

THE SHREW UNLEASHED

A DANCE AND POETRY EVENT IN CONJUNCTION WITH
THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my grandparents, who believed in me as a dancer and as a creative mind and shared their love and resources; to my parents, who inspired a love of reading and writing in me and never hesitated in their support of all my wild dreams; to my first dance teacher, Virginia Holte, who taught me ballet technique and how to flow beautifully and graciously with life; and my wife Nicole Schubert, who works with youth every day as a middle school math teacher, inspires them with her passion, style, and care, and also created the artwork for the flyers, scenery, and programs for *The Shrew Unleashed*.

Abstract

The Shrew Unleashed is a creative feminist response, in poetry and dance, to the misogynistic messages in Shakespeare's play *The Taming of the Shrew*. It is a green show performed by five dancers and a poet in three parts: selected Shakespearean sonnets, an Audience-Participation "Spontaneous Dance Poem," and "Wonder Woman," a spoken-word poem. Performances for school and public audiences took place March 11-15, 2015 inside and outside the Kennedy Theatre at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Themes in the work include the power of words, empowerment, and social justice.

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I. Original Thesis Proposal

A. Broad Intention

I propose to produce my thesis as a “green show”¹ in conjunction with *The Taming of the Shrew*, which is playing in the Earle Ernst Lab Theatre March 13th-15th, 2015. My production will be 15-20 minutes in length (30 minutes before curtain), with a curated show including spoken word poetry, live art, and music before and after “The Taming of the Shrew” and dancing prior. The work will speak to themes of the power of words (identity, language, communication, articulating with the body), empowerment, and social justice.

Given that I will be working with text, spoken word and poetry, this production could also serve as a lead-in for the faculty and guest choreographed dance concert *Dancing Off the Page* in April. The production of *The Taming of the Shrew* is Theatre for Young Audiences and my portion will be included as part of education and outreach. The choreography will be appropriate for audiences of all ages, and aimed at young adults of high school age.

The Kennedy Theatre season program copy for *The Taming of the Shrew* states: “Adapted from William Shakespeare, Directed by MFA Theatre for Young Audiences candidate Kim Shire. A classic battle of the sexes between the strong-willed and sharp-tongued Kate and the equally sharp-tongued and cunning Petruchio. This shortened version of Shakespeare’s well-loved play explores the power of words to elevate or defeat both men and women.”

In early conversations with Kim Shire about her production, she has shared thoughts on the spine of this interpretation: “In this sense, Kate uses words to her disadvantage at the beginning, but as she watches Petruchio and is controlled by him, she learns to flip the words she uses to her advantage. She gains the stage and center of control by the power of words.” Aiming at a high school-aged audience, the production will keep the original language, but in a shortened format with a more abstract/modern aesthetic and use of some projection design to highlight certain words in the play. I originally envisioned including choreography in the context of the production of *The Taming of the Shrew*, but in its shortened format there won’t be much time for

¹ A “Green Show” is an outdoor performance traditionally done preceding or following the presentation of a Shakespeare play and may share similar themes to the onstage performance or other content, such as music and dancing. Festivals such as the Oregon Shakespeare Festival still feature green shows as part of their performance lineup.

dancing in the play. However, my dancers may participate in the show in minor roles to enhance the continuity of the two related features and we are actively pursuing ways to collaborate.

I am approaching the project with the theoretical lens of feminism², queer theory³, and hip hop performance⁴. My work will reflect an understanding of the value of identity and self-actualization and the impact of our presence/presentation in the world. Adolescents struggle with finding their purpose and voice in the world and being understood by peers, so this theme is timely for the audience. Certain interpretations of *The Taming of the Shrew*⁵ describe it as patriarchal and misogynistic, but our reading is that language can empower individuals.

I will utilize a collaborative choreographic process with other UH and outside choreographer/dancers (5-10), spoken-word poet(s), musician(s), visual artist(s), and theatrical designers and technicians. I will act as choreographer and curator of this multi-media event, which will be a pre-show, possibly also continuing the performance and exhibition event after each showing (or selected showings such as opening and/or closing) of *The Taming of the Shrew*, which will run only sixty minutes.

I will approach creating movement from the starting point of text, both from the play *The Taming of the Shrew* and new poetry which will be performed live, and the choreographic process will include personal reflection on the part of the dancers and other collaborators, structured improvisation, and video capture. Movement ideas will demonstrate the struggle to come to know oneself and communicate with others, the process one must engage with to

² “On the one hand, feminist theorists champion the identity of women, demand rights for women, and promote women’s writings as representations of the experience of women. On the other hand, feminists undertake a theoretical critique of the heterosexual matrix that organizes identities and cultures in terms of the opposition between man and woman.” (Culler 140)

³ “Like deconstruction and other contemporary theoretical movements, queer theory [...] uses the marginal - what has been set aside as perverse, beyond the pale, radically other - to analyse the cultural construction of the centre: heterosexual normativity.” (Culler 145)

⁴ Hip Hop Performance is characterized by four elements, “b-boying [dance/physical], DJing [turntablism/music/aural], MCing [oral], and graffiti art [visual].” (Chang 110) Hip Hop Performance is related to Minority Discourse, in which “Debates bear on the relation between strengthening the cultural identity of particular groups by linking it to a tradition of writing and the liberal goal of celebrating cultural diversity and ‘multiculturalism.’” (Culler 145)

⁵ Brian Brooks’ article “Feminist Struggle in Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*” in the online magazine *Discoveries* states: “Audiences have historically found something both abhorrent and endearing in Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*. Seeing Katherina tamed by Petruchio, according to modern sensibilities, is offensive. Conversely, seeing Katherina and Petruchio fall in love is uplifting. [...] Many see this play as anti-feminist—Phyllis Rackin calls the play ‘crudely misogynist...’”

become fully self-actualized. The dancing will also express the joy of clarity and the love and acceptance one can find in community. Stylistically, the movement may include modern dance, ballet, hip hop, and breakdancing vocabulary.

**B. How the Dance Idea is Reflected in Projected Production Elements
(use of costumes, sets, lighting, sound, and other elements)**

My dance idea of finding your voice and language calls for simple, contemporary costuming, with individualized/personal accents for each dancer. The scenery will be site-specific, consisting of a natural background, architecture, and/or live art mural making. I would love to see a graffiti artist creating a mural that incorporates specific words, but a projection design might be equally effective. I may incorporate live audience feedback/participation and/or input through social media to further engage the audience in creating poetry and movement around my theme, which is tied to the themes Kim is exploring with the play. Projection and other designs will align with the aesthetic of *The Taming of the Shrew* and possibly share the same designer. If possible, I would like to use live music, instrumental and vocal (maybe a beat-boxer), with minimal enhancement. As much as possible, I would like all of the art to be generated live by the performers--dance, sound, and visual elements. Although the project centers on the power of words, spoken language is not the only way we communicate--body language, dance, song, facial expressiveness, costume, and visual art all convey our message.

C. Timetable/Production Calendar

Projected date for thesis committee formation based on acceptance of proposal: October 3rd, 2014

Showing date for first 1/3 of the choreography: November 21st, 2014

Showing date to present 2/3 of the choreography: January 30th, 2015

Showing date (at least 2 weeks prior to tech week of concert) for complete choreography: February 20th, 2015

Concert dates:

“The Taming of the Shrew” University of Hawai’i at Manoa Kennedy Theatre

March 13th and 14th at 8pm, March 15th at 2pm, plus additional school showings

Scheduling of production- and publicity-related elements:

Poster design and production: November 24th, 2014

Materials for education and promotion to schools: January 12th, 2015

Facebook Event: January 30th, 2015

Lighting, Sound, Scenic, and Costume Designs: February 27th, 2015

Deadline for submission of first draft of written work (within 2 weeks of final show):

March 20th, 2015

Deadline for submission of video and written document to Graduate Division:

April 3rd, 2015

II. Candidate's Evaluation and Analysis of the Choreographic Process

A. *The Shrew Unleashed* in Performance

The Production of *The Shrew Unleashed* ran approximately twenty minutes and contained three parts: Selected Shakespearean Sonnets, an Audience-Participation “Spontaneous Dance Poem” using themes from the sonnets and the spoken-word poem, and an original poem, “Wonder Woman.” Immediately prior to *The Taming of the Shrew*, three dancers performed a two minute introductory “teaser” of poetry and dance on the Earle Ernst Lab Theatre stage amid white pillars and scenery with bright paint and hanging paper. The dancers performed two duets, set to Shakespearean sonnets (full text of the Selected Sonnets can be found in **Figure 2**), embodying ideas about time and friendship. Then, immediately following *The Taming of the Shrew*, the actors burst out, leading the audience to the lawn adjacent to Kennedy Theatre, a casual outdoor proscenium space, illuminated under the stars in the evening by stage lights and naturally lit by day. The audience observed the Green Show while canopied by nearby trees, the performers framed by the architecture of the theatre.

Shining soap bubbles drifted through the air for a moment and once the audience was in place, the full ensemble of five dancers performed a series of five more of Shakespeare's sonnets as solos and groups, connecting to the language and themes of *The Taming of the Shrew* while adding the element of modern dance as a medium of communication and a feminist emphasis. Wearing an array of warm colored tops with black pants, bright socks and boots, the dancers spoke and danced themes of love, friendship, time, death, and beauty. In the next section, we invited fourteen volunteers to join the performance, selecting keywords from the sonnets and spoken-word poem to follow displayed on graffiti-style signs during the “Spontaneous Dance Poem.” Well-known local slam poet Jenna Robinson powerfully spoke the lines she wrote for each keyword and the dancers danced, creating a brand new dance/poem on the spot. Robinson and the dancers then transitioned into “Wonder Woman,” her response to the famous comic book heroine's being shrunk and bleached for Hollywood, with the dancers dramatizing the action.

Ultimately we entreated the audience to get out, use the power of words and expression, be seen, and make a difference.

B. Casting

The Shrew Unleashed is a feminist project, and as such it was important to feature the strengths and voice of each performer by creating the work in collaboration, engaging in an emancipatory and non-hierarchical⁶ working structure as much as possible. Given that we utilized a collaborative process, the collaborators were essential in creating the final product. I selected the cast of dancers looking for talented but not overcommitted participants who would be willing to both speak and dance, as well as make a contribution to the choreographic process and performance. I was pleased to find such a diverse (different majors, races, geographic backgrounds, ages, and dance experiences--see cast photo in **Figure 8.18**) and generous group of performers who were willing to take risks and leave their comfort zones through this project. Each person brought a different history and ideas to the work, and in the end all agreed that the process had been a unique challenge, but also smooth and a great deal of fun.

