Dance ATAR Course

Practical (performance) examination 2018 & 2020

Choreographic intent and technical notes for the Set solo
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This document is intended to be studied in conjunction with the Dance ATAR course Practical (performance) examination 2018 & 2020 Set solo DVD which contains:
• Full performance: Front and back view
• Breakdown of sequences
Choreographic intent

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The solo is based on the idea of someone, ‘the dancer’, not being heard or being able to express their opinion. The idea of frustration is explored through the interrelationship between the external (outside world) and the internal (not being heard or able to express themselves). The dancer experiences frustration from the external world which then manifests within. This internal frustration is then expressed through the choreography of the solo.

The key connection between the external and the internal is the use of abdominal articulations. Examine the timing carefully, as it drives the intention at times; as do the lyrics of the music. The key technical challenge for the dancer is to have the feet slide on the floor, not step. Balance is assisted if both the feet and abdominals are working together throughout the solo.

The narrative of the solo is not explicit or literal. Rather, the journey or story, is driven by an abstract exploration of its themes. There is an opportunity in the Set solo for each dancer to make it their own journey. It is encouraged that the emotive moments of the solo be expressed physically through the action and tension of the movement and not through facial expressions. Try not to over-dramatise these moments.
Lyrics

Help
You feed me sugar-coated phrases
Hear
I'm speaking through my skin

And my eyes collect water like clouds
and then rain them on the drought,
the drought within

You cannot sense me. You do not see me falling
‘Cos you’re always doing the talking

You cannot feel the lightness of my hand
‘Cos you’re always holding on so tight

Well this is how low I will crouch
and this is how high I will fly

I know what you see
you see a
bundle of unspoken thoughts,
a mess of tangled knots

but you're not listening

I know what you see
you see a
bundle of unspoken thoughts,
a mess of tangled knots

but you're not listening

I know what you see
you see a
bundle of unspoken thoughts,
a mess of tangled knots

but you're not listening

I know what you see
you see a
bundle of unspoken thoughts,
a mess of tangled knots

Well if you won't see me crouch
and if you won't see me fly
then

Feel this
Just feel this
Feel

Hear
Speaking through my skin.

Lyrics and score by Mel Robinson (2009)
Technical notes

The length of the solo is 3 minutes 20 seconds. It is broken down into ten parts.

1. Nudge sequence
2. Push – floor to standing sequence
3. Travel ‘V’ sequence
4. Push – standing to floor sequence
5. Circular travel sequence
6. Jump sequence
7. Arm sequence
8. Floor sequence 1
9. Floor sequence 2
10. Repeat of nudge sequence to exit

Key counts for Set solo

1. Nudge sequence (3 bars of 8)

Wait motionless in starting position until count ‘seven and’ for the first elbow to nudge. Left hand swings out to escape on the ‘breath’ in the music. Both hands move at the same time, the left hand caught by the right hand. Right hand then escapes brushing beside the leg and caught by the left hand. The right hand is slowly placed onto the left hip during a ‘high pitched string’ echo. Hand brush is on count 7 and quickly swivel around to start ‘C’ curve on count 8. The shoulders rise slightly on lyric ‘help’. 3 counts to curve, 1 count to shunt backwards. Repeat. 2 counts to arc the arm forward and around, 1 count to swivel and kick the leg to back corner, 1 count to lunge. 2 counts to scrape up the leg and 2 counts to melt and sit on heels facing front corner.

Recommended teaching points:

- The first elbow nudge is strong and sharp. The intention: To move someone way from your personal space. They are irritating and speaking ‘at you’, rather than ‘to you’. If you really engage your abdominals you will achieve the sharp edge to the movement.
- When the left hand drops it needs to have weight. Try to make it look like it’s slipping through the fingers rather than placing it higher up the arm.
- Keep the feet attached to the floor when stepping forwards and backwards.
- Knee brushing. The intention: There is a hand on your knee and you brush it way. The action is slightly more exaggerate than a little brush.
- The shoulders rise slightly before the ‘C’ curve.
- Knees start in a bent position and shunt backwards onto straight legs.
- Keep the weight on the left foot and knee slightly bent and the right leg fully straight after the leg kick.
- The scraping up the leg is not even. The intention: There is a layer of thick mud covering and protecting you and you want to remove this layer so you can be heard. Clasp the hands together and scrape up the leg trying to chip away the layers. Then melt to the ground raising the right shoulder.
2. **Push – floor to standing sequence (4 bars of 8) start counting faster beats here**

8 counts to do the first two arm scoops rotating on knees. 4 counts to slide left leg backward on floor, repeat on right leg. The step back into plank facing the back diagonal is on count 1. Jump back into plank on count 4. Fall forward on count 5, sliding the feet walking backwards. Leg brushes on count 1 into an off balance arabesque and the knee and elbow bend on count 5 to catch yourself out of the fall to hold the right wrist.

