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Establishing the Importance of Watching Ballet for Classical Ballet Students

THESIS

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MASTER OF FINE ARTS
in dance

by

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~ For my parents ~

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Establishing the Importance of Watching Ballet for Classical Ballet Students

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Professor Jennifer Fisher, Chair

An important connection exists between watching high-level professional ballet and the classical ballet student's technical and artistic development as a dancer. While the exposure to professional dancers and performances is inherent in traditional ballet conservatories that are directly linked to professional companies, this part of the dancer's training is often not addressed in private studios and university programs where interaction with the professional realm is not part of the student's regular activities. This link remains undocumented in the literature that covers ballet pedagogy; therefore, this thesis seeks to formally identify the value of watching professional ballet as part of classical ballet training. The research first explores written records, such as dancers' memoirs and pedagogy texts that indirectly support this connection. Interviews with current ballet teachers give further insight into this topic. The research also addresses the difference between conservatory-model schools and other training options highlighting the historical factors that led to the widespread split of ballet schools from professional companies. Finally, results from two research studies, conducted with ballet students at the University of California, Irvine and involving the integration of video materials into ballet classes and coaching sessions, address the benefits students can gain from exposure to ballet's visual tradition.

PART 1
Setting the Scene

Introduction

Through experiences in both academic and private studio settings in California over the past 15 years I have noticed repeatedly that, although they may be studying ballet intensively, many young ballet students in the United States today are not exposed to or seeking out professional performances of the art they are studying. I believe the lack of additional visual material in many dancers' training ultimately deprives them of an essential aspect of classical ballet training. As a young ballet student myself, many years ago, I watched any ballet video I could get my hands on and went to as many live performances as possible. While I was watching for the enjoyment of it, I was also studying and absorbing what I saw. I took what I saw back with me to the dance studio and worked to find the same lines, placement, and expression with my own body. It was not until later, as a teacher, that I began to understand what an important part this focused ballet viewing had played in my dance training.

With this in mind, throughout my years of teaching ballet, I have experimented with creating these experiences for my students by showing video footage of great dancers or particular choreographic works in order to illustrate a point discussed in technique class, to encourage artistic expression, or to simply educate my students in the tradition of the art. I have seen that watching ballet can be significantly inspirational for ballet students and can also lead to greater technical and artistic understanding of the discipline. These experiences and observations have led me to focus my research on more clearly identifying and documenting the benefits of watching professional ballet as an important part of a student's ballet training. Through research experiments in the ballet studio setting, I hope to highlight the benefits that are pertinent to ballet

students today and to propose successful methods for incorporating supplementary visual materials into ballet education.

Review of Literature

I began my research by reviewing pedagogical texts, written by ballet instructors or about ballet instructors, published in the 20th and 21st centuries, to see whether or not they addressed the benefits of watching ballet for the ballet student. I then focused on ballet dancers' memoirs ranging in publication dates from 1931 to 2014. I looked for references to watching professional ballet and any trends that might become clear across these recorded experiences. A selection of secondary texts and documentary films that speak reliably about the dancer's experience were also referenced. Finally, extra supporting material was drawn from ballet and dance history texts.

For the purpose of this research, when I write about watching ballet, I am referring specifically to the classical ballet student watching high-level professional ballet, either live or recorded. In this context, high-level refers to internationally recognized ballet companies and the dancers that they hire. Similarly, the students I am referring to in this literature review are pre-professional students between the ages of ten and 18. However, learning and improving in ballet continues into the dancer's professional career, and there will often be overlap between the pre-professional students referenced and dancers whose professional careers have already started.

In all the texts I reviewed written by or about ballet teachers I found no direct reference to how the observation of a great dancer specifically relates to the technical and artistic development of the student. Nowhere did I find it written that ballet students should be required to watch professional performers in order to improve in aspects of their own ballet practice. I did, however, find the connection implied and supported by indirect statements. In Gretchen Ward

Warren's book *The Art of Teaching Ballet: Ten Twentieth-Century Masters*, Warren, herself a respected ballet teacher, shares a quotation from a student of the renowned ballet pedagogue Marika Besobrasova, who owned and directed a school in Monte Carlo for more than 60 years. Besobrasova's student said of watching the teacher demonstrate: "Her artistry, coordination, and flow of movement were an inspiration. There was so much to learn by observing the care she gave to small details — the way she used her head and eyes in connection to the tips of her fingers, her feet, and beyond" (qtd., Warren, 17). The student recognized the amount to be gained simply by watching Besobrasova in the classroom and absorbing the former ballerina's skill and experience. This point is again highlighted in *Vaganova Today: The Preservation of Pedagogical Tradition* written by American ballet dancer turned journalist Catherine Pawlick. Pawlick explains that at the Vaganova Academy in St. Petersburg, Russia, rigorous qualification standards are required of the Academy's teachers, all of whom must be graduates of the Academy, have had performance careers, and have also completed the four-year teacher-training course at the Academy (Pawlick, 75-76). In an interview, former Kirov Ballet dancer Konstantin Shatilov, now a teacher at the Academy, explains that the teachers in his day were all principal dancers in the company and were able to "correctly demonstrate how to execute difficult movements, but also simple ones" (qtd., 88). The Vaganova Academy students clearly would absorb part of the technical and artistic nuances of their art by watching their professionally experienced teachers, as well as regularly attending, and even participating in, company performances at the Kirov Theatre.

In all the literature reviewed in this category of dance pedagogy, the closest I found to a direct statement about this relationship between watching ballet and the student's training was

the following comment from Asaf Messerer, a renowned pedagogue of the Bolshoi Ballet Academy in Moscow:

> I had come to understand that the ballet artist had to perceive and make fullest use of all the knowledge of his many years of preparation as the student. Therefore daily, besides attending Gorsky's class, I watched how dancers worked in other classes of my school … In addition, during the evening hours I came to the school, found an empty studio and, alone, standing at the barre and in the middle of the room, watching myself in the mirror, tried various movements and learned to control myself through the reflection (Messerer, 17).

One text stands alone in this research, in the fact that it does directly highlight the benefit of watching ballet for the ballet student. This is American choreographer Agnes de Mille's short 1960 book of advice titled *To a Young Dancer.* She advises a young dancer to "… try to see all the good dancing you can of whatever kind, either in live theater or on films. This will be your surest means of establishing standards" (de Mille, 63). When writing specifically about technique and the artistry of smooth transitions between steps that make the dance a pleasure to watch, de Mille writes, "Watch a great star do even so dull a thing as a series of *pliés* and you will understand this" (de Mille, 33). She is giving the dance student a clear direction to watch the greats. In relation to this she gives the specific example of watching old footage of the Russian ballet star Anna Pavlova and observing the positioning of her arms (de Mille, 33). She also advises the young student to learn classical variations and to study the way they are performed by great dancers in order to understand style (de Mille, 35). Although more than fifty years old, this text remains relevant today and is unique in giving this essential advice to aspiring dancers.

In reviewing ballet dancers' memoirs I was able to draw more support for my belief that there is an important connection between watching ballet and the ballet student's development. In all the memoirs I read there was always some reference to watching ballet or dance and the effect that this experience had had on the dancer watching. It was clear that watching ballet had been influential at some point for most of the dancers whose memoirs I read. Through analyzing the experiences chronicled by ballet dancers in their memoirs, I identified three primary categories of the benefits of watching professional ballet for the ballet student. These categories are inspiration, artistic development, and technical development. All three categories are interrelated and one viewing experience can often lead to results in more than one area for the ballet student. However, in order to clearly illustrate these findings, in the following section I will isolate and give examples of each category.

