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Musical Theatre: An American Art Form

Nicole Fein

Mentors:

Professor Teresa Heiland, Ph.D.



**In partial fulfillment of
The Bachelor of Arts Degree in dance
Loyola Marymount University**

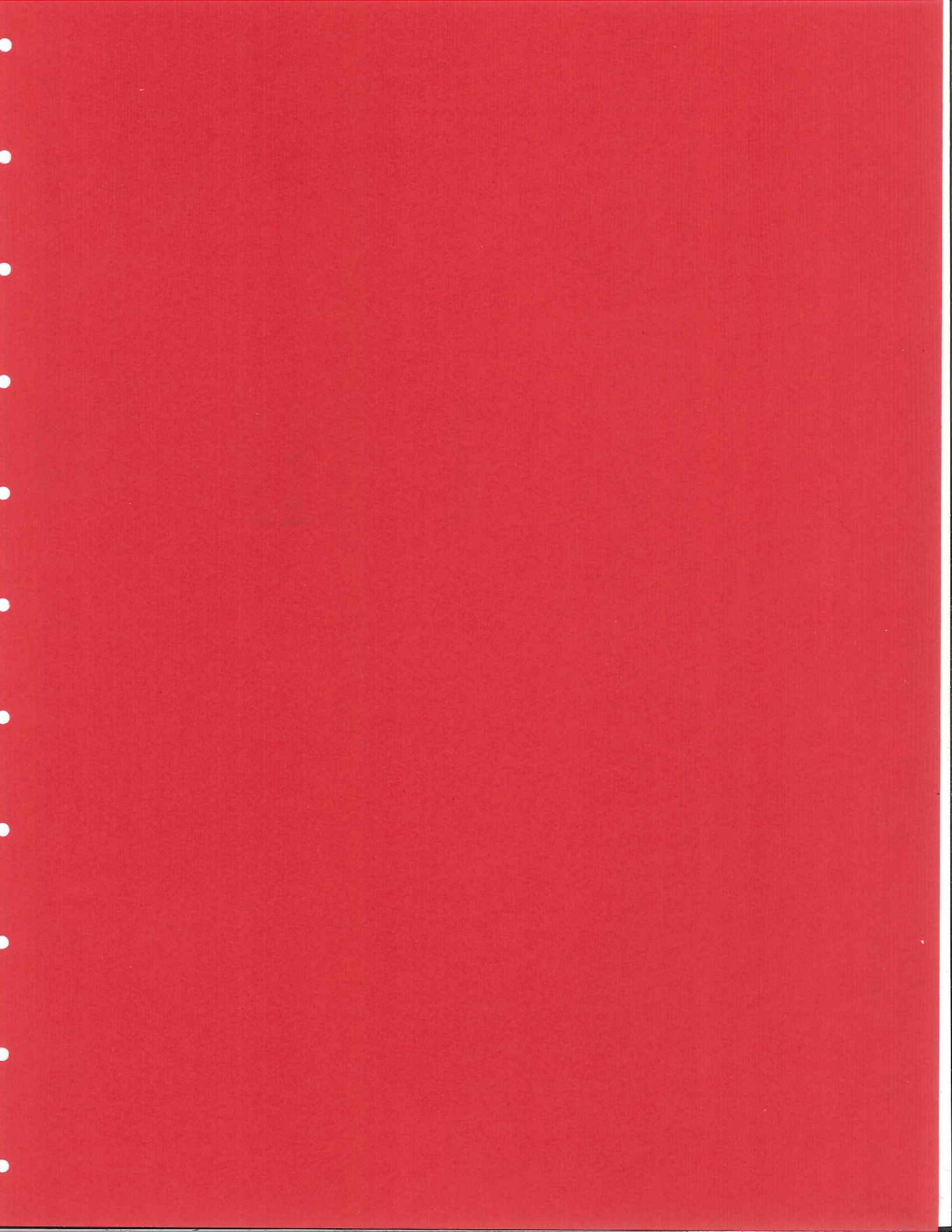
May 7th 2010

I would like to thank the entire dance faculty of Loyola Marymount University who have guided me on my journey of self examination, who have broadened my view of what it means to be a dancer, and who have inspired me to continue to explore my love of dance. I will be forever grateful for all the love and support you have given me.

Musical Theatre: An American Art Form

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Aesthetic Statement

Life moves at such a fast past its hard to keep up sometimes. There are moments when I look back at where I have come from, and the vast distance I have covered, and cant remember how I got there in the first place. You never really notice a change taking place until it's already complete. I find myself in that position now approaching my graduation from university. I only spent two years in college, and already I am a completely different person and dancer, both in the way I move, and the way I appreciate and am affected by dance. Some of it may come from the maturity gained with age, but I believe a lot has to do with the fact that this program immerses you so fully in your craft that it is impossible not to be greater connected to your art.

When I began my studies at Loyola Marymount University I never expected to graduate with the mentality I have today. I came into this school straight off the competition circuit fully aware that I was a jazz and only jazz dancer. My studio never focused on ballet or modern technique. Though I went to a high school with a dance program, I specifically chose the high school that had a more commercial style than our rival arts school which functioned more like a conservatory. What did I stand to gain from taking modern and ballet classes all day long? I thought the only type of dance with any real validity was the kind that could get you work in the commercial world. I would go to the occasional Ballet performance here and there, your typical once a year *The Nutcracker* around Christmas time, but other than that I really didn't see the value of concert dance. I couldn't appreciate what I did not understand.

After starting my journey here at LMU all that began to change. I found myself surprised and delighted with the newfound interest I was gaining in my modern and ballet classes. Surprisingly my jazz class was my least favorite; I only ever took one jazz class here. However I

jumped at the opportunity to take extra modern and ballet classes. It really wasn't until this year began to close and I was asked to begin reflecting on my time here at LMU that I really noticed how far I had come as a dancer. The way that I watch dance is so different now than it used to be and I know I have changed so much, and all for the better.

I used to appreciate performances that were overflowing with tricks. It was all about the razzle dazzle; the higher the kicks, the more turns there were, the larger the leaps, and flips were always a plus. I thought that virtuosity lay in the ability of a dancer to perform extremely difficult movements. What I realize now is that a good dancer isn't necessarily someone who can make a lot of crazy movement look good, it's the dancer who can make the simplest movements captivating where true talent lies. Here at LMU I have seen and practiced with dancers who could make the simple lift of an arm or flick of a finger breathtaking. That is dancing.

There is always something to be said about the choreography a performer is given, but true talent can make just about anything look good. Though I used to enjoy watching a group or soloist perform a sequence of tricks strung together with minimal transitions, I now prefer to watch dance that tells a story. By this I don't mean that there is a literal or obvious narrative occurring in the piece. I just mean the performance must strike a cord, it must have a meaning whether intended or up to my own interpretation. Dances that have something obvious to say, or an emotion intended for the audience to feel are so much more gratifying than a spectacle of ability.

Though I do believe anyone can dance, and should dance for the mere fact that it can be such a cathartic release of emotion, I do not believe that all people can be professional dancers. I have come across many "professional" dancers who look like they were average people who just

walked off the street onto a stage. Growing up in a world where technical ability is so highly regarded is not something that I can completely erase from my frame of reference. Though I love to watch modern companies even sometimes more abstract things such as performance art, I personally need to see some sort of technical ability. No matter how expressive or brilliant a performer is, sickled feet and bent knees make me cringe. I know that this may be a harsh reality, but it was something so engrained in me through my life I can not help but feel this way.

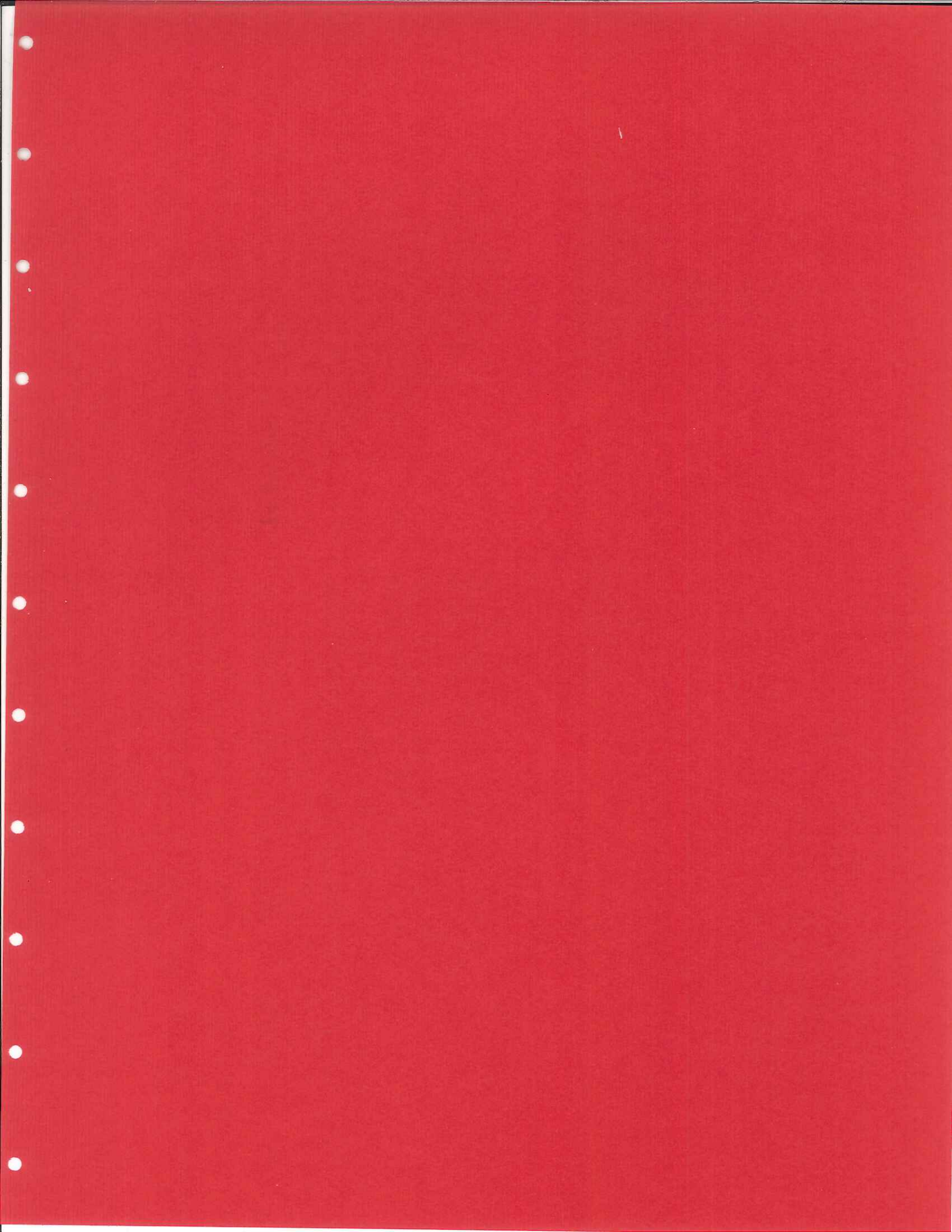
Because of this I must admit that I am not a huge fan of the works of the more avant-garde modern movement that developed during the 1960's with "happenings" rather than traditional performances. Though I in no way discount the value of their existence as another stepping stone in the exploration and development of art I have a hard time being comfortable calling them dance. Though such styles definitely fall into the realm of art, and hold great value for their originality, it is not the type of dance that fits into my personal aesthetic.

Another aspect of dance that is so important to me is the music, and subsequently a dancer's musicality. Though most traditional modern and other contemporary companies choose to use songs without lyrics I personally don't mind, and even sometimes prefer a song to have words. I know that the lyrics put a limitation on the choreographer because the message or meaning of the piece is for the most part predetermined, but I also believe that the lyrics can serve as such a supplement to the meaning and can so greatly aid in the audience's understanding and experience of the intended mood or story of a piece. Though dance is 100% sufficient in telling a story or conveying an emotion, I see no problem in having another source add to the movement's power even more! There are some songs that can give you chills or bring you to tears, and when combined with technical skill and performance quality of a dancer the result can be overwhelming in the best possible way.

I firmly believe that at the end of the day, or performance I should say, it is completely the dancers responsibility to make or complete the package. The choreography can help, the music may also assist, but it is the performance of the individual dancer or dancers that truly make a piece memorable. A dancer who is able to loose themselves in the work and truly embody whatever it is they are trying to perform is the kind of dancer who will really be cherished by an audience. Most importantly it should be overwhelmingly obvious that the performer on stage is absolutely unequivocally entranced by what they are doing. Even in the most solemn of pieces a great dancer can convey to an audience that they truly love the work they do, and that is the most engaging and captivating thing in the world for me to watch. Someone who's dancing makes me feel the love they have for dance, and in turn remind me of the love I have for the beautiful art. If I leave a performance with an irresistible urge to find a studio and dance, it was a job well done.

Nicole Fein
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- Stage:** Radio City Christmas Spectacular - Clara/Young Girl - October - December 2001
AGVA Option 12 week contract - Branson, Missouri and Cincinnati, Ohio
Loyola Marymount University- Evenings of Concert Dance - Seen by Scott Heinzlerling & Tekla Kostek, Lunar River by Holly Johnston, Serve It Up! by Paige Porter, Vapid Reflux by Damon Rago, Fame Fenomenon by Paige Porter
Broadway Bound - C & J Productions - Principal Dancer - Miami & Ft. Lauderdale, FL
Kellogg's Corporation National Olympic Kick-Off Event - Principal Dancer - Ft. Lauderdale, FL
A Chorus Line - Principal Dancer - Winterfest - Broward County Waterways
One World, One Voice - Principal Dancer - Broward Center for the Performing Arts
Showtime at the Apollo - Regional Winner - Miami, FL
FAME - Iris Kelly, Ballerina - B.J. Deitrlle Theatre - Miami, FL
The Sound of Music - Luisa - Angels of Charity Event - West Palm Beach, FL
Beat of the Future - Principal Dancer - Broward Center for the Performing Arts
- TV & Film:** Walt Disney "Mickey's Magical Gathering" Christmas Special
Featured Performer - CBS - November 2005 and 2004
CBS Thanksgiving Day Parade - Opening Number - Principal Dancer - Nationally Televised
Commercial - Marshall's - "Spring Wear" - SAG Principal
Commercial - Volkswagen - "Rear View" - SAG Extra
Commercial - VISA - "Christmas Morning" - Daughter (Principal)
Commercial - Burger King - "End of a Long Day" - Daughter (Principal)
- Modeling:** Next New Face - National Model Search - 2nd runner (out of 30,000 entries)
Abercrombie Fresh New Face 2006 and 2008 (on shopping bags and Spirit perfume packaging)
Editorial - Ocean Drive Magazine, Elite Traveler, Girl's Life
International/European - Italian Vogue, Pink, Young, Fena, Moda, Lioutas, Japanese Bride
Advertising - Oilily, Burdines, Macy's, Frontgate, Faith Mountain, Simplicity, Kmart, Kaufhof
Runway - Bal Harbor Shops Designer Fall Show, Next New Face Finale
Live Model - Guess for Macy's, Roberto Cavalli for Vodka Launch, Ralph Lauren for Perfume
- Representation:** New York Models /LA Models, Ace Models (Greece), Visage International (Japan)
- Training:** Loyola Marymount University - Los Angeles, CA - Dance major – Graduation, May 2010
Jason Myhre, Holly Johnson and Paige Porter
Dance Attack - Miami, FL - 15 hours per week - Ballet, Jazz, Modern, Lyrical, Hip-Hop- 2002-08
John Culbertson, Mark Marino and Candice Miscavage
Dance Unlimited- Miami, FL - 10 hours per week - all styles - 1994-2001
Coral Reef High School Visual and Performing Arts Academy - 2 hours daily all styles - 2004-06
Southwood School for the Arts - 2 hours daily all styles - 2001-2004
- Master Classes and Conventions:** Millennium (LA), Edge (LA), Alvin Ailey (NYC), Broadway Dance Center (NYC), Steps on Broadway (NYC), Jose Limon Institute (NYC), Julliard (NYC) UCLA Summer Dance Intensive, Tremaine, Dance Educators of America, Shock the Intensive, Pulse, Dance Power Express, West Coast Dance Explosion, New York City Dance Alliance, Hollywood Vibe, Shake the Floor, Access Broadway, Florida Dance Masters Workshop, UDA
- Awards:** International 16 and Under Grand Champion Ballet Talent Grand Prix Italia (Cesena, Italy)
Fourteen National Titles including Natl Teen, Pre-Teen, Junior and Petite Miss Dance USA,
Natl Teen and Junior Miss Starpower, Natl Junior Miss Spotlight and Footloose
Over 100 Regional Titles including Nexstar, Star Systems, DEA, ADA, and Hall of Fame



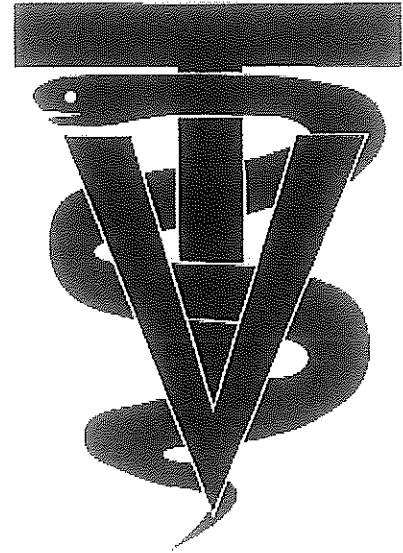
Veterinary technician

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

A **veterinary technician** or **veterinary technologist**, (also called an **animal health technician/technologist**), is a person trained to assist veterinarians.

