Democracy's Body

Judson Dance Theater, 1962–1964

Sally Banes

scissiveness of the process of choreographic choice. In general, questions of technique and its perfection were considered less important than formal compositional problems. This was true in part because the performers available to the choreographers were a mixture of experienced and inexperienced, trained and untrained dancers. But also, it was an aesthetic and even political choice, allowing for full participation by all the workshop members and giving the works an unpolished, spontaneous, “natural” appearance. Questions of the relationship of music to dance were explored anew. Perhaps even more important than the individual dances given at Judson concerts was the attitude that anything might be called a dance and looked at as a dance; the work of a visual artist, a filmmaker, a musician might be considered a dance, just as activities done by a dancer, although not recognizable as theatrical dance, might be reexamined and “made strange” because they were framed as art.

In retrospect, several important individual choreographic styles grew out of the rich culture at Judson: Yvonne Rainer’s dialectical work, mixing ordinary or grotesque movement with traditional dance techniques, pushing the body’s operations and coordination to the limits, and testing extremes of freedom and control in the choreographic process; Steve Paxton’s fusions of nature and culture, his framing of mundane actions like eating and walking as noteworthy for attention and perception, his flattening of time; Robert Morris’s task dances, using objects to focus the attention of both performer and audience and his references within the works to other artworks, creating an historical context for the work in the work; Lucinda Child’s cool performance style, rooted first in handling of objects and later in pure movement structures; Trisha Brown’s improvisations and flyaway movements. This analytic, reductive wing of the post-modern dance movement was one aspect of Judson. A second aspect was the theatrical, often humorous, baroque style—in the work, for example, of David Gordon, Fred Herko, and Arlene Rothlein. A third aspect was the multimedia work exemplified in Elaine Summers’s Fantastical Gardens and, later, Judith Dunn’s Last Point. Work developed along all three of these lines in the later 1960s and 1970s, but it was the analytic, reductive side of the Judson work that proposed and tested theories of dance as art.

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Robert Dunn’s Workshop

John Cage asked Robert Dunn to teach a class in choreography at the Merce Cunningham studio in the fall of 1960. Dunn had taken Cage’s class in “Composition of Experimental Music,” taught at the New School for Social Research from 1956 to 1960, as had the writers Jackson MacLow and Dick Higgins, the composer Toshi Ichiyanagi, and Al Hansen, George Brecht, and Allan Kaprow, all of whom were later associated with Happenings and Events. The classes Cage gave were small and participatory. Cage later wrote of his teaching method:

I began each series of classes by meeting the students, attempting to find out what they had done in the field of music, and letting them know what I myself was doing at the time. The catalogue had promised a survey of contemporary music, but this was given only incidentally and in reference to the work of the students themselves or to my own work. For, after the first two classes, generally, the sessions were given over to the performance and discussion of student works.

Dick Higgins remembers that Cage spoke about notation, prepared a piano, gave the class problems to solve, and when the students demonstrated their solutions, discussed the philosophy of each piece. “The technique of the piece was seldom mentioned, except that inconsistencies and incongruities would be noted.” Higgins, who credited the class with contributing to the development of Happenings, writes that “the best thing that happened to us in Cage’s class was the sense he gave us that ‘anything goes,’ at least potentially.” Al Hansen came to Cage’s class interested chiefly in film; he had read in writings by Sergei Eisenstein that “all the art forms meet in the film frame.” Hansen also traces Happenings back to Cage’s course and his own realization, by the end of it, that “all art forms . . . meet . . . in the eyeball. In the head of the observer.” He remembers that the class members often brought their friends to class, and it was there that Hansen met artists such as George Segal, Jim Dine, Larry Poons, filmmaker Harvey Gross, and regular class members Florence
Tarlow and Scott Hyde. "To a great extent, and probably to John Cage's
disgust, the class became a little version of Black Mountain College."8

According to Remy Charlip, then a member of Merce Cunningham's
company, the dancers in the company asked John Cage to give a modern
dance composition class—as an antidote to Louis Horst's class—in 1957 or
1958. Cage consented, and in the class, which lasted for about six months,
taught in a way that was "very free." "Everyone did a piece and then we
talked about it, I think in a similar way to how Bob [Dunn] later did it," 
explains Charlip. Charlip made a dance, called Crosswords for the
Cunningham Company, in which he took a crossword puzzle and colored
in the squares in an arbitrary order with four different colored pencils. "Each
dancer had a square, and each person had a color, and when you came to a
color, you went to that other person to get a movement." Jo Anne Melsher
did a dance to music with a line of people. Charlip says that on the first
day of Robert Dunn's class, Dunn showed the Crosswords score to his
students.9 James Waring had also taught an "experimental" composition
class, at the Living Theater, in 1959 and 1960.9

Dunn was not a dancer or choreographer. He was the accompanist at
the Cunningham and other modern dance studios at the time. Dunn thinks
that Cage asked him to teach choreography because Dunn had a know-
ledge of contemporary dance and other art forms, and because Cunningham
was not inclined to teach composition.9 Dunn, married then to Cun-
nigham dancer Judith Dunn, was born in Oklahoma in 1928. He studied
music composition and theory at New England Conservatory, where he
earned a bachelor's degree. He worked in opera as a vocal repertoire coach
and accompanist. From 1955 to 1958 he studied dance at Boston Conserva-
tory of Music, chiefly with Jan Veen, a student of Mary Wigman and
Harold Kreutzberg; Dunn also taught percussion for dancers at the Boston
Conservatory. In 1958, when Cunningham performed in Boston, Dunn
accompanied him and was asked to work at the American Dance Festival
at Connecticut College that summer. In the fall of that year, Dunn moved
to New York, where he worked for Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham
as a pianist for rehearsals, classes, and performances. During his years as
an accompanist he also worked for José Limón, Helen Tamiris,
Pearl Lang, Jane Dudley, Paul Taylor, and James Waring. He no longer
danced, but he studied Tai Chi Chuan and Yoga.10

Cunningham donated the use of his studio at 14th Street and Sixth
Avenue free of charge for Dunn's classes, which ran about two and a half
hours, for ten to twelve sessions per course. Dunn charged a fee of twelve
to fifteen dollars for the entire course "for each solvent student," except
returning students, who were allowed to take subsequent courses without
further payment.11 During some of the classes, Cunningham sat in his
dressing room behind the studio where, Dunn claims, he was listening to the
discussion.12

Robert Dunn had seen the composition classes given by Louis Horst,
Martha Graham's music director, who demanded rigid adherence to musical
forms; he had seen those given by Doris Humphrey, who assessed dances
according to their theatrical tensions and resolutions.13 Dunn found
the atmosphere in those classes, in which young dancers studied every sum-
mer at the American Dance Festival sessions, "so oppressive that it was
incredible. If indeed I helped liberate people from Louis [Horst] and Doris
[Humphrey] (who was a great woman, but still)—...that was well worth
doing."14

Unlike Horst, who used preclassic forms, and modern music by com-
posers such as Béla Bartók, Zoltán Kodály, Alexander Scriabin, Arnold
Schönberg, and Aaron Copland, Dunn taught his students the musical
structures of later composers, like Cage and the European avant-gardists
Karlheinz Stockhausen and Pierre Boulez.15 These chance and
indeterminate structures were given to the students not as musical forms,
but as time-structures "derived from and applicable to all the arts or future
arts which might take place in time."16 John Cage's use of noise and silence
in music and his move toward theatricals in musical performance were two
influences on Dunn's thinking in this regard.17

Dunn's classes, both in their heritage from Cage and in their eclectic
assimilation of various cultural preoccupations of the 1960s—including
Zen Buddhism, Taoism, existentialism, and scientism—were a microcosm
of New York's avant-garde art world. It was an art world small enough for
poets, painters, dancers, actors, and musicians to know each other and
each other's work. So, many of the ideas circulating in the various artistic
and social networks around Greenwich Village found their way into the
dances and discussions in Dunn's courses. To Dunn, the classes were a
generalized "clearinghouse for structures derived from various sources of con-
temporary action: dance, music, painting, sculpture, Happenings, literature."18

But literature was the area least plumbed because, according to Dunn,
"we were feeling that dance had been so super-literary in a very destructive
way. Burroughs had just come on the scene, making a break in texture with
the New American Poetry. Even before he did the cut-ups, his work was
 collage, hard-edged, perceptually obsessive. A lot of people had read
Naked Lunch. And all of us had some attachment to the Dadaists."19

The concrete approach Dunn used in the class was modeled after
Cage's class. But Dunn had felt an unsatisfying lag in productivity as
Cage's classes progressed, and so he added assignments for the choreography students, "materials and ideas put forth for their possible suggestiveness to further work. This was a bit of strategic 'irrigation' of the garden plot, it being very clear to me at the time that the all-necessary seeds were provided by each member of the class." These materials included Cage's graphic production of the chance score for Fontanna Mix and the number structure of Erik Satie's Trois Gymnopédies. Other assignments dealt with an abstract time constraint, e.g., "Make a five-minute dance in half an hour." Others involved collaborations in which autonomous personal control had to be relinquished within a "semi-independent" working situation. Still others had to do with the subject matter, though this was rarer: "Make a dance about nothing special."

Louis Horst had also used Satie's music in teaching modern forms of musical structures for dance composition. But Horst's approach to teaching was more prescriptive and rigid than Dunn's. For example, Horst used one of the Gnossiennes as a study in "archaism," in which two-dimensional design of the body is achieved by distortion, tension, formality. The archaic composition was to emphasize "planal design," arresting all "in attitudes that breathe at the same time a potential of movement." Horst prescribed performing the Gnossienne study so slowly that the dance would imitate slow-motion cinematography. He also suggested Satie's Danse de la Brouette as an accompaniment to an exercise in asymmetrical rhythm. He wrote that the "uneven, oblique, unstable" movement done to a 5/4 rhythm was especially appropriate to express the scattered, frantic feeling of a Madison Avenue executive or a housewife. But, he warned, the "feeling of unbalance [should] not [be] destroyed by gestures which create a too symmetrical design in space." In other words, the quality of expression in the movements in a Horst composition assignment was to resemble the emotion suggested by the musical accompaniment.

