

Behind the Seams:

The Story of the Dance Costume

A Costume Production Monograph

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Introduction to the project:

Behind the Seams: The Story of the Dance Costume is a research series that is investigating not only the history of dance costumes but also the future to which it is heading. The centerpiece of the project is a series of podcasts, interviewing luminaries in the fields of dance costume creation and inter-related technologies. Though I have outlined podcasts with many different guests and topics, I have selected four to use in the monograph as my proof of concept, including: Whitney Laemlli on the history of the pointe shoe, Jarod Lewis on the New York City Ballet's Fall Fashion Gala, Claudia Folts owner of Tutu.com on her company, and Catherine Zehr Costume Designer for Ballets with a Twist. To ground my understanding of traditional dance wear and enrich my conversations with podcast guests, I include as part of my monograph, the making of a classical tutu and ballet bodice. For this I have chosen to realize a design by Tony award winning costume designer Gregg Barnes for the New York City Ballet's *Cinderella*. The objective of both the creation of the dance costume and the interviews is to further my own knowledge and hear from experts in the field about their own personal learned experiences. We as a community rely on one another to pass down these time honored techniques so through the podcast and creation of this monograph this documentation will be useful to sustain such an intricate and time honored tradition of making. There are no other podcasts doing research into the history of the dance costume, its evolution over time, and where the future is taking it. Discussing these topics with experts in the field about the history as well as up and coming people and where they see the future of such a niche area is going, I learned not only about traditions but also what are the cutting edge ideas amongst the experts in the field. I left my interviews feeling inspired by the makers, artisans, and designers. This research is critical and comes at a time when fewer and fewer people are learning the art of the creation of the dance costume and preserving the art form is so important at this point in time. Over seven and a half months I explored the creation of a traditional tutu, bodice, wings, tiara, and cultivated a multipart podcast series. These pieces will interact together on a live dancer and come together with the creation of the garment and the intersection of the podcast bringing the history and techniques learned through the interview process to life.

Initial Calendar:

INITIAL CALENDAR

AUGUST:

- GRANT APPLICATIONS DUE
- FABRIC SHOPPING
- FIRST INTERVIEW

SEPTEMBER:

- FIRST TUTU FITTING

OCTOBER:

- SECOND INTERVIEW

NOVEMBER:

- FINAL TUTU FITTING
- ATTENDING TEXAS THESPIANS

DECEMBER:

- TUTU DUE

JANUARY:

- THIRD INTERVIEW

FEBRUARY:

- EDIT EPISODES

MARCH:

- WORK ON WINGS & TIARA

APRIL:

- TIARA & WINGS DONE
- PREP FINAL PRESNETATION
- FINALIZE PODCAST EPISODES

Updated Calendar:

UPDATED CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER:

- FABRIC SHOPPING - 1ST - 4TH
- FRFF GRANT APPLICATION DUE - 25TH

OCTOBER:

- FIRST TUTU FITTING - 3RD

NOVEMBER:

- ATTENDING TEXAS THESPIANS - 15TH - 18TH
- FINAL TUTU FITTING / PHOTOS - 28TH

DECEMBER:

- FIRST INTERVIEW - 6TH
- SECOND INTERVIEW - 13TH

FEBRUARY:

- THIRD INTERVIEW - 5TH
- FOURTH INTERVIEW - 14TH

MARCH:

- CREATE WINGS & TIARA - 2ND - 10TH
- EDIT PODCAST EPISODES - 13TH - 20TH

APRIL:

- TIARA & WINGS DONE
- FINALIZE PODCAST EPISODES

Frank Ratchye Further Fund (FRFF) Grant Minimum Budget Proposal:

At the beginning of this process back in September I applied for the Frank Ratchye Further Fund (FRFF) Grant. I received \$1,300 based on my minimum budget proposal to help fund my monograph. This grant allowed me to pay for beads for the tutu, tiara, and wings. As well as both my podcast editing software and pay to ship my microphones for optimal audio recording around the country to various guests. Without this grant my monograph would not have been possible and I am deeply grateful for The Frank Ratchye Studio for Creative Inquiry's generosity.

Minimum Budget				
DATE NEEDED	ITEM / SERVICE	QTY	ESTIMATED COST PER UNIT	SUBTOTALS
10/16/23	Podcast -- Alitu Editing Software	8	\$38.00	\$304.00
10/16/23	Podcast -- Shipping podcast materials to guests	6	\$40.00	\$240.00
10/16/23	Wings -- Wing and arm swag base fabric	2	\$20.00	\$40.00
10/16/23	Wings -- Metallic White and Pale Gold 3D Floral Embroidered Lace on a White Netting	1	\$75.00	\$75.00
10/16/23	Wings -- Beading for wings	250	\$1.50	\$375.00
10/16/23	Tiara-- Beads for Tiara	100	\$1.50	\$150.00
TOTAL OF COLUMN F aka "Subtotals"				\$1,184.00

Part 1: The tutu

Built as part of a course project for Carnegie Mellon University's School of Drama 54779, Dancewear Techniques and for purposes of better informing my research, the classroom project expectations were expanded to utilize more couture techniques, including extensive beading and creating synthetic feathers.

