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Exploring Audio Description as a Generative Choreographic Tool
Toward Centering Disability Justice in Creating and Presenting Dance Works

THESIS

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

in Dance

by

Bradford Chin

Thesis Committee:
Associate Professor Kelli Sharp, Chair
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Assistant Professor Ariyan Johnson

2023

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Exploration of Audio Description as a Generative Choreographic Tool
Toward Centering Disability Justice in Creating and Presenting Dance Works

by

Bradford Chin

Master of Fine Arts in Dance

University of California, Irvine, 2023

Associate Professor Kelli Sharp, Chair

Although some conversations are taking place about dance practitioner accessibility as related to disability, many of the methods, tools, and guiding philosophies proposed by this body of work focus on molding disabled practitioners into existing conventions of dance technique, performance practices, and aesthetics. This framework results in creative practices that operate despite, not because of, disability. This limited view of disability is exemplified in traditional applications of Audio Description for dance, where, despite being an accessibility measure for disabled people, Audio Description—and by extension, disability—is treated as a barrier to overcome rather than as an artistically valuable contribution. Through the production of two new choreographic works, this thesis explores how Audio Description can be used as a generative choreographic tool that also centers disability in choreographic process. The first choreographic process explored Audio Description as a movement generator, and the second additionally explored Audio Description as a generator for narrative and

environmental content. In centering the use of Audio Description as a generative choreographic tool, these choreographic processes facilitated Disability Justice-informed access for the artistic collaborators and centered disability itself toward the potential realization of a disability aesthetic in creating and presenting concert dance works.

INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1987, AXIS Dance Company is “the nation’s most-acclaimed ensemble of dancers with and without disabilities” (AXIS Dance Company 2020)—sometimes referred to as a physically integrated dance company—and centers its vision for radical inclusion in dance as its brand. During my time as a company dancer and teaching artist with AXIS Dance Company (Oakland, CA), I found myself constantly at odds with the conception of roles being for either *disabled* or *nondisabled* dancers. Sometimes, the characterization of roles would shift to other binaries, such as either *dancers in wheelchairs* or *dancers whose lower bodies were perceived as nondisabled*. While this exact phrasing was never used verbatim, the sentiment guided the company’s philosophy with casting for restaged works and hiring new company members.

This approach to disability inclusion is common in the dance world and even among physically integrated dance companies—companies whose ensembles include both disabled and nondisabled dancers. Disability is fit into preexisting exclusionary practices, philosophies, and aesthetics, rather than shifting these conventions to better fit disability. While so-called “accommodations” are pursued to include disabled bodies in traditionally nondisabled contexts, the conventional framework of accommodations relies on the maintenance of ableist hierarchies that positions disability as disempowered. Nondisability is the norm for which disabled-identifying people must adapt or rely on accommodations to access, and as Laurel Lawson of Kinetic Light puts it, those who grant accommodations retain the power to remove such accommodations

at any point, even if as functional as the depletion of resources to continue providing accommodations.

Such accommodations include Audio Description (AD), or the aural communication of visual elements for people who are blind or low vision. The offering of AD for concert dance productions is not universal; in many cases, even when resources are available to provide AD services, it is offered only by advance request and/or at specific performances marketed as such. This institutional limitation is what led me to begin audio describing for dance. During the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, I served as a curatorial panelist for the Virtual Pathways Dance Festival (VPDF) hosted by ODC/SF (originally Oberlin Dance Collective). As with many concert dance presentations, the festival organizers had not accounted for accessibility measures in the festival budget. Prior to the pandemic, few dance companies—including AXIS—engaged audiences virtually. During this period of sheltering in place, there was a newfound wealth of digital media access for people—especially disabled people—who previously had little access to the arts, but there was still very little digital media accessibility available for people who need those access measures. As has often been the case in my career, I recognized a need that I felt a responsibility to fill. With the help of Tiffany Taylor, a blind friend who does performance AD and accessibility consulting, I took on my first Audio Description project (pro bono) and described all four festival programs for VPDF. Since then, my AD work has developed with influence from other disabled dance artists and audio describers such as Ellice Patterson of Abilities Dance Boston, Vanessa Hernández Cruz, and Laurel Lawson of Kinetic Light, as well as my own sensibilities regarding artistry, access, and empathy.

In my work as a collaborative dance artist, I am constantly asking about who is missing and how they can be brought to the table. My artist statement, which has remained largely unchanged since 2015, reads as follows:

The power of collaboration expands the horizons of our storytelling. Every individual embodies a uniquely lived life, lending different perspectives to a shared experience or process. We are elevated when we mesh our rich diversity of experiences and perspectives in a collaborative effort toward a common goal. Combining the values of individual identity and self-determination, growth through community care, and embodiment as experiential laboratory process, collaboration empowers us to affect change by increasing the accessibility of our work and the stories we tell.

When describing other people's works as an audio describer, collaboration can be difficult to find. Often times, AD is never considered at any point by the work's author(s). A lot of AD work is solitary not because describers seek that solitude, but because disability is uncommonly considered in the creation of a dance work. When disability is considered, it is often, even if unintentionally, viewed as a barrier to overcome rather than something that can enrich an artistic process. Audio Describers and disabled artists such as Alice Sheppard and Laurel Lawson of Kinetic Light, and Louise Fryer are working to undo these approaches to accessibility considerations and disability itself.

Such is the curiosity that I bring to my work as a dance artist and an Audio Describer. The choreographic processes in this thesis explored the use of Audio Description in dance and how it can be used as a generative creative tool toward centering disability in creative process. The first work, *Sunrise: A case study in movement scores and Disability Justice* (2022), referred to as *Sunrise*, utilized a text-

based script of non-body-specific movement prompts that also theoretically served as the foundation for the work's AD. The second work, *The world was ending, so they danced, and they were free* (2023), referred to as DE23, utilized a combined AD and poetry track that guided the creation of the choreographic work. Informed by an emphasis on collaboration and a Disability Justice framework, the use of Audio Description as a generative tool resulted in the emergence of critical access for the collaborative team and the realization of a disability aesthetic. Ultimately, I hope that this research will contribute to ongoing efforts toward shifting concert dance aesthetics—not just what dances *look* like, but the values they communicate—and the conceptualization of disability and how it impacts both disabled and nondisabled individuals alike.

I. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

APPROACHES TO AUDIO DESCRIPTION IN DANCE

A primary accessibility measure centered in the two choreographic processes is Audio Description (AD), which is typically created and provided for people who are blind or low-vision. The American Council for the Blind describes Audio Description for artistic media presentations as “commentary and narration which guides the listener through the presentation with concise, objective descriptions of new scenes, settings, costume, body language, and “sight gags,” all slipped in between portions of dialogue or songs (American Council for the Blind n.d.).”

Sonic text is already used in concert dance works to communicate narrative and/or emotional landscape. Examples of such use of sonic text include Bill T. Jones’ *Analogy Trilogy*, which used interview and oral history transcripts to abstract the visual landscape of the work, and ODC/SF’s annual wintertime adaptation of *The Velveteen Rabbit*, which uses literature as the chronological guide for the work. Text has also long been used as a choreographic device toward movement generation in many Choreographic processes (Blom and Chaplin 1982). However, these conventional uses of sonic text in concert dance often differ from AD in that mere sonic text, while adding to the presentation of the dance, does not necessarily provide description for the visual elements that occur in the dance.

Compared to museums and other performing arts such as theater and opera, Audio Description is not yet a widespread practice for concert dance (Barnés-Castaño,

Bernstorff, and Vilches 2021). The less common instances where AD is created for dance are often either for venues and companies with large budgets and patronage—such as Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater at Lincoln Center—or niche companies that have relatively small followings but a core commitment to disability accessibility—such as Abilities Dance Boston and, for some productions, AXIS Dance Company. Of worthy note is Scottish Ballet, which is not a disability-centered dance company but has committed to presenting Audio Description toward increased audience accessibility.

Beyond artistic media presentations, the American Council for the Blind defines Audio Description broadly as “a narration service that attempts to describe what the sighted person takes for granted... (ACB),” which neatly describes common approaches to AD for dance. Mainstream approaches to AD may render a dance work technically accessible in that there is an accessibility measure offered for blind and low-vision folks to experience the dance work. However, the ACB’s definition also reveals an intrinsic tension between mainstream Audio Description—and ultimately, most accessibility measures broadly— and my and others’ ongoing research with accessibility in the performing arts: how to center, not merely include, disability in dance.

In some cases of increased accessibility awareness and capacity, the AD process for a dance work may begin during technical rehearsals in the theater and include the artist team’s input and the stage elements that support the dance’s storytelling. However, it is more typical that the AD is not created until after the complete creation of the work and without input from the artistic team, elements which typify what Audio Describer Louise Fryer describes as *Traditional AD (TAD)* (Fryer 2018).

In the TAD approach for dance, the AD—and by extension, blind and low-vision audience members—is most often not considered during a dance’s creation process. Many applications of TAD for dance engage with AD as an accessibility measure to *accommodate*, rather than *incorporate* into a dance work. For example, a student-choreographed work that premiered in April 2023 at California State University, Long Beach utilized spoken word in its sound score. Because AD was not considered during the creation of this dance work, the AD could only be inserted into the work by pausing the archival video between phrases of lyrics and movement and inserting the AD into those post-production pauses. The AD thereby disrupted the flow of this work rather than incorporating the AD into the work as part of an intentional, accessible audience experience.

It is important to consider that the practice of inserting AD between various sonic elements is a common practice in other visual media, such as television and film, and is actually a strict standard for various Audio Description in different countries (Rai, Greening, and Petré 2010). While I disagree with some of these guidelines that AD should *only* take place in moments of *absolute* silence, I believe that this practice can be a powerful lesson to artists about the impact of concision and incorporating AD into an art work.

These conventional approaches to Audio Description also invoke a disabled / nondisabled power imbalance: AD creators are often sighted folks, and the blind and low-vision audience members (disabled) who consume art via the AD experience are thus reliant on a sighted person (nondisabled) (Thompson 2015). This power imbalance is especially present when AD is treated purely as an accessibility measure rather than

an extension of the artistry at play. For example, the UK Civil Service's standards of best practice for creating Audio Description includes guidance to "avoid personal interpretations and opinions (UK Government Communication Service 2021)." This guidance unintentionally relies on the fallacy of objectivity and, in the context of the arts, implies the assumption that there are singular correct and incorrect ways to interpret works of art (Remael, Reviers, and Vercauteren 2015).

This approach to Audio Description privileges the sighted describer's interpretation in at least two ways. First, emphasizing the *description*, rather than *symbolism*, of the visual leaves the person using the AD with fewer avenues to explore artistic impact, thereby undercutting the ability of the AD to "make the same interpretation possible for those for whom the visual element is missing (Fryer 2010)." Second, the sighted (nondisabled) describer's experience of the art is positioned as objective truth. The privileging of the sighted describer in this dynamic communicates that the singular, proper way to experience the work of art at hand is through sight, which researcher and AD user Amelia Cavallo refers to as *ocularcentric* (Cavallo 2015). This ocularcentrism ultimately positions blindness and low-vision as deficits to overcome, rather than opportunities to facilitate unique and impactful experiences of their own.

Take for example the "Lincoln Center at the Movies" Audio Description of Alvin Ailey's signature work *Revelations* (1960), specifically this excerpt from the iconic "Pilgrim of Sorrow" opening section set to the African American spiritual "I Been 'Buked:"

With their feet in a wide stance, the dancers lean their heads back and gaze up with their arms stretched downward and slightly out to the sides. At the front, Hope [Boykin] wears a brown dress, while women behind her, including Rachael [McLaren], Alicia [Graf Mack], and Belén [Indhira Pereyra], wear beige or rust-colored dresses. In the rear, Matthew [Rushing] and two other bare-chested men strike the same pose as the women. Crouching down, the dancers reach their right hands downward to the right, then stand, crouch again, and reach the opposite hand down to the left. They stand again and raise both hands overhead, circling them in the air. [pause] The others bend forward and crouch while Matthew [Rushing] stands taller behind them. The dancers swoop their arms out, then in and up again as they stand together.

This excerpt is an excellent example of Audio Description without “personal interpretations and opinions” as advised by the UK Civil Service (UK Government Communication Service 2021). However, while this Audio Description technically describes very accurately *what* the dancers are visually doing, it gives little information about the emotional landscape of the dance work or the impact of the dancers’ actions; it does not communicate the weight, tension, and gravitas—the *how* and *why*—that is just as important as and inseparable from the *what* of the dancers’ movements.

This is not to say that AD must bear the weight of communicating every single contextual detail in the work. Sound, specifically music in the case of *Revelations*, is itself an effect that conveys information about the narrative of a dance work (Crook 1999; Fryer 2010). However, as an aural source of information, AD is ultimately another sound effect, and how it interacts with the other aural components (i.e. music, text, sound effects) of a dance work should be considered toward curating a more cohesive audience experience (Fryer 2010).

In contrast to the *Revelations* example is Abilities Dance Boston's (ADB) approach to Audio Description. ADB not only offers AD for every performance, but also presents its AD as *default* for all audience members regardless of their vision status, one form of what Fryer calls *Integrated Audio Description* (IAD) (Fryer 2018). Presenting AD—especially TAD—as default in a dance work is noteworthy because in cases where a work's creative team is consulted on the AD, which is not common, it is not uncommon that the creative team expresses that the AD should not interfere with the sighted audience's experience of the work (Patiniotaki 2022).

ADB's Audio Descriptions are collaboratively produced by a team of two to three people, including at least one blind or low-vision collaborator at all times. AD written by a fully sighted describer is not necessarily accessible to disabled AD users and their lived experiences (Fryer and Freeman 2013b); having blind or low-vision AD users participate in the AD process ensures its accessibility and centers those who are most impacted by this work, which is one of the core principles of Disability Justice (Berne and Sins Invalid 2015). Further centering critical access and the disabled audience's experience, ADB's Audio Descriptions are also captioned and ASL interpreted for Deaf and Hard of Hearing audience members.

In specifically considering and curating the artistic experience for blind and low-vision audience members, ADB's approach to Audio Description results in a rich artistic component that both adds to the artistry of the dance work as a whole and is its own self-contained sonic experience. Take for example these Audio Description excerpts of the Drunk Jade Princess' solo from Abilities Dance Boston's livestreamed production of *Firebird* in 2021:

“Bradford jumps right in as Lauren abashedly moves to the side. [...] Spinning until dizzy, he regains his composure graciously as he kicks his right leg out to bend at the knee...maybe? [Chuckle] [...] He attempts to spin and fails. [...] Bradford’s arms windmill around as he welcomes praise. No one is praising FYI, but he waves goodbye to us.”

This approach realizes in practice the idea that Audio Description—and other accessibility measures—can add to the artistic value of a work (Dolmage 2014) and transform the work being described (Mills 2015). Cavallo adds that using poetic, metaphorical, or creative language to AD can help tap into the emotional state of a character or movement that might be otherwise more difficult to detect, thereby positioning the AD to help progress the narrative of the work (Cavallo 2015). Furthermore, this use of more creative AD can result in higher rates of AD users feeling present and more interested in experiencing the work being described (Walczak and Fryer 2017; Fryer 2014; Fryer and Freeman 2013a).

However, although ADB’s approach produces a far more inclusive experience for both the creative team and the audience members who utilize the Audio Description, the AD is still not actively present in the process until the very end, when the dance work is almost complete. This absence means that the Audio Description is still arguably something to fit into the visual work, rather than developing the AD in tandem with the work and allowing the centering of disability to further impact the creation of the dance work.

Ultimately, as is implied in the ACB’s definition of Audio Description (American Council for the Blind n.d.), the typical dance work is a visual art that is usually created

with only sighted audiences considered. These typical approaches to Audio Description and concert dance are arguably superficial patches—even if to varying degrees—if disability is not centered in the creation of these works and their corresponding accessibility measures. However, there is much potential in non-normative approaches to Audio Description to further center disability in creating and experience art. Similar to my own explorations, Laurel Lawson and Alice Sheppard of the disability arts ensemble Kinetic Light have also proposed the possibility of approaching Audio Description as a disability-centered generative tool rather than merely a post-production accessibility measure that is effectively divorced from the artistic process. This thesis explores the use of disability-centered Audio Description as a generative choreographic device that also centers disability through a Disability Justice lens in creating and experiencing dance. These explorations pursue the spirit of the late disability studies pioneer Tobin Siebers and his “disability aesthetic,” which questions how centering disability—in this case, an accessibility tool—might impact aesthetic horizons in art and art-making (Siebers 2006).

ABLEISM IN CONCERT DANCE AESTHETICS AND PRACTICES

Disability studies pioneer Tobin Siebers recognized that mainstream aesthetics denied and subsequently invisibilized the existence of disability in works of art. Siebers proposed the possibility of a *disability aesthetic* that could embrace disability as valuable, de-center harmony and “health” as standards of beauty, and utilize disability as a critical framework through which to question historical and future art aesthetics (Siebers 2006). Dance scholar Bailey Anderson has additionally recognized that

conventional concert dance practices rely on an optics-driven method of movement transmission; a choreographer originates movement on their body, and the dancers observe and copy the choreographer's movements onto their own bodies. Anderson proposes that, instead, educators and choreographers might consider adopting principle-based methods in their work. Rather than relying on visually copying the choreographer's body, a principle-based method can unpack the underlying intentions and goals—the *principles*—of the movement at hand (Anderson 2015).

