

## **Dancing in an Epidemic: The interplay of dance and AIDS in 1980's America.**

### **1. Introduction**

For many years there has been a consistent association between gay men and dance. Following the decrease in 'masculine' work after the industrial revolution, men were no longer pigeon holed into one profession. This led to some men choosing careers in the arts and in dance. It is clear that there is an urban myth that all males who partake in ballet or contemporary dance, widely seen by some as effeminate pastimes, are themselves effeminate, therefore they must be homosexual. For a long time the apparent connection between gay men and dance remained unexplained and unfounded; it was not until the latter half of the twentieth century when social and cultural commentators highlighted this apparent link between the gay community and dance. This link was cemented on the third of July 1981, when the male dancer, his body and his sexuality would become a part of an epidemic (Gere 2004:4.) It was on this day that GRID (gay related immune deficiency) entered the public domain in a news paper article referring to consistent cases of skin cancer among gay men. Shortly after this, GRID, later named AIDS, became a recognised disease with epidemic status spreading panic and fear among American society. The disease was quickly traced to gay men and became a predominantly 'gay disease.' However, it is important to note that cases of AIDS and HIV were also contracted from blood transfusions, intravenous drug use with used needles and in some cases from mother to child during childbirth (Gere 2004: 45.).

The relationship between AIDS and male dancers is one that contributes to a wider network of issues that make up the semiotics of the 1980's AIDS epidemic. David Gere's book, entitled 'How to make dances in an epidemic: tracking choreography in the age of AIDS,' 2004, examines the interplay of AIDS and choreography in the United States,

where AIDS had the biggest impact on the gay community either through death, the number of cases of AIDS or the number of people confirmed as being HIV positive. He asks what is possible when art and politics of this nature collide while providing detailed analysis of the political landscape of the early 1980's. As well as looking at choreography of theatrical dances, Gere expands the term 'choreography' to include protests conceived by the ACT-UP foundation and the NAMES Project - AIDS quilt, adding another level of choreography to his exploration. Gere's book provides the basis for this essay and subsequently for the choreographic exploration undertaken within this unit through his questioning whether or not a dance can say AIDS. He uses a three part theorisation to ascertain if a dance is about AIDS:

1. The dance must denote gayness - the abjection factor. Gay men are outside the mainstream or marginalised.
2. The dance must depict (denotatively or connotatively) male - male eros
3. If the dance is to be perceived as having to do with AIDS, it must depict mourning, or loss.

This three point system provides a theoretical framework to apply to work of the time and Gere analyses work in his book using this system. It also provides two important research questions for this unit's choreographic exploration where the piece asks can a dance piece denote a sexuality? Or a sexual relationship?

This essay will look at how AIDS met dance and what they created in the 1980's. As well as looking at the artistic implications and output of choreography, questions will arise such as, is it possible to make a gay dance? What was the impact of the media and politics on choreography of the time? As well as asking these questions, contextual information of the epidemic and social commentaries will also be considered when

forming arguments to create a full picture of what was happening to dance and dancers at this time.

## **2. AIDS, Dance and the Gay Man**

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, or AIDS in its abbreviated form, is a disease of the human immune system caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV.) The immune system is progressively weakened leaving those affected susceptible to opportunistic infections and tumors. In the early 1980's, America had little contact with AIDS or HIV. It was a rapid process from the first diagnosis to the sense of panic instilled in American culture to the disease being labelled by those other than medical practitioners as a 'gay disease.'

Dance in the 1980's was evolving fast, there had been the explosion of contemporary choreography and choreographers such as Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham some twenty years earlier, there was now an emergence of integrated arts, ranging from installations involving many disciplines to live art performances on the streets. This 'bohemian' like exploration of live art, coupled with the development of dance was often centred around the gay community, particularly in major cities such as New York and San Francisco. There was still an assumption by those who occasionally viewed and commented on dance that male dancers were possibly homosexual (Gere 2004: 49). This could be traced to peoples views on dance and dancing being effeminate, therefore the man who dances must be effeminate, therefore the man who is dancing is gay. This was probably untrue for a great deal of people, however, for those that were gay and dancers, the emergence of AIDS was to prove a major turning point both artistically and personally. Once public interest had been caught and public announcements made an association of

the disease with homosexual men, thus everything changed. The male dancer, his body and his sexuality were to become a part of an epidemic and its implications would be felt for years to come. Aside from homosexual dancers having to cope with the added scrutiny of America in response to the announcement of the AIDS epidemic, another often forgotten problem is that at the time there was little medical knowledge of the disease being passed on to the public. Therefore people were forming opinions and beliefs about this disease and its victims with little knowledge and this too became as big a problem as the actual disease itself. Paula Treichler who appears in David Gere's book is quoted as saying that "Aids consists of a plague or terminology" (pg. 46) and furthermore:

