Inspiration to Impulse: Inviting the Spectator to Enter In

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By

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to Doug Varone, who initially invited me to appreciate my own impulses.

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ABSTRACT

INSPIRATION TO IMPULSE: INVITING THE SPECTATOR TO ENTER IN

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The thesis project, *impulse Present*, was a site-specific work presented in two separate public performances. The first performance was on September 22, 2008, as part of the George Mason University's Fall for the Book Festival, and the second performance was on September 27, 2008 during "Clarendon Day," a neighborhood street festival in Arlington, VA. This project included a 19-member cast, involved audience participation and used improvisational elements within a loosely choreographed structure. The duration of the work was approximately 30 minutes.

In this work, the audience was invited to physically join in spontaneous duets with the dancers. Given the esoteric nature of modern art and the reluctance of many potential audience members to experience it, the predominant question was: "How can I create a work where the audience is invited to be participatory yet doesn't feel pressured to 'perform' when they intended to observe?"

CHAPTER 1. Introduction

The incidence of audience participation has increased over the years, as artists look for ways to challenge their audiences' perceptions about the confluence of life and art. The impetus of rebellion often leads artists to look for the boundaries surrounding artistic forms and to question whether those boundaries need to exist. In the case of live performance, one assumption is that audiences and performers are separate entities. Most of the time, audience members have a specific place, and it's not onstage. Theatrical performance has existed long enough that people understand how to behave when other people are performing. The very definition of audience (*Oxford English Dictionary*) connotes a separation from the performers, of people giving attention to somebody else's statements. Theoretically, as soon as spectators contribute to the spectacle, they themselves become performers. In the world of contemporary dance, the advent of the post-modern movement in the 1960s (Banes) gave rise to an explosion of explorations into challenging the traditional notions of what is dance and what is not dance. (Is walking or waving a hand, dance?) The inclusion of pedestrian movement in choreography opened up the dance world in a way that has allowed for audience participation; the audience doesn't need to have training in order to take part.

For me, the possibilities opened up by those founders of post-modern dance provided the foundation for my thesis project. In addition to the focus on audience

inclusion into the physical work, I employed improvisation and collaboration, two other post-modern choreographic methods, in the creative process. It was certainly a journey through which I (and hopefully my dancers) gained much enlightenment.

CHAPTER 2. Project Overview

For this culmination of my MFA work, I wished to challenge myself to take risks in exploration, to attempt to venture into new territories in my creative work. To choreograph a proscenium-based work for a concert seemed to me to be a safe bet; I had done that several times previously, and although the results weren't always necessarily spectacular, it wasn't ever likely that those pieces would utterly fail. I was inspired to create an event that allowed the performers and audience freedom to make choices, mainly because I didn't really know how to accomplish that successfully. During the previous year, I had had some success with integrating audience interaction with performers in a different project and was inspired to continue developing those ideas.

During the past several years, I had been feeling a sense of disenchantment with the proscenium model of traditional dance presentation. I feel that the traditional proscenium format too closely resembles the electronic media model where the spectator receives his information within a packaged format (screen, monitor, etc.) and, therefore, is passive. I believe this passivity contributes to a certain apathy that is problematic in our society. However, given the esoteric nature of modern art and the reluctance of many potential audience members to experience it, my question was: "How can I create a work where the audience is invited to be participatory yet doesn't feel pressured to 'perform' when they intended to observe?"

I think that encouraging the passive and remote nature of traditional audiences to become more participatory can lead to greater support for dance. Even within the electronic media model, computers and video games have some interaction, which gives people ownership of, and affinity to, those forms. People will support what they can connect to, and by presenting dance as an activity attainable for the common person, I hope to spark more people's interest in the art form. We need to invite them into our process. Many times connections are made through audience interaction in discussions, but there's nothing quite like the performance experience, when the participants' actions make a difference to the aesthetic outcome of the work. The subsequent ownership over the movement material provides a strong link to the dance form; the participants understand better what it's like to be a part of an artistic spectacle and gain connection with the artists themselves.

Within the process itself, which spanned over seven months, my focus was on attempting to achieve an effective balance between freedom and structure. I hoped to take advantage of chance happenings during creation and performance while ultimately producing a reliable product. Since I selected my dancers from the students in the George Mason University (GMU) dance department, I was constantly aware of my faculty status and my responsibility to positively shape their experience with this creative process. In my classes, I always strive to encourage autonomy in my students. I don't believe that my purpose is limited to teaching them dance skills and steps. I think that one of the ways we can improve our world is by influencing our future generations towards more responsiveness and empathy.

I have been fortunate in my life to be surrounded by quality people: parents, teachers, professors, and mentors. One thing that has been pre-eminent in all of their personalities was a true desire for experimentation and a constant love of learning. One of the most influential people who has inspired the experimental nature of this project has been Doug Varone, with whom I danced for ten years, and for whom I have great respect and admiration. He has always striven to investigate the unfamiliar, to learn new things rather than relying upon proven methods that garnered prior success. Constantly throughout each of the methods he employed, he brought a high level of intelligence to problem solving and integrity to choreographic design. My time with him was intensely rewarding, and I wished to provide some of the same modeling and guidance to my dancers.

Definitions

The following terms are used in this thesis and are defined as follows:

Collaboration – in choreography, this often refers to a co-operative working relationship between the choreographer and dancers. The choreographer takes suggestions from the dancers and incorporates their ideas into the work. It can also mean a sharing of ideas between artists who work in different mediums; each brings her expertise to the common project.

Cyborg – a cybernetic organism (i.e., an organism that has both artificial and natural systems). In performance art, a performer who is wearing electronic communications technology.

Guerrilla performance – a style of street theatre popularized in the mid-late 1960s, usually political in nature. Guerrilla (Spanish for "little war") describes the act of spontaneous, surprise performances in unlikely public spaces to an unsuspecting audience. Typically these performances intend to draw attention to a political/social issue through satire, protest, and carnivalesque techniques.

Happening – a term, coined by Allan Kaprow, to describe a non-verbal, theatrical production that abandons stage-audience structure as well as the usual plot or narrative

line of traditional theatre. The happening was to be a genuine "event" involving spectator participation and no longer confined to the museum, gallery, or stage. Performers are encouraged to capitalize upon unplanned occurrences while acting out fantasies based on real life within a certain roughly pre-ordained structure that suggests symbolic and universally basic themes and meanings. A field of aesthetic operation is thus created in relation to life, combining artfully determined materials with strong associational properties, and dimensions with events and things from the sphere "outside" of customary definitions for art.

Improvisation – the production or execution of anything off-hand; any work or structure produced on the spur of the moment.

Module – a small portion of choreography. In this project, each module has an independent idea and can exist independently from the others.

Performance art – an art form involving the performance of (usually non-narrative) actions in front of an audience, and often combining elements from both the visual and performing arts.

Site specific – artwork created to exist in a certain place. Typically, the artist takes the location into account while planning and creating the artwork. Also refers to performance existing outside the bounds of its traditional place of exhibition.

Technology – in the context of this project, “technology” refers to elements of communication technology, or more broadly, anything electronic that was used.

CHAPTER 3. Inspirational Overview

As suggested by its title, *impulse Present Project* was an intuitive journey through a personal creative process. The questions investigated and procedures conceived were influenced primarily by a twelve-year association with Doug Varone. In artistic creation in general, the origin of personal aesthetics is often difficult to determine. Presumably, personal history often combines with current inspirations to determine creative motivation, as was the case in this particular project.

Doug Varone

Throughout the more than two decades of his choreographic career, Doug Varone has been widely considered one of the most exciting choreographers in the dance field. His company, Doug Varone and Dancers, "one of today's most compelling contemporary dance companies" (Gazette), has been praised for its "expansive choreographic vision, versatility, and technical prowess" (Appalachian). Although *New York Times* veteran critic Anna Kisselgoff once mused that Varone could be regarded as a "choreographer of extremes," a distinctive quality distinguishes his works. Beyond the recognizable long-limbed, fluid physicality expressed by Varone's dancers within his structurally and musically cohesive choreography, it is the abiding interest in exploring the human psyche that characterizes his oeuvre.

It is perhaps this connection to humanity that makes Varone's dances accessible to a wide audience pool. Karen Campbell suggests that this is because his work is "grounded in the subtleties and ambiguities of everyday realities" (Campbell). Relationships and associated emotions displayed by the dancers seem to be given greater choreographic significance than the creation of movement material. His movement choices vary widely in intent, from huge, full-tilt athleticism to the subtlest of gestures. Following the post-modern tradition in questioning whether pedestrian movement can be considered dance, Varone delights in blurring the perceived boundaries of movement categorization. By including common gesture in his movement vocabulary, Varone enables his audiences to more quickly connect with what they see since movements are immediately familiar. Varone's explorations are indicative of a larger concern in demystifying the work the company does, in order to foster greater understanding and appreciation in current and potential audiences (Varone).

Though the specific company casts have changed over the years, Varone's dancers reflect his interest in the human experience. Dancers have ranged in age from 21 to 56 years and represent a larger variety of physiques than are found in many dance companies. Varone has stated a preference for dancers who look like "real people" (Walker), in order to present works that reflect the society of the actual world offstage (Phillips). His creative process also reflects this inclination towards diversity: as one long-time company member commented, "Doug's very appreciative of everybody's contributions, their differences, their uniqueness. We're all very much individuals, and I think he plays upon that" (Campbell).

Varone seems to be an artist who is driven by the impulse of curiosity, continually taking the risk of creative exploration, rather than repeating what is already known. Perhaps one of his most challenging projects was "Ballet Mécanique," which interpreted George Antheil's radical 1924 score of the same name. Departing from his signature humanistic style, Varone created movement for this dance that evoked an "urban-industrial architectural force" (Weiss). Stark geometric scenic projections overlaid the dance, further completing the effect of movement and music which was "a highly rhythmic, often brutalistic piece combining, among other elements, sounds of the industrial age, atonal music, and jazz" (Lehrman). Cheryl Tobey allowed that this was not the first attempt to realize the concept of a mechanical ballet into visual form; others have fulfilled the idea in other artistic mediums (sculpture and film). However, she points out that with each interpretation, the creation has broken new ground. Historically a daunting task, it seemed fitting that Varone was the choreographer to actualize the concept into dance.

Interweaving of Forms

Varone has not confined himself to the dance world, but has made forays into opera, theater, film, and even fashion shows (dougvaroneanddancers.org). He has pushed the boundaries of each form, where musicians, actors and dancers traditionally occupy separate roles. In his 2005 contemporary opera, *Orpheus and Euridice*, the clarinetist plays his instrument barefoot in a crowd of dancers, the singer is hoisted shoulder-high while in full song, and the pianist goes for a ride on the piano, outfitted to move. This collaboration with composer Ricky Ian Gordon especially demonstrated Varone's talent

for interweaving creative elements, seen in his previous opera productions, but never to this extent. Paralleling his enthusiasm for erasing the assumed separation between pedestrian and dance movements, he relishes blurring the line between forms of art (Gold).

With the 1998 production of *Triumph of Love,* Varone joined the short list of modern-dance choreographer who bridged the gap between the worlds of modern dance and Broadway (Dunning). He brought with him substantial experience in plying the balance between form and experimentation in his previous ventures into theatre, though the challenges of Broadway were even more than expected. Although he may have been hired with the intent of bringing a different look to traditional Broadway, the boundaries were often difficult to challenge. Regardless, his voice resonates in the work and is recognized by others in the theatrical community. His guiding philosophy is that ideas are often quashed before they are even attempted. He rejects the all-too-common idea that "This is the way it's done, so that's how it should be done." He has shown disdain for convention by breaking rules, both on Broadway and in his dance-making, arguing instead for the prospect of discovery and potential failure.

