

Evaluation of the ballet choreography of alice in wonderland



Ballet is a physical struggle to attain perfection on the stage. Swathes of fabric, sleepless choreographers, and a gaggle of well-trained performers gathered together to try and make a fantastic production that is both artful and entertaining. Be it one of the great classical ballets of Petipa, or the stunning recent production of (change title) Alice in Wonderland and ballet form, both are stories of love better spectacles for the eyes ears and heart that are rooted in classical ballet.

While Petipa and Christopher Wheeldon, choreographer of Alice might have lived hundreds of years apart, both ballets are not overly dissimilar from one another (Royal). The choreography, theme, or similarly the extravagant nature of each performance they are both deeply rooted in the same ballet tradition. One of the roots that these Ballets share is that Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and the Pharaoh's Daughter are both spectacles. However, they are spectacles in differing ways. While Wonderland uses technological wonders such as a movie of moving letters, Pharaoh provides a massive Troop of dancers with identically dressed women archers and other guardsmen adding to the portrayal of ancient Egyptian times. In addition to the large number of performers, is extravagant sets to highlight the dancers and the production itself. " Petipa devised...his ballets" to "[use] backdrops painted in perspective, dancer" these " were arranged to give a false perception of stages recession, making the stage at a much deeper than it was" and the performers seem fantastical on larger-than-life (Scholl Pg 9).

In fact, Petipa's ballets were very reminiscent of the once popular court spectacles in length as well as flamboyant style. " Daughter of the Pharaoh (1862) was the first of Petipa's grand ballets and remained the most

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ambitious, with three acts and nine scenes, including an epilog and a prolog” a somewhat bloated runtime compared to Wonderland’s condensed two act two-hour runtime (Pg 7). This extravagant runtime would continue to plague his productions which makes sense when you consider that “ Petipa’s works are described as ‘ bol’shoi balet’..... a translation of the french ballet a spectacle” (Pg 4).

Both productions, like most great stories are ones are focused on love and desire and both happen to take place in fantastical worlds. Alice, who is in love with a boy who works at her house also happens to be the wonderland knave. While in Pharaoh the protagonist and English Lord, Lord Wilson descends into a drug-induced fantasy and falls in love and “ wishes to marry the pharaoh’s daughter Aspichia” (Pg 7). These ballets also seem to share a similar base of technique when it comes to their choreography and dance. It seems both productions have a classical sense in their dance style, particularly in their use of point, jumps, and lifts. However, if these ballets do have their differences. The Pharaoh’s Daughter while implementing point, does so sparingly with the dancers going point for a few seconds before descending once again telling of the point shoe technology that Petipa had at his disposal. While in Alice the actresses particularly Alice tends to be on point for much greater, especially in scenes of great emotional stress. For example, when the Queen of hearts face is and dances with Alice the second act there is a sequence of choreography were both are on point seemingly pushing each other back and forth both on unsteady ground due to the threat of the other.

The musicality of both pieces is different as well with Alice in Wonderland having a much smoother transition between music and choreography than Petipa's Pharaoh's Daughter. The score of Alice was originally composed by Joby Talbot is especially for this ballet (Royal). This I think is why Alice in Wonderland has the better musicality of the two. Each little movement, whether it be Alice buries her head in her hands, a lift of the leg, or twirl every single step feels wonderfully nestled within each note of the music. The Pharaoh's daughter score while pleasing and generally follows suit with the action on stage, does not feel as hand in glove as the score of the Wonderland ballet. So while similar in story, ballet technique, and female protagonist and the places they differ, they are pulled miles apart from what a spectacle means in each productions modern age.

Both ballets include themes on and center on families of the upper class. How our economic backgrounds not only grant us the privilege, but also restrict us in the choice of whom we can or cannot love. In Alice we begin at a fantastic garden party for what seems to be a wealthy family and we the audience despair as the young boy of a lower class is shooed away by Alice's mother breaking her heart. In a similar vein of a wealthy English person falling in love with someone who was less fortunate see the protagonist of Pharaoh Wilson, who the synopsis tells us to be a wealthy English lord trapped in a pyramid on his fantasy vacation to Egypt. Under the influence of narcotics or perhaps to a more sentimental soul love, he is transported back to ancient Egyptian times and finds love in the embrace of the pharaoh's daughter, Aspichia. But both love and ballets have their products crumble at the end. Each love while danced beautifully and made real before the

audience's eyes dissipate being shown to be only a dream as our protagonists awake. Despite their background of relative wealth, their loves seem beyond their grasp. However, Alice wakes up as a modern woman of the familiar book atop her head seemingly she had fallen asleep. While our English Lord journeys away back to England his love only residing in his mind and heart.

I think one reason for Alice's happier ending has to do with the power of a woman in a modern society. Throughout the ballet Alice fights for her love. She stands up to the clean of heart's she is the one who traverses Wonderland granted with the help of friends and magical baked goods but nonetheless with her own point toed feet. She does not need to be rescued like The Pharaoh's Daughter. In Pharaoh you're watching a man experienced fantasy of the week essentially on woman of whom he can sweep up into his arms. With Alice we see a young woman fight for what she wants and learning to grow and rely on herself in the free the fantastical real world. Wonderland of all its kooky creatures and contraptions is simply a metaphor for the adult world that young preteen Alice must soon venture into. Be it a lower class boy or a damsel in distress both story centers on a love between a protagonist and someone less than them in society. It shows the rifts between us that can be healed through love and perhaps dance.

Modern ballets have changed since Petipa, both in style and their approach to women and how to entertain the audience. Not only do modern audiences crave innovative choreography, music and sets, but we seek strong female protagonists backdrops by shows of technological light in color to keep us focused in our distraction filled world. While both are extravagant in their <https://assignbuster.com/evaluation-of-the-ballet-choreography-of-alice-in-wonderland/>

own ways, represents an era of ballet that while long past is still something worth performing today is perhaps with a small Alice like twist. As long as there is an audience for beautiful human movement appeared with music that will be a place on stage for ballet be a classical performance like that of Petipa, or new approach to ballet based off pop culture like Alice will find a home in the arts and culture of this rapid paced world.