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Design and choreographic approach to an original modern dance work | "Of stars and men"

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A DESIGN AND CHOREOGRAPHIC APPROACH TO AN ORIGINAL MODERN DANCE WORK: "OF STARS AND MEN"

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

Modern dance is an art form which uses consciously-chosen movement to communicate man's feelings, ideas, emotions, or situation. Modern dance, as it is found in our educational system, is not merely the study of specific techniques and compositions; but rather it is the exploration of movement which eventually leads to creative, artistic expression. The movement experiences are carefully chosen with emphasis given to the rhythmic organization and dynamic quality. The result of these selective movement experiences is the communication of an idea, mood, feeling state, or situation.\(^1\)

As an educational instrument modern dance is a worthy and applicable tool. Dance is of particular importance in education because it lends itself readily to creative activity.\(^2\) Through the study of this dance form the student extends his creative capacity, increases his organizational and discriminatory ability, improves his problem-solving techniques, deepens his appreciation of related art forms and develops a kinesthetic awareness not only to muscle action, but also to the responses of people and situations surrounding him.


\(^2\)Turner, ibid., p. 2.
Once the student has been exposed to movement fundamentals, movement exploration, composing improvisationally, and has mastered these techniques, the student is then ready to organize his movement into a definite form which will be presented for the class or an audience. The performance aspect of dance study is logical. To allow student performance is to provide a complete dance experience and a natural culmination of classroom activity. Dance is a performing art and is meant to be shared by dancer and audience alike. As Margery Turner explains, "Dance is a performing art—it lives at its highest only during performance."³ Performance, whether it be composed of student works or faculty works has many educational and personal benefits, just as the classroom experience does. To do a good job of performing, the student must learn to do his best within the limits of his ability, must learn to work with a group and contribute to it, and must learn to be responsible for his part in the over-all performance if it is to be successful. Personally, the student receives satisfaction in the knowledge that he has worked hard to accomplish his goal; that he has gained new ideas for original compositions; and that he has developed his critical ability in an objective manner. Gertrude Lippincott further states that:

Dance production can provide the opportunity for students to work cooperatively in the creation of dances, to learn such valuable aspects of performing as self-discipline, control and projection; and to give the "test of fire" to their artistic works in presenting them to an audience.⁴

³Turner, ibid., p. 162.
Because of this belief in the benefits gained from the study and performance of modern dance, the Health, Physical Education and Recreation Department of the University of Montana has produced an annual spring dance concert for the past seven years. The performers are chosen from the University Dance Company, a performing group composed of University students, and the choreography is usually a combination of student and faculty works.

The investigator also believes in the benefits of creating and producing original modern dance works. In addition to the educational benefits of modern dance production there is also the fascination produced by the visual environment in which the dance itself takes place. The visual-environment aspect of dance production also interested the investigator. Dance is movement in a defined space. Too often, the investigator believed, the visual aspects such as scenery, lighting, and costumes were not regarded as important visual elements in modern dance production.

This thesis, therefore, is concerned with the investigation of the total visual environment and the creative processes which compile an original modern dance production, including the selection of music, the writing of a scenario, the choreography, the design of costumes, sets, properties and lights, and the direction of the over-all production. The specific work to be investigated is "Of Stars and Men," which was presented (see Appendix III) as part of the University Dance

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5"Of Stars and Men" is the title of an original modern dance work. This title should not be confused with the book, Of Stars and Men, written by Harlow Shapley.
Company's annual spring concert at the University of Montana Theater, in Missoula, on May 30 and 31, 1969. This year's concert was produced by the Health, Physical Education and Recreation Department and the Department of Drama. This writer composed, choreographed, designed and directed the production of "Of Stars and Men" as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Drama.

Since beginning students in dance production and/or choreography might refer to this investigation, the purpose of this study is to investigate the total visual environment in which dance production takes place and the creative processes involved in selecting accompaniment, writing an original scenario, choreographing movement, and designing costumes, properties, etc. Not only will there be emphasis placed on how these processes evolved, but also on why they were performed in this specific manner.

There were definite factors which affected the production from its beginning. Certain restrictions were placed on the choreographer-designer before work on the production began. These restrictions, such as the lack of live accompaniment, a restricted budget, the students' limited technical ability, and restricted rehearsal time, would affect the decisions to be made concerning all aspects of production. These problems will also be discussed in the text so that students may know the theory behind the decisions.

In order to further clarify basic terminology employed in this study, the following definitions and/or explanations were established:
Modern Dance:

Modern dance is an art form that uses movement as a medium of expression. It is the result of intentional ordering of movement by a choreographer. The movement is created in response to the re-experiencing of emotional values, which are thus given a new existence. The expressive movement is highly selected, spatially designed, and organized through rhythmic structure; the result is the communication of an idea, mood, feeling state, or situation.6

State Properties: Doris Humphrey defines stage properties in relation to their use in modern dance choreography, when she states that:

The modern dance is full of the use of what we will call props: poles, handkerchiefs, skirts (manipulated), fences, mirror shapes (movable), swords, flags, scarves (from small to enormous), tables, chairs, books, umbrellas, and unidentifiable objects which are deliberately abstract or meant to be symbolic. These, to be justifiable, must never be simply decorative, but must serve a functional purpose which is highly useful to the choreographer. They heighten the action; lend extra meaning to it; even, in some cases, make the whole point of the dance.7

Dance Composition:

The way in which inner experience is brought into existence by technique not only as skillfully executed movement but as artful relating and integrating of these movements so that their organization results in a dance symbolizing unity between content and the form of its expression.8

Scenario: "The plot of a play prepared for production of a film or live show, showing its development scene by scene and giving...

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essential details for acting."9 This same definition would hold true for a dance scenario.

Choreographer: A choreographer is one who plans and arranges dance movements into a meaningful whole.

Designer: "The scene designer inaugurates the planning of the scenic investiture of the production. He has complete responsibility to the producer for all the visual elements of the production except, or possibly including, the costumes."10 In this particular work the designer also was responsible for the costume designs.

Scenery: The visual environment created for the action of a play or a dance work is called the scenery. It may be described as "... a series of two- and three-dimensional units that are placed on stage to enclose the acting area. When painted, and lighted, they form the background for the action of the play."11

Lighting:

Lighting refers to the selection of the instruments and their positioning and to the control of the quality, color and distribution of the light that they produce. It is the purpose of the lighting to illuminate, give plasticity, create realistic effects, indicate mood and augment the composition of the design.12

CHAPTER II

THE MUSIC

With a general dance idea in mind, the search for musical accompaniment began. The purpose of dance accompaniment is to lend support to the movement and to reinforce the mood, quality, rhythmic structure, and the dynamics that are to be incorporated in the dance action. Very often the dance accompaniment will also offer movement ideas to the choreographer. There are instances where the music increases in tempo, emotional pitch, and/or dynamics which cannot be ignored by the choreographer. In these instances, especially when the music is an established work, the choreographer may interpret the music, rather than the music being only a device used to support the movement. The type of accompaniment used for the Dance Company's productions is recorded music. Understandably, live music would be ideal since the dance is performed live. However, because of a restrictive budget and the lack of available live musicians, the choreographer has been forced to rely on this type of accompaniment. Hence, music is one of the initial factors to be considered when contemplating original choreographic works for the University Dance Company.

A choreographer has several alternatives when selecting accompaniment for his choreography. He may either decide first on a scenario

and then have original music written for his work; he may write his scenario and then try to find appropriate recorded music; or he may find music which moves him emotionally and aesthetically and then develop a scenario around the previously composed music.

As stated earlier, the choreographer for the University Dance Company must rely on recorded music to accompany her dance compositions. Therefore, the investigator chose the third alternative given in the preceding paragraph.

Many recorded works were listened to before making a final selection. Finally the symphonic suite, The Planets, by Gustav Holst was chosen. The selection was made initially because of mental images evoked by the music and inherent factors in the composition of the music itself.

The images suggested by the music consisted of movement patterns, groupings of dancers, mood and action. By action, the investigator is referring to story-line, such as the battle sequence in the third section. The various pieces also offered contrasts in dynamics, mood, tempo, melody, and dramatic line. These contrasts would eventually aid the choreographer in designing and arranging movement.

The five pieces selected for the work were Neptune, Uranus, Venus, Mars, and Saturn. Eventually, the five pieces would be placed in the above sequence in order to lend support to the scenario.

