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TAP AND JAZZ DANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: UNCOVERING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TAP AND JAZZ DANCE TRAINING IN UNIVERSITY DANCE STUDIES

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TAP AND JAZZ DANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: THE UNDERESTIMATED SIGNIFICANCE OF TAP AND JAZZ DANCE TRAINING IN UNIVERSITY DANCE STUDIES

A THESIS APPROVED FOR THE

SCHOOL OF DANCE

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ABSTRACT

The values system in the United States is based in Western intellectual tradition, which has caused an imbalance in the availability to study certain forms of dance at the collegiate level. Ballet and modern dance are accepted as individual art forms that are culturally rich. Meanwhile, tap and jazz dance are often viewed as subordinate dance forms. Even today, some people consider these forms of dance as mere entertainment and will not credit them as true art forms. Likewise, a majority of dance programs in United States' universities do not offer courses in these forms, and even fewer require students to study them. Unfortunately, the United States has turned away from its own cultural forms of dance rather than nurturing their practice and growth.

History shows that this neglect is rooted in racism and classism, which also permeates the education system. Tap and jazz dance are sophisticated art forms that have moved audiences for over a century. Yet, there are extremely limited opportunities to study these forms in the university system. This research project was designed to demonstrate through multiple lenses the dire need for a stronger presence of tap and jazz dance in higher education. The historical suppression of these art forms is examined while considering how the dichotomy of the development of ballet and modern dance versus the development of tap and jazz dance affected the cultural response to each. A case study is presented in which classically trained ballet and modern dancers received tap dance training, and then analysis and observations were collected on the benefits of this training in all of their dancing. Lastly, four voices from the professional realm of dance speak to the importance of the availability of tap and jazz dance in the university setting.

Dedicated to all the tap masters of past generations, the present generation, and future generations.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Abstract iv

Dedication v

Acknowledgements vi

Chapters:

1. Introduction 1

2. A Historical Examination of the Societal Views on Dance in the United States ... 7

   Evolutions of the Dance Forms 8
   Discussion of the Dichotomy 14

3. A Case Study on Tap Dance Training for Classical Dancers 20

   Methodology 20
   Class Description 23
   Participant Responses 34
   Case Study Conclusion 45

4. Interviews with Dance Professionals on Tap and Jazz Dance in Higher Education 46

   Amanda Clark 47
   Hollie Wright 52
   Margaret Morrison 58
   Michelle Dorrance 63
   Interviews Conclusion 71

5. Conclusion 72

Bibliography 74

Appendices:

Appendix A: IRB Case Study Forms 75

Appendix B: IRB Interview Forms 83

Appendix C: Dictionary of Terms 87

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

As artists continuously strive to make American administrations and government recognize the importance of art in education and the community, tap and jazz dancers are still fighting to get other artists to recognize the importance of their forms in the field of dance and to convince others to devote time and resources to these truly American dance forms. One of the clearest examples of this is seen in the relatively minimal role tap and jazz dance play in dance programs within higher education institutions.

Dance has established a strong presence in higher education. However, at most institutions, courses in African American dance forms such as tap and jazz dance are extremely limited, if present at all, let alone required for students to take. Many aspiring young dancers are encouraged by their teachers or family members to further their training in the college setting in order to adequately prepare for various careers in dance. While choosing a university is already a daunting task, for dance majors, this often requires selecting a specific form of dance on which to focus, such as ballet or modern. Most private dance studios offer children's classes in ballet, tap, and jazz dance and sometimes modern, so they grow up learning and enjoying the forms of tap and jazz dance as well as a variety of other dance forms. A majority of college dance curricula limit their students to one or two forms of dance forcing young artists to choose which forms they will sacrifice in order to train at an institution. This demands young high school graduates to pick a concentration for their studies. While focused study provides many benefits to students, it

can also limit the students' growth, and in today's job market, both concert and commercial dancers are required to be exceptionally versatile. The benefits of training in American dance forms, such as tap and jazz dance, are widely undervalued. Higher education's neglect of the importance of tap and jazz dance training effects the students' overall development as a dancer and consequently future job opportunities.

Inclusion of tap and jazz dance in a college dance curriculum enhances students' training by diversifying their abilities and honing essential skills in a distinct practice. The limited access to tap and jazz dance on college campuses affects students' entire careers. Not only is age seventeen or eighteen too early in the dancers' training to make such a consequential decision, but it also limits their abilities for growth in the forms in which they do continue. Studying tap and jazz dance strengthens imperative abilities, such as, but not limited to, musicality, balance, and agility. Upon graduation, dancers will enter an incredibly competitive job market in which most employers seek versatile artists that can perform a variety of dance styles. Ballet companies do not just perform classical ballets; they also do contemporary work which requires familiarity with modern and jazz dance principles. Furthermore, Tulsa Ballet commissioned Tony Award-winning Broadway choreographer Andy Blankenbuehler to create a work on the company for the spring 2018 season, and American Ballet Theatre commissioned works by prominent tap dancer and choreographer Michelle Dorrance throughout 2018. Likewise, commercial dance does not only involve street forms of dance but often ballet or modern dance as well.

Other students may graduate with aspirations to open their own dance studios or to teach at an existing studio. As aforementioned, a large majority of dance studios teach ballet, tap, and jazz dance to children, which means that offering classes in these forms is

necessary in order to be competitive in the market. Even if an individual is looking to own a studio and not personally teach tap or jazz dance, it will be imperative to offer these classes to attract customers. This means that at a minimum the owner must understand the basics of these forms in order to recognize and hire qualified teachers for these classes. Also, a graduate searching for a job teaching at an existing dance studio will be much more competitive for employment if he or she is able to teach a variety of forms instead of just ballet or modern. If students are unable to study tap or jazz dance at the university system, that means that the teachers at the front of the room in private dance studios have no higher education in dance than the high school students that they are training. With curricula designed to force students into one or two forms of dance, college educators are failing to prepare young professionals for the realities of the work that they will be expected to do.

Moreover, there are currently no institutions providing graduate level training in tap or jazz dance. Therefore, professionals are unable to seek an advanced education aimed towards providing this training to students in universities. This causes the cycle of lack of resources to perpetuate. Meanwhile, a plethora of faculty job listings include teaching tap and/or jazz dance technique as a primary or secondary job responsibility; this fact alone validates the need for advanced learning in tap and jazz dance.

Dance educators must strive to preserve and advance the uniquely American art forms of tap and jazz dance. These efforts are stunted without continuing to train younger generations as they progress through college and with little university support of research and creative development in these fields. There are few environments in which to foster scholars of tap and jazz dance. A large majority of individuals who pursue an undergraduate or graduate degree and wish to study tap and jazz dance must seek their

training and research in these forms outside of the dance program or outside of their degree requirements. Schools that offer a bachelor of arts, bachelor of fine arts, or master of fine arts degree in dance, actually are offering these degrees in ballet or modern dance, not all dance. Some schools clearly indicate these concentrations in the degree title, such as a BFA in Ballet Performance. However, many of these schools offer simply a degree "in dance." A closer look at the curriculum almost always reveals that the actual course requirements are entirely or predominantly in ballet and modern classes. Even schools that offer classes in tap and/or jazz dance usually only allow these course credits to count towards elective requirements. This means that if a student wishes to take tap or jazz every semester, very few of these credits will actually count towards the completion of the degree. This leaves students and scholars to divide their focuses between their full load of obligations for the dance program or degree requirements and that which they wish to study most intently, tap and/or jazz dance. This split focus is draining of time, energy, and resources, leaving those studying these art forms to essentially complete twice the amount of work as someone who studies ballet or modern dance, which are extremely more readily available and supported in institutions of higher learning.

To look through another lens, artists and scholars must wonder why institutions within the United States of America accept this vapid attitude towards the most American forms of dance. Ballet was developed in European courts. Modern was developed by Germans and Americans. The American form of modern dance is considered an American art form; however, it was developed by individuals of white European descent in the mid to upper class who had first trained in ballet. On the other hand, tap and jazz dance are a direct result of the cultural blending that was exclusive to America including both

Europeans and African individuals primarily in the lower social class. These two forms of dance reflect the American heritage. However, children do not learn about tap and jazz dance in school, and universities or colleges do not offer specialized degrees in these areas. As mentioned, very few offer classes in these areas at all. Somehow, the institutions in the United States have turned away, almost entirely, from its very own forms of dance.

When asked what is the United States' greatest contribution to the arts, most people will answer jazz music. So, what is it about jazz music that is so unique and profound to be labeled America's greatest art? It is the direct result of a clash of cultures exchanging artistic ideas and styles on American soil that formed an entirely new and unique form of expression that features polyrhythm, syncopation, and improvisation. Yet, tap and jazz dance could just as easily be the antecedent of "it" in that sentence.

Outside of an individual's training or research, the scarce representation of these art forms in the university system affects larger society's view of these forms. People in college communities who attend the college dance performances do not see these forms represented on the stage and may be likely to even subconsciously separate tap and jazz dance from the "high" art being studied in schools. For those fortunate to live near a theatre that brings in artists and shows on tour, audiences are less likely to see these forms represented on even that stage because there is less funding available for these dance companies, which enigmatically is a result of less exposure. Plus, without seeing these arts represented, there are fewer opportunities to encourage patrons of these forms. This naturally further perpetuates the cycle of fewer resources for the incredible artists of tap and jazz dance.

After decades of all of this being the case, it is time to offer dancers and scholars the resources and opportunities to flourish in and push forward tap and jazz dance. This graduate thesis will provide a historical survey of how the developments of jazz and tap dance influenced their roles in the university system, examine the benefits of tap dance training for ballet and modern dancers through a case study, and offer thoughts on the subject from professionals in the field of dance. In Chapter Two, the dichotomy of the developments of ballet and modern versus tap and jazz dance is discussed with particular attention paid to the racial tension that has surrounded these art forms. Chapter Three reviews a case study performed by the author in which she trained ballet and modern dance majors with little or no tap experience to tap dance; this data includes surveys and interviews with the research participants, which provide detailed information of the specific benefits of training classical dancers in tap and jazz dance. Finally, Chapter Four outlines discussions with professionals in the field of dance – including teachers in higher education, scholars, and company directors – about the past, present, and future of tap and jazz dance in higher education. These individuals contribute esteemed evaluations of the importance of these dance forms in the professional and historical realms. All together this research data supports the argument to increase the presence of tap and jazz dance in higher education.

CHAPTER TWO

A HISTORICAL EXAMINATION OF THE SOCIETAL VIEWS ON DANCE IN THE UNITED STATES

The world exists innately in an imbalance. Resources and power have affected the development of civilizations throughout documented history. This inequity can be traced in politics, military power, and art - not in the quality of art, but in the perception and representation of different art forms. Because it is ultimately subjective, quantifying any art form is impossible; although it is practiced through the pricing of visual art pieces, tickets to performance arts, and the like. Even so, there remains an inherent subjectivity.

The imbalance in art is better observed through the lens of social patterns. Studying the ways in which different arts have been represented and celebrated and how different types of artists have been treated opens an interesting discussion that reveals history in a different sense. This chapter will examine the dichotomy of the development of ballet and modern dance versus jazz and tap dance, acknowledge the controversial history of the latter, further the discussion of art versus entertainment, and examine the lasting effects of society's influence on jazz and tap dance.

The evolution of ballet, modern, jazz, and tap dance are each as unique as the dance forms themselves. A plethora of literature exists detailing the developments of each of these art forms; thus, in order to avoid redundancy, overviews of their individual paths will be kept brief but include the most relevant points to this discussion.

Evolutions of the Dance Forms

The roots of what is today recognized as ballet, both classical and contemporary, developed directly from European court dances of the 16th and 17th centuries. Used as a display of grandeur and wealth, the movements in court dances bared little resemblance to the extremes of ballet today other than the erect carriage of the torso, turnout of the feet, and graceful quality of the gestures. These courtly spectacles were performed by noble amateurs. Opulent heavy costumes restricted movement. The goal was to glorify the state and impress spectators with their decorum and majesty, not to awe an audience with athletic agility and strength.[1]

As court ballet developed, emphasis was put on pantomime dances, which started including more acrobatic tricks more professionals were needed to perform roles in court ballets that were beneath the noblemen's dignity or beyond their capability. In 1661, ballet was introduced to the proscenium stage. This separated the audience from the performers both physically and psychologically. Also, the technical feats performed by dancers continuously developed.[2] That same year, King Louis XIV of France founded the *Academie Royale de Danse*, thus ensuring the future of ballet and taking a major step in the development and improvement of ballet instruction.[3]

Ballet gradually evolved from court ballet to ballet as we know it. In the 18th century, dancers and choreographers believed that dance should not just be visual spectacle, but it should convey meaning and tell a story. These types of ballets were

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[1] Selma Jeanne Cohen, Ed., *Dance as a Theatre Art* (Princeton Book Company, 1974) 7-8.

[2] Susan Au, *Ballet and Modern Dance* (New York, NY: Thames & Hudson, 2012), 17-18.

[3] Au, 24.

referred to as *ballet d'action*. In order to communicate the stories to the audiences, professional dancers were no longer wore masks but displayed emotions using facial expressions. Pierre-Jean Burette compared dance to other arts by calling it animated painting. Additionally, female dancers became the stars of the shows. These talented artists contributed to the changing landscapes of ballet. A brilliant technician, Camargo cut her skirt shorter to better show her intricate steps. In contrast, Marie Salle explored the dramatic potential of dance and became known for her emotional portrayals on stage.[4] Costumes were being made of lighter fabric and shoes were now flat to accommodate the enhanced physical demands of the steps.[5]

European touring companies were a catalyst for ballet coming to America. Styles of ballet developed through history were reflective of their social and cultural periods, and eventually blended with principles of modern dance into the new form of contemporary ballet. From its inception, ballet was institutionalized by the government. Originally wielded as a tool of governmental power, the form has always been embraced by the upper class.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, modern dance was developed by artists who found ballet too rigid for expression. Isadora Duncan diverted from tights, tutus, hair buns, and pointe shoes, and instead performed in loose fitting dresses with her hair down and bare legs and feet. She looked toward more pedestrian or primitive movement, such as running, skipping, and hopping, for her compositions and was deeply inspired by nature.

