

NEWSPAPER DANCES

Chapter 13



## NEWSPAPER DANCES

There is nothing more enjoyable to hold in your hands while you dance than a piece of newspaper. With it you can create all kinds of interesting sounds and movements. You can wave it, shake it, crumple it, tear it, stamp on it, beat it, throw it in the air.

### Preparation

Every dancer improvises individually with a piece of newspaper, experimenting with as wide a variety of movements and sounds as possible.

### Group Dances

In these dances every dancer carries a piece of newspaper. All have the same size paper: a double spread is best.

#### 1 Unison Movement with Leader

Members of the group stand freely scattered... one member, in a central position, leads the group through unison sounds and movements... whatever movements and sounds the leader makes, all members of the group do the same at the same time... the leader's movements and sounds are thus amplified, creating an impressive group experience.

## 2 Rotating Leadership in Circle

This is the same as Circle Dance 4 (page 62) except that every dancer carries a piece of newspaper. In a circle, starting in standing position, all members of the group make the same movement at the same time, led by one member after another... every member has a turn leading through only one movement... leadership passes from one member to another in regular rotation around the circle.

## 3 Free Group Improvisation

A very experienced group, with every member carrying a piece of newspaper, can improvise freely together, creating a wide variety of interesting patterns in movement and sound.

## 4 Group Accompanies Individual

The group, every member with a piece of newspaper, sits in a circle around an individual who dances freely in the center... the group accompanies with newspaper sounds every movement which the dancer makes... The sound must have the same feeling as the movement and must occur at the same time.

## 5 Reading the Newspaper

With a group which has learned to improvise freely in movement and speech (see Chapter 16) delightful dances can be created by dancers reading passages from newspapers which they hold in their hands while showing in movement the feeling of the words.

This theme, although it may be treated seriously, offers opportunity for broad comedy.

PROCESSIONAL WITH INSTRUMENTS

Chapter 14



## PROCESSIONAL WITH INSTRUMENTS

In this dance every dancer carries an instrument.

The instruments may be conventional ones such as drums, shakers, tambourines, bells, claves, gongs, cymbals, triangles, whistles, pipes, stringed instruments, wood blocks, or they may be useful everyday objects used to make interesting sounds, such as keys, paper, tin cans, shoe soles beaten together, sandpaper scraped, etc. Every instrument produces a unique sound expressing a unique movement feeling. The movements of the dancer who carries and plays the instrument should express the quality of the sound.

With the group standing in a circle, one dancer plays a repeated pattern on his instrument... after the pattern has been firmly established, one member of the group after another joins in, enhancing the sound by the addition of his particular instrument, playing not the same pattern as the leader but a complimentary one... all begin to dance as they play... now the leader leads the group out of the circle into a line... all follow, dancing and playing, in a procession around the room...

The sound pattern is fixed, everyone playing his own pattern over and over, but the dancing may be freely improvised...

The procession may go anywhere at all, in circles and lines, back and forth, upstairs and downstairs, through doors, indoors and out...

The basic beat and pace must be maintained... although every dancer is moving and playing in his own way, all are united in a feeling for the beat...

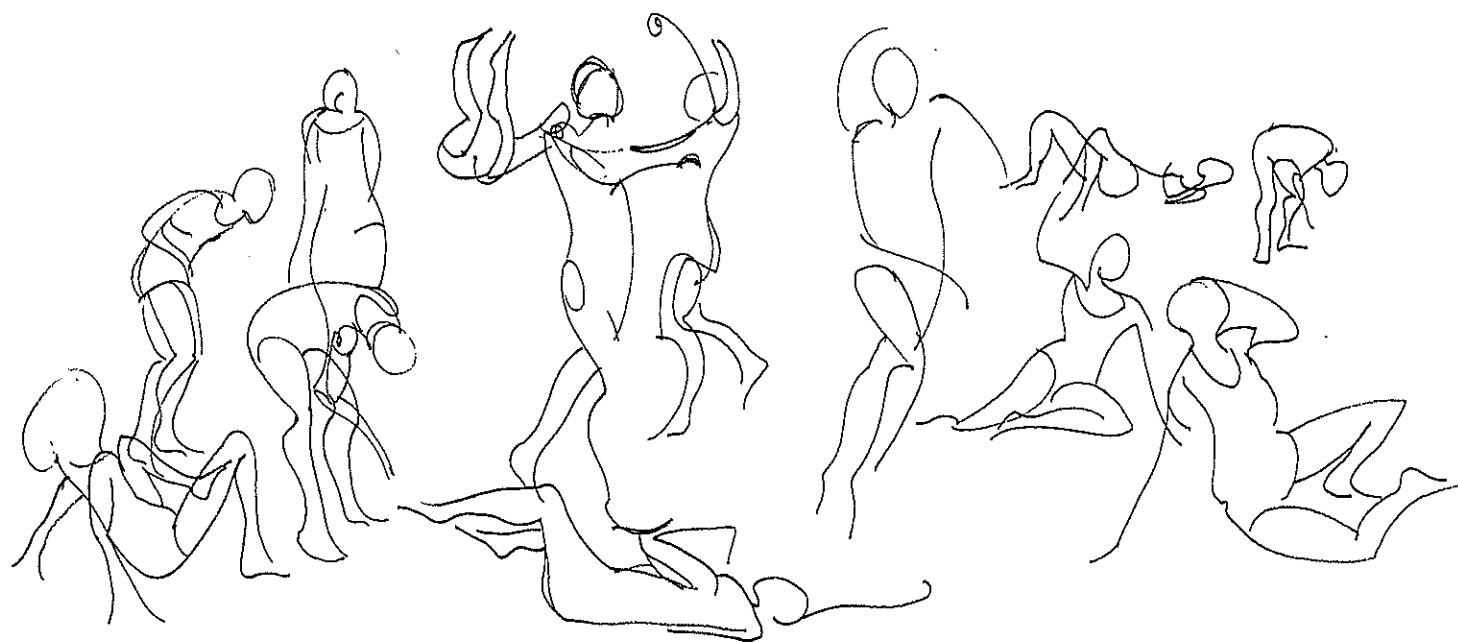
The leader eventually leads the line back into a circle... continuing to dance and play, the group spreads out, using all the available space and dancing more freely than they were able while following in line... the intensity of sound and movement will increase for a moment, but then all will feel that it is time for the dance to end, and both movement and sound will gradually stop.

Many dance studies with instruments will be found in Materials of Dance, Chapter 13.

LAUGH DANCE

Chapter 15





## LAUGH DANCE

### Preparation

The basic preparation for this dance is free exploration of vocal sounds as movement accompaniment, described in Materials of Dance, Chapter 12. Dancers should experiment individually with all kinds of natural breath and voice sounds, expressing freely in movement the unique quality of every sound: yawning, sighing, moaning, groaning, grunting, growling, hissing, howling, humming, shouting, whispering, sneezing, hiccoughing, sobbing, laughing.

Immediate preparation for the Laugh Dance is individual exploration of different kinds of laughing sounds such as shaking, rocking, rolling, exploding, chuckling, giggling, bellowing, using the whole body to express the particular movement quality of the sound.

This is not drama: we are not acting out a person laughing. It is dance: we are creating movements which express the feeling of a particular kind of sound.

### Group Dance

One dancer, whom we shall call the leader, assumes a central position with members of the group scattered freely around...

The leader laughs in many different ways, always expressing in movement the quality of the sound... whatever the leader does all members of the group do with him, trying to reproduce exactly the same quality...

This can be a hilarious dance as the group amplifies the sounds and movements of the leader. The leader should vary the feeling of his laughter as much as possible, and the form of his movements should exaggerate the quality.

SPEECH DANCES

Chapter 16



## SPEECH DANCES

The combination of movement and speech gives opportunity for very satisfying dances. Words express mental concepts while movement expresses feeling. The two together can offer a broad range of experience.

### Preparation

General preparation for these dances is individual exploration of free vocal sounds, as described in Materials of Dance, Chapter 12, and a good introduction to words and movement is the use of No and Yes in couples, or in two groups, moving in alternation, one saying No and the other Yes.

Immediate preparation should include these individual improvisations:

say a word and, while saying it, use your whole body to show the feeling of the word in movement...

speak a sentence, using your whole body to show in movement the feeling of what you are saying...

improvise freely in movement and speech, using your whole body to express the feeling of the words...

### Group Dances

#### 1 Talk-Around

The group is in a circle. Beginning with one member and continuing in regular succession around the circle, every dancer has a turn making a statement in words and movement, saying anything at all and using his whole body freely to show in movement the feeling of the words. Except for the first dancer's statement, whatever

is said should have some relationship to what has been said before, although this relationship may be expressed in a complete change of subject if this is what feeling dictates.

The form of the circle should be maintained, although every dancer is free to move within it in any way at all. At the end of every statement there should be a slight pause and the dancer who has just spoken should hold the final position of his movement for a moment before the next dancer makes his statement (see notes on the creative pause in *Materials of Dance*, page 112). If it is a small group, every dancer should hold the final position of his movement until it is his turn to speak again.

If the group is large, the dance may end when every member of the group has had one turn, but in a small group it may continue until everyone has had several turns. If there is plenty of time, the dance may go on until the dancers themselves feel that it is time to bring it to a conclusion, expressing this spontaneously in words and movement.

## 2     Why? Because!

The group forms a circle with one member in the center.

One after another, in regular succession around the circle, every dancer expresses his feeling in movement as he asks the question Why? In answer to each one, the central dancer, expressing himself freely in sound and movement, says Because!

The dance is concluded with all dancers in the circle together asking Why? and the central dancer answering, with a feeling of finality, Because!

This same dance can be created with a different question and answer: Now? Not Now! It concludes with the entire circle of dancers asking Now? and the central dancer answering Now! followed by expression of rejoicing on the part of the group.

### 3     Where? Here!

Starting in a freely scattered position, members of the group move about individually, saying repeatedly Where? while using their whole bodies to express the feeling of the word in movement.

