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LOUIS HORST: HIS THEORIES ON MODERN DANCE COMPOSITION

by
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LOUIS HORST: HIS THEORIES ON MODERN DANCE COMPOSITION

by Esther E. Pease

The purpose of this investigation is to record the theoretical concepts of a method for teaching dance composition as it has been formulated by Louis Horst, one of the pioneers in the development of the American modern dance. The study aims to establish the importance and significance of Horst's contribution to a contemporary art and to reveal the parallelisms he has emphasized as existing between the composition of music and the composition of dance and the interrelatedness of all contemporary art.

Data were collected by means of tape-recorded conversations with the subject on previously prepared topics selected by the writer. These were supplemented by excerpts from Horst's own volume on dance composition, from the few articles he has published, and from notes taken by the writer during his classes. Certain material photostatted from the scrapbooks Horst has been maintaining since 1915 was included because of its historical interest.

The first chapters deal with events leading up to the development of Horst's theories: his musical background, his experiences as musical director for the Denishawn company, his collaboration with Martha Graham during the experimental period when there was a need to find a new idiomatic expression in dance in keeping with the contemporary movement in the

other arts, and Horst's first teaching experiences.

Chapters III and IV are devoted to a discussion of the importance of form and content in composition and ways by which the choreographer can arrive at an understanding of these. Horst considers a knowledge of form basic to an understanding of the dance art--that it should be the first discipline of the dance composer. Not until the artist has developed the habit of working within a structural form is he prepared to give primary concern to the content of his composition.

The succeeding chapters record in detail Horst's analysis of the basic elements of dance as they parallel the basic elements of music--rhythm, melody, and harmony--as well as a description of the two courses in dance composition that he teaches. These are followed by a chapter on the rules of criticism that Horst employs in measuring the worth of a new dance and a brief discussion of the principles he considers essential in the selection of musical accompaniment for dance.

In summarizing the uniqueness of Horst's contribution to the contemporary American modern dance, the study concludes that many of the theories of music composition which he has applied to dance composition are of practical value and can be adapted for use by teachers and students of the modern dance at secondary and higher levels of education as

well as by the professional dancer. In any creative medium, according to Louis Horst's premise, the individual must learn to synthesize his emotional and intellectual reactions to his contemporary existence and to reveal his ideas through a conscious and skillful manipulation of his own craft.

PREFACE

A Brief Summary of the Development of the Dance Art in the Western World

The beginnings of the dance are lost in the obscurity of the past although many writers have speculated that dance is the oldest of the arts because man's body was the instrument of expression. The earliest obtainable records of this art are found in the artifacts of ancient Egypt, pictorial representations which are interpreted as dance movements. However, because of their static nature, it is impossible to reconstruct these movements in any detail. There are historical data to indicate that during the Eighteenth Dynasty (1580-1350 B. C.) slave girls who were proficient in the performance of dance and music were imported from Southwestern Asia.

There are no details of the dancing during the period in history when the Cretans inhabited Hellas, although Homer in the Iliad and the Odyssey extolled the perfection of the dance art. It is recorded that Thaletus, a Cretan musician, was invited to Sparta during the seventh century B. C. and that he introduced the Pyrrhic, a Cretan sword dance,[1] which later became part of the education of

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[1] Curt Sachs, The Commonwealth of Art, p. 50. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1946.

Athenian youths. The first book about the dance of which we have any record was written by Lucian, a Greek poet, circa 120 A. D.

During the Hellenistic period dance developed to a high state of perfection and became a necessary part of the training of citizens. Warriors and statesmen alike were educated to become proficient in this art; philosophers and poets extolled its virtues. Professionally trained dancers appeared in theatrical productions dancing the kômos, an emotional and descriptive dance form composed of phoraí (gestures expressive of emotional states and actions) and the schémata (gestures characteristic of specific personages). Physicians prescribed its rhythmic exercise for many ailments; Plato believed it to be among the necessities for the ideal republic; artists immortalized it in stone. The Greek dance was symbolic of the perfection of classical beauty.

Dance along with the other performing arts gradually declined during the Roman period. It soon reflected the debasement of a culture which was content to remain as spectator not participant, and it became imitative and noncreative. The social position of actors, mimes, and dancers was no better than that of slaves, and in their endeavors to please the Roman public their material soon fell to the

level of slap-stick and debased grotesquerie. About 150 B. C. Scipio, destroyer of Carthage, closed the doors of the dancing schools to the sons and daughters of the Roman citizens, and the dance became a thing of debaucherie, obscenity, and absurdity.

Throughout the Middle Ages the dance art was kept alive by the minstrels, the mummers, and even in some instances by the Church. The miracle plays and ceremonials which were part of the structure of feudalism contributed to the re-birth of the dance. At Tauste, Spain, in 1313, Rabbi Hacén ben Salomo taught the Christians to perform a choral dance around the altar of the Church of St. Bartholomew.[2] Father Menestrier, a Jesuit priest, compiled data on the dance in relation to religion about 1682.

> Divine service was composed of psalms, hymns and canticles, because men sang and danced the praises of God, as they read His oracles in those extracts of the Old and New Testaments which we still know under the name of Lessons. The place in which these acts of worship were offered to God was called the choir, just as those portions of comedies and tragedies in which dancing and singing combined to make up the interludes were called choruses.[3]

Dance theory developed as dance instruction became

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[2] Curt Sachs, World History of the Dance, p. 299. Translated by Bessie Schönberg. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1937.

[3] Troy Kinney and Margaret West Kinney, The Dance: Its Place in Art and Life, pp. 29-30. New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1936 (3d edition, revised).

a unique profession. During the fifteenth century Domenichino of Piacenza, dancing master to the house of Sforza, formulated specific rules relative to his subject. These were spread throughout western Europe by his students and disciples. Antonio Cornazano, a poet of Piacenza, and Guglielmo Ebreo, frequently called William the Jew, put some of these theories of Domenichino in writing, supplying the first known records of the technical aspects of the dance. Commenting on William's "De practicha seu arte tripudii vulghare opusculum," Lincoln Kirstein observes:

> It is one of the first known examples of choreographic technique of which the modern world has any record, and hence is a monument from which descends the brilliant pedagogy of contemporary ballet.[4]

Defining dance as an art this pioneer theoretician concluded:

> The art of dancing is for generous hearts that love it, and for gentle spirits that have a heaven-sent inclination for it rather than an accidental disposition, a most amiable matter, entirely different from and mortally inimical to the vicious and artless common people who frequently, with corrupt spirits and depraved minds, turn it from a liberal art and virtuous science, into a concupiscence under the guise of modesty, make the dance a procuress, through whom they are able to arrive stealthily at the satisfaction of their desires.[5]

Dance like the other arts experienced a re-birth

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[4] Lincoln Kirstein, The Book of the Dance: A Short History of Classic Theatrical Dancing, p. 117. New York: Garden City Publishing Co., Inc., 1942 (revised).

[5] Ibid., p. 118.

during the Renaissance. Folk dancing had been developing prior to the art form of the dance from the thirteenth century on. It is referred to in all the Romance languages. King Alexander III of Scotland, about 1300, purportedly wrote:

> Mery time it is in May..
> Maydens so dauncen and thay play.[6]

And Chaucer in his Canterbury tales, c. 1386, describing a versatile maiden wrote:

> Of remedies of loue she knew per chance
> For she koude of the Art the olde daunce.[7]

In the Wyclif edition of the Holy Bible from the Latin Vulgate, Sam. 2:6, we read "David ... daunside with all strengthis bifor the Lord."

By the time of Queen Elizabeth's reign over England dance had begun to take on specific forms. The Queen herself was reported to have performed six or seven Galliards each morning by way of daily exercise,[8] and to have appointed Sir Christopher Hatton as her Lord Chancellor, not because of his statesmanship, but because "he wore green bows on his

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[6] A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles, III, 23, referring to MS. Laud Misc. 622. Edited by James A. H. Murray. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Louis Horst, Pre-Classic Dance Forms, p. 24. New York: Dance Observer, 1937.

shoes and danced the Pavane to perfection."[9] Shakespeare alluded to the court dances of his time in several of his plays. In Twelfth Night, for example, he wrote the lines: "Why dost thou not goe to Church in a Galliard and come home in a Carranto?"

Sponsored by most of the reigning monarchs of Europe, dance became an essential adjunct to the life at court. Catherine de Medici, daughter of the pageant-loving Lorenzo, transplanted much of the splendor of the Italian court to France and imported her favorite dancing masters, scenic artists, and musicians to direct the magnificent balls at Versailles. The first dance to be cast in the form of the ballet as we know it today was composed in 1581 and performed to celebrate the marriage of Catherine's sister Marguerite de Lorraine to the Duc de Joyeuse. This ballet, Le Ballet Comique de la Reine Louise, was created by a professional musician, Baldassarino de Belgiojoso. It combined the elements of tournament, masquerade, and pastoral and set a pattern for the many imitations which followed.

The publicity received by Le Ballet Comique led many of the scholars of the period to analyze the details of the techniques of the ballet and to record them. The most valuable of these records, because of its wealth of detail and authenticity of descriptions, was written by the Canon of

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[9] Kirstein, op. cit., p. 138.

Langres, Jehan Tabourot, under the pseudonym of Thoinot Arbeau. His book[10] published in 1588 contains a treasury of information on the dances of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, including an analysis of the musical accompaniment and commentaries on the customs and deportment of the period. Written as a dialogue between master and pupil, it is without literary pretension but endures as a classic in the field of dance literature.

It is Louis Quatorze, Le Roi Soleil, who exalted dance to unexpected heights of popularity and who did much to encourage its artistic development. The establishment of the Académie Royale de Musique, which admitted the dance as co-partner in 1661 and dictated the pattern to be followed by music and dance for two hundred years, occurred during his reign. At the Académie, under the dynamic leadership of Lully, Rameau, and later Noverre, dance became the serious work of professionals rather than the dilettantism of amateurs. A pedagogical system evolved, presided over by a succession of great dance artists who were the instructors at the Académie. Lully gave a new emphasis to the importance of the ballet in his operas. As an accomplished dancer himself he understood the basic problems of accompaniment and

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[10] Thoinot Arbeau, Orchesography: A Treatise in the Form of a Dialogue. Translated by Mary Stewart Evans. New York: Kamin Dance Publishers, 1948, pp. 5-212.

"influenced a whole genre of ballet according to his views, to be no longer a suite of dances related by tenuous plots, but rather mimed plays...."[11] During a lifetime he composed nineteen complete ballets, twelve comedy ballets, and eighteen operas in addition to other compositions for special occasions.[12]

In those first opera ballets it was the custom to include male members of the royal household in the supporting roles. An account of the performance of Lully's Les Fêtes de l'Amour et de Bacchus performed at the Tennis Court de Belair on November fifteenth, 1672, noted that the Duc de Monmouth, the Duc de Villeroi, the Marquis de Rassen, and M. le Grand appeared before the king along with four "stage" dancers.[13]

The ballet was a masculine art with masks being worn by those dancers enacting the part of women. This discriminatory practice continued until 1681 when, with the performance of Lully's ballet Triomphe de l'Amour, women took part in a theatrical ballet for the first time.

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[11] Kirstein, op. cit., p. 182.

[12] Marion Bauer and Ethel Peyser, How Music Grew: From Prehistoric Times to the Present Day, p. 225. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925.

[13] Charles Burney, A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period (1787), II, 468. Edited by Frank Mercer. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1935.

Lully's collaborators were the greatest artists of the period: Béraine the decorator, Beauchamps the choreographer, the poets Racine, Corneille, and Molière. The Comedie-Ballet resulted from his association with Molière, who had adapted a whole roster of comic figures from the Commedia del' Arte, native Italian farces. These figures became classic in the ballet: Harlequin, Columbine, Polichinelle, Pierrot and others. Lully directed much of the dance movement of contrived clowning that was to characterize these roles.

The dance held such an important position in all the performances at the Académie that Molière was prompted to make satiric comment when he wrote lines for a dancing master in one of his plays:

> All the ills of mankind, all the tragic misfortunes that fill the history books, all political blunder, all the failures of great commanders, have arisen merely from lack of skill in dancing. . . .
>
> When a man has been guilty of a mistake, either in ordering his own affairs, or in directing those of the State, or in commanding an army, do we not always say: So and so has made a false step in this affair . . . ? and can making a false step derive from anything but lack of skill in dancing?[14]

The five classic positions, which form the base for the movement of the ballet, and the establishment of French

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[14] Molière, "Le Bourgeoise Gentilhomme," Everyman's Library, II, 223. Edited by Ernest Rhys. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1929.

as the official language of the ballet, can be attributed to Beauchamps. As the first maître de ballet of the Académie he formulated many of the concepts which have become the essence of the ballet. To Pécourt, Beauchamp's successor, is given the credit for development of the first system of dance notation, although many dance historians will argue in favor of Feuillet. There is sufficient evidence to conclude that Pécourt did conceive the idea of a system of recording dances by signs and that Feuillet be given credit for the editing.

Because of its contributions to the establishment of specific forms based upon definite rules of structure, the Renaissance is considered to be one of the most significant periods in the evolution of dance and music. Forms such as the Pavane, the Galliard, the Allemande, the Sarabande, the Gavotte, the Courante and others were constructed according to prescribed formulae. Composers of music and of dance learned to adhere to well-founded rules which have not been disregarded since.

Utilizing the principle of aesthetic contrast, the dances became grouped together in a definite order: "It was usual to couple a grave measure with a gay one."[15]

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[15] John Guthrie, Historical Dances for the Theatre, p. 22. Sussex, England: Aldridge Brothers, 1950.

Vestiges of the dance forms established during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries still can be observed in contemporary usage. Modern composers of music sometimes utilize the structures of these earlier forms--Ravel's Pavane pour une infante defunte, the Gavotte from Prokofiev's Symphonie Classique.

By the first half of the eighteenth century ballet as an art form was firmly established. Dancing academies modeled after the French Académie had sprung up in England, Germany, Russia, Italy and other European countries. Traditions were deeply rooted and threatened to stultify further progress. Costumes, which directly influence the quality of the dance movement, were elaborately padded and constructed by heavy, unyielding materials. Expressive movement was further hampered by the practice of wearing high heels and masks. Swift action and vertical elevation of the movement were impossible. Mme. Camargo (1710-1770), celebrated dancer of this period, did provide some relief for the situation by introducing a costume which was shortened to ankle-length and adding a short of tight fitting undergarment, the forerunner of dancing tights. Yet, despite this innovation, much of the dance action of the period remained slow and ponderous. At its gayest it was limited to the mincing restraint of the Minuet.

At the time when the development of the ballet appeared to be at a standstill Jean Georges Noverre published his letters (1760), which set up a chain-reaction that has continued down to the present day. Called "the Shakespeare of the dance" by no less a noted artist than the famous actor-manager David Garrick,[16] his reforms were strongly influenced by Rousseau's theories on naturalism. He explained his purpose in his publication, Lettres sur la Danse et les Ballets:

> To break hideous masks, to burn ridiculous perukes, to suppress clumsly paniers, to do away with still more inconvenient hip pads, to substitute taste for routine, to indicate a manner of dress more noble, more accurate, and more picturesque, to demand action and expression in dancing, to demonstrate the immense distance which lies between mechanical technique and the genius which places dancing beside the imitative arts. . . . .[17]

His goal was to attain an art imitative of nature.

As maître de ballet for the Opera Comique, for the Duke of Wurtemburg at Stuttgart, and finally for the Académie, Noverre's principles eventually spread to Italy and to Russia where other reforms in dance were to take place. While he was in Vienna he allied himself with Gluck--a partnership that further aided the progress of both music and the dance.

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[16] Arnold L. Haskell, Ballet: A Complete Guide to Appreciation, p. 24. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1938 (2d. edition).

[17] Jean Georges Noverre, Letters on Dancing and Ballets, p. 1. Translated by Cyril W. Beaumont. London: C. W. Beaumont, 1930.

Many classical steps, such as the pirouette and the ronde de jambe that imposed new tests upon the dancer's technique, were invented under Noverre's direction. His insistence upon the virtues of emotion and expression rather than mere technical display brought a greater dramatic quality to the ballet, although his use of long and involved program notes brought him criticism.

Beginning with Noverre we find a direct line of contributors to the dance art of today. Finer details of their contributions are omitted purposely in this historical summary because of the extent of the material and its relative unimportance as compared with previous inventions. A few principal trends are to be noted, however, to bring the reader up-to-date on the practices which led to the formulation of a new ideology of the contemporary American dance.

Carlo Blasis, who founded the Academy of Dancing in Milan in 1837, originated a system of instruction in ballet still used by many dance teachers. In his time the center of the ballet world shifted from France to Italy.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century Petipa, a Frenchman, laid the foundations for the brilliant and world-renowned company the Diaghileff Ballet, which later became the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. He had been invited to St. Petersburg where from 1870 until 1905 he

established a new capital of the ballet, composing fifty-seven ballets and dances for thirty-four operas.[18] His productions and those of his successors, Cecchetti and Fokine, kindled what is frequently referred to as the "renaissance of the ballet," even though ballet in the other European countries had sunk to the level of the music-halls--"Even the term 'ballet dancer' had become one of opprobrium."[19]

Composers, choreographers, dancers, and painters were drawn to St. Petersburg and collaborated in the creation of new artistic ballets. The highest peak of perfection was attained with such performers as Nijinsky, Karsarvina, Massine, Dolin, Balanchine, and for one season Pavlova. Composers such as Tschaikowsky, Stravinsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin, Manuel de Falla, and scenic artists such as Benois, Bakst, and Picasso contributed to the spectacle and to the world-renown of the Ballet Russe. This organization was to maintain a brilliance and artistic level unsurpassed by any other until the death, in 1929, of Diaghileff, the "benevolent despot"[20] and managing director of the Ballet Russe. After this date the ballet suffered from an artistic

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[18] Kirstein, op. cit., p. 256.

[19] Anatole Chujoy, Ballet, p. 21. New York: Robert Speller Publishing Corp., 1936.

[20] Kirstein, op. cit., p. 282.

starvation which endured until the advent of the Sadler's Wells Company in the nineteen-thirties.

Meanwhile a new movement, which was to lead dancers along fresh pathways and which was to develop another art form of the dance, was taking place. This new form, the "contemporary" or "modern" dance, is indebted for its existence to a few individuals who, rebelling against traditionalism in the ballet, struck out in new directions.

The roots of the modern dance go back to the crusades of Isadora Duncan (1878-1927) at the turn of the twentieth century. There is little similarity between the form and style of her dance and that existing today and no direct line of descent following the pattern of her instruction. And yet this audaciously free spirit, unrecognized by her native country, the United States, became in a real sense the founder of the movement which was to produce the modern dance. Her imitators, motivated by her phenomenal success throughout continental Europe, unloosed a flood of interpretive dances to the music of the classical composers, filling theaters everywhere with bare-footed pseudo-Grecian posturings.

> It was her deepest desire to discard all artifices, all invention, all traditional methods and established vocabularies of movement such as the ballet employed, and to get to the natural source of man's expressiveness, using only the natural movements of the body without acrobatic exaggeration or surface ornamentation,

and allowing them to produce themselves only under inner compulsion.[21]

In Duncan's autobiography[22] which has become a classic of dance literature, she describes her basic theory of the solar plexus as the central source for dance movement.

At almost the same time that Isadora Duncan was becoming the "Isadorable" of the European audiences, another dancer, a personality in stark contrast to the ecstatic Duncan, was beginning to make significant contributions to the dance more directly in line with its later development. Mary Wigman (1886-) in Germany was searching for a convincing dance technique, with results which later earned her the title of First Modern Dancer.

Wigman reports her movement of discovery of dance as having taken place during a time when she was memorizing the lines of Juliet for that famous balcony scene in Romeo and Juliet.[23] On a sudden impulse she set aside her script and attempted to communicate the ideas by moving in a fresh, strange, exploratory manner. From that departure all her thoughts and energies turned toward the dance. „Tanz ist

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[21] John Martin, The Dance, p. 106. New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1946.

[22] Isadora Duncan, My Life, pp. 1-359. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927.

[23] Conversation between Mary Wigman and the writer, Dresden, Germany, 1938.

Gegenwartsbekenntnis, Erleben des Da-Seins ohne jeden intellektuellen Umweg."[24] (Dance is the symbol of modern times, experiences of the nature of the here-and-now without any intellectual detours.)

Wigman learned all she could about movement theory, studying with Dalcroze at Hellerau and with Rudolf von Laban at Ascona, later becoming his assistant in his school in Zurich. At the beginning of World War I she was ready to become independent as an artist, to compose dances for herself and for groups, and to establish her method of dance in her own school. She gave concerts in Frankfort, Hannover, Munich, Berlin and in other German cities. Soon her fame was spread not only in her native country but also throughout the whole of Europe. Reports of her activities were read in the United States where, either directly or indirectly, they had an influence upon the American modern dance. Although Wigman did not tour the United States until several years after Martha Graham's first concert, it is not difficult to observe similarities in their theoretical concepts. Margaret Lloyd cites some of Wigman's theories which the American modern dancer utilizes:

> With her came new ideas of the dancer's relation to space and the dance's relation to music, of movement

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[24] Mary Wigman, "Tanz," in Rudolf Bach's Das Mary Wigman-Werk, p. 20. Dresden: Carl Reissner Verlag, 1933.

