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《鏈結》與《回憶錄》：編舞過程的探討

*Link and Recollection: Reflection on the Choreographic Process*

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## 民族音樂學系碩士班

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- 白珮郁 (Baibai) 許瑜真 (Chloe) 陳品樺 (Lora) and 王筱雅 (Tanya).

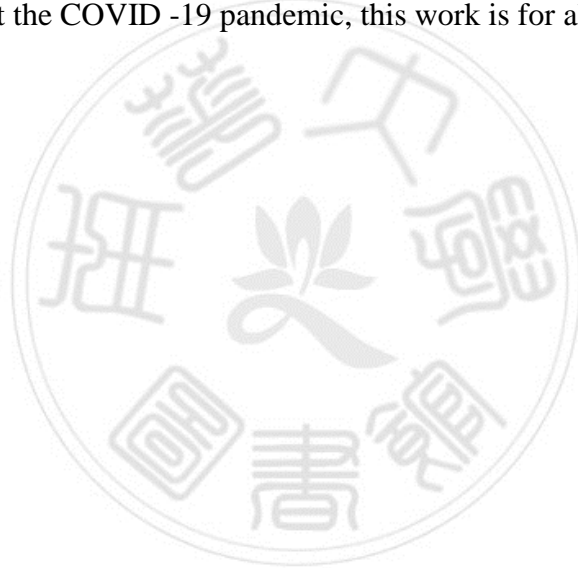
Lastly, I want to express my gratitude to our amazing mentor Lin Wen-Chung who guided us toward the path we are taking and for sharing his principles and skills in creative performance. Least I forget Lin, Xiao-Yuan for the all-important moral support from the very

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this project to my grandfather who recently passed away.

To my grandmother who had a mild-stroke but kept on fighting,  
and to the rest of my family, friends and all the unsung heroes who are leading the fight  
against the COVID -19 pandemic, this work is for all of you



## 摘要

本文回顧了我的藝術創作碩士(MFA)之編舞計劃的過程與結果。舞作《鏈結》與《回憶錄》在 2021 年 4 月 18 號呈現於嘉義縣表演藝術中心實驗劇場。兩首總長 23 分鐘的舞蹈創作展示了編舞的獨創構思；一首探索圓形運作，另一首則彙整我之前創作過程的零星片段而集結成一個整體作品。在此書寫論文中，我利用體現研究(embodied research)原理作為書寫方法，進一步說明我的創作研究，也收集了相關作品的紀載、期刊文獻及協作對話內容作為參考依據。本論文中關於編舞的選擇、過程與反思，旨在為舞蹈創作領域做出貢獻，並為追求編舞作為藝術途徑的新年輕藝術家提供參考。

關鍵詞：純動作、純舞蹈編創

## Abstract

This paper presents the process and output of my MFA choreographic thesis. My works respectively entitled *Link* and *Recollection* were presented at Chiayi Performing Arts Center Experimental Theater on April 18, 2021. The two choreographic works are 23-minute-long and show original choreographic ideas: the exploration of circles and recollected fragments from my previous choreographic processes were utilized to create one whole story. In this thesis, I utilized the idea of embodied research as my approach in writing to further explain my study. I also gathered data from related written works, journals as well as collaborative conversation. The choreographic choices, processes, and reflections on this thesis aim to contribute to the field of choreography that may serve as a reference for new young artists who may pursue choreography as their artistic path.

Keywords: Pure Movement, Pure Dance Choreography

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## Introduction

*” Pure dance, in terms of dance history refers to dance in which the raw movement itself is the focus of the choreography. ... There might (or might not) be music but the dance occurs independently to that (Bechinger, 2018)”.*

My interest in pure dance or pure physical movement dance choreography began when I was studying at Guang Ming College (GMC), Manila as a dance major. Guang Ming College (GMC) formally introduced me to many talented teachers, they helped me learn things that I have not encountered before. I was trained in various disciplines, and ways of understanding. I developed my skills, and learned by heart the principles in dance from my great teachers. They were not only educators but also leading artists and-choreographers in the Philippines. Each with their own individuality and style in choreographing dances. As they taught us skills and principles in dancing, they very well let us meditatively understand the processes, especially on to use our body in digesting the dance movement routine and style of movement. Some of my teachers use modern and contemporary dance movement styles which we study in our classes. Thus it only takes us a few corrections during the rehearsal process. Some of my teachers have developed their own distinct movement that requires personal interpretation for the movement to be embodied. Such movements have become my personal preference because to me, they looked extraordinary and I have not seen any video on them on the internet. If I state the particular distinct movement, it goes in many different aspects. Picture this: when you are standing on the road of pointed carpentry-nails, or moving like a drunk, moving the body to mimic waves, and no center balance. Also, adaptation of the paralyzed-movement as a style or more aptly the disabled-body movement, and adaption of the mentally-ill body behavior. Natural body reaction occurs when you release sudden energy or effort on the body parts; in

the fingers, head, shoulders, hips, chest, knees, legs, and toes. I found it very interesting because the movements do not express not only energy, but it contains deeper meaning that I rarely see. Through these experiences I had in college, it piqued my interest in choreography which focuses on pure physical movement in dance.

My processes and explorations as a college student at GMC and now at NHU in Taiwan that deals on pure physical movement in dance-making leads me to this MFA thesis project. At first, I thought of taking risks by trying to shift my interest to the exploration of the dance theater practice which uses props, sets, texts, and visuals. However, upon reflecting on these thoughts, I realized that as a new developing choreographer, my strong conviction and vision of dance is to focus first on the aesthetic of movement and later discover what lies beyond. By doing so, it helps me develop myself by collecting output from different exercises and activities that I am doing. Moreover, accumulating new experience and knowledge studying a Master's degree in Nanhua University, Taiwan, this gave me new viewpoints and a worldview on movement explorations, choreographic choices/process, as well as in performing-approach.

# CHAPTER 1: ABOUT MYSELF AS A DEVELOPING CHOREOGRAPHER

My vision as a new developing choreographer is to show pure dance choreography which uses pure physical movement that expresses distinct movement exploration and movement style. It is to encourage new artists, like myself, to create works inspired from the uniqueness of their dancing or performing style which can be a stepping stone to showcase their identity as a developing artist.

My initial journey in using pure physical movement or pure dance choreography is through my undergraduate thesis project in Guang Ming College (GMC)-Manila which was a 15-minute-long abstract choreographic work. My undergraduate thesis was inspired by the interpreted practice of Silent Meal which is a Buddhist form of mindful eating practice. My objective is to bring the practice and bring its form in to a level of performance. During my undergraduate thesis project, I had two different choices of choreographing the concept. First is, through the Dance Theater approach which uses visuals and video design, props, and spoken texts. My second choice is pure dance choreography where movements are the only focus of choreography. I decided to pursue the idea of studying pure dance composition when I stumbled upon the article on the work of Trisha Brown. The article talks about the Brown's journey and movement ideology and made reference on the term '*pure movement*'<sup>1</sup>. It is her ideal choice of process in dance-making in which the raw movement itself is the focus of her work, by extension, this would also mean that the movement is the focus of the choreography itself.

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<sup>1</sup>bending, straightening or rotating as bodily actions are suitable as pure movement, thus pure movement is used to break down the body's capabilities (Trisha, 2013).

By reading and reflecting upon their ideas and viewpoints in dance specifically in movement choices, this gave me appropriate factual or historically based terms in the path of dance-making in which I intend to go.

### **1.1 My vision of dance-making**

I am developing a practice in choreographing dance which is a pure dance composition that uses pure physical movement. Pure movement occurs when other capabilities of the body are used. Trisha Brown (2013) said mechanical actions of the body would qualify as pure movement such as bending, straightening, or rotating. This kind of practice is often seen in all of my choreographic work. It happened in the stage of developing a practice where I stumbled on the idea of exploring my own movement vocabulary. My reason for doing this is simply because I see it as my medium on movement exploration. At a particular stage I make, I examine the distinct movement created every time my body moves, as well as how my body interprets certain concepts or themes that is rooted in my every output. Likewise, my interest in the pure movement approach in dance-making grew wider when I found three major factors which I find to be useful in the field of composition. These three factors are the important points I consider beneficial whenever I create and watch dances. These factors are creativity in movement, beauty in motion, and artistic ideas in gestures. Developing a practice helps me accumulate knowledge through the use of these three factors which I later adopted as my foundations in pure movement dance-making.

The first factor, creativity in movement, enables me to explore various movement combinations by examining what lies beyond a certain action. I tend not to stop in a span of exploring unless I am satisfied with what I have discovered from the initial action. In every exploration that I do, I am always certain of the idea that in every simple action lies several movements, forms, or shapes apart from what is visible in the eyes. Having this idea fuels my curiosity to even discover further creativity in movement. I do it by understanding and studying

the effects of incorporating devices such as dynamics, levels, moods, spaces, and bodies which may support creativity.

