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THE CHOREOGRAPHY, PRODUCTION AND NOTATION OF

A LONG DANCE ENTITLED

"A LOVE DREAM"

bу

Elizabeth Ree Gavett

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of
the Consolidated University of North Carolina
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Fine Arts

Greensboro 1951

Approved by

Virginia Momans

Virginia Moomaw, Advisor

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THE CHOREOGRAPHY AND PRODUCTION OF A LONG DANCE ENTITLED "A LOVE DREAM"

The subject matter of "A Love Dream" is based upon the mythological story of Cupid and Psyche. In this myth the irate Venus, losing the worship of her people, seeks revenge upon the beautiful mortal Psyche through her son Cupid who falls in love with the innocent girl.

Considering the required length for the dance, the story of Cupid and Psyche provided an abundance of material adaptable to dance. Few people were necessary for the production. Moreover, a desire to choreograph a narrative in which it would be possible to create characters with definite personalities and to work out the sequence of the plot carefully and clearly, influenced the choice of subject matter. The use of personalities in a plot provided a more interesting problem in notating the dance by the Laban System of Dance Notation. The myth of Cupid and Psyche, therefore, served these purposes to the fullest.

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

In the field of modern dance experimentation and exploration in creative activity has become an integral part of dance education. The inclusion of the creative process in dance curriculums has provided numerous benefits resulting from the demand creative activity places upon individual resources. Thus, through furthering individual development, choreography claims its place in dance education. 1

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The problems of this study were

(1) to choreograph a long dance for a group, (2) to produce the dance
for an audience, and (3) to record the dance by means of the Laban

System of Dance Notation.

Purpose of the problem. The purposes of this study were (1) to gain experience in creative activity, (2) to experiment in correlating all the arts in order to attain a more effective production, and (3) to gain experience in the adaptation of literary material to dance.

Limitations of the problem. The limitations of this study were

(1) the length of the dance, (2) the length and structure of the music selected, and (3) the number of available people with ability to dance.

York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1944), p. 72.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Modern dance. The meaning of modern dance in this study was interpreted according to Radir's definition of the term:

Modern dance is that term in current use applied to that kind of contemporary dance that organizes expressive movement in certain characteristic ways in a time - space structure.²

Choreography. The meaning of choreography in this study was interpreted as that art of creating and organizing expressive movement in a structure of time and space.

Dance notation. The meaning of dance notation in this study was interpreted as the system of recording dance movements in time and space. The Laban System of Dance Notation was the method used.

Motif or movement theme. The meaning of motif or movement theme in this study was interpreted as that dominant phrase of movement which defined each main character and the concepts of worship, love, dominance, pleading, and desolation.

III. ORGANIZATION OF REMAINDER OF THE THESIS

The remainder of the thesis has been organized into the following chapter divisions: the choreography and sources of data, the production and sources of data, the notation of the dance and an evaluation of the study.

² Ibid., p. vii.

Survey of recent dance studies in the realm of mythology. In order to justify the use of mythology as subject matter for the dance, a survey was made of the dance periodicals for the past five years. The periodicals used for this survey were Dance Observer, Dance Magazine, and The Dancing Times. In the field of modern dance Martha Graham has performed two major works: "Serpent Heart," built around the myth of Medea and Jason, (1946);3 and "Night Journey." based on the Oedipus and Jocasta legend. (1950).4 Alice Marting has presented "Dido and Aeneas," (1947); and "Medea," (1949).6 Ted Shawn performed his "Prometheus Bound" in 1950.7 One of the major contemporary choreographers of the ballet, George Balanchine, has produced three major works in the realm of mythology: "Orpheus," (1949);8 "The Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne." (1949);9 and "Apollo." (1947).10

³ Robert Sabin, "Martha Graham Presents New Work, 'Serpent Heart' with score by Samuel Barber, at Columbia Festival, " Dance Observer, 13:73, June-July, 1946.

⁴ Doris Hering, "The Season in Review," Dance Magazine, 24:13, March, 1950.

^{5 &}quot;Choreographies," Dance Observer, 14:21, February, 1947.

⁶ Joan Brodie, "Choreographies," Dance Observer, 16:87, June-July. 1949.

^{7 &}quot;Jacob's Pillow," The Dancing Times, 481:21, October, 1950.

⁸ Doris Hering, "The Season in Review," Dance Magazine, 23:13, 33-34, January, 1949.

⁹ Loc. cit. 10 Charles Payne, "Ten Years of Ballet Theatre," Dance Magazine, 24:17-18, April, 1950.

Survey of previous dance studies using the myth of Cupid and Psyche for subject matter. The ballet "L'Amour et son Amour," composed by Jean Babilee, was based upon the story of Cupid and Psyche. This ballet was performed on September 19, 1949 by Les Ballets des Champs Elysees to the music of Ceasar Franck with decor by Cocteau. The dance consisted of two scenes one of which was a pas de deux between Cupid and Psyche. One other specific reference to a ballet based upon the Cupid and Psyche story was found: "Cupid's and the Ballet-Master's Moods" composed by Vincenzo Galeotti, an Italian ballet-master, in the late seventeen hundreds. There were no references found to indicate that the myth of Cupid and Psyche had been used as subject matter by any outstanding choreographer in the field of modern dance.

V. THE PROCEDURE FOR PURSUING THE PROBLEM

In order to pursue the problem of choreographing, producing, and notating a long dance for a group, it was necessary to follow a certain procedure. The first steps in this procedure were those of adapting the literary version of the Cupid and Psyche story to the dance medium and examining the personality of each character involved. Several musical compositions were then considered for conformity to the idea of the dance and one of these was selected. The next step was that of locating an available accompanist who could play the chosen music. After

^{11 &}quot;The Sitter-Out," The Dancing Times, N. 470:68-69, November, 1949.

¹² Calle Flygare, "The Ballet," Theatre Arts, 24:607, August, 1940.

At intervals sections of the dance were presented to a faculty committee for approval and criticism; and at this time the costume designs with the choice of materials for each were also displayed. Then the dancers were selected from Dance Group members by means of voluntary try-outs. They were chosen for their ability in dance and their ability to learn quickly. After these girls were selected, full-scale rehearsals and costume construction were begun. The entire dance was presented to the graduate committee in a formal dress rehearsal on the Aycock Auditorium stage. After the final production the dance was notated by means of the Laban System of Dance Notation.

CHAPTER II

THE CHOREOGRAPHY AND SOURCES OF DATA

In making preparation for the actual choreography of the dance it was necessary (1) to compile all the data on the mythological story of Cupid and Psyche, (2) to consider the personality of each character, and (3) to select suitable music to accompany the dance.

I. SOURCES OF DATA

The sources of data for the choreography of this study were

(1) literature on mythology, (2) dance periodicals and publications,

(3) experience and knowledge gained from the study of dance and choreography, and (4) faculty members in the fields of Dance, Physical Education, and Music.

II. METHODS OF SECURING DATA

The methods of securing the data for the choreography of this study were (1) reading and research, (2) examination of experience and knowledge, and (3) conferences with faculty members in the various related departments.

III. THE CHOREOGRAPHY

The adaptation of the Cupid and Psyche story to the dance. The first problem in the choreography of the dance was that of adapting the various versions of the Cupid and Psyche story to the medium of dance. The literature reviewed for this adaptation was Bulfinch's Mythology, Fairbanks' Greek Gods and Heroes and Mythology of Greece and Rome,

Guerber's Myths of Greece and Rome, Moncrieff's Classic Myth and Legend, and Spence's An Introduction to Mythology. The principal theme of the story in all cases was identical, however, it was necessary to make several changes to simplify the complex plot and assure audience comprehension. Psyche's sisters were eliminated, Cupid was made visible, certain symbols were eliminated, the tasks imposed upon Psyche by Venus were excluded, and the actual ending was merely indicated. The dance was divided into six sections: Episode I - Venus loses her people's worship to Psyche; Episode II - Cupid and Psyche find their love; Episode III -Psyche's happiness, doubt, loss of faith, and consequent desolation; Episode IV - Psyche's search for Cupid; Episode V - the triumph of Venus; Episode VI - the lovers reunited happily. The first episode set the stage for the remainder of the dance by presenting the basis for Venus' anger and revengeful methods. In this dance the mortals turned away from the goddess of beauty to worship Psyche, bringing the wrath of Venus upon the girl. In Episode II Cupid began to carry out his mother's revenge until he saw Psyche asleep. Startled by his reaction to her beauty, the god of love did not harm her; instead he fell in love with her. 1 After the two found their love, Cupid placed his scarf on Psyche's shoulder as a symbol of marriage. The use of a physical property to symbolize love and marriage was evolved from the description of the lover's wedding by Fairbanks: "both the Cupid bridegroom, who carries a dove of Venus, and Psyche his bride wear the marriage veil."2

H. A. Guerber, Myths of Greece and Rome (New York: Cincinnati, Chicago: American Book Company, 1921), p. 122.

² Arthur Fairbanks, The Mythology of Greece and Rome (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1907), p. 43.

