



St Benedict's
Sixth Form

A LEVEL DANCE TRANSITION PACK





St Benedict's Sixth Form

A LEVEL DANCE COURSE OVERVIEW

A-level Dance is a dynamic qualification which encourages students to develop their creative and intellectual capacity, alongside transferable skills such as team working, communication and problem solving. All of these are sought after skills by higher education and employers and will help them stand out in the workplace whatever their choice of career.

The A Level Dance course is divided into three key components:

- Performance
- Choreography
- Critical Engagement

The specification reflects both historical and current dance practices, making it more relevant, and inspires a lifelong passion and appreciation for dance. You will study a range of dance styles and perform and choreograph in a style of your choice.

To be successful at A Level Dance it is necessary:

- To have a passion for dance
- Stay fit and healthy.
- Undertake independent research; understand the context of the dance style, the specific practitioner and keep up to date with current choreographers
- Watch video clips on You Tube and Vimeo - this will inspire you choreographically, inspire you with dance ideas and music and help you to understand the key practitioners.
- To know the definitions of keywords for each topic





St Benedict's Sixth Form

Critical Engagement: Theory

You will study two compulsory set works and two 'Areas of study' in depth. These will also inform your performance and choreography work.

Set works:

Rooster by Christopher Bruce

Singin' in the Rain by Stanley Donan & Gene Kelly

Sutra by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui

Areas of Study:

Rambert Dance Company 1966 - 2002

American jazz dance 1940-1975

Independent Contemporary Dance Scene 2000- present

These are links specific to these works and areas of study:

Set work: Rooster (Christopher Bruce, 1991)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bTW8tPL6qY&list=PL4F3B261E734B7D91>

Key dance sections in Rooster

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6uSj4OereW8> Rooster in rehearsal

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jp8gl07dhQI> Interview with Christopher Bruce

Compulsory area of study: Rambert Dance Company (formally Ballet Rambert) 1996-2002

<https://www.rambert.org.uk>

<https://www.rambert.org.uk/about-us/our-history/>



St Benedict's Sixth Form

Baseline Assessment:

During the week beginning **25/9/23**, an assessment will be undertaken to consider suitability for the course. The assessment will comprise of:

- A review of your summer work
- Assessment of a preliminary practical task that you will complete in the first two weeks
- Assessment of a written task that you will complete within independent study time

Summer Work to be completed:

Task 1: Rooster & Rambert Dance Company

Rooster is choreographed by contemporary choreographer Christopher Bruce. For this task you are going to research his **background & influences**.

It is important research as it will help you understand his movement style and develop your contextual understanding of him as a practitioner.

Here is some information to help you start your research.

CHRISTOPHER BRUCE

BORN: Leicester, 1945

Bruce started to train at the Benson Stage Academy to improve his health after suffering from Polio. At the age of 13, in 1958, Bruce began training at the Ballet Rambert School in London.

After a brief time performing with Walter Gore's company in 1963, Bruce joined Ballet Rambert as a performer later that same year.

Bruce left Ballet Rambert in 1987 to pursue a freelance career but returned to Rambert Dance Company in 1994 as Artistic Director.



St Benedict's Sixth Form

MOVEMENT STYLE

A clear **blending** of classical ballet and Graham techniques -mostly developed through his time with Ballet Rambert.

Graham - use of contractions, spiralling, flexed feet, expressionistic aspects etc.

Ballet -There is extensive use of recognisable balletic vocabulary as well as open chest and back, extended lines, a lyrical use of energy etc.

Social Dance - Bruce is known for blending other styles into different works to reflect era/theme/music. Folk dance elements are usually integrated into the style somewhere (chains, leading/following, heel toe steps etc)



CHOREOGRAPHIC STYLE

Motif development and strong/symbolic repeating images are used to highlight emotional intensity. Dance structure is usually episodic or rondo form, with links to the theme and/or musical accompaniment. There are semi narrative aspects to most of his works.

Bruce uses a wide range of musical sources, and these are often enhanced through the use of music visualisation.

Dancers are selected for their personal strengths.

