Moving with Music: Approaches to the Analysis of Movement-Music Interactions

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ABSTRACT
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In this study I investigate the variegated and complex ways in which music and movement can interact in works that involve both media, such as ballets, modern dance works, music videos, and dance films. My dissertation centers around analyses of pieces in diverse styles and genres; each analysis focuses on different aspects of human movement or movement analysis tools. Some of these concepts – Effort, Space, Body, and Shape – are sourced from Laban Movement Analysis, while others – synchronization, body language, kinesthetic empathy, and form – do not belong to a cohesive system. Taking an intersubjective approach, my analyses highlight instances in which watching co-occurring movement affects my musical perceptions, or vice versa. I also examine conscious interventions on perception, where deliberate changes in perspective, theoretical frameworks, or prioritization of my embodied responses affect the way I hear and see the works. I aim not only to account for structural complexities in movement-music interactions, but also to examine ways in which those interactions participate in articulating identities and politics or in suggesting narrative interpretations. I aim to provide a versatile toolkit that would facilitate the analysis of many different kinds of music-movement interactions. Each chapter outlines two analytical tools and then demonstrates how the tools can be used in an analytical example.
In the first chapter, I investigate the role of body language and movement-music synchronization in a hip hop music video by the rapper Tyler, The Creator. I argue that Tyler’s movements fail to synchronize to the music in straightforward ways and fail to convey the cool confidence that his lyrics purport to. As a result, the movement-music relationship helps to articulate a version of masculinity that can be read as non-normative and politically charged.

In the second chapter, I examine the role of kinesthetic empathy in the perception of choreographic and musical form in the “Rose Adagio” from Tchaikovsky’s and Petipa’s *The Sleeping Beauty*. While both character and performer inhabit a single onstage body, the observer’s empathetic embodied responses to the dancer may diverge depending on whether she is read as character or performer. This perceptual contrast depends in part on the ballet’s narrative world. The two possible empathetic alignments yield, in turn, divergent analytical observations about the relationship between music and movement.

In the third chapter, I offer an analysis of “Duet” from Lar Lubovitch’s *Concerto 622*, which is set to the Adagio movement of Mozart’s Clarinet Concerto in A Major K.622. Examining Lubovitch’s choreography helps me to arrive at a more sensitive hearing of the music than I initially expected. Also, in comparing two phrases whose music is nearly identical but which feature different choreography, I find an especially compelling case in support of the proposition that dance affects musical perceptions.
In the final chapter, I consider the role of Body and Shape in Nijinsky’s and Debussy’s Jeux. Movement-music analysis provides support for an interpretation of the ballet that acknowledges a pervasive, yet ultimately unfulfilled sexual desire. Movement-music analysis also sheds light on the ever-changing and moment-focused nature of Debussy’s musical form. Motives are not developed nor organized by a large-scale formal design, but instead give rise to ever new musical ideas, unprepared and unresolved. The ballet’s choreography often helps these rapid and abrupt transitions to cohere.
Table of Contents

List of Examples and Illustrations ii

Introduction 1

Chapter 1: Synchronization and Body Language in Tyler, The Creator’s “Yonkers” Music Video 17

Chapter 2: Kinesthetic Empathy and Form in the “Rose Adagio” from Tchaikovsky’s The Sleeping Beauty 65

Chapter 3: Space and Effort in “Duet” from Lar Lubovitch’s Concerto Six Twenty-Two 113

Chapter 4: Body and Shape in Debussy’s Jeux 157

Conclusion 201

Bibliography 206

Appendix: Video Recordings and Films 216
LIST OF EXAMPLES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Examples

Example 1: A recomposition of the rhythm and emphasis in the first line of “Long Live A$AP.” 21

Example 2: The first line of “Long Live A$AP” as it is performed. 21

Example 3: Lyrical and movement groupings in the first verse of “Yonkers.” 52

Example 4: Effort Factors and their polar Effort Qualities. 123

Example 5: Ciara, “Ride” – repeated bassline. 162

Illustrations

Illustration 1: Body language in Aya Level’s choreography. 33

Illustration 2: Auguste Rodin - The Thinker, “Yonkers” intro, and Kehinde Wiley – Alexander the Great (Variation). 40

Illustration 3: “Yonkers” music video - “I’m a fuckin’ walkin’ paradox. No I’m not.” 42

Illustration 4: Four photographs from Tyler, The Creator’s Instagram, including cover art for his 2015 album Cherry Bomb. 47

Illustration 5: A photograph from Tyler, The Creators Instagram, and the “White Pride” symbol. 48

Illustration 6: “Yonkers” music video - “Reptar.” 52

Illustration 7: “Yonkers” music video - “Sheesh I already got mine,” and “wasting my damn time.” 59

Illustration 8: “Yonkers” music video - “Fuck her.” 60

Illustration 9: “Yonkers” music video - “I’ll crash that fuckin’ airplane that that faggot nigga B.o.B. is in.” 62
Illustration 10: “Yonkers” ending. 64

Illustration 11: *Fantasia*, Toccata and Fugue in D Minor - Violinists in the toccata section versus dancing bows in the fugue section. 67

Illustration 12: *Fantasia*, Toccata and Fugue in D Minor - Conductor; Woodwinds; Strings and conductor. 69

Illustration 13: *Fantasia*, Toccata and Fugue in D Minor – Conductor and flares. 69

Illustration 14: Coppélia in productions by the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre and the English National Ballet. 84

Illustration 15: Medially Initiated marching, and Distally Initiated marching. 160

Illustration 16: Arcing - emphatic wave, and Spoking - Taekwondo kick. 168

Illustration 17: Lengthening - thoracic breathing, and Bulging – diaphragmatic breathing. 170

Illustration 18: Left-Side Growing – rib isolation. 174

Illustration 19: Left-Side Shrinking – bending at the waist. 174

Illustration 20: Opening and Closing – Starfish crunch. 175

Illustration 21: *Jeux*, the *jeune homme* – pelvic thrust at 1/2:56. 191

Illustration 22: *Jeux*, *a jeune fille* – pelvic thrust at 1/0:48. 192

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To Cici and 명훈
INTRODUCTION

Movement and music productively interact to create emergent experiences for listeners/viewers. In this dissertation, I aim to provide a range of analytical tools and approaches that facilitate close study of such interactions. Movement and music are intimately connected activities. Each has nearly ubiquitous presence in the production and reception of the other. Even when music is not created with movement in mind or vice versa, one often suggests, recalls, or induces the other. This copresence speaks to the importance of their interaction. Music and movement might reinforce, compete with, or remain indifferent to each other’s structural properties. I consider all of these relationships to be forms of interaction, and another of the primary aims of this dissertation is to show the significant effects that these interactions have on the perception of both music and movement.

I am motivated to consider the relevance of movement analysis to music analysis not solely because of the ubiquity of movement in occurrences of music, but especially because of the richness of musical experiences that movement can encourage. In the analyses that this dissertation comprises, I find that movement-music interactions are surprising in their complexity, variegatedness, and ability to yield analytical observations about both art forms that are not available, or at least not striking, when either art form is isolated.

In this study I investigate interactions between music and movement in works that involve both, such as ballets, modern dance works, music videos, and dance films.
I include in my considerations movement that may not present as dance as such, but which nonetheless co-occurs and interacts with music. As music and movement can each be considered artistic media in their own right, I think of such works as multimedia works, which involve both sonic and visual components. My dissertation centers around analyses of movement-music multimedia pieces in diverse styles and genres; each analysis focuses on different aspects of human movement or movement analysis tools. My analyses highlight instances in which watching co-occurring movement affects my musical perceptions, or vice versa. I also examine conscious interventions on perception, where deliberate changes in perspective, theoretical frameworks, or prioritization of my embodied responses affect the way I hear and see the works. My research aims not only to account for structural complexities in movement-music interactions, but also to examine ways in which those interactions participate in articulating identities and politics or in suggesting narrative interpretations.

The idea that music affords possibilities for movement does not necessarily mean that the task of an analyst should be to determine whether, or how well choreography corresponds to music. While a choreography might be said to respond to musical events, such that we might attribute a kind of musical sensitivity to the choreographer or performer, it seems equally true to say that dance or movement will draw out a musical experience. On one hand, we might say that choreography is sensitive to music; on the other hand, we could say that the choreography, whether sensitive or not, suggests ways of hearing music. In
some cases this means that “movement exaggerat[es] musical events, which, heard alone, may be barely perceptible” (Jordan 2011, 50). In some cases where the music precedes the choreography, dance has the potential to “refresh our perceptions of a score” (Jordan 2011, 58), or to “disturb the expectations that [we] had from already knowing the music by itself” (Jordan 2011, 51). For the present study, my primary concern will be to consider in depth how each medium affects the perception of the other, without necessarily asking whether the movement and music in question properly suit each other. I contend that whatever the relationship between movement and music, whether it be parallel, contrary, indifferent, etc., and whatever the creative process that resulted in a particular pairing of music and movement, their interaction can be analyzed from the perspective of the listener/viewer.

The analysis of music and visual media more generally has recently been considered by a number of scholars who discuss relationships between music and film, television, music video, video game, dance, and so on.¹ Notably, in his book *Analysing Musical Multimedia*, Nicholas Cook aims to theorize interactions between music and other media in general terms rather than focusing only on a specific genre or type of visual medium (Cook 1998). Cook argues that the very nature of musical culture depends on interactions between music and other media (including text), and that music, rather than possessing absolute, autonomous

meaning, has a “potential for the construction or negotiation of meaning,” which can only emerge in a specific context “in the mutual interaction of music, words, and pictures” (Cook 2000, 23). Cook maintains that musical meaning is mutable and negotiable according to its multimedia context. He also maintains that the relationship between music and other media is non-hierarchical: neither music, text, nor visuals necessarily has more influence than the others on the meanings that result from their combination. Cook proposes the concept of metaphor as a model for multimedia interaction, where limited points of similarity between media enable meaning to emerge as a result of their differences.² Cook emphasizes the importance of multimedia interactions where the potential meanings inherent to each medium are sufficiently different from one another that meaning formation is possible. In fact, according to Cook, experiencing the interaction as an instance of multimedia depends on the ways in which the two media diverge.

Like Cook, I consider musical meaning to be permeable and malleable to the influences of a visual medium, in this case dance or movement. Likewise, music makes suggestions for how movement can be parsed or interpreted. My hope is that my analyses convey the relevance of movement to music study and vice versa. Also like Cook, I do not privilege music nor movement but consider the ways in which they mutually affect each other. It is not of special concern for me, however, to emphasize the points of difference between the two media. In some

² Lawrence Zbikowski also theorizes multimedia under the concept of metaphor, expanding Cook’s approach with a detailed consideration of conceptual blending in multimedia interactions (Zbikowski 2002/2003).
cases under examination here, music and movement send contradictory messages, but in many others they mutually reinforce each other, and the separation between the two is, in fact, minimized by their interaction.

The present study focuses, not so much on theories of meaning formation in multimedia works, nor even on generalized theories of movement-music interaction, but rather on examining in detail what it is like to watch and listen to dance-music pieces. To this end, I outline eight tools that are relevant to the analysis of movement and consider, primarily by way of example, how each tool might be used in movement-music analysis. One of my aims is to digest a limited set of movement analysis tools such that readers in music disciplines could incorporate them into their own studies. Through my analyses I hope to offer, in addition to a new perspective on the pieces in question, a range of approaches to the study of music-movement works that might be thought-provoking for readers in multiple disciplines, including music theory, musicology, dance studies, and gender and sexuality studies.

Despite the near-ubiquitous copresence of music and movement, analytical study of their interaction remains scant in both music and dance disciplines. Studies of the interaction between dance and music have typically approached the subject from historical or ethnographic perspectives. In these studies, even in the

few whose disciplinary context is music theory, the analytical focus tends to revolve around questions of how the music and movement are put together by choreographers and composers, or how one art form shapes the production of the other. Eric McKee’s study of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century minuets and waltzes, for instance, aims to show that dance forms and their social contexts shaped musical structure in these genres. His project is shaped by important questions such as, “What did the dancers require of the music, and how did composers of the minuet and waltz respond to the practical needs of dancers? In what ways did composers go beyond the practical requirements, incorporating into the music the aesthetics and cultural associations of the dance?” (McKee 2012, 2).

Similarly, Charles M. Joseph considers dance as a site of inspiration for Stravinsky, showing how the particular demands of ballet as well as Stravinsky’s relationships to the Ballets Russes and to Georges Balanchine shaped Stravinsky’s music (Joseph 2002, Joseph 2011). In other cases, especially in ethnomusicological studies, researchers focus on giving an account of the social spaces and cultures that dance musics create (Gilbert and Pearson 2002, Meintjes 2004, Turino 2008).

Movement-music interaction has also been studied from the perspective of cognitive research, especially, though not exclusively, with a focus on music and gesture. Typically, this research is not as concerned with analysis or close reading as it is with contributing to an understanding of human cognitive capacities related to movement-music interaction. These studies often attempt to determine, for instance, what kind of movement people are likely to do given certain musical

All of this research contributes crucial perspectives to an understanding of how music and dance go together, but analysis from the perspective of a listener/viewer – that is, an account of what it is like to watch and listen to pieces – constitutes another vital part of the overall picture. Rather than attempting to understand how the creative process or historical context achieved a particular relationship between movement and music, or how the capacities of the human brain universally operate, my goal in this dissertation is to provide an analytical approach capable of articulating, in detailed and rigorous terms, encounters between a listener/viewer and a music-movement work. I emphasize that, while two people can look at the same piece and experience the movement-music interaction differently, analytical tools offer ways of communicating those experiences intersubjectively, such that a reader could try on the writer’s way of hearing/seeing and enrich or refine their own understanding of the piece.

Several scholars have adopted a formalist, close-reading approach to the study of movement-music interaction.4 Notably, Stephanie Jordan has worked extensively on choreomusical analysis, advocating for an integration of technical

tools from music theory and movement analysis. She argues that, while traditionally, formalist attitudes have wrongly positioned works of art as abstract, self-contained, and unified, the tools of formalist analysis remain useful in understanding how meaning is created in dance works (Jordan 2011, 47). For Jordan, meaning formation includes a broad range of experiences, including, for example, the “drama” and manipulation of “tension” suggested by rhythmic structures (Jordan 2011, 52). Like Jordan, I examine the formal properties of dance-music works in order to determine how “these two sensory planes now meet to affect each other and create a new identity from their meeting” (Jordan 2001, 48). Jordan’s analytical framework focuses primarily around rhythm, as she believes that “rhythm is an immediate point of contact between the two art forms” (Jordan 2011, 52). For Jordan, rhythm includes a consideration of frequency and duration, stress and accent, and the grouping of sounds or moves through time (Jordan 2011, 52). I expand Jordan’s approach by addressing a far wider range of musical parameters, including harmony, melodic contour, orchestration, timbre, and texture, by considering a more diverse set of dance-music repertories, and by invoking more movement analysis tools. My approach also diverges from Jordan’s in its focus on intersubjectivity and on the perspective of the listener/viewer.

