

Technicalities of dance



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Technicalities of Dance Dance is a universal language that involves exaggerated movements of the arms, legs, and body. With the sound of music, dance is more than just a form of expression. It is a moving portrait embraced by the curtain frame. It is a masterpiece assembled by artfully maneuvered strokes. The strokes don't belong to that of the painter, but rather the educator who supervised the integration of music and dance.

There it hangs on a stage like any other painting on a wall; a moving portrait.

However, the many stereotypes formed among the dancers have altered the way some view the performances of dance. Especially in the modern and ballet genres, while the dancers pour their heart and soul into the movements, why does the audiences' perspective change with a shift from female to male leads? What if the movements just did not meet our standards of liking or fit our taste? Do we enjoy the performance as a whole if there is one odd flaw standing out? I explore the reasons as to why society judges the attributes of dance in such cases as mixed genders, their styles, and the unwillingness to accept it as a sport.

The issues pertaining to gender should not matter in art. Men and women are free to express thoughts and ideas through paintings, and therefore both should be equally free to express themselves through dancing. In *Negotiating the Gay Male Stereotype*, Katherine M. Polasek believes cultures construct "gender, the body, and movement, restricting both males and females from using and exploring their bodies in ways not deemed gender-appropriate" (Page # and fix how the quote flows with sentence). Some people ridicule males in ballet for wearing tights because it is too "feminine".

On the other hand, when comparing ballet to wrestling, swimming, or football the use of tight pants or Speedos are considered as an attire requirement. Tights enable one to possess ease of movement and less drag friction. However, this does not correspond with sexual stereotypes targeting ballet because many other sports make use of similar tight-fit clothing. The gay stereotype in dance originates from the fact that men who take part in the form of art do not often present competition with other men in fields of sturdy speed and strength.

Unlike sports such as basketball, football, soccer, or wrestling, men in ballet are not often looked upon as masculine for their light leaps and smooth swaying movements. Another reason why gay stereotypes exist within ballet would be because gay men actually do ballet alongside women, and ballet still remains more popular among women than men during the 21st century. Due to the amount of stereotypical comments made about the male dancers, “claims for athleticism and technique have been used to downplay the perceived risk and denigration of being identified as homosexual, as well as to justify dancers’ virility and value.

culture’s sex segregation, women are only allowed to dance with other women, but dancing of the genders does vary from culture to culture.

Polasek’s purpose was to “examine the experiences of the professional male modern and ballet dancers in the United States” (page #). Polasek mainly studied things that dealt with homosexuality within dance and “homophobia within the dance community” (185). It is true in the case that some cultures in Asia do forbid dancing for it is considered distracting or sexual. Most of the time for example, it is certain cultures such as Muslims and even some

Christians that forbid dancing. As Judith Hanna, in her article of Dance and Sexuality: Many Moves, she states, " the sexuality of dance is in the mind of the observer.

Seen as threatening, dance falls victim to censorship" (220). While only a handful of Christians believe it leads to sinfulness, Muslims look down at it as immoral and disgraceful and would deem it as an act of prostitution. Dance is sometimes considered to be sexual (

The movements in a dance that the performer executes may have the observer assuming that the performer could be " infusing sexuality into dance", especially if the performer is an exotic dancer or if the music type is explicit (Hanna 212). It's a universal art, yet due to the past norms some cultures have branded dance to be unacceptable. As far as physical health is concerned, Edward C. Warburton states in his article, Of boys and Girls, that " much has been written about threats to boys' and girls' healthy participation in dance" (146).

Furthermore, even though boys and girls are different genders and should be able to interact with each other in class for the good of understanding each other and for the benefit of helping one another. In relation to that, " peer-to-peer influences and interactions may be the single best way to combat harmful stereotypes, strengthen relations between male and female dancers, and build healthy dance communities"(Warburton 148). The article also focuses on " the roles and responsibilities of dance educators and administrators".

In other words, educators hold the highest responsibility for the health of the dance community. Sometimes, ballet teachers may be so used to teaching

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only girls that boys become concealed from the eyes of the educator. This is a form of an unhealthy dance community because the boy might have fewer chances to perform in front of the class. For this reason, when a parent seeks an instructor for his or her son, he or she must choose carefully an instructor who has experience in teaching boys and young men.

Instructors who provide equality in his or her school have the potential to form a healthier dance community. When dancing relates to health, adolescent girls in Great Britain become recruits to after-school extra-curricular activities such as dance. According to the article *Adolescent Girls'*, a study revealed that "recruitment and retention campaigns that focus on enjoyment, socialization, mastery, goal setting and relating to other girls are likely to be an effective tool for recruiting and retaining girls in an after school dance program" (Jago 1).

In other words, schools aim to support a healthy lifestyle for teenage girls by embedding the idea of making positive choices, possessing expert skill in something, planning ahead, being organized, and giving an account of oneself to others. Without this extra-curricular activity given, the students would be inactive. It keeps them busy but also holds the same criteria for any other school sports. As a team they acquire the same goals. Gaining another girl's trust and making new friendships may be the key to a girl's motivation to endeavor other challenges within the intervention, and therefore remain a member.

Geraldine Morris speaks of "whether the use of nineteenth century dances as the dominant, designated competition variation is leading both judges and competitors to value technical achievement over artistic performance" (page

#). To Morris, the art perspective of dance is slowly withering, and competitions are becoming increasingly based on the technicalities of dance instead. The critiques given are not for the background itself but merely for the technical performance. With the times changing, future generations are becoming more able to accept the gay male population with casualty. However, the stereotypes still linger.

Although a male plays a role, it should not automatically mean he is gay, and it should not lower the standards of the audience. The performance is meant for enjoyment. It was made to resemble the true feelings and shall express the performers' freedom of speech. Without words, how else can we show our thoughts but through dance. We should perceive dance as a story rather than judge who is performing. It would defy the art of dance if we critique dances aside from their intended storyline. With the accumulated sweat and tears, dancing becomes the act of a sport. It grows from hard work and dedication. Despite the ridicule, both men and women will continue enjoying the art of expression they love to be a part of.