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DAVIS, PAMELA NELLE. Crochet. (Videotaped Choreography). (1974)
Directed by: Virginia Moomaw. Pp 21.

The dance, Crochet, was developed out of the translation of actual crochet patterns into dance movement. Instead of using yarn and hook, nine dancers were used to weave the designs, textures and rhythms of the needlework. The relationships of the threads determined the relationships of the dancers; the floor patterns evolved directly from the stitch patterns and their combinations; and the movement patterns and quality were derived from the lines of the stitches. All the movement variations were created through the development and manipulation of one basic stitch, the chain, just as in crochet needlework.

Structurally, the first section of the dance, entitled "Chaining," provided the basic introduction of hook and threads, the formation of the single crochet stitch, the combination of the single crochet into the double crochet and chain, and the creation of a variety of crochet patterns, increasing in complexity and resulting in a huge inescapable knot. The second section, "The Knot," revolved around the undoing of this entanglement, a slow and tedious procedure. "Loose Ends," the tying together of all the threads of the dance, concluded the crochet with a touch of fantasy, the threads frolicking circles around the hook, until, in the final moments, order was re-established.

Crochet is to be danced to the music of Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. Three in G Major. The first two movements of the music are used in order. The third section of the dance begins with three minutes and 45 seconds of silence, before the third movement of the music accompanies the dance.

Costuming is basically simple long sleeved leotards and tights.

In the first movement, the dancers wear leotards and tights accented by 2" wide stripes in geometric design. In movement two, solid white leotards and tights blend with the lines of the white elastic, and a dark backdrop is used for visual contrast. In the final section of the dance, the stripes of movement one are loosened at the lower end to fly free with the freedom of the movement of that section.

The first and third movements are set against a pale cyclorama on which images of thread patterns and geometric designs are projected. The middle section of the dance is set against a dark cyclorama, with lighting effects used to heighten the mystery of the knot.

In evaluation, the crochet idea proved good motivation for the dance and was quite translatable into the elements of dance. Pattern and design proved strong in the dance, as it is in the crochet, with use of contrast in rhythm and dynamics. The choreographer might have captured more of the light, fanciful spirit of the crochet in the dance by adhering less strictly to the actual crochet instructions or by taking another approach to the composition. Still, the relationship between weaving a dance and weaving crochet is obvious.

Crochet was not intended solely as a dance of the patterns of crochet. The twisting, turning, darting threads might easily be the threads of life, sometimes knotted, sometimes smoothly flowing. When woven together, the product is unique and individual.

CROCHET

by

Pamela Nelle Davis

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Fine Arts

Greensboro
1974

Approved by

Virginia Macmurtrei
Thesis Advisor

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis has been approved by the following committee
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Date of Examination

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457497

BRANDENBURG CONCERTO NO. 3 IN G MAJOR

J. S. Bach

Movement One

Silence: 10 seconds

Movement Two

Silence: 10 seconds

Silence: 3 minutes 45 seconds

Movement Three

Recording: "Switched-On Bach" Columbia MS7194.

Score: Not available in electronic form.

A DANCE CALLED CROCHET

Simple and free and pleasurable is the woven handicraft of crochet. Using only the tools of hook, yarn, and a deft hand guided by inspiration, one basic stitch is developed and manipulated into endless variations to create a work unique unto itself. Each piece has its own designs, textures, and rhythms woven from the looping, twisting, and turning of the yarn as it is drawn by the hook to create unusual and interesting patterns. What begins as a common skein of yarn is developed into a beautiful personal creation. Entanglements and knots, complications and mistakes interrupt the smoothness of the fabric. Some problems are resolved easily; others, with effort; some, not at all. Nevertheless, all are woven into the whole of the fabric. The finished product may be surprising--lighter or heavier, smoother or more textured, longer or shorter than originally intended. While the formative stages of development may give some indication of the direction the crochet may take, only in the finishing does the piece reveal its total character and identity.