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Veterinary technician logo.

Job description

Technical skills include: venipuncture; collecting urine; performing skin scrapings; taking and processing radiographs; and performing routine lab procedures and tests in: hematology, biochemistry, chemistry, microbiology, urinalysis, and serology. They assist the veterinarian with physical examinations that help determine the nature of the illness or injury. Veterinary technicians also perform and maintain anesthesia, and administer medications, fluids and blood products as prescribed by the veterinarian. Tasks in patient care include: recording temperature, pulse and respiration, dressing wounds, applying splints and other protective devices, and cleaning teeth. They perform catheterizations - urinary, arterial, and venous; ear flushes; intravenous feedings and tube feedings. Equipment use includes operating electrocardiographic, radiographic and ultrasonographic equipment. Veterinary technicians commonly assist veterinarians in surgery by providing correct equipment and instruments

and by assuring that monitoring and support equipment such as anesthetic machines, cardiac monitors, scopes and breathing apparatus are in good working condition. They may also maintain treatment records and inventory of all pharmaceuticals, equipment and supplies, and help with other administrative tasks within a veterinary practice.

Education and credentialing

To become a credentialed veterinary technician, one must attend a two-year or three-year AVMA or CVMA-accredited school, most of which terminate in the awarding of an associate's degree in veterinary technology (those enduring a four-year AVMA or CVMA accredited school terminating in the awarding of a bachelor's degree are considered veterinary technologists though the distinction is rarely made an issue)^[1]. The education a credentialed technician receives is in-depth and crucial for medical understanding and to give proper health care. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) are responsible for accrediting schools with either Associate's degrees or Bachelor's degrees, though in some states or provinces this is not necessary. The AVMA also accredits schools that offer distance education. As a requirement of AVMA-accreditation, all distance learning programs require a significant amount of practical clinical experience before the student will be allowed to graduate. Clinical experience is usually obtained by employment or volunteer hours at an animal clinic. Preceptors must be a veterinarian or a credentialed vet technician and are required to instruct and sign off on clinical tasks, and then submit the records to the school for approval; some tasks must be videotaped and submitted to the school for grading. Though rare and competitive, there exists, in some large multi-specialty practices, one-year rotational internships available to veterinary technology students upon graduation.

Gaining a degree in veterinary technology is only a part of the requirements for credentialing. Veterinary technology degree holders who wish to be credentialed must generally also pass some sort of credentialing exams based upon the requirements of the state, province or country in which they live. In the United States, these exams are usually the Veterinary Technician National Exam (^[2]) and an exam written by whatever governing body bestows credentials to veterinary technicians in that state. Depending on the state that a technician is working towards credentialing in, these tests may be administered by a state licensing board, state veterinary medical association or state veterinary technician association. The type of credential granted to technicians also varies from state to state based upon the laws that govern that state and the type of organization granting credentials. Veterinary technicians may be licensed [LVT (LVMT--Licensed Veterinary Medical Technician in Tennessee)], registered (RVT) or certified (CVT). Licensure is granted by a legal governing body such as a state licensing board and indicates that only people who hold a license may represent themselves as a "veterinary technician" or perform certain tasks. Registration refers to the keeping of lists of people who have met specific requirements to be a veterinary technician but in most instances doesn't limit certain actions or the use of the term "veterinary technician" to only those who are registered. Certification is generally bestowed by a private organization such as a school or professional organization and hold no legal connotation. Certification is often granted by the state veterinary technician association in states where neither the laws nor the veterinary medical association require or recommend credentialing of technicians. The term Animal Health Technician (AHT) is still used in some provinces of Canada and was once commonly used in the United States before giving way to the current moniker of veterinary technician. As with VT's there are (or have been) RAHT's, LAHT's, and CAHT's.

While it used to be very common that people with a set number of years or hours of experience assisting a veterinarian could sit for these exams that is now only allowed in a handful of states and will be phased out by 2011 in any state which uses the Veterinary Technician National Exam. (a deadline set by

the owners of the Veterinary Technician National Exam).[3]

In most anglophonic countries outside North America veterinary technicians are known as Veterinary Nurses (VNs). The American Nursing Association and some state nursing associations have claimed proprietary rights to the term "nurse", thus it is not used as a credential for veterinary personnel in North America. While this claim has been debated *ad nauseam*, there is no case law to date supporting this claim. Some veterinary technicians argue that even though their scope of responsibility is broader than that of nurses (filling the roles of nurse, radiology technician, laboratory technician, pharmacy technician, etc.) they still spend approximately 90% of their time performing nursing tasks and should therefore be allowed to be called Veterinary Nurses like their counterparts outside North America. Unofficially in conversation with veterinary clientele veterinary technicians are often referred to as veterinary nurses simply because it is the most succinct, albeit incomplete, description that the clientele can relate to. What is now the British Veterinary Nursing Association faced similar opposition early on from the nursing community in their country.[4]

Laws differ greatly from state to state. Contact your state's Veterinary Medical Board to find out what laws bind Veterinary Technicians in your state. Veterinary technicians' interests are represented nationally in the United States and Canada by the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA—formerly the North American Veterinary Technician Association) and the Canadian Association of Animal Health Technicians (CAAHT) respectively. Each state also tends to have its own veterinary technician association which represents the interests of veterinary technicians in that particular state. Membership in state veterinary technician associations is very important as these are the groups that present the needs and desires of veterinary technicians to the state lawmakers and veterinary medical associations.^[*citation needed*] As it is each state's right to set the laws and rules which govern the practice of veterinary technology and veterinary medicine, representation on a state level is necessary to address the specific needs of veterinary technicians in their state.^[*citation needed*]

Specialty certification

Beyond credentialing as a veterinary technician specialty certification is also available to technicians with advanced skills. To date there are specialty recognitions in: emergency & critical care, anesthesiology, dentistry, small animal internal medicine, large animal internal medicine, cardiology, oncology, neurology, zoological medicine, equine veterinary nursing, and behavior. Veterinary Technician Specialists carry the additional post-nominal letters "VTS" with their particular specialties indicated in parentheses. As veterinary technology evolves more specialty academy recognitions are anticipated.

Veterinary assistants

See main article Veterinary assistant

Non-credentialed personnel who perform similar tasks to veterinary technicians are usually referred to as veterinary assistants though the term technician is often applied generously. In many states, a veterinary assistant cannot legally perform as many procedures as a technician. Veterinary assistants often have no formal education related to veterinary medicine or veterinary technology. In larger facilities with tiered hierarchies veterinary assistants typically assist veterinary technicians in their duties.

Global presence

Veterinary technology as an organized and credentialed career option is relatively young only existing since the mid 20th century and as such is still struggling for recognition in many parts of the world. Attempts at professional solidarity resulted in the creation of the International Veterinary Nurses and Technicians Association (IVNTA) in 1993. Its members currently include Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Hong Kong, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States^[5].

Australia

Veterinary nurses in Australia have a two tier hierarchy consisting of Qualified Veterinary Nurses who hold a Certificate IV in veterinary nursing and Diplomaed Veterinary Nurses who hold a diploma in veterinary nursing. Diplomaed Veterinary Nurses may apply for further training in a specific field to receive "Extended" qualifications^[6]. Veterinary nurses exhibiting excellence in their field may be recognised jointly by the Veterinary Nurses Council of Australia (VNCA) and the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) with the post-nominal letters AVN (Accredited Veterinary Nurse)^[7].

Finland

Veterinary nurses in Finland are represented by *Klinikkaeläinhoitajat ry* (Finnish Veterinary Nurses Association).

France

Veterinary support personnel in France consists of *Auxiliaire Vétérinaire Qualifiée* (AVQ), [formerly known as *Auxiliaire Vétérinaire* (AV)], and *Auxiliaire Spécialisée Vétérinaire* (ASV). The former's job description is similar to that of the veterinary assistant in North America and is achieved with one year of formal training while the latter's job description is similar to veterinary technicians in North America and is achieved with two years of formal training^{[8][9][10]}.

Ghana

Veterinary medical technicians in Ghana are represented by the Ghana Veterinary Medical Technicians Association (VEMTAG).

Ireland

Veterinary nurses in Ireland are represented by the Irish Veterinary Nursing Association (IVNA) since 2002 and prior to this were represented by the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) from the 1960's. Veterinary nursing became a regulated profession in the State from January 2008 under the Veterinary Practice Act 2005. The title 'veterinary nurse' can only be used by those registered with the Veterinary Council. Post-nominal letters used in Ireland are RVN (Registered Veterinary Nurse). A provisional register was created for the purpose of allowing experienced staff working in veterinary practices the opportunity to achieve formal education and qualification. Provisional registration confers the same rights and responsibilities as those on the Register enjoy except that those with provisional registration must have reached the standard required for entry to the Register by the 31 December 2012. Therefore, from January 2008 no individual can legally perform veterinary nursing duties unless listed on the Register or is currently undertaking a course of formal education approved by the Veterinary

Council (Ann Marie Byrne, RVN, IVNA Chairperson, 10 mar 2009). To date, there are three programmes of study which qualify one to become a veterinary nurse in Ireland, each being sanctioned by the Veterinary Council of Ireland: the 2-year diploma course at St. John's College in Cork, the 3-year ordinary Bachelor of Science degree in Athlone I.T. and the 4-year higher (honours level) Bachelor of Science degree at University College Dublin.

Japan

Veterinary technicians & nurses in Japan are represented by the Japan Veterinary Nurses & Technicians Association (JVNTA).

New Zealand

Veterinary nursing in New Zealand is represented by the New Zealand Veterinary Nursing Association (NZVNA) which is subject to the Animal Nursing and Technology Board (ANTECH) of the New Zealand Veterinary Association (NZVA)^[11]. Veterinary nurses hold either a National Certificate or Diploma in Veterinary Nursing. The National Certificate represents one year of formal training while the National Diploma represents an additional two years with the National Certificate or its equivalent as a prerequisite. There are thirteen providers of veterinary nursing education in New Zealand, eight of which award the National Certificates (others offer their own local courses)^{[12][13][14]}. Other available entry-level certificates include the National Certificate in Animal Care^[15] and the Certificate in Rural Animal Technology^[16]. In 2009, Massey University started a new degree - the Bachelor of Veterinary Technology. It is a 3 year degree and the first class will graduate in 2011.^[17] Veterinary nurses in New Zealand are not currently required to be registered with the government but an accreditation scheme is being explored^[18]. New Zealand veterinary nurses adopted a national work uniform in 2004 but its wear is optional^[19].

Norway

Veterinary nurses/technicians in Norway are known as "*Dyrepleier*" and they along with veterinary assistants are represented by the Norwegian Veterinary Nurse and Assistant Association (NDAF--*Norsk Dyrepleier og Assistent Forening*). The Norwegian veterinary nurse/technician education is a two year university level program taught exclusively at the Norwegian School of Veterinary Science. Prior to 2003 it was a one year program followed by one year of practical experience. Nurse/technician graduates of the Norwegian School of Veterinary Science must apply for an official authorisation issued from the Norwegian Food Safety Authority (*Mattilsynet*) in order to use the title "*Dyrepleier*"^[20].

South Africa

Veterinary Nurses (VN's) in South Africa attend a two year program at the Onderstepoort campus of the University of Pretoria culminating in a diploma in veterinary nursing (DipVetNurs)^[21] and unlike lay staff are trained to do everything except clinical consultations and surgery subject to the Para-Veterinary Profession's Act ^[22]. Qualified veterinary nurses, curiously of both genders, utilize the title of "Sister (Sr.)", similar to the practice of female charge nurses in the human medical field in many countries, representing their professional sisterhood. They can be recognised by the wearing of epaulettes bearing a lamb, representing the patients they care for; a lamp, representing knowledge; and an axe, symbolising strength (Sr. Tania Serfontein, vice-president, VNASA, February 2009). They are represented by the

Veterinary Nurses Association of South Africa (VNASA) which was started in 1978 after South Africa's first class of qualified veterinary nurses graduated^[23].

Sweden

Veterinary nurses (as well as veterinary radiographers, administrative personnel, and laboratory assistants) have been represented in Sweden since 1997 by *Riksföreningen Anställda Inom Djursjukvården* (RAID--The Swedish Veterinary Nurse Association). Education consists of a two-year 80 credit post-secondary program at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU). RAID has also devised a distance learning course for experienced nurses and organizes continuing education for para-professionals in the equine and small-animal sectors^[24].

Switzerland

Veterinary medical assistants in Switzerland [*tiermedizinischent/in praxisassistentinnen/ assistantes en médecine vétérinaire* (AMV)/*assistenti medicina veterinari* (AMV)] organized in 1991 in Berne and are represented by the Swiss Association of Veterinary Medical Assistants [*Vereinigung der schweizerischen tiermedizinischen Praxisassistentinnen/Association Suisse des assistantes en médecine vétérinaire/Associazione Svizzera di assistenti medicina Veterinari* (VSTPA/ASAMV)]^[25]. The curriculum is offered in German in two or three schools and in French at a single site—Ecole Panorama in Lausanne—where students meet each Thursday starting in late August during a three year apprenticeship for lessons in theory and one day per month for practical training. This training culminates in the award of the National Certificate [*Eidgenössisches Fähigkeitszeugnis als gelernte/r/Certificat Fédéral de Capacité/Attestato federale di capacità* (CFC)]in veterinary medical assisting^{[26][27]}.

Turkey

Veterinary technicians in Turkey are represented by *Veteriner Saglik Teknisyenleri Dernegi* (Association of Veterinary Technicians in Turkey).

United Kingdom

Veterinary nursing personnel in the UK consists of Animal Nursing Assistants (ANA's), who can be recognised by maroon trousers and tunic with white piping, and Registered Veterinary Nurses (RVN's), who can be recognised by bottle green tunics with white piping. RVN's are also issued with an oval-shaped badge from the RCVS, when they receive their certificate to confirm them as an RVN. These badges are made from pewter, and feature an image of St Francis of Assisi (patron saint of animals), bordered in red, with Veterinary Nurse engraved on the lower half. The RVN's number is engraved on the back of the badge, along with the letters R.C.V.S., and these badges are usually displayed on the nurses uniform. UK veterinary nurses are represented by the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA)^[28]. VN's can further their formal training with a BVNA specialist course Certificate in Dentistry and/or by achieving their Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (DipAVN) by following a course of study in one or more of three tracks: Small animal nursing, Equine nursing, and Veterinary nursing education. The DipAVN has been administered by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) through Myerscough College in Lancashire since 2007 (it was administered by the BVNA up til 2005 and offered Medical and Surgical tracks)^{[29][30][31]}. In the UK the RCVS awards the veterinary nursing qualification and maintains a statutory list of veterinary nurses. Qualified VN's who are listed

are allowed to use the post-nominal letters "RVN" (Registered Veterinary Nurse)^[32]. VN's on the list are entitled by law to give animals medical treatment, and carry out certain minor surgery (under Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act of 1966)^[33], under veterinary direction.

Veterinary Technician Oath

"I solemnly dedicate myself to aiding animals and society by providing excellent care and services for animals, by alleviating animal suffering, and promoting public health. I accept my obligations to practice my profession conscientiously and with sensitivity, adhering to the profession's Code of Ethics, and furthering my knowledge and competence through a commitment to lifelong learning."

See also

- Veterinarian
- Veterinary medicine
- Veterinary surgeon
- Veterinary nurse

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External links

Associations

- American Veterinary Medical Association
 - AVMA's "Becoming a Veterinary Technician"
 - Programs accredited by the AVMA
- American Association of Veterinary State Boards
 - "Regulatory Agencies"
- National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America
- American Association for Laboratory Animal Science
- Canadian Association of Animal Health Technologists and Technicians
 - AHT/VT Programs in Canada
- Association des Techniciens en Santé Animale du Québec
- World Small Animal Veterinary Association
- International Veterinary Nurses and Technicians Association
- Veterinary Nurses Council of Australia
- Australian Veterinary Association
- Danish Veterinary Nurses Union
- Finnish Veterinary Nurses Association
- Irish Veterinary Nurses Association
- New Zealand Veterinary Nursing Association
- Norwegian Veterinary Nurse and Assistant Association
- Veterinary Nurses Association of South Africa
- Swedish Veterinary Nurse Association
- Swiss Association of Veterinary Medical Assistants
- Association of Veterinary Technicians in Turkey
- British Veterinary Nurses Association

Specialty academies

- Academy of Veterinary Technician Anesthetists
- Academy of Veterinary Emergency & Critical Care Technicians
- Academy of Internal Medicine for Veterinary Technicians
- Academy of Veterinary Behavior Technicians
- Academy of Veterinary Dental Technicians
- Academy of Equine Veterinary Nursing Technicians
- Academy of Veterinary Zoological Medicine Technicians

Resources

- VetMedTeam
- VetNurse
- VSPN
- International Veterinary Information Service


- American Association for Laboratory Animal Science

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In Demand: Veterinary Technologists and Technicians Printer-Friendly Version

CareerBuilder.com

Do you love your pet? Most people do - so much they expect the same state-of-the-art health care for their pooches that they would for themselves.