Neither

Varone's experience merging the dance and theater worlds was boldly implemented in December, 2000, with the hour-long "danced theater work" (Varone's term) titled *Neither*. The work physically traveled through unused sections of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, as audience members were ushered up and down stairs, through cramped hallways and in and out of dusty rooms. Once inside a "scene,"

audience members were free to position themselves however they wished, as close to or far away from the performers as was comfortable. The choice in physical location was necessarily linked to visual perspective. Susan Yung recounted the feeling of liberation that resulted from the permission to observe the performance from whatever perspective she wished – acting, so to speak, as the cinematographer of her own viewpoint.

Most of the time the spaces were so small that choosing a far perspective wasn't really an option, which was especially exciting when the physicality of the dancers increased in vigor. Audience members were leaned upon, bumped into, manipulated physically. In a pre-performance interview with Tony Phillips, Varone spoke of how the physical integration of spectators must awaken their senses in a visceral way, since their inclusion in the spatial design, however unrehearsed, meant that they had to be just as aware as the performers were about their choices in movement and position.

Wendy Lesser was particularly moved by the conclusion, when the separation between spectator and dancer roles had subtly disappeared, all present seeming to be "guardian-angels," witnessing Nancy's fate. Lesser felt a strong sense of community; although the members were not making simultaneous movement choices, all were behaving with common intent. Perhaps the intimacy of the group helped. Due to the physical constraints of the space, the audience was limited to 20 people per performance.

The reviews were unequivocal; with *Neither*, Varone has created a "highly original, unusually compelling" work (Josephs). It's a "singular event that overflows with piquancy" (Sagolla).

Audience Participation

Perhaps the participatory nature of *Neither* was successful because of its theatrical essence. Audience participation in theatre performances has long been in existence, especially during artistic displays of social activism. One example is Living Stage Theatre, in existence since 1966. It works with audiences drawn primarily from targeted populations (mainly children, especially inner city and disabled, but also the elderly and inmates of D.C. prisons).

Active participation in the creative event is a core tenet of Living Stage's philosophy. Scripts reflect difficult situations faced by the specific audience population, and by presenting these events through the lens of dramatic interpretation, spectators are given a unique opportunity to be witnesses to their own lives. In a workshop session, as a play reaches its climax, the scene is frozen and the spectators take a collaborative role, working with the actors to find a resolution and create the ending. In fact, several endings may be worked out, with audience members stepping into the roles of the actors, even donning pieces of their costumes in the process. This offers the opportunity to re-envision their lives and see new possibilities that might be translated to their real lives. Unlike traditional theatre, where professional actors deliver a polished performance for a passive audience, this kind of theatre focuses more on the process of creative art production as an end to itself. Indeed, the actual scripts do not even fully exist without the input of the audience. Haedicke believes that this kind of participation in the creative event undermines the elitism of "Art," as it focuses instead on the potential of art as a

provocation to view concepts with varying perspectives and open perceptual possibilities. Presumably, this will release the viewer from stagnant and limiting worldviews.

Gaining audience participation during performance, though perhaps unwittingly, has also been the object of guerrilla performance art, with its reputation for artistic activism and emphasis on socio-political commentary. Its methods have evolved to include the use of high-technology in performances. In the work, *Schizophrenic Cyborg* (8), Sheridan, *et al*. outfitted a performer with a wireless computer display on the front of his body to which a hidden accomplice feeds images. Spectators interact with the performer, influenced by the various contents of the display. However, as soon as an observer participates in the performance, the observer becomes a participant, since others are able to observe their interplay. The relationship of such a construct is outlined in the authors' Performance Triad model (4), designed to analyze the complex tripartite interactions during this type of performance. Although the authors of this study devised this structure in order to analyze technology-based performance art, the presence of technology does not seem necessary to activate the performative interactions.

In this study the authors look to guerrilla performance instead of traditional theatre to provide fertile ground for their experimentation. In guerrilla performance, the performer is placed in close proximity to the audience, making interaction more likely, emotional manipulation more intense, and the complexity of tripartite interactions rich. Artists have extracted from guerrilla procedure the aspect of allowing spontaneous reactions from the performer, the ability to "make decisions on the fly" (Lim) in order to

evoke visceral reaction. The performer has autonomy to react and act, based upon responses from the audience.

Persuading audience members to participate in dance is perhaps more challenging in many ways. Even more than in theatre, where dramatic storylines provide familiarity, the abstract themes of dance often discomfit people and make them retreat from experiencing it. However, abstraction need not be complex, and the connection with dance can be simply found in the idea that all living creatures, even when standing still, move. Ironically then, these barriers to the appreciation of dance may actually be overcome by participation. In the reconstruction of one of Anna Halprin's 1960's pioneering experiment in participatory dance, historian Janice Ross, assuming that she was only to report on the event, found her notebook taken away and herself thrust into the piece. Initially skeptical, she ended up being impressed by this event that brought three generations together to dance, reflecting, "to see a 17-year old doing lead-and-follow hand dancing with an 87-year-old former Lindy-hopper from Harlem – I found it very touching and very, very tender…people had some sense of having passed through something together" (Palmer).

Attention

The positive effects of active participation have been well documented in educational theory research. Highlighted in a respected teacher training textbook is the phrase, "Engaging and involving students on task is the sine qua non for curriculum implementation" (Saphier and Gower, 15). It seems that the essential ingredient in effective learning is attention. Without capturing a person's attention, it matters not what

is being presented; the information will not be retained. The authors delineate categories of teacher behaviors, which may perhaps be applied to other situations: "Desisting," "Alerting," "Enlisting," "Acknowledging," and "Winning." The physical participation that is required of audience participants seems to fit the category "Enlisting" most fully. Although the textbook lists specific classroom strategies, the basic premise is to recruit people's interest in order to gain voluntary involvement in the activity (19). As the title, *The Skillful Teacher*, suggests, the ability to successfully engage people's interest is a skill that may be acquired.

Improvisation

In studies of creativity, researchers such as Kent De Spain are investigating the nature of improvisational awareness and how it can be used in research into unconscious creativity. He draws comparisons to the state of improvisation that one consciously engages within a physical artistic expression and the unintentional state of improvisation that each of us lives in daily, postulating that with greater awareness in each temporal moment we may learn more about our own desires and intentions (27). For De Spain, improvisation is practice in awareness, and since reality is based on what is sensed, through dance improvisation one might gain a more refined experience in life.

Conclusion

In all stages of *impulse Present Project*, the influence of Doug Varone and Dancers can be seen. The movement material relies heavily upon human aspects; relationships amongst the dancers are as important as communication with the audience. Curiosity is the driving factor, which permeates the combined aspects of creativity and

teaching. Each influences the other, which lends potency to the creative act and the personal history that dictates one's preferences.

CHAPTER 4. Research Methodology

Maintaining a fluid attitude throughout the choreographic process of *impulse Present Project* was important, both for the choreographer and the dancers. The method of working was largely unfamiliar to many, and the potential for frustration was evident. Creating this work within a university setting also generated particular challenges. The dancers were also students; the choreographer was also a teacher; therefore, the entire process was a learning opportunity. Each rehearsal was an exercise in design inquiry, a Deweyan concept that examines problem-solving in fields that are complex, uncertain and unclear, such as education or art. As soon as the researcher defines and attempts to solve a problem, the resultant changes brought about by the solution create new issues to be considered (Schon). The constant reflection in-action and reflection on reflection-in-action certainly describes the immediacy of acting upon the creative prompt and response. The choreographic process is indeed a form of what Lewin termed "action research" (Schon).

Research procedures: choreographic processes

The initial set of rehearsals was spent creating many individual "modules" (solos, duets and small group pieces) that included both choreographed movement and improvisational sequences. Two types of modules evolved:

Movement Modules:

The characteristics of these modules were heavily influenced by the moods and personalities of the specific dancers present at each rehearsal. This was intended to incite a variety of expression in the overall spectacle. Each dancer had a different collection of modules, corresponding to the rehearsals the dancer attended.

User-Friendly Module:

The choreography for the *user-friendly* module was built as a loose outline of events through which each dancer would guide an audience member. Dancers relied heavily on improvisation, since the reactions of the audience members were unpredictable, and each event could be modified to the abilities of the specific audience member. Duets could be as technically and creatively complex or simple as each audience member felt comfortable with. Rehearsals for this module consisted mostly of experimenting with, and expanding upon, commonly known gestures (shaking hands, "patty cake," follow-the-leader).

We created the modules during the 2008 spring semester, one module per rehearsal. In an attempt to anticipate scheduling difficulties due to the size of the cast, I enacted an "open-attendance" policy, with varying success. Chance methodology was used to determine casting for each module. The particular dancers who showed up for rehearsal were cast in the module being created that day.

When the cast reconvened in the 2008 fall semester, dancers reconstructed the modules, and I wove them into a set sequence. Spontaneity still remained, though less than before. I became more specific about logistic and aesthetic details; however, some decisions were still left up to the dancers' discretion mostly involving partnering and spacing choices. Parameters were discussed and delineated, based upon how much information dancers needed in order for the module to occur. Generally, the least amount of prior planning was preferable in order to encourage spontaneity, although this did not always set up the safest course of action.

Delimitations

Dancers for this project were cast from the pool of GMU dance majors who would be on campus during the 2008 fall semester. I favored people with a willingness to experiment and cast a balanced mix of upper and underclassmen. The large size of the cast (22 people) was necessary to allow multiple modules to be performed simultaneously and create many possibilities within each module for varying partnerships and roles.

In considering possible performance venues, my advisors and I systematically vetted off-campus locations. James Lepore suggested that the project might be linked to Clarendon Day, a day-long neighborhood street festival located in Arlington, Virginia. Subsequent inquiries to the festival organizers led to an outdoor courtyard near to the Clarendon Metrorail station, at 3100 Clarendon Boulevard. Responding to concerns about inclement weather possibly interfering with the performance, I scheduled a second performance during the Fall for the Book Festival, an organization that invites departments to contribute outdoor performances around campus during their yearly

festival. Since the festival in 2008 was occurring on the same week as the Clarendon Day event, it seemed an ideal opportunity. I requested a performance time for early in the week in the lower-level courtyard outside of the Johnson Center on the GMU campus.

Because each performance was to occur in a public courtyard, with audience members surrounding and potentially passing through the dancers, some delineation of performer from audience was necessary in order to maintain visual choreographic connectivity throughout such a large, outdoor space. I ordered bright red tee shirts and designed a logo to be printed on them. The costumes would appear casual, yet allow the dancers some distinction.

Planning the performances for September 2008, was a calculated effort to take advantage of the relative calm of student and departmental scheduling before the semester became too busy. Even so, a potential conflict prompted the decision to restructure the piece to implement a shorter duration of approximately 35 minutes. The dance department administration realized that the dancers were needed for an event on the GMU campus that was scheduled on the same day as the Clarendon Day performance. That event was slated for later in the afternoon, so *impulse Present* could still be performed, as long it was short enough to ensure that the students had time to travel to GMU and be ready to dance at 3:00. The performance needed to be scheduled as late as feasible after the 12:00 start time for the Clarendon Day festivities, to allow the crowds to gather and therefore have the largest possible audience. A start time of 12:40 and duration of 35 minutes would give a safe cushion of time for the dancers to arrive at their next event promptly.

Since the inclusion of improvisation in the project decreased consistency in timing and sequence of events, I desired to employ more of a soundscape than setting the dance absolutely to a musical score. Dr. Michael Nickens, a recent collaborator and personal friend, is also a colleague in the music department at GMU. We were primed to collaborate on another project and the improvisational focus of *impulse Present* seemed ideal for that partnership. Nickens is experienced in music improvisation and unafraid to physicalize and innovate. He also had several students who were interested in exploring the process; the interdisciplinary educational potential was quite attractive.

