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Module code: ADPA6000

Research and note log for independent project.

Question – Has the sexualisation of heels dance destroyed its original intent?

13/11/24

- What is the original intent?
- Interview people from the industry – Geo Rose, Liz Colley, Phoebe Henderson – look for people with differing perspectives also.
- Aim to get the interview questions done by week 3 of the project so interviews can begin this side of the year / in January.
- Watch music videos through the times to see how pop culture has influenced heels dancing / vice versa.
- Check out Yanis Marshall, Aisha Francis and other pioneers of heels dancing.
- Immerse yourself in heels culture – heels empowerment classes, also go to class in Birmingham to experience people's ideologies through their teaching – Jade Barnes, Heels and Feels. Classes in London at the Manor / base / pineapple
- Lived experience of podium work – delve into your own and other's experience of this.
- Define sexualisation and gather evidence of what the original intent of heels dancing was.
- Look at other art forms – burlesque, commercial etc and analyse the difference of these styles and how they are perceived by society.
- People to follow – Brina Brecelj, Davide Albon, Heels and Feels, Heels Empowerment, Beyonce Sunley & more (check out heels pages and teachers that work for them.)
- Writing a reference page as you go along and use trusted resources for your research.

19/11/24

Origin of people journeys? Why heels?

People's challenges, have they faced judgement and challenge

How have people opinions effected other people experiences

Look at gender

Look at difference in class to perform and the audience demographic

How to focus on the artistry of heels

The globalization of social media on heels

Does the intention change depending on the audience.

Get interview questions for next week

25/11/24

Questions:

How does heels make you feel?

What is the heels style to you?

Why heels dancing? / What resonates with you from the style?

What makes you feel supported by your peers and family around you?

What's your favourite thing about the style?

What is your personal aim when stepping into class?

Is heels about empowerment, technique, looking good or feeling sexy to you? / What do you take away from sessions.

Do you feel that the intent in the style changes due to the environment/ Audience?

Question for male: Do you still feel empowered even if it is a female dominated industry?

Have you faced judgement in a negative light from dancing the heels style?

Do you feel that the opinions of valued people around you change your views on heels dancing?

Do you feel the intentions change depending on if its in class or a performance. From the audience and performers prospective.

Do you personally feel that burlesque is perceived the same way as heels dancing?

How do you balance religion and heels dancing? What intentions do you go in with?
Does it hold you back from doing certain moves/choreography in class?

27/11/24

Has your religion had an impacted your heels journey?

What do you think social media has done to the heels industry

Talk about African culture and where twerking came from and why it's a thing in culture.

Create structure to write and plan final documentary and film.

21/01/25

I wanted to change topics as i struggled to find sources due to heels being a new and upcoming style. This made it hard for me to gage a full understanding of the historical & present context. I have decided that I want to look at what is commercial and how is it defined as a style.

What is commercial?

To sell a product/person. To make money or an intention for a business to sell.

Oxford dictionary commercial meaning:

How do we define commercial dance and is it subjective?

The first know use of the word commercial was in the 1500s.

The earliest use of commercial was in 1598 in a translation by George chapman, poet and playwright.

commercial, adj. & n. meanings, etymology and more | Oxford English Dictionary. (2024). *Oed.com*.

From a dance perspective it means:

What is hot in the industry at the time, style that is in.

Commercial (adverts), billboards, tv, film

22/01/25

Things to watch:

Strike a pose,

Commercial artists that use contemporary dancers:

Melanie Martinez

Lady gaga

I want to create a documentary about the context of commercial and if it is subjective? I feel this would be a good way for presenting my findings.

30/01/25

Meeting with amber:

Look at music videos (74 street jungle)

Look at adverts

Look at Madonna and written sources of controversial

Interview people on opinions to figure it out

Notice common themes to differentiate between

Write list to interview, think about different cultures and genders.

Watch at least one music video a day and write what you find.

02/02/25:

Commercial is whatever you want as an artist for people to understand and to rewrite/push the narrative of barriers. What message you want to portray

Question: do you think that the commercial scene can be impactful in either a positive or negative way?

Can commercial be used to tell a story and how?

Ask Lee from university:

Beth, Jessie

Melanie Martinez: she is a commercial artist but uses contemporary dancers and

Strike a pose documentary note:

Vogue music video was choreographed by jose & luzi who a vogue artist from the underground scene in was New York in 1990. Madonna came to New York to see the vogue scene. She saw artistic expression.

