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《鏈結》與《邊緣》：表演者的自我探索

Link and Limbo: Self-Exploration as a Performer

安瑞嘉

Wynvel Ramasasa Anguren

指導教授：林文中 助理教授

Advisor: Wen-Chung Lin, Asst. Prof.

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研究生：安瑞嘉 Anguren, Wynvel R.

(簽名)

經考試合格特此證明

口試委員：曾瑞媛  
劉永英  
林文中

指導教授：林文中

系主任(所長)：馮智強

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## 摘要

本篇論文分享了我在舞作《鏈結》與《邊緣》中運用舞蹈經歷所進行的自我探索。

《鏈結》由沈亞彤編舞；《邊緣》則由賈西亞所編創。兩首創作是南華大學藝術創作碩士(MFA)畢業展的演出舞碼。我在舞蹈創作過程中保持日誌的書寫，本論文分享與揭露了我對這兩首舞作的詮釋與反思。我聚焦於自我探索的三個重要面向，例如透過舞蹈傳達思想、對雙人舞及獨舞的詮釋，以及舞蹈對我的影響。此外，本論文還根據編舞者與其他舞者的觀點，我對舞蹈職業的計劃與期望，介紹了我在舞蹈方面的進展。這些想法幫助我意識到身為舞者的本分與責任，以及通過自我探索體會舞作精髓的重要性。

**關鍵詞：**以舞蹈自我探索及自我反思、當代舞蹈、表演經驗、《鏈結》與《邊緣》

## Abstract

As a participant-observer, this paper is sharing of my self-exploration using my dance experiences in *Link* and *Limbo*. *Link* was choreographed by Alexes Sandino and *Limbo* was choreographed by Al Bernard Garcia. These choreographies were done in partial fulfillment of the MFA graduation requirement at Nanhua University. I kept a journal during the dance creation process as reference. This written thesis shares and unfolds my interpretations and reflections about these two dance pieces. I focused on three significant aspects of my self-exploration: expressing ideas through dance, my insights in dancing duet and solo, and the impact of the dance in myself. Additionally, this paper encompasses my improvement in dance based on the choreographers' and co-performers' perspectives, as well as my plans and expectations in dance as a career. These reflections helped me realize the importance of knowing my duties and responsibilities as a dancer and in understanding the essence of these two dance pieces through self-exploration.

**Keywords:** *Dance as Self-Exploration and Self-Reflection, Contemporary Dance, Performance Experiences, Link and Limbo.*

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# MY DANCE BACKGROUND

Guang Ming College is the institution that honed me to become a dancer. It is where I spent four years of dance training that enlivened my artistic performance skills. This graduate program provided me with rich opportunities in gaining valuable experiences while performing on national and international stages. Guang Ming College made everything possible by equipping the students with dance theoretical understanding and practical exposures.

In dance academics, many courses were offered to us, these are: Dance History, Philippine Folk Dance, Contemporary Dance Practice, Modern Dance, Ballet, Dance Pedagogy, Semiotics, Dance Anthropology, Dance Anatomy, and Dance Research. Most of my teachers studied from two well-known universities in the Philippines: The University of the Philippines and De La Salle University. My professors in dance practice were Jennifer Bonto, Christine Crame, Al Bernard Garcia, Sarah Samaniego, Paul Alexander Morales, Michael Barry Que, Gia Gequinto, and Marla Rivera. My teachers in dance academics were Katherine Sabate, Regina Bautista, and Jared Luna. With their full support, they helped us fulfill our dreams of dancing while also molding us to become better dance performers.

Stage performance soon became my primary interest. Many performance styles caught my attention but I mainly focused on Professor Al Bernard Garcia's choreography. He was an associate professor at the college in 2015 and would often choose (assigned) me to be the main dancer in his choreography. I have taken his other classes as well. Among them, Dance Composition 1& 2 and Dance Technique classes such as Ballet, Contemporary Dance, and Folk Dance. Professor Al Bernard Garcia also founded the school's dance company Guang Ming Dance Project (GMDP). That same year, I became its first founding-student president. The school-based dance company has been an active performing group in Manila in the past seven years.



Figure 1. Guang Ming Dance Project Logo

“GMDP embarks on performances inspired by Karuna and Prajna, a dance for compassion and wisdom. It combines a multi-genre approach culled from classical, contemporary, and cross-cultural dance toward performances which aspire to inspire liberation and greater understanding. GMDP develop works were inspired by Filipino and Asian Cultures with the incorporation of the principles and practices of Humanistic Buddhism especially the Life Education” (GMDP 2020). The dance company served as my medium in order to develop and experience different styles of choreographies.



Figure 2. The pioneer company members of GMDP (Top, from the left: Rey Escobar, Daryl Desengano, Louise Biong, Wynvel Anguren, Dyan Panganiban, Karen Cabana, Ted Gaje, Cyril Valeriano, Alexes Sandino, Mario Villariaz. Middle, from the left: Jennybeth Pico, Cychaina Jontillano, Mr. Paul Morales (Former Artistic Director), Kristine Agno and Lady Ann Ciriaco. Bottom, from the left: Shenn Bernardo, Janille Apurillo, Ms. Sarah Samaniego, Mr. Michael Que, Dyna Rose Sulit, Mary Recto and Ghealyn Undang). Photo credit: Guang Ming College.

Professor Al Bernard Garcia served as my mentor and my inspiration in pursuing further studies in dance, guiding me to become a better dancer. His supervision in dancing style, movement vocabulary, and dance discipline greatly helped in my professional and personal growth. He was one among the practitioners that highly influenced my interest and passion for dance.

Aside from discussing my dance background, the following sections will include the dance repertoires that I have performed in the past few years and which contained dance descriptions including my personal observations.

## Performance Experiences

This section presents some of the dance pieces that I performed when I attended Guang Ming College. These performances greatly helped me grow as a dance practitioner. The performers were all from the school's official companies: Guang Ming Dance Project (GMDP), Dharma Theatre Ensemble (DTE), and Guang Ming Harmonies (GMH).

### *Emptiness (2015)*



Figure 3. *Emptiness* premiered at Bulwagang Francisca Reyes Aquino Studio at the Cultural Center of the Philippines. Photos credits: Guang Ming College and Al Bernard Garcia.

*Emptiness* is a dance inspired by a Buddhist prayer, “Heart Sutra” or “心經” in Chinese. This piece was performed in the 2015 Pasinaya Arts Festival<sup>1</sup> at the Cultural Center of the Philippines. This performance was officially my first time performing in front of many artists and audiences coming from different islands and regions across the Philippines. It achieved many firsts: our first dance repertoire for the Guang Ming Dance Project was performed in public for the first time. This event led me to begin my journey of exploring dance with new a discipline and practice.

The choreography of *Emptiness* explored gestural movements such as joined palms, kneeling, and half/full bows. The piece used movement techniques derived from contemporary dance, which at that time, was new to me. I have never encountered, learned, nor engaged in dance workshops or classes that taught this particular dance discipline. It was only at GMC that I learned this technique.

Whenever there is enough space and time, my body automatically reawaken my deep passion for dance and movement. Because I realized that my body feels good when I can freely move without being restricted. As one of the student artists, I pushed myself to adapt to the learning environment of GMC, applying gestural movement for the first time in my performance of *Emptiness*.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Cultural Center of the Philippines (2021), “Pasinaya is an open house festival held annually for one day at the center. Every possible venue at the CCP is used - theaters, lobbies, hallways, promenade areas, the alley beside the Production Design Center and are “zoned” according to the genres of music, theater, dance, film, literature, visual arts, children and family, variety and the artist’s market. The event also features crash workshops, film screenings, visual arts exhibitions and activities for children”.