In his book Modern Dance Forms, Horst gave young choreographers a checklist for evaluating their compositions:

1. Is the work sufficiently beautiful and is its movement delineation striking and ingenious?
2. Is the formal design rational and clear?
3. Is its rhythmic structure distinct and effective?
4. Does it contain sufficient fullness?
5. Is the demand of contrast adequately respected, and the bane of monotony avoided?

In a world where concepts of beauty had long since been challenged, where art works that embraced monotony and eschewed rational design had been made at least since Duchamp and the Dadaists, Horst's rules seemed old-fashioned, even though he was still applying them through the early 1960s. (The book, a record of his teaching methods, was published in 1961.) Comments Horst made in his classes, also recorded in Modern Dance Forms, strikingly reveal the difference between his method and Dunn's:

You always have to know where you're going—how things look to the audience. You must do the impossible. A dancer is an aesthetic acrobat—must be—so you can do anything you want to do. . . . A quarter of an inch makes a difference—that sort of exactitude that makes it professional. Nothing casual should happen on stage anyway. . . .

I know it hurts. You didn't think it was going to be fun, did you? Dance and be happy?

When Dunn used Satie, his approach was entirely different: "I played the piece and gave them a number structure and they composed a dance, separate from the music but structured with the music in a sort of dovetailing way without any mickey-mousing." The separateness of the dancing from the musical structure was typical of Cunningham's collaborations with Cage and other composers.

In fulfilling their assignments in Dunn's class, students were allowed wide latitude in terms of methods, materials, and structures; as in the Cage class, the discussion focused on how these choices were arrived at and how well the choreographer had succeeded in carrying out his or her intention. The analytic method used in the discussions was also inspired by Cage's ideas about musical form:

Structure in music is its divisibility into successive parts from phrases to long sections. Form is content, the continuity. Method is the means of controlling the continuity from note to note. The material of music is sound and silence. Integrating these is composing.

Cage was a rich font of principles and methods, but, as noted above, he was not Dunn's only influence. At the time Dunn did not want to be only a musician, preferring the "model of a sort of errant philosopher-poet adventuring in various media, including that of the social occasions surrounding the work." He later wrote of his ideas about teaching as originating in quite disparate sources:

I was impressed by what I had come to know about Bauhaus education in the arts, particularly from the writings of Moholy-Nagy, in its emphasis on the nature of materials and on basic structural elements. Association with John Cage had led to the project of constantly extending perceptive boundaries and contexts. From Heidegger, Sartre, Far Eastern Buddhism and Taoism, in some personal amalgam, I had the notion in teaching of making a "clearing," a sort of "space of nothing," in which things could appear and grow in their own nature. Before each class I made the attempt to attain this state of mind, of course with varying success.
Heidegger's writings about the human "world" in which we exist and act but which is not of our making, and about "things-in-the-world" which constitute our everyday existence, together with Sartre's stress on consciousness, find analogues in the interest, among the artists of the late 1950s and early 1960s, in using ordinary objects and amplifying perception of their thinness in relation to the beingness of humanity. For Heidegger, the social world consists of a set of relations between humans, tools, and natural things. This "world," where people manipulate things and use up materials, is in constant strife with the "earth," or natural realm, which remains impenetrable and secluded. The artwork functions as the bridge between these two realms, paradoxically bringing the earth into the world without violating it. The truth that is present in nature takes on a social—i.e., historical—existence. In the artwork, a framework that sets off the thinly nature of an object fashioned by humans is created.

The rock comes to bear and rest and so first becomes rock; metals come to glitter and shimmer, colors to glow, tones to sing, the word to speak. All this comes forth as the work sets itself back into the massiveness and heaviness of stone, into the firmness and pliancy of wood, into the hardness and luster of metal, into the lighting and darkening of color, into the clang of tone, and into the naming power of the word.
music, that any movement is valid as part of a dance—"whether it's a cough, a sniffle, or natural movement." And that continuum of sound and of movement extended, critically, to silence and its correlate, stillness. Mahaffay remembers using charts that outline space, movement, and rhythm options in order to make dances by chance. "The possibilities came out limitless."  

I used the rotation of the moon to make one structure, but it could have been anything—for instance, the routine of getting up in the morning and cooking an egg. The path of the moon indicated where things could happen in space, in the dance.  

For Mahaffay the ever-present option of stillness—that of nothing—was crucial. "When you roll the dice and get stillness, suddenly you are given an image of what preceded that moment—and that creates a kind of meditation on the movement." Giving up cherished control over the dance was an experience as compelling as the use of stillness.  

To give up your own cliches, to give up your own movement that you were so attached to, was very exciting. You might only be given enough time to do the beginning of your favorite movement, or to do it much less than you would have preferred to. You ended up putting movements together in ways that weren't at all obvious or expected.  

Mahaffay, a very small woman, was interested in the kind of detailed, meticulous movement she had learned in ballet and in Cunningham's technique classes. She remembers one phrase she made within a larger form that involved the folding and unfolding of the body in various careful ways, "like a box opening and closing, very complex and fast." Other students generally did activity that was less "dancey." Mahaffay recalls Steve Paxton creating a dance that consisted of repeatedly running into the school office to carry out one piece of furniture at a time. Simone Forti did a duet with someone else from the class running together in a large circle for a long time, then breaking that constancy and tension with a series of quiet, abrupt side steps. "The effect of those very simple elements was thrilling. I was so moved by the simplicity and strength of it: the comfortable, clean, expansive run, the quietness of the stepping. Simone [Forti] brought certain ideas from Ann Halprin into a situation of extreme discipline." Mahaffay also remembers Yvonne Rainer doing a meditative study making shapes with her entire body while sitting on the floor.  

It was visual, it was nondance. Those exercises in meditation that several people were involved in came out of Zen and seemed to relate to Merce [Cunningham]'s philosophy. You could go to a concert and listen to La Monte Young playing sandpaper for half an hour or forty-five minutes. Sandpaper wears down, and then the sound changes. Or he would adjust the sandpaper in his hand, changing the rhythm and texture of the sound. There is an impact when one simple element works against another.  

At another concert, someone threw a cord of logs down a staircase, and we listened to the sound it made. Or a musician would sit at a grand piano and never touch the keyboard, making sounds with sponges and window-cleaning squeegees, tapping the piano in various ways.  

The students in the class were remarkably resourceful, Mahaffay recalls, bringing in ideas from various places and disciplines. Yet Dunn clearly directed the flow of events in the class. Everyone was free to be wherever it was they were coming from; somehow it all fit into what Bob [Dunn] was doing. The way he talked about movement was so all-encompassing, you could do anything! There was something very centering and supportive about him, a deep level of understanding that went beyond what he was teaching. I remember him sitting at the piano with a stopwatch, and with a calmness and centeredness that related to Tai Chi.  

Steve Paxton grew up in Tucson, Arizona, where he did gymnastics and started dancing in high school to improve his tumbling. He was trained in Graham technique and toured with a performing group directed by his dance teachers, an Episcopal nun and a woman who taught at the local Jewish Community Center. In 1958 Paxton went to Connecticut College for the summer courses in modern dance. That summer Merce Cunningham was teaching at Connecticut College for the first time, and Paxton studied with him as well as with Graham, Doris Humphrey, and José Limón. Paxton came to New York, where he danced with Limón's company and studied at the Cunningham studio. He got a work-study scholarship with Cunningham; his work was to clean up the studio. "I was very much in love with the company at that time because they all seemed very sprightly, sprightly and droll."  

From the beginning of Dunn's class, Paxton was interested in challenging all of the assumptions of modern dance, including the methods and habits of people, like Cunningham, whom he respected. He tried to find sources for movement outside of the by-then refined technical vocabulary of the first generation of modern dancers and Cunningham's ballet-derived technique. Rainer remembers Paxton doing a dance that consisted of his sitting on a bench, eating a sandwich. Paxton says of his work in Dunn's class:  

The work that I did there was first of all to flush out all my "why-nots," to go through my "why not?" circles as far as I could until getting bored with the question. "Why not?" was a catch-word at that time. It was a very permissive time.
The Living Theater was in the same building as Cunningham, and there were concerts there by the Paper Bag Players, who were zany, and by Jimmy Waring, who was eclectic and droll, by the Living Theater itself, which was my first contact with the rise of political consciousness—the first time I saw the peace symbol, the first time I saw dope smoked, where they were doing plays like The Connection and talking about prison reform. Jackson MacLow did readings there. It was an environment that was very permissive and form-oriented. (I.e., the approach to making art was formalist.) A MacLow play was described as a chance operation. James Waring was interested in chance and eclecticism. His dance had all different styles. It didn't seem to matter; nothing had ever been done before seemed to matter.

Diane di Prima and other poets were there at the Living Theater, and I remember lectures that they gave, in which the hostile audience would say, "What are you doing? What has happened to art?" And they would say, "We're just making art, and why not?" They [di Prima and her circle] had a title pool. Everyone would contribute titles, and if you needed a title for something, you just pulled one out. Why not?

Paxton remembers Dunn's style as a teacher as Zen-like.

Dunn himself managed to do something that I've admired ever since. He taught us ideas almost by neglecting us, by mentioning things but tending to disappear at the same time, leaving with a smile. It was rather Zen-like, because how can you teach something that is in a constant state of mutation? What do you teach? He taught forms—Cage forms, Satie forms, basically musical ideas, in rebound, I think initially for him, against Louis How's study, or one of the keys to time. When you listen to a piece of music, you listen to intervals, sections, and structures. You aren't involved with personality and style of presence. So Dunn got us into that.