These principle-based methods can include *movement translation*, the translation or transposition of the same movement across different bodies. For example, a *grand battement* (large beat) is typically executed by tossing a straight leg high into the air, but this traditional iteration of the *grand battement* excludes many would-be practitioners, regardless of non/disability identity. However, in utilizing movement translation—a principle-based method—the *grand battement* could be realized as a large beat or toss with any body part, limb or not. The application of principle-based methods to dance pedagogy and choreography might facilitate greater representation and inclusion of disabled people in dance (Anderson 2015).

As it stands—or, from a movement translation perspective, “exists in an upright position”—the optics-driven methods of concert dance rely largely on mimicry to achieve its aesthetic values. Mainstream *physically integrated dance*—the most common name for the disability sub-field in dance—has arguably not strayed far beyond the mere presence of disabled bodies as transgressive in normative concert dance aesthetics. The leading physically integrated dance companies in the United States privilege certain

kinds of disabled bodies and cater to people with physical disabilities over people who have cognitive disabilities or are neurodivergent (McLaughlin 2019).

Thus far, most mainstream explorations of movement translation have been shallow and still rely on the use of mimicry in transmitting movement ideas between choreographers and dancers. Disability culture activist Petra Kupperts writes that presenting disability in dance simultaneously hypervisibilizes bodies whose disabilities are visibly perceived and invisibilizes the socially constructed nature of disability itself (Kupperts 2001). This dual effect is especially true when mimicry is central to concert dance aesthetics and inadvertently presents disability as a monolith in dance, erasing a large portion of disabled people's experiences (Anderson 2020).

While these considerations explicitly center on dance aesthetics, the aesthetic values of dance symbiotically impact and are informed by mainstream choreographic and educational practices. Recognizing an equity issue allows for the opportunity to move toward a better future. As law professor, critical race theorist, and originator of intersectionality Kimberlé Crenshaw puts it, "When there's no name for a problem, you can't see a problem. When you can't see a problem, you can't solve it" (Crenshaw 2016).

DISABILITY JUSTICE FRAMEWORK AND ANTI-ABLEISM

Disability Justice was coined in 2005 by the Disability Justice Collective, a group of disabled Black, Brown, queer, and trans activists including Patty Berne, Mia Mingus, and Stacey Milbern. Disability Justice is a framework for movement-building and social

critique—and is itself a movement—that considers disability and ableism as inseparably entwined with other forms of oppression (e.g. White and Christian supremacy/racism, sexism, queer- and transphobia, capitalism, etc.) (Lewis 2022). As a politic of being, Disability Justice centers the dynamic perspectives, needs, and leadership of those who are most impacted by the given issues at hand (Berne 2020; Piepzna-Samarasinha 2018; Berne 2015; Berne and Sins Invalid 2015). The disability justice performance project Sins Invalid, based in the San Francisco Bay Area, lists ten core principles of Disability Justice:

1. *Intersectionality: “We do not live single issue lives.” –Audre Lorde. Ableism, coupled with white supremacy, supported by capitalism, underscored by heteropatriarchy, has rendered the vast majority of the world “invalid.”*
2. *Leadership of those most impacted: “We are led by those who most know these systems.” –Aurora Levins Morales*
3. *Anti-capitalist politic: In an economy that sees land and humans as components of profit, we are anti-capitalist by the nature of having non-conforming body/minds.*
4. *Commitment to cross-movement organizing: Shifting how social justice movement understand disability and contextualize ableism, disability justice lends itself to politics of alliance.*
5. *Recognizing wholeness: People have inherent worth outside of commodity relations and capitalist notions of productivity. Each person is full of history and life experience.*
6. *Sustainability: We pace ourselves, individually and collectively, to be sustained long term. Our embodied experiences guide us toward ongoing justice and liberation.*
7. *Commitment to cross-disability solidarity: We honor the insights and participation of all of our community members, knowing that isolation undermines collective liberation.*

8. *Interdependence: We meet each others' needs as we build toward liberation, knowing that state solutions inevitably extend into further control over lives.*
9. *Collective access: As brown, black and queer-bodied disabled people we bring flexibility and creative nuance that go beyond able-bodied/minded normativity, to be in community with each other.*
10. *Collective liberation: No body or mind can be left behind—only moving together can we accomplish the revolution we require.*

(Berne and Sins Invalid 2015)

Poet and visual artist Naomi Ortiz additionally defines Disability Justice as a “framework that values access, self-determination, and an expectation of difference. [...] Disability Justice redefines beliefs about productivity, attractiveness, and the value of human life” (Ortiz 2012). To differentiate disability *rights* from disability *justice*, Ortiz offers this consideration using notes from a 2009 Disability Activist Collective meeting:

Rights: What people in power can give you—laws (individual power)

Justice: What can't be taken away—values, identity, defined allies, access, etc. (community power)

(Ortiz 2012)

I view the application of Disability Justice to choreographic process as a call to shift from the conventional power structure of concert dance processes. Currently, typical choreographic models position the single choreographer as the reigning authority figure in a process (Anderson 2020; 2015). This phenomenon is mirrored in the organizational structures of institutions, which often incorporate a top-down hierarchy or distribution of power. Choreographer, curator, and community organizer Hope Mohr has explored the impacts of shifting from this top-down model of power distribution and

proposed considerations for engaging with this power shift in dance spaces (Mohr 2021). This thesis also centers considerations for interacting with community members as partners in the collaborative process, similar in spirit to the work of Liz Lerman (Borstel 2021). Toward increasing inclusion and access in choreographic process, a component of this research explores the relationship between the adoption of a Disability Justice framework and the feasibility of the traditional single choreographer model. Another component of this research is exploring how the inherently collaborative and dynamic nature of Disability Justice might expand the narratives that are presented and perspectives that are centered in dance works.

EMERGENCE THEORY

Some contention exists in contemporary scholarship as to the exact definition of emergence theory and if, how, or when emergence theory can be observed (Corning 2002). Neuroscientist JA Scott Kelso defines emergence as being the spontaneous, unpredictable outcomes produced from the self-organization of agents in complex systems (Kelso 1997). Emergence theory serves this research as a guiding framework for understanding how collaboration might function toward realizing a creative process and Disability Justice. In understanding collaboration through the lens of emergence, this research draws upon the following four features of emergence theory as proposed by el-Hani and Pereira:

1. *Ontological physicalism: All that exists in the space-time world are the basic particles recognized by physics and their aggregates.*

2. *Property emergence: When aggregates of material particles attain an appropriate level of organizational complexity, genuinely novel properties emerge in these complex systems.*
3. *The irreducibility of the emergence: Emergent properties are irreducible to, and unpredictable from, the lower-level phenomena from which they emerge.*
4. *Downward causation: Higher level entities causally affect their lower-level constituents.*

(El-Hani and Pereira 2000)

I view these features of emergence theory as a guiding framework for the collaborative choreographic processes in this research as follows:

- *Ontological physicalism*—each individual in the process, regardless of perceived “role” or power, is an integral, irreplaceable entity in the larger group because of the unique perspective and experience they bring to the process
- *Property emergence*—the interaction of these individuals in the choreographic process produces a work that is unique to that specific collaboration or cast
- *Irreducibility of the emergence*—the final unique work cannot be predicted based on any single individual in the process, and neither can the final work be attributed to any single, individual participant
- *Downward causation*—the facilitator(s), even in processes that aspire to be less or non-hierarchical, hold power and responsibility in cultivating the environment of the collaborative process

While Kelso, el-Hani, and Pereira’s works relate specifically to neuroscience and physics, emergence theory has been applied to dance improvisation. For example, dance artists Yasmine Lindskog and Ivar Hagendoorn have explored the use of

emergence theory in producing “complex” improvised choreography out of simple structures (Lindskog 2016; Hagendoorn 2008). In these cases, emergence theory was applied as the primary generative tool—through the use of observation, selection, and application of choreographic rules—for producing a dance work.

While I have not found documentation about the application of emergence theory as a philosophy, rather than itself being a primary tool, in creating a dance work, some work has explored the use of emergence theory in organizational leadership.

Organizational theorist Karl Weick and Black feminist writer adrienne maree brown have written about the potential of emergence theory to unlock individuals’ creativity, innovation, and agency in collaborative group efforts (brown 2017; Weick 1998).

Additionally, Piepzna-Samarasinha references emergence theory in relation to organically building networks and movements toward collective care and disability justice (Piepzna-Samarasinha 2018). In this thesis research, I apply emergence theory as a framework toward fostering collaborations that can dynamically respond to the shifting needs of both the individual and the group (Piepzna-Samarasinha 2018; Weick 1998). This concept of collective care is a core principle of disability justice (Berne 2020; Piepzna-Samarasinha 2018).

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND FEMINIST PEDAGOGY

Alongside emergence theory, critical theory—and more specifically, critical pedagogy—helps direct this process-centered exploration. A critical theory perspective critiques knowledge and social structures as neither objective nor apolitical. Under the

umbrella of critical theory is critical pedagogy, which is credited to Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire. In critical pedagogy, the educational experience is positioned as a platform by which social critique—and liberation—can occur. Teachers learn in collaboration with the students, who are active agents in their learning, rather than a top-down approach in which the teacher deposits knowledge into the students, who have no agency in the educational process. This collaborative learning between “teacher” and “student” provides opportunity for questioning structures of power and oppression (Freire 1996).

Applied to dance, critical pedagogy can foster critical inclusion in Western dance education spaces (Chin In progress; Kerr-Berry 2017). In working toward this critical education, I have learned that my teaching philosophy mirrors that of dancemaker and educator Charlotte Griffin, who views teaching as an “act of disappearance.” This disappearance follows in the spirit of emergence theory in that the “teacher” is de-emphasized as the focal point of the educational space, but simultaneously becomes even more vital in how they facilitate the space for others. By extension, a choreographic process presents a site of educational opportunity in the context of the choreographer as teacher and the dancers as learners. Given its experimental nature, the choreographic process at the heart of this research is uniquely poised to be a site of learning and is explicitly considered as such. Furthermore, critiquing prevalent practices through experimentation and learning, particularly in educational and DEIJ (diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice) contexts as this research does, lends itself to the criticism of power structures, a hallmark of both critical pedagogy and critical theory broadly (Freire 1996).

This spirit of criticism toward power structures also lends itself to the spirit of feminist pedagogy, especially when applied to this choreographic process in the context of the Disability Justice framework. Allowing the educational space, or choreographic process in this case, to be flexible and responsive to the experiences and needs of the students is a core premise of feminist pedagogy (Alterowitz 2014). The ability to flexibly respond to student experiences and needs requires that the power of granular goal-setting does not rest solely with one arbitrator, but is shared as a collaborative, community responsibility. This philosophy closely resembles the Disability Justice principle of “leadership [by] those most impacted” (Berne and Sins Invalid 2015), in which the most vulnerable participants can impact the trajectory of the space according to what their needs are.

The previously mentioned optics- or mimicry-based practices (Anderson 2015) of mainstream dance technique and choreography hold little room for centering flexible and responsive inclusion. Ultimately, what happens in these optics-based spaces is the emphasis on mastering and reproducing an aesthetic that is modeled by a single, often nondisabled, body that leads the space (Lakes 2005). Furthermore, in educational or pre-professional training environments, there is also the element of assessment and the evaluation of how well a practitioner has mastered and reproduced an aesthetic. Although conversations are taking place about the need to shift current assessment methods for disabled dance practitioners (Needham-Beck and Aujla 2020), the arbitration of achievement in dance technique—ultimately a creative practice—presents a potential platform for the perpetuation of ableist, racist, classist, and other inequitable perspectives. Even with best intention, these optics-based practices rely on ableist

principles that present a single standard as “normal.” Anyone who deviates from this “normal” must justify their inability to conform, such as through disclosure of injury, disability, or other medicalized condition. Rather than changing the conventions themselves, inclusion is arbitrated as an exception to the normative exclusionary practices of the space, meaning that the traditionally excluded or marginalized participants continue to be disempowered in these exclusionary spaces.

A core exploration underlying this research is the belief that studying communities or experiences that exist at the margins of society can unearth revelations about the structures or experiences that exist at the center of society, an idea that comes out of Black feminist pedagogy (Mogadime 2021). Although disability may seem like a niche area of research, over 25% of US American adults have a disability according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC 2023). Furthermore, the insidiously constructed nature of disability and ableism is ingrained into nearly every aspect of society and impacts everyone regardless of disability or nondisability identity; as abolitionist community lawyer Talila “TL” Lewis states, “You do not have to be disabled to experience ableism” (2020). In centering disability, this thesis research is ultimately grappling with ableism and how we categorize things as “normal” or “other” in concert dance practices, as well as how accessibility and equity can be better realized for practitioners regardless of their disability identity.

II. CHOREOGRAPHIC PROCESS #1: *Sunrise: A case study in movement scores and Disability Justice (2022)*

INTRODUCTION

The primary exploration of the first choreographic process in this thesis research was investigating how centering Disability Justice and emphasizing collaborative choreography, rather than that of a single choreographer, in a choreographic process would impact the dancers' experience as a collaborator and performer. To do so, this choreographic process utilized a written script of non-body-specific movement instructions that both described the movements witnessed in the work and allowed the dancer-collaborators to exercise agency in how they chose to embody and create the choreography. This dance work explored the relationship between text-based movement scores and Audio Description as choreographic devices that could center disability in creating and presenting a stage dance work. *Sunrise: A case study in movement scores and Disability Justice (2022)*, the work produced by this choreographic process, engaged with personal and philosophical explorations of dancer agency and wellness, movement creation conventions and conceptions of unison movement, and so-called productivity in production-oriented creative processes, all related to principles of Disability Justice and critical and feminist pedagogies. Disability and accessibility considerations were central in facilitating how the care-oriented, anti-capitalist environment could emerge in this choreographic process, such as through the dancers playing a central leadership role in directing the pace of the creative process and the movements witnessed in the choreography based on their individual capacities. This disability-centered approach was also central to audience considerations in

constructing the performance environment, including the intention to create and incorporate Audio Description as default from the beginning of the process.

RECRUITMENT

This thesis explores the use of Audio Description as a generative choreographic tool toward centering disability, especially practitioner-collaborator accessibility, in choreographic process. To that end, equally as important as the use of Audio Description is how the practitioner-collaborators are treated through the process. The principles of Disability Justice were woven into the decision-making considerations throughout the *Sunrise* process, starting with the recruitment of the participant collaborators. In the recruitment process, the most present Disability Justice principles were *leadership of those most impacted*, *recognizing wholeness*, *anti-capitalist politic*, and *sustainability*. The dancer-collaborators who participated in this choreographic process were recruited in October 2021 via a call for collaborators that was electronically distributed both by the UCI Claire Trevor School of the Arts Dean's Office and in the UCI Department of Dance's weekly internal email newsletter. In both instances, the call was distributed only to the Department of Dance's internal listserv, so only undergraduate dance majors, graduate students, staff, and faculty members in the Department of Dance received the call for collaborators. Especially in a department environment where the mainstage performance opportunities are by audition only, this call for collaborators sought to facilitate the power of self-selection for the dancer-collaborators—*leadership by those most impacted*.

From the beginning, a goal of this choreographic research was to premiere the resulting choreography in April 2022 as part of Dance Escape, the Department of Dance's annual spring concert production of MFA Dance student choreography. The recruitment of collaborators included two pre-process workshops for interested potential collaborators to learn about the various components of this process: the artistic and philosophical explorations related to disability and equity in dance, the collaborative working environment vis a vis Disability Justice and emergence theory, the choreographic tools being used in the process, and my own personality and demeanor in facilitating this specific process. The primary goal of these pre-process workshops was to provide opportunity for the dancer-collaborators to exercise greater agency by making informed decisions about their self-selected casting. In doing so, the pre-process workshops established the crucial understanding that the dancer-collaborators were viewed as partners who had the right to exercise their agency in this process. This principle dethroned the "single choreographer" role which might typically arbitrate who was "good enough" to participate in this process, which was presented as an open invitation for anyone who wanted to enter and participate. This recruitment approach was also functional: because the recruitment took place during my first quarter of residency, I did not know anything about the undergraduate dance majors in the very large department, and thus could not effectively invite selected individuals into the process.

The interested dancer-collaborators were told that the performance of the work itself was not guaranteed. The selection of the work was subject to the department faculty approval via the "piece audition" process, wherein graduate student

choreographers must “audition” their works-in-progress to the faculty, who then select which works to present in the mainstage concert production. The interested dancer-collaborators were also explicitly informed that their final casting in the eventual choreographic work was not guaranteed. Although I assured the interested dancer-collaborators that I would advocate hard to keep the cast together during the post-audition casting process, the dancer-collaborators were still required to audition for the Dance Escape concert production, where I could not guarantee their casting in the work because they would be eligible for selection by the other graduate student choreographers. Despite that lack of guaranteed casting, the dancer-collaborators in *Sunrise* still committed to this process, further exercising their agency in the pursuit of *leadership by those most impacted*.

