

RAMBERT

GCSE Resource Pack // A Linha Curva
November 2022



ALINHA CURVA



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Preface

Rambert's Participation and Community team has created this resource pack to help teachers prepare their pupils to study *A Linha Curva*, one of six works on the GCSE Dance Anthology.

As well as helping teachers to prepare their pupils for all the elements of the GCSE Dance syllabus, this pack aims to provide a deeper exploration of the social, cultural and historical context and its relevance to the subject matter, themes and production features of *A Linha Curva*. That is why it includes many talking points designed to support the development of pupils' critical thinking by relating some of the complex topics and themes of the piece to their lived experience.

These talking points are designed to provide opportunities to extend pupils' learning and may cross over into other areas of the curriculum, including Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) and citizenship.

We are very grateful to One Dance UK and the academics, practitioners and dancers who helped us create this resource:

- Dr Katia Chornik, Impact Development Manager, Kingston University / Research Associate, Cambridge University
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- Amy Williams, Dance in Education Manager, One Dance UK
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At Rambert, we believe our work can always be better. We accept that it will take time to dismantle biased systems but we are committed to this journey for the long term. As teachers use the pack, we anticipate further thoughts on engaging students with the work will come to light. We invite you to join the conversation on improving this pack by emailing learning@rambert.org.uk

How to use this resource pack

The information and guidance provided in this pack is designed to supplement your teaching, open up discussion and provide additional context to the work. Not all the information is essential for GCSE examinations, please refer to the relevant examination criteria for further information.

In order to help teachers use this resource pack to best suit the needs of their students, we've highlighted the different elements in the guide:

Glossary

Terminology **highlighted** on its first appearance is explained in the glossary at the end.

Insider perspectives

Boxed-out content headed 'Insider perspectives' are quotes from practitioners who were directly involved in the rehearsal or performance of the work.

Classroom activities are indexed



Activities using online resources such as YouTube videos



Writing and research activities



Practical activities



Discussion activities



Talking points – questions designed to encourage classroom discussion of some of the complex themes explored in the piece



Talking points that could cross over to curriculum areas such as PSHE and citizenship.

ABOUT A LINHA CURVA

Title

A Linha Curva (pronounced a-lin-ya-courv-a) means The Curved Line in Portuguese.

Choreographer

Itzik Galili

Duration

23 minutes

Cast

28 dancers: 15 men, 13 women

Première

23 July 2005, Balé da Cidade de São Paulo, Brazil.

Rambert première

19 May 2009, Sadler's Wells, London, England.

Most recent Rambert performance

29 March 2018

Performance note

The work was mounted on Rambert in 2009 by Itzik Galili's assistant Lumena Macedo Day, a former dancer with Balé da Cidade de São Paulo, who was observed by Mikaela Polley. Polley then became the senior rehearsal director for the 2016 performance of the work.

FAST FACTS

Stimuli

(What a choreographer uses as a source of inspiration)

- Contradictions (for example, *A Linha Curva* means The Curved Line in Portuguese but much of the movement is performed in regimented straight lines).
- Brazilian culture.
- A celebration the Brazilian way of life and living in the moment.

Choreographic intentions

(What the choreographer wants to show in the movement – this can include mood, meaning, idea, theme, style, style fusion)

- To have fun
- Vibrant Brazilian-inspired movement creating a sense of samba parade.
- Communication / interactions between men and women.



Carolyn Bolton
Photo by Hugo Glendinning

1.1 OVERVIEW

A Linha Curva takes its primary influence from Brazilian culture, music and dance, with the linear travelling formations and samba-inspired movement specifically referencing Carnaval, the annual festival that begins on the Friday before Lent and ends on Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent.

The piece comprises seven sections (plus the introductory chant).

- Sections one, five and seven are large group sequences with complex, changing formations organised by linear, regimented movement, all lit by the strikingly vibrant colours of the lighting design.

- By contrast, sections two, three, four and six are shorter, using fewer dancers to mix pace, style and semi-narrative content staging interactions between men and women, with a much sparer lighting design.

The structure of the work creates a kind of 'curved line':

- it starts with an almost full company of dancers onstage and the music, lighting and movement all at high intensity
- it then drops immediately to the lowest intensity, with a single dancer performing in almost total darkness
- it then builds back up to match and then exceed the energy of the opening moments.

Plotting the progression of the intensity level on a chart would create a curved line similar to the shape of a 'u'.

A Linha Curva is not a narrative piece – it does not tell a story through a sequence of scenes in which identifiable individual characters interact and achieve their goals (or not). It is instead an episodic piece, where the scenes or sections are linked together more loosely by theme, feel, time or place. Like all of Galili's work, the lighting design is essential to the meaning of the piece, and was (unusually) designed by Galili himself.

Insider perspective

Mikaela Polley, senior rehearsal director, 2016

“A Linha Curva essentially is an abstract work. It's not telling a story to the audience as such, but what it is, is conveying a sense of fun and celebration to the audience. There are some large group sections where the dancers are in very clear formations and lines and that, I think, gives a sense of the samba parades that you might see in Brazil.”

(Interview, 2016)

1.2 ABOUT THE CHOREOGRAPHER

Itzik Galili was born in Tel Aviv, Israel in 1961, and began his dance career when a friend took him to a folk dance event. After dancing with the flagship Israeil dance company Batsheva in the 1980s, where he also choreographed his first three works, Galili moved to the Netherlands in 1991 to develop himself as a choreographer in a country with a reputation for innovative dance.

Galili has created more than 70 works by working with renowned dance companies across the world, including Balé da Cidade de São Paulo (with whom he made *A Linha Curva*).

In her essay on Galili in the 2011 edition of *Fifty Contemporary Choreographers*, Liesbeth Wildschut summarises his style like this:

“Influenced by the Batsheva Dance choreographers Ohad Naharin and Daniël Ezralow, Galili’s style became very energetic, sometimes even acrobatic, with horizontal jumps, bent knees and deep arches of the torso ... His movement phrases are often logical and fluent, even when body parts suddenly erupt in unexpected directions.

The movement language is rich: turns and extensions, explosive kicks and swinging arms can be immediately followed by light-footed, humorous, tranquil or poetic motion ...

Galili ... combines fear and power, loneliness and comfort, aggression and tenderness, humour and seriousness, emotions and abstraction – not as contradictions, but as possibilities.”

Fifty Contemporary Choreographers, edited by Martha Bremser & Lorna Sanders, 2011, pp172-173

1.3 CHOREOGRAPHIC PROCESS

Working with the dancers of the Balé da Cidade de São Paulo, Galili gave tasks to the company in which they improvised short phrases that they then fixed and taught each other. Each solo phrase is (unusually) named after the dancer who created it, imprinting their personalities on the movement of the work. Galili then structured and linked the movement material to create *A Linha Curva*.

The piece includes many choreographic devices, such as accumulation, canon, contrast, highlights and repetition, particularly in the 'carnival-type' scenes, as well as improvised elements, such as the second solo in section six.

Insider perspective




Mikaela Polley, senior rehearsal director, 2016

“I know that Itzik gave some tasks to the dancers and he asked them to create a short solo, perhaps just two or three sets of eight counts, and some of them, I think, used some improvisation to create their solos and these became the basis for the **motifs** of the work. Each of those singular movement phrases were then taught to the rest of the company of dancers. So, he had a series of movement phrases that he could then work with to then structure the large group work ...



It then became Itzik's decision to decide how they would interlink with each other, how many times they would be repeated, how they would go in order.

So, one phrase might join to another phrase, but it might change according to how he wanted the group to develop the work.”

ACTIVITY

-  Exam practice: Explain the choreographic process of *A Linha Curva* and how it helps to enhance the audience's appreciation / understanding of the work.
-  Consider one particular movement phrase or section. What choreographic process or device can you see in this example, why is it important, and what effect does it have?
-  Is *A Linha Curva* a true collaboration? How much overall input did the dancers have, and is it possible to know this? Although the dancers improvised short solos to form some of the movement content, should we consider this work to have been 'made on the dancers'?

ACTIVITY

-  The competitive mood of some sections of the work was reinforced during rehearsals. As soloists improvised and created material, other dancers were encouraged to react. How do you think this experience would have felt for the dancers?
-  What are the advantages and disadvantages of collaboration as part of the choreographic process? Consider the impact on the overall choreography and performance.



Talking point

Be mindful of the command word 'explain', which requires students to conclude their points by saying what was beneficial, impactful or useful.

1.4 PHYSICAL SETTING

Set / Staging

A Linha Curva is performed on a bare stage. The four musicians perform on a raised platform or mezzanine upstage.

In rehearsal, the lighting grids were marked out on the studio floor using tape whereas onstage for the performance, there was minimal use of tape. This was unusual, as tape is often used to help dancers with positioning and formations. The absence of tape onstage meant the dancers had to learn the positioning.

The lack of props allows dancers to fully maximise the use of the stage. Formations can be completely unobstructed and symmetrical and work in harmony with the lighting design. This further allows for entrances and exits to appear and disappear seamlessly with a sense of spontaneity and excitement.

By making it impossible to predict where dancers will appear or disappear, the choreography encourages live audiences to become completely immersed in the action on stage. Their focus and attention move around the space just as spectators might be engaged by the music, movement, costume, design and floats at Carnaval.

The lack of set / props further enhances the episodic structure as it provides a blank canvas for the audience when forming their own interpretations.

Six skateboards are used during section two to slide some of the men across from stage left to stage right. The skateboards are barely visible due to the low lighting and create the illusion that the dancers are 'floating' across the stage as they lie on their backs, moving their limbs back and forth.

Performance environment

Proscenium arch, or end-on, staging.

Lighting design

Itzik Galili is unusual among choreographers in creating his own lighting designs. Lighting is an integral production feature of *A Linha Curva* that helps to convey a sense of fun while, at the same time, regimenting and directing the dancers into different positions and formations.

The different coloured and timed lighting (linked to the costume colours) creates a chequer-board effect on stage and defines the lines and spacing for the dancers in the large ensemble sections of the piece (sections one, five and seven).