Paxton never choreographed a dance in response to the Satie assignment. He was less interested in using musical forms—perhaps because Cunningham had already used Satie's music as accompaniment to some of his dances—than in the very process of movement selection itself. For Paxton the history of modern dance had been tainted by cults of personality, and he searched for ways of stripping any trace of the artist's hand from his own work.

Simone Forti was born in Florence, Italy, in 1935. Her family was Jewish, and in 1939 they escaped to Switzerland and then to the United States. Forti grew up in Los Angeles, then studied psychology and sociology at Reed College, where she met Robert Morris. They married and left school in 1956, moving to San Francisco where Morris painted and Forti studied dance with Ann Halprin. Halprin had only recently broken with conventional modern dance. For four years, Forti danced with Halprin in Halprin's outdoor studio near Mount Tamalpais in Kentfield, California, working on free improvisations, kinesiological analysis, and vocal work.

Halprin's studio was a gathering place for other artists who collaborated with the dancers and sometimes taught them. They included the composer La Monte Young, actor John Graham, dancer A. A. Leath, painter Jo Landor, and architect Lawrence Halprin, Ann Halprin's husband. Forti was fascinated by Surrealist films, which she had seen since high school; she read Kurt Schwitters with interest. At Halprin's workshop Forti continued her involvement with fantastic juxtapositions. She, Halprin, and Graham worked together on movement and language improvisations based on intuitive imagery and contrasts. "I felt we were working out of a Zen state. But it wasn't Zen, so we took the word Nez," calling these works the Nez plays. Halprin also taught Forti techniques for inducing a "dance state" in which the body is focused and receptive to impulses that set off movement flow.

In 1959, the Morrices moved to New York. Forti, who was beginning to find the chaos of total improvisation disturbing, looked for other ways of working in dance and theater. Robert Morris gave up painting in the Abstract Expressionist style. Forti took some classes at the Martha Graham studio, where the idea of holding her stomach in repelled her, and then at the Cunningham school, where she found the characteristic speed and fragmentation of Cunningham's style bewildering. Cunningham was brilliant at articulating adult sensations of alienation, she writes, but she felt that "the thing I had to offer was still very close to the holistic and generalized response of infants." She taught at a nursery school, where she noticed the meaningful and satisfying repetitive movements of the children. She listened to La Monte Young's reductive, repetitive music. She saw and then worked in the Happenings of Robert Whitman, and she read about the activities of the Gutai group in Japan, who used artist's materials and actions to create simple, sensuous experiences for audiences.

Forti enjoyed Dunn's workshop sessions, where chance methods became meaningful to her not so much as a repudiation of personal control—she did not mind having control over the work—but as a technique of invoking a past experience—the moment of composition—in present performance. She was impressed with the speed with which Dunn himself worked, and she found his clarification of principles useful. "Bob Dunn asked us to be very specific about our parameters and to invent new ones." One of the first assignments Dunn gave, according to Forti, was to make a dance by combining sets of choices for body parts, durations, parts of the rooms, and left or right directions in space.

You could end up, for example, with eye, hand, neck; left, right; here, there. And then you would make up slips of paper for each option. So if you picked three combinations arbitrarily, you might get [she demonstrates]: hand, right, there; eye, right, there; eye right, there. And you'd use those results as instructions, as a score to make a dance.

Remy Charlip remembers Forti's dance in response to Dunn's Satie assignment. Forti put different parts of her body against the floor, depend-
ing on whether the musical phrase was a five-count, four-count, or three-count measure. "If it was a five she put her head down. If it was three, she just put her two feet down. It was an exquisite dance."

In December of 1960, Forti created two Happenings, See-Saw and Rollers, for a program at the Reuben Gallery, on which were also Jim Dine's A Shining Bed and Claes Oldenburg's Blackouts. In both works, Forti used children's playthings to generate movement. In See-Saw the movement structure was dictated by a seesaw, which was attached to a toy that made a mooing sound, and in Rollers two performers sat in shallow wagons pulled by three ropes.35

Robert Dunn remembers Paulus Berenson, who later became a potter, showing the class a long solo and then asking them where they thought the climax of the dance was.

"Climax" was aesthetically perhaps not a very "in" word at the time, but we felt we had experienced something rather mysteriously impressive in that line, and left him to tell us what. His dance was punctuated by a number of stillnesses of varying lengths, and on his informing us that it occurred during the longest pause, everyone shook their head in happy agreement with this solution.36

Yvonne Rainer, born in San Francisco in 1934, had moved to New York in 1956 to study acting. She took classes from Lee Grant, at Herbert Berghof's school, and from Paul Mann, but, dissatisfied with the Method approach, she took some dance classes on the recommendation of a friend. Rainer began dancing in 1957 with Edith Stephen, and in 1959 heightened her commitment to dance, taking two classes a day at the Graham school. Rainer studied ballet, with Lynn Golding and Lisan Kay at Ballet Arts, in addition to modern dance.37 At that time, Rainer says, she already planned to become a choreographer, partly because she had begun training as a dancer, at age twenty-four, too late to achieve "mastery as a performer of other artists' work."38 She started taking classes from Cunningham at the end of 1959, and soon after that, she met Simone Forti through Nancy Meehan (a dancer studying at the Graham school). Rainer, Meehan, and Forti met once a week in the spring of 1960 to improvise and share ideas. Rainer's interest in repetition, social contact, unusual positions, and fragmented movement was stimulated in these sessions.39 (See Chapter 4.)

In the summer of 1960, after taking Cunningham's intensive June course, Rainer went back to California to take Halprin's workshop, on Forti's recommendation. Forti herself attended the class, as did Robert Morris, Ruth Emerson, Trisha Brown, June Ekman, Willis Ward, La Monte Young, A.A. Leath, and John Graham.40 That fall, Rainer resumed classes at Cunningham's studio, including Dunn's choreography course.41

At some point in Dunn's two years of teaching, but probably during the first year, Rainer made a chart that listed body parts (head, hands, voice, spine, foot) and also five possibilities of action for each part. The head could shake, roll, nod slowly, look at the feet, or nod quickly; the hands could touch the knee, shake the fingers, brush the hip, clap, or rub together; the voice could say "eeioo," "if you insist," "sure," "aaaaa" in a breath, or "First of all, it is a contribution to history"; the spine could round, arch, curve to the side, curve the lower spine, or curve from side to side; the foot could rotate, step out three times, stamp, pat the other foot, or rub the floor.42 Although the possibilities for the spine are Cunning-

hamesque, the use of voice — and the options for the voice — and several of the actions of the head are strikingly original in modern dance. Rainer's use of speech, related to the Dada use of formal and art statements and pure sound, would continue as a salient feature of her work throughout her career. (See Chapter 4.) Rainer composed a dance by grouping points on the chart together, some actions to be performed one at a time and some simultaneously; she inserted four six-count pauses into this phrase. For instance, the dance begins with the hands clapping and the second action is a rotation of the foot. The dance ends with five simultaneous actions: the foot rubs the floor, the hands clap and fingers shake, and the voice says "eeioo" and "sure."43

Another untitled score by Rainer from this period is a spatial plan made by connecting dots on a piece of paper. Also on the paper are scattered words that could indicate movements and body parts in a dance, such as hand, hip, ribs, knee, leg, foot, and recline, walk, creep, squat, hop, leap; numbers from one to ten; and indications for fast and slow.44

Rainer thinks she may have been the only person in the class to use all the materials Dunn provided in the beginning of the term.45 Her Three Satie Spoons used the method of Cage's Fontana Mix and also the number structure of Satie's Gymnopédies. In Fontana Mix, Cage marked the imperfections on a piece of paper, drew lines on the paper, and then put a transparent staff or grid across the markings, which were then subject to interpretation by the performers. When Rainer used this graphic method, she made a separate score for each of the three Satie Gymnopédies. She decided on the smallest interval, a four-count measure, then counted the total number of measures in a piece and made a staff to correspond to that number. She made a drawing with crayons, using a different color for every phrase in the first section of the music (which then repeated itself), then put the staff on top of the drawing. She laid a straight line at an angle across the staff, and wherever the "guideline" crossed a color, or colors, she performed the corresponding movements, which she had invented, at that point in the duration of the music. Rainer then made a decision about
how to fill the unit of time with movement: whether to do a particular movement phrase several times, once slowly, or once and then hold for the rest of the musical phrase.\textsuperscript{66} The chance method of \textit{Fontana Mix} resulted in a repetitive structure that was appropriate to Satie's music, because the staff usually crossed the same color for several lines in a row.

Although Rainer was interested in the impersonal quality inherent in the chance method, which created unpredictable juxtapositions, what emerged in her dances was a distinctive movement style, full of eccentricities and fragmentation, arrived at by choice as well as chance. In 1962 Rainer wrote about her movement choices, in a short essay on three dances made for Dunn's class.

I dance about things that affect me in a very immediate way. These things can be as diverse as the mannerisms of a friend, the facial expression of a woman hallucinating on the subway, the pleasure of an aging ballerina as she demonstrates a classical movement, a pose from an Etruscan mural, a hunchbacked man with cancer.

I am also deliberately involved in a search for the incongruous and in using a wide range of individual human and animal actions—speak, shriek, grunt, slump, bark, look, jump, dance. One or many of these things may appear in a single dance—depending on what I read, see, and hear during the period I am working on that dance. It follows, therefore, that no single dance is about any one idea or story, but rather about a variety of things that in performance fuse together and decide the nature of the whole experience.\textsuperscript{67}

The movements themselves could be seen as highly expressive, but the ways in which they were put together resisted the interpretation of a unified plot or characterization.

