

# Still Life at the Penguin Cafe

David Bintley



# Watch the following video on youtube:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kO7wjpijSz4>



# Questions

- What are the influences of historical factors?
- What are the influences of cultural factors?
- What are the influences of economic factors?
- What are the influences of political factors?
- What are the influences of technological factors?
- What are the influences of social factors?
- What are the influences of geographical factors?
- What influences were there from others?



# Research Prompts

- The influence of historical factors, to include:
  - key events, epoch or major shifts and changes in society
  - practitioner's personal history and experience.
- The influence of cultural factors, to include:
  - traditions and practices within the arts, community or religion
  - other art forms, cultural trends and styles.
- The influence of economic factors, to include:
  - reactions to or statements about the impact of economic factors on people
  - funding conditions for performing arts or the financial status of the practitioner.
- The influence of political factors, to include:
  - relationship to establishment, supporting or undermining
  - laws, propaganda, legal rights, censorship, equality and diversity.
- The influence of technological factors, to include:
  - latest developments in technology and opportunities for the use of technology in productions
  - any type of impact of technology on people, behaviour or society.
- The influence of social factors, to include:
  - values, morals, social conventions and audience expectations
  - changes in social attitudes, media influences and external pressures, issues of equality, diversity and representation.
- The influence of geographical and physical factors, to include:
  - relationship to the environment, geography or location
  - conventions and innovation in the use of space, venues and physical characteristics of spaces.
- The influence from others, to include:
  - the influence of their education from teachers, mentors or peers
  - collaboration with others or whether practitioners were part of a movement.

# Research resources

- <https://prezi.com/6usxva6m-yqs/still-life-at-the-penguin-cafe/>
- <https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/17616/1/Wallis%2C%20Lucy%20%28redacted%29.pdf>
- <https://slideplayer.com/slide/13233718/>
- <https://prezi.com/zy6aejhrwzew/david-bintley-and-still-life-at-the-penguin-cafe/>
- See slides below with info:



# SET

The place where the dance is performed.  
What does it represent?

So in Still Life.....

Dance is set in a café with tables & chairs. After first section dance takes place on a bare stage. Each animal has own individual backdrop that represents their environment.

E.g. - Flea backdrop is appears to be animal hair. Represents that flea lives on animal. Strands of fur look huge to make flea appear tiny.



# LIGHTING

Colours, spotlights, video projections etc.  
Can highlight key moments.

So in Still Life.....

Lighting represents the starts & ends of acts.  
Spotlights follow animals.

Colour is used to enhance mood.

Dance starts bright & goes dark towards end as  
piece becomes more dramatic.



# COSTUME

Could be on their feet, legs, bodies, arms, hands, face or heads.

Length, fabric, colour, texture etc

So in Still Life.....

Masks & headdresses have animal features.  
Costumes & accessories have cultural references.

E.g. The Zebra wears a lycra black & white unitard. His face is also painted in these colours, he has a headdress that represents his mane & goes down his spine. He also has mitts that again make him animal like.





# ACCOMPANIMENT

Sound that accompanies dance.

Music, silence, natural sounds, found sounds etc

So in Still Life.....

Uses orchestral music & each animal is portrayed by the dynamics & style of music. There is also a voice over by Jeremy Irons at the start & end of dance. This sets the scene & helps the audience to understand the theme of the dance.

E.g. The monkey sections has a carnival/samba feel to it, suggesting it could be from a Brazil.



# DANCE (RADS)

Mix of styles are seen in Still Life.....

