

Imagining the Future of Danceaturgy 5/12/20 – “Tuesday as Friday.”

I think that although danceaturgy is on pause for now, the principles of it will continue on in the dance community now, as it did before it began. Artists will always want to talk about their craft; whether that's through conversations after classes or rehearsals, over text, or even late at night over a glass of wine, dancers will never stop discussing dance. Imagining the future of danceaturgy, I hope that it will include anyone and everyone who wants to join. I don't think that there is any dancer that doesn't have a new perspective to offer, and I hope that all dancers will have the opportunity to discuss dance in some capacity. I don't believe that discussing art in any form should be an activity reserved for a specific group of people, as I believe that is the reason that often times dance can come off elitist to some. Dance is for anyone and everyone, and danceaturgy/ discussing dance should be as well. Appreciating the arts seems in our society to be reserved for those who have the funds or education to participate in a traditional sense, and I hope that danceaturgy someday can break that down. I don't think that it's done, I think it will just shift. – **Olivia Passarelli**

The future of danceaturgy much like all parts of our future is unknown. No matter how much we plan and plan and plan there are too many unknown variabilities that come into play for us to be able to say what any of our futures will look like. But we can imagine them. I can imagine the future of Danceaturgy in many different ways. One version of the future has us all sitting in the Dean's conference room every Friday morning at 8:30 eating grapes and cookies from Kings. Another version of this same future has us meeting on the stage about to give a talk back before the show at Kasser. But there is also a version of danceaturgy that happens outside our scheduled meeting times. It happens in the cathedral after we do an across the floor combination and we have a class discussion about feedback and someone makes a comment that gets the whole class thinking in a new way. It happens in the hallway on the walk to the water fountain when someone turns to their friend and asks them a question about why we spend such long hours sweating through the pain. It happens in our dorm rooms late at night when a group of dancers hang out to discuss the show they saw at Kasser theater. Danceaturgy happens all the time. We do not need a scheduled time in a designated classroom, and although the time together and the snacks are great the reason we are there doesn't change the minute we walk out the door. Danceaturgy is a universal language that is understood and appreciated by all dancers. And although we cannot know the future of Danceaturgy and what it might hold I know that it is present all around us all the time. Danceaturgy resides in life hall and resides with every danceaturg that ever entered the Dean's conference room. So you ask what the future of Danceaturgy might look like? I cannot say for sure but I do know that when I go to look for it it will be there and I can't wait to see where I might find it next. – **Megan Theobald**

I imagine a future Danceaturgy course as a sort of front line for the Dance Department. The first idea that crossed my mind involved inviting guest speakers from the field into class, but the more I thought about it, the less willing I was to turn the course into an exclusive club. It would not be fair to hold back advice and information from industry leaders from the other dancers - thus, I imagine that a significant part of being a Danceaturg could involve organizing master classes and talks for everyone. Most of the dancers I know have a wealth of connections from their years of training, and even though we may not have as strong a network as the faculty does, together we could bring the people we know and admire to Montclair. It would familiarize our group with the process of negotiating classes and rehearsals, widen our connections, and most importantly be a gangway between the somewhat intimidating dance

world and our program. It is true that we were accepted into this seminar based on our writing prowess; I think we should use that talent to help ourselves and our classmates succeed. – **Sarah Macken**

I think that the future of Danceaturgy is an important one. Through this course I have learned to think more actively about dance and performance in regards to myself and others. I think that the future of Danceaturgy is one that could be introduced to each grade. I believe that having a discourse about dance will allow more dancers to think about the process of movement creating more well rounded dancers. By doing so each dancer will be able to analyze movement choices and production elements to be better dancers and dance educators. I believe that the future of such an important course lies in the fact that while dance is a non verbal activity most of the time, this allows dancers to feel like they do have a voice and the capability of using it to make an impact in the dance community. – **Serena Brown**