*Self- Awakening (2017)*



Figure 4. *Self-Awakening* premiered at CCP Main Theatre. Photo credit: Guang Ming College.

*Self- Awakening* was one of the dance series of the production “Flip: Change the World, Benefit Humanity”. This piece was one of my very first solo performance in collaboration with a theatre artist while reciting her learnings as a scholar of Fo Guang Shan, Philippines. The choreography of *Self-Awakening* influenced me to self-reflect on my own personal changes before and after I entered GMC. My solo part exemplified interpretative dance movement, showcasing my development as a student dancer.

This particular piece boosted my confidence in the realm of stage performance. During the performance on the National Stage, I realized that there were still many things that I needed to be able to explore myself better. It was during this performance when I finally realized that I’m in for the many possibilities of gaining new dance knowledge, approaches, experiences, and performances. Watching this performance today makes me reminisce about my past memories. As I remembered, it has never been easy to be choreographed during the process and perform my solo dance because I am the only dancer. I have to familiarize and embody the movements until its final performance. To this day, the experience still guides me to further develop myself and my capabilities in the field of dance.

*Vast Cloud (2017-2018)*



Figure 5. *Vast Cloud* premiered at CCP Main Theatre. Photos credit: Guang Ming College.

*Vast Cloud* is a tribute dance for the legacy of Venerable Master Hsing Yun, the founder of Fo Guang Shan. This dance was one of my most memorable choreographies and one of the notable repertoires of the Guang Ming Dance Project. *Vast Cloud* has seen performances in many countries among them. Taiwan, Indonesia, and the United States of America. This dance has travelled to many countries and I was delighted to have my own distinct dance section during this performance. Smooth, soft, and gentle movements naturally flowed out of me radiating my aura towards the audience.

Dancing the choreography of *Vast Cloud* was a surreal experience for me. When we performed it on the National Stage, my parents watched and commented afterward that the beautiful dance, melodic music, and my soft and gentle facial expression while I was dancing made them shiver with awe. They felt that the dance piece was quite special because of its meaning and concept. Hearing their feedback made me realize how beautiful the piece was since my own parents appreciated the dance. As one of the dancers, I felt that I have successfully delivered the meaning of the dance.



*Prelude (2019)*



Figure 6. *Prelude* premiered at CCP Main Theatre. Photo credit: Guang Ming College.

The creation of *Prelude* came postdated after the *Vast Cloud* in 2019. This dance piece featured a prayer for the founder of Fo Guang Shan, Ven. Master Hsing Yun. This piece was my last dance performance under the supervision of Professor Al Bernard Garcia at Guang Ming College. I had the honor to portray Venerable Master Hsing Yun in this piece, making it one of my most favorite performances.

All the dances presented above have integrated Buddhist concepts. The religious customs and beliefs of Fo Guang Shan in the Philippines influenced the choreography, creating a performance that gives consideration to the religious audience. This form of art fosters talents and skills by incorporating Humanistic Buddhism on the level of the performers' humanistic values. The choreographers and dancers while identified as Christians, have performed and lived with the Humanistic values of Buddhism.

Most of the performances previously mentioned above were able to present at the Main Theatre of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP). Among them, *Lak-baybayin* and *Whispered Thoughts*, both choreographed by Professor Michael Barry Que, were created without the application of Buddhist concepts. Furthermore, Professor Que is one of the teachers



who helped facilitate the school's dance company. He does his best by exposing us dancers to various aspects of dance and engaging in different dance approaches.

*Lak-baybayin (2017)*



Figure 7. *Lak-baybayin* performed at CCP Main Theatre. Photo credit: Guang Ming College.

*Lak-baybayin*<sup>2</sup> was choreographed by Professor Michael Barry Que, the current Adviser of Guang Ming Dance Project (GMDP). The dance was inspired by Philippine ancestral and historical writings and texts called *Baybayin*. This dance piece displayed the concept of *Lakbay*, the Filipino people's way of "nomadic"-living, traveling from one place to another across the archipelagic country of the Philippines. This choreography was a competition dance piece for the National Commission of Culture and Arts, a national contemporary dance competition which won second place for our GMDP.

The dance conveyed a powerful and meaningful message about the Philippines' rich history and cultural heritage. When the choreographer explained to us his intention and reason

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<sup>2</sup> *Lak-baybayin* was awarded as 2<sup>nd</sup> prize winner during the National Commission of Culture and Arts (NCCA), National Dance competition- Contemporary Category at Cebu, Philippines in the year 2017.

for creating this dance, Choreographer Que stated: “I want GMDP to be known in the field of dance especially in this kind of dance platform- the National dance competition,” his words and vision of this masterpiece has left a mark in my heart. His words became my inspiration in delivering the purpose of the dance as a performer all throughout the rehearsal process until the very end of the final performance day.

### *Whispered Thoughts (2017)*



Figure 8. *Whispered Thoughts* premiered at Star and Cloud Theatre. Photo credit: Guang Ming College.

The choreography of *Whispered Thoughts*<sup>3</sup> has a unique contemporary style of dancing composed of three dancers. This dance is the hardest of all the dances that I have performed. The goal of this performance was to display using fast but minimal gestures and movements which my body was not accustomed to. There were times that the three dancers continuously moved until the audience heard our heavy breathing and only stop for the next section of the movement phrase. The movement choices were simple yet hard to remember because it was fast and minimal. It was also hard even for the camera shots to clearly take the photos of our

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<sup>3</sup> *Whispered Thoughts* was inspired from the human mentality or the thinking that depicts anxiety, worry, and exhaustion.

hand gestures due to the quick change of movements. The movements were difficult to exercise and the concept itself was also very hard to grasp. Therefore, I came up with my simple and concrete inspiration while performing by imagining the images of people I have seen specifically a person suffering from Tourette syndrome, a condition characterized by repetitive movements like blinking or shrugging the shoulders.

### **Reflection on my Dance Foundation**

Upon reflecting on my dance experiences at Guang Ming College, I realized that I had been accorded great opportunities that helped me become a competent artist. Having the chance to study has opened my eyes to the importance of dance as a means for individual improvement. I would consider the knowledge that I have gained from GMC on different techniques such as Ballet, Contemporary, Modern, and Improvisation, as among the most important foundation in my journey. The techniques enabled me to develop good traits, such as being disciplined, responsible, hard-working, and committed. Aside from that, the different dance techniques allowed me to achieve a more refined body posture and the agility to execute dance movements more efficiently. Having gone through the different techniques, I gained a better understanding on how to move my body, to build strength while avoiding injuries.

Moreover, the choreographies were the other reasons that greatly shaped me to be a competent dancer. I have learned many different things in these dances, especially in grasping the conceptual thoughts of the choreographers in executing the movements better. As one of the performers, I observed and realized that it was important to have a positive mindset and preconceptions of the choreography because it enabled me to sharpen my understanding of the dance piece. Often, the dance pieces have unique concepts which truly displayed and conveyed

the ideas and vision of the choreographers in dance. These practices and experiences I gained allowed me to trust myself and developed good characteristics in learning and executing the dance choreographies properly.

During my academic days toward getting my bachelor's degree, my dance teachers were well-equipped in shaping dancers to become outstanding artists in pursuing their chosen paths. All the experiences I gained from different techniques and performances under my mentors made me realize how great their contributions were for my growth and development as a dancer. They provided me proper education through dance in dealing with various circumstances, especially during the process and performance. One important area is knowing how to make the audience relate to and understand the dance and not merely being able to show the complexity of the movements. As an individual, my life also changed while I was in school. I got to experienced many opportunities that offered a "taste" of the "good life," studying and traveling abroad for free as a good example. But on top of that, this led me to become a more goal-oriented and purpose-driven individual.