In the beginning of Episode III Psyche demonstrated her complete happiness; however, she was overcome by doubt and a loss of faith without Cupid by her side. When he returned and found Psyche changed, he seized the scarf from her and returned to Venus, leaving Psyche desolate. Psyche searched for her lost love, seeking aid from the mortals to no avail, in Episode IV. She was finally forced to plead aid from Venus who showed no mercy in her judgment of the girl. Dominating Psyche completely, Venus is triumphant in Episode V. In this scene the mortals return their worship to the goddess of beauty, ignoring the entreaties of the unhappy maiden. The last episode resolves the separation of the two lovers in that their love is renewed and Psyche again receives Cupid's scarf. Completely happy, the lovers go off together toward Cupid's heavenly abode.

Research on the characters and their qualities. Venus (Dione, Aphrodite, Cytherea) was the goddess of beauty, love, laughter, and marriage. The fact that she was concerned for herself was brought out when she was forced to marry Vulcan, god of the forge. "This cumpulsory union was anything but a happy one; for Venus never showed any affection for her deformed consort, and, instead of being a faithful wife, soon deserted him, and openly declared she would please herself."

This fact was again illustrated when Venus said to Adonis, "Beware how you expose yourself to danger and put my happiness to risk." Venus

³ Guerber, op. cit., p. 103.

⁴ Ibid., p. 106.

⁵ Thomas Bulfinch, Mythology (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1913), p. 66.

was capable of anger as her love affair with Anchises illustrated. The boastful mortal revealed their secret marriage thus arousing the wrath of Venus. 6 When she was angry with Psyche, Venus said to Cupid,

My dear son, punish that contumacious beauty; give thy mother a revenge as sweet as her injuries are great; infuse into the bosom of that haughty girl a passion for some low, mean unworthy being, so that she may reap a mortification as great as her present exultation and triumph. 7

In most every other mythological love story Venus appeared in her usual role as a benefactress to young lovers; however, in the Cupid and Psyche story, the goddess of love maintained a personality of the opposite extreme.

Cupid (Eros, Love), the son of Mars and Venus, was that force which brought male and female together so that new generations might be reproduced. Psyche, the youngest of three daughters of a king "was so lovely, that her father's subjects declared her worthy to be called the Goddess of Beauty, and offered to pay homage to her instead of Venus. However, "Psyche, henceforth frowned upon by Venus, derived no benefit from all her charms. HO

Selection of <u>suitable music</u>. Once the story was adapted to the dance medium, it was necessary to select music which would conform to the idea to be conveyed. In this selection the tempo, the mood, and

⁶ Guerber, op. cit., p. 111.

⁷ Bulfinch, op. cit., p. 81.

⁸ Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 65.

⁹ Guerber, op. cit., p. 121.

¹⁰ Bulfinch, op. cit., p. 81.

the length of the music had to be considered. An attempt was made to choose a musical composition that would be unfamiliar to the majority of people so that it would be secondary to the dance. The music selected was the <u>Suite Dans Le Style Ancien</u> for piano, by Alexandre Tansman (New York: Associated Music Publishers Inc.). It was divided into six sections: I Entree, II Sarabande, III Gavotte, IV Choral Fugue, V Aria, and VI Toccata. To better convey the moods of the dance, the selections were arranged in the following order: I Toccata, II Sarabande, III Gavotte, IV Choral Fugue, V Entree, and VI Aria. Apart from this rearrangement the music was played as it was written.

The creative process. With the story outlined and the music chosen, it was possible to begin the actual choreography. In order to clearly define each character, a movement theme or motif was created for each. These themes were repeated with variations and developments throughout the dance. As the concepts of worship, love, dominance. pleading, and desolation reoccurred in different episodes, movement themes were again devised to represent each of the concepts. Here too the basic themes were repeated and varied to insure clarity. This method of creating a main theme and manipulating variations was used through the entire choreography of the dance. As the dances began to acquire form, it was necessary in some instances to change the themes to give stronger movement or clearer relationships. Later in rehearsals with those girls chosen to dance the different parts, it was again necessary to make some minor changes for the sake of a smooth performance. The choreography was complete when the dances, combined with the music, took form in rehearsals.

CHAPTER III

THE PRODUCTION AND SOURCES OF DATA

In making preparation for the production of the dance it was necessary (1) to design and construct costumes for the dancers, (2) to plan the stage set, (3) to arrange a lighting plan, and (4) to plan the curtain cues.

I. SOURCES OF DATA

The sources of data for the production of this study were (1) literature on the costuming of dance, lighting the stage, and planning of stage decor; (2) faculty members in the fields of Dance, Art, and Physical Education; and (3) students in the fields of art and home economics.

II. METHODS OF SECURING DATA

The methods of securing the data for the production of this study were (1) reading and research, (2) conferences with faculty members in the related departments, and (3) conferences with students in art and home economics.

III. THE PRODUCTION1

The costuming of the dance. In order to assure harmony in a dance, the costumes must be in unity with the dance itself. "The dance costume is made up of line, material and color. It depends upon these

¹ The Costume plates were drawn by Marian Adams.

and their combinations for its effectiveness and rightness."² In the consideration of the line of the costume, the quality of movement was of major importance. The colors for each costume were planned carefully so that they would harmonize with each other and emphasize the personalities of the characters. The materials were chosen with both economy and effectiveness in mind.

The costume for Venus, (Figure 1), was made of rayon crepe material to give it a richness of appearance. As the quality of her movement was strong and percussive, the dominant lines of the costume were vertical, the straight skirt being split to the thigh on the left side. These lines were an abstraction of the archaic Greek and were older and more sophisticated than the others. The color of yellowgreen was chosen to blend with the forest green of Cupid's costume and the bright yellow of Fsyche's. Cupid was arrayed in a forest green tunic of wool jersey which was bound at the waist by a gold corded belt, (Figure 2). In the use of green and gold together in the costume of both Venus and Cupid, a relationship between the two was clearly defined. Psyche's costume was made of bright yellow broadcloth, blending with the costumes of Cupid and Venus, (Figure 3). The lines were smooth and flowing to signify youth and to complement the quality of her movement. The costumes for the group who represented the mortals consisted of maroon leotards and black gored skirts with maroon stripes. These dark and earthy shades were chosen to emphasize the color contrast between the group and the main characters.

² Betty Joiner, Costumes for the Dance (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1937), p. 5.

³ Tbid., p. 8.

The planning of the stage set. The stage was set off by a black cyclorama with the side pieces separated and arranged as wings. High graduated levels were placed upstage right, just off the center line and covering approximately one fourth of the stage. The planning of the stage set followed Beiswanger's principle: "With dance, a large cleared space must be the basis of any sound stage design." The same set was used throughout the dance. (Figures 5 & 6).

The arranging of the lighting. The lights which were used in the production of this dance were reds, blues, and straw. Reds were used in order to suggest a warm and happy feeling, blues were used to indicate a bleak and desolate feeling, and straws were used to temper the reds and blues and to insure the maintenance of costume colors. General lighting with all or some of these colors was used except for the area in which the levels were placed; here a straw spot was sometimes used. The light plot was worked out for the person in charge of light cues. (Figure 7).

The planning of curtain cues. As there was no break in the continuity of the dance, the curtains were opened at medium speed before the dance began and closed at a medium fast speed on the last note of the music.

Arts, 23:222, March, 1939.