Responding to this prompt was difficult because imagining our department without Danceaturgy seems incomplete. Imagining an undergraduate education without Danceaturgy seems implausible. I started studying Dramaturgy in high school; I was first exposed to Danceaturgy on my freshman year field trip to Montclair's Dance Day, when Neil led the Danceaturgs in a pre-show discussion. Every high school year after that, I looked forward to that field trip and hearing a discussion about the art we all cherish so dearly. When I came to Montclair State as a freshman, Kristilee was my roommate; she spoke in anticipation about Danceaturgy in the fall, and shared the prompts and discussions with me in the spring -- I could not wait to be a part of it. Danceaturgy is always the highlight of my week, my way of freshening my perspective and reflecting on even the most challenging weeks. Being without the Danceaturgy I've grown accustomed to -- our round-table discussions, ritualistic morning fruit, Neil's endless fascination with our dance anecdotes -- will be difficult, but when boiled down to its simplest form, Danceaturgy is this: a conversation. In the most optimistic scenario my imagination can create, we will find another person to lead our Friday morning practices, continuing the legacy of an in-person Danceaturgy. We will continue to prelude performances and interview student choreographers after informal showings. Worst-case scenario, if Danceaturgy no longer exists as a class, it is imperative that the conversations still continue. We must carry on discussions of why we dance, what we love and even what we hate. We need to draw intellectual connections between our passion and our pedestrian lives. We need to ask ourselves our own prompts and hold discussions with one another to analyze, reflect, and appreciate the common love we all share. – **Amanda Edore**

I imagine the future of danceaturgy to live on through many more years at Montclair State Dance. Whether it's at the MFA level or the BFA, the life and creativity danceaturgs bring to the table can't go unnoticed. Whether it's a class or not, I believe the talkbacks and discussions during shows can still be done whether we have a volunteer to lead the talks while former danceaturgs discuss or vice versa. I believe these talkbacks and discussions are an influential part of being a part of the dance world and without it, our community would be at a disservice. – **Jasmine Bullen**

When I imagine the future of Danceaturgy I see a world in which the term is a household name. I see a world where dancers and choreographers all over delve into meaningful discussions of what makes dance tick and what it means to be a part of the dance world. Colleges around the world would offer courses in Danceaturgy and it would permeate children's dance education. Danceaturgy would start young. "Once they can talk, start them in Danceaturgy!" would be a rallying cry amongst dance educators. And it would never end, with established choreographers scheduling weekly meetings to discuss with each other. College students everywhere would have

lively hallway discussions on the meaning of the word “style” in dance and what actually happens in their personal choreographic processes. These animated discussions, particularly in the college courses, would frequently be enlivened by the perspectives of those ‘outside’ the world of dance, such as artists in other media and professors of other subjects. The level of choreography everywhere would be elevated because choreographers would have the resources to consider all elements of their art. And it all started here. – **Amelia Sanders**

Discussion on dance is one of the most valuable things in my life as a dancer. If I am asked to reflect now, in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, on the role that reflective time plays in my life, I would say that it is more important than ever. I certainly will not allow that importance to diminish once I graduate Montclair and head into the “real world” once the coronavirus crisis simmers down.

I have seen a beautiful sense of community and unity emerge from the dance world in these challenging times. Our shared experiences have brought humans together. Never have I witnessed people so open and honest with their feelings. Space has been opened up for discussion across many groups of people. I do not want to see this wide-open, inviting, non-judgmental space close back up once our world gets back on its feet. I want discussion and conversation to continue, and become more inclusive—I am thinking as broad as the dance world as a whole, to as tight-knit as our Danceaturgy class. I would love to see the seams of Danceaturgy widen a bit. Inclusivity allows for new perspectives to be heard. I would love to see all dance majors have the opportunity to engage in and listen to the conceptual ideas that we discuss in this class. There is so much to learn from ourselves and from each other.

Throughout my three years in Danceaturgy at Montclair State, I began to find that I could learn something new from every class—whether it was a new big idea, or a small, yet significant concept; whether I learned this lesson from personal reflection, or from listening to a classmate speak. I never left Danceaturgy feeling unsatisfied.

