

Laura Biagi

PORTFOLIO

(2015-2019)

SOLO PERFORMANCE

Open Questions

(2019)



"The language you speak defines your perfection of reality. Your perception defines your actions, your actions make up your life's tapestry. How do you use your words? Do you use them to heal or to hurt?"

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkGzbZGtYPw&t=20s>

This piece was designed for the Collaboration Encounter Series 2019, in Chicago, and produced by Collaboration with help by:

Sound Tracks and Design: Toy Deiorio (for "High Priestess"); Joe Palermo

Shadow design: Karly Bergmann

Light Design: Levi Wilkins

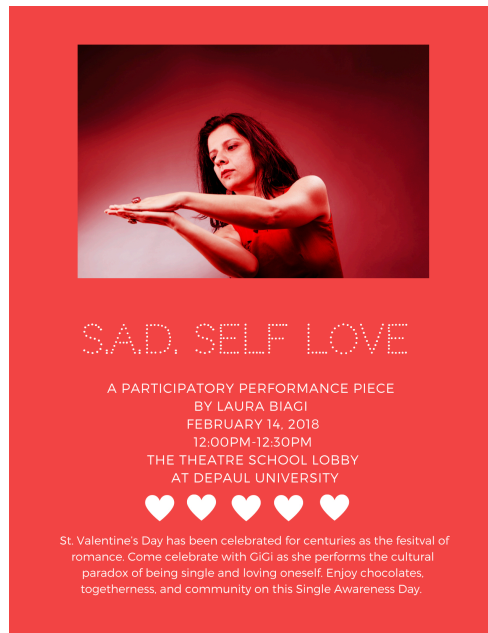
Video Design: Liviu Pasare and Parker Langvardt

Stage Management: Jennifer Roseman

Filming and Video Editing: Alex Groesch at Butterfly Productions, LLC

Self-Love

(2018)



Director, Playwright, Choreographer, Musician and Performer: Laura Biagi
Assistant Director: Grace Grindell

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cYvrUecp8NY>

Article by Emma Durbin on The Theatre School's Grappler:
<https://ttsdramaturgyblog.wordpress.com/2018/02/13/laura-biagis-s-a-d-self-love/>

This piece was devised specifically for the community at The Theatre School and was performed on St. Valentine's Day. It's a piece about community and belonging, mental health and loneliness, particularly on established holidays such as this one.

The piece was later selected to be showcased at **Stage 773** in Chicago in the fall of 2018; as part of the **Fillet of Solo Festival** in Chicago in the winter of 2019; and as part of the **Los Angeles Women's Theatre Festival** in Los Angeles in the spring of 2019.

The High Priestess

(2017)



Devised and Performed by Laura Biagi
With Tolga Yenilmez on Drums
Collaboration's PEACEBOOK Festival 2017
<https://www.collaboration.org/peacebook2017>
Performance Trailer: <https://youtu.be/-q9nRnFbUiA>

Premiered at the Goodman Theatre, Chicago on August 26th, 2017
Excerpt performed at Chicago Ideas Week in November 2017

The Collaboration's PEACEBOOK Festival is an annual marathon of twenty-four original dance, music, and theater performances. The theme is peacemaking in Chicago through art-making. *The High Priestess* was selected among hundreds of submissions. Inspired by the two cards of the major Arcana of the Tarot, this performance art piece revolves around the power to give social meaning to sounds, and the concept of failing and undoing by meditating on four alphabets: Sanskrit, Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin. The audience is invited to listen to the alphabets, and reflect on the power that thought has in shaping our experience of reality. Laura Biagi creates a soundscape of tones and syllables that "entrain" thoughts, allowing the audience to experience a moment of calm and rest.