The colours of the lights also complement the colours featured in the costume design. It further contributes to the audience's understanding of the piece by leading the dancers into particular grid spaces to create strong linear formations, contrary to the 'curved line' of the title of the piece.

This allows the audience to perceive patterns between the dancers and movement material when the whole cast is on stage together. Each original, named motif can be performed within one of these grid spaces.

The lighting is made up of 49 boxes of light in a 7 x 7 coloured grid and a secondary lighting rig of two diagonal lines which form an X (see image below).

Profile lights are used for these boxes as they have shutters to enable manipulation of shape to create the clean, straight lines of the light grid squares. There are two sets of side lights on either side of the stage (profile lights) and the lighting plan also includes three 5kw Fresnel lights overhead, which create the wash of white light in sections three and four.

There are 173 lighting changes over the course of the piece. The timing and cues for the lighting are pre-programmed and therefore dictate the speed and pace of the movement and music. The full lighting plan can be viewed in Appendix A.

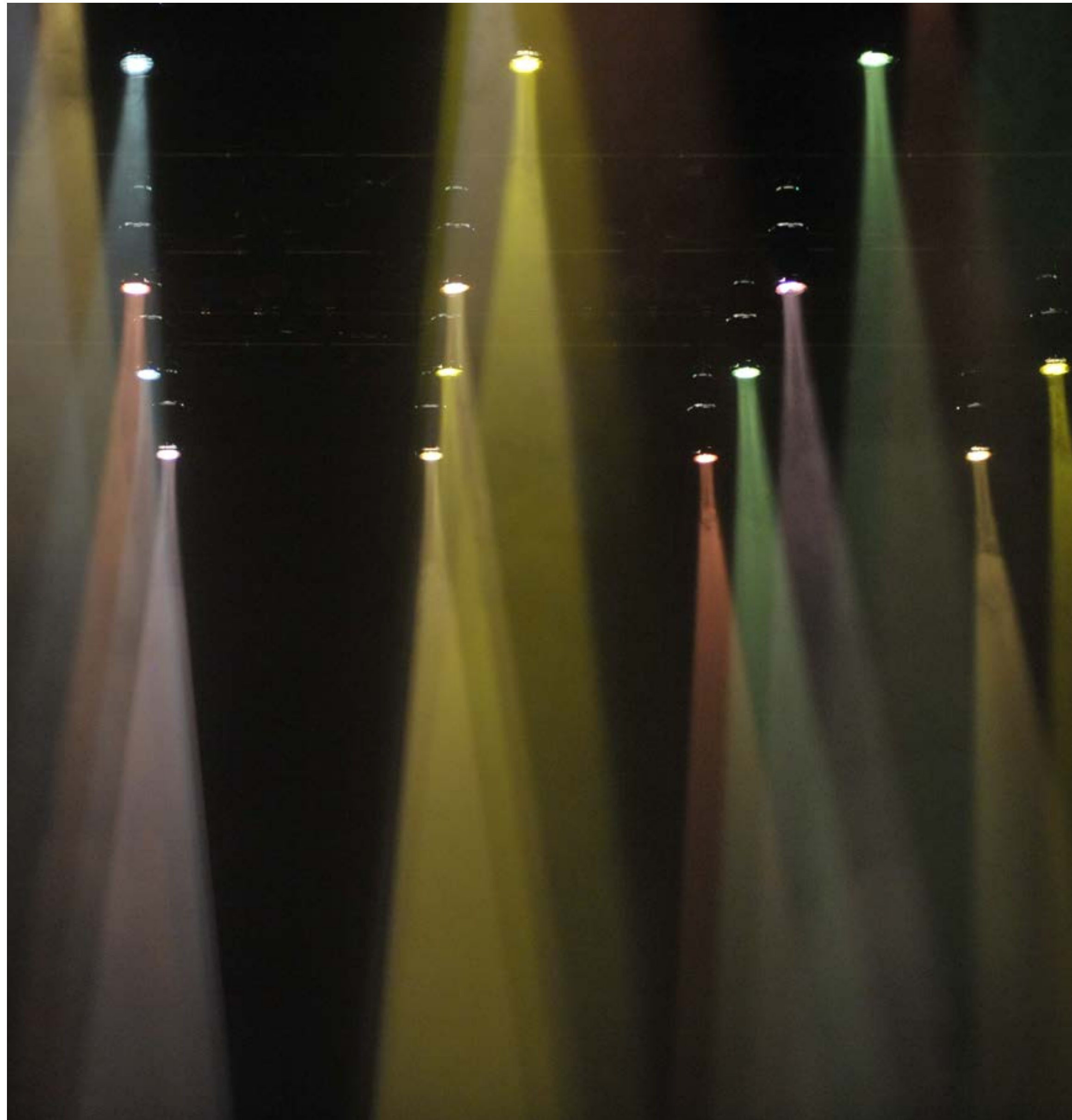
Within Rambert's works, lighting has typically been used to enhance the mood, atmosphere or setting of a piece, so this approach was radically different to other works being created by or mounted on the company at this time. In addition to the main lighting rig, there are overhead profile lights for each musician that come on at the blackout after the opening and then remain on for the duration of the piece. This lighting cue draws the audience's eye up and away from all the dancers going off stage or getting into their first positions.

When the skateboards are used during section two to slide some of the men across the stage, the low lighting means they are barely visible. This creates the illusion that the dancers are 'floating' across the stage as they lie on their backs, moving their limbs back and forth.

Yellow	Magenta	Pink	Yellow	Magenta	Yellow	Pink
Green	Yellow	Cyan	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Cyan
Magenta	Pink	Magenta	Yellow	Pink	Pink	Magenta
Green	Yellow	Cyan	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Cyan
Magenta	Pink	Yellow	Pink	Magenta	Pink	Yellow
Green	Yellow	Cyan	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Cyan
Pink	Yellow	Pink	Magenta	Pink	Yellow	Pink
White	Black	Black	Black	Black	Black	White
Black	White	Black	Black	Black	White	Black
Black	Black	White	Black	White	Black	Black
Black	Black	Black	White	Black	Black	Black
Black	Black	White	Black	White	Black	Black
Black	White	Black	Black	Black	White	Black
White	Black	Black	Black	Black	Black	White



Itzik Galili's A Linha Curva, photo by Tristram Kenton



Lighting design in Itzik Galili's *A Linha Curva*, photo by Hugo Glendinning



Lighting design in Itzik Galili's *A Linha Curva*, photo by Tristram Kenton

Insider perspective

Lucy Balfour, dancer, 2016

“All the lights are in a grid pattern. Different patterns come up – you might have a diagonal, or it might be all the red boxes.

When we rehearsed in the studio, it was all marked out in boxes on the floor. Then when we got on stage it was suddenly, ‘Oh, I’m in a green light, I’m in a red light.’

A lot of times you were running to a box (before the lights came on) thinking, ‘I hope I’m in the right square!’ Sometimes you’d be like, ‘Move outta my square!’ but there were 20-odd people on the stage, so you didn’t necessarily see those moments!”

Insider perspective

Mikaela Polley, senior rehearsal director, 2016

“I think one of the really important components to *A Linha Curva* is the lighting grid – the lighting grid you see on the floor, and it’s a coloured chequerboard, essentially.

The lights are changing in formation throughout the work and the dancers, really, are being dictated where to move in the space by the change of the lights in the space.

It’s like the lights are pulling the dancers into their next space, in order to do their next set of movements.”

ACTIVITY



Based on these two insider perspectives, what do you think it would be like to perform *A Linha Curva*?

Costume

The dancers' costumes (also designed by Itzik Galili) consist of black mesh vest tops with coloured zips (placed either on the vertical, horizontal or diagonal), and Lycra shorts of the corresponding colour – men's have a front zip, women's have ruched, tie sides. The shorts are made out of shiny Lycra and come in 12 different colours. These colours are bright, block colours, chosen to reflect the energy of Carnival while enhancing the impact of the lighting.

The men's tops can be worn either with the zip at the front or the back and change throughout the piece: in section one, all men's tops are with the zip at the back, but in section three they are all worn with the zip at the front and then turned round again for the remainder of the piece.

The women's tops are either round neck or turtleneck with a tie at the back.

