

How has dance
changed?



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With knowledge of present day dance, discuss how has dance changed?

With reference to arts history, for this instance, dance; one must always discuss it not just within its context but also with the developments surrounding it. This is because of the large interrelationship between the notion of dance history and the events surrounding it which includes both the arts and non arts related developments. Ballet dance was regarded as a formalized dance form which is highly looked upon by countries in Europe during 16th to 17th Century. However, its roots and functions are affected by the dance history development that took place in other parts of the world namely Ancient Egypt, Greece and Roman Empires.

Dance was seen a necessity whereby everyone were required to learn and understand in the past. Looking at the reign of King Louis XIV of France, he brought the height of Ballet to different level in terms of importance and practice. Ballet was made a mode of measure of power and superiority to determine the importance of nobles. Also everyone would be dance literate to communicate in ballet be it court sessions, council meetings or even in social day to day activities. Hence it can be seen that ballet became a language for everyone to communicate with during that period of time.

In comparison with today's situation in both court sessions and day to day activities, it can be seen that dance or ballet to be exact is not required for such. Dance is not regarded of that level of importance but a performing arts show which is watched in theatres or dance halls. Ballet dance is taken up by interested parties or enthusiasts who wish to learn about this formalized performing art techniques. However, if one were to look at the situation of

both eras, not much of a change has occurred. While ballet was common practice of King Louis XIV's time, it was a way of expression in formal and events which is similar to today's practice of greeting, bidding farewell or introducing oneself. There is still a form of procedure or system to do things. Hence, the change is not pertaining directly to discount of ballet but a change of modes and language of actions which people use today.

Ballet Dance is seen as a structured dance form. Noverre describes,

A well-composed ballet is a living picture of the passions, manners, customs, ceremonies and customs of all nations of the globe, consequently its must be expressive in all its details and speak to the soul through the eyes; if it be devoid of expression, of striking pictures, of strong situations, it becomes a cold and dreary spectacle.

As seen, a well performed ballet dance entails this many amount of criteria attached. There is no issue with this structure of perception towards a dance form, but rather laying such expectations on an art form does have its own set of impact. No doubt that adhering to the characteristics laid by Noverre, the Ballet performance will turn out to be a fantastic one but ballet would seem institutionalised with steps and control to follow at specific timings. A lot of time and dedication will be needed to be devoted into practice and training to perfect both self and team work with other ballerinas.

However, this is not possible in the context of mainstream citizens of developed countries. Looking at the education paths which schools in Singapore have drafted, the more important subjects will be that of arithmetic, sciences and language studies. Subjects related to the arts are

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regarded as secondary importance hence taken up as an interest group activity. Hence, the time dedicated to ballet dance practices will be reduced at the expense of other subjects, and the perfection of expression in ballet seems to be impossible unless one has the time and passion to pursue.

Changes can be seen when it comes to attitudes towards dance in general. With reference to ballet dance, it can be seen dance has a set of requirements and rules to follow. This includes the need for costumes, accompaniment of music, choreographed steps, training, scenic effects etc. Today's ballet follow the above mentioned requirements but there are innovations of ballet being on different scenes like ballet on ice performances, combination of ballet and other styles of dance. Dance sometimes will not need any special training and can be regarded with just random physical actions' reaction to sound, music or other forms of actions. This can be seen discos, club scenes or even mosh pits where actions take place randomly. Although these actions may appear random, the people performing these reactive actions might use the actions which they are familiar with some other places like dance performances or videos; which they adapt to fit in that particular situation.

Technological advancements have also created a new phenomenon in dance from the 20th century. The introduction of music video and television have brought knowledge of other music practices from other parts of the world many steps closer to what we are familiar with. This have brought upon what is term integration of dance forms, and fusion. This would account for constant update of dance trends and coming of dance styles due to the

constant review, practice with the use of mass media that widen the scope of inspiration for new dance moves.