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REFLECTIONS ON THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS
IN FIVE CONTEMPORARY WORKS FOR FLUTE AND DANCE

by

Renée Bond

A Document Submitted to the Faculty of the

SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DANCE

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

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Contemporary Works for Flute and Dance

and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

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ABSTRACT

This lecture-recital document evaluates the collaborative process in five American works written for flute and dance. My perspective is that of a musician interpreting and performing music for choreography and dance. This project aims to elevate the significance of collaborative works in general, and in the flutist's repertoire specifically. The second and broader purpose of this study is to identify fundamental elements of the collaborative process. Using five works as a model, I have developed collaborative guidelines that assist musicians, dancers, and choreographers in the performance of these and other works.

This study concludes that a shared vision is vital to a successful collaborative experience. An awareness of the differences between musical language and kinesthetic vocabulary is also necessary. In addition, the incorporation of theatrical parameters must be explored. Teamwork, trust, flexibility, and communication must be developed between the performers. Understanding fundamental elements of the collaborative process provides a foundation for bringing music and dance together in performance.

Chapter 1

PURPOSE OF STUDY

This study examines the collaborative process in five contemporary American works for flute and dance for the purpose of identifying fundamental elements of the collaborative process. Although many compositions could conceivably be performed with dance, there is music written specifically for this combination. This project aims to elevate the significance of collaborative works in general, and in the flutist's repertoire specifically. The works selected for this project by composers Larry Attaway, Daniel Dorff, Ezra Laderman, Beth Mehocic, and Alexandra Pierce are all meant for performance with flute and dance.

There are many relationships between music and dance in the collaborative arena. The shared properties of music and dance, as well as the differences, are defined in this document. Each selected composition reveals certain relationships between music and dance during the collaborative process. As each piece is researched, rehearsed, and prepared for performance, elements of collaboration are ascertained. The evidence obtained during this process provides the foundation for identifying fundamental elements of the collaborative process.

This project addresses how the collaborative process between musician and dancer can differ from the relationship between two musicians. It suggests that the relationship between musician and dancer take on an added dimension because each form of artistic expression functions on a different level of communication. It asserts that a shared vision, an awareness of musical language and kinesthetic vocabulary, the

incorporation of theatrical parameters, and teamwork are vital to a successful collaborative process.

This evaluation is from the perspective of a musician interpreting music for dance. Since the musician is performing music for choreography and dance, the musician is no longer a soloist but becomes a partner with the choreographer and dancer(s). The goal of this study is to provide a method of collaboration for performers. The guidelines are intended as a resource to assist musicians, dancers, and choreographers who are working together in partnership.

Chapter 2

JUSTIFICATION

Related Literature

A universally recognizable relationship exists between music and dance.

Throughout the history of mankind, music and dance have been paired for numerous purposes in diverse societies throughout the world. In some Native American languages, only one word exists that simultaneously stands for both music and dance. In his “Convocation Address” (1966) at *The Juilliard School*, faculty member José Limon maintained that “dancers are musicians are dancers”.¹ Works that combine the two disciplines have been, and continue to constitute, the majority of the dance repertoire as well as significant part of the music repertoire. While both music and dance are independent arts in their own right, there is an undeniable intrinsic affinity between them.

A wealth of literature is already published on the historical nexus between music and dance. *Dancing, Ancient and Modern*, *World History of the Dance*, *Choreographer and Composer*, *Choreographic Music*, and the *Story of Dance Music*² are among the many examples that document an ongoing partnership between the two forms of artistic expression.

¹ José Limon, “Dancers are Musicians are Dancers”, *Juilliard Annual Review* (1966-67), 5.

² Ethel Urlin, *Dancing, Ancient and Modern* (London: Kent & Company, 1943), Curt Sachs, *World History of the Dance* (New York: Norton, 1965), Baird Hastings, *Choreographer and Composer: Theatrical Dance in Western Culture* (Massachusetts: Twayne, 1983), Verna Arvey: *Choreographic Music: Music for the Dance* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1941), Paul Nettel, *The Story of Dance Music* (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc. 1947).

There are also many books and articles that discuss the creation of music for dance, offering many points of view. For example, composer Louis Horst believes “...the fact of starting with dance is important, because dance should be the center of interest... Ideally, dance uses no music at all.”³ There are certainly examples of dances performed without music, such as Doris Humphrey’s *Water Study*, Helen Tamaris’s *The Queen Walks in the Garden*, Jerome Robbins’s *Moves*, and Limon’s *Thirteen Mazurkas of Chopin* which opens with a silent section. A diametrically opposing viewpoint is expressed by choreographer George Balanchine: “The music is first. I couldn’t move without a reason and the reason is music.”⁴ Composer Norman Dello Joio goes so far as to say “Dance... has no life of its own disassociated from music.”⁵

In keeping with these diverse opinions, it follows that composer/choreographer teams prefer different methods of working together. Some composers welcome the challenge of writing for set choreography. Choreographer Marius Petipa provided specific instructions for Peter Illitch Tchaikovsky’s compositions. For example, in *The Nutcracker* he asked for:⁶

1. Soft music. Sixty-four bars.
2. The lighting of the tree. Sparkling music, eight bars.
3. The entry of the children. Noisy and joyous music, twenty-four bars.
4. The moment of astonishment and admiration. A tremolo.

Others consider an interactive process the ideal, such as composer Robert Starer, choreographer Martha Graham, and the team of Ian Spink and Orlando Gough.

³ Janet Mansfield Soares, *Louis Horst, Musician in a Dancer’s World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), 94.

⁴ A.J. Pischl and Selma Jeanne Cohen, eds. *Dance Perspectives* 16 (1963), 38.

⁵ Ibid., 18.

⁶ Humphrey Searle, *Ballet Music; An Introduction*. New York: Dover Publications, 1973.

Composer John Cage and choreographer Merce Cunningham experimented with yet another technique: the use of indeterminacy in their collaborations.

While reading about the process between composer and choreographer is illuminating, it does not necessarily provide a method of collaboration for the performers. It is not a question of music accompanying dance or vice versa: the affinity of sound and movement is “a love affair, a mutual accompaniment, a kind of glorified counterpoint.”⁷ Composer Gunther Schuller sums up the argument about which comes first, the music or the dance, as “irrelevant” and states, “Inspired creativity can cut through any seeming barriers between the two forms of expression.”⁸ However, if musicians have always practiced and performed with other musicians, and dancers have only trained with recorded music, the performers may not be well equipped for exploring collaborative works. Artists seeking to learn how to work together may find that the resources are limited.

The added dimension of visual elements stretches the boundaries of creative expression beyond sound. Collaborating with dancers may be a new experience for musicians who have to develop the ability to look at the dance and imagine what sound will enhance and inspire dancers’ movements. For dancers who are accustomed to recorded music, working with live music may present new challenges. They have to learn to be flexible and to be able to adjust to the subtleties of a live performance. The

⁷ Jack Gottlieb, “Let There Be Music: A Composer Analyzes His Craft to Aid the Choreographer” *Dance Magazine* April (1959), 52.

⁸ Pischl and Cohen, eds., 38.

collaborative experience can be very satisfying as live music and live dancing are given a chance to interact - an important ingredient of the arts as social interaction.⁹

Although music and dance collaboration exists in the classroom, in rehearsal, and on the concert stage, it does not have a well developed, written, scholarly tradition.¹⁰ While there are some guidelines designed to assist dancers in learning about music such as *Ear Training for the Body*,¹¹ “An Approach Toward the Effective Use of Music for Choreography”¹² and “Learning to Dance with Live Music”¹³, even fewer collaborative resources exist for musicians. *A Handbook for the Ballet Accompanist*¹⁴, *Dance and Music*¹⁵ (recently translated into English), and books by Katherine Teck stand out as the main references for musicians working within the field of dance.

Few music schools, universities, and conservatories train musicians to work with dancers. Shenandoah Conservatory at the University of Winchester, Virginia is the first school to offer a Master of Music Degree in Dance Accompanying. This program acknowledges that specialized instruction is necessary for dance musicians and provides a highly interactive curriculum. Dance accompaniment classes are also available at some schools such as the University of Nevada Las Vegas, Duquense University, and the University of Arizona, which offers a minor in Dance Accompanying.

⁹ Beth Mehocic, “Learning to Dance with Live Music” *Dance Teacher Now* (1997), 57.

¹⁰ William Moulton, “Musicians in Dance: The Struggle for Legitimacy in Academia” *Journal of the International Guild of Musicians in Dance* 1 (1991), 24.

¹¹ Katherine Teck, *Ear Training for the Body* (New Jersey: Princeton Book Company, 1994).

¹² David Karagianis, “An Approach Towards Effective Use of Music for Choreography” *Journal of the International Guild of Musicians in Dance* 3 (1994), 18.

¹³ Mehocic, “Learning to Dance with Live Music” (1997).

¹⁴ Gerald Lishka, *A Handbook for the Ballet Accompanist* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1979).

¹⁵ Harriet Cavalli, *Dance and Music* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2001), translated by Barbara Hesser.