Veterinarians have so much to do these days that they need some help. Therefore, veterinary technologists and technicians - who perform similar duties to what nurses do for physicians - are in high demand. If working with animals is just your niche, here are some facts about veterinary technologists and technicians from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Overview
 Veterinary technologists and technicians work under veterinarians to provide quality health care to animals. They typically conduct clinical work in a private practice, performing medical tests and treating and diagnosing medical conditions and diseases in animals. In addition, they may discuss the animal's condition with its owner, develop X-rays and provide specialized nursing care.

Some technologists vaccinate newly admitted animals and euthanize seriously ill, severely injured or unwanted animals.

Training and Education
 The primary difference between veterinary technologists and technicians is the educational requirements: veterinary technicians must complete a two-year program, veterinary technologists need a four-year degree. Veterinary technician programs are typically offered at accredited community colleges. Both programs are taught in clinical and laboratory settings using live animals.

Though exact requirements vary by state, all veterinary technicians and technologists must pass a credentialing exam after they finish their coursework.

Entry-level positions usually involve routine tasks under the direct supervision of a veterinarian. As they gain experience, technologists and technicians take on more responsibility and work more independently. Some eventually become supervisors.

Opportunities
 Veterinary technicians and technologists generally perform the same duties. Most care for either small, companion animals (cats, dogs, etc.) or larger, nondomestic animals. In addition, some technologists and technicians work in biomedical research, wildlife medicine, the military, livestock management or pharmaceutical sales. Still others may work in medical-related fields like gene therapy and cloning.

Pros and Cons
 Veterinary technologist or technician is an ideal career for animal-lovers who do not want to undergo many years of education. They work closely with animals, and get fulfillment from helping and caring

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for pets. Because some animal hospitals, research facilities and shelters are open 24 hours a day, it is possible to work flexible shifts. Most technologists and technicians work about 40 hours per week.

However, some of the work can be physically and emotionally draining or dangerous. Technicians and technologists must sometimes clean cages or hold or restrain animals, risking injury from bites or scratches. In addition, the work setting may be noisy.

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges for any animal lover in the occupation is overcoming the emotional stress of witnessing and euthanizing abused, injured or unwanted animals. Those who deal with the public must be prepared to meet with hostility if they imply animal owners are abusing or mistreating their pets.

Salary

Median annual earnings of veterinary technologists and technicians were \$22,950 in 2002.

Job Outlook

As pet owners become more affluent - and willing to spend money pets they consider to be part of the family - job opportunities are increasingly abundant for veterinary technicians and technologists. Biomedical facilities, diagnostic laboratories, wildlife facilities, humane societies, animal control facilities, drug or food manufacturing companies and food safety inspection companies will provide additional technologist and technician jobs.

Job competition is expected to be stiffest in zoos, due to low turnover, a limited number of positions and a hearty applicant bank.

Source: BLS October 2004

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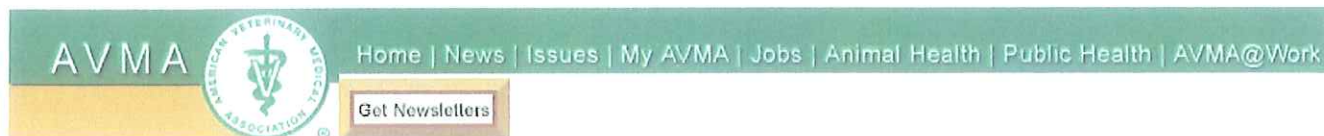
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Veterinary Technicians

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Visit the AVMA *Veterinary Career Center* to see available jobs for veterinarians and their staff.

View AVMA-accredited programs in veterinary technology

- Duties and Responsibilities
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In recent years, the profession of veterinary medicine has become ever more sophisticated and complex. The public expects state-of-the-art veterinary care for animals. To provide high quality service, today's veterinary team utilizes the skills of trained professionals known as *veterinary technicians*.

If you care about animals, enjoy working with your hands, are good at basic math and decision-making, like working with people and handling a variety of responsibilities, then the challenging career of veterinary technology may be just right for you.

Duties and Responsibilities

The veterinary technician is an integral member of the veterinary health care team. Veterinary technicians have been educated in the care and handling of animals, the basic principles of normal and abnormal life processes, and in routine laboratory and clinical procedures. All veterinary technicians work under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian. While a veterinary technician can assist in performing a wide variety of tasks, they cannot diagnose, prescribe, perform surgery, or engage in any activity prohibited by a state's veterinary practice act.

In Private Practice

A veterinary technician employed in a veterinary clinic or hospital handles many of the same responsibilities that nurses and other professionals perform for physicians. They are trained to:

- Obtain and record patient case histories
- Collect specimens and perform laboratory procedures
- Provide specialized nursing care
- Prepare animals, instruments, and equipment for surgery
- Assist in diagnostic, medical, and surgical procedures
- Expose and develop radiographs (x-rays)
- Advise and educate animal owners
- Supervise and train practice personnel
- Perform dental prophylaxes

In Biomedical Research

In addition to the responsibilities above, veterinary technicians employed in a biomedical research facility perform other duties under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian, a biomedical research worker, or other scientist:

- Supervise the humane care and handling of research animals
- Assist in the implementation of research projects

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Career Opportunities

While the majority of veterinary technicians are employed in private practice, the demand for technicians is rapidly expanding to include new employment opportunities in *both* human and animal health-related fields such as:

Biomedical research	Diagnostic laboratories
Colleges/Universities	Veterinary supply sales
Zoos and wildlife facilities	Humane societies and animal control facilities
Military service	Drug and feed manufacturing companies
Food safety inspection	

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Education

Students interested in a career in veterinary technology should have an aptitude for general science, math and biology and demonstrate basic language and communication skills.

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) accredits veterinary technician programs throughout the United States and Canada. Most AVMA-accredited programs lead to an associate degree after two years but some lead to a four-year baccalaureate degree. Students earning a baccalaureate degree usually receive higher salaries and greater level of job responsibilities.

A period of clinical experience in a veterinary practice is required for all students in an AVMA-accredited veterinary technology program. This period of hands-on training is called a *preceptorship*, *practicum*, or *externship* and is a critical component of the veterinary technician program.

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Distance Learning

To accommodate work and family obligations, distance learning is an option for many students wishing to earn a degree in veterinary technology from home. The AVMA accredits several distance-learning courses that meet the same standards of accreditation as traditional programs and include a clinical component. Students fulfill the clinical training through sponsorship by a licensed veterinarian.

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Salary

Veterinary technicians earn salaries that compare favorably to those in other fields requiring a similar education. Salaries vary according to experience, responsibility, geographic location, and employment type.

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Professional Regulation

The majority of states have regulations that provide for technician credentialing (certification, licensure, or registration). Candidates are typically tested for competency through an examination regulated by the state board of veterinary medical examiners. Most states require candidates to pass the Veterinary Technician National Examination (VTNE) before being issued a license to practice.

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Veterinary Technician Specialties

Some veterinary technicians decide to focus on areas of specialization. The National Association of Veterinary Technicians (NAVTA) currently recognizes five specialties: emergency and critical care, anesthesia, dentistry, internal medicine, and veterinary behavior.

Academy of Veterinary Emergency Critical Care Technicians (AVECCT) – www.avecct.org
Academy of Veterinary Technician Anesthetists (AVTA) – www.avta-vts.org
Academy of Veterinary Dental Technicians (AVDT) – www.avdt.us
Academy of Internal Medicine for Veterinary Technicians – www.aimvt.com
Academy of Veterinary Behavior Technicians – www.svbt.org

In addition, there is one society formed by technicians with interest in the discipline of equine (horse) health care and animal behavior.

American Association of Equine Veterinary Technicians – www.aaevt.org

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Continuing Education

Many state licensing boards require a certain number of hours of continuing education (CE) to renew professional licenses. In addition, with ongoing advances in technology and treatments, most veterinary technicians find it important to continue taking advantage of educational opportunities to keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date.

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Veterinary Technician Associations

About 100 state, local, and provincial organizations of veterinary technicians exist across the United States and Canada. NAVTA offers its members continuing education, as well as social and employment-related activities to assist in their professional growth. For specifics on Canadian veterinary technology programs, contact the Canadian Association of Animal Health Technologists and Technicians (CAAHTT) (see "For More Information").

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For More Information

For a complete listing of AVMA-accredited veterinary technician programs, visit www.avma.org

National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA)
50 S. Pickett, #110, Alexandria, VA 22304
www.navta.net

Canadian Association of Animal Health Technologists and Technicians (CAAHTT)
Box 595, Langham, SK S0K 2L0, CANADA
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Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010-11 Edition

Veterinary Technologists and Technicians

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Significant Points

- Animal lovers get satisfaction from this occupation, but aspects of the work can be unpleasant, physically and emotionally demanding, and sometimes dangerous.
- There are primarily two levels of education and training for entry to this occupation: a 2-year program for veterinary technicians and a 4-year program for veterinary technologists.
- Employment is expected to grow much faster than average.
- Overall job opportunities should be excellent; however, keen competition is expected for jobs in zoos and aquariums.

Nature of the Work

Owners of pets and other animals today expect superior veterinary care. To provide this service, veterinarians use the skills of *veterinary technologists* and *technicians*, who perform many of the same duties for a veterinarian that a nurse would for a physician. Although specific job duties vary by employer, there is often little difference between the tasks carried out by technicians and technologists, despite differences in formal education and training. However, most technicians work in private clinical practice while many technologists have the option to work in more advanced research-related jobs.

Veterinary technologists and technicians typically conduct clinical work in a private practice under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian. Veterinary technologists and technicians often perform various medical tests and treat and diagnose medical conditions and diseases in animals. For example, they may perform laboratory tests such as urinalysis and blood counts, assist with dental care, prepare tissue samples, take blood samples, and assist veterinarians in a variety of other diagnostic tests. While most of these duties are performed in a laboratory setting, many are not. For example, some veterinary technicians record patients' case histories, expose and develop x rays and radiographs, and provide specialized nursing care. In addition, experienced veterinary technicians may discuss a pet's condition with its owners and train new clinic personnel. Veterinary technologists and technicians assisting small-animal practitioners usually care for small pets, such as cats and dogs, but can perform a variety of duties with mice, rats, sheep, pigs, cattle, monkeys, birds, fish, and frogs. Very few veterinary technologists work in mixed animal practices where they care for both small pets and large, nondomestic animals.

Besides working in private clinics and animal hospitals, some veterinary technologists and technicians work in research facilities under the guidance of veterinarians or physicians. In this role, they may administer medications,

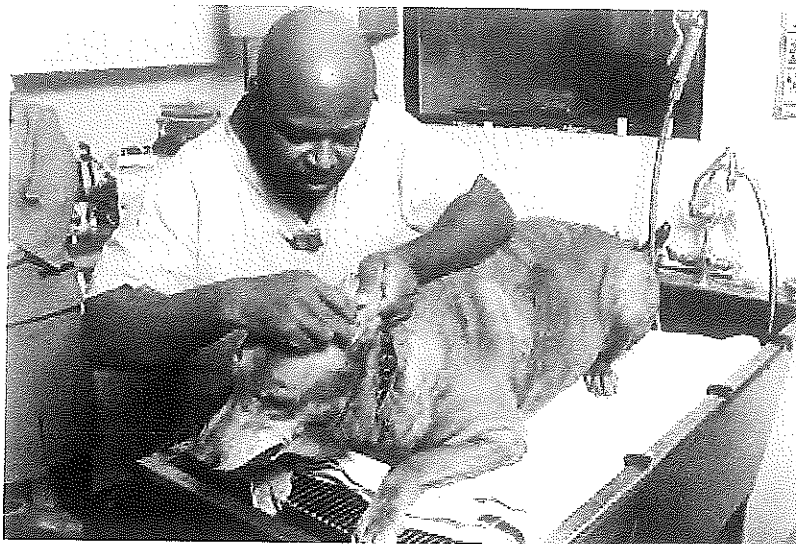
prepare samples for laboratory examinations, or record information on an animal's genealogy, diet, weight, medications, food intake, and clinical signs of pain and distress. Some may sterilize laboratory and surgical equipment and provide routine postoperative care. Occasionally, veterinary technologists vaccinate newly admitted animals and may have to euthanize seriously ill, severely injured, or unwanted animals.

While the goal of most veterinary technologists and technicians is to promote animal health, some contribute to human health, as well. Veterinary technologists occasionally assist veterinarians in implementing research projects as they work with other scientists in medical-related fields such as gene therapy and cloning. Some find opportunities in biomedical research, wildlife medicine, livestock management, pharmaceutical sales, and increasingly, in biosecurity and disaster preparedness.

Work environment. While people who love animals get satisfaction from helping them, some of the work may be unpleasant, physically and emotionally demanding, and sometimes dangerous. Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show that full-time veterinary technologists and technicians experienced a work-related injury and illness rate that was much higher than the national average. At times, veterinary technicians must clean cages and lift, hold, or restrain animals, risking exposure to bites or scratches. These workers must take precautions when treating animals with germicides or insecticides. The work setting can be noisy.

Veterinary technologists and technicians who witness abused animals or who euthanize unwanted, aged, or hopelessly injured animals may experience emotional stress. Those working for humane societies and animal shelters often deal with the public, some of whom might react with hostility to any implication that the owners are neglecting or abusing their pets. Such workers must maintain a calm and professional demeanor while they enforce the laws regarding animal care.

In some animal hospitals, research facilities, and animal shelters, a veterinary technician is on duty 24 hours a day, which means that some work night shifts. Most full-time veterinary technologists and technicians work about 40 hours a week, although some work 50 or more hours a week.



Veterinary technologists and technicians often assist veterinarians by conducting tests.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

There are primarily two levels of education and training for entry to this occupation: a 2-year program for veterinary technicians and a 4-year program for veterinary technologists.

Education and training. Most entry-level veterinary technicians have a 2-year associate degree from an American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)-accredited community college program in veterinary technology in which courses are taught in clinical and laboratory settings using live animals. Currently, about 20 colleges offer veterinary technology programs that are longer and that culminate in a 4-year bachelor's degree in veterinary technology. These 4-year colleges, in addition to some vocational schools, also offer 2-year programs in laboratory animal science. About

10 schools offer distance learning.

In 2009, about 160 veterinary technology programs in 45 States were accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). Graduation from an AVMA-accredited veterinary technology program allows students to take the credentialing exam in any State in the country.

Those interested in careers as veterinary technologists and technicians should take as many high school science, biology, and math courses as possible. Science courses taken beyond high school, in an associate or bachelor's degree program, should emphasize practical skills in a clinical or laboratory setting.

Technologists and technicians usually begin work as trainees under the direct supervision of a veterinarian. Entry-level workers whose training or educational background encompasses extensive hands-on experience with diagnostic and medical equipment usually require a shorter period of on-the-job training.

Licensure and certification. Each State regulates veterinary technicians and technologists differently; however, all States require them to pass a credentialing exam following coursework. Passing the State exam assures the public that the technician or technologist has sufficient knowledge to work in a veterinary clinic or hospital. Candidates are tested for competency through an examination that includes oral, written, and practical portions and that is regulated by the State Board of Veterinary Examiners or the appropriate State agency. Depending on the State, candidates may become registered, licensed, or certified. Most States, however, use the National Veterinary Technician (NVT) exam. Prospects usually can have their passing scores transferred from one State to another, so long as both States use the same exam.

Employers recommend American Association for Laboratory Animal Science (AALAS) certification for those seeking employment in a research facility. AALAS offers certification for three levels of technician competence, with a focus on three principal areas—animal husbandry, facility management, and animal health and welfare. Those who wish to become certified must satisfy a combination of education and experience requirements prior to taking the AALAS examination. Work experience must be directly related to the maintenance, health, and well-being of laboratory animals and must be gained in a laboratory animal facility as defined by AALAS. Candidates who meet the necessary criteria can begin pursuing the desired certification on the basis of their qualifications. The lowest level of certification is Assistant Laboratory Animal Technician (ALAT), the second level is Laboratory Animal Technician (LAT), and the highest level of certification is Laboratory Animal Technologist (LATG). The AALAS examination consists of multiple-choice questions and is longer and more difficult for higher levels of certification, ranging from 2 hours and 120 multiple choice questions for the ALAT, to 3 hours and 180 multiple choice questions for the LATG.

Other qualifications. As veterinary technologists and technicians often deal with pet owners, communication skills are very important. In addition, technologists and technicians should be able to work well with others, because teamwork with veterinarians and other veterinary technicians is common. Organizational ability and the ability to pay attention to detail also are important.

Advancement. As they gain experience, technologists and technicians take on more responsibility and carry out more assignments with little veterinary supervision. Some eventually may become supervisors.

Employment

Veterinary technologists and technicians held about 79,600 jobs in 2008. About 91 percent worked in veterinary services. The remainder worked in boarding kennels, animal shelters, rescue leagues, and zoos.

Job Outlook

Excellent job opportunities will stem from the need to replace veterinary technologists and technicians who leave the occupation and from the limited output of qualified veterinary technicians from 2-year programs, which are not expected to meet the demand over the 2008-18 period. Employment is expected to grow **much faster than average**.