The ballet is *Cinderella*, music composed by Sergei Prokofiev. The variation is one of the fairies, specifically what is usually the "Winter Fairy". The rendering I am using is one designed by Gregg Barnes for the New York City Ballet. The rendering is labeled "Tiara Fairy" a different take on the fairies normally being themed "seasons", she is the fairy that brings the tiara to *Cinderella*. The aesthetic choices are still heavily influenced by winter with its striking colors of blue and gold, with sparkles.

The music for the piece is Op. 87, Act 1, No. 16. This is a point in the ballet when the Fairy Godmother reveals herself and summons the fairies of Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter. The music for the Winter fairy is almost dizzying as the music cascades up and down, and around and around. It is light and ethereal, uplifting and buoyant. The choreography features turns and light, delicate, precise footwork as she piques from one side of the stage to another.

In the sketch that I am using by Mr. Barnes, he uses an interesting combination of both blue and gold instead of just cool tones which I think makes the design even more striking to the eye, like snow caught in the warm light of a street lamp. I picture the tutu for the Winter or "Tiara Fairy" to be that of a Christmas tree when there is heavy snow on top, almost a slightly droopy effect like it is being weighed down by the snow.



Before this project I had made many tutus; however, this one was special in so many ways. I created the patterns from various methods of draping and drafting as well as combining the two to fully realize the patterns the garment is made from. I initially taped out style lines based on Mr. Barnes' rendering that I felt reflected it accurately. Draped on the dress form, the bodice pattern was traced in paper. For the knickers I selected a scale pattern from Lawson and Revitt's *Dressing For the Ballet*. The pattern needed to be sized up accurately and modified to my dancer's measurements. The basque, which joins to the knickers and sits under the bodice going from the high hip line to the waistline, was drafted using the knicker and bodice patterns as reference so that all measurements on various patterns equalled each other.

The bodice, basque, and knickers were then mocked up for a first fitting. With just those garments on we were able to see how these foundations fit. The edits that needed to happen were: extending the top and bottom finishing edges on the bodice, taking in the side seams of the bodice, and taking up the knickers where they meet the basque. Once those were fit we then applied a fitting tutu where most of the net layers have been applied to a yoke that can be easily affixed to the knickers sits at the point the knickers meet the basque. This will allow us to achieve a level tutu when the dancer is in relevé. We also checked to see if the width of the tutu was a good match for the dancer or if it needed to be bigger or smaller. We ended up going two inches bigger than the fitting tutu to create a soft, drooped effect instead of the still "pancake" like effect the fitting tutu created. At this point, we also established where the hoop and its casing would sit within the tutu and how big the circumference would be to create the shape we were going for to be accurate to the rendering.

After this fitting I edited my patterns accordingly and was then able to move forward with cutting the real fabric and beginning the tedious building process. This process started with dyeing the knickers fabric a blue color from white to match most of the tutu net layers. I did several swatches with the various blue dyes we have in our stock and finally got a soft, pale blue color that would match most of the net layers. This knickers fabric, known as bobbinet, was then quilted with two layers of itself together and stitched in a $3/4" \times 3/4"$ grid on the industrial sewing machine with a specialty foot. After being quilted, I played a game of Tetris laying out the knickers pattern on the quilted bobbinet that had now gone through two

steps of shrinking between the dyeing and quilting processes. After being cut out, the various lines in which the layers had to be applied were then hand stitched in so that later I could see where the rows were being applied as I worked my way up from leg line to where the knickers meet the basque. In addition, there is hand stitching in a contrasting color at the quarter points on the knickers so that once I pleated the net and marked its quarter points I would know where the two met up.

All of this hand sewing and Tetris playing done, time to cut and pleat all the net! I cut varying widths of net according to the different rows as they go from leg line to high hip line. Working my way upwards, I started at row one — the leg line. This row would get two widths of tulle cut at 4" (unlike net, tulle is very soft so I doubled the traditional width and folded it so that it had some support on itself to stand up and support other layers). As each row got higher and closer to the high hip line so did the widths and lengths of the net or tulle also increase.

Here is the math:

Row 1	1 1/2 widths @ 4" — doubled	Row 8	3 1/2 widths @ 9"
Row 2	2 widths @ 6" — doubled	Row 9	3 1/2 widths @ 10"
Row 3	2 1/2 widths @ 4"	Row 10	4 widths @ 11"
Row 4	2 1/2 widths @ 5"	Row 11	4 widths @ 12"
Row 5	2 1/2 widths @ 6"	Row 12	4 widths @ 13"
Row 6	3 widths @ 7"	Row 13	4 widths @ 14"
Row 7	3 widths @ 8"		

Here is then the color mapping of the net layers:

