

RIGHT ANGLED CURVES
INTRODUCTORY NOTES

Pg. 37



In the present state of the art of the Dance, the essence of composition is, in my opinion, the study of the material. The exploration of the material requires, a single assumption: **that we know nothing a priori.**

Folk dance evidences regular structure based upon motifs which are movement values. The structure of theatrical dance is the result of largely ad hoc decisions and choice without movement significance. Continuity is maintained by the correlation of movement to music (with some exceptions); this continuity is thus dependent upon rhythms of a musical rather than a movement character. The other element ensuring continuity is 'literary' expression. The only 'laws' observed are the limitations imposed by the 'rules of the game' - the style. There are in fact no real laws, but only customs. It can be objected that adherence to laws is no less a custom; it is, however, a productive custom, inasmuch as it affords a way of attaining new information - a criterion of evolutionary type.

In this composition, the main motif (movement value) is a plane movement of 90 degrees - and hence the name given to the suite. The subject is a development of this motif by successive transpositions of the movement into different orientations (three planes), and the reversal of the order and of the movement process in the motif. This yields an ordered arrangement (phrase) of six terms:

A	B	C	C	B	A
1	2	3	4	5	6

Further procedures transform this into a dance. The original phrase undergoes a continuous process of evolution consisting of changes produced through recombination of the material in different transformations and transpositions. In each dance, the first phrase is an exposition of the main motif in the metamorphosis which forms the subject of that dance.

The score does not represent a final and ultimate exposition of the material. It is an arrangement of the material for three dancers; not three 'parts' in the theatrical sense of protagonists in a drama. The material is shown as a 'canon' between the parts of the body, and between the bodies of the three performers; a single reservoir of movement, distributed among three bodies - six arms - six legs ... The identical material could be recast for (for example) ten dancers - in which case a quite different work would emerge. Similarly with the rhythmic arrangement, and with the 'choreography'.

In the dances in the present work, the interrelations between the dancers and between the dancers and the performing space are determined and created as a result of the movements of the legs, and there is no 'choreography' as something distinct from the movements of the dancers' bodies. There are no entries and exits during a dance, and no need for a curtain. A floor plan is sometimes needed for the indication of the places from which the dancers start, so as to avoid having the dancers collide. Such a plan will be

found in the notes preceding some of the dances in this book.

Note that a minimal space of 8 x 8 metres is required for most of the dances.

The names of the dances are indications of sensual images which I associated with them, and which were accepted by the dancers with whom I work, rather as expression markings in music, hints of intangible qualities beyond the formal expression of the score. For anyone who has seen great birds circling a mountain top or the wary perambulation of a chameleon, these names may provide a helping hint towards the proper execution of the dances.

The dances may be performed in any order desired; in this score, they are given roughly in order of increasing physical and technical complexity. The duration of the whole suite is 40- 45 minutes. The metronome marking for each dance indicates a certain range from which the exact speed is to be chosen.

The dancers are indicated by I, II, III, Note that in some cases all three dancers move part of the body in unison while other parts move differently. To assist the eye, the mark // is used on pages which contain more than one complete line of the score. (Where the mark does not appear, the whole page represents a single line for the three dancers, read in one scanning).

The notes which precede each part of the suite include comments on specific aspects of the notation exemplified in that dance. In particular, the key signatures are dealt with. The idea of key signatures is a flexible one, inasmuch as new ones can be introduced as the need arises - always provided that they are based upon the concepts of the notation, and introduced intelligently. The use of a key signature is logical when it results in a significant economy of writing. Since key signatures provide overall information applying to a whole dance or movement sequence, they usually give some indication of the style of the work. They are generally written outside the frame of the score, either in front of the limb spaces to which they apply, or above the system. Exceptions occur when key signatures are introduced in the course of the work.

Frequent use is made of the device of changing the value of the time unit in the course of a score. This is done for graphic reasons and has no compositional significance.

Throughout the whole suite, unless otherwise indicated, positions and movements of the upper body are not affected by movements of the legs; and positions and movements of the legs are not affected by movements of the upper body. We therefore give here the overall stipulation: