1E for a full summary.

"Interesting way to break the fourth wall in a novel war."
"It forced me to be aware of exactly what my thoughts were, sometimes stressful, sometimes eye opening."
"I followed you all the way through."
"I never stopped paying attention, kept me thinking and engaged."
"It made me feel like I was talking to you."
"I felt the emotion running through my body, very awesome."
"I want to type too!"
"Nice to meet you."

Many people also responded with imaginative and poetic language. Such responses support the idea that, when given the opportunity, audiences are creative, and will share their artistry in response to one's work. This is a priceless exchange. Some responses were poignant; they stimulated ideas for further development and revisions of the piece. Examples include:

"Red Heavens."
"False Freedom."
"Plants that live in the river."
"I think it's about being yourself no matter who that is."
"Sensuality, flowing body like a river from a mountain breaking off into small streams."

On another end of the spectrum, not all responses were affirmative. Many were valid constructive criticisms, from which I drew insight, examples are stated below:

"I can write or I can pay attention to you on stage, since I'm writing, I'm not paying attention to you."
"Unsure why I should participate."
"It doesn't flow."
"I was thinking in words more than I would like to."
"I'd rather watch you than write about you."
"Interesting but quickly became a gimmick."
"Some of it was just too slow."
"Your saying too much, your stillness says more."

In evaluating this project's outcomes, it is clear that there were many issues with the flow, the communication with the audience, and the overall crafting of "This & That", there is much that I would alter. First, the audience members did not expect to witness a solo that did not

follow the normal setup for concert dance performances, where the audience sits, observes, and leaves at the end of the show. Audience members were unaware that they would be asked to participate, and, in the future, should be informed of these factors before entering the theatre. Had audience members been informed, the performance might have been less shocking, and perhaps the audience would have better understood the objective. Hereafter, crucial details about the presentation of the work will be presented to the audience as they enter the theatre.

Additionally, many audience members found writing during the performance to be cumbersome, and to distract from their ability to watch the performance. Initially, I assumed the audience would be forgiving on behalf of my research, but this was, perhaps, selfish, and the fact that people were asked to share their thoughts three times in an eight-minute piece was excessive. Pre- and post-performance questionnaires seem to be most logical. After reflection the extreme importance of choosing proper language for communicating when constructing the audience's questionnaire became clear, as prompts on future questionnaires would be more refined, and better-designed to elicit the sort of information necessary.

In terms of the choreography, the performance might have been improved by seamlessly blending the transitions between the three vignettes, and the whole concept of "This & That" might be altered into a structured improvisation, in which the audience has more control. For example, one could give the keyboard to the audience, and ask them to type in suggestions according to a list given to them. The performer would then respond to the word or phrase by physicalizing the typed suggestion. Although this idea has not been thoroughly considered this interactive structure using the Bluetooth keyboard as a gateway for performer-to-audience interaction would be worthwhile to explore and develop.

SNaP: A Short Dance Film: The Process

For this self-produced project, I chose to produce a short dance film for the benefit of accessibility. The Internet and YouTube allowed for maximizing exposure, compared to producing a live theatre performance. Given that my interest in processes of audience inclusion relies heavily upon having a large audience to generate more feedback, a film seemed like the most appropriate medium to utilize this methodology. As an initiative in making the performing art of dance more accessible to the general public, major dance companies have signed contracts with Cineplex, to show their dance works in movie theatres as a part of the Front Row Centre Events: Dance Series. The Dance Current, Canada's Dance Magazine, promoted on their website a "live-screening of Nederlands Dans Theater: An Evening With Crystal Pite on November 17 or Royal Opera House: The Nutcracker on December 12 and 22. Getting to the ballet has never been so easy, or affordable." (thedancecurrent.com/contest, October 2013) Although my dance film was not in major theatres, it follows a similar approach of The Nederlands Dans Theater and the Royal Opera House, by making my dance film easily accessible.

Categorizing the self-produced piece was difficult, as dance films do not have traditional categories, as it is often tough to distinguish which genre a particular film falls into. "Artistic Dance Film" as a label or genre, would probably best represent the choreography for SNaP; however, I do not think that the "Artistic Dance" label would entice a general public. Therefore, I asked people visiting my website to vote on the following options.⁶

Genre- Comedy, Philosophical, Action, Suspense

Setting- Bus stop, Hair Salon, Underground Parking Lot, Warehouse

In the end, thirty-nine people participated: philosophical and suspense tied at 30%, comedy recorded 35%, and action received 25% of the votes. As for the setting, warehouse

⁶ See appendix 2A

garnered the majority of the votes at 56%. (They were able to vote for multiple genres) That left me with the odd pairing for a comedic film set in a warehouse.⁷

At this point, my inspiration as a choreographer was challenged. In the choreographic world comedy and contemporary dance are two extremely difficult facets to combine, and the choreographer must be extremely clever to successfully craft such a comedic contemporary choreography. At this point, I did not feel ready to take on the challenge, and for that reason I chose to create a “philosophical suspense” piece, set in a warehouse. Though it might seem as if I went against my collaborators, the audience, by choosing the second most voted for choice I would argue that compromise is essential in a collaborative process, and that the choreographer’s personal inspiration is important. This methodology of audience inclusion invites the audiences’ input as impetus to create, and therefore it is not mandatory to abide by every single suggestion by the audience, especially if the choreographer does not feel inspiration. If it were obligatory to abide by all of the audiences wishes, this process would not be collaborative, and would be onerous for the choreographer. “The aim is not to be controlled by the audience, but rather to open up a dialogue and create greater room for reflection”. (Embala, danceaudiences.com)

In deciding on subject matter for the film, I was inspired by many peoples responses to the online questionnaire, examples include: “the notion of feeling unwanted” and “there is no such thing as reality, only perception.” I chose to focus on a quote by John Milton: “The mind is its own place, and in itself, can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven” (Milton, *Paradise Lost* Book 1). To create the choreography I pondered ideas and feelings of allowing one’s mind to enter a state of hell: What would it be like, and how would it feel? When thinking about the mind, French philosopher Rene Descartes immediately came to my thoughts. Descartes had a

⁷ See appendix 2B for a summary of the full results

notion that mind and body are separate substances, and neither relies on the other in order to function. Contemplating Cartesian dualism, I began to imagine a mind completely outside the body as an outer trigger. These images were used as a jump off point in the imagery of the narrative; it is important to note that the film does not reflect Cartesian dualism; it only inspired imagery and casting. I believe our thoughts are indeed reflective of our reality and perception; as such, the film's message is that it is wise to foster positive thoughts in order to restrict distress to one's body.

This film has three distinct divisions. The first was the introduction of the primary character, whom is clearly disturbed by the manipulation of the negative thoughts circulating in her mind. The affects of those negative thoughts are then released into her body, as they beat her down and weaken her. The repetitive helpless and weighted falls to the floor symbolize the intense struggle. In the second section her mind, represented by Ryan Lee, escapes metaphorically to the external world. The protagonist is frightened by this relationship and, at the same time, she explores it. She gradually gains her strength to fight her own mind and finally, in the last section, she is chased by her mind, all of which leads to a final snap, when the mind re-enters her body as a transformed version.

Creating this scenario in an effort to help viewers understand the concept of the choreography, the film was not designed to capture abstract movement for its own sake. Rather, the aim was to meet somewhere between dramatic concept and abstract movement, with a film that incorporates a narrative. Also in an effort to maintain the viewer's attention, the editor was instructed to make quick and fragmented edits in order to keep the eye satisfied. When analyzing editing in popular films, one easily notices that scenes and camera angles tend to change very quickly; part of this is likely the result of modern viewers' need for instant gratification.

SNaP: A Short Dance Film: Outcomes

The results of the self-produced film were mediocre. Posting the film on YouTube did reach a larger audience; however, out of 286 views, I received 31 completed questionnaires in return.⁸ This tells me that the Internet is useful in accumulating views however, people are reluctant to offer feedback on their own time; in person interaction is most valuable.

In the end, the film itself was a success. The film's concept, editing, and location are what I intended them to be; however, certain choreographic procedural choices needed revision such as the following: In regards to the movement, the film would have benefitted from more gestural phrasing, which would add another layer of symbolism for the viewer. For example, there could be more detailed choreography for the head and eyeball focus in order to represent the mind's thoughts and direct choices. This would at least give the audience more obvious allusions. Finally, the following quote to be placed at the end of the film, instead of the beginning: "the mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven" (Milton, *Paradise Lost*).