*Recommended teaching points:*

- Try to get full rotation in the arm socket in the first reaching sections while the legs also rotate inwards and outwards.
- Use your hands on the floor to take the weight off the legs by lifting the hips when sliding backwards over the knees.
- The plank is off balance and there should be a straight line between hands and feet.
- The brush into arabesque is a step backward that never comes to a balance. As you straighten the supporting leg, hit the height of the arabesque off balance, and then fall forward by lifting the knee and bending the elbow. As the leg lifts to arabesque the right arm mirrors it.

3. **Travel 'V' sequence (4 bars of 8)**

Ball change backwards with the accent of the elbows nudging on count 1. Ball change forwards to face back on count 3. Hop on count 4. Ball change around the corner and ‘boxing arms’ on count 7. Scoop gallop left leg extended on count 1, repeat on right leg and gallop on count 3. Small ‘fruit bat’ on count 5. Windmill arms on count 1, 7 and 1. Three slide steps to the back, 3 steps to the front.

*Recommended teaching points:*

- Right foot starts in front. It moves first as you ball change backwards keeping the feet close to the floor by bending the knees and try to travel the distance. Transfer the weight into the back foot and repeat again changing the direction to face the back corner.
- Small hop on left leg with right leg extending into the air, step back onto right foot, keep turning towards left shoulder, stepping around the corner (left, right).
- ‘Boxing arms’ as you jump in parallel. **The intention:** It’s like you have been sandwiched in between two people and you need to ‘ruffle’ your way out. Don’t use your head, only the shoulders.
- Keep the knees bent when doing the windmill. The focus is outwards. The body should be upright during the windmill and not bent over. The arms whip around past the ears not letting them drop out to the side. On the return the arms trail behind the head. It is a more relaxed swing. **The intention:** Imagine you’re standing at the edge of a train platform and a fast train drives by and the force of the moving train flips you into a windmill.
- The steps after the windmill are all sliding feet, and finish on a straight leg facing the back with your balance slightly forward.
- The body turns first before the head.
4. **Push – standing to floor sequence (2 bars of 8)**

Contract for 2 counts and push the knee away on count 3. 4 counts to slowly extend the arm out over the head. Slowly rotate the body to face opposite direction and head and hand flips up on the lyric ‘high’. 2 counts for a full plie turned out. 1 count to swing leg to back corner, 1 count to turn dragging right foot.

*Recommended teaching points:*

- Keep the resistance between hand and foot in this section. **The intention:** The contraction is a punch in the stomach, and the knee being pushed away is the driving away of the build up of opinions.
- When the right hand extends. **The intention:** Keeping space between you and the opinions.
- The hands lead the body around with the head to follow last.
- The full plie should have the weight between both feet and the body upright and not leaning forward.
- In the one handed handstand, keep the weight over the right arm and lift the hip to get balance in the air.
- Keep the toe dragging along the floor after handstand otherwise you will lose balance and speed through the music.

5. **Circular travel sequence (4 bars of 8)**

Low hop on left foot on counts 1 and 3 using bowling arms, tilt over left leg on count 5, change the arms on 6 and weight over to right leg and barrel with bent legs count 7. Repeat two more times. Hop on left leg count on count 1 and run to corner on count 3 and 4, jump on count 5 and 6 step back on count 7 and crouch hold arms in front on count 8.

*Recommended teaching points:*

- This whole section is done with bent knees. The aim is to travel in a very large circle covering as much distance so that there is plenty of room for the run at the end.
- The hops are really skims across the floor, keep the knees bent and travel them.
- Watch the DVD carefully for the arm detail. It is different to a conventional preparation, think ‘cricket bowling arms’.
- In the preparation for barrel, the hips need to have a large crease and body slightly forward. Use the arms to help in the jumping action.
- The legs are bent in the barrel roll.
6. Jump sequence (2 bars of 8)

Elbows lead to ceiling, jump on count 1. Big lunge backwards on count 3 and long travelling jump forwards on count 5 landing on count 6 to continue a straight leg barrel on count 7 with an upper back arch and stepping forwards on count 8. Repeat this once more.

*Recommended teaching points:*

- The jump sequence is an extension of the nudge sequence but amplified. Be careful not to use the face for expression, put the expression into the tension of the body and show it through the movement dynamics.
- The lunge backwards needs to be wide so you get a good platform to jump from.
- The barrel is straight-legged with an upper body extension.
- Keep the steps large in after the barrel as you need to travel through the centre of the space.