In the words of Malraux, "Creating means seeing, reducing, ordering."¹ Seeing requires an openness of mind, in order to look at and feel all the possibilities of the material, and its treatment through exploration, experimentation, and improvisation. In crochet, the exploration began with the basic running chain stitch. The stitch was developed, reduced, augmented, reversed, taken in different directions, used singly or used in combination with other stitches so as to form

¹ Focus on Dance, ed. American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation. Vol. V.

a variety of interesting patterns, shapes, and lines. In gathering many conceivable "expressions" of the thread and yarn, the crocheter has a wealth of material to use in his creation. Using his material wisely, he creates a work filled with color and contrast, eventually synthesizing his diverse discoveries into a product of his own invention. Usually after "seeing" and discovering all the possibilities, a refinement of materials is necessary. All that is found is not completely usable; an economy of means must be developed. Stitches must flow with continuity, following each other in ordered patterns, with excessive frivolities trimmed out. This might be analogous to Malraux's "reducing" phase of creativity, using only that which is essential to emphasize the form and shape of the idea. After considerable reflection and refinement, the original ideas discovered may be changed slightly or beyond recognition. New ideas may follow, as suggested by old ones, some usable, others not. Accidents may result in some unique discoveries. It is then necessary to order the stitches, deciding what is workable and where it is most effective in relating the total idea of the work. Even though the idea may be well visualized and directed, the total design in its finished form may not be exactly what was originally planned. But the finished piece can still be beautiful.

Just as crochet is woven, so is a dance created--stitch by stitch, piece by piece, the dance grows and is integrated. Beginning with a special idea, the dance is shaped and formed and directed towards an end. Considerations are made regarding the aesthetics of line, design, dynamics, textures, and rhythms, regularly relating these back to the original idea.

It is easy to see how the play of the hook and yarn could be readily translatable into dance movement. Instead of crocheting with hook and yarn, the dance was crocheted by dancers on the stage, assuming the characteristics of the hook and yarn. The relationship of the dancers was determined by the relationship of the threads; floor patterns were taken directly from the stitch patterns and their combinations; and movement patterns and qualities were derived from lines created by the stitch. The various stitches, designs, textures, and rhythms of crochet were created through development and manipulation of the basic theme stitch, the single crochet. This was the choreographer's idea as originally conceived.

Actualization of the idea into dance movement, spatial, and time elements directly paralleled the development of the crochet. Using the single crochet stitch as the original theme material, the dance began simply with the creation of a basic theme statement. Circular pattern and design predominated throughout the first movement of the dance, since these are important characteristics of the single crochet. Small, quick, precise movements were emphasized in this movement. In crochet, single crochet stitches are linked together to form a chain. Varying in form, this twisting and turning chain links together all patterns of the crochet. Similarly in the dance, the basic theme may be varied, expanded, reduced, inverted, or reversed for contrast and unity. Just as each added stitch changed the proportion and character of the crocheted fabric, the addition of each new movement or pattern of movements changed the proportion of the dance. When one crochet stitch flows into another and one chain combines with another,

a double chain, or the double crochet stitch, is formed. This stitch features definite geometric angular design, which is more complex and heavier than the simple running chain. The movement development of the "stitch" accentuated these angular design elements, making use of slower, more direct, sustained qualities of movement. Movements became more deliberate; movement patterns more complex and heavier. At the point in the crochet when the double chain is placed on the single chain, the interaction of the threads becomes more intricate. As a result, entanglements and knots are virtually unavoidable. Interestingly enough, this situation which spontaneously arises in the crochet, also arose in the dance. With so much movement and so many dancers involved, entanglement provided the perfect conclusion for the first movement section and an interesting introduction for part two. The dancer, who had the role of the hook, managed to free a few of the dancers trapped in the knot, but three others remained hopelessly caught. With this first major conflict, section one ended.

