

# Workshop for Dance Critics choreography through meditation

Open Focus —

MAP OF 5 sensory attention states

1 Visual Attention

2 Auditory Attention

3 Somatic Attention

4 olfactory

5 Taste

open focus - defocus Eye Blinks

right - left both - imagine  
face mirror photo - comparison

listen open

Sense of place - imagine

2 points in space.

get there in as many  
different ways as possible

— what can you smell?

— imagine smelling

Taste - imagine favorite  
food

work with sound according to sensation,  
intuition, feeling, analysis —

transform the sound

make the sound or movement that best  
expresses what you had in mind,



## Choreography Through Meditation

Tonight I would like to collaborate with you the audience in order to realize a dance with music which you will invent. Before we do that I want to briefly discuss the 23 year history of my collaborations with choreographers. I want to show the changes in the nature of these collaborations from writing to order, <sup>for a choreographer or dancer</sup> equal responsibility, <sup>through my own suggestion with dancers</sup> for a work, providing structures which need for choreography to order, to establishing attentional structures applicable to music and dance where the creative process is shared by all participants.

- Collaborations between composers and choreographers usually develop in several ways.
- 1) the choreographer finds existing music and choreographs the dance to the music
  - 2) The choreographer choreographs a dance then looks for music that fit.
  - 3) the choreographer asks a composer to write specifically for the finished dance
  - 4) the choreographer asks a composer to write music for a dance which is specified but has not been choreographed.
  - 5) the composer writes what he or she considers to be a dance piece then asks a choreographer to choreograph the dance
  - 6) the composer and choreographer work together through mutual interest building the piece through interaction.

In the 23 year history of my own work with choreographers the nature of the collaboration has gone through changes from the usual writing to order to my present interest in establishing attentional structures applicable to both music and dance where the creative process is shared by all participants rather than limited to a composer choreographer team. Following is a brief review of this history showing some concerns for the relationship between composer and choreographer, <sup>the music and the dance</sup> and the changes leading to this current interest. After that I would like to invite you to participate in such a collaboration.



## Choreography through Meditation

1-1-81

P. Olweiss.  
Eucadia  
Calif

My relationship to dance as a composer-collaborator began in the theater in 1958. I was invited by Herbert Blau to write and play the music for Cock a doodle Dandy of Sean O'Casey for the S.F. Actor's workshop production. Bari Kofe was the choreographer for Cock's Dance.

The music was kind of a crazy Irish jig which I played on the accordion for the solo dance.

*the director +* This relationship was rather conventional: the dance must serve the theatrical purpose and the music serve both. I did research on Irish music to find the flavor. I talked with both the choreographer, watched the dance <sup>en scene</sup>, then composed the music.

By 1960 I had been involved with group improvisation and the beginnings of my work in Electronic Music. Colleagues Morton Subotnik, Ramon Sender and I were including improvisation on our regular series of programs entitled Sonics at the S.F. Conservatory which later became the S.F. Tape Music Center. Subotnik who was working with Ann Halprin invited some of her dancers to work with us. We had a series of Improvised Operas with John Graham, A. A. Leath, Lynn Palmer and Norma Liestiko. We called them Operas in the sense of works. They were generally absurdist in nature.

This relationship was one of interdependence. Each person was responsible for his or her own part improvising freely according to the moment. The theme or themes developed as we reacted to each



other.

In 1961 Willard Lathrop invited me to his studio to see how he had choreographed a dance using my Variations for Sextet in a taped version he had acquired from radio KPFA.

This relationship was primarily the responsibility of the choreographer who had responded to a piece of music which was not intended for dance by the composer. (As a matter of fact I was shocked when I saw the dance and couldn't understand why anyone could feel that music as accompaniment to dance.) For me the dance was added on to the music.

In 1963 I was commissioned by Elizabeth Harris to do an electronic work for her solo Seven Passages. At the time we began working her piece was not set. She worked from images, improvising until the image filled. I would go to her studio and watch then try to find appropriate sound material. The work proceeded as a slowed down improvisation between us until it was completed.