After a while, one member will feel that it is time for him to change the mood by saying Here! As he says it, other members of the group pick up the feeling and join him, all saying Here!

The dance may end with all dancers close together, focussing on a single point, or with every dancer expressing Here! in a different place.

### 4     People

A large mixed group can have a very enjoyable experience if the members move about freely, repeating the word People as they move in relation to one another.

The form of the dance is fluid and free, its shape changing continuously as group members seek to create movement relationships to other individuals and to the group as a whole.

If it is a large group, the dance may continue for quite a long time. If the dancers themselves do not seem to be able to bring it to a conclusion, the director may indicate, in movement or sound, when it is time to stop.

### 5     Dance Story or Poem

One member of the group speaks while the others dance, the dancers expressing freely in movement the feeling of the words.

The dance starts with dancers in a scattered position with the speaker either in the center or somewhere outside the group.

The speaker improvises a story or a poem, describing action or creating a mood. Members of the group may dance as individuals or they may move together as a group, depending on the nature of the spoken words.

This dance is most alive when the story or poem, like the dancing, is improvised but, if desired, it may be fixed in advance.

## 6 Goodbye

Two groups, speaking in alternation, say Goodbye to one another, freely expressing the feeling of the word in movement.

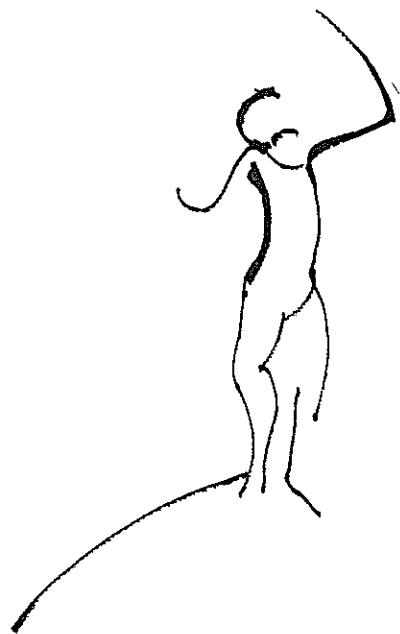
Some leadership by the director may be needed at the beginning to establish a comfortable pace. There should always be a moment's pause at the end of one group's statement before the other is made.

This dance makes a good conclusion to a program of group dance improvisation. If there are spectators, dancers and spectators may alternate.



OWN-LANGUAGE DANCES

Chapter 17



## OWN-LANGUAGE DANCES

In these dances the dancers use their voices to accompany themselves with language-like sounds which everyone makes up for himself and which we call our "own language".

This language is not an interpretation of a known language. It is free expression of feeling in speech-like sounds.

### Preparation

General preparation will be found in the studies exploring free voice and speech sounds as movement accompaniment in Materials of Dance, Chapter 12.

Immediate preparation may include these individual improvisations:

make up a word, expressing the feeling of it in movement while you say it...

say a sentence in your own language while expressing the feeling of it in movement...

improvise freely in movement, accompanying yourself with a language of your own creation...

### Group Dances

#### 1 Dance for Two

Dancer No. 1 makes a statement in his own language, expressing the feeling of it in movement... he holds his final position while Dancer No. 2 makes a statement in his own language and movement... the dancers

continue to move and speak alternately in this way until they both feel that the dance should end.

It may be decided in advance that the dance will represent an argument, a discussion on some particular theme, or just a casual conversation.

## 2 Dance for Three or More

Three or more dancers dance freely together, improvising in movement and speech, each creating his own language.

## 3 Social Gathering

A large or small group may improvise freely in movement and speech, every dancer creating his own language, with the feeling of being together at a social gathering.

## 4 Political Rally

A single individual, expressing himself in movement and in his own language, represents a politician speaking to a group. Members of the group respond in sound and movement, everyone using his own language.

The action may develop in any number of ways, evolving out of improvisation or having been planned in advance.

### Additional Themes

Themes like these are suitable for group improvisations in which the dancers accompany themselves with their own language:

Classroom

Committee Meeting

Auction

Spelling Bee

University Lecture

Guided Tour of Hollywood

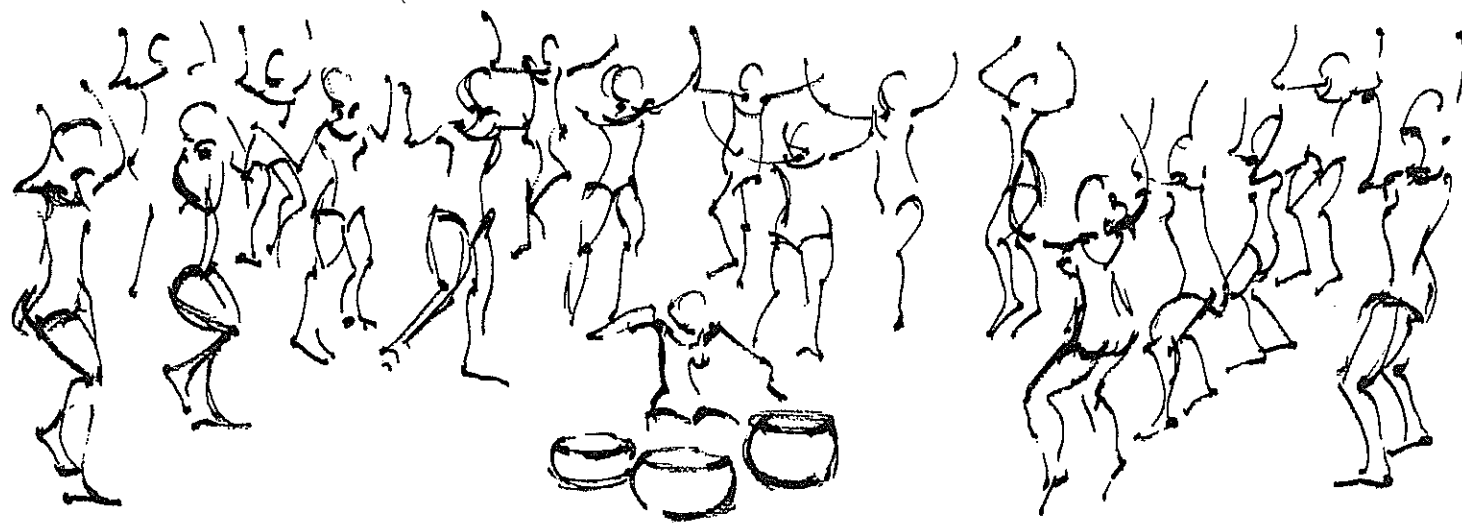
Poetry Recitation or Story-telling before an Audience

Dramatic Performance

Because the action element is dominant, the dances in this chapter are dramatic.

DRUM MUSIC DANCES

Chapter 18



## DRUM MUSIC DANCES

Drum music is the best of all music for dancing because it makes audible the rhythmic heart of the movement: the beat. Most dancers can create good dance music on a drum if they feel free to express in sound their natural movement feeling.

### Preparation

Every member of a creative dance group should have opportunity to dance freely with a drum in his hands, and to play a drum while others dance.

Studies which can help develop feeling for beat will be found in Materials of Dance, Chapters 9 and 10.

### Group Dances

For these dances, a drum which rests on the floor and does not have to be held in the hands is best because it allows the player to use both hands on the drum. It is preferable to use hands on the drum rather than beaters because this provides more intimate contact with the instrument. If several drums are available, more than one may be used.

#### 1 Basic Drum Music Dance

With one member of the group in the center playing one or more drums, the entire group dances freely around the drummer...

The drum music may be varied at first but it should eventually settle into a repeated pattern which has a regular beat. The pattern may be varied as long as feeling for the basic beat is maintained...



Dancers dance individually at first in loose circular formation around the drummer but gradually a leader, selected in advance, begins to create movements which the entire group can do with him. The movements should have a strong feeling for the drum beat and for the group's circular formation. It is unison group movement. Whatever the leader does, all do with him...

When the dance has continued long enough, the drummer watches the dance leader and together they bring the sound and movement to a conclusion.

The success of this dance depends on the vitality of the drum music and of the dance leader's movements, but it is such a natural progression from drum beat to individual movement to group movement that almost any group, adults or children, can create an exciting dance.

An experienced dance group may be able to create this dance without a leader, developing the unison movement together, or a leader may emerge spontaneously without being selected in advance.

## 2 Drum Music Shaker Dance

The preceding dance may be danced with this addition: every dancer dances with a shaker, or pair of shakers in his hands.

## 3 Drum Music Couple Dance

This is a dance for a large group.

One dancer makes drum music in the center, repeating one pattern continuously...

Group members are in couples in a circle around the drummer. In every couple, one dancer is No. 1 and the other is No. 2.

The couples dance freely to the drum music, remaining in their own places in the circle, until a signal is given, when all No. 1's move around the circle, each taking a new partner with whom he continues to dance. It should be decided in advance in which direction the No. 1's move. The signal may be the word "change" called out by the director or by someone else who is not dancing, or it may be shouted by one of the dancers selected in advance.

The music continues uninterrupted, the signal is given at intervals, and the No. 1's move on again and again. As every new couple is formed, dancers should make an effort to vary their dancing...

The dance ends when everyone has come back to his original partner or, if the group is so large that this would make the dance too long, the drummer may bring the music to an end.

#### 4 Many-Drums Dance

In this dance three or more large drums rest on the floor in the middle of the dancing area.

Starting in a scattered position around the drums, members of the dance group play the drums while dancing... some play at one time and some at another... while playing the drums, dancers continue to dance... while dancing, they continue to express the beat of the drums... regardless of who is drumming, the music and the dance go on, until all together bring the dance to a conclusion.

As a variation on this theme, the drums may be scattered throughout the dancing area instead of being clustered in the center.

DRUM ORCHESTRA DANCES

Chapter 19



## DRUM ORCHESTRA DANCE

In this dance every dancer has a drum.

