

The Interplay of Sexuality and Sensuality in the Context of Jazz Dance

Dance CUE Research

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Abstract

For my Dance CUE research, I chose to study jazz dance in performance settings. Specifically how sexuality and sensuality can explain the misconceptions of the art form. This research is important to better understand why women and their bodies have been objectified on stage. Also, the study of the relationship between sexuality and sensuality in jazz dance is important in understanding why it took time for the genre to be respected by the dance community. Jazz dance being recognized as an erotic dance form has caused dancers to fight for its legitimacy. The research I have conducted is broken up into sections: introduction, sexuality, sensuality, further analysis, movement analysis through video and conclusion.

Introduction

The purpose of my research is to better understand the relationship between sexuality and sensuality in jazz dance, specifically its place in performance settings. I am curious how the two can be both separate and comparative ideas. Through this research I will look at how the female body is portrayed by the audience when performing more sexual content, and how/if the movement qualities in the choreography change when performed by male identifying performers. I will then look at various jazz dance choreographers and analyze how they utilize both extremes of sexuality and sensuality in their work, as well as analyzing the history of jazz dance and how a performer's race effects the way the audience reads the performance. This research is important to better understand why women and their bodies have been objectified on stage. This objectification depends on who is dancing and who is watching.

Jazz dance is known to be the more erotic and sexual dance form. As explained by Blackburn Center in its post about the historical roots of the sexualization of Black women, the idea of sexual roots come from the African diaspora in Western culture (Center). This is something that I have been taught and reminded of by my various professors at Muhlenberg College. Prior to my higher education, I was not as informed of my dance history and where the movement I was participating in came from. On the City Academy webpage, I learned that the term 'jazz' originated from twentieth century sexual slang, from the words 'jism' and 'jasm'. Later the site notes that the term jazz had become associated with the objectification of women (City Academy 2017). Jazz dance contains the same energy and eroticism found in striptease dance and overlaps in many ways. Jessica Berson is a modern dancer who had the opportunity to learn about the strip tease dance form firsthand. She states in her book, *The Naked Result: How Exotic Dance Became Big Business*, that there is a sense of erotic subjectivity that this dance

form can offer female performers. Club dance meets the aesthetic criteria applied to theatrical dancing. “Dancers are there to entertain and seduce audiences; display the dancer’s body; engage individual audience members visually, verbally, and often physically” (Berson 2016). Although jazz dance performance does not intend to seduce its audience, this idea that the dancer’s body is on display is what relates it to club dance. There are some ideas of concert dance in strip tease dance to include elongated extensions of the legs, high jumps, multiple turns, and of course “dancing sexy” (Berson 2016).

I was inspired to learn more about this topic due to my lifelong training in dance. During my dance studio and college experiences I have always been noted to be ‘a jazz dancer’. For me my goal was to be recognized as being a versatile dancer. Constantly hearing comments like this made me feel like my work in other areas wasn’t as strong. Over time I realized how this isn’t necessarily a bad thing and it persuaded me to dive deeper into my past and the long history in the genre. As Sean Cheesman states, “Jazz is hard to define because it’s constantly changing and growing. But that means a jazz dancer can easily do all types of dance” (Dance Spirit 2014). I decided that I wanted to pursue Jazz Dance in my post graduate work and started to do more personal research in my dance practices. Through my personal experiences being directed by a choreographer to perform with a particular intent, I was influenced and motivated to complete this research.

When discussing Jazz Dance, it is important to recognize where it came from, its history, and how it has been shaped to be the genre we know today. It is also crucial to recognize the bodies on stage, in terms of their race and gender and how that interplays with movement. Dolores Kirton Cayou discusses the origins of jazz dance specifically with the roots of African dance in her journal article, *The Origins of Modern Jazz Dance* from *The Black Scholar*, further analyzing

how slavery disrupted the idea of cultural expression. Jazz dance was not a dance form that was institutionalized. Due to this, it was only seen on the concert stage at the beginning of its creation. Black bodies were oppressed on the stage (Cayou 1970). Black dancers were rarely highlighted in performance settings if at all allowed to participate. Compared to City Academy, they state that slavery played a huge part in the formation of jazz dance. The jazz dance we know today came about in the early 1900s in New Orleans. The music and rhythms of African slaves were adopted, and movement came from an emotional outlet (City Academy 2017). Enslaved women essentially used dance as a way to cope with the way they were being treated and used dance to let out and release their emotions. Carlos Jones covers the aesthetics of Jazz dance and its directness with racism in the journal, *Jazz Dance: A History of the Roots and Branches*. The credibility has been lost in the art form and social power has dictated what remains in the dance form (Guarino 2014). I have found that dance teachers are not taking the time to acknowledge and accredit where this movement lies within history. There is a power dynamic as noted by Jones of what is visible in jazz today. There is a history of white and black bodies not being able to convene together in public spaces (Guarino 2014). This is an important idea to consider as when Black bodies were finally seen onstage, they were depicted to be highly sexualized beings.