Limitations

In general, the student dancers had limited experience in improvisation and were naturally underdeveloped in rehearsal skills. There was varying ability among the dancers to access their creative impulses, understand complex patterns, and retain information. There were also issues surrounding casting such a large group for one project. With classes, other departmental projects, and work schedules, not much common time existed in order to meet together as an entire group. The musicians' schedules seemed even more challenging to coordinate. Dr. Nickens was committed to supplying musicians, although until the last minute, nobody knew who or how many musicians would actually participate.

The performance spaces also presented some challenges. We had to re-choreograph much of the movement where dancers slide their bodies across the floor, since the concrete surface of the space was rough. Since the choreography included using trees, much rehearsal was done outside of the GMU Performing Arts Building.

Both sidewalk and lawn spaces were used, and encounters with passersby provided some experience of what might happen in the performance.

Support was granted from GMU Dance Department funds; however, funding was limited for this project. In-kind donations comprised the majority of the budget's income.

Because the aim of this research project was to document awareness of audience members as observers and as potential participants in a dance event, approval needed to be obtained from the Human Subjects Review Board. Appendix A shows the HSRB application form and subsequent approval letter.

Technology

I selected four "Cyborg" dancers to don wearable technology, capturing images from inside of the dance to be fed wirelessly to their partner receivers that were connected to nearby TV/VCRs. Cat Buchanan, the GMU costume-mistress and Aislinn Lacorazza, her assistant and one of my dancers, constructed the cyborg costume. They sewed spy-cameras into sports bras and modified the tee shirts to uncover the apertures, shown in Appendix B. During the testing of multiple cameras in the outdoor space, on live, moving dancers, strength of frequency was an issue. At first it appeared that skin-contact was necessary for a strong signal; however, during the second performance, we found that the system supported no more than two cameras running simultaneously before cross-interference prevented clear signals.

Future viewers of this work will be able to gain multiple perspectives, captured by focusing video cameras on separate aspects of the event. One camera captured the

overall space, a second camera focused on the audience, and the third camera was hand-held by a student videographer, who was able to be in closer proximity to the dancers in order to gain a more intimate perspective. The images from the spy-cameras were recorded on VHS videotapes and then transferred to digital form.

Pilot Studies

We conducted several rehearsals in the GMU performance site in the weeks prior to the performance in order to become accustomed to an environment very different than that of the dance studio. The dancers were already accustomed to dancing outdoors, on uneven surfaces, but each rehearsal run gave the dancers the opportunity to play with spacing choices and deal with unexpected behavior of people who came into their proximity.

The *User-friendly* module presented some special challenges. In creating this sequence, it was necessary to involve non-dancers in order to gain an understanding of how movement is perceived by them. Friends who happened to walk by during these rehearsals were recruited by a casual invitation to "test" the module and provide reactions. Parameters of this module drastically changed according to the feedback given.

Conclusion

The creation of this work was primarily focused on the moment-to-moment process. The environment of academia, although wealthy in raw materials of dancers and studio space, was also fraught with scheduling conflicts both on individual and departmental levels. However, as all cast members were engaged in the "action research"

(Schon) of this creative process, problem-solving and offering suggestions, my hope is that the end product had personal relevance to each dancer.

CHAPTER 5. Findings

For both performances, the improvisational nature of the events, including some logistical elements that were unknown prior to each performance, meant that maintaining the relaxed attitude set up in the rehearsals would be helpful to all parties. Both dancers and choreographer needed to be able to make spontaneous decisions and respond to environmental prompts. It seemed much like an adventure unfolding, a journey to be taken together. A DVD containing a recording of each event is found in Appendix C.

1st Performance – George Mason University, Johnson Center Courtyard

The dancers proved capable of presenting themselves with little guidance from the choreographer, save a schedule of pre-production events. No stage manager was appointed; dancers were responsible to prepare themselves appropriately. As all dancers were engaged in classes throughout the morning, the choreographer handled the set-up of equipment. As dancers arrived, they busied themselves with calibrating the radio signals to the cyborg dancers and passing out flyers to attract audience members. The flyer, shown in Appendix D, gives a short explanation of the project and lists the cast.

Unsurprisingly, the research population for this on-campus performance was comprised mostly of college students with some faculty and university staff also in attendance. The performance was located at one of the entrances of the main university student center and generally receives heavy traffic, both from passersby and from people

entering and exiting the building. Audience members spontaneously attracted from this population positioned themselves at many viewpoints surrounding the event. There was an optimal perspective from the center entrance to the courtyard where the audience members who had come purposefully to view the performance were invited to orient themselves. A long and low wall running along the front of the courtyard provided seating for many audience members as well as platforms for the TV/VCRs, located by the common power source transmitted from a nearby generator. Appendix E shows the layout of the Johnson Center Courtyard.

Several student volunteers monitored the video equipment. The primary student videographer organized the placement of the two stationary cameras. One camera was set up in the upper level of the Johnson Center through the large picture window that overlooks the courtyard. The camera was essentially positioned "upstage," looking out of the second story window of the Johnson Center and therefore poised to capture the audience's reactions. The other stationary camera was positioned a short distance away, slightly up on a hill. As this recording was for documenting purposes, the cameraperson maintained a wide recording perspective. The student videographer handled the third camera and moved with it along the perimeter.

The piece lasted 28½ minutes from the dancers' entrance to the conclusion of the last *user-friendly* duet. The dancers stayed focused, creating compelling scenes and fulfilling technical movement details. In addition, they maintained a cohesive sense of relationships and community while performing, an ability that is often difficult for

dancers to achieve. Keeping a relaxed sense of timing was difficult for the dancers in practice runs; in performance they paced themselves and did not rush.

The cyborg-technology was ineffective. There were sporadic moments of clarity on each screen, but on the whole, constant static was displayed throughout the event. At times people would glance at the images, but then lose interest fairly soon when nothing consistent could be discerned.

An estimated 900 people passed through the area during the duration of the piece and another approximately 90 people either stayed to watch the rest of the program or were intentionally present from the beginning. At 8 ½ minutes into the dance, the traffic increased dramatically for about 14 minutes, which obviously signaled a break between classes. Many people would stop for a while and watch, before continuing their journey. A few people actually crossed into the performance area, but most people seemed to be alerted to the event, either because of the uniform red tee shirts, or by the focused presence of the onlookers. It was almost as entertaining as viewing the performers to watch those few people who seemed oblivious to the event, walking into the space and realizing that they were part of the spectacle.

At the beginning of the user-friendly module, the invitation of "now it's your turn!" produced a dispersing effect. However, there were enough people who volunteered to participate to partner with every one of the 19 dancers; in fact, one volunteer was leftover to be partnered with the choreographer. The natures of the physical conversations were varied. As expected, those people who had experience with dance and improvisation were quicker to experiment with the structure; however, all

duets seemed to flow well, and participants never looked like they were at a loss for movement.

Post-performance feedback from fellow dancers and friends was fairly positive. As well as enjoying the work itself, they had a good time watching people who had spontaneously stopped to watch. During practice sessions, conversations were struck up with curious onlookers. One man commented on the aura of energy transference amongst the community of dancers, likening it to the practice of Reiki, which deals with the idea that "an unseen *life force energy* flows through us and…causes us to be alive" (Reiki.org). Curiously, the formality of the performance seemed to eliminate that atmosphere of approachability during the piece and conversations with spectators, which had casually developed during the rehearsals, were conducted after the conclusion of the performance.

Since this was the first of two performances, feedback was indeed very important. Two main comments were repeated. First, the sounds of the string instruments unfortunately were lost in the large outdoor space. Two musicians had accompanied the group from the beginning, one playing a trumpet and the other playing an acoustic guitar. Another musician playing an upright bass cello came later in the performance. The second comment dealt with the *user-friendly* module. Issuing the verbal invitation interrupted the flow of the piece and changed the comfortable dynamics that the audience had felt up until that point. Suddenly the audience was on the spot, and instead of gently bringing the audience into the piece, the invitation drove them away. A lesser issue concerned the lack of closure. There wasn't a clear indication that the piece was over;

those present instinctively broke into scattered applause. Lastly, the reason for the cyborg-technological failure was unknown directly after the performance, but a little research provided several options to try for the next performance attempt.

2nd Performance – Clarendon Day: Arlington, VA

As the second performance was off-campus, several additional logistical details needed to be worked out. As a group the dancers arranged carpooling, the musicians organized themselves, and the choreographer took care of transporting production pieces along with her tiny crew (her husband). Set-up began several hours before the dancers arrived.

As a small neighborhood festival, Clarendon Day produced a more varied research population than the GMU performance. People of all ages attended, including families with small children. Unfortunately, the crowds did not start to gather until later in the day, which meant that audience size was not large. The light rain which was sporadically falling may have been a contributing factor. Even the advertising by the dancers, which consisted of traveling through the larger festival space performing duets and inviting passersby to come to the show, wasn't terribly effective, since most of the people present at that time were workers setting up their displays. Between invited and spontaneous audience members, the number of spectators present at any time throughout the event hovered around 66, as least until the *user-friendly* module, which again had a dispersing effect, but less intensely than before. On the whole, perhaps approximately 120 people witnessed some part of the event.

The performance space was less open and accessible than the GMU courtyard, more of a cul-de-sac on the outskirts of the festival grounds. It did provide a cohesive space so that the piece was framed nicely in a confined area. There was also a fairly obvious front, where audience members instinctively arranged themselves. A light, brief rain that began at the onset of the performance motivated many spectators to huddle at the sides of the space, where awnings provided some shelter.

Since the space was fairly secluded, the cameras could be set up at the back of the space and left unmonitored. The student videographer carried the third camera and used the space and vantage points creatively. She played with proximity, especially during the *user-friendly* module, where she actually entered into the fray.

The piece lasted 34½ minutes from the dancers' entrance to the conclusion of the piece. The dancers seemed even more comfortable in their performances during this run. The musicians certainly helped the process. Dr. Nickens was able to attend this performance with four additional musicians. They created a vivid soundscape that inspired the dancers to enhance their creative choices. In addition, during the *user-friendly* module, they displayed more confidence and spontaneity, leading the audience participants in particularly inventive and fun duets.

During the dancer debriefing session, the group had revised the choreography leading up to the *user-friendly* module. By not verbally and conspicuously announcing the invitation, instead offering physical encouragement to likely participants first, the transition was more seamless, and cohesiveness was maintained throughout the performance. The strategy seemed successful, with most of the dancers taking a second

turn with new partners. A nice complement of people participated, including several children and obvious non-dancers. We also had added a simple ending, which gave a clear indication of closure.

This time around, the cyborg-technology was more successful. Removing two cameras and placing the receivers higher in vertical space cleared up most static. The only issue was keeping the apertures of the cameras aimed forward, instead of up; the placement of flat-backed cameras upon the cyborg dancers' chests caused an upward focus, something that was partially alleviated by some creative padding. Unfortunately, because the nearest power source was located across the street, the TV/VCRs had to be arranged behind most of the audience members; not too many spectators even noticed them. However, some satisfying images were recorded. Appendix F shows the layout of the Clarendon Day Courtyard.

During this entire event, the dancers comported themselves with maturity. After all group members arrived at their call time, they reframed the events to the new space and troubleshot any problematic issues they anticipated. During the *user-friendly* module and afterwards, in conversations with audience members, they were generous and articulate.

Unanticipated Results

The *user-friendly* module turned out to be the most potent part of the event. We anticipated that there probably would be some hesitation to participate, but we didn't know what would trigger that hesitation or what would induce audience members to volunteer. The effect of the verbal invitation seemed to generate instant trepidation, as it

required them to take initiative to volunteer and come forward. In fact, individual dancers coming to them and not giving the option to refuse actually seemed to quash misgivings.