Dancers sit on the ground in a circle. If the group is too large for a single circle, there may be concentric circles, or merely a loose arrangement around a circular central area. Every dancer has a drum to be played with one or both hands, small enough to be carried while dancing.

All dancers play their drums simultaneously, experimenting with beat patterns while at the same time listening to others, until together they find a common regular beat. This beat will be maintained throughout the entire dance, although every individual may vary it as freely as he wishes. Voice sounds may be added to the beat if drummers feel the need of them...

Once the beat has been firmly established, members of the group are free to get up and dance for a while, eventually returning to their places in the orchestra. If the group is small, only one dancer should dance at a time so that the music is not weakened by the loss of more than one musician but, if the group is large, two or more members may get up and dance at the same time...

No one should dance too long and, after everyone has had a turn dancing, the entire group should rise with their drums in their hands and dance freely in the available space while continuing the drum music...

Everyone will feel when it is time to quiet down and bring the sound and movement to a stop.

Other possible endings are these:

- 1 After the last dancer has returned to his place and rejoined the orchestra, the drum music gradually quiets down. Silence and motionlessness end the dance.

- 2 As the last dancer returns to his place, all rise and begin to dance with their drums in their hands until one member, selected in advance, leads them in a line, still dancing and playing their drums, out of the room. This can be an impressive conclusion to a program before an audience.

### Clap Orchestra

Instead of using drums, dancers may use their hands to clap the music of this dance. Clap music makes the dance available to very large groups and to any group which does not have drums.

DRUM-SHAKER DANCES

Chapter 20





## DRUM - SHAKER DANCES

For these dances there should be half as many drums and half as many shakers as there are members of the group.

### Preparation

Every dancer has opportunity to dance with a drum in his hands, improvising freely in sound and movement.

In the same way every member of the group improvises with a single shaker, or pair of shakers, in his hands.

### Dance for Two

One partner carries a drum, the other a single shaker or pair of shakers. The two dancers improvise freely together, relating to each other in both sound and movement.

As a variation on this theme, both partners may dance with drums or both with shakers.

### Group Dance

Half of the group sits on the ground in a circle, or in a loose circular formation, every member with a drum to be played with one or both hands. The other half stands within the circle, everyone carrying a single shaker or pair of shakers...

One member of the drum circle creates a repeated pattern which all drummers pick up and play at the same

time. The pattern is continued throughout the entire dance without variation of any kind...

The dancers with shakers dance individually for a while, improvising freely in sound and movement in relation to the drum pattern... eventually they fall in line behind a leader, selected in advance, who leads them in a line around the room, in and out of the circle, wherever he wants to go... all use their shakers as the leader does, in unison sound and movement...

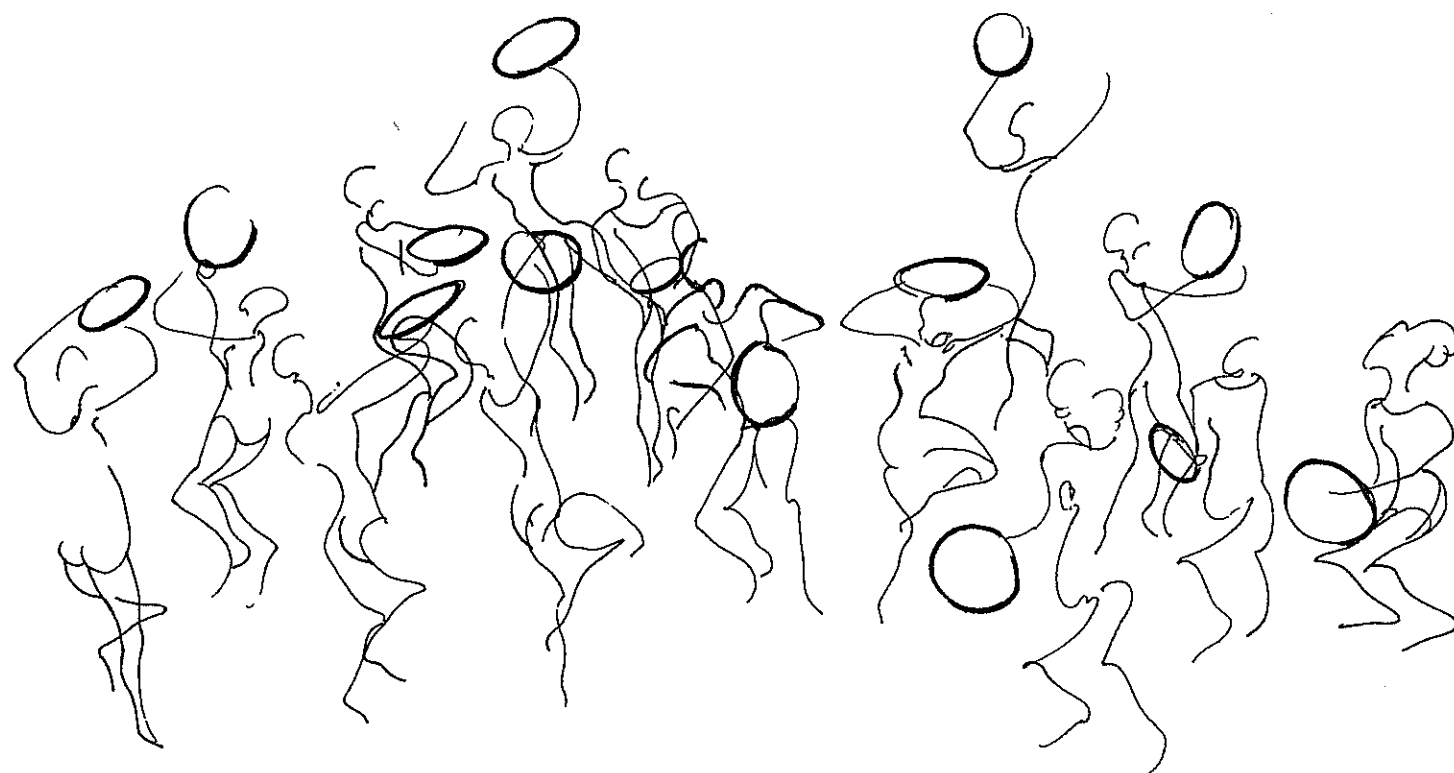
If the group is very large, it is possible to form two lines moving in relation to one another.

It is up to the leader of the drum orchestra (the member of the group who started the beat pattern) to bring the dance to a conclusion by gradually quieting the music down as he sees that the dancers are ready to end the dance.

As a variation on this theme, the shaker dancers may create a circle dance instead of a line dance, or the dance may begin as a circle, then become a line and, finally, a circle again.

DRUM-VOICE DANCES

Chapter 21



## DRUM - VOICE DANCES

The drum and the voice are the dancer's basic instruments. When used together in movement they offer beautiful experiences.

### Preparation

These dances require freedom in the use of voice and instruments in movement (see Chapters 12 and 13 in Materials of Dance).

### Group Dances

#### 1 Dancers Accompany Themselves

The group is scattered in the room, every member carrying a drum...

All improvise freely in sound and movement, exploring use of voice and drum... they may shout or sing, experimenting with tones and creating simple melodies...

As soon as possible dancers should try to hear and adjust to one another so that all are using voice and drum in the same way...

The voice and drum pattern is repeated continuously throughout the dance, with every dancer moving in his own way...

There is no need for controlled spatial patterns in this dance. It is the sound of voice and drum which creates group unity...

If the melody and drum pattern are simple enough, spectators may be invited to sing along and clap, moving as freely as possible even if they are seated...

When the dancers feel that it is time for the dance to end, sound and movement diminish and stop.

## 2 Individual Accompanies Group

One dancer, in a central position or somewhere outside the group, improvises freely with drum and voice, singing or speaking or using his voice in any way at all. The rest of the group improvises in movement, expressing the feeling of the sound.

Not only the drum but any instrument may be used in this dance.

DANCE SONG

Chapter 22





## DANCE SONG

### Preparation

Individual dancers should become free in the use of their voices in song while they dance. They should sing tones in freely created sequences, making their own melodies (see Materials of Dance, Chapter 12).

### Group Dance

One dancer is in a central position with the group in a circle around him, or, if it is a large group, in a freely scattered position...

The central dancer improvises in song, remaining in place but moving freely as he sings. He may or may not use words with his melody...

The other dancers move as the singer moves, not trying to make exactly the same movements but creating movements which have the same quality. The group movements reflect the movements of the singer, expressing with him the feeling of the song...

If there are spectators, sitting or standing, they may be invited to express the feeling of the dancers' movements in movements of their own...

It is up to the leader to bring the dance to a conclusion by quieting down the movement and song.

INSTRUMENT ORCHESTRA DANCE

Chapter 23



## INSTRUMENT ORCHESTRA DANCES

Any combination of instruments may be used in these dances and there should be many different kinds, offering as wide a variety of sounds as possible. Every member of the group has an instrument and, if the group is not too large, everyone should have a different kind. Easily available instruments are: drums, shakers, tambourines, rasps, cymbals, claves, bells, triangles, wood blocks, slide whistles, stringed instruments, etc.

### Preparation

Dancers should improvise individually with various instruments, accompanying their own movements with sound and making every effort to create a perfect unity of sound and movement.

Many studies offering creative experience in the use of instruments with movement will be found in Materials of Dance, Chapter 13.

### Group Dances

#### 1 Sound Follows Movement

Dancers form a circle, or two lines facing each other, either sitting or standing, every dancer holding an instrument...

One dancer, leaving his instrument behind, dances freely in the center of the circle, or between the two lines, varying the qualities of his dance as much as possible... the group accompanies the dance, every member using his instrument to express those qualities occurring in the dance which his instrument is most

capable of expressing. Not all instruments need to be played all the time. It will depend on the nature of the movement...

After dancing a while, the first dancer returns to his place, picks up his instrument and joins the orchestra again, while a second dancer puts aside his instrument and begins to dance. The orchestra now accompanies the second dancer...