Row 1	smokey blue tulle — doubled	Row 8	dip dyed and gold leafed white net
Row 2	smokey blue tulle — doubled	Row 9	dip dyed and gold leafed white net
Row 3	cotillion blue net	Row 10	dip dyed and gold leafed white net
Row 4	cotillion blue net	Row 11	gold net
Row 5	cotillion blue net	Row 12	gold tulle
Row 6	cotillion blue net	Row 13	silver pleated and gold leafed tulle
Row 7	cotillion blue net		

Rows 8, 9, and 10 of the tutu - as noted in the color mapping chart - got dip dyed blue on the side that was applied to the knickers and the other side was left white so that it could have a gold leafing effect applied to it. Samples were done to find the best glue to be used when doing the gold leafing so that it did not shed. The best option ended up being a fabric glue that still remains a little tacky to the touch. I then needed to be careful with the netting because it does pick up lint and threads but the gold leafing has yet to shed. Everything was cut and specialty layers decorated, I then dagged the edge of the netting that would be going out away from the body which created a more feathered appearance finishing the hard edge in a softer, more delicate manner. I used a template for this dagging and did samples beforehand so that I knew how it would look and if the edges would still lay flat and not curl. On the pleating, all layers were laid out and their quarter points marked. Math was then done to know where the quarter points of the net when pleated would match up with the quarter points of the knickers. For example: row one measures at 108" in length once each width is seamed together. The quarter points of that would be every 27". The quarter points for the knickers measured every 9 1/2" if her low hip is 38". I then knew that I needed to pleat 27" down to 9 1/2" every quarter of the 108" strip. This takes some practice to get but once you find a rhythm it moves pretty quickly. Something to also think about when pleating is that every other row is pleated in the opposite direction. So all even rows would have the dagged edge going towards the inside of the industrial sewing machine arm whereas, all odd rows would be facing out away from the arm then one is able to use the standard throat plate on the machine as a normal seam allowance guide if needed. I then applied each of these rows of net to the knickers with rows 1-12 with the "headers" going

down towards the leg line. Row 13 would have the header going up so that it is clean finished off by the basque being applied.

The basque is applied with both the fashion fabric, that matches the bodice, and the lining fabric, a cotton sateen, with the seam allowance going up in the same manner that the last row header is going up. This sandwiches the last row header and the raw edge of the knickers to clean finish those edges and conceal them inside. The layers of the basque are then pushed upwards away from the knickers and the waistband finishings are applied to conceal the basque fashion fabric and lining edges in the thinnest manner possible so as to not add bulk. Closures are placed at center back as well as buttons are applied to the outside on the waistband. These buttons will connect to buttonhole elastic on the bodice later so that the bodice and tutu act as one unit and do not separate during the dancer's movement.

Once all layers are applied to the knickers, the crotch seam of the knickers is machined closed and the center back of the tutu is hand whip stitched closed on each side of the placket. The placket is only closed to a certain point so that the dancer can still get into the tutu. Later, hooks and bars will be applied where the opening still exists to close the tutu once the dancer is in the costume. Once the placket and crotch are closed, each of the layers of the tutu are closed at center back. The rows are closed from the dagged edge to about 8" from the center back seam, again to let the dancer still be able to get into the costume. Now that these rows are closed, the hoop can be slipped into place through its casing that was top applied to Row 8 before that row was ruffled. The hoop is then wrapped and whipped closed to be one continuous circle.

To wrap up the construction of the tutu, I tacked all 13 layers together. I used an extra long hand sewing needle, around 3-4", and went up from the bottom most layer all the way to the top most layer. When doing this I made sure to not dimple the top most layer by applying too much tension on the thread. I did this tacking at 8 different points around the tutu circumference. This is all done with the tutu on the dress form. After tacking, I then flip the tutu over with the bottom most layer facing the ceiling and allowed it to hang off the table ever so slightly. With a standard hand sewing needle that I feel fits in my hand best, often one I've lovingly worked a slight curve into, I take a small bite of Row 1 at the edge of the ruffle where it is dagged and to the ruffle below it. After that bite, I then I

felt fit another to anchor it. Next, I did the same thing and go to Row 2, biting near the edge and to the row beneath it. During this process I am using a continuous thread and not tying off until I run out of thread or get to the terminal edge of the tutu biting to the last layer. These processes are done so that through leaps and turns performed by the dancer, all the layers stay intact and do not splay everywhere and get in the dancer's or their partners way.

I stitched the bodice as one normally would for theatrical purposes, applying Prussian tape as a bone casing on only the coutille, or flat lining fabric. After the bone casing gets applied to the cut out lining pieces I then placed those pieces on my fashion fabric of the bodice, the fashion fabric which the audience sees on stage. I stitched these together in a standard fashion and applied cording to seams such as the princess, side back, and top and bottom finishing lines. The center front panel is special in that it has two layers of fashion fabric. It has the gold brocade and then the blue pleated and gold leafed tulle that coordinates with the top plate.