While Jordan acknowledges the interdependence of music and dance, she tends to privilege the creative agency of choreographers, focusing on their role as musical interpreters, and she generally studies choreographers with particular reputations for musicality, such as George Balanchine.
Inger Damsholt has also considered music-movement interactions with a similar focus on close reading, focusing especially in the work of Mark Morris. While Damsholt offers astute and illuminating analyses of Morris’s choreomusicality, the scope of her music-analytical observations is somewhat limited. In her analysis of Morris’s *Gloria*, for instance, she primarily considers instrumentation and texture as the musical parameters to which the choreography responds, addressing rhythm and harmony only vaguely or in passing (Damsholt 2006). The disciplinary background of this dissertation has resulted in more music-heavy approaches that I hope will complement Damsholt’s and Jordan’s.

Though Jordan and Damsholt both draw on more generalized theories of multimedia analysis, such as Cook’s, mentioned above, or Claudia Gorbman’s work on film music (Gorbman 1987), their analytical techniques are designed to address the particularities of specific choreographers under consideration, meaning that some of their findings are difficult to generalize or apply elsewhere. Similarly, John Roeder and Michael Tenzer’s recent study of the gamelan piece *Gabor*, while providing a detailed analysis of how the dance movements express different pulse layers simultaneously, does not offer an easily generalizable analytical approach (Roeder and Tenzer 2012). Indeed, the strength of these studies lies in their specificity and investment in historicity. The space in the literature that I hope to partially address here, however, is for more flexible analytical tools and approaches that might be applied to diverse movement-music combinations, even ones where
the relationship between music and movement is not a particular point of focus for the movers or music-makers in question.

In each chapter, I will isolate two movement analysis tools or aspects of movement, discussing each in detail before offering an analysis of a music-dance work that foregrounds both. Although every example is sufficiently complex to warrant analysis of multiple movement parameters, I’ve chosen to isolate two at a time simply as a clarifying organizational strategy. Still, the chapters will build cumulatively on each other, in the sense that once I have outlined a given movement analysis concept, it will be available in my analytical toolkit in subsequent chapters. The concepts are not necessarily grouped into twos because of particular relationships between them, but because the analytical examples with which they are paired lend themselves well to demonstrating both concepts. Although this study of course invokes a great many music analytical apparatuses, I’ve chosen to lay out this study in terms of movement-analysis concepts because of the disciplinary context of music theory, where movement analysis has not previously received much attention.

Chapters 1 and 2 focus on synchronization, body language, form, and kinesthetic empathy. These are aspects of movement or the experience of watching movement that are not unified by any particular theory or cohesive system of movement analysis, but which all prove useful to the study of movement-music interactions. Form and synchronization constitute basic structural aspects of movement, or movement in a multimedia context, whose analysis seemed unavoidable given the goal of describing relationships between movement and music.
Isolating these parameters enabled a focus on the timing of movements in relation to music and the organization in time of movements. Body language and kinesthetic empathy, on the other hand, suggested themselves to me as significant components of movement-music analysis in the course of surveying a large number of movement-music works. In many ways, the inclusion of body language and kinesthetic empathy arose as part of a humanist impulse. I found that moving human bodies introduce elements to the experience that are irreducible to the structural properties of abstract or nonhuman moving shapes. Issues of timing, organization, and pattern formation only supply part of the picture. The other, very vivid part is the understanding of dancers and movers as people. Moving people exhibit personality traits, conveyed to observers through body language, and physiological traits, conveyed through kinesthetic empathy, and both kinds of traits struck me as highly pertinent to the ways in which moving people interact with music.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the four main categories (Space, Effort, Shape, and Body) of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA), a technique for studying human movement originally formulated by Rudolf Laban in the early twentieth century and further developed by subsequent dancers and dance theorists. The Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies describes LMA as a “systematic method for analyzing, documenting, describing, and recreating human movement” (Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies 2009). LMA has been used in various and diverse fields including dance, dance therapy, theatre, social sciences, education, cognitive science, and the history and sociology of science. In music studies, however, LMA has
remained peripheral, and one motivation for invoking it here is to introduce concepts and terminology that might be usefully adopted in the disciplinary context of music theory. Rather than providing a full exegesis of the Labanian system, however, I extract descriptors from it that help to provide more precise accounts of movements. I approach Labanian concepts without much commitment to Laban’s theories or to rigid definitions of the concepts, and at times I supplement Labanian concepts with my own ideas, or I apply the concepts somewhat loosely. Not unlike many music-analysis frameworks, LMA offers, not a means by which to claim the objectivity of movement-analytical observations, but rather a technical apparatus that allows me to account for my experiences in more precise and detailed terms.

It is important to acknowledge that my analyses are based on video recordings. There are many limitations to working primarily from video, and the extent to which any particular performance can be considered fully representative of a work is tenuous. In some cases, such as music videos, the recording constitutes the work, but in other cases recordings present a single instantiation of a work that is open to divergent interpretations or performance styles. Because the focus of this study is perception, I offer analyses, not of abstract works, but of individual recordings. Though recording technologies have mediating effects on movement and sound, in order to maintain a focus on relationships between music and human movement, this study does not address such mediating forces as

\[5\] For a thorough discussion of on-screen dance see Brannigan 2011. For an in-depth consideration of popular music on screen see Mundy 1999.
camera angle, coloring, lighting, editing, mic-ing, and so forth. In most cases, the videos that I refer to in this dissertation are available on YouTube, in the few cases where they are not, I have made video examples available on a separate website.6

In the wake of the many music scholars since the New Musicology who have argued that social and political contexts shape music’s structural properties and that socio-political meanings can be read into those properties,7 I suggest that such meanings can also be articulated through relationships between music and movement. As such, many of my analyses include socio-political or narrative interpretations.

This study is also indebted to foregoing music scholarship that invests in the role of embodiment in music analysis. Since the critiques leveled at traditional music theory in the 1990’s, many have advocated for an approach to music analysis that acknowledges the inextricable link between music’s audible dimension and the body. For instance, Suzanne G. Cusick, Nicholas Cook, George Fisher and Judy Lochhead, and Elizabeth LeGuin stress the importance of the embodied knowledge that arises from music performance, arguing that such knowledge can significantly enrich analytical practice.8 Others, like Mariusz Kozak, Katherine Heidemann, Andrew Mead, Arnie Cox, and Wayne Bowman, have emphasized the

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6 The video examples that are not available on YouTube may be viewed at https://sterbenzdissertationexamples.tumblr.com using the password sterbenzdissertationexamples.


inherently embodied nature of listening as a crucial dimension of musical experience. This study presents a different response to the charge to take bodies seriously, by examining movement that co-occurs with music and by admitting the analyst’s embodied sensations into the realm of music analytical observation.

In my analyses, rather than positioning myself as an impartial observer, I submit my observations as one out of many possible ways of seeing and hearing. In so doing, I aim to align my work with that of the many music theorists who similarly situate their analytical claims as intersubjective. My analyses aim to enable readers to experience the examples in different ways and to imagine new ways of studying movement-music works. Similarly, the diversity of my analytical examples should not be taken as a suggestion that we might arrive at a universal thesis on how music and movement interact. Instead, I intend to give a sense of how vast and variegated the possibilities are. My hope is that readers from multiple disciplines who wish to study music-movement works might come away with some new and adaptable analytical approaches.

I have selected examples that I believe will lend themselves especially well to demonstrating particular aspects of movement or of movement’s interaction with music. The eclecticism of examples also reflects an attempt to sustain the interest of readers with diverse intellectual priorities. Some of the examples occurred to me as good candidates for study on the basis of the fact that they are

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relatively popular, well-known, or canonical (e.g., Baryshnikov’s scene from *White Nights*, Ciara’s *Ride*, Alvin Ailey’s *Revelations*, Lar Lubovitch’s *Concerto Six Twenty-Two*, and Petipa’s *The Sleeping Beauty*). None my examples have so far been considered with an extended focus on music-movement interactions.

Viewed from one perspective, this study can be read as an extension of multimedia studies to include detailed study of movement-music interaction, from another, as an extension of dance studies to include diverse music analytical approaches, and from yet another perspective, it offers new ways of listening to and analyzing music by earnestly considering the musical interpretations that moving bodies suggest.

In the first chapter, I investigate the role of body language and movement-music synchronization in a hip hop music video by rapper Tyler, The Creator. I argue that Tyler’s movements fail to synchronize to the music in straightforward ways and fail to convey the cool confidence that his lyrics purport to. As a result, the movement-music relationship helps to articulate a version of masculinity that can be read as non-normative and politically charged.

In the second chapter, I examine the role of kinesthetic empathy and choreographic form in the “Rose Adagio” from Petipa’s and Tchaikovsky’s *The Sleeping Beauty*. While both character and performer inhabit a single onstage body, the observer’s empathetic embodied responses to the dancer may diverge depending on whether she is read as character or performer. This perceptual contrast depends in part on the ballet’s narrative world. The two possible
empathetic alignments yield, in turn, divergent analytical observations about the relationship between music and movement.

In the third chapter I offer an analysis of “Duet” from Lar Lubovitch’s Concerto 622, which is set to the Adagio movement of Mozart’s Clarinet Concerto in A Major K. 622. Examining Lubovitch’s choreography helps me to arrive at a more sensitive hearing of the music than I initially expected. Also, in comparing two phrases whose music is nearly identical but which exhibit different choreography, I find an especially compelling case in support of the proposition that dance affects musical perceptions.

In the final chapter, I consider the role of Body and Shape in Nijinsky’s and Debussy’s Jeux. Movement-music analysis provides support for an interpretation of the ballet that acknowledges a pervasive, yet ultimately unfulfilled sexual desire. Movement-music analysis also sheds light on the ever-changing and moment-focused nature of Debussy’s musical form. Motives are not developed nor organized by a large-scale formal design, but instead give rise to ever new musical ideas, unprepared and unresolved. The ballet’s choreography often helps these rapid and abrupt transitions to cohere.
Synchronization

In approaching the analysis of interactions between movement and music, it might first occur to us to consider their synchronization – that is, the timing of gestures or movements in relation to sonic events or structures. We might initially think that the notion of synchronization suggests at least two possible relationships: synchronous and asynchronous. Attempts to assess a person’s competence as a dancer, for example, might elicit statements like “she was way off the beat,” or “he has a very good sense of timing,” and such assessments would seem to hinge on the possibility that movements can be observably in or out of synch with music. If a mover bobs his head to the beat, we might say that his head movements are synchronized with the musical pulse, whereas if he bobs out of time, we would be tempted to say that his movements are asynchronous. We do not have an especially precise definition for “out of time,” however. If the mover misses the pulse, but instead bobs his head on the off-beats, or according to a longer metrical unit, like hypermetrical downbeats, of course we would not describe either of these relationships as asynchronous. Instead, we would simply say that the movements are synchronized with different musical events.

It may be most straightforward, then, to drop the notion of “out of time” in favor of noticing what a movement is synchronized to. Alternately, if a lack of
synchronization stands out as a feature of a movement-music pairing, then
asynchrony will, equally, have to be defined in relation to something, rather than
as a stable property. Off-beat-oriented head bobbing could be defined as
synchronous or asynchronous, depending on the musical reference point, and we
can allow the choice of reference point to be influenced by any number of
analytical goals. With the following examples, I hope to show that simply directing
analytical attention towards simultaneities goes a long way in characterizing
relationships between music and movement.

In a dance choreographed by Aya Level to Shal Marshall’s “Wine yuh Body,”
Aya, along with Layaa Dhq and Marion from the Queen’stonn dance crew, effect a
smooth transition between musical sections by changing the aspect of the music to
which they synchronize.¹ From about 0:42-0:46 the dancers wine – a dance move
involving smooth and fluid hip circles – at a pace that roughly corresponds with
the flow of the sung text “slow wine.” While their movements clearly fall in with
the metrical structure of the song, the relationship between pulse and movement
here is somewhat loose because of the fluidity of the gesture, and because of the
lag-and-snap pacing that is characteristic of this type of dancehall wine. Rather
than rotating the hips at an even pace and remaining squarely on the beat, the
wine starts out slowly and then snaps back into the metrical groove every two
beats. Under different stylistic norms, the lag might not appear appropriately

¹ A recording of the dance can be found on YouTube. My timestamps will refer to the YouTube
February 2017).
synchronized, but this uneven pacing is naturalized by the generic context. Aside from any concern about what is appropriate or natural, though, we can also observe synchrony with the lag-and-snap delivery of the words “slow wine.”

At 0:46, the dancers abruptly switch gears, stomping out the beat in an angular four-square step. While the music continues in much the same way as the previous three measures, with Shal Marshall repeating “gyal ah make it slow wine,” the movement shifts to a precise synchronous relationship with the musical pulse rather than the vocals. This shift anticipates a significant musical change at 0:48. From 0:46-0:48, their feet draw attention to the strong, square rhythm that was always present, but which was never forcefully articulated until 0:48. One measure early, the dancers switch their synchronization from one musical layer to another, bridging the gap between the end of one section and the beginning of another.

This example invites the simple observations that (1) gestures synchronized to musical events may draw attention to those events, and that (2) the more precisely a movement is aligned with an event, the more we might be inclined to call the relationship synchronous. We might now expand our focus to include, not only the co-occurrence of movements and sounds, but also varying degrees of emphasis, competing synchronizations, and different ways of synchronizing. As another example, consider the opening of the music video for A$AP Rocky’s “Long Live A$AP.”

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In the very beginning of the video, A$AP Rocky sits ominously in his throne, straight-backed and aloof. His rap starts just before the beat comes in, and his movement is synchronized primarily with his vocal delivery. The moment he begins to speak his body comes to life: his head moves forward and his right hand comes off the chair to begin a kind of shaking gesture. This gesture ends in a small whipping action of his hand. Arguably, the defining feature of a whip action in general is the abrupt change from relaxation to tension, suddenly withdrawing slack at a precise moment. In this case the quick withdrawal, while subtle, is synchronized with the start of the beat on the first syllable of the word “probably.” At the exact same moment, A$AP looks directly into the camera, breaking the distance between him and the viewer that characterized the introduction.

