

## AS UNIT 2 - SUPPORTING DOCUMENT-SECTION 1

We have chosen to look at the work of two practitioners to explore the concept of “Contrasts” for our Performing Arts Event. The title for our performance is “Different” and we will have 5 dancers, a choreographer, a singer, a lighting and costume designer in our group.

We discussed the idea of “Contrasts” and have decided to look at two **contrasting** dance styles. This will suit the make-up of our group and will provide us with opportunities to develop our skills

The first practitioner on which our work is based is Alvin Ailey who was born in Texas in 1931. Alvin Ailey was a choreographer who founded the American Dance Theatre in 1958. It was a hugely popular, multi-racial modern dance ensemble and his most famous dance is “Revelations”. The style of dance for this piece could be described as contemporary with undertones of ballet influenced by the legendary choreographer Martha Graham who was one of Ailey’s mentors. This is the dance we have chosen as a stimulus for our Performing Arts Event. Revelations is a celebratory study of religious spirit expressed through movement which captures the social and historical issues of the Black Gospel era in American culture. Although Ailey died in 1989, his dances have been performed for audiences of 20 million people around the world and his American School of Dance is a major force in dance today. His works can be viewed on line and are easily accessed on U tube.

Our contrasting dance choice is “Smooth Criminal” from the repertoire of Michael Jackson. This piece is very much in the style of Michael Jackson who created his own unique dance genre which was influenced by performers such as Gene Kelly, Fred Astaire, James Brown and Jackie Wilson. His style of dance is eclectic with Funk, Boogaloo, Popping, Locking and his famous Moon Walk all forming aspects of the end product. The performance of Smooth Criminal was filmed live in Bucharest in 1992 when Jackson was at the peak of his career. The style reflects the Hollywood Gangster era of the 1930’s and the ensemble work of the chorus dance will form a basis for our approach to this practitioner. Despite his untimely death Michael Jackson is still a major influence for dance performers and his works are still imitated and adapted for modern audiences.

We have 5 dancers in our group and each of us has a range of experience. My dance background is through the study of GSCE which gave me the chance to perform a set study of contemporary dance and also to create my own choreography. Our choreographer has a similar background but she also trained in ballet and has her grade 5 exams. One of the other dancers is a great Michael Jackson fan and she has performed in “Thriller” as part of a local festival. The lighting designer worked on last year’s school show which was “Bugsy Malone” and she will use some of those ideas for the dance performances. Our costume designer is using his skills from Unit 1 to develop new ideas for this Unit. In Unit 1 he worked on an extract from “Street Car Named Desire” for the character of Stanley. We feel this look might be adapted to work for some characters in “Smooth Criminal”.

Our performance will take place in our large School Assembly Hall which is 50 x 30 feet and has a wooden floor and two lighting stands and dimmer board. We will perform to a side wall and the audience will be placed there. The production costs will be minimal as the lights are already in place and the costumes will be pieces that will be gathered together based on the costume designers ideas.

621 words.