

Unit 1— Investigating Practitioners Work

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LEARNING AIM A - Investigating contextual factors of three different practitioners:

- Bob Fosse
- Christopher Bruce
- Matthew Bourne

Key knowledge- The Investigation process:

- Setting clear aims and objectives for contextual investigation.
- Selecting relevant sources to access information.
- Selecting primary source
- Selecting secondary sources
- Collating information, such as selecting and organising the pieces most relevant to the tasks and purpose.
- Employing different formats for recording information.
- Documenting research sources.

LEARNING AIM B - The relationships between contextual factors, creative intentions and themes.

1. The influence of historical factors
The influence of cultural factors:
The influence of economic factors
The influence of political factors
The influence of technical factors
The influence of social factors
The influence of geographical and physical factors
The influences from other practitioners and performers.
The influences from education, teachers and mentors

2. Creative intentions and themes

LEARNING AIM C - Critical analysis of the work of performing arts practitioner.

1. The application of critical analysis skills
2. How performance styles and methods that characterise practitioner work are used to create and communicate meaning and style.

Performance and relationships:

pace, dynamics, timing, musicality, voice , movement, gesture, character, spatial awareness, performer to performer, contact work, performer to space, performer to audience, performer to accompaniment, placement and role of audience.

Production and repertoire:

text, choreography/direction, score/music, content, genre, style, set, staging and special effects, costume, hair and makeup, mask, lighting and multimedia, sound, puppetry.

LEARNING AIM D - Be able to present conclusions and independent judgements through effective investigation.

1. Summarise key information to support independent judgements.

Alternative viewpoint
Make connections and links
Consider validity of material collected

2. Presentation of findings.

Use of appropriate format, structure and tone.
Use of language and subject-specific terminology.
Use of referencing information, citation and bibliography.

3. Presentation of independent judgements.

Use of critical analysis.
Explaining views and interpretations.
Presenting structured arguments, conclusions and judgements.
Use of relevant examples to support arguments



Unit 1— Investigating Practitioners Work—Matthew Bourne

Early training and background

- Five time Olivier award winner, including best theatre choreographer.
- Also the winner of both tony awards for best director and best choreographer, which he is the only person to ever achieve both awards.

He has been recognised by over 40 international awards.

- Matthew received is obe in 2001 for his contribution to the arts.
- His creation of the new adventures dance company is now the most successful and busiest dance company in the world.
- He was knighted in the queen's new year's honours in 2016 and awarded Elizabeth 11 Coronation award for his outstanding services to ballet, the most prestigious award in the dance world.

Born in 1960 in east London, Matthew Bourne was a stage-door regular and autograph hunter as a kid. He directed his own minimusicals at school. In 1987 he co-founded a small company called Adventures in Motion Pictures (AMP), which performed "arty farce" - modern choreography with a light comic touch.

- Matthew started his dance training at the comparatively late age of 22. He studied Dance Theatre and Choreography at The Laban Centre (now Trinity Laban) graduating in 1985 and spending a further year with the college's performance company Transitions. Matthew danced professionally for 14 years creating many roles in his own work.

- In 1992 Bourne created a version of The Nutcracker for Opera North; it became his largest and most successful production to date. The Nutcracker was the first of several classics to be given a Bourne makeover, with the choreographer adding a shot of modern irony, plenty of in-jokes, and a hefty dose of old-fashioned feeling. By far the best known of the Bourne revamps is Swan Lake (1995), with its all-male chorus of swans, which became a phenomenal international hit.

Influences

- Swan Lake - Tchaikovsky (the original choreographer of Swan Lake) was the influencer on Bourne's Swan Lake because he felt troubled due to his homosexuality. This made Bourne link with royalty who in the period of 1990 royal scandals were high and rebellion was occurring more within the royal family. He used that as a starting point to explore the psychology of a prince trapped by royal protocol.
- His influence was to produce work for people who struggled to vocally produce. People who had nerve issues with being on stage and public speaking was an issue for him so he wanted to focus on creating work that didn't involve the voice so everyone could express their passions.

Contextual Factors

In his works of Swan lake it was his first piece that was able to challenge such an iconic classic that followed the strict rules of ballet. 'However, a breakthrough came in 1992, when Nicholas Payne, then general director of Opera North, suggested Bourne create a take on the Nutcracker

- the first of the witty remakes of classical ballets, including Highland Fling, for which he was to become famous. But the real transformation was three years later, when Swan Lake was unveiled, and at once hit the big time. The success was extraordinary, but also uncontrollable.' So we can see with his daring choices to remake the classic productions they were such hits due to the abstract nature of them that he'd been able to successfully make pieces that broke the ideology of strict ballet.

Having the aspiration from a young age to achieve and to be focused on the money side of the career meant he would need to be producing such high content of pieces in order to succeed. However, this gave him the determination he needed because he knew he would need to do extremely well in order to get the money he desired with such a hard job to make it a big name. He has clearly been able to achieve his dream due to being the UK's most awarded and successful choreographer and director!

As a young performer he wanted to be able to create pieces that focused on both style and humour; this fact can be portrayed in his work of Nutcracker! That focuses on comedy and glamor throughout with the costumes and facial expressions clearly showing.

