

“BEAUTY OF MEN” DANCE CHOREOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

The evolution of high heels from women's to men's and finally to jockeys' footwear in horse racing has attracted the authors. The wearers' poses and movements can be elevated to a level of dance. Likewise, the drag queen in the Cabaret show faces difficulties in his personal and professional life. The choreographic form of “Beauty of Men” entails the creation of this dance. The dance work of “Beauty of Men” is presented in ensembles. This dance work is composed and presented by developing dance movements. The dance work consists of four sections, beginning with introducing the self's inner conflict. The first section designates the issues that confront families and communities. The second section describes the difficulties associated with social friendship. The third section illustrates the self's difficulties and the quest for self-identity. Lastly, the fourth section expresses how the problems encountered were resolved. The process of creating the dance work of “Beauty of Men” reflects the dancer's creative ability as a result of his experience.

Keywords: Dance, Beauty of Men, high heels, and drag queen.

ABSTRAK

Perkembangan high heels yang dipakai wanita dan kemudian pernah juga digunakan pria di masa lalu serta akhirnya dipakai juga oleh joki dalam pacuan kuda, menjadi daya tarik tersendiri bagi penulis. Pose dan gerak pemakainya dapat diangkat ke dalam sebuah tari. Demikian juga, drag queen dalam pertunjukan Cabaret memiliki kerumitan dalam kehidupan dan kesehariannya. Penciptaan karya tari ini dengan permasalahan, yaitu bagaimana bentuk koreografi “Beauty of Men”? Karya tari “Beauty of Men” disajikan dalam bentuk kelompok. Karya tari ini merupakan karya tari yang disusun dan disajikan dengan pengembangan gerak-gerak tari. Bentuk karya tari terdiri atas empat bagian, yang diawali dengan introduksi penggambaran konflik batin yang terdapat pada diri yang dialami. Bagian pertama berisi penggambaran permasalahan yang dialami dari lingkungan keluarga dan masyarakat. Bagian kedua penggambaran permasalahan yang dialami dari pergaulan. Bagian ketiga merupakan penggambaran dari permasalahan yang dialami oleh diri, dan pencarian jati diri. Dan, bagian keempat sebagai ungkapan dari jalan keluar permasalahan yang dialami. Proses penciptaan karya tari “Beauty of Men” merupakan kekuatan kreatif seorang penari sebagai hasil dari pengalaman yang diperolehnya.

Kata kunci: Tari, Beauty of Men, high heels, dan drag queen.

1. Introduction

“Beauty of Men” is a dance work that is lifted from the experience of the creator in a Cabaret performance, which is identical to Drag Queen in every performance where he often wears high heels. In the creation of “Beauty of Men”, the creator took a part that is identical to Drag Queen, namely High Heels to be used as part of the idea of this dance work. “Beauty of Men” dance work is inspired by the development of high heels. High heels are shoes that have a heel that is higher than the entire surface of the foot. Shoes with high heels or commonly called high heels are a type of shoe that is popular among women. The reason is, besides being able to increase the wearer's height, it also emphasizes that the user's legs are getting longer and slimmer. This type of shoe is often used to give the impression of height and improve the posture of women, thus making the appearance elegant and sexy (“Alasan Wanita Memakai High Heels,” n.d.).

A pair of high heels was once an essential accessory for men in the past. High heels in ancient times were more practical for the wearer. High heels for centuries were used as footwear when riding, riding a horse well was very important in Persia (Iran). When the soldier stood on a stirrup or step when riding a horse, the high heels helped him secure his position, so that he could shoot the arrow from a bow effectively (*artsandculture.google.com*).

In addition to high heels, the creator is also interested in the Cabaret show which is identical to the drag queen. Robby Aji Tri Santoso argues that a drag queen is someone who dresses up like a queen for show or entertainment needs, often dressing up excessively to attract the attention of the audience, and this is identically with men who play as a woman, and drag queens are served in nightclubs (Santoso, 2020). Being a drag queen is not easy, because there is a lot of discrimination experienced in the surrounding environment. The creator also experienced conflict within the family when he first became a drag queen. This problem has been experienced by the creator for a long time, that to become a drag queen is not easy with various problems. Problems arise from the scope of family, community, personal, and social friendship. From the problems experienced by the creator, it

became the basis for the choreography in this creation. The motion taken from this dance work is the result of exploration by the creator.