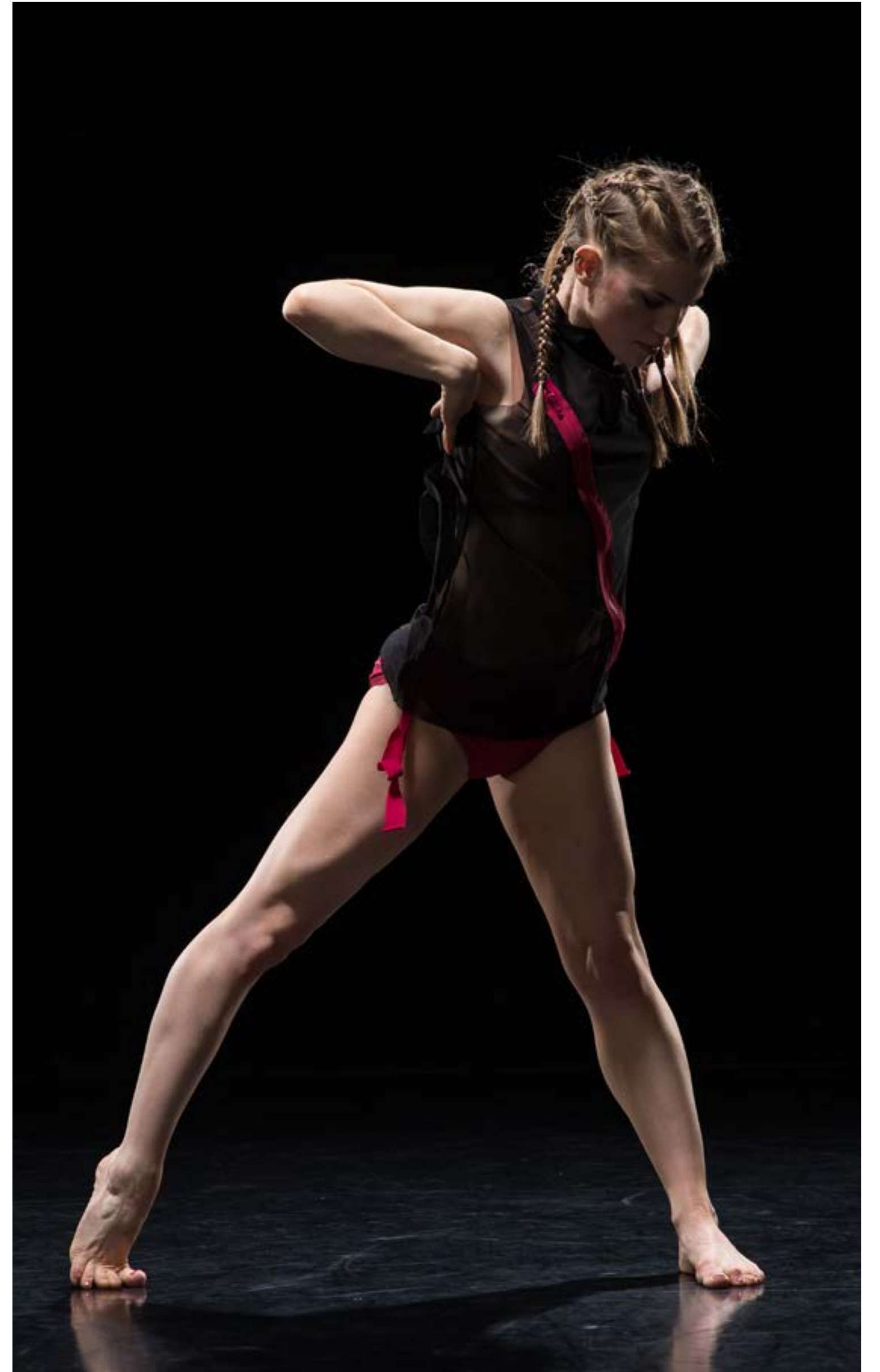
As the minimalism of the costumes allows all the movement to be clearly visible, it contributes to the audience's understanding of the piece. The sole variation in costume occurs during the introductory chant, when the men wear mirrored collars to reflect the lights and dazzle the audience. This is a contentious choice, given Portugal's history of enslaving native Indians and West African captives during its colonial exploitation of Brazil.



Carolyn Bolton, photo by Hugo Glendinning



Luke Ahmet, photo by Hugo Glendinning



Hannah Rudd, photo by Hugo Glendinnong



More costume images, including scans of fabric swatches, can be found in Appendix B.

The uniformity of the costumes, with their shared colour palette and similar embellishments, prevents the audience from becoming distracted from the movement and discourages identification with individual dancers as characters. This further enhances the episodic structure by discouraging running narratives from forming in the minds of members of the audience.

The minor variations in costuming suggest the individual variations within a single community, like the way (in schools with uniform policies) pupils express themselves through, for example, how they wear their ties, or their choice of style of skirts or trousers.

The short length of the hotpants and the close fit of the tops helps to enhance or sculpt the bodies of the dancers. The lines and muscular physiques of the dancers can be fully appreciated, which is emphasised during highlights such as *grande battements* (high leg kicks), *fouette à la seconde* (turning repetitively with one leg outstretched) and tilts.



Hannah Rudd and Luke Ahmet
Photo by Hugo Glendinning



Talking points

The costumes could be considered as 'revealing' when coupled with the sexualised choreography. How would you feel to perform as a dancer in one of these costumes?

Typically, Carnival costumes are brightly coloured, flamboyant and may feature different materials and textures such as feathers and sequins. These traditional costumes are specific to Carnival characters and rich with symbolism. Why do you think Galili designed a very different sort of costume for this work, despite stating he was influenced by Carnival in the making of the piece?

Why do you think only the men wear the mirrored collars? What does this suggest and how does this relate to the rest of the work? What do you think the collars add to the presentation of the piece?



Hair and make-up: The women wear their hair in multiple braids; some cornrowed. The men's hairstyle is not set. All dancers wear natural stage make-up. Carolyn Bolton and Luke Ahmet, photos by Hugo Glendinning

1.5 AURAL SETTING

The aural setting consists of anything within the performance that can be heard. In *A Linha Curva* this consists of three key elements: music / accompaniment; vocalisations; and found sound.

The music, which includes vocal sounds, is played live by four percussionists and is influenced by Brazilian samba music. The dancers also contribute to the vocal sounds.

Music / Accompaniment

The music is often described as Brazilian, partly because of its references to samba and capoeira. But it would be more accurate to say that the music features Brazilian influences, rather than being an example of Brazilian music. The Dutch percussion group Percossa, who perform the music live, do not have any Brazilian members and therefore they do not represent any of the communities referenced in the work.

The score calls for a number of percussion instruments connected to Brazil, including:

- berimbau (a wooden bow with a single steel string associated with the Afro-Brazilian martial art of capoeira)
- caxixi (a shaker with a flat bottom filled with seeds widely used in Brazil)
- surdo (the largest and deepest bass drum in a typical samba bateria, or drum kit)
 - tamborim (small Brazilian frame drum played with a single stick associated with several Brazilian genres including samba).

The score is performed live in time to a click track (a pre-determined pulse set by a digital metronome that musicians can hear through headphones or in-ear monitors).

ACTIVITY



Given Galili has stated the piece was influenced by his experience of Brazilian communities, why do you think this is not reflected in the musical choices? Why do you think the musicians are placed on stage, at a higher level than the dancers? What are the implications of this?

Vocalisations

Two types of vocalisations can be heard within *A Linha Curva*.

- **Introductory chant:** Section one begins with a loud, confident chant by the men dancers, to which the women respond with a short, sharp, shrieking sound. The men's vocalisation returns at the end of section seven.
- **Catcalls:** In the 'dance-off' sections, dancers can be heard calling out to one another. At times, they sound encouraging and motivational whereas on other occasions, they seem to mock and belittle.

Found sound

In some sections, the music is complemented by found sound. For example, in the ROSE phrase first seen in section one, the dancers clap their hands twice in front of their pelvis.



Talking points

The vocalisations used do not demonstrate traditional Brazilian music or social interaction. They could also be considered problematic, as they depict singing as primitive, or without language. Why do you think the vocalisations were incorporated?

In the opening section, why do you think the vocalisations are divided and differentiated by gender?



Itzik Galili's *A Linha Curva*, photo by Tristram Kenton

1.6 DANGERS

The large ensemble cast comprises 28 dancers: 15 men and 13 women.

Some dancers play a larger role than others, dancing in the smaller solo / duet / group sections. Though Galili says that the work is influenced by Brazilian culture, music and movement styles, the cast of dancers featured in the Rambert recording do not represent Brazilian communities or have this lived experience.



Talking points

Dancers face a difficult situation when they are asked to perform as individuals from communities that they have no lived experience of. If you were a dancer in this situation, how could you prepare for such a project?

Given some of the themes and narratives explored in this work, why could it be problematic to have more men than women in the cast? Why do the women and the men often perform different movement content, interact in different ways and appear to take on different roles within the work?

The work appears to present stereotypical views of men and women, with the men often depicted as strong, confident and 'macho' while the women perform more of the slower, gentler movement material and do not have as many opportunities to showcase their skills. As you watch the work, observe the interaction between the men and women. What does this suggest to you?

1.7 MOVEMENT

When making *A Linha Curva*, Itzik Galili drew from a range of different movement styles, including contemporary, capoeira, samba and ballet. The large group sections (one, five and seven) deliver an explosion of colour, movement and sound, which embody the celebratory aspect of *A Linha Curva*.

Movement material is repeated and developed throughout the work and formations are structured and tight, dictated by the lighting grid.

Straight lines are a significant feature, in contrast to the 'curved line' of the title of the work.

Unison is a key feature; groups of dancers perform phrases of movements travelling through the light grids on horizontal and vertical pathways.

Body percussion (found sound) and vocalisations are performed by both the dancers and the musicians, allowing the body to be seen as an instrument as well as conveying a story or emotion through movement.

The main movement content was created through improvisation tasks set for the dancers by Galili. Each dancer created a short solo phrase which they then taught to the whole cast, before being structured into longer sections by the choreographer. The solo phrases were designed to fit within the small boxes created by the grid lighting.

Despite these spatial restrictions, the phrases show the style and influences of the original dancers, and are filled with dynamic variation, exciting movement material and personality.



Itzik Galili's *A Linha Curva*, photo by Tristram Kenton

1.8 KEY MOVEMENT STYLES

Capoeira

Afro-Brazilian form of danced martial derived from traditions brought across the Atlantic Ocean by enslaved Africans and a means of communicating their desire for freedom, typically practised in the plantations. Influences of capoeira in *A Linha Curva* include the use of circular, sweeping leg gestures and 'cause and effect' duets, seen in sections one and seven. Instruments typically used in capoeira are also present in some sections, such as the berimbau in section two.

Samba

Dance styles that derived from West African culture, brought to Brazil by enslaved people transported to the country to work in mines and plantations. Samba further evolved in Rio de Janeiro in the early 20th century at dance parties held by former enslaved people.

Samba is typically an energetic and rhythmically driven form of dance characterised by rocking step combinations, rolling hip action and pulsing movements on the beat and in syncopation, used in this work to convey the energy of the Carnival parades Galili observed in Brazil.

Contemporary dance

A form of dance that broke free from the restrictions of classical ballet in the middle of the 20th century, often featuring contracted torsos, flexed feet, floor work and low centre of gravity (all used in this work).

Ballet

classical dance form that originated in the Italian Renaissance courts. Ballet was often performed for upper-class citizens including royalty, and early balletic movement was restricted by cumbersome clothing. Since its beginnings, the dance style has developed and is recognised universally via a codified movement language including positions of the arms and feet. Dancers in the Rambert company are often formally trained in this style. Within *A Linha Curva*, classical leg lines such as arabesque and attitude can be seen combined with contemporary upper-body movement, as well as the use of pointed feet and turnout.