I think that by nature, dancers are often insatiable human beings. Sometimes sitting down to converse and conceptualizing what we physicalize can feed my hunger and quench my thirst like no other, leaving me ready to experiment, create, or rehearse with a well-nourished mind and body. – **Madalyn Rupprecht**

The future of danceaturgy is never ending, but it certainly will never be the same. Like all great concepts or ideas, something can be invented, but that does not mean that the creator will follow through to see its end. While a break may be necessary in order to figure out the future for this class, the ideas will never disappear, and I don’t believe this is the end. Modifications, new instructors, and new student will come into play, and spark up the wonderful aspects of this class and concept. The idea of danceaturgy does not only need to be discussed in a classroom setting for 1 college credit. Danceaturgy could be a club, just an idea that intellectual artists discuss for pleasure, or something kept inside the mind. Even if it will not be presented to the public, danceaturgy is a wonderful thing, even just for self improvement. No matter where danceaturgy ends up, the idea of it is not over... because it is not its time. Not enough people have been granted the opportunity to be immersed in this topic, so I am eager to see what the future holds. Multiple people have already expressed interest in continuing this concept on, and I have great faith that it will. There will always be new ideas, emotions, and theories to discuss and analyze,

so this cannot and will not be the end. Maybe 8:30 on a Friday at Montclair State University with Neil is over, but this is not the last of anything else having to do with Danceaturgy. – **Jess Lavenda**

Well of course there would have been no danceaturgy without Neil Baldwin, I can say though that he was instilled in us so much wisdom that we are no longer just the "danceaturgy class that has to meet at the conference table." I feel that having to "disband" the actual class doesn't mean we won't be carrying these past prompts or ideologies.

I am reminded of conversations I have with Amelia, Megan, our other roommate Sarah, regarding these prompts. Once class is over, we usually spend a good while continuing on what others have stated, or we spark new ideas from the given prompt. Not only does it take our love for dance to the next level, it makes us dig deeper into the whats, whys and hows. Just like how these prompts unlocked a new respect of dance to me, I want to do the same for others.

** I have one more year of running montclair's instagram and I was thinking of including the prompts on future posts. – **Becky Seow**

The future of danceaturgy possibilities are truthfully endless. There is no way that one could possibly identify exactly what this seminar would look like in the future. What we can do is look at the past experiences and growth. After all, history has proven to repeat itself in many different inconspicuous ways. I could only imagine the way that danceaturgy would impact students in the future. The outlet that danceaturgy has created is one like no other; our conversations, in regard to dance, have opened new thoughts that otherwise may not have been explored. As for the future, well I couldn't even begin to describe what the outcome could be. – **Ellie Sharpe**

What holds for the future of danceaturgy? Danceaturgy will always be a concept of the past, present, and future. Danceaturgy has taught many people to really begin to think in different ways, reapproach material, and come at 'it' at a different angle. The present of danceaturgy is now. Danceaturgy has taught me, as well as others, different aspects of dance that I only knew deep inside, not knowing that I could even put words to these ideas. The future of danceaturgy may not be a visual or physical meeting, but it will live deep within us, even as we share everything we have learned with others. As we all continue our dance careers, we will always have a 360 degree view of choreography and performance, even when attending a concert. Danceaturgy will truly live on though the many dancers that have passed through in the past and present. Danceaturgy is the theory and practice and dance composition. Danceaturgy will always live in the now, whether that be in 2013, 2020 or 2030.

- **Alfonse Napolitano**

The future of danceaturgy is something that no one knows the real answer to. I imagine the future danceaturgy to live on no matter what, this class is so special and will not go unnoticed. Some things will change some will not, but the thing that will stay is all of the students. We will keep it alive whether it is talking in the halls or talking about a show that just took place. We do not need to have a class to keep it alive, even though I wouldn't trade our Friday mornings for anything. Danceaturgy is special, I know lots of us value this class to just speak our mind about things we normally would not in our typical dance class. Danceaturgy is something that most of us hold special to our hearts, we will just not be the same without it. Danceaturgy must live on. – **Emily Burke**

I wish that our return was certain, but it is not. So, in the meantime, it is our responsibility to keep the discussion alive. Even if danceaturgy isn't physically occurring, it is important to take this time-more so than ever-to discuss the aspects behind dance.

A lyric from *Hamilton: An American Musical* comes to mind: "We're planting seeds in a garden we never get to see"

We may never know our influence on the dance world. Maybe one of us will bring up an old prompt to a student we're teaching at a dance studio. Maybe a struggling freshman dance major will stumble upon the danceaturgy archive and feel less alone knowing we discussed exactly what they were feeling. We may never know!

But I hope we continue, as artists, as dancers, to keep the discussion alive, and keep planting seeds in a garden we never get to see. – **Rachel Ambrose**