The *International Guild of Musicians in Dance*, founded in 1990, has begun to establish a cohesive body of literature for musicians, choreographers, and dancers. The organization is dedicated to the advancement of musicians who have devoted their art to the world of dance. With annual conferences and the publication of professional journals, the *Guild* provides a forum for communication and documentation within the field of dance music. For performers searching for compositions intended for music and dance, contacting the *Guild* is a good starting place. Many dance music composers will have repertoire suggestions, and may have access to unpublished works they would like performed. Nonetheless, there remains a void in the literature that addresses an actual methodology of collaboration for the performers.

The Flute and Dance

The flute is a viable medium with which to explore the collaborative process in music and dance. Various types of flutes have existed since ancient civilization until the present day, as have many dance forms. Archeologists in Slovenia discovered one of the oldest flutes ever found, dating back 43,000 years ago. The tone holes are carved into a hollow animal bone. In China, archaeologists found the world's oldest still-playable musical instrument, a 9,000-year-old flute carved from the wing of a crane bone.¹⁶ This flute is more than twice as old as instruments used in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and other early civilizations. Just as virtually every culture in the world has developed a method of dance, likewise they have a version of the flute.

¹⁶ Joseph B. Verrengia, "Oldest Instrument Found in China" (*Associated Press*; Internet; available from http://dailynews.yahoo.com/h/ap/19990922/sc/oldest_instrument_1.html), accessed 24 September 1999.

The flute sound has been paired with dance for many purposes and in numerous cultures. For example, in early tribal cultures the flute symbolizes fertility, harvest, and love in ritual dances.¹⁷ In several shamanistic cultures, the flute accompanies the medicine man dances.¹⁸ In Brazil, the *Siusi* tribe performs a circular partner dance with flute music.¹⁹ Distinction between courtly dance and folk dance occurred in Europe during the Medieval Era, yet the recorder continued to be played for both the “untamed” dances, and the formal *basse danses*.²⁰ Panpipes are important in the traditional dance music of Peru, Greece, and Ireland. Ancient Greek vases, with their depictions of pipers and dancing figures, portray an early link between the flute and dance.²¹ To this day in Cairo, dervish Monks “whirl” to ancient Turkish melodies played on the flute.²² From shepherds in the fields to modern times, clearly there is an almost archetypal association of the flute with the purest, most basic musical expression and a natural invitation to respond in dance. The flute appears to cross many diverse cultural boundaries and pervade numerous dance forms.

The varied flute timbres are appropriate for dance as they can evoke different emotions and inspire movement. Solo flute works by Western European composers, such as Claude Debussy’s *Syrinx* and J.S. Bach’s *Solo par la flute traversière* BWV 1013 have been used for choreography numerous times although they were not intended as dance music per se. André Jolivet’s *Cinq Incantations for solo flute*, which expresses

¹⁷ Curt Sachs, *World History of the Dance* (New York: Norton, 1965), 179.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 172.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 147.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 317.

²¹ Teck, *Ear Training*, 202-203.

²² Urlin, 57.

the primordial forces revealed in human dance,²³ has been adopted for dance as well. An example from the early 18th century of a flute piece actually intended for dance is *Partita for Two Flutes* by Dutch composer Peit Ketting.

As a traditional member of the modern orchestral instrumentation, the flute is featured within many ballet scores. Perhaps the most well known example is Tchaikovsky's "Dance of the Reed Flutes" from the ballet *The Nutcracker*. In Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloé* the love scene between the two main characters is accompanied by one of the most important flute solos in the literature. Ballets by composers such as Aaron Copland, Igor Stravinsky, and Sergi Prokofiev all point to a certain affinity between flute and dance as well.

Masterpieces in the operatic literature also include the flute in a prominent role. While the stage blocking and movements in opera are not dance per se, analogies can be drawn in the role of the music in both dance and opera compositions. In Willibald Gluck's opera *Orpheus and Euridice* the "Dance of the Blessed Spirits" dance scene is set to a flute solo. In the opera *Cardillac* by Paul Hindemith a deranged goldsmith villain enters the heroine's room to steal back some gold he sold to her. His entrance is an extended ballet section choreographed to essentially solo flute music. In the "mad scene" from Domenico Donizetti's opera *Lucia di Lamermoor*, Lucia works her way down a grand staircase accompanied entirely by a flute solo.

Another possibility is for the musicians to add movement or dance to the performance themselves. Branching off in this direction, Oliver Knussen's *Masks* and

²³ *Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. s.v. "Jolivet."

Karlheinz Stockhausen's "Kathinka's Gesang", "Abduction", and "Tip-of-the-Tongue-Dance" (all from the multi-media opera *Licht*) require the performer to memorize the music and move to choreography indicated in the score while playing. Similarly, flutist Elizabeth Brown was drawn into visual aspects of Thea Musgrave's *Orpheo I* and added her own choreography. In a review of her performance *The New York Times* commented: "Moving as persuasively as she played the flute, Miss Brown wove those strands of music into a potent suggestion of Orpheo's dark voyage after Euridice."²⁴ These works, where the musician also becomes the dancer, challenge us to question how we think of sound and movement together.²⁵

The flute continues to be closely associated with dance. The melodic and expressive capacities of the flute can lend itself to many styles of dance including ballet, modern, and ethnic dancing. Extended flute techniques such as flutter tonguing, whistle tones, breath tones, singing while playing and key clicks can expand the traditional sound, adding more creative possibilities for dance. Members of the flute family include concert, alto, and bass flutes, piccolo, recorder, fife, baroque flute, Native American flute, crystal flute, and panpipes – all which contribute to a rich repertoire for dance. Contemporary composers such as Ray Brooks, Henry Cowell, Lukas Foss, Marc Langier, Leigh Landy, Otto Luening, Steve Rush, Wallingford Riegger and Joan Tower include the flute in their dance music scores. Some works are for solo flute, while others are written for a larger ensemble which include flute within the instrumentation.

²⁴ Teck, *Music for the Dance*, 93-94.

²⁸ Michael Seaver "A Singular Impulse—Musician and Dancer as One Performer" *Journal of the International Guild of Musicians in Dance* 2 (1992), 21-22.

Yet, there are hardly any published references regarding past or contemporary works specifically written for flute and dance. The *National Flute Association* Library, which is housed at the University of Arizona, catalogs flute music by category such as flute and piano, flute and orchestra, and flute choir. While flute and dance is recognized as one of the categories, only two works are currently listed. This genre is rarely included in university-level flute syllabi. This study aims to elevate the significance of collaborative works in general, and in the flutist's repertoire specifically.

Chapter 3

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MUSIC AND DANCE

There are many relationships between music and dance. In the collaborative arena, the shared properties of music and dance provide the performers with a common frame of reference. There are also differences between the two disciplines that can be utilized in a complementary manner to enhance each other. Music and dance can serve each other, and thus ultimately belong together. Joining them allows performers to develop and present ideas that could not have existed separately. Shared properties include organization, time, tempo, rhythm, dynamics, and texture. Contrasts between written music notation and the oral tradition of dance as well as the importance of space in dance are significant differences that become apparent during the collaborative process.

Shared Properties of Music and Dance

Organization: Perhaps the elements of organization are what unify all forms of art. Philosopher Suzanne Langer believes that “Nothing has an aesthetic existence without form.”²⁶ Accordingly, music and dance are both based upon some type of organization and structure. It is the organization of sound that creates music, and the organization of movement that creates dance. In music this organization is perceived aurally; in dance this organization is perceived visually.

²⁶ Suzanne Langer, *Problems of Art* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), 23.

Time: Whereas all art forms rely on some type of organization, the performing arts of music and dance are dependent upon the axis of time.²⁷ The elements of music and dance must exist within the framework of time. Time is the ordering force that coordinates, measures, and calculates the composition.²⁸ The manner in which this time is divided is the work's essence, and the performance can even change the way we experience time. At the most fundamental level, the entire structure of music and dance is its' actual duration. This is not to imply that a collaborative work must share the same timing: for example, the dance can begin in silence, or the music can begin before the dancing.

Tempo: Tempo is closely related to both time and rhythm. Both musicians and dancers have an understanding of tempo and can communicate to achieve the desired speed. Musicians must learn to adapt the speed of their performance to accommodate the needs of the dancer(s). The tempo may be determined in rehearsals but it could change in actual performance to fit the movement of the dancers in that moment.

Rhythm: In both arts, highly specific proportions divide time into rhythms. The concept of rhythm permeates our existence in the broadest sense. For example, there is rhythm in the calendar year, the four seasons, seconds, minutes and hours, the tide of the ocean, our breathing, and our heartbeat.²⁹ In music, sound and silence is organized in an array of patterns between the beats to create rhythm. In dance, the pulsation,

²⁷ Louis Horst and Carroll Russell, *Modern Dance Forms in Relation to the other Modern Arts* (San Francisco: Impulse Publications, 1961), 29-30.

²⁸ Lynne Anne Blom and L. Tarin Chaplin, *The Intimate Act of Choreography* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1982), p 23.

