

The 1960's

"Rooster"

By Sarah Dawson 11V4

In expressive arts we are studying the theme of the 60's. In our lesson we watched a dance called "Rooster".

Rooster was created for the Ballet du Grand Theatre de Geneve and first performed on October 10 1991 at the Grand Theatre de Geneve, Switzerland. It was first performed by Rambert Dance Company on 8 December 1994 at the Theatre Royal, Newcastle. Christopher Bruce (the choreographer), wished to celebrate the music and to use the qualities of the song to reflect the "sexual war" between women and men that he felt was prevalent during his teenage years. He compared the image of a strutting cockerel with its fine feathers and the men dressed up to go out. Rooster is a creation of the 1960's by using music, dance, gesture and costume to create the feeling of a Saturday night out.

My first impression of the dance was very strange, as it opened with a man moving across the stage in a very strange way. A style of walk that the man did was a move where he slid his feet along the floor and jutted his head forward. This move reminded me of a bird, and was actually named the "rooster strut". There are about 10 people in this dance, but there are 2 main dances throughout. I believe it shows what a normal night out in the 60's was like.

The costumes are very significant to the dance. The women wear a mini skirts, this relates to the 60's because this was very fashionable at this time. It is a combination of black and red. This contrast in colours is significant because many colours in the 60's were usually contrasting. E.g. black and white. The black and red may also represent feathers, like a rooster. The men wear black trousers, velvet suits, and bright colours for their shirts; this reflects the dazzling, flashy mood of the swinging 60's.

The centre stage is illuminated initially enabling the opening dancer to walk into the area whilst performing the "rooster strut". There are occasional contrasts where lighting fills the stage. This may be representing a disco or party, which again relates to the setting as it shows the audience a typical night out in the 60's.

The music is by the Rolling Stones who were popular between 1964 and 1969 who performed in a rhythm and blues style. They use a different song for each dance. The first song seems very beaty and active, the second song seems more slow and relaxed, and the third is very energetic, lively and repetitive. The guitar and drums are used a lot in all of the 3 songs, which again relates to going out in the 60's.

All of the dances link together very well and seem to flow into one another. I believe the first dance they use an animal theme (a rooster) effectively, as they are looking for a mate. I believe it's used a metaphor for men on a Saturday night, out on the prowl looking for girls. The second dance is representing courting, as they have all found a partner. The third dance seems to be the fun

part, where the 2 main characters are dancing. I believe this part may relate to drugs, as the dancers are moving in very strange and peculiar ways. This would relate to the 60's, as drugs were very popular at this time.

Movement plays a big part in the performance. They use a lot of movements that relate to the 60's. They use a "knee wiggle" which is a move that was used by Elvis a lot. They also use a "scissor movement" where you move your arms and legs across each other. This is also a move that is used a lot in the 60's. They also include a Marilyn Monroe pose, where a group of men hold up one woman in a balance. They may use all these movements to show the audience that this was set in the 60's, as they may recognise these when watching the performance. The dance contains lots of free and exaggerated movement in the dances. This created an illusion of being free, which relates to the 60's. It contains lots of contemporary ballet, and includes lots of turns, spins, and balances. They carry out the jive in many of their dances that relates to the 60's, as this was a very popular dance at that time. The male dancers perform repeated grooming gestures, slicking down their hair, straightening cuffs and sleeves and adjusting ties. This may be to show masculinity while searching for a partner. In the second dance they use ballroom movements. This may be to show the more formal side of the 60's. As the dance moves are very free when dancing with their partners, this may signify that love is free, which was very true in the 60's.

I think this dance is very peculiar, but does create the illusion of the 60's by using dance and music. I will use this as a stimulus for my 60's performance as I have seen how to show freedom and love through movement, and how to represent certain things through costume and staging.

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