The inspiration a ballet student can gain from watching ballet can be subdivided into two further categories: the moment of initial inspiration when a person, who may or may not yet be a ballet student, falls in love with the art, and the continued inspiration a student gains by watching ballet throughout his or her training.

Many dancers remember the moment of initial inspiration as having occurred while watching ballet. Early 20th century Russian ballerina Tamara Karsavina, in her memoir *Theatre Street*, recalls the awe she felt in the theatre when, as a young child, she was taken to see her father's farewell performance at the Imperial Theatre in St. Petersburg (Karsavina, 26). Irina Baronova, who would become one of the "baby ballerinas" of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo at age 12, recalls the pivotal moment of seeing, at age seven, Tamara Karsavina perform. She states, "I was transfixed, overwhelmed. To this day I remember it all like photographic snapshots … From that day on, for all of my life, I have loved ballet" (Baronova, 45-46). Current American

Ballet Theatre soloist Misty Copeland also references, in her memoir, the moment that sparked her initial obsession with movement. Although Copeland's experience was not with ballet, but rather connected to seeing Olympic gold-medal gymnast Nadia Comaneci perform a routine, it is clear that this experience of seeing an influential performance was pivotal for Copeland and sparked a love of movement that quickly developed into the pursuit of ballet (Copeland, 21).

This moment of initial inspiration is most often associated with seeing ballet for one of the first times as a child, but my research shows that it can also occur when the ballet viewer already has experience as a ballet student but has not yet found a deep understanding or love of the art. Li Cunxin, who was a student at the Beijing Dance Academy during the Cultural Revolution in China, pinpoints the exact moment he truly fell in love with ballet when already an advanced student. In a rare exposure to the western world, Li and his fellow students were shown video footage of world-famous Russian ballet dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov in both *Don Quixote* and the Hollywood film *The Turning Point*. Li states, "From that moment on I loved ballet with a passion. I dared to believe that if Baryshnikov could dance like that, then so could I … I had only one desire now - to dance like Baryshnikov" (Li, 241).

Continued inspiration refers to the inspiration gained by watching ballet throughout the student's training and often into his or her performing career. Continued inspiration is often connected to a role-model dancer whom the student idolizes. This is very clear in former New York City Ballet dancer Toni Bentley's 1982 published journal that follows her experiences through one company season. She dedicates several pages to principal dancer Suzanne Farrell, writing about her adoration of the ballerina, marveling at her apparent divinity, and stating that Farrell changed her life (Bentley, 26, 30-31, 123).

Continued inspiration reaffirms the student's love of the art and is important in keeping the student engaged and wanting to improve. It links directly to the student's motivation to apply the lessons learnt from watching ballet to his or her own dance practice. A clear example of this can be seen again with Chinese dancer Li Cunxin and his sole desire to dance like Baryshnikov. Throughout his memoir, he returns multiple times to this goal as a benchmark for his own improvement, showing how the influence of Baryshnikov and his other two idols, Rudolph Nureyev and Valdimir Vasiliev, continued to be a driving force for him to make efforts reach his goal and to continuously surpass himself, artistically and technically (Li, 315, 402, 405).

In her memoir, Imperial Russian ballerina Mathilde Kschessinska very clearly illustrates the connection between watching inspirational dancers and the student's artistic development when she writes about being in awe of Italian ballerina Virginia Zucchi. She writes, "I felt an overwhelming, unforgettable sensation when I watched her. I felt that I was beginning to understand, for the first time, how one should dance in order to deserve the title of a great dancer" (Kschessinska, 26). She shares that watching this ballerina in certain roles informed her own dancing at a young age and continued to be a reference point for her throughout her career. She expresses gratitude to the older ballerina for having been such a formative influence in her development as an artist (Kschessinska, 26-27). Kschessinska writes of Zucchi, "From the day that Zucchi appeared on our stage I began to work with fire, energy and application: my one dream was to emulate her" (Kschessinska, 27).

The final category refers to the development in technique that a student can gain through watching ballet. Again, this category is closely linked to the others, particularly continued inspiration and artistic development, but it includes also the analysis, assessment, and assimilation of what the student is seeing. Kschessinska refers to this clearly when she writes

about watching the great dancers of the Imperial Theatre at work. She and her fellow students analyzed the professional dancers' performances, looking at both their qualities and faults, assessing their skills and, through this, establishing their own respective levels in ballet (Kschessinska, 26). Karsavina writes, "When particularly impressed with something seen on the stage, I secretly practiced the steps in front of the long mirror in our dressing-room and memorized most of the parts long before my time came to play them" (Karsavina, 73). Karsavina watched the Italian star ballerina Pierina Legnani, who was known as a great technician. Legnani is credited with being the first ballerina to perform the 32 *fouettés* that are now a standard part of the classical ballet repertoire. After seeing Legnani perform this feat, Karsavina noted, "all the girls, big and small, constantly tried to do the 32 turns" (Karsavina, 81).

Karsavina's reference to Legnani's 32 *fouettés* leads to an important aspect of the benefits ballet students can gain from watching professional dancers; seeing the artistic and technical achievements of great dancers can inspire students to push to master challenging steps and this can lead to innovation in the art. An educational video published by London's Royal Opera House on YouTube illustrates this point very well. After discussing the origins of the 32 *fouettés* and Legnani's reputation, the video highlights that today's ballerinas routinely perform double and triple *fouettés,* making the turn count in the *fouetté* series even greater than 32 (Royal Opera House 1:23). A connection can be seen between the ballet students and young professionals of Karsavina's day who watched Legnani and strived to recreate her feat and the subsequent innovations in ballet technique that led to the famous *fouettés* at the level at which we see them today.

Artistic innovation can also occur through the same process. Viewing a special artistic performance can lead the dance student to examine his or her own interpretive tendencies

and to search for a unique artistic voice. The 18th century French ballerina Marie Sallé, for example, whose name is closely connected with the *ballet d'action* and the development of human expression in ballet, was a ten-year-old student and performer at Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre in London when English ballet-master John Weaver was producing work at the nearby Drury Lane Theatre (Astier, par.11; Guest, 21). Weaver was experimenting with mime and gesture as the sole form of storytelling in his ballets, and, although it cannot be fully confirmed, ballet historian Ivor Guest has speculated that Sallé would have seen and been influenced by his work. This inspiration would possibly have led to Sallé's emphasis on expression in ballet throughout her career (Guest, 21-22).

It is not by chance that most of the ballet memoirs surveyed for this research contain direct references to watching professional dancers. The original ballet training systems that developed in Western Europe and spread to Russia intrinsically supported this part of classical ballet training, though it wasn't formally documented. The world's first ballet schools, such as The Paris Opera Ballet School (which grew from the existence of a dance academy founded in 1661) and La Scala Theatre Ballet School in Milan (1813) were founded with the same initial purpose, which was to train dancers who would then fill the ranks of the national opera and/or ballet company (Hammond, 75, 76). The first ballet school in St. Petersburg was established in 1738 to supply dancers for performances at the court of Empress Anna Ivanova, and within 20 years the Imperial Theatres had been established under the reign of Catherine the Great (Garafola, 152). The final two schools that make up the list of the world's oldest ballet schools, the Royal Theater Ballet School in Copenhagen (1771) and the Bolshoi Ballet Academy in Moscow (1773), were founded to fill the same need.

