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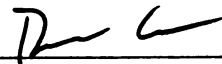
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**IMAGERY IN MOTION:
MODERN DANCERS & THEIR COMPANIES**

presented by

DAMARA ANDERSON

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IMAGERY IN MOTION: MODERN DANCERS & THEIR COMPANIES

By

Damara Lynn Anderson

A THESIS

**Submitted to
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ABSTRACT

IMAGERY IN MOTION: MODERN DANCERS & THEIR COMPANIES

By

Damara Lynn Anderson

Documentary films may show reality in more ways than one. Besides showing us our surroundings, contributions may be seen from people behind the scenes. Like other forms of media, documentary films can show reality in this dual way. Imagery in Motion: Modern Dancers & Their Companies is a documentary thesis about what it is like to be a modern dancer in a modern dance company. Elements were added to the documentary that were not essential to relay the information, but perhaps represent a part of the producer/editor. The subject matter of the documentary may also prove to be useful for student dancers, who are contemplating a possible career as a professional dancer in a dance company. A limited picture and interpretation of the reality of the modern dance world is portrayed through documentary footage and added interpretive elements. The written part of the thesis talks about this documentary, as well as the composition of some significant documentary films and their filmmakers. The producer's use of formative research to aid in planning the documentary is also discussed. Modern dance contributors and dance companies that perform modern dance are also spoken about in the written thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

When one hears the term “documentary film,” he/she may immediately think of “reality” and this may be a word that is correctly associated with documentary films in more ways than one. First of all, documentary films show us our world. They give us a look at this place we call home. However, they also may show us something about the people behind their creation. Someone (may be more than one person) has to decide what is shown and how it is shown. It may seem then that a filmmaker has the opportunity to put a portion of himself/herself within his/her creation. Therefore, the audience may be also viewing reality through seeing the creative input of this individual(s). Something about this individual(s) may be apparent within a film.

This is not unique to just documentary films. Various forms of media also represent reality in these ways. However, the amount of reality in these two ways varies according to the media. For instance, the daily news is a reality-based program. Viewers may think they are completely viewing reality when they watch the news. Although the news is largely based on reality, there is some creative treatment to that reality. Someone decides what stories will be shown. Also, there are people, who write the stories that are shown. Possibly, writers and reporters can add a certain level of creativity to the stories.

Another form of media that is perhaps at the opposite end of the spectrum is a piece of visual artwork. If an artist created a piece of modern art that consists of two circles and a square on a piece of canvas, it can be argued this also shows reality in this dual fashion. It shows reality because circles and squares are

shapes that exist in the world. However, the artist had complete creative control of this creation. His/her creation may be a product of self-expression. The artist could be completely subjective with this piece and yet it is still confined to a known visual reality.

Various forms of media have certain levels of subjectivity and objectivity, which function as two different ways in which a viewer can view reality. A creator can work with reality as a pottery maker works with clay. A creator has the opportunity to mold what they are working with in the manner they so choose. They can mold reality a good deal or just a little bit. The more they mold it, the more they put something of their inner selves within the piece. Other forms of media that can possess these levels of subjectivity and objectivity are theatre, dance, music, fiction films, books, magazines, web sites and television programs (in addition to the news). Documentary film, as mentioned before, falls into this category. Since the nature of documentary film is that it shows reality and in doing so, gives information, it probably has a higher content of objectivity than subjectivity. However, subjectivity can be present as well.

There is too, the element of how the medium is perceived by the viewer. What will they come away with that they did not have before as a result of experiencing this medium? Is the medium they may view, something that will interest them? Creators may think in terms of their audience when they are developing their product. This can have an affect on how they then shape reality.

Imagery in Motion: Modern Dancers & Their Companies is a documentary about what it is like to be a modern dancer in a modern dance company. The

viewer has the opportunity to see the companies and hear company members speak of their experience and knowledge. In this manner, the viewer has the opportunity to experience a part of another's world or a part of another's existence. However, the way the video was put together and elements that were added reflect the producer/editor of the documentary and therefore provides the viewer with a glimpse of this person. The creative consultant of this documentary also had input that was applied to it, so he is reflected in the documentary as well.

Will this documentary hold the interest of more than just a few people? There may be the possibility that it will. Every documentary has to find its audience in order to gain acceptance from viewers. To help make it more appealing to its audience, it may be helpful to do formative research. Using formative research to structure and format a documentary may improve the likelihood that an audience will enjoy and/or continue to watch the final piece. The intended audience for this documentary is young dance students. Student dancers from two dance schools were interviewed about dance. Their academic placement ranged from eighth grade to twelfth grade. Their responses were used by the producer in determining how to structure some of the documentary. The documentary became somewhat of a product of this formative research.

This documentary may be useful to dance students, who are considering or who are not considering careers as professional dancers. Those, who are considering the career, may take the information they obtain from the video and use it to help them determine whether to pursue it or not. Those who do not want

to pursue such a career, may change their minds after seeing the video. It may be safe to assume that student dancers do not know a lot about what it is like to be a professional modern dancer in a modern dance company. Hence, this video may be helpful. The video does not give an extremely thorough overview of the world of a professional modern dancer, but it does give a glimpse of what it is like. If the documentary had been meant to air on television and was supposed to be longer in length, a more detailed world of the modern dancer may have been shown.

CHAPTER ONE

DOCUMENTARY FILM: LOOKING GLASS TO THE WORLD

“Throughout the film Flaherty details the blinding expanse of snow and the blizzard conditions in and against which Nanook must search for food. While the scenes in which Nanook spears a walrus and harpoons a seal through the ice are striking, the blizzards and his search for shelter, which climaxes in the building of an igloo, are most memorable.”¹

“Funny, affecting and irresistible, it offers a fluid excursion into the emotional politics of a star’s backstage life. With a keen eye, director Alek Keshishian portrays the tensions within the insular world of a touring troupe—and with the family members and friends who venture in from the outside like visitors from another planet.”²

In reading about the two different films mentioned above, one may notice obvious differences between them—the differences in subject matter and style. However, they both have been called “documentaries.” The first one is a 1922 film named Nanook of the North and the second is a 1991 film called Truth or Dare: On the Road, Behind the Scenes & in Bed With Madonna.³ Although they may seem very different, they may have more in common than first meets the eye.

The world in which we live is a diverse place. It’s a place of different cultures and lifestyles. Inhabitants of this planet range from insects to animals to sea life to humans. Documentaries are a vehicle in which we can see the world in a manner other than in person. Documentaries enable us to view the diversity in this place we call home. However, the filmmakers behind the making of documentaries can exercise control over the presentation by what is shot, how it

1. Sharon R. Sherman, Documenting Ourselves: Film, Video, and Culture (The University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 7.

2. Brian D. Johnson, “Unmasking Madonna: She Bares All in a Documentary,” Maclean’s, 13 May 1991, 50.

is edited, and what elements are added, such as music and graphics. Therefore, besides showing us our world, one could speculate that documentaries bear the marks of their creators. The fact that a certain documentary was created at all by a particular filmmaker could be because he/she had an interest in the subject matter. Therefore, it may be that besides giving us glimpses of life in front of the camera, they give us glimpses of the people behind the camera as well.

John Grierson, a film documentarian, said, "Art is a hammer, not a mirror."⁴ What he may have meant by this statement was that art is meant to get a specific point across and not to function as a reflection of the world. He may have viewed the documentaries that were done by the EMB Film Unit⁵ as propaganda. In regards to Grierson and his staff, "He told them they were propagandists first, film makers second."⁶ Therefore, he may have believed the documentaries that were to be done in that unit should be done to further an agenda. If the documentaries that were done in this unit were propaganda, then one could say they were used as "hammers" to shape the way the audience viewed the agenda. If Grierson believed in certain points of view and the products of that unit were propaganda for these views, then Grierson is represented in these documentaries.

3. This documentary has other titles in some other sources.

4. Cara Mertes, "Documentaries: Stories Beyond the Facts," Quill, July 2000, 44.

5. David L. Woods, "John Grierson: Documentary Film Pioneer," The Quarterly Journal of Speech LVII, no. 2 (1971): 223. "The EMB had been created in 1928 to 'promote all the major researches across the world which affect the production or preservation or transport of the [British] Empire's food supplies.' To its 44 departments were added a 45th, a Film Unit under Grierson and Walter Creighton."