²⁹ Jack Gottlieb, "Let There Be Music: A Composer Analyzes His Craft to Aid the Choreographer" *Dance Magazine* (April, 1959), 53.

arrangement, and patterns of body movement create the rhythm. While a musician uses bodily movement to produce rhythms with their instrument, likewise the dancer creates rhythms with their movements. At certain times, the bodily movement is such an integral part for the musicians that they might even be considered dancers.³⁰

There is a definite correlation between basic music rhythms and dance rhythms.³¹ Many of the rhythmic patterns that pervade Western music are derived from dance rhythms.³² Likewise, dance forms such as the *allemande*, *bourée*, *minuet*, *mussette*, *sicilienne*, and *sarabande* have been adapted as musical structures.

Dynamics: Dynamics are defined as a continuous variation and contrast in intensity, force, or motion, as in music or in dance. Dynamics are communicated in both music and dance, albeit in different ways. In music, dynamic level corresponds to the volume of sound. Music consists of varying intensity of sound in time.³³ In dance, dynamic level relates to the physical force, or energy. Dance consists of varying intensity of movement in time. Thus, dynamics are the interaction of intensity with time in both arts.³⁴

Texture: Analogies can be drawn between harmony in music and texture in dance.³⁵ In music, harmonic texture is the pattern of sound created by tones or lines played or sung simultaneously. The resulting harmony is either consonant or dissonant.

³⁰Judy Van Zile, "Examining Movement in the Context of the Music Event: A Working Model", *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 20 (1988), 125.

³¹ Aaron Copland, *What to Listen for in Music* (New York: Mentor, 1963), 35.

³² *Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, s.v "dance."

³³ Loma Roberts "A Minimum of Music Training for Teachers" *Dance Observer* IV.3 (1937), 25.

³⁴ Lynne Anne Blom and L. Tarin Chaplin, *The Intimate Act of Choreography* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1982), 73.

³⁵ Horst and Russell, 48.

The basic types of harmonic textures include monophony, homophony, heterophony, polyphony, and sound collage. In dance, the physical quality of the movement paired with the density or sparseness of action creates the texture.

Differences between Music and Dance

Written Notation versus Oral Tradition: A highly codified, fixed, and specific system of written notation exists for music. This visual representation of musical sound is extremely precise and for the most part communicates the complete information necessary for performing the music. In the realm of classical music, the performers are typically able to prepare their part by reading a standardized system of notation. While the realization of a score, including approaches to phrasing, articulation, tone quality, and expression are largely passed on through an oral rehearsal process, the musicians are able to learn their individual parts beforehand, and usually expected to come into the rehearsal thoroughly prepared.

Dance however, predominantly relies upon oral tradition. A teacher or choreographer demonstrates the movement, and the dancers must be able to see this movement and put it into their own body. The movement is often explained verbally as well. Although some systems of dance notation have been developed, such as Labanotation, dance primarily continues to be taught using the “knowledge by description and imitation method”.³⁶ The Suzuki method of music instruction does establish aural and instrumental skills first, but the musician eventually learns to read notation whereas the majority of dancers depend entirely on the oral rehearsal process.

³⁶ Ibid., 4.

Because dancers are not reading from a written score, the amount of practice time required for them to learn a new piece tends to be far greater than it is for musicians. Unlike musicians who can learn and practice their parts prior to rehearsal, dancers generally learn their movements during rehearsal time. Furthermore, coordinating the dance patterns and sounds together requires extra practice. Compared to learning music from a score, the amount of time required for learning a dance is increased exponentially and this will impact the collaborative rehearsal process.

Spatial Aspects: Movement through space is an important concept for dancers but plays a less prominent role in musical performance. Although musicians must move in order to produce sound and often use “pre-playing”, “concurrent”, and “post-playing” movements to communicate with each other,³⁸ this motion serves as a means to an end. In dance, movement is the primary focus, i.e., the end result. While some composers, notably Henry Brant, worked with spatial concepts in order to place the musicians throughout the hall, the musicians themselves remain stationary.

The choreographer and dancer are acutely aware of the three-dimensional canvas of the stage space. All movement must be delineated in this space. The dance patterns result in symmetric and/or asymmetric divisions of the space. Geometric properties of the space include corners, levels, diagonals, upstage, downstage, the proscenium, the cyclorama, the wings, and the center.

³⁸ Van Zile, 127.

Chapter 4

FIVE CONTEMPORARY WORKS FOR FLUTE AND DANCE

Compositions by Larry Attaway, Daniel Dorff, Ezra Laderman, Beth Mehocic, and Alexandra Pierce were chosen for this project because they are all written specifically for performance with flute and dance. These works show a range of approaches and possibilities that can be explored with collaboration. Every one of these American composers are still living, and interviews were conducted with all of them to elicit historical information and insight about each piece and any other perspectives the composer had to offer about creating and performing collaborative works. Drawing upon my experiences with these pieces I identified the fundamental elements of the collaborative process.

Each of the selected compositions represents a different approach to combining the two disciplines. In *Recesses*, the choreography was set first and the music was composed afterwards to fit the movement. *Duet for Flute and Dancer* is written with standard notation in the flute part while non-pitched rhythmic notation structures and guides the choreography. In *Through A Misty Arch...*, the poem and flute ensemble score provide a springboard for the choreographer to interpret through movement. Each movement in *Incantations* characterizes voodoo deities, yet the choreography is completely up to the creation of the individual. *Escaped Exotics* also incorporates a theme that is described in the score. The flute part is notated and the choreography, or movement is meant to depict the sound visually. The study of these collaborative works highlights the shared properties of music and dance, as well as the differences.

Recesses (1978)

Composer: Larry Attaway

Choreography: Bella Lewitzsky

Larry Attaway (b. 1949), composer, pianist, and flutist was born in Georgia. He received a Bachelor of Music degree from Florida State University where he studied flute with Albert Tipton and dance with Nancy Smith-Fitcher. He continued his dance and music training with Lee Hambro, Cara Bradbury Marcus, and Donald McKayle. At the California Institute of the Arts from 1972-1997, he served in many capacities including faculty member, Associate Dean of the School of Dance, President of the Academic Senate, Faculty Trustee, and Chair of Interschool Projects Committee.

Attaway is a founding member of the *International Guild of Musicians in Dance* and now serves as the *Guild's* President and editor of the *Guild's Journal*, the only professional publication of its kind. He is currently a member of the Dance Department faculty at Butler University and Director of the Jordan College Academy of Dance.

Attaway became completely consumed with performing and composing for dance. He believes composing for dance is its own unique art form:³⁸

The aspects of the compositional craft are the same but it is my belief that you need to leave room for the dancers. My dance compositions are only a part of the overall piece. For me, to listen to the music without viewing the dance means that there is something missing, and vice versa.

He collaborated with his mentor, choreographer Bella Lewitzky, as Composer-in-Residence and Music Director for the Lewitzky Dance Company for 25 years. He and Lewitzky collaborated on over 19 works and he toured with the company throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, and Africa. During his association with Lewitzky, the

³⁸ Attaway to the author, 5 June 2000.

collaborative process varied with each piece. They reached a point where conversation about the music was usually not needed. Most of the time the choreography came first, and if the music was conceived first, it always underwent revision to fit the choreography. In many ways they were “kindred spirits.” He recalls:⁴⁰

The best of times were when we would be working at the same time, a bit of choreography, then a bit of music. These intimate working sessions were the most rewarding to me. Towards the end of our time together it became increasingly difficult to ascertain which came first. Who was leading whom?

Lewitzky decided to create a set of solos as a gift for three senior members of the company in 1978. The dancers were Sean Greene, Loretta Livingston, and Iris Pell. Titled *Recesses*, the piece includes a solo for each dancer and a trio section for all the soloists together. The concept was that each solo would be built entirely around the personality of the specific person. First the dancers wrote about some of their inner thoughts on life, dancing, and performing. Recorded readings were edited down to a few choice phrases and then added to the musical score. After utilizing the words, both Lewitzky and Attaway decided the text was superfluous and it was eliminated. The ability to let go of the pre-conceived idea for the work was significant. It is an example of the flexibility Attaway and Lewitzky attained during their years together as a collaborative team.

The music for each of the three solos is composed with two parts: one recorded instrumental line, and another line of the same instrument to be performed live. “Iris” is with flute, “Sean” with piano, and “Loretta” with harp. The coda is written for the three

⁴⁰ Ibid.

live instruments. A version of the coda was also written for flute and piano to perform when a harpist was not available.

Attaway believes that all wind instruments have a connection to dance in that dance phrasing is closely related to the breath phrasing of wind players.⁴¹ As a composer and a flutist, he is comfortable writing for an instrument he knows very well.⁴² The flute specifically has the ability to be lyrical, soft, piercing, sultry, quicksilver, languid, and sensual. These varied timbres are well suited for dance, and Lewitsky was fond of having Attaway play flute in technique classes.

The flute sound, along with other “subconscious” factors influenced Attaway’s choice of the flute for Pell’s solo.⁴³ As a dancer, Pell responded to the sound of the flute in a very intangible way. The very personal nature of the choreographic process of this solo connected to her association with the flute. She was a musical mover, very sensitive to the nuances of sound. Something about her reminded Attaway of the flute. The dark, brooding quality of the low register and the plaintive sound in the upper register seemed to match Pell’s personality. She was a private, solitary person, and the solo flute captured that feeling of aloneness. The multi-faceted person is paralleled with the multi-layered timbre of the flute.

