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Level 1 Dance RAS 2023

91939 Demonstrate understanding of the application of the elements of dance in a performance

EXEMPLAR

Excellence

TOTAL 21

INSTRUCTIONS

There are THREE questions in this assessment. Answer ALL questions, using the dance performance provided for each question. Use examples from the video to support your response.

You may:

- include aspects other than those suggested in the bullet points of the question
- use the description of the performance to help you with your responses.

QUESTION ONE: *Rotunda*

The dance *Rotunda* is about the courage of the ANZAC soldiers during the First World War. This excerpt is the death duet where one dancer struggles to leave the other behind.

Note: The dance in this video was performed without music.

VIDEO PLAYER

Rotunda, The New Zealand Dance Company, Shona McCullagh

00:36

Source (adapted): Turner, M., Bindon, C. (2015), *Rotunda Educational Resource*, The New Zealand Dance Company

(a) How are relationships used in this duet?

You might refer to:

- weight-bearing / contact
- action and reaction
- near or far.

B I U ☰ ☷ ↶ ↷

In the dance "Rotunda" by the New Zealand Dance Company, the choreographer (Shona McCullagh) implements a wide range of dance elements, the most significant one being the use of relationships. There are three extremely strong aspects of relationships being used in this dance; movement relationships, dancer relationships and conceptual relationships.

Movement relationships describes how the dancers move with each other. This can be seen in the form of action and reaction movements. At 10 seconds in one person falls back, this action is then contrasted by their duet partner who pulls them back up into a seated position as a reaction. Meaning that the action from one dancers, signifies a reaction from the other dancer. Furthermore, their movements are enhanced by the use of energy, specifically weight and dynamic qualities of movement. When the dancer falls back it is very heavy, and when the other guy pulls him up the dynamic of his action is percussive - as it is very sharp and sudden. His reaction to his partner falling down is almost instant.

Another significant example of relationships being used is dancer relationships, which is the connection the dancers have with each other. Throughout the whole duration of this dance they are always in contact with each other and as a viewer you can feel these powerful emotions radiating from their connection. Each movement they have a point of contact and are at a close proximity. Additionally, the movements near the end of the dance excerpt are weight-bearing and show counter balance, as the guy lifts the other guy, trying to keep him standing up right. From this we can see the roles of each duet partner, as one person stands out as the strong leader trying to help and support the other weak guy.

The final example of relationships being used is conceptual, meaning it is an external abstract relationship symbolising an idea. This can be seen in the concluding seconds of the dance when both dancers look different ways, each for significant reasons (that relate to the deeper meaning behind the dance). At 28 seconds in, the dancer holding the guy upright looks back whilst the other dancer being held up looks down. When the dancer looks back he is connecting to fear and when the dancer looks down he is connecting to death (like hes given up). These are external relationships that connect to conceptual meanings, not to mention, visually it shows movement relationships as the orientation of each dancer is asymmetric and contrasts each other whilst they are still tightly intertwined. This point in the dance is so symbolic, despite it being small moment, and it is successfully emphasised by the use of the element body, as they are non-locomotor, isolated, small actions.

(b) How do these dance elements contribute to the communication of ideas?

B I U    

The action reaction movement of the dancer falling down then getting pulled back up, is a significant conduit between the inner realm of intention and the outer realm of expression. When the first guy falls back it shows how he is in a great deal of pain and wants to give up on himself. He wants to escape the war, the trauma, the injuries, everything. Ultimately showing death and how close he is to it. However, on the other hand, his soldier friend is not ready to give up on him, he doesn't want to let him go or see him die. So instead he helps him, he pulls him back up and gets him standing. Attempting to keep him going.

The idea of the dancers being at a close proximity and always having a point of contact shows the relationship between these two soldiers and how they are really close, they love each other and they are there for each other. Additionally this builds tension for the audience as it makes it even more heart breaking to see how the World War is tearing them apart as one soldier has to watch his friend slowly die, due to the conditions and experiences of what they have had to go through.

As the dance progresses we see the courage, resilience and bravery of the ANZAC soldiers shine through as one guy has to be strong for his friend and do his best to support him and keep him going (seen when he lifts him around, holds him upright). Despite the rough unfortunate moments the soldier never gives up on his friend and always holds on tightly.

Then finally, at the end of the piece, when the guy looks back in fear (seeing more soldiers and war events happening) he immediately looks back at his friend as a way of reassurance and that everything is going to be okay.