...they have gone so far as to write it themselves. AIDS is a nexus where multiple meanings, stories... overlap and subvert one another  
(Gere 2004: 47)

From this it is important to understand that not only were gay people having to deal with this life threatening disease killing their peers and friends daily, the wider American culture were writing AIDS using their own words, possibly due to the lack of medical understanding surround AIDS at this time, but with these words came the stigma of being gay and having AIDS or HIV. Throughout the 1970's gay people, having gained some basic freedoms during the social revolution of the 1960's, faced a containment of their liberation which lead to several Christian fundamentalists being allowed to preach hatred and disdain against homosexuals. Thomas Long, an ex-catholic priest turned academic gay rights activist, wrote 'Aids and American Apocalypticism: The Cultural Semiotics of an Epidemic' (2005) reviewed by James Fisher in '*Theatre Journal*' (2007, Vol.59 No.1.) Fisher highlights the way Long discusses his own 'rage and grief...' that he felt watching the mounting death toll from AIDS while 'examining the impact of apocalyptic views of the growing pandemic and diverse images of homosexuals emerging from public presentations... by conservative Christian fundamentalists' (Fisher 2007: 152.) James Fisher highlights the way Thomas Long describes the situation gay people faced because

of the developing crisis, referring to it in an empathetic tone as ‘apocalyptic.’ Being gay in 1980’s America was becoming easier, gay rights were becoming much more of an issue and in some cases were being discussed on a political level. However, it is wrong to assume that being a gay man at this time was easy. Much like today, there are those who have extreme views on homosexuality and gay rights and were less than ready to accept that homosexuality was becoming more acceptable. When the epidemic hit America, those that held these views were in some way responsible for this uneducated syntax that surrounded AIDS and its victims.

Jennifer Fisher writes in her essay ‘Maverick Men in Ballet. Rethinking the “Making It Macho” Strategy’ (2009) about the ‘Gay Elephant in the Room.’ She refers to Ramsay Burt reasonably suggesting that the ‘widespread reluctance to talk about “dance and homosexuality” might have been an attempt to protect the institution of ballet’ (Burt 1995: 29.) So it is true to say there had long been this, however unspoken, association of dancing and homosexuality, but for the sake of the wider ballet community the topic was brushed under the carpet. What happened then between the era of The Ballet Russes, Diaghilev and Nijinsky where sex and, say, sexuality were kept quiet, and the work of Bill T Jones and Arnie Zane being discussed in Richard Gere’s book as a ‘response to AIDS’? (Gere 2004: 21.)

To answer this, it is important to note what changes had occurred socially up to the early 1980’s to understand what standing gay people found themselves in at this time. Firstly, the 1960’s bore a distinct change in the way that certain groups of people were perceived. Many people speak of the liberation of women and the rise and progression of the feminist movement as the embodiment of this liberation. While this is perhaps true, there was a liberation of the homosexual community. The notion of ‘free love’ meant that

sex was no longer considered something taboo and private, people freely accepted casual sex as a recreational past time, the individual person became much more important, beliefs about politics and gender changed so much that it affected thousands of people worldwide. Sexuality and sensuality was celebrated, however, this 'golden period' of liberation, was in some ways contained for homosexuals. The feminist movement was adopted as the voice of liberation, other such groups were less featured in news reports or publications. This idea of contained liberation of the gay community is evident in the fact that sub cultures and communities of gay people enjoyed freedom in certain parts of certain cities in America. Cities such as San Francisco, New York and Los Angeles were particularly welcoming to gay people, indeed it is in these places that a new, more exciting style of choreography was being created. This social liberation, however small, coupled with the evolution in dance and dance technique made for a revolution in the way dance was made, what it contained and who viewed it.

Bill T. Jones and Arnie Zane's work highlight these changes in society and in dance.

