



6/DDICS

Dance coversheet: dance investigation

Submit To: **Examiner** Arrival Date: **30 APR/ 30 OCT** Session:

School Number:

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 School Name:

- Write legibly using black ink and retain a copy of this form.
- Complete one copy of this form to accompany each candidate's work.
- Please see overleaf for teacher declaration.

Subject: Dance Level: SL

Candidate Name: _____

Candidate Session Number:

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Instructions to candidates

Check that your candidate session number is on each sheet of paper used in your dance investigation and attach this coversheet to the front of your work.

Outline below the nature of your dance investigation

SL only	Familiar (first)	Unfamiliar (second)
What is the name of the dance culture/tradition?	Modern Dance form	Polish Polka
How did you gain some practical knowledge of the dance culture/tradition investigated?	DVD/video, live performances, classes	Workshop, DVD/video

HL only	Familiar (first)	Unfamiliar (second)
What is the name of the dance culture/tradition?		
What is the title of the dance from which you analyse a short extract in depth?		
How did you gain: (1) a more developed practical knowledge of the familiar dance work, including movement knowledge of the short extract? (2) some practical knowledge of the unfamiliar dance culture/tradition (not necessarily of the short extract)?		

International Baccalaureate

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School Name:

Word length of dance investigation:

SL (no more than 1,500 words), HL (no more than 2,500 words): **1315**

I confirm that this work is my own work and is the final version. I have acknowledged each use of the words or ideas of another person, whether written, oral, aural or visual.

Candidate's signature: Date:

I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, the material submitted is the authentic work of the candidate.

Teacher's name: Date:

Teacher's signature:

SL	A (0-5)	B (0-5)	C (0-5)	D (0-3)	E (0-2)	TOTAL (0-20)
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Moderator code: _____

OR

HL	A (0-5)	B (0-5)	C (0-5)	D (0-3)	E (0-2)	F (0-5)	TOTAL (0-25)
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The Polish Polka and Modern Dance Form

I began my distant dance form research with the mambo and then decided I was not really interested in discovering more about it, so I was searching for a new dance form when I saw the Polish polka. I had never heard anybody speak about the Polish polka and decided that it would be an interesting choice. As for my familiar dance form, I was struggling a little more. I have been dancing since I was young but I never really stayed with a single type of dancing. I figured my choice of modern dance would be a good choice since it is the current dance form I am taking. I specifically wanted to focus on José Limón's style of modern dance. Both of these dance forms are similar in that they are both fluid and can be dramatic and full of emotions. The Polish polka is supposed to be a fun, lively dance, but it has been changed to fit different meanings all over the world. José Limón's choreography is known for its dramatic expression and passion. This is where the two differ; the Polish polka is not a very passionate dance unlike most of Limón's work. His choreography had strong stories behind it and the more abstract polka has become a social, lively traditional dance.

The Polish polka was actually borrowed from a form of the Czech polka that originated in Bohemia (a province in the Czech Republic) in the early 19th century¹. Poland is surrounded by many other countries, which is why it is easily and heavily influenced by foreign ideas, which is why 'polka' ended up being the biggest 'import' of dance to the country. A young woman named Anna Slezak is given credit for creating the Polish form around 1830. It is believed that she began doing a 'jig' once she had found out her lover had not been killed at war. The actual word 'polka' is believed to have originated from the Czech work 'pulka' or 'half'. This may be due to the basic step involved in the dance, which repeats on one leg, then on the other, evenly splitting the motion in half. Ever since then, the Polish polka has been a very upbeat dance form and became one of the county's traditional dances.

The beginning of José Limón's choreography was in 1937 when his first major work appeared called 'Danzas Mexicanas'. Then, in 1946 he began a company for which Doris Humphrey, his former teacher, served as his advisor. Limón's movement is fluid and very passionate because of each dance's meaning. The origin of both forms of dance is different but similar in the way that José Limón began dancing once he was inspired, similar to Anna's inspiration to create a 'jig' for her lover. Just because they both began in a similar way, however, does not mean that the slight differences in their beginnings does not change the dance forms.

Modern dance has a wider variety of movements and way of moving, while the Polish polka can be considered a ballroom dance because of the repetition and patterns. The basic polka step is: hop, step, step, step and then it repeats. The dance began being danced in couples resulting in the addition of spins usually as the last movement. The dance also has a circular pattern to it on the dance floor and no straight lines.

José Limón's movement was not strictly patterns and repetition, but rather told a story. He was well educated in the modern dance form of Humphrey and Weidman where he took classes when he began dancing. Limón's main point of creating dance was to express his feelings and tell his stories of struggle and his life². His movements consisted of sharp and fluid movements providing a variety. Limón's movement also has floor work providing a change in levels that the polka does not provide.

The passion of his dancing does not exactly 'fit in' with the Polish polka. The polka is an upbeat dance and always will be since it was created out of happiness. The story behind the Polish polka is never going to change unless it is reinvented by someone else, but then it would not be the traditional Polish polka. The similarity between these two dance forms could be how they are able to be taken and changed into a different meaning or form. Both can be moulded by other people but can still hold the core of their meaning.

The core of each dance form can be identified easily. Limón's varied movements obviously paint a picture to the audience of stories that happen in life, while the Polish polka's basic side to side steps can be easily recognized. José Limón's work has been described as 'extolling a humanism' on stage to all audience members. The polka is not as 'deep' of a dance form because its only purpose is to provide joy to people. This is where both of them are similar however. Stemming from each dance form's movements is an emotion. They both convey an emotion to anyone watching or dancing and this is why they are both considered an art. Without this important factor present neither dance form would have been as successful as it is now. This is why José Limón's dance company still thrives even after his death and why the Polish polka has been adopted by other cultures and turned into their own.

¹ "One-Two Polka". [National Review](http://www.questiaschool.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5002156149) 1 Apr. 1990: 14. [Questia](http://www.questiaschool.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5002156149). 26 May 2008

² Foulkes, Julia or The Columbia Encyclopeida

The modern dance form continues to thrive today ranging from small companies to large ones. Just like José Limón, many people continue to branch out and create new movement. In Houston there is a wide variety of modern dance companies that come to perform and many people go to enjoy them. Even with the Polish polka we see performances and clubs dedicated to the dance form. Of course the Polish polka has evolved due to cultural changes, but nonetheless it continues to be a popular dance form.

Although these dance forms are obviously different, they both share simple characteristics that allow them to be popular and important in many places and cultures. It is because of these simple similarities that they can be easily linked, especially because they are completely different dance forms. Today José Limón's modern dance form is very popular and is studied by many dancers around the world. The Polish polka however, has evolved into a completely different dance in many countries in order to fit the particular culture. The basic steps of the polka are present in the dance form, but the dance form has been added to and the meaning has changed depending on the culture. Steps from the original Polish polka continue to influence new ideas to the ballroom style of the polka. Both of these dance forms have affected the dance community by creating new ideas that will be carried on in different or new dance forms. The Polish polka shares a story like José Limón's choreography, but the stories conveyed are different, making them distinct.

When I took my polka class, it was not the traditional kind, but a variation of the Polish polka called the Western polka. The basic steps were definitely present and the learning process of the footwork was similar to the learning process of modern. The major difference between the two was that after I learned the polka steps there was nothing else really to learn. Of course, the instructor said it was always possible to mix up the spins and sometimes change the order of the steps. In contrast, modern dance provides more of a variety in movement choice with numerous opportunities for individual dancer/choreographer input and extension of the form. They are both interesting and intriguing art forms regardless of their similarities or differences.

Works Cited

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