

Performance and Media

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Bachelor of Undergraduate Studies: *Performance and Media*

In crafting a BUS program I have carefully chosen a title that reflects my evolving process as a student artist. I start with the word "performance" because I seek to broaden my depth and range by evoking as large a genre as I can imagine. I chose "media" to express my intention to use film, video, the internet and other "new media" to reframe and refocus my existing work as a dancer and choreographer. This is not a degree in the existing fields of "performance art", "performance studies", "new media" or "video art". Instead, I see this BUS proposal as an opportunity to identify myself where I feel I best belong as an artist, in a realm of performance work on the borderlands of dance, theater and video art practices. I am looking to place myself somewhere the Modern Dance department could not place me on its own.

I ask the following questions: How and why should I continue to practice the making of body-based performance in the age of television, cheap and accessible video, social media and pervasive internet use? How and why dance in a culture that devalues live performance? Are the skills I have relevant and meaningful? What new skills do I need? How can my work begin to address the time in which I live? In short, how should I proceed?

To answer that question, permit me to look back. I entered the University of Utah in 2005 on scholarship in Modern Dance. Between 2005 and 2008, I studied the basic skills of a professional dancer of the late twentieth century. As a male, I was privileged to get a lot of performing opportunities and I learned a huge amount from my peers and my professors. In 2009, I left school and moved to New York for a year. While there my interests shifted drastically. When I returned to Salt Lake, I began to imagine a degree that addressed some of my new aesthetic concerns: integration of language and narrative (which are often dismissed in dance) and a desire for fluency with technology. I also sought a path of study that would connect me to a different history than the cultural heritage I received in Modern Dance. I needed to connect with a more experimental and interdisciplinary lineage in order to move forward.

Within my curriculum, I include some of the classes I took while seeking a degree in Modern Dance. I have also decided to go back and finish some classes that I never completed. My sole criterion for inclusion is that the class in question must continue to resonate with what I am doing now. My technical, improvisational and choreographic training are still central to my life as an artist. I also include my dance pedagogy classes because teaching has become a major source of supplemental income that has helped me to continue working as a performer. Teaching dance is an important service and will continue to be a part of my mission as an artist. I look forward to seeing how my teaching philosophy and practice will be transformed by my BUS course of study.

Allow me to return for a moment to my personal chronology. Upon returning to the University in 2010 I studied theater, in a first attempt to reframe my work as a performer. I have always been interested in story telling and I feel that the use of text in dance has been a significant trend for many years though it is underrepresented in academia. I had studied creative writing with Francois Camoin from the English Department. Camoin's class greatly influenced the way I write and the way I make performances. My work with language is evident in many of the pieces I've worked on since the fall of 2008 and was particularly crucial in an evening length project I created in 2009 called *boy at sea*. In order to fill out this cluster and deepen my understanding of the recent history of experimental work with language, I will study Modernism with Craig Dworkin in the Spring. Along the same lines, in the spring of 2010, I took "Absurd Theater" with Tim Slover and "Queer Theater" with Jesse Portillo. The plays these classes presented are important antecedents to the contemporary work I am interested in making and seeing. "Queer Theatre" and "Absurd Theatre" offered me an alternative heritage to complement my Modern Dance history. These courses introduced me to several important artists who worked on the margins of their field. How these artists charted new territory and negotiated difficult careers contextualizes my work in a new way and offers examples for me as I continue making art.

On to film, video and new media. For the summer and fall of 2010, much of my curriculum comes from the University's Graduate Certificate in Screen Dance. I am also studying the related and co-evolving

field of video art with Kent Maxwell, in which I am receiving another exciting new lineage to connect to. As U Professor Ellen Bromberg writes, "screendance [and I would argue more broadly video-performance work as well] is burgeoning worldwide. [These] exciting hybrid form[s], which in the past [have] been found at the margins of practice in [their] fields... [are] now...articulating richly intertwined art-historical roots as a means to understand present dance, film, digital media and art practices and how they intersect in a complex discourse of ideas about the body on screen." Looking at dance and performance on screen will complement and complicate my experience in these areas by reframing the body within a lens as apposed to a proscenium. This will challenge my values, aesthetics, and modes of composing in a way that can only be beneficial to my career as an artist of the twenty-first century. Making film and videos (for theater, gallery or internet consumption) will present me with a totally new avenue and audience for expanding my work from that of a choreographer or performer to that of a film/video-maker as well.

Literacy and fluency with film and video will also serve me in an arts administration context. In May I applied for and was accepted into a year long internship program with Ashley Anderson Dances. AAD and the affiliated Sugar Space Studio for the Arts both present dance, theater, and performance here in Salt Lake City. My internship responsibilities include writing press releases, aiding in curation, organizing and participating in rehearsals, selling advertising, seeking grant funding, teaching a variety of populations, publishing program notes and posters, blogging and social media work, documenting performances, creating internet and archival videos and more.