## Chapter 1: OVERVIEW OF *LINK* AND *LIMBO*

In this chapter, I will provide brief descriptions of the two dance pieces. This includes how these repertoires have been developed with my dance trainings. My perceptions of my performance choices for each dance were distinct, as both pieces explored various methods such as conceptualizing, composing, and structuring. *Link* and *Limbo* were outputs of the two-year dance training under the mentorship of Professor Wen-Chung Lin. Experiencing his creative approaches inspired me to explore new possibilities.

My thesis will share the different experiences while being part of these two dances. The creative processes of each dance had given me a chance to ponder about ideas and reflect on them. *Link* and *Limbo* has affected me as a dancer because of their magnificent creative ideas. The following is my self-exploration.

### 1.1 *Link*

The concept of this dance choreography started when the choreographer became interested in the movement exercise during a Dance Composition class. The topic in class was about circular movements using different body parts. The mechanics in this exercise started from making small gestures and later developing into big movements. This was how the teacher presented the structure of the dance.

The objective in performing circular movements was to continually execute circular movements without doing the reverse. The movement must create fluid, continuous and smooth transitions between movements. For example, a minimal circular gesture from the right shoulder moving toward the chest must smoothly connect to the hips that will go in the same direction. Similarly, dancing with a partner with a similar movement style can create a different

flow. As an example, when performing the choreography, the movement combination associated with lifting should follow the direction that the movement is going to.



Figure 9. *Link* choreographed by Alexes Sandino and performed by Wynvel Anguren and Cyril Valeriano. Photo credit: Zhi-Yan Liao.

Alexes Sandino is a new developing choreographer who uses pure physical movement that expresses distinct movement exploration and style. According to Choreographer Sandino (2021), “*Link* is a relationship between two objects. One's action influences the other in a loop of interlinking connections. This piece is an exploration of circles between two bodies on stage, manifesting the movements' interconnectedness, completeness, and continuity. This theme provides momentum to keep the flow of energies in the bodies and further explore possibilities of moving through space. Circle is the basic idea for machines to work. Metaphorically, a circle is life's basic movement. Everything constantly moves in a never-ending circle and link between creation and degeneration”.

Choreographer Sandino mentioned that he allows his imagination to run wild while creating the dance. Even during the process and performance, his imagination did not stop as it continued formulating various scenarios and images towards his choreography. My interpretation was quite similar. I told him that when we were dancing, I imagined that every

time we move a part of our body through space, I visualized bubbles. It was a feeling one has while diving deep in the water where we can see bubbles characterized by the simple waving of our hands in the water. When he heard how I interpreted his piece, he started sharing his own ideas and we started discussing our processes about the dance. He told me that he sees traces of light every time we slice our bodies through space. Also, he told me to imagine a graffiti because it will help me to have a concrete idea that may lead to developing new movements.

## **1.2 *Limbo***

The idea of this dance began when the choreographer used the music and its history from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Music course at Nanhua University. The choreographer used three bodies (dancers) and incorporated compositional devices from one of the main topics in Dance Composition class. These are the props/sets and circular movement theme. It also included elements from the Improvisation class such as body restrictions, negative & positive exercises, and transferring weights. These topics helped the choreographer to deliver his interpretation of the music and its history.



Figure 10. *Limbo* choreographed by Al Bernard Garcia and performed by Mary Evangeline Recto, Cyril Valeriano, and Wynvel Anguren. Photo credit: Zhi-Yan Liao.

According to Professor Al Bernard Garcia (2020), “*Limbo* was inspired by the music of Olivier Messiaen- a French composer from the 20th century, entitled *Quartet for the End of Time*, which resonated a feeling of transcendence-beyond time and space, beyond life. This musical work was written while he was a prisoner of war under German captivity in Gorlitz, Germany where he spent quite some time as a prisoner during the war. In this time of pandemic, Messiaen’s piece is still relevant. In this challenging time, I would like to use this music and create a work like what Messiaen did during the time of war. His work gave people hope and was able to release them from all their anxiety, hatred and fear”. He defined *Limbo* as “an uncertain period of waiting for a decision or resolution. A temporary state or condition. A place (that) is in-between and unknown. A place where time is unknown (Garcia 2020)”.

During the process, Professor Garcia shared and described his initial image of the piece where bodies were piled up, similar to how Messiaen hid his own body under dead bodies during the war. I also shared my preconceptions about the piece with him and explained that I imagine people dying, crying, screaming, and afraid to lose their lives, since the piece was inspired by music and its history. Nevertheless, as *Limbo* was choreographed again, my interpretation of the piece changed which will be discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. Thus, I had a multilayered understanding and interpretation of the meaning of the piece.

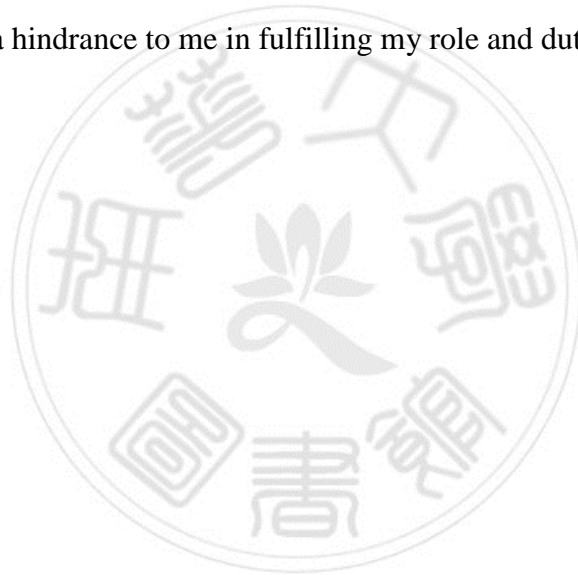
### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The choreographies of *Link* and *Limbo* were the mediums I used to express my experiences as a dancer in this study. They narrated my journey in dealing with different performances and the unfolding of my personal interpretations of the dance. This thesis presents my experiences of different dance pieces from the two choreographers who shared



their own unique approaches to create dance pieces. These performances greatly helped me in my journey as a dancer and in discovering my own potential.

This paper aims to narrate my process of dance creation as a way of self-exploration and to deeply understand the meaning of dancing in relation to my experiences in growing up as a dancer. The lessons that I gained from my dance experiences became my strong foundation for who I am today. The two dance pieces had influenced my way of expressing myself through the disciplines I learned from dance. Although the skills and techniques I learned in studying were manifested in my performance, I am still continuously in search of my own dancing style. Along the way, there I shall encounter many difficulties and challenges. But I believe that these difficulties will not be a hindrance to me in fulfilling my role and duty as a dancer.



## Chapter 2: EXPLORING MYSELF IN DANCE

This chapter shares my experiences in performing the choreography of *Link* and *Limbo*. My goal was to integrate self-exploration in the creative process toward the final performance. My self-exploration allowed me to discover an in-depth meaning of my experiences. First, I narrated the creative process of the choreographies and then discussed my experiences in the three aspects of self-exploration: express ideas through dance; insights in dancing duet and solo; and the impact of the dance in myself. My observations and self-reflections were documented by writing in a journal about the happenings encountered during the process and performance.

### 2.1 The Creative Processes

Change is one of the important factors in the choreographies of *Link* and *Limbo*. Through the uncertainty or in-between state of performances, the exploratory process challenged the mental capacity and body potentials of the choreographers and dancers. The choreographers are not strictly implementing the movement to be as their executed movements. Instead, they both valued the feeling, not only of the dancers, but the dance in general. During rehearsals, the process of collecting movement materials was generated from a collaborative approach between dancers and choreographers. They both acknowledged the occurring changes upon its rehearsal process. Also, dancers were encouraged to be free to interpret the movements in their bodies.

