AN ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON OF THE CHOREOGRAPHIC PROCESSES OF ALWIN NIKOLAIS, MURRAY LOUIS, AND PHYLLIS LAMHUT

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Greensboro
1978

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April 3 1978
Date of Acceptance by Committee

March 28 1978
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ZUPP, NANCY THORNHILL. An Analysis and Comparison of the Choreographic Processes of Alwin Nikolais, Murray Louis, and Phyllis Lamhut. (1978) Directed by: Virginia Moomaw. Pp. 170

The purpose of this study was to investigate what each of three professional choreographers perceived to be his choreographic process and to present an analysis and comparison of the information.

Criteria used in selection of the three subjects were established and Alwin Nikolais, Murray Louis, and Phyllis Lamhut were selected as subjects for the study. The four areas of basic concern for the study were decided: motivation for choreographing; creative process; use and function of the dancers; and evaluation of choreography. Questions basic to the study were determined and questions were then formulated for use in interviewing the subjects. The interviews with each subject were taped in their New York studios and then transcribed, analyzed, discussed, and comparisons were made between the choreographic processes of the three subjects. A summary chart of each choreographer's key responses to questions basic to the study was placed in the appendices. A comparison chart of the key responses of all three subjects and a chart containing the comparative analysis of the choreographic processes of each of the subjects was placed at the conclusion of Chapter Six.

The results of the analysis and comparison of the interview responses, as they related to the four areas of basic concern to the study, revealed the similarities and differences, which follow, in the choreographic processes of Nikolais, Louis, and Lamhut.

For each of the subjects the need to create serves as the underlying motivation for his or her work. The subjects said ideas for works come from a variety of sources. Similarities in the personal and aesthetic philosophies of the subjects were discovered and, of equal import, the pervasive effects of these philosophies were apparent throughout the entire choreographic process of each subject. It was learned that each of the subjects viewed the evolving choreographic process, as well as the structure and content of the work, as being related to intuition and experience and to the inherent identity of the work. Only Lamhut will at times predetermine the structure of a piece. The subjects differed in their use of their dancers' creativity and in their expectations of their dancers in performance. Louis and Lamhut create virtually everything in their works themselves while Nikolais utilizes the improvisational resources of his dancers for movement which he structures into his works. All three subjects, when soliciting creative contributions from their dancers, use a definitive approach. The subjects made similar responses in regard to the evaluation of their works. All subjects felt that the criteria used in evaluation of a work was dependent upon the artistic intuition and experience of the choreographer. All three subjects evaluate their works throughout the choreographic process and agree in their lack of concern for the opinions of critics with regard to their works.

Interview responses further indicated individual differences in the philosophical concepts that were an

integral part of each subject's work and works. While all three subjects seemed to have personal and aesthetic philosophies that related to universal concepts, there was a difference in perception of aesthetic purpose between the subjects. Nikolais views the dancer as a part of the universe and the universe is communicated to man through man. Louis views man as a conduit through which poetic illumination may occur. Lamhut views life as a comic-tragic existence, and in her works she tries to give the audience her interpretations of this existence through a kinetic-aesthetic experience.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to express her deep gratitude and appreciation to the following people who have contributed to the completion of this project in special ways.

A special thanks is extended to Virginia Moomaw, dissertation adviser, who has served as an unfailing source of stimulation and encouragement throughout the entire process involved in producing this product.

A special thanks is extended to Dr. Lois Andreasen, Dr. Joan Gregory, Dr. E. Doris McKinney, and Dr. Herman D. Middleton for serving as members of the advisory committee for this dissertation. Without the encouragement and support of these individuals this project could not have been completed.

Special appreciation and gratitude are expressed to the three professional choreographers who participated as subjects for the study: Alwin Nikolais, Murray Louis, and Phyllis Lamhut. Without the cooperation and willingness of these three remarkable individuals this project could not have been undertaken.

The following individuals assisted the writer in a variety of ways and the writer wishes to recognize them for their contributions at this time: Phil Floyd, Michael Shisko, Letitia Griggs, Randy Fields, Linda K. Loftis, Alma Stonecypher, Allen DeLoach, Henrietta Thornhill, John Stewart, Elizabeth Mushak, Ione Carter, and Molly Zupp.

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INTRODUCTION

Modern Dance is the product of more than fifty years of kinesthetic and choreographic experimentation. The art is steeped in a tradition of individuality, and because of its individuality possesses a degree of vitality that can only result from constant searching, probing and questioning. It is a unique art form because it deals with human movement and, through movement, with man's struggle to communicate his innermost thoughts (Byrum, 113).

Richard Kraus, the author of History of the Dance, defines the uniqueness of Modern Dance in this statement:

> . . .this highly individual form of artistic expression began as a rejection of what its advocates saw as the formalism and sterility of traditional ballet. Today, it still places emphasis on the artistic expression of the individual performer, and lacks a single approach to technique; however, its practitioners range from those who accept ballet as an indispensible form of training to highly avant-garde practitioners who, in performance at least, appear to be concerned with non-dance. (36:3)

The rising status of Modern Dance is the result of many factors. Acceptance of the art form has been encouraged by national and state legislation which has made dance a viable commodity for audiences and aspiring dancers throughout the entire country. This increase in availability and exposure has led educators to place increased value

on dance and to accept it as a part of the curriculum. The acceptance of dance as a viable means of developing creative potential has pointed to the need for more in depth study of the choreographic process. It has become readily apparent that the quest for greater understanding of the choreographic process must begin with an attempt to define the art form, the product and the process (Byrum, 113).

In an attempt to define the art form as a whole, author Elizabeth R. Hayes has written: "Modern Dance is an art form in which movement is consciously used to express ideas, feelings, and emotions for their communication." (25:66)

Dance educator Margery J. Turner wrote:

> Modern or contemporary, dance is an art form that uses movement as a medium of expression. It is the result of intentional ordering of movement by a choreographer. The movement is created in response to the re-experiencing of emotional values, which are thus given a new existence. The expressive movement is highly selected, spatially designed, and organized through rhythmic structure; the result is the communication of an idea, mood, feeling, state, or situation. (68:1)

Philosopher Susanne K. Langer, in her work Problems of Art, stated:

> The dance is an appearance; if you like, an apparition. It springs from what the dancers do, yet it is something else. . . . A dance, like any other work of art, is a perceptible form that expresses the nature of human feeling. . . . What is expressed in a dance is an idea . . . (42:33)

Dance Educator Nancy Smith stated: "Dance has always been a way of casting feeling into form, and conversely,

of revealing the form and shape of a feeling or experience." (109:8-9)

While dance educators and dance philosophers find it difficult to agree on a single, all-inclusive definition of dance as an art form, there also seems to be equal lack of agreement on a definition of the product itself. Choreographer Alwin Nikolais in an interview for Dance Perspectives thinks of the product of dance as illusion. He said: "Motion is the illusion created by movement. And dance is illusion at its purest." (107:44)

In her book, Problems of Art, Langer also considers that dances are created for perception. She said: "What dancers create is a dance; and a dance is an apparition of active powers, a dynamic image." (42:5)

Non-literalist choreographer Erick Hawkins, in a discussion based on the work of F.S.C. Northrop, the author of The Meeting of East and West, said:

> When the choreographer presents movement in and for its own sake, he is not communicating. He is then not using the movement as a language. He is not "saying" something. The movement just "is". This difficult innocence of the pure fact of movement just "being" in and for itself, before it communicates, yields that strange holy center that is the only thing we know about being alive. Such movement has its own significant purpose of filling the audience with wonder and delight, and that is very special and very perfect and more valuable than anything in the world. But it is not communication. It is before and beyond communication. It simply is! (18:47-48)

Choreographer Donald McKayle in a discussion of his work has said:

> In my own work, I always demand a certain vibrancy, an inner vitality that communicates through the viscera, not the mind. While the mind is never dormant, it does not hold sway in all areas, and definitely should not in dance. The senses must be reached before the mind. The reflection afterward, which is then basically a process of the mind, should--if the experience has been meaningful--once more awaken this sensory network. This is what I aim for in my dances, whether they have definite plots or are more abstract in concept. (18:55-57)

While the definition of the art form as a whole, as well as the definition of the product itself, falls under the jurisdiction of various writers and artists, even more confusion and less information is available to those who would delve into the creative process itself. One may be forced to view a broad spectrum of fields in order to find similar threads that have led to the unraveling of creative processes in areas with problems similar to those involved in choreography.

To the student of creativity, the diversity of subjects and of approaches to the subjects signifies a widening range of interest in the significance of the subject. Perhaps people are just now becoming aware of the importance of creativity for solutions to the problems faced by mankind. These problems are perceived as the result of man's creativeness. Therefore, solutions must be found in the same source--man himself. If solutions are to be found, creativeness must be studied and understood as a trait that can be developed and used in all areas of endeavor by a greater proportion of the population.

Man, it seems, cannot avoid some thought about the nature of creativity if he is to live a richer life. Whether he does this consciously or subconsciously, he strives to know the deeper workings of the world and himself; he struggles to gain richer returns within his world. This struggle of the thoughtful man will eventually lead him to ask certain questions. As summarized by researchers Mooney (1967), Razik (1967), Gutman (1961), and Brittain and Beittel (1960), these questions generally fall into the following categories: How does creation go? What is its structure? How can I discover this? How can I further this knowledge? How will this knowledge, applied to my particular field of endeavor, have an impact on mankind? (51)

The following ideas quoted from Mooney and Razik (51:1&2) on the nature of creativity, illustrate the diversity of disciplines and thinking on the subject:

> Herbert Gutman, a genetic psychologist, asks how man is made by nature so he can behave creatively. How did man evolve? What does this mean for cultivating further growth in man?
>
> Lawrence Kubie, a psychiatrist working with adults, asks how the creative system works in man to heal him when he is sick: What is the system the doctor needs to keep in mind when trying to help the healing process work?
>
> Abraham Maslow, a clinical psychologist working with highly developed adults, asks how maturation proceeds when men mature into their best: What is the system that operates in such a case? Wherein lies creativeness?
>
> Donald MacKinnon, a research psychologist working with highly creative writers, asks what the makeup is

for those who succeed in making of themselves a creative source for expression in the written word: How are they able to produce a continued flow of fresh and vital stuff?

Carson McGuire, an educational psychologist working with students, states that creativeness is found more fully formed in some students than in others. What is the makeup of those students who are more fully formed than those less so?

Lambert Brittain from the field of child development, and Kenneth Beittel from the field of art education, ask what the distinguishing marks are for those students whose art products are the more creative: What may be inferred as to the nature of creativity when trusting to the product to provide the prime initial cue?

J. P. Guilford, a research psychologist working with adults, asks what "intelligence" becomes when it includes capacity for creative thought: What abilities are then required? Where do they fit in a total system for the intellect? (51:1&2)

In his article "Creativity," which appeared in the American Psychologist, Guilford has written:

> Creative behavior is thought to be spontaneous, innerdirected and generally not capable of being elicited at will. However, there are contradictions to this premise in almost every art form. Writers, architects, painters, and choreographers, as well as countless others who by profession are creators, serve as obvious examples of creative individuals who can and do elicit their creative behaviors at will. These individuals have spurred psychologists, as well as other scientific researchers, to seek means other than those experimental and statistical by which to verify their findings concerning creative behavior.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> . . . The study of creative behavior has generally been confined to three aspects of the subject: its phenomenal side, productive thinking or problem-solving, and the composition of the trait of creativity. The methods of investigation applied in these various studies appear to be correspondingly descriptive, experimental, and statistical. Attempts at interpretation are found in all three approaches: in the first, in terms of psychological dynamics; in the second, in terms of mental

> processes; and in the third, in terms of factoral-analysis. (90:444&445)

Once again science has pointed the way for researchers to explore vital areas of knowledge and behaviors that should shed some light on educational processes.

Interest in developing choreographic skills or abilities has led this writer to the idea of investigating the creative or choreographic processes of three professional choreographers. This investigation was carried on to provide information related to choreographic processes that should be helpful in the attempt to develop greater choreographic skills, ability and maturity.

Specific information obtained from choreographers who have proven themselves capable of producing, on a continuing basis, works of high artistic standards and quality should go far in answering the novice choreographers' questions: How does one begin to make a dance? How does one proceed? How does one decide which materials to include? How does one decide when the dance is finished?

In order to become involved in the choreographic process, the choreographer must bring to the task a degree of aesthetic discipline, physical technique sufficient for control, and a basic knowledge of the craft of choreography. He must be viewed as a potential artist with accepted creative potential if he is not yet in the category of an artist. He must be provided the opportunity to experience and participate in dance as an aesthetic art form. The

ensuing result of this multilevel experience or exposure would be to enable the choreographer to create works which are characterized by his own individuality.

One must understand the process of choreographing a dance in order to facilitate this expression of individuality. Since the process of choreographing a dance differs with each choreographer, one should be exposed to as many diverse processes as possible. This exposure should be helpful in the attempt to discover or develop one's own unique creative process.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

There has been a great deal written about dance. Most of the material is historical in nature and deals with the religious, social, educational or artistic purposes of the art form (14, 17, 18, 20, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 32, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 52, 68). Another significant portion of the literature treats the lives and careers of famous dancers (17, 32, 45, 46, 47, 48, 61, 73, 74, 77, 81, 82, 83, 84, 87, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 101, 102, 103, 107, 108, 110, 111). The biographical sources tend to serve as mere recordings or observations of works and do not go into the processes involved in choreographing dances. Often works of this nature emphasize the performer rather than the choreographer. The books written for dance educators are not extensive in number and most include chapters on choreographic

form or techniques for improvisational study (14, 20, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 38, 39, 43, 54, 68, 69). With only this limited information, the inexperienced choreographer still faces the questions: What process should I follow in order to produce my choreography? Where do I begin? How do I proceed?

Specific information obtained from professional choreographers who have developed proven choreographic processes demonstrated in works of consistently high artistic standards and quality should prove helpful in answering the questions of the aspiring choreographer.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to interview three professional choreographers asking the questions stated in Chapter II and to discuss, analyze and compare what each of the subjects felt to be his creative or choreographic process.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to interview three professional choreographers and present what each believes to be his choreographic process. The investigator felt that a study in greater depth would be possible if the three subjects had certain factors in common. Nikolais, Louis, and Lamhut have a great deal in common due to their years of

professional association, yet each has maintained his individuality in the creative or choreographic aspects of his work. The factors they have in common include a common dance vocabulary, a sense of space that has been influenced by the Germanic school via Wigman and Holm, a respect for improvisational training for their dancers and a mutual respect for intuitive continence in relation to form and evaluation. The investigator had known and worked with each of the three subjects in professional situations prior to this study, and each of the three subjects had expressed a willingness to participate in a study of this nature.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Terms used in a special way in this study are defined as follows:

1. Abstract: The development of an idea, concept or movement in non literal or non figurative terms.
2. Aesthetic: A sensed perception utilized by the artist in dealing with the nature of beauty or "fit" in judgements relating to his own artistic or creative works.
3. Affective stimuli: The stimuli primarily stemming from the attitudes, values and feelings of an individual.
4. Bravura: A descriptive term used by Louis to describe one kind of choreography which he has produced. It refers to a pretentious display that requires a dashing and brilliant execution and a daring style or form.

5. Choreographic intent: The purpose of the choreographer might be to produce a work that the audience will respond to in a specific way or it could be to produce a work that has no specific purpose other than simply to be.
6. Choreographic process: This term refers to the total process that is required to create a dance.
7. Cognitive stimuli: Factors related to knowledge or factual information leading to simple and complex mental operations. Webster (118) states that "cognition . . . the act or process of knowing including both awareness and judgement; also: a product of this act--."
8. Concept related factors: Pertaining to the idea of the artist or the work.
9. Continence: Used by Louis and Nikolais to indicate "the sense of balance," that they feel is inherent in the artist and is that aesthetic sense that enables the artist to evaluate his works. Also used by Louis to mean, "flow."
10. Creative process: Refers to the activities or organizing behaviors of the choreographer that result in the objective expression of the idea of the creator in the form of a dance.

11. Development factors: Pertaining to the conscious or subconscious elements affecting the actual creation of the work or the working process of the choreographer as the work evolves.
12. Dynamics: The degree of force or energy used in the execution of a movement.
13. Energy: As used by Murray Louis is similar to dynamics.
14. Environmental stimuli: The factors arising from the immediate surroundings or the external collective circumstances. These stimuli may emanate from the real world or may be effected by the choreographer.
15. Filmic: As used by Alwin Nikolais refers to the use of projections as a means of changing the environmental setting within a dance.
16. Internal stimuli: Those factors emmanating from within the person. These may be mental, emotional, or kinetic in nature, but they are the product of one's own personality.
17. Kinetic-kinesthetic factors/elements: The factors/elements arising from motion potential or from the sensory awareness of one's body in motion or the ability to see the body of another person in motion and respond emphatically with one's own muscles.
18. Motion: Pertaining to the illusion that is produced by movement.
19. Movement: Pertaining to that which is produced by physical activity.

20. Poetic works: As used by Murray Louis describes one kind of choreography which he has produced. It refers to a metaphorical use of content by the choreographer in a composition.
21. Preliminary factors: The conscious or subconscious elements affecting the artist during periods of creative incubation or during periods just prior to beginning work on a new piece of choreography.
22. Process related factors: Pertaining to the work involved in actualizing the artistic product.
23. X Factors: As used by Phyllis Lamhut refers to the unknown artistic elements such as timing and talent and aesthetic awareness.

CHAPTER II

PROCEDURE

The extensive growth and development of modern dance is a direct result of the dedication and creative abilities of the professional dancer-choreographers who nurtured the art form in its infancy and promulgated its value as a viable means of creative and artistic expression. Through the efforts of the professional dancer-choreographers, dance spread through the educational programs in this country and rapidly grew into an academically respected art form. This rapid assimilation into academe gave modern dance broad-based exposure and resulted in the grassroots interest that was needed for its widespread support and consequent growth.

While the growth and acceptance of the fledgling art form occurred in a relatively short time, there was no compromise on the part of the professional dancer-choreographers in their dedication to the highest standards of choreographic excellence and performance quality. The consistently high standards of the professional dancer-choreographers served as a guiding influence to dance educators in their attempts to keep abreast of a growing and changing field. The eclectic nature of the art form and the sweeping transformations that it constantly undergoes ensure its immediacy

and therefore its value as an art form capable of serving the artistic and aesthetic needs of contemporary society.

Dance educators have come to realize that dance has a clear-cut need for precise, scholarly research, and investigation in all areas. With so little information available on the creative or choreographic process, the writer decided to investigate this particular area.

Initially it was deemed necessary to search the literature of somewhat similar areas in an attempt to discover approaches that had proved useful to researchers. It was discovered that one common approach to the investigation of creative processes was the identification of recognized professionals in the field in question and subsequent interviews of these individuals about their own perceptions of their creative processes (Anderson: 1; Jenkins: 31; Kneller: 33; Schaeffer-Simmern: 58;). This method of inquiry was deemed appropriate for the investigation of each of three professional choreographers' creative processes.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF THREE PROFESSIONAL CHOREOGRAPHERS

The criteria for selection of three professional choreographers for the purpose of interviewing them and presenting what each of the three believes to be his choreographic process is stated below:

1. Each is recognized and accepted by the general public and by dancers as an outstanding artist-choreographer.

2. Each is articulate as evidenced by his or her lectures and/or writings or by the writings of others based on interviews with the subject.
3. The subjects should have a degree of commonality in background, training or dance vocabulary in order to facilitate the comparison and analysis of responses.