White jazz dance pioneers have taken the African roots of the art form and have commercialized it in more recent years. Commercial dance combines multiple dance forms together and are the most choreographed numbers that are often seen on television, music videos, exc. According to the Dance Spirit article, *The Jazz Breakdown*, commercial jazz showcases the latest steps to pop songs and can be seen by artists like Janet Jackson and Paula Abdul. There is an emphasis on impressive tricks, leaps, flips and turns (Dance Spirit 2014). I will discuss later on how commercial jazz differs in musical selections. On the contrary, concert jazz dance

celebrates classical jazz and has been performed in Broadway musicals and by professional dance companies. The movement includes strong contractions, isolations and hinges. As quoted in Dance Spirit, “It’s a style performed from the core, with clean and strong lines emanating from the hips and chest,” Sue Samuels says (Dance Spirit 2014). The article later acknowledges that Jack Cole, Gus Giordano, Matt Mattox and Luigi were major influences of this classic jazz form in the concert dance scene.

The study of the relationship between sexuality and sensuality in jazz dance is important in understanding why it took time for the genre to be respected by the dance community. Its Black dance origins in relation to hypersexuality has caused dance pioneers like Gus Giordano to fight to make it recognized as a legitimate art form (Dance Spirit 2005). Hypersexuality from a movement perspective demonstrates a craving/excessive amount of sexual dancing occurring at one time. Psychologically, it appears that the dancer is obsessed with this idea of lust in movement more than the spectator expects there should be. Sexuality and sensuality can be better understood through the analysis of movement quality, mind-body connection, gender and race in adjacent with audience perspective and its relationship to the objectification of female bodies. In completing my research, I first looked at information that was already published on the topic and found myself looking at how the history of jazz caused opinions with racial ties. As a white woman I understand my privilege and biases and am not trying to imply that I have a complete understanding of what Black bodies have experienced.

Sexuality

I find it important to first review the dictionary definitions of both sexuality and sensuality. According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, sexuality is the “expression of sexual receptivity or interest especially when excessive”. These types of dances are made with the intent

of overt sexuality to excite and entice the audience. They are purposefully designed with sexual emphasis. Judith Lynne Hannah investigated dance and sexuality as a source of power in her journal article, *Dance and Sexuality: Many Moves* from *The Journal of Sex Research*. She claims that dance and sex both use the human body, and both involve the language of pleasure. These two ideas may be conceived as inseparable even when sexual expression is unintended (Hannah 2010). The types of movement choreographed in sexually driven works are important to look at as well. Hannah notes that pelvic thrusts, grinds and sexual acts on-stage help reveal meaning. Analyzing the sex characteristics in regard to use of pelvis, breasts, and hips in choreography reveal the playfulness that is present. This article offered me the idea that sex and dance are directly related. Returning to this idea that jazz dance is erotic and sexual, it is interesting to look at some of the personal experience's striptease dancers faced. Berson describes, "Performing at Backstage Bill's in New Haven and at Diamonds in Hartford, I discovered that dancing sexy assumed divergent meanings depending on who was dancing and who was watching," (Berson 2016). This recognition of 'who' is important in understanding why women were objectified onstage in both jazz and striptease dance. The male gaze is what has viewed female dancers as erotic objects instead of expressive subjects.

In jazz dance specifically there has been a known oversexualization of Black female identifying bodies. Europeans believed that Africans were sexually driven due to the minimum amount of clothing they wore and the suggestive tribal dances they performed (Center). Their overall appearance and choice in costuming gave this perception to the Europeans. During the slavery era, when a Black enslaved woman got pregnant, she was seen as being promiscuous and highly sexual. Black bodies that were auctioned off appeared to be in nude form while white bodies were covered up since they were more modest (Center). Judith Lynne Hanna notes that

Jaeger believes that nudity is a costume in dance that is not always sexual but can be used to express vulnerability and beauty of the body (Hanna). Therefore, being nude or partially clothed onstage does not always have sexual connotations, the dancers could be expressing beauty of the body or the emotion of oneself.

