In and Out of Step: Dance Diplomacy in the United States

by

Rachel Lowy Davis
Class of 2018

A thesis submitted to the faculty of Wesleyan University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts with Departmental Honors in Dance and Government

Middletown, Connecticut April, 2018
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements............................................................................................................. 2

Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 3
  Part I: The Concept of Soft Power.................................................................................. 4
  Part II: The Concept of Public Diplomacy................................................................. 7
  Part III: The Role of Cultural Exchange................................................................. 9
  Part IV: Chapter Outline.......................................................................................... 12

Chapter I: The Cold War and Cultural Exchange................................................... 16
  Part I: Origins........................................................................................................... 16
  Part II: Intensification............................................................................................... 19
  Part III: Culmination.................................................................................................. 23
  Part IV: Cultural Exchange Pre-Eisenhower’s Program........................................ 27
  Part V: Eisenhower’s International Cultural Exchange Program....................... 29
  Part VI: President Kennedy and Cultural Exchange............................................. 45

Chapter II: Modern Dance.............................................................................................. 49
  Part I: Overview...................................................................................................... 50
  Part II: José Limón.................................................................................................... 51
  Part III: Martha Graham........................................................................................... 56

Chapter III: Ballet.......................................................................................................... 63
  Part I: The Moiseyev Dance Company.................................................................... 64
  Part II: American Ballet Theater (ABT)................................................................. 66
  Part III: New York City Ballet (NYCB).................................................................... 70

Chapter IV: African American Artists........................................................................ 75
  Part I: Overview...................................................................................................... 75
  Part II: Alvin Ailey................................................................................................. 77

Chapter V: Twenty-First Century Dance Diplomacy............................................. 89

Conclusion......................................................................................................................... 103

Appendix A: Companies exported under the DanceMotion USA® program...... 112

Appendix B: Participating artists in DanceMotion USA® “follow-on” program... 113

Appendix C: Choreographic Process.......................................................................... 114

Works Cited....................................................................................................................... 126
Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my parents without whom I would not be who I am or where I am -- literally. I cannot believe I was lucky enough to be adopted by you. You have never failed to support me in whatever I am doing, and I cannot thank you both enough for being the best role models.

To Professor Katja Kolcio, my dance thesis advisor: Thank you for inspiring me and believing in me from the beginning to the end. Whenever I felt panicked, stressed, or worried, you were only a phone call or email away. Thank you for being there for me. I am a hundred percent certain I could have not completed this project without your guidance or support, and I am forever grateful.

To Professor Yamil Velez, my government thesis advisor: I am immensely grateful for your patience and thoughtfulness throughout the many transformations of this project. Your ideas, advice, and help were invaluable towards fully realizing my ideas and completing this thesis. Thank you so much.

Lastly, I would like to thank my dancers (Anna Krotinger, Maddy Paull, Kellen O’Brien, and Gretchen LaMotte) who helped me create the choreography performed in the fall and spring and played crucial and inspiring roles in this written thesis as well. I would also like to thank my friends for their love and encouragement, particularly the ladies of 310 Fauver and Joshua Usdan.
Introduction

On October 14, 1962, United States reconnaissance planes spotted Soviet missiles in Cuba, setting in motion the events now known as the Cuban Missile Crisis. A week earlier, the New York City Ballet (NYCB) arrived in Moscow to begin an eight-week Soviet Union tour. Before every performance, the Soviet and then the U.S. national anthem played. When the U.S. anthem ended, the seventeen women onstage removed their hands from their chests and raised them to a high diagonal that is *Serenade*’s opening pose. Moments later, the dancers returned their arms to almost the same position: right forearms across their torsos, their right hands just above their hearts. The playing of the two national anthems followed by George Balanchine’s *Serenade* opened every NYCB engagement in each Soviet city.¹

How art was used as a weapon during the Cold War is a widely ignored subject. Cultural exportation did not only include cars, televisions, kitchen appliances, and refrigerators, “but also Robert Rauschenberg, the Paul Taylor Dance Company, and jazz improvisation.”² Dance offered evidence that the United States “excelled not just in capitalism but at culture, too” and served as a way to demonstrate true democratic values and peacefully win over foreign leaders, diplomats, and individuals during a time of immense conflict.³ This thesis explores the role cultural diplomacy, specifically dance diplomacy, played during the Cold War in terms of President Eisenhower’s International Cultural Exchange Program, in comparison to how

---

³ Ibid.
Part I: The Concept of Soft Power

The broader narrative this thesis examines is the importance of a soft power approach in American foreign policy. Thus, a crucial question that must be addressed is: what is soft power? Harvard Professor and former Pentagon official Joseph Nye first introduced the concept of soft power in his 1990 book, Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power.4 In this book, Nye vaguely defined soft power as the ability to influence others to act or think similarly. More specifically, a country’s hard power may include its economic and military assets, while a country’s soft power lies in its ideology, cultural, and political values, and the ability to formulate and develop international norms and institutions.5 Additionally, Nye sought to demonstrate that the United States is a strong country not only in terms of economic and military power but in terms of soft power as well. After the publication of Nye’s book, the term became popular among researchers and policymakers around the world, albeit the term is sometimes used incorrectly.6

In a 1998 article published in Foreign Affairs entitled “Power and Interdependence in the Information Age,” Nye (with Robert O. Keohane) further clarifies the differences between hard power and soft power. Hard power is the power

---

6 For example, in a recent article, Peter Brookes of the Heritage Foundation refers to economic sanctions as “soft power” foreign policies. However, economic sanctions are clearly intended for coercion. See: Nye, Joseph S. "Think Again: Soft Power."
to force someone, through reward or threat, to do something they do not want to do. In other words, the term “hard power” is used in situations where it is necessary to entice someone with economic reward or threaten someone with military might. On the other hand, soft power is the power to convince someone to do something by attraction and example. In foreign policy, this would be a country’s ability to indirectly influence other countries to follow its political and cultural values.\textsuperscript{7} Nye further clarified the concept of soft power in his 2002 book, \textit{The Paradox of American Power -- Why the World’s Only Superpower Can’t Go it Alone}, however, in contrast to his earlier books, Nye criticizes the belief of American hegemony and the unilateralist foreign policy agenda in the post 9/11 era. In this book, Nye argues that if America seeks to continue to be a superpower, it has to pay more attention to the benefits of a soft power approach because while the U.S. has unprecedented military power, economic power is widely spread amongst European and East Asian nations and a booming world of transnational relations lies outside Washington’s control.\textsuperscript{8}

In \textit{Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics} (2004), Nye continues to clarify the concept of soft power by looking at the relationship between hard power and soft power and the practical and realistic application of soft power among major countries, such as Russia and the United States. Nye contends that the 2003 Iraq War was a victory for U.S. hard power at the cost of U.S. soft power. Furthermore, he argues that a soft power approach is preferable than a hard power approach wherever possible: “When you can get others to admire your ideals and to do what you want, you do not have to spend as much on sticks and carrots to move them in your


direction,” but in order to generate soft power, a state has to be considerate of the concerns and interests of other states. Any action or inaction by the state has to be perceived as legitimate and beneficial. As Nye suggests:

American leadership will be more enduring if we can convince our partners that we are sensitive to their concerns […] if we squander our soft power through a combination of arrogance and indifference, we will increase our vulnerability, sell our values short, and hasten the erosion of our preeminence.9

In each of these works, Nye continually asserts that the soft power of a country has three primary resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority).10 He also frequently contends that soft power includes the ability to shape international institutions and agendas, thus arguing that the concept of soft power should play an important role in all foreign policy objectives. Nye says that the most ideal situation is if a state could use all of its resources of power to attract, appeal and persuade all other states, but in reality, this is impossible. The best scenario is then to have soft power over a majority of states. If one state could use its resources of power in such a way that the vast majority of states in the international system regard as legitimate, justified, and helpful for international relations, then that state possesses the desired amount of soft power.

This discussion of soft power breaks the boundary between domestic and international politics, as often a country will employ a soft power approach in response to international disapproval or obvious domestic weaknesses. For example,

9 Ibid. xvi.
to overcome a poor socio-economic reality, a country may use soft power rather than hard power to persuade the outside world that it remains strong since soft power may be more readily available and easily accessible. Furthermore, the same sort of cultural values and expectations presented abroad should align with what is prioritized back home. As such, a soft power approach should be understood, accepted, and appreciated by the ruling elite. In sum, soft power can be used to establish a desired national identity or reinforce a certain reputation.

Part II: The Concept of Public Diplomacy

Joseph Nye coined the term, “soft power,” after examining several public diplomatic efforts introduced by Director of the United States Information Agency (USIA) Edward Murrow in 1963. Murrow was the first to articulate this concept of public diplomacy as “the exchange of government and non-government opinions with foreign government and non-government individuals and organizations.” In 1987, the State Department gave the first official definition of public diplomacy: “PUBLIC DIPLOMACY refers to government-sponsored programmes intended to inform or influence public opinion in other countries; its chief instruments are publications, motion pictures, cultural exchanges, radio, and television.” Hans N. Tuch, author of several books theorizing on the concept of public diplomacy, offers perhaps the clearest and most current understanding. Tuch writes the following definition in his 1990 book, Communicating with the World: U.S. Public Diplomacy Overseas: Public

---

diplomacy is “official government efforts to shape the communications environment overseas in which American foreign policy is played out, in order to reduce the degree to which misperceptions and misunderstandings complicate relations between the U.S. and other nations.”


First, the most important task of public diplomacy is the day-to-day communication with foreign agents, as governments must pay close attention to domestic and foreign reactions to any public decision. Leonard warns that a common mistake governments make is when explaining a decision to an audience, it neglects to inform the audience of the decision’s international impact. For example, when President Bush consistently promised American hegemony, he raised criticism from American competitors and reinforced a self-obsessed image of the United States. Second, public diplomacy works because there is a simple set of goals kept in mind. These goals are guided by the nation’s image-building agenda, which aims to demonstrate American democratic values such as freedom of expression and diversity. Thirdly, public diplomatic efforts mean the exchanging of ideas among peoples through a variety of channels. Through international conferences, forums, media, and educational and cultural exchanges, individuals can build long-term and valuable relationships across the world.

---

16 Sun, “International Political Marketing.”
Part III: The Role of Cultural Diplomacy

Cultural diplomacy is a sub-type of public diplomacy that predominately relies on the “exchange of ideas, information, art, language, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding.”¹⁷ This type of public diplomacy, and thus application of soft power, addresses the role artists play in politics.

Murrow’s definition of public diplomacy was based on U.S. diplomatic efforts starting in 1938 when the State Department created its Division of Culture. In 1942, The Office of War Information (OWI) was created as part of the ongoing propaganda efforts during World War II. In 1942 and 1943, the State Department expanded its cultural exchange programs with emergency funding. In 1946, the State Department’s Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs (OIC) took over the activities previously conducted by the Division of Culture. That same year, Congress passed the Fulbright Act relating to educational exchange, and the United States entered into the newly formed United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In 1948, the Smith-Mundt Act, officially titled the United States Information and Educational Exchange Act, was passed. The Act authorized increased funding for cultural exchange programs.¹⁸

Cultural diplomacy became a significant and valuable tool against the spread of communism during the Cold War. In 1954, President Eisenhower created the International Cultural Exchange Program with emergency funds allocated by

Congress to respond to the “cultural offensive” being waged by the Soviets.\textsuperscript{19} Sending visual artists, musicians, dancers, and choreographers abroad could “act as proof of American democracy’s promise: a government system that allowed individual dissent” as the work of these artists often critiqued or ridiculed the idealized image of America.\textsuperscript{20} For example, during this period, the State Department sent works by Jackson Pollack and other modern painters abroad even though abstract expressionism was not universally appreciated and accepted at home, and exported dance choreographers like Martha Graham even though Graham’s work questioned traditional gender roles. Such public performances offered evidence of true American freedom, as these artists and groups of artists pressed back on the claims made by the nation they represented. Seeing performances by American artists simplified, elaborated, accentuated, or otherwise constructed “America” for foreign audiences.\textsuperscript{21}

Yet how could the United States represent a government based on egalitarian and individual rights if foreigners frequently saw images of violence against Americans of color? Despite being American citizens, Americans of color clearly did not have the same rights and when they protested this status, they were met with “more oppression and violence.”\textsuperscript{22} Thus, the State Department faced the challenge of arguing for American social and government systems as superior to that of the Soviet Union while somehow explaining the ongoing violence toward nonwhite Americans. The strategy became to allow those who felt disenfranchised to be represented and understood on stage, as this conveyed a present based on inclusion rather than exclusion and alluded

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{22} Croft, \textit{Dancers as Diplomats}, 67.
\end{flushleft}
to a future color-blind America. Notably, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, a predominately black company, was sent abroad by the State Department multiple times to represent this vision.

It took the tragedy of September 11 for the “battle of hearts and minds” to once again rise to the top of the international political agenda. After 9/11 and other aggressive responses to terrorist attacks in the early 2000s, the Bush administration and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the State Department facilitated initial funding for DanceMotion USA, the first dance diplomatic effort in more than twenty years. Launched in 2010, DanceMotion USA enables young American dance companies to travel internationally and present their work. The program has reached global audiences of more than 15,000 people during residencies in sixteen cities in nine countries within three world regions -- Southeast Asia, South America, and Africa. Under President Obama, DanceMotion USA started a “follow-on” program in 2012 aimed to bring foreign artists back to the United States to work with American artists. DanceMotion USA offers them the space and funding to create a collaborative piece that premieres at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) in New York City. The most recent “follow-on” program features professional development classes and workshops for foreign and local artists. Similar to how the State Department relied on the American National Theater and Academy (ANTA) to select artists to represent the United States abroad during the Cold War,

24 "Dancemotion USA." www.dancemotionusa.org/about/. Website.
DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} “relies on its private partner BAM for artistic guidance and for logistical support.”\textsuperscript{25}

DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} emphasizes community and cross-cultural engagement rather than concert performances showcasing American choreography, dancers, or repertory. To date, the program has engaged more than 125,000 people in forty-nine countries (and an additional forty million people through digital platforms and social media) and offered more than 700 workshops worldwide. Additionally, DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} artists are not nearly as well funded as the artists exported during the Cold War era, as DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} tours are shorter and less frequent. Only three or four dance companies have been sent abroad for about a month each season with only eight dancers being allowed on tour. By looking more closely at the similarities and differences between Cold War and recent Bush- and Obama-era diplomatic efforts, I identify distinct changes in U.S. foreign policy goals.

**Part IV: Chapter Outline**

Naima Prevots’ *Dance for Export*, Clare Croft’s *Dancers as Diplomats*, and the 2012 Library of Congress exhibit entitled *Politics and the Dance Body* were instrumental in organizing and understanding which companies, what dancers, and which choreographers were chosen and exported under President Eisenhower’s International Exchange Program during the Cold War. Similar to Prevots, this thesis will analyze government documents and American National Theater and Academy (ANTA) Dance Panel meetings to illustrate how dance diplomacy worked during the

\textsuperscript{25} Croft, *Dancers as Diplomats*, 22.
Cold War era. Similar to Croft, this thesis will use quotes from the choreographers and dancers themselves for their own opinion as to why they were sent abroad and their experiences performing in a foreign country. However, this thesis expands upon the work done in these resources by investigating the ideological goals and shifts within the larger international contexts of these two periods. Prevots carefully provides a detailed history of those artists exported under President Eisenhower’s International Cultural Exchange Program and Croft personally interviews a variety of these artists, but both do not fully explain or analyze the objectives and reasoning for using such artists. I recognize three broad socio-political concepts that aligned with the United States foreign policy objectives during the Cold War. Firstly, exporting modern dance and modern dance choreographers demonstrated democratic values such as humanity, individuality, and freedom of expression. Secondly, exporting American ballet challenged the Soviet Union in an art form it was traditionally known for and considered superior in. Thirdly, exporting African-American artists painted an image of an inclusive and accepting nation, substantiating the United States’ claims of acceptance and diversity. The artists exported under Eisenhower’s International Cultural Exchange Program were instrumental in ending the Cold War on terms favorable to the United States and other democratic nations because they combatted the Soviet Union’s portrayal of the United States as materialistic and barbaric by effectively communicating and embodying the value of U.S. culture.

Additionally, I provide an in-depth analysis of the DanceMotion USA™ program, a twenty-first century initiative that has not yet been extensively analyzed. Throughout my research, I found a few newspaper or journal articles that only briefly
mention the program but do not explain what is it or how it works. Croft writes a short chapter on the DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} program but this chapter was written during the initial launch of the program in 2010. Like Croft, I discuss what the dancers and artists who were exported under the DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} program have to say, but I expand upon this research by detailing the logistics of the initiative and outlining the mission and goals of the program. I was able to provide this amount of detail because of multiple interviews and emails with DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM}'s Project Manager Meghan Rose Murphy and her team.

In chapter one, I provide a historical background on the Cold War and the role of cultural diplomacy pre- and post- Eisenhower in order to illustrate the political context within which to examine the State Department sponsored tours. This chapter also examines the growing friction between the Soviet Union and the United States that ultimately led to cultural exchange being harnessed as a weapon. Chapter two, chapter three, and chapter four detail companies and/or artists exported under Eisenhower’s Program. In these chapters, I highlight specific tours or aspects of the choreographers themselves I believe made them appropriate choices for representing true American values and effective in countering Soviet Union communism. Chapter five examines the state of dance diplomatic efforts today, focusing on the DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} program. The conclusion discusses how the current Trump administration is slashing the funding for diplomatic efforts to an extent not seen since the end of the Cold War. I argue that this is a mistake because of globalization and increasing interdependence among nations. The United States should not be
following a purely hard power approach in foreign policy and instead should
proactively be trying to increase its diplomatic efforts like it did during the Cold War.

The Dance Collection at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Historical Collection at the
University of Arkansas, where there are records of the meetings of the ANTA Dance
Panel, are the primary resources used and frequently cited throughout this study.
Other resources, such as congressional hearings and newspaper reviews, were
accessed online.
Chapter 1: The Cold War and Cultural Exchange

Part I: Origins

The United States emerged from World War II as the strongest and wealthiest nation in the world.\textsuperscript{26} The demand for heavy machinery and war supplies, and the thousands of U.S. citizens employed in the armed forces pulled the nation out of the Great Depression. During the war, America more than doubled its wealth, and unemployment rates fell to practically zero. However, for much of Europe, Russia, and Japan, the end of World War II left the cities devastated and destroyed. The Soviet Union suffered immense losses in particular. Although the United States lost nearly 300,000 Americans in the war, twenty-seven million Russians had died, the Soviet Union lost forty percent of its production capacity, and the Germans destroyed 70,000 Russian villages.\textsuperscript{27} Every industrial nation was poorer and weaker at the end of war except the United States.

It is clear that Soviet and American mutual distrust intensified over events following World War II but the seeds of mistrust can be attributed to the Russian Revolution of 1917 when a spontaneous uprising of workers and soldiers unseated the Russian monarchy.\textsuperscript{28} Eight months later, the Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, seized power from the government. On March 3, 1918, Lenin ended Russian participation in World War I with the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. Concerned that the Russian withdrawal would hurt the United States war effort, President


\textsuperscript{28} Chafe, \textit{Unfinished Journey}, 31; Encyclopedia Britannica Online, “history of Russia.”
Woodrow Wilson sent American troops to Russia in an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the new government.

The Bolsheviks’ ideological commitment to Marxism and the Soviet government’s apparent violation of democratic procedures and human rights disturbed Americans. During the Red Scare of 1919-1920, American government officials arrested three thousand alleged members of the Communist Party.  

However, with the beginning of the Great Depression in 1929, leftist sentiments grew. During the 1930s, many people, including dancers and other artists, sympathized with the Workers’ Movement, with some even joining socialist or communist organizations, such as the Workers Dance League.  

