

James Baldwin wrote 'The purpose of art is to lay bare the questions which have been hidden by the answers'. The artist attempts to undefine, to present the moment, the word, the gesture as new and full of uncontrolled potential...

We create out of fear, not from a place of security and safety. According to the physicist Werner Heisenberg, artists and scientists share a common approach. They enter into their work with one hand firmly grasping the specific and the other hand on the unknown. We must trust ourselves to enter this abyss with openness, with trust in ourselves, despite the unbalance and vulnerability. How do we trust ourselves, our collaborators and our abilities enough to work within the terror we experience in the moment of entering? In the face of terror, beauty is created and hence, grace...

The creation of art is not an escape from life but a penetration into it.

(Bogart 82, 83, 87)

Aquellos Silencios

This chapter aims to inform the reader of how the piece -called *Aquellos Silencios*- was constructed after the investigative process. It will contain annotations on

- a) how the piece was composed -the way the process informed the creation, inspiration, music, costume and light design, the use of scenic elements.
- b) the commentaries from the advisors and guest viewers after showing a first draft of the piece and how these affected and aided the further development of the work.
- c) a small section in which the piece is described.
- d) another section that contains a near-poetic story of what the piece is.
- e) the critiques received from the audience once the piece was premiered.

1. Creating *Aquellos Silencios*.

1.1 The process informs the creation/Outside inspiration.

To create the piece feeding directly from the investigative process I used the material that had been developed during the research process. There were also images I pursued, but that were inspired by the outcome of the research.

Throughout the process, I observed each of the dancers as individuals and in their work as a group. I looked for movement qualities specific to each of them, physical limitations, which strategies affected them more than others or seemed to have a stronger effect in them, with which others they seemed to connect more. I found myself with the intention of risking turning the results of the process into scenic material, and by doing so and setting material we would be able to structure the piece.

I decided to use most of the exercises done during the creative process to make the piece grow from them. I incorporated the dancers' experiences and explorations into the piece; most of the work was created after what they proposed and discovered during research. The following is an exposition of each of the scenes influenced by the process:

- a) The opening scene was informed by the exercise called Tight-Rope Walks.
- b) The second section in the piece was made after the sensitizing exercise called Observe & Touch -it became a half choreographed/half improvised part in which the dancers played off of the concept 'acceptance and rejection' and applied it to physical contact- and by the Leeches exercise -in which a dancer breaks off of the group in order to disrupt another dancer who has been performing solo.
- c) The Hive became a transition that led to the dancers working on a solo that was partly improvised but deeply influenced with what each of them found throughout all the performance practices as well as in the 75 trillion-celled body improvisation.
- d) The running section fed directly from the Running between Walls practice and, the image in which the group crashed against the wall after running frantically for several minutes in a circle was inspired by renowned Chinese visual artist Cai Guo-Qiang and his work *Head On* -in which a pack of 99 paper-wolves runs until it crashes against a plexiglass wall (refer to photo archive Creating Aquellos Silencios: 'Cai Guo-Qiang').
- e) The following part presented a body walking backwards until it fell blindly and was caught by the rest of the group -this fragment was informed by the Plank exercises we did, in which dancers let themselves fall from the ground, from a chair, and from the barre-; the section was also informed by a sensation present in me as a director, which was that of a blind man leading a group of blind people -which reflected fear of what you cannot grasp, reflected the fear of walking one's own path alone and my insecurities as a first-time choreographer/director-; I also used a similar description about blindness that I found in José Saramago's book *Ensaio sobre a Cegueira*, which helped me convey the feeling of uncertainty I wanted to accomplish.
- f) In the following transition/scene I stepped onstage and portrayed what I felt was an image of time passing -since I didn't have the time to find another dancer for the part-; I chose to pour sand in an unclear pathway around the floor so that a vaguely reminiscent image of a desert could be ready for the next fragment.

g) The part in which a dancer tears red fabric while the rest of the group sits on the floor holding their legs together and collapsing their heads and necks to the back was taken out of the vocal practices we had and also came from having the dancers experience the use of their voices onstage; the dancers sitting were supposed to resemble several painful facets of the one who tore the fabric in silence.