Employment change. Employment of veterinary technologists and technicians is expected to grow 36 percent over the 2008-18 projection period, which is much faster than the average for all occupations. Pet owners are becoming more affluent and more willing to pay for advanced veterinary care because many of them consider their pet to be part of the

family. This growing affluence and view of pets will continue to increase the demand for veterinary care. The vast majority of veterinary technicians work at private clinical practices under veterinarians. As the number of veterinarians grows to meet the demand for veterinary care, so will the number of veterinary technicians needed to assist them.

The number of pet owners who take advantage of veterinary services for their pets is expected to grow over the projection period, increasing employment opportunities. The availability of advanced veterinary services, such as preventive dental care and surgical procedures, also will provide opportunities for workers specializing in those areas as they will be needed to assist licensed veterinarians. The growing number of cats kept as companion pets is expected to boost the demand for feline medicine and services. Further demand for these workers will stem from the desire to replace veterinary assistants with more highly skilled technicians in animal clinics and hospitals, shelters, boarding kennels, animal control facilities, and humane societies.

Continued support for public health, food and animal safety, and national disease control programs, as well as biomedical research on human health problems, also will contribute to the demand for veterinary technologists, although the number of positions in these areas is fewer than in private practice

Job prospects. Excellent job opportunities are expected because of the relatively few veterinary technology graduates each year. The number of 2-year programs has recently grown to about 160, but due to small class sizes, fewer than 3,800 graduates are anticipated each year, a number that is not expected to meet demand. Additionally, many veterinary technicians remain in the field less than 10 years, so the need to replace workers who leave the occupation each year also will produce many job opportunities.

Veterinary technologists also will enjoy excellent job opportunities due to the relatively few graduates from 4-year programs—about 500 annually. However, unlike veterinary technicians who usually work in private clinical practice, veterinary technologists will have better opportunities for research jobs in a variety of settings, including biomedical facilities, diagnostic laboratories, wildlife facilities, drug and food manufacturing companies, and food safety inspection facilities.

Despite the relatively few number of graduates each year, keen competition is expected for veterinary technician jobs in zoos and aquariums, due to expected slow growth in facility capacity, low turnover among workers, the limited number of positions, and the fact that the work in zoos and aquariums attracts many candidates.

Employment of veterinary technicians and technologists is relatively stable during periods of economic recession. Layoffs are less likely to occur among veterinary technologists and technicians than in some other occupations because animals will continue to require medical care.

Projections Data

Projections data from the National Employment Matrix

Occupational Title	SOC Code	Employment, 2008	Projected Employment, 2018	Change, 2008-18		Detailed Statistics	
				Number	Percent		
Veterinary technologists and technicians	29-2056	79,600	108,100	28,500	36	[PDF]	[XLS]

NOTE: Data in this table are rounded. See the discussion of the employment projections table in the *Handbook* introductory chapter on [Occupational Information Included in the Handbook](#).

Earnings

Median annual wages of veterinary technologists and technicians were \$28,900 in May 2008. The middle 50 percent earned between \$23,580 and \$34,960. The bottom 10 percent earned less than \$19,770, and the top 10 percent earned more than \$41,490. Veterinary technologists in research jobs may earn more than veterinary technicians in other types of jobs.

For the latest wage information:

The above wage data are from the [Occupational Employment Statistics \(OES\)](#) survey program, unless otherwise noted. For the latest National, State, and local earnings data, visit the following pages:

- [veterinary technologists and technicians](#)

Related Occupations

Others who work extensively with animals include:

[Animal care and service workers](#)

[Veterinarians](#)

[Veterinary assistants and laboratory animal caretakers](#)

Sources of Additional Information

Disclaimer:

Links to non-BLS Internet sites are provided for your convenience and do not constitute an endorsement.

For information on certification as a laboratory animal technician or technologist, contact:

- American Association for Laboratory Animal Science, 9190 Crestwyn Hills Dr., Memphis, TN 38125. Internet: <http://www.aalas.org>

For information on careers in veterinary medicine and a listing of AVMA-accredited veterinary technology programs, contact:

- American Veterinary Medical Association, 1931 N. Meacham Rd., Suite 100, Schaumburg, IL 60173-4360. Internet: <http://www.avma.org>

O*NET-SOC Code Coverage

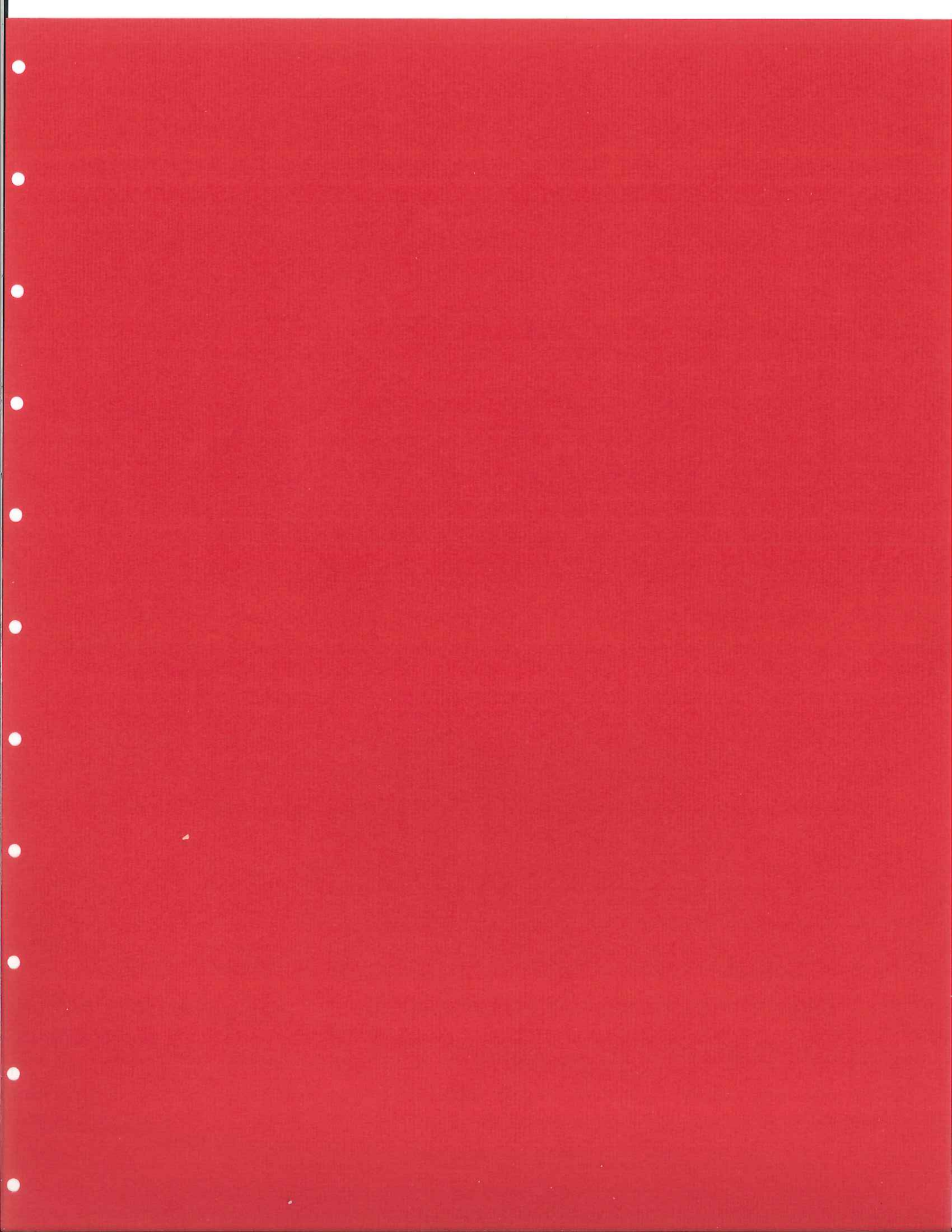
Get more information from O*NET| the Occupational Information Network:

O*NET provides comprehensive information on key characteristics of workers and occupations. For information on a specific occupation, select the appropriate link below. For more information on O*NET, visit their [homepage](#).

- [Veterinary Technologists and Technicians \(29-2056.00\)](#)

Suggested citation: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010-11 Edition*, Veterinary Technologists and Technicians, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos183.htm> (visited February 26, 2010).

Last Modified Date: December 17, 2009



Overview of Classes

Technique:

Ballet IV:

- Proper alignment
- Core stability
- Ballet class etiquette
- Understanding of mind/body connection
- Core initiated movement
- Experiment with personal style/ artistry

Ballet V:

- Increased strength and stamina
- Improved placement and alignment
- Increased knowledge of Ballet vocabulary
- Foot articulation
- How to maintain engaged in a properly turned out position

Point & Variations:

- Perform variations with stylistic clarity and nuance
- Point work with correct alignment, musical phrasing, and rhythmic clarity
- Understanding and appreciation of style, period, and context of Ballet

Yoga for Ballet:

- Proper placement and alignment in yoga
- Asana and Vinyasa
- Understand importance of breath
- Recognize the similarities with yoga and ballet
- Strengthen movement from the core
- Increased flexibility and range of motion in the joints

Modern II:

- Theories of movement in modern
- Understanding of music in connection with dancing
- Body connections; i.e. head tail, etc.
- Inversions
- Modern repertoire
- Bartenieff Fundamental Patterns of Total body Connectivity

Modern III:

- Inversions
- Moving in and out of the floor with ease
- Upper body strength
- Core stability
- Floor work
- Core distal connectivity

Modern IV:

- Effective use of plié in and out of movement sequences
- Inversion skills
- Musculature development
- Aerial and floor work, transitioning between
- Movement efficiency and accuracy
- Incorporate breath in movement
- Core stability through use of breath

Friday Dance Workshop:

- Integration of breath into movement
- Developing greater muscular strength
- Inversion work
- Awareness and performance quality
- Performing stylized movement with accuracy

Dance Conditioning: Pilates Wellness Lab:

- Understanding of Pilates exercises and concepts
- Posture, alignment, and muscle joint function
- Core strength and stability in conjunction with mobility
- Basic muscular-skeletal anatomy
- Using exercises to increase performance and prevent injury
- Movement patterning via kinetic chains

Dance of Africa:

- Skills and understanding of the principles of African dance
- Musical rhythm, clarity, and phrasing
- Cultural context of African dance movement
- Accuracy in timing and tempo
- Awareness of dancer/drummer relationship
- Increased stamina

Jazz V:

- Jazz techniques and performance
- Increased strength, stamina, and flexibility
- Confidence and performance quality
- Gain understanding of working in the professional dance world
- Movement articulation
- Motor control and coordination

Musical Theater:

- General knowledge of Musical Theater
- Work towards overcoming fears about other areas of Musical Theater beyond dance
- Confidence in areas of dance, voice, and acting
- Dynamics, personal interpretation, and characterization

Composition:

Fundamentals of Dance Composition I & II:

- Dance theories and history as relevant to dance composition
- Dance outside of competition and concert dance
- Introduce elements of terminology and choreography
- Improvisational exercises
- Relationship between music, text, spoken word and dance
- Movement invention and signature

Laban Movement Analysis:

- History and theory of Laban movement analysis
- Introduction to Laban notation
- Elements of dance: Effort, Weight, Space, Flow
- Development of phrase work using the elements of dance studied

Styles and Forms:

- Develop multiple approaches to dance composition
- Deeper understanding of Laban's Effort concepts
- Individual dance aesthetic
- Investigate solo, duet, trio, and group dance format
- Evaluate movement through verbal description and written work
- Perform an expanded dynamic range of movement

Principles of Movement:

- Introduction to Bartenieff Fundamentals, Pilates, Yoga, Franklin ball method, meditation, and message
- Basic biomechanics
- Understanding stretching and strengthening techniques
- Brief introduction of anatomy and kinesiology

Theory, History, and Science:

Dance in LA:

- Recognize diverse aesthetic practices
- Recognize distinct individual professional artist's personal voice
- Discern what constitutes professional choreography
- Greater understanding of the concept of self in context to performance qualities
- Attend live professional performances to observe these ideas

Stagecraft for Dance:

- Learn the language of technical theatre
- Ability to better communicate with technical experts
- Appreciation of technical arts
- Construction of the dance floor in Strub theatre

Creative Dance for Children:

- Theories of creative dance
- Incorporating academics and dance
- Developing lesson plans
- The history of creative dance for children
- Class management skills
- Learning to understand different types of children and personalities

To Dance is Human:

- History and theories of dance in different genres
- Difference vs. Deficiency
- Understanding the self in relationship to the other
- Defining and understanding the concepts of race, ethnicity, and culture
- Discovering the importance of dance in relation to self expression and mutual understanding
- Self exploration and study
- The art of story telling

History of Dance Theatre:

- The history of dance specific to the western tradition: ballet, modern, jaz, tap, and hip hop
- Early developers and pioneers of western dance forms
- Commercial vs. concert dance
- Dance's role in film and on the stage
- The role of dance throughout western history
- Careful and detailed investigation of a particular topic pertaining to western dance styles

Kinesiology I & II:

- Identify major muscles
- Learn the action of major muscles and joints
- Discuss dance movement using anatomical terms
- Explain kinematic chain relationships
- Develop understanding of the structure and function of parts of the body
- Analyze the outside forces that act on the body
- Concentric, eccentric, and isometric muscle contractions

Jerome Robbins, and his Contribution to Musical Theater

Many Broadway lovers, spectators, and critics alike have named Jerome Robbins as one of the most influential and groundbreaking choreographers of all time. Robbins is responsible for bringing to life some of the most extravagant and famous Broadway musicals in history. Adorned with numerous Tony awards for direction and choreography, Jerome Robbins has blessed audiences with the creation of such masterpieces such as *West Side Story* (1957) and *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964). Though emerging from fairly modest beginnings, Robbins developed and grew into a crucial contributor to the American art form of Musical Theater.

Jerome Robbins was born Jerome Wilson Rabinowitz on October 11, 1918 in New York City. His parents Harry Rabinowitz and Lena Rips Rabinowitz were Russian Jews who immigrated in order to avoid religious persecution. Robbins was exposed to art from an early age. He played piano and violin and sometimes accompanied his older sister, Sonya, to her dance classes (Hering, 1998, p.359). Due to financial reasons, Robbins was forced to cut his scholarly career short and drop out of New York University after just one year. Following this, Robbins began studying the “German Technique” of modern dance with his sister under the teachings of Senia Glück-Sandor and Felicia Sorel (Hering, 1998, p.359). It was these women who encouraged Robbins to further his dancing education. Following their advice, he began studying ballet with Ella Daganova and Anthony Tudor, Spanish dance with Helen Veola, and Asian Folk dance with Yeichi Nimura. Robbins’ first appearance came with a role in Glück-Sandor’s choreography for the Yiddish Art Theater’s *Brothers Ashkenazi*.

From these performances, Robbins moved onto a summer job at Camp Tamiment. Camp Tamiment was an adult resort in Pennsylvania known for hiring “gifted young artists to perform in its revues,” (Hering, 1998, p.359). These performances as a song and dance man, led him to the Broadway stage in performances such as *Great Lady* (1938) and *The Straw Hat Revue* (1939) all choreographed by George Balanchine. This initial experimentation in the Broadway arena was short lived. Soon after Robbins joined the corps de ballet of the newly formed Ballet Theatre, later to become to world renown American Ballet Theatre or ABT. It was here, according to Clive Barnes (1998), that Robbins learned to be such a “fine technician – the quadruple series of double tours without preparations in between in the finale of *Interplay* (1945) were made for Robbins himself,” (p. 1). From 1941-1944, Jerome Robbins was a soloist with the company. During these years he began achieving recognition especially through his roles in *Helen of Troy* (1942) and *Three Virgins and a Devil* (1941). In 1944, Robbins choreographed his first ballet, *Fancy Free* (1944), telling a story of three sailors on leave. Later that year, Robbins conceived and choreographed *On the Town* (1944), a musical loosely based on the plot of *Fancy Free*. It was with this production that Robbins’ Broadway career officially commenced.

Throughout the entirety of his career Robbins jumped back and forth between the worlds of ballet and Broadway. As he did so, he established himself as a prominent leader in both genres. After his first performances on Broadway, Robbins developed a relationship with his choreographer, George Balanchine. Balanchine too was adept at straddling the worlds of classical dance and musical theater. Balanchine was the co-founder and ballet master of the

renowned New York City Ballet. In the late 1940's, following his choreography appearing in such shows as *High Button Shoes* (1947), *Look, Ma, I'm Dancin* (1948), and *Miss Liberty* (1949), Robbins wrote to Balanchine asking if he could join New York City Ballet. By 1950, he had been named artistic director. While with New York City Ballet, Robbins created and collaborated on such works as *Age of Anxiety* (1950), *The Fire Bird* (1970), and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (1979). Though heavily active in ballet, Robbins did not abandon the Broadway stage completely during the 1950's. He was the choreographer for *The King and I* in 1951, co-directed *The Pajama Game* in 1954, and both directed and choreographed *Peter Pan* (1954) that same year.

