

AS UNIT 2 - SUPPORTING DOCUMENT - SECTION 2 - PART 1

We watched a number of recorded events and one live performance to help us with our ideas for our own Performing Arts Event. Because the theme is based on the idea of “Contrast” we choose two pieces from a total of five events which we thought were a good contrast to each other. These final choices were selections from “Revelations” by choreographer Alvin Ailey and “Smooth Criminal” performed by Michael Jackson and his dancers at his live concert in Bucharest.

My chosen discipline is Costume design so I was very interested in looking at the ideas from each performance and then using these to influence some of my thinking.

The first event, Revelations, was performed in three parts. The first part “Pilgrims Sorrow” starts with “I’ve been Buked” and had a total of nine dancers who performed in a contemporary style Black American dance accompanied by Gospel singing. All the female dancers wore long dresses which were draped close to the upper half of the body and then flowed from the waist with a full skirt. The costumes were lit with an amber light which made them look quite earthy. The texture seemed smooth and they were a very simple shape which made the characters look humble or poor. I noticed that the dancers moved freely in their costume and because they used their arms a lot, we could see this clearly because their arms were bare. The men wore string vests and simple cotton trousers of a brown or beige colour. All costumes were worn above the ankle and this made them look safe for the performers.

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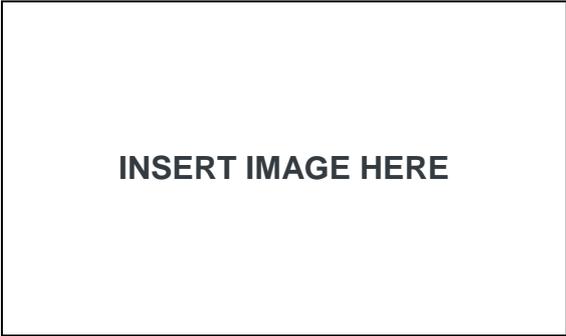
In the next section “Take me to the Water” we looked at the piece “Wade in the Water”. This is a well-known Gospel song which was made famous by the late Eva Cassidy. The costumes in this section are all white and look richer. The material looks to be cotton and frills are added to the ladies skirts and bodices. One of the male characters carried a large white parasol and two of the male dancers wore no shirts which gave the impression the weather was very warm. The costumes added a great deal to the dance in this section.

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In section above “Move Members Move” we looked at “Yellow” which takes place inside a Baptist Church. For this piece the group of female dancer’s wore very bright yellow which was very striking and in contrast to the white and brown colours of the other two sections. The dancers wore large circular hats which were well secured by elastic. They also used fans throughout the dance and this accessory added a lot to the overall atmosphere

Our other event was the live performance of Michael Jackson’s “Smooth Criminal” at his Bucharest Concert in 1992. He is accompanied by 4 male dancers who are dressed in Gangster suits of the 1930’s. There are two dancers in grey suits and two in black, all are wearing white shirts and dark ties and Michael has on a white jacket with dark trousers and under the jacket a gold leotard worn over the trousers. The footwear is interesting as each of the dancers wears spats. Spats were worn at first to protect shoes from becoming dirty; they then become a fashion accessory. All dancers wear hats known as Fedoras which were very popular in the 1930’s. The hats help to finish the whole look and again are well secured to the dancers’ heads. At the end of the dance there is some gunfire and the dancers’ suits light up with fireworks. This is a really spectacular end and provides a great finish to the dance.



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