



# MERCE CUNNINGHAM

## and Dance Company



## Variations V

Choreographed in 1965  
Filmed in 1966  
50 minutes  
black & white  
sound

rental: \$50  
purchase: \$415

16mm film

Dancers:  
Carolyn Brown  
Merce Cunningham  
Barbara Lloyd  
Sandra Neels  
Albert Reid  
Peter Saul  
Gus Solomons, Jr.

Directed by Arne Arnbom  
Produced by Studio Hamburg

## Westbeth

a work for video

1974  
32 minutes  
black & white  
sound

rental: \$40  
purchase: \$135

U-matic ¾ inch  
video cassette  
and 16mm film

"The French-American Festival commissioned John Cage to prepare a score and myself to make a choreography to this score. John decided to find out if there might not be ways that the sound could be affected by movement, and he and David Tudor proceeded to find out that there were. The first was a series of poles, twelve in all, like antennae, placed over the stage, each to have a sound radius, sphere-shaped, of four feet. When a dancer came into this radius a sound would result. Each antenna was to have a different sound, and some had several. The second sound source was a series of photo-electric cells, figured out by Billy Kluber of the Bell Laboratories, which were put at the base of the twelve poles throughout the area and this seemed to function. The general principle as far as I was concerned was like the doors opening when you go into the supermarket. The dancers triggered a sound but the kind of a sound, how long it might be, or the possible repetition of it was controlled by the musicians who were at the various machines behind us. The effect was of a count-down when they count down to three and then stop. There was another element in this piece, and the use of film. Stan Vanderbeek and his assistant Tom Hewitt had in the weeks ahead of this made a number of reels of film of us, myself dancing, my company doing movements out of the piece. Stan came to the studio one day while we were rehearsing and without disrupting the dancers at all shot through and around them; he shot my hands and feet several times. He said the feet would look marvelous blown up. Stan used other images, still shots and shots from movies, a montage of contemporary scenes, automobiles, a man in space, nature, buildings. Nam June Paik, the Korean composer who has developed ways of changing the images on a television screen, used some of these ways to change the images. There were a number of non-dance activities that I figured out for the dancers to do. I potted a large plant and Carolyn Brown repotted it. The plant had a cartridge microphone attached to it so that a quiver could produce sound. Barbara Lloyd put a towel on her head which had a contact microphone attached to it and proceeded to stand on her head and then was moved gently back and forth by Gus Solomons, while upside down. At the end of the piece, I rode a bicycle through the space, around the poles and the photo-electric cells, and then exited."

—Merce Cunningham



## Fractions I

1978  
33 minutes  
color and black & white  
sound

rental: \$50  
purchase: \$225

U-matic ¾ inch  
video cassette  
and 16mm film

Directed by Charles Atlas  
Music by Jon Gibson: *Equal Distribution*  
Decor and costumes by Mark Lancaster

Dancers:  
Karole Armitage  
Louise Burns  
Graham Conley  
Ellen Cornfield  
Meg Eginton  
Lisa Fox  
Chris Komar  
Robert Kovich

*Fractions I* is a video/dance, taped at the Merce Cunningham Studio in November-December, 1977. The first performance in a theatre was given at the Boston English High School, Boston, Massachusetts on February 26, 1978.

"*Fractions*, as it unfolds, has the concentrated energy of a great signature work. When it is over, it seems to have summed up everything important in the Cunningham canon and yet to have weighed not an ounce . . . It is the finest piece of video choreography anyone has yet made, the closest any choreographer has yet come to working with absolute integrity in two medias at once. Cunningham, alone of the choreographers who have worked with television, has assumed that defining TV space is necessary to the projection of a dance in TV terms. The same factors that make Cunningham choreography as interesting to watch close up as from a distance make it televisable. To watch the videodance *Fractions I* is to watch the medium find its dancing master. *Fractions I* may be the most successful of Cunningham's videodances because it's really about dancing and "television" is metaphorically present in its conception—a part of the real world of change which Cunningham believes in and makes dances about."