h) The next to last part shows two dancers repeatedly being hit with pillows; the scene came from explorations we did during rehearsals and image-wise it was informed by French photographer Olivier Valsecchi's series called *Dust* -in which tiny particles of dust seem to come out of a person's body (refer to photo archive *Creating Aquellos Silencios: 'Olivier Valsecchi'*).

i) The ending rain sequence was a desire I had. I wanted it to represent a cleansing after everything the dancers went through in the piece as well as an acceptance of what was happening, feeding from the practices 'where I am is what I need' and 'what is happening is what I need'; it tried to convey flow and life moving on.

I knew there was a fair amount of symbolism in each of the scenes and wondered if we would be able to make it clear for the audience and if we would be able to generate moments that would trigger complex associations so that each audience member had a different experience.

1.2 Music.

To score *Aquellos Silencios*, I chose seven pieces of music and the sound of the fabric being torn. I needed each music to convey particular feelings I had regarding each scene, the selection of the works was not random rather carefully thought of. The use of the different pieces of music was intended for them to aid in conveying the atmospheres and sensations desired for each scene; they supported the discourse and heightened it.

During the opening scene I wanted to have the audience feel trapped in the eternal aspect of the tight-rope walks, just as the performers were at that specific moment. I wanted the music to have a hypnotizing quality to it, so that it could frame the image of the seven dancers suspended in the space. I chose British composer John Tavener's *The Last Sleep Of The Virgin* -which was composed in 1991 after

Tavener underwent major heart surgery; he commented that the piece came to him as he lay “suspended between life and death” . I found the sound of Byzantine bells alluring and entrancing and believed it would help the scene accomplish what we were after.

I wanted the second section to feel cozy and eerie. I wished that the spectators would somehow relate to the action happening -the struggle between two dancers and the peacefulness found in the touching part- and that there would be a sense of pleasure in discomfort when witnessing the scene. I used American composer, dancer and filmmaker Meredith Monk's song *Evening*, contained in her 1998 album *Book of Days* since I felt it had the qualities I needed and it created “a kind of armature for the images to lie on... it becomes part of the action...” (Monk 161). *Evening* illustrated the image as I needed and it helped in creating an atmosphere for the effect desired, as well as the other musical selections for the piece.

The running scene was already visually strong and I chose not to accentuate it with an even stronger piece of music. I did want the piece to be decisive and clear in its ending since I wanted to pair the action to the music. I chose American minimalist composer Steve Reich's *Three Movements*. Musicologist and thesis advisor Emilia Ismael, after seeing a rehearsal, mentioned that I was walking a fine line with having all the score of the piece with a similar feel and tempo, that it might seem linear and flat; I took her advice and tried out several other pieces of music to no effect and so decided to continue using the chosen music since I wanted to keep a similar heartbeat throughout the whole piece, I wanted the music to carry the audience seamlessly through the piece. I used the music to heighten the scenic action and to try and engross the audience in the whole piece.

The previous section ended with the dancers crashing against the wall. This one presented them walking blind and holding hands while one of them walked backwards toward the audience. I wanted the music to accentuate a feeling of numbness, discomfort and disorientation -specially after the crash. Danish composer Jacob Kirkegaard's *Labyrinthitis* had the kind of disconcerting auditive ambience I was looking for; its premise is the research of how one can hear the sounds of one's own inner ear by presenting two different audio frequencies that each listener perceives differently and his/her ears develop a third frequency, which is the one that is born inside their own ears. I was aware that for some audience members it could turn out to be annoying, unsettling or disconcerting -since many people described it to be somewhat piercing- but it was what gave the feeling I wanted to convey.

The section in which the fabric was torn by one of the dancers presented the rest of the performers in couples, manipulating their bodies in a direct, sharp way. The sound of the fabric was meant to represent the way bones break and muscles are torn.

