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DOYLE, LAURA WATKINS. Dance Piece. (Video tape of the dance is available at the Walter Clinton Jackson Library.) (1975) Directed by: Miss Virginia Moomaw. Pp. 24.

The composition entitled Dance Piece was designed for four dancers. It is a non-literal dance that emphasizes movement and motion. The main concern of the choreographer was the use of abstract spatial designs. The five movements of the dance correspond with five movements of musical accompaniment, "Symphony in D Major" by Carl Philip Emanuel Bach. The first three movements of the dance correspond with the three movements of music, Allegro di Molto, Largo and Presto. Movement IV of the dance utilizes the music of Movement I, Allegro di Molto, and Movement V of the dance utilizes the music from Movement II, the Largo.

Each of the movements deals with various choreographic elements with a strong emphasis placed on horizontal lines, diagonal lines and curved shapes. Movements I, III, and IV utilize four dancers and are primarily concerned with a variety of floor patterns composed of horizontal lines, diagonal lines, box patterns and circular designs. Movements II and V emphasize shapes and spatial lines that are created by groups and by individual dancers.

All four dancers are female. Each dancer wears a long-sleeved black leotard with a V-neck and camel colored tights. Each dancer wears her hair in a bun on top of her head.

During the course of the dance the choreographer became quite aware of the arduous developments of creativity. The composer, in dealing with the choreographic process, discovered that the interplay

W

between intellect and intuition was vital to the construction of the dance. These two forces helped to synthesize and mold the dance into the recognizable shapes and patterns which united the work structurally.

Leora W. Doyle

A Thesis Submitted to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School at  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Fine Arts

Greensboro  
July 1975

Approved by

*[Signature]*  
Chairman

DANCE PIECE

ARTS 101

This thesis has been approved by the following members of the  
Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at  
Greensboro.

by

Laura W. Doyle

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Approved by

Virginia Moman  
Thesis Adviser

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Thesis Adviser

Virginia Moomaw

Committee Members

Lis E. Oubrearen

Arthur B. Hunkins

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

June 27, 1975  
Date of Examination

MUSICAL ANALYSIS

Symphony in D Major

by

Carl Philip Emanuel Bach

Arrangement of Music for Choreography

(Section 1) Allegro di molto	6 minutes, 15 seconds
(Section 2) Largo	1 minute, 40 seconds
(Section 3) Presto	3 minutes
(Section 4) Allegro di molto	6 minutes, 15 seconds
(Section 5) Largo	1 minute, 40 seconds

Publisher: Breitkopf and Härtel: Wiesbaden, Germany, 1966.

Recording: Nonesuch, H-71180

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Grateful acknowledgment to Miss Virginia Moomaw for her guidance and support in the preparation of this thesis. To Jean Braxton, Ann Raye, Gail Joyner and Alison Koprowski deep appreciation for the time and energy that went into the completion of this work. A very special thanks to Mr. James K. Doyle, Jr. and Mr. Thomas H. Doyle for their technical assistance and help during this undertaking.

DEALING WITH THE CREATIVE PROCESS

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## DEALING WITH THE CREATIVE PROCESS

A work of the mind is a combination of hand, heart, head and the imagination all working together to produce something of value.<sup>1</sup> --Frank Lloyd Wright

The creative process is probably one of the most analyzed phrases in the English language. The characteristics of this process have been debated in artistic and intellectual circles for generations without resolution. But the choreographer, in researching this paper, has run across a working definition which is applicable in dealing with the subject matter of this dance.

John Haefele in Creativity and Innovation has stated that the creative process is essentially problem solving.<sup>2</sup> Haefele seems not to be talking about the process but the result of that process, the end product. He seems to state that the process is a way in which the creator gets to the result, placing strong emphasis on the product and not the methods of reaching the conclusion. The value then lies only in what is produced, not in the trials and errors of judgment prior to solution.

At first the choreographer tended to agree with Haefele's statement because of previous experiences with choreography. The problem at hand called for experimentation with four dancers, combining their bodies into patterns that flowed and related to each other. A non-literal subject was chosen which required a dance composed of shapes and floor patterns so that the overall structure became of central

importance. In the beginning, the composer was much more intent on finishing the product than in watching the process evolve. There was a tendency to look for certain formulas, ideas that could fit nicely into patterns of movement and which flowed musically.

But as the choreographer proceeded with the work, it was realized that not all ideas fitted into a prescribed mold. All of the variables that became part of the choreographic process such as use of line and dynamics and dealing with each dancer's particular style or way of moving could not be handled as smoothly and readily as imagined.

As the frustrations mounted, the choreographer became more and more fascinated with the actual process of choreography. How the choreographer began to deal with each separate obstacle became of prime interest during the creation of the dance. If the difficulties had become too great the dance might not have been completed, or if the choreographer had made different decisions concerning such areas as form and content, the end result or the solution to the problems may have looked entirely different. The process of creating became the primary concern because during the process the decisions were made which determined the product and which might influence future works.

In beginning a dance, the choreographer has the raw material, the body, but what about the mental processes, the motivation for the dance? All works of art are surely not inspired and completed in a frenzy of artistic temperament. Working through a problem is often the nemesis of many attempted pieces. The gem of an idea or an inkling of form seem to vanish when one is faced with a group of dancers

confidently staring at you, ready to get started. How does one begin? One must start with a strong central idea and be motivated to the point that one wishes to expand the idea into a tangible form.

The choreographer began simply by playing around with movement, creating patterns of rhythmic structure and spatial line demanded by the central idea. The choreographer also constantly listened to the music, becoming familiar with the various instruments and the steady beat. Sometimes the composer worked directly with the musical accompaniment in order to develop movement that was complimentary to the sound. But often the music seemed to get in the way or to dominate the patterns to the extent that the choreographer could not move freely.

For instance the music in Section III, the Presto, is quite lively; the count is in  $3/8$  meter. Playing the music while trying to concentrate on inventing movement patterns became unrewarding because the choreographer literally tried to "run after each note," moving on every count. The result was a series of extremely quick, scurrying steps, small and contained to the point of being ridiculous. The dancers, breathless after this particular section, refused to participate in these "Olympics" again. Thus the choreographer was left with the original music but no choreography and had to begin again. Using the beat as a guideline rather than the taskmaster, the composer devised movement that accented every first beat of each measure, cut down on excessive motion and collaborated with the music in a more functional manner.

In dealing with actual movement and line patterns the choreographer discovered that there was a tendency towards cluttered movement, the

impetus being to keep moving rather than let the movement build on itself such as adding subtle hand gesture or quick turn of the head. Consequently many group patterns began to look jumbled and poorly designed. There was a much greater need for contrast, especially when the choreographer followed the music too closely. For example, Section II of the dance, the Largo, has a slow and sustained quality throughout. At this point the choreographer was working with group patterns emphasizing shape. As the dancers became more familiar with the movements, however, it gradually became evident that there was going to be a need for variety in shapes within the group. As the choreographer began to experiment with a change of levels and rhythm, this section developed a more interesting visual effect.

It was realized that subtle changes like an arm movement or a leg swing could make quite a difference in the over-all pattern. The choreographer, by nature being impatient, had a habit of dismissing total sections intact when they did not adhere to the original idea of what the dance should convey. Working with the problem of movements and patterns, however, the choreographer became cognizant of the effectiveness of small changes or refinements rather than drastic and time consuming deletions. The choreographer began to salvage material and to realize that such material as eye focus or a flexed foot could add immeasurably to the work.

The choreographer often did not intellectually realize this fact until she saw the movements executed by the dancers. An objective eye can be a discerning critic. A good guideline to remember

is that less is more, especially at the start. But the process of reduction, refining, defining and shaping the dance was carried on throughout the work.

The choreographer began to perceive that a dance was not actually set until the movement had been seen and completed. Particular sections were reviewed again and again. There was no ready formula to develop workable patterns except by accessing, evaluating and examining continually.

During the preparation period the composer began to reflect on the experiences needed in order to be a choreographer. One had to know one's own body, how to manipulate, distort, control and create with one's own flesh in order to make workable patterns with other bodies. The senses go through many channels. The external stimuli are vital. For instance, there are the rigors and disciplines of taking classes, attending dance concerts--Paul Taylor, Merce Cunningham, Viola Fauber, Erick Hawkins--a hundred eclectic views. The mind catalogues, picks and chooses, processing those patterns which will stimulate. Intuition merges with rational thought as the choreographer begins to move. The physical act of moving often prods the mental faculties to make a logical sequence.

The intuitive sense plays a vital part in creativity, especially in the improvisational stage. Working with various movements the body develops an instinctive feel for movement flow. The movement must feel right. It should have a muscular sense as each movement grows out of the next. Secondly, the movement must also look right.



The right movement and how it looks comes from the choreographer's experience in working with various movement patterns. At this stage the choreographer found that activity was more important than intellectualizing. It was realized that the more critical one became of the initial movement, the more difficult and inhibiting the act of moving was. More often than not, the choreographer had to make a physical and mental attempt to "loosen up." At first the choreographer became so intent on moving "correctly" or within the prescribed limits of previously tried dance sequences that none of the movement patterns looked suitable. A level of concentrated effort became habitual. Throughout the choreographic experience from preparation to verification of the dance forms, the choreographer was constantly creating mental images of dance sequences, trying to envision those which would work. As the dance slowly evolved, the composer actually began "living" the dance patterns. No matter where one was, whether eating, sleeping, walking, taking class, etc., the resolution of various patterns was always at the "back of one's mind." Sometimes through conscious and consistent effort the problems of choreographic techniques were solved, and sometimes through unconscious efforts, for "the Eureka effect may strike anyplace."<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately this "Eureka effect," a flash of insight, is not controlled by the will. It is not predictable no matter how intense the concentration period. The choreographer had to wrestle with creativity on a rather jerky basis. It was somewhat like learning to drive a car. The intensity of thought was so great that it

often "breaks" the creative "juices" and yet acceleration occurs from sudden flashes of insight. One knows that one is going in a direction but it is so difficult to control.

Sometimes the choreographer seemed to try too hard. The desire to complete the product was so intense that nothing evolved. In such cases the physical act of pacing the room or walking in circles helped to decrease the mental tension. Just the act of moving helped the mental gears grind. Such qualities as use of space, force, speed, levels and rhythm came into play when the body was set in motion. Until the dance developed a semblance of form, through the act of moving, the mental facilities were utilized only in a negative fashion by "stewing" about the problem. As the patterns emerged the mental and intuitive forces began to sift through the movements for a "sense of rightness," a sequence of movements with a logical flow.

Another method that seemed to help the choreographer when "stuck" was to try to forget about the immediate difficulties by researching this paper. In redirecting the energies temporarily, an apt proverb was discovered that declared "The archer hitteth the mark partly by pulling, partly by letting go."<sup>4</sup> Indeed here was the crux of the problem, for the choreographer was actually sitting on her ideas as dilemma rather than letting go. It was almost as if the composer did not want to deal with the "unknown" element of creativity, intuition. Thus the choreographer tenaciously clung to familiar patterns, laboriously conceived by trial and error techniques, rather than "sleeping on the problem." There was an unverbilized sense of guilt, somehow associated

with sitting around, coupled with a restless impatient nature. There was a sense of having to do something, do anything, just move!

But as the choreographic process took more and more time to complete, the choreographer became aware of two things. First, it was realized that there were to be no quick and easy solutions to the problems. Secondly, the amount of wasted time was not actually lost if the disciplines of consistent effort were applied daily. For instance, on some days things seemed to "click." Movements that had taken days, even weeks to complete, were falling dramatically into place with ease.

Again and again the designer became aware of the interaction of intuition and intellect. As the ideas grew, both forces meshed in order to create an organized whole rather than amorphous and unrelated bits of movement. The creative process becomes a murky subject as one tries to deal with the various levels of awareness. The choreographer would like to circumvent the problem by stating that from experiences in dealing with choreography, one becomes quite conscious of the necessity for both intellectual and nonintellectual mental activity.