The three professional choreographers whose inclusion was based on the stated rationale for selection of subjects and who expressed a willingness to participate in the study were Alwin Nikolais, Murray Louis, and Phyllis Lamhut.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERVIEW

The following process was used in the development of questions for the interview:

1. Resources pertaining to the study of the creative processes of artistic and scientific subjects in comparable studies were researched.
2. A study of resources pertaining to the use of interview techniques as research methods was conducted.
3. Resources pertaining to the biographical and career-related information of each of the three subjects were researched.
4. Significant information pertaining to the choreographic process was researched and the findings

served as the basis for structuring the theoretical rationale utilized in the formulation of the questions basic to the study, in the formulation of the interview questions and in the analyses of the information.

The questions used in interviewing the choreographers may be found on page 27 of the study. The questions were augmented during the interviews as the development of the situation indicated. The interviews were taped in the New York Studio of each subject, and an analysis and comparison were made of each choreographer's responses.

THEORETICAL RATIONALE FOR THE STRUCTURING OF QUESTIONS BASIC TO THE STUDY

Prior to the structuring of the interview questions, four main areas of the subject pertinent to the study were selected for inquiry. It was felt that each of the areas selected would be pertinent to the study of the choreographic process of professional choreographers. The four main areas selected were:

Motivation for choreography

Creative process

Use and function of the dancers

Evaluation

In the following presentation, each question basic to the study is stated with its underlying rationale.

I. Motivation

A. QUESTION: Why did the subjects choreograph?

RATIONALE: Factors related to the artist's views of why he choreographs may influence his process either positively or negatively.

B. QUESTION: What were their personal philosophies and did they affect their choreography in the areas of subject matter, content, creative process, use of dancers and evaluation?

RATIONALE: As the work unfolds, factors related to the underlying concept or idea for the dance come into focus. These factors may be related to the choreographer's philosophic views and they therefore become inherent in the concept or idea for the work and in the content of the work. It is also plausible that these factors may affect the choreographer's creative process as well as his use of his dancers and finally his evaluation.

C. QUESTION: What were their aesthetic philosophies and did they affect their choreography in the areas of subject matter,

content, creative process, use of dancers and evaluation?

RATIONALE: As the work evolves, factors related to the underlying aesthetic purpose of the choreographer in creating the dance come into focus. Here again, these factors may be related to the choreographer's philosophic views, and they in turn become inherent in the idea and content of the work. It is also plausible that these factors may affect the choreographer's creative process, his use of his dancers and finally his evaluation of the work.

D. QUESTION: Was there a relationship between their personal and aesthetic philosophies?

RATIONALE: The aesthetic purpose or intent of the choreographer's work is frequently related to his philosophic view of choreography, yet his aesthetic philosophy must be focused on the current work he is undertaking. As the work evolves it is possible that the aesthetic purpose or intent of the choreographer will assume a different focus from that which the choreographer originally

envisioned. If finished work is dependent upon the choreographer's philosophical and aesthetic views, then the result may be related, or totally unrelated, to either the preliminary idea of the work or the ongoing development and subsequent identity assumed by the work.

II. Creative Process

A. QUESTION: Where did the ideas or subject matter of their dances originate? Did the idea or subject matter come before the creative process, during the creative process, or after a portion or all of the work was completed?

RATIONALE: The attempt to identify the choreographer's source or sources of ideas for his creative works dealt with the personal cognitive and affective possibilities as well as with external and abstract possibilities for idea sources. This was done in anticipation of the multiple response possibilities in this question. Inquiry into the matter of when the idea was

introduced into the working process was meant to reveal the importance or impact of the idea upon the overall choreographic process.

B. QUESTION: What preparation was made for choreographing?

RATIONALE: Identification of the preliminary factors that the choreographer found helpful or necessary in his approach to his creative process could prove valuable to this study. A wide variety of response possibilities were apparent.

C. QUESTION: How and when was the structure of the work determined? Was it determined before, during or after a portion or all of the work was completed?

RATIONALE: The philosophic views of the choreographer obviously affect this aspect of his creative process. It was conceivable that the choreographer would work from the standpoint of a preconceived form, and it was equally conceivable that the structure of the work would emerge as the work evolved.

D. QUESTION: What served as the source of the movement patterns? What was the relationship

of the movement to: subject matter or idea; design elements, i.e., line, shape, mass, etc.; dynamics; space; sets or projections; time elements; and dancer to dancer or dancers?

RATIONALE: Insight into the source of movement patterns should lead to the crux of the choreographer's creative substance. It should be revealing in terms of the philosophic relationship of the idea and the content of the product. The relationship of the source of the movement patterns to the elements of the choreographic craft utilized in a particular work could reveal internal or external factors affecting the choreographer in his creative process.

E. QUESTION: How do they feel about "deadlines" for choreography?

RATIONALE: The pressure of time has a varying effect upon creative individuals. This effect may be either a positive or negative influence on the choreographer who is involved in his creative process. It is also possible that the time factor does not affect the creative process of the choreographers in any way.

F. QUESTION: What sequence or progression was followed in making dances?

RATIONALE: Insight into the sequence or progression of the form and content of the work in progress should reveal meaningful information relating to the effects of the choreographer's philosophical views as they have impact on the structure and content of the finished artistic product.

G. QUESTION: Does the choreographic process outlined above relate to the personal and aesthetic philosophies of the choreographers?

RATIONALE: Inherent within the choreographic process are the factors that influence the choreographers. These factors include cognitive, affective, kinetic and environmental elements. Each of these factors should be able to be traced to the philosophic views of the choreographers.

III. Use and Function of the Dancers

A. QUESTION: Did the dancers contribute creatively to the work?

RATIONALE: For some choreographers, the creative contributions of the dancers are important factors in developing the movement and structural content of a work. For other choreographers, this factor might not affect the development of the work. It would seem that the philosophical stance of the individual choreographer would have direct bearing upon this aspect of his creative process.

B. QUESTION: What contributions other than creativity were expected of the dancers? What was expected of the dancers in terms of performance?

RATIONALE: It seemed possible that some choreographers might ask their dancers for materials of a source nature at times while other choreographers might not find this kind of assistance from the dancers valuable. It was felt that the specific performance requirements of the choreographers might shed some light on matters of choreographic approach or process development. Certainly, the findings here should prove

related to the philosophies of the choreographers.

C. QUESTION: Were the use and function of the dancers related to the choreographers' personal or aesthetic philosophies?

RATIONALE: It was expected that the use and function of the dancers would be related to the personal or aesthetic philosophies of each choreographer.

IV. Evaluation

A. QUESTION: When do they evaluate the structure of the dance? If evaluation occurs during the creative process, how often does it occur? Do they evaluate only when they have completed the dance? What are the considerations when evaluating?

RATIONALE: It was felt that information relating to when each choreographer evaluated his work and the considerations each used in evaluating his work would be of value in the attempt to understand the choreographic process of each subject and would provide additional information concerning the relationship

of the individual's philosophy to his work-in-process and to his evaluative approach.

B. QUESTION: What is the artistic responsibility of the choreographer? Does he evaluate alone or have others involved in the evaluations?

RATIONALE: It would seem that each choreographer would have definite ideas concerning his aesthetic responsibility in relation to the evaluation of his work. Whether the choreographer accepts the full artistic responsibility for the evaluation of his works or whether he seeks the opinions of others involved in the creative process would seem to be a matter of philosophy.

C. QUESTION: Do they change their choreography on the basis of audience reaction or critical reviews? If so, when, and if not, why?

RATIONALE: The responses to this question should verify the choreographers' philosophical beliefs and should prove very revealing in terms of effect on the creative process.

D. QUESTION: Are these points on evaluation related to personal and/or aesthetic philosophies?

RATIONALE: It was felt that these points would relate to the personal and/or aesthetic philosophies of the subjects and would serve as a reinforcing factor in the observation of the choreographic process of each choreographer.

Based on the foregoing Rationale, the following questions were formulated and structured into the interviews:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why does the professional choreographer create?
2. What is your purpose or intent for the work you as a choreographer are creating? Is your purpose or intent related to communication, stimulation, entertainment, propaganda, psychotherapy, etc.?
3. Is it possible for you to identify factors or situations which serve as creative stimuli or motivational factors for you? If so, are these internal or external factors?
4. How important, if at all, is it to you that your dancers be creative as well as technically competent? Do you allow or encourage your dancers to make suggestions when you are choreographing? If so, when? If not, why not? Do you plan the entire work and then mount it, or do you

explain what you want and have your dancers explore the movement possibilities?

5. As you create a dance, do you find your aesthetic evaluation is constant, or do you function best when you evaluate only at given intervals or at the end of a completed section?
6. Whom do you, as a professional artist, find best suited to serve as your confidante, critic or sounding board while you are involved in creating a new work?
7. What evaluative criteria do you utilize while creating a dance? Do you consider at any point in your choreographic process the opinion of the audience-to-be, or the possible reaction of critics, or the strengths or limitations of your company members, or the boundaries imposed by a given musical score, or limitations of time intervals? If so, how do these affect the process? If not, why not?
8. Some investigators of the creative process in various other art forms have found that artists are able to divide their creative process into specific parts such as inspiration, incubation, illumination, etc. Others report that their subjects ascribe to the "ghost that whispers in my ear theory," or the "shazam theory," as the source of creative inspiration. Can you share with us your own view of your creative process or experience? Is it inspired? Is it induced by logic? Is it predictable?

Is it unpredictable? Does it follow a set pattern? Is it orderly? Can you control the process or does it seem to flow of its own accord and in its own time?

9. As the choreographic process evolves, what do you perceive as primary factors affecting the process itself?
10. What physical situation or setting do you find most desirable when you are creating a dance? Do you work best while alone, with others, etc.? Do you work better under the pressure of a deadline or at your leisure? What time of the day do you find most conducive to your creative work?
11. What effect, if any, does the choreographic process have on you physically, mentally and emotionally? Do you lose track of time, do you push for closure, do you have a preoccupation with the work in progress, etc.?
12. How do you determine the structure of your works?
13. How do you go about the business of making a dance? Do you plan the entire work and then mount it, or do you explain what you want and have your dancers explore the movement possibilities?
14. How do you initiate the choreographic process?

TREATMENT OF THE INTERVIEW MATERIAL

The three choreographers were interviewed in their New York studios. Each interview was taped and then transcribed. The quoted expressions and statements in the study

are basically unaltered for the purpose of retaining the subjects' nuances of emphasis and meaning for potential re-analysis. Each of the transcripts was analyzed, using the questions basic to the study as stated on pages 18 through 27.

SUMMARY

In Chapter I literature was reviewed to illustrate the importance and difficulty of defining Modern Dance or Dance as an art form and to illustrate the difficulty in defining the product of the choreographer. Literature concerned with the nature of creative acitivity in many disciplines was also presented to illustrate the divergent interest in the study of the creative process.

Chapter II presented the questions basic to the study. Chapter III, IV, and V present the answers given by Alwin Nikolais, Murray Louis and Phyllis Lamhut to the questions basic to the study. Unless otherwise noted all quoted information presented in the subsequent chapters of the study was obtained from taped interviews with the subjects.

CHAPTER III

ALWIN NIKOLAIS

INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1950's Alwin Nikolais has been noted for a new kind of dance theater which is almost completely abstract in terms of dramatic content but which represents a unique and imaginative fusing of sound, color, light, unusual props, shapes, and movement into what he terms his total theater concept of dance. Nikolais is an accomplished musician, former dancer, technical wizard, teacher par excellence, and innovative choreographer. He ranks among the most outstanding choreographers and dance innovators to come out of the American modern dance scene.

The strength of the Germanic influence of Hanya Holm is still evident in his most recent choreographic works. He frequently alludes to the impact of his Germanic training on his works and his creative process. (47)

In the late 1940's, Nikolais took over as the director of the Henry Street Settlement House and developed a strong modern dance program. His work included developing a company that performed children's works, establishing a strong teaching program in modern dance, and eventually developing his own performing company that is still in

existence. He has performed his works virtually all over the world. He has appeared at several international festivals and has had a number of commissions for choreography from various universities and foundations. Nikolais has reached a multitude through his several appearances on national television programs; he has been the subject of numerous articles and publications and has lectured on dance extensively. He is without a doubt a major influence in dance today. (47)

Nikolais' early training in dance included study with Wigman trained dancer, Truda Kaschmann, as well as with Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, Martha Graham, and Hanya Holm. He is particularly fascinated with the theories and concepts of Holm and feels that he owes much credit to her for his development as a dancer and as a choreographer.

The dominant influence of his Germanic training is still apparent in the work of this aesthetic revolutionary. Patricia Rowe has summarized this influence in her statement: "Certainly both Wigman's and Holm's philosophies regarding total theatre and the ordering and attention given to space as a key element of dance rubbed off on Nikolais." (115:183)

Certainly an artist of this caliber should provide valuable information on the choreographic process for students of the subject. For this reason Nikolais was selected as a subject for this study.

Nik, as he is called by those who know him both as a person and an artist, is a man of distinguished presence

and dynamic energy. In conversation one is immediately aware of his intellectual brilliance and of a vast reserve of philosophic strength born of the artist's struggle to come to grips with his own creative dimensions.

In 1971, Dance Perspectives published an issue entitled "Nik: A Documentary," in which Nikolais outlined what he felt to be the evolution of his aesthetic philosophy. The following is a summary of his statements in the article:

> First came the annoyance with the self-expression rampant in the late 40s. The self as the sole germinal point of all value. . . . There was little acknowledgement of external source or heritage. . . .
>
> I found myself realizing a new philosophy and consequently creating new techniques. Perhaps it was that I had the philosophy but had to clarify it to myself. I recognized the pattern of religious dynamics--particularly in the Christian belief where man, built in the image of a god, created a direct line of energy from that concept--there was an imagined spiritual umbilical cord nourishing him. . . . He built life on this basis and created arts despite it.
>
> It was Darwin who cut this cord. . . . Man did not realize that instead of being the embodiment of . . . god, he was for the first time given not only a foot upon the earth, but a place within the sun--and more importantly, an entity--albeit a microscopic one--in the universe. Man's definition changed--his energy and life source were re-routed. . . . he had only himself . . .
>
> If Darwin ruined man's concept of his divinity, Freud gave the final blow by exposing his uglies. With ties to god cut, now his self-expression had no parentage other than his personal itch. He turned his reverence to himself--uglies and all. Again art happened despite this. Man was now stuck with a sex-dominated libido. He was now man-god-self-important-inviolable the thing from which all blessings flow.
>
> With Einstein, again life dynamics changed. The circuitry again repatterned--but whereas before there

were semi-permanent patterns, now the patterns changed to suit the venture. Man was permitted variable vistas . . . .

The dance period immediately following the Hitler war was characterized mainly by a search for new or larger abstraction. Generally dance was relieved of narrative and the earlier forms of dancey-dance. But no matter what forms it took generally, it still held on to the human vision--and, of course, the Nureyev complex [Focus on the glory of an individual] . . . .

It is not that I don't believe in hero identification, even Nureyev--but I wanted man to be able to identify with things other than himself. This is the day of ecological and environmental visions. We must give up our navel contemplations long enough to take our place in space.

My total theater concept consciously started about 1950, although the seeds of it began much earlier I'm sure. First was expansion. I used masks and props--the masks, to have the dancer become something else; and props, to extend his physical size in space. . . . I began to see the potentials of this new creature and in 1952 produced a program called Masks Props & Mobiles. I began to establish my philosophy of man being a fellow traveller within the total universal mechanism rather than the god from which all things flowed. The idea was both humiliating and grandizing. He lost his domination but instead became kinsman to the universe. . . .

With the breakdown of story-line, choreographic structure necessarily changed. With the further breakdown of physical centralization--the lid was off. Logic of metronomic and sun time was no longer necessary. Time no longer had to support logical realistic events. It too could be decentralized but more importantly, breaking the barrier of literal time throws the creator into visions and possible motional itineraries way beyond the literal visions (particularly if physical emphasis is subdued). The time-space canvas was now free. The ecology of the space canvas now could be balanced. . . . Now we are permitted visions into the world in which we live and perhaps even into the universe. We might even, then, return to the vision of self but placed more humbly into the living landscape, adding grandeur to vision of self. . .as consonant members of the environment--enriched by the resonance of that which surrounds us, a shared energy interplaying with vital discussions rather than domineering argument.

First I had destroyed the fetish of the narrative and realism. Then I began a 3-dimensional environmental lighting instead of the usual overhead--comes from above!--kind of lighting. This overhead lighting was not only a matter of convenience for the dramatic theater; there was also a kind of rationale about the sun and moon overhead--as well as warm direct light--cold reflected light. The floor and the head of the performer received most of its blessings.

With floor lighting I was able not only to light the figures without over-illuminating the floor, I was able to make quick color changes. This led obviously to designs of light--not only on the body but upon the environment.

Along with all of this came the tape recorder, and electronics of a nature to fit into the new stage dimensions of audio-visual impacts. The creative drive of both the artist and the engineer resulted from accumulations of knowledge, new discoveries, new relationships and curiosities. . . .Despite my dedicated belief that dance is basically the art of motion I could not resist my curiosity to explore motion happening in different aspects of light and sound. So actually the examples of "pure dance" in my chronology of creations are rare. But the understanding of this basis gave me a much broader palette than I might otherwise have had. My rationalizations included some realistic considerations. For example human vision requires an object to emit or reflect light if it is to be seen. Because the human does not emit light, to make him visible some light source has to be aimed at him. Because light comes in an infinite variety of ways, I could select sources that would most effectively illuminate the dancer & his environment. So this became more than just illumination--it became selected & controlled design.

. . . Next was a desire for color. . . . My closest contact to any transparent color paper was lollypop wrappings. . . . By this time I was the Belasco of Southington. McCandless' theory of natural light--hot on one side--cold on the other--was not for me. Where my lights were placed depended on how much cord I could afford.

Now I carry more than one ton of electrical equipment--but aside from the projected designs it does no more than my tin cans, brine & lollypop papers in Southington. (107:9-17)

Nikolais' practical sense and his insatiable curiosity have served him well in his evolution as an aesthetic revolutionary. These same qualities plus his keenly analytical mind have enabled him to cut through confusing theories and endless jargon to formulate in simple terms his own definition of dance:

> As art - dance is the art of motion, not movement. . . . (107:22)

> Dancers often get into the pitfall of emotion rather than motion. To me motion is primary - it is the condition of motion which culminates into emotion. In other words it is our success or failure in action in time and space which culminates in emotion. . . . We do not have to be educated to understand the abstract language of motion, for motion is the stuff with which our every moment of life is preciously concerned. So in the final analysis the dancer is a specialist in the sensitivity to, the perception and the skilled execution of motion. Not movement but rather the qualified itinerary en route. (107:20-21)

In his choreography, Nikolais attempts to create a three-dimensional environment in which motion creates illusion which is metaphoric. His works do not tell stories. His works transcend the literal; and by the masterful and precise integration of motion, light, color, projections, costumes, properties, decor and appendages to the dancers he achieves the metaphoric language that communicates an abstract Gestalt in terms of total, dynamic dance theater.

The preceding discussions attest to the choreographic expertise of a unique artist whose analytical and perceptive abilities have led to the development of sound artistic principles and a firmly grounded philosophy. The question

remaining is this: What choreographic process does the artist use in order to produce a total theatre work?

