



Getting Ready to Leave

A Symbolic Approach

Teaching Practice Exam
M6

Master Dance Teacher 3

Specialization: Professional Education

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1. INTRODUCTION

This concept and the ensuing video register are part of the Module 6 in the Master Dance Teacher Program (MADT) of the Palucca University of Dance Dresden. This module offers the opportunity for students to practice skills related to choreography and its specificities, such as the use of stage space, musical time as well as the work of shaping choreographic material under aspects of movement quality and dynamics.

The theme of this module in composition revolves around relationships: movement material, space, time, and relationships between dancers and their relationship to all the other elements present in the composition. Ultimately, these compositional aspects aim to arrive at the expressiveness of the scene, and its potential for communication.

Choreographic composition is a way to unveil, explore and develop the potential for expression present within each individual/artist. Through composition it is possible to say what is most precious within oneself. This happens through the exploration of creativity in the compositional process, which happens most effectively through the equilibrium between spontaneity, discipline and freedom.

Working with composition also offers students the opportunity to approach movement from different perspectives, and provides a context where their ability to perceive and analyze movement can be developed, so that they can verbally articulate what they see, and can critically expose their ideas, based on knowledge and observation.

The theme of my composition revolves around the relationship between the physical aspect of the scenic space, the sound atmosphere offered by the music, the energetic textures of the movement material, and my personal interpretation of the phrase "and my garden was watching me without distracting me from my intention"¹.

Following this introduction I will present the starting point of my ideas for the composition, including theme and intention. This will be followed by the description of the creative process and the dramaturgy. Next I will provide a movement and musical analysis, as well as write about the scenography. At the end there is a brief conclusion of the whole process of gathering ideas, developing and relating them to the scenic space, music, and the phrase provided by the examiner.

¹ This sentence was generated by Prof. Dr. Coogan.

2. STARTING POINT

The starting point of this composition is the idea of creating movement material on site while writing the present concept. Following, I present the 5 elements that constitute the initial impulses for this composition, as well as ideas of how I integrate them into the scene:

1. Quality of movement and its nuances: based on Laban Movement Analysis², I attribute energetic textures (movement) to the character; these are divided between predominant and underlying textures, thus forming a palette of textures that include qualities for the movements and gestures, as well as for the expressive details and the “transitional forms”. These textures/qualities are described in more detail in section 6.
2. Scenography: 3 rooms - bedroom, bathroom, and in the middle a small corridor; the narrow walls offer empty spaces where the dance happens, as well as limitation to the movements - thus offering the possibility of dialogue between the dance and the limitation of the scenic space;
3. Musical piece: it has a clear structure and evokes expressiveness; it outlines the choreographic organization in terms of temporal division of its sections; it influences the movement texture. I seek to highlight the emotional aspect (ethos) of the musical piece through the energetic qualities of the movement;
4. Written word: "and my garden was watching me without distracting me from my intention"³
5. Character's intention: To get ready to leave.

3. THEME AND INTENTION

The theme of this composition is: A symbolic representation of a transitional phase in an individual's life. It is a solo piece where the character's intention is to get dressed and leave the house. He is at home and transits between bedroom, bathroom and corridor. Alongside, the composition brings the idea that the scenic space and its objects are related to the character as they interfere, although passively, in the character's paths, trajectories, and also in his decisions.

² Laban Movement Analysis (LMA), also Laban/Bartenieff Movement Analysis, is a method and language for describing, visualizing, interpreting and documenting human movement. It is based on the original work of Rudolf von Laban, which was developed and extended by Lisa Ullmann, Irmgard Bartenieff, Warren Lamb and others. LMA draws from multiple fields including anatomy, kinesiology and psychology. It is used by dancers, actors, musicians and athletes; by health professionals such as physical and occupational therapists and psychotherapists; and in anthropology, business consulting and leadership development.

³ I will elaborate on my interpretation of the sentence in section 5.

This composition has the intention of communicating to the viewer everyday actions such as moving around the house, wearing clothes and accessories, leaving the house. Such ordinary actions are interlaced by dance movements and expressive gestures, which are understood as projection (exteriorization) of the wishes, dreams and delusions of the character. The relation between his movement quality, the empty spaces, the limitations of the space, and the expressive sounds offered by the musical score are part of the intended scenic landscape.

