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Teaching Seminar

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The Importance of Hip Hop in Dance History Pedagogy

Hello, fellow Dance History educators! I am here today to speak to you about the importance of including the history of Hip Hop in our teaching of dance history courses. Hip Hop comes from a rich culture, one that is frequently ignored, whitewashed and misunderstood. The culture of Hip Hop is often accredited to gang culture, and “gangsta rap” when it in fact rose as an answer to violence associated with gang culture, and the “gangsta rap” resulted from commercialization of the genre. Hip Hop dance is one of the most mislabeled genres that currently exists in the dance world.

We as educators have the opportunity to give a deserving community attention. So often, the curriculum for these courses is Euro-centric; we lecture at length about ballet, modern, contemporary, give minimum attention to African Diaspora Dances, Native American Dances, Indian Diaspora Dances, Asian Diaspora Dances, and American dances that frequently come from the African dance traditions. By lecturing and teaching in this way, we are perpetuating the hierarchy that so many of us disagree with, and we lose the interest and passion of student’s who do not share in those dance traditions. Hip Hop history is living, breathing and changing as we speak, making it a very exciting topic for students, and one that many can relate to. If we include Hip Hop in our curriculum, not only can we capture the interest of dancers who come from non

European dance traditions, but we can give students an example of a current, living history, and show how dance forms and culture can evolve.

Outline of Key Note Speech on the importance of including Hip Hop History in Dance

History Pedagogy

- Introduction
- Outline of Hip Hop History
- How to structure class/elements to include while teaching
- Stressing importance of all 5 elements, dance class or not, they all have equal weight in the movement
- Including socio-political elements
- Importance of showing videos
- Suggested 2 day (50 min classes) minimum for Unit, Better suited for 3 or 6 days (either addressing 2 or 1 elements of Hip Hop per day)

A. Unit One

- NYC 1970's
- "Bronx is Burning"
- Benign Neglect- cutting of social services, Bronx as "economically unviable"
- Introduction of Gangs

**Suggested Activity= Have students list their thoughts/ stereotypes about gangs.*

Revisit these lists after the unit

- Gang Culture

**Recommended watching= Flying Cutsleeves and 80 Blocks from Tiffany's*

- Afrika Bambaata and the Zulu Nation
- + stopped the violence

- + warlord of black spades-freight train
- + Zulu Nation
- + entered Unicef writing contest, won a trip to South Africa, saw how tribes settled differences
- + ^battling through contest not violence
- + coined the name hip-hop, decided to use elements to settle differences
- + started throwing jams in the Bronx Rivers Projects
- + started inviting the punk rockers from the village
- + word of mouth started to spread hip hop to Manhattan/ the village
- + hip hop is for everyone

B. Unit Two

- 5 Elements of Hip Hop

1. MC-ing

1. Talk about difference between MC-ing(culture, love, respect) and Rap, and what led to to the commercializations that created rap (NWA, sellable product)

2. DJ-ing

1. Grand Master Flash

- + developed/perfect three techniques
- + invented the mixer
- + electrician
- + Punch Phrasing-cutting in another song before the first is done
- + Quick Mix theory- back and forth between records

+ Scratching- perfected

2. *Kool Herc*

+ Merry go round- extending the break

+first person to put the elements together

+ Jam; elements of hip hop (block party,

1. DJ-two turn tables

2. MC-toasting/rhyming

3. B-boy/b-girl (break boys and break girls) lost their mind on the dance floor,

originally dancing to funk

4. Graffiti Art

5. Knowledge-self and culture

3. *B-boy/B-girl-ing*

**Recommended Watching= The Freshest Kids*

+Rock Steady Crew

-Founded by Jimmy D and JoJo

-first to take the dance international

-Flashdance

+ Kool Herc- block party

Michael Holman- Produced Graffiti Rock- people felt as though he exploited it, but he was also important in getting it out there, negril

-Zulu Kings; Beaver

Pioneers- Rock steady crew

Spy- the man with 1000 moves (Crazy Commander Crew)

Mr. Wiggles

Crazy Legs- rock steady

The Nigga Twinz

Asia One

Rockafella

- Comes from rocking, then developed into top rocking, then the floor came in

Top Rocking

-Indian Step- comes from Native Americans-one of the first

Sweeps, CCs, the russian- Frosty Freeze is a good example of original BBoys

Puerto Ricans put the dance on their back- integration of latin dances

Disco scene killed breaking

young city boys

Rock Steady Crew

Village Voice- To the beat y'all

Skeeta Rabbit

4. *Graffiti*

** Recommended watching= Style Wars*

“getting up” fame

political statements- way of protesting

rep gangs

tags(name) vs /burners (takes time to do, usually the work of multiple people)

bombing is the act of doing

- + in and on subway trains is very popular

- + seen as symbol that city has lost control

- + Black Book- like a portfolio for graffiti artists

- + "we're not running the system, we're bombing the system"

doing it for themselves

many writers were of different races, hierarchy in talent not race

"wild style" hard to read

"toys" means you're a walk writer

graffiti is a quality of life offense

Mayor Ed Cox pushed for jail for graffiti

graffiti police- changed the train schedules to make it more difficult for artists

"Legal Walls" commissioned art

Taki 183- first to get up

first to do graffiti; cornbread from Philly

computer rock- Kase2

The Message- Grand Master Flash and the Furious 5

Crazy legs- rock steady crew

battle rock or Brooklyn rock- no physical contact but shows you could've

Cap- went over other people's work to destroy it, total asshat

graffiti makes it way to galleries- andy Warhol

self perpetuating cycle due to lack of social services

they then stupidly painted the trains white

put up some insane security- super razor wire and dogs

Michael Stewart- artist caught by police and beaten to death for graffiti

5. *Knowledge*

* *Recommended watching= Fresh Dressed*

- Importance of history and elements

Biography

Samm is a Pennsylvania native with a B.A. in Dance from Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania. While attending SRU she worked with artists such as Ursula Payne, Jennifer Keller, Teena Marie Custer, Helanius Wilkins and Marta Renzi. She is currently attending University of Colorado-Boulder as an MFA candidate where she is a Graduate Part Time Instructor teaching a lecture course entitled Dance and Popular Culture, as well as the Front of House Manager for the Theatre and Dance Department. Her research interests focus on a desire to decentralize the dance history canon, and create an equitable and non western approach to the teaching of dance history. She also has academic interests in the pedagogy of Hip Hop History. Choreographically, Samm is interested in creating autobiographical work that deals with the reclamation of degrading language, and the reconciliation of dichotomous parts of identities.

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