Morris - Flea section

African - Zebra

Latin American carnival - Monkey

Relationships

Action

Space

Dynamics



# Musical accompaniment

Still Life at the Penguin Cafe	Describe	Explain
Texan Kangaroo Rat	<p>Oboes, Flutes and bassoons start the section with slow descending notes. Then we hear a fast bouncy rhythm. The section has a hoedown feel to it, the melody again played on an oboe and Flutes, with a banjo plucking strings underneath.</p> <p>Music is repetitive, it is interrupted by a loud brass chords and a drum snare ever now and then.</p> <p>Sounds of dancer slapping his leg.</p> <p>Light-hearted fun melody</p>	<p>The beat is fast and hard to pin down just like a rat- highlights character.</p> <p>The banjo suggests geographical location (Traditional American Country music)</p>

# Musical accompaniment

<b>Humboldt's Hog Nosed Skunk Flea</b>	<b>The beat is fast, jumpy and bouncy. The main melody is played loudly on brass instruments- mainly horns, answered by violins. The violins take over later in the section. There are maracas in the background. Spoken word. Sound of banging the stick Flea 'EEKS' Morris Dancers 'Hey</b>	<b>The quick, jumpy beat relates to the character of the flea.  The maracas create an itchy scratchy atmosphere.  The banging of the sticks relates to the dance style.  The repetitive melody suggests the flea is always there and irritating.</b>
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# Musical accompaniment

<p>Southern Cape Zebra</p>	<p>Brass Fanfare, Slow at first. Unchanging Marimba note (percussion instrument) Clip clop Gunshot sound effect</p>	<p>Clip clop sound identifies the character.</p> <p>Marimba's are used in African music, suggesting geographical location/habitat.</p> <p>Essence of tribal lifestyles and cultures. Could also represent the pulse of the Zebra, constant and firm until, by man's hand, life ebbs from him.</p> <p>Clip clop sound represents the character.</p> <p>Gunshot signifies death which highlights the theme of endangered species.</p>
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## Choreographer: David Bintley

- Born in Huddersfield
- He was a performer then choreographer then director.
- 1995 became Artistic Director of Birmingham Royal Ballet.
- Trained at the Royal Ballet School
- Uses traditional British style that develops the rich theatrical heritage.
- Uses ballet as part of narrative, to create a mood or show character



**Music:** *Simon Jeffes*

**Design:** *Hayden Griffin*

**Lighting:** *John B Read*

**Premiere:** *9 March 1988 at the Royal Opera House*

**Filmed:** *3 August 1989 broadcast on Thames TV*

**Length:** *40 minutes*



## Choreographer: David Bintley

- Strong sense of Theatre
- Ability to explore a theme and take contentious issues
- Surreal, imaginative
- Entertainer
- Characterisations and humour
- Inspiration from music / collaborations
- Draws upon several sources for stimulus
- Costume and design are high on agenda
- Often uses different styles



## Subject Matter

### Serious Episodes / Serious Issue

Endangered species

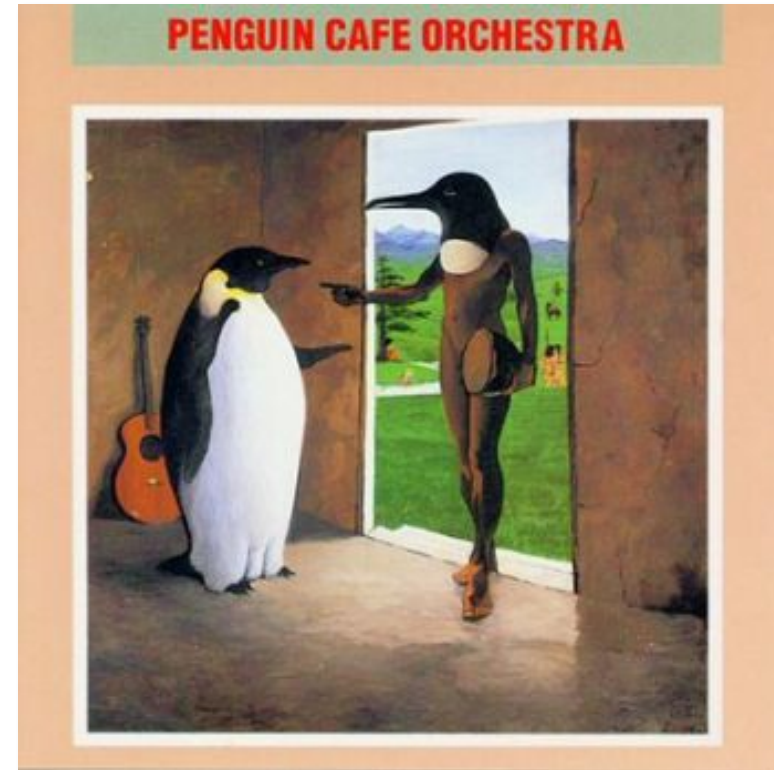
**Focus:** *man's part in animal extinction*