The ideas in making “Beauty of Men” dance originated from the creator's interest in drag queens who have problems or obstacles in facing life. These problems include self-identity and character that arises from within, rejection from the family, personal and community. The creator as a drag queen is faced with a life decision that must be lived in an environment full of pros and cons. Feeling sad, lonely, alone, empty, emotional, happy makes a conflict in this dance work. Various ways are done to become human according to their nature, but the creator realizes that this is a way of life and no human is perfect and every human being has advantages/ positive side and disadvantages/ negative side of each.

This work is presented as a group with four male dancers. The ideas are worked out with movements arranged in three parts, is a picture of the big problems experienced by the creator. The first is a problem involving the family and society, the second is a problem that occurs in a social friendship, the third is a problem within oneself. . The three parts are not a story sequence but a sequence of conflict situations in the work. Work on motion is the result of exploration which is reprocessed with choreographic methods that have been gained in lectures, including choreography techniques of body contact, initiation and spiral.

This dance work has an interesting thing in its working process, namely when the introduction of high heels to dancers who have never worn high heels. The creator introduced how to walk using high heels and how to maintain balance which can affect movement. In addition, the elements of motion and the form of Cabarate performances which are a source of inspiration, and are processed into an interesting presentation. Based on some of the brief descriptions above, the creation of this dance work is formulated with a problem statement: How is the form of “Beauty of Men”'s choreography?

2. Literature Review

This source review was conducted to review the reference sources used in the creation of art. This activity is carried out to obtain data in building mindsets and concepts in creation. Creativity according to Utami Munandar is the ability to create new combinations, based on data, information or existing elements. The results created are not always new, but can also be a combination of things that already exist (Munandar, 2002).

Rhodes argues that in general creativity has 4 types of dimensions that are used as the concept of creativity, namely the 4P (Four P's Creativity), which includes person, process, press and product. Creativity in the person dimension is an effort to identify creativity that focuses on creative individuals. Creativity in the process dimension is creativity that focuses on the thought process so as to bring up unique or creative ideas. Creativity in the press dimension is creativity that emphasizes the press or encouragement factor, both internal encouragement (self) in the form of desire and passion to create or be busy creatively, as well as external encouragement (social environment). Creativity in the product dimension is creativity that focuses on products or anything what is produced by individuals, whether it is something new, original, or innovative (Munandar, 2002) (Kristianto, 2017).

The choreographic elements used to compose the choreography refer to the thoughts of Y. Sumandio Hadi in a book entitled "Aspects in Group Choreography" which states that the elements of traditional dance include the dance title, dance theme, dance type, number of dancers and gender, dance hall, and mode of presentation. The implementation of the thought model on choreography is adjusted to the needs of the research (Hadi, 2003).

High heels are shoes that raise the heel of the foot that is higher than the toes (Fauziah, 2013) (Rahman, 2019). The Greeks create the first high heels called korthonos for theatrical performances. The message to be conveyed at that time was to add 'majesty' to the heroes in the drama so that they could stand taller than other actors and be more easily recognized. The Greek women then adopted the trend,

making heels with a certain height. Along with the conquest of Greece by the Romans, the adoption of shoes and heels in the Greeks was then influenced by the Romans. Roman fashion symbolizes power and status, and the presence of shoes represents the state of a civilization.

During the European renaissance, the high heel became a status symbol worn by both male and females from the higher social statuses. It has been suggested that wearing high heels as a fashion statement was pioneered by Catherine de Medici a Franco/Italian noblewomen. Two hundred years later King Louis XIV of France decreed that only nobility could wear heels (Amber K, 2015). The use of high heels in ancient times was also used by horseback troops when fighting, as explained in *Standing TALL: The Curious History of Men in Heels*.

Evidence for early Western Asian heels suggests a strong relationship to horseback riding and may have been connected to the innovation of the stirrup. The stirrup profoundly changed horseback riding and made military campaigns more effective, as it enabled riders to steady themselves dramatically improving the effective use of weapons such as the bow and arrow (Bata Shoe Museum Toronto, n.d.).

3. Creation Methodology

The dance choreography entitled “Beauty of Men” refers to the opinion of Alma M. Hawkins quoted by Soedarsono that there are three creative processes in dance development, namely exploration, improvisation, and composition.

a). Exploration

Exploration is one of the early forms of choreographers in creating a dance work. Exploration is an activity of thinking, imagining, and responding (Soedarsono, 1978). This step has been used to create the dance work “Beauty of Men”, namely from the development idea of high heels in ancient times and now used by men. Then the creator realizes it in a form of motion exploration. The first step is to do an exploration related to the concept of the dance work Beauty of Men.

The exploration of motion that has been carried out can be seen in the motifs of foot steps, circular movements, jumps, shuffles, and hand plays. In addition to these motives, there is also a connecting motion of running and walking. In the exploration

process, the dancers practice almost every day, practicing two to four hours per day with the aim of carrying out exploratory movements to the maximum, until they get a satisfactory movement.

