

# JUST AD DANCE

With dancing becoming more prevalent in advertising, **Marianka Swain** asks if it benefits the industry and counts down the best examples



**W**hat links cars, shoes, booze and Christmas? Not just a list of my favourite things, but advertising campaigns that have all used dance. “It used to be a rarity – now, you see dancing popping up in lots of different guises,”

observes choreographer Karen Arnott. Fellow choreographer Adam Wilson adds: “There’s definitely been a shift over the past 20 years. A relatively niche activity has become universally relatable, with more formal styles like ballet and tango appearing

alongside street dance.”

Director Dawn Shadforth worked with choreographer Jamie King on a hit Nike Women ad featuring dancer Sofia Boutella, one of a series highlighting the athleticism of female dancers. “Sofia has a very

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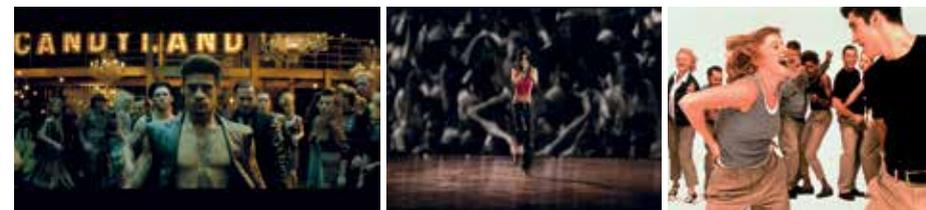
## TOP TEN DANCE ADS

10. **Rover Riverdance** Wink Bingo's Irish dancing dog is the canine Flatley. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7pys8AQ9XM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7pys8AQ9XM)
9. **Horsing around** Continuing the animal theme, how about an equine pas de deux for OPI? "I swear that horse has more grace than me!" **Claire Jenkins** [www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGLCZSwYfDo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGLCZSwYfDo)
8. **Golden oldies** Lynx Pulse features some properly cheese-tastic moves, from D-I-S-C-O finger points to the old rope mime. Somehow, it works. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEI2FGxOhcw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEI2FGxOhcw)
7. **If it ain't got that swing** There's a lovely organic quality to this JD Williams ad (well, bar Lorraine Kelly's entrance), which stars a café full of sprightly swing dancers. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wa7EUDYDo8U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wa7EUDYDo8U)
6. **Station shout** Combining Liverpool Street, Lulu and surprise flashmob scores a winner for T-Mobile. "I love the actual randomers who join in – it shows you dance is truly for everyone. It makes my heart smile!" **Suz Hu** [www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQ3d3KigPQM&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQ3d3KigPQM&feature=youtu.be)
5. **Minty fresh fusion** Taking its cue from the cheesy dance film formula, Wrigley's Extra features a compelling krump/tango battle. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=I\\_0LWknY4jQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_0LWknY4jQ)
4. **Ballet battle** Who says dancers can't be tough? The Royal Ballet's Steven McCrae, Thiago Soares (pictured opposite left) and Iana Salenko prove otherwise in Baileys' sumptuous Christmas spot. "It's a fantastic showcase for strong male ballet dancers." **Will Greenway** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M188DIF3odY>
3. **Girl power** Nike's ads celebrating female dancers wisely let its talented subjects do the talking, with magnetic Sofia Boutella (pictured opposite centre) leading the charge. "I want to be her when I grow up." **Alice Cooper** [www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NnbAnHtVsl](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NnbAnHtVsl)
2. **Mind the Gap** The clothing brand has given us so many gems, from khaki-a-go-go and *West Side Story* to the rebirth of *Funny Face*-era Audrey Hepburn. Top prize has to go to khaki swing for sheer joyousness (pictured opposite right). [www.youtube.com/watch?v=knW1hGwmEXQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=knW1hGwmEXQ)
1. **Urban milonga** VW Polo's *Last Tango in Compton*, featuring 20 cameras simultaneously capturing every move of top Argentine tango dancers Gaspar Godoy and Manuela Rossi, is intricate, unexpected and seriously sexy. "This rocks!" **Leona Tan** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Yww2VhbFL8>

specific style of movement – gymnastic, elegant breakdancing – so we really based it around her," explains Dawn. "We worked out a sequence that showed off some of her best moves and picked the camera

angles that highlighted them in an exciting way." Dawn, who has experience working with dancers on music videos, has created a variety of ads involving movement. "I did the M&S Christmas ad with models

like Twiggy and Erin O'Connor, and because the brief was about embodying those 1940s and 1950s movies, I insisted on bringing in a choreographer for movement direction. It makes a huge difference to how



## A DANCE FOR ALL SEASONS

Sometimes, the style picked for a product defies all logic. Here are a few suggestions that make total sense (well, to me).

- Salsa** Tabasco sauce
- Viennese waltz** Motion sickness tablets
- Samba** Roll-on deodorant
- Quickstep** FedEx Express
- Rumba** LoveFilm
- Foxtrot** Glacier Mints
- Tap** Limescale remover

they hold themselves, getting that period posture and feel.

"When you have ads with people moving and acting to the music, it gives it a great energy: the way shots connect has a rhythm and flow, and an understanding of dance can help that hugely. I'd love to use dancers whenever I can and find a new approach for the work."

"Dance is perfect for ads, as it distils emotion," observes Adam. "You can convey a whole story in a few quick movements. It's also a great way of differentiating a piece,

particularly when you use a more unusual style."

If advertisers see dance as a useful commodity, one that can help products become more attractive to the general public, is that a good sign for the industry? "I think so – with a few reservations!" says Karen. "I'm really pleased it's becoming more 'normal', something everything can have a go at and take ownership of. However, you're not necessarily seeing the best dancing or dancers in ads."

Adam disagrees. "Of course there's a visual

aspect to it, but that applies to dancing on stage as well. Casting directors know the value of talented performers, so they're not just picking the ones who look attractive on camera. And the public is becoming more dance-savvy through watching competition shows.

"But even if there is an element of favouring aesthetics over training, at least it's getting dance out into the wider culture, getting people interested and making it part of everyday vocabulary. That's good news for everyone." ●

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