Misha Matsumoto was a student in my Beginning Modern Dance (131) class in Spring 2014 and was at that time returning to dance as a graduate student in American History. Matsumoto brought experience with ballet, modern, jazz, and hip hop techniques as well as knowledge of history and an interest in comics that proved helpful to the research for “Wonder Woman.” Christiana Oshiro is an undergraduate Biology major who is planning to minor in Dance. Oshiro has a background in ballet and modern dance and we met studying Okinawan Dance at UH from Yukie Shiroma. N. Grace Parson was in the same section of 131 as Matsumoto, and is an undergraduate student majoring in Ethnobotany and minoring in Dance, with past experience in jazz and modern dance. Corbett Stern is an undergraduate dance major who started with swing dancing, then took my 131 class in Fall of 2013 and also collaborated on my choreography, “Undertow,” a trio performed at UH in *Fall Footholds* 2014.

⁶ Isabelle Schad discusses non-hierarchical collaborative working processes in the section “Embryology as Choreography” in the book *Dance (and) Theory* (Brandstetter and Klein 280).

Matsumoto summed up the highs and lows of the collaboration (see **Figure 9** for the full text of the dancers' reflections on the creative process of speaking, improvising, and crafting the choreography):

“Collaborating choreographically is always tricky. There are multiple considerations that come into play when working collaboratively-- multiple personalities, various points of view and different styles of dance and choreography. However, these factors all contribute to the final project, allowing the final presentation of dance be something distinctly unique to the group that may have otherwise not been created. [...] The main purpose of a collaborative process is to expose one another to new movements that is [sic] distinct to each dancer. As a whole, the collaborative process expands each dancer's movement vocabulary, allows each dancer to experience new movement and aids each dancer in broadening their choreographic skills.”

C. Selection and Generation of Poetic Text

Since the work was text-based, an integral part of my choreographic process was selecting which texts to use as a starting point. As a discussion of and response to *The Taming of the Shrew*, I wanted to include a section consisting of Shakespeare's works, in order to illuminate the difficult but beautiful heightened language with movement. Since the work was designed for a young audience (middle school, high school, and above), I wanted to include a social media element and conducted an informal survey via Facebook about Shakespearean works friends would recommend for such a project. Among the recommendations I received were selections from Shakespeare's plays, such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Henry V* as well as sonnets. I wasn't sure that dialogue would make sense out of context, and wanted to provide a variety of perspectives while maintaining brevity, so decided to use a selection of sonnets, which would prove to be nuggets of text on which to build dance.

Selection of the poetic text served as the jumping-off point for the choreography and I worked with colleagues, friends, and the cast to select which sonnets we would use and decide who among the cast members would dance for each. I read and researched the sonnets, taking recommendations, reading academic research about the sonnets, and taking into account the themes I wanted to carry over from *The Taming of the Shrew*, such as love, friendship, identity, power, and the passage of time. Then I worked to extend those themes into contemporary work

via modern dance, the audience-participation portion, and original poetry. The full text of the sonnets we danced in *The Shrew Unleashed* is provided in **Figure 2**.

The dancers and I collaborated with Jenna Robinson to select subject matter and themes for an original poem that would respond to the misogyny in *The Taming of the Shrew* in an empowering way, providing entertainment as well as a call to action for our audiences. Originally I referred to this poem as a “slam,” since this is the style of competitive performance poetry I have seen Robinson and others perform at poetry slams here in Hawai‘i and in the continental U.S., and it is a term that may appeal to general audiences. However, as we worked together I realized that outside of a competition context, the poetry may appear in print or be performed in other contexts and Robinson considers herself a “performance poet” more broadly than a “slam poet.” I kept the language the same in our marketing materials to grab attention, but in this work will simply refer to “Wonder Woman” as a poem rather than a slam poem. Robinson and I have wanted to collaborate on a dance and poetry project ever since we became familiar with one another’s work several years ago, and the thesis project created a good platform. Robinson earned her BA in History from the University of Hawai‘i, has competed on the Hawai‘i National Slam Poetry Team, and co-founded the local nonprofit Urban Aloha to benefit youth programs. Robinson and I discussed the major themes and goals of *The Shrew Unleashed* and she provided drafts of the “Wonder Woman” poem (see **Figure 4**), which the dancers and I would read and improvise to, considering possible movements and our audience. Robinson then edited the drafts in response to our feedback.

Then once the sonnets were chosen and “Wonder Woman” developed, I chose keywords from those existing texts to use in the creation of the Audience-Participation “Spontaneous Dance Poem.” Jenna Robinson created poetic lines for each keyword, and the dancers and I chose key movements and movement sequences to correspond. The last portion of the poetry development for this section was creating the “chance procedures” process⁷ to facilitate the

⁷ Chance “is a process whereby the choreographer decides to give up his own self will and, to some extent, leave decisions in the hands of fate or of his dancers. One can use it to produce both content and order. Composer John Cage has pioneered the use of chance as a formulative device in art. He has collaborated for many years with Merce Cunningham, the first well-known choreographer to apply this approach to the field of dance.” (Blom and Chaplin 117)

“Spontaneous Dance Poem” section. The process of selecting which keywords and corresponding movements would be performed is detailed in **Figure 3**.

D. Poetry Analysis and Improvisation

Once the poetry was selected and created, the compositional structures were implemented as a collaboration between the dancers, poet, and myself as director/choreographer. We developed the choreography by analyzing the structure and meaning of the sonnets and “Wonder Woman,” considering the language, meaning/interpretation, speaker, volume/dynamics, pitch, rhythm, and intent. The cast improvised movement together to the poetry selections, key words, and phrases, identifying appropriate movement efforts for the mood and subject of each piece using the language of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA)⁸ and other evocative descriptions. We videoed our improvisation sessions, viewing the videos to select appropriate movements, spatial choices, timing, and speed, and to start creating transitions between gestures and movements as well as between poems and sections. Part of the choreographic work was to create parallels and a shared movement language between all the poetic selections, so we created movement motifs from shared themes in the texts, and played with different variations on these motifs. All choreography was designed with our own impressions and preferences in mind, as well as those of the target audience of middle school and high school students⁹.

I did my best to help interpret the meaning of each poem so that we could dance with clear intention, and according to Oshiro my approach was effective: “Blythe was good at explaining what her visions were and what she wanted this piece to be about. I had never done any big speaking or poetry readings before, but I do admire Shakespeare and poetry as it is. So I thought it was really fun to take on a new challenge that I never tackled before.” (See **Figure 9**

⁸ In my work with LMA, it was helpful to refer to Peggy Hackney’s book, *Making Connections*, as well as references such as those provided on the Movement Has Meaning website. Hackney describes how “Rudolf von Laban’s seminal work in the first half of [the 20th] century identified and illuminated the concepts of Effort, Space, Shape, Action of Body Parts, and Group Relationships as elements which describe how human beings express themselves through movement.” (1)

⁹ We gave some consideration to both the preferences of this age group (in terms of the popular culture influences and overall “look” of the work) and their developmental stage. Students age 11 or 12 through adulthood fall into Piaget’s “Formal Operational” stage and “form and operate on--that is, reverse--abstract as well as concrete mental representations.” (Sternberg and Williams 45) This means that they can think analogically and abstractly.

for the full text of the dancers' reflections) The members of my thesis committee, Gregg Lizenbery, Lurana Donnels O'Malley, and Amy Schiffner, were also instructive in realizing my vision. Donnels O'Malley, a Theatre faculty member who directed the *Strong Voice Project*, which included my qualifying choreography to an excerpt from the choreopoem *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf*, helped to analyze the speaking and acting in relationship to the movement and so that we could realize our intentions in performance, and she also supported me in the early stages of considering the overall structure of *The Shrew Unleashed*. Lizenbery provided expertise in LMA, embodying different moods and efforts, as well as working with spoken word, and he worked to draw a greater movement range from the dancers in rehearsal. Lizenbery also connected me to Leiney Rigg, a Theatre graduate student at UH who then coached the cast on interpreting and speaking Shakespearean language, aided by her coursework and referencing John Barton's *Playing Shakespeare: An Actor's Guide*. Schiffner provided structural ideas and early brainstorming support as well as ideas to fine-tune the transitions and performance quality.

E. The Choreographic Process

In general, the choreographic process for each segment of the work followed a common structure: we analyzed the structure and meaning of the poetry, considered common keywords, themes, and movement qualities to build bridges between the poems, explored the language of the poetry together through movement improvisation, video recorded our improvisations, and chose movements from the videos to build the choreography, generating motifs¹⁰, and implementing various compositional procedures. As dancer Grace Parson summarized, "I am not normally one for improvised dance or public speaking. I enjoyed it. As far as process we began with just ideas and solidified those and then we pieced together the dance part until it was what we wanted. [...] I think I've learned to trust myself a bit more through it, to stick to your guns and most definitely to enjoy yourself whatever you're doing." (For full dancer reflections on the choreographic process, please refer to **Figure 9**).

¹⁰ Blom and Chaplin explain that a motif as a choreographic device is: "a single movement or short movement phrase (usually shorter than a theme) that is used as a source or a spark for development into an integrated gestalt. The motif can contain the essence for the complete piece." (102)

Here I will share more about the choreographic process for each section in order of creation:

1. Part 1: Selected Sonnets by William Shakespeare

The Sonnet Section set the stage for the entire work, and provided gifts of rich imagery, thematic material, and structure as well as challenges of memorization, interpretation¹¹, and delivery. The full text of the selected sonnets is in **Figure 2**. Dancer Christiana Oshiro opines:

“The hard part was getting everyone together and just running through the poems/sonnets and really delving deep inside ourselves to find a meaning to everything we were doing [...] once we translated what the words together meant we were able to get a better grasp at conveying the message behind them. Most of [Shakespeare’s] sonnets we performed had a central theme of ‘time,’ ‘love,’ ‘beauty,’ and ‘death,’ so they possessed a lot of power (since those things we tend to obsess over or run from). [...] looking at the words and the sonnets as a whole, [we were] able to do some interpretation through movement. I really enjoyed that concept, because it was not overly cheesy or senseless; every move we made corresponded with a line or a word within the sonnet.”