Video (Chicago Ideas Week): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3CUH-NT8r8>

"In the most literal interpretation of peace, Laura Biagi, accompanied by drummer Tolga Yenilmez, guides audiences through a breathing and meditation exercise to an enchanting soundscape based on the alphabets of four languages." – from the *Chicago Reader*
<https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/collaboration-peacebook-2017-anthony-moseley-englewood-hermosa-austin/Content?oid=29743497>

STUDENT PROJECTS

**(WORKSHOPS & COURSES in
ACADEMIA, A JAIL, and A HOSPICE)**

Student Wellness Initiatives

In Collaboration with Take Care DePaul

(2018/2019)

STAY PRODUCTIVE BY CALMING DOWN
WITH LAURA BIAGI, PH.D.
TTS FACULTY/STAFF MEMBER

Take Care DePaul
WORKSHOPS DESIGNED FOR THE TTS COMMUNITY

EVERY OTHER WEDNESDAY SEPT 19 OCT 3 OCT 17 OCT 31 NOV 14 5PM-6PM TTS RM 401	Why is it important to calm down and get in touch with yourself to sustain your best productivity? Scientific research shows that slowing down increases your attention span, your capacity to focus and connect, and the potential to come up with innovative ideas. Enjoy this class to learn a series of breathing, stretching and humming exercises. Come and connect with yourself and others. Everyone's welcome! You must commit to arrive on time and stay for the length of the class. Bring a yoga mat if you have one, a bottle of water and comfortable clothes. CONTACT DR. BIAGI FOR ANY QUESTIONS: EXPLORE@LAURABIAGI.COM WWW.LAURABIAGI.COM
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SOUND BATHS
WITH LAURA BIAGI, PH.D.
TTS FACULTY/STAFF MEMBER

Take Care DePaul
WORKSHOPS DESIGNED FOR THE TTS COMMUNITY

FRIDAYS SEPT 21 OCT 26 NOV 9 5PM - 6PM TTS RM 401 CONTACT DR. BIAGI FOR ANY QUESTIONS: EXPLORE@LAURABIAGI.COM WWW.LAURABIAGI.COM	A sound bath is an immersive experience in which you are invited to lay down, stretch, breathe and listen to a variety of instruments including crystal tuning bowls, tuning forks, mouth harp, bells, and rattles. The title, "sound bath," comes from the fact that sound envelops the body and, through intentional vibration, helps it release tension and cleanse from worry, stress, and anxiety. No prior experience necessary. Everyone welcome.
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These workshops were designed for the community at The Theatre School with the intent to provide a space to relax, let go, connect and rejuvenate. Between 10 and 45 students showed up at each session.

Kidjie Boyer reviewed Laura Biagi, Ph.D. — 5★
Yesterday at 3:28 PM · 🌐

Laura Biagi's work in multiculturalism and healing has changed my life and artistry in such a healthy and productive way. I'm an acting major at the Theatre School at DePaul University and my studies requires so much from me mentally, emotionally, and physically that at times it feels like I'm losing my grip on everything. As a result of that, I took Dr. B's weekly Staying Productive By Calming Down workshop once a week for about ten weeks and it was quite an enlightening experience. Since taking her classes I have befriended my body and I am taking steps towards understanding what my body needs to function at an optimum level. She has inspired me to do my own research and find my own ritual that will help me destress and restore myself in a way that will allow me to be available for whatever work comes my way...

With the warmest regards,
Kidjie Boyer
Acting Major at The Theatre School at DePaul University

Sam Kerns 🌟 recommends Laura Biagi, Ph.D.
about 3 months ago · 🌐

I took Laura Biagi's Take Care DePaul course and the effects are immediate. Ever since I've started school, I have had a lot of trouble napping/sleeping. It's been affecting my social/academic/artistic performance. No matter how hard I tried to nap, I just couldn't. I found myself upset, frustrated, and very tired. That was until her course. Right after her class, feeling rejuvenated and alive, I took the best nap. She helped calm my mind and my body so that it could allow itself to relax and enter REM sleep.

I tell all of my friends and family about her healing powers and how lucky I am to have her in my life as a student. She not only makes me a better artist, but a better person.