Visual, aural and physical aspects of the dance are integrated to present universal themes/subject. A bare stage is preferred in Bruce's pieces.

Bruce mainly uses serious themes based on a wide range of stimuli. More than one stimulus is usually used, and his works often involve social and political commentary. There are however some works that use abstract contexts.

Research the following:

1. Christopher Bruce's background- can you add any further information?
2. Christopher Bruce's Training- who is Marie Rambert?
3. Christopher Bruce's influences- who is Martha Graham? Who is Norman Morrice? Who is Glen Tetley? Who is Anna Sokolow? Write a small paragraph on each.
4. Watch the videos below and describe Christopher Bruce's movement style - Use the information above to help you.



St Benedict's Sixth Form

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fgh13vsc1jU> – Trailer Ghost Dances

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0o2PEewTu8> – Section 6 Ghost Dances

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ek2qwuiuY> – Ghost Dances Audience reaction

Task 2: Singin' in the Rain

In the early 1900s the jazz dancing performed by African-American artists showed links to the dances of minstrelsy and ragtime using new syncopated rhythms. From the 1930s through to the 1960s the style became a more theatre-based form of dance, requiring trained dancers. Choreography involving jazz dance was created by practitioners from the ballet and modern dance world. These included Jack Cole, George Balanchine, Agnes de Mille, Michael Kidd, Katherine Dunham, Jerome Robbins, Bob Fosse, Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly.



Research the film 'Singin' in the Rain'. Include information on the following:

- Gene Kelly- who was he? What was he known for? Can you describe his movement/ choreographic style?
- What is the film about?
- Themes within the film
- Why was this film such a huge success? Legacy?

You can present your research in any format, PowerPoint, poster, table. Include pictures and key images from the film.

Task 3: Sutra

The set work Sutra is choreographed by contemporary choreographer Sidi Larbi. Read the following information about his background, training and career.

BACKGROUND, TRAINING & CAREER OUTLINE

Born in Anvers Belgium in 1976, to a Flemish mother and Moroccan father, Cherkaoui grew up in a multicultural, multi-lingual household with his father speaking Arabic, Spanish and French and his mother French and Dutch.

"Translation was always a very important part of my life. In Belgium we are surrounded by other cultures, so we tend to be very focused on understanding others"



St Benedict's Sixth Form

During his teenage years Cherkaoui loved watching Bruce Lee films fascinated by the Kung Fu movement in them. Hip Hop was just beginning to influence mainland Europe and inspired by the music videos he saw on television, Cherkaoui began imitating artists such as Janet Jackson and Prince.

During that time, he took part in a dance contest with friends after school and someone from TV invited him to audition for television work, which he did and was successful. Whilst working for TV he was encouraged by the other dancers to attend classes, so he began learning jazz, ballet, hip-hop, flamenco and tap.

In 1995, at the age of 19, Cherkaoui, encouraged by his ballet teacher, entered a dance context for the Best Belgian dancer, organised by Alain Platel (founder of Les Ballets C de la B). He won first prize for his solo performance that he had choreographed combining voguing, Hip Hop and African dance. Wim Vandekeybus was on the jury for the contest along with someone connected to the school of Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker (P.A.R.T.S.-based in Brussels) and they suggested that Cherkaoui enrol at the school.

There he studied the techniques of William Forsythe, Trisha Brown and Pina Bausch.

"It was a very eclectic dance school that really allowed you to touch on very iconic contemporary dance styles and it was so inspiring to be there. So, having experienced contemporary, modern, classical and pop culture dance it helped me to define my own criteria and find my personal voice with in it."

Watch the video below and describe Sidi Larbi's movement style

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_cMBDeIGAE

Sidi Larbi is the man in the grey trousers and black jacket.

This is the trailer for Sutra. Watch all of the video, but then focus on his movement style from **2 minutes 20 seconds** where he is in a duet with a Shaolin Monk.

Key words you might want to use:

- Extreme flexibility
- Hyper extension
- Fluidity - offset with extreme strength/attack
- Interest in duet work -mirroring



St Benedict's Sixth Form

RESEARCH LINKS

These are links to various performances and social media platforms that illustrate the breadth of dance work under the umbrella heading of **contemporary dance**.

