

Interviewee Name: Michael Noble

Interviewer Name: Jung Yoon

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Location: Restless Dance Theatre studio

Length of Interview: 15:31 minutes

Transcript

Jung: So the first question is - can you tell me-about yourself? about - what do you think we need to know about you including-where you're from? or your experience to become the person who you are now?

Michael: Deep question straight off the bat.

Jung: Yeah, start from your name.

Michael: So my name's Michael Noble. I guess the journey really begins with me being an ex-foster kid, and it was through the programs that I was in as part of being a foster kid, a lot of arts programs and stuff to through all of that and through all the stages of those art programs is how I ended up here at Restless. Yeah, a lot of fun times being in the foster system and but through that, I've also been able to grow my grow as a person and being able to take in those experiences and make Yeah. Turn, turn it into who I am today.

Jung: I guess that's a really interesting and inspiring.

Michael: Yeah, that's all right. I'm trying to think how. How, what makes me who I am, I guess not really....

Jung: So why did you start the art program like performing programs?

Michael: I initially wanted to go into acting, so how I started the program was initially wanted to go into acting and then I know someone who was like, 'I don't know many acting - like through programs that I've been a part of they were like, 'Oh I don't know any acting programs, but here try this instead, try Restless instead' and it was yeah. That's kind of, how I, yeah, into arts this Restless itself but in arts in general I've always been yeah I was always like a theatre kid kind of thing. Always wanted to do drama programs and stuff and whatnot. I did some musical programs as well when I was younger.

Jung: Is there why? Because the question is why. I mean, in terms of what gives you, the what, what art gives you?

Michael: Right. Yeah. Right. Right. Yep. Yeah. I guess I use art as an outlet mainly just feel like all of, like pent up emotions and stuff and it's a really, really good way to, I guess, let them out. So that's kind of how I yeah. What really drew me in to all the arts programs to begin with.

Jung: That's true. Kind of express yourself.

Michael: that's probably a better answer.

Jung: So, I just kind of like. Or what? Yeah. I think you answered the question is like, what's getting involved, what you were just making involved and part of the art industry.

Michael: Yeah, yeah, I've already answered that kind of.

Jung: And now you come here as a main dancer to the Restless, what motivates you to come to Restless every like day as your career?

Michael: That's a very good question. I guess what really motivates it is, yeah, like, like being able to express myself like what motivates my career is basically being able to express myself and, you know, Restless has been very accommodating to my needs as a dancer and like my mental health kind of needs as well, which has been really, really good and yeah, they've been very understanding and yeah and also, you know, also to, to get better at my technique and being able to perform on a vast variety of stages and knowing that there's always a new opportunity around every corner, essentially.

Jung: The next question is about motivations and so on, so you said about your dancing head. Have you - has your dancing style or performing style has been evolved or changed from the beginning when you joined to now?

Michael: That's very good question.

Jung: So, can you just explain about this change, how you changed and if it didn't change and then why didn't it change?

Michael: My dance style has kind of changed a bit as anyone's dance style. When you first start, you know, as I was, I was when I first started, I wasn't as confident as I am now and being able to just throw caution to the wind, to being able to create different movements and I'm thinking a bit more abstractly now than I was before. Like when I first started, I was very, very logical and very direct, and it had to be exactly like we'd go even tasks and it would have to be exactly to the task rather than being like an interpretation of the task. Whereas now I'm doing it more interpretation stuff and a bit more abstract stuff.

Jung: you want to define your style, would you - how would you describe your style?

Michael: Kind of contemporary, I mean, yeah I mean I'm basically trained as a contemporary artist and, you know, the contemporary skill has kind of improved but I haven't done any other styles at all or never really also, never really exposed to any other styles either. I mean, we do a little bit of ballet training in our training, but not

really, you know, other styles in, but I also think contemporary is a blend of a lot of a lot of styles in itself, and it gives it the freedom to do whatever you want with it rather than being stuck to a very yeah, stuck to one particular thing. It's quite a variety.

Jung: Do you want it - Is there any other style you want to learn, more you want to develop into, or what's the next sort of goal as an artist?

Michael: I don't know. I mean, I wouldn't mind trying out a few things yeah at the moment. Yeah. I don't know really. Yeah. Yeah.

Jung: [Just being, happy being...

Michael: I mean, I've done. I mean, I have. I have done a bit of I have done a bit of pole dancing in my day.

Jung: Oh, really?

Michael: Yeah I've done a bit of pole dancing in my day. I'm currently doing a burlesque dance class as well. I don't know, just all that kind of weird out there kind of stuff.

Jung: Just keep trying

Michael: Just trying a few other things at the moment. Yeah

Jung: Oh, yeah. So and obviously, the Restless is, of course, is in terms of the characterising, we define Restless Dance Theatre as disability art industry like space and production in the disability art position so I kind of wonder what motivates you to be part of the in the disability art space?