Second, the beauty in motion, is another factor which actually brings my interest in studying pure movement. It is delightful to watch how the body moves and where the movement leaves traces of motion. This is the beauty that completes the form of the movement in dance. Having this idea that there is a present beauty in every motion in movement complements the aptness of the pure movement approach. Likewise, choreographic or movement choices in dance-making which focuses on calm, minimal, and low movement display an idea that the visible action is not the only focus of the dance. It is rather an underlying meaning where movement originates. For example, meditative practice which particularly focuses on the flow of movement or the refinement of how a single movement goes through various angles. In my view, beauty comes in every direction even when a dancer simply runs diagonally on stage and does a pivot turn in going back to his original point of origin. Also, I am convinced that the beauty in motion varies depending on how other artists perceive the movement in dance.

Lastly, the artistic idea of gestures gives me a lot of ideas for imagination when it comes to creating dances. A simple gesture can open up my realm of fantasy which often leads me in trying out what I have imagined. Simply shaking the head for instance, excites me to explore more movement. I base the movement on the dynamics, repetition of movements, and my feeling at the moment. With this in mind, it gives me a realization that sometimes I really do not need to think of movement themes which I need to explore. Because of this, there were cases in which the movement itself often triggers my desire to explore further. I believe that it goes for every artist that whatever triggers them makes them work on it because of the sense of feeling it creates—a sense of deep inspiration, the energy released by excitement, and interest sustained by imagined images.

Moreover, through this developing practice, I also develop my personal style of dancing and choreographing. I realized that as time passes by, my personal approach to choreography and movement language grows further through constant studio movement improvisation, which really affects my way of creation. By far, I still follow the original intent of pure movement in dance-making. But along the process, I have slowly figured -out certain aesthetics whenever I create dances. I am motivated when I see the body release sudden energy, like a certain dynamic created by movement akin to suddenly being jolted or surprised. Maybe I am far more interested in exploring movements through a certain dynamic that makes the movement look like a pumping action. For example, an image of how the heart moves when it is beating. From this, I used the dynamics which are quick, strong, sudden, yet controlled in each of my explorations. Likewise, when it comes to dance-making I personally believe that each creator choreographs from what inspires them, what makes them move, and why they choreograph. It also varies on the background and what strikes them the most which made them take the path of dance-making. My dance teacher in the undergraduate study has a strong conviction toward bringing Philippine culture into performance-making. He wants to use dance as a platform to display the Philippines' rich ethnic culture to the national and international stage in order to preserve its essence through his own way. And that is the reason why he choreographs. Similarly, my personal preference in choreography, though I am still developing a practice began through exploring movements. Movements that are distinct, usual but thoroughly explored, inspired from a certain theme or concept that deals with creativity in movement and the inner feelings that makes the body move. Pure movement associates with pure dance choreography which is abstract in some ways but nonetheless provide a displays of uniqueness of the creators' approach. That is why my first journey in dance-making focuses on bodily action. It is because I am able to create dance that triggers my personal opinions and

eagerness. For this reason, it goes in the idea that I do not need to ask myself what kind or type of dance I need to use in choreograph. Rather, it is more on the aspect of asking myself why I am doing this particular activity. I realize that as time goes on, we create dances to showcase our ideas, philosophy, aesthetics, and style of movement. Also, the feeling we have when choreographing a dance is the same driving force that lead us to create.

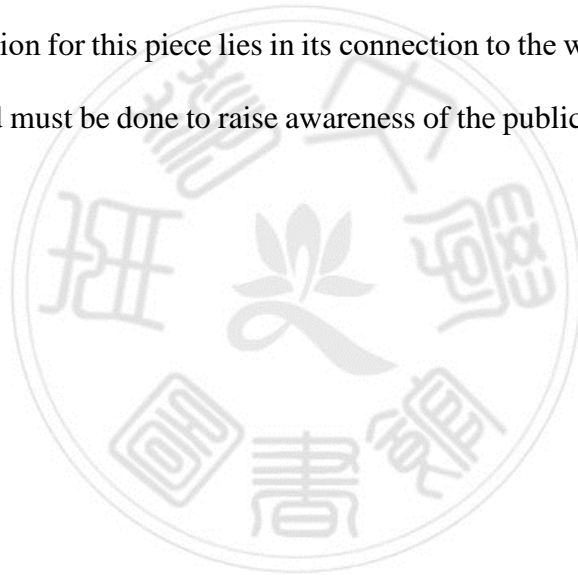
More so, I have come to realized that movement is definitely a significant element in all approaches. It adds beauty, completeness, and texture. May it be the main or least focus of a work, but it definitely balances everything. This approach brings to fore my interest to explore more possibilities and uphold several opportunities. That opportunity is nothingless than the freedom to enjoy the aspects of dance-making.

As I focus on movement, I studied further the distinct movement I have embodied to see the differences and probe further what lies beyond the movement. I then continue exploring and enhancing it until it become an available material that can be of use. Also, as earlier mentioned, it serves as my main medium in delivering my ideas in actual form. For this reason, I can freely let myself explore by merely concentrating on movement. These events are already becoming part of my trait in every opportunity I encounter as I choreograph dance. To prove my point, here are some of the examples of my previous works when I was in Guang Ming College, and also some specific works during my study at Nanhua University.

## 1.2 My previous choreographic works

### *Worth Thinking* (2018)

*Worth thinking*<sup>2</sup> is an abstract choreography that interprets and displays the Silent Meal<sup>3</sup> practice. It is created to educate people who do not often visit and participate in the practice of Silent Meal at the Mabuhay Temple<sup>4</sup>. The objective of this piece is to interpret the practice and concept of the Silent Meal and transform it into a pure dance choreographic work thereby bringing philosophy into an academic and artistic discussion. It uses pure movements in delivering the Buddhist practice of silent meal in its sequential order. The main point of this piece is to display the causes and conditions involved in food preparation and production. The choreography's inspiration for this piece lies in its connection to the world's crisis of starvation and what action can and must be done to raise awareness of the public about the food crisis that the world is facing.



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<sup>2</sup> *Worth thinking* an undergraduate thesis project of the author performed in May 2018 in Guang Ming College Star and Cloud Black Box Theater.

<sup>3</sup> Silent Meal is a practice of Chinese Mahayana Buddhist sect strictly imposed and practiced by Fo Guang Shan.

<sup>4</sup> Mabuhay Temple is a branch of Fo Guang Shan located in Manila, the capital of the Philippines where the Main temple among five others, that are built in the Philippines.





Figure 1. Prologue-solo section from my undergraduate thesis project, displaying an interpretation toward a leading Venerable who oversee the practice of the Silent (Meal? Or just one word --“Silent”). Performed by *Charles Louis Biong* (third year bachelor of performing arts in dance in year 2018). Photo credit from Abigail Marie Delgado (assigned photographer during the thesis concert from the department of Buddhist Studies, trusted for her Media arts skill).



Figure 2. Third part from the undergraduate thesis project of the author A group dance section following the movement varied from the prologue-solo part which displayed the interpreted unusual form of food ingestion. Dancers in the photo are, Girls from right to left: *Mary Evangeline Recto*, *Ghealyn Undang*, *Felichie Angela Francisco*, and *Kristine Joy Agno*. Boys from right to left; *Wynvel Anguren*, *Ted Gaje*, *Daryl Desengano*, and *Charles Louis Biong*. Photo credit from Abigail Marie Delgado.

*Preta* (2018)

This is my competition piece for the event—Dance Sutra<sup>5</sup>. It is a pure dance choreography that tells of the realm of *Preta*, a Sanskrit term which means Hungry Ghost. It is a five-minute-long piece danced by two bodies that display the struggles of the Hungry Ghost. In the Buddhist philosophy the hungry ghost is a sentient being that lives before the human realm, meaning its the lowest kind of human. The philosophy about them is that everything they swallow turns into fire, and that happens when every silent meal practitioner is loud. It is to be believed that they can be relieved through thorough contemplation. Contemplating is a way of practice that involves ‘moving-meditation’ where every movement is being observed with control breathing. The twist of this creation is to transcreate the pre-imagined scenario in a form of choreography that shows action when a hungry ghost is disturb. It was shown through dark lighting and costume with two bodies intact together with the movements that are strong, sudden, and fast minimal gestures.

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<sup>5</sup> An annual choreographer’s competition founded and facilitated by Guang Ming Dance Project held at GMC showcasing student-choreographer’s not-so-new dance choreography which wishes to sharpen skills.



Figure 3. A scene from the undergraduate thesis of the author “Worth Thinking” that displays the interpretation of the hungry ghost (*Preta* derived from a Sanskrit word) which was my inspiration in creating my piece for *Dance Sutra*. It was for this reason that I became interested in bringing on stage my pre-conception of their bodily-reaction. The movement which shows suffering through mentally-adapted movement exploration. Dancers; *Mario Niel Villarias* (who is on the floor), (from front to the back) *Wynvel Anguren*, *Ghealyn Undang*, *Felichie Angela Francisco*, *Dyan Rezhie Panganiban*, *Daryl Desengano*, *Mary Evangeline Recto*, *Ted Gaje*, *Kristine Joy Agno*, and *Charles Louis Biong* (solo on the right). Photo credit from Abigail Marie Delgado.