It was clear that Roosevelt’s New Deal had brought the nation closer to adhering to socialist ideas. In a brief warming of attitude toward the Soviet Union in 1933, the newly elected President Roosevelt officially recognized the Soviet government. However, when news of Stalin’s purge trials in which six million Soviet citizens were sent to their deaths between 1936 and 1938 was leaked, anti-communist sentiments quickly grew with many Americans equating Stalin to Hitler.  

In August 1939, the Soviets signed the Nazi-Soviet Pact, a non-aggression agreement with Hitler. The following month, Hitler’s armies invaded Poland, prompting Britain and France to declare war on Germany. World War II had begun. Poland was quickly defeated. Russia soon annexed Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

---

However, in June 1941, the Germans broke their pact with the Soviets and invaded Russia, prompting the Soviet Union to enter the war on the side of the Allies.

During this time, the United States government was committed to an isolationist point of view, thus refusing to enter the war. However, when the Japanese invaded Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States declared war on Germany and Japan, aligning itself with Stalin’s Russia. Growing xenophobia in the United States led to the Alien Registering Act of 1940 (later known as the Smith Act), requiring immigrants to register with the government. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, anger and fear of Japanese sabotage led the United States government to forcibly relocate Japanese Americans to concentration camps.

The Russians suffered heavy losses on the Eastern front and asked President Roosevelt for supplies and for the Americans to provide a second front to combat Nazi forces. Roosevelt agreed to help, but assistance was delayed by two years. As a result, Stalin’s distrust of the United States intensified, as he felt that Roosevelt was not keeping with his agreements. Eventually, the promised second front was sent on June 6, 1944, coming to be known as the D-Day invasion of Normandy. With World War II finally drawing to a close, both Stalin and Roosevelt were prepared to make concessions. However, Roosevelt’s death just prior to the July 1945 Potsdam conference, at which Winston Churchill, Josef Stalin, and Harry Truman would decide the post-war fate of Europe, thrust Truman into the presidency with little preparation.

34 Chafe, Unfinished Journey, 36-41, 46-48; Hodgson, America in Our Time, 26.
him and without a clear sense of Roosevelt’s perceptions to offer him direction, took little time to assert his authority with the Soviets. However, Truman’s no-nonsense approach largely foiled the chance of postwar cooperation.

Part II: Intensification

In 1945, the United States and the Soviet Union were committed to an expansionist ideology. The Soviet Union wanted to create “spheres of influence” so as to maintain friendly governments at its borders. However, tensions over the issues of free elections in Poland and the inclusion of pro-democratic representatives in the Polish government erupted at the Yalta conference in February 1945. Truman wanted Stalin to allow free elections in Rumania and Bulgaria, contradicting Roosevelt’s implied agreement to allow Soviet “spheres of influence” in Eastern Europe. Tensions only increased when Truman received a report of the successful explosion of “Trinity,” the first atomic bomb by the United States. After hearing the report, Truman sought to completely deny the Soviet “spheres of influence,” specifically in Eastern Europe and Manchuria. When Truman authorized the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki later that year, U.S. military superiority was undisputed.

On February 22, 1946, American diplomat George Kennan sent an 8,000-word telegram to the State Department detailing his views regarding the Soviet Union and his stance on any future United States foreign policy toward the communist state.

37 Ibid. 21.
The lengthy memorandum began with the assertion that “in the long run, there can be no permanent peaceful coexistence” between the Soviet Union and the West due to the “Kremlin’s neurotic view of world affairs.” This view, Kennan argued, was due to Russia’s crippling “sense of insecurity,” which has led her to “seek security only in patient but deadly struggle for total destruction of rival power.” Thus, the Soviets would stop at nothing to expand their sphere of influence as far as possible with Iran and Turkey in their sights next, and “violent efforts will be made to weaken the power and influence of Western Powers.” As a result, there can be “no permanent modus vivendi” with the Soviet Union. Kennan’s telegram alarmed officials in the State Department as well as confirmed their suspicions about Soviet intentions.

Two weeks later, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill delivered the famous The Sinews of Peace speech declaring, “from the Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent.” Although metaphorical, this “iron curtain” became a widely accepted idea that drew in further support from the West. One year later, Truman added to the narrative in his speech to Congress on March 12, 1947. Truman claimed that it was necessary for the United States to “help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes.” He believed that communism “relies upon terror and

38 Kennan, George. "The Charge in the Soviet Union (Kennan) to the Secretary of State." edited by Department of State, 1946.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms,” while democracy “‘is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression.’”\(^45\) In accordance with these beliefs, Truman pledged to Congress that the U.S. would contain Soviet threats to Greece and Turkey. Known as the Truman Doctrine, Truman generally called for any freedom-loving people to assist the United States against the global crusade of communism and guaranteed the United States’ support against any nation threatened by the Soviet Union. This strategy has been identified as “containment.”\(^46\)

By 1947, Europe was on the verge of economic collapse. The so-called “Iron Curtain” had cut off the flow of raw materials and farm products from Soviet-controlled Eastern Europe to the industrial centers in Western Europe. As a result, Secretary of State George Marshall devised an economic rescue plan to rebuild European economies and to keep American allies from falling to Soviet expansionism. He dictated his plan, called the Marshall Plan, in a commencement speech at Harvard in June 1947, and after Czechoslovakia fell to the Communists in March 1948, Congress passed the Marshall Plan. In response to the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, Stalin created the Cominform to serve as the Soviet propaganda agency and the Comecon to provide aid to the Eastern bloc countries.\(^47\)

The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan encouraged Western European unity, resulting in the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on

\(^{45}\) Ibid.
April 4, 1949.\(^{48}\) Originally NATO included the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Italy, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, and Portugal. In 1952, Greece and Turkey joined, and in 1955, West Germany was admitted. In response, the Soviet Union created its own mutual defense alliance, the Warsaw Pact, in May 1955.\(^{49}\)

The Berlin blockade and airlift of 1948-1949 increased tensions between the West and the Soviet Union.\(^{50}\) Located in the Soviet section of Germany, Berlin had been divided into four occupied zones after World War II. Each occupied zone was under the jurisdiction of one of the Allied powers: the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. Previously in 1948, the Americans, British, and French had secretly planned to unite the Western sectors of the city by implementing a new currency. In June 1948, the Western powers released the new currency, the deutschmark, without notifying the Soviets. This new currency destroyed the black market. In retaliation, the Soviets issued their own currency in the Soviet zone, cut electricity to factories and offices, and blocked access routes between Western Berlin and West Germany. This blockade made food and coal delivery by land impossible. The West responded by airlifting the necessary supplies into West Berlin and imposing a blockage on the Soviet zone of Berlin, depriving it of Western coal, steel, and machine tools. Stalin ended the blockade on May 12, 1949 nearly a year after the blockades were implemented, but the effects from the blockades were clear and


\(^{49}\) Ibid.

significant. Berlin came to be ideologically divided into East and West, a separation concretely realized with the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961.

**Part III: Culmination**

In 1948, twelve Communist Party leaders in the U.S. were charged with “conspiring to advocate the violet overthrow of the government” under the Smith Act, formerly the Alien Registration Act. These individuals were convicted and sentenced to five years in prison. Also in 1948, communist spy Whittaker Chambers accused State Department official Alger Hiss of giving him several classified State Department documents in the 1930s. With the explosion of an atomic bomb by the Russians in 1949, nuclear disaster became a realistic and reasonable fear. In May 1949, the Communist Party of China was able to take over mainland China, forcing the Nationalist Chinese, the American allies, to flee to Taiwan. On January 21, 1950, Hiss was convicted of perjury and imprisoned for denying he had passed classified documents to Chambers. Two days later, scientist Klaus Fuchs, who had worked on the Manhattan Project responsible for producing the first U.S. nuclear weapons, admitted to passing secret information to the Soviets. On January 31, Truman announced that he had decided to pursue the development of the hydrogen bomb.

---

51 Fariello, *Red Scare*, 201.
52 Ibid. 201-202.
53 Ibid. 146-151.
54 Hodgson, *America in Our Time*, 20-21, 35.
56 Hodgson, *America In Our Time*, 35-36.
American scientists rushed to build a hydrogen bomb before the Soviet Union to maintain military hegemony. The first thermonuclear hydrogen bomb was tested on the small Elugelab or Elugelap island, part of the Enewetak atoll in the Marshall Islands. The detonation produced a crater 6,420 feet in diameter and 164 feet deep where Elugelab had once been. In August 1953, the Russians would conduct their first thermonuclear test. In 1955, they successfully exploded the first airborne hydrogen bomb.57

On February 9, 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy captured anti-Communist national hysteria with a speech at the Republican Women’s Club of Wheeling in West Virginia about his list of American Communists working in the State Department.58 McCarthy suspected a conspiracy among government officials, targeting Dean Acheson in particular, for the recent shift in the balance of power between the United States and the Soviet Union:

How can we account for our present situation unless we believe that men high in this government are concerting to deliver us to disaster? This must be the product of a great conspiracy, a conspiracy on a scale so immense as to dwarf any previous such venture in the history of men.59

In June 1950, North Korea captured Seoul, the capital of South Korea. The United Nations successfully counterattacked, but in November, the Chinese sent half a million Chinese soldiers to help the North Koreans, fearing an American invasion of

58 Hodgson, America in Our Time, 34, 40-42; Whitfield, The Culture of the Cold War, 29, 37-38; Fariello, Red Scare, 27.
59 Senator Joseph McCarthy quoted in Whitfield, The Culture of the Cold War, 37.
China. In Truman’s private notebook he wrote, “It looks like World War III is near.”

In 1951, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were convicted of conspiracy to commit espionage and sentenced to death. On June 19, 1953, they were executed. The Rosenbergs maintained their innocence but recent evidence reveals Julius’ involvement in a Soviet spy ring. However, although evidence proves Ethel knew of her husband’s activities, there is no evidence that proves she was directly involved.

From 1950 to 1954, Senator Joseph McCarthy chaired the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC). HUAC questioned American citizens about their ties to the communist party and their loyalty to the United States, although allegations were often based on the flimsiest of evidence. Individuals were called before the committee if they were considered a member of a communist organization (or an organization which was considered a communist front) or were friends with a communist sympathizer. Anyone called before the HUAC was frequently pressured to implicate others, and many artists, writers, educators, and free thinkers who were called before the HUAC lost their jobs and often could not find support for their work afterwards regardless if they identified as a Communist (or communist sympathizer) or not. Members of the Screen Actors Guild, employees of major television networks, federal employees, and employees of colleges and universities had to sign an anti-communist pledge to keep their jobs. Any literary and art works produced with “communist ideals” or those that presented an unfavorable picture of Americans or

---

62 Ibid. 178-180.
American culture were banned. For example, the State Department removed books and paintings from national libraries that had been created by “any controversial persons, Communists, fellow travelers, et cetera.” However, within time, McCarthy’s increasingly reckless charges and suspect methods wearied his supporters in Congress, and in 1954, the Army-McCarthy hearings finally sent them scurrying. By the end of the year, McCarthy was censured by the Senate and ignored by the press. He soon died in 1957 but it was clear that McCarthyism had ushered in an era based on paranoia and xenophobia. McCarthyism resulted in an attack on the Left, the media, the educated, the artistic, and intellectuals. According to Stephen Whitfield, professor at Brandeis University and author of *Culture of the Cold War* (1991), McCarthyism “weakened the legacy of civil liberties, impugned standards of tolerance and fair play, and tarnished the very image of democracy.”

During this time, the Korean War reached a stalemate with both sides defending their original borders. After two years of negotiations, a cease-fire was agreed to in July 1953, and the United States finally began to pull its troops out of North Korea.

In 1954, the Supreme Court decided the landmark case of *Brown vs. the Board of Education*, which mandated the desegregation of American public schools. To some, the Court’s decision suggested that the Court had succumbed to Marxist thinking. Later that year, the United States and Canada announced plans to build the Distant

---

64 State Department directive quoted in Whitfield, *Culture of the Cold War*, 39.
68 Whitfield, *Culture of the Cold War*, 21, 23.
Early Warning (DEW) system across the northern part of the continent to warn North Americans of any imminent attack by the Soviets.\textsuperscript{69} Also in 1954, Congress voted to add the phrase “one nation under God” to the Pledge of Allegiance to distinguish the ideology of the United States from that of the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{70}

Additionally in 1954, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) overthrew the government of Jacobo Arbenz Guzman in Guatemala. Arbenza had allowed the expropriation of the holdings of the largely American owned United Fruit Company, the producers of Chiquita bananas.\textsuperscript{71} That same year, Secretary of the Treasury Hubert H. Humphrey rejected a Latin American report calling for an Inter-American Fund for Development in Latin America. This was the atmosphere within which the State Department selected the José Limón Company, the first company sent under Eisenhower’s International Cultural Exchange Program, to present a positive image of American culture and the American way of life to the people of South America.

**Part IV: Culture Exchange Pre-Eisenhower’s Program**

With the Soviet explosion of an atomic bomb in 1949, the perceived need for combatting the Soviet Union and the spread of communism through the use of non-military means became an obvious and necessary feat. In March 1949, Senator William Benton, who had resigned as Assistant Secretary of State for Public and Cultural Affairs, addressed Congress identifying five themes in Soviet propaganda attacks on the United States:

---
\textsuperscript{70} Whitfield, \textit{Culture of the Cold War}, 89.
\textsuperscript{71} Kunz, \textit{Butter and Guns}, 122.
First. The United States is headed for a cataclysmic economic crash. Second. The rulers of the United States are Fascists, warmongers, and monopolists. Third. Although the rich in the United States are getting richer, everybody else is getting poorer and there is starvation, unrest, and growing sympathy for the Soviet Union among the masses. Fourth. America’s vaunted freedom is a fraud, and our doctrine of equality is belied by racial and religious discrimination. Fifth. Our character is bad—we are culturally barbarous, money-mad, lawless, crime-ridden, and effete.72

Soviet Union propaganda had deeply penetrated radios, movies, newspapers, and works of art. In particular, Soviet propagandist posters were rapidly being made and distributed to remind Soviet citizens of communist tenets and assure them of Soviet Union superiority.

In response, President Truman called for an aggressive psychological offensive to offset all anti-American propaganda being generated by the Soviet government in his famous “Campaign of Truth” speech on April 20, 1950. Truman’s speech writers in the State Department purposely characterized the Soviet’s portrayal as propaganda that needed to be combated by an American “campaign for truth,” intentionally avoiding the term propaganda for United States actions.73 In fact, Edward Barrett, an American journalist who later served as Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, recounts how he was asked to review the speech before it was presented and revised the speech by adding the phrase “campaign of truth” where the word “propaganda” could have been used. In his memoir Truth is Our Weapon (1993), Barrett attests to the

73 Barrett, Truth is Our Weapon, 72-73.
propagandistic nature of the “campaign of truth” language, but maintains that this was necessary to promote United States interests.\textsuperscript{74}

This new “psychological offensive” led to three major policy changes designed to increase the effectiveness of the current informational programs. First, countries were classified according to their strategic importance to the United States. Second, target groups were identified in each country. Third, recommendations were made as to the most effective methods and materials for reaching people in the target groups.\textsuperscript{75} The United States Information Service (USIS) would later use this information to formulate individual “Country Plans” for each country in which there was a USIS post.\textsuperscript{76} Another bureaucratic decision was to consolidate the Office of International Information and the Office of Education Exchange into the U.S. International Information Agency (IIIA). This occurred around the same time that Senator Joseph McCarthy was alleging that there were “205 Communists” in the State Department and attacking Dean Acheson in particular.

**Part V: Eisenhower’s Program**

In 1953, President Eisenhower appointed a special committee headed by William H. Jackson to evaluate the government’s information and cultural programs. The Jackson Committee report on exchange-of-persons programs stated that, “More use should be made of the medium of exchange of persons in influencing the attitudes

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid. 72-74.
\textsuperscript{75} Thomson & Laves, *Cultural Relations*, 81.
\textsuperscript{76} Barrett, *Truth is Our Weapon*, 315-317.
of important local individuals.” However, one of the most frequent debates was over separating informational from educational cultural programs. Proponents of cultural programs wanted to keep education and cultural programs separate from information programs to avoid any propagandistic tones while others saw cultural programs as inevitably tied to U.S. foreign policy objectives.

In keeping with his campaign promise to reorganize government and at the recommendation of the Jackson Committee, President Eisenhower created the Foreign Operations Administration (FOA) to oversee all foreign aid programs and established the United States Information Agency (USIA) to consolidate the government’s various cultural and informational exchange programs. The agency was known as the United States Information Service (USIS) overseas. In September 1953, Eisenhower established the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB), under the National Security Council (NSC), to coordinate all “psychological” operations.

The USIA’s mission was to “submit evidence to peoples of other nations by means of communications techniques that the objectives and policies of the United States are in harmony with and will advance their legitimate aspirations for freedom, progress, and peace.” Administration officials declared over and over again that the USIA did not engage in propaganda, and instead its mission focused on “delineating

78 Thomson and Laves, Cultural Relations, 69-72.
79 Thomson and Laves, Cultural Relations, 80; Lois Roth, “Public Diplomacy”, 360-361.
82 Osgood, Total Cold War, 90.
those important aspects of the life and culture of the United States which facilitate understanding of the policies and objectives of the Government of the United States.”

Although an independent agency, the USIA received daily policy guidance from the State Department. Eisenhower appointed Theodore Streibert as the first director of USIA in July 1953. Streibert further clarified the goals of the USIA in his statement of “strategic principles.” He said the following:

We are in competition with Soviet Communism primarily for the opinion of the free world. We are (especially) concerned with the uncommitted, the wavering, the confused, the apathetic, or the doubtful within the free world. […] The target of the USIA is not simply, or even preponderantly, public opinion within the Soviet Union or the Soviet Orbit. […] The main target is public opinion in the non-Soviet world and particularly public opinion among those who are not fully committed to opposition to Soviet communism.

In a letter written on July 27, 1954 to the House Committee on Appropriations, President Eisenhower requested five million dollars, to stimulate the presentation abroad by private firms and groups of the best American industrial and cultural achievements, in order to demonstrate the dedication of the United States to peace and human well-being [and] to offset worldwide Communist propaganda charges that the United States has no culture and that its industrial production is oriented toward war.

Even after the two years of increased cultural activity under Eisenhower, the Russians were still sending out “eight times” as many cultural delegates as the

---

83 Ibid.
84 Streibert quoted in Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 92.
85 Bureau of Educational and Historical and Cultural Affairs Collection. University of Arkansas Special Collections Libraries, Fayetteville.
Americans across the world. Congress approved President Eisenhower’s request on August 26th, Public Law 663 was passed, and thus the President’s International Cultural Exchange Program (also referred to as the Emergency Fund for International Affairs) was created. The program was the result of collaboration among governmental and non-governmental institutions. The State Department understood how necessary it was for artists to pick other artists, resulting in a contract signed between the State Department and the American National Theater and Academy (ANTA), authorizing ANTA to serve as a professional administrative agent:

Recognizing the incompetence of Government representatives in most cases to judge the artistic merit of individual performers or groups, this principle was established in an attempt to alleviate possible criticism by the American public of the Department and the other agencies concerned.

It was only natural that the State Department would turn to ANTA when Eisenhower’s Program was established. Previously in April 1951, ANTA was appointed the State Department’s official agent in organizing and administering the American attractions for the first Berlin Cultural Festival, and in 1950, 1951, and 1953, ANTA helped organize tours of Ballet Theater to Europe and Latin America (during those tours, Ballet Theater performed under the name American National Ballet Theater). However, American National Ballet Theater did not represent the United States as part of any official program of international exchange, and for the company’s 1951 Latin American tour, the State Department gave little financial

---

87 Department of State Instruction to USIS posts, 8 Oct 1954.
88 Breen-ANTA Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Fenwick Library, George Mason University.
support. Instead, it left ANTA to struggle with income tax, currency exchange, and dollar transfer problems as well as coping with the vagaries of state-run theaters.89

One of the most unusual and innovative aspects of the ANTA operation was establishing separate panels of experts in music, dance, and theater to choose various presentations. ANTA believed that only experts in each art form could choose the best artists and groups of artists that the United States should send abroad. These panels were referred to as the Music Panel, Dance Panel, and Theater Panel, and members had various concentrations within their art form. Although panel members frequently rotated, they respected one another for their achievements in their field and thus greatly relied on one another to make objective and intelligent decisions.

