



# Dance Portfolio

A Collection of Performance  
Reviews, Analytical Reflections, and  
Feature Articles

Kenton Hoffmann

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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### Wang Ramirez: Bordering Magic and Reality

Breakdancing, or bboying, is one of the most physically demanding styles to master, being the pinnacle of body control. As an apprentice in this art, I felt privileged to witness masters of the skill in Company Wang Ramirez's *Borderline* on March 9<sup>th</sup>, where gravity did not exist and the dancers seemed unreal. The elaborate system of pulleys and cables amplified the athletic ability of the dancers and created a piece that will certainly be the highlight of my year.

Being familiar with this style of dance, I was interested in finding any slip-ups that usually occur when performing powerful moves. However, these dancers executed their technique flawlessly, doing flips, airflares, windmills and other moves that take years to master. Seeing the dancers pull them off with ease overshadowed the difficulty I had in understanding the dialogue told through fuzzy speakers during the performance. The rice bowl story was the only one I managed to comprehend during the piece, as the other stories were told in French. I would have enjoyed knowing that the translations were in the program beforehand, but they carried a profound message worth reading after the dance regardless.

When the audience first sees a metal cube, it is suspended in the air with no clear purpose. As time goes on, the cube begins to play a more interactive role in the performance as dancers begin to push it around stage. The meaning of the cube is never explained, so that its purpose is based on personal interpretation. Its ambiguity is a perfect representation of what I felt watching this show. Even through the lens of personal experience it was difficult to follow, but the experience left me mesmerized and wishing to see more of Wang Ramirez in the future.

Word Count: 293

### Nederlands Dans Theater Starts Strong but Loses Momentum

Never before have I left the Power Center so conflicted about a performance than I did on Friday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> after Nederlands Dans Theater's performance featuring choreographies by Paul Lightfoot, Sol León and Crystal Pite. My emotions ranged from shock to amusement to boredom as I tried to characterize the performance I was witnessing. The prolonged delay between each dance caused me to evaluate the pieces individually rather than collectively.

For the first choreography titled *Shoot the Moon*, I could only describe it as "funky." As soon as I thought I was watching ballet, unexpectedly the dancers started acting like malfunctioning animatronics; wide eyes, gaping mouths, and jerky hand motions all reminded me of those Chuck E. Cheese arcades with the robotic mouse from my youth. It was so bizarre I had trouble reacting to it, as I never thought I would have to criticize a dance that doesn't fall under a specific category. Calling it a robotic dance is wrong because the music did not fit with the mechanical style of the moves.

Fortunately, I was able to overcome the eccentricity of the first piece to enjoy the next, *The Statement*. This was easier to grasp as the dancers moved in-sync with voiceover dialogue. Both comedic and realistic, the plot centered around four characters charged with fueling a conflict in a distant country, with each perpetrator frantically trying to avoid the wrath from "upstairs". This was the highlight of my evening, being the most comprehensible and entertaining dance.

Each piece required new scenery, making the lengthy intermissions a buzzkill. The program stated that it would be 2 hours long, but the third performance *Singuliere Odysee* started at the projected end time. By then, the hype of the previous two performances had

vanished and I lost interest. Overall, I think the company underestimated the effect that downtime has on a late-night performance.

Words: 294

### RoxRite: Renowned Dancer and B-boy Legend

Omar Delgado Macias, known as “RoxRite” in the b-boy community, is one of the most iconic dancers for being the first to win 100 breakdancing titles and having a spot on the Red Bull BC One All Stars dance crew. A representative of the United States b-boy community, RoxRite’s success comes from his ability to freeze with the beat and perform without falling out of his moves, a skill that many b-boys fail to develop. His consistency to execute his moves effortlessly stems from years of practice, as he has been breakdancing for well over twenty years. A former member of the Renegade Rockers crew in California, his influences include some of the earliest b-boys who dominated the west coast with their simple yet refined approach to b-boying. As a result, his repertoire is not as flashy as some other dancers on the scene, but he rarely falls out of sync with the music and completes each set flawlessly. Whenever he isn’t competing in tournaments, he is often on judge committees evaluating the next generation of b-boys.