The finishing touches are as follows: the top plate is a mixture of appliqués and beading. The appliqués have been delicately cut and placed around, working their way from center front to the back in a swooping motion and mimicking that of the ice inspiration photo. The beading used is a mixture of raw mother of pearls, blue dyed pearls, and gold leafed beads. They are individually strung on in cluster like shapes to give more weight to their appearance visually. The center front of the bodice uses these same techniques. There are appliqués as well as clusters of beads along the center front panel. On the princess line there are individually strung mother of pearl beads cascading down that line of the body. Finally, there are silk organza feathers made by cutting a piece of rigilene placed down the center, then shredded by hand. Six, 12" long feathers took about 10 hours to create.

The tiara is hand shaped sprung steel wire with individually placed beads on the shaped wire pieces. There are three rows of different shapes to create depth on the head. The front row has four low half circles, the middle has three large peaks, and the last row a large half moon. These shaped wire pieces now strung with various beads and crystals are placed on another piece of shaped sprung steel much like a headband. The shaped beaded pieces are then wired on to the headband structure. These pieces become one unit and then the headband base is wrapped in hug snug to cover all

the wire that has attached the two pieces together. Finally, horsehair is attached to the hug snug so that the dancer may pin the tiara to her head and an elastic strap is put across the back so that it may sit snuggly below the dancer's bun as another anchoring point. The wings are made similarly, the wire is shaped, pieces connected with wire, and then hug snug covers the wire to finish the edge. The wings then use the same fabric as the top plate and center front bodice panel and it is pleated across the wire frame. The fabric is then stitched down to the hug snug and it is ready to be rhinestoned. The rhinestones are glued on with E6000, a toxic adhesive. This meant sitting under the vent hood with a respirator on while individually glueing hundreds of rhinestones on. I created a general glueing pattern and then added the rhinestones alternating colors as I saw fit.

Design Inspiration:



Looking at the color blending of the net layers as the dancer extends her leg and what that looks like through the top and under side of the skirt. This will help when exploring the color blending of net on the tutu layers.



Looking at how the snow transitions to ice and then to water in this delicate lace like pattern. Would be great to explore on the top plate pattern.



Looking at how the snow weighs down the tree and has this gentle slope that reflects how the rendering of the tutu has a natural gentle slope.



Looking how the light reflects through the snow on the branches of the tree and how this can be a choice when applying beading to the tutu and bodice.



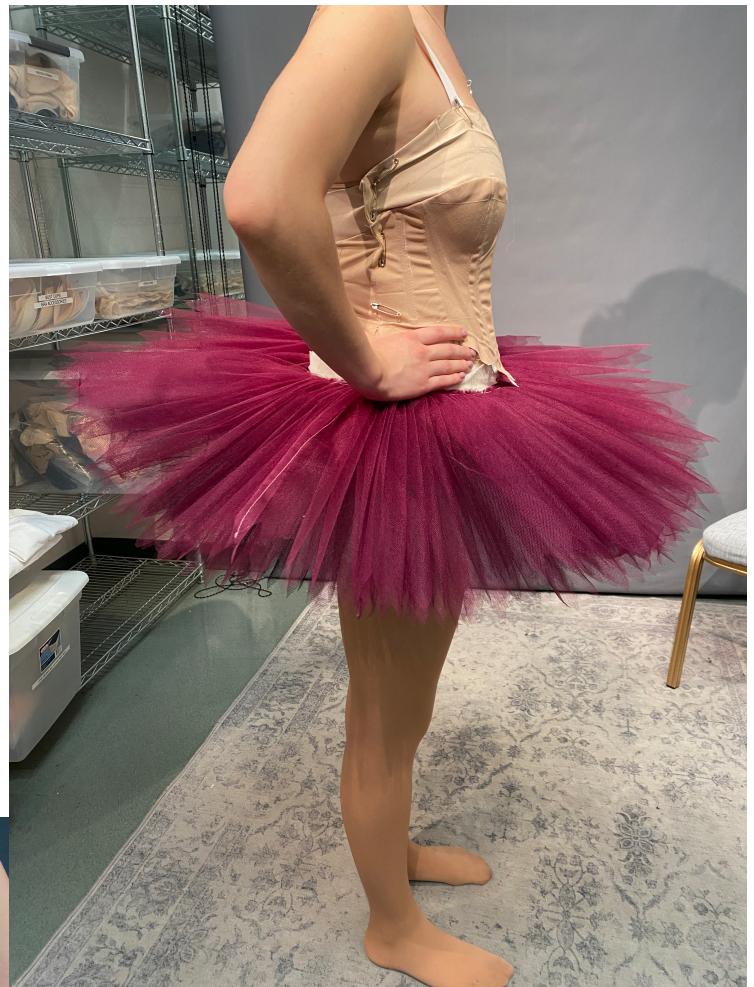
Looking at decorations on the top plate of the tutu as well as the dagged edge of the tutu that creates a more feathered appearance to the edge of the tutu.



Looking at how the light reflects with the snow and how this can be applicable to the beading created on the bodice and the top plate.

Fitting Photos:

Side view of mock up with fitting tutu on.



Front view of mock up showing alterations to be done on the bodice and basque.

Dyeing process of rows 8, 9, and 10.



Left: Rows drying after the gold leafing process



Right: Row 1 being applied to the knickers after being pleated



Left: All the net rows after being pleated, waiting to be applied to the knickers.