As part of the recruitment process, the interested dancer-collaborators were also informed about my personal boundaries regarding wellness and health as related to the rehearsal schedule. Rehearsals would only be scheduled during the 6:00-8:00pm studio reservation block—not during the 8:00-10:00pm studio reservation block or on the weekends—because I was trying to model care and wellness toward realizing the Disability Justice principles of *anti-capitalist politic*, *recognizing wholeness*, and *sustainability* in this process.

At the end of the recruitment period, eight undergraduate dancer-collaborators self-selected to continue forward with the choreographic research process. A total of 14 undergraduate dance majors attended the pre-process workshops or communicated interest in the process to me during the recruitment period. Six undergraduate dance majors self-selected to discontinue due to either scheduling conflicts or for personal

reasons following the pre-process workshops. The ensemble of eight dancer-collaborators was maintained through the end of the concert production process.

The presence of performance units as degree requirements presents some form of coercion, especially when students view the four annual mainstage performance opportunities as scarce considering the large number of dance majors in the department; yes, students can reject casting following an audition, but performance casting is never guaranteed and, for some students, a rare experience. However, this recruitment process was still successful in facilitating dancer-collaborator agency—leadership of those most impacted. The collaborators self-selected to attend the recruitment workshops because of some level of personal interest, not because it was merely one mandatory component in a larger audition. The collaborators also received greater exposure to the process to make better-informed decisions about their self-selected casting.

Of interest to this thesis is that none of the eight dancer-collaborators openly identified as disabled during the duration of the choreographic process. On the surface, the lack of openly disabled-identifying collaborators is a barrier to more fully exploring a Disability Justice politic and a disability aesthetic in choreographic practice. However, I believe there is also room to critique the binaric conception of disabled/nondisabled and expand colloquial definitions of disability, especially when we consider that ableism impacts everyone regardless of non/disability identity. The participation of nondisabled-identifying dancer-collaborators provides fertile ground for this critique of the disability binary, especially with the use of the non-body-specific movement instructions in the choreographic process for *Sunrise*.

CHOREOGRAPHIC PROCESS

In this choreographic process, the dancer-collaborators were tasked with choreographing—or creating movement to—*Sunrise* based on a script of non-body-specific movement instructions. This script was written by me and undergraduate drama major Lauren Rotante, *Sunrise*'s rehearsal assistant and co-choreographer. Taking on the spirit of *movement translation*, previously mentioned in the Theoretical underpinnings, the movement instructions presented a principle-based approach to considering and creating movement. A primary intention of the movement script was to avoid, as much as possible, dictating if or when a specific body part should be used for a given movement instruction. This intention was an effort to circumvent the disabled/nondisabled power dynamic that is present in most mainstream applications of movement translation, where the nondisabled body is positioned as the standard around which the disabled body must adapt. The instructions that came closest to prescribing—or did prescribe—a specific body part were ones that referenced the use of the gaze or contact with the head.

The movement script was written for four dancers, a quartet, and was presented on a spreadsheet with four descending columns of instructions, one column for each dancer in the quartet. Each movement instruction was given with counts, or musical duration for the given movement, and the movement instructions were grouped into eight-count sections to make the script more easily digestible for the dancers. These movement instructions include prompts for individual movements (solo), contact or non-contact partnering (duet, trio, or quartet), and individual and ensemble spatial arrangements.

Rehearsals took place during the 6:00-8:00pm studio reservation block on Mondays and Wednesdays during the regular instructional weeks. Rehearsals did not take place during any finals or break periods. The rehearsal process was disrupted during the first four weeks of the Winter 2022 quarter when the campus temporarily shifted to online instruction due to the COVID-19 surge. However, the nature of the movement script allowed the dancer-collaborators the option to continue creating on their own if they so desired.

The movement script was also designed to be a foundation for *Sunrise's* AD. While non-body-specific by design, the script was also a description of the movements even before they were generated, and in theory, the movement script itself could be read as a form of AD. In this way, the work's AD was present as the choreographic generator throughout the process by way of the movement script, which will be further discussed later.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION PROCESS

In this choreographic process, I was interested in facilitating student-oriented learning experiences as much as possible. I approached the Audio Description for *Sunrise* as a learning opportunity in which I would mentor a student through the process of creating an Audio Description for a dance work. My decision to pursue mentorship had less to do with the explorations of this research and more to do with my desire to disseminate knowledge and tools toward greater accessibility in dance to more people.

I presented this opportunity to undergraduate dance major Dillon Zamora, who had communicated an awareness of and interest in disability and accessibility. Under my supervision, Zamora wrote and recorded the AD track for *Sunrise*, his first experience as an audio describer for dance.

Because of personal capacity and the previously mentioned barriers to recruiting collaborators in advance of this first process, as well as the department's hectic overlapping production rehearsals, this mentorship idea was not discussed until the Winter 2022 quarter when the dance work was already in development. Zamora's AD work did not begin in earnest until after the final studio rehearsal at the end of the quarter, when the dance work was nearly complete. In total, Zamora only had around two and a half weeks to create his AD for *Sunrise*. The AD mentorship process was limited due to this compressed timeline and involved only two workshop/training consultations with me and Lauren Rotante along with various correspondence and feedback via email.

Originally, the AD was intended to largely source from the movement script with additional input from the visual elements in the choreography produced by the dancer-collaborators. However, Zamora largely referenced the rehearsal footage rather than the movement script in creating his initial AD draft. In response to his draft, my feedback included two primary suggestions: the suggestion to consider word density and potential aural / sensory overload to prepare for the eventual audio recording the AD track; and more importantly for this work, the suggestion that Zamora could move beyond objective description of the visual in his AD, which is the current, limiting practice of TAD. To the latter, I challenged him to investigate interpretive and/or narrative context in

his work so that the AD might become a more integral part of the work and its storytelling, rather than the dry accessibility crutch that can be typical of many applications of TAD. Following some modifications to the script, Zamora then recorded his AD for the work, which he also revised after I again provided feedback, mostly about word density. At this point, because the scheduling capacities for both the production and ourselves prohibited continued in-depth mentorship for Zamora to further refine his AD work, I made additional modifications to his revised recording in an attempt to further reduce the density of his AD text on my own. Zamora's AD recording with my edits was presented as part of the sound score in the performances of *Sunrise*.

While I am glad that my collaborators and I pursued this mentorship opportunity through *Sunrise*, Zamora's AD was ultimately more in line with a TAD approach despite the initial design of this choreographic process. The AD was still present through the process via the movement script, but the exploration of integrating the AD throughout the process was not as fully realized as hoped. This experience informed the explorations and AD execution of the second choreographic process, which kept the AD process in the hands of more experienced audio describers who were better positioned to push forward these explorations.

III. CHOREOGRAPHIC PROCESS #2: *The world was ending, so they danced, and they were free* (2023)

INTRODUCTION

The world was ending, so they danced, and they were free (2023) (Appendix C) was the dance work produced by the second choreographic process (referred to as DE23) in this thesis research. This work continued the explorations of *Sunrise* (2022), investigating generative approaches to Audio Description that could integrate into and elevate the dance work, as well as center disability and Disability Justice in creating and presenting a concert dance work. However, although the foundational design was in place to pursue this exploration, the *Sunrise* choreographic process ultimately resulted in choreography and AD that were produced in a more separated manner than originally intended. The DE23 process thus went further than *Sunrise*, using Audio Description itself as a generative tool in the creative process. This work also more actively sought and recruited disabled artists and collaborators to join the mostly nondisabled-identifying UCI collaborators in both creating and presenting the work to audiences, better exploring a disability-centered process than did *Sunrise*. *The world was ending, so they danced, and they were free* ultimately pursued explorations of Audio Description into new territory that current literature has not yet explored.

RECRUITMENT

This choreographic process involved a large team of performing and non-performing collaborators. For this thesis, which investigates the use of Audio

Description in choreographic process, this recruitment section will only discuss collaborators who were directly involved with the Audio Description for this work. The following collaborators were involved in the construction and/or the performed delivery of the Audio Description:

- eight UCI undergraduate dance students, who choreographed the work in response to the Audio Description
- two non-UCI-affiliated disabled-identifying guest dance artists, one of whom also wrote the poetry and co-authored the Audio Description with me
- two UCI graduate drama students, who orated the combined poetry and Audio Description in the live performances of this dance work
- one non-UCI-affiliated ASL student interpreter, who interpreted the combined poetry and Audio Description for this dance work's companion access video
- one non-UCI-affiliated ASL interpreter, who interpreted the combined poetry and Audio Description in the live performances of this dance work
- myself, who directed this dance work and co-authored the Audio Description

Dancer Recruitment: Call for Collaborators

Originally, this choreographic process sought two categories of dancers:

- UCI students who have dance experience, whether disabled- or nondisabled-identifying
- disabled-identifying UCI students with or without dance experience

Calls for collaborators were published through the following channels in September and October 2022:

- UCI Department of Dance's weekly email newsletter distributed to its internal listserv (only undergraduate dance majors, graduate students, staff, and faculty members in the Department of Dance)
- Original Instagram feed and story posts on my personal Instagram account as well as the UCI Disability Services Center's Instagram account
- Instagram story posts, both original and reposts, by the UCI Department of Dance Community Student Advising Committee, UCI Claire Trevor School of the Arts, UCI Associated Graduate Students, and Associated Students UCI
- Two Reddit posts in the UCI subReddit

Per these initial calls for collaborators, interested participants were eligible to collaborate in this choreographic process if they:

- Were at least 18 years old at time of recruitment; AND
- Spoke English; AND
- Were enrolled as a student at UCI; AND
- Either had dance experience; OR
- Identified as disabled.

Dancer Recruitment: Pre-Process Workshops

Two pre-process workshops were held on Tuesday, October 11, and Thursday, October 13, 2022, 6:00-8:00pm both evenings. Similar to the pre-process workshops for *Sunrise* (2022), the purpose of these pre-process workshops was to provide an introductory, informational experience about the process for interested dancer-collaborators so they could make informed decisions about whether this process and its methods were right for them.

Attendance at both pre-process workshops was recommended but not required, and both workshops were presented as an open invitation with no RSVP required. However, with the explicit clarification that medical disclosures were not required in any way, interested participants were encouraged to email me in advance to discuss access needs / realities so that workshop accessibility measures could be adjusted appropriately where capacity allowed. No respondents contacted me regarding access needs prior to the pre-process workshops.

Several interested undergraduate students communicated that they had one-time scheduling conflicts with the October 11 workshop but would attend the October 13 workshop. Two undergraduate students attended the October 11 workshop and returned for the second workshop on October 13. In total, ten undergraduate students attended the October 13 workshop. At the end of the October 13 pre-process workshop, I invited the participants to take time to consider their experiences and email me within one week about their decision to continue or not with the choreographic process. Eight participants continued with the choreographic process, and two attendees withdrew due

to scheduling capacity for the Fall 2022 and Winter 2023 quarters. None of the eight dancer-collaborators openly identified as disabled during the duration of the choreographic process.

Company Workshops

Following the pre-process workshops and the confirmation of the dancer-collaborators, the “company” of collaborators engaged in a series of “company workshops.” These company workshops were held in response to dancer-collaborator feedback from the choreographic process for *Sunrise* (2022). In that process, the artistic collaborators dove straight into the choreographic process without first getting to know each other as movers and people. The dancer-collaborators for *Sunrise* shared that the rehearsals earlier in the process were a period of adjustment to the choreographic methods being employed (text-based movement instructions and movement translation), the disability-centered principles guiding the process (Disability Justice and emergence theory), and the movement habits and comfort zones of the other dancer-collaborators in the space.

For the DE23 choreographic process, these company workshops were intended to facilitate camaraderie between the individual dancer-collaborators, as well as familiarity with the various guiding principles (such as Disability Justice and emergence theory) and methods (such as generating movement from text, movement translation, and partnering) that would be employed during the choreographic process. Eight

company workshops were scheduled for the Fall 2022 quarter, and five of the scheduled workshops were held.

Disabled-identifying Dancer Recruitment

From the various calls for disabled-identifying collaborators, one disabled-identifying student responded with interest. However, due to their various disabilities and health conditions that were in various states of progression, they withdrew from the choreographic process after attending two company workshops.

Because centering disability was core to this choreographic process, it was important to ensure that the process involved both openly disabled-identifying collaborators and openly disabled-identifying performer-collaborators who could visibilize disability on the stage. The majority of disabilities are invisible and not any less significant than visible disabilities. However, because invisible disabilities are unseen, the presence of invisible disabilities—which are often read as nondisabled-presenting on bodies that do not also display visible disabilities—on stage does not necessarily push the aesthetic horizons of a dance work without the disclosure of disability (Anderson 2015; 2020). One of my priorities for this process was recruiting visibly disabled artists toward proposing further aesthetic and attitudinal shifts for the UCI collaborators, department, broader campus community, and audience members.

I invited Vanessa Hernández Cruz, a disabled Chicana dance artist and accessibility consultant for dance with whom I had previously collaborated, and David Bernal-Fuentes, another disabled dance artist, to collaborate as performing co-

choreographers in this choreographic process. Prior to their recruitment, Cruz had already agreed to join this process as a co-choreographer and collaborator in authoring the combined poetry and Audio Description for this work.

Recruitment of Non-dance Collaborators for Delivery of Critical Access

The presentation of this choreography offered ASL interpretation of the poetry and Audio Description for audience members. These accessibility measures both served disabled audience members and visibilized disability for audience members who might normally not consider disability in the concert dance performance environment. This effort involved two ASL interpreters who each provided their own translations of the work. A professional ASL interpreter, Stacey Descanzo from Goodwill of Orange County, was recruited through the UCI Disability Services Center and made possible with generous support from Dr. Gillian Hayes, Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate Division at UCI. Two ASL student interpreters, Dominique Morse and Rose Quezada, were recruited from the ASL Linguistics and Deaf Cultures Program (ASLD) at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) through the assistance of Dr. Wanette Reynolds, Assistant Professor of ASLD Linguistics at CSULB.

The Audio Description also involved two UCI MFA acting students, Jiayi Zhao and Zalen King, who were recruited through the assistance of UCI MFA acting student Robert Zelaya. For this work, Zhao and King recited the combined Audio Description and poetry tracks on stage as part of both the performance ensemble and the work's

soundscape. Although their collaboration was confirmed for some time, Zhao and King did not enter the choreographic process in earnest until about one week before the work moved into the theater due to their commitments in the Department of Drama's extremely busy performance calendar.

CHOREOGRAPHIC PROCESS AND AUDIO DESCRIPTION

Similar to *Sunrise* (2022), the DE23 choreographic process utilized text as a generative choreographic device toward generating movement and composing the work, but unlike *Sunrise*, text was only one of several choreographic devices that was heavily used in creating this dance work. The creation and composition of the choreography were primarily impacted by the following components:

- The studies and works of the late Deaf Uruguayan visual artist Petrona Viera (1895-1960), which provided visual inspiration for the movement generation and three of which were reproduced and incorporated into the set design
- Music recordings by disabled musician Gaelynn Lea, which provided the temporal boundaries of the work given the mixed bill nature of the work's premiere
- The combined spoken sound score of poetry and Audio Description created by Vanessa Hernández Cruz and Bradford Chin (Appendix D)
- The performed delivery of the combined spoken sound score by Jiayi Zhao and Zalen King

For this dance work, Cruz wrote an original poem by the same name, *The world was ending, so they danced, and they were free*, which, despite the other generative tools involved, provided the primary structure for composing the narrative and movement arcs of this dance work. The total length of the poem was dictated by the time limitations placed on the allowable length of the dance work. Because this work was presented on a shared bill rather than as a standalone production, the dance work was limited to a 15-minute run time. When constructing the poem, Cruz and I followed a loose poetry to Audio Description ratio of 1:1, which was based on our own individual experiences as Audio Describers for dance. Following its completion, the poem was divided into four sections in relationship to the music selections performed and recorded by Gaelynn Lea:

1. "Prologue" set to "Tombigbee Waltz"
2. "Part 1: The world was ending" set to "Dragons & Faeries (Live)"
3. "Part 2: So they danced" set to the finale of "Dragons & Faeries (Live)"
4. "Part 3: And they were free" set to "Sunrise Garden (Live)"

Cruz and I developed and wove the Audio Description throughout the poem as the dance work was constructed, similar to how Audio Description is approached for visual media that involves dialogue, such as in television and film. At my suggestion, Cruz developed her poem as itself a form of Audio Description, going further than preexisting AD conventions. In doing so, the poetry and AD combined into a single narrative Audio Description track.

Earlier in the studio creation process, the dancer-collaborators constructed sections of individual, small group, and ensemble movement responses to both Cruz's poetry and Petrona Viera's visual works separately. While the movement generation process was driven by an exploration of Disability Justice toward a disability aesthetic, the generative process related to Viera's visual works is beyond the scope of this thesis.

The Audio Description flitted between responding to (the TAD approach) and preceding the movement sections. Where the AD preceded the compositional generation, it further dictated the explorations of compositional and narrative concepts proposed by me and Cruz. For example, sections of movement—drawn from a library of movement responses created during the movement generation process beyond the scope of this analysis—were drafted together following the structure of the poem, its stanzas, and the AD. Qualitative and spatial nuance, such as the aggression present in some duets or how different visual events were positioned and highlighted on stage, were also added in response to the emotional and narrative needs of the poetry and AD content. For example, toward the end of the second movement, the AD read, "Two dancers are left behind in the dust, viciously scrambling to save themselves but chained together." This text dictated the dissipation of the ensemble to reveal a duet. Although the duet movement sequence had already been drafted, the duet refined their sequence to include an aggressive (quick and direct) quality, as well as maintaining further physical contact to embody the description of being chained together.