The spectators who did respond to the film had positive feedback, examples of descriptive words include:

<i>"Reflective"</i>	<i>"Dark"</i>	<i>"Robotic"</i>	<i>"Strength"</i>	<i>"Inner</i>
<i>Demons"</i>	<i>"Emotional"</i>	<i>"Anguished"</i>		
<i>"Powerful"</i>	<i>"Tortured"</i>	<i>"Criminal Minds"</i>		

When asked to provide additional comments or an idea of the context/message they responded with the following:

"Being a prisoner of your subconscious"

⁸ See appendix 2D

“Being trapped in a trance”

“Not sure what is real”

“Cool imagery”

“Some sort of representation of the chaos in ones mind and a little voice trying to take over”

“Enjoyed the effects, didn’t distract from the dance, could have been more”

“Would like to see extended version”

“A battle between two personalities of the mind in the body”

“The confidence of the final staircase scene leads me to believe that Ryan took over the body through the mind.”

“Take control of your own body and mind, don’t fall victim to the puppet master.”

One particular response is worthy of note, as the respondent captured the film’s objective:

“I love the way the movie presented itself, not too abstract and not too simple, easy to get the big picture while still raising questions. Was any of this real or just a peak into the unconscious?”

There were two negative criticisms to take into consideration:

“Not being of a dance background I was somewhat confused.”

“I don’t know if there was a message. I don’t understand the relationship between the man and the woman/what was happening. I honestly don’t understand the connection for the quote to the piece. Was someone’s heaven turned into hell or visa versa? If so it was unclear.”

Overall, the majority of the respondents understood and enjoyed the self-produced film, SNaP; this encourages the continuation of engaging and developing an audience through dance films⁹.

GRAND ACT(s): The Process

This final choreographic study altered the procedure of the audience inclusion method by eliminating step one and two of the methodology,

- 1) Provide an online questionnaire involving questions related to the proposed choreographic project.
- 2) Gather the results and distinguish which contributions inspire creative development.

Instead, this piece focused exclusively on creating narrative choreography and utilizing

⁹ See appendix 2D for a full summary of results

audience participation during the performance. The reason for eliminating step one and two was primarily based on time limitations as it became apparent while producing the first two studies – “This & That”, and “SNaP” – that an enormous amount of time is needed to construct the online questionnaires, and to gather and facilitate the results. Since this final project was the largest, and arguably the most prestigious in presentation, the composition and crafting of the piece needed appropriate attention.

The choice to create a narrative piece came from my belief, which arose from conversations with many non-artistically centered people who have attended modern/contemporary shows in the past, that a dance in the form of a narrative is more easily relatable for an audience, compared to a dance that explores physical ideas through abstraction. After reading a book entitled, *Rank Ladies: Gender and Cultural Hierarchy in American Vaudeville*, by Alison Kibler, I decided to focus the piece on gender inequality during the early 1900’s, and dedicated the piece to the eccentric female performers of that time, who had the courage to perform acts that lampooned societal expectations surrounding gender. The goal here was to not only allow the audience to easily comprehend the theme, but to also leave them with a historical lesson in Vaudeville theatre, and with the realization that although some aspects of our modern society have come very far in reducing female objectification, we still have a ways to go until equality is achieved. The overall focus was to unveil the mask, and present the inner and outer self-struggle that female performers, of that era, may have experienced. My choreography incorporated provocative movement such as hip thrusts, rubbing of the breasts, miming, full body movements of off-centered release and recovery, comedy, sound effects, among others. The cast was comprised of five performers, four dancers and one host. The host represented the owner of the Vaudeville theatre, she ran the show and demanded anything she wished. Two

dancers played sisters in a duet where they dressed as men, one sister broke down while struggling with her inner self, while the other sister did all she could to hide her sisters embarrassing behavior. Another dancer with the stage name of 'Daisy', represented the perfect ideal damsel of the 1920's time period. While the headlining dancer named 'Rhonda', represented a burlesque dancer who challenged the audience, by teasing them, while at the same time, engaging in aggressively enhanced sexual movement, with unpleasant facials, in order to mock her spectators for objectifying her. GRAND ACT(s) was structured as follows,

Scene # 1: Opening number

Scene # 2: Audience vote for the headlining act

Scene # 3: Sisley Sisters duet in which the dancers dressed as men with moustaches

Scene # 4: Daisy, who was kicked off the stage for being too pretty and safe.

(Juxtaposition, this would not occur during the Vaudeville era, pretty and obedient maidens were celebrated.)

Scene # 5: A burlesque solo incorporating a blend of provocative and contemporary movement. Near the end of this solo the dancer aggressively yelled to the audience, *"what are you looking at?"*

Scene # 6: Closing Act: the dancers chose to work together and take a stand. With strength they approached the audience by walking toward them with a strong sense of female empowerment.

In terms of the participatory aspect of the piece, to compensate for the lack of collaboration with my audience during the process, I chose to offer them the chance to be especially and actively involved during the actual performance. After recalling memorable personal experiences of being an active participating audience member in the past, for such performances as a magic show in Las Vegas and a children's theatre performance while in elementary school, one event stood out most, and left a lasting impression. This was Medieval Times: a spectacle where knights and their horses battled in an arena while audience members cheered and encouraged their assigned knight, distinguished by the colour of their costume, to win the battle and marry the Princess. Considering I was a child when I first saw this

performance I decided to attend the show again to see if, as an adult, I felt the same thrill as in my youth. It turns out that I did, it was an exhilarating, exciting, and a memorable experience yet again. The idea of having a rowdy audience remained appealing, as research continued into methods for engaging audiences. During this research, an online video entitled “Rhythm Extreme: Audience Participation” (Youtube.com) was noteworthy. This video incorporated a call-and-response rhythmic theme with the use of drums sticks, three leaders, and a massive audience. The results of this video showed extreme excitement and energy from the crowd. The video was convincing in its use of noisemakers, and the decision was made to incorporate it into GRAND ACT(S). I wished to create that same vibrant, ecstatic energy with the audience as witnessed in the “Rhythm Extreme” video, and at Medieval Times. The inclusion of these noisemakers, which ended up being plastic colourful clappers, would be a dynamic change in the evening’s program – which included pieces by the other six MFA candidates. As the audience re-entered the theatre after intermission, they were handed a clapper, and told that their participation was encouraged for the upcoming piece entitled, GRAND ACT(s). The spectators showed immediate excitement and intrigue.

GRAND ACT(s): The Outcomes

Grand Act(s) was presented to the public a total of three times, two night performances, and one matinee performance. The energy of the crowd differed from show-to-show because of the following factors: amount of spectators in attendance, time of the performance, and type of instructions given to the audience. I was curious to witness what the difference would be if the audience was given different instruction for each show. Opening night, February 13, 2014, had a sold out crowd filling the auditorium with hundreds of bodies. Being the first presentation to a

full audience I decided to tell the audience members to make as much noise as they desired, both with their voice and with the clappers, and as a result, the auditorium transformed into the atmosphere of a live music event. There was a tremendous amount of noise and cheering to the point where it felt as if the theatre had transferred back in time to a 1940's Vaudeville experience. There must have been musicians in the crowd because at one point the whole audience utilized the clappers to follow the rhythm of the music. The energy was indeed electrifying, however some audience members felt that the cheering distracted from the dance. The cast members absolutely adored the atmosphere, and said that they felt like rock stars. One dancer out of four said that she was at some points distracted by the noise. For the last two shows on February 14th, the audience was instructed to wait to be prompted by the host – an instruction that proved quite supportive, the energy was not as electrifying as the first show, however, the performances were successful in achieving the goals of highly engaging an audience through participation in a contemporary dance piece. The lesson learned here was, once again, that the communication, instruction, and terms expressed to the audience must be completely clear in order to achieve the set goals.

Reactions from the audience expressed in the post-show questionnaires, and in direct communication, were overwhelmingly positive. Immediately after the show people approached me in excitement, commending the work. I also had a York university student contact me for an interview on behalf of a review she was writing about the show. As the conversation drew to a close, the reporter mentioned that she absolutely loved the piece, and if she could see it again she would. This was exactly the desired reaction. A total of one hundred and thirty-seven post-show questionnaires were filled out, one hundred and five reported finding the audience participation aspect engaging, four people disagreed, and twenty-nine thought that it was only sometimes

engaging. Also, the results showed that the aim to tailor to a wide audience base was indeed successful. When asked whom they think this performance piece would appeal to, adults, teens, seniors, artistic thinkers or average people, many circled every option. A few people also stated, “You are touching points that belong to every audience,” and “This piece would appeal to any thinking human with a heart.”