Section two of the dance centered around resolving this conflict. The threads struggled to escape the ties of the knot. Long, drawn-out, stretching lines predominated; the threads worked individually and together, pulling, twisting, sometimes almost escaping, more often becoming more entangled. Here again, in section two, the ending was a surprise, arising entirely by accident and changing completely the final section of the dance, as originally conceived. While experimenting with various ways to move out of the knot, using the dancers as part of the elastic instead of as manipulators of it, it seemed the elastic became increasingly tight and tense. So became the movements of the dancers.

When the elastic had expanded to its limit, the dancers began to feel the pull of the elastic. Instead of working against it, the dancers responded to it, following the lead of the elastic, which of course was moving in response to the dancers themselves. At times we wondered what was actually responsible for the pull; it seemed very magic and mysterious. The dancers were drawn closer and closer by the elastic. Then the elastic slipped free, flinging the dancers in all directions. Although emphasis upon design was not specifically intended, the design element emerged strongly in this section. The lines of the elastic emphasized the long thin lines of the dancers as they moved within their elastic boundary. After the section was choreographed, to further blend the lines of the dancers, simple costuming of white leotards and tights was chosen, resulting in one continuous line. Ideally, a dark backdrop should be used for greater contrast and visual clarity.

At this point, it is interesting to note that the choreographer began work on the first and second parts of the dance simultaneously, since there was a basic idea for each. Deciding how to begin the second part, however, had been a major frustration. When it was decided, it seemed most effective with the dancers standing, partially obscuring one another in a knotted grouping. And so it was worked out to the finish. But when the first section was finished, it was realized that the beginning of the second part would not fit smoothly upon the end of the first. The second part would have to begin on the floor where the first section ended. Instead of changing all of the second part, however, the same movements were used but taken to the floor.

Orders of movements were reversed, giving them new relationships to the other movements. New levels were created. The "new" more interesting character of the second part was a total and pleasant surprise.

The originally accidental loosening of the elastic, the final stroke of Part Two, changed the course of the third movement. If this accident of the elastic releasing is related to the breaking of the thread in crochet, the result in crocheting is the loss of effectiveness of the hook; stitches unravel and are lost. The thread is freed from the hook. Part Three of the dance resulted in a reversal of roles of thread and hook. The threads ran free, teasing and playing with the hook. Frivolous, light, using much air and floor space, the last section proved the most fanciful manipulation of the crochet theme. The hook was pushed, pulled, captured, bound by the threads only to escape at the last minute, tying the threads together into one last running chain. The result was a fast paced, constantly moving flight to the finish. In all the busyness of the final section, it was necessary to emphasize the importance of the needle regaining its former power. How does one emphasize anything which has so much movement all of the time? Experimentation with new types of movement and new movement patterns provided one solution--emphasis through contrast. But at the point where the reversal of power arose, where the needle regained its authority and power over the threads, this device seemed ineffective. If movement was not the solution, then non-movement might be appropriate. After trying different combinations and ways of achieving a state of non-movement (for example: one figure stopping at

a time, facing different directions, different levels), the strongest way seemed a deliberate dead stop; all motion ceased at one point while the music continued to race on. The hook then reversed the race, picked up each individual thread, twisting, turning, drawing them together into one final chain. All knots, untangled; the conflicts, resolved; the loose ends, tied securely, if somewhat reluctantly into the design of the crochet.

Such was the original motivation and its development, through various stages of the work. The dance idea seemed to translate itself into the structural elements of movement, space, and time. When unproductive periods struck, usually the idea itself suggested workable new movement concepts. Often one idea would lead to another similar idea and then to another, completely different from the first but somewhat related to the second. This new idea might be suitable for the place and time. Or a movement or pattern might be inappropriate for one instance but quite appropriate for another, earlier or later in the choreography. Many blank spaces were left in the choreography of "Crochet", but during the progress of the work, solutions filled the blanks. These solutions were worked out of certain specific future needs of the dance, limitations imposed by the previous choreography, spatial and time limitations, abilities of the dancers, and quite often by accident. Sometimes, after leaving a problem behind, several solutions would arise almost simultaneously. Or, in returning to a problem spot, a simple modification of an already existing movement would provide the answer. Orders of movements and patterns were sometimes reversed to provide interest and contrast; level and direction, changed

for a new perspective. In the creating, movements and patterns seemed remarkably flexible. Eventually, everything found its own special place in the structure.

