**Module 8 Discussion Forum**

**Dance Evaluation**

**Grading**

See assessment rubric attached.

**Materials**

Use the Module 8 Required Readings, your own independent research, and the  Module 8 Dance Elements and Vocabulary for writing this discussion post. In addition, you may wish to review the *Swan Lake* and *Night Journey* video clips.

**Instructions**

In this 3-part discussion, you will (1) compose a 3-paragraph original post, (2) compose ONE response post to a classmate, then (3) write a reflection to your own original post about this aesthetic experience.

**1.** Carefully view the excerpts of the ***Swan Lake*** and ***Night Journey*** dance selections (in Required Online Exploration).

2. Find and read TWO research sources (BEYOND your text book - try Google scholar or the SPC Library) concerning the two selections and be prepared to integrate them in your essay. Be sure to cite these research sources as well as your textbook.

3. **Write a new thread using the following instructions**:

**In the FIRST paragraph** (at least 150 words):

* Using at least three terms from the Dance Elements & Vocabulary Guide, identify the dance elements in the ***Swan Lake*** excerpt.
* Identify ***Swan Lake*** as either Classical Ballet or Modern Dance.
* Then, using at least three terms from the Dance Elements & Vocabulary Guide, evaluate the choreography. Is this a good example of this type of art? Is it well presented? What are its points of value?

**In the SECOND paragraph** (at least 150 words):

* Using at least three terms from the Dance Elements & Vocabulary Guide, identify the dance elements in the ***Night Journey*** excerpt.
* Identify ***Night Journey*** as either Classical Ballet or Modern Dance.
* Then, using at least three terms from the Dance Elements & Vocabulary Guide, evaluate the choreography. Is this a good example of this type of art? Is it well presented? What are its points of value?

**In the THIRD paragraph** (at least 150 words):

* + Compare and contrast the styles of Classical ballet and Modern dance.
  + Identify how both of these dance compositions (***Swan Lake*** and ***Night Journey***) are “interdisciplinary” (i.e. are related to one or more of the disciplines in humanities we have studied so far).

**2. Read one of your classmates' original posts. Then compose a response post (at least 100 words) that does at least TWO of the following:**

* Extends or adds to his/her point(s)
* Asks a clarifying question
* Disagrees (with reasoning and evidence) with the author's analysis
* Adds to the understanding of the analysis
* Offers constructive suggestions for improvement

**3.**Finally, **return to your own original post, and write a reflection reply to your own post of at least 50 words, in which you**:

* Reflect on this aesthetic experience: Do you have a deeper appreciation of dance as a form of art? What impact did this experience have on you?
* Indicate whether you've learned anything additional after reviewing your classmate's post.

COURSE INFORMATION

**Chapter 8 Lecture Transcript (with additional insights)**

**Introduction**

Music and theater have a very long history together. Anthropologists have found musical rituals in cave paintings from 30,000 BCE. Symbolic reenactments of the hunt have been preserved in the Native American “buffalo dance” that is still preformed in the ritual of the Blackfoot nation of Montana. In the last chapter we noted that Greek theater also has its roots in the music, song, and dance of the Dionysian festivals. Music is used to enhance the poetic drama of Shakespeare. In *Othello,*Desdemona sings the “Willow Song” as a premonition of impending doom in the final tragic scene in which she is murdered. Shakespeare also uses music and even dance in such comedies as A Midsummer-Night’s Dream, which is frequently performed in ballet style. Audiences by the late 17th century demanded more inclusion of music resulting in the musical theater of opera in Italy.

**Opera**

The word “opera” comes from “opus” in Latin, meaning “work”. Opera became a label for a new musical art form combining a playwright (librettist), a composer, an orchestra, singers, and dancers. The Italian Renaissance gave birth to the baroque composer, Claudio Monteverdi, who laid the foundations for the evolution of the Italian opera. It dominated the European and world stage in its time. Opera would continue to be sung in only Italian for centuries until Mozart broke the mold by composing an opera in German.

The Renaissance introduced the invention of new instruments that lead to harmony with new sounds and in new ways. These new sounds and vocal lines produced repeated melodies. Audiences came to appreciate repetition in a beautiful melody and this repetition is pleasing to the human brain. The problem which arises for opera is that although audiences love repetitive melodies, the need to move a dramatic plot forward requires both continuity and change. Monteverdi developed a continuous musical line interrupted at regular intervals by memorable arias (songs and duets). Later, Mozart would solve the problem as we see below.

