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Dance History Aesthetics

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Artist Study

Jiri Kylian: *"Falling Angels"*

In 1980 Jiri Kylian created "Falling Angels" a piece that was made based off of the roles of women in the 1980s, and Kylian's personal intent for this small section of works that is part of "The Black and White Ballet." In 1960 Kylian went to London and viewed Rambert Dance Company he believes this was the most important part of his life. While he was there he became inspired he wanted to use more than one style of dance, which included folk dance, romantic classical, neoclassical, and parts of jazz critiques call his dances "very eclectic." you can see these styles in his work "Falling Angels."

Background Knowledge

Jiri Kylian was born in Czechoslovakia he grew up with communism which could affect how he created his piece. He had all of his dancers become unique and not go with the crowd, unlike communism. He grew up during the cold war which could be why he chose to create the piece about falling angels. He thought of the falling angels as angels that once used to be good but now turned evil like people that go to war when they come back they are changed and affected by the experiences they had fighting and killing other people.

Women in the 1980s

Kylian's goal wasn't to show the role of women in the 80s but since this piece was made during this time period some of the things going with women in the 80s could have influenced his choices without his even be aware of it. In "Falling Angels" only females were used to represent his artist intent. They were all wearing black unitards that are cut like shorts. " In his childhood he was deprived of color and only had brown, grey, and black, he found out that it also expressed his feelings. That's why he wanted to create an absence of color in his pieces. He used black because falling angels are dark and mysterious and because it's in the "Black and White Ballet." In this piece the women are doing very powerful movement. The facial expressions that are used show the females being sneaky, devious, deceiving, furious, and happy. I believe they have these emotions because they are much like the women in the 80s; because they were going against conformity and were confused that they were actually able to have almost as much power as men. He showed this in his piece by having all females dance it to show they have superiority. They were getting paid more and with that they had a standard to uphold so they did whatever they could do to be powerful. Kylian tried to capture this in his piece by having the dancers be confident and self-promoting. The females do gestures that surround their face trying to cover themselves up so that they aren't open to judgment that's so frequent in society. The dancers are in a line walking off stage and they all grab their mouths probably to show questioning themselves to show the lack of confidence they have but should never show. Often times the dancers pull at their leotards almost as if their souls are trying to escape their "imperfect bodies" and go elsewhere. This does this to show that they are comfortable in their own skin because of who they are and what they became.

Intent

Jiri Kylian says the intent for many of his pieces revolves around paradox, falling angels is one the pieces he used this with. A paradox is a statement that is contradicting but has a hidden truth to it as well. In this piece it could be that falling angels aren't actually real but we see characteristics of them as real people in society, so maybe they aren't so fake it turns out. An angel is an ideal perfect person: nice, faithful, trustworthy, nurturing, understanding, and caring. A falling angel is someone who goes against the commercial way of how things are done. Religiously falling angels are someone who is rebellious against god and cast out of heaven. This is connected to feeling out cast in society. I think he is using falling angels as an analogy comparing women in society in the 80s to falling angles, they are broken but pretend it's going to be okay. His dance is showing what women actually feel like on the inside but can never show it. The dancers make tiny wings on their back with their hands and flap them as if they can fly because they really want to fly but can't. The dancers also took their arms up slowly in the beginning and break them down like broken wings, this motif is further developed throughout the piece. They start doing the same arm movement but in different directions and at different tempos.

Movement in relation to Intent

In the beginning of the dance the dancers are walking forward very slowly in the darkness each comes up to a square of light and their arms pop up then break at the elbows to represent broke wings of a falling angel. The significance of this is to show that they are all broken but still want to be with each other but they can't because there are separated from the world in there little boxes of light. In the end of the piece the dancers are on the floor in there boxes again and their hands grab at their leotards for the last time then they release and hold still. I think Kylian wanted to show that they are giving up, they know they have done something

wrong to become a falling angel and now they have to face the consequences. In some parts of the piece dancers break off and do solos or duos. Mostly they are done to show personal identity and individuality to show that not every person is similar it just appears that way because no one wants to be the odd man out. Also I think they are done to show the rebelliousness of the angels to show that they can be whoever they want to be and not what the rest of society (the falling angels) want them to be. Just like women in the 80s who are trying to break off and get a college education so that they can be whoever they want to be in life.