—Arlene Croce,  
"Quintessence,"  
*The New Yorker*

## Dances choreographed by Merce Cunningham now available on film and videotape cassette



## Torse

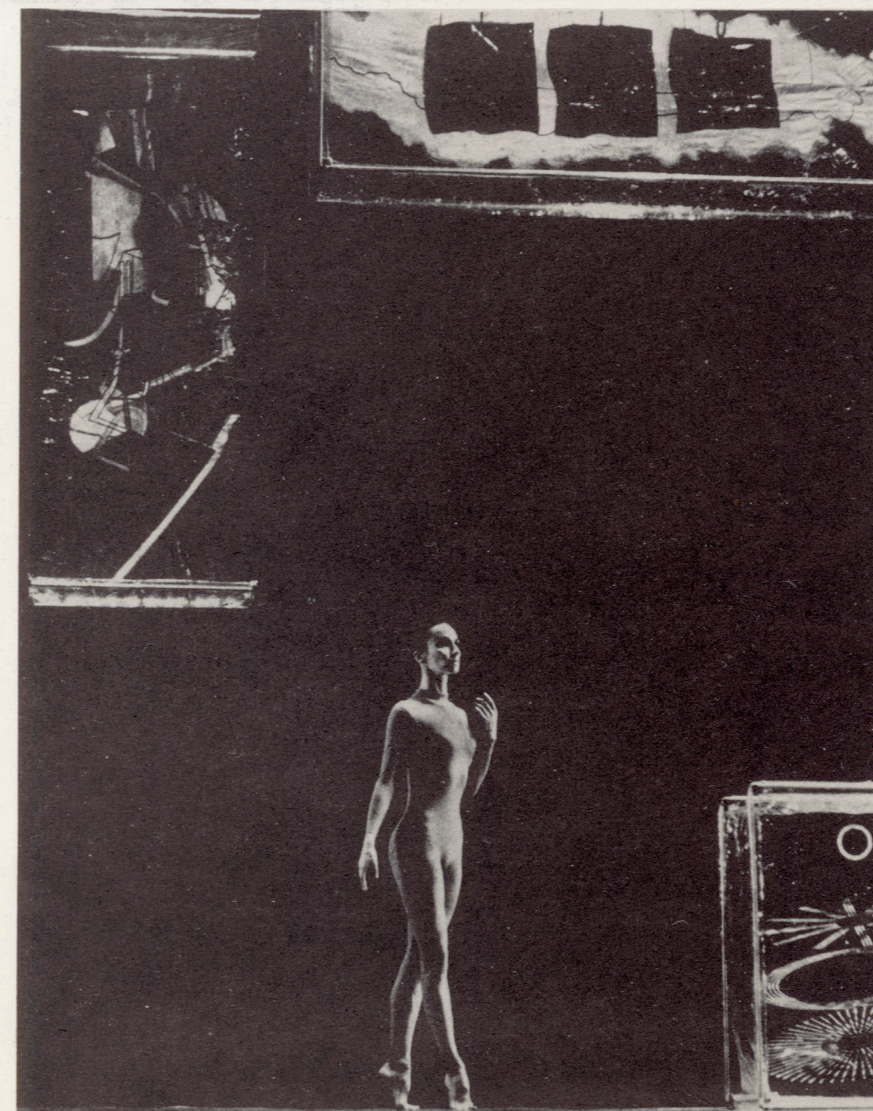
1974-77  
55 minutes  
color  
sound

rental: \$70  
purchase: \$1500

16mm film

Dancers:  
Karole Armitage  
Louise Burns  
Ellen Cornfield  
Morgan Ensminger  
Lisa Fox  
Meg Harper  
Robert Kovich  
Chris Komar  
Julie Roess-Smith  
Jim Self

## Walkaround Time



"The choreography makes reference to Duchamp in concept (composition) and in detail (physical image). Cunningham has translated Duchamp's concern with transparency in terms of movements into a dance composition which explores the possibilities of lateral movement back and forth across a proscenium space. In addition to the "transparent" clarity of this way of shaping space (as against, for example, the use of a swirling space) this is movement that retains its visual integrity as the dancers pass behind the see-through vinyl inflatables of the set. The stillness that penetrates and surrounds the movement has a definite Duchamp flavor. Cunningham's readymade is the "laissez-faire" movement during the "entr'acte" and when he changes costume on stage it is a nod to the famous nude. The viewer is left to complete the dance with discoveries of Duchamp on many levels."

—Charles Atlas

Directed by Charles Atlas  
Cameramen: Merce Cunningham, Charles Atlas, Niels Melo  
Costumes by Mark Lancaster  
Music by Maryanne Amacher: *Remainder*  
18. | R | ] D | —afterimage

*Torse* was designed as two synchronous hour-long films to be projected simultaneously on adjacent screens. The purpose was both to provide a complete archival record of the choreography and to approximate the spectator's experience of the dance. The contrapuntal structure of the dance and Cunningham's asymmetrical use of space also suggested a two-screen presentation. Either film may be viewed separately, but their combination provides a more complete record and experience of the dance.