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[4]Au, 30-32.

[5] Au, 37.

Her new form of dance was not well received in the United States; however, she was hailed in Europe for her ingenuity and soulful dancing.[6] Another modern dance pioneer, Ruth St. Denis, looked to exotic countries and foreign cultures for inspiration. Her strongest influences came from India and Egypt. St. Denis incorporated movements, shapes, rhythms, and costumes from these alluring influences into her choreographic works and performances. Like Duncan, she was admired by artists and scholars when she went to Europe. Contrarily, she eventually returned to the United States and later opened a dance school in California with her partner Ted Shawn, who was also a dancer. Together they founded Denishawn in Los Angeles in 1915. It is at this school that many of the next generation of modern greats trained. Dancers such as Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, and Charles Weidman trained at the Denishawn school before going on to create their own modern dance techniques and masterful compositions, which are still revered today.[7]

Modern has evolved over the many years and pushed the boundaries of what "dance" is, testing audiences with performances of stillness, new soundscapes instead of music, and breaking the fourth wall, in other words acknowledging or interacting with the audience members. While all of these modern dancers were met with some degree of adversity for the dramatic risks that they took, they have each since been celebrated as great artists for their brilliance and contributions to dance.

Jazz and tap dance had similar paths – to each other, not ballet and modern dance – in their development since both are rooted in West African dance. In reality, the development of jazz and tap dance mirrors the story of American history. These dances are

[6] Au, 87-88.

[7] Au, 92-94.

the result of the blending of cultures, which was the product of settlements in the New World. As colonists from around the globe ventured to North America in search of riches and opportunity and then countries began bringing African slaves to the continent to increase their profits, cultures clashed in what is commonly referred to as the melting pot. The stage was set for the formation of new dance.

Prominent West African influence on jazz and tap dance include a grounded quality, bent knees, improvisation, community, polyrhythm, and the aesthetic of the cool or projection of a sense of ease and confidence in the movement.[8] The influence of Irish dance is particularly evident in tap dance. Jigs, hornpipes, and reels all emphasized the element of percussive sounds with the feet. Yet, it is the slave trade that ultimately led to the creation of jazz and tap dance. The relatively close quarters of white plantation owners and the African slaves resulted in a cross pollination of cultures as they eventually each began to imitate one another.[9] Furthermore, after the War of 1812, Americans desired to define their own culture. Riots began to break out at theatres as the average American population rebelled against the high society European style shows.[10] Performers turned to more ordinary settings and folk sources for material, featuring characters representing the common and less educated man. The result was blackface minstrel shows, the most prominent form of American entertainment for the majority of the nineteenth century.[11]

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[8] Marshall and Jean Stearns, *Jazz Dance* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994),14-15.

[9] Mark Knowles, *Tap Roots: The Early History of Tap Dancing* (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2002), 7-8.

[10] Knowles, 75-76.

[11] Lynne Fauley Emery, *Black Dance From 1619 to Today* (Hightstown, New Jersey: Princeton Book Company, 1988), 203.

Audiences were drawn to the theatricalized imitation of African American dances. When popular entertainment eventually shifted to vaudeville shows, vernacular African American dance still headlined the performances, and all the while the dance techniques continued to progress.

Jazz dance evolved primarily in the social dance scene in the early twentieth century, and this vernacular dance became extremely popular on the Broadway stage. Eventually, African rooted jazz dance blended with ballet technique and was further developed by Jack Cole, Matt Mattox, Gus Giordano, among others. It was not until the mid to late twentieth century that jazz dance moved from the Broadway and commercial stage to the concert dance stage. Jazz dance has since evolved into many new styles, such as musical theatre, lyrical, and jazz funk, even sparking a debate of what can truly be called jazz dance.

The clearest differentiation with tap dance is its focus on the percussive sound created with the feet. It is still a full-bodied dance form, yet tap dance requires a particular set of skills and has its own movement vocabulary. The fascinating and complex rhythms were developed on plantations during slavery and then in the backrooms of clubs and on the street. Tap dancers gathered in these areas to jam with one another constantly trying to outdo one another and therefore always pushing the boundaries of tap dance. This form was brought to the public in Minstrel and Vaudeville shows before making its way onto the Broadway stage and silver screen. Tap dance thrived in the big band and Hollywood movie musical era. However, with the rise of bebop music in the 1950s, music no longer left room for intricate taps that included a lot of sounds. The musicians were playing so many notes that tap dancers could no longer be heard. Despite the survival of the old masters,

there were sparse performance opportunities as pop culture shifted, and tap dance died out to the public eye.[12]

It was not until the 1970s and 80s that artists worked to essentially bring tap dance back to life by creating movie documentaries, festivals, and new stage shows that featured the dance. Most of the tap dance greats mentored individual students. These students who became the protégés of these various artists also played a vital role in the preservation of tap dance. This new generation of tap dancers served as the link between many of tap dance's most influential figures and the future of tap dance. Dancers such as Gregory Hines, Brenda Bufalino, and Savion Glover learned from some of tap dance's most esteemed artists. They diligently advocated for the slowly reviving art form and in doing so rose to fame. As tap dance continued to evolve, it too found its way to the concert stage, though significantly more infrequently than other dance forms.

[12] Mindy, Aloff, "Hot Eire," *New Republic*, June 1997.

Discussion of the Dichotomy

These colorful histories shaped each style of dance into their current forms. Each has celebrated artists and rises and falls through the years, but a closer look at the social climate surrounding these varied paths reveals a conflict that remains today.

During its drastic evolution from the court ballets of four hundred years ago to today's concert stage, ballet has almost always been regarded as a high art, in other words, having a higher value. Descended from the courts of kings and queens, a certain decorum has always surrounded ballet. This is not to say that no artist met any challenges. Controversial ballets such as *Afternoon of a Faun* choreographed by Vaslav Nijinsky in 1912, sparked great dispute among critics. At the time, the use of unique stylization that opposed much of the ballet aesthetic paired with a sensual ending prompted attacks from some critics.[13] However, as with any revolution, what began as controversial gradually became accepted, and ultimately this work is now celebrated as a transcendent ballet.

As discussed, this same phenomenon was prevalent in the development of modern dance. Choreographers challenged viewers with dance performances unlike any others they had witnessed. It is interesting to note two parallels here. Isadora Duncan's movement was based on pedestrian and primitive movements, the latter adjective has been used several times in history to describe African dance.[14] Additionally, Ruth St. Denis was inspired by exotic cultures from the east, even including Egypt on the African continent; however, the Egyptian people were considered to have built a great civilization, unlike their Western

[13] Au, 82-83.

[14] Au, 87-88.

African counterparts.[15] In the rise of modern dance, dancers stepped on stage with bare legs and feet, danced movement that practically contradicted ballet in every way and explored more raw emotional and psychological themes. At the forefront of its development, modern dancers were controversial compared to society's values. Modern dancers were viewed as radical. Yet, society eventually saw past this and began appreciating the form, and these artists were ultimately celebrated.

Meanwhile, artists in jazz and tap dance are often still treated as lower class citizens within the realm of dance. One cannot ignore the severe controversy surrounding their development. The blending of cultures that spawned these forms of dance was a result of enslaving a population of innocent people. During the crossing of the Atlantic, slaves were forced to dance on the ships in order to keep them in good health in hopes of being able to sell them for a higher price based on their physical strength. Anyone who did not dance lively enough was whipped.[16] Later, as African dance became the basis for minstrel shows, the white men imitated the movement in order to reap the benefits. Jacqui Malone describes in her book *Steppin' on the Blues*, "Soon hundreds of blackface minstrel performers were appropriating African American art forms and successfully crisscrossing the Atlantic to showcase their stolen goods."[17] These shows were also false advertisement. The white minstrel companies portrayed the character as a "contented slave," or as a slave who did not want freedom because he loved his masters; but, once black minstrel

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[15] Au, 92-94.

[16] Emery, 6-8.

[17] Jacqui Malone, *Steppin' on the Blues* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 52.

companies could perform, they portrayed this character with a cruel master who sold the slave's wife and children away.[18] However, even facing the cruelty that was so wrongfully dealt to them, African slaves danced together in joy. The interviews with former slaves that are archived in Lynne Fauley Emery's book *Black Dance From 1619 to Today* repeat over and over the excitement that surrounded Saturday night dances, Cake Walk competitions, and every chance they had to dance.[19] Dance served as a link to their past in Africa while also helping them to escape their present condition, even if only temporarily.

Another polarizing aspect of these art forms is the way in which they are taught. The first royal ballet academy was founded by King Louis XIV. Ballet has a rich tradition in codified techniques that all follow the basic same class structure. Modern techniques have been codified as well, such as Horton and Graham. Again, dancers trained in a school in a classroom setting to learn modern dance. Thus, the education systems of both ballet and modern dance were institutionalized relatively early in their development. Jazz and tap dance could not be more different in this regard. Learning these movements and steps was done on plantations and street corners and in clubs. For the first half century of the tap dance's development, no one learned the form by attending a lesson taught in a classroom by a teacher. Instead, he or she watched others and tried to imitate their movement. Although, in tap dance no one ever copied another's step exactly unless wishing for public humiliation as a dancer would immediately call him or her out. Renowned tap dancer Charles "Honi" Coles remembered, "I [didn't] know anyone who went to school to learn

[18] Emery, 196-198.

[19] Emery, 103-108.

show business or dancing. You learned it…as you were exposed to it."[20] Eventually both jazz and tap dance were taught in methodically planned lessons that took place in the structured setting of a dance studio, which continues as such today. Yet, this drastic difference of the original development of these styles likely contributes to society's lowbrow view of them.

Ultimately, horrible conditions and inhumane practices are part of what led to the birth of jazz and tap dance; however, this part of their history does not negate their validity as uniquely American art forms. This branding as lowbrow or lesser art has affected jazz and tap dance for many decades, and is a cry of frustration that still rings out today. *Jazz Dance* by Marshall and Jean Stearns has been described as the defining text on jazz dance history; however, even this volume does not acknowledge jazz dance as art. In *Dancing Many Drums*, editor Thomas DeFrantz challenges Stearns' book saying,

> "… their critical assumption that jazz dance can only be considered a 'vernacular' form threatens to overshadow the professional achievements of the artists they interview… Were the Stearnses conceptually opposed to the identification of consummate technique *within* these African-derived expressive idioms? If not, why do they end their volume with a prediction that 'art dance and vernacular dance will combine more and more effectively as time passes'? Why was it not possible to consider the dances of the African diaspora they chronicled in their book art?"[21]

This same concern is echoed by Malone in her text as she cites the article "Hearing Dance, Watching Film" and pleas, "… the dance historian and critic Sally Sommer points out that high-budget widely disseminated movies of the thirties and forties… not only exclude tap's true originators and innovators but it also convinced the American public that tap was

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[20] Malone, 28.

[21] Thomas F. DeFrantz, *Dancing Many Drums* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), 13.

not worthy of the respect given to more 'serious' dance forms like ballet and modern dance."[22]

In the realm of higher education, it is not terribly uncommon to hear something along the lines of "modern dance is treated like the ugly stepchild or a second-class citizen." Yet, at least it is part of the family or is considered a citizen. Jazz and tap dance rarely even get to enter the conversation. Many colleges have professors struggling to implement either dance form into their curriculum. True, some are succeeding, but even so this implementation is almost always met with a fight. Not all programs must include these styles in their curriculum. Simply, those that wish to, should not have to overcome mountainous obstacles to do so. Furthermore, students wishing to study jazz and/or tap dance in a university setting should not have to feel limited to a handful of options. Far fewer universities offer any jazz or tap dance classes, while almost every university with a dance major includes ballet and modern dance in the curriculum. Often, a program that offers these techniques only has one or two levels and seldom includes them in the class rotations. This neglect endangers the preservation of these forms of dance.

Continually, I personally have been met by others in the performing arts and academia with the argument that jazz and tap dance are "entertainment" and not "art." Again, art will always remain subjective. To be factual, entertainment is defined as "agreeable occupation of the mind; diversion; amusement,"[23] and art is defined as "the quality, production, expression, or realm, according to aesthetic principles, of what is

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[22] Malone, 115.

[23] "Entertainment," The American Heritage® Idioms Dictionary, 2002, https://www.dictionary.com/browse/entertainment?s=t.

beautiful, appealing, or of more than ordinary significance."[24] This solves nothing as the definition clearly points out "according to aesthetic principles." I would counter with this thought: To truly master the form of jazz dance or tap dance, there is no perfect formula, no one key to success. Rhythm can, usually, be taught. Strength can be built. Skills can be rehearsed. Yet, it takes years of practice and tremendous creativity to produce a beautiful piece of work in either form. Jazz and tap dance outline the history of a country and depict the resurrection of an entire population. To me, that is art.

[24] Art," The American Heritage® Idioms Dictionary, 2002, https://www.dictionary.com/browse/art?s=t.

CHAPTER THREE

A CASE STUDY ON TAP DANCE TRAINING FOR CLASSICAL DANCERS

Methodology

Volunteers from the University of Oklahoma School of Dance were recruited via an email sent by the Program Assistant to all School of Dance students. In this email, students were invited to participate in research about the benefits of rhythm tap dance training for classical ballet and modern dancers with the goal of the research being to identify ways in which training in tap dance technique can enhance the dance majors' overall dance abilities by learning skills in musicality, weight shifting, movement quality, etc.

Participation in the class required no official university registration in credit hours and no fees. Volunteers met with the principal investigator, who is also the author, for a rhythm tap dance technique class twice a week. Classes were taught by the principal investigator and met in the School of Musical Theatre's dance studio, which was kindly loaned to the principal investigator for this research. In Round One of the study that took place in the spring 2018 semester, each class was one hour and fifteen minutes long. This round was only able to last seven weeks and took place in the second half of the semester due to an injury sustained by the principal investigator in January. In Round Two of the study that took place in the Spring 2019 semester, each class was one hour long. This shortened class time was the result of fewer volunteers able to enroll in the study; thus, the same goals could be accomplished in a shorter amount of time.

