

# dance



Debuting as an exhibition event in 2008, Dance (1070) joins Competition in 2009 as a regular event!

Guidelines for choreography in the CSFC Handbook state that for the purpose of the Competition, the choreography must be the student's work, but the student may have assistance and/or direction with creative ideas. Choreography should:

- Develop from a chosen idea/theme
- Be age-appropriate
- Contain respectful movement

Additionally, the costume should be appropriate to the dancer's body, modest and fitting to the content of the choreography.



In this issue of the CSFC newsletter, ORU Director of Dance Amy Roark-McIntosh addresses these parameters as she moves through the different elements of the creative process involved in choreographing a dance performance.

# THE CREATIVE PROCESS

By: Amy Roark-McIntosh



## CHOOSING A THEME/IDEA FOR YOUR CHOREOGRAPHY:

A dance can be about anything and the challenge is to draw something from the inside of the choreographer out so that the audience can engage and be changed, challenged or inspired. Some ideas for finding motivation are in a scripture, a poem, the lyrics of a song, a picture or an emotion....

## CHOOSING MUSIC:

- Music as a layer in communicating your theme/idea
- Music as a partner in communicating your theme/idea
- Music can set a tone or mood for your theme/idea
- Silence as an option
- Types of music: classical, jazz, popular, spoken text, sound scores (water, thunderstorms, bee buzzing, door opening...), drums and live music, among others
- Body percussion and sounds made with your given space/props (clapping, brushing/slapping parts of your body to make sounds, stomping floor, using a prop to make sound).

Music is a tool for you as a choreographer, but you can choose how you want to involve it. Typically a dance is married to a piece of music. It may be interesting to consider your music as secondary to your dance and let it be a background. You may even choose to have your music come in and out of your dance so that there are moments of silence. Today it is common to see dance companies use spoken text in their performance, so that the dancers are using their voices to create a musical score.

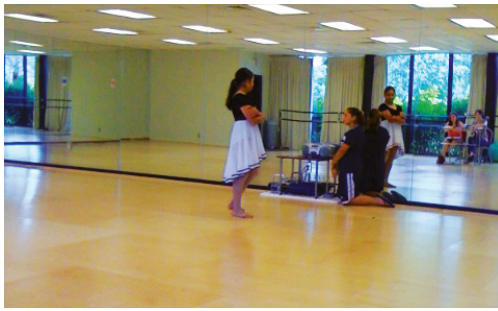
## DISCOVERING MOVEMENT TO BRING YOUR THEME/IDEA TO LIFE:

A wonderful starting place for creating movement is improvisation. This might look like the choreographer going into the dance space, reading a chosen poem and then beginning to move as inspired by the words. See if you can move and express from the inside, creating your own movement. Your technique is a guide for you, but attempt to find movements outside of your technique classes. Later in your creative process, you will want to be sure that your movement is something within your skill level as a dancer so that watching you execute your movements doesn't distract the audience. It can be interesting to discover movement without music so that your movement can stand alone. Music is a powerful tool that can shape and bring further impact to your theme/idea, but movement also has the potential to communicate and can sometimes get lost in the music.

## DEVELOPING YOUR THEME/IDEA INTO A DANCE:

### Types of compositions:

- **Abstract:** a collage of ideas, movement focused, an abstraction of an idea
- **Lyrical:** quality of movement/music focused



- **Dramatic:** high intensity
- **Dance-drama:** tells a story
- **Comic:** humorous
- **Your own inspiration of a structure:** Every dance needs to have a clear beginning, middle and end, but how you go about this is up to you as the choreographer.

Above are some examples of how a dance might develop. Some of these are linear, advancing in communicating your theme/idea from the beginning and climaxing at the end. Others might be a series of images strung together as in the collage example, or the movement might draw out a strong emotion through a dramatic dance. I still recommend working without your music at times so that your choreography can develop on its own.

### **CONSIDERING THE ELEMENTS OF MOVEMENT:**

Rudolf Laban, the creator of Labanotation, was interested in the way people move in terms of space, shape, time and effort (how a dancer uses his/her weight to show variance from heavy to light.) When looking at space does your movement stay in a small range of space or move to a medium or large range? What about your pathways through space, do you include diagonals, circles, angles and jagged patterns? Have you explored circular and round shapes contrasted with angular and linear shapes? Does your movement use a range of time from slow to fast? What type of effort does your movement have: is it light as a feather or heavy as if carrying a burden?

### **PREPARING FOR PERFORMANCE:**

Dancers need to prepare physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually for their performance. Rehearsing is a must and it can be helpful to ask a group of people to be an audience for you. Videotaping yourself is also a wonderful tool for evaluating your performance level. It is important to meditate on the content of your theme/idea, and you may want to spend time in prayer asking God to give you wisdom as you prepare for the performance.

### **CHOOSING YOUR COSTUME:**

At this point in your creative process you should be very familiar with your chosen theme/idea. This is your inspiration for choosing your costume. Some choreographers like to dress the dancers in pedestrian clothing or the clothes we wear as people because the dance is about humanity. Others choose flowing pants, skirt, dress... to highlight the flow of the movement. Likewise, a unitard or other form fitting costume would capture choreography with emphasis on lines of the movement. Color and texture of the costume also gives the audience information about your choreography.

## CHOOSING A TITLE:

Often the last thing to do in the creative process is to come up with a title for your work. You may want to go back to your inspirational material: your poem, scripture, song, painting... and think about what stands out to you. Sometimes the title is the essence of the choreography and other times it is a clue to draw the audience into your work. You can also include program notes that can be printed or read if performing without a program. These are meant to give further insight into your choreography while still leaving some room for your audience to draw their own conclusions.

I like to think the creative process is as important as the performance of a work. If you think about it, this is where the most time is spent working, reflecting and seeking to communicate an idea. I believe everything we do can be an act of worship unto our God, and as I look back on my times of creative process I have distinct memories of God taking me to new depths of my faith as I grapple with communicating His truths. "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship." Romans 12:1 NIV

*Amy Roark-McIntosh, a native Tulsan, is the Director of Dance at Oral Roberts University. McIntosh holds an M.F.A. in dance performance/choreography from the State University of NY College at Brockport and a B.F.A. in dance from Stephens College of Columbia, MO. As an artist she has worked internationally and nationally, performing, teaching and choreographing.*

## NEWSWORTHY NOTES:

– The compulsory poetic selections for the 2009 Spanish #160 and French #165 events have been posted on the Competition Web site along with an audio version for each poem. Remember that the compulsory selections must be recited FROM MEMORY. Only those who are non-native speakers of the language in which they are reciting may compete in this event. A brief impromptu poem will be given to the performer at the competition site and he or she will have 15 minutes to prepare before reciting the selection FROM MEMORY. More details will be available in the 2009 Competition Handbook.

– Science Projects must conform to the International Science and Engineering Fair Rules (ISEF). There has been an update to the web address for this organization. Rules and project forms may be downloaded at [www.societyforscience.org](http://www.societyforscience.org) and books may be ordered from:

Society for Science and the Public  
1719 N. Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: (202)785-2255  
Fax: (202)785-1243

The links page on the Competition Web site has been updated with the new information.

– The dates for Competition 2009 are May 17-22. Be sure to mark your calendar.

**ORU Christian School Finals Competition**  
**7777 South Lewis Avenue, GC 612**  
**Tulsa, Oklahoma 74171**

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