Nikolais feels that he has been involved in various kinds of creative activities throughout his entire life. (121) This creative activity was not discouraged by his parents, nor was it the product of any special training in his early years. Instruction in the arts was not available to him as a child growing up in a rural town. Yet when the opportunity to study the performing arts presented itself, he was quick to take advantage of the opportunity. Of this period, he said:

> Whenever anything passed through [town] that allowed me to take part in the study of performing arts I always engaged myself that way. I then created the habit of creating for performance and I never got out of it. (121)

Nikolais feels that his early habit of creating was done in the spirit of play; it later became serious giving his creativity purpose.

The following is the result of the information gathered in the investigator's interview with Alwin Nikolais:

MOTIVATION FOR CHOREOGRAPHY

Nikolais feels that for him creating is a habit and is based on a felt need to communicate aesthetically. He is very conscious that:

> . . . communication takes place through motion and the work is something that you are trying to say to someone who receives the thing through sight or hearing.

> The communication is an aesthetic one, it isn't a re-creation; it is a creation. It must always be looked at from the aesthetic point of view. (121)

His personal philosophy, which he feels is the basis for all of his work, is the belief that:

> Man is a fellow traveller within the total universal mechanism rather than a god from which all things flow. Man is a kinsman to the universe. Man is a part of the total universe. (121)

He views his aesthetic philosophy as being the direct result of his personal philosophy. This direct relationship is clearly visible throughout his entire discussion of his aesthetic philosophy. He says, "The dancer must subdue himself as an individual and becomes greater by becoming a part of a much greater thing." (121) He feels that man must function within the total environment as a vital part of the universal totality.

For Nikolais:

> . . . aesthetic communication takes place through motion or in terms of abstract theatre the way I do it. As an art, dance is the art of motion, not movement. To me motion is primary--it is the condition of motion which culminates in emotion. (121)

His personal philosophy and his aesthetic philosophy are completely interwoven and as a result affect all aspects of his creative works. It is not possible to separate his philosophies from his creative works or his creative process.

In an attempt to identify motivational factors that prompt him to begin work, Nikolais quickly said that there is no one specific factor involved. The urge to create a

specific work can happen in a variety of ways and under numerous circumstances. For example:

> I might just be walking through nature and I'll see something that will make a connection with my Rorschach and bring me to an association which has been there all the time or has been fed from a variety of sources. But that is the thing that causes it to take action. Once it begins to take action, then of course, as a professional you work from a point of view of faith. You have to have extraordinary faith in the inner process, which you don't understand, that you can't understand in a million years. You just don't know why you created what you created. You don't know what machineries are involved. You know only superficially what was involved. But I know years ago I would, and I do really pretty much now, I would have a period of time in which to create and somehow or other I would assume that somewhere within myself there had been forming a whole batch of material that would be ready to pour out. (121)

Nikolais' view of the manner in which his process evolves once the choreography is begun is contained in his statement:

> . . . I had enough faith in the mental process, of the orderliness of it, to know that if I allowed it to come out freely that it would be coherent. It's when you begin to block it that it becomes incoherent. So the process is to allow it to come out. I would, in effect, just spew, spew, spew, and then I would try afterwards to put it in order and make sense of that outpouring. (121)

CREATIVE PROCESS

The inseparable nature of Nikolais' personal and aesthetic philosophies are in evidence throughout his entire creative process as the following discussions will verify.

Nikolais feels that his ideas for works are fed to him from many sources, but the thing that triggers his urge

to take action is something that occurs at a particular moment. He says:

> I might just be walking through nature and I'll see something that will make a connection with my Rorschach and bring me to an association which has been there all the time, or [an association awakens which] has been fed from a variety of sources. But that [particular time I see it] is the thing that causes it to take action. (121)

For Nikolais a vague idea of some environment scheme for his work precedes the creation of the work. He has this to say concerning his preparation for choreographing a work.

> I very often go [into the studio to create a work] with very limited thought in my conscious mind of what I am going to do. Of course in multimedia work I have to set up some things prior to my going to rehearsal. So I will somehow or other sense that somewhere within me I am concerned with a particular kind of environment. I will try to make that [environment] visible through some mockup of mockup slides which will be projected at, on, or around the dancers. Then I'll have costumers and technical crew come in and we'll put costumes on the dancers that will perhaps work and within the technical operatives that I have set I will have the dancers move. Sometimes I direct it and show the dancers very specifically what I want. Other times I'll say, "Here is the environment. Will you please improvise within it so that I can see what will happen." (121)

The incredible complexity of this preliminary aspect of his work does not seem to justify the choreographer's opinion that he goes into the studio to create a work with very limited thought in his conscious mind of what he is going to do. His statement is contradictory unless one accepts the choreographer's word on the basis that he does not yet have a definite structure or form in mind and he has

no specific movements or steps in mind at this point in his creative process. The choreographer continues in the unraveling of his complex personal creative process.

Nikolais explained the factors determining the structure of his work:

> The structure of the piece of course depends upon the content of it and whether the content has been evidently satisfied.
>
> The process is involved in the identity of the thing. Once the thing gives an identity, then it becomes the master and you have to make sure you don't paw over it too much. Because it is the thing. I very often find myself saying, "It wants to do this;" not, "I want to do this." (121)

In the preceding statement by Nikolais we have what at first would appear to be a contradiction concerning whether the idea for his work precedes or evolves throughout the choreographic process. The point he seems to be emphasizing is that he begins with some vague idea of an environment and, as the preliminary aspects which he has discussed evolve, the work begins to assume its identity. From this point, he continues:

> It [the identity given by the work] is like a child. You guide its character. . . .you have to have faith in its inherent moralities. . . .
>
> It's like a conversation; you know when you have said it. I have enough faith in the mental process, of the orderliness of it, to know that if I allow it to come out freely it will be coherent. (121)

One is now aware that Nikolais views as inherent the simultaneous development of idea and structure in each work. From the first motivational glimmer through its giving an

identity and finally becoming the master of the entire choreographic process, he views the work as his guide.

Nikolais states that, "Technology has changed my structure." This rather straightforward statement by the choreographer takes us into the choreographer's complex creative maze once more. He states that his work is now more "filmic in nature than choreographic," in what he feels is the traditional sense of the term choreographic. He explains this by stating that advances in modern electronic technology have enabled him to do away with the entities of time and space with a flick of a carrousel projector button. He explains what he means by his work is now "filmic" with the explanation that it is now possible for him to change the concepts of time and space within a 20 minute piece no fewer than two hundred times.

In Nikolais' discussion of factors determining movement as quoted earlier, he mentioned setting up an environment and having the dancers move so he could see what happens. He continues, saying:

> . . . we start to move. . . . Then if something happens or it begins to speak back to me, then I know it will speak to an audience. With my dancers there is definite feedback. I can manipulate their feedback into a structure and into part of a piece. It isn't a re-creation; it is a creation. (121)

It is apparent that the movement is the result of the developing identity of the work itself and is created as the process develops as do all aspects of the work.

Nikolais says that he works on a time schedule in order to complete his works on time. This strict adherence to a time schedule forces him to complete per day a designated number of minutes in a work. Although the pressure created by his time schedule frequently causes him distress, he feels that it serves a real purpose for him and tends to accept it as a factor with which he must live and contend in his working process.

In Nikolais' discussion of his choreographic process, the following sequence emerges. First he gets an idea of some kind of environment with which he wishes to concern himself; then he makes mockup slides that will convey the idea of the environment to his dancers. He then brings in the technical crew and his costumers, and he puts costumes on his dancers that might possibly work in the environment he has created. He then outlines the technical operatives and gives the dancers some idea of the environment in which they will move. Then, without any preliminary preparation in regard to movement, the dancers begin to move, and as they move Nikolais observes. If he sees something beginning to happen that "speaks" to him, he takes that creation and structures it into the piece. At the moment "the thing" inherent in the environmental concept of the work begins to take form, he recognizes it and allows it to take form. In Nikolais' works the identity of the thing becomes the guiding factor in creating the work. He says that his creative

process is simply to allow the identity of "the thing" to come out freely and that his role is to make certain the structure of the work is coherent. Because he views the structure of the piece as being inherent in the identity of "the thing," he feels that the content of the piece must be satisfied in the work. If the content has been satisfied, then the work is complete. He says that knowing when a piece is finished is like knowing when a conversation is over. He feels that he knows when he has said what he started out to say.

The process as outlined by Nikolais seems obvious and yet complex. It is again quite apparent that the underlying personal and aesthetic philosophies of the choreographer permeate all aspects of his process. The total environmental concept is especially accented in the choreographer's discussion of his creative process.

USE AND FUNCTION OF THE DANCERS

The use and function of the dancers has already been discussed in part by Nikolais because of the interwoven nature of his product and his process. However there is something to be added to what has already been said about the role of Nikolais' dancers and their creative contributions. Nikolais said:

> My dancers are taught to improvise and to react to environmental change, dynamic change, so that they give back very generously. This enables us to create special

> roles for special dancers too, which proves to their advantage because they come up with stylistic behaviorisms that let's say speak a little more eloquently of them than one imposed upon them from another mind. A modern dance [choreographer] depends a great deal upon the feedback from the dancer. (121)

It is obvious that Nikolais' personal philosophy applies in toto to his creative process when one views his manner of utilizing the creative contributions of his dancers in his works and when one views what he considers to be the role of his dancers in the creative process as well as in the performance.

EVALUATION

For Nikolais, "the identity of the thing becomes the master." This statement then becomes the basis for his evaluations. He said, "Each step of the way must be challenged aesthetically as to whether or not it was the correct way." He said:

> It must speak to me; otherwise it will speak to no one. . . . To me art is a form of aesthetic communication. Creating a piece is like a conversation. You know when you have said it. . . . you have to make sure that you've said it because it is abstract. You have to have a sense of when it's been said. (121)

In each of the statements above made by Nikolais there is an inherent acceptance of the responsibility of the choreographer for the aesthetic evaluation of his choreography. And if this were not enough he says, "There is no one except the choreographer who can evaluate the work he has created." The impact of this statement is not lessened

by the fact that Nikolais will frequently call his dancers and have them watch a work and get their reactions. In addition Nikolais said, "Murray [Louis] and I will look at each other's works also and give out reactions to each other and that's pretty valuable." Nikolais pointed out that the choreographer may become more atuned to watching his works by having someone whom he respects watch with him and react. He said he almost never regards critics' opinions.

> As a performer you always have a fortification of the work or an affirmation of it based on its acceptance by audiences. I have been fortunate in that I've played to all sorts of ethnic groups all over the world. So if a thing works here and it works in Japan and it works in Tunisia, and it works in Taipei or Paris, then there must be something that I am doing right.
>
> . . . If I listened to critics I would stop doing many of the abstract expressions which actually make the substance of what I am with my mode of communication. (121)

CONCLUSION

The philosophies, the process, the product are blended in an inseparable union by the genius of Alwin Nikolais. For Nikolais:

> . . . a communication takes place through motion . . . . the work is something that you are trying to say to someone who receives the thing through sight or hearing. The communication is an aesthetic one; it isn't a re-creation; it is a creation. It must always be looked at from the aesthetic point of view. . . . Man is a fellow traveller within the total universal mechanism rather than a god from which all things flow. Man is a kinsman to the universe. Man is a part of the total universe. . . . The dancer must subdue himself as an individual and becomes greater by becoming a part of a much greater thing. . . . Aesthetic communication takes place through motion or in terms of abstract theatre the

> way I do it. As art--dance is the art of motion, not movement. To me motion is primary--it is the condition of motion which culminates in emotion. (121)

These interwoven philosophical tenets run through his entire creative process as a leitmotif runs through a musical composition or as a ground bass underlines a score.

A chart of the answers to the basic questions of this study as stated by Nikolais is placed in Appendix A.

CHAPTER IV

MURRAY LOUIS

INTRODUCTION

Murray Louis, a native New Yorker, was a featured dancer with the Alwin Nikolais Dance Company from its inception in 1948 at the Henry Street Settlement Playhouse until he formed his own company for touring in the early 1960's He received his major professional training with Alwin Nikolais and did additional study with other modern dancers while stationed in California for a brief tour of Navy service during World War II. He attended San Francisco State College for one year and then transferred to New York State University where he completed his formal education. While a student at New York State University, he continued his professional training with Nikolais, and soon after his graduation he joined the staff at the Henry Street Settlement Playhouse. He has worked and taught with Nikolais steadily ever since (McDonagh, 47).

Since the mid-1950s, Murray Louis has choreographed works regularly for the concert stage. In the early 1960's he formed his own touring company. He has performed all over Europe, North and South America, and the Middle and Far East as the result of his affiliation with the Nikolais company

and with his own company. He has appeared frequently on television with the Nikolais company and with his own dancers. In addition, he has also produced a series of films illustrating his own approach to technique and choreography. (36:404) Louis has continued his teaching career while involved in choreographing works for his own company and while continuing his professional association with Nikolais and the current Chimera Foundation. His background in dance and in academic pursuits were factors in his selection for this study.

Louis' inclusion in this study was based on his widespread acceptance by the general public and by dancers as an outstanding artist-choreographer. He is extremely articulate and has been the subject of numerous articles. He himself has written numerous scripts and articles dealing with his own approach to technique and choreography and to dance and its role in education.

Louis exudes tremendous energy and enthusiasm. His personal charm is enhanced by his wit and energy, both mental and physical. The ease with which Louis discusses his views of his personal artistic philosophy and methodology indicates the depth to which these penetrate his artistic endeavors and the solidarity they impart to his works.

Louis is often characterized as being a performer who is unusual in his muscular control. Author Richard Kraus precisely sums up this quality in this statement:

> As a performer, he is unique in his muscular control. He is able to produce spasms and ripples of movement seemingly without any overt anticipatory preparation and then allow them to subside just as quickly and without any apparent effort. His sense of comic timing is extraordinarily precise, neat, and pertinent. (36:404)

Nikolais, in an interview for Dance Perspectives, said of Louis' performing ability:

> What is a dancer? Murray! When he is around--Death hides. When he leaves there is a peaceless peace and an irritating quiet. He shakes passivity--he shames stasis--he berates contentment. When he leaves--there still trembles a rattled vacuum. (107:25)

Through his study with Nikolais, Louis has been influenced by the Germanic philosophies of Mary Wigman and Hanya Holm. This influence is apparent in his approach to the ordering of his materials in choreographing and to the attention given to space in his works. Nikolais said of Louis' background:

> I remember working with Hanya years ago, and she was always very meticulous about structure. For example, she would never go to the next step if she weren't absolutely sure that the present step was correct. . . . She herself was a great believer in the inevitability of a choreographic structure. I have inherited some of that and I think Murray has too--in a way provided from Hanya, through me, to Murray. (121)

In an interview with this investigator, Louis gave a long statement on what he believes is his aesthetic or artistic philosophy. (120) He feels that the motivations of each artist determine whether he becomes a performer or a creator. This decision to perform or create stems from the necessity of each individual. He feels that the compulsion to deal in terms of revelations through movement is not always

understood by choreographers. Louis feels that those who create dances might view the purpose of their work as primarily to make art. In his personal concept of art, he sees two forms of beauty in the world. One form is the beauty produced by nature in its own time, and the second form is the beauty produced by man and this last is based on the rules that man himself devises. From man's artificial rules comes art. Louis believes that it is innate in some men, and in mankind in general, to respond to art because it is an inherent part of their growing and living process. He feels that art creates a certain order in their system; it creates sanity; it creates balance; it creates the opportunity for investigation into areas which otherwise would go without investigation in the daily living process. Art is essential because it serves to nourish the soul. Art then becomes a series of materials that is utilized only by mankind. It does not appeal to animals; it is an artificial thing.

Louis feels that he creates a work out of a particular aesthetic need and out of a sense of responsibility as an artist. He feels that the creation of art is an honorable manifestation of his basic skills as an artist. He also feels that he is "hooked on creativity," and he finds, "I have very few other ways of coming into the world except through the art." He points out that earlier in his career he, "had to struggle to learn his craft," and during that

phase of his career the need to create dances was not as compelling as it is now. At this present point in his career, he feels that he composes for a variety of reasons. He composes because he understands dance as an entree into the universe to such a degree that he "can reveal things to other people . . . through a structure called a dance." He then gets his dancers to reveal these things through the dance.

At the age of thirteen Louis made his decision to become a dancer and to work creatively. He feels that nothing has intruded upon his decision since the time he made it, but he feels that he has developed his philosophy and the ability to verbalize and deal with the intangible through his art since he made his decision. He said that the idea of man as a part of the universe is not his own thinking but rather credits Nikolais with the concept. Louis' own point of view, "is not so much man as part of the universe but that the universe is communicated to man through man." This view affects the way he develops his dancers.

He trains his dancers in a certain sensitivity that will enable them to serve as a conduit from the universe to man. This he feels makes his position as a choreographer much more poetic in a sense because he is concerned with the illumination, the insights, with a kind of poetry versus prose in his works. Louis feels that Nikolais views his own works on a much more heroic scale as the result of his philosophy than he himself sees his own works. Louis'

view of his own works comes as the result of the fact that he has always been a dancer-choreographer, and he feels very strongly that knowing how much a dancer can do, and how what the dancer does, has a way of directly affecting the audience. This knowledge enables him to work through the audience in subtle ways. Therefore the dance influences the audience without overwhelming them. For Louis it is essential that he knows how his dances are communicating from the "stage out" that is as the performer affecting an audience. Until the last few years he never saw any of his works from the audience. He always danced in his works so he had to know how his works were communicating from the "stage out."

Louis feels that the way he works now is very different from the way in which he worked fifteen years ago. He feels that his dedication and his working towards an aesthetic level have never lessened. The change in the way in which he works has been in his grasp of his subject matter, in the effort involved in creating dances, and in the range of materials which he utilizes for his dances. At one time in his career he worked toward what he terms a very scientific clarity in his choreography. He feels that this approach was refined through his teaching. As a teacher he was forced to develop the ability to verbalize clearly and fully in order to make the intangible concepts which he was striving to teach tangible for his students. Throughout the

period in which he was developing his scientific approach to choreography he would set as his goal the choreographing of three works for a program. Each of the three works would have a predetermined place in the program and a preconceived form for its development. The opening work which he terms his "big structured piece" would have as its structural focus a piece of classical music. The second work which he terms his "poetic work" would allow him to probe into his material much as he does in his current works. And the final work for the program would be what he terms "a big theatrical carnage" that would include all the "lusty bravura" that form and content could convey.

He discovered after a few years of working in the total program manner that he had so many works in his repertoire that it was no longer necessary to choreograph three works or entire programs each year. He felt he could enjoy doing whatever he chose to do. His premises, after years of composing, began to develop from deeper levels of creative searching. For Louis, the richness of new movement, of new dynamics, of new time sensitivities, and of new spatial sensitivities became the sources for his premises. For him, these premises resulted in getting deeper into his works, and this led him to develop his works on what he has termed "a more subtle level." His view of his choreographic development then would seem to be contingent upon the fact that he developed from the practical considerations of his

craft through a phase which he terms "scientific" on the basis of the manner in which he dealt with his subject matter into a more pronounced "scientific analysis" of his subject matter. In this latter stage of his work he feels his works became more subtle in nature. At this point in the development of his choreography he feels that he began to probe and work at deeper levels of the organism of dance as an art. He feels that the attempt to peel away surface matters and get to the heart of things gave his works a new dimension. When he attempted to work with the "big theatrical forms," they began to lose the "lusty bravura" they had at one time because he was more concerned with the depth of their premises. Depth, in his words, "doesn't have lusty bravura. It has another kind of depth, it's gory." He feels that his coming to grips with the depth of his premises enabled him to look at gore as bravura as opposed to looking merely at the brashness of bravura. In his poetic works he feels that he began to come to grips with "the sensitivity of just touching a nerve and how one could make that happen." He began to work on certain poetic things that had as their focus sustainment in time or the investigation of a small aspect of space. He feels the result of his probing into the depths of his premises opened new vistas to him as a choreographer. Louis says that as the result of his attempt to probe into the depths of possible premises he occasionally encounters areas that he doesn't care to investigate because

they frighten him. He also feels that with what comes with the age and with the experience of being able to go deeper into one's work, comes the maturity and materials to handle that depth in one's work. When he encounters things that frighten him, they have their effect. He begins to think:

> How can I now put this into the materials of my art? How can I translate that sensation, that moment, that insight, into the craft? The space of it, the time of it, the shape of it, the life of it, into a body manipulation of it. (120)

This is the stage Louis feels he has reached now at this point in his career. Louis considers that working at this depth is not a matter of working actively over a long period of time. Rather he thinks it is the result of working with an uninterrupted motivation. He feels that he is fortunate because he has not had to be concerned with the financial and practical matters of survival which he feels interfere with the motivations of so many artists. He feels that this is due to the fact that his early works were successful and provided him with a sound financial basis that then enabled him to develop along new lines in his work as he matured as a choreographer. He does not feel compelled to keep producing the same kinds of works that he produced in the beginning of his choreographic career and that had proven to be financially successful.

In the above material Louis outlined his unique approaches to his choreography as three different ways of producing three kinds of dances: "big structured works,"

"poetic works," and "lusty-bravura theatrical works." He also emphasized the fact that he has shifted his approach from a surface level to a deeper probing of his subject matter, indicating that the shift has brought about a greater concern with the subtle treatment of subject matter.

The following is the result of the information gathered in the investigator's interview with Murray Louis:

MOTIVATION FOR CHOREOGRAPHY

Louis feels that for him creating is a compulsion based on a need to communicate aesthetically. He finds that as a dancer-choreographer-artist he has "very few other ways of coming into the world except through my art."

An examination of motivational prods that cause him to begin working on a piece led Louis to conclude that ideas for dances come from everywhere. He says, "They come at crazy times, and I can say, ah, that's the beginning." And they come through in a variety of ways. They can come through visual stimulation. They can come while he is teaching a class when the clarification of what he is doing wrong can be the motivation for the new dance. The stimulation for a new dance comes from all sorts of places; it can come from a pedestrian, from Louis the dancer and from Louis the choreographer. Certainly for him ideas come from all sources.

Louis says that he keeps himself open to ideas and that when they occur he consciously "nails" them. He keeps

a kind of mental card catalogue of ideas for dances; this he adds to constantly. This is in keeping with his belief that "there is no such thing as a wrong movement, it's only wrong for a particular dance. It might turn out to be perfectly right for the next piece or dance." Sometimes when he works he will let himself get carried away with what he feels is the "germinal seed" for the next thing that he will choreograph. He will let the "germinal seed" go just far enough to identify it and for him to grasp it; then he will return to his work in progress. He feels it is unfortunate if one work does not lead him to the premise for his next piece.

The interrelatedness of Louis' philosophies is apparent in his discussion of the motivations for his works but becomes even more apparent when one considers that for him, "Each work has its own identity. I stay with the thing I want the audience to see." He knows how he is going to direct the audience in its responses and remains conscious of this factor throughout his entire creative process. He knows how he is going to use his dancers as conduits through which the universe will be communicated to the audience.

CREATIVE PROCESS

The question remaining is this: What creative process does the artist use in order to produce his unique and varied works?

Louis believes that the motivation or stimulation for his works that can be communicated through man to man come from a wide variety of sources. They can come from,

> . . . a pedestrian, from the teacher me, from the dancer me, from the creative me. They can come through visual stimulation. While teaching a class the clarification of what I am doing wrong can be the motivation for a new dance. (120)

He feels that he keeps himself open to ideas for new dances, and when they occur he consciously nails them then goes back to the work he was doing.

Louis said:

> When I work I have a premise. I stay with the premise [and] that is what leads me into how I direct it [the dance]. I stay with what I want the audience to see. (120)

This statement points to the fact that his works are related to both his personal and aesthetic philosophies.

In terms of preparation for his creative process he said:

> I don't start choreographing [movement] until I begin the dance. Until I'm in the mood. I don't plan anything. I just become imbued with the area and the nature of what I am going to do. I just open the flood gates and then it happens. (120)

It would seem that the confidence to do this comes from an extraordinarily sound faith in the strength of his underlying personal and aesthetic philosophies.

Louis believes that form or structure in his works, "has to do with my own lyricism." He has an elaborate personal theory dealing with form:

> Form is passed on, form is inherited in the human body. It is a genetic thing. Nik [Nikolais] calls it balance. There is within the human body a sense of continence when a thing is right and the human body intuitively orders itself towards that [sense of rightness]. Especially in creators there is the sense of what the form for a particular thing should be. It is a sense of form. (120)

His statement on form is harmonious with the universal aspect of his personal philosophy in that he feels the sense of form is universally inherent in man. It logically follows that his perception of form is compatible with his aesthetic philosophical concept that in his works he uses the dancers as a direct route to go through the metakinesical and kinetic senses of his audience in order to communicate his premise on an aesthetic level.

For Louis the actual working development of the form or structure of a piece is contingent upon his belief that,

> Each work has its own identity. That is what leads me into how I direct it. I stay with its premise. I stay with the thing I want the audience to see. I know how I am going to direct that audience. (120)

Again, assuming that his premise is related to his personal philosophy that, "the universe is communicated to man through man," and that his aesthetic philosophy encompasses his concern with illumination and insights, this illumination and the insights are used in an attempt to aesthetically communicate his premise through his audience. His statement

is then a verification that this aspect of his creative process is in keeping with his personal and aesthetic philosophies.

Louis feels that, "Through years of improvising I have learned to understand the intuitive decisions. When a phrase says, dum bump, it says it is finished." This intuitive ability that Louis feels he has developed through the years serves as his guide in determining when a work is completed. This belief seems to be related to the portion of his aesthetic philosophy in which he says, "I can reveal ideas to other people through a structure called a dance." This statement also implies that the choreographer has confidence in his mastery of the structural aspect of his craft.

Over the years Louis has developed a personal way of choreographing. He feels that the way in which he works probably doesn't make any sense to other people but for him it is the only way that does make sense. He makes no preparations for the content of his dances before he goes into the studio to create them. He simply saturates himself with the area and the nature of what he is going to do. Then he,

> . . . just opens the flood gates and then it happens. I let it flow and I just sneak it through very quickly. . . . I use the dancer me to create the steps that the choreographer me is doing. (120)

Louis said that he becomes an amazing kind of schizophrenic machine when he choreographs.

> I talk to myself. . . . I do talk aloud and my company is so thrilled now that they actually hear me at times saying, "Oh, no, you didn't want that," and I say, "Do that." And I do that. Then I'll finish a thing and I'll say, "What did it mean?" The company will say, "What did it say?" and I say, "It said, around the corner with the arms, and when you get to it you need to go into a relevé and lower yourself."
>
> I say, "What does it mean?" And then they [the dancers] will do the literal instructions and I'll say, "Oh, okay," and that's it. That's what it was! (120)

He does this talking to himself and the follow-the-leader process right there in the studio. He doesn't take anything home, and he makes no preparations for what the steps may be until he gets inside the thing he is creating.

It seems that Louis' choreographic process does relate to his personal and aesthetic philosophies. The selection of a premise that can be communicated aesthetically in abstract terms is basic to Louis' choreographic process. Louis' personal and aesthetic philosophies guide the formulation of the premise which leads him into how he directs the piece, how he develops the movements, and how he determines the structure. It is not possible to separate the developmental sequences relating to structure and content from the developing premise or identity of the work in Louis' choreographic process.

USE AND FUNCTION OF THE DANCERS

Louis illustrates the manner in which he encourages creative contributions from his dancers throughout his creative process in the following statements:

> [Sometimes] I just give my dancers the steps and many times the dynamics and perhaps the energy necessary, and I see what they can do. Or if I come to special things where I know some kids can do extraordinary leaps or falls or extensions, I just talk those out. I say, "Here I want this kind of fall. You work it out." (120)

There is no question but that he controls the creative contributions of his dancers. Louis feels that, if the choreographer is going to determine the audience reaction, he must then determine the movement content of the piece.

Louis is explicit in what he expects of his dancers in terms of performance.

> What I ask from my dancers is performance and to that performance they have to bring the skills of performing. Their duty is to do transitions, dynamics and quality. My dancers are trained in improvisation. They lend so much. (120)

What Louis expects of his dancers in performance is the fulfillment of his philosophical statement that "Dancers serve as a conduit through which the universe is communicated to man."

The choreographer's control of all aspects of the choreographic process which enables him to direct the reaction of his audience by working through them subtly via his dancers is proof enough of the interrelatedness of his philosophies and his choreographic process.

Louis is consistent with his philosophies throughout his choreographic process and in the way in which he allows his dancers to make creative contributions to his work. This consistency also carries over into that which he expects from his dancers in performance.

Louis said that he refuses to work under the pressure of a performance deadline. He feels that it is unprofessional to finish a work "ten minutes" before it is to be performed. He feels that the work must be completed far enough in advance to allow it to "mellow like a fine wine." He also feels that his evaluation of a work takes on a new dimension as he removes himself from it in time. He said that he choreographs for his audiences because, "dance is a performing art." And it is essential for him to get away from the piece and look at it from a fresh perspective in order for him to tell how the audience is going to react.

The sequence or progression followed by Louis in making his dances seems to be very logical in its development. His work begins with a concept or premise which then becomes the factor leading him in developing the structure or form of the work which seems to parallel the development of the movement and all subsequent aspects of the work. He does evaluate his work aesthetically as it develops. In a later discussion we will consider other evaluative factors.

Louis feels that he has an unusual source for developing movement patterns. He has already said that he makes no preparations for what his movements or steps will be until he gets inside the thing that he is creating. And he has discussed the fact that his premise for a work determines all subsequent aspects of it. Thus his premise determines his structure as well as his movement content. He describes

his process for developing movement in the following statements:

> When I choreograph I am an amazing kind of schizophrenic machine. I talk to myself. I let it [the dance movement] flow. I demonstrate which way it wants to go. I use the dancer me to create the steps that the choreographer me is doing. I do this talking to myself and the follow-the-leader kind of process right there in the studio with my dancers watching and listening. (120)

Louis does not work through improvisation with his materials. He says that he creates almost everything in a piece. Sometimes, "I just give my dancers the steps and many times the dynamics and perhaps the energy necessary, and I see what they can do." He emphasizes his control over all aspects of his works; even the creative contributions of his dancers are carefully guided to enable him to adhere to his premise.

There is a definite relationship between the choreographic process and the personal and aesthetic philosophies of Louis. The selection of a premise that can be communicated aesthetically in abstract terms is basic to his creative process. The fact that the premise leads Louis into the manner in which he directs the piece, develops the movement content, and determines the structure of the work are indicative of the existing relationship. The control he maintains over all aspects of the creative process including the contributions of his dancers points to the relationship developed under the control of the premise. Finally, his expectations with regard to his dancers' performance and the

aesthetic purpose of the performance blend into a single statement: "Dancers serve as a conduit through which the universe is communicated to man."

EVALUATION

Louis evaluates the structure and content of his dances throughout his entire creative process. As the choreographer, Louis is concerned with his aesthetic judgment and his ability to structure movement. He depends upon what he terms "my inner lyricism in determining form." He relies upon his intuitive or innate sense of form as an evaluative guide. He also feels that creative individuals have an innate sense of continence, and this sense guides them in determining the appropriateness of content.

On another level he stated, "I must evaluate my work from the stage out because I am a dancer." He feels the need to know how his works are communicating from the dancers' viewpoint. On still another level he feels that it is imperative that he compose a piece as early as possible.

> I have to get away from it, and the evaluations have to be on another level. In the heat of my work, of my working process and in the heat of my irritations I cannot evaluate it [the piece]. I must divorce myself from all that and see it openly and directly. And it takes a little bit of time to get away from it. (120)

This insistence on separation in time Louis feels is necessary for him if he is going to be able to determine the impact of the work upon his audience.

In all of his statements concerning evaluation, Louis affirms his acceptance of the choreographer's responsibility with regards to evaluation. He says, "I have to go it [evaluation] alone." The only person other than "myself whose aesthetic judgment I even consider is Nik. Nik, because he knows what I'm doing."

Louis feels that a critic is never important enough to make a choreographer change his work. This statement reinforces the fact that Louis feels as a choreographer he is responsible for the aesthetic impact his work has on his audiences. He feels that, as the artist who created the work, he is the only person who is capable of determining whether the work has revealed its inherent identity. The fact that he believes that he is concerned with illumination, insights and a kind of poetry-versus-prose in terms of the aesthetic purpose of communication in his works would seem to justify his view of the critic's opinion.

The philosophical tenets of Louis are interwoven through all aspects of his creative process from the motivation for a piece through the final evaluation of the completed work. The creative product that results from this masterful blend of philosophical strength and choreographic process is like a beautiful tapestry that combines textural effect with color dynamics to create an unforgettable aesthetic effect in the viewer.

CONCLUSION

Louis believes that "the universe is communicated to man through man." This is revealed in his need to know what a dancer can do, in his knowing that a dancer has a "very direct way of getting into an audience." Artistically he feels he is concerned with illumination, with insights and a kind of poetry which he can reveal "through a structure called dance." Dancers are, as he says, "a conduit through which the universe is communicated to man." Louis' personal and aesthetic philosophies are so interwoven it is difficult to separate them.

In working his way through the choreographing of a dance, Louis is guided by what he wants the audience to see; again the factor, "communication to man through man," is apparent. What the dance wants to say guides the selection of movement, as well as all the materials of the dance and the structure. This selection indicates that each dance can only have one structure which is appropriate to it only. Hanya Holm and Alwin Nikolais, teachers of Louis, were and are meticulous about structure, both believing that each choreographic work has an inevitable form. Finally in his discussion of evaluation, his philosophy is again apparent in his statements that he creates for his audiences and has to direct the responses of his audience. Again, Louis, dancers, communicating to man.

A chart of Louis' statements in answer to the basic questions of this study is placed in Appendix B.

CHAPTER V

PHYLLIS LAMHUT

INTRODUCTION

Phyllis Lamhut was a featured dancer with the Alwin Nikolais Dance Company from its inception in 1948 at the Henry Street Settlement Playhouse until 1969. She also had a long tenure with the Murray Louis Dance Company as leading dancer. Miss Lamhut received her major professional training with Alwin Nikolais and studied with Merce Cunningham. She studied ballet at the American Ballet Center, with Zena Rommett and Peter Saul. As a member of the Nikolais and Louis companies, she performed all over the world on concert stages and on television, winning critical acclaim for her artistry of motion and her talents as a comedienne. She has been equally successful in choreography and has produced her own works for many years. Miss Lamhut was a 1974 Guggenheim Fellowship Recipient and has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Creative Artists Public Service Program and the New York State Council on the Arts (McDonagh, 47).

In 1969 Miss Lamhut formed her own company and has choreographed extensively for her company while continuing her teaching career.

Phyllis Lamhut, a petite blond, possesses poise and energy which are immediately apparent. Her keen mind, ready wit and obvious enthusiasm for her art provide one with a clue to the depth and breadth of this unusual dancer-choreographer-artist.

Jack Anderson, a well known dance critic and observer, in an interview article succeeded to a degree in capturing Lamhut's essence in the following:

> Phyllis Lamhut calls herself "a witch." Yet she also insists, "Essentially, I'm a product of American modern dance." The more one thinks about these [two statements] the less disparate they seem.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Like a witch, she can be deceptive. Anyone who has seen her in the productions of Alwin Nikolais or Murray Louis or in her own compositions for her own company knows Phyllis Lamhut as a tiny blonde dancer, nimble as an elf and blessed with a nearly impeccable sense of timing.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> But look again, and look closer. The elfishness is a product of hard work in the studio. Phyllis Lamhut is simultaneously perky and determined. Her determination is even apparent in her speaking voice, and it's emphasized by some no-nonsense inflections which remind one that her birthplace was Brooklyn. What could be more American than that? (73:62)
>
> . . . . . .

Reflecting upon her training and the development of her creativity in Anderson's interview Lamhut said:

> . . . I consider myself to have been totally trained by Nik [Nikolais] and influenced by Nik and Murray [Louis]. Yet I don't think I imitate either. While we all share a common movement vocabulary, we have quite separate choreographic visions. Nik never negated any

> of his students as individuals. He nurtured the special qualities each of us had to offer. (73:62)

A sound philosophic insight into her aesthetic sensitivities and choreographic purpose has enabled Lamhut to develop a diverse repertoire. She is quite capable of choreographing somber or serious works, works which she calls "dramatic" dances, although she admitted that they are not dramatic in any of the conventional narrative forms. She has also choreographed non-proscenium stage works as well as proscenium ones. Although she works in many genres, audiences have tended to associate Lamhut, as a dancer and as a choreographer, with comedy. This view of Lamhut as a comedienne is quite justified if one has seen her works Country Mozart, Hearts of Palm, or Z Twiddle.

As might be expected of such a proficient performer and choreographer, she has developed some concrete theories about comedy. Of her theories, Lamhut told Anderson:

> ". . . Comedy arises out of a juxtaposition of disparate events and the incongruities of those juxtapositions are communicated to the audience through 'the X-factor of timing.' A sense of timing, like genius itself, cannot be manufactured--it's too mysterious for that." (73:62)

Anderson wrote:

> Very importantly for Phyllis, the humor must basically reside in the movement itself. It cannot be applied from the outside by giving the dance a veneer of jollity. "That leads to cutesy humor," she says, "and I can't stand cutesy humor." In cutesy humor the performer strains hard to be amusing. He may even smile and wink and smirk at the audience. But the dance will remain resolutely un-funny because its humor, rather than being part of the movement, is only an affectation.

> To make sure that the humor in her pieces is intrinsic, she tries to forbid her company from laughing during rehearsals: "I don't want us to fool ourselves into thinking we're funny when we're really not." She adds, however, "Sometimes we have such fun working on a comedy that we can't help breaking out into fits of giggles." (73:62)

Though Lamhut never explains her mysterious sense or "X factors," one is able to surmise that she is speaking of the "x factor of timing" as the primary ingredient of comedy. She alluded to this in her interview responses with the writer. (119)

In her statements to the interviewer concerning her philosophy, Lamhut said she views life as a comic-tragic existence. Anderson commented on this view in his article; he wrote:

> Phyllis would probably agree with the theory that there is a comic view of life which some people possess by temperament, just as other people share a tragic view of life: "Not a day goes by that I don't have a good laugh. Some of the ways our bodies operate are funny in themselves. And as for the business and commercial world, that lifestyle is nothing but a big joke. I see life in a comic-tragic way."
>
> The addition of the word "tragic" indicates that comedy, for Phyllis, is not something simple. Indeed, she thinks that all her comic works have double meanings. (73:64)

The double meanings of Lamhut's dances can also involve such subtle or lofty concepts as the duality (or positive and negative aspects) of existence itself. In his writing Anderson enlarged upon Lamhut's view of duality in her works.