In the first meeting of each round, volunteers signed the consent form and filled out a survey. This written survey collected information on previous dance training (styles, years studied, and age during training), current dance training, musical instrument and voice training, areas of strength and weakness in current dance ability, and ratings on a scale of zero to five on confidence in each of the following dance skills: coordination, weight shifting, fast footwork, ankle strength, musicality, understanding of rhythm, and style.

At the conclusion of class meetings – or in the case of Round Two, nine weeks into the training in order to collect data before the thesis defense – volunteers were interviewed individually by the principal investigator. These interviews consisted of nineteen scripted questions. Participants were asked about their motivation for taking part in the study, their experience in the study, any noticeable changes within their ballet and modern movement execution and abilities, whether or not skills learned in this study were helpful to their overall training and career paths, reasons for not taking a tap dance class before this study, opinions on ideas for a curriculum change to include tap dance requirements for dance majors, and future interests in tap dance. The interview also included a reminder to participates of their initial ratings of themselves in the individual dance skills listed above, asking how they would rate their confidence in those skills now, and the reason for the change or no change in those ratings. After completing all interviews, the principal investigator analyzed the data from the surveys, experience, and interviews to compose the discussion in this chapter.

In an ideal world, this study would have been replicated with participants taking a jazz dance class. However, with limited studio space and busy schedules, this was not

possible. The decision was made to devote focus to tap dance because firstly more universities include jazz dance than tap dance in their curricula, and secondly dancers and dance educators more easily make the connection of the benefits of jazz dance training because some types of jazz dance share a similar foundation as ballet.

The conduction of this case study and all of its components were approved by the University of Oklahoma Norman Campus Institutional Review Board. Approved documents include the recruitment email, consent form, survey, and interview questions, which can be found in Appendix A. Furthermore, definitions of tap dance and ballet vocabulary in this section can be found in the Dictionary in Appendix C.

Class Description

As with any new experience, participants on the first day of each round demonstrated both nervous and excited behavior. A majority of participants had never taken a tap dance class before and were unsure what to expect. I began by giving the participants the same four reminders that I give all of my tap dance students. First, students in a tap dance class must be aware that they are equally both musicians and dancers in the studio. We are not only responsible for the movement but also for the sounds and music we make with our feet. For this reason, we often count in fours (i.e. 1 2 3 4, 1 2…) in 4/4 time or threes (1, 2, 3, 1…) in 3/4 or 6/8 time instead of the traditional eights (i.e. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8, 1 2 …) or sixes that dancers use, because this is how musicians count their music. Second, tap dance is not codified the same way as ballet. It is a common occurrence for tap dancers from different regions or training backgrounds to have different names for some steps, for example a *Shirley Temple* versus a *Broadway* or a *closed third* versus a *slurp*. Participants were told to not be alarmed if I used a different term for a step than what they had heard before and were encouraged to share any other names they knew for any step. Additionally, special care and focus must be directed to how we approach the floor, including with what part of the shoe, how much force, and from where its initiated, all of which will be addressed throughout class. Finally, I informed them that I always push students to go one tempo faster than they are currently able to accomplish with clear sounds in order to progress towards faster footwork. Students should try not to be discouraged by this but instead remember it is building towards a long-term goal.

As mentioned in the methodology section, this was a rhythm tap dance class, as opposed to a Broadway tap dance class. Broadway tap dance is a style of tap that focuses

more on classical tap dance steps and use of stylized arms and body lines. Traditionally, women wear high-heeled tap shoes in Broadway tap dance, which affects the tone of the sounds and causes most of the work to be done on the balls of the feet. On the other hand, rhythm tap dance is traditionally done in Oxford tap shoes which have little to no high heel and thicker wooden soles. The different shape of the heel also means the size of the metal tap on the heel is much larger on an Oxford shoe than a high-heeled tap shoe. All of this results in darker or heavier sounds. Characteristics of rhythm tap dance include close-to-the-floor footwork, intricate shifts of weight between the heels and the balls of the feet, extremely complex rhythms and polyrhythms, and musical phrasing similar to jazz music such as carrying phrases over the musical bar. Of course, these two styles of tap dance do not exist completely independent of each other and are often blended.

The tap dance classes followed the common class structure for this form, beginning with a center warmup. The first part of this warmup involved using the different parts of the shoe to make sound, weight shifting, and coordination. The second part of the warmup drilled the basic tap vocabulary of *shuffles*, *scuffles*, and eventually *riffles*. Following the warmup, one or two center exercises were taught that introduced new vocabulary, practiced close-to-the-floor footwork, and/or challenged rhythm or coordination skills. The next portion of class consisted of exercises that moved across the floor, from one side of the studio to the other. This portion began with drills of tap vocabulary, progressed to turning steps, and ended with flash steps. Finally, class ended with a center combination blending various skills worked on in classes into one choreographed dance phrase. A list of the vocabulary covered in class can be found in the Dictionary in Appendix C.

Although there were three participants who did have tap dance experience, the curriculum and class content were designed for a student with no experience. At times, I gave options within an exercise to the experienced students that made the exercise slightly more difficult, for example a faster tempo or adding more sounds in order to challenge them. The first class meeting introduced participants to the parts of the shoe (toe/ball of the foot and heel) and various ways in which to use them to create sounds, including *toe drops*, *heel drops*, *heel digs*, *tips*, *toe heels*, *heel toes*, and *crawls*. Students were also introduced to basic tap dance vocabulary including *shuffle*, *cramproll*, and *flap*. Because the class was designed for absolute beginners, the first few class meetings did not include a final center combination. Participants needed to learn the basic skills and vocabulary before combining steps into an elongated center phrase.

As with any dance class, participants built skills over time, and a variety of specific skills were refined in class. Rhythm is an innately essential component of tap dance and was discussed in depth in a variety of ways. Early on in each round, we discussed the different types of notes we were playing with our feet when changing the amount of sounds produced in each bar of music. A bar of music is a segment of music that holds a specific number of beats. For example, 4/4 time means that one bar of music equals four beats, which equates to four quarter notes. When a tap dancer is tapping at tempo, there is one sound for each beat in the bar. In 4/4 time, this means four sounds per bar, which indicates the dancer is playing quarter notes. The sounds are counted 1 2 3 4. If a tap dancer doubles the amount of sounds in the bar or in other words taps double time, this means there are twice as many sounds in one bar or in the same amount of time. Now, there are eight sounds in one bar. In 4/4 time, this would be eighth notes, which are

counted 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &. Note that the counting begins with the first downbeat or strong beat. In other words, counting begins on the first note of the bar, 1. This is instead of starting the counting with the '&' before the 1, which would be & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4. If a tap dancer again doubles the amount of sounds in a bar, there are now sixteen sounds in one bar. In 4/4 time, this would be sixteenth notes, which are counted 1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a. In order to understand this concept, participants were asked at times how to count a step. This question was followed up by asking what types of notes were being played. For example, when doing a *paradiddle* exercise – a tap step consisting of four sounds – participants were asked how to count the *paradiddle* with the music. A participant answered, "1 e & a." The participant was then asked what kind of notes she was playing, and she correctly answered with sixteenth notes.

Another musical concept explored was straight rhythms versus swung rhythms. This principle also refers to subdivision of the beat in music. In this case in 4/4 time, there are eight sounds per bar. Whether a rhythm is straight or swung is determined by proximity of the notes to each other within the bar. Consider the below illustration in which each character represents a sound or a note:

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

1 a 2 a 3 a 4 a

In the first line, there is equal space between each sound; the '&' is placed exactly halfway between each number or beat. However, in the second line, the 'a' is placed far away from the beat before it and very close to the beat after it. There is the same amount of sounds in each example, yet each rhythm is very different from the other because of the proximity of the sounds to each other. The first line presents a steady or straight rhythm, such as

military troops marching in unison or the clicks of a metronome. There is an equal amount of silence between each sound. The second line presents a swung rhythm with a long and then a short silence or break between each sound. This rhythm calls to mind a pendulum swinging with a long suspension at the top of each swing and a short pass through the bottom of each swing. This concept was discussed with participants with visual aids and then practiced with tap dance vocabulary. Participants practiced alternating between straight and swung rhythms using two and four sound tap steps, such as *toe heels*, *shuffles*, and *paradiddles*. Participants danced two bars of a straight rhythm followed by two bars of a swung rhythm and repeated this twice through for each step.

Participants also were asked to shade their sounds in class. In tap dance, shading simply refers to the volume of a sound. A dark sound is loud, and a light sound is quiet, plus every shade of gray in between. This skill requires mastering control of the force used when hitting the floor with any part of the shoe. Even without changing the force, different parts of the shoe produce different shades automatically. Using the bottom of the heel of the shoe produces a darker sound than using the flat part of the toe tap on the ball of the foot, which produces a lighter sound. The heel is commonly referred to as a bass note, and the toe is commonly referred to as the treble. Additionally, using the back edge of the heel by striking it into the floor using a digging motion produces a sound lighter than using the flat portion of the heel but still darker than ball of the foot. Endless variations are possible using the tip of the toe, inside edge of the whole foot, outside edge of the whole foot, outside edge of only the heel, etc.

A practice exercise for shading included continuously doing *flaps* and changing how many were dark and how many were light. For example, the simplest structure starts

with one dark or loud *flap* followed by seven light or quiet *flaps*. Then two dark *flaps* followed by six light *flaps*; then three dark *flaps* followed by five light *flaps*. This progresses until reaching seven dark *flaps* followed by one light *flap*. Finally, the exercise is continued with seven dark *flaps* and one light *flap* and regresses back to one dark *flap*. This exercise was done as a group, but then each participant was asked to perform a short portion of it individually in order to be able to hear her feet. For each participant, the most difficult part of the exercise was the first light or quiet *flap* no matter how many dark *flaps* preceded it.

In addition to working these particular skills, participants also learned a piece of traditional American tap dance repertoire, the "Shim Sham Shimmy," also known as the shim sham. The shim sham is a tap dance routine that was choreographed in the late 1920s/early 1930s. While the date range is confirmed, the exact choreographer remains disputed. Historians commonly cite tap dancer Leonard Reed as the choreographer, who claimed late in his life to have put together this iconic routine. However, there are discrepancies as to whether he choreographed it on his own or with the help of this dance partner Willie Bryant. Yet, some other accounts include the famous Whitman Sisters as contributing artists. Complicated history aside, the shim sham is hailed as tap dance's national anthem. While the decades of being passed from dancer to dancer has resulted in slight variations of the specifics of the steps – again, tap dance is not codified – the structure and general rhythm is consistent across different versions.[25]

[25] Constance Valis Hill, *Tap Dancing America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 80.

The shim sham is a thirty-two bar chorus comprised of four steps – the shim sham, the crossover step, the tack Annie, and the half break. The first three steps follow the traditional three-and-a-break structure in which one two-bar step is done three times and then followed by a different two-bar step, or break; and the last step is one two-bar step and one two-bar break that are done twice. Since this routine was designed as a finale for a show, the shim sham is still traditionally performed at the end of tap dance performances. More often than not, any audience members who know the shim sham are invited on stage to participate. I personally have participated in the shim sham at the end of shows in St. Louis, Chicago, New York City, and Vienna, Austria. The shim sham knows no borders or language barriers rightfully earning its title as the national anthem of tap. As such, I make a point to teach all of my tap students the shim sham, and the participants in this case study were no exception. Learning the shim sham tied participants in this study to the remarkable history of tap dance while still gaining important movement and musical skills.

During each round of this case study, similar corrections occurred for participants. The most frequent corrections were to loosen ankles, allow the torso to lean forward, relax the body, and varied musical corrections for rhythmic inaccuracies. In tap dance, often the ankles need to be relaxed rather than pointed or flexed in order to achieve clear sounds and be able to do steps quickly. This is a rather foreign sensation for ballet and modern dancers who are almost always instructed to point or flex the foot and ankle. Relaxation in the ankle was achieved over time, and as this got better, participants were also able to hear a difference in the tone of the sounds they were creating.

Another characteristic ballet and modern dancers have in common is their postures. Non-dancers often state that they can recognize dancers in pedestrian settings simply from

their upright postures. As in any dance form, proper alignment of the body is crucial in ballet and modern dance. Dancers in ballet and modern class are trained to place their ears over their shoulders, shoulders over the front of the hips, hips over the knees, and knees over the ankles. This body alignment allows dancer to properly and safely execute movements in the ballet and modern vocabulary. The same alignment is taught in jazz dance classes; however, jazz dance stylization often isolates the head, shoulder, ribs, or hip, and therefore throws the body out of this strict alignment.

In tap dance, a generally relaxed body better aids the movement vocabulary. Of course, tap dancers are not trained to be rag dolls with the body chaotically flailing, but in order to achieve certain steps and tones and avoid injury, dancers must find a state of relaxation. For example, *toe drops* are a step in which the toe is lifted off the floor while the heel remains on the floor, and then the ball of the foot is dropped or pushed back to the floor to return to a flat foot; this can be done standing on two feet or one foot. While it is technically anatomically possible to do this with the shoulders and hips stacked, the sound would be quiet, the tone would be flat, and the knees would be forced to absorb a detrimental amount of shock, especially as this step is repeated. The safer and more successful alignment for this step requires bent knees, hips pushed slightly back, and shoulders forward or the torso leaning forward. This produces a louder and more resonant sound, better dissipates the shock absorbed from the force on the floor, and allows the dancer to repeat the step many more times before fatiguing.

Furthermore, ballet and modern dancers usually focus on keeping all of the muscles to support their alignment tightly engaged, whereas in a tap dance aesthetic, with perhaps the exception of military and Broadway tap styles, dancers should maintain a relaxed upper

body as much as possible. This allows the movement in the torso to better aid or support the sounds being produced by the feet as well as leaves a freedom of individual expression in the upper body which could also be shaped by the choreographer to add style, dynamics, and accents to the dancing.

