Annual Dance Concert 2017: The Discovery of a New Artist

In my premier performance of the Annual Dance Concert, a metaphor of achievement was revealed. Personally speaking, performing in the Annual Dance Concert symbolized the overcoming of injuries, technical advancement and the celebration of a newly developed artist. In its entirety, the amount of knowledge, technical skills, artistic inspiration and professionalism attained through the entire rehearsal and performance process exceeds all expectations. In an effort to condense my research findings in my performance and practice led research, I will expand upon components that were integral to my performance season. Primarily and most evident are the technical demands and its consequences on the body, mind and spirit. Additionally, what it means to present choreography in its most true and authentic form – with an undying amount of artistic expression and vulnerability.

Upon casting, I entered the rehearsal process with a strong sense of optimism and anticipation. However, as rehearsals continued I began to feel the effects of dancing twenty-five hours a week. Aside from the physical exhaustion, my mental capacity decreased significantly along with my attentiveness and positivity. While these may seem like unfortunate and detrimental consequences, these aspects instigated a necessity to delve deeper into my artistic development. In instances when my body or cognitive capacities were presenting unexpected limitations, I had no other choice but to find novel techniques to adopt the choreography. Whether it was through repetition, guided
instruction or separation in order to gain perspective – I not only advanced in my performance, but also identified new modes of problem solving. Furthermore, the rigor and intensity presented the obligation of ensuring a healthy lifestyle and self care practices. This included a healthy amount of sleep, a sufficient diet and listening to the needs of my body, but it also revealed the importance and necessity of relaxation and stress relief techniques. Being closely attuned to the needs of my instrument was imperative in such high-stake rehearsal conditions as I was able to understand the true meaning of self-care.

The most rewarding moments of the entire research process were the final performances. In these moments, a synthesis of expression, technical accuracy and artistic voice was vital to relaying the overall message of the piece. Upholding a certain amount of personal responsibility, I discovered ways to push the boundaries of my technique and artistry. When I found myself uninspired or falling to meaningless repetition, the demands of performance begged the question “what can I give today?” Understanding the larger context for choreographic work was also extremely influential. Setting aside individualistic and egocentric thoughts, performing was an opportunity to serve the greater good. The effectiveness of how the audience received said message depended on the effectiveness and transparency of ones performance. Therefore, it was inevitable that I experienced a breakthrough moment in which I allowed myself to genuinely offer the choreographic material to others as a method of storytelling. The unleashing of this raw artistry required the willingness to be vulnerable, yet in return I was given the priceless gift of personal fulfillment and joy. So in a sense, a wonderful
paradox presents itself as having the opportunity to give to others through performance led way to a personally gratifying reward.

There are a multitude of elements that impacted my personal and artistic development that go left unsaid. For example, the importance of process versus product, abiding by patience in the rehearsal process, the necessity of communal ideologies (care for self, care for others and care for community) and professionalism in the rehearsal and stage setting were all extremely prominent concepts during the overall performance experience. Nevertheless, the endless outcomes of participating in the Annual Dance Concert hold significant value and will directly contribute to any future performance experiences and other artistic endeavors. In closing, I would like to note that the Annual Dance Concert experience does not just concur with Loyola University Chicago’s mission statement, it fulfills each category – the spiritual, the physical and the mental (as stated throughout the bulk of this paper). Therefore, this experience truly nourishes the development of the whole person and is without a doubt an opportunity to “seek God” find “diverse community” and “expand knowledge” all in service of the greater good.