#### 2.1.1 The Creative Process of *Link*

The choreography of *Link* was originally created by Alexes Sandino and Cyril Valeriano, both skilled dancers. During the process of dance creation, the choreographer gave us the freedom to suggest and comment about the movement explorations of the piece. I became an

observer, later a participant while helping the choreographer create the dance. After which Alexes Sandino - the choreographer, asked me to be the permanent dancer for his piece. I presented him with all my observations about the dance while observing him create. I tried to familiarize myself with the dance steps knowing that I will be performing the same dance piece.

The rehearsals for *Link* took place almost every day, thus giving ourselves- me and my dance partner Cyril, an assurance that we can finish learning the whole choreography. Although I was at first observing them while they were creating the dance, I still needed to review and familiarize myself with the actual dance steps. I started learning the dance by watching the recorded videos of the rehearsals. I continued observing it carefully and recalled the actual rehearsals and the instructions to compare the movements. I also received help from my partner and the choreographer through their explanation on how to execute some of the movements, for instance, the process of lifting my partner.

The dance studio of Nanhua University became my second home just to learn all the movements given by my choreographer. Most of the time, I did my rehearsal practice on my own. I executed and performed the movements one by one, even without my partner, so that I would become familiar with the movements. Thereafter, I danced with my partner so I could have a feel of the whole flow of movements. Throughout this whole process, my choreographer was always available to help me in learning the steps he created for us.

The choice of movements was based on the principle of circle exercise from the Dance Composition class taught by Professor Wen-Chung Lin. Most of the rehearsals were spent developing and exploring possible movements- circular movement phrase, that may create and give a wonderful effect to the piece. The collaborative process of creation allowed me to contribute a lot more compared with the other dance pieces. Suggestions, comments, and

advice were important during the creation of the dance to best portray the main message of the dance for our future audience.

### 2.1.2 The Creative Process of *Limbo*

*Limbo* was conceptualized during the second week of May 2020, while we were in our second semester of the first year. The dance piece is the final output for the class of 20th Century Music under the supervision of Professor George Holloway and Professor Wen-Chung Lin for the Dance Composition course. *Limbo* then premiered in June 2020 at Nanhua University.

The rehearsals took place after our dance classes. We started rehearsing in a small area set with masking tapes in our studio, later it was changed into big green mats and the mats were positioned in a square shape. We spent one to two hours of rehearsal for three days every week specifically for movement study. Then, we tried to put together the dance. Since the dance piece's structure and movements were finished, we had run-throughs until the final performance in the YB11 dance studio. It was exhausting but very satisfying. The piece was twelve minutes long which did not exceed the time limit. We were able to finish it on time with complete sets and costumes.

After the premiere, this dance piece was continuously modified. It was shortened to a ten-minute dance where some parts of the dance had to be changed for workshop purposes. The choreography of *Limbo* has been performed many times including during outreach programs for schools such as Silixiezhi High School of Industry and Commerce, Municipal Zhongbuguomin Junior High School, Minxiong Junior High School of Taiwan and a Virtual or Online Performance at the Cultural Center of the Philippines. The dance piece was also used as an audition piece at World Dance Alliance 2020 in Taiwan.

This dance was modified again since *Limbo* would be presented at the MFA graduation concert. The structure of the dance was enhanced and redeveloped. The dance piece reached eighteen minutes as the choreographer rearranged the movements during our rehearsals. We began to record our new movements in the rehearsals as a handy reference. We gathered our video recordings and saved them in a drive for future referrals. Some of the clips in our collected video recordings were posted on our social media accounts. The choreographer reminded us to review the dance piece before the run-through of the whole dance in order not to waste the time during our rehearsals. He would also take time in polishing the dance phrases on our solo, duet, and trio part of the dance. I was challenged to focus and work hard to improve my dance movements and to explore more on my capabilities. Also, I followed all the given suggestions and comments of my choreographer during rehearsals because I always gave myself room for improvement.

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, the choreography of *Limbo* was derived from one of the main topics in our Improvisation class: body restriction, negative & positive exercise, and transferring weights. Also, it was derived from one of the topics in Dance Composition class: props/sets and circular movement theme. Through these principles, the choreography was able to create different organic feelings.

The piece also became more personal to me as time passed by. Every time I danced this piece, I felt different because I could sense my own emotions and so with the other dancers' feelings. I also felt responsible during our usual rehearsals because most of the time, I have to act like a team leader in the dance. However, I enjoyed performing it because the approach to the dance is so unique. And lastly, during the process of composing this piece, suggestions, comments, and advice were also very valuable because they helped us improve the piece and convey the message more effectively.

## **2.2 Express Ideas through Dance**

Expressing the ideas or the message of dance is one of the significant factors that a dancer should pay attention to. It is part of my responsibility as a dancer to interpret the conceptualized idea of the choreography through movement execution. This does not mean that I just dance the movement that is given by the choreographer but also to show the message of the dance.

The expression of ideas happens when I am already in the process of internalizing my role in the dance. It does not occur only during the beginning of the rehearsal, rather, it reaches the expression of ideas happen when my body becomes familiar with the movements being explored. Though it demands a lot of time, it is where I can engage myself in expressing the idea or concept of the dance.

One way of expressing my ideas is through sharing my thoughts about the dance with my fellow dancers as well as with the choreographer. I ask questions about my role in the dance piece. Afterwards, I express my ideas on how I will do the movements. However, I can only do my suggested movements if the choreographer agrees with the ideas I shared. On the other hand, I get opinions from my fellow dancers whether I am able to express the concept of the dance especially during my dance parts. I also able to express my observations about the dance and on the performance of my fellow dancers. Through this process, I am able to understand the whole dance and also contribute to the dance improvement.

## **2.3 Insights in Dancing Duet for *Link* and Dancing Solo for *Limbo***

In this section, I shall be discussing my views based on my experience in performing a duet and solo dance. Duet promotes teamwork, trust, and good collaboration with my partner. On the other hand, solo dance allows me to perform specific dance moves and execute theme

based on personal preference that comes from experience. These two ways of the performance vary on the effort being exerted and the movements that are being explored.

### 2.3.1 Performing Duet for *Link*

In the past years, I have experienced performing duets under the choreographies of Prof. Al Bernard Garcia, Prof. Michael Barry Que, and Prof. Wen-Chung Lin. I am honored to have performed Alexes Sandino's piece under their tutelage. For me, performing a duet can be tricky because sometimes my partner and I have different understandings of movement executions.

The choreography of *Link* was difficult for me. It had continuous dance phrases and had short pauses in between. I had to pull and carry my dance partner most of the time as part of the choreography. The pulling and lifting add to the level of difficulty in this duet.

As already mentioned, in some parts of the dance, I am asked to lift my partner. Dancing with a partner in the choreography of *Link* nonetheless helped me adjust to the changes and encouraged me to better communicate with my partner on how we can execute our dance movements properly. There are some parts that we communicated non verbally-- only through our eyes. Dancing this duet enhances my teamwork-building skills with my partner, which is indeed very important in any duet. I also see that through practicing the duet parts of *Link*, I was able to gain the trust of my partner. One of the important things in performing a duet is that you must have faith in each other. Good collaboration and communication are important especially when there are moves that could lead to potential injuries (i.e. lift my dance partner during our dance piece, then falling on the floor happened) Nevertheless, I enjoyed performing with my partner and we were able to build trust during the process of this dance.

Indeed, I am so thankful and honored with the opportunity that the choreographer has given to me. I also feel somewhat special having the role as one of the two dancers in *Link*.

Certainly, it was another experience to treasure. Since the piece only evolved between me and my dance partner, it feels great when I and my partner were able to share and learn from each other. I believe we were able to build a stronger camaraderie. Our relationship as dancers and friends have become stronger.