Lastly, the musicality and rhythms in tap dance require much more precision than in ballet or modern dance. In the latter, full bodied movements require more time and usually the most that a beat is subdivided is by two (1 & 2 & 3 &…). Meanwhile in tap dance, the sound must be produced exactly where it belongs within the beat, which is frequently subdivided by six (1 I e A & a 2 I e A & a…) if not more. It is most natural to place a sound on the beat, in other words on the count or the number, but it must be exactly on that beat. A dancer cannot hit the floor slightly before the intended beat or just after it, or a trained ear will hear the mistake. Even audience members with no tap dance training have heard enough music to discern when the sounds are off the music. This becomes even more complicated with syncopation, or an accent that is placed on a weak beat, such as the '&' instead of the 1. Syncopation is exciting because it deviates from the natural emphasis of the rhythm; at the same time, it can be challenging for classically trained dancers because it differs from the natural rhythms they have been dancing throughout their training. Many participants struggled with syncopation. Often, they understood where the sound was supposed to happen but struggled to make their bodies do it.

Likewise, the way in which tap dancers begin a musical phrase or phrase of movement is often different than ballet and modern dancers. Traditionally, ballet and modern dancers "count in" a phrase 5 6 7 8 and then begin moving on the 1; sometimes they begin on the subdivision between 8 and 1 beginning on the '&.' In tap dance, this

often shifts. For example, if a phrase starts with a *flap* – a two sound step consisting of a forward brush of the ball of the foot and then stepping on the ball of the foot – often choreographers prefer the louder sound to fall on the downbeat, which is the step or second sound of a *flap*. This requires the dancers to begin on the '&' or 'a' before the 1 – depending on whether the rhythm is straight or swung. This practice goes against what is naturally ingrained in classical dancers' bodies and poses the same challenge as syncopation.

Similarly, it is common in tap dance for phrases to start on the pickup, or the beat before the first downbeat of the first bar. In 4/4 time this would be the 4 of the bar before the first full bar of the dance phrase. This phrase would be "counted in" 1 2 3 and movement would begin on the 4. An example of this can be found in three of the steps of the shim sham – the shim sham, crossover, and half break. Participants often were not ready to start on the 4, and we would have to restart the whole phrase in order to begin correctly. Despite these musicality nuances being different from what is most often practiced in ballet or modern dance, these skills help tremendously to train dancers' ears to better understand the musicality within any form of dance.

Throughout all of this hard work, the atmosphere in the dance studio was upbeat, fun, and happy. Laughter often broke out from individuals and the entire class. And though curse words were uttered more than once out of frustration, the mood never darkened; rather, whoever did so almost always immediately laughed at herself for this slip up and continued the exercise. There was considerable comradery among the group in each round as participants regularly vocally supported each other when asked to perform a step or a phrase one at a time and always acknowledged one another's improvements. Even with

varied levels of experience in the room, the nervous energies from the first meeting quickly evaporated at participants discovered the music, challenges, and joy of tap dance.

Participant Responses

During the IRB review process, there was discussion on whether the concluding interviews with class participants should be conducted by the principal investigator or a third impartial party. The IRB staff member, thesis committee, and principal investigator agreed the best option was for the principal investigator to conduct the interviews for two reasons. First, she would be able to ask the most appropriate follow-up or clarification questions. Second, the relationship between the principal investigator and participants was one of enough mutual respect and trust that there was little to no concern of biased answers. The principal investigator also reminded each participant before the interview that she wished for them to give honest answers and not simply what she hoped to hear, because a dishonest answer would negate the findings.

There were seven participants who completed the study in its entirety. All of these individuals were female students at the University of Oklahoma. Four participants had no experience in tap dance before enrolling in this study; all participants had at least four years of training in ballet dance. Additionally, four participants had some type of previous musical training, either playing an instrument or voice lessons, for three or more years.

The most common reasons for participation were never taking a tap dance class before or loving tap dance but not having been able to take it during college. Participants also mentioned that they were interested in tap dance or that it looked fun. Participant A stated that she was curious to see how it would affect her dancing and believes versatility as a dancer is extremely important. A couple of participants expressed that they felt this was a comfortable environment in which to try to learn something new since they would be surrounded by peers who also would be new to the experience.

Besides learning basic tap dance vocabulary or skills, multiple participants stated that they had hoped to gain a better sense of rhythm and musicality from tap dance. Participant B mentioned being aware that she was often behind the music in ballet or modern class and hoped this class would help. Dancers who had previously taken tap dance classes expressed the wish to regain their previous skills while learning new ones. Participant G stated, "Especially since I am going into the dance field, I feel like I should know more about every form of dance," while Participant F defined her short-term goal as being able to go into a dance class and have fun and her long-term goal as understanding the basic mechanics of tap dance. All participants stated that at the end of the study these expectations had been met.

Of the participants that had taken tap dance classes before this study, all of them stated that this class was quite different from their previous experiences for a variety of reasons. Participant C had grown up at a competition dance studio and stated that previously her tap dance classes had been about trying to catch up with the more advanced dancers around her and included a lot of flashy steps. She appreciated that the class in this study broke down the fundamentals of rhythm and weight shift to build a more solid foundation. Participant D had been mostly taught by her peers growing up, meaning that when she was thirteen, other thirteen-year-olds from the same school were teaching her class. Meanwhile, Participant G had taken a combination jazz and tap dance class in college (at another university), but the tap portion was only during the last two weeks of the semester and aimed towards the advanced students. Furthermore, shoes were not required, so she took this tap dance class barefoot.

Participants expressed a variety of experiences during the first few class meetings, including feelings of nervousness, uncertainty, and frustration. Participant F, who was brand new to tap dance, expressed that she had been very nervous, but the first few classes were simple enough to wrap her head around the material and proved to be very informative, which she found to be extremely helpful moving forward. Participant E, who had many years of previous experience, described being more challenged than she had anticipated; she clarified that this was a result of the demand of specific detail and rhythmical accuracy, which she had not experienced to such a degree in her previous training. Similarly, a few participants discussed the amount of mental focus required in tap dance – even at a beginner level – that differs from ballet and modern dance. Participant G stated, "You have to be so high focused to learn everything and absorb as much as you can… Being able to focus in was hard, but I felt very rewarded every time after because I would find myself at home wanting to review, which I never would have thought would happen." Participant A explained that the different nature of body mechanics made the first few classes difficult; she specified that allowing her weight to be in her heels, maintaining bent knees, and releasing tension in her ankles were all challenging. Overall, participants expressed feeling rewarded in the last few class sessions for making considerable progress in a few weeks. Participants stated that of the skills they felt they had not mastered, such as weight shift, they at least better understood the skills and believed they could master them with more time.

When asked to revisit their rankings in specific dance skills, participants had a variety of answers for each area. The dance skills included were coordination, weight shifting, fast footwork (i.e. *dégagé*, *frappé*, *petite allégro*, etc.), ankle strength, musicality,

understanding of rhythm (i.e. beat subdivision, straight vs. swung, counterpoint, syncopation, etc.), and style. For the purpose of this study, musicality refers to the ability to embody the music in one's dancing with attention to phrasing, timing, and dynamics, while understanding of rhythm refers to the intellectual understanding of various rhythmic principles and the ability to apply this knowledge to one's dancing and movement. Averages for point changes in each skill were calculated by taking the difference on the scale for each participate (which ranged 0 to 2 including decimals), adding them together, and dividing by seven. For example, if a participant ranked herself in a skill as a 2 on the introductory survey and then changed her rank to a 4 in the concluding interview, the difference was 2. If the other six participants rank themselves in that skill beginning to ending as 1-3, 2-3, 3-3, 3-4.5, 2-3, and 3-4, their differences would be 2, 1, 0, 1.5, 1, and 1. I would then add all seven differences to total 8.5. Finally, I would divide that total by 7 and round to the nearest thousandth to arrive at an average change of 1.214.

The area with the least amount of change noticed by participants was coordination. Three participants stated they had no noticeable changes, and the other participants noted a difference of .25 to 1.5 points with an average of 0.357 points change. This may be in part due to the fact that the class work focused on learning the mechanics of the lower body before adding any specific arm movements. Since each round was cut short due to injury of the principal investigator and the thesis defense, students would have been given more work that included specificity with the arms as well as the feet with more time. However; there still could have been little change.

Participants noted similar amounts of change for both musicality and style, averaging 0.607 points and 0.679 points of change respectively. In musicality, two

participants did not see notable change, and most participants increased one point. Participant B stated that she found herself listening to the music more intently in all of her classes, rather than just following the tempo. In style, three participants observed no notable change, while the change for remaining participants ranged from .25 points to 2 points. Participant G explained that she recognized a tendency to curl into herself while dancing, has become significantly more aware of when this happens, and is trying to correct herself. Participant A had a unique experience in regards to style explaining,

> I feel like I've always had the ability to dance and enjoy movement in ballet, but what's different is that there's something about tap with use of rhythm and the intricacies of the steps that makes it more exciting to me, and I feel like that has improved my style because it's given me a little bit of joy.
>
> I've found that I really enjoyed this, and I feel like it's crossed over into ballet, because I'm finding things in tap that we're doing – whether it be rhythmically or stylistically or whatever it is – that I think, "Oh, well this could also apply to ballet." It brings another level to what I'm doing – an ability for me to approach ballet in a different way instead of waiting for someone at the front of the room to tell me what I should be doing. That's why I like doing other styles of movement, because it opens your eyes to other ways of moving.

She went on to give examples of being more precise and playing with her timing in exercises like *tendus* and finding joy in movements that can seem repetitive in ballet.

Weight shift had the median amount of change with an average of 0.75 points. All but one participant noticed measurable change in this area. Participant E ranked her confidence in this ability equally but noted that she has a better understanding of this skill now. Participant C also said that from class discussions she now understands the cause and effect of how she shifts her weight rather than just doing what she is told. Participant B stated, "I have definitely used skills that I've learned from [this class] in my other dancing like being able to be more grounded and use your whole foot."

Understanding of rhythm and ankle strength had similar ranges of improvement with the average change being 0.929 points and 0.964 points respectively. When discussing rhythm, three participants exclaimed that starting a movement phrase on count 4, or the pickup, rather than on count 1 was an entirely new experience for them and very difficult. Participant B specified that she could hear and was surprised by how much this affected the rhythm and musicality of the whole phrase. Several participants echoed that the mental understanding of complex rhythms and physicalizing them were two completely different tasks, and all of them noted that physicalizing the rhythm was very challenging.

The amount of notable change in ankle strength was not anticipated. Participants mentioned two main types of tap dance exercises that they felt enhanced their ankle strength. The first was an exercise that involved standing on one leg for a long period of time while regularly shifting the weight on the supporting leg as the foot off the floor performed various steps, and the second involved changing the part of the shoe they hit the floor with first, which required great control of allowing the ankle to flex or relax. Participant B noted that this type of work enhanced her awareness of where her ankle is in space during ballet class. A few participants noticed that their stamina to balance increased. Also, Participant A explained that the control of making the ankle flex or relax has helped her become more fluid in her balance because rather than simply gripping all of her muscles, she allows her ankle to relax and move as needed, which has made her balances more stable.

Finally, fast footwork proved to have the greatest amount of notable change in participants with an average change in points of 1.036. Several participants noted improvement in their *petite allegro* exercises in ballet, which will be discussed more in

depth below. Participant A explained that she believed she improved in this area because she has a better understanding that the goal is not just to move quickly but to use of accents and be precise, which are both skills that were worked on in the tap class. Participant G explained that the mental focus required to learn tap dance steps and rhythms translated to learning exercises in ballet in modern that are fast with intricate footwork, which became easier after studying tap dance.

Participants noticed a wide variety of effects in their ballet and modern classes after this study. A common improvement included musicality and rhythm, which participants expressed in different ways. Participant B, who had mentioned a tendency to be behind the music, found herself to be in time with the music in ballet after studying tap dance; she also expressed an enhanced awareness of what her feet were doing in class, including sensibility of where her toes, heels, and ankles are in space. Participant F passionately stated improvement with her *petite allégro* in ballet class. She also expressed that part of the trouble was that she had not realized she could find ways to work on skills for *petite allégro* outside of ballet class but that tap dance had seemingly caused a noticeable progression in this exercise during her last semester at college. Participants A and E echoed an improvement in *petite allégro*. Participant A explained that tap dance forced her to be able to relax her ankles in order to achieve certain steps. She said that this allowed her to be able to find a relaxation in her *plié* during *petite allégro* rather than constantly gripping the ankles, and that this has helped her be more successful during these exercises. Meanwhile, Participant E discussed feeling a different type of muscularity in the feet and ankles in tap dance class, and that with tap working different muscles in her feet, she found this strengthened her lower legs to be able to complete small jumps such as in *petite*

allégro. Participant A said that she also noticed an enhanced ability to learn counts, combinations, and choreography faster after the experience of picking up intricate tap dance steps that move much more quickly. Also noted were ankle strength, balance, and weight shifting particularly in modern dance class. While there are too many other variables in the participants' regular training to state outright that this must be because of the tap dance class, every participant said that they believed the changes they noticed in the other techniques were at least partially an effect of the tap dance training.

Furthermore, every participant passionately agreed that tap dance training would have been beneficial earlier in their college careers. Several again referred to *petite allégro*, fast footwork, and musicality in saying they would have been able to grow more in these areas within their ballet and modern classes if they had had tap training earlier and/or longer. Participants A and G each referred to the mental focus and attention to detail that were developed in the tap dance class and were beneficial in other dance forms.

All participants also believed that the skills gained in the tap dance class would be helpful as they pursued careers in dance. Participant F stated,

> I feel like not only the intricacies that I am connecting with *petite allégro* but also the attention to the music, rhythms, where the downbeat is, where the accents are, fitting a certain number of moves into one beat or however many measures, just all of that awareness will definitely help me moving forward in picking up choreography and teaching.