7. Arm sequence (4 bars of 8)

Right hand to right shoulder/neck on count 1. Left hand on left shoulder/neck on count 2. Crouch on count 3, jump releasing arms on count 4. Right hand on right shoulder on count 5, left hand on right shoulder on count 6, crouch on count 7, jump on count 8.
Step quarter turn to left on left foot placing left hand on left shoulder on count 1. Place right hand under left armpit on count 2, crouch on count 3, and jump on count 4. Slide right leg to front corner on count 5, kick the left leg towards the corner on count 6 and continue to turn in the same direction to finish facing front corner count 8 legs in parallel. Right leg slides out in 2 counts, right hand brushes over head for 2 counts, left hand brushes over head on count 2, and left leg slides in for 2 counts. Right leg kicks out backwards leading with the heel on count 2, 2 ball changes with hands on knees backwards.

*Recommended teaching points:*

- The hands take the longest route to get to around the body.
- On the crouching forward the body needs to bend right forward so that the jump can straighten out.
- The feet slide along the floor in the turns and the body stays down in leg kick with the hands still attached.
- Let the head fling backwards on the heel kick.
- The upper body ripples on the ball changes backwards.
8. **Floor sequence 1 (4 bars of 8)**

2 counts to get to the floor, 2 counts to roll over knees, on ‘count 2’ the pelvis leads the jump off the floor and 2 counts to move into plank. 2 counts to roll and swing the leg forward. 2 count to sit up with right leg straight, 2 counts to swivel on floor to change feet and direction to crouch facing profile sitting on right heel. 2 counts to bunny hop. 2 counts to knee slide, 2 counts to leg swing to back, 2 counts to leg swing to front, 2 count to ‘attitude’ leg swing behind, 2 counts to attitude swing in front, 2 counts to swing an sit up, and 2 counts to squat facing profile. 4 counts to drop backwards onto back.

*Recommended teaching points:*

- The floor sequence should keep moving and have no stopping moments.
- Keep the weight over the right foot when dropping to the floor.
- Keep the head down during the bottom rolls.
- Keep the feet attached to the floor at ALL times in the leg swings.
- Bunny hop legs do not kick up like a handstand; they stay in a pike position.
- Keep the feet attached to the floor at ALL times in the leg swings. Find the length in the leg swings so that you don’t hit the position.
- When rolling over the back, keep your head on the ground along with your hands. Look carefully at the detail on the DVD.
- The leg swings in ‘attitude’ (bent leg) are in turn out so the knee is lifted away from the floor.
- The hands become very useful in whipping the body around into the squat.
- The squat is very relaxed when it hits the ground but not uncontrolled.

9. **Floor sequence 2 (4 bars of 8)**

4 counts to mermaid flick on side accent on count 1, 4 counts to sit facing diagonal front. 2 bars and 5 counts of 8 of rolling sequence to stand in beginning position.

*Recommended teaching points:*

- The mermaid flick occurs on the side of the body and not on the stomach.
- Melt to the ground on the right elbow and then lift the hips as soon as possible, again using the hands on the floor for balance.

10. **Repeat of nudge sequence to exit (6 bars of 8)**

Start repeat of nudge sequence on count ‘7 and’. The knee swipe is on count 6 and turn to face the opposite front corner. 3 slide steps backwards on diagonal, ball change backwards with strong arms.

*Recommended teaching points:*

- Same intention as in the beginning.
- The swivel now turns to face the other diagonal corner. **The intention:** You take a step forward to stand your ground and to show strength of character.
- Steps backwards are with sliding feet; keep the tension in the shoulders.
- On the departure, the body moves first then the head last.
- Walk off with a strong posture.
Floor plan for Set solo

1. **Nudge sequence**
   X1 long steps into X2. X2 moves through X1.
   X1 ‘C’ curves backwards into X3. X3 moves to the floor into X4

2. **Push – floor to standing sequence**
   X1 moves backwards into X2. X2 shuffles backwards into X3.
   X3 falls out of arabesque back into X2.

3. **Travel ‘V’ sequence**
   X1 travels in a slight curve to X2. X2 moves straight backwards to X3.
   X3 walks back to X2

4. **Push – standing to floor sequence**
   X1 is on the spot and travels through a handstand into X2

5. **Circular travel sequence**
   X1 travels with hops to X2. X2 travels with hops to X3.
   X3 changes direction in an ‘L’ shape to travel and run to X4.
6. **Jump sequence**
   X1 travel through centre to X2.

7. **Arm sequence**
   X1 is a large step into X2.  
   X2 are travelling turns with leg kick into X3.  
   X3 travels backwards to X4.

8. & 9. **Floor sequence 1 and 2**
   X1 roll sequence to X2.  
   X2 knee slide into X3.  
   X3 falls backwards into X4.  
   X4 roll sequence into beginning position X5.

10. **Nudge sequence to exit**
    X1 repeat nudge sequence steps backwards to walk with back to audience-finish X2.
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