Each party had a specific role in the decision making process. The State Department decided which countries and geographic areas were most important to American foreign policy and would benefit the most from an American cultural presence based on requests from foreign embassies and USIS posts. After a general location was approved by the State Department, projects were sent to ANTA for recommendations of appropriate performing artists. Although it solicited input from the Advisory Committee and foreign USIS posts, the OCB maintained final approval over funding the artists involved. Once a project was approved by OCB, the State Department offered it to all the USIS posts in that geographical area. The ANTA administration staff then arranged the details of the tour, including the itineraries and financial arrangements.

89 Ibid.
The first company exported under Eisenhower’s Program was the José Limón Dance Company in 1954 to Latin America. The State Department clearly stated why the first tour should be to Latin America:

The strategic importance of Latin America and the size of our stake in that area is well known. What is not so well know is that, first, a tremendous social and economic change, an upsurge, is taking place throughout Latin America; and second, international communism is systematically exploiting the problem arising from that upsurge, seeking to foment hatred of the United States and establish footholds in the hemisphere.

Limón was not the Dance Panel’s first choice. The ANTA Dance Panel nominated Martha Graham as their first choice for a State Department tour, but the State Department insisted on the José Limón Company instead. One reason was because Limón was Mexican-born and Spanish speaking. Thus, his fluency in Spanish allowed him to speak to audiences and explain the originality and value of American modern dance. He told audiences in Rio and Montevideo that,

With all our crudities, we are Americans. We are not afraid to declare ourselves, and have done so in our dance. The academic dance from Europe is not adequate to express what we have to say. Hemingway and Faulkner write in English, but they write like Americans. In the same way, we are trying to find a new language for American Dance.

---

90 Bureau of Educational and Historical and Cultural Affairs Collection. University of Arkansas Special Collections Libraries, Fayetteville.
91 Hearing before the Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, First Session, 16 Feb 1955.
92 Croft, Dancers as Diplomats, 110.
Of course, this was not the only reason for choosing Limón. By 1954, he was considered one of the most important modern dance choreographers. He had created two masterpieces, *The Moor’s Pavane* and *La Malinche*, in 1949 that were performed on the tour because of their critical acclaim and relevant themes. *The Moor’s Pavane* is based on *Othello*, a Shakespearian play dealing with themes of love, jealousy, revenge, power, and race. *La Malinche* is set in Mexico at the time of the sixteenth-century Spanish invasion. The piece tells the story of an Aztec princess torn between her love of country and her love for a Spanish conquistador. Limón’s choreography in these works, and in general, reflects a “universalist bent, a concern with man’s nobility of spirit in a chaotic world,” making his repertory easily digestible and understandable to foreign audiences. In addition to these works, the company performed Doris Humphrey’s *Variations and Conclusions*, *Night Spell*, *Day on Earth*, *Ritmo Jondo*, *Ruins and Visions*, and *Story of Mankind* on tour.

---

The José Limón Company arrived in Rio de Janeiro on November 22, 1954 and traveled to São Paulo on November 30. The next stop was Montevideo, where the group performed from December 7-10 at the Teatro Solís with continued success. Below is a map to depict how far the company traveled to perform on this tour.

When Eisenhower requested continuance of the Fund in June 1955, hearings revealed not only profound ignorance about the arts but also active hostility toward them on the part of many congressmen. Representative John James Rooney, a Democrat from New York, chaired the hearings. In his opening statement, Acting Secretary of State Herbert Hoover, Jr. attempted to convey the value of the program:

No matter what progress will be achieved, there will be fundamental and basic differences between the ideologies of the free world and the Communist systems. Greater and greater emphasis may well fall on the economic and cultural differences between the two conflicting systems… The promotion of peaceful United States objectives should be facilitated by every means at our disposal. Frequently, an
international trade fair, an important cultural event, or a specific gathering provide opportunities to influence public sentiment, of value as great, or even greater, than more formal official occasions.\(^{95}\)

The total cost of the Limón tour was $35,400, and the Congressmen reviewed every single expense. Representative Rooney stated that the budget broke down into four items: $410 for getting the scenery and costumes in order, $22,658 for international transportation of persons, scenery, and costumes, $11,427 as reimbursement of losses to a South American impresario, and $905 as a cancellation fee to the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM). The first budget item challenged by the committee was the $410 for the costumes and scenery. Julius F. Seebach, testifying on behalf of the USIA, explained that the costumes had to be cleaned regularly and the scenery had to be correctly assembled at each venue, which sometimes required additional equipment. As Seebach was questioned about the $11,427 to reimburse the company’s South American impresario, Rooney requested an itemized list of expenditures by the impresario to be submitted for record. He asked to see the box office receipts of the performances, the receipts from expenditures made by the company, the company’s pay, the audit fee, and even a bank service charge.

By the time the June 1955 congressional hearings were underway, *Porgy and Bess* had already completed a hugely successful tour with funding from Eisenhower’s

---

\(^{95}\) Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, Eighty-Fourth Congress, First Session, June 1955.
Program.\textsuperscript{96} \textit{Porgy and Bess} was a collaboration between composer George Gershwin, dramatist DuBose Heyward, and librettist Ira Gershwin. The revival that toured abroad was directed by Robert Breen and had previously appeared at the Berlin Festival in 1952 under government auspices. In December 1954, under President Eisenhower’s International Cultural Exchange Program, \textit{Porgy and Bess} began a three-month tour that took the production to Zagreb, Belgrade, Alexandria, Cairo, Naples, Milan, Athens, Tel Aviv, Casablanca, and Barcelona. In an article written for the \textit{New York Times}, Robert Breen, the director of \textit{Porgy and Bess} observed that,

It is ironic that Communist activity in the field of the arts exchange really awakened the official United States to the need for our involvement in such a program. Unfortunately, arts exchange is not yet officially viewed here as being intrinsically desirable or necessary. It is used, as it were, in ‘combat,’ as a tactical arm -- fighting culture with culture -- a new but not-so-secret weapon for use in various, ever-changing ‘target areas.’\textsuperscript{97}

\textsuperscript{96} Bureau of Educational and Historical and Cultural Affairs Collection. University of Arkansas Special Collections Libraries, Fayetteville.

Below is a map of the cities where *Porgy and Bess* was performed. In contrast to the José Limón tour that was less than two weeks, *Porgy and Bess* traveled to ten cities in three months.

The 1955 hearings treated *Porgy and Bess* more gently than the Limón tour, yet the eleven weeks of performances had cost the government $285,000. This caused Representative Cliff Clevenger, a Republican from Ohio, to express his distaste with the notion of spending any government money on the arts:

> We are operating in a field where I am not willing to operate at all. When we are running a deficit of probably $3,500 million this year… I wonder where in the Constitution you can find anything that gives the right to spend the taxpayers’ money for projects of this sort… National defense costs for the military alone are running $33 billion, or $34 billion a year, and in view of that situation, how many of these frills can I vote for? We go on the defensive immediately when some propaganda connected with people whose ideologies are different from ours charges us with
having no culture. The world knows better... Just how responsible are we as representatives of the people when we vote to continue this madness until the crash takes us over?\textsuperscript{98}

The third largest performing arts group to be exported under the aegis of Eisenhower’s International Cultural Exchange Program was the Symphony of the Air, a free-lance organization.\textsuperscript{99} The orchestra played under the direction of guest conductors -- Thor Johnson of the Cincinnati Orchestra, Walter Hendl of the Dallas Symphony, and Nicolas Moldavan, a violist with Symphony of the Air. From May 3 to June 25, the orchestra performed in Tokyo, Nagoya, Takarazuka, Kyoto, Hiroshima, Fukuoka, Sendai, Yokohama, and Shizuoka, Japan, Seoul, Korea, Taipei, Taiwan, Manila, Philippines, Bangkok, Thailand, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and Colombo, Ceylon.

\textsuperscript{98} Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, Eighty-Fourth Congress, First Session, June 1955.

\textsuperscript{99} Bureau of Educational and Historical and Cultural Affairs Collection. University of Arkansas Special Collections Libraries, Fayetteville.
Below is a map that shows how extensive the tour was in less than two months. This tour reached more cities than either José Limón or Porgy and Bess, and did so in less time. Evidently, artists were exported for longer and to more places as the success and effectiveness of the previous tours were realized.

The State Department was paranoid about the Communist influence in these Far Eastern countries and the small number of American performing arts presentations in that region thus far. According to the testimony given at the June 1955 hearings, no Western orchestra had ever visited Japan. The orchestra’s tour was still in progress during the Program hearings in June, which is perhaps why the organization escaped close scrutiny. However, in March 1956 during another hearing before the Subcommittee of the Committee of Appropriations, Rooney asserted that several members of the Symphony of Air were “Communists or Communist sympathizers, and that taxpayer money was being spent on dangerous and subversive
activities.”

Rooney managed to get Dennis A. Flinn from the Office of Security to check the background of orchestra members to determine if any past or present Communist affiliations existed:

Rooney: On or about the 18 of January 1956, were you in touch with me, Mr. Flinn?

Flinn: That is correct.

Rooney: At the time I told you that I had the name of a certain person in the city of New York, which had been sent to me by a retired detective of the police department of that city…including the name and address and telephone number of that informant?

Flinn: That is correct.

Rooney: And what did you then do?

Flinn: I referred it to the FBI…They reported the interview with the original informant named in the letter to you.

Rooney: Let us stay with the original informant…We will call him No. 6…what did No. 6 say?

Flinn: He identified himself as associated with this orchestra in the past, and stated that since the last election of officers of the orchestra, when the leftist groups took control, he has not played with the orchestra…he attributed his lack of further employment to an incident that took place in 1955 when the arrangements were made for the trip to the Orient. He made the comment that some of the fellows were going to have difficult in making the tour because they would have difficulty in getting a passport because of their background. Since that statement…he was constantly watched by “leftists…He said…that No. 8 highly praised and agreed with a book which condemned the atom bombing of Hiroshima…No. 9…and constantly

---

100 Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, Eighty-Fourth Congress, March 1956.
praised Russian music… He admitted that he could not be specific as to the allegations of the Red propaganda, nor cite specific instances as to the spread of the propaganda. He did furnish, however, a list of 30 individuals suspected by him of being “leftists.” This informant was also not quite articulate when asked to define the term “leftist.”

Rooney: Did he not say that he believed there were certain people who were un-American?

Flinn: Un-American, yes.

Rooney: What did No. 36 say?

Flinn: He said that he had no special information regarding the spread of Red propaganda, but felt and had heard that several members of the orchestra were Communists… that a certain local union is controlled by the Communist faction… because of his own rightist tendencies, he had been held back in his career in the music profession…

Although no members of the Symphony were found to be “Communists or communist sympathizers,” the Symphony received no further bookings from the State Department.

During this time, the Soviet Union sent artists to the United States. For example, pianist Emil Giles was the first Soviet artist to appear in the United States in decades, when he performed to rave reviews on a month long tour in 1955. Violinist David Oistrakh had similar success the same year, as did cellist Mstislav Rostropovich

---

101 Ibid.
in 1956. Columbia Artists Management presented all three artists in the United States.\textsuperscript{102}

The President’s International Cultural Exchange Program was transformed into permanent legislation on August 1, 1956 when the Eighty-Fourth Congress voted to pass Public Law 860, the International Cultural Exchange and Trade Fair Participation Act.\textsuperscript{103} Clearly, Congressional attitudes had changed, and they now saw the value of exporting American artists. This change of attitude was primarily driven by the success of these three companies, the growing friction between the Soviet Union and the United States, and the increasing spread of Soviet propaganda. This change of ideology helped pass the 1958 bill establishing the National Cultural Center -- the Kennedy Center in Washington DC -- and the National Endowment for the Arts six years later.

That same year, the Lacy-Zarubin agreement was signed in January signifying “the first exchange agreement between the two superpowers after the Second World War.”\textsuperscript{104} The full title of the agreement was “Agreement between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Exchanges in the Cultural, Technical, and Educational Fields.” Because it was an executive agreement rather than a treaty, it did not require Senate ratification. Special Assistant to the Secretary of State William S. B. Lacy and USSR Ambassador Georgi N. Zarubin functioned as negotiators and signatories on the agreement. In many ways, the Lacy-Zarubin

\textsuperscript{103} Prevots, \textit{Dance for Export}, 35.
agreement is a product of the Soviet opening up to the West following Josef Stalin’s death on March 5, 1953. In fact, soon after his death, Soviet Prime Minister Georgy Malenkov announced that the Soviet Union did not have a “single problem with the West, including the United States, that could not be solved.”  

Although primarily driven by the Kremlin, the State Department Bulletin announced that,

This Agreement is regarded as a significant first step in the improvement of mutual understanding between the peoples of the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and it is sincerely hoped that it will be carried out in such a way to contribute substantially to the betterment of relations between the two countries, thereby also contribute to a lessening of international tensions.  

The historic exchange cemented a new view of how the Soviet Union and the United States could interact during the Cold War and identified cultural exchange as a way to peacefully further Soviet-American relations.

**Part VI: President Kennedy and Cultural Exchange**

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy appointed journalist Edward Murrow as head of the USIA. Also in 1961, Congress passed the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act (Fulbright-Hays Act), which consolidated various educational and cultural programs.  

The Act strengthened educational and cultural programs in the State Department and emphasized reciprocity in cultural exchange by

---

107 Roth, “Public Diplomacy,” 368.
108 Ibid. 369.
encouraging cultural presentations from other countries to the United States.\textsuperscript{109} It intended to do the following:

\begin{quote}
to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United State and the people of other countries…to promote international cooperation for educational and cultural advancement; and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic, and peaceful relations between the United States and other countries of the world.\textsuperscript{110}
\end{quote}

Senator Fulbright, co-sponsor of the bill, emphasized the need to keep educational and cultural programs separate from information programs:

\begin{quote}
I utterly reject any suggestion that our educational and cultural exchange programs are weapons or instruments with which to do combat…There is no room, and there must not be any room, for an interpretation of these programs as propaganda, even recognizing that the term covers many respectable activities.\textsuperscript{111}
\end{quote}

Some USIA officials feared that the USIA would lose its cultural programs and its cultural affairs officers as a result of the bill. The bill delegated responsibility for organizing foreign tours of performing artists to the State Department, but responsibility for making local arrangements and handling publicity remained with USIS posts.\textsuperscript{112} Thus in practice, a separation of cultural and information programs did not occur. Foreign cultural affairs officers and information officers continued to work out of the same USIS posts.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{110} Fulbright-Hays Act quoted in Coombs, \textit{Fourth Dimension}, 51.
\textsuperscript{111} Senator Fulbright quoted in Coombs, \textit{Fourth Dimension}, 52.
\textsuperscript{112} Henderson, \textit{United States Information Agency}, 80-81.
\end{flushright}
The USIA revised its mission statement after several important Cold War events: the Bay of Pigs invasion, the building of the Berlin Wall, and the Cuban Missile Crisis. On April 17, 1961, a force of 1,500 Cuban exiles trained by the CIA landed on a Cuban beach. Denied American air cover and given erroneous intelligence, the Bay of Pigs invasion failed against Cuban soldiers who wiped out the American invaders in one day. This attempt to invade Cuba originated under President Eisenhower, but was executed by President Kennedy.\(^{113}\) In the wake of the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, Fidel Castro, fearing another invasion attempt by American troops, turned to the Soviet Union for protection. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev responded by moving a variety of weapons to Cuba, including medium-range and intermediate-range nuclear missiles, as well as IL-28 nuclear bombers. During the summer of 1962, American intelligence sources picked up reports that Soviet missiles were stationed on the shore of Cuba. President Kennedy and his advisers privately debated how the United States should respond as they worried that the U.S. would be perceived as weaker than the Soviet Union for having taken inappropriate action. On October 22, Kennedy announced an American “quarantine” of Cuba and ordered nuclear forces to DEFCON 2, the highest alert short of war. On October 24, Soviet ships stopped just before the quarantine line. Four days later, Khrushchev announced he would withdraw the missiles. In return, Kennedy agreed to not invade Cuba and remove American missiles from Turkey.\(^{114}\) Also in 1961, the Berlin crisis, sparked by East Germany’s construction of the Berlin

\(^{113}\) Kunz, *Butter and Guns*, 129.

\(^{114}\) Ibid. 141.
Wall, physically divided the city, igniting another major crisis for the Kennedy administration.\footnote{115 Ergebnis.}

As a result, in January 1963, President Kennedy restated the USIA’s mission:

The mission of the United States Information Agency is to help achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives by (a) influencing public attitudes in other nations and (b) advising the President, his representatives abroad, and various Departments and Agencies on the implications of foreign opinion for present and contemplated U.S. policies, programs, and official statements.\footnote{116 Ergebnis.}

The USIA’s mission as a tool for gathering information about foreign attitudes of the U.S. and U.S. policies was clear. Finally, President Eisenhower’s International Cultural Exchange Program and its associated government and non-government organizations were firmly established, and the objectives and values of such a program were fully realized. Thus began a period of exporting numerous artists from various disciplines until the absorption of the USIA into the State Department at the end of the Cold War.

\footnote{115 Ergebnis. 150.}
\footnote{116 Ergebnis. 66.}
Chapter 2: Modern Dance

One way the United States psychologically combatted the Soviet Union’s negative portrayal of the U.S. and demonstrated true American values was by using modern dance and modern dance choreographers. This chapter analyzes two modern dance choreographers frequently exported under the aegis of Eisenhower’s International Cultural Exchange Program: José Limón and Martha Graham. As previously mentioned, José Limón was the first major artist exported under Eisenhower’s Program. This chapter concentrates on Limón’s 1957 tour under Eisenhower’s Program, as there are extensive press releases about this tour that emphasize him as an “American” icon and choreographer. This chapter also details the company’s 1973 Soviet Union tour after his death. Memos from this tour demonstrate the State Department’s oppressive attitude on how dancers were to behave on tour on and off-stage, revealing the State Department’s homophobic attitudes even though the U.S. was attempting to convey democratic ideals, such as appreciation of individuality, and a nation more accepting and inclusive than the Soviet Union. The second part of this chapter focuses on Martha Graham, as she herself was a groundbreaking female icon in the art world, and discusses her 1955 and 1962 State Department tours because of the repertory performed and what those tours represented.

These two modern choreographers were chosen by the ANTA Dance Panel and approved by the State Department because of their humanist perspective. Thus, it is useful to briefly look at the tradition of humanistic modern dance and the underlying values and ideologies that guided the choreographers working in this way
since these values match the positive American values the State Department was seeking to portray.

**Part I: Overview**

Early modern dancers broke away from the tradition of ballet to create a form dedicated to the expression of the human spirit.\(^{117}\) These individuals wanted to create dances that captured the full range of human experience, with an emphasis on the individuality of the dancer and with the understanding that each dancer moves in a unique way. Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, and Charles Weidman, three dancers who broke away from the Denishawn Company, are frequently hailed as the creators of this new art form. The fourth founder of modern dance, Hanya Holm, brought German Expressionistic dance from her studies with Mary Wigman in Germany. In addition to creating a stylistically modern art, these individuals sought to create a uniquely American style of art.