The way a Black woman moves her butt has depicted her as a sexual freak. Sonja Thomas notes Brenda Dixon Gottschild's explorations in her article, *Articles Educated Feet: Tap Dancing and Embodied Feminist Pedagogies at a Small Liberal Arts College*. Gottschild states that, "for black vernacular dances that accentuate the trunk, the butt is part of a gendered discourse with sexually charged energy that must be contained," (Thomas 202). What Thomas is getting at in this section of text is that sexual movement had to be toned down for these types of bodies in order to fit the aesthetic of the other dancers. When Black dancers who were trained in Africanist forms entered the white concert dance world, their movement was too sexy as the accentuation of the buttocks did not meet the aesthetic standard (Thomas 202). The aesthetic standard of concert dance was for dancers to look clean and professional on stage. This accentuation of the buttocks was seen in hip isolations in jazz dance. African dance forms practiced hip isolations overtly and were to be performed toned down in the jazz dance form. As noted by Sue Samuels, "It's a style performed from the core, with clean and strong lines emanating from the hips and chest" (Dance Spirit 2014). Black female bodies have felt the pressures to hold back in their movement in order to avoid grabbing the central attention of others.

The shape of a dancer's body can also create sexual connotations. The size of a male's buttocks or female's breasts can be distracting and used to judge a dancer's artistry (Hanna). Dancers are seen as physical objects when they are presented onstage and the shape of the body

is ultimately what the audience is perceiving. If a dancer is curvier, has large breasts or buttocks they can come off to being hypersexual beings when they begin to move. This is especially the case when movement has a sexual drive to it. Today in society dancers are very comfortable in expressing oneself and not afraid to touch themselves in front of others. This is something that I have adjusted to when performing and dancing in college settings. It was a culture shock for me and my family as well when shifting from dance studio to concert dance training. I have always been comfortable with my dancing body and expressing myself. There was a time where my family, specifically my mom felt like I was putting “too much of myself out there” on social media when posting a sexualized piece of movement which I learned in a dance class. Her initial response was that the male gaze was going to view me moving my curvier body around and have a perception of the ‘type of person I am’. For me I was just letting go and releasing emotion, yet to others it could have been seen as me objectifying my own body for others to critique.

Sensuality

I believe that sensuality is about the personal expression of the dancer and comes from a personal place of feeling. On the other hand, Merriam-Webster defines sensuality as “relating to, devoting to, or producing physical or sexual pleasure” (Merriam-Webster). This definition implies that sensuality is directly related to sexuality. In the context of dance, sensual movement shows feeling and emotion, and can be implicit, slow and smooth. This embodied manifestation of sensuality is performative and not intended to be sexual. An article from the Brazilian Council describes sensuality as expressing one’s attitude and used to arouse curiosity and to intrigue. They go into detail on how each gender identifies sensuality in themselves. Men express sensuality through sexual gestures while women express it through softer affection (*Brazilian Zouk Dance Council*). In my opinion, sensuality is the soul of Jazz Dance although it has strong

sexual roots. Berson states that Wes, a former Alvin Ailey dancer who owned a strip club, instructed dancers who felt most sensual in sinuous, to emphasize their fluidity in sustained movements (Berson 2016). In this example as a coach and choreographer, Wes is giving direction of intent to his dancers. This is central to my argument, that the dancer and choreographer need to be straight forward with their movement intentions as it effects how the audience finds meaning in the dance. My later analysis of Giordano Dance Chicago's movement invention will further explore this idea.

Further Analysis

Analyzing the movement quality of the dancers performing in jazz dance works can help us understand when a dancer is performing with a sexual or sensual intent. Sarah Rubidge notes how women have had a history in dance of performing more skillful movement that still underplays their technical ability. This is made evident in Rubidge's article *Decoding Dance* which was featured in *Dance Theatre Journal's* 1989 issue. Female dancers are often seen as delicate creatures that are light and airy and appear to be weak. Their movement is fluid, sensuous and sexual. Men perform more vigorous and strong movement that showcases their strength and dominance (Rubidge 1989). This is something that is prominent within multiple genres of dance, whether looking at Ballet, Modern or Jazz. Carlos Jones describes the movement quality of jazz to be sultry and seductive, having 'hmmm factor' connotations in his article on race in *Jazz Dance: A History of The Roots and Branches* (Guarino 2014). This seductive description comes from his analysis of enslaved people. The role of seduction in jazz is to make the audience enticed and interested in the ways that the body can express itself. Looking at the movement quality of males, they also tend to perform dynamic qualities of sharp, edgy, and vigorous while females perform more fluid and smooth movement (Rubidge). Ultimately it