In conclusion, this dance hangs of the threads of my heart and evokes many emotions, not to mention it teaches us about the true, raw despair wars cause and makes me think how lucky we are to live in a safe country, free of wars.

QUESTION TWO: *Minoi*

Minoi is a combination of contemporary dance and fa'ataupati (a Samoan dance style).

VIDEO PLAYER

Minoi, Black Grace, Neil Ieremia

Source (adapted): <https://teara.govt.nz/en/video/44248/black-grace-2005>

(a) How are time and energy used in this section of the dance performance?

You might refer to:

- tempo
- rhythm
- accent
- contrasting energy qualities.

B I U | **☰ ☷** | **↶ ↷**

Time is used in this dance sequence through the use of tempo and tempo. Throughout this dance the tempo gradually increases, thus the duration of each movement is much faster and the corresponding rhythm changes. At the beginning, dancers slap their thighs at a reasonable pace, however this slowly increases and when they start with their hand actions in the air (clicking, pointing, etc.) the tempo is much faster.

After the introduction and thigh slapping period, the beat of the 'in' then 'out' movements change. The time spent with each hand in contact and the time spent with each hand apart is shorter, making the beat speed up.

Another example of elements being used in this dance is the use time and energy, and how they work together; due to an accent seen in the very first 10 seconds. An accent is a specific movement/action performed in a particular way for emphasis. The centre man moves his arm in the air, painting an air pathway of an arc, whilst all the others continue with the rhythmic thigh slapping. Because he is singled out its an accent and the choreographer would of made this decision for a particular reason. This accent is supported through the use of production as the camera zooms up onto his arm movement. Additionally, it works together seamlessly with the use of energy. The use of contrasting energy qualities is seen during the duration of the accent action being performed; the background thigh slapping is percussive (fast, sudden, strong) whereas the arm movement is sustainable and flowy (the movement happens at a slow peaceful constant speed). Additionally, the use of flow and tension (other factor of energy) are also used in this contrasting manner. The arm movement is free flow, as it is relaxed/unrestrained/continuous and the muscle tension is relaxed, ultimately meaning the energy (combination of mental, physical and emotional power that fuels movement) is low. Whilst the slapping is bound flow, as it is rigid/restrained/discontinuous, and the tension is strong, making the energy feel high.

(b) How are these dance elements used to create impact?

B I U | **☰ ☷** | **↶ ↷**

By the tempo increasing over time it creates suspense and builds up tension for the viewers. Additionally, by changing the beat of each move, creates interest, making the dance more desirable to watch, because honestly after the long intro of the same constant move, the dance was losing my attention.

The use of energy has a powerful impact as it makes the moves vary, so its not just the same constant thing happening. By changing up the dynamic qualities and more specifically by contrasting them, the audience is more engaged and hooked as they try anticipate whats going to happen next.

The changes in timing is impactful as it makes the dance unique and different to what we generally see and it's really cool to see the use of sound and action working together to create a piece of art.

The use of time and energy working together simply makes the dance inviting and aesthetically pleasing. Additionally you can feel the rhythm radiate through you bones and you can both see and feel the performance.

QUESTION THREE: *The Anatomy of a Passing Cloud*

The Anatomy of a Passing Cloud was a celebratory 60th anniversary piece for the Royal New Zealand Ballet. It draws inspiration from New Zealand locations and history, and from Pacific cultures.

VIDEO PLAYER

The Anatomy of a Passing Cloud, Royal New Zealand Ballet, Javier de Frutos

Source (adapted): Knight, B., (2015), *The Anatomy of a Passing Cloud*, Royal New Zealand Ballet

(a) Describe how space and/or energy are used in this section of the dance performance.

You might refer to:

- pathways
- levels
- energy qualities.

B I U ☰ ☷ ↶ ↷

In the dance "Anatomy of a Passing Cloud" by the Royal New Zealand Ballet, space and energy is used in a wide variety of ways.

There are three strong uses of space that stood out to me in this dance; the incorporation of pathways, levels and formations.

- The pathways in this dance are both floor and air pathways, as there are patterns drawn in all areas. However, a significant aspect of the pathway is that it is repeated. Each pair (female and male) followed the exact same route and steps as the pair in front; they walk out do a side squat in opposite but symmetrical directions, come together, perform a lift, then go to the opposite sides (but the pathway is the same actions of a bouncy fast walk paired with the swinging of arms in a figure of 8 shape). It is also accumulative; meaning one pair performed this pathway of movement, then the following pairs perform the same movement, starting at different times, until all pairs have performed the same moves and then the dance finishes.