Dance critic John Martin was also instrumental in defining this new art form. Martin gave a series of lectures expounding his theories of modern dance at the New School for Social Research in 1931-1932. These lectures were distributed in a publication entitled *The Modern Dance*. According to Martin, modern dance was based on “expression of an inner compulsion” and the movement is “the most elemental physical experience of human life”\(^{118}\) and dance in general was capable of expressing


the “intangible.” Thus, Martin viewed dance as a universal means of expression capable of overcoming any cultural or language barriers. Dance “is […] the only fundamentally substantial means for the conveying of ideas because it is universal. All men do not speak the same language but all men move in generally the same way and for the same reasons.”

The basic tenets of humanistic modern dance -- its emphasis on human and spiritual values, freedom of expression, and the importance of the individual -- were values the State Department wished to convey to the people of other nations because they mirror the tenets of a true democratic society. Furthermore, modern dance as a universal language and a uniquely American art form (if one conveniently forgets its German influences) added to the idea of dance as a cultural export capable of reaping diplomatic benefits for the United States.

Part II: José Limón

José Arcadio Limón was born in Culiacán, Sinaloa, Mexico on January 12, 1908. After a year at UCLA as an art major, he moved to New York City where he saw his first dance performance. After the show he said,

---

119 Ibid. 10-11.
120 Ibid. 84.
122 Ibid. 179.
What I saw simply and irrevocably changed my life. I saw the dance as a vision of ineffable power. A man could, with dignity and towering majesty, dance…dance as Michelangelo’s visions dance and as the music of Bach dances.123

After ten years of studying and performing with Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman, two prominent American dancers and choreographers, Limón created a new dance company, naming Humphrey as the company’s artistic director. This artistic collaboration spawned several masterpieces of modern dance.124

As previously mentioned, José Limón and his modern dance company were chosen for the first tour under President Eisenhower’s International Cultural Exchange Program. The Limón Company took three additional State Department sponsored tours during Limón’s lifetime to Europe in 1957, to Latin America in 1960, and to Southeast Asia in 1963. Just two months after José Limón’s death, the company embarked on a tour of the U.S.S.R in February of 1973, and in 1975, they toured the Middle East under State Department sponsorship.

The 1957 Tour

In December 1956, the Limón Company was again approved to travel to Europe under President Eisenhower’s International Cultural Exchange Program. ANTA sent out press releases the following week announcing a five-month tour of Europe and the Near East. The publicity material commended Limón’s South American tour, the first tour organized under the President Eisenhower’s

123 José Limón quoted on limon.org website. For more information, see limon.org/about-us/founders.
International Cultural Exchange Program in 1954. According to the press release, “No better exponent of modern dance can be found to represent this form of American art.”\textsuperscript{125} The press release not only noted the company’s repertory had been choreographed by Limón and Doris Humphrey, but it also emphasized the works with scores by American composers. In June 1957, the contract between ANTA and the José Limón Company was finalized.\textsuperscript{126} Two months before the tour, the Department of State sent the following publicity release to the USIS posts where the company planned to perform:

José Limón is regarded as the top male modern dancer in the Americas and the leading exponent of the modern dance movement. Limón, an American, was born in Mexico but came to the United States at the age of eight and has only returned a couple of times for performances in Mexico City. Limón, who will be accompanied by his wife, personal manager, and costume designer, Pauline Lawrence, will travel with a company of twenty-one, including sixteen dancers, Doris Humphrey, artistic director, Tharon Musser, lighting designer and stage manager, and Simon Sadoff, musical director and pianist, who together with Betty Walberg, assistant conductor and percussionist, will supervise the musical accompaniment which will be played by a European orchestra. The roster of performers will include Pauline Koner, Lucas Hoving, Betty Jones, Ruth Currier, Letitia Ide, and Lavina Nielsen among others.

The Limón Company will perform four different programs consisting of twelve to fifteen dance works from the Limón repertory, which represent purely an American

\textsuperscript{125} Press Release, from Samuel J. Friedman, Publicity Director, ANTA, José Limón Papers, ZBD-510, reel 8, DC-NYPL.
\textsuperscript{126} ANTA Agreement between the International Cultural Exchange service of ANTA (ICES) and José Limón, 3 June 1957, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Historical Collection, Box 96, Folder 4.
developed art. The choreography is by Limón and Doris Humphrey. American composers will be represented by such numbers as “La Malinche” by Norman Lloyd, “Scherzo” by Hazel Johnson, “Symphony for Strings” by William Schumna, “Variations on a Theme ‘There is a Time’ “ by Norman Dello Joio, “New Dance” by Welling ford [sic] Riegger and “Day on Earth’ by Aaron Copland.127

Although Betty Walberg and Tharon Musser were both eventually cut from the tour, the press release stressed that Limón was an American and a leader in the American modern dance world. It also clearly highlighted American composers who had composed scores for the dancers to be performed on the tours.

The company departed for Europe on August 23, set to premiere in London on September 2. Among the dances presented on tour were There is a Time and The Emperor Jones, both choreographed in 1956. This tour was far more ambitious in comparison to the 1954 tour. During this four-month tour, the company visited thirty-five cities in eight nations. On the whole, the tour was successful, although reactions in Western Europe were mixed.

The 1973 Tour

During the Cold War, the State Department fired the largest percentage of suspected homosexuals. As historian David K. Johnson has charted, since the late forties congressional inquiries had led to the firing of thousands of federal employees

127 Department of State Instruction from Secretary of State Dulles to USIS posts, 27 June 1957, Dept. of State, Central Files, Record Group 59, Stack Area 250, 1955-59, Box 111, 032 Limón, Jose/6-2757, NARA II.
suspected of being homosexuals because they were thought of as “security risks.” In fact, Senator Joseph McCarthy argued that homosexuals’ “perversity” made them susceptible to blackmail by Communists, particularly those in diplomacy roles. The federal government’s most public sexual inquisitions ended in 1962, but it was clear that homophobia had been institutionalized through the late 1960s as the State Department’s annual reports to congressional committees always included the number of homosexuals fired that year. As late as 1966, all male applicants to the State Department were asked if they had ever engaged in a “homosexual act.”

Although homosexuality was not something that could be eradicated, the State Department believed it could be obscured and/or managed. Thus, the State Department charged the USIA escorts with watching for homosexual activity of their artists sent abroad. In an unsigned internal memo, a government official traveling on the Limón Dance Company’s 1973 Soviet Tour dedicated several pages to a meeting with the company manager Judith Hawkins, lighting designer “Spence,” and stage manager John Towland. The memo writer expressed how “It is only too relevant to this tale of company intrigue and backbiting to mention that Spence and Towland are flagrant homosexuals, whose appearance, demeanor and conversation detracted from the otherwise excellent public image the company projected.”

Even though the State Department publically supported José Limón as an American and an embodiment of American freedom, Limón and his company faced...
clear restrictions on how they could act and behave on tour. Clearly, the Company was encouraged to be “American” and to identify as “Hispanic,” but no one could act or be “gay.” Clear homophobic attitudes saturating State Department’s personnel and written policies is also seen in the section entitled African American Artists, Part II: Alvin Ailey.

**Part III: Martha Graham**

Martha Graham was born in Allegheny Pennsylvania in 1894. In 1908, she moved with her parents to Santa Barbara and from 1919-1923, she was a member of the Denishawn Company and Show, the first large American modern dance company and the spawning ground of many major dance choreographers of the next generation. Graham left the company to pursue her own vision, and in 1926, she formed her first independent company consisting of herself and three other dancers in New York. A year later, she opened her studio. The Martha Graham Dance Company has been flourishing ever since.\(^{133}\)

From Roosevelt through Reagan, every seated president received, honored, or exported Graham as cultural propaganda.\(^{134}\) In 1937, Martha Graham was invited to perform for President Roosevelt, his first lady, and key cabinet members at the White House. As a horn played, she began to dance *Frontier* (1935). Her State Department sponsored tours began in 1955 when President Eisenhower’s administration exported

---


her to Japan, Pakistan, India, Burma, Ceylon, and Iran. During this time, Graham also traveled to Israel on private foundation funding but still with government publicity and embassy support. In 1962, under President Kennedy, she was sent to Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia, Germany, and Poland. In 1967, with private funding, she again traveled to Israel, followed by performances in Portugal sponsored by Lyndon B. Johnson’s administration. Richard Nixon’s Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, oversaw her 1974 tour that repeated the 1955 itinerary, dropping India, Pakistan, and Iran, and adding Hong Kong and Vietnam instead. By the time Graham departed for this tour, President Ford was elected. In 1979, the Graham Company performed on the “Jimmy Carter Goodwill Tour” to Jordan, Egypt, and Israel. In 1987, Graham returned to Berlin with government support.

Graham challenged and reformulated gender norms on stage, challenging the boundaries of sexuality while presenting herself as a cultural ambassador, complete with pearls, at cocktail parties and embassy dinners while abroad. Thus, she was an ideal choice for representing the United States as she clearly embodied democratic values such as freedom of expression and unique individuality as a powerful American female, a leader of a new genre, and a professional who managed a company of dancers while pushing the boundaries of gender and heteronormativity.

The 1955 Tour

In April 1954, Eisenhower articulated his Domino Theory: if Indochina fell to the Vietminh, then Malaya, Burma, India, and Iran could topple.\textsuperscript{135} As a result,

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{135} Prevots, Dance for Export, 44.}
Graham and her Company’s itinerary followed foreign policy agendas that specifically targeted the Near, Far, and Middle East.

On October 27, 1955, Martha Graham and her company attended a “welcome party” in Japan for the start of the State Department tour of Asia and the Far East that would conclude on February 12, 1956 in Teheran, Iran. This tour featured Graham’s Appalachian Spring (1944). Of the works taken on tour, Appalachian Spring (1944) was choreographed earliest in Graham’s career. Dance critic Chris Pales explains how the ballet tells a simple story. A young farm couple ruminates on their lives before getting married and setting up a house in the wilderness. An itinerant preacher delivers a sermon. An older pioneer woman oversees the events with sympathy and wisdom. The newlyweds muse about their future as night falls. In the course of the dance, Graham reveals the inner lives of the four principal characters -- Wife, Husbandman, Pioneer Woman, and Preacher. She shows that the couple will face a future that will be tumultuous, but she reveals how they will be able to bring emotional resources to any challenges they may face. Appalachian Spring (1944) is regarded as Graham’s last ballet to have “such an American theme.”136 The piece is a celebration of a simpler past, but with a sense of optimism and hope in the future. It reflects a contemporary America that had experienced the Great Depression and World War II, but is now prepared for a better and more prosperous future.

Graham was also an appropriate choice for this tour because of the Asian influences in her dance aesthetic. In 1923, Graham met Michio Ito, a Japanese dancer and choreographer, when she performed in his production, Garden of Kama. In

---

1927, Graham performed experimental works with Ito at the Neighborhood Playhouse called “orchestral dramas.” In 1930, one of Graham’s signature works, a modern dance solo entitled *Lamentation* (1930) established her voice in the modern dance world. Critics have found similarities to Ito’s work and their shared use of “abstraction of the dramatic element and its integration in the choreography of the work as a whole.” Ito introduced Graham to sculptor Isamu Noguchi, with whom she formed an enduring partnership beginning in 1935 with the stage set for *Frontier* (1935). Every work on the 1955 tour to Asia included a Noguchi set.

The 1962 Tour

Following her successful 1955 tour to Asia, Martha Graham’s company was selected to be the first American modern dance company to travel behind the Iron Curtain. Placed between José Limón’s 1957 tour to Yugoslavia and Poland and Alvin Ailey’s 1967 tour to the Soviet Union and Romania, Graham continued the narrative of “American modern dance” initiated by Limón and foreshadowed the diversity displayed by Ailey.

To better prepare her for this tour, the State Department asked Graham to rethink and refine her political stance:

*We want to send you this word of gratitude and to let you know that we shall be following every performance with the keenest interest, as the reports come back from*

---


our embassies and consulates…the money for your and all other tours comes from the American taxpayers, through annual appropriations by the Congress.\textsuperscript{140}

The letter goes on to remind Graham that tickets are sold at a low price to encourage attendance, and she is expected to demonstrate “her belief in this program,” as “never was the comprehension [mutual understanding] more important for the survival of our country and our way of life.”\textsuperscript{141} The letter also stresses that she would be “constantly in the limelight, off stage as well as on” and that Graham herself would be “in the hands of the USIS” and “in the charge of the cultural officer of the USIS,” while her activity would be reported directly to the American ambassador.\textsuperscript{142} Most importantly, Graham must keep “in mind that, as guests in their country and as representative of our American Government program,” she was in a “special position.”\textsuperscript{143}

The choice of Yugoslavia and Poland for Martha Graham’s first performances behind the Iron Curtain was a calculated and inspired move. During the Kennedy era, relations between the United States and Yugoslavia had begun to deteriorate.\textsuperscript{144} In 1961, Tito publically criticized the Americans, expressing an “understanding” of Soviet actions.\textsuperscript{145} In 1962, Congress denied financial aid to Yugoslavia. At the time of Martha Graham’s arrival, Tito had sent a letter to the United Nations stressing his unaligned policy, briefly alleviating the tense situation. Poland was also a strategic

\textsuperscript{140} Letter to Martha Graham from Heath Bowman, Educational and Cultural Affairs Bureau, 10 Oct 1962, Box 350, Graham Collection, LOC.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{144} Campbell, John C. \textit{Tito’s Separate Road: America and Yugoslavia in World Politics}. Harper & Row, 1967.
\textsuperscript{145} Campbell, \textit{Tito’s Separate Road}, 49-54.
choice.\textsuperscript{146} Poland seemed to be on the road to greater democracy as foreign films were regularly shown in Poland, and some travel to foreign countries were permitted. Thus, the Polish sixties seemed like a phase of “bearable Communism,” making it a viable choice to foster political divisions within the Soviet bloc.\textsuperscript{147}

The 1962 tour also took place during a very complicated political context, marked by the construction of the Berlin Wall and the Bay of Pigs, increased by the Cuban Missile crisis’ significance, and culminating with the naval blockade of Cuba, which ended on November 20, 1962. That same day, Graham gave a second performance in Zagreb. The tour started on November 15, 1962 when she and her dancers traveled to Belgrade and had two performances on November 16th and 17th in the city’s Opera House. The next day, they went to Zagreb, where they performed for two days. On November 21, the Company traveled to Warsaw and had three performances at Theatr Dramatyczny.

The 1962 tour program differed from Graham’s 1955 tour where her American themed pieces were the core of her performances. During her 1962 Eastern European tour, \textit{Frontier}, \textit{American Document}, and \textit{Appalachian Spring} were not performed. Instead the works focused on Greek myths, philosophical themes, and universal themes of human existence.

The official report of the tour claimed that the audience that “filled the theaters” was “sophisticated and highly critical.”\textsuperscript{148} Eastern European audiences were surprisingly open toward Graham’s art. Critics called Graham a “spiritual sister of

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{148} Evaluation of Martha Graham after the tour, Box 354, Graham Collection, LOC.
\end{flushleft}
Isadora Duncan” and compared her to other American artists who had already visited Eastern Europe -- namely, José Limón and Jerome Robbins.149

Yugoslavians and Poles were struggling with the status of belonging or not in Europe, as they were European but considered Eastern European. Thus, attending performances of American artists such as Graham represented a subliminal form of resistance as “American art during the communist times, like America in general, was associated by Polish people with everything that we have dreamt of behind the ‘iron curtain’: freedom, being open to the world, tolerance, modernity…everything that was missing in the communist countries that were grey, backward, censored, and isolated from the West.”150

149 Branko Dragutinovic, “Martha Graham” (translation from Serbian by Dr. Draga Fotez), Politika, November 18, 1962, Clipping, Scrapbooks, Box 350, Graham Collection, LOC.; Irena Turska, “Martha Graham’s World of Dance” (translation from Polish by Dr. Leszek Murat), Ruch Muzyczny, no. 1W [January 15, 1963]: 9. Reprinted in Lenart, “Dancing Art and Politics Behind the Iron Curtain”

150 Chynowski quoted in email to Lenart, “Dancing Art and Politics Behind the Iron Curtain”
Chapter 3: Ballet

Privately, the State Department dictated how artists could act on tours. However, publically approving and exporting modern dance was an effective way to challenge Soviet Union communism because modern dance itself and the choreographers represented and embodied democratic values such as humanity, individuality, and freedom of expression. On the other hand, ballet was exported not to demonstrate democratic values but because the State Department saw the success of the Moiseyev Dance Company, the Bolshoi Ballet, and the Kirov and felt the need to respond to the favorite dance styles of Communist countries.

In contrast to the long history of ballet in Russia, true American ballet did not emerge until the 1930s. In 1933, the New York impresario Sol Hurok negotiated with Colonel Vassili de Basil, who had founded the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in 1932, to bring the company to the United States. The Ballet Russe’s 1933-1934 season was extremely successful as millions of Americans eagerly flocked to theaters in the cities where the Ballet Russe appeared even though “there was virtually no educated ballet audience in America” at this time. After World War II, the Ballet Russe severed its connections with Monte Carlo and officially became an American troupe. The burgeoning interest in ballet generated by the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo enabled the successful inauguration of the two American ballet companies: the American Ballet Theater (ABT) and the New York City Ballet (NYCB). The focus of this chapter is on these American ballet companies but Part I examines the success of the

Moiseyev Dance Company, as this was the company that initially motivated the United States to export ballet.

Part I: The Moiseyev Dance Company

As part of the Lacy-Zarubin Agreement, the Moiseyev Dance Company visited the United States to perform in multiple cities including New York, Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Cleveland, Washington, Boston, and Philadelphia. The American tour began in April of 1958 and ran a total of eleven weeks. The tour included the following numbers: A Suite of Old Russian Dances, The Dance of the Tatars of Kazan, Torychka (A Byelorussian Dance), Khorumi (An Adzharian Dance), Polyanka (The Meadows), Zhok (A Moldavian Suite), Mongolian Figurine, City Quadrille, Bub'ba (Potatoes), Partisans, Soccer, Two Boys in a Fight, and Ukrainian Suite.

The Moiseyev Dance Company was founded and directed by Igor Moiseyev and featured a repertory of highly theatrical versions of folk dances from many regions of the Soviet Union. Newspapers reported that over 450,000 people went to see the company, and the company had grossed more than $1,600,000 on the American tour alone. The popularity of the company can be clearly gauged by ticket sales. The New York Times reported that tickets marked at $8.05 were being sold for $80.00. Sol Hurok recognized this success and announced additional performances.

---

153 Bureau of Educational and Historical and Cultural Affairs Collection. University of Arkansas Special Collections Libraries, Fayetteville.
at Madison Square Garden, which would allow more people to attend each performance than at the Metropolitan Opera House. The venue experienced the largest advance mail order sale in its history for these added-on performances, receiving a total of 18,000 ticket order requests.\footnote{Hallinan, “Cold War Cultural Exchange and the Moiseyev Dance Company,” 144.}

Critics observed that the Americans received the Moiseyev without a thought about politics: “Completely ignoring the political implications, the U.S. public has lovingly accepted the dancers from Soviet Russia.”\footnote{Joel, “The Moiseyev Dance Company: What Is It? What Is Its Appeal? What Is Its Lesson?”, 30.} In fact, critics believed that the Moiseyev Dance Company was so captivating that audience members completely “forgot about hydrogen bombs, intercontinental missiles, and space-girdling satellites.”\footnote{Dash, Thomas R. "Moiseyev Dance Company Metropolitan Opera House." Women’s Weave, April 15 1958.} In every city, the company was reviewed with the highest praise but the New York audience in particular seemed to receive the Moiseyev with wild enthusiasm. Dance critic John Martin’s review in \textit{The New York Times} on April 15 reveals his immense excitement about the Moiseyev’s opening night performance at New York Metropolitan Opera House:

“The implications of the occasion were enormous with regard not only to international relations but also to artistic exchange…under such circumstances, there might easily be a tendency to overrate the performance itself an regret it the next day. To play safe, then, let us risk understatement and call it merely stupendous.”\footnote{Martin, John. \textit{The New York Times}, April 15 1958.}

Similarly, Walter Terry’s untlited article for \textit{The New York Herald Tribune} on April 20 expressed that, “The Russians have made a mighty effective move in sending
us a mass of smiling, richly talented ambassadors. For it is quite impossible not to like these spirited folk dancers.”