It was during this period of the 1940's and early '50s that an obvious change began to occur in the Broadway musical. Before this time, there were shows such as *Anything Goes* (1934) and *Jubilee* (1935). In these shows, the dance sequences, if there were any, served no purpose other than to make time for a set or costume change. They were merely a diversion from the plot and typically did nothing to advance it. Up until this point the music and lyrics were chosen based on the lyricists' own inclination and paid little attention to the intention of the character that was singing. This style of musical was dramatically changed with the opening of *Oklahoma!* (1943). For the first time in musical history, there was no aspect of the show that went unattended to, "This was something new – a fully rounded musical play, with every element dedicated to organically moving the story forward," (Kenrick, 1996a, p.2). With the help of reputable choreographer Agnes DeMille, *Oklahoma!* was the first musical to use dance to help further the plot. DeMille insisted on having professionally trained dancers perform the role of

ensemble rather than they typical chorus girls of the time (Kenrick, 1996a, p.2). “Before *Oklahoma*, composers and lyricists were songwriters – after *Oklahoma!* they had to be dramatists, using everything in the score to develop character and advance the action. One commenter critiqued, “with songs by Lorenz Hart or Cole Porter, you hear the lyricist – with Hammerstein, you hear the characters,” (Kenrick, 1996a, p.5)

Kenrick (1996a) states:

In fact, everything in a musical now had to serve a dramatic purpose. The diverting dance routines of the past were replaced by choreography that helped tell the show's story. Any number of earlier shows had attempted a book-driven approach, but they showcased particular performers in songs and scenes that did not always serve the story. For example, the original *ShowBoat* gave Captain Andy excuses to clown around, and *Lady in the Dark* gave both Danny Kaye and Gertrude Lawrence star turns that had nothing to do with the plot. *Oklahoma* rejected such high jinks, tossing out anything which did not fit the plot or bring characters into sharper focus. Old-style formula musical comedies like *No, No, Nanette* and *Anything Goes* can be very entertaining, but their one-dimensional characters are like comic book figures, eliciting little sympathy. When *Oklahoma's* Laurie and Curly admit their love by singing, "Let People Say We're In Love," audiences become a sea of smiles and moist eyes. This same holds true for the other classic musicals by R&H and their successors – the major characters

are believable individuals that we can empathize with. Rodgers and Hammerstein often dealt with serious themes, but they knew that the first duty of theatre (musical or otherwise) is to tell interesting stories about fascinating characters (p.5)

Though DeMille's dance sequence was the first of its kind, it was Robbins who capitalized on this new idea and took it to a whole new level. In *Oklahoma!*, the dance number was only a small part of the production. Jerome Robbins expanded on that idea and "used dance as a story-telling device, making it as intrinsic to the musical as the script and the score," (Kenrick, 1996b, p.2). Though Jerome Robbins was not the first classically trained Broadway choreographer, he was the first to both choreograph and direct. Robbins choreographed for over 15 Broadway musicals and directed nine of those productions. George Abbot, who was a close theater comrade of Robbins, directed Robbins' first musical *On the Town*. His next production, *Billion Dollar Baby* (1945), was also directed by Abbot, and showcased a series of story telling dances choreographed by Robbins. Another notable musical that Robbins choreographed was *High Button Shoes* (1947). This show was most remembered for Robbins' choreography in the "Mack Sennett Ballet" segment of the show (Kenrick, 1996b, p.2). The next famous musical, was the Rodgers and Hammerstein masterpiece, *The King and I* (1951). For this production, Robbins created the "Small House of Uncle Thomas Ballet." He also staged the "March of the Siamese Children" and the crowd favorite "Shall We Dance."

The next production Robbins took on is one that many claim to be his masterpiece and

crowning achievement, *West Side Story*.

Kenrick (1996b) claims:

What began with Agnes DeMille's dream ballets in *Oklahoma!* found its fulfillment here with Robbins serving as director and choreographer, shaping the entire show as one nonstop choreographic event. Something as prosaic as a gang walking down a street became an excuse for dance that simultaneously strengthened the plot and developed individual characters. The inherent drama of young lovers meeting at a dance or teenagers clashing in a schoolyard brawl became riveting highlights in the history of modern dance (p.2).

West Side Story swept the nation and gained a place in the Broadway hall of fame. It ran for 732 performances before going on tour. The production received a Tony Award nomination for Best Musical in 1957. That same year, Robbins won the Tony for Best Choreography. Following its run on Broadway, the show moved to London where it found great success. It has also been honored with several revivals. The production inspired a groundbreaking, and award-winning musical film version of the show in 1961. The film was directed by Jerome Robbins and won ten Academy Awards out of eleven nominations. Throughout the rehearsal period, the New York newspapers were filled with articles about gang warfare. This kept the performers on their toes and assisted in keeping the show's plot relevant. Robbins kept the cast members playing the Sharks and the Jets separate in order to discourage them from socializing and develop a sense of

mutual distrust between the dancers (Jays, 2008, p.1). Robbins reminded everyone of the reality of gang violence by posting news stories on the bulletin board backstage. Something unique that Robbins brought to Broadway was that he gave the ensemble more freedom than Broadway dancers had previously been given. There were now asked to interpret their character and their roles, he taught his dancers aspects of method acting, and for the first time each dancer was able to develop his or her own person's character rather than just being a background element used to fill the stage. Another interesting choreographic approach taken by Robbins was that he insisted the cast improvise key scenes, such as the Jets assaulting Anita. He allowed them to rehearse the sequence only once a day in order for the scene to remain raw and authentic.

Though *West Side Story* may have been his crowning achievement, it was not his only masterpiece. In 1959, Robbins choreographed for the Broadway musical *Gypsy*. Though this show was not as full of dancing as *West Side Story*, his knack for humor was praised in the dance number "You Gotta Get a Gimmick," (Kenrick, 1996b, p.2). In 1964, Robbins achieved yet another triumph. It was in this year that he directed and choreographed *Fiddler on the Roof*. This musical held a special meaning for Robbins because it allowed him to investigate his own Jewish heritage while creating the choreography and staging. As Kenrick (1996b) states, "Robbins wove story, song and dance together to tell the story of a Jewish milkman facing change in his family and his shtetl community. He staged unforgettable images: the Jews of Anatevka forming a circle of community, the wedding dancers with wine bottles perched precariously on their hats, and the circle finally breaking apart as the Jews flee Russian oppression," (p.2). The original Broadway production of the show, which opened in 1964, was

the first run of a musical in history to surpass 3,000 performances. The production was nominated for ten Tony Awards, winning nine, including Best Musical, score, book, direction and choreography.

Following his accomplishment with *Fiddler*, Robbins devoted his final years to his technical roots. Robbins became ballet master of the New York City Ballet in 1972 and worked almost exclusively in classical dance throughout the next decade, straying only momentarily to stage the revivals of *West Side Story* (1980) and *Fiddler on the Roof* (1981).

His final hurrah on the Broadway stage was with his direction of *Jerome Robbins' Broadway* (1989). The production was a collection comprising musical numbers from earlier shows that were either directed or choreographed by Robbins. Robbins won his fifth Tony Award for direction of the show. The musical opened on Broadway on February 26, 1989 at the Imperial Theatre and closed on September 1, 1990 after 633 performances and 55 previews. The musical was an elaborate production with a cast of 62 and the show reportedly cost \$8 million to produce. The production presented classic numbers from many different works by Robbins, such as: “New York, New York” from *On the Town*, “Shall we Dance” from *The King and I*, and “Sunrise, Sunset” from *Fiddler on the Roof*. This production was living proof of the numerous contributions that Robbins brought to the Broadway stage. The various iconic numbers that bear Robbins’ name are unparalleled. As eloquently stated by John Kenrick (1996b), “Robbins was arguably the most brilliant director the musical theatre has ever known. He worked closely with authors and composers, taking an active role in shaping much of the material he would bring to

life on stage. As a result, his directorial concepts are often written into the librettos and songs, a permanent part of the fabric of these shows,” (p.2).

Robbins suffered a massive stroke in 1998, and died at his home in New York on July 29, 1998. On the evening of his death, the lights of Broadway were dimmed for a moment in tribute. It was a necessary homage to the man who reshaped and reformed the Broadway stage forever, a man who has left an indelible mark upon the art of musical theater.

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Musical Theatre: An American Art Form

The art form that has come to be known as musical theatre is not a performance genre that was generated spontaneously or independent of outside factors. It is a form that arose due to the sequential developments of multiple art forms such as acting, music, and dance. The progression and expansion of these styles intertwined, each contributing unique aspects, eventually culminating in the manifestation of the celebrated entertainment form that is musical theatre. When analyzing the development of any one thing is it crucial to revert back to the very beginning. Without starting at the source, it is impossible to grasp a clear and complete understanding of why something is the way it is. If analyzing a person, for example, it would be foolish not to take into account the effect those individuals' parents and even grandparents had on the development of their character. A tree is not a tree without first being a seed. In this same way, all things have a starting point, even if what they originated from does not resemble that which they become. To obtain a concise understanding and appreciation of musical theatre, we must go back to its roots. According to John Kenrick, "Theatre is a communal activity where one or more people act out a story for an audience."¹ Though rite and ritual portray some aspects of theatre, it is the Greeks who are credited with the true development of theatre. The Greek tragedies were the first productions, so to speak, appointed with the title of theatre. Because of this, it could also be said that the Greek tragedies were the earliest beginnings of musical theatre. The dramas of ancient Greece used dialogue, song, and dance as "integrated storytelling tools."²

¹ John Kenrick, Musical Theatre: A History (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc, 2008) 18.

² Kenrick 18.

Renowned playwrights of ancient times such as Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Aristophanes were also composers and lyricists. Due to this, they were able to interweave their different talents into their writing, providing early Greek theatre with what some historians have dubbed “lyric theatre.”³ The Greeks also had a custom of honoring Dionysus, the god of agriculture, theatre, wine, and joy, with choral performances. These musical portrayals of well known mythological fables were called dithyrambs.⁴

As the Roman Empire developed, they took the ideas and themes initially developed by the Greeks and further expanded upon them. It was the Roman Empire that is accredited with the first “stage.” They decided to build a large wooden platform that would be raised above the spectators for the actors to perform on. The Roman Empire also brought us the very first adaptation of a tap shoe. In order to make the dance steps audible, performers clipped metal chips to the bottom of their shoes.⁵ As the world developed, appreciation of arts and culture grew as well. The Age of Enlightenment, a time period dominated by reason and intellect, also bred an appreciation for the arts. This period witnessed the birth of three new genres of theatre: comic opera, pantomime, and ballad operas. Each of these further demonstrated the power music had on an audience and what an important component it was in a fulfilling theatrical experience. In the years to come, it was in the city of Paris where the infant that was musical theatre was nurtured and cared for. Opera took flight in Paris when musical genius Jacques Offenbach entered the scene. Offenbach developed what is known as “operetta”, a form of opera in which the lyrics are just as significant as the music.⁶ He also developed “opera-bouffes,” a style which

³ Kenrick 19.

⁴ Kenrick 19.

⁵ Kenrick 25.

⁶ Kenrick 38.

combined the same “opera-sized singing with zany comic plots.”⁷ The operetta was mainly seen in Paris, London, and Vienna. The form reached its full development in the late half of the 19th century and began to achieve commercial success. The key timing is important because it was in those years that Europe’s influence on American culture was most strongly felt. The American nation was just developing and looked to its eastern neighbors as models for development.⁸ Once the slowly maturing musical theatre crossed the Atlantic, it was America that fostered its progression and turned it into the brilliance it is today. A name commonly associated with musical theatre and sometimes referred to, as the “great white way” is the infamous avenue, Broadway. However, its beginnings weren’t as glamorous as one would expect. In 1664, the British Navy took over the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam and renamed it New York. Formerly known as High Street, the English changed the avenue’s name to Broadway because it was the widest boulevard in the town. But Broadway would have to wait almost a century until it saw even its first theatrical performance.⁹

One of the earliest forms of musical theatre to develop that was unique to America was Minstrelsy. Minstrelsy began as early as 1815 and gained recognition in the mid 1840’s.¹⁰ Minstrelsy consisted of comic skits, variety acts, dancing, and music. Though honored for being the first distinctly American theatrical form, it was a type of show that was centered on racism and bigotry. The performers in a Minstrel show were typically white, though later African Americans performed as well. They covered their faces in black paint and used makeup to draw on exaggerated features, typically the lips, all in an attempt to caricaturize and mock the

⁷ Kenrick 38.

⁸ Raymond Knapp, The American Musical and the Formation of National Identity (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006) 19.

⁹ Kenrick 51.

¹⁰ Knapp 49.

appearance of African Americans. The plot and themes of the shows also ridiculed and derided black culture portraying them as sloppy, ignorant, and lazy. Though few artists gained fame or recognition while acting as members of touring minstrel shows, one African American performer was able to distinguish himself as a talented dancer. William Henry Lane, more commonly known as “Master Juba,” was one of the first black performers to dance for a white audience, and was the only black man to ever tour with a white minstrel group.¹¹ His personal style and incorporation of rhythms is generally credited as being one of the first pioneers in the style of tap dancing.

Another predecessor to the American musical was the “extravaganza.” This term was applied to a type of show whose main goal was to provide some sort of grand spectacle.¹² These productions often included awe-inspiring acts such as acrobats or other types of circus performances, and it always included some form of singing and dancing. As time progressed, many extravaganzas began to implement some form of narrative to connect together the song and dance.¹³

Burlesque and vaudeville also largely influenced the development of musical theatre. Though the term burlesque now holds a slightly negative and more sexual connotation, it used to have a very different meaning. Burlesque simply meant to parody or comically exaggerate more serious shows, individual scenes or character roles. This form showed the brilliance and success of adding comedy to theatre, a tactic that is still continuously employed on Broadway today.¹⁴

Vaudeville began when the variety acts that were mainly used to showcase beautiful women,

¹¹ Knapp 51.

¹² Knapp 59.

¹³ Knapp 59.

¹⁴ Knapp 61.

started integrating plot and narrative to their shows, bringing a sense of legitimacy to the performance.¹⁵ The influences of these types of productions have left their mark on such musical theatre icons as the Ziegfield Follies.

In the summer of 1866, on the stage of New York City's Niblo's Garden, a producer by the name of William Wheatly, opened *The Black Crook*. Initially, the play was a four-act melodrama written by Charles M. Barras. When Wheatly realized that he had a potential flop on his hands, he collaborated with a variety of composers adding a musical score to his production. He also hired a ballet company and inserted numerous dance sequences in the play.¹⁶ With the largest budget found on Broadway up until that time, Wheatly turned his serious and arguably bland stage play into a stunning spectacle and the first stage show in world history to run for more than a year.¹⁷ Some have mistakenly titled *The Black Crook* the first Broadway musical, though it wasn't even Broadway's first long running musical hit. However, *The Black Crook* was the first Broadway musical to achieve nation wide acclaim.¹⁸

Following the sensation of *The Black Crook*, the American musical was thrust towards the forefront of American entertainment. Due to the financial success the production brought its patrons, it was now obvious that musical theatre could be a very lucrative investment. In the early stages of Broadway's development, the European light opera tradition was the chief foreign model for American musical theatre.¹⁹ This standard was exemplified in the late 19th century with the collaboration of playwright William S. Gilbert and classical composer Arthur S. Sullivan. The union of Gilbert and Sullivan ushered in a new era for musical theatre. Gilbert and Sullivan

¹⁵ Knapp 63.

¹⁶ Kenrick 65.

¹⁷ Kenrick 67.

¹⁸ Kenrick 67.

¹⁹ Knapp 29.

productions had many unique staples that became ingrained into the musical theatre formula. For example, they typically had leading men whose characters were unqualified, yet maneuvered their way into public office or positions of authority; love stories that were complicated at best; absurd and over the top plotlines situated around very realistic scenery and costumes; and also at least one fast tempo, rhyming number known as a patter song.²⁰ Gilbert's lyrics incorporated creative rhyme like no one before his time and his writing style seamlessly blended sense and non-sense, particularly playing on the fact that "the ridiculous was far more amusing when depicted in a realistic context."²¹ One of the duo's most memorable creations was *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878). This show was a satirical portrayal of the British class system set on a naval warship. Though achieving moderate success in England, the show was an instant sensation on the American stage. At one point, eight productions were simultaneously running on Broadway, and an estimated 50 more appeared all across the United States.²² Following their reign on the Great White Way, Gilbert and Sullivan productions have been subject to numerous Broadway revivals. Though most second generation productions alter the material of the show, it is unique that all Gilbert and Sullivan acclaimed revivals have left the music and words fundamentally intact.²³ Their impact was so great, that after almost two centuries, the team's work can be experienced and enjoyed in their original form. Gilbert and Sullivan raised the bar for all musicals to come, increasing the expectations of audience members around the country.

Riding on the coat-tails of Gilbert and Sullivan's musical masterpieces, American theatre in the 20th century commenced with full force. At the helm of this creative movement was

²⁰ Kenrick 78.

²¹ Kenrick 78.

²² Kenrick 81.