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Bee's Knees

(2017)

The Theatre School at DePaul University
Intro to Performance Course, Fall Quarter 2017
Premiered at The Theatre School



Director: Laura Biagi

Assistant Director: Zandra Starks

Stage Managers: Annie Reznik & Camilla Dwyer

Music Direction: Annie Reznik

Devised by the Ensemble: Tiff Abreu-Acevedo, Ryan Kirby, Michela Murray, Isabelle Muthiah,
Bridget Painter, Virginia Rose, Kamari Saxon, TJ Thomas

This was a piece about failing, trust and overcoming barriers in communication and connection. Inspired by the life of bees, *Bee's Knees* is a reflection on the theatre community and the life of young actors. I am always amazed by the process of devising. The ensemble is a microcosm of society, with its variety of personalities belonging to many cultures. We sit, we breathe, we learn how to trust, we apply all our skills to create something that was not here before, & that is bigger than all of our individualities. Everyone is essential, everyone is welcome.

BeLonging : Longing to Be (2016)

The Theatre School at DePaul University
Intro to Performance Course, Fall Quarter 2017
Premiered at The Theatre School



Director: Laura Biagi

Assistant Director: Grace Grindell

Stage Managers: Maddie Doppelt and Kelsey Donovan

Devised by the ensemble: Claudia Quesada, Laila Rodrigues, Garrett Young, Rodney Newsome, Thalys Karatsolis-Chanikian, Cullen Clancy, Kya Brickhouse, Elise Rivkin, Cameron Roberts, Johnny Tran, Cedric Hills, Gabrielle Maalihan

The desire to belong stems from a “longing to be” seen, heard, and respected. While working with second-year BFA actors, it became clear to me that these young adults were all waiting to leave a mark, make an appearance, find their role in the school and in the larger society. I decided to devise this piece on their search for love and care. Students wrote their own solos, music and choreography with topics that included mental health, rape, racial discrimination, child abuse, climate change, and immigration.

“*Be/Longing* was a production that incorporated music, movement, and spoken monologues and dialogues written by the students themselves. Laura Biagi was masterful at negotiating difficult and challenging conversations with students with respect to issues that are paramount on college campuses across the country—race, ethnicity, class, sexual violence, and the like. It was one of the finest devised theatrical pieces that I have ever had the pleasure to witness. – Barry Brunetti (Audience member/Head of Theatre Arts Program)

“I worked as an Assistant Director with Professor Biagi on *BeLonging: Longing to Be*. What most inspired me about this piece and the process is how Laura fully embraced whatever was in the room and any and all ideas, emotions, and thoughts that the cast and team brought into the room. The energy and state of the room was never taken for granted nor ignored but rather recognized and used for creative inspiration, creating a very personal and close relationship between the creators and their art. Asking “Where do you belong?” “To what do you belong?” “To whom do you belong?” created theatre that was deeply introspective but also extremely unifying.” – Grace Grindell (Assistant Director/student)

“The work done during *BeLonging: Longing to be*, made me want to be more than just an actor. There was an immense satisfaction in watching something come to life that had never lived before, to hear words be released which had never been spoken before, to watch humans go to places emotionally (and physically surprisingly) that they had been longing to go to (perhaps consciously or subconsciously). Thanks to *Belonging*, and Laura Biagi, the bare minimum I expect of myself is to write, move, change, love, and give as I work on any performance (devised or not), which I may embark into.” - Cameron Roberts (Ensemble/student)

Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program

Healing Narratives: Storytelling and Performance

(2016-2019)



The Theatre School at DePaul University and Cook County Department of Corrections
Spring Quarter 2017

Closing Ceremony and Performance¹
Friday June 2, 2017 @ CCDOC, Chicago

Faculty and Deviser: Laura Biagi

Outside Students: Alyse, Bri, Chloe, Emily, Evan, Hannah, Jake, Maddie, Noelle, Olivia, Yasmin

Inside Students: Damarques, Zach, Terry, Jamal, Paul, David, Gregory, Bryant, Tyles, Eric,
Christopher

Eleven DePaul students met twelve inside-students weekly over the course of a quarter to discuss justice, education, mental health, leadership, and the role of the arts in the shaping of society. Each week, we wrote, composed, dialogued, and practiced contemplative exercises such as deep breathing, listening, and yoga. We talk about biases, privilege and prejudice; we thought about new forms of inclusive leadership. By the end of the 10th week, we are ready to perform a devised piece that weaves together movement, rapping, singing, and theatre. Students who complete the course received two college credits.

