



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?	Russian Ballet	Chinese Dai Ethnic Folk Dance
How did you gain some practical knowledge of the dance culture/tradition investigated?	DVD, dance experience, books, scholarly journals, live performances	Workshop, DVD, Online video, books

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): **1500**

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	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
	(0-5)	(0-5)	(0-5)	(0-3)	(0-2)	(0-20)

Examiner:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Examiner code: _____
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OR

HL	A	B	C	D	E	F	TOTAL
	(0-5)	(0-5)	(0-5)	(0-3)	(0-2)	(0-5)	(0-25)

Examiner:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Examiner code: _____
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Russian Ballet and Chinese Dai Ethnic Folk Dance

Historical and Social Origins

Ballet is known to have originated in Europe, drawing influences from 12th century European court dances and theatrical plays and undergoing various forms such as Italian intermedii before culminating in the world's first official ballet: "Le Ballet Comique de la Reine" (1581) (Lee, P44). Court dance served the double purpose of exhibiting physical fitness and providing a platform for courtship. Its transition into "ballet", then loosely defined as spectacles of artistic performance combining dance, drama, music and verse (Lee, P40), gave it an increasingly important role in French aristocratic entertainment. Early in his reign, King Louis XIV expected his subjects to practise dance in times of peace in order to sustain fitness; after retirement as a dancer, he institutionalized ballet by establishing the Royal Academy of Music and Dance to train professional ballet dancers (Lee, P.68-69). During this period, ballet spread to Russia, gaining widespread popularity among the Russian nobility. Tzar Pyotr Alexeyevich Romanov encouraged the proliferation of dramatic performances and balls as means of breaking the conventional rigidity of behaviour between the sexes (Zhu, P51). With increasing popularity of the performing arts came the construction of theaters and opera houses. Thus, the performance of ballets (dance dramas), along with that of stage dramas and musical dramas, began to resemble its present form, providing entertainment to many.

The existence of a distinctive Dai folk dance has been mentioned in Han ethnic historical records written as early as the Ming Dynasty (1362-1644) ("The Graceful Peacock Dance"). However, the true origins of the form are untraceable in written record and shrouded in myths. The origin of the peacock dance (one of Dai folk dance's sub forms) for example, is explained by a religious story: the nondescript but pious peacock came to pay respects to the Buddha on the "Bailla" Festival. Unable to draw enough attention to push through the crowds, the bird was pitied by the Buddha, who threw a ray of magical light on its tail. From then on, every year, the beautified peacock appeared to offer his peacock dance to the Buddha and thus, the Dai ethnic group came to perform the peacock dance too. Unlike ballet, Dai folk dance draws heavy influence from the ethnic group's Buddhist religion, and is often used as a form of worship. Yet, like ballet, Dai folk dance was a source of entertainment and platform for socializing, especially during festivals and holidays.

Ballet and Dai folk dance have different but overlapping functions in their societies – they share the roles of entertainment and socializing while Dai folk dance also serves as a means of religious worship. However, the most distinctive difference is that ballet originated in royalty – its performance required virtuosity; its viewing indicated high social class – while Dai folk dance arose from the plebeian. According to Dan, Fu, (member of the Dai ethnic minority and a peacock dancer), the Dai did not train in dance but naturally learnt to dance from imitating movements in nature. This difference in social class, perhaps also gives rise to their difference in historical documentation. Ballet's carefully recorded history owes thanks to the resources royalty devoted to its development; all that remains of the historical origins of the Dai folk dance is a series of different myths.

Cultural and Political Context

Throughout the development of Russian ballet, the progress of contemporaneous culture and politics (within and outside the country) has played an undeniable role. The European Romanticism Movement gave rise to romantic ballet productions – ballets removed from reality that drew storylines from myths and expressed universal themes like love and conflict between good and evil – such as *La Sylphide* (1832) and *Giselle* (1841). These thrived in Russia throughout the 19th century, influencing the works of choreographers such as Petipa and Ivanov (Zhu, P69). With the success of the October Uprising and birth of the Soviet Union, Russian ballet underwent radical changes to suit the tastes of the new union. Romanticism was rejected or parodied as vestiges of Western capitalism – drama and pantomime substituted large chunks of dance in reproductions of "Giselle" (1918-1924) and "Swan Lake" (1920) (Zhu, P106). Dance productions analogously featuring the revolution or celebrating historical revolutions dominated the period (Zhu, P110).