This seems especially true in working with dances of considerable length. Studies done for classroom projects or short compositions seemed effortless by comparison. The choreographer must be concerned with the overall effect in an extended piece, from the structural patterns to the awareness of the dancers' abilities and limitations.

Moreover, the choreographer became aware that dance on the first level, that is dance viewed as an arrangement of shifting patterns without any inherent socio-psychological connotations or intellectual



complications, is an experience of visual effects. During the formative stages, when one is creating and combining movement in the middle of one's kitchen at midnight, there is often a sure sense of rightness. However, the outcome may look entirely different when the choreography is being performed on stage by four bodies quite different from the creator's. The central idea may not have changed but the actual, visual images certainly can.

The choreographer believes that the resulting visual effect is an important point when one is discussing the art of choreography. The choreographer does not have a one to one relationship with her materials as the painter does with canvas. The choreographer's mind and body interact with the dancer's mind and body. The dancer may also develop an interpretation of the movement which is inconsistent with the choreographer's intentions. These difficulties must be worked out during rehearsals. Nonetheless, no two performances will be the same even though the basic elements such as the movement patterns, costumes and lighting remain constant. Dance is essentially a living art, one of the moment.

This realization made the choreographer again aware of the limitations of the result of the product. Since the choreographer did not dance in the composition, the designer did not have the influence that one's own body could give to the quality of the product. The choreographer had to depend on the dancers to get across the ideas.

The composer must have a well-conceived idea of what she desires in order to communicate with others. But one must be receptive to the

fact that even the best laid plans sometimes go astray. Some movements must be altered if they look awkward, superfluous, or contrived after repeated rehearsals. Thus one must be open to the idea of change in order to create effectively. How the individual dancers move can contribute or detract from the overall movement quality and structure of the dance. Many rehearsal sessions were spent in laboriously going over certain movement patterns, only for these movements to be finally discarded because the discrepancy between that the choreographer wanted and what the dancers performed was too great. For instance, in a 4/4 meter the choreographer wanted the dancers to execute an intricate number of movement sequences. Again and again the movements were repeated until it became obvious that unless alterations were made in the movement pattern the results would be very unsatisfactory. On another occasion a dancer insisted that she could not count the meters in a continuous mathematical sequence, i.e., 1-2-3-4, 2-2-3-4, so the choreographer had to devise a method for the dancer to be in time with the music without a counting cue. In this case, the original plan for counting was continued for the other dancers but modified for one individual. It is the unexpected situations that one must deal with in the process of choreographing that makes the experience an invaluable aid.

In the end the audience is left with the final visual product but the choreographer has accrued a worthwhile stockpile of experience on which to build. The real value of the creative process is that it becomes a recycling process. The choreographer completes one dance but it is not an end in itself. The insight and experience

gained are what are of continuing importance to the composer. Every dance builds on the next in the sense of being a preparation for new choreographic problems. In the future the choreographer will be more cognizant of certain choreographic elements such as movement flow and tension, She will be able to build on these elements and be more aware of the pitfalls. The composer will be more readily aware of inherent dangers in the use of repetition or lack of unity in the dance structure. The writer will learn to deal more successfully with the unexpected problems that inevitably arise while composing a dance, such as indisposed dancers, the scheduling of rehearsals and domestic dilemmas. As experience grows, one gains in the ability to deal more objectively and effectively with choreographic techniques. Moreover, the writer will learn to use the available time to work on the framework of ideas without letting the external pressures reach such a point that the work is unduly hampered. Gaining more experience with the elements of dance and with the process of creativity, the choreographer will have a clearer understanding of the craft of choreography and a greater facility for ironing out difficulties. The choreographer leaves the finished product but takes the insights gleaned from the process into future works. The process has become internalized, a part of one's self. The immediate outcome, the product, is for the audience.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Paul Baker, Integration of Abilities: Exercises for Creative Growth (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1972), p. 52.

<sup>2</sup>John W. Haeefe, Creativity and Innovation (New York: Reinhold Publishing Co., 1969), p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>Patricia Rowe, "The Selection of Movement Patterns," Focus on Dance V: Composition, ed. Miriam Gray (Washington, D.C.: American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, 1969), p. 45.