> There are occasions when a single event may seem hilarious or somber--or simultaneously both--because of the differing perspectives from which it can be viewed. "There are dances of death in everything I do," Phyllis insists. "Yes, they're intentional dances of death. I put them there deliberately. It's your problem to find where they are." (73:64)
>
> She is very much interested in the responses of audiences to her comedy and, like many comic artists, speaks of playing with an audience, rather than simply playing to it. Nonetheless, there are times when, for all her knowledge of the ways audiences can behave, their reactions come as a total surprise. (73:64)
>
> One form she does not attempt very often is mixed-media. "I'm around a master of that form," she explains, "so I'll leave it to him"--the "him" being, of course, Alwin Nikolais. (73:64)
>
> Though proud of her versatility, Phyllis says, "I'm bored with my two feet and my same old body. It's a burden always to have the same body. I think that feeling of burden is related to a choreographer's constant fear of repeating himself. No one wants to repeat himself over and over." (73:64)
>
> "That's why I'm a witch. I like magic, levitation, illusion--above all, illusion. I'd like to evaporate during a dance. I'd like to do big, wild, wacky, crazy numbers. But I also feel like doing tiny dances to Mozart." (73:62)
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "My company stimulates my imagination," she says, "It's not a company of look alikes. I hate companies like that: they seem to negate the whole point of modern dance." (73:62)

Writer Don McDonagh painted a vivid description of Lamhut's choreographic and performing style in one of his reviews: "Phyllis Lamhut's vocabulary of comic gesture has been refined into an exquisitely witty shorthand over the years." (103)

In an interview with this investigator, Lamhut said of her belief in her own aesthetic or artistic philosophy:

> Actually I create because it is part of my nature. It was developed early in my dance training, and I feel the need to create. . . . to create is a need and is executed for that [purpose].
>
> I choreograph to stimulate the awareness of the audience to what I am doing. I would like to create an awareness for an aesthetic sense for the audience. And I would like people to respond very strongly to my work. I don't do any psychotherapy. I just do it [communicate] very directly. I am stimulated by everything around me, and I try to give it my point of view and hope that I enrich what I do in relation to the audience. I want the audience to have a kinetic and aesthetic stimulation when they see my work. (119)

The question remaining is this: What choreographic process does the artist use in order to produce her unique and varied works? The following is the result of the information gathered in the investigator's interview with Phyllis Lamhut unless otherwise noted.

MOTIVATION FOR CHOREOGRAPHY

Lamhut feels that she creates because it is a part of her nature. She also feels that her need to create dances was developed early in her dance training. In response to the question, "What has enabled you to create your dances?" she had this to say: ". . . twenty five years of constant creativity and 50,000,000 plies." (73:62)

Although Lamhut readily points out that she considers that she was totally trained by Nikolais and influenced by both Nikolais and Louis, she feels that her works reflect

her own separate choreographic visions. She believes that she utilizes a wide range of subjects for her works and this has enabled her to produce a diverse repertoire.

In an attempt to identify motivational factors that prompt her to begin work on a piece, Lamhut refers to the varied nature or wide range of her repertoire as the key to the motivational aspects of her creative work. She feels that she is stimulated and motivated by everything around her (nature, life, music, motion), and sometimes her motivation is some kind of idea that she has emotionally in her soul and which she tries to then communicate through a dance. This view seems to be in keeping with her philosophical views.

CREATIVE PROCESS

Lamhut's view of the manner in which her creative process evolves is again related to the diverse nature of her work. She rarely defines specifically what she is going to do before she begins working on a piece. She works instead from some aspect of space or time in order to allow the dance to grow or develop in a nonrestrictive environment.

She feels that she is practical as opposed to emotional or erratic when she is creating a piece. Lamhut said that she is never depressed when she is creating. In fact, she believes that she is usually elated during her creative activity. She believes that she has the ability to view her

working process objectively, and she feels that this ability enables her to determine whether the work is going well or not. She feels that deciding whether the work is good or not and deciding whether the process is going well or not, requires a great deal of experience and artistic intuition.

She has a process she thinks about when she gets stuck that indicates a logical or scientific approach to solving her creative problems. She outlines her process in the following statement:

> I think about certain rules and regulations: What have I done? What haven't I done? What does it need now? What doesn't it need? Where is the dynamic flow? What do I want to do spatially? What is the form of it? Is the form right? Am I structurally interesting? What is the nature of the dance? Which turn is it taking? Is it what I started out to make it become, or is it something else? What is that something else? And so it goes, on and on and on. While I'm working I look into it. I'm always out of it looking into it. While I'm making it, I'm usually into it. Then I pull myself out of it to look at it and see. This is all done psychically. (119)

The rationality of her approach in analyzing her problem is a clear indication of what she feels should be inherent in a well-structured work. Her concern with the basic choreographic elements serves as a capsuled view of her choreographic process. She analyzes the dynamic flow, the spatial elements, the form of the whole, the nature or identity of the work and its relationship to her original intent or the nature or identity of the work if it has assumed its own identity. Here again the versatility of the choreographer is apparent. She does not insist that

the work become that which she originally set out to make it become. She implied that she looks at the work in process to determine whether or not it has become something other than that which she as the choreographer set out to make it become.

It is apparent that the form and content of a work evolve simultaneously throughout Lamhut's choreographic process. While Lamhut has a process that she thinks about to guide her in her creative efforts, it is also implied that this process can be applied as an evaluative tool for the choreographer to judge whether the work takes on its own identity or whether it retains the identity envisioned by the choreographer. According to Lamhut, the form or structure of a work, as well as the aesthetic evaluation of the work, are the direct result of the choreographer's experience and intuition. In her working process, she said that she does something and then she evaluates. She feels that the basis for her creative and evaluative processes are these:

> I want the audience to have a kinetic and aesthetic stimulation when they see my work. . . . The humor or pathos must be intrinsic in the movement. . . . Intuition, the "X factor," the artistic "X factors," all of these things are involved. Everything comes from practical application, from what I know, from experiences. (119)

Certainly we assume at this point the experiential and intuitive factors serve as her criteria for evaluation, and her personal experiences and knowledge as a creative artist serve as her artistic guides through the creative maze.

Throughout her creative process, if she "gets stuck" Lamhut feels free to call upon her dancers for their movement ideas. However, she stressed that she does not do this often. Again we see the importance of her personal philosophy as it affects her work. She feels that she tries to give her works her own point of view; therefore, she feels that the movement content of her works should develop out of her own creative fiber. She does not work through improvisation in her work. She said that she sets practically everything in her works herself. There is a direct relationship to her statement on the importance of experience and intuition in the way she approaches solving her creative problems. She has a process she thinks about when she gets stuck that indicates a logical or analytical approach to solving her creative problems which was stated earlier on page seventy seven.

She further implied as stated earlier that she looks at the work in process to determine whether or not it has become something other than that which she as the choreographer set out to make it become. This statement is indicative of the flexibility of her thinking in terms of her creative concept and confirms her philosophic statement concerning the duality of thematic approach or content possibilities.

She said that there is never enough time to make a work correct in the artistic sense of the word. She relies

upon her intuition and experience in determining when the work is complete.

USE AND FUNCTION OF THE DANCERS

Lamhut feels free to ask her dancers for their movement ideas: "When I get stuck I ask them, 'What should I do next?'" She emphasizes that she does not often ask her dancers for their help. And she does not need their help as a source of ideas. She feels

> . . . that it is important for the dancer to be trained creatively as well as technically. In her opinion, "The better dancer is the dancer who has more to him than his physical ability. He has to have feeling for the movement, feeling for the creative idea, feeling for the choreography and a feeling for improvisation." (119)

This indicates that there is a relationship here to that portion of her philosophy in which she states, "I am influenced by everything around me. . ."

EVALUATION

Again the logical aspect of Lamhut's creative approach became apparent as she discussed her evaluation process. "I do something and then I evaluate." This statement implies that evaluation is an on-going process for Lamhut. She has already explained the process she uses for this phase of her work in her statement on page seventy seven. The consistency of her approach to evaluation is parallel to the approach she uses in developing movement content as well

as to her process sequence. Concerning evaluating during the creative process, she made the statement:

> Sometimes I'll say, "Well, it's not going very well today, or it is going well, or it's not this or that, or what it is." I can remove myself from it and then deal with it as I see it after I leave it. (119)

The implication here is that the ability to remove herself from the work and gain a new perspective is again indicative of the flexible mind of the artist. The ability to use the practical aspect of time to gain a fresh perspective and to retain the desired point of view that she wishes to convey in the work is again very logical and therefore compatible with the artists' approach to the choreographic process. According to Lamhut, ". . . how to get to the point, to know when it [the work] is good and when it is not good, . . . requires a lot of experience." This concept seems to be specifically related to her premise that, "everything I know and experience go into practical application."

In order to clarify her vantage point as performer-creator involved in the evaluation process, she says:

> While I'm working I look into it [the work] . While I'm making it I'm usually into it. Then I pull myself out of it to look at it and see [what it is] . This is all done psychically. (119)

This explanation affirms Lamhut's earlier statement that the intuition, the "X factor," or the artistic "X factors" are all involved in creating a work.

It seems that Lamhut's view of motivational factors as well as her choreographic approach to form an aesthetic

evaluation are related to her philosophical beliefs that she is guided by intuition and experience and motivated by everything around her. That she relies upon her artistic "X factors" and upon her experiences in giving her works her own point of view is made apparent in her statements concerning motivation, form, content, creative use of her dancers and in her aesthetic evaluation.

For Lamhut the push for the completion of a dance serves both as a prod and ultimately provides the opportunity to preview the work. The preview serves in turn as an experience that enables the artist to view the finished work in a practical evaluative sense. Lamhut said:

> . . . the dancers have the experience of performing out of the rehearsal studio in the real situation. When we come back from previewing a work we can see what it was, what it felt like, and how people responded to it. It's a test. (119)

Here again the artist is confirming the importance of experience in the creative process. She feels that the work simply must be finished by the performance deadline. By previewing her works outside of New York and ahead of the deadline, she feels that she can see what she has created and can determine if the work needs changes in order to strengthen its impact. Lamhut said that she seldom makes changes in her works, but occasionally in a completed work she will find that she needs to make a few changes. She feels that her works need to be completed at least two weeks before performance in order for the dancers to do justice

to their performance of the work. Lamhut said that in her creative process, "The intuition, the 'x factor,' the artistic 'X factors' all of these things are involved. . . . everything I know and experience goes into practical application." This view is emphasized in that Lamhut believes that one never has enough time to make a work correct in the final artistic sense of the word. She believes that only the creator of a work is capable of evaluating the work. She accepts the full artistic responsibility for evaluating her works.

One assumes upon the basis of the artist's statements that throughout Lamhut's creative process she keeps open to everything around her and tries to give her works her own point of view since her intent is to enrich what she has experienced in order to give the audience her point of view through kinetic and aesthetic stimulation. The awareness of the fact that she considers a preview performance a test of the work because it gives her dancers the opportunity to perform the work for a live audience in a realistic situation and that this enables Lamhut to view the work as it actually comes to life for the first time, confirms the practical experience factor as one of the strongest elements influencing the choreographer's creative process.

CONCLUSION

The personal and aesthetic philosophies of Lamhut seem to have a definite relationship throughout her choreographic

activities and their influence is apparent in her dances in subject matter and manner of performance. In her personal philosophy she says that she views life in "a comic-tragic way" and feels that "humor and pathos must be intrinsic in the movement she uses in her choreographing." This statement points to the interrelatedness of her philosophic tenets. She states also, "I am stimulated by everything around me, and I try to give it my point of view and hope that I enrich what I do in relation to the audience." This statement is carried through in her choreography as she attempts to "stimulate the awareness of the audience" to what she is conveying in her choreography. She said "I want the audience to have a kinetic and aesthetic stimulation when they see my work."[3]

A chart of Lamhut's statements in answer to the basic questions of this study is placed in Appendix C. In Chapter VI a comparison and summary of the interview material is presented. The chapter ends with a chart which can be used to compare the three choreographers' statements.

CHAPTER VI

COMPARISONS

Chapter VI presents the comparisons of the similarities and differences in the choreographic processes of Alwin Nikolais, Murray Louis and Phyllis Lamhut. The comparisons are based on the interview responses of the three choreographers as related to the four areas of basic concern to the study.

A comparison chart of the key responses of all three subjects to the questions basic to the study followed by a comparative analysis of their choreographic processes are presented at the conclusion of the chapter.

The individual approaches of the subjects to the choreographic process and the differences in the techniques used throughout the creative process are evident in the discussions of each of the subjects. The differences between the subject's choreographic processes and between the techniques each uses throughout his creative process differ in varying degrees. Yet, the finished artistic product of each of the three choreographers bears the unquestionable stamp of outstanding creative and artistic work. Equally evident is the strong influence of the personal and aesthetic philosophies of each of the subjects that affect all aspects of creative endeavor by the choreographers.

MOTIVATION

All three subjects choreograph to satisfy a need to create and communicate aesthetically.

Reason for Choreographing

For each of the subjects, the need to express himself in artistic terms serves as the underlying motivation for creative activity. Each choreographer expresses his personal and aesthetic philosophies in his work. These interrelated philosophies of each of the subjects serve as a motivation for choreographing as well as the basis or primary reference point for all aspects of the creative process.

Personal and Aesthetic Philosophies

All three subjects expressed a universal point of view in their personal philosophies. Nikolais expressed his personal philosophy in terms of man as a part of the universe; therefore, man must perform within an environment of which he must be an integral part. "The dancer who subdues himself as an individual becomes greater by becoming a part of a much greater thing." (121) This statement is the key or guide to understanding Nikolais' entire choreographic process. Louis sees man as a "conduit through which the universe is communicated." (120) Lamhut has interpreted the experience of being a part of the universe as man's existence in a "comic-tragic situation." (119) She tries to give her works her own interpretations of this "comic-tragic" experience.

Each of the choreographers has a personal philosophy that differs slightly from the others in conceptual terms. Nikolais said that, "Man is a fellow traveller within the total universal mechanism rather than a god from which all things flow." Louis said that, "The universe is communicated to man through man." He views his works from the standpoint of a dancer who chooses to work in such a way that he goes through the viewer in a very subtle way to make his aesthetic point. Aesthetically, he feels that his works are "poetic" in that he is largely "concerned with illumination, and with insights." This view of Louis' underlying personal and aesthetic philosophies becomes the key or guide to understanding his entire choreographic process. Lamhut feels that she is stimulated by everything around her. She said, "I view life as a comic-tragic situation." She tries to give her works her own point of view and seeks to enrich what she does in order to stimulate her audience kinetically and aesthetically when they see her work. These personal and aesthetic philosophies become essential factors in attempting to understand Lamhut's choreographic process.

CONCLUSION

All three choreographers have a personal philosophy that is clearly related to an aesthetic philosophy. For each of the subjects, a need to express himself in artistic terms serves as the underlying personal motivation for

creative activity. Each choreographer expresses his or her personal philosophy of life in his or her work. This personal philosophy of life serves as the basis or reference point for all aspects of the creative process.

CREATIVE PROCESS

Another question for which answers were sought was based on the creative processes of the choreographers. There were similarities and differences between the three artists in terms of their creative processes.

Source of Ideas

Each of the choreographers attests to the fact that the ideas for his works come to him in many ways. Nikolais feels that any variety of factors may serve to trigger some association that has been building within his subconscious that will gradually reveal itself in the form of a piece. Louis and Lamhut feel that environmental factors and sensory factors frequently serve as the key that unlocks the creative premise for them. Both Louis and Lamhut stated that ideas for their works frequently come from within their emotional sensitivities. Nikolais and Louis agree that once the idea begins to take on a specific identity it then becomes the dominant factor in the creative process. Lamhut implied that she is flexible in this phase of her choreographic work in her statement concerning the process she uses when she encounters difficulty in the flow of her

creative process. She said that she asks herself if the work has taken on its own identity or whether it has retained the identity she originally intended it to have. She does not say that her works must retain the identity she originally perceived nor does she say that she allows the work to assume its own identity once it begins to make itself apparent. For each of the three choreographers in their individual creative processes the idea or subject matter for their works is perceived as being the result of a variety of influences. Each choreographer feels that the idea or subject matter of a particular work comes first and subsequently guides the development of the work as a whole in terms of: movement content, design elements, dynamics, spatial elements, time elements, sets, properties, projections (when used), form or structure of the piece. The idea or subject matter also serves as the choreographers' guide in the aesthetic evaluation of the work in progress and in its final form.

Preparation for Choreographing

The preparation that the three choreographers made for choreographing a work consisted of becoming submerged in the idea or premise of the work. All three choreographers go into the studio to create the movement for a particular work without any preconceived ideas of what the movement content will be for that particular work. One major difference in the approaches that the three choreographers utilize in the development of movement content for their works is

that Nikolais will in some instances establish environmental parameters and ask his dancers to improvise within these technical operatives. At other times he works much as Louis and Lamhut in that as a movement comes to him in the studio situation he tries it out on the dancers. While none of the choreographers made any specific preparations in terms of movement content before going into the studio to choreograph, they had become completely imbued with the idea or premise of the work from which the movement is developed.

Determination of the Structure

The form of the work is a factor that each of the three choreographers ultimately decides in differing ways. Louis and Nikolais believe that the choreographer has an innate sense of continence that allows him to direct the inherent aspects of the form as the work evolves. Lamhut clearly believes that the choreographer relies upon experience and intuition in the development of the inherent form for each work. Each of the three choreographers feels that the form or structure of the piece is inherent in the work itself. Each choreographer feels that the idea of the piece determines the movement content as well as the form of the piece.

Nikolais has to make some preliminary environmental "mockup" slides prior to a session in which he has his dancers improvise within that particular environment because he deals with a multimedia approach in his work. However his

preliminary preparations have no prior relationship to the movement content of his work. Nikolais' faith in the orderliness of his mental process, coupled with his concern for a particular kind of environment, guides his artistic sensitivities in terms of the "rightness" of the structure of the work. Once the thing gives an identity he feels he, "must be careful not to paw it over too much." He feels that, "one must guide the character of the work" at this point and must "take great care not to change its inherent character." His inherent feeling of form and concern for structure is the result of his work with Holm, whom he says "was meticulous about structure." Because Nikolais is concerned with environmental concepts as an integral part of his works he feels that his structure has been greatly influenced by technological developments and refinement throughout his career. He now sees his work as more "filmic" in nature than "choreographic in the old sense of the word." He said technological developments and the invention of the carrousel projector-changer have enabled him in his works to eradicate the unities of time and space with a mere click of a button.

Louis said that through the years his approach to structure has changed because his premises have changed. He feels that his current works seek to "probe the depths," of his subject matter. When he worked on groups of dances for a single program, the first selection for a program "might

be structured to classical music." The middle work would be based "on certain poetic things" that had as structural focus, sustainment in time or the investigation of a small aspect of space. The final piece for the program would be, in Louis' words, "a big theatrical carnage." He feels that his sense of form has to do with his own inner lyricism; it is intuitive. He believes that "the human body has inherently a sense of continence when a thing is right and the human body intuitively orders itself toward that end." He is quick to admit that this sense of continence for him has been developed to a great degree and refined through his training and subsequent work in improvisation. Louis feels that each work has its own identity and that identity is the thing that leads him in directing its development. He stays with the premise, the identity, and with what he wants the audience to see in the work.

Lamhut feels that form or structure is the product of the choreographer's experience and intuition. She does reveal that she has a process of sorts that she thinks about when she "gets stuck." This process indicates that there is a certain logical order in her approach to the structuring of a work. In her own words she outlined this process:

> I do something and then I evaluate. I have a sort of process that I think about when I get stuck. I think about certain rules and regulations: What have I done? What haven't I done? What does it need now? What doesn't it need? Where is the dynamic flow? What do I want to do spatially? What is the form of it? Is the form right? Am I structurally interesting? What is the nature of the dance? Which turn is it taking? Is it

> what I started out to make it become, or is it something else? What is that something else? (119)

Lamhut said that she looks at her works to decide whether the work is that which she set out to make it become or whether it has taken on its own identity. She does not indicate which she prefers, to accept its evolving identity or to force it into what she originally intended to be its identity.