> evolved out of its own meaning, of dance self-governing and self-contained. . . .new music to be written . . . . or dispensing with music altogether.[25]

The contemporary American dance, although somewhat influenced by the discoveries of Isadora Duncan and Mary Wigman, was nurtured by an American dance institution, the Denishawn school, co-directed by Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn. While it approached dance from a frankly theatrical point of view, and combined Oriental mysticism with dance idioms of Spanish and American Indian origin, Denishawn is recognized as the cradle of the American dance. "Without that school and that company the American modern dance could not have come into being, for there would have been no base of departure for the so-called rebels who founded it."[26]

The new dance movement in the United States took place during the nineteen-twenties, and all but one of its leaders were trained by Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn. Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, and Charles Weidman studied dance at the Denishawn school and became members of the professional company. Louis Horst, whose theories are the subject of this investigation, served as musical director of the Denishawn organization from 1915 until 1925. Hanya Holm, who

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[25] Margaret Lloyd, The Borzoi Book of Modern Dance, p. 16. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949.

[26] Ibid., p. 22.

played an equally important part in the development of the contemporary American dance movement, was a former pupil and teacher at the Wigman school in Germany.

From the early experiments of these five individuals a new dance art took shape, based upon the belief that dance is subject to constant change, that it must be a creative manifestation of its own time, and that its deepest roots are to be found within its own cultural heritage.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

PREFACE: A Brief Summary of the Development of the Dance Art in the Western World ii

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION 1

Art and cultural change
Horst's role in the development of the dance
Previous investigations and reports
Value and importance of this investigation
Method of collecting data

II. THE PROFESSIONAL CAREER OF LOUIS HORST 12

Early training and experience
The Denishawn Period
The status of musical accompaniment
The break from Denishawn
New directions
Further developments
The Dance Observer
First composition classes
Record of teaching

III. FORM IN DANCE COMPOSITION 29

The importance of form in dance composition
Outer structure
Manipulation
Component parts
Classical dance forms
Other contributory forms
New forms

IV. THE CONTENT OF COMPOSITION 41

Scope and importance
Sources for material
Working title
Sublimation of gesture
Indigenousness
Colloquialism
Overworked material

Chapter Page

V. BASIC ELEMENTS OF THE MODERN DANCE 54

Rhythm
Melodic linear design
Harmonic texture

VI. "PRE-CLASSIC AND MODERN FORMS" 72

Prerequisites and general characteristics
Class organization
Pre-Classic dance forms
Pre-Classic problems
Modern Forms
Problems in Modern Forms

VII. CRITICISM 91

Rules for criticism
Common errors
Emotionalism
The problem of musical accompaniment

VIII. SUMMARY 103

Brief summary of Horst's contributions
Acknowledgments

BIBLIOGRAPHY 107

Appendix

I. A Partial List of Music Composed by Louis Horst for the Dance Compositions of Martha Graham . . 112

II. Martha Graham's First Concert 113

III. First Concert of Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman 116

IV. Last Graham Concert with Louis Horst as Musical Director 119

V. Photographs of Louis Horst and Some of the Members of the Denishawn Company 122

VI. Recent Informal Photographs of Louis Horst . . 124

VII. Music Used in Pre-Classic Forms Course 129

VIII. Music Used in Modern Forms Course 132

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Art and cultural change. The history of the fine arts parallels the history of the social, political, and spiritual development of mankind; it confirms the theory that all art is shaped by the cultural state of its time and reflects the distinctive qualities of its particular era. Cultural patterns change when there is a break with tradition, closely following political, scientific, and philosophical trends. New styles in art, characteristic of their time, frequently give rise to categorical concepts. There is common usage of such terms as classical, romanesque, gothic, baroque, rococo, naturalistic, romantic, impressionistic, expressionistic, jazz, and modernistic when referring to a specific historical period, although these adjectives which are descriptive of significant stylistic trends in the arts might better be reserved for this purpose. A masterpiece of art becomes an expression of the time in which it was created, revealing the artist's reaction to his particular environment. Changes in art concepts take place as the need arises to adapt to changes which have already become significant for the social, political, economic, and spiritual

existence of men. In the evolution of any art there is "no marking time or standing still."[1]

When an art remains static for any great length of time and becomes hopelessly enmeshed in the traditions of the past, it is likely to regress and to degenerate. It becomes imitative rather than creative, artificial rather than communicatively articulate. Traditions, however, cannot be entirely disregarded since the past contains the foundations of all art. Each age, building upon the past, contributes to the evolutionary development of its art by bringing additional enrichment to it. Every era has produced experimenters and inventors, creative visionaries who, sensitive to the continual changing needs of art, have succeeded in initiating new styles and techniques and ultimately have established new traditions.

The immediate past usually is rebelled against with passionate intensity in the struggle to overcome inertia and intellectual stagnation. In the attempt to focus upon new directions in art there is a general tendency to break away from recent traditional practices for inspiration and to leap farther backward in time. Today we avoid the Victorian ideals and practices of the nineteenth century, although we do not hesitate to incorporate in our contemporary art many

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[1] Sachs, The Commonwealth of Art: Style in the Fine Arts, Music and the Dance, p. 26.

of the qualities of style which are characteristic of primitive cultures or of the art of the Greek, the Medieval, the Renaissance and other periods.

In the present century the seeds of revolution which led ultimately to the formulation of the characteristic style of the modern dance were planted by Isadora Duncan and given nurture by the Denishawn organization, although in both instances the focus of attention was upon past cultures, Duncan turning to the period of Greek classicism and Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn delving into Oriental and primitive cultures. While discontent with the sentimental and romantic dancing of the nineteenth century resulted in a rejection of the traditional concepts of dance, it could be only a first step, a transition period if the dance was to become an expression of the twentieth century and move forward in the direction the other arts had taken. After a brief period of imitation the trends set by the Duncan and Denishawn influences were halted by the advent of a new idiomatic approach to dance, which we know as the modern or contemporary dance.

Horst's rule in the development of the dance. Although Mary Wigman already had begun her experiments in Germany and had been hailed as the originator of the new dance (her first group composition was presented in 1918), the American modern dance was founded quite independently,

Martha Graham's first concert (1926) preceding by five years Wigman's Boston debut. News of the new German dance had reached this country, but the actual dance compositions had not been seen. From the time Graham commenced working on her own and embarked upon "the adventure of seeking,"[2] Louis Horst became her indispensable ally, confidant, and critic. He contributed to these early beginnings of the new dance art a fine musicianship and a keen observation of the changes which were taking place in all contemporary art. Composing musical backgrounds for her new dance compositions, advising, suggesting, appraising the work as it progressed, he began formulating certain theoretical concepts about dance which have gained him recognition not only as a composer-accompanist but as a teacher of dance theory. Working at first with the young dancers who were members of Graham's company, he soon was in great demand as a teacher and critic. To promote interest in the modern dance and to explain it to a confused public, he founded a magazine for this purpose, Dance Observer.

Horst's proficiency as a musician enabled him to apply many well-established musical principles to the dance which have affected its structure and its present form. William Schuman, commenting on Horst's influence, has stated:

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[2] Lloyd, op. cit., p. 49.

> In my judgment it is not too strong to claim that Horst is largely responsible, together with Martha Graham, for the wide use of contemporary music by the modern dancer in America and for pointing the way to a mature development of this collaboration from the crude beginnings of literal musical and visual equivalencies.[3]

He has been one of the reasons for the growth which has taken place in a new area of the musical profession, that of the composer-accompanist. Many of the modern composers of music have followed his lead in composing "out of the dancers' need and not of his own compulsion . . . ,"[4] content that their music be of secondary importance to the dance.

Most of the professional modern dancers of today have been Horst's students at one time or another, as have many of the dance teachers in the schools, colleges, and private studios of this country. His former pupils can be numbered in the thousands, for since his first formal class at the Neighborhood Playhouse in 1928 his record as a teacher of dance composition has been unbroken. His two courses in Pre-Classic and Modern Forms have been presented in many colleges and universities on the east and west coasts of the United States and in numerous New York professional dance studios. At the present time he is a member of the

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[3] Letter from William Schuman, President, Juilliard School of Music, November 5, 1952.

[4] Lloyd, quoting Louis Horst, in Merle Armitage, Martha Graham, p. 90. Los Angeles: Merle Armitage, 1937.

distinguished faculty at the Juilliard School of Music, which recently inaugurated its department of dance. Horst's theories of composition have been adopted by many teachers of dance as well as by professional dancers, for there is a general recognition of the practical value of his approach to the subject. As one supervisor of physical education for a city school system has said:

> The contributions of Louis Horst to the field of dance are far-reaching and impossible of measurement. Having been associated with him for many years as a student and as a member of the same faculty, I never fail to derive stimulation and insight from his classes, lectures, and informal conversations. His knowledge of dance in relation to all of the arts is profound. . . . His name will long be remembered by dancers of this period.[5]

Horst has been an enthusiastic supporter of the efforts of contemporary dance artists for the past twenty-seven years, and his association with them has been effective in forging a new link in the evolution of dance. During the early period in the development of this art he encouraged the young dancers of the nineteen-twenties to experiment with modern music. He played the compositions of modern musicians for them, read modern poetry to them, composed music for their dances, discussed with them the directions being taken in contemporary art, and criticized their dance compositions. As Agnes de Mille has acknowledged:

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[5] Letter from Delia Hussey, Supervisor of Health and Physical Education, Detroit Public Schools, October 7, 1952.

> I was not the first person he'd helped, nor the last. In the course of time, he has accompanied Ruth St. Denis (for twelve years), Ted Shawn, Ruth Page, Doris Niles, Martha Graham, Charles Weidman, Harald Kreutzberg, Helen Tamiris and me. He has taught and composed for nearly every concert dancer in the business. He has given all of us advice. More, reassurance and comfort and when the need arose, money. Over the years he has influenced and helped the dancing in this country more than any other non-dancer, with the possible exception of John Martin and Lincoln Kirstein. The long talks he had with us worked like yeast in our creative thought.[6]

Previous investigations and reports. Although Horst has been teaching his theories of composition in the two courses Pre-Classic and Modern Forms for the past two decades, the demands made upon him as teacher, composer, accompanist, and critic have left him little time in which to present his theories in form for publication. Occasionally he has contributed short articles to Dance Observer, which he has continued to edit since its inception. His one published work, Pre-Classic Dance Forms[7] contains analytical material pertaining to the dance forms of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, suggesting in a general way the application of these traditional forms to contemporary dance expression. Four articles[8] written several years ago summarize briefly

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[6] Agnes de Mille, Dance to the Piper, p. 124. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1952.

[7] Horst, op. cit.

[8] Horst, "Modern Forms: Understanding by Contrast," Dance Observer, VI, Nos. 9 and 10; VIII, No. 2; X, No. 7.

his basic principles on Modern Forms, but are insufficient in detail for direct application to dance composition.

As far as can be ascertained there have been only two writers who have attempted to record some of Horst's ideas on dance composition. Martha Coleman's article[9] is based upon the results of a personal interview with Horst and is one of a series of brief interviews with several teachers of choreography designed to bring out comparisons and contrasts in instructional methods. The answers to questions which were posed by the interviewer were quite general in nature.

Mary Kulynitch's unpublished thesis,[10] although restricted in scope, contains a description of Horst's theoretical concepts but overlooks certain aspects of his work such as dance criticism, which is indispensable to a knowledge of composition.

Value and importance of this investigation. It is the writer's opinion and one which is supported by many dance educators that Horst's theories provide a sound foundation for the study of modern dance composition. For many years it has been the hope of his students and associates

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[9] Martha Coleman, "On the Teaching of Choreography: Interview with Louis Horst," Dance Observer, XVI, No. 9 (November, 1949), 128-130.

[10] Mary Kulynitch, "Louis Horst, A Historical Study of His Contributions to Modern Dance Choreography." Unpublished Master's thesis, New York University, 1950.

that Horst himself would undertake the task of compiling his material, but his preoccupation with teaching, criticism, and music composition have left him with little opportunity to devote time to such an endeavor. As he once said, "The immediacies are too pressing. Writing will have to wait unless someone is willing to help me."[11] Recognizing the necessity for accumulating the data while it is possible to obtain first-hand information, this investigation of Horst's theories was initiated.

A conscious effort has been made to avoid distortion of the theoretical concepts by any personal interpretation, even though in certain instances some clarification of the material has been necessary. There has been no attempt to criticize Horst's theories and teaching methods. The study is restricted to the recording of the beliefs of an individual, a man who is recognized as one of the most important contributors to the growth of the contemporary American dance.

It is believed that teachers and students of the modern dance will find the material stimulating to the creative exploration of dance movement, for Horst's principles of composition can be adapted to the age levels and dance experiences of students in secondary schools, colleges, and

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[11] Statement by Louis Horst during an informal conversation with the writer, August, 1946.

professional dance studios. The inexperienced as well as the experienced dancer can be guided in the development of new compositions and can appraise his own work as well as that of other choreographers by the application of Horst's rules of criticism.

An understanding of the principles of composition which Louis Horst has formulated should lead to a deeper appreciation of dance as an art and a realization of the interrelationships which exist between all contemporary arts.

Method of collecting data. A series of conferences with Louis Horst were held during the spring of 1952 in his New York studio. During this time tape recordings were made of these conferences which took the form of conversations on topics growing out of a list of questions previously prepared by the interviewer. Informal photographs were taken of Horst during the interviews, and he generously permitted the writer to examine the scrap-books he has been developing since 1915, and to have some of the more interesting and significant pages photostatted for inclusion in this volume.[12]

In addition, published and unpublished materials in dance literature have been studied in order to provide a background for his statements as recorded. Friends and students of Louis Horst have been helpful in their assistance

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[12] See Appendix.

in furnishing supplementary information through correspondence, as has Horst himself, when clarification was needed.

CHAPTER II

THE PROFESSIONAL CAREER OF LOUIS HORST

Early training and experience. Louis Horst was born in Kansas City, Missouri, January 12, 1884. His father, a trumpet-player who had emigrated to the United States from Hesse-Kastle, Germany in 1882, was his first music teacher. His mother, a native of Hesse-Darmstadt, and a sister three and one-half years older than Louis, were the other members of his immediate family.

In 1890 the Horsts moved to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and two years later to San Francisco where they established permanent residence. The elder Horst became a member of the San Francisco orchestra, at that time under the direction of Fritz Shale who later founded the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra. Young Louis was sent to public school and graduated from the Adams Cosmopolitan School after nine years of formal education.

His first lessons in music were on the violin, and upon graduation from public school he began his training in piano.

> I used to practice eight hours a day, four hours in the morning and four hours in the afternoon, on both the violin and piano. My father thought this was

> most important. In those days parents didn't send their children to college and high school as much as they do today. They were poor people, and they wanted me to be proficient.[1]

After developing considerable skill on both instruments Horst began to learn from other musicians, studying violin with John Josephs and John Marquand, and piano with Samuel Fleichman, a pupil of Moszkowski. By the time he was eighteen he had become a member of the musicians union and was playing professional engagements in dance halls, restaurants, and gambling houses. His music was the ragtime and the popular sentimental songs of the period--She's More to be Pitied than Censured, After the Ball, Old Kentucky Home, and the like. Around 1904 he began playing in the better cafes which had contributed to San Francisco's fame. On the side he taught piano and played as pit musician at the old Columbia Theater, violin for the musical productions and piano for the dramatic shows. He played ensemble music with a trio and accompanied singers and violinists. A few top-rate artists were among them, notably Nathan Firestone and the Metropolitan Opera star Berniece Pasquale.

> We did everything. We accompanied singers, we accompanied violinists, we played at dances, we played at weddings and banquets and theaters. I played for vaudeville shows, burlesque shows . . . . everything.[2]

Occasionally he accompanied the soft-shoe and clog-dancing

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[1] Horst, recorded interview, April 7, 1952. Reel No. 1.

[2] Ibid.

"hoofers" of vaudeville, and once in a while a devotee of so-called "fancy dancing," an arty and overly-sentimental kind of picture dancing popular at that time.

The Denishawn period. In 1915, when Horst was thirty-one years old, an event took place which was "of far-reaching significance for the dance in America."[3] At the time, he was playing for one of the musical productions currently running in San Francisco. Following one of the performances, as he was returning his violin to its case, the manager of another theatrical house came up to him and asked if he would be willing to go out on the road with Ruth St. Denis for a temporary assignment of two or three weeks. Miss St. Denis had been touring the California coast with Ted Shawn and the members of the Denishawn company and was looking for a replacement for her musical director. She needed a substitute until another musical director could be brought out from New York, for her present conductor seemed unable to accompany the group to her satisfaction and had resigned after St. Denis shouted "faster" at him over the footlights during a performance. Horst agreed to accept this temporary assignment, one which was to continue for eleven years.

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[3] Ruth St. Denis, Ruth St. Denis: An Unfinished Life, p. 182. London: George G. Harrap and Co., Ltd., 1938.

The first performance he conducted for the Denishawn company was without rehearsal with the dancers. There had been some discussion of the program with St. Denis and the company manager, her brother "Buzz," during the train ride to Medford, Oregon, but no opportunity to work with the dancers prior to the two and one-half hour show. As was the general practice at that time, dance companies relied upon local musicians for the musical accompaniment. Because of their regular day-time jobs these musicians could not be assembled at the theater until an hour before the house was to be opened to the public. There was just time enough for a brief run-through of the music.

The next day the company entrained for Everett, Washington, with further conferences on the way, but again there was no chance for a rehearsal with the group. Horst continued to labor under this handicap for several more performances, with constant revisions of the program. By the time the organization reached Seattle where it was to play a three-day engagement he issued an ultimatum. Unless he could have a full rehearsal with the entire company he threatened to return to San Francisco. His demand was met following the opening night's performance. During this rehearsal Ruth St. Denis walked out on the stage and, leaning over the orchestra pit, invited Horst to remain with the Denishawns as permanent musical director. A life-time

association with dancers was begun, one which was to be of significance in changing the concept of the art of the dance and to influence its development.

The status of musical accompaniment. For several years as musical adviser to the Denishawn company, Horst's main problem was finding music to suit the dances--"really a scissors and paste thing."[4] He would be told the ideas for a new show, and then his job was to find the music, cut it to fit, patch it up, and smooth it over. That it be good music wasn't important, but that it fit the dance was.

Eventually Horst was to suggest a new method of working which was to free the Denishawn company from the theatrical and Oriental dances which had characterized their performances. He had been reading about the revolutionary experiments in dance being conducted by Isadora Duncan and had watched three of her performances in Los Angeles, in 1918. These experiences partially influenced him to suggest that the Denishawns try choreographing dances to the better music of the classical composers, and he recommended that one of the most promising members of the group be permitted to direct the experiment. Thus did Doris Humphrey begin a new phase in partnership with music which became known as music visualization. She had enrolled in the Denishawn

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[4] Horst, recorded interview, April 7, 1952. Reel No. 1.

school in 1917 and soon had revealed an intensely sensitive response to a lyrical quality of movement which was to color much of her choreography. Working with a small group she directed practice sessions in which they danced to some of the Bach Inventions. They moved in strict unison with the note structure of these musical compositions, one group being assigned to represent one voice of the music while a second group imitated the second voice. As the work progressed they began to dance to more complicated symphonic forms in which every dancer learned the part of a specific musical instrument and moved as part of a visual orchestra. In this new approach to dance composition there was a marked resemblance to the system of eurhythmics which E. Jaques-Dalcroze had founded in Hellerau, although Horst has stated that the Denishawn group did not imitate his system in any strict sense.[5] However, there was a direct relationship between the two from an aesthetic point of view, as this excerpt from the lectures of Dalcroze indicates:

> But if, disdaining tonal gradations, moving plastic would assert itself apart from them, it will never be able to regulate the gradations of its dynamics and its agogics better than by adopting the musical agogic and dynamic techniques which are now already ordered and regulated and may certainly serve it as models.[6]

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[5] Ibid.

[6] E. Jaques-Dalcroze, Eurhythmics, Art and Education, p. 33. Translated by Frederick Rothwell. New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1930.

Ultimately, compositions based upon music visualization were incorporated into the Denishawn concert tours. Dances were composed to the Sonata Tragica of MacDowell, to the music of Grieg and Tschaikowsky, and to the first movement of the Beethoven Sonata Pathetique. Martha Graham, who had been a Denishawn student since 1916, frequently was assigned the bassoon passages "because she was dark."[7] Charles Weidman, who had joined the organization in 1919, also took part in this symphonic dance. The import of this development to the emergence of the modern dance in the United States should not be overlooked.

> In our first number, the Beethoven Sonata Pathetique, which we [Doris Humphrey and Ruth St. Denis] developed together, I am content to rest my claim that we began the first suggestion of what has become the American dance. . . .[8]

It would appear defensible that credit for the uniqueness of this contribution to modern dance be given to all three, St. Denis, Humphrey, and Horst, for as musical director Louis Horst's technical knowledge was an essential aspect in the development of music visualization.

The break from Denishawn. As the Denishawn company was making preparations for a tour of the Orient in 1925, Louis Horst resigned as its musical director. Martha Graham

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[7] Horst, recorded interview, April 7, 1952. Reel No. 1.

[8] St. Denis, op. cit., p. 214.

had preceded his action by a year, leaving Denishawn in order to teach at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester and to work on her own concerts. Both Graham and Horst had begun to realize the changes which were revolutionizing the other arts and had decided that Oriental and classical music and Oriental and symphonic dance were not meeting the challenge of the contemporary movement. Horst's resignation deeply affected the company and marked the closing of an important era in American dance.