She did an audition for her 1990 tour, and she hired a lot of vogue artists to use. She wanted to see more personal expression (sell yourself).

One dancer was from the hip hop scene and the rest were classic trained dancers and in the vogue scene.

All she wanted was expression to change the face of pop and performance. She was threatened to be arrested by the metro police for 'nude and obscene behaviour' on the 1990 tour. She was accused of being blasphemous because she used a different style/dance style.

She also used different race dancers that at the time was 'controversial'

The vogue expression was used to open the public's eyes and to change the face of pop/commercial. She also used the commercial use to bring attention to the gay community.

She used a film of her own called 'truth or dare' which was shot documentary style following her controversial 'blond ambition' tour and it had taboo subjects at the time on it such as men kissing each other. It was used to push buttons COMMERCIALLY. This then was further discussed on TV with the dancer Luis and José. People said Madonna was 'setting a tone that was destructive'. The film was also seen as offensive to the public and Madonna said, 'THESE THINGS EXIST IN LIFE, IM ONLY PRESENTING LIFE TO PEOPLE.' 'IF YOU KEEP PUTTING SOMETHING IN SOME ONES FACE EVENTUALLY, MAYBE THEY CAN COME TO TERMS WITH IT' in an interview. She knew that the way to put a message out was to do it through TV/tours/music videos which all come under the genre COMMERCIAL.

The Digital Dance Media Library (2024). *Strike A Pose*. [accessed 2nd of feb 2025]

She also used commercial value to bring attention to aids and the misconceptions of it as a disease. She had friends who died from aids and she gave a speech in memory of Keith her friend who was an artist.

Madonna used the kiss scene with Gabrielle in it after he begged her not to use it in the film. Gabrielle sued Madonna for 'outing' him as gay on TV commercially. Three other dancers sued her as well for the same reason.

06/02/25:

Potential interviews: Bethany kyle

Leighton

Becky Humprey

Beth slater

Madonna's film truth or dare was the highest grossed film for the following 12 years after its release on the 10th of may 1991 (domestic release) and the 27th of June 1991 (international release). This brought in \$29,012,935 in the worldwide box office.

Quote from closeted male who was inspired by the film:

'[There] was a scene of a gay pride parade—something I had never seen before ... Madonna's dancers stand in the sidelines while people march, screaming, 'We're here. We're queer. Get used to it!' There are all types of people ... 'Even I could fit in there,' I thought. That moment changed my life ... Madonna's dancers were now my heroes. They let me know that it was okay to be different. Even if you are a part of the LGBT community, you wouldn't understand what I felt unless you lived through the '80s or early '90s as a teenager.'

Daryl deino

Deino, D. (2016). *Madonna's Groundbreaking 'Truth or Dare' Helped the LGBT Community at Its Most Vulnerable Time*. [online] HuffPost [accessed 6th of feb 2025]

For next meeting make a timeline of how commercials changes with history and link historical events with what styles are classed as commercial at that point in time.

Look at band years & years dancers.

Watch Its a sin

Link the social and cultural events and context of commercial dance within the time its in.

1980 aid epidemic and how it influenced commercial dance and advertising.

Micheal Jackson, Pepsi advert

The rise of social media (Tik Tok) and dance shows. People's attention spans have changed and if that has influenced commercial.

Look at how diversity dance group changed the industry after they went on x factor

George Sampson Britan's got talent

How do I see commercial and people interpretation shape the style.

Are there specific choreographers whose help bridge the gap between dance and commercial success?

Do you think commercial dance is accessible to all types of people? Cultures, shapes, sizes, ethnicity.

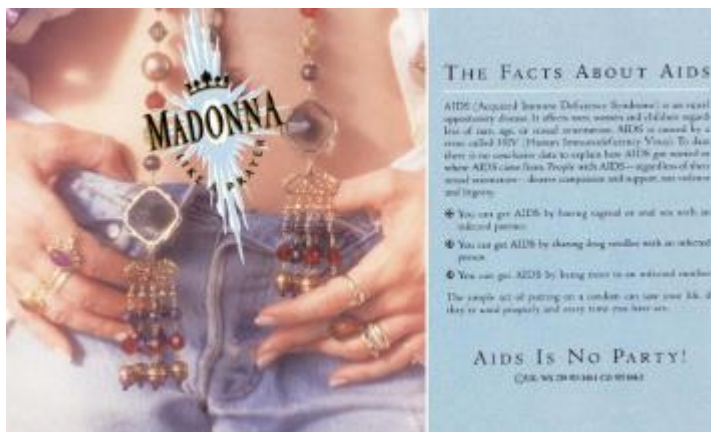
Dance trends and how they change and what styles/cultures. Has it influenced people interests to dance.