Basic to the creation of the dance is the choreographer's knowledge of his instrument and material. In music, a symphony orchestra is composed of many different instruments; under the direction of the conductor, all of the instruments are blended together to produce music. In dance, the choreographer must blend all of his instruments together in similar manner. Each dancer comes to him with a different shaped instrument; each offers him a different movement style and range, a uniqueness, individual in every way, physical and emotional. The choreographer must select his instruments carefully, considering not just their individual merits, but how they will blend together to communicate the dance. The choreographer must also keep his dancer in mind while he choreographs. Rarely do two dancers communicate the same idea through the same movements, when they obviously have two different types of body builds and movements. Movements must sometimes be modified or changed; the choreographer must develop a keen awareness of his dancers, a sensitivity to his instruments to successfully communicate his dance.

Another factor that influenced the dance to some extent was the music. Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. Three in G Major was chosen for several reasons. First, the structure of the music was well-suited to the structure of the dance as originally conceived. The music begins with a very predictable, regular, measured four-four meter, ideal for the very orderly statement of the first simple crochot theme--small,

precise, and quick. As the music develops more in texture, so does the dance become more woven. Musically, the second movement introduces a note of foreboding, mystery and building suspense, echoing long tones of struggle and conflict, and concluding with a surprise ending. This provides a natural accompaniment for the knot which was choreographed first without music; then the music, added. The final movement of the Third Brandenburg, light, playful, and almost explosive in six-eight meter, was more than suitable for the frivolous conclusion of the dance. More transition was needed between the second and third sections of the dance, however. The logical solution was to perform this transition in silence, the only accompaniment being the sounds of the dancers moving through space. At the appropriate time, the music joins the dancers in their frantic race to the final chain, all of the stitches, patterns, designs unraveled into a single thread. The music of Bach, especially his Third Brandenburg, is often compared to woven fabric, since it is generally a mixture of contrapuntal and homophonic textures. Just as the music was woven, so was the dance, drawing sometimes from the rhythms of the music, sometimes from the rhythms of the crochet, playing with the music and against it, moving with the music, moving in silence, music with no movement, music to emphasize the movement. The possibilities are innumerable; the choreographer need never feel entrapped by the music.

Many factors influence the creation of the dance: factors within the choreographer, factors arising out of the choreographer's interaction with his dancers, the dancers themselves as instruments of the dance, and most unusual and exciting, the "accident" factor. It

seemed at times that the dance was creating itself, weaving itself out of the materials at hand. Predictably enough, the materials of any creation determine to a great extent the character, appearance, and ultimate result of the product, the form, determined by the content. All of the ideas converging on the choreographer must be brought into focus, filtered through the mind, selected, ordered, structured through the imagination, consciously or subconsciously. Yet the process is not simply an intellectual one. It begins with an idea and is directed to an end. It is a total experience of intellect and emotion, experienced and sensed. As evidenced by the dance, "Crochet," the creative process does not necessarily start at the beginning and work smoothly and orderly through to the end. Amazingly enough, all conflicts are eventually resolved. The "knots" are either untangled or "woven into the design," in crochet, in dance, or in the everyday creative process of living.

PHOTOGRAPHIC DATA

Videotape

Distance of Camera to Stage: 100'

Lighting: Stage and Auditorium House Lights

Camera Make and Number: Concord 200

Stationary Placement of Camera

Tape Size: 1/2" Irish Videotape

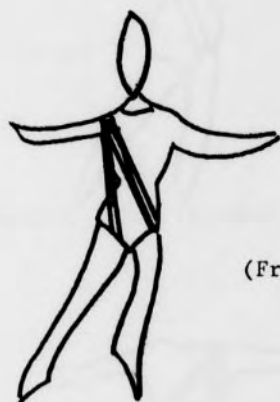
Videocorder Make and Number: Concord 200

Sound Process: Microphone placed beside record player. Volume
setting: 6.