Michael: Yeah. Like when I first joined Restless, I guess I didn't know much about disability and stuff. And, you know, as I've, you know, I guess curiosity in a way, I sense, in a sense motivated me to like find like, you know, because I've never experienced it what it would be like, you know, my brain curiosity was like, well, you know, see what it would be like to mingle in and then, you know, like just I don't know how to explain it. It's really weird,. but, you know, because I didn't know anyone with disability when I first joined or anything and then just realizing how, I guess how the other half [Restless dancers with disability] lives in a way, in a sense but then over my journey of hanging around with a lot of people with disability and neurodivergencies [sic] is realizing how myself, I'm actually potentially neurodivergent and has started off my own journey of, of being actually properly diagnosed with being on the autism spectrum. So....

Jung: and then you were very, you didn't really acknowledge anything about that from, at the beginning and then you just slowly merging into place

Michael: Yeah.

Jung: And then you don't - you feel comfortable with it?

Michael: Yeah. Like I just didn't know much at all when I first joined, at all and then, you know, realizing that, yeah, we're all the same, essentially.

Jung: I love the point and a lot of people, they don't know actually until they get exposed to that you know that circumstance.

Michael: Yeah.

Jung: Okay. Thank you very much for sharing. So good. Do you think is this you know, you must experience a lot of the audience reactions and, you know being in between the mainstream and sort of people with an artist with disability. Is there any in terms of the disability art history like past, you know, decades? Did you see any kind of event or momentum to change their perceptions around or?

Michael: With the interactions that I've witnessed with audience members, they just appreciate the art for what the art is itself, not whether or not the artists themselves has a disability or not. So, you know, we're all equal in that sense. You know, as long as we're producing good content, you know, everyone appreciates it the same. It doesn't really matter because the art community is so inclusive itself, you know, whether, you know, it doesn't matter the colour of your skin, sexual orientation or disability you have, it's all about the art that you produce. And if people like it and people want to see more of it, then they will go see more of it, you know, because it's so inclusive. Yeah, the art industry is so inclusive that I don't see any difference of how the audience reacts whether. Yeah. Whether it's with, you know, neurotypical people or people who don't have a disability or people who compared to people who do have a disability. Yeah.

Jung: You see it as a very positive side of the audience who want to interact with this sort of any kinds of the art form.

Michael: Yeah. That's what I see. Anyways, I don't know, I haven't really been exposed to much prejudice against, you know, people with disability or anything like that. So I'm not sure if that's just a sign of the times or you know or yeah, but that's also because I never really, I guess portrayed myself as having a, having a disability myself. But yeah

Jung: Well that's a really good point. I'm really glad that you didn't have any experience and maybe that's how you start at the time in already the society tried to be inclusive more open yeah for the diversity. So this question can be really tricky and a bit harder. If you don't know or you don't have any comment, you can say anything but do you think the art can be political or should be political? Um in terms of creating. So, I mean, the art should be aimed to create the changes in people's mind, perception or act?

Michael: It's it's really hard to define what political is because people like to display what they view as their own, I guess, opinion or not, whether or not they want to make everyone inclusive and stuff but being inclusive shouldn't, you know, being inclusive and not exclusive shouldn't be political. You know, everyone should just be equal across the board or, you know, those who have who are less fortunate should have ways of, you know, being, you know, having the support they need to then be up to par with the rest of everyone else. Yeah, I've learned that from my own experiences being in the foster system. I've had lack of support, like didn't have the initial support as a family, for

instance. But then I've had other people and other supports that helped me kind of get there, if that makes sense so whereas art being political, I mean, art can be political when people are doing shows about, I don't know, climate change, for instance, you know, but that's what they believe. That's what the artists believe in themselves for, like what they're passionate about and what they feel is their opinion. And art is all about expressing oneself and expressing their own opinion about anything. You know, like art, it's an exclusive like that. I don't know if that makes sense.

Jung: Yeah, it makes sense.

Michael: It's just like I wouldn't see it as political, though. I would see it - I don't see art as political. I see it as the, you know, the artists themselves voicing their opinion or creating an image that they want to share with someone, whether it's, you know, a dance performance, a play or, you know, whatnot as the creator or you do the other side of it. Whereas if you're playing someone else's song, you agree with that person's opinion, or like if you were doing someone else's art, for instance, you're performing a play that someone else wrote. You are wanting to make that vision of that person come to life. So, you either, you know, you're either voicing your opinion or you're helping someone else voice theirs.

Jung: So maybe the term terminology using the political perspective is more third person interpretation.

Michael: Yeah, but like, you know, just because someone's wanting to voice their opinion, or I guess show how passionate they are about something shouldn't be political.

Jung: All right. That's very inspiring, very insightful story. Just thank you very much for sharing. So last thing, is there anything we should know about you? You want to add up anything about your opinion in this art space?

Michael: Not really. I'm just a vessel here trying to get other people's opinions out. I don't know. That's how I see it. Like, I, I am very opinionated to a degree as a person. So I'm more than, I'm more than happy to help, you know, express what other people's opinions are as a dancer, especially because, you know, we have our visions of the director who has a very strong like, you know, an opinion or something's inspired her to create something. So and it's our job as the dancers to make the director's decision come to life. So I yeah, it's kind of like being the helper of someone else. Yeah. Someone else's vision coming to life rather than the creating the vision, if that makes sense.

Jung: I see, your position is more like a messenger.

Michael: Yeah, exactly. Yeah.

Jung: Oh, cool. Thank you very much. This is the all the question we have today.