

Critical Analysis 3 - Dance - Union Dance Company

The 'Union Dance Company' is called 'Union' because the performers come from around the world. Most of them are fourth generation immigrants which contained a mixture of cultures. This is why cultural diversity is important to them. The Dance styles they use are all fused together and contain a mixture of ballet, Contemporary, Jazz, Capoeira, street, Hip Hop, and Breakdance.

The dance work 'Dance Tek Warriors' is based on Tekken, robotic movement, isolation, and the idea that we are less human in a technological world. The piece has different styles of Music in different parts. The solo piece I have studied is the first piece from 'Falling from Grace'. This piece contains a lot of twists, crosses, and locks which make you use a lot of robotic movement.

The section we performed had the following components:

Actions:

(What of Dance?)

1. This includes sharp and fluid movements like:
 - Body ripple when we turned our heads after going on the floor and kicking.
 - Lunges like when we turn on our knees we lunge into an easy fluid moving shape.
2. We also use crosses and other unusual moves. These are the moving motifs and the moves make us lose humanity as the moves are inhuman. Some of these moves are:
 - Side steps when we untwist out of the knee lunge into the body ripple.
 - Crossed feet are used just after twisting round to face the audience to do our 3 kicks before lunging.
 - Arm movements are mainly crossed and something locked when moving to add a robotic feel to it.
 - Our final move is when we spin and end up with our head to one side on the floor and one leg is outstretched and up whilst the other leg is bent supporting the weight along with the hands which are either side of the head.

Another component is relationships:

This piece could be performed solo so no other dances are supporting the soloist.

I think that the relationship with the audience is very important. In the performance there is a lot of eye contact with the audience. The first 24 counts are facing the audience and the last 9 counts are with backs to the audience apart from the end move.

Dynamics (How of Dance?) is a mixed component. It includes a lot of different movements (some of which are opposites but still work well together.) Examples of these movements are:

- Staccato - This is jerky and is used when we lock our arms, head, and body.

- Fluid - This is our body ripples and could be used to describe the way the dance flows together and each move fits perfectly with the next and the previous.
- Fast - When we do our kicks and when we begin. The first move can be easy to miss a step as it is so quick.
- Slow - This is the main movement as it occurs in many of the movements. It occurs on the knee lunge when we are twisting upwards.
- Strong - These moves are all very strong as they make you tense the muscle of the body part which is being moved.

The final Union Dance component is Space (Where Of Dance?):

The dance includes changes of height using high, low, and medium. An example of high height is at the beginning when you move and lock the arms. An example of low height is the last move when the head is on the floor with the leg outstretched. An example of medium height is when you do the knee lunge and twist because you are neither in a high nor low position.

By using the body you can extend it to make the space wider using more air during the dance and making use of the space around you and using as much of it as you can.

You can make a floor pattern for your feet by using certain steps over and over again.

The different styles that are evident in the piece I have learnt are:

- Hip Hop - This style is derived from Africa to begin with. The beats began by the Africans just using drums. This style soon caught on and the rest of the world is now producing their own form of this style by using other instruments to make the beats.
- Contemporary - This style is modern yet it also contains a robotic sort of feel to it. I think this is because the technology today can be used to make any sound possible. The technology has evolved from a time when you could only make a plain piano sound and nowadays you can add an electronic feel to the simple instrumental sound.
- Capoeira - This is an African style which despite there being robotic movements still contains the African beats to remind you of the topic. This style is similar to Hip Hop but contains more African beats and probably has more emotion put into the creation of the beats.

In their performances, the Union Dance Company use projections of Tekken Warriors in the background to create that feeling of inhuman and robotic movements again. The use Tekken warriors because that is what they based their movements on. The Tekken game contains human features but in robotic form. This robotic form makes them use sharp, but also fluid, movements to move around. The performers use these movements and present them in a choreographed way to show how simple it is to produce a robotic dance which looks amazing.

The performers didn't just dance in a gym or dance room they danced in the street as well. If they did decide to dance in the gym they would project an image in the background to create the illusion that they are in fact outside. For example, they might project a busy street and do their inhuman movements.

The music that the solo is performed to is created electronically to add effect to the robotic movements. As the tempo of the music increases the pace of the piece is also increased. This shows that the choreography was well thought through to fit only this particular piece of music.

The costumes used in the performance of the piece are mainly tight fitting so that their movements are not restricted. If they wore loose clothing the clothes would still have to be unrestrictive and able to allow the performer to move without tripping or allowing another performer to catch the clothing and be injured.

When I danced the piece it felt a bit awkward and difficult to begin with as the music was a lot faster than expected. I started to miss certain moves that are hardly detectable in the dance but still have to be performed. After a bit of practice I began to get all the moves together in a fast pace without missing any of the little moves that a blink of the eye would miss. I suppose that my favourite 'bit' of the piece would be the part where we have our backs to the audience and we twist and cross over our arms and legs. It took a lot of practice as you could get a little confused if you don't have your feet and arms in the correct position but it was probably the most easiest move (in my eyes) to perform. The reason for this is (as I have already said) that it is simple yet the move allows you to add emotion to it. If you flowed your arms you would be adding a soft touch to it, but, if you made your arms really straight with no bends it would make it even more robotic and you would be adding that inhuman technological feel to it again.

I feel that the idea of losing humanity was clearly communicated throughout the piece. This is because when you lock your arms it adds that feeling of restraint or a little 'blip' in the system that robots supposedly have. I also feel that when you move sharply from one move to another you add that tension which makes you look like you are not in control. It is not until you watch people performing the piece that you realise how effective each move is. You may feel like a fool when you learn them but when you watch them you realise that they are not foolish at all, they are merely steps to a good dance.

The way in which I could use the ideas from this piece to create my own piece of work is by including certain parts. I wouldn't use a lot but I would use the ones which make you understand the dance. These moves would be the lock ones. I would use music with an electronic feel to it so that it would work well with the robotic moves. I would choose the music before the dance as I find it easier to choreograph a dance if you have music to choreograph it too. I would change the pace of the dance as the tempo of the music changes. I think that by doing this it adds effect to the piece of work. I would want to make my piece of work as effective as possible so that the audience I would perform it to will understand what I am trying to do. I would use moving image to create a backdrop. The backdrop wouldn't be of tekken warriors but it would contain robots moving. I could also use a backdrop of a busy place. I wish to do this by filming a busy place such as a street, city centre or a park and then project this film onto a white backdrop creating the illusion of me dancing in a busy place. The purpose would be not to dance on my own but also not to dance with a lot of people. I would use just enough to add effect and not make me feel intimidated or lonely.