The next big hand gesture occurs on the word “prison;” A$AP crosses his arms, throwing his relaxed hands across each other to opposite side of his body, where they sit for a moment before the second half of the lyrical phrase begins. The first hand gesture falls on a downbeat while the second falls on the next strongest third beat, meaning that on one level A$AP’s movement is synchronized, unsurprisingly, to the meter. The two movements also emphasize the alliterative connection between “probably” and “prison.” At the same time, the crossing gesture is somewhat more energetic, takes up more space, and involves more of his body than the subtle whipping action, placing an emphasis on a beat that would otherwise be metrically weaker. The opening gesture draws back and outward, tensed, creating a sense of potential energy to which the second gesture responds.
in a forward-moving, inward release. The movement gives a feeling of an
anacrusis-to-crusis succession, while synchronized with the musical opposite.
These two hand gestures, simple as they are, draw out competing musical layers.

The first complete phrase in A$AP Rocky’s rap comes off as a short-short-
long structure – an impression that is not an inevitable result of the words, but
which is created by A$AP’s flow. The phrase might have been very square, with
accents on the first and third beats of both measures, as in Example 1.

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Example 1. A recomposition of the rhythm and emphasis in the first line of “Long Live
A$AP.” Columns represent eighth-note beats, and bold letters show points of emphasis.13

But A$AP Rocky’s emphasis and articulation partition the text differently, as
shown in Example 2.

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Example 2. The first line of “Long Live A$AP” as it is performed. Columns represent eighth-
note beats, and bold letters show points of emphasis.

His movement synchronization does a lot to emphasize this asymmetrical
phrasing, and, at the same time, highlight the regular meter, showing the grid-like
backdrop against which A$AP’s flow is interesting. A$AP brings his hands up
towards his face on the downbeat, and flicks them back down again on the third

13 This way of representing flow in rap music is derived from a method proposed by Kyle Adams and
nuanced by Adams’s exchange with Justin Williams (Adams 2008, Adams 2009, and Williams
2009).
beat, stressing the strong beats with movements and replicating the tension-release pattern of the previous measure. Whereas the first two hand movements were quick and sharp, helping to articulate the beat precisely, the finger wiggle that accompanies “-pensive taste in” does not place a particularly strong or sharply delineated emphasis on the downbeat. This brief moment of asynchrony with respect to the strong beats unifies the three words as part of something slightly longer. The entire thought is completed as he casually leans back into the throne on the extended syllable “-men,” creating a smooth rounded phrase ending. On the simplest level, over the course of this short phrase, he leans forward in his chair and then returns to a straight-backed position of detached dominance.

Though synchronization is a basic concept, there is quite a lot that we can do with it, especially once we admit the many and diverse types of synchronization that are possible. As we have already seen in the foregoing examples, however, equally important as the question of when a person moves is the question of how a person moves. In service of facilitating more detailed descriptions of how people move, I will turn now to the concept of body language.

**Body Language**

Although the concept applies more obviously to everyday, interactive scenarios, rather than to dance or art, body language is an incredibly productive aspect of music-movement relationships. Here, I use the term body language to mean the postures, gestures, and facial expressions that intersubjectively communicate
attitudes, thoughts, and feelings. As my primary concern here is movement-music interactions, I take body language to refer to the kind of communication that takes place through bodily comportment or actions – sometimes called kinesics or nonverbal behaviors (Matsumoto, Frank, and Hwang 2013, 4). These constitute only one subcategory of nonverbal communication, which can include a number of other non-linguistic signifiers like environment, physical characteristics, appearance, and so on (Matsumoto, Frank, and Hwang 2013, 4). While all of these factors undeniably contribute to forms of communication that take place in the pieces I study, for the most part I will limit my study of nonverbal communication to body language in order to maintain a focus on movement in particular.

In their introduction to Nonverbal Communication: Science and Applications, David Matsumoto, Mark Frank, and Hyi Sung Hwang define body language, or nonverbal behaviors, as “the dynamic actions of the face, voice, and body” (Matsumoto, Frank, and Hwang 2013, 34) that participate in “the transfer and exchange of messages in ... modalities that do not involve words” (29).

According to Matsumoto, Frank, and Hwang,

Nonverbal behavior intrigues us. We see the way a person looks, the way he or she moves and how he or she sounds. Nonverbal messages are transmitted through multiple nonverbal channels, which include facial expressions, vocal cues, gestures, body postures, interpersonal distance, touching and gaze. (Matsumoto, Frank, and Hwang 2013, 34)

These authors, and in fact much of the foregoing literature on body language – whose most common disciplinary contexts are psychology, anthropology, sociology, and neuroscience – are primarily concerned with nonverbal
communication as it plays out in the extemporaneous exchange of messages between people. In everyday contexts, nonverbal behavior guides interactions and often conveys types of meaning that either stand in for, or are closely related to semantic meaning. One of the aims of this literature is to understand the many functions of nonverbal behavior and to classify the different kinds of meaning it might communicate.

Our focus, though, is limited to body language that appears in artworks, and as a result, some of the concepts and taxonomy associated with the study of body language may not be an especially natural fit with the task of movement-music analysis. For one thing, the ability of gestures to replace or support speech might not be a striking feature of the kinds of movement that tend to accompany music. Such functions might show up when the mover in question is one and the same person as the music performer, such as in many music videos, or when dancers invoke mime, punctuate a phrase, or use gesture to convey feeling about an implied referent. Ballet, for instance, often invokes a sign-language-like system of gestures that help the audience understand developments in the plot. Even in cases like these where speech-related gestures could factor into a movement-music relationship, everyday human interaction may not be the best model. Such performances are typically a unidirectional mode of conveying meaning to the “inert” audience, rather than an interpersonal and dynamic exchange.

For our purposes, a discussion of terms and concepts in the study of body language may be useful, not so much as a way of facilitating categorization and
labeling, but as a way of thinking through the nature of body language in more
detail. Though we might be unlikely to make frequent recourse to the codified
gesture-related terminology in analysis, a brief outline of the many different ways
that nonverbal behavior can signify might provide more depth to the concept.

Before providing such an outline, it is important also to note that the
meanings that movement and posture convey are even less fixed than meanings
that are communicated in words. Typically body language is understood to be an
intentional or unintentional message or “outward reflection of a person’s
emotional condition,” but body language can, like words, be contrived (Pease
2004, 42). Body language in everyday life is not a direct representation of the inner
thoughts and feelings of a mover, and we might expect movement that occurs in
performance to be especially untrustworthy in this regard. Furthermore, how
movement signifies is always dependent on culture, on context, and on the
interaction between the person sending the message and the person receiving it
(Knapp, Hall, and Horgan 2007, 71-78). A given movement might mean something
different at a different time, or on a different person’s body, or in a different
environment, and different people might interpret the same movement differently.
As Mark Knapp, Judith Hall, and Terrence Horgan argue, “everyone possesses a
wealth of knowledge, beliefs, and experience regarding nonverbal
communication,” and these personal histories largely determine the success or
failure of body language to signify precisely (Knapp, Hall, and Horgan 2007). The
meanings that movements carry are not fixed by the movements inherently, but rather are formed by interactions between movers and interpreters.

Moreover, it is not only the interpretation of movements but movements themselves that are a product of culture. Gestures, habits, and dispositions of the body are not natural nor inevitable, but learned and cultivated. Marcel Mauss’s theory of the body acknowledges that, as Carrie Noland paraphrases, “social conditioning reaches beyond the ideas of the mind... to lodge itself in the very tissues of the body” (Noland 2009, 21). Even seemingly automatic ways of carrying the body, like sleeping positions, are learned. This is not to say, however that the body is an inert material on which culture is impressed. Rather, “cultural subjects have a lived experience of such social conditioning, that is, a sensual apprehension, in those tissues, of socially organized kinesis” (Knapp, Hall, and Horgan 2007, 21). So movers, while conditioned by culture, still possess bodily awareness and are active agents in deciding to move this way or that. In the analyses that follow, I will proceed, not under the assumption that body language is a natural, unfiltered form of expression, nor that the meaning of any given movement is fixed or objective, but instead under the assumption that reading body language is intersubjective, and my readings can be understood, if not shared or independently reached, by readers.14 Three components of body language that will be useful to consider are gesture, posture, and facial expression.

14 Here I would like to thank Professor Mariusz Kozak for offering his perspective on the enculturated nature of body language, and for pointing me in the direction of Marcel Mauss’s and Carrie Noland’s work.
While admitting that there can be overlap between the two types, Knapp, Hall, and Horgan, maintain a distinction between speech-independent gestures and speech-dependent gestures. Speech-independent gestures are “nonverbal acts that have a direct verbal translation or dictionary definition, usually consisting of a word or two or a phrase” (Knapp, Hall, and Horgan 2007, 201). Usually, but not always, these meanings are bound to a particular culture, and “there is a high degree of agreement among members of a culture on the verbal translation of these signals” (Knapp, Hall, and Horgan 2007, 201). A shrug meaning “I don’t know,” a wave meaning “hello,” and a spinning forefinger next to the temple meaning “he’s crazy!” are examples of speech-independent gestures. While they often replace speech, they can also be used redundantly during speech for emphasis or clarity. Speech-independent gestures are not limited to the hands and arms. Some facial expressions also convey verbal meanings beyond emotional states, such as when a person wrinkles her nose to mean, “it stinks” (Knapp, Hall, and Horgan 2007, 202). Of course, the meanings of speech-independent gestures can still be ambiguous and context-dependent. The same nose wrinkle, for example, could alternately mean, “I don’t like it.”

Speech-dependent or speech-related gestures “are directly tied to or accompany speech” (Knapp, Hall, and Horgan 2007, 211). Knapp, Hall and Horgan classify speech-related gestures into four categories:

1. Gestures related to the speaker’s referent, concrete or abstract
2. Gestures indicating the speaker’s relationship to the referent
3. Gestures that act as visual punctuation for the speaker’s discourse
4. Gestures that assist in the regulation and organization of the spoken dialogue between two interactants (Knapp, Hall, and Horgan 2007, 211).

Referent-related gestures are used to “characterize the content of our speech” (Knapp, Hall, and Horgan 2007, 212). They provide more information about the thing being talked (or thought) about. A person uses a referent-related gesture when pointing directly to something she is talking about, or when gesturally depicting something she is verbally describing, or when using gestural metaphors to represent something abstract. For instance, a person might put her flat palms close together when talking about something small, or she might draw an arc in the air when delivering an argument with a similar (metaphorical) trajectory.

The second type of speech-dependent gesture does not necessarily characterize the referent itself, but rather indicates an attitude or feeling that the speaker has towards the content of his speech or thought. For instance if a speaker is unsure about what he is saying, he might turn his palms upwards in an apathetic gesture (Knapp, Hall, and Horgan 2007, 213). Or if he exclaimed, “I think ducks are great!,” he might throw his hands up enthusiastically in the air.

Punctuation gestures “accent, emphasize, and organize important segments of the discourse” (Knapp, Hall, and Horgan 2007, 214). For example a person might use gestures to separate items in a list, or to punctuate phrases in a sentence, or she might slam her fist on the table at important moments in an argument. Arguably, this last example could be considered both a punctuation gesture and a gesture that indicates the speaker’s relationship to the content. In fact, it is
important to note in general that often the same gesture serves multiple purposes at once.

The last category of speech-dependent gesture that Knapp, Hall, and Horgan identify are interactive gestures, or gestures that “acknowledge the other interactant relative to the speaker and help regulate and organize the dialogue itself” (Knapp, Hall, and Horgan 2007, 214). Perhaps this last category occurs slightly less often in performance movement that co-occurs with music, but interaction between performers is certainly possible, as is implied interaction between performer and audience. An interactive gesture might indicate that it is the other person’s turn to speak, or that the speaker is referring to something the other person said, or that the speaker is seeking help (as in e.g., searching for a word). An interactive gesture could also be used to deliver information in a manner that involves or engages the other person (Knapp, Hall, and Horgan 2007, 214).

One part of body language that might be especially important for the purposes of studying dance are those aspects that are not necessarily connected to semantic meanings but which still convey moods, personalities, and attitudes, such as posture and facial expression.\(^{15}\)

Posture and gait can be crucial to perceptions of emotion and personality. Later, in the fourth chapter of this dissertation, I will consider the applicability of

\(^{15}\) These interactive functions are distinct from physical features of the face and body, which are also a part of nonverbal communication. They are said to convey personality, for example. I will confine my study of nonverbal communication to body movement.
terminology from Laban Movement Analysis that describes the shape of the body in relatively systematic terms. For now, though, in order to maintain focus on the communicative dimension of posture, impressionistic descriptions will suffice. Descriptions like “hunched over” and “erect” quickly convey observable differences without recourse to a technical apparatus. Neither of these descriptors necessarily implies that the postures carry meaning, but descriptions of posture might also slip into more interpretive territory – e.g., “hunched over and meek” or “erect and proud.”

Reading facial expressions is a similarly interpretive and intersubjective business. Knapp, Hall, and Hogan identify three interactive functions of the face in relation to speech and human interaction. Though they might not occur very often in dance or performance movement, I will briefly outline these types of facial expression. The face can be used in human interaction to:

1. Open and close channels of communication
2. Complement or qualify verbal and/or nonverbal responses
3. Replace Speech (Knapp, Hall, and Horgan 2007, 259)

For instance, when controlling channels of communication, a person might smile receptively to indicate that he is listening, or open his mouth slightly to indicate that he would like to say something. Alternately, the face can “underline, magnify, minimize, or contradict speech,” as when a person raises her eyebrows for emphasis while saying “seriously?!,” or maintains a blank expression to imply sarcasm while saying “I love it!,” or smiles to soften the blow while saying “this isn’t your best work” (Knapp, Hall, and Horgan 2007, 259). Third, as I mentioned
earlier, facial expressions can convey relatively direct verbal meanings, such as “it stinks.” Like gestures, the face can also be used to organize or punctuate speech (Knapp, Hall, and Horgan 2007, 261). Facial “emblems” represent the idea of an emotional state, and they are usually “different from the actual emotional expressions in that the sender is trying to talk about an emotion while indicating that he or she is not actually feeling it” (Knapp, Hall, and Horgan 2007, 259).

Knapp, Hall, and Hogan provide the following example,

When you drop your jaw and hold your mouth open without displaying other features of the surprise expression, you may be saying that the other person’s comment is surprising or that you were dumbfounded by what was said (Knapp, Hall, and Horgan 2007, 260).

Perhaps the most relevant kinds of facial expression for our purposes are those that simply express emotion. The degree to which the face accurately represents an unfiltered inner state is difficult to determine, especially in movement-music works where some degree of acting is likely involved, but we can describe facial expressions, and consider their relationship to accompanying music, without worrying much about what the mover is truly feeling. Like other aspects of body language, approximate and impressionistic descriptions of emotional facial expressions, such as “surprised,” “crestfallen,” and “her mouth smiles while her eyes remain deadpan,” will usually go a long way in analysis.