### 2.3.2 Performing Solo for *Limbo*

I am so grateful for the opportunity given to me by Prof. Al Bernard Garcia which allowed me to take part in his choreographic work *Limbo*. I have danced for him for a good number of years. I was honored to be given a solo part on his thesis project. As a dancer, this is a great chance to dance solo under his choreography because the concept and movements were distinct.

As I have mentioned in the previous chapter, Prof. Garcia's piece has been performed multiple times, my solo performance is in the second section of the piece. Although it only took a few minutes, I know how important the section was. I had to perform it seriously and with responsibility. My process for the solo dance has not been easy for it required an organic movement. According to my choreographer, the movement that the body will generate must look natural. For instance, if I move my head, I should pay attention to the impetus of the movement and the impetus will eventually lead my other body parts to move at different dynamics, directions, and levels. Organic movement occurs one at a time as it rises from rest to a peak of activity, then returns to rest. A pause is emphasized so that the dancer can see how one movement develops to another (Brehm, 2019). Moreover, my choreographer would always tell me that another way to achieve organic movement is not to limit myself to the movement he suggested and to also explore more movements. Working on my solo movement phrase challenged my ability to visualize how I would execute the solo dance.

As time passed, the experiences I gained from numerous solo performances in *Limbo* gradually improved my skills as a dancer. First, I discovered and observed an improvement in my dancing. I was able to explore my own techniques while performing. Moreover, I was able



to adapt easily, embody the movements with ease. Second, it built my confidence as a performer. Performing my solo dance multiple times naturally increased my self-confidence. It motivated me to perform at an even higher level. Additionally, it improved my stage presence. And finally, it stimulated my interest in exploring the movements that can be made through dance. During the rehearsals, I made sure that I took a serious mindset. I always reminded myself that I should do my very best, especially in performing my solo dance. Having a good, healthy mindset helps me in making sure that I will be able to perform my parts well.

Performing my solo in *Limbo* enabled me to realize good responses which affected me as a dancer. I gained improvements through my solo, which helped me realize that solo performance plays an important role in a dance as it gives the dancer a great deal of responsibility to convey the message of the piece. It takes courage and effort to execute the choreographer's movements when performing solo.

## **2.4 The Impact of the dance on Self**

Dance is my passion. Because of this, every time I perform, I gain new experiences. Performing helps me become more disciplined in time management, physical-awareness, and other aspects such as critical thinking and creativity that contribute in shaping good character as an individual. Through performances, I realized that there is a wide range of possibilities in movement and choreography that can be explored and discovered along the process.

### **2.4.1 Influence of *Link* on Self**

The *Link* performance boosted my capabilities as a dancer and improved greatly my stamina. I am fully aware that performing the piece took effort and strength. For this reason, it motivated me to work harder and performed the dance the best way that I can. It was hard to

perform the whole choreography of *Link* because the movement was continuous and had only short pauses. I knew it was necessary, yet I cannot deny the fact that in every rehearsal process I had a hard time breathing. There were moments when I got so tired that my momentum stopped abruptly even during brief pauses.

When the production was approaching, the choreographer decided to have a run-through twice a day in every rehearsal. With that, I got used to the physically demanding choreography which eventually decreased my difficulties after every rehearsal. I found ways to properly place my breathing in between the pauses. I learned the proper timing when and where in the movement phrases I needed to exhale and inhale.

The choreography of *Link* was a great challenge, not only in my breathing, but in the overall performance as well. Since it was abstract and only focuses on pure dance movement as the choreographer created, my particularly focus was on refining my dance movements techniques. I realized that when we polish our movements, it effectively impacts the overall choreography of the piece. Therefore, the movements and phrases improved over time.

There were times when I watched myself on the video recording and I personally felt my dance was not doing well. Hence, I took notes and encouraged myself that in a certain phrase and dance section I must be responsible and remember my mistakes and note what I needed to improve on. Watching once was not enough for me. Whenever I went home during that time, I would watch the rehearsals that were taken from that day. This process was used not only in my dance rehearsal in *Link* but also in all the dances where I got involved in. Reviewing helped me familiarize the dance patterns, characterize the role, and polish my imaginative presentations. It helped me as a performer and helps the choreographer in creating his dance; the choreographer was able to have more time in creating movements for us because of that I was so delighted when I felt my body becoming stronger and healthier through these rehearsals. I was intentional in my food choices during production week. I made sure to get enough hours

of sleep each night. I had to learn how to best manage my time in order to take care of myself and finish any commitments before the rehearsal. I was able to improve productively day by day because of the different reflections I gained in both rehearsals and performance day.

By observing the entire process of the dance creation, I was able to adapt to how my choreographers work in terms of conceptualizing, planning, and structuring the dance that they created. Being a dancer also includes going beyond my role. The impact of this in my self-development is being flexible in portraying roles. I was not only thinking of myself as a dancer but as a team player who wanted to bring the best potential out of my co-performers and choreographer.

In conclusion, I gained so much learnings from this performance. It contributed in my self-exploration during and after the processes of this dance. I was able to distinguish my strengths and weaknesses that needed to be developed. I was able to manage my time better and take care of myself. I realized that I needed to empower and strengthen myself in performing this dance. In doing so, aiming for perfection is not only the main point of performing but also taking the journey of self-exploration.

#### 2.4.2 Influence of *Limbo* on Self

*Limbo*, which means "uncertain period of waiting for a decision or resolution; a temporary state or condition," drew from the choreographer's music inspiration of a German composer named Olivier Messiaen. The main objective of this piece was to give people hope and to provide a medium where people could release all the negative energy created during this pandemic time through a dance performance. In this manner, the process and final performance was remarkable. Through self-exploration of the experiences I gained from this dance, it brought me lots of life realizations.

I performed the dance piece with a focused mind and realization; henceforth, it gave me further understanding of how *Limbo* became part of life in general. *Limbo* is not a mere concept but rather a fact that exists. *Limbo* happens from time to time and I can relate to it in some circumstances like, *making decisions and solving problems*. As we continue living in this society, decisions as well as problems become part of one's everyday life. People more often see it as an unnecessary part of life; therefore, tumble into doubts, fear, or even uncertainty in deciding due to lack of trust. Understanding it in a deeper sense, I would compare it to the Buddhist idea of *impermanence* which means everything is subject to change from time to time. The causes and conditions that created changes were determined by time. Impermanence is inevitable, and just like *Limbo*, it is always present in one's consciousness.

The main point I am referring to in this part is that the dance piece is not just a mere performance but rather a framework that encourages people to self-reflect on what control and self-control means. The piece serves as a good reminder that challenges are necessary in life because it teaches people to be courageous enough in facing the next chapter of one's life.

Change is an important concept of the choreography of *Limbo* because I realized that after dancing the piece multiple times, it creates a change in the dancer. It lets one experience change and offers a place for the imagination to travel. The dance has its fix structure, but I felt like "change" always takes part, especially during the moment of dancing, a change of dynamics in movements, a change of feeling in emotion, and a change of directions in space. I felt surprised and awed to the extent of posing a question to myself while performing.

Lastly, I would like to compare *Limbo* with my past dancing experiences. When I was in Guang Ming College, I performed most of the choreographies of Prof. Al Bernard Garcia. I could certainly say that the experiences in each choreography were the same because the concept was built on a Buddhist perspective. However, at this time, the feeling was just quite

different. The choreography of *Limbo* was a new experience. Compared to my previous performance experiences, the concept and choreography of this piece was extraordinary. The piece had a very strong and mature approach where it brought the dance into a new level of performance. It was my first time wearing only underwear while dancing. At first, I felt awkward and uneasy but in the end it actually felt good to perform freely, embracing my own natural body. Throughout the stage of performance, I had a sense of liberation and satisfaction. The experience gave me another perspective on performing and portraying the role of a dancer.



