

How the use of males and their technique has changed throughout the history of dance.

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Proposal

Subject:

How the use of males and their technique has changed throughout the history of dance.

Overview of aims:

I believe that the use of men in society has changed drastically throughout the years, this also reflects in men's dance styles and techniques. My aim is to teach young performers the influence society has had on men's dance throughout the past 100 years and how men's dance has been developed from the golden age to modern musical theatre. My goal is to create a short film to display my research and show my dance skills. I want to teach young performers therefore I hope the audience would learn something new too. My target audience ranges from teens to adults, due to the broad history of dance I could go safe enough for children yet informative enough for adults.

Research:

Podcasts - I will listen to podcasts on how men's status has changed throughout history

<https://www.catalyst.org/2019/08/14/podcasts-for-men-gender-equity-champions/> These podcast will be a good source of research as I engage well with them. The information is relevant as feminism is a very relevant factor into men's change in society and I can discuss this in my film.

Tv - I will watch strictly come dancing to see the men's technique on the show also how it compares to the women's

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=p-rSdt0aFuw>
<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=uqHt2VeYJN4>

These two videos from YouTube are a great source of research to show examples of the progression of men's dance/technique and how music has influenced it through the years. These videos will help to inspire me with what dances and decades I would like to investigate further.

Websites - I will see if anyone else has done this before and I'll use it as supporting research. I will search into how men have changed in dance including their masculinity.

https://www.arthurmurraydancenow.com/blog/most-popular-dance-styles-over-the-past-100-years?hs_amp=true
<https://www.sutori.com/story/dancing-through-the-decades--qVK2JKNcw4Qj6Qv1us5cxNEr>

These two articles are a helpful source as it gives me knowledge of dance styles over the past 100 years and I can see the specific style changes and what's influenced the changes of dance.

<https://medium.com/gbc-college-english-lemonade/masculinity-and-dance-a837d507c2c>
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/43473050>

These two articles are beneficial to me as they talk about male masculinity in dance during this current age. It's interesting to see how some people feel that male masculinity has been lost in dance in modern dance and others feel male masculinity is more accepted in modern dance. I will reflect on this in my short film.

Questionnaires - I will use questionnaires to see how much people know about the history of my project. This will be beneficial as I can give the questionnaires to my fellow peers as well as my dance tutors showing the opinions of different age brackets. I can use this information to develop a character for my short film.

E.g.

how much do you know about the change of men through dance

Do you think men's history in dance has changed

Do you feel that modern dance is catered to be more feminine

My self - As a young performer who has been studying dance and musical theatre over the past 5 years I will use past experiences as research, such as my work on short films will help me produce and write my piece. I will also use my knowledge on the different dance styles and eras I have been taught in college as well as university and their differences.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=p-rSdt0aFuw>

This is a video that shows dance evolution through the years 1950's-2019 by Ricardo walker's crew. I chose this reference because it's a male 'crew' that dances to different songs through the ages. They also use dances relevant to the era. This will help me in my development phase as I will mainly be using jazz as it's a style I'm most comfortable with, and this video is mainly jazz dances and styles. I can also use this video for inspiration when I come to recording, editing and cutting the video.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=uqHt2VeYJN4>

This is a video of (Evolution Of Dance) from the 1920's -2000's. Lindy hop, Charleston, Tap, Rock and Roll, Swing, Disco, Breakdance, Hip Hop and the viral trends of today. This will help me in my development phase because, if I'm ever stuck with choreography this will show me that I can use more than one style. I can also use this video for inspiration when I come to recording, editing and cutting the video.

Instead of these two videos, I ended up using the links and videos below as my dance inspiration. I did not completely disregard the linked videos above instead I used them as video and editing inspiration. As they did not help me much with choreography and dance styles as I went down a different route with my dances and styles as I did not feel like the video benefitted me for my dance and my dances purpose.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=077BgT3h6As&list=PLyilCKcw3speQrHNs68DhbBX1vGFcbUPX&index=1>

I used this video (swan lake - act II pas de deux) for my ballet inspiration. This really helped me with choreography. I also used moves and techniques we learned over level 4 and 5 ballet. The male in the dance influenced me, as I was able to look at what he does in this and take them and use it in my piece. I was also able to see how little men do during this ballet piece compared to the woman.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bv4EXGk3zeQ&list=PLyilCKcw3speQrHNs68DhbBX1vGFcbUPX&index=4>