Born in 1982 in Jalisco, Mexico, RoxRite discovered b-boying at a very young age when his parents took him to watch children breakdancing in the park. Although he did not participate, the experience stuck with him when he migrated to the United States to Windsor, California. Here, his fascination with this style continued when a dance crew performed at his school in Healdsburg when he was 12 years old. During a time when breakdancing was beginning to regain some of the popularity it had during its beginning as a new dance style, the experience at his school compelled RoxRite to begin practicing daily and study everything he could about b-boying. Five years later, he entered a competition in San Jose, California, where he went up against a world-class b-boy in the final battle and pushed him to ten rounds that ended in a tiebreaker. This result gave him a ticket to a Pro-Am tournament in Miami and signified the

beginning of RoxRite's career as a professional b-boy. After two years of community college, he dropped out and delivered pizzas as a source of income while he traveled for competitions.

RoxRite's name originated in 1996 when fellow b-boy Ground Level noticed he tended to "rock right" whenever he danced. Although he had his name early in his b-boy career, his celebrity status didn't take off right away. It took him two years before he won his first recorded professional win in Windsor, California at the *Hip Hop on Stage 4* event in 1998. His first international win came five years later when he traveled to France for the *Bboy Master Pro-Am* tournament. Since then, he has continued to garner victories across the globe and has been nominated as a judge for several competitions, including the 2015 Red Bull BC One India Cypher and the 2016 Red Bull BC One Canada Cypher. He was also on the 2013 scholarship committee for the B-boy Scholarship Fund sponsored by TheBBoySpot.com, which aims to provide financial support to aspiring b-boys and b-girls looking to emerge in the scene. RoxRite represents the United States whenever he travels because he has spent most of his life in America learned breakdancing during his residency in California.

One factor contributing to RoxRite's success is his network of support that extends to several b-boy crews, including the Renegade Rockers. His first affiliated crew, Renegade Rockers was situated in San Francisco, California, and was the result of two distinct groups that joined forces to establish themselves as the prominent crew in the area. These groups, Stunt City Rockers and the Eternal Breaking Crew, united in 1983 and used their combined power to defeat any rival crews through entering contests or by literally running into them on the streets and challenging them on the spot. Fusing the acrobatic moves of the Stunt City Rockers and the energetic enthusiasm of the Eternal Breaking Crew, the Renegade Rockers made an immediate impact on the local scene finishing first in the first championship they entered. Their competitive

mentality, along with their willingness to “show and prove” their skills no matter what, garnered victories throughout California and built a breakdancing dynasty by the end of the decade.

Consequently, this allowed the Renegade Rockers to sustain their group throughout the 1990s by attracting “free agents” from disbanding crews such as Prototype (PRT), Daly City Breakers (DCB), and Swift Kids. At this point, breakdancing had become a job instead of a hobby for the Renegade Rockers, as they needed to uphold their reputation they had established in the previous decade. One of the cofounders, Oc Silva, established a workmanlike approach to b-boying and used this to train the new recruits that had the raw potential and passion needed to compete. It was during this time that Silva recruited b-boys Wicket and Air Jazzy, two pioneers in the b-boy scene that would later become the franchise’s public figures. By winning every championship they entered, this mixture of “old school” and “new school” bboys created an unprecedented legacy and set a new standard for the dance. Their success spurred overseas tours, commercials, clothing line sponsors, and ad exposure through radio, television, and print. Renegade Rockers had become a brand and used their celebrity status to attract talent from across the west coast.

By the time RoxRite joined in the early 2000’s, the Renegade Rockers were on their third generation of crew members and the older bboys were retiring, paving the way for rising talent to shine. To avoid another rebuilding process, the Renegades picked out recruits while they were still on top. This time, b-boys and b-girls came from cities across California, including Oakland, San Jose, Sacramento, Bakersfield, Los Angeles, and San Diego. The newer members had a tradition of excellency to uphold, which helped give them motivation to be creative and experiment with their moves. As a result, they have continued to gain publicity through movies, music videos, commercials, and performances. Since 2006, they have performed during the



halftime shows for the NBA's Golden State Warriors under the name GS Lightning and GS Breakers. The Renegade Rockers have now established five generations of b-boys that continue to compete in battles around the world even today.