The choreography was basically complete before Attaway composed the music. The first part of “Iris” is new choreographic material and the second part is comprised of excerpts from other solos that Pell had danced.⁴⁴ Although this second section of

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Attaway to the author, 9 June 2000.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Amy Ernst “Music and Dance Collaborations Seminar”, 21 November 1999.

“Iris” quotes bits and pieces of choreography from her previous solos, Attaway composed entirely new music to accompany it. Of the three solos, “Iris” was the only one ever performed by a dancer other than the original. When Pell left the company, Amy Ernst took over the piece.

Amy Ernst was a member of the Lewitzky Company from 1976-1986 immediately following her dance training at Stephens College and Texas Christian University. She then practiced physical therapy in Los Angeles for six years before earning a M.F.A. degree at the University of Washington. She was Assistant Professor of Dance at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln from 1993-1995 and has been on the Dance Faculty at the University of Arizona since 1995.

Ernst learned *Recesses* from watching Pell perform live and on videotape. Due to the personal nature of the choreography, Lewitzky was wary of having another dancer perform it. The choreography originally reflected Lewitzky’s personal vision and interpretation of Pell’s personality. Ernst auditioned it for Lewitzky, who accepted her performance and further guided her.⁴⁵ Ernst was able to transform the work so that it became a piece about herself.⁴⁶ When Pell subsequently returned to the company for a few more years she and Ernst shared the piece, alternating performances. Each dancer had a unique way of moving and their own way of interpreting Lewitzky’s choreography, thus bringing different aspects to the piece. They continued to learn about the piece by watching each other’s performances.

⁴⁵ Ernst to the author, 29 July 2000.

⁴⁶ Attaway to the author, 5 June 2000.

In the ten years that Ernst performed with the Lewitzky Company, she considers *Recesses* her favorite work in the repertoire. She recalls that when Attaway performed the flute part live, the piece was “more exiting, vivid, fun, immediate, alive, and more personal.”⁴⁶ Although neither Ernst nor the audience could see Attaway performing in the orchestra pit, the live music allowed for instinctive interactions between the performers. She believes dancing with live music is an incredible learning experience because the dancer must be flexible and be able to make adjustments in the moment.

Duet for Flute and Dancer (1957) Composer: Ezra Laderman

Ezra Laderman (b. 1924) was born in Brooklyn, New York. He received his B.A. from Brooklyn College in 1950, and his M.A. from Columbia University in 1952. He studied composition with Stefan Wolpe and Otto Luening. He has taught at Sarah Lawrence College, SUNY Binghamton, and directed the Bennington Composers Conference in 1967-68. In 1988, he was visiting composer at Yale, and from 1989-1995 he was Dean of its School of Music. He was named professor of composition at Yale School of Music in 1996. He has garnered three Guggenheim Awards and the American Prix de Rome.

Laderman has been commissioned by the Philadelphia, Dallas, Houston, Fort Worth, Syracuse, Denver, Columbus, Albany, and New Haven Symphony Orchestras, the National, Louisville, and Chicago Symphonies, as well as by the New York, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestras. He has written for distinguished artists including Yo-Yo Ma, Emanuel Ax, Murray Panitz, and the Juilliard and Tokyo

⁴⁶ Ernst to the author, 29 July 2000.

String Quartets. He has also composed for world-renowned flutists Julius Baker, Samuel Baron, and Jean-Pierre Rampal.

Laderman's compositions range from solo instrumental and vocal works to large-scale choral and orchestral music. His eight string quartets and his concertos for piano, violin, cello, flute, and double winds are all notable contributions to the repertory. He has also written music for the Academy Award-winning films "The Eleanor Roosevelt Story" and "Black Fox" and an opera based on the life of Marilyn Monroe.

Laderman incorporates a lyrical style into contemporary context, using tonal materials in combination with atonal elements. He seeks out unusual formal structures for his compositions. His personal vigor, often intense and romantic, comes through in his music. His writing has evolved over the years such that the music, although rigorously conceived, speaks with immediacy and accessibility.

Duet for Flute and Dancer, written in 1957 and published in 1974, was Laderman's first composition written to include dance. Although he originally set out to write a solo flute piece, he says:⁴⁸

I found myself thinking about still another solo instrument – dancer. As the flute part took shape, the dance emerged in my mind as well. A bit on the fantastic side, in spite of my years of exposure to the dance. I was tormented to capture the moving, living, image. A clumsy notation was hurriedly conceived and written onto the score to correspond with the flute solo. From this unintentional beginning a new relationship (although not altogether without precedent) is slowly and painstakingly evolving.

⁴⁸ Ezra Laderman, "An Experiment in Cooperation", *Dance Magazine* (1957), 37.

He wrote standard music notation to structure the choreography above the flute line. Notating the rhythmic action, dynamics, and intensity of the dance to relate visually to the music is an intricate process.⁴⁸

The choreographer must adhere to this provided structure. The following principles are to be followed to when realizing the dancer's part:⁴⁹

1. *Notes* are in effect pulses to be enacted with any part of the body at the dancer's discretion.
2. A *sustained note* does not intimate a cessation of movement, but a fluidity of motion.
3. The duration of a dance "thought" is determined by the *length* of a *phrase curve*.
4. The *depth* of the *phrase curve* reveals the breadth of the movement; notes rising above and falling below the dancer's line also indicate the use of increased space
5. A *phrase mark not connecting two notes denotes a suspension*.
6. Various *accent marks* correspond to the intensity of the dancer's attack.

The entrances, exits, attacks, phrases, and movement sequences must be translated in spatial movement.

This work poses a challenge because the choreographer is not given the freedom to create movement from the impetus of the music alone - the dance score must be adhered to. Choreographer Jean Erdman was intrigued by Laderman's idea and was the first dancer to try the piece. She says: "I could read the rhythms, and we could get movements, but I found I had no idea how to choreograph it until the composer told me what his idea was in the music. So it was quite reversed...a completely different

⁴⁸ Laderman to the author, 14 August 2000.

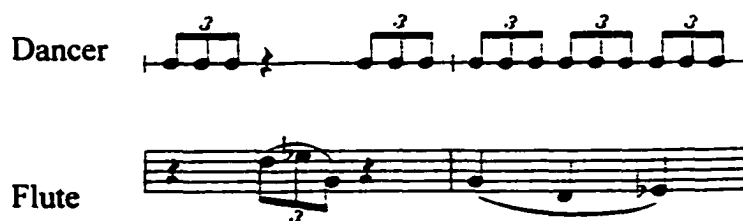
⁴⁹ Laderman, *Duet for Flute and Dancer* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 1.

experience, and it came out very well”.⁵¹ Erdman and flutist Samuel Baron premiered *Duet for Flute and Dancer* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1957.

The method of the composer notating the dance score has not become standard practice. As Erdman says, “It was a real sweat, reading a score for ten dancers and having them do exactly the rhythm of the composer! But that rhythmic pattern was in counterpoint to what he wrote for the instruments.”⁵² Laderman composed several more works for Erdman, however *Duet* remains his only published collaborative work.

Laderman is aware that *Duet* has been performed as a solo flute piece (sans dance) and “does not approve.”⁵³ In this piece, the spatial element of a *standing* instrumentalist in combination with a dancer is of utmost importance. Although this detail may not be clear to all performers, he says it “exists in his mind.”⁵⁴ He has enjoyed numerous renditions of the piece and observes that for some inexplicable reason, it is most effective when one performer is female and one is male.⁵⁵

In *Duet*, the written musical notation provides the complete information necessary for the flutist to perform the piece, while the dance part must still be realized. For example the choreographer must decide how to create these triplets in some visible way, be it the hand, arm, foot, leg, head, or the entire body in measure 7-8:



⁵¹ Teck, *Music for the Dance*, 58.

⁵² Teck, *Music for the Dance*, 58.

⁵³ Laderman to the author, 14 August 2000.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

It was an intricate and exceptionally time-consuming process to translate the noted score into movement.

The choreographer I worked with, Elaine Husted, understood the music notation due to a former music class. She purchased a metronome, and we began rehearsals by first “singing and tapping out” our respective rhythms. In my experience with this piece, our dancer Isaac Cordova was unable to read the score and relied upon Husted to explain every detail to him. While this piece exemplifies the rhythmic similarities in music and dance, it also exposes the vast difference between standard written music notation and the oral tradition of dance.

A significant consideration in preparing *Duet* for performance is staging. The essence of a duet is defined such that “each performer is essential to the whole.”⁵⁶ Husted and I agreed that the title of the piece implies a partnership; the music is not merely accompaniment for the dance. This was confirmed upon reading a journal article by Laderman: “The work I am involved in makes the units of music and dance not just related in any of these ways, but inseparable. They are intertwined, and if realized properly, will draw from each other.”⁵⁷ We decided that I would be placed center stage and the dancer would move in front, behind, and around me. The consensus on interpretation, here in the realm of staging, is an important element of the collaborative process.