Because the choreographer did not try to interpret the composer's musical ideas as stated on the record cover, a musical analysis

2The Planets, by Gustav Holst. Recorded by Angel Records, #S36420.
is not presented. The choreographer's ideas are expressed in the chapters which discuss the scenario and choreographic treatment.
CHAPTER III

THE SCENARIO

After the general dance ideas and musical accompaniment had been selected, the next step in the creative process was to develop a scenario. The purpose of a scenario, which accompanies a modern dance work, is to give the movement a logical and comprehensible motivation. Thus, if the movement is motivated by some identifiable force, not only will the audience better understand the artistic statement, but the dancers will also be better able to communicate with their audience. After all, the choreographer is using dance as his medium of expression. He is trying to communicate some belief, theory, or situation which he believes important enough to share with an audience. Motivating the movement, then, is simply a device used by the choreographer to insure understanding and comprehension by his audience.

The Planets had already suggested ideas, both for movement and scenario, to the choreographer. The idea of expressing the personalities of the planets through music, as Holst had done, was intriguing. However, the choreographer wished to relate her work, in an abstract manner, to the human situation. Perhaps there existed both in the heavens and with man a similar characteristic and/or situation which could be expressed meaningfully through modern dance.

The universe is known to be orderly and predictable. Some
exceptions to this predictability do exist such as meteorites. Nevertheless, man has always appeared to be fascinated by this orderliness. He has studied the heavens, from the time of the Greeks, because he was intrigued by the universe and because he desired the secret of its orderliness. He has tried to live and govern an organized life on every level of his existence as shown by his family structure, his social activities, his religion, and his local, state and national governments. With these thoughts in mind, the choreographer began developing her scenario.

A certain amount of research was needed to solidify the choreographer's thoughts. Books of astronomy, philosophy, science collections and Greek mythology were consulted. Although the investigator could not find an established theory precisely like her own, she did locate the scientific facts needed to verify her major beliefs.

The scenario was then developed into four sections. Throughout the work the dancers would represent planets which would symbolize man. The sets and costumes will be discussed in the following chapter. A short prelude would be used to establish a desired mood. Approximately the last 40 seconds of Neptune would be used for the prelude.

The opening movement statement would be concerned with the unity and harmony of the heavens. The musical piece for this section

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would be Uranus. The harmony in movement would symbolize man's efforts to live peacefully in an organized, civilized community. A disruptive force, however, would then temporarily disturb the tranquility. This disruption could be interpreted as war, social change, racial strife, or any other force which temporarily changes men's lives. This section would be titled "The Planet of Disrupted Harmony."

The second section would symbolize peace and man's longing for an end to human strife and suffering in all its forms. "The Planet of Peace" would be the title of the second section and would be performed to the music of Venus.

The third movement would show the planets, or man, in conflict with each other. War, slavery, fear, and destruction would be communicated through movement in this section called "The Planet of War," which would be danced to Mars.

The final section would be titled "The Planet of Possibilities." In this section the planets would finally resolve their differences and regain the harmony that was lost in the opening section.

These four sections would be worked out later in detail, filling in and completing the scenario as the music demanded. As stated in Chapter II, a choreographer who chooses the music before the scenario has to create a motivation around the composed piece of music.
CHAPTER IV

THE DESIGNS: SCENERY, COSTUME, PROPERTIES, AND LIGHTING

Part I: The scenic design

Once the scenario had been developed the visual environment, in which the movement ideas would take place, had to be created. Several factors would affect the creation of a scenic design. The setting would have to define the place, mood, and general environment while allowing ample floor space for movement. The setting would also have to contribute to the communication of the dance idea and amplify the choreographic themes. The set had to be a necessary part of the visual aspects of the production, rather than just ornamentation. Another factor to be considered was time. Since "Of Stars and Men" was only one of the works to be presented in the concert, the scenery would have to be easily and quickly moved.

Having considered the requirements of a set for the dance work, the designer-choreographer began preparing for an actual design. Research was utilized as a natural beginning. Astronomy, theater design, and design books for dance were consulted. (See Bibliography for exact references.) Notes, word images, and brief sketches of possible designs were made.

After studying the preliminary sketches and research materials, it was decided that a hanging piece of scenery and two platforms would comprise the set pieces which would allow maximum floor space. The
purpose of the hanging piece would be to suggest the heavens and its planets which move in an orderly, predictable path. The two platforms, representing planets also, would be utilized for changes of level and entrances and exits by the dancers. The platforms would be of similar design to the hanging piece and would thus carry out the over-all design in three dimensional form. A large arc would round-off the proscenium opening providing another statement of the curved lines found in the hanging piece, properties, platforms and movement. However, due to the lack of construction time the arc was omitted in the actual production. Although the setting was relatively complete without the arc, its inclusion would have provided a completed feeling to the design.