While RoxRite is still an active member of Renegade Rockers, he also played a role in founding two other breakdancing crews: The Break Disciples and Squadron. The Break Disciples was created by RoxRite and Kid David, both former members of the Renegade Rockers, and primarily competes in 2 vs 2 and 3 vs 3 settings, with an extra member filling in. Although Break Disciples is a small and relatively newer group, they have won several competitions, including Claws Out 3 in 2008 and Claws Out 4 in 2009, and were finalists in the Outbreak Hip Hop Festival 10-year anniversary in 2013. Despite their success, the group is now inactive as Kid David and Roxrite have both gone on to co-lead their newer group, Squadron. A slightly bigger group with nine active members, Squadron participates in crew battles and group competitions more than solo battles and are still competing in tournaments today. Finalists in the Freestyle Session 20<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary Crew Battle in 2017, their crew includes other notable b-boys in the scene such as b-boys El Nino, Vicious Victor, and Keebs. Ranked 19<sup>th</sup> in the world, the Squadron crew continues the standard of excellency that the Renegade Rockers had set decades ago.

Roxrite is one of three Americans on the Red Bull BC One All Stars, a crew of thirteen internationally renowned dancers representing the best of the best in the b-boy scene. Sponsored directly by Red Bull, each member has competed and excelled in the Red Bull BC One Championship, widely considered to be the most prestigious annual one-on-one b-boy battle tournament in the scene. The best dancers from each region battle it out and only one can emerge victorious. Thus, for Red Bull to offer RoxRite a spot on this team only further solidifies his

position as a b-boy of the century. Even though he is thirty-five and well past the prime of most b-boys, RoxRite shows no signs of slowing down and continues to expand his accolades each year. In fact, his most recent win occurred in March 2018 at the Circle Industry Breaking Battle in Salzburg, Austria. RoxRite appeared in a documentary about breakdancing called *Turn it Loose* (2010) and starred in two seasons of an online reality series called *Break'n Reality* in 2012 and 2014.

Despite all his accolades, there are many critics in the scene who disagree with RoxRite's success and think he does not deserve many of his wins. During the 2007 Red Bull BC One Championship in Johannesburg, South Africa, RoxRite went up against the Algerian-French b-boy Lilou in the Semi-finals and won by a single vote. Lilou was the crowd favorite and many people predicted that he would win the championship, so when he lost there was a lot of controversy surrounding the decision. Many spectators started booing RoxRite which caused him to lose the finals to fellow American b-boy Ronnie. Commentating on the criticism, RoxRite believes that his status as an American played a role in aggravating the audience, in addition to his less eye-catching repertoire. Lilou's moves were more dangerous and risky, but RoxRite's moves stayed in sync with the music more and was consistent throughout his rounds, which ultimately won him the vote. To an untrained eye, RoxRite's routines may seem underwhelming and simplistic, but his approach keeps him from overextending himself and crashing in the middle of his set, a mistake that many judges look for when determining the winner of a battle. This is what ultimately caused Lilou's defeat; he started strong in the first and second rounds but exhausted his energy and struggled to finish the third set.

Regardless of the controversy, RoxRite's ability to persevere through trials and continue winning champions will forever establish him as a b-boy legend. His dedication to the dance

form is an inspiration not only for amateurs beginning to learn about b-boying, but also for current b-boys who have struggled to maintain motivation. RoxRite practiced for years before he won his first championship, and even he doesn't win every competition that he enters. His greatest achievement is not just the 100 wins themselves, but his ability to learn from his mistakes and come back from his losses with an even stronger resolve. He continues b-boying at an age where most b-boys retire and represents the best of the United States. From his history with the Renegade Rockers to his spot on the internationally acclaimed Red Bull BC One All Stars, RoxRite's reputation is known around the globe as being one of the most consistent b-boys who rarely makes mistakes. Although there may be b-boys after him who surpass his victories, he will always be remembered as the first to stand above his competition.