The movements in \textit{Three Satie Spoons} include stretching the mouth with the index fingers, tracing lines down the body with the index finger, squatting, grasping the foot to the thigh while turning, making semaphoric arm movements, lying down on the side and falling over on the back, extending a trembling bent leg, and a shoulder stand.\textsuperscript{68} Among these movements are themes that thread through Rainer's choreography for the rest of her career: one part of the body leading or indicating another part; awkward positions; a subversion of the "pulled-up" dancerly line in limp or trembling limbs; quotations of games and gymnastics. The third section of the dance, performed to the third \textit{Gymnopédie}, also includes sounds: a squeak; "the grass is greener when the sun is yellower"; "ah-o-o-o-wah-oo-o."\textsuperscript{69} Rainer threw dice to determine where these sounds should fall in relation to the movement.\textsuperscript{70} The use of language and the disjunctiveness between the verbal and visual "tracks" of the work have also threaded through Rainer's \textit{oeuvre}, not only in her choreography, but also in her filmmaking in the 1970s.

In composing \textit{Three Satie Spoons}, Rainer shared Dunn's interest in associating other art forms with dance in her use of Cage's scores and Satie's time structures, as well as in considering the spatial and temporal qualities of sculpture:

[The] spirit of the piece derives from the simplicity and monotony of Satie's music. I became involved with repetition thru a concern that each movement might be seen as more than a fleeting form, much as one can observe a piece of sculpture for one minute or many minutes.\textsuperscript{71}

As Rollo Myers has pointed out, sculptural presentation was Satie's explicit intention, not only in the \textit{Gymnopédies}, but also in the \textit{Gnossiennes} and \textit{Sarabandes}. However, Myers describes the listening experience in slightly different terms than Rainer uses; he calls the three \textit{Gymnopédies} three different views of the same thing, all three of which share an underlying unity.\textsuperscript{72} For Rainer, the sculptural aspect dealt not so much with point of view as with permanence.

According to Rainer, Dunn's early classes were informal, with everyone bringing in disparate ideas and Dunn leading the discussions with a mixture of tact and enthusiasm.

It was a very strange assortment of people. Paul [Berenson] was Graham-trained. He did a very long, complicated solo, with traditional Graham-Cunningham movement. I can't remember how it was discussed. Marni [Mahaffey] did a dance in a little black skirt, tights, and leotard. She did some hip movements and played around with her skirt, as if she were doing a strip tease. Maybe there was some jazz music. I was dumb-founded. I wouldn't have known what to say. And I recall I was impressed by the delicacy and sensitivity that Bob [Dunn] used in dealing with her. That was the great thing about Bob. He got interested in everything. Anything that happened there, he was interested in, and the more unusual it was, and the more unsophisticated, the more things he would find to focus it in some way that would bring out its specialness.\textsuperscript{73}

When Dunn offered the course a second time, in the early part of 1961, Ruth Aliphon and Judith Dunn joined the others as students.\textsuperscript{74} Although some of the students (and the program notes for Concert of Dance #2) refer to both Robert Dunn and Judith Dunn as the teachers of the class, Robert Dunn says that he only asked his wife to assist him while he taught.\textsuperscript{75} Judith Dunn confirms this view, writing:

As a teacher Bob Dunn was outrageous. He allowed interminable rambling discussion, which often strayed wildly from the opening point. He permitted class members to deal with whatever hit their fancy. To examine, consider and present any object, dance collection of words, sounds and what have you in answer to problems he had given for study. He posed questions arising out of the most basic elements—structure, method, material. He was in one respect persistent, as if he had taken as his gospel the words of
the Chinese philosopher Laou T'su [sic], who said, "Favor and disgrace are the things which drive men mad." In other words, evaluation, in terms of "good or bad," "acceptable-rejected," were eliminated from discussion and analysis replaced them. (What did you see, what did you do, what took place, how did you go about constructing and ordering. What are the materials, where did you find or how did you form them, etc.) There was no formula to be filled. Initially this caused some anxiety. What he asked was that invention take place and that work continue to be produced economically and practically in terms of the place were we were in, at that time, the Merce Cunningham Studio. 78

Judith Dunn grew up in Brooklyn. Her mother, a physical therapist, had studied with Martha Graham. Dunn had no childhood ambitions to be a dancer, but she did want to be a professional basketball player when she was in junior high school. She majored in anthropology at Brooklyn College, where she was a member of the modern dance club. She planned to go to graduate school in anthropology, but in 1955 changed her mind and began the master's degree program in dance at Sarah Lawrence. After graduation she got a job teaching dance at Brandeis University, where she discovered how to teach as she went along. 77

There were no obstacles and few traditions to prevent me from teaching or doing what I wished. Frankly, I had very little idea what was expected of me or how to proceed. I knew I was to meet classes and I had decided in the time allotted I would do both technique and composition. I would just have to invent things from week to week. 79

When Merce Cunningham visited Boston as a guest teacher, he was encouraging to Judith Dunn, and she moved to New York to study with him. By 1958 she was a member of his company. 79 But until the Robert Dunn choreography class, Judith Dunn had not attempted her own choreography in New York. 80

At the end of the first year, the choreography class gave a private recital of works made in class, at the Cunningham studio. Rainer showed a dance built on interlocking instructions for five dancers. Each dancer had a path to travel that was one part of a spiderweb-shaped floorplan. Marni Mahaffy's instructions were to "comb your hair, rest, sleep, practice pirouettes or chainé turns or piqué turns in whatever sequence you wish" along the prescribed route. She could stop at a marked point to bark like a dog. She also had an option to eat the food of the other performers. When everyone else left the stage, Mahaffy was left alone to do two pirouettes, one en dehors and one en dedans, then to walk off. Ruth Allphon outlined her route with string. She had the option either to practice handstands or cartwheels, or to eat walnuts at prescribed spots. She could also make involuntary sounds, "such as grunts, squawks, 'whoops!', etc." She could not leave until Paxton escorted her off. Paxton was instructed to creep along his path and between certain points to practice walking on his hands. At one place there was a preset stethoscope, which Paxton could sit down to use, but not necessarily every time he encountered it. If he met Ruth Allphon, he was to help her do handstands. Berenson's directions told him to eat raisins along his route. Whenever another person arrived at the exact center of the space, his instructions were set down his raisins and do his "standing-in-one-spot bird movement dance." He could stand still to watch at any point, but at certain places he had to sit down "for 10 'bananas'."

Rainer's score for her own part has been lost, but she did make two exits, on the second of which Berenson could exit at the same place. 81 The unnamed dance exemplified a number of principles Dunn and the participants had brought to the class: the value of ordinary, even mundane actions, such as combing one's hair or eating; the freedom to exercise a range of options; the value of stillness as an element in the dance; the use of repetition and juxtaposition as structuring devices; and above all, the use of scores to generate and teach the dance.

Another in the end-of-the-year concert was a collaboration between Rainer, Forti, and Allphon. Its title was Stove Pack Opus, the result, according to Rainer, of a three-way free association between the choreographers; Forti contributed "stove," Allphon "pack," and Rainer "opus." 82 The score for the dance gives a coded structure for each dancer, indicating intervals of unison movement, stillness, and two instances when the stage was empty. During one of the interludes with an empty stage, barking, whistling, and humming emanated from offstage. 83

Another dance in the recital was a solo Forti made for a telephone booth. Designed for the booths then in use, which had panes of glass through which the upper part of the user's body was visible, the dance took place in one spot, using only Forti's torso, head, and arms. Forti also read a "dance report," in which she described how the growth of shoots in an onion she was observing caused its weight to shift and ultimately, caused the onion to fall off the bottle on which it rested. 84

The end-of-the-year recital by Dunn's class was given in May or June 1961. That spring La Monte Young organized a series of concerts at Yoko Ono's loft at 112 Chambers Street. On 26 and 27 May Simone Forti gave a concert of "5 dance constructions + some other things," as part of the series. Other artists who gave concerts or events were Robert Morris, who created an environment that lasted four days; Philip Corner, Jackson MacLow, Toshi Ichiyanagi, Terry Jennings, Henry Flynt, Joseph Byrd, Richard Maxfield, and D. Lindberg. 85 At Forti's concert, the loft was arranged more like an art gallery than like a stage. Different dances took place in various parts of the loft. There were pieces that were based on children's playthings, and See-Saw was performed again. Slant Board, a
ten-minute climbing activity for three or four people, was clearly based on sports. *Huddle*, a cluster of people who took turns climbing each other, was a kind of human jungle gym, meant to be viewed in the round. But here the audience walked around the dance. Several activities were simple, unitary actions lasting or repeating for a long time, much as La Monte Young's music often consisted of single, sustained tones. One of the dances was an accompaniment to a piece of taped music by Young. Forti’s game structures were presented simply, without special scene changes or costumes, without special backstage or secret transformations. They were dances without drama or illusion. Each dance consisted of a set of rules that generated an ongoing activity, without artistically arranged phrases, climaxes, or theatricality. These “constructions” simply allowed both dancer and viewer to enjoy the kinesisthetic moment and to watch the subtle changes in shape and energy that occurred when the moment extended into longer durations.

During the spring and summer of 1961, more connections were forged between the students at the Cunningham studio and the dancers working with James Waring. The Dunns were friendly with Waring already. Rainer had been impressed by Aileen Passloff's dance *Tea at the Palace of Hoon*, which she saw in 1960. She knew that Passloff worked closely with James Waring, and in spring 1961 Rainer found herself at Waring’s studio. That summer, Waring asked her to perform two solos in a program he was organizing for 31 July at the Living Theater. The program also included Waring’s own choreography and dances by Passloff and by Fred Herko, a young dancer who performed with Waring. Rainer danced *Three Satie Spoons* and another dance she had choreographed in the Dunn course, *The Bells*. In that dance, among other actions, Rainer crumpled her right hand into her nose; performed a “backwards traveling turn on one foot as fingers flit around head like insects”; turned her legs in and out while doing jetés; improvised in a staccato, rhythmic movement style while saying “the lewd fat bells of Manhattan”; rubbed her fists in her eyes while walking on tiptoe, saying, “I told you everything was going to be alright, Harry.” She did the movement phrases while facing squarely in the various directions of the compass, which had been predetermined by chance.