Of course, more research could be done to improve the effectiveness of the cyborg-technology, judging from the second performance when the live-feed worked; however, the concept itself was ineffective. The resultant images were too bouncy and didn't really give the inside-the-dance perspective that was intended. Perhaps a steady-cam live-feed from inside the dance would be more potent. The audience-focused cameras were also somewhat ineffective, being too far away to capture specific reactions. Having a dedicated cameraperson to record individuals or small groups of people would have been more helpful.

As expected, when given the opportunity to be more involved in creative decision-making, the students rose to the occasion. It was interesting to see the social dynamics when group processes were occurring, with some students more comfortable in the leadership role than others. All members cooperated equally, however, and when individually interacting with non-project-members, each student acted with initiative and enthusiasm. Participants from both events were invited to write responses in several journals; those responses, as well as feedback acquired through informal conversation, were extremely positive.

Conclusion

In keeping fluid in procedure and process, this project did lose some certainty of execution that comes with a more planned product, but this attitude also gave more

opportunity for creative decision-making and autonomy to all parties involved. True, some events didn't occur in exactly the ways I had anticipated; however, that is the nature of creative work involving uncertain conditions and improvisational decision-making. Trying to achieve set results would surely have lessened the creative adventure!

CHAPTER 6. Reflection and Evaluation

As a piece of designed choreography, *impulse Present* ended up not being terribly intriguing; however, choreographic innovation and skill weren't the true focus of the project. I was more interested in developing the working process, using unfamiliar methods and testing my reserves in dealing with unexpected circumstances. In that respect, both successes and disappointments manifested themselves; regardless, all findings were enlightening. My choreographic concepts changed dramatically over the course of building the work, when obstacles necessitated modifications. Though dealing with obstructions can be an anxiety-provoking situation, I feel that my keeping a fluid attitude throughout the creative process mitigated much of those possible feelings of frustration. By embracing instinct and responding to the dancers' suggestions, rather than insisting on my point-of-view, I had hoped to create a piece of work in which the dancers felt fully invested. I feel proud of their artistic growth as well as my own progress in my ability to direct complicated choreographic processes.

During the previous semesters when I had been dabbling in traditional proscenium-stage-oriented choreography, I found that the most enjoyable time was inevitably at the beginning of the creative period, when possibilities were still open. The satisfaction in solving choreographic problems was rewarding, to be sure, but the moments that really excited me were during the initial collaborative process where all

participants present within a room combined to spark ideas and subsequently reveal their instinctual creative minds. Very dear to me was a 2007 duet that I created in a scant two rehearsals with a couple of senior GMU dance students. The dance was fresh, yet rich, with their creative input. The spontaneous act has ever been exciting to me, even from the early days with Varone. It was very important that the movement material generated should be derived from the people present in the room who would also perform it later. The material has history to it; the memories of its origins make the performance of it richer.

Within the module creation period during the spring, the "one-a-day" rule that we maintained was at turns both satisfying and inadequate. It was refreshing to allow the mood of both students and choreographer to dictate the character of each piece, and to spark ideas from the immediate moment of inspiration. Yet, sometimes we would just be getting somewhere with our exploration and then have to stop. Many of the modules would have benefited from an extended period of experimentation.

In the fall, when we reconvened after the summer vacation, the inevitable changes in departmental and personal scheduling made maintaining the original groups difficult, and many casting alterations occurred which ended up unintentionally filtering the dancers into their respective classes. The freshmen and the upperclassmen had different schedules, and I needed whole casts present in order to shape the module effectively and efficiently. This was an unfortunate side effect, this division amongst the cast, yet all in all it wasn't too upsetting or counterproductive. Despite a post-performance lament from

one of the dancers that expressed regret over the division, for most dancers there seemed to be enough moments in the entire piece that united the company.

The original plan was quite ambitious; I knew this early on, as did my many advisors. I think that since I didn't know my limits yet, I decided to go ahead and see how many components I could handle. Mistakes are sometimes the best teachers, and I wanted to make my own mistakes and not censor my ideas before trying them out.

The vision of a continuously moving environment that an audience would traverse was inspired by a visit to the National Zoo in Washington, D.C. I very much enjoyed the encompassing sensation of being in the outdoor flight cage at the birdhouse. I was less taken with some of the other exhibits where spectators view the animals from a distance, separated by glass or nets. The three-dimensionality of the flight cage scenario, where spectators are active participants in the environment, traversing the space, appealed to me. They necessarily make decisions of where to place themselves and where to look, perhaps reacting to multi-directional stimuli in the space.

I had an admittedly romantic conception of the dance project, envisioning the dancers almost as different species of animals, engaged in various tasks. The spectator would traverse the dance savanna, seeing a herd of "gazelle" leaping by in the distance while a pair of "red-tailed monkeys" grooms each other next to some nearby young trees. They might stoop down to examine "fungus" growing underneath a low overhang. The landscape would be visually layered, either with sculptural installments or by architectural design, and musical strains would float in varying decibels from diverse locations. Each spectator's experience within this setting would be individual and

personal. The event would need to last for at least two hours, enough time for many small groups of people to pass through and take the time they wished, and a large cast was necessary for the dancers to alternate performing and resting in order to sustain energy throughout the long duration.

Being a teacher of my dancers, not just the choreographer of this project, definitely influenced my desire to work in a way that would advance the experience of the students I cast. I wanted to experiment with improvisation, something that interests me for its collaborative nature when used within choreographic processes. However, my dancers had not much familiarity with improvisation in performance, and I wasn't really certain of how to build an ongoing atmosphere with improvisatory elements. In my classes, I always hope to model a curiosity about life and learning by sharing that I am also involved in my own studies of dance, intellect and life. Therefore, I decided to leap into the fray, for I believe that the shared process of discovery can lead to a more generous learning process for all involved.

In addition to all of that, I wanted to somehow include material from a previous work, *Movement Poetry Project*. Its concept employs translating words given by the audience into a particular movement language. Using improvisational games and capturing movement from the people surrounding us, we had developed small bursts of repeatable movement which we paired with words from the English language. The dancers were able to instantly embody choreography, based on combinations of these words. The participatory nature of how the *Movement Poetry Project* gathered input from the audience seemed to fit *impulse Present Project*, although how it would be

incorporated into the overall work was yet to be seen. I was toying with it being a separate event, linked to the main work, as a "café" where people could go to refresh themselves by choreographing something, complete with a menu card of words that they could have processed and performed.

Obviously the choreographic conception of the overall piece changed dramatically, and several of the initial ideas never made it into the final product. The main impetus for structural change occurred after realizing that an event on the GMU campus which some of my dancers were very likely involved with, was scheduled for the same day as the off-campus performance. The process of deciding where and when the performance would occur had been long and convoluted, however, and rescheduling was an unappetizing option.

Since the result of keeping both events intact was that the window of time in which the performance could occur suddenly narrowed, the two- to three-hour timeframe that I had originally envisioned shrank dramatically. Therefore, the option of having small audience groups pass through, which would have taken some time to process, was eliminated. A more traditional piece was decided upon. As well, the dramatic sculptural set never materialized. I became concerned after several weeks into the process that perhaps I had too many components to keep track of. I had had preliminary conversations with Art and Visual Technology faculty member Tom Ashcraft about the design and logistics of the set, but there were so many unknowns at that time. I didn't really know where the actual performance site would be within the Clarendon Day layout. I didn't know whether there were suitable sculptural elements already present.

One idea was to use student works from GMU art classes; coordinating an effort with the art students, however, seemed unnecessarily complicated, and somehow the idea just fell to the wayside. As I reflect upon this, I think that I made the right decision. Perhaps now that the piece has been created, I could adapt it to a sculptural set. It would be an interesting challenge.

During the entire process, questions about the amount of formality needed kept coming up. How specific do I need to be about location planning and scheduling? Can I be fairly spontaneous about how I conduct rehearsals? Within the choreography itself, what should the mood of the piece appear to be? The beginning of any piece sets the stage, especially when there isn't a stage. Within a site-specific work, every aspect needs to be designed, including how the dancers approach the performance space. Their actions set up first impressions of how the space will be perceived. This is not an issue for proscenium-oriented presentations with implied theatrical capabilities.

I have always been a fan of pieces that seem to form organically out of the surrounding environment. In many musicals, dances seem to emerge from people having conversations. Two people discussing their relationship fall into movement and song as if the topic is too potent to express in prose. Or, all of a sudden on the town square, a whole crowd breaks into choreographed movement, as if there was an order to the universe that we perhaps need to have the sensitivity to be aware of. Of course, the musical theater world itself is quite stylized, while in the modern dance genre, artists are usually dealing with a closer approximation to how everyday life and art intersect. Last year in Suzanne Carbonneau's Contemporary Trends class, learning about John Cage's

and Allan Kaprow's philosophies provided an affirmation for my partiality, and I desired my piece, both in appearance and creation, to be more like a *happening*, rather than a studied effort.

I had initially intended the dancers to assemble from the crowd, as if they were just members of the crowd spontaneously deciding to participate, but James Lepore, advised that a clear opening idea would give the piece more impact. For the GMU performance, I assembled the dancers in a nearby place and directed them to process in single-file to take their places in a line along the front edge of the space. Their ringing the edge allowed them to regard their untrodden performance space before stepping into it; the opening walk served to initiate the space. In the Clarendon performance, we tried a mix of ideas: the performers filtered in from across the street and formed the line at the back of the space. This meant that they had already passed through the performance space, so the initial opening walk had less impact. Although there was the option of assembling at a "backstage" location, the performance space was in an alcove on the edge of the festival space and therefore had less traffic than the GMU performance. I had hoped potential audience members would be drawn towards the performance in the wake of the dancers passing through the crowd. The dancers had also just done their "advertisements," which were intended to gain the interest of passersby and direct them to the performance.

I had never been to Clarendon Day, so I had no idea of what the atmosphere would be like. I had envisioned that the festival was more spread apart; we found that the booths actually were fairly centrally clustered. The idea to send dancers out to advertise

and recruit audience members came about when the piece was conceptualized as the dance savanna scenario. During the 2-3 hour duration, small groups of dancers would take turns traveling through the crowd and performing modules. The intention was that interested parties would ask what the dancers were doing and be directed to the performance site. When the piece had to be shortened to the half-hour duration, I instead sent all groups out at one time, shortly before the performance was to begin. I believe the stratagem would have worked if there were anybody around to witness it. If I repeated such a performance next year, I would definitely schedule it for later in the day.

In trying to strike a balance between formal and casual presentation, the appearance of the dancers themselves was important. I have a general distaste for conspicuous dancewear for costumes, especially for pieces that have a humanistic bent to them. I didn't want my dancers to look other than human, yet I felt that some visual coherence would be helpful to attract attention. I thought that just a tee shirt and plain black pants would give a clean and natural look, not distracting to the work. In the end, I chose a bright red color, not to be completely garish, yet intended to stand out when the shirts were grouped together.

