

Movement Assessment Outcome 4 PC c

INTERPRET OBSERVED MOVEMENT PATTERNS AND PERFORMANCE

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Chicago – The Musical

The show I am going to do a report on is Chicago. I went to see the musical in Broadway in late December 2002, and enjoyed every minute.

The first image I had of the set was of the Band, centre stage, taking up more than half of the stage space. I was confused as to how the remaining space would be large enough for a large cast to do dance numbers but I kept myself open minded. As the musical went on it became apparent that this was very effective use of the stage space, as the cast could interact with the band, and the stage was far to large for the cast alone to fill.

The first dance number of the show was to the music “all that Jazz”. In the beginning, most of the cast, except Billy Flynn and Amos, were dancing all over the front, and sides of the large bandstand. At this point there didn’t seem to be any choreography, and everyone was doing his or her own thing, with there own personality. It was very hard to decide who to watch, and when to watch them. I looked beside me at my Mother, and Sister and Law and both were looking in different directions. After the music had been playing for about a minute, two of the cast started doing the same movement at front, centre stage. Now most in the audience started to watch the same people, and it was effective, and good to watch. They kept their same personalities, but started dancing the same moves. Then two other people joined in, and we had four in the middle dancing together, with still about ten people dancing in there own style. Four of this ten then split up, two either side, and started their own dance, different to the middle quartet, but the same as each side and this was beginning to bring the whole cast together. What we now had was a symmetrical dance with the eight people, and still six just running, and dancing about in the middle. The music was jazzy, and uplifting, and the dance was coming together perfectly. Then the whole cast joined together, to dance the same dance till the end of the music.

As an opening number, in my opinion it was perfect. What we saw initially was a group of individuals, all dancing in their own inimitable way, and then all coming together, in a tight choreographed piece. It gave the audience a chance to see most of the cast, and make their opinions on them individually, and collectively. Visually it was also strong with the way it came together at the end. At the very end of it the cast split down the middle and we were introduced to Roxie Hart. This worked well theatrically as we knew now the musical proper was about to begin.

When we were introduced to Billy Flynn, the music was "All I care about is Love". His entrance was through the bandstand and he came in applauded by the female cast, all dressed in the same way, with large white feather boas. We were then treated to a visual treat. Billy, who was acting, and dancing like a cool, confident Don Juan was obviously adored by the girls. He was walking between them, while they looked all nervous and shy, as he sang the opening lines. When the music kicked in, the girls all got into a circle, and Billy was in the middle. The front couple of girls knelt down, then the two next to them crouched until the top two were standing high. They put their big feather boas next to each other, and moved round from position, to position. What we saw was like a big flower, turning in the wind, raised at the top, and lowered at the bottom, with Billy Flynn the pistil in the middle. They all then split, and danced their own way with Billy, still singing, and walking in his own cocky way, walking between his dancing girls. With the feathers still raised, he would appear, and disappear at various intervals. Near the end of the Song the flower like shape remerged, and it ended with Billy seen, then when the feather boas joined in the middle, Billy hidden, until a blackout. I really enjoyed the images throughout this piece, and having spoken to my family after, this was also their favourite dance number. It is interesting that it involved no complicated dance steps, and is something even our class could do just as well given the correct lighting, and costumes, but was still the most popular.

Amos, who is Roxie's Husband, had a solo dance and song called Mr Cellophane. Amos is what you could call, big boned. His size means he wasn't as supple, and found movement a lot harder than the professional dancers. The choreography of this dance was made to suit, and it was both funny, and graceful at the same time. With simple movements, like standing still, rocking from side to side, and simple, but slow dance steps, you could see this actor could dance. What this showed me was that regardless of who the person is, and what the person looks like; everyone has some ability to dance.

Near the end of the musical, when Roxie Hart, and Velma Kelly were near desperation, they decided to team up together, to do a duet. They didn't like each other, but had no other choice. The way the dance went on was very effective, and I enjoyed it immensely. You could see in the way they danced, and sang, that they were two totally different individuals, and they despised each other, but they still sang, and danced the same lyrics, and moves. However, although they were dancing together, they were trying to outdo each other, and it was great to watch. They would both do high kicks at the same time; both do the splits at the same time, both do jazzy dance steps at the same time, and dance together in a waltz, but the two huge ego's were doing it there own way, not as a pair.

Overall I learned a lot from doing this assessment. Probably most important I learned that dance, and movement is very important regardless of ability. Props are also something that can be very effective, and visually appealing. It is also important when dancing as a unit, to do it together but not too much to lose the individuality of character. Having a variety of individuality, and teamwork is very important so it is not too monotonous for the audience.

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