In this way, one member of the group after another dances while the others accompany him with their instruments. The sound should follow the movement, beat for beat, and every dance should be as different as possible in quality from all the others. If the group is very large not everyone will have a turn, in which case it may be decided in advance who will dance.

As the dancer's instrument is laid aside while he dances, the orchestral sound suffers some loss, but the other instruments can make up for this and the variation in instrumental sound can be an asset.

This dance may be ended as follows: the last dancer takes his instrument with him and plays it while he dances, creating a pattern with a regular beat... all dancers play their instruments in ways which accord with the feeling of the beat, and, rising if they have been seated, dance freely in the room... gradually the sound and the movement quiet down and come to a stop, or one dancer may lead the others out of the room (in a line or free group) with all continuing to dance and play as they go.

## 2 Movement Follows Sound

This dance is better for a small group than for a large one.

Dancers sit in a circle, everyone with a different instrument...

One dancer creates with his instrument a regularly repeated pattern which he continues to repeat throughout the dance...

Another dancer joins in, playing his instrument in a way which enriches the basic pattern with a new sound...

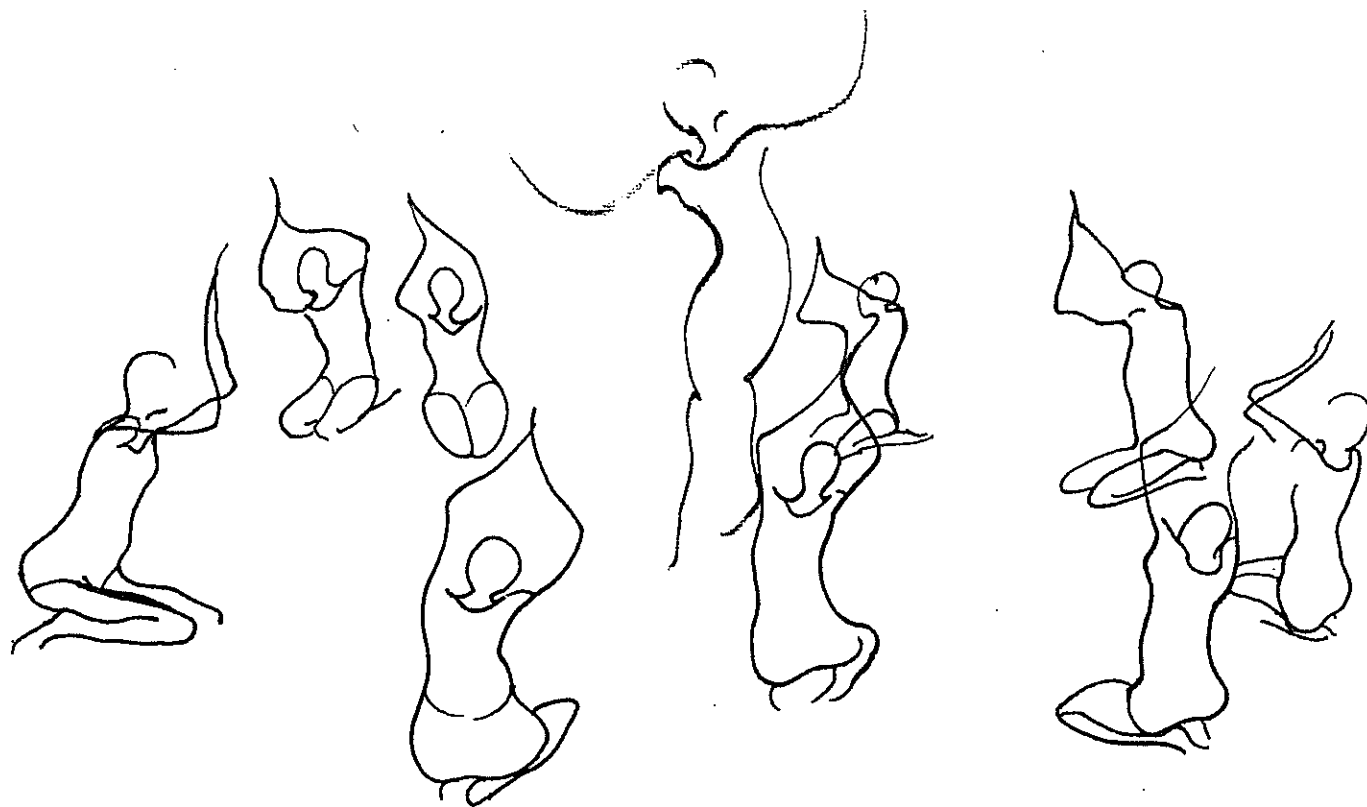
One after another, individual members of the group join in, adding the sound of their instrument to the pattern... no two should play in exactly the same way... all are unified through feeling for the basic beat...

After all have joined the orchestra and the musical pattern is firmly established, the dancer who created the original pattern puts his instrument aside and gets up and dances to the music... after dancing a while he returns to his place in the circle, sits down, picks up his instrument and becomes a part of the orchestra again... now another dancer puts his instrument down and dances... one after another does this, leaving the orchestra in order to dance, then returning to his place in the orchestra again...

When every member of the group has danced and all are seated again, one instrument after another drops out (in the reverse order of entrance) until the instrument which created the original pattern is playing alone... then that too stops, and there is silence.

VOICE-HANDS-AND-FEET CIRCLE DANCE

Chapter 24





## VOICE - HANDS - AND - FEET DANCE

This is a dance for a large experienced group.

The group sits on the floor in a circle, or in two or more concentric circles, with one member ready to dance in the center...

Group members move in unison, following a leader who creates movements accompanied by sounds of hands and feet. The leader is a member of the inmost circle. He should establish a regular beat in movement and sound and maintain it until all are feeling it with him...

The dancer in the center moves in relation to the group beat, improvising freely in song and dance...

As the dance proceeds, the leader may vary the group movement and sound in ways which strengthen feeling for the basic beat and which move the group in relation to the central figure. The group need not remain sitting on the floor. The circle (or circles) may rise, sink, revolve, contract, expand, etc.

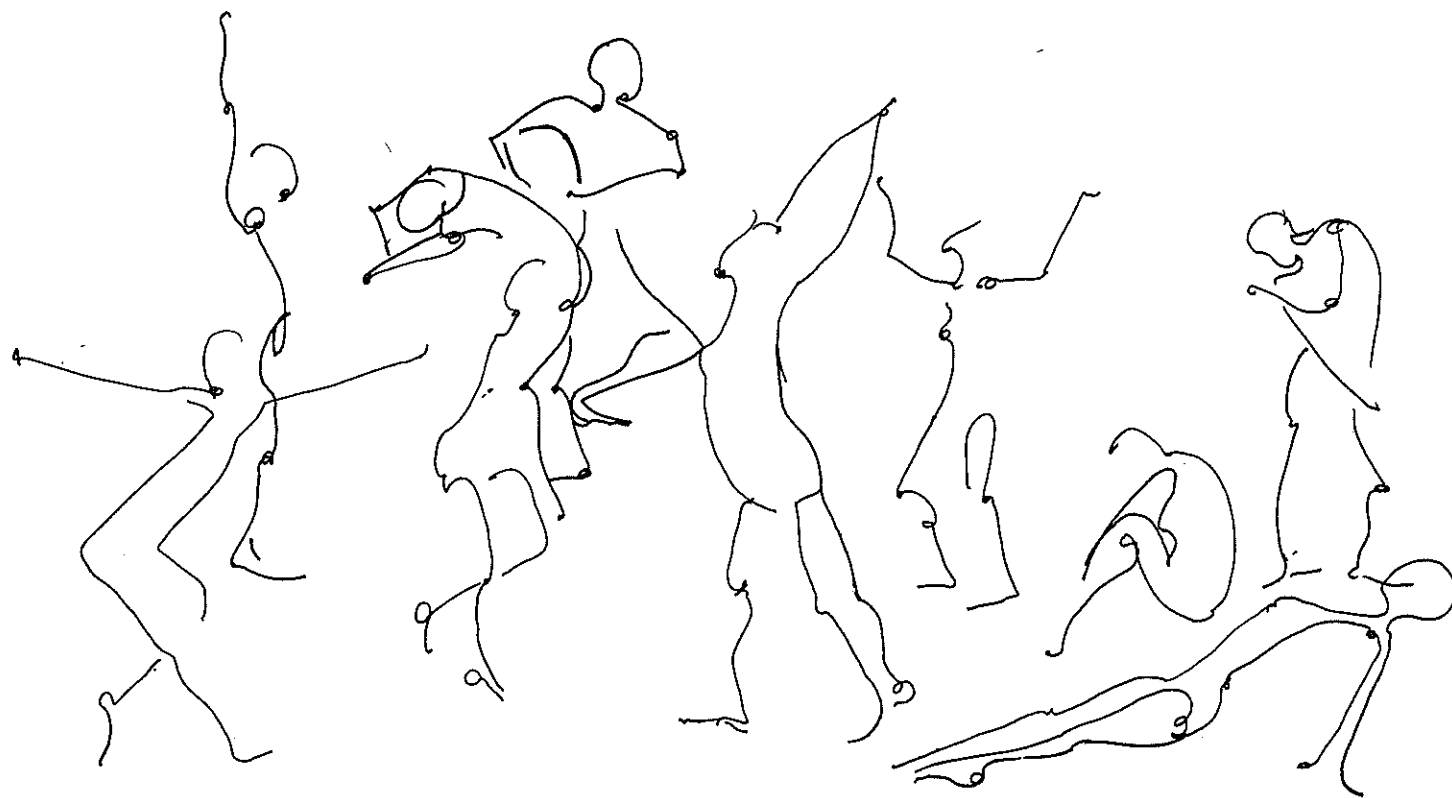
The singing dancer and group leader together bring the dance to a conclusion.