I don't know what would have happened if I had chosen the slow assembling option or costumed the dancers in their own pedestrian clothing. I imagine that it would have been less of an "Event." Perhaps there would have been more interesting interaction with people walking through the space and dancers needing to deal with unexpected obstacles. At the least, it would have seemed less of a display that should not be disturbed. An alternate focus for my project would have been to concentrate

exclusively on developing those guerrilla interactions with unsuspecting passersby. The project might have been an extended series of happenings that would appear to be a natural extension of life already in progress – the dancers, clothed in pedestrian clothing, conducting intimate modules across the space. Moving in and out of pedestrian movement, they might seem to be just ordinary people deciding to express their thoughts in the moment through movement. They would be dressed in the manner of hoi polloi, with backpacks at GMU and casual weekend wear at Clarendon Day. The purpose of guerrilla performance art like this, less presentational and more ubiquitous, would be to subversively spread the idea of movement in life throughout society. An improvisational theatre group, Improv Everywhere, takes advantage of this. In a food court in a mall, sixteen performers staged a spontaneous musical; those other patrons of the mall had no idea what was happening. At one point, a policeman approaches and begins to interrogate the singers, but then he joins into the play, and it becomes evident that he was part of the scene all along. Spectators had no idea who was "in" on the script and who was just like them, observing. Although this kind of event makes for entertaining spectacle, sometimes I think it actually makes people more inhibited to react to surrounding events because in this age of candid cameras and Reality TV, they are more suspicious of being manipulated.

Many people are afraid of dance, of being watched while dancing, or of being ridiculed for trying to dance when they've had no training. I wished to confront those fears openly rather than implicate audience members surreptitiously. Similar to the arrangements in *Schizophrenic Cyborg*, where the audience was voluntarily present and

willing participants in the tripartite interactions provoked by the performers, the audience participants of *impulse Present* were aware they were being watched and that they were contributing to the artistry of the dance. This work wasn't about encouraging people to discard notions of when dance is acceptable in everyday life. Rather, the intention was to invite the spectators to envision themselves as being able to perform movement, thereby forging common interests and increasing support for the art form in general. In order to do that, it was necessary to get the public dancing, not just participating via verbal interactions, as in many other performance pieces that employ audience participation elements.

In practice runs at GMU, dancers wore rehearsal clothing and behaved fairly casually in the moments when they weren't dancing. This is in stark contrast with a traditional performance, which is a generally focused and serious event. Passersby still stopped and watched, but not as many as during the actual performance. Of course the invited audience wasn't present during rehearsals, and we had no musicians. One interesting side effect was that the casual nature of those rehearsals encouraged conversations to be struck up. Prentice, one of the dancers in the project, even persuaded a couple of students to participate in the *user-friendly* module. He reported that the students had felt more comfortable participating in the module because they had had previous personal interaction with him. Based on this, I asked the dancers to hand out programs and interact with people ahead of the performance. It didn't seem to have the same effect, possibly because of the formality of those interactions. Similarly to an usher dealing with all members of the audience, it didn't have a personal feel to it. Prentice had

conversed with the students while the dance was in progress, answering questions as they were watching. Perhaps I should have built some personal conversation moments into the work?

Although improvisation was used for much of the creative process, most of the modules ended up being fairly set. As we were defining the rules for each of the modules, we experimented with trying to keep the most freedom of choice possible in the performance of the choreography. Not all modules made it into the work, but for those that did, the variables left to the dancers' discretion mostly concerned where the dancers chose to place themselves in the space and who partnered with whom in duets. Transitions also had elements of choice regarding who might decide to begin the next process and when that would happen. In the creation of several of the modules, we had experimented with more advanced improvisational skills and the results weren't consistently engaging. The more successful modules had tighter parameters; more elements were set. There is more risk in allowing the performers more control over the elements of a work, and I feel as though I had played it safe, which isn't a particularly satisfying realization. I wonder if I could have pushed the students more, had I known more about guiding improvisations or had I had more time, since the method to increasing effectiveness as improvisers surely involves spending copious amounts of time actually doing it.

One overall element that was entirely dependent upon the dancers' calculations was the tempo of the performance — the timing between and within the modules. Because there was no set music or rhythm, it was up to the dancers' internal time-sense to

set the pace. It took some explanation and much fine-tuning during run-throughs to instill my aesthetic in the dancers. In a larger sense, I also desired to increase the dancers' sensitivity to the importance of the time element in general. We asked ourselves the questions: what needed to happen, and in what order should the events happen? In my composition classes, I explain that one aspect of choreography that a choreographer may consider is how the audience's perceptions are tied to contrasts in timing. For instance, how long does it take for the audience to be able to recognize and understand a specific theme, and when can a new idea be introduced without overwhelming the viewer? In my own work, it has been important to me to consider what the audience is experiencing and to direct events accordingly. In *impulse Present*, since my ultimate purpose wasn't to craft each moment of a performance from a pre-determined vision, the focus became on developing a common aesthetic understanding amongst all of us, dancers and choreographer.

At the very beginning of the project, my initial concept was admittedly a trifle vague. I didn't know how to achieve my vision; however, I trusted that I would, with my dancers, come up with something interesting. Most of the students whom I cast had worked with me previously and were familiar with the collaborative way that I work. In a manner similar to Doug Varone's methods, I often state an idea and ask for the dancers to react creatively to the prompt and interpret my suggestion. For those freshmen who were uninitiated in that process, the first several rehearsals must have been quite strange. During the very first rehearsal, I had divided the dancers into groups, based upon their preferences for solo, duet, trio and group work, and gave them instructions to play with

the concepts. Three freshmen had elected to work together on a trio of lion cubs playing. The freshmen didn't know what to do and seemed reluctant and embarrassed. But they learned from the example of the upperclassmen, who dove right in without hesitation. To their credit, which fulfilled my expectations of their ability to become autonomous artists, the freshmen quickly adapted to this new way of working. Once given the opportunity to make decisions, they were eager to offer suggestions and contribute.

Varone says that when he begins a work, he doesn't plan anything. I don't know if that's really true anymore, but during many of the works that I was involved in creating, we certainly began with an open slate. Varone would improvise movement; we would "catch" and manipulate it in the moment, letting the piece organically grow. Unlike many choreographers who are immediately married to their music, making the movement fit the music and predetermined intent, Varone usually had several pieces of music on hand during the initial creative period, waiting to determine the best fit. During Question and Answer sessions with audience members, where we performers finally learned about the background of pieces we had been creating, Varone oftentimes stated that somewhere in the process, "a door would open" and then the direction the piece is supposed to go in quickly becomes apparent. This is similar to the Zen saying, "You have allowed the cloth to weave the cloth" (Blom and Chaplin, 86). This attitude made for an exciting process when we dancers were active threads within the fabric of Varone's creativity.

Modules

Not all of the modules were included in the final product. Some of them lacked visual interest; some relied on set pieces that weren't available in the performance spaces; and some were too similar to modules that were already integrated into the dance. Each module, regardless of inclusion in the final performances, presented separate challenges and learning outcomes. Following is an examination of the significant modules, in the order that they are performed in the work. For simplicity's sake, to reference them later, we gave each module a unique name, many of them intentionally humorous.

Snake Line – this opening module was derived from a simple improvisation exercise where one person makes a shape in space and each additional person makes a shape that connects physically to the shape that is accumulating. The group then disengages one by one, dissolving what was just created. I wanted this module to keep sequencing, so I modified the rules slightly: each additional person connected only to the last person who added on, creating a line. In order to make the module last for a while, dancers also removed people from the beginning of the line, which kept a pool of dancers available.

Little Shop Duet – after the *Snake Line Module* has gone on long enough, one of the *Little Shop* Module members breaks away to begin these revolving duets. This was actually the first module that we made; I began in my comfort zone and created a Varone-inspired duet in which one dancer manipulates another. In the spring, after we recovered the movement material, we played with structure, employing a replacement strategy where anyone who is not involved in a duet may "tap another dancer out" and take her

place. This gave it a "lava lamp" quality, cohesive to its core. We experimented with how many duets should be happening simultaneously (three duets gave a nice flow) and what to do with the people not dancing – how far should they go away; how often should they replace one another? The replacing was slow at first as members of this module were exiting from the S*nake Line*, but gained speed throughout the duration, by intention and as the result of more people being added into the action. We learned some things in trying to make the replacement-effect work. First, a dancer needed to actually touch the person she wanted to replace, and second, the supplanting dancer had to replace her target physically and spatially in the same place; it didn't work to instigate a mirror of the module. At any time when the number of duets fell below three, any member could instigate a new duet by performing the designated mating call, a simple shaking of the hair with an upward focus.

Shark Bait Ooh-Hah-Hah – on the day of this rehearsal, I felt like making a group module with a grazing theme. Present was a group of good-humored and amusing sophomores with whom I feel comfortable experimenting, so I tried to make playful and strange material. I started by embodying an awkward, unique animal and built the phrase from there. I wanted to keep the movement traveling but didn't know in which directions it would travel. We also played with what material should be uniform and what could be random. The mating call for this module was a bouncing in place in the shape of that awkward, unique animal. It was performed until at least four people were in the group. Cooperation in timing provided the transition to this module. The first person had to sense when the *Little Shop* module had gone on long enough; the *Little Shop* module

participants had to be aware of the *Shark Bait* mating call so as to not start another round, or to quicken their pace if they still had a lot of the duet left to perform.

Tree Duet – this was originally a tree solo. Only two people had shown up for the tree solo rehearsal, and I wanted to include more people. Since we had another module that involved trees, I decided to convert the material into duets, with a partner taking the place of the tree. The cast for this module consisted of upperclassmen that had already had some contact improvisation experience; developing the duets gave opportunity for some nice partnering practice. Unfortunately, the partnering material was most reliable when the partners were consistent; I had to abandon the initial plan of having interchangeable partners. Perhaps this might have been alleviated with more experienced dancers.

Arborophiliacs Unite – during this module, the task was to try to climb a tree three times, freezing and waiting for help on the third attempt. The climbers are helped up the tree by the group and then helped down to the ground again. In crafting each ascent and descent, we tried to find unique approaches. I had initially left the dancers (all freshmen) to experiment but found that I had to interject suggestions quite a bit, because they didn't understand many of the properties of lifting and supporting others (although some were more insightful than others). In order to achieve a clean transfer of helpers from tree to tree, we found that the running pathways needed to be staggered, or else people would run into each other. At first I was enamored of the idea that everyone would know what needs to be done and instantly, as a group, cooperate to make it happen. The dancers used phrase material from the *Shark-Bait Ooh-Hah-Hah* module for

their traveling movement. Limiting the material turned out to be boring, and I could have given them more leeway to demonstrate their talents. I also would have given them more license to improvise their climbing attempts, perhaps prompting more dramatic effect.

Meerkat – I originally made this as a solo, but modified it into a duet when another dancer joined the rehearsal already in progress. I needed a large group to balance out the individual explorations, so I had the original dancer teach it to a dancer who had fewer modules in her repertory, owing to a full schedule the previous semester. They performed as a duet. I also had them teach the material to the rest of the upperclassmen, as I needed a large group section with some unison to provide contrast to the rest of the work. We experimented with several versions as a group and found that, regardless of the version, absolute unison within the group was important.

Electric Squirrels – this was a concept used as transitions after the *Arborophiliacs Unite* section and before the *Meerkat* group material. The tightly packed dancers make little shifts in rotation until they decide that they are part of a group, facing the same direction. The concept was that each dancer attempts to read her surrounding dancers' intentions as they read hers. In the transition from the *Meerkat* group material, they assemble into three groups, which means they needed to be aware of the entire group to determine whether more or fewer groups are needed. Once they decide that they are a group, they may begin the *Meerkat* group material. No group should be in unison with another. The *Arborophiliacs Unite* dancers had a similar transition, where they shift in one group until they decide on multiple group facings. They then split off and run to another location, repeat the shifting until the separated groups decide on a common focal

point and run to reestablish one group. I set the number of fissions and fusions at seven repetitions, after which they all split off and exit. They seemed to have a lot of fun with the material, but I think the original intent was mostly lost. It seemed to work a little better with the upperclassmen; perhaps it was too complicated for the freshmen and more pre-planned details needed to be set.