## Chapter 3: REFLECTIONS ON THE PERFORMANCE

*Link* and *Limbo* were both presented on April 18, 2021 at Chiayi Performing Arts Center Experimental Theatre in Minxiong, Taiwan. Upon reflecting on the final performances, I have found and read an interesting article that talks about imagery in dance. This article relates to my experiences while learning and performing the two dance pieces. According to Eric N. Franklin, a dancer and choreographer (2014), “Imagery is a multi-perspective, multisensory, multi-representation of a movement, future or past scenario, or motivational state”. As a dancer, Franklin’s idea of *imagery* was important because it helped me understand and deliver the choreography clearly. The two dance pieces displayed unique approaches and concepts. This section describes my observations and insights after the final performance.

### 3.1 *Link*

*Link* is about the relationship between two objects where one’s action influences the other in a loop of interlinking connections. This piece is a contemporary dance that runs for eight minutes and thirty seconds. The choreography of this piece presents continuous “circular movement phrases” with short pauses in between.

After performing *Link*, I realized that the general ambiance of the piece depicts a feeling of dancing under water. The lights displayed slightly bluish and darker colors, just like the rays of the sun reflecting on the gloomy water. In addition, I observed that the piece was divided into three sections. The first section happened when Cyril and I started dancing by executing minimal circular movement gestures. This part of the dance happens to be the prologue of the dance. In this part, we were able to acknowledge each other until we had our long continuous circular movement phrases. The second section happened when Cyril had his solo in the middle

of the dance. Lastly, the third section happened when Cyril and I met after his solo and had our long continuous circular movement phrases again.



Figure 11. presents the three sections of the *Link*. Starting from the left to the right, the first picture shows one of the scenes from the prologue. The second picture was a solo dance of Cyril. And the third picture shows one of the scenes in circular movement phrases. These photos were taken during the final run-through of *Link* at Chiayi Performing Arts Center Experimental Theatre. Photos credits: Xiao-Yuan Lin and Zhi-Yan Liao.

When I was performing this piece, I imagined Cyril and I floating on the water. The exploration of our movements did not only stay in one place but also traveled into another. Moreover, the dance was done using circular movement phrases which explored different levels such as low, middle, and high. These levels can be seen through the floor works and lifting movements. There was also a quick jump of Cyril where I caught him and that ended the dance. Upon my observation, this piece is a combination of slow, moderate, and fast dynamics.

As one of the dancers in this piece, I enjoyed the part where Cyril and I would have our long continuous circular movement phrases in the beginning and halfway toward the ending. I like the image of being formed just like a magic spring-toy and how the piece developed as time goes by.



Figure 12. shows one of the scenes in doing the circular movement phrase. This photo was taken during the final run-through of *Link* at Chiayi Performing Arts Center Experimental Theatre. Photo credit: Zhi-Yan Liao.

As I have mentioned in my previous chapter, *Link* was not an easy piece to perform because it required a lot of effort and strength. During the actual performance, I still encountered some difficulties especially when it comes to breathing and lifting my partner. For instance, one of the members of the audience personally told me that she could hear my breathing while I was performing this dance.

In conclusion, this dance allowed me to observe myself. It let me explore the spaces using the movements created by my choreographer. This dance allowed me to present the concept of interconnectedness, completeness, and continuity. It helped me to enhance my partner skills and way of dancing in a duet dance. Although this dance is quite challenging, it provided me new experiences mentioned in chapter 2 that I shall be able to use in my future performances.

### **3.2 *Limbo***

During the actual performance, my experience in dancing *Limbo* accorded me lots of interpretations and varying degree of feelings. *Limbo* was a contemporary dance piece that



aimed to give hope to the people amidst the pandemic. The piece ran for eighteen minutes, divided into three sections. Each section presented an image, like a painting, containing a different story or meaning of the dance. I compared it to a painting because I imagined every section as a different image which conveyed a certain scenario.

The first section of the piece presented, not only the image of piled-up dead bodies, but also the resurrection of a person. When I was performing this part, I felt like I was a newborn baby. As we began to move slowly starting from our head, limbs, arms, and body while simultaneously giving and taking weights from one space to another, the movements felt like the motion of a baby. A baby begins with small movements until one learns how to crawl, walk, run, and do many things. This part presents how the bodies start to accumulate, learn, and adapt to the movements of the choreography. The movements were derived from the principles learned from our choreography class, such as body restrictions, pulls and pushes, and circles as I mentioned in the previous chapter.

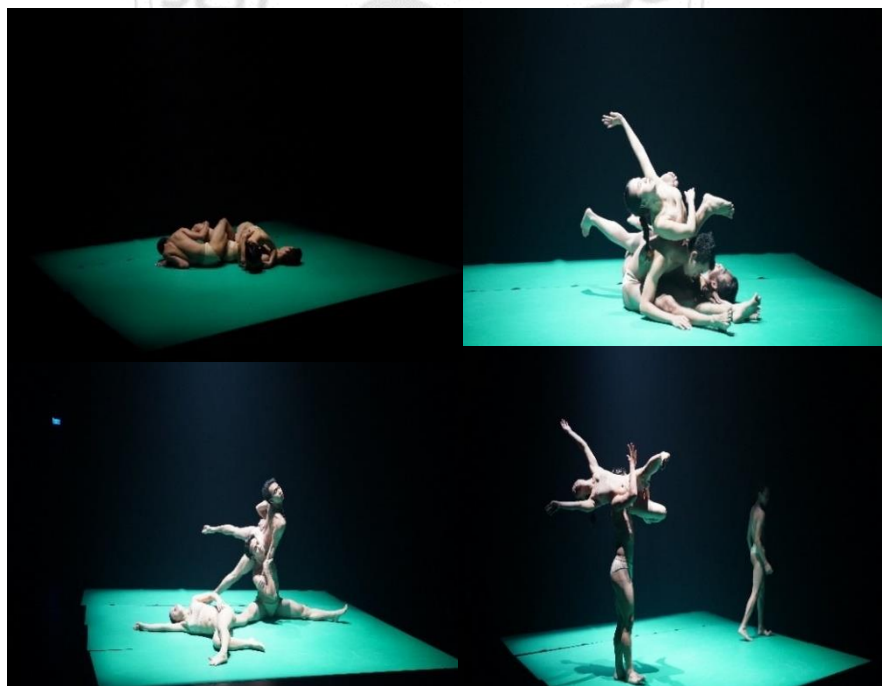


Figure 13. shows some of the scenes of the first section of *Limbo*. These photos were taken during the final run-through of *Limbo* at Chiayi Performing Arts Center Experimental Theater. Photos credit: Zhi-Yan Liao.

The second section of the piece presented one's life journey. Mary, Cyril, and I depicted the scenario of people coming from different walks of life. It showed that people have their own stories and perspectives in life to share. This section consisted of a solo, duet, and group performance. When I was dancing my solo, I imagined sharing my own journey through the execution of the movements. I felt like I was somewhat traveling in search of my own destination as Mary, Cyril, and I transferred and moved the green mats from one space to another.



Figure 14. shows some of the scenes of the second section of *Limbo*. These photos were taken during the final run-through of *Limbo* at Chiayi Performing Arts Center Experimental Theater. Photos credit: Zhi-Yan Liao.

The third section was the longest part of the piece. This segment was composed of solos, duets, and trios with the transformations of the mats. I realized that this part presented the survival of life similar to the people who find ways in search of food or money for their life's

sustenance. For me, our exploration using movement phrases was like a portrayal of our differences and responsibilities as a dancer.



Figure 15. shows some of the scenes of the third section of *Limbo*. These photos were taken during the final run-through of *Limbo* at Chiayi Performing Arts Center Experimental Theater. Photos credit: Zhi-Yan Liao.