In this traditional conservatory model, the ballet school is directly connected to a professional company and theatre. In a short profile of the Bolshoi Ballet School published in 1959, the authors write, "What is the secret of the ballet school's success in training highly-qualified professional dancers? The answer lies in the many-sided and constant links between the school and the Bolshoi Theatre" (Bocharnikova and Gabovich, 46). This statement highlights the essential benefit for the ballet student in the traditional conservatory system. The students in these historical conservatories were constantly in direct proximity to the professional dancers in the company. Referring back to previously used examples, especially those of Kchessinska and Karsavina, it is clear that the students in these schools regularly watched the company dancers rehearse, saw them perform, and also participated in performances with the company. This connection is illustrated in Bertrand Normand's documentary film *Ballerina* (2009). In one scene, Mariinsky Ballet prima ballerina Uliana Lopatkina rehearses alone in a studio; the camera turns slowly to settle on a group of young students watching her through the glass-paned doors with looks of rapture on their small faces (Normand 46:22).

Although there are now well-established, conservatory-model ballet schools in the United States, the early development of ballet in the country did not lay the foundation for a continued development of this tradition. In her book chronicling the first 50 years of George Balanchine's School of American Ballet, Jennifer Dunning states that despite European ballerina Fanny Elssler's popularity in the United States in the first half of the 19th century, her "artistic influence was not deep" and the level of ballet performance and instruction in America declined over the second half of that century. Dunning illustrates further how this was made obvious by the weak reception Russian star ballerina Anna Pavlova was given at her first performance in New York in

1910. There was also little professional ballet of note in the country between Pavlova's last tour and the arrival of the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo in 1933 (Dunning, 5, 6, 10, 11).

In an article for *McClure's* magazine in 1913, author Willa Cather wrote about ballet training in the United States and stated that there was no good ballet in America. She attributed this to the fact that there were no good dance schools and that just about anybody could make a living as a teacher regardless of his or her qualifications (Cather, 86). George Balanchine, widely considered the father of American ballet, when asked by Lincoln Kirstein if he would come to America to start a ballet company, is famously quoted as having said, "But first a school" (Dunning, vii). There were no established conservatory or company models to build upon and little to no ballet tradition for Balanchine to draw dancers from for a new company. Kirstein saw this lack and envisioned establishing America's own tradition of ballet (Dunning, viii).

The School of American Ballet began to establish a tradition of conservatory-model training in New York City in the 1930s and 1940s and on the West Coast the San Francisco Ballet School did the same. However, elsewhere ballet training options remained small-scale and privately operated. Over the years some of the dancers from the Ballets Russes and Pavlova's company broke off from the companies while on tour and settled down to open studios in remote locations. Although the dancers themselves may have been inspirational teachers, there was most likely no established tradition of ballet in many areas for the first-generation students to refer to and few high-level companies to influence the development of this tradition. This is the background from which private ballet schools and, subsequently, university dance programs in the United States developed.

This literature review begins the work of officially identifying the importance of watching professional ballet as part of the ballet student's training and highlighting why this

aspect of ballet training is not prominent in private ballet studios and university programs in the United States. A review of dancers' memoirs shows that watching ballet is influential in multiple aspects of the dance student's development. Watching ballet can serve as the initial inspiration that sparks the love of ballet. It can continue to feed the love of the art throughout the dancer's training and career. And it can influence artistic and technical development in the student, which can lead to innovation in the art.

This important connection between watching high-level ballet and a student's ballet training is naturally present in the traditional conservatory model as established by the world's first ballet schools. However, when ballet took hold in the United States, there was no tradition to build upon, and, with the exception of the notable conservatory-model schools already mentioned and a few others, the private studio model predominated the world of ballet education in the United States. I propose that due to these historical factors the unspoken essential connection between the ballet school and the professional company was often lost, and that because this connection was never officially recognized or documented, no steps were taken to fill the gap.

Having established the importance of watching professional ballet as part of classical ballet training, I intend to develop and propose solutions that might fill this gap in dance education where needed. In an article published in 2012, Andrew Carroll, assistant professor of ballet at the University of South Florida, Tampa, writes, in regards to ballet education in private studios and the smaller cities of the United States, "Without the benefit of having a professional company on hand to provide artistic stimulation, the task of exposure is more challenging than that of the major schools" (par. 10). It is this gap that I am addressing with my research, and that I hope to begin to close through my work at UC Irvine and beyond.

Conversations with Teachers

In support of my preliminary research and the research studies that followed, I chose to speak with a small selection of ballet teachers to add to the information already uncovered through my review of literature and begin to understand what importance current teachers give to this subject and how they emphasize watching ballet for their students. Although the small number of six subjects (limited by time and availability) was not big enough to make any broad claims about ballet teachers in general, these conversations supported a lot of the material already gathered for this research and gave valuable insight into other teachers' teaching methods.

I chose to speak with teachers who represented a variety of training experiences, career paths, and current teaching situations. I thought that this might bring to light different student experiences and teaching approaches. All six teachers trained originally in classical ballet with the majority of their years of training taking place in traditional conservatory schools connected to professional ballet companies. Five of the six teachers trained in North America (United States and Canada) and one in China at the Beijing Dance Academy. Four of these professionals spent their careers in traditional ballet companies (companies that perform the classical ballet works as well as more contemporary work) while two moved to contemporary ballet companies (Alonso King LINES Ballet and Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet). Five of the teachers currently train pre-professional dancers in university and/or conservatory programs; the sixth teacher also did so before his retirement.

The interviews took the shape of informal conversations. I guided each conversation through three main topics but also followed other subjects that could provide valuable information about the teacher's thought processes and teaching focus. The three general topics

were: the teacher's own experience of watching ballet as a student; his or her opinion, from a teacher's point of view, on whether watching dance is important for dance students; and whether or not he or she emphasizes this importance while teaching and how. Throughout these interviews I found information that supported the three areas of influence that I had already identified through my review of literature. I also encountered further information that influenced and supported my work in my research studies.

All six teachers I interviewed identified a notable influence on their development as dancers that came from watching more advanced and professional dancers during their time as students. Both Jackie Kopcsak, who trained at the Pacific Northwest Ballet School, and Shaun Boyle, who finished her training at the BalletMet Academy, spoke about the irresistible pull to "run down the corridor" to the company studios to watch the professionals in class or rehearsal, which highlights the inbuilt and unspoken part of the dancer's training in the conservatory system. Boyle also spoke about participating in company performances and the power that seeing the professionals at work can have to keep young student inspired: "Being backstage, watching how professionals interact, watching what they are physically doing in their bodies … [That] can be enough to feed you for a while and put yourself in … very strenuous situations."

David Allan, who trained at the National Ballet School of Canada and then danced with the company, shared a classic story of initial inspiration. When he was nine-years-old, after seeing Rudolph Nureyev dance Romeo, in *Romeo and Juliet*, he turned to his parents and said, "I have to be just like Rudolph Nureyev; where can I do that?" Allan noticed the lack of advanced dancers to watch and compare himself to during his early training in St. Louis. Once at the National Ballet School, the influence of more advanced students helped him quickly develop the technique he needed to catch up to their level. Tong Wang, who trained at the Beijing Dance

Academy, also remembered the influence watching the older students at the Academy had on the younger students' technical development. Inspired, the younger students would work to perfect the impressive steps they had seen practiced in the more advanced classes.

