

ATO 3M: Glossary of Compositional Forms and Tools

Forms:

AB: A simple choreographic form with two distinct, self-contained movement sequences.

ABA: A simple choreographic form with three sections having two contrasting themes, A and B, followed by a repeat of the first theme in the third section.

Narrative: A narrative composition is sometimes known as a story or dance drama.

Rondo: The rondo form includes an initial section (A) followed by an alternate or contrasting section (B). The third section is a return to (A), either in its entirety or with some changes. This is followed by a fourth section, (C), and another return to (A). The remainder of the choreography can include other section, interspersed with variations or restatements of (A). (ABACADA and so on).

Theme and Variations: The theme can be a single phrase of movements or several movement phrases put together in a sequence. The theme or original movement series can be changed in a number of ways as the dance progresses, but the timing and movement sequence of the original theme remains, for example: speeding up, slowing down, inverting the levels, reversing the movements or directions, performing the combination in reverse, repeating some movements or eliminating some movement, performing the theme in a new place, performing the movements with a lighter quality or performing the movements with a heavier quality.

Tools:

Call and Response: One soloist or group performs with the second soloist or group entering in response to the first.

Canon: Similar to a round but all dancers join in at the end (coda).

Counterpoint: Two independent themes danced simultaneously.

Fugue: Requires more than one dancer; one dancer repeats the theme while the other dancer(s) perform variations on the theme.

Instrumentation: Perform the movement with different body parts.

Inversion: Perform movements upside-down.

Retrograde: Perform pieces backwards – like a movie running backwards

Repetition: Repeat exactly the same.

Size: Condense/expand movement.

Staging: Perform it at a different place on the stage and/or with different facing to the audience.

Transformation: altering a dance sequence by changing one or more of the elements of dance (e.g. maintaining the steps but changing the direction or pathway, or converting a solo into an ensemble piece); can also be achieved by using exaggeration or distortion.

*Sources: Minton, S. (1997). **Choreography: A Basic Approach Using Improvisation.***

*Blom, L. & Chaplin L. (1982). **The Intimate Act of Choreography***

Round: Similar to 'Three Blind Mice' or 'Row Your Boat'; the theme is repeated with new dancers joining in after certain intervals. The original dancer finishes first and goes on to repeat the movement theme or begin a new theme.

Instrumentation: Perform the movement with different body parts.

Staging: Perform it at a different place on the stage and/or with different facing to the audience.