

# Genres in Performing Arts and Theatre

## Abstract

Performance is a genre in which art is present "live", usually by the artist but sometimes with collaborators or performers. It has had a role in avant-grade art throughout the twentieth century, playing an important part in anarchic movements.

Indeed, whenever artists have become discontented with conventional forms of Art, such as a means to rejuvenate their work. Performing arts are a form of art in which artists use their voices or bodies, often in relation to other objects, to convey artistic expression. It is different from visual arts, which is when artists use paints, canvas or various materials to create physical or static art objects. Performing arts include several disciplines, each performed in front of a live audience. Music, Dance, Drama, etc. are the genres in performing arts will discuss in detail.

Theatre is a collaborative form of Fine art that uses live performers, typically actors or actresses, to present the experience of a real or imagined event before a live audience in specific place, often a stage. The specific place of the performance is also named by the word "Theatre". Theatre is the branch of performing arts, concerned with acting and stories in front of an audience, using a combination of speech, gesture, music, dance, sound and spectacle. Genres of Theatre are Comedy, Tragedy and Theatre cruelty etc. will discuss in detail in the paper.

**Keywords:** Genres, Performing arts, Theatre, Dance, Drama etc.

## Introduction

Everyone has their own taste when choosing to watch a performance. Performance art and theatre are both rooted in the same practices and ideas. Performance art is an art form that utilizes the human body as a tool for creating art. It has no boundaries and past performance pieces have proven that the options are limitless. The human body acts as a type of canvas in which the artist manipulates however they wish, whether it is on the body itself or the movement or placement. Theatre does the same thing, using people to tell stories that illuminate real life situations in a scripted and rehearsed manner. However, while theatre has become a commercialized and popular form of entertainment, performance art remains more taboo and outlandish. Both these practices ultimately have the same goal: to garner a response, a reaction, an emotion from the audience. However, if they have the same objective, why is it that they are so separated and isolated from each other? The world of performance art and theatre share numerous qualities and yet they exist in two different worlds. Both art forms employ a human body as instruments in conveying a point, but the ultimate goal is to have it received by an audience as neither can exist without one.

## Objectives of the Study

In this paper the different forms of performing arts and theatre are discussed in detail and also discuss thathow every form of theatre and performing arts work. After Introduction we discuss about the difference in between performing arts and theatre.

## Review of Literature

Performing arts may include dance, music, opera, theatre and musical theatre, magic, illusion, mime, spokenword, puppetry, circusarts, performance art, recitation and public speaking.

There is also a specialized form of fine art, in which the artists *perform* their work live to an audience. This is called performance art. Most performance art also involves some form of plastic art, perhaps in the creation of props. Dance was often referred to as a *plastic art* during the Modern dance era. *Epperson, Gordan (April 11, 2016). "Music". Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.*

Dance is a powerful impulse, but the art of dance is that impulse channeled by skillful performers into something that becomes intensely



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expressive and that may delight spectators who feel no wish to dance themselves. These two concepts of the art of dance—dance as a powerful impulse and dance as a skillfully choreographed art practiced largely by a professional few—are the two most important connecting ideas running through any consideration of the subject. In dance, the connection between the two concepts is stronger than in some other arts, and neither can exist without the other.

*"Mackrell, Judith." "Dance" britannica.com.*

*Retrieved 11 March 2015.*

The evolution of comedy is much simpler than that of its sister art, though as to its origin and earlier development there is little exact information. All that Aristotle can tell us is that it first took shape in Megaris and Sicyon, whose people were noted for their coarse humor and sense of the ludicrous, while Susarion, the earliest comic poet, was a native of a Megarian town. Add to this that it arose from the phallic processions of the Greeks, as did tragedy from the dithyramb, and we have about all that is known as to the inception of the lighter branch of the drama.

*"Origin of Comedy".*

*Www.theatrehistory.com.*

A performance, in the performing arts, generally comprises an event in which a performer or group of performers present one or more works of art to an audience. Usually the performers participate in rehearsals beforehand. Afterwards audience members often applaud. Theatrical performances can take place daily or at some other regular interval. Performances can take place at designated performance spaces (such as a theatre or concert hall), or in a non-conventional space, such as a subway station, on the street, or in somebody's home. Heart rate shares a strong, positive correlation with the self-reported anxiety of performers. Other physiological responses to public performance include perspiration, secretion of the adrenal glands, and increased blood pressure. *Studer,*