In this relationship although the choreographer initiated the work <sup>with the images</sup> there was an equal responsibility. We evolved a way of working which continued through many other pieces. The music and dance were complementary as if the movement sometimes continued the music or the music continued the movement rather than simply supporting or reinforcing the movement. Sometimes I initiated a new work and sometimes Elizabeth initiated a work.



In 1966 Ann Halprin invited me to work with her Dancers Workshop production of the Bath. The group was attention to task using nudity and water. I decided to use the sounds the dancers made and any ambient sounds. as my material.

Then my task was to record <sup>simultaneous</sup> the first  $\frac{1}{3}$  of <sup>several</sup> machines the piece, then during the second third I used tape delay to reverberate the on going sounds so that the space apparently expanded ~~and~~ all sounds became very reverberant; then during the final third of the piece I played back selectively different parts of the beginning while continuing to record so that new echoes of old materials resonated and accumulated into a large texture encompassing the dance with the sound of its own history.

while continuing my recordings

The relationship here was quite independent. Neither Anna nor I told each other what to do. But I had derived my relationship to the dance from its <sup>incidental</sup> auditory components and thus had moved inside of it rather than imposing, ~~or~~ impinging or accompanying.

although initiated by the choreography

In 1968 I received a commission from Merce Cunningham to do music for his work Canfield. He specified that the shortest version would be 20 minutes and the longest version a whole evening. He told me that Canfield was a card game of solitaire which he had used to derive his choreography. Other than that I was told nothing else. His philosophy is that the dance goes its way and the music goes its way. Knowing this I composed In Memoriam Nikola Tesla, Cosmic Engineer. It again was a three part



structure; Part I began with a conversation <sup>among the musicians</sup> in the pit about the particular theater or space where the performance was occurring. What the audience was hearing was simultaneously recorded for playback in part III. Part II was an acoustic test of the space which was a search for the resonant frequency of the space. The test included moving to different parts of the space using clicking sounds for reverberence, ~~and~~ some times a gun, a bugle, slide whistle and other isolated sounds. Microphones were also deployed back stage and in adjacent spaces to pick up off stage sounds. During Part III Signal generators set below 100 Hz, began a long crescendo from inaudible to very intense over a period equal to approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the time of the performance.

<sup>arguing the case</sup> <sup>creating a bed of sound</sup> During this crescendo recordings of Part I & II are played back. The oscillations of the generators modulating the material. When the curtain closes the sound is still building.

The relationship, initiated by the choreographer is quite independent. ~~although~~ the dance and music could exist quite separately. This was dramatically illustrated on the occasion of the Brooklyn Academy Premiere. I was flown to New York for it. Because of a dispute between the stage hand union and the musician union ~~over~~ about who had jurisdiction over the pit full of electronic equipment, the musicians decided to be silent. The Cunningham Company performed without music. It was extraordinarily beautiful, and underlined Cunningham's philosophy. Dance Critic Clive Barnes said in his New York Times Review: ("Merce Cunningham goes on in silence thank God!")



In 1969 I met Al Chung Liang Huang during a shared workshop at Kairo in Larches Santa Fe. From him I learned a bit of Tai Chi Chuan. I was immediately attracted to the synchrony of breathing and slow movement. I translated this fundamental to my accordion playing and the kind of meditative work that I was ~~providing~~ <sup>doing</sup> them. I played for his workshop presentation. He felt that the result was very appropriate for the usually unaccompanied Tai Chi. During the next few years we collaborated often, improving from Tai Chi feeling

The relationship was <sup>of mutual interest</sup> focused on the meditative basic: observing breath, and was independent otherwise. Sound or movement could happen alone or simultaneously and in a complementary way.

(Side) our most recent collaboration was the yellow river map.

In 1973 Elaine Summers participated at my invitation in my Meditation Project at the Center for Music Experiment at the U of Calif. Santa Cruz. I had studied Kinetic Awareness with her since 1968. Her work was also very meditative. She instructed my group. <sup>body</sup> At the end of her residency she did a solo version of her work Energy Changes. The movement comes from an involuntary mode based on observation of sensations. So that the dancer observes that she is moving rather than wills the movement. We made music for energy changes in a complementary meditation. The performer listens to all that is sounding. When he or she is convinced that all is being heard he or she is free to make a sound or series of like sounds. Then he or she



must reconnect with all that was being heard before making another sound.

the relationship here is one of complementary meditation. Both sound & movement based on awareness of sensation rather than a formal consideration like Tai Chi.

