

Learning in the Digital Era

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E-Portfolio

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Essential Skills

The creative industry is a field which requires an array of skills in order to work professionally and successfully, many of which can be applied both during our time of study as well as our everyday lives.

Dance isn't just purely a physical art form, a great dancer can also be characterized by their personal qualities that drive them in their careers. An example of this would be a dancer using .

As well as this the dance industry within itself as well as auditions have a competitive nature meaning we must be able to pick up choreography as quickly as possible (Rain Frances, no date).

In order to truly hone your skills as a dancer one must apply discipline not just through their training but also within themselves and how they manage their habits and everyday lives. An example of this is applying discipline when taking care of your body. It is known that dancers have been pressured overtime to obtain a certain physique, however losing weight does not equal an improvement in performance and can lead to disordered eating, amenorea and bone loss, otherwise known as the female triad (Dance Anatomy, 2018). One must apply discipline to ensure they are giving their bodies the nourishment they need.

Commonly overlooked is the ability to have confidence in oneself and your skills in order to present them to the world, dancers may often perform in TV, films and music videos as well as participating in live performances. Networking and marketing yourself may also be a part of thriving within the dance community (Ivory Howard, 2023), both of which require a certain level of confidence.

their intellect and knowledge of their craft in order to carry out skills such as quickly picking up choreography and reversing combinations- in order to enhance your chances of success knowledge is power (Michelle Potterf, 2014). This is an incredibly useful quality particularly when working in professional productions as an understudy or swing who has to learn multiple roles

A Review of Disney's Aladdin

On January 24th I was fortunate enough to have watched a stage production of Disney's Aladdin in the Wales Millenium Centre, a show that was both highly entertaining and made for a fantastic evening at the theater. The show was deemed appropriate for those aged 6 and above and lived up to its expectations of a family friendly evening of music and entertainment, featuring all of the music and well loved classics from the original film produced by Alan Menken, Howard Ashman, and Tim Rice (WMC,2023). From its elaborate scenery to its exhilarating musical numbers, this show did not leave its audience wanting for more.

The story of Aladdin is well known by audiences across the world and its original 1992 film is well loved by those of all ages. Aladdin, a kind hearted "street urchin" falls in love with Jasmine the princess of Agrabah and with the help of the genie they must defeat the Sultans advisor Jafar in his sinister plans for the pair (IMDB, no date) . This particular stage adaptation did well in remaining true to the main plot points of the original screenplay, overall telling the story in a very recognisable way. However a lot of dialogue was sacrificed for musical numbers, both original and adapted, so while the story to those familiar with it could be easily followed i do believe that someone attending the show with no prior knowledge of the screenplay or any further adaptations may have felt that the plot itself moved very quickly and this may have made it harder to follow. The emotional stakes of the show were not as high because of this, with dialogue being at a minimum in comparison to the musical numbers we weren't able to connect as strongly to the characters, something that I would argue is a huge charm of the original story and why so many audiences fell in love with this Walt Disney fairytale. However when taking into consideration the difficulty of adapting such a well known classic to stage this production did well to ensure the show remained entertaining for family based audiences and overall told the story through both music and dialogue in an impressive way.

A major high point of this production was its incredible use of elaborate costumes and scenery, both of which throughout looked lavish and visually pleasing, again knowing the magic of the original screenplay one would enter such a show with

high expectations regarding the visual aspect of the show and it did not disappoint. The set pieces managed to remain true to real life while also harboring a sense of whimsy and the use of vibrant colors and patterns throughout really created a fantasy world that the audience were able to feel that they were a part of. In particular the costumes created a real sense of awe for audience members, with over 350 extravagant costumes an impressive level of style and opulence was displayed (WMC 2023), the level of grandeur of the costuming continued to escalate throughout and really pushed the rags to riches narrative. I was especially impressed with the “whole new world” sequence of the show, knowing that this was a huge climax of the story I anticipated this moment throughout, unsure of how they would recreate such a mystical moment. Furthermore the special effects, lighting and stunts used throughout the sequence left me fully entranced in the magic of the moment.