In sharing their own experiences of watching ballet as students, all six teachers I spoke with supported the information I had already found in my review of literature. But the conversations with these teachers expanded on the material and presented new viewpoints on the potential benefits to be gained by the student from watching ballet. In relation to technical development, Kopcsak, who now teaches at the University of Southern California (USC), felt that watching well-executed ballet choreography can help students understand the purpose of the steps they practice at the *barre* and help them stay motivated to strengthen these building blocks. Boyle, who now teaches at UC Irvine, shared that watching other dancers can aid in giving the student accurate images to draw on when visualizing their dancing in class. She gave the example that a teacher can speak endlessly about the rotation of the leg in the hip joint, but often if a student has not seen what the correct execution of this movement actually looks like, he or she cannot visualize the correction and therefore cannot direct his or her body to make the needed adjustment. Allan explained that watching ballet can be instrumental in helping the student see and understand the whole picture of the dance ensemble, which is essential knowledge for any dancer who hopes to pursue a career in a company that has a *corps de ballet* or any type of ensemble work.

Although all the teachers that I spoke with were clear in their conviction that watching ballet is important for ballet students, none of them support this connection by using video material in the classes they teach. However, four of the six do, or did, assign viewing material to their students and/or organize group outings with students to watch live or recorded

performances. Of these four, three spoke clearly about how these assignments and theatre trips are directly related to the classes they teach. At USC, Kopscak assigns one short video for her students to watch each week. The students are also required to write one journal entry per week, and, although it is not mandatory that they write about the assigned video, Kopscak remarked that the majority of the students do write about the video and record a lot of inspiration gained from watching the material. Sacramento Ballet School principal Melanie Haller regularly takes her students, as a group, to see live ballet performances and also takes advantage of the Ballet in Cinema series that features broadcasts from Moscow's Bolshoi Ballet and London's Royal Ballet. In class she incorporates movement themes from the classical repertoire the students have seen. For example, after studying *La Sylphide* or *Giselle*, she will prepare exercises for the students that recall the positions and movement quality of ballet's Romantic era. When Allan was still teaching, he also took students to watch performances and led discussions with the students after each event. He wanted the students to identify what they really liked about a performance and to be able to articulate in words why that was. He also gave students "viewing exercises". For example, when attending dress rehearsals, he asked the students to watch from the balcony and to observe the dancers at the back of the corps de ballet in order to gain a better understanding of ensemble work.

The remaining two teachers that I spoke with said that they suggest viewing ballet outside of class but leave it up to the students to make the ultimate choice and commitment to go to performances or to spend time watching videos. They do emphasize the importance of watching other dancers but focus on having the students watch each other while in class. Wang, who currently teaches at both UC Irvine and Maple Conservatory of Dance in Orange County, regularly draws the students' attention to specific dancers in class, either to highlight something

the dancer is doing well in order to illustrate what he is looking for in the students or to offer a constructive correction that the whole class can benefit from by seeing the effect it has on the dancer being corrected. Boyle also finds moments in her class to focus on one student, leading the class in the observation of a certain movement quality or technical adjustment. She also directs the students to observe each other in pairs, allowing them to discuss briefly what they see in each other's dancing, and, through this, solidifying new understanding. Although, these teaching methods are not the focus of this research, their regular use by successful teachers such as Wang and Boyle further supports the connection between watching and a student's positive development in his or her own dancing.

Marina Hotchkiss, a former dancer with Alonso King LINES Ballet and now a teacher at the school and the director of the school's BFA program in conjunction with Dominican University, also directs students to watch each other in class, and encourages observation of the artistic choices other students make. Hotchkiss also shared that the teachers at LINES Ballet are still able to and do fully demonstrate the work being given to the students, implying that the students in these classes gain the unspoken benefits that are the focus of this research simply from watching their teachers. This highlights the intrinsic learning opportunities for students in a traditional conservatory where the teachers themselves may be a visual resource.

PART 2
Into the classroom

Preparing the Class: Research Plan & Methods

My research in literature and through interviews supported my theory, developed through my years of experience as a ballet student and teacher, that watching professional level ballet can play an important role in a ballet student's technical and artistic development. I also observed that with the proliferation of ballet schools that are not connected to professional companies or, at least, not located in the vicinity of one, many ballet students lack the opportunity to be exposed to this fundamental aspect of classical ballet training. With these theories established I developed two research studies with the following two aims: To start to document the benefits that current ballet students can gain from watching professional ballet as part of their training, and to identify and record successful ways of incorporating visual materials into the ballet classroom as a teaching method aimed to address the lack of exposure to professional ballet in many ballet training settings.

I chose to work with the young adult population available at UC Irvine because the age range of these students, approximately 17 to 25, could accurately represent the range of students from teens to adults found in many ballet studios or other university settings. I chose not to address the child ballet student at this time because I think that work with children requires a different focus and its own dedicated research. I developed two separate studies in order to address two generalized categories of ballet students: the amateur, or recreational, student and the pre-professional student. I felt it was important to look at both of these groups because most teen and adult ballet students will fall into one of these two categories. It was important to look at both groups separately because the students' needs would differ between the groups and the teaching approach would need to be adjusted accordingly.

For the group representative of the amateur or recreational ballet student (Group A) I chose to incorporate my research in the Ballet II course for non-dance-majors that I was teaching at UC Irvine during the 2015 Winter quarter (10 weeks). This is a regularly scheduled class offered to university students who are not pursuing a degree in the dance department. My reasoning for this choice was that it would allow me to expand and get feedback on my methods in a traditional ballet class environment with students who were an average representation of the students found in similar ballet classes at colleges, universities, and private studios. It was important that I conduct research within the standard ballet class structure in order to understand how my methods could be incorporated successfully into that structure and to document the resulting benefits for the students in that setting. The sample size for Group A was determined by the number of students that enrolled in the class. The final enrollment number for this class was 20 students. Of these 20 students, two were graduate students and the rest were undergraduate students of junior or senior standing with the exception of one freshman. Approximately 75% of the students were students in the School of the Arts (primarily in drama and musical theatre); the remaining 25% were students in the sciences. Twenty percent of the students were male. Ballet II is the highest level ballet class for non-dance-majors offered at UC Irvine, which means that the students' proficiency levels range from advanced beginner (having completed the Ballet I series) to intermediate (multiple years of training prior to attending UCI). The technical level of the students in this particular class was strong.

The second study group (Group B) represented the pre-professional students more often found in professional training programs at ballet conservatories or in university degree programs. With this group I chose to work with a select number of students on an independent project that involved preparing variations from classical ballet repertoire for performance. This study was

designed to explore the effect of watching ballet on the learning process of the more advanced student who is, theoretically, more sensitive to the nuances of artistry and performance quality as well as the more subtle expressions of ballet technique. This study group aimed to explore not only the effects watching professional ballet would have on the dancers' development of technique and artistry, but also how watching ballet might be incorporated into the coaching process.

The study with Group B was conducted in the dance department at UC Irvine during the 2015 Winter quarter. The participating students all received two "independent study" units that will show on their transcripts. The students in Group B were all Ballet IV level students (out of five levels) pursuing BFA degrees with a focus in dance performance. All five students were sophomores (19-20 years old). With the exception of one of the students who began studying dance at age 12, the students in this group all began with creative movement classes between the ages of three and five. All five students studied in pre-professional training programs at ballet conservatories before being accepted into the dance department at UC Irvine. Having five students provided a balance between having enough students to produce a variety of results and having a group small enough to be able to do quality work in the amount of time allotted to the study. I chose to work only with female dancers for this study because I feel more qualified to coach female technique and am more familiar with the classical repertoire for the female dancer.

