

Concluding Remarks

Andrea Baldwin

I have attended the Patti Pace Festival eight consecutive times and under multiple identities. First, I attended as a budding and wide-eyed undergraduate, then as a master's student with hopes of continuing on, and now as a doctoral candidate. What I find most significant about this festival is the opportunity for genealogical growth and learning. This festival provides a chance for students to meet other students from across the country with similar interests. Also, the Patti Pace Festival provides a chance for faculty members to reconnect with other colleagues. Judith Hamera reminds us that we do not just teach, but we embody the bodies we teach and study and are reshaped again and again (63). Relational learning and mentorship, two aspects that continue to occur in festivals, also means that with every encounter, educators adjust and evolve like their students. Patti Pace, for me, serves as a marker of growth and development of practitioner work in the field. In my earliest years of attending, I was not only turned on by the understanding of how we communicate through embodiment, but also how this type of praxis provided influence and connection to my scholarship.

I return to this space each year because it is a significant space where non-competitive praxis occurs. The festival, by design, as a 'traveling festival' means that the festival is hosted at a different institution each year, and that those who attend not only experience devised learning with other students when they create performances together, but also a chance to see how other programs function in their home spaces. This is an important key for student to kinetically see the breadth and influence of this discipline. These spaces serve as a place for community and student enrichment; they are occupied by the traditions of returning to the place to engage in the same acts, meaning that the space itself serves as a living genealogical tree that grows and marks where the discipline is going. As scholars, it is important for the growth of the discipline to document and preserve these traditions that occur in this space. Preservation of this site comes by attending and encouraging the enrichment that occurs there.

This year's Patti Pace Festival, held at Georgia Regents University with Dr. Gretchen Stein Rhodes as festival leader and Dr. Jason Del Gandio as guest

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speaker, experience was no different in the fundamentals of what Performance Festivals aim to be. When students engage in devising as a pedagogical tool for learning, as they do with the exercises, lectures, and workshop guidelines provided by Rhodes and Del Gandio, they find significance in the discipline and a growing critical voice in academia. When students have a hand in their learning process, they become invested in the work they are doing. This can manifest in several ways such as, participating in activism for social justice, close textual examinations of topics personal to them, and the desire to obtain a higher degree. All of these aspects are present in festivals and all are considered successes in devising as a pedagogical tool.

The students, while met with the challenge of creating a performance with people with whom they do not know well, in spaces many were unfamiliar with, rose to the occasion as they do each year. Students who attend festivals engage in problem solving skills in small groups, critical thinking and audience analysis while they participate. This environment provides a healthy space for students to engage artistically with others while also practicing other skills that enrich their learning experience. I mark that I am a better scholar, practitioner and artist through my multiple attendances to the Patti Pace Festival. This educational experience provided me with learning experiences beyond the classroom and provided moments to find my connection within the Performance Studies discipline. Upon my reflection of this year's festival, I note that while I have participated for many years, I am surrounded by many others who continue to come to this festival and bring their students. Many of those knew and worked closely with Patti herself, and others who worked with other significant members of our discipline, like Mary Francis HopKins, Beverly Whitaker Long and Marion Kleinau. And while those and others may not have attended explicitly the Patti Pace Festival, they attended other festivals like Patti Pace and their student's continue to attend and honor the traditions of those festivals. It is clear to me that the Performance Studies genealogical tree grows in and through Festivals. Strong pedagogy, or rather creating strong pedagogical moments, like ones that occur at the Patti Pace Festival, builds a strong discipline that lasts. As Rita Verna writes, "True engagement with one's history is a key to building strong teachers" (328). The opportunity to connect with the traditions of the past and honoring them not only builds strong educators with a sense of belonging and purpose, but also allows those educators the desire to participate in a cyclical trail of history that begins with participation in festivals and organizations.

Works Cited

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