Interning with AAD, it has become clear to me how invaluable the development of arts organizations is in allowing artists like me to have careers. My main focus at Ashley Anderson Dances in 2010-2011 is a project called loveDANCEmore. loveDANCEmore (named in a reference to the work of Miranda July and Harrell Fletcher) administrates a new journal of performance on the Wasatch Front, a blog on dance in Utah, periodic choreographers-in-residence programs, and Mudson, a monthly evening of works-in-progress at the Masonic Temple. Basically, we create opportunities and raise awareness for marginalized artists such as myself. (Our ongoing work can be viewed at www.lovedancemore.org.)

The work we do is loosely based on the New York dance service organization Movement Research. Since the eighties, Movement Research has administrated the weekly performances at the Judson Church in Manhattan (hence the name Mudson here at Salt Lake's Masonic Temple). Judson was and is a very important place in the history of dance, theater performance art, poetry and other affiliated forms within American art from the sixties to the present. Mudson resonates with me because many of my dance and performance heroes (dancer Yvonne Rainer, sculptor Bob Morris and artist Carolee Schneeman to name a few) performed in the early Judson shows in the 1960's. Researching and continuing the Judson-era legacy of experimental performance takes my curriculum full circle, authentically reconnecting me with my dance roots in a way that the Modern Dance department never could.

In the Spring of 2011, I will bring all of my new skills to bear on an evening length performance featuring dance, prerecorded video and live technologies. I will try to find funding and will hire performers (some dancers and at least one actor) in November or December and apply to present an early version of the piece at the February or March Mudson. This performance will be in March, April or May and will serve as my BUS thesis project and the culmination of my studies at the University of Utah.

Major Requirements

Number and Title	Department	Codes	Credits
Film 6910: Grad Video Editing and Certification Film Studies	Film/Media Arts	+	3
Film 6250: Grad Cinematography	Film/Media Arts	IP	5
Film 3905: Video Art and Frontier Films	Film/Media Arts	IP	4
Film 6900: Internship: Archiving and Curation for Sugar Space	Film/Media Arts	+	3
Film 4910: Independent Research: Fall Mudson and performance journal	Film/Media Arts	IP	4
Film 4911: Independent Research: Spring Mudson and performance journal	Film/Media Arts		4
Film 4912: Thesis Performance Project	Film/Media Arts		4
Thea 3791: Queer Theater	Theatre	+	3
Thea 3792: Absurd Theater	Theatre	+	3
Danc 6340: Screen Dance	Mod Dance	IP	3
Danc 1310 and 1320: Modern Tech Theory I	Mod Dance	+	6
Danc 2310: Modern Tech Theory II	Mod Dance	+	3
Danc 3310: Modern Tech Theory III	Mod Dance	+	3
Danc 1410/20: Beginning Improv/Modern Workshop I Modern Dance	Mod Dance	+	2
Danc: 4388: Dance Performance (x3)	Mod Dance	+	3
Danc 4510 and 4511 Dance Kinesiology	Mod Dance	+	6
Danc 2410/20 Modern Workshop II/ Intermediate Choreo/Improv	Mod Dance	+	2

Number and Title	Department	Codes	Credits
Danc 4571: Movement in Culture	Mod Dance	+	3
Danc 4850: Tchg Meth-Children	Mod Dance	+	4
Danc 3410: Advanced Improvisation	Mod Dance	+	2
Danc 4460 Senior Capstone	Mod Dance	+	2
Danc 4851: Modern Dance Tchg Meth	Mod Dance		4
Danc 4711: Dance History	Mod Dance		3
Engl 5510: Fiction Workshop	English	+	3
Engl 3703: Lit Hist 3	English		3

Total Emphasis Hours: 87

Total Hours at 4000-level: 54

General Education Requirements

Number and Title	Requirement	Department	Codes	Credits
AP American History	American Institutions (AI)	-	+	-
AP Language	Writing Requirement (WR2)	-	+	-
QA CLEP Test	Quantitative Reasoning (QA)	-	+	-
Math 1070: Int Stat Inference	Quantitative Reasoning (QB)	-		3
IB Diploma	Humanities IE Area (HF)	-	+	-
IB Diploma	Physical, Life and Applied Science IE Area (AS)	-	+	-
Astr 1060: The Universe	Physical, Life and Applied Science IE Area (SF)	Physics	+	-
IB Diploma	Social Science IE Area (BF)	-	+	-
Danc 4571: Movement in Culture	Communication/Upper Division Writing (CW)	Mod Dance	+	3
Pols 3140: Gender and Politics	Diversity Requirement (DV)	Political Science	+	3
(Span 2010: Int Spanish	BA Language Requirement	Spanish		4
Total Test Credits	-	-	+	41

Total Hours at 3000-level or above: 72

Total Hours at time of proposal: 119 (including 41 test credits)

Remaining Hours to Complete: 41

Total Hours for Graduation: 160