Michael Smith, the drama critic, reviewed the concert in the Village Voice, characterizing the dramatic effects of each dance rather than describing or analyzing its movement. We learn from his review that Waring’s *Little Kootch Piece No. 2* was humorously despairing, its “eccentricities all but destroying [communication]”; Passloff’s *Rosefish* was about “a hopeless desire to escape,” and that it was “danced with fine authority.” This concert marked the public debut of both Rainer and Herko as choreographers, although Smith does not make any reference to this fact in his review. He notes that Rainer’s solos emphasize form, and he praisestheir concern with structure as “effective in holding attention.” But he sees her dances as studies, wondering where the communication with an audience enters into the performance. “The Bells is funny, but maybe for the wrong reasons: the Satie Spoons is bleak, introspective, fascinating, private.” Herko’s *Possibilities for a Pleasant Outing* provided Smith with a change from the otherwise uniformly “bleak landscape.” “Mr. Herko seems, more than the others, to derive direct delight from moving, which I’d think would be the basis of all dances.” Still, Smith must dramatically interpret Herko’s dance: he is, Smith writes, dancing about infantile pleasure in a world dominated by inhibiting adult rationality.

That fall, Robert Dunn again offered a course in choreography at the Cunningham studio. Several more students began to attend. Rainer continued for the third and fourth terms, as did Paxton. The new participants over the course of the year were: Trisha Brown, Ruth Emerson, Alex Hay, Deborah Hay, Fred Herko, Al Kurchin, Dick Levine, Gretchen MacLane, John Herbert McDowell, Joseph Schlichter, Carol Scathorn, and Elaine Summers. Valda Setterfield and David Gordon attended occasionally, with an “incredible air of being ‘in it but not of it.’” As in Cage’s experimental music class, friends of the students often dropped in to observe, and sometimes participate. Dunn remembers Robert Rauschenberg, Jill Johnston, and a young filmmaker, Gene Friedman, as regular visitors, and Remy Charlip, David Vaughan, Robert Morris, Ray Johnson, and Peter Schumann as occasional guests.

Once again Dunn gave a Satie assignment. Rainer again combined *Fontana Mix* with Satie, this time with *Trois Gnossiennes*, to make a duet for herself and Trisha Brown. Punning as she did with the earlier dance, she called it *Satie for Two*. The movement phrases included a “Gauguin sit,” a “sloppy skip,” a standing position in which the head was turned in profile and the arm wrapped around the head to grasp the forehead while the opposite hip jutted out, a section in which Brown and Rainer touched parts of each other’s and their own bodies, an “atom bomb,” and various traveling steps. An interlude between the second and third *Gnossiennes* involved both speaking in “children’s dialect” and barking and quacking.

Trisha Brown had grown up in Aberdeen, Washington, where as a child she played football, climbed trees, and studied tap, ballet, and acrobatics. She got a bachelor’s degree in modern dance at Mills College, where she learned “traditional” modern dance composition according to the rules of Louis Horst and Doris Humphrey. During the summers she studied at Connecticut College, where she took classes from José Limón, Louis Horst, and Merce Cunningham. In 1958, Brown was hired to set up a dance department at Reed College. After a few months, she “exhausted conven-
tional teaching methods,” and for the rest of her two years at Reed she taught improvisationally, while also developing her own dance vocabulary.94

In the summer of 1960, Brown also went to Halprin’s workshop. Simone Forti vividly recalls a study Brown did in Halprin’s studio:

She was holding a broom in her hand. She thrust it out straight ahead, without letting go of the handle. And she thrust it out with such force that the momentum carried her whole body through the air. I still have the image of that broom and Trisha right out in space, traveling in a straight line three feet off the ground.95

That fall, Brown came to New York, where she worked on structured improvisations with Forti and Dick Levine. In 1961 she performed in Forti’s evening at Yoko Ono’s loft.96 The process of improvisation has been an essential aspect of Brown’s work. As she later wrote:

If you stand back and think about what you are going to do before you do it, there is likely to be a strenuous editing process that stymies the action. On the other hand, if you set yourself loose in an improvisational form, you have to make solutions very quickly and you learn how to. That is the excitement of improvisation. If, however, you just turn the lights out and go gah-gah in circles, that would be therapy or catharsis or your happy hour, but if in the beginning you set a structure and decide to deal with X, Y, and Z materials in a certain way, nail it down even further and say you can only walk forward, you cannot use your voice or you have to do 195 gestures before you hit the wall at the other end of the room, that is an improvisation within set boundaries. That is the principle, for example, behind jazz. The musicians may improvise, but they have a limitation in the structure just as improvisation in dance does. This is what I would call structured improvisation because it locates you in time and place with content.97

Young dancers at the beginning of the 1960s, like their peers in every field, and like each new avant-garde generation, were trying to free themselves from the restrictions and rules of what they perceived as an older, more rigid generation. Improvisation in jazz and “classical” music or in dance stood as a metaphor for freedom, but also as a strategy for learning to act spontaneously, for setting one’s own rules within a form.

For Brown one of the most valuable features of Dunn’s class was the way he approached analysis, not looking for the correct answers to the problems he set, but interested in whatever individual solutions his students discovered for themselves, and in helping them to understand what it was they had created.

After presenting a dance, each choreographer was asked, “How did you make that dance?” The students were inventing forms rather than using the traditional theme and development or narrative, and the discussion that followed applied nonevaluative criticism to the movement itself and the choreographic structure as well as investigating the disparity between the two simultaneous experiences, what the artist was making and what the audience saw. This procedure illuminated the interworkings of the dances and minimized value judgments of the choreographer, which for me meant permission, permission to go ahead and do what I wanted to do or had to do—to try out an idea of borderline acceptability.

One of the assignments Brown recalls distinctly was the simple instruction: Make a three-minute dance.

This assignment was totally nonspecific except for duration, and the ambiguity provoked days of sorting through possibilities trying to figure out what time meant, was 60 seconds the only difference between three minutes and four minutes, how do you stop something, why, what relation does time have to movement, and on and on. Dick Levine taught himself to cry and did so for the full time period while I held a stopwatch instructed by him to shout just before the time elapsed, “Stop it! Stop it! Cut it out!” both of us ending at exactly three minutes. That dance is a good example of the practice of substituting one medium, in this case acting/crying, to solve a dance problem.98

The interest in time and its perception is related to the 1960s fascination with Zen meditation, with altered sensations of time under the influence of drugs, with phenomenology. It is also related to the extension of nontime arts, like painting and sculpture, into forms that used time—like Happenings and Events—to promote an experience of immediacy, of impermanence, and of duration itself. The perception of time, of space, and of the workings of the body were three major preoccupations of the new, post-modern dance that grew out of Dunn’s workshop and the Judson Dance Theater. Of course, not all the students in Dunn’s class may have known about Zen Buddhism, the effects of drugs, or phenomenology and existentialism. But there were shared areas of investigation between those who did and those who approached issues of perception and control by other means. And the involvement of Cage, who was the mentor of many young dancers and other artists, in Zen did provide a certain framework for these issues. Paxton recalls:

When I heard Cage talking, it was a more articulate version of what I had mulitely been feeling, and I was very drawn to it. It was the first time I had heard anybody talk that way besides myself and my friends...[about] attitudes to life in general, with art being just one facet of how to deal with attitudes, how to see them.99

Brown and Rauschenberg, discussing Dunn’s class, say that Paxton was especially adept at creating dances about duration.

Brown: I can remember Steve [Paxton] presenting pieces that so extended time I couldn’t believe it.

Rauschenberg: It was unbearable.
Although Brown and Rauschenberg seem to disagree in the above exchange, my impression was that they both admired the cool, casual and meditative work that Paxton presented. It was exactly because the dance was “in no way compelling,” without gratifying expectations, and simply seeming to exist without rushing toward a climax, that the sense of duration was heightened.

Elaine Summers was born in Perth, Australia. When she was five, her family moved to Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts, where at first she went to convent school, but then soon began studying tap and toe dancing. At thirteen she began taking ballet lessons in Boston. She wanted to become a dancer, but, partly because her parents were opposed to her pursuing that career, she trained as an art teacher at Massachusetts College of Art. She continued to dance while at college, and came to New York one summer with her sister to take an intensive workshop at the Graham school, where Cunningham still taught, as did Louis Horst and Erick Hawkins. Summers also studied for a short time at the Juilliard School after graduation. But she had to work nights to afford it, and she began to develop an arthritic hip, so she left Juilliard. She continued to study dance at various studios, including Mary Anthony's, Jean Erdman's, and Merce Cunningham's, and she also began to teach dance. In teaching nondancers, Summers noted the way differently shaped bodies permitted different dynamics and discovered that many of the movements she preferred were not considered dance movements.101

During the summers, she and her husband, the artist Carol Summers, went to Woodstock, where Elaine Summers choreographed for the Turnau Opera Company. In the mid-1950s she saw works by James Waring and Aileen Passloff that excited her in much the same way as Cunningham's dances had.

Ballet didn't really excite or interest me, and Martha Graham didn't. But there was a very lively dance scene that included Cunningham, Waring, and Passloff and I was more and more thinking about different sized bodies and ordinary movement.

By the time she entered Dunn's class, Summers had taken several composition classes from Louis Horst, which she had enjoyed, partly because she appreciated Horst's keen kinesthetic memory.

Horst's classes were also about structure, but they were more historical. They weren't concept-oriented. One of his courses was based on pre-classic dance forms. You made up a dance of your own, using a pre-classic structure. He was extraordinary. You'd do your dance, and then he'd say, "Fourth measure, second beat, third beat—what did you mean there?"