## Stimuli / Inspiration

- Simon Jeffes's Penguin Café Orchestra album covers by Emily Young
- "Dooms Day Book of Animals" by David Day
- Peter Weir's Film "The Last Wave"
- Music from the Penguin Café Orchestra



## Subject Matter

**War**

**Oil Spill**

**Bullying**

**Recession**

**Current Serious  
Issues**

**Gang Crime**

**Chilean Miners**

**Poverty**



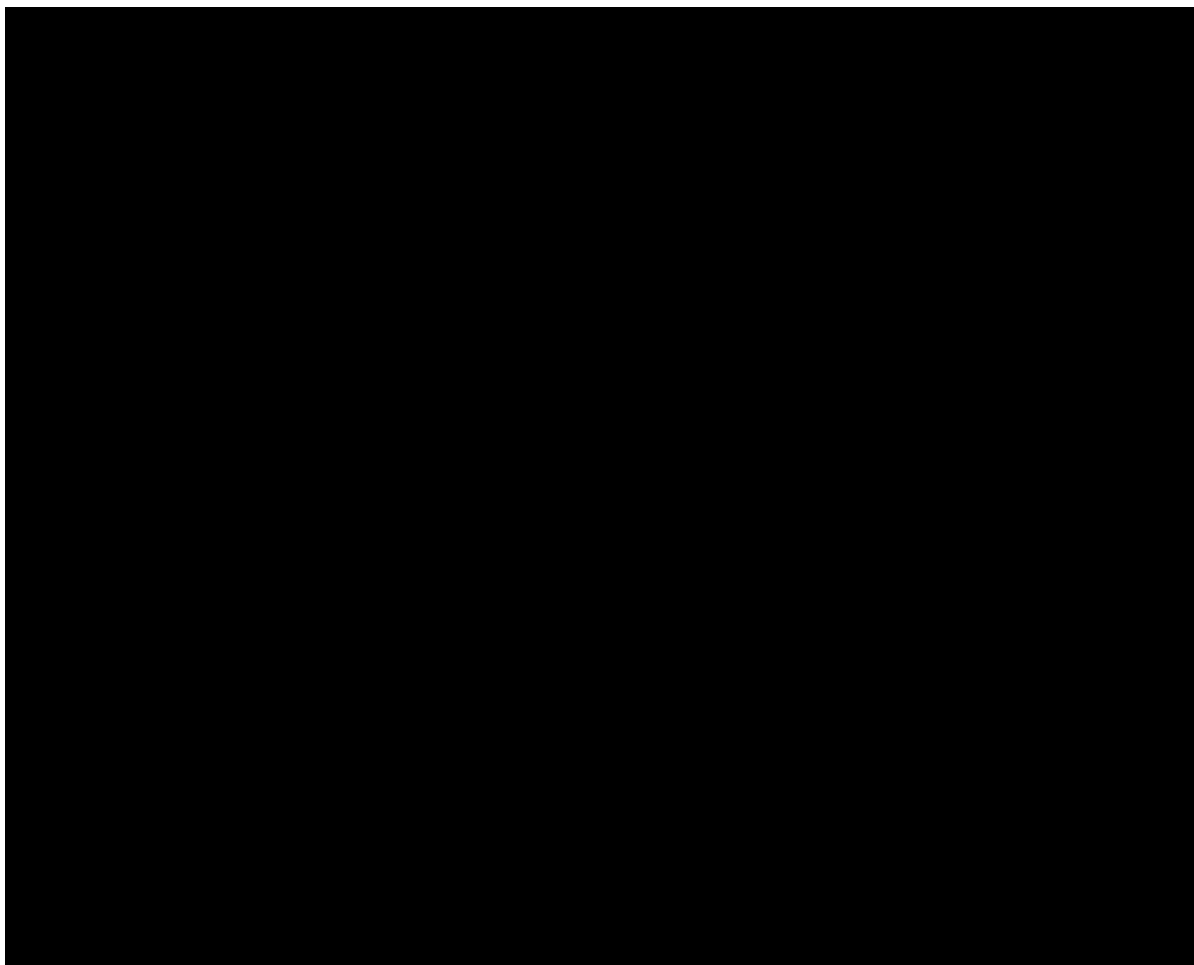
## ITN: Chilean Miners



# Africa United Trailer



# London 2012 and 7<sup>th</sup> July 2005



# Choreographic Style

## “Episodic”

each scene acts as a different section

## “Compère”

The Great Auk acts as a compère

## Theatrical Shocks



## Choreographic Style

- Each animal is made distinctive by their movement material
- Motifs are built from actions that capture the essence of how each animal moves
- Not completely authentic – took features of each to develop movement material

***“like a radio station, you can’t quite get – fragments,  
bits and pieces, images”  
Bintley 2000***



## Choreographic Style

- Range of different dance styles from different cultures