Coolest Module Ever – this material was generated from a Rhythmic Analysis class exercise to define a rhythm and then create movement to its cadence. Taking turns, we created a collection of four-count phrases, which they arranged in their own individual sequences. The aim was to produce instances of unison, when the dancers' choices collided. Everyone had to have the same beginning downbeat, even though they perhaps had different material, and they could enter or exit the group at will. It was too difficult to maintain a common rhythm amongst the dancers; a human metronome was needed. The dancers flocked around one of the dancers not in the module as he clapped and provided the pathway, much like a Pied Piper. I had wanted to use a musician for this role, but since the musicians weren't rehearsing with us, it was safer to have a dancer do it. Unfortunately, the dancer was inconsistent in tempo during the second performance, which presumably would not have happened with a trained musician. As well, the optional exit and entrances didn't work. It might have given more clarity to the structure to keep the dancers in groups that would replace each other at specific times.

Knock-Kneed Trio and *Testicle Shock Quintet* – these are two modules that did not make it into the work. I wanted to try out an improvisatory structure in which the dancers memorized a list of directions (Dancer A moves Dancer B's leg, Dancer C

responds to that, Dancer B touches Dancer C's arm, etc.). The actual movements were up to the dancers' interpretations; they were encouraged to find an organic response to the events of the dance. I think this module needed a lot more time to develop. It still is an interesting concept, and one that has ramifications for personal expression within a directed work, but it wasn't very viscerally interesting, especially compared to some of the other modules in the project.

User-Friendly – working on this module actually became the most interesting part of the entire project. I was very excited to play around with this, although at first I wasn't sure how to build it. I must credit my dancer, Prentice, with the creation of this module; he was the one to suggest using common hand gestures (waving hello, shaking hands, mirroring, etc.) and building upon them. The pedestrian nature of this movement base also facilitated my desire to make the user-friendly module as accessible as possible so that people with a range of physical abilities (an eight year-old child, an experienced dancer, and/or my seventy year-old father) could participate in it. Incidentally, it turned out that my mother was the one to join in. I also desired the module to allow for a range of options, depending on the guest's comfort in improvisation and physical skill in dancing.

We tried to anticipate how the guests would react and how to guide them into doing what we wanted them to do. In fact, during the test runs, for which we simply partnered with volunteer friends who happened to be walking by, most of the choreographic intents were discarded and the module became more about having a framework in which to play with the guest's reactions. For instance, I had initially

envisioned that the module would travel in a specified pathway around the space; the directions that the module would travel were actually unpredictable. We had assumed that the guest would mirror a dancer's gesture, which means that if the dancer waved her right hand, the guest, facing her, would wave her left hand. Many times, however, the guest would imitate the dancer instead of mirror her. That is, when moving to the right, the guest would move to her right as well, in the opposite direction from the dancer. We had also made a set order of events within the module. When some test subjects did not understand what they were supposed to do from our prompts, other methods were employed. Our aim was to never to make them uncomfortable or to feel that they were doing something wrong. Anything they chose to do needed to be embraced and played with. Therefore, we made a very loose outline of choreographic sequences the dancers could do with their guests that allowed the dancers to deal with unexpected events. For instance, I stepped in to be a guide during the GMU performance, since there was one extra guest left, and my guest actually started to lead me, an unexpected and fun turnabout.

The *User-Friendly* module certainly worked much better at Clarendon Day. After the first performance, it was generally acknowledged that the verbal invitation to participate produced anxiety, which wasn't unexpected. However, the mass physical exodus of potential participants removed the opportunity to convince hesitant but curious audience members to set aside apprehension and participate. The remaining audience members who were willing to volunteer were mostly other GMU dance majors, dance faculty and several beginning modern dance students.

Overcoming that initial shyness was the task for the second performance. I believe that many people actually want to be involved in activities of social display but need the impetus of someone physically guiding them into the activity, thereby taking accountability away from them. They won't be shamed if they don't perform well because they didn't choose to exhibit in the first place. Curiously enough, not offering a choice seems to overcome fear of embarrassment. Gentle coercion allowed Janice Ross to overcome her initial hesitation and participate in Anna Halprin's dance reconstruction, melting her skepticism into enjoyment. We employed a similar strategy at Clarendon Day, although we integrated the moment of persuasion into the choreography. It certainly seemed as though participants at the *impulse Present* performance were having a good time, however unwilling they may have been to initially volunteer.

Technology

Fortunately for me, my emphasis on process over product relieves me from feeling too dejected at the utter failure of the technological component of my project. The inclusion of the spy-cameras and TV/VCRs arose from the demise of the dance savanna structure. Since I no longer had the audience members physically immersed in the performance space, I was attempting to give that inside perspective in a alternate manner. I went through a succession of ideas, including using video cameras that select audience members would take into the work, giving ownership to their vision as they frame it in the lens. Eventually, the *User-Friendly* module fulfilled that component of audience participation; however, I did not eliminate the technology, mostly because I was still curious about using it. The idea of using the spy-cameras launched a host of

fascinating possibilities, but apparently it would have been helpful to be knowledgeable about wireless technology. The wearable technology, included successfully in pieces like *Schizophrenic Cyborg*, did not work so well in our case. This project would have been an ideal case for collaboration with a technology-savvy colleague. In addition to the logistical difficulties, the effect of using such technology in an outdoor environment was counterproductive. The TV/VCRs were almost unnoticeable, perhaps because they were so small, but more likely because they were fixed and limited boxes set in the expansive, open space. Moreover, the information being transmitted from the spy-cameras, even when the images were clear, was uninteresting, compared to the more viscerally exciting actions of the live dancers. It is ironic, and slightly disturbing, that I ended up using the television sets to purvey information, when my initial inspiration came from my dislike of the prevalence of electronic media in today's society.

Risk-Taking

I anticipated that I would encounter challenges in working within the constrictions of a university structure, but I doggedly strove to maintain an atmosphere where experimentation and pleasure were preeminent. Many times scheduling difficulties or departmental objections to some of my procedures would frustrate me, but repeating my mantra, "Flow like watah," encouraged me. I believe that my long association with Varone gave me the tools and inspiration to handle such a situation. It is curious that many universities, purportedly institutions of experimentation and innovation, actually are very bound by protocol and hierarchy. This project was by no means pushing the boundaries of the art form, partly because I preemptively negated some of the more

experimental procedures in the original vision in order to fit within the model of the traditional thesis project, and perhaps partly because I wasn't brave enough to really take the risk. I wonder how creative exploration (which is risky and often unquantifiable) can be balanced with strengthening the traditional arts (which is also important) within a dance department in a university system?

It is easy for an artist to become disheartened by restrictions and pressures while simultaneously being a university faculty member. A dance department, as part of the university system, can certainly be swept up by bureaucratic concern; often efficiency and approval gain greater significance than pedagogy and creativity. The task before all faculty members is to determine how to better support experimental procedures by not allowing the rigidity of organization to overcome the possibilities of exploration. I believe that educators need to always strive towards this ideal balance.

There were many moments of satisfaction in the final presentation in Arlington, but what resonates most strongly in my memory is the maturation of my dancers throughout this collaborative process. I am increasingly identifying myself as a teacher, letting go more and more of the comparatively self-absorbed focus of professional performer. I can confidently state that my dancers comported themselves with maturity and presence, especially the ones who interacted with non-dancers. I am very proud of our work together.

APPENDIX A

The following pages include the Human Subjects Review Board Application and Letter of Approval. The application calls for all advertisements to be approved; stamped copies of the flyer and Facebook event invitations are also included.

George Mason University
Human Subjects Review Board
Application for Human Subjects Research Review

For ORSP Use Only	GMU
Protocol No. _____	Proposal No. _____
Classified: ☐Exempt ☐Non Exempt ☐Expedited	
Signature _____	Date _____

Federal Regulations and George Mason University policy require that all research involving humans as subjects be reviewed and approved by the University Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB). Any person, (GMU faculty member, staff member, student, or other person) wanting to engage in human subject research at or through George Mason University must receive written approval from the HSRB before conducting research. Approval of this project by the HSRB only signifies that the procedures adequately protect the rights and welfare of the subjects and should not be taken to indicate University approval to conduct the research.

Please complete this cover page AND provide the Protocol Information requested on the back of this form. Forward this form and all supporting documents to the Office of Research Subject Protections, MS 4C6. If you have any questions please feel free to contact ORSP at 703-993-4121.

Project Title: **Impulse Present Project Performance**

Required Data	Principal Investigator (Must be Faculty)	Co-Investigator/Student Researcher*
Name	Dr. Victoria Salmon	Adriane Fang
Department	Graduate Studies	Dance
Mail Stop	3E6	3D4
Phone	x3-4541	x3-4384
E-mail	vsalmon@gmu.edu	afang@gmu.edu

Type of Project ☐ Faculty/Staff Research ☐ Doctoral Dissertation ☒ Masters Thesis
☒ Student Project (Specify Grad or Under Grad) Grad ☐ Other (Specify)

I certify that the information provided for this project is correct and that no other procedures will be used in this protocol. I agree to conduct this research as described in the attached supporting documents. I will request and receive approval from the HSRB for changes prior to implementing these changes. I will comply with the HSRB policy for the conduct of ethical research. I will be responsible for ensuring that the work of my co-investigator(s)/student researcher(s) complies with this protocol.

Victoria R Salmon — Principal Investigator Signature
9/16/08 — Date

*Student researchers should provide a mailing address rather than campus address.
Additional researchers should be listed on a separate page.

VULNERABLE POPULATION:
☐ Fetuses/Abortuses/Embryos
☐ Pregnant women
☐ Prisoners
☐ Minors
☐ Mentally disabled
☐ Emotionally disabled
☐ Physically disabled
☐ Undergrad student pool (Psyc/SOM)
☐ Other:

PERSON IDENTIFIABLE DATA:
☐ Audio taping
☒ Video taping
☐ Data collected via email
☐ Data collected via internet
☐ Confidential electronic records
☐ Coded data linked to individuals
☐ Human biological materials – BioSafety Project #

RESEARCH DESIGN:
☐ Questions on harm to self or others
☐ Questions on illegal behavior
☐ Deception
☐ Human/computer interaction
☐ Collection and/or analysis of secondary data

FUNDING: ☐ Yes ☐ No
Source
(If yes, please attach a copy of the grant application)

ABSTRACT

1. Describe the aims and specific purposes of the research project and the proposed involvement of human participants.

The aim of this research project is to document awareness of audience members as observers and during potential participation in a dance event.

2. Describe the characteristics of the intended sample (number of participants, age, sex, ethnic background, health status, etc).

The characteristics of the intended sample are difficult to describe because the dance performances will take place in public spaces (George Mason Campus outside of the Johnson Center and a public courtyard in Clarendon).

3. Identify the criteria for inclusion or exclusion. Explain the rationale for the involvement of special classes of participants (children, prisoners, pregnant women, or any other vulnerable population.

There is no criteria for inclusion or exclusion of participants.

4. Describe your relationship to the participants if any.

I have no relationship to the participants.

PROTOCOL – Involving Human Participation

1. If there are direct benefits to the participants, describe the direct benefits and also describe the general knowledge that the study is likely to yield. If there are no direct benefits to the participants, state that there are no direct benefits to the participants and describe the general knowledge that the study is likely to yield.

There are no direct benefits to the participants. The general knowledge that this study might yield concerns audience observation of and participation in a dance event.

2. Describe how participants will be identified and recruited. Note that all recruitment materials (including ads, flyers, letters to participants, emails, telephone/presentation scripts, SONA postings) for participants must be submitted for review for both exempt and non-exempt projects.

Participants will be identified and recruited through advertising and word of mouth. I have placed copies of advertisements in Facebook, the Fall for the Book website, and flyers to be manually distributed. Copies are attached.