Word Count: 2012

### Dictionary Entry: Crystal Pite

Pite, Crystal, b. Terrace, British Colombia 1970. Can. Dancer-Choreographer. Studied at Ballet British Colombia (1988-1996) where she had her professional choreographic debut in 1990 with her choreography called *Between the Bliss and Me*. Joined Ballet Frankfurt (1996) under instruction of William Forsythe. Formed company Kidd Pivot in 2002. Chor. over 40 works for various companies including Nederlands Dans Theatre, National Ballet of Canada, Ballet British Colombia, Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal. Collaborated with Electric Company Theatre for co-creation *Betroffenheit* (2015). Associate Choreographer of Nederlands Dans Theater since 2008, Associate Dance Artist of Canada's National Arts Centre, and Associate Artist at Sadler's Wells, London since 2013. Works include *Double Story* (2002), *Lost Action* (2006), *The Second Person* (2007), *Dark Matters* (2009), *Emergence* (2009). Recipient of Banff Centre's Clifford E. Lee Award (1995), the Bonnie Bird North American Choreography Award (2004), Isadora Award (2005), Jessie Richardson Theatre Award (2006) and four Dora Mavor Moore Awards for her work *Emergence* (2009). Awarded Laurence Olivier Award for "Outstanding Achievement in Dance" (2015). Fuses classical elements of ballet with the complexity and freedom of structured improvisation. Inspired by movement and structures that come from nature like swarming and flocking. Integrates movement, original music, text, and visual design to create a work balancing sharp precision with irreverence and risk. Company marked by strong theatrical sensibility and keen sense of wit and invention. Kidd Pivot received the 2006 Rio Tinto Alcan Performing Arts Award and tours extensively around the world; resident company at Künstlerhaus Mousonturm in Frankfurt Germany 2010-2012. Residency provided Pite opportunity to create *The You Show* (2010) and *The Tempest Replica* (2011). *Polaris* (2014) Pite's first work with Sadler's-Wells which won Critic's Circle National Dance Award for best modern choreography (2016). In 2017

Pite was commissioned by the Royal Opera House to create *Flight Pattern*, which premiered in March 2017.

Word count: 309

### Dance in the Internet Age: An Inhibitor or Facilitator?

Dance has been a tradition, passed from teacher to pupil in a studio or some other training ground. To learn a particular dance form, one had to search for an instructor trained in the form and hope that the instructor was willing to teach them. The result of this arduous pursuit meant that would-be dancers were often limited in the dance styles they could learn, allowing less room for experimentation and creativity. However, with the advent of the internet and video-sharing websites like YouTube, this is no longer the case. There are thousands of videos offering instruction in a plethora of dance styles, ranging from beginner to intermediate to advanced-level tutorials. Today, it is possible for someone who grew up in the countryside isolated from urban life to learn contemporary dance styles previously inaccessible. While this new medium of technology has encouraged thousands of people to explore new ways to express themselves, the consequence of this easily accessible education is that there are many more self-taught dancers than in the past. As more people forgo the traditional method of traveling to a dance studio in favor of learning alone at their own pace, the social aspect of dance and its role in facilitating interaction with others suffers and its power to connect people deteriorates.

Picture this: it's homecoming dance at a predominantly white school in a rural town where the nearest dance studio is miles away and is oriented towards girls under the age of sixteen. This was the case in my freshman year of high school in Frankenmuth, MI, where I witnessed firsthand the ridiculousness of the white boy dance. The lawnmower, the sprinkler, the inch-worm and many more questionable moves made an appearance that night. While it was entertaining to watch, it was underwhelming to see most people standing around, wishing they were anywhere else but the school's cafeteria on a Friday night. The awkwardness of it all compelled me to search the internet for the most complex and impressive dance moves possible,

which led me to bboying. Known to most people as breakdancing, bboying is a very rigorous dance form that is not taught in most traditional dance studios. I knew it was unlikely that I would find an instructor nearby that would be willing to teach me this form of dance, which propelled me to search YouTube and internet forums for step-by-step tutorials of beginner moves. Thanks to these comprehensible resources, I was able to learn something unfathomable in my archaic town of Frankenmuth and they opened a world of possibilities for me.