> In a sense, when he left the camp . . . , the signal was given for the dissolution of Denishawn. Of course we did not realize this at the time, but it turned out in retrospect that Louis, as one of the chief pillars of the church, let the roof sag at the place where he had been, and it was never really mended again.[9]

New directions. Following the break with the Denishawn company Horst spent seven months in Vienna, studying music composition with Richard Stöhr. During this period he had the opportunity to observe some of the modern developments in the other arts--painting, architecture, sculpture--and to read about the new dance movement in Germany under the leadership of Mary Wigman. Believing that the future of American art must spring from its own soil rather than from efforts to transplant European concepts, he cut short his visit to the continent and returned to New York. Martha Graham was preparing for her first concert. Convinced of her

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[9] Ibid., p. 259.

potential artistry, Horst plunged into rehearsals with her. For inspiration, together they visited art galleries and museums, attended concerts and recitals of modern music, read the poetry of the avant garde--argued, discussed, and explored.

After four months of intense work the first American modern dance concert was presented at the Forty-Eighth Street Theater (April 18, 1926).[10] Louis Horst played the piano accompaniment for the performance which featured Martha Graham, assisted by three young dancers from the Eastman School and a soprano who offered modern lyrics which Horst had set to music. He also had composed the accompaniment for Graham's solo, Masques, constructing it from the dance movement and design. This marked the beginning of the trend which has done so much to liberate the dance from the restrictions of previously composed music, and introduced a new working arrangement between choreographer and composer. The concert, interspersed as it was with certain qualities reminiscent of the Denishawn school, held a promise of a unique and distinctive approach to the dance. The use of the music of modern composers and the strange quality of inner tension revealed in the dance movement represented a marked departure from the concerts of that time, all of which were steeped in the traditions of ballet or classical

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[10] See Appendix II.

techniques. Even the critics, who during the nineteen-twenties covered dance concerts in addition to their regular dramatic or musical assignments, detected undercurrents of originality and intellectual appeal. One of them even went so far as to hail Martha Graham as the "Blessed Damozel."[11]

Stimulated by the reactions to this first experiment and driven on by the impulse of affirmation, Graham and Horst were encouraged to present other concerts and to create other new compositions. A second dance venture, Three Poems of the East,[12] had its musical accompaniment tailor-made. New York audiences continued to follow with interest the progress of the new dance revolution.

> What New York City saw . . . was the first bold, as yet unjoined timbers of a new form and style in dancing; and the indefinable but unmistakable aura of dance magic--that emanation of power to which, for want of a better term, we give the name genius.[13]

By the time the Denishawn company had returned from their Oriental tour, Graham had given several concerts and her dances were beginning to take on a new idiomatic character. Horst was insistent that Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman leave Denishawn and go to work on their own,

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Barbara Morgan, Martha Graham: Sixteen Dances in Photographs, p. 152. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941.

[13] George Beiswanger, "Martha Graham: A Perspective," in Barbara Morgan's Martha Graham: Sixteen Dances in Photographs, p. 142.

experimenting in the new dance idiom.

> The minute they came back I attached myself to Doris like a leech and wouldn't let her go until she left Denishawn. I said "You have to. Martha is right and Denishawn is wrong."[14]

Four months later, on April 15, 1928, Humphrey, assisted by Charles Weidman and a group of dancers from the Denishawn school, gave her first program[15] in the John Golden Theatre. Horst, playing everything from Bach to Debussy, accompanied all but two of the dances. These two, written expressly for the dance compositions, were conducted by the composers, Clifford Vaughn and Henry Cowell, members of the young American composers group.

For the next few years Louis Horst was the indispensable friend, critic, musical adviser, and accompanist to all the young dancers who were struggling against traditionalism, and to some who still were continuing in the old pathways.

> I played all their concerts. I used to rush from one studio to another and rehearse all day long. A concert every Sunday night, sometimes two. I sometimes played for Tamiris in the afternoon, Martha at night.[16]

The roster of dancers whom he accompanied included such

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[14] Horst, recorded interview, April 7, 1952. Reel No. 1.

[15] See Appendix III.

[16] Horst, recorded interview, April 7, 1952. Reel No. 1.

outstanding artists as Agnes de Mille, Tamiris, Doris Humphrey, Hans Wiener (Jan Veen), Ruth Page, Adolph Bolm, Michio Ito, and Harald Kreutzberg. Excepting Graham, he composed for very few dancers, for his time was taken up with a full rehearsal and concert schedule. Most of the concerts were held at the Guild and Booth theaters and in 1930-1931 at the Dance Repertory Theater. During this time New York became the center of the new American dance movement, a position it has continued to maintain.

Further developments. Musical accompaniment for dance began to take on a secondary aspect as the practice of writing music for dance became the fashion. Whether the music could stand by itself wasn't important. The principal concern was whether or not it augmented the dance for which it was intended. Whole dance compositions, such as Graham's Frontier, Primitive Mysteries, and Celebration were finished before Horst began writing a note of music for them. "If a dancer wants to use music after she's composed a dance, that's like a painter deciding to frame his picture."[17] Some adventurous choreographers, following earlier experiments of Wigman in Germany, began doing dances with no accompaniment whatsoever in an attempt to establish dance as a completely independent art. Sometimes accompaniments were written for instruments other than piano, as Horst's flute

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[17] Ibid.

and gong composition for Graham's Fragments: Comedy and Tragedy, first performed in 1928.

By 1931 two clearly distinct approaches to the American modern dance had developed, and Horst felt it expedient to align himself with the Graham school. It was natural for a split to occur between Graham and the Humphrey-Weidman group, for the personalities of the leaders of the two movements were in diametric opposition. Humphrey approached her compositions in a coolly abstract manner, building beautifully formal structures such as her Passacaglia upon impersonal designs. Relief to her formality was supplied by the nonsensical comedy of Charles Weidman, her artistic collaborator. Martha Graham, on the other hand, arrived at her compositions through a sense of dramatic invention and a concern with individual reactions to the forces of nature. "Her method . . . is always by dancing through a problem first, and thinking through it afterward."[18] Although still finding time to serve other dancers with his criticism, Horst concentrated most of his energy upon assisting Martha Graham.

The Dance Observer. During these first years of the modern dance there were few of its critics who could explain it and few, with the possible exception of John Martin of

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[18] Edith J. R. Isaacs, in Martha Graham, p. 41. Edited by Merle Armitage. Los Angeles: Merle Armitage, 1937.

the New York Times and Mary Watkins of the Herald-Tribune, who understood it at all. So many misstatements were being made about it that Louis Horst, with the assistance of Ralph Taylor, decided to publish a small dance magazine as a means of presenting the facets and facts about modern dance in a discriminating light. The Dance Observer, founded in 1933, has encouraged the creative efforts of three generations of modern dancers and has been invaluable in explaining to the public the concept of modern dance through its stimulating articles and its reviews of dance concerts in the professional and educational fields. Organized as a non-profit venture in which "no one except the printer and the post office receive payment,"[19] it has survived in an area of publication where mortality rates are high. No other American magazine dedicated to the service of dance can equal its record of longevity or solvency. Although Horst believes Dance Observer has fulfilled its original mission today, professional dancers and educators continue to rely upon it as a valuable source of information on the current developments in the dance field.

First composition classes. Horst taught his first formal class in dance composition during the fall of 1928 at the Neighborhood Playhouse. Irene Lewisohn, its director,

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[19] Horst, recorded interview, April 8, 1952. Reel No. 4.

had been a pupil of Dalcroze in her earlier years, and felt the importance of dance training in the preparation of the young drama students attending the school which was part of the Playhouse organization. She invited Louis Horst to come and work with these students and to teach them the elements of dance composition. This new phase in Horst's professional career made it necessary for him to develop a logical presentation of the theories he had been formulating, as he observed the results of experimentation in the modern dance. Reviewing the discussions he had had with Martha Graham and others, he realized that the idea of form in all the arts appeared as the most insistently basic principle, and that his emphasis must be upon the adherence to specific form in dance composition.

Selecting the court dances of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as models of formal design which avoided the obvious pitfalls of over-sentimentality, Horst planned this beginning course in composition which he called Pre-Classic Dance Forms. Students were encouraged to experiment with these old dance forms, using them as the basic structure upon which to build compositions made up of individually unique movements. Other ideas which modified this initial approach developed from this first teaching experience.

The following year Horst began organizing material

for an advanced course in dance composition, his Modern Forms. This course was for dancers and actors who had a sufficient understanding of the fundamentals of basic dance structure. Modern Forms represents the crystallization of Horst's thinking on the contemporary nature of all art and has served as his most effective weapon against the tyranny of traditional dance education. It symbolizes the radically new direction contemporary dance has taken and its present relationship to modern art, modern music, modern sculpture, modern architecture, modern poetry, and modern drama. It required three or four years of experimentation before it assumed its final form, but for the last fifteen years its pattern has remained constant, except for minor additions.

Record of teaching. Since that first class in dance composition at the Neighborhood Playhouse, Louis Horst has devoted the major portion of his time to rendering service as a teacher of dance composition. For twenty-four years he has presented his theories at the Playhouse and at many other professional and educational institutions. He has been a member of the teaching faculty at Bennington College, Barnard, Teachers College (Columbia University), Sarah Lawrence College, Mills College, Connecticut College for Women, Perry-Mansfield Camp, and Juilliard School of Music, his most recent professional post. He has given his courses in his own New York studio and in many of the dance studios

of that city.

Horst's unique approach to dance composition has influenced most of the professional dancers of today, a large majority of whom have been his pupils. His methods and his materials are widely used in many of the high schools and colleges throughout the United States. As a key figure in the growth of the modern dance in America, Horst and his theoretical concepts have had a direct bearing upon the continual creative shaping of the contemporary dance art.

CHAPTER III

FORM IN DANCE COMPOSITION

The importance of form in dance composition. For students of dance composition, the study of form is of greatest importance. As Mary Wigman has said, „Ohne Form kein Tanz."[1]

An allegiance to certain prescribed forms that he considers basic to a knowledge of contemporary dance is the premise of Louis Horst's teaching of beginning dance composition. He employs form as a discipline fundamental to the dance and basic to beginning choreography. During his many years of teaching and criticizing the works of young dancers, he has found only a few individuals who seem to have an instinctive sense of good form. It must be painstakingly taught, and only after a realization of the nature of form has been thoroughly acquired, is the student prepared to concentrate more intensely on the content of his compositions. Horst has insisted that good form become a working habit, that form is fundamental in attaining clarity.

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[1] "Without form [there is] no dance." Mary Wigman, "Tanz" in Rudolf Bach's Das Mary Wigman Werk, p. 19. Dresden: Carl Reissner Verlag, 1933.

During the first years of the modern dance its exponents mistakenly believed that merely to revolt against the classical ballet and the interpretive dancing of the early twentieth century was sufficient to establish a new trend in the dance art. First reactions were of complete self-expressionism with no apparent form. However, Horst and the other leading figures in this developmental period soon began to sense the necessity for arranging dance materials along the lines of a structural order. They realized that if dance was to gain stature as an independent art it must find permanency in a definitive shape. This belief is substantiated by DeWitt Parker's aesthetic appraisal of form, for he has written:

> Impatient artists rebel against forms, but wise ones either accommodate their genius to them, until they become in the end a second and equally spontaneous nature, or else create new forms, as definite as the old.[2]

It is doubtful that anyone today would challenge this philosophy. All contemporary art has demonstrated a concern with form, and all artists have learned to deal with the materials of their art through a knowledge of form. Clive Bell, noted art critic, emphasized the point when he advanced the hypothesis that "significant form is the essential quality in a work of art."[3] When the composer

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[2] DeWitt H. Parker, The Principles of Aesthetics, p. 81. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1946 (2d. edition).

[3] Clive Bell, Art, p. 16. New York: Frederick A. Stokes and Co., 1914.

matures in the use of form he can take certain liberties, for, as Horst has pointed out:

> The finer composer we become the less we reveal the structure. It must be there, but it doesn't have to jump out at the audience. Form is merely the plan of the composition, and one shouldn't become such a slave to it that paralysis results. We follow a plan in dance as we have followed a plan in music, not mechanically but with good taste, taking advantage of poetic license to break rules only after they have been well-learned.[4]

The following discussion is based upon Horst's general concepts of the nature and importance of form as revealed in his classes, conversations, writings, and lectures.

Outer structure. Louis Horst turned to the well-established musical forms for the outer structure of dance compositions, formulating problems for his students to solve according to many of the rules which are indispensable to the composition of music. The form becomes the framework of the composition, and the material is handled according to a definite plan.

Most of his compositions he based upon a universal pattern, which in music is known as the simple song form or the ABA. The first or A section contains the opening theme, the B serves to introduce material of contrasting but related nature, and the second A represents some return to the

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[4] Horst, recorded interview, April 7, 1952. Reel No. 2.

original theme, wholly or in part, to concede to the demand for an orderly arrangement of the material.

> There are certain laws of dynamic symmetry and certain laws of form and balance that don't change. Human beings are the same way. We might look completely different from the South Australian Bushman, for instance, but we're still the same basic form. We've changed from the monkey, but we're not much different in form. The basic form is there.[5]

After the student has acquired sufficient experience in handling the ABA form, Horst introduces him to other forms such as the theme and variations, rondo, and sonata. Even these have a relationship to the ABA, although they are more complex from a structural sense. The problem represented by the theme and variations is that of developing the original A section through interesting manipulation of movement. Its success depends upon how skillfully the composer can vary the theme without losing its original threads. The basic material must be re-shaped without losing the interest of an audience.

Horst analyzes Martha Graham's composition, Frontier, as an example of the way a choreographer can use the rondo form. The pattern of this dance is ABACADAEAFA, although most spectators have become so absorbed with its dramatic content and its unique beauty of movement that the structure has escaped notice. The A section of Frontier always takes place at the center of the backstage area, at a segment of

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[5] Horst, recorded interview, April 8, 1952. Reel No. 5.

a ranch-type fence. The other sections of the dance, which contained a reference to various aspects of frontier life--exploration, homesteading, trials and tribulations, celebration--utilize other stage areas. But there is an inevitable return to the fence-rail as the A section is repeated. Graham's artistry and ability to sublimate the form to suit the content, her inventiveness of movement, covers up the basic form so well that even experienced critics sometimes are not aware of it.

Horst considers the sonata form as an extension and an enlargement of the simple ABA form in which certain minor additions, essential for the purpose of continuity, are inserted.

Sometimes the content of a dance requires a certain irregularity of form, but he feels that this license is permissible only after the choreographer has worked with the basic forms and has acquired the disciplines they impose. The advanced student is given more freedom from basic form, since his concern at this stage of learning is with content.

> You don't do ABA'ing through your dance life, ever. So many of your dance ideas are dramatic ideas, and they don't always evolve that way. But then you follow a form such as you find in a play or a novel, and those haven't changed much. . . .We still write plays much as Aeschylus and Euripides did.[6]

Manipulation. In Horst's measure of a composer's

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[6] Ibid.

ability he passes judgment on the skill with which the material of each section of the composition is manipulated. In his classes he points out that the real problem of composition in both music and dance is to reveal the significant potential of the thematic material. Both arts are concerned with taking up time. The basic theme might be stated in the first two bars, but to extend it to composition length the composer must be able to develop this theme. This can be done through the use of specific devices. The original theme can be repeated or restated in a different sequential order. A small segment of it can be reiterated. The material can be extended by inversion, by augmentation, by rhythmic variations, by altering the range of movement (large and expansive to small and contracted), or by varying its tempo. The discipline of developing a section of the composition from a short theme is important.

The theme to be developed should illustrate the principle to the economy of means. Horst generally limits the initial statement to a time span of two bars, citing Beethoven's genius in his manipulation of the two-note cuckoo theme in the First Movement of the Fifth Symphony. He permits nothing to be added to the first statement in the way of new movement, saying that the real problem is how to manipulate what has already been stated.

Manipulation of the germinal idea is the most

difficult problem the beginner faces. Because of the fear of becoming monotonous there is a tendency to add new material instead of attempting to create visual interest through skillful treatment of the basic theme. By learning to employ devices such as those previously mentioned, the student can acquire this essential facility.

Component parts. In analyzing the component parts of a composition Horst points out the three things which are unavoidable--the beginning, the middle, and the end. First the composer must decide how he wants to start the composition, then what he wants to do with it to develop the idea, and, lastly, how he intends to bring it to its necessary conclusion. In general practice, a dance begins with the important first statement of idea, seldom building up to this by an introduction such as is frequently done in a dramatic production. However, there are times when the dance form seems to necessitate some kind of prologue, such as an entrance upon stage; but where this occurs, Horst maintains that a reversal of the introduction conclude the dance--that the dancer make an exit. If there is to be an introduction, such as coming on stage or picking up an object, this must not be confused with the first statement of the composition. In most instances the dance begins on stage at the moment the curtain is raised.



Classical dance forms. The basic structure of the court dances of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, most of which are in a simple two-part form,[7] provide the beginning students with elementary models upon which to design their first compositions in dance. These traditional forms, the social dances of their time, provide a concise reference for new dances but they are of no compositional value as reproductions. "The modern dance is concerned with reference rather than representation."[8]

Horst maintains that any attempt to reproduce traditional dances of another historical period is not a creative activity. The creator and the thing created belong to the same time. He insists that, although, as Parker has asserted, "The present repeats much of the form of the past," we must build upon this past and give a new slant to the old ideas.[9] If art is to continue its evolutionary progress by being a vital expression of contemporary existence, it must contribute to the discoveries of past generations by adding something new.

Horst gives instruction in the fundamentals of dance

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[7] "The principle of the two-part form . . . is the perfect balance between two contrasted but unified parts, each ended by a complete cadence." Howard A. Murphy, Form in Music for the Listener, p. 6. New York: Radio Corporation of America, 1945.

[8] Horst, recorded interview, April 7, 1952, Reel No. 3.

[9] Parker, op. cit., p. 36.

composition through analysis of the two and three-part[10] forms which are characteristic of most dances of the past such as the Gavotte, the Minuet, and the Sarabande. His students are enjoined to retain only the basic elements of these forms--the structural outline, meter, tempo, and predominant style. Within these limitations they are expected to discover new ways of moving. The study of the traditional dance forms of the pre-classical period serves to establish a habit of working with clarity and disciplined assurance. Eventually this habit becomes ingrained, and the experienced choreographer no longer needs to concentrate upon it.

> We do such things as tip our hat to a lady because it is good form to do it. We don't even think about it any more. And a good dancer falls intuitively into some traditional form which has been handed down to us, for we can never completely throw off the past.[11]

Other contributory forms. Although the universal pattern of the ABA or variations of this trinity, as exemplified by the rondo, the sonata, or the theme and variations, is the one Horst uses most frequently, he occasionally will sanction the use of other distinctive forms. He suggests that certain literary forms such as can be found in drama, poetry, opera, and the novel can be applied to dance

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[10] "In the three-part form it [the principle of repetition] takes complete control and repeats not only the ending but at least the beginning of Part I as well--the familiar ABA design." Murphy, op. cit., p. 6.

[11] Horst, recorded interview, April 8, 1952. Reel No. 5.

composition. He does not think that the unique forms contained in painting, sculpture, and architecture are adaptable, however, since although they do exist in space they do not develop according to a time sequence. Only such forms of art as exist in time, or in time and space, as move forward in time, as contain a beginning, a middle, and an end can be used for dance structure.

He does not rule out the influence of painting, sculpture, and architecture upon the modern dance, for these are of value in the consideration of content and style, but they do not affect the form. Music, drama, dance, and poetry, on the other hand, have a close relationship formwise because they all operate under the laws of time-progression. They can interchange their forms, and often do. In music, for example, we can observe the tone-poem, the operatic music-drama, the dance suites, the musical comedies, the masses--all forms which have been borrowed from other arts.

The same adaptive process can take place in the modern dance, although Horst warns against the danger of becoming too literal in so doing. "The more you lean on another form, the less individual is your art."[12] The study of form in art is a preparation for composing, but the true basis of all dancing for the mature artist is "something deep

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[12] Ibid.

within you."[13]

New forms. According to Louis Horst, the general outline of all form, the ABA or its variations, will remain constant for the dance. He concedes that new forms of a more specific nature might evolve, possibly stemming from social dance forms, but even these will contain the basic structure. His theory can be supported by analysis of the development of the dance forms of the pre-classical period, the social dance of its day, which later became established art forms. The birth of the blues, the insistence of the jazz idiom of the twentieth century, conceivably might lead toward a new structural form.

> The modern American dance is characterized . . . by a direct relationship to the blood flow of the time and country that nourishes it. To have an American dance we must take these characteristics as a starting point, then from a cognizance of old forms we shall build a new order.[14]

The dance, to become a work of art, must have a distinguishable form, a shape, a planned outline. This is Louis Horst's first principle of dance composition, and one shared by most dance educators.

> The student is already familiar . . . with the principle that the movements of the dance, however spirited and spontaneous, are in no sense of the word erratic.

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[13] Martha Graham, in Merle Armitage, Martha Graham, p. 110.

[14] Ibid., pp. 100-101.

What he is now beginning to learn is that the dance, fluid as it is, has its own artistic shape and its own artistic principles.[15]

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[15] Margaret H'Doubler, The Dance and Its Place in Education, p. 183. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1925.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONTENT OF COMPOSITION

Scope and importance. Dance critics generally agree that the content of the composition is of primary importance. For the experienced dance artist, for whom form has become a matter of habit and good practice, the chief concern is for the content of the dance. Content is contained within a certain framework, a specific form, and deals with an idea which is to be communicated through meaningful movement. It is the development of the composer's initial concept, the course taken by the "seed idea"[1] that has germinated in the mind of its originator.

"Content should suit the idea," as Louis Horst continually advises his students when evaluating their works, "If you begin with a certain idea then you must stay with it and not just add a movement here and there because it feels good."[2]

It depends upon the creative inventiveness of the

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[1] Martha Coleman, "On the Teaching of Choreography: Interview with Jean Erdman," Dance Observer, XIX, No. 4 (November, 1952), 52-53.

[2] Horst, recorded interview, April 7, 1952. Reel No. 2.

composer and cannot be reduced to absolute theories. There is an intangibility about the creative process that defies analysis. It is part of the mystery of the personal equation. As Horst has said:

> We can all teach theory. Theory is how to construct. It teaches you the things that take place in a composition. You can teach the structural knowledge of how to put movement together to make a dance, but to make it live and vibrate with something--that's inside. It can't be taught. You can urge people toward an intensity so that they don't move like dead fish all the time, so that they give a dramatic impact to their dance, but further than that you can't go. The actual imaginative richness takes maturity and is the result of experience. It doesn't happen in people much before thirty, anyway. I think that a lot of the creative activity is subconscious. We don't know how it comes about. It's in the lap of the gods, I say."[3]

Sources for material. Students can be directed toward specific sources for subject matter, for ideas to dance about. These sources are almost limitless and are within easy access. As Horst has suggested, "We can take the past or the present. But a new slant must be brought to the old themes, just as O'Neill did in Mourning Becomes Electra."[4] Many successful dances have used old themes, treating them by making the characters modern or giving a universal meaning to the theme. The Moor's Pavane by José Limón illustrates this process. The principal character in the dance

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[3] Horst, recorded interview, April 8, 1952. Reel No. 4.

[4] Horst, recorded interview, April 7, 1952. Reel No. 2.

resembles Shakespeare's Othello, but the ingenious movement Limón has created gives a new slant to the universal theme of the jealous husband.

The Greek tragedies have been a fertile source for content, particularly in recent years. Martha Graham has become fascinated with their psychological implications and has used many of their basic themes--Night Journey and Errand into the Maze, as well as several other recent works. These are not mimed versions of the tragic dramas of Sophocles, Euripides, and Aeschylus. They have a stream of consciousness aspect to them and a contemporary meaning that reveals the singular manifestations of a genuinely creative artist.

Episodes in early American history often can serve as content for dance. A notable example of this was Doris Humphrey's exquisite composition, The Shakers. She delved into the records of this unique religious sect for details of custom and practice, then based her dance upon her own reactions to the subject.

Horst places no limit on the search for ideas. He encourages his students to explore in a wide range--to dip into literature; to look at cartoons; to visit art galleries, concert halls, and places of worship. The daily newspaper he suggests as an excellent source--want ads, editorials, the agony column, the social calendar. Universal experiences,

too, such as sorrow or joy, hunger or satiation, life or death can provide inspiration. But then, after the initial idea has been discovered, the dancer must "go into herself."[5]

Working title. According to Horst's teaching, the germ of the content of the composition should be expressed in a working title from the very beginning. This title should be a simple and clear statement of the basic idea of the dance and should reveal, in a few words, what the composer has in mind. It should indicate that particular aspect of the idea that the dancer has selected, for it must reveal the approach of the composer to the subject.

> If the dance is about war, then the choreographer must first decide which angle of war is to be presented--the wounded soldier's return, the soldiers in battle, the men marching off to war, or the destruction of a city. Then this should be set down in words, specific words, because then you will have ideas about ways of moving. You might employ military gestures, or fighting gestures, or other gestures coming out of your thoughts about a specific aspect of war. That doesn't mean that you try to imitate a soldier--that you pick up a gun, put it on your shoulder, and go shoot at somebody--but it gives some suggestion as to ways of moving which can be incorporated in your composition.[6]

The working title provides the dancer with implications for movement. If the dance is to be about rejection, and this idea is implied in its title, then the movements

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[5] Horst, recorded interview, April 7, 1952. Reel No. 3.

[6] Horst, recorded interview, April 8, 1952. Reel No. 5.

can be derived from those used in the natural state of rejection. "You can push something away, turn your back on it, kick it out."[7] This can give the composer a start, even though later these realistic gestures must be sublimated and fitted into a design.

When the composition is finished the working title can be changed, to dress it up for an audience. Although the final title might be more obscure than its working title, even then Horst demands that it reveal something of what the composer has in mind. It should not be so far removed from the content of the composition that the dancer can be accused of being esoteric.

> There are always a few dancers like that--the ones who try to find titles in lines from poems where the meaning is unclear. Those are the "arty fringers," the dreamers who refuse to come down to earth. You find them in any art. Clarity is a jewel.[8]

Sublimation of gesture. Until a subject is abstracted from its natural state it cannot be considered art, and until a dancer can learn to abstract movement from the natural gestures his composition cannot pass for dance--it will be pantomime.

Many dance movements that are used to reveal the content of a composition are derived from common gestures,

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

and it is doubtful if any movement can actually be considered new or divorced from some sort of meaning. Louis Horst agrees with Doris Humphrey that every movement probably has been made at some time or another and once had a meaning. If a dance is to be about sorrow its movement theme probably will be based upon a swaying from side to side. "We tend in real life to sway when we grieve--to bend low and close in--just as when we feel joyous we tend to expand and lift our bodies. Why we do this we don't know."[9]

According to this theory it is impossible for dance movement to become completely abstract and non-representational. Some of the other arts can become so. A musical note has no particular meaning, nor does a dot or a line in a painting, but movement, no matter how strange, usually has a meaning for someone. As it becomes traditionalized it may lost its original import and take on a new connotation. Today we shake hands as a token of friendship where formerly this act signified that we were unarmed and bore no malice. The same gesture in two opposing cultures may mean something quite different. Zuni Indians stick out their tongues to indicate a specific direction. In our culture this would be interpreted as an expression of derision. Since all movement has a significance, it is difficult for the dance to be completely cerebral or sbstract. Its movements generally

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[9] Horst, recorded interview, April 7, 1952. Reel No. 4.

will suggest something, for "whether emotion gives birth to motion, or motion to emotion, movement is likely to be meaningful."[10]

Movement can approach the abstract, nevertheless. Gesture can be sublimated. The beginning student can be shown ways of redirecting his movements in designing his composition. Since it is a common and fallacious belief that the dance is something which is concerned with acting without words, Horst places an emphasis upon the importance of discovering ways of breaking away from traditionalized gestures. He suggests exaggeration as one means--performing the gesture in an extended or contracted range as a departure from the original. Another method for distorting the original gesture is the technique of minimizing all but the most salient features of the subject--the cartoonists' technique. The non-essential details of the gesture are eliminated and the essential ones are blown up. Horst recommends stylization of the gesture as still another means.

> If you are crying, you shouldn't dig your fist into your eye and haul out your handkerchief. You might follow the example set for us by the Japanese in the Noh dramas. If a woman is to express crying she slides a hand into the opposite sleeve of her kimona and pulls it toward her bent head.[11]

Doris Humphrey suggests that the gesture might be made by a

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Horst, recorded interview, April 7, 1952. Reel No. 4.

part of the body not ordinarily assigned to the action.[12] In place of shaking hands two dancers could make the same motions with their feet. Instead of kicking the cat one might reject the feline by an elbow or by a jerk of the head. This approach to sublimation is particularly good when a comic effect is desired, for an audience can recognize the relatedness of the movement to the normal gesture as well as its absurdity.

Rhythmic variations given to the movement will render it less obvious. Horst suggests that a movement could be performed rapidly, applying energy in staccatto-like spurts. Then, for contrast, it could be done smoothly and slowly. He proposes that the composer vary the design of the movement in its spatial sense--a short or a long line of the movement--putting it along an arc, a vertical line, a diagonal line. The problem is to depart from the literal use of the gesture. "If the music composer wants to write a pastorale he doesn't have to have a cow mooing. He might write a sustained note for the horn which will sound like a cow, but it's really just an F sharp or a G."[13]

Through stylization and formalization from the natural Horst demonstrates in his teaching the possibility

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[12] Doris Humphrey, from notes taken in a course in advanced composition, August, 1948.

[13] Horst, recorded interview, April 8, 1952. Reel No. 4.

of referring to things without actually representing them. While movement contains certain overtones which are meaningful, or what the Greeks termed metakinetic, the composer must "select the kind of movement . . . that is the product of a mental, an emotional, a non-physical demand."[14]

Indigenousness. Horst agrees with Humphrey and others that content is related to an interest in the things and trends of one's own time and culture: "I believe that the dancer belongs to his time and place and that he can only express that which passes through or close to his experience."[15]

As history reveals, dance, like the other arts, is expressive of the predominating spirit of its time. The Minuet, it reflected the social mannerisms of this period of luxurious and aristocratic living. The Spaniards of the Inquisition had their Pavane, a slow and powerful dance which expressed the cruel and dominating power of the ruling class. "The form society assumes at a given moment is reflected in the art of that moment."[16] Nothing is more natural than for creative artists to find much of their subject matter within

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Doris Humphrey, "My Approach to the Modern Dance," in Frederick Rand Rogers, Dance: A Basic Educational Technique, p. 188. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1941.

[16] Adolfo Salazar, Music in Our Time, p. 13. Translated by Isabel Pope. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1946.

their own historical period.

It is not unusual for students in Horst's classes to select dance themes indigenous to our twentieth century interest in the jazz idiom, or themes which relate to the social structure of our times. "In part, its movement may be used for decoration, entertainment, emotional release, or technical display; but primarily it is composed as an expression of American life. . . ."[17] The greatest danger in this practice as Horst sees it is the overuse of that which is fashionable, until it becomes as familiar as a tune on the Hit Parade.

Colloquialism. Although our daily existence can provide subject-matter adaptable for dance, Horst believes that students should be cautioned against selecting themes which he considers to be colloquial. He feels that they are so close to us that they are difficult to sublimate. For the beginning choreographer he recommends that ideas which are more subjective and more universal be chosen, since they can be more easily manipulated. Subjects that are likely to foster literal and pantomimic interpretation only add to the difficulties of composing.

Horst thinks that, in general, colloquial subjects lack dignity and cannot be handled with sufficient fullness.

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[17] Humphrey, "My Approach to the Modern Dance," op. cit.

They seldom can be fitted into a clear form like the ABA. For this reason he advocates that the inexperienced choreographer avoid such subjects as gangsterism, prize-fighting, election campaigns, football and other sports.

Horst considers as atypical those successful compositions which have employed colloquial subjects. Sophie Maslow's The Champion, based upon the Ring Lardner short story of the ascendency and decline of a boxer, has been able to surmount the obstacles of colloquialism. Sometimes in a comic dance there is the desire to lampoon familiar subjects, as in People and Things of Emily Frankel and Mark Ryder. This composition is a commentary upon the acquisitive nature of a modern husband and wife, and depends upon the use of props--lamps, radios, telephones, clocks--to communicate this idea.

Comedy sometimes can afford the risk of being literal because of the necessity of making its point. It is less subjective than tragedy, although the outcome seldom approaches the standard of a work of art. Frequently it bears the same relationship to art that a cartoon does to a fine painting. Horst believes that it is possible to sublimate certain comic situations if the choreographer will go deeper into the subject. For illustration he points out that a dance about Coney Island might be sublimated if the composer would treat it as an expression of its tawdry cheapness or its complete non-sensicalness.

Overworked material. In a discussion about themes which have been used with too much frequency, Horst observed:

> After the war we had too many dances about coming back to bombed cities--We the People set off a lot of dances of We the People coinage. Steig drawings did, too--My Mother Didn't Love Me sort of thing. We've had an overdose of folk ballads as well--everyone tried to climb On Top of Old Smokey! In the Twenties most of the dances had a sort of pink tinge--we were doing Down with Capitalism in those days, delivering messages to the working people [e.g., Martha Graham's Revolt, composed in 1927]. Then we got interested in social justice with our dances about anti-lynching and the like. And now we have the psychological dance dramas--everyone is doing them. There's always a mother and a daughter fighting for the love of the son, or the mother trying to keep possession of the son against his sweetheart. It's the eternal triangle, the psychological triangle--Oedipus all over the place in every different way. It can get terribly corny, just as the earlier introspective dances did.[18]

Horst points out that a new direction taken by one of our leading dance artists often sets a new trend in ideology. Graham's Letter to the World which utilized the spoken words of some of the poems of Emily Dickinson unleashed a tidal wave of dances accompanied by words. Folksay of Sophie Maslow was the forerunner for hundreds of dances based upon American balladry. It is to be expected that a successful new composition is likely to initiate a game of follow-the-leader, for imitativeness is more prevalent than inventiveness. Horst is tolerantly receptive to such imitation of content and device, for, as he asserts, "In the end we'll

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[18] Horst, recorded interview, April 8, 1952. Reel No. 5.

always put up with any kind of dance if it measures up--if its good. Dance can't help but follow the popular taste of its time because it is a contemporary art."[19]

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[19] Ibid.

CHAPTER V

BASIC ELEMENTS OF THE MODERN DANCE

Success in organizing the structural elements of an art into a meaningful whole is attained only through a detailed study of each element in turn. The laws and operating principles governing the function of each element should be understood if the creative artist is to master the tools of his craft. Contained within each art are specific technical ingredients which, when combined, give to it a unique status and set it apart from the other arts. Yet an interrelationship of all the arts is apparent, due to the similarities of these basic elements. Thus an examination of the underlying principles of any one art will contribute to an understanding of the others.

In presenting the foundation materials of the modern dance, Louis Horst often turns to painting, sculpture, literature, drama, poetry, and architecture for analogies to clarify certain significant features of the dance. Nevertheless, it is to music that he refers most frequently. He believes that dance is more closely related to music than to any of the other arts.

The basic musical elements of rhythm, melody, and harmony operate under much the same set of rules as do the basic elements of dance, which Horst defines as rhythm, melodic linear design, and harmonic texture.

In the belief that a complete presentation of Louis Horst's theories is a necessary basis for a detailed consideration of the elements of contemporary dance, an exact record of his responses to questions prepared by the interviewer is presented. These have been transcribed from the tape contained on reels six and seven and are without alteration from the original material, except for the elimination of the extraneous.

Rhythm

Are there any radical differences between modern rhythms and those of the classic and romantic periods?

> --Well, in the main there are only slight differences. Rhythms haven't changed exactly, but they have broadened and become more flexible. Even during the time of Bach there was a reaction against the regular rhythms of the Medieval composers. Everything then was written in classic proportions, either in two, four, eight, or in three, six, nine, twelve. These were symmetrical rhythms. They never thought of using what the Russians in the late nineteenth century called "oblique" rhythms. So it was natural that when art became more asymmetrical, rhythms should also take their place with more freedom, using fives and sevens, and mixing rhythms so there was a change in every measure.
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> The same break-up of the rigid pattern happened in poetry. The poets refused to be tyrannized by symmetrical and traditional meters, so now we have vers libre--in fact, it doesn't look like poetry when

you see it, sometimes. But in this way there is a greater relaxation. That doesn't mean that every five-beat bar has to be a dance about a ghost or a wounded person--that you must always move off-balance--but it is natural that if you do a dance that concerns a disturbed condition, an uneven rhythm will create a more realistic feeling of it through the rhythmic motivation.

We don't feel that we have to be bound by pedestrian symmetrical rhythms of two, four, eight, and three, six, nine. Just because we begin a composition in 4/4 time doesn't mean we have to stay with it throughout--we have much more flexibility in our rhythm. However, the bulk of music and the bulk of dance still is written in even rhythms. We have two hands and two feet, and it would get just as boring to have everything in fives and sevens and in complete unevenness.

Often in your classes you speak of action rhythms. What do you mean by this term?

--This is rhythm which is realistic, rhythm that helps to produce an action feeling, like Prokofiev writing a piece called Phantom in 5/8 time. This produced an action feeling of a phantom, of something which isn't seen clearly. If you were to do a dance of turmoil, or disturbance, or indecision you would move unevenly. Now if you would set a dance of indecision in an uneven rhythm, it would become more complete in action than if you were to set it to a straight 4/4 time. You still could do it to a 4/4, but an uneven rhythm would make the action correct, almost automatically.

Why does a composition in 3/4 time produce a feeling of symmetry which is not felt in 5/4 or in 7/8? They all are uneven in number.

--Probably because of the difference in the ratio of the numbers and the unevenness of the units. With the 3/4 you have even units. It is broken down into a two and a one, or a one and a two, and two is twice as long as one, making it symmetrical. A five is divided into three and two, and the relationship between three and two is not symmetrical. There is no natural relationship established--they are two separate units and make for a stranger pattern.

You don't think it might be because we are more accustomed to the 3/4 that it seems symmetrical?

--No, because it can be balanced. Symmetry arises because of balance. In a five, the three and the two are not balanced. I can show you drawings of Matisse where one eyebrow relates to the other almost like a three to a two, and you'll find when he draws vases that one side will compare spatially with the other side in a similar ratio. This automatically creates distortion.

Still isn't it possible to get distortion in a 3/4 meter if you employ phrases of uneven lengths instead of the customary eight-measure phrase?

--Yes, the classic musicians did that. Haydn often uses a five-measure phrase, but it is so long that it doesn't have much dramatic effect. A five-bar phrase sounds a little uneven in its length, but when you use 12345, 12345, 12345, 12345 you get it more quickly. It comes up immediately because the two and three play up against each other.

Is that the clue, then, the quickness of the occurrence within the measure to produce the distortion?

--Yes, the quick turn making a count of five into a unit of two and a unit of three. That creates unevenness, what I call dissonant rhythm.

Curt Sachs, in a lecture given recently at the University of Michigan, suggested the theory that the seven is a more fundamental rhythm than the five, that it is a basic rhythm which occurs frequently in nature. Would you agree with this?

--No, I wouldn't say that. I don't know that seven is used more in nature than a five. We have a five-pointed star--we have many things that are fives. Musically we use a five more than a seven. A seven is larger than the five, and you don't get the same quick breaks back and forth. Seven can be made very uneven, but either you get the two twos and a three, or a two, three, two which then begins with another two. After all, even the Greeks used the pentameter.

Do you consider pulse and rhythm in the same sense?

--Yes, more or less. There's a common garden



variety of rhythm which is what we call the beat of the thing. Then there is the phrase rhythm like the five-bar, but that isn't the actual rhythm. We look upon that as a phrase length. We say a composition has a broad rhythm, a broad pulse. The pulse of a thing is how it beats--like the pulse of your heart.

Does the heart-beat serve as a reliable indicator of tempi?

--Yes, but you can perform an exciting dance and feel bored as the devil, you know. Of course, in the analysis of a composition--in its conception--if you wanted to show excitement your movements should have that quality of a fast-beating heart, to give out that feeling. You would likely have an uneven heart-beat if something happened to upset you. This does tie up.

Is there any similarity between the way we use rhythm and the way rhythm is developed in Oriental music?

--No, I don't think so. The Oriental rhythms are outside the practical adaptation. We've looked into it--musicologists have tried to adapt it--but we have plenty of our own intricate rhythms now. A man like Stravinsky doesn't have to go to Oriental music for strange rhythms.

Is that what we're after, strangeness in our rhythms?

--Well, at least we want to be strange enough to get away from the pedestrian rhythms of the classic--away from four centuries of everything being set. This was a little like the Chinese who had never heard Western music. He came to America, and a friend of his took him to a symphony concert. When asked how he liked it he said, "It's all right, only it's all march music!" Oriental rhythms are much more subtle. The classic symphonies of Beethoven, Haydn, and Mozart go along in the same rhythm with which they begin.

Now if you do a movement in four, and then you do it in five, you will do it a little more strangely--unconsciously. The action rhythm will make the movement a little strange.

Then do you believe that our rhythms are characteristic of our Western culture?

--All our art is more or less characteristic of Western civilization. Occasionally we'll see the influence of Orientalism in a dance, but we don't draw much from it.

I think all our art stems from Greece--from the early Greek civilization--and from the primitive. By primitive I don't mean the Oriental or the exotic--real primitive art might be African, or Babylonian, or American Indian. Yet the American Indian undoubtedly was an Oriental, once. But Oriental art has a formlessness which is difficult for us to understand. The music with its endless arabesques seems to wander like a cloud or a mist.

Modern painters were influenced by Japanese watercolors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, because those artists were strict formalists. Ancient Chinese art was very formal, too. When you speak of Oriental, I don't always include Japan and China. They had an archaic art which in its clarity has a relationship to Western art. Oriental, to me, implies East Indian and even the Arabian. It is like incense.

Would you explain the term pedestrian which you often use in describing the evenness of classical rhythm?

--Pedestrian means prosaic. If you are a pedestrian sort of person, you go along in the same rhythm--you never get out of it. Pedestrianism is uninteresting--it means to walk. We speak of pedestrian art, implying that it is common and uninteresting.

Does the composer need an understanding of rhythms which are nationalistic, such as the South American?

--They don't use them particularly. By this time we already have brought our own rhythms up to a high point of complexity. We might be a little influenced by primitive or South American rhythms--by certain effects of syncopation--but syncopation isn't a change of rhythm so much as it is a breaking up of the rhythm.

In the classic days musicians got unevenness by syncopating the music. That is not the same as ragtime and jazz. It means getting the beats off the main beats so that another rhythm is created within the even rhythm. They might use a 4/4 rhythm but write it in 3/4, to create an uneven feeling. They

didn't change the time signature to do that; they did it within the regular rhythm.

Would you illustrate this syncopated effect further?

--All the popular composers do this. George Gershwin relied heavily on it. He used what we call resultant rhythms. There might be three fours, and then within that four threes. A group can do this, or two instruments can. I've done it with some of Martha's things. She might move in five bars of four and I'd write four bars of five to it. This creates a rhythmic counterpoint, a four against a five, playing one against the other. We often do that in dance.

How is a single-beat bar used, one written as 1/4? Does it wear itself out quickly?

--Very quickly. It can't be used much--only now and then in between other rhythms. Sometimes we don't want to make a fifth beat, if a composition is in 4/4. We don't want a 12345, we want a 1234 1 1234--. It gives a different feeling, like two starts on a thing instead of a weak upbeat. One being a primary beat, the single-beat bar would get a primary accent.

Does accent determine the rhythm?

--Well, of course you can have rhythm without accent because anything has a rhythm if it goes forward in a time sense, but classically speaking we mark the beginning of a bar with an accent on the one. We do 1234 123 12 1, because the more we accent the more we are aware of the rhythm. But the American Indian didn't know anything about a bar or a measure even though when we take their songs down we put them into this form.

Then the bar line is an arbitrary thing, isn't it?

--Oh, yes! Even Schumann began to make the bar line arbitrary. And Satie was one of the first to do without bar lines. When we accent we speak of the dynamics of a composition.

How does a dancer accent movement?

--By being more dynamic, making a percussive movement to accentuate what she has been doing. That doesn't mean that everything must be accented--you

unconsciously put a little more pressure on the first count of a bar, but it doesn't have to be too obvious. You can't count aloud, so you show the rhythm of the movement by a little pressure--a little pulse. You should feel the pulse in a dance, just as musicians should show the difference between a 4/4 meter and a 2/4, even though both could be played the same way. In a 2/4 it should be 1̲2 1̲2 1̲2; two bars of 2/4 are not equivalent to one bar of 4/4 because of the accent. Anyone who has had training seems to develop a sense of intuitive accent.

Is accent in dance a matter of giving the movement an additional spurt of energy at a given point?

--Yes, you hit it a little harder. You can even show it in your facial expression. This occurs in all the arts. Poetry must have its proper beat; syllables in a word must have their stress at the right time. You put a little additional weight on something, and that makes the accent.

Are there any other ways of indicating an accent in dance? Could this be done with a change in the direction of the movement, in the spatial design?

--Any change of space is an accent, because a change of direction is important to the movement. It is bound to be an accent.

Why is asymmetry in art more pleasing to us now than when artists, musicians, poets, and dancers first began experimenting with it?

--Because we have become accustomed to it. Usage determines our acceptance of things.

This was true even with the classic composers. I recall Honegger's account of his first visit with Cezanne. When he wrote about it he said that he couldn't understand why a man who was such a fine painter was so determined to be ugly in the way he painted. Today we think Cezanne's canvasses are poetic and lovely--we change. We have even gotten used to dissonances. Dissonance doesn't sound as harsh to our ears as it did back in the nineteenth century.

Might this familiarity not eventually lead us to the same conditions against which we have been struggling?



--Yes, these things move in cycles. Today we use uneven rhythms as part of our bag of tools--we use fives and sevens, we change rhythm from one bar to another, we use a lot of syncopated rhythm in our jazz. Some composers write in terrifically complex rhythms, like a thirteen against a seven, but these are humanly impossible to play, almost. Someday we might get tired of this and return to more symmetrical uses of rhythm, but not in just the same way as did the classical composers.

In your classes do you concentrate on problems based upon rhythmic devices, such as mixed meter or resultant rhythms?

--Not specifically, no, unless in learning a new form the rhythm becomes a problem. Students can get all that from Dalcroze or in the elementary classes where they are taught note values and the like. A dancer should know the value of notes to have some symbol of measurement, but you could call it three apples or three pies or three anything. As long as musicians have divided time into symbols we might just as well take them over, for you have to divide your movements into some rhythmic units.

Oh, in the Bourrée I use the up-beat--4 1234--and a Gavotte is 34 1234--this is part of the form. And I do take up rhythm when we work with uneven rhythms in the Modern Forms classes.

Isn't it conceivable that rhythm as well as harmony can give texture to a composition?

--No, rhythm has no tone.

If it is polyrhythmic, wouldn't you get a feeling of texture?

--You'd get counterpoint of rhythm but not texture. Texture is a sound. Rhythm itself is beat, beat, beat--that's all. If I do two against three, this is just a counterpoint of movement. I use texture in a tonal sense. Rhythm is just the pulse--you don't have to hear anything.

Do you believe there is any validity in Carl Seashore's claim that rhythm is innate, or do you think it can be acquired?

--I've seen it learned. I have seen people who have had poor rhythm become better through discipline. Ninety-nine percent of the people have a natural

rhythm, I believe, because they walk in rhythm and they do many things in rhythm. Work usually is done in a rhythmic way. On the assembly line there is a certain observable rhythm, but it isn't an aesthetic rhythm. It is a natural rhythm, just as walking is a natural rhythm--you don't count it. Every once in a while I find a student who can't even walk on a 4/4, who doesn't hear the rhythm.

Then there should be concern with teaching an awareness of rhythm, shouldn't there?

--Yes, by all means. It should be a conscious perception of rhythm. A lot of people could improvise to a piece of music but not know if it were in 4/4, or 3/4, or 6/8. They could do it right, rhythmically, and not know it. They should become aware of what they are doing and should know the various dance rhythms we use, as well as the differences between them. A Waltz has one rhythm and a Minuet, which is also in 3/4, has a different quality to its pulse.

In dance, then, is the process that of first becoming aware of the rhythm before transposing it to movement?

--I think so, definitely. Every dancer should have a strong rhythmic sense. Every musician should, too.

Why is it so difficult to maintain a steady rhythm for any length of time?

--Well, even trained musicians have that difficulty. Henry Cowell demonstrated that by first giving the pulse and then asking his musicians to count up to ten in that same pulse and clap their hands. He reported that they were never together by the time they were at the tenth count.

It is human not to beat time like a machine. We are bound to vary, but not enough to worry about. You keep a rhythm, and yet you change it--we hurry and stress certain parts of a composition, we are likely to slow down in parts that are more reposeful. When things get more exciting, we unconsciously follow the bent to hurry.

Might this tendency be due to the emotions one is experiencing at the time?

--A little bit perhaps, and, too, because we are

not machines. I find people who have a tendency to drag, others who tend to rush things along. It depends upon the temperament of a person. Singers love to drag--they hate to let go of some notes; they hang on to them because they become so interested in the tonal quality. Some pianists do, too.

Do you find dancers have individual preferences as to tempi?

--Oh, yes, I get that in every class. When we do the slow Pavane certain ones find it difficult to hold back enough; then when we do the Galliard which is fast, some say, "Oh, I don't like fast tempi. I can't do anything with them." Then I say, "You should do a lot of them, then, and get used to them." We all have preferences. Some dancers are what we call slow dancers--they have a habit of doing one slow dance after another and have to force themselves to do a lively one, once in a while.

Melodic Linear Design

How does the melodic line in music relate itself to dance?

--By means of its movement delineation in space--the profile of the music. When you look at the melody you see the lines formed by a succession of notes that go up and down. It is what Surrett calls a series of notes curved to a line of beauty. That is sort of a flowery description, but we do curve the notes, and we speak of this as the melodic line--the linear element of music.

In dance we refer to movement delineation as the spatial design. Melody in dance is the way you use the space about you. This forms the profile of the dance. Even your body expresses this line by the designs it makes.

Why do we tend to consider the curved line as the most beautiful, from the standpoint of aesthetics?

--Because we have gotten into the habit of thinking of curves as being graceful. Now with modern music we jump--the melody is not nearly as easy to sing, and it doesn't flow as smoothly as classical music.

Moderns don't accept the curve as the symbol of beauty, but we get accused of being non-beautiful

because of the inevitable reaction against anything new. It is the minority which starts something new, and just because the majority doesn't get it doesn't make it wrong.

What are the operating principles which cause this difference in the profile of modern music?

--This has come about through the use of different scales, for the scales are the source materials for melody. From the Renaissance on, melodies were made from the diatonic scales, the major diatonic and the minor diatonic. If a piece was gay or affirmative, it was written in the major diatonic. If it was melancholic, or dramatic, or sad, it was written in the minor scale. Those two scales were the only sources of melodic materials for the great composers. Occasionally, as in one of Beethoven's quartettes, they would use a Lydian mode which was a little different.

The modern musicians rebelled against this practice because the melodies were so smooth and so predictable. The diatonic scale is predictable because it is made up of two even tetrachords. They began writing melodies to the pentatonic scale, which is a five-tone scale and has open spaces. Then the melody began to sound a little more open.

Debussy, Moussorgsky, and Ravel started using the six-tone scale, made up of whole tones with no half steps. Their compositions were spatial. If you move to a whole-tone scale you are apt to be more planal than if you move to a diatonic scale.

Composers began to use the old Greek modes--the Phrygian and the Dorian--which were in use during the Medieval period. This produced strange sounding melodies--melodies with more pull to them and less smooth.

How can dancers use this same approach to designing their compositions?

--They will automatically move differently to a pentatonic scale. Their lines will become less smooth and contain more openness instead of a continual curved flow. With the whole-tone scale, where everything is even, you are likely to do things having a sense of space, having a planal consciousness.

Romantic dancers never thought about space. When they were joyous they threw up their hands, and when they were sad they drooped. They never thought about the spatial organization.

What is the difference between moving to a pentatonic scale and moving to a whole-tone scale?

--Well, a pentatonic scale is more primitive--it is a little more open--the space would be apt to be a little more distorted. With the modes you get more pull, like the archaic quality. The modes begin to give you a feeling of tension, and you will move with a quality of tension which the ballet never uses.

Nowadays, musicians sometimes will use two tonalities at once--what we call bitonality--or even three or four, in some orchestrations--which we call polytonality. A dancer can't do this, for there is no way to establish tonality in a dance.

Musicians even do away with tonality altogether, by using the twelve-tone scale; and that is what we are doing today, mostly, writing a-tonal music. Melodies are apt to jump all over the place, and dance movement is broken.

How does a dancer establish mode in a composition?

--When you speak of a major mode, it really is a major mood--it is bright. You do a gay dance and you can say you are in the major mode, or you do something sad and you can call it the minor mode. You can show differences in moving to different scales by the quality of the movement and the delineation of the movement in space, for that is the line of the melody; but tonality belongs to sound.

Are you suggesting that the dancer try to follow the lines taken by a piece of music?

--No, not exclusively, for you shouldn't interpret music. You can't always avoid the instinctive and the natural, but you must free yourself from the tendency to follow the music to the exclusion of other ways of working to it.

When we compose music for dance, the musician must think of this, too, and if a dance movement begins to go up, it is sometimes more interesting for the melody

to go down. This sets up a counterpoint between the two which is more interesting. Beginning dancers usually lean too heavily on the music.

Harmonic Texture

Did the third element in dance, the harmonic texture as you call it, develop more recently than the temporal and melodic qualities, as was the case in music?

--Yes, for in the ballet we don't find much in the way of harmonic texture. Ballet is all rhythm and melody; it doesn't color its movements much nor use the torso as an instrument, the way we do in modern dance. It is bound by a tradition which concerned itself only with rhythm and melody.

Modern dancers consciously color movement by creating certain tensions in the muscles of the body--in the torso, particularly--and even in the arms and legs.

Harmonic texture is an inner thing. We hear a piece of music and we say, "That sounds like Debussy," but it isn't his melody or his rhythm that makes the piece recognizable, it is his harmony. It is the same with modern dance. We recognize it by that texture-like movement which comes through the torso; and this is a new thing in dance.

What is this texture?

--Casella calls harmony the physical part of music, and in dance it is the amount of tension in the muscles and the way these muscles are used. It is the inner feeling about it--its tensions, its distortion.

We think of melody in music as being on top and of rhythm as being in the base, below. Until Medieval days there was never anything in between. Then they began to write notes in between, and that became the harmony--the body of a composition.

Are these distorted tensions of movement the equivalent of dissonance?

--Yes, when we move with a certain inner tension, we are moving dissonantly--we try to get off balance.

The ballet has no dissonance, but the modern dance does. Dissonance isn't anything new--Bach, Beethoven, and the rest all used dissonance, but the rule in their time was that if you had a dissonance, you had to resolve it to a consonance. Then Debussy asked, "Why do I have to resolve a dissonance? Why can't I go from one dissonance to another?"--and he did.

Music is apt to be more dissonant now, as is painting and the other arts. We threw color harmony to the wind instead of following the rule that purple couldn't be used with certain other colors. Now the painters use anything against anything.

There is, in the same way, a dissonance in our use of words today. We speak and we write differently from the flowery prose of the nineteenth century. Dissonance is a new speech--it isn't just wrong notes. As Marion Bauer has said, "The tendency of a dissonance is to move." It is logical that a modern dance has this quality. That doesn't mean that you don't use consonance, too. Shoenberg said that he didn't mind consonance, but it took up so much room! You always had to add a consonance when you used a dissonance, and the consonance sounds so placid following a dissonance.

In dance is a movement which returns to the center of the body the same as resolving dissonance to a consonance?

--Yes, I would say that. It is the return to a feeling of being centered. As Doris Humphrey says, "All modern dance is getting off balance and then attempting to catch yourself."

Is it this dissonance in the harmonic texture which disturbs an audience?

--You bet it is, but it is a stimulating disturbance, aesthetically. The layman always picks on harmony when he says he doesn't like modern music. He compares it to the consonance of classic and romantic music and calls it discordant or cacophanous.

Any clash of sounds is cacophanous, just as any clash of colors is cacophanous. Kandinsky, Matisse, Monet saw colors in a new way. When you examine the little purple dots, the little green dots of a Monet, you are looking at a dissonance, but these create a

vibration. When you look at a modern painting you don't remain passive--and the same way with modern dance.

After watching a ballet you might say, "Isn't that lovely!" but after seeing Martha Graham you don't say that; you don't relax and think, "Isn't that pretty!" You are stimulated because the dissonance pulls you, because you have experienced an aesthetic disturbance.

Dissonance has a bite, an edge to it. The ear gets accustomed to it, and so does the eye, for dissonance doesn't seem dissonant to us now.

How does a dancer indicate an unresolved dissonance?

--Why, she does it all the time. She goes from one dissonance to another. It is a new idiom, a new speech. You don't have to alternate a contraction and a release, or a relaxation, nor move away from the center and return to it with the next movement. Your movement has a quality of vibrant luminosity.

What is the meaning of vibrant luminosity of movement?

--Well, it is a tenseness, a wonder, like a primitive seeing something for the first time. The movement has a quality that seems to vibrate. Not that you shake like a musical tremolo--that I don't mean. I mean an art is vibrant when it lives.

Is it an inner excitement?

--Yes, it is something modern dancers have that the ballet dancers don't often display. Isadora Duncan was vibrant, but modern dancers are apt to vibrate more. There's more intensity, we'll say. Intensity vibrates. You might be perfectly still physically, waiting to jump, but there is a vibration going on, a quality which we have in this art that comes from the primitive.

What of the meaning of luminosity?

--This is a term of the Impressionists because of their interest in light. Debussy's chords have this quality, I think. Light has a vibration, too. It is an inner feeling, and yet it is expressed physically.

How is this done?

> --Well, if you get technical I suppose you can't say that movement is really luminous, but we speak of dark movement or we speak of light movement. That means that it is colored in some way--that you feel it, that it has a vibrancy. Vibrant and luminous probably are synonymous. It is a phrase we use sometimes because it sounds nice, but it does mean something, although it is hard to explain. It has a specific quality.

What gives harmonic progression more interest than harmonic resolution?

> --A consonance always brings things to a stop, because it is something at rest. If you were always coming to a consonance after a dissonance, you would be continually stopping and starting. When we continue to move dissonantly we can go somewhere, and it is interesting because of its pull, its tension--it is never just relaxed.

Can you end a composition in either dance or music on a dissonance and still produce a feeling of finish?

> --Oh, yes. In the old days things could never end on a dissonance, but now we can and still have a feeling of finality. If we end consonantly, we end placidly. But we might not want to give that impression. You can use all the dissonance you want and still produce a sense of total finish. With the dance it is a sense of logical finish--you have made your point. We no longer want everything to end sweetly.

Because the two arts, dance and music, both exist in time, Horst has developed his theories of dance composition from an exploration of the natural bonds existing between the two. His musical parallelisms are not new to the analysis of dance, for Dalcroze based his work in Eurhythmics upon music structure, but Horst has further advanced the theory and has made it applicable to the contemporary dance

art. He admits that he selected this approach because of its convenience, but its effectiveness and logic are self-evident in the compositions developed under his supervision.

The uniqueness of Horst's approach is in his insistence that the dance must at all times dominate the music and not interpret it, and that a choreographer can compose through use of the same basic elements--rhythm, melody, and harmony--as those used by the musical composer.

CHAPTER VI

"PRE-CLASSIC AND MODERN FORMS"

Prerequisites and general characteristics. Most of the professional modern dancers in the United States, as well as many of the dance teachers in the educational institutions of this country, have taken Louis Horst's courses in dance composition, Pre-Classic and Modern Forms. Many observers consider these two courses to be his most important contribution to the development of the modern dance. They are based upon the insistence that form is essential to a knowledge of composition, and that an artist must gain mastery of his craft by first learning its rules and principles. His teaching has altered the direction taken by the American dance and, to a large extent, has shaped the mold of the entire art.

> His unique approaches to composition, his undeviating high standards of achievement have challenged dancers to produce finer works and to develop their own best means of expression.[1]

A certain amount of technical preparation in rhythm and dance technique is prerequisite to participation in

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[1] Letter from Ruth Bloomer, Co-director, Summer School of the Dance, Connecticut College, November 10, 1952.

Horst's composition classes. The student should have attained some control of his body instrument and should have some knowledge of rhythmic analysis before enrolling for the first class, Pre-Classic Forms. A dancer's technique is the vocabulary with which he creates, and Horst maintains that an insufficient vocabulary is a serious handicap to the composer. He does urge, however, that composition be studied before the student arrives at a perfection of his technique.[2] This recommendation is born out by observation of the difficulties many technically finished dancers have in trying to free themselves from learned dance movement and in developing an individual style rather than an imitative one.

Present practices in teaching the modern dance, particularly in secondary and collegiate institutions, incorporate certain compositional problems in elementary classwork, but these generally are of the nature of simple studies in which the student is encouraged to explore movement of a limited sort. In Horst's classes he expects his students to have had these elementary experiences and to be ready to compose complete compositions.

Class organization. The classes function on a problem-solving basis in an informal work-shop atmosphere. Each lesson is devoted to a specific dance form or problem

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[2] Coleman, "On the Teaching of Choreography: Interview with Louis Horst," op. cit., p. 129.

and to an evaluation of each student's solution to the assignment of the previous class.

In setting a new study Horst analyzes its individual characteristics, playing a number of musical examples on the piano by way of illustration. He suggests themes and movement qualities appropriate to the problem and points out relationships with the other arts. He gives a structural analysis of the musical illustrations--the pulse, the number of bars in each section, the meter--and each student selects one composition as the background for his dance.

During the student's working period outside of class-time, he prepares his composition, keeping in mind the general characteristics of the problem. He is not permitted to lean on the music for inspiration, nor to use it while composing. Instead, he works from its outline--its pulse, rhythmic and harmonic nature, its structural form--and hears it again only when he is ready to present his work for critical appraisal, the following lesson.

When the compositions are brought to class, Horst supplies the piano accompaniment while concentrating on the student's attempts to solve the demands of the problem. His evaluation is the most important contributory factor in the student's learning period, for he provides the discipline which is essential to the dance art by objective criticism and high standards of good form and good taste. Ruth Bloomer,

in describing Horst's critical acumen, states:

> As critic he is that rare phenomenon, a technical dance critic. He is articulate, urbane, and with high standards. With this he is also kind. He not only states why he likes or dislikes a new work, he is able to go further and show how it might be made better through changes in its structure or connotations. His motor memory is a fabulous one which allows him to recall at will the high points in movement of hundreds of dances.[3]

Solutions to the problems are as individual as the personalities of each class member. Within the framework of the assigmment each student is encouraged to develop a unique style rather than to imitate others. Certain similarities in style and techniques are observable, however, for pupils who have learned their techniques from Martha Graham, Hanya Holm, Doris Humphrey, or Charles Weidman, or who have studied with some of their students, unconsciously imitate the styles which these pioneers of the American modern dance have developed.

> There are no Grahams in sight, no Humphreys, no Wigmans, for their's was the period of revolution and this is the period of evolution. After a series of inventions there is apt to be quite a long period before another Graham will come out of the corn belt. A lot of young dancers have gone on in the idiom of these people. They naturally bring something a little new, because dance is a very personal art. Expressionistically, we dance ourselves.[4]

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[3] Bloomer, op. cit.

[4] Horst, recorded interview, April 7, 1952. Reel No. 3.

Pre-Classic Dance Forms. Pre-Classic Forms is intended as the beginning course in composition and as a prerequisite for the advanced course, Modern Forms. In it the student is introduced to some of the traditional dance forms which have arisen from the court dances of the Pre-Classic period. Limitations which are inherent in these forms are placed upon him.

These traditional forms have a clarity and a simplicity which is within the limited range of most beginning choreographers. Most of them have an outer structure of the three-part ABA form. This necessitates the handling of only two themes in a composition. The emphasis is upon form, with content being given only secondary consideration. However, the student is expected to incorporate the characteristic mood or quality of each specific dance form in his solution to the problem. Such basic principles as level, focus, floor patterns, and the design of the movement are not considered as separate problems but are taken up as the necessity arises.