These two men were not only a creative partnership but also a domestic partnership and together, they created a wealth of work that as 'Dance Magazine' says:

...blends Zane's highly developed visual sensibility, his masterful command of display and pose, with Jones's skill at cutting to the human heart of interaction.

Dance Magazine (October 1984)

Their partnership is one that David Gere discusses a lot in his publication, and one that has informed a lot of choices in the choreographic investigation within this unit.

Particularly the way in which duets are orchestrated, the contact work, the vocabulary and style in which the choreography is executed. . Looking at Jones' and Zanes' work there is a sense of avoidance of denoting a relationship through movement vocabulary.

For example in *Duet x2* (1982) the movement is weighted, centred around releasing the

torso (a key characteristic of Arnie Zanes choreographic explorations) whilst traveling across the space. At no point is there any interaction between the dancers, there are no points of contact between the two men, they very much dance in unison but are spatially separate in the short section viewed. Therefore, one views these dancers as two separate men, dancing a phrase together. The viewer finds it hard to draw any ideas together about a relationship between the two, whether this was a deliberate choice at this point in the duet is unknown. The duets of Jones and Zane have come to symbolise a meeting point between several art forms, such as the use of voice and film. These denote a much more integrated sense of dance performance, creating a space for dance work in the developing scene of integrated art of this time. Once Arnie Zane was diagnosed with AIDS, critics began to note how their work reacted to the AIDS epidemic. Gere's book looks at how choreographers responded to the epidemic and he discusses how Jones and Zane's back catalogue can be read as an artistic response. However, Jones himself disagrees, he says in a telephone interview with Gere:

I've never made work specifically about AIDS. I've made work about loss, about sex, about death but never about AIDS

(Gere, 2004: 20)

This then means audiences and critics alike will naturally draw conclusions about the work, making assumptions about the nature and purpose of the choreography. Applying this to the choreographic exploration, it is clear that audiences will draw their own conclusions about choreographic intent and meaning and make connections between choreography and performers, to try and address this, the piece being created needs to try and disassociate itself from audience members through movement vocabulary and performance modes.

Looking at other work of this time there appears to be some choreographic consistency running throughout them all. Tracy Rhoades' *Requiem* (1989,) is a tribute to his lover, Jim,

who had died of AIDS. David Gere talks about this piece in some detail and in doing so has made choreographic choices for the student exploration in this unit a lot clearer. He says:

Rhoades rises to half-toe and treads in a long bourrée. He appears to float. His hands press together in a gesture of prayer, then opens out to expose his vulnerable white forearms.

(Gere 2004: 91)

What is clear here is this ethereal quality in the movement, delicate and sombre. This is a work that depicts mourning, as Rhoades takes the audience through a relationship, its delicate moments, from sharing a sock drawer to nursing someone with this deadly disease. There is a choreographic choice within *Requiem* to show the vulnerability of the human form. The dancer shows the most delicate parts of the limbs, highlighted by the pale pigment, he also uses dynamic to enforce this idea of delicacy, which is juxtaposed as, with repetition, the motif described above is performed faster and faster. This idea of delicacy is one that can be seen in the duets of Jones and Zane. Their choice of movement is a world apart from that of Rhoades, but there is a definite sense of gentility. In one of their early works, *A Study for Valley Cottage* (1980,) the choreography is concerned with weight bearing, the dancers chop and change their role in this duet, one dancer is placed on the back of the other and it is here that a moment is taken to register this equal partnership of balance. After this the dancer on top is lifted down, as the second dancer holds his partners face, his hand extended he looks into his partners eyes, creating a sense of real partnership. Relying on printed word to study Tracy Rhoades' *Requiem* is not ideal but from watching a section of this Jones/Zane duet, there are links here that inform the choreographic choices made in the studio for this unit. There is a common link shared by much of the dance work and that is of the use of gestural movement. Jones and Zanes work is much more physical, including expansive traveling phrases but embedded in there are moments of gestural significance. In *Duet x2*, the two dancers hold their left arms up as if to say 'no,' a sign of defiance against the growing

public fear surrounding AIDS and HIV. But there is this link of highlight the limbs of the body, gesturing the hands and the legs in a pedestrian manner makes dance more accessible and readable for audiences and thus will have a greater impact on an audience. Gere highlights Rhoades' use of gesture,

More gestures: The fingers intertwine over head, tips of index fingers touching to form an upward - pointing arrow or the shape of a church steeple.