- Ballet features: large cast, detailed costumes and gender roles
- “Unclassical”: use of popular dance forms, modern political theme and expressionist not narrative
- Contemporary: e.g. Zebra – Graham contractions / Models using every day gestures / parallel and flexed feet more common





# African Dance

## Different Types of African Dance

Focusing on Sub-Saharan Africa

- Each country has a different type
- Varies from town to town



# African Dance

## Contextual Links

- Courtship
- Celebration
- Warrior
- Welcoming
- Ritual



# African Dance

## Key Movements or Characteristics

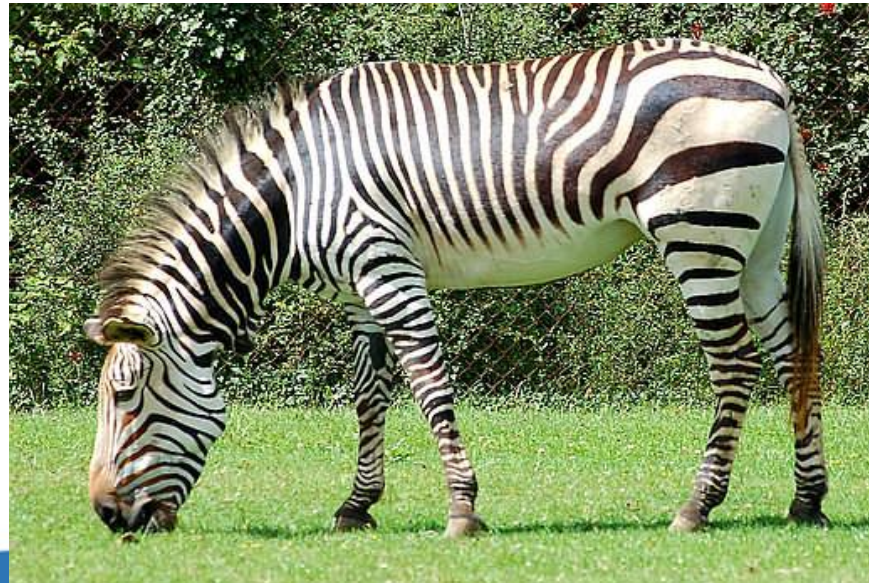
- Gender separated
- Open gestures to the gods
- Bent knees
- Arched back
- Rhythms from drums
- Chanting and percussive music
- Use of Torso

## “Still Life” Subject Matter

### Serious Episodes / Serious Issue

Endangered species

**Focus:** *man’s part in animal extinction*



# Our Subject Matter



ous Episodes / Serious Issue

Community: Love and Hate

ocus: *man's part in community*