**Classical Opera**

Classical opera of the 18th century added balance and restraint to baroque complexity in the golden age of opera. A child prodigy of musical genius, Mozart helped to further develop opera from a classical to a romantic style to accommodate intense expression of emotions. His operatic style alternated melodious arias with dialogue that was sometimes spoken, but often sung. Sung dialogue is **recitative**. When combined with song it is called **singspiel**. Mozart created a great masterpiece of opera in *The Marriage of Figaro*, which was not well-received in his native Vienna, Austria. His adopted plot, from a French farce, may have offended aristocratic sensibilities as servants outwit their master. Mozart perfected the use of arias in *Figaro*as his characters talk to each other in music. This helped the story move along.  Wouldn’t life be more interesting if social convention allowed us to “break into song” once in a while to convey our emotion and meaning? Some think it would. It is interesting to imagine such a world. At least that is what some “humanities” enthusiasts think.

**Romanticism**

Romanticism also fostered a new spirit of nationalism and demand for opera reflecting native languages and cultures. Early in the 19th century German music was experiencing world recognition in the great romantic symphonies of Beethoven. Earlier, Mozart used a German libretto in *The Magic Flute*, but the genius of Richard Wagner made the German language as powerful a medium for Opera as the Italian. His new romantic opera liberated musical drama from classical restraint. Wagner used German mythology in his masterpiece *The Ring of the Nibelung* which is epic in scope covering four separate operas. It is unified by leit-motif and its variations through individual characters. The Nibelung are elves and dwarfs that control a hoard of gold, including a ring of infinite power, but also this ring has a curse which moves the plot of the drama. Wagner added monumental symphonic music which demanded Wagnerian singers of great vocal power. In the final epic and climatic scene of the Ring-cycle, the German gods are destroyed as Valhalla burns. Then, natural order is restored as the fire is put out by the floodwaters of the Rhine.

Note: The mythology of a magic ring occurs in Norse, German and other world cultures. Socrates referred to the ring of Gyges in Plato. The modern epic trilogy of J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* also revolves around the powers of a magic ring. Also similar is the message that power corrupts and only selfless love can save the world.

**Modern Stage**

Modern opera is heavily influenced by Wagner’s ideal of the unity of music and drama. Italian is no longer the required language of opera. The flow of the dramatic line or plot has become dominate over melody. Today, arias are often replaced with a musical underscoring of dialogue to enable the onrushing flow of drama. Modern stage adaptions such as *West Side Story* and *Sweeny Todd* have come to approach grand opera in the American form of musical theater known as Broadway. *Sweeny Todd, The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* presents a chilling plot laced with dark comedy and irony in which dialogue is underscored by music. Set on a revenge plot against the judge who sentenced him to prison and stole his wife, Sweeny Todd teams with Mrs. Loveit, an unsuccessful pie-maker. As Todd provides bodies from his barber shop, Mrs. Loveit’s pies improve and become the best in town. Todd’s character development from a wronged husband to a cold-blooded killer reaches a final conclusion when he mistakenly kills his own wife who he did not recognize as a prostitute. His final cry of “No” is accompanied by crashing chords from the orchestra in the spirit of the great tragedies.

**Operetta**

Operetta was a 19th century development in which spoken dialogue moves the plot forward, but it is continually interrupted by melodious arias that were more entertaining than the drama. The storyline in operetta is secondary and often fast-moving as characters tend to remain two-dimensional and undeveloped, as the plot is subordinate to music. The American production of *Showboat* (1927) represents one of the first attempts to unify the music and the story and stands as a precursor to the musical theater of Broadway. Showboat addressed racism and introduced one of the first classic songs to the American stage in *Old Man River* sung by an African American dockworker. American composers reached new heights in musical theater of Broadway such as Gerswin’s *Rhapsody in Blue*set to the *Porgy and Bess*with an entirely African-American cast. This classic production unifies a dramatic plot with memorable music, such as “summer time” and “the living is easy.”  This is a classic story about an underdog hero that Americans especially are attracted to. The play’s hero, Porgy, remains optimistic and spirited, although his crippling condition restricts his mobility to a goat cart. Although Porgy loses his girl, he remains optimistic for her return at the end of the play as he heads to NY. The chorus concludes with “I am On My Way” which is a classic, upbeat ending.

