American College Dance Association Northwest Regional Festival: Presentation of “That Time”

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American College Dance Association Northwest Regional Festival: Presentation of “That Time”

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Rachel Kearl, Whitney Ellis, Graham Brown; Dance Department

Introduction

March 24-25th, 2018, Graham Brown’s choreographic work “That Time,” an excerpt from his professional evening-length work Sonder, was set on a group of BYU students and presented at the American College Dance Association Northwest Regional Festival (ACDA). American College Dance Association exists to foster creative potential, to promote excellence and diversity in choreography and/or performance of dance.

Methodology

Graham Brown invited Rachel Kearl, lead cast member, and Whitney Ellis as Rehearsal Director. These roles included teaching Graham Brown’s choreography, organizing and managing weekly rehearsals, finding personal artistry, and collaborating with BYU students.

For about three years, we’ve worked under the direction of Graham Brown. This includes daily Contemporary Dance Technique, DancEnsemble, Senior Capstone Projects, and the professional immersive show, Sonder. During that time, we’ve been mentored on the importance of being fully engaged, ambitious, and dedicated in creating new work. We were able to gain that creative knowledge and progress in becoming a choreographer/performer in Sonder.

With this project, we were able to, again, collaborate side-by-side with Graham Brown. Rachel Kearl as lead performer, and Whitney Ellis as Rehearsal Director. Together, we managed the compositional structures for each individual, teaching them the professional repertoire of the excerpt entitled, That Time, from the full length work Sonder.

Results

By the end of the 30+ hours of rehearsal, the Sonder excerpt was performed before adjudicators at the American College Dance Association, hosted by Colorado Boulder University. During these rehearsals and performance processes, students experienced a professional rehearsal environment, direction from the Rehearsal Director and the Performance Coach. Students were challenged by mastering highly advanced choreography, which improved their technique and their ability to express a story driven work.

Conclusion

This opportunity offered us the opportunity to collaborate as performers, and, how to direct rehearsals. This, and others, gave us the experience of an off-campus production of a previously, highly successful, professional work.
It represented the BYU Department of Dance as one that leads the field in creation, innovation, and strong performers at a regional festival. It recognized BYU as a University that fosters cutting edge performance in a collegiate arena.

It offered a performance work of highest artistic merit to the communities of the BYU Department of Dance, and other participating Universities that attended the American College Dance Association.