While costumes are sometimes considered the final element, for this collaboration it was one of the first decisions. When Husted first heard the musical part

⁵⁵ Ibid.

of *Duet*, she imagined a strange man costumed in a black hooded cloak. I suggested that I wear coordinating colors and perform barefoot like Cordova. I later read that when flutist Elizabeth Brown and choreographer Nancy Allison collaborated on this composition, they wore color-coordinated costumes (pink and feathered) and Brown was also barefoot.⁵⁷

After our initial performance of *Duet*, several audience members commented that the hooded cloak obscured, rather than enhanced the dance movements. A maroon velvet top replaced the cloak, and I wore a similarly textured dress in a coordinating color. When Husted parted with her initial vision of a dancer in a hooded cloak, the choreography instantly became more tangible. If an aspect of the collaboration is not working or it can be improved upon, it is important to allow for changes.

The difficulty of choreographing to a prescribed structure and the limited number of dancers able to read musical rhythmic notation has prevented this practice from becoming prevalent. Since most choreographers are accustomed interpreting the music freely, the imposed structure creates limitations. “Adhering to the rhythms in the score was a challenge - it made the choreography more difficult” says Husted.

Through A Misty Arch . . . (1986) Composer: Daniel Dorff

Often, collaborations take their inspiration from another art form, such as painting, sculpture, architecture, literature, or poetry. This can serve to motivate the composer, providing an image or plot; or they can be included in the final performance. Metric regularity, pulse, and rhythm characterize the words, sounds, and movements in

⁵⁵ Blom and Chaplin, 176-177.

poetry, music, and dance respectively. Because poetry is one of the “time arts” along with music and dance, it is particularly suitable as the starting point for a collaborative work.⁵⁹

Composer Daniel Dorff finds that the arts provide “a starting point, a focus, a mood, and a texture”⁶⁰ to draw upon, and enjoys composing from this direction. He has written a piece based on the works of Claude Monet called *Sonatine de Giverny* where each movement portrays a different painting. He has also written several pieces for children’s concerts based on literary fairy tales such as *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* and *The Tortoise and the Hare*. *Through a Misty Arch...* is his first composition inspired by poetry.

Dorff (b. 1956) was born in New York and received early acclaim at the age of 18 when he won First Prize at the Aspen Music Festival’s annual composer’s competition. Originally a saxophonist and a rock musician, he earned degrees in composition from Cornell University and the University of Pennsylvania. His composition teachers include George Rochberg, George Crumb, Karel Husa, Richard Wernick, Ralph Shapey, Elie Siegmeister, and Henry Brant. He studied saxophone with Sigurd Rascher and is an active clarinetist in the Philadelphia Region.

Dorff has been Director of Publications for Theodore Presser since 1985 and is a sought-after lecturer on music engraving and notation. He has presented lectures on these topics at many colleges as well as Carnegie Hall. His compositions have been

⁵⁷ Laderman, “An Experiment in Cooperation”, 38.

⁵⁸ Teck, *Music for the Dance*, 94.

⁵⁹ Horst and Russell, 29-30, 40.

⁶⁰ Dorff to the author, 23 October 2000.

published by Theodore Presser Company, MMB Music Inc., Elkan-Vogel, Shawnee Press, Mel Bay, Kendor Music, Karl Fischer, Tenuto Publications, and Golden Music. His music has been recorded on the Crystal, Silver Crest, Capstone, Orange Note, and Meister labels. In 1996, he was named composer-in-residence for the Haddonfield Symphony.

In addition, the Philadelphia, Detroit, Indianapolis, Baltimore, St. Louis, Oregon, Colorado, Sacramento and Chicago Symphonies have performed Dorff's music. Other commissions have come from the Eastman Wind Ensemble, American Wind Symphony Orchestra, Louisville Orchestra, Network for New Music, Concerto Soloists of Philadelphia, Percussive Arts Society (Polish Chapter), and the International Contrabassoon Festival. The National Flute Association's Piccolo Committee has also commissioned his work for the annual Young Artists Piccolo Competition. Perhaps Dorff is best known through children's concerts, and has been commissioned twice by the Minnesota Orchestra's Kinder Konzert series.

Through A Misty Arch... (1986) was inspired by a poem written by Joy MacAlister, a sixth-grade student at Ardmore Avenue Elementary School in Lansdowne, Pennsylvania. MacAlister attended a residence program that was supported in part by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts in Education where she created the poem in 1985.⁶¹ *Through A Misty Arch...* can be performed as a concert piece for flute ensemble alone, as music for dance, and/or as music underscoring a reading of the poem.

⁶¹ Daniel Dorff, *Through A Misty Arch* . . . (Pennsylvania: Theodore Presser Co., 1986), 1.

Dorff was composer-in-residence at the Arts in Education program for one week. He read many of the poems the children had written the prior week, and felt MacAlister's imagery lent itself to a multi-media piece.⁶¹ He composed the piece for the children's flute choir concert that took place the following evening. MacAlister read her poem while a group of children performed improvisatory dance with the flute music. Although the music is technically simple enough for young flutists, it possesses challenges in the areas of tuning, breathing, and ensemble playing. Many adult flute choirs enjoy performing the piece.

The text of *Through A Misty Arch...* is as follows:⁶²

I walk into another world,
Through a misty arch
Nothing is around me
Except dry, empty space
The sounds are quiet and soft
Just as at home
Through a misty arch
To a quiet place
The quiet is a lullaby
To rock me to sleep.

The timing for the entrance of the poem is specified in the score: lines 1-6 are read beginning in measure 11 and then lines 7-10 are read beginning in measure 36.

There are three flute parts to the score. The second and third parts include a *divisi* note in the last bar, so the piece actually requires a minimum of five flutists to play all five pitches in the final chord. Since the score reads "for flute ensemble", the number of flutists meant to perform this piece remains open to interpretation. I thought

⁶¹ Dorff to the author, 23 October 2000.

⁶² Dorff, *Through A Misty Arch* . . . , i.

of creating a literal, tangible “arch” pattern with multiple flutists. When I spoke with Dorff, he confirmed my instincts of using flute choir saying “the more the better!”

Meanwhile, choreographer and dancer Holly Seitz envisioned a set on the stage. The structure not only serves as a metaphor for the arch, but it allows an area of the stage space to be utilized that is often overlooked. The task of creating a set first appeared daunting, but in consultation with University of Arizona set designer Tyler Herring, the arch was built, painted, and transported from the Music Building to the Dance Building.

Because the set requires the effort of several people to set up, transport, and tear down, some rehearsals were rendered with the set in our imagination only. With the set serving as the metaphor for the arch, we found that placing the flutists in the arch pattern became redundant. We changed the staging of the flute ensemble to further play upon vertical levels of the stage space. The flutists were arranged in random groups with one, two, or three people. They were standing or seated at varying heights that created depth and texture.

Since the flute ensemble was not available for all of the rehearsals, we used chairs in place of people to determine staging. In preparing the flute ensemble for performance, the additional components of stage placement, stage presence, and specific concert dress were addressed in addition to musical ideas. The ensemble also had to rehearse carrying their flutes, music, music stands, and chairs to specific locations in complete darkness. Each music stand was marked with glow-in-the-dark tape to guide the flutists to their places.

An important decision was whether or not to integrate the poetry reading into our performance. Choreographer Doris Humphrey champions the use of words, “with the greatest taste and caution”.⁶⁴ It seemed that adding words to the flute ensemble music, two dancers, and a set would be overwhelming or chaotic. When we experimented with the poem, we discovered that it actually enhanced the choreography. I was particularly pleased with Seitz’s circular movement on the word “around”. One view is that the poetry actually becomes another dancer. Another interpretation is that the vocal sound is a part of the musical texture.

At the final technical rehearsal, however, we chose to change the placement of the poetry reading that is suggested by Dorff. We began with the poetry reading from an offstage wing with the house and stage lights off. Then a spotlight illuminated one dancer, and slowly the lighting widened, encompassing the stage area as the musical ensemble started. I believe this sequence of events allowed the audience to hear the poem completely without interference and understand that the music and dance were based upon the poem.

In a subsequent performance of *Through A Misty Arch...* we eliminated the poetry reading. Some people interpreted the words as superfluous because the music and dance already stands on its own as a complete composition. The piece still has meaning without requiring further explanation from the text. In this rendition only three flutists performed, one on each part of the trio. Some of the visual impact was lost because three flutists cannot create as many vertical levels on the stage as twelve

⁶⁴ Humphrey, 126.

people. The sound was thinner but this did not seem to alter the choreography in a profound way. From a visual standpoint, this performance accentuated the choreography whereas the twelve flutists in the previous performance emphasized the aspect of live music.

Incantations for Flute (1988) Composer: Beth Mehocic

Beth Mehocic (b. 1953) was born in Ohio and earned a B.M. in composition and theory from Youngstown State University and a M.M. in composition from Michigan State University. She holds a Ph.D. in composition, theory, and literature from Michigan State University. She specialized in dance music and dance music history and was declared a dance music specialist. In 1982 she became Composer-in-Residence at the University of Las Vegas, Nevada and has been the Music Director for the Department of Dance since 1995.