We created a nickname for each sonnet to distinguish one from the other, and the first, “Sonnet CXVI (116),” became known as “Impediments” (**Figure 2.3**). “Sonnet 116” is about the constancy of true love, unphased by obstacles and unshaken by storms. We chose to dance this sonnet as an ensemble as an introduction to the full green show Sonnet Section, since it has a clear narrative structure and we wanted to create an intelligible storyline as an entree for our audience. The dance depicts two lovers (Stern and Matsumoto) overcoming tests to their bond (provided by Parson and Oshiro). Spatially, the dancers started in an inverted “V” formation with backs to the audience and with myself as the speaker upstage center at the apex. I turned and began speaking the poem and the dancers turned and sprung into action, which vacillated with impeded- and then free-progress back and forth across the stage with the narrative, finally proceeding to the edge of the stage which served as the “edge of doom” (see photo in **Figure 8.5**).

¹¹ We found help in interpreting the meaning of the Shakespearean sonnets from Leiney Rigg (**Figure 5**), Oxquarry Books’ website, shakespeares-sonnets.com, as well as “No Fear Shakespeare” by Sparknotes.

Key themes of “Sonnet 116” are true love, impediments, time, death, constancy, and strength. The movement depicts struggling together against resistance, with qualities of strength, directness, boundness, pressing, and punching. We developed a violently slicing sickle/scythe movement that cuts in with the opposing arm and leg, like ominously cutting grain with a sickle, as a powerful cannon and then unison movement when “rosy lips and cheeks within his bending sickle’s compass come.” The sickle/scythe movement motif also appears on different levels (standing and horizontally on the floor) in “Sonnet 12,” “The Clock,” as well as in “Wonder Woman” to depict the power of Amazonian warriors.

“Sonnet XXIX (29),” “Bootless” (**Figure 2.4**), began where “Sonnet 116” left off, with the ensemble at the “edge of doom” with a despondent Parson speaking while all the dancers struggled and sunk to the ground, then found redemption by the thought of “your sweet love remembered” as I spoke and all dancers rose to a high level. Although keywords of fortune/richness/wealth, sweetness, friendship, time, and earth do appear, the main idea we wanted to demonstrate with this sonnet is antithesis. For the first half the speaker, danced by the ensemble, is downtrodden, depressed, and pathetic, yearning and striving without success, moving in qualities of heaviness, sustainment, limpness, wringing and pressing, and for the second half of the poem transforms to floating with joyful contentment, uplifted, “like to the lark at break of day arising from sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven’s gate.” Therefore, the LMA efforts for the first half are heavy, strong (active, but subdued by some invisible force) and direct, becoming light in the second half (see the postures of floating in the photo in **Figure 8.6**). I wanted to provide some humor to balance all the seriousness of the sonnets, so provided a tongue-in-cheek moment by having us struggle to literally remove our boots when Parson spoke about “bootless cries.” At the conclusion of this sonnet, the speaker then “scorn[s] to change my state with kings,” with all dancers performing a motif: a regal gesture like that of donning of a fur-trimmed cloak, which I created while working on “Sonnet 52,” “Treasure,” to exhibit richness and royalty. The regal gesture motif appears again in “Wonder Woman” in reference to being a queen and goddess.

In “Sonnet XXXV (35),” “Roses Have Thorns” (**Figure 2.6**), the speaker has been betrayed, and this sonnet was performed as a dramatic solo by Corbett Stern. Themes of “Sonnet

35” include infidelity, betrayal, longing, forgiveness, surrender, and acceptance. It shares some of the earthly and celestial elements of other selected sonnets, with overtones of both sadness and anger. In interpreting the sonnet, we got the sense that the speaker feels torn apart and wanted to portray that feeling in the movement, which has layers of sharp lightness, boundness and quickness (slashing, stabbing) over the top of limp, heavy, gliding, pressing, and sinking (see **Figure 8.8**, which is a photo of the moment of “salving thy amiss”). I found a piece of music that captured the complex, moody emotions of this sonnet, and we used it during choreographic process, but not during performance: Kaki King’s “My Nerves that Committed Suicide.” Leiney Rigg, a Theatre graduate student at UH who coached the cast on interpreting and speaking Shakespearean language, shared thoughts about interpreting and acting Shakespeare’s works that were especially helpful for this solo (refer to **Figure 5**). In his investigations Stern considered to whom he, as the speaker, was talking and what had happened the moment before the poem commenced.

Stern felt that he was

“[...]almost entirely in control of what was created for my solo piece, *Roses Have Thorns*. The process was pretty straight forward, with my improvising and Blythe giving direction and feedback and the ultimate thumbs up for the final cut. We spent many Friday mornings crafting and refining the piece. Working with the recitation of the sonnet was something I had never done before and was both a challenge to remember to continue dancing, and a joy to figure out. The more comfortable I became with my lines, the easier my dancing flowed. It even influenced how the choreography ultimately looked on stage. I started getting really into my recitation and perhaps found a new enjoyment to pursue.”

With “Sonnet XII (12),” “The Clock” (**Figure 2.1**), I wanted to portray the paradox of our human perception of time--how sometimes time seems to stretch and slowly pass, while other times it flies like lightning. I worked with Matsumoto to develop movements that capture the essence of the words in the poem, and chose a spiraling path of to travel, first winding in and then out, representing a circular perception of time, while in contrast Parson walked along a linear path upstage while speaking the poem (**Figure 8.3**). Matsumoto then repeated the keywords Time, Day, Night, Curls, Canopy, Green, White, Beauty, Time, Die, Scythe, and Brave from the sonnet while dancing them to complete the piece, as if having flashbacks or

memories of the past in rapid succession. We worked together to contrast quick, light, and free movement qualities with bound, strong, and more sustained movements and Gregg Lizenbery assisted greatly by challenging Matsumoto to bring out the different effort qualities to create a dynamic performance.

As with many of Shakespeare's sonnets, "Sonnet 12" contains antithesis, as time is personified as both bringer of beauty and cruel thief. Key themes in this sonnet, which are shared with other selected sonnets, are time, beauty, sweetness, the passage of the days and seasons, colors, and death. The image of "the violet past prime" relates to that in "Sonnet 35" of "loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud," so we wanted to build a connection between the movement in the two. The imagery of the seasons relates to "Sonnet 104" and "Sonnet 60," so there are shared motifs between them, the scythe is also referred to as a sickle in "Sonnet 116," and the scythe movement was used again to portray ferocity in "Wonder Woman."

"Sonnet CIV (104)," which can be found in **Figure 2.2**, "Fair Friend," talks about a dear and beautiful friend, whom the speaker has known for three years yet hasn't seemed to age at all during that time. Key ideas we wanted to emphasize were friendship, beauty, colors, seasons, the passage of time and inevitable death. As the poem is about a sweet friendship, I decided to create it as a duet between Parson and Oshiro, and had them speak and dance as a call and response, alternating the speaking between the two of them and also alternating speaking and dancing. This rotating structure created a nice rhythm and a sort of echo between spoken words and representative movement. At first, the dancers came together from different entrance points to the stage, then they danced apart but in unison in reference to the seasons turning during the interlude of their friendship, then they danced very closely together as they speak "Ah! yet doth beauty like a dial-hand, steal from his figure, and no pace perceived," and enact the stealth of beauty that is leaving even as the "sweet hue" of youth still seems to remain, just as the hands of a clock ever turn (**Figure 8.4**). Amy Schiffner provided valuable input on how the dancers could better embody the words they spoke, highlighting the contrasts in the poem. Overall the exchange between the two dancers was meant to be playful, loving, and sweet in the face of a cruel world and in fact creating this choreography together generated friendship between the

dancers. As Parson relates: “I never thought I would get along so well with Christiana but she's my fair friend now.”

“Sonnet LX (60),” “Like Waves,” incorporates many themes from throughout the Sonnet Section and ultimately was chosen to conclude the section, bringing it full-circle by speaking of time, death, beauty, maturity, praise, and the ocean (Figure 2.7). This sonnet gives me the feeling of being resigned to an inevitable fate, in awe and powerless. For this final sonnet, we moved away from a narrative interpretation and chose to depict how “the waves make toward the pebbled shore,” rising, falling, turbulent, sustained, strong, bound and at times free, wringing and pressing with the tides (**Figure 8.9** shows the turbulence, ebb, and flow of the dancing). I was able to draw on my studies of water for my piece, “Undertow,” to inform the choreography for this sonnet. In order to dance the movements of the waves, this last sonnet was performed as an ensemble, descending and ascending diagonals from upstage right to downstage left. Structurally it worked well to have five dancers, as we rotated through the lines of poetry, first dancing as we advanced, and then speaking as we retreated, until the last two lines of text, the first of which was spoken two words at a time, the second in unison for a strong final statement.

“Sonnet LII (52),” “Treasure,” speaks of how perhaps absence, or limited contact, can make the heart grow fonder, and shares the themes of time, love, longing, sweetness and richness with other selected sonnets. It can be found in **Figure 2.5**. “Sonnet 52” has a luscious sumptuousness that immediately attracted me, with imagery of jewels, feasts, and special robes. I was excited to share a Shakespearean Sonnet that sensuously alluded to pleasure and desire, with sensuous but appropriate language, so I chose it to be a solo for myself, with movements that were direct (either towards or away from the object of my desire), and alternately strong and quick (in resistance to the pull of pleasure) or light and sustained (savoring). The “regal” gesture motif appears at the beginning during the first line, “So am I as the rich,” and the movement follows a somewhat narrative line as I explored an imaginary landscape of chests of fine clothes and jewels, shelves and tables of delicious food, and a lover that infrequently visits. In **Figure 8.7** I can be seen reveling as I enact donning “captain’s jewels in the carcanet” (a necklace). The suspense and gratification provide a nice counterpoint for the sonnet we chose to follow, “Sonnet 35,” “Roses Have Thorns.”

2. Part 3: *Wonder Woman* poem

Jenna Robinson worked with us to choose material and create her poem, around the subject of Wonder Woman and her character's strong presence in print media and cartoons, but persistent absence from the Hollywood¹² landscape in a time where films based on comic books (with overwhelmingly male lead characters) are making millions. Robinson wrote a powerful poem with a shared lens of feminism and empowerment, which integrated ideas about Wonder Woman as a comic book, television and soon-to-be Hollywood star, Katniss Everdeen (the protagonist of the book and movie *The Hunger Games*, a popular culture reference with which our audiences would be familiar), Amazons, Greek gods and warriors, her ninety-one year-old African-American Grandmother, enslaved people, immigrants, Rosie the Riveter, and Rosa Parks (full text of "Wonder Woman" is in **Figure 4**). The ultimate message was that as women, we are powerful and need to stand up and be seen.

After the poem was written, the dancers and I had a few sessions of choreographic brainstorming to get started, then Robinson joined us for most of the remaining rehearsals to flesh out the piece and to chart her path moving through the dancers as part of the action (**Figure 8.12**). Robinson explains the process of choreographing "Wonder Woman:"

"I went through each stanza of the poem to find each motivation, how the poem shifted and how that can be visualized. I found that this rehearsal ended up being the most memorable as I asked each dancer if they had any female sources of inspiration and empowerment. We connected on why the poem matters to each one of us and tapped into what we wanted to accomplish."

We discussed historic and contemporary women who have inspired us, the struggles they faced, and the similar efforts (LMA efforts and personal endeavors both) between these great women and other larger-than-life superheroes, such as strength and directness.

We created a motif, that dancer Christiana Oshiro referred to as

"a specific move for the word 'Amazon[:]' whenever it came up in the poem we would bring our hands over our chests (like we were slicing our breasts off), then we would

¹² The upcoming film we are referring to is *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*, set to come out in 2017. There has been much debate about whether Wonder Woman, who is confirmed to be a part of the narrative, will have a major role alongside the male superhero characters and also about casting Gal Gadot (a small, thin, Israeli actress/model) in her role. See comments on the Noelene Clark's LA Times online article "Wonder Woman cast: Gal Gadot to star in Batman-Superman film" for a sampling of the controversy.

mimic drawing an arrow and aiming a bow. That movement is so powerful in regards to the overall theme of *The Shrew Unleashed*, because it represents a woman's strength and dignity."

This motif was created to epitomize the ideas of Amazon, warrior, queen, and hero in the choreography (**Figure 8.13**). We created several variations, along with the "scythe" motif, such as performing the movements in unison, in cannon, with different facings and levels depending on where it appeared in the work.

Oshiro described other important elements of "Wonder Woman," in this way: "We used props and dressed Blythe up as Wonder Woman, it was so much fun! This piece was special because we mostly had women dancing in it with one male, but that one male (Corbett) was very significant, because we cannot be strong feminists if we did not have someone to fight." We decided to use props to help bring the story to life, iconic elements from Wonder Woman's wardrobe which also symbolize her powers, including gold wrist guards/shackles, a gold belt, a tiara, and a red cape. We also used a men's tie, printed with money, as a prop for the male figure who was to represent the patriarchy and leadership in the Hollywood movie industry. Robinson commented on the use of props: "I really admire the ingenuity of the choreographer and the dancers to to simplify the use of props in exchange for more body expression. It forced me to really define the construction/deconstruction of the wonder woman image and the shifts in the poem."

The way we interacted with the props evolved over the course of the piece: at first Wonder Woman's props were placed on me (as I was chosen to represent her in Hollywood) by the other dancers, and I was weighted down by the imposition of society's ideals (see **Figure 8.14**), then Wonder Woman realized her own power and I passed a prop to each of the other female dancers as they each took on her superhero qualities (**Figure 8.15**). Still wearing or carrying these props, we danced the part of the work that spoke of personal struggles and history and related the qualities of familiar people in Robinson's life to those of so-called superheroes (**Figure 8.16**). At the end of "Wonder Woman," each dancer realized that they were powerful in and of themselves and they discard the superfluous props and exit ("step off the pages") by walking powerfully through the audience (**Figure 8.17**) to the lines: "You are powerful

So claim your title as an Amazonian goddess

And demand to be seen.”

Dancer Misha Matsumoto reflected that

“The "Wonder Woman" slam was (and is) thought provoking, powerful and empowering. Jenna [Robinson] is an amazingly talented poet who can create visual imagery with the words she speaks. She moves the audience and really adds to the choreographic aspect of section three. There is power in her voice and power in her words. She relies on personal experiences and historical events, as well as popular culture references, in order to convey the expression of women’s suppression throughout history in a broad, but specific way. The choice to have Jenna [Robinson] perform live, as opposed to a taped recording, added to the overall impact of section three. It was the live delivery of the slam that allowed people to be moved by the words that were spoken and the dance that was performed.”

3. Part 2: Audience-Participation *Spontaneous Dance Poem*

The middle section was developed after we already had chosen themes and movement motifs for the first and third sections, then we had only to choose which keywords/movements to use, create new poetic lines around them, and devise a process of facilitating such an event that would be fresh and new for each performance. **Figure 3** (Poetry: Section 2, Audience-Participation “Spontaneous Dance Poem”) includes the keywords used to develop the poetry and movement for this section, the new lines of poetry Robinson wrote, and the process we employed to set up a new “Dance Poem” for each performance. **Figures 8.1** and **8.2** are photos that show the keyword cue cards/posters in the process of being made by eighth grade students at Dole Middle School in Kalihi, and **Figures 8.10** and **8.11** show the Audience-Participation “Spontaneous Dance Poem” during a school show and one of the evening performances.

F. Crafting the Flow and Transitions

Inspired by the theatrical interpretation and modern design look of *The Taming of the Shrew*, and responding to its themes, I worked in collaboration with director of that production, Kimberly Shire. Shire is a candidate for the degrees of MFA in Theatre Directing for Young Audiences and MFA in Costume Design and *The Taming of the Shrew* was her directing capstone project. Shire and I talked together several times at the start of my thesis, and then

would check in from time to time about costuming, design, and particularly how to transition between the two works.

Along with Shire, the dancers and poet Jenna Robinson worked to balance the elucidation of the language via literal movement with abstract movement to convey the effort qualities. I wanted to create a progression within the Sonnet Section from more literal interpretations of words/phrases to more abstract depiction of qualities, then remove keywords from their context in the “Spontaneous Dance Poem” section and have a fresh creation each performance, ending with some combination of literal and figurative with the “slam” (spoken-word “Wonder Woman” poem). With a small, diverse, and talented cast, it was important to me to feature each dancer in a solo or duet as well as in ensemble work so I worked with them to choose which poetry they were most drawn to dance. I worked with each solo dancer, pair, or group to create their movement, carrying over themes and motifs from the other dances, then got feedback from the ensemble to keep the work moving forward.

The themes of the sonnets helped create flow, introducing the production with a pre-show of two sonnets about time that featured three of the dancers, following *The Taming of the Shrew* with five more sonnets to carry the Shakespearean language into a new context and adding themes of richness and betrayal, then circling back to time. I wanted the audience-participation section to fall in the middle of the work, keeping the audience engaged and giving them the opportunity to contribute to the piece in real time. Then it made sense to conclude with “Wonder Woman,” which is exciting, fast-paced, uses potent modern language, and relays the empowering call to action that left our viewers changed and ready to create change.

I decided to have the bulk of the work appear after *The Taming of the Shrew* so that we could share the piece with an existing audience, but to build anticipation with the Pre-Show Introductory “Teaser” of two sonnets about time, beauty, friendship, and death: Sonnet 12, “The Clock,” and Sonnet 104, “Fair Friend.” Since Parson spoke and walked while Matsumoto danced during the first Sonnet, it was simple to have her continue into the next, joined by Oshiro.

The next task was to have the audience flow quickly out of the theatre and into the Green Show. In this we were aided by the cast of *The Taming of the Shrew*, who ran out onto the green following their bows and helped escort the audience to the appropriate viewing area. This

transition worked well with the school shows, but with public audiences proved a challenge as some audience members wished to loudly congratulate the *The Taming of the Shrew* cast as we were beginning our performance. This was resolved in the performances to follow by having the cast stay and observe quietly or go directly to the dressing rooms to change after leading the way out onto the green. The transition music which we originally planned to lead the way outside (playing on a portable stereo) would probably have helped as well, but we ran into technical limitations that prevented using that technique.

We built smooth transitions from sonnet to sonnet, keeping in mind that when performing outdoors there is no “off-stage” area into which to retreat in between scenes, every movement and transition would be observable by our audience. We used our props to shape the performance area as scenery, as well as having the dancers who were not dancing a particular segment form the borders of the stage and direct their attention to the performer, and the last performer creating a formal passage of energy and focus to the next through brief contact. After the Sonnet Section was done, we paused to introduce the Audience-Participation “Spontaneous Dance Poem,” solicit volunteers, and vote on which keywords/movements to incorporate into the original composition. After that concluded, Robinson introduced “Wonder Woman” while the dancers put on their boots and prepared.

G. Production Elements: Publicity, Costuming, Lights, Scenery

Publicity was straightforward, as *The Shrew Unleashed* was presented alongside *The Taming of the Shrew*, which was advertised as a regular part of the Kennedy Theatre prime time lineup, as well as to local schools for the student shows. I worked with Margot Fitzsimmons, Kennedy Theatre Coordinator for Young Audiences to draft copy for the publicity to schools (the “School Information Packet” appears in **Figure 6**, with text specifically about *The Shrew Unleashed* in **Figure 6.2**). Additionally, I hung flyers on- and off-campus, designed in a graffiti style that coincidentally matched that of *The Taming of the Shrew* flyers (street art style, yet legible) alongside those postings and created a social media event on Facebook, inviting friends, colleagues, and local poetry, street art, dance, and theatrical organizations and personalities.

I wanted a hip-hop or “street” look for costumes that would appeal to young people, somewhat abstract, with bright warm colors, casual and not too “costume-y.” Having spoken to Shire about her costume and scenic ideas early in the process, we had a good sense of how to harmonize with and complement that look, while bringing it to an outdoor setting and dance context. To give more of a hard-edged street look, I decided to use boots during some of the dance sections (the early sonnets and then again in the slam) and once the dancers removed their boots they revealed brightly-colored patterned socks that coordinated with the colors of the tops (red, orange, yellow, and pink with accents of turquoise). Our student audiences particularly loved the socks and bright colors as well as the boots. Since we had a limited budget, it was fortunate that most of the costuming could be pulled from the dancers’ own closets, as they already had black leggings or jeans, boots, and appropriate tops and we had only to add the socks and accessories. Although the costuming, hair, and makeup had a unified theme, I also wanted each dancer to be individual, so we chose different hairstyles for each and there were variations in the style of all items: pants, tops, socks, boots, and props. I’m quite pleased with the results in terms of costuming, aesthetically and with regards to the response of our target audience.

In terms of location, we were only able to use the stage briefly for the Pre-Show Introductory “Teaser” and for the Green Show, proximity to the theatre was important, as I wanted to begin the as soon after *The Taming of the Shrew* as possible to maintain audience interest and engagement. Originally, I considered making the piece site-specific, but as it developed it made more sense to create it as a portable work, potentially able to tour to schools and community venues of all kinds. Though the work developed a specific relationship to the environment in which it was created, we are now able to perform it in any venue with sufficient flat space (grass, concrete, wood--any surface); indoors, outside; with or without scenery; and with limited or no technical requirements (lights, sound, etc.) if performed in daylight. The side of Kennedy Theatre has a striking architecture, which is quite appealing as a stage background, in photos, and on video.

In the beginning I had envisioned projection designs to harmonize with what Shire had spoken of for the inside work to emphasize key words, but due to the need to produce my work in full daylight (for the school shows and matinee) as well as at night, we decided to rely on low-

tech scenery instead, with lighting for evening shows only. The low-tech approach used simple poster boards for Section Two, the Audience-Participation “Spontaneous Dance Poem,” which I was then able to have eighth-graders in my wife, Nicole Schubert’s, classes at Dole Middle School help to color. Working with these students to create the scenery was a nice bonus since the production was designed for that age group and up.

Lighting was required during the evening performances only and Brian Shevelenko, Assistant Professor of Theatre and Director of Design, Lighting, Sound, Projections, and Special Effects, provided a light tree, instruments, dimmer, and necessary cords while Falcon Aguirre, a Theatre major who also designed the lighting for *The Taming of the Shrew*, created a look in the same colors (a bright fuchsia and aqua) as were used in that production. This provided illumination of our faces and movements from the front and balanced the amber back-lighting coming from the side of the theatre as well as creating interesting and dramatic shadows.

Scenery was simple, as the side of Kennedy Theatre makes a lovely and versatile statement on its own. All we added were colorful Hydro Flask water bottles along the upstage edge to provide practical weight for props to be used for “Wonder Woman,” having discovered by rehearsing in strong winds that we needed something attractive to help prevent things from blowing away. The props themselves, preset, also helped to provide an intriguing scene, as did other elements: the previously mentioned lighting, our boots during the sections where we removed them from our feet, and graffiti-style signage for the work on an attractive easel as well as individual posters for the “Spontaneous Dance Poem” section, where audience members provided living scenery.

H. Challenges and Evolution of the Work as a Whole

Having worked on several other collaborations between theatre and dance (*Sonnets for an Old Century*, *Look Back*, *Move Forward*, and *Strong Voice Project* to name a few) I originally approached Kimberly Shire to propose choreography within *The Taming of the Shrew*, but shortening the work proved to be a challenge such that she could not envision adding a dance element. She then suggested creating a green show and I started conceptualizing it as a pre-show, but decided that I could generate more of an audience by following *The Taming of the Shrew*,

arranging to do a brief pre-show teaser on stage featuring a couple of the Sonnet selections, but having the bulk of choreography appear post-show. The Pre-Show Introductory “Teaser” alerted audiences to the dancing that would follow, relating and responding to *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Throughout choreography, I retained my initial goal of presenting the power of words, empowerment, and social justice. I originally envisioned portraying different types of identity and relationship, but wound up embodying the power of words to express different emotions, incorporating ideas from *The Taming of the Shrew* and Wonder Woman. I believe that I was successful in making Shakespeare’s timeless sonnets understandable to new audiences, through both literal and more abstract interpretive movement. I was able to retain the original vision of a three-section work of sonnets, improvised dance around set motifs, and a modern poetry “slam.”

I had wanted to incorporate social media input by students and did solicit feedback from online community about Shakespeare excerpts, but it was more immediate and gratifying to get student input live for the Audience-Participation “Spontaneous Dance Poem” section instead of virtually. During the last performance, I also tried to broadcast the performance live online for family and friends off-Island, but ran into connectivity issues.

We successfully dealt with the following challenges: choosing poetry selections, memorizing poetry and being coached on our speaking, creating an ordered flow, dancer attrition and unwellness, personal injury and family crises, navigating technical elements, gaining financial support, communication with school groups, drawing audience members who did not specifically come to view the work, and coping with outside weather.

I. Choreographer’s Assessment of Effectiveness of Choreography in Performance

There were five performances--two school shows and three public showings--and I estimate that the total audience we reached was over 150 people. It was gratifying to see the dancers go deeper into the poetry and movement interpretation over time, taking ownership of vocal and movement delivery and investigating characterization. I still would have liked to see a greater range in the movement qualities, notably more free flow when called for (such as when depicting “Green,” “Spring,” and “Youth”), but this sort of growth in range takes more time and technical development than was in the scope of the project. However, I was delighted with the

dancers' growth during our work together. Similarly, if I had more time or access to vocal coaching, we would have had someone present to assist with that element at every rehearsal, starting early on.

If I could do it again, and with my next project, I would call on even more outside support and resources to collaborate on each element. I perhaps assumed a sense of scarcity and got stopped by this perception when I could have pushed forward in search of support. For example, I simply did not realize that the costume shop would have been happy to consult with me (and wanted to) even though my project was outside of the regular Kennedy Theatre season. Also, there may have been other financial resources of which I was not aware. An important takeaway for me is to bring in as many resources as possible and don't be stopped by the perception of limitations, especially in terms of time or money. When asked, people were mostly very happy to lend a hand, especially in their area of expertise.

Overall, I achieved my goal of a fun, collaborative, colorful, easy-flowing process and performance which raises critical societal questions, inspiring engagement in poetry, dance, the arts, and political/social causes. Audience members reported feeling excited and empowered, and responded well to all three sections of the work, especially "Wonder Woman," which helped resolve a sense of incompleteness and injustice at the close of *The Taming of the Shrew*. I believe that many empowering creative collaborations are ahead for all of us involved.

III. Figures:

Figure 1) Printed Program

(FRONT)

A Dance and Poetry Event with Choreography by Blythe Stephens,
Slam by Jenna Robinson and Sonnets by Shakespeare



@ UH Manoa
Kennedy Theatre Side Lawn
Friday 3/13 and Saturday
3/14 at 9:20pm
Sunday 3/15 at 3:20pm

A green show in conjunction
with *The Taming of the
Shrew*, directed by Kim Shire

Free Admission
Donations to
Urban Aloha programs
for youth appreciated

(BACK)

The Shrew Unleashed

Part One: Selected Sonnets by William Shakespeare

- Pre-show Sonnets (before *The Taming of the Shrew*): 12, "The Clock" & 104, "Fair Friend"
- Post-show Sonnets: 116, "Impediments;" 29, "Bootless;" 52, "Treasure;"
35, "Roses Have Thorns" & 60, "Like Waves"

Part Two: Audience-Participation *Spontaneous Dance Poem*

Part Three: *Wonder Woman* slam

Choreography: Blythe C. Stephens, in partial fulfillment of the MFA in Dance Choreography and Performance

Dancers: Misha Matsumoto, Christiana Oshiro, N. Grace Parson, Blythe Stephens, Corbett Stern

Wonder Woman slam poem and Spontaneous Dance Poem written and performed by Jenna Robinson

Lighting Design (evening showings only): Falcon Aguirre

Sonnet Vocal Delivery Coach: Leiney Rigg

Organizational Support: Theatre and Dance Association at UHM (TADA), Urban Aloha,

UH Manoa Department of Theatre and Dance

Special Thanks: Kim Shire, Margot Fitzsimmons, Gregg Lizenbery, Amy Schiffner, Lurana O'Malley,

Brian Shevelenko, Nicole Schubert

From the bottom of my heart, Mahalo Nui Loa to all who have gathered here today to celebrate language, meaning, movement, empowerment, being seen and heard, working together, creating art—ultimately to celebrate life. It has been an immense joy!

Figure 2) Poetry: Section 1, Selected Shakespearean Sonnets

(underlined words are keywords which were to be used in Section 2, the “Spontaneous Dance Poem”)

PRE-SHOW INTRODUCTORY “TEASER” SONNETS

Fig. 2.1: “Sonnet XII (12),” “The Clock”

When I do count the clock that tells the time,
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;
When I behold the violet past prime,
And sable curls, all silvered o'er with white;
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
And summer's green all girded up in sheaves,
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard,
Then of thy beauty do I question make,
That thou among the wastes of time must go,
Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake
And die as fast as they see others grow;
And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence
Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee hence.

Fig. 2.2: “Sonnet CIV (104),” “Fair Friend”

To me, fair friend, you never can be old,
For as you were when first your eye I ey'd,
Such seems your beauty still. Three winters cold,
Have from the forests shook three summers' pride,
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turned,
In process of the seasons have I seen,
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burned,

Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green.
Ah! yet doth beauty like a dial-hand,
Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived;
So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceived:
For fear of which, hear this thou age unbred:
Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.

GREEN SHOW SONNETS

Fig. 2.3: “Sonnet (116),” “Impediments”

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O no; it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

Fig. 2.4: “Sonnet XXIX (29),” “Bootless”

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone bewEEP my outcast state

And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possess'd,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

Fig. 2.5: “Sonnet LII (52),” “Treasure”

So am I as the rich, whose blessed key,
Can bring him to his sweet up-locked treasure,
The which he will not every hour survey,
For blunting the fine point of seldom pleasure.
Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,
Since, seldom coming in the long year set,
Like stones of worth they thinly placed are,
Or captain jewels in the carcanet.
So is the time that keeps you as my chest,
Or as the wardrobe which the robe doth hide,
To make some special instant special-blest,
By new unfolding his imprisoned pride.
Blessed are you whose worthiness gives scope,
Being had, to triumph, being lacked, to hope.