is up to the choreographer to dictate if the movement given to both female and male identifying performers should be performed with the same intentions. It is noted that choreographers like Richard Alston and Slobhan Davies rarely differentiate male and female dancer's movement vocabulary or quality (Rubidge). As described by Jessica Berson, "A punch that is performed fast and hard is a very different experience and expression than one that is performed slowly and without muscular tension. It is the quality of the movement that makes the difference" (Berson 2016). Berson is highlighting the importance of how a movement is performed, as it provides different meaning for the viewer. Historically, men and women have performed movement with distinctly different movement qualities. It is the choreographer who decides if they are going to follow this status quo or have all bodies on stage perform the same movements and intent.

The mind/body connection a dancer possesses can also affect the way movement is perceived. Linda Haviland states how the mind on movement effects the way the dancer performs the work in her article, *The Sentient Archive: Bodies, Performance, and Memory*. Our history of performing and perceiving dance is used when analyzing and dissecting the meaning behind someone's movement. When I am watching dance, I bring my own knowledge and history to my viewing experience and can infer meaning of a piece differently than the person next to me. The author goes on to discuss the effects of dance competitions showcasing over the top, virtuosic, overly emotional, attitude, and sexually driven dancing. Haviland covers the aesthetics of competitive jazz dance and how there is a difference between mind/body movement and physical entertainment (Bissell 2018). Competitive jazz dance has turned into a showcase of tricks and extensions and does not embody or pay tribute to the origins of the art form.

The audience's perspective plays a huge role in determining if a performance is sexually and/or sensually driven. Each performance is typically presented to a new audience each time. This audience is made up of people who come from a variety of backgrounds. We all have had our own experiences and prior knowledge we bring to the table. Rubidge also discusses in her article, *Decoding Dance*, that the cultural values of the spectators play a role in understanding the meaning and reading of a work. So much imagination is put into dance that the viewer could read too much or too little into its sexual metaphors (Rubidge 1989). These sexual metaphors are not always picked up by a viewer as one could not be knowledgeable in such connotations. What is beautiful about dance is that every person does not have to understand or believe a work has a particular meaning. Our imaginations can create a vision for which we only believe. Judith Lynne Hannah notes that the point of view of being a participant versus viewer determines how a performance can be interpreted (Hannah 2010). When you are participating as a dancer in a work you have a better understanding of what is expected of you and what you are trying to portray to the audience. The viewer does not necessarily have all the information that the dancer was given when learning a work, so it is not as likely for an audience member and dancer to have the same interpretation of such dance.

The musical selections chosen for a jazz dance work can influence the way the piece is depicted by the viewer. Like jazz dance, jazz music originated from the same African lineage. Jacqueline Nalett explains how African rhythms were brought to America by African slaves and were used in the minstrel shows performed by white bodies in her article, *A History of Jazz Dance* for the book *Jump Into Jazz* (Nalett 2005). The 1920's became known as the Jazz Age where New Orleans was the homeplace of this genre of music (Joanne 2008). In *A Brief History of Jazz* article from Stella and Rose's Books, Joanne dives into how jazz music changed each

decade from the 1920's to the present. Jazz music is unique as it heavily uses improvisation, giving the musician the opportunity to express themselves in their own way. The style and tune of jazz music was not written down like other genres but was rather passed on by ear (Joanne 2008). Nalett notes how jazz music spread from New Orleans to Chicago and later New York which helped popularize jazz dance (Nalett 2005). I believe that jazz dance choreographers today do not often present this genre of movement with jazz music. There are pieces where the performers are dancing jazz to jazz music versus dancing jazz to popular music forms. Dancing jazz to jazz music is seen more commonly in concert dance while commercial jazz is often performed to pop music. In commercial jazz, the changes in the music lead to changes in the choreographic theme (Dance Spirit 2014). Since jazz dance and jazz music both came from the African diaspora, they are directly related in the ways they explore rhythm. In my opinion, it is more satisfying and entertaining to watch jazz performed to jazz music because of their strong relationship and roots.