The internet cannot substitute for dancing with another person, however, and the problem remains finding nearby individuals who share enthusiasm in a particular dance form remains, which in turn can be demoralizing. In traditional dance studios, the possibilities for collaboration are numerous because of a shared interest in the dance. Being self-taught, there isn't the same network of individuals that can offer constructive criticism or advice on how to improve. Without a teacher or mentor to motivate and encourage my dance, I reached a point where I almost stopped entirely. Some moves proved too challenging for me, leaving me in a state of limbo where my experience reached a plateau. When I tried something new, I didn't have the immediate feedback of an instructor to tell me what I did right and how I could improve; instead, I had to post my problems to an online forum and hope that someone would recognize my problem and know how to resolve it. Feeling lost on what to do, I felt alone in my desire to dance. People cheered me on whenever I stepped on the dance floor, but no one wanted to step into the circle. I had been practicing in hopes of a dance-off or a challenger to approach, but no one could comprehend how to engage in this dance. I wanted competition to drive me forward or a partner to share the spotlight with, but instead I was a one-man show.

Not everyone who is a self-taught dancer has this problem, and some manage to use the internet as a tool for social interaction. Two years ago, Synta Igusti, a videographer and self-

taught dancer, made headlines when Chris Brown posted one of her videos on his Instagram for millions of his followers to view. In an article posted by ABC News in Australia titled “How a self-taught Queensland hip-hop dancer captured the attention of 33 million people”, the author Harriet Tatham explains how Synta Igusti garnered international fame without a single dance lesson. Her inspiration for dancing originated from a YouTube clip of one of Lady Gaga’s back-up dancers she saw when she was eight years old. Envious of the passion that the dancer exhibited, Igusti started teaching herself, using a camera and a mirror to record her routine so she could watch it back. She started to experiment with video editing and animation, publishing music videos with special effects and sometimes with an emotional story connected. Instead of just using the internet to extract information, Synta Igusti channeled her dance knowledge back into the digital medium to express herself. While she said she still suffered from anxiety at the time of the article, having that creative outlet helped her recover and develop a brighter perspective on life. Her online career served as a springboard to improving her social skills both online and off, as she started saying hello to strangers and maintaining eye contact more often when having a conversation. Even if she does not dance socially with others in-person, she tries to be socially involved in other ways.

While Igusti’s case is another example of the internet’s ability to create new dance identities, the same problem of losing the social aspect of dance comes into play. Igusti simply became another online dancer for others to draw inspiration from; whether she participates in real-world dance activities is still a mystery. The internet may succeed in spreading dance as an artistic expression for individual performers, but it fails to bring these newfound artists together in the physical world. Either they become too absorbed in the internet and lose interest in venturing to local dance clubs, or they become complacent in expressing themselves only



virtually. YouTube and similar video-hosting sites incentivize content creators by providing revenue based on the amount of views and advertisement impressions they make. According to statistics that YouTube posted on their website, for every 1,000 ad impressions a YouTube channel makes on its viewers, YouTube will pay approximately \$7.60. While this seems like a small amount for such a large sum of views, YouTube has more than 1 billion monthly unique visitors and over 6 billion hours of video are watched per month. This means only .001% of those 1 billion visitors need to watch a video for it to accumulate a million views. Along with the fact that some of these visitors may become recurring subscribers and will probably watch a video more than once, content creators can quickly generate a steady income without leaving the comfort of their home. For dancers who have attracted a considerable following online for posting their routines, they may turn their hobby into a source of income if they can make a quick profit. This is not entirely a bad thing for dancers, but it can quickly consume their time and they may find themselves prioritizing uploading content over meeting people face-to-face to share their dance experiences.