COSTUME PLATE FOR VENUS



Figure 1

COSTUME PLATE FOR CUPID



Figure 2





Figure 3



Figure 4

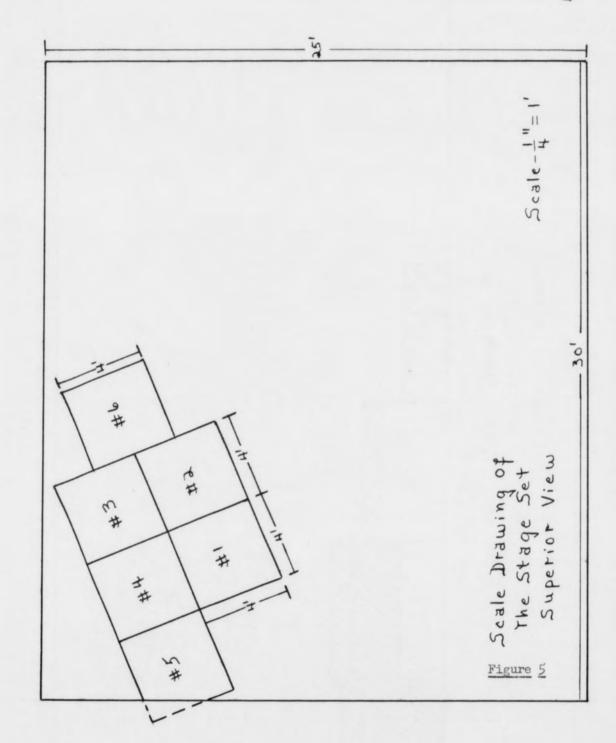


Figure 7

THE LIGHT PLOT FOR "A LOVE DREAM"

The stage was divided into six areas lighted from the teaser.

Border lights were placed two-thirds upstage and against the cyclorama.

There were six straw balcony spots which remained on throughout the dance. The directions below apply both to the teaser and to the borders.

	Areas	
/	a	3
6	5	4

Preparation: Area 1, straw up full; areas 2 - 6, mixed red, blue, and straw up.

Change 1: Area 1, take off straw; Areas 1 - 6 bring up reds.

Begin on measure 36 of Toccata and complete on measure 1 of the

Sarabande.

Change 2: All areas, dim red. Change at end of Sarabande.

Change 3: Measure 16 of Gavotte

Change 4: Measure 32 of Gavotte All areas, increase the

Change 5: Measure 44 of Gavotte intensity of the blues

Change 6: Measure 54 of Gavotte gradually.

Change 7: Area 1, bring up straw. Measure 30 of Choral Fugue.

Change 8: All areas, bring up reds and straws. Begin Measure 48 of Choral Fugue and complete measure 2 of Entree.

Change 9: Area 1, bring up straw; areas 2 - 6, dim blues and straws, bring up reds. Begin at end of Entree and complete on measure 3 of Aria.

To be to a season of the world in the best of the best to a season of the best to a season of the world it is to a season of the world in a season of the world and the world and the world in the case of the world and the world and the world and the world and the case of places to be a recommendate the season of places to be a recommendate the season of places to be a recommendate. Included the season of places to be a recommendate the season in the season of the world in the season of the world in the season of the

John Martin, "They Secre a Dance as Others De Syste," The

² Martin, Lee, cil.

CHAPTER IV

THE NOTATION OF DANCE

The dance has been recorded separately by means of the Laban System of Dance Notation. Since its introduction this system has been improved upon and has become the most acceptable and precise method of notating the dance. Martin said of this system:

The development of a system of writing dance movements on paper, much as music is written has finally reached maturity and is now being widely accepted.

The method that is used was devised by Rudolf Laban, the great theorist of the German dance, now a British citizen. He began his first experiments fifty years ago along highly original lines, and he has seen his system developed to maturity by more than twenty years of actual practice by many different schools of dance.

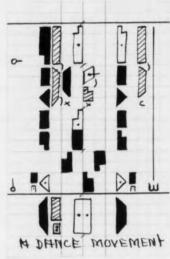
The notation is written on a staff of three vertical lines and is read from the bottom to the top beginning on the left side of the paper. The center staff line divides the body and serves as a vertical axis. They symbols which lie to the right of this line represent the movements of the right side of the body, and those which lie to the left of the line, the left side of the body.

The basic symbol for movements of key parts of the body is a rectangle. But the rectangle is modified in many ways to indicate direction, duration and level (that is, distance from the floor). Direction is shown both by finger-like projections (in the case of forward and backward movements) and by reshaping the rectangle into appropriately angled figures (in the case of sidewise movements). Duration is indicated by the length of the symbol. Levels are indicated by color: a blacked-in symbol means that the indicated part of the body is low, a shaded symbol that it is high, and a white symbol that it is "middle."

¹ John Martin, "They Score a Dance as Others Do Music," The New York Times Magazine, p. 10, July 2, 1950.

² Martin, loc. cit.

There are five columns on each side of the center staff line. The first column on each side of the center line represents the support; the second column, leg gestures; the third column, movements of the body; the fourth column, movements of the arms; and the fifth column, movements of the head and hands. (Figure 8). In addition, there are certain symbols or presigns to represent each body segment. (Figure 9).3





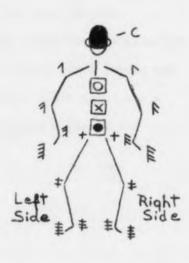


Figure 9

Notation is of major importance in the dance field for it will serve to record the compositions and techniques of the masters for future generations. "As Doris Humphrey remarked when she saw some of her own compositions on paper: 'Now these works are no longer legend; they are history'."4

³ Ibid., p. 12.

⁴ Martin, loc. cit.

CHAPTER V

AN EVALUATION OF THE STUDY

A reworking of this study might include the following:
in episode III, more time might be allowed in the dance for the
fullest development of the different movement themes; in Episode
IV a longer and more varied motif might strengthen the story.
However, the intentions of the study, which were to gain
experience in creative activity and in the adaptation of literary
material for dance, to choreograph a long dance for a group, and
to experiment in correlating all the arts in order to attain a
more effective production, were pursued to the fullest.

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APPENDIX

COPY OF THE PROGRAM

The Dance Group of the WOMAN'S COLLEGE of the UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA presents a

DANCE CONCERT

FRIDAY, MARCH 9, 1951

AYCOCK AUDITORIUM

8:00 P. M.

Program

A LOVE DREAM Choreography by Betty Gavett

Based on the story of Cupid and Psyche

Cupid-Ann Voorhis Psyche-Betty Gavett Venus-Annette Ezzelle

Group of People-Rosemary Barber, Carol Byrd, Hilda Wallerstein Accompanied by Joan Johnston

..... Tansman THE COVETOUS SISTER

Choreography by Marian Falloon

A conflict arises among three sisters over their father's will. The will is contested in court and a decision is reached.

Middle Sister-Dorothy Copeland Oldest Sister-Marian Falloon Youngest Sister-Patricia Paton Judge-Winnifred Gunnersen

Lawyers-Carol Byrd, Carolyn Junker

Jury—Grace Coutras, Shirley Haase, Barbara McKeithan, Carolyn Murray, Virginia Van Dyke Accompanied by Doris Huffines

DANCERS

Mary Charles Alexander, Barbara Arnold, Rosemary Barber, Anne Borow, Carol Byrd, Dorothy Clemmer, Joycelyn Coats, Mary Rose Compton, Dorothy Copeland, Grace Courras, Dixie Crumpler, Susan Deyton, Jo Carol Ennis, Annette Ezzelle, Patsy Fowler, Nancy Gray, Shirley Griffith, Winnifred Gunnersen, Shirley Haase, Betty Hagan, Lucille Hannah, Sarah Henneberger, Jean Hogshead, Tavia Holbrook, Carolyn Junker, Julia Lambert, Martha Lashley, Tommie Lentz, Nancy Lewis, Barbara Little, Virginia McFarland, Barbara McKeithan, Carolyn Miller, Louise Mooney, Carolyn Murray, Mary Oliver, Ann Osborne, Patricia Paton, Nancy Pease, Dorothy Snider, Gloria Stroupe, Ann Voorhis, Hilda Wallerstein, Joanne Williams.

STAFF

Director of Dance Group: Virginia Moomaw Assistant: Mildred Olson

Accompanist: Doris K. DeVeny Stage Manager: Shirley Haase

Assistants: Rosemary Barber, Elizabeth Bell, Joycelyn Coats, Marian Falloon, Doris Hovis, Annette Strickland

Lighting: Jacqueline Goodwin Assistants: Members of Play-Likers

Costume Designs: Trilby Boerner Costume Construction: Carolyn Biggerstaff

Executed by: Joretta Michael, Madeline Johnston

The Dance Group wishes to thank John Courtney, Wayne Bowman and the Play-Likers for their kind assistance.