This can be a beautiful dance if feeling for the beat is strong, sounds of hands and feet interesting, and the singer's use of his voice free. The leader of the group and the singer should be dancers with well developed feeling and imagination in movement and sound.

Instead of (or in addition to) song, the central figure may use free vocal sounds or speech.

POSITION DANCE

Chapter 25



## POSITION DANCE

This is a dance which may be enjoyed by children and adults on a beginning level yet which gives experienced dancers opportunity to create highly developed forms. Its emphasis is on visual design.

### Preparation

Studies in position, as described in Materials of Dance, Chapter 11, are a helpful preparation.

### Group Dance

The group is scattered, and every individual member has assumed a fixed body position which has a clearly defined shape...

One dancer dissolves his position and dances freely among the others, shaping the design of his movements to relate in some way to the design of their fixed forms... when he has finished dancing he returns to his original place and assumes a new position, while at the same time all others change their body positions, creating entirely new forms... now another member dances... when he returns to his place, everyone changes position again... in this way, one group member after another takes a turn dancing around the others who are stationary...

The order in which the dancers are to succeed one another must be decided in advance. If the group is very large, not everyone will have a turn dancing, or two or three may dance at the same time.

The end of every dance and the change from one position to another is signaled by the dancer returning to

his position, who calls out the name of the dancer who is to succeed him.

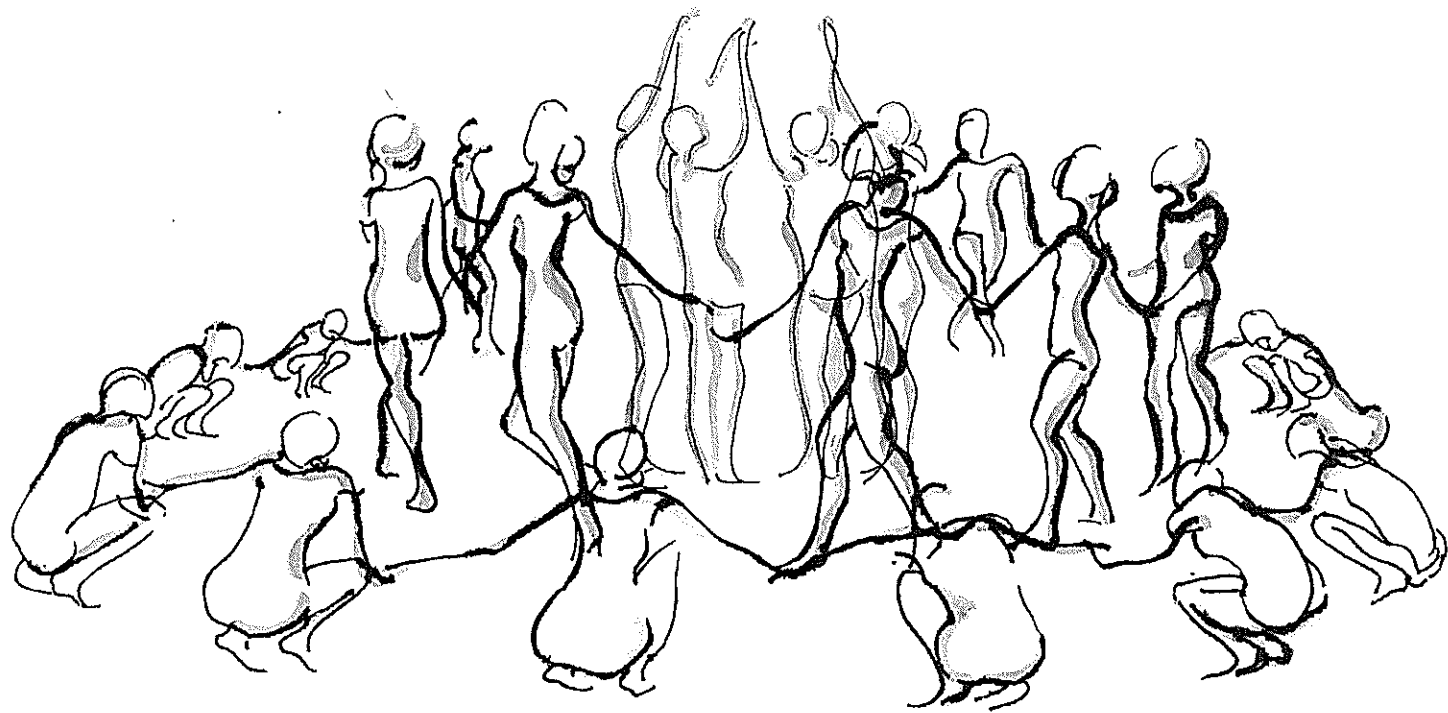
The positions assumed by the dancers, and the movements created in relation to them, should be clear in spatial pattern and as visually satisfying as sculpture or architecture.

When the last dancer has returned to his place and all, at the signal, have assumed new positions, the dance ends in a moment of stillness and quiet.

Another possible ending is this: as every dancer finishes his dance, he drops out instead of returning to his place, and the group becomes smaller and smaller until there is only one stationary figure left. This dancer alone moves freely in the surrounding space, creating visual designs in movement. Finally he too leaves the dancing area.

CIRCLE DESIGN DANCE

Chapter 26



## CIRCLE DESIGN DANCE

This is a dance for an experienced group, large or small. It is a silent dance emphasizing visual design.

### Preparation

Dancers improvise freely in movement, first individually, then in small groups, stressing spatial pattern and visual design. See *Materials of Dance*, Chapter 14.

### Group Dance

Dancers form a circle around a single dancer.

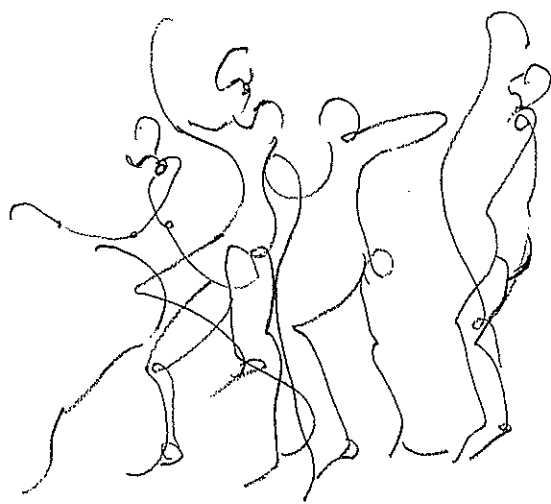
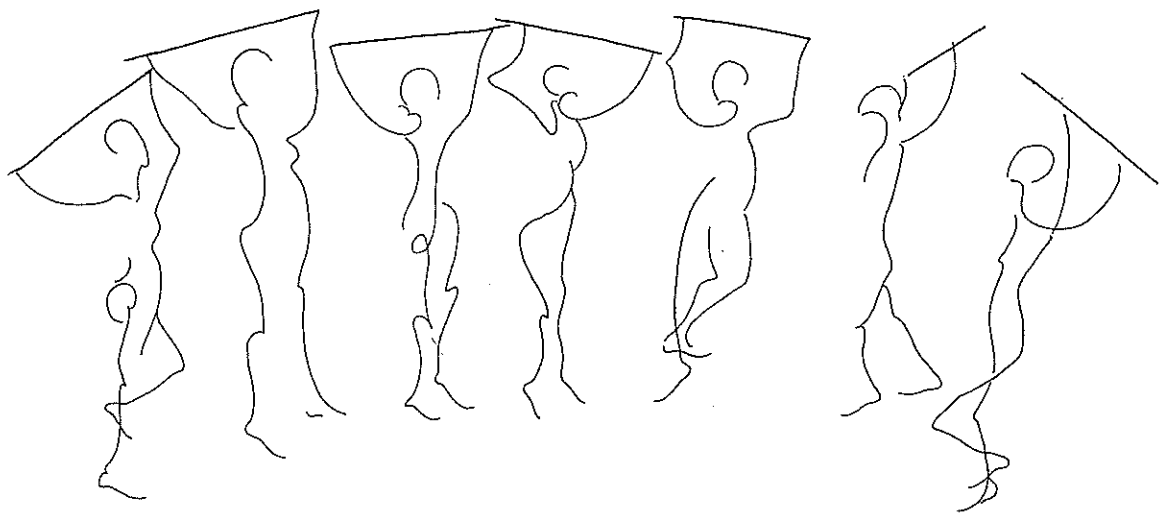
The central dancer improvises freely, stressing clarity of spatial pattern and visual design, while the circle of dancers, following a leader, dances in unison movement around him. The leader creates movements which contrast with, or otherwise enhance, the design of the central dancer's movements.

If the group is large enough, there may be two or more concentric circles. Every circle has its leader who creates, with his circle, unison movements which are different from those of the other circles. In this way the movements of the central dancer and the movements of the circles enhance each other, creating rich visual designs.



DESIGN DANCES WITH OBJECTS

Chapter 27



## DESIGN DANCES WITH OBJECTS

The design element of movement can be greatly enhanced if dancers carry something in their hands such as a piece of cloth, a rope, a rod, or any material thing which has a definite size, shape, weight, texture and color. The nature of the object influences the design of the movement of the dancer who carries it and the form of the group movement.