His Works

- As Artistic Director of his first company, Adventures in Motion Pictures from 1987 until 2002 Matthew created many award-winning works for the Company including Spitfire (1988), The Infernal Galop (1989), Town and Country (1991), Deadly Serious (1992), Nutcracker! (1992), Highland Fling (1994), Swan Lake (1995), Cinderella (1997) and The Car Man (2000).
- The most iconic productions have been revived for New Adventures, which was launched by Matthew and his Co-Director Robert Noble in 2002. Ground-breaking new productions were added to the repertoire including Play Without Words (2002 – a co-production with the National Theatre), Edward Scissorhands (2005), Dorian Gray (2008), Lord Of The Flies (2011 – Director Only), Early Adventures (2012 – a compilation of his early work) and Sleeping Beauty (2012). In 2016, New Adventures presented the World Premiere of Matthew Bourne's, The Red Shoes, based on the classic Powell & Pressburger film with music by Bernard Herrmann. The Red Shoes performed to sell out audiences across the UK and won two Olivier Awards in 2017 for Best Entertainment and Matthew Bourne for Best Theatre Choreographer.
- Matthew's choreography for classic musicals includes Cameron Mackintosh's productions of Oliver! (1994 and 2009 Olivier nominations), My Fair Lady (2002 - Olivier Award), and the National Theatre's revival of South Pacific (2002).
- In 2004 Matthew co-directed with Richard Eyre and choreographed with Stephen Mear the hit West End musical Mary Poppins for which he won an Olivier Award for Best Theatre Choreographer, and two Tony nominations when it opened on Broadway. Mary Poppins returns to its original home, The Prince Edward Theatre in London, in October 2019.
- His film work includes television productions of his stage work including Matthew Bourne's Christmas (Channel 4, 2012), Swan Lake (1996 Emmy nomination, 2011 in 3D and 2019), The Car Man (2001 and 2015), Nutcracker! (2003) and Sleeping Beauty broadcast by the BBC for Christmas 2013 prior to worldwide cinema screenings

Unit 1— Investigating Practitioners Work—Matthew Bourne

Contribution to Contemporary Dance

Matthew started his dance training at the comparatively late age of 22. He studied Dance Theatre and Choreography at The Laban Centre (now Trinity Laban) graduating in 1985 and spending a further year with the college's performance company Transitions. Matthew danced professionally for 14 years creating many roles in his own work.

- New Adventures Company: Matthews first dance company that was created in 2002. Play without words was the companies' first piece that went on to win best entertainment and choreography at the Olivier awards.
 - Nutcracker! was another successful piece that was first shown at the Sadler Wells in 1992. It was the first ballet that aired on BBC1 in 20 years and then followed onto being made into a world tour.
 - Bourne's Highland Fling (1994) and 10th Anniversary production of Swan Lake have also reached new audiences through extensive International touring, including seasons in Asia, Australia, Russia, Europe and the USA.
 - Cinderella 1997, a Second World War interpretation of the Disney classic. A heart-stopping and touching make on a classic that has won 2 Olivier awards.
 - Carman first arrived from Matthew Bourne in 2002 in which it featured at the Theatre Royal in Plymouth. Rodion Shchedrin's Bolshoi Ballet version of Georges Bizet's opera Carmen (1875).
 - In 2005 Bourne produced his own version of the Tim Burton film of Edwards Scissorhands. Again it first premiered at the Sadler's Wells Theatre and broke box office figures for 11 weeks and then went on to tour around USA and Asia for 6 months.
 - Bourne was the choreographer for Cameron Mackintosh's productions of Oliver! in 1994.
 - He choreographed also My Fair Lady when it arrived from Broadway.
 - South Pacific he choreographed in 2001 as well as co-choreographing and co-directed the West End hit of Mary Poppins, in which he won another Olivier award for best theatre choreographer.
 - Lord of the flies, 2011, was a Matthew Bourne creation in which he directed that still has huge success as is currently touring in Australia after the performances being a huge hit in the 2014 UK tour.
- Sleeping Beauty was his choreographic creation which entailed a gothic concept of the classic tale. It was the fastest selling production in the company's history and was created to celebrate the 25th anniversary of New Adventures



Stylistic Features

There are 13 fingerprints of Matthew Bourne's style

Overview of key features:

1. Eclectic dance styles
2. Humour
3. Large ensemble numbers
4. Lavish set and costumes
5. Entertain audience
6. Reach wide and diverse audience
7. Post-modern approaches
8. Reworking past ballets
9. Collaboration
10. Dancers are actors
11. Existing musical scores
12. Music used ironically
13. Dancer's counts used

Specific Examples

- Eclectic in approach, using different style of dance such as ballet, contemporary and social dance.
- Works are popular often with witty humour and large ensemble numbers as they have been strongly influenced by musical theatre and Hollywood musicals. Sets and costumes are lavish and memorable.
- Wants to entertain the audience and reach as wide and diverse an audience as possible.
- Can be seen as a post-modern practitioner as he takes from the past and use the material to create a meaning relevant for a contemporary audience e.g. using past ballets and reworking them.
- Collaboration is key in his working process. The dancers have great input into the choreography and characterisation and he builds working relationships with designers, composers and technical directors.
- Often uses and existing musical score and may adapt it or leave it very close to the original.
- Sometimes uses music in an ironic manner to state a point.
- Uses dancer's counts when choreographing rather than rhythms from the score.