**CAPTIONS:**

**- Greek Vase with Different Sportsmen – ca.**

In this image ancient Greek athletes are depicted.  They are posed in what we call "classical" style.   Classical style refers to this period of Antiquity in which the ideal was based on orderliness, geometry and the importance of rigorous discipline. We recognize a tension in their pose that is reminiscent of ballet choreography of the 20th century.

**- Apollo Belvedere – ca. 130BC**

Apollo: ancient god of music, poetry, dance and the sun. This marble statue is a copy of the original bronze version from 320 BC. Apollo is one of the foremost gods of antiquity, an inspiration to artists, poets and choreographers throughout time. The power of Apollo as a symbol for art and beauty is timeless - Balanchine’s *Apollo* has been performed over a span of almost 100 years, from Lew Christensen in 1928 to Chase Finlay in 2013.

**- 1490: Vitruvian Man, Leonardo Da Vinci**

This drawing is often used as an implied symbol of the symmetry of the human body, and by extension, of the universe as a whole. Leonardo based his drawing on the writings of the ancient Roman architect, Vitruvius in his treatise *Da Architectura.*

**- 1634, Nicolas Poussin – Dance to the Music of Time**

Nicolas Poussin, French painter, drew on subjects of antiquity for his paintings. He is considered a “classicist” because of his preference for clarity, order and line over color. In this painting he depicts the Four Seasons dancing, while Time plays a lyre, and Apollo the sun-god in his chariot, flies across the morning sky.

**- 1653, Louis XIV as Apollo, Le Ballet de la Nuit**

LOUIS XIV came to the throne at a very young age and ruled over France for more than 60 years. He is most associated with Apollo, the sun god, and became known as the Roi Soleil. He performed as Apollo in various ballets between 1651-1670. In 1661 he permitted the Academie Royale de Danse to be established. Many academies were opening in Europe during this period with academicians specifically returning to the ancient sensibilities, philosophies and aesthetics of the ancient classical Greeks.

**- 1680’s, Jean Pierre Beauchamp, Ballet’s FIVE POSITIONS**

Under King Louis XIV’s reign the Academie de Danse professionalized dance, which had previously been performed only by courtesans and royalty. King Louis stopped performing in 1670 making room for the serious training of dancers. Jean-Pierre Beauchamp, Ballet-Master to the King and Academie, codified the Five Positions of Ballet, later published by Pierre Rameau in *The Dancing Master*.

**- Mercury by da Bologna (1580) and Maria Tallchief, in Attitude (195?)**

Mercury is the winged messenger of the Greek gods and in this sculpture you see him poised for flight. Next to him stands Maria Tallchief, posed in Attitude as from *Swan Lake*. Compare the elegant reach of Mercury and Maria Tallchief, and note the span of centuries over which these photos make reference.

**- 1912, NIJINSKY – Afternoon of the Faun (photo Baron de Meyer)**

Vaclav Nijinsky revolutionized ballet at the turn of the 20th century. Despite his departure from the classical ballet style, in *Afternoon of the Faun,* Nijinsky makes reference to ancient Greece through his frieze-like compositions, reminiscent of a Greek vase.

**- 1921, Diaghilev & Stravinsky**

Serge Diaghilev kept ballet alive and thriving between the Russian Revolution, World War I and the lead-up to World II with his daring and innovations. Igor Stravinsky returned to classical principles in his compositions and paved the way for modern classical music.  Together with many leading artists of the day they were the original Ballets Russes.

**- LK & GB with Noguchi’s Lyre, uncredited photo/Ballet Society Collection**

Lincoln Kirstein and George Balanchine met in 1933 in Paris. Europe was in great upheaval with an economic depression and war on the way. Balanchine was looking for a home where he could develop his own choreography but to no avail. Lincoln Kirstein invited him to America to start his own school and be free to choreograph without constraints. Classicism continued to influence the arts, despite enormous changes happening in technology and worldviews, represented here by Isamu Noguchi’s lyre from Balanchine/Stravinsky/Noguchi’s *Orpheus*.

**- Arthur Mitchell & Diana Adams, AGON, 1957 (photo Martha Swope)**

Arthur Mitchell, an African American dancer, studied at the School of American Ballet and went on to become one of NYCB’s principal dancers. He said: "The myth was that because you were black that you could not do classical dance. I proved that to be wrong."

He is depicted here with principal dancer Diana Adams, in the rehearsal of the pas de deux that broke race barriers onstage and advanced the state of ballet through sheer ground-breaking choreography.

**- Three Dancers in an Exercise Hall, Edgar Degas, 187?**

Edgar Degas, very much influenced by the Greek movement and tradition, reminds us in this canvas of the ballet student’s lifelong devotion to study, self-discipline and practice.

CREDITS:

1. Staatliche Antikensammlungen, Munich, Germany

2. Museo Pio-Clementino, Vatican. photo: Marie-Lan Nguyen (public domain)

3. NYPL of Performing Arts, gift of William Machado via Peter Kayafas

4. Wallace Collection, London

5. Roi-Soleil, public domain?

6.  “The Five Positions of Dancing" from *Analysis of Country Dancing,*Thomas Wilson, 1811 public domain?

7. *Mercury,* by Giovanni da Bologna, 1580, public domain?

Maria Tallchief in *Swan Lake,* Martha Swope (195?)

8. photo Baron Adolphe de Meyer, 1912, (in Eakins Press collection)

9. Photo by Hulton Archive, Getty Images

10. uncredited photo/Ballet Society Collection

11. photo Martha Swope, 1957

12. Three Dancers in an Exercise Hall, Edgar Degas,

LINKS:

1. Metropolitan Museum of Art,

2.

3.

11. Arthur Mitchell

<http://www.kennedy-center.org/explorer/artists/?entity_id=3515>

12. Degas and the Dance , Jill DeVonyar and Richard Kendall, 2002

13.