

APPRECIATING

Ways to Appreciate Contemporary Dance
by Fabienne Cabado, cultural mediator



Photo Red Sky Performance Company / École Père-Marquette © Salomé Boniface.

When you arrive at the theatre, take a few moments to **assess your mood**. Take a few deep breaths to relax and open yourself up to the artistic experience.

Try not to have expectations and preconceived ideas about the show. **Act like a “sponge”** and absorb the experience; in other words, sit back, let the show happen, and notice your reactions and responses.

Sometimes people worry that they may not “understand” contemporary dance. The first step to understanding is very easy: it’s a matter of simply **observing and describing** what you see ... **and feel**. This will bring up all kinds of reflections and questions that will enrich the dialogue between you and dance.

A dance performance doesn’t necessarily tell a story. You can make up a story based on what you see, or you can simply let yourself be swept up in the magic of the moment. **There is no right or wrong interpretation of a show**, and your perspective deserves to be considered and discussed. Dare to share: your enjoyment of dance and your critical eye will be the better for it!

If your attention starts to wander during a performance, observe how the show is made (costumes, sets, lighting, movement in space, body types and movements, relationships between performers, etc.). Ask yourself why these things are they way they are.

If, despite all your efforts, you’re having trouble focusing on the show, that’s OK. Take the opportunity to **dream or create** another show in your imagination. There’s a vast diversity of styles and genres in dance, and everyone discovers their preferences through experience. If the work of a particular choreographer leaves you cold, try another!