For the next to last scene, two dancers are hit repeatedly and left exposed to a point of near-nudity. I wanted to set an atmosphere in which the audience became a witness of an event they might not feel comfortable when looking at it. I wanted it to be a time in which they could reflect on what was presented to them throughout the piece. I chose a chant/lament by Armenian composer Djivan Gasparyan called *Mater Mea*; as quoted on the website JivanDuduk.com by Lanzarote's 8th Visual Music Festival, the music “tells us in the sweetest, yet most simple way, the story of what has always been and always will be”. This piece helped in supporting an atmosphere of uncertainty, desolation and loneliness.

For the final rain scene I combined the musicality of falling drops of water with Matthew Robert Cooper's *Miniature 9*. I wanted to give the audience an array of feelings, ranging from longing, hope, future, sorrow, happiness, flow, rest, release. I also wished for them to make whichever associations they might have regarding the scene and the whole piece. I wanted the rain and the music to bring all these as well as a sense of closure. I wanted the music to invite the audience to contemplate and reflect upon what they had experienced, of what *Aquellos Silencios* was.

1.3 Costume Design.

Angelina Del Buey -student of the Dance major at Universidad de las Américas Puebla- was in charge of costume design. To feed the creation of the garments she witnessed and participated in nearly all the rehearsals; she had as well several conversations with the cast members to see if she could feed from their input on how they felt regarding each exercise and scene; we would also comment what we saw in each scene and what could work. We decided to keep costumes simple and minimal since the ideas we had regarding vulnerability drove us to try and present the dancers as unadorned -except in the opening sequence, where one of them wears a purple dress.

Angelina proposed keeping one base costume for most of the piece -in earthly hues-, one purple dress -for the opening scene- and one red skirt -which would be used at the fabric tearing section. I gave her full freedom to create and chose to trust her vision and sensibility for the task she had. (for sketches of the costumes, please refer to photo archive Creating *Aquellos Silencios*: 'Costume Design')

1.4 Light Design.

José Eduardo Espinosa 'Yayo' was in charge of light design. He saw the piece rehearsed several times and we had various meetings to discuss what I wanted the piece to portray and what his artistic sensibilities informed him, what he felt about the piece and the emotional content it presented so that he could come up with a proposal for illuminating the work. We talked about the discourse being something that in a way resembled what happens when you are alone at night in your bedroom faced with your loneliness; it was also necessary to keep a certain somber aspect to it. We were striving for a certain kind of intimacy and knew we had to carefully create the proper light so that all the elements would merge and work together.

The nature of *Aquellos Silencios* was of a very intimate character and so we decided to keep the light simple and minimal with the idea of supporting the discourse and trying to not make it look adorned; we used mostly warm colors that varied on shades and tonalities. José Eduardo refers to his work by saying that “la iluminación es en verdad un lenguaje, no solamente un diseño arbitrario. Es otro factor de toda la experiencia escénica... En la suma de las sensaciones de una audiencia, la luz es parte del todo. Pintamos o damos ambiente a los momentos para apoyar las ideas del coreógrafo. Juntos decidimos qué es lo que mejor le va a la pieza¹” (Espinosa). (for blueprints, please refer to photo archive Creating *Aquellos Silencios*: 'Light Design')

1.5 Use of other scenic elements (sand, fabric, umbrella, water).

Sand represented the passing of time; it was inspired by images of lost people in the desert and by sand clocks; I also wanted to create a desert of time in which one is suspended within one's own mind and thoughts. The use of fabric -as I mentioned earlier in the document- was suggested by hearing how the fabric sounded when torn; the sound intended to convey the feeling of broken bones and torn muscles. An umbrella for this piece -which was used at the ending section- was merely an element that tried to accomplish a subtle metaphor of rejection and fear of the unknown, this was shown by having a dancer cover herself while the rain was pouring down on the rest.

¹ Please refer to Appendix for English translation.

As for the rain, the effect was designed by Víctor Hugo Reyes, Special Effects Coordinator at Mexico City's Teatro de la Danza; he hung a 50 meter hose -which had been previously perforated- at the top of the theatre bars and connected it directly to a fire hydrant outside the black box.