Fig. 2.6: “Sonnet XXXV (35),” “Roses Have Thorns”

No more be grieved at that which thou hast done:

Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud;

Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun,

And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud.

All men make faults, and even I in this,

Authorizing thy trespass with compare,

Myself corrupting, salving thy amiss,

Excusing thy sins more than thy sins are;

For to thy sensual fault I bring in sense--

Thy adverse party is thy advocate--

And 'gainst myself a lawful plea commence:

Such civil war is in my love and hate

That I an accessory needs must be

To that sweet thief which sourly robs from me.

Fig. 2.7: “Sonnet LX (60),” “Like Waves”

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,

So do our minutes hasten to their end;

Each changing place with that which goes before,

In sequent toil all forwards do contend.

Nativity, once in the main of light,

Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,

Crooked elipses 'gainst his glory fight,

And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.

Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth

And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,

Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,

And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow:

And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,
Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

Figure 3) Poetry: Section 2, Audience-Participation “Spontaneous Dance Poem”

Keywords (14 choices to correspond with lines of a sonnet)

1. Love (Impediments- Misha and Corbett)/Hate (Corbett)
2. Beauty (Clock ALL)/Death (Clock ALL)
3. Rose (Roses Corbett) /Scythe (Sickle 3x different levels ALL)
4. Sweet (Taste from WW ALL)/Sour (Roses lift with all but Christiana)
5. Moon (Corbett)/Sun (Misha)
6. Earth (Sink from Edge of Doom ALL)/Waves (Wave from SR ALL)
7. Thief (Roses “lift” with all but Christiana)/Innocent (Grace and Christiana)
8. Youth (Same as innocent)/Maturity (down to up to down ALL)
9. Amazon (WW phrase ALL)/Queen (WW/Treasure phrase Blythe)
10. Strong (WW Christiana)/Weak (Bootless Grace)
11. Sit (ALL)/Stand (ALL)
12. Summer (Grace and Christiana)/Winter (Grace and Christiana and Misha)
13. Day (Misha same as Sun)/Night (Misha)
14. Green (Misha spring)/White (curling in and shiver Grace and Christiana)

Poetry lines for each keyword (composed by Jenna Robinson)

1. When LOVE is noticed in slight glances
2. Yet HATE follows in the shadows the crevice of heartbreak provides
3. I cherish the BEAUTY in sweaty palms and high school dances
4. I prayed for the solitude of DEATH
5. Just as ROSES wither in old age
6. With a SCYTHE to the soul as all could see
7. I will find my SWEET only when i am willing to give into shadows
8. I must not be SOUR as the years turn
9. Dancing under pale MOON light
10. I now yearn for SUN rays

11. For rebirth rising from the dirt of the EARTH
12. As WAVES of loneliness rush through the beaches of my conscience
13. Realizing that I feel for a midday THIEF
14. Offering blood sacrifice for INNOCENCE
15. How I mourn the days of YOUTH
16. As MATURITY sets in and my bones creak as floorboards
17. Kneeling to AMAZON goddesses
18. Worshipping QUEENS and man-made systems
19. Finding STRENGTH despite empty promises and fleeting moments
20. I am WEAK for a taste of infatuation
21. I will no longer SIT and wait but venture into the horizon
22. But STAND tall through each sliver of doubt
23. For one cannot enjoy SUMMER and ignore the inevitable Fall
24. I journey through wrathful white WINTERS
25. How I mourn the DAYS of youth
26. Hoping that NIGHT could cleanse my skin
27. For my love resides in the GREEN meadows of my past (*or future*)
28. I journey through wrathful WHITE winters

Process of creating the “Spontaneous Dance Poem” in performance

- A. Introduce the process to the audience.
- B. Distribute poster boards (with one word on each side in graffiti style) to fourteen audience member volunteers, who join the dancers onstage.
- C. Each participating audience member finds a spot to stand upstage in semi-circle as living scenery, shuffling the order of the words.
- D. The audience votes for which of the two sides of each poster is read and danced in the spontaneous poem by shouting out choices improvisation-show style.
- E. The order of the dance/poem is read based on the words decided by chance, in the order from left to right (stage right to stage left) that the volunteers are standing.

- F. Robinson reads corresponding line of poetry for each word, dancers dance each word's corresponding movement or phrase of movement with selected dancers performing, set speed/tempo, spatial choices, and travel. Dancers improvise transitions, freeze when not dancing or improvise to make space.

Figure 4) Poetry: Section 3, “Wonder Woman” by Jenna Robinson
(underlined words are keywords which were to be used in Section 2, the “Spontaneous Dance Poem”)

As a child I always looked up to Wonder Woman
An Amazon
Seven foot tall Greek warrior
A defender of fertility and innocence
Like Maori women
Who would follow men into battle
And come home to raise future chiefs
Like African slaves brought to American plantations
Who picked cotton all day
While carrying their babies on their backs
Like immigrants
Who cut off their native tongues
Hoping to give their children a taste of the American dream
I’ve always been self-conscious of this girth
But wonder woman allowed me to see size as strength
As a long lost descendent of the Amazonian race
We were made to fight leagues of men
But the same pens that wrote her into comics
Wrote her out of film
After 6 superman and 8 batman movies
DC is finally making a superman AND batman film
And Wonder Woman is making a guest appearance
Like her presence was some long awaited gift
So us feminists could shut up already
When wonder woman finally made it to Hollywood
Male casting directors lightened her up and shrunk her down
Just visible enough to be in the background of the big screen

A token princess with a little tiara
A petite movie star whose strength is her beauty
Forget that
Wonder Woman flew in an invisible plane
Used that costume to deceive men into believing that she was weak
She repurposed her shackles of oppression
Into bulletproof wrist-guards
And used that tiara as a boomerang
Because she is not a princess
She's a queen
She didn't have any of the powers or money of Clark and Bruce
I mean, yeah she's a goddess
But aren't we all?
Whether we fit societal definitions of beauty is irrelevant
See
For me
Wonder Woman
Looks like a breast cancer survivor
An Amazon
Who cut off her decaying breast
So she could aim her bow better
Warriors don't give up in the middle of battle
Wonder Woman looks like my Grandma
Who turned 91 this year
A black woman from Louisiana
Who became Rosie the Riveter during the War
Transforming into Rosa Parks on bus lines
My grandma refused to sit down
Cuz she had to teach her children to stand up

My grandma had a golden lasso of truth
That looked a lot like a belt
To whip the truth out of her grand babies
My Wonder Woman
Could become whatever superhero her family needed
We are the products of Amazonian gladiators
Women who don't walk around all day
In a superhero costume
But throw on their capes
In times of crisis
The silver screen tells us we are weak
Damsels in distress
Waiting for a prince to save us
I mean
Even when we have a strong female lead
We berate her
We honor Katniss
But get caught up in her love story
Instead of the fact that she is the face of a revolution
If you don't love our strength
Why do you keep carving our image in marble?
Adorning monuments and capitals
We are the life of this nation
We must honor the legacy of our woman warrior heritage
Step off the pages and pick up the pens
When we write our history
We will no longer be invisible footnotes
Cameos or sidekicks
No matter your size

You are powerful

So claim your title as an Amazonian goddess

And demand to be seen

Figure 5) Shakespearean Sonnet Delivery Coaching with Leiney Rigg

3/1/15 10am-1pm

Use the Language

- Onomatopoeia- words sounding like what they mean, rich and evocative
- Alliteration- repeated sounds within words
- Antithesis- comparisons/opposite
- Spiral- rollercoaster; build, Build, BUILD
- Discovery- juiciest tool, have the thoughts occur to you freshly in the moment, figure out what to say spontaneously
- Substitution

Use the Structure

- Caesura- lines connecting one to the next
- Iambic Pentameter
- 10 syllables- de dum de dum de dum de dum de dum

Head, Heart, Gut, Groin

Where is this coming from?

Be Specific

- Who are you talking to?
- What do you want from them?
- Moment before- what happened just prior to this?
- Do you win? (even if you don't, TRY)
- Moment after
- Start one place and end another

Figure 6) *The Taming of the Shrew* Information Packet for Schools

(Fig. 6.1: PAGE 1)

JANUARY 6, 2015

TAMING OF THE SHREW

The Taming of the Shrew

AT THE UNIVERSITY
OF HAWAII AT MANOA
MARCH 11-15



LAB THEATRE
SPECIAL EVENT
INTIMATE SPACE - 2



SCHOOL DAY SHOWS
HOW TO BOOK YOUR
SCHOOL GROUP - 3



POWER OF WORDS
DIRECTOR'S
CONCEPT - 3

TAMING OF THE SHREW



What about a woman's voice?

In this tale about a woman who is reputed to be too outspoken to find a suitable husband, the headline character eventually is "tamed" by her husband who married her because of the healthy dowery she came with. With our modern sensibilities, this story borders on being too politically incorrect to be staged. The only problem with shelving it is that it is just too funny to ignore. We still want to see it because of the masterful way the story is told and the iconic characters who fill the stage with life and laughter. As you prepare your class to come see this show, ask them to think about what

"My tongue will tell the
anger of my heart, or
else my heart
concealing it will break"
- Katharina IV.iii

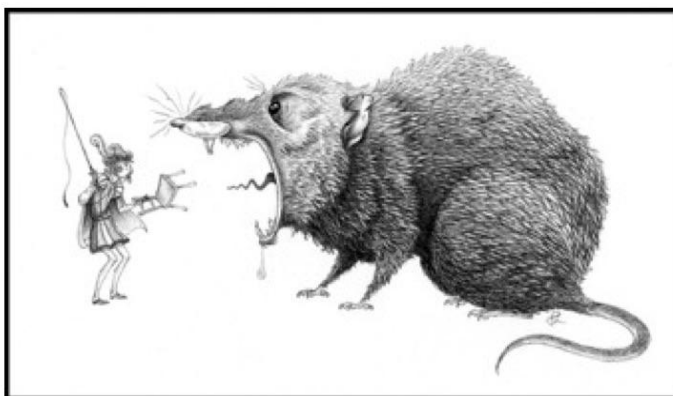
(Fig. 6.2: PAGE 2)

JANUARY 6, 2015

TAMING OF THE SHREW

this production says about women. Is it excusable that Petruchio treats Katharina so poorly because they end up happy together? Which woman is more admirable? Is it Bianca who is mild and obedient on the surface, but elopes behind her father's back? Or is it Kate, who is outwardly wild and abrasive, but marries the man her father chose for her. And speaking of that, what about the father having the right to choose a spouse for his daughters?