In addition to the set of actions in the scene, I work with the idea that the scenography (floor, walls) and props (plants, wall paintings, etc) live⁴, despite being immobile; they witness the character's actions.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE CREATIVE PROCESS

4.1 Format

At first I thought about the possibility of doing a duet, however I quickly abandoned this thought; I figured it would be more work and that I would possibly have to spend more time and money (artist's payment) on this idea. I then decided it would be a solo.

4.2 Movement Material

Regarding the quality and type of movement, I chose to use a score for improvisation, in which I establish two main movement textures that offer the possibility of being differentiated from each other.

4.3 Choice of Music

I used Spotify to search for quiet and flowing songs that offer a clear metric, between 3 and 5 minutes long, instrumental and without voice. I then found Fabrizio Paterlini's "Week No. 5" – I knew instantly that I had found what I was looking for.

4.4 Overview

Next I wrote down all the elements that should be present in the scene. They are listed below, in order of appearance in my imagination:

1. Text provided by the examiner: The idea of the garden caught my interest; it is common for me to go for a walk in the small garden close to my apartment and feel connected to the

⁴ In the character's imagination.

plants, it is as if they listen to me; I then thought of transferring such a feeling to my apartment.

2. Theme: the text talks about intention; I searched for a personal intention to work on the composition; for me it could be any intention – since the text says that the garden would not in any way distract me from my intention.
3. Intention: leaving the place where I am and looking for new possibilities of life is a current theme in my life, so I brought it to the scene, turning it into the underlying motif of the composition.
4. Energetic textures of movement: I looked for a polarity of energetic qualities (based on Laban Movement Analysis) that on the one hand convey the idea of dreams and lightness, on the other hand the expression of tension and anxiety.
5. Plot: sitting in my apartment one day, while putting on my shoes to leave the house and I found the perfect angle of view, suitable for my intention; I was in the bedroom and saw the bathroom through the hallway; an angle that connects the three rooms, (the middle room has the function of connecting the other two). I perceived it as a transitional space; thus I came to the idea that my intention of getting dressed to leave the house, as well as the act of leaving itself had a primary meaning: the transition between two phases or states (physical and emotional).
6. Script: before having studied the musical structure of the piece, I entered what would be my scenic space and turned the music on; inspired by the clear structure of the piece, I created the 9 moments of my composition – without specifying precisely their content.
7. Costume: I chose to wear only pants, t-shirt, shirt and shoes. And I made the first choice of scenography design – the orange color of my shirt should offer a "compositional alignment" with the yellow towel⁵ that hangs over the bathroom box.

4.5 Starting Written Concept

At this point I already had an idea of the general structure of the composition. I wrote the introduction, starting point, and theme and intention. The process of elaborating the text and outlining the sequence of parts within the scene helped me to better understand my intentions; my ideas gained better cohesion within my imagination.

⁵ In the video shooting I decided not to use this alignment and did not include the towel in the scenography.

4.6 Shooting Setup

I set the props, placed the tripod exactly at the angle I had previously discovered while putting on my shoes, and adjusted the camera height. Furthermore, I also removed objects that are not part of the scene, such as shoes and carpets in the corridor, and I placed the plants on the piano and in the corridor. Finally I defined the angle in relation to the camera at which I would put on my shoes in the bedroom and look in the mirror in the bathroom.

4.7 Rehearsal

I did only one rehearsal on the recording day. I did a run-through with music and without movement (dance), paying attention to the musical cues and to my general locomotion between the three rooms. I once again studied the map of energetic texture and I did a dress rehearsal with music and costume. At the end I made the last decision about the scene: before leaving the house I would turn off all the lights.

4.8 Video Shooting

I filmed 3 times in a row, without looking at the material before proceeding. Everything went according to plan: locomotions, interaction with the scenography, music cues, the timing of picking up the backpack, turning off the lights and leaving the house before the last musical chord, the seconds of darkness and silence at the end of the scene.

I chose the third footage.