²³ Kenrick 92.

writer, producer, director, performer, extraordinaire George M. Cohan. The unique trademark of Cohan's musicals was their overwhelming sense of patriotism. According to John Bush Jones, "Cohan tailor made his musicals for an audience looking for something fresh, vigorous, and celebratory of America. George M. pioneered what became the essentials of the form, tone, and national character of American musical comedy for decades to come."²⁴ Between the years 1901 and 1911, Cohan was responsible for the opening of eleven Broadway musicals. Cohan's musicals almost always touched upon, if not centered on, the theme of achieving "the American Dream." His musicals generally presented a character that, through hard work and determination, makes a name for himself, and lands the girl of his dreams.²⁵ Cohan's works were instrumental in the development and popularization of the archetypal "boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl back," formula. Cohan's amalgamation of the "boy meets girl" paradigm, witty dialogue, and music and dancing based on popular trends of the time, set the basic pattern for musical comedy well into the 1940's.²⁶ Though contributing greatly in many ways, Cohan is most commonly recognized for the jubilant, sometimes even xenophobic or chauvinistic, patriotism and devotion the flag found within musical productions. Most notably, Cohan was the writer of the perennial childhood favorite, "The Yankee Doodle Boy," with the unforgettable lyric, "Yankee Doodle went to London, Just to ride the ponies."²⁷ Cohan wrote a total of twenty-one musicals and twenty plays in his career. He was also responsible for altering the image of the leading male. Before Cohan came along, a male lead would vary rarely been seen dancing, but Cohan set a new professional standard by having his male leads perform tap dances in some of

²⁴ John Bush Jones, Our Musicals, Ourselves: A Social History of the American Musical Theatre (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2003) 18-19.

²⁵ Jones 20.

²⁶ Jones 21.

²⁷ Jones 21.

his shows.²⁸ Cohan's legacy was resounding, laying the groundwork for future twentieth century musicals by, "furthering the art of conversational dialogue, making it acceptable for leading men to dance, and by encouraging the integration of song and dialogue in musical comedy."²⁹

Ironically enough, the next large development in musical theatre occurred in Broadway's smallest house; the 299 seat Princess Theatre.³⁰ Though only four of the "Princess Theatre musicals" actually played, the Princess the venue itself was less significant than the new style of writing and performance it generated. Shows such as *Nobody Home* (1915), *Very Good Eddie* (1915), *Oh Boy!* (1917), *Leave it to Jane* (1917), and *Oh, Lady! Lady!* (1918) were national icons and staples of the Princess Theatre aesthetic. The Princess Theatre's intimacy allowed for a more natural performance by the actors because they were not playing to such a large audience. They were also some of the first musicals to be set primarily in New York City. The story line in Princess shows developed organically, exemplifying the "integrated musical" in which storytelling was the main objective, resulting in song lyrics that serve to logically develop the plot rather than divert attention or perform a spectacle.³¹ These musicals directly inspired future generations of lyricists and playwrights, and their influence is notable in many modern musicals.

As the 1920's began, there was a notable shift in American culture. The country began indulging in a new found consumerism and there was a steady rise of leisure time for the average American. Due to this, people had more time for the arts and to visit the theatre. From 1919 to 1930, Broadway produced a larger total number of musicals than any other ten year period. More hit shows opened each year than at any other time in all of musical's history. Rather than

²⁸ Kenrick 119.

²⁹ Kenrick 122.

³⁰ Kenrick 137.

³¹ Kenrick 141-142.

mirroring the lives of the audience, the purpose of the shows of this era was to provide “diversionary entertainment.”³² The musicals of the 1920’s were some of the first to incorporate dance as a more important role in the production. American musical comedies began integrating major dance trends such as the Charleston, foxtrot, and tango into the dance sequences of the show.³³ These trends were seen to reach their pinnacle with the creation of Broadway classic, *Show Boat* (1927). According to Scott Miller:

“*Show Boat* took the best from the musicals that had gone before it- the pacing, the girls, the laughs, the song forms, the comic second couple, the American setting and characters, the slangy dialogue, even a couple interpolated songs and celebrity impressions- and to that mix it added important complex social issues; tragic, flawed, real characters; complex relationships; an integrated, dramatic score; a muscular profoundly American sound, and an epic scope like no musical had ever achieved before. *Show Boat* blended the best of American drama with the best of musical comedy and created a new animal: the American musical drama, the kind of show that would eventually just be called “a musical.”³⁴

Show Boat’s songs were crafted by future Broadway icon Oscar Hammerstein. Hammerstein’s genius lay in his ability to move the story along with his lyrics more quickly than could be done with mere dialogue.³⁵ Hammerstein wrote in the voices of his characters; each lyric seemed to naturally flow from the character who was singing. They sounded like dialogue that just so

³² Jones 55.

³³ Scott Miller, Strike Up The Band: A New History of Musical Theatre (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2007)19.

³⁴ Miller 24.

³⁵ Jones 76.

happened to rhyme.³⁶ Though in retrospect *Show Boat* is seen as a fundamental step in the development of musical theatre as we know it, at the time it was not hailed as the icon it is today. *Show Boat*'s originality in time has enabled it to become a major influence on the form and canon of classic American musical theatre.³⁷ Despite its contributions, audiences would have to wait some 16 years before another musical would come along to finally establish the integrated musical as the norm for musical theatre writing and production.³⁸

During the following decade, the majority of the musicals were smaller more modest versions of the "feel good" musicals of the 1920's.³⁹ During the 1930's, musical theatre took a step back on the evolutionary scale and would wait almost another entire decade to take its next leap forward.

The 1940's became the decade in which the "Classic Musical" was born. Only a few shows produced before the 1940's are still objects of revivals today. However, countless post 1940 musicals are restored and re-done over and over again. The success of the musicals of this era was due largely in part to the collaboration of lyricist Oscar Hammerstein and composer Richard Rodgers. Their partnership became a turning point in American musical theatre. Some critiques refer to the years of 1943 to 1959 as the Rodgers and Hammerstein revolution, giving birth to six productions that have become the staples and hallmarks of American musical theatre. In 1943, Broadway welcomed Rogers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* which not only broke the old rules and forms of theatre but invented rules all of its own.⁴⁰ *Oklahoma!* became an instant hit, playing 2,248 times, a record for a Broadway musical that remained unchallenged for two

³⁶ Miller 26.

³⁷ Jones 73.

³⁸ Jones 77.

³⁹ Jones 88.

⁴⁰ Miller 48.

decades.⁴¹ Rodgers and Hammerstein achieved with *Oklahoma!* what had been attempted with *Show Boat* so many years earlier; the development of a truly integrated musical. Throughout the show, every word, number, and dance step, was an “organic part of the storytelling process.”⁴² One of the monumental contributions of *Oklahoma!* was the development of the original cast recording. Due to the overwhelming success of the score, *Oklahoma!* was the first musical to record all the songs with the full cast and orchestra to create an album that sounded identical to what would be heard in the theatre during a performance.⁴³ Another reason *Oklahoma!* was so revolutionary is that it was the first show that “used dance as a fully formed narrative language, just like the words and music, instead of merely a plot device. This created a new mix of dance types that created an entirely new dance form: Broadway dance.”⁴⁴

Rodgers and Hammerstein further developed and perfected their partnership and creative voice with the development of *South Pacific* (1949). Hammerstein again would be challenged to scale down an epic plot line to sensibly fit inside a musical.⁴⁵ *South Pacific* ran 1,925 performances and won eight Tony Awards such as best musical, best director, best book, and best score. In 1951, Rodgers and Hammerstein opened their next stunning success, *The King and I*. The original production of *The King and I* ran 1,246 performances and was awarded five Tonys.

Come 1957, musical theatre history, would again be forever changed. On September 26th of that year, Stephen Sondheim delivered to Broadway the next great American musical, *West Side Story*. *West Side Story* has been said to be a “perfect blend” of the many disciplines that

⁴¹ Jones 141.

⁴² Kenrick 248.

⁴³ Kenrick 248.

⁴⁴ Miller 49.

⁴⁵ Miller 58.

make musical theatre, such as the book, the music, lyrics, and staging. In this production, they come together as a “perfectly unified whole, speaking with one voice.”⁴⁶ Though the show would eventually achieve incomparable success, at the Tonys that year, it was overshadowed by another audience favorite *The Music Man* (1957). *The Music Man* had a remarkably profound sense of unity between its components due to the fact that Meredith Willson wrote all the book, music, and lyrics. Willson’s score was complimented by the choreography of Onna White, who created dance sequences that seemed like believable unplanned expansions of everyday movement.⁴⁷ *The Music Man* swept the Tony awards that year and had a run of 1,375 performances. Another mid-twentieth century hallmark includes composer-lyricist Frank Loesser’s *Guys and Dolls* (1950). Some people today label *Guys and Dolls* as the most perfect musical comedy ever written, and an exceptional example of the integrated musical. This show returned musical comedy to its roots, “the rough-and-tumble, New York-centric, streetwise musicals of George M. Cohan.”⁴⁸ The show also broke the long held tradition of choosing ironic detachment instead of emotional attachment within a musical comedy.⁴⁹

Some critics view the decade of the 1960’s as a brief period of decline for musical theatre. However, this decade can actually be seen as a time of expansion and generation; a period of creative explorations in new forms and methods to employ on the musical stage. In January of 1964, one of musical theatre’s biggest hits and lasting classics opened on Broadway, *Hello, Dolly!*. It ran for 2,844 performances, achieving its lasting success due to Gower

⁴⁶ Miller 70.

⁴⁷ Kenrick 275.

⁴⁸ Miller 60.

⁴⁹ Miller 61.

Champion's "highly stylized, high-energy staging and overall production style."⁵⁰ Though appearing somewhat old fashioned initially, *Hello, Dolly!* mirrored some of the changes the Broadway stage was undergoing, such as the understated irony found within the lyrics. Though the show did not produce any monumental changes for the art form, it still became an enormous success, winning Tonys for best musical, composer, book, director, choreographer, producer, actress, sets, costumes, and musical director.⁵¹ The next phenomenon to hit the stage was seen in September of 1964 with the opening of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Through Jerome Robbins's choreography in *Fiddler*, the "integrated" musical was finally solidified as a necessary component to musical theatre success. Though not reaching full maturation until later years, *Fiddler* began showing aspects of the "concept musical," a show in which instead of being a simple plot, all elements of the show serve to expand a central metaphor or theme. Another fantastic stage piece seen in the 1960's, was Hal Prince's *Cabaret* (1966). Though *Cabaret* attained great success following the release of the film version, and the stage revival later to come, its initial imperfection lay in the fact that though it was a concept musical in nature, the idea of the concept musical had not yet been sufficiently developed, so it still maintained aspects of the traditional musical comedy of earlier years, muddying the metaphor it was trying to articulate. The first true monumental change came in 1967 with the release of *Hair*. *Hair* changed the look of Broadway for the rest of time, eliminating so many of the old, and at times, outdated traditions of past musical theatre. *Hair* was an "American Tribal-Love Musical," a

⁵⁰ Miller 92.

⁵¹ Miller 93.

“free-form, definition-smashing celebration of the hippie counterculture.”⁵² As stated by Scott Miller:

“Gone were the brightly colored costumes with white piping, gone were costumes that looked like they were made for a musical, gone were the grotesque fake eye lashes and bad wigs, gone was the need to force physical movement onto the beat whenever music was playing... gone was pretty much everything fake.”⁵³

Hair paved the way for the nonlinear or formula based musicals that dominated the 1970's. This show was the first Broadway musical in many years to successfully display an “authentic voice of today, rather than that of the day before yesterday, and it made its mission to encourage more of the same.”⁵⁴

In a large way, the 1970's marked the end of the Rodgers and Hammerstein era and the dawn of both the concept and rock musical, concepts that were initially experimented with in the 1960's but reached full fruition in the following decade.⁵⁵ It wasn't until midway through this decade, however, that this achievement would be fully materialized. Then one of Broadway's true legends opened in April 1975, *A Chorus Line*. This was the first show to base its plot around the true stories of people's lives, rather than developing a contrived story line for people to act out.⁵⁶ The show was revolutionary in multiple ways. *A Chorus Line* had more music than most other productions of the time, and raw authentic character-driven lyrics. Also the show's cast displayed such a broad diversity, representing true Americans from all different walks of life.

⁵² Kenrick 315.

⁵³ Miller 108.

⁵⁴ Kenrick 319.

⁵⁵ Miller 116.

⁵⁶ Miller 141.

The show accurately reflected actual change that was occurring in the musical theatre world, producers and financiers could no longer afford to higher the huge casts and extended choruses known to the Broadway stage of the past. Dancers or chorus members often also had speaking parts. This development led to the necessity of a broader training for performers, and the invention of the “triple threat,” someone who could dance, sing, and act. Yet another 1970’s hallmark concept musical was Bob Fosse’s *Chicago* (1975). *Chicago* tells its story through a lens of raw cynicism, highlighting the “false glamour” of show business, and using it as a metaphor for life. This production employed one of Fosse’s favorite techniques of breaking the fourth wall, acknowledging the audience and speaking to them directly, allowing the audience to become a part of the show.⁵⁷

Though the 1960’s and 70’s brought many advances and innovations to musical theatre, the 1980’s ushered in a slight period of stagnation, with a few notable exceptions. At this time in history, there was an extreme explosion of the popularity and appreciation of dance. Capitalizing on this phenomenon, composer Andrew Lloyd created the first true “dance musical.”⁵⁸ *Cats* opened on Broadway in 1982, with music by Stephen Sondheim based on T.S. Elliot’s collection of children’s poems *Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats*. *Cats* can be seen as classic form of the megamusical, characterized as a show that is sung throughout with little to no dialogue, loud and majestic music and vocals, characterization that is explained rather than interpreted, a rock-poppy sound not reflective of any particular time period, melodramatic plots with minimal humor, and productions that purposely lack variation, intending for each audience to have the

⁵⁷ Miller 144.

⁵⁸ Miller 157.

exact same theatre going experience.⁵⁹ Potentially the most revolutionary or groundbreaking aspect of *Cats* was the marketing system it developed for itself and many shows to come. The idea of Broadway souvenirs was developed, with *Cats* selling programs, mugs, t-shirts, and hats all with its iconic logo of the two piercing feline eyes on a plain black background.⁶⁰ Overall, *Cats* grossed over three hundred fifty million dollars after being seen by over 10 million people, closing on September 10th, 2000 after 7,485 performances.

Though *Cats* was one of the first musicals appropriate for families to bring their children to, it was *Rent* (1986), that was the first musical in decades the younger generation could really relate to and identify with. *Rent* “breathed new commercial life into the Broadway musical, possibly signaling the beginning of the end of the great divide between pop music and theatre.”⁶¹ As seen with *Hair*, *Rent* brought a voice to a generation of Americans who had not previously been heard, bringing with it a new audience for the musical theatre stage and finally successfully combining contemporary pop music with the Broadway tradition.⁶² *Rent* was nominated for eight Tonys and won four, including best musical, score, and book.

As Broadway and musical theatre continued developing, it stumbled upon an experimental musical in 1995, icon for the dance world, *Bring in ‘da Noise, Bring in ‘da Funk*. Unlike any other musical, *Noise/Funk* was the first ever hip-hop musical, spontaneously developing each element such as song, dance, structure, and staging with each performance.⁶³ This type of uniquely crafted art gave birth to such dance icons such as Savion Glover, tap prodigy. Another heavy dance musical was Disney’s *Lion King*, opening in 1997. This

⁵⁹ Kenrick 341.

⁶⁰ Kenrick 347.

⁶¹ Miller 189.

⁶² Miller 190.

⁶³ Miller 202.

production was monumental because it was not just a stage adaptation of the animated classic; it took the production one step further by adding aspects of authentic African customs to the songs, movement, and costumes, creating a musical that was both visually spectacular and culturally rich.

With the turn of the century, a notable turn in the Broadway tradition can be seen again. Due to the overwhelming costs of a full scale Broadway production, most experimental work and invention is taking place off the Great White Way. Audiences may notice that it is now harder than ever to find a show with a “unique, singular, artistic voice.”⁶⁴ Some twentieth century productions are still worth mentioning especially when it comes to the role of dance within musical theatre. Though there were few dance centered musicals before this time, with the jukebox musical *Movin’ Out* (2002), dance took center stage. The production, set to the songs of pop artist Billy Joel, and developed by renowned modern dance choreographer Twyla Tharp, is exceedingly distinct in that it is not much more than a series of short dances strung together by a thin plot and none of the dancers sing. All the music and vocals are performed by a pianist and band separated from the stage while the dancers act out the storyline. Though this show is a far cry from the original musicals to take the Broadway stage, it is hopefully only a brief glimpse of the masterpieces musical theatre as yet to offer us. As the Broadway icon, Frank Sinatra once put it so eloquently, “The best is yet to come, and baby won’t it be fine. You think you’ve seen the sun, but you ain’t seen it shine!”

Musical Theatre is comprised of multiple different elements; all coagulating to form the grandiose productions we have come to know and love. Ingredients such as singing, acting, lighting, direction, and set and costume design all work together and collaborate to create a

⁶⁴ Miller 221.

multidimensional theatre experience. One of the most crucial elements in today's form of musical theatre is dance. However, dance has not always been such a vital component in producing a successful musical. Just like the form of musical theatre itself, dance has changed and evolved with regards to both its style and form and the amount in which it was utilized on the musical theatre stage. Though much credit can be given to the dancers themselves, it was the choreographers who were most responsible for enabling dance to transcend to the position it holds today. By focusing on the individual contributions of a few specific choreographers, it is possible to trace the evolution and development of dance as an intrinsic part of the musical theatre art form.