This film was produced by the Dance Collection of the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center with funds from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The choreography of *Torse* utilizes the numbers 1 to 64, taken from the I Ching, *The Book of Changes*. These numbers are used both in the spatial plan, conceived as a square eight by eight, and the movement phrases, which constitute the language of *Torse*. All aspects of the continuity were chance-determined, the sequence of phrases, the number of things happening at once and the number of dancers involved in a given phrase. The rhythm is sometimes metric and sometimes not. *Torse* refers to the use of the torso throughout the dance. There are five basic positions utilized—upright, arch, twist, tilt and curve. The dance in live performance is ordinarily given in 22-minute sections. This film presents the dance in its full length.

A videotape made at the Merce Cunningham Studio in New York in the fall of 1974.

Dancers:  
Karole Armitage  
Ellen Cornfield  
Meg Harper  
Cathy Kerr  
Chris Komar  
Robert Kovich  
Brynar Mehl  
Charlie Moulton  
Julie Roess-Smith  
Valda Setterfield  
George Titus

Directed by Charles Atlas  
Costumes by Mark Lancaster, from a design by Jasper Johns (for *Un Jour ou Deux*, 1973)



## Squaregame Video

Directed by Charles Atlas  
Music by Takehisa Kosugi: *S.E. Wave/E.W. Song*  
Decor and costumes by Mark Lancaster

"Cheerful scrambling and scabbly movements on the floor are followed by a duet between Cunningham and Susana Hayman-Chaffey in which he steadies his partner lightly, her long probing legs connected only loosely to the rest of her, as if they were some kind of liability which rendered her unsuited for simple locomotion."

—Deborah Jowitz,  
*Village Voice*

1976  
27 minutes  
black & white  
sound

U-matic ¾ inch  
video cassette  
and 16mm film

Dancers:  
Karole Armitage  
Karen Attix  
Ellen Cornfield  
Merce Cunningham  
Morgan Ensminger  
Meg Harper  
Susana Hayman-Chaffey  
Cathy Kerr  
Chris Komar  
Robert Kovich  
Raymond Kurshals  
Julie Roess-Smith

*Squaregame Video* was videotaped at the Merce Cunningham Studio in May, 1976. The first performance of the piece was given on March 24, 1976 at the Festival Theatre, Adelaide, New South Wales, Australia.

"A work of complex playfulness, with confrontations through barely defined games, involving duffle bags, that give way to sudden, spasmodic action."

—Stephen Godfrey,  
*Toronto Globe and Mail*

## Story

1964  
20 minutes  
black & white  
sound

rental: \$50  
purchase: \$135

16mm film

Produced by the Finnish Broadcasting Company  
Music by Toshi Ichinyanagi: *Sapporo*  
Decor by Robert Rauschenberg

A film of a performance of the dance in Finland during the company's world tour in 1964. This dance, first performed in July, 1963 while Mr. Cunningham and his company were in residence at the University of California in Los Angeles, is indeterminate in its composition. It is made up of sections of varied character, none of which need be performed twice in the same way. Specific directives and freedoms have been given the dancers and they receive cues from one another. The continuity within a section is thus altogether unpredictable. The title refers not to any implicit or explicit narrative, but to the fact that every spectator may interpret the events in his own way.

The dancers are involved with objects that change from evening to evening. They are things found by Robert Rauschenberg in or outside the theatre, when and where the dance is performed.

The music by Toshi Ichinyanagi carries the title *Sapporo*, the name of the northern Japanese city in which it was first performed. The sounds that are produced have different qualities: either they are sustaining sounds, begun without attack, sometimes constant in pitch, sometimes sliding; or they are vibrant, sudden and shocking. The performers under certain circumstances exchange parts not only among themselves, but on occasion with the conductor too, who, like them, is also free to produce sounds.