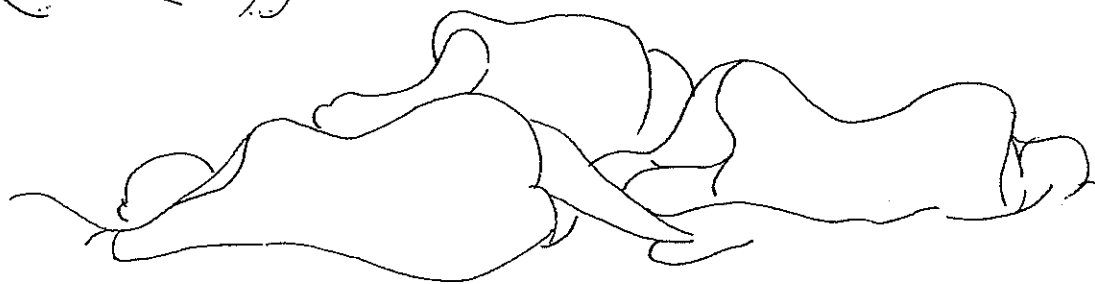
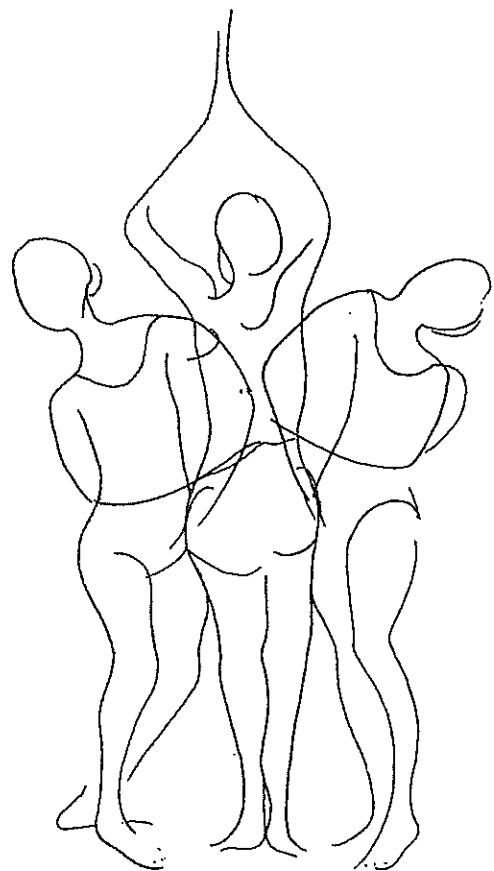
If every dancer carries the same kind of object, there can be beautiful unison movement in circles (see Chapter 10) and in lines (see Chapter 11) or in free group positions (see Newspaper Dance 1, page 77).

An inexperienced group will need a leader, perhaps more than one leader (as in Circle Dance 5, page 63, and in Line Dance 4, page 68) but experienced dancers can improvise freely together, creating ever-changing forms (see Chapter 34).

As preparation for these group dances, studies in the use of material things in movement are described in Materials of Dance, Chapter 15.

## MELTING AND CONGEALING

### Chapter 28



## MELTING AND CONGEALING

In very small groups (three to five dancers) this dance can be created by children or adult beginners, but in larger groups it needs experienced dancers.

All members of the group attach themselves together to form one single rigidly solid structure. The design of the structure should be as clear and as visually satisfying as sculpture or architecture...

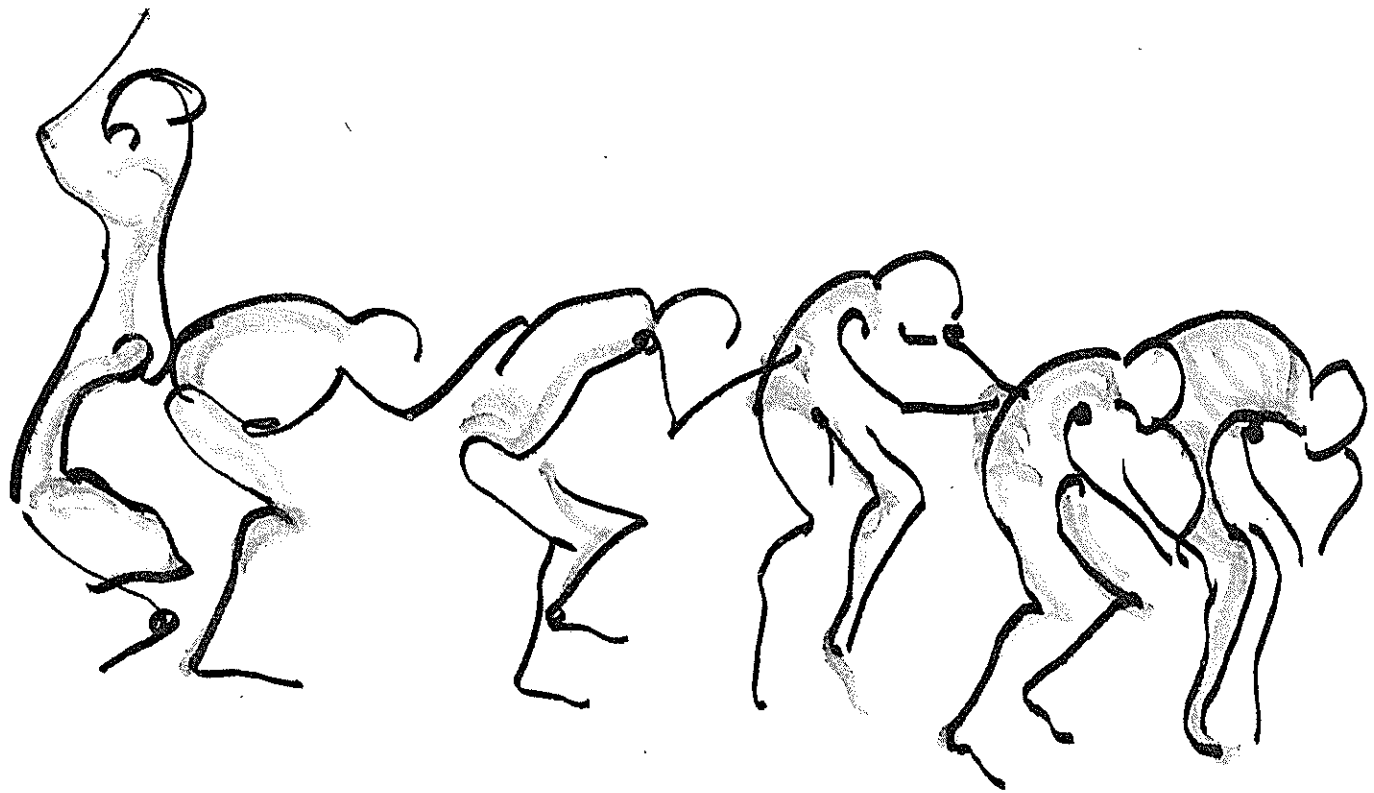
Very gradually the structure melts until it is completely liquified...

After a pause, the liquid begins to congeal, continuing until the solid structure is formed again exactly as it was at the beginning.

This is a more difficult dance than might be supposed because it requires control over both tension and relaxation, the use of visual as well as motor imagination, and motor memory. If done well it can be very satisfying for spectators as well as participants.

## DERIVED-QUALITY DANCES

### Chapter 29





## DERIVED - QUALITY DANCES

Qualities of movement derived from things outside ourselves (things seen, heard, touched or otherwise sensed) can provide us with excellent dance themes.

In these dances the dancers express through the movements of their own bodies their feeling for the movement of some specific thing perceived in the world around.

### Preparation

Dancers should improvise individually on themes such as these:

fire... water... wind... rain... lightning... thunder... rainbow... mountain... volcano...  
cactus... snake... bug... washing machine... typewriter... bulldozer...

Many more derived-quality themes will be found in Materials of Dance, Chapter 5.

### Group Dances

These dances, because they involve an action sequence, contain an element of drama

#### 1 Storm

All members of the group dance this sequence together, or different elements may be assigned to different members:

fair weather... gathering clouds... wind... rain... lightning... thunder...  
clouds disappearing... rainbow... sunshine...

## 2 Machine

One dancer begins the dance by creating a single machine-like movement, with regular beat, accompanied by vocal sounds, which he repeats continuously...

One after another, group members join him, each creating a different machine-like movement and sound, related to all the others through feeling for the common beat and through contrasting movement quality...

After all have become involved, the combined movements are repeated mechanically over and over again...

The dance ends when the movement gradually slows down to a stop, or when it stops suddenly as the machine seems to break down and fall apart.

## 3 Forest Fire

Dancers show in movement the following: a forest of trees... one tree is struck by lightning and begins to burn... the fire spreads until all trees are burning... gradually the fire dies down and goes out.

## 4 Aquarium

Dancers create underwater scene with movements of fish, plants, snails, rocks, etc.

## 5 Seashore

The entire group may move together with a feeling of ocean waves, or some dancers may move as waves while others move as shore birds, crabs, gulls, seaweed, rocks, etc.

## 6 Desert Scene

Individual dancers express in movement the feeling of cactus, snake, lizard, roadrunner, tarantula, coyote, tumbleweed, and other desert things.