Similarly, Participant G spoke of her aspirations to dance on a cruise ship; she explained that recently the director at an audition had stressed that they learn a lot of material in a short amount of time and must be able to retain all of the information. This participant believed that the focus and attention to detail developed in tap dance class would help tremendously in such an endeavor. She went on to relate this to concert dance stating that

any dancer learning a lot of repertoire, understudying several roles, or working as a swing would benefit from tap dance as well. Participant E expressed frustration in seeing tap dance as "such a beneficial style that gets pushed under the rug so much."

Both Participants A and B reflected on the increased marketability as a teacher if she is able to teach even only basic or beginner tap dance classes. Participant A explained that in a search for a teaching position at a dance studio, most owners have asked her to teach a creative movement type class for young children that includes both ballet and tap dance. Participant B spoke about an experience her mother, who was not a tap dance specialist but knew the basics, had when trying to get a job as a dance teacher. A dance studio whose owner was desperate for a tap dance teacher hired this woman simply because she could teach the lower level basics, which is a common occurrence in the private dance sector. This participant also expressed tap dance's influence on her own choreography. She explained that one section of her capstone choreography involved expressing a connection to the earth, so she incorporated flat footed steps and stomping. However, her dancers, who were all ballet majors, struggled to do this type of work. The participant said she was constantly urging the dancers to "stomp as if you had shoes on or wanted to make a sound with it," and yet they kept "placing" their feet rather than using their whole foot into the ground. In reference to a performing career, Participant A described the changing landscape in the world of professional ballet. She specifically mentioned three recent instances of tap dance presented by ballet dancers: a performance at Southern Methodist University with a guest choreographer from Broadway who created a ballet work with a tap dance section in the middle of it, Christopher Wheeldon's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in which the role of the Mad Hatter tap dances throughout the

show, and tap dance artist Michelle Dorrance's recent set of works with the American Ballet Theatre. She described seeing tap dance's influence in ballet saying,

> Even if it's not using tap shoes within the choreography, it's the use of rhythm and the floor. I think that's a big thing that's happening within not only ballet but also contemporary or modern dance companies… I think [tap dance] is coming into choreography a lot and is a useful tool for any dancer to have in their belt…
>
> Experiencing the guest choreographers we've had, watching dance, staying up to date on the dance world…I think versatility within especially ballet has been underestimated, and it's coming to the surface now how much it's valued.

The participants had a variety of career goals including concert dance, cruise ships, and teaching, yet each found their experience studying tap dance beneficial.

Similarly, all participants firmly believed a tap dance class would help other students in the School of Dance. Various participants again brought up mental focus and musicality as well as confidence. Participant B expressed that she often sees tall dancers who have difficulty moving fast, but in tap dance "you can't be late, not an option" and that this could help them learn to move quickly. She also expressed that tap dance could help students find a "fiery energy" which she feels is lacking.

Tap dance classes are offered regularly at the University of Oklahoma in the School of Musical Theatre, which is separate from the School of Dance. All levels of tap dance are offered including beginner, but tap dance class credits do not count towards any degree requirements for dance majors. When participants were asked why they had not previously taken a tap dance class, almost every one said scheduling was part of the problem. The beginner tap dance classes almost always overlap with ballet or modern technique classes, and even if they do not, the dancers have such busy schedules that they were unsure they would have time for the class. Most participants also stated that if they had been advised into taking a tap dance class that they would have, but the tap classes available had never

been mentioned or suggested by their advisors. Sentiments were echoed in several interviews that it would be beneficial if advisors encouraged tap dance classes or mentioned that they were offered so it would at least put tap dance on students' radars.

Participants were also enthusiastic about the suggestion of a curriculum change to require all dance majors to take at least one tap dance class. Participant B expressed understanding that the cost of shoes may be a concern but stressed that tap shoes are the same price as or cheaper than pointe shoes and last much longer if not forever. All participants expressed feelings that tap dance should be something every dancer experiences at least once. Participant E pointed out the irony that musical theatre majors are required to take a larger variety of dance forms – ballet, modern, jazz, and tap dance – than dance majors, whose minimum requirement is ballet and modern dance. Additionally, participants A and F suggested that if tap dance was not specifically required, to offer it as an option towards the degree. They stated it could be listed as an option towards a requirement such as taking one course in either tap or jazz dance in the same way the dance majors' production requirement gives options of stagecraft, lighting, or costuming. All participants agreed that since the credits could not count towards degree requirements, dance majors were extremely unlikely to ever enroll in a tap dance class.

Finally, all participants agreed that they would be interested in continuing to train in tap dance at the University of Oklahoma or elsewhere. Several participants expressed concern finding a tap class with people similar to their age and at the appropriate level, but they stated that if it would be like the experience in this case study that they would be very interested.

Case Study Conclusion

Naturally, every participant in this case study had a unique experience. Students came from a variety of music tap dance backgrounds, but with similar training since attending the University of Oklahoma. The most common effects experienced by participants included enhanced awareness and sense of musicality, rhythm, and weight shift; increased ankle strength; more ease with fast footwork; stronger mental focus; quicker ability to learn material; and joy in dance.

Every participant emphatically wished for their peers to have the same training opportunity because they saw improvement in all of their dancing and believe the skills gained from this class will aid them in their diverse career pursuits. The participants were also enthusiastic about the idea of a curriculum change requiring a tap dance class for all dance majors or offering it as an option for a requirement category. Some stated honestly that before this case study they may have been slightly hesitant but the experience from this tap dance class would have changed their minds. Overall, the principal investigator and the participants all enjoyed the process and had fun, which is sometimes difficult to do in other dance forms. Joy is somehow omnipresent in tap dance, and this case study was no exception.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTERVIEWS WITH DANCE PROFESSIONALS ON TAP AND JAZZ DANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In order to gain perspectives and insight from professionals in the field of dance, I conducted four interviews with an assortment of dance educators and performers. Potential participants were contacted via an email sent by the principal investigator. After receiving a response, either a face-to-face or phone interview was scheduled.

Four individuals were contacted, and all volunteered to take part in the study. These participants come from a variety of backgrounds, and all of them are engaged in teaching and/or performing tap and/or jazz dance. Participants include Amanda Clark, Professor and Dance Program Coordinator at Western Kentucky University; Hollie Wright, Jazz Chair at The Ailey School; Margaret Morrison, Lecturer at Barnard College and Education Advisor at the American Tap Dance Foundation; and Michelle Dorrance, Artistic Director of Dorrance Dance and MacArthur Fellow. These interviews took place during the 2018-2019 academic year. Each interview lasted about one hour and was recorded by the principal investigator.

The conduction of these interviews and all of the components are approved by the University of Oklahoma Norman Campus Institutional Review Board. Approved documents included the recruitment email, consent form, and interview questions, which can be found in Appendix B.

Amanda Clark

Professor of Dance and Dance Program Coordinator at Western Kentucky University

Amanda Clark received her BPA in Dance Performance at Oklahoma City University and went on to earn her MFA in Dance from the University of Oklahoma. She is now a Professor of Dance and the Dance Program Coordinator at Western Kentucky University (WKU), where she has taught for fourteen years. Clark has taught all levels of jazz and tap dance technique, Dance Appreciation, Choreography, Dance Pedagogy, Tap Dance Pedagogy, and Jazz Dance Pedagogy. She is also Artistic Director of the WKU Dance Company and has presented choreography nationally, internationally, and at a variety of dance festivals including the Big Apple Tap Festival and Jazz Dance World Congress.

When Clark began at WKU, the department offered a BFA in Performing Arts with a Dance Concentration and dance minor, had two full-time dance faculty, and taught dance classes in ballet, jazz, and tap dance. In a span of three years, the Dance Program deleted the BFA in Performing Arts with a Dance Concentration, implemented a BA in Dance, hired a third full-time dance faculty, and began offering modern dance classes. Students pursuing the BA were required to reach the highest level of technique class in ballet or jazz and an intermediate level in a secondary dance form. At that time, WKU offered six levels of ballet and jazz dance technique and four levels of modern and tap dance. The number of levels of technique offered for each dance form has changed over the years, but starting in Fall 2019, WKU will offer four levels of technique in each of the four dance forms – ballet, jazz, modern, and tap dance. Clark explained, "[This] creat[es] a more equal playing field within the program. I also believe this demonstrates to students, and the general

public, that we view each of the four dance genres as equals and important to the successful preparation of a well-rounded dancer."[26] All dance majors are required to take a minimum number of credit hours in each dance form, so all dance majors experience each of the four forms offered in the Dance Program. Additionally, the two mainstage dance concerts presented each academic school year include all four forms of dance.

The WKU Dance Program's motto is "Creating Thinking Artists." In addition to technique classes and performances, students are encouraged to engage in research and creative activity. Many students have completed an undergraduate honors thesis project in dance. Even more students and close to equal have received Faculty-Undergraduate Student Engagement grants to complete original research projects and present findings at an annual research conference. Students have completed research projects in all four dance forms at WKU. Clark emphasized, "There are equal opportunities for students to train in the technique, craft artistic compositions, and produce scholarly research in any of the four dance genres. Faculty are equally supportive of the students' training and creative efforts in each genre."[27]

When asked about obstacles she has encountered, Clark expressed that she felt fortunate to be in an environment that has always supported jazz and tap dance. She mentioned that it had been difficult to incorporate consistent tap classes into the program. She explained that due to a small faculty, other dance genres and theory courses had had to be prioritized in their workloads, but now, she is able to maintain a continuing rotation of tap courses. During her tenure at WKU, Clark said the value of the jazz program has

[26] Amanda Clark, interview by author, Bowling Green, April 14, 2019.

[27] Clark, interview by author.

remained strong, and the value of the tap program is increased. She has been able to take students to festivals to perform and train with master teachers and mentored research and creative activity in tap dance. She asserted her strong belief in the importance of these activities stating, "These factors, along with consistently incorporating tap dance into all of our main stage dance concerts, has helped increase awareness of the art form and generated interest in tap dance."[28]

Clark is a strong advocate for the inclusion of jazz and tap dance in higher education. She believes there is much that the university system can do to preserve and progress these art forms and explained that the circumstances for each are slightly different. For jazz dance, she thinks there are enough artists and opportunities in the professional realm of dance to help the art form continue, but she stressed that universities need to do more to preserve the root of jazz dance by offering education in the vernacular movements and awareness of authentic jazz dance as opposed to contemporary trends. She elaborated, "Universities need to provide opportunities for students to study in a myriad of jazz dance styles and increase their historical understanding of the developments in jazz dance and the depth of vocabulary that the genre encompasses."[29] She also spoke to the dance studio trend of competition dance and how this does not properly prepare dancers who are serious about entering the professional world:

> Professional employment opportunities that utilize the jazz dance genre rarely feature the tricks and trends of competition jazz. They are looking for dancers that have a more mature understanding of the art form and demonstrate style and

[28] Clark, interview by author.

[29] Clark, interview by author.

training. This is where universities can help dancers make the transition within their jazz dance training.[30]

As for tap dance, Clark said that most students come to college with the notion that they will only encounter tap dance if they want to sing on Broadway and are unaware that professional tap dance companies even exist. She acknowledges that the nature and tradition of tap dance is for information to be passed down by the tap masters and that this will always be required; however, she believes universities can help preserve tap dance by offering tap classes and discussing the historical aspects of the dance. Additionally, Clark discussed that tap dance is intended for everyone, and she has seen many non-majors take a tap dance class and discover a love for the art form.

Not only do these art forms rightfully deserve a place in university programs, but they also greatly enhance dancer's overall skills. Since all students are required to take all four dance forms at WKU, Clark has seen how this affects dancer's abilities and artistry across the board. Jazz dance training has increased dancers' abilities to coordinate their bodies into sequences of isolation and helped dancers identify and better execute dynamics within their movement. Clark also said, "Jazz training helps our students who have trained primarily in ballet to find a different strength within their movement, which enhances their movement quality. They also become more grounded and aware of how they are using their space as they move."[31] Like the participants in my case study, she identified rhythmic and musical understanding and weight shift as highlights of the value of tap dance training. She also mentioned that after training in tap dance, students were better able to demonstrate a drop of weight. Lastly, Clark has also observed that dancers who study tap

[30] Clark, interview by author.

[31] Clark, interview by author.

dance catch on to movement patterns quickly and become better at hearing directions rather than always seeing and feeling the movement sequences for themselves.

Clark adamantly believes in increasing the presence of jazz and tap dance in higher education and for her entire career has actively made this happen. She chose to attend OCU particularly for the inclusion of jazz and tap dance. When looking for an MFA program, there were none that included study of jazz or tap dance, so she chose to attend OU where one of her former jazz and tap professors was now teaching, in part because she knew she could continue to study these forms at a higher level even though they were completely separate from her MFA program studies. Clark was appreciative of her graduate faculty's support in pursuing her studies of jazz and tap dance while completing her MFA, which was focused on ballet and modern dance. She continues to actively work to provide as many opportunities in jazz and tap dance for her students as possible.

Lastly, Clark was asked if the history of jazz and tap dance's development has affected society's view of these dance forms. She promptly responded,

> Of course. Had the Europeans invented tap dance and slaves performed ballet on plantations, these questions would be reversed. Because jazz and tap developed with lower classes, it was never looked upon as worthy by the upper class. Society tends to strive to reach the level above them not below them and that includes their culture, style, and art.[32]

[32] Clark, interview by author.

Hollie Wright

Jazz Chair at The Ailey School

Hollie Wright has had a diverse dance career performing on both the concert dance stage and Broadway. She began her career with the Philadelphia Dance Company, also known as Philadanco!, where she worked her way up to principal dancer and performed works by numerous artists including Ronald K. Brown, George Faison, and Talley Beatty. Wright made her Broadway debut in *Hot Feet* and went on to perform in the first national tour of *The Color Purple* and several other shows. Additionally, Wright holds a BFA in Dance Education from the University of the Arts. She was a lecturer at the University of the Arts and now teaches in the Professional Division at The Ailey School where she serves as Jazz Chair.