Figure 4. Some fun movement exploration inspired by from the undergraduate thesis project (figure 3) of the author. This photo shows further study of the conceptual-theme (Hungry ghost) weeks before the school base-choreographer's competition (Dance Sutra) in 2018 together with Ghealyn Undang (my junior—third year college bachelor of performing arts in dance) who was my understudy during the process. Photo credit from Felichie Angela Francisco.

### *Troubadour* (2020)

*Troubadour*<sup>6</sup> is a seven-minute-long dance choreography performed by two bodies. It was created through exploration of the circle as one of the activities in our choreography class in Nanhua University. It interprets the meaning of troubadour with the use of two bodies by moving around space in a circular movement and normal speed dynamics. The structure of the piece is created like the two bodies have their own world on stage neglecting other disturbing matters and merely focusing in the present moment. The point in creating the piece is based on its creative process which is the feeling of liminality in every performance that happens upon entering the stage which gives a sense of different space and time when the lights and music start to play.

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<sup>6</sup> The 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century French and Italian terms for folk poet-writers that described harmony in relationship, mainly, courtly love.



Figure 5. My first collaborative work with a Taiwanese body (which is a more appropriate term to use – a Taiwanese artist-dancer instead of body? In journalism, when one says in news copy that there is a body-- it means a dead one). A dance composition choreographed through movement exploration of circles. Dancers are Zhang, Wen-shuo (鄭文碩) (in red jacket) and Alexes Sandino (this author in dark blue T-shirt). Photo credit (screen shot) from the video on my phone, wherein the performance was taken in May 2020 in Yb11a Dance Studio).

My objective in my choreographic works is to display the art of movement that passed through a thorough and complex exploration. This lets the pure physical movement of dance itself to be the focus of attention. I have thought of a plan that I want to explore in the realm of movement and what lies beyond it. I want to show that pure dance is not limited, it can create visual images, it present factors that are promising, it has a narrative approach without the need of using so many theatrical elements like video, set, and props design. I believe that every dance artist has their own taste and style on what they want to showcase in dance-making. I do acknowledge and respect the fact that certain choreographers prefer an abstract performing approach. However, in my case, I am more interested in the movement itself, the way the body moves, breathes, and sweats. This occurred to me as I always enjoyed watching people moving or simply walking on the streets, thinking that their actions are a part of dance activity.

## CHAPTER 2: INTRODUCTION OF *LINK* AND *RECOLLECTION*

My previous works as well as during my study in Taiwan basically showcased my interest in the dance-making craft. It was influenced greatly by focusing on pure physical movement on dance choreography which led me to create this MFA thesis project.

I choreographed two original choreographic works, both run for 23-minutes a piece. It was pure dance choreography using two different styles. First, a dance choreography which explored circular movement around the space employing the use of two dancers. And second, a pure physical movement choreography which displayed my movement style. It was a product of piecing together the recollected fragments from my previous works, processing them and fusing them into one whole abstract story which thematically expresses memory.

The dance pieces written in this chapter merely described a short description of the conceptual-theme, as well as the title and the meaning of the choreographed works and supported with some reviews on related literature. The inspiration, process and methodology shall be explained in the next chapters.

### *Link*

*Link* is the 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 behind the workings of a machine.

Metaphorically, a circle is life's basic movement, everything constantly moves in a never ending circle, just like the link between creation and degeneration.

### ***Recollection***

The process of dance-making is based on our existence in the present. But there exist the overlapping and collecting of present thoughts with the continuous recollection of memory which is the embodiment of (Re)collection. The process does not stop when movement does. On the contrary dance keeps moving on.

### **Interpreting the Notions on Pure Movement**

In a number of literature that I have read discussing certain practices related to my choice of device, the connection I see lies in my choreography using simple pure movements, which basically become the focus of the dance choreography. This emphasis I have in my work that talks about *pure movement* is particularly close to what history of movement refers to. Going back in time, this particular practice was labeled as another medium of approach toward dance-making which is not-so-new compared today. Yet, nowadays there are a number of creators having the same idea merely focusing on movements with coats that showcased their style of body-configuration. And their very particular style itself became the topic of discussion wherein the inspiration lies on the idea of pure dance creation.

I have also found specific literature that expresses the historical meaning of the term “pure dance”. It is a way-of-creation that stands on itself without any type of element included to complete the practice. Mere exercises or activities in the past might be considered a form of performance that indicate the common movement that has less-emphasis. One of the dance practitioner and knowledge-sharer named Bechinger in the website *Quota* state that;

*“Pure dance, in terms of dance history refers to dance in which the raw movement itself is the focus of the choreography. ... There might (or might not) be music but the dance occurs independently to that (Bechinger, 2018)”.*

In connection with the quoted passage, the ideology and works of Trisha Brown is the closest example that can relate to the reflection on my choreographic process. During the conference I reviewed online featuring T. Brown, I found it interestingly beneficial since she was able to explain the basis of her choreographic works. According to UMS<sup>7</sup> Night School: Curious about dance –Session 3 Recap (nd), Trisha Brown idea on “pure movement” was clearly reiterated that;

*“movement based on mechanical body actions such as bending, straightening, or rotating: stripped of any metaphor or connotation (Trisha Brown in UMS Night, nd).”*

was the strong statement that supported the potential present in all of my work. Based on my understanding of her description of her works, even though her way of moving the body was still in line with the modern technique, she still qualifies in modeling a new medium in choreography. One of her practical example was through the sensation of creating personal movements or gestures that hold specific meaning, but seem to appear abstract to the eyes of others. It was stated in the event, *UMS Night School: Curious about dance—session 3 recap*, that it is in each individual’s moment of curiosity that drives them to explore in examining their personal interpretation toward a certain practice (UMS Night School, nd). This can include movements that one individual has yet another individual’s artistic processes would otherwise make it different. This can be easily accomplished in one’s own bodily reaction that forms the unusual activity that makes certain common movements change. In that way the process done

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<sup>7</sup> This was posted online which is part of a dance series facilitated by *U-M* student and UMS intern Hillary Kooistra—UMS Night school: curious about dance workshop series presenting the Trisha Brownie Dance Company.



by the creator differs from the creative and innovative. The creativity in the process is where the creator alters the typical standard of movement to set variation of what it used to. And innovation happens upon creating new ideas from what have been experienced. They are the factors that correspond to making pure dance movements. For the reason that it differentiates on how the term varies from time to time. As has been stated frequently in previous paragraphs, that movement itself “occurs independently” based on the significance it has in each individual’s personal construct.

For that matter, their ideas meet my way of working, thus I personally find it helpful. I have a particular movement vocabulary or body gestures that nowadays may be called new or out of the ordinary. The existing medium (pure dance approach) succor the potential-ideas and some thoughts that may be unknown to other practices or perhaps individually. Through time and repeated analysis of the said term it can develop into further versions. And that varies as to the style that every artist has. This idea is clearly seen in the way I choreograph dance, where upon close examination will make it is easy to distinguish between my strengths and weaknesses.

### **Reviews of Related Works**

I have found works that share the same intentions as I do and that is the use of *pure movement* as a performance-approach in dance-making. It is quite different when compared to literature, because texts-based information expresses ideas of how pure movement works in other forms or viewpoints. As what was elaborated in the previous subchapter where I expressed the other interpretation of the ideas on pure movement. Similarly, in this chapter. I will also elaborate works that are related to my creation. For this reason, few of the earlier choreographers focus on movement-articulation. Specific works similar to *Trio A* choreographed by Yvonne Rainer together with her fellow New York choreographer-dancers

David Gordon and Steve Paxton, a solo dance and one part of the piece entitled *The Mind is a Muscle*. This is a publication excerpt from MoMA that highlights the idea of the choreographer. Here is Rainer's (1978) description of the performance:

*"Trio A consists of a four-and-a-half-to-five-minute sequence of discrete movements that, with the exception of walking, are never repeated. –the dance is painstaking to learn in its precise articulation of hands, arms, shoulders, feet, and legs (Rainer, 1978 in MoMa Highlights, 2011)".*

This solo work of Yvonne Rainer represents pure movement choreographic exploration in terms of conceptual-theme in dance. She abandoned the aesthetic of both classical and modern dance as her principles toward dance-making. Instead, her working process was altered in the era of minimalism that refer to her ideology (MoMa org., 2011). The idea of Yvonne Rainer has a similarity to the idea of Trisha Brown about *abstraction* and *representation*. Their approach towards creating is similar to the point that the movements represent an abstract form of images where it is hard to read for typical eyes, and rather it is at an intuitive level of comprehension (Rosenberg, 2020). Rosenberg referred to Bernardi's statement about this matter where *abstraction* displays images that are beyond what is being presented. And *representation* presents ideas without obvious depiction that tells the meaning of the movement, basically known as abstract (Rosenberg, 2020).