The cast put on a particularly entertaining performance and were all able to move the story along well. This is especially impressive when you consider that originally cast in the role of Aladdin is Gavin Adams however for this performance Aaron Elijah Patel stepped into the role and as someone originally listed as a member of the ensemble he did well to carry the leading role with such ease (Aladdin the musical 2023); I personally was unaware that he was not the official casting for the role until reading the programme! I personally very much enjoyed the use of colour blind casting for this production and believe this should be applied more heavily to the performance industry, particularly musical theater. Representation and diversity on stage is something I am extremely passionate about and it was extremely refreshing to go and see a show and have this applied. It could however be argued that a show set in a fictional town based on the city of Baghdad in the Middle East (Refinery29 2019) should heavily feature a cast of middle eastern/Arabian descent, which this production did not, we must ask ourselves which form of representation is correct?

My overall experience watching this show was extremely pleasant, the facilities of the Donald Gordon Theatre were comfortable and accessible and the staff were helpful and kind. Due to my experience being very positive I would definitely recommend that anyone who enjoys the theater and/or Disney to see this show while it remains on tour as it guarantees a night of wholesome fun and high standard entertainment.

A Reflective Review of Commercial Dance 1

In our Commercial dance 1 Module we have been covering the basics of our street styles with our tutor representing Jukebox Collective Reuel. The street styles are widely known as Hip Hop, Popping, Locking, House, Breaking, Krump, Waacking and voguing (Moser-Kindler 2023), however for the purpose of this module we have substituted waacking and voguing for the styles Afro and Dancehall. Street Styles or 'Street Dance' is a term used for a variety of dance styles that have originated "from the streets", these styles have been pioneered by a variety of different practitioners and are often referred to as vernacular dances which reflect the culture of the time and get passed down through generations by social nature, encouraging interaction with audiences and culture (Twinkl, date unknown). For the purposes of this reflection I will be focusing specifically on the style locking and my experiences of it in this class.

While I have prior experience with locking and have done my own individual research on the style it was important to me that I applied myself to this style as if I had never encountered it before. Reuel commented that while I had great groove and knowledge of this style, I should concentrate heavily on applying the right technique and paying attention to detail with individual moves.

Locking is a style of funk dance that originated in the early 60s/70s by a dancer called Don Campbell who was known for locking his arms in a certain way, accidentally creating the Campbell Lock. From here a plethora of movements and variations were created, eventually leading to what we know as the style locking today (Society Dance, date unknown). We began delving into this style by connecting first with the music associated with it, finding our own rhythm to songs such as "workin' day and night" and "get up offa that thing". We then stripped back the meaning of the style and focused first on the foundational groove of locking and how that could be incorporated into our movements.

Some of the moves we focused on included Up and Down Locks, Stop and Go, Accurate Points, Skeeter Rabbit, the Scoobot and a number of tricks including Straddle jumps, Knee drops and Jazz splits. When executing these movements Reuel pointed out that it's important that when doing classic movements such as

up locks and down locks that I needed to concentrate on making sure that my arms were sharp and accurate as the name “Locking” centers around the style being clean and almost robotic in nature in contrast to the groove of other moves such as the Leo Walk. I realized that this is where I most needed to apply myself and that in order to improve my ability in not just this style but in all styles of dance this accuracy was something I needed to develop. In order to do this I conducted research on how best to make my dancing cleaner and discovered that the most effective way to do this is through the improvement of my muscle memory. In order to apply this I would need to conduct the moves with accuracy and efficiency in repetition in order to allow my brain to recognise the correct way to execute the movements (Pu 2020).

I have done this by ensuring that when practicing I apply myself in this way every single time, making sure not to fall into bad patterns with my technique and ensuring accuracy even when marking the movements. In the classes to come I really put effort into my sharpness and accuracy and what I did not expect was that in doing this I found that I now also had to ensure that I did not lose the groove that comes with this style and so many others. Being a successful and interesting dancer means finding the balance between the two, being able to have a natural groove while also ensuring you are precise and clean with your movements. In doing both of these things I discovered that it allowed me to experiment with the texture of my dancing, something that I can make unique to myself and use to make my dancing elevated. Furthermore the application of this texture also allows me to show off my musicality and add an extra element of performance to my dancing.

And so in conclusion, when Reuel suggested that I concentrate on the accuracy and cleanliness of my movements when locking, in applying this critique it has allowed me to further elevate my dance ability in numerous ways and not just within locking itself, i am also able to apply this to all of the street styles as well as my commercial training in general. Going forward I am focused on ensuring my dancing continues to grow and I aim to do so by applying this particular critique as well as any received going forward in my training.

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