- Levels refers to the location of each dancer in relation to the ground. And the levels of each individual within the pair is contrasting. The male of the pair is at a middle level, with their feet acting as their body base, whereas the female is suspended in the air, balanced on the male's palms, with their level being high. The relationship between the levels in this particular moment is the fact that the female is above the male.

- The formations used in this dance were significant as they built character and provoked emotions. Although it was organised, it felt chaotic, and gave off this energetic buzz. A strong example of formations being used in this dance was the final pose. The ending pose formation had dancers facing in all different directions/orientations, with varied levels and dimensions (some poses were wide, others were tall, others were narrow). Not to mention it consumed all of the lit up circle area, meaning it used the stage area provided in a impactful manner.

Energy was also a powerful instrument of expression used in this dance piece. The energy throughout the whole duration of this dance was fast paced, however the dynamic quality of each specific movement varied.

- For example, when the pairs first move forward down the centre of the stage, the first action they perform is leaning forward on one foot and swooping their arms up (synchronised). This movement was free flow, light and the quality was smooth. However, immediately afterward they erupt rapidly into a bound flow side lunge, with a heavy weight, performed in a forceful sudden manner.

- Another example of energy qualities switching from one extreme to another is when each partner was on their separate sides and they did a spin with their leg out before bringing their leg back in and performing multiple turns in a fast loco-motor way. The speed of the first turn with the leg out was slow, making the axial movement sustained, however the loco-motor sequence of turns had a fierce, sharp aspect to it.

(b) How do these dance elements communicate a mood, feeling, or idea?

B I U | ☰ - ☷ - ↶ ↷

The use of levels and the fact that the man was holding the woman up communicated an idea that women nowadays are treated with more respect than the olden days, and that the assertive/selfish men are now learning how to be more respectful and kind.

The repeated pathways used in this dance, to me represented history and stories being passed down generations. And how each pair is a new generation going through life and learning all these things. Additionally, due to the accumulative nature of which it was performed, it felt like the story behind the dance significantly progressed and at the ending posed they all came together - symbolising how we can use historical things to help shape our future and teach us things about life.

The variety of moves and energy qualities for me show the different locations and aspects of New Zealand and Pacific Cultures locations and history. It portrayed this as there is such a wide variety of moves, which is just like life - things are all different and unique. Each place you visit is completely different from a previous place, even if you think it looks similar at the start, and although life always seems the same, when you look back at history you can see how much it's changed.

The feelings and moods communicated by this dance were emotions of confusion, chaos and uncertainty. These were evoked through both energy and spacing. The high intense energy of the dance coupled with the random, spread out spacing in all different directions established a chaotic atmosphere, and made the audience feel confused where to focus and look, which ultimately caused uncertainty. These feelings and moods are powerful as they can strongly relate to the original inspiration of this piece, especially those ideas derived from history. Life in the past (and today) is chaotic, confusing and most feel a strong sense of uncertainty.

Excellence

Subject: Dance

Standard: 91939

Total score: 21

Q	Grade score	Marker commentary
One	E7	<p>The responses examined the application of dance elements by explaining how a range of elements work together and analysing how a range of elements communicate ideas or create impact. Dance language was used consistently with understanding.</p> <p>The response showed understanding of Relationships dance elements by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making a distinction between movement relationships and conceptual relationships • explaining what action and reaction are, using a specific and detailed example from the excerpt • illustrating how elements were used in the excerpt (connection, weight-bearing) • referring to relationship elements beyond those provided in the bullet points, e.g. proximity. <p>The candidate has examined the application of dance elements, including in the discussion of elements beyond those provided in the bullet points, by analysing and explaining how multiple elements work together to communicate. For example, part (a) paragraph 2 explained how action and reaction work with energy, weight and dynamics, heavy, percussive, sharp and sudden.</p>
Two	E7	<p>The response showed understanding of Time dance elements by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using less common elements of 'duration' and 'rhythm' appropriately • explaining why the movement feels faster, to show understanding of tempo (reference to time signature would further support this) • explaining what accent is and how it is created • analysing how time and energy work together to create dynamics, contrast, and effect.
Three	E7	<p>The response examined the application of Space dance elements by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using 'air pathway', 'floor pathway', and 'formation' appropriately to show understanding of the differences between them • accurately identifying medium level • using a range of other elements to explain how a pathway is created and used, e.g. 'symmetrical', 'directions', 'accumulative', 'bouncy fast walk' • explaining how a range of elements work together • analysing how a range of elements are combined to communicate ideas or create effect.