Jazz dance classes are offered every day at The Ailey School, even though there are only two jazz dance teachers in the Professional Division. There are five different tracks for students at The Ailey School including a BFA program, and the number of times students are required to take jazz is determined by which track they take. Wright expressed that she is extremely grateful because the directors at Ailey really understand jazz dance and its importance, so she has not had to fight the same battles that other dance educators have fought for inclusion of jazz dance.

When describing her class, Wright said she could be called "old school,"[33] while the other jazz teacher does more musical theatre and contemporary work with the students, which she says is a great balance in the program. The structure and format of her class is rooted in the values she sees in jazz dance training. Wright's jazz dance class begins with a

[33] Hollie Wright, interview by author, New York City, January 10, 2019.

set warmup that she teaches one time. This warmup includes isolations, flat backs, *pliés*, *tendus*, *dégagés*, *pirouettes* both parallel and turned out, abdominal exercises, and push-ups. After that, there are across the floor exercises, and then students return to the center to learn choreography. She purposefully keeps the same warmup all semester so that the students eventually do not have to concentrate so hard on the sequence of the exercises but rather can focus on the mechanics of the movements. The warmup lasts about forty to forty-five minutes with no breaks in order to help build the students' stamina.

Wright also mentioned that often the least amount of time is spent on the center choreography, but this is for a purpose. "So that we start to train the 'pickup muscle' – how to pick up [or learn choreography] quickly," she explained, "Whether it's an audition or you're in a company and trying to learn a piece, you don't always have time to fine tune, and I need those antennae to be up and working to get details."[34] She also always ends her class by having the students bow as they would on stage at the end of a performance. The dancers walk to the right, bow, walk left, bow, walk forward, bow, walk back, and bow. This is placed at the end of class intentionally when the students are tired, so that they will understand how it feels to bow at the end of a show when it is difficult to keep up high energy.

Wright also includes an audition preparation practice in her curriculum. She instructs her students to come to the next class meeting dressed as if they are going to a Broadway, concert dance, or commercial dance audition. During that next class, there is no dancing. One by one students tell her for what type of audition they intended to dress, and then they pick apart the look. Attention is given to wardrobe choices, accessories, shoes,

[34] Wright, interview by author.

makeup, and hairstyles. Wright said that this helps them learn to dress as a professional trying to get a job as opposed to walking into an audition looking like students. A very important component to auditioning for any type of performance is looking the part at the audition. In professional work, there are teams of people whose job it is to dress the artists. Wright asserted, "And when you're a dancer trying to get a job, *you* are the team."[35] She also specified that purpose is to help the students figure out who they are so that they can dress comfortably yet appropriately for any type of audition. Wright admitted that there are often a lot of tears from students, but eventually the students come back from an audition grateful for the experience. This variety of audition types is only discussed as a part of the jazz program at The Ailey School.

When asked about the benefits of jazz dance classes for students, Wright replied with no hesitation, "The ability to put two steps together."[36] She explained she has found that dancers today love to do choreography, but their technique is lacking. Multiple times she has given a basic across-the-floor exercise and been astounded by the amount of advanced-level students unable to do it. She also strongly believes that the basics of jazz dance technique are much needed right now, because she has seen so many students sitting on the floor with knee issues. She said this is a result of no one teaching them the basics of jumps and how to use technique in jumps. While of course students are jumping in ballet and modern classes as well, Wright emphasized the differences between them saying,

[35] Wright, interview by author.

[36] Wright, interview by author.

"Doing a *sauté arabesque* in ballet class to Tchaikovsky is completely different than doing it to Earth, Wind, and Fire. The timing is different. It's just all different."[37]

Stamina and the ability to learn movement quickly is also important to Wright in her jazz dance classes. One of her own challenges while dancing with Philandanco! was stamina. Dancers have to be able to make it through twenty, thirty, or forty-minute pieces of choreography with no water. This is her inspiration for giving her students a warmup with no breaks. Once she hits play on the music, there is no stopping for water until after push-ups. Then there is only one more water break after learning the center choreography. She noted that the students learn the choreography before the water break in order to train their minds to work while they are tired. She stressed, "We've got to figure out how to think and move. You know Alonzo King is not going to stop creating so you can go get some water."[38]

Wright views jazz dance as a technique, a means to an end. In this way, jazz dance helps students with the mechanics of their dancing, but she also believes it helps students improve their performance quality. "I think jazz teaches them there's more, and to use it," she explained.[39] This is extremely important in company repertoire. In many ways, she admires the benefits of the students regularly seeing resident company Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Seeing the work that this company performs is a constant reminder to students and directors that jazz dance is a vital part of the program. "When you

[37] Wright, interview by author.

[38] Wright, interview by author.

[39] Wright, interview by author.

see the rep[ertoire], there's *no way* that modern and ballet are going to cut it! There's no way. None," exclaimed Wright.[40]

Wright agrees that universities can do a lot to help preserve both the technique and history of jazz dance. Some of the most important work that needs to be done is to protect the history. Wright discussed emphatically how much of the roots and history of jazz dance has been erased "because that's exactly what it is. His story," she explained.[41] The person telling the story decides what gets told, and often that has erased the contributions of African Americans. She continued, "There are people at the forefront of jazz that don't get their just due because of whatever racial barriers were happening at the time."[42] She also stressed that the same issues happening with tap and jazz dance are happening with hip hop as well. People have to fight to prove its worth, and a vast majority of people do not understand its history and roots.

Wright said that part of preserving history requires relying on institutions that do more than just follow the latest trends but that make a point of including history in the dancers' training. Taking classes and workshops with artists from past generations who had lived the history were some of the most influential experiences of her career. She appreciates that at The Ailey School there are teachers who danced with the Ailey company in the 1960s, so history is literally walking the hallways of the building. Wright adamantly believes that institutions like The Ailey School and universities have the means and the responsibility to preserve the art form of jazz dance. She is thankful to have had

[40] Wright, interview by author.

[41] Wright, interview by author.

[42] Wright, interview by author.

teachers in college that taught classic jazz technique such as Luigi and thinks it is beautiful that this history can be documented and taught in universities. Additionally, universities often have the monetary means and facilities to support research, and she perceives this to be part of universities' responsibilities for the arts.

Ultimately, Wright said, "It's all relevance."[43] Jazz dance is present and strong in concert and commercial dance. She recalled seeing a split screen video come out online after Beyoncé released her music video for her song "Single Ladies," which was dubbed iconic. The other half of that split screen video was Bob Fosse's choreographic work "Mexican Breakfast" with jazz dance icon Gwen Verdon and two more women. This video clearly shows similarities and sometimes replicas of movements in Beyoncé's 2008 hit video and Fosse's work from the 1960s. In interviews, Beyoncé did mention her inspiration from seeing Fosse's work. The history of jazz dance remains relevant in today's culture but continues to fade in darkness without more education.

[43] Wright, interview by author.

Margaret Morrison

Lecturer at Barnard College; Education Advisor at American Tap Dance Foundation

Margaret Morrison is a tap dance soloist, choreographer, teacher, and scholar. She earned her BA at Barnard College and holds an MFA in Dance from Hollins University/American Dance Festival. Morrison was a founding member of Brenda Bufalino's American Tap Dance Orchestra and went on to choreograph tap dance works of her own. Her research has been published in dance journals and anthologies. She is now a Lecturer at Barnard College and the Education Advisor at the American Tap Dance Foundation, where she teaches classes and directs the Tap Teacher Training Program.

Morrison rotates through five tap dance courses at Barnard College, which is a part of Columbia University – Tap I, Tap II, Tap III, Tap: An American Art Form (tap history), and Tap Ensemble (tap composition). All of these courses are open to all Columbia University students, and none of them are required for students, including dance majors. Morrison expressed deep gratitude to the Dance Department Chair who originally invited her to begin teaching tap dance technique at Barnard and eventually suggested adding the academic courses as well. She understands it was a unique situation to have a chair that nurtured other's talents and sought opportunities for everyone. These values ultimately led to the benefits of tap dance being offered to the students at Columbia University.

Morrison spoke passionately about the multitude of benefits that students receive in tap dance training. Of course, musical training is one of these benefits. A crucial part of tap dance class is listening intently to the music, which can very astutely train students' ears. Students are required to hear and physicalize the music. Morrison explained that tap dance differs from other dance forms because it is musically and rhythmically driven, rather than

shape or position driven. “That can improve their ability to be in the musical moment – that’s a term I use a lot. To be in the musical moment in any dance form,” she said.[44] Morrison bases her classes in jazz music and is fortunate to have a live pianist for all of her tap dance classes. This allows her to teach them about jazz music as well as helps the students more fully understand that they are making music while they are dancing.

Morrison also identified benefits in body mechanics. “We work from the kinesthetic, proprioceptive, sensory, and knowledge [approaches]. And I’ll work somatically a lot in class, and auditory is also part of that somatic experience,” she explained.[45] In tap dance, the somatic approach of the movement affects the sound and tone produced. Part of this idea includes another benefit that Morrison identified, which was working with the ideas of release and relaxation in the movement. She elaborated, “That has a whole skill set around it – to release the muscles, but to hear the sound, and to do the action.”[46] If students do not master this skill, they may miss sounds with their feet. Morrison also listed using weight in dance and “understanding of the body in relationship to gravity”[47] as large benefits of tap dance. Being an American art form, students also learn about American history both in Morrison’s technique and academic classes. Last but not least, she explained that her students have a lot of fun in tap dance classes “because being

[44] Margaret Morrison, interview by author, New York City, November 10, 2019.

[45] Morrison, interview by author.

[46] Morrison, interview by author.

[47] Morrison, interview by author.

able to be in your body and be in the music is so gratifying, especially in a world where we only work on little screens or are tied to our phones."[48]

Morrison emphasized her gratitude for the opportunity to teach a variety of classes. Extremely few institutions offer a tap dance history or a tap dance composition course. However, when reflecting on what the dance form needs and the students need, Morrison said she would ideally push for many more offerings of tap dance classes. For instance, at Barnard, ballet and modern dance each have six levels of technique courses, while there are only three levels of tap dance technique offered resulting in mixed-level classes. Morrison stressed that she feels strongly about the need to even out course offerings and that there are not enough tap dance technique classes for students to take. Students are able to take upper level ballet or modern classes every semester, but with three levels of tap dance technique, students can only study tap dance intermittently or not in a level appropriate group. She continued to say that the same situation exists with hip hop and other Africanist dance forms in that they are regularly marginalized in dance departments.

Furthermore, simply peppering in more courses is not enough. Morrison explained that for a true change to occur in university dance programs, these institutions need to re-center and rethink how dance forms are being offered. Institutionalized dance clearly centers on ballet and modern dance, which are often referred to as Western theatrical dance forms while any other forms of dance are frequently lumped into a category called world dance. This nomenclature actually separates ballet and modern dance from the entire rest of the world of dance, as if ballet or modern dance do not exist in that world or jazz or tap dance are not theatrical forms. Additionally, Morrison recalled attending a variety of types

[48] Morrison, interview by author.

of African dance classes during the 1970s and 80s that were advertised as primitive dance. This ideology permeates into the way that both technique and dance theory courses are offered. "I could see a space for looking at the scope of dance technique and dance history and decentralizing the [dance] departments, so that there is a real home for dance forms that are based in the African diaspora," Morrison explained.[49] She went on to describe a vision of a program in which students were offered a range of studies that included the African American roots of tap, jazz, and hip hop and contemporary versions of those forms today while also being able to study ballet and modern dance, if they wished. Morrison declared,

> Ultimately, it's not enough just to throw a lot of jazz classes or tap classes into the mix and still have the center of gravity or the culture of the department [say] the main thing is ballet and modern and then you can do these other things. Because then tap and jazz or maybe these other forms may be taught outside the context that makes it really valuable as an art form… I would love to see dance departments really re-center and rethink how the forms are offered.[50]

In order for these types of changes to occur, Morrison explained that it "really takes a top down belief" in which the administrators and heads of dance programs are willing to make the change.[51] She expressed hope in the new generation of educators and scholars entering the professional world and perhaps the opportunity to influence the structures of dance programs. During her time working at Barnard, she has seen interesting and unique scholars join the college including scholars of Africanist dance; yet, the individuals that

[49] Morrison, interview by author.

[50] Morrison, interview by author.

[51] Morrison, interview by author.

hold the tenure positions "are not in any way questioning the paradigm."[52] She believes that in order for this to happen people must be educated on the "standard of excellence" in tap dance, or in other words the artistry in the form.[53] She spoke of seeing dance educators watch tap dance and compare it to ballet, which pays no respect to the tap dance artist because the forms are too different to compare. Morrison understands that someone heading a dance program may want to hold on to control and not be open to seeing tap dance as art, and she believes that exposing them to the "brilliance of the form" can help overcome this obstacle.[54] Key to understanding tap dance as an art form is how well someone hears it. In order to embrace tap dance, administrators and educators must appreciate the music of the feet in tap dance as well as the movement. Only then is there hope of dance programs examining how Africanist dance is taught and viewed and consider decentralizing ballet and modern in the university system.

[52] Morrison, interview by author.

[53] Morrison, interview by author.

[54] Morrison, interview by author.

Michelle Dorrance

Artistic Director of Dorrance Dance; MacArthur Fellow 2015

Michelle Dorrance is a prominent tap dance performer, choreographer, and teacher. Her numerous performance credits include STOMP, Imagine Tap!, Manhattan Tap, and Rumba Tap as well as work with Barbara Duffy, Savion Glover, Dr. Harold Cromer, Mable Lee, Derrick Grant, and many more. Dorrance holds a BA degree from the Gallatin School at New York University. She is the founder and artistic director of Dorrance Dance and a 2015 MacArthur Fellow.