In this approach, although the AD played a heavier part in communicating how an audience member might feel through the narrative arc, the AD actually pursued neither objectivity nor personal interpretation because the AD was itself the narrative.

As the AD was developed and refined throughout the choreographic process, these movement sections were filled out with additional material from the movement bank for reasons including temporal parameters and transitions (such as entering and exiting the stage). Throughout the process, reducing the density of the AD text was a priority as an accessibility-centered consideration, especially for the ASL interpreters, captioning, and audience members who may experience difficulty with auditory processing and/or sensory overstimulation.

As the choreographic process continued and the sections developed further and longer, it became less feasible for the collaborators' capacities to create draft audio recordings of the spoken poetry and Audio Description for each rehearsal. During rehearsals, I would read the spoken text along with the recorded music to accompany the dancer-collaborators as they workshopped the movement drafts. Invariably, some sections of movement and the script would not synchronize. After every rehearsal, the Audio Description content and its corresponding time stamps were modified and further developed in response to the most recent rehearsal's video footage, establishing the working script version for the next rehearsal. This approach is similar to that of Elbourne and Fryer with *Unscene Suffolk* and Cavallo with *Extant*, where the performers co-author the AD by providing their own vocabulary selections to the descriptions of their characters and movements. However, rather than having the DE23 performers contribute directly to the vocabulary of the AD, they became co-authors of the AD through their movement and choreographic choices. While at first this may seem more in line with a TAD approach, DE23's AD, which already dictated the composition of the

work, continued to engage in an integrated, generative dialogue of responding and adapting alongside the development of the work's visual elements.

The MFA actors, Jiayi Zhao and Zalen King, were introduced in the final two weeks of the studio rehearsal process. Zhao and King contributed their unique artistry in interpreting the poetry and AD, performing the spoken text with slightly different timing and emphases compared to how Cruz and I had performed the texts during the preceding rehearsal process. The introduction of their collaboration and artistry into the ensemble initiated another process of modifying the Audio Description script in response to the actors' timing in performing the script. Most of these modifications involved additional reductions—in some sections, quite significantly—of the AD text density, but not the poetry, so that the actors could feasibly perform the script within the temporal parameters of the music selections and the performance slot in the mixed bill program. The editing of the AD script in collaboration with the actors continued until one week before the production opened.

Further refining the AD in response to the actors' timing necessitated another process of adjusting various components of the movement sections, such as their duration and the temporal location of transitions, especially where text-based movement cues had shifted in temporal location or textual content. This final process of modifications continued until opening night, due in part to the actors' limited availability even for dress rehearsals immediately prior to the performances.

The approach to the DE23 was unconventional compared to TAD in that, unlike in most applications of AD to dance, the AD was incepted both prior to and alongside

the development of the choreographed work. This approach of integrated AD is similar in spirit to the innovative AD work of Fryer and Cavallo. In positioning the AD as an artistic component with which the collaborators dialogue throughout the creation process, AD—and disability itself—becomes more visible and centered in the creation and presentation of the work. However, the DE23 AD was different from Fryer and Cavallo's work in that the AD itself was used as a generative tool toward dictating the choreography and trajectory of the work.

IV. REFLECTION

AUDIO DESCRIPTION IN *SUNRISE*

In creating *Sunrise*, work on the AD did not officially begin until the work was nearly completed, making it more akin to common applications of TAD. However, unlike in many other instances of TAD for dance, the AD was arguably still present throughout the entire creation process because of the way *Sunrise* was scripted (as was originally intended). The movement script was a generative device in directing the creation and composition of the movement, but in theory, although Zamora ultimately did not write his AD in this manner, the script was also an early draft of Audio Description.

The dancer-collaborators translated the script of principle-based instructions into movement on their own bodies. This act is not itself so novel for choreographic process; as discussed previously, the use of narrative text as a generative choreographic device (such as creating movement in response to a poem or short story) is a long-standing and common practice in creating movement. With *Sunrise*, the unique blend of movement notation principles and imagery was also loosely reminiscent—albeit with more flexibility when it came to prescribing what the body should do—of Remy Charlip’s *Air Mail Dances*, in which Charlip would create visual scores of poses and figures that its recipients were tasked with choreographing. What is unique about *Sunrise* is that, because the script described the movement that was to be created during the studio rehearsal process, anything the dancer-collaborators created and performed was already described in the movement script. Approaching this process with the intention of describing movement and presenting AD as default simultaneously positioned the

movement script as the AD script, thereby also positioning Audio Description as a generative choreographic device, rather than an accessibility measure divorced from the creative process.

This theoretical application of Audio Description for *Sunrise* was not fully explored due to its framing as an experiential learning opportunity with AD for Zamora. Although the movement script was presented to Zamora as a resource in his AD work, he largely relied on the rehearsal video footage of the dance work to describe what was occurring within the ensemble broadly, which is a common approach for describing ensemble dance works. In this manner, the AD by itself was not so different from—and thus, arguably did not center disability any more than—a typical TAD process for dance. Even with the text-based and AD-oriented creative process that constructed *Sunrise*, Zamora's AD was still a communication of a sighted experience rather than itself being a generative tool that centered disability.

In theory, this approach to Audio Description—where the AD *precedes* the movement—and the use of principle-based (energetic, spatial, qualitative, etc. for both the physical and emotional), non-body-specific movement instructions means that, based on the movement script alone, one could create an Audio Description that could apply to multiple cast configurations for this work. It is, of course, important to consider that in the context of power and the increased visibility of marginalized communities, the unique descriptions of different casts of dancers and how they each embodied the movement script would be hugely impactful toward shifting audience perspectives, thereby realizing the power of dance to inform and impact cultural change. However, as a thought experiment, this approach to Audio Description could be used to encompass

casting variations such as specific movements created by the unique dancer-collaborators and/or their individual manifestations of disability/nondisability identity.

Admittedly, the *Sunrise* movement script does not *easily* translate to a conventional single-track Audio Description. The script contained some descriptions for the ensemble as a whole, but the script largely focused on descriptions of the individual dancer-collaborators—their movements, positions in space, and energetic and emotional qualities—and their unique relationships to the other members of the ensemble. However, these individual dancer-collaborator tracks in the movement script provide rich opportunity to explore the innovative idea of multi-track Audio Descriptions in performance, a concept which Lawson and Sheppard of Kinetic Light have also begun exploring separately from this work.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION IN DE23

The second choreographic process, *The world was ending, so they danced, and they were free* (DE23), continued the work of *Sunrise* in investigating the use of Audio Description as a generative choreographic tool. However, where *Sunrise* set out to use AD to generate only the movement and composition of the dance work, the DE23 process utilized AD as a choreographic device in generating the emotional landscape and narrative arc in addition to inspiring the composition of movement sections in the dance work. Furthermore, based on the experiential learning/mentorship experience pursued with Zamora for *Sunrise*, and due to the expanded scope of this second work—an already heightened undertaking for experienced Audio Describers—I decided to

leave the AD process closed to just myself and Cruz because we both had experience with AD, similar values in our Disability Justice-informed perspectives, and a preexisting shared history as previous collaborators.

At the beginning of the DE23 process, the original vision or hope was that Cruz's poem would incorporate AD into its prose, effectively scripting the dance as *Sunrise* had been. While Cruz's poem did not do exactly that, the poem centered and communicated her marginalized experiences as a disabled Chicana dance artist, as well as provided visceral, emotional, and textual context for the dance work. The poetic content allowed the Audio Description to serve as a generative choreographic device in a more dynamic, symbiotic relationship with the creation and composition of the movement.

With the AD being incorporated into the poetry via insertion rather being part of the prose itself, the poetry served as the structure for movement and compositional generation, landmarks of sorts around which the movement and Audio Description were composed. While the poem was not itself AD in the conventional sense, because the creation of Audio Description had been centered in proposing the work, the poem was created with rich textural and emotional descriptions that formed the emotional and narrative landscape of the dance work.

*This mechanic society
Rusting and decaying
Heavy tired souls
Gasping for air*

[...]

*Ever so slowly yet at the speed of light
Brushing through all the listless faces*

The AD additions followed suit, communicating not just the descriptions of the literal movement composition, but further emotional and narrative nuance to the landscape as well.

In a moment of shattering transformation, Taylor recognizes herself in the trio and, untethered, begins to wander.

[...]

David grabs Pluto and pushes the trio back, anger rippling against this inhumane cycle.

[...]

The trio reunites as Beebee and Taylor cast flowers and joy into the space, clearing the sensation of darkness.

This joint description track, as it were, informed how the dance work was constructed, especially on a macro level with the assemblage of the various movement sections. While individual movements may not have been constructed according to every word of text in the joint description track, the composition of the movement sections—both spatially and temporally—were largely informed by the arc of the AD and poetry. Different from *Sunrise* was that this description track was also approached with flexibility that *Sunrise*'s AD did not afford, especially toward centering disability considerations.

Rather than prescribing the temporal requirements of individual movements in the work, the DE23 Audio Description (as a generative device) provided temporal landmarks for the dance work, facilitating flexibility for the dancer- and actor-collaborators to embody the work on their own terms. The AD was the generative compositional tool, dictating how and when the dance work and its arc was sectioned.

However, because the individual sections in DE23 were less prescribed than in *Sunrise*, the AD and the movement composition for DE23 were in a near-constant state of adjustment in relationship with each other and the actor-collaborators.

CENTERING ACCESS AND DISABILITY THROUGH AUDIO DESCRIPTION

Both choreographic processes explored how Audio Description—or the concept of AD in the case of *Sunrise*—could be used as a generative choreographic tool to center disability and realize a disability aesthetic through Disability Justice framework in creating and presenting a concert dance work. From the very beginning of *Sunrise*, the movement score of non-body-specific movement instructions—intended to be more inclusive for various disabled and nondisabled dancer-collaborators—was designed to be the foundation of the work’s AD. In addition to AD being an audience accessibility measure, considering how the AD could be written and presented was an act of centering access for the practitioner-collaborators. Although Zamora’s AD for *Sunrise* did not reflect this design, writing the movement script was itself the creation of the theoretical AD.

The movement script, the intended foundation for the AD, was a democratizing component for the work’s creation process between me (the director, who might otherwise be called “the choreographer” in a more traditional process) and the dancer-collaborators. In a more traditional process, I as the director or choreographer might have the power to dictate, especially on a whim, the vision for the dancing ensemble,

who might typically comply without capacity for substantial artistic input. However, designing the AD—vis a vis the movement script—prior to the creation of the choreography provided a contract of sorts toward an equalization of power between the traditionally hierarchical parties.

The movement script was the entire group's responsibility to hold together, rather than being transmitted from a higher position of power to the masses. The director's power to *dictate* or *command* became the power to *suggest* in partnership with the dancer-collaborators, who now had more power and agency to self-determine how they needed—both individually and as an ensemble—to proceed through the process. For example, in the spirit of movement translation, the dancer-collaborators had the power to decide how large or small they might choose to embody a non-body-specific movement instruction. If two dancer-collaborators encountered difficulty with reaching each other for a moment of partnering, the director might make suggestions based on what they witnessed from the outside toward fulfilling the tasks of the movement script. However, unlike in some other, more traditional processes, the director could not tell the dancer-collaborators to embody a movement instruction a specific way merely because the director wanted to achieve a certain, preconceived aesthetic.

Beginning the *Sunrise* process with the AD, even if only in ideation, was an act of shifting traditional power dynamics toward prioritizing disability as important rather than an afterthought. Even without the presence of explicitly disabled-identifying collaborators, disability became a central, influencing factor that impacted the trajectory and output of the creative process. In *Sunrise*, a disability aesthetic began to emerge as a framework for centering disability in creative process, due at least in part to the

Disability Justice framework that guided the collaborative process. *Sunrise* was not predictable and could not be credited to any singular collaborator in the process, but it was very much a result of how the various collaborators were allowed to collaboratively lead the space and exercise their access needs in relationship with each other and the movement script.

In DE23, which built upon the *Sunrise*, the symbiosis between the AD and the visual elements allowed the DE23 work to move beyond the mere highlighting of disability via immutable accessibility measures, and toward the centering of disability as a dynamic and generative, rather than limiting, experience. DE23 intentionally engaged disabled-identifying collaborators and an even larger cast of collaborators, each of whom impacted the trajectory and output of the work according to their individual and group access needs. This approach to the collaborative process, similar to *Sunrise* but perhaps even more visible due to the scope of DE23, allowed a more expansive understanding of and engagement with disability as something that impacts everyone regardless disability/nondisability identity. How the collaborators worked together and facilitated the process allowed a disability-centered and disability-generated aesthetic—a disability aesthetic—to emerge.

As previously discussed, more common forms of disability inclusion in concert dance attach disability to pre-existing aesthetics of nondisability rather than forging new possibilities that might offer more equal disabled/nondisabled power dynamics. Such is the case even in leading disability-oriented dance companies, such as The Dancing Wheels Company (DW) in Cleveland, OH. DW's "sit-down technique" translates the codified technique practices of "stand-up dancers" for seated dancers (re: primarily

wheelchair users), but this intervention ultimately places the onus of adaptation (additional labor) on the disabled participant and reinforces the disabled/nondisabled power imbalance.

Core to both *Sunrise* and DE23 were two recognitions that: current dance practices—or rather, their underlying principles and how they are currently pursued—are insufficient for fostering increased inclusion of historically marginalized communities; and in the context of power, equity, and justice, marginalized perspectives must be centered in shifting current practices toward change, rather than merely *including* their presence in the maintenance of exclusionary practices. Contextualizing these core understandings within a Disability Justice framework (Berne 2020) produced a critical stance that facilitated these dynamic collaborations. Instead of prescribing shifts, the only certainty was that current practices were insufficient for our collections of collaborators, and that centering this understanding in the spirit of collaboration would allow solutions to emerge as appropriate and needed for the group at hand.

The choreographic processes in this thesis centered an understanding that current mainstream applications of AD for dance and movement translation in technique and choreography are insufficient for realizing a more inclusive and equitable dance field. As a result of that understanding, this thesis research worked to center and prioritize disability through the use of AD as a generative choreographic tool. In these works, the AD generated movement, composition, and narrative rather than merely describing visual elements after the fact. Because AD is often not considered in choreographic process, this approach to AD for dance was a critical act of resistance that centered disability itself as a vital, generative contribution. Centering disability in

these choreographic processes allowed the artistic collaborators to create movement more freely from the traditional disabled / nondisabled hierarchy prevalent in mainstream concert dance practices, more deeply realize and pursue their individual and collective access needs regardless of disability identity, and push toward the realization of a disability aesthetic.

While the specific choreographic processes for *Sunrise* and DE23 were labor intensive in some areas, working toward these paradigmatic shifts is not so far out of reach. In using Audio Description as a generative device toward the realization of a disability aesthetic, this choreographic research used tools that already exist within the concert dance canon. What is missing from these existing tools, including Audio Description, is a critical stance that challenges how disability is conceptualized, approached, and valued. Folks looking to enhance their AD and other accessibility approaches for dance can plan to incorporate AD into the creative process such that the AD is richly informed by, rather than divorced from, the full breadth of the creative process as is recommended by many audio describers. Additionally, as has been done by Extant, the creation of AD for dance can be a collaborative effort to which the dancer-collaborators contribute. More broadly, accessibility for dance will be enhanced when creative teams discuss what disability and accessibility mean for the work at hand in its pre-production or planning stages. This effort will go a long way toward shifting perceptions of disability and even performance aesthetics. The tools are already there; what is needed for these shifts to emerge are the awareness and critical intent to break from existing practices and consider new aesthetic horizons.

LIMITATIONS

Some of the primary limitations in pursuing this research were heavily related to institutional culture and resources. At this university, there is no centralized campus hub for disability-oriented community, such as UCLA's Disabled Student Union. This lack of visible disability-oriented community at the home institution was a contributing factor in the failure of the recruitment call for disabled-identifying students in the DE23 process. While there is the presence of the Disability Services Center on campus, DSC exists for the purpose of accessibility accommodations (within the arbitrary bounds of what is "reasonable") toward legal compliance and does not engage in matters of Disability Justice, equity, or community-building. As a related aside, this lack of awareness about disability culture—and even disability itself—in DSC's operations was illustrated by the current director's arguably harmful comments about arbitrating disability diagnoses and gatekeeping against offering reasonable accommodations; these comments were made in campus leadership meetings to which I was privy as the Campus Climate Director for the Associated Graduate Students.

In short, because of the limited nature of its mission and potentially some lack of clarity on various legal allowances, DSC was unable to substantially assist in recruiting disabled-identifying students for this research, but did assist in recruiting ASL interpreter Stacey Descanzo through its contracted vendor, Goodwill of Orange County, for the live performances of the DE23 work. This campus would greatly benefit from a center that engages with disability as culture, similar to UCLA's recently announced Disability Cultural Center.