Talking point

Some of the movement content could be viewed as sexualised, for example when the dancers move in a wide plié with pelvis thrust forward; in the ROBSON phrase when the bottom is pushed towards the audience; and when the men gesture towards their groins in section two. How would this feel to learn and perform as a dance?



(L-R) Hannah Rudd, Carolyn Bolton, Luke Ahmet, Pierre Tapon; Carolyn Bolton; Luke Ahmet, photos by Hugo Glendinning

ANALYSIS OF A LINHA CURVA

Throughout the analysis of *A Linha Curva*, several motifs and phrases will be referred to using the name of the dancer who created it for ease of reference.

We would encourage teachers and students not to refer to these names when providing examples in response to exam questions. Instead, we encourage teachers and students to describe the movement content using actions, space and dynamics to further develop the students' literacy skills.

2.1 SECTION ONE

(0:00-4:11)

Movement summary

The introductory chant that opens the piece features 20 dancers. Thirteen men wearing the mirrored collar discs are stood in an X-formation, each man lit by a square white spotlight.

Seven women kneel in two horizontal lines just downstage of centre, lit by a soft yellow pool of light.

The dancers perform vocalisations that are later repeated by the musicians throughout the work.



Talking point

Why are the dancers split by gender here? Why are there many more men than women in this opening moment? Why are the women kneeling on a lower level?



Itzik Galili's *A Linha Curva*, photo by Tristram Kenton

Insider perspective

Lucy Balfour, dancer, 2016

“Behind us we have the samba band, and they were on earpieces, on a click track. So, they were always on the same rhythm.

And in the wings, we had the stage manager, Amy, and she would be so focused at the start because it was the cuing of the curtain going up, the music starting with the click track, and her pressing the button which started the lights, and it all had to be in sync.

And when it was, I think she sat down thinking, ‘I can relax now’...

Sometimes these things don’t always link up and there were maybe one or two times when they were out.

And if it’s out, it’s not out for just a little, it’s out like that for the whole thing.

So, it was extra challenging as a dancer to be in that moment and be like, ‘Right, okay, maybe the lights are a click ahead of where I’m supposed to be’ ...

And in those moments, you just feel everyone’s hairs on their arms perk up a bit more and that’s when you realise that beautiful team energy together and wanting to make that work.”

Much of the movement in this section comes from the named movement phrases created by the original dancers who helped develop the choreography. The dancers perform these phrases in linear formations and develop them in various ways as they travel through the lighting grid.

This is how the named movement phrases are introduced and developed:

Phrase	First Seen	Development
LIRIS	Seven women in a horizontal line downstage perform the phrase facing upstage	
ROBSON	Seven women in a horizontal line downstage perform the phrase facing stage left	Change of stage face: Repeated immediately by 14 dancers in two horizontal lines downstage facing downstage. Later performed by two groups of dancers stage left and stage right facing downstage
KENYA 2	First half is performed by seven women centre stage in a horizontal line facing upstage	Addition, change of stage face and place: performed in full by several dancers at the cross-section of linear formations.
WAGNER	Performed by 15 dancers downstage in a rectangular formation facing upstage. This phrase ends with a sequence of gestures where one dancer covers his mouth, another covers his ears and a third covers his eyes, echoing the gestures of the three wise monkeys of the Japanese proverb who 'see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil',	Change of stage face: performed by large ensemble of dancers in two vertical lines and two horizontal lines facing upstage.

While the phrases are introduced and developed, the music repeats layered percussive melodies that vary in speed. At times, the music is complemented by found sound, for example clapping from the dancers onstage as part of the ROSE phrase and when the dancers walk across the stage to reveal a duet centre stage towards the end of the section.

Choreographic devices

Choreographic devices are used to develop some of the named movement phrases and create interest within the section. Some key examples are listed below:

Choreographic Device	Description
Canon Example 1	The ROSE phrase is performed by seven dancers entering the stage right in a vertical line. The first line of dancers perform 3 x 8 counts of the phrase before the second line of dancers enter.
Contrast Example 1	A solo performed by a woman centre stage in a square white spotlight. The movement vocabulary used here bears some similarity to the named phrases such as deep lunges and circular motions of the arms above the head, although it is much slower and performed with a more fluid dynamic
Contrast Example 2	A duet performed by a man and a woman centre stage in a rectangular pool of white lights. This duet contrasts with the previous choreography as it features contact work and balletic movement vocabulary. As the duet is performed, hands appear in the light from upstage, performing a sharp, rhythmic gestural sequence. The influence of capoeira is also seen when the man spins with his left leg raised <i>à la seconde</i> while the woman lunges underneath his leg, sweeping her arms overhead towards stage right.
Canon Example 2	Section one finishes with a rapid canon of duets, performed in a diagonal formation from downstage left to upstage right. The full grid of colourful lighting can be seen here. The duets include the capoeira influence of sweeping circular leg gestures over another dancer.

Insider perspective

Mikaela Polley, senior rehearsal director, 2016

“You’ll see in those duet phrases that sometimes the legs are swinging across the dancer’s head and I think that really captures that essence of what we know about the martial art of capoeira.

If anyone’s ever seen videos of how that is performed, you see the dancers, sort of, dancing opposite each other and they might swing their leg and the other person may be ducking underneath it, and I think that’s apparent in the duets.”

2.2 SECTION TWO

(4:11-6:24)

Movement summary

Section two begins after the diagonal canon duets. There is an immediate change of pace, initiated through the change in physical setting, aural setting, number of dancers and movement.

In stark contrast to the complex grid of colourful lighting used in section one, the stage is now in almost total blackout, except for one small white spotlight downstage left illuminating a solo woman dancer.

There is an abrupt end to the repeated percussive rhythms of section one, and instruments typically used in capoeira, such as the berimbau, play isolated and sustained notes.



Talking point

Why are instruments typical of Brazilian capoeira used here when the movement vocabulary could be described as predominantly ballet and contemporary? What is the impact of this choice?

The woman dancer goes into an inverted position from wide **parallel second** to perform a headstand in which she sweeps her legs slowly around towards stage right and stands up having turned 180 degrees. The movement is controlled and sustained, another contrast from the opening section. Another woman enters downstage right and together the two begin the ADAGE in unison.

This phrase begins with a deep lunge towards downstage left with the arms reaching in front of the body. One by one, another five women enter the space; this is known as an accumulation. The music serves as a cue for the movement: as there are no counts for this section of choreography, the dancers must follow the music carefully to ensure they are in unison.

During the **adage**, the movement is quite sensual at times as the women stroke their necks and chests and sink into deep pliés. Each dancer is lit by a dim yellow square of light, meaning the costumes are barely visible and instead the dancer's limbs are highlighted.

Each dancer stands under an individual spotlight that could resemble a street light, especially as the rest of the stage is in darkness (which could suggest night-time). The electronic aural setting is piercing and unpleasant. It creates a dark, mysterious and eerie atmosphere that elicits a sense of anticipation from the audience. The ominous mood created by the complementary movement, lighting and aural setting prompts the audience to ask if something sinister is going to happen, since night-time universally creates a heightened sense of vulnerability, especially for women.

As the women face downstage right with one leg extended away from the floor and arms raised above the head, a group of men begin to cross the stage, from stage left to stage right. They are positioned on their backs on skateboards and are pushed from the wings by their feet. As they travel across the stage, they move their legs back and forth. Due to the low-level lighting, the men are barely visible, and almost seem like insects or animals, lying on their backs in the sun. As this takes place, the seven women break out of unison, performing **fragments** of the ADAGE.



Talking point

What is the impact or effect of separating the dancers by gender here?

The change in pace, accompanied by the fluid, more circular movement vocabulary could be a direct link back to the title, with the first section seeming to convey the 'line' of *A Linha Curva* through structured linear formations and harsher, more angular choreography.

Choreographic devices

Additional choreographic devices in this section create further contrast with section one. Some key examples are listed below:

Choreographic Device	Description
Unison	Two women dancers begin the ADAGE in unison
Canon	The women join in with the ADAGE phrase one by one, until all seven dancers are performing in unison
Contrast	The men's travelling movement across the stage, assisted by the skateboards, introduced a contrasting use of level and dynamics when compare with the choreography of the women



Talking point

When students have watched this section, ask them to describe what they see. Using open questions will help them develop their thinking and interpretative skills.

2.3 SECTION 3

(6:24-8:57)

Movement summary

After the final skateboard has rolled across the stage, the lighting brightens and four vertical lines of the colourful grid lighting appear. Men begin to enter the stage, assuming positions linked to the 'three wise monkeys' gestures from section one.

The first man appears upstage left in a deep *plié* covering his eyes. The next runs and jumps to centre stage left, freezing in a deep *plié* and covering his ears. The third enters upstage left, also covering his ears, quickly followed by a fourth entering centre stage right with one hand placed over his mouth. As this happens, the women gradually exit the stage and the music is now embellished with vocalisations. Once a fifth man has entered upstage left, all five repeat the jump into a deep *plié*, alternating between the three positions of the hands to coincide with the vocalisations in a short canon.

By this point one woman is left standing downstage centre, and the men gradually travel towards her as they jump. As the jumps speed up and the music increases in tempo, the men encroach on the woman's space.

Their movement is also sexualised, as they alternate between thrusting their pelvis towards the woman and covering their groins with their hands. The woman watches on, seemingly uninterested and unimpressed. She later mocks them herself before performing her own explosive phrase in a counter-display of her power and athleticism.

The vocalisations build to a repeated melody, and the men travel as a group to upstage left while the woman distances herself downstage right. A physically challenging section of movement follows as the men appear to show off their strength and versatility to the woman. The timing of the chants adds comedic value to the dance as it enhances the dancers' cheeky poses and mannerisms.



Itzik Galili's *A Linha Curva*, photo by Tristram Kenton



Talking point

The 'peacocking' and 'showing off' in this section is not typical of Brazilian culture / communities. Why do you think Galili has chosen this kind of movement for the men?

The men use plyometric movements to jump and land in a rapid or explosive manner, keeping in time to the rhythm of the accompaniment. They travel as a group to upstage right, where they repeat the 'three wise monkeys' positions.