The structure for the studies was founded on my previous teaching experience and the methods I had already developed that included using visual materials as a supplementary teaching tool in the ballet classroom. My aim was to expand on this method and to use it more systematically in order to identify the benefits the students gained from watching ballet and to record effective ways of incorporating visual materials into teaching. Effectiveness would be

assessed through my observation of the students and through feedback from the students collected from discussions, surveys, and journaling. The form for each study and the methods for determining results were clearly established before the studies began.

With study Group A I taught a standard ballet class incorporating supporting video material through short viewings in class and emails sent to the students with material to watch outside of class. Because this was a standard course offered by the university, all thesis related components had to remain optional and anonymous; consequently, I could suggest but not require the students to watch the material I sent to them by email (when material was shown in class, everyone participated). Feedback was collected through two optional and anonymous surveys given at the beginning and the end of the class term, discussion of the video materials in class, student-motivated discussions outside of class, in person or via email, and my observations of the students in class.

My original plan for the study with Group B was to work with all five dancers as a group on five classical variations. After consulting with the ballet teachers on my thesis committee and with the dancers themselves, it became clear that this approach would not be the most conducive to quality work for the dancers. Consequently, each student chose, with my approval, one variation, and the study was structured as a series of one-on-one coaching sessions in which each student would meet with me to rehearse her variation for 30 to 45 minutes per week. Prior to the coaching sessions we watched and discussed approximately one hour of video material together as group. Feedback was gathered through surveys, group and one-on-one discussions, the students' journaling after each session, and my own observation of the students.

Although the form for each study was determined at the outset of the project, the precise content for each class or coaching session was the unknown variable. Because a class is driven,

in large part, by the needs to of its students, I decided on the appropriate themes to address and visual materials to use as the classes and rehearsals progressed. In an article published in *Dance Research Journal*, authors Stinson, Blumenfield-Jones, and Van Dyke write about their research method changing and adapting as their research study advanced. They share the information that each discussion during their project led to an adjustment for the following session (Stinson *et al,* 3). This is the research model I used for my studies. Drawing on my extensive experience as a ballet teacher, I gauged the students' needs in each class or rehearsal session. I looked for areas where the students could benefit from extra information, and then, using my knowledge of ballet repertoire and the video material available today, I selected material that would address the issue I had identified.

Teaching the class: Putting ideas into practice

I identified an area I felt needed attention within the first week of teaching Group A. I immediately saw that the students were advanced enough to grasp the steps I was giving them but that their dancing lacked upper-body involvement and expression. As a teacher I think that it is important to help students develop this aspect of dancing in order to help them understand what lies beyond the steps and in the hopes of inspiring a greater enjoyment of the dance for each student. With this in mind, I chose my first video material for the class to illustrate the use of the upper body in dancers (for full list of videos used throughout the class see Appendix B). Each video was connected to specific movements the students were practicing in class in order to help them to apply the new information directly to their own dancing. For example, I directed the students to watch specifically the use of *épaulement* in a *coups de pied croisé* position (like in preparation for a *pas de bourrée* or landing from a *jeté*) and the use of the shoulders and head in

balancés that travel backwards using *second arabesque* arms. At the same time I invited the students to watch for other examples of upper-body involvement that they might find particularly inspiring.

Throughout the quarter I also shared videos that highlighted certain technical details we were working on in class or helped show the students why I was so insistent that they perform steps in a particular way. For example, we watched a slow motion video of a perfectly executed *petit allegro* exercise to see the use of the controlled *plié* and brushing the foot through the *tendu* in jumps. This was selected not only to help the students understand the mechanics of the jumps but also to clarify for them that the exercises practiced at the *barre* are not given arbitrarily but are building blocks and have practical application in the more intricate steps of center work. Similarly, I have found it effective in the past (and applied the method again when preparing this class) to teach simple excerpts of steps from classical ballet repertoire and then to show the students a professional performance of the same choreography. This helps the students apply the concepts we have talked about directly to the steps they are practicing. It also gives the less advanced ballet students an embodied experience of the actual amount of work there is behind the steps that look so effortless when performed by advanced dancers.

Throughout my years of teaching ballet I have observed that a broader knowledge of the art form can deepen the amateur dancer's appreciation for the art and his or her enjoyment of it as a spectator. With this in mind, I chose music for my classes that would create the possibility of sharing extra information with the students about the history, style, or specific works in the canon of classical ballet. When the students had danced to a piece of music from a specific ballet, I opened up a discussion about that ballet in class and often followed up with a video supplement. For example, after hearing a piece from the 19th century ballet *Giselle*, we discussed

the stylistic difference between the ballet of the Romantic era and the ballet of the Classical era. I then used an educational video from the Royal Opera House series on YouTube to further illustrate the point. The music also opened the door for a short synopsis and discussion of the ballet, which I then followed up with an emailed video link so that the students could watch the part of the ballet where the music occurred.

Different from the study with Group A, the material watched with Group B was predetermined by the six variations the dancers chose to work on for this project (for full list of videos used throughout the class see Appendix C). We discussed and chose the variations during the first week of the quarter. Two of the dancers chose to work on two variations each and the other three worked on only one each. For three of the dancers we chose variations that they had studied during their training prior to beginning their studies at UC Irvine; the idea behind this was that we would have more time to spend with refining the variation if we did not have to spend time learning it. These three variations were Esmeralda's variation from the stand-alone *Esmeralda pas de deux*, Aurora's variation from the wedding *pas de deux* in *Sleeping Beauty* (this variation was practiced by two of the dancers), and the Prelude solo from *Les Sylphides*. Three of dancers learnt new variations, one out of interest and the other two because they did not have any variations already established in their repertoire. These three variations were the third variation from *Pas de Quatre*, Gamzatti's variation from the *grand pas de deux* in the first act of *La Bayadere*, and the sixth *Paquita* variation, which is often performed by the principal ballerina who is dancing the role of Paquita.

We began rehearsing the variations in the second week of the quarter. This first rehearsal focused exclusively on refreshing the steps, for the dancers working with material they already knew, and learning the steps for those preparing new variations. Any videos we watched during

this first session were used only to this end. At our third meeting we began to watch the variations and have discussions. We watched two or three of the variations each session for the first few sessions, as opposed to attempting to watch all six variations each time we met, in order to have enough time to develop observations and to explore each piece thoroughly. In these first sessions, I did not guide the students towards any specific details or discussion topics. I showed the material and let the students initiate and lead the conversations based on their own observations and reactions to what we were watching. I wanted them to start the project by identifying what stood out for them in the performances we were watching before I began to ask them to observe specific details. I felt that this would allow them to make an immediate emotional connection to the project and to compare and contrast all versions of each variation before more directed viewings would make it harder to watch as many videos back-to-back. In the rehearsals following these sessions, I drew the dancers' attentions back to their own observations of the performances we had watched, encouraging them to connect to what inspired them.

Similarly to how I worked with Group A, I also had to assess the needs of the advanced dancers in Group B and identify the areas that were challenging for them as the rehearsals progressed. Based on what we talked about and what I saw in their dancing, I began to pick video to show that I thought clearly highlighted specific artistic and technical details, and I guided the students more actively through discussions that focused on these themes. For example, I identified specific steps that were technically challenging for the dancers (and often shared between variations) and picked videos of performances that showed the correct execution of the steps very clearly. I pointed out the specific technical details that helped make the step successful for the performer. Also related to the students' technical development, I found,

through discussion, that their first association to the word "technique" was to the lower body and the muscular work of the legs. Through videos, I pointed out that the upper body also plays an active part in the technical aspects of dance (as opposed to just being the artistic part – it aids in stability as well as expression).