In my most recent collaborations Crow's relationship was quite different.

In 1972 I began my study of Karate continuing through the present to Black Belt level.

As my own work in Sonic Meditation developed I applied the principles to movement as well as sound thus making Choreography through meditation.

CROW TWO  
SLIDE

In 1975 I included a mirror meditation for two dancers in my Crow Two. The couple is asked to perform facing each other with unblinking eye contact. They are to mirror each other's movements exactly, which is a common exercise, but the unique thing is that they are both instructed not to initiate a move. Thus neither knows who is responsible for the resulting movement, which comes from the involuntary phasic movements of the body and becomes very similar to Tai Chi movement.

Crow Two also includes 3 Hayokas or Sacred Clowns who attack the circle of meditators doing any thing except touching to distract the performers whose only protection is their meditation.

Al Huang was one of the Hayokas for Crow Two thus giving me the opportunity to initiate the relationship for my own work as well as provide some of the choreography while Huang reacted to it.



Slide Rose  
Moom  
Mandala  
Photo  
Photo

In 1977 Rose Moon was commissioned by Keely Bruce for the Wesleyan Singers. This mandala piece is an integrated combination of sound and movement which could be accomplished by <sup>singers</sup> trained or dancers. Besides a procession which moved continuously around the circle a marathon runner circumnavigated the outer circle triggering sounds from seated performers. The so called cloth people, 4 groups of three corresponding to Earth Air Fire and Water manipulated ~~the~~ sheet sized colored cloths making choreographed figures under the direction of choreographer Silvio d'Archangelo.

Here again the relationship is of my own initiation with a choreographer reacting to ~~an established~~ a structure established by any composition.

My most recent piece <sup>involving dance</sup> was completed this past summer. It is entitled Traveling Companions and is a meditation on relationships for percussionists and dancers. The performers are asked to agree on a beginning which is equal with respect to tempo, sound quality, dynamic level and density or frequency of events.

(Illustrate)

After beginning if a performer perceives that another performer is differing from the equality by playing faster or slower, simpler or complex (sound), louder or softer, more or less then he or she has the following four choices: 1) try to equalize by playing the same way 2) If someone is playing more do less 3) If someone is playing more play faster, slower, simpler, complex, louder or softer. 4) If someone is playing more, compete by playing more than their more. Dancers participate similarly substituting larger or smaller movements for louder or softer.



The relationship here is one of guidelines but establishing a situation where each performer must rely on his or her own creative energy within his or her disciplined vocabulary. So this case it would be possible for the piece to manifest in different styles and even mix different styles.

As yet the piece has not been performed but I am looking forward to a collaboration with the Margi Jenkins Dance Co in June.

Are there any questions or comments before I invite you to participate in ~~tomorrow~~ <sup>now</sup> choreography through meditation? I would like to invite you to participate in a piece called Angels and Demons.

The participants can be anyone but a lot of respect for the metaphor and concentration is required.

In this piece Angels are represented by those who blend long steady tones together with others or who blend slow steady movements with others.

Demons are more difficult. Demons are the guiding spirits of creative genius. (Not to be confused with evil spirits) Demons are represented by those who make unique or fantastic sounds after listening inwardly for demon guidance.

~~by who~~ The success of the piece depends on the concentration of listening or looking and blending perfectly with others and the concentration of listening for looking inwardly deeply enough to penetrate to your own demon spirit.

Otherwise the piece simply can degenerate to a ~~freestyle~~ <sup>freestyle</sup>. Angels can change to demons and demons to Angels during the course of the piece.



Stories of Crow  
nest

When I played a recording of Crow Two for Elaine Summers she imagined a <sup>7-sided</sup> structure which would be used for film with dancers. She described the piece to me when the recording was over and proceeded to carry it through asking me to make the music for it. The premiere was in January 1980 at the Buggenheim Museum with the film structure on the ground floor and about 75 singers spiraling to the top of the Buggenheim singing long tones to each other and trying to tune to each other, <sup>in this sonic meditation</sup> as new tone emerged.