2. Open Rehearsal/Showing for Advisors and Other Guests.

2.1 First Showing.

On Monday April 19 2010, with just one rehearsal of the actual piece on our backs we had to show the work to advisors María Emilia Ismael Ph.D. and Ray Eliot Schwartz MFA. Other guests included dance artist and faculty professor Mayra Morales MA and light designer José Eduardo Espinosa. After witnessing the piece, they commented, gave their advice and observations.

Ismael pointed out the following:

- a) felt cut out from the very beginning;
- b) one piece of music was very similar to the next and that made the discourse seem flat;
- c) the dancers didn't catch her interest as an audience member and thought of them as weak performers;
- d) the image of the blows with pillows reminded her of pajama parties and that made her laugh rather than feel sorrow or any other type of sad feeling;
- e) disliked the use of props and questioned why they were present;
- f) the piece is full of clichés and therefore becomes boring.

Her proposals to work on the piece were to run it without music and then with other pieces of music and finally with the original score to see if something could change and how; she also advised to rethink the use of the props and to ask myself if they were just whims or if they were there for other reasons.

Schwartz's first reaction was to ask if what we had presented them was the actual piece or if it was just a showing of results. He commented:

- a) clichés abound;
- b) there are no transitions;
- c) there isn't a connection to the spectator;
- d) the interest kept on falling as the piece evolved.
- e) the performers are lacking quality even though their physicality is nice;

He proposed to destroy the whole thing to later build it back and see if the scenes worked as they were or if they could be put in a different way or order; perhaps even cutting some. He questioned why in the ending section the dancers stayed in their underwear instead of being naked; he asked if I was being afraid of showing them naked and exposed since that is what he felt I wanted to portray to the audience; I told him that near-nudity represented where we left the process and how we were unable to surpass the barrier of nudity. Also, he recommended we should work the piece scene by scene so we could find something new and probably deeper and more essential.

Morales' points of view were:

- a) the piece has a very strong symbolic charge and that is what makes it a cliché -like the pillows or the sand;
- b) the performers were weak and uninteresting;
- c) questioned if the girls' 'whimpering' after they crashed against the wall was actually part of the piece or if they were faking reactions;
- d) there wasn't a connection to the piece because she felt the dancers were not feeling what was being lived; they were rather trying to re-access what they felt when they did the exercises for the first time.

As opposed to Schwartz, she proposed we should work the piece by just running it over and over from beginning to end so we could be able to find nuances and transitions and many missing things, and also to approach each dancer separately and demand more of them in terms of their presence and performance.

They all proposed to try and fall out of love with the process and what we had built so that we would be more objective and hands on what was actually interesting and important in the piece. They also recommended to show the piece to other people, so they could give different opinions and advice.

2.2 Second Showing.

On Monday April 26 2010, we had a second showing of the piece. Anthropologist and photographer Víctor Blanco said that the piece had a quality of slowness and pace which was similar to Butoh and that that was what drew him in as an audience member. Diana Beltrán, dancer, commented that they should work on their presence as individuals who are members of a collective so the piece could benefit from that.

Dancer and choreographer Lourdes Roth, pointed out that we should be aware of the difficulty of showing internal feelings and sensations to an audience; she advised to think of how we could share those inner feelings by projecting them out to space; she commented that we only had a brief moment in which we would be able to transmit the process to our spectators and thus recommended me to force the dancers to step out of their comfort zones and push them in order to potentiate their abilities as performers so they would be able to transmit their feelings and their experience of what was being lived at the moment of the performance. She also invited me to reflect upon how to reprise the sense of vulnerability within the images I presented in the piece; how would I as a director be able to reprise vulnerability on a scenic and choreographic level and not just within what was lived in the investigative process.

