

## The 4 Basic Elements of Dance Composition

Time, Space, Shape and Energy

Composing dances is very much like problem solving:  
5 steps to the solution:

- 1) Idea(s)
- 2) Experiment (putting ideas into movement)
- 3) Select the most appropriate moves
- 4) Organize the structure and form as a cohesive whole
- 5) Perform and evaluate the success

The 4 Basic Elements of Dance Composition:

### **1) TIME (*Tempo and Rhythm*):**

**Tempo:** Involved the manipulation of time making the movements faster or slower, altering the pace at which they are performed.

**Rhythm:** The measure of time by any regularly recurring impulses or sounds. A periodic emphasis. (2/4 time, 3/4 time, 5/8 time, 6/8 time)

### **2) SPACE (*Levels, Direction, Facing, Focus and Floor Pattern*):**

**Levels:** The altitude of a movement in relation to the floor. Levels may involve parts of the body or the entire torso. Steps of elevation may also manipulate the level.

**Direction:** Movement in any of the eight general stage areas, forward, sideward, backward and diagonally.

**Facing:** The direction to which the front of the body is presented. The dancer may be facing one direction yet moving towards another direction.

**Floor Pattern:** The imaginary delineation of the path in space taken by the dancer or dancers moving from place to place.

### **3) Shape:**

**Shape:** The design of the body's position or the design made by a group of bodies (formations), involving the manipulation of width, length, depth and levels.

#### ***4) Energy (Energy and Dynamics):***

**Energy:** Inherent or internal power, force, vigor, strength, expression, spirit and emphasis.

**Dynamics:** Shading in the amount of energy, intensity or power. There are subtle variations in the treatment of movement contrasts. Qualities of movement dynamics are: sustain, suspend, vibrate, swing, collapse, and percussive.

#### ***Structure of a Dance Composition:***

Every dance composition has a BEGINNING, MIDDLE and an END. All compositions should include variety in time, space, shape and energy.