6. Erik Barnouw, Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 90.

The creators behind documentaries can use their creations as a means of self-expression, to get a specific point across and/or as an opportunity to take something they are interested in and use it as subject matter. Also, if they had been involved in the subject matter prior to making the film, they may be able to bring something to the film that others cannot. This idea can be argued by looking at various documentaries done in the twentieth century and the masterminds behind them.

Although Grierson viewed documentaries as hammers and not as mirrors, documentaries can function as mirrors in some aspects. They reflect our surroundings and perhaps mirror their creators as well. This can be seen in the fact that documentary films do show us a part of the world and the creator(s) behind the films have control of the presentation. The following documentary films and filmmakers provide examples of this way of thinking.

Four Documentary Filmmakers

Robert J. Flaherty

Robert J. Flaherty was the scriptwriter, cameraman and director of Nanook of the North. Flaherty had experiences prior to making this film that may be linked to it. One can speculate that these past experiences had something to do with the subject matter of this film, which has been described as a “documentary motion picture about the daily life of an Inuit family who lived on the shores of Canada’s Hudson Bay in the 1920s.”⁷

“The boy grew up around mining camps of northern Michigan and Canada, with miners and Indians as companions. Later the father became a prospector

7. Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia Deluxe 99, s.v. “Nanook of the North.”

searching the Canadian wilderness for mineral resources—for United States Steel and other corporations. Sometimes he took young Bob with him on these explorations, traveling many weeks by canoe in summer and on snowshoes in winter, meeting Eskimos, mapping the country, learning arts of frontier survival.”⁸

Further evidence supports the idea that Flaherty’s experiences had something to do with the subject matter of this film, as well as the way in which it was presented.

“...Flaherty began his career prospecting for minerals in the Hudson Bay Territory and Baffin area of Canada. Beginning in 1910, he made five expeditions over six years. Although the deposits he found were not rich enough to justify excavation, Flaherty, through working with the Eskimos, became absorbed with their lifestyle and began an amateur ethnological diary of them. On one of his expeditions, he took along an Eyemo film camera and photographed 30,000 feet of film about Eskimo life. After editing the film, Flaherty accidentally dropped a lit cigarette on the negative, destroying it. Fortunately, he had a positive work print that he was able to project and use to obtain financial backing for another film expedition.

Flaherty recognized that his first film had focused on the picturesque. He wanted to structure his new film around the life of one man and his family.”⁹

His exposure to the outdoors and Eskimos may have given him an interest in these people. It seems likely that filmmakers trust a subject if they are familiar with and have an interest in it. This was something Flaherty wanted to pursue, so the subject matter can be traced back to him and hence represents him.

One can also possibly see Flaherty’s mark in some of the things actually seen in the film. He did not just shoot an Inuit family as they went about their daily business the way they normally would. There was some intervention.

“When he arrived on location, he found that “the people” were no longer wearing the typical Eskimo clothing and so he ordered in appropriate but real garb. Many events appearing in the film were restaged from events he had seen in previous Arctic trips. An igloo twice the normal size was built so he could film

8. Barnouw, 33.

9. Sherman, 5-6.

inside, but even at that there was not enough light, so the top part of the dome was removed.”¹⁰

The walrus hunt in the film is also not an example of how the family was currently living. One of the family members presented the idea of the hunt: “One of his first suggestions was a walrus hunt, done as in former days, before the explorers came.”¹¹

The appearance of another creature may be another example in the film that shows some intervention. “...as certain critics pointed out at the time, the seal Nanook pulls up through a hole in the ice had clearly been dead for days.”¹²

Obviously, Nanook of the North is not a pure and true account of how those particular people were living at that time. This does not mean that watching this film is not a learning experience. Perhaps this film shows elements of life as it had once been for the Inuit people, so it may provide the viewer with a history lesson. If the documentary shows life as it existed in the past, it is still showing life. Erik Barnouw said Flaherty recorded memories on film: “It has been called ‘romantic’ in that Flaherty was not recording a current way of life but one filtered through memories of Nanook and his people. Unquestionably the film reflected *their image* of their traditional life.”¹³

10. Thomas W. Bohn, Richard L. Stromgren, with Daniel H. Johnson, Light and Shadows: A History of Motion Pictures (Port Washington, N.Y.: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 1975), 293.

11. Barnouw, 36.

12. Eric Rhode, A History of the Cinema from its Origins to 1970, (New York: Hill and Wang, A Division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976), 247.

13. Barnouw, 45.

If the viewer is presented with memories of these people, the film is showing us life in another aspect. The memories of these people have been recorded on film, hence a part of them, themselves have been recorded. The viewer is seeing a part of these people by seeing their memories.

To gain a better understanding of Flaherty and perhaps of the film itself, going right to the source may be helpful. Flaherty wrote the following:

"I am not going to make films about what the white man has made of primitive peoples. . . .

What I want to show is the former majesty and character of these people, while it is still possible—before the white man has destroyed not only their character, but the people as well.

The urge that I had to make *Nanook* came from the way I felt about these people, my admiration for them; I wanted to tell others about them."¹⁴

If Flaherty's intention was to present a certain type of people to an audience, then in a broader sense, his intention was to take a part of life and present it to viewers.

The viewer perhaps has the opportunity to absorb the very essence of this film through its presentation and hence perhaps see part of Flaherty in this manner as well. To do this one may need to look beyond just seeing the film as a presentation of facts. What sort of artistry can be seen? According to Eric Rhode,

"He was trying to show how filming was something else than the record of fact (Grierson called documentary 'the creative use of actuality'): how it needed to include the fantasies and poetry which suffuse experience and give it meaning. He was trying to project a beauty which was more than scenic; a beauty to be

14. Barnouw, 45.

found in the generosity and courage which certain men reveal under stress; and this beauty had to be reconstructed.”¹⁵

Perhaps Grierson sums up the idea of Nanook of the North being a product of Flaherty’s artistry when he called Flaherty “a poet.”¹⁶

John Grierson

John Grierson, himself, was involved with documentaries. He produced and directed a documentary called Drifters. The 1929 film was “a story of the daily lives of the North Sea herring fishermen.”¹⁷ He also was involved with the Film Unit of the Empire Marketing Board, which later the General Post Office sponsored. One can speculate they see elements that reflect Grierson in Drifters by taking a look at his thoughts and interests.

It appears Grierson was interested in the public, or more precisely those who were audience members to various forms of communication. He was interested in how these forms of communication affected these people.

“After graduation, Grierson lectured at the University of Durham until he was awarded a Rockefeller research fellowship for social science study in the United States. Grierson was interested in the role of mass media in shaping public opinion, and particularly how press, radio, and advertising had taken over the educational role that previously had been provided by the church and the school.”¹⁸

Grierson went to the University of Chicago and there he “...conducted research on criminal dropouts, but evidenced greater interest in the influence of

15. Rhode, 247.

16. Woods, 223.

17. Woods, 223.

18. Woods, 221.

newspapers on the public—particularly on second generation foreign-born immigrants.”¹⁹

He also thought about audience members in terms of documentary film.

“...he began to feel—with Walter Lippmann—that expectations once held for democracy were proving illusory. Problems facing society had grown beyond the comprehension of most citizens; their participation had become perfunctory, apathetic, meaningless, often nonexistent.

While Lippmann was pessimistic about all this, Grierson was not: he saw a solution. The documentary film maker, dramatizing issues and their implications in a meaningful way, could lead the citizen through the wilderness. This became the Grierson mission.”²⁰

It seems Grierson had an interest in showing people themselves and those around them. “Grierson’s determination was to ‘bring the citizen’s eye in from the ends of the earth to the story, his own story, of what was happening under his nose...the drama of the doorstep.”²¹

In looking at Drifters, one may be able to see Grierson’s thoughts in action. “There was nothing doctrinally radical about it, but the fact that British workingmen—virtually ignored by British cinema except as comedy material—were the heroes gave the film an almost revolutionary impact.”²² If British workingmen and their families had the opportunity to view this film, they may have felt they were watching something that hit close to home. This film may have functioned as a way for Grierson to give British people a look at themselves.

19. Woods, 222.

20. Barnouw, 85.

21. Barnouw, 85.

22. Barnouw, 87-88.

It seems likely that someone from behind the scenes wanted to get a specific point across and/or change people's way of thinking with this film. "Grierson's own first film was a piece of public relations for the Empire Marketing Board promoting the principle of 'the Projection of Britain', which had been propounded by the Board's chief, Sir Stephen Tallents."²³ Grierson once said, "I look on cinema as a pulpit, and use it as a propagandist;..."²⁴ It has also been said, "When he left Britain cinema for him had been merely one aspect of a fascinating subject; when he returned in 1927 he was deeply absorbed in the possibilities of its use as a medium of education and persuasion."²⁵

It should be noted that the subject matter of this film was probably not something Grierson concocted out of thin air. He may have had an ulterior motive.