*Regina (2014). "Psychophysiological*

*Activation During Preparation, Performance, and*

*Recovery in High- and Low-Anxious Music Students".*

#### **Difference in between Performing Art and Theatre**

Theatre is scripted, which we all know and one of its main purposes is to entertain. To put it simply, it's acting vs action. This doesn't make live theatre a bad or basic thing, as theatre appeals to a lot of people and generates a lot of money for the industry (mainstream theatre especially). Theatre, like performance art, comes in many forms e.g. dance, opera, musicals etc. But with performance art you don't know what is going to happen next (well most of the time). The main term for this is *live art*, and the purpose is to make you think. You can do anything in performing art just as long as you have a concept. What is this performer trying to convey? Is a question you find yourself asking?

Performing Art can be anything from the most random thought to something that is well planned out such as a scripted piece of text. This art form also originates from visual art e.g. sculpture and paintings. The artist makes themselves the art. In theatre there are artists but it's always someone else

performing their art. Actors are told what to do while the artists do as they want.

Performing art is too self-indulgent and it isn't fair to have an audience come in and interpret your work. The people who are more into performing art feel that mainstream theatre is only there to make money, while the purpose of performance art is to express yourself, and more importantly to create art. This is true, but is still perhaps quite harsh and unjustifiably elitist.

*"To be a performance artist, you have to hate theatre. Theatre is fake: there is a black box, you pay for a ticket, and you sit in the dark and see somebody playing somebody else's life. The knife is not real, the blood is not real, and the emotions are not real. Performance is just the opposite: the knife is real, the blood is real, and the emotions are real. It's a very different concept. It's about true reality."- Marina Abramovic (2010).*

#### **Performing Arts**

Performance is a genre in which art is present "live", usually by the artists but sometimes with collaborators or performers. It has had a role in Avant-grade art throughout the 20th century, playing an important part in anarchic movements.

Indeed, whenever artists have become disconnect with conventional forms of art, such as painting and traditional modes of sculpture, they have often turned to performance as means to rejuvenate their work. Performing arts are a form of art in which artists use their voices or bodies, often in relation to their objects, to convey artistic expression it is different from visual arts which is artists use paint, canvas or various material to create physical or static art object. Performing art includes several disciplines, each performed in front of a live audience.

Theatre, music, dance and other kinds of performances are present in all human cultures. The history of music and dance date to pre-historic times. More refined versions, such as ballet, opera, and Kabuki, are performed professionally.

Live performances before an audience are a form of entertainment. The development of audio and video recording has allowed for private consumption of the performing arts. The performing arts can help explain our emotions, expressions, and feelings.

#### **Genres in Performing Arts**

A performance, in the performing arts, generally comprises an event in which a performer or group of performers present one or more works of art to an audience. Usually the performers participate in rehearsals beforehand. Afterwards audience members often applaud.

The means of expressing appreciation can vary by culture. Chinese performers will clap with the audience at the end of a performance; the return applause signals "thank you" to the audience. In Japan, folk performing-arts performances commonly attract individuals who take photographs, sometimes getting up to the stage and within inches of performer's faces.

Artists who participate in performing arts in front of an audience are called performers,

including actors, comedians, dancers, magicians, musicians, and singers. Performing arts are also supported by workers in related fields, such as song writing and stagecraft.

Performers often adapt their appearance, such as with costumes and stage makeup, etc. There is also a specialized form of fine art in which the artists *perform* their work live to an audience. This is called performance art. Most performance art also involves some form of plastic art, perhaps in the creation of props. Dance was often referred to as a *plastic art* during the Modern dance era. The performing arts refer to the forms of art where an artist uses his own face, body and presence. The major types of performing arts include Music, Opera, Dance, Drama, and spoken words.

### **Music**

Music is perhaps the most universal of the performing arts and is found in every society, most often as an integral part of other performing art forms and other domains of intangible cultural heritage including rituals, festive events or oral traditions. It can be found in the most diverse contexts: sacred or profane, classical or popular, closely connected to work or entertainment. There may also be a political or economic dimension to music: it can recount a community's history, sing the praises of a powerful person and play a key role in economic transactions. The occasions on which music is performed are just as varied: marriages, funerals, rituals and initiations, festivities, all kinds of entertainment as well as many other social functions.

The performing arts refer to the forms of art where an artist uses his own face, body and presence. The major types of performing arts include music, opera, dance, drama, and spoken words etc. Music is a form of art whose medium is silence and sound. The word "music" was derived from the Greek word "mousike" which means the art of the muses. The common elements of music include rhythm, pitch, dynamics, timbre and texture. The performance, creation, significance and definition of this art depend on the social context and culture.