Memorable responses for the “additional comments” section of the questionnaire, as well as the question: “did you find the audience participation engaging?” include the following responses”¹⁰

“As the music slows down so did the audience participation, and the mood of the audience.”

“It makes the audience feel like they are a part of the performance.”

“Entertained, confused, curious”

“Great use of memorable movement & comedy. A bit twisted.”

“It was funny and there is no other piece with the fun factor, its always refreshing.”

“Loved it all. Lots of humour, which is always enjoyable for the audience.”

“It made me feel happy, and it made me think of how far the world has come in the past century.”

“I felt like I was in the moment/back in time.”

“Interesting use of comedy & vaudeville reference. Exploring then exploding the stereotype.”

“It not only invited, but encouraged audience participation/engagement breaking a barrier that sometimes people are not sure they can cross.”

“Felt nice to take a break from the regular modern pieces that tend to lose my interest.”

“Although the audience’s use of the clappers did initially make it hard to get into the story, the depth it added outweighed the early disruptions.”

“I felt uplifted amused and touched.”

“Great performance, entertaining with a message.”

“What are you looking at” was perfect; it immediately changed the tone of the piece.”

When asked what respondents thought the moral/message/purpose of this piece was, the majority understood its purpose, while some made their own meaning; a few responses include:

Spotlight on the act of spectacle, defining art.”

“Be yourself we are told what to be like.”

“There is fakeness in the world and inner battle to reveal to others a true identity.”

“I think the piece was a juxtaposition regarding characters we create/perform vs. our true selves which we seek to find but also yearn to play.”

“Deconstruct traditional performance roles”

“Breaking gender roles”

¹⁰ Refer to appendix 3 B for a full summary of results

“Ideas around viewership”

“Something about free will and control by puppet master.”

“That we objectify women, sex sells, women have to use their bodies to get ahead or we think we do.”

“Subjectivity- what the individuals may be feeling behind a mask of characters.”

“Conflict between objectification & empowerment of women in the 20’s, a decade where status of women was changing.”

There were minimal negative critiques regarding the piece as a whole, and regarding the audience participation factor. These comments have been noted for future reference. A few examples are stated below:

“I had a hard time identifying emotionally with the acts because I was playing the role of the “audience member.”

“If there is meant to be a message other than the obvious, it needs to be more clear because it just seems disrespectful to the other performers and the host distracted much from the actual dance.”

“When I felt like people were randomly clapping it wasn’t as engaging.”

“I felt too influenced by the “group” I felt forced to participate.”

“I felt that there were moments where the clapping took away from the beauty of the dance.”

“Simple entertainment.”

The positive reactions obviously outweighed the negative; that being said, this experience showed that I must continue to strive to create work that is easily accessible and relatable, but not so obvious in its presentation. I do believe, however, that my attempt at creating contemporary dance work that highly engages my audience was successful in this final MFA study¹¹

CONCLUSION

This final section of the extended essay will include benefits of, and potential alterations to, the audience inclusion methodology. This section will also include insights on how this method can influence one’s choreography, as well as how I intend to use this method in the future.

An extremely positive aspect of the audience inclusion method in creation, and in the performance of contemporary dance, is the fact that there is an immediate response from one’s audience that is completely authentic due to the procedure’s anonymity. If an audience was not

¹¹ See appendix 3B for a full summary of results

deliberately asked to anonymously share their reflections about their experience, it would be difficult to pinpoint how exactly a performance is received by the paying spectators. It is rare for random people to contact a choreographer or creator of theatre and willingly offer honest constructive feedback about the performance. In this method you have immediate response free of charge, which in retrospect is a vital tool in learning about the impact one's work has on an audience. Having this knowledge will aid future revisions, decisions, and further explorations of the crafting and choreography. Hence, this method is a great asset for getting into the minds of the paying customers. The study done by Tapa in 2013 on audience attendance for the performing arts in Toronto, also agrees, that it is important to know ones audience, their key findings state, "continuing to understand the audience and what kind of experience they are seeking and what they can afford is important in order to move forward. (tapa.ca 7)

Additionally, this method of audience inclusion when utilized on a regular basis has the potential to connect and bridge the artist-to-audience relationship, creating a sense of belonging and empowerment for the spectator. Participants from the first choreographic study offered remarks such as, "It made me feel like I was talking to you," and "nice to meet you." And partakers from the final choreographic study mentioned, "It makes the audience feel like they are a part of the performance," and, "It not only invited, but encouraged audience participation/engagement breaking a barrier that sometimes people are not sure they can cross." This is a priceless connection that hopefully remains memorable for performers and audience members alike.

Audience inclusion also has the potential of stimulating the creative process in a unique way.

This methodology has revealed that there are people in the local community who want to share their creativity, and audience inclusivity provides an avenue to do so. Many participants involved in the first study replied to the autobiographical solo, *This & That*, with touching poetic phrases

such as “false freedom,” which immediately evoked inspiration in furthering the work. Had this method been implemented throughout the development phase, via online video’s or live work in-progress showings, the solo could have taken a different, more satisfying route. If I had access to these responses during the process of creation, I could have molded the choreography in a way that set more of a poetic imagistic tone. Based on the feedback I received, I might have used the support of projection with images of an endless sky, and have my movement for the first half embody staccato flow, while my emotion exuded repression and a yearning for freedom. For the latter half, I would explore the freedom via free flow with an emotional intent of joy, but in the end when it is realized that the freedom is false, the piece would end with melancholy. The idea and inspiration offered by “false freedom,” is a lot more emotional and thought provoking than the simple idea of “flow”, on which the original piece was predicated.

A further benefit of audience inclusion concerns the issue of perspective. “We produce every play with the assumption that it will still be unfinished when it appears on the stage. We do this consciously because we realize that the crucial revision of a production is that which is made by the spectator.” (Bennett 7) Audience members can clarify or identify exactly what a choreographer is meaning to share. In my case, I often begin a process without an exact clear idea of what I want to express in the work’s final form, as I tend to follow my instincts and observe where they lead. In the second choreographic study, entitled SNaP: A Short Dance Film, the audience shared their views on the film’s significance, which I thought were a lot clearer than my description of my own film. Objective, outside perspectives can often help to clarify and refine what an artist is trying to say with respect to choreographic work. That being said it would be more useful to receive audience feedback during the development of the work, rather than only during the final performances. In this case there would have to be much more publicity and

incentives to attract audiences to participate. Creating an inclusive group, such as an “audience club”, would be ideal, as an avenue for people to share their thoughts and ideas, to develop a critical eye and voice, to network with current dance professionals, or to meet new people. This club would perhaps appeal to retired seniors, stay at home parents who may be looking for a hobby, students and fellow artists.

One cumbersome aspect of the inclusive methodology involves the time-consuming nature of designing and delivering survey materials. The creation of the online questionnaires, the promotional marketing and gathering and scoring the data, was extremely time consuming. As a result, it inhibited the time spent on the actual development of the choreography. Therefore, it would be ideal to have a dramaturg as a partner for each project that involves audience inclusion as a method in creating dance work. This would relieve much time and stress for the choreographer and they can focus on the creation aspect rather than also having to deal with the paper work.