I used this video for my Tango inspiration. As this is the perfect video I could have used. It was what I was looking for in a video and I believe it was the closest to my idea to achieve what I wanted to show.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4go3RoWw-iE>

I used this video for my Chicago inspiration from 17 seconds until 1:45. As I have done Chicago before I could remember what it was like doing and how pedantic my tutor was with me so I took this into consideration. This video happens to be the video my college released at the end of covid19.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1qp7r99DcE&list=PLyilCKcw3speQrHNs68DhbBX1vGFcbUPX&index=9&t=621s>

I used this video for my 'sway' inspiration, as it actually taught me how to slow dance. This was extremely helpful for the dance I had in mind and the style and purpose of the dance.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNCQsu5uXbo&list=PLyilCKcw3speQrHNs68DhbBX1vGFcbUPX&index=3>

I used this video for my "stay" inspiration. It was the best video I could find as they had the best connection and it was the right style of dance for what I wanted to portray. It was the best in terms of videography as well.

Meeting with Tori

I have yet to have this meeting/interview with Tori. But what I hope to get out of this is more insight into the dance side of the industry.

Examples of questions I'll ask:

Which gender's dance has been affected the most over time?

Do you feel that dance has evolved to the best of its ability and purpose?

What era would you say displays men's dance the best?

I know that this will help me during my development phase as I will have more inspiration and knowledge to back up my dance. I will also be able to get an outside view and understanding of my piece which will help me to stay on track and not stray off from what I am trying to show.

My meeting with Tori really helped me to get a better understanding on my project as a whole. Prior to this meeting I was only looking at it from a male's perspective and how only male's dance has evolved. Which is what my piece is about, but looking at it and getting an understanding of my subject from all angles helped me look into it further than I anticipated. I asked Tori "Which gender's dance has been affected the most over time?" and her reply was simply "Both, difficult to quantify. Both males and females have changed beyond recognition."

This stumped me as I was expecting either "males because... or females because".

So after this meeting it took me a day or two to snap out of the mindset of men and only men and then decided to use this to my advantage.

Therefore I chose to do my pieces as a duet and asked Maisie from the commercial course to be in my dances.

The questions and answers from Tori

Which gender's dance has been affected the most over time?

Both, difficult to quantify. Both males and females have changed beyond recognition.

Do you feel that dance has evolved to the best of its ability and purpose?

No. Because you can't define the best. There's always more room for improvement.

What era would you say displays men's dance the best?

All of them. Subjective

Who were the most influential choreographers

Bob fosse

Balanchine

Wayne mcgregor

Susan stroman

Questionnaire

I am yet to make the questionnaires, as I will make them after my meeting with Tori. I am doing this because I will be able to use some information from the meeting / interview in my questionnaires to see if anyone else knows something that I've only recently discovered and to see if it's relevant to our generation.

I will use the questionnaire to gather multiple viewpoints on men's dance through time and see if the difference has any correlation to gender or age or even profession.

This will help with my development as I will be able to see the subject I have chosen on a much broader spectrum and it may help me to decide on scenes I think will be valuable in my documentary.

After my meeting with Tori I realised that the questionnaire wouldn't be much help to me as I started to look at my project in a different way. And if I sent these questionnaires out it wouldn't have helped me much if at all and I wouldn't have used them in my research.

<https://www.sutori.com/story/dancing-through-the-decades--qVK2JKNcw4Qj6Qv1us5cxNEr>

I have chosen this website for a reference because it goes through history and makes points about what else was going on at the time, and relates them to music and dance. For example it says 'Up to 60 percent of African American men had no work and Black musicians were not allowed to do studio or radio work.' And then goes on to say how jazz was 'resilient' and dance halls were always busy.