Dorrance has trained with many of the most revered masters in tap dance and taught a wide variety of students around the globe. As a tap dance master herself, she is extremely aware of the benefits of training in tap dance. The most obvious of these she stated was the relationship to executing movements in a musical phrase, which naturally requires a different focus to embody the precision and execution necessary for percussive dance. Dorrance elaborated, "There's a whole kind of subset of a manner or method of execution that exists when you're responsible for a sound, because you can hear up to or probably past a 64th note."[55] With the auditory nature of tap dance, it is much easier to tell the moment that someone is off. Dorrance believes this is immediately evident to anyone who seriously trains in tap dance and that for this trained ear and sense of precision and musicality to affect the rest of someone's work, dancers should invest a couple of years in tap dance training.

In the spring of 2018, Dorrance premiered her first work with the American Ballet Theatre (ABT) titled *Praedicere*. She also worked with the company that summer at the

[55] Michelle Dorrance, interview by author, January 14, 2019.

Vail Dance Festival and again for their fall season. In order to challenge these ballet artists, Dorrance was "interested in pushing them in the direction of being responsible for their own music, so I asked them to do percussive work with their pointe shoes… I was interested in working inside of a classical movement vocabulary but asking them to address the floor differently."[56] During this process, she observed her tap influence challenge them in the connection to the ground. This was especially evident in the rhythmic *petite allégro* phrases she gave them. Instinctually, part of her goal was for them to be on the floor at a specific time, but ballet dancers are trained to focus on the lifted feeling in jumps with the energy sent upwards. Dorrance explained, "… to do the *petite allégro* phrases that I made up in my timing was very difficult for them, because I have this instinct to pull myself back down toward the floor."[57] She wanted the precise timing of them landing to be together. Dorrance also said that this work required the dancers to constantly switch back and forth between vernacular styles and classical styles, which require "a completely different relationship to the way you carry your body and a relationship to the floor."[58] Most likely, as the dancers trained their whole lives to get into ABT, they never imagined it would result in working with a leading tap dance choreographer. This proves that even students training with aspirations to work in some of the most elite classical ballet companies absolutely must be extremely versatile dancers.

In her work with her own company Dorrance Dance, she explained that they are in a rare position to present tap dance on stages associated with the concert dance world or

[56] Dorrance, interview by author.

[57] Dorrance, interview by author.

[58] Dorrance, interview by author.

"high art." Dorrance said, "I realized this was a stage that tap didn't exist on, and I always thought it should."[59] She expressed that after having key opportunities to present her work in New York's downtown dance scene and among post modern works, she has been fortunate that people have been very open minded viewing her work. While she has not had to fight any abnormally difficult battles to get her work on stage, Dorrance has faced other challenges with her choreographic work. She explained that often people approach her about her work to say they did not know this kind of tap dance exists or they admire the way she crosses contemporary dance with tap dance. She has a multitude of responses to such statements including "No, this is just tap dance. You're seeing it in this framework, but it's not a certain kind of tap dance. We all do the same kind of tap dance. This is the same technique," and,

> No, this is our technique. This is why you're interested in what we're doing. You're moved by the music we're making. You're intrigued by the eccentricity of this weird dancer. Or you just can't believe the sounds that are coming off the stage. And you're moved by the actual bodies doing movement together whatever it is. You're moved by all these different things. It's not because someone did an *arabesque* or rolled on the floor. That's not it.[60]

This is all part of the process of getting audience members to see tap dance as art on its own, not that they like this tap dance performance because it is blended with something else that they perceive as art.

Part of the tradition of tap dance is to respect and honor the great tap dancers of previous generations. Dorrance carries on this tradition in all of her work. Every biography on her websites includes a statement of credit and gratitude to the masters who mentored or

[59] Dorrance, interview by author.

[60] Dorrance, interview by author.

influenced her. This practice of honor also helps drive her choreographic endeavors. She expressed that the power of theatrical work to open people's minds and change perspectives convinces her to never step away from it completely. "It's too important I think to show people what tap dance is capable of," she declared, "Part of it is just wanting my elders and our tap ancestors and our legacy to be respected and embraced and supported."[61]

In addition to her outstanding performative and choreographic prowess, Dorrance is familiar with the world of academics as well. She attended NYU for her BA degree, but she intentionally did not interact with the Department of Dance because there is no tap dance. "I did not engage with the dance department at all," she said. "I made tap dancing a part of what I was doing academically as opposed to physically."[62] In the Gallatin school, students design their own majors and defend it orally to a panel of professors. In this work, Dorrance focused on American tap dance history as an echo of the American dream and the way this form's development makes it an art of the people. She still performed at open mics and took classes in New York City, but none of it was in collaboration with the Department of Dance.

Despite no interaction with the dance department, she specifically chose to attend NYU so that she could earn her degree while tap dancing in New York City. This is a frequent compromise for tap dancers. Dorrance is another example of a tap dance artist wishing to earn her degree but being unable to make tap dance her focus in any existing dance degree program. She has achieved incredible success, but many more students are unable to attend a New York City college in order to continue serious tap dance training

[61] Dorrance, interview by author.

[62] Dorrance, interview by author.

while pursuing a degree. Even those that do are still doing more work because their efforts in tap dance do not or very minimally count towards their degrees. Dorrance described this lack of tap dance availability as "an antiquated dance program mentality and methodology that is pervasive to the whole country."[63]

In an ideal world, Dorrance believes tap dance classes would be required for both music majors and dance majors, because it is a cross-disciplinary art form. She also stressed that tap dance would not be a supplemental portion of a dance major, but equally valued as a concentration or form for a dance degree. Additionally, Dorrance stressed the importance of tap dance history and said it could be included in American studies programs as well as dance programs. "It's really interesting to look at basically the most oppressed people in the immigrated America or forced migrated American culture carrying what America is about, which is this melting pot. It's this really beautiful idea that we are many cultures that came to seek some sort of freedom or new truth," she described emphatically.[64] Dorrance also discussed tap dance's influence on other American arts including jazz music and bebop in which tap dancers influenced the rhythms of drummers who influenced the horns, as well as hip hop in which tap dance flash acts such as the Nicholas Brothers influenced break dancers. She also pointed out that a lot of contemporary dance work right now is continuously becoming more influenced by vernacular and street forms of dance, suggesting that contemporary dancers should have American vernacular classes.

[63] Dorrance, interview by author.

[64] Dorrance, interview by author.

A large part of Dorrance's mission is to continue educating people about tap dance as an art form. Throughout her life and career, she has witnessed the development of tap dance festivals and the phenomenon that was the tap dance based Broadway show *Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk*, performed in the tap dance show *Imagine Tap!* and *STOMP*, and created her own tap dance company. Dorrance describes this as a cycle of tap dance rising to popularity and then seemingly fade, and she is adamantly working to break this cycle. She said she has seen an ebb and flow in people outside of the tap dance community's understanding of this art form. Often in press interviews, she is asked when she felt that tap dance was making a comeback, to which she replies, "Tap has been coming back my whole life."[65] She reflected that people's cultural memory is very short, which causes each one of tap dance's successes to appear as if it is a resurgence. Dorrance resolved, "I'm trying to make sure we don't lose it again. Educating people for once and for all. Then at least having a small enough presence to maintain an understanding that yes, [tap dance] is still here."[66]

Part of this education of tap dance needs to take place in institutions of higher education. Offering degree programs in which students can study tap dance full time is crucial to fostering scholars in the art form, which is imperative for its preservation and ongoing education. However, the battle that is being faced is larger than university dance programs. The problem is rooted in institutionalized racism. Dorrance discussed that the academic hierarchy in the United States is largely based on the Western intellectual tradition, which means it is colonial, or in other words a white male driven culture. In her

[65] Dorrance, interview by author.

[66] Dorrance, interview by author.

analysis, the fight is not simply about tap dance, but a hierarchal experience of our culture, and tap dance could serve as a vehicle through which to change minds. This goes further into the cultural perception of what can be deemed "art" and why something labeled entertainment has a lower value, but "also that these things because they started here will always live in this realm. And that's what we're fighting – that people will always put [tap dance] there because it's always been put there… Is [the] reflex to immediately swipe tap dance to the lower echelon of being?"[67] Ultimately, the problems that have surrounded the efforts to include tap dance in the university systems stem from a much deeper root of the cultural perceptions of African American art forms.

Not only is tap dance a form of art, but "it is one of the most sophisticated forms of art. It is movement and music at the same time. It is a cross-disciplinary form, which is fascinating."[68] In order for universities to embrace tap dance, administrators and professors must see the sophistication of the form. The change envisioned for tap dance and higher education will take a lot of work, which will never happen if current educators do not see the value in this work. Dorrance acknowledged reasons this could be difficult for people, which primarily requires understanding the sophistication of tap dance. She speculated that this could be a humbling or threatening experience for educators rooted in the classical dance tradition. "To consider this thing that they [have not experienced] could be just as expressive as something that's rooted in classical technique or any of the modern or post

[67] Dorrance, interview by author.

[68] Dorrance, interview by author.

modern techniques, is maybe terrifying. But that's what any revolution has been in any dance form."[69]

To give administrators and educators the benefit of the doubt, perhaps most of them do not consciously choose to base the decision of what forms to include in their programs on race or history. Yet, this institutionalized racism and classism is so engrained in the American culture that the most American form of dance cannot be studied at the university level as a major. Dorrance explained,

> If we are going to consider institutions of higher learning to be also institutions of truth and institutions of integrity, then class and race and hierarchy have to be addressed, and not in a way to make everyone walk on egg shells, just in a real honest way… It's really interesting to think about every dance program having to assess its own classism. That's a lot to ask, but I think very important…
> And I guess that that's really what it is. That's our job – is to just continue to educate. But institutions of higher learning have to be willing to be cutting edge in order to keep up with the truth.[70]

Change has to start with an honest look at our cultural values. Of course, the purpose of universities is to prepare students for the work force, and there are plenty of opportunities for tap dancers. Even ballet dancers may find themselves in a tap dance rehearsal during their careers. The university system is long overdue for a sincere evaluation of its perpetuation of classism and hierarchal structures that brazenly neglect African American culture, and frankly its very own American culture.

[69] Dorrance, interview by author.

[70] Dorrance, interview by author.

Interviews Conclusion

All four participants have witnessed the positive effects of tap and/or jazz dance training for students. Most prevalent among these was musicality, weight shift, drop of weight, precision, focus, stamina, artistry, and joy. Additionally, each participant believes in a future with a stronger presence of tap and jazz dance in higher education in order to not only preserve these art forms, but also to prepare students for the professional world of dance. Like the author, they envision students being able to attend college and regularly enroll in tap and jazz dance technique classes as well as learn more about the history and composition of these dance forms. In order to achieve these goals, education of the larger American culture remains imperative. Current professionals in academia need to learn about the artistry and value of tap and jazz dance and then decentralize the current hierarchal structure pervasive across college dance programs in the United States.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Looking through multiple lenses has uncovered the potential for tap and jazz dance in higher education that is currently not being met. This marginalization of African American dance forms is by no means a new phenomenon. A glance through history has shown evidence of society diminishing the value of these art forms for over a century. American culture has been established on Western intellectual standards, which included the borrowing of ballet dance from Europe. While modern dance was partially developed in the United States, it was created by and has largely and primarily served the same elite, white, upper-class demographic as ballet. Meanwhile, the dance forms that are truly of the American people, that showcase the beauty of the mix of cultures on which this country was founded, and that include a variety of eccentricities, styles, and stories have repeatedly been pushed aside.

This paradigm is reflected in the university system. There are still few opportunities for students pursing a degree in dance to study these techniques at an advanced level, learn about their rich histories, and develop choreographic voices through mentorship. While there are universities that offer a few classes in some of these areas, they are almost strictly elective, requiring students to do extra work outside of their degree requirements. Plus, any aspiring scholar, researcher, or educator has nowhere to turn for a graduate level education in tap or jazz dance.

In a case study with ballet and modern dancers at the University of Oklahoma, participants experienced a multitude of benefits from studying tap dance that included an enhanced sense of musicality, a deeper understanding of rhythm, a more subtle awareness of their weight shift and feet in space, a quicker ability to learn material in all dance forms, and simply joy. Not only did every participant see the effects of studying tap dance in all of their dancing after only a few weeks, but also all participants expressed a wish to have had this training earlier in their training. They all also identified ways in which the skills learned in tap dance would help them in their dance careers. Lastly, every participant believed all dance student should experience tap dance at least once. Moreover, professionals currently working in the field echoed the same concerns of the lack of tap and jazz dance available in universities and how this affects aspiring artists in these forms.

Now is the time for institutions of higher education to acknowledge and address the institutionalized racism and classism that they perpetuate, which bleeds into larger society. University dance programs need to take serious consideration of the values in these forms both as areas of studies in their own rights and with the added benefits for any type of dancer. Honest looks need to be taken at the moral values of dance programs to elevate all dance rather than only what has been deemed the Western theatrical forms, ballet and modern dance. Universities need to honor American dance and all that it encompasses. Students have a right to the access of tap and jazz dance in higher education, and these art forms deserve the same prestige as ballet and modern dance. The time is now for universities to decentralize their programming, and it is forty years overdue.

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APPENDIX A

Attention School of Dance students:

You are all invited to participate in a study for a master's thesis research project about the benefits of rhythm tap dance training for classical ballet and modern dancers. The goal of this research is to identify ways in which training in tap dance technique can enhance dance majors' overall dance abilities by learning skills in musicality, weight shifting, movement quality, control, etc.

Volunteers will complete a written survey to gather information about their previous and current dance training, any musical training, and their perceptions of personal ability in specific dance skills, such as musicality, and coordination. This survey will take about ten minutes to complete. Volunteers will then participate in a one-hour-and-fifteen-minute tap class taught by the principal investigator that will meet twice a week for the remainder of the semester. This class will meet from _ p.m. to _ p.m. on Monday and Wednesday in Carpenter Hall Room 209. Videos will be taken of the students in class at the beginning and end of the semester to document progress. At the conclusion of the semester, volunteers will complete an individual interview with the principal investigator to discuss the overall experience and any developments in the student's overall dance technique. These interviews should take about twenty minutes to complete and will be filmed and transcribed for documentation.