Quotes from Students' Performance:

“Rain – Snow – sleet yeah / Threw the pain goes deep
Right here through the roots of my black peers year.
‘Cause it’s Rain – Snow – sleet yeah / Through my veins, cold feet
I’m right here standing tall with my black peers.” – Damarques

¹ I am unable to provide images from the ceremony because CCDOC did not give permission to use them publicly. This image is of the DePaul Theatre Students taking the weekly trip to the jail on a yellow school bus.

Students were asked to send a quote for the ceremony's program. Here are some of them:

A Liberal Arts education is great, but sometimes we get trapped in environments with people who are too similar to us, making a truly diverse education not achievable. This class changes that, and has taught me what it really means to learn from your classmates, and what a diverse class and education should look like. – Bri

In the future, I want to make sure that my work continues to engage with what I think the core of this course is: using the knowledge of art, spirituality and meditation to help others. I think the core of this class was to understand and learn how to create art within a world that propagates institutions such as prisons and how to negotiate between the reality of the two. – Chloe

This class helped me to become compassionate about others and how they feel. It helped me to work in groups. Before this class I was so stuck inside myself. The feeling occurred that I was better than others and didn't need no one. Being alone in this world makes a person like me feel empty. If I could do this over and over again I would. Being of the young black minority in my community I never had the mindset to think of some of the oppression that goes on in this world. I thought since I was black and they were other races that ones get special treatment and more opportunity. But now I get it, I get that no matter what race, ethnic group, we all can go through the same struggle. – Damarques

I believe that everyone should take a similar course to this because it broadens your horizons of the human experience. Our world needs empathy now more than ever and that is exactly what this course provided. – Evan

First thing first, I want to thank you and those great students for your time and the wonderful opportunities. Like you said on the first day I met you, this class was either going to be really bad or it was going to be really good. Your plan really worked. Before this class I never focused on how I was breathing or how much pressure I was putting on my body. It was kind of like starting all over with the basics and all of those small things can really change your life. This class just opened my eyes to so many new things and it was right on time because that's kind of the phase my life was in. I wanted change. Thank you! – Jamal

This course has really been transformative for me. It is one of the very few courses I have taken that I actually was invested in and felt was more than just a credit I was paying for. – Olivia

What I got from this class is something that I will never forget: like, pleasant, kind, understanding, will power, positivity, friendship, and most importantly, love. This class and people made me see a lot of things different. I'm using brain tools I haven't used in years – some, that, for a long time, I didn't think worked anymore. I wanna just take this time out to say thank all you guys from the outside that took out your busy days to help a friend in need. Especially Laura. You are a wonderful person that have maybe saved some people, turned some people around for the better, and the others you bring with you. I'm not writing this for a grade, but this is 100% real. - Paul

I was thankful for this and hope that I am able to continue my education. Thanks to thins class I plan to start going to school. - Zach

Article from the DePaulia, DePaul University's Magazine:

<http://depauliaonline.com/2017/09/25/inside-program-brings-depaul-department-corrections>

In Light Of

A Performance on Healing, Illness and Transition

(2015)



Arts Across Disciplines Initiative at Vassar College
With funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
In collaboration with the Hudson Valley Hospice

Faculty Mentors: Michael Joyce and Laura Biagi

CAAD Coordinator: Tom Pacio

Devised by: Joe DeGrand, Kelsey Greenway, Alex Raz, and Aran Savory

Premiered at the Susan Stein Shiva Theatre, Vassar College, New York
September 18-20, 2015

A selected group of students from the departments of Dance, Drama, Anthropology, and Art visited the Hudson Valley Hospice in Poughkeepsie, New York, to work with nurses, social workers, residents and their families to create a play that celebrated life and memory through storytelling. My role was to help devise a piece that was deeply emotional, and to support students with contemplative practices that would allow them to process emotions while drawing inspiration from their experiences. We worked with free-writing, drawing, yoga, and improvisation, which increased the students' capacities to understand life and death, grieving and change, and to respect the residents of the hospice as humans and not just source material.