Once the demands of the set were studied, preliminary sketches, notes, and conferences were made. In the preliminary sketches the designer was trying to achieve a feeling of unity and harmony, a composition that would suggest the planets and their relationship to one another; and the geometric lines that would be used in the movement, costumes, and properties. Circles of the same shape, but various sizes, were initially tried. However, there was too much symmetry in these designs and the suggestion of many planets was not represented. After referring to pictures of planets, the designer realized that some planets were round and others oval. Many of the planets had vapor circles surrounding them. Therefore, a combination of round and oval designs was employed. These symbols were unified by a large, narrow line which joined them to each other. This design seemed to offer the effect that the set was to achieve.
The final design was then decided upon and a rendering was made. The rendering was painted in the desired colors since the painting would be done by crew members, rather than by the designer herself. A scale drawing on tracing paper was also made so that it could be projected onto the raw surface of the hanging piece and traced. The traced material would then be cut out and fitted together to form the hanging piece of scenery. This piece would then be hung from a pale blue sky drop. A blue scrim\textsuperscript{1} would hang in front of the set piece to soften the effect and suggest distance. Side masking would be achieved by hanging black velour wings along the sides of the stage. All of these technical and construction problems were handled by the designer and technical director of the Drama Department and his production staff. The finalized plans and construction of the set can be seen in Appendix I.

Part II: The costume design

The next step in the creative and production process was to design the dancers' costumes. The designer-choreographer now knew the physical and visual framework in which she would be working. The music, scenario, stage design, and numbers of dancers had been selected. These factors would suggest costume ideas to the designer.

Because the scenario would deal with the heavens and man, a costume that suggested both worlds would be needed. The contrast between

\textsuperscript{1}Scrim—a drop made of an open weave fabric like cheese cloth. It is possible to see through this material in the direction of the heaviest concentration of light.
the straight and curved lines found in the set, properties, and eventually the movement would also affect the costume design. The need for freedom of movement would definitely be a deciding factor when designing the costumes. A certain anonymity among the dancers was desired too. The scenario intended to express qualities found in all mankind, rather than specific personalities. Therefore, a certain degree of symmetry in design and construction was needed. Since there would be men and women comprising the cast, a costume which could be adapted for both sexes was necessary. Colors that were representative of mood and character had to be chosen also and considered in the initial planning.

After the requirements for costuming had been considered, research was once again utilized for suggesting design ideas. (See the Bibliography for exact references.) Sketches, cloth samples, pictures, and movies were consulted and ideas collected. Because all the designs created for "Of Stars and Men" were original ones, the investigator cannot refer to specific time periods, furniture construction, costume designs, etc. as definite guidelines. The costume design, as an example, was a product of the designer's research, experience in performing, and desired visual effect.

Leotards and tights in various shades of blue and pure white for those dancers representing peaceful elements were chosen as the basic costume. Tights and leotards in black and gray were chosen for the dancers of war-like elements. Hoods with styrofoam balls attached in the color corresponding to the basic costume were also selected. The purposes of the tight-fitting hoods were to suggest anonymity among the dancers, to slightly abstract the human form, and to further
carry out the curved lines of the scenic design, properties, and movement. A drape attached to the neckline of the women's costume in front and back would also be used. The drapes would be fastened at the waist by an elastic band. The drapes and elastic bands would be the same color as the tights and leotards. (See Appendix II for exact details.)

The material would be draped in such a fashion as to form curved lines when moving in a circular pattern and straight lines when moving in a more angular pattern. Many types of material were explored as possibilities. Georgette was chosen for the drapes because of its lightness and draping quality. Felt was used for the hoods because of its strength and rough texture. The styrofoam balls could easily be attached to the rough felt surface with a type of cloth glue. Elastic was chosen for the waist bands because it allowed freedom of movement.

The men would wear tights and tank-suit leotards in black. The georgette would be attached around the shoulders in a curved line and allowed to hang vertically at their sides. (See Appendix II.) Their hoods would be black, but the drapes would be of red georgette. The design of the men's drapes also allowed the re-statement of the curved and straight lines found elsewhere in the visual designs.

The costuming of this modern dance work was relatively costly. However, the cost was justified since the drapes could be removed and used as raw material for a new set of costumes. The tights and leotards could also be used in following productions done by the Company. Also, the original costumes for this work could be re-constructed if the work were to be performed next year. These "multiple-use" ideas must be considered when a group is working on a limited budget and
long-range planning. The actual construction of the costumes was executed by a seamstress. Several members of the Company also helped with detail work.

Part III: The properties

A discussion of the definition and use of stage properties for dance was presented in Chapter I. The properties used in "Of Stars and Men" consisted of hoops, sticks, and two platforms. The idea for their use grew out of the scenic design and movement patterns. Through the use of these properties the dancers would become a living part of the total scenic design and vice versa. The properties would also help clarify characterization and story-line. The hoops would be used a great deal in the opening movement and later in the final movement. They were originally painted blue; however, they blended into the hanging piece of scenery. Therefore, the hoops were painted silver to offer greater contrast. The sticks which symbolized weapons were two feet long and painted red. The men used the sticks in "The Planet of Disrupted Harmony." The platforms which were part of the setting were placed in the up-right and down-left corners. The platforms were a semi-circular shape and had two tiers. The dancers used these platforms for entrances and exits throughout the work. The up-stage right platform was used mainly for the dancers of peaceful elements. The men, representing war, employed the down-stage left platform for their important movement statements.

All of the properties were taken from either drama department stock pieces or from the dance department properties. The actual
properties may be seen in the pictures in Appendices I and II.

**Part IV: The lighting design**

"Of Stars and Men" required many lighting cues because of its complexity and length. The lighting was designed to serve the following purposes:

1. to provide visibility,
2. to create mood,
3. to help define the characters involved, and
4. to complete the total visual environment of the work.

The actual lighting designs were built mainly from warm and cool light. The warm tones (deep pinks) and the cool tones (pale blues) provided the needed contrasts. The nine general areas of the stage (up-right, left and center, down-right, left and center, and center-right, left and center) were treated with one set of area spots in pink-amber and one set in pale violet and pale blue-green. Three rows of striplights\(^1\) in primary colors were used for general color washes across the stage. Stage areas that needed special lighting, such as the platforms and the down-center areas, were treated individually with area specials. Side-lighting, in pinks and blues, was achieved by attaching ellipsoidal spotlights\(^2\) to towers which were placed in the wings and side balconies. The backdrop was lighted in primary colors

\(^1\)Striplights—an instrument containing several light sources. The striplight provides a wash of color over the stage.

\(^2\)Ellipsoidal spotlight—a spotlight that uses an ellipsoidal reflector to form two conjugate focal points. It contains two lenses and produces a sharp beam of light.
by striplights from above and below. The scrim, which was hung in front of the drop, was lighted from above by pale blue scoops.  

For the prelude, the only lights used were the drop borders and foots, all in blue, since a silhouette-effect was desired. An ethereal quality was needed for the opening statement and, therefore, very little light was used. When the dancers actually began moving, the first, second, and third borders, drop borders and foots, and scrim scoops in blue were brought-up. Side-lighting in blue was also added from the balconies and wings. Warm tones of pink were added to the nine main areas of the stage. These additional lighting effects allowed not only visibility, but also contributed to the warm, bright mood projected by the movement.

For the men's entrance the borders went to red, while the drop foots and borders remained blue. The scrim also retained its blue wash. Red side-lighting from the off-stage towers was included for a change of mood and to emphasize the entrance of a strong, evil force. An area special in amber was used on the up-stage right platform for the entrance of the male lead. This area special drew the audience's attention to the soloist.

When the women symbolizing peace entered, the borders returned to blue and the drop borders and foots remained the same. The blue drop was used whenever the peaceful elements were on stage. As the dancers of peace began their movement statement, the borders and drop

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3Scoop—full name is ellipsoidal reflector floodlight. Uses a 500-watt lamp and provides a broad wash of light. Lamp is contained in a large hood with the reflector.
borders continued in blue. Blue side-lighting, white special on the up-stage right platform, and green foots on the drop were brought in. The area special once again drew attention to the desired focal point. The use of white light symbolized the purity of the movement theme and intensified the white of their costumes. Pink tones, for warmth and skin tones, were also employed in the down-center area.

In the third section, "The Planet of War," the borders and drop borders changed to red. The lower half of the drop was washed in blue-green light from the drop foots, while the upper half was in red. These two colors emphasized the two elements, the oppressed and the oppressors, which were at play in this section. During "the prisoners," the borders, drop foots, side-lighting and area special remained the same. A blue-green area special directed on the down-center area was used to define the imaginary prison. The drop borders changed also from only red to red and blue in this section. When the women escaped, the only alteration was to fade-out the down-center special.