More so, the reason I decided to use Yvonne Rainer's choreography as related work even though the composition was derived from everyday movement routine was because of its intention. She selected movement from the body's normal action as part of dance activity to put on stage as it gives a different approach towards performing. The movement or images that merely looked common transformed into a different activity which revealed her purpose in creating the piece. Because of that, it inspires me to bring my embodied movement which carries dynamics that are quick, controlled, and sudden into dance-making. These dynamics

exhaust the energy of the body because it requires controlled breathing coupled with fast and sudden movements that also need to be controlled for its precise direction and pace (further explanation of the exercise is explained in the next chapter). Likewise, because of this practice, I selected fragments from my previous processes and recorded improvisations that incorporate the said dynamics. These processes and improvisations constitute the major points in every movement style of my creation.

Though her structure and approach in creating *Trio A* were influenced by her era, her creation still presents new ideas in dance-making. Her lead opens my interpretation toward choice or style of movement. Her dance choreography made me believe that what inspires the creator matters when it comes to displaying their philosophies or viewpoints in creating certain works. Although her piece did not display a narrative plot, my interpretation of her works was such that each movement certainly tells a different story.

Subsequently, my understanding of the philosophies of the earlier choreographers lies in pure dance movement as a whole. Choreographic design it means that it rests in the development of the movement itself. Focusing simply on the thoughts associated within the movement/phrases. In addition, from the beginning, I found the point in all of these ideas and that is the liberty to showcase craft that displays significant meaning for creators on what triggers them in creating something. Hence, my process relates considerably to these linked ideas.

## CHAPTER 3: CHOREOGRAPHIC PROCESS OF *LINK* AND *RECOLLECTION*

Further to this chapter, I shall discuss the inspiration, methodology, and choreographic process of the two dances: *Link* and *Recollection*. The choreographer's interpretational insights on these works may not only apply to the creator's but may influence and give ideas to future readers of this paper.

### *Link*

*Link* tells about the relationship between two objects. How one's action influences the other person's action in a loop of interlinking connections. This piece is an exploration of circles between two bodies on stage that manifest the movements' interconnectedness, completeness and continuity. This theme provides a momentum to keep the flow of energies in the bodies to further explore the possibilities of moving through space. As mentioned earlier, the circle is the basic idea for machines to work. Metaphorically, a circle is life's basic movement, everything constantly moves in a never ending cycle ushering the link between creation and degeneration.

This work is my movement exploration, a study of circles and its characteristics. The features of circles would reveal interconnectedness, completeness and continuity. I started exploring using my own body as reference. I meticulously observe the circular movements in my muscles and joints. I studied the flow of continuity with the goal of making every movement connect with each other. This was done through and ABA structure: three compositional form, in which second contrast from first section, then third is a restatement of the first in a modified, extended or condensed form. I also explored the completeness of the circle without using any

reverse flow of movements in order not to break the flow of the visual image of the dance for the audience. On the other hand, the interconnectedness movement was done through the use of two different bodies moving around space.

The cast of my dance piece are Cyril and Wynvel, both MFA students of Nanhua University majoring in performance. They learned the movement phrase by observing the motions which I have choreographed first and re-explore the phrase with their hands holding each other. Upon doing the movement of circular patterns and phrases, their interlocking hands change depending on the structure of the movement phrase. Obviously, the performers' hands are not holding each other at all times, rather they touch other parts of the body in order to achieve the objective of the exploration which is to connect while moving in circles or dancing in circular movement. The concept of interconnectivity of this dance is the state of being connected with each other as applied in the structure of the dance.

I also reflected upon the form and shape of the circle through understanding of these components—body, action, energy, time and space in dance. These components helped a lot during the process. I used these to convey my ideas on how I created the movement's motif/theme. The theme was introduced through making small circles that slowly reveal the variation through a single body. The body is the skeleton of the movement. The remaining four components reflect the other parts that complete the form. Moreover, the use of space helped me design the flow of circles that is created to live through the dance. For instance, imagine making a circle on a piece of paper with the objective of occupying the available space with the shape of circles. This is the same situation when looking at the choreography on a macro perspective.

The dance does not only display how the movement goes. It also shows colorful traces that a child's mind could imagine. Choreographically, the style of this creation adapted

the style and techniques of photography which is light graffiti. The traces of lights of light graffiti create letters, shapes, and images. This is the under layer aesthetic or artistic visual image that *Link* would subtly show. This dance aims for an audience with broad and fantastical imagination. The pure movement dance choreography of *Link* may have colors on its own through this kind of interpretation and imagination.

### ***Recollection***

The choreography of *Recollection* gets its inspiration also from my previous works. I planned to choreograph an embodied movement which will “pop” to my performers who are not familiar with this particular movement. As a result, i each dancers’ interpretation toward the plan became different due to the differences in their dance trainings. The variations I gave to them can be seen as their own movements without neglecting the dynamics and approach of the dance. The focus towards pure movement was successful because I have seen the variations that were created by each of them. Although it was different from what it was supposed to be, the outcome suggested new thoughts of creation. Moreover, I have collected all the outputs during the movement study and exploration. All the movements that we have created throughout the process is gathered together to create a new choreographic work. The concept of the theme was formed when all of the dance fragments from my past dance pieces were collected.

Basically, it all started when there are many things happening around me; deadlines, previews, homeworks, among others. Suddenly during the rehearsal, the dancers were dancing as the music plays and there I was in a state of liminality. Being in that situation, I cannot hear anything even from the speaker, the sound created in the dance floor and dancers heavy breathing--it seems that the dance happening in front of me was just blurry and in slow motion. All I did was wonder, be in awe in the state I was in. It was an absurd feeling where I

was fully awake yet seems to feel like I was in a dream. It felt interesting when I was aware that the dance was on going and I am still wondering at that time how amazing it was the feeling. There were two opposite scenarios happening at the same time, while I was watching the rehearsal process I was as well doing the dance movements in my head which triggered me a split in my perception.

Then, suddenly blurry vision slowly became clear and gradually my ears heard the sounds that were present in that space and time. I was dazed on how peculiar that was. Only at that time that I realized that such a situation had come to pass. I reminisced about what just happened to me in that short span of time. I even wrote a journal reflection about my experience on this and which I shall try to explain in the following chapter. As I try to recall the incident, I contemplated on its meaning. When I he details became clear, I have decided to continue the on progress that we have made and call the dance choreography *Recollection*.

### **3.1 Methodology**

#### *Embodied Movement Research*

My first study on this process started with my embodied movement vocabulary and developing style, which I have accumulated from identifying myself through college performances and in my current explorations. I may have learned ballet, modern, contemporary and other dance disciplines. However, my body seeks to have an expression of its own. I realized that I am developing my own body-language in dance when I choreographed my undergraduate thesis at GMC. It was during the section where I need to exhaust the energy of body, to display struggles through krump and restriction, and staccato phrases which leads me to discover further the inner feelings I have every time I release sudden energy. So these bodily-movement experiences I embodied affects how I choreographed and move today. It is not a

rare style but I wish to contribute to the dance world through the path I am taking and it starts with by focusing on pure movement ideology.

### *Practice as Research*

Practice research is the stage where I learned many things. Doing the actual image of the plan in the studio being one among them. Every time I move my body, it is where I can feel how it feels like, how it looks, and how it should be at that instance. This method helps me to reflect on my point of view of what I am doing. The reflections I have during the practice determine the output. Upon doing the output which is the material in the study, I assess myself against the points of choices I made. Asking myself how the choice affected me and how my decision affected the results. In this way I am able to develop myself in this kind of practice. The consistency of doing this by analyzing the plan, the output, and the performance quality will ultimately support my growth in practicing choreography. Also, by actually doing what I have discussed to the dancers, this leads me to feel what they feel. Thus helping me build and modify some details which they can also modify or rethink.

### *Reflection/Journalizing*

I do journal-reflection every time I see that the process is a bit off from what has been planned. I write keywords on my note to remind myself of the additional tasks I have to achieve in the next rehearsal meeting. It helps me when it comes to personal realization. In a way I ask myself about my purpose, the point of doing this and that, and the role as a dance artist. More so, through journal-reflection I am able to come up with new ideas. I keep the ideas I write on my notes because not only does it serve as my reference for the time-being but will also guide and remind me of the learnings I have found during my study in the MFA program in the future.



### *Video Recording and Photography*

Upon doing the rehearsal process and run-through, I made video recordings of both dances. It helped me have concrete bases in giving and taking notes for myself and for the dancers. Giving notes without proof may affect the whole process, where the dancer's awareness is broad—they may know or feel that they had created a mistake but may not know the specific mistake. The video therefore becomes a very convenient tool in reviewing the dance. It also helped me reflect on what I need to fix, modify and polish. Likewise, photography focused on the minor details. It helped me on my decisions when it comes to blocking and pauses. In a nutshell, while the actual dance is important, how the stage looks or the image on stage is also important as well. Performance is ephemeral but the chance to remember the whole structure is rare. What is a frightening thing and that should never happen is when the audience only remembers cool movement phrases and neglects the concept and meaning of the dance. That's why photos and video recording are a convenient tool in gathering data as it suggests ways to avoid or prevent this kind of situations from happening.

