

WRITING ABOUT DANCE

Experiencing dance for the first time can sometimes be scary and confusing, especially if you have to put your feelings down on paper at some point afterward. It doesn't have to be this way if you know how to organize your thoughts. The first thing to realize and to accept is that dance is something that often conveys or evokes a human emotion or feeling that often cannot be expressed in words. This is exactly why some people choose dance as a means of expression instead of more concrete medias. For instance, have you ever been so affected by an event that you couldn't effectively describe how you felt to someone. Well, dance is a way of doing this.

Here are a few guidelines to help you begin to see and be able to write about dance:

1. Start with the general:

- What was the overall feeling or mood of the piece(s)?
- How did the work make you feel?
- What did you see that influenced on affected you the most?
- Begin to develop adjectives in your mind that might describe how the experience made you feel.

2. Begin to look at the specifics that lead you to some of these conclusions:

- What kinds of movement qualities did you see? Quick, sharp, angular, repetitive, smooth, circular, flowing, elongated, explosive, drawn out, scattered, light, unified, low to the ground, in the air, traveling, rounded, pointed.....
- What kind of patterns did they make in space? Circular, linear, in place.
- What relationships did the dancers have to one another? Were they moving together as a group or separately? Were they supporting each others' weight or pushing each other away? Were there other relationships between dancers? Were the men lifting the women? Were the women lifting the men? Did the same gender partner ~~and~~ each other?
- How did the lighting, costumes and/or props help or not help you come to any conclusions about the piece(s)?
- What combinations of these events occurred?
- What was the music like (if any) and how did that help your perceptions?
- How did the title help your perceptions of the piece(s)?
- Any other observations that you have about the work: the dancers' execution of the movement, the expressions on their faces, their body type?

3. Now move again back to the general:

- Based on the above observations, do you think the choreographer had a clear intention of what he/she wanted you to see?
- Did the experience remind you of something else you've seen, heard or read about before?
- Based on what you have seen: How has this experience related to other observations you have made about the world around you and to your life?

REMEMBER: What you saw is what was there. It was correct because you saw it. Now begin to try putting your feelings into words. Have fun!