Certain rhythms and instrumentation in music can allude to sexual or sensual connotations and can create complex meanings. Music can communicate a message and enforce movement choices. Brass sections give off a sense of power and dancers tend to perform movements that accentuate this. Vigorous leaps tend to occur during vigorous brass or percussion sections (Rubidge). The exaggeration and power behind their sound is shown in the dancer's movement choices. A big part of music is personal interpretation. From my own personal music background, I learned in my music classes growing up that Blues music has deep emotional connotations. Notes and chord choices can showcase a dark or light mood which is picked up by the listener. Music that is depicted to be more sensual has a rhythmic influence, showcases more emotion and sadness, slurs the notes, can be legato and shows smoothness.

Emotional pieces of music have more dynamics and show very slow and fast extremes. There is a built tension in emotion. More sexually driven pieces of music have excitement in the way notes jump around, show syncopation and have staccato notes. The male and female voice can also demonstrate sexual motives through their lyrics. Music with lyrics change the meaning of a piece as the words reveal a specific connotation. In commercial jazz dance, there are “moments where the movement is a very literal interpretation of the lyrics” (Dance Spirit 2014). Movement will match directly to the words in the lyrics, which is seen a lot in competitive dance. For example, the dancer falls to the ground as the singer in the music says, “as I’m falling in love”. Jazz dance essentially was born from jazz music rhythms which also has African roots as well.

Movement Analysis Through Video

In this section I am looking at three distinct works by choreographer’s Nan Giordano, Danny Buraczeski, and Jack Cole. Each of these selections either recognize or reject sexual and sensual connotations in their movement. I intend to analyze the works from my own interpretation while also looking at other critic’s perspectives.

I am interested in the way that Giordano Dance Chicago celebrates sensuality in their performances and movement invention. I chose this artist in particular due to my inspiration for my research as earlier explained in the introduction. In January of 2020 I attended a master class with Nan Giordano, artistic director of Giordano Dance Chicago and daughter of dance pioneer Gus Giordano. The class changed my life and perspective on the art form and had me wanting more. Planning to travel to Chicago for the Giordano Summer Workshop, my plans were altered to participate in a Giordano Technique Certification course over Zoom. As a company, their work concentrates on expressing sensuality and avoiding sexual contexts in their movement. Nan

stated in the master class that I attended at Steps on Broadway that “Jazz Dance without feeling is nothing” and that it is an expressive form that allows the soul to sing. That moment caused me to reflect on times where my work as a jazz dancer required me to only move in a sensual context and how sexuality was highly denied. Michael McStraw claims how Giordano technique/style celebrates the sensuality of jazz in *Jazz Dance: A History of the Roots and Branches*. McStraw goes on to describe their movement quality as being athletic, strong and free (Guarino 2014). The grounded and pelvis-oriented nature of the movement is something I personally experienced when taking class with Nan. The style of Giordano technique incorporates classic jazz dance, which recognizes its African roots. Jacqueline Nalett describes African dance as being earthy, low level with the knees bent and pulsating movements with body isolations (Nalett 2005). This description is exactly what I experienced when dancing Nan’s choreography and working in a crossed fourth position with plié.

In the Spring of 2005, Nan Giordano and Jon Lehrer premiered a new work, *Giordano Moves*, in honor and tribute of legendary jazz dance pioneer, Gus Giordano. Dance Spirit magazine released an interview with the choreographers of the work to understand their inspiration and process. The company’s movement incorporates classical jazz roots but with a contemporary definition of concert jazz (DanceSpirit 2005). What make the work stand out is its respect and homage to jazz dance roots. Lehrer worked with Chicago jazz musician, George McCray, to create an original score for the piece which incorporated the main jazz instruments- saxophone, piano, drums and bass. He also worked with Kevin Dreyer to create dramatic lighting that represented a jazz nightclub (Dance Spirit 2005).

What is first striking about the piece is the use of a solo and duet at the opening. The clear use of saxophone driving the soloist’s movement and drums driving the duets make it

appear to be a playful conversation between the two. While completing the Nan Giordano Certification Program for teaching Giordano technique, I learned Gus' various port de bras exercises. This is something that was prominent in *Giordano Moves* as the dancers were utilizing their head and torso isolations (Lehrer 2011). The dancers had a regal feel in their upper body while staying relaxed and poised in the first group unison section. This is noted by Nalett in regard to the Giordano technique, that the dancing incorporates the natural and freer body movement of modern dance showcasing relaxation of yoga influence (Nalett 2005). It is clear in their use of contractions and upper body curves that there is a clear source of energy and expressivity. As the tempo of the music begins to speed up, the dancers begin completing various traveling passes from one side of the stage to the other. The smooth and calm nature of their movement makes the large expansive jumps look effortless. It is the dancer's use of pelvis that drives their dancing from low to high levels in the air.