At the end of the 1958 tour, the Moiseyev appeared on the *Ed Sullivan Show*. Sullivan spent a reported $200,000 to engage the Moiseyev for the entire full hour on his show. This marked the first time an ensemble had been given the entire evening of the show since the program’s inception in the late 1940s. The success of the 1958 tour allowed the Moiseyev Dance Company to tour the United States again in 1965 and 1970.

In response to the success of the Moiseyev Dance Company, the Dance Panel looked for an American folk dance company but ultimately did not approve any choreographer or company in this genre. When the Bolshoi Ballet toured the United States for the first time in 1959 and the Soviet Union’s other main ballet company, the Kirov, made several trips to the United States following the success of the Bolshoi’s tour, the Dance Panel felt increasingly pressured to send an American ballet company abroad.

---

**Part II: American Ballet Theater**

In 1938, the Bolshoi artist and Diaghilev soloist Mikhail Mordkin revived the Mordkin Ballet, originally formed in 1926, to provide the students of his New York school with dancing experience. General manager Richard Pleasant decided to expand the school into a company, forming Ballet Theater in 1939. Ballet Theater

---

debuted in 1940, boasting “the largest collaboration in dance history, comprising eleven choreographers, eighteen ballets, fifty-six classical dancers of whom fifteen were soloists, nineteen Spanish dancers, fourteen African American dancers, eleven designers, and three conductors preparing the music of numerous composers.”161 In 1941, Sol Hurok assumed responsibility for booking Ballet Theater on international tours.

The 1960 Tour

The first ballet company tour the Dance Panel approved was sending the American Ballet Theater to the Soviet Union in 1960.162 When the company was under consideration for an international tour in 1957, the company added “American” to its name.163 Upon approval, the Dance Panel’s discussions centered around two concerns: the dancers and the repertory.

The Panel was worried about sending ABT’s non-American principal dancers, such as the French Violette Verdy and the Danish Erik Bruhn, but felt as if they had to send stars such as Canadian Melissa Hayden and American Maria Tallchief from New York City Ballet. Rosamond Gilder, the ANTA chairperson for the international exchange program at the time, had written letters in the name of the Panel to Maria Tallchief, Melissa Hayden, and Nora Kaye hoping to convince them to perform in Russia with the Company. These letters did not successfully commit either Melissa Hayden or Nora Kaye. However, in her autobiography, Maria Tallchief vividly

161 Ibid. 237.
163 Lee, Ballet in Western Culture, 328.
recalls the pressure from ABT and State Department to perform that made her eventually commit:

It was explained to me that this was a very important tour with political consequences. Ballet Theater would be breaking barriers, and the State Department was very much involved in working out the logistics. A great deal was at stake. No one wanted to risk the off chance that a major American performing arts institution might have anything less than a triumph in the Soviet Union. So, after talking to government representatives, I felt that as an American I owed it to my country. I gave in.\textsuperscript{164}

The Panel approved the ABT tour with the provision that Agnes de Mille’s Western themed ballet \textit{Rodeo} be part of the tour.\textsuperscript{165} De Mille had created numerous ballets for the company and was most successful in creating ballets that used “American themes” such as \textit{Rodeo} (1942), originally created for Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, and \textit{Fall River Legend} (1948), which arguably established her as a major American choreographer. Her choreography for Broadway musicals included \textit{Oklahoma} (1943), \textit{Carousel} (1945), and \textit{Gentlemen Prefer Blondes} (1949), and critics hailed these dance segments for taking “the indigenous American art form of musical theater to new heights.”\textsuperscript{166} \textit{Rodeo} remains popular with audiences today. On October 16, 2012, the company celebrated 70 years of \textit{Rodeo}. The 32-minute ballet is hailed as “one of the first truly American ballets” with its Wild West setting, Aaron Copland

\textsuperscript{166} Lee, \textit{Ballet in Western Culture}, 329.
score, and cowboy modern dance influenced ballet technique. The ABT tour also included the American work *Fancy Free* (1944), originally choreographed for Ballet Theater by Jerome Robbins.

ABT received extremely high praise from Soviet audiences and Soviet dancers. Maria Tallchief remembers how during the Moscow performances,

The weather had turned cold. We were dancing not at the Bolshoi but at the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Lyric Theater, a somewhat smaller house. It was freezing there, and nothing I did warmed me up. […] I was so cold I couldn’t feel my feet […] The excitement compensated for the primitive state of affairs we had to endure. Opening night the theater was packed. Two Soviet prima ballerinas, Galina Ulanova and Maya Plisetskaya, were in the audience, and all number of dancers, critics, and Soviet officials. Their eagerness and anticipation somehow conveyed themselves to us onstage. […] After the performance, Ulanova and Plisetskaya came backstage to pay their respects, and hundreds of other people were hurling themselves at our feet.168

Tallchief and some of the members of Ballet Theater were invited to a dinner with Premier Nikita Khrushchev, after he attended one of the last performances in Moscow before the tour came to a close. Tallchief remembers how “English-language newspapers weren’t available, and everything on television and radio in the Soviet Union was in Russian. We were completely in the dark about what was happening in the world.”169 Only a few days before, Premier Khrushchev had returned to Russia

---

169 Ibid. 266.
from his trip to the United States where, as the head of the Soviet Union delegation to
the UN in New York during the first week of October 1960, he had delivered a tirade,
excoriating the West. During the session on October 12, Khrushev is said to have
pounded his shoe on his delegate-desk in protest of a speech made by Philippine
delegate Lorenzo Sumulong.  

Tallchief remembers being “seated directly across from Mr. Khrushchev, and he was very friendly.” The ABT tour of the Soviet Union lasted from September 13 until October 23.

Part III: The New York City Ballet

In 1933, Lincoln Kirstein, American impresario and philanthropist, created
the School of American Ballet and brought George Balanchine, a Russian native and
now regarded as the father of American ballet, to the United States. By December
1934, the School of the American Ballet expanded to include The American Ballet
Company, and by November 1945, the company became the resident ballet company
at the Metropolitan Opera House. In 1938, the troupe’s relationship with the
Metropolitan dissolved. As a result, the group disbanded, and Balanchine turned to
choreographing Broadway musicals and Hollywood films instead. In 1939, Kirsten
formed a new group called Ballet Caravan comprised of former members of
American Ballet and additional recruits from the school but Kirsten’s enlistment in
the war resulted in the closing of Ballet Caravan and the School of American Ballet.

---

171 Tallchief, Maria Tallchief: America’s Prima Ballerina, 266-267.
At the war’s end, Kirstein announced plans for a new company called Ballet Society. In 1948, Ballet Society became affiliated with the New York City Center of Music and Drama and was renamed the New York City Ballet.¹⁷³

The Dance Panel discussed the possibility of the New York City Ballet being sent to Russia numerous times. In 1956, Kirstein had received an offer from the Soviet Minister of Culture inviting the company to perform in four Soviet cities, but Kirstein refused to go. The idea of New York City Ballet going to Russia came up again in 1957 at a meeting but Kirstein again declined the offer.¹⁷⁴ Kirstein’s reasoning was predominately based on how Balanchine, although perhaps born in Russia, “was violently anti-Russian” so his choreography, which was frequently performed by the company, would not be well received or valued.¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, there were clear aesthetic differences between the New York City Ballet and those of the Bolshoi, Kirov, and Moiseyev companies. New York City Ballet productions tended to focus less on narrative, story, and spectacle, and so Kirstein objected to take the company on tour in fear of being misunderstood and rejected.¹⁷⁶

The 1962 Tour

In 1962, Kirstein finally agreed for the New York City Ballet to tour the Soviet Union. Kirstein and Balanchine agreed to the tour only if there was also enough funding for NYCB to tour Western Europe first. Sol Hurok invested his own money in the tour once he realized that without a NYCB tour to Russia, the second

¹⁷³ Lee, *Ballet in Western Culture*, 323-324.
¹⁷⁵ Prevots, *Dance for Export*, 74.
¹⁷⁶ Ibid.
Bolshoi Ballet tour to the United States would be canceled. The Bolshoi’s tour coincided with the New York City Ballet’s appearance in the USSR.

After six weeks in Western Europe, The New York City Ballet opened in Moscow on October 9 and gave its final performance in Baku on December 1. The company performed in five Soviet cities, spending three weeks in Moscow, ten in Leningrad, and one week each in Kiev, Tbilisi, and Baku. Including the tour of Western Europe, the company traveled for almost three months.

The repertory chosen for the tour were stylistically different from Soviet ballets. Ballets such as Apollo (1928) and La Sonnambula (1946) were chosen for their loose sense of narrative and simplicity. Agon and Episodes (1959) were also chosen because of their freshness and abstraction. The Panel believed that Balanchine’s ballets best represented American ballet’s innovation and excellence, despite the irony of a Russian-born choreographer representing the United States in the USSR. The Panel’s recommendations consisted of Balanchine’s Agon (1959), Apollo (1928), Serenade (1935), Symphony in C (1948), Prodigal Son (1929), Allegro Brillante (1956), Concerto Barocco (1941), and Theme and Variations (1947). Balanchine overrode the Panel’s desire to exclude Episodes (1959). Gostkoncert, the Soviet cultural agency, rejected A Midsummer Night’s Dream because the Soviet officials did not want “Russian children working with American dancers.”

179 New York City Ballet Archives, L. Leonidoff to Betty Cage, July 9 1962.
The Dance Panel chose Balanchine not only because he was “anti-Russian” but because he defined and shaped American ballet by combining Africanist aesthetics into traditional European ballet.\textsuperscript{180} His repertory frequently featured black ballerinas dancing on pointe while white ballerinas performed a “frenzied jazz,” indicating his desire to use black skin as a color value in his modernist stage picture.\textsuperscript{181} For example, \textit{Agon}, which was chosen for NYCB’s 1962 tour, was revolutionary because it featured a pas de deux of two stars of NYCB: Diana Adams (who was white) and Arthur Mitchell (who was black). In the racially segregated world of pre-1970s United States, this pairing made a statement to the white, elite world of ballet. According to Arthur Mitchell, the only black member of Balanchine’s NYCB for many years: “There was a definite use of the skin tones in terms of Diana being so pale and me being so dark, so that even the placing of the hands or the arms provided a color structure integrated into the choreographic one.”\textsuperscript{182}

Additionally, Balanchine sought specific qualities of energy, attack, speed, timing, and musicality that were “partially informed” and influenced by his exposure to Africanisms in the culture, and his particular sensitivity in using them to serve the ballet aesthetic.\textsuperscript{183} Maria Tallchief writes of this aesthetic:

\begin{quote}
Phrasing and timing were the most important aspects of the technique as I learned it. In a demonstration with Walter Terry and Balanchine, I did an eight count développé [a leg extension], straight up and out with a port de bras [a position of the arms] in a manner in which we most often see it done. Then George turned to me
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{181} Ibid. 64.
\textsuperscript{182} Mitchell quoted in Gottschild, \textit{Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance}, 64.
\textsuperscript{183} Gottschild, \textit{Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance}, 63.
and demanded, “Now out in one count and hold the rest.” That is an example of the simplicity of his style. The speed was not hard for me, because I always had more of a propensity for allegro dancing than anything else. Standing still as the tricky part.\(^{184}\)

In the quotation above, Tallchief inadvertently points out Balanchine’s use of the Africanist aesthetic by referencing the unusual speed and timing at which he heard and understood the music. Balanchine had asked Tallchief to simultaneously move fast and attack hard and immediately follow by being still. This hot-cold juxtaposition reflected heightened speed and densely laden phrases of other African-based dances and music. Balanchine defined American ballet by implementing a high-contrast, high-affect style evidently inspired by Africanist rhythmic landscapes.

\(^{184}\) Tallchief quoted in Gottschild, *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance*, 68.
Chapter 4: African-American Artists

Polls conducted by the State Department’s partner in cultural diplomacy, the USIA, confirmed the worldwide disproval of the United States’ “Negro” race relations in the late 1950s and throughout much of the 1960s. As a result, the State Department decided to export African-American artists to show American democracy as culturally superior and socially and politically more open minded and accepting than Soviet Union communism. This chapter first discusses African-American artists who were ultimately not sent under Eisenhower’s International Cultural Exchange Program but predominately focuses on choreographer and dancer Alvin Ailey and why he was chosen for export numerous times.

Part I: Overview

From 1954 through 1961, the Dance Panel discussed two African-American artists whose choreography had strong roots in American modern dance: Katherine Dunham and Pearl Primus. The Dance Panel showed great interest in Katherine Dunham in particular and considered her for a tour in 1955 but she was ultimately never sent under Eisenhower’s International Cultural Exchange Program. Following private engagements in Australia, New Zealand, and the Far East in 1956 and 1957, Dunham disbanded her company. In an interview with International Variety in May

---

186 Bureau of Educational and Historical and Cultural Affairs Collection. University of Arkansas Special Collections Libraries, Fayetteville.
1958, Dunham expressed her anger at ANTA and the State Department for not providing any government support for any of her previous tours. However, her choreography often received mixed reviews from critics, and her ballet *Southland* (1951) caused great controversy. Dunham and her work appalled many after the creation of this ballet. In the program notes for *Southland*, she writes: “This is the story of no actual lynching in the Southern states of America, and still it is the story of every one of them.”

At the premiere of the ballet at the Teatro Municipal in Santiago de Chile in January 1951, Dunham said,

“Though I have not smelled the smell of burning flesh, and have never seen a black body swaying from a Southern tree, I have felt these things in spirit…Through the creative artist comes the need…to show this thing to the world, hoping that by exposing the ill, the conscience of the many will protest…This is not all of America, it is not all of the South, but is a living, present part.”

The premiere of ballet featured dancers Lucille Ellis and Ricardo Avalos (or Jon Lei) as a black couple and Lenwood Morris and Julie Robinson as a white couple. After the opening scene where field hands sing and dance before an antebellum Southern mansion, the white couple makes love under a magnolia tree but then the husband attacks the wife and leaves her unconscious. When the field hand reenters, the white woman falsely accuses the black man of rape. The ballet climaxes with the staging of the lynching, in which the black man is swung onto stage, hanging by his neck from a branch of the magnolia tree. The ballet was never performed in the

---

188 Ibid.
United States, and Dunham’s decision to protest the historical oppression of blacks in the United States in such a way cost her dearly, as her subsequent applications for financial support and subsidy from the U.S. government were denied.

The Dance Panel approved Pearl Primus in 1961. Her work was cited as always being of the highest cultural level, although the Panel was concerned she had a “weight problem.”\textsuperscript{189} However, the Panel noted that she could still do all the dances in her repertory. Oddly, although she was approved, Primus never went abroad under Eisenhower’s Program.

It should be noted that one of the African-American dance traditions the Dance Panel utterly failed to appreciate was tap. The Panel approved Georgie Tapps and his company to be sent to Africa from December 1961 through April 1962 but missing from his work was “the improvisation, complex rhythms, and inspired sense of personal style typical of African-American tap.”\textsuperscript{190} Tapps was doing “white tap,” seen in the movies, musicals, and tap studios across the United States. The irony of sending a white tapper to Africa was lost on the members of the ANTA Dance Panel.

\textbf{Part II: Alvin Ailey}

Born on January 5, 1931 in Rogers, Texas, Alvin Ailey has become one of the leading figures in twentieth century modern dance. At the age of 12, he moved from Texas to Los Angeles, where he saw the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo perform. This performance inspired him to pursue dancing, and he began studying modern dance

\textsuperscript{189} Prevots, \textit{Dance for Export}, 106.
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid. 109.
with Lester Horton in 1949. He joined Horton’s dance company the following year.

In 1958, Ailey founded his own company, now called the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and debuted works such as Blue Suite and Revelations that drew inspiration from his southern roots. In 1969, Masekela Language premiered, which probed at the experience of being black in South Africa. Ailey formed the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center, now called the Ailey School, that same year. In 1988, Ailey was honored by the Kennedy Center for his contributions to the arts.¹⁹¹

The Alvin Ailey American Dance Company was the first major African-American dance group sent abroad under the sponsorship of Eisenhower’s International Cultural Exchange Program.²⁰² Although the company generated interest from the start, Ailey was not given funding until September 1961. The December 1958 minutes of the Dance Panel describe the company as “an all-Negro company with desires to tour Africa…The Company is appearing at the YMHA on Sunday, December 21, and an effort will be made to get Panel members to see the performances.”¹⁹³ However, at the January meeting, the Panel decided that the company was not quite ready for export: “Mr. Terry saw this performance and, while Ailey is a good dancer, and they do a blues number which is good, the troupe is not qualified for export at this time. Therefore the project was not approved.”¹⁹⁴ A similar view was expressed at the November 1959 meeting:

A European impresario is requesting transportation to get his company to Europe where she can set up a tour. Mr. Kirstein and Mr. Terry are familiar with it and feel

---

¹⁹² Prevots, Dance for Export, 93.
it is not representative of the United States. Mr. Ailey is a good dancer, but his company only has one good number, and is therefore not considered ready for use under the President’s Program. This was agreed unanimously. Mr. Kirstein and Mr. Menotti want to organize a Negro dance company for Spoleto next summer, composed of Geoffrey Holder, Talley Beatty, Louis Johnson, among others. The project would need a good organizer.\footnote{ANTA Dance Panel minutes, Nov 1959. Bureau of Educational and Historical and Cultural Affairs Collection. University of Arkansas Special Collections Libraries, Fayetteville.}

After no one organized such a group, the Dance Panel returned to the idea of exporting the Ailey and his Company in a February 1960 meeting:

Although this has been turned down for use by our program, Claude Planson, Director of the Paris International Drama Festival, has asked if he might include the company as a representative of American dance this year. Should the Embassy encourage Planson to accept Alvin Ailey? This would be for approval without the use of Government funds. Miss Coleman said we do not like to interfere with someone being hired. The Panel, however, was of the opinion that this Dance Company was not of the caliber to bear any designation as the official representation from the United States. It was moved, seconded and carried not to recommend the Alvin Ailey Dance Company as a representative of American dance at the Festival.\footnote{ANTA Dance Panel minutes, Feb 1960. Bureau of Educational and Historical and Cultural Affairs Collection. University of Arkansas Special Collections Libraries, Fayetteville.}

In 1961, there was a dramatic shift in the Panel’s view. The panelists who had seen the company perform at the historical and renowned Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival in late June and early July were excited and enthusiastic about Ailey and his company:

\footnote{ANTA Dance Panel minutes, Nov 1959. Bureau of Educational and Historical and Cultural Affairs Collection. University of Arkansas Special Collections Libraries, Fayetteville.}
There were eight dancers in the Company at Jacob’s Pillow. The Panel members felt that the dance “Roots of the Blues” was one of the most brilliant they had seen. They used tapes at Jacob’s Pillow, and these were fine. It was very exciting, very theatrical program, an all-Negro company, most dependable and disciplined, highly professional, and could be sent anywhere. Miss Pimselur, the manager, should be told the weakest numbers, “Gillespiana” and “Knoxville,” should not be included, but “The Roots of the Blues,” “Portrait of Billie,” “Revelations,” and “The Beloved” would make an especially fine program. Mr. Faine moved the project be approved, and the programs will be submitted before finalizing anything. This was seconded and carried unanimously.\textsuperscript{197}