Slides

El Galicano

Yellow River map

Crow two

Crow's nest

Rose moon



## Choreography Through Meditation

1-1-81 Lucinda  
Pauline Oliveira

Collaborations between composers and choreographers usually develop in several ways; 1) The choreographer finds existing music and choreographs the dance to the music. 2) The choreographer choreographs a dance then looks for music that fits. 3) The choreographer asks a composer to write specifically for the finished dance. 4) The choreographer asks a composer to write music for a dance which is specified but has not been choreographed. 5) The composer writes what he or she considers to be a dance piece then asks a choreographer to choreograph the dance. 6) The composer and choreographer work together through mutual interest building the piece through interaction.

In the 23 year history of my own work with dance the nature of the collaborations with choreographers has gone through changes from the more usual writing to order to my present interest in establishing attentional structures applicable to both music and dance where the creative process is shared by all of the participants rather than limited to a composer/choreographer team. Following is a brief ~~history~~ review of this history showing some concerns for the kinds of relationship between composer and choreographer, the music and the dance and the changes leading to this current interest. After that I would like to invite you to participate in a collaboration.



My relationship to dance as a composer-collaborator began in the theater in 1958. I was invited by Herbert Blau to write and play the music for the Sean O'Casey play, Cock a doodle Dandy, for the San Francisco Actors Workshop production. Bari Rolfe was the choreographer for Cock's Dance. The music was kind of a crazy Irish jig which I played on the accordion for the solo dance.

This relationship was rather conventional: the dance must serve the theatrical purpose and the music serve both. I did research on Irish music to find the right flavor, After discussion with both the director and the choreographer and watching the dance en scene, I composed the music.

By 1960, I had been involved with group improvisation and the beginnings of my work in electronic music. Colleagues Hinton Subotnick Ransom Sender and I were including improvisations on our regular series of programs entitled Sonics, at the San Francisco Conservatory. Sonics later became the San Francisco Tape Music Center. Subotnick who was working with Annalkepin invited some of her dancers to work with us. The improvised works we did with John Graham, A.A. Leath, Lynn Palmer and Norma Lestiko were called operas and were generally absurdist in nature, mixing sound, movement, theater and electronic media.



this relationship was one of interdependence. Each person was responsible for his or her own part improvising freely according to the moment. The context with its themes developed as we reacted to each other.

In 1961 a choreographer invited me to his studio to see how he had choreographed a dance using my Variations for Sextet in a taped version he had acquired from a radio station.

This relationship was primarily the responsibility of the choreographer who had responded to a piece of music which was not intended by the composer for dance. As a matter of fact I couldn't understand before and after I saw the dance how anyone could feel that particular music as dance accompaniment. For me the dance seemed added on to the music.

In 1963, I was commissioned by Elizabeth Harris to compose an electronic work for her solo Seven Passages. At the time we began working the piece was not set. She worked from images, improvising until the image filled in movement. I watched as she worked then tried to find complementary material in sound. The work proceeded as a slowed down improvisation between us until it was completed.

In this relationship, although the choreographer initiated the



work and its images there was an equal responsibility. We evolved a way of working which continued through many other pieces we did together. The music and dance were complementary as if the movement sometimes continued the music or the music continued the movement as well as supporting or reinforcing the movement.

Sometimes I initiated a new work and sometimes Harris initiated a work.

In 1966, Anna Halprin invited me to work with her Dancer's Workshop production of The Bath. The group focus was attention to task using the elements of water and nudity. I decided to focus on the sounds the dancers made and any ambient or environmental sounds as my material. Therefore my task was to record simultaneously with several tape recorders the first part of the dance without making or contributing any sound myself. During the second part of the piece <sup>while continuing to record</sup> I began to enhance the sounds being made by the dancers through reverberation which gave the illusion of expanding the space. Then during the third and final part of the piece I played back selectively different parts of the first & second parts of the piece also continuing to record so that new echoes of old materials resonated and accumulated into a large texture, encompassing the dance with the sound of its own history.



this relationship, initiated by the choreographer, was quite independent, neither Anna nor I told each other what to do. But, I had derived my relationship to the dance from its incidental auditory components which resulted from the dancers relationship to task in movement. Thus I moved inside of the dance rather than imposing or impinging or accompanying it.