This will help me in my development as I could use facts like this in my dance and it could also help create a 'scene' in the documentary I will be making.

https://www.arthurmurraydancenow.com/blog/most-popular-dance-styles-over-the-past-100-years?hs_amp=true

For similar reasons I have chosen this website for reference as it also talks about the history of the era but focuses more on the dance aspect of it. For example it says in the 1930's section 'And if you're shaking your head, thinking the Moonwalk was created by Michael Jackson, think again—this move, though called "The Buzz" at the time, was first stepped by Jazz icon Cab Calloway as early as 1932.' And from this you can see compared to the website above it delves a little deeper into the history of dance.

This will help me develop due to the fact that I will be able to make accurate and factual statements relatable to the dance and techniques I will use in my dance.

<https://medium.com/gbc-college-english-lemonade/masculinity-and-dance-a837d507c2>

I have also looked into this last website because it talks about masculinity in dance and the stereotypes associated with it. For example it says 'male dancers are being stereotyped that they are not "macho" enough, that dancing is for women and that men are not masculine enough.' This will help me develop in my piece as it will push me to 'prove' these stereotypes wrong within my piece. It is also a piece I can relate too because I used to think this before I went to college and therefore I can use this article to show others and help them to understand.

After my meeting with Tori I realised that the questionnaire wouldn't be much help to me as I started to look at my project in a different way. And if I sent these questionnaires out it wouldn't have helped me much if at all and I wouldn't have used them in my research.

So instead I looked at books as they were the only thing I could think of that would help me without getting my mind set back into just males and only males again. In essence, to keep me with an open mind. One of the books I used a male speaks about his experience with dance and it stood out for me maybe because I can relate to what he said, for example "the fear of being laughed at because they danced" and as a young male dancer I can understand how that made not only him but others feel too.

LI, ZIHAO. "Invisible Barriers." In *Dancing Boys: High School Males in Dance*, 105–19. University of Toronto Press, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3138/j.ctv1005bxm.11>.

Evidence of development

<https://youtu.be/gI9UFsN-Z30>

(unfortunately not in order as i cannot move them around)

00:00 - 02:07

We start this video with the ballet rehearsal. This is the latest clip I have. Unfortunately. It was also only a video so that we had a rough idea on what we were doing and not a full professional clip. It was also difficult as we weren't wearing our proper outfit (shoes etc.). I also have the person recording calling out our next moves because when we were walking through it I couldn't remember what I did. My biggest challenge was I wasn't supposed to do much so that you see the progression so for me to concentrate on Maisie and myself when we were doing different movements was difficult because I wanted to make sure she was doing the right thing.

02:07 - 04:04

Then we go into the rehearsal of the tango. This was the first fully comfortable run we did as it was one of the first dances I choreographed. Looking back I think I should have looked more at Maisie to build that connection in the dance rather than stare at the mirror. But as i said i like to make sure the lines are good and the movements flow. I also believe that this is the strongest dance I have choreographed and is the most visually pleasing. But by far the most stressful part about this song is that it has no intro. So when the song starts playing we start moving. It was the hardest part to nail, but fair play to Maisie she nailed it.

04:04 - 05:17

This is the early version of the ballet. In this we do the start of the ballet piece because I had not choreographed the rest at this point. This is the most professional we had done the ballet in the recordings as we were really drained both mentally and physically, so we decided to just smash out what we had and we would leave it there for the day. This ballet piece i was really happy with as it looks right and it was enough for me to be able to see where else the dance needed to go and it was also enough for me to be able to critique myself on my posture throughout the small piece we had and it was something i needed to bare in mind.

05:17 - 06:15

In this clip we see where Maisie had some input into the dance. This clip shows us working together to make the piece what it was. Also without sound. This was also a recording I looked back at to see if it would 'make sense' in the piece and if it fitted in nicely to the dance, which it did. More or less an extension onto the piece before.

06:15 - 08:51

This was an early version of the tango that we recorded. This was the first recording we have where we do the full dance with all the moves. This clip also shows that even though we mess up a little bit we just jump straight back into it and give it our all whilst being cautious.

08:51 - 11:51

These are just multiple recordings of the dance to show the progression we had. And even though I twisted my knee I just got straight back into it. It was a case of me between clips just getting up and walking it off to have another go. This I may also use as my evidence for not doing the double pirouettes in the ballet as this was before the ballet was recorded. This also shows our work process together and how well and hard we worked in these rehearsals.