Copy Process: The edited tape was transcribed by David Hoskins
(UNC-CH Audio-Visual Aids, Education Department) to
the Sony 3600 speed; then, two copies were made
directly from the Sony 3600 tape.

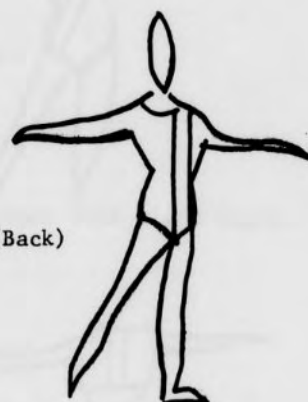
COSTUME

Movement One: Black Leotards, Black Tights, 2" White Elastic Stripes.

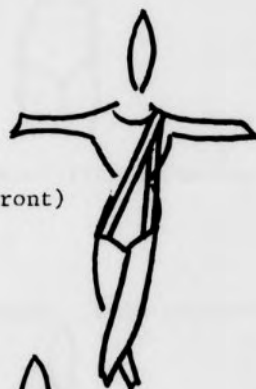


(Front)

Dancer One



(Back)

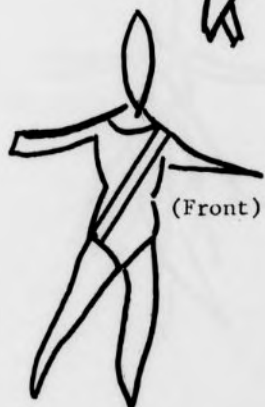


(Front)

Dancer Two



(Back)



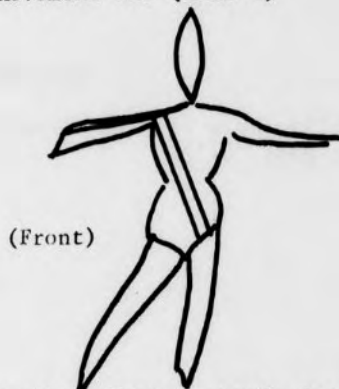
(Front)

Dancer Three



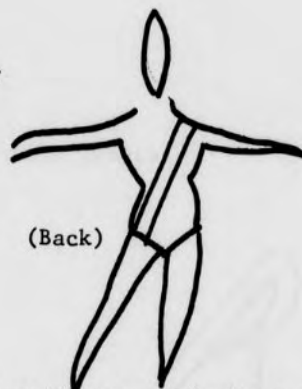
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Movement One (Cont'd)



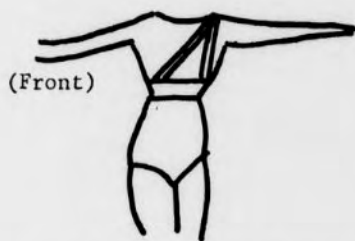
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Dancer Four

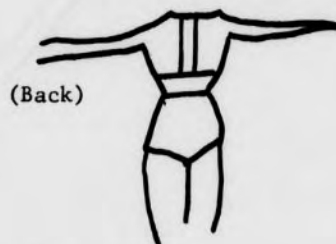


(Back)

Needle: Grey Leotard, Grey Tights, 2' Silver Stripes with Black Edges.



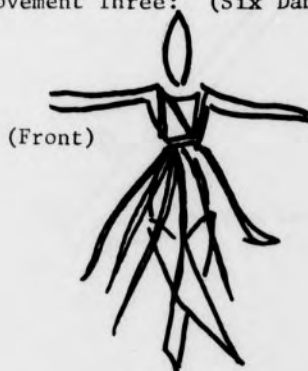
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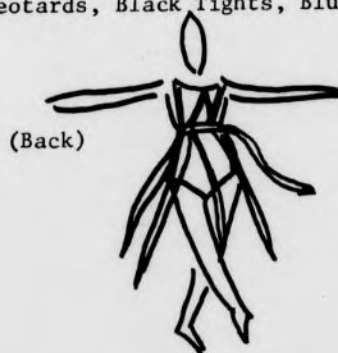
(Back)

Movement Two: (Three Dancers) White Leotards, White Tights.

