



St Benedict's
Sixth Form

A LEVEL DANCE TRANSITION PACK





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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 also help you to understand the key practitioners.
- To know the definitions of keywords for each topic



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

RESEARCH LINKS

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	The Place https://www.theplace.org.uk Northern School of Contemporary Dance http://www.nscd.ac.uk Rambert School https://www.rambertschool.org.uk Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance https://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk Arts Pool www.arts-pool.co.uk AQA Examination Board: Dance qualifications. A level https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/dance
TV/YOUTUBE	In This Shirt- Kate Jablonski and Beyond Words Dance Company https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sEKZj-H7qa8 Hofesh Shechter – Political Mother https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVktg2cY9vA Park - Jasmin Vardimon Dance Company https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8SzLBPTiYk Matthew Bourne's – Swan Lake https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQsECoq9XGM 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=o31qnl-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



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	<p>Rambert Performance of 'The Redemption of Thomas Shelby' Rambert Performs Peaky Blinders Dance Routine BAFTA TV Awards 2024 - BBC (youtube.com)</p>
SOCIAL MEDIA FB/Twitter/Instagram:	<p>Rambert Dance Company Akram Khan Dance Company Matthew Bourne New Adventures SBSJ Dance Department Instagram sbsj_dancedpt</p>

Critical Engagement: Theory

You will also study **two compulsory** set works and **two 'Areas of study'** in depth.

Set works:

Rooster by Christopher Bruce

Sutra by Sidi Larbi Chekaoui

Areas of Study:

Rambert Dance Company 1966 - 2002

The Independent Contemporary Dance Scene in Britain 2000 - Current

Below are more links specific to these two 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/>

Set work: Sutra (Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, 2008)

<https://vimeo.com/202670621> Sutra

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2009/dec/17/sidi-larbi-cherkaoui-dance>



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Area of Study: Independent Contemporary Dance Scene

Akram Khan <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2009/sep/22/dance-guide-akram-khan>

Matthew Bourne <https://new-adventures.net/take-part/schools>

Baseline Assessment

During the week beginning **23rd September 2024** there will be an assessment which 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 Tasks 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.



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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 Soklow? 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



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<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=5ek2qwuivvY> – Ghost Dances Audience reaction

Task 2: Sutra & Independent Contemporary Dance Scene

Sutra is choreographed by contemporary choreographer Sidi Larbi. 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 a paragraph of information to help you start your research.

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”

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



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contemporary, modern, classical and pop culture dance it helped me to define my own criteria and find my personal voice with in it.”

Research the following:

1. Sidi Larbi's background- can you add any further information?
2. Sidi Larbi's Training- who is Alain Platel? What is P.A.R.T.S?
3. Sidi Larbi's influences- who is Wim Vandekeybus? Who is Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker? Who is William Forsythe? Who is Pina Bausch? Write a small paragraph on each.
4. 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



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GLOSSARY- Key Dance Terminology

Elements of dance

Actions, space, dynamics and relationships.

Actions

What a dancer does e.g. travelling, turning, elevation, gesture, stillness, use of body parts, floor-work and the transference of weight.

Elevation

The action of “going up” without support, such as in a jump.

Space

The “where” of movement such as levels, directions, pathways, shapes, designs and patterns.

Air pattern

A design that is traced in the air by part of the body.

Direction

The facing of a movement.

Formations

Shapes or patterns created in space by dancers.

Levels

Distance from the ground: low, medium or high.

Pathways

Designs traced in space (on the floor or in the air).

Dynamics

The qualities of movement based upon variations in speed, strength and flow.

Acceleration

Speeding up the movement.

Deceleration

Slowing down the movement.

Relationships

The ways in which dancers interact; the connections between dancers.



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Accumulation

When a dancer performs a series of movements and others join in at different times until all perform in unison.

Complementary

Perform actions or shapes that are similar to but not exactly the same as another dancer's.

Contrast

Movements or shapes that have nothing in common

Counterpoint

When dancers perform different phrases simultaneously.

Manipulation of number

How the number of dancers in a group is used.

Choreography

The art of creating dance.

Choreographic approach

The way in which a choreographer makes the dance.

Choreographic processes

Activities involved in creating dance such as improvisation, selection and development.

Constituent features

Characteristics of choreography such as style, stimulus, subject matter, number/gender of dancers, action content, choreographic principles, form and structure, physical and aural settings.

Ideational

Relating to ideas or concepts.

Improvisation

Exploration or generation of movements without planning.

Intention

Aim or desired outcome.

Interpretation



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Finding the meaning that is in the movement or finding the movement that is in the idea.

Stimulus/stimuli

Inspiration for an idea or movement.

Choreographic devices

Methods used to develop and vary material.

Canon

When the same movements overlap in time.

Climax

The most significant moment of the dance

Development

The way in which movement material is manipulated.

Fragmentation

Use of parts of a phrase or motif.

Highlights

Important moments of a dance.

Motif

A movement phrase encapsulating an idea that is repeated and developed throughout the dance.

Motif development

Ways in which a movement phrase can be varied.

Repetition

Performing the same action or phrase again.

Retrograde

Reversing a movement phrase.

Unison

Two or more dancers performing the same movement at the same time.



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The way in which material is organised to create the whole.

Binary

A composition in two parts or sections.

Episodic

A choreography with several sections, linked by a theme.

Form

The overall shape and structure of a dance.

Logical sequence

The flow of phrases or sections of a dance.

Rondo

A music or dance form with alternating and repeating sections eg verse and chorus.

Structuring devices

The ways in which a dance is made, built, ordered or organised.

Ternary

A composition in three parts.

Transitions

Links between dance phrases or sections.

Unity

A sense of "wholeness" or harmony.