As I reflected on all the comments and observations, I found new tasks and challenges to turn the explorations and results into a piece. Its nature demanded more investment from the dancers in terms of their own performance and how they approached it, how they brought themselves into things. No matter how committed they were in every action and in every part of the piece, they had to keep in mind that they would be seen by an audience and thus, they had to be aware of them. They also needed to invest themselves in inviting the audience to see them and they needed to keep open so that a true conversation and connection between piece/performer/audience took place; as Tim Etchells said on his book *Certain Fragments*, “investment draws us in. Something is happening -real and therefore risked- something seems to slip across from the private world to the public one -and the performers are 'left open' or 'left exposed'” (48). As the advisors commented, the process seemed to be very precious to them and that was an impediment. I had the task of helping them put aside their love for the process so that we could move on and keep exploring with all the material we developed, giving it new forms, new meanings, finding new ways of approaching it. I wasn't able to find a way.

How could I help a performer find a way into her/his own evolution, is it even possible for a choreographer and director to do this? Where lies the point in which a performer can potentiate her/his capacities and thus transcend herself/himself so that any piece evolves into a work of art? As I write this I think of how pretentious this may sound and at the same time I realize that many things come into play when trying to create a work of art, not just the work of the performers. I wanted to make a work of art. I didn't set out to do it and didn't work towards it, it was just a desire. I would have to say I have not

succeeded and that I might actually be very far from it. However, the path to reaching a small glimpse of it is truly delicious and full, it is blossoming and it teaches me what I need. I am in constant learning.

3. *Aquellos Silencios as is.*

The piece opens with a moving tableau in which all the dancers walk on their tiptoes, each traveling a specific lane in space. We transition with two dancers starting to touch each other and later being joined by four more who end up in a clump, there they recognize each others' bodies through touch while one last dancer stands alone doing a similar exploration of her body through touch; from the clump, a dancer breaks off and jumps on top of the one who was alone and they engage in a fight.

The section dissolves and all the dancers and a musical cue from Steve Reich's *Three Movements* leads them to form a line in which they are imitating the movement of the person who guides the line; little by little the line vanishes until each stands at a specific location in space, performing a solo in which the body contorts, breaks, caresses, rejects while the music slowly fades and the audience can witness the shared solo action taking place.

The next transition in the piece is achieved by a break in the action, where one dancer starts running repeatedly from one wall to the next at the same time that the third movement from Reich's composition is reprised; soon the other performers join the run until they are all caught in a circular running which ends with them crashing against a wall.

Depicting a sense of numbness, six dancers form two groups and they slowly walk with their eyes closed around the edges of the stage while the last dancer slowly walks backwards toward the audience and at the last moment lets go of the control she has over her body and falls while there takes place a blackout and all the dancers exit the stage.

There is a mid-section in which another performer pours sand across the stage. This is followed by a new fragment of the piece in which a dancer is giving her back to the audience while her body trembles and contorts; meanwhile the rest of the dancers form a diagonal line in space in which they sit holding their legs together with their arms and their heads collapsed towards their backs; there they whisper to the audience what they are feeling.

The lights are dimmed and the group of dancers sitting now stand in couples manipulating one person's body at the time that the dancer's facing the wall is now ripping a piece of them fabric. Another blackout gives way to the next to last section of the piece in which several actions take place at once, i.e. two dancers reprise the section in which they recognize their bodies by way of slapping it, pulling their skin, feeling each other, etc; two more dancers have an interaction with the sand on the floor as their bodies expand energetically in space; one more dancer talks about a scar in her body and another dancer tries to share a story with the audience but is stopped by a last dancer who violently manipulates her.

Five performers exit the stage and the couple exploring the sand is left alone, suddenly two people enter and strip them off their clothes, leaving them exposed to the audience. Then they are hit repeatedly with pillowcases full of flour while the remaining dancers cover them in a cloud of flour and witness the event. The lights slowly fade while the dramatic action continues.

In pitch black, the rain starts falling and for ten seconds the audience can only hear the sounds of drops falling on the floor. Then enters the music and the lights on the empty stage. The performers start coming out from the back of the stage, walking walking under the rain. One final dancer walks too but covers herself with an umbrella trying to avoid the water. In the end, she chooses to let go of the umbrella and walk the path under the rain. The lights fade to black and the music slowly does so too, in time with the water.