That last example suggests that we devote a bit of attention to one final aspect of facial movement – gaze. Gaze serves a few different functions in nonverbal communication, some of them interactive and some of them expressive. As with other dimensions of body language, the expressive function of gaze is
more easily applicable to the study of movement-music interactions than the interactive function, but a brief discussion of both may be in order nonetheless.

In conversation, gaze helps to regulate the flow of communication, monitor our interlocutor's feedback, and express the nature of interpersonal relationships (Knapp, Hall, and Horgan 2007, 298). For instance, looking at someone might constitute a suggestion that they speak, or a person might look up hopefully to gauge the response of their interlocutor, or a difference in frequency and duration of eye contact could establish a differential of power or status between two people.

One reason that someone might avert his gaze is to increase cognitive activity. That is, when one is trying to solve a problem or remember something, one might look away to facilitate the activity. This can be expressive in and of itself in certain contexts as it “reflects a shift in attention from external to internal matters as well as an effort to exclude or interrupt external stimulation,” and we could infer that the mover is dealing with especially “difficult or complex ideas” (Knapp, Hall, and Horgan 2007, 301). Additionally, we can sometimes read introversion or anti-socialness into such movements. Gaze aversion also has a tendency to be associated with certain personality traits such as shyness and low self-esteem, or with related emotions such as embarrassment, shame, or sadness. Generally, the activity of the facial muscles around the eyes as well as the direction of the gaze play a large role in communicating emotions (Knapp, Hall, and Horgan 2007, 295-322), and these movements, while minute, might direct musical perceptions.
Let us briefly revisit the dancehall choreography example. As I noted in the previous section, there is an abrupt musical contrast at about 0:49, which is reflected, or if you want, emphasized, by the choreographic change. Focusing on Aya Level (in the middle), we can also observe a change in her facial expression at the same moment from a serious, arguably sexual, intensity, to a wide carefree smile. Compared to the bigger gestures of the limbs and torso, facial movement might not seem like an especially important aspect of the movement-music interaction, but because facial movement plays such a large role in communicating emotion, it has a significant effect on my perception of the musical change as especially energetic and lively.

Illustration 1: Body language in Aya Level's choreography. Timestamps from left to right: 0:46, 0:47, 0:48.

Additionally, in the measure before the musical contrast, where the choreography anticipates the change, it is not merely a shift in synchronization or fluidity that contributes to the sense of anticipation, but also a change in choreographic style that signifies meaningfully in terms of body language.
Just before the dancers switch to the precisely synchronized box step at 0:46, they move slowly to the right and eventually assume a twisting closed-off pose. While their gazes remain straight ahead, their right knees and elbows cross in front of their bodies as they sink into their left hips with their left shoulders pulled back and right shoulders contracted up towards their face. The result is a kind of coy, flirtatious reticence that might be understood as an interactive gesture, which, although not speech-independent, has a relationship to semantic meanings of sexual suggestion.

The shift in synchronization around 0:46 that I mentioned above is accompanied and emphasized by an abrupt change to a more confrontational body language. The dancers step forward, square their shoulders and torso and uncross their arms and legs, which gives them a more open, direct and slightly aggressive feeling. Still, however, they appear somewhat pulled into themselves with their torsos bent forward and maintaining a degree of crossing and twisting. Finally, when the music changes at 0:48, they arch their backs, opening their torsos and they uncross their legs completely, forming a wide stance while further expanding their personal space by stretching their arms up above their head. They now appear open, confident and nonchalant.

Body language, then, also contributes to the transitional feeling of the measure just before the musical change – a measure that would otherwise simply sound like a repetition or continuation of the previous music – as the dancers move in stages from slow movement with inward-directed body language to fast
movement with outward-directed body language. Importantly, by focusing on body language we get a sense not only of a stylistic change in the dancing but also of a change in the implied meaning of the movement. While the bodily details might be subtle, the feelings that they convey are readily apparent and interact productively with the music.

Turning again to the opening phrase of the A$AP Rocky music video, we can observe another way in which body language affects musical experience – namely, body language imbues text with emotional valences beyond what the music alone provides or specifies. Imagine an alternate choreography set to the line, “I thought I’d probably die in prison.” Even given the sharp and forceful delivery of these words in the song, a defeated or self-effacing body language could give them a very different feeling. As I noted above, A$AP Rocky’s hand gestures further emphasize the musical accent on “prob-” and “pris-,” this emphasis could be completely preserved while vastly altering other functions of body language. Imagine, for instance, that he looked down instead of at the camera, that his shoulders were hunched over, and that the hand gestures on “prob-” and “pris-,” while still abrupt and emphatic, flopped downwards, unresisting to the force of gravity. In this case, A$AP’s movement, helped by his lyrics, might lend this bit of music a rather bitter, resigned feeling. We might get more of a sense of defeated frustration at the inevitability of bleak futures for black men. The movement in the video, however, creates a rather different air of indignant confidence. The attitude
towards the same very short bit of text and music now conveys something more like, “I showed them!”

Whereas the concept of synchronization could arguably allow us to reduce movers to shapes whose visual presence has an effect on our listening experience, focusing on body language demands that we account for a very human dimension of movement. Already we have seen that this human dimension can play a significant role in movement-music interactions, and it is precisely because of its meaningful, communicative aspect that body language can so greatly affect these interactions. From the perspective of moving shapes, a facial expression would not seem very important to the movement-music relationship, but because facial expressions, and other subtle contributions to body language, signify strongly to human viewers, they possess power that is disproportionate to their visual presence. With some of these considerations related to synchronization and body language in mind, let us try out these two analytical tools in a more in-depth analysis of a complete work.

**Tyler, the Creator’s “Yonkers”**

Both synchronization and body language bear heavily on my interpretation of the 2011 music video for “Yonkers” by Tyler Okonma, a young California rapper better known by the stage name Tyler, The Creator from the hip hop collective Odd
Tyler’s rap in “Yonkers” is loosely structured as a dialogue between him and a therapist, and his verses tend to take the form of thoughts and reflections on various topics. The video on the other hand presents a linear series of events, which might lead the viewer to ascribe some narrative significance to developments in the music. The majority of the video consists simply of Tyler sitting on a stool rapping to the viewer, but this is interrupted periodically by progressively more intense dramatic developments. On a large scale, overall changes in Tyler’s bodily attitude as well as developments in the video’s plot help to demarcate the large formal sections, or, on a few occasions, to obscure their boundaries in interesting ways. On a small scale, minute details of synchronization and body language contribute to an impression of Tyler as alternately awkward, lame, anxious, aggressive, and defeated. His movements elicit nuanced hearings of his vocal flow and aspects of the song’s form, and allow Tyler to position himself as both aggressive and vulnerable, simultaneously invoking and subverting many black masculine tropes common to hip hop. Tyler’s movements render a particular kind of musical experience for me – one that highlights a peculiar political dimension of the video.

At first glance, the relationship between movement and music in this video might not seem like one worthy of analytical attention. Tyler never dances per se, nor does he even entrain his body to sound in the usual ways (e.g., bobbing along,

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swaying, snapping, tapping etc.). The possibilities for movement-music analysis appear limited in a context where body movements seem to function more as action in a solo narrative than as a response to musical cues. His movements often appear awkward, ineffectual, or strange in relation to the accompanying music. Sometimes the relationship between movement and music appears contradictory or indifferent. It is precisely these features, however, that provoke my interpretation of the piece. It is in Tyler’s failure to synchronize his movements to the music in an obvious way, and in his failure to convey the cool confidence purported by his lyrics, that I locate the “Yonkers” video’s political potential.

Failure, in fact, characterizes a great deal of the video. Tyler fails to be archetypically hetero-masculine, fails to confront the viewer, fails to achieve self-actualization, and ultimately, by the end of the video, he fails to live. But in these moments of failure, Tyler charts artistic and political alternatives to the status quo. I will consider the notion of failure in more depth presently, but let us first examine a bit of the music video.

The opening of the video is sparse, both musically and visually. We hear a simple, common hip hop drumbeat, a screechy synthesizer giving approximately F#5 on every eighth-note beat, and interjections from Tyler’s pitch-shifted voice, and we see Tyler’s near-black silhouette sitting on a stool against a white background. Though he sits perfectly still, we already have a productive music-movement relationship. If we interpret Tyler’s dark stillness as a failure – that is, failure to engage the sound, failure to entertain, failure to be fully seen – we
become aware that the sense of the opening sound as sparse is in fact created, or at least emphasized, by the lack of movement. The angular posture, the prolonged stillness, and the ominously obscure figure draw attention to the tinny, harsh timbres. Imagine instead that the lights were already on Tyler’s face, and he was moving and mouthing along to the pitch-shifted interjections. Or alternately, imagine that he was bobbing energetically to the beat. Such re-compositions would redirect the focus away from the thinned-out, severe nature of the musical accompaniment and towards the rich low-register vocals or the commonplace rhythmic structure.

Tyler’s stiff posture, reminiscent of Rodin’s familiar sculpture, *The Thinker,* also plays a role in setting the ironic and often contradictory tone that characterizes much of the video. We see the backlit profile of a small-ish, young, black male dressed in signifiers of West coast skater culture – a snapback, a short-sleeved collared shirt, straight-legged shorts. Not unlike in some of Kehinde Wiley’s portraits, in which Wiley paints Harlem men in poses taken from European Renaissance painting, this contrast – between the black male body as it has been figured in contemporary hip hop culture on the one hand, and the white-coded modes of embodiment in classical European high art on the other – serves to “position young black men in the field of power” (Wiley 2006).
Illustration 2: Auguste Rodin - *The Thinker* (left),17 “Yonkers” intro (middle), and Kehinde Wiley - *Alexander the Great (Variation)* (right).18

Yet, the posture is a bit overly pose-y – a stiff caricature of the thinker’s shape rather than an imitation of its closed-off, introverted, contemplative body language. By the same position that signifies as powerful, Tyler also pokes fun at himself. Were he to actually sit like *The Thinker*, the harshness and dryness of the musical texture might feel deflated, shrill, or severe. Given Tyler’s body language, the same timbres come off to me as detached, haughty, and a bit ironic.

At 0:12, the bass enters powerfully. Simultaneously the lights come on and Tyler’s body suddenly activates. He straightens up, turning to face the camera, and his body language is open, direct, and almost confrontational. This turns out to be a rather important moment; brief as it is, it is the only moment in the entire video in which Tyler is fully successful at confidently confronting the viewer. The hand on which he had previously rested his chin bursts open abruptly on the downbeat, lending some fanfare to the opening bass note. As he delivers the first line, “I’m a

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fuckin’ walkin’ paradox,” his movement imbues the music with a sense of confidence, as if being a “fuckin’ paradox” gave him a kind of untouchable mysteriousness or glamorous exceptionalism. Quickly, however, this jig is up as Tyler admits, “No I’m not,” quickly turning his gaze away from the camera, lowering his chin and shrinking back into his shoulders. Beyond a clever joke on the notion of paradox, this line initiates the self-defeating, loser ethos that runs through the video. The opening bass note, which initially brought the promise of confident strength, sinks a half step just as Tyler corrects himself, “No I’m not,” as if musically sounding out the sense of letdown brought about by the realization.

Already text, music, and movement interact to form a complex picture of a conflicted black masculinity. Within the first few seconds of rapping, Tyler flips manically from aggressive self-inflation to self-deprecating defeat. This turns out to be just the beginning of a series of contradictions, which I will read as productive failures, that take place within the movement-music relationship. While these failures contribute to pervasive feelings of loss, awkwardness, emasculation, humiliation, and apathy, they also serve as openings for the subversive and playful.
Jack Halberstam suggests failure as a queer political attitude, which enables radical alternatives to normative ways of being and patterns of thought. For Halberstam, when one fails to succeed under the models of success defined by the dominant culture, one creates the potential to inhabit the world differently:

Under certain circumstances failing, losing, forgetting, unmaking, undoing, unbecoming, not knowing may in fact offer more creative, more cooperative, more surprising ways of being in the world (Halberstam 2011, 2).

For instance, in Halberstam’s queer reading of the film *Little Miss Sunshine* (Dayton and Faris, 2006), failure provides the means to creatively resist mastery and legibility. Although Olive Hoover – “a young girl with her sights set on winning a Little Miss Sunshine beauty pageant,” – fails humiliatingly to actually win the pageant, “her failure... leads to a kind of ecstatic exposure of the
contradictions of a society obsessed with competition” (Halberstam 2011, 4-5). And while her family is almost completely dysfunctional in conventional terms, they offer a non-patriarchal model of collectivity. Halberstam observes that in the face of the family’s many failures,

a new kind of optimism is born. Not an optimism that relies on positive thinking as an explanatory engine for social order, nor one that insists upon the bright side at all costs; rather this is a little ray of sunshine that produces shade and light in equal measure and knows that the meaning of one always depends on the meaning of the other (Halberstam 2011, 5).

Halberstam identifies a few different ways of creatively failing, including losing, forgetting, and stagnating, as well as exercising stupidity, negativity, and immaturity. For the purposes of the present analysis, a few specific types of failure that are especially appropriate lenses for the “Yonkers” video are worth special mention. I group them into two broad categories: (1) light-hearted failures, including overt stupidity, silliness, and illegibility, and (2) bleak failures, including abjection, anti-futurism, and self-annihilation.

The queer potential of stupidity and nonsense become apparent in Halberstam’s analysis of the film Dude, Where’s My Car? (Leiner 2000). The two main characters, stupid white “dudes” named Jesse and Chester, embark on a mission to find a car that results in a ridiculous, and pointless (in the conventional sense) journey. Halberstam contends,

Stupidity in Dude is a kind of relaxed relation to knowing which paradoxically makes Jesse and Chester manipulable and permeable, receptive to the narratives of others, precisely because their own stories are so uncertain and irretrievable (Halberstam 2011, 63).
Stupidity and silliness present opportunities to confuse privileged relationships (such as those between straight white dudes and everybody else). The queer political dimension of stupidity lies in its irreverence to the established forms of knowledge production that establish such relationships. In other contexts, stupidity and silliness result in a kind of nonsense whose queerness takes the form of illegibility. Halberstam implores readers to “resist mastery” and “privilege the naïve or nonsensical” (Halberstam 2011, 11-12).