11:51 - 14:21

All of these clips are of us rehearsing our lifts while Nico was tap dancing. We often shared the dance space with Nico as we found it easier to book one room out for a longer time and we shared it rather than just booking separately. This is to show that we went over not just routines but segments that we felt we needed to go over for comfortability. These were also videos we both looked over for improvements on the lifts. We ran them frequently to make sure we were both comfortable and safe doing them. Unfortunately these are the only clips I have of us going through them and I apologise for the unprofessionalism in the clips.

14:21 - 15:54

This is the first run we had of 'stay'. This we felt was a good run of the choreography and we felt like there were only small things to adjust one for instance was me turning away from her at the end of the piece we felt like it took away from the piece and just ruined it a little so we took it out after this. This was a good clip to look over and refer back to when we went over them after this because if we forgot something we would look back at this video and it would set everything right for us.

Rehearsal process

The rehearsals were hard to put together because Maisie still had classes going on within the university. So instead we decided after university times would be best for the both of us, as it would allow me time during the day to look at pieces or pieces we had choreographed and either find new ideas or just slightly adjust the ones we had. This was extremely useful as I wasn't too sure about the first couple of videos I was using for inspiration and so I just looked and looked for new ones. This was beneficial for when I was stuck on finding movements from the rehearsal before.

I also tried my best to check in on Maisie everyday to make sure she was okay to do the dances not just energy wise, but also in the fact that before this project we didn't really know each other so I was making sure that she was comfortable enough to do the dance. I would always think of alternative movements so that if she wasn't comfortable with the moves then i could just change it no problem. I would also let her have input to the pieces because I wouldn't want her to do something she isn't comfortable with. I would always listen to her suggestions if she had any and most of the time I took her suggestion and changed it slightly so that I didn't feel like she was 'choreographing' the dance.

Another issue that I had while rehearsing was my knee twisting. So unfortunately I wasn't able to do the double pirouettes like I had learned to do in level 4-5 . This really upset me as I wasn't able to show off my skills fully and show what I had learned.

Our aim for these rehearsals were to show what we had learned during our time on our courses and to get my point across about mens development in dance. Which I decided to do through duets. We also discussed costumes for the pieces and we even booked J1 studios with nico and split the time there. I looked through what they would usually wear in these pieces to see what I had so that I could use what I had. We planned out a couple of sessions at a time but it got into us rehearsing everyday. This was hard for us because when my knee twisted i just carried on, but Maisie still had classes so i tried to rest it but it was just very sore and ached. We would talk frequently on our availability during the week and weekends as we would still come in on Saturdays.

We also had breaks in our rehearsals as they would last hours. So before routines we would do our warm ups together for around 10-15 mins then we would stretch to make sure we were being safe to reduce the risk of injury. After our breaks we would then do a small stretch to make sure we were still being safe. After the dances we would do a cool down so that we weren't too sore and to keep ourselves in the best condition we could be in.

One of the main challenges was to learn the choreography as fast as we could because we would learn a choreography then the next rehearsal we would go over it before and after choreographing a new piece. I would go home and look over the videos over and over so I wouldn't forget the choreography, but I still forgot a couple of things because I would be thinking of different ways to do something. This made it a little difficult for me to focus solely on one thing, the way that I got around this though is I would tell Maisie anything that came into my head. We would either try it out to see if it worked and if it didn't then we would just

go back and do what we were doing. We were very flexible in the way we worked with each other which made things so much easier to try out and put together. I also struggled with booking rooms as some of the actors were booking dance spaces to rehearse. With this in mind I went and spoke to Eilir about only us dancers having the dance spaces as there are only two dance rooms and four dancers. He then went and sorted it with staff to only let the dancers book the dance studios. Booking rooms from then was the easiest it had been prior. Also looking back at my research was extremely helpful to keep me on track for example the invisible barriers book helped me to remember, I'm older now its professional not weird no one is going to laugh.

I learned how to take control of my project and get my ideas across to someone else whether it would be for us to try the movements and trust each other or for me to show Maisie and then we 'give it a go'. I will take a lot from this project as I also learned how to manage time properly. I would have to find out times and schedules of not only myself but Maisie and the availability of the rooms in order to book them. I also learned how to research effectively as I knew what I wanted so I would look at similar dances and styles and take the movements from there.