In other viewing sessions we looked at musicality and expressive choices in the upper body since this often seems to take second place to the desire to perform the steps with technical accuracy. I also found that while we were watching different performances of the variations, the dancers returned often to the subject of the character a given ballerina. From this observation, I structured a session in which we watched multiple versions of one variation and discussed the movement choices each ballerina made to support the character she was portraying. In rehearsals I reminded the dancers of what we had observed during our hour of watching and coached with references to our discussions. I was careful to keep asking them why they made a certain movement choice or why they thought a certain technical feat worked well helping them to make connections between what we watched and their own dancing and hoping to inspire them to continue watching ballet actively and thinking critically about what they were seeing.

PART 3
The Final Steps

Results

The results the two studies I conducted were assessed through my own observation of the students and from feedback gathered from the students through discussions, journaling, and written surveys. The overall response from the students in both study groups was positive and indicated that they found the addition of watching ballet footage to be an effective supplement to their ballet classes or coaching sessions. When answering the final survey questions (for a full list of survey questions, see Appendix A), the majority of the non-major ballet students in Group A, who participated in the optional surveys, stated that watching the video material had a significant effect on their own dancing in class and also on their understanding and appreciation of the art form as a whole. One dancer wrote, "It was helpful to see what the movements we were practicing were supposed to look like in the context of a full ballet." Another said, "Seeing the technique in the videos gave me a better example of what to aim for." Another student unknowingly spoke to the fact that not all teachers wish to or are able to demonstrate steps: "It's easier to see what we should do than to hear someone's description of what we should do and imagine what that looks like." One male dancer shared how watching the material offered for the class reshaped his ideas of men in ballet; he wrote, "Watching the male dancers do adagio made me realize the power in slowness and grace, even for the gender that is usually known for its leaps and turns." And yet another student indicated the benefit of practicing the same steps she saw performed by the professionals in the videos we watched by writing, "… when we're actually physically performing the movements and it's not as [easy] as the professional dancers make it out to be, I really appreciate the work and dedication that they have put in to be able to do what they do and do it so effortlessly."

The advanced dancers in Group B also noted the influence the visual materials and our discussions had on their dancing and their learning process. These dancers were more specific in articulating the benefits they gained from the watching portion of the study. For example one dancer wrote in her final survey, "Visualizing … how the stability of technique resides not only in the legs but through the torso as well helped me find that sensation for myself." In further discussion with this dancer, she elaborated on this point, explaining that this useful visualization during her own dancing developed directly from the sessions during which we watched and discussed the technical aspects of certain steps. The advanced dancers also more clearly differentiated between the development of technique gained through the viewing exercises and the artistic inspiration that they found. One dancer said that watching the different characterizations of roles in the variations we watched was the most influential part of the study for her. Another student wrote, "… you can learn so much by watching others, and can take what you like and put it in your own repertoire. It … helped me decide how I wanted to approach the character of the variations I am doing." The advanced dancers were also able to articulate how our work in the study changed the way they watch ballet and how this developed new skills for them to take into their future work. One dancer stated, "I feel like I have a lot more to think about when I'm watching ballet now … I can dive into it and think about the context of everything, the technicality, the character, and developing both of those and where those push and pull together … [this project] took [watching ballet] to the next level for me."

Throughout my years as a ballet teacher (and as a student myself), I have seen how easily the ballet student's pursuit of an elusive perfection can lead to discouragement. In developing these research studies, I wondered if watching high-level professional dancers could potentially have a disheartening effect on my students. With this in mind, I made sure to ask, in discussion

and/or on the final survey, whether the students had felt discouraged at any time when studying the performances I chose for them to watch. The responses I received from the students further confirmed the benefits they received from watching the material and did not indicate any major negative side-effects. In the answers to this question, I saw clear indications of the inspiration category of influence that I had identified in the review of literature for this research. The students in Group A shared thoughts on how it was simply inspiring to see the best dancers at work and that it fed their appreciation and enjoyment of the art. One student wrote, "We all are in a non-major dance class for a reason. We love the joy of dance and don't expect to be professionals so I never felt discouraged." Only one student honestly wrote about feeling a minute amount of discouragement (claiming it lasted for about a "millisecond") but then shared how it led to the inspiration for her to work her hardest in class. The advanced dancers in Group B also all wrote and spoke about the inspiration, as opposed to discouragement, gained from watching top performances. One dancer wrote, "… it is more inspiring for me than it is discouraging. Also, the dancers we watched were the top notch, best in the world. I still have a long ways to go, but they contributed to this process in a very positive way." Another shared, "When watching, I more so felt an aspirational desire to take the knowledge I was gaining and work to apply it to my own dancing, rather than being discouraged and shying away from the material. I viewed it as the opportunity to improve." In discussion, one dancer said, "Dance isn't being the best of the best, it's being the best of myself. So it's a different mindset watching them; it's more 'what can I learn from them?' but not 'oh, I want to be them'."

Through my own observations in the classes and coaching sessions I was able to see the direct influence that watching the ballet videos had on the dancers' technical and artistic development. Examples in these two categories were particularly obvious with the dancers in

Group B, possibly due to the more advanced ability of the dancers and also to the structure of the study that allowed for more detailed discussion of the video material and for one-on-one coaching. After observing specific technical details in the video footage of the variations, the dancers discovered new approaches to certain challenging steps, and I saw a clear improvement in their dancing in the subsequent rehearsals. For example, two of the variations included challenging turns in an *attitude* position that the dancers were struggling with. Through watching the videos, they were able to see more distinctly how to use their focus and spotting in order to make the turn more smooth and stable. After this discussion, one of the dancers managed to complete full turns in this position, which she had not been able to do before. Another clear example came when studying *piqué* turns that open to a *développé à la seconde*. While watching video examples, the three dancers who were practicing this step observed that this movement was less of a full turn and more of a *développé* on *pointe* that happens to pivot 180 degrees. This discovery made a large difference for the dancers in the execution of the step; they showed much more confidence and the step was more consistently performed correctly.

A particularly successful moment for me in this process was when one of the dancers proved that she was assimilating technical details beyond what I had already pointed out to her. After she successfully performed a particularly difficult series of *arabesques* on *pointe* in the Aurora variation, I asked what had made the difference for her in comparison to the other times she had worked on that part of the choreography. She explained to me that besides the extra lift and rotation in the *arabesque* leg that we had looked at in a video together, she had noticed that the professional dancers that we watched seemed to be reaching through the *arabesque* leg toward the back corner of the stage (the direction the movement travels) and that she was thinking of this as she performed the step.

The influence of watching ballet on the dancers' artistic development was also obvious in observing the dancers in Group B. A particularly clear example of this was when I asked a dancer what she thinking about during a movement sequence she performed that I found particularly beautiful and compelling. She shared that she was trying to recreate a movement quality in her arms that she had admired in one of the performances of that variation that we had watched. Similarly, another dancer was very influenced, to her surprise it seemed, by a performance of Aurora from the late 1970s. After watching this performance a few times, it was clear in our rehearsals that the dancer was working to develop the expression and movement quality that had intrigued her.

With the non-major dancers in my study Group A, the results of watching the material were less detailed. Again, this was possibly due to the relative skill level of the students compared to the more advanced dancers in Group B and also to the structure of the class, including the fact that the viewing (especially when the material was emailed) was not mandatory. I did choose and show videos with the aim of focusing on details of technique, but, although the students wrote in their survey responses that this was indeed helpful for them, I found it hard to see obvious changes in their execution of specific technical steps after watching the videos. I did, however, see a renewed effort to dance expressively. I saw students use bigger movements and more engagement of the head and shoulders after I emphasized a professional dancer's use of her upper body when watching a video all together in class. In a particularly successful experiment, I taught the students a center combination from a company class at the Royal Ballet that can be watched on YouTube. The students practiced the combination competently before watching the video, but after watching the video, they truly performed it! The change in their energy-level and the quality of their dancing was startling.

