

Dance: interpretative performance skills

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Name and describe 4 interpretative skills used by a dancer. Explain the importance of each of these skills in dance performance. Give examples of how you have used these skills in your own work. All performance/interpretative skills are extremely important in any routine. There are various skills that each dancer must consider, the notable ones for this essay will be: Projection, Clarity of movement, Energy and Focus. I will be attempting to analyze, explain and give examples of these in my works during this essay. Firstly, Projection as an interpretative skill helps us to convey a lot to the audience. Depending on the choreography extension can be used to show a number of things. The projection of the movements you're performing often details the emotion and the mood of the dance at that moment. Projection is described as 'giving out a certain energy from all or parts of the body'. Projection can help make movements in motifs a lot more elegant and controlled, but minimal projection can show a range of different emotions and can have a specified effect. In a classical ballet piece an example of good projection would be a dancer standing in ballet fifth, with her arms slightly curved at the elbow joint and a nice balletic hand shape. A bad example would be a dancer who was standing in fifth with her shoulders hunched up, her elbows angled with sharp and edgy hands that do not resemble a smooth shape. Projection is the extension of movement, and the concept of finishing moves. Furthermore, clarity of movement is a performance skill that benefits dancers in many ways and can help improve your dancing ability just by paying attention to the smaller details. Clarity Of Movement is the precision of each move in a motif, any variations on this performance skill can change a movement completely. Clarity of movement

comes in extremely important when there is a routine that relies heavily on unison and formation, a troupe of 8 could do a motif with the same moves but if their clarity is not there it will not achieve the desired effect that was intended. The clarity of movement in a dance is specifying and paying attention to every little detail that the choreographer intended. For example, if in a routines choreography you had to bring your knee up to your pelvis' a good application of this skill is making sure that the height of the knee is consistent with all of the individual dancers in the routine, and stays in context with the choreography. Clarity is the clear ability to execute a move clearly and correctly. Moving on, Focus in dance, like all of the other performance aspects, helps a dancer greatly in controlling their body throughout a dance. Focus is the ability to concentrate on a specified area/body part. Different choreographies require different amounts and types of focus. The most obvious and notable example of focus within dance is probably when a dancer is spotting during multiple (or singular) pirouettes, returning her eyeline back to the same point helps the co-ordination of the body and helps the dancers balance. Another example of focus is when a dancer is standing in third position moving the arms into second, at this moment you would often focus your eyeline on the moving body part and adapting it as it moves as it is more aesthetically pleasing in some cases. A lot of the time the requirement for focus is to the back of the audience as this is commonly known to increase the feeling of audience connection, the dance is being directly performed to the audience, though in other cases this is specifically asked not to be done. Energy in dance sets the mood of the piece and is an extremely important performance skill to be able to have.

Energy is the amount you exert physically in to a dance and how much. Examples of ways to use energy fall under: Float, swing, explosive, smooth, sharp. Each of these dynamics requires a dancer to use a different amount of energy. When performing an upbeat piece the dancer will show a clear use of energy if the movements are big and the mood is happy, this helps convey this to the audience. A variation on the use of energy is not always a negative thing, a small amount of energy can help portray different moods and different themes. An example of an instance where I had to use this was in a recent rock'n'roll piece we'd learnt in class, styled after 1940-50 type dance. There was a move in which you run forward with extended arms and flat hands, the extension of the arms as you run required a sense of projection as you had to control how high your arms went and how extended they were as you ran whilst making sure the hands stayed flat and the movement was rhythmic. Clarity of movement as a performance skill also was a necessity, at one point of the dance we made a diagonal line starting from frontstage right going across to mid centre stage, at this point we all performed the same movement but in different directions. This meant we had to clearly and concisely perform the same moves paying specific attention to small detail, otherwise the idea that we're doing the same movement to different directions is lost. For this to happen we had to rely on each dancer copying the movement they were originally taught. In another piece I'd completed this year there was a movement in which I would jump from parallel to left leg over supporting, I'd then extend my right arm down and my left arm directly up and my head would fall to the right, at this point I'd focus directly down to my foot as this makes the move look complete, the

focus also helped me to balance after sharply changing my supporting legs. In the 40's/50's piece a lot of the dance was based around happy, jaunty, energetic moods and so certain moves had to be performed with a lot of energy to convey the mood of the piece.