The list includes dances from history and work by current and emerging choreographers. These are a select few that will hopefully inspire you within choreography & performance and support your dance analysis.

WEBSITES	Rambert School https://www.rambertschool.org.uk Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance https://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk One Dance UK Home Page - One Dance UK Dance organisation AQA Examination Board: Dance qualifications. A level https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/dance Centre for Advanced Training - Northern School of Contemporary Dance (nscd.ac.uk)
TV/YOUTUBE	In This Shirt- Kate Jablonski and Beyond Words Dance Company https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sEKZj-H7qa8 Rambert performing on 'The Greatest Dancer' 2019 https://www.facebook.com/BBCOne/videos/freya-ridings-and-rambert-the-greatestdancer-performance/342811809901418/ Alicia Keys - Fallin'/Carlo Atienza choreography https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o31gnl-CFQE DV8 Physical Theatre, Can We Talk About This - Martin Amis https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNjE53Pt4WQ So You Think You Can Dance The Girls SO 9 Travis Wall Contemporary Routine https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-H-FEjweQU Blake McGrath - Surrender https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYJCB63IPIs BBC Young Dancer of The Year 2015 Contemporary Dance (Grand Final) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jm182Lp5DpY&t=98s SYTYCD 8 - Top 14 Guys Contemporary https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z09ccERQqaE Bob Fosse- Rich Man's Frug https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcrZIK3gqbU Jerome Robbins: In his Own Words https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ChbvQGSedw



St Benedict's Sixth Form

GLOSSARY- Key Dance Terminology

The following subject specific vocabulary provides definitions of key terms used in AQA's A-level Dance specification. Students should be familiar with and gain understanding of these terms.

Agility

The ability to move quickly with ease and efficiency.

Alignment of the body

The optimum placement of and balance between joints in order to allow the body to move with ease and efficiency, removing unnecessary muscular tension and effort.

Appreciation

The ability to understand the worth of a dance/choreography and value its qualities and importance within the context of the art form; a recognition of aesthetic values.

Artistic intention

Artistic intention includes a knowledge and awareness of the purposes, characteristics and principles of the art form and how these contribute to the structuring of individual choreographic intention.

Aural setting

The aural choices the choreographer decides upon in the creation of a work, ie music, the spoken word, sound effects, natural sound, found sound, the audible aspects of dancing, silence.

Balance

The ability to maintain equilibrium over the base of support.

Binary (in relation to sectional structures/form)

An AB sectional structure/form. Section B provides the contrast to the opening section A.

Call and response (in relation to the relationships between the dance and its aural setting). Similar to a conversation the music or dance 'calls', the other 'responds'.



St Benedict's Sixth Form

Cardiovascular endurance

The capacity to sustain continuous moderate-level exercise.

Constituent features

The elements which a choreographer selects in order to manipulate, develop and structure into a coherent whole, ie the three movement components (action, dynamic and spatial elements), dancers, aural setting and physical setting.

Critical engagement

An objective and informed enquiry into both content and context, enabling the student to develop and articulate an in-depth knowledge and understanding of dance through time and location in relation to features of a specific genre(s).

Disassociation (in relation to the relationships between the dance and its aural setting)

Dance and music are created independently of each other and when performed share only time and space.

Direct correlation (in relation to the relationships between the dance and its aural setting)

Dance and music work together, sharing the same time signature, tempo, phrasing and cadences.

Dynamics

The variations in the expenditure of energy in relation to the action/motion of the body.

Embodiment

A tangible or visible form of a dance/choreographic idea, quality or feeling.

Emphasis

The accents provided by the dancer at different moments throughout the dance. The accents may relate for example to energy, space and timing.

Episodic (in relation to sectional structures/form). A series of sections presented by the choreographer. The sections can be self-contained but when put together will illuminate the overarching theme of the choreographed work.