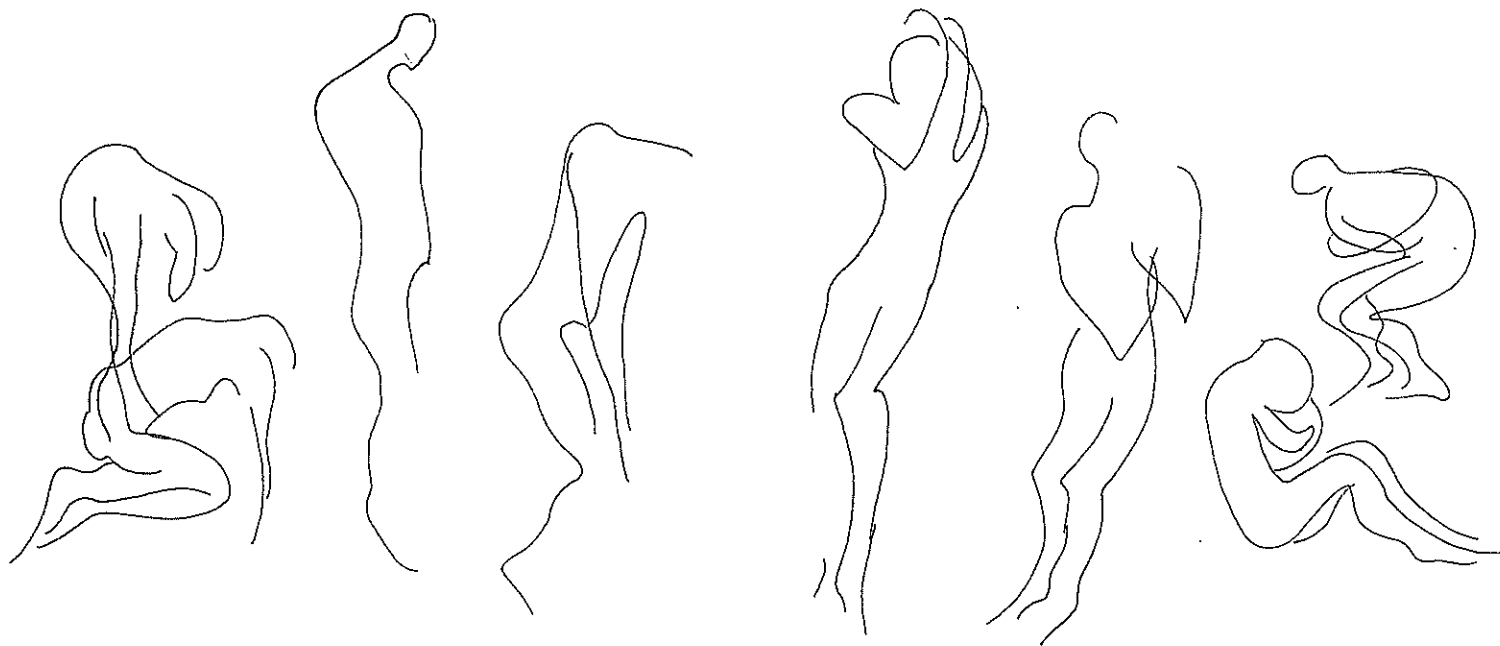
## 7 Zoo

Every dancer shows the movement quality of a certain kind of animal, using vocal sounds if he wishes to accompany the movement.

Small groups can create amusing and sometimes beautiful group dances by having all members attach themselves together to form one single creature (scorpion, butterfly, centipede, etc.) then move together in ways characteristic of it.

SPECIFIC-EMOTION DANCES

Chapter 30



## SPECIFIC - EMOTION DANCES

These dances express specific emotions and have dramatic quality. They are more suitable for experienced dancers, adults and teenagers, than for beginners and children. Very large groups, as well as small groups, can enjoy them.

### Preparation

Dancers improvise individually, expressing in movement specific emotions such as loneliness, fear, rage, joy, sorrow, frustration, greed, generosity, shame, pride, irresponsibility (see Materials of Dance, Chapter 16).

### Group Dances

#### 1 Fear

Starting in a freely scattered position, the entire group improvises in movement on the theme of fear, everyone expressing the feeling in his own way while relating somehow to the movements of the others...

At first everyone is afraid of everyone else... gradually mutual feelings of fear draw individuals closer to each other until all are afraid together in a unified group.

Free voice sounds should accompany the movement throughout the dance.

## 2 Celebration

The entire group improvises freely on the theme of celebration, using sounds of voice, hands and feet to accompany the movement.

The form of this dance should be allowed to develop freely according to the feeling of the group. Lines, circles, or loose group formations may evolve. The end will be determined by the nature of the movement.

### Additional Themes

These themes are also suitable for group dance improvisation:

Lost

Mutual Aid

Victory

Defeat

Revolt

Peace

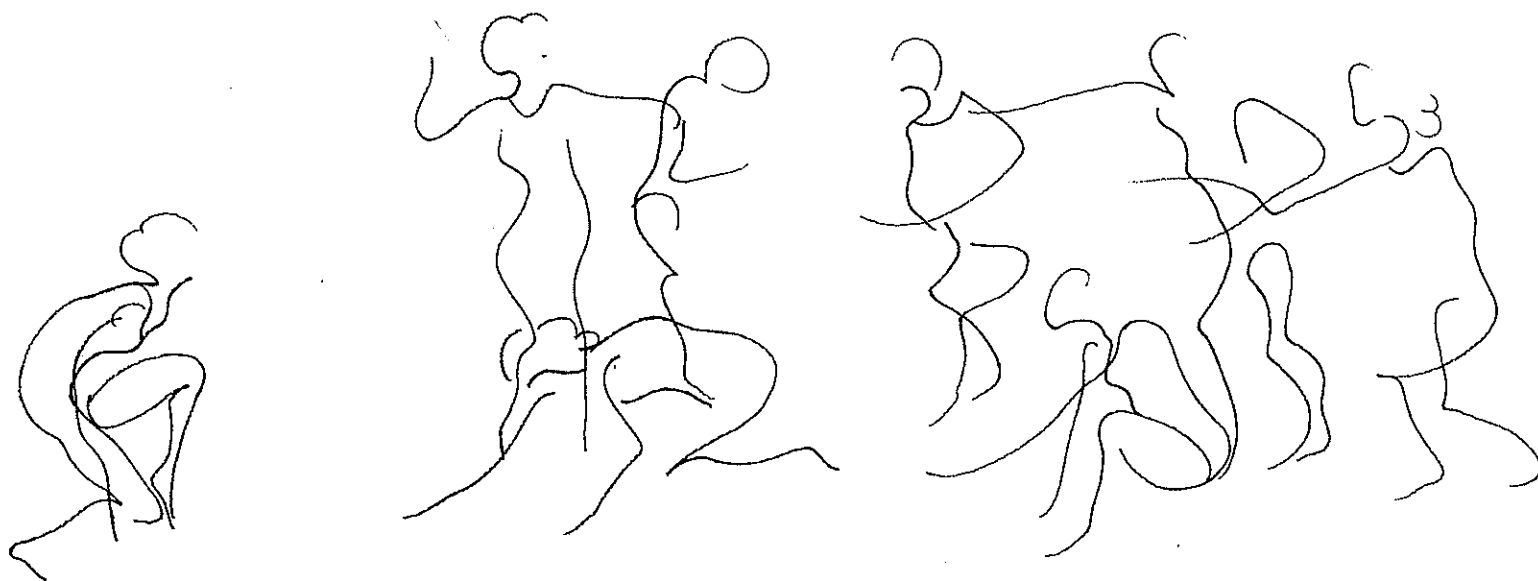
Lament

The Fighting and Friendly dances (Chapter 9) and Hide and Seek (next chapter) could be included here.

HIDE AND SEEK

Chapter 31





## HIDE AND SEEK

This dance may be danced by only two dancers, but it is an excellent dance for a large group.

### Preparation

Dancers improvise individually on movement themes having specific emotional content such as freedom, restraint, struggle, hide and seek (see Materials of Dance, Chapter 3).

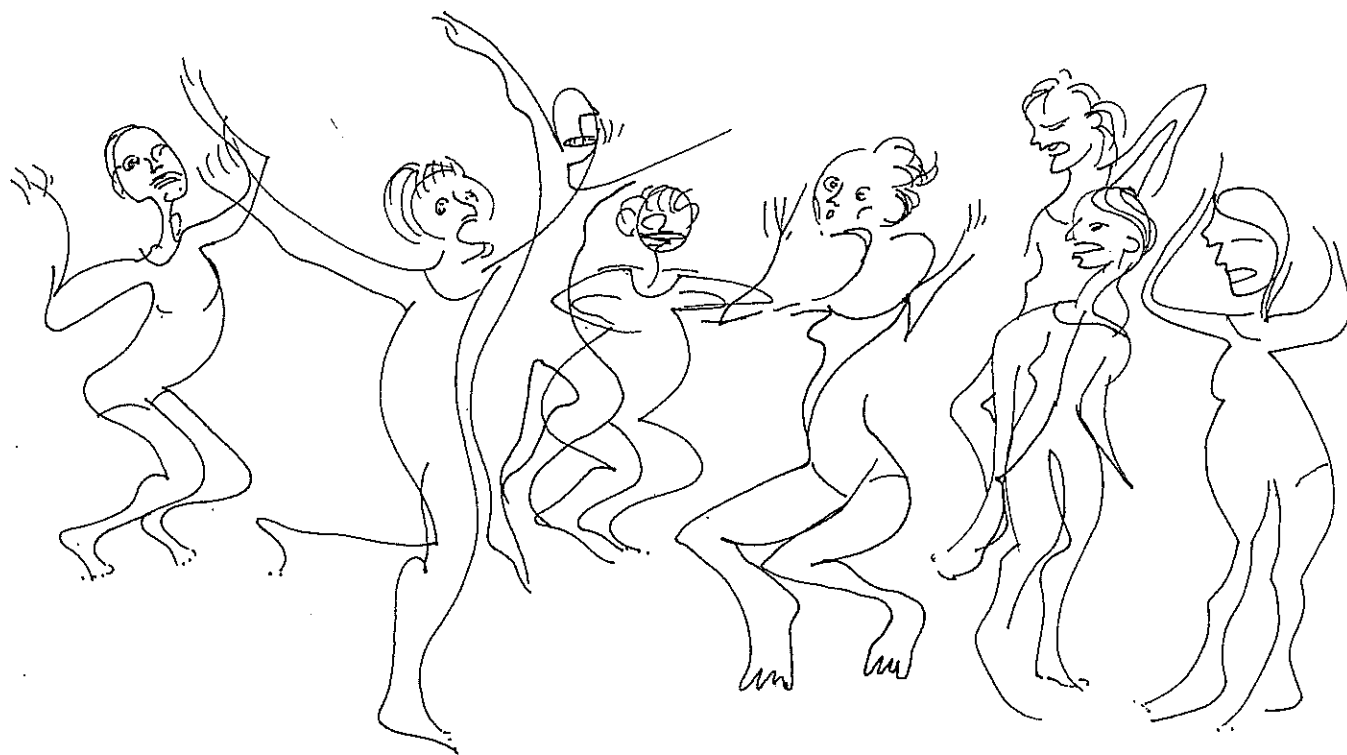
### Group Dance

Moving freely in the available space, one dancer expresses in movement the feeling of hiding while all others express the feeling of seeking... this continues until one member of the group after another finds the one who is hiding and changes his movement to express this feeling.