The students wrote this note to me at the end of the run:

Your spirit, energy, and love made this project what it came to be. You helped us heal, and we couldn't be more grateful. - Joe, Kelsey, Alex, and Aran

Article in the Poughkeepsie Journal:

<http://www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/story/news/health/2015/09/11/healing-narratives-light-vassar-college-hospice-health-illness-stories/72062012/>

**CONTEMPLATIVE and THEATRICAL
PRACTICES for
LEADERS and CHANGEMAKERS**

Faculty, Staff, Artists, Leaders

**(DePaul University; The School of the Art
Institute of Chicago; and the Chicago Artist
Coalition in Chicago)**

Failure Immunity: Contemplative and Theatre Practices for Changemakers (2019)



2130 W. Fulton, Chicago, IL 60612 | 312.491.8888
| chicagoartistscoalition.org | cac@chicagoartistscoalition.org

When Dr. Laura Biagi facilitated a workshop titled “Failure Immunity: Contemplative and Theatre Practices for Changemakers” with the 2018-2019 FIELD/WORK cohort at Chicago Artists Coalition, the deep thinking, attentiveness, and empathy for others that inform her practice were made manifest for the group. FIELD/WORK artists described significant benefit to being exposed to Dr. Biagi’s unique approach to grounding a professional creative practice with a sense of spirituality, self-reflection, and care for oneself. They gave her the highest remarks in exit surveys, with one artist commenting: “I don’t know what I was expecting, but a transcendent and deeply moving experience, shared by the whole group, was not it.”

Dr. Biagi’s emphasis on the vital importance of connecting with yourself (via breathing, movement, and free-writing, among other practices) and being in community with others, as well as her ability to introduce tangible tools that people can incorporate into their everyday lives is such a gift. Through sharing her work, Dr. Biagi empowered these artists with fresh ideas about self-worth/self-care and renewed confidence in pursuing a sustainable creative life.

Thank you, Dr. B.!

Penny Duff
Director of Education
Chicago Artists Coalition

Contemplative and Theatre Practices For Self Care and Social Change (2016-2019)

Offered at DePaul University Through: the BUILD program; Teaching Commons Initiatives; and the Steins Center for Community-based Service Learning

<https://offices.depaul.edu/diversity/education/diversity-certificate/Pages/Winter-Quarter.aspx>

 **Molly Kay** reviewed **Laura Biagi, Ph.D.** — ...
Yesterday at 3:42 PM · 🌐

I was lucky enough to be apart of Laura's workshop at DePaul University-- Contemplative Pedagogy in the Classroom: Issues and Methods.

This workshop was something I did not even know I needed! Laura provided a space of reflection and breathing unlike any other I have been a part of in a classroom setting... It was truly moving. I walked away feeling aligned and ready for the rest of my week.

Additionally, her exercises can be adapted to several different professions, not only the classroom. I am a practicing counselor and see the value in breathing on a day to day basis with my clients and students, but Laura has created a way of reflection that helps bridge the why to what. Thank you Laura for such a moving experience! You are truly an inspiration.