On the other hand, queer failure can take on darker meaning as the loser’s abject or nihilistic view from the bottom. This view “lays claim to rather than rejects concepts like emptiness, futility, limitation, ineffectiveness, sterility, unproductiveness” (Halberstam 2011, 110). Halberstam identifies political potential in an anti-futurist negativity that does not invest in the heterosexist optimism of the continued family line, but rather invests in “antireproductive logics ” and even in abjection (Halberstam 2011, 108). He locates this kind of negativity in a number of archives from “anticolonialism to punk,” including, for example, photographs by Spanish artists Cabello/Carcellar of empty, dirty, abandoned pools, which “in this ruined state... represent a perversion of desire, the decay of the commodity, the queerness of the dissociation of use from value” (Halberstam 2011, 111). Halberstam asks us to consider the political advantages of valuing conventionally useless or failed things. In an even darker turn, Halberstam explores the self-annihilating negativity of what he calls “radical passivity.” He outlines a “shadow feminism,” which “speaks in the language of self-destruction, masochism, [and] an antisocial
Within this feminist perspective, acts of passivity and self-annihilation become political acts that “[refuse] purpose,” “[surrender] to a form of unbeing,” and seek to dismantle the feminine subject (Halberstam 2011, 131-132). As an example of radical passivity, Halberstam cites Yoko Ono’s “Cut Piece,” wherein she provides the audience with scissors and allows them to cut off bits of her clothing. According to Halberstam, the performance positions Ono as a radically submissive anti-master, and aligns her work with a feminist genealogy that invests in “antisocial” and “anti-authorial” modes (Halberstam 2011, 140). For Halberstam, passivity and self-annihilation take on political significance as queer responses to the liberal politics of futurity, action, and progressiveness.

Failure, as an analytical framework, can illuminate the more radical aspects of the “Yonkers” video. While not precluding critique (after all, Tyler proves successful in the normative sense in a number of arenas, often with sinister results, including misogyny and homophobia), this queer reading highlights some aspects of Tyler’s public image which possess a surprising potential for feminist politics. In particular, my focus here is on the ways in which the movement-music relationship contributes to Tyler’s creative queer failings. As such, I isolate two types of movement failures: the failure to effectively synchronize; and the failure to convey through body language the machismo that is sometimes suggested by his lyrics. At times, reading failure into a movement-music relationship might seem like an arbitrary decision, and in many cases, it is. The point is not so much to make a case for failure as the only reasonable reading of the piece, but rather,
using a purposefully limited definition of failure, to apply the concept as an analytical lens in order to see what falls out. Not unlike a music-theoretical tool, such as Schenkerian or set-theoretical analysis, we could say that, while the piece might lend itself especially well to this lens, it is ultimately an analytical decision to run the piece through a flexible failure “sieve,” in order to arrive at a more detailed interpretation of it.

It might seem odd to provide a queer or feminist reading of a video that, in many ways, resists such a reading. Tyler, The Creator has received criticism for the often misogynistic and homophobic content of his lyrics, including his frequent use of the word “faggot,” in this song and others (Eate 2013). Some of his failures at conventionality in the “Yonkers” video might arguably be interpreted as part of a hyper-masculine display, or as mere shock value, rather than as radical or queer. Indeed, I maintain that Tyler’s works and public image simultaneously contain elements of both dominant masculinity (predicated on the subjugation of others) and a radical queer rejection of this archetype. By doing a queer reading, I aim not to speculate about Tyler’s sexuality, but to read a political potential into the music video – a potential that is not a fixed property of the work, but that exists in the interpretive space between work, context, and viewer.

The political dimensions of the video become more apparent when considered alongside his image as a celebrity figure. Instagram has provided one of the platforms through which Tyler curates his public image. His Instagram often
features revolting, stupid, or nonsense images, as well as images of failure, usually presented with little or no context.

Illustration 4: Four photographs from Tyler, The Creator's Instagram, including cover art for his 2015 album Cherry Bomb (top left).

In an Instagram post from April 2015 that promoted the release of his album, Cherry Bomb, he posted one of the record’s album covers, featuring the pissed-in jeans, limp hands, and unlit cigarette of an anonymous person. This album cover, not unlike many of his other Instagram posts, conveys a kind of humorous apathy for more conventional macho or cool posturing. The pathetic humiliation normally associated with pants-pissing, in tandem with the rather lame body language of the limp hands, too defeated to even light a cigarette, takes much of the sense of ego out of the image. In fact macho and cool posturing do not feature in any of the five Cherry Bomb album covers, which range from silly, to lame, to slightly disturbing.
A queer analytical framework might seem somewhat more apropos when these silly, gross images are considered alongside some of Tyler’s more overtly political public statements. In another Instagram picture posted a few weeks after the album cover, Tyler advertised a T-shirt he was selling as part of his Odd Future clothing line, and, in the caption, directed fans to a brief article he had written about the shirt.19 The shirt features a re-appropriated White Pride symbol, filled in with rainbow colors and reading “Golf Pride World Wide.” In the picture, Tyler and another man wear the shirt while holding hands. The two men seem to convey, not so much a defiant statement of pride in the face of adversity, as a somewhat meek, apathetic stance. The image is rather queer in its normcore dorkiness; rather than a liberal rhetoric of triumphant overcoming, the image displays a couple of meek-looking losers taking the mick out of an offensive symbol.

Illustration 5: A photograph from Tyler, The Creators Instagram (left), and the “White Pride” symbol (right).

19 This is one of a few such anti-homophobic posts by Tyler, the Creator on Instagram, including, e.g., a rainbow flag, and an unflattering photo of Samuel Truett Cathy, the Chick-fil-A CEO who received media attention for homophobic hiring practices and public remarks.
In the article Tyler published in his online magazine, *Golf Media*, he wrote about the thought process by which he arrived at the shirt’s design:

Now it doesn’t take a rocket scientist to know that these guys aren’t fans of Blacks, Gays, Asians or anything else that doesn’t fit in the “white” box. Now having the thought process that i have, i asked myself some questions: What if a black guy wore this logo on a shirt? Would he be promoting self hate? Would he be taking the power out of a shape? What if a gay guy wore this on a shirt? Would he promoting Homophobia? Then BAM! I Had it. Throw a little rainbow in the logo .... and take a photo with a white guy in it and we have an amazing photo. The thing that tops it off is the homo erotic tone of the hand holding, which to some degree HAS to piss off the guys who takes this logo serious. This made the photo even more important to me, because it was me playing with the idea of taking the power out of something so stupid (Okonma 2015).

He goes on to address the homophobic reputation he acquired throughout his career for frequently using the word “faggot,” arguing that his use of the word is a similar attempt to “take the power out of something.” Both the shirt’s design and its homoerotic advertizing reflect a rejection of homophobia and racism, but also of positivity and progressive politics. In fact, in a rather ego-diffusing move, Tyler does not even stand firmly behind his own experiment: “Or maybe my whole idea on this is stupid. Who knows, but why not try it out?” (Okonma 2015). Duri Long argues that Tyler, The Creator’s music and public image reflect, not simply apathy, but an openly *nihilistic* attitude, wherein he regularly invests in nihilistic themes including the rejection of higher values, the devaluation of life and property, and a loss of hope (Long 2014). Under a Halberstamian lens, this nihilism might take on radically queer meanings.
Still, in many ways Tyler invests in prevailing and often violent modes of masculinity. At times, Tyler's lyrics also explicitly invoke misogynistic anger. Penelope Eate has argued that narratives of rape and misogynistic violence in Tyler, The Creator's music function as therapeutic performances through which Tyler can allay anxiety related to the pressure of appearing conventionally masculine (Eate 2013). In Eate’s study of Tyler’s works, she observes that Tyler’s lyrics often consist of “lurid rape fantasies which detail the stalking, abduction, murder and sexual violation of women” (Eate 2013, 530). She categorizes these fantasies into three types:

Such scenarios, within the narrative conceptualization of Tyler, The Creator’s recorded material, are presented as a form of punishment for rejecting romantic advances (‘Sarah’, ‘She’), as a furtherance of more benign anti-social behaviour (‘Ass Milk’, ‘Tron Cat’) or as a strategy to knowingly play into and commodify culturally embedded fears of the Black man as ‘brute’ (‘VCR’, ‘Transylvania’) (Eate 2013, 530).

Still though, Eate acknowledges Tyler’s frequent and “surprisingly transparent” admissions of his own failures to be conventionally masculine and feelings of self-loathing, which position these fantasies as opportunities “to work through feelings of disempowerment or as a way to construct a specifically deviant masculine subjectivity in opposition to established patriarchal norms” (Eate 2013, 543). While Eate does not excuse the misogynistic content of these fantasies, she positions them as reactions to, and acknowledgements of, various emasculating humiliations that pervade black male experience. She suggests that, “rather than the cultural expression of one who comfortably occupies a place of privilege,” the fantasies participate in Tyler’s construction of a peculiar version of black
masculinity in the face of a “failure to satisfy social constructed ideals of Black manhood” (Eate 2013, 543). Thus, the even most misogynistic and aggressive dimensions of Tyler's masculine identity point to the failure that is its queer flipside. In some ways Tyler's public persona as a loser participates in the articulation of a misogynistic and homophobic status quo, but at the same time, certain aspects are surprisingly subversive, and those are the aspects I intend to explore here. With this in mind, let us now turn back to the music video.

Tyler rarely employs speech-independent gestures or referent-related gestures. That is, his gestures do not usually help clarify or modify the semantic meaning of his words. In the second line of the rap, however, he uses his hand to form the number three just after he delivers the word “threesomes,” and then a second later he folds his hand to resemble a dinosaur head around the time he says “triceratops” and “Reptar” – the dinosaur toy from the cartoon Rugrats. While these offer some successfully communicative body language, they fail to synchronize either to the vocal delivery or the accompanying music in an obvious way. His hand moves in a rather controlled way, subtly changing directions at very precise moments, yet for the most part this precision is awkwardly out of sync with any obvious musical cues, including basic aspects such as the pulse. In fact, I find the exact timing of these movements rather difficult to replicate in my own body. The movements lie somewhere in between everyday movements that would lend the rapping a conversational quality and more dance-like movements that might ordinarily befit a music video. The only seemingly musically motivated movements
are the shift of the gaze into the camera just when the phrase begins and the emphasis on the word “fuckin’” as the three-finger gesture quickly gives way to a subtle flash of his whole hand.

![Illustration 6: “Yonkers” music video - “Reptar”](image)

On a slightly large scale though, units of movement correspond loosely to musical groupings created by Tyler’s flow. The repetition of the vowel sound in “-dox,” “-not,” and “-tops” creates a long-short-long grouping of the vocal phrase, and the grouping is loosely replicated in the larger movement changes, as shown in Example 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lyrical Grouping</th>
<th>Movement Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I’m a fuckin’ walkin’ paradox.”</td>
<td>open posture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“No, I’m not,”</td>
<td>concave posture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Threesomes with a fuckin’ triceratops.”</td>
<td>open posture, right hand moves up to the Reptar position</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 3. Lyrical and movement groupings in the first verse of “Yonkers”

This vowel sound returns in the words “mockin’” and “rock,” but this time it occurs on the beat rather than on an offbeat as it did in the three previous
instances. While the rhythm of the vocal delivery is rather square and repetitive – every syllable lasts either an eighth or a sixteenth note – the irregular placement of these internal rhymes creates an unpredictable and dynamic flow.20 The movement that initially draws attention to this grouping structure helps to highlight this complexity.

Tyler’s movement also obscures other possible groupings that are more regular and predictable, such as the one created by the emphatic repetition of the word “fuckin’” followed by the word “mockin’,” which all fall on beat three of the first three measures of the rap (at 0:14, 0:17, and 0:20). Some of his movements are simultaneous with this repetition: he looks up at 0:14, and then opens his hand from three fingers to five at 0:17. But the hand movement is rather subtle as compared to the larger movement changes that emphasized the other grouping, and the word “mockin’” is not really emphasized in his movements at all. The synchronization of his movements highlights these competing groupings, while also rendering the more irregular, subtle one the stronger of the two. Similarly, the relative lack of movement change throughout the Reptar-hand section somewhat obscures the would-be obvious aural parallel between “Reptar” and “rock stars.”

Imagine that the introduction of the cockroach occurred a beat earlier so that, instead of marking a downbeat, it coincided with “Rock stars.” The movement

20 In his article, “Metric Ambiguity and Flow in Rap Music: A Corpus-Assisted Study of Outkast’s "Mainstream" (1996),” Mitchell Orhiner shows different ways in which rap flow can suggest different and shifting metrical groupings against those evident in the instrumental part of the track (Ohriner 2017).
change might then highlight another grouping within the vocal flow. The synchronization of Tyler’s movement flits rapidly between attention to the metrical structure, to different grouping structures in the vocal flow, as well as to nothing in particular. He never maintains a consistent pattern long enough for the viewer to entrain to it, and the result appears somewhat graceless and manic.

Although the lyrics here are arguably quite boastful, these strangely timed body movements convey a kind of ineffective awkwardness. His gaze momentarily returns to the viewer, and his hand gestures engage the viewer by way of serving a loosely communicative function, but he quickly averts his gaze, and the largely asynchronous nature of his arm movements make them feel more like absent-minded fidgeting. Compounding this feeling is the disconnect between hand and gaze. While the ostensible reason for looking away from the viewer is to follow the path of his hand, his gaze actually looks up at nothing initially, and his hand eventually arrives in the vacant spot. While his gaze and hand finally click into place at the word “rappin’,” he almost immediately loses focus on his hand, which absent-mindedly carries on with the Reptar gesture. The Reptar hand opens and closes its “mouth” in a rhythm that continues to be irregular and awkward-looking, but which is actually almost completely synchronized with the alliterative “r-” sounds in the rap. The movement is subtle, and the sense of synchronization is somewhat loose. The combination lends this alliteration a kind of stuttering, rather than deliberate, quality.
One of the effects of all this movement-music awkwardness is that Tyler fails at the kind of strong movements or musical coordination that would convey the cool confidence his lyrics purport. The relationship between music and movement, even in this very brief opening, prevents him from appearing fully convincing in his boastful claims. If confidence and posturing are a requisite part of archetypical masculinity, especially within the hip hop genre, Tyler’s movement fails to realize this archetype.  

Shortly, Tyler’s left hand re-enters the frame holding a cockroach without any interruption to the flow of his movement (0:22). The introduction of the cockroach is smooth and, in a different sort of failure at conventionality, Tyler's body language remains unperturbed as if the bug were unremarkable. Though this is one of the more eventful moments in the video’s plot it does not mark any significant musical change. It occurs three measures into the first verse before any change in vocal flow or instrumentation has occurred. Still, the appearance of the cockroach coincides with the descent by a semitone of the bass line, which, once again, lends this melodic gesture a somewhat sinister effect. Tyler plays with the cockroach somewhat ominously during a verse wherein his movement remains highly controlled, but largely monotonous and out of synch with obvious musical cues. For the rest of the verse, he carefully follows the cockroach with his eyes and hands and the stoic, uninterrupted motion lends a sense of continuity to his vocal

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flow. Compared to the gesture-filled and fidgety opening, the appearance of the cockroach downplays some of the divisions that might have been created by the rhyming structure. The changing metrical position and rearrangement of rhyming syllables, such as “deaf rock stars,” “wars dread locks,” “bed rock har-,” “crack rock,” in tandem with the steady, controlled movement gives the impression of a kind of monotonously delivered tongue-twister. There is also a square rhyming structure created by the placement of “Flintstone” and “fish bones” on the fourth beat of two consecutive measures, but again this regularity is somewhat obscured by Tyler’s movements, in favor of a more fluid feeling. The verse is divided into two smaller sections (0:12 – 0:36 and 0:36 – 0:48) by a noticeable change in the style of his flow starting with “Swallow the cinnamon. I’m scribble this sinnin’ shit…,” but the continuous manipulation of the cockroach also de-emphasizes this contrast.