"The Empire Marketing Board was intended to cement the British Empire by promoting trade and a sense of unity among its various parts, and it was attempting this through posters, pamphlets, exhibitions. The next step, argued Grierson, must be film; Tallents already held the same view. But this required a meeting of minds with the Financial Secretary of the Treasury, Arthur Michael Samuel, who was considered the leading authority on the herring industry and who was flatly opposed to film. Grierson met this problem with a characteristic head-on approach. He came to the meeting recommending immediate production of a film on the herring industry."²⁶

Besides the subject matter, there are other aspects in this film that could bear the mark of its creator. The film has been described as "Vigorously paced and

23. David Robinson, The History of World Cinema (New York: Stein and Day Publishers, 1973), 211.

24. Forsyth Hardy, ed., Grierson On Documentary, revised ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), 16.

25. Hardy, 16.

26. Barnouw, 87.

imaginatively edited...²⁷ These aspects can possibly be attributed to Grierson's cinematic knowledge. He said, "what I know of cinema I have learned partly from the Russians, partly from the American westerns, and partly from Flaherty, of *Nanook*. The westerns give you some notion of the energies. The Russians give you the energies and the intimacies both. And Flaherty is a poet."²⁸ The fast pace may stem from the "energies" he speaks of and the imagination may come from his comprehension of Flaherty's work in Nanook of the North. However, the manner of editing may be a product of Grierson's belief concerning documentaries, which may or may not stem from Flaherty. He "believed that the main intent of the documentary was the 'creative treatment of reality.'"²⁹

There's evidence Grierson had something to do with other films as well. He was involved with the GPO Film Unit. "...Grierson taxed his GPO unit to concern itself with more than the simple pick-up and delivery of mail, and to depict the vital action of the gale warning, international cable, night mail, and ship-to-shore radio services. Hence, this new unit was able to maintain its reputation for experiment, quality, and audience interest in its films."³⁰

Grierson's opinion that "the main intent of the documentary was the 'creative treatment of reality,'"³¹ may have had some influence on the 1936 documentary, Night Mail, which was a product of the GPO Film Unit. It was directed by Basil

27. Barnouw, 87.

28. Woods, 223.

29. Sherman, 13.

30. Woods, 225.

Wright and Harry Watt. The way the film was edited may have had something to do with his belief about creative treatment. "The film was edited to the rhythm of its sound track."³²

As far as documentary films showing us our world, Grierson can be tied to this as well. "Grierson insisted that documentary films should be about real social problems; they should be about life, and life itself should be the source of the ideas, research, and filmmaking."³³

Jacques-Yves Cousteau

Another director who may have incorporated an interest of his into a documentary film was Jacques-Yves Cousteau. Looking at his links to a world encompassed by water may provide some insight.

"One afternoon, someone—no one seems to be able to remember who—gave Jacques a pair of aviator's goggles to try out while hunting for fish near the shore. He was twenty-six and remembers that day as perhaps the most important one in his life. Being able to see underwater was a thrill Jacques could scarcely have imagined before.

'I was astounded by what I saw,' he wrote in *The Silent World*. 'Rocks covered with green, brown and silver forests of algae and fishes unknown to me, swimming in crystalline water. Standing up to breathe I saw a trolley car, people, electric-light poles. I put my eyes under again and civilization vanished with one last bow. I was in a jungle never seen by those who floated on the opaque roof.'³⁴

Another incident provides a look at Cousteau:

"A lone swimmer cruised the green-blue sea off Tunisia. About all you could see of him was the slow flutter of his rubber foot fins and his breathing tube sticking

31. Sherman, 13.

32. Barnouw, 94.

33. Jan Bone and Ron Johnson, Understanding the Film: An Introduction to Film Appreciation, 5th ed. (Lincolnwood, Illinois USA: NTC Publishing Group, 1996), 36.

34. Susan Sinnott, The World's Great Explorers: Jacques-Yves Cousteau (Chicago: Childrens Press, 1992), 26.

out of the water. He was looking down through his diving mask at unknown landscapes on the sea floor. He was Lieutenant Jacques-Yves Cousteau of the French Navy, one of the first of the menfish. The time was the summer of 1939. On leave from his cruiser, Cousteau had come to explore the mysterious African seas. He had almost lived underwater since he had started to dive three years before with his friends, Philippe Tailliez and Frederic Dumas.”³⁵

It has also been said, “By 1948, Jacques Cousteau’s explorations of the undersea world were gaining him the respect and admiration of scientists, oceanographers, inventors, and photographers around the world.”³⁶

According to Lesley A. DuTemple, “By the late 1940s, Jacques was well established as an underwater explorer.”³⁷

Peering into Cousteau’s mind regarding a water related topic may also be useful: “He had dreamed and talked about a vessel built for divers and oceanographic research since 1944...”³⁸

Le Monde du Silence (The Silent World) was likely made because of a personal interest of Cousteau’s and/or because of his underwater involvement. It has been described as a “motion-picture documentary about life beneath the sea.”³⁹ Louis Malle and Cousteau co-directed the film. Parts of it can be traced back to each of them.

“Cousteau wanted a true documentary, a film that not only overwhelmed its audience with footage of undersea wonders but also showed *how* such images were obtained, that is, showed Dumas, Falco, and everybody else *working*.”

35. James Dugan, Undersea Explorer: The Story of Captain Cousteau (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1957), 1.

36. Sinnott, 61.

37. Lesley A. DuTemple, Jacques Cousteau (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Company, 2000), 59.

38. Sinnott, 64.

39. Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia Deluxe 99, s.v. “The Silent World.”

Malle wanted a movie that stretched the viewers' mind with true otherworldly poetry. The opening sequence was his—a trail of bubbles disturbs the blue stillness as aqualunged divers, in wetsuits and carrying arc torches, glide through the world of silence. The next sequence was JYC's—the magical creatures surface and scamper up to the *Calypso's* deck, mere men in awkward costumes and breathing apparatus. The movie's concept was entirely Cousteau's, but many of the images that stay in its audience's mind had a marked affinity with the Louis Malle films that were to come.⁴⁰

This documentary shows us our world in a stunning way. It has been said, "In 1956 our first full-length underwater color film released commercially, *The Silent World*, introduced movie audiences to the startling beauty of the sea's inhabitants and landscapes."⁴¹ It has also been said, "Its first audience was stunned by the film's technical mastery, the undersea life forms,..."⁴²

In a review of the film, a critic spoke of more than just those who call the water home. "...the hardy divers and the operations of the compact little ship, a floating marine laboratory, are established clearly at the start of the film before the cameras are taken underwater to view the wonders and the beauties that are there."⁴³ Later in the review it said, "And then we go back into the water to look at fishes and lobsters and coral clumps and to feel a case of the 'bends' with one of these divers, after we have been made acquainted with him."⁴⁴

40. Axel Madsen, Cousteau: An Unauthorized Biography (New York: Beaufort Books Publishers, 1986), 97.

41. Jacques Cousteau, Window In the Sea, vol. 4 of The Ocean World of Jacques Cousteau (New York: World Publishing, Times Mirror, 1973), 46.

42. Sinnott, 86.

43. Bosley Crowther, "The Silent World," in The New York Times Guide to the Best 1,000 Movies Ever Made, Vincent Canby, Janet Maslin, and the Film Critics of The New York Times, ed. Peter M. Nichols (Times Books, a division of Random House, Inc., 1999), 787.