As with most discussions regarding history, it is often difficult to pinpoint the exact time in which an event first happened, or the person truly responsible for the creation of a new entity or occurrence. The same can be said with the use of dance in musical theatre. Though there will always be some discrepancy on when dance was first used on the musical theatre stage, there is much less surrounding the question of when dance was first used as a truly integrated aspect of the show itself, not serving as spectacle but to actually used to push the plot forward. This credit is almost always overwhelmingly bestowed upon Agnes De Mille. De Mille's work on the show *Oklahoma!* was responsible for cementing the role of choreographer as a position of nearly equal importance to that of the writer, lyricist, and director.⁶⁵ When Rodgers and Hammerstein approached the development of their new show *Oklahoma!*, they decided to hire Agnes De Mille for her progressive attitude towards using dance as a storytelling tool.⁶⁶ At the time, De Mille had very few professional credentials. But after years of difficult struggles, De Mille was able to

⁶⁵ Knapp 129.

⁶⁶ Kenrick 246.

launch one of if not the very first lucrative Broadway careers as a choreographer. De Mille's work was so revolutionary because it was the first time that dance was used as a "fully formed narrative language," just like the words and music, instead of merely as a plot device.⁶⁷ With *Oklahoma!*, all production elements united in the single goal of producing an organic musical theatre piece capable of "containing and expressing themes and ideas of real import." Before De Mille, theatre dance was typically ballet, modern, jazz, ballroom, and tap. After her work, all these forms began to blend together forming an entirely new dance form, Broadway dance. Following her work, Broadway dance would be a unique dance form unto itself; one that no longer merely assisted in but was now fundamental in communicating story, character, and even in some instances psychology.⁶⁸ De Mille's greatest success in *Oklahoma!* came with the well known dream ballet at the finale of act one. With the terrifying dream ballet, De Mille was able to conceive a dance that could translate the characters subconscious fears and desires. The panic of the lead character, Laurey, is depicted for the audience in a way that was psychologically accurate.⁶⁹ De Mille's choreography gives the viewers insight into Laurey's most secret feelings, hopes, and dreams. This ballet sequence brilliantly represents the facets of an "integrated" musical. By utilizing dance to enhance dramatic action, the ballet here serves to establish a dream like quasi reality that is singularly responsible for presenting the initial problem in the show's romantic plot, thus rendering the ballet sequence a "dramatically pivotal event."⁷⁰ The dream ballet made *Oklahoma!* a serious piece of theatre; a title which dance had never before been responsible for giving to a show. Yet another notable contribution of De Mille's was that she gave her leading lady a sex drive, a concept that would be explored further in many musicals

⁶⁷ Miller 49.

⁶⁸ Miller 50.

⁶⁹ Jones 143.

⁷⁰ Knapp 130.

to come. Also for the first time, a choreographer demanded that the score for her dance pieces be written specifically to suit her choreography, and not the reverse. Due largely in part to Agnes De Mille's overwhelming contributions, *Oklahoma!* became a huge success, allowing it to forever be held as a model for musical theatre to come, especially when it came to the role that dance played in the production.

The next great leap for the role of dance in musical theatre came with a man by the name of Jerome Robbins. Many Broadway lovers, spectators, and critiques alike have named Jerome Robbins as one of the most influential and groundbreaking choreographers of all time. Robbins is responsible for bringing to life some of the most extravagant and famous Broadway musicals in history. Adorned with numerous Tony awards for direction and choreography, Jerome Robbins has blessed audiences with the creation of such masterpieces such as *West Side Story* (1957) and *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964). Though emerging from fairly modest beginnings, Robbins developed and grew into a crucial contributor to the American art form of Musical Theater. Though DeMille's dance sequence was the first of its kind, it was Robbins who capitalized on this new idea and took it to a whole new level. In *Oklahoma!*, the dance number was only a small part of the production. Jerome Robbins expanded on that idea and "used dance as a story-telling device, making it as intrinsic to the musical as the script and the score,"⁷¹ What began with Agnes DeMille's dream ballets in *Oklahoma!* "found its fulfillment here with Robbins serving as director and choreographer, shaping the entire show as one nonstop choreographic event."⁷² Robbins was unique in that he was the first to label himself with the title of director-choreographer, new type of position that implied an artist who had a say in every

⁷¹ Kenrick 284.

⁷² Kenrick 285.

aspect of the show, often including its initial conception. Robbins became known as the “show doctor,” because he was called in to lend a hand to many troubled Broadway bound musicals that without his help would have been a potential flop.⁷³ Robbins first monumental work was his choreography for the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *The King and I* (1951). Though the production is hailed as a masterpiece, its nonmusical scenes held much less impact than those that contained contributions by Robbins. Most notable is the 16-minute political ballet “The Small House of Uncle Thomas,” which commented directly and quite obviously on the show’s central issues by using dance and literary allusion.⁷⁴ Through his work in this show, Robbins was also able to showcase his great ability at creating multidimensional characters, giving each child in the production a unique role by creating independently choreographed entrances for each boy or girl that defined his or her character in “March of the Siamese Children.”

Though acknowledging that dance could play a vast role in musical theatre, Robbins was also aware that adding dance movement simply for the sake of dance movement could take away from the believability of a certain show. To avoid being cliché or cheesy, Robbins used his choreography sparingly with his work in *Gypsy* (1959), allowing the movement to occur more naturally.⁷⁵ Though this show was not as full of dancing as his other productions, his knack for humor was praised in the dance number “You Gotta Get a Gimmick.”⁷⁶

In 1957 Robbins staged *West Side Story*, displaying the most extensive use of dance as a story telling tool in Broadway musical history. *West Side Story* will forever remain a milestone and landmark moment in the history of theatrical dance. For years to come, all serious Broadway

⁷³ Kenrick 280.

⁷⁴ Miller 65.

⁷⁵ Kenrick 285.

⁷⁶ Kenrick 285.

choreography would be compared to the work Robbins did in this show.⁷⁷ Something unique that Robbins brought to Broadway was that he gave the ensemble more freedom than Broadway dancers had previously been given. They were now asked to interpret their character and their roles and he taught his dancers aspects of method acting. For the first time, each dancer was able to develop his or her own person and character rather than just being a background element used to fill the stage. Another interesting choreographic approach taken by Robbins was that he insisted the cast improvise key scenes, such as the Jets assaulting Anita. He allowed them to rehearse the sequence only once a day in order for the scene to remain raw and authentic. *West Side* had one of the shortest books ever written for a musical production, leaving almost all of the plot development and characterization to the songs and dance. There were twelve major dance sequences in the show; most of which were used in the exposition of the major events in the plot.⁷⁸ The degree and subtlety with which dance is used in *West Side Story* to not only establish character and situation, but also develop theme and plot, set a new standard for the American musical stage.⁷⁹ *West Side Story* is a perfect blend of the many disciplines that make musical theatre, coming together to craft a perfectly unified whole.⁸⁰ Robbins' next masterpiece reached fruition in 1964 with the opening of *Fiddler on the Roof*. In this production, Robbins was able to produce striking and iconic choreographic images such as the precariously placed fiddler balancing on top of a slanted roof.⁸¹ Robbins also created such famous dance sequences as the wedding celebration dance in which the orthodox men balance wine bottles on their hats. During the creative process leading up to *Fiddler*, Robbins sat down his dancers and would discuss what

⁷⁷ Kenrick 285.

⁷⁸ Miller 72.

⁷⁹ Knapp 184.

⁸⁰ Miller 72.

⁸¹ Kenrick 308.

they believed to be the main message behind the show. They concluded the answer to be “Tradition.” Due to this, Robbins created one of the most memorable opening numbers in musical theatre history, creating a guideline for all work to come. From this time on, Robbins cut any routine or scene that didn’t serve that central theme. Through this action, Robbins was able to harmonize the production with a profound sense of unity, driven by the fact that all the material of the show had been developed by one mind. With this, Robbins established once and for all the idea of “integration” in musical theatre as an, “indispensable given, the idea that every element is in perfect synch with every other element.”⁸²

His final hurrah on the Broadway stage was with his direction of *Jerome Robbins' Broadway* (1989). The production was a collection comprising musical numbers from earlier shows that were either directed or choreographed by Robbins. Robbins won his fifth Tony Award for direction of the show. This production was living proof of the numerous contributions that Robbins brought to the Broadway stage, lovingly recreated by the best dancers on Broadway. The various iconic numbers that bear Robbins’ name are unparalleled. As eloquently stated by John Kenrick, “Robbins was arguably the most brilliant director the musical theatre has ever known. He worked closely with authors and composers, taking an active role in shaping much of the material he would bring to life on stage. As a result, his directorial concepts are often written into the librettos and songs, a permanent part of the fabric of these shows.”⁸³ . On the evening of his death in 1998, the lights of Broadway were dimmed for a moment in tribute. It was a necessary homage to the man who reshaped and reformed the Broadway stage forever; a man who has left an indelible mark upon the art of musical theater.

⁸² Miller 97.

⁸³ Kenrick 288.

Following Jerome Robbins's reign on the Broadway stage, Robbins left his legacy to be continued in the hands of Bob Fosse. Fosse first won Broadway's attention when he took over the lead role in the 1952 hit revival of *Pal Joey*. Fosse shared Robbins' ideas about dance as a form of dramatic expression, creating dances that "teetered between antic comedy and sophisticated sexuality."⁸⁴ In 1966, *Cabaret* opened on Broadway, with choreography by Fosse. The *New York Times* raved that *Cabaret*, "opened the door to a fresh notion of the bizarre, crackling, harsh and the beguiling uses that can be made of song and dance."⁸⁵ When Fosse produced the film version of *Cabaret* in 1972, he altered the book and songs, creating a complete concept musical. The same year of *Cabaret*'s opening, Fosse also created the choreography for another Tony award winning show, *Sweet Charity*. Fosse's award winning choreography produced several iconic stage pieces such as musical numbers: "If They Could See Me Now," "Hey Big Spender," and "Rich Man's Frug." Though Robbins had started the development of having the title director-choreographer, it was Fosse's work that cemented the trend. 1972's *Pippin* marked Fosse's return to Broadway, following a six year hiatus in which he devoted himself solely to film making. In this production, Fosse modeled the techniques he'd gained through working with movies. Using dance and minimal settings, he was able to create a "cinematic flow of action."⁸⁶ *Pippin* is often remembered for one scene in particular; a stimulating orgy sequence which Fosse created to provoke his audience members. Though Fosse was sometimes scorned for steering away from the producer's preferences, there was no other director-choreographer who could duplicate the imagination or entertainment value his works

⁸⁴ Kenrick 281.

⁸⁵ Miller 104.

⁸⁶ Kenrick 322.

contained.⁸⁷ Fosse's next project was *Chicago* (1975). Like much of Fosse's other work, *Chicago* was overflowing with raw and sometimes crude sexuality. He created for his audience members a world which was shocking, alarming, and intentionally offensive. Fosse blended all of these elements to use the false glamour of show business as a metaphor for life.⁸⁸ Fosse was forced to undergo open heart surgery during the initial creation of *Chicago*. Though he had already earned the title of "The Prince of Darkness" before his surgery, following his procedure the exaggeration of his darkness had now become real, and his cynicism towards the world is clearly evident in his work in *Chicago*.⁸⁹ Fosse's production was so packed with style that it almost overwhelmed the material. It would take around thirty years, and a more straightforward adaptation of his ideas for the show to reach the overwhelming success it achieved with its 1996 revival.⁹⁰ Following his work on *Chicago*, Fosse took the concept musical a step further and conceived of a production with no dialog, no lyrics, and no composers; an evening simply of dance, hence the title *Dancin'* (1978). Relying on pre-existing music, Fosse created the first ever all-dance Broadway musical. Though the achievement was irrefutable, the downside to his project was that it allowed for no future beyond its Broadway run. Due to Fosse's difficult style and choreography, it was a show that could never be reproduced by small theatres or amateur artists. Although his career was far from over, *Dancin'* was his last original Broadway hit.⁹¹ Following Bob Fosse's death, Richard Maltby, Jr. and Anne Reinking co-directed a tribute to the choreographer's brilliance by creating a compilation of all his finest dances. *Fosse* opened in 1999 and was the season's longest running hit, with 1,108 performances. It won the Tony for

⁸⁷ Kenrick 322.

⁸⁸ Miller 144.

⁸⁹ Miller 145.

⁹⁰ Kenrick 330.

⁹¹ Kenrick 331.

Best Musical. It is no great surprise that decades after the opening of Fosse's first productions they still remain among some of the most frequently performed stage musicals. Fosse's work speaks to the heart of human experience ultimately affirming the triumph of the human spirit.⁹²

The next profound leap for the art of dance within the musical theatre tradition came with choreographer Michael Bennett. After already finding success with his collaboration with a few Sondheim-Prince musicals, Bennett decided to venture off and develop works of his own. As the story goes, Bennett was approached by two chorus dancers interested in developing a musical based around their real-life experiences as professional dancers. Intrigued by the idea, Bennett brought together a group of dancers for a sort of conference each sharing stories and memories from their experiences in the career, making the dancers audition to play themselves. Soon after, Bennett rented a rehearsal space and began his "workshop" attempting to put together what he had gathered into some sort of workable show. The first workshop began in August 1974, attempting to work until they had a show ready for the public. The result was a show that steered away from the typical linear plot line, and instead was built around a singular event; a Broadway chorus audition. In 1975, this work came to fruition with the opening of *A Chorus Line*.⁹³ Bennett's intention was to display the inhumanity of the dance world, first displaying all the agonizing work it takes to produce a show and then exhibiting the sad truth that the chorus line robs the dancers of their personality.⁹⁴ Unfortunately for Bennett, that message was lost on most audiences, the majority of whom found the ending quite thrilling. Bennett chose to leave the dancers in rehearsal clothing; some even wore the exact outfits they had on during their audition for the show. The set for the show was just as basic, a simple black stage with a single line of

⁹² Kenrick 312.

⁹³ Kenrick 331-332.

⁹⁴ Miller 141.

tape running across it. This show was groundbreaking in many ways; there was more music than many other musicals of the time, the lyrics were authentic and character driven, the subject matter was fresh and unprecedented, and the characters on the stage for the first time represented a new character- themselves. This was one of the first times that musical theatre portrayed America as it really existed; an amalgamation of all races and ethnicities. Musical theatre was no longer a “whites only” art form.⁹⁵ *A Chorus Line* marked an important change that was occurring on Broadway. The age of the huge chorus lines had ended; producers could no longer afford to pay dancers, singers, and actresses. Also the content of the shows of this era no longer required large grandiose musical numbers. Plot lines were leading to more authentic and real stagings. This meant that dancers could no longer survive as simply dancers. They were now forced to expand their realm of abilities and broaden their pallets of performance, for without doing so, there would be no potential for a career on Broadway. The musical theatre dancer now had to be a triple threat. *A Chorus Line* was one of the last spectacular musicals. Bennett’s staging demanded full attention at one point completely filling the stage with dancers.⁹⁶ The production ends with a simple fade out. As explained by Bennett himself, “There are no bows. I don’t believe in bows, just the fade out. That’s what a dancer’s life is.”⁹⁷ *A Chorus Line* will truly belong to every dancer; every actor who has ever appeared in a musical anywhere.⁹⁸ The show became an instant phenomenon, receiving every major award, including the Pulitzer Prize for Drama and nine Tony Awards, including Best Musical, Direction, and Choreography. The show’s unprecedented 6,137 performances broke all Broadway records, proving America’s embrace of the non-plot, concept, or fragmented musical. It ran for 15 years, and its flashing sign

⁹⁵ Miller 142.

⁹⁶ Kenrick 332.

⁹⁷ Kenrick 332.

⁹⁸ Kenrick 144.

became a theatre district landmark.⁹⁹

The role of dance within musical theatre is one that will always fluctuate depending on the needs of a particular show, but because of the contributions of De Mille, Robbins, Fosse, and Bennett, the question of its validity as an integral part of the musical theatre genre will never again be debated. Through the involvement and brilliant contributions of these four choreographers, dance has forever cemented itself in the musical theatre formula. Dance has developed from a background, simply decorative, addition to a show into a form that can carry and lead a musical to success all on its own.

Throughout time, musical theatre has not only been a form of entertainment, but also a spotlight which has illuminated and expanded our understanding of specific moments in history and elements of American culture. The American musical is almost always built upon some type of construction of America. Due to the simple and obvious fact that American musicals were designed for American audiences, this implicit fact remains true. Generally speaking, musicals tend to challenge or define the concept of what America's place is in the world, or what America represents and stands for. By displaying certain situations and characters in America on the musical stage, the audience will see them in relation to who they are as Americans. When viewers see "various constituent groups of Americans, whether in the present or in a re-imagined past, they will be aware of how congruent, or not, those representations seem to be with their own perceived notions of such groups and their history."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Kenrick 332.

¹⁰⁰ Knapp 103.