Music can be assorted into different genres or subgenres, although the divisions of these genres are usually vague and subtle. It is also said that there is a very strong connection between mathematics and music. To a lot of people who belong to various cultures, music plays an important part in their lives. Music is usually associated with the way of life of different kinds of people across the land.

Music, dance, drama, folk theatre or puppetry our country India, had all of it in abundance. Music focuses on three career paths, music performance, music education, and musicology (theory, history, etc.). Students learn to play musical instrument, but also study music theory, musicology, history of music and musical composition. In the arts tradition, music is also used to broaden skills of non-musicians by teaching skills such as concentration and listening.

Music performances (e.g. a concert or a recital) may take place indoors in a concert hall or outdoors in a field, and may vary from requiring the

audience to remain very quiet to encouraging them to sing and dance along with the music. A performance may also describe the way in which an actor performs. In a solo capacity, it may also refer to a mime artist, comedian, conjurer, or other entertainer. Some genres of music are: Busking, concert, opera and singing etc.

### **Busking**

Street performance or busking is the act of performing in public places for gratuities. In many countries the rewards are generally in the form of money but other gratuities such as food, drink or gifts may be given. Street performance is practiced all over the world by men, women and children and dates back to antiquity. People engaging in this practice are called street performers or buskers.

### **Concert (rock)**

A concert is a live music performance in front of an audience. A recital is a concert by a soloist or small group which follows a program, such as featuring the works of a single composer (organ recital). A recitalist is a musician who gives frequent recitals. The invention of the solo piano recital has been attributed to Franz Liszt.

The performance may be by a single musician, sometimes then called a *recital*, or by a musical ensemble, such as an orchestra, choir, or band. Concerts are held in a wide variety and size of settings, from private houses and small nightclubs, dedicated concert halls, entertainment centres and parks to large multipurpose buildings, and even sports stadiums. Indoor concerts held in the largest venues are sometimes called *arena concerts* or *amphitheatre concerts*. Informal names for a concert include *show* and *gig*.

### **Opera (operetta)**

Opera is a key part of the Western classical music tradition. It started in Italy at the end of the 16th century. Opera is an art form in which singers and musicians perform a dramatic work combining text (libretto) and musical score, usually in a theatrical setting. In traditional opera, singers do two types of singing: recitative (a speech-inflected style) and arias (a more melodic style) in which notes are sung in a sustained fashion. Opera incorporates many of the elements of spoken theatre, such as acting, scenery, and costumes and sometimes includes dance. The performance is typically given in an opera house, accompanied by an orchestra or smaller musical ensemble, which since the early 19th century has been led by a conductor.

### **Singing**

Vocal music is a type of music performed by one or more singers, either with instrumental accompaniment, or without instrumental accompaniment, in which singing provides the main focus of the piece. Vocal music typically features sung words called *lyrics*, although there are notable examples of vocal music that are performed using non-linguistic syllables, sounds, or noises, sometimes as musical onomatopoeia. A short piece of vocal music with lyrics is broadly termed a song. Vocal music is probably the oldest form of music, since it does not require any instrument besides the human

voice. All musical cultures have some form of vocal music.

#### **Drama**

Drama is a branch of the performing arts concerned with acting out stories in front of an audience. It uses speech, gesture, music, dance, sound and spectacle—indeed any one or more elements of the other performing arts. In addition to the standard narrative dialogue style of plays, theatre takes such forms as musicals, opera, ballet, illusion, mime, Indiandance, kabuki, mummings' plays, stand-up comedy, pantomime, and non-conventional or art-house theatre. Drama refers to a mode of fiction represented in a performance. The word "drama" originated from the Greek word "drao" which means action. Dramas are usually enacted by actors on a stage for an audience. The structure of the text for dramas is usually influenced by collective reception and collaborative production. Masterpieces that can be considered to be in this form include the classical Athenian tragedy, "Oedipus the King" of Sophocles and "Hamlet" of William Shakespeare.

#### **Comedy**

Comedies are lighter in tone than ordinary writers, and provide a happy conclusion. The intention of dramatists in comedies is to make their audience laugh. Hence, they use quaint circumstances, unusual characters and witty remarks.

#### **Tragedy**

Tragic dramas use darker themes such as disaster, pain and death. Protagonists often have a tragic flaw—a characteristic that leads them to their downfall.