Mehocic has written over fifty works for orchestra, concert band, and chamber ensemble with dance which have been performed throughout the United States, Japan, and Europe. She has received numerous grants and commissions from both music and dance organizations. She has collaborated with many prominent choreographers including Carol Rae, Barbara Smith, Deborah Stone, Nancy McCaleb, Edward Talton-Jackson, Jennifer Thomas, and Emily Yewell. She has released four recordings, and held a solo debut concert at Carnegie Hall in 1988. *Chamber Music America*, *Dance Teacher Now*, and at the Elon College Women Studies Conference have published Mehocic's papers and articles. She is a founding member of the *International Guild of Musicians in Dance* and served as editor of the Guild's *Journal* from 1991-1995.

Mehocic considers herself a kinesthetic composer. Most of her music is directly inspired from movement first, rather than being cerebral or “paper” music. The reverse is also true in that when she hears sounds she immediately sees or feels movement.⁶⁵ This is not typical of most composers, and although the synergy of movement and sound can be learned to some extent, few people are actually born with this rare ability.

Mehocic was familiar with Davidovsky’s *Synchronisms for Flute*, a composition written for solo flute and electronically generated tape. This piece also makes use of extended techniques and motivated Mehocic to write *Incantations for Flute*.⁶⁶ However, *Incantations* has no taped component, and *Synchronisms* is not meant as dance music.

Incantations for Flute (1988) is based on “Six Voodoo Flags”, an exhibit of Haitian voodoo art published in *The Connoisseur*, Feb. 1988. Vodoun, commonly called “voodoo”, is a syncretic religion derived from African polytheism, ancestor worship, and Catholicism. It is practiced chiefly in Haiti and has 50 million followers worldwide. There are two main rites of Vodoun worship: Rada (African), more passive with traditional African patterns and white clothing; and Petro (New World-Haitian), more violent with red clothing emphasizing vengeance and death. Drumming, dancing, chanting, and ecstatic trances characterize both Rada and Petro rites.⁶⁷

Vodoun is derived from vodu, meaning spirit or deity, and is a product of the slave trade. The Vodoun pantheon of gods is enormous, with hundreds of deities. These gods can be kind, beneficent, wise, violent, sexual, vindictive, generous, or mean. The

⁶⁵ Mehocic to the author, 8 June 2000.

“Voodoo Flags” are among the voodoo art forms that African slaves carried from Africa to the New World. They represent various deities and are designed to communicate respect and honor, and to herald a spirit’s coming, or it’s possession of a worshipper.⁶⁷

There are four deities represented in *Incantations for Flute*.⁶⁸ A large python or boa represents “Damballah”, the oldest god. It hisses but does not speak. Those possessed by it do not walk using their limbs, but slither instead. “Erzulie Freda”, one of the many Erzulies, is the Haitian goddess of love represented as the Virgin Mary. She is the moon wife of Legba, the sun. Pure and virginal, she is the goddess of beauty, love, wealth, and prosperity. She also encompasses the vices of jealousy, discord, and vengeance. “Bossou” is represented by a bull-like animal and the black stars that surround it are power points. “Grandboi” is the god of the woods, and his spirit is peaceful rather than aggressive or violent.

The flutist represents the role of the “Houngan”, the voodoo priest or priestess. The piece calls for many extended flute techniques including whistle tones, flutter tonguing, singing into the flute while playing, breath tones, and pitch bending-where the pitch is purposely brought out-of-tune by raising or lowering it. The flutist also recites spoken incantations at certain points. These extended techniques expand the traditional flute sound, and conjure up the atmosphere of voodoo ritual.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Mehocic to the author, 8 June 2000.

Prior to composing *Incantations for Flute*, Mehocic had devised a system based on the alphabet in that each letter of the alphabet is assigned a chromatic pitch.⁶⁹ The system is as follows:

pitch -	C	C#	D	Eb	E	F	F#	G	Ab	A	Bb	B		
letter -	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L		
number -	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
	Eb	E	F	F#	G	Ab	A	D	Eb	E	F	F#	G	Ab
	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Each deity portrayed in *Incantations* is spelled out with pitches extracted from the letters in the word. For example:

D A M B A L L A H

Eb C Eb Db C B B C G

The system is used for both the melodic and harmonic material, and “it always seems to capture the essence or mood of the word.”⁷⁰

Incantations for Flute was premiered at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in April 1988, and at Carnegie Recital Hall in June 1988. The choreography is not set or implied in the score, and thus is completely up to the interpretation of the individual performers. At my request, Mehocic suggested a scenario for the four movements:⁷¹

1. *Ah, Beh, Say* – flute solo, a chant conjuring up the spirit world by the Houngan. (“ABC” in Creole French pronunciation)
2. *Damballah* – male solo, representing the deity Damballah.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

3. *Bossou* – male/female duet between Erzulie Freda and Damballah, narrated by Bossou.
4. *Grandboi* – female solo, she is possessed by the peaceful male deity of the woods.

Choreographer April Greengaard altered this scenario to fit her interpretation of the music. Her choreography depicts the flutist in the role of the Houngan conjuring up Damballah who becomes possessed by the music. In turn, Damballah entices Erzulie Freda to dance with him. She becomes enthralled with him as they dance together in the third movement *Bossou*. In the last movement *Grandboi*, Erzulie Freda reflects upon her experience with Damballah in a solo dance. Thus, our performance portrays only the two deities Damballah and Erzulie Freda and there is no characterization of Bossou or Grandboi.

The voodoo priest or priestess, the Houngan, traditionally wears a top hat, tuxedo with tails, and a bow-tie during rituals. Since the flutist assumes the role of the Houngan in *Incantations*, I wanted to portray this character as literally as possible. I chose to wear this complete formal attire as I conjured up Damballah and Erzulie Freda from the stage wings. Because Damballah is associated with snakes, we wanted a costume that helped the audience to make this connection. Dancer Anton Smith wore shiny metallic python printed tights and a head-scarf with a snake pattern as he slithered on stage. Since one facet of Erzulie Freda combines beauty, love, and virtue, I felt a flowing white skirt would assist in presenting this image. In rehearsal, the bright stark white contrasted so much with Damballah that Greengaard thought they “didn’t even look like they were in the same piece.” The skirt also obstructed some details of the choreography. The white costume was replaced with a golden beige leotard that blended

more harmoniously with the snakeskin of Damballah and with dancer Susu Gray's skin tone.

In a second performance of *Incantations*, the costumes were altered. Although Mehocic envisions the Houngan in traditional attire, Greengaard wanted the flutist to unite more visually with the dancers. Because our second performance was in a classroom rather than in a dance auditorium, and she thought the top hat was "too prominent, too costumey, and distracting". My costume was changed to a simple black suit and sleek hairstyle: a ballet dancer's bun. Greengaard also changed Erzulie Freda's golden beige unitard to a green leotard because of the deities' connection with nature.

The second performance took place in a classroom, a drastically different venue than the original site, so the choreography had to be adjusted as well as the costumes. We acquired as much information about the new space as possible so we could prepare in advance. The classroom had a carpeted floor unlike the "marley" dance surface where we had rehearsed and performed before. Some of the turns and slithering floor movements were not as easy to execute for the dancers. The room was also much smaller, so we taped off a smaller section on the dance floor in rehearsal to mimic the new dimensions. In our first presentation of *Incantations*, I entered the stage walking backwards, playing the music by memory as I conjured up the deities. Since the classroom did not have wings, this dramatic element was omitted. I had to start the music on stage where I was completely visible to the audience. It is important to realize that special conditions may be imposed by the venue of your final performance.

Escaped Exotics (1985) Composer: Alexandra Pierce

Alexandra Pierce (b. 1934) is a pianist, composer, and movement artist. She has written works for symphony orchestra, string quartet, chorus, solo voice, piano, prepared piano, harp, woodwind, percussion, and mixed chamber ensembles. She received her education in composition at Yale and Brandies University. She is currently Professor of Music and Movement at the University of Redlands in California and heads the composition program.

Pierce has written several books and articles that specialize in movement for musicians. She is also a founding member of Moving Voices, an ensemble that performs music and poetry. Her scores have been published by Seesaw Music Corporation, Media Press, Arsis Press and Hildegard Music. Her music can be heard on Arizona University Recordings, Capriccio, and Vienna Modern Masters labels. Her music has received yearly ASCAP Standard Awards since 1979 and various other prizes.

As a pianist, composer, and movement artist, Pierce specializes in teaching the theory of movement qualities to musicians. She believes that there are four distinct movement qualities in music: the beat, melodic contour, the cadential tonic, and phrasing. The musician learns a series of kinesthetic exercises which embody the sound physically. Ultimately, the performer learns to translate gestural character into sound. The goal is to express through sound the meaning that has been explored and experienced physically through the exercises.⁷²

⁷² Pierce to the author, 21 October 2000.

Flutist Darla Pumphrey, a student in Pierce's class commissioned the *Escaped Exotics*. Pumphrey asked for music that would challenge her to incorporate kinesthetic expression into her flute playing. In the composer's conception of this piece, dance is optional, and it serves to express a visual representation of the sounds.⁷⁴ The dancer is the accompanist, encouraging the audience to see the shape of the music. As composer Roger Sessions has said, "music is a gesture"⁷⁵ and this piece embraces that concept. When it is performed with a different philosophy, as in my experience, the interaction between music and dance is changed.

In our performance, the dancers did not always embody the sound in such a literal manner. The choreography is more abstract in concept and does not necessarily follow the musical rhythm. However, there are periodic landmarks where the movement corresponds with the music. Some of the dance is done in duet fashion, where two dancers must be exactly synchronized. In rehearsing the piece, tempo became a critical issue. The dancers rely on certain cues from the music, as well as from each other. If the music is too fast or too slow, it becomes apparent physically in the dance. Similarly, the dancers had to adjust their tempo and timing to coincide with certain structural events in the music.

An "escaped exotic" is a plant growing wild in an area not indigenous to it. In *Escaped Exotics*, the governing image is a plant or being, out of place, living there with apparent enthusiasm. Yet, this being knows and is responsive to inner laws foreign to,

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Pischl, 9.

and probably not shared by, the immediate surroundings.⁷⁵ Choreographer Greengaard suggested that I represent the “escaped exotic” and the dancers portray the “native elements”. Her interpretation is that the flutist symbolizes mankind at peace with nature, yet separate from it. The dancers, costumed in green unitards, symbolize plants in nature. The flutist, being human in contrast, wears a long pale dress.

In the first movement, “Contouring Melody”, the musical emphasis is on the feel of the melody as it draws a line upward, falls downward, or glides across plateaus of pitch repetition and held notes. Greengaard’s choreographic story is about a trio of “plants” who become curious about the music. Then two of the “plants” become swept away in the music, and the third “plant” urgently tries to awaken them from their trance. She brings the other two “plants” out of their reverie and they encircle the music, ultimately extinguishing it’s very existence. The “solo plant” from “The Solitary Song” looks upon the scene from afar.

In the second movement, “Shaping Phrase around Climax”, the focus of the flutist is on clear articulation of performance phrases, each shaped around a concentrated climactic note. There could be one or more dancers expressing this idea. We did not perform this movement due to time constraints.

In the third movement, “Letting the Rhythm Through (The Solitary Song)” the concentration is on the released throw of weight into the changing eight-note groupings of 2’s, 3’s, and 4’s. Balanced meter is interjected with “little weight throws”, causing the meter to shift. Greengaard and I believed a solo dance texture would best parallel

⁷⁵ Alexandra Pierce, *Escaped Exotics* (New York: Seesaw Music Corporation, 1985), preface.

the title and sounds of this movement. The ensuing scenario is that the “plant”, normally used to being in the company of other plants, becomes enchanted with the music. This movement can be played on piccolo, if the timbre is preferred.

At the premiere of this piece, Grace Babosa expressed the musical qualities with improvisatory dance so that flutist Darla Pumphrey and the audience had visual encouragement to hear the music’s shapes. I watched a videotape of this performance after we had completed our project. In their interpretation, the music is given the primary role and Babosa’s movements are a reaction to the sounds. The result is quite different from our performance where Greengaard’s choreography was rehearsed, synchronized and polished. Yet another version was performed by flutist Rebecca York where melody climax, and beat were expressed with simple arm or hand movement by Steve Hanlon, a musician friend (but not dancer), who had rehearsed the piece with the flutist and was listening closely as she played in concert.⁷⁷ The piece has also been performed with set choreography at Smith College. Each vastly different performance of *Escaped Exotics* serves to inform us of how the role of each performer can affect the interpretation and overall outcome of a given musical score when it is combined with dance.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

Chapter 5

FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

INTERPRETING MUSIC FOR DANCE: A PERFORMANCE GUIDE

Interpreting music for dance is a distinctive art form. Based upon research and my personal experiences in working with dancers, I have discovered that there are integral factors to consider when combining music and dance. Fundamental elements of the collaborative process include a shared vision, starting out with a well-designed plan, and becoming aware of the differences between musical language and kinesthetic vocabulary. In addition, theatrical parameters such as staging, costumes, lighting and sets broaden the traditional horizons of the musician. Furthermore, trust, teamwork, flexibility, and communication become essential during the collaborative process. Identifying these fundamental elements of the collaborative process serves to guide musicians, dancers, and choreographers who are working together in partnership.

Shared Vision

A shared vision is vital to a successful collaborative experience. This vision should include a consensus on the interpretation, intent, and goal of the piece. Just as composers may perform their own musical compositions, it is possible for the choreographer and dancer to be one and the same. In many cases, the choreographer will be designing the movement patterns for other dancers. It is crucial to remember that typically a musician's role as composer, conductor, or performer is to support the intent and goal of the choreographer. This may require some compromises or shifts in attitude on the part of the musician.

The role of both performers within the piece needs to be determined. There is a vast difference between a composition with dance (when the dance accompanies the music), and a dance with music (when the music accompanies the dance). For example, Pierce's *Escaped Exotics* is based on the concept that the dancer provides visual support that enables the audience to see the shapes in the music. In contrast, the choreography could dominate the stage with the music providing an underlying ambiance, or mood that simply enhances the performance. For example in *Recesses* by Attaway and Lewitzky, the flutist is placed offstage and the dancer assumes central importance. The third possibility is the goal of equally shared roles between musicians and dancers. In Laderman's *Duet for Flute and Dancer*, both parts are rhythmically intertwined and thus create a partnership inseparable from each other.

The desired relationship between the two disciplines will affect and guide repertoire choices. In addition, the individual personalities involved in creating a collaborative performance will have a substantial impact on the final results. Without the essential shared vision, conflicts may arise in presenting a joint work. Ideally, there is a genuine interest, respect, and desire to learn about the art form other than your own when involved in collaboration.

Starting Out

Dancers are perhaps even more accustomed to working within groups than musicians are. Preparing a music and dance piece for performance involves many familiar steps that a musician is used to, as well as some added components. Certain issues should be addressed at the onset of the project. A planned timeline can insure that

deadlines will be met. Funding should be clarified: for example, will the musician or dancer be paid, is the choreographer commissioning the musician, or vice versa? There are many possible arrangements that can be worked out. The overall budget should also be determined, and any financial obligations agreed upon. For this project I was able to provide funds for the hall rental, the technical director, the videographer, the sets, and the costumes through grant monies.

Typically, the choreographer is the artistic director for the work and the musician supports their perspective. This project is a bit different in that I initiated it, selected the repertoire, and contributed to the shaping of ideas during the choreographic process. First I provided a cassette with my interpretation of the music for all of the choreographers. This enabled them to form impressions, create the initial choreography, and set some of the movement on the dancers. It also prepared the dancers prior to working with live music at rehearsals.

Musicians should be aware that certain limitations are imposed when scheduling rehearsal time with dancers. Although musicians can practice in closet-sized confines, dance requires a large space with an appropriate dance-floor surface. Finding dates and times when the performance space is free as well as when all of the performers are available can become complicated. If the performance will take place in a venue other than the rehearsal space, find out as much as possible about it. Factors such as floor surface, floor dimensions, lighting, wings, dressing rooms, storage space for sets, and hall size will affect the choreographer's choices. As I experienced with *Incantations for*

Flute, when we moved the performance to a new venue some alterations had to be made.

Another consideration is the difference between mirrored studio rehearsal space and the stage space where the performance will ultimately take place. While helpful in rehearsal, the studio mirrors will be absent in the final presentation. The artists must learn to take their cues from each other without depending on mirrors. In *Escaped Exotics*, for example, the dancers had to make the transition from taking cues from the mirrors to relying on each other and the music. They could not count on the mirrors to keep their movements synchronized.

If possible, find out if you will be able to schedule rehearsal time in the performance space. In my second presentation of *Incantations for Flute*, we assumed we could fit in a rehearsal prior to our performance. We arrived several hours early, expecting to rehearse and alter the piece as necessary. We assumed the space would be available, but it was actually in use until our program began. Fortunately, we had rehearsed with information about the new space before our travels.

Musical Language and Kinesthetic Vocabulary

Music and dance function on different levels of communication. Both arts have the ability to evoke emotions, metaphors, and other associations. Because music communicates ideas through sound and dance communicates with movement, they can be used to achieve different purposes. Since music is perceived aurally and dance visually, they can exist simultaneously without impeding upon the other. Joining them together expands the realm of creative possibilities.