A minimum of twelve solo dances are composed, based upon the dances of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. When there is sufficient time allocated to the course, students are expected to re-work their compositions after they have been criticized. This re-working frequently is done under the supervision of one of Horst's assistants.

> There is no doubt that by the end of the course . . . the student is thoroughly aware of form in dance, and that he has mastered within the range of his own capacities a working knowledge of the principles of dance composition.[5]

Pre-Classic problems.[6] The twelve dance studies comprising the course in Pre-Classic Forms are described briefly in the chronological order with which they are taken up in Louis Horst's classes. These descriptions are intended as fragmentary suggestions for the beginning choreographer. The musical compositions Horst employs in the course are listed in the Appendix.

In manipulating the material contained in the forms of the dances of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the student concentrates on attaining a clarity of form with an economy of means. Horst insists on the elimination of all non-essentials. Most of the studies are structured upon the three-part ABA form requiring two basic themes, each having a complete unity within itself but bearing some relationship to each other. The final A section is the inevitable return to the original theme, or some amplification of the original theme, to bring the composition to a satisfactory close. Use of devices such as repetition (whole or

[5] Mary Kulynitch, "Louis Horst, a Historical Study of His Contributions to Modern Dance Choreography," p. 57. Unpublished Master's thesis, New York University, 1950.

[6] Material from writer's notes taken in Horst's course on Pre-Classic Forms, Mills College, 1939.

in part), sequential movement, condensation or amplification of movement, and development of original motifs are methods by which the beginning composer can manipulate movement and carry it out to a satisfactory compositional length.

The modern dancer is expected to compose, as this is an important part in the experiencing of the art. In his introductory comments Horst frequently states, "There are more instrumentalists than composers, more actors than playwrights, more ballerinas than choreographers. In the modern dance one is judged by his choreographic ability as well as his technique."[7]

Problem 1 - Pavane

Probable etymology - Origin disputed. Believed to be a derivative of the Spanish pavo, peacock, or from the Italian Padovana, from the city of Paduan.
Nationality - Possibly Spain. Popular during the time of the Inquisition.
Principal qualities - Slow, powerful, dominating, formal.
Suggested themes - Arrogance, vanity, conquest, pride, rudeness, ominousness.
Rhythmic base - Commences with a strong first beat, in slow 4/4 time.
Basic movements - Walking, particularly the halting step as used in wedding processions of today. Also formal bowing.

Problem 2 - Galliard

Probable etymology - Unknown. Speculatively believed to be from the Italian gigolane meaning to kick.
Nationality - Probably Italy.
Principal qualities - Lively, gay, brisk, full of high spirits.
Suggested themes - Holiday cheer, exuberance, fun and frolic.

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[7] Ibid.

Rhythmic base - In quick 3/4 time with an irregularity occurring always in the even bars. The characteristic rhythm can be noted in England's national anthem.
Basic movements - Small running steps accompanied by a caper or a small jump into the air.

Problem 3 - Allemande

Probable etymology - From the French word for German, it has taken on a connotation of to turn. Its use can be noted in a common square dance figure.
Nationality - Germany.
Principal qualities - Slow, sentimental, flowing.
Suggested themes - Yearning, nostalgia, remembrance, exile, melancholia.
Rhythmic base - Slow 4/4 pulse, related to the Pavane, but sentimental in feeling.
Basic movements - Small steps and jumps, intertwining of arms. Emphasis upon arm movements.

Problem 4 - Courante

Probable etymology - From the French verb courir, to run.
Nationality - One of the oldest of dance forms, its origin is shared by Italy and France.
Principal qualities - Rapidly running tempo, continuous in form.
Suggested themes - Pursuit, contagion, rumor, teasing, assembly-line speed, confusion.
Rhythmic base - Fast 3/4 time.
Basic movements - Running, sudden changes of direction.

Problem 5 - Sarabande

Probable etymology - Thought to be from the Oriental.
Nationality - Spain, in the form as we know it.
Principal qualities - Similar to the Pavane in its austerity and slow formality.
Suggested themes - Intrigue, pomposity, ideas of social import.
Rhythmic base - Slow 3/4 time, beginning on the first beat of the bar.
Basic movements - Slow walking and deep bending, giving a weight to the movement.

Problem 6 - Gigue

Probable etymology - From the Italian giga, originally a fiddle or a lute.

Nationality - Earliest known gigues are Italian. Later ones are traceable to Spain, France, and England.
Principal qualities - Rapid, furious excitement.
Suggested themes - Frenzy, rabble-rousing, nervousness, tantrums.
Rhythmic base - Fast 6/8, counted as two triplets.
Basic movements - Closely related to Irish jig steps. Quick movements of the foot and leg.

Problem 7 - Minuet (five-part form, either ABCAB or ABCBA)

Probable etymology - From the French menu, small.
Nationality - Introduced during the time of Louis XIV, in France. Reigned in popularity until the advent of the Waltz.
Principal qualities - Neat, delicate, with mincing artificiality.
Suggested themes - Artificiality, timidity, innuendo, exaggerated politeness, persistence--any theme which can be approached from the standpoint of delicate satire.
Rhythmic base - A moderate 3/4 pulse, each beat given the same importance.
Basic movements - Small, dainty steps, with an emphasis upon the tips of the movement.

Problem 8 - Gavotte

Probable etymology - Name given to a dance of the Gavots, natives of the Alpine region.
Nationality - Southeastern France.
Principal qualities - Rustically good spirited, broadly swinging.
Suggested themes - Good health, good spirits, good cheer.
Rhythmic base - Generally a fast 4/4, starting with two up-beats.
Basic movements - Springing and walking.

Problem 9 - Bourrée

Probable etymology - True origin is uncertain. Claims have been made that it is an outgrowth of an ancient Gallic festival.
Nationality - The form is based upon a rustic dance of Auvergne, France.
Principal qualities - Direct and vigorous, rustic.
Suggested themes - Determination, common vulgarities, stubbornness, labor--down-to-earth ideas.
Rhythmic base - A lively 4/4 with a single up-beat.
Basic movements - Stamping, heavy body movements in a downward direction.

Problem 10 - Rigaudon

Probable etymology - Its origin is doubtful. Possibly derived from the name of a celebrated dancing master at Marseilles, M. Rigaud.
Nationality - Thought to be originally a gay peasant dance from Provence.
Principal qualities - Frivolity and lightness.
Suggested themes - Veneer, froth, confetti, silliness, shallowness, glitter, exhibitionism.
Rhythmic base - A fast 4/4, often with two eighth-note up-beats.
Basic movements - Running, hopping, turning.

Problems 11 and 12 - Chaconne and Passacaglia

The final problems in Pre-Classic Forms are of wider structural dimensions than the preceding ones, for by this time the student should have gained facility in working with the elementary principles of good form and should be ready to consider material of greater complexity.

Although musicologists disagree on the structural differences between the Chaconne and the Passacaglia, Horst employs the Rondo and the Theme and Variations as examples. The Rondo (ABACADAEA, etc.) is a problem of developing several different movement themes having some relationship to the basic statement made in the A section. The A theme recurs in much the same way as the chorus follows the separate verses of a song. Each new section, while differing from each other, must be integrated with the germinal idea and should represent various developments of the main theme. In the Theme and Variations a basic movement theme is treated

in a variety of ways, each variation being considered as another statement of the theme ($AA^1A^2A^3A^4$, etc.). The original theme must be simple and clear to allow for elaboration. Each variation must be a unique entity with marked differences from the others.

Modern Forms. When a student enrolls in Modern Forms Horst presupposes that he has acquired the basic principles of composition and can manipulate them with some degree of facility. In this advanced composition course Horst permits a greater freedom and elasticity in the manipulation of themes and in the construction of dance forms. Here his emphasis is upon the texture and quality of movement and upon an understanding and appreciation of contemporary art structure.

The course is divided into three sections which Horst calls 1) Understanding by Contrast, 2) Backgrounds of Modern Art, and 3) Immediacies which Influence Modern Art. In the first section compositions are conceived that incorporate the modern approach to the three basic dance elements: rhythm, melodic linear design, and harmonic texture. Examples of the modern idiom as expressed in painting, sculpture, literature, and poetry are correlated with the contemporary dance idiom as enhancements to the understanding of the dance.

For an examination of the backgrounds of modern art

consideration is given to the characteristics of those historical periods which are significant in the development of the contemporary movement. Students attempt to translate into movement certain mechanics of style, representative of the distinctive qualities of those spans in art history which have had a direct bearing upon the techniques of the modern artist. To comprehend the complexities of any art there should be an understanding of the focus of those eras which have contributed to the visions of one's own epoch. Horst has quoted Sheldon Cheney, to whom he admittedly owes his ideas on the subdivisions of Modern Forms, by writing, "The moderns, indeed, go to man's past reverently. They recognize the life of the ages as soil from which contemporary art takes nourishment."[8]

In the attempt to translate stylistic quality, Horst feels that the aim is to use style as the point of reference for contemporary comment and that exact reproduction should not be attempted. In this he agrees with Curt Sachs, who wrote, "The eternal recurrence of general trends appears to be the inevitable law. But within the law, the style of art, man's truest mirror, has unlimited freedom and never repeats itself."[9]

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[8] Louis Horst, "Modern Forms: Introduction," Dance Observer, VI (November, 1939), 285.

[9] Curt Sachs, The Commonwealth of Art, p. 25. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1946.

The final section of Modern Forms, the immediacies influencing modern art, deals with an analysis of twentieth century developments in the arts as they parallel the changes in our social structure and in our philosophy. The purpose and the method is an attempt to "lead to an understanding of the actual currents of contemporary culture and art: those currents which spring from the immediacies of life today and reflect the obvious changes in world thought, sociological conditions, and economic readjustments."[10]

For each problem in Modern Forms musical examples are used as illustration and as accompaniment for the performance of the completed dance compositions. These are listed in the Appendix. The same procedure as is used in the Pre-Classic classes is followed--the dance formulated without musical dependency except for the limitations of the skeletal framework and the remembered pulse.

Problems in Modern Forms.[11] There are fourteen studies in Modern Forms, each providing an opportunity for the advanced student to utilize the skill he has acquired in the study of dance form to an application of those qualities of movement style characteristic of the expression of

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[10] Horst, "Modern Forms: Introduction," op. cit.

[11] Material from writer's notes taken in Horst's Modern Forms, Connecticut College, 1947.

contemporary ideology in the modern dance. Greater freedom from the rigid demands of form is permitted, and the scope of subject matter is almost limitless.

The emphasis is upon the texture and quality of movement which results from the analysis of each problem. The well-established rules of composition sometimes can be knowingly violated where there is need to do so in order to achieve a certain dramatic effect, but the final outcome must indicate "a new realism based upon action, not attitude."[12] Horst stresses the importance of the delicate balance to be maintained between the form and the content of a composition, saying, "Perfect composition is a perfect blending of form and content. If the content dominates, the form suffers, and if the form dominates, the composition will suffer from dullness."[13]

The first four problems are related to the first section of the course, Understanding by Contrast. The next five are based upon the examination of qualities of style contained in those periods in art history which have furnished the backgrounds for modern art. The final five are focussed upon the immediacies of our own culture as they

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[12] Louis Horst, "Modern Forms: Understanding by Contrast," Dance Observer, X, No. 7 (August-September, 1943), 79.

[13] Horst, recorded interview, April 7, 1952. Reel No. 2.

are revaled in the idiom of our contemporary art.

Problem 1 - Rhythm. This is a study in 5/4 time with an emphasis upon the asymmetrical quality that is the effect of the ratio between the three and the two beats of a measure. A greater distortion of movement is bound to occur because of the irregular nature of the pulse, and an unbalanced impression is created. Movements should be designed to accent the first and third beat or the first and fourth (12345 or 12345).

Problem 2 - Pentatonic. This problem which is to deal with the primitive five-tone scale is one of finding unusual lines of movement in space through the linear organization of the material and a strange spatial use of the body instrument. The emphasis is upon the visual aspect of the composition, in terms of design and line which are in direct contrast to classical and romantic conceptions of design.

Problem 3 - Whole-tone. The whole-tone scale, constructed in a musical sense upon six notes of even intervals, requires for dance an evenness of planally designed movement which must remain constant throughout the composition. In contrast to the five-tone study, the movement is less distorted and emphasizes a parallelism and openness as opposed to natural opposition.

Problem 4 - Dissonance. Dissonance is the harmonic texture of movement, an essential characteristic of the modern dance. In this problem concentration is upon the movement distortion which is produced by an inner muscular intensity and pull. The movement is colored by tensions which are recognizable as the "logical speech for the art of this century."[14]

Problem 5 - Earth Primitive. This and the following problem are concerned with the return to first principles in the beginnings of art. The qualities are those of simple directness and conscious awkwardness, in which a child-like discovery is predominant. Excessive adjectives are eliminated in attaining a sense of wonder and awe combined with an earthly reality. Content generally is ritualistic and non-personal, the movement restrained as in that of a first experience.

Problem 6 - Air Primitive. Imaginative wonder and amazement characterize this study in which rain worship and sky magic are illustrative of primitive expression. The movement tends to be high and has a feeling of breath in it. It is restrained with tensions and sustained in space. Bird motifs frequently serve as suitable content.

Problem 7 - Archaic. In the style of the archaic

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[14] Horst, "Modern Forms: Understanding by Contrast," op. cit.

the composer becomes absorbed with the materials of his craft, breaking through the ritual. There is a consciousness of design in the two-dimensional plane which is well-organized and dissonant in its strangeness. Quite often the effect of the movement is like that of the slow-motion camera.

Problem 8 - Religious Medieval. The tortured quality of movement infused with religious stigmata is emphasized in this study based upon Medieval asceticism. Movement is attenuated, drawn out, pulled to one side in distorted denial of the earthly things of life. There is power with a sense of paleness, strength with emaciation.

Problem 9 - Secular Medieval. The linear indications of irregularity and asymmetrical parallelisms, suggestive of the Gregorian modes of the Medieval period in music, form the basis for this and the above problem in dance composition. With the secular the content is likely to be related to legend, to some aspect of black magic, or to deal with fantasy which is an attribute of fairy tales. The secular covers more space than the religious, moving in a strangely weak and light fashion.

Problem 10 - Introspection. Emerging as a development of the psychological interpretations of Freud, Jung, and Adler, the interest of the modern artists were turned

inward. In this study there is the contemplative approach to dance, the movement serving as a revelation of inner feelings and colored with psychological implications. Strangely distorted patterns are evolved through this turning in of the movement.

Problem 11 - Cerebral. With this study the problem is one of arriving at a complete abstraction of idea and movement. Emotion is eliminated, and movement becomes symbolic and geometric in design as the composer concentrates on arriving at the essences of his medium.

Problem 12 - Impressionism. A term descriptive of the first experiments of the modern painters, this presents the most difficult problem for dance. The texture and the quality of the movements are vague and misty, and the composition should be one of indefiniteness of line and form. This can be approximated by a continual shifting of patterns, by a certain detachment of mood, and by a lack of conclusiveness to any of the movements. The form must be almost completely covered up by the vibrational texture of the movements.

Problem 13 - Jazz. In this study there is an application of the qualities which we have come to recognize as characteristic of American urbanity with its restless nervousness, its sophistication, and its physical sensuality. The

jazz idiom, whether it be the blues or the be-bop, reflects the tempi of American living and contains within itself certain elements of primitivism.

Problem 14 - Americana. The final problem is an affirmation of the spiritual pulse which is indigenous to the American soil. Movements are wide and sweeping, open and direct, and concerned with the wide horizons of the spirit of the prairies. This material should be treated with complete frankness and sincerity and should be related to the ideals of the American heritage.

CHAPTER VII

CRITICISM

. . . . . .
But where's the man, who counsel can bestow,
Still pleased to teach, and yet not proud to know?
Unbias'd, or by favor, or by spite,
Not dully prepossess'd, nor blindly right;
Tho' learn'd, well-bred; and tho' well-bred, sincere;
Modestly bold, and humanly severe;
Who to a friend his faults can freely show,
And gladly praise the merit of a foe?
Bless'd with a taste exact, yet unconfined;
A knowledge both of books and human-kind;
Gen'rous, converse; a soul exempt from pride;
And love to praise, with reason on his side?[1]

Louis Horst, "with reason on his side," is a true friend to the modern dancer in his ability to render impartial judgment based upon sound principles. His criticism of compositions and his suggestions of specific ways to improve them are sought eagerly by the serious dancer. His reputation as an astute and experienced appraisor of the dance is without peer. No other American dance critic, with the possible exception of John Martin, is regarded with such high esteem.

In his discipline of the young composer, Horst

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[1] Alexander Pope, "An Essay on Criticism," in Criticism: The Foundations of Modern Literary Judgment, p. 437. Edited by M. Shorer, J. Niles, and G. McKenzie. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1948.

permits nothing to escape notice nor does he support any deviations from the rigid demands of good form and good taste. Certain definite rules are essential in the structure of the dance, according to his belief, and must be adhered to in the beginning. As Shelley once wrote, "Every man in the infancy of art, observes an order. . . ."[2]

Rules for criticism. Horst, again relying on musical principles, has adapted for dance criticism the rules Percy Goetschius formulated for the evaluation of musical compositions.[3] These he reads to every class at the first meeting. The following is an exact record of his discussion of the subject of criticism as it was trans ribed from the tape recording:[4]

> We all must have some rules of criticism to determine whether a thing has good form or not, whether its content is meaningful to the audience. Goetschius has listed eight rules which, while set up as an evaluation of musical compositions, are usable for the dance--except his last one, the eighth. That, too, may be helpful some day, as soon as we get a system of dance notation that works--for he says, "Does it sound as well as it looks on paper?" A thing can look very right upon the paper and not sound very well. Well, with dance we can't do that yet.

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[2] Percy Bysshe Shelley, "A Defense of Poetry," in Criticism: The Foundations of Modern Literary Judgment, p. 456.

[3] Percy Goetschius, The Homophonic Forms of Musical Composition, pp. 235-236. New York: George Schirmer, 1924.

[4] Louis Horst, recorded interview, April 9, 1952. Reel No. 8.

He begins his conclusions on criticism by stating that in his judgment of his own compositions or those of other writers, the conscientious composer or critic must reason from the following vital considerations, testing each question in turn with the utmost objectivity and fullness:

His first rule, in spite of it being a book on harmony and form, is, "Is the work sufficiently beautiful and is its melodic delineation striking and ingenious?" Now the phrase "sufficiently beautiful" is open to many ways of interpretation--but it must have a sufficient dignity. It cannot be a completely nonchalant work, not unless you are dancing about nonchalance. He says, "melodic delineation" which I change to movement delineation. When I look at a work I ask myself, "Is the work sufficiently beautiful and is its movement delineation striking?" That is, is it strange enough so that it strikes me as being novel or ingenious. Goetschius says "ingenious or new." It's only the new that strikes us. When we go to a foreign country the new sights are the things that make the deep impressions upon us, not the familiar ones. We want to get away from the everyday sort of thing.

His second rule is, "Is the formal design rational and clear?"--does the composition have a recognizable shape to it and does it develop logically?

His third, "Is its rhythmic structure distinct and effective?" so that it isn't all 1234, 2234, 3234, 4234, and so on. You get compositions like that, sometimes. Or it isn't distinct--you don't know where the first count of the measure is. It must be distinct, and it must get at rhythmic effectiveness by shifting accents occasionally. This must be in your mind. Otherwise, the dance is rhythmically dull.

These first three are the primary rules, the same as the three primary colors in a painting. They cover the sufficiently beautiful and striking, the formal design, and the rhythmic interest.

Next Goetschius asks, "Does it contain sufficient fullness?"--to which he adds "charm." Remember, he was writing in the nineteenth century. For dance I use sufficient fullness of texture. Is there sufficient richness in the projection of the idea? A full way of moving will project. Intensity is fullness, too. If you are doing a tense dance your body

is full of tensions. If you have a soft dance the body must express that softness sufficiently. That is the fullness which is demanded of a dancer.

The fifth rule is, "Is the demand of contrast adequately respected and the bane of monotony removed?" There must be contrast in a dance. The contrasting material should not be so extreme that it looks like another dance, but the B can't look exactly like the A. There must be a new direction, a new mood, a new something, with all related to the title.

Another one is, "Is it written conveniently and sensibly with regard to the technique of the instrument for which it is designed?" You shouldn't do things that you can't do technically, thereby losing your balance and making the audience worry about you. If you compose for a group you shouldn't expect them to do things that they cannot do conveniently. We mustn't be conscious of the fact that something is hard to do--it must look easy.

His seventh and last rule I use is, "Is its title appropriate?" If a dance composition meets all these seven rules it's bound to be a good dance even if it isn't a public success. Is it striking, is it ingenious, is its form good, is its rhythmic structure interesting and effectively clear, does it have sufficient fullness for the dance in mind, and is the demand for contrast respected?

Sometimes you can do a monotonous dance, but that becomes a tour de force. You can't make that a rule. For a dance of monotony you break a rule, take poetic license with it. Then, in order to do things which are conveniently written for your instrument, your body, you must consider its limitations. But in working you must try the impossible to do the improbable.

Then, after all of this has been considered, the dancer must know when to bring her composition to a cadence close--to end her dance when she has made a sufficient statement of the idea. That is something which depends upon esthetic judgment. When I'm asked if a dance is too long, I say, "All dances are too long." I don't believe a thing should go on any longer than its interest warrants. That is a thing you can't tell, often, until you show it to someone. We say, "Oh, Lord, she moves well--it's a well-made dance. But it's full of bad taste."