Right: feather after being created, before the spine was gold leafed





Here I am quilting the tutu rows together. Note the tutu is flipped upside down and hanging off the table slightly as I quilt.

Below you can see the change of colors as it progresses from row to row. You can see Rows 8 - 10 that have been gold leafed. The hoop can also be seen in Row 8 specifically at center back.



The Final:



Part 2: The Podcast

The podcast series could be ever expanding as new guests, ideas or areas of study emerge. The topics and guests initially proposed were as follows...

My sew-losophy

- * History of the pointe shoe
- * Larger scale production work — tutu.com — Claudia Folts
- Wardrobe and maintenance in dance costuming — Tomoko Ueda-Dunbar
- History of the dance costume — multiple parts
- Draping for dance — former NYCB Draper — Anna Light
- * Fall fashion gala — NYCB Shop Manager— Jarod Lewis
- Travis Halsey's impact on the dance costume — Adam Schnell
- Teaching young students to make tutus — Nina Reed
- * Building for dance with a theme — Catherine Zehr
- Building for non-traditional bodies — Ballet Trocadero
- Regional dance — Jason Hadley
- Designing for dance — Robert Perdziola

From the above I narrowed to those marked by asterisks. Next, the method of recording and questions to be asked needed to be explored and settled upon.

When beginning the budgeting for this I anticipated it being even more expensive than my minimum budget request for the FRFF Grant because I would have to buy all the equipment. Fortunately for me, the CMU Drama Department went through a time when all productions were done remotely. The sound department had equipment that has been sitting in their stock just waiting to be used again. With the advice of my advisors I reached out to the sound department and asked to borrow several microphones for myself and to ship across the country to my guests. I had two guests in New York City, one in Charlotte, North Carolina, and I interviewed one here in person on Carnegie Mellon's Campus. For my on campus interview I used one microphone set up on a table between the two of us with the microphone adjusted to pick up sound from the front and the back. I used GarageBand to record this process which did a great job and was later uploaded into the editing software. The other three interviews were conducted over Zoom so we could see each other as we spoke and it was recorded using their software and later plugged into my editing

platform. Minus one wifi hiccup during my last interview I think the recording went well. The microphones worked great and required very little instruction on setting up. Only one person needed an adapter which was also provided for by the sound department. The microphone boxes were very well packaged so that no damage would come to the microphone. I did put that box inside another box with even more padding just in case.

When finding an editing software I did some Google searches to see what was out there. I read a lot of online reviews and also watched YouTube reviews hearing samples of what people could do with the software. I came to the conclusion that the best program for me would be Alitu. It was well priced and very user friendly as a beginner. It also offered me transition music for free which was a big plus.

I interviewed four different people in the industry. First, Whitney Laemlli, a professor of History here at Carnegie Mellon University, with whom I discussed the history of the pointe shoe, which is a topic she wrote about and has a connection to as a former dancer herself. Second, Jarod Lewis, the current Costume Shop Manager at New York City Ballet. I discussed a moment in their season called The Fall Fashion Gala and the history behind the annual event and where he sees it going in the future. Next, Catherine Zehr, the Costume Designer for Ballets with a Twist, her creativity when it comes to her memorable company and designs. Finally, I interviewed Claudia Folts, the owner of the iconic staple of the dance community Tutu.com about the mass production aspects of her company and how she remains at the forefront of the industry.

When coming up with questions for people I did a lot of research on their work whether that be Whitney's paper on the pointe shoe, history of the Fall Fashion Gala at New York City Ballet, viewing videos of Catherine's work at Ballets with Twist in motion, or even listening to other interviews Claudia has done about herself and her company. I read a lot of articles on the history of dance costumes and how we have evolved over time. Mr. Hugh Hanson's podcast series for our Dancewear Techniques class is very thorough in the history of not only the dance costume but also that of iconic dancers which was informative and insightful to have listened to before interviewing people like Whitney and Claudia who reference these famous dancers. I studied many videos of dancers "destroying" their pointe shoes after conversations with Whitney about how dancers customize their shoes to best fit and support their feet and ankles. The focus of the conversation

was often the history of the topic of the interview but the important question to remember was “where is the future leading us to?”.

See Appendix 1 - 4 for openers, and closers of the various episodes as well as selected questions from the about 10 - 15 I had prepared for the guests. Following, you will find some quotes that resonated with me from each of my guests. They provide an eloquent summation of my reflection on both the process and product of my monograph.