While traditional dance studios may eventually become obsolete thanks to online classrooms and instructors, I believe that people need to dance physically with one another not only to prevent themselves from feeling isolated, but also to help them get personalized feedback from others sharing the space together. Transitioning from a relatively small high school with less than 500 students to a public university with over 44,000 students, the odds of finding at least a couple of people interested in bboying were in my favor. Thanks to the University of Michigan's expansive list of over 1,000 student organizations located on the Ann Arbor campus, I found the Element 1 Breakdancing group and finally met others that shared my interests in this street dance. At last, I was no longer the sole performer of this difficult dance form and I could

relate my struggles to the other members of the group. For the first time, I saw power moves like windmills, airflares and airswipes up-close in person. These moves were the ones I couldn't learn on my own, so seeing ordinary teenagers perform what I thought only professionals could do amazed me. With the cyberspace barrier behind me, I could learn side-by-side with my peers and ask questions directly instead of referring to a screen. Even if I was performing the moves completely wrong, having someone correct me and offer advice right away is a privilege that traditional dancers take for granted. I still make a lot of mistakes when dancing but now I can rely on a mentor to catch those mistakes before they become bad habits.

That being said, a person is doomed to fail if they cannot find a dance group nearby that they are interested in. The population and geographic location of a person plays a huge role in facilitating the spread of new dance styles and ideas in their area, and if I didn't get admitted into the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, I might have encountered the same problem I faced in my home town if I had enrolled in a smaller college. I am fortunate enough to be in an urban city to pursue a higher education, but it would not have been feasible for me to move here otherwise. Traveling would be out of the question also, as I could not justify traveling for three hours every time I wanted to dance. In this case, having the internet to explore dance would be better than the alternative of quitting dance entirely; no one should have an empty arsenal of moves at a party.

Overall, the internet is a great tool for providing that spark to ignite someone's desire to dance, but it requires a lot more support to keep the passion ablaze. In rural areas where interpersonal communication is usually limited, it can be the only source of information available. But like soil without nutrients, if there isn't a community willing to support and nurture the seed, it will quickly die before it ever reaches maturity.

Word Count: 1756

## Final Reflection

When I went to my first class for this course, my initial thought was that “I’ve made a huge mistake.” As an LSA student transferring to the School of Information, I was an anomaly in this class consisting solely of dance majors and minors. This disparity was evident on day one, when I learned that I had to watch a “Masterclass” hosted by the American Ballet Theater (ABT) in one of the University’s dance studios. I was invited to participate in the workshop but considering that it had “master” in its title, I reckoned that they were looking for students far above my skill level and I had guessed right. I felt so out of place watching this ballet practice that I wondered if there was a glitch in the system and I had inadvertently signed up for the wrong course. Unfortunately, it was too late in the semester and I had already dramatically shifted my schedule around, so I overcame the uncomfortable vibes I had during the first session and persevered. My enrollment in this class was nothing short of an accident, but it was one of the best mistakes I’ve made during my sophomore year at the University of Michigan. For most of my academic career, I’ve been writing analytical arguments or persuasive papers citing other works for evidence. I had never written a critic review about a work using my personal opinions before, especially for a dance performance, so this writing style was foreign to me. Regardless, I knew that this class seemed far more interesting as an upper level writing course than Russian sports, so I was glad to have a course that would not only broaden my experiences, but also give me a newfound appreciation for writing about dance. None of the papers felt like busy work created to satisfy a quota for students; instead, there was enough time given between assignments that I could reflect on what I wrote and edit it before the next assignment was due, which allowed me to focus on the common mistakes I make as a writer and take steps to correct them moving forward.