View “[**I Am on My Way**](https://www.youtube.com/embed/QuL-QABvZS4?modestbranding=1&amp%3biv_load_policy=3&amp%3brel=0&amp%3bshowinfo=0&amp%3btheme=light&amp%3bcolor=white&amp%3bwmode=opaque)”

**Musical Comedy**

American musical comedy rose in popularity rose in after WWI into the 1950s for audiences who wanted escape through entertainment. Like operetta, superficial plots and two-dimensional acting was subordinate to popular and entertaining songs and dance. By the late 1930s, Hollywood was pioneering musical plays of increasing depth and complexity. Talented composers such as Rodgers and Hammerstein contributed great musical scores with ballet in such masterpieces as *Oklahoma!,* *South Pacific*, and the *Sound of Music*. The musical stage reached a new height in *West Side Story* (1959) an adaption of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* set with the modern gangs of New York. The music of Leonard Bernstein is set to modern dance as gang members were played by seasoned ballet dancers. Many of the arias of *West Side Story*, like “Maria,” have become classics in their own right as in other popular musicals.

View Maria: [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DyofWTw0bqY**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DyofWTw0bqY)

**Rock**

The rock musical and rock opera made its debut in *Hair,* a Broadway Musical production of the Love Generation in 1967. It was taken to another level by Pete Townshend with “The Who’s” *Tommy* in 1969, and then with *Quadrophenia* in 1973. These rock operas became so popular that you may have played many of the songs from these compositions in your high school band.

View “[**Bell Boy**](https://www.youtube.com/embed/vuELTY3eCvo?modestbranding=1&amp%3biv_load_policy=3&amp%3brel=0&amp%3bshowinfo=0&amp%3btheme=light&amp%3bcolor=white&amp%3bwmode=opaque)” from Quadrophenia (a story about a teenage boy with mutiple personality disorder).

Another famous rock musical with a religious theme was *Jesus Crist Superstar*in 1970. It contained social commentary about the Vietnam War as well. Another example of Broadway taking on important social issues in the postmodern era is *Spring Awakening* (2007). It marks the blending of a serious and tragic drama with a rock score. The music underscores the suppressed emotions and sexual desires of teenage students obsessed with sex in a repressive society while being unable to talk about it. Rock scores are also used to balance the tragic bitterness of the play. The addition of driving rock beats (with electric basses and drums) added intensity in the 20 century and it continues today.

*Next to Normal* (2009) broke new ground in contemporary social issues. It uses rock lyrics to create a sense of dysfunction in exploring the chaotic world of mental disorder. This show won a Pulitzer Prize for drama for raising the level of the musical stage in dealing with a subject that has not been approached before. The main character is a bipolar mother who is watched over by her son’s ghost on stage. The son’s spirit, Gabriel, sings to her at the end, “I’m Alive” but she cannot hear him. Postmodern audiences have become accustomed to cutting-edge social issues and sad endings, but music, lyrics and dance enhance the dramatic experience of tragedy in musical theater.

You will learn more about Dance later in the module.

**References**

Janaro, R., & Altshuler, T. (2012). *Art of Being Human: The Humanities as a Technique for Living* (10th ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson.

**In your textbook, read Chapter 8.** As you read, think about these essential question:

* What are the major types and musical stage?
* What are the major elements of musical stage?
* What are the similarities and differences between Classical Ballet and Modern Dance?

**Dance Elements & Vocabulary**

Use these terms to compare and contrast different forms of dance, so that we have a common "language" to talk about dance.

**Dance Elements**

**Dance Elements of Space**

The following elements can be used to describe or analyze dance by looking at how the dancers utilize space.

| **SPACE ELEMENT** | **QUALITIES** |
| --- | --- |
| Size / range of movement |  |
| Level of movement | low, medium, high, aerial |
| Dimension of movement | depth, width, height |
| Body design | curved, angular, symmetrical, asymmetrical |
| Pathway |  |
| Direction |  |
| Facing |  |
| Proximity |  |
| Focus |  |
| Location in the space / on the stage |  |

**Dance Elements of Time**

The following elements can be used to describe or analyze dance by looking at how the dancers utilize time.

| **TIME ELEMENT** | **QUALITIES** |
| --- | --- |
| Speed (tempo) | quick, moderate, slow, stillness |
| Meter and subdivisions | metered, pulse, rhythm phrasing, non-metered, personal time, breath phrasing |
| Acceleration | accelerating, decerlating |
| Effort |  |