Alek Keshishian

Alek Keshishian, who directed the documentary, Truth or Dare: On the Road, Behind the Scenes & in Bed With Madonna, may also have displayed aspects of himself within his film. The documentary is described as "...behind-and-in-front-of-the-scenes look at Madonna on her 1990 globe-spanning Blonde Ambition Tour."⁴⁵

Keshishian's involvement with performing and the arts may have something to do with this documentary. Considering the fact that Keshishian has been involved in these areas, it may not be surprising that he directed a film centered around a performer. Keshishian has been described as "A former child actor, violin prodigy, and classically trained ballet dancer,..."⁴⁶ His involvement does not stop there. "While he was a student at Harvard, he took \$2,000 and staged an imaginative theatrical production of *Wuthering Heights*, in which the principal characters mimed the voices of pop singers."⁴⁷ Yet another example shows his related experience. "After he graduated from college, Alek moved to Los Angeles, where he became the director of music videos."⁴⁸ He had an interest in these areas and this documentary clearly fits in with his interests. Also, since he

44. Crowther, 787.

45. Jeff Dick, "Documentary Delivery: 20 Videos for Library Collections," Library Journal 119, no. 9 (1994): 40.

46. James Ryan, "Cameos: Director: Alek Keshishian," Premiere, June 1991, 35.

47. Mark Bego, Madonna: Blonde Ambition, updated ed. (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000), 267.

48. Bego, 267.

had experience in these areas, perhaps he brought something to this documentary that others who were detached from such subjects could not.

He may also have been attracted to the very idea of working with Madonna. It has been said he passed time "...dreaming of one day working with Madonna."⁴⁹

Keshishian provided some useful information regarding himself in relation to the film. "Of course I'm subjective,' Keshishian says. 'A filmmaker has to feel inspired and attached to the material he's working with. Is Oliver Stone not in love with Jim Morrison to a certain degree when he's making a movie about the Doors?'"⁵⁰

It also appears Keshishian had his audience in mind with this documentary. He wanted the film to affect them a certain way. "My goal was to take you on a roller-coaster ride,' he says. 'Every time you feel comfortable about having a certain opinion about her, I wanted to challenge it. That's what I felt happened to me as I got to know her.'"⁵¹

This documentary presents facets of the real world—even if it is a highly unusual one. The audience witnesses a specific period of time that is connected with a tour. "The documentary follows our preeminent cultural icon through her four-month Blond Ambition Tour, from Tokyo and Paris to her hometown of Detroit..."⁵² The viewer is looking at cultural history. Madonna, herself, has said,

49. Ryan, 32.

50. Ryan, 32.

51. Ryan, 32.

52. Peter Wilkinson, "Madonna's Favorite Filmmaker is One Smart Alek Director," Rolling Stone, 16 May 1991, 52.

"It was overwhelming to see how much did happen, how much responsibility I did have."⁵³ Also, it has been said of the documentary, "What started out as a routine concert film became an amazing chronicle of a slice of her life."⁵⁴ June Sochen says, "Her 1991 documentary, *Truth Or Dare* described life on tour;..."⁵⁵

Nanook of the North, Drifters, The Silent World, and Truth or Dare: On the Road, Behind the Scenes & in Bed With Madonna are all films that represent life.

They show us a part of our world and there is evidence that points to the representation of the films' creators within the films.

Sharon Sherman gives an example of how video can show life in the two ways that have been discussed when she talks about film, video and folklore.

"A class in basic video production might begin with an assignment to create a short video about oneself. The second assignment asks the students to have someone else in the class make such a video about them. They will shoot and edit a project about themselves, have such a project made by another student, and shoot a video about another classmate. Thus, each student will have two tapes or 'visions' of his or her life. The first assignment will capture the 'self,' or the self that the filmmaker wishes to reveal. The second assignment will also capture the self, revealing as much about the videographer as it does about that person's conception of the subject being portrayed. On the surface, the two videos will share the same topic; on quite another level, each video will be a self-expression of its videographer.

Through the lens, the camera metaphorically mirrors the self of the filmmaker."⁵⁶

John Grierson mirrored this idea somewhat. As mentioned before, he "believed that the main intent of the documentary was the 'creative treatment of

53. Wilkinson, 59.

54. Bego, 268.

55. June Sochen, From Mae to Madonna: Women Entertainers in Twentieth-Century America (The University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 192.

56. Sherman, 1.

reality.”⁵⁷ Documentary film directors have the opportunity to represent themselves as well as their subjects within their films. Hence, audience members can watch a documentary film and see the world as it is presented before them, but also see something of the person or people who have created the film. Documentaries are a celebration of life in that they present us with the wonders of our surroundings and provide their creators with the opportunity to express their inner selves.

57. Sherman, 13.

CHAPTER TWO MODERN DANCE

As documentary filmmakers have created offspring of their inner selves through their films, modern dancers and choreographers have done the same through another medium: modern dance. By expressing themselves through their own movement and through their choreography, they have added pieces to a puzzle that makes up this idiom of dance.

What is this art form? Jack Anderson gives some insight:

“Modern dance remains a mystery. It is known the world over and, in some form or other, has existed since the late nineteenth century. Yet no one has ever been able to say precisely what it is. Nevertheless, if modern dance is mysterious, it is also glorious, and it has proved to be miraculously self-renewing. Therefore anyone trying to describe its historical development can only revel in its diversity.”⁵⁸

Modern Dance Contributors

Martha Graham

Martha Graham was a contributor to modern dance. Graham has been described as “...the brilliant, innovative and legendary dancer, choreographer and teacher who in a 70-year career is generally acknowledged to have been the primary influence on the development of modern dance in America as well as the art form’s leading exponent,...”⁵⁹

In terms of Graham’s choreography, it appears she looked to the stories of others. “Her choreographic work was rooted in a wide range of material,

58. Jack Anderson, The World of Modern Dance: Art Without Boundaries (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997), xi.

59. Bart Barnes, “Modern Dance Legend Martha Graham Dies,” The Washington Post, 2 April 1991, sec. A.

including Greek mythology, American literature, poetry, the Bible and historical legend."⁶⁰

She provided an example of how dance can be more than the physicality of movement. One can associate feelings and emotion with Graham. "Her dance purpose is to give physical substance to things felt, to lamentation, to celebration, to hate, to passion,..."⁶¹ Graham herself spoke of a connection between movement and emotion. "She wanted her dancers, Graham once said, 'to move in a technically clean, clear fashion, and so passionately that you can see the essence of the emotion....'"⁶² Graham's external exposure of the inner workings of humanity did affect people. "Many people untutored in dance and Greek tragedy and oblivious to the symbolism in her dances responded to the hatred, lust, greed, betrayal, remorse, madness, and revenge they contained."⁶³

Charles Weidman

Another figure in modern dance who was involved with dance in terms of human feelings was Charles Weidman. Humor was an element that figured into his career. "Weidman created several dances inspired by the comic drawings and stories of James Thurber: *Fables for Our Time* (1947), *The War Between Men and Women* (1954), and *Is Sex Necessary?* (1960)."⁶⁴ "His *Atavisms* (1936), a suite of three dances, began with two comedies. *Bargain Counter*

60. Barnes, A8.

61. Richard Kraus, *History of the Dance in Art and Education* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969), 152.

62. Barnes, A1.

63. Mary Campbell, "Martha Graham: An American Original," *Dance Magazine*, March 1999, 73.

showed a timid department-store employee overcome by a stampede of female shoppers. *Stock Exchange* satirically examined the dog-eat-dog world of high finance."⁶⁵

Another characteristic of Weidman was his affiliation with pantomime. "Through his mastery of pantomime, he could indicate the presence of unseen people or things by the ways in which his eyes focused, his hands moved, or his head turned."⁶⁶ Both sardonic humor and pantomime can be found in his works, *And Daddy Was a Fireman and Flickers*.

It has been said "...he was recognized as the leading male dance comic and satirist of his day."⁶⁷

Doris Humphrey

Another contributor to the idiom of modern dance was Doris Humphrey. Part of her relation to modern dance comes from a technique she developed.

"Like Graham, she developed a technique from a study of elementary principles of movement. But whereas Graham emphasized the breath, Humphrey stressed balance. Her key words were 'fall' and 'recovery' and her choreography made much of the contrasts between yielding to gravity and resisting gravity to restore equilibrium."⁶⁸

"Fall" and "recovery" can be seen in Humphrey's dance, *Water Study*. She "made use of fall and recovery to suggest the movements of waves."⁶⁹

64. Jack Anderson, *Ballet & Modern Dance: A Concise History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton Book Company Publishers, 1986), 156.

65. Anderson, *The World of Modern Dance*, 165-166.

66. Anderson, *The World of Modern Dance*, 165.

67. Kraus, 156.

68. Anderson, *Ballet & Modern Dance*, 156.

Also unique to Humphrey was her work in terms of group works. She did not limit her choreography to solos. "...Humphrey specialized in group works, for she believed that group designs could make great themes clear and powerful."⁷⁰

Like documentary film directors, modern dance choreographers/dancers have the opportunity to display themselves through their art. Choreography is a product of self-expression. The actual act of dancing can be a form of self-expression as well. Dancers can have their own unique styles and hence the way they move is unique to them. They may exhibit something from inside themselves when they dance.