In focusing on the impact that the audience inclusion method had on the choreography of a dance piece, one must realize that these outcomes may differ, depending on the choreographer and nature of his or her work. Also, note that this is a summary encompassing all three choreographic studies; therefore, each effect may or may not have occurred for every single piece. The intentional focus on the audience affected my choreography in the following ways:

- **Made it literal to an extent-** In an effort to assure the comprehension of the piece, Grand Act(s) could have been perceived as literal, due to the fact that there was a host giving instructions in common vernacular, as well, the scenery and costumes were true to the 1920's era.
- **Favoured the narrative style-** In an effort to assure the comprehension of the pieces, SNaP and Grand Act(s) followed a loose story line.
- **Made it theatrical with the use of many props-** Props and theatrical sets were utilized for all three choreographic studies as a means to catch the spectators eye.
- **Made it dynamic, dramatic and bold-** Audacious choices were made in order to maintain the audiences full attention at all times. A few examples include: quick

- camera edits in SNaP, choices to focus on quick and sustained movement in SNaP, the choice to incorporate a variety of dance genres in GRAND ACT(s), bold choices in movements such as rubbing breasts, and vulgar hip thrusts, the choice to implement the shocking phrase, “what are you looking at”, directed to the audience.
- **Made it frontal in terms of positioning on stage-** This & That and GRAND ACTS(s), were positioned in a frontal manner toward the audience to ensure the crowds attention, this was not necessarily a logical choice.
 - **Allowed for focus on the big picture-** The overall meaning of the work, as well as the sets, costumes and props were a key focus.
 - **Inhibited focus on movement details-** Due to the fact that the above elements were key focuses, detailed attention was lost in the crafting of This & That and SNaP.
 - **Encouraged action to “step out of the box”-** This research has encouraged me to create three completely diverse dance works in which I had never attempted in the past. The first being performance art, the second being a dance film labeled in the style of popular culture, (which took the risk of offending fellow performing artists for attempting to cater to popular culture), and the third being a theatrical performance, incorporating a variety of dance genres, theatrical acting, active audience engagement, and historical reference.

Overall, exploring the audience inclusion methodology has been a roller-coaster ride of emotions and intense labour. What I have gained most from this experience is the valuable connection with my audience. This, in turn, has led to the desire to create a proposal to local theatres to implement this procedure of audience inclusion, as an addition to their audience development sector. The resident choreographers or directors of a particular theatre can create an outreach program for their community by inviting people to collaborate in creating the next show. Community members would be invited to vote on themes and share their reflections at work in progress showings. In some cases, it would be wise to incorporate these participants on stage for the actual performance. This, in turn, this will give the audience a stronger connection to the work, and hopefully they will encourage others to participate or attend the final shows. This methodology can also be implemented in local elementary and high schools, as a method of audience development, and as an effort in advocating the complexity and importance of the arts to children and teenagers. I plan to develop a system that coincides with the schools curriculum

involving the arts. This proposal will offer schools the opportunity to have dance choreographers in their schools leading students in the process of creating a dance work/event. This system will cater to each grade level; however, in general it will accomplish the following: teach students analytical skills by offering tips on how to watch contemporary dance, offer knowledge on what to look for in terms of symbolism and repetition, offer basic dance/movement classes to students so that they are able to perform through movement and identify dance terminology. Students will then vote on the themes, motifs, and/or messages of the piece, and will be involved as collaborators during its creation. Their input and suggestions will be collected, and some aspects of the choreography will be derived via movement inspired by the students, through improvisation games. Students will be guided through the arrangement and planning of the production aspects of the public performance, such as ticket sales, scenery, and promotions. Also, their final performance will incorporate professional dancers from the Toronto community.

This methodology of audience inclusion in creation and in performance, as a method in creating contemporary dance work, and for the purpose of audience development, has proven to be successful both in this study, and in evolving further gateways to share this methodology. This process stimulates creative impetus and challenges the artist's exploration, allowing the artist to dive inside the audiences mind, and inspire audiences to become active and reflective spectators. It is my belief that, if implemented on a regular basis, this methodology will attract a wider audience base for contemporary dance in Toronto.

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Appendix 1A
“This & That” Online Questionnaire

Hello, thank you for taking the time to visit this page I truly appreciate it. Your participation in completing the below form will be my inspiration in creating my autobiographical solo. I will use the words or phrase that you offer as impetus to create my solo for my MFA first project. This questionnaire is 100% anonymous.

Whether you are my friend, family member, colleague, student or acquaintance, please offer any descriptive words or phrases that you believe best describe me. You may enter as many words or phrases as you wish. Please be honest!

Appendix 1B
“This & That” Audience Results from Online Questionnaire
*The highlighted words are the applicable words that were focused on.

- **Energetic, happy, driven, organized, determined, caring, loves children, compassionate, busy, goal-oriented, loves to have fun, spontaneous**
- **Strong, beautiful, sexy, decisive, leader, bright!**
- **Strong very talented Inspiring smart extremely creative compassionate**
- **Ambitious Motivated Happy Committed Loyal Creative Patient Kind Intelligent Dedicated**

Appendix 1C
“This & That” Post Show Questionnaire

Hi there, hope you will consider participating (anonymously) with my research - I'd appreciate it tremendously and would fully understand if this is not something you want to do. Thank you!

Front Side
During Performance Participation
Please stay tuned for instructions during “*This & That*”. Please be honest in your responses and use whatever words or phrases that pop up in your mind. This is 100% anonymous

Back Side
If you have time, please answer the questions on the back and please hand this paper, with your responses, to one of the ushers as you leave the theatre. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

“This & That” Post Show Questionnaire

- 1) Which section was most memorable for you? Please circle your answer, and feel free to elaborate on the backside if you wish.

Spotlight # 1

Spotlight # 2

Spotlight # 3

- 2) What are your thoughts on the use of technology in this solo?

Appendix 1C cont'd
“This & That” Post Show Questionnaire

3) Did you find this piece entertaining? Please circle one answer and feel free to elaborate.
Yes No Sometimes

4) What do you think the theme(s) might be? Please circle as many as you want and feel free to add your own ideas.

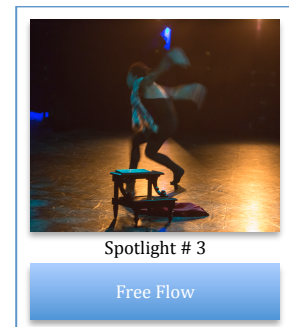
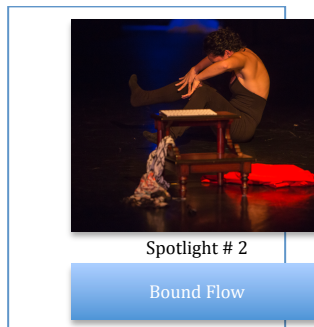
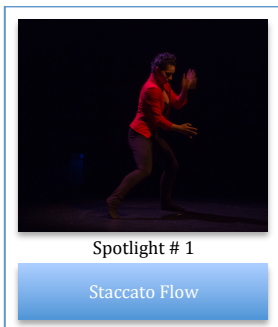
The Dancer The Audience Love Hardship Flow Not Sure

5) Did you read the program? Please Circle. **Yes No**

6) Did you pay attention to the display outside? **Yes No**

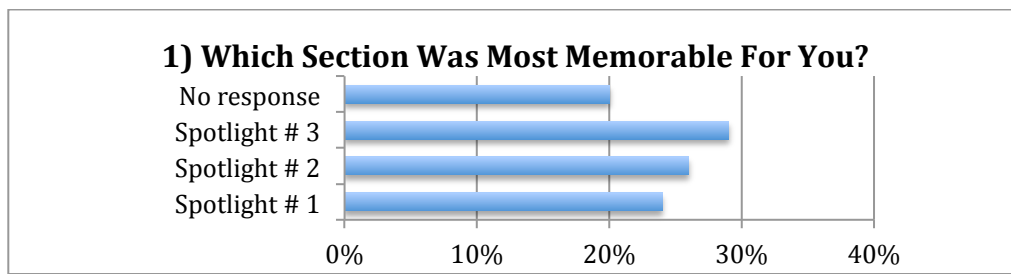
7) Do you think this experience will make you a more active spectator in the future?
Yes No

Appendix 1D
Photo's of Live Performance



Appendix 1E
“This & That” Post Show Questionnaire Results

- Two hundred and thirty seven people filled out this post show questionnaire.



Appendix 1E cont'd
“This & That” Post Show Questionnaire Results

2) What are your thoughts on the use of technology in this solo?