The men then perform a more pedestrian sequence to return to upstage left, to travel on a diagonal pathway back once again towards the woman downstage right. This sequence includes a repeated contact movement in which one man runs onto another's back before being assisted back down to the ground.

The woman observes the 'performance' taking place without interest. She performs a short solo as a higher-pitched vocalisation is introduced but the men travel upstage and then proceed to perform further **plyometric** movements across the stage, appearing to be more interested in showing off than paying the woman any real attention.



Talking point

Why would Galili choose to have the first solo for a woman go unnoticed by the man on stage? What does this suggest?

Choreographic devices

Choreographic devices used in this section provide contrast between the choreography for the men and the women.

Choreographic Device	Description
Contrast	The movement performed by the five men typically has a weighted dynamic and includes lots of elevation. The woman's solo is more fluid, including circles of the arms, quick <i>pliés</i> and deep lunges.
Repetition	The ' <i>three wise monkeys</i> ' movements performed by the men are repeated at the end of the section

2.4 SECTION 4

(8:57-9:36)

Movement Summary

Section four is extremely short in length and begins with the second solo from the woman dancer present throughout section three.

This solo is more physical than the first, as she matches and outdoes the men's attempts to impress her in section three, by kicking her legs up, spinning and diving to the floor. She has been sitting back watching the circus of events and her solo is about showing what she can do. As she begins to dance downstage centre, percussive rhythms return to accompany the vocalisations from section three.

The men's response to the solo is complex: are they clapping and shouting to express their appreciation and encourage her? Or is this 'catcalling' that represents a potential threat, which is intensified by the men being in a large group in comparison to the lone woman?

It is also important to note how they also point and ironically cheer as the woman falls out of an off-balance leg extension.

The woman does not appear to be intimidated by the men, which is a challenge to the power dynamics that have been on display up to this point. As one contemporary review suggested: "*it tells stories of men all chasing the same woman (who's not interested in any of them)*".



Itzik Galili's *A Linha Curva*, photo by Tristram Kenton

Insider perspective: Adam Park, dancer, 2016

“My favourite moment is a section called ‘The Five Guys’. There’s a group of five men and a single female dancer. The men are trying to get a reaction from her and to get her to respond to the way they’re moving, which is quite suggestive and flirtatious. Yet she’s having none of it and performs her own solo to put the guys back in their place.”



Talking points

The catcalling by the men during the woman’s solo is not typical of capoeira, Brazilian society or the other styles evident in the piece. What is its purpose here?

The men jeer loudly as the woman dancer falls out of an off-balance leg extension. What are the implications of their response and the way the dancers are divided by gender here?

The lighting in this section is simpler, with a white pool of light descending onto the stage from stage left, almost like the heat of the sun or a large performance spotlight.

To begin the transition into the next section, one of the men copies some of the woman soloist’s movement vocabulary, including a turned-out walk with bent knees while waving the gesturing arm in front of the body in a curved line.

Choreographic devices

The use of devices is minimal in this section due to its short duration. One example could be:

Choreographic Device	Description
Canon	Downstage centre, the woman soloist jumps with arms above her head to land on the floor on one knee and quickly rolls towards centre stage.

2.5 SECTION FIVE
(9:36-11:42)

After three contrasting sections, section five sees a return to some of the motifs, movement vocabulary and spatial designs introduced in section one. As with the first group section, section five contains the idea of linear regimented movement.

The atmosphere changes as women enter from upstage right, and a group of dancers perform a stepping sequence in which they swing their right arm back and forth across their body as if they are mocking the men's previous display of 'peacocking'.

As this happens, the dancers begin to call out, adding to the repeated low-pitch percussive rhythms in the music to develop the 'carnival-like' atmosphere.

The dancers are restricted as to when they can call out by cue points that indicate when to start and finish. But they are free to choose what they call out, which can be party-related words or sounds like whistles or screams.

Although this is an unscripted aspect, it still needs rehearsal to ensure the vocals are spread out between the start and finish cue points and the dancers save their voices and energy by not all calling out at the same time.



Talking point

Why do the men and women have different movement vocabulary at times in this section? What does this suggest?



Itzik Galili's *A Linha Curva*, photo by Tristram Kenton

ACTIVITY



Why are the call-outs improvised? What effect does this have for:

- a. the dancers
- b. the audience
- c. the musicians?

The linear formations return as eight dancers travel upstage in a horizontal line, waving their hands above their heads. Simultaneously, another line of eight dancers enter from stage right creating a second horizontal line downstage.

Sudden call-outs and the introduction of a samba whistle cue the dancers to run into a new formation, consisting of three vertical lines (stage right, centre stage and stage left) and a horizontal line of dancers upstage.

As well as the use of canon and contrast, other named movement phrases that also return here:

Phrase	When?
WAGNER	Performed by three vertical lines of dancers centre stage
LIRIS	Performed by seven dancers in a horizontal line downstage, as other dancers run to exit stage left

Following the repetition of LIRIS, a vertical line of dancers travel across the stage from stage left, as the original horizontal line of dancers make their way upstage.

As the vertical line reaches centre stage, the iconic lighting grid returns, creating a '+' shape to highlight the formation of the dancers. This appears to signal a brief moment of joy and celebration, with a change to the rhythms being played on percussion as the dancers call out, rippling their torsos and arms while facing upstage.

The conveyor belt of dancers then continues, with another vertical line travelling across from stage left. Again, this may be to mimic the pathways and formations of a typical samba parade.

The dancers continue travelling and exit the stage, with the exception of seven dancers (six women, one man) who form a diagonal line from upstage left to downstage right. Each dancer is now in a square white spotlight, and once again we see the return of the LIRIS phrase. The seven dancers repeat the phrase several times while another man enters downstage left in a yellow square spotlight performing a dynamic solo.

To end the section, the man downstage left and the man downstage right are left lit in spotlights. The downstage right man performs a short solo, moving into a **jazz split** position with fluid, rippling arm movements as the downstage left man simply watches before the section ends with a moment of contact.



Itzik Galili's *A Linha Curva*, photo by Tristram Kenton

Choreographic devices

Choreographic devices are used to develop some of the named movement phrases and create interest within the section. Some key examples are listed below:

Choreographic Device	Description
Contrast	The three vertical lines of dancers perform the ADAGE from section two while the horizontal line of dancers upstage perform ROBSON, first seen in section one. The fast, fluid circling of the arms on a high level in ROBSON creates contrast with the sustained, lower-level lunges in the ADAGE.
Canon	The ROBSON phrase is repeated six times. With each repetition, more dancers enter upstage and join in, as well as dancers breaking out of the ADAGE to join in with ROBSON. This is followed by three vertical lines of dancers performing WAGNER
Highlight	To end the section, a highlight is created as the first man runs across a horizontal corridor of light to straddle the other dancer's neck, causing him to hinge backwards. This is met with audible gasps and applause from the audience



Talking point

What are the implications of this concluding highlight for the representation of consent, sexualization and cultural behaviours?

2.6 SECTION SIX (11:42-14:52)

Section six bears more similarities to sections two, three and four as another dance-off situation is depicted, this time between two men performing solos. The first solo is choreographed but includes space at the end for the dancer to show their own skill and flair. Galili is unusual in giving the dancer autonomy over the content and helping to maintain the adrenaline-fueled, celebratory atmosphere.

The solo includes travelling movement, sustained leg extensions, deep pliés with rippling gestures of the arms, and acrobatic movements such as a handstand into a forward roll.

As the first soloist is performing, the other men enter upstage left, teasing him and mocking his movements, but he is confident and unbothered by this. Elements of one of the named movement phrases can also be seen in this solo:

Phrase	Development in the solo
ROBSON	The first two arm gestures are performed facing upstage with fast side steps to create a travelling phrase

As the first soloist finishes by the group of men upstage left, the group chooses a second soloist, pushing him forward and encouraging him to represent them in competition. There is clear eye contact between the two soloists, suggesting an element of competition.

The group motivate their representative by stamping their feet to start a rhythm for him, mirroring the rhythm in the music. He is reluctant at first but he grows in confidence and approaches the first dancer, provoking him to exit stage right. The second soloist's movements gradually increase in size and intensity. This solo is improvised in performance (although the dancers practise this improvised section during rehearsal to get feedback). The improvised solo starts small and builds in intensity through variation in actions, dynamics and levels all with less than seven counts of eight to work with. In the performance, it almost appears as if the movement and rhythms are taking over the dancer's body.



Itzik Galili's *A Linha Curva*, photo by Tristram Kenton

Insider perspective

Mikaela Polley, Senior Rehearsal Director

“One of those solos is actually improvisation and each night that solo will be different, if you were to come and see the show, because the dancer isn’t setting the movement to repeat it every night.

They are given that freedom to use improvisation and to really live in the moment on that particular solo.”



Talking point

What are the effects of the men having freedom in some parts of the performance, particularly the second improvised solo in this section, while the women’s movement is all set in the choreography?

Following the improvisation, the first dancer is invited over by the second and they dance a duet in unison as the group of men watch from downstage left. The movement style here is more classical, with the inclusion of repeated **arabesque** leg lines.

The lighting throughout this section is simplistic, with white pools of light highlighting the soloists and the group of men.

During this duet, another man is pushed into the light unexpectedly from stage right to show what he can do. The lighting changes to a rectangle of white light centre stage, as if to create a performance area for the reluctant soloist. He appears shy and initially unwilling to participate, trying to exit the space as the other dancers surround him. He quickly exits stage left followed by the larger group and the duet continues, repeating the earlier phrase.

As this happens, some of the men travel across downstage from stage left to stage right, appearing only as silhouettes.

The reluctant third soloist is then carried into the space, seeming to have a movement-based conversation with another dancer who gestures to the floor with encouragement. Following imploring looks, the soloist begins. The lighting has now changed to a larger pool of white light, and the music is stripped back to two instruments playing a short, **staccato** rhythm.



Talking point

What is the impact of the group of men mocking the soloists? How do you feel while watching the third soloist being 'forced' to perform?