There are several reasons for this shift in the Panel’s view of the Ailey company: Ailey’s growing maturity as a choreographer, the strength and cohesiveness of his company as a performing ensemble, an awareness that African-American work needed to be seen abroad, and the increasing acceptability of an all African-American modern dance company. However, when Ailey gave an interview to \textit{New York Times} dance critic Anna Kisselgoff, he adamantly refused her suggestion that his sponsorship had anything to do with race. The Ailey Company represented, “American dance,” he said, “not blackness.”\textsuperscript{198}

\textit{Revelations}

Ailey’s \textit{Revelations} remains Ailey’s most celebrated and well-known choreography, and was frequently utilized by State Department throughout the Cold


\textsuperscript{198} Ailey quoted in Croft, \textit{Dancers as Diplomats}, 68.
War. In fact, it closed almost every Ailey program on every State Department tour. In his autobiography, Alvin Ailey writes that, “it’s pretty clear that there’s a love affair between audiences and ‘Revelations.’”200 *Revelations* has proved endlessly popular since its premiere in 1960. As of January 2016, the Ailey Company estimates that it has been seen by more than 23 million people in 71 countries -- the biggest audience to view any modern dance work ever.201

Told in three sections -- “Pilgrim of Sorrow,” “Take Me to the Water” and “Move, Members, Move” -- and set to traditional African American spirituals, *Revelations* traces a dramatic journey from sorrow and longing to joy.202 The first section includes the spirituals “I Been ‘Buked and I Been Scorned,” “There is Trouble All Over this World,” “Ain’t Gonna Lay My Religion Down,” and “Fix Me, Jesus.” The movement in this section is weighty to convey a sense of burden. The second section recalls images from the baptismal scenes of Ailey’s childhood with all of the dancers costumed completely in white. The movement is much more spirited than that of the first section in order to communicate the ecstatic nature of the baptismal experience. The third section is the most energetic section of the piece. As Judith Jamison, current artistic director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and former Ailey dancer, describes, “The dancers carry large yellow fans and wear Sunday-go-to-church straw hats.”203 The movements in this section are large and fast, a combination that requires an incredibly amount of technicality, strength, and

---

199 Croft, *Dancers as Diplomats*, 70.
202 In addition to reading literary work and research on *Revelations*, I have had the opportunity to view the performance in person a few years ago and in videos.
stamina. The section closes with the spiritual “Rocka My Soul.” Jamison believes

*Revelations* has been so successful because,

> There is a spirit within *Revelations* that keeps it fresh every time. At the end of “Rocka My Soul” the audience is indeed moved, taken to another place in their lives, someplace lasting that’s touched their hearts and minds and changed their perspective.\(^\text{204}\)

The music is performed live, adding to the power and mysticism of the work. Originally, Brother John Sellers performed the spirituals for *Revelations*. Sellers was a powerful vocalist and protégé of Mahalia Jackson, a well-known American gospel singer.\(^\text{205}\)

### The 1962 Tour

Once approved in 1961, the State Department decided to send the company on a tour of the Far East starting in early 1962. However, minutes from the October 1961 meeting indicate the panelists’ concern about what would be included in the touring repertory. Ailey himself even came to the December 1961 meeting to discuss the programs he would be taking abroad. Ailey believed the program should consist of *Modern Jazz Suite*, *Roots of the Blues*, *Creation of the World*, and *The Beloved*. Eventually, it was agreed that the touring program would consist of *Cinco Latinos*, *The Beloved*, *Adam in the Garden* (previously known as *Creation of the World*), *Roots of the Blues*, *Letter to a Lady*, and *Revelations*. The racial makeup of the tour was almost the exact opposite of the

---

\(^\text{204}\) Judith Jamison, *Dancing Spirit*, 116.

\(^\text{205}\) Ibid.
Since founding the Ailey Company, Ailey had made sure that the company was predominately African American and also had Latina/o and Asian American dancers. A white dancer joined the company just prior to the company’s tour in 1962.

On January 30, 1962, ten dancers and four musicians associated with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Company boarded a plane for Sydney, Australia. The dancers were James Truitte, Minnie Marshall, Ella Thompson, Charles Moore, Thelma Hill, Don Martin, Georgia Collins, and Connie Greco (the only white company dancer), with choreographer and dancer Carmen de Lavallade as a featured guest artist. The four musicians were Les Grinage (bass), Bruce Langhorne (guitar), Horace Arnold (percussion), and folk singer Brother John Sellers.

The company was a huge success. A July 2 report from the American Embassy in Japan to the State Department included reviews that ranged from exuberant to ecstatic. Ongaku Buyo Shimbun wrote, “It is really possible, I was asking myself, that I feel so elated and beautified by seeing a dance? I was leaving the theater after the show as over, my heart still dancing with your rhythms that fly toward the future, my head deep in thought.” Tokyo Shimbun wrote, “The dancing on the stage, as the program went on, demolished the barriers between countries, forced us to forget all the stuff about race, color, creed, etc. and embraced

---

206 Croft, *Dancers as Diplomats*, 83.
207 Bureau of Educational and Historical and Cultural Affairs Collection. University of Arkansas Special Collections Libraries, Fayetteville.
208 The report was a foreign service dispatch from the American Embassy in Japan dated July 2. All quotations are from this report. Bureau of Educational and Historical and Cultural Affairs Collection. University of Arkansas Special Collections Libraries, Fayetteville.
209 Ibid.
Asahi Shimbun wrote,

“There is nothing more American than American negro music, which, being the basis of jazz, has stamped a deep mark upon the music of today…Their dance numbers, though thematically different, all conveyed the soul of Negro art, the joys and sorrows of a suppressed race, with vivid modern sensitivity…We heartily admire the mastery of technique, the amplitude of expression, and the free, easy unbridled bodily movements of the dancers including above all, de Lavallade and Ailey.”

Similarly, a foreign service dispatch, signed by William C. Trueheart, Counselor of the American Embassy in Saigon, gave a long review of the Ailey visit that began on March 2 and ended on March 8. Trueheart writes,

“The visit of this dance company in Vietnam marked the introduction of a completely new form of artistic presentation to the Vietnamese…There were enthusiastic ‘ohs’ and ‘ahs’ when the curtain went up -- surprise and delight at the stage sets and costuming. And as each performance progressed, there was more real appreciation for the excellence of the dancing itself.”

Trueheart also wrote about how the dancers seemed to show a genuine interest in the Vietnamese music and dance:

In all their contacts with the Vietnamese, the dancers showed sensitivity to a culture that was new to them and genuine interest in the people themselves. The day after

---

210 Ibid.
211 Ibid.
212 The report was a foreign service dispatch from the American Embassy in Japan dated May 21. All quotations are from this report. Bureau of Educational and Historical and Cultural Affairs Collection. University of Arkansas Special Collections Libraries, Fayetteville.
their arrival, USIS held a press conference for the leads. Alvin Ailey gave an inspired -- almost evangelistic -- explanation of the modern American dance and gave the newsmen a chance to question him on details. The group, almost in toto, accepted the invitation of a Chinese music group to attend a song and dance performance arranged especially for them. And Miss de Lavallade and Mr. Ailey met with a group of students and the Public Affairs Officer for a discussion of the dance and youth.213

Additionally, Trueheart’s report makes it clear that the dancers were accepted as Americans: “The dancers represented admirably not only their own field but the United States in general.”214

The 1966 and 1967 Tours

In the late 1960s, the State Department sent Ailey and his company to the Africa twice. The company first traveled to Africa in 1966 for the First World Festival of Negro Arts in Senegal, but the company was sent on a longer African tour in 1967.215 In 1967, Ailey wanted the company to perform in South Africa but State Department officials refused, claiming it was too dangerous. Ailey also wanted to perform for local African audiences, not just elites and expatriates, and fought for lower ticket prices. At his request, the embassies added several informal outdoor shows to ensure more local community members could attend.

Like José Limón, the State Department supported Ailey publically, but officials reprimanded him in private because of his sexuality. The State Department

213 Ibid.
214 Ibid.
215 Bureau of Educational and Historical and Cultural Affairs Collection. University of Arkansas Special Collections Libraries, Fayetteville.
knew Ailey identified as gay because of information in his FBI file. As a result, when Ailey was preparing to leave with his company on the 1967 Africa tour, he was told to walk on a “straight and narrow path” and failure to do so could result in immediate cancellation of the tour.

The 1970 Tour

Like all of Ailey’s State Department tours, the 1970 tour to the Soviet Union was a great success, although the State Department expressed concern over the piece *Masekela Language*. The piece is a homage to Hugh Masekela, the South African trumpet player and composer and his searing, wistfully melodic music. There is no particular story but it is clear that Ailey drew parallels between the era of South African apartheid and the race-induced violence of 1960s Chicago. Dance critic Anna Kisselgoff describes the piece as Ailey’s most “militant” work, but notes that the work’s “framework and message are universal rather than specific in a sectarian way.” Thus, even Ailey’s most militant piece is still described as universal.

In her review of the premiere, Anna Kisselgoff wrote a passionate description of one particular moment in *Masekela Language*.

Another beats her fists against the floor. Suddenly, life and love are interrupted by violence -- read race conflict in Chicago -- as a wounded man rushes in and the lyrics speak mockingly of ‘Fuzz all around to protect me from Mace and grenades.'

---

216 Croft, *Dancers as Diplomats*, 96.
217 Bureau of Educational and Historical and Cultural Affairs Collection. University of Arkansas Special Collections Libraries, Fayetteville.
219 Ibid.
In this moment it is clear that Ailey’s work is inspired by U.S. race relations, such as the violence at the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago.

Almost coinciding with the years of the tours, in 1968, 1969, and 1970, three separate and lengthy feature articles on Ailey appeared in The New York Times. All three discussed Ailey’s message of universalism and his beliefs of integration. None of the articles placed Ailey in a negative light.\textsuperscript{220} Compared to those artists proclaiming Black Nationalism, Ailey’s message was more easily accepted by mainstream America and the State Department’s support did more than help Ailey’s troupe get off the ground. It helped establish “African American concert dance performance as an American cultural offering.”\textsuperscript{221}

In May 2008, the Library of Congress opened an exhibition entitled: Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater: 50 Years as Cultural Ambassador to the World.” This exhibition coincided with a Congressional resolution honoring the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre as a “Cultural Ambassador to the World, a pioneer in the world of dance, and a resource for training future generations of dancers and exposing a wide range of communities to the arts.”\textsuperscript{222} The company’s title as cultural ambassador is well earned because since its inception in 1958, the company has performed for an estimated 25 million people at theaters in 48 states and 71 countries.

\textsuperscript{220} Clive Barnes, ”"As Long As They Have Talent";” Ellen Cohn, ""I Want to Be a Father Figure;"” and Clive Barnes, ""A Great Lesson in Race Relations," The New York Times, 26 April 1970, 30(D).
\textsuperscript{221} DeFrantz, Dancing Revelations, 71.
on six continents.\textsuperscript{223} Although the State Department used Alvin Ailey to claim an inclusive present and race-blind nation during the Cold War era, continued government sponsorship has enabled Ailey to become one of the most famous names in dance and a cultural icon. Thus, in this case, exporting Alvin Ailey and his company has been and continues to be mutually beneficial.

Chapter 5: Twenty-First Century Dance Diplomacy

This thesis explores the role of public diplomacy during the Cold War in terms of Eisenhower’s International Cultural Exchange Program because the program was conceived as a weapon to make the United States more culturally competitive with the Soviet Union and to persuade undecided or left-leaning countries that the American way of life was superior to Soviet communism. That being said, when the Cold War ended with the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991 that also led to the collapse of the communist regimes in other countries such as Mongolia, Cambodia, and South Yemen, cultural diplomacy was increasingly devalued and deprioritized.  

Up through the 1980s, large companies, such as the aforementioned ABT, NYCB, and Alvin Ailey, had the money and resources to sustain themselves, and government grants and corporate sponsorship made international tours possible and helped disseminate American modern dance throughout the world. However, in 1999, the USIA became an integrated part of the State Department and drastic cuts were made to the USIA’s budget. The abolition of the USIA as an independent agency was part of a larger governmental restructuring act called the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998. This Act also integrated the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency into the State Department. Although Secretary of State Madeleine Albright described public diplomacy as a “national security imperative” at the ceremony marking the absorption of the USIA into the State Department, the increasing decline in funding during the 1990s indicated that others in the

government did not share her opinion. After the 1994 Republican landslide, USIA and the role of public diplomacy was called into question by Senator Jesse Helms, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and the Clinton Administration. Senator Helms targeted both the State Department and the USIA with requests for accountability and quantifiable evidence of their value.\textsuperscript{226} Congress soon forced the cancellation of most cultural exchanges and closing of American libraries and cultural centers worldwide.\textsuperscript{227} Thus began dance diplomacy’s 20-year hiatus until the DanceMotion USA initiative was launched in 2010.

I agree with dance historian and professor Naima Prevots that DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} has been “scantily documented” since its inception, so in addition to reviewing articles and videos online, I interviewed Meghan Rose Murphy, the Project Manager, to learn more about the initiative.\textsuperscript{228} As previously noted, DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} was launched in 2010. This launch served as a model for other cultural exchange programs and was the first major international dance program supported by the State Department in over 20 years.\textsuperscript{229} The program was conceived as a grant-based program open to applications, and in 2012, the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) was asked to apply, as it is a large organization with the administrative ability to make arrangements for artists and attract audiences domestically and globally. Joseph V. Melillo, the Executive Producer of BAM, played a major role in


orchestrating the partnership between the State Department and BAM. DanceMotion USA℠ is currently in its seventh season with the Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, and Bebe Miller Company being chosen to facilitate cultural exchange later this year.²³⁰ Unlike the companies exported during the Cold War, the companies exported today are small, relatively new, and are diverse in gender and race. For a list of the companies exported under the DanceMotion USA℠ program, see Appendix A.

The DanceMotion USA℠ program has goals distinctly different from the Cold War diplomatic efforts described in the preceding chapters. Cold War dance export focused on multiple performances in numerous cities within a country with occasional teaching, lectures, and embassy-related interactions, after which the company moved to another country in different region just as quickly as it had arrived. As Naima Prevots summarizes, during the Cold War, “the messages were about America’s freedom, democracy, strength as a country” and relaying this message to as many people as possible through dance.²³¹ The present initiative relies more on listening and exchange rather than showing and telling. There is much more interaction and engagement with audiences through classes and community-based workshops and fewer presentations and performances, as residencies are generally only a month with about a week spent in each location. DanceMotion USA℠’s website boasts about having sent artists to 49 different countries to teach over 700 workshops to more than 125,000 people. These large numbers of engagements indicate how committed the program is to facilitating a dialogue with individuals in

²³⁰ Murphy, Meghan Rose. Interview by Rachel Davis, DanceMotion USA, February 9 2018.
the countries of exchange and finding connections with them through movement.

Over email, Ms. Murphy wrote out the programs four goals:

1) Foster cultural exchange and mutual understanding between artists, in-country partners and audiences across sectors.

2) Enhance cultural diplomacy by extending the range and reach of traditional diplomacy through multiple formal and informal cultural exchange opportunities.

3) Establish relationships between artists, in-country partners and others, extending the range of possibility for professional, artistic, and personal development.

4) Showcase the best American dance across genres.232

The Bush administration realized the need for a soft power foreign policy approach after events in the early 2000s such as Guantanamo Bay, the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, and other aggressive responses to terrorist threats caused international opinion of the U.S. to sour.233 As a result, Congress began discussing cultural diplomacy as a way to combat the negative perceptions of the U.S. abroad, as it was used during the Cold War.234 Congressional hearings were held to consider the usefulness of cultural diplomacy, and ambassadors were called to explain the advantages of presenting art.235 However, instead of approaching cultural diplomacy as a way to compete and portray impenetrable American greatness as it was used during the Cold War, experts realized that cultural diplomacy would be more

---

232 Murphy, Meghan Rose. “Re: DanceMotion Program Goals.” Feb 20 2018.
233 Croft, Dancers as Diplomats, 148.
235 Croft, Dancers as Diplomats, 150.
effective if artists could interact with the communities to build global connections.\footnote{Mulla-Carrillo, “American Dance as Cultural Diplomacy.”} This reflects a larger shift in U.S. foreign policy goals, as the U.S. increasingly realized it could and should not attempt to be the one and only dominant world power, and instead, should seek to be an active participant within a global network. Ms. Murphy felt that it was important to clarify that the “original support and funding for the program came under the Bush administration and continued under Obama administration.”\footnote{Meghan Rose Murphy Email. April 9 2018.}

Thus in contrast to the overt political advertisements of the Cold War dance tours, artists are briefed about their roles as “cultural ambassadors” and asked, “not to speak of politics, only of culture” on all DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} tours.\footnote{Croft, Dancers as Diplomats, 153.} Some dancers appreciate this emphasis on cultural connections. For example, Seán Curran, whose company was selected to tour the former Soviet republics in 2012, was eager to “get to know locals and share studio time to engage youngsters.”\footnote{Traiger, Lisa. "Global Collaborations." DanceTeacher Magazine, Jan 2012.} However, other dancers felt this limited interactions, as they had to stop conversations with locals once they were asked about politics and their opinions about the political climate back home. Ms. Murphy says that DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} encourages to the artists to “remember that they may be the first Americans that an individual may meet” and to “serve as representatives of the country with this in mind.” However, she did say that DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} warns all dancers that, “you never know when you’re being interviewed and whether or not that will end up in a newspaper.”\footnote{Interview with Meghan Rose Murphy.}
The recent exchange programs demonstrate a commitment to including dance artists who use their choreography to express a diverse American experience. The first exchange included Urban Bush Women, a company led by an African-American women and featured choreography deeply inspired by the African diaspora with elements of African dance and rhythm incorporated into the contemporary movement style.\textsuperscript{241} DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} also sent the Jazz Tap Ensemble abroad in 2011, recognizing the importance of a greatly overlooked form of dance and one not utilized and appreciated during the Cold War. Furthermore, artists from all over the United States have been sent abroad, including ODC/Dance from San Francisco, Rennie Harris Pure Movement from Philadelphia, and the previously mentioned Jazz Tap Ensemble from Los Angeles. Thus, it is clear that the DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} program has broadened outreach not only in the countries that DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} connects with, but also has broadened the spectrum of companies included in these efforts. In order to effectively connect with a diverse international community, U.S. cultural diplomacy today has sought to embrace the diversity of its own artists.\textsuperscript{242}

The artists’ personal experiences provide a rare insight into whether or not DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} is successful at creating ever-lasting impressions and dialogues. Dancers who went on the 2013 tour to Morocco, Spain, and Algeria with the Hubbard Street Dance Company were able to share their thoughts on the exchange in a video.\textsuperscript{243} They seemed excited about the opportunity to engage with others in

\textsuperscript{241} Croft, \textit{Dancers as Diplomats}, 175.
\textsuperscript{242} Mulla-Carrillo, “American Dance as Cultural Diplomacy.”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cL7ggpPwCv0&ab_channel=hubbardstreetdance
“international relations” but did not expect “anything in return.” The majority of their trip involved teaching workshops at schools and cultural centers, as well as collaborating with professional dancers on a new piece. For the most part, the residency was structured around having a shared space where movement and ideas could be exchanged and collaborated upon. However, there were instances where political differences became clear to the dancers. For example, the dancers reflect upon not being able to walk around at night in Morocco and Algeria, and while the dancers do not say so directly, it is evident that the turmoil of the Arab Spring was still being felt in the countries visited. This became more apparent over the course of the trip when the former president of Algeria passed away and the culminating performance was cancelled because of a nationwide ban on public spectacle. Despite the political upset, the Hubbard Street dancers and members of the Algerian company they were working with decided to perform with and for each other. The dancers performed a collaborative piece and then individual pieces for each other, using this opportunity to study and learn from each other on a new level.