### *Data Gathering from the use of social media*

In creating movement phrases for both *Link* and *Recollection* I often search social media apps like YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook, and Instagram to watch some dance videos and clips. I prefer to watch video clips every time to be more aware of the process and creation that I shall be doing. This is because circular movement exploration has a number of masterpieces explored by different dance artists. It only varies on their style of way-of-working or performing. As my references, these clips help me navigate and avoid inadvertently using their intellectual property while also ensuring that my intellectual property for my choreographic works is there as well. As a developing choreographer, these social media

platforms stand as my source of awareness and contemporary knowledge in the field of choreography. For instance, I found Asian choreographies insightful, as they use pure movement in their creations which display strong style of body-movement and distinct gestures. Though some western creations do have pure dance masterpieces, I found it very technical. Asian mindset and approach in dance-making shows originality and a clear taste of performance outcome. This helped me reflect always during my process especially on my journals and reviews of my video rehearsal recordings.

### 3.2 Phases in choreographing *Link and Recollection*

This subchapter (of the Choreographic process of *Link and Recollection*) shows two different tables of these two different choreographed dances. Each table illustrates various phases in choreographing the dance. I choose table form in this section to explain the details in comprehensive and organized manner and in order to demonstrate its development.

<i>Link</i>	
<b><i>Phase 0</i></b>	I reviewed the file I have saved which contains my previous works during my MFA study to seek further exploration.
<b><i>Phase 1</i></b>	I asked Cyril about performing the piece I have decided to re-explore which was <i>troubadour</i> (figure 5) and set schedules for the rehearsal process.
<b><i>Phase 2</i></b>	Along the process of continuous learning of movement, I have also accompanied modification on the dance to set new phrases of the creation based on the dancer's body capabilities.
<b><i>Phase 3</i></b>	After a number of rehearsal processes and preview, the dance casts changed due to developing the movement. Thus, movement continues

	to improve because of the dancer's sudden surprising action which can be merged.
<b><i>Phase 4</i></b>	The last phase focused on minor modification and polishing of the dance until the day of performance.

Table 1. shows the sequential development process of *Link*. Each phase is further explained below the table.

### ***Phase 0***

Before the actual planning activity, I have reviewed all the existing repertoire during the past months of my study in Taiwan. I have contemplated on what else I should further explore or re-explore for my MFA thesis project. Upon scrolling over my notes and watching all the pieces that I have saved on my phone including the videos that I have uploaded on Vimeo and YouTube, I saw my first piece performed during my first semester. That video where I was with my Taiwanese friend, my classmate in that particular subject made me realize that maybe movement, especially exploration, does not just end there. Thinking about this idea, I asked one of my friends (Cyril) to do some quick exploration to examine how other bodies perceive action with the same mechanism. That led me toward a decision on re-exploring the conceptual-theme I have studied.

### ***Phase 1***

The collaborative piece with Wen-shuo which we both composed (figure 5) was again re-explored and further studied. In this study, my first process was to ask Cyril Valeriano to learn the dance and the movement together with me. It was my first attempt to let Cyril's body understand the flow of the movement. With that method his body became familiarize with the

dance. Because of that familiarity, it became easier for the two of us to re-explore and examine after all the movements have been learned. After planning and discussing with him about the flow and the mechanics of the movement, a day later I immediately conducted rehearsals that only focused on studying and learning the movement of the piece (figure 5). The point in that study was to orient Cyril on how two bodies move together around the space without separating the hands or the connection. Few days into the rehearsal week, he found the exercise causing him some light-headedness, since he was not used to moving in a circular pattern or in a circular phase of movement.

## *Phase 2*

Cyril and I started learning the movements on the video from the beginning until the end without prior thought of changing anything. It was a plan I made in the process of choreographing the *Link and in order* to finish the process right-away since the material was already present. It was a successful way of working together since we learned the dance earlier than I expected. Upon embodying the movement, I and Cyril started inserting improvisations in between to examine its effects. I wish to find out whether improvisation helps to broaden the exploration. I have decided to use it occasionally where it can only utilize certain sections of the routine.

The development on modifying the movement progressed gradually. When we did circular patterns to create phrases, there were times that either me or Cyril looked for ways to avoid the struggle. Instead of going back to review what we have missed we took the chance on reflecting about what had happened. It was because at times, some sudden movement were captivating. It was for this reason that help make some progress to gradually increase.

### *Phase 3*

The number of rehearsal processes, run-throughs and previews were witnessed by the mentor for his comments and as a necessary step to check on our development. It was also an opportunity to ask questions related to the process that I am studying. So after I and Cyril performed the modified duo inspired by the piece (figure 5). One of the main concerns that was pointed out was the lack of choreographer's observation or application of ideas towards movement-making. One example was the difficulty in creating dance which the choreographer also needed to perform along with the dancer. Not because of typical movement, but due to the continuous circular process. That's a valid observation and I personally agree for the reason that sometimes the circular motions also make me dizzy and confused. This is an area where I need to focus, whether on the execution or on the creation aspects

The process in phase 3 encountered challenges which is not at all bad because it helps in the further development of creating and modifying the piece. My solution is to this is to ask Wynvel if he can be my replacement as Cyril's partner. I was delighted when he agreed and granted me this favor. He immediately decided to learn the dance. It took him a few days to familiarize himself with the movement.

During the rehearsal process when the two has gotten used to each other and were already comfortable with the movement combinations, they keep making surprises. I got excited thinking that I made the right choice to let the two of them dance together. Since they were both incredible dancers, they can execute things that goes beyond mine and their own expectations. Because of that, even though the movements for me were already fixed, I was overpowered by the fluidity in their movements. I changed it to where I thought it has become stronger than previous combinations.

#### ***Phase 4***

The last phase of the process concentrates on the polishing and minor modification of movements like clear blocking, orientation of dancer's heads, dynamics, and timing on the rhythm and movement pace. At first, I gave dancers short notes and reminders on these particular recaps, and we proceeded to the next point which was to have at least three run-throughs every rehearsal meeting. We treat our last weeks as performance time where we go through every cues, entrances, and exits. We continued this practice or routine until the day of the recital came.

<b><i>Recollection</i></b>	
<b><i>Phase 0</i></b>	At this initial stage, I planned on creating a dance- performance that comes from my own movement vocabulary.
<b><i>Phase 1</i></b>	I followed my plan and started doing solo improvisation and movement exploration. I also recorded the exercises..
<b><i>Phase 2</i></b>	Rehearsal meeting with the three performance majors to share the explored movements which I previously recorded in video.
<b><i>Phase 3</i></b>	This stage is where modifications, variations, and movement interpretation from the materials of Phase 2 where made.
<b><i>Phase 4</i></b>	Structuring the output from Phase 3 and creating it into one whole choreography.
<b><i>Phase 5</i></b>	Continuous preview, notes from mentor, and further modifications until the date of final performance.

Table 2. shows the sequential development process of *Recollection*. And each phase is further explained below the table.

#### ***Phase 0***

At this initial stage, I planned on creating a dance- performance that comes from my own movement vocabulary. It was because I was fascinated watching MFA performances online showcasing different genres and study which shows the real interest of the recitalist.

I had a self-reflection and rediscovered the movements that are unique or distinct in me. I realized that when I dance I cannot avoid the embodied movement that I have, and it is my bodily-gestures that normally come out. As it happened, it became my basis of movement exploration.

The movement constructed within me happened when I was aggressively learning a different form of discipline which was *hip-hop* and embodied a particular fundamental called *popping*. However, I will not discuss these two since they are not the focus of my study. These things were merely the factors that have helped me construct my own movement. I am not convinced to call it my as my own since I am still in the stage of developing a practice, and I still use conventional ways of dancing and merely adding some extra gestures of my own. Nonetheless, I took the risk to try and explore this idea.

I have trained and learned different dance disciplines, and my way of moving is some kind of culmination of the dance knowledge that I gathered. With all of those I have inserted my particular gesture in between movements and resulted in building my style.

### ***Phase 1***

I was determined in trying the ideas that I have thoroughly thought of. I spent days in the studio doing improvisation and movement construction before I proceeded to the next point in which I need to choreograph. Spending enough time to explore the idea was my initial process so I can see what specific area do I need to put my attention to. When I was doing the process alone, I experimented in feeling the flow of movement. I asked myself these questions: where

does the energy in performing the exercise originate? How does the movement-mechanism work?

After days of exploring alone, I started creating combinations for the dance I want to create. I took my phone to record the activities that I was doing and saved it for the next stages.

### ***Phase 2***

Upon completing the first task of having a plan. I asked three performance majors; Mary Evangeline Recto, Wynvel Anguren and Cyril Valeriano a favor to dance with me. Before I start sharing with them what I have saved in my previous process, I prepared some activities for them. The activities contain the basic principle in learning the dance style “*popping*.” It was one of the fundamental elements in another form of dance discipline. Learning the basics for them seems easy, so I jumped to the point where I showed them the video-recording of what I have explored.