4.9 Finishing Written Concept

After shooting the scene and editing the video (cutting a few seconds of footage at the beginning and end) I wrote sections 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and the conclusion.

5. DRAMATURGY

The character appears sitting on a bench inside his bedroom and puts on his shoes; he moves to the corridor where he begins a sequence of movement exploration symbolizing his dreams and delusions; then he goes to the bathroom, puts on his shirt, and fixes his hair while looking in the mirror; then he returns to the corridor, looks up toward the light source, and walks in circles – symbolizing his reflections about the future; finally he returns to the bedroom, picks up his backpack, and leaves the house.

Symbolically, the idea of being ready to leave is understood as follows: one phase of life is coming to an end and another is beginning. The action of getting dressed symbolically represents gathering all

the experience of life that has been accumulated up to the present day. Leaving home symbolically represents the transition from a phase that has just ended to the next phase of life.

5.1 Map of Actions

	Scene Script	What	Action	And/While...	Where	When
1	Beginning	Getting ready	putting on shoes	sitting on the bench	bedroom	0:00
2	Development 1	Past/Present	dreaming	standing	corridor	0:27
3	Development 2	Conflict	scaping	touching/pushing doors	corridor	1:17
4	Development 3	Solution	letting go	carving	corridor	1:43
5	Transition 1	Getting ready	put on shirt	look in the mirror	bathroom	2:09
6	Development 4	Future	walking in circles	looking towards the light	corridor	2:34
7	Transition 2	Getting ready	go into bedroom	pick up backpack and turn off lights	bedroom	3:00
8	Ending	Leaving	open the door	leave the house	corridor	3:11
9	Ending	Emptiness	music-fades away	empty space	corridor	3:18

6. MOVEMENT ANALYSIS⁶

Using Laban Movement Analysis to describe the energetic texture of movement:

- ✘ Flow Effort is mostly *bound* with attempts towards freedom;
- ✘ Weight Effort is mostly *light*, exploring bones and fascia, and the lightness in the joints;
- ✘ Space Effort oscillates between *direct* and *indirect*;
- ✘ Time Effort is mostly *sustained*, with quick movements and gestures (*quick time*) scattered throughout;
- ✘ The Phrasing is initiated from different parts of the body, sequencing through the body *successive*, *sequential* and *simultaneous*;
- ✘ Movements acknowledge the elements of the Patterns of Total Body Connectivity (PTBC): *Core-Distal*, *Upper-Lower*, *Body-Half* and *Cross-Lateral*;
- ✘ The Approach to Kinesphere is mostly *central* and *transverse*, even though the movement sometimes also reveals the edges of the kinesphere (*peripheral*);
- ✘ Use of the 3 Basic Planes: *vertical*, *sagittal* and *horizontal*;
- ✘ Use of Basic Shape forms: *Pin* (linear, elongated), *Ball* (round, spherical), and *Screw* (twisted);

⁶ Reference: Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies – Contemporary Applications, Colleen Wahl.

- ✘ Use of the 3 Modes of Shaping Change: *Shape Flow* (self-referential), *Directional* (bridging to the environment), and *Carving* (adapting with the environment);
- ✘ Shape Qualities: Movement moves toward all 6 basic directions (up/down, right/left, front/back), and within all 3 basic dimensions (vertical, horizontal, sagittal) – *rising* and *sinking*, *spreading* and *enclosing*, *advancing* and *retreating*.

6.1 Map of Energetic Textures

	Action	Effort
1	putting on shoes	About Space, thinking of what comes next, light weight by wringing the arms while tying the shoes, using vision to move through space, Stable State (attention to weight and space)
2	dreaming	Mostly oscillating between 2 qualities (mostly with one bar of duration, sometimes more): 1 st Passion Drive – light weight, bound flow and sustained time; 2 nd Vision Drive – direct and indirect space, bound flow and quick time; also using ideas of Effort Action like Float, Glide, Punch and Flick. Here is very much Self Referential (Shape Flow) and the Approach to Kinesphere is mostly Central and Transverse
3	scaping	Mostly strong weight, direct space, and quick time (Action Drive); Pressing (Effort Action). The Mode of Shape Change is mostly Directional
4	letting go	Mostly light weight, indirect space, and sustained time. Using Carving as Mode of Shape Change.
5	putting on shirt	About Space, <i>thinking</i> of what comes next; light weight by putting on shirt and combing hair, using vision to move through space, Stable State (attention to weight and space)
6	walking in circles	Bound Flow, Sustained Time, and Light Weight (Passion Drive); Internally, the attention is multi-focused, flexible, taking in all thoughts and future possibilities, seeing/imagining many possibilities at once (Indirect Space – internally scanning); there is a <i>central</i> Approach to Kinesphere
7	picking up backpack	About Space and Time, <i>thinking and intuiting</i> about what comes next; hurried (quick time), using vision to move through space; Awake State (attention to space and time)