However, the similarity does not stop there. As documentary films can show us the world, some modern dance choreographers/dancers have represented life in their dances. This can be seen in the feelings and emotion associated with Martha Graham's dances and the humor associated with some of the dances of Charles Weidman. Perhaps audience members in a narrower sense have seen the artist and in a broader sense have seen the world. As Martha Graham said, "I think the reason dance has held such an ageless magic for the world is that it has been the symbol of the performance of living."⁷¹

Dance Companies

From these previously mentioned modern dancers, sprang even more modern dancers and today modern dance is still alive. One way in which modern dance is alive today, is through dance companies. There are modern dance companies

69. Anderson, Ballet & Modern Dance, 156.

70. Anderson, The World of Modern Dance, 162.

in communities across the United States. Two examples of dance companies that perform modern dance are Stephen Pelton Dance Theater and Ground Zero Dance Company.

Stephen Pelton Dance Theater

Those who want to familiarize themselves with a modern dance company in existence today, can do so through Stephen Pelton Dance Theater. The company's website says the company "is a San Francisco-based modern dance company that tells inspiring, human stories through narrative, emotionally-driven dance and theater to illuminate the art in everyday life."⁷² Also according to the website, "They perform regularly throughout the Bay Area and offer technique classes and special repertory workshops in Bay Area dance studios."⁷³

Ground Zero Dance Company

Exposure to modern dance is possible through another dance company called Ground Zero Dance Company. This company's website says of the company, "Ground Zero's mission is to bring modern dance to a wider and more diverse audience by maintaining an ongoing dialogue between the company and the community, through the production of new work and regular public educational and participatory opportunities."⁷⁴ A company class which dancers who are not in the company can attend, may be helping to keep modern dance alive.

71. Anderson, Ballet & Modern Dance, 174.

72. "The Company: Artistic Vision," Stephen Pelton Dance Theater, <<http://www.dnai.com/~peltdanc/>> (7 November 2001).

73. "The Company: History," Stephen Pelton Dance Theater, <<http://www.dnai.com/~peltdanc/>> (7 November 2001).

According to the website, “The company maintains an ongoing company class, held twice a week, which is free and open to the dance community in Richmond.”⁷⁵ The website also says, “The scope of the class is generally advanced modern technique, but with the change of instructors can also include contact improvisation, ballet, and jazz.”⁷⁶

Other companies that perform modern dance do exist. Besides the common element of modern dance, they also may have another aspect in common. It is likely they all struggle financially to some extent to stay in existence.

Jack Anderson may say that modern dance is “a mystery,”⁷⁷ however, what does seem clear is that for some it has been and for some it still is a part of their lives. Whether they are the participant or the viewer, they have the opportunity to experience the artistry and beauty that is modern dance.

Anderson later says, “Modern dance is an art as elusive as it is great. No one has ever offered an all-inclusive, totally satisfying definition of it. No one can point to its date or place of origin. Yet something known as modern dance does exist and, despite periodic attempts to pronounce it dead, modern dance continues to flourish.”⁷⁸

74. “Company: Mission,” Ground Zero Dance Company, <<http://www.groundzerodance.org/>> (6 November 2001).

75. “Company: Education/Outreach,” Ground Zero Dance Company, <<http://www.groundzerodance.org/>> (6 November 2001).

76. “Company: Education/Outreach,” Ground Zero Dance Company, <<http://www.groundzerodance.org/>> (6 November 2001).

77. Anderson, The World of Modern Dance, xi.

78. Anderson, The World of Modern Dance, 3.

From the modern dance contributors mentioned earlier in this chapter, as well as from others, modern dance has continued to develop. Modern dance is continually redefining itself. It is a reflection of the evolution of culture. It is technical expertise, as a means of expression.

The documentary, Imagery in Motion: Modern Dancers & Their Companies serves an educational purpose. It adds to the information that already exists about this art form. Audience members can gain a better understanding of how modern dance has existed in recent years. Specifically, dance students may be able to use this information in determining the future careers they want to pursue.

CHAPTER THREE THE VIDEO

Imagery in Motion: Modern Dancers & Their Companies is a documentary video that provides a look at what it is like to be in a modern dance company. However, it does not just purely provide information. Artistic elements were added by the producer/editor, such as graphics and montages. These elements are as important in the work as the information provided. The documentary is a presentation of both information and these elements.

The people interviewed for this documentary were involved with one of two companies. One is called Happendance and is based in Okemos, Michigan and the other is called Peter Sparling Dance Company and is based in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

This documentary has multiple sections. It starts with interview segments from company members. It then goes into an introduction consisting of two dancers (never seen together) performing. In some of the shots, it looks like they are under a light similar to a spotlight (the edges of the light are not smooth), while in other shots, their bodies appear to be lit against a black background. The sequence is a montage with music from a song performed by Enya. The title of the documentary also appears on the screen during part of the introduction. The two dancers were from Happendance.

The specific informational sections then follow. Each section has a title page. The title pages have a lavender background and black wording and are accompanied by music also taken from a song performed by Enya. The sections

in the order they appear are “Performing,” “What We Do,” “Physicality,” “Relationships,” and “The Companies.”

The sections consist of interview footage, as well as shots of company members working together as a company. There are, however, exceptions. One of the sections also shows them interacting. Another section shows, among other things, company signs and one of the dancers either putting on make-up or blending it. Some of the footage was shot by MSU students, while other footage was provided by people in the companies. All of the interview footage was shot by MSU students. Titles are given for the interviewees. The titles consist of their name, their title in regards to the company and their company. When performance footage is shown, the name of the piece, the name of the show and the date are given. The titles that pertain to Happendance all have a green background and the titles that pertain to Peter Sparling Dance Company have a blue background. The lettering in both cases is done in black. The two different color backgrounds may aid in keeping the viewer from becoming confused between the two companies.

“The Companies” section is different than the other four in that after the title page, it starts off with a montage of shots representing both companies. The music used for the montage comes from a song performed by Enya. The montage starts out first with images representing Happendance. A sign for the school and the company is shown and then there are three shots of various company members. A sign for Peter Sparling Dance Company is then seen and followed by shots of company members.

The credits start out over black for the credit for the producer/editor and then appear over black and white images of the companies for the rest of the sequence. Again, a montage is used, with music again from Enya.

Added elements in this documentary may give a mystical and/or dreamlike impression. For instance, music of Enya helps to give an ethereal feeling. Also, the colors that were used may promote this feeling as well. The lavender, green and blue are “sea foam” colors. Also, the montages to Enya music in the “Companies” section and for the credits provoke an emotional response by the viewer. He may get the feeling he is witnessing the inner emotions of these dancers, as well as the beauty of dance. The viewer may also feel moved by the beauty of the introduction montage and the montage used during the ending credits.

In addition, the section title sequences and montages may give the appearance that the documentary itself is dancing which may add to the artistic feel of the piece.

Were such added elements necessary to get the information out to the viewer? They, of course, were not. However, that does not mean they should not be there. Take for example what Richard Munson says about Louis Malle and The Silent World in his book, Cousteau: The Captain and His World.

“The movie’s first and most memorable scene was conceived not by Cousteau but by Louis Malle, then only twenty-three years old and fresh out of film school. Malle had become fascinated by an underwater flare—developed by Frederic Dumas, the team’s resident pyromaniac—that produced a dreadful roar and a cascade of bubbles. With a sense of visual poetry, the filmmaker arranged for aqualunged divers to glide down into the world of silence, disturbing the sea’s blue stillness with their arc torches.”⁷⁹

79. Richard Munson, Cousteau: The Captain and His World (New York: William Morrow and

Was this necessary? Probably, it was not. However, this may have added a sense of beauty to the movie and it may have captured the attention of the viewers.

Other examples can perhaps be seen in the documentaries, Drifters and Night Mail. Drifters was described as "...imaginatively edited..."⁸⁰ and in regards to Night Mail, it has been said, "The film was edited to the rhythm of its sound track."⁸¹ These elements may not have been necessary to give the information about the subject matter, but may have made the documentaries more entertaining.

Imagery in Motion: Modern Dancers & Their Companies provides the viewer with information about what it is like to be in a modern dance company. However, it also has added creative elements that may give a certain impression to the viewer and encourage him to take notice of the beauty of the art form known as dance. This documentary gives the viewer a glimpse of this profession, as existed through those companies, but also portrays dance as an art form that is not limited to an external existence.