Additionally, there is a lack of awareness and urgency regarding disability inclusion both in this home department and the campus at large. Many people, especially the thesis committee and the production teams for both *Sunrise* and DE23, supported the accessibility efforts of this research. However, there is currently no infrastructure in the home department—and until these choreographic explorations, no precedent—for providing accessibility services such as Audio Description and captioning in a concert dance performance setting. This limitation is emphasized by the need to seek support from another institution (CSU Long Beach for DE23) and outside collaborators (such as Cruz for DE23) in pursuing these accessibility efforts. Disability Justice activists and accessibility providers argue that departments and universities are legally obligated to offer these accessibility measures under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as follows:

No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States [...] shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of , or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance [...]

For the purposes of this section, the term “program or activity” means all of the operations of [...] a college, university, or other postsecondary institution, or a public system of higher education [...]

(Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973 1973)

[...] no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity.

(Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Title II Subpart A 1990)

It is important to note that this department is not unique among US American collegiate dance programs in its lack of infrastructure for providing these accessibility measures. To my and several disabled accessibility consultants' knowledge, the Department of Dance at California State University, Long Beach is the only US American collegiate dance program that has consistently provided accessibility measures for its mainstage productions in the last several years. CSULB Dance has also begun preliminary explorations into incorporating AD for dance into its program curriculum, an effort in which I have played an active role.

Not every collegiate dance program can be expected to offer a robust AD or other accessibility program. However, dance programs can create preliminary accessibility action plans or partnerships (which will certainly require adjustment depending on the context at hand) such that they are at least marginally prepared to adapt appropriately when needed. In this time of industry-wide change, collegiate dance programs—and institutions of higher education more broadly—must do better on their responsibility to not merely replicate existing practices, but pursue new and innovative practices to realize a different future.

V. CLOSING THOUGHTS

This thesis pursued the use of Audio Description—and disability itself—as a generative choreographic tool toward realizing a disability aesthetic in creating and presenting dance works. The choreographic processes modeled approaches to integrated AD that could push beyond the aesthetic limits of traditional AD for dance. As previously discussed, AD as an accessibility measure is usually created after the completion of a dance work. However, this choreographic research explored AD as preceding the choreographic process, utilizing AD and the concept of disability itself to generate the movement compositions and the emotional and physical landscapes, and the narrative context of the dance works. In doing so, this choreographic research explored the potential realization of Siebers’ “disability aesthetic” not as a tangibly produced outcome, but as a critical framework for approaching creative process, proposing what aesthetic shifts—such as the equalization of the disabled/nondisabled hierarchy—might be possible when disability is centered in tandem with the tools that already exist in the concert dance canon. Through the lens of Disability Justice, this critical framework necessitates an understanding that current practices are insufficient to significantly realize a more inclusive and equitable dance future. Centering this understanding in collaboration with others allows solutions for progress to emerge as needed for the contexts at hand. While this research explores the bounds of AD practices for dance, the AD is ultimately a vehicle for Disability Justice considerations about how disability is conceptualized in creating art and sharing power.

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APPENDIX A: Choreographic Process #1 Video Link and Collaborators

Sunrise: A case study in movement scores and Disability Justice (2022)

https://youtu.be/1zobjp_pbk8

Direction: Bradford Chin

Choreography: The dancers, Bradford Chin, Lauren Rotante

Rehearsal Assistant: Lauren Rotante

Movement Score: Bradford Chin, Lauren Rotante

Dancers: Caitlyn Cargnoni, Ashton Craven, Emma Mertens, Amanda Martz, Elizabeth Sah, Coral Scialpi, Alexa Wade, Alicia Young

Music: “II. Sunrise” by Ola Gjeilo; performed and recorded by Westminster Williamson Voices, James Jordan, conductor; used with permission by GIA Publications, Inc.

Student Audio Describer: Dillon Zamora

ASL Student Interpreter: Lauren Rotante

Companion Access Video: Vanessa Hernández Cruz, Lauren Rotante, Bradford Chin

Lighting Design: Jimmy Balistreri

Costume Design: Natalie Oga

Faculty Mentor: Dr. S. Ama Wray

Production Stage Manager: Jake Arpaia

Concert Director: Dr. Kelli Sharp

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT: SOLO ENSEMBLE (Virtual, Fall/Winter 2020)

Maylis Arrabit (Saint-Pierre-d'Irube, France)

Stephanie Cheung (Los Angeles, CA)

Erik “Clyde Dimension” Debono (San Francisco, CA)

Paige Geissler (Chicago, IL)

Jhia Jackson (San Francisco, CA)
Janice Laurence (Vancouver, BC, Canada)
Toby MacNutt (Burlington, VT)
Tatiana Nori (Daly City, CA)
Sonya Rio-Glick (Atlanta, GA)
Tajh Stallworth (Oakland, CA)
Joshua Tuason (Providence, RI)
Meredith Aleigha Wells (Chicago, IL)
Justin Yee (New York, NY)

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT: South Florida (Summer 2021)

Alyssa Foglia (University of Florida)
Ryan Jaffe (Southern Methodist University)
J.J. Butler (Vantage Pointe Dance Studios)

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT: University of California, Irvine, Department of Dance (Fall 2021)

Assistant Professor Charlotte Griffin and UCI Dance Modern Technique IV dancers

SPECIAL THANKS

Dr. Canton Winer (Northern Illinois University)
Dr. Kelli Sharp (University of California, Irvine)
Charlotte Griffin (University of California, Irvine)
Ellice Patterson (Abilities Dance Boston)
Victoria Marks (University of California, Los Angeles)
Joey Veenstra (University of California, Irvine)
Shih-Wei Carrasco-Wu (University of California, Irvine)

APPENDIX B: *Sunrise* (2022) Director's Note

ABOUT *SUNRISE* (2022)

Sunrise: A case study in movement scores and Disability Justice, is a new work premiering as part of Dance Escape 2022, UCI Dance's annual spring concert of MFA student choreography. In creating *Sunrise*, Bradford Chin and collaborators centered Disability Justice and drew upon critical pedagogy and emergence theory to explore power sharing and co-authorship in creative process. Researched and developed over two years, *Sunrise* presents a site of learning and aesthetic shift toward increased inclusion and accessibility in concert dance practices.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Sunrise: A case study in movement scores and Disability Justice finally premieres April 14-16, at the University of California, Irvine. I have been researching and developing this work since 2020. At the time, I was still with AXIS Dance Company and questioning how mainstream physically integrated dance (and everyone else in dance!) could expand its current practices to realize greater inclusion in concert dance.

This creative process was guided by principles of Disability Justice (as proposed by Patty Berne / Sins Invalid) and critical pedagogy. Centering Disability Justice in this creative process was key to facilitating inclusion with an intersectional lens beyond non/disability as a single-issue identity factor. Prioritizing the dancer-collaborators' holistic wellness and agency throughout the creative process involved everything from movement invention choices to individual costuming choices around pants/dresses and socks/bare feet. These equity-oriented artistic choices provided an opportunity to collaboratively explore the impact of disability, gender, race, and class on concert dance aesthetics and conceptions of the body.

I am indebted to my many collaborators, who have continuously shown me the impact of power sharing on inclusion. Through the past two years, this process has shifted and morphed, guided by the unique collaborators at each stage. The fluidity of this process exemplifies the dynamic nature of inclusion, equity, and justice efforts, which includes access/ibility. Inclusion, equity, and justice are not fixed points achieved with a checklist of completed tasks; they are a constantly shifting process of dialogue, power-sharing, and community care.

Sunrise offers several audience accessibility components (Audio Description, ASL interpretation, captions), which have not yet been done at UCI Dance. It has been

challenging to realize these components in a less-than-ideal manner, but I am grateful to the Department of Dance and the Claire Trevor School of the Arts - and especially Dr. Kelli Sharp, Jake Arpaia, Joel Veenstra, and Shih-Wei Carrasco-Wu - for their support in this crucial first move toward greater inclusion. Onward and upward from here!

Please note that these accessibility components are available both in-person and virtually via livestream, but only for *Sunrise* and not the rest of the concert. Innumerable thanks as well to Vanessa Hernández Cruz, Lauren Rotante, Dillon Zamora, and Dr. S. Ama Wray for your counsel and assistance in realizing *Sunrise's* accessibility components.

If you or someone you know are interested in attending (in-person or virtually), but the ticket prices present a financial burden, please contact me! Additionally, please be advised that the University of California, Irvine, no longer requires masks on campus despite the ongoing pandemic. There will be unmasked people in the theater, and I understand and support you if that impacts your decision to attend in-person.

APPENDIX C: *Sunrise* (2022) movement script

Time stamp	Measure	Person A	A Counts
1:53	51	Enter from offstage SR and slowly travel into the group in five 8-counts plus 2 cts; more US of group, rest of group DS of A	42
	55		
	59		
	63		
2:43	67	Finish travel into B/C/D	4
	69	Use a body part to make contact with D, continues into small scoop away from group	1
		Gentle traveling rotation into middle of group and toward B	2
		Gentle pulling contact w/ B to stop B's travel (settle/pause as vocals re-enter)	1
	71	<i>Hold 6 counts</i>	
	74	Let go and melt away from B	1
		Arc up and over toward group	2
		Lean into group at mid-level (settle/pause as vocals re-enter)	1
	75	<i>Hold 8 counts</i>	
	79	Melt to low-level and fall away from group	2
		Rise up halfway and reach to C	1
		Lean away from group supported by C	1
	81	<i>Hold 8 counts</i>	
	85	Pull up out of lean w/ C	1
		Transition into lean/support where B is at a higher level than the group (either elevated or group drops lower)	2
86	<i>Hold 18 counts</i>		

3:34

93	Contract into self and wave forward and upward	2
	Reach backward	1
	Swipe upward	1
	Wave down through your center	2
	Lean back in a grounded position	2

95	Hold	2
	Drop to lower level	1
	Rotate in place	1
	Reach upward from low-level	2
	Contract in	1
	Shoot into mid-level position	1

97	Large gather up and over into self	3
	Swipe up and behind self	1
	Stop C's forward momentum with pull	1
	Catch and transition C to land behind you on next 1	3
99	Land C	1
	Toss forward to shift weight/travel	1
	Crumple and land forward	1
	Arc and spiral upward toward D	2
	Spill and travel over D (finishes on next 1)	3

101	Continue momentum into a sideways lean	2
	Drop away from the lean into a swipe and into a roll, turn, or spiral	3
	Hiccup	1
	Retrograde the roll/turn/spiral (into next 1)	3
103	(Completing retrograde)	1
	Reach US	1
	Pull/cut back and rebound to travel backward DS	4

Suspend w/ body part reaching backward	1
Land forward in a mid-level position	1

105	Clasp or motion toward chest with a leftward rotation	2
	Hop in the same direction as B	2
	Reach in the same direction as B and away from C & D	1
	Slice the reach to face toward D	1
	Rebound the reach/slice to rotate/spiral and lean/travel toward D	2

107	Two strides toward D	2
	Catch D and continue their momentum to land behind you	2
	Spiral in opposite direction from previous movement	1
	Stop and grab upward	1
	Lean/melt toward D	2

109	Cross paths with D	2
	Lean and fall/rebound backward	2
	One body part shoots behind to continue travel backward	2
	Continue into spiral/wrap around self	2

End this 8-count phrase in a diamond: A DS, B SL, C US, D SR

111	Continue spiral into unfurling toss of a body part	2
	Growing reach and lean backward with a rock or weight shift	3
	Shift into a rolling travel to end at new position	5

4:43

127	Contemplatively join foreheads with B while holding their head or shoulders, or at elbows; hold for 3 counts	4
	Disengage from B and mill around until next appointment	4
	Repeat previous 8-count phrase with C	8
131	Contemplatively join foreheads with D while holding their head or shoulders, or at elbows; hold for 3 counts	4
	Slowly disengage from D	4
	Watch D as D departs	4
	Follow after D in a leisurely-paced stroll in a large, counterclockwise circle around stage	4

Traffic note: When passing someone slower than you, pass on the right side of that person (toward the outer edge of the circle)

135-146: Music slower; face DSL and stay mostly stationary unless traveling explicitly dictated; formation (when not directed to enter/exit formation): A-B-C-D from DSL to USR; Group 1 DS of Group 2

135	Continue pace in the circle pathway	8
139	Continue pace in the circle pathway	8
139	Rotate 180 degrees to the left while taking one big scoop of jewels toward USR	1
	Find a crown	1
	Lean away from USR toward DSL with a counterbalance/pull toward USR	1

Fall toward DSL	1
Fan the right side of the body up and over toward DSL, perhaps with body rotation	1
Facing USR, reach the left side of your body toward DSL	1
Repeat one big scoop of jewels toward DSL	1
Repeat finding a crown	1

141	Float upward	2
	Drop/toss downward into a clockwise rotation that travels you two strides toward DSL	2
	Pause, gesture or movement that communicates home or a house and ends higher than it began	1
	Orbit counterclockwise around the home/house gesture	3
143	Orbit home/house gesture counterclockwise around self	2
	Fall forward toward DSL with a horizontal splat	1
	Recover from the fall forward with a full rotation to the left	1
	Finish the recover by pulling your left side toward DSL and leaning the right side of your body away from DSL	1
	Shoot the right side of the body toward DSL, taking the weight forward into a suspension or balance	1
	Fall toward USR with two strides and a circling motion over self from back to front	2
	Pause, gesture or movement that communicates home or a house and ends higher than it began	1
	Orbit counterclockwise around the home/house gesture to end in neutral pause facing DSL	3
	Slowly, almost with reluctance, depart from DSL and starting exiting toward SR on a slight US diagonal	4

Pause mid-stride and maintain USR facing when music stops	Hold
<i>Music resumes</i>	
Keep body facing USR, but slowly look over right shoulder	4
Slowly rotate toward the audience, not going farther than body facing DSL, leading with the gaze over the right shoulder	4

Fast-paced traveling phrase around perimeter of the stage (manège)

6:05	151	Single, suspended bound forward with focus down and in front	2
		Single, suspended bound forward with gaze upward and body trailing behind	2
		Grounded traveling counterclockwise rotation	2
		Stationary reach outward like a starfish	1
		Contract out of starfish into self, body leans into continuing forward travel	1
	153	Single, suspended bound forward the slightly rotates from a body half fanning inward (from the side to the center)	2
		Reach forward with a slight counterbalance lean backward	1
		Snap the reach into self and collapse weight into a heavy lean backward/away from forward trajectory	1
		Fall forward to continue pathway with a chug	1
		Reach upward into a balance	1
	155	Two long strides forward	2
		Turning rotation with jump and slice upward	2
		Residual jump with body parts trailing behind	2
		Two long strides forward with scoop from behind and up and over	2
		Pull backward and suspend	2
<i>Continue traveling into diagonal line line, A-B-C-D (USL to DSR)</i>			
157		Fall forward into two strides	2

		Rotating hop/jump leaning into body half	2
		Rotation ending in upright position	3
		Snap downward	1
4:15	159	Reach up to the sky and then return to lowered position in a wave like motion	2
(Lauren		Hold as B reaches	2
		Hold as C Reaches	2
		Hold as D Reaches	2
	161	Make contact with B on a low level	1
		Rise to standing position	1
		Contraction of the body while circling a body part	2
		continuing the circle to reach to SR	2
		Flick moving upward	1
		Flick moving upward	1
	163	Snap to a stance of power	1
		Melt into self	2
		Turning Suspension with body part reaching backward	3
		Momentum continues to a jump	2
	165	Traveling step with scooping motion with transfer of weight , that moves you to 167 position	1
		Repeat 165 but gradually larger	1
		Repeat 165 but gradually larger	1
		Repeat 165 but gradually larger	1
		Hands come to crown position and slowly trail down the body	4

From US/ground row in a horizontal line across the stage, A (SR) - D (SL); B just slightly USL of A, D just slightly USL of C

6:39	167	Travel forward one stride and hit a powerful pose by slicing out to the sides while facing DS	1
		Collapse inward and lean/suspend out to the right and begin to twist to the right	1
		One stride to US and one stride right to SL	2
		Toss upward while facing US	1
		Spacehold the toss while melting to the right and falling toward DS	1
		(cont'd) into two strides forward to DS, passing B to start next phrase further DS than where B was	2
		Repeat previous 8-count except strong pose now has a crown instead of slicing	8
171		Facing DS, spill to the front	1
		Exit spill SR into tight clockwise travel around B	2
		Travel DS to pass B and start next phrase further DS than where B was	1
		Facing DS, spill to the front	1
		Exit spill SR into tight clockwise travel around B	2
		Travel DS to pass B and start next phrase further DS than where B was	1
173		Still, upright position facing DS with an upward growing sensation	2
		Upward growing sensation begins falling to SR	2
		Fast travel to exit SR	4
6:55	175	Offstage SR	8

177	Offstage SR	8

Formation: A entering from DS of respective group; B entering from US of respective group

179	Hold	2
	Enter from SR, sailing through the air and past C/D toward SL	2
	On the quarter SR line, suspend and reach with whole body toward SL while leaning away toward SR	2
	Fall into fast travel to cover rest of distance to next position	2

Formation: A-B-C-D facing DS in vertical line from DS to US on quarter SR line; Group 1 SR of quarter line and Group 2 SL of quarter line

181	Gather upward	1
	Pull down	1
	Left side gather upward	2
	Gathering motion continues into fall to low level toward SL	1
	Hold	1
	Return to upright position in the line	1
	Look upward toward SL while body reaches upward toward SR	1