<sup>4</sup>Haeefe, op. cit., p. 3.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC DATA

## Video Tape

Distance of camera to stage.....forty five feet

Lighting.....Upper studio--PJ spots  
upper stage left to  
counterbalance the day-  
light from door upstage  
right. Three strips of  
overhead florescent  
lights were also on.

Camera model.....Sony Video Camera AVC-2000

Lens.....Cosmicar Television Lens  
12.5 mm. 1:19 No. 11090

Lens setting.....f4 (lens opening)  
Infinity (distance)

Videocorder.....AV-3650 Sony Video Deck

Tape.....Sony  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. V-31  
380 m. 25 micron  
1.0 mil polyester backing

Video process.....Stationary

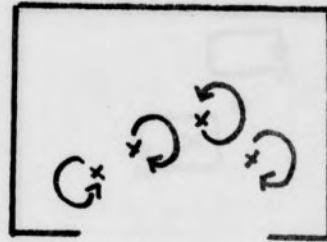
Sound process.....Recorded live from pre-  
pared tape through  
videocorder. The micro-  
phone was located 12  
feet from the tape  
recorder.

Copy process.....Deck to deck

## CLARIFICATION OF MOVEMENT



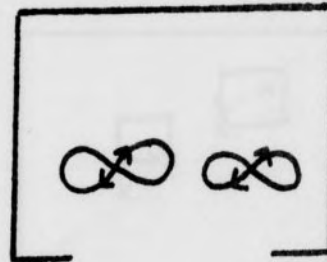
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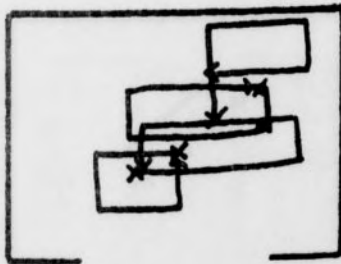
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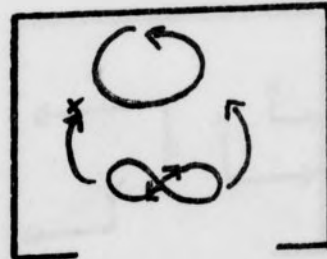
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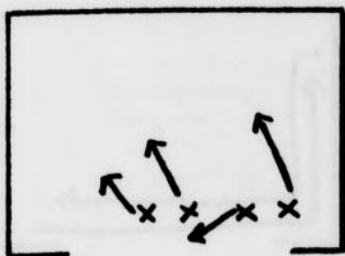
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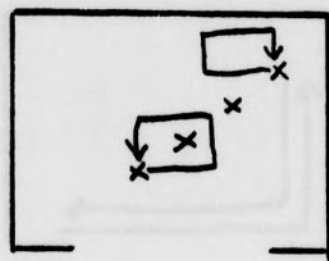
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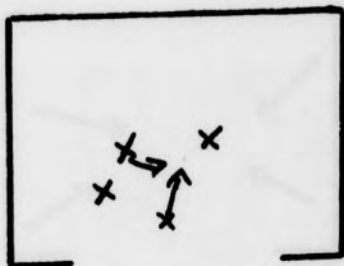
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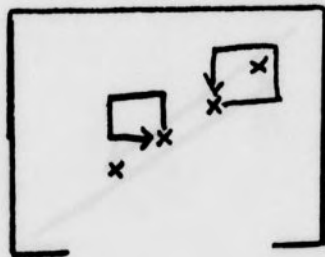
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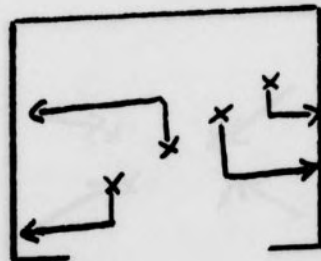
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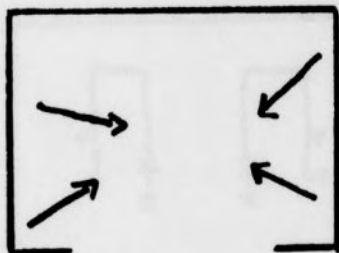