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THE LABAN NOTATION OF "A LOVE DREAM" Choreographed by Elizabeth Ree Gavett

Key:

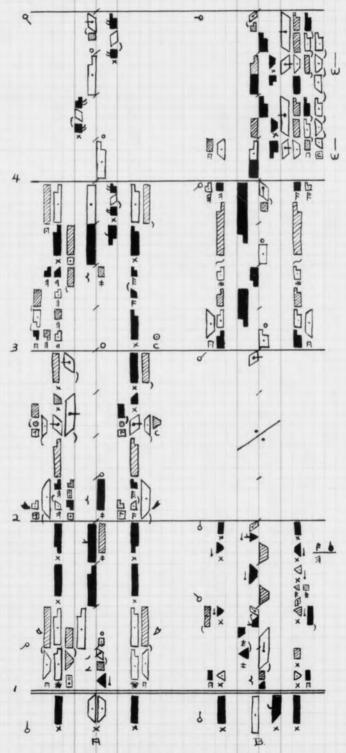
A = Group

B = Psyche

C = Venus

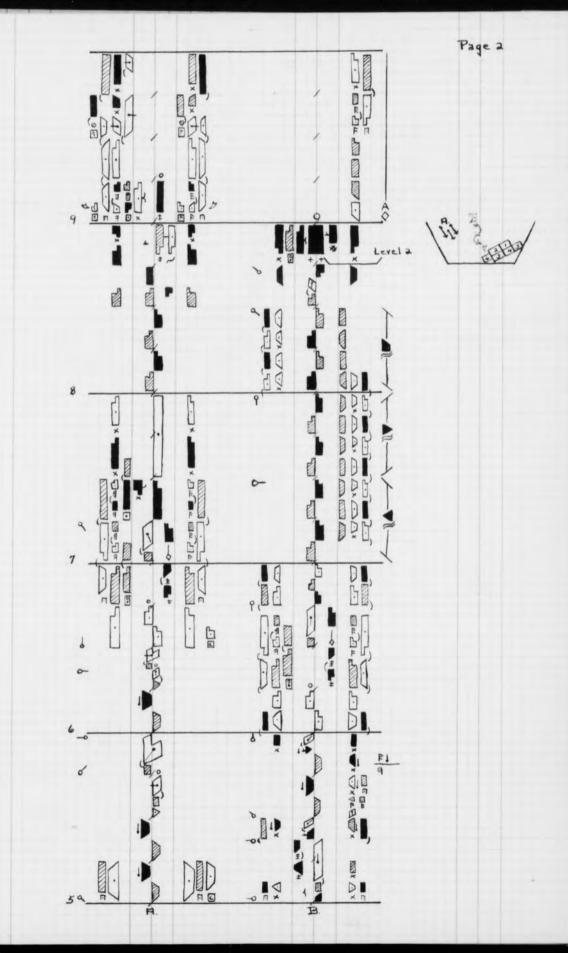
D = Cupid

Music: Suite Dans Le Style Ancien
by Alexandre Tansman
Associated Music Publishers



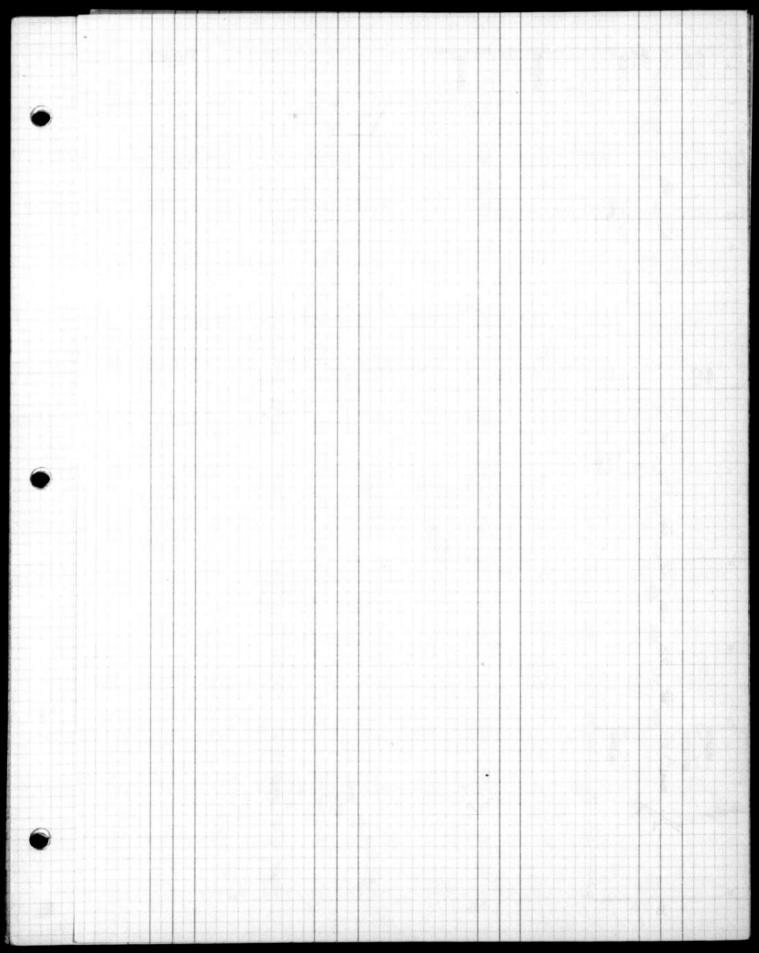
The dance was notated from the body aspect throughout.