I shared with them how the movement goes without pointing out the important factor to make the movement similar to mine. Unfortunately, continuously doing the same process made me realize at some later point that based on what they were doing everything seems different. It was way different from how I usually do it. I personally interpreted the scenario as a typical movement where variations on its performance happen. Thus, it totally became a dancer’s interpretations on the movement since they cannot do the original exploration. The original way of doing it was absent for the reason that in the beginning the dancers do not have the background-knowledge of certain exercises.

### ***Phase 3***

In this process what I did was to record what we have done in the previous stage, and I plan to do it in the following stages of the process as well. As I continue sharing my movement



to them, the same result keeps on happening. In several rehearsal meetings I now have to face the big challenge, the problem on how I can deliver the ideal-creation I planned.

As time goes by, it seems that I restlessly created many movement-combinations and have lost track of what I originally intended to make. I can see the doubts and confusion on the dancer's faces thinking about what I am going to create in the end based on the present activity. Then I was stuck in a state of liminality which happened because of random abstract images I unconsciously visualize from their movement.

Being in that state gave me a conceptual-theme that I haven't thought of before. It was about a memory which I have explained in the previous chapter. I have discussed what this was about with the dancers. And I was delighted when they all agreed to it and even shared their opinions about the idea I presented to them.

#### *Phase 4*

The movements that were supposed to be expressing my dance style were changed into interpreted movements of the dancers. But the previous explorations were kept and merged in the new dance idea. I structured the dance into different sections that represent different attacks on movement which displays fragments which I collected from our previous explorations.

I have created eight different scenes in the dance. I also played with a number of dancers since there were only four of us dancing. I placed solo, duo, trio, and quartet. I would make every soloist to have a distinct character in each section to show fragments of recollection and a characteristic which is opposite to the dance.

I did this to represent my concept of memory. It was the same in a certain period of time in our deep sleep, where we create various main characters with different roles and without

an absolute plot. Likewise, there is even a case that every fragment has a different main character.

### ***Phase 5***

In this stage, I have finally grasped my senses by thinking about the purpose of this creation. As I have structured the dance together with the three performance majors, we focused on modifying parts that needed improvement. We followed the *phase 4* of *Link* where we discussed notes after every run-through and preview that we conducted.

I have also inserted important notes given by my mentor that significantly improves the dancers' performance including the choreographic structure. *Recollection* honestly had a tough-rough process due to numerous factors. But, I think that the abstract representation of the idea was effectively carried out.

More so, during the technical dress rehearsal, I was delighted with the light's design which elevated further the choreography of *Recollection*. It was the element that I have waited for in the final performance where the light design highlighted the visual stage image of the dance.

### **3.3 Artistic discussion with the Light and Costume designer**

During the creative and rehearsal processes of the two dances, I have pre-imagined the design of the stage lights. However, during the preview of my dances with my mentor I used the spare par lights in the dance studio as a temporary element to complete the whole ambiance for the piece. It was a decision that I made in order to create a space where dancers can deepen their imagination and role in the dance which helps them perform way better than the usual studio lights which creates feelings that are stagnant, neutral, and cold. Because of that, the par

lights which were temporarily used made them perform further than what was being asked. This situation was created better situation for me. Afterward, my mentor asked me if I have already pre-imagined a lights design for both of my pieces. Upon knowing that I already have, he gave me advice and suggestions which I found to be very helpful. Now, I realized that I can bring this principle in the future too. He told me that it was better to let the light designer watch the dance first, rather than telling them what was the planned design. Because having them watch the dance without any pre-conception in their minds lets them freely conceptualize everything. He added that it was very helpful because there were cases where the lights' designer had interesting ideas as well based on their feelings towards the whole choreography of the dance and the music. Having heard the advice and suggestions of my mentor I discarded what I had planned and followed his words. It was delightful to have heard such artistic wisdom from the expert who has have a great experience in choreography and in production. Sharing hints and ideas of expertise to developing choreographers like me was a great experience as well. I have learned new ideas and principles not only in dance-making but also in pre-production.

Likewise, working with professor Sung who was the lights' designer of our concerts was extraordinary. He helped me elevate the concept and feeling for my dance pieces. I was surprised by his choices in terms of mood, timing, and atmosphere (please see figures 6 and 10 on pages 35 and 39). He only asked me afterward what my opinion was based on his designs. Surprisingly, I was amazed at how the lights' design looks. I was only able to ask him about the intensity of the lights. Other than that, I was positively stunned by his work. Working with them was beneficial in terms of accumulating knowledge and experience. I realized that other artists in different fields can also offer many and new ideas. Collaborating with them also broadened my knowledge toward the overall set-up from choreographing a dance to pre-production.

Having this experience helped me develop my skills when it comes to preparation and collaboration with other artists. I have learned several lessons which I need to consider in the future. These ideas will definitely become handy throughout my future processes and works. There might be an opportunity in the future where I will be able to share my knowledge with others too. More so, an artist or a creator who eagerly accumulates knowledge from their experiences develop further in their path. I also believe that a creator who is open to any ideas grows further and is able to better develop themselves. Appreciating and accepting ideas, collaborative contribution, and opinions of others broaden the aptitude of a choreographer or artist toward their approach in art-making.

In addition, the discussion I had with the costume designer in the beginning was insightful and productive. We were able to discuss and agree on the type of fabric, texture, measurements, cuts, color palette, and style. We sent emails every week about the updates especially on the changes. However, when the production date was approaching various unavoidable issues occurred in the budget to the fabric. The designer was not able to match the fabric requested and the style of clothing as well as the color palette. Since the budget for the thesis concert was directly sponsored by the school, it somehow affected their target time to finish all of our requests. This also affected the preparation of the costume. Instead of having two different sets of costumes for two different dances, it ended up having just one set for both dance pieces. As it was shown from figures 6 to 13 there was no difference in clothing. It looks like *Link* and *Recollection* was one whole choreography instead of being separate as the dancers look the same. It somehow partially misguided some of the audience reading toward the dance. Though the dance has two different dynamics and approach, the overall image it displayed toward the audience appear no different. Another difficulty I encountered has to do with the costume designer not being in the field of dance, rather the designer had much experience in theater play costume design which uses typical clothing depicting real-life scenarios unlike dance

Having experienced all of these, I realized that I should personally learn the types of fabric and other elements that include costume making for it may help me communicate better with the costume designer in the future. Also, I should have an original blueprint which may guide designers on the pattern and style that I wanted them to create. This is not to say that I will just brush aside their ideas. Comparing ideas is always a lot better. What concerns me is the overall picture of the dancer on stage, since costumes sometimes affect the performance. The main significant aspect in creating costumes in dance is where the body of the dancers are clearly seen. Paying attention to these encounters is a new consideration for me. I will have to remember that this counts as a priority in any future dance performance. However, I have discovered that a simple costume is better. Overall, I am still delighted that the costume the designer made complimented the mood and atmosphere of the dance. I was glad that it somehow helped the light designers during the technical dress rehearsal to ponder the color palette as well. It taught me the valuable lessons on how to better communicate with the designers in the future.

## CHAPTER 4: FINAL PERFORMANCE

### *Link*

The dance starts with the dancers pre-set on stage, Cyril in upstage left and Wynvel standing outside, in downstage right corner. In a few moments, while Cyril is creating small circular movements on his shoulder and chest, the designed light that looks blueish that created an underwater like-effect directed at his position and which also envelops the space where Wynvel enters will slowly fade. Wynvel, on the other hand, is walking backward towards Cyril with sidelights (in a 30% intensity) that will make him visible to the audience. Around the edges of Cyril's light, Wynvel, which is close to him, turns into a silhouette figure.



Figure 6. Introduction part of the dance *Link*. Image taken during the Technical Dress Rehearsal (TDR) at Chiayi Performing Arts (CPAC)-Experimental Theater in April 17, 2021. The dancers are: Cyril Valeriano (*top*) and Wynvel Anguren (*down*). Photo credit from Lin, Xiao-yuan (林筱圓).

Later, the light will finally envelop the two of them. The two dancers will slowly recognize each other as a prologue of their abstract relationship, within their first phrase in dance. They shall further introduce the theme by creating minimal movement phrases in circles.

After their short phrase which establishes and builds their relationship with each other, a certain section in the beginning of the dance will see Cyril dropping on the floor, this is the cue for the music to start playing.



Figure 7. *Link*. A section for music queue and a transitional cut to start the first part of the dance. Dancers: Cyril Valeriano (*on the floor*) and Wynvel Anguren (*on standing form*). Photo credit from Liao, Zhi-yan (廖志晏).

During the first one-minute of techno drum-like beat music, the two of them will be seen doing different movements. Cyril is moving slowly with all of his body on the floor as Wynvel stands at the right side of the spotlight and with average speed creating all sorts of circles on his entire body. After 12 4/4 count queue in the music, the two will connect with each other. After that, the second layer of music that has a double beat of drum will play to signal the dancer to start the first section.

