

A FEW COMMENTS ON THE CREATION OF A PROGRAM ***(for choreographers, coaches, and judges)***

Design the program concept of idea

Ideally, a program should begin as a concept which grows in the mind of the choreographer until it evolves into a completed thought. An important part of this program concept involves “sound” or “silence.”

- ★ Sound creates the mood for the scenario and guides the feelings and responses of the audience while observing the program.
- ★ The sound-track manipulates the viewer’s understanding of the intent or purpose of the program. It provides highs and lows that shape the impact response and provides opportunity to develop ideas. It serves as a basis to showcase the skills of the performers.
- ★ The sound track and its structure suggest how the program will be written utilizing the tools of staging, equipment, form, body, personality, etc. It suggests what colors should be used and what and when specific pieces of equipment will be used. This entire format or premise would be in place **before** movement or form is written. This concept becomes the **means** through which the repertoire is developed. It is the **whole** which encompasses all the **parts** and reflects the intent and purpose of the show. It should reinforce the designed style, personality and identity of the performers.
- ★ **Do not confuse the program concept with the idea of “theme.” Theme is not a prerequisite within the concept.**

In reviewing the Program Concept and the sound track, the choreographer should answer a variety of questions which the JUDGE is sure to consider. (This is a sampling but is not limited only to these points.)

- Does the program concept inspire creativity?
- Does the concept/sound have highs and lows? Does it have to?
- Does the sound provide opportunity to DEVELOP an idea?
- Does the sound have impact and effect build in?
- Does it provide CONTRAST? Does it need or want contrast?
- Is the tape EDITED carefully, making musical sense?
- Do the performers RELATE to the concept?
- Does the audience UNDERSTAND the concept and ENJOY it?
- Does the concept invite a GREAT ENDING? It should!!!
- Do I UNDERSTAND the concept, its meaning and function?
- Does the concept SHOWCASE OUR SKILLS to our best advantage?
- Is the subject matter accessible and appealing or will it cause controversy, and am I prepared for that if it does?

When the choreographer is satisfied with all the answers to these and other questions, then the **MEANS FOR THE REPERTOIRE** is set.

Design the visual script

Programs can tell a story; reflect a visual statement of classical, jazz, or contemporary music; or be written around a “personality” or a central theme such as comedy, poetry, color, season, flowers or even social statements.

Whichever of these options (alone or in combination) are used, all must be depicted by the language or our art to translate the concept from a mental image to reality on the stage. ***That language is movement, form, character, identity, and equipment.*** How that language is coordinated, staged and presented becomes an important aspect of design which is credited in General Effect.

The choreographer should create a visual script of well stage and coordinated movement, form, and equipment and guide the viewer through the program to provide the information and depth to intrigue and entertain while unfolding the program intent.

Appeal here may be intellectual or aesthetic in nature or it may evoke emotional responses such as surprise, excitement, etc. Most of these reactions are easy to understand. The aspect of aesthetic response is expanded below.

ART IS THE OBJECT AESTHETICS IS THE EXPERIENCE

We depend on our sense to inform us about the aesthetic qualities of an object: sight, sound, rhythm, motion, harmony, etc. ***Senses***, alone or in combination, produce ***feeling*** that we identify as an ***aesthetic*** experience that often comes from knowing what an object means. Most people are more comfortable reacting to the familiar rather than the new, and fewer have the broader experience needed to be comfortable responding to the new and innovative. Aesthetic perceptions can change in different context. People evaluate an object using a set of standards. ***Objects*** remain the same; the ***ways*** they are perceived may differ or change.

Therefore, aesthetics to the choreographer and to the judge, or from judge to judge could vary based on their exposure to the extremes of art and design even though the “object” (the repertoire) is the same. This is an important point to discuss in recaps or during clarification sessions.

Costumes, props, and set design

Performers are costumed and equipped in such a way as to assist our understanding of the program and the identity of the performers. Colors should be selected to please or intrigue the eye while giving us a visual representation of the music or the story. Some choreographers will create sets and alter the environment to heighten our response and awareness even more, and this adds another dimension to the effect of the program.

SHOWMANSHIP - Bringing the show to life!

When the choreographer has written the *script* of the program, defined the repertoire, and set the scene with decorative and colorful visual aids, it now becomes the function of the performers to bring the ***performance*** to life. In this area we respond to the performers' presentation of the following:

- ★ Believable role portrayal
- ★ Identity, personality, character
- ★ Techniques of theater, mime and/or dance

Here, theater techniques and skills are demonstrated along with the technical skills. We look for and respond to the passionate and emotional investment of the performers – the sensitive, vulnerable, excited, funny, aggressive, loving and child-like dramatizations - ***showmanship***. These qualities exceed the pure technical excellence and give the performance ***life***. These qualities invite the audience in to share the experience of the performance, make the performers accessible to the audience, and make the performance ***effective!***

***In this area, as well as in the others, the coach/choreographer must provide the performer with opportunities to demonstrate these skills and then the performers must communicate them effectively!
The purpose of the program is to entertain!!***