Participation in this research is strictly voluntary. The ideal participant will have little to no experience in tap dance, but all skill levels are welcome. There will be no negative affects towards students who choose not to participate. Volunteers will benefit by receiving tap dance training. There are no requirements to register for the class through OU and no payment. Even if you choose to participate now, you may stop participating at any time and for any reason.

Class will begin on _. If you wish to volunteer for this study, please notify the principal investigator via email at sbpecina@ou.edu before this date. Any questions about this study may also be sent to the same email address. You may also refer to the attached consent form for more information.

I look forward to hearing from you and working with you in class.

Sincerely,

Sara Pecina

Consent to Participate in Research at the University of Oklahoma

You are invited to participate in research about the benefits of rhythm tap dance training for classical ballet and modern dancers. The goal of this research is to identify ways in which training in tap dance technique can enhance dance majors' overall dance abilities by learning skills in musicality, weight shifting, movement quality, control, etc.

If you agree to participate, you will complete an introductory written survey about previous and current dance and music training, participate in a one hour and fifteen minute tap dance class that will meet twice per week for the remainder of the _ semester, be video recorded during the first and last week of the tap class, and complete a video-recorded face to face interview with a third party at the conclusion of the semester.

The written survey will take about ten minutes to complete, and the conclusive interview will take about twenty minutes to complete.

As with any physical activity, there is a risk of injury. This risk will be kept minimal by proper class planning and working with participants at their individual physical abilities. If you are injured during your participation, report this to a researcher immediately. Emergency medical treatment is available. However, you or your insurance company will be expected to pay the usual charge from this treatment. The University of Oklahoma Norman Campus has set aside no funds to compensate you in the event of injury.

This study includes no direct benefits to participants besides learning a new skill.

Participation in this research does not require enrollment in any university courses. Therefore, participants do not incur any tuition fees or credit hours. There will be no grades.

Your participation is voluntary and your responses may be included in the Principal Investigator's master's thesis. Data about previous and current training as well as personal reflections may be discussed in this writing. Research records will be stored securely and only approved researchers and the OU Institutional Review Board will have access to the records.

If preferred, the researcher will use pseudonyms when discussing participants. Video recordings will not be made public or released to the University. Videos of the tap dance class will only be used by the researcher to analyze student progress at the conclusion of the project. Interview video recordings will be conducted by a School of Dance faculty member and transcribed by the Principal Investigator. Quotes may be used in writing from these interviews.

The data you provide will be retained in anonymous form unless you specifically agree for data retention or retention of contact information at the end of the research. After removing all identifiers, we might share your data with other researchers or use it in future research

without obtaining additional consent from you. Please check all of the options that you agree to:

I agree to being quoted directly.	___ Yes ___	No
I agree to have my name reported with quoted material.	___Yes ___	No
I agree for the researcher to use my data in future studies.	___Yes ___	No

Even if you choose to participate now, you may stop participating at any time and for any reason. Your video images maybe used in University research reports unless you tell me not to do this. Your data may be used in future research studies, unless you contact me to withdraw your data.

If you have questions about this research, please contact:

Sara Pecina	Austin Hartel
Principal Investigator	Faculty Advisor
sbpecina@ou.edu	ahartel@ou.edu

You can also contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu with questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant, or if you don't want to talk to the researcher.

Are you 18 years of age or older?
___ Yes ___ No (If no- cannot participate)

I agree to participate in this research.

_____	_____
Signature of Participant	Date
_____	_____
Signature of Researcher Obtaining Consent	Date

Pre-Tap Dance Class Survey

Instructions: Please answer the following questions completely.

1. Previous dance training: For the following dance styles, please list the number of years (if 0, put 0) and your age during any training experience you have had.

    a. Ballet

    _____

    _____

    _____

    b. Modern

    _____

    _____

    _____

    c. Jazz

    _____

    _____

    _____

    d. Tap

    _____

    _____

    _____

    e. Other (please specify)

    _____

    _____

2. Current dance training: Please list the styles of dance in which you are currently training. Include the schools at which you are training in them.

_____

_____

_____

3. Have you ever played an instrument/s? (Circle one) Yes No

   If you answered yes, what instrument/s have you played?

   _____

4. If you answered yes to number 3, please list the number of years studying the instrument/s and your age at the time.

   _____

5. Have you ever taken voice lessons or been in a choir? (Circle One) Yes No

   If you answered yes, please list the number of years spent studying music and your age at the time.

   _____

6. Please rate your confidence in the following dance skills by circling a number.
   0 = No confidence 3 = Fairly confident 5 = Extremely confident

Coordination	0	1	2	3	4	5
Weight shifting	0	1	2	3	4	5
Fast Footwork (i.e. dégagé, frappé, petite allégro, etc.)	0	1	2	3	4	5
Ankle Strength	0	1	2	3	4	5
Musicality	0	1	2	3	4	5

Understanding of Rhythm 0 1 2 3 4 5
(i.e. beat subdivision, straight vs. swung, counterpoint, syncopation, etc.)

Style 0 1 2 3 4 5

7. Please discuss any of your strengths and weakness in your current dance ability.

Post Tap Dance Class Interview Questions

1. Why did you choose to be a part of this study?

2. What did you hope to gain from this experience? Were those expectations met?

3. If you have had previous experience in tap dance, was this class similar to what you did in the past? If not, how was it different?

4. Will you please describe your experience in the first few class meetings? In the last few class meetings?

5. At the beginning of this course you ranked your confidence in coordination as X on a scale of 0 to 5, where would you place yourself on that scale now? Why?

6. At the beginning of this course you ranked your confidence in weight shifting as X on a scale of 0 to 5, where would you place yourself on that scale now? Why?

7. At the beginning of this course you ranked your confidence in fast footwork as X on a scale of 0 to 5, where would you place yourself on that scale now? Why?

8. At the beginning of this course you ranked your confidence in ankle strength as X on a scale of 0 to 5, where would you place yourself on that scale now? Why?

9. At the beginning of this course you ranked your confidence in musicality as X on a scale of 0 to 5, where would you place yourself on that scale now? Why?

10. At the beginning of this course you ranked your confidence in understanding rhythm as X on a scale of 0 to 5, where would you place yourself on that scale now? Why?

11. At the beginning of this course you ranked your confidence in style as X on a scale of 0 to 5, where would you place yourself on that scale now? Why?

12. Are there any other exercises, movements, or skills in ballet/modern class that you feel more confident in now than you did before taking this tap dance class? Do you think this change is partially an effect of the tap training? Why or why not?

13. Do you think this tap training would have been beneficial earlier in your college career? In other words, would the skills gained in this class have helped you throughout your college dance training?

14. Do you think the skills gained in this class will be useful as you pursue a career in dance either performing or teaching?

15. Do you think training in tap dance would help other students in the School of Dance?

16. All levels of tap dance are offered at the University of Oklahoma in the School of Musical Theatre and open to students of the School of Dance. What are the main reasons that have kept you from enrolling in a tap dance course before now? Please be specific.

17. Do you think a curriculum change requiring all dance majors to take at least one tap dance class would be worthwhile for students? Why or why not?

18. Would you consider taking a tap class again or continuing to train in tap dance either at the University of Oklahoma or elsewhere? Why or why not?

19. Is there anything else you would like to say about this experience to be on record with the research?

APPENDIX B

Dear [insert name],

My name is Sara Pecina, and I am a third year MFA in Dance candidate at the University of Oklahoma. I would like to request an interview with you for my thesis research.

In short, my thesis research analyzes the benefits of training in jazz and tap dance for all types of dancers and argues for a stronger presence of these dance forms in university dance programs. There are four key components of my research: examining the current state of jazz and tap dance in higher education, reviewing the dichotomy of the developments of ballet and modern dance versus jazz and tap dance and the lasting effects, interviewing professionals in the field, and conducting a case study in which I teach classically trained dancers to tap and collect data on how this affects their overall dancing.

I understand that [name of institution] includes [jazz and/or tap] dance in its curriculum and that you are [job title]. If you are willing, I would like to [sit down with you OR speak over the phone] to discuss the [jazz and/or tap] program at [name of institution] and your views on the value of [jazz and/or tap] dance in a student's training. Your participation is strictly voluntary, and you may stop participating at any time. You may also remain anonymous if you wish.

The interview would not take more than an hour. Please let me know if you are interested and when you might be available. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at sbpecina@ou.edu or [phone number].

I greatly appreciate your time and consideration.

Thank you,

Sara Pecina
Graduate Assistant
MFA in Dance Candidate
School of Dance
University of Oklahoma

Consent to Participate in Research at the University of Oklahoma

You are invited to participate in research about jazz and tap dance in higher education. The goal of this research is to discuss with current leaders in the field the benefits of training in jazz and tap dance for all types of dancers, the current state of jazz and tap dance in higher education, the dichotomy of the development of ballet and modern dance versus jazz and tap dance and the lasting effects, and personal experience training and teaching in these styles.

If you agree to participate, you will complete an interview discussing the topics of jazz and tap dance training, values, and roles in higher education. The interview will take about one hour to complete.

There are no immediate risks to participants in this research. This study includes no direct benefits to participants. There is no compensation for participation in this project.

Your participation is voluntary and your responses may be included in the Principal Investigator's master's thesis. Data about previous and current training and teaching experience as well as personal reflections may be discussed in this writing. Research records will be stored securely and only approved researchers and the OU Institutional Review Board will have access to the records.

If preferred, the researcher will use pseudonyms when discussing participants. Video recordings will not be made public or released to the University. Interview video recordings will be conducted by and transcribed by the Principal Investigator. Quotes from these interviews may be used in writing.

The data you provide will be retained in anonymous form unless you specifically agree for data retention or retention of contact information at the end of the research. Please check all of the options that you agree to:

I agree to the video recording of this interview strictly for the researcher's records. (Video will only ever be viewed by the principal investigator.)	___ Yes ___ No
I agree to being quoted directly.	___ Yes ___ No
I agree to have my name reported with quoted material.	___Yes ___ No
I agree for the researcher to use my data in future studies.	___Yes ___ No

Even if you choose to participate now, you may stop participating at any time and for any reason. After removing all identifiers, we might share your data with other researchers or use it in future research without obtaining additional consent from you.

If you have questions about this research, please contact:

Sara Pecina	Austin Hartel
Principal Investigator	Faculty Advisor
sbpecina@ou.edu	ahartel@ou.edu

You can also contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu with questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant, or if you don't want to talk to the researcher.

You will be given a copy of this document for your records.

Are you 18 years of age or older? ___ Yes ___ No (If no- cannot participate)

I agree to participate in this research.

_____	_____
Signature of Participant	Date
_____	_____
Signature of Researcher Obtaining Consent	Date

Thesis Interview Questions for Professionals

1. Please describe the jazz/tap program at your institution.

2. What values do you see in dancers of any type training in jazz/tap dance?
    a. (Musicality, weight shift, movement quality, control, drop of weight, isolation, etc.)

3. What obstacles have you faced in starting, maintaining, or growing the jazz/tap program of which you are a part?

4. Has the value of the jazz/tap program at your institution shifted in any way in the time that you have been there? If so, how?

5. What do you perceive to be the role of universities in preserving jazz/tap dance?

6. What do you perceive to be the role of universities in continuing to develop jazz/tap dance?

7. What is the difference between entertainment and art? Do you consider jazz/tap dance to be entertainment, art, or both? Why?

8. Do you think the history of jazz and tap's development has affected society's view of these dance genres? How?

APPENDIX C

Dictionary of Terms

Please note: This is not a complete dictionary terminology. Many of these steps have other names and/or can be executed in a variety of ways. The purpose of this dictionary is to describe the steps used in this writing.

L: Left foot

R: Right foot

Broadway* or *Shirley Temple
Flap alternating heels R to stage right, spank L, heel drop R, tip L, heel drop R

Brush
To strike the ball of the foot forward in a swinging motion

Closed third* or *Slurp
Brush, heel dig, toe drop

Cramproll
Step R, step L, heel drop R, heel drop L

Crawl
Heel drop L, heel drop R, toe drop L, toe drop R
Travelling to the R

Coup-de-pied
A ballet position of the foot in which the foot of the working leg is connected to the standing leg between the ankle and calf

Dégagé
A ballet step in which a dancer moves the leg off the floor with a pointed foot and straight leg allowing the foot to raise 4 inches off the floor

Dig
To jab the ball of the foot into the floor next to the supporting foot with no transfer of weight

Flap
Brush, step with transfer of weight

Flap alternating heels

Flap R, heel drop L, heel drop R (may be done in any direction)

Frappé

A ballet step in which the dancer forcefully extends the leg to a d*égagé* position from *cou-de-pied*

Heel dig

To strike the back edge of the heel into the floor with a flexed foot
(Can be done with or without transfer of weight)

Heel drop

To lift the heel and drop it into the floor

Heel tap

Heel dig, toe drop

Nerve tap

Rapidly repeated toe taps executed by only using the ankle muscles

Paradiddle

Dig, spank, toe heel

Petite allégro

A ballet exercise comprised of small and quick jumps

Plié

A bending of the knee or knees

Riffle

Brush, scuff, spank

Scuff

To strike the heel forward in a swinging motion

Scuffle

Scuff, spank

Shuffle

Brush, spank

Spank

To strike the ball of the foot backward in a swinging motion

Stamp

To step flat-footed and transfer weight

Step
To step onto the ball of the foot and transfer weight

Stomp
To strike the entire bottom of the foot on the floor with no transfer of weight

Tendu
A ballet step in which the dancer slides the foot out with a pointed foot and straight leg while keeping the toes connected to the floor

Tip
To strike the front edge of the toe on the floor

Toe drop
To lift the ball of the foot and drop it on the floor

Toe heel
Step, heel drop

Toe tap
To strike the ball of the foot on the floor