(Gere 2004: 92)

By 1982, when GRID was renamed to AIDS and America became aware of the links between the disease and gay men, dance had undergone a major shift from the traditional ballet setting, through the evolution of modern dance, the evolution of the post modern arriving back at a much more integrated art scene in inner-city America. The gay man himself had undergone some social revolution whereby in certain areas of some cities, he could live freely, without question or daily harassment. It was by no means near equality but he could live without fear of retribution as many had done before. No one could know during the first months of the AIDS crisis what was to come, how many friends and loved ones the disease would claim or the way in which the world would deal with the disease. What is clear is that there was an emerging sub culture of artists that brought AIDS and dance together which in turn brought AIDS to the attention of the entire world. (Sayler online: acc 24/02/11)

### **3. Media Politics and Stigmatism**

Once physicians and medical authorities had a better understanding of AIDS and HIV, the public awareness juggernaut was let loose. Newspaper and television stations were reporting the increase of diagnoses and the link between gay men and the disease thus there was a growing stigmatisation born of the media. Indeed, James Kinsella writes in his book *Covering the Plague: AIDS and the American Media* that,

(AIDS) has forced reporters to acknowledge that their treatment of the news, far from being objective, is often shaped by their personal prejudices and their assumptions of their audience.

(Kinsella 1989: 1)

Therefore it is true to say that there was still a negative view of gay people that was widely accepted as normal in America in the early eighties. Not only that, some people with these views were responsible for the way in which AIDS was reported. Like all prejudice, these attitudes stem from a lack of knowledge about the subject. One of David Gere's chapters is called 'Blood & Sweat' and it is in this chapter he describes the way in which people thought that AIDS was transmitted through sweat as well as blood and other bodily fluids. Gere explains that it is in the dance studio where the collision between these beliefs and assumption is highlighted. The assumption is based on three key elements that lead to a plethora of issues being projected on to dancers bodies. These are that some or all male dancers are gay, therefore these male dancers would contract HIV (this is unspoken but implied) and that coming into contact with sweat from other people could be dangerous. Gere then explains it would take 'buckets of sweat to create even the slightest possibility of transmission' (Gere 2004: 40.)

This serves as a representation of the stigmatism born of this press coverage. The lack of detail about AIDS and HIV being passed on to the public in the early days of the epidemic lead to newspapers and news reports being able to print assumptions about the disease, the reporters own prejudices bleed into what little fact is being presented and through this communication of falsity, a reader begins to assume what is written is fact. In support of the above argument, this fear of bodily fluids of gay men lead several people straight to the male dancer. Working along side this preconception that all male dancers are gay, the studio or rehearsal room became a 'ground zero' of AIDS activity. Dancers creating new work, in contact with each other were deemed to have come in direct contact with this disease.

This idea of media induced fear is cemented in the police forces response to a protest at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in October 1988. Some time had now passed from the earlier days of the disease. It is now widely acknowledged that a large proportion of AIDS victims are gay men who have had unprotected sex with other gay men. The number of deaths is mounting and activist groups are demanding something is done, one such organisation is the ACT UP group. ACT UP is a social justice organisation who, during the 1980's, were fighting for better treatment, more recognition from political powers and the wider American public. At the height of the epidemic the ACT UP members marched on the FDA and demanded more research and money to be provided for better HIV treatments. Gere writes about the placards of protest, the protesters staging a 'die - in' where chalk would be drawn around protesters bodies who held up make shift grave stones saying 'I died for the sins of the FDA' and 'Killed by the system' (Gere 2004: 69.) He also notes how the police force present that day:

...at various points and in response to particular actions, groups of police don latex surgical gloves before making arrests or directly encountering the bodies of the protesters...

(Gere 2004: 70)

This is a clear demonstration that touch and contact of possible diseased people was a genuine fear and genuine belief of people in America at this time. This is largely due to the media creating this fear. The gay males body, whether it was a dancers body or not was a source of corporeal stigmatisation. The fluids it contained had a stigma that scared people. This fear is clearly demonstrated by the police wearing protective gloves at this FDA protest. Indeed, Gere comments further that,

Even after fears about contracting AIDS through casual contact were debunked, the police continued to wear gloves at AIDS demonstrations.