St Benedict's Sixth Form

Flexibility

There are different types of flexibility. For example the dancer may need to consider:

- static flexibility: the range of motion possible at a joint
- dynamic flexibility: the resistance of a joint to motion.

Focus

The intensity and direction of the dancer's eyeline, for example to a specific point in space, to a fellow performer or to the audience.

Genre

A broad classification of a dance type, for example Ballet, Modern dance, Jazz dance.

Holistic (in relation to the study of dance)

The parts of study (ie performance and choreography/practical and theory) which will only be understood by reference to the whole.

Kinaesthetic awareness

A developed perception of bodily movement by the dancer. Enhancement of mood and atmosphere (in relation to the relationships between the dance and its aural setting)

This relationship aids in the communication of theme. The dancers may not be using the musical rhythm or phrasing but the aural setting is helping to evoke the mood and/or atmosphere.

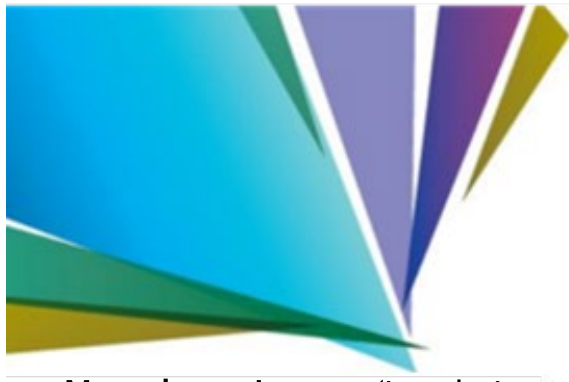
Muscular endurance

The ability to produce force against a particular resistance repeatedly.

Music visualisation (in relation to the relationships between the dance and its aural setting) Dance which aims to clarify the music, using the structure and content as its base. The dance follows the rhythmic, melodic and harmonic lines in the music.

Musicality

An interpretation of the music's structure, rhythm, mood and meaning by the dancer in performance.



St Benedict's Sixth Form

Mutual coexistence (in relation to the relationships between the dance and its aural setting)

Dance and music are created independently of each other but may share the same tempo, theme or directive.

Narrative (in relation to the relationships between the dance and its aural setting)

The music and dance express an idea or tell a story.

Narrative (in relation to sectional structures/form)

A sequential structure/form which allows the story to unfold.

Neuromuscular coordination

The synchronous working of muscles during complex movements.

Physical skills

The skills required by a dancer to inform technique, for example strength, flexibility, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance.

Practitioner

A person actively engaged within the art form of dance, for example a performer or choreographer.

Projection

The engagement of dancer's whole self in the communication of the dance idea; a considered use of energy to attribute perceivable qualities to the movement content.

Rondo (in relation to sectional structures/form) An ABACADA structure/form. The repetition of 'A' provides the recurring theme whilst the other sections provide the variety and contrast.

Strength

The maximum force generated by a muscle against resistance in a single effort.



St Benedict's Sixth Form

Safe practice

A full understanding and awareness of procedures which need to be implemented in relation to the development of skills either in a class, rehearsal or performance environment.

Style

A word used in dance which has a variety of meanings, including:

- **movement style:** the specific choices and manipulation of the three movement components by a choreographer which when put together become a recurring and major element of the choreographic output
- **choreographic style:** the consistent choices a choreographer makes in relation to all elements of choreography, for example subject matter and its treatment, use of choreographic devices, structuring, dancers, aural setting and physical setting.

Subject matter

The theme(s), narrative and/or dance ideas associated with a specific piece of choreography.

Technical skills

The skills acquired by the dancer in training in order to present clear and precise movement in performance, utilising an awareness of control, alignment and physical articulation in relation to a specific genre and/or style.

Ternary (in relation to sectional structures/form)

An ABA structure/form which develops on from Binary by providing a return to and reiteration of the opening statement. This is thus cyclic in nature.

Theme and variation (in relation to sectional structures/form)

An A, A1, A2, A3, etc. structure/form. A theme is stated at the outset of the dance and the subsequent sections are all variations of this theme. The initial theme is not necessarily re-stated in its original form.