DanceMotion USA seasons two through four featured a “follow-on” program that allowed one of the companies to bring artists they had worked with while abroad to the United States for a residency and performance at BAM. During season two, three women of the Korea National Dance Company joined members of the Trey McIntyre Company in Boise, Idaho for a few works to work on a collaborative piece, “The Unkindness of Ravens,” which had its premiere on November 14, 2012 at BAM. In a New York Times article, McIntyre explains the challenges about the collaborative process as the “language barrier required a change.

244 Ibid.
of approach.” While the Korean women spoke basic English, rehearsals required interpreter Ben Chon to “really get in there and demonstrate” McIntyre’s vision. As a result, Mr. Chon “kind of turned into a ballet master.” The dancers had to make adjustments too. The Korean women felt uncomfortable making direct eye contact during partnering sequences and realized that “in Korea we are not to express facial expressions but here it is what is expected.” Brett Perry, one of the McIntyre company dancers, recalled a day when going into a lift with Chang An-lee, one of the Korean dancers, “Ms. Chang looked at me and I was like, ‘I’m not going to drop you, I promise.’ And she was like: ‘I trust you. I know you’re going to take care of me.’” This was a significant moment for Perry and Chang. During season three of DanceMotion USA, Doug Varone and Dancers worked with members of the Brenda Angiel Danza Aerea from Argentina, culminating in a performance on October 10-13, 2013 at BAM and a talk and master class hosted by DanceMotion USA afterwards. Season four presented David Dorfman with dancers from the Korhan Basaran Company and guest Armenian dancers. Together, the artists created a two-hour long piece performed August 14-16, 2014 at BAM.

For DanceMotion USA seasons five through seven, the “follow-on” program is structured on professional development classes and workshops rather than collaborative projects. “Some of the artistic directors that travel to the countries [of exchange]” nominate individuals to “bring back to America in the summer” for professional development workshops, which “can include anything from grant writing

246 Ibid.
247 Ibid.
248 Ibid.
249 Ibid.
to administration to marketing.” These international artists are paired with local artists to help them “further explore [the] different opportunities […] in America as well as how we structure our development of artistic companies.” For many of these workshops, DanceMotion USA partners with Creative Capital, a nonprofit organization that supports innovative and adventurous artists across the country. Ms. Murphy explains that, “we partner with them to help us with the structure of the professional development workshops but then we also do some workshops in dance because most of the people who participate, if not every single one of them, are dancers and performers themselves […] they all have a dance background in some way.” For example, this past year, DanceMotion USA sponsored a workshop where the international artists taught their local traditional dance forms: “we had artists from Tunisia, Ethiopia, Thailand, and the Dominican Republic and they all taught the […] local New York artists as well as their other international cohorts.” For a list of the artists who participated in the DanceMotion USA “follow-on” program seasons five and six, see Appendix B. The season seven international and local artists have not yet been chosen.

Another significant difference between the Cold War cultural diplomacy tours and the DanceMotion USA tours is that funding and administrative direction comes largely from private sources associated with BAM. Clare Croft, a dance theorist and dance historian, is concerned about this lack of transparency and argues that DanceMotion USA “has intensely obscured the relationship among the

---

250 Interview with Meghan Rose Murphy.
251 Ibid.
252 Ibid.
253 Ibid.
various governmental forces, agencies, and private partners that created the program.”254 Ms. Murphy had not made up her mind on this statement when asked but she said she ”understood how DanceMotion USA℠ could be perceived this way” as the program is not conceived as a partnership between specific organizations but individual companies when appropriate and is systematically and objectively different from Cold War exchange programs.255 Furthermore, DanceMotion USA℠ has a much smaller budget than Cold War diplomatic efforts, as only eight dancers can be brought on each tour. This is not an issue as most of the companies chosen for export are small, but some companies, like the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, which has 14 members, “will have to adapt their repertory accordingly.”256 BAM gives “a list of repertory [each company] can work with” well in advance to give the dancers the opportunity to modify and rehearse with the set group.257

The most similar aspect between cultural diplomacy during the Cold War and cultural diplomacy in the twenty-first century is how artists are chosen. Similar to the ANTA Dance Panel, companies do not apply and are instead chosen by a selection committee comprised of BAM staff, alumni dance companies, and State Department staff. The only necessary qualification is that “you have received government funding in some way in the past” as this automatically puts the company up for consideration.258 After the list is reduced to approximately 15-20 companies, the selection committee votes to determine which artists will be appropriate for cultural exchange that year. Once chosen, the State Department selects two to four

254 Croft, Dancers as Diplomats, 146.
255 Interview with Meghan Rose Murphy.
256 Ibid.
257 Ibid.
258 Ibid.
regions that would be receptive to American dance and diplomatic efforts, and Joseph V. Melillo determines which company will go to which region based on artistic quality, level of artistry, skills and techniques demonstrated. After deciding which company will go where, the DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} team gets in touch with the embassies to begin planning the details of the trips. The State Department only specifies what countries the companies should travel to so the embassies are crucially important because they “pinpoint specific regions.”\textsuperscript{259} Ms. Murphy does not seem to mind that DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} does not get a say in where the artists will travel, as she knows that DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} is primarily “concerned with safety” rather than “trying to make sure the artists are in largely populated cities or anything like that.”\textsuperscript{260} In fact, artists are often sent to some smaller towns “because that is part of the program -- making sure we are reaching out to those underprivileged communities that otherwise would not get access to dance and exchange activities like this.”\textsuperscript{261}

DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} has completed multiple grant cycles (2012-2015) and will complete its current grant cycle (2016-2018) this summer. The grant program is structured as a two or three year agreement between the State Department and BAM, and currently, there are no plans in place for another grant cycle. Ms. Murphy revealed that “BAM will not be the producing partner for the program moving forward” and that she is “unsure how dance diplomacy will continue through the State Department, specifically with DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM}, as the program was open for dance application, and there was not a selected partner so it is currently not going to be continuing an eighth season consecutively.” The budget for what would have

\textsuperscript{259} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{260} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{261} Ibid.
been season 8 of DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} was “executed and finalized during the Obama administration.”\textsuperscript{262}

This is not surprising because in his first federal budget plan, President Trump has proposed eliminating the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.\textsuperscript{263} President Trump has also proposed terminating the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, an important revenue source for PBS and National Public Radio stations, as well as the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. These endowments were created in 1965 when President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act declaring, “any advanced civilization must fully value the arts, the humanities, and cultural activity.”\textsuperscript{264} In 2016, appropriations for the three programs identified above made up 0.02 percent of federal spending. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting received $445 million, and the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities each received $148 million in 2016.\textsuperscript{265} Yet, the Congressional Budget Office reported that the government spent about $3.9 trillion during the fiscal year. President Trump would prefer that the 0.02 percent of the federal budget that is allocated to the arts and humanities be spent on defense and homeland security, an area the United States in 2016 alone gave “$64.9 billion in total budget authority, $51.9 billion in gross discretionary funding, $41.2 billion in net discretionary funding, and $4 billion in discretionary fees.”\textsuperscript{266}

\textsuperscript{262} Meghan Rose Murphy Email. April 9 2018.
\textsuperscript{264} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{266} Department of Homeland Security, Budget-in-Brief, Fiscal Year 2016. 124.
There are artistic diplomatic efforts that will continue after 2018. For example, Ms. Murphy mentioned “Arts Envoy,” a program that sends American artists in all professions (performing artists, visual artists, poets, playwrights, theatrical and film directors, curators, and others) overseas to conduct workshops, give talks, perform repertory, and engage with the community. However, unlike DanceMotion USA.SM, artists apply to be “Envoys,” approximately 200 artists are chosen to travel abroad for individual programs or as part of an ensemble or group, and programs range from five days to six weeks in length. Additionally, as stated on the website, the program’s goals are distinctly different. They are to:

1) Support U.S. foreign policy goals by enabling U.S. citizen cultural experts to interact with key foreign audiences worldwide;

2) Identify and recruit the most appropriate U.S. cultural experts to undertake Public Diplomacy programs in response to Department of State strategic initiatives and requests from U.S. missions abroad;

3) Promote an understanding among foreign audience of U.S. culture and society, including the political, economic, social, and cultural contexts from which they arise;

4) Engage in conversations that enable foreign audiences to learn more about U.S. culture, society and institutions, thereby supporting development and growth of civil society and cultural and social institutions abroad, and countering negative stereotypes;

5) Establish sustained relationships and linkages between Arts Envoys and foreign audiences and institutions in order to share knowledge and skills with their peers and broader communities.
Dance diplomacy focused on presentation instead of interaction during the Cold War era. The Dance Panel’s use of modern dance and ballet to present American strengths and values helped stop the spread of communism but many American narratives of oppression were excluded from the narrative. On the other hand, DanceMotion USA℠ has made a conscious effort to deemphasize the political context around its dance diplomacy, instead calling the diverse array of choreographers and artists “cultural ambassadors.” DanceMotion USA℠ has made it clear that its priorities lie in facilitating a dialogue between international and local artists through its numerous workshops, classes, and “follow-on programs.” Although during the Cold War the State Department relied on ANTA’s Dance Panel for artist suggestions and today the State Department similarly relies on BAM to select the companies for export, diplomatic efforts today are far less ostentatious and aggressive. Unfortunately, dance diplomacy seems to be taking another hiatus since the DanceMotion USA℠ grant cycle has not been renewed. Only time will tell how long this hiatus will be, but Ms. Murphy remains hopeful for the future of this program and U.S. cultural exchange in general. Over email, she wrote,

BAM has been immensely proud to partner with the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs on seven fruitful and enlightening seasons of the DanceMotion USA℠ program. The program has created meaningful outreach and people-to-people exchanges around the world, while providing professional development opportunities for dynamic American and international artists. DanceMotion USA℠ has been a wonderful expression of BAM’s mission and of U.S. policy goals, and we are hopeful that it will serve to inform and inspire upcoming cultural programs.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁷ Meghan Rose Murphy Email. April 9 2018.
Conclusion

During the Cold War, the U.S. harnessed the power of culture as the weapon to use against the Soviet Union and its communist ideology by sending numerous artists overseas under the guise of President Eisenhower’s International Cultural Exchange Program. José Limón, Martha Graham, American Ballet Theater, New York City Ballet, and Alvin Ailey are the focus of this thesis, as these artists and companies embodied American culture and democratic values in the eyes of the members of ANTA Dance Panel and State Department for what they represented off stage and created on stage. The success of this Cold War cultural diplomacy influenced the Bush administration to pursue a soft power approach in the twenty-first century after early 2000 events tainted America’s image abroad. Thus, the DanceMotion USASM program was launched in 2010 and supported by the Obama administration for several more seasons.

Recently, on Monday October 23, 2017, DanceMotion USASM and choreographer Seán Curran hosted a discussion panel titled, “Fostering Connections Through Cultural Diplomacy,” which I had the opportunity to view through live stream. Participating panelists included Executive Director Adrienne Bryant of Dance Heginbotham, former Acting Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Helena Kane Finn, Artistic Director and Choreographer Reggie Wilson of Reggie Wilson/Fist and Heel Performance Group, and Chief Operating Officer of the Humpty Dumpty Institute and former U.S. Foreign Service Officer

Joseph Merante, with foreign policy and entrepreneurship expert Elmira Bayrasli as moderator. The discussion primarily centered upon how dance could be considered cultural diplomacy, how this type of program leads to more understanding and awareness, and what effect the DanceMotion USA program seems to have on the choreographers, dancers, and audiences at home and abroad.

One of the main points of contention during the panel was whether artists sent under the guise of the DanceMotion USA program were being sent to advance U.S. governmental goals and were seen as representatives of the current administration. Joseph Merante responded first by saying, “if an organization is going out as a U.S. government entity, it basically becomes, unfortunately, a tool for U.S. government…if you go out, you go out for a purpose…you are going out to promote American values and also the policies of the current administration and going out means you are accepting that role.” Reggie Wilson quickly disagreed with Merante, responding that artists are not supposed to be “mouthpieces of the current administration” but rather “mouthpieces of American culture,” to which Merante said, “unfortunately, it doesn’t work that way.” Helena Finn agreed with Wilson, arguing that “we are not the Soviet Union…we do not use our artists for propaganda…I do not believe any artist should be expected to support any particular policy […] when it comes to the arts, the arts speak for themselves.”

This part of the panel discussion reflects a larger question about cultural exchange, as the objectives and specific goals of government-supported cultural exchange
exchanges are often lost in either vague talk of promoting international good-will or in tactical considerations of how to use cultural programs for immediate political profit. However, this thesis has sought to examine two cultural exchange programs with clear objectives and goals: artists were sent under Eisenhower’s International Cultural Exchange Program to combat the Soviet Union’s materialistic and barbaric portrayal of the United States and demonstrate the superiority of American culture, while artists are utilized under the DanceMotion USASM program to foster stronger international connections and understanding after 9/11 and the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq caused international opinion of the U.S. to sour. However, U.S. foreign policy objectives have shifted as the primary goal of diplomatic efforts during the Cold War was creating a better impression of the United States in other nations while today, the primary goal is no longer to manipulate opinion nor to pander to the most recent political line. The sole emphasis is no longer telling America’s story to the world. Today, U.S. diplomatic efforts place a greater emphasis on mutuality, solving common problems, and achieving similar goals. Cultural exchange programs are no longer only focused on providing insights about Americans for others. Instead, cultural exchange programs like DanceMotion USA$^\text{SM}$ place a significant amount of emphasis on providing insights of other cultures for Americans.

Have American cultural activities been worth the money and effort? In general, Philip Coombs, a former U.S. diplomat during the Kennedy administration, would say that, “dollar for dollar, [cultural programs] have often yielded more than

our far larger national outlays for foreign economic and military aid.” Although the Cold War was not quickly or dramatically “won” in any sort of the definition, the United States feared how quickly it could have been “lost.” It could have been quickly lost in Latin America by a rash of Castro-style revolutions or in Southeast Asia by the accession of non-communist governments to communist ones but instead, the success of Eisenhower’s Cultural Exchange Program helped end the Cold War on terms favorable to the United States and democratic governments. Cultural exchange programs like Eisenhower’s not only demonstrated democratic values to foreign audiences but also enabled the community of advanced democratic nations to continue to grow and maintain an unswerving unity of purpose, as this unity required more than heavy military expenditures and more than expanded trade. To establish this unity required a depth and breath of mutual understanding, respect, and confidence among these nations, and so governmental programs like Eisenhower’s played an important part by:

inspiring confidence in the United States as a political force in the world [and]

providing evidence that the United States has a serious culture, that its civilization is not merely materialistic, is not superficial and immature, but has its roots firmly embedded in the best traditions of Western civilization.\(^\text{273}\)

President Trump has undermined the U.S. soft power cultivated by these cultural exchange programs in three ways. First, he has sought crippling budget cuts for institutions that the U.S. government uses to exercise nonmilitary influence

overseas.\textsuperscript{274} For example, Mick Mulvaney, Trump’s current Budget Director, proclaimed a “hard power budget” was necessary as he slashed funds for the State Department and the U.S. Agency of International Development by thirty percent in 2017.\textsuperscript{275} The most recent 2018 Congressional Budget Justification calls for Worldwide Security Protection (WSP) to increase from 41 percent to 45 percent of the total Diplomatic and Consular Programs (D&CP) budget, while the share of core diplomacy is squeezed from 59 percent to 55 percent. The last time the United States reduced its diplomatic programs sharply (though not as sharply as today) was when the U.S. “won” the Cold War.\textsuperscript{276} Secondly, President Trump has called for a more narrowing nationalistic approach to American statecraft. Trump campaigned on slogans such as “Make America Great Again” and “America First,” promoting the idea of returning to a time when America reigned supreme. Now in office, he continues to endorse the idea that the U.S. must behave more selfishly in the world.\textsuperscript{277} Lastly, Trump has weakened American soft power through his own behavior. The President has repeatedly derided America’s role as chief promoter of democracy and human rights. For example, he has undertaken policies -- such as his persistent efforts to restrict immigration and exclude refugees from Muslim majority nations -- that have been deemed cruel and discriminatory. His consistent use of “racist and

\textsuperscript{274} Brands, Hal. “Not Even Trump Can Obliterate America’s Soft Power, but the Damage May Take Years to Undo.” Jan 18 2018.
\textsuperscript{277} Ibid.
xenophobic appeals, his disdain for democratic norms, and his generally crass style of rhetoric and action” have dragged global respect for America to a new low.278

The U.S. cannot afford to cut cultural diplomatic efforts and instead should be creating and utilizing programs like Eisenhower’s International Cultural Exchange Program and DanceMotion USA℠ because globalization has created a political context where using sticks or similar types of coercion will not work and are far too costly in such an increasingly interdependent world.279 A series of economic phenomena such as the liberalization and deregulation of markets, the privatization of assets, the retreat of state functions, the age of technology, the cross-national distribution of manufacturing production (foreign direct investment), and the integration of capital markets characterize globalization. All of these phenomena have historical precedents, but what is unique is that they have never occurred in such volume, with such breadth, with such speed, and on such a systematically linked basis before.280 Thus, globalization characterizes an intensification and linkage of a number of old processes rather than the development of a new one.281 As David Broad, a World Bank economist and author of numerous articles identifying this globalization period, says, “So, is anything new with the current phase of globalization? Well, in

278 Brands, “Not Even Trump Can Obliterate America’s Soft Power, but the Damage May Take Years to Undo.”
fact, yes, but more by way of a ‘deepening’ than a qualitative change in the global economic structure.”282 As a result, space has been compressed. Space can no longer be equated with territory and political authority as was formerly the case. Kenichi Ohmae, a Japanese organizational theorist and strategic consultant, believes the world is now “borderless,” stating,

As private sector managers and government policymakers are discovering, it makes no sense in so borderless a world to think, say, of countries like ‘Italy’ or ‘China’ as discrete economic entities. Their internal variations are too great and their external linkages are too extensive for such slipshod generalizations to be useful as guides to action. Equally important, the sheer speed of business related migration through the digital network now vastly outpaces the ability of governments—both leaders and institutions—to adapt and respond. Left to their own devices, governments simply cannot move quickly enough to build prosperity for their people.283

Although historians have long debated the timing of the onset of the Cold War, they appear to agree that it can be designed as “a period of history” rather than a sociological phenomenon or a theoretical framework.284 The Cold War was a period of history marked by certain features such as bipolar distribution of power between the United States and Soviet Union, theories of nuclear deterrence, and strategies to solidify spheres of influences. Many scholars believe the demise of the Cold War coincided with the rise of globalization, raising the question of whether there is a causal relationship between the two. Whether causally related or not, this

---

282 Ibid.
globalization period might be said to succeed the Cold War historically, and if the world is indeed in this globalization period, the U.S. should be actively seeking more soft power.285

With the defunding of DanceMotion USA program, the proposed elimination of the National Endowment for the Arts, and the continued dramatic cuts to U.S. diplomatic efforts, it is clear that the current Trump administration has failed to see the value and use of this soft power approach. However, the fact of the matter is that powerful economic and technological forces are creating a highly interdependent world economy, diminishing the traditional significance for national boundaries. The cost of using or threatening to use force has dramatically increased to the point where a war between major powers is almost “unthinkable.”286 As a result, nation states may feel increasingly “jealous and sensitive” to their relative power position because it affects the ability of states to achieve what they perceive to be their interests, but to focus on ethnocentric nationalism is a fatal mistake in today’s economic climate.287 A technological revolution has led to more competitive interactions among states and societies. In general, political, economic, and social activities are becoming worldwide in scope, and various interactions among states and societies on many fronts have


287 Ibid. 23.
increased because of this interdependence. The growth of international organization and regimes has embedded nations “firmly in networks of cooperation,” and in such a world, unilateral actions that disregard these institutions are too costly. As a result, such institutions have raised the minimum level of civil behavior in international politics and consequently raised the importance of soft power significantly. A soft power approach needs to be utilized like it was during the Cold War and after events in the early 2000s because in this age of globalization, international opinion matters more, not less.