(Gere 2004: 70)

This anchors James Kinsella's comments that peoples personal prejudices were influencing the way in which people dealt with AIDS victims and protestors alike. It also relates back to David Geres three part theorisation of what an 'AIDS dance' must

contain.' By the police wearing gloves and treating them as something that is dangerous, they forcing the AIDS victim to become abject, outside of the mainstream. This works as a tool while exploring ideas in the studio, playing with spatial patterns and ideas to do with structuring dancers to denote different sectors of society. These spatial and structural ideas in turn could be highlighted with slogans and images used at this particular protest, creating a much more inter-disciplinary piece and serves to contextualise the movement.

Ultimately these activists were seeking help from government agencies. President Ronald Reagan was notoriously well known for avoiding the issue of AIDS and did not utter the word AIDS until 1987. He was responsible for siphoning the money needed to fund new treatments but the money never came. The NAMES project, another activist group, made the names quilt, and chose to lay the quilts in Washington DC, it is no coincidence that that is the home of the President of the USA. The website, [thebody.com](http://thebody.com), serves as an information point for people diagnosed with the disease and it is here there is some information on Reagan and his response to AIDS. An article by David Saylor says:

He and his administration did almost nothing during the first seven years of the epidemic. AIDS research was chronically underfunded  
(Saylor: 2004)

In the article the author comments that "The media - - print and television... ..were all over AIDS in the 1980s." (Saylor online: acc 24/02/11). So the lack of political response could not be traced to lack of media interest in the epidemic. The author says that for Reagan to not understand the urgency of the disease and its spreading he must not have "turned on a television" or "picked up a newspaper." It is from this lack of funding that people started to look at other ways of raising money to fund research. During the height of the epidemic two benefits took place, one in uptown New York and the other in down

town New York. It is here that David Gere highlights a difference between classes and the way they interact with AIDS.

These two benefits were a response to the lack of political recognition for this disease and its victims and the lack of money being provided to research HIV and new preventative treatments, both benefits shared the worthy ambition of raising money for AIDS research and direct care. Gere highlights what differentiates these benefits is the way in which they deal with the stigmatisation of AIDS and the male dancer, one benefit embraces the fact that there are gay male artists who are living with AIDS and the other denies the stigmatisation and attempts to disclaim the connection between gay men and the arts. Gere also highlights that it was in downtown New York where there was a 'performance community' that was dealing with AIDS and HIV on a daily basis by saying artists within this community,

...had been coming out as gay men and as people with AIDS.

(Gere 2004: 78)

So it is with this that Gere affirms the differences between the two events, he says about the downtown benefit,

This downtown benefit embraces the gayness of the participants and admits to the wide reach of AIDS in the dance/performance community by drawing performers and audience together as one united group at the eye of the storm.

(Gere 2004: 78)

When talking about the uptown benefit, Gere describes the event as being distant from the issue, the pomp and ceremony of the benefit far outweighed the purpose of the event.

This kind of dichotomy between uptown and downtown and their relationship and dealings with AIDS and HIV is one that continues to be referenced throughout David Geres book.

The interaction of the media had an important effect on the reaction of the wider American population. In the early days of the epidemic, newspapers and television stations had a free reign to assume things and attach stigmas to the male body that were not medically or ethically correct. Tones and attitudes had to change once there was a better understanding of the disease but this did not affect the way some people dealt with AIDS victims. There was a sense of frustration at the media and indeed the politicians who were seemingly ignoring the devastating effect of this disease, with particular frustration and anger aimed at President Reagan and his apparent failings in funding new HIV treatments. This led to activist protests at government agencies and to the performance art community of downtown New York taking action themselves and organising fund raising events. It is when this downtown benefit, one of freedom and acceptance is compared with the uptown 'high society' benefit, where one can see the difference between the way stigmatisation is dealt with.

#### **4. What Happens When Issues Change?**

Much like the vast progression and change in dance from the Graham era of the early fifties to the choreography of Jones, Zane and Rhoades, there has been another shift in dance since the eighties to 2011. The advancement of modern technology has allowed for current choreographers to create work that is enhanced and influenced by technology. This new breed of style is yet another development of other disciplines coming together with dance to create a much more integrated sense of performance. That said, the eighties did see a return to conservatism and conservative audiences that viewed dance. Performance art, like the work of Keith Hennessy discussed in David Geres book, was a deliberate move away from the resurgence of conservative choreographers and art makers to a more political and integrated sense of performance and was labelled at the time as 'progressive.'

