

Nashville Summer Intensive: reflection and correction log (Especially impactful/helpful corrections are in bold.)

Tuesday June 20, 2017

+Conditioning class

Ballet Technique class

- sousou is the feeling of your crotch going up, and staying up when you come down
- Reach *both* legs through the upper/inner thighs in arabesque
- Keep the elbows forward in en bas
- Keep in mind a sense of *dynamic* down-ness or wide-ness when needed
- **Hold your lower core in frappe**
- Cross your arabesque behind you, just don't over-cross, it will lower the leg/shorten the line
- Keep the opposite side of the body engaged and up in arabesque
- Turnout, like plie, is an action and NOT a position
- The supporting leg is part of the "picture," especially in promenades
- Keep the body in once piece, with any moving parts coordinating appropriately
- In turning, pas de bouree, think of going "down (up, up) down" while going through sousou for cleanliness
- Maintain body and joint alignment while jumping i.e. turnout
- Both jete and assemble come together at the *top* of the leg and then hang in the air in that position
- **Don't let the leg "drift" to the side in sissonne front**
- Bring the opposite arm around strongly and in a supported shape while turning. (don't let the elbows collapse down and in since it will carry over into your body alignment and balance)

Pointe class

- keep weight forward and lifted en pointe
- Maintain turnout when rolling down on one leg
- Bring foot back to crossed behind sousou, not open!
- Maintain depth and turnout of plies
- In pique arabesque back, push off of standing leg with more power, just as you would step past your leg in a normal one
- Stay on top of the music, not behind it
- Be mindful to maintain speed of the second leg in pique sousou
- Get to arabesque fast and then maintain suspension there, don't take up time in the music just getting there

Variations class (Kitri Act 1: FIREFIREFIRE)

- Phrase; the plie assemble should be on the 7,8
- Pull up in the butt and pelvis to keep the sideways hops en pointe light and jumpy; not jamming into the floor with your toes
- The toe tap goes to attitude back. Corkscrew the back/leg and extend through the attitude slightly in order to show this position to the audience

- Keep the jump out of the beginning double step-over turn *moving*. Think of circular, motions to maintain the momentum, for example, extending to a low, plie rond de jambe out of that jump
- The plie for the last diagonal of pirouettes is on the DOWNBEAT
- Swing the leg through for the assemble before the second “kitri” jump directly from the fouette to attitude
- Preparation for the pirouette diagonal is a passe
- Kick the leg high after the turn (phrase 1)

Contemporary class

- Coordinate the body and arms
- “let your body fall into the rapture of LOVE”
- “The working leg will do whatever it must”

Wednesday June 21, 2017

+Floor Barre

Ballet Technique class

- Move arm in cleanly to the side
- Don't go too deep in second position demi-plie
- Don't neglect the articulation through demi-pointe, especially on the pull in to fifth position in fast jetes
- Don't lock the knee in fondu and ronde de jambe en l'air; smooth out the movement
- **Don't tense the fingers when supporting the arm – think of softening your middle finger and thumb together without letting them touch**
- Don't sacrifice the turnout and move the feet before a pirouette
- Your back should not be affected by your arabesque leg until it reaches 45 degrees
- Don't break the line of your arms with floppy/tense wrists
- Don't circle the lower leg both in front and behind the knee in ronde de jambe en l'air, instead go straight into retiree and then circle to either the front of the knee and out (en dehors) or to the back of the knee and out (en dedans)
- Initiate an adagio fouette from the turn-out at the top of the legs
- Straighten both legs equally when coming out of a chasse
- Pick up the working leg quickly in a lame-duck

Pointe Class

- Arrive en face again before closing/finishing a sousou en pointe

Repertoire (Sleeping Beauty Act 1: Nymphs corps work)

- Learn how to absorb small sections of choreography for use in (setting) work later

Thursday June 22, 2017

+Pilates

Ballet Technique class

- don't abandon the energy in your legs
- keep the full foot flat on the floor when brushing through first position, don't allow it to either pronate or for the toes to lift
- make sure that the working leg in arabesque gets fully behind you

