

Dynamics of movement and space by Leif Hernes

This text is about the dynamics of movement and the dynamics of space and how movement and space work together in order to give the audience a kinaesthetic experience.

Every movement and every space has its own dynamics. The choreographer works with the interrelation between the characteristics of the movements and of the space. In a choreographic work it is the different choices made by the choreographer concerning space, and the dancers relation to space, that conveys the dynamics to the audience.

The word dynamics (gr. Force, efforts) relates especially to the forces that make movements occur. Rudolf Laban is the co-writer of the book "Effort" which deals with how a movement is executed — the dynamics of the movement.

A choreographer conveys something through movements to the audience and the characteristics of the space have an enforcing function. The dancer, in conjunction with the other dancers, is performing the choices of the choreographer concerning levels, directions, focus, interrelations i.e. The members of the audience have to recognise the movements even if they are unfamiliar.

Rudolf Laban has written about movements where different aspects of time, weight, flow and space all are elements of dynamics.

Dancers move through space along pathways sometimes making figures like circles or triangles, sometimes parallel movements and sometimes crossing pathways of other dancers, creating tensions which a choreographer should make use of.

A dancer is performing the movement material from an inner motivation that comes from rehearsing the movements. The dancers personality and technique colours the movement material in a way that gives possibilities for the audience to create their own meaning — their own "potential space". In between the intimate space and the public space different ways of performing a movement material can have effects like making the audience feel embarrassed or create interesting tensions as the dancer intrude upon the audience's space. A good choreographer knows how to use these possibilities for interesting choreographic purposes.

A room / space has at least three dimensions. To know this is different from experiencing it. Choreographers have to look at the movement material from

different angles in order to find the potential of the dance. They need to look at the stage area as a goldfishbowl. Rudolf Laban created a geometrical figure he called the Icosahedron, which shows the different directions the dancer could reach out for.

We call the space around the body, and which the dancer can reach from a fixed position, for personal space. The space outside this defined area is called general space. A dancer can move in another dancer's personal space. This space is called negative space and the way the dancer is moving gives different signals to the audience whether it is supposed to be a positive or a negative experience. When a dancer intrude upon another dancer's personal space, the way it is done and the setting in which it is done, is crucial in relation to whether the audience accepts it as part of the total dance language or not.

Any "lift" in dance is about how one dancer touches another dancer. When a dancer gives another dancer a handshake, hugs her or embraces him, the actions show different relations between the dancers.

The way a choreographer is designing the sound or the music can create different ways of experiencing the space. A space can feel smaller by distributing sound well over normal level. By using "bordunes" one can create open spaces and change the sense of time. A space can be felt too small or too big (agoraphobia and claustrophobia). Something or someone can be too near or too far away from you.

Clarity in movement and clarity in directions is the clue in conveying a kinaesthetic experience to the audience. It is an important experience for any dancer who wants to develop as a dance conveyer. Any choreographer needs dancers who have developed the sensitivity to space and to the fellow dancers.

A choreographer is organising everyday practicalities in an artistic way. This is what art is about. A costume is interesting to the choreographer if the movements done by the dancers create interesting movements in the costume. A dancer dealing with props should need to work with the weight, the size and the texture of the object in order to make it a part of the dance. The light, the set — every element in a choreographic piece is important to create relations in space and through that create interesting dynamics which gives the audience kinaesthetic experiences. Choreography is all about the artistic choices that place the different elements in the art of dance in an interesting relationship to the architecture of the space.

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