Choreographic devices

The use of choreographic devices differs in this section as it mainly features solo movement material. Much of the choreography could be considered a 'highlight' particularly within the two solos for men. Two examples are identified below.

Choreographic Device	Description
Highlight Example 1	The soloist in the red shorts performs a handstand into a forward roll travelling towards stage right
Highlight Example 2	The soloist in the blue shorts turns and quickly extends his leg towards the ceiling while dropping his head and torso towards the floor.



Talking point

What are the implications of this concluding highlight for the representation of consent, sexualization and cultural behaviours?

ACTIVITY



What other highlights can you identify in this section? What movements stand out to them and why?

**2.7 SECTION SEVEN
(14:52-END)**

In the final section, the movement ideas from sections one and five return to build to an energetic and rousing finale. Section seven begins as the reluctant dancer from section six begins to perform a series of **pirouettes** with one leg extended *à la seconde*.

The music also changes in pace and energy, with the introduction of an accented eight-count drum rhythm. The other dancer ducks and jumps to avoid the extended leg – a possible influence of capoeira that intensifies the competitive mood.

As the dancer finishes the *pirouettes*, the other dancer grabs his face and kisses him. As this takes place, the ensemble of dancers begin to re-enter in horizontal lines of seven from upstage right before travelling forwards.



Talking point

As one dancer appears to grab the other to kiss them, does this moment raise questions about the representation of consent? How do you interpret the kiss? Are there other ways to interpret the kiss? What does a kiss between two men add to the piece?



Itzik Galili's *A Linha Curva*
Photo by Tristram Kenton

The movement content in this section is made from many of the named phrases we have seen already, developed further. MILTON only appears in this section. Some developments include:

Phrase	Development(s)
LIRIS	Addition: performed in a line travelling forward with the addition of small steps to make it travel.
ROBSON	Fragmentation: the dancers perform the arm circle with flexed elbows when they first enter upstage right. Change of stage place: performed by horizontal line of dancers travelling towards downstage while other lines perform contrasting movement.
ROSE	Repetition and fragmentation: vertical lines of dancers entering from stage left perform fragments from the phrase, then pause as other dancers move.
ADAGE	Fragmentation, change of stage face and place: the low-level lunge and gesture forwards with both arms is performed by a vertical line of dancers entering stage left.
WAGNER	Fragmentation: the pencil jump with arms circling upwards to clap above the head is repeated in canon centre stage.

The call outs have a musical cue, but this time they are not started by a specific dancer (although they are rehearsed to ensure an even spread of vocals throughout). The return of the call outs in combination with the complex lighting grids with vibrant colours, linear travelling formations and larger ensemble of dancers on stage builds the 'carnival-type' atmosphere.

Several choreographic devices are used, including a canon featuring contact work. Following this, several of the named phrases appear again, with constantly changing groupings and formations to add to the excitement and chaos onstage. Two canons take place on stage left and stage right using developments of the ROBSON phrase. A change of pace follows, as the dancers briefly hold individual static positions in four vertical lines, each lit by a colourful column of grid lighting.

The dancers then casually walk upstage and downstage to the tempo of the music in an informal moment, before beginning the structured movement again. Two vertical lines of dancers travel across the stage, crossing sides, to create a new TRAVELLING PHRASE. The columns of colourful grid lighting follow them. As they exit the stage, a

similar lighting design is used as seven women travel from upstage to downstage in a horizontal line. As they reach the front of the stage, they repeat LIRIS but one by one break away to create a diagonal line from downstage right to upstage left while facing upstage, each lit by a white square spotlight.

Following this, the entire cast gradually re-enter from downstage right in horizontal lines of seven. They repeat previously seen movement vocabulary, and once again canon is used until all dancers are onstage. This moment is emphasised as all dancers perform the ROBSON phrase two and a half times facing upstage in a rectangular formation.

To end the piece, the performers suddenly turn to face downstage and stand still as the music abruptly ends. The performers repeat the vocalisation performed by the men in the opening of section one. One woman continues to dance stage left, accompanied by a repeated vocalisation. The lighting fades to blackout as the soloist can be seen continually jumping with bent knees and arm raised above the head.



Itzik Galili's *A Linha Curva*, photo by Tristram Kenton

Choreographic devices

Several choreographic devices are used in this final section to help create the **climax** of the work:

Choreographic Device	Description
Unison and highlight	Four horizontal lines of dancers suddenly change from performing different phrases to coming together in unison, stepping in parallel to face downstage right and curving the arms over the head. This moment stands out as the whole cast (28 dancers) is onstage and it's unexpected. The lighting creates a chequerboard, with alternate squares filled with colour or in blackout.
Contrast	The long phrase of unison performed by the whole cast features more elevation than we have seen in previous sections, including jumps with both legs in <i>attitude</i> and arms above the head as well as fast springs from one foot to the other with gesture leg extended. These contrast to the more gestural, static movements in the phrase such as a 'shoulder shimmy' towards downstage right and clasping the hands above the head.
Canon	Six couples in a vertical line centre stage perform a brief contact sequence. One dancers stands in a deep <i>plié</i> in second while the other runs towards them, steps on their thigh and kicks the right leg over their head. The fragmentation of the WAGNER phrase follows this. The canon continues with playful contact work, including one dancers jumping onto the waist of another and pencil jumps while one dancer catches another by the waist. These moments are interspersed with runs in a circular pathway, complemented by the lighting.
Climax	Several aspects of the choreography, lighting and music suggest this section is the 'peak of the work', such as the use of the whole ensemble, use of multiple choreographic devices, return of complex colourful lighting grids and the addition of the vocalisations of section one.

Teaching and learning tip

Throughout lessons, analysis tasks should always try to link back to the choreographic intentions and stimuli in order to draw out meaningful connections and interpretations in preparation for exam questions.

While analysing in lessons or during homework tasks, students should be encouraged to describe, interpret, explain a component's purpose and link to the choreographic intentions and stimuli.

This can be facilitated in stages in order to improve students' ability and confidence to do this. For example, in Year 10, students might focus on building their descriptive and interpretive skills; and in Year 11, they can practise linking their points to a specific exam focus such as mood and atmosphere.

When students are analysing the purpose of a particular feature, share the mindmap below to help prompt their responses.

What's the purpose of the movement or production feature?

mood /
atmosphere

occupation

highlighting a dancer or
group of dancers

showing the
stimulus

complementing other
components of the
choreography or
production features

gender

weather

geographical
location

social
context

enhancing the
structure

creating pathways,
entrances and exits

temperature

age

historical
context

representative of the
choreographic process

sculpting
the body

showing the
choreographic intention

cultural
context

showing character or
personality

Teacher tip: Essay writing in reverse

This tip is aimed at helping students who struggle with essay-writing.

Rather than expecting students to come up with the answers themselves based on a writing frame or a formula, consider flipping the script.

Traditionally, writing frames and formulas start with simple, low-order skills (such as describing) and then progress in difficulty. Instead, you could give your students the complex answers first and then ask them to build a paragraph to reach that conclusion.

PRACTICAL TASKS



Task 1: My named phrase

The original dancers developed and learned each other's phrases, which formed the basis of this work.

- Teach a solo phrase from the piece to inspire ideas and increase movement vocabulary.
- Look purely at the basic body actions (balance, fall, gesture, jump, travel, turn) within that phrase, and note the order, to support students in creating alternative movements.
- Students create an alternate phrase using those body actions in the same order, but their own movement ideas.
- Students create their own phrase, using any combination of body actions.
- These phrases (original or student work) can be revisited throughout the practical workshops outlined here and could be used as a tool for further exploration of the piece.

Simplify

- Instead of having to create their own phrase, students could change the order of the basic body actions rather than having to create something brand new.

Challenge

- Students could explore the use of contrasting dynamics in relation to taught material and their own phrase. This could begin by identifying the dynamics used in one of the *A Linha Curva* phrases
- Students could look at manipulating each phrase using different motif developments and /or choreographic devices for each repetition



Task 2: Smaller and smaller

- Students create a travelling phrase using as much space as they wish.
- Progressively reduce the amount of floor space allowed, so students have to restrict certain movements. How can they still keep the essence of their phrase in a smaller space and give the illusion of travel? You could mark out an area on the floor using tape or chalk.

Simplify

- Allow a larger final area.
- Teacher or student modelling how some movements could be performed in a smaller space.
- Students could be invited to give their ideas on how to restrict a particular movement / phrase.

Challenge

- Reduce the space in all directions.
- Initially encourage them to use a large amount of floor space including rolls and leaps.



Task 3: Inside the box

- Mark out a small space for each dancer – or use a yoga mat.
- Create a simple standing gesture phrase to be repeated.
- Think of the space as a 3D shape and explore how the gesture phrase can reach all areas in the space and adapt the original phrase.

Simplify

- Have a bank of gestures for students to choose from.
- Work with a partner (but create a solo phrase).
- Warm up using 'add on' style games, for creative inspiration.

Challenge

- Randomly choose which gestures should be high / mid / low level using chance.
- Instrumentation – perform gestures with different body parts.



Task 4: Dance repeat

- In the big group sections, the named phrases are repeated and developed. Unison is a strong feature.
- Students learn phrase(s) – could be those already explored in another task.
- Practice performing in unison in clear lines.

Developments:

- Different facings.
- Change formation.
- Add travel to the phrase - move through the grid as a line (horizontal or vertical)

Simplify

- Use mats / tape / chalk to create a physical grid.
- Use phrases already learned.

Challenge

- Change the phrase after every change in formation.
- Increase movement material e.g., phrase A, B, C, D, A, B, C, D etc.



Task 5: Cross traffic

- In the big group sections, lines of dancers cross the stage moving through and past each other
- Practise travelling in straight lines across and down the space.
- Split group, some travel across while the others are travelling down (timing and formation is key).
- Include claps or vocals on particular beats for the different groups.

Simplify

- Increase space between the dancers.
- Basic travel movements.

Challenge

- Add travel to the learned phrases.
- Change beats to clap on, each 8.



Task 6: Street life

At the start of section five, the women dancers enter vociferously as if chatting to each other in the street.