Suddenly, he bites down on the cockroach in an abrupt gesture, which, on a large scale roughly coincides with a move to a new musical section and the return of the screechy synthesizer. But there is not a whole lot of fanfare to this move, despite its shock value. Rather than emphatically mirror the intensity of the synth timbre, he puts the bug in his mouth with perfunctory effort just after the big musical change. He hardly moves or alters his body language. This music-movement relationship gives the impression that Tyler does not triumphantly conquer the cockroach in a masculine display. Rather, he appears to force it on
himself masochistically. Sure enough, he humiliatedly vomits it back up, and eventually returns to his stool, apparently defeated, to deliver the next verse.

The vomiting section serves as an interesting case-in-point for the observation that synchronization between sound and music can have important effects on the perception of both. In particular, it may be worth noting that the perception of Tyler’s vomiting as an extemporaneous response to eating the cockroach is greatly helped by the fact that the retches and heaves and so forth, while constituting some of the largest and most emphatic body movements we have seen so far, do not have any special relationship to the music. Imagine instead a very slightly different timing wherein the heaves were synchronized with perceptually strong moments in the metrical structure. Despite the universally understood body language of vomiting, this section would look much more like part of the performance than an involuntary break from it. By comparison, notice the slightly different effect created by the body movements over which Tyler has more control, namely the two wrist flicks just after he wipes his mouth. These fall pretty precisely on the beat, and the first one marks a downbeat. While Tyler still has not yet returned to full “performance” mode, these hand flicks have a subtly stronger relationship to the music than the involuntary vomiting movements.

Nonetheless, the body language of the vomiting gestures has a musical effect. The hunched-over, seizing body lends some tension and urgency to the screeching synthesizer that dominates this section musically. The line between musically motivated versus “nonartistic” or “everyday” body movement is
somewhat blurry here, and throughout the video. In many cases, it is simply the presence of music and synchronizations with music that gives otherwise unremarkable body movement a deliberate or dance-like quality. Similarly, movements that appear somewhat more deliberate than ordinary movement, but whose musical motivations and synchronizations are obscure, give the impression of awkwardness or strangeness.

In the absence of the music video this screechy-synthesizer section seems initially to serve a relatively conventional formal function as a hook between verses, although there is no vocal component to the hook. The cockroach-vomiting scene that accompanies this section, however, gives the impression that the hook section is unintentionally blank. That is, it appears as if Tyler must momentarily break from his performance because he could not manage to keep the bug down. Tyler fills the instrumental section with apparently extemporaneous action in the music video’s narrative that accounts for the empty space, which might otherwise have posed a problem to the video’s in-real-time format.

Just as Tyler resumes his position on the stool the next verse begins. In much of the next verse, Tyler resumes the kind of sheepish body language and fidgety gestures that characterized the first verse. And again this kind of movement is subtly at odds with his relatively aggressive and boastful lyrics. Though his body appears relaxed overall, there are a few brief moments wherein he tenses up awkwardly (e.g., “Sheesh I already got mine,” and “wasting my damn time”). These moments of tension occur at somewhat random intervals that do not
allow the viewer to latch onto any particular pattern, and as such, they give the impression of being genuine, involuntary emotional reactions to the content of his lyrics.

Illustration 7: “Yonkers” music video - “Sheesh I already got mine” (top), and “wasting my damn time” (bottom).

The second verse is split into two sections (1:14 – 1:38 and 1:38 - 1:50). In the second section, the instrumental track thins out somewhat, but the screechy synthesizer from the vomiting scene returns. Tyler’s soft and inward-focused body language, however, does a lot to change the musical effect of the synthesizer. Tyler also momentarily explicitly addresses masculinity and sexuality in this section. He raps, “I slipped myself some pink Xanies/and danced around the house in all-over print panties/my mom’s gone that fuckin’ broad will never understand me/I’m not gay, I just wanna boogie to some Marvin.” Again, his movement here is somewhat fidgety, and lacks any emphatic synchronization to the vocal delivery or the
instrumental track. His body language is closed off, introverted and sheepish. Imagine instead confident body language and sharp synchrony with the music that would render more convincing his hetero-masculine assertions. Instead, however, in a rhetorical move that simultaneously conveys humorous self-awareness and self-depricating despondency, the movement that actually occurs emphasizes the effeminate and queer aspects of his persona.

The imaginary therapist (one of Tyler’s alter egos) with whom Tyler is in dialogue throughout the song then asks, “Whachu you think of Hayley Williams?” The question triggers a sudden shift from the sheepishness and relatively loose relationship between movement and music that characterized the previous verses to hyper-aggression and a sharp, synchronous correlation between movement and sound. Tyler leans forward abruptly and emphatically as he says the word “fuck,” emphasizing beat two and mirroring the sharpness of the simultaneous snare attack, then sits back up and articulates the next eighth-note beat just as emphatically with a small bounce in his chair.

Illustration 8: “Yonkers” music video - “Fuck her.”
He performs two similar, but progressively weaker, movements on beats three and four. In the next measure, his hand swoops up on beat one (1:52), in a gesture that possesses anacrusic potential energy towards the “airplane” hand shape that is achieved sharply on the snare hit on beat two (1:53). Tyler’s movement thus articulates a kind of shifted metrical emphasis where beat two serves a downbeat-like function by virtue of being an emphatic point of arrival. On beat three his hand falls down past his face in a relatively fluid and unemphasized movement and lands sharply in a fixed shape on beat four, continuing the pattern of strong emphasis on weak beats. His movements draw attention to aspects of his vocal flow and to the force of the snare timbre, while creating tension with the underlying metrical structure. Thus, even in this singular moment of overt aggression and synchronization, Tyler’s movements remain, in at least one dimension, awkward and tense. Especially given the lack of eye contact, they seem to express more a sense of internal conflict than a confrontational attitude.
In the narrative arc of the video, this emotional outburst seems, perhaps primarily in retrospect, to serve as a climactic episode from which Tyler never fully recovers. While the outburst is positioned as a kind of interruption, and Tyler appears to calm down and resume delivering more reasoned, articulate thoughts, his blackened-over eyes betray the fact that something crucial has changed. Notice also that the drastic change in movement creates a much more significant boundary between parts one and two of verse 3 – i.e., between the first four aggressive measures (1:50 – 2:00) and the last eight meek-ish measures (2:00 – 2:27) than between verse 2 and verse 3. Movement plays a significant role in the
perception of the song’s form. The anticlimactic return to sheepish body language and awkward synchronization give the impression of emasculating defeat.

In a shocking final failure, Tyler gives up entirely and commits suicide. As we see his body dangle ominously, his legs kick frantically before going still. Though the movement is ostensibly an extemporaneous response to the situation and not *musical*, the wild jerking is reminiscent of the fidgeting awkward movement that characterized earlier parts of the video, and lends a frenetic quality to the screechy synthesizer. This movement is also reminiscent of the vomiting section, and thus highlights the repetitive nature of the song’s large-scale form. And, of course, none of this is extemporaneous, natural, or unfiltered. Tyler’s movement, unpolished as it appears, is performed and deliberate. Failure here is not a loss of control, but a controlled move away from what is expected, conventional, useful, positive, appropriate, or productive.

In the final moments of the video, Tyler *mimes* an ultimate self-destruction that is the endpoint of a trajectory initiated by the self-effacing and thoroughly negative attitude demonstrated even within the first few seconds of the video. In the face of racist and sexist systems of oppression that often demand brutishness and arrogance of black masculinity (Eate 2013), Tyler chooses futility, passivity, and annihilation. In a refusal of respectability politics, progressivism, and looking on the bright side, Tyler fails. Beyond lyrics or visuals alone, the relationship between movement and music plays a crucial role in the way Tyler articulates this politically queer narrative.
Tyler’s music video illuminates some of the ways in which movement can significantly alter musical perceptions and interpretations. One of the more remarkable features of this particular example is that it suggests *incongruity* between music and movement as a potent aesthetic strategy. Divergent messages sent by the visual and sonic components of the music video were largely responsible for my interpretation of Tyler’s song as self-deprecating and abject. Incongruity is primarily expressed in the two aspects of movement-music interaction that were isolated in this chapter: (1) movements do synchronize with musical events in a way that we might expect, and (2) conflicting meanings are often conveyed by body language and spoken language. This example goes to show that movement and music productively interact even when they are in an ambivalent or contradictory relationship.
As the opening piece in Walt Disney’s Fantasia, a symphonic arrangement of J. S. Bach’s Toccata and Fugue in D Minor BWV 565 serves as a transition between the movie’s filmed introduction and its animation worlds.\(^2\) At end of the toccata, the visual accompaniment dissolves from filmed silhouettes and shadows of the musicians and conductor into abstract animations. Unlike most of the other pieces in the film, this music-visualization does not offer a narrative, which the film’s narrator attributes to the fact that Bach’s piece is “absolute music,” “for its own sake.” Both the lack of narrative and the transition from film to animation are apparently motivated by properties of the music:

What you will see on the screen is a picture of the various abstract images that might pass through your mind if you sat in a concert hall listening to the music. At first, you’re more or less conscious of the orchestra, so our picture opens with a series of impressions of the conductor and the players. Then the music begins to suggest other things to your imagination. They might be, oh, just masses of color, or they may be cloud forms, or great landscapes, or vague shadows, or geometrical objects floating in space (Armstrong 1940).

The medium of animation, exhibited during the fugue, provides a great deal of freedom, such that many details of the musical surface and structure can be reflected in the movement of shapes and changing colors. Of course, rather than a

natural, inevitable realization of sound in vision, this pairing of music and moving image conveys a certain musical interpretation, and the animations render certain aspects of the music more or less perceptually significant than they otherwise might be.

The toccata section exhibits some similar music-interpretive action in, for instance, the changing of backlight colors or the placement of cuts in the film. In large part, however, the on-screen activity in the toccata section results from the human movement that goes into performing the music. A lot of what we see is the body actions involved in rendering the sound, and, depending on the instrument or role in the orchestra, this can range from near stillness to emphatic hand waving. With the exception of the conductor, who is free from the technical demands of playing an instrument, the movements are often small, repetitive, or stiff, meaning that musical intensity is not necessarily reflected by visual intensity. During their steady streams of sixteenth and thirty-second notes the violinists sit almost completely still, moving only their right arms in small, controlled motions. The slightly frenetic quality of the rapid and repetitive arm movements contributes somewhat to a sense of the music as tense or agitated, but to a larger degree, the lack of overall body movement emphasizes the music's continuity – it's baroque noodling.

Later on, in the fugue section, the rhythmic continuity persists, but the visuals respond to diverse musical aspects, such as the melodic contour, changes in timbre, the divergent activity of distinct polyphonic voices, etc. Still, the
connection to musical performance is not entirely lost. The image of bow tips floating in the air, apparently moving on their own, recurs several times in the fugue (see Figure 1). The bow tips, now freed from their real-life context, give a rather different effect than they did in the toccata. While the human violinists looked rather stiff previously, the isolated bow tips appear lively and energetic. Eventually, they lose their straight shape, flying off and swirling around in accordance with the contour of melodic gestures. But even while the isolated bow tips do what bow tips normally do, their motion now appears to have a bouncing, almost dance-like quality, and, as a result, they enliven the continuous sixteenth-note rhythms.

Illustration 11: Fantasia, Toccata and Fugue in D Minor - Violinists in the toccata section versus dancing bows in the fugue section.

Before the animation paid them special attention, we might not even have noticed the dancing bow tips; they were a somewhat inconsequential part of the overall picture of a violinist. The human presence diminishes the music-perceptual effect of the bobbing bows. The relationship between bow and rhythm is not especially interesting when the bows are contextualized, and thus surface rhythm
in the toccata is not a point of focus as much as it is in the fugue. Why should the context of human movement change the musical effect of roughly the same sonic-visual relationship?

Human movement provides the viewer with additional information beyond moving shapes alone. As humans, we have some affective and embodied sense of what sitting stiffly and barely moving feels like, and what kind of emotional or cognitive states it might reflect. Floating bows bobbing in the air look livelier than held bows bobbing in the air because the complete picture of the violinist engages our embodied empathy with the performer, who appears subdued, focused, and controlled. The multiple human tensions, flexions, exertions, and so forth that go into producing a movement are as relevant to an experience of the movement and its relationship to the music as its formal or visual aspects. Arguably the liveliness that I attribute to isolated bobbing bows, is, in fact, a result of my seeking humanness in them; bobbing up and down is a rather more energetic thing for a person to do than moving a forearm back and forth.

As a converse example, let us turn our attention briefly to the conductor. While the constrained movement of the violinists subdues the perceptual significance of certain musical aspects, the conductor's big, theatrical movements suggest clear phrasing and emphasis. The opening of the piece is sufficiently dramatic that the energetic gestures of the conductor better suit the musical intensity than the relative stillness of the seated instrumentalists. After the emphatic statement of the opening motive, the music drops suddenly to quiet
“noodling,” at which point the conductor disappears, and the near-still woodwind players contribute to the contrasting musical effect. A reintroduction of the conductor’s body, in conjunction with a widening red light, helps draw attention to the increase in intensity provided by the subsequent musical crescendo.

Towards the very end of the piece, dramatic runs in the strings are reflected by large flares in the animated sky. When the image of the conductor fades back into the picture, his arm gestures appear to conjure the flares, and his movements add emphasis to those moments. This additional emphasis can be attributed to our proprioceptive and affective sense of what it feels like to raise our arms energetically above our heads.
This dimension of the movement-music experience can be formalized through the concept of kinesthetic empathy. The study of kinesthetic empathy has informed diverse research on human movement from dance scholarship to neuroscience. Deidre Sklar regards kinesthetic empathy as a particular form of embodied knowledge, arguing that it “provides a different kind of information than does either visual perception alone or symbolic analysis; it gives a sampling of the proprioceptive, or ‘felt’ dimensions of events” (Sklar 1994, 15). While Sklar claims that kinesthetic empathy is a “capacity that we all inherently possess,” a claim supported by recent neuroscientific research (see for instance, Hagendoorn 2004, Calvo-Merino et al. 2005, Freedberg and Gallese 2007), she also acknowledges that the particular way in which movement resonates in another person’s body will differ from person to person based on physical ability, enculturation, and so forth. For instance, a violinist, whose past experience includes exerting a great deal of energy while playing the violin, might not read the small, controlled body movements as “subdued.” Still, intersubjective sharing of at least some part of these embodied experiences is possible. One of the primary goals of this chapter will be to show the rich musical-analytical possibilities afforded by an explicit focus on a listener’s kinesthetic empathy with a moving body.