The lighting effects stayed the same until after the death of the woman warrior. As the men carried her off the stage, the red drop foots and red side-lighting were taken out. This deletion represented the exit of the evil forces. Blue side-lighting and the amber special on the up-right platform were then added to suggest the hope that a solution could be found.

In "The Planet of Possibilities," red borders, blue scrim, blue side-lighting, drop foots in blue, and drop borders in blue to suggest a dream-like quality were employed. The down-center area was bathed in pink. This same lighting cue remained unchanged throughout
the first part of the section and the *pas de deux*. When the remaining dancers re-entered, the up-right area special in white was added since the soloists were on the platform and the purity of peace needed to be re-stated. All the blues and pinks on the main areas were also brought in. At the close of this section, everything was taken out except the blue drop feet and blue borders. The silhouette-effect of the prelude was once again created as the act curtain closed.
CHAPTER V

THE CHOREOGRAPHIC TREATMENT

Once the designs for scenery, lighting, and costumes had been considered, the choreographer began the development of the specific movement ideas which would be performed in that chosen visual environment. Although the choreographic treatment is being discussed as the last step in the creative process, it is still the most important area and received the most attention. The other design factors were developed in order to complete the visual framework in which the dance would exist. The various design elements and choreographic treatments were discussed separately even though the basic ideas were created simultaneously. All of these design factors, such as costuming, settings and properties, depended on one another and would eventually affect each other in the total design picture. That dance is the dominant art form of this study should be stressed and that all other design factors were utilized to strengthen the communicative power of the dance.

In the first section, "The Planet of Disrupted Harmony," specific movement themes were given to the characters. These themes would later be re-stated and would help the audience to identify the motivating forces which the dancers represented. The dancers portraying peaceful elements would perform in round, flowing, circular patterns. The use of hoops would further carry out this theme. Those dancers portraying war-like elements would move in a strong, angular style. The three men would employ sticks to re-create the angular patterns
inherent in the movement. The compositional form of "The Planet of Disrupted Harmony" was basically an $ABC^1$ pattern. The unity and harmony would be represented by the chorus through circular, flowing, and symmetrical patterns. The spatial designs created by the hoops would also clarify this theme.

The scene would open with eight women, costumed in various shades of blue and black, forming a large circle with their bodies and the hoops. Most of the movement would be in unison to symbolize the unity and harmony of the heavens. They would dance together in flowing circular and diagonal patterns displaying a mood of joy and friendship. The men would create the disruptive force by creating fear and chaos through broken rhythms, percussive movement, jarring transitions, and oppositional lines. The eight women would react to the disruptive force by changing their movement style to angular and opposing lines. The women would demonstrate fear and chaos by shaking the hoops and using wild, uncontrolled movement. They would eventually move into straight lines for the entrance of peace. Their heads would focus down, instead of upward as they had done in the opening scene. The movement themes of the men would suggest strength, opposition, tension, and conflict. The men would move in an angular, percussive style, using the sticks to symbolize weapons. They would taunt the women as they danced in and out of the lines created by the women's hoops.

When the dancers in white symbolizing peace entered, the men would strike a pose on the kneeling level which would allow the soloist

$^1ABC$—a free sequential form in which three themes or ideas are combined to comprise an organic unity.
of peace to dominate. The soloist would move and gesture to the women with hoops as if to tell them they would be saved. The four women in white would then take their places on the up-stage right platform as the men exited. The women with hoops would rise from their knees and, in two's, pass by the women of peace, lowering their hoops as they did, which symbolized their allegiance to the planet of peace.

In "The Planet of Peace" an ABA_2 compositional form was used. The movement was curved, flowing, and successional. The intended moods of this section were peace, tranquility, and love. Man's longing for an orderly, peaceful existence was symbolized in movement throughout this second section.

In the introductory theme the dancers worked in unison and succession. They established the idea that man could live and function in a peaceful manner by smooth transitions, symmetry, a sustained movement quality, and flowing lines. Their focus and body projection were directed upward to suggest a feeling of uplifted spirits and hope. Movement themes were established in this "A" section that would later be repeated. In the contrasting section, or "B" section, the soloist moved away from the other three dancers. Although the contrast was made by the use of one dancer against a group and new movement, the mood projected by the dancer would be the same as in the "A" section. In repeating the original theme the four women in white would be joined by four women in blue. The women in blue would enter with hoops and

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2ABA—a composition in ternary form which is composed of an introductory theme, a contrasting theme, and a re-statement of the original theme.
the eight women together would use the props. Many of the same movement patterns used in the original "A" section would again be performed by all eight dancers. At the end of this section the dancers would move to the four corners of the stage, holding the hoops at shoulder height. The soloist would then leave her partner, momentarily stop at each corner, and then exit. The four hoops were then in position for the entrance of the dancers in "The Planet of War."