Foremost, the biggest challenge I faced when writing about dance was learning to criticize a piece without feeling pompous. As a non-dance major writing reviews about dance professionals, I thought I lacked the credentials to critique a performance that people worked hard to create. Choreographers spend countless hours casting roles, perfecting movements, and applying for funding before their piece debuts. A lot of effort goes into choreographing a dance, and now I am supposed to judge whether it was worth the time and money for other people to watch it in the future. I didn't spend years learning about the history of the companies and why their dancers move in a certain way; I had one lecture in class and a couple of readings before the performance that I had to scrape knowledge from. I lacked the experience that many of the dance critics that have been writing reviews for years have had. This affected the way I wrote my reviews, and I think the biggest flaw in my earlier papers was that I was trying to be someone else. I tried to write as an expert in the field when I should have been writing through my perspective as a newcomer unfamiliar with dance. A seasoned viewer that regularly watches dance performance wouldn't be looking for the same things that I am, but a casual viewer who only sees a few performances per year may share the same perception I have in determining the rating of a dance. When I watch a performance, I'm not looking for specific techniques or certain moves. If I can stay awake for its entirety without falling asleep, the performance accomplished its purpose. I realized that I didn't have to write as a professional; I could serve as a voice for people who don't follow dance closely but are interested in learning what the average viewer would think about a performance.

As most of the assignments had a low word limit, the brevity forced me to be more concise in my writing and get to the point. Usually, it's difficult finding enough information to satisfy the word requirement, but now I was writing too much. For the first review of *Urban*

*Bush Women*, I spent more time deleting sentences than I did creating them, and I still couldn't say everything I wanted to say. I never thought I would stress about going over the word limit but fitting a two-hour performance in a 300-word review proved otherwise. In many of my first drafts, I find myself repeating the same information twice or trailing off on details irrelevant to the topic. It's easy to lose focus when writing a long paper, but having a short assignment limits the amount of words I can fit per paragraph. Luckily, I improved over the course of the semester, and by the end I felt confident in my ability to cut the "fluff" that usually pervades my papers.

One aspect of the course that initially deterred me from enrolling was the mandatory dance performances that students were required to see. Already juggling out-of-class time between my job and a leadership role in a student organization, my schedule is always subject to change. The fact that a large portion of the class and ultimately, the final grade, hinges on being able to write about these performances, I didn't know if I would be able to see them all, especially ABT's *Romeo and Juliet* at the Detroit Opera House. Fortunately, there were several different showtimes for each performance, so I didn't have to neglect my other responsibilities for this class. Additionally, the cast for each performance was usually different, meaning that even though all the students watched the same show, there would still be discrepancies among the dancers which would make our reviews more distinct. I remember being disappointed that I couldn't make the Thursday performance for *Romeo and Juliet* to see Misty Copeland since she seemed to be a celebrity in the dance world, but I still enjoyed Isabella Boylston's interpretation of Juliet's character. The bus ride to Detroit wasn't awful either, as I had more than enough time to walk to the Opera House before the show started and make it back to Ann Arbor right after it ended. Seeing what UMS had to offer turned my reluctance of sacrificing my weekends into excitement for what other companies were bringing to Michigan.

Throughout the course, I learned that not every first draft is going to be excellent, and sometimes it takes several revisions before I can call something a finished product. One of the biggest mistakes that I make in terms of writing is that I don't spend enough time editing my paper once I'm done. I pride myself on creating interesting essays with a vast vocabulary, but I spend so much energy trying to finish the piece that I am usually too exhausted to double check my work. While my message may be clear, sloppy grammar mistakes and choppy sentences obstruct the reader's ability to understand my logic. Due to the amount of time given to reflect on my works in class, I began to see the value behind editing a paper, and I wish more teachers would understand the importance of quality over quantity when creating their assignments.

In the future, I hope that other students outside of the dance department aren't intimidated by the dance aspect of this class and attempt to enroll regardless, as I think it is more interactive than traditional writing courses. I've written literary essays for years in high school, so escaping the usual routine of reading a book and citing passages for evidence was a breath of fresh air. I think a lot of people could benefit from the change of pace that writing dance reviews offer because it lets a person's individual thoughts shine through. Instead of being forced to pick a side in an argument or explain predetermined topics, students have the freedom to write whatever comes to mind after seeing a review. Not everyone is going to enjoy the same performances equally, so there's room for debate if a student enjoyed a particular routine that another student felt was lacking. It isn't necessary to have a strong background in dance to be able to write about it effectively. While dance majors will have the advantage in identifying terms and dance forms, I don't think it's impossible for an outsider that has little to no dance knowledge to excel in this course.

Word count: 1400

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