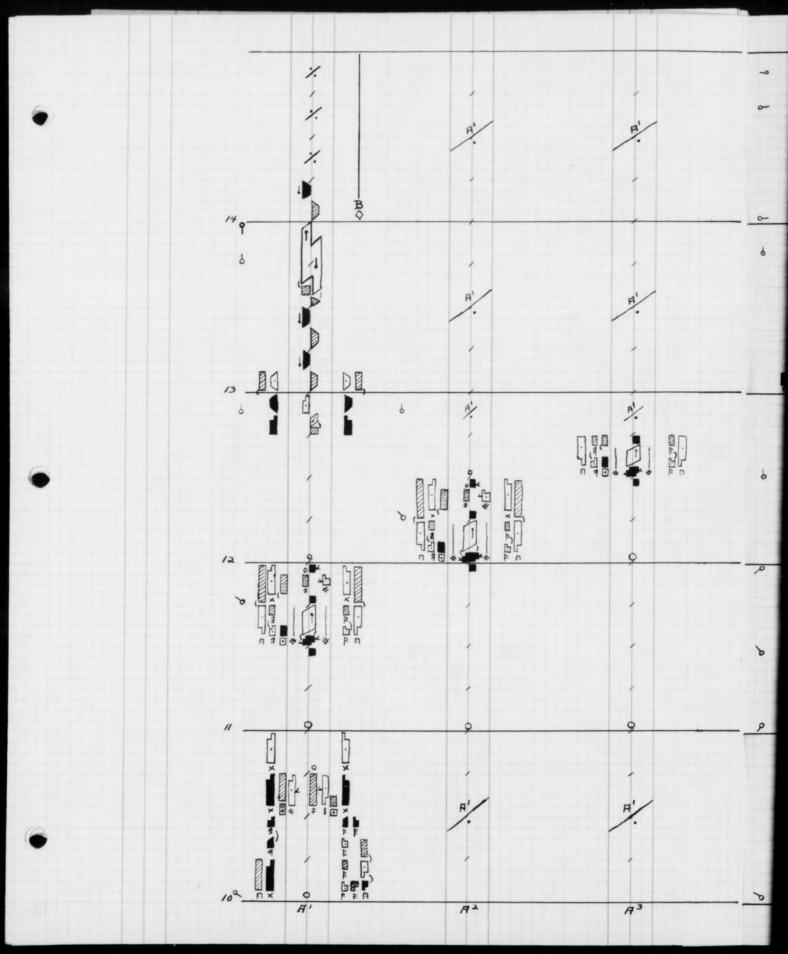
162337



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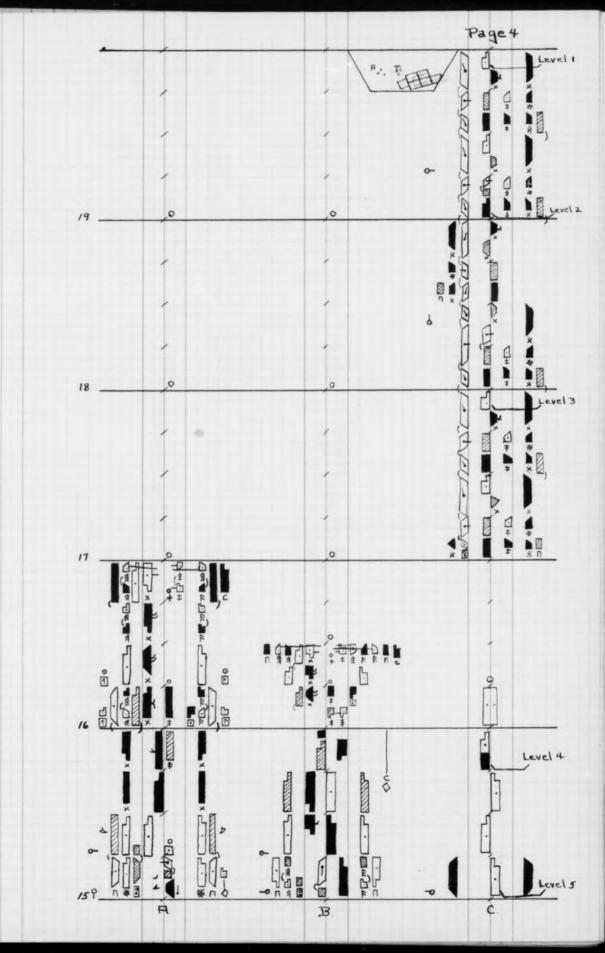
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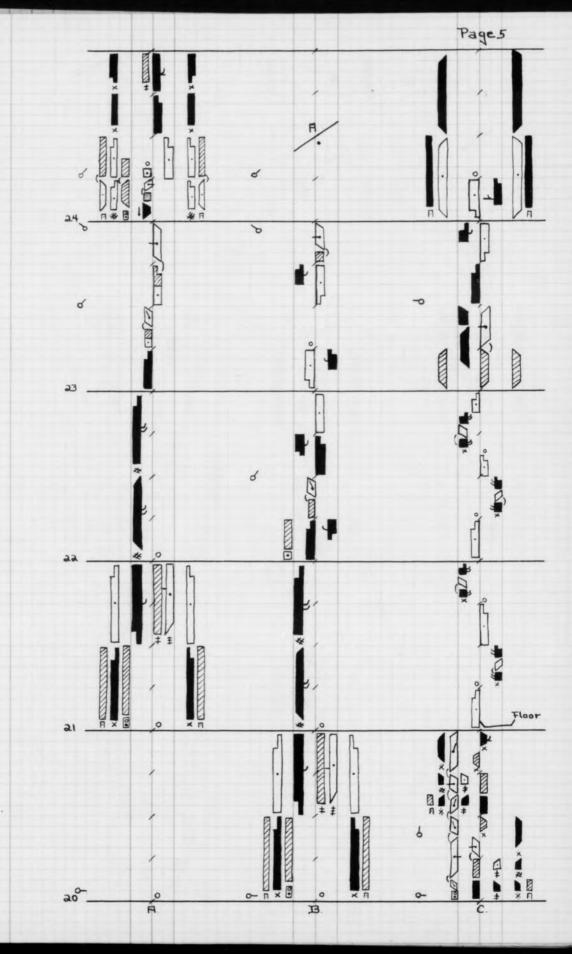