Apparently each of the subjects feels that the form or structure of a work is inherent in the work itself. Therefore we are led to conclude that each work has a structure that is singular and unique to the work itself. Louis and Nikolais believe that the choreographer has an innate sense of continence that allows him to direct the inherent development of the form. Lamhut clearly believes that the choreographer relies upon experience and intuition in the development of the inherent form for each work. If the "innate sense of continence" that Louis and Nikolais "allow to direct" their choreography, is parallel to Lamhut's "intuition," then all three choreographers would appear to depend upon the same artistic sensitivity in guiding the development of form in their dances. Then it may be said that each of the three choreographers feels that the aesthetic validity of his work depends upon his intuition and his artistic sensitivity that enable him to structure the evolving work as "it" determines its own identity.

Determination of Movement and Content

Another area of concern in the analysis of the choreographic process is that of movement itself. Where

does the idea for movement originate for each of the three choreographers? And how does each choreographer approach this aspect of his work? The divergent approaches of the three choreographers concerning the matter of movement development or creation of the actual movement content of a work focused primarily upon the differences in the philosophic positions of each of the choreographers. The similarities of approaches to the discovery or creation of movement for a piece were quite noticeable in the work of Louis and Lamhut. The preparation that the three choreographers made for this aspect of their work consisted of their becoming submerged in the idea or premise of the work.

All three subjects agree that the movement content for a work develops out of the idea or premise for that work. Nikolais is quite clear on his approach to movement. He says that he works in two different ways. He will, in some instances, show the dancers exactly what he wants in terms of movement or he will establish environmental parameters and ask the dancers to improvise movement within these technical operatives. In the latter case, he observes what is happening in terms of movement and if he sees something that "speaks" to him he can manipulate it and integrate it into a structure and into part of the piece. He feels that the creative feedback from his dancers is very valuable and he encourages their creative input in terms of movement. He also allows his dancers to create movements in which they

are encouraged to utilize any special qualities or technical abilities which they possess. These he also structures into the piece.

While both Louis and Lamhut create their own movements and do not rely upon the improvisational contributions of their dancers for the movement content of their works, they may do so upon rare occasions. Louis allows his dancers to contribute solutions to situations which he specifically outlines. Upon rare occasions he verbally gives his dancers the steps and the dynamics and perhaps the energy necessary for a particular section and then he sees what they can do with these in terms of movements or phrases. There are other times when he comes to special things in the piece where he is aware that one of his dancers can do extraordinary things, such as leaps, falls or extensions, and he will then tell that dancer what he wants and allow the dancer to work out the movement or phrase for his appraisal. He is emphatic on one point; he sets virtually everything in his works himself and does not work through improvisation with his material. Lamhut asks her dancers for movement ideas only when she reaches an impasse in her movement ideas. She stressed that she did not ask the help of her dancers on a regular basis. It should perhaps be brought to the reader's attention that improvisation with material or on material differs from improvisation to find or discover material.

Louis has a unique approach to movement content. He goes into the studio to create a dance without any preconceived idea of what the movement content for a specific work will be. Having first become imbued with the area and nature of his premise he then becomes, in his own words, "an amazing kind of schizophrenic machine." He explained this description of himself by saying that he allows his "dancer aspect" to listen to and then create and demonstrate what his "choreographer aspect" wants to do. He even talks aloud to "the choreographer aspect" of him while he is involved in this creative activity as "the dancer." This creating the movement takes place in the studio with his dancers present. As the process evolves, his dancers learn the movement as it is created in a follow-the-leader fashion. While he is involved in this movement creation process it is important to note that Louis feels he is demonstrating the way in which the work wants to go. He said he feels that the work takes on its own identity once he "gets inside the thing" he is seeking to create. Louis feels that he creates virtually everything that goes into his works. Lamhut said that she very rarely defines specifically what she is going to be doing in terms of movement when she goes into the studio to choreograph a work. She said that she "always seems to move with some sort of space in mind; space, such as air, for example," where she feels "a dance in the process of creation can grow." She emphasized that she does not need her

dancers as a source of ideas for her works. All three choreographers felt that the ideas for movement developed out of the premise or idea for the work.

EFFECTS OF DEADLINES

Deadlines for finishing dances for performances affected the three choreographers differently. Nikolais and Lamhut felt that the pressure of performance deadlines served a purpose for them in that it pushes them to complete a piece on a specific time schedule. This completion then enables them to view the dance as a whole and therefore evaluate it in a different light. Louis said he refuses to work under the pressure of a strict time schedule. He believes that it is unprofessional to finish a work minutes before it is to be performed. He prefers to set his own schedule for the completion of a work far enough in advance of performance to allow it to mellow. This early completion then enables him to remove himself from the work in order to evaluate it from another point of view. So the push for process completion is a means of allowing for testing the material in a preview performance for Lamhut; and for Nikolais it is the factor that compels him to finish a piece on schedule, while Louis finds his own schedule suitable for his evaluative purposes. Apparently in most cases completion of the work is the beginning of a final evaluation phase for that work.

Progression or Sequence of Choreographing

The choreographic process for each artist grows out of the idea for the dance. The idea, the form and the process of structuring the dance grows, in turn, out of the personal and aesthetic philosophies of the choreographer. All three choreographers follow the same relative sequence or progression in choreographing their dances. First each choreographer has an idea or premise for a dance. Then after submerging himself in the area of concern or in the idea for the piece he goes into the studio to create the movement content for the dance. Nikolais says that in his total theatre approach to dance he must set up some semblance of what he senses is the environment with which he is concerned, and then his dancers can begin to move. Louis uses his "dancer aspect" to create what his "choreographer aspect" wants to do and this is done with his company present in the studio. Then in a follow-the-leader fashion he and the company learn the movement as it is revealed through his dancer aspect. Lamhut works with some idea of space or time in mind as she creates her movements. After she has created the movement she teaches it to her dancers. Here one sees the major differences in the approaches that the choreographers utilize in the development of the movement content for their works. Nikolais frequently has his dancers improvise as a means of discovering and then establishing the movement content for his works. Louis and Lamhut create their own

movements and do not rely, as a rule, upon the improvisational contributions of their dancers for the movement content of their works. Occasionally Louis and Lamhut ask their dancers for movement input, and occasionally Nikolais will spell out for his dancers specifically what he wants in terms of movement content. All three choreographers rely upon their intuition and artistic experience in determining the form and movement content of a work. Each choreographer feels that the idea of the piece determines the form or structure of that particular piece. Each of the three choreographers feels that the form or structure of the piece is inherent in the work itself. All three choreographers evaluate the work throughout its entire developmental process. Each of the choreographers relies upon his intuition and artistic sensitivity in determining when a work is complete. Nikolais says, "it's like a conversation; you know when you have said it. But because it is abstract you have to make certain that you have said what you set out to say." For all three choreographers the content and the process are so interrelated that only the satisfaction of the content, in terms of idea and structure, can determine whether the work is complete or not. This judgment is felt to be the intuitive and aesthetic province of the choreographer by all three subjects. The personal and aesthetic philosophies of the three choreographers led each of them to the ultimate selection of the idea for a work; it guided them in their mental

preparation for the work; it served to direct the selection of movement materials; and it affected the structure of that material. Each choreographer knew when a work was completed through an aesthetic awareness that was sensitive to the idea, movement content and structure of the evolving idea or premise.

USE AND FUNCTION OF THE DANCERS

Each of the choreographers encourages creative contributions by his dancers but to differing degrees. Nikolais seems to utilize the creative contributions of his dancers to the greatest degree in that he frequently explains the environmental and technical parameters of the piece and then has his dancers improvise within the setting or situation in order to find the movement content for a particular work. He then selects the movements that "speak" to him and structures these movements into his work. Louis sometimes sets up specific guidelines or movement problems and has his dancers develop movements or phrases based upon these directives and then uses what he deems appropriate to the work. Lamhut does not call upon her dancers for movement contributions unless she comes to an impasse in her own creation of movement. She said that she does not ask her dancers for their help often in her creative work.

Non Choreographic Contributions by Dancers

Inherent in the philosophies of Nikolais and Louis is that which they ask of their dancers in terms of performance. Nikolais feels that the dancer must become a part of the environment in order to communicate the idea that man is a part of the universe. For Nikolais each dancer is a part of a greater totality and must function within that environment "thereby losing his individuality but becoming greater by becoming a part of a larger universal whole." In his works he expects the dancer to become a part of the sum total of the idea which is being communicated aesthetically. Louis feels that, "the universe is communicated to man through man," and therefore feels that it is the responsibility of the dancer to bring to the performance the skills of performing transitions, dynamics and quality. He feels that these performing skills enable the dancers to serve as a conduit through which the universe is communicated to man. Lamhut feels that it is important for her dancers to be trained creatively as well as technically because she feels the better dancer has more to him than his physical ability. She feels the dancer must have a feeling for the movement, a feeling for the creative idea, a feeling for the choreography; and all of these are enhanced, in her opinion, by a feeling for improvisation. Lamhut's philosophic statement that stresses the importance of experience is tied into her view of the role of the dancer.

EVALUATION

Evaluation techniques are an area of primary concern for anyone interested in the choreographic process. How does the professional choreographer approach this aspect of his work? When does the choreographer evaluate his works? What are the criteria he uses for evaluating a choreographic work? How does the choreographer utilize evaluation techniques in his work?

Occurrence of Evaluation

All three choreographers evaluate their works throughout the choreographic process. Each choreographer, however, has a different view of how this phase of his work is accomplished. Nikolais views the evolution of his works from in front of the stage since he is not a dancer. He watches the work evolve on a minute by minute basis and constantly evaluates what is happening. Once the work begins to take on its identity and its form he feels that it is his responsibility to guide its development and is careful not to interfere with its developing character. Louis said that he must evaluate his works from the stage out because he is a dancer. He feels he has to know how the work is being perceived by the audience. He feels that he knows intuitively when something is wrong with a movement or a phrase. This he feels is due to his innate sense of rightness and form which has been developed and refined through

years of work with improvisation. When he senses that something is wrong with a movement or a phrase he might allow it to go by in rehearsals a few times then he either corrects the thing that is wrong or he removes it from the piece and then ties together that which remains. Louis always has to know how his dances are communicating through the dancer's instrument. He evaluates his works aesthetically throughout the entire creative process. Lamhut said that the ability to create a work and the ability to evaluate aesthetically is the product of the choreographer's experience and intuition. She stated that she does something and then she evaluates. When she "is stuck" she has a mental process that she goes through in order to overcome the impasse. This process was outlined on page ninety two of this chapter. The process includes elements of evaluation as it was quoted. Lamhut said that intuition and the artistic "X factors" that the artist possesses enable the artist to evaluate aesthetically. Lamhut relies upon her intuition and experience in determining what is wrong in her works. She has a list of questions that she uses to assist her in evaluating problems in her works. These are the same questions that are included in her process on page ninety two of this chapter. If she sees something in a work that she does not like she changes it. She says that when she works she is usually into her work implying that she evaluates from the standpoint of the dancer; then she says that she removes herself from the work and evaluates it from

a different vantage point. That different vantage point is from the audience's point of view.

Evaluation as an Artistic Responsibility

All three choreographers believe that the evaluation of the work is the sole responsibility and province of the choreographer. Each of the subjects feels the responsibility for the aesthetic content of his works. Nikolais feels that only the choreographer of a piece can serve as its critic because he feels that the personal judgement of the choreographer serves as the criterion for evaluating a piece. Nikolais says that it is often valuable for him to have someone whose opinion he respects view a work with him because this might serve to make him more aware of what is happening in the work and might serve to affirm his artistic judgements. However, he feels that the evaluation of the work is ultimately up to him as the creator of the work. Nikolais said that having performed his works all over the world to a variety of ethnic groups serves as an affirmation to him as a choreographer that his works contain something of value. This affirmation serves to re-enforce Nikolais' faith in his ability to evaluate the aesthetic validity of that which he seeks to communicate. Louis states that the only person other than himself whose opinion he respects with regard to his works is Nikolais because he knows what Louis is doing. Louis feels that he alone must evaluate his works. In order to make his final evaluations of a work

Louis said that he must separate himself in time from the process of creating the work. He then feels his evaluations can take on new dimensions. Lamhut views the preview of her works as a test of the choreography. She feels that after she has seen her works outside of the studio rehearsal hall she can then decide if changes need to be made in a work. She also said that she does not often make changes in her works. Lamhut feels that she must evaluate her choreography alone.

Effects of Critics and Incentive for Changes

Nikolais said that he rarely notes the opinions of critics. He very seldom reads critical reviews of his works. He pointed out that as a choreographer whose works have been criticized as being dehumanized and too abstract, he would not be able to continue to produce works that he feels are of value if he listened to critics. All three choreographers feel that the opinions of critics should not have any effect on the work of the choreographer. Lamhut stated that experience, intuition and the artistic "X factors" enable the choreographer to evaluate his work. She said she tries to finish her works far enough ahead of performance deadlines to preview them outside of New York. She feels that a preview performance enables her to evaluate her work in a different light. She views the preview performance as a test. She believes that only the creator of a work is

capable of evaluating the work; so she does not worry about the critic.

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

In Chapters III, IV, and V statements made by Alwin Nikolais, Murray Louis, and Phyllis Lamhut were related to the questions stated on page 18 as basic to the study. Charts showing the answers of each artist to the questions basic to the study were placed in the appendices. Chapter VI has been a comparison of the three artists' statements in response to the same basic questions. The chart at the conclusion of this chapter may be used to compare the choreographers' responses to the questions basic to this study. A comparative analysis of the choreographic processes of the three subjects has been placed after the chart of key responses as a brief summary of findings.

Chapter VII is a summary of the purpose and background of the study and the procedures used in the study followed by findings derived from interviews with the subjects and the implications derived from these findings.

COMPARISON CHART OF KEY RESPONSES BY
NIKOLAIS, LOUIS AND LAMHUT
TO QUESTIONS BASIC TO THE STUDY

I. MOTIVATION FOR CHOREOGRAPHY

A. Need for artistic expression.	Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
	Creating is a habit for me. I feel a need to communicate aesthetically.	Creating is a compulsion for me. I feel the need to communicate aesthetically. I find I have very few other ways of coming into the world except through my art.	I create because it is a part of my nature. I feel the need to create.
B. Need to express personal and artistic philosophy.			
1. Personal philosophy	Man is a fellow traveller within the total universal mechanism rather than a god from which all things flow. Man is a part of the total universe.	The universe is communicated to man through man.	I see life in a comic-tragic way. There are dances of death in everything I do. I am stimulated by everything around me, and I try to give it my point of view

	Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
			and hope that I enrich what I do in relation to the audience.
a. Used for all aspects of creative process.	For multimedia work I have to set up some things prior to my going to rehearsal. So I will somehow or other sense that somewhere within me I am concerned with a particular kind of environment. . . . I will try to make that visible through some mockup of mockup slides which will be projected at, on or around the dancers. Then I'll have costumers and technical crew come in and within the technical operatives that I have set I will have	When I work I have a premise. I stay with the premise that is what leads me into how I direct it. I stay with what I want the audience to see. I am concerned with illumination, with insights, with a kind of poetry versus prose. I have always been a dancer and I know how much a dancer can do. I also know how the little things the dancer does have a very direct way of getting into an audience. I try to work through the audience rather than awing them into acceptance.	I always seem to move with some sort of space--air, for example, where a dance in the creative process can grow. . . . I ask myself, What is the nature of the dance? Is it what I started out to make it become or is it something else? My process starts from a variety of possible sources. Sometimes it starts with a musical inspiration, sometimes it starts with a motional inspiration, sometimes it starts through a kind of idea or vision that I have in my soul and I try to get it out.

	Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
	the dancers move. Sometimes I direct it and show the dancers specifically what I want. Other times I'll say, "Here is the environment. Will you please improvise within it so that I can see what will happen?" It must speak to me. At the moment the thing begins to take form I let it ride. As a professional I work from a point of view of faith.		
2. Aesthetic philosophy	As art - dance is the art of motion, not movement. To me motion is primary - it is the condition of motion which culminates in emotion.	Dancers serve as a conduit through which the universe is communicated to man. I am very concerned with illumination and insights. Communication through dance.	I want the audience to have a kinetic and aesthetic stimulation when they see my work. The humor must be instrinsic in the movement.

	Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
a. Related to artistic philosophy.	The dancer must subdue himself as an individual and becomes greater by becoming a part of a much greater thing. Aesthetic communication takes place through motion or in terms of abstract theatre the way I do it. The process is involved in the identity of the thing. Once the thing gives an identity, then it becomes the master and you have to make sure you don't paw over it too much. It's like a conversation, you know when you have said it. I have enough faith in the mental process, of the orderliness of it, to know that if I allow it to come out freely it will be coherent.	I can reveal ideas to other people through a structure called a dance. Each work has its own identity. I stay with the thing I want the audience to see. I know how I am going to direct that audience. I always have to know how my dances are communicating through the dancer's instrument. I work from the stage out. I imbue myself with the area and nature of the thing I'm going to do. Then I just open the flood gates and then it happens. I let it flow and I just sneak it through. I demonstrate which way it wants to go.	I choreograph to stimulate the awareness of the audience to what I am doing. I just communicate very directly. The intuition, the "X factor," the artistic "X factors," are all involved in creating a work. Everything I know and experience goes into practical application. Sometimes the push for process completion is very important because then it [the work] becomes alive and you are happy and you know what you have. Once I state it, I think I'm pretty clear.

	Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
II. CREATIVE PROCESS			
A. Source of ideas (subject matter resulting in the content of the dance.)	I might just be walking through nature and I'll see something that will make a connection with my Rorschach and bring me to an association which has been there all the time or has been fed from a variety of sources. But that is the thing that causes it to take action.	The stimulation for a new dance comes from all sorts of places, from a pedestrian, from the teacher me, from the dancer me, from the creative me. They come through visual stimulation. While teaching a class the clarification of what I am doing wrong can be the motivation for a new dance. I keep open to ideas for new dances and when they occur, I consciously nail them. Within each work the germinal seed for the next work is being formed. I let myself go with it far enough to see it then I go back to the work I am doing at the time.	I am usually motivated by everything around me, nature, life, whatever. For me the motivation is very versatile. Sometimes it starts with a musical inspiration, sometimes with a motional inspiration, sometimes it starts through a vision that I have of an idea, not necessarily have [in concrete terms] , but with some kind of idea that I have emotionally in my soul and I try to get it out.

		Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
B.	Factors determining.			
	1. Structure	The identity of the thing itself. Technology has changed my structure. The structure of the piece of course depends upon the content of it and whether the content has been evidently satisfied.	Form has to do with my own inner lyricism. Form is passed on, form is inherited in the human body. It is a genetic thing. Nik calls it balance. There is within the human body a sense of continence when a thing is right and the human body intuitively orders itself towards that. Especially in creators there is the sense of what the form for a particular thing should be. It is a sense of form. At one time in my career I choreographed in terms of whole programs. Three works in each program. The opening work was my big structured work, it might have been structured to some	The intuition, the "X factor," the artistic "X factors," all of these things are involved. Everything falls into practical application, into what I know, into experiences. I have a sort of process that I think about when I get stuck. . . . What is the form of it? Is the form right? Am I structurally interesting? . . .

	Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
		classical music with structural clarity as one of my goals. The middle work would be a poetic work, in which I would probe into the materials. And the final work would be a big theatrical carnage. The grasp of the subject matter, the effort and range of materials has changed. I began to work at deeper levels with my premises.	
2. Flow - Continence	I somehow sense that somewhere within me I am concerned with a particular kind of environment and I will begin to try to make that visible through some mockup of mockup slides which will be projected at,	Each work has its own identity. That is what leads me into how I direct it. I stay with its premise. I stay with the thing I want the audience to see. I know how I am going to direct that audience. Through years of improvising I have learned to	Sometimes I'll say, "Well, it's not going very well today, or it is going well, or it's not this or that, or what it is. I can remove myself from it and then deal with it as I see it after I leave it. I

Nikolais

on, or around, the dancers. I'll then have the technical people come in with the dancers and even the costumer and we'll put costumes on the dancers that will perhaps work within the technical operatives that we have set up. Then we will start to move. Sometimes I will direct it and very specifically show the dancers what I want. Other times I'll say, "Here is the environment. Will you please improvise within it so that I can see what will happen". At the moment when the thing begins to take form I let it ride. You come back again to the whole process. The process is also involved in the identity of the thing. Once the thing gives an identity, then

Louis

understand the intuitive decisions. When a phrase says, dum bump, it says it is finished. I have learned that this business of finishing a work ten minutes before it is to be performed is unprofessional. I simply don't work under the horrible stress of deadlines any more.

Lamhut

do something and then I evaluate. I think about certain rules and regulations: What have I done? What haven't I done? What does it need now? What doesn't it need? Where is the dynamic flow? What do I want to do spatially? . . . What is the nature of the dance? Which turn is it taking? Is it what I started out to make it become, or is it something else? What is that something else. Everything falls into practical application, into what I know, into experiences. You usually have a deadline for performing a work so the work has to be ready. I've always pushed

	Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
	it becomes the master and you have to make sure you don't paw it over too much. Because it is the thing I very often find myself saying, "It wants to do this," not, "I want to do this." It is like a child, you guide its character. . . . you have to have faith in its inherent moralities. . . . I work on a time schedule in order to complete works on time. This time schedule forces me to complete a designated number of minutes in a work per day.		through to meet performances and lately I've been trying to preview out of town the things I've pushed through earlier than I expect. Sometimes the push for process [completion] is very important because then it the work becomes alive and you are happy and you know what you have. You can always go back and fix it if you don't like what you have.
3. Movement	I very often go [into create a work] with very	I don't start choreographing [movement] until	I very rarely define specifically what

Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
limited thought in my conscious mind of what I am going to do. Of course in multimedia work I will have to set up some things prior to my going into rehearsal. I'll set up some technical operatives, bring in technical people and costumers and put costumes that will perhaps work on the dancers and then we start to move. Sometimes I will direct it specifically and show the dancers exactly what I want. Other times I will say, "Here is the environment. Will you please improvise within it so I can see what happens." Then if something happens or it begins to speak back to me, then I know it will speak to an audience. At the	I begin the dance. Until I'm in the mood. I don't plan anything. I just become so imbued with the area and the nature of what I am going to do. I just open the flood gates and then it happens. I let it flow and I just sneak it through very quickly. I have no preparation for what the steps may be until I get inside the thing. When I choreograph I am an amazing kind of schizophrenic machine. I talk to myself. I let it [the dance] [movement] flow. I demonstrate which way it wants to go. I use the dancer me to create the steps that the choreographer me is doing. I do this talking to myself and the follow-the-leader kind of process	I am going to be doing. I always seem to move with some sort of space - air, for example, where a dance in the creative process can grow. I do allow input by my dancers when I am choreographing. I usually have a lot to say and a lot to do, and then when I get stuck I ask them, "What should I do next?" Sometimes I ask them and sometimes I don't. I work freely.

moment the thing begins to take form I let it ride. With my dancers there is definite feedback. I can manipulate their feedback into a structure and into part of a piece. It isn't a re-creation; it is a creation. So the process is to allow it to come out. I, in effect, just spew, spew, spew, and then try afterwards to try to put it in order and make sense of that outpouring. I have enough faith in the orderliness of the mental process to know that if I allow it to come out freely it will be coherent. So the process is to allow it to come out.

right there in the studio with my dancers watching and listening. I create pretty much everything [in a piece]. [Sometimes] I just give my dancers the steps and many times the dynamics and perhaps the energy necessary, and I see what they can do. Or if I come to special things where I know some kids can do extraordinary leaps or falls or extensions, I just talk those out. I say, "Here I want this kind of fall. You work it out." On the whole, I pretty much set things. I don't work through improvisation with my material.

	Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
III. USE AND FUNCTION OF THE DANCERS			
A. Creative input by dancers.	I'll ask the dancers to improvise within an environment so I can see what happens. With my dancers there is definite feedback. I can manipulate that feedback into a structure and into part of a piece. My dancers are taught to improvise and to react to environmental change, dynamic change, so that they give back very generously. This enables us to create special roles for special dancers too, which proves to their advantage because they come up with stylistic behaviorisms that let's say speak a little more eloquently of them than one	I create pretty much everything [in a piece]. Sometimes I just give my dancers the steps and many times the dynamics and perhaps the energy necessary, and I see what they can do. Or if I come to special things where I know some kids can do extraordinary leaps or falls or extensions, I just talk those out. I say, "Here I want this kind of fall. You work it out." My dancers are trained in improvisation. They lend so much.	I do allow input by my dancers when I am choreographing. When I get stuck I ask them, "What should I do next?" Sometimes I ask them and sometimes I don't. I do not need, as an area of source, help from the dancers. But I do not ask them too often. . . . it is important for the dancer to be trained creatively as well as technically.

	Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
	imposed upon them from another mind. A modern dance [choreographer] depends a great deal upon the feedback from the dancer.		
B. Other input by dancers.	The dancer must subdue himself and become part of the environment.	What I ask from my dancers is performance and to that performance they have to bring the skills of performing. Their duty is to do transitions, dynamics and quality.	The better dancer is the dancer who has more to him than his physical ability. He has to have feeling for the movement, feeling for the creative idea, feeling for the choreography, and a feeling for improvisation.
IV. EVALUATION			
A. Choreographers' approach.	The identity of the thing becomes the master. Each step of the way must be challenged aesthetically as to whether or not	I am the choreographer whose concern is his aesthetic judgement and his ability to structure movement. I have a	The intuition, the "X factor," the artistic "X factors," all of these things are involved in [aesthetic] evaluation .

Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
it was the correct way. I very often find myself saying, "It wants to do this," not, "I want to do this." It must speak to me; otherwise it will speak to no one. To me art is a form of aesthetic communication. Creating a piece is like a conversation. You know when you've said it. . . . you have to make sure that you've said it because it is abstract. You have to have a sense of when it's been said.	premise when I work and that is what leads me in developing a work. The way I determine form is from my own inner lyricism. Through years of improvising I have learned to understand the intuitive decisions. When a phrase says, dum bump, it says it is finished. I must evaluate my work from the stage out because I am a dancer. When I see something wrong in a piece I intuitively sense that it is wrong. I try very hard to compose a piece as early as I can. I have to get away from it, and the evaluations have to be on another level. In the heat of my work, of my working process and in the heat of my irritations I cannot evaluate it [the	Everything into practical application, into what I know, into experiences. Sometimes I'll say, "Well, it's not going very well today, or it is going well, or it's not this or that, or what it is." I can remove myself from it and then deal with it as I see it after I leave it. It's painful work when you know that you have something good and have to live up to the occasion, or you know you don't have something good and have to try to salvage it. And then how to get to the point, to know when it is good and when it is not good, is also very painful.

	Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
		piece]. I must divorce myself from all that and see it openly and directly. And that takes a little bit of time to get away from it.	You need a lot of experience. I do something and then I evaluate. I have a sort of process that I think about when I get stuck. I think about certain rules and regulations. . . . While I'm working I look into it. I'm always out of it looking into it. While I'm making it I'm usually into it. Then I pull myself out of it to look at it and see. This is all done psychically.
B. Artistic responsibility.	There is no one except one's self that can serve as one's critic. There is no one at all who can take the	In terms of aesthetic evaluation I have to go it alone. I evaluate aesthetically throughout the process. The	The choreographer is the only one who can evaluate his work.

place of your own personal judgement. You can have someone affirm it, or perhaps by having someone whose thinking you respect sit next to you, you may become more akeyed to yourself in looking at it, so what they say will help fortify. First, of course, I make the judgement; it is a very lonely process, but it must be made by the choreographer who created it himself. I will frequently call the dancers and have the other dancers watch and I will get their reactions. And, of course, Murray and I will look at each other's works also and give out reactions to each other and that's pretty valuable.

only person, other than myself, whose aesthetic judgement I even consider is Nik. Nik because he knows what I'm doing.

	Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
C. Critics and audience reactions.	Critics' opinions I almost never regard. I rarely read reviews written about me. If I listened to critics I would stop doing many of the abstract expressions which actually make the substance of what I am with my mode of communication. So, of course, I can't listen to it, even though I might respect the person. As a performer you always have a fortification of the work or an affirmation of it based on its acceptance by audiences. I have been fortunate in that I've played to all sorts of ethnic groups all over the world. So if a thing works here and it works in Japan and it works	A critic is never important enough to make you change anything. I choreograph for my audiences really, because dance is a performing art. I know how I am going to direct that audience into its response. I have to get away from a piece and look at it to tell how the audience is going to react. I have to go it alone. This business of finishing a work ten minutes before it is to be performed is unprofessional. It does not do justice to the work.	I've always pushed through to meet performances and lately I've been trying to preview out of town the things I've pushed through earlier than I expect. Sometimes the push for process is very important because then it [the work] becomes alive and you are happy and you know what you have. You can always go back and fix it if you don't like what you have. I always like to finish the work early enough so my dancers can involve themselves in it and there are not the last minute changes

Nikolais

in Tunisia, and it works in Taipei or Paris, then there must be something that I am doing right.

Louis

Lamhut

to make. Although I really don't change too much, I change certain things that I don't like. I do try to preview my works out of the city. Because then I'm playing for audiences and the dancers have the experience of performing out of the rehearsal studio in the real situation. When we come back we can see what it was - what it felt like and how people responded to it. It's a test.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CHOREOGRAPHIC PROCESSES OF NIKOLAIS, LOUIS AND LAMHUT

I. MOTIVATION FOR CHOREOGRAPHY

	Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
A. Need for artistic expression.	Habit. Need to communiate aesthetically.	Compulsion. Need to communicate aesthetically. Feels he has very few other ways of coming into the world except through his art.	Is a part of her nature. Need to create.
B. Need to express personal and artistic philosophy.			
1. Personal philosophy	Universal basis. Man is a part of the universe and must perform within the total environment.	Universal basis. Man is the vehicle through which the universe is communicated to man.	Universal basis. Stimulated by everything around her she tries to give her works her point of view. There are dances of death in everything she does because she views life in a comic-tragic manner.

	Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
a. Aspects of the choreographic process affected by personal and artistic philosophy.	All aspects: environmental and technical parameters, costuming, movement, flow, structure and evaluation. Process completion is viewed as being affected by time limitations. Works from point of view of faith in the orderliness of his mental process. Ideas for dances come from a variety of personal experiences and intuition. Often stimulated by some environmental happening.	All aspects: premise, movement, structure, flow, evaluation. Process completion is not viewed as being affected by time limitations. Concerned with poetic illumination and insights. Works as a dancer from the stage out and feels his intuition is his artistic guide. Premises for dances come from a variety of sources both external and internal, tries to probe depths of premises.	All aspects: premise, movement, flow, structure, evaluation. Process completion affected by time limitations. Process related to personal experience and intuition. Process stems from a variety of sources, music, motion, emotional.
b. Factors related to aesthetic philosophy.	View of the role of the dancer. Purpose of aesthetic communication. The identity of the work determines content,	Purpose of choreographer. Revelation of ideas through a structure called dance. Identity of premise determines	Purpose in relation to the audience. Direct communication. Method related to

	Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
	structure, and creative process. For Nikolais, dance is the art of motion and motion is primary. Process completion. Evaluation.	content, structure, and the artist's process. Role of the dancer. Illumination and insights communicated through dance. Process completion. Evaluation.	intuition, the "X factor," the artistic "X factors," and to experience and practical application. Process completion. Evaluation.
II. CREATIVE PROCESS			
A. Factors affecting source of ideas.	Variety of sources. Usually something in nature stimulates an association which has been there all the time and triggers the action.	Variety of sources. May be prompted by a pedestrian, or visual stimulation. May come from the choreographer as a dancer, or creative aspect of his personality or they may be the result of teaching experiences. Also the germinal seed for a new work may be found in the work currently being choreographed.	Variety of sources. Usually motivated by everything around her: nature, life, whatever. May start with a musical inspiration, a motional inspiration or with some kind of idea the choreographer has emotionally in her soul.

	Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
B. Factors determining.			
1. Structure	Choreographer's recognition of the identity of the thing (idea inherent in the work itself) itself. Technology has changed the choreographer's structure. Nikolais feels the structure of the piece depends upon the content of the piece and whether the content has been evidently satisfied from the choreographer's standpoint.	Feels that form is dependent upon his inner lyricism. He views form as a genetic or inherited sense.	Intuition, the "X factor," the artistic "X factors," are all involved in the choreographer's determination of form. Experience and personal knowledge are involved. Follows a mental process.
2. Flow - Continence	Intuitive. Stems from environment. Order of development: Environment, technical parameters, costumes, movement-specifically outlined or improvisational leading	Intuitive. In creators there is a sense of what the form for a particular thing should be. The premise is the thing that directs him in determining the	Intuitive. Based on the choreographer's experience and knowledge. Has a mental process when she gets stuck. Stays with her idea in determining flow.

	Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
	to structured movement. Nikolais emphasizes that you come back again to the whole process. The process for him is also involved in the identity of the thing being created. A time schedule forces Nikolais to complete a work.	flow. Feels that each work has its own identity. Refuses to work under pressure of time.	Evaluates the flow of the process on a day to day basis. Time schedule serves as factor in completion of work. Meets the schedule and then makes corrections when necessary.
3. Movement	No preliminary conscious plans for movement. Sets up environmental and technical operatives then either specifically directs or shows the dancers what he wants or asks them to improvise within the environment. If something speaks to him he takes it and structures it into the piece. He views movement as a creation not a re-creation. His	Does not plan any movement until he goes into the studio to choreograph a work. He simply becomes imbued with the area and the nature of what he is going to do. Then he opens the flood gates and lets it flow. He talks to himself allowing the dancer aspect of his personality to demonstrate what the choreographer aspect of	Rarely defines specifically what she will be doing. Always seems to move with some sort of space in mind in order to allow the dance to develop. When she gets stuck she might ask her dancers for movement ideas. She feels she works freely and is free to ask her dancers for ideas when she needs

	Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
	view of his process is to spew, spew, spew and then put order into the outpouring.	his personality dictates. He does not work through improvisation. He creates pretty much everything in a piece. He does at times tell his dancers what he wants and allows them to develop it.	help. She does not ask her dancers for their help often.
III. USE AND FUNCTION OF THE DANCERS	Does frequently ask his dancers to improvise within an environment. There is definite feedback from his dancers. This feedback he manipulates into a structure and into part of a piece. His dancers are taught to improvise and to react to environmental change and dynamic change. He feels they give back generously. This enables him to create special roles for special	Does not work through improvisation with his work. Sometimes he gives his dancers the steps, the dynamics and the energy necessary and sees what they can do. Or if he comes to special things that he knows his dancers do well he might tell them what he wants and allow them to develop these for a piece. His dancers are trained in improvisation. He says they lend a great deal. What he asks from his dancers is performance	Does occasionally allow input by her dancers when she becomes stuck for movement. She does not need, as an area of source, help from her dancers. It is important to her that the dancer is trained creatively as well as technically. She feels that the better dancer is the dancer who has more to him than his physical ability.

	Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
	dancers which embody their own stylistic behaviorisms rather than those imposed upon them from another mind. He feels the modern dance choreographer depends a great deal upon the feedback from the dancer. Will frequently have his dancers watch a piece and get their feedback. Considers the reactions of audiences all over the world as an affirmation of the aesthetic quality of a work. If it works for all sorts of ethnic groups all over the world he feels that he must be doing something right.	and to that performance they have to bring the skills of performing. He feels that it is their duty to do transitions, dynamics and quality in performing. In performance he tries to work through the audience. He knows how he wants the audience to react and he directs their reactions through his choreography.	He must have feeling for: the movement, the creative idea, the choreography and a feeling for improvisation. Tries to preview works out of town because in this situation she can see what the work was, what it felt like and how people responded to it. It's a test.
IV. EVALUATION			
A. Artist's approach.	The identity of the thing becomes the master. Each step	The premise of a work is the factor that leads him in	In her process she implies that she constantly

Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
of the way must be challenged aesthetically. Often finds himself saying, "It wants to do this," not, "I want to do this." Because art for him is a form of aesthetic communication and because his work is abstract he feels that he has to make certain that he has said what he thinks he has said in a piece. He feels he has to have a sense of when it's been said.	developing the work. He feels that he must evaluate his work from the stage out because he is a dancer. Because of years of improvising he feels that he has developed the ability to understand the intuitive decisions such as knowing when a phrase or section says it is finished. When something is wrong in a piece he knows it intuitively. He tries to complete a work early so he can get away from it and allow his evaluations to take on another dimension. He evaluates aesthetically throughout the process.	refers back to what she started out to make the work become. She mentally monitors the process to see if the work is becoming something other than that which she set out to make it become. She is not definite on whether she adheres to what she intended the work to become or whether she allows it to develop its own identity. She does say that her intuition, the creative and artistic "X factors," and her own experiences and knowledges are determining factors in her evaluation. She does something and then she evaluates. She

sometimes says, "Well, it is going very well today, or it's not going well, or whatever. She can remove herself from it and then deal with it as she sees it after she leaves it. While creating a work she speaks of being into it and being outside of it looking into it while evaluating it. After a work is previewed she feels that she knows for sure what she has and if changes are needed she then makes them. She does not make changes often. Evaluation for her is a psychic-intuitive process.

	Nikolais	Louis	Lamhut
B. Artist's Responsibility.	There is no one except one's self that can serve as one's critic. No one can take the place of one's personal judgement. One might have someone affirm his judgement by having a person whom he respects watch a work and then get his reaction. But only the choreographer who created the work can make the judgements. Nikolais frequently has his dancers and Murray watch his works and then gets their reactions. These reactions he considers to be of value.	In terms of aesthetic evaluation Louis says he has to go it alone. The only other person whose aesthetic judgement he even considers is Nikolais.	Implies that she is the only source of aesthetic evaluation for her works. She says that a great deal of experience is necessary in order for one to know whether a work is good or bad. For her the intuitive, artistic "X factors" are involved in the artist's evaluative process as are his experience and knowledge. She stated that her previews serve as a test for her works.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The first portion of this chapter will have as its focus a summary of the purpose and background of the study and the procedures used in the study. The second portion of this chapter will focus on the findings derived from interviews with the subjects Nikolais, Louis and Lamhut. The final portion of this chapter will present the implications obtained from the actual responses of the choreographers.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this study was to investigate what each of three professional choreographers felt to be his choreographic process and to present an analysis and comparison of the information derived from interviews with the three subjects. It was felt that the information obtained from the study would be valuable to those who were engaged in developing or expanding their creative abilities and their choreographic processes. Studies related to the actual choreographic processes of professional choreographers have apparently been neglected in the past.