Lucia Mauro wrote a review for the Chicago Tribune of the performance of *Giordano Moves* in March of 2005 at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance. She notes, "From the spiderlike arms to the sensual hip isolations, the piece showcases an amalgam of Giordano signature gestures," (Mauro 2005). Mauro makes it clear that the hip isolations are not sexual in nature and illustrate how they are used with emotional and expressive intent. As discussed prior, hip isolations and movements can be highly sexualized, yet the style of Giordano dancing executes it in such a professional and clean way.

Next I will be analyzing Danny Buraczeski's work, *Swing Concerto*, which premiered in the Fall of 1993 (Buraczeski 1993). The clip I will be analyzing came from its Jacobs Pillow performance on July 28, 1995. This work embodies all elements of concert jazz dance due to its clean lines and use of jazz music. As noted in the Jacobs Pillow description, the work embodies

Buraczeski's fertile imagination, elegance and love for jazz. It is clear how experienced he is in this classical and theatrical form of dance due to his movement intentions as well as Broadway experience (Buraczeski 1993). The dancers begin by traveling and changing their head focus from the floor to the audience while loosely punching the space and completing a head isolation. The use of partnering creates relationships between the dancers that is playful yet explores the various rhythms by the jazz instruments. This work explores the idea of sensuality through the subtle shifts of shoulder isolations and shimmy motions. Choreographically, Buraczeski chose to have all female and male dancers perform the chorus section in unison to the musical selection of 'Sing, Sing, Sing'. All dancers were performing large turns and jumps on stage, traveling swiftly back and forth no matter what their gender. Buraczeski did not feel the need to separate the type of movements the female and male performers were dancing. In an interview hosted by Buraczeski with his three soloists of *Swing Concerto*, Zach talked about the excitement he had as a dancer playing with swing music and the roots of jazz (Buraczeski 2015). Zach expresses how his understanding of jazz technique came full circle as his solo in the work made him explore plié as currency. Danny's choreography had a strong connection of the pelvis with the ground, practiced shifting weight which allowed Zach to add his own nuances to the movement. As a dancer he had to make his own intentions of the movement he was given to develop his own knowledge of his body (Buraczeski 2015).

Lastly, I will be looking at the work of Jack Cole and his creation of what we know today as theatrical jazz dance. During the 1940's Cole's work started gaining attention, being named as the "Father of Theatrical Jazz Dance". He developed dancers through personal training to be prepared for Hollywood movies (Nalett 2005). From a Jazz Dance III lecture by Ricky Dieter at Muhlenberg College, he spoke about Jack Cole's career highlights. Cole's involvement in the

Ted Shawn company helped develop his hypermasculine approach to movement, highly against the weak female and strong male persona. He wanted to break the sex and gender norms and internalized suppressed sexuality. Cole's dance works were inspired by aesthetics of Indian and Eastern Asian art, specifically Bharatanatyam technique. It was when Cole got to Harlem where he first combined jazz music with jazz movement and where his own choreographic style came to fruition (Dieter 2020). Watching Cole's choreography in the 1951 film, *On The Riviera*, the feature of Gwen Vernon while performing the Can Can was most striking (MrShowbizman 2012). The dancers are shaking their butts, performing high kicks, and lifting their skirts away from their bottom. In this YouTube clip of the Can Can scene, you can see how the arm movements have integration of Bharatanatyam, while using authentic jazz dance in theatrical choreography. Another thing I picked up on was the exclusion of black dancing talent in Hollywood. As discussed earlier, black dancers were not included on the concert dance stage either right away.

Conclusion

I believe that jazz dance was intended to express emotion and feeling through sensuality. Its sexual African roots have created an image to some that it is a promiscuous and erotic dance form. Jazz dance's similarities to strip club dance also reveals its sexual undertones. With that being said, I find it silly to not recognize jazz dance as being both sexual and sensual. Sexuality and sensuality are better understood through the analysis of movement quality, mind-body connection, gender and race. The intentions set by the dancer and choreographer are imperative for meaning making and interpretation by the audience. Finally, the objectification of female bodies on the stage have made this research especially important to conduct. This genre of dance

often honors its classical roots, yet choreographers today are incorporating their own style to make it an evolving art form. Jazz dance is everchanging.

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