According to Raymond Knapp:

“Those responsible for creating a musical will probably be consciously aware of this dynamic and will present their assemblage of diverse character, locales, and events expecting such a context of reception. If they are not consciously aware, they will either behave as if they were aware- through a quasi-instinctual sense for this dynamic or because they will observe pragmatically that some things work and others don’t- or they will fail to connect with their audiences in the expected way so that, consequently, what they stage will to that extent cease to function as an “American” musical.”¹⁰¹

Musicals serve also to inform audience members about certain events of history by allowing them to experience first hand particular moments of the past as perceived by Americans. Because of this, “American musicals become, in part and in some form, an enacted demonstration of Americanism, and often take on a formative, defining role in the construction of a collective sense of “America.”¹⁰²

Some early musicals take on a fairly aggressive agenda of defining America. Shows such as *Little Johnny Jones* (1904) by George M. Cohan, and *The Cradle Will Rock* (1938) by Marc Blitzstein take on the task of qualifying who exactly counts as an “American.” *Little Johnny Jones* displays “nose-thumbing patriotism,” exemplified in Cohan’s recognizable “Yankee Doodle Dandy.”¹⁰³ Cohan’s lead character, an Irish American, holds the difficult task of celebrating his identity as an American, in a time when Irish Americans were still seen as outside of the Anglo-American mainstream majority. The aggressive and powerful dance routines seen

¹⁰¹ Knapp 103.

¹⁰² Knapp 103.

¹⁰³ Knapp 104.

in *Little Johnny Jones* exemplify the idea that, “such posturing is basic to what it means to be an American, and more importantly what one aspired to become, in part through patriotic posing.”¹⁰⁴ Some of the songs in Cohan’s production use a method of exclusion, vehemently asserting and emphasizing the difference between Old World culture and the new American way of life. In *Little Johnny Jones*, in response to the question, “What makes Americans so proud of their county?” an American in the show responds, “Other countries.”¹⁰⁵ *The Cradle Will Rock* was conceived during the alignment of big business and big government in American society, and especially highlighted the plight and poverty brought about as a result of the Great Depression. *The Cradle Will Rock* defines America as a country run by big business and bosses, but rightly belonging to the hard working men and women who built it, highlighting the contrast between the concepts of “who is America,” and “whose America.” In answering the first of the two questions, this musical is able to point out the necessity of realigning the answer to the second.¹⁰⁶ Rather than define America, this musical illuminates a particularly turbulent period in history when America stood at a crossroads; a time in which the blossoming country was still waiting to discover and take ownership of its greater identity.

Musical theatre, in illuminating aspects of American existence, sometimes will use mythology of traditions unique to the United States as their themes. As stated by Knapp:

“Central to the mythologies these musicals project were the ways that many in the United States, in forming a conception of America as a nation, departed substantially

¹⁰⁴ Knapp 106.

¹⁰⁵ Knapp 107.

¹⁰⁶ Knapp 112.

from European concepts of nationhood and nationalism, which had been developed with increasing vehemence across the nineteenth century and into the twentieth.”¹⁰⁷

Though the European construct of nationalism was more exclusive, assigning people to their land, the American mode of nationalism was quite the opposite. America was a land for all the people who did not really feel like they belonged anywhere else. From this concept sprouted a nationalism that was alluring and materialized in a type of “super-charged patriotism that has produced and embraced its own mythologies.”¹⁰⁸ American mythologies tend to honor the more simple aspects of life, often rural or small town in nature, steering away from the idolization of urban glamour and sophistication. Accordingly, American mythologies reverse the typical European construct of purity of race, embracing a common theme of union, advancing the idea of the American “melting pot.”¹⁰⁹ Three major musicals, *Oklahoma!*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *The Music Man*, all present these mythologies by consisting of a plot in which a steady and undisturbed community is uprooted or strained by an outside force, and rather than rejecting this alien object, the resolution comes by bringing together all the characters and finding compromise and unity.

Oklahoma! works to distract Americans from any current conflict of strife and provide confidence and optimism for the future of the nation. With the characters in the show overcoming their own personal conflicts and offering some “homespun folk-wisdom in common, direct, everyday language, America saw itself in a microcosm and acquired a vision of what it could offer the rest of the world.”¹¹⁰ The conflict resolution found within *Oklahoma!* generally

¹⁰⁷ Knapp 119.

¹⁰⁸ Knapp 121.

¹⁰⁹ Knapp 122.

¹¹⁰ Knapp 124.

comes with a new found maturity or coming of age, directly reflective of America's emerging role in the world, and its development as a fully self reliant country.

Guys and Dolls displays another common aspect of American society; its existence as a mostly male run public, civilized through religion, and with a marriage to the female cultural contributions. The shows title, "Guys" and "Dolls" directly reflects this canon.¹¹¹ *Guys and Dolls* also displays the "fold-her" status of the American gangster which developed parallel to the prohibition in the 1920's.¹¹²

The Music Man, like *Guys and Dolls*, shows the benefit of offering acceptance to others. At the start of the show, the small-town setting is "lethargic, dysfunctional, and isolationist". The town is seen as distrustful and prone to gossip and rebellion. Overall, however, the town remains innocent.¹¹³ It is not until the male lead, a more worldly and urban character, enters the play, and is eventually accepted, that the town and its citizens are able to reach their full potential.

According to Knapp:

"The "community" being built through music in *The Music Man* is thus at once that of River City, of America just after the turn of the century, and of an America centered "free world" just after mid-century. Within the paradigm discussed about, a nostalgic mythology of emerging community set in the past serves both to reassure a troubled America that its problems are manageable, and to goad it out of its lethargic smugness to recognize the energizing power of community-based feeling and activity."¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Knapp 138.

¹¹² Knapp 138.

¹¹³ Knapp 146.

¹¹⁴ Knapp 146-147.

Not only does Musical Theatre do an excellent job of presenting audiences with the more typical representations of American life and culture, but emerging during the 1960's, a new alternative version of America could be seen on the stage, displaying American "counter-mythologies."¹¹⁵ New subject matter began appearing on stage and new musical trends were surfacing. In both politics and music, sharp divisions between generations were developing. One of the first shows to attempt to address this matter was *Bye Bye Birdie* (1960). This show, however, failed to grasp the seriousness of the issue, and presents the topic far too lightheartedly. Though there were a few musicals that followed *Bye Bye Birdie's* attempts to challenge the "status-quo", it wasn't until the 1968 phenomenon of *Hair* that new ground was truly broken. *Hair* marked a calculated attempt to, "create a viable alternative to the musicals of the older generation, grounded in a documentary-like approach to life as it is actually lived, and steeped in the emergent political issues, alternative life-styles, iconoclastic manner of appearances, and of course, the music, of the younger generation."¹¹⁶ *Hair* was created by Gerome Ragni and James Rado, and would eventually become honored and memorialized as the first ever rock musical. It also was the first production to have a prolonged nude scene and on-stage drug use. Besides the obvious new subject matter of *Hair*, it also broke numerous boundaries in a more technical production sense. This show broke the fourth wall between the audience and cast members, allowing the audience to more fully participate in the production. Also, the choreography was only loosely predetermined, allowing for a truly authentic and spontaneous feeling given by the movement. *Hair* had no "cast," rather its members considered themselves part of a "tribe."¹¹⁷ The loose structure and other disorienting strategies of *Hair* serve to promote a strong association

¹¹⁵ Knapp 153.

¹¹⁶ Knapp 154.

¹¹⁷ Knapp 155.

with the drug culture and a more casual attitude toward expressed sexuality. The counterculture with which this show aligns itself to was initially a West Coast phenomenon, but quickly spread. In part, then, *Hair* may be seen to relocate this movement to New York City at the same time that it asserts its universality.”¹¹⁸ Raymond Knapp eloquently sums up *Hair*’s monumental impact:

“*Hair* was able to give a palpable and focused presence to a number of disparate trends among America’s young, creating the sense of a vibrant and extended youth-based commune that had come to exist outside of the mainstream establishment, whose members had successfully forged a new way of living in the wake of rejecting the values structures their parents had tried to impose on them. Within this vision of the counterculture, prejudice, war, and taboos of every kind were replaced by “harmony and understanding, sympathy and trust abounding.”¹¹⁹

Another archetypal “counter-mythological” musical is the 1991 production of *Assassins*. This show depicts American development between the years of the Lincoln and Kennedy assassinations. Like *Hair*, *Assassins* too focuses on a counter-mythology, but in a distinctly unique way. Rather than focusing on an evolving dogma, the way *Hair* does, *Assassins* highlights the unsettling fact that such outsiders have always existed in American culture. Upon *Assassins* initial release it was labeled as an “anti-musical about anti-heroes.” This alone proves that the American musical, by definition, is expected to adhere to mainstream ideology regarding, “behavior, motivation, and musical expression.”¹²⁰ Though *Assassins* never actually made it to the Broadway stage, it still remains a key example and hallmark of the way in which

¹¹⁸ Knapp 155.

¹¹⁹ Knapp 1155-156.

¹²⁰ Knapp 164.

theatre is necessary to illuminate the world in which we live. It is a show that engages, “with rare intelligence a topic that exhibits no inclination to disappear or become less critical to America’s continued health: the violent underside of the American dream.”¹²¹

Another overwhelmingly evident theme found within American musicals is the deep-seated issues of race and ethnicity. Though the black-white racial conflict has possibly been the most prominent in our society, it is nowhere near the only one. Many shows have been labeled as breakthroughs in addressing such pertinent issues. Sadly, however, none of these shows can really be seen as optimistic because the problems they each address are still very much present in today’s society.¹²² The 1927 musical *Show Boat* deals specifically with the black and white color line. The two “problems” that *Show Boat* addresses are the difficulty of achieving a “true racial blend” and American’s obsession with fantasy which hinders its ability to distinguish between “appearance and reality.”¹²³ However, because *Show Boat* was one of the first attempts to tackle the racial issue, it tends to trivialize the matter by focusing on providing an entertaining experience for the audience rather than a thought provoking encounter.

A show that perhaps more accurately addresses the magnitude of racial and ethnic conflicts is *West Side Story*. This show is so fundamentally grounded upon the race-based hatred between the characters that there is not a single moment of the musical it is not evident. Though the intention behind the production is sound, the articulation may not have been completely accurate. In developing *West Side Story*, the choreographer and director, Jerome Robbins, was more concerned with making a minority group that his audience would relate to, rather than depicting them authentically. His goal was said to have been to create a faceless “other”; an

¹²¹ Knapp 165.

¹²² Knapp 184.

¹²³ Knapp 194.

outsider, who for the most part, was interchangeable. This was so that the central conflict of the musical could be much more accessible to anyone involved in any kind of racial or ethnic based struggle.¹²⁴ This production is able to highlight effortlessly the tragedy that occurs as a result of intolerance and ignorance, adapting the well-known yet unattainable story of Romeo and Juliet, into a story line that hits close to home for many theatergoers.

The last production of interest is *Fiddler on the Roof*. This musical does a magnificent job of encapsulating so many different problems. Not only is this show obviously about the struggles of the Jewish culture, it also strongly emphasizes the conflicts in regards to traditions between a generation gap. This show has been heralded as a “central marker of the Jewish experience in the twentieth century.”¹²⁵

American musicals, through their stories, characters, and songs; through the unforgettable portrayals of those characters; and through the ways in which audiences everywhere merge and unite with those characters, offer people the chance to live out the stories, sing and move to the songs. Viewers are given the ability to fully embody whatever alternatives that musical might offer to their own life circumstances and choices. Musical also directly shape our mindset and opinions, altering our pre-existing prejudices, revealing a possibility to connect more fully to the human experience. The American musical has not only mirrored American existence. It has taken a steady hand in shaping its context, by both addressing American ideals and realities, and allowing us as viewers to witness first hand the incongruence that sometimes occur between the two, encouraging us to use empathy and understanding to bridge the gap.

¹²⁴ Knapp 206.

¹²⁵ Knapp 216.

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Reflection

Studying dance at a university level was never something I saw myself doing. I have had friends who graduated high school and became dance majors, and I remember thinking that they were foolish for not having a more “academic” major. I knew I would use dance as my ticket into the college I attended, but I always thought I would add another more “practical” major as a backup. I was raised in a household that strongly emphasized academics, and subsequently, developed a love for learning. I knew that dance was also my passion, but I always viewed it as something separate, an outlet for expression rather than something that required study. It wasn’t until I reached LMU that I realized those worlds not only could be united, but they blended together effortlessly. Not only could dance be just as academic as other subjects, but it could also offer teachings that no other focus could provide.

Growing up in Miami, surrounded by the Cuban culture, dance and music have always been around me, and at a young age I was placed in studio classes. I began participating in dance competitions when I was just six years old, and continued up until my high school graduation. I find that being a “competition dancer” has a certain stigma associated with it in the world of professional dance, and even at the university level. But based on my personal experiences, I don’t believe it could have better prepared me for a dance career. It offered me so many opportunities as a young dancer, and experiences that I could have never gained elsewhere. I was able to perform in front of large audiences on a weekly basis from the time I was six years old, and I also was able to meet dancers and see dance styles from all over the country. Though I know there are some elements of my dancing that I have had to retrain since coming to LMU, I believe my competition background gave me a firm base of technique and knowledge that better prepared me for my experience at LMU.

I first came to LMU thinking I knew what my potential was as a dancer. I knew what I could do and I had come to terms with the things I would never be able to accomplish, things that just weren't possible for me physically. Though I had great success as a young dancer, during the last few years of my training in Miami, my ability had sort of stagnated. I resigned myself to believing that I had come as far as I could go. Though I still loved to dance, the overwhelming fire that I once felt had decreased to mild flame. I could feel that I was at a pivotal point in my life, and knew that if something significant didn't happen, my life as a dancer might end.

Upon starting my classes I slowly began to realize that all of my preconceptions regarding what dance was and what it meant to be a dancer were wrong. Never before could I have imagined that going across the floor in Fundamentals of Composition as "bacon sizzling in a pan," could be dancing. I must admit at first I was so shocked by this flood of new information that my natural reaction was to reject it. But once I began to notice the growth of my classmates, and really began to feel the support and security this program offers, I decided to test the waters so to speak. What I found I was not at all prepared for. In an environment so foreign to me and so outside of my comfort zone, I felt completely safe; an absolute tribute to the amazing and unique program that LMU offers. The competitive spirit that had saturated my studio from home was non-existent here. The faculty and students are utterly uninterested in which dancer is better than the other, but are completely focused and dedicated to helping each student reach their full potential. Rather than being jealous, the students here are genuinely happy to witness the breakthroughs of their fellow classmates. It was this communal atmosphere that inspired me most, and reignited my love for dance. I distinctly remember the moment I had this realization. It was my first semester at LMU following the fall concert. Everyone was gathered in the studios for our annual studio blessing. The lights were off and all I could see were the flickering lights of

candles and the glistening faces of all my closest friends. After a moment of stillness, Katie Denton's soothing voice penetrated the silence when she began to sing Silent Night. This song had an added significance for me because it was the song my mother used to sing me to sleep at night. When the rest of the room took up the melody and began to sing, I remember tears running down my face. The same calm and utter peacefulness I felt lying in bed being held by my mother I felt once again. I was overwhelmed by feelings of love, and tranquility and just as I did on those childhood nights, I felt home.

Following this moment, every class I approached seemed different to me. My perspective towards dance, and life as a whole, had changed completely. I no longer noticed my aching muscles and bruised body. I no longer felt the same restraint and hesitation towards any potential failure. All I wanted to do was learn and soak up as much as I could. I was desperate to participate in this community of dance I saw around me, filled with a group of people who were so fortunate to do what they love on a daily basis. And once my attitude shifted, my dancing quickly followed. I tested myself to reach beyond the limits I had set for myself, and found that I had seriously underestimated my ability. I could have never pictured myself partnering with another dancer and being able to lift them up over my head with very little difficulty. I never envisioned myself learning full variations on pointe, a technique I had no experience in. And I certainly never believed I would be able to do athletic floor work, or difficult inversion skills. The expertise of the faculty and the supportive atmosphere of each class enabled a growth I would have never conceived of as possible.

This newfound eagerness to participate and to experience simply for the sake of experience trickled off into other aspects of my life as well; I wanted to see what other things I could be a part of. I knew I had always had a love of animals, and I decided to investigate that

further, to see if I could be lucky enough to find another thing that gave me the same joy as dancing does. I couldn't have been more pleasantly surprised. From the start of my second semester until now, I have spent every available Sunday afternoon at the Santa Monica Animal Shelter. Like dance, my volunteer work has helped me to find my place in my community and to give my life a more directed purpose. Though my dancing gives me tremendous joy, this new path has also offered me the feeling that I am contributing to the world, and fills me with the satisfaction of helping others. Because of this, following graduation I will be attending school in Las Vegas to become a veterinary technologist. Though I plan to still dance in whatever free time I have, my professional goals have shifted. And I couldn't be more excited about this new journey that I am about to embark on.

My time here at LMU has given me so much it is hard to even begin to cover with such few words. Though I am thankful and amazed at the change I have seen in myself both physically and technically, it is the emotional and mental transformation I have experienced that I am most grateful for. My time at LMU has refueled a now inextinguishable flame within me. My mind and eyes have been opened to a whole new way of experiencing life. I used to always have my head in the future, but I'm now able to enjoy each moment as it comes. I feel that in my discovery of what it is to be a dancer, I have learned what it is to be a person. With studying an art that is so fundamentally based on the human body and human emotion comes an ability to feel and experience with not just the mind or body but with the entire self. I believe this to be the most important thing I will take away with me from my time at LMU. Though the amount of time devoted to dancing in my years to come will most likely be significantly less than before, I am now more of a dancer than ever, and I am exhilarated to see what comes next.