

2019

An interview with student author Laura D'Amico

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Recommended Citation

D'Amico, Laura and Wing-Paul, Dimitri (2019) "An interview with student author Laura D'Amico," *Proceedings of GREAT Day*: Vol. 2018 , Article 10.

Available at: <https://knightscholar.geneseo.edu/proceedings-of-great-day/vol2018/iss1/10>

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An interview with student author Laura D'Amico

Dimitri Wing-Paul

What inspired you to write this paper?

Oh, good question! So, I decided to take a directed study with Professor Lancos, who is head of the Dance Studies department. Labanotation has always interested me. I have taken courses where the professors teach about it and they teach about [Rudolf Laban's] movement analysis and his pattern recognition and theories. Labanotation [provides] a historical perspective of the new artistic revolution of the early twentieth century, especially in Europe, and how that impacted the fine arts world, specifically dance and science for that matter throughout the rest of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Yeah, I have taken many classes, and I wanted to amalgamate all of them together, so that is why I wrote about it. I love spreading my enthusiasm because I am a dance nerd.

What type of dancing you do?

I do mostly ballet, but I have been delving into modern recently too. Part of the reason I also wrote the paper because we, as a school, resurrected the first-ever Labanotation piece in America last spring semester. We had an alumna come out, who is doing her master's on Labanotation, and she set the piece on us. We have the original scores and the copies of the original scores to look at while we were recreating the piece.

What were the goals in creating this paper?

Well honestly, I wrote my paper because it was a final paper for my directed study. My goals were to provide a basic rundown of what Labanotation is, such as how to read a simple score, what each column means, and what the measures are. I wanted to explain that stuff so that someone can look at a score and not see it as hieroglyphics. Also, I did it because the course was kind of an informal history course, so I wanted to delve into what we learned just from the experiences of our [course] too. I briefly talked about some of the other notators like Ann Hutchinson Guest, Ray Cook, Irmgard Bartenieff, and other people who were notable in the dance notation world. I just wanted to create something that encompassed a broad generalization and how it personally relates to the work that I was doing at Geneseo.

How was your experience at presenting for GREAT Day?

I loved the experience. Even though I knew everything that I was going to speak about, I felt that I was still learning and relearning what I was putting into the slide show. I did a fifteen minute presentation at GREAT Day. Yeah, it was a great experience. It was also Tech Week for the show, and I was also really sick. So, putting it all together was a little rough, but I did it.

What did your involvement with GREAT Day mean to you?

I was just happy to leave a mark at Geneseo, since I participated in something that recognizes my interests and intellect. I am not just another student who goes in and out of the SUNY system just for a degree. When I initially entered Geneseo, I wanted to get in and out as fast as I could just to get my diploma. I already had an associate degree, and I thought that I already had my life plans set out. So, when I started I said, "I am not going to waste my time studying more dance at Geneseo and taking Labonation directed study." But, I am just happy to be part of Geneseo and say that I did take away something that I am enthusiastic about that was outside of my major. It just means a lot to me to participate in GREAT Day, especially in the Dance department, because dance is not always taken seriously, especially when it comes to the academia. But, dance is so academic. So, that is also why I care so much about what my work and where I stood at GREAT Day in Geneseo, particularly because dance does belong to academia. Dance is a fine art just like music and studio art.

In retrospect, do you think your GREAT Day project was an essential part of your experience at Geneseo?

One hundred percent! I think back to times that I missed about Geneseo such as sitting down at lunch time and just chatting with my professors informally, and learning by word of mouth from an expert. Because of those experiences, those experiences made me participate in GREAT Day. So, when I think about GREAT Day, I get to think about all the times that I sat down with [Professor Lancos] whom I love so much. GREAT Day gives me a really personal experience.