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Spring 2015

We were here

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University of Iowa

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WE WERE HERE

by

Maurice Shawnte Watson

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Master of Fine Arts
degree in Dance in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

May 2015

Thesis Supervisor: Associate Professor Eloy Barragán

Graduate College
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER'S THESIS

This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

Maurice Shawnte Watson

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the Master of Fine Arts degree in Dance at the May 2015 graduation.

Thesis Committee:

Eloy Barragán, Thesis Supervisor

Rebekah Kowal, Associate Professor

Horace Porter, Professor

This work is dedicated to George Greene, Sonia Maria Smith-Watson, Yolanda Yvette Varnado, and anyone else that lived life immersed in secrecy and isolation due to chronic illness

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

Illness. A secret. Feeling alone? Have you ever kept a secret? A life-changing secret that keeps you secluded, isolated, and contained in a bubble, lonely and empty? The daily struggle of coping with your own secret, yet feeling like everyone you come in contact with already knows, takes its toll in the lives of those who carry the burden of a chronic disease. While dealing with judgmental thoughts, and the scrutinizing gaze from others, do we think that the stigma of a medical diagnosis affects our ability to love someone? More specifically, how about being capable of allowing someone to love you knowing that you are positive?

In *We Were Here*, the choreographic research speaks directly to the topic of secrecy and isolation through song, dance, poetry, and videography of people living with life-threatening diseases in today's society. This piece will take the audience on a short journey through the lives of seven individuals who seek to find peace and understanding in revealing their conditions to their family, friends and loved ones. In seven different journeys, through the highs and lows of coping with a disease, the silver lining of *WE WERE HERE*, provides a friendly reminder that everyone needs somebody, sometimes.

CONCERT PROGRAM

Title: WE WERE HERE

Concept and Direction: Maurice Watson

Choreographer: Maurice Watson in collaboration with the dancers

Concert Performance Dates: April 16-18, 2015, 8:00 PM

Concert Venue: Space Place Theatre, University of Iowa North Hall

Music: Firehorse, Jono McCleary, Jorge Mendez, Session Studios

Text: We Make The Change: Faces of HIV (wemakethechange.com)

Dancers: Katarina Akridge, Rebekah Chappell, Irina Gass, Duane Lee Holland Jr.,
Kristen Vasilakos, Calvin Windschitl, and Nicole Zozulia