“A lot of the resistance [against modernizing the pointe shoe] is actually driven by the idea that dancing shouldn’t be comfortable, that there’s an inherent part of being a ballet dancer that is about pain and suffering and overcoming it, and that getting away from that, you’re actually losing something that’s central to the identity of the field.” — Whitney Laemmlie

“[The] women’s tights we buy as white and then we hand dye them to match the skin tone of each individual dancer...We have 120 mesh swatches that replicate the range of all different skin tones. It’s more work on our end...for the dancers it’s something that they could only have dreamt of when they were first learning to dance.” — Jarod Lewis

“Our martini tutu is very narrow.. that’s a little unusual for a tutu. I would say I’m kind of making my own traditions.” — Catherine Zehr

“I mean tutus, I can think of nine different ways to make a classical tutu. They’re all fine, they all work. It just depends on what look you want... so you just have to have an open mind. I think the worst thing you can do is say ‘no, it can’t be done that way’.” — Claudia Folts

Appendix 1

Whitney Opener:

Hello everyone and welcome to Behind the Seams: The Story of the Dance Costume. Today we are talking to Whitney Laemlli who is an incredible historian and former dancer herself. She often explores the history and future of dance, specifically that of the pointe shoe and how that has impacted and continues to impact not only dance choreography but also the dancer. I hope you enjoy today's episode as we delve into the innovation that is the pointe shoe and where future technologies are taking it. The pointe shoe is an iconic and essential piece of equipment in classical ballet, allowing dancers to perform on the tips of their toes, creating the illusion of floating or flying across the stage. The concept of dancing on tiptoe dates back centuries, with depictions of dancers in elevated footwear found in ancient Egyptian murals and artwork. However, it wasn't until the 18th century that the pointe shoe as we know it began to take shape. The pointe shoe gained prominence in the early 19th century with the rise of Romantic ballet. Ballerina Marie Taglioni is often credited with popularizing pointe work in her performance as the Sylph in "La Sylphide" 1832. Taglioni's ethereal and seemingly weightless dancing captivated audiences and inspired generations of dancers to strive for the same level of grace and skill. Early pointe shoes were stiff and lacked the supportive structure of modern designs. Dancers would often sew ribbons or fabric around their feet to help support their ankles and prevent injuries. Over time, pointe shoe construction evolved to incorporate features such as reinforced boxes, shanks, and elastic inserts to provide greater support and flexibility. Throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, advancements in materials and technology have led to further improvements in pointe shoe design. Companies such as Capezio, Freed of London, Bloch, and Gaynor Minden have become renowned for their pointe shoes, each offering a variety of styles and options to suit the individual needs of dancers. Pointe shoes are often customized to fit the unique shape and size of each dancer's foot. Professional dancers may have their shoes specially made or modified by a skilled pointe shoe fitter to ensure optimal fit and performance. The pointe shoe has become a symbol of ballet's grace, beauty, and discipline. It is an integral part of the classical ballet aesthetic and is often featured prominently in ballet performances and imagery. Overall, the pointe shoe has a rich history rooted in the traditions of classical ballet. Its evolution over the centuries reflects not only advancements in footwear technology

but also the dedication and artistry of generations of dancers striving to achieve the highest levels of technical skill and artistic expression. Again, I hope you enjoy today's conversation as we explore the history and future of the pointe shoe with Whitney and have an insightful conversation on a piece so integral to the idea of classical ballet as we know it today.

Whitney selected questions:

1. What were some of the initial challenges faced by dancers when attempting to dance on their toes, and how did early pointe shoes address these issues?
2. How has the design of pointe shoes evolved over the years? Are there specific changes in construction, materials, or aesthetics that mark different eras in pointe shoe development?
3. Can you discuss any cultural or stylistic variations in pointe shoe design and usage in different countries or ballet traditions?
4. What are the challenges and considerations that pointe shoe manufacturers face when creating customized shoes for individual dancers?

Whitney Closer:

As we come to the end of this episode, it's clear that the pointe shoe is not just footwear for dancers; it's a symbol of grace, dedication, and the pursuit of perfection. From its humble beginnings centuries ago to the advanced designs of today, the pointe shoe has undergone remarkable evolution, mirroring the evolution of ballet itself. Looking ahead, we anticipate further innovation and refinement in pointe shoe technology. As dancers continue to push the boundaries of what is possible, manufacturers will undoubtedly respond with shoes that offer greater support, comfort, and durability while still allowing for the freedom of movement essential to the art of ballet. But beyond the physical aspects, the pointe shoe will always carry with it a sense of tradition and reverence. It represents the countless hours of training, the sacrifices made, and the sheer determination required to achieve the seemingly impossible: dancing on the tips of one's toes. As we continue to celebrate the history and future of the pointe shoe, let us also remember the dancers who have worn them – past, present, and future. Their talent, passion, and unwavering commitment to their craft are what truly bring these shoes to life on stage, inspiring audiences around the world with every graceful step. Thank you for joining us on this journey through the fascinating world of the pointe shoe with Whitney Laemlli. I hope you've gained a deeper appreciation for this iconic piece of ballet attire and the incredible dancers who wear them.