- In small groups select four or five pedestrian actions to suit an everyday situation e.g., chatting with a friend, taking a selfie, waiting for a bus.
- Build these actions into a phrase which can be repeated.

Simplify

- Model pedestrian actions for a particular situation.

Challenge

- Explore how expressive skills and relationships enhance performance.
- Develop with choreographic devices.



Task 7: Anything you can do ...

In section four, the lone woman dancer shows she can match the men in her second solo and in section six, the men encourage a dance-off between members of their group.

- In pairs, students create a duet, in any style, starting small and finishing with showing some of their most impressive skills.
- Join two pairs together to create a phrase to be performed in unison, selecting and rejecting action content from the two duets,
- Perform with the rest of the class standing around cheering for one side or the other until it is their group's turn.

Simplify

- Teach sections of action content to be developed by pairs / groups

Challenge

- Use solo improvisation during the dance-off.

GLOSSARY

Movement

À la seconde – a step or movement performed ‘to the side’.

Adage – to move slowly.

Addition – to add new movement to a motif or phrase.

Arabesque – a balletic movement where the weight of the body is supported on one leg with the other leg extended behind the body in a straight line.

Attitude – a balletic movement where the weight of the body is supported on one leg and the other leg is lifted with the knee bent at a right angle. This movement is usually performed in turnout, so the knee of the lifted leg is higher than the foot.

Canon – When two or more dancers perform the same movement, overlapping in time.

Climax – the most significant or important moment of the dance. There can only be one climax.

Collaboration – Working with another person to produce something.

Contrast – Movements or choreography that have nothing in common – opposing ideas.

Crescendo – 1) the loudest point reached in a gradually increasing sound. 2) the highest point reached in a progressive increase of intensity.

Fragmentation – Using parts or single movements from a motif or phrase.

Highlights – important moments within a dance. Unlike a climax, there can be several highlights within a dance.

Jazz split – Seated position with one leg extended in front of the body and the other leg bent at the hip and knee, encouraging the foot to sit behind the body.

Motif – Single movement or phrase that communicates the dance idea and has development possibilities.

Movement (cont'd)

Parallel second position – Feet are placed wider than hip width apart with the toes facing forwards.

Pirouette – Turn performed on one foot, with the other leg typically bent at the hip and knee with the foot placed next to the knee of the supporting leg.

Plié – Balletic movement where the dancer bends and straightens the knees.

Plyometric – Movement involving rapid stretching and contracting of muscles, designed to build muscular strength and power.

Repetition – Performing the same action, phrase or section of movement again.

Unison – When two or more dancers perform the same movement at the same time.

Music

Berimbau – Tensioned steel string with a gourd resonator, struck with a stick, almost a guitar-like sound. Often used in traditional capoeira. Originated in Africa.

Caxixi (also caixixi) – Shaker, woven basket with a bottom made from gourd. Usually found in Brazil.

Found sound – Sound created by the dancer's body.

Staccato – Short, sharp notes in the music.

Surdo – Brazilian two-skinned bass drum, light enough to carry in samba processions, capable of open and closed tones.

Tamborim – Small Brazilian hand-held drums played with a stick in samba processions.

Vocalisations – Sound created by the voice using vowel sounds or nonsense syllables rather than full words or text.

Production

Fresnel – A flat lens made up of a number of circular rings.

Proscenium arch – Traditional theatre space, usually with a deep, raked stage and architecture framing the performance space. Also called 'end-on'.

Context

Carnaval or carnival – Celebratory festival with multiple definitions and meanings in different cultural and religious contexts. In many traditions, an opportunity to celebrate freedom from cruelty, enslavement and brutality. Many traditions feature symbolic characters created by enslaved peoples that were based on white plantation owners.

**CRITICAL RECEPTION
OF A LINHA CURVA
IN BRITAIN**

'Rambert: A Linha Curva plus other works'

Elizabeth Mitchell, The Manchester Review, October 2016

Itzik Galili's *A Linha Curva* has recently been added to the GCSE Dance syllabus, meaning that the vast majority of the audience were schoolchildren waiting for this piece. They were not disappointed and let the company know; the auditorium erupted in whoops and descended into a riotous party atmosphere. A fitting end to a summer dominated by images of Rio and carnivals, it makes you feel as though you're at a knees-up in a favela. Set to a percussion score, the dancers become loose and adopt salsa, samba and capoeira moves, alongside more traditional contemporary positions. Full of call and response, improvisation and battles, it tells stories of men all chasing the same woman (who's not interested in any of them), groups of girls having a gossip, competition and sex appeal. It contains some of the best lifts and catches in the Rambert's repertoire, including a dive roll from a height over other performers and dramatic catch around the neck. It is also humorous, with strong elements of Voguing and a dancer ducking and jumping over a colleague undertaking the traditional showpiece of fouettés en tournant. No one could accuse this of being anything other than a brilliant introduction into the world of British contemporary dance, and you'd be hard pushed to find a more fun one.

<http://www.themanchesterreview.co.uk/?p=6704>



Itzik Galili's *A Linha Curva*, photo by Tristram Kenton

‘Hush; Scribblings; A Linha Curva’

Vera Liber, British Theatre Guide, May, 2009

The final orgiastic 20-minute percussive piece, *A Linha Curva*, created by Itzik Galili in 2005 in São Paulo, cranks up the temperature even more. This is its UK premiere – a wild elemental tribal rave, a pumped-up high on which to end the evening.

Israeli-born choreographer Galili is out of the Batsheva Dance Company stable, and it shows. Think Ohad Naharin, and now the young Hofesh Shechter – overwhelming volume of dancers, strong rhythm, precise synchronised moves celebrating the group and the community. And powerful lighting effects.

In sensual, ritualistic, escapist, physical purging 28 dancers under chessboard grid disco lights, in skimpy glitter pants and see-through vests, dance in ever-changing formation to the unrelenting pounding beat of four drummers (music by Percossa). Hips, shoulders, hands, deep pliés, rubber limbs, virile bodies popping (audience’s eyes popping) – ecstatic salute to the sun, this is carnal carnival.

Capoeira challenges, mocking male bravado, taunting females, and exhibitionist party pieces – one man whips round in fast and furious fouettés while another alternately ducks and jumps the extended leg. Youthful exuberance, shouts, claps – dynamite. Dancers lying on their backs on skateboards hurtle across the stage, and the young audience gasp in wonder and delight.

<https://www.britishtheatreguide.info/reviews/SWrambert09-rev>

‘Rambert – A Linha Curva and other works’

Howard Loxton, British Theatre Guide, November 2017

This triple bill opens with Itzik Galili’s *A Linha Curva*, a work inspired by the Brazilian carnival that offers a stage full of dancers, the company amplified by performers from the Rambert School, and bursting with energy.

An image of dancers in shiny white ruffs is almost instantly replaced by rows of dancers: Galili makes his lighting part of his choreography. Thrusting hips and waving arms have a samba and capoeira exuberance synchronized with mechanical precision.

There is a sudden change to very slow stretches and turns and then it is back to high energy: a chain of dancers in unison, lines through which prone bodies glide through on skateboards to the sound of four drummers and a vast array of percussion pounding out Percossa’s music. It is part-party, part-ritual with elements of capoeira competition but the mechanical overweighs the exuberance, surely this should feel more joyful. It has been in the repertoire since 2009 (though this is the first time I’ve seen it). I wonder did the dancers once find it more fun?




There’s a clever sequence with the chattering rhythms of the Balinese Kecak, the monkey dance, the men springing in leaps like deep pliés, hands in see, hear and speak no evil positions, but it just misses being witty. While responding enthusiastically to the rigorous vitality of this audience pleaser, it didn’t generate that feeling of happiness that seems its potential.

<https://www.britishtheatreguide.info/reviews/rambert-a-l-sadler-s-wells-15262>



(L-R) Carolyn Bolton; Hannah Rudd, Carolyn Bolton, Luke Ahmet, Pierre Tapon; Pierre Tapon, photos by Hugo Glendinning

ACTIVITY

-  What language do the reviewers use to try to describe the feel and impact of *A Linha Curva*? Do you find any of this language problematic?
-  How accurately do the reviewers describe the content of the piece? Do you agree with all the points all of them make? For example, do you agree that the piece contains “strong elements of Voguing”?
-  What do these reviews tell you about the reception of the work in Britain? Do you think British audiences / critics would react in the same way if the work was performed today? What might be different in terms of their reactions and interpretations?

ACTIVITY



Watch the work in full again. Are there any moments that you do not understand? Discuss why.



Write your own review of the work. Remember to refer to specific moments and outline what others may, or may not, enjoy.



Show the dance to a parent, carer, relative, friend or teacher and ask them for their thoughts and opinions on the work. How do they differ from yours?

**HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL
CONTEXT**

Knowledge of the historical and social context of *A Linha Curva* is not required for the exam, but we include the information here to help teachers and students more fully understand both the piece itself and the evolution of debate and discussion about how dance artists make their work.

5.1 THE EVOLUTION OF SAMBA AND CARNIVAL

In making *A Linha Curva*, Itzik Galili was inspired by samba and by Brazilian Carnaval.

Samba is a set of dance styles so important to Brazil that they have been added to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

Samba was created in the late 19th century by marginalised former enslaved peoples in the *favelas* (poor informal settlements) of Rio de Janeiro. Before slavery in Brazil was finally abolished in 1888, Portugal had trafficked more than 4 million African people into slavery in the country. Because of samba's origins in the *favelas*, the Brazilian élite originally looked down on the dance and even tried to ban it because they wanted to promote dance forms that mimicked dominant European styles. But samba's first big hit in 1917, *Pelo Telefone* (On The Telephone), created huge demand for the dance throughout Brazil, and over the course of the 1920s, samba became ever more closely associated with the music and movement of Carnaval.

To protect and develop their music, the people of the *favelas* began setting up artistic spaces called *escolas de samba* (samba schools) in the late 1920s.

The first competition between rival samba schools was held in 1929, and the annual competition remains a central element of Carnaval to this day.