3. Describe your procedures for obtaining informed consent. Who will obtain consent and how will it be obtained. Describe how the researchers will ensure that subjects receive a copy of the consent document.

I am seeking a waiver for obtaining informed consent. A consent form may influence audience reaction or participation.

4. State whether subjects will be compensated for their participation, describe the form of compensation and the procedures for distribution, and explain why compensation is necessary. State whether the subjects will receive course

credit for participating in the research. **If yes**, describe the nonresearch option for course credit for the students who decide not to participate in the research. The nonresearch option for course credit must not be more difficult than participation in the research. Information regarding compensation or course credit, should be outlined in the Participation section of the consent document.

Subjects will not be compensated for their participation.

5. If minors are involved, their active assent to the research activity is required as well as active consent from their parents/guardians. This includes minors from the Psychology Department Undergraduate Subject Pool. Your procedures

should be appropriate to the age of the child and his/her level of maturity and judgment. Describe your procedures for obtaining active assent from minors and active consent from parents/guardians. Refer to the Guidelines for Informed Consent for additional requirements if minors from the Psychology Subject Pool are involved.

No minors that I know if will be involved. The audiences will be drawn from the public.

6. Describe the research design and methods. What will be done to participants during the study? Describe all tests and procedures that will be performed. Include an estimate of the time required to complete the tests and procedures.

The research method used will be observation of a dance performance and its audience by video camera.

We are looking at the level of the audience's enthusiasm with varying degrees of voluntary participation. There will be three levels of audience participation:

1. **The audience will observe the performance.**
2. **The audience will observe a live video of the performance.**
3. **The audience will be invited to participate in the performance..**

7. Describe how confidentiality will be maintained. If data will be collected electronically (e.g. by email or an internet web site), describe your procedures for limiting identifiers. Note that confidentiality may have to be limited if participants are asked questions on violence toward self or others or illegal behavior. Contact the Office of Research Subject Protections for assistance.

Confidentiality will be maintained since the audiences in public spaces will not be individually identified.

8. Describe in detail any potential physical, psychological, social, or legal risks to participants, why they are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits and what will be done to minimize the risks. Where appropriate, discuss provisions for ensuring medical or professional intervention in case participants experience adverse effects. Where appropriate, discuss provisions for monitoring data collection when participants' safety is at risk.

No potential physical, psychological, social or legal risks exist for this study.

9. If participants will be audio-or video-taped, discuss provisions for the security and final disposition of the tapes. Refer to Guidelines for Informed Consent.

The video tapes will be locked in the Dance Department in Adriane Fang's files

10. If participants will be misinformed and/or uninformed about the true nature of the project, provide justification. Note that projects involving deception must not exceed minimal risk, cannot violate the rights and welfare of participants, must require the deception to accomplish the aims of the project, and must include a full debriefing. Refer to Guidelines for Informed Consent.

Participants will not be misinformed and/or uninformed about the true nature of the project.

11. Submit a copy of each data collection instrument/tool (including questionnaires, surveys, standardized assessment tools, etc.) you will use and provide a brief description of its characteristics and development. Submit scripts if information and/or questions are conveyed verbally.

No data collection instrument/tool will be used.

12. **INFORMED CONSENT:** Attach appropriate Proposed Informed Consent document(s).
See Guidelines for Informed Consent and the Template Informed Consent Document for additional information.

13. **APPROVAL FROM COOPERATING INSTITUTION/ORGANIZATION:**
If a cooperating institution/organization provides access to its patients/students/clients/ employees/etc. for participant recruitment or provides access to their records, Attach written evidence of the institution/organization human subjects approval of the project.

PROTOCOL – Involving Existing Records

(For the study of existing data sets, documents, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens.)
1. Describe your data set.

Not applicable.

2. Provide written permission from the owner of the data giving you access for research purposes at George Mason University if the data set is not publicly available.

Not applicable.

3. Describe how you will maintain confidentiality if the data set contains person identifiable data.

Not applicable.

4. Describe what variables you are extracting from the data set.

Not applicable.

CITI Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Human Research Curriculum Completion Report
Printed on Monday, September 15, 2008

Learner: Adriane Fang (username: afang)
Institution: George Mason University
Contact Information Department: Dance
Phone: 703-993-4384
Email: afang@gmu.edu
Group 1: This group is appropriate for Social & Behavioral Research Investigators and Key Personnel.

Stage 1. Basic Course Passed on 09/15/08 (Ref # 2125087)

Required Modules	Date Completed
Introduction	09/15/08
History and Ethical Principles - SBR	09/15/08
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBR	09/15/08
The Regulations and The Social and Behavioral Sciences - SBR	09/15/08
Assessing Risk in Social and Behavioral Sciences - SBR	09/15/08
Informed Consent - SBR	09/15/08
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBR	09/15/08
George Mason University	09/15/08

For this Completion Report to be valid, the learner listed above must be affiliated with a CITI participating institution. Falsified information and unauthorized use of the CITI course site is unethical, and may be considered scientific misconduct by your institution.

Paul Braunschweiger Ph.D.
Professor, University of Miami
Director Office of Research Education
CITI Course Coordinator

Return

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

Office of Research Subject Protections

Research 1 Building
4400 University Drive, MS 4C6, Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Phone: 703-993-4121; Fax: 703-993-9590

TO: Victoria Salmon, College of Visual and Performing Arts

FROM: Sandra M. Sanford, RN, MSN, CIP
Director, Office of Research Subject Protections

PROTOCOL NO.: 6017 Research Category: Masters Thesis

TITLE: Impulse Present Project Performance

DATE: September 17, 2008

Cc: Adriane Fang

On 9/17/2008, the George Mason University Human Subjects Review Board (GMU HSRB) reviewed and approved the above-cited protocol following expedited review procedures.

Please note the following:

1. **Any modification to your research (including the protocol, consent, advertisements, instruments, etc.) must be submitted to the Office of Research Subject Protections for review and approval prior to implementation.**
2. Any adverse events or unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects including problems involving confidentiality of the data identifying the participants must be reported to Office of Research Subject Protections and reviewed by the HSRB.

The anniversary date of this study is 9/16/2009. **You may not collect data beyond that date without GMU HSRB approval.** A continuing review form must be completed and submitted to the Office of Research Subject Protections 30 days prior to the anniversary date or upon completion of the project. A copy of the continuing review form is attached. In addition, prior to that date, the Office of Research Subject Protections will send you a reminder regarding continuing review procedures.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 703-993-4015.

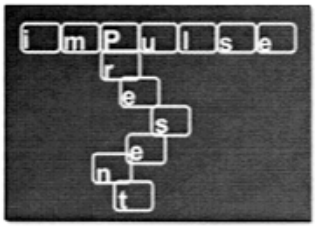
imPulse Present Project.

Impulse Present Project is a site-specific dance event, to be performed twice this September. GMU dancers will use set choreography and improvisational skills to create a moving environment for viewers. Audience members are invited to view the work from a variety of perspectives. There's even a chance to get in there and participate! Come on by and be moved!!!

Event #1: **Fall for the Books**

George Mason Campus – Courtyard outside of the Johnson Center lower level (outside of Jazzman's)

Monday, September 22nd, 2008
1:00pm – 2:00pm



Event #2: **Clarendon Day**

3100 Clarendon Blvd, Arlington – Courtyard outside of SoBe Seafood Co.

Saturday, September 27th, 2008
12:30pm – 1:30pm

Clarendon Day is a festival of food, art, music and fun, celebrating the unique offerings of Arlington's original downtown, Clarendon. Check out the festival's website for info on the festivities:

http://www.clarendon.org/clarendonday.html

Our event will be located across the street from the acoustic stage. Hope to see you there!!!

Approval for the use of this document EXPIRES

SEP 16 2009

Protocol # 6017

Impulse Present Project pt. 2

Come to Clarendon Day and play!

Event Info

Host:	Adriane Fang
Type:	Music/Arts » Performance
Network:	Global

Time and Place

Date:	Saturday, September 27, 2008
Time:	12:30pm - 1:30pm
Location:	Courtyard in front of SoBe Seafood Co. (a fine place to eat!)
Street:	3100 Clarendon Blvd.
City/Town:	Arlington, VA

View Map

Description

Impulse Present Project is a site-specific dance event, to be performed twice this September. GMU dancers will use set choreography and improvisational skills to create a moving environment for viewers. Audience members are invited to view the work from a variety of perspectives. There's even a chance to get into the action and participate!

The second event will be presented during Clarendon Day, is a festival of food, art, music and fun, celebrating the unique offerings of Arlington's original downtown, Clarendon. Check out the festival's website for info on the festivities:

http://www.clarendon.org/clarendonday.html

Our event will be located across the street from the acoustic stage. Come on by and be moved!!!

Photos

No one has uploaded any photos. Add Photos.

Videos

No one has uploaded any videos. Add Videos.

Posted Items

Displaying 1 posted item See All

Post a link: Post

Clarendon Day
Source: www.clarendon.org

SATURDAY, SEPT. 27TH, 2008 NOON TO 7PM Arlington's Biggest Party Clarendon Day is a festival of food, art, music and fun, celebrating the unique offerings ...

Posted by You

Confirmed Guests

This event has 25 confirmed guests See All

Karen Ready Laura Lamp Jessica Moore Ashlin Lazorazza Maya Oschin Kori Hundley

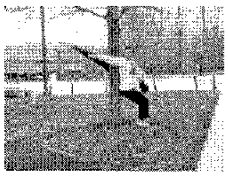
The Wall

Displaying 6 wall posts Write Something | See All

Colleen Thomas (Columbia) wrote
at 10:13am

Will be in New York but Merde!!!!!

Report - Delete



Invite People to Come
Cancel this Event
Edit Event
Message All Guests
Remove from My Events

Share Export

Your RSVP

- (•) Attending
- ( ) Maybe Attending
- ( ) Not Attending

RSVP

Other Information

- Guests are allowed to bring friends to this event.

Other Invites

Maybe Attending (15) See All

Melissa McFarland Jeremy Freer Katie Ludwick

Not Attending (31) See All

Sarah Schweyer Douglas James Atkins Christine Jackson

Awaiting Reply (46) See All

Luanne Pignatello Julian Barnett Dave Kung

Event Type

This is a secret event. It will not show up in your profile, and only admins can invite guests.

Admins

- Adriane Fang (creator)

Approval for the use
of this document
EXPIRES

SEP 16 2009

Protocol #_6017
George Mason University

Welcome to the new Facebook

Send feedback

Impulse Present Project pt. 1

Fall For The Books Event at GMU

Event Info

Host: Adriane Fang
Type: Music/Arts > Performance
Network: Global

Time And Place

Date: Monday, September 22, 2008
Time: 1:00pm - 2:00pm
Location: George Mason University - Courtyard outside of the Johnson Center (by Jazzman's)
City/Town: Fairfax, VA

Description

Impulse Present Project is a site-specific dance event, to be performed twice this September. GMU dancers will use set choreography and improvisational skills to create a moving environment for viewers. Audience members are invited to view the work from a variety of perspectives. There's even a chance to get in there and participate! Come on by and be moved!!!

Photos

Displaying the only photo — Add Photos | See All

Videos

Displaying 1 video — Add Videos | See All

Beast Quartet Module
Jenn Added about a week ago
Like Video | 3 comments

Posted Items

Post a link:

Confirmed Guests

This event has 21 confirmed guests — See All

Daisy Farrington-Ryan, Jim Lepore, Kahron Fronte, Amber Hill, Lauren Goodwin, Erika Longmeyer, Adam Bass

The Wall

Displaying 1 wall post — Write Something | See All

Daniel Zook wrote
at 10:15pm on September 7th, 2008
Wish I could but I will be at Magical Montgomery ! :)
Reply - Delete

Invite People to Come
Cancel this Event
Edit Event
Message All Guests
Remove from My Events

Share — Export

Your RSVP

- (•) Attending
- ( ) Maybe Attending
- ( ) Not Attending

Other Information

- Guests are allowed to bring friends to this event.

