

THE DANCE MAKER SERIES

The Basic Elements

Choreographers may find these techniques helpful in creating a more engaging work with multiple layers or texture. Do consider giving the dancers ownership by choosing an element and letting them “play” with it. Treat the piece as a work in progress. Edit, edit, and edit some more. Keep interesting movement and perform it even longer while eliminating choreography that does not work. Remain open to suggestions from fellow dancers and just “do” it or keep moving versus talking it out. A few simple changes can bring a piece to life with surprising development for the dance maker. The audience will appreciate the original and interesting choreography. Begin with a short phrase and manipulate the movement with the following elements.

action words: link a few of these action words together to make a movement phrase: bend, stretch, twist, swing, sparkle, hit, push, pull, sway, turn, spin, kick, shake, wiggle, float, melt, bounce, and vibrate

cannon: one group begins a phrase; another group(s) picks-up the phrase; for greater interest incorporate high to low levels

chaos: every dancer improvises for an eight count

connect: link any of the activities together

contagion: like dominoes falling; perform the same movement one after another; may begin front to back, side to side, or in the center moving out

direction: change the direction that the performers are facing; for example; have all dancers perform the same phrase but with some facing the back and others facing the front

echoes: create hooks throughout the piece that continue to suggest your theme or purpose in the work