

# Bill t jones | choreography analysis



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Bill T. Jones is a startling choreographer with an exhilarating presence and charisma. His compilation of “ Solos” includes “ Tea for Two”, “ Ionization”, and “ Chaconne”. All different from each other are depictions of Jones’ emotions and body movements to their extremes. Giving a brief explanation to each, “ Tea for Two” is a depiction of emotions like desire and love, while “ Ionization” has an extreme involvement of strong music, movement, and expressions which depict violence, and finally, “ Chaconne” is a flickering performance that displays the involvement of artistic techniques and music insinuating a certain story, or feeling. This paper is an outlook of Jones’ work, especially in these performances, and how each performance is an artistic representation of a certain theme.

The classical song “ Tea for Two” is what Bill T. Jones’ performance is based upon. It is a solo which he presents twice; once on the stairs, and next in a studio. On the other hand, as a spectator I have realized that differences in the setting may lead to a vast distinction between two performances.

Firstly, “ Tea for Two: On the Stairs.” The performance is a depiction of love, freewill, and desire. I have felt that Jones performs with his full fervor on the streets out to celebrate. Also, the lyrics sung by Blossom Dearie speak for themselves as the dancer is blissful and content about the house created for him and his lover away from the busy life of the city. As a spectator, I have felt that it is a romantic ballad dance where Jones is conveying to his audience that he is happy regarding being alone with his loved one with no one to bother them enabling them to have tea for two and enjoying it without any interruption.

Also, I have realized that Jones' free style of dancing reflects his freedom and peacefulness. The daylight tends to capture the essence of love and happiness, while his facial expressions are of a happy man content with his living and life. In this dance sequence, the space is fully utilized with no sets, or props to disturb the concept of freedom he is trying to convey to the audience. A very natural and clean performance, which shows what little happiness in life, along with a loved one, can do to a human being.

Furthermore, moving on to "Tea for Two: In the Studio". Although Jones had performed the piece twice on the same music, the difference in the setting gave the dance another feeling. I felt that Jones is not performing with the same essence, or power. Also, I believe that his performance in the studio constrained him; impeded him from moving freely, unlike his performance on the stairs where you could feel the positive energy shimmering from every movement and line Jones had made. Moreover, "Do you think I'll make a soldier, every round goes higher and higher, do you want to have your freedom?" are the words of Bill T. Jones which he added after his performance to the piece in the studio. To me, this altered the mood after watching the performance as Jones left the audience in deep thoughts; also, as a spectator, I did not fully understand the intention of such a quote; however, it could be that Jones is doubtful while referring to "himself" as a soldier, and questionable regarding acquiring his freedom as he pictures it with his loved one.

Moving on to another spectacular piece by Bill T. Jones entitled "Ionization". "Ionization" is a piece choreographed to a classic music composition by

Edgar Varese, and this dance piece is an excellent synchronization of different instruments with the moves of the body.

Also, as a spectator, the dance is an ionization of the human body to different beats in life and is also built on the premise of how a body moves to the most sensitive distinctions of various kinds of percussive sounds.

Different instruments such as the bass and the drums are a pleasure to hear when synchronized to the soft and soothing sounds of the piano and the saxophone. Also, as a spectator, I was awakened with the African like beats, as well as, beats similar to the roaring of a lion and sirens allowing Jones to shift within the space using stronger movements according to the beat of the instruments. Furthermore, I consider this solo performance by Jones very much attention grabbing as the way he communicated with his audience through his facial expressions was outstanding; also, the way he switched swiftly from one expression to another, yet having full control to make such switches apparent was expertly done. Moreover, violence could be seen gradually in the performance from the beginning to the end from his sharp stomp like movements to his facial expressions with accordance to the music played. However, although Jones' performance fully caught my attention, the music he chose for such a sequence was somehow dominating making me focus in certain parts with the music played rather than Jones while performing.

Additionally, "Chaconne" is framed around spoken text and the music of Bach's D-Minor Partita for Solo Violin. This solo performance accompanied by Bach's D Minor Partita could be about Jones' personal memories accompanied by the appearance of written text on screen about a close

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friend of him, or it could be dedicated to his mother. Moreover, I believe that the text is directly related to the sad and painful moves of Jones in the dance sequence. Also, the text helped me as a spectator understand the mood of the performer and comprehend the purpose of the dance sequence as it felt that Jones was somehow impersonating the person in agony, or remembering how she felt during her instant of pain, especially during the part while he was on the floor with his hand forming a heart like shape and the text appearing. Furthermore, the music, which is entirely a mix of violins, added to the softness of the performance. Although there is a huge difference between Jones' four performances, I have liked "Chaconne" the most as I have felt that it reflects certain hidden emotions within him which he is able to only reflect through dance and hidden speech.

Last but not least, it is difficult to compare between two profound choreographers such as Bill T. Jones and Merce Cunningham; however, I have admired Jones' style most as to me he managed to portray original contemporary dancing and choreography. Although Merce Cunningham is a pioneer in contemporary dancing, and I am not a guru in such a field to fully express my opinion; however, that is what I have realized after watching several pieces by both choreographers.

Bill T. Jones is an exquisite performer and choreographer who is able to grab hold of his audiences attention from the moment he starts dancing. Also, his ability to establish choreography with clear messages sent is an attribute which I find significant. Bill T. Jones is truly proficient in his field of expertise, and really has the ability to keep his audience engaged wherever and whenever he performs.