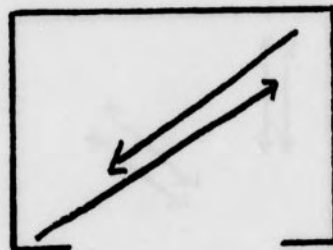
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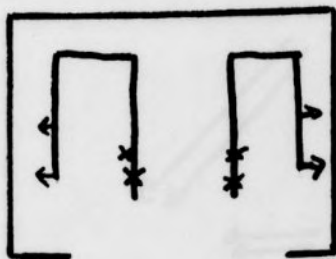
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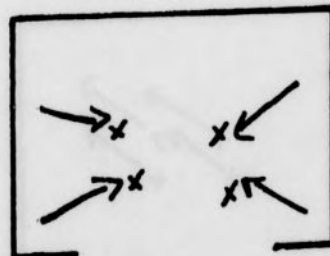
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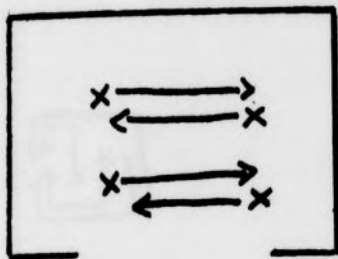


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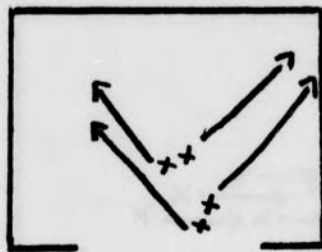


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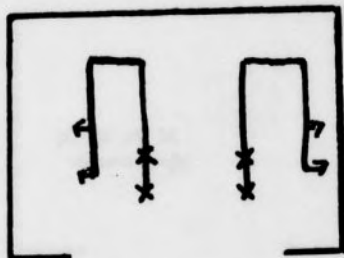