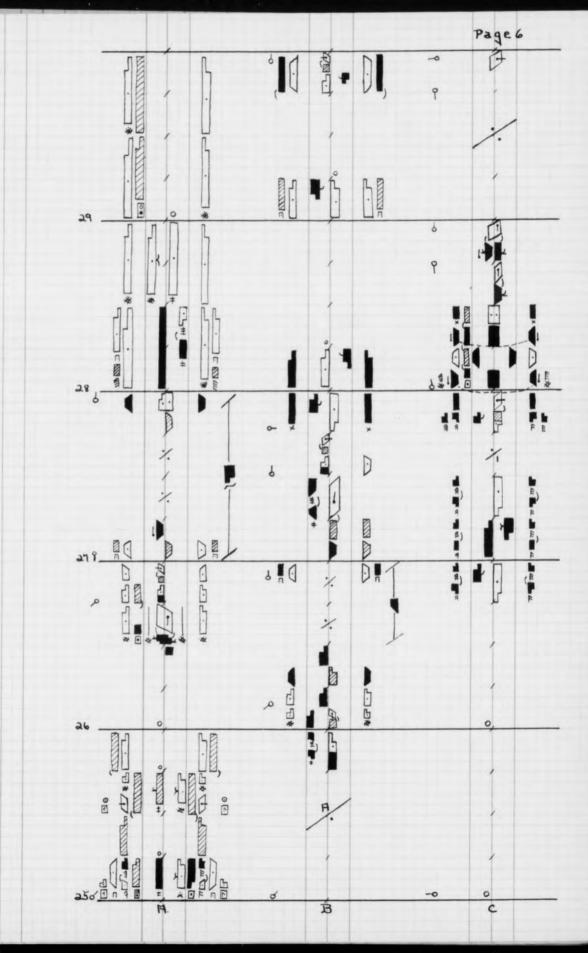


EN B



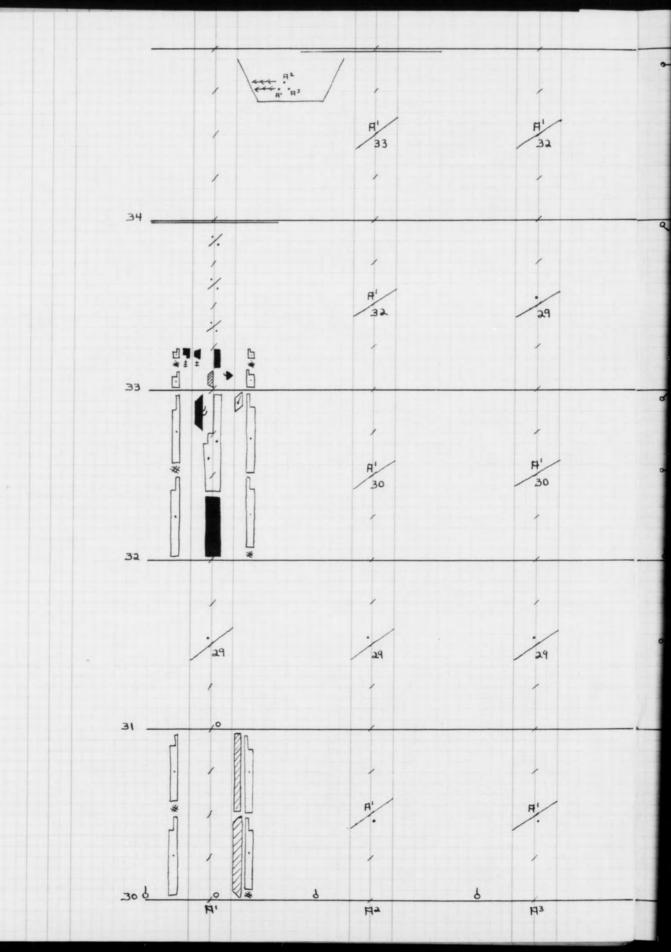


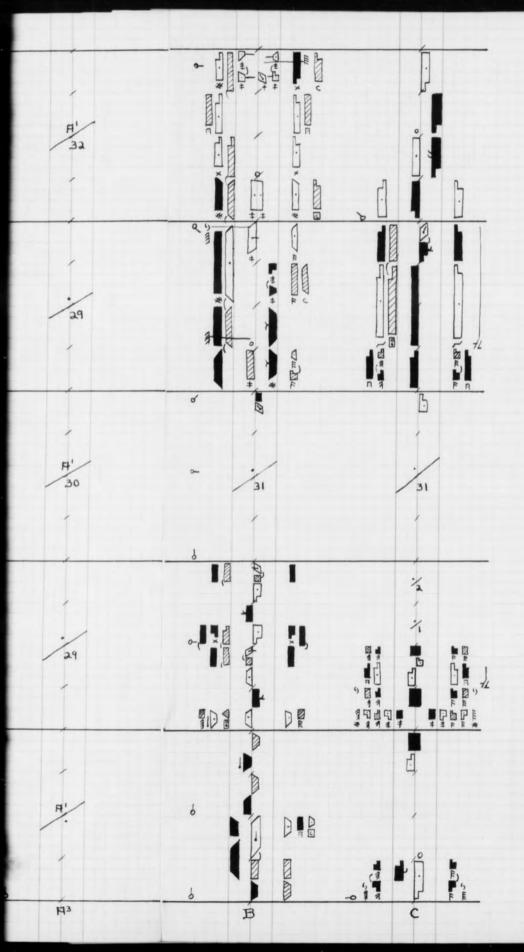


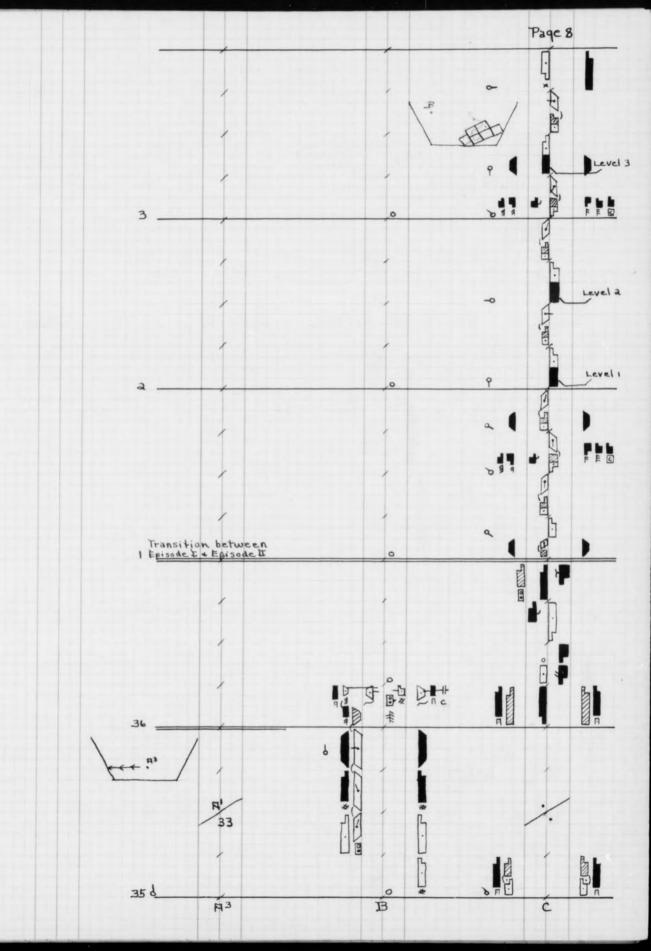


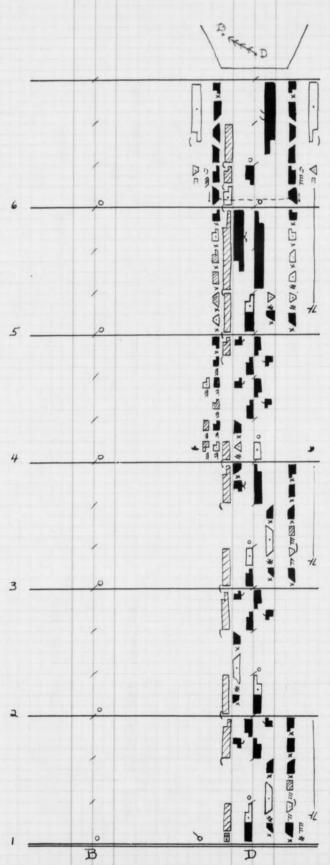
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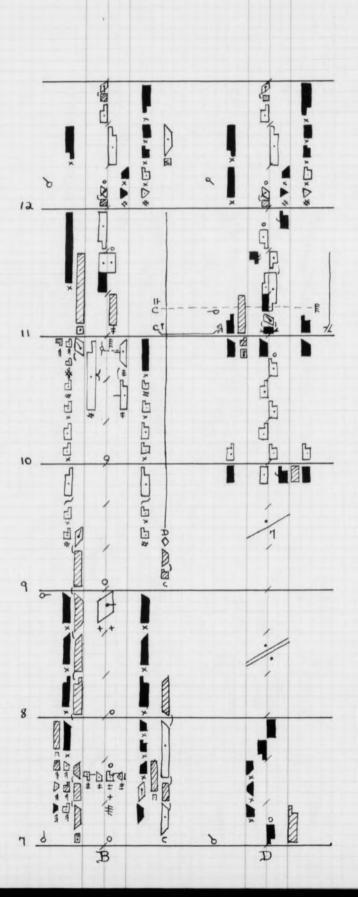
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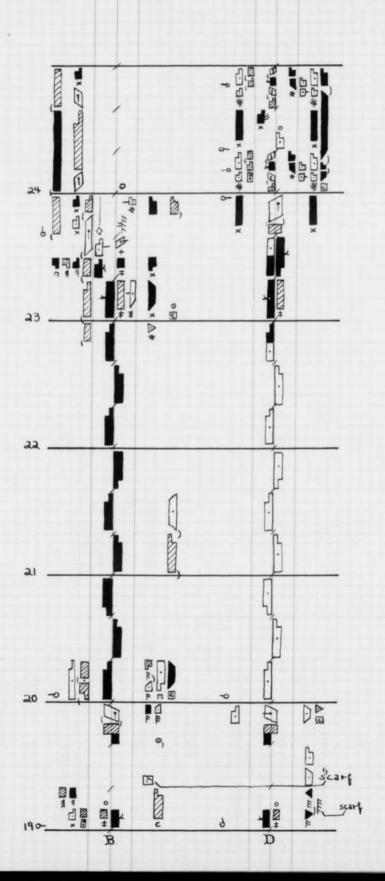