- engage in order to completely stretch the leg in fast tendus/jetes
- don't prepare your hips for arabesque, as in penche, let the abdomen and hips' movement be a natural result of the leg rising and reaching the limits of joint mobility
- close to fifth completely every time in a series of fast tendus, not just the last one unless specified or impossible due to speed, get to a fully realized jete at 35-45 degrees
- don't let the arms in fifth en haut drift to one side or too forward of the head
- grand battements have a fast release of the leg so that suspension can occur at the maximum height of the leg
- **grow and extend through the front arm of a first arabesque line *at the same rate that the back leg also reaches and gets higher***
- do not allow the arms to reach into backspace unless extending a line (i.e. arabesque) intentionally; especially important in bournaville jumps where arms must be *held and supported* even more than in a standard technique
- don't allow the arms to drop in a pirouette, *however*, It is most important that they are supported under the elbow and rooted through a wide back (allowing for partnered pirouettes to also succeed when the arms must be over-crossed and slightly lowered)
- maintain weight equally on both legs in fifth position (preparations) as much as possible
- move *efficiently* through transition steps; while they are still very important, you can't linger in them for too long
- your leg is one piece in regard to turnout – turnout from the hip build strength and balance

Friday June 23, 2017

+conditioning

Ballet Technique class

- focus on bringing the outside shoulder forward in attitude back balance and maintaining the spiral/turnout of the standing leg
- **coordinate the movement into plie with the lifting of the leg as a counter-balance when landing a fouette/tor de jete to "stick" the arabesque landing without jolting the arabesque leg**
- bring the second leg on a pas de chat up to position as soon as possible after lifting the first, ideally, so that the descent of the first leg will only occur after the initial movement of the second leg has stopped

Pointe class

- finish a chasse fully up on your standing leg
- when closing to sousou from arabesque, be sure to correct the pelvic tilt and shift your weight quickly to stay on your balance
- keep your opposite shoulder up and straight in arabesque
- begin the momentum on a turn from fifth position strongly and *immediately*; keep alignment by keeping your weight forward (even though you will be picking up the front foot)

Repertoire (Sleeping Beauty Nymphs Continued)

Saturday June 24, 2017

(Color Leotard Day!)

Ballet Technique class

- **“your butt is in your foot”** – keep your arches lifted and your pinky toe on the floor to maintain alignment
- When going into a glissade, keep your plie deep and then use it to spring into the air/travel, whichever is called for
- (see above) that plie should maintain a **circular momentum pattern**

Repertoire (“Under the Lights,” Johnny Cash Contemporary)

Week 1 reflection

The obvious circumstantial highlight of this week was popping my knee out of the socket – again. I’m hoping it will not be as bad as last time this happened, but I’m trying to prepare myself for the worst-case scenario where, after having seen an orthopedic specialist, I return home to recover in an environment more friendly to my insurance. I also hope that I will be mentally strong enough moving forward to continue sitting out of each class for 5 hours every day while remaining engaged, optimistic, and hard working.

Monday June 26, 2017

+Pilates

Ballet Technique class w/guest teacher Anthony Krutzkamp

- Really go through a deep demi-plie on the way to a grand plie
- Pull up the knees/quads to maintain strength through the leg
- Keep elbows back in en avant
- The simpler the movement, the faster you can move
- Don’t bring your pelvis to your legs, bring your legs to your pelvis
- “no chicken wings, no ribs” (use this to tech younger students, good imagery)
- Don’t clench your muscles, lengthen them while engaging
- **Balance strength with ease/relaxation in the upper body**
- Going from passe to attitude on balance will require a shift of weight, do not pretend otherwise
- Use your turnout to disengage the quad/hip flexors when raising the leg
- Don’t adjust or move the standing leg before starting a developpe
- A grande battement leg is mutually exclusive to the movement of rest of the body
- Point the back/working foot *immediately* after it leaves the floor in a pirouette en dedan so that force will come from pushing off the floor
- **Use your epaulement without affecting your hips/overall alignment**
- use all the muscles of the lower leg to maintain control over balance/where and at what rate the rest of the body moves through space
- utilize your plie fully to pique
- get your second leg to passe faster and sharper in an Italian pas de chat

Pointe class

- staying more connected to the floor will reduce noise in echappe (and generally speaking)

- open the arms to second just before the en face end of a “floating” pirouette to reduce momentum
- coordinate the upper and lower body in the prep for a pirouette; they are two components of the one body

Pas de Deux/Partnering class

- find the “weightless spot” it means the girl is on her leg
- partner with your palms, and only steady with your fingers
- “maintain the frame” instead of correcting your balance/moving your arm in a one-armed promenade facing your partner
- Grip the man’s shoulder in the “divot” – NOT the trapezius, and evenly distribute the weight of the upper body through both hands (the one on the hand and the one on the shoulder)

Tuesday June 27, 2017

+conditioning

Ballet Technique class

- Keeping your heels together (especially when you’re hyperextended) can help give you a better sense of where your weight should be and keep you on top of your legs/hyperextension as opposed to sitting back in it
- Maintain opposition in the outside shoulder in tendu/jete back to keep the hips square
- Energy goes into the floor when balancing, not out of it
- Relax the shoulders when arms are in fifth en haut
- Actively work to engage the hamstring in passe, working to get the foot above the knee without distorting the level of the hips
- Lead the fondu front with the inside of the calf/ go through attitude
- “Lift up, for the love of everything that is holy”