Traditionally, discussion of listener’s bodies and personal experiences have not been considered integral or even relevant to music theoretical inquiry. Perhaps because they are considered “imprecise and embarrassingly personal” (Guck 1994,
or “profoundly self-absorbed, and decidedly un-shareable” (Kozak 2015, 4.1), explicit discussions of listeners’ bodies and personal experiences do not often appear in the realm of music analytical observations. Surveying the existing literature on embodiment in music analysis, Mariusz Kozak notes the prevalence of studies that emphasize the body movements involved in performing music. The role of listeners’ bodies is largely omitted, even from music scholarship that privileges embodiment in an effort to avoid the traditional view of music listening as a “mind-mind exchange.” Kozak observes that the result of such omissions is an implicit suggestion that listeners’ bodies, “are quite unnecessary – or at least extraneous – to the formation of musical meanings, in which case we might describe the listening situation as quasi-embodied at best” (Kozak 2015, 1.6). In these studies, performance gestures are typically understood to be a form of active engagement with the music, and the affective feelings and sensations that they create is acknowledged as an integral component in musical meaning. On the other hand, “the body of the listener turns to either a quiescent mirror of someone else’s actions or an automaton that impulsively reacts to external stimuli” (Kozak 2015, 1.6).

Kozak, on the contrary, directs his inquiry towards “analysis that uses listeners’ bodies as a tool in its arsenal” (Kozak 2015, 1.8). Furthermore, rather than

\[\text{In her 1994 essay “Feminist Theory, Music Theory, and the Mind/Body Problem,” Suzanne Cusick critiques traditional music theory for denying embodiment with a view of music listening as a “mind-mind” exchange, wherein music analysts “describe practices of the mind (the composer’s choices) for the sake of informing practices of other minds (who will assign meaning to the resulting sounds)” (Cusick 1994b, 16).}\]
conceiving of the relationship between music and listener’s body as one wherein
the passive body reacts or responds to sound, Kozak contends that “the listener is
projected inside the music by anchoring the gestures in its temporal unfolding,
and in the process, generating structural elements that shape the experience”
(Kozak 2015, 2.8). In other words, “musical relationships are... not mirrored...
through gestures... but are constituted by different kinds of motor engagements on
the part of the listeners” (Kozak 2015, 3.1). Music presents a kind of situation or
environment that listeners actively navigate with their bodies.

Kozak acknowledges the difficulty that subjectivity poses to the project of
taking listeners’ bodies seriously. Each listener’s body is unique, and differences in
training, ability, and stature mean that any given listener’s embodied experiences
cannot be universalized. Kozak’s study, therefore, informed by research in
embodied cognition, uses motion-capture technology that collects movement
acceleration data from a range of listeners, drawing conclusions about listening
experiences based on the ways in which many different listeners move to music.
For Kozak, motion-capture tools and data analysis provide a “methodologically
robust” solution to the threat of solipsistic subjectivity (Kozak 2015, 5.1).

A different, and equally robust, means of addressing this threat is to admit
intersubjective claims as a proper subject of music analysis. The listener’s physical
body is but one of many factors that render any given listener a situated, rather
than objective or impartial, observer. Feminist music theorists in particular have
long acknowledged the personal and subjective nature of musical experiences. In
her article “Analysis as Interpretation: Interaction, Intentionality, Invention,”

Marion A. Guck outlines an analytical approach that focuses on the particular experiences that music affords individuals:

Because music is designed to be used by people and to effect change in us, I look for analysis of the human-music interaction that articulates what the music does to or for us – for instance, that it confuses, astonishes, or moves us – and how it does so (Guck 2006, 206-207).

Guck proposes that analysis should reflect a “meeting between an individual and some music” (Guck 2006, 194), and she contends that, while all music analytical claims are interpretive on some level, they can still be intersubjectively shared. Rejecting the perspective which holds that the validation of music analytical claims rests on their objectivity, Guck shows how divergent analytical approaches yield equally informative analytical results, even when those approaches appear to be based in personal, impressionistic, or metaphorical observations, rather than impartial or formalist ones. Guck’s analytical approach emerges from the perspective that experiences can be intersubjectively shared with readers. The analytical process becomes one of “directing the reader’s attention towards a way of hearing the music in question” (Guck 2006, 201).

By a similar token, I can convey some of what I feel in my body to a reader who may intersubjectively share in the experience by imagining what that might feel like. Invoking listeners’ bodies in music analytical observations need not always depend on methodologies that attempt to eliminate subjectivity by examining large, representative sample sizes, and quantifying parameters of body movement. A divergent, yet equally productive approach is to embrace the
subjective nature of musical experiences, validating an interpretive analysis based simply on its ability to enrich the reader’s engagement with an artwork.

Indeed, while not explicitly thematized, this perspective underlies the foregoing chapter. All of my analytical observations about Tyler, The Creator’s music video depend on my intersubjective empathy with his moving body, and any usefulness that my observations might have to readers depends on their empathy with Tyler’s body and on a willingness to try to see and hear the video through my eyes and ears, insofar as that’s possible. In the present chapter, I aim to render one part of this process more transparent. Namely, in examining a recording of the “Rose Adagio” from Tchaikovsky’s The Sleeping Beauty, I hope to show how my experience of the video is heavily shaped by my kinesthetic empathy with the dancer’s body. The “Rose Adagio” serves as a particularly demonstrative case for the relevance of kinesthetic empathy to the perception of dance-music works; at various points throughout the variation the viewer’s embodied knowledge provides a rather different interpretation of the dance-music relationship than that which would be suggested by purely visual information (i.e., by the dancer as a picture without any sensorial component). Additional complexity is introduced by the aesthetic values of ballet in particular, wherein dancers attempt to conceal the physical effort involved in performing their movements, creating the possibility for two divergent perceptions of a single body, which is at once the body of a fictional character and a real performer.
The second focus of this chapter will be the interaction between musical and choreographic form. As in music, the organization of choreography in time can be meaningfully assessed according to perceptions of choreographical sameness and difference, which suggest grouping and segmentation. Gestures and phrases in a dance can also serve particular formal functions, such as closure, preparation, transition, climax, theme, or motive. Generally, formal functions in dance are not absolute but are contextually determined within a given piece. While there may be generalizable or abstract formal schemas that can inform understandings of a number of different dance pieces within a particular genre or style, I opt instead for approaches to analyzing choreographic form that operate on a case-by-case basis, starting with surface details and working outwards to a bigger picture. In the “Rose Adagio,” musical and choreographic form take up various relations to one another, from correspondence, to divergence, to indifference. I will now consider kinesthetic empathy and form in more detail before providing and analysis of the “Rose Adagio.”

**Kinesthetic Empathy**

Watching and listening to the *Fantasia* excerpt, I noticed that among the moving images that accompanied the music, human bodies had an exceptionally striking ability to suggest a musical interpretation. Human presences seem to guide my experience in an immediate and potent way, and I attribute this power to
kinesthetic empathy. Lucy Fife Donaldson describes kinesthetic empathy as an affective experience, whereby

The human body is perceived and responded to as corporeal, sensory and moving (both literally and figuratively) because we are watching with an awareness of our own human bodies. To engage with them is to engage with their body, to interpret and evaluate it through and embodied and empathetic response (Donaldson 2012, 159).

Donaldson, whose primary subject of study is film, emphasizes the importance of embodied responses in a viewer’s engagement with a film generally and with the ability to understand a character. As in film, any experience of a dancing body invokes a sensory dimension of perception. When we watch a moving performer, we are “invited to experience and feel (both emotionally and sensorially) what they feel” (Donaldson 2012, 161).

Research in cognitive neuroscience on kinesthetic empathy suggests that physical empathetic experience is often involuntary. Primarily, the phenomenon has been attributed to the activity of so-called mirror neurons. Mirror neurons are “brain cells that are activated not only in the individual performing an action, but in the brain of the observer witnessing the action, and are thought to be the neural mechanism underpinning our ability to perceive emotions, intentions, and gestures” (Shaughnessy 2012, 35). Behind kinesthetic empathy is a process by which observation activates the same neurons that the brain would actually use were the observer to perform the action herself. I invoke mirror neurons here not so much to justify my claims on the basis of Science, but rather to emphasize the thoroughly physical nature of kinesthetic empathy. Beyond imagination,
emotional sympathy, or intellectual comprehension of another person’s movements, kinesthetic empathy is a sensation. Still, although mirror neurons fire spontaneously and kinesthetic empathy may occur unconsciously, as a music theorist, I am concerned here with examining empathetic responses that are available to reflection and introspection. My aim is not necessarily to report an automatic and inevitable component of my perception, but rather to consider in detail how a given movement in performance makes me feel, literally, as a viewer and, most importantly, what effect that close physical engagement has on my experience of the movement-music relationship.

First, it may be helpful to consider how viewers relate to performers in more general terms. A film-analytical apparatus provided by Donaldson is useful to this end. Donaldson emphasizes that “identification” is not a sufficient explanatory model for the relationship between viewer and performer. The notion of identification, as Murray Smith puts it, “conflates perceiving and constructing a character with affectively responding to a character” (Smith 1995, 3), and oversimplifies the complex process of engagement. Donaldson finds the concept of identification especially unsatisfactory in an attempt to account for kinesthetic engagement with on-screen bodies. She outlines instead a three-part theory, adopted largely from Murray Smith, that describes different sorts of engagement more precisely using the terms, “access, alignment, and allegiance” (Donaldson 2012, 160).
Access is the process by which the viewer comes to know about the character through visual and aural information, such as, e.g., “the spatial position of the camera in relation to the performer” and “expressivity of voice” (Donaldson 2012, 161). Viewers construct characters through access to them, which is provided by multiple dimensions of the film, including dialogue, facial expressions, bodily actions, and the characters’ surroundings. Because of the access that viewers have to the world and events of the film, they are “placed in a structure of alignment with the characters” (Smith 1995, 75). That is not necessarily to say that they identify with the character, but that the film encourages them to engage with the character closely enough to run parallel to him or her – to at least partially feel, on an affective level, what the character feels. Allegiance is dependent on alignment, and it “considers the nature of [a viewer’s engagement with a character] and is concerned with the figuring of character evaluation, encompassing the emotional and moral position we are invited to take toward a character” (Donaldson 161). The film (by way of access) may encourage a viewer to varying degrees to step into the shoes of a character (alignment), at which point she may or may not ally herself with the character.

Donaldson suggests that directing and editing decisions, which place the viewer in specific spatial positions in relation to the character, are primarily responsible for inviting kinesthetic engagement. In recordings of ballet, the camera arguably aims to provide the viewer both with close-up views of important focal points, like the prima ballerina, and with a general sense of the goings-on on
stage. Unlike in narrative film, the viewer is not especially likely to immerse himself in the dancer's world; largely, the camera is doing the job that opera glasses in the nosebleeds might. Still, though Donaldson’s tripartite theory can be useful in the analysis of ballet, as it helps us account for the process by which our reading of the fictional events of the ballet is influenced by kinesthetic engagement. In fact, ballet presents a special case in which there might be considerably more pressure placed on kinesthetic empathy, as there is no dialogue, and the story must be conveyed through music and body movement alone. Of course, because ballet movements are limited by a highly disciplined technique, and are therefore not body movements that we would think of as realistic responses to any given narrative situation, there is an additional level of mediation of which the audience is consciously aware. Still though, spectators ascribe expressive significance to dance, and this expressivity arises not in small part through spectators’ sensuous responses.

In her understanding of bodies on screen, Donaldson makes an important distinction between character and performer: “the character carries out the action of the narrative, while the performer’s body, in combination with the camera, dramatizes the event” (Donaldson 2012, 165). Details of movement and expression on the part of the performer account for the spectator’s understanding of the character and narrative. Kinesthetic engagement with the body of the performer may result in the spectator’s alignment and allegiance with the character. Arguably, film is sufficiently immersive that spectators typically conflate performer
and character temporarily. In the case of ballet, however, the distinction tends to be a conscious part of the spectator’s experience. Especially in the case of classical ballets, where audiences will already be familiar with the ballet’s narrative (or will have read it in the program), audience members are not likely to be captivated by the sequence of events or character development so much as they are by the dancing itself as a technical and expressive display. In films, acting is a medium through which stories are articulated, whereas the medium of dance is the primary focus of ballet for which a given story is the backdrop.

Unlike in film, then, kinesthetic empathy with the dancing body might invite just as much alignment with the performer as with the character. I contend that both modes of alignment are possible and that a viewer may shift between them, consciously or unconsciously. Of particular importance for the present study is the observation that a viewer’s perception of music-movement relationships may depend in part on whether the viewer aligns with the performer or with the fictionalized character. A viewer’s perception of labor in a particularly difficult partnered lift, for example, reflects an alignment with the body of the performer, not the character, who joyfully leaps into the arms of her beloved. Bodily expressions of joy and labor arguably invite rather different interpretations of the accompanying music.

Part of the specific skill set of ballet dancers, in fact, is maintaining the plausibility of the character’s emotions despite such difficult and unnatural body movements. The deceptively light and effortless appearance of ballet directly
contradicts the high level of strength and endurance that are required for a human to carry out the movements. At any given time the same nuances of movement in a single body might invite two different empathetic engagements. If empathetic engagements indeed play a large role in suggesting musical interpretations, as I have suggested, then the question of character versus performer alignment is, surprisingly, highly relevant to movement-music analysis. Movement is often responded to as though it were an outer reflection of an inner state, and kinesthetic empathy typically provides a way of engaging with the experience of another person. Ballet, by contrast, presents a special case where, more than in almost any other kind of movement, there is potentially an extremely high degree of divergence between outer expression and inner effort. Even more intriguing is that audiences are often fully aware of this divergence and may alternate between vastly different experiences of the same visual information. Since the nineteenth century, one of the primary aesthetic focuses of ballet has been creating the illusion of an implausibly light, sprightly, almost immaterial feminine body. Still, the technical demands of ballet are widely acknowledged, and the contemporary image of the ballerina as a supremely disciplined powerhouse is commonplace. The female ballet dancer thus presents a basic contradiction between “her ethereal exterior and her iron-willed interior” (Fisher 2007, 3).