Other Invites

Maybe Attending (2)

Austin D'angelo, Abby Byrom

Not Attending (8) — See All

Mat Hedgen, Allie Elms, Megan Tormo

Awaiting Reply (21) — See All

Ken Ekker, Brad Snyder, Karen Stuck

Event Type

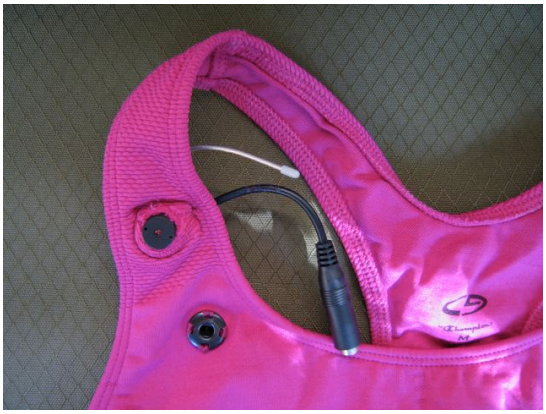
This is a secret event. It will not show up in your profile, and only admins can invite guests.

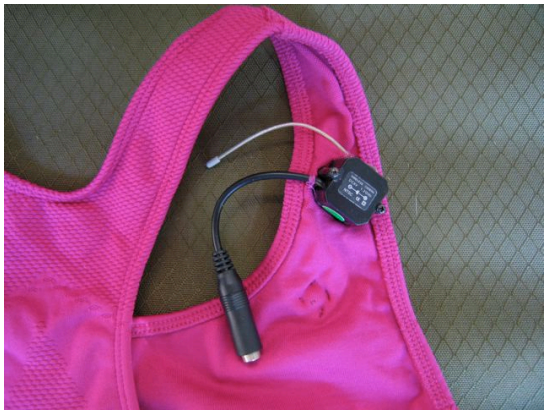
Admins

- Adriane Fang (creator)

APPENDIX B

The spy-cameras, procured through Craigslist, were sewn into these sports bras. A small holes was made which the front of the camera was poked through and secured with thread.





The shoulder and partial armhole seams were unstitched and the extra fabric was folded and tacked down.

APPENDIX C

The DVD contains:

- The George Mason University performance on September 22, 2008.
- The Clarendon Day performance on September 27, 2008.
  - Pre-show advertisements.
  - Cyborg camera perspective.
  - An alternate view of the u*ser-friendly* module.

APPENDIX D

These are the front and back images of the flyer passed out at the Clarendon Day performance.

Front View:

imPulse Present Project!

12:30 performance in front of SoBe Seafood Co.

This is a site-specific, experimental dance piece that seeks to increase audience involvement and interest in dance performance by offering viewers a more intimate perspective, including the opportunity to participate in the dance!

We've attached spy-cameras to some of the dancers and the real-time images will be displayed on the TV/VCRs in order for you to get the view from inside the work *(unless, of course, it's raining!)*

Then, later in the piece, there will be a chance to physically join in and dance with us. We hope that you will put aside any inhibitions and have a bit of spontaneous fun! Don't be worried – there is no right or wrong…

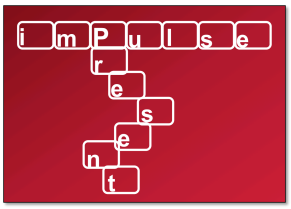
We'd appreciate it if you would take a moment and jot down your reactions to what you experience here. Three journals are available for this purpose.

Thank you for coming – we hope you enjoy it!

Back View:

Choreography:
Adriane Fang, in collaboration with the dancers.

Cast:
Aislinn Lacorazza
Amanda Blauer
Amber Hill
Aquiles Holladay
Brianna Kimball
Christina Salgado
Jamie Baptist
Jessica Berube
Jessica Moore
Jordan Daugherty
Kalynn Frome
Kori Hundley
Lauren Goodwin
Maria Ambrose
Maya Orchin
Nora Hickman
Prentice Whitlow
Shanleigh Philip
Stephanie Locey



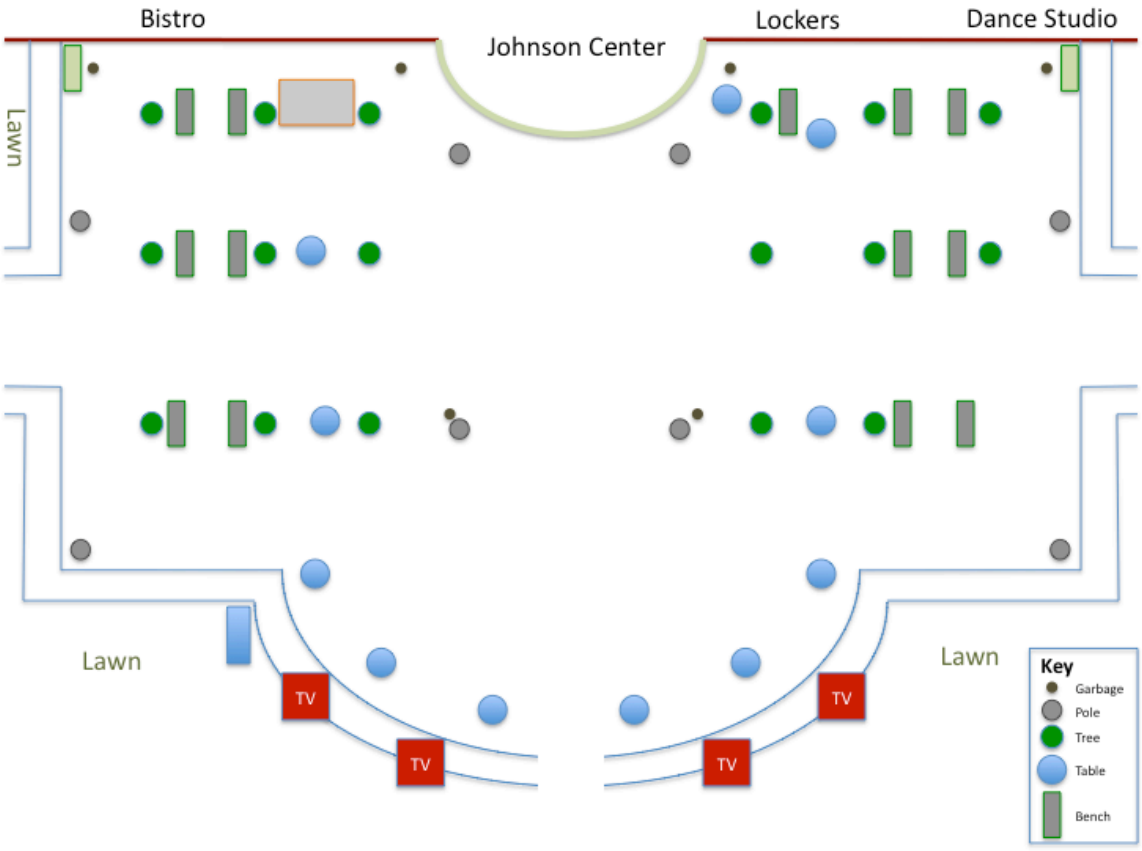
Music: Doc Nickens, Jeremy Freer and their Impromptu Crew!

Cyborg Construction:
Cat Buchanan & Aislinn Lacorazza

Special Thanks to:
Jim Lepore, Laura Lamp, Dan Joyce, Suzanne Carbonneau, Buffy Price, Victoria Salmon, Allie Linn, Daniel Zook and to Mom, Dad and my James. Also much gratitude to all of our 'test subjects'…and finally, thank you to my beautiful dancers… you rock!!! – a

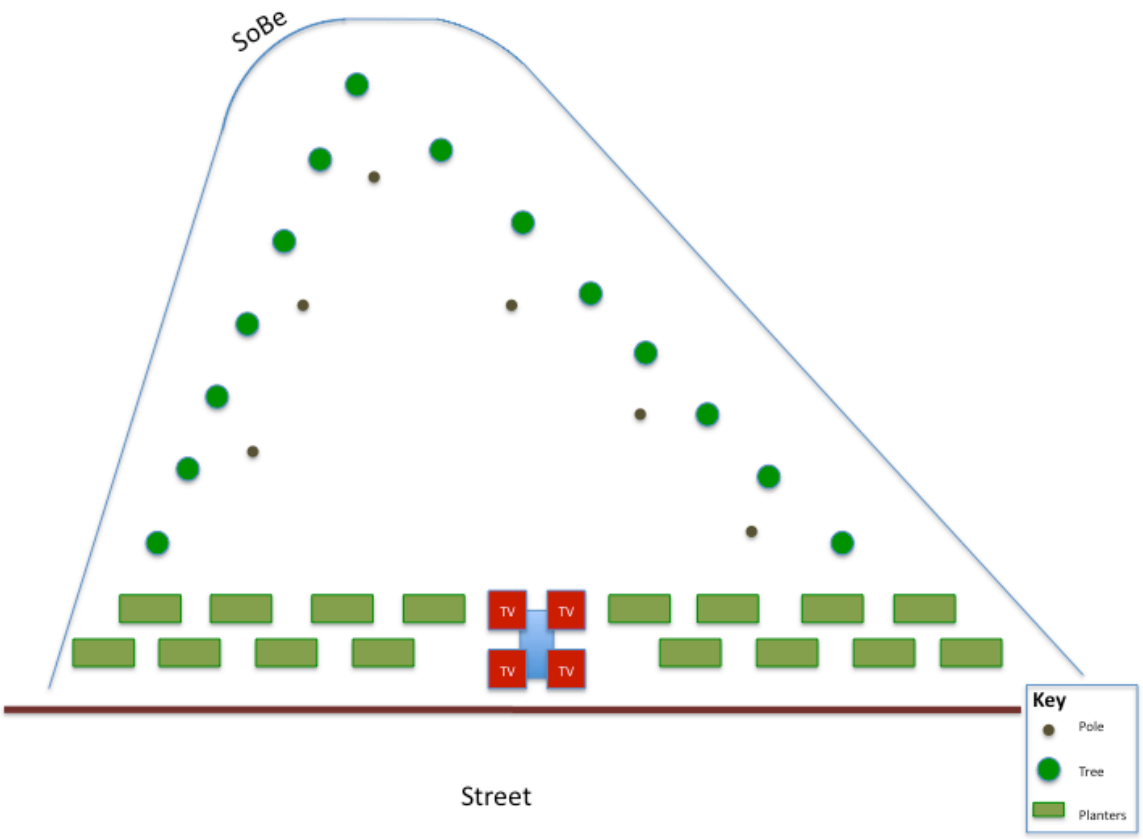
APPENDIX E

This is a map of the Johnson Center courtyard layout on the George Mason Campus in Fairfax.



APPENDIX F

This is a map of the Clarendon Day courtyard layout in Clarendon, Virginia.



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CURRICULUM VITAE

Adriane Fang received a B.A. with honors with a double major in Dance and Psychology from the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point in 1994. She was a professional dancer with Doug Varone and Dancers from 1996-2006 and has staged the works of Doug Varone for various universities and companies, including North Carolina School of the Arts, CityDance Ensemble, BalletMet Columbus, George Mason University, Ohio State University and the University of Minnesota. She has had thirteen years of professional teaching experience at the university level as well as with master classes throughout the United States and Europe. She has been an Assistant Professor of Dance at George Mason University from 2006 to the present.