

### **DANCE 847 - ISSUES OF CHOREOGRAPHY III G 3**

Continued investigation of the choreographic process; emphasis on choreographic invention, structure, and context.

3rd quarter of a 3 quarter sequence; Two - 1-1/2 hour classes each week

Pre-requisite: 846 or permission of instructor

Repeatable to a maximum of 6 cr. hrs.

#### **I. Objectives**

At the successful completion of the course the student will be able to:

- build on the knowledge and experience from D. 846
- demonstrate a facility for using many compositional devices for exploring and developing phrase material as well as expanding one's movement preferences
- demonstrate the ability to develop/create a context and structure for choreographic inventions
- demonstrate the ability to create 4-6 minute solo and/or duet form
- appreciate the diversity of approaches to dance making.

#### **II. Course Content and Procedures**

Content is presented through a combination of concept descriptions and guided improvisations. The format includes working in partners coaching each other, showing phrase development of compositional devices and performing two drafts of the final 4-6 minute solo or duet. Approximately five weeks are devoted to exploring compositional devices and five weeks are devoted to developing the context and shaping the structure of the final project.

- development of a 30 second to one minute phrase which has the minimum of four undeveloped and contrasting choreographic ideas/units/motifs
- investigations of compositional devices: transformation, development, transposition, isolation, scrambling/rearranging, accumulation, inversion, retrograde, splicing in or insertion, embellishment, repetition
- discussion of choreographic points of departure or contexts: music, text, dramatic situations, conceptual ideas, images, formal considerations and "moving from within" issues.

#### **III. Requirements**

- Completion of the final project which demonstrates the use of compositional devices for creating the movement vocabulary and phrasing
- Participation in final class showing during exam week
- Final paper: due Friday of 10th week of classes (a commentary on your ability to apply course concepts to your own choreography as well as to the choreography of others. This should include examples from performances you have seen throughout the quarter.)
- Informal workshop and concert attendance
- Video viewings
- Performance Attendance (Events will be selected from the Production Calendar.)

#### IV. Evaluation

- Comprehension and ability to deal with class assignments
- Ability to transform assignment into personal choreographic statement
- Written work

#### V. Grading

Degree of accomplishment of course objectives is evidenced by:

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| • Quality of final project: ability to utilize compositional devices for extending one's choreographic vocabulary | 50% |
| • Degree of originality: ability to make a personal choreographic statement                                       | 25% |
| • Quality of written work   | 15% |
| • Attendance (more than 2 absences will affect grade)   | 10% |

#### VI. Required Reading

- Foster, Susan Leigh. Reading Dancing. Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1986.

#### VII. Required Video Viewing

- Eye on Dance Series:
- #64 & 67 "The Experimentalists" (Dana Reitz, Molissa Fenley, Marta Renzi)

#### VIII. Selected References

- Blom, Lynn Anne & L. Tarin Chapin. The Intimate Act of Choreography. University of Pittsburgh Press, 1982.
- Smith, Jacqueline. Dance Composition. London: MacDonald & Evans, 1976.

- Turner, Margery. New Dance: Approaches to Non-literal Choreography. University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971.

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## COMPOSITIONAL DEVICES FOR EXPLORING PHRASE MATERIAL

NOTE: Definitions in quotes are musical definitions from the Harvard Dictionary of Music.

### 1. TRANSFORMATION

"The modification of a musical subject or motive made with a view to change its personality."

e.g., change the phrasing/organization of energy and time (rubato); dynamic/character change; meter change (waltz, march, mazurka)

### 2. DEVELOPMENT

"The important technique of recent composition which consists in the 'unfolding' of the thematic material. These devices are used in a manner designed to bring about a feeling of evolution and growth, of increased intensity and higher 'temperature,' of dynamic stress and climax."

- to gradually carry the phrase to a new choreographic intention through repeating, mirroring, augmenting, diminuting, isolating

### 3. TRANSPOSITION

"The rewriting or the ex tempore performance of a composition at another pitch, i.e., in another key."

- to change range or plane orientation of movement
- to put the movement of one part of the body on another part

e.g., arms to legs, legs to arms

- to change the level of the movement

e.g., all phrase aerial, floor

- to change the state of the rotation of body parts

e.g., change from turned-out to parallel

4. ISOLATION

- develop one aspect of the phrase

e.g., only do the focus and head movements of the phrase  
only do the port de bras, transfer of weight, leg gestures  
or torso, directional changes

5. SCRAMBLING/REARRANGING

- to reorganize the material within the phrase

6. ACCUMULATION

- A sequential repetition. Start at a specific point in the phrase and gradually add the following counts, going back to the starting point each time and accumulating.

e.g., 1; 1,2; 1,2,3; 1,2,3,4; 4,4,4; 5,6,7; 7,8; 8

7. INVERSION

"The general meaning of the term is substitution of higher or lower tones and vice-versa."  
inversion: There are two main types of

- Harmonic - an interval is inverted by transferring its lower note into the higher octave or its higher note into the lower octave.
- Melodic - a melody is inverted by changing each ascending interval into the corresponding descending interval, and vice-versa. The result is a mirror-like exchange of upward and downward movements, comparable to the contours of a forest and its reflection in a lake.

- to perform the spatial opposite, or counter-direction with the same body part

e.g., Right arm becomes right arm to do the "reverse" in ballet

Reminder:

- do not change level, invert in relation to center of body
- consider center of weight

8. RETROGRADE

"The term denotes the backward reading of a melody, i.e., beginning with the last note and ending with the first one."

- to go from back to front, i.e., as in running a film backwards
- performing the momentum or energy of the movement in reverse

9. SPLICING IN OR INSERTION

"Highlighting what you have by bringing in high contrast."

- to "insert" or "splice in" new material

10. EMBELLISHMENT

"Arose as a spontaneous act on the part of the interpreter who, in performing a written melody, enlivened it, expanded it, or varied it through his technique of improvisation."

- to add on top of, or to give a special emphasis to one aspect of the phrase

e.g., adding an elbow movement every 2 counts, focus, emphasis on weight transfers and leg gesture, maximizing or restricting, and turns, jumps, rhythm, step pattern, prop/costume, person

11. REPETITION

- an action for emphasis

12. CANON

"A polyphonic composition in which all parts have the same melody throughout, although starting at different points."

e.g., start the port de bras 4 counts later

13. AUGMENTATION

"The presentation of a subject in doubled value, e.g., quarter-note replaced by the half-note."

- to lengthen and significantly change time values/slow motion, stillness
- to increase range/fragment gesture

14. DIMINUTION

"The presentation of a subject in halved value, e.g., quarter-note replaced by an eighth-note."

- to reduce in size
- o condense time

15. MIRRORING

- to repeat
- to do it on the other side
- to change the facing
- to travel on a line