Being gay in western culture today is widely acknowledged as 'normal.' There are still cases of intense homophobia, reports in late 2010 of young American gay teenagers taking their own lives increased so much that the 'Trevor Project' which was established in 1994 stepped up their work and campaigned under the nation wide tag line 'It Gets Better' in response to cases of bullying. Organisations like this are all born from the same place that organisations such as ACT UP originated. Both of these projects seek equality and also highlight that is OK to be gay. Homophobia is still a problem in todays society, however, in western culture, much progress has been made in the UK with the civil partnership act of 2004, giving homosexual couples the same legal rights as married heterosexual couples, and in some states in America, gay couples enjoy the same freedom.

When looking at dance work and choreographers working with these issues, things have changed. Bill T. Jones and Arnie Zanes choreographic relationship ended when he died from AIDS related illnesses in the late 1980's. Jones' work continued to address his deceased partner, for example in *Untitled*, 1989, Jones responds to a recording of Zanes voice, the choreography is still as strong physically but Gere comments that the content is a lot more linear, saying:

Jones marches into the frame to assume a series of sharp, linear, martial postures, each emphasised by a sharp expektoration of breath.

(Gere 2004: 13)

This sense of purging oneself of grief is evident throughout Jones work just after Zanes death.

With society moving on, there has been a change in how choreographers deal with AIDS in todays dance world. The work of Lloyd Newson and DV8 in the UK deals with homosexual issues, *Dead Dreams for Monochrome Men*, 1989, dealt with the serial killer

Dennis Nielsen, their work continues to question the place of homosexuals and homophobia in modern society. Choreographers such as Russell Maliphant look at the construction of masculinity in their movement choices and attempt to play with gendered identities and twist them from the normal and force an audience to look at why there are these preconceptions. Companies such as 'The Ballet Boyz' do not add any such references to sexuality. Their duet *Torsion* is a look at a friendship between two males demonstrated through twisted gestural sequences, weight sharing and bearing. Therefore it is true to say that in 2011, there are companies working in both areas. Some companies continue to look at where homosexuals fit in society and ideas on masculinity whereas others choreograph against this, denoting no sexual connotations with their choreographic choices and content.

## **5. Conclusion**

The AIDS epidemic of the 1980's is now considered a pivotal point in LGBT history where gay men were the subject of much discrimination, media and political interest. The epidemic status of the disease was downgraded gradually throughout the 1990's as new drugs and treatments were found, but in 2011 thousands of gay men have the disease and live with it as a macabre reminder of this period in their history.

Choreography is often used as a tool of expression and it is here when issues change choreography and dance changes too. When AIDS became part of everyday life, artists responded to it, through performance art or through dance, and they offered a very personal look at how they deal with the disease, their own sexuality and the stigmatisation of both. So when the issue faded into the background and society moved on to the next issue, so too did choreography, choreographers and art. What is left though, is a wealth of work and art that is highly personal, highly charged with clear

moments of choreographic advancement. The work of Bill T. Jones and Arnie Zane offer a viewer a very intimate look at a partnership off and on stage and their choice of movement has informed the practical element undertaken within this unit in terms of contact work and weight bearing. Tracy Rhoades *Requiem* has lead the movement down a gestural route, highlighting a consistent theme of abandonment of the limbs and offering the delicate parts of the body to an audience to highlight the delicacy of the human form.

In cessation, there is no doubt that what the dance makers of the time did is make work that is timeless and shows the real impact of the disease not only on their own bodies but on their bodies in the context of movement. Dance made people look at the real issue and challenge their own beliefs, it provoked reaction, went against the grain, presented alternative views and exposed truth and reality. In a time when the media looked at gay men with disdain, the homosexual dancer became ground zero for a breeding ground of untruth and falsity. The work of the ACT UP organisation in campaigning for better drugs lead to politicians having to confront the harsh reality of this classless disease, the way they choreographed their protests captured the eyes of the world and the images that came from them act as a visual stimulus for the choreographic exploration in this unit. Ultimately, choreographers lost their dancers and dancers lost their lives. What is clear from researching this area is that AIDS has left an indelible mark on dance, both in terms of work generated from this era but also in the way it took so many talented young minds and bodies far too soon.

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