Pointe class

- Visualize moving your standing leg forward in arabesque/developpe to lighten it and keep you on your leg
- Use the movement through the plie as preparation for the next (i.e. jumps) to smooth movement and transitions
- Cut in straight lines, not in ronds de jambes
- Keep your weight forward in step overs
- **For turns, apply the feeling of the right to the technical awareness of the left**
- getting up to passe quickly will let the viewer register more turns; especially true for pique and step-over turns
- **in a sissonne to pointe, move your front foot the same amount as would in a pique arabesque; this will let you balance at the end/be on top of your leg**
- create the longest line possible using the arms in arabesque *from the audience’s perspective*

Variations class (Tchaikovsky pas de deux)

- requires cleanliness and precision of movement before “Balanchine technique”
- piques are *up and over* not down
- don’t neglect the second leg in the gargouillade

- keep the arms light and relaxed, and the movement subtle – with the speed of movement, they will naturally conform to the Balanchine style if they are not overly stiff
- the back leg motivates the traveling sousou in the first phrase
- don't short change the battu
- only slow down the descent of the leg for a brief moment at the height of the developpe a la second and use both arms to coordinate with this – do not forget about the side arm
- push with the back foot to travel the piques as opposed to hopping them.
- Move immediately from the gargouillade into the first of the fast passes on count 8 (not 1)
- **Cut from the echappe to the coupe quickly to prepare for the kick**

Contemporary class

- Color your movement

Wednesday June 28, 2017

Ballet Technique class

- Use balance in first position with forced arch as a good opening balance, followed by couee on flat and then on releve
- Feel that the working leg is straight in the *back* of the knee
- **Move wrist and foot at the same time/rate for coordination in passe to attitude**
- Reach forward arabesque arm without the shoulder being involved'
- Lift where your partner would be supporting you
- Expand and lift your back in grande jete a la second
- Lower your shoulders for the back arm in arabesque (press down)
- Use your glutes to pull your leg open in a pirouette a la second

Thursday June 29, 2017

+Orthopedic doctor appointment at Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Variations class (Raymonda)

- Focus on the transition from rounded arms to allonge
- Tailbone down in pique back from arabesque
- Arms should originate from the back
- Coordinate the elbow and knee in a developpe a la second/ronde de jambe en l'air
- **Direct your eyes diagonally down for long balances, and up for petite allegro**
- Keep the standing leg shoulder stable

Friday June 30, 2017

+Pilates

Ballet Technique class

- *Arrive* to close tendu front; don't *pull* back into fifth
- Don't lose the coordination of the arms when you get tired (it will only make it worse)
- Reach to the "sweeping lines" of a ballerina stick figure
- **Don't strive to be a "Svetlana" they are born that way; instead strive to become a "Clydesdale" – a super dependable and hard-working dancer**
- Keep your elbows on the same plane as the preparation in a pirouette to avoid having to throw your upper body to counteract the sudden re-adjustment of the arms

- **Check the position in space of choreography on counts 1 and 5 (or halfway through a measure/phrase) to help you remember choreography**
- Drop your pelvis at the same rate your leg moves from attitude to passe in a turn – maintain the subtle counterbalance of the turn
- **Visualize the interconnecting lines that flow through space and then show them to the audience**
- **“the muscle that’s on fire is the one you should have used earlier”**
- Do not let your lower spine be involved in the epaulement of your upper back – isolate the articulation of the thoracic spine (repeat)
- Harness the power of a plie down and be aware of momentum generated therein; then direct it (*do not stop it*) (repeat)
- As in tchai pas variation: float on top of petite allegro
- don’t allow your hips to go forward and/or release the lower back/abdominals in a jump (especially echappe)
- be aware of how to create the longest line with the arms and legs when viewed normally en face (think the side arm in traditional croise devant)
- watch your facing in a tombe pas de bouree preparation for a large jump – be sure to change direction *intentionally* from the previous step (i.e. facing for the hips)

Pointe class

- make sure to push over your pointe shoe to its fullest extent, don’t just let the shoe prop you up onto pointe but **actively point your foot**
- don’t just roll your shoulders back; maintain your posture with a broad back/shoulder blades back BUT ribs closed/abs engaged
- find the corners with the tendu when doing pique turns in a small circle; remember that you will travel where your foot points
- don’t allow your upper arm to circle around into the back-space in a tombe-coupe-jete, (with a back attitude) this will kill your momentum/it’s inefficient