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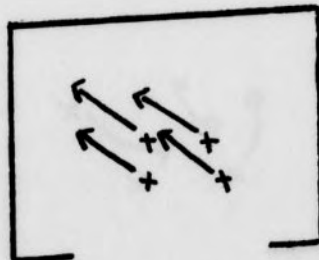
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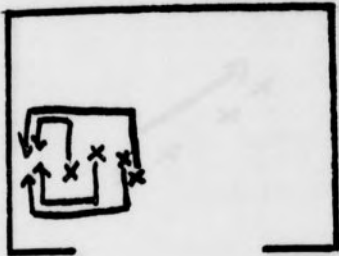
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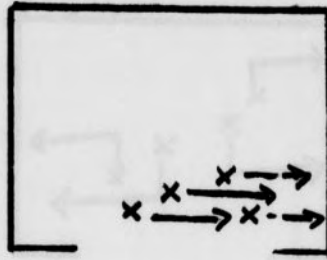
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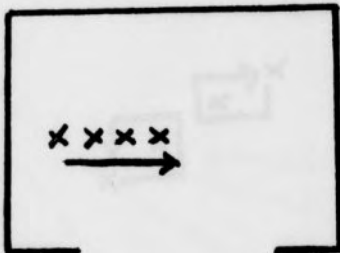
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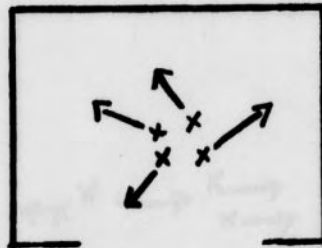
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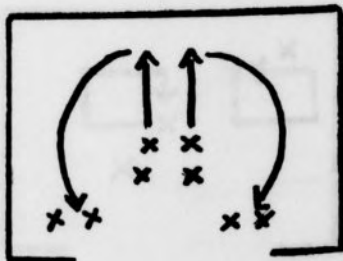
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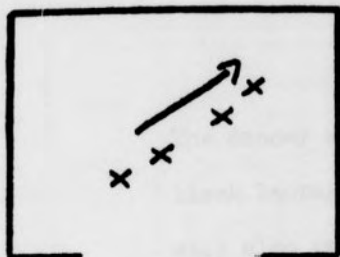
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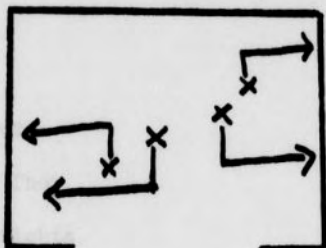
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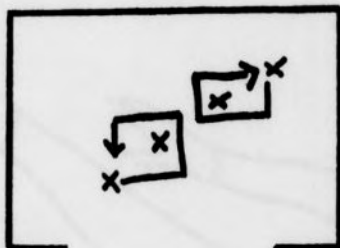
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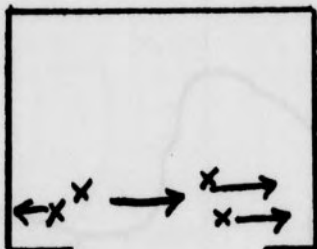
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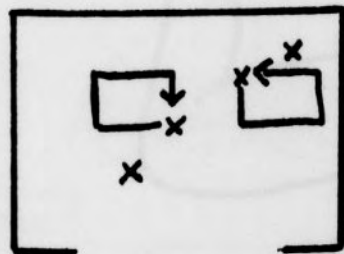
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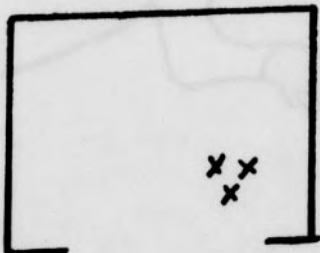
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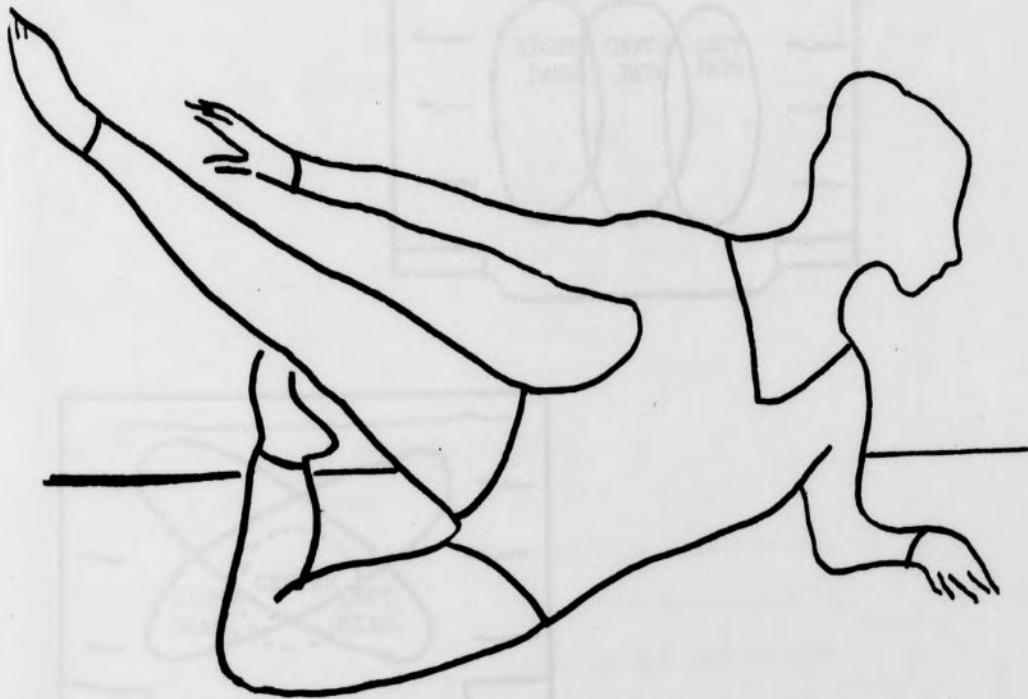
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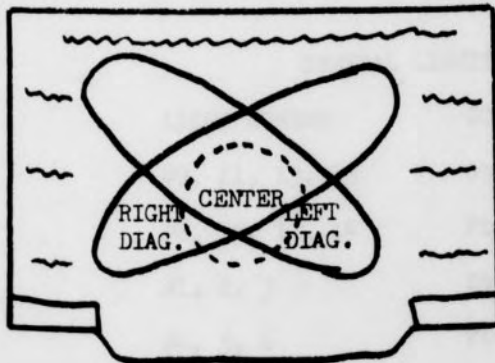
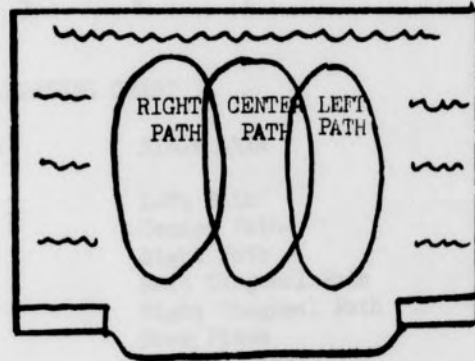
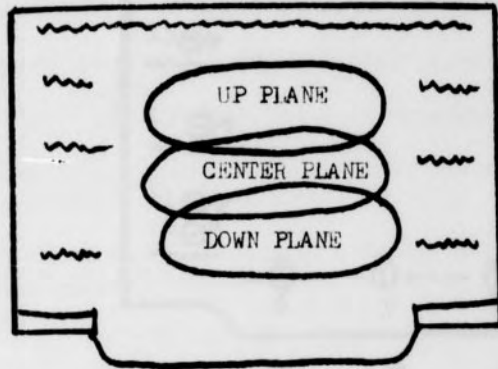
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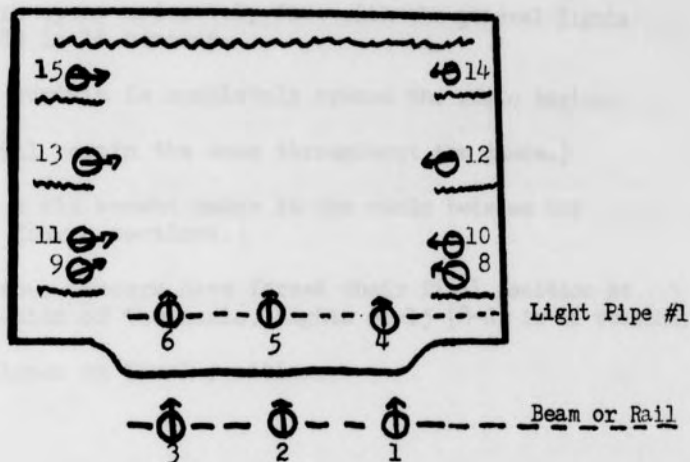
## COSTUMES