In this stage the creator tries to explore the potential through imagination about the forms of motion and then it is developed into contemporary forms of motion, using illustrated music to stimulate creativity for both creators and dancers.

The exploration stage is one way to determine the flow of dance work which is divided into 4 parts as the basis for the motivation to search for motion, namely problems with the environment that accentuate soft movements and large volumes. The second stage is the problems experienced in the social friendship sphere that give the accent of agile, soft, and broken movements. The third stage is the problems experienced by individual in finding his self identity, the emotional feelings that exist within themselves are visualized by moving back and forth and changing places. The last stage is the awakening of a sense of enthusiasm, thinking clearly in facing or responding to problems and insults which are stepping stones in a good direction.

Another search process is through improvisation, initiation, and responding to the form of stage space or move. The movement technique is produced from a form of motion exploration that is adjusted to the capacity of each dancer's ability. The “Beauty of Men” dance work process takes approximately four months. In addition, the creators also present their work in stages to lecturers with the aim of obtaining input in order to get optimal results.

b). Improvisation

Improvisation is the next step taken by the choreographer in creating the “Beauty of Men” dance work. Improvisation in this case involves selecting, and creating dances from exploration results. Improvisation is often referred to as spontaneity in making movements, but also used or applied appropriately that can be a valuable way to increase the development of creative attitudes in creating motion (Soedarsono, 1978).

This improvisation process is carried out based on imagination and motion selection which is then arranged into a dance that has a systematic structure. The imagination in “Beauty of Men” dance often comes to mind when listening to music, and when exchanging opinions with several other dancers. With it came the ideas of motion that will be developed again. Sometimes imagination often arises spontaneously. The activities carried out by the creator in creating the “Beauty of Men” dance are influenced by dance stimuli. The dance stimuli are both visual stimulation and kinesthetic stimulation. Dance stimulation is a stimulus that evokes thought or enthusiasm, and can encourage creative activities, especially for dance creator (Suharto, 1985). Artists can create a “Beauty of Men” dance work based on the stimulation of the dance.

c). Composition

Composition is a series of processes carried out by choreographers in creating a dance work. Through composition, new forms will emerge, namely dance works that have expressive and unique characteristics from their creators.

The creator composes the entire movement obtained from exploration and improvisation. This process is carried out in the studio, namely by searching and arranging movements freely and intensively in order to get an appropriate form to represent working on the atmosphere. Exploration of the body is carried out by the creator in order to obtain a maximum form in terms of flexibility, balance, strength, and body discipline of dancers in moving. The motion materials that have been selected are then compiled, through the composition process of combining the motions that were originally cut into pieces, then assembled into a complete series of motions. The selection of motion in this stage is adjusted to the concept of working and the form of this dance work. Various sets of moving material are then arranged in sequence to get a clear plot.

In the end, the “Beauty of Men” dance work was created after going through the stages or processes that have been passed, namely exploration, improvisation, and composition. The creator in compiling the motives of this movement is very

concerned about the sequence or dramatic plot, so that in its presentation it does not cause boring for the audience. The dynamic plot of the work is formed by soft movements with slow tempos, powerful movements with fast tempos and attractive movements, and supported by musical rhythms that provide colors and depict new interpretations for the audience.

4. Discussion

4.1. Concept

“Beauty of Men” dance work is a work that departs from the personal experience of the creator who plunged directly into a drag queen and used high heels. From this experience, creative activities were carried out to create a dance piece inspired by high heels. High heels in this modern era are very identical to the wearer, namely a woman, which aims to increase height, and looks sexy.

In this dance work, the creator takes the function or use of high heels in the past which was used by a man. High heels in ancient times were used by horseback troops to fight and to maintain balance while standing in stirrups. In this dance work, the creator explores movements that resemble horseback troops, and are visualized as jumping paths with a slightly bent body position, depicting a person riding a horse. The foot slide movement is a depiction of avoiding enemy attacks. Movements that are always changing places are used as a description of the strategic arrangement of soldiers who are at war.

Apart from the development of high heels that existed in the past, the creator also combined a modern element in the use of high heels for men who are identical with drag queen. With creativity, the creator combines these two elements into one, because nowadays men who use high heels tend to be identical as drag queen. These two elements are a continuity in this dance work. The movements created in this dance are poses with crossed legs, cross walking, upward kicks, jump squats, and butt rolls. These movements are everyday human movements such as walking, running, rolling, jumping, squatting, and kicking which are then reprocessed to become quality movements. These kind of movements are often shown by drag

queen in his performances to attract the audience.