Company, Inc., 1989), 78-79.

80. Barnouw, 87.

81. Barnouw, 94.

CHAPTER FOUR RELATIONSHIP TO POTENTIAL AUDIENCE

If the director and/or producer of a documentary film wants an audience to enjoy his film and wants to keep their interest, it is important to think about the potential audience in relation to the film. Creating something for self-gratification is fine, but will it appeal to anyone else? If filmmakers do not care about the popularity of their film, then they do not need to think in terms of the audience. Otherwise, it may be to their benefit to keep the audience in mind. If a documentary filmmaker obtains information about a potential audience's interests and knowledge, he can then include this information in his film to please a potential audience.

The subject matter of the documentary, Imagery in Motion: Modern Dancers & Their Companies, should attract people who are involved with or are interested in dance. However, what about the overall appeal to an audience? Once an audience has started watching it, will they continue? Will they enjoy it?

The intended audience for this documentary is young dance students. Two groups of dance students from two different dance schools were interviewed about dance. Their placement in school ranged from eighth grade to twelfth grade. Three of the five sections the producer put in the video were a result of responses from these interviews. These sections are: "Performing," "Physicality," and "Relationships." Because these subjects were brought up and spoken of positively, these dance students may be more apt to continue to watch and enjoy this video than if it did not have these sections.

Performing

Performing can be a major part of involvement in dance. Part of the reason some people may be involved in dance is for the performing aspect. The section called "Performing" in the documentary may be of interest to student dancers. This can be backed up by looking at responses concerning performing that were given during the interviews with the student dancers.

There were responses that indicated that the students liked performing. Some of the students were specific about their inner feelings that were a result of performing. One student spoke of it making her feel good about herself and another said, "Its a rush." Two others spoke positively of the performing aspect. One of them said, "...the only thing I've have to say besides taking dance classes is, like little companies. Like, I'm in Children's Ballet Theatre and then Academy of Dance. Those are two small companies or studios that work on performance I guess throughout the year and I enjoy doing that just because its a lot more fun than just taking classes because it's more learning on how to perform rather than learning on or learning all the techniques and things that are involved in dance." Another student said, "...I guess it's it's kind of that kind of butterflies in your stomach kind of thing you get when you are nervous before a performance and when you walk off stage and know that you did a great job and you made someone else appreciate that performance you did for them and it just makes you feel so good about it..."

Physicality

The physical aspect of dance is an obvious one. Dance students mentioned the physicality of dance during the interviews. Both positive and negative aspects were spoken of. Some of the students spoke of it keeping the body in shape. Coordination in relation to dance was also brought up. Someone mentioned "Challenging the mind." When asked about taking dance classes, one of the students said, "...I like the overall feeling I get from my body..." Injuries were also brought up as well as dance being "hard on your body."

Relationships

Dance can be more than just a physical activity that evokes positive feelings. There is a social aspect too. Whether someone is merely taking dance classes or is in a company, they are involved in a social situation. Unless of course, they are a one man company or take classes through videos. The aspect of relationships in relation to dance was also spoken of in the interviews. When asked about dance classes, one student said, "...I like being able to have a lot of friends in the class and it's a bonding experience." Some of the other students spoke about relationships in regards to dance companies. One of the students spoke of people becoming "part of your family." She also spoke of "really tight friendships." One of the students spoke of personal experience concerning a company she was in. "...we've become really good friends and really close..." Not all the discussion in terms of relationships was positive. One of the students thought there would be jealousy present within a company.

There are two other main sections of this documentary that are not results of this formative research. One of the sections is called, "What We Do." The name for this section was suggested by the creative consultant for the documentary. The other section is called "The Companies."

Because there are sections in the documentary that correspond to things that were spoken about by student dancers from two different dance schools, the documentary may hold the attention of student dancers. They may also enjoy the documentary because of these aspects. Because the interviewed dancers had these things on their mind, it may be something student dancers want to hear about. Although not all of the responses were in regards to dance companies, that does not mean that student dancers would not positively relate to this documentary because these areas are covered in the video.

Although student dancers are the intended audience, they are not necessarily the only people who would be interested in this documentary. Anyone could find it interesting. However, a filmmaker who has done formative research on an intended audience can use the information gathered to help structure his creation. His gathered data will perhaps give him some confidence in a possible audience, so he will not be completely riding on hope.

CONCLUSION

Documentary film is a form of media that can display reality in both an objective and subjective way. People may view documentary films as films that give us information and show us the world as it is. Although this may be true, documentaries may also provide a way of viewing the inner workings of part of humanity. Someone from behind the scenes is responsible for what we see in the film. This includes the choices of footage and what is added for the overall affect of the film. For instance, if a documentary is made about African animals and music is added to the film that is not music that would generally be associated with the wild, this music goes beyond the reality these animals live in. However, the director may have wanted to add it to represent something and/or give the documentary a certain feel. This music then gives the viewer somewhat of a look at the director. The music was something the director wanted to add to his creation. Also, the director would decide what footage to use from what was shot.

The producer's familiarity with the subject matter of the film may also be a significant factor in the production and overall effect of the documentary. A film may not be made at all if a filmmaker does not have an interest in it. In addition, if a filmmaker is involved or has been involved with the subject matter, perhaps he can bring something to the film that others can not.

The documentary, Imagery in Motion: Modern Dancers & Their Companies, is about what it is like to be a modern dancer in a modern dance company. In the video, the viewer can see the dancers as part of a company and hear parts of

interviews from people who are part of the company. However, the viewer also has the opportunity to experience elements in the video that the producer/editor added, which were not necessary, but add to the presentation. Such elements are in the form of music, montages and graphics. The producer's own impressions and experiences of modern dance as an ethereal and uplifting endeavor resulted in the use of music of Enya and a color scheme emphasizing blue, lavender and green. The montages in the documentary give the impression that being in these companies is an experience that is gratifying to the soul. The producer has left a personal mark on the documentary through the addition of these elements.

Young dance students are the intended audience for this documentary. Three of the sections in the documentary were devised from formative research involving student dancers. Dance students from two different dance schools were interviewed about dance. Their responses helped the producer develop part of the structure of the documentary. The use of this information gathered through formative research is likely to improve the effectiveness of the documentary in reaching its intended audience.

This documentary can help steer student dancers one way or another in terms of a career decision. Those, who are considering becoming professional dancers, can use the information in this video to help determine whether they want to pursue that career. Student dancers, who do not intend on pursuing professional dance as a career, may change their mind after seeing this documentary.

In looking at the documentary itself, some things could have been done differently that might have improved it. Documentaries display the world and provide information. A better grasp of the world of the dancers in the video might have been more accessible if additional footage was shown.

Rehearsal footage of the Peter Sparling Dance Company other than in the montages could have functioned in giving the viewer a better look at the company. It also might have made more sense of its use in the montages. The same goes for footage of Happendance company members warming up and Peter Sparling Dance Company dancers putting on make-up. It would have made more sense to have footage of these things in other parts of the video in addition to the montages. In doing so, the montages might have more meaning.

Also, for the section titled "Relationships," when one of the dancers from Happendance speaks of people in the company doing things together outside of the company; it would have added to the "world" the video was showing if footage of that was shown. Footage of the dancers from this company interacting while with the company would have contributed to displaying their occupations as well.

This documentary gives a glimpse of what it is like to be a professional dancer in these companies. Someone, who wanted to do a documentary on this subject in the future, could use this video as a building block to create a documentary that is more in-depth.

The effectiveness of the video in reaching its intended audience has not been measured in this thesis project. A posttest would need to be done to determine if

the effectiveness. The most ideal situation might be if the same student dancers were interviewed again that same year and asked questions pertaining to the effectiveness of the addition of these sections, after watching the video.

The producer/editor of this documentary learned that dance can be enjoyed in ways other than through performing it herself. The enjoyment of dance is not limited to physical movement. It can also be enjoyed by observing the creative process through the artistic medium of video. Something that is so much a part of her can be appreciated on a small screen in addition to having the experience of performing on stage.

APPENDIX A
IMAGERY IN MOTION: MODERN DANCERS & THEIR COMPANIES

SCRIPT

LISA: I knew that I wanted to do something in the arts, I've always known that—

STACY: What's appealing to me about being a professional dancer at all, is that I'm a professional dancer (laughs) and I can say that and I can tell people that and I get paid for what I do and that in itself is a rarity.