Summers's impression was that both Dunn taught the class. Judith Dunn may have taken a more active role in assisting Dunn during the third and fourth terms of the class, for many of the students who began taking the class in fall 1961 or spring 1962 refer to it as the Dunn's class. According to Summers:

My feeling is that Judith was teaching alongside of Robert. I remember Robert sitting at the piano and Judith beside the piano, Robert giving out the assignment and Judith participating in it. The extraordinary thing about the class was the clarity of the presentation of Cage's principles, and the clarity of the teaching structure, which both Robert and Judith participated in.

I remember Deborah Hay's dance with a mirror, and I remember a dance that Trisha [Brown] did, where what the dancer did depended on what the audience was doing, like crossing their legs or coughing. That was a chance mechanism.

Summers says that one of the few rules in the class was that the solution to the assignment had to be presented as a complete, finished dance.

You couldn't come in and say, "This is the idea," and then when the critical time came say, "Well, you'll like it better when I do it better or when I get Margot Fonteyn to come in and dance it for me."

Not all the criticisms in class were supportive. One of Summers's earliest dances made in class was based on Debussy's Ondine, and she remembers that the class "rejected" it.

I was still afraid to step out from Debussy's structure and I did a dance that was quite romantic. And Steve [Paxton] said, "Well, I don't like the dance and I don't like the structure, and you didn't dance it well." First time out!

So I went home and thought about that a lot and then I thought, "Well, I don't care, I like the structure."

I went back the next week and I did it again, and Steve said, "I still don't like the dance, I don't like the structure, but you danced the hell out of it." And I felt good because I felt that my own feelings about my work were more important to me than what somebody, even someone I respected a great deal, felt. Unconsciously, though, I think I was being safe, doing a structure that wasn't chance at all.

But even though I had been rejected tremendously, there was an impersonal aspect in it. The class was very dry. You went, you did your work, and you were totally involved with ideas and concepts, so that if you were rejected, you didn't feel personally destroyed. There was a kind of objectivity in the situation that was caused by Bob and Judy [Dunn], to begin with, plus the intensity of the participants.102
Elaine Summers's son Kyle was two years old when Dunn's class began, and at one point Summers brought in a score for Ruth Emerson that used a drawing by the child to dictate movement choices. The drawing was a long vertical scrawl, and Summers divided its length into thirds to determine the timing. In the first third and last third of the dance, the shape of the line dictated the pattern of movements in terms of space, and in the second section of the dance, the shape of the drawing determined the floor pattern. The initial instructions read: "Any length of time in total, but the proportions the same in time as the division in space." Instructions for movements in the first section of the dance read: "Toes, head, 2 hands," for the middle: "jump, gallop, squiggle"; for the end: "Squiggle, jump, walk." Several chance mechanisms remove the personal involvement of the choreographer from the dance in this instance: the drawing, which shaped the movements in space and along a path, was a "found" drawing, and a drawing by a child who did not have adult, aestheticized design sense; the list of movements corresponding to each section was probably established through another chance procedure; finally, the dance was performed not by the choreographer, but by another dancer, who could install certain of her own choices in the interpretation of the score. Emerson chose to make the dance last a total of eight minutes, with one minute of stillness inserted arbitrarily into this section.

For Dunn's assignment to use a chance mechanism to choose body parts, Summers remembers using a spinning ball to solve the problem. Later, Paxton developed the use of the ball by writing movement choices on it and stopping the diagrammed ball with his index finger or flattening it with a piece of glass to determine the order of the options. Summers remembers that the discussion following the body parts assignment centered on "how difficult it is to break away from body patterns that go together, your own particular clichés or dance clichés in general."

Ruth Emerson had grown up in Urbana, Illinois, where she studied dance in high school with the graduate students of Margaret Erlanger, who had created the dance department at University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. Emerson learned Graham technique there, and she remembers that when she saw Cunningham perform in his own work in 1954, she hated him. Twice during college at Radcliffe she went to Connecticut College for the summer sessions with the modern dance establishment. In 1958, she graduated with a degree in mathematics. She had danced during college, where she was president of the Radcliffe Dance Group, and before moving to New York in 1961, Emerson danced with Dancemakers, a small company in Boston, for two years. She returned to Connecticut College for another summer session in 1959.

In 1960, Emerson went to Ann Halprin's workshop for the summer session where she met Rainer, Brown, Forti, and the other students and collaborators who were also in Kentfield that summer. Emerson was still committed to the Graham aesthetic at the time.

It was very disturbing to see all these things in which people weren't looking for the right answer and they weren't trying to be pretty and famous and do hard steps and all the things I was tremendously anxious to do, and to do better than anyone else. Occasionally I could move without being terribly self-conscious and thinking how it would look. Usually I wanted things to look nice and cheerful.

When she moved to New York, Emerson took classes at the Graham school, but soon she changed to the Cunningham studio. She was coming to appreciate Cunningham's work, and like many of her fellow students, she hoped eventually to be in his dance company. And, like most of the other students in Robert Dunn's class, she took the course in choreography because it was there.

He accompanied. I can't remember why I decided to take his class. Maybe it was just a social thing that everyone was doing then. I didn't have any deep conviction of what it was going to bring at all. We all wanted to dance more.

During this time, Emerson was also dancing in the company of Pearl Lang, a choreographer who had danced with Martha Graham. In addition she was coauthor of a textbook in mathematics and working at the Center for Programmed Instruction. A Quaker, Emerson was active in The American Friends Service Committee and The General Strike for Peace.

Emerson enjoyed Dunn's commitment to the students as well as his neutral, nonauthoritative way of teaching.

For me it was a total change from controlling the process of how you made movement, which was first of all that you were supposed to suffer and improve and struggle with your interior, which I couldn't bear. I hated it. I remember years of sitting rebelliously in the window sills at Connecticut College while teachers would come and look at me and know that I wasn't doing things right. It was such a relief to take a piece of paper and work on it without someone telling me I was making things the wrong way.

Then when [Dunn] would look at things, he was interested in what happened and how you had done it. He was not at all judgemental about whether you got it right or whether it was art. It was a tremendous relief.

Emerson thinks that one reason Dunn stressed the use of written scores was a purely practical one:

There was no rehearsal space, and Bob [Dunn] understood that. It was well understood by everybody that most people didn't have a studio of their own. But in another week,
you were expected to come in with something. It was the only practical way of conveying information. You might not see people in the meantime for rehearsal. That was totally beyond everybody's capacity. So it was expedient in some ways. I enjoyed using scores very much, for their formality and the graphic aspect.

But also, Dunn was interested in having people deal with randomness. Some people were reluctant to cope with random numbers. There was something good about the telephone book. It was the only way they could do it. Dice or chance seemed too intellectual.\textsuperscript{113}

Emerson's studies for the class reflect an appetite for mathematical conceptualization, a sensitivity to time structures and to the particular space in the Cunningham studio, and also a thorough commitment to the chance methodology. One of the scores she created began with a chart using the following elements: dancer, time, space, speed, and absolute time. The gamut for each factor included dancers numbered one through five; ten-second time spans; six different areas of space in the studio, one of which was offstage; various speeds ranging from stillness to very fast; and factors of six, rounded off to multiples of five. Apparently Emerson used a complicated system of throwing dice to determine which choice out of each gamut fell into the blanks on the chart. One of her notes says, "Doubles is 2 dancers," and in some spaces in the "dancer" column, there are, in fact, two numbers listed instead of the customary one. A score for each dancer, consisting of a time graph in absolute time and the corresponding activity for each part of that time (space, duration, and speed) was made from the master score.\textsuperscript{114}

Another of Emerson's scores uses the streetlight at the corner of 14th Street and Sixth Avenue, visible through the studio windows, as a cuing device. The score assigns numbers arbitrarily to the dancers, based on the color of their hair ("lightest hair lowest number, etc."). The dance could be performed by three to eight people. The space in the studio was divided into eight contiguous blocks, six of which were labeled with numbers, and each of the six windows in the studio was also assigned a number. The instructions to the dancers read as follows:

\textit{Use only enough windows so that 2 people have no window at the beginning. Use windows and spaces according to number of people.}

\textit{Beginning: All except 2 "extra" people go to windows as numbered and wait for one of the 14th St. & 6th Ave. lights to start flashing "don't walk." Count the flashes for one intake of breath, then proceed to your space & perform your dance for half that number of times.}

\textit{Extra people wait for a vacant window & then proceed the same way.}

\textit{Each person should go through the process twice, first using the "a" part of his space, & then the "b" part.}\textsuperscript{115}

One Emerson score from this period contains explicit political content. It is an improvisation with chance cues involving predetermined sounds and actions. Again there is an emphasis on space: six numbered spaces border the walls of the studio, and a seventh (space 81) is a small area that borders space 2. Four of the areas were reserved for the performance of actions: in the other three areas, sounds were to be made. The activity was shaped by a number of factors: first, three to five people each took two slips of paper from one pile of ten "sound" possibilities and one pile of ten "actions." The sounds were: "when she said that I", "don't go there now with all that in", "there is a lovely road that goes", "in the beginning", "yesterday", "WORD"; make high sound; make low sounds; "ban the bomb"; free. The actions were: jumps from two feet to one foot either big or fast; carry someone with you; fast leaps in place; cross arms behind you as far as possible; collapse on floor; arch backwards; sit on the floor and turn; use hands to make sounds; move head and stamp feet; free. Each dancer also chose two numbers from one to seven, from another pile of slips of paper, and each dancer chose two "guide people." A transformation of the numbers on the slips made 1 correspond to 2, 2 to 7, 3 to 1, 4 to 5, 5 to 4, 6 to 6, and 7 to 4. The instructions for using all these factors were:

\textit{Walk or stand at will.}

\textit{When your guide goes to your number, go immediately to the appropriate space and do the prescribed sound or action for as long as you want, then resume.}

\textit{In case of horn or siren -- all cluster together low.}\textsuperscript{116}

Apparently there was also a dance phrase which the performers did in between sounds and actions.