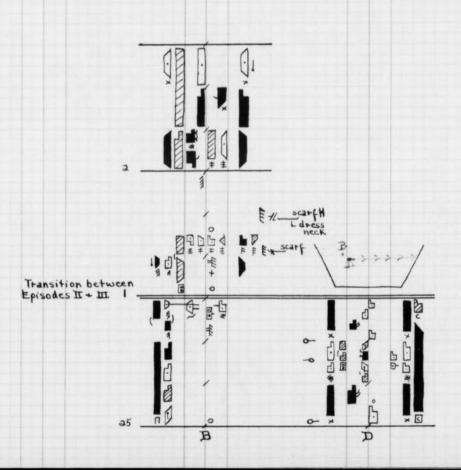


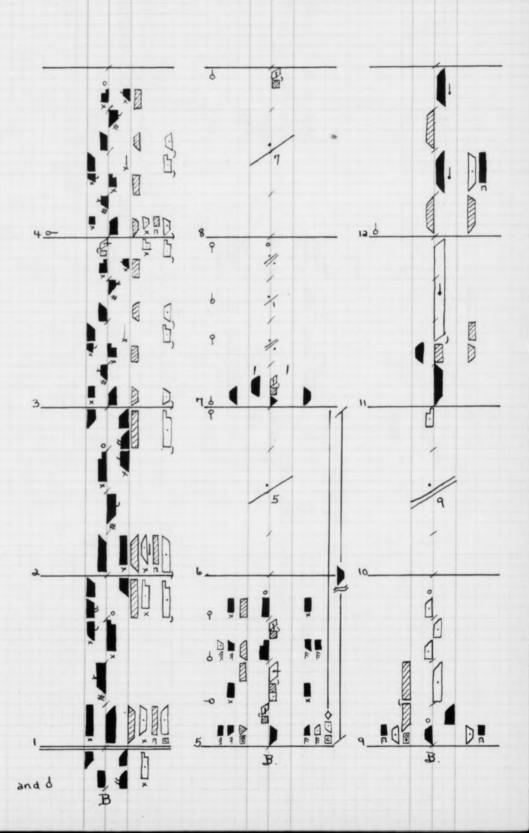


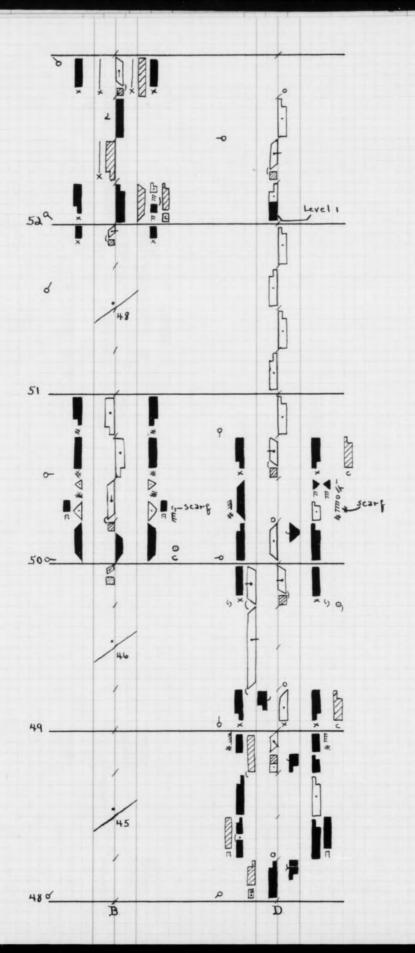


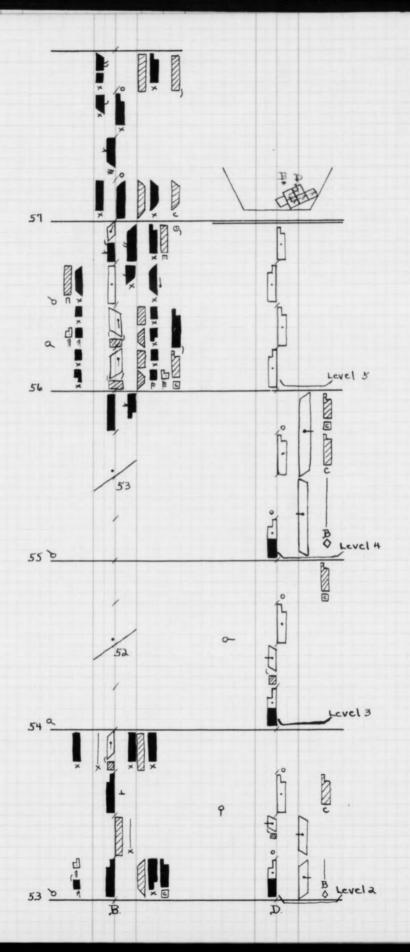


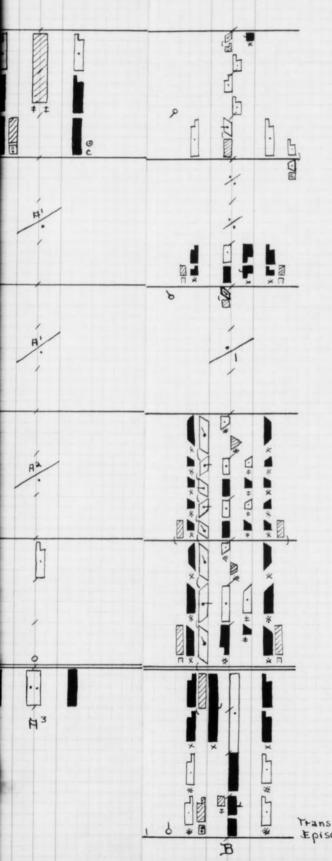




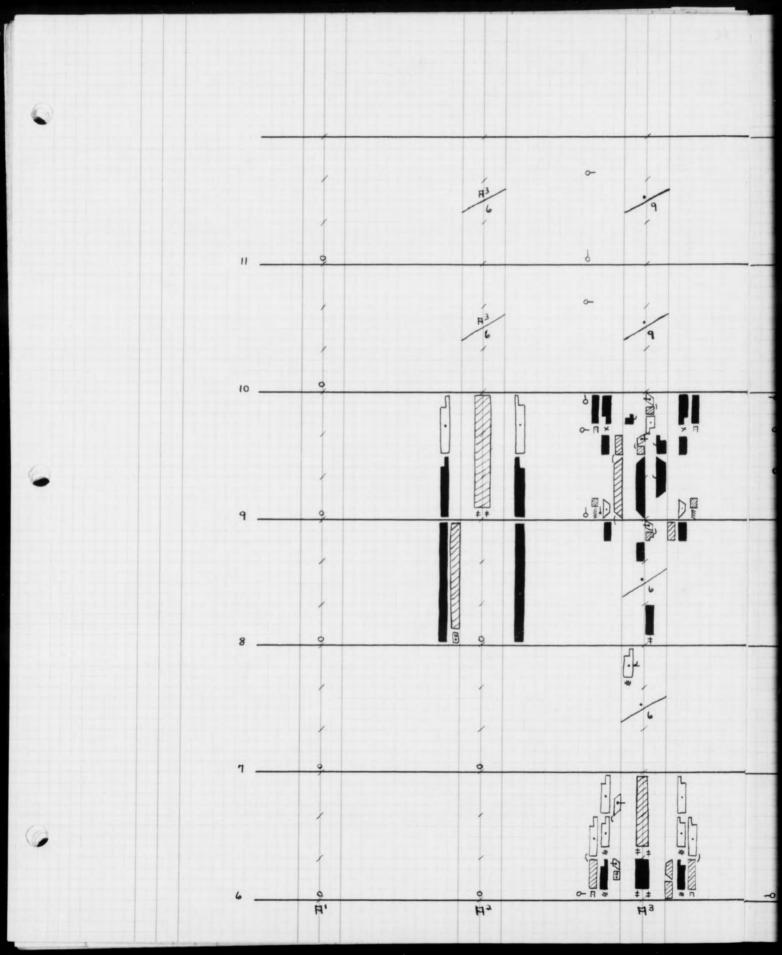


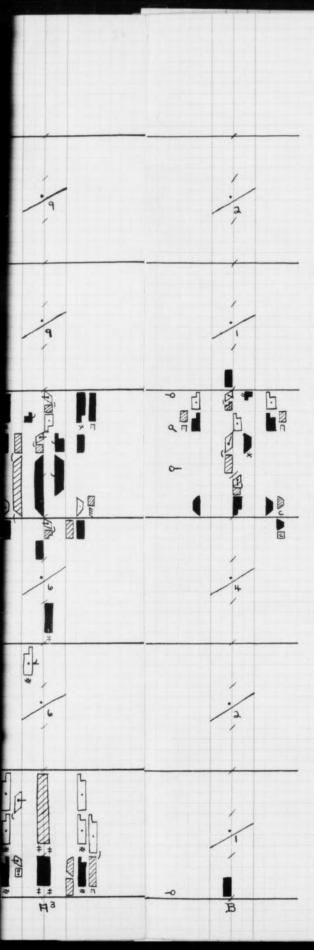


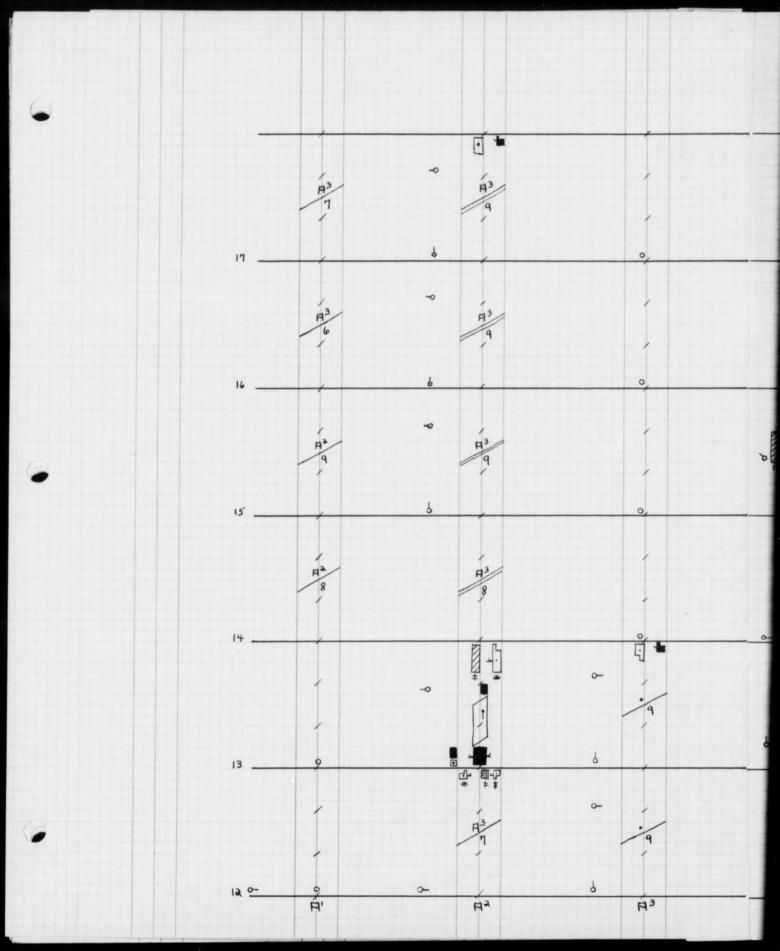


