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DN310

Professor Stacy Alley

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DN310 and Why I Think I Will Miss Class with Stacy Alley

As I outwardly admitted in class today, DN310 is one of the only classes I have found the ability to truly apply myself towards. I have struggled to find the motivation to do a lot of things because I am loving my life outside of school right now; I love both of my jobs and I am the happiest I have been in a while. Thankfully, DN310 has been another source of joy in my life this semester and I think with that and that alone, it fueled me to give this class all I could.

Coming into this class, I wanted a double pirouette. When we presented our final today, I'll be damned if I didn't do a double pirouette. It was not perfect. However, I have done double-turns much better before and I am confident if I were to do that in a show, it would only get more and more consistent. Plus, I am 6'5 and if I ever do that on stage, I will be in the back and the audience probably won't see my flat-footed turn anyway. While yes, we should always strive for perfection, I realized that I have no reason to finish this degree if it isn't for the joy it brings me, so I just decided to have fun and enjoy it while it is here.

I have learned a lot more about myself than I would've expected myself to. Contrary to popular belief, and while I am so far from dancer first, I think I can dance. I am leaving this class confident in my abilities to hold my own in a combo. My issue is the speed of learning, but if I have time to process and practice, I do have faith in myself and believe I have the skills to succeed. For myself to leave a 300-level dance class and say that confidently puts a huge smile on my face. I know that I need to work on my speed on learning a combo, but I do pride myself

at my attention to detail when it comes to learning a combo. I know I may not land my single pirouette when we run the combo in an audition, and I may blank a time or two about which eight-count is coming next, but I have learned that it is not as much about that as it is about listening and processing and showing the director you can give them what they want. I thank you, Stacy, for making me prioritize every detail I learn. That is my strength!

When it comes to how I can improve in the future, I am very excited for jazz with Alvon. I know this is going to be a class with choreography that is going to extremely challenge me, but I am excited to challenge myself to learn it and really fight to get it right in this class. Dancing is fun and I have to remind myself of that. Dance being one of the only classes I get to do in person is something I will not take for granted. I love the community and I love growing with my friends. I hate zoom. If I get this class in person, I am going to appreciate this class in person.

I know I am going to be naturally challenged in the future with learning combinations; that is something that will always be difficult for me, but I am excited to focus on my fitness during the break and come back to school in the spring and dance. I have felt a rapid increase in my dancing abilities; whether that is my barre training or my confidence, we may never know. I just know I feel more centered than ever before. I feel supported and I feel strength in my legs. This is also something to rejoice about considering my knee-surgeries in the past.

After the midterm, I was very upset about my low grade. It was actually something that made me very upset and that took me by surprise. I think I had been doing very well and right as I was starting to get confident and excited about the combos, both of my grades felt low. While that is what it is and that is fine, it made me realize that this is something I still very much care about and want to improve on. "Turn It Off" was one of my favorite combos to do, especially since this is a show I would dream of being in one day, so when this was one of my lower scores,

it hurt a little bit deeper! When I responded so strongly to the low(er) grade, I decided to work harder next time around and not let “Bitch of Living” defeat me—because believe me, after the first day we learned it, it almost did.

I will not get to take this class next year, so as for what I would like to explore later, I don’t get that luxury. However, this semester made me eager to reserve fresh foods next semester and attempt some zoom classes... especially if no one can see me! I can fail safely! Learning so many different combos was so beneficial. I know this is the point of the class, but I really feel as if I have a grasp in what ways different choreographers have different styles and preferences and make their own choices. Each unit provided something that I was able to have fun with. In doing the research for each unit, I had to keep going back to these performances on YouTube. I remember when we were learning “Beat Me Daddy,” I was (sort of) doing the same moves as the dancers, but it looked completely different on my body versus theirs. They made the dancing look so much more fluid and pedestrian in the most beautiful ways. I tried my best to mimic that.

The research helped me most to find the other shows the choreographer had worked on. With each name, there was at least one show I was familiar with, so I was much more eager to research their work/style throughout that show and compare it to the show we were working on. YouTube was my bestie. Wikipedia, while problematic, was my bestie. I just used the internet for what it is there for: going down rabbit holes and delving all in. Even twenty minutes minimum can make a world of difference.

I will say, surprisingly, my least favorite section of class was the Andy Blankenbuehler combos, even though I was so excited for this part of class. Zoom learning, while I know it will be vital in the future, was difficult. I know that they were important and I am glad we did them, but the lags between his speech and movement versus the music provided so many difficulties.

Again though, I am glad we tackled them. I need to get ready to audition online for Norwegian, so I am thankful to have been pushed out of my comfort zone.

Jesus Christ Superstar probably felt the best to perform. I loved seeing what you gave us as the framework for the choreo, but when I watched the videos on YouTube, the performers made so many different and fun stylistic choices. It was so fun to watch and once I watched and was inspired, it made the dance that much more fun to perform. I am very much a “monkey see, monkey do” kind of girl, so to do combos like this and *In the Heights*, it is nice to push myself outside of my comfort zone and create a little bit on my own. It gives the performer a bit more creative control and it is so much fun.

The combos that felt worst in my body at first ended up being my favorites to perform. Both “Beat Me Daddy” and “Bitch of Living” were two combos that I worked for so long on and I ended up truly enjoying my time performing them. I know the technique was far from perfect, but it felt good to get every turn in there (for the most part) and every kick and everything that in a prior class, would’ve been far from possible. I chose to relish in my successes with this class compared to what I was failing at.

While I think it was much easier to enjoy the trip this time than it may have been in classes past, I am glad I did it. I am glad I put in the work for this class. I am glad I had a teacher that constantly pushes us to be our best. I am leaving this class fully prepared to say I can dance if I need to. I am genuinely sad to see this class go.

Thank you for everything and then some, Stacy Alley!