This piece ended with a solo dance performed at the center of the stage signaling the conclusion of the whole performance. The audience may have their interpretations, but as one of the dancers, I realized that the ending illustrates abandonment. In this scene, Cyril and I left Mary dancing alone after performing our own solos, duets, and group performances from the previous sections. In other words, just as in life, no matter what affinities we make with other people, we can only depend on ourselves.



Figure 16. shows the solo dance performed by Mary Evangeline Recto. This photo was taken during the final run-through of *Limbo* at Chiayi Performing Arts Center Experimental Theater. Photo credit: Zhi-Yan Liao.

*Limbo* was manageable to grasp because it was not fast nor slow. The tempo of this piece was moderate. I realized that the piece took a moment to showcase the form of the movements. I liked the part when Cyril and I slowly formed the mats into a mountain-like shape and Mary positioned herself standing on top of the mountain-shaped mats as she moves her body, legs, and hands, portraying loneliness and wonderment through her movements. As for our part, Cyril and I acted like a trunk of a tree, covering our bodies with the mat while Mary was being lifted to look like she was floating (*see figure 15*). I liked the image being presented. The scene gave me goose-bumps and a sense of euphoric feeling as well.

The stage light is one of the primary factors that enlivened the performance. The light design represented a sun especially at the beginning of the performance. It served as a direction which led our way in traveling within the square-shaped green mats. The atmosphere that the lights created gave the feeling of a meditative state, openness, and transcendence.

The music contributed to the sensory experience of the dance performance. I was carried away by the melody that resonated within the concept of the dance. The harmonious quality of sound blended with the gentle articulation of movements. It was clearly expressed from the beginning of the performance.

*Limbo* is a piece that brings different images and meanings. Through my self-exploration of this piece, I learned how to connect with the message of the dance in order to best express it to the audience. In addition to this, I was able to express myself in every given opportunity of performing this dance as it gave me the feeling of gratefulness whenever I am on stage. Through the choreography of *Limbo*, I learned to be present or focused while performing and dancing, concentrating at the given moment.

### **3.2 Peer Feedback**

Working with my choreographers and co-performers allowed me to realize the value of collaboration and community. This became an important element during the process of dance-making for it gave us an in-depth understanding when communicating our ideas. Moving forward in my dance career, team collaboration and a sense of community, which I learned from the dances and the dancers and choreographers, shall continue as my top values. My peers were emotionally supportive and they gave me lots of invaluable advice that would help me become a better dancer. The collaborative approach allowed us to get to know one another on a more personal level, thus we valued each other's presence more. As such, this section lays out the insights and observations of my choreographers and co-performers about my improvements in dance.

*"I see myself in Wynvel's passion for dance when I first met him at Guang Ming College as my student. Dancing from the province, his talent has paved his way to have great potential in the field of dance and performance upon graduating. Wynvel's understanding of dance become stronger, with the help of more rigid training in Taiwan. His technique in ballet improved and his contemporary*

*dance vocabulary expanded. More is instore for him if he keeps persevering and widening his horizons, explore more dance training, and just keep on dancing”.*

(Choreographer Al Bernard Garcia)

*“Wynvel as a dancer/performer is absolutely astounding. Upon my observation of him, since he also took part in my creative thesis when we were at Guang Ming College, he exceeded far beyond my expectations. His understanding of dance has deepened and his development in dance also improved a lot. As his choreographer, I see a huge potential in him that he will become far better. If he continuously his works on his craft, dance companies with its different high standards will not hesitate to accept him”.*

(Choreographer Alexes Sandino)

*“You are gifted with a strong body figure, which accord you with a strong stage presence. I observed how you managed yourself in and outside the studio. You know how to evaluate yourself if things work or did not work for you. But, you are willing to accept suggestions that contribute to your improvement. With your positive mindset, you were able to surpass challenges and pursue your goals”.*

(Mary Evangeline Recto)

*“I am honored to have danced with you because I can see the maturity in dance especially in the rehearsal process. I can see your commitment and dedication all throughout. Working with you became easier for me because you can adapt to changes easily. Making sure that everything is organized and well planned. You find out what really matters and see situations with positive responses. In just a short period of time, I saw that you improved a lot. Not just your much improved-dance technique but also of the character”*

(Cyril Valeriano)

In my seven years of dancing, I have experienced many difficulties and triumphs. Now, it feels great especially when people that you have worked closely with really appreciate and acknowledge your potential and value as a dancer. Hearing their positive and heart-warming feedback made my heart swell. I felt that I have victoriously achieved my goal to become a better artist. I know that growth and progress are not easy and it takes a lot of time or even years to achieve it. But, as a dancer who has gained great improvements within myself- that’s already a huge accomplishment. Of course, I was honored and fortunate to have been able to work with my choreographers and co-performers, who generously shared their knowledge and skills with to the team. All of their feedback will serve as my inspiration as I continue pursuing dance as my profession. It shall serve as my motivation to work harder and be more resilient in the future.

## CONCLUSION

By doing self-exploration in *Link* and *Limbo* choreographies, it led me to a new perspective and knowledge about exploring oneself in dance. The platform to explore the diversity of interpretations and reflections were unraveled as a dancer. In *Link* and *Limbo*, I have discussed my experiences during the process of dance-making. This allowed me to get to know myself better as a dancer. Also, as I gained knowledge from the creative processes of each piece, it became the determinant of knowing myself as an individual.

In every choreography, I observed the significance of choosing an efficient artistic approach by every choreographer. It matters a lot in establishing what choreographic approach is appropriate to them. Similar to performing, dancing is a continuous process of self-exploration. It does not happen at the spur of the moment. It requires time and effort to realize the impact of knowing the self as well as the creative process. Sometimes, it occurs unexpectedly or just being set aside as less priority because it happens unconsciously. There were times that the method being used from the dance-making was an important factor too for the dancer's self-exploration. The relationship between choreographer and dancer can contribute to molding one's capability. Not only in dancing but as an individual, a trusting relationship enhances self-confidence, mutual trust, and the liberty to express one's personal understanding.

Through dancing, I can say that it made me holistic in dealing with situations. Dance allowed me to express my ideas; *Link* and *Limbo* clarified my perceptions of dancing duet and solo; and rethink the impact of these dances on myself. These are the factors that I became interested to dwell more on. Unknowingly perhaps, the experiential knowledge gained from them is yet another thing. It also drew my interest in dance to contemplate it as a passion. This matter has grown from within and it has encouraged me to continue pursuing it despite the



pitfalls I had gone through. This positive power, is now the key component which drives me to be persistent in achieving the goal I have set for myself. More so, it has become the foundation of knowing oneself.

Usually, every dancer focuses more attention on executing the movements. Other elements of dance have been set as secondary priority such as music, props/sets, lighting, and costumes, despite them contributing a lot during dance completions. As a dancer, these are the key elements that I would like to be part of my exploration as I further investigate its influence on dancing and also on the entire performance. I do believe that it encompasses a larger scope of ideas in nurturing the self.

As one of the dancers in *Link* and *Limbo*, I learned that dance plays an essential role in self-exploration. I discovered the importance of cooperation by working with the choreographers and co-dancers. My participation in the two dance choreographies was a great opportunity and a great way to gain more performance experiences. The dance pieces were among the performances that tested my abilities as I pondered upon self-exploration. For instance, it also affects my way of living, prioritizing being physically fit and mentally stable in preparing to deal with its consequences. Eating healthy food and having enough sleep are essential factors that I have given importance as among the primary needs to be able to perform well in every rehearsal. On top of that, lifestyle can greatly affect how the mind and body respond during performances.