For the purposes of this study four areas of primary concern to the investigation of the choreographic process were selected for inquiry, analysis,and comparison. Because

these four areas appear basic to the choreographic process, it was felt that information relating to these would be most helpful to the development of choreographers at any stage of choreographic experience.

PROCEDURES USED IN THE STUDY

Initially, a search of the literature in areas similar in nature to the study revealed a commonly used approach for the investigation of creative processes. That approach commonly being used, identifies recognized professionals in the field in question and then these individuals are interviewed in regard to their own perceptions of their creative processes. This method of inquiry was deemed appropriate for the investigation of the choreographic processes of each of three professional choreographers.

The criteria were established for the selection of the three subjects. The four main areas of inquiry for the study were determined and the questions of basic concern to the study and their underlying theoretical rationale were formulated. Following the determination of the questions basic to the study and the formulation of their theoretical rationale the questions to be used in the interviews with the subjects were constructed.

Alwin Nikolais, Murray Louis and Phyllis Lamhut were selected as subjects for the study because: they were professional choreographers who were recognized and accepted

by the public and by dancers as outstanding artists; they were articulate as evidenced by their writings or by the writings of others based upon interviews with them, which was further confirmed by the fact that all three of them are teachers of outstanding reputation; and they had a common background of dance training and similar professional vocabularies. Each of the choreographers consented to be interviewed and to participate as a subject for the study.

Questions were developed to obtain information from the subjects in areas of: motivation for choreography; the creative process; the use and function of the dancers; and evaluation. The interviews with each of the three subjects were taped in their New York studios and the responses were transcribed. An attempt was made in the quoted materials to retain the validity of the essence and implications of the subjects' responses. The interviews were analyzed and compared for the purposes of the study. Charts appear in the appendices containing the responses of the subject to the interview questions. The charts following the conclusion of Chapter VI are (1) a comparison summary of the responses of the subjects in the four primary areas of concern in the study and (2) a comparative analysis of the choreographic processes of Alwin Nikolais, Murray Louis and Phyllis Lamhut.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study indicate certain factors which are important to any choreographer and to the development of his/her choreographic abilities.

1. Identification and clarification of personal and aesthetic philosophies.

2. The personal and aesthetic philosophies of the choreographer serve as the basis of choreographic processes.

3. Identification of sources of motivation or ideas for works.

4. Development of the ability to analyze personal creative and choreographic skills.

5. Identification of evaluative criteria inherent in one's personal and aesthetic philosophies.

6. Exploration of diverse creative and choreographic processes.

IMPLICATIONS

The implications for further studies related to the choreographic process as indicated in the findings of the study are given in the following discussions. The findings indicate certain factors which are important to any choreographer and to the development of maturity in the choreographic process.

1. Methods of teaching students to identify and clarify their personal and aesthetic philosophies as they

relate to dance must be devised. This information appears basic to the entire choreographic process.

2. Methods must be devised for identifying motivational sources for ideas or works that develop out of one's own philosophies.

3. Methods for developing evaluative criteria inherent in one's own personal and aesthetic philosophies must be developed and their application supervised in some predetermined learning situation if the choreographer is to learn rather than achieve this ability through experience.

In conclusion, the implications for further study should serve as a means of refining creative information into a method for specific application to the choreographic process that will enable the choreographer to develop his skills and abilities through some method other than experience.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Alwin Nikolais' Responses to Basic Questions

ALWIN NIKOLAIS' RESPONSES TO BASIC QUESTIONS

I. MOTIVATION FOR CHOREOGRAPHY

A. Need for artistic expression.

> Creating is a habit for me. I feel a need to communicate aesthetically.

B. Need to express personal and aesthetic philosophy.

1. Personal philosophy.

> Man is a fellow traveller within the total universal mechanism rather than a god from which all things flow. Man is a kinsman to the universe. Man is a part of the total universe.

2. Aesthetic philosophy.

> The dancer must subdue himself as an individual and becomes greater by becoming a part of a much greater thing.

> Aesthetic communication takes place through motion or in terms of abstract theatre the way I do it. As art - dance is the art of motion, not movement. To me motion is primary; it is the condition of motion which culminates in emotion.

II. CREATIVE PROCESS

A. Source of ideas or subject matter resulting in content of the dance.

> I might just be walking through nature and I'll see something that will make a connection with my Rorschach and bring me to an association which has been there

all the time or [an association which] has been fed from a variety of sources. But that [particular time I see it] is the thing that causes it to take action.

B. Preparation for the creative process.

I very often go [into the studio to create a work] with very limited thought in my conscious mind of what I am going to do. Of course in multimedia work I have to set up some things prior to my going to rehearsal. So I will somehow or other sense that somewhere within me I am concerned with a particular kind of environment.

I will try to make that visible through some mockup of mockup slides which will be projected at, on, or around, the dancers. Then I'll have costumers and technical crew come in and we'll put costumes on the dancers that will perhaps work and within the technical operatives that I have set I will have the dancers move. Sometimes I direct it and show the dancers very specifically what I want. Other times I'll say, "Here is the environment. Will you please improvise within it so that I can see what will happen?"

C. Factors determining structure.

The structure of the piece of course depends upon the content of it and whether the content has been evidently satisfied.

The process is involved in the identity of the thing. Once the thing gives an identity, then it becomes the master and you have to make sure you don't paw over it too much. Because it is the thing. I

> very often find myself saying, "It wants to do this," not, "I want to do this." It is like a child, you guide its character . . . you have to have faith in its inherent moralities. . . . It's like a conversation, you know when you have said it. I have enough faith in the mental process, of the orderliness of it, to know that if I allow it to come out freely it will be coherent.
>
> Technology has changed my structure.

D. Factors determining movement.

> I'll set up some technical operatives, bring in technical people and costumers, and put costumes that will perhaps work on the dancers, and then we start to move.
>
> Sometimes I will direct it specifically and show the dancers exactly what I want. Other times I will say, "Here is the environment. Will you please improvise within it so I can see what happens."
>
> Dance is the art of motion, not movement. Motion is primary; it is the condition of motion which culminates in emotion.

E. Meeting Deadlines.

> Nikolais states that he works on a time schedule in order to complete his works on time. This time schedule forces him to complete a designated number of minutes in a work per day.

F. Steps or sequence of the process.

> I very often go [into the studio to create a work] with very limited

> thought in my conscious mind of what I am going to do. Of course, in multimedia work I will have to set up some things prior to my going into rehearsal. . . . put costumes that will perhaps work. . . . Then we start to move . . . . Then if something happens or it begins to speak back to me, then I know it will speak to an audience.
>
> At the moment the thing begins to take form I let it ride. With my dancers there is definite feedback. I can manipulate their feedback into a structure and into part of a piece.
>
> It isn't a re-creation; it is a creation. So the process is to allow it to come out. I, in effect, just spew, spew, spew, and then try afterwards to try to put it in order and make sense of that outpouring. I have enough faith in the orderliness of the mental process to know that if I allow it to come out freely it will be coherent. So the process is to allow it to come out.

III. USE AND FUNCTION OF THE DANCERS

A. Creative contributions by dancers.

> I'll ask the dancers to improvise within an environment so I can see what happens. With my dancers there is definite feedback. I can manipulate that feedback into a structure and into part of a piece. My dancers are taught to improvise and to react to environmental change, dynamic change, . . . so that they give back very generously. This enables us to create special roles for special dancers too, which proves to their advantage

> because they come up with stylistic behaviorisms that let's say speak a little more eloquently of them than one imposed upon them from another mind. A modern dance [choreographer] depends a great deal upon the feedback from the dancer.

B. Other contributions by dancers.

> The dancer must subdue himself as an individual and becomes greater by becoming a part of a much greater thing. Man must function within the total environment as a vital part of the universal totality.

IV. EVALUATION

A. By the choreographer.

> The identity of the thing becomes the master.
>
> Each step of the way must be challenged aesthetically as to whether or not it was the correct way.
>
> It must speak to me; otherwise it will speak to no one. To me art is a form of aesthetic communication. Creating a piece is like a conversation. You know when you have said it. . . . you have to make sure that you've said it because it is abstract. You have to have a sense of when it's been said.

B. Artistic responsibility.

> I will frequently call the dancers and have the other dancers watch and I will get their reactions. And, of course, Murray and I will look at each other's works also and give out reactions to each other and that's pretty valuable.

C. Critics' and audience reactions.

> Critics' opinions I almost never regard. I rarely read reviews written about me. If I listened to critics, I would stop doing many of the abstract expressions which actually make the substance of what I am with my mode of communication. So, of course, I can't listen to it, even though I might respect the person.
>
> As a performer you always have a fortification of the work or an affirmation of it based on its acceptance by audiences. I have been fortunate in that I've played to all sorts of ethnic groups all over the world. So if a thing works here, and it works in Japan, and it works in Tunisia, and it works in Taipei, or Paris, then there must be something that I am doing right.

APPENDIX B

Murray Louis' Responses to Basic Questions

MURRAY LOUIS' RESPONSES TO BASIC QUESTIONS

I. MOTIVATION FOR CHOREOGRAPHY

A. Need for artistic expression.

> Creating is a compulsion for me. I feel the need to communicate aesthetically. I find I have very few other ways of coming into the world except through my art.

B. Need to express personal and aesthetic philosophy.

1. Personal philosophy.

> The universe is communicated to man through man.

2. Aesthetic philosophy.

> I am concerned with illumination, with insights, with a kind of poetry versus prose. I have always been a dancer, and I know how much a dancer can do. I also know how the little things the dancer does have a very direct way of getting into an audience. I try to work through the audience rather than awing them to acceptance.
>
> I can reveal ideas to other people through a structure called a dance.
>
> Each work has its own identity. I stay with the thing I want the audience to see. I know how I am going to direct that audience. I always have to know how my dances are communicating through the dancer's instrument. I work from the stage out.
>
> Dancers serve as a conduit through which the universe is communicated to man.

I am very concerned with illumination, and insights, communication through dance.

II. CREATIVE PROCESS

A. Source of ideas or subject matter resulting in content of the dance.

The stimulation for a new dance comes from all sorts of places, from a pedestrian, from the teacher me, from the dancer me, from the creative me. They come through visual stimulation. While teaching a class the clarification of what I am doing wrong can be the motivation for a new dance. I keep open to ideas for new dances and when they occur I consciously nail them. Within each work the germinal seed for the next work is being formed. I let myself go with it far enough to see it; then I go back to the work I am doing at the time.

B. Preparation for the creative process.

When I work I have a premise. I stay with the premise. That is what leads me into how I direct it. I stay with what I want the audience to see.

I don't start choreographing [movement] until I begin the dance, until I'm in the mood. I don't plan anything. I just become imbued with the area and the nature of what I am going to do. I just open the flood gates and then "it" happens.

C. Factors determining structure.

Form has to do with my own inner lyricism.

Form is passed on; form is inherited in the human body. It is a

genetic thing. Nik calls it balance. There is within the human body a sense of continence when a thing is right, and the human body intuitively orders itself towards that. Especially in creators there is the sense of what the form for a particular thing should be. It is a sense of form.

I imbue myself with the area and nature of the thing I'm going to do. Then I just open the flood gates and then it happens. I let it flow and I just sneak it through. I demonstrate which way it wants to go.

Each work has its own identity. That is what leads me into how I direct it. I stay with its premise. I stay with the thing that I want the audience to see. I know how I am going to direct that audience. Through years of improvising I have learned to understand the intuitive decisions. When a phrase says, dum bump, it says it is finished.

D. Factors determining movement.

I have no preparation for what the steps may be until I get inside the thing. When I choreograph I am an amazing kind of schizophrenic machine. I talk to myself. I let it [the dance movement] flow. I demonstrate which way it wants to go. I use the dancer me to create the steps that the choreographer me is doing. I do this talking to myself and the follow-the-leader kind of process right there in the studio with my dancers watching and listening.

I create pretty much everything [in a piece]. [Sometimes] I just give my dancers the steps and many times the dynamics, and perhaps the energy necessary, and I see

what they can do. Or if I come to special things where I know some kids can do extraordinary leaps or falls or extensions, I just talk those out. I say, "Here I want this kind of fall. You work it out." On the whole, I pretty much set things.

I don't work through improvisation with my material.

E. Meeting deadlines.

I have learned that this business of finishing a work ten minutes before it is to be performed is unprofessional. It does not do justice to the work.

I simply don't work under the horrible stress of deadlines any more.

F. Steps or sequence of the process.

I don't start choreographing [movement] until I begin the dance, until I'm in the mood. I don't plan anything. I just become imbued with the area and the nature of what I am going to do. I just open the flood gates and then it happens. I let it flow and I just sneak it through very quickly. I have no preparation for what the steps may be until I get inside the thing. When I choreograph I am an amazing kind of schizophrenic machine. I talk to myself. I let it [the dance movement] flow. I demonstrate which way it wants to go. I use the dancer me to create the steps that the choreographer me is doing. I do this talking to myself and the follow-the-leader kind of process right there in the studio with my dancers watching and listening.

> I create pretty much everything [in a piece]. [Sometimes] I just give my dancers the steps and many times the dynamics and perhaps the energy necessary, and I see what they can do. Or if I come to special things where I know some kids can do extraordinary leaps or falls or extensions, I just talk those out. I say, "Here I want this kind of fall. You work it out." On the whole, I pretty much set things. I don't work through improvisation with my material.

III. USE AND FUNCTION OF THE DANCERS

A. Creative contributions by dancers.

> I create pretty much everything [in a piece]. [Sometimes] I just give my dancers the steps and many times the dynamics and perhaps the energy necessary, and I see what they can do. Or if I come to special things where I know some kids can do extraordinary leaps or falls or extensions, I just talk those out. I say, "Here I want this kind of fall. You work it out." My dancers are trained in improvisation. They lend so much.

B. Other contributions by dancers.

> What I ask from my dancers is performance and to that performance they have to bring the skills of performing. Their duty is to do transitions, dynamics, and quality.

IV. EVALUATION

A. By the choreographer.

> I am the choreographer whose concern is his aesthetic judgement and his ability to structure movement.

I must evaluate my work from the stage out because I am a dancer.

When I see something wrong in a piece I intuitively sense that it is wrong.

I try very hard to compose a piece as early as I can. I have to get away from it, and the evaluations have to be on another level. In the heat of my work, of my working process and in the heat of my irritations I cannot evaluate it [the piece]. I must divorce myself from all that and see it openly and directly. And it takes a little bit of time to get away from it.

B. Artistic responsibility.

The only person, other than myself, whose aesthetic judgement I even consider is Nik. Nik because he knows what I'm doing.

C. Critics' and audience reactions.

A critic is never important enough to make you change anything.

I choreograph for my audiences really, because dance is a performing art. I know how I am going to direct that audience into its response. I have to get away from a piece and look at it to tell how the audience is going to react. I have to go it alone.

This business of finishing a work ten minutes before it is to be performed is unprofessional.

APPENDIX C

Phyllis Lamhut's Responses to Basic Questions

PHYLLIS LAMHUT'S
RESPONSES TO BASIC QUESTIONS

I. MOTIVATION FOR CHOREOGRAPHY

A. Need for artistic expression.

I create because it is a part of my nature.

I feel the need to create.

B. Need to express personal and aesthetic philosophy.

1. Personal philosophy.

I see life in a comic-tragic way. There are dances of death in everything I do.

I am stimulated by everything around me, and I try to give it my point of view and hope that I enrich what I do in relation to the audience.

2. Aesthetic philosophy.

I choreograph to stimulate the awareness of the audience to what I am doing. I just communicate very directly.

I want the audience to have a kinetic and aesthetic stimulation when they see my work.

The humor must be intrinsic in the movement.

II. CREATIVE PROCESS

A. Source of ideas or subject matter resulting in content of the dance.

I am usually motivated by everything around me, nature, life, whatever. For me the motivation

is very versatile. Sometimes it starts with a musical inspiration, sometimes with a motional inspiration, sometimes it starts through a vision that I have of an idea, not necessarily have [in concrete terms], but with some kind of idea that I have emotionally in my soul and I try to get it out.

B. Preparation for the creative process.

I very rarely define specifically what I am going to be doing.

I always seem to move with some sort of space [in mind]--air, for example--where a dance in the creative process can grow.

C. Factors determining structure.

The intuition, the "X factor," the artistic "X factors," all of these things are involved [in creating a work]. Everything I know and experience goes into practical application.

D. Factors determining movement.

I always seem to move with some sort of space [in mind]--air, for example--where a dance in the creative process can grow.

I usually have a lot to say and a lot to do and then when I get stuck I ask them [my dancers], "What should I do next?"

Sometimes I ask them and sometimes I don't. I work freely.

E. Meeting deadlines.

You usually have a deadline for performing a work so the work has to be ready. I've always pushed through to meet performances, and lately I've been trying to

preview out of town the things I've pushed through earlier than I expect.

F. Steps or sequence of the process.

I very rarely define specifically what I am going to be doing. I always seem to move with some sort of space [in mind] . . . where a dance in the creative process can grow.

I do allow input by my dancers when I am choreographing. I usually have a lot to say, and a lot to do and then when I get stuck I ask them, "What should I do next?"

Sometimes I ask them and sometimes I don't. I work freely.

I have a sort of process that I think about when I get stuck . . . What is the form of it? Is the form right? Am I structurally interesting? . . .

Sometimes the push for process completion is very important because then it [the work] becomes alive and you are happy and you know what you have. You can always go back and fix it if you don't like what you have.

Once I state it, I think I'm pretty clear.

. . . I ask myself: What is the nature of the dance? Is it what I started out to make it become or is it something else?

III. USE AND FUNCTION OF THE DANCERS

A. Creative contributions by dancers.

I do allow input by my dancers when I am choreographing. When I get stuck I ask them, "What

should I do next?" Sometimes I ask them and sometimes I don't. I do not need, as an area of source, help from the dancers. But I do ask them. I do not ask them too often.

. . . it is important for the dancer to be trained creatively as well as technically.

I always like to finish the work early enough so my dancers can involve themselves in it and there are not the last minute changes to make. Although I really don't change too much, I change certain things that I don't like.

B. Other contributions by dancers.

The better dancer is the dancer who has more to him than his physical [technical] ability. He has to have feeling for the movement, feeling for the creative idea, feeling for the choreography, and a feeling for improvisation.

IV. EVALUATION

A. By the choreographer.

I do something and then I evaluate. I think about certain rules and regulations: What have I done? What haven't I done? What does it need now? What doesn't it need? Where is the dynamic flow? What do I want to do spatially? . . . What is the nature of the dance? Which turn is it taking? Is it what I started out to make it become, or is it something else? What is that something else?

Sometimes I'll say, "Well, it's not going very well today, or it

is going well, or it's not this or that, or what it is. I can remove myself from it and then deal with it as I see it after I leave it.

And then how to get to the point, to know when it is good and when it is not good, is also very painful. You need a lot of experience.

. . . While I'm working I look into it. While I'm making it I'm usually into it. Then I pull myself out of it to look at it and see. This is all done psychically.

B. Artistic responsibility.

I do try to preview my works out of the city. Because then I'm playing for audiences and the dancers have the experience of performing out of the rehearsal studio in the real situation. When we come back we can see what it was--what it felt like and how people responded to it. It's a test.

C. Critics' and audience reactions.

I do try to preview my works out of the city. Because then I'm playing for audiences and the dancers have the experience of performing out of the rehearsal studio in the real situation. When we come back we can see what it was--what it felt like and how people responded to it. It's a test.