The movement and verbal content of this dance are strikingly full of reference to nonviolent resistance, and perhaps, in the case of the cluster, to bomb shelters. In conjunction with these highly expressive elements, the cuing from the "leaders" and the arbitrariness of the changes in activity take on a political meaning, suggesting both the need for political organization and the frustration of following a political leader into unknown territory without explanation.

Emerson frequently scribbled scores and notes on the backs of used pieces of paper. Appropriately, on the back of one of the sheets of this score is a crossed-out draft for a notice, which reads:

\textit{Dear Friend,}

\textit{Are you interested in reading about non-violent direct action, and talking it over with other people? I would like to know who is interested in meeting one evening a week. In}
order not to degenerate into a group of opinions with no material to build on, it seems we should do new reading, with the object of finding out things that we don’t already know or think. 17

John Herbert McDowell was a composer who had grown up in Scranton, New York, and earned a degree in music from Columbia University, studying with Darius Milhaud, among others. McDowell had composed for Paul Taylor, James Waring, and Aileen Passloff, and he worked with Alc Rubins on dramatic improvisation and movement therapy at the Master Institute. 18 His impression, like Summers’s, was that both Dunns taught the class.

The kind of dance teaching that Jimmy [Waring] did in his composition courses, and that Bob and Judy [Dunn] subsequently did in their composition course, which went directly into the Judson group, is historically important. I think the important thing about the Judson group was that it was a focus for a number of things that already had been happening over . . . . five, ten years . . . . Dance had become stylized into old dance, Graham-Humphrey had by then become codified . . . . Merce [Cunningham] and Jimmy [Waring] and a few other people were breaking away, individually. But there was in the air a spirit of change, there were now two codified things, and a whole fresh outlook was needed. 19

But, McDowell notes, not everyone in the class enjoyed Dunn’s approach. “Some people who were not turned on by the sort of thinking that went on in the class simply went and made pieces which they showed in the class.” 20 David Gordon and Valda Setterfield were two students who were less enthusiastic about the class than most. Gordon grew up in Manhattan and went to Brooklyn College, where he earned a degree in fine arts and also performed with the school dance club. He began dancing with James Waring in 1956, while still in college. Gordon took technique and composition classes from Waring, and in 1960 presented his first choreography on a program of works by Waring’s students, given at the Living Theater. 21

The dance, Mama Goes Where Papa Goes, was a chance-composed duet for Gordon and Setterfield. It opened with Gordon standing on stage, his arms full of rubber balls. He dropped all the balls, waited until they had stopped rolling and bouncing, and walked offstage. Setterfield had a solo composed of jumps strung together without pauses or preparations. At one point in the dance, Setterfield played a cripple who limped on crutches to be miraculously cured; when Gordon pulled away her crutches, she could walk again. From Waring, Gordon had learned to put together disparate activities and images and to value wit in dancing. He also, from the beginning, was drawn to the panopoly of Hollywood myths. 22

In the summer of 1960, Gordon studied with Cunningham at Connecticut College on scholarship. There he took technique classes from Martha Graham and composition from Louis Horst. After Graham turned her class over to another teacher, Gordon lost interest. And when Gordon refused to conform to Horst’s prescribed assignments, Horst lost interest in him.

[Horst] said ABA: this many beats in the A, this many beats in the B, this many beats in the A. That seemed very sensible, and that seemed to be all the information I needed. And if I were to stand and pick my nose for eighteen beats and then go back to it at the end, that seemed to be perfectly fine, and you couldn’t object to that, because I was following the form. 23

Setterfield, who grew up in London, studied ballet there with Marie Rambert and Audrey de Vos. She worked for an Italian revue to save money to come to the United States where, she had heard from David Vaughan, her height would not be a handicap as it was in the English ballet aesthetic. When she arrived in New York 1958, Vaughan immediately introduced her to James Waring, who asked her something about Zen (“I didn’t know what he was talking about”) and shortly asked her to dance in his next concert. 24

Setterfield remembers Horst as “the kind of person who was jolted by anything humorous. He would think it irreverent.” Yet when Setterfield, who had learned preclassic forms at the Royal Academy of Ballet, performed her version of a pavanne in Horst’s class in 1960, “really an honest-to-god pavanne,” Horst thought it was humorous and liked it. “He decided that I was just like Virginia Woolf and he snorted and giggled the whole way through.” The rest of the students in the class that summer, as in previous summers, were following Horst’s teachings and filling their pavannes with emotional content, “full of lamenting and weeping and waiting.” 25

Gordon and Setterfield married in 1960 and went to Europe for a year. When they came back, Setterfield began to dance with Cunningham, and both went to Dunn’s class. According to Setterfield, they had already learned certain very useful lessons about choreography from Waring:

Why shouldn’t something be put in a dance, and what was art, why was it special and particular. One got to be able to do all sorts of things one might have earlier thought were just not suitable, not proper, not appropriate. One learned not to evaluate things as they came to mind. 26

Gordon thinks he wanted to go to the Dunn classes “to be with a group of my peers and see what everybody else was doing and see what I was doing.” 27
Gordon found the class "amazing," but he was more excited by the other students in the class than by the teaching. Judy and Bob [Dunn] were really very rigid about this chance procedure stuff they were teaching. And I had already been through a lot of this chance stuff with Jimmy [Waring]. I wasn't very religious about it. And I couldn't deal with all of the rehashing. Every time somebody got up to do something it was part of the class to take it apart. "How did you decide to move your left arm after your right arm?" I was trying to find the holes in the teaching, and I did manage to make them feel uncomfortable which was very useful to me at that time.29

Setterfield remembers the discussion as less analytic than vague and congratulatory. "I would really like to say I thought that was a wonderful piece. 'I thought your piece last week was more wonderful.' That sort of thing."29

Rainer recalls that Robert Dunn came under attack during the second year of the course. To begin with, Gordon and Setterfield made it clear that they "thought it was just garbage—the way people performed, their style of performing. They thought there was no critical perspective being brought to bear on the situation." And Rainer herself had choreographic ambitions that were no longer wholly satisfied by the class.

I began to get fed up with all the chance stuff. That seemed to be the end-all. If you made it by chance, then anything was okay. But I don't remember being particularly vocal about it.

Something different was obviously needed, and Bob [Dunn] didn't know how to go on. So it was the participants who took it over. Judy and Bob [Dunn], and Valda [Setterfield] and David [Gordon] always had things to say, and they were always at odds.130

Robert Dunn thinks that the tension that began to arise stemmed from an anxiety about authority on the part of the students, who were products of a rebellious generation but were not always prepared to face their own free situation.

My refusal to provide a "recipe" toward which to work for approval or disapproval periodically got me in hot water emotionally with members of the class, so much had this approach been typical of the attitude taken by teachers in this area. I think also I provided rather the wrong kind of surface for the "parental transference" usually and rather troublesome to present in any advanced study still in a teacher-class situation. (I moved from the Judson years, 1960-64, most of the rest were in their 20s.)

But Dunn was not troubled by this manifestation of anxiety, which he considered part of the learning process.

The "interminable rambling discussion" spoken of by Judith Dunn did indeed take place and was part of a deliberate aesthetic, preventing premature closure before the practically unheard-of had some chance to poke its way into our presence, which it often did. Particularly, the matter of anxiety, whether personal or aesthetic, on the part of teacher or other members of the class, was rather sternly bypassed, in so far as it could be, though this took place by example and contagion rather than as stated doctrine. Allowing this anxiety to take place for dancer and choreographer, and later for the audience, without automatic and unconscious retreat to safer formulae, was of utmost importance in getting to the explorations, the dances, and the audience experiences which we felt at that time as somehow crying to be born.131

In the fall of 1961, Diane di Prima and Alan Marlowe had founded the American Theater for Poets with the intention of producing plays by poets, and dance and music concerts. From October 1961 through February 1962, they had presented a program of plays at the Off Bowery Gallery at 84 E. 10th Street, with works by Michael McClure, LeRoi Jones, di Prima, John Wieners, Robert Duncan, and James Waring. At the same time they exhibited in the gallery collages by Ray Johnson and photographs by the filmmaker Jack Smith.132

In March 1962, the group organized a Poets Festival at the Maidman Playhouse on 42nd Street. The prospectus announces new music by Richard Maxfield, La Monte Young, Philip Corner, and Joseph Byrd; Happenings by Allan Kaprow, Robert Whitman, George Brecht, and Ray Johnson; films by Stan Vanderbeek and Nicola Cermonich; and several dance concerts.133

The first of the dance concerts, on 5 March, featured the works of Yvonne Rainer and Fred Herko. Rainer danced The Bells, three Satie Spoon, and Three Seascape (made that year in Dunn's class and described in Chapter 3). She and Trisha Brown danced in Rainer's Satie for Two. Rainer also did a collaborative duet with Dariusz Hochman, called Grass and dedicated to the Great Wallendas. Herko presented Edge, a long group work for actors and dancers.134

The concert was widely reviewed, with reactions ranging from the horrified to the delighted. Lillian Moore, whose review appeared the next day in the New York Herald Tribune, describes the scene in the theater lobby as a chaotic gathering of seedy "beatnik types." She discusses The Bells, Satie for Two, and Three Seascape, and concludes her review by explaining that she was "obliged to forgo" the rest of the concert. Herko is mentioned in the headline, but nowhere in the body of the review.135 Marcia Marks, writing in Dance Magazine, calls the concert an example of meaningless nonconformism. She thinks Rainer's work suffers from repetitiveness, and considers Edge "a heavy-handed attempt at nonsensical."136
Lelia K. Telberg wrote about the concert for Louis Horst’s *Dance Observer*. Telberg opens her review with a sympathetic contextual framework:

Yvonne Rainer and Fred Herko are part of the trend in which young experimental choreographers are searching for new—New what? Form? Content? Technique? Significance? There is no standard form for modern dance; “anti-form” or “chance” form is in itself a form…. Emotional involvement is frowned upon; it must be abstract, unrelated—a crystalized, pure style. Pure Dance—each decade had its own interpretation.