Here is some feedback I received from maisie about the process: "I thought Will was very professional and had good choreography and taught it to me slowly and in detail, which was really helpful. I liked having some input and working as a team with Will. We had a lot of the same ideas which was great and we bounced off each other really well. He made sure I was comfortable with the choreography and comfortable with the dances. Throughout this process I thought we worked really well together and it has given us a good experience with dancing with a partner."

Performance

<https://youtu.be/YBNWk9vAiW0>

This performance was to demonstrate how the use of males and their technique has changed throughout the history of dance. I decided to do this through duets. I used Maisie for the performances until the last one. With the last one I decided to go even further into today's world and get toms into it because in today's world it doesn't matter who's dancing with who.

The recording of the dances on J1 went how I hoped they would. Personally for me the tango recording went perfectly. The lighting, the costume and our attitude to the dance and each other were spot on. The costumes for everything else were also amazing. I really think we got the right atmosphere, mood and era right. I was extremely upset at the fact I lost my ballet and jazz shoes in my house to complete the whole look and have the correct equipment. In 'stay' and tango and only slightly in the ballet I think we had the right stage presence and emotional depth.

Unfortunately, the sway dance didn't go as well as it did during rehearsals. There were noticeable errors such as mood, connection and emotional depth to the piece. Which affected the overall quality of the performance. Recording in the Theatre Studio was a problem for me. The footage captured in the theatre studio didn't meet my expectations in terms of professionalism. It may have lacked the desired lighting, stage presence, or visual appeal, thereby diminishing the overall impact of the choreography. Losing my ballet and jazz shoes was an unfortunate setback. This oversight impacted the professional look I intended to achieve for the project. The absence of proper footwear detracted from the overall presentation. The anticipation of finally stepping into a dedicated dance studio filled me with excitement, as it signified a significant milestone in my journey as a dancer. However, alongside the excitement, there was also a sense of nervousness, knowing that this was an opportunity to showcase my skills in a more professional setting.

To enhance the overall aesthetic of the video, we decided to experiment with the lighting. We adjusted the colour and intensity of the lights, aiming to create a more professional and visually captivating atmosphere. With each change in the lighting, the ambiance of the dance space transformed, adding an extra layer of artistry to the performance. One of the challenges we faced during the recording session was the need for quick costume changes. As the choreography pieces varied in style and mood, we had to swiftly transition from one costume to another, ensuring that each outfit appropriately complemented the choreography and enhanced the overall visual impact. The rapid changes demanded precision and efficiency, but they also added an element of excitement and dynamism to the recording process. Despite the physical demands, the heat, and the time pressure, the experience of recording in a professional dance space was immensely rewarding.

The thrill of performing in a dedicated environment, with tailored lighting and the opportunity to showcase my skills in the best possible way, made it all worthwhile. This experience reinforced the importance of preparation, adaptability, and attention to detail in a professional setting. It also highlighted the significance of collaboration and teamwork, as we worked

together to create an impressive final product. Overall, recording in a professional dance space for the first time was a memorable and transformative experience

One aspect I was pleased with was the professionalism displayed in the Tango piece. The execution, technique, and overall performance quality were strong, resulting in a polished and captivating dance. Both the Tango and the "Stay" dance successfully conveyed emotional depth. The movements, expressions, and overall interpretation effectively communicated the intended emotions, adding depth and authenticity to the performances. The videos recorded at J1 exceeded my expectations in terms of professionalism. The location, lighting, and overall visual aesthetics contributed to a high-quality production value, enhancing the impact of the choreography.

Overall, while there were aspects of my individual project that fell short of my expectations, such as the Sway Dance, recording in the theatre studio, and the loss of ballet and jazz shoes, there were also highlights that I can be proud of. The professionalism displayed in the Tango, the emotional depth in the Tango and "Stay" dance, and the high-quality videos captured at J1 were significant achievements. Moving forward, I recognize the importance of thorough preparation, attention to detail, and ensuring all necessary resources are available to maintain a consistent and professional standard across all choreography pieces. I will learn from the areas of improvement identified in this evaluation and strive for continuous growth and refinement in my future projects.

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