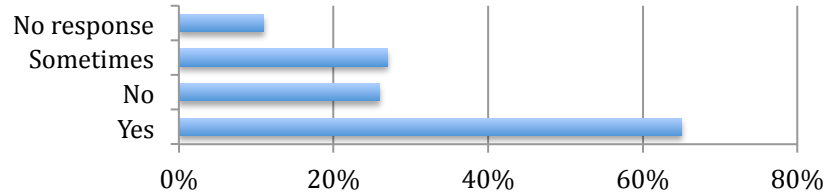
Took away from the dance	Created a dynamic
Great but distracting	Posed an interesting challenge
Accurate and creative	Added to the piece, made me thinking about what you were trying to figure out
Enough	Added to the dance
When used to support the piece it is great	Very effective way to connect with the audience
It enhances the spectacle/style of solo	Interesting and refreshing
Distracting at times but worth it, it really added to the experience	Really enjoyed the spotlight focuses on the soloist, easy to follow the dancer
It was cool and different	Refreshing
Captures attention	Caught me off guard
Very interesting, never seen a dance like this before	Interesting room for errors
Allows audience to connect with the dancer	More dance
Great interaction	Intricate, complex and interesting
They were set perfectly and helped enhance the performance	Brilliant and creative
Innovative	Very cool the way the technology got the audience thinking
Interpretive	
Like incorporated elements	Very impactful, felt as if I were reading your mind
Added mystery	Technology these days...
Nice and considerate toward the audience	Creative and eye-catching
Unnecessary	A fun diversion
Clever and distracting	Limiting, perhaps make it a part of the performance somehow
I'd like to see more, take it to the next level	Wished you danced more in typing section
Very effective	Interesting way to break the fourth wall
Very creative showed lots of personality	A lot with the words, not necessary
Great interaction	Perfection
Confused!	Enjoyed it
Got audiences attention	It's not used
So cool- theatrical	Made me feel very connected
Being forced to articulate thoughts	Clever
Gave chance for reflection	Does enhance
Incomplete	Interesting but felt pressure and distracted
What I like best was that you created a dialogue with the audience	Interesting and worth developing further- like two ideas
Least interesting when reading off screen	Don't ask me more
Live chat	Made me feel involved and connected to the piece
I like everything and the spelling mistakes	Too much
Today's day and age interaction	I want to type too
I prefer watching the dancing	Interesting way to break the fourth wall in a novel way
Interesting but quickly became a gimmick	Loved the typing and sense of humour
Gives insight into dancers personality	Is it an aside? Is it part of the piece?
Intrigued by the unique communication	Liked the text and questions
It forced me to be aware of exactly what my thoughts were- sometimes stressful, sometimes eye opening	Had a purpose
Exclusive, inclusive	Not completely necessary

Appendix 1E cont'd

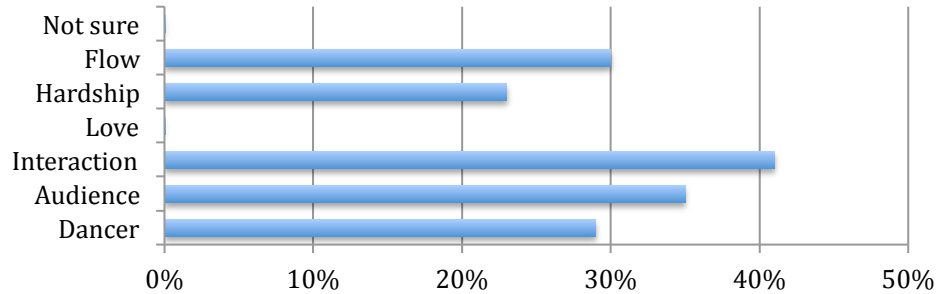
“This & That” Post Show Questionnaire Results

- Two hundred and thirty seven people filled out this post show questionnaire.

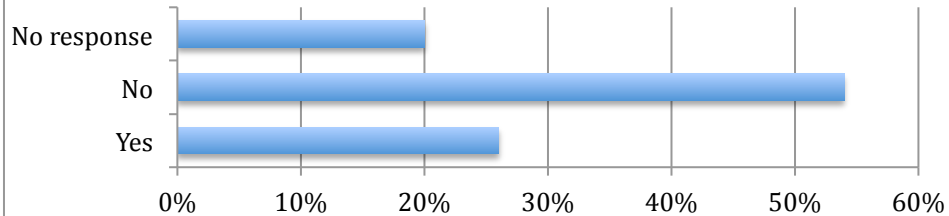
3) Did You Find This Piece Entertaining?

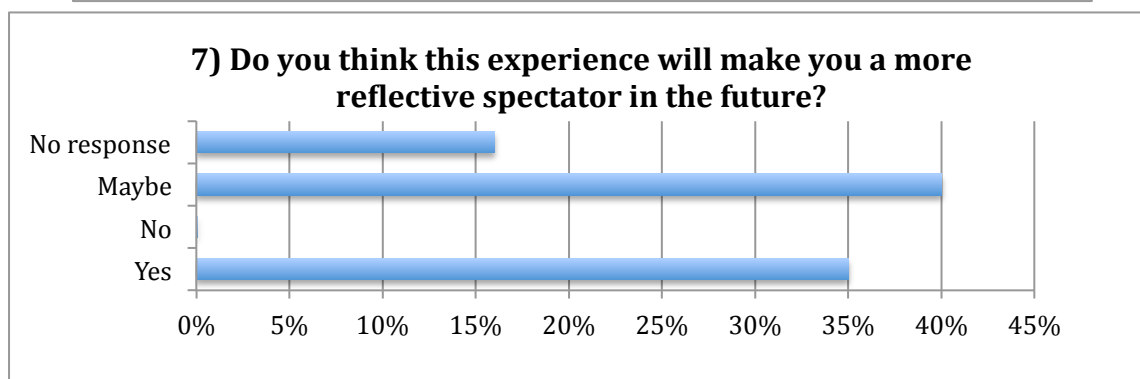
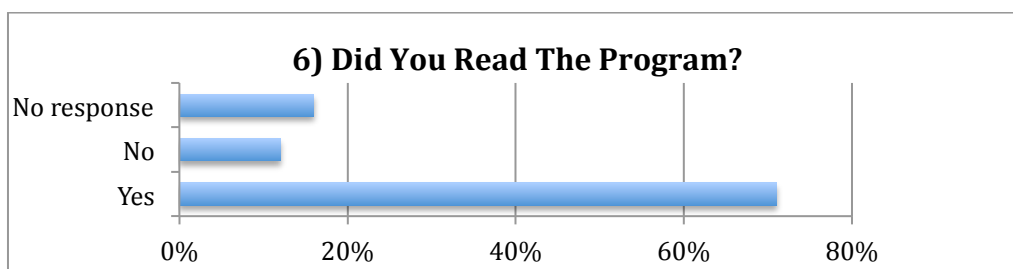


4) What Do You Think The Theme(s) Might Be?



5) Did you pay attention to the display outside?





Appendix 1E cont'd
“This & That” Post Show Questionnaire Results
Additional Comments

Didactic felt unfinished	Inspiring
It was thought provoking	Nice to meet you!
Loved the flow worked great with the music	I wanted to see more movement
Hard to understand	Addiction- Validity
Not a part of the “norm”	Couldn’t engage because I was preoccupied with the writing
Bow the end clap	Re-energized
Peace, harmony, flow	Eccentric
Wish it wasn’t one way	Wit-humour
Are you trying to entertain?	Thought she had a disability and needed a different form of communicating. Struggling to find out who she is.
I feel that the fact that she had her eyes closed really added to the wonder of the piece	I really want to know the story
You are an amazing dancer but your inquire still too basic	Very repetitive
Your saying too much, your stillness says more	Spot light # 1 made her seem afar and outcast, I can relate
Lets audience do that work while giving it a container	Unsure why I should participate
It doesn’t flow	The plants that live in the river
Connecting the activity of dance, research and performance	I was thinking in words more than I would like to
I never stopped paying attention, kept me thinking and engaged	I followed you all the way through

What do you mean by active?	Dramatic and soulful
Took away from movement focus	Ending inconclusive
Loved it	Memorable
Red Heavens	Held my interest, thought provoking
Made me think	Over too soon
It made me feel like I was talking to you	It's over already?
I'd rather watch you than write about you	What does the scarf mean?
Boneless	Became more clear on second view
I felt the emotion running in my body, very awesome	Some of it was just to slow
Work, school, commitments, pressure	Reminding me of the stressful things in life, responsibilities and obligations
zzzzzia	I think it's about being yourself no matter who that is
Indecision, torn two minds	Makes you want to concentrate on content
Dancer to audience connection	

Appendix 2A

Dance Film Original Questionnaire

I WANT TO COLLABORATE WITH YOU!

Hi there, thank you for taking the time to read this; I truly and greatly appreciate it!

I am currently a MFA student at York University studying dance choreography and dramaturgy. This program entails that I choreograph 3 separate dance pieces, while experimenting with my thesis research: **Audience participation as a methodology in creating dance pieces, engages performers, choreographers & audiences in an array of ways. This methodology creates a unique and transformative experience for all involved.**

I am researching “audiences”, and the many ways they/you can be involved, both in the development and in the revising of contemporary dance work. All the projects call for different involvement, either during the beginning stages, during the process or post show. I basically just want your opinion!