**Dance Elements of Energy**

The following elements can be used to describe or analyze dance by looking at how the dancers utilize energy.

| **ENERGY ELEMENT** | **QUALITIES** |
| --- | --- |
| Energy | sudden, sustained, delicate, strong, free flow, bounded flow, contrast, swinging, vibrating, suspending |

**Dance Vocabulary**

| **DANCE TERM** | **MEANING / USAGE** |
| --- | --- |
| **Abstract** | To remove movement from a particular or representative context and, by manipulating it with elements of space, time and force, create a new sequence or dance that retains the essence of the original |
| **Axial movement** | Around the body’s center (in contrast to locomotors movement) |
| **Ballet** | The premiere form of dance art; features a series of technical, controlled bodily positions requiring precision in dance |
| **Breath Pause** | A fleeting interruption of the flow of movement; comparable to a singer taking a breath during an aria |
| **Call and Response** | A structure that is most often associated with African music and dance forms, although it is also used elsewhere; one soloist/group performs with the soloist/group entering “in response” to the first |
| **Canon** | Choreographic form that reflects the musical form of the same name, in which individuals and groups perform the same movement / phrase beginning at different times |
| **Chance** | A choreographic process in which elements are specifically chosen and defined but randomly structured to create a dance or movement phrase |
| **Choreography** | The designing of a dance composition; it may also refer to the design itself, which is sometimes expressed by means of dance notation; a “choreographer” is one who designs dance compositions; aspects of dance choreography include the compositional use of organic unity, rhythmic or non-rhythmic articulation, theme and variation, and repetition |
| **Dynamics** | The expressive content of human movement, sometimes called qualities or efforts; movements can be sharp vs. Smooth, fast vs. Slow, heavy vs. Light, abstract vs. pedestrian |
| **En pointe** | ballet term for standing on one’s toes |
| **Elevation** | The body’s propulsion into the air away from the floor, such as in a leap, hop, or jump |
| **Extension** | Includes the action of stretching away from the body, also refers to an unfolding of the body parts |
| **Jeté** | Ballet term for “leap” |
| **Gesture** | A non-weight bearing movement; gestures are usually of the limbs but may also be of the head, torso, and its parts |
| **Improvisation** | Movement that is created spontaneously, ranging from free-form to highly structured environments, but always with an element of chance; provides the dancer with the opportunity to bring together elements quickly, and requires focus and concentration; improvisation is instant and simultaneous choreography and performance |
| **Initiation** | Point at which a movement is said to originate; this particularly refers to specific body parts and is generally said to be either distal (from the limbs or head) or central (from the torso) |
| **Levels** | The height of the dancer in relation to the floor |
| **Locomotors Movement** | Movement that travels from place to place, usually identified by weight transference on the feet; basic locomotors steps are the walk, run, leap, hop, and jump and the irregular rhythmic combinations of the skip (walk and hop), slide (walk and leap) and gallop (walk and leap) |
| **Modern Dance** | Style of dance started in the 20th century that departs from classical tradition and style |
| **Movement Quality** | Typical terms denoting qualities include sustained swinging, percussive, collapse and Vibratory; and effort combinations such as float, dab, punch and glide |
| **Musicality** | The attention and sensitivity to the musical elements of dance while creating or performing |
| **Narrative** | Choreographic structure that follows a specific story line and intends to convey specific information through that story |
| **Pas de deux** | French phrase meaning “step of two”, a usually slow dance duet set to melodious accompaniment |
| **Percussive** | A movement quality using sharp, quick and staccato movements |
| **Phrase** | A brief sequence of related movements that has a sense of rhythmic completion |
| **Pirouette** | Spinning movement executed by the dancer balancing on one foot |
| **Plié** | French ballet term for a basic position in which the dancer squats down, keeping the feet extended horizontally with heels touching |
| **Projection** | A confident presentation of one’s body and energy to vividly communicate movement and meaning to an audience; performance quality |
| **Stillness** | An absence of movement |
| **Sustained** | A movement quality characterized by slow extended movements |

Wanted these videos watched

[Swan Lake](https://mycourses.spcollege.edu/d2l/le/content/245067/viewContent/10037495/View)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p21n1xorjEs&feature=youtu.be>

[Night Journey](https://mycourses.spcollege.edu/d2l/le/content/245067/viewContent/10037493/View)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFNsKeMbW20&feature=youtu.be>