—Barbara Baracks,  
"Merce Cunningham, Carl Soloway Gallery,"  
*Art Forum*

## Blue Studio: Five Segments

15½ minutes  
color  
silent

rental: \$50  
purchase: \$170

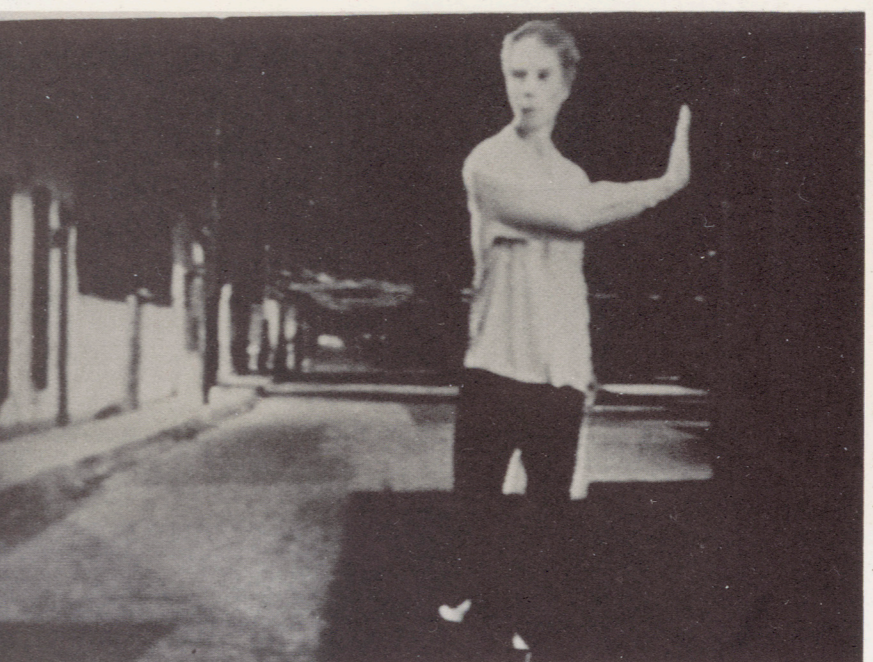
U-matic ¾ inch  
video cassette

A videotape by Charles Atlas and Merce Cunningham

An intimate piece using video as its "set".  
Produced at the WNET TV Lab in October, 1975.

"Extensive utilization of chromakey as well as mirrors in real time allowed Cunningham's movements to be transposed against various realities: Caracas, a solid blue background, among members of his company, and near the tape's end, several images of himself dancing among, though not with, each other. Throughout *Blue Studio* Cunningham developed a vocabulary of movement, from walking, to intimate hand gestures, to large movements of the body. By the end the vocabulary could be demonstrated simultaneously by the same performer, concentrated, in total silence. Now and then a frog, a monkey, and a small dog, each moving in its own way, were chromakeyed in—surprising as Cunningham usually doesn't work with untrained dancers."

—Barbara Baracks,  
"Merce Cunningham, Carl Soloway Gallery,"  
*Art Forum*



## ORDER FORM

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institution \_\_\_\_\_ phone \_\_\_\_\_  
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film	Story	request date	alternate date	rental \$50	purchase \$135
<input type="checkbox"/>		_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
film	Variations V	request date	alternate date	rental \$50	purchase \$415
<input type="checkbox"/>		_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
film	Walkaround Time	request date	alternate date	rental \$60	purchase \$750
<input type="checkbox"/>		_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
video film	Westbeth	request date	alternate date	rental \$40	purchase \$135
<input type="checkbox"/>		_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
video film	Blue Studio: 5 Segments	request date	alternate date	rental \$50	purchase \$170
<input type="checkbox"/>		_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
video film	Squaregame Video	request date	alternate date	rental \$30	purchase \$115
<input type="checkbox"/>		_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
video film	Torse	request date	alternate date	rental \$70	purchase \$1500
<input type="checkbox"/>		_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
video film	Fractions I	request date	alternate date	rental \$50	purchase \$225
<input type="checkbox"/>		_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

please send additional information  payment due upon receipt of our invoice for total rental/purchase fees plus postage & handling

## Dances choreographed by Merce Cunningham now available on film and videotape cassette

Story	1964	sound	b/w	20 min.	film	\$50 rental	\$135 purchase
Variations V	1966	sound	b/w	50 min.	film	\$50 rental	\$415 purchase
Walkaround Time	1973	sound	color	48 min.	film	\$60 rental	\$750 purchase
Westbeth	1974	sound	b/w	32 min.	video and film	\$40 rental	\$135 purchase
Blue Studio: 5 Segments	1975	silent	color	15½ min.	video	\$50 rental	\$170 purchase
Squaregame Video	1976	sound	b/w	27 min.	video and film	\$30 rental	\$115 purchase
Torse	1977	sound	color	55 min.	film	\$70 rental	\$1500 purchase
Fractions I	1978	sound	color and b/w	33 min.	video and film	\$50 rental	\$225 purchase