Appendix 2

Jarod Opener:

Hello everyone and welcome to Behind the Seams: The Story of the Dance Costume. Today we are talking to Jarod Lewis, the Costume Shop Manager of New York City Ballet as we discuss the topic of the Fall Fashion Gala. I hope you enjoy it as Jarod tells a little bit about both the history of the Gala and the future in which he sees it going. The Fall Fashion Gala was first introduced in 2012 by Sarah Jessica Parker, who was then a member of the board of the New York City Ballet. The idea was to combine the worlds of fashion and ballet in a glamorous event that would raise funds for the ballet company. Each year, the gala features collaborations between fashion designers and choreographers. Designers create original costumes for ballet performances choreographed specifically for the gala. This fusion of fashion and dance has led to some remarkable and innovative collaborations over the years. The Fall Fashion Gala attracts celebrities, fashion icons, ballet enthusiasts, and philanthropists from around the world. The gala typically includes performances of new works, often commissioned specifically for the event. These performances showcase the talents of the New York City Ballet dancers and highlight the creative vision of the collaborating choreographers and designers. In addition to raising funds through ticket sales, the Fall Fashion Gala also includes auctions and other fundraising campaigns. The proceeds support the New York City Ballet's performances, education programs, and other initiatives. Since its inception, the Fall Fashion Gala has continued to grow in popularity and success. It has become a highlight of the New York City cultural scene and a significant fundraiser for the ballet company. Overall, the Fall Fashion Gala at the New York City Ballet is a unique and glamorous event that celebrates the intersection of fashion and dance while supporting one of the world's premier ballet companies. Again, I hope you enjoy today's conversation with Jarod Lewis as we delve into The Fall Fashion Gala.

Jarod selected questions:

1. Balancing fashion-forward designs with the practicality of dance costumes can be challenging. How did the designers address the need for functionality and freedom of movement?
2. Were there any specific challenges in creating costumes that are both visually striking and suitable for the physical demands of dance?
3. How do you believe the infusion of fashion into ballet costumes enhances the audience's experience?
4. Have you noticed any changes in audience reactions or perceptions of ballet as a result of incorporating fashion elements?

Jarod Closer:

As we conclude this episode, The New York City Ballet's Fall Fashion Gala stands as a testament to the power of collaboration, creativity, and community. From its inception, this annual event has not only raised crucial funds for one of the world's premier ballet companies but has also served as a dazzling showcase of artistic innovation. The fusion of fashion and dance has produced breathtaking performances, where each pirouette and plié is adorned with the elegance and sophistication of couture. As we gaze toward the future, we can only imagine the heights to which the Fall Fashion Gala will soar. With each passing year, new designers, choreographers, and philanthropists will bring their unique vision and passion to this celebrated event, ensuring its continued success and impact for generations to come. Thank you for joining us on this journey through the history and future of the New York City Ballet's Fall Fashion Gala with the incredible Jarod Lewis.

Appendix 3

Claudia Opener:

Hello everyone and welcome to Behind the Seams: The Story of the Dance Costume. Today we are having a lovely conversation with a woman who is a staple of the dance costume industry, Claudia Folts, owner of tutu.com. Tutu.com is a prominent online retailer specializing in ballet costumes, particularly tutus, and dancewear. Tutu.com was founded by Claudia, a former professional ballet dancer, in the early 1990s. Claudia recognized a need for high-quality, customizable ballet costumes, particularly tutus, for dancers and dance companies around the world. Over the years, Tutu.com has expanded its product offerings to include a wide range of dancewear, accessories, and costume-making supplies. The company caters to dancers of all ages and levels, from aspiring students to professional performers. One of the key features of Tutu.com is its customization options for ballet costumes. Customers can choose from a variety of styles, fabrics, colors, and embellishments to create a unique costume tailored to their preferences and specifications. Tutu.com has a global customer base, serving dancers and dance companies in countries around the world. The company ships internationally and has built a reputation for providing high-quality products and excellent customer service. In addition to selling dancewear and costumes, Tutu.com offers a wealth of educational resources and tutorials for dancers and costume makers. The website features step-by-step guides, video tutorials, and articles covering topics such as costume construction, embellishment techniques, and care instructions. Tutu.com is actively involved in the dance community, sponsoring events, workshops, and competitions to support dancers and dance organizations. Overall, Tutu.com has become a trusted resource for dancers and dance companies seeking high-quality costumes and dancewear. Its commitment to customization, quality, and customer service has solidified its reputation as a leading provider of ballet costumes and accessories in the dance industry. I hope you enjoy today's episode as we have an incredible conversation with Claudia about the rich traditions of dance costume making, specifically tutus, and where she sees the future of her company going forward.

Claudia selected questions:

1. Are there specific technological advancements that have significantly impacted the production process?
2. Have you noticed any shifts in what dancers and companies are looking for in terms of costume styles and features?
3. What challenges does Tutu.com face in the dance costume industry, and how do you navigate them?
4. Have there been any industry-wide changes that have influenced how Tutu.com operates?

Claudia Closer:

As we reach the final moments of our exploration into the fascinating world of Tutu.com, we're reminded of the profound impact this platform has had on the dance community worldwide. From its humble beginnings to its current status as a beacon of creativity and innovation, Tutu.com has been a pioneer in providing dancers and dance companies with access to high-quality, customizable costumes and dancewear. Its commitment to excellence, customization, and customer service has made it a trusted resource for dancers of all ages and levels. As we gaze into the future of Tutu.com, we envision continued growth and expansion, with the platform continuing to evolve to meet the changing needs of the dance community. It's a testament to the creativity, ingenuity, and spirit of collaboration that drives dancers and costume makers alike to push the boundaries of what's possible. So, as we bid farewell to this episode, let us carry with us the inspiration and empowerment that Tutu.com represents. Thank you for joining us on this journey through the history and future of Tutu.com with Claudia Folts.