Although political influence has been present in Dai ethnic folk dance in recent years, it has had relatively little impact on the dance itself¹. However, Dai folk dance has always been inseparable from the local culture. Each movement in the distinctive Dai dance style has its origin in their lifestyle. For example, the basic step for female dancers is characterized by slowly bending down, quickly rising, feet lightly kicking back with closed thighs. This step is influenced by their style of clothing – flowing skirts that tightly wrap around the body down to the knees and then opens out. (Zhang, P116). Another "side step" is characterized by the leaning of the upper body towards the opposite direction of the foot planted forward –

¹ Discussed under RECENT DEVELOPMENT

this originates from the act of carrying water up through mountainous areas (Dan, Fu, “Peacock Dance” Workshop). It has been said that, for the Dai, “dancing is living and living is dancing” (Dan, Fu, “Peacock Dance” Workshop).

The Dai have always lived among nature and far from war and industrialization, therefore having few sources of political change to influence its art styles. In contrast, political events and different governments had significant impacts on the development of Russian ballet, which in turn played roles of political propaganda for the government. However, for both dance styles, culture has been a significant influence.

Dance Styles and Elements

A ballet production is generally quite long, with a number of acts and scenes compiled to tell a story. Ballet has a distinctive style of dancing, characterized by its rigid formality and ethereal quality, which require years of formal training to perfect. This style is evident throughout sections of its training syllabus: basic turnout position, pointé technique, five basic feet positions, three basic styles (attitude, arabesque, ecarté). Narrative plays a dominating role in dramatic ballet, in which the dance as well as the music, setting, costumes and any pantomime involved serve either to illustrate the plot or to develop the characters. For example, Ivanov’s choreography of “Swan Lake” (1876) used a series of attitudes and arabesques to characterize the graceful innocence of the protagonist Odette. Within Russian ballet choreography, the use of chorus, solo and principal dancers, the manipulation of regular or irregular floor patterns, and the variance of tempo are all tools available to the choreographer for his portrayal of the narrative.

In contrast, Dai ethnic folk dance was not designed for stage performances. Onstage productions have been staged only after the establishment of the People’s Republic of China (1949). The single notable large-scale production of Dai folk dance, choreographer Liping Yang’s “Yunnan Impression”, comprised of stage adaptations for various sub-classes of Dai dance, each a separate performance without identifiable plotline. Rather, the intent of each individual performance (religious worship or portrayal of nature) was conveyed through use of motifs and movement dynamics. In “Spirit of a Peacock”, the performer used a series of hand shapes and contrasting sustained and sudden releases of energy to illustrate the image of a peacock in its natural environment (“Yunnan Impression”). The dance was largely stationary, restricted within a tiny section of the stage.

Recent Development

Russian ballet originally branched off from European classical ballet, which has spun off into various styles (including neoclassical, contemporary). Today, Russian ballet has evolved from dramatic to symphonic ballet, now encompassing various forms, including expressionist, contemporary, abstract. The two ballet companies, Bolshoi Ballet and Mariinsky Ballet tour internationally as well as perform in home theaters (Zhu, P201). In contrast, the development of Dai folk dance has been more convoluted. In the 1950s ethnic folk dances were brought to the stage as part of a cultural legacy revival movement. The development of Dai folk dance stagnated during the repression of art in the Cultural Revolution but resumed in the early 80s (Li, 165). Today, the institutionalization of Chinese folk dance in schools, (Beijing Dance Academy for example), has given the training of Dai folk dance increasing similarity to that of ballet in terms of technique and virtuosity (Xie, 86). However, with the development of mass media and digital technology, both face competition from other dance forms and especially popular entertainment industry sectors as well as the question of commercialism to survive the competition.

Summary of Findings

The central difference between the two was not one of emphasis between expressive and physical capability of the dancers. Differences in the two dance styles can be attributed to their varying origins – the difference between Eastern and Western cultures, between plebeian and nobility. Throughout the development of both dance forms, cultural context dictated movement style, social function impacted production form, political events influenced thematic intentions. Today, both have developed outside their regions and continue to draw inspiration from cultural, social and political sources nationally and internationally.

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