PETER: You're doing a work that has a life of its own, that takes you places and that leaves you at the end with this sense of fulfillment, a conclusion.

LISA: I just didn't know I wanted to do it as a profession until I got to college and then I decided that that's what I wanted to do...

MICHAEL: Performing onstage for me is like um you know like when when you jump into cold water on on like a ninety degree day

STACY: I can not imagine doing anything else, at all.

STACY: What is it like for me performing in a company piece? It's bliss. I love it. It's the best it's the best thing in the world. It's the best feeling in the world. Um. You, you know, I hate to nnn. I don't want to say like a cliché remark but, for you (pause). It depends. Um, I think it depends on each individual dancer, but for me it's like I'm the king of the world (laughs). I'm up there, I'm

onstage, I'm doing what I love to do. I'm hopefully affecting the audience in some way. I'm just pouring my heart and soul out and it's just the best feeling in the world to be out there with the lights on you with the audience watching and just you know (pause) just (laughs) I have no words for it. Just um, giving it your all. It's just it's wonderful. Love it, love it.

MICHAEL: Its like a release, where like You're giving everything you have Physically, emotionally, mentally, everything. You're giving it to the audience and you're like displaying yourself from the inside out through movement

and to me that's what performing is, you know, giving of yourself to the audience.

LISA: It feels great. Absolutely exuberating. Awesome. I can't think of any other (laughs) It's wonderful. (laughs)

JANE: I think thee audience uh can give you energy as you're as you're out there moving...

STACY: What I hope to achieve with the audience when I perform is some type of bond, any kind of bond to set. Even if even if they say she moves wonderfully, even if they say her expression is wonderful, even if they say uhh you just you inspired me in any way, shape or form that's what I try to get acrossed is to make the person who's sitting in that seat, get up and walk out of there feeling a little bit different, inspired, moved by something that I've done.

JANE: A lot of times I try to almost

sometimes tune the audience out 'cause I'm trying to get so far into myself and what I'm doing and but I guess if they react or if they're reacting, I will I will react to that or you will feel that I don't I guess I don't think a whole lot about the audience when I'm out there performing um just because you're you're so involved with dancing with the other dancer or feeling what you need to feel in that particular piece.

STACY: I, you know, love to perform. The rehearsal is grueling, but most most dancers will agree that the pay off is the performing and is affecting the audience in the way that you do...

JANE: ...the types of performances we do in this company are our annual winter concert which is usually, we call it winter concert but its usually thee edge of winter near spring.

And we perform lecture demonstrations in the schools usually either on Wednesdays, mostly on Fridays uh for starting in January and ending in June when the school year is over, so we're very busy especially with our school shows.

LISA: ...we have a contract which binds us to whatever dates we decide on touring and performing and then we also do lecture demonstrations for schools... A big time commitment is towards the summer festival. That's our big performance in the summer every year, usually in June or July.

PETER: The company is very much of the tradition of American modern dance uh as opposed to Broadway, jazz, showdance, MTV. Uhm. The work that I do comes out of a tradition of of

serious con creative movement of uh works that are created the same way that poetry is created or uh something in the visual arts: uh Picasso, oh Kandinsky uh, so that you have a serious uh approach to using movement to express the human condition. Now that might sound a little heavy, but I think what it what it means is that dance uh the dance that Peter Sparling Dance Company does reveals thee the happiness, the joy, the ecstasy, the s the tragedies, the sorrows that are part of being human. So we dance dances about being human. We also dance dances about that celebrate music.

JANE: Our school shows are based on uh children. They They're dances that children are really going to we feel turn 'em on.

We do a lot of liter uh children's literature

Our latest one that we're doing right now is called Stلالuna, which is a book by Jenelle Canon.

...our winter concerts that we do are based more on um adult dances or more serious works.

PETER: And even within thee the program I mean for the mature audiences, we have works that can be done with local orchestras, such as the Four Seasons.

We then have works that are more serious or more adult, they're they're a little more complex or abstract. There are works to popular music, so they're very accessible to a general public. So thee other aspect of having a

modern dance company is that you have to be you have to have a range of works that appeal to a broad range of audience members, so that you have the flexibility to program, so hopefully you have something that will please everyone. And if there's a piece that totally confuses or baffles someone or if you have a piece that people are violently reacting to, that's ok, that's what art is, but at least you give them a range of things, so that they've got something that they'll take home and say "yeah I really like that."

JANE: Dancing is good for your body because it not only str I think it not only stretches you um it also strengthens your body

PETER: ...it strengthens you, it coordinates you, you have to find your center of gravity, you have to know where your center is physically.

STACY: Dancing professionally in this company affects my body in a good way because uh we're there three or four days a week. Um. I don't necessarily have to do much if I don't choose to outside of it to keep myself in shape. We dance a lot. We have class

JANE: ...it also works your mind, I think that's what's so different with dance than just doing um just any exercises, I think it's because if you're working with music or even just with any kind of rhythm, you're really you're also using your mind and your body at the same time...

PETER: Dance is not for dumb people. (laughs) Dance is for for very intelligent people, who can coordinate their physical bodies with their mental

facilities with their with their with the imaging of movement in the mind as it sends the message to the body.

STACY: ...affecting my body in a bad way with the company is is your average you know you get injuries, you know. I haven't had anything major, knock on wood, but just strain, stress, on your body.

JANE: I have had an injury. In fact, I'm nursing an injury right now. My foot is wrapped. I'm going uh uh to see a doctor and I'm having physical therapy done on my foot. I sprained my foot during one of my rehearsals.

PETER: ...part of being a dancer is learning to prevent injury, to maintain the body, but also to heal if and when an injury occurs, so it's all in all it's an incredible education as to living in one's body.

STACY: ...the relationships with the other dancers in the company um are really good uh overall.

MICHAEL: ...we all get along really well

STACY: ...there's not a lot of uh cattiness where maybe you know because of competition like oh she's better oh, you know what I mean? I wanted that part.

LISA: ...everybody's pretty close I would say...

JANE: ...there just seems to be a warmth between all the dancers...

PETER: There's so much giving. There's so much love. There's so much uh um compassion and empathy for

each other because you depend on the other person so much. I depend on my dancers. They depend on me. They depend on each other too for the show to go well.

MICHAEL: ...we're really supportive of each other, you know people are doing other projects and working on other things and so we like to support each other; go to other performances, you know, things like that...

STACY: We go and we do things together when we're not dancing. You know, we'll go and eat lunch, go and eat dinner and chit chat an an hang out when we're not in the company.

DIANE: Oh its you know the same mix of relationships you find in real life. There are certain kindred uh experiences that you share that will always bind you, but there are certainly personality clashes. ...no matter what the clashes are everyone knows what the common goal is, and we get over it or we work it out. We may still never be bosom buddies with this person or that person, like we are with another person in the company, but it doesn't seem to effect the overall because we are professional. We really do understand that our goals are similar and we will get there.

PETER: ...tonight's performance is, and you can read in the program, is supported in large part by Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs. Yes, they are doing something. Yes, they are allowing us to be here. (laughs) Uh...

PETER: Most of our funding comes through Michigan Council, through our a

membership drive that we do every year. We're a non-profit corporation, so that we can take in contributions. We seek funding from corporations.

JANE: ...I think if a dancer wanted to uh come in and join our company, um they would uh come in and enjoy the fact that they would uh come in and enjoy the fact that they would get free classes and paid rehearsals, ... paid performances,...

DIANE: ...The people who work in our company over the years, many, many, mana many of them have wanted a life and didn't see dance in the old-fashioned tradition of you must be young, you must be anorexic and you must not be married or you how could you call yourself a dancer because you know your your life as a as a athlete is so short-lived.

STACY: I enjoy the fact that I'm not ninety-eight pounds and still get good parts (laughs) and they you know, they give me parts on my ability and not the frame that I have, which a lot of companies would turn me right away, once they saw me. I'm not thin enough.

DIANE: Our niche has always aimed at there are meaningful performing artists no matter what they're age as long as they're training and they're upholding professional standards, then they certainly can be married and have children and participate at the level they feel comfortable.

PETER: ...in my company, we're a smaller company and everyone gets a lot of work to do. Uh. So there's a there's a fair distribution of roles and of of featured parts,...