It is our hope that your class will have lively discussions about the roles of women, equality, and the value of producing a play like this one which extols the virtue of a man who can tame a woman's tongue.



Make a Day of it!

The Taming of the Shrew is being performed in the Earl Ernst Lab Theatre at Kennedy Theatre. This 120 seat venue will give your student up close experience with the performers. MFA Theatre Candidate Kim Shire is directing this production with teenagers in mind, keeping it lively, understandable, and thought-provoking.

Following the 80 minute performance of *The Taming of the Shrew*, you are invited to join us on the Mauka side of Kennedy Theatre for a 15 minute green show. You are welcome to eat your lunches while enjoying this Shakespeare-inspired show directed and choreographed by MFA Dance Candidate Blythe Stephens entitled "The Shrew Unleashed." The content of the piece will center around the power of words and will feature excerpts from Shakespeare's works, original slam poetry by Hawaii Slam team member Jenna Robinson, and work by students.

The Power of Words

When love speaks,
the voice of all the gods
makes heaven drowsy
with the harmony.

—*Taming of the Shrew*, Act IV, scene iii



Words have the power to uplift or to destroy. Words can win you a place at the cool kids table, or banish you to a corner. Watch what happens to Kate when she uses words to her advantage for the first time. How does it change the way people treat her?

(Fig. 6.3: PAGE 3)

JANUARY 6, 2015

TAMING OF THE SHREW



Taming of the Shrew

Planning your visit...
...to KENNEDY THEATRE

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

PAYMENT	CONFIRMATIONS	CANCELLATIONS	DIRECTIONS & PARKING	ARRIVAL
				
Payment is made at the Kennedy Theatre Box Office on the day you attend the performance. Checks or purchase orders are to be written out to the <i>University of Hawai'i</i>. Payment can also be made by <i>Mastercard</i> or <i>Visa</i>. The payment must cover the total number in your group (adults and children) attending the performance. The price of admission is \$5 per person (if booking by SEPTEMBER 1 deadline) and \$6 per person thereafter. One free admission is given for every 20 paid admissions.	After the reservation form deadline, the TYA Office will send out confirmation forms to all teachers/school contacts. Upon receiving your confirmation form, you must review and correct any information that may have changed since your initial reservation, sign the form, and return it by the deadline provided on the form. <i>Your reservation is not confirmed until we receive your signed confirmation form.</i>	Cancellations after receiving your confirmation form will be subject to fees: \$25 for 100 seats or less \$50 for 101 seats or more Cancellations made 14 days or less before the scheduled performance date will be billed for complete payment. Please contact us if the total number of attendees changes from your confirmation form. Your group will be charged a "cancellation fee" if the total number in your group is reduced by 20 or more attendees after a confirmation form has been processed.	Busses should enter the campus at Maile Way. Take Maile Way to the intersection East West Road. Turn right on East West Road. Kennedy Theatre is ahead 100 yards on the right. When returning for pick up, busses should follow the same route. Busses must park off campus or in the lower portion of the campus. Cars may park behind the theatre but space is limited and each vehicle pays \$2.00 for every half hour. If your school plans to transport children in automobiles, please contact the TYA Coordinator at 956-2591 to discuss parking options.	Plan to arrive 30 minutes before the start time of the show. This will allow time to disembark the bus and seat your group. Upon arrival, ushers will greet you and take you to your block of seats. The seating arrangement is mapped out prior to the performance date in accordance with the age and size of all groups attending. If you are running late, please call the Kennedy Theatre Box Office at 956-7655.

Questions? For further assistance, please contact the Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) office at (808) 956-2591 or kyouth@hawaii.edu. 3

(Fig. 6.4: PAGE 4)

	Attn: Theatre for Young Audiences University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Kennedy Theatre 1770 East West Road Honolulu, HI 96822	
	PHONE: (808) 956-2591 FAX: (808) 956-4234 EMAIL: ktyouth@hawaii.edu	

Taming of the Shrew

by Shakespeare
Edited for length by Kim Shire

*School shows will be offered at 9:30am
Wed, March 11 & Thurs, March 12.
There will also be a private performance for
International Thespian Society members on
Sat, March 14th at 4:30*

BOOKING DEADLINE: FOR PREFERRED PRICING	February 11, 2015	BOOKING DEADLINE: FOR PREFERRED PRICING	February 11, 2015
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SCHOOL:	_____	ADDRESS:	_____
CONTACT:	_____	PHONE :	_____
EMAIL:	_____	# of CLASSES:	_____
		GRADE LEVEL:	_____

Taming of the Shrew Performances	Wednesday 3/11 9:30am	Thursday 3/12 9:30am	Special ITS workshop and performance Saturday 3/14 4:30pm
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PREFERENCE	DATE	TIME
1st Choice		
2nd Choice		
3rd Choice		

of Students _____

of Adults _____

TOTAL # of Seats _____

ADMISSION IS \$5
(WITH 1 FREE TIX FOR
EVERY 20 PAID)
**BUT ONLY BEFORE
February 11**

**Figure 7) Theatre and Dance Association of the University of Hawaii at Manoa (TADA)
Funding Proposal**

TADA Proposal: “The Shrew Unleashed”

Blythe Stephens

Candidate for MFA in Dance Choreography and Performance

Abstract:

I am producing my thesis choreography, *The Shrew Unleashed*, as a “green show” in conjunction with *The Taming of the Shrew*, which is playing in the Earle Ernst Lab Theatre March 11th-15th, 2015. My production is a fifteen-minute dance and poetry event including sonnets by Shakespeare, audience-involved spontaneous dance poetry, and a slam poem. The work speaks to themes of the power of words, empowerment, and social justice.

Statement:

The Shrew Unleashed will cross-promote *The Taming of the Shrew* as well as *Dancing Off the Page*, but is to be performed outdoors—on the sidewalk/lawn of the Lab Theatre—separate from the official Kennedy Theatre season calendar, so has no departmental budget. I am fortunate that the Department of Theatre and Dance is supporting the work by providing lighting for the evening shows, and the project participants have been generous with their own resources. The show is certain to be a success, since we have scheduled sold-out school shows for our target demographic (high school students) and will be showing for the same audiences that will attend *The Taming of the Shrew*.

TADA should support this project because it not only benefits me by helping fulfill the choreography thesis requirement for my MFA in a way that brings together so many of my passions, but it also will benefit the larger community at UHM and in Honolulu by providing visibility to new audiences (TYA) and potential future students for both Theatre and Dance, by connecting theatre, dance, and poetry communities, by embracing a collaborative approach, and

by providing cross-publicity for *The Taming of the Shrew* and upcoming Lab Theatre and Main Stage productions, while simultaneously being a philanthropic project for youth programs (donations).

In order to complete the project, I am requesting funding for the following supplies as well as human support from TADA, in the amounts listed on the budget that follows: funds for printing both publicity and programs; funds for costuming, props, and scenic elements; publicity support by posting the event to the TADA Facebook page and inviting friends and acquaintances to the event; volunteers to help usher and facilitate audience movement and participation; and if possible, someone to help with archiving the work by video recording each performance (the department will record just one).

Budget:

Detailed Budget:

Printing (flyers):	\$.10 ea x 50 =	\$5
Printing (programs for public shows):	\$.20 ea x 300 =	\$60
Poster Boards (scenery):	\$1.50 x15 =	\$22.50
Cuff bracelets (props x2):		\$17
Costuming (socks):	\$5 ea x 5 dancers =	\$25

TOTAL funds requested: \$129.50 (granted \$130)

Other sources of funding available to me:

The dancers, poet, and I are already investing our own funds for boots and costuming, other props, and art supplies, and the UH Department of Theatre and Dance has donated use of light trees, lighting fixtures, dimmer and cords and lighting design.

Figure 8) Photography

CREATING THE SCENERY

Fig. 8.1 Dole Middle School Eighth Grade students color the signs



Fig. 8.2 Eighth Grade students proudly display their work



PERFORMANCE PHOTOS

Fig. 8.3 Pre-Show Teaser inside the Lab Theatre: “Sonnet 12,” “The Clock”



Fig. 8.4 Pre-Show Teaser inside the Lab Theatre: “Sonnet 104,” “Fair Friend”



Fig. 8.5 “Sonnet 116,” “Impediments”



Fig. 8.6 “Sonnet 29,” “Bootless”



Fig. 8.7 “Sonnet 52,” “Treasure”



Fig. 8.8. “Sonnet 35,” “Roses Have Thorns” (evening with no stage lighting)



Fig. 8.9 “Sonnet 60,” “Like Waves”



Fig. 8.10 Audience-Participation “Spontaneous Dance Poem” (School Show)



Fig. 8.11 Audience-Participation “Spontaneous Dance Poem” (Evening Show)



Fig. 8.12 “Wonder Woman” #1



Fig. 8.13 “Wonder Woman” #2



Fig. 8.14 “Wonder Woman” #3



Fig. 8.15 “Wonder Woman” #4



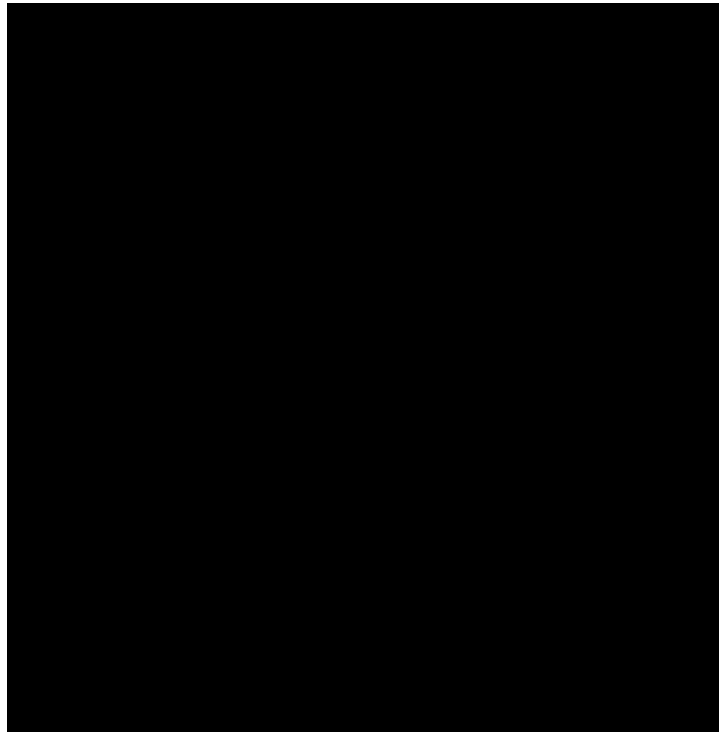
Fig. 8.16 “Wonder Woman” #5



Fig. 8.17 “Wonder Woman” #6



Fig. 8.18 Dancers



L-R: Blythe Stephens, Corbett Stern, Christiana Oshiro, Misha Matsumoto, N. Grace Parson

