

Questions to Ask Myself at a Dance Performance

1. Before seeing a dance production:

- What do I know about the company, choreographer or individual dancers?
- What do I know about this particular production of this dance work? Is this a new dance or a re-staging of a previous dance?
- What do others say about this dance production and what do I want to know before seeing it? What dance reviews, informal word of mouth, and publicity items give me more information?

2. Before entering the dance theater space:

- How, if at all, does the exterior of the theater capture my attention?
- How does this theater exterior compare to other dance venues I have seen or are nearby?
- Who else seems to be attending the show? What is the make-up of the other audience members (i.e. age, gender, ethnicity, race, etc?)

3. As I enter the dance theater:

- What is the energy of the dance space compared to the street I just left?
- What senses seem to be most activated for me? (Touch, sight, sound, smell?)
- How do I navigate the building to find my seats? Who helped me? Are my seats easy to find? Why?

4. Once in the dance space:

- What strikes me about the design of the performance space? The lighting?
- What do I notice about the “house” or audience seating. Are there accommodations for those who need assistance with stairs? Special seating for wheelchairs, etc.?
- What do I notice about the stage or performance area? Are there set pieces or is it a bare stage? Is there a curtain when looking at the stage? What might I understand about the production before it even starts?

5. Observations about the production:

- What captures my attention during the dance? Is it the dancers? The set? Music? Movement?
- What costumes are the dancers wearing? Do they complement the movement? How?
- Does the movement engage me and hold my attention?
- What do I think about the performances? Are the dancers committed to the work and concentrating?
- How do the dancers interact with one another? With the space or set? With the music itself?
- How does the choreographer and designers (costume, lights and set) stage the action to focus the dance for me? (*Dance artists work to tell stories in varied and very specific ways.*)
- How might I describe this work to a visually impaired person? What might a deaf or hard of hearing person understand about the dance if not able to hear it traditionally?
- What questions do I have about this production? What is the meaning of the dance? (This may not as easy as it seems!)
- How did it feel when the lights came up and I was brought back to the reality that I was in a theater and it is now time to leave?

6. Who else in the dance audience with me?

- I took note of who entered the theater with me. Now who captures my attention before the dance performance begins, during the production and at intermission? Why?
- How do people interact with the dance? Do they seem to laugh when I laugh? Gasp when I am amazed by the dancers? Applaud? When? Why?
- What is the interaction, if any, among the dancers and the audience?