

Elizabethan life elizabethan dance

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Christian Gabriel Mrs. Molnar English 1 Pre-IB 23 May 2011 Elizabethan Life/Elizabethan Dance Dance was an integral part of the lifestyle in the Elizabethan Era. Not only did the noble class enjoy it, but also the lower class. Dance was used in celebrations and parties, and often, just for leisure. Prestigious dancing masters taught these dances. These dances included unique forms and one-of-a-kind styles (Hall 81). First of all, dancing masters were great services for the English Elizabethan Court.

In the Elizabethan era, it was required for English Elizabethan Court members to have experience in dancing, especially because Queen Elizabethan encouraged it amongst all of her subjects (Alchin /Elizabethan Dance). The most famous dancing masters were Thoinot Arbeau, Fabritio Caroso, and Cesare Negri (Alchin / Elizabethan Dance). Thoinot Arbeau was born on March 17, 1520. He was known as a theoretician and historian of dance. He produced a dancing manual called the Orchesographie. This dancing manual contained carefully detailed, step-by-step descriptions of 16th dance forms.

His services were very helpful to the Elizabethan Court (Hall 81). Fabritio Caroso da Sermoneta was an Italian Renaissance dancing master. His dance manual, *Il Ballarino*, was published in 1581. Another was *Nobilta di Dame*, which was printed in 1600. Many of the dances of Fabritio Caroso's manuals are meant for two dancers with a few for four or more dancers. These manuals offer a great deal of information to dance historians. Many of the dances also contain dedications to noble women who were members of the Elizabethan Court (Hall 81). Cesare Negri was an Italian dancer and choreographer.

Born in Milan, he founded a dance academy there in 1554. He wrote the dance manual *Le Grazie d'Amore*, the first text on ballet theory to expound the principle of the " five basic positions". Negri was an active Elizabethan Court choreographer for the nobility in Italy (Hall 81). Arbeau, Caroso, and Negri all taught many forms of dance. There were many simple dances performed during the Elizabethan Era. Dances for the upper class included the Tintertell, the Saltarello, and the Ballet. Lower class dances included the Jig, the Brawle, and Morris Dancing (Alchin / Elizabethan Dance). It was impossible for many of the upper class dances to be performed by the lower class and vice-versa" (Alchin / Elizabethan Dance). As a result, dances were only for one's specific class (Alchin / Elizabethan Dance). Upper class dances required the use of large instruments, such as keyboard instruments. A popular dance of the upper class was the Tintertell. It was a sophisticated dance with intricate steps and nuances. The Tintertell was performed with couple and at Masques or other Elizabethan parties at the time (" Medieval And Renaissance Dances"). Other upper class dances were the Saltarello and the Ballet.

The Saltarello is a dance modeled after some of the more common dances. It requires active steps combined with hopping (Miller / Renaissance Dance Steps). The Ballet is a formal and courtly dance form established at the French Court in the sixteenth century danced by trained professionals. It is very similar to the Ballet performed today, except much simpler (Alchin / Elizabethan Dance). Aside from upper class dances, lower class dances would have been performed at fairs and festivals, other than Masques and

parties. Some dances of the lower class were the Brawle, the Jig, and Morris Dancing.

To start, the Brawle was an “immensely popular dance performed during celebrations” (Alchin / Elizabethan Dance). In this dance, people are in a circle and move sideways (Evans / SCA Renaissance Dance). The Jig is a lower class dance, which was associated with the customs and festivals celebrated in Elizabethan England. The dance consists of flailing legs, hopping feet, and bending legs (Evans / SCA Renaissance Dance). Lastly, Morris Dancing was a ritual folk dance performed in rural England by groups of specially chosen and trained men. It is based on rhythmic stepping and the execution of choreographed figures by a group of dancers. The dancers wielded sticks, swords, handkerchiefs, and bells to apply creativity (Hall 81). Although there were many types of dances, dancing in the Elizabethan Era had certain etiquette. Dancing was a formal and special matter. It had many formations and styles (Miller / Renaissance Dance Steps). These styles included Singles and Doubles, Saltarello, Reverence, and Signals. These forms of etiquette were the guidelines of dancing in that time (Singman 137). One dancing etiquette formation was the Singles and Doubles (Miller / Renaissance Dance Steps). These are simply just steps forward or backward. They usually started with the left foot” (Miller / Renaissance Dance Steps). Often, the dancers will say, “Double forward, single back!”, which makes the whole procession move forward gradually across the dance floor (“Medieval and Renaissance Dances”). Another formation was the Saltarello. It required very active steps. The Saltarello was a form used in increased movement dance like the Jig. For example, the dance required three fast

steps and a hop at the end (Hall 81). Other dances needed a more behavioral factor.

These behaviors included Reverence and Signals. Reverence, also known as reverena, was just a form of respect for the dancers. For example, the men would bow, while the women bend their knees in a form of a curtsey (Singman 137). Certain dancers used signals to attract other dancers. Women definitely used this technique (Hall 81). Women used their fans to signal their partner. Consequently, the fans were very symbolic. For example, "a fan fully open with the left hand meant, 'Come and talk to me'" or "a closed fan in the right hand meant, 'Follow me'" (Hall 81).

The signals were keys to partnership and chemistry in dancing (Hall 81). To conclude, dancing was very significant in the lifestyle of Elizabethans ("Medieval and Renaissance Dance"). It was popular due to the fact that both classes could be involved. It was unique in the many types and formations of dance. From upper class dances like the Tintertell, to lower class dances, such as the Brawle (Alchin / Elizabethan Dance). What they all shared was the need for a certain originality, inspiration, and individuality.