183	Maintain reach toward SR, two long strides toward next position (see end of this 8-ct phrase)	2
	Continue traveling to next position w/ Floating, suspended jump upward with body reaching upward and emphasis on the floating verticality of the body	2
	Land jump by swinging into a lunge in any direction that prepares for a rebound	2
	Use lunge to rebound counterclockwise rotation	2

Stop the rotation on a dime, body facing DSL; solid stance, but body can be easy, breathing	1
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End in diamond formation from 111 and slightly tilted on diagonal toward DSL; Group 1 SR, Group 2 SL, both groups overlapping

Measure	Person B	B Counts
51		
55	Enter from offstage SR, travel to center, and pause to hold (not hitting a "pose" or making a big deal about it)	8
59	Hold	7
	Initiated by C, relax and settle into C in a relaxed neutral position and hold	1
63	Hold	8
67	Hold	4
69	Initiated by A/D, melt to a lower level	1
	W/ gentle breath, reach/lunge away from group	1
	Gentle traveling rotation back into and through group, gently pauses mid rotation, pulling contact from A (settle/pause as vocals re-enter)	2
71	<i>Hold 6 counts</i>	
74	Melt out of A	1
	Body half lean and swipe to fall into group	1
	Drip into front w/ inward then outward rotation	1
	Tall, upright position (settle/pause as vocals re-enter)	1
75	<i>Hold 8 counts</i>	
79	Horizontal circle in the body	1

	Wrap around D	1
	Disengage from D, rotate in place, and find a pulling support for C	2
81	<i>Hold 8 counts</i>	
85	Help C pull A up	1
	Supported into higher level than group	2
86	<i>Hold 18 counts</i>	
93	Drop down and unfurl upward	2
	Crown above the head w/ twist in body	1
	Rebound	1
	Wave forward and upward toward US	3
	Flick back	1
95	Charge toward US	1
	Swing around toward DS	2
	Reach toward C	1
	Pull C toward self into weight share	2
	Rebound C away	2
97	Body toss down	1
	Body toss back	1
	Travel w/ rotation toward USL	3
	Scoop down and upward	1
	Lean backward and suspend	2
99	Fall forward	1
	Undulate and grow upward	2
	Swipe sideways and down in an upward jump/interjection	1
	Lean sideways and reach in two opposite directions	4
101	Drop into an inverted alignment and rotate	2
	Slide or glide out of the rotation and settle	2

	Dart a body part out to a low level in front of C and hold	1
		1
	Keep B/C cross connected for a twisting rotation that travels US	2
103	Reach US	1
	Pull/cut back and rebound to travel backward DS	4
	Suspend w/ body part reaching backward	2
	Land forward in a mid-level position	1

105	Clasp or motion toward chest with a leftward rotation	2
	Hop in the same direction as A	2
	Reach in the same direction as A and away from C & D	1
	Slice the reach to face toward C	1
	Rebound the reach/slice to rotate/spiral and lean/travel toward C	2
107	Two strides toward C	2
	Catch C and continue their momentum into a rotation that lands them where they started	3
	Dive forward	1
	High level twist to one side	1
	High level twist to other side	1
109	Toss horizontally out	1
	(cont'd) into undercurve and rise up toward C	2
	Follow C's lead into pull/support	3
	Land next to C	1
	Right side of body sweeps open to pose profile to audience	1
	<i>End this 8-count phrase in a diamond: A DS, B SL, C US, D SR</i>	
111	Flutter/jump upward	1

Close in previous pose on opposite side	1
Toss a body part upward	1
Snap the toss in while leaning back	1
Cut underneath self with a little hop	2
Two shifts into the new position	2

127	Contemplatively join foreheads with A while holding their head or shoulders, or at elbows; hold for 3 counts	4
	Disengage from A and mill around until next appointment	4
	Contemplatively join foreheads with D while holding their head or shoulders, or at elbows; hold for 3 counts	8
131	Contemplatively join foreheads with C while holding their head or shoulders, or at elbows; hold for 3 counts	4
	Begin disconnecting from C while gently pulling C into a quick, fast-paced stroll in a large, counterclockwise circle around the stage	4
	Continue the quick, fast-paced stroll in a large, counterclockwise circle around stage	8

Traffic note: When passing someone slower than you, pass on the right side of that person (toward the outer edge of the circle)

135-146: Music slower; face DSL and stay mostly stationary unless traveling explicitly dictated; formation (when not directed to enter/exit formation): A-B-C-D from DSL to USR; Group 1 DS of Group 2

135	Float upward	2
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	Drop/toss downward into a clockwise rotation that travels you two strides toward DSL	2
	Pause, gesture or movement that communicates home or a house and ends higher than it began	1
	Orbit counterclockwise around the home/house gesture	3
	Orbit home/house gesture counterclockwise around self	2
	Fall forward toward DSL with a horizontal splat	1
	Recover from the fall forward with a full rotation to the left	1
	Finish the recover by pulling your left side toward DSL and leaning the right side of your body away from DSL	1
	Shoot the right side of the body toward DSL, taking the weight forward into a suspension or balance	1
	Fall toward USR with two strides and a circling motion over self from back to front	2
139	Rotate 180 degrees to the left while taking one big scoop of jewels toward USR	1
	Find a crown	1
	Lean away from USR toward DSL with a counterbalance/pull toward USR	1
	Fall toward DSL	1
	Fan the right side of the body up and over toward DSL, perhaps with body rotation	1
	Facing USR, reach the left side of your body toward DSL	1
	Repeat one big scoop of jewels toward DSL	1
	Repeat finding a crown	1

141	Repeat Measure 135	8

Exit SR without drawing attention, but giving reverent attention to the others still dancing around you	8

Fast-paced traveling phrase around perimeter of the stage (manège)

151	Single, suspended bound forward with focus down and in front	2
	Single, suspended bound forward with gaze upward and body trailing behind	2
	Grounded traveling counterclockwise rotation	2
	Stationary reach outward like a starfish	1
	Contract out of starfish into self, body leans into continuing forward travel	1
153	Single, suspended bound forward the slightly rotates from a body half fanning inward (from the side to the center)	2
	Reach forward with a slight counterbalance lean backward	1
	Snap the reach into self and collapse weight into a heavy lean backward/away from forward trajectory	1
	Fall forward to continue pathway with a chug	1
	Reach upward into a balance	1
	Two long strides forward	2

155	Turning rotation with jump and slice upward	2
	Residual jump with body parts trailing behind	2
	Two long strides forward with scoop from behind and up and over	2
	Pull backward and suspend	2

Continue traveling into diagonal line line, A-B-C-D (USL to DSR)

157	Fall forward into two strides	2
	Rotating hop/jump leaning into body half	2
	Rotation ending in upright position	3
	Snap downward	1

159	Hold as A reaches	2
	Reach up to the sky and then return to lowered position in a wave like motion	2
	Hold as C reaches	2
	Hold as D reaches	2
161	Make contact with A on a low level	1
	Dart away from A maintaing that low level	1
	swivel motion to face DSR	2
	Support Cs moment of suspension	4

163	Transition out of suspension	2
	Slide with a portion of the body connection to the floor	2
	Quick Gathering of the dust on the floor	2
	Release of dust upward like confetti bringing you to a higher level	2

165	Turn into a melt with hands at the crown position	4
	Move to next position	4

From US/ground row in a horizontal line across the stage, A (SR) - D (SL); B just slightly USL of A, D just slightly USL of C

167	Toss upward while facing US	1
	Spacehold the toss while melting to the right and falling toward DS	1
	(cont'd) into two strides forward to DS, passing A to start next phrase further DS than where A was	2
	Travel forward one stride and hit a powerful pose by slicing out to the sides while facing DS	1
	Collapse inward and lean/suspend out to the right and begin to twist to the right	1
	One stride to US and one stride right to SL	2
169	Repeat previous 8-count except strong pose now has a crown instead of slicing	8
171	Travel DS to pass A and start next phrase further DS than where A was	2
	Facing DS, spill to the front	1
	Exit spill SR into tight clockwise travel around A	2
	Travel DS to pass A and start next phrase further DS than where A was	1
	Facing DS, spill to the front	1
	Exit spill SR into tight clockwise travel around A	2
173	(completing previous mvmt)	1
	Finish travel to end slightly USL of A	1

Still, upright position facing DS with an upward growing sensation that begins falling to SR	2
Fast travel to exit SR	4

175	Offstage SR	8

177	Offstage SR	8

Formation: A entering from DS of respective group; B entering from US of respective group

179	Enter from SR, sailing through the air and past C/D toward SL	2
	On the quarter SR line, suspend and reach with whole body toward SL while leaning away toward SR	2
	Fall toward next position and into a single, clockwise rotation	2
	Fast travel to cover rest of distance to next position	2

Formation: A-B-C-D facing DS in vertical line from DS to US on quarter SR line; Group 1 SR of quarter line and Group 2 SL of quarter line

181	Gather upward	1
	Pull down	1
	Gathering motion continues into fall to low level toward SL	1
	Hold	1
	Return to upright position in the line	2

	Staying rooted to spot in line, one stride out toward SL, unfurling upward like a big sail	2
183	Return to upright position in the line	1
	Look upward toward SL while body reaches upward toward SR	1
	Traveling toward next position (see end of this 8-ct phrase) w/ floating, suspended jump upward with body reaching upward and emphasis on the floating verticality of the body	2
	Land jump by swinging into a lunge in any direction that prepares for a rebound	2
	Use lunge to rebound counterclockwise rotation	2
	Stop the rotation on a dime, body facing DSL; solid stance, but body can be easy, breathing	1

End in diamond formation from 111 and slightly tilted on diagonal toward DSL; Group 1 SR, Group 2 SL, both groups overlapping

Measure	Person C	C Counts
51		
55		
59	Enter from offstage SR, travel to B	7
	Use a body part to make gentle contact with B, settle and hold	1
63	Hold	7
	Initiated by D, settle into gentle mutual lean w/ D	1
67	Hold	4
69	Initiated by A/D, stay in contact w/ D and shift in place w/ rotation	2

	Scoop away from B	1
	Rebound back into group/toward B in a grounded, mid-level position (settle/pause as vocals re-enter)	1
71	<i>Hold 6 counts</i>	
74	Rise out of grounded position into balance and reach upward	2
	Gentle fall/lean into B for support (settle/pause as vocals re-enter)	2
75	<i>Hold 8 counts</i>	
79	Rise to upright position	1
	Scoop upward and over into reach/pulling support for A	3
81	<i>Hold 8 counts</i>	
85	Pull A up out of lean	1
	Transition into lean/support where B is at a higher level than the group (either elevated or group drops lower)	2
86	<i>Hold 18 counts</i>	
93	Swipe horizontally in arc away from group	3
	Push across the body	1
	Float up with body half	2
	Interjection upward	2
95	Lean back in ground position, match A direction	2
	Drop to lower level	1
	Rotate in place, match A direction	1
	Reach toward B; C pulls B (partner)	2
	Rebound away from B	2
97	Body toss down	1
	Body toss back	1
	Travel w/ rotation toward USL	2
	Stopped by pull from A	1

	Fall into A, transition through fall to land upright on next 1	3
99	Land upright	1
	Undulate out of landing toward low-level	1
	Snap into wide, low-level position	1
	Melt into self	1
	Spiral and expand horizontally into a higher-level position	4

101	Two single-count darts that travel horizontally	2
	Single dart between A & D to end next to B	2
	Hold	1
	Dart a body part out to a low level to cross B's movement	1
	Keep B/C cross connected for a twisting rotation that travels US	2
103	Disengage from B and continue twisting rotation with D, one point of contact	3
	Disengage from D and continue rotation in place	2
	Land toward SL	1
	Cut underneath self for sideways body half jump	2

105	Clasp or motion toward chest with a leftward rotation	2
	Roll or fall to a low level	2
	Reach behind self and incline upward	3
	Collapse down	1
107	Grow to mid- or high-level like a flower	2
	Fall into B and follow their cue/momentum	2
	Arc up and over toward B	2

	Twist in body while chugging toward B	2
109	Cut and contract into self	1
	Reach and expand outward/slightly back	1
	Reach toward B	1
	Pull B into self for shelf/suspension	3
	Land B next to self	1
	Right side of body sweeps open to pose profile to audience	1

End this 8-count phrase in a diamond:

A DS, B SL, C US, D SR

111	Reach up and away/off-balance out of pose	1
	Fall and roll out of reach	3
	Two shifts toward the new position while reaching downward	2
	Toss up	1
	Rebound down	1

127	Contemplatively join foreheads with D while holding their head or shoulders, or at elbows; hold for 3 counts	4
	Disengage from D and mill around until next appointment	4
	Repeat previous 8-count phrase with A	8
131	Contemplatively join foreheads with B while holding their head or shoulders, or at elbows; hold for 3 counts	4
	Begin disconnecting from B while gently pulling B into a quick, fast-paced stroll in a large, counterclockwise circle around the stage	4
	Continue the quick, fast-paced stroll in a large, counterclockwise circle around stage	8

Traffic note: When passing someone slower than you, pass on the right side of that person (toward the outer edge of the circle)



135-146: Music slower; face DSL and stay mostly stationary unless traveling explicitly dictated; formation (when not directed to enter/exit formation): A-B-C-D from DSL to USR; Group 1 DS of Group 2

135	Continue circle pathway right into next phrase	8
	Orbit home/house gesture counterclockwise around self	2
	Fall forward toward DSL with a horizontal splat	1
	Recover from the fall forward with a full rotation to the left	1
	Finish the recover by pulling your left side toward DSL and leaning the right side of your body away from DSL	1
	Shoot the right side of the body toward DSL, taking the weight forward into a suspension or balance	1
139	Rotate 180 degrees to the left while taking one big scoop of jewels toward USR	1
	Find a crown	1
	Lean away from USR toward DSL with a counterbalance/pull toward USR	1
	Fall toward DSL	1
	Fan the right side of the body up and over toward DSL, perhaps with body rotation	1
	Facing USR, reach the left side of your body toward DSL	1

Repeat one big scoop of jewels toward DSL	1
Repeat finding a crown	1

Exit SR without drawing attention, but giving reverent attention to the others still dancing around you	8 to 12

Fast-paced traveling phrase around perimeter of the stage (manège)

151	Single, suspended bound forward with focus down and in front	2
	Single, suspended bound forward with gaze upward and body trailing behind	2
	Grounded traveling counterclockwise rotation	2
	Stationary reach outward like a starfish	1
	Contract out of starfish into self, body leans into continuing forward travel	1
153	Single, suspended bound forward the slightly rotates from a body half fanning inward (from the side to the center)	2
	Reach forward with a slight counterbalance lean backward	1

	Snap the reach into self and collapse weight into a heavy lean backward/away from forward trajectory	1
	Fall forward to continue pathway with a chug	1
	Reach upward into a balance	1
	Two long strides forward	2

155	Turning rotation with jump and slice upward	2
	Residual jump with body parts trailing behind	2
	Two long strides forward with scoop from behind and up and over	2
	Pull backward and suspend	2

Continue traveling into diagonal line line, A-B-C-D (USL to DSR)

157	Fall forward into two strides	2
	Rotating hop/jump leaning into body half	2
	Rotation ending in upright position	3
	Snap downward	1

159	Hold as A reaches	2
	Hold as B reaches	2
	Reach up to the sky and then return to lowered position in a wave like motion	2
	Hold as D reaches	2
161	Make contact with D on a low level	1
	Dart away from D maintaining the level	1
	swivel motion to face DSL	2
	Moment of suspension while making contact with B	4

163	Transition out of suspension	2
	Large expansion of the body	1

	Quick contraction folding inward	1
	Scooping motion, gathering the energy from your previous explosion	2
	Sending that energy to one corner of the room	1
	Sending that energy to your position in 167	1
165	traveling towards that spot in the room	4
	Hands come to crown position and slowly trail down the body	4

From US/ground row in a horizontal line across the stage, A (SR) - D (SL); B just slightly USL of A, D just slightly USL of C

167	Travel forward one stride and hit a powerful pose by slicing out to the sides while facing DS	1
	Collapse inward and lean/suspend out to the right and begin to twist to the right	1
	One stride to US and one stride right to SL	2
	Toss upward while facing US	1
	Spacehold the toss while melting to the right and falling toward DS	1
	(cont'd) into two strides forward to DS, passing D to start next phrase further DS than where D was	2
169	Repeat previous 8-count except strong pose now has a crown instead of slicing	8
171	Facing DS, spill to the front	1
	Exit spill SR into tight clockwise travel around D	2
	Travel DS to pass D and start next phrase further DS than where D was	1
	Facing DS, spill to the front	1

	Exit spill SR into tight clockwise travel around D	2
	Travel DS to pass D and start next phrase further DS than where D was	1
173	Still, upright position facing DS with an upward growing sensation	2
	Upward growing sensation begins falling to SR	2
	Fast travel to SR/next positions	4

Formation SR: C on the right, right next to D; group 1 DS of group 2; stay in SR vertical quarter

175	Toss upward toward SR	1
	Contract in toward D and find a point of contact to grab	1
	Maintain grabbing point of contact and provide counterbalance while D falls away and holds	2
	Pull D into self and support them in a suspended hold	2
	Let D down back toward SL and guide them through a rotation	2

