

Final Report for Arts Endowment Grant 2009 – *It's All About Time*

This report covers the Arts Endowment Grant to the company, Fusion, for its 2009 production of *It's All About Time*. . . As the Founder of the company Fusion, I have been awarded several Arts Endowment Grants in the past that actually led up to the creation of the company. My goal and purpose in all of the previous grants was to find a way to use music, dance, and other effects such as masks and puppets to tell stories about everyday people and their lives. In 2009, I wanted to add a new element to this project, specifically media and projections, to see how I could enrich the process of storytelling. While the committee was concerned that this project seemed like a group project as opposed to an individual one, the introduction of media needed much more in the way of personnel and equipment than past projects have, and since our department has a new Interdisciplinary Center for Media and Technology in the Arts, I felt it would be appropriate to use this resource in advancing the art of storytelling.

The project was directed by me and I, along with the cast members, selected the poetry that would be used in the piece. Teresa McCullough, my collaborator, chose the music and with the help of her dance minors choreographed the entire piece. Mitchell Lathrop, a Senior Theater Major and specialist in the technology we would be using, designed all of the media visuals for the show. Linda Janosko, the department set designer, designed the set and Tiffany Bula, Senior Theater Major, designed the Costumes. I am very proud of the mixture of faculty and students on this project as it gave us all an opportunity to work within our areas of expertise as collaborators, putting the hierarchy of faculty and student to the side. All theater is collaborative and rarely the result of one persons work, though usually the result of one persons vision.

As Teresa and I have developed several productions together we began by using what has worked in the past, that being her working separately with the dancers while I worked with the actors. We had several design meetings in which I gave designers some thoughts and metaphors with which to work. I felt there was a strong connection to water in this piece based on a David Bowie song we wanted to use in the piece. The connection is the flow of time and the flow of water. Costumes should flow and the set should allow for a flowing movement and adequate areas for dance.

Past productions have always been staged in our proscenium space in Dreiser Hall which lends itself to dance and the use of masks and puppets. Indeed it would have lent itself to media also, but the space was closed due to being dangerous and in need of renovation for audience safety. The production was instead developed in our ¾ thrust space in the New Theater. This presented the team with many challenges, not the least of which was my inexperience in directing in that configuration. In the end, I felt it worked very well in the space and with the help of other faculty members and students; I was able to effectively stage the piece. Since the space is not like a 'picture box', one of the main projection areas was the floor itself which added to the excitement and unique quality of the show.

The equipment purchased with the grant money helped us to be able to project onto many surfaces at the same time creating movement and texture that was woven with the dance movement. The ability to do a broader advertising campaign than we usually can because of the additional funds helped us to fill the house for every performance reaching the maximum audience members.

I believe this production was very successful and taught us all patience and respect for each other as all elements intertwined with one another. My greatest satisfaction is that the whole process was a story in itself and was, indeed, all about time. I believe the experience for the student performers as well as the student designers and directors was one to which they would not otherwise have been exposed.

The Arts Endowment Committee and their funds have enabled me to expand my creative horizons in a way that would have not been possible otherwise. I will continue to create events for which I will request funds from the Committee so that I can continue to expose the students, University, and Terre Haute Community to a unique approach to theater.