Get interview questions for next session. Make sure they reach all the key points you're working on.

15/03/25:

My historical commercial timeline

- | Aids crisis- although many cases were found during the late 70s, hiv/aids became a epidemic in the year 1981 and by this time spreading to 15 different countries.
- |
- | From year 1983 the WHO assessments were carried out, helping remove the stigma that it was a 'gay disease' by doing blood screening.
- | Madonna's activism for the aids crisis goes back to the 1980s. In 1989 she included an insert in her album 'Like a prayer' with facts about AIDS/HIV to break the stigma that it was a 'gay disease'. This was huge as speaking out about aids or gay people was very controversial during this era.



- | In 1991 she released her film/tour documentary which heavily shone light on LGBTQ communities, breaking stigmas and showcasing artistic people.
- | In 1992 she also took part in The Freddie mercury tribute concert for aids awareness. Including lots of other artist such as led zeppelin, Axl rose of guns and roses, mick Ronson, slash, tony lommi of black sabbath, David bowie and other artists.

The event raised \$35 million but after expenses it raised for the AIDS charity \$8 million.

24/03/25:

Talk about negative effects from Commercial dance, Charlie xcx and drug use/writing about drug use.

Influence on young people and how it molds certain trends.

02/04/25:

Create survey about commercial dance and cultivate research from people off social media to gather opinions and outlooks on the style.

potential questions:

How old are you?

Do you have a dance background

14/04/25:

Talk about Amy Winehouse and how she sings about substance abuse and domestic violence. Making her a more relatable yet glamorized celebrity. Also talk about her social status.

I have decided to create a website as I want to make a source of information that will continuously grow with commercial itself. I also want people to be able to reach out and grow the website as style comes in and out of fashion.

15/04/25

History of commercial dance section:

Speakeasys

When the prohibition first took place legal saloons catering to only men across America closed leaving people to turn to illegal bar known as speak easies, gin joints and blind pigs. These were found in urban areas and supplied jazz bands, ballroom dance floors and back rooms. The segregation between men and women stopped and more venues

were created such as, the house party. offering seats, table service and Italian food with wine pairing.

One iconic feature of speakeasies were the showgirls, they would perform and dance the Charleston to Ragtime Jazz. This was very popular with 'rebellious' young girls at the time, giving them the name Flapper girls.

This brought in a social side that was very much needed at that point in history due to such strict laws. These speakeasy's set the tone for the twenties creating a new era with liquor infused parties and jazz entertainment, this is where the name 'the roaring twenty's' came from

Golden age of Hollywood

Some of the most iconic films came from the golden age such as The Wizard Of Oz, Gone With The Wind, Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs. These were groundbreaking during this point in time as they were some of the first films to be shot with sound and colour.

every major film studio had their own Hollywood actor that they knew would drive sales at the box office, such as Humphrey Bogart, James Stewart, Cary Grant, Charles Chaplin and Audrey Hepburn. this is due to popularity of certain actors and style of clothes and filming that gained notoriety after the great depression leading people to be more fluid within their lifestyle due to such poor living in previous years.

Singing In The Rain' heavily used Tap with varying styles of Jazz and Ballet. Why?

Edubirdie. (2024). *Dance in 'Singing in the Rain' - Free Essay Example - Edubirdie*. [online] Available at: <https://hub.edubirdie.com/examples/essay-on-singing-in-the-rain-dance-style/>. [15/04/25]

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Pfeiffer, L. (2019). Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs | Story, Cast, & Facts. In: *Encyclopædia Britannica*. [online] Available at:

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[15/04/25]

16/04/25:

Aesthetics, why is my website layout in a commercial style. Why black and white? Is it easy for people. Is it clean?

Also think about doing a dance to put into presentation film that is relevant to the styles you talked about on website.

Don't forgot to reference on the website.

Change title and move question to overlap photo.

20/04/25:

survey results

[survey results.docx](#)

21/04/25:

I have decided to change one of my icons from Micheal Jackson to Elvis as I believe that Elvis was one of the first to dance with groove and not the 'normal way' in the 1950s-60s.