The dancer will wear long-sleeve  
black leotard with a V-neck. They  
will also wear camel colored tights.  
All four female dancers will wear  
their hair in a bun.



## STAGE AREAS FOR LIGHTING





## LIGHTING CHART

LIGHT NUMBER	STAGE AREA
#1, #4	Left Path
#2, #5	Center Path
#3, #6	Right Path
#8	Left Diagonal Path
#9	Right Diagonal Path
#10, #11	Down Plane
#12, #13	Center Plane
#14, #15	Up Plane

## GENERAL LIGHTING

LIGHT NUMBER	COLOR
#9, 11, 13, 15	Steel Blue Roscolene #854
#8, 10, 12, 14	Flesh Pink Roscolene #826
#1, 2, 3	Steel Blue Roscolene #854
#4, 5, 6	Flesh Pink Roscolene #826

## CURTAIN AND LIGHT PLOT

- Cue 1 All lights are pre-set at zero.
- Cue 2 The curtain opens moderately fast with the general lights #1-15 (0-8) in 16 seconds.
- Cue 3 After the curtain is completely opened the music begins.  
 (Lights will remain the same throughout the dance.)  
 (There is a six second pause in the music between the third and fourth sections.)
- Cue 4 When the four dancers have formed their final position at the completion of the music, lights #1-15 (8-0) in 16 seconds.
- Cue 5 Curtain closes on final position.

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