

Anne Dillon Loflin

29 November, 2019

DN310

Stacy Alley

DN310 Review

This semester in 310 has been extremely transformative in my dance training. Since this was my second time taking this course, I felt a lot more confident with the layout of the course and with performing in small groups for my peers. This has always been a little bit more difficult for me as I sometimes allow my focus on the material to get in my head and in turn psyche myself out. I loved starting off Senior year with a new mindset of enjoying class rather than stressing about it, and focusing on the joy of dancing!

Starting off with another disco combo was a wonderful way to get back into picking up combinations quickly and letting loose with the movements. “Shake Your Groove Thing” was one of my favorite dances from last year, and I greatly enjoyed getting back into the Motown style this semester with, especially since it is currently such a popular genre in musical theatre. I also love getting to do some partner work to help build upon the more difficult movements in the “Too Darn Hot” combination. Disco was a great way to have fun with our classmates and start off the semester feeling confident and committed to a specific style and character.

Transitioning into the “Anything Goes” combination was a welcomed change of pace. Tap is my favorite style of dance and I was very excited to challenge myself with this difficult choreography. This piece included a collaboration of musical theatre and street tap, and the mixture of these two styles made the combination very unique. I really enjoyed working on

balancing the energized momentum behind the choreography with the more relaxed and laid back nature of the characters. Becoming more grounded in this sexier style of tap was a challenge that I was excited to explore and conquer!

“Too Darn Hot” was the hardest combination for me from this semester. It required a level of high energy that challenged my stamina in the best way possible. As we learned in class, a lot of the majorly athletic choreography was done by the men in the show, however, it really challenged us women to step up to the plate and manage our energy well enough to not get sloppy with the movements due to exhaustion, and also keep ourselves safe while jumping in heels. This precision was integral in being able to accurately execute the movements while maintaining safety in our ankle support and plie. This particular combination challenged me greatly, as I tend to get bouncy with choreography when I get excited in an uptempo piece. However, I learned quickly that using too much energy at the beginning of the combo prevented me from finishing the piece with that same strength. Being intentional about how I used my breath throughout the combination greatly impacted the level of commitment and consistency I was able to give the entire piece.

“The Frug,” choreographed by Bob Fosse for the musical *Sweet Charity* was a complete change of pace from the previous combinations we had done this semester, however, I loved having another opportunity to do a new piece in this style. This combination was a nice transition from the “Bye Bye Blackbird” combination we did last year, and introduced a new adaptation of Fosse movement from what I have studied before. Since this piece comes from a fully fleshed musical, I was able to explore with specific characters within the storyline, rather than only dancing as a Fosse ensemble member. Though this combination was not as technically

challenging as some of the other pieces this semester, its specificity and stylized movements helped teach me the value of detail and the importance of body placement in telling these over the top stories. Finding humanity in the absurdity of the movement was a really fun acting objective to explore as well, as I examined the complexities of these high class society members, how they physically carry themselves, and how they interact with others.

The final combinations from *The Prom* and *42nd Street* were two of my favorites I have ever done in a dance class. These bright and energetic musical theatre pieces combine many classic elements of Broadway dance. I have always felt that tap was the dance style comes most naturally to my body, therefore I loved getting to challenge myself with this difficult and intricate choreography. One of the notes I have always received in my dancing is to ground myself. These two combinations really gave me an opportunity to improve in this area, since they required a delicate balance of energy and connection to the floor. One of my main goals in working on these combinations was to not allow my movements to get out of control, but to breathe through the phrases of the movement just as I would in a contemporary or lyrical piece. This change of approach to the movement opened me up to a new understanding of channeling energy into sharpness and specificity while remaining in the pocket.

My experiences through my dance classes at UA have completely changed my life. I often think back to my first ballet class Freshman year, and how differently I felt about myself as a dancer and as an individual. I am forever grateful for the lessons I have learned from taking 310 specifically. Dancing at my studio back home was my first exposure to performing and was a major influence in choosing my career path in theatre. However, I always hoped I could find a healthy work environment that helped me find the confidence to reach my full potential, fail

without fear, and feel supported in my growth. This class has provided the perfect balance of intentionality with every student, specific feedback, encouragement, and high expectations. This is a difficult business and a challenging field of study, however, this class has been a steady source of providing the joy of performing, which I will carry with me in my heart forever.