The other important result I was able to observe with Group A was the effect watching ballet had on their appreciation and enjoyment of the art form as a whole, whether or not related to their own dancing. Emailed video links often led to responses from students either by email or in person that indicated their engagement with the material. In one instance, a student replied to my email to share with me how much he had enjoyed watching the video and to ask for my thoughts on the dancer's use of his shoulders in a particular part of the choreography. This led to a follow up video and a short compare-and-contrast exercise for the student. Another time a student approached me to tell me how much he had enjoyed watching the "Entrance of the Shades" in *La Bayadere*, which I had sent to the class. He was intrigued by the hypnotic quality of the piece and had enjoyed it so much the he had continued to watch the full *pas de deux* that follows.

Clearly, showing videos in the non-major class highlighted the students' curiosity and interest. They actively asked questions that led to discussions that focused not so much on the dance as it pertained to their own practice but rather on larger scale information about the art: Who a particular dancer was and what company was dancing with, the difference in dancing styles between companies, professional training programs and their audition processes, the synopsis of a given ballet. In one moment that made me very happy, a large number of the students were audibly disappointed when the internet stopped working and we had to forego the planned videos for that lesson.

Conclusion

Options for training in ballet are numerous in the United States today. There are the traditional, professional training grounds; the conservatory-model schools that accept only the

most predisposed bodies through a series of auditions and that are directly linked to nationally, if not internationally, acclaimed professional ballet companies. But far-outnumbering these schools are the alternative training options of private studios and university programs that are not connected to, or often even located near, professional performing companies. These training institutions can differ in many ways, but the difference that is of interest in this research is that missing link to a professional company and the resulting lack of opportunity for the students to watch professional dancers at work.

Proof of the beneficial influence ballet students can receive from watching professional dancers and professional ballet productions is scattered through the pages of dancers' memoirs. Dancers recall the essential inspiration that came from watching a particular performance or a favorite dancer; they highlight moments in their own artistic or technical development that stemmed directly from observing great dancers. Similarly, in interviews, ballet teachers shared recollections of moments in their own training where this connection was unmistakable. And yet, no ballet pedagogy texts discuss this important connection, and because it has not been formally documented, it is often overlooked as an integral aspect of ballet training. This thesis begins the work of developing this needed documentation.

Both studies created for this research produced strongly positive results. The students in both groups displayed a greater appreciation for the art form, a new development of artistic inspiration, and a fresh understanding of technical details. The non-professional-track students gained benefits from watching ballet on a large scale: an understanding of why certain steps are performed and, consequently renewed inspiration to work on those steps, the development of more energy in their dancing in an effort to recreate what they were seeing, and an overall greater appreciation for the art form, which will help ensure its place in their life. Because of

their more advanced level of technique, the pre-professional dancers worked on more subtle details. They fine-tuned challenging steps and explored the nuances of mature performance qualities. In the culminating public performance of their work, the dancers were able to speak clearly and eloquently about the rehearsal process and what they gained from the project. Although their dancing performances already spoke for themselves, this further proved to me their complete assimilation of the material and its fundamental purpose as part of their training.

This thesis focuses on the student's experience, which is where the research naturally had to start. The connection between watching ballet and the ballet student's training is essentially important to the student; however, in studios and universities where ballet students are not exposed to the work of professional dancers, it becomes the teacher who needs to actively facilitate this type of learning. Further work needs to be done to refine and document the teaching methods I used for my studies. The choosing of video materials is time consuming and it is difficult to break away from habitual teaching methods; teachers could potentially benefit from follow-up work that details this teaching method and provides a sort of manual that they could refer to if they are interested in giving this valuable opportunity to their students.

As a young ballet student I devoured ballet videos because I simply loved ballet. I did not know at that time that I was following in the footsteps of so many dance students before me, and only years later, as a teacher, did I realize what that exposure had given me and that not all ballet students have the same opportunity. These were the days before YouTube and before Amazon made 30-second purchases a reality. Today's resources (the internet and technology) make it possible for teachers to integrate video materials into their classrooms and their classes and, consequently, to bring this valuable learning experience to many more students. Through watching professional dancers, some students may develop a love of the art that ensures ballet

remains a life-long leisure pursuit, while others may gain the additional inspiration and tools they need to push through into the dream of becoming an artist. Watching professional ballet has essential benefits for all ballet students, and exposure to this influence no longer has to be only for the few, specially chosen students who attend the world's traditional ballet conservatories. Using the tools that are available today, ballet teachers can help close the gap between conservatory education and the education in private studios and university training programs by bringing recordings of the world's leading dancers and companies into their classrooms and emphasizing this vital link that is so important to the ballet student's development as a dancer and as a member of the artistic community.

APPENDIX A
Survey Questions

Group A - Survey #1

- How many years of ballet instruction have you had prior to this class?
    - One
    - Two – Five
    - More than five
- Did any of your previous ballet teachers encourage you to watch professional ballet?
    - Yes
    - No
    - If yes, briefly explain any reasons the teacher gave.
- How often do you watch video recordings of ballet? (YouTube, DVDs, etc.)
    - Never
    - Occasionally (a few times a year)
    - Regularly (weekly)
    - When you are in ballet class, do you think of any of the videos you have watched? Briefly explain.
- Have you ever attended a live professional ballet performance?
    - Never
    - Once
    - A few
    - More than five
    - Briefly explain how this experience has affected your own ballet practice.
- How do you feel about watching ballet in general?
    - It's boring
    - Indifferent
    - It's somewhat enjoyable
    - Love it!
    - Please feel free to share any additional thoughts.

Group A - Survey #2

- Did watching and discussing the ballet videos shared for this class have a positive effect on your own dancing?
    - Not at all
    - A bit
    - A lot
    - Briefly elaborate. Give specific examples when possible.
- At any point did watching the ballet videos shared for this class leave you feeling discouraged?
    - No
    - Yes
    - Briefly elaborate. Give specific examples when possible.
- Did watching and discussing the ballet videos shared for this class change your understanding/appreciation of the art form as a whole?
    - Not at all

    - A bit
    - A lot
    - Briefly elaborate. Give specific examples when possible.

Group B - Survey #1

- In your previous dance training, were you encouraged to watch ballet? If so, was any reason given as to why?
- How often do you watch video recordings of ballet (YouTube, DVDs, etc.)?
    - Once a month
    - Once a week
    - Multiple times a week
- Does any of the video material you have watched come to mind when you are in ballet class? Briefly elaborate?
- How many life professional ballet performances have you attended?
    - None
    - One
    - A few (around 3)
    - Many (over 5)
- Do you every think of any of these performances when you are in ballet class? Briefly elaborate.
- Are there any dancers that you admire? Who and why?

Group B - Survey #2

- Do you feel that our watching sessions made a difference to your learning process and the development of your dancing throughout this project? If yes, can you identify what were the most effective aspects?
- At any point did you feel discouraged by the material we watched? Please explain.
- Did this project change the way you watch/will watch ballet? And if so, how?