"The Planet of War" dealt with emotions and results of war. This section was choreographed in an ABCD\(^3\) form. The themes represented in this section were "the hunted," "the enslaved," "the prisoners," and "the warriors." In "the hunted" five women, dressed in gray and in black, would move in and around the four stationary hoops as if the hoops were a maze. As the last of the dancers passed by the hoops, those girls holding the hoops would exit, leaving only "the hunted" on stage. These five girls would run, twist, turn, and struggle to find a way out. However, the men would enter and force them into march-like movement symbolizing their submission to the men. Their submission would be demonstrated through a downward focus, a struggling movement quality, and a mimicking of the men's movement. After this sequence, the men would hurl three of the women into an imaginary prison. "The prisoners" would then define their cell by feeling its walls and by moving in a very small space. The women would eventually claw their way out, only to find themselves and the other two women still prisoners. A battle between one of the men and one of the women would then

\(^3\text{ABCD—a free sequential form in which four themes or ideas are combined to comprise an organic unity.}
begin. The two dancers would move toward one another and pass by as if jousting. The designs created by the two dancers would consist of strong, angular, and opposing lines. A great degree of body and movement tension would be employed. The woman would be killed and carried off by the men. The remaining women would mourn their loss and use a sustained reaching movement theme to symbolize not only their grief, but also their longing for help.

The conveyance of emotional reaction was highly important in "The Planet of War." The dancers had to communicate fear, oppression, struggle, hate, and grief through their movement. This was perhaps the most difficult movement section for the dancers because of the pace and the highly volatile emotions involved.

The conclusion of the work was titled "The Planet of Possibilities." The last section was choreographed in an ABC pattern. The dancers who remained on the stage from the previous section would begin a movement motif designed to establish a dream-like mood. This dream-like quality would be accomplished by keeping the focus straight forward, as if the body movement was independent from the thinking process. There would be no projection of mood, nor any change in the facial or body expression. The movement would be slow in speed, controlled, and sustained. After one sequence of this movement pattern, a dancer from the war group would move up-stage left. As the dancer in black or gray moved away from the group, a dancer in blue would enter and take her place. This sequence was repeated until all the dancers in gray or black were up-stage left and all the dancers in blue were down-stage right. Both groups would then kneel and continue to repeat the movement
sequence on this lower level as the dancers of peace entered. Each
girl in white would enter stage right and focus all her movements to
the down-stage left platform of the men. This sequence, which again
was sustained, curved, and flowing, was to represent their longing for
understanding and communication. Next each dancer would meet his
counter-part in center stage, hesitate momentarily, and exit, leaving
only the lead dancers from each side on-stage. The lead dancers of
peace and war would be the first to communicate. This communication
would take form in a *pas de deux.* After the two lead dancers had
established communication, the chorus would re-enter and resolve their
differences through symbolic movement patterns. The dancers from each
of the two opposing forces would re-enter in much the same way as they
had exited. They would try to communicate with one another, but fear
and distrust would come between them. Finally bodily contact would be
made between the dancers representing communication. They would then
move in two's, one partner from each group, to various places on the
stage. The movement patterns would again be free, energetic, circular
and symmetrical. All of the dancers would finally move into a large
circle with the two soloists in the center. The male lead would lift
the female soloist to his shoulder, turning her slowly in the center.
The lifted dancer would hold a hoop above her head as she was turned.
The remaining dancers would focus upward and kneel in a large circle
around the soloists, re-creating the circular formation used in the
first section. The lights would fade-out on this scene at its conclusion,
symbolizing that the unity and harmony of the heavens can be duplicated
by man.

An important part of the choreographic process was the re-working
of unsuitable movement sequences. If the problems could not be
corrected the sequence was re-choreographed in its entirety. Also,
extraneous movements which tended to confuse the choreographic intent
were also deleted. This editing phase is as important in dance as it
is in music, poetry, art and related fields. Another important aspect
of the choreographic process was the discussions between the dancers
and choreographer. Motivation, characterization, and mood were dis-
cussed. Through these talks the dancers became more aware of the
choreographer's intent and were better able to respond to their indi-
vidual roles.