STACY: at least with this type of company because its small and because its not in some big city and you know there's fifty of us uh, it really makes a difference as to (pause) what comes out of our hard work. Um. If uh, its not just about going in there and ok you show me how to dance an an you show me what to do and I'll do it. This way it makes it much more of a uh uh mental and physical connection, you can You know what I mean? We all are educated in dance and we all can say ok choreographically, this is what I think, or musically, this is what I think an or costuming this is what I think, so it's it's putting our minds together with our bodies and not just going out there and being a a body for them to use.

MICHAEL: I think being a dancer in the company is is giving your full commitment um, physically, emotionally. Um you know a lot of effort goes goes into you know in a rehearsal being there, you know, learning what you're supposed to be learning or when it comes to performing, like doing the best you can and really dancing for yourself, but you also are dancing for you know seven other people and we're a unit, you know. We're, I'm only one part of like a nucleus that we have together that can create all these different things and so you know I think it takes all of us to put out what we do.

APPENDIX B RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Group #1

Please tell me your name and grade in school.

How did you first get involved in dance and how old were you?

What types of dance classes are you currently taking and which one is your favorite?

Why do you continue to take the dance classes? What is it you like about them?

What other ways are you involved in dance? And why are you involved in these ways besides just taking dance classes?

What type of exposure have you had to professional dance?

Has anyone gone to see a professional dance performance from a company?

Now, why do you continue just to be involved in dance in general? Not necessarily the classes, but just dance, why do you want to be involved in it? What is it you just like about dance? What does it do for you?

Ok, what else? Think about why you come to class everyday. Think about why you dance with the dance team. What does it do for you inside?

Can anybody think of anything else?

How does it feel when you start incorporating movement with music? Think about actually being out here just dancing, the act of dancing.

How do you feel like when you finally accomplished a step correctly? Describe to me the feeling.

Do you see you guys, do you see yourselves in the future involved in dance in some way and then why or why don't you want to be?

What are your opinions of professional dance companies? Like, what do you think it is like to be a professional dancer in a company?

What's involved in it?

Any other ideas? Anyone else have any main opinions on dance companies?

What do you think would be the um pros and cons to being a dancer, I mean the main pros and cons?

Ok, now when I asked you this question, what type of company are you talking about? Besides professional, are you thinking of you know, as far as location and how would you classify the type of company you're talking about?

You know how there's different classifications of different types of dance companies?

Ok, so like a full-time dance company in a major city is what comes to your mind?

Ok, are you aware of any other types of dance companies that are maybe on a smaller scale? And what their characteristics might be?

Ok. Would something like this appeal to any of you, as opposed to the other type of company you were talking about?

If you had to pick just one thing about dance that you absolutely love the most, what is it? What is it that just really keeps you connected to it, if you had to pick that one thing?

Ok, if you could ask a professional dancer in a professional company one question about what it's like to be a professional dancer in their company, what would you ask them?

Is um is there anything else that you can think of that I've left out that we talked about that you'd like to add?

...what does it feel like for you when you're actually performing onstage in front of an audience? I mean is it something, is it a good feeling, a bad feeling?

Group #2

Ok, so first of all just to start out, please tell me your name and your grade in school.

Now, how did you first get involved in dance and how old were you?

...what types of dance classes are you currently taking and which one is your favorite?

Ok, why do you continue to take dance classes? What is it you like about taking dance classes?

...what other ways are you involved in dance and why are you involved in dance these ways besides just taking dance classes? You know like dancing in musicals or dance teams, or that kind of thing.

...what type of exposure have you had to professional dance?

Why do you continue to be involved in just dance in general? What is it you like about it? Not necessarily just the classes, the idiom of dance. Why do you keep dancing?

Describe to me the um feeling it, what it feels for you to be incorporating movement to music. You know, when you're out on stage or in class. How does it feel—just the act of dancing, being one with the music?

Describe to me the feeling you feel when you execute a dance movement correctly. Let's say it's something you had a hard time, you'd been working on it and oh, you finally got it.

Ok, um do you see yourself in dance some way in the future and why or why don't you want to be?

Now for the two of you who are going to go on, be more specific about how you are going to try to be professional dancers. You know as far as Broadway or companies, teaching

What are your opinions of professional dance companies? What do you think it's like to be a professional dancer in a dance company?

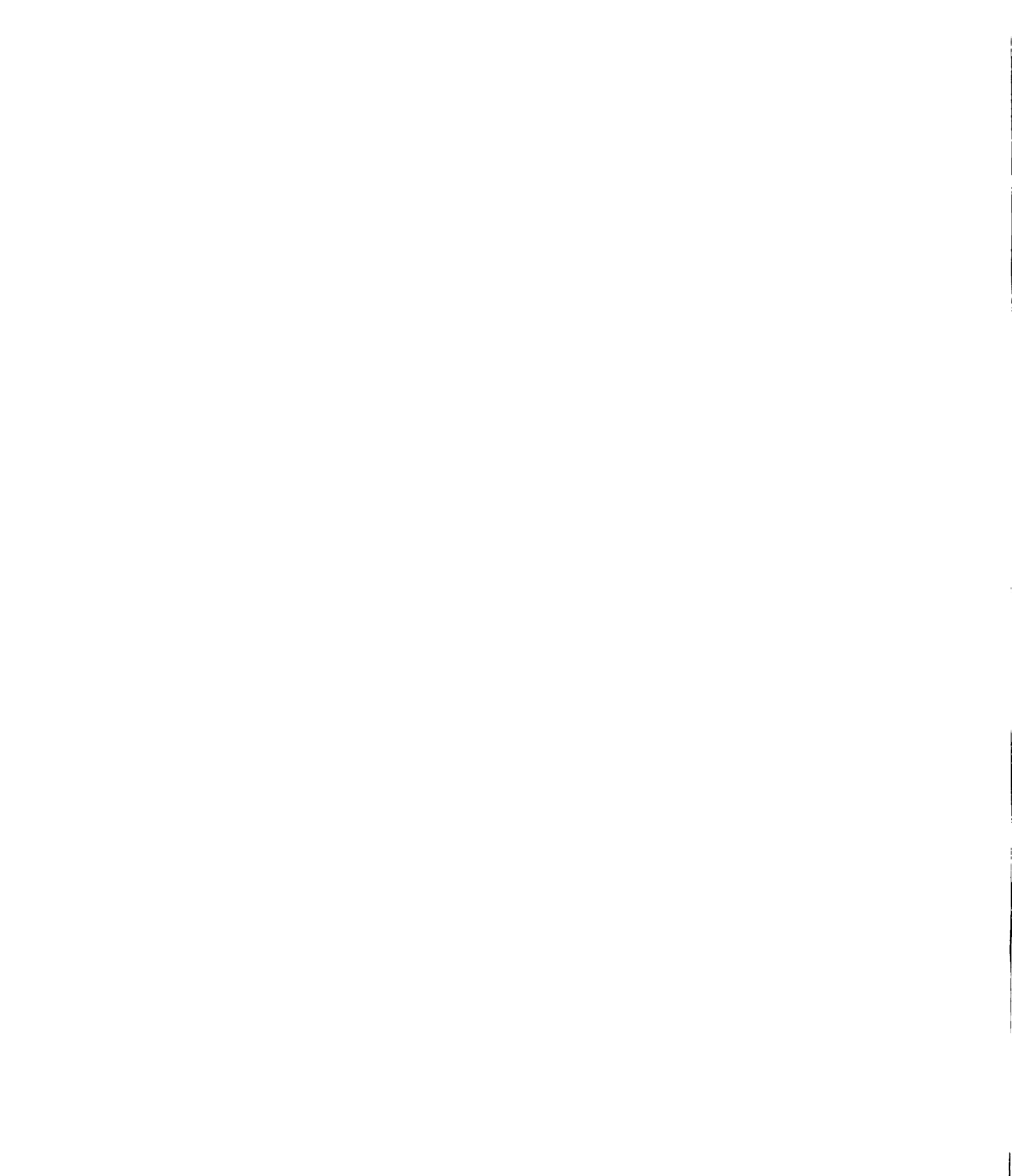
Specifically what do you think are the main pros and cons of being a professional dancer in a dance company?

Ok, now what type of companies come to your mind when you were answering those questions, were you thinking in terms of you know professional, full-time company in a major city or were you thinking in terms of a part-time regional company in Michigan or What do these characteristics apply to? Do you think it applies to all types of companies?

Ok, so you wouldn't separate the companies as far as their characteristics?

...what is the one thing about dance that you absolutely love the most, the one thing that just keeps you connected to it, the one thing that just gets you right here?

If you could ask a professional dancer about what it's like to be a professional dancer in a company, what would you ask them? What one question?



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