From upstage left they will move straight to the downstage to do small short movement phrases of circles then go back again to their original spot. After that, they will start the first section of the dance, from slow to fast pace. They will dance linked to each other from upstage left going to down stage right with a circular pattern in a zigzag direction. Upon reaching the next blocking the movement phrase will change and separates the two, however still moving in unison.

After the unison phrase of movements, the two momentarily run around the space together as a transition for Wynvel to exit. This stage is a preparation that transitions toward Cyril's solo. He then temporarily pauses in the upstage left and gently starts the circular small gestural form from his shoulder to his entire body with dynamics from slow to fast.



Figure 8. Solo of Cyril Valeriano in *Link*. Photo credit from Liao, Zhi-yan (廖志晏).

When Cyril does his floor work in stage center in the last part of his solo, Wynvel enters from upstage right to run around Cyril and stop at downstage right. Wynvel does his short solo



section going toward Cyril who is on the floor to start the next phrase that connects the two of them.

The last movement variation of circles happens as soon as the two are linked together. After the last variation, the ending part of the dance would go back to the previous dance sections which I have designed in ABA structure. Then, the finale unravels when the two dancers move diagonally back to upstage right with Cyril quickly flying toward Wynvel, and the lights blackout before he lands.

### ***Recollection***

In the dark bare space, the mystical fantasy type of music will play for 15 seconds in which the volume surrounds the theater space. After that, a special spotlight, hanging eight feet tall from the ground which creates circular shape on the center stage will slowly fade in to grasp the attention of the audience.

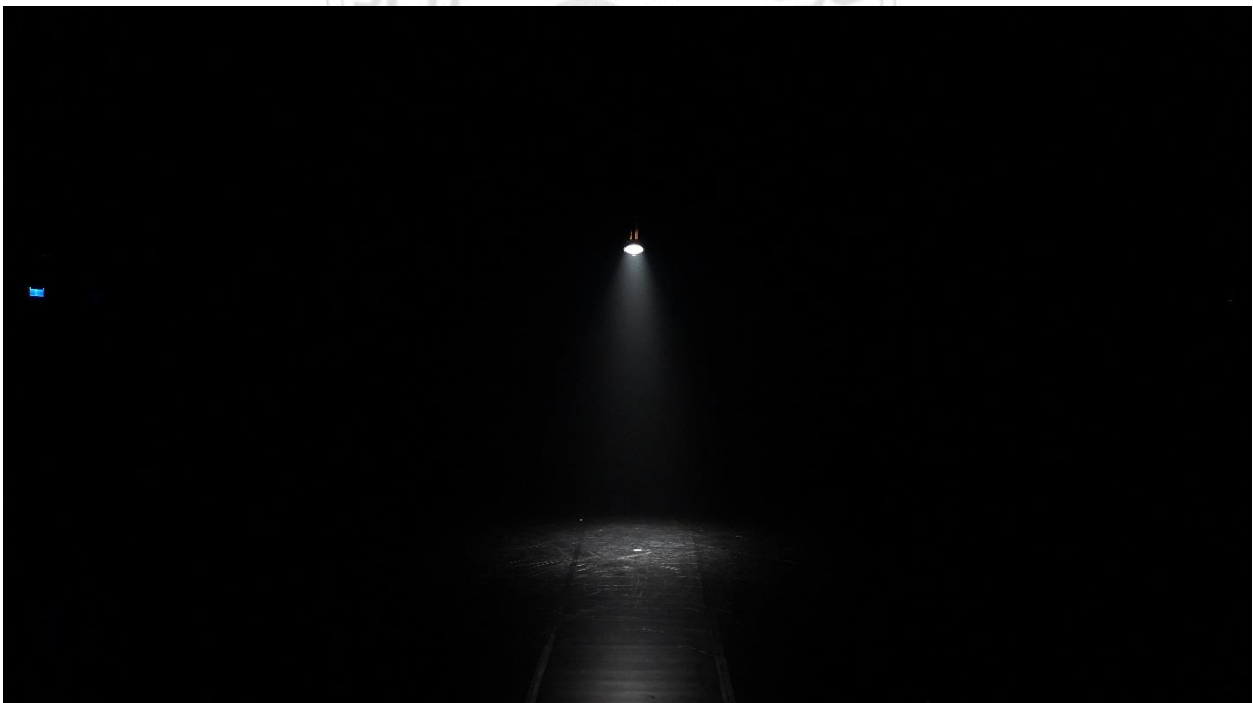


Figure 9. The spotlight effect during the introduction of *Recollection*. Photo credit from Liao, Zhi-yan (廖志晏).

At this moment, Mary Evangeline will secretly enter into the spotlight where she will first feel the light that touches her skin and body. Slowly, she will shift her focus by wandering around and acknowledging the space she is in.



Figure 10. The silhouette of Mary Evangeline Recto upon entering around the spotlight. Photo credit from Liao, Zhi-yan (廖志晏).

In the dark bare stage, she tries groping for the very end of dark space to look into the audience's eyes. Upon looking out, she walks around under the light with the facial expression of knowing and wondering. On the first sharp note of the violin instrument Mary will slowly start her solo dance as the light goes up lighting up the whole performance space. With the light now occupying all the space, Mary will take her time moving around the stage, later on the focus of the light and her solo part will be at the center stage.



Figure 11. A three-minute-long prologue and a solo dance section in the piece *Recollection*. Specially performed by Mary Evangeline Recto, Master of Fine Arts Performance major. Photo credit from Liao, Zhiyan (廖志晏).

When Mary finishes her solo section, the music will change into a techno upbeat music followed by three dancers entering from different corners of the dark side of the stage. When the dancers go in and start running around, a drastic change will happen wherein the four dancers will start dancing. They will dance with a fast and strong pace of movement in a compact formation.

Upon dancing the second section of the dance, the three dancers will run exiting in the upstage right, leaving Cyril alone on the upstage left.



Figure 12. A second solo dance section of the dance choreography *Recollection*. This photo shows the third part of the piece after the group scene. Especially performed by MFA performance major Cyril Valeriano., The image was taken during the TDR at CPAC-experimental theater on April 17, 2021. Photo credit: Lin, Xiao-yuan (林筱圓).

Cyril will do his solo section with super-fast pace and strong movement phrases together with upbeat music while under the spotlight. Upon dancing, his focus will be acknowledging the three sides of the audience area, showing each side his dance routine. Toward the end, just before his final few steps of his solo, side lights from down stage right will fade in showing the two dancers (Mary and Wynvel) who will be running toward the center. Cyril will then exit in between them and will run around the space as the two are performing their Dance routine. Cyril will stop in the upstage right and doing a low profile to hide, his presence with the help of dark space that shall cloak him.



Figure 13. A transition in the dance before going to the next part which is the duet. Dancers: *(from left to right)* Wynvel Anguren, Cyril Valeriano, and Mary Evangeline Recto. Taken during TDR at CPAC. Photo credit: Lin, Xiao-yuan (林筱圓).

The lights will slowly crossfade to train its focus at the center where the two dancers are doing their section. The duo section will dance their ‘conversational’ movement phrases at the center facing the left and right sides and diagonals. This way the dancers will not be facing the audience directly. While the two are dancing, past two to three minutes, faded square designed light will enter in the down stage left. The duo will then change their blocking and enter in the square light. At this point, their previous light will dim. Later on Cyril will come in for their trio.

The duo’s pace will be slow in contrast to Cyril’s fast movement at the center, it is a trio with separated blocking. The duo is within the spotlight that makes them the highlight of

the section, Cyril at the center under a dim light achieves for him a floating in space effect while also casting a silhouette over the two dancers. When Wynvel lifts Mary with her leg stretching towards the audience, Cyril will exit in the down stage left momentarily. Then he will re-enter with another dancer –who is actually this author.

Cyril and I will run fast in between Mary and Wynvel to the next blocking which signal the start of a new section. We will do short floor works in unison to prepare for two different duos that will happen at the same time. The two separate duos are part of the current section, because it is a manipulation of numbers on stage and in space. It becomes a duo, a quartet, a trio and a separate solo to interpret and display recollected fragments in memory. The dance ends when Cyril diagonally leaps or fly into the air toward downstage left and is caught by this author and later lifted above our heads maintaining his form until the lights fade out.

#### **4.1 Reflections on the final performance**

Upon watching the final output and performance of my two choreographed works, they gave me a profound understanding of the processes and choices I had to make. For instance, I should carefully consider the process and ideas I had before the creative stage of *Recollection*. Though I was clear and firm on my decision of displaying my embodied movement style, I still was not successful in fully presenting what I consider is an ideal output. Though I was certain that in the future it will become a major movement style in each of the compositions, however the space and time seem not suitable in the processes I made. Its actually just a hunch since I was not even sure of the statement I wanted or needed to say. Perhaps I'm just not easily satisfied. One thing is clear though--I was just simply focusing on the desire of presenting the style of *popping* in a contemporary platform of choreography. Even for the fact that the interpretation of the dancers during our process revealed a new approach towards a new

concept of creation, yet still I was not totally convinced with my idea. Perhaps, my thoughts merely focused on finishing the work and meeting the deadlines. But, if I am given another opportunity and a longer period of time for the project, I can possibly bring out the best that I can do. Perhaps, I may have opted to use different choreographic devices like repetition, rondo structure, and simple movement themes which can. Thereafter, I could have simply selected the movements that are simple and minimal but can continuously develop with the use of these devices.

