Composition and choreography

IB DP Dance composition and analysis task full package

Composition and choreography

- create a motif that carries the **intention** of a dance;
- develop a motif using **repetition**, **variation**, retrograde, accumulation and other devices;
- shape a dance with a clear form and with contrast inside and across works;

Composition and choreography (2)

- plan three contrasting works within the time limits;
- write an analytical statement that explains compositional problems and decisions.

The motif and its development

- A **motif** is a short movement phrase that carries the dance's **intention**.
- It should be small enough to change and clear enough to recognise when it returns.
- A whole dance can grow from one or two motifs.
- Choreographers develop a motif with **devices** :

Form and contrast

- **ABA** (ternary): a statement, a contrasting section, and a return of the statement, often changed;
- **rondo**: a returning section A between different sections: A B A C A;
- **theme and variations**: one motif changed in each section;

Form and contrast (2)

- **narrative**: the structure follows a story.
- **inside one dance**: changes of level, tempo, density, **dynamics** and the number of dancers keep the work alive;
- **across the three works**: at least two of your three dances must **contrast** clearly in subject matter or compositional approach. Three dances in the same style with the same **devices** read as one dance three times.

The analytical statement

- the **intention** : what the dance set out to communicate;
- the **problems** that arose;
- the **solutions** you tried and the one you chose, and why;
- what the making taught you for future work.

Sources for this lesson

- International Baccalaureate, *Dance guide* (2014).
- D. Humphrey, *The Art of Making Dances* (1959).
- T. Brown, *Accumulation* (1971), Trisha Brown Dance Company archive.
- A. Ailey, *Revelations* (1960); M. Graham, *Lamentation* (1930).

Common errors

- Starting with lots of different movements instead of one clear motif.
- Using **devices** for their own sake. Every **development** should change what the motif says.
- Making a return that the viewer cannot recognise. The return must be visible.

Common errors (2)

- Submitting three works that look the same. At least two must **contrast** in subject or approach.
- Writing the analytical statement as a rehearsal diary instead of an account of problems and decisions.
- Forgetting to name your sources and influences.

Key terms

- **Motif**: a short movement phrase that carries a dance's **intention**.
- **Device**: a method of developing a motif, such as **repetition**, **variation**, retrograde or accumulation.
- **Retrograde**: performing a movement phrase backwards.

Key terms (2)

- **Accumulation**: adding movements one at a time to a growing phrase.
- **Form**: how a dance is organised in time, such as ABA or rondo.
- **Analytical statement**: a written account of the compositional problems and decisions in one dance.

Check yourself

- 1.
- What is a motif, and why should it be short? 2.
- Describe the accumulation pattern for four gestures. 3.
- A dancer performs a turn, a jump and a fall.