4.2. Artwork Description

The dance work “Beauty of Men” does not tell a story, but is only worked on by strengthening the atmosphere desired by the creator in each scene. This dance work is presented by four male dancers. This dance work was performed on January 14, 2019. The dance movements are dominated by foot steps, twisting, walking, and jumping. “Beauty of Men” dance has a duration of 19 minutes accompanied by illustrated music by music arrangers Bagus Tri Wahyu Utomo and Andi Sujatmiko. The dance work “Beauty of Men” uses a stage setting of three boxes and a board with a picture of high heels, the function of the boxes are to store shoes and a seat when wearing high heels on stage. The costume used is purple shorts that are below the knee. The design of such pants is inspired by the use of pants from horsemen. The side pants are left transparent, the waist is tied like a circular belt and is light brown in color as an accent, and the top is not wearing a shirt. At the bottom, the legs wear high heels in the form of boots, measuring 13cm. The purpose of wearing this costume is to show the outline of the body in every movement, and to show the curves of the body when moving.

The choreographer in the dance work “Beauty of Men” saw that the dancers involved had undoubted potential. The dancers in the “Beauty of Men” dance are students of Institut Seni Indonesia Surakarta who are familiar with some of the movements that will be used in the “Beauty of Men” dance.

The dance work “Beauty of Men” is a choreographed work in which it tells about the experience of the creator who is involved in cabaret and drag queen performances. If you pay attention, in this dance more describes the flow of the atmosphere. The shape of the line that appears in the motion and volume of motion in this dance is very influential on the presentation and delivery of the atmosphere to the audience.

The forms of motion presented in the “Beauty of Men” dance have varied or

lot of movements. The movements used are mostly straight lines and large volumes, but there are also movements that use a zig zag pattern, clustering, curved lines, and a small volume of motion. Movements with straight lines, clustering, and large volumes are used as a description of assertiveness, which this dance wants to highlight. Meanwhile, movements with curved lines and a smaller volume are used as a depiction of softness.

“Beauty of Men” dance also has several types of floor patterns. Floor patterns are the lines on the floor traversed by a dancer or the lines on the floor made by the formation of group dancers (Soedarsono, 1978). The floor pattern used in “Beauty of Men” dance tends to be in groups or clusters.

The scenario for working on the “Beauty of Men” dance is as follows.

a). Introduction

Four dancers are on stage, one dancer appears first in the left corner of the stage, using high-level footwork, and using a slow tempo. At the end of the movement using a fast and past tempo, three dancers emerge from the center of the back of the stage by stomping their feet at a slow and fast tempo, then run to the center of the stage, followed by a jumping motion, and back and forth motion with both feet alternately as a transition one dancer appears to the stage again.

b). Step 1

Four dancers form random or irregular formations that fill the stage and then turn into a rhombus formation in the middle of the stage, using a high-level and medium-tempo motion motif, followed by a straight composition on the left side of the stage that uses a running transition, then the four dancers make a close-up formation and do perform foot slides performed three times. With the dancer's position on the left side of the stage, proceed with a canon rotating motion or alternate rotation to the right, then slowly *kayang* (bend to bow the body) and then the body is thrown forward and followed by a running transition to create a random or irregular floor pattern. Soft motion motif, with the direction of facing the front, back, right and left sides. Three dancers fall and one dancer performs movements by

moving from the right corner to the front, then running to the front center, then to the back center, and back to the front right corner again. The movements used are foot slide plays, body pulling up, jumping, and *kayang*. Four dancers do a butt roll with straight legs, then stand and run, one dancer ago. This scene shows a picture of the conflict that exists in the family and environment.



Figure 1. Dancers form a random formation that fills the stage
(Photo: Andhika, January 14, 2019)

c). Step 2

Three dancers go to the back left corner with a running transition, and move to the middle and make a triangle pattern. Then proceed with butt roll movements, leg slides, moving hands and back to the center which are performed by three dancers together at a moderate tempo. Next, make hands swinging motion in the center of the stage with a fast tempo, as a depiction of the emotions that are inside. Then, the two dancers change positions to the right back corner with a running transition and perform a broken movement, the volume is large, and the tempo is fast. One dancer who is in the front left corner performs a soft movement, the volume is large, and the tempo is slow. Next, perform the same movement, which is to turn the body until *kayang* and return to a straight position, slide the legs to the left by canon and return to the starting position with the head turning, then continue the head down to the right slowly and back quickly. In this movement, the position of the dancer forms a straight line in the center of the front of the stage with the position of the hand

holding the head of the other dancer. Next, the dancer moves into a triangular floor pattern in the middle, then runs backwards and past one by one randomly. This scene describes a conflict that occurs in an social friendship.