AND

At the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

 **Kate Dumbleton** recommends **Laura Biagi, Ph.D.** ...
about a month ago · 🌐

I had the good fortune to meet Laura when I was looking for someone to lead deep listening workshops for my graduate students at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In speaking with Laura in preparation, I knew immediately that she would not only be an exceptional facilitator for exploring deep listening, but that she would know how to connect these ideas to the work my students are doing in their own creative practices. I was right!! Laura is uniquely adept at building trust, modeling empathy, pushing rigorous but gentle self-inquiry, exploring how creativity manifests itself and so much more. She also understands the power of joy, humor and a good night out dancing. She has now come to many of my classes and my students are always asking me when she can come back! Laura is a rare gift!

TED_x TALK

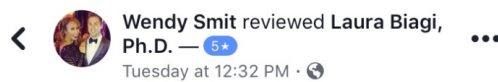
Reimagine Failure: Breathe, Belong, Believe (2018)



Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5V5wKMcoQYs>

Event Description: <https://www.ted.com/tedx/events/24992>

After traveling the world, studying yoga and diving into academia to find more meaning in life, I found fulfillment by searching within myself. In this talk, I take the listeners on my path to discovery and give tools we can use in our own times of distress. In this talk, I mention the work I am doing at The Theatre School in my devised work with students, and in my course at Cook County Jail on Healing Narratives.



As one of the organizer's of TEDxDePaulUniversity, I had the pleasure of working closely with Laura on the development of her talk "Reimagine Failure: Breathe, Belong, Believe." The process for developing a powerful TEDx talk is labor-intensive and takes a lot of time and patience. At all times, Laura was collaborative, creative, professional and open to constructive feedback. Her ideas and energy are inspiring. Any one who has the chance to work with her should jump at the opportunity.

PUBLICATIONS

In Paradise With Contemplative Pedagogy: A Journey Academic Journal Essay (2017)

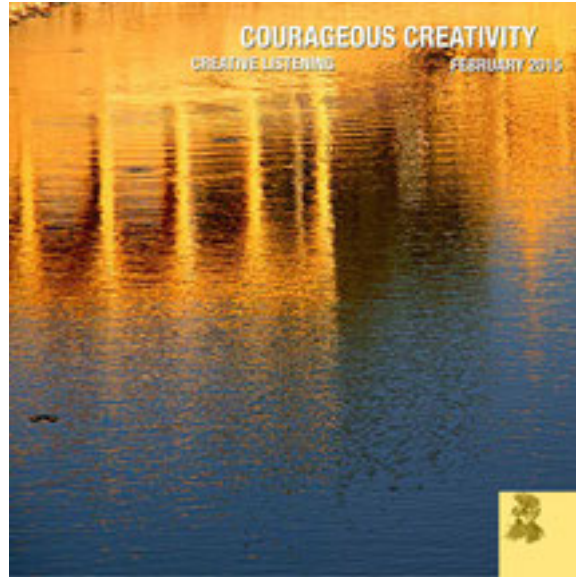


Building Just Communities, The Journal of Contemplative Inquiry, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2017

“Laura Biagi introduces contemplative practices in an Italian Studies course on Dante’s Paradise to create holistic learning experiences and group sharing that transcends cultural boundaries.” – Trudy and David Sable, Co-Editors

Spider Medicine

On-line Article (2015)

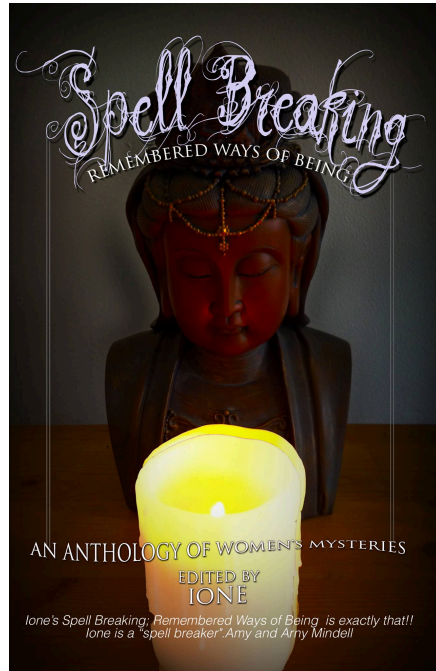


“I sat facing the direction of Ground Zero and chanted. I tapped into my child intuition and mourned the passing of souls, the grief of their beloved, the scar of the city. This experience woke me up to the power of sound to kill and to heal. Listening became a way of life, and not something *to do*.”