In 1968 I received a commission from Merce Cunningham to compose music for his *Canfield*. He told me that *Canfield* was a card game of solitaire which he had used to derive his choreography. He specified that the shortest version would be 20 minutes and the longest a whole evening. Other than that I was told nothing else. His philosophy is that the dance goes its way and the music goes its way. Knowing this I composed *In Memoriam Nikola Tesla: Cosmic Engineer*. It again was a three part structure. Part I began with an amplified conversation among the musicians in the pit about the acoustical conditions of the theater or space where the performance was occurring. What the audience was hearing was also simultaneously being recorded for play back during Part III of the piece. Part II consisted of continued conversation



and acoustical testing of the space with various instruments such as clickers, test oscillators a gun, a bangle and others. The musicians were searching for the resonant frequency of the space while <sup>testing and</sup> moving around in it. Meanwhile microphones were recording all of this action plus sounds from back stage and adjacent spaces.

During Part III after a silence, a number of signal generators set at low frequencies began a long crescendo from inaudible to very intense over a period of time equal to about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the performance. (Sometimes as long as 20 minutes.) eventually creating a flood of sound. Recordings from Part I and II were added to this flood creating a surrealistic modulated history of the performance. The sound is still building as the curtain closes.

The relationship, initiated by the choreographer, is quite independent. The dance and music could exist quite separately. They go together because they are together. This was dramatically illustrated on the occasion of the Brooklyn Academy Premiere. Because of a dispute between the stage hands union and the musician union about who had jurisdiction over the pit full of electronic equipment, the musicians in protest decided to be silent. The Cunningham



Company performed without music on this occasion.  
It was extraordinarily beautiful, and underlined  
Cunningham's philosophy. (by Tomis Rowin)

In 1969 I met Al Chung Yang Huang during a shared  
workshop at Kario in Landro Santa Fe, California.  
From him I learned a bit of Tai Chi Chuan. I was  
immediately attracted to the synchrony of breathing  
with slow movement. I translated this fundamental  
to my accordion playing and the kind of meditative  
work I was evolving then. I improvised music  
based on this for his group workshop presentation  
of Tai Chi like dance. He felt that the result  
was very appropriate for the usually unaccompanied  
Tai Chi. During the next few years we collaborated  
often with meditative improvisations from Tai Chi  
feelings.

The relationship was one of mutual interest & focused  
on the meditative basic of observing breath, and  
was independent otherwise. Sound and movement  
could happen alone or simultaneously and in a  
complementary way.

(Here are slides of a more recent <sup>1977</sup> collaboration - The Yellow River Map)



In 1973 Elaine Summers participated at my invitation in my meditation research project at the Center for Music Experiment at the U. of California San Diego. I had studied kinetic awareness with her since 1968. Some of her own work was also very meditative. She instructed my group in Body awareness. At the end of her two week residency she performed a solo version of her work Energy Changes. The movement comes from an involuntary mode based on observation of sensations. She observes that she is moving rather than wills the movement. We made music for Energy Changes in a complementary meditation. The performer listens to all that can be heard in the environment. When he or she ~~feels~~ is convinced that all is being heard, he or she is free to make a sound, or series of like sounds. Then he or she must immediately reconnect through listening with all that was being heard before making another sound.

The relationship here is one of complementary meditation. Both sound and movement is based on awareness of sensation rather than a formal consideration like Tai Chi.

As my own work in Sonic Meditation developed



I applied the principles to movement as well as sound thus arriving at choreography through meditation.

Crow  
Two  
Slide

In 1975 I included a mirror meditation for two dancers in my Ceremonial Opera, Crow Two. The couple is asked to perform facing each other with unblinking eye contact. They are to mirror each other's movements exactly which is a common exercise, but the unique thing is that that they are both instructed not to initiate a move. The resulting movement comes from tiny involuntary phasic movements which each reacts to but neither person knows who is responsible for the smooth slow Tai Chi like movements which eventually develop.

Crow Two also include a clown who attacks the circle of meditators. The clown may do anything except touching to distract the performers whose only protection is their meditation. Al Huang was the clown for Crow Two thus giving me the opportunity to initiate the relationship for my own work with some of my own choreography which he could interact with.



CROW'S  
NEST  
SLIDES

When I played a recording of Crow Two for Elaine Summers she was busy imagining a new piece. She described the piece to me when the recording was over as a 4 sided structure which would have film projected on all sides with a dancer for each panel and audience surrounding.

She proceeded to carry it through asking me to make music for it. The premiere was in January 1980 at the Guggenheim Museum in New York with the film structure on the ground floor and about 75 singers spiraling to the top of the Guggenheim singing long tones to each other alternately trying to tune to someone or contribute a new tone to the cloud of choral sound.

ROSE MOON  
SLIDES

Besides my study of kinetic awareness with Elaine Summers I began Karate in 1972 and continue presently at Black Belt level. The attention states learned in Karate have become fundamental to my recent work as the Tai Chi was earlier. It has also supported my interest in movement as a compositional element.

In 1977 Rose Moon was commissioned by Healey Bruce for the Wesleyan Singers. This mandala piece is an integrated combination of sound & movement which



could be accomplished by singers untrained as dancers.

Besides a procession which moved continuously around the circle, a marathon runner circumnavigated the outer circle triggering sounds from 8 seated performers.

The so called cloth people, 4 groups of 3 singers, corresponding to positions named Earth, Air, Fire and Water, manipulated sheet sized cloths making choreographed figures under the direction of choreographer Sylvia d'archangelo.

The relationship like Crow Two is of my own initiation with a choreographer working to order within a specified structure, although with creative freedom.

My most recent piece involving dance was completed this past summer. It is entitled Traveling Companions and is a meditation on relationships for percussionists and dancers. The performers are asked to agree on a beginning which is equal with respect to tempo, sound quality, dynamic level and the density ~~of~~ or frequency of events. ~~Dancesubtitle~~

After the beginning, when a performer perceives that another performer is differing from the equality by playing or moving faster or slower, simpler or more complex, louder or softer (larger or smaller for dancers), more or less events, then she or she has the following



four choices 1) try to regain the equality by changing to what the other performer is doing. 2) If someone is perceived as performing differently for instance playing more then do the opposite for instance play less. 3) If someone is perceived as performing differently then differ in any of the other 6 ways. For instance if more then play faster, slower, simpler, more complex, louder or softer. 4) If someone is perceived as performing differently for instance softer, then compete by playing softer than the other.

The relationship here is one of establishing an attentional structure where each performer must rely not only on his or her skills in their respective disciplines regardless of style, but to react creatively within the discipline of his or her vocabulary. In this case it would be possible for the piece to manifest in different styles or even mix different styles.

As yet this piece has not been performed but I am looking forward to a collaboration with the Margie Jenkins Dance Co. in June.

At this point before I invite you to participate in a collaboration, are there any questions or comments?



Now I would like to invite you to participate in choreography and composition through meditation by performing a piece entitled Angels and Demons.

Angels and Demons composed in May 1980. Premier was instrumental with audience choruses in one of the subsequent performances. Audience members made their own sides which were incorporated into the performance. Tonight + will be the first performance including movement. Anyone may participate. The requirement is respect for the metaphor and concentration.

In this piece Angels are the guardian spirits and are represented by those who blend long steady tones and slow steady movements together with others.

Demons are of a different order. Demons are the guiding spirits of creative genius. Demons are represented by those who after listening or looking inwardly for demon guidance make unique or fantastic sounds or movements. Their performance will be extremely individual.

The success of the performance depends on sustained concentration and faithfulness or fidelity to the metaphor through listening or looking <sup>outwardly</sup> and blending as perfectly as possible with others if you are an angel, and listening or looking inwardly deeply enough to penetrate to your own demon spirit if you are a demon.

Angels may become demons ~~or~~ or demons become angels during the course of the performance.