#### **Farce**

Generally, a farce is a nonsensical genre of drama, which often overacts or engages slapstick humour.

#### **Melodrama**

Melodrama is an exaggerated drama, which is sensational and appeals directly to the senses of audience. Just like the farce, the characters are of single dimension and simple, or may be stereotyped.

#### **Musical Drama**

In musical drama, the dramatists not only tell their story through acting and dialogue, nevertheless through dance as well as music. Often the story may be comedic, though it may also involve serious subjects.

#### **Dance**

Dance word is derived from 'Old French' word 'Dancier', generally refers to human movement either used as a form of expression or in a social, spiritual or performance setting. Dance is a form of performing arts that refers to the art of moving the body rhythmically and usually in accordance to music. It is used as a form of social interaction and expression, or it is commonly presented in a performance or spiritual setting. It is also seen as a form of nonverbal communication, a type of communication where words are not used. Definitions of what dance is really all about usually varies in each culture, society or person.

Some people considered even the movement of the leaves as a form of dance while

some even considered martial arts, like karate, as one form of it. Dance can also be social, participatory, and performed for an audience. It can as well be erotic, ceremonial or competitive in purpose. Nowadays, dancing has evolved into many styles. These styles include ballet, break dancing, and crumping. Nevertheless, each type of dance, whether what style, has something that is common. It does not only involve the usage of the human body kinetics and flexibility but also physics.

'Dance' is also used to describe methods of non-verbal communication (see body language) between humans or animals (bee dance), motion in inanimate objects (*the leaves danced in the wind*), and certain music genres.

Choreography is the art of making dances, and the person who does this is called a choreographer.

The definition of what is dance depends on society, and ranges from folkdance to codified, virtuoso techniques such as ballet. In sports, rhythmic gymnastics, figure skating, ice dancing and synchronized swimming are dance disciplines. Some martial arts have dance-like moves.

#### **Theatre**

Theatre or Theater (mostly American English), has several meanings. The word comes originally from the Greek *Theatron*, meaning roughly, 'a place to behold'. In American English, the word 'theater' can mean either a place where films are shown (this is also called a cinema) or a place where live stage plays are performed. In British English, 'theatre' means a place where live *plays* are performed. Some people, both English and American, use the spelling 'theatre' to mean a place where live plays are performed, and the spelling 'theater' to mean a cinema.

It is a collaborative form of Performing arts, concerned with acting that uses live performers, typically actors or actresses, to present the experience of a real or imagined event before a live audience in a specific place, often a stage. The performers may communicate this experience to the audience through combinations of gesture, speech, song, music, and dance. Elements of art, such as painted scenery and stagecraft such as lighting are used to enhance the physicality, presence and immediacy of the experience. The specific place of the performance is also named by the word "theatre" as derived from the *Ancient Greek* (θέατρον, "a place for viewing"), itself from (θεάομαι, "to see", "to watch", "to observe").

Modern theatre, broadly defined, includes performances of plays and musical theatre. There are connections between theatre and the art forms of ballet, opera (which uses staged, costumed performances with singing and orchestral accompaniment) and various other forms. A play is a form of literature written by a playwright, usually consisting of dialogue between characters, intended for theatrical performance rather than just reading. Plays are performed at a variety of levels, from Broadway, Off-Broadway, regional theatre, to Community theatre, as well as University or school

productions. There are rare dramatists, notably George Bernard Shaw, who have had little preference as to whether their plays were performed or read. The term "play" can refer to both the written texts of playwrights and to their complete theatrical performance.

### **Genres in Theatre Comedy**

Comedies are plays which are designed to be humorous. Comedies are often filled with witty remarks, unusual characters, and strange circumstances. Certain comedies are geared toward different age groups. Comedies are lighter in tone than ordinary writers, and provide a happy conclusion. The intention of dramatists in comedies is to make their audience laugh. Hence, they use quaint circumstances, unusual characters and witty remarks. Comedies were one of the two original play types of Ancient Greece, along with tragedies. An example of a comedy would be William Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, or for a more modern example the skits from *Saturday Night Live*.

### **Farce**

Generally a nonsensical genre of play, farces often overacted and often involve slapstick humour. An example of a farce includes William Shakespeare's play *The Comedy of Errors*, or Mark Twain's play *Is He Dead?*

### **Satirical**

A satire play takes a comic look at current events people while at the same time attempting to make a political or social statement, for example pointing out corruption. An example of a satire would be Nikolai Gogol's *The Government Inspector* and Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*. Satire plays are generally one of the most popular forms of comedy, and often considered to be their own genre entirely.