I have realized that I did not dig deeper into the movements of *Recollection* which is really vital in a pure dance approach as what my mentor has said. Pure dance being an abstract form of choreography categorically concentrates on movements and their possibilities. The dance I created was absolute and focuses on the principle of pure movement. However, the choreography I have created revealed different opportunities which could serve as my reference in further exploration. The errors and flaws I had during the process leads me to these considerations. I have outlined better resolutions in my ways of working around it. This time is the period that tested how broad the potentials I have in the field of choreography. Through this, I was able to distinguish the weaknesses I need to develop and put more attention to. The knowledge I have gathered during the process and after the final performance certainly builds a better foundation that will help in developing myself further as a new choreographer in my chosen field. There were uncertainties encountered especially in the first stage of developing the two dances. But, those hesitations in my plans and ideas has driven me to further examine my capability in dance-making. Thus, I was surprised by the results in between which made me realize a few things. First, trust the process for discoveries do not end in a single stage. The process continuously develops through constant revisions. And in every revision lies a new experience which develops and matures our understanding. Second, following the momentum



helped me in structuring *Link better*. It was when the momentum supports the previous idea. It also helps solve situations where sometimes I am stuck with a certain movement and no longer know how to proceed. By following momentum in the process, the problem sorted itself out. Also, it provides additional ideas on how to further explore a certain movement. Lastly, watching the dance several times with a clear mind or merely trying to appreciate the dance with unusual mood/angles of viewing, offers a new approach. It gives a better view and understanding of the section that needs improvement and modification. Likewise, I was delighted by the final performance because I was able to see significant aspects that I can use in my future works. These aspects are the focus of the dancer's eyes, orientation on stage which helps the audience see what is going, and clear structure which defines the clarity of the concept of the work.

I have pondered these constant errors and exploration in choreographing dances help me better in identifying myself and in identifying the connection of myself to my work. Moreover, I was able to ask myself how I feel when I see my creation and what inspires me to develop it further. Upon thinking over these thoughts, I found out that the satisfaction in completing a work is the achievement of putting ideas in actual form. Seeing the final performance of *Link* and *Recollection* definitely moved me. As if it feels like it was part of me. It mirrors who and what I am., Reviewing the dance gives me a feeling of accomplishment—going through the process completes me.



## REVIEWS AND FEEDBACKS

*“Clear use of movement repetition and dance structure with clever choice of finale ending which was short and precise was excellent”*

I am delighted to receive feedbacks regarding my choreographic works. I felt that I successfully delivered the definite theme of the dance. There were reviews that complimented on how clear the dance was. And for a few audience the performance was still clear in their heads; they can still visualize the whole movement structure of the choreography. Especially that the finale ended with a clear cut in movement phrase and punctuated with quick detailed lift. Moreover, a few people informally expressed their opinions to me after the show saying that they have seen traces of movements around space because of the fantastic lighting during the show.

Varying feedbacks from the audience that contains several interpretations about the performance gives me a feeling of content. When the audience visualizes something triggered by the performance they watched, even if the piece is abstract, it is for me such a good memory to treasure. Even a usual observation from a certain person who has stated that she visualizes two people having intimate relationships—that’s already very meaningful. I leave the audience interpretations as they were made after the show, without them knowing what my inspiration was. If someone would care to ask, my answer would depend on how the question was framed. To my surprise, nobody asked. Having perceived their thoughts towards my works was proof that I was able to activate the viewer's mind and packed them with imaginations.

*“The music was enjoyable where I felt my body unconsciously moving together with the dancers. I also remembered childhood memories where we spent our time tirelessly playing outside the house”*

*Recollection* has fast pace dynamics of movement with several scenes in it. Accompanied with fast beat music that helped elevate the kinaesthetic feeling of the dance which resonated to the audience. I was surprised that it effectively awakens someone's memorable past experiences. However, one from audience said that he felt an absence in the performance. And that was the facial expressions of the dancers. He intimated his thought that it would have helped greatly if there facial expressions were present in the dancers as the audience can feel deeply by watching their expressions. It was worthy to know that some people shared their observation that can help in a much better development of the piece. I did not expect this kind of feedback to come. He even wished to see more energetic and lively performances similar to the quartet which tries to display the children's wonderful and memorable days.



## CONCLUSION

The study made me realize that merely focusing on pure movement as an approach toward dance-making do further increase the knowledge about creating dances. Doing a pure movement study provides many opportunities for movement choices. Thus, upon choosing a specific movement as the main theme it resulted in the opening of various ideas which one can ponder upon its significance to the audience and to the creator himself.

Moreover, during my process I have learned various significant factors that I can use in developing future processes. *Recollection* as an example, before I completed the piece to what it is now had undergone numerous revisions. I have encountered challenges and errors along the way which taught me a practical lesson--and that is, planning. Preparing ahead of time really helps a lot not only in the field of choreography but in many other ways. Moreover, it was only about this time that I was able to measure how I value the path I have chosen. I evaluated myself using the feedback of my mentor and classmates who were with me all throughout the journey.

This opportunity lets me reflect in three different ways about my weaknesses when it comes to choreography. First, I should know in the beginning the capability of the people who are going to dance with me. Second, there should always be a clear inspiration and basis of the movement. Lastly, organized target time for good progress.

Nevertheless, I can conclude that from my previous works before and during further study in Taiwan, it solidified my interest towards dance-making. The two dance pieces *Link* and *Recollection* were, like myself, one of the fragments of who I might become in the future.

*Link* is where I can see myself in a repetitive process of exploration, but in every repetition there's a variation and change which shows progress. Even during the process, I have felt that

the piece I have made linked within me. Somehow, I am affected when the piece was not performed well, or there were slight mistakes. But my aggression is not toward the dancers, but to myself. It was during this time that I learned my lessons from these flaws, and the realization alone helps me grow for the better. That is-- better than the performance I had the other day.

*Recollection* as I said taught me by far, the hardest lesson I need to know in life. Planning guarantees a level of success for my work. And that was something I missed during the first stage of the process. I am still delighted that I have found ways to do better when the next opportunity presents itself. Not only that, the abstract images formed in the dance choreography showcased my actual interpretation of the conceptual theme that I have in mind. And it was a strong proof that I can do better even with only movement as the main element.

Furthermore, the use of methodologies I have stated presented several options which further support my process. In the case of the journal reflection, I had a great time realizing the improvements that I still need to do. Besides that, I was able to re-evaluate myself. On how I relate and respond to an interaction with another person. Through the process of the two dances I made, I found one important factor that also helped in my progress, and that is to listen. I wrote the comments and feedback of the dancers towards the process and the dance. With their words, I pondered on the possibilities that can contribute greatly. Accumulating new experiences and knowledge studying for my Master's degree at Nanhua University in Taiwan gave me new viewpoints and worldview in three different ways: movement explorations, choreographic choices/process, and performing-approach.

In addition, I choose choreography as my path in life and as a form of self-expression so I may show that I can make a difference when it comes to dance-making. Focusing on movement potentially helps me develop my creativity. So, in my future works, I plan on

exploring the realm of movement and continue venturing into the areas that shall help me develop in becoming a better choreographer. It is also because I want to follow my vision in choreography which is to show pure dance choreography using pure physical movement that expresses distinct movement exploration and movement style. It is to encourage new artists, like myself, to create works inspired by the uniqueness of their dancing/performing style that serves as a stepping stone to display our identity as a developing artist.



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## APPENDIX A

**(RE)CONFIGURATIONS**

04.18 2021

Sun. 19:30

重祿  
酌置

嘉義縣  
表演藝術中心  
實驗劇場

嘉義縣表演藝術中心  
ChiaYi Performing Arts Center  
Experimental Theatre

指導老師○林文中

編舞者●Al Garcia, Alexes A. Sandino

南華大學  
民族音樂學系(所)  
舞蹈組碩士班畢業公演

Graduate Dance Concert  
of Nanhua University  
Department of Ethnomusicology

○舞者○Al Garcia,  
Alexes A. Sandino,  
Mary Evangeline R. Recto,  
Cyril C. Valeriano,  
Wynvel R. Anguren

【舞台監督】陳品瑛 【技術統籌】林哲宇 【燈光設計】宋永鴻、汪玄昱 【舞台設計】王君維  
【服裝設計】張義宗 【平面攝影/影像設計】余絃之 【劇照攝影】廖志晏 【平面設計】鍾明健

○票價請洽○  
南華大學民族音樂學系  
(05)2721001轉 2271

Graduation concert poster entitled “(Re)Configuration”. We named the dance concert (re)configuration as where the performance space covers choreographies that have different approach, style and concept. Poster designed by: 余絃之.