Telberg, though not unqualifiedly enthusiastic, finds much to like in the dances. She considers both choreographers gifted, thinks *Satie Spoons* “charming” and *Satie for Two* Rainer’s best work. She is impressed by Rainer’s strong “inner image,” which captivated the audience.137

Jill Johnston, writing about the event in the *Village Voice*, was prophetically moved. Johnston, who had taken classes at Limón’s studio while going to graduate school at Columbia University, met Louis Horst when she got a job in the dance research department of the New York Public Library around 1958. Horst asked Johnston to write for *Dance Observer* and, after she wrote a favorable review of James Waring, Johnston remembers, Remy Charlip befriended her at the library and encouraged her to look at Cunningham’s and other avant-garde dances. It was Charlip and Waring, she claims, who soon arranged for Johnston to review dance in the *Village Voice*.138 She pronounces the concert the wave of the future, noting the connection to Robert Dunn’s course, which, she predicts, will have a strong bearing on coming developments in choreography. She compares Herko’s dance-play to a Rauschenberg combine. In *Edge*, she states, the various dance events and dramatic occurrences “seemed to move forward and backward, or skip all around in time, and to have no origin, no destination, and no Simple Simon meanings.” Johnston explains the conceptual groundwork for Rainer’s *The Bells* and *Satie for Two*, associating this choreographic strategy with Gertrude Stein’s circular, repetitive writing style.139

Another concert, on 13 March, presented work by Waring, Passloff, Emerson, Rainer, Brown, and Herko. For Maxine Munt, Brown’s *Trillium* (see Chapter 4) was “with its taut construction and nice performance…the high point of the evening.” Munt had a mixed response to this group of avant-garde dances.

The concert field has long needed new directions, fresh talent, and performing opportunities, so we welcome any efforts in presenting them. You may like some of the works, or none; you may find them confusing, or even absurd; you may miss quality and beauty of movement, but no matter—here are dancers at work and some of them are very promising…. Are the offerings of this group really studio studies? Is this man-

Jill Johnston much preferred this program to Allan Kaprow’s *A Service for the Dead*, given on 22 May at the Maidman. She invokes Antonin Artaud:

Isn’t this [Kaprow’s happening] still what Artaud meant when he said: “There is still one hellish, truly accursed thing in our time, it is our artistic dallying with forms, instead of being like victims burnt at the stake, signaling through the flame”?…If there is going to be any “artistic dallying with forms” I much prefer this sort of dallying [the dancers'] to that clatterbang burlesque of a fertility rite that didn’t dally enough to be interesting Art and wasn’t real enough to be a moving experience.141

In regard to Rainer’s *Dance for 3 People and 6 Arms* (See Chapter 2), Johnston pronounced Rainer “not ‘promising’ but ‘arrived.’”142

Johnston accurately perceived that the work of these choreographers was new and significant both in terms of the historical development of choreography as an art and in terms of its relationship to the other arts. Beginning with “Fresh Winds,” as she titled her review of the March 5 concert, Johnston enthusiastically followed and championed the burgeoning of a new, pluralistic generation of choreographers—one which, as the body of her criticism shows, she saw as actively installing in dance new values of democracy, humanism, decentralization, and freedom.
Notes

Introduction


Chapter 1

5. Ibid., p. 121.
6. Ibid., pp. 121-22.
7. Interview with Remy Charlip, Bennington, Vermont, 8 July 1980.
17. Ibid.
18. Interview with Dunn, 16 May 1980.
19. Ibid.
25. Horst and Russell, Modern Dance Forms, pp. 73-75.
26. Ibid., pp. 44-45.
27. Ibid., p. 26.
28. Ibid., p. 39.
29. McDonagh, The Rise & Fall, p. 79. "Mickey mousing" is a term used in film and dance to mean mimicking the rhythms and emotional shading of musical accompaniment.
33. Ibid., p. 54.
34. Interview with Dunn, 16 May 1980.
35. Ibid.
37. Interview with Dunn, 16 May 1980.
38. Rainer, Work, p. 5.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid. Rainer told me (on 20 June 1980) that she thinks the dance Mahaffay described and demonstrated to me might be Steve Pack Opus, a collaboration between Rainer, Forti, and Ruth Allphon.
43. Interview with Mahaffay, 19 June 1980.
47. Ibid.
49. Ibid., pp. 23-24.
52. Ibid., p. 25.
53. Meg Cottam, Videotaped interview with Simone Forti by Bennington College Judson Project, New York City, 8 February 1980. All of the Bennington College Judson Project interviews cited here were videotaped in New York City and will be abbreviated BCJP hereafter.
54. Interview with Charlip, 8 July 1980.
57. Rainer, Work, pp. 4-5; Yvonne Rainer's note to me, 29 July 1980.
60. Rainer, Work, pp. 312-13; Rainer, unpublished notes, 23 May 1980.
63. Ibid.
64. Rainer, Score with dots, body parts, actions, and rates of speed.
66. Ibid.
67. Rainer, Notebook [1962].
68. Rainer, Work, pp. 281-82.
69. Ibid.
70. Rainer, Notebook.
71. Ibid.
73. Interview with Rainer, 24 June 1980.
74. Rainer, Work, p. 7. Rainer also says that Ruth Emerson began to come to the Dunn class in spring 1961, but Emerson in my interview with her on 11 June 1980 in New York City says she only took the course once (or for one year).

75. Interview with Dunn, 25 March 1980.


82. Rainer, Work, p. 7.


87. Rainer, Work, pp. 6-7.


91. Dunn, notes, 30 March 1980, p. 8. Rauschenberg, the painter and collagist, was at the time Cunningham’s designer for lighting, costumes, and decor. Johnston was the dance critic for the Village Voice (since 1960). Remy Charlip was a dancer in Cunningham’s company, a designer and illustrator, and he worked with the Paper Bag Players, a children’s theater group. David Vaughan, a good friend of James Waring’s, was a performer and the administrator of the Cunningham company. Robert Morris was making wood and mixed-media sculptures. Ray Johnson was a collagist and mail artist. Peter Schumann, soon to found the Bread and Puppet Theater, had recently arrived from Germany; his Toentime, with the Alchemy Players, was given at Judson Memorial Church in May 1962.

92. Rainer, Work, p. 7; and Score for Satie for Two.


96. Ibid., p. 68.

97. Livet, Contemporary Dance, pp. 44-45.

98. Ibid., p. 45.


100. Interview with Trisha Brown, Alex Hay, and Robert Rauschenberg, New York, 17 February 1980, BCJP.


102. Ibid.

103. Score with drawing by Kyle Summers for Ruth Emerson, 1961 or 1962.

104. Ibid.


106. Ibid. According to Rainer, in Work, p. 7, Paxton used his index finger; according to Paxton, in Paxton with Béar, “Like the Famous Tree,” p. 28, he used a piece of glass.

107. Interview with Summers, 26 April 1980.

108. Sally Banes and Amanda Degener, Interview with Ruth Emerson, New York, 10 June 1980, BCJP, Ruth Emerson, Vita [1967].

109. Banes and Degener, Interview with Emerson, 10 June 1980.

110. Ibid.

111. Emerson, Vita.

112. Banes and Degener, Interview with Emerson, 10 June 1980.

113. Ibid.

114. Emerson, Chance score, 1961 or 1962.

115. Emerson, Score, chance dance with windows, 1961 or 1962.

116. Emerson, Score with improvisation with chance cues, 1961 or 1962.

117. Ibid.


120. Ibid.


122. Ibid., p. 99.

123. Interview with David Gordon and Valda Setterfield, New York, 6 April 1975.


125. Interview with Gordon and Setterfield, 6 April 1975.

126. Ibid.

127. Ibid.
Chapter 2

2. Interview with Paxton, Bennington, Vermont, 11 April 1980.
3. Rainer, Work, pp. 8-9; Interview with Paxton, 11 April 1980.
4. Paxton, in my 1980 interview with him, thinks that he, Rainer, Emerson, and Robert Dunn went to the audition; Rainer, in Work, p. 9, only mentions that she, Paxton, and Emerson went there to dance; Emerson remembers that she, Rainer, and Paxton went (Banes and Degener, Interview with Emerson, 10 June 1980); and Elaine Summers (in my interview with her, 15 March 1980) thinks that it was Rainer, Paxton, and Robert and Judith Dunn who went. In a note to me, 29 July 1980, Rainer stated that Judith Dunn was there and Robert Dunn was not.
5. Rainer, Work, p. 9; Banes and Degener, Interview with Emerson, 10 June 1980; Paxton doesn't remember what he performed (Interview with Paxton, 11 April 1980).
7. Banes and Degener, Interview with Emerson, 10 June 1980.

10. "Judson Jubilee" flyer; Judson Archives.
11. Judson Archives.
12. Ibid.
15. Program, Judson Poets' Theater, 18 November 1961. A play by William Packard, In the First Place, had been performed in the organ loft of the church on 23 through 26 March 1961 by a group called the Judson Gallery Players, directed by Robert Nichols. The program and announcement for this production are in the Judson Archives.
16. Sohn, Happenings and Fluxus, unpagged; Judson files. I have changed the punctuation in the quotation.
17. Ibid.
18. Judson Archives; Kaufmann, "Music by Al Carmines."
19. Perron, Interview with Carmines, 1 July 1980. But in fact, the first concert did take place upstairs in the church sanctuary, according to numerous accounts.
22. Interview with Paxton, 11 April 1980.
29. Program, A Concert of Dance, Judson Memorial Church, 6 July 1962. Freeman should be spelled Friedman.
30. I know this from photographs of later concerts, numerous verbal descriptions of the concert, and my own viewing of the space.
31. Perron, Interview with Carmines, 1 July 1980.