We learn each other's artistic languages through the process of collaboration. Since the musician is interpreting the music for the choreography and dance, the musician is no longer a soloist, but becomes a partner with the choreographer and dancers. The dancers also must learn to communicate with the live musicians. However, dancers and choreographers do not necessarily learn how to read musical notation in the course of their training. Terminology and vocabulary that musicians take for granted may be foreign to dancers. Often, dancers perceive the music and relate to it in a different way than musicians are accustomed to. As Mehocic says: "It takes patience and a shared goal of supporting and educating the dancers and musicians."⁷⁷

Many concepts, including tempo, meter, beat, rhythm, phrasing, dynamics, and melody are shared between music and dance. However, differences in the application of these concepts can arise. For example, musicians and dancers tend to view the counting of measures differently. Musicians count beats per bar, and dancers often count in phrases. Whereas musicians generally ascribe "1" to the downbeat of the bar, dancers may consider the beginning of their movement phrase "1", regardless of the actual beat it begins on. Therefore, beat and measure numbers cannot be relied upon. In *Duet* for example, Cordova dances 4 beats of triplets, starting on beat 3. While he thinks of the first triplet as "1", I think of it as "3". Once our differences in terminology were cleared up, we were able to understand each other better.

The musician must develop the ability to look at the rhythms and phrases of the movement and adapt the music accordingly. For example, tempo must be determined by

⁷⁷ Mehocic, "Learning to Dance with Live Music", 60.

how the movements are executed optimally, not only according to what by sounds best. There are differences between a musical phrase and a dance phrase. A musical phrase is one in which the music and the movement fit into a particular meter with a certain amount of measures. A dance phrase need not fit the beats in such a precise manner. The dancer may consider the phrase to begin and end according to their movement patterns.

Theatrical Parameters: Staging, Costumes, Lighting and Sets

Theatrical parameters include staging, costumes, lighting, and sets. We have come to expect these facets to be included in dance performance. Dancers may be well versed in the incorporation of theatrical parameters, but these additional components may present a new avenue for musicians, broadening their traditional scope. These visual elements may grow out of the needs of the piece, or can be the initial inspiration for the collaboration.

Staging: For the musician, stage placement is often pre-determined and stationary. For example, the flutist's placement within an orchestra, band, woodwind quintet, or even solo recital is bound by tradition. In working with dancers onstage, there are many more options to consider for the musician's placement. While dancers as a whole already possess great physical awareness, the musicians must become aware of the visual imagery they project on the stage as well. Often the audience cannot see the musician, but for this project, the musicians assumed a vital role in the visual presentation.

Stage locations have inherent strengths and weaknesses that need to be taken into consideration when staging the musicians in a collaborative work. With musicians performing onstage with dancers, placement has to be choreographed. A musician's position on the stage can signify the prominence given to the music as opposed to the dance. If the musician is near the back or side or off-stage the dancer is usually more centrally located or vice versa. In *Duet for Flute and Dancer*, I remained center stage as the dancer moved around me, because we wanted the audience to see us as equally important to the piece. In *Incantations for Flute*, I was placed upstage right so as not to obstruct any of the choreography. In order to support the choreographer's staging design, I was seated on the floor in *Escaped Exotics*.

All performers should rehearse their stage entrances, exits, and placements. In *Incantations for Flute*, I had to practice my entrance from the wings with dancer Smith following my lead. With twelve flutists, two dancers, music stands, chairs, stools, and an 8'x 4' platform in *Through A Misty Arch...*, practice became imperative. There was no conductor to lead the musical ensemble and the dance performance space was new to the flutists. Furthermore, they had to enter and exit the stage in complete darkness. Musicians may be used to warming up and tuning onstage before the performance, but this often destroys the visual picture of a more theatrically based design. In *Through A Misty Arch...* the flute ensemble had to tune their instruments in a rehearsal room underneath the stage.

Costumes: Like staging, the musician's attire often follows tradition. In a joint performance of music and dance, the performance takes on the realm of theater.

Traditional concert black dress is no longer required, and may no longer be deemed appropriate. Costuming becomes as important as the other theatrical elements and there are now a multitude of options to consider. Costumes assist in bringing the choreographer's visual images to life and can even extend the actual possibilities of human bodily motion. For example, a cape, hood, or long flowing skirts will change the silhouette of the body creating an altered visual image. If the choreography tells a story, costumes can play a vital role in presenting the characters to the audience.

Usually, the choreographer will make costume choices for the entire production: both dancers and musicians. In *Duet for Flute and Dancer*, the hooded cloak was Husted's first decision about the piece. Yet, this visual idea changed as the choreography evolved. In *Through A Misty Arch...*, I thought the flute ensemble should be dressed entirely in black and use black music stands, chairs, and stools. Since light reflects off the shiny silver flutes, and I believed any other colors would distract from the dancers. Seitz was amenable to this concept. In *Incantations for Flute*, I wanted to appear as close to a real voodoo Houngan as possible, but Greengaard later dismissed such a literal translation. All artists involved with the collaborative work may have valid suggestions regarding costuming, but the choreographer usually makes the final decisions.

Lighting: In traditional music recitals and concerts the musician is not responsible for complicated lighting decisions. Normally, the musician enters the stage with the lights on. Then a stage technician dims the house lights to signal that the performance is about to begin. In a live music and dance concert, the best lighting

design may vary with each piece. Musicians may have to adjust to dimmer lighting than what they are accustomed to, or learn to perform with colored lights. The musicians may even be asked to make entrances and exits in complete darkness, as was the case in *Through A Misty Arch...* It can be challenging to mimic the effects of lighting in rehearsal situations, hence technical rehearsals become an important aspect of the collaborative process.

Sets: Sets and props can enhance the dynamics of the stage space for functional, symbolic, and dramatic purposes. An umbrella could suggest rain, a hand-held fan could indicate heat, or a stuffed animal could portray the dancer as a child. Sometimes sets provide special movement possibilities for the dancer, and thus become indispensable to the choreography. In contrast, musicians rarely incorporate a set, or prop in traditional performance. For example, ladders, chairs, platforms, and stools can change the landscape of the stage space, allowing the dancer to move in areas that were previously unavailable. To unify the piece, the choreographer may ask the musicians to incorporate sets or props into their presentation as well. In *Through A Misty Arch...* the set became essential to the choreography.

Teamwork: Communication, Trust, and Flexibility

Working through the collaborative process presents a unique opportunity for understanding others and their artistic medium. The give-and-take between sound and movement is the result of teamwork between the artists. Everything from scheduling rehearsals, deciding on the role of the performers, selecting repertoire, and interpreting the composer's intent, to choosing costumes, lighting, and sets must be discussed.

Furthermore, musicians and dancers must remain receptive during rehearsals and in performance. Remember that the musician's role is to support the ideas of the choreographer. When communication is open and there is mutual respect, the results can be superlative.

Artistic and personal trust should be developed between performers. For example, I had to trust Seitz's conception of using a set as a metaphor for the arch, and she had to trust my judgement of using a flute ensemble for the music in *Through A Misty Arch...* Another example was allowing Greengard's interpretation in *Escaped Exotics* to go beyond the composer's intent of movement as "visual encouragement of sound" to a full-fledged piece with set choreography. Although I was not the choreographer, in *Duet for Flute and Dancer* Husted agreed with a few movements I devised for my part: a relevé coordinated with the dancer's, and a few foot stomps. In all of the works we performed, the choreographers and dancers trusted my musical artistry without question.

It is important to remain flexible while creating a music and dance piece. By remaining open to new ideas, different interpretations, or changing requirements, the piece can evolve. For example, at the last dress rehearsal of *Through A Misty Arch...* I decided the poetry reading should happen prior to the music so the audience could understand the words fully. In *Recesses*, Attaway and Lewitzky had to discard their initial idea of using spoken dialogue within the musical texture. Then Lewitzky had to allow Iris's very personal solo to be danced by a new person. For Greengard's choreography, I had to try some unusual flute playing positions that were new to me. In

one piece I was seated cross-legged as the dancers moved around me, and in another I walked backwards while playing the music. Furthermore, in *Escaped Exotics* I had to see her view of the musician representing the misplaced objects and the dancers belonging to nature as plants whereas my interpretation was the opposite. For *Incantations*, I had to trust the choreographer's eye for costuming and discard my literal notion of the Houngan in a formal top hat, tuxedo with tails, and bow-tie and Erzulie Freda in flowing white skirts. Because we developed artistic trust and allowed for changes, we realized the expressive capacity of each piece to our fullest potential.

In conclusion, this study asserts that a shared vision is vital to a successful collaborative experience. An awareness of the differences between musical language and kinesthetic vocabulary is also necessary. In addition, the incorporation of theatrical parameters must be explored. Teamwork, trust, flexibility, and communication must be developed between the performers. The evaluation and comparison of collaborative approaches, along with the identification of fundamental elements of the collaborative process serve as valuable resources for many artists.

Musicians, dancers, composers, conductors, and choreographers will be able to draw upon assessments in this document to benefit their particular area of expertise. Understanding fundamental elements of the collaborative process provides a foundation and method for bringing music and dance together. Relationships between the disciplines will be discovered and affirmed as artists explore the collaborative path.

There is an intrinsic affinity between music and dance. The added dimension of visual elements stretches the boundaries of creative expression beyond sound.

Simultaneously, musicians and dancers create a synergy that could never be developed alone. The collaborative experience can be very satisfying for musicians, as they become more aware of their skills and how the nuances of their sound impacts the dancers. Collaborating with dance will require some extra effort and patience, yet the experience is extremely rewarding. After rehearsing and performing a work with dancers, musicians may discover that their interpretation of the music is ultimately transformed.

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