177	Continuing the rotation energy/direction, use D as a platform to launch self into a jump that travels you toward SL and past D	2
	Single punch sideways and downward into a downward rotation in the opposite direction from the previous movement	2
	Facing DSL, reach upward toward the left	1
	Maintain facing, reach upward toward the right	1
	Contract inward	1
	Shoot part of the body backward into a dramatic, grounded pose	1

179	Grow upward from the dramatic, grounded pose	4
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Contract inward while jumping upward	2
Jump toward the next position with the left side of the body trailing up and over	2

Formation: A-B-C-D facing DS in vertical line from DS to US on quarter SR line; Group 1 SR of quarter line and Group 2 SL of quarter line

181	Gather upward	1
	Pull down	1
	Left side gather upward	2
	Gathering motion continues into fall to mid level toward SL	1
	Hold	1
	Return to upright position in the line	1
	Look upward toward SL while body reaches upward toward SR	1

183	Maintain reach toward SR, two long strides toward next position (see end of this 8-ct phrase)	2
	Continue traveling to next position w/ Floating, suspended jump upward with body reaching upward and emphasis on the floating verticality of the body	2
	Land jump by swinging into a lunge in any direction that prepares for a rebound	2
	Use lunge to rebound counterclockwise rotation	2
	Stop the rotation on a dime, body facing DSL; solid stance, but body can be easy, breathing	1

End in diamond formation from 111 and slightly tilted on diagonal toward DSL; Group 1 SR, Group 2 SL, both groups overlapping

Measure	Person D	D Counts
51		
55		
59		
63	Enter from offstage SR, tavel to B/C	7
	Use a body part to make gentle contact w/ C, settle into gentle mutual lean w/ C	1
67	Hold	4
69	Initiated by A, shift/lean into group	1
	Fall away from group	1
	Shift through lower level to return to group, settle between A & C with a point of contact w/ each	2
71	<i>Hold 6 counts</i>	
74	Follow in spatial direction of B	1
	Spill to low-level toward B	1
	Return to group at mid- or low-level and lean on closest person (settle/pause as vocals re-enter)	2
75	<i>Hold 8 counts</i>	
79	Lean forward	1
	Lean forward to rebound backward and rotate in place to mid- or high-level	2
	Find a point of contact to support C	1
81	<i>Hold 8 counts</i>	
85	Help C pull A up	1
	Transition into lean/support where B is at a higher level than the group (either elevated or group drops lower)	2
86	<i>Hold 18 counts</i>	
93	Interjection upward w/ swipe	2
	Rotation in place	1
	Interjection backward across group	2

	Twist in place	3
	Crown above head	1

95	Melt downward	2
	Swipe upward one side	1
	Swipe upward other side	1
	Swipe into rotation in place	2
	Interjection upward	2

97	Horizontal, circular swipe	2
	Upright pose with crown on the head	1
	Melt out of crown pose toward B & C	2
	Scoop down and upward	1
	Lean backward and suspend	2

99	Land forward into a low-level spiral	3
	Float upward	1
	Stick a grounded mid- or low-level position to support A	1
	Assist A if/as needed	3

101	Lean sideways in the same direction as A	2
	Drop away from the lean into a swipe and into a roll, turn, or spiral	3
	Oppositional pull to the front and back plus growing upward into backspace	2
	Cut into side	1

103	Twisting rotation with C, one point of contact	3
	Continue momentum into quick travel in tight arc around A/B/C	5

105	Clasp or motion toward chest with a leftward rotation	2
	Roll or fall to a low level	2
	Reach behind self and incline upward	2
	Collapse down	1
	Hold	1
107	Grow to mid- or high-level like a flower	2
	Fall into A and follow their cue/momentum	3
	Arc up and over toward A	1
	Twist in body while chugging toward A	2
109	Cross paths with A	2
	Lean and fall/rebound back on the same path	2
	Continue into spiral/wrap around self	2
	Continue into cut/sharp travel backward with one body part shooting back	2

End this 8-count phrase in a diamond:

A DS, B SL, C US, D SR

111	Paint behind self with an upward body gesture	2
	Contract forward with a hop	1
	Snap and lean out of hop	1
	Slide toward new position	2
	Cut underneath self with a little hop	2

127	Contemplatively join foreheads with C while holding their head or shoulders, or at elbows; hold for 3 counts	4
	Disengage from C and mill around until next appointment	4
	Contemplatively join foreheads with B while holding their head or shoulders, or at elbows; hold for 3 counts	4

131	Contemplatively join foreheads with A while holding their head or shoulders, or at elbows; hold for 3 counts	4
	Slowly disengage from A	4
	Looking back toward A, as if encouraging or welcoming them to join, start into a medium- to medium-fast-paced stroll in a large, counterclockwise circle around stage	4
	Continue pace in large, counterclockwise circle around stage	4

Traffic note: When passing someone slower than you, pass on the right side of that person (toward the outer edge of the circle)

135-146: Music slower; face DSL and stay mostly stationary unless traveling explicitly dictated; formation (when not directed to enter/exit formation): A-B-C-D from DSL to USR; Group 1 DS of Group 2

135	Continue circle pathway	8
	Continue circle pathway right into next phrase	4
	Finish the recover by pulling your left side toward DSL and leaning the right side of your body away from DSL	1
	Shoot the right side of the body toward DSL, taking the weight forward into a suspension or balance	1
	Fall toward USR with two strides and a circling motion over self from back to front	2
139	Rotate 180 degrees to the left while taking one big scoop of jewels toward USR	1

Find a crown	1
Lean away from USR toward DSL with a counterbalance/pull toward USR	1
Fall toward DSL	1
Fan the right side of the body up and over toward DSL, perhaps with body rotation	1
Facing USR, reach the left side of your body toward DSL	1
Repeat one big scoop of jewels toward DSL	1
Repeat finding a crown	1

141	Float upward	2
	Drop/toss downward into a clockwise rotation that travels you two strides toward DSL	2
	Pause, gesture or movement that communicates home or a house and ends higher than it began	1
	Orbit counterclockwise around the home/house gesture	3

143	Orbit home/house gesture counterclockwise around self	2
	Fall forward toward DSL with a horizontal splat	1
	Recover from the fall forward with a full rotation to the left	1
	Exit SR without drawing attention, but giving reverent attention to the others still dancing around you	8

Fast-paced traveling phrase around perimeter of the stage (manège)

151	Single, suspended bound forward with focus down and in front	2
	Single, suspended bound forward with gaze upward and body trailing behind	2
	Grounded traveling counterclockwise rotation	2
	Stationary reach outward like a starfish	1
	Contract out of starfish into self, body leans into continuing forward travel	1
153	Single, suspended bound forward the slightly rotates from a body half fanning inward (from the side to the center)	2
	Reach forward with a slight counterbalance lean backward	1
	Snap the reach into self and collapse weight into a heavy lean backward/away from forward trajectory	1
	Fall forward to continue pathway with a chug	1
	Reach upward into a balance	1
	Two long strides forward	2

155	Turning rotation with jump and slice upward	2
	Residual jump with body parts trailing behind	2
	Two long strides forward with scoop from behind and up and over	2
	Pull backward and suspend	2

Continue traveling into diagonal line line, A-B-C-D (USL to DSR)

157	Fall forward into two strides	2
	Rotating hop/jump leaning into body half	2
	Rotation ending in upright position	3
	Snap downward	1

159	Hold as A reaches	2
	Hold as B reaches	2

	Hold as C reaches	2
	Reach up to the sky and then return to lowered position in a wave like motion	2
161	Make contact with C on a low level	1
	Rise to standing position	1
	Twist section of the body upward	1
	Stop the twist with another portion of the body, moving it downward	1
	Move towards SL in a spiral motion	2
	Continue the momentum with a jump	2
163	Rolling of the body	1
	throw the momentum of the roll towards SR	1
	contraction of the body moving backward	2
	suspension of the leg in a position off center of gravity	2
	snap to a concave position at a low level	1
	Snap to a power stance	1
165	Turn into a melt with hands at the crown position	4
	Move to next position	4

From US/ground row in a horizontal line across the stage, A (SR) - D (SL); B just slightly USL of A, D just slightly USL of C

167	Toss upward while facing US	1
	Spacehold the toss while melting to the right and falling toward DS	1
	(cont'd) into two strides forward to DS, passing C to start next phrase further DS than where C was	2

	Travel forward one stride and hit a powerful pose by slicing out to the sides while facing DS	1
	Collapse inward and lean/suspend out to the right and begin to twist to the right	1
	One stride to US and one stride right to SL	2
169	Repeat previous 8-count except strong pose now has a crown instead of slicing	8

171	Travel DS to pass C and start next phrase further DS than where C was	2
	Facing DS, spill to the front	1
	Exit spill SR into tight clockwise travel around C	2
	Travel DS to pass C and start next phrase further DS than where C was	1
	Facing DS, spill to the front	1
	Exit spill SR into tight clockwise travel around C	2

173	(completing previous mvmt)	1
	Finish travel to end slightly USL of C	1
	Still, upright position facing DS with an upward growing sensation that begins falling to SR	2
	Fast travel to SR/next positions	4

Formation SR: C on the right, right next to D; group 1 DS of group 2; stay in SR vertical quarter

175	Continue fast travel to next position	1
	Contract in toward C and find a point of contact to grab	1
	Maintain grabbing point of contact; fall away from C while pulling on them in a counterbalance	1
	Maintain fallen position	1
	Pull self upward and into C for a support and suspend/hold	2
	Come down off of C toward SL and let C guide you through a rotation	2

177	Support C through their jump	2
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	Toss down and back while slightly floating up in the body	2
	Facing US, right side arc up toward ceiling and then pull down to rightside lower level	2
	Right side shoots up and over to turn body to face SR	2

179	Facing SR, left side shoots backward for a small chug	2
	Reach backward toward SL	2
	Contract inward while jumping upward	2
	Jump toward the next position with the left side of the body trailing up and over	2

Formation: A-B-C-D facing DS in vertical line from DS to US on quarter SR line; Group 1 SR of quarter line and Group 2 SL of quarter line

181	Gather upward	1
	Pull down	1
	Gathering motion continues into fall to mid level toward SL	1
	Hold	1
	Return to upright position in the line	1
	Fall toward SL into a small jump with a counterclockwise rotation to end back in upright position in line	3

183	Look upward toward SL while body reaches upward toward SR	1
	Maintain reach toward SR, one long stride toward next position (see end of this 8-ct phrase)	2
	Land jump by swinging into a lunge in any direction that prepares for a rebound	2
	Use lunge to rebound counterclockwise rotation	2

Stop the rotation on a dime, body facing DSL; solid stance, but body can be easy, breathing	1
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End in diamond formation from 111 and slightly tilted on diagonal toward DSL; Group 1 SR, Group 2 SL, both groups overlapping

APPENDIX D: Choreographic Process #2 Video Link and Collaborators

The world was ending, so they danced, and they were free (2023)

<https://youtu.be/wMUF2goAlfc>

Direction: Bradford Chin

Choreography: The dancers, Petrona Viera (1895-1960), Bradford Chin

Dancers: David Bernal-Fuentes (Guest Artist), Spencer Brown, Bradford Chin, Laura Cubanski, Taylor Grandy, Vanessa Hernández Cruz (Guest Artist), Oriana Kou, Isabella Lara, Jessica Lopez Hernandez, Amanda Martz, Beatrice White

Actors: Zalen King, Jiayi Zhao

Personal Care Assistants: María Silvia Hernández Cruz, Nancy Cruz

Music: “Tombigbee Waltz” (traditional), performed by Gaelynn Lea; “Dragons & Faeries (Live),” written and performed by Gaelynn Lea; “Sunrise Garden (Live),” written and performed by Gaelynn Lea, used with permission by Gaelynn Lea

Poem: “The world was ending, so they danced, and they were free” by Vanessa Hernández Cruz

Audio Description: Bradford Chin, Vanessa Hernández Cruz

ASL Interpretation: Stacey Dascenzo, Goodwill of Orange County

ASL Student Interpretation (Companion Access Video): Dominique Morse

ASL Student Interpretation (Promotional Materials): Rose Quezada

Set Design: Bradford Chin

Lighting Design: Jimmy Balistreri

Costume Design: Kaylynn Sutton

Costume Assistant: Mary Leopo

Production Stage Manager: Blake Elliott

Artistic Advisor: Canton Winer

Rehearsal Videography: Karley Forgatsch

Rehearsal Photography: Wallence Zhou, Xintong He

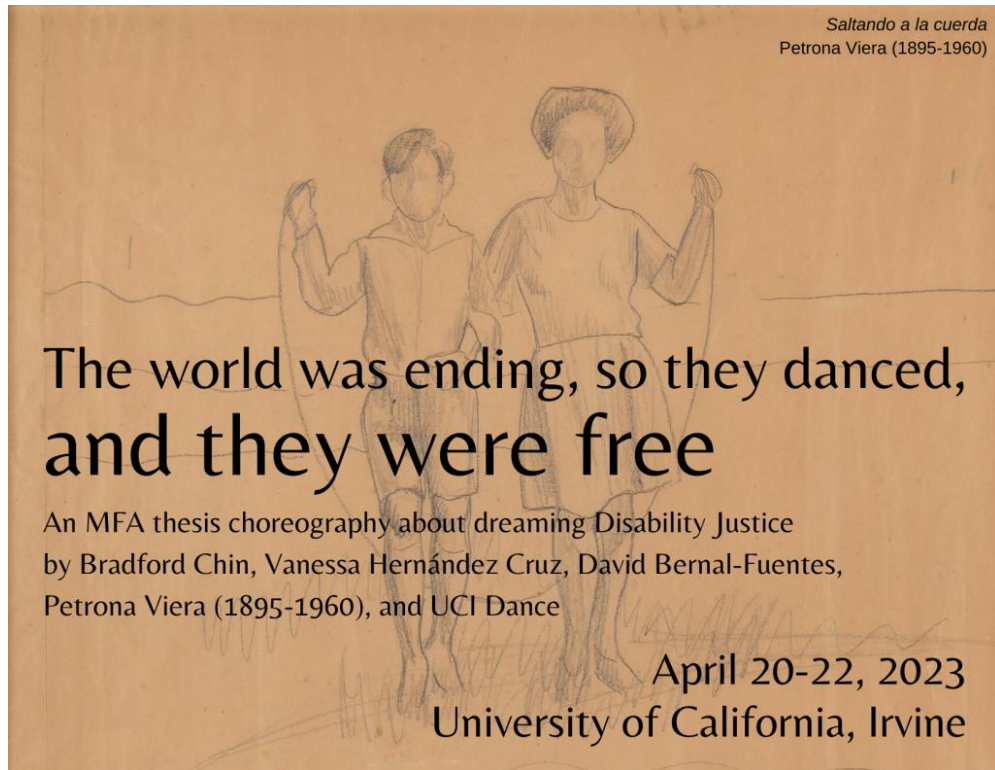
Concert Directors: Alan Terricciano, Ariyan Johnson

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- Dr. Gillian Hayes, Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate Division, UCI
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- UCI Associated Graduate Students
- UCI Disability Services Center
- Kai Hazelwood, Pieter Performance Space And Dance
- Dr. Wanette Reynolds, Assistant Professor, ASL Linguistics & Deaf Cultures Program, California State University, Long Beach
- Liz Curtis
- Merle Haberman
- Carol McDowell
- Tatiana Nori
- Megan Wright

APPENDIX E: DE23 Director's Note



Caption: The digital postcard for *The world was ending, so they danced, and they were free* (premiere). The performance information is displayed over Petrona Viera's *Saltando a la cuerda* (*jumping rope*), a pencil-on-paper study of two figures linking arms and holding the ends of a jump rope.

EVENT ACCESSIBILITY

The following audience access components are offered for ONLY this work in Dance Escape 2023:

- Audio Description
- Captioning
- ASL interpretation

Accessible seating, parking, drop-off/pick-up, and assistive listening devices: [LINK REDACTED]

Complimentary shuttle service for guests with disabilities and/or mobility issues: [LINK REDACTED]

*Please note that CTSA does **NOT** currently advocate for scent-free performance/audience environments.

*Regarding the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, please note that **UCI does NOT require masks on campus**, and the majority of audience members will likely be unmasked.

INTRODUCING THE WORK

In the Disability Justice primer *Skin, Tooth, and Bone: The Basis of Movement is Our People*, the Bay Area-based disability performance project Sins Invalid writes,

"We may or may not survive as a species, but can move forward in love for each other regardless of where we are going."

The world was ending, so they danced, and they were free (premiere) is both a lament and a dream for a more accessible and more just future. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the disconnection between the increased awareness of disability and the capitalist insistence on production over personhood. In this dissonance lies the ever-widening gap between our society and our humanity. Even with pleas from the disabled, immunocompromised, and other vulnerable communities—the communities who are *most* impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic—our society has been loathe to pause and forge new pathways forward. Instead, our society continues to choose, as it has always done, to abandon those who are in need for the sake of capitalism: the production of goods, yes, but also the manufactured scarcity of resources and the production of profits that benefit the rich few rather than our communities.