Pas de Deux/Partnering class

- keep your shoulders back in a partnered turn (no hunching forward)
- **in attitude promenade: if you’re falling upstage, lift your elbow; if downstage, lift your side.** Keep your outside shoulder coming forward at the same rate as your standing leg is turning out
- get into an extended position as soon as possible in an assisted soute de chat and ***don’t lean forward***

Week 2 reflection

I believe that over the course of the last week I have begun to see the true value of visualization. After seeing the doctor and getting a firmer prescription for specialized physical therapy, I feel more confident in my ability to recover fully given time. However, in the absence of time – I have only 3 weeks remaining in the program – I have been forced to acknowledge that I may end up hardly dancing at all here in Nashville. Having said that, I don’t want to leave since I will not be able to get a refund on either my tuition at the ballet school or rooming costs for the dorm and I want to get everything I can out of

these classes. I have been trying to picture myself dancing and applying corrections, since fully comprehending those corrections is the most productive thing I can do right now. Also, I am frustrating with dealing with my insurance company over the phone; my only saving grace is that I know what I'm doing more than when I injured my knee previously. Small miracles.

Monday July 3, 2017

Ballet Technique class

- focus on the lift between developpe a la seconde and arabesque
- don't half-ass the preparation
- keep the elbows fully supported *in all positions*, including when the arm is extended into a straight line (it will keep your core strong and maintain the shape/line of your arm musculature)
- use a dynamic deep/full demi plie in chasse, don't let it become stuck/stagnant
- "the pirouette is not the end of the step" – finish slow for a moment en pointe before closing to fifth position
- land a jump like a pointe exercise, by going through the feet
- simple arms are best for coordination with the legs/the rest of the body, however there needs to be a division between the sharp energy of the legs and the ease of the upper body
- use and strengthen your obliques to make full use of the lateral space around you

Variations class

- when you can't use your legs due to injury, you can still gain control and insight by practicing epaulement and port de bras fully – for example by doing this along with every group that goes across the floor in grand allegro

Contemporary class

- find the distinctiveness of articulation in the movement

Tuesday July 4, 2017

Ballet Technique class

- first full barre – working more actively in class means fewer notes taken)

Pointe class (first attempt at simple releve exercises)

- use the plie in piques, especially turns to both control momentum and create movement contrast (slow/fast. Soft/sharp, etc.)

Wednesday July 5, 2017

Musical Theatre

- "find your inner doobly-doo"
- Don't be afraid to really go for it and/or sing

Thursday July 6, 2017

Ballet Technique class

- In a brise, don't just throw your butt back or your legs forward, instead, **derive the position in the air organically from your momentum**

Pointe class

- Don't let your leg "rock" inward in pirouettes from fifth position

Friday July 7, 2017

Performance Repertoire

- Don't make the movement of bourrees feel small
- Breathe *through* the small quick jumps, or else you'll be out of breath
- **Your momentum is suspended in a pique sousou**

Week 3 reflection

I've started to slowly introduce dance back into my workouts and my physicality. I have also started physical therapy twice a week. I feel as though my turnout muscles should not be *this* atrophied after just a few weeks not taking class, but here I am – totally lacking the turnout I thought that I had developed. I also have been forbidden from forcing my turn-out or standing in fifth position; I have been banished to the realm of elementary schoolers and their third position (I'm weeping internally, in case you were wondering.) In any case I have been able to stay strongly motivated to keep moving forward (on what seems like it will be an excessively long and strenuous road to recovery) by working out like there is no tomorrow. I can't do anything except for my therapy exercises in terms of weight bearing activities, so I got a month-long membership to Vanderbilt University's rec center and have been swimming laps there at least three times a week. So basically, I've been grinding like my life is some sort of tedious mmorpg and exhaustion will help my character level up.

Week 4 & 5 rehabilitation and tentative workout schedule

*To be used with discretion according to muscle fatigue and overall pain/inflammation

**graduated exercises which cannot be performed immediately due to increased difficulty

Clamshells

- sets of 20, right/left
- with and without engaging the gluteus

Standing rotation exercises

- using turn-out boards or sheet paper on tile
- 2 sets of 15
- with and without engaging the gluteus

prone leg extension

- set of 10, right and left
- keep lower abdominals engaged, lower back totally supported and uninvolved in movement of leg

wall sits

- 3 sets of 30 sec. each
- Add a Theraband around thighs in week 5+

*Prone leg extension on yoga ball

- set of 10, right/left

*turned out, one-leg balance

- 2 sets of 30 sec. each
- in coupe with eyes open/closed, right/left

warrior three series

- with counterbalanced dumbbell: set of 10, right/left

- rotating upper body in airplane: set of 10, right/left
- plie on standing leg, arms moving down: set of 10, right/left
- plie and releve on standing leg; set of 10, right/left
- spiral down to floor and releve: set of 10, right/left
- graduate to next exercise in series when form can be maintained relatively easily through the full set