Below is a form for my-self produced project. I will be producing a short dance film in collaboration with ELD Films. The film will be presented at a gallery in Toronto in mid-December 2013, so stay tuned for that announcement. After all, don't you want to see the outcome of what you participated in? I would like you to know that your participation is 100% anonymous, it is free and there is absolutely no risk involved. When a questionnaire is submitted I do not know who sent it, your name will not be asked.

I am looking for inspiration for my dance film. Please check mark or fill out whichever options interest you. I will use the most popular and enticing material to create and produce an original dance film.

Your Gender: Female Male

Type/Genre Of Dance Film: Suspense Comedic Philosophical Action

Location/Setting: Warehouse Office Bus Stop Hair Salon

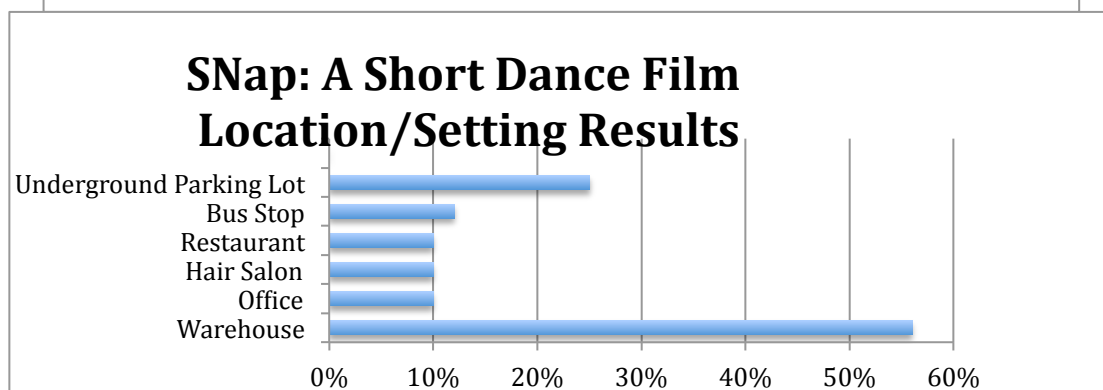
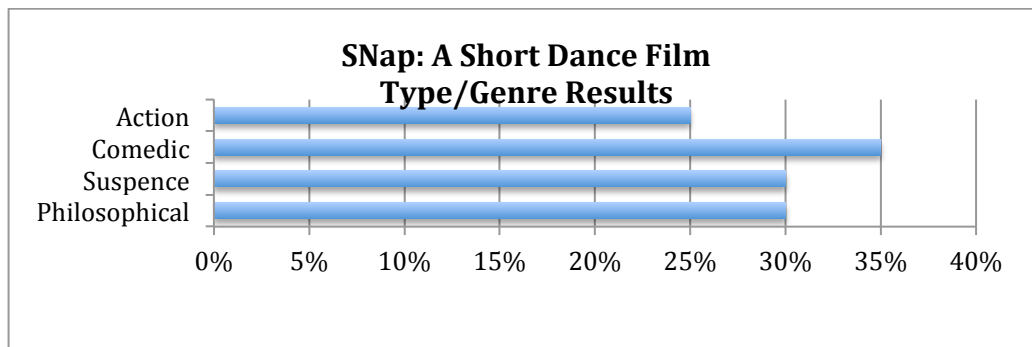
Restaurant Underground Parking Lot

Additional Comments: According to what you chose, please provide inspirational quotes, stories or online links. (Optional)

Appendix 2B

“SNap”: A Short Dance Film Audience Voting Results

- **Thirty-nine people** participated in the voting for this self-produced Dance Film project. Below are the final results of the public voting.



Additional Comments

- The Bitter Earth- “Nature of Daylight”- based around notions of feeling unwanted.
- There is no such thing as reality, only perception.
- Sound of movement, breathing, swishing of feet- atmospheric
- Choose happiness- smile
- Strong classical with lots of strings- SYTYCD- “architect of the mind”
- I would be interested in a film that makes you think, a film that reflects some of the challenges we face in our daily lives.
- Dubstep/Glitch music
- Anything 1970’s themed
- “Wash That Man Right Out Of My Hair”
- “Back of the Bus” by Outkast- Rosa Parks

Appendix 2C

SNaP: A Short Dance Film Post Show Questionnaire

Message from Producer & Choreographer Patrizia Ferlisi

I want to thank you greatly for being here tonight. I hope that you enjoyed the experience. If you don’t mind, please consider participating (anonymously) with my research - I’d appreciate it tremendously and would fully understand if this is not something you wish to do. Thank you!

Circle your answers:

1) Did you find this film engaging/entertaining?

Yes No Sometimes

2) Did you find this film thought provoking? Elaborate if you wish. What do you think the message is?

Yes No

3) Who do you think this film would appeal to?
(You can circle more than one)

Children Adults Teens Elderly

4) Would you attend an event like this again in the future?

Yes No Maybe

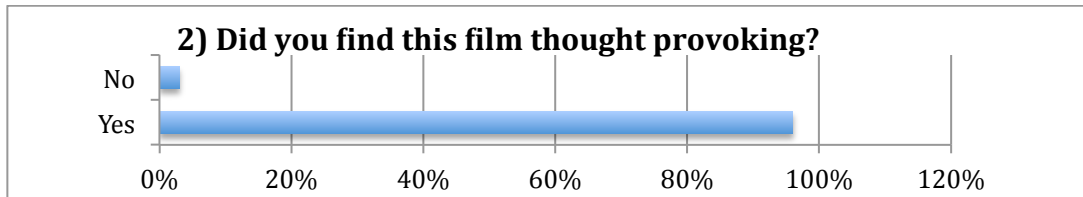
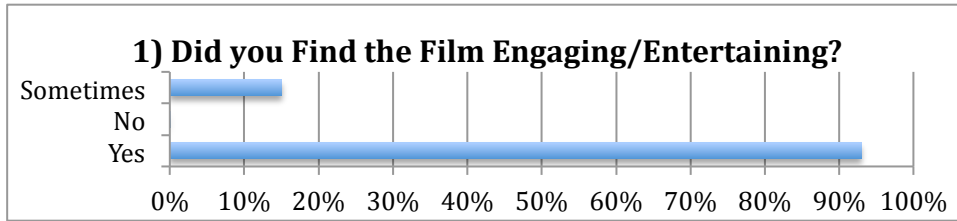
Comments:

(Share descriptive words or phrases that come to mind after watching. How did the film make you feel?)

Appendix 2D

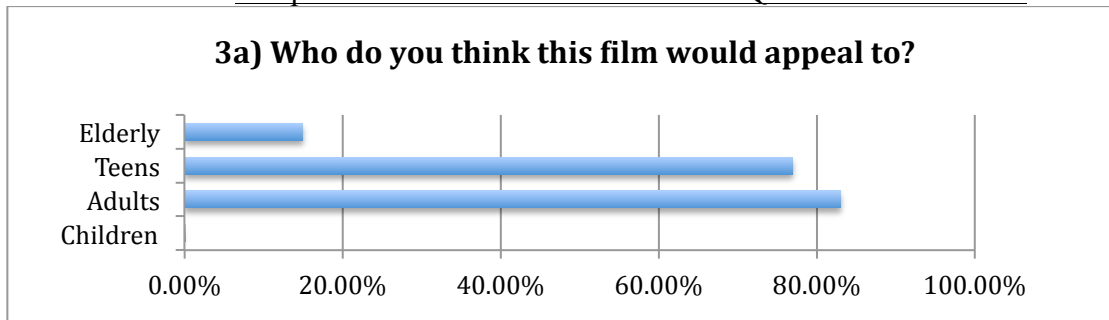
SNap: A Short Dance Film Post- Show Questionnaire Results

- **Thirty-one people** filled out this post-show questionnaire.