4. A Story about *Aquellos Silencios*.

One person. She is perhaps different from all the rest, the initiator or guide of a great change, of a movement. Walking without any certainty, trying to reach for something in spite of the path being sometimes difficult, tremulous, like walking on a curb. Little by little we discover that a group of beautiful individuals walks behind her, supporting her and themselves, walking similar paths. Everybody is there, present. Each of them in their own path and in their own experience. Nevertheless, they are all united, they stand together, they hold each other.

Contact is sought after, we fear it, we reject it, we explore it, we accept it, we feel it. By being there, we look to contact not just the person standing next to us, but ourselves. Sometimes we will enjoy together in harmony, discover, fear, sense, share... and many other times we shall be alone in a different path, with

our own selves as our sole companion. Both moments are fine, they are necessary, it is necessary to live both ends of the spectrum so we know the wide range of it and can later stand balanced. We should not impede anything, we should not fear the remoteness of somebody whose path is a little afar from ours, we've just to support and respect.

What is the meaning of a path walked together, of following each other, sharing ideas, thoughts, movements, ways of observing the world, laughter, tears, jumping, stillness...? Up until what point do we remain ourselves and up until what point do we become a copy of the one walking beside us and we lose the essence of who we are? We are nonetheless bound to arrive to a place in which we recognize and confront ourselves continuously, in search of our own being, of ourselves. No matter how frightful that confrontation may be, we have to undertake it. We may very well try to escape it but sooner or later it will show itself to us again, stronger, in full force. We will crash into it or it will make us crash. We must face it if we want to grow, to move on, to transcend. Though there might be moments of complete stupor, where we might feel like we walk alone or like we walk as if we have no clarity whatsoever of where we are going, we must make a choice and we shall discover that that group of beautiful individuals is still there, supporting us every step of the way. We must make a choice of entering, of accepting life and death. To be with ourselves and to let go of ourselves. Time passes... over our bodies, our minds, over what we have lived together, separate and alone, and we are still there...

Letting out what is eating us up and stopping us from breathing is vital. We have to let our bodies cry and we must learn to trust their innate wisdom. Let go, release, talk, enjoy and reflect upon that which occurs, the events that are solely ours, ours to keep, ours to share. The body might at times feel vain, useless, dead, like an object. We shall know how to appreciate every single moment in which our bodies teach us and bring us a newly found wisdom. We are lucky. And if tears happen to fall along the way, let them flow, let them be part of ourselves, we shall not exclude them from our experience.

Each has been given a specific task for some reason. We have all been exposed in many different ways. Some learn to recognize and be acquainted with their bodies, with themselves. Some speak about it, about what has happened to their bodies. Others are guides and an aid for that knowledge to take place. Some have only to let themselves be. Everybody present, exposed, vulnerable and alive. Everybody standing at the exact moment of change. All there. Together, exposed, naked.

A protecting cloud covers all those moments in silence, only to discover that afterwards we can still flow, that the mist can dissipate only to let us see what lies in front of us. Go on, keep on walking, discovering, touching each other, feeling each other, supporting each other. We will always be there, flowing, if we want it so. We must make a choice and then... keep walking towards that beautiful and eternal uncertainty. (refer to photo/video archive *Aquellos Silencios*: 'Performance')

5. Post-Performance Reviews, Critiques and Other Comments.

On Saturday May 8 2010 *Aquellos Silencios* was first performed in front of a live audience. We received diverse comments -whether in writing or spoken directly to us. The piece elicited two kinds of reactions: extreme hate for a few and extreme love for most. I deemed successful that the piece didn't fall in the middle of those categories, where the audience doesn't care; the piece brought out very strong opinions and reactions and I can consider that as an achievement.