Common errors. Horst has found that the greatest difficulty the beginning student encounters is the need to remain with the initial theme of the composition. There is an observable tendency to add extraneous and unrelated movements because of an inability to manipulate the original statement and to develop it into compositional length. This detracts from the content and confuses the on-looker. Often it occurs as a result of inexperience, or from fear of becoming monotonous, or from a desire to interpolate a movement for the sake of exhibitionism. As Horst repeatedly says, "You are always running away from your theme."[5] In composition the problem is to confine oneself to what Sachs describes as "the truly Gothic idea of developing a work of art out of one kernel, excluding anything foreign, inorganic, accidental, arbitrary. . . ."[6]

> If the evolvement of your dance suddenly makes you want to go to the floor in the fortieth measure, you are safer to indicate that in the theme, even if it means only a look to the floor. I know that is being academic, but it is a good discipline. Later on, when you become theatrical, you needn't be so strict with yourself. But poetic license is earned after mastery of the rules.[7]

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[5] Horst, recorded interview, April 7, 1952. Reel No. 2.

[6] Curt Sachs, The Commonwealth of Art, p. 253. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1946.

[7] Horst, recorded interview, April 9, 1952. Reel No. 8.

Another common error which the young composer often makes, according to Horst, is that of becoming pretentious. Themes are selected which are of a grandiose nature and which are beyond the dancer's technical ability and intellectual maturity. The tendency to become overly ambitious is displayed by a dependence upon special effects to help out the composition. There is unwarranted use of fancy lighting effects, props and gadgets, words, special sound devices and effects, and costuming which is distracting. The first concern, as he insists, must be with the dance itself, a striving for clarity of form and content. Devices, when used with good taste and good judgment, can enhance a composition but should not become the main concern of the choreographer. Horst is steadfast in maintaining that a composition be able to stand alone, that it contain within itself sufficient fullness to satisfy even the most critical observer.

Occasionally some dancers become obsessed with their own virtuosity and overburden their compositions with technical tours de force. Horst cites the over-frequent use of side extensions of the leg as a concrete example. Certain techniques tend to be overdone and are meaningless in the expression of the dancer's idea. He believes that there is a lack of sincerity when there is an obvious play to the audience, or when movement becomes overly decorative and absorbed with pictorial effects. Technique is the alphabet

of the dance, and the dancer should have a good technique for an enlarged vocabulary of movement, but the movement should have meaning in relationship to the total composition. Horst does not intend that all technical virtuosity be eliminated, however, for he believes there is a need for spectacular movement if the content has an intensely dramatic idea to convey. He only rules out spectacular movement when it is used for the purpose of demonstrating the dancer's accomplishments.

> You can't help showing your technique if you have one, but it should be covered up as though you were using it for a dramatic purpose, and not just to say, "Here I do this because it's a stunt."[8]

There are other practices Horst believes the choreographer should avoid, such as triteness of subject matter, colloquialism of idea, literal movement which is too near pantomime, the tendency to improvise instead of being able to repeat a dance accurately each time it is performed, and technical demands which are beyond the ability of the performer.

Emotionalism. The emotion that a dance conveys should not be experienced by the dancer during a performance, according to Horst's theory. "You don't do a sad dance and say to yourself, I'm so sad, I'm so sad!' because the

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[8] Horst, recorded interview, April 8, 1952. Reel No. 5.

audience never cares what you feel."[9] The composer may experience an intense emotional state at the conception of his dance idea, but the composition should be developed intellectually. On the other hand, Horst agrees that a slight amount of emotional feeling helps to make the dance communicative and is likely to occur anyway, evoked by the movements of the dance.

> Of course when you perform you do want to flavor your movements--you don't want to be dead. But on the other side you don't want to become so emotional that the dance becomes bathos instead of pathos. You can do a movement of great tragedy and think, "Gee, I'm hungry!" or "That's a nice girl over there!" because we work in the abstract. To do Lamentation you don't have to feel sad emotionally. You know the movements which communicate sadness just as I can go to the piano and play a combination of notes that will sound like a funeral march, even though I don't feel it. I know the notes that will make a funeral sound, and a dancer knows the movements that will communicate the idea of a grieving person. A dance has to restrain emotion. Dance is a sensory art, but we don't only want to experience it through the senses, we want to experience it through the mind, too.[10]

In a performance the dancer should remain in control of the situation, commanding the physical elements of the composition and being certain of the exactitude of the movements. This requires the utmost in objectivity, even though an emotive state is to be communicated. As Martha Graham has commented, "The difference between the artist and the

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[9] Horst, recorded interview, April 7, 1952. Reel No. 3.

[10] Ibid.

non-artist is not a greater capacity for feeling. The secret is that the artist can objectify. . . ."[11]

The problem of musical accompaniment. Louis Horst, from his experience as a composer-accompanist for the contemporary dance, and from his work with other musicians who have composed for dance, has arrived at some principles of musical composition which are intended as backgrounds for dance compositions.

The natural affinity existing between dance and music has established such strong bonds that the modern dance continues to maintain a closer alliance with music than with any other form of accompaniment. The majority of dances are set within a musical framework, although occasionally this is replaced or augmented by words or non-musical sound effects.

While music can and does exist independently of the dance, the converse is not the case, for the so-called absolute dance has not been well-received. Dance without some form of accompaniment induces uncomfortable reactions of embarrassment, due, possibly, as Horst has speculated, to the discomfort of unaccustomed silence. It becomes almost unbearable to watch for any length of time. "Music adds

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[11] Martha Graham, in Merle Armitage, Martha Graham, p. 109. Los Angeles: Merle Armitage, 1937.

depth and another dimension to dance. I think the great value of it is that it helps assuage the audience and keeps people in a more receptive mood."[12]

Horst believes that music which is written for dance should adhere to the same principles of form as does the dance for which it is composed, taking its cue for harmonic color from the quality of the dance movements and its pulse from the rhythm of the dance. He warns that the musical composer should avoid the attempt to reproduce the dance on a note-for-step basis, nor should the melody be an exact parallel of the linear design of the dance. There is bound to be a greater interest when there is a contrapuntal relationship between the two and an interplay of pattern. The two arts, when tastefully combined, should achieve a higher unity than each contains separately.

> The question is not how great a composer for dance is, but what he does for the dance. The composer-accompanist must expect to sacrifice some of his identity as a musician when he writes or plays for the dance, although, just as the virtuoso accompanist to a singer, violinist, or other artist is as important as a virtuoso performer, in his specialty, so a dance composer or accompanist is as important in his.[13]

Horst has been quoted as saying, "Music for the

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[12] Horst, recorded interview, April 7, 1952. Reel No. 1.

[13] Margaret Lloyd, citing Louis Horst in Merle Armitage, Martha Graham, p. 93. Los Angeles: Merle Armitage, 1937.

dance cannot be judged apart from the dance for which it is written, because it is an integral part of it."[14]

More frequently than not, as Horst realistically notes, there isn't the opportunity to have music composed especially for a dance. The choreographer is faced with the problem of selecting music already composed, and should do so with discretion and good taste. He thinks such musical compositions as have become familiar to concert-goers, or which have become banally popular, are seldom suitable.

He recommends the selection of well-constructed and non-sentimental music as a framework for the dance, agreeing with the statement of Sachs that music which is to be used for dance should contain a minimum of subjectivism, emotion, and duplicating gesture.[15]

In teaching his classes in composition, Horst finds most of his musical examples in the literature of the modern composers, for, as he has said, the modern composer is speaking in the same dissonant idiom as the modern dancer and is striving toward a greater elasticity of rhythm and harmony. Bach, too, he values, for there is a clarity and mathematical precision in his structure which is adaptable to dance. An analysis of the previously composed music used

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[14] Ibid., p. 92.

[15] Sachs, op. cit., p. 249.

by leading dance artists would reveal a rather consistent usage of Bach along with such contemporary composers as Benjamin Britten, Bela Bartok, Ray Green, Morton Gould, Villa Lobos, Aaron Copland, and others equally as well-known.

In selecting music for a dance the principal consideration, Horst instructs, is whether it will add something to the dance that will contribute to the total effect. The initiative on the part of the dancer is lost when there is an attempt to interpret the music. The intent in modern dance should be deliberate. This belief is in accord with that of Sachs, who states, "It makes a decisive difference whether we spontaneously answer to a stimulus or deliberately create a work of art."[16]

In the final analysis Horst judges the musical accompaniment by what it brings to the dance. "Whether it stands by itself or not isn't important. The main thing is, is it good for the dance?"[17]

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[16] Ibid., p. 248.

[17] Horst, recorded interview, April 7, 1952. Reel No. 1.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY

In 1925, one year before the modern dance had made an appearance in the United States, Louis Horst predicted an alliance between dance and music:

> . . . when dance establishes itself upon a firm scientific basis and proves to music that union with a partner as independent and scientific as itself will be a greater honor than even its present glorious bachelorhood. Then, indeed, their very separateness will make them more at one than they are now; and composers will study the science of dance, and dancers study the science of music.[1]

Today this prophecy has been fulfilled, at least in so far as the modern dancer has learned many of the secrets of the dance art from a study of musical principles. It seems reasonable to expect that the musician who composes for dance has felt the necessity of learning about the basic elements of dance and the approach of the choreographer to composition.

Horst, himself, has been the significant contributor to the partnership between contemporary music and contemporary dance through his application of musical knowledge to

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[1] Louis Horst, "The Musician Comments," The Denishawn Magazine, I (Summer, 1925), 7-8.

dance composition and through his insight into the problems of the choreographer, as revealed by his teaching and the music he has composed for dance accompaniment. By his own efforts to discover the foundations of dance structure and to formulate guiding principles for the direction of the creative activities of young dancers, he has been of inestimable value in the establishment of a firm basis for the American contemporary dance. His teaching and his criticism have put a keener edge on the tools by which the modern dancer synthesizes his intellectual and emotional reactions to the impact of contemporary existence. Louis Horst has been unselfishly dedicated to those who sought expression in a field other than his chosen musical one. He has done much to elevate the artistic level of the American dance and to promote a closer relationship between the dance and the other arts.

Horst's important contributions to dance can be summarized briefly as follows:

1. Composer and accompanist for the modern dance.[1]
2. Teacher of dance composition and dance accompaniment.
3. Founder and editor of Dance Observer.
4. Author of Pre-Classic Dance Forms and several dance articles.
5. Criticism of dance compositions and dance performances.

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[2] See Appendix I.

6. Formulator of rules of criticism and theories of dance composition.

7. Promoter of the contemporary dance art and influential figure in the development of method for teaching composition.

No finer tribute could be paid him than this statement by a fellow dance critic, John Martin:

> Louis Horst is one of the few figures without whom the modern dance could never have come to maturity. As musical director, personal critic and general guide to practically all of the young artists who were rising twenty-five years ago, he did a genuinely creative job of shaping the whole art. Probably, however, the greatest contribution he has made has been his insistence that the dance has form, just as any other art has form, and that it is subject to rules and laws that can be taught. For his establishment of dance composition as an art and a science, generations of dancers will continue to rise and call him blessed.[3]

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[3] Letter from John Martin, Dance Critic, New York Times, October 6, 1952.

Acknowledgments

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the chairman and the members of the committee for their invaluable suggestions and technical assistance in the preparation of this material. To Dr. William C. Trow the writer desires to express her gratitude and personal indebtedness for his patience and encouragement, his time and interest, his kindly criticism, and his help in editing and revising this manuscript. Appreciation is extended to those who so generously responded to requests for statements to be used in the study, and to friends and associates who have shown consideration and interest in the undertaking. A special note of appreciation is due Julia Ann Goodman for her help in checking the material and for her cheerfulness in assuming extra duties at home while the study has been in progress. Finally, the writer wishes to express her deep appreciation to Louis Horst, himself, for his willingness to serve as subject of the investigation, for his kindness in making certain important data available, and for his generosity in giving of his time and thoughts. His cooperation and assistance have been of inestimable value.

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APPENDIX I

A PARTIAL LIST OF MUSIC COMPOSED BY LOUIS HORST FOR THE DANCE COMPOSITIONS OF MARTHA GRAHAM*

Title of Dance	Date of Premiere
Three Poems of the East (solo) "On listening to a flute by moonlight" "She like a dancer puts her broidered garments on" "In measure, while the gnats of music whirr, the little amber-colored dancer moves"	November 28, 1926
Fragments (solo) Tragedy Comedy	April 22, 1928
Primitive Mysteries (Martha Graham and group) Hymn to the Virgin Crucifixus Hosanna	February 2, 1931
Chorus of Youth (group)	November 20, 1932
Tragic Patterns (Martha Graham and group) Chorus for Supplicants Chorus for Maenads Chorus for Furies	May 4, 1933
Celebration (group)	February 18, 1934
American Provincials Act of Piety (solo) Act of Judgment (Martha Graham and group)	November 11, 1934
Frontier (solo)	April 28, 1935
Horizons (Martha Graham and group) Migration (New Trails) Dominion (Sanctified Power) Building Motif (Homesteading) Dance of Rejoicing	February 23, 1936
Columbiad	December 27, 1939
El Penitente (Martha Graham and two men)	August 11, 1940

* From a choreographic record prepared by Louis Horst for Barbara Morgan's Martha Graham, pp. 152-156.

APPENDIX II

MARTHA GRAHAM'S FIRST CONCERT

The Blessed Damozel Comes Down from Rochester

Clad in a heavy gold kimona, making patterns with her body against a screen of brilliant lacquer—a romantic twelfth century tapestry in bold colorings, a gold crown on her head—a modern portrait after Beltran-Masses, lithe and tigerish in her crisp silk gown of black and orange stripes, and red poppies in her sleek black hair—Martha Graham presents a series of pictures that fire the imagination and make a hundred stories for every gesture. Shall we say her dances are motion pictures for the sophisticated—motion pictures without the bothersome banality of subtitles and the sugary narrative of the movie theatre?

The Dance. July 1926.

Martha Graham seems to have been moulded for such portraiture in motion, for she is in appearance a maiden after Rossetti, slender, unearthly and exotically graceful. Her talent is for making pictures. This compensates to some extent for her lack of power and virtuosity.

From the Eastman School of Music, Miss Graham brought with her three young girls. The three soft childish figures nude and silhouetted whitely against the black drop curtain made charming cameos while Louis Horst played Debussy. Again, as the playful characters of Goosens' Marionette Show, their dancing was so frolicsome, so spontaneous and unforced that they were called back for an encore. I liked them best, however, as the three gopis in their lovely draped batik costumes of melting colors and their young faces brightened by the warm flowers in their shining hair.

The interpretive dances were pretty but lacked force, and made the first part of the evening lukewarm. The musical program was unusually interesting. Miss Graham had chosen mostly modern music with only one group of dances going to Schumann, Schubert, and Brahms for inspiration. It was an enthusiastic audience who looked and listened . . . and it numbered many of the aristocrats of the dance world.

Martha Graham

IN A

DANCE RECITAL

WITH

Louis Horst, Pianist

ASSISTED BY

The Martha Graham Concert Group

AND

Mabel Zoeckler, Soprano

APRIL 18, 1926

Forty-Eighth Street Theater

FORTY-EIGHTH STREET EAST OF BROADWAY

Tickets

$1.10, 2.20, 3.30, AT THE BOX OFFICE OR BY MAIL FROM MORRIS COLMAN, 7 EAST EIGHTH ST., NEW YORK

Programme

PRELUDE (Piano)
CHORALE — *César Franck*
MARTHA GRAHAM
and THELMA BIRACREE, EVELYN SABIN, BETTY MACDONALD

NOVELETTE (op.99, no.9) — *Schumann*
MARTHA GRAHAM

TANZE — *Schubert*
BETTY MACDONALD, THELMA BIRACREE, EVELYN SABIN

INTERMEZZO (op.119, no.3) — *Brahms*
MARTHA GRAHAM

MAID WITH THE FLAXEN HAIR — *Debussy*
MARTHA GRAHAM

ARABESQUE NO. I — *Debussy*
EVELYN SABIN, THELMA BIRACREE, BETTY MACDONALD

CLAIR DE LUNE — *Debussy*
MARTHA GRAHAM
and THELMA BIRACREE, EVELYN SABIN, BETTY MACDONALD

DANSE LANGUIDE — *Scriabine*
BETTY MACDONALD, THELMA BIRACREE, EVELYN SABIN

DÉSIR (op.57, no.1) — *Scriabine*
MARTHA GRAHAM

DEUX VALSES — *Ravel*
MARTHA GRAHAM

FOUR SONGS — *Louis Horst*
a. HARVEST DIRGE (Poem by *Alfred Kreymborg*)
b. TOYS (Poem by *Arthur Symons*)
c. CHANGE (Poem by *Witter Bynner*)
d. BLIND WEAVERS (Poem by *Lucile Rice*)
MABEL ZOECKLER

MASQUES — *Louis Horst*
MARTHA GRAHAM

Intermission

TROIS GNOSSIENNES — *Erik Satie*
MARTHA GRAHAM
and EVELYN SABIN, THELMA BIRACREE, BETTY MACDONALD

FROM A XII CENTURY TAPESTRY — *Rachmaninoff*
MARTHA GRAHAM

A STUDY IN LACQUER — *Bernheim*
MARTHA GRAHAM

THE THREE GOPI MAIDENS — *Cyril Scott*
THELMA BIRACREE, BETTY MACDONALD, EVELYN SABIN

DANSE ROCOCO — *Ravel*
MARTHA GRAHAM

THE MARIONETTE SHOW — *Eugene Goossens*
BETTY MACDONALD, EVELYN SABIN, THELMA BIRACREE

PORTRAIT—AFTER BELTRAN-MASSES — *de Falla*
MARTHA GRAHAM

Thelma Biracree, Betty Macdonald and Evelyn Sabin are members of Martha Graham's Concert Group at the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, N. Y.

Choreography by Martha Graham
Masks by Robert Howard
Costumes for *XII Century Tapestry* and *Danse Rococo* by Erle Franke
Costumes for *Three Gopi Maidens* by Norman Edwards

APPENDIX III

FIRST CONCERT OF DORIS HUMPHREY AND CHARLES WEIDMAN

N.Y. "Herald-Tribune." April.16.1928.

Denishawn Dancers Give First Recital of Season

~~Miss Humphrey Makes Her Debut, Mr. Weidman Also Debuts~~

Some of the best dancing of the year was to be seen last evening at the John Golden Theater, where Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman and several dancers from the Denishown School gave their first recital of the season in Manhattan.

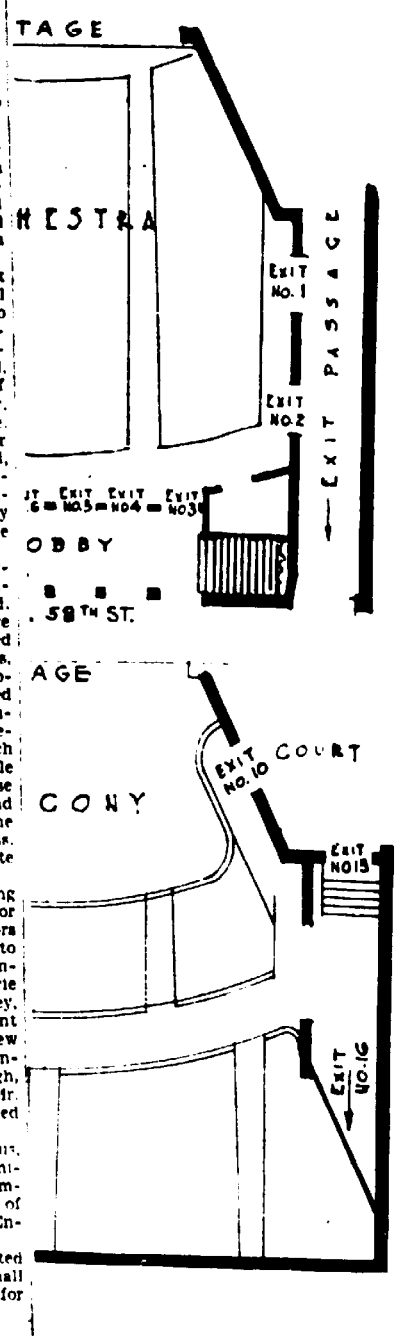
The excellent thing about their work was that it did not require a special enthusiasm for their type in order to admire their presentation. The program was almost entirely what is usually called, for want of a better word, "interpretive," and in the majority of the numbers the costumes were classic, semi-classic or frankly negligible. Therein they differed little from other recitalists. Nor was the music unusual, consisting largely of familiar compositions of familiar composers. One number by Henry Cowell and one specially written by Clifford Vaughan were the only novelties.

The difference and the vital superiority of the work lay first in its fidelity to the music which it illustrated. Without becoming too technical, we will merely say that the dance created the same forms, patterns, progressions, phrases, harmonies, discords and motivations as the composer transferred from his mind to the mfusical instrument. It was the most supreme reflection of sound in movement which we ever remember. As for the simple essentials of rhythm and tempo, these are the Denishawn A B C's, learned and mastered in the cradle. Their discipline is so faultless that it is inconspicuous. The training has reached the ultimate ideal of apparent spontaneity.

Taken individually, the outstanding numbers were the featured "Color Harmony" wherein the primary colors of light evolve, struggle and merge to music by Clifford Vaughan, and conducted by the composer; the eerie "Banshee," danced by Miss Humphrey, to a blood-curdling accompaniment which Mr. Henry Cowell himself drew from a tortured piano; Debussy's "Minstrels," which proved, strangely enough, a delightfully "comic relief," and Mr. Weidman's "Scherzo," wherein he acted a juggling peddler.