Movement Three: (Six Dancers) Black Leotards, Black Tights, Blue Streamers.



(Front)

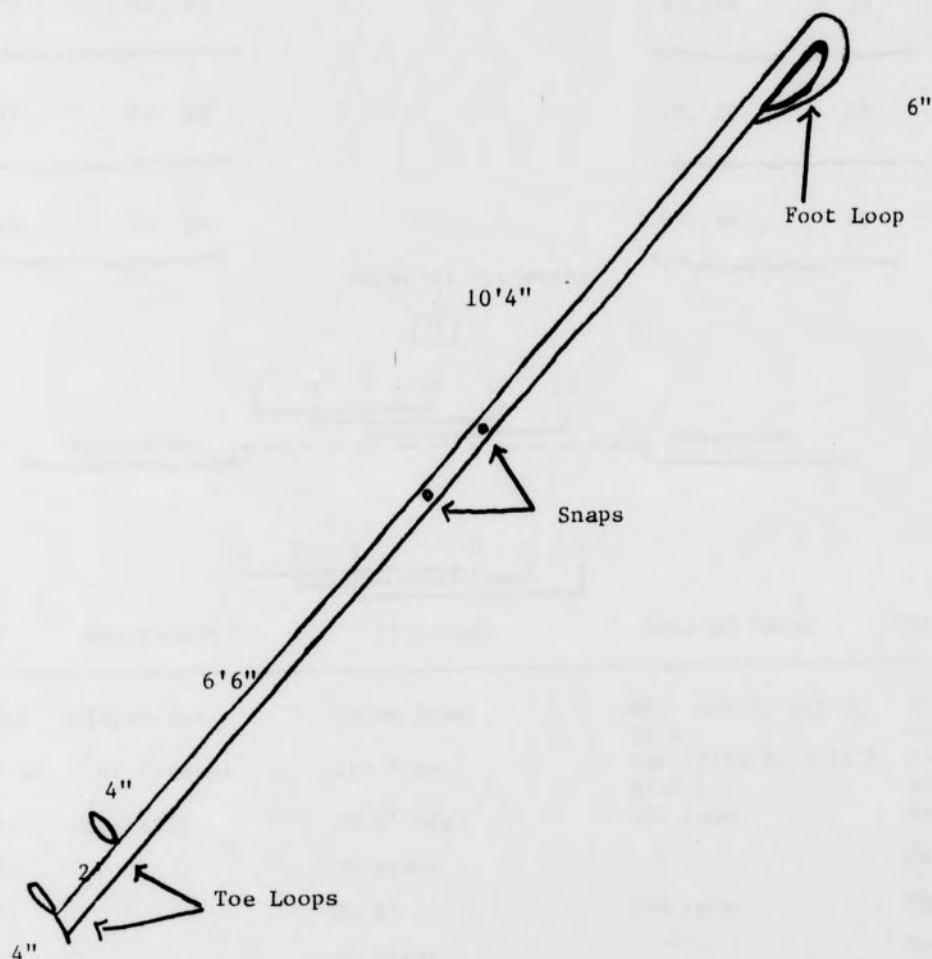


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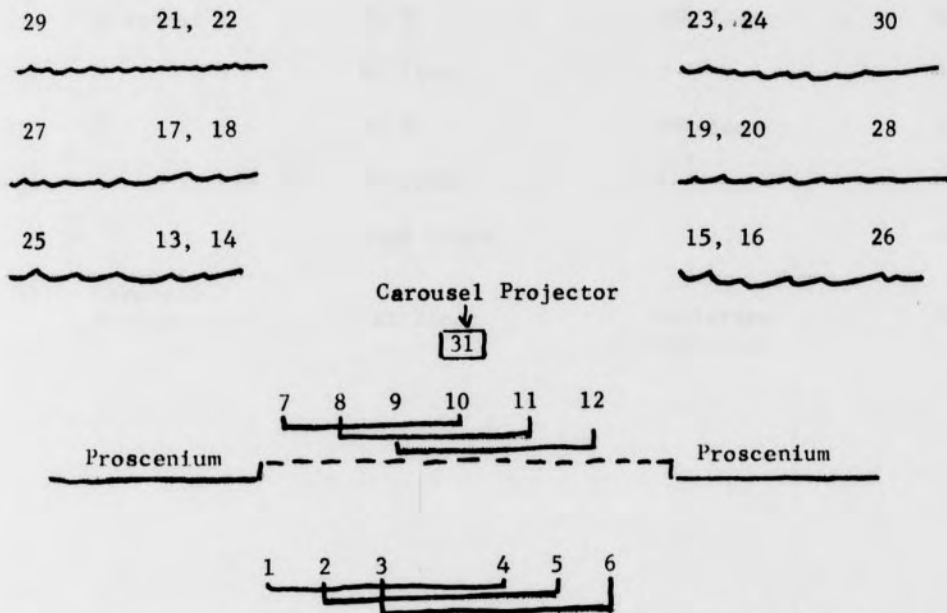
PROPERTIES

ELASTIC

Dimensions: 2" wide utility elastic
18'10" long double (or 37'8" total length)



LIGHTING PLOT

Cyclorama

#	Instrument	Placement	Area of Focus	Color
1-6	Elipsoidal	House Beam	DS: 1/4 R, 2/5 C, 36 L	1-3 Straw 4-6 Blue
7-12	" or Fresnell	1st Pipe	US: 7/10 R, 8/11 L, 9/12 L	7-9 Straw 10-12 Blue
13	Fresnell	DR 8' high	DSL lane	Magenta
14	"	DR floor	"	Green
15	"	DL 8'	DSR lane	Magenta
16	"	DL floor	"	Green
17	"	CR 8'	CSL lane	Magenta
18	"	CR floor	"	Green
19	"	CL 8' high	CSR land	Magenta
20	"	CL floor	"	Green

LIGHTING PLOT (cont'd)

#	Instrument	Placement	Area of Focus	Color
21	Fresnell	UR 8'	USL lane	Magenta
22	"	UR floor	"	Green
23	"	UL 8'	USR lane	Magenta
24	"	UR floor	"	Green
25-30	"	High Sides		Amber
31	Carousel Projector	1st Pipe	Cyclorama Projector	Slide #1

Movement One

5

LIGHTING PLOT (cont'd)

Movement Two

Instrument Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25-30			
No. Cue (Count)	Reading																											

Drop in black backdrop.

Carousel with blue wash on apron.

1. Music 3-----> 7 7 7 7 9 9 9 9

LIGHTING PLOT (cont'd)

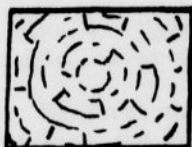
Movement Three

Instrument Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25-30															
No. Cue (Count)	Reading																																							
1. Trio movement in silence.	4	-----→												8	8	8	8	-----→												9	9	9	9							
2. Needle enters (5)	8	-----→																																						
3. Music																																								
4. Needle (6)																																								
a. to DR															10	10																								
b. to DL												10	10																											
c. to UL																														10	10									
d. to UR																																		10	10					
e. off CR	10	-----→																				10	10	10	10															
5. Twisting of (5) needle and threads																														7	-----→									
6. Elastic wraps needle (10)	7	-----→																					7	-----→																
7. Needle DS (5)	8	-----→																																						
8. Loose end (4) enters UL	10	-----→																					10	-----→																
9. Chaos (10)	10	-----→																																						
10. End	10	-----→																																						

Cyclorama Projection

Slide #1

Desired Design



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