Carnaval, the annual celebration preceding Lent, is so significant for the country that the Brazilian anthropologist Roberto DaMatta says: "It was not Brazil that invented Carnaval; on the contrary, it was Carnaval that invented Brazil."

DaMatta made an exhaustive study of the forms of Carnaval in Brazil and especially in Rio de Janeiro in his book *Carnivals, Rogues, and Heroes*, originally published in 1979. Carnaval, he says, represents a moment of almost complete freedom in an otherwise extremely hierarchical society.

Unlike military parades, church parades, protests or demonstrations, Carnaval is not owned by any particular group – it belongs to everyone, he says. And because everyone can take part, the boundary between participants and spectators becomes very blurred.

There is a long tradition of LGBTQ+ visibility and inclusion in Carnaval celebrations in many of the biggest cities. In 1976, the trans woman Eloína helped lead the samba school Beija-Flor to victory in Rio de Janeiro, and went on to win the competition to be named Queen of the Drums three years in a row.



Talking points

What do you think of the Brazilian critic's assessment of *A Linha Curva*? Do you think the piece includes clichés about Brazilian culture? If so, what are they?

A Linha Curva aims to create a purely celebratory impression of Brazil but includes elements that depict stereotypical and inaccurate views of Brazilian culture and communities. What impact does this have?

5.2 THINKING ABOUT CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

This section was written in collaboration with Rachel Gnagniko (commissioned by IncArts).

GCSE students may not have considered questions of cultural appropriation in dance. But they may well have come across the issues as they arise in celebrity and popular culture.

Look at the debate in 2020 when singer-songwriter Adele posted a picture of herself wearing Bantu knots, a Jamaican bikini top and a feather neckpiece to her Instagram account. Adele intended to celebrate would have been that year's Notting Hill Carnival (cancelled because of the pandemic). But instead she sparked a discussion about whether this was cultural appreciation or cultural appropriation.

On the one hand, journalist and diversity advocate Ateh Jewel pointed out that Black women in white-majority societies live with relentless criticism of their hair (“unprofessional”, “messy”, “crazy”, “too big”). Such disparagement makes it painful to see white women celebrated for adopting Black hairstyles – especially when these styles can be taken up and dropped as and when they feel like it.

“Many are arguing that Adele was showing appreciation for Carnival and Caribbean culture with her look but appreciation turns into appropriation when it's worn as a party outfit and taken off again and disposed of,” she wrote in *Glamour*. (<https://www.glamourmagazine.co.uk/article/adele-cultural-appropriation-notting-hill-carnival>).

On the other hand, the academic and activist Emma Dabiri argued on Twitter that Adele was neither extracting a subordinate group's cultural resources nor erasing that group's role in their creation (two typical features of appropriation). "As far as I can see Adele isn't erasing anyone or claiming this as her own, she is simply participating in a culture she is likely to have grown up in in Tottenham," she wrote. (<https://twitter.com/EmmaDabiri/status/1300508271615369216>).

When *gal-dem*, the online magazine that tells the stories of people of colour from marginalised genders, invited its readers to ask them any questions in 2016, many took the opportunity to ask about cultural appropriation, in particular about whether white people could wear dreadlocks. This was the writer Varaidzo's conclusion: "In a society that puts emphasis on free speech, you have the freedom to wear dreadlocks, and black people have the freedom to explain to you why they find it racist or offensive. We are not entitled to all things. We cannot get away with doing everything we want at all times." (<https://gal-dem.com/askgaldem-can-white-people-wear-dreadlocks/>)

Appreciation and appropriation are not necessarily diametrically opposed to each other. Some music artists can be said to do both. For example, Professor James O. Young, author of *Cultural Appropriation and the Arts* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), suggests this is the case with the rapper Eminem: "He is accepted as a successful practitioner of an African-American musical style by African-American musicians. He respects the culture from which he has appropriated and is in turn, respected." (<https://www.harpersbazaar.com/uk/culture/a36798089/cultural-appropriation-vs-cultural-appreciation/>)



Talking points

Can you think of other moments when a celebrity or public figure has sparked controversy about whether they are appreciating or appropriating another culture?

How would you define the difference between cultural appreciation and cultural appropriation?

The design for *A Linha Curva* dictates that the women's hair is braided or cornrowed. Cornrows, braids in geometric patterns close to the scalp, emerged in sub-Saharan Africa thousands of years ago, and the hairstyle represents a very specific set of meanings. "Although beautiful, the hairstyle was more than mere aesthetics. It also represented one's social position, age, occupation, tribe, or marital status ... In America, enslaved Black women would braid their hair on Sundays in more simplistic styles with neat, linear rows. This was not a fashion choice but a function choice – hair had to be easy to manage, and scalps kept cool to work long hours on plantations." ('The Tangled History of Cornrows', Carlyn Beccia, Medium, 31 May 2021).



Talking point

Why do you think this artistic choice was made? Since the dancers in the Rambert recording do not represent any Brazilian communities, this choice of hairstyle could be considered cultural appropriation. What are the racial implications of this choice?

The Creative Equity Toolkit, which is a joint initiative by The British Council and Diversity Arts Australia, defines cultural appropriation like this:

“Cultural appropriation occurs when people from a dominant culture use things from an oppressed culture without acknowledgement, permission and / or payment. A difference in power is a critical component in cultural appropriation.

Cultural appropriation is most stark when it affects a community that has suffered from colonisation, disenfranchisement or the impacts of poverty. The more you’ve lost, the more oppressive it is when your remaining resources, such as your cultural assets, are taken.”

Creative Equity Toolkit (<https://creativeequitytoolkit.org/topic/organisational-culture/cultural-appropriation>)

This definition identifies four key components to cultural appropriation:

- it’s an action by a member of a dominant culture
- it involves taking something from an oppressed / marginalised culture
- no credit is given; permission requested; or payment made
- the worst examples involve taking from communities that have suffered colonisation.

Looking at *A Linha Curva* from this perspective, you could observe:

- Itzik Galili has spent the vast majority of his career in the Netherlands (where he holds dual citizenship). In April 2006, he was made a Knight of the Royal Order of The House of Oranje Nassau by Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands for his contribution to Dutch dance.
- Samba is a set of styles created in the late 19th and early 20th century by marginalised former enslaved peoples in the *favelas* (poor informal settlements) of Rio de Janeiro.
- Galili created *A Linha Curva* with and for the Brazilian dance company, Balé da Cidade de São Paulo. The names of the company's dancers are inscribed in the movement phrases they created that Galili used as the building blocks of the piece.
- Like the UK, the Netherlands was directly involved in the slave economy. After conquering northern Brazil in 1630, they gained a monopoly over the transatlantic slave trade that lasted for the next 100 years. (The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade 1600–1815, Johannes Postma, Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp1-16)



Talking points

Do you think any of this definition is relevant to *A Linha Curva*? If so, which parts of the definition would you point to?

Can you think of any examples from popular culture, pop music or celebrity culture that would fit all of this definition?

As part of the closing ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics, the city of Rio De Janeiro, which was to host the 2016 Games, presented an eight-minute sequence of music and movement that promised to “avoid the clichés”.

Stereotypes about Brazil that are often perpetrated outside the country include:

- all Brazilians love football
- every Brazilian sambas at every opportunity
- samba is the only form of popular music
- Brazilians live in beach attire the whole year round.

(<https://www.iheartbrazil.com/brazilian-stereotypes/>)

Created by Brazilian film directors Daniela Thomas and Cao Hamburger, the 2012 piece, called Embrace, featured Sorriso, a street sweeper famous in Rio for working in the Sambadrome, samba musicians and dancers, indigenous drummers and dancers, Brazilian rapper BNegão, singer Marisa Monte, actor-musician Seu Jorge, model-fashion designer Alessandra Ambrósio and the country’s most famous footballer, Pelé, who helped the national team win the World Cup in 1970.



Talking points

Watch Embrace on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iY6-TEOUwBQ> (the piece begins at around 6:42 and lasts about eight minutes).

What elements does it have in common with *A Linha Curva*? Where does it differ?

When he was making *A Linha Curva*, Galili said he had developed the choreography in an abstract direction because he was keen to avoid clichés about Brazil.

A critic at the première in São Paulo was not convinced he had succeeded. “Galili sought an abstract direction for choreography, but he could not escape the clichés about the vision of Brazil abroad,” wrote Inês Bogéa in her review for *Folha de São Paulo*, the largest circulation Brazilian daily newspaper (‘Balé enchants at first but falls into commonplace’, *Folha de São Paulo*, 26 July 2005).



Talking points

What do you think of the Brazilian critic’s assessment of *A Linha Curva*? Do you think the piece includes clichés about Brazilian culture? If so, what are they?

Can you identify any stereotypes of Brazilian culture *A Linha Curva*? Do you consider the use of elements of Brazilian culture in the work to be cultural appropriation? Would someone from Brazil recognise this work as ‘Brazilian’?

A Linha Curva aims to create a purely celebratory impression of Brazil but includes elements that depict stereotypical and inaccurate views of Brazilian culture and communities. What impact does this have?

Since Itzik Galili created *A Linha Curva* in 2005, artistic practice has evolved and will continue to do so as further questions are raised. Artists are asking new questions about how to respect what inspires them. For example, *A Linha Curva* could have had more representative music and choreography if Galili had worked with Brazilian musicians and samba specialists.

This is a list of ways to respect inspiration that is from a different culture to your own when used in performance:

- Work with a mentor from the culture.
- Learn about the culture's history.
- Buy costumes or musical instruments from community businesses.
- Be sensitive, especially around humour or jokes in your work.
- Show respect for sacred objects. Minoritised groups have had to struggle to preserve symbolic, communal and religious objects and artefacts.
- Credit your inspirations clearly. In a professional context this should include reward / pay for inspiration and expertise.
- Apologise when you get it wrong and then do differently and do better.
- Share the information about your inspiration in a public way.
- Take care of yourself and the people working with you.



Talking points

How do you respect what inspires you? How do you make sure you are entitled to use it?

If you were to make a celebration dance, how would you show respect to the communities who inspired you? How could you ensure that the voices and views of the communities are heard?

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