25/04/25:

Elvis Presley was born on the 8th of January 1935 in Tupelo, Mississippi, USA. He was an only child from a working class family. They moved to Memphis in 1948 where Elvis attended Hume's High School, it was there he took part in lots of talent shows after receiving his first guitar for his 11th birthday.

after leaving school Elvis started recording with Memphis Recording Service. he recorded 'That's When Your Heartache Begins' and 'My Happiness' in 1953. In 1954 Elvis met with producer Sam Phillips and musicians, Scotty Moore and Bill Black. This is where they recorded their version of 'That's All Right Mama' which later became his first single.

Elvis was scouted by RCA Records in 1955. This led to him recording his first Number one song 'Heartbreak Hotel' and having his first national television appearance on Stage Show with Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey.

HistoryExtra. (2022). *The life and death of Elvis Presley*. [online] Available at: <https://www.historyextra.com/period/modern/life-of-the-week-elvis-presley/>.

Why was his dancing so controversial .

The reason for Elvis's 'rubber legs' was due to his legs shaking from being nervous on stage. To over exaggerate the moves during instrumentals by stepping back from the mic and shaking his hips and legs.

Elvis thought he was being booed because the crowd were screaming so much.

These moves sparked his fame leading him to become one of the most famous people of our time, he experienced a lot of backlash.

Ed Sullivan was the biggest TV host at the time however he said he would never work with Elvis because of his obscene moves

his appearance on the Steve Allen show had Sullivan rethink his decision due to the amount of viewers/ratings Elvis would bring in.

He was the highest paid act on the show at \$16,000 per show.

He performed his song hound dog while making very sexual hip gyrations which gave him the name 'Elvis the pelvis' in the news papers/media.

Elvis was threaten legal action by a judge in Florida if he performed 'obscenely' in the state.

Due to 70,000 letters of complaint Ed Sullivan decided to only film Elvis from the chest up during his last performance on the show. This did nothing as Elvis already had a name for himself.

Elvis was huge with the younger generation resulting in 'bizzar' behaviour from teenagers whenever they saw him on the screen or in person. Many news papers wrote up on the situation as reactions such as 'screaming and giggling' from the public had never really been seen before.

Newspapers.com. (2025). *Nov 03, 1957, page 85 - The Miami News at Newspapers.com - Newspapers.com*. [online] Available at: <https://www.newspapers.com/image/298538272/> [Accessed 25th Apr 2025].

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28/04/25

The darkside of tiktok, talk about when it was created/founded and who by?

what styles are used and why. Is it global? has tiktok reshaped commercial.

wstadmin (2022). *How TikTok Has Influenced Different Dancing Styles*. [online] World Champion Productions. Available at: <https://www.worldchampionproductions.com/2022/12/05/how-tiktok-has-influenced-different-dancing-styles/>.

01/05/25:

Survey break down:

Analise questions and what the outcome was.

How age and dance ability may change your view/outlook.

Oberlo (2024). *Facebook Age Demographics*. [online] www.oberlo.com. Available at: <https://www.oberlo.com/statistics/facebook-age-demographics>.

06/05/25:

The dark side of commercial influencing:

Body image, drug use, mental health

Exploitation of dancers and treatment of dancers. Whats the effect?

How does it effect the dance community?

The prevalence of at least moderate symptoms of depression was 11.1% in female and 6.4% in male dancers, of generalised anxiety disorder 16.0% in female and 6.4% in male dancers and of eating disorders 14.8% in female and 6.1% in male dancers

Junge, A. and Hauschild, A. (2023). Behind the Curtain: Prevalence of Symptoms of Depression, Generalised Anxiety and Eating Disorders in 147 Professional Dancers from Six Opera Houses or State Theatres. *Sports Medicine - Open*

The exploitation of dancers and abuse used in schools by instructors.

10/05/25

Conclusion

Draft:

Throughout my research I had sort to find out 'what is Commercial dance and is it subjective?'. However while I have found my answers and expanding research very helpful in reaching a conclusion I believe that Commercial cannot be defined by one style or culture, but as a amalgamation of backgrounds, music, style, fashion and mainstream influence. The

influences from companies, artists and musicians are used to push narratives or social change for revenue (money or repetition). Following this Commercial will always be changing with sociality as trends go in and out of fashion. The future of Commercial dance looks to continue to grow more inclusive, accepting and honest as artists and general public work together to create a safer place for everyone. The cultural swap of styles is one of the most important elements to commercial dance, it allows dancers to be more free and self expressive, continuing to grow as a dancer/performer. This also creates inclusivity within the community and expanding the world of Commercial dance.

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