This "advancement at all costs" mindset is also present in dance. As sociologist Lacey Wood once remarked to me, dance is simultaneously a conduit into and a gatekeeper against disability. Physical, musculoskeletal injuries are common among dancers and, even if not acutely career-ending, can stay with the dancer for the rest of their life. Many conventional teaching and choreographic practices also result in mental and emotional tolls—such as body dysmorphia, fatphobia, and eating and stress disorders—that also stay with dancers for the rest of their lives. All of this for what end?

Despite its frequent production of disability, current mainstream dance aesthetics hold little room for even the conception of disability. The Centers for Disease Control states that over 25%--one in four—US American adults are disabled (in the medicalized model of disability diagnosis). How many dancers do you know who openly identify as disabled? How many disability-centered dance companies exist in the US? I can guarantee that those numbers are not one in four, and that is an indictment of the current state of the dance world.

Whether we identify as disabled or not, and whether we choose to accept it or not, ableism impacts all of us. Disability is not a single, standalone identity, but is inseparable from other forms of identity. The construction of ableism—not just outright discrimination, but how we define what is "normal" or not—simultaneously informs and is informed by the construction of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression and power. That all of our struggles are linked is the first principle of Disability Justice.

The world was ending, so they danced, and they were free invites you to join the artistic collaborators in an insistence on potentially uncomfortable questions. Why *must* things be the way they are? Why *must* some people be left behind? What can be done differently, and what would it take to do things differently *now*? **How can we move forward in love for each other regardless of where we are going?**

We do not know where this dream for an accessible future will take us or what this accessible future looks like. All we know is that a change is desperately needed *now*. We hope that you join us in dreaming and shaping our future together.

EXPERIENCING THE WORK

At the core of ***The world was ending, so they danced, and they were free*** (premiere) is disability. This work highlights disabled artistry and prioritizes access for both its collaborators and audiences.

Audio Description (for blind or low vision folks) and ASL interpretation (for Deaf or Hard of Hearing folks) are audience accessibility measures that are often presented as separate from the primary audience experience and usually by advance request only. Following the example of Ellice Patterson, Founder and Artistic Director of Abilities Dance Boston, both Audio Description and ASL interpretation are presented as default for the audience. The Audio Description is woven together with an original poem by

disabled collaborator Vanessa Hernández Cruz, both of which are narrated live by two actors on stage.

The sonic landscape is completed with music selections by disabled folk musician Gaelynn Lea. These curated music selections include Lea's arrangement of the traditional folk tune "Tombigbee Waltz," which serves as particular interest for this work. This folk tune has its origins in minstrelsy, an artistic genre that "normalized" blackface. Additionally, "tombigbee" is the Choctaw word for "coffin maker." Set as the prologue for this work, Lea's performance of "Tombigbee Waltz" prepares the work to consider the relationship between different factors of oppression (such as racism, ableism, and classism) and the insidious nature of capitalism, in which most people are coerced and exploited for their labor all the way into their coffins.



Caption: Three tapestry reprints of *Sin titulo (Untitled)*, *Recreo (Playtime)* (c. 1924), and *Saltando a la cuerda (Jumping rope)* by Deaf Uruguayan visual artist Petrona Viera (1895-1960).

The set design includes three tapestry reprints of works by the Deaf Uruguayan visual artist Petrona Viera (1895-1960). These selected works include two studies, *Sin titulo (Untitled)* (date unknown) and *Saltando a la cuerda (Jumping rope)* (date unknown), and one of her most well-known works, *Recreo (Playtime)* (c. 1924). By chance, I came across Viera's work in December 2022 at an exhibition of her work at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (Santiago, Chile). Viera's use of color, perspective, and literal play in the world around her became the visual anchor for the landscape created by Vanessa Hernández Cruz's poem.



Caption: *Sin titulo (Untitled)* (n.d.). Pencil on paper. Petrona Viera (1895-1960).

In her works, especially those of people, Viera drew heavily on her observations of people in motion, whether engaged with labor or at play with each other. Viera's works are rich with movement—choreography!—but these evocations of play and joy are riddled with unsettling tension. Amidst the joy of play, Viera also captures the sadness of isolation and exclusion. This dissonance provided one of two primary sources of choreography in this work. The movements witnessed on stage are a combination of (re)creations of Viera's works and studies, as well as responses to Cruz's original poem for this work.

Cruz's original poem, also titled ***The world was ending, so they danced, and they were free*** after this dance work, is rich with texture and emotion. Through her poetry, Cruz reflects on her experience as a disabled, Chicana artist and advocate in systems that were not constructed for her. Her imagery and emotional content add a viscerally unsettling yet cathartic element to the choreography and the landscape of the dance work. In creating this dance work, the dancers responded directly to Cruz's poetry, which is entwined with the Audio Description to form the sound score. This dance work flips the script on traditional approaches to Audio Description by exploring how Audio Description can inspire movement, rather than creating Audio Description in response to the choreography.

One of the core explorations of ***The world was ending, so they danced, and they were free*** is the pursuit of a "disability aesthetic," coined by the late disability studies pioneer Tobin Siebers. **What happens to our art when we center disability (rather than marginalizing disability), and how does that shift transform our existing artistic horizons and aesthetic paradigm?** I can't say that this work holds any

answers to those questions. However, I encourage you not to consider this experience as a dance work produced for consumption. Rather, I invite you to join this experiential laboratory process in which all of us together are asking questions toward visioning a different future.



Caption: *Recreo (Playtime)* (c.1924). Oil on canvas. Petrona Viera (1895-1960).

APPENDIX F: DE23 combined poetry and Audio Description script

CHANGEOVER

The next work offers the following accessibility measures: Audio Description, ASL interpretation, and Open Captions. To access the Open Captions and a better view of the ASL interpretation, use your web-enabled device to scan the QR code or follow the link in your program. You will be instructed when to begin the companion access video. Thank you.

TOP OF PIECE

Please stand by to begin the companion access video. Three, two, one, begin.

ACCESS DESCRIPTION

Access Description for *The world was ending, so they danced, and they were free.*

In this work, ten dancers of different genders and body types wear loose, flowing dresses in floral and color patterns that reflect the dancers' individuality. The dresses and the dancers' bodies are asymmetrically obscured on one side by a brown, shapeless layer with unfinished edges, reminiscent of burlap or a desert apocalypse. One dancer, Vanessa, dances with Pluto, an elegant, purple seated walker with accents that match Vanessa. The dancers wear black face masks as a form of disability-centered community care given the ongoing pandemic.

This work is shepherded by an ASL interpreter and two actors on the right side of the stage.

The stage is a cavernous black vacuum except for a thin, vertical portal of light blocked by a chain link fence in the center back of the stage.

Hanging in the air are three large tapestries of works by the late Deaf Uruguayan visual artist Petrona Viera. On the left is *Sin titulo (Grupos niños bailando)* (*untitled - group of children dancing*), a monochromatic pencil on paper study of children holding hands and dancing. In the center is *Recreo (Playtime)*, an oil on canvas painting with people wearing bright but peaceful colored tunics. Two people make a bridge with their arms while the others run through and around them in the lush, green grass. On the right, above the actors for the entire work, is *Saltando a la cuerda (Jump rope)*, another monochromatic pencil study of two people linking arms and holding the ends of a jump rope.

POETRY

The world was ending, so they danced, and they were free. Prologue.

[“TOMBIGBEE WALTZ” START]

[START WATCH]

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

David, Vanessa, and her walker Pluto in a bleak landscape. A mournful string waltz, a requiem for those who didn't make it. A nostalgia not for what was, but for what could have been...what should have been...

(0:20, high note on strings)

POETRY

Does it ever end?

The silent screams

No one can hear in a room full of listless stares

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

Trapped in this dystopia, David writhes with a desperate staccato, while Vanessa hopelessly looks up into the grey skies.

Two figures with threatening intent make their presence known, their gaze menacing, yet just as lost as the trio.

(0:45, introduction of string melody line)

POETRY

Stares carving deep into my soul

The storm waves colliding into the e-ther

Cascading onto itself

As if it's trying to save itself

(1:00)

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

Realizing there is no escape, Vanessa's breathing and limbs spiral heavily with frenzied friction. The two dancers stalk the trio with suffocating proximity, making it clear the trio does not belong and is being surveilled.

POETRY

Brown skin, different joints
A configuration that the universe
Designed
Yet the anomaly in a society that
Praises the privileged & the human machines
Damned to exist in a loveless system
Where love has only become a distortion into
“What benefits me?”

(1:45)

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

Pluto soars high over David’s head. The trio peels their skin from the top of their head to their heart, trying to escape the colonial curse of bodies that do not fit in. From the left, six dancers march lifelessly toward the trio with a mechanical soullessness.

POETRY

This mechanic society
Rusting & decaying
Heavy tired souls
Gasping for air

(2:15)

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

The trio anxiously searches for the right configuration to escape their coercive oppression and finds themselves facing the wall of dancers looming over them.

POETRY

Pulsing stride to

Just to make it

One more day

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

Despite their doomed fate, the wall of dancers stubbornly descends deeper into the isolation of individualism and the manufactured scarcity of resources.

POETRY

Brown skin, different joints

The weight of the world

Felt tenfold

A system fighting us

For just existing

(3:00)

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

With a mix of disappointment and despair, the trio backs away and makes eye contact with Taylor. In a moment of shattering transformation, Taylor recognizes herself in the trio and, untethered, begins to wander.

POETRY

Simultaneously

We are all on the brink of

Our last breath

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

A dancer, Spencer, rises to catch Taylor as she falls forward. Amid the disintegration, a glimmer of hope as the lights and music fade.

[“TOMBIGBEE WALTZ” ENDS]

(3:35)

[BLACKOUT]

[RESET WATCH]

[“DRAGONS & FAERIES” BEGINS]

[START WATCH]

POETRY

Part One: “The world was ending.”

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

Ominous strings strike as lights fade in. Eight dancers stiffly rock side to side without end. The trio struggles through this dense forest of barriers blocking their path.

POETRY

Seeking a place to call home

On a planet that is decaying

Ever so slowly yet at the speed of light

Brushing through all the listless faces

(0:30)

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

Bodies and fire suffocate the trio. The ensemble fills a narrow path, blocking the trio's way forward. They are forced to shove through the ensemble.

POETRY

Is this what giving up looks like?

I feel my legs rusting

As I try to get to the other side

Listless faces increasing their stride

But nowhere really to go

yet needing to be on time

(1:00)

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

The trio escapes the entrapment, but everybody is still trapped by the heavy weight of isolation.

POETRY

My heart screaming

[VANESSA and DAVID]

VANESSA: ESTOY CANSADA! (*I AM TIRED!*)

DAVID: ESTOY CANSADO! (*I AM TIRED!*)

VANESSA & DAVID: Estoy cansada... / Estoy cansado... (*I am tired...*)

POETRY

Brown skin different joints

Different mind

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

The ensemble begins the capitalist sprint to the death. Bella and Beebee jump the start without consequence to begin their capitalist quarrel. In despair, the trio returns to their demoralized repetitive gestures.

POETRY

My thoughts are raging

Each passing minute

I am giving in

(1:40)

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

David grabs Pluto and pushes the trio back, anger rippling against this inhumane cycle. The trio begins depolluting the acidic web from themselves, searching for freedom. Meanwhile, the ensemble plays children's games of patty cake and switch-a-roo, ignoring their manufactured plight.

POETRY

I am grappling with losing myself

Wavering my limbs in despair

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

Bella and Beebee's capitalist quarrel grows violent. They manipulate time and energy, focusing only on themselves. Amanda and Jessica are locked in a futile competition, both doomed to the same end.

POETRY

Needing to rip away all the acidic web

That is in front of me

But the pain in doing so

Is unbearable

The thread is too deep

Everything burns

(2:50; short swoops of strings begin)

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

The ensemble uses their bodies to construct fences and bridges with heavy defeat and no purpose, an endless death march. The strings weep in angst and sorrow.

POETRY

The so-called light at the end of the tunnel

Nowhere to be seen or felt

Everything is falling apart

The darkness taunting my hopes

Crackling cackles echoing from a distant

Future of a broken Earth

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

The trio looks toward the night sky, tracing and circling the stars falling on the pavement. They circle each other down to the earth.

(3:30, sustained repeated high strings)

POETRY

I feel the weight of the universe

Of what should be a hug

But is the hug of betrayal

of all my beliefs

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

The trio flies kites, lamenting what could have been. In a moment of magical realism, a forest of ancestors echoes in solidarity. Vanessa dives under Pluto and meets David on the other side for a slow exchange of nostalgic patty-cake.

POETRY

All my stars are falling
Vessels that once carried
My tears of happiness
Now drip on the
Cold hard pavement of decaying
dreams

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

David pulls Vanessa and Pluto through the web. The ensemble snaps back to their futile fences and bridges. Two dancers are left behind in the dust, viciously scrambling to save themselves but chained together.

POETRY

This world has only become a vessel for terror
Hate has become blooded acid rain
What's the end goal?
Pain, tragedy, fear
Engulfing our minds in every waking moment
Our humanity should have never been politicized
Our humanity stripped from us

(4:45)

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

Pluto leads the trio in shifting spirals, and David and Pluto patty-cake in the corner. The ensemble manufactures a four-person sequence of lifeless poses. Constant replacements occur without interrupting the flow of productivity.

[5:15, "DRAGONS & FAERIES" MUSIC SHIFT]

POETRY

Part Two: "So they danced."

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

The strings quiet into a springtime hope that follows a violent storm. The ensemble flees in a capitalist death march, but Beebee lingers.

POETRY

I no longer understand what it's like to be human

We've become something the world watches

With helpless stares

We have lost our way

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

Petrona Viera's *Sin Titulo* lowers into the space. Beebee struggles toward the light beyond the gate. Taylor runs in and collapses.

(6:00)

POETRY

I am unsure what to reach for
As my dreams and hopes dissipate
Into the e-ther

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

Beebee and Taylor support each other as they lunge with pleading hope.

POETRY

I crave to be free.
That feeling has never subsided
Can you tell me what freedom looks like?
Paint a picture for me?

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

David joins them to build new possibilities together. Their brown coverings melt from their flowing florals as they cascade through the space.

POETRY

I don't think I can do this by myself
Can you understand?
What destroys me is the violence from the outside
That later eats me alive on the inside

(6:45)

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

Vanessa and Pluto, brown coverings gone, travel slowly to honor crip time, distorting the cycle of this mechanic society.

POETRY

And yet this world asks me
To be strong, to be that hero
But all I want is peace

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

The trio reunites as Beebee and Taylor cast flowers and joy into the space, clearing the sensation of darkness.

(7:15)

["DRAGONS & FAERIES" END]

[RESTART WATCH RIGHT AWAY]

["SUNRISE GARDEN" EDIT START]

POETRY

Part Three: "And they were free."

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

The strings pluck with quiet hope and curious joy. Taylor and Beebee take turns joyously lifting Pluto. Six dancers peer at the sunrise through the chain link fence blocking the portal. They shed the dust of the world to reveal their floral blooms and start again, together.

POETRY

Show me utopia

Where our brown skin, different joints, different minds
are thriving

no longer ruminating what lurks behind every opportunity

Where we are celebrated and loved.

Where we can finally rejoice to be alive

To feel the echoes of earth singing in healing

(0:40-45, first long strings)

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

The trio, Taylor, and Beebee lean on each other and sway like flowers in the lush, green grass, invoking the strings to sing the songs of the ancestors. The ensemble forms two groups that dynamically adjust to the needs of their group with leans, lifts, and community care.

POETRY

Even in this chaos

There is this fuel that has been

Ignited

Exhausted yet ready to fight

Our Brown Skin, different joints, and different minds

Our power

Let us show you how

Our spirit remains unbreakable

(1:25-30)

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

The ensemble creates a bridge with their arms, referencing Viera's *Recreo*. They run under and through the arms with a childlike ability to dream. The swaying flowers begin dancing joyously together.

POETRY

Let me dry the pavement

To light up the night sky once again

Showing us the way to collective liberation

That our ancestors have longed for, for centuries.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

Taylor and Laura explore listening and moving together, referencing Viera's *Saltando a la cuerda* on the right. The ensemble frolicks under Viera's *Sin titulo* on the left. Everyone joins the joyful dance party with traveling solos of liberation.

(2:30-35)

POETRY

Let's leave this world behind
Let's find a place to truly call home
A place to rest & just be
To just exist
To rejoice in our dreams and aspirations
Away from what was to what will be
A place where our humanity is in harmony
With each other

(3:00)

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

Vanessa casts her disabled magic, sending the gate away to open the portal and summoning Viera's *Recreo* from above. Taylor and Beebee gather the narrators to join the group. Guided by the ancestors, everyone dances together, departing through the portal toward hope, freedom, and a better tomorrow.

(3:30)

[Jiayi, Zalen, and Stacey follow Beebee and Taylor to join the group and exit]

APPENDIX G: IRB

8/18/23, 1:56 PM

Protocols



PROTOCOLS

#1283 - Disability, Accessibility, and Inclusion in Concert Dance Practices

Protocol Information

Review Type	Status	Approval Date	Continuing Review Date
Exempt	Exempt	Sep 30, 2022	--
Expiration Date	Initial Approval Date	Initial Review Type	
--	Apr 15, 2022	Exempt	

Approval Comment

None
Feedback

Protocol Amendment Form

Amendment Instructions

Specify the type of submission:
AMENDMENT: IRB (UCI is the IRB of Record)