7. MUSICAL ANALYSIS

7.1 Music Structure

The piece has a regular metric, totalizing 4 times 16 bars of 4 beats, i.e. 64 bars. To suit the structure of the dance, I divided the music into 10 parts, including a fade away at the end.

Instrumentation: Part 1 is only with piano, from part 2 to 6 with piano and strings, from part 7 until the end only with piano.

1. 00:00 Beginning 8 bars of 4 beats
2. 00:27 Development 1 16 bars

3.	01:17	Development 2	8 bars
4.	01:43	Development 3	8 bars
5.	02:09	Transition 1	8 bars
6.	02:34	Development 4	8 bars
7.	03:00	Transition 2	4 bars
8.	03:11	Ending	2 bars
9.	03:18	Ending	2 bars
10.	03:25	Fade away	20 seconds

8. SCENOGRAPHY

8.1 Media

Using the Spotify digital music service accessed through the Samsung Galaxy A6 cell phone. The mobile phone is part of the scene, it is on the piano.

8.2. Stage

Interior space of a 1-bedroom apartment in an old/renovated house in the state of Saxony in Germany. The scene takes place between bedroom, hallway and bathroom. The angle of filming shows only a small area of each of the three rooms.

- ✘ Bedroom: from right to left one sees picture hanging on the wall, objects on bookshelf, backpack, open door, digital piano with closed cover, plant, cell phone, musical scores, lamp, pictures and other objects hanging on the wall;
- ✘ Hallway: pictures hanging on the wall, plant on black chair;
- ✘ Bathroom: blue and white mats on the floor, shower box in the back, clothes hanging on 2 hooks on the left wall.

8.3. Light

No daylight. In each room there is an OSRAM LED Ceiling Lamp 4W - 220/240V.

8.4 Costume

Dark socks, black shoes, navy blue pants, pink-orange t-shirt, long sleeve shirt with orange/white/black stripes (orange being the predominant color).

9. CONCLUSION

The theme of my composition revolves around the relationship between the physical aspect of the scenic space, the sound atmosphere offered by the music, the energetic textures of the movement material, and my personal interpretation of the phrase "and my garden was watching me without distracting me from my intention". Underlying these relationships is the intent to symbolically represent a transitional phase in an individual's life.

Three aspects of the composition brought me the opportunity for professional and intellectual development: to look for ways to integrate the various elements of the scene (scenic space, music, movement, expressivity, overall narrative intent); to primarily use the language of Laban Movement Analysis, permeated by my own interpretation of it, to create movement and meaning; to simultaneously seek ideas for the creation of the composition, write the concept and shoot the video (the process in fact happened parallel to each other).

Looking at the final product of this choreographic research I feel satisfied and have a wish to continue working creatively within artistic practice. For my future projects I wish to have the opportunity to work in partnership with other artists and artistic spaces, to be able to contribute to a collective work and continue to develop myself professionally and artistically.

10. REFERENCE

Wahl, Coleen. (2019). *Laban/Bartenieff movement studies: Contemporary applications*. Human Kinetics

STATEMENT

(§27, para. 1 - studies and examination regulations of the Palucca Hochschule für Tanz Dresden)

I hereby certify that I wrote the concept with the title: *Getting Ready to Leave: A Symbolic Approach*

I wrote independently and did not use any sources and tools other than those specified by me. I used the DeepL-Translator to verify words and sentences.

Date of submission of the paper: 24.1.2023

Leipzig

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Isaac Ferreira de Acajis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.