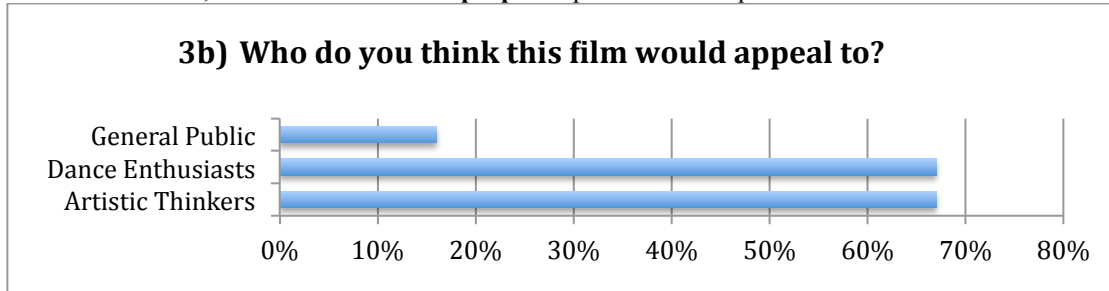


Appendix 2D cont'd

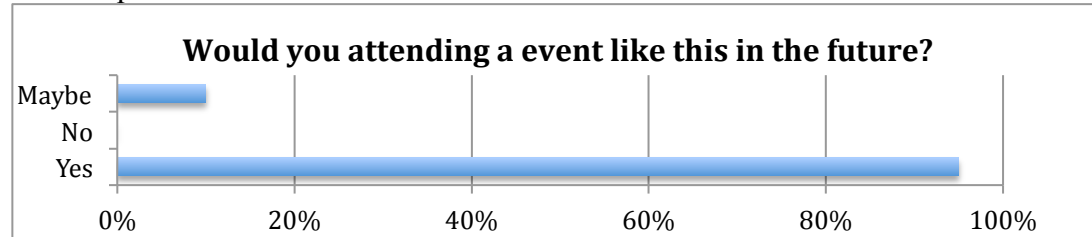
SNap: A Short Dance Film Post- Show Questionnaire Results



The online version of this questionnaire incorporated an additional three options listed below, Artists Thinkers, Dance Enthusiasts, and General Public. **12 people** responded to this questionnaire.



Only the guests that were present at the film premiere answered this question, **18 people** filled out the questionnaire.



General Comments and Comments on Theme/Message

Amazing! Inner demons	Made me want more
Cool imagery	Soundtrack complimented the movement
Not being of a dance background I was somewhat confused	Some short of representation of the chaos in ones mind and a little voice trying to take over
Enjoyed the effects, didn't distract from the dancing, could have been more. Would like to see extended version	It felt a lot like the split personality concept of fight club. A battle between two personalities of the mind in the body
Dark, anguish, tortured, strength	Intense, at some points frightening
Loved the quote	Had my full attention the whole way through
The confidence of the final staircase scene leads me to believe that Ryan took over the body through the mind	I wonder how people would respond if the text was revealed at the end apposed to the beginning
Take control of your own body and mind. Don't fall victim to the "puppet master".	Dark, enchanting, could not take my eyes off the screen
Playing and contorting the concept of time?	Seemed to provoke thoughts of Stockholm Syndrome
The very last picture almost felt like a warning done almost in the form of a PSA	The creepy stares were fierce in relation to the overall pallet of the video, an eerie, yet strong theme was established that lead its audience to wonder what was going on in Patricia's mind during the piece.
I don't know if there was a message. I don't understand the relationship between the man and the women/ what was happening. I honestly don't understand the correlation for the quote to the piece. Was someone's heaven turned into hell or visa versa? If so it was not clear.	Very well done and edited! I love the way the movie presented itself, not too abstract and not too simple, easy to get the big picture, while still raising questions. Was any of this real or just a peak into the unconscious?

Appendix 3A
“GRAND ACT(s)” Post Show Questionnaire

Hi there, hope you will consider participating (anonymously) with my research - I'd appreciate it tremendously and would fully understand if this is not something you want to do. Thank you!

- 1) Did you find the audience participation engaging?
Please elaborate if you wish.

Yes No Sometimes

- 2) What do you think was the moral/message/purpose
of this piece?

- 3) Who do you think this piece would appeal to?
You may circle as many as you believe apply.

Adults Teens Kids Seniors

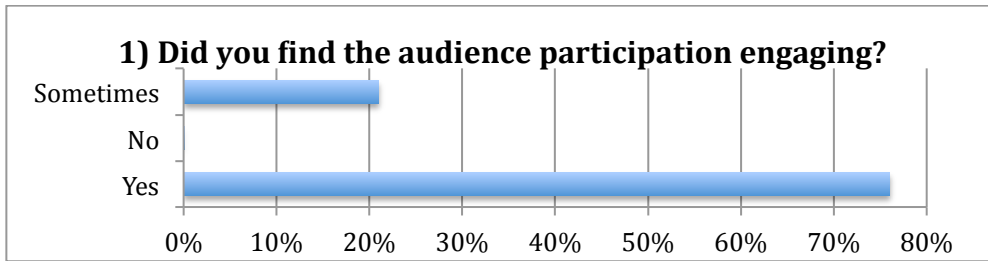
Artistic Thinkers Average Person

- 4) **Additional Comments:** If you have time please share your thoughts
How did the piece make you feel? (Memorable moments, descriptive words or phrases)

Appendix 3B

“GRAND ACT(s)” Post Show Questionnaire Results

- One hundred and thirty seven people filled out this post show questionnaire

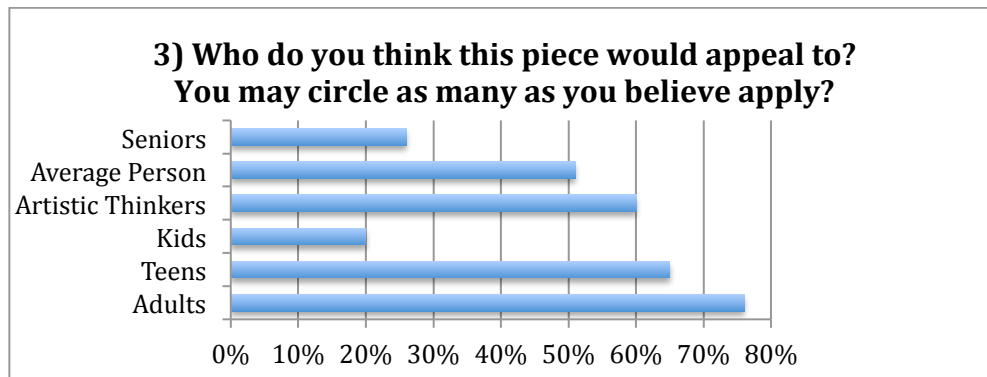


2) What do you think is the moral/message/purpose of this piece?

Fame isn't all it's cracked out to be	Be yourself we are told what to be like
What defines entertainment?	There is fakeness in the world and inner battle to reveal to others a true identity
Don't judge a book by its cover	I thought it was a take on cabaret/satire
Women as sexual objects	Deconstruction of a cabaret
Having self confidence, believing in your own skills	Its hard to be a women, especially with a moustache or big breasts
Highlighting the art forms and comedy	To have fun
Spotlight on the act of spectacle, defining art	Hardship of entertainment
I think the piece was a juxtaposition regarding characters we create/perform vs. our true selves which we seek to...but also yarn to play	Sometimes doing the same things over and over results in a meltdown
Being watched having an audience 24/7	Looking good is what matters
Deconstruct traditional performance roles	Show business is tough
Everyone has problems & sex sells	Subjectivity- what the individuals may be feeling behind a mask of characters
Popularity is an ugly thing, beauty is harder to find	All girls were capable of performing same but were treated differently
Entertainment comes in all forms, it can posses you and may be ugly	Acting on impulse

Entertainment comes in all forms, it can posses you and may be ugly	Acting on impulse
Not everything is what it appears to be	That we objectify women, sex sells, women have to use their bodies to get ahead or we think we do.
Beautiful can damage, don't judge a book by its cover	Something about free will and control by puppet master
Female empowerment	Not every book tells the entire story
Deconstruction of women in entertainment, female roles, exploding, dysfunctional, constructed, made caricature, good girl, bad girl	Explore character development and performance
I felt the purpose of the piece was to explore different interpretations of vaudeville performance	Beauty & sex can take you far
Behind the mask	Ideas around viewership
To point out stereotypes, everyone wants to see sexy dance.	To show 1920/30 acts
Breaking gender roles	Art must be unique, strange, analyzing to be interesting?
Beauty isn't everything	Entertainment
Couldn't understand	I don't know
Keep your clothes on	Exploring/juxtaposition contemporary form vaudeville
Demonstration of the transformation of media in society & how our voices affect it.	Harshness & stereotypical surface, lack of humanity towards "entertainers"
That we underestimate the contestant	Tradition vs. Modern
To see what type of performance people would like to see.	Expectations – appearances can be deceiving
About the meaning behind "the act"	The jazz era and how statements can go a long way
The darker side of the stage	Getting audience reactions?
No idea, contemporary + Vaudeville?	To transport the audience to the olden days: Jazz vaudeville feel
Good question	Maybe gender related?
People prefer sexy over anything else	Mix of 20's theatrics + Contemporary
Sex appeal isn't everything	Conflict between objectification & empowerment of women in the 20's, a decade where status of women was changing