Figure 9) Dancers' and Poet's Responses Regarding the Choreographic Process

Since we followed a collaborative choreographic process and I wanted the opportunity to reflect on the work from the perspectives of all involved, I asked the dancers and poet to write “a brief account of your experience collaborating on the choreographic and poetic process for *The Shrew Unleashed*.” I have provided some of these thoughts in my analysis in Part II: Evaluation and Analysis of the Choreographic Process under section D: Dance Composition, and the full text of the dancers' and poet's responses follows:

Misha Matsumoto, Dancer

“These reflections come from your piece, but also from other collaborative choreographic dances that I have been a part of. The part of the crediting choreography comes from my experience in another piece; however, I added it in here, to try and play a little 'devils advocate.' Here's my account/reflection on the choreographic process:

Collaborating choreographically is always tricky. There are multiple considerations that come into play when working collaboratively-- multiple personalities, various points of view and different styles of dance and choreography. However, these factors all contribute to the final project, allowing the final presentation of dance be something distinctly unique to the group that may have otherwise not been created. Perhaps the hardest part of this collaborative process is how to acknowledge those who have had a hand in the choreographing the dance. While the main portion of the project is under the name of the main choreographer's name, the question of whether the other dancers, who have contributed to the choreography, are mentioned as co- or partial-choreographers still exists. Yet, the question of crediting other dancers as part choreographers is minimal; the main purpose of a collaborative process is to expose one another to new movements that is distinct to each dancer. As a whole, the collaborative process expands each dancer's movement vocabulary, allows each dancer to experience new movement and aids each dancer in broadening their choreographic skills.

In regards to the poetic process, since I did not really have any input in this aspect, I do not feel as though I can really contribute to it. What I can provide, however, is a reflection on the

poem itself and the delivery of the poem. (Please, feel free to pass these thoughts along to Jenna, if you feel obliged.)

The "Wonder Woman" slam was (and is) thought provoking, powerful and empowering. Jenna is an amazingly talented poet who can create visual imagery with the words she speaks. She moves the audience and really adds to the choreographic aspect of section three. There is power in her voice and power in her words. She relies on personal experiences and historical events, as well as popular culture references, in order to convey the expression of women suppression [sic] throughout history in a broad, but specific way. The choice to have Jenna perform live, as opposed to a taped recording, added to the overall impact of section three. While the dance would have still been good; the live presentation of the slam added an element and a presence that cannot be replicated in a taped recording. It was the live delivery of the slam that allowed people to be moved by the words that were spoken and the dance that was performed.

I was very moved by the project and it was a great way to be re-introduced to the "stage" after being away for so long. It was so much fun to be a part of - thank you for inviting me to be a part of something so fun and thought provoking!"

Christiana Oshiro, Dancer

"Let me first start off by saying that being apart of "The Shrew Unleashed" has been a wonderful, and memorable experience. Blythe Stephens is definitely one of the most enthusiastic and creative choreographers that I have had the pleasure to work with.

It's funny, because I was not originally selected to be in this piece, Blythe came up to me one day and asked if I could fill in for another dancer who sadly had to turn it down. Agreeing to step in, I did not really know what to expect, but Blythe was good at explaining what her visions were and what she wanted this piece to be about. I had never done any big speaking or poetry readings before, but I do admire Shakespeare and poetry as it is. So I thought it was really fun to take on a new challenge that I never tackled before. Public Speaking. On top of that we learned some choreography to go with the poetry, but that was not the hard part. The hard part was getting everyone together and just running through the poems/sonnets and really delving deep inside ourselves to find a meaning to everything we were doing. Shakespeare's sonnets were

intense and even though the words were just mere words (not to mention everything was in Victorian English), once we translated what the words together meant we were able to get a better grasp at conveying the message behind them. Most of his sonnets we performed had a central theme of “time,” “love,” “beauty,” and “death,” so they possessed a lot of power (since those things we tend to obsess over or run from). But looking at the words and the sonnets as a whole Blythe was able to do some interpretation through movement. I really enjoyed that concept, because it was not overly cheesy or senseless; every move we made corresponded with a line or a word within the sonnet. And Blythe was also very good with letting us work out some dance moves that felt good, but she always gave us helpful feedback.

Wonder Woman, was a whole other world when compared to the Shakespeare sonnets. I thoroughly enjoyed working on that dance and hearing the poem. Jenna Robinson wrote it and performed it with our dancing, so I really thought that was amazing. Everyone who came to watch was sure to have been moved by her words, and even by our movements. We used props and dressed Blythe up as Wonder Woman, it was so much fun! This piece was special because we mostly had women dancing in it with one male, but that one male (Corbett) was very significant, because we cannot be strong feminists if we did not have someone to fight. Rehearsing this was always my favorite, because we were all moving as a whole with Jenna guiding us along. Blythe’s choreography was also very significant, for example she had a specific move for the word “Amazon” whenever it came up in the poem we would bring our hands over our chests (like we were slicing our breasts off), then we would mimic drawing an arrow and aiming a bow. That movement is so powerful in regards to the overall theme of “The Shrew Unleashed,” because it represents a woman’s strength and dignity.”

N. Grace Parson, Dancer

“My experience with working on the shrew unleashed [sic] was definitely unique. I saw it as a bit of a challenge because I am not normally one for improvised dance or public speaking. I enjoyed it. As far as process we began with just ideas and solidified those and then we pieced together the dance part until it was what we wanted. I made friends, I never thought I would get along so well with Christiana but she's my fair friend now. I think I've learned to trust myself a

bit more through it, to stick to your guns and most definitely to enjoy yourself whatever you're doing, if it's troubling deaf heaven or feeling like a Queen, Shakespeare will have you know death is inevitable but so is life. Enjoy it.”

Corbett Stern, Dancer

“Working on this thesis project was a rather interesting process. I was not involved in a majority of the actual creation, as I was unable to meet with the rest of the group due to interference with work and class. I was however almost entirely in control of what was created for my solo piece, *Roses Have Thorns*.

The process was pretty straight forward, with my improvising and Blythe giving direction and feedback and the ultimate thumbs up for the final cut. We spent many Friday mornings crafting and refining the piece.

Working with the recitation of the sonnet was something I had never done before and was both a challenge to remember to continue dancing, and a joy to figure out. The more comfortable I became with my lines, the easier my dancing flowed. It even influenced how the choreography ultimately looked on stage. I started getting really into my recitation and perhaps found a new enjoyment to pursue.

As a whole it took me a while to get used to dancing to spoken word poems. I'm not sure why it was so uncomfortable but it eventually stopped being so as we rehearsed more and more. The putting together of the piece was smooth from my point of view. We rehearsed the choreography and our lines. We work shopped and refined our delivery with Leiney, an MFA student. In the end, everything came together really well.”

Jenna Robinson, Poet

“This was a new experience for me. I have never had an opportunity to choreograph my poetry with a group of dancers. Usually choreography is resided to [sic] my own body, which is limited to hand movements and facial expressions as the microphone radius is small. Overall I would say it was a shared learning experience with the dancers. It is difficult to bring movement to a specific story-based poem, particularly the one chosen, *Wonder Woman*. It was a calculated

decision, however, as an open response to the play our performance was tied to, *The Taming of the Shrew*.

The first step was finding out if the movement was going to be abstract or a direct reflection of the poem. I think it was difficult to choose either, really. It seemed to be quite difficult to figure out phrasing since the poem is so specific. On the other hand, literal movement acting out the poem was quite boring. We did our best to find middle ground. This process was the most crucial for my experience as we had to break down the poem to its essence. I went through each stanza of the poem to find each motivation, how the poem shifted and how that can be visualized. I found that this rehearsal ended up being the most memorable as I asked each dancer if they had any female sources of inspiration and empowerment. We connected on why the poem matters to each one of us and tapped into what we wanted to accomplish. This led to a discussion of props.

It's easy to get caught up in the allure of props. With no background in dance, it is in my nature to use objects when words are not enough. It got to a point, however, that trying to figure out handling props got out of control. I really admire the ingenuity of the choreographer and the dancers to to simplify the use of props in exchange for more body expression. It forced me to really define the construction/deconstruction of the wonder woman image and the shifts in the poem.

The hardest part for me was trying to figure out what to do with myself. I am used to staging alone center stage. With the understanding that I can be distracting from the dancing, we had to designate a placement for me while speaking. Honestly, it was rather fluid, and I think that it worked out best that way. Putting too much thought into my marking would have taken away from the spontaneity that slam poetry calls for. Also, as the cast rehearsed more, natural staging came into play as we found points to hit together, i.e. the ending line.

I believe the result was a powerful community effort.”

Robinson's Rehearsal Notes:

- Slow smooth beginning
- Solo WW down stage

- Women of power (real and fictional)

- Harriet Tubman
- Lauren Cox
- Ida B. Wells
- Joan of Arc
- Xenia
- Mulan
- Tina Fey
- Jennifer Lawrence
- Ellen DeGeneres
- Corretta Scott
- Isadora Duncan
- Martha Graham
- Susan B. Anthony
- Queen Liliuokalani
- Amelia Earhart
- Queen Emma
- Rosie the Riveter

- Props?
- Easel
- Posters
- Pics of women?
- Construct the “Barbie”
- Reclaim
- Deconstruct shift

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