https://issuu.com/flyingchickadee/docs/feb_2015_print

Yoga: Breaking the Spell of Ignorance

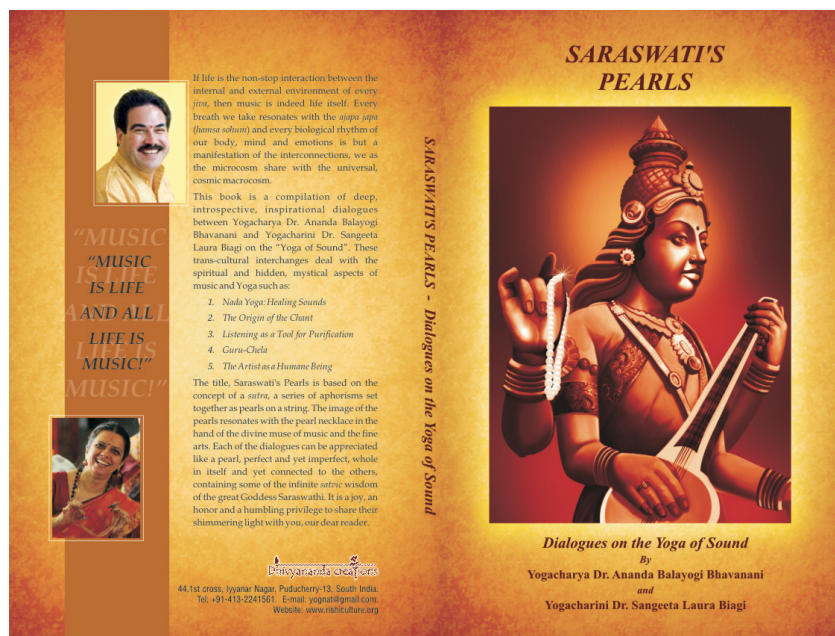
Narrative Essay (2013)



Spell Breaking; Remembered Ways of Being. An Anthology of Women's Mysteries, Ione, ed., pp. 25-31; M.o.M. & Deep Listening Publications, 2013.

Spell Breaking; Remembered Ways of Being is a stirring collection featuring the fresh voices of twenty members of an international Women's Mysteries community. The reader travels with these fascinating women through intimate spaces and territories ranging from the Upper West Side of Manhattan and the shores of Long Island to Egypt, South America, Canada, Italy and the heart of Native America.

Saraswati's Pearls: Dialogues on the Yoga of Sound Book (2013)



Dr. Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani and Dr. Laura Biagi (Sangeeta)
Pondicherry: Dhivyananda Creations, 2013

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266201494_Saraswati%27s_Pearls

This is a book. I decided to add it to the portfolio because it was a stepping-stone in my work as a performance maker and deviser. I spent two years in Southern India, at the Center for Yoga Education and Research, studying with Dr. Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani who is a yoga teacher, medical doctor, composer of *Carnatic* music and director of *Bharatanatyam* theatre. This book is the result of my studies at ICYER. It consists of five interviews (the five chapters) that touch on several aspect of the relationship between performance, performance making, yoga, and spirituality. I was interested in having a multicultural dialogue with my teacher who, raised in a traditional Hindu Ashram, traveled the world and translated cultural concepts and practices to non-Hindus. I asked my *acharya* (teacher/mentor) questions on the philosophy and practice of *Nada Yoga* (the yoga of sound), the delicate relationship between *guru* and disciple, the purification practices that traditional artists engage in, and the implications of sharing this knowledge with people around the world. Recording, transcribing, and editing the interviews was a learning process. The questions that I wrote for my teacher became a reflection of who I wanted to be as an artist: a humble leader who, through disciplined study and practice, would lead by example.