To see audiences response to a range of content	What you are on stage is not necessarily who you are on the inside
Beauty is deceiving	To get people engaged? Not sure
The last performer didn't like her job	



Additional Comments

As the music slows down so does the audience participation, and the mood of the audience, finally there is none
The ambience and context was very good. I liked the woman at the corner bossing the other women around
It makes the audience feel like they are a part of the performance
Entertained, confused, curious
Great use of memorable movement & comedy. A bit "twisted"
Excellent presenter
You are touching points that belong to every audience
Excellent music, you decomposed also the aural Cabaret
It was fun
Enjoyed the comedic elements, Rhonda solo showed inner struggle
Making the audience participate is always good even if people don't do anything
This piece made me feel guilty for the performers who have to sell their bodies to the audience in order to get their approval
Felt nice to take a break from the regular modern pieces that tend to lose my interest
Wasn't sure when to use the clappers at points

It was funny and there is no other piece with fun factor, its always refreshing
Loved it all. Lots of humour which is always enjoyable for the audience
It made me feel happy, and it made me think of how far the world has come in the past century
Good resolution
I found it hard time identifying emotionally with the acts because I was playing the role of the "audience member"
Beautiful character work
Interesting use of comedy & vaudeville reference. Exploring then exploding the stereotype
Incomplete
It was interesting, liked the audience interaction
It not only invited, but encouraged audience participation/engagement breaking a barrier that sometimes people are not sure they can cross
I think everyone could watch and take something from this piece
Enjoyment, entertaining, empathy
"What are you looking at" was perfect, it immediately changed the tone of the piece
Static, lovely, emotional
It made me feel happy
Distracting - Loved it Satisfying
I liked background scenery, music & simple but contextual use of costumes
People are always going to play with things that make noise, so it will give you a better response
The host seemed like the madam at a brothel. I did not agree with her most of the time. I felt bad for the acts.
Felt like audience was pre-recorded. Added to hilarity
My favourite of the show -Excellent, engaging, powerful choreography
Made me reflect on self & society and how both are somewhat controlled by those in power
Less participation & more coercion, though pleasant
Narration
Raunchy sexy acts attract more attention than art- Who would have been in the audience for early vaudeville shows? Men only or men & women? Felt sorry for Daisy
The host was too talkative and her bossiness grew tiresome
If there is meant to be a message other than the obvious, it needs to be more clear because it just seems disrespectful to the other

performers and the host distracted much from the actual dance
Liked Rhonda, most interesting choreo - Nostalgic
Fun, over the top characterization - Interested
All the characters presented on stage were very engaging
I loved it
I felt too influenced by the "group" I felt forced to participate
When I felt like people were arbitrarily clapping it wasn't as engaging
Hip thrusting was interesting - We followed the leader blindly - Loved it!
I so wish we could keep the clappers! - Entertained & Engaged
Comedy catches my attention and the participation comments on how society functions and where its going.
Was expecting more 1920's jazz music – I loved the background, this dance was unique
This piece would appeal to any thinking human with a heart
We all like to be a part of the show and I felt the dancers were much more beautiful when dancing together rather than competing where they all fell apart.
A good choice to start the second half
It was highly distracting and annoying, especially during the dance sections – reads as simple entertainment
Although the audience's use of the clappers did initially make it hard to get into the story, the depth it added outweighed the early disruptions.
I found the idea of choice in the piece interesting, although the audience had arguably more voice in this piece it did little to affect the flow. As such we were left to say "yes" to the MC with our clappers
Great performance, entertaining with a message. Great Music!
I like how the crowd was involved - This piece was great and made me think.
Composition flowing - great sense of story
Fun, engaging, interactive - It was a show - Loved the piece, hilarious
I felt that there were moments where the clapping took away from the beauty of the dance
It brought me to the 1920's era, made me feel happy and spontaneous, sexy, wanted to mimic last act
Confusing at first, the host helped lay down the ground rules. Tonight I'm tired so it felt loud.
No need for clappers piece was engaging without
I don't think the average person would get it/like it but I think it's important for them to experience artistic brussel sprouts
Funny, great choreography, each piece was disturbed/altered for some reason, it connected though.
Great piece, very funny, but with a serious undertone really illuminating the reality of vaudeville genre.
Distracting but fun - It was a bit clunky, but very fun, so good I felt good
I felt uplifted amused and touched - Distracting and bothersome
Reminded me of a burlesque shows found myself asking why are they not taking their clothes off?
Cool use of putting the audience in an alternate world then throwing in contemporary
I felt like I was in the moment/back in time

This and That

Choreographer and Interpreter: Patrizia Gianforcaro

Lighting Design: Melissa Buckley

Music, Composer: *Chatting*, Essential Sound; *A Bang of Void*, Apparat

Costume Design: Patrizia Gianforcaro

Set Design: Patrizia Gianforcaro; Outside eye: Marie France Forcier

MFA Supervisors: Professor Darcey Callison, Professor William Mackwood

An inner fuse of
energy driven by
rhythm knocked
my knees forth
and back, sending
my neck, head
and torso astray.
Bound by the
boundaries I
created, my body
floated and my
mind eased.



Patrizia Gianforcaro

is a graduate of Ryerson University's BFA Dance program. She has worked for renowned companies and choreographers such as Cirque Du Soleil, Roberto Campanella and Debra Brown, to name a few. She is a co-owner and artistic director of Lady Luck Productions Arts and Entertainment Group. Her studies at York involve audience dramaturgy/outreach and the incorporation of technology in performance.

Appendix 5
SNaP: A Short Dance Film Premiere
Program

Bulb (2011)

Dancer: Zhenya Cerneacov
Choreography/Concept: Courtnae Bowman
Director: Jonathan Lawley

State of Evil: Ire (2012)

Dancer: Kyra Jean Green
Choreography/Concept: Meredith Anderson
Director: Jonathan Lawley

Series 1/12 (2010)

Dancers: Patrizia Ferlisi, Erin Poole
Choreography/Concept: Courtnae Bowman
Director: Jonathan Lawley

Baba (2006)

Dancers: Alana Elmer, Cassidy DeFreitas, Chad McFadden,
Devon Perri, Jazzmin James, Jennifer Nichols, Matthew Waldie, Michael Tracz, Patrizia Ferlisi, Paulo
Farinha, Stacey Armstrong
Choreographer: Tré Armstrong
Writer/Director: Jonathan Lawley

State of Evil: Sorcordia (2012)

Dancer: Meredith Anderson
Choreography/Concept: Meredith Anderson
Director: Jonathan Lawley

SnAP- Premiere

Dancers: Patrizia Ferlisi, Ryan Lee
Choreography/Concept: Patrizia Ferlisi
Director: Jonathan Lawley

*I would like to thank Jonathan Lawley, Darcey Callison,
Teresa Lombardi, Rosemarie Stea, my husband, my family,
friends and students for your support.*

Appendix 6

GRAND ACT (S)

The movement was originally driven by the intricacy of Jazz music, and later, was dissected and revised to fit the characters and backstory that eventually formed. There was emphasis on bold statements and layering of meaning. Movement seemed to flow out rapidly; then, much time was spent with experimentation.

Choreographer: Patrizia Ferlisi

Host: Teresa Lombardi

Interpreters: Kristen Carcone, Julia Cosentino,
Leah Lavergne, Rosemarie Stea

Lighting Design: Kyle Morton

Music: "Drunk Trumpet" Kid Koala /Basin Street "Blues" Kid Koala/Happy As The Day Is
Long- Fletcher Henderson version

Costume Design: Patrizia Ferlisi

Set Design: Patrizia Ferlisi, William Mackwood

MFA Supervisors: Darcey Callison

William Mackwood



Annette Kellerman (pictured) was promoting women's rights and was arrested and charged with indecent exposure for wearing a one piece fitted bathing suit in 1907.