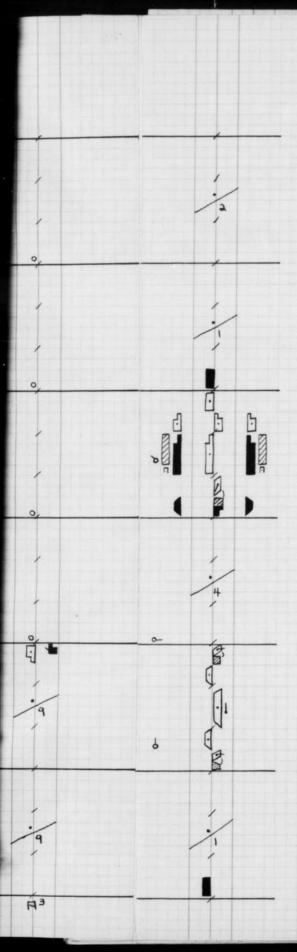


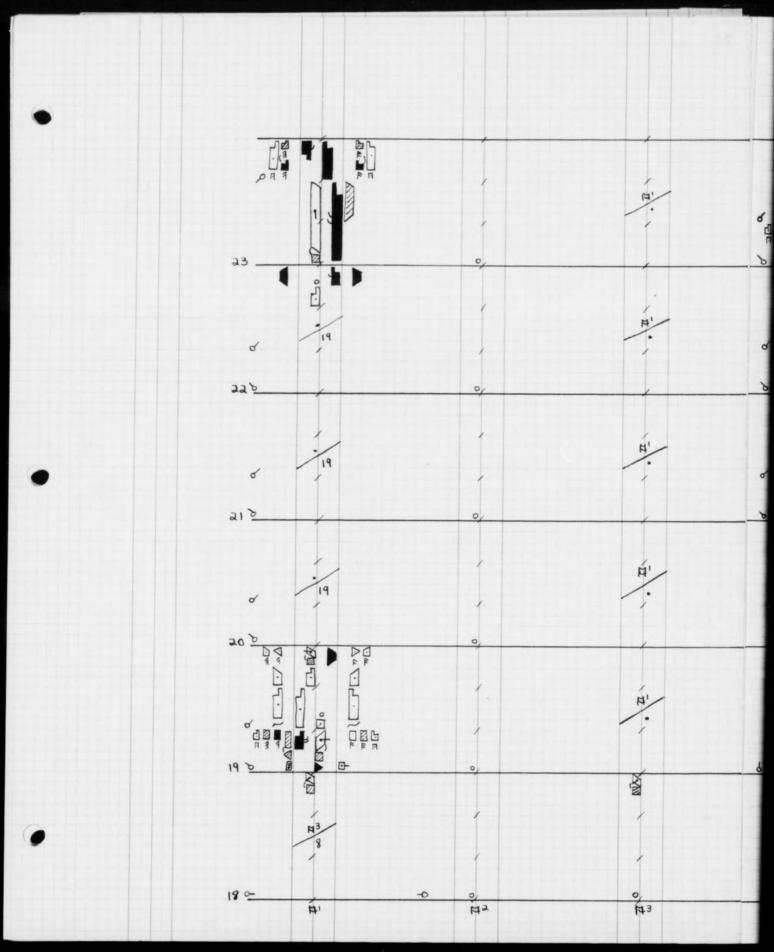
Transition between Episodes III + IX

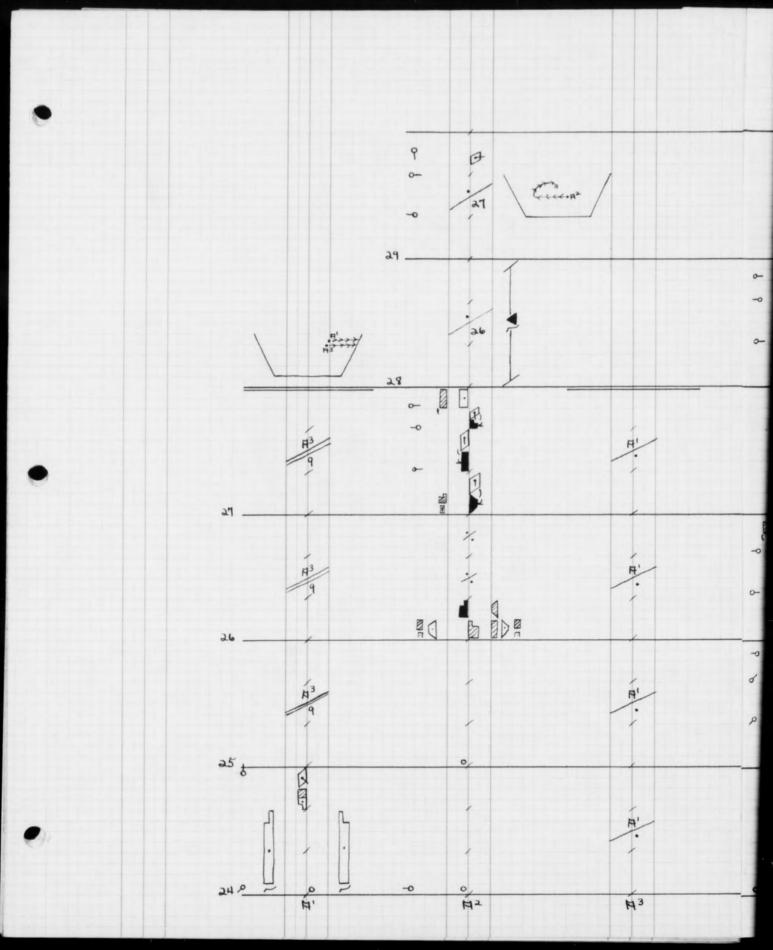


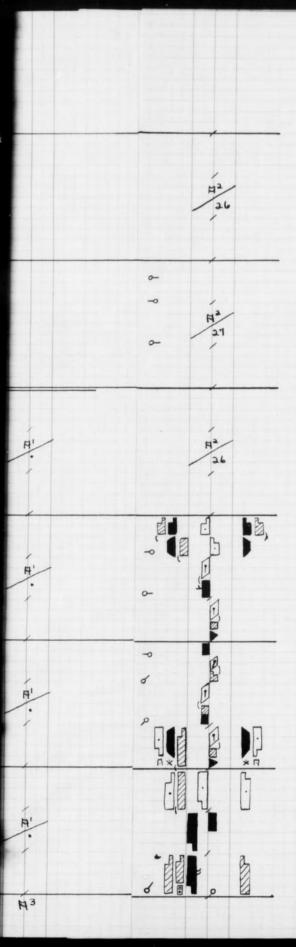


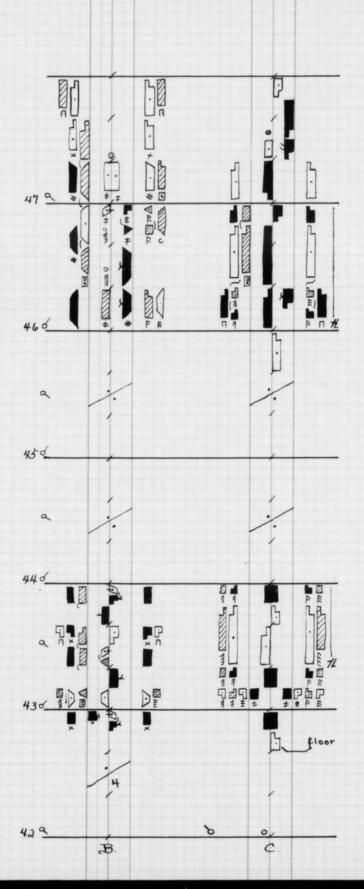


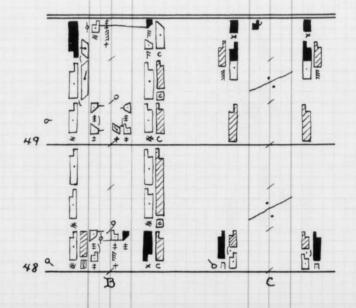












Episode V - Entree

