



The Audition

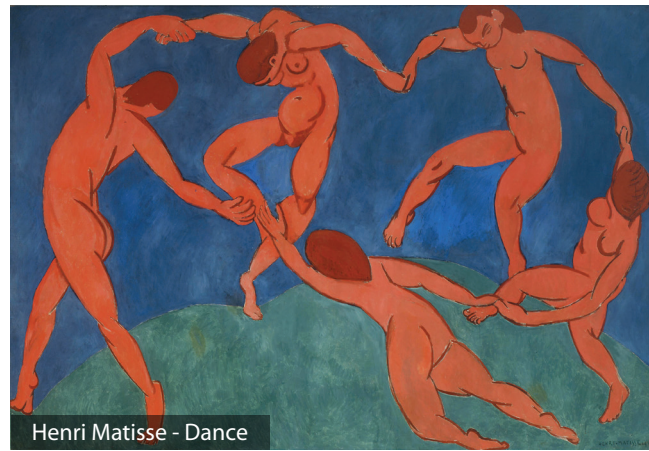
Completed: 12-06-2022

In this series, a group of ballet dancers audition for a new production of *"Swan Lake"*. This time it's an all-male cast, and each member does his utmost to impress the stern and intimidating dance master.





Matthew Bourne - Swan Lake



Henri Matisse - Dance



Inspiration

I'm a great lover of classical music, dance, and opera. So, for me, it was just a matter of time before engaging in a project like *"The Audition"*. I'm, of course, fully aware that this theme is not to everyone's taste. But I hope you have nonetheless enjoyed the dreamy storyline, the dynamic of the characters, and the splendor I tried to convey with settings.

For this series, I was mostly inspired by *Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake*, a contemporary ballet based on Tchaikovsky's original and best known for having the traditionally female parts of the swans danced by men. It was first staged in 1995

and appears to have been the longest-running ballet in London's West End and on Broadway. I've never seen a live performance, but it's quite impressive to watch it on-screen as well. It was a delightful distraction during the long and dreary hours during lockdown last winter.

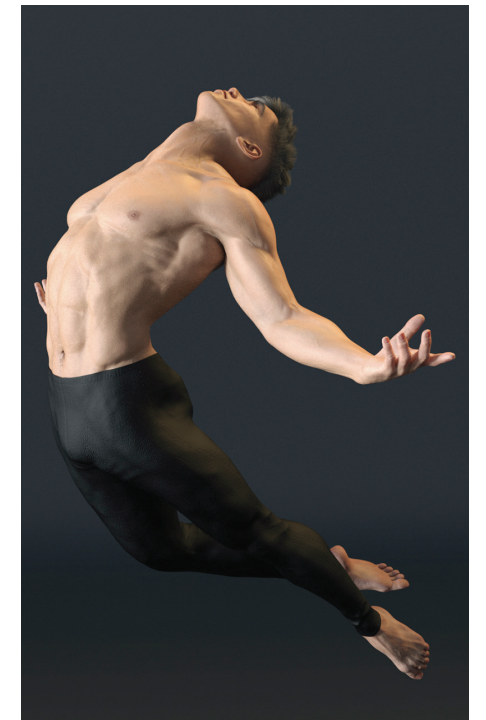
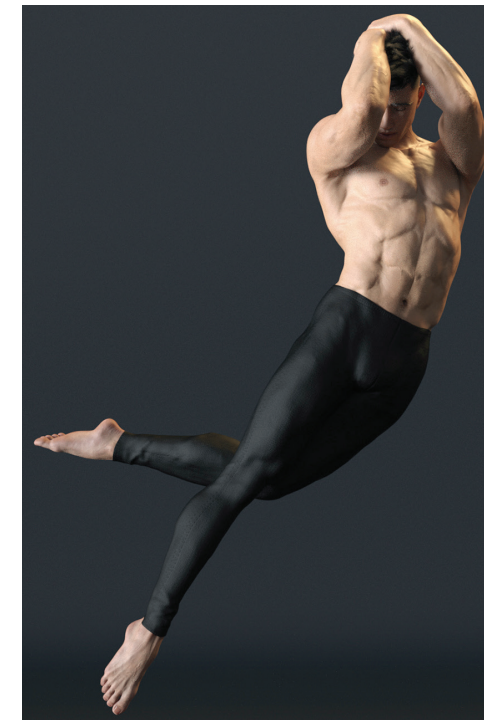
Other sources of inspiration for this project came (obviously) from the ballet paintings by *Edgar Degas*, the beautiful movements of the dancing figures by *Henri Matisse*, and in one scene you may have recognized the elegant poses from *"The Three Graces"*, a sculpture by *Antonio Canova*.



Edgar Degas - The Ballet Class



Antonio Canova - The Three Graces



The Models

When content and software company DAZ came up with a series of 3D ballet characters and dance poses, the idea to make my own version of *"Swan Lake"* became irresistible. Of course, the whole cast had to be all-male as well, but the story would obviously go much further than is usual on stage.

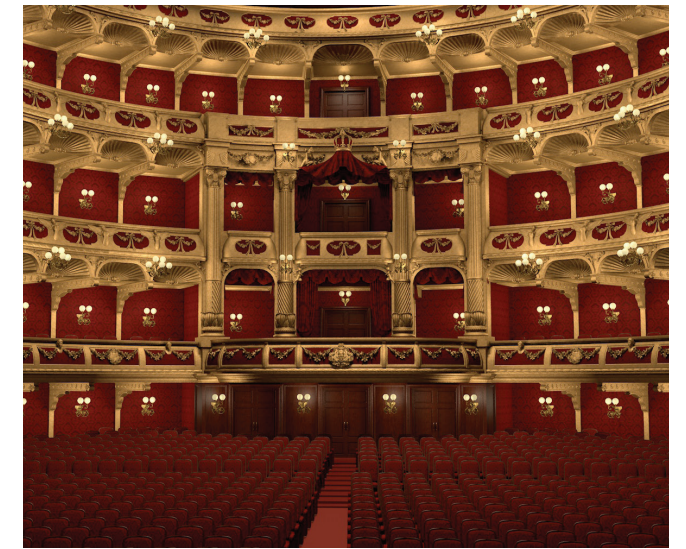




The first part of the story is in a dance studio; a very large and bright space that seems to be located in a very posh part of town.



For the exterior of the dance school, I used a model of the iconic Brownstones of New York. The interior of the building is based on the model of an old boxing club, something I also used before in "The Champion" series.



An audition makes no sense if there's no performance, so the second part of the series is in a full-scale theatre, with a large audience and a complete orchestra. I wanted it to be really big and crowded, magnificent and sumptuous like those grand opera houses. It gives the story a whole new boost, and I think it makes an interesting contrast with the plain settings of the first part.

The interior of the theatre was compiled from several loose bits and pieces, and it was based on a 3D model of the Opera Garnier in Paris. Unfortunately the original was far too big for this project, and at 3K perhaps also a bit too expensive as well. The stage background - the dark forest with the monument - is something you may perhaps recognize as well, for I have used it in "The Education of Achilles" series many years ago.