This dance is dramatic but the dancers are not acting. They do not represent actual hiding and seeking. Rather, they create movements which express the feeling of these two activities.

FACE DANCE

Chapter 32



## FACE DANCE

The face is the most personally expressive of all our body parts so, unless a dance is dramatic and intended to express a specific emotion, or unless it is a Face Dance, face movements should be subordinate to the movement of the body as a whole.

In a Face Dance, the face is dominant. It moves in ways which seem to change its size and shape, emphasizing abstract qualities of movement and creating a mask-like effect.

Studies in face movement are included in Chapter 2 of Materials of Dance.

### Preparation

Group face dances may be preceded by individual studies in face movement in this progression:

lying on back in relaxed position, make all kinds of faces, moving your face in all possible ways...  
stretch your face... twist it... make it go around and around...

make your face long... short... narrow... wide... large... small... open... closed...  
tight... loose... crooked...

make your face move slowly... fast... up and down... from side to side...

make jerky movements... smooth movements...

exaggerate movements of scowling... grinning... staring... pouting... chewing...

put your face in some strange position... now put your whole body in a position that has the  
same shape as the face...

change the position of your face and whole body... keep changing position of face and body...

improvise freely, making all kinds of face movements and letting the whole body express in movement the same feeling as the face (this should be done first lying or sitting, then standing and moving freely around the room)...

### Group Face Dance

This should be danced first in twos, then in small groups of three, four or five. Finally, all members of a large group may do it together.

Starting in a scattered position, dancers move freely around the room, creating a variety of movements for face and whole body, alone and in relation to one another.

With an inexperienced group the dance will probably not develop beyond the point of continuous change of position as dancers move around trying to relate to one another. Although this loose dance form is elementary, it can be full of imagination and feeling.

An experienced group will gradually be able to create some kind of unity so that, although every individual's movements are unique, all are related in some way. If plenty of time is given, every group will discover for itself group movement forms which are unpredictable, new and interesting.

In any face dance free vocal sounds may accompany the movement, but they are not necessary and should be used only if they enhance, without distracting from, the movement. For studies in free vocal sound, see Materials of Dance, Chapter 12.

OUTDOOR DANCES

Chapter 33





## OUTDOOR DANCES

Most of the dances described in this book may be danced outdoors as well as indoors, but an outdoor environment suggests some special themes.

### Preparation

Individual dancers improvise freely, expressing in movement their feeling of being outdoors. They may also improvise on these themes, showing in movement their feeling for:

sky... grass... wind (breeze, air)... clouds... sunshine... shadow (one's own or some other)...  
trees or bushes... architecture (wall, doorway, steps, etc.)...

### Group Dances

#### 1 Follow the Leader

One member of the group, leading, creates "outdoor movements": movements which express in some way feeling for the outdoors... the entire group follows the leader wherever he goes, everyone expressing in his own way the same feeling as the leader.

There may be only one leader throughout the dance, or leadership may be passed from one member of the group to another by having the leader, after he has led for a while, call out someone else's name. The order of succession may or may not be determined in advance.

Voice sounds may accompany the movement, if the leader wishes to use them.

## 2 Garbage Can Music

A garbage can may be used to make very good music for dancing, if the one who uses it is inventive and bold.

The group is scattered freely around one member in the center who makes music on a garbage can.

While the musician improvises in sound with his instrument, the dancers dance around him, improvising freely in movement. The garbage can may be beaten with hands or with a stick, like a drum, and a variety of sounds can be produced if the cover and handles are manipulated. As long as the musician follows his movement feeling, the music will be good for dancing.

The development of this dance may be the same as that of the Basic Music Dance (page 101).

## 3 Object Dances

### 1) One for Every Dancer

All dancers sit on the grass in a freely scattered position, everyone holding a flower or branch or rock or some other natural object... all begin to move with their objects while remaining seated on the ground... now one dancer gets up and dances around the others, moving with his object in relation to them while they, remaining on the ground, move with their objects in relation to him... the first dancer continues while a second dancer gets up and, like the first, dances with his object in relation to the others... one member of the group after another gets up until all are dancing freely... now, one by one, starting with the one who was the first to dance, and continuing in order (or in free sequence, determined by individual feeling), the dancers sit down, continuing to move until all are seated... gradually the movement stops.

Dancers may all carry the same kind of object or they may each carry a different kind.

Instead of a natural object, a piece of garden equipment such as a rake, pail, hoe, watering can, trowel, or length of hose may be used.

If the group is very large, not all dancers will have a turn dancing, or several will need to dance at the same time. The order of succession may be determined in advance or it may be freely improvised.

2) One for All

One dancer, holding a flower or branch or rock or some other natural object (or a piece of garden equipment such as a rake, pail, hoe, watering can, trowel or length of hose) leads the group, all dancing, into the dancing area where all scatter freely and sit down on the ground... the lead dancer does not sit down but dances with the object around the others, relating his movement to them as they move in relation to him... now he gives the object to another member of the group who gets up and dances with it while he sits down... after dancing with the object for a moment, the second dancer gives it to a third and sits down... in this way the object is passed from dancer to dancer while the rest of the group continues to move on the ground... when the last dancer has danced with the object, all rise and follow him, dancing, out of the dancing area.

If the group is very large, not every member will have a turn dancing, or there will need to be more than one leader with more than one object.

FREE GROUP DANCE

Chapter 34



## FREE GROUP DANCE

The most vital of all creative dance experiences is free group improvisation. Without limitation of theme or goal other than the goal of all working together to create clear movement forms expressive of true movement feeling, a group can explore in perfect freedom the entire range of group movement expression.

This is an experience for a group of any size, but it should not be attempted by a large group until all members have achieved some freedom, awareness and control in the use of movement as a creative medium. The ability of individual group members to sense the nature of group movement themes as they occur, and to help them develop according to their nature, is the creative foundation of free group dance improvisation.

This dance may begin quite casually with every member of the group, in any position, moving independently in his own way... as group members become aware of one another's movements, they begin to create movements together, and a movement theme involving the whole group will emerge... from here on, no specific guide-lines can be given because no two groups will create exactly the same movement themes.

### Movement Themes

A movement theme is a perceptible movement form with a definite quality expressive of feeling.

Some themes stress spatial patterns of movement, creating beautiful visual designs. Others stress time patterns and may include sounds of voice, hands or feet. Some themes stress force patterns of movement with the action element dominant, creating a dramatic quality.

Some movement themes are tight... some are loose. Some are fast moving... some are slow. Some are jerky... some are smooth. Some have a regular pulse... some an irregular one. A theme may be strong... weak... large... small... high... low... fixed... free... or anything else.

It is not always possible to describe a movement theme in words, because this is non-verbal expression, but its quality can be sensed and felt throughout our whole being if it has a clearly expressive form.

What does a movement theme "express"? What are we "feeling"?

Every human body movement in its particular quality (the way in which it is done) expresses some feeling. The feeling may be a specific emotion which can be named such as fear, pain, rage (see Chapter 30) but in most of our dances the feeling is a generalized, diffuse emotional tone associated with a particular abstract quality of movement. For example, a slow movement may express a feeling of slowness. This feeling is an inner experience associated with the outer form.

Abstract qualities of movement are basic building blocks of creative dance because the feelings inherent in them can be shared by all human beings alike, although every individual derives these feelings from different concrete life experiences. A complete study of abstract elements of movement will be found in *Materials of Dance, Part II*.

### Continuity

A free group dance improvisation may grow from theme to theme and it may continue for a long time. Our experienced dance groups sometimes improvise uninterruptedly for hours.

The continuity of movement themes is determined by natural laws of rhythm. Rhythm means the wave-like alternation of activity and rest inherent in all natural movement. If dancers are sensitive to these laws and allow themselves to be subject to them, the dance will flow along, rising and falling rhythmically, without artificiality or strain.

A vigorous movement theme may lead into a quiet one, giving the dancers a chance to rest. A theme which includes loud sounds may be followed by one in which sounds are soft or which is completely silent. A theme may appear in a fixed form such as a circle or a line, after which the group may feel the need to scatter and move around freely. A theme in which the group moves in unison may give over to a theme in which the group breaks up into small groups moving in relation to one another. Sometimes an individual dancer will separate himself from a unison group movement in order to provide a contrasting movement quality. All of these possibilities may present themselves in a free group dance improvisation and every group will handle them differently.

Although this dance is essentially a leaderless group dance, themes may evolve in which the group needs to follow a leader, as when a line forms spontaneously and one member of the group finds himself at the head. No one should be timid in assuming the leadership role if this is what the group movement seems to need. At the same time no one should superimpose his individual movement needs on the movement needs of the group.

Patience is a prime requisite for free group dance improvisation. Like any living thing, an improvised group dance takes time to grow. Growth cannot be forced. There should be no hasty effort to achieve ripe movement forms. Sometimes a group movement will take a long time to develop, and sometimes one movement will repeat itself over and over. Dancers should not become impatient. If given plenty of time, group movement forms will ripen of themselves, and one will inevitably give birth to another.

A free group dance, for dancers experienced in group dance improvisation, is the most challenging and most rewarding of all the dances described in this book. It may be considered the ultimate goal of our way of work. Once a dance group is ready for it, this dance will be preferred above all others. It can be created again and again with ever-ripening form and feeling. There is no limit to the variety of beautiful experiences which it can provide. It is the measure of a creative dance group's artistic maturity.

### Conclusion

Members of a creative dance group who practice free group dance improvisation should not be surprised to find that the group's freedom to find its own unique forms of expression leads it to the discovery of forms which are universal. Sometimes, during a dance, members of the group sense intuitively that the movement forms which they are creating have been created by other groups at other times in other places. These forms are universal because they are basic and true and because they express the nature of human beings. Awareness of this adds another dimension to the beauty of the dance.



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