I didn't find any valuable work in the piece, if one can call it that. It seemed more like a whim of people playing and pretending to be vulnerable. The performers were disgusting and the whole piece was senseless and pointless. If there was a narrative trying to be told, the effort was unsuccessful; it just seemed like patches of things, and if those girls on stage thought they were being vulnerable, they are very wrong. I am also impressed at how the choreographer/director, having studied two majors, one in Theatre and the second one in Dance, can come up with such a lousy work, in which the latter lacks altogether. One would expect more from a person with that kind of preparation. Was there a point in making the audience endure for around five minutes an ear-piercing sound? If the piece was supposedly worked for about four months, at least some of that work should be visible on stage, but it doesn't happen. There is no choreography, no theatre, nothing in this sorry attempt of a piece. Each passing day I fall more out of love with dance and theatre and this is a new reason why.

Alejandra Medellín *Dance Researcher* 5/12/10

The whole set of experiences and feelings embraced me in this exchange of movement, expressions, gestures and footprints. Thank you for sharing this and for accomplishing getting so close to the spectator as to make her/him part of every action. Each process is submerged in diverse situations and conditions which lead to generating new meanings and emotions. You managed to help me get to a point of complete detachment, in which every step, movement, breeze, drop and gesture was able to generate within me an exchange of words, images, actions both mental and physical.

Siglinde Lanholz *Visual Artist* 5/10/10

I wasn't able to understand a single thing.

Israel Hidalgo *Industrial Engineer* 5/10/10

I believe we always keep things silent inside, and sometimes that silence is so deep that not even ourselves are able to truly listen... the piece has a lot of information and it succeeds in transmitting it and bringing out many feelings and experiences... Transmitting is a very difficult thing to do and you really did it. It's an excellent work.

Alejandra Ramírez *Theatre Student* 5/11/10

During the piece there were moments that disturbed me with sound, words and gesture. I believe the piece works better in small and confined spaces so one can appreciate all the detail included in sound and visuals, which are a complement of the dance.

Miguel López *Folkloric Dancer* 5/10/10

Live theatre. It wet our senses. They were very dusty before. Thank you so much for giving yourselves to us and for making us give ourselves to you and the piece. In the climatic moment, I felt you near me.

Christian Diez *Actor* 5/9/10

The piece is full of clichés. You can't quite tell if they are really feeling what is happening or if they are feigning it, but it seems more like the latter. The props seem unnecessary and gratuitous. Everything is very predictable. The only thing missing in the piece was a little boy walking on stage with a flower.

Emilia Ismael *Musicologist* 4/19/10

A piece that absorbs you when you look at it, it makes you feel and live moments of sensibility, anguish, restlessness, uncertainty, loneliness and a wide array of emotions that unravel when one sees the performance of these seven dancers that are confronted with the most frail parts of their beings, showing themselves unique, fighting and at the same time as sensitive beings that strive to find the one thing that is certain: themselves.

Gina Sosa *Dance Student* 5/12/10

I felt invaded by every possible sensation. Generally, contemporary dance is something that sometimes lacks in its ability to communicate clearly, but this time I felt really inside of it, it was something very sensitive and cathartic.

Tatiana Murasaki *Industrial Design Student* 5/10/10

The piece doesn't quite accomplish its goal. Why if there is such an extensive amount of work behind it, is the piece not successful? All the images are very rich but they don't manage to transcend their image-quality and be fully exploited. If the piece had seven performers with the quality of performer its director has got, it would be so much different, it would be a good piece. There is a lot of potential in it, but it falls short in trying to achieve what it is after. The biggest risk involved in this piece is not actually the dancers' input and investment, but the choreographer taking a chance in becoming a creator.

Mayra Morales *Dancer, Choreographer & Teacher* 9/16/10

Throughout the piece, many times I asked myself 'why is this happening in this way?' And I came to the conclusion that it is because that's exactly how life is.

Penélope De La Madrid *Architect & Interior Designer* 9/27/10

Rarely do you see in a student a work of this quality. It is an important piece that should be presented in many different places. The investment of the group and the images presented were striking. An original, intelligent and impressive work.