Others numbers not so good, obvious, or blindly "arty," were so in the minority that it is unnecessary to comment upon them in detail. Chief of these offenders was "Le Cathedral Engloutie."

Louis Horst is to be congratulated on his accompaniments, and a small instrumental ensemble served well for Mr. Vaughan's piece.





FIRE NOTICE: Look around NOW and choose the nearest Exit to your seat. In case of fire, walk (not run) to THAT Exit. Do not try to beat your neighbor to the street.
JOHN J. DORMAN, Fire Commissioner.

Sunday Evening, April 15th 1928.

DANCE PROGRAM

presented by

DORIS HUMPHREY

with

CHARLES WEIDMAN

And Dancers of the Denishawn School

LOUIS HORST, Pianist

PROGRAM

PART I.

1 Air for the G String — *Bach*
CELIA, CLEO, EVELYN, ROSE, SYLVIA

2 Gigue — *Bach*
DORIS HUMPHREY

3 Allegro — *Scott*
CHARLES WEIDMAN

4 Color Harmony — *Clifford Vaughn*
(Conducted by CLIFFORD VAUGHN)
ENSEMBLE

Each of the three primary colors of light moves according to its own being; the red is both sensual and scintillating; the green moves soothingly; the purple is rich, threaded by an aspiring violet. As each color follows its own course, it is inevitably flung against another, and as each collision occurs a new color suddenly emerges the confusion becomes greater, and rapidly draws towards chaos and death. Through the maelstrom appears a white light, symbolic of a controlling intelligence, which draws all the flaming colors into the rhythmic harmony of its own essence.

PART II.

1 Papillon — *Rosenthal*
DORIS HUMPHREY

2 *a* Cathedrale Englotie — *Debussy*
CHARLES WEIDMAN

b Waltz — *Debussy*
DORIS HUMPHREY

c Minstrels — *Debussy*
CHARLES WEIDMAN, JOHN GLENN, EUGENE LE SIEUR

3 First Movement of the Concerto in A Minor — Grieg
DORIS HUMPHREY and ENSEMBLE

PART III.

1 *a* Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty — *Ravel*
b The Fairy Garden — *Ravel*
DORIS HUMPHREY

2 Bagatelle — *Beethoven*
SYLVIA and EVELYN

3 The Banshee — *Cowell*
(Played by HENRY COWELL)
DORIS HUMPHREY

4 Scherzo — *Borodin*
CHARLES WEIDMAN

5 Etude—Opus 8, No. 12 — *Scriabin*
DORIS HUMPHREY and CHARLES WEIDMAN

Dancers—Celia Rauch, Gertrude Shurr, Virginia Millar, Olga Fry, Jean Nathan, Sylvia Manning, Dorothy Lathrop, Rose Yasgour, Frances O'Meara, Evelyn Fields, Cleo Atheneos, Leja Gorska, Katherine Manning, Frances Shinn, Helen Strumlauf, Eleanor King, Robert Gorham, John Glenn, Eugene Le Sieur.

ORCHESTRA

Concert Management DANIEL MAYER, Inc.

APPENDIX IV

LAST GRAHAM CONCERT WITH LOUIS HORST AS MUSICAL DIRECTOR

SUNDAY, AUGUST 22, 1948
2:30 P.M.

AMERICAN DANCE FESTIVAL

PRESENTS

MARTHA GRAHAM

WITH

Erick Hawkins

AND

MAY O'DONNELL PEARL LANG
MARK RYDER

DOROTHEA DOUGLAS		ROBERT COHAN
JOAN SKINNER	HELEN MCGEHEE	STUART HODES
DOROTHY BEREA	NATANYA NEUMANN	DALE SEHNERT

LOUIS HORST, *Musical Director*

HELEN LANFER, *Pianist*

Lighting by ARCH LAUTERER

PALMER AUDITORIUM CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

NEW LONDON, CONN.

I

WILDERNESS STAIR

Diversion of Angels

MUSIC . . . . . Norman Dello Joio
SET . . . . . Isamu Noguchi
CHOREOGRAPHY . . . . . Martha Graham

It is the place of the Rock and the Ladder, the raven, the blessing, the tempter, the rose. It is the wish of the single-hearted, the undivided: play after spirit's labor: games, flights, fancies, configurations of the lover's intention: the believed Possibility, at once strenuous and tender: humors of innocence, garlands, evangels, Joy on the wilderness stair: diversion of angels. – *Ben Belitt*

Pearl Lang	Dorothea Douglas	Mark Ryder
Helen McGehee	Joan Skinner	Robert Cohan
Natanya Neumann	Dorothy Berea	Stuart Hodes
	Dale Sehnert	

INTERMISSION 15 MINUTES

II

ERRAND INTO THE MAZE

MUSIC .....Gian-Carlo Menotti
SET AND COSTUMES .....Isamu Noguchi
CHOREOGRAPHY .....Martha Graham

This dance has, as its core, the errand-journey into the maze of the heart's darkness in order to face and do battle with the Creature of Fear. There is the accomplishment of the errand, the instant of triumph, the emergence from the dark.

Martha Graham

Mark Ryder

The title is from a poem by Ben Belitt.

INTERMISSION 15 MINUTES

III

(First Performance)

THE STRANGLER

A Rite of Passage

DANCE . . . . . Erick Hawkins
POETRY . . . . . Robert Fitzgerald
MUSIC . . . . . Bohuslav Martinu
SET . . . . . Arch Lauterer

CHARACTERS:

THE SPHINX . . . . . Anne Meacham
OIDIPOUS . . . . . Erick Hawkins
CHORUS . . . . . Joseph Wiseman

THE SPHINX, half lion and half woman, represents the father and mother in the primal scene; her wings are a symbol of the physical ecstasy of the parents, and her name, in Greek meaning the Strangler, refers to the danger of parental fixation or domination.

OIDIPOUS overcomes the Sphinx by discerning in her the child's phantasy of the primal scene and by deciphering her riddle to mean the four-legged being of the primal scene, the two-legged image of the naked human being, and the three-legged image of the physically creative man. His name in Greek is a euphemism, Swollen Foot.

THE CHORUS, a single figure, speaks as the internal everpresent witness of every drama; at times for himself, and at times for Oidipous at this moment of his initiation into manhood.

The scene is the ritual dancing-place in a stony pass on the road from Delphi as it approaches Thebes. Oidipous is asleep.

Conducted by EUGENE LESTER

INTERMISSION 15 MINUTES

IV

NIGHT JOURNEY

Commissioned for Martha Graham by the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation in the Library of Congress. Presented here by permission of the Foundation.

MUSIC . . . . . William Schuman
SET . . . . . Isamu Noguchi
COSTUMES . . . . . Charlotte Trowbridge
CHOREOGRAPHY . . . . . Martha Graham

"And loudly o'er the bed she wailed where she
In twofold wedlock, hapless, had brought forth
Husband from a husband, children from a child.
We could not know the moment of her death
Which followed soon."—*Sophocles*

This dance is a legend of recognition. The action takes place in Jocasta's heart at the moment when she recognizes the ultimate terms of her destiny. She enters her room where the precise fulfillment of its terms awaits her. Here the Daughters of Night, Oedipus in his inescapable role, and the Seer pursue themselves across her heart in that instant of agony.

JOCASTA . . . . . Martha Graham
OEDIPUS . . . . . Erick Hawkins
THE SEER . . . . . Mark Ryder
LEADER OF THE CHORUS . . . . . Pearl Lang
DAUGHTERS OF THE NIGHT . Helen McGehee, Natanya Neumann
. Joan Skinner, Dorothea Douglas, Dorothy Berea

APPENDIX V

PHOTOGRAPHS OF LOUIS HORST AND SOME OF THE MEMBERS OF THE DENISHAWN COMPANY



ELENORE SCHEFFER



LOUIS HORST



GEORGIA GRAHAM





















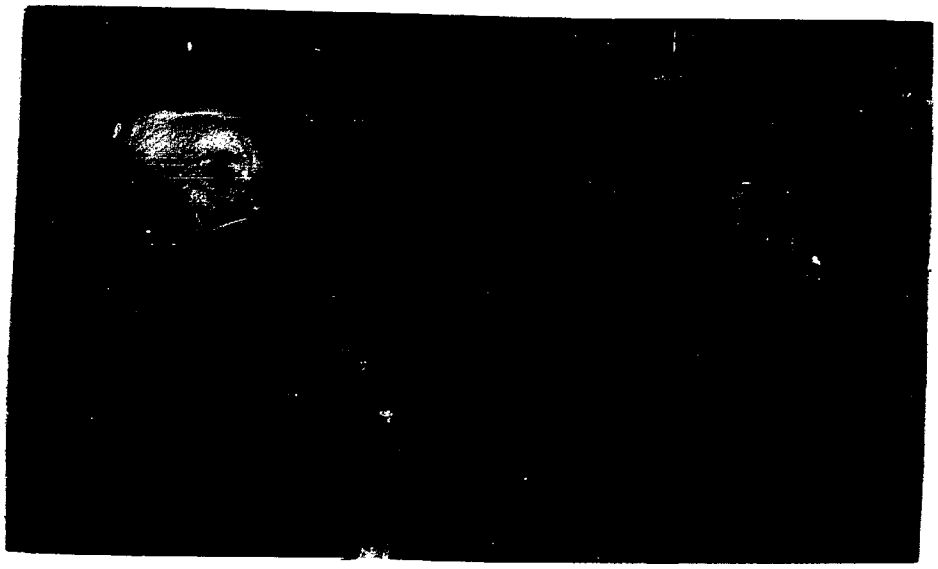




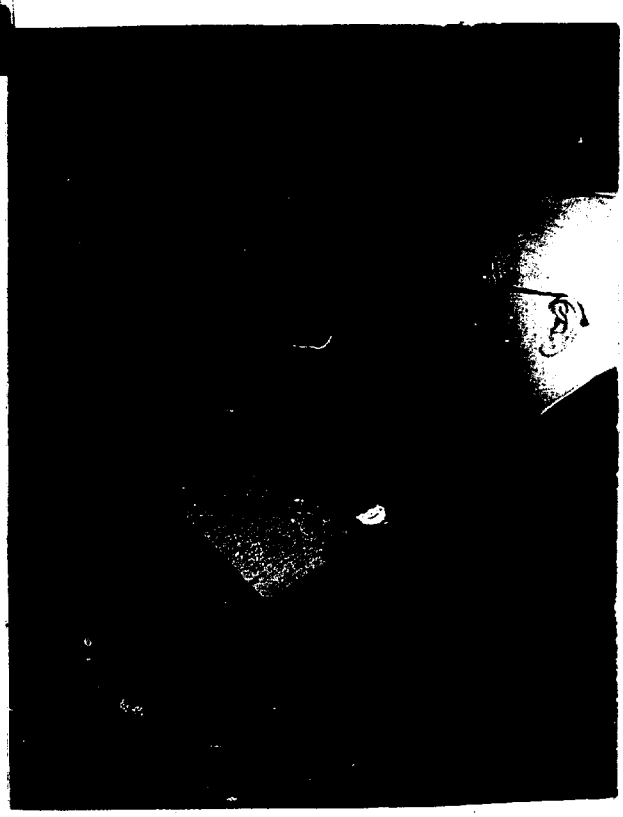
APPENDIX VI

RECENT INFORMAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF LOUIS HORST

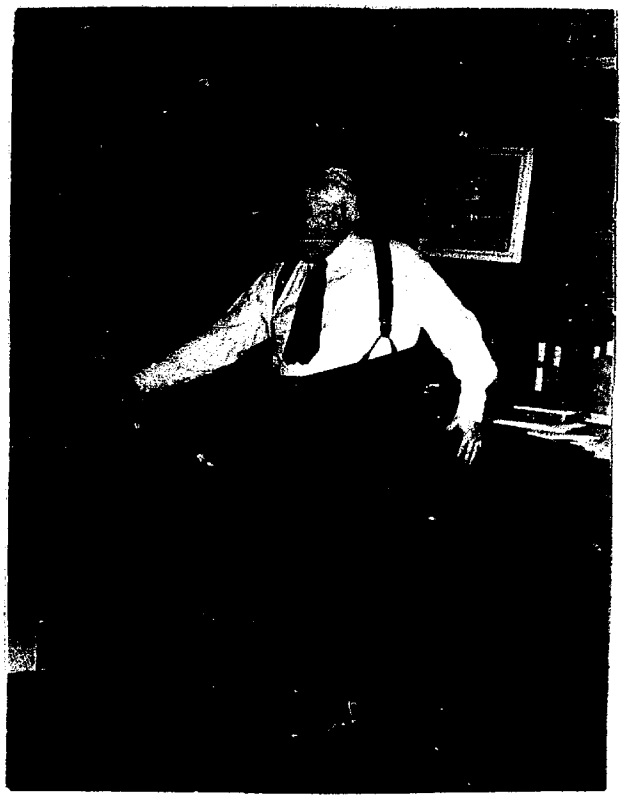






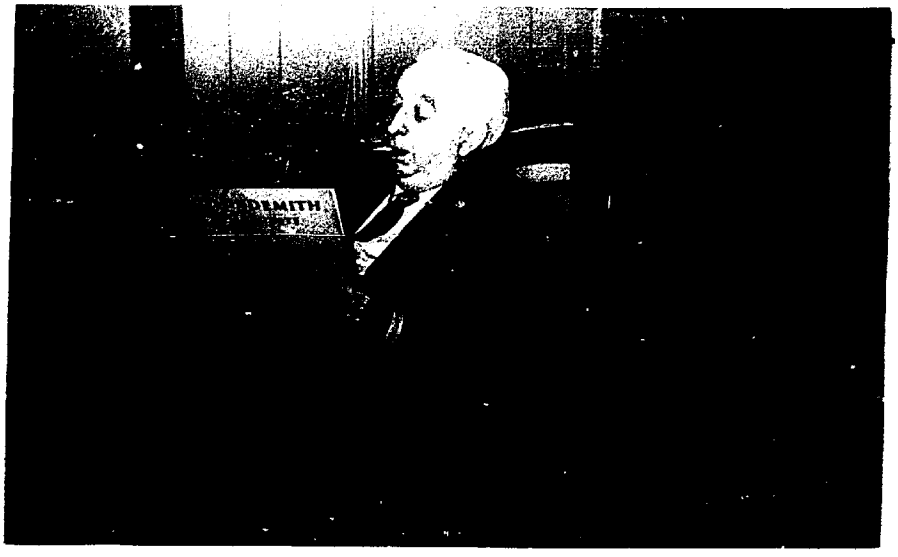












APPENDIX VII

MUSIC USED IN PRE-CLASSIC FORMS COURSE

Pavane

Pierre Phalese, Pavane Ferrarese.
William Byrde, "Pavana" from The Earle of Salisbury.
Gabriel Fauer, Pavane, Op. 50.
Maurice Ravel, "Pavane de la Belle au Bois dormant," from Ma Mere l'Ove.
Walter Niemann, "Pavane" from Tafelmusik, Op. 125.
Francis Poulenc, "Pavane" from Suite Francaise.

Galliard

Pierre Phalese, Galliarde Ferrarese.
Hans Leo Hassler, Gagliarda (E minor).
_____, Gagliarda (C major).
Paul Peuerl, "Galliarde" from Tanzbrevier.
Esther Williamson, Galliard (manuscript).

Allemande

John Bull, The Duke of Brunswick's Alman.
John Blow, Almand I.
Henry Purcell, Almand (G minor).
Francois Couperin, "Allemande" from La Tenebreuse.
Johann Mattheson, Allemande (C minor).
Johann Sebastian Bach, "Allemande" from Fourth French Suite.
Georg Friedrich Handel, "Allemande" from Suite XIV.
_____, "Allemande" from Suite XI.

Sarabande

Louis Couperin, Sarabande in Canon Form.
Francois Couperin, La Lugubre.
Claude Debussy, Sarabande.
Georg Friedrich Handel, Sarabande (D minor).
Paul Vidal, "Sarabande" from Zino Zina.
Erik Satie, Three Sarabandes, No. 2.

Courante

John Blow, Corant (C major).
Domenico Zipoli, Corrente (G minor).
Johann Kirnberger, Corrente (G minor).
Berniece Hellebrandt, Courante (manuscript).

Gigue

Domenico Zipoli, Giga (G minor).
Jean Philippe Rameau, Deux Gigues en Rondeau, No. 2.
Georg Friedrich Handel, Gigue (D minor).
Carl Heinrich Graun, Gigue (B♭ minor).
Alfredo Casella, "Giga" from Piéces Enfantines.

Minuet

Henry Purcell, Minuet (G major).
Jean Philippe Rameau, Menuet (G minor).
J. F. Fasch, Menuet (D minor).
Johann Sebastian Bach, "Menuet" from Sixth French Suite.
Maurice Ravel, "Menuet" from Tombeau de Couperin.
Walter Niemann, "Minuet" from Tafelmusik, Op. 125.

Gavotte

Louis Marchand, Gavotte (D minor).
Johann Sebastian Bach, "Gavotte" from Fifth French Suite
Georg Friedrich Handel, "Gavotte" from Masque.
Christoph Foerster, Gavotte (A major).
Serge Prokofiev, Gavotte, Op. 12, No. 2.
_____, "Gavotte" from Symphonie Classique.
_____, Gavotta, Op. 32, No. 3.

Bourrée

Georg Friedrich Handel, Bourrée (G minor).
J. F. Fasch, Bourrée (B♭ major).
Gottfried Heinrich Stolzel, Bourrée (G minor).
Aime Lachaume, "Gavotte-Bourrée" from Trianon Suite.
Esther Williamson, Bourrée (manuscript).

Rigaudon

John Barrett, "Rigadoon" from The St. Catherine.
Jean Philippe Rameau, Rigaudon (E minor).
Walter Niemann, "Rigaudon" from Tafelmusik, Op. 125.
Esther Williamson, Rigaudon (manuscript).

Passepied

Andre Campra, Passepieds from L'Europe Galante.
Andre Destouches, "Passepieds en Rondeau" from Isse.
Jean Philippe Rameau, Passepieds from Castor et Pollux.
Johann Sebastian Bach, "Passepied" from Fifth English Suite.
Georg Friedrich Handel, "Passepied" from Aylesford Pieces.

Chaconne

Louis Couperin, Chaconne (G minor).
Johann Pachelbel, Ciaconna (D major).
Henry Purcell, Chaconne (F major).

Passacaglia

Francois Couperin, Passacaille (B minor).

APPENDIX VIII

MUSIC USED IN MODERN FORMS COURSE

Section I. Understanding by Contrast

Rhythm - 5/4 time

Erik Satie, Danse de la Brouette.

Melodic line - pentatonic

Lothar Windsperger, Nordisches Leid, Op. 37, Book I.

Melodic line - whole-tone scale

Lothar Windsperger, Ganztonleiter.

Harmony - dissonance

Lothar Windsperger, Dissonanzen.

Section II. Backgrounds of Modern Art

Earth primitive

Bela Bartok, Bagatelle, Op. 6. Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.
Zoltan Kodaly, Op. 11, No. 3; Op. 3, Nos. 1 and 5.

Air primitive

Monpou, Cants Magícs, Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4.
_____, Charmes, Nos. 1, 2, 4, and 6 (occasionally).

Archaic

Erik Satie, Gymnopédie, Nos. 1, 2, and 3.
_____, Trois Gnossiennes, Nos. 2 and 3.

Religious medieval

Paul de Maleingreau, Introits.

"Les Stigmates de St. Francois."
"St. Justin, Martyr."
"St. Benoit, Joseph Labre."
"St. Stanislaw Kostka."
"St. Irenee."
"St. Thomas, Martyr."
"Salve Sancta Parens."
"Le Jeudi Saint."

Secular medieval

Charles Koechlin, Douze Petites Piéces, Op. 41, No. 2.

"Retour de Printemps."
"A Travers Champs."
"Fanfare de Chasse."
"Chanson du Pêcheur."
"Ronde."
"Rosée au Jardin."

Phyllis Cunningham, Secular Medieval (manuscript).
Beatrice Hellebrandt, Medieval Troubadour (manuscript).
Conrad Paumann, Mit Ganzen Willen.
Stantipes, anonymous.

Section III. Immediacies of Modern Art

Introspective

Alexander Scriabin, Danse Languide, Op. 51, No. 4.
_____, Prelude, Op. 74, Nos. 2, 3, and 4.
_____, Prelude, Op. 49, No. 2.
_____, Prelude, Op. 67, No. 1.
_____, Etude, Op. 49, No. 1.
_____, Desir, Op. 57, No. 1.

Cerebral

Ernst Toch, Tanz und Spielstücke, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.
Arnold Schönberg, Op. 19, No. 2.

Impressionism

Maurice Ravel, Valses Nobles et Sentimentales, Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Jazz

Louis Gruenberg, Six Jazz Epigrams, Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 5.
Blair Fairchild, Chants Negres, No. 3.
George Gershwin, Three Preludes, No. 2.
Tibor Harsanyi, Rythmes, No. 2 (5/8 time).
Aaron Copland, Sentimental Melody.
Norman Lloyd, Blues.

Americana

Louis Horst, arrangement of She'll be Coming 'Round the Mountain, theme and variations.
Walter Niemann, Louisiana Suite, "The Mississippi Steamboat's in Sight."
David Guion, Sheep and Goat Walkin' to the Pasture.
Wendell Keeney, Mountain Tune.
Paul Nordoff, arrangement of Camptown Races.
Drusa Wilker, American Sentiment (manuscript).