Upon dance making, each choreographer has their own established method of transforming their concepts into practice. The process in *Link* provided me the freedom to express my opinion by sharing possible movement materials for the improvement of the piece. On the other hand, *Limbo* is choreographed through instructions and movement exploration. The dancers were guided by the choreographer's ideas facilitated upon rehearsals. Moreover, I realized that my role is not solely as a dancer who performs. It incorporates layers of



responsibilities to portray together with the choreographer. Self-exploration widens my point of view to perceive the dance process as part of knowing myself. It allows me to see things in a different level of perspective, which led me to consider myself playing a vital role from the beginning until the final performance.

The collaborative relationship between choreographer and dancer became an effective method for shaping who I am. It guided me to be more responsible and be selfless in exchanging ideas as well as being willing to accept suggestions from the choreographer. With the choreographers validating my opinion, this made me feel accepted and competent, that I too can create a big difference in the making of the dance. It heightens my interest to perform the dance pieces knowing that the choreographers value my opinions and suggestions. For the same reason that I was willing to share my thoughts and see their value in the choreographies. I did not only gain new knowledge from being a dancer but it impacted me as I undergo my self-exploration.

The garnered experiences throughout the process flourished as a means of personal growth. The challenges upon resolving problems made the learning opportunities more abundant. It paid for all the hardships endured during the trial and errors phase. The inputs from the choreographers and the fundamentals of the dance training I accomplished will be invaluable in my future dance career. After the MFA graduation concert, it gave me new hope and a chance to be a better dancer. The process that I have gone through and the opportunity to perform made me realize to see myself performing in various dance companies and sharing my expertise in dance. Performing on stage will be a means of exploring my potential as a dancer as it gives me more ways to do self-exploration as a whole.

When I was in the Philippines, I met aspiring dancers, actors, and musicians who wanted to pursue arts as a career. Unfortunately, they cannot afford it because it is expensive. Meanwhile, I had the opportunity to enjoy the access to free education and it was a great

opportunity for me to experience. It inspires me to work hard to pursue my passion in arts more specifically in dance. After completing my MFA Degree in Dance at Nanhua University, I hope to pursue a career path that would stimulate my interest in teaching dance, allowing me to share the expertise and knowledge I have gained, and molding the careers of future artists. Now that I have matured and taking dance as a profession, it is also one of my greatest fulfillment in life to be able to work in an environment that supports and contributes to the development of the field of arts.

My experiences honed my perspective in the field of dance. It became more personal for the reason that it changed my life as a dancer and as an individual. It helped me to realize that it can make a person's life better. Before, I thought that dance only develops one's capabilities, but now it reaches beyond the way I thought. Being a full scholar in my college years, dance freed my parents from the financial burden of sending me to college. I also have other siblings who were studying at the same time. It did not just uplift us from the poverty that we experienced at an early age, studying Dance brought pride and joy to my parents and family who are my ultimate source of inspiration. If it weren't for dance, for instance, I would have never had the opportunity to perform in both local and international stages. If we believe in ourselves and if we have a dream in life, no one can stop or hinder us from achieving it.

In achieving all of these, I want to see myself joining or auditioning in various dance companies that will make further progress in my experiences. I am convinced that with the right dance company, I can grow more in the area of dance. I also hope to build my own dance school to pay a tribute to my parents, teachers, and benefactors who have helped me throughout my journey in dance. They serve as my inspiration and strength through all these years. Through these it is my opportunity to show what I have studied and learned at Nanhua University. I hope that I will be a good teacher and a model to my future students. I will assure them that dancing is not just about learning movements but it is also about passion and

dedication, two things that cannot be easily taken away. I am aiming to achieve all of these by working hard, showing my passion, and dedicating myself wholeheartedly into this field. Dance is now a big part of my life and I could not live without it.



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# APPENDIX A

## A.1 (Re)collections Publicity Poster



The *(Re)configurations* production consists of four choreographies with different styles of creation. The dance pieces were entitled *Limbo*, *Link*, *Recollection*, and *Babaylan or BBYLN*. All the cast members were Filipinos from the Philippines. The production was also made possible with the support of the Department of Ethnomusicology-Faculty & Staff, of Nanhua University.

## A.2 Other Photos of *Link*

### *LINK* 《鏈結》

Choreographed by Alexes Sandino | Performed by Wynvel Anguren and Cyril Valeriano |  
Chiayi Perform Arts Center, Experimental Theatre (April 18, 2021) | Photos credit: Zhi-Yan  
Liao



(A few scenes from the prologue of the dance piece)





(The dance piece features pushing and pulling movements)



(A few scenes from the dance piece that show floor work and lifts)



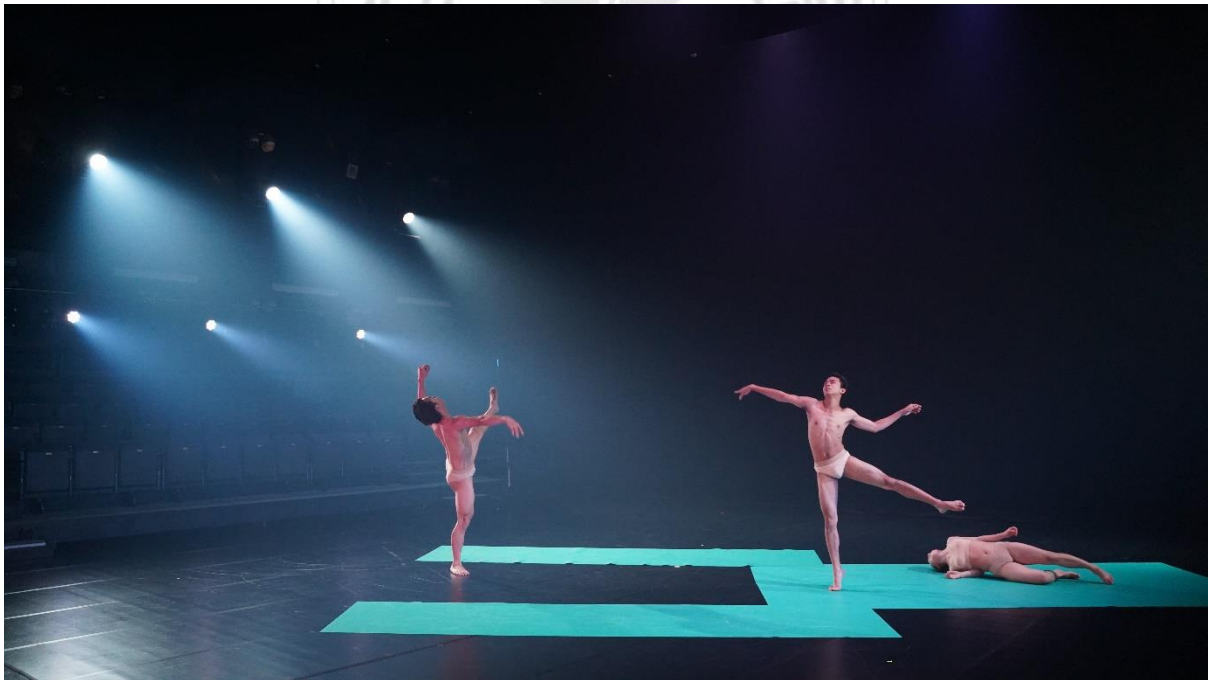
### A.3 Other Photos of *Limbo*

#### *LIMBO* 《邊緣》

Choreographed by Al Bernard Garcia | Performed by Wynvel Anguren, Cyril Valeriano, and Mary Recto | Chiayi Performing Arts Center, Experimental Theatre (April 18, 2021) | Photos credit: Zhi-Yan Liao



(A couple of scenes featuring body restrictions and transferring weights movements)



(Dancers were exploring the space through solo, duet, and group performance)



(Using mats to create an image as part of the dance performance)



(Using mats to create an image as part of the dance performance)

