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Engaging the Culture: Performing Arts and Society

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Abstract

Performing arts are a mirror of the culture and the culture mirrors performing arts. In this paper, Dr. Leary-Warsaw examines art forms that use performance as their vehicle for full creative and cultural realization. While looking at traditional and non-traditional thought relating to the performing arts, attention is given to artistic objectiveness, aesthetic consideration, and critical evaluation of elements that define "interpretation." Topics that are discussed include: performing arts among the many paradoxes of our modern world; the role of performing arts as an often unnoticed backdrop to human activity; commonalities of the various genres (music, dance, theater, film, etc.); the relationship and interaction between artist, artwork, and audience; and mass distribution and its growing diversity of choices for consumers. A discussion of current and historical artistic trends addresses the changing role of performing arts in the 20th and 21st centuries. Lastly, this paper explores likely developments and societal implications for performing arts and culture in the future.