

## ATC 10: Compositional Elements

- A. **Elements of Dance:** Fundamental components of dance, which include the following:
- **Body:** The instrument of dance. The term **body** may also refer to the body's position or shape (e.g., curved, straight, angular, twisted, symmetrical, asymmetrical); **also**, how the body is moving (e.g., using locomotor or non-locomotor movements).
  - **Energy:** The force with which the body moves (e.g., light, strong, sustained, sudden).
  - **Relationship:** The way in which two or more things are connected to or associated with one another (e.g., dancer to dancer, dancer to object, right arm to left arm).
  - **Space:** The physical area in which the body moves; also, the area surrounding the body.
  - **Time:** An element of dance involving rhythm, tempo, accent, and duration. Time can be based on measured beats, as in music, or on body rhythms, such as breath, emotions, and heartbeat.
- B. **Choreographic Form:** A structure that organizes movements. Choreographic form may be defined as **narrative** or **patterned**. Choreographic form is also called compositional form, and/or choreographic structure.
- Pattern Form:** A choreographic form used to communicate an abstract idea or message (as opposed to a narrative). Examples of pattern forms include AB, ABA, call and response, canon, collage, motif, pattern, retrograde, rondo, theme and variation.
- **Binary (AB):** A two-part choreographic pattern form with an A theme and a B theme. The form consists of two distinct, self-contained dance sequences or sections.
  - **Ternary (ABA):** A three-part choreographic pattern form with an A theme and a B theme in which the second section contrasts with the first section and the third section restates the first section in a condensed, abbreviated, or extended form.
  - **Call and Response:** A choreographic form in which one soloist or group

performs, followed by a second soloist or group whose performance responds to the first.

- Canon: A choreographic form in which a dance phrase is performed by more than one soloist or group and begins at different times so that the phrases overlap (analogous to a **round** in music).
- Collage: In dance, a choreographic form consisting of a series of phrases that are often unrelated but have been brought together to create a single dance with a beginning, middle, and end.
- Motif: A distinctive recurring gesture, movement, sequence, or image that can be elaborated upon in a variety of ways. A motif may be used to provide a theme or unifying idea for a dance piece.
- Retrograde: A choreographic form in which a dance or movement sequence is performed in reverse order (e.g., a dance phrase performed from back to front).
- Rondo (ABACAD): A choreographic form which expands on ABA form to ABACADA (lengthened indefinitely), in which the A theme is repeated or varied.
- Theme and Variation (A, A1, A2, A3): A choreographic form that starts with an original movement idea that is repeated with various modifications (e.g., performed faster or slower, with lighter or stronger movements, in a new place) while still maintaining its structure and sequence, resulting in an A-A1-A2-A3 pattern. The theme may be repeated between the variations.

### **C. Compositional Tools**

- Beginning, Middle, End
- Counterpoint: Phrasing movements in opposition to the rhythm
- Repetition: the repeated use of movement phrases or parts of phrases for emphasis or to create some other effect. Repetition can help relate sections of dance to each other
- Transitions: the links between dance movements and phrases.
- Unison: A movement or action performed in exactly the same way by two or more people at the same time.

**Helpful Tips:**

Go to <http://artsalive.ca/en/dan/make/toolbox/chttoolbox.asp> for more information on Composition.

Go to [www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca) for the revised Arts Curriculum document (glossary at the back)