Introduction

Ballet is a very graceful form of dance in which dancers perform very complex movements which appear natural if they are done correctly. Different movements are meant to be seen as effortless and very precise, dancers must look like if they are floating rather than jumping and dancing. Ballet is meant to tell a story through movement and representation of music, different choreographers have different dance styles and each of them depends on the choreographers innovative style and way of representing music. In this extended essay I will analyze how the choreographer’s innovative style and interpretation of a story creates aesthetically pleasing art specifically in ballet as a form of dance, I will be exploring the choreographers George Balanchine, Sergei Diaghilev, and Alvin Ailey, I will analyze and discuss their technique, style, background, and most important productions.

I started my investigation by individually researching each choreographer’s background, technique, style, etc. I also watched productions by each choreographer and analyzed the music used, the most prominent movements, the plot and story, and the style. During my summer vacation I was also able to make some more research by watching live ballet productions such as “la sylphide” in L’Opera de Paris, and the “Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre” also in Paris. I also had the opportunity to meet one of the Danseur Étoile de l’Opéra de Paris, Hugo Marchand and to ask him about his opinion on choreography and its relationship to aesthetically pleasing art. With my live, digital and written sources I will be creating an analysis with the purpose of exploring my principal statement: The choreographer’s innovative style and interpretation of a story creates aesthetically pleasing art.

Ballet first originated from the italian renaissance as a new performing dance, and then it started as a more famous way of dance throughout France and Russia, classical ballet uses french terminology and it has been heavily influenced by the french culture, but ballet is taught all around the world and different countries incorporate their own culture within the dance and the choreography. Ballet dance requires flexibility, body strength and attention, usually the movements require most of these things as well as perfect understanding and development of each movement, most professional dancers have been learning ballet for many years mostly because it takes a lot of practice and professionalism to achieve flawless choreographies and movements. Ballet will always be solely based on the interpretation of music to create an elaborate story, most ballet is seen as a way of expression because of its complexity but it is mostly a way of creating a story through the development of complex movements accompanied by specific music, elaborate costumes, and scenography.

Ballet originated in the italian renaissance during the 15th and 16th centuries, it was then spread to France by Catherine de Medici who became the queen of at the time. Ballet was used mostly as a political statement rather than a form of art, most ballet dancers during their first years were not professional but they worked as amateurs. Ballet was developed in France for its first years “by King Louis XIV who founded the Royal Dance academy as well as the Ballet de l’Opera de Paris” (Marsh, 2010). After its large development in France, ballet was then passed on and developed in Denmark, Italy and Russia, and had its first important breakthroughs during the First World War when Russian choreographer Sergei Diaghilev founded the Ballets Russes in Russia. In the 20th century ballet had a major breakthrough when different styles of ballet such as the romantic ballet, the classical ballet, and the modern contemporary ballets were developed in Europe as well as in America, George Balanchine was a very important american choreographer to create the famous neo-classical ballet which was the most common ballet
Russes, he did not only create one of the most prestigious art companies in the world but “he established an artistic movement which intended to gather the most distinguished artistic, musical, and theatrical experts with the intent to produce some of the most prominent compositions, works and productions ever known” (Salter, 2010). Diaghilev launched some of the greatest and most well-known artists into their careers, some of these include Pablo Picasso, Joan Miro, Marie Laurencin amongst others. He also brought together dancers and choreographers such as, Balanchine, Massine, Nijinska, Fokine, and artists such as, Matisse, Picasso, Strauss, Debussy, etc. Sergei Diaghilev directed some of the strongest spectacles ever introduced to the world, “not only because of his expertise as famous impresario but also as a heavily acclaimed critic, he will be remembered as the artist who revived the interest in modern dance and brought together the greatest artisans in the world” (Salter, 2010).

The Ballets Russes had an important burst during early 1909 and had become one of the most popular forms of entertainment around the world, by reuniting many different artists, dancers and composers, Sergei created a very innovative and creative movement which was mostly based on the discovery of fashion, experimentation, and revolutionating art. By unifying the world most recognised choreographers, artists, designers, composers, and dancers, he had the purpose to create elaborate works of art which would demonstrate intricate costume design, groundbreaking choreographies, and harmonious compositions which would all blend to create the most authentic and exotic dance performances ever seen. “The Ballets Russes' performances were full of vivid colours, staggeringly intricate costumes and designs from some of the world's most famous artists” (Salter, 2010). The Ballets Russes created works of art which were based on perfect aesthetic and creative look where would stand out and over other forms of entertainment, the compositions directed by Sergei were not so based on the choreographies but they would merge all concepts of dance into a whole and incorporated all concepts of dance to create original and ingenious works of art merely based on image and aesthetic. He wanted his compositions to stand out and express perfection and exquisiteness, his techniques were able to create very aesthetically pleasing art which would differentiate from other choreographers because of its vast amount of creative elements which would not just create a composition but also an experience for the audience. His compositions would incorporate art, fashion design, flawless choreography, and harmonious compositions, none of his works were the same because of their vast amounts of content.

Some of the most important aspects of Diaghilev’s compositions were the variety of costumes, “As well as the bright, flowing silks from Schéhérazade, a kind of Arabian Nights fantasy that created something of a style revolution in Paris when it was first performed, there is traditional Russian folk dress, next to the more outré designs of Picasso, Matisse and de' Chirico” (Salter, 2010). The costumes truly represented the theme and inspiration of his compositions, they were design by prominent artists and designers such as Matisse and Coco Chanel and were able to express the growing contemporary and avant-garde culture, seen during the era of the roaring twenties. “Nicholas Roerich's costumes would have added to the powerful effect the performance had on its audience. Even today the bold patterns and colours of the long tunics would look at home on stage during a performance of experimental dance at Sadler's Wells” (Salter, 2010).

Sergei would break the rules of traditional ballet and would create the most contemporary and original dance compositions, his work would break the ideas of conventional ballet costumes and scenery, he would turn every aspect of his composition into a perfect work of art, by applying his knowledge and creativity into his works, he was able to create the most different and inspiring compositions which would