APPENDIX B

Group A – List of videos used

Video Description	Company/Dancer(s)*	Year Recorded**	Source	Use
Swan Lake Act III Male variation – Grand pas de deux	Kirov Ballet Igor Zelensky	1990	YouTube	General education after dancing to the music in class
Royal Opera House educational video: "Ballet Evolved - The first four centuries"	Royal Ballet	2013	YouTube	General artistic education and to highlight the difference between the romantic and classical eras in ballet as discussed in class
La Bayadere Act I Gamzatti variation – Grand pas de deux	Royal Ballet Marianela Nunez	2009	YouTube	To show *épaulement* and fluidity in the upper body
Swan Lake Act II Odette variation	Svetlana Zakharova		YouTube	To show *épaulement*
La Bayadere Act I Solor variation – Grand pas de deux	Mikhail Baryshnikov	1969	YouTube	To show the movement of the torso in the *balancés*
La Bayadere Act I Solor variation – Grand pas de deux	Bolshoi Ballet Vladislav Lantratov	2013	YouTube	To show the movement of the torso in the *balancés* (sent as a compare and contrast exercise in answer to a student's question)
Jewels Emeralds – 2nd variation	Mariinsky Ballet Daria Sukhorukova	2011	DVD	To show the fluidity of the upper body
Sheherezade Pas de deux	Mariinsky Ballet Svetlana Zakharova, Faroukh Ruzimatov	2002	YouTube	General education after stretching to the music in class
La Bayadere Act II Pas de trois	Bolshoi Ballet Natalia Osipova, Ekaterina Krysanova, Anna Nikulina	2008	YouTube	To show the professional performance of choreography we learnt in class
Royal Opera House educational video: "Insight: Ballet Glossary - Petit allegro"	Royal Ballet	2011	YouTube	To show the transition through the *plié* and *tendu* positions, how important it is to develop a strong brushing action in the *tendu*

Royal Opera House educational video: "Insight: Ballet Glossary - Grand allegro"	Royal Ballet	2011	YouTube	To show examples of precision and variations in the *tombé pas de bourrée* sequence
Royal Opera House educational video: "Insight: Ballet Glossary - Pirouette"	Royal Ballet	2011	YouTube	To show examples of precision and variations in the *tombé pas de bourrée* sequence
Don Quixote Act III Basilio variation – Grand pas de deux	Igor Zelensky	1991	YouTube	To inspire more energy in *grand allegro*. To show the importance of absorption through the *plié* when landing from jumps.
Giselle Act II Albrecht variation	American Ballet Theatre Mikhail Baryshnikov	1977	YouTube	To inspire more energy in *grand allegro*. To show the importance of absorption through the *plié* when landing from jumps
Beauty and the Beast Transformation scene	Disney animated film	1991	YouTube	To give a visual of light streaming out of the body; to help students understand the feeling of expansion
Sleeping Beauty Entre Acte Prince variation	Bolshoi Ballet David Hallberg	2011	YouTube	To show the ability of male dancers to perform *adagio*
La Bayadere Act II Entrance of the Shades	Mariinsky Ballet	2009	YouTube	General education after stretching to the music in class
Jewels Diamonds	Paris Opera Ballet	2006	YouTube	To show the intricacies of ensemble work and the need for precise placement and spatial awareness
Giselle Act II Pas de deux	Royal Ballet Natalia Osipova Carlos Acosta	2014	YouTube	General education after stretching to the music in class
Royal Ballet Full Class – World Ballet Day 2014	Royal Ballet	2014	YouTube	To show the professional performance of choreography we learnt in class

*Occasionally, due to the nature of YouTube, it was not possible to identify the company or dancer performing. Gala performances are also left without a company reference

**It is not always possible to identify the performance year

APPENDIX C
Group B – List of videos used

Video Description	Company/Dancer(s)*	Year Recorded**	Source	Use***
Pas de Quatre (Third Variation)				
	Yelena Yevteyeva	1968	YouTube	
	Ghislaine Thesmar		YouTube	
	Kirov Ballet Elena Evteeva	1982	YouTube	
	International Ballet Festival Havana	1988	YouTube	
	Tatiana Terekhova	1991	YouTube	Full upper body involvement
	Olga Pavlova	2005	DVD	
	Bolshoi Ballet Anna Antonicheva	2008	YouTube	
	Patricia Zhou	2011	DVD	
Sleeping Beauty (Act III - Aurora variation - wedding pas de deux)				
	Royal Ballet Merle Park	1978?	YouTube	Character development through movement
	Royal Ballet Alina Cojucaru	2007	DVD	*Piqué* turns to *developpé* Extended single-leg balances
	Evgenia Obraztsova	2008	YouTube	
	Mariinsky Ballet Ekaterina Osmolkina	2008	YouTube	*Piqué* turns to *developpé*
	Bolshoi Ballet Svetlana Zakharova	2011	DVD	
	Paris Opera Ballet Aurelie Dupont		YouTube	Character development through movement
Esmerelda (Esmerelda variation - grand pas de deux)				
	Bolshoi Ballet Academy Natalia Osipova	2003	YouTube	
	New York City Ballet Ana Sophia Scheller		YouTube	
	Maria Kochetkova	2003	YouTube	

	Maria Kochetkova	2005	YouTube	
	Agnes Letestu	2005	YouTube	
	National Ballet of Cuba Yolanda Correa	2007	YouTube	
	Bolshoi Ballet Ekaterina Krysanova	2012	YouTube	
	Tamara Rojo		YouTube	
	Anastasia Volochkova		YouTube	
	Cecilia Kerche		YouTube	
La Bayadere (Act I - Gamzatti variation - Grand pas de deux)				
	Kirov Ballet Tatiana Terekhova	1977	DVD	
	American Ballet Theatre Cynthia Harvey	1980	YouTube	
	Royal Ballet Darcey Bussell	1991	YouTube	
	Royal Ballet Marianela Nunez	2009	DVD	*Attitude* turns
	Dutch National Ballet Maia Makhateli	2009	YouTube	
	Mariinsky Ballet Anastasia Matvienko	2010	YouTube	
	Paris Opera Ballet Ludmila Pagliero	2012	YouTube	
	Bolshoi Ballet Maria Alexandrova	2013	DVD	
	Mariinsky Ballet Yulia Stepanova	2014	YouTube	
	La Scala Ballet Mariafrancesca Garritano		YouTube	
Paquita (Sixth variation)				
	American Ballet Theatre Cynthia Harvey	1984	YouTube	
	Mariinsky Ballet	2010	YouTube	

	Alina Somova			
	Marianna Ryzhkina	2004	DVD	
	Bolshoi Ballet Maria Alexandrova		YouTube	*Attitude* turns
Les Sylphides (Preludes variation)				
	Royal Ballet Alicia Markova	1953	YouTube	
	Royal Ballet Margot Fonteyn	1963	YouTube	
	Bolshoi Ballet Ekaterina Maximova	1974	YouTube	
	American Ballet Theatre Marianna Tcherkassky	1984	YouTube	
	Kirov Ballet Elena Pankova	1991	YouTube	
Giselle (Act I - Giselle variation)				
	American Ballet Theatre Carla Fracci	1969	YouTube	All Giselle material was used for one session discussing character development through movement
	American Ballet Theatre Natalia Makarova	1977	YouTube	
	Royal Ballet Alina Cojucaru	2008	DVD	
	Bolshoi Ballet Svetlana Lunkina	2011	DVD	
	Royal Ballet Natalia Osipova	2014	DVD	

*Occasionally, due to the nature of YouTube, it was not possible to identify the company or dancer performing. Gala performances are also left without a company reference

**It is not always possible to identify the performance year

***All videos were used to inform the student's work with a particular variation. The "use" notes in this list indicate any specific details that were looked at in the videos.

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