Appendix 4

Catherine Opener:

Today we are talking to Catherine Zehr, the Costume Designer for Ballets with a Twist. Catherine is not only an incredible designer but she also makes all the costumes for Ballets With a Twist herself. She is a dear friend of mine that continues to lead me in exploring the art form of ballet and the dance costume. It was a joy to speak with her. I hope you enjoy today's conversation as we explore the history and future of Ballets with a Twist and their creative concepts and inspiring takes on the world of ballet. Marilyn Klaus founded Ballets with a Twist in 1996 with the goal of creating original dance works that would appeal to a broad audience. Klaus, who has a background in both classical ballet and theater, sought to blend the precision and technique of ballet with the excitement and accessibility of popular culture. In its early years, Ballets with a Twist focused on creating original dance productions that reinterpreted classical ballet themes with a modern take. These productions often featured vibrant costumes, eclectic music selections, and dynamic choreography. Over the years, Ballets with a Twist expanded its repertoire and gained recognition for its innovative approach to dance. The company began touring nationally and internationally, performing at theaters, festivals, and other venues around the world. Ballets with a Twist is perhaps best known for its signature production "Cocktail Hour." This production combines elements of ballet, theater, and storytelling to create immersive and entertaining experiences for audiences. Under Marilyn Klaus's artistic direction, Ballets with a Twist continues to innovate and push the boundaries of dance. The company remains committed to creating original works that blend classical ballet with contemporary culture, while also engaging with audiences in new and exciting ways. Overall, Ballets with a Twist has carved out a unique niche in the world of dance with its inventive and engaging productions. Through its fusion of classical ballet with elements of popular culture and theater, the company has attracted a diverse and devoted following, and continues to inspire audiences around the world. Again, I hope you enjoy today's episode as we speak with Catherine about her creative process and where she sees the future of the dance costume going forward.

Catherine selected questions:

1. How closely do you collaborate with choreographers to ensure that your costume designs complement the artistic vision of the performance?
2. Can you provide an example of a collaboration that particularly stands out to you?
3. Ballets with a Twist often combines storytelling with dance. How do you approach incorporating narrative elements into your costume designs?
4. Do you have a favorite project where the costumes played a significant role in telling the story?

Catherine Closer:

From the inception of this dynamic dance company to its current status as a trailblazer in the realm of costume design, Ballets with a Twist has continually pushed the boundaries of tradition, captivating audiences with its imaginative and evocative creations. As we look to the future of Ballets with a Twist costumes, we see a continuation of this spirit of innovation and creativity. With each new production, each new collaboration, the company will continue to dazzle and inspire with its ability to transform dancers into characters, stories, and worlds beyond imagination. But beyond the stage, Ballets with a Twist costumes serve as a reminder of the transformative power of art. Through their intricate designs, vibrant colors, and attention to detail, these costumes invite us to see the world in new ways, to explore the depths of our imagination, and to embrace the beauty of diversity and individuality. Thank you for joining me on this journey through the history and future of Ballets with a Twist with the incredible Catherine Zehr.

Appendix 5

Lengths of the episodes are as follows:

- Episode 1: History and Future of the Pointe Shoe with Whitney Laemmlie — 38 min
- Episode 2: History and Future of The Fall Fashion Gala with Jarod Lewis — 57 min
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- Episode 3: History and Future of Ballets With A Twist with Catherine Zehr — 52 min
- Episode 4: History and Future of Tutu. com with Claudia Folts — 47 min

Conclusion:

In the process of diving into the rich history of dance costumes, Behind the Seams: The Story of the Dance Costume was meant to explore not only the history of dance costumes but also the future to which it is heading. The centerpiece of that being interviewing experts in the field of dance costume creation and inter-related technologies. Through these cultivated interviews I found so much passion and joy in the community that I hope to enter post graduation. The love for what these makers, artisans, and designers do shows a dedication to their work that I strive for. The continuation of the podcast is endless. I have listed several more episodes as possibilities for the future of the podcast and how I see it progressing. In addition, through the exploration of the traditional tutu and bodice construction I have rooted myself in time honored, bespoke construction techniques. This Monograph exploration has illuminated the intricate connection between tradition and innovation in the dance costume and its inter-related technologies. Over the last seven and a half months of exploration and creation, this Monograph became a living embodiment of the intersection of history, creation, and creativity. In closing, Behind the Seams: The Story of the Dance Costume is testament of the power of storytelling, collaboration, and dedication to the history and preservation of dance costumes. I hope this research brings those who connect with it a sense of passion and spark of curiosity for not only future costume makers but also anyone who has a love for dance as a whole.

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