****Warrior 3 Bosu Ball series**

- rotating upper body in airplane: set of 10, right/left
- plie on standing leg, arms moving down: set of 10, right/left

step-downs

- set of 15-20, right/left
- cycle front/back (set of 15 each) and side (set of 20) every other day
- add TheraBand for increased difficulty

****step-downs on inverted Bosu ball**

- use week 5+/when normal step-down form can be maintained relatively easily through the full set with TheraBand
- set of 10, right/left
- front, side, and back (begin with 5 each)

Bosu Ball Balance

- 2-3 sets of 30 sec. each, right/left
- Keep standing leg turned in, slowly moving arms, closing eyes, and turning out working leg into coupe to increase difficulty

Abdominal planks

- 2 sets of 2 min. each + set of 1 min

TheraBand foot/ankle exercises/articulations

*Pointe exercises (relevés, elevés. Plies en pointe, etc.)

Pilates Classes at Vanderbilt Rec Center: Tues/Thurs 5:15-6:15p

***Yoga at Vanderbilt Rec Center**

- Mon 5:30-6:30p
- Tues 6:30-7:30p
- Thurs 7:15-8:15p
- Sun 2:00-3:15p

Lap Swimming Plan (freestyle) Week 4: 100m warm-up, 150m, 3X100m, 2X75m, 4X50m, 4X25m (sprints)

Week 5: 100m warm-up, 200m, 3X100m, 3X50m, 3X25m (sprints)

Week 4 reflection

I think that I have figured out why I injured my knee again: even though I thought that I had fixed the problems I had with my alignment that caused the first incidence of this injury, I had just tricked myself. The catalyst for this re-injury was a combination of being slightly out of shape going into classes here at Nashville, a sticky floor, and forcing my turnout from my lower leg without realizing it. Previously, I believed that if my knee was going over my toe, then the small discrepancies in my

alignment were within an acceptable range, and could be slowly corrected over time. However, upon realizing earlier in the summer that my weight was habitually a bit back, I had begun actively trying to correct it and shift my weight slightly forward to get more “on my leg” and improve the stability of my standing leg (particularly in adagio in the center.) I was successful in this, but in order to do so I lost the “safety zone” that I had established by *ever so slightly tucking my pelvis in*. Because this habitual alignment – developed to protect my knee after my previous injury – reduced the appearance of my slight sway back and maintained an acceptably wide angle of turn-out, no teacher could recognize that I was tucking my over-engaging my gluteus muscles while **not making use of my external rotators**. This is the key reason why I am having so much trouble right now: for the greater part of a year, I have not been using my main rotation muscles and they have weakened considerably. This means I must rebuild these muscles, and my turnout alignment from basically nothing. I cannot rely on my faulty muscle memory, instead moving slowly through proprioceptive barre exercises to retrain my body to accept my *actual* turnout. By my best estimation, there are about 6 very hard months of constant attention and effort before I can regain the level of technique I had before this injury. It’s incredibly daunting, but at least I have a better idea about the path I need to walk moving forward – I did say that everything comes down to visualization.

Best Week 4 & 5 corrections

(abbreviated to allow for more time focused on therapy/recovery/dance)

- When finishing a pirouette, don’t focus on the leg shooting back to finish, but rather on the lift of the leg in *pas de chat* that *unfolds turned out* when momentum has already slowed
- Having “academic” arms, especially regarding arms that do not cross each other or the center line of the body, is NOT mutually exclusive to grace and fluidity of the upper body. Weightlessness is built upon the simple structure of arms
- **A professional = stability + consistency + artistry**
- Syncopate the preparation (i.e. suspend in the air) for grand jete coming out a *tombe pas de bourree* sequence
- Don’t neglect the *sousou* in the air that travels on a *chasse* in grand allegro
- *Cabrioles* should move up – like an *assemble* – not side to side or front (unless specified)
- Use suspension to create moments that will stand out in the audiences’ memory
- Don’t lose the articulation of the feet in *cabriole*... or ever
- **Corps de ballet work requires that you never go on “auto-pilot.” You must be constantly analyzing your movement pattern(s) and its relation to everyone around you without neglecting your role in the space itself**
- Don’t be lazy just because you are in the back