---

Appendix A: Companies exported under the DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} program

2017
Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company in Korea and Mongolia
Dayton Contemporary Dance Company in Kazakhstan and Russia
Bebe Miller Company in Colombia and Peru

2016
Stephen Petronio Company in Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam (Jan-Feb)
Reggie Wilson/Fist and Heel Performance Group in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Panama (Jan-Feb)
KEIGWIN + COMPANY in Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, and Tunisia (Feb-March)

2015
BODYTRAFFIC in Israel and Jordan (Sept-Oct)
Dance Heginbotham in Indonesia, Laos, and the Philippines (March-April)
Limón Dance Company in Madagascar, South Africa, and Zambia (May-June)

2014
David Dorfman Dance in Turkey, Armenia, and Tajikistan (April-May)
CONTRA-TIEMPO in Ecuador, Bolivia, and Chile (May-June)
Korhan Basaran Company (to the U.S.)
Mark Morris Dance Group in China, Taiwan, Cambodia, and Timor Leste (Oct-Nov)

2013
Brenda Angiel Aerial Dance Company (to the U.S.)
Doug Varone and Dancers in Argentina, Paraguay, and Peru (April-May)
Hubbard Street Dance Chicago in Algeria, Morocco, and Spain (March-April)
Illstyle & Peace Productions in Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine (March-April)
Spectrum Dance Theater in Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka (Feb-March)

2012
Korea National Contemporary Dance Company (to the U.S.)
Trey McIntyre Project in China, South Korea, Philippines, and Vietnam (May-June)
Jazz Tap Ensemble in Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Zimbabwe (April-May)
Rennie Harris Puremovement in Egypt, Israel, Palestinian Territories (March-April)
Seán Curran Company in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, and Turkmenistan (April-May)

2010
Evidence, A Dance Company in Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa (Feb-March)
Urban Bush Women in Brazil, Colombia, and Venezuela (March)
ODC/Dance in Burma, Indonesia, and Thailand (Jan-Feb)
Appendix B: Participating artists in DanceMotion USA\textsuperscript{SM} “follow-on” program (seasons five and six)

2017

Haroun Ayari – Dancer / Choreographer from Tunis, Tunisia
Krailas Chitkul – Professor of Dance at Chiang Mai Rajabhat University from Chiang Mai, Thailand
Addisu Demissie – Dancer / Choreographer / Teacher / one of the Founders of DESTINO Dance Company from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
Cindy Sosa – Dancer / Choreographer / Founder of Gran Premio de Danza Quisqueya from Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
Rebecca Bliss – Dance Educator / Performer / Choreographer in Brooklyn, NY
Davalois Fearon – Dancer and Founder / Artistic Director of Davalois Fearon Dance in Brooklyn, NY
Nicholas Neagle – Founder and Artistic Director of NSquared Dance in Queens, NY
Bennyroyce Royon – Director / Dancer / Choreographer and Founder of Bennyroyce Dance in Brooklyn, NY
Michelle Yard – Performer / Arts Administrator in Brooklyn, NY

2016

Mark Chilongu - Executive Director of Africa Directions from Lusaka, Zambia.
Elijah Zgambo - Executive Director of Street Culture Events & Arts from Lusaka, Zambia.
Saroy Rakotosolofo – Dancer / Choreographer from Antananarivo, Madagascar
Jeannie Park - Director of Bagong Kusudiardjo Arts Community (PSBK) from Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Thip Luanglath – Managing Director of Laobangfai Academy from Vientiane, Laos

Sydnie L. Mosley – Founder and Artistic Director of SLMDances in New York, NY.
Kwame Shaka Opare – Choreographer / Performer in Baltimore, MD.
Jenny Rocha – Artistic Director of Rocha Dance Theater and Artistic Director of The Painted Ladies in Brooklyn, NY
Šara Stranovsky – Interdisciplinary Artist / Performer in Brooklyn, NY
Mandarin Wu – Artistic Director of Mandarin Orange Performing Arts in Queens, NY
Appendix C: Choreographic Process

At Wesleyan, dance majors are required to complete either a two-semester senior thesis project or a one semester essay their senior year. Along with this written component, those who choose to write a thesis must choreograph about 20 minutes of original work with dancers of their choosing. This 20 minutes is generally divided into two 10-minute pieces in two performances, one in the fall and one in the spring. In this appendix, I reflect upon my choreographic process during each semester and the work that eventually came out of each process.

“US”

I did not have a clear-cut vision for my piece in the fall semester, but I knew I wanted to work with Anna Krotinger and Maddy Paull, as I was familiar with how they moved and am good friends with both of them. I felt this was the right decision because we were comfortable enough with each other to jump right into rehearsals. I wanted to work with people I was familiar with because I had never faced such an expedited choreographic process before. With Spring Dance and Winter Dance, there is more room and time to realize and develop your piece. I felt like I didn’t have the luxury of time.

Originally, I wanted to incorporate some type of show-biz or comedic element into the work, as I am constantly inspired by individuals who make fun of Trump in a satiric but still poignant and understandable way (ex: John Oliver) but after discussing this over-the-top, in your face, drama with my dancers and with my advisor Professor Kolcio, it became clear that this probably was not the best direction. I came to agree,
as I felt like this type of piece would require more research and thought into how to develop and portray “irony” and “comedy” on stage.

As I researched more about my thesis topic, I realized I wanted to focus on specific examples of choreographers and companies exported under Eisenhower’s Program. This turned into examining the case studies mentioned in the thesis: José Limón, Martha Graham, ABT, NYCB, and Alvin Ailey. I wanted to focus on particular aspects I found important about each choreographer or company. For example, some choreographers like Ailey were exported because of what he himself represented for American race relations, while ABT and NYCB were exported because we felt we needed to respond to the success of Soviet ballet companies in the United States. I have attended numerous performances of Ailey, ABT, and NYCB, and they are definitely some of my favorite companies existing in the twenty-first century. These three companies served as the inspiration for my fall piece. In particular, Ailey’s Revelations, which has a separate section within the Alvin Ailey part in chapter four, has always enchanted and amazed me, and the imagery of this piece greatly inspired US.

Anna, Maddy, and I have trained predominately in ballet, and I believe we have the same level of technique and experience in ballet. However, I absolutely did not want the piece to be a ballet, and they agreed as we have all grown tired of this art form (why I have grown tired of ballet can be the topic of a completely separate project). However, I would admit that we were all the most comfortable in ballet, as it was what we each knew best and excelled in. In order to break these bounds, I first re-established them by giving ballet based warm ups and focusing on a presentational structure -- as in we all face the mirror and look out into the audience and only
acknowledge each other when absolutely necessary. We also had little physical contact during these rehearsals, another theme of ballet I identify.

However, I wished to make ballet what I had never experienced -- personal. Thus, I gave prompts specific to Anna and Maddy. For example, I would say, “come up with a phrase that you truly enjoy, that contains all of your favorite movements, that is your own in some way.” I have always wished ballet was about free expression and individualism, and so I took these tropes from modern dance. In my opinion, modern dance showcases humanity and vulnerability of the individual; unlike ballet where you are required to be a swan, a princess, or a queen. In modern dance, you can be you, not a character.

As a result, I had seven phrases that seemed to devolve from ballet-style to modern-style work. For showings, I put these pieces in the order I felt worked. However, showings feedback was very helpful for clarifying my idea and the sequencing of my piece. Even though I had wished to not have a purely balletic piece, Professor Alejandro interpreted it this way because of its presentational nature. I realized I needed to break out of this organization, so in the following rehearsals, I worked on different facings and organizing the piece in a way that hints at the desired state of modern dance while feeling pulled back or restrained by a balletic style. As I told numerous people and as almost everyone who had seen showings told me, my piece completely changed after showings. After showings, I had a completely new structure, organization of the piece, and even new music. I think the biggest and most obvious change was that I replaced the two songs I was using with two sound effects: a metronome and a heartbeat. The idea of using a metronome came to me when I was trying to find a consistent beat for the more balletic sections, since these sections are
repetitive and I wanted to highlight the repetitive -- almost militant -- nature of ballet in general. The idea of using a heartbeat came to me right before we had our final spacing rehearsal in the ’92 Theater. I thought to myself, what else has a consistent rhythm, but like modern, has a more realistic and individualistic feel? I considered using the idea of breath but I felt as if this can come off as sexual. Playing around on YouTube, I found sounds of a human heart, and I realized this could work. I wanted there to be three different heartbeats with three different paces, reflecting the three individual dancers.

I organized the heartbeats from the fastest to the slowest, which made sense to me because I believe a slowing heartbeat signifies the mind calming down -- and so, we become calmer and more relaxed as we shed our hard balletic exterior. I also wished to reflect this idea of us shedding our exterior in our costuming. We all started out wearing black leotards with black tights and pink ballet shoes, looking the same and performing the same set of ballet moves as the opening but after each solo, we would shed an article of clothing. After Anna’s solo, Maddy and I took off our ballet shoes. After Maddy’s solo, Anna and I took off our tights and changed into black shorts. By the end of the piece, we were all stripped down to our leotard and black shorts, barefoot.

The aspect of my piece I am most proud of is that each of us had a solo, and my solo was completely improvised. To create these solos, I divided one two-hour rehearsal into one hour with Maddy and one hour with Anna. In each of these meetings, we talked for 30 minutes about how we were doing, and then I would leave the room so they could create a phrase, however long, on their own. When they felt ready to show me the phrase they created, I watched but I did not touch or edit
sequences. They did not see each other’s sequences until the last few rehearsals when we were in the ’92 Theater. I felt these movement phrases were too raw, personal, and significant to edit so I never gave notes or edits to anyone’s solo.

Why did I choose to improvise my solo? Sophomore year, I took Improvisational Forms with Professor Lourie. In one class we had to get up in front of the class and just dance, however we felt, alone, without any music or accompaniment. Afterwards, the class would tell the dancer what they saw. For example, what movement they felt the dancer constantly going back to or how the dancer seemed to generally move. Then, the entire class would try to repeat and interpret the dancer’s individual style. I did this exercise with Anna and Maddy, and I felt like I saw exactly what I expected. Anna was comfortable doing balances, soft rolls with the neck, and long extensions. Maddy was comfortable turning, moving horizontally across the space, with the same basic ballet arm positions. However, when it was my turn, they felt like I did not seem to have one specific movement quality I constantly returned to. I was happy to hear this, as I have wished to break out of my balletic style for years and have been actively working to move my body in my own way. After this exercise, I realized that I should not set a solo like Anna and Maddy did. That would be too processed and prepared, and untrue to the dancer I am now. As a result, my solo was improvised every night on stage. I did not rehearse my solo at all. I did whatever I felt was right in the moment. Without a doubt, I have never felt more vulnerable in my entire life.

The audience seemed to really enjoy these solos, and I received compliments on my solo in particular. I was amazed by what people thought was the meaning behind my solo. One audience member asked me if my frantic breath and sharp
angular movements with bendy accents was to reflect how I felt trapped inside a ballet bubble and was trying to break free. Another audience member asked me if when I went to the floor that signified me trying to feel grounded and one with the earth. When I told each person that I have no recollection of what I did and that each night it is improvised and completely different, they seemed completely surprised. I was glad to hear that no one thought I seemed lost or had no idea what I was doing. During the solo, I just moved how I pleased so I thought the audience could see me calculating my next step or trying to figure out my next move, but apparently not. I seemed comfortable improvising on my own.

I was pleased by the audience’s reaction to the ending of the piece, which was the projection: “US is unfinished due to lack of government funding. For more information, please visit the National Endowment for the Arts website.” It was surprising for me to hear some laughs in the audience, but everyone seemed to understand the purpose of this message. We can create art criticizing the government, showing the flaws of our society, and reflecting on our past and present culture but we need to take action in order for this art to be created. As demonstrated in chapter five, Twenty First Century Dance Diplomacy, our current government has defunded DanceMotion USA℠, and President Trump has worked to disband the National Endowment for the Arts because the administration does not see the value in this soft power approach. You can sit there, watch my piece, and try to interpret its meaning but I wanted to hit the audience over the head with this point: I am one of many artists who are criticizing our government, but I hope you realize that I and others will not be able to create art criticizing the government without government support or grants.
The titles of my pieces have always been a struggle for me to create, but the title “US” came quite naturally. Firstly, “US” can be interpreted as “United States,” but more so, I wished “US” was interpreted as three individuals existing in a collective but having their own identities within that collective. “US” has been the most personal piece I have made and performed in, and I am very happy with the end result. The piece showed who we were collectively and who we were individually, who we were together and who we were apart, and this reflects how I feel as a dancer, American, and human.

“wall”

I wanted my spring semester process to be completely different than my fall semester, so I decided to work with dancers I did not know well. However, working with Kellen O’Brien and Gretchen LaMotte was a dream, and I believe out of all the pieces I have created for my major, this has been the easiest piece for me to choreograph -- once I figured out my grounding idea. I decided not to perform with my dancers, as I wanted to challenge myself with a duet.

The DanceMotion USASM program reflects a collaborative approach to dance diplomacy, rather than the United States showing off and telling off the Soviet Union during the Cold War. I wanted to focus on this idea of collaboration versus presentation, and I thought about how political “walls” have come to be as President Trump has promised to build a wall separating the United States from Mexico. Furthermore, in ways, the language barrier proved to be a “wall” for the companies
working under the DanceMotion USA℠ program, but luckily, every individual spoke
the language of dance and so this wall was broken and trust was built in its place.

As a result, my initial prompts focused on Kellen and Gretchen working
separately and hardly speaking to each other, but over time, I asked them to learn and
edit each other’s work to become more familiar with each other and each other’s
movement. They first met in my rehearsals. Thus, I had pieces choreographed by
Kellen or Gretchen but pieces that could be danced and interpreted differently
depending on who was dancing the role. They have different styles, but they both are
very internal movers, giving the impression that they dance in their own personal
world that the audience should feel lucky to see. They do not outwardly or naturally
face the audience, and only did so when I directly asked. However, I used this quality
to my advantage, as I wanted them to start in their own world, separated by a
concrete, physical wall, and eventually, this wall would be taken away and so they
would have to acknowledge each other and create a common space. I wanted the wall
to be removed by the run crew very obviously to show that we have to actively work
to build or take down walls -- they do not just suddenly appear or disappear, and so if
we decide to build this wall separating us from Mexico, this is our conscious decision.
No one has forced us to do this; we are letting it happen. When the wall is removed,
Kellen and Gretchen take a moment to register the other person on the other side of
the wall, and in slow motion, gravitate towards each other, mirroring each other’s
gestures.

In every rehearsal, I decided to have them mirror each other for a few minutes
after warm-up. I am very interested in this idea of mirroring because it is copying the
other person, and when done well, it’s almost like you are the other person and yet…
you are the reverse of that person. You are similar, but different. I felt this theme of “similar, but different” reflected how we felt we had to respond with our own form of American ballet and American modern dance that was similar enough in caliber but different enough in culture and values to the Soviet Union. In general, this idea of “similar, but different” carried throughout the rehearsal process, as I never edited or corrected Kellen or Gretchen if they forgot a move or did something slightly differently during rehearsal. I welcomed the slight variations on the phrases we were working on, as I felt this is how the artists working in the DanceMotion USASM programs felt. They had to be flexible enough to adapt and had to have an open mind to changes in order to effectively collaborate together.

One piece of constructive criticism I wanted to take from my fall piece was breaking out of this presentational structure as much as possible, as I realize that I only think this way because of ballet. Ballet conditions you to face the audience (or the mirror), judging yourself, and seeing what you are and are not doing correctly. Thus, I decided to have Kellen and Gretchen never directly or purposefully face the audience throughout the entire piece. I wanted the audience to feel as if they were seeing Kellen’s world or seeing Gretchen’s world and then seeing the world they create together but Kellen and Gretchen do not exist in the same space as the audience. I wanted the audience to feel like those foreign audiences seeing American artists for the first time: outsiders with the privilege of looking in. I wanted the audience to feel like outsiders because I believe this is how the dancers exported under the DanceMotion USASM program felt when they traveled -- they did not know the traditions, customs, or values of the country necessarily, and in fact perhaps they did not care. I wanted the audience to feel as if they are privileged and lucky to see
Kellen’s world, Gretchen’s world, and the world they create together. This idea of “outsiders” was incredibly poignant and important to me.

I also wanted the audience to have an obstructed view when the wall divides the stage. The right side of the audience can only see Kellen and the left side of the audience can only see Gretchen in the beginning, and they may crane their necks to see the other dancer but those sitting on the periphery will not be able to see the dancer on the other side. I believe this is relevant to how we would feel if a wall is built dividing us from Mexico. We will feel completely separated from them -- physically and ideologically -- even more so than we feel now, and we will have an increasingly difficult time seeing the other side and the other side’s perspective to the point where any effort at cooperation may become fruitless.

One of the most important and interesting moments in the piece to me was when they mirror towards each other, getting closer and closer until it appears as if they will touch. This section was performed in silence, which I believe made the audience really focus and question what was about to happen. Originally after this silent mirroring, I had them touch in what we called the “necking” pose, but I decided that it would create more tension to have them almost touch, break away, and have them touch later. As a result, the first time they actually touch is after the “teaching” section, after they became more comfortable with each other and learn each other’s styles. After they “neck,” Kellen falls into Gretchen, and she gently lays him down. This reflects a “trust fall” type of exercise. Amazingly, I found all the material and movement phrases Gretchen and Kellen created somehow completely related to my thesis. I did not ask them to try a “trust fall,” they did this intuitively. Another example of a movement phrase they did that I felt completely related to my
thesis was when they passed energy back and forth. This section came after they moved and collaborated with each other. I felt this section used the energy built previously and played with that energy between each other. Although I wish I had time to discuss every single section, the last section I want to address is when they used their hands to build on top of another. I felt like this was building a wall -- but a different type of wall, one made of hands. They build this “wall” towards the very end of the piece, after which they immediately break the wall and “smush” around the stage, not only moving with each other but through each other and giving each other a significant amount of weight with different parts of their bodies.

The feedback from this piece was some of the most positive feedback I have ever received. Sophie Miller, a Wesleyan dance major who graduated last year, told me I had finally “got it” -- I had finally got what it means to be a choreographer and how to choreograph a concept. Eiko Otake, who is generally a very harsh critic and whom I do not know that well, told me that I was a very “mature” choreographer, who had created something “impressive.” I was blown away by these kind words (and the words of others). I was also pleased by how random strangers came up to me and said that they “got” my piece. They understood how political, significant, and relevant my piece was, and they appreciated my “happy” ending, as Gretchen and Kellen walk together into the light at the end of the piece, completely ignoring the wall that had separated them in the first place.

When I look back at Wesleyan experience, I will remember how Anna, Maddy, and I created US, what it felt like to perform ballet once again, and what it felt like improvise for the first time on stage. I will remember how easy it was for me,
Gretchen, and Kellen to create *wall*, how every time I saw the piece I found something new or important, and how I wish I have worked with them earlier in my career. The work I made my senior year has been the most rewarding and fulfilling work I have ever created. When I look back at my Wesleyan experience, these two pieces, and the honor and joy it was to create and perform them, will come to mind first.
Works Cited

American National Theatre and Academy Archives, George Mason University Libraries, Fairfax, Virginia.
Bureau of Education and Historical and Cultural Affairs Historical Collection, Special Collections Division, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville, Arkansas.


Kennan, George. "The Charge in the Soviet Union (Kennan) to the Secretary of State." edited by Department of State, 1946.


---. *The Modern Dance.* A.S. Barnes and company, 1936.


Murphy, Meghan Rose. Interview by Rachel Davis, DanceMotion USA, February 9 2018.


---. "Think Again: Soft Power."


