

Analysis of Dance Performances from the United States to Italy

Prior to my time at UVA, I was an avid ballerina and found my artistic passion in the dance studio and on stage. As a third-year Miller Arts Scholar, I am now more fluent in and appreciative of artistic disciplines other than dance. Attending other artists' showcases, performances, and concerts is by far one of the most enriching and pleasing aspects of being involved in the art world. In order to keep the arts alive, it is pertinent that the public, especially other artists, continues to go and appreciate arts related events. I believe, it is absolutely necessary for all artists to not only create their own work, but also to support and learn from fellow artists.

Therefore, my proposal is not to create my own work, but to open my mind and experience dance as an audience member. My ballet experience had been structured around one performance after another, and rarely did I have time to sit back and visually reflect on the art form. I'm well aware of the countless hours of hard work that go into rehearsals and performances; weeks of constant pain, frustration, and passion combined. Additionally, I know the intricate details that are involved with creating a full-length ballet performance: costumes, backdrops, music, lighting, backstage tech, etc. With this insight about ballet performances, I am interested in watching and analyzing professional ballet companies' performances as an audience member and a dance critic.

Every ballet company has different dancers, directors, and styles, which is why I would find it to be a culturally enriching experience to analyze the similarities and differences of two professional ballet companies' performances. Since I am planning to study abroad for this upcoming January 2019 in Rome, I will have the opportunity to attend a ballet performance while abroad to further my artistic curiosity. My project will be set up into three parts. I will analyze a ballet in Rome, followed by a ballet in the United States. Then, I will reflect upon both by writing a detailed report discussing the similarities and differences of each production.

Part one of my research project will occur in Rome. While in Rome, I will attend and analyze a famous ballet performance. While viewing the performance, I will note a multitude of aspects of the Italian ballet company and their performance: including but not limited to, the dancers, music, sets, props, costumes, ballet technique, and over all atmosphere. Within the theater, I will also analyze the box office, usher, seating, etc.

After preliminary research, I have found that "Swan Lake" will be showing in Rome during the days of my attendance for the January Term (January 1-January 12). At the Teatro Costanzi, the Orchestra and Corps de Ballet of the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma will be performing "Swan Lake" (December 28, 2018-January 6, 2018). Having performed the role of Odette from "Swan Lake" in the past, I am eager to see this ballet company's take on the role and full performance. I have spoken with the program director of the January Term and she has clarified that there would be time to permit this excursion.

Part two of my research will occur in the U.S. later in February 2019. As New York City is home to a numerous of famous ballet companies, I plan to travel to experience the magic of the New York City Ballet's "Sleeping Beauty" at the David H. Koch Theater. I have two reasons for choosing the New York City Ballet as the American ballet company to analyze. The primary

reason is that the artistic director and founder of New York City Ballet is George Balanchine. He choreographed and created this ballet company, which serves as an inspiration to many. In my mind NYCB is one of the greatest companies and represents American ballet. The second reason for choosing this performance is that I danced the role of Aurora from “Sleeping Beauty” in 2016. Of all the lead roles I’ve performed in my lifetime, Aurora was by far my favorite role to dance. I am interested in seeing the emotive qualities and athleticism that is brought to NYCB’s performance. Since I am familiar with “Sleeping Beauty,” I will be able to speak to it and relate my Aurora performing experience to the NYCB’s Aurora performance. I believe that this production of “Sleeping Beauty” will be a complete 360 degree turn from previously performing it on stage to now watching it offstage by my all-time favorite ballet company.

Nature of the research and need for support:

The research will be a detailed analysis of two different ballet performances – one in Italy and one in the U.S. After 19 years of dancing, including having performed a variety of roles, I will provide an educated and informative report of the similarities and differences between the performances. Aspects that I will analyze include; the dancers, music, sets, props, costumes, ballet technique, and over all atmosphere. The cultural implications and differences in choreography from Italy to the U.S. will be interesting to note.

With the help of the Miller Arts Scholar Program I will be able to fund this opportunity. Traveling and ballet tickets are expensive, and this grant would afford me the chance to conduct this research.

Objectives, significance, how the work will be conducted, and a time schedule for completion:

My objectives are to appreciate my artistic passion from an audience perspective, rather than the performing vantage point. Generally, I am the one creating the movement, but for this research I will be viewing and analyzing the dance. Additionally, I am motivated to find and understand how two ballet performances may differ based on the culture, location, and ballet technique.

My work will be conducted in parts. While in Rome, I will travel to the Costanzi Teatro to attend “Swan Lake.” I will analyze and reflect on the overall experience of this performance. A little more than a month later, I will travel to New York City to attend “Sleeping Beauty.” In the same fashion, I will analyze and reflect on this performance. In conclusion, I will write a final report comparing and contrasting the two performances. I may conduct additional online research to learn the background history of each company and their dancers.

Tentative time schedule for completion:

- Buy tickets online soon after receiving the grant
- Part one analyzation and reflection of “Swan Lake” from Rome – roughly 2 weeks after attending the ballet
- Part two analyzation and reflection of “Sleeping Beauty” from New York City – roughly two weeks after attending the ballet
- Final report (including comparing/contrasting both ballets) – end of February 2019

Detailed budget:

| Expenditures | Cost |
|--|--------------|
| Ticket to “Swan Lake” in Rome (Early January 2019) | ~\$100 |
| Ticket to “Sleeping Beauty” in NYC (February 16, 2019 @ 2pm) | ~\$150 |
| Round trip ticket to NYC (CHO-LGA February 15-16, 2019)* | ~\$181 |
| Miscellaneous travel expenses in Italy & NYC (ex. cab/uber/subway) | ~\$69 |
| TOTAL | \$500 |

*After consulting both train and flight schedules, this was the best option due to timing and money.