The entire work was organized in order to present a unified
integration of scenario, music, visual designs and movement. The con-
struction of the work offered contrasts in timing, numbers of dancers
on stage, and emotional intensity. There was a constant, though subtle,
building of tension throughout the work which was finally resolved in
the climactic sequences of the final section. It should be noted that
the determination of the contrasts, emotional shadings, and over-all
pacing evolved in an intuitive manner. Although conscious thought was
given to these factors, they were not pre-planned according to a spec-
ific formula. These aspects of timing, emotional pitch, etc., were
allowed to be determined intuitively with consideration given to a
unified, artistic whole.
CHAPTER VI
THE PRODUCTIONS SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to describe the design and choreographic elements employed in an original modern dance work. Emphasis was placed on the creative processes which were involved in determining the visual designs and choreographic treatment. The duties of the designer-choreographer were explained in detail so that the stated purpose of the investigation could be accomplished. This outline of duties and the analysis of how the ideas became realities should be a helpful guide to anyone wishing to design and choreograph for a group comparable to the University Dance Company.

Far too often a choreographer must depend on related departments to complete the design and technical aspects of a proposed dance production. The analytical, step by step description of how the designer reached the designs used is included so that other choreographers might use it as a guide and become more actively involved in the creation of the total visual environment. The approach used in this investigation is only one method of designing, but it is a trustworthy one. Background material for designs and choreography must be secured from a pre-production program of research and analysis. However, as described, technical aspects affect the final designs that are suggested by the research. Also, each design was dealt with in terms of why it should be used and how it would achieve the desired effect. This procedure
should also be helpful for anyone having difficulty transposing his designs into a final form.

The designer-choreographer has reached the following conclusions as a result of this study:

Modern dance does not have to rely solely on lighting and costuming effects to complete the visual design. A set, rather than an empty stage, can be used effectively without distracting from the dance statement. A total visual environment is established by using a set along with the other design aspects, such as costuming, lighting and properties. The audience, too, is given a feeling of wholeness. The set supplies an environment in which the dance ideas take place. Like any design for dance, the setting must not dominate; but it can support the dance, as do the music, costuming and lighting.

Through active involvement in the creation of the visual designs, the choreographer was given not only ideas for movement, but also a feeling of total commitment to and absorption in the production. Because the choreographer was also the designer, she knew, without having to inquire elsewhere, how each production element would affect the others. An atmosphere of unity in the design aspects resulted because the investigator was able to integrate and relate the designs to each other. She concluded that the visual environment greatly affects the "picture" that the dance movement originates. The specific designs employed in "Of Stars and Men" definitely strengthened the dance ideas and the work would not have been complete visually without these designs.
Some further conclusions need to be made concerning the effectiveness of the total work, as compared to the designer's intent. Basically, the desired effects, in design and choreography, as stated in the text were achieved. However, if the production were to be performed again certain alterations would be made. The decisions to change or alter certain aspects of the production were based on the success of those aspects as they existed in the production described in this study.

As stated earlier the false proscenium arch would be included to suggest distance and complete the curved lines found in the other design elements. The platforms, which were used as properties and set pieces, would be re-designed. They were too large for the size stage on which they were used. Also, height would be added to the platforms. In this year's production the platforms were too low and did not offer a noticeable change in level. The actual design of the platforms would be re-worked so that they clearly resembled the planets of the hanging piece. Also, some device would have to be found to suggest a three-dimensional effect in the hanging set piece. Although the scrim suggested distance the piece looked too flat. This problem might be solved with lighting and/or painting techniques.

The dancers' hoods would also be re-designed. The complete effect of the hoods was not achieved with the present design. Perhaps the styrofoam balls could also be used on the actual costume so that the two designs (hood and body costume) would become more integrated.
In conclusion, it should be stated that the design, technical and other practical experiences gained from this study will greatly affect future productions done by the investigator. Hopefully these experiences will enable the designer-choreographer to be more self-reliant in the area of designing for concert dance.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX I

PHOTOGRAPHS AND DRAWING OF SET
GROUND PLAN
"OF STARS AND MEN"
SCALE: ¼" = 1'0"
APPENDIX II

PHOTOGRAPHS OF COSTUMES AND PROPERTIES
APPENDIX III

PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY DANCE COMPANY

Presents
LA PRIMAVERA
PRE-CLASSIC SUITE
GRAND TARENTELLE
JUST JAZZ
OF STARS AND MEN

University Theater
May 30 - 8:15 p.m.
May 31 - 8:15 p.m.
1969
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