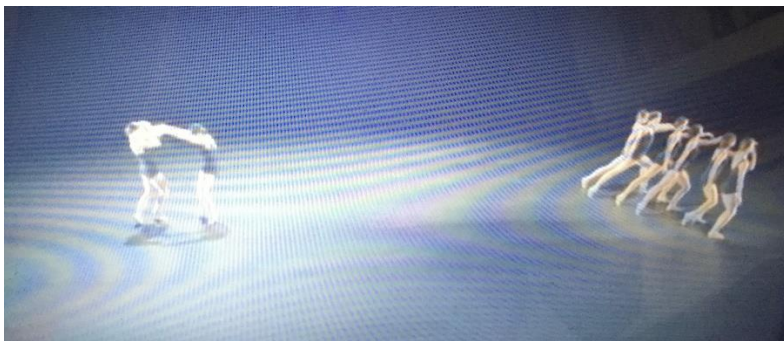
Reoccurring Patters and Choreographic Devices

There are reoccurring patterning in this dance that helps to further develop the intent. Vibratory movement is often shown to resemble flying. Gestures around the face are used to shield themselves so they aren't open to judgement. There is a lot of collapsing to resemble them trying their best to pull themselves up but it's hard to do when you have lost the trust of your friends and no one believes you can change. One pattern that is clearly seen is when all of the dancers are dancing but one by one they break off into a pose that holds still in contrast to what all the other dancers are doing, this happens several times throughout the piece.



This image shows the dancers breaking off and described above. At the end each dancer is in this shape.

In relation to his intent he creates this pattern because he wants to show the falling angles unique qualities and there personality of not caring what everyone thinks of them. The form of the dance starts with A with the square lights then B and then A again with the squares. After the squares of light disappear there is always different contrasting chorography. ABACADA is the type of form this dance was in. Choreographic devices are used to further show his intent and develop his sequences. Juxtaposition is seen whenever someone breaks off into a solo or duo often times the groups just continues to do what they were doing and act like it doesn't matter or phase them that someone else is trying to be different by showing their ideas. The dancers doing the solo juxtapose the rest of the dancers. For example on dancers all do a lunge and one dancers hold it longer and very slowly moves out of it to join with the rest of the dancers. Later two dancers break off from the vertical line doing percussive movements going upstage and begin a duet that juxtaposes the other dancers that are doing slow movements in a canon on the side.



This image shows the dancers that are doing a duet in juxtaposition to the dancers in the line doing a canon.

His idea of juxtaposition was a difference in tempo, or a difference in quality. Repetition is seen in the beginning when the dancers are in the boxes along with the motifs that are used, they repeat themselves but in a different way to show their significance. They all often used their

hands and arms to resemble wings, for example they put their hand on their backs and flap them as if they were wings they repeat this but each time it's manipulated to something a little different but the intent of angel's wings is still seen. The repetition in there piece is a lot like the now frequent repetition of women in society because now they are regularly go to their jobs. Canon is used to show the relationships between the dancers. When other dancers join in creating a continuous cannon its show how people mimic what others do in order to fit in they try to be like everyone else so that no one can make fun of them. For example the dancers all are continuing one movement but then one dancer breaks off to a pose that stays still and each count other dancers join in on the stillness. His interpretation of this device was to make the dancers look different but he didn't use a canon how it's typically used. Normally the dancers would join each other in the same movement and keep dancing, but he had his dancers join them but in stillness.

In *Falling Angles* Jiri Kylian used women in society, paradox, and choreographic devices to help the audience figure out what his true intent was behind the dancing. Kylian uses many outside references such as colors, types of dances, and live performances to help him create his pieces, which makes him different form the rest of the choreographers during this time.

Sources:

Kiylain, Jiri. *Prescribed Artists*. Print.

[Http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbViYBPwOBWF4OPNI1rKtWA](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbViYBPwOBWF4OPNI1rKtWA). "Interview with Choreographer Jiří Kylián - Life, Love and Death." *YouTube*. YouTube, 2015. Web. 23 Apr. 2016. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cLpMlcRve4>>.

[Http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCo29G_eEaXrt2iK7MyI1F3w](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCo29G_eEaXrt2iK7MyI1F3w). "Иржи Килиан. Black & White." *YouTube*. YouTube, 2015. Web. 23 Apr. 2016. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwJLstOK8qk>>.

Alvin Ailey created Revelations in 1960. Revelations is something that is revealed or a surprise often associated with the communication with god, it's also the last book in the New Testament. He chose this title because he wanted to create a three section work that captured the essence of god. The first section is called Pilgrims of Sorrow, the second is Take me to the Water and the last section is called Move, Members, Move; each section has separate dances within it.