### **Restoration comedy**

Restoration comedy is a genre that explored relationships between men and women, and was considered risqué in its time. Characters featured in restoration comedy included stereotypes of all kinds, and these same stereotypes were found in most plays of this genre, so much so that most plays were very similar in message and content. However, since restoration comedy dealt with unspoken aspects of relationships, it created a type of connection between audience and performance that was more informal and private.

It is commonly agreed that restoration comedy has origins in Molière's theories of comedy, but differs in intention and tone. The inconsistency between restoration comedy's morals and the morals of the era is something that often arises during the study of this genre. This may give clues as to why, despite its original success, restoration comedy did not last long in the seventeenth century. However, in recent years, it has become a topic of interest for theatre theorists, who have been looking into theatre styles that have their own conventions of performance.

### **Tragedy**

These plays contain darker themes such as death and disaster. Often the protagonist of the play

has a tragic flaw, a trait which leads to their downfall. Tragic plays convey all emotions and have extremely dramatic conflicts. Tragedy was one of the two original play types of Ancient Greece. Some examples of tragedies include William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and also John Webster's play *The Duchess of Malfi*.

### **Historical**

These plays focus on actual historical events. They can be tragedies or comedies, but are often neither of these. History as a separate genre was popularized by William Shakespeare. Examples of historical plays include Friedrich Schiller's *Demetrius* and William Shakespeare's *King Jhon*.

### **Musical Theatre**

Ballad opera, a popular theatre style at the time, was the first style of musical to be performed in the American colonies. The first musical of American origin was premiered in Philadelphia in 1767, and was called "The Disappointment", however, this play never made it to production. Around the 1920s, theatre styles were beginning to be defined more clearly. For musical theatre, this meant that composers gained the right to create every song in the play, and these new plays were held to more specific conventions, such as thirty-two-bar songs. When the Great Depression came, many people left Broadway for Hollywood, and the atmosphere of Broadway musicals changed significantly. A similar situation occurred during the 1960s, when composers were scarce and musicals lacked vibrancy and entertainment value.

By the 1990s, there were very few original Broadway musicals, as many were recreations of movies or novels.

Musical productions have songs to help explain the story and move the ideas of the play along. They are usually accompanied by dancing. Musicals can be very elaborate in settings and actor performances. Examples of musical productions include *Wicked* and *Fiddler on the Roof*.

### **Theatre of Cruelty**

This theatre style originated in the 1940s when Antonin Artaud hypothesized about the effects of expressing through the body as opposed to "by socially conditioned thought." In 1946, he wrote a preface to his works in which he explained how he came to write what and the way he did.

Above all, Artaud did not trust language as a means of communication. Plays within the genre of theatre of cruelty are abstract in convention and content. Artaud wanted his plays to have an effect and accomplish something. His intention was to symbolize the subconscious through bodily performances, as he did not believe language could be effective. Artaud considered his plays to be an enactment rather than a re-enactment, which meant he believed his actors were in reality, rather than re-enacting reality.

His plays dealt with heavy issues such as patients in psych wards, and Nazi Germany. Through these performances, he wanted to "make the causes of suffering audible", however, audiences originally reacted poorly, as they were so taken aback by what they saw. Much of his work was banned in France at the time.

Artaud did not believe that conventional theatre of the time would allow the audience to have a cathartic experience and help heal the wounds of World War II. For this reason, he moved towards radio-based theatre, in which the audience could use their imagination to connect the words they were hearing to their body. This made his work much more personal and individualized, which he believed would increase the effectiveness of portraying suffering.

#### **Theatre of the Absurd**

Theatre of the Absurd: This genre generally includes metaphysical representations of existential qualms and questions. Theatre of the absurd denies rationality, and embraces the inevitability of falling into the abyss of the human condition. Instead of discussing these issues, however, theatre of the absurd is a demonstration of them. This leaves the audience to discuss and question the content of the play for themselves.

One of the main aspects of theatre of the absurd is the physical contradiction to language. Oftentimes, the dialogue between characters will directly oppose their actions. Famous playwrights within this genre include Beckett, Sartre, Ionesco, Adamov, and Genet.

#### **Conclusion**

In the end we conclude the facts come in light that how these forms works. Theatre is also a form of performing arts but the performance of theatre art is different. This paper will help to understand the different forms and working style of Performing arts and Theatre.

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