I chose to write about Gene Kellie and Cyd Charisse’s dance from Singin in the Rain. This dance tells the story of a nerdy guy going to a bar and meeting a gorgeous lady. She teases him, makes suggestions about how he could make himself more attractive (by removing his hat and glasses) and flirts with him over the course of the dance. At the end we discover that she is dating a man who works for the mafia mainly because of the money that he has to offer. Mafia men hold Gene Kelly back while she is lead away by a man holding expensive jewelry. This dance uses fast paced energetic movements to start (choreographed by Gene Kelly), and uses bright colors as well to create a high energy environment for the performance. Cyd Charisse seems to lead the dance at first by initiating most movements and dancing around Kelly. Sharp movements and isolations are used characteristic of Fossie’s style of dance. The story line is central to the dance as it goes through it’s plot arch. This is evident because of the change in movement styles that happens when Cyd changes from the dance “leader” to a more submissive role when Kelly takes the lead. Movements become more fluid (with moments of spastic energy) and the two dancers start touching more as they dance closer and closer together.

Gene Kelly is the main backbone of this dance so I will be writing about him as an artist. He was a dancer actor, singer, film director, producer, and choreographer so he really did have all the bases covered. Kelly started his dancing career as a child at his mother’s suggestion and the family opened a dance studio in 1932. From there he worked his way up through the chorus lines on Broadway (in Cole Porter’s *leave it to me*). This performance was also the first time on stage where he danced to his own choreography. his way up to the show  *the time of your life* which one the Pulitzer prize in 1939. After is star role in *Pal Joey* He signed a contrac with David Selznick and moved on to Hollywood. He choreographed all of the dance routines in Anchors Aweigh. He eventually worked his way up to directing (after much struggle with MGM) and directed Singin in the Rain. On top of this, he choreographed most of the dances in Singin in the Rain as well as dancing/staring and Directing the show. This dancer is historically know for bringing ballet styles of dance into film and making it a commercially acceptable form for a wider audience. He is quoted on his Wiki page as loving ballet, but using only what he can adapt to his own use. Saying instead that he prefers mood and continuity over technique. This is very readily apparent in the dance I am writing about. PBS accredits Kelly to reviving the movie musical and redefining dance on screen.

This piece makes me wonder what they would have added into it (or expanded upon) if they had more time. I love the whole performance and am curious what they would have done with it if they could have expanded it further. I wonder what thoughts went into deciding the costumes for this piece and how they thought it would fit in with the general color pallet and mood of the scenery. How was this choreography informed by the abilities (for better or worse) of the two performs. Also what would they say is the climax of this piece and which places in the dance do they want the audience to be affected the most emotionally.

First off, I think this dance is absolutely spectacular. The performs bring an amazing energy to the piece and I find the way they tell story through movement to be particularly engaging and universally understandable. People from ANY language/cultural background would be able to tell you what was going on in this scene and could enjoy it for what it is. I love the colors that are used in the set and costumes because they add another solid piece of energy to the piece. The music is wonderful. It’s stylized for the times, builds with the piece to add suspense, and also has a fluid quality to it that fits the dance well. Also, Cyd Charisse’s costume (with all it’s frills) adds to the enticing seductiveness of her movements and really helps to move the dance forward. The use of props is also done very well. By incorporating the hat and glasses (which she kicks away as she improves Kelly’s appearance) they create solid plot moments that can be expressed through movement very concretely. The use of the diamond necklace at the end is another example of this. These first props are so tied into Gene Kelly’s self image, and their absence makes his transformation into an assertive courter by the end of the dance all the more effective. If I was to change anything about this dance, I would most certainly make it longer. It feels a bit rushed (even though it get the story across wonderfully). I loved it so much that I just want it to go on longer.

Personally, this paper has shown me how hard it is to discuss dance while remaining objective. I had a lot of difficulty describing what it was about the dance that I found so enjoyable. Putting these things into words without phrases like “I like it” is difficult. Also, I didn’t realize how much the costumes and music and props effect my experience of the dance performance. I found all of those pieces to be compelling, but until I put it into words I didn’t realize how much they affect me and the performance. I’m happy to have had the change to learn from this project since I doubt that I would have done this without having an assignment to submit to a class.

Overall, this was a very enjoyable experience.