Figure 2. The position of the dancers making a straight line in the center of the front of the stage (Photo: Andhika, January 14, 2019)

d). Step 3

One dancer appears when the three dancers go by, then do a tiptoe walk over the stage and make a trajectory, with a sharp gaze towards the front. After making that transition, the dancer stops in the middle of the stage and does a stretching body movement from the bottom slowly to the top and both hands are thrown up quickly. Followed by a bent body position and swung to the right and left quickly, turn the body and run to center of the backstage and jump to a lower level with both hands holding the left foot. Then, performing a leg slide, roll bottom with low level to the left corner of the stage. Running backwards towards the center of the stage and doing a swinging hand movement, the position of the right hand holding the left hand which is done at a fast tempo with a bent body position. This scene is a depiction of a turbulent self-disclosure of emotions, feelings of disappointment, search for self identity and a personal conflict he experienced.



Figure 3. The dancer performs a foot slide using a low level
(Photo: Andhika, January 14, 2019)

e). Ending

One by one the dancers entered with the transition running at an irregular tempo, while one dancer was still wearing high heels in the right corner of the stage. All dancers walk at a fast tempo randomly or irregularly and meet in the front left corner of the stage. Then walk towards the back and center of the back canon or alternately, then pause for a moment, step cross forward and right foot kick up. Then walk towards the middle with random or irregular jumps. After that, head to the left corner of the stage to the back right corner of the stage using a shuffle transition from medium to fast tempo. And proceeded to the center of the stage by still using the shuffle and doing a rotating motion with a fast tempo. Finally, move to the right and left of the stage with a shuffle and jump transition, return to the center and perform a squatting motion standing facing the front, then black out.



Figure 4. Posing the ending
(Photo: Andhika, January 14, 2019)

The form of presentation of the Beauty of Men dance work is a picture of the creator who was once a member of a cabaret group. In it there are some beauty in motion such as twisting movements, foot slides, and walking like on a catwalk stage. All of these movements have aesthetic value.

The twisting motion is a movement inspired by the belly dance motif, which is a type of dance that shows the part of the stomach that is under pressure (<https://id.m.wikipedia.org>). Creator include belly dance because he want to show the sexy side of the body which is done with firm pressure.

The slide movement has an aesthetic value, it is used to show the sexy side of the lower body. When the legs are shifted, the sexy parts of the body will appear. When the foot is shifted it will form a straight line and have an aesthetic value. The aesthetic value can be seen from the legs that form a straight line and display sexy legs.

Walking like on the catwalk stage has beauty, which shows a different way of walking than usual. When walking, it is inserted on tiptoe so that it is like using high heels. By walking like that, it can distinguish between normal walking and walking like using high heels. Such a catwalk-walking model has continuity when using high heels in the dance work “Beauty of Men”.

The costume used has a marker that shows the sexy side used, it can be seen

from the ornament which is a type of skin color tile so that the side legs are visible and gives its own aesthetic value. Floor pattern with curved lines and a pattern that forms a triangle. The triangular pattern gives a sense of self-doubt. The use of a stage setting decorated with broken glass gives a shining effect and gives its own aesthetic impression.

5. Conclusion

The dance work *Beauty of Men* conveys the creator's self-anxiety as expressed through motion as an expression of ideas and the following conclusions can be drawn. First, creator get problems or obstacles that occur in life, various conflicts that are obtained from the family, personal, social friendship and community spheres. The creator places his body as the subject of the language of expressing an experience.

The choreography of “*Beauty of Men*” dance is an expression in the creative process. The forms of dance movements arranged in the “*Beauty of Men*” dance work are dance moves made by taking the vocabulary from modern dance movements, cabaret performances, and exploration movements. The forms of motion presented in this dance work have varied movements, such as the motives of motion A, B, C, D, fly and up and down. This dance work also uses large volume movements and varied levels. This dance work uses 4 male dancers, and is performed on the proscenium stage.

The idea of motion is developed in several stages: firstly understanding and studying modern dance forms, lyrical dances, cabaret shows and understanding the use of high heels; second, deepening the strength of the choreographic form; and third, exploring with existing motions.

“*Beauty of Men*” dance work raises several aesthetics which are the result of exploration and enrichment of movement vocabulary. Aesthetic values can be seen in terms of movement motifs, clothing, make-up and manner of carrying. There are some beauty in the motions presented, such as twisting motions, foot slides, and catwalk-walking.

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