Background Information:

1. Alvin Ailey grew up in a Baptist church in Texas
2. He began his dancing training with Kathrine Dunham Dance Company, the second generation of modern dancers and teachers following aspects from Isadora Duncan's first ideas.
3. When they died he became the director of Horton Dance Theater
4. Not long after he created his own company Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.
5. In 1960 created Revelations.

Intent:

Revelations was based off of his childhood he grew up going to church on Sundays. He made all of his dancers attend a church service every Sunday so that they would be able to connect with god and understand the intent for his work. For "Pilgrims of Sorrow" he wanted to show the dancers hoping for a better life. For "Wade in the Water" he was baptized in a pond in the back of his church. And for "Move, Members, Move" he showed three sinners who wanted to escape, but in the last dance it was a church congregating to worship god. He wanted to show all aspects of Christianity that he saw and grew up with.

Culture Influences

Music:

1. The music used are spirituals
 - they are folk songs originally created when Africans were brought to America to be used as slaves they helped give them hope
 - these songs are related to Christianity
 - gave them comfort
 - they server vital functions to them such as work, entertainment, worship, or helping other slaves to escape.
 - slaves were forced to convert to the religions of the new world most liked it better and assimilated anyways because they religions promised life after death if you were good, believed god was doing things for a purpose, and had hope.
2. Different types of spirituals
 - a. Sorrow Songs are slow and express sad emotion towards having no freedom
 - b. Jubilees are upbeat songs often celebrating things
 - c. Work are songs sung during work to make it more enjoyable
 - d. Worship are sung at night in secret churches
 - e. Entertainment are sung at the end of the day to relax and unwind
 - f. Code songs were used to communicate with other slaves the phrase "wade in the water" warned slaves that were escaping to go in the river so that the owner's dogs couldn't track you down.

Section 1: "Pilgrim of Sorrow"

"I've been Bulked" "Didn't my Lord Deliver Daniel" "Fix me Jesus"

Choreographic Devices:

1. Juxtaposition is used a few times in this work to show one person breaking off from everyone else because he is trying really hard to get up off the ground but everyone is having problems trying to get up and he then finally joins the other dancers.
2. Repetition was seen in reoccurring patters such as
 - a. The bird pose
 - b. Praying movements
 - c. Reaching
 - d. Falling on the floor
 - e. Rising to the air with hope
 - f. Looking for a place to hide

Reoccurring Patterns

Section 1: "Pilgrim of Sorrow"

"I've been Bulked" "Didn't my Lord Deliver Daniel" "Fix me Jesus"

This often occurs in the dance the dancers are trying to reach to get themselves off the floor.



This is also a reoccurring patter the dancers often fall to the ground during this piece.

“Take me to the Water”

“Honor Honor” “Wade in the Water” “I want to be ready”

Reoccurring patterns in this are movements that represent water such as flicking away the water and moving freely this piece also has blue and white long pieces of fabric they dance with to make the dancers look they are in water.

AileyOrganization. "Alvin Ailey's Revelations." *YouTube*. YouTube, 2012. Web. 30 Apr. 2016. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZuBFz6WYfs>>.

Akram Khan' Zero Degrees

Background Knowledge

He grew up with classical training and he wasn't exposed to contemporary movement until he was 22 and he fell in love with it. To create his pieces he needs a year or so of playtime to create ideas and choreography for his piece. When collaborating with others he chooses someone that he thinks they will both gain something from it and that he doesn't know what it will turn out to be like yet.

Intent:

I think he wanted to show the relationships people have in the world. By using the fake doll people it was showing how the rest of society is unresponsive. By talking throughout it I think he wanted to audience to be able to connect with them further he talks about people and passports and what being a foreigner is like.

Cultural Influences

I think culturally he was affected by the different people he works with as well as the style of dance he uses, Kathak. He other people help him make decisions and help him to do things he has never thought of doing before, that's why I think other people are his cultural influences.

Choreographic devices

Juxtaposition is the man one often times on dancer would be on the floor lifeless and the other would be full of energy doing many things on the floor and in the air.

Reoccurring Patterns

The dolls were used whenever one of dancers seemed died or completely stopped moving.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1g5fLgsSQWU>. "Interview with Choreographer Akram Khan-Zero Degrees." *YouTube*. YouTube, 2015. Web. 23 Apr. 2016.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1g5fLgsSQWU>