Claudio Valdés Kuri *Theatre Director* 5/8/10

Seeing an idea carried out to the very end and be defended by its conceiver is always a wondrous thing to behold. No matter what others say, one must always stay true to oneself. This piece is the result of that, and the outcome is a work of art.

Ramón Del Buey 5/8/10

I cried like I've cried few times in my life. It gave me hope, in life, in the Dance major at UDLAP and in dance. I had just seen two other dance thesis works and they were alright but very hollow, shallow, and I was very frustrated because I thought that that was all there was. But this work was a reencounter with authenticity, I think that's why it got to me so much, because it was a quest that went beyond shapes and forms, and everything that took place was very real. I think vulnerability is right in that intermediate point of the things you always look for but that at the same time you want to cover and hide, and seeing it all exposed on stage was very gratifying.

Pamela Ochoa *Dance Student* 11/11/10

I was expecting so much more from what was presented. The piece doesn't accomplish anything it originally set out to do. The process might be very valuable for the students/performers, but the piece itself is a failure altogether.

Ray Eliot Schwartz *Dancer, Teacher, Choreographer & Arts Activist* 7/12/10

The piece gets to one as an audience member in such an intimate way that it breaks the barriers we build as a protection. Each one sees in the piece that which they want to see but, above all, that which they need to see. I would even dare to call it a 'psychoanalysis in movement'. From the first moment you know that there exist only two choices: to simply watch, or to commit fully to what happens on stage. Without realizing it, the images and the movement take you to a moment of catharsis. You are no longer a spectator, it is you, right there, on stage, your fears and hopes; and the fears and hopes of everybody in the audience. All different and the same, at the same time. All the elements create a show which is complete and homogeneous. The costumes are marvelous and the few props or scenographic elements suffice to inspire hundreds of images and memories, all at the same time. The images and movement create a message, so universal and complex that it is difficult to put it into words. Pain, loneliness, struggle, hope, love, fear, strength... all the good and all the bad that we hide in our relationships and that we deny ourselves. I have to thank the investment of the performers. In my opinion this makes of the piece something so effective. They are not just dancers creating images, moving beautifully; they are human beings. Exposed. The reflection of everything that hides underneath our eyes, within our souls, that which we don't want to believe. The silence.

Claudia Edith Álvarez *Theatre Student* 5/10/10

6. Reflections regarding *Aquellos Silencios*.

I believe that the boundaries between my theatre background and my dance background merged to form a piece which had movement as a main language vocabulary. As a choreographer/director, I didn't want to set a choreography about vulnerability; by this I mean that I didn't imagine a whole piece beforehand and come into the studio to set it to the dancers so we could then rehearse it endlessly and give it an affected quality to it. I came into the rehearsal room with semi clear ideas in my head of what I wanted to do and of how I wanted to do it, “with one hand firmly grasping the specific and the other hand on the unknown” (Bogart 83). I wanted to explore with the dancers and have the outcome be given by them, by what they lived each day during the process.

I was never working to please people. I worked to investigate a theme that still is of great importance to my artistic research. However the piece turned out to be, it was what at that moment was real and honest and the scenic discourse would get to the people it needed to get to at that time.

All the strategies and exercises employed presented a vocabulary that belonged to this work but that was not 'a new movement vocabulary'. We didn't set out to discover something no one ever had and that was one of the places where risk came in for me as a director; it may very well seem that I aimed for the easy solution and for the win/win situation when I presented the audience with images that were most likely to make a strong impact on them; both theatre and dance as well as other post modern scenic discourses have already seen similar scenes, there was probably nothing new.

If everything has already been done, how could I find new meanings for those images and actions? How could I make them my own and how could these become unique and owned by this piece? How could I find a new meaning for all this and not make it seem like I was acting out of a whim? How could I remain honest to the artistic quest?

This creative process and the piece itself are an experiment. They were strongly influenced by trial and error and by non-likeness -concepts previously described in the Methodology section of the paper. What was presented to the audience was an experimental piece which took movement and experimental dance as its main vocabulary to try to build a scenic discourse with a particular aesthetic that came from how we developed the work.