For Donaldson, kinesthetic empathy helps to bring about a relationship of alignment. In tandem with aspects of the film that the spectator might process on a more emotional or intellectual level, such as of dialogue, facial expressions, and
setting, physical engagement with the performer’s body draws a spectator into alignment with the subject position of the character. This is not to say that the viewer assumes the character’s subject position, or that the viewer necessarily sympathizes with the character (allegiance), rather, Adriano D’Aolia characterizes spectator empathy as “an *accompaniment*, in which the spectator’s subjectivity is not ‘one with’ the [character’s] subjectivity, but only ‘with’” (D’Aolia, 2012, 94).

There is an implied causal relationship for both Donaldson and D’Aolia between kinesthetic empathy and alignment/accompaniment. Kinesthetic empathy – a matter of affective, corporeal sensations – precedes alignment and accompaniment; it is an experience on which part of the spectator’s involvement with character depends. Because the movements of film actors resemble movements encountered in “real life,” kinesthetic engagement that a spectator feels with the performer invites alignment with a character. In Donaldson’s analysis of a scene from *Rosemary’s Baby*, for example, she observes the following relationship between Rosemary (the character) and Mia Farrow (the actor):

“alignment and allegiance with Rosemary’s physicality is built up throughout the sequence... through... the access granted to Farrow’s... body” (Donaldson 2012, 165).

In the case of ballet, I contend that, because of the more consciously salient distance between performer and character, this apparently inevitable, causal relationship between kinesthetic empathy and alignment/accompaniment may be reversed. That is, I can choose to put myself in the shoes of either the performer or the character, and the empathetic physical resonances that I feel follow from that
choice. While for Donaldson and D’Aolia, kinesthetic engagement is an unconscious process and prerequisite for alignment/accompaniment, I will aim to consider both the kinds of engagement that come to me naturally while watching dance and the kinds of engagement that I have to try on or exercise. In both cases, however, kinesthetic empathy remains sensorial and affecting. For me, as someone who used to perform ballet, the kinesthetic empathy that I tend to unconsciously feel leads to an engagement with the performer’s (rather than the character’s) experience, but I have found that if I consciously attend to the character in the context of the ballet’s plot, it is possible to perceive the same body differently.

As an example of this difference, consider two passages from the ballet Coppélia. The ballet is named after a life-sized wind-up doll around which the plot of the ballet centers. In the second act of the ballet, a human character, Swanilda, pretends to be the doll by dressing in the doll’s clothes and assuming doll-like movements. Shortly before this, the actual doll, Coppélia, dances briefly as a result of being mechanically wound up. These two moments in the ballet are characterized by very similar qualities of movement. Both the doll and the human pretending to be a doll carry themselves with stiff, jerky movements that suggest mechanistic artificiality. In order to distinguish themselves from the convincingly human characters, both dancers abandon certain conventions of ballet technique, keeping their feet in parallel (rather than turned out), and bending their arms and legs at more acute angles to emphasize their joints.
Illustration 14: Coppélia in productions by the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre (top), and the English National Ballet (bottom).24

If an observer attended to the experience of performers generally, then the quality of movement that the two dancers assume would likely yield very similar kinesthetic resonances for said observer. In both instances of doll-like movement, this observer might experience something of the twitchy, agitated feeling that accompanies abrupt starts and stops in movement, or perhaps the muscle tension that produces a stiffly maintained right angle at the elbow.

If, on the other hand, observers generally aligned their own bodies with those of characters, then these two passages could yield entirely different kinesthetic experiences. In the second instance, when Swanhilda pretends to be Coppélia, the observer might have many of the same sensations just described, as

he would register the human effort of the doll-impersonating character. In the first instance, by comparison, a spectator who is fully immersed in the fictional world of the ballet would not attribute human effort to Coppélia’s body, and, as a result, would not experience the same empathetic sensations. These divergent experiences, felt (or not felt) in the body of the observer, might, in turn, mold his musical perceptions in observable ways.

Admittedly, the above is, in all likelihood, a bit too simplistic a picture of real observers; it is unlikely that any spectator could suspend belief to the extent that they actually experience a dancing body as a mechanical doll. Yet this example still points to the divergent possibilities created by the separation of character and performer, which is relatively unique to ballerinas, who make incredibly difficult physical feats (performer) look easy (character).

In general, much of the discourse on kinesthetic empathy in the perception of artworks focuses on instances in which empathetic sensations seem to arise unconsciously or passively. Because it can be attributed to automatic neurological phenomena, it is tempting to think of kinesthetic empathy as an unmediated, immediate, and purely affective, rather than intellectual. It is also acknowledged, however, that it is possible to actively or consciously imagine the feeling of doing something or being in someone else’s position. Evan Thompson, in fact, divides kinesthetic empathy into codified subcategories that involve varying degrees of

\[25\] And in fact mechanical dolls might themselves inspire kinesthetic empathy as suggested by autism research with puppets (Shaughnessy 2012, 37).
conscious attention, including, for example, “affective and sensorimotor,” which is spontaneous and unconscious, and “active and cognitive,” which is imaginative (Thompson 2007, 397).

As analytical observations tend to arise from a mixture of unconscious perception, conscious perception, and intellectual sense-making,26 in using kinesthetic empathy as an analytical tool, I will not bar deliberate empathetic body sensations from the discussion. That is, I am just as concerned with observations about a movement-music interaction that result from active attempts to feel another’s movement as I am with perceptions that occur without effort. In so far as both kinds of kinesthetic empathy are felt and embodied, neither experience is more or less affecting then the other. In this case, conscious thought intervenes before the felt sensation, not after.

As I have said, ballet movement, deceptive in its lightness and effortlessness, can often project two rather different impressions of the bodily sensations of a single person, who is both performer (constant, intense exertion) and character (experiencing the narrative events of the ballet). If, in considering the “Rose Adagio,” I align myself with the princess character instead of the performer, I can access a slightly different set of kinesthetic sensations. When I imagine the character’s body, I attend to the aspects of her physicality that relate most directly to the narrative events. In order to do this I have to take seriously the

26 My thinking on this is informed especially by my exposure to Benjamin Hansberry’s Ph.D. dissertation research through conference presentations and informal conversations. See Hansberry 2015.
idea that she is not doing anything especially unnatural with her body. Rather ballet is simply the movement language with which she expresses herself and goes about her daily life. I liken it to watching an animated fairy dart through the air; though I have never experienced the feeling of flying, I attribute bodily sensations to the fairy, to which I can nonetheless relate. If I imagine, not that the character is dancing, but that she is carrying out actions in a narrative plot, then my embodied perceptions shift, and these sensations may suggest alternate ways of hearing the variation’s music.

Form

Another aspect of choreography that it is productive to isolate is its form – a term which I use in roughly the same way as it is used in music analysis. By form, I mean the organization of a piece in time, not necessarily from the perspective of the choreographer, but as suggested by observable choreographic events. Much like in music, the perception of a choreographic form depends largely on our ability to group and differentiate sections of dance (both on a large and small scale) – observations that are suggested by repetition, varying degrees of continuity and contrast, moments of emphasis, and so forth. As in music, formal properties of a choreographic phrase give the viewer a sense of beginning, middle, and end, and suggest particular ways of segmenting the phrase into smaller units.

In music analysis, it is common to understand form in terms of generalized formal types, which are robust enough, by virtue of convention, to loosely
characterize a range of particular pieces, or sections, or phrases (e.g. sonata form, rondo form, strophic form, ritornello form, period, sentence etc.). In many genres of Western dance, including ballet and modern, however, formal types are not necessarily formulaic enough to be defined or codified. Standardized formal types apply only to specific, narrowly defined genres, and as a result technical vocabulary for labeling and describing choreographic form is not widely agreed upon. Because it is my aim to offer approaches to the analysis of music-movement interactions in a range of contexts, I suggest describing choreographic form in whatever terms best fit a given piece, accounting for perceptions of formal boundaries and formal functions with recourse to observable features.

Consider the following dance sequence from Jean Baptiste Lully’s 1675 opera Thésée, as reconstructed by La Belle Danse Baroque Dance Company (See Video Example 1).  

Musical form in this excerpt certainly gives the analyst cues in assessing how the choreography is organized, but the dance on its own exhibits form that is observable in the absence of music. Changes within a given attribute of the choreography may lead an analyst to make decisions about where formal boundaries lie. Let us examine the opening phrases. The dancers begin moving downstage side-by-side in a series of small steps and hops. The change in direction from sagittal to lateral movement at roughly 0:11, suggests a segmentation, such

27 Video Example 1 shows the dance without music, and my timestamps will refer to Video Example 1. All video examples can be viewed at https://sterbenzdissertationexamples.tumblr.com/ with the password sterbenzdissertationexamples. A recording of the full dance with the original music can be found on YouTube. LaBelleDanse, “Baroque Dance: Lully’s ‘These’ – Act V, sc. Vi.” YouTube. Online video clip, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bwc3yQ5FlhE (accessed 8 March 2017).
that the first ten seconds of the dance becomes a formal unit, let us refer to it as section 1, or S1. While the choreography in S1 has an internal structure of its own, the change in direction is the most dramatic contrast so far, which highlights the continuity of S1.

Another formal unit, let us call it S2, is suggested from 0:11 to 0:19, again by virtue of the dancers’ overall direction of movement and spatial orientation. The dancers take the duration of S2 to trace part of a circle with their movements, facing out from the circle so that they are always moving laterally. Eventually, they come to rest at the positions that initiated the dance, facing the audience. Throughout S2, as in the previous section, the dancers alternate between small steps on relevé or in plié and small hops. As before, their arms remain more-or-less-fixed in a low second position, with small rotations of the wrist and elbow, and intermittent presentational gestures. In every regard except for direction of movement and spatial orientation, then, there is a quite a high degree of continuity between S1 and S2.

So far, direction and orientation are linked such that we may not recognize them as different attributes. One could imagine fixing one while changing the other, however. For example, the dancers could move in a circle while facing the audience. Since both direction and orientation change at roughly the same time though, we might treat them as if they were a single attribute. Because the change at 0:11 presents the most significant disruption to the choreography, direction-
orientation, at this early stage of watching the dance, may be the primary attribute by which a viewer differentiates sections.

At 0:19 a new section, S3, seems to begin. In assessing the piece’s formal organization, we might initially want to describe S3 as a return or repetition, given that it shares side-by-side movement along the upstage-downstage plane with S1. For the first time in the dance, however, the two partners do not dance at the same time, instead dancing in turn and imitating each other’s sequences. An attribute of the choreography that we may not have even registered initially – the synchronization of the two dancers – now reveals itself as a form-determining parameter. In terms of direction-orientation, we might want to describe the form as ABA, but in terms of partner synchronization, we might instead choose AAB. Perhaps determining form based only a single attribute may seem overly simplistic, and the analyst would therefore prefer ABC, AA'B, or ABA'.

Already, some apparently simple inquiries about form have given way to a relatively high degree of complexity. I am reminded of Catherine Hirata’s analysis of Morton Feldman’s Durations 2 (Hirata 2006). In her analysis, Hirata attends to perceptions of musical difference and sameness that influence her experience of the Feldman piece. She opens with an analogy, describing a fictional process of categorizing books:

Imagine that you decide one day, on a whim, to organize your books about music. You don’t give it any forethought, rather you initiate the process simply by picking the first two books off the pile on your desk, which happen to be a volume of Tovey’s Essays in Musical Analysis and Andrew Dell’Antonio’s newly edited collection, Beyond Structural Listening? Postmodern Modes of Hearing. It’s easy to imagine that you might want to
place these books in different categories. Tovey’s book, for example, has that historical edge that Dell’Antonio’s doesn’t have; and it is all Tovey, whereas in the other book we hear the voices of a number of different scholars (Hirata 2006, 211).

After our initial encounter with the Baroque dance excerpt, Hirata’s imagined experience will be somewhat familiar. Just as the difference between the Tovey and Dell’Antonio books pointed to the existence of the category “single author,” the change in direction at 0:26 pointed to “direction” as a relevant attribute of choreography. Hirata continues her analogy with a third book:

So perhaps you put these books down side by side, each beginning its own pile as it were, and then reach for a third book, which happens to be David Lewin’s Musical Form and Transformation: 4 Analytic Essays. You could group this book with Tovey’s, since it is all Lewin. On the other hand, these essays were written about a decade ago, whereas Tovey’s were written almost a century ago—and almost everything about the essays reflects their having been written during different eras (Hirata 2006, 211).

Now a new set of attributes emerges – “new” versus “old” – which obscures the sense that the number of authors is the most important attribute by which to categorize books. Similarly, in the foregoing analysis, the change from synchronization to non-synchronization between the partners, which coincided with a return to sagittal and audience-facing movement, pointed to the importance of inter-partner synchronization as an attribute, while retrospectively minimizing the sense of contrast between S1 and S2. In other words, the newly different feature, “makes us suddenly see something that [S1 and S2] had in common (and that we may have taken for granted)” (Hirata 2006, 216). As in music, the determination of choreographic form can become rather complex, and it often depends on subjective analytical decisions about which choreographic
parameters are salient and, within a given parameter, what constitutes contrast versus continuity. Both formal sections and the criteria for determining formal sections are contextually decided.

One other, related, issue in the analysis of choreographic form is worth noting. As in music, the precise location of formal boundaries can be ambiguous or nontrivial to determine. Take the boundary between S1 and S2. Above, I said that the change in direction creates a sufficiently significant contrast to place the boundary at 0:11. At 0:13, however, the dancers cross each other and perform a plié which is held slightly longer than previous pliés in the dance, and gives an impression of mild closure, both because of the spatial relationship of the two dancers, who, in lateral space, have come to the same position, and because of the brief pause in the flow of motion. The moment that immediately succeeds the plié only heightens this impression, as the dancers spring up into a small jump, which changes their orientation. Previously, I contended that the change from S1 to S2 is suggested by a change in direction and orientation. If I were going to be more precise, I would observe that this change happens in two stages. From 0:26 to 0:28, the direction of movement has changed (they have initiated the circular path), but the dancers’ orientation remains front-facing. At 0:28, the dancers orient their bodies outwards from the midpoint of circle. There are two possible boundaries between sections 1 and 2, the change in direction at 0:11 or the plié 0:13.

If contrast and continuity are criteria for decisions about grouping and segmentation, then assessing the precise location of the boundary between S1 and

92
S2 will similarly depend on which choreographic attributes (direction, orientation, fluidity of motion, distance between the two dancers, etc.) the analyst is focusing on. Although the change in direction at 0:11 is significant, the fluid steps with which they do it do not present an especially significant contrast to the previous choreography. One way of reading the bit of choreography from 0:11 to 0:13 might be as an analogy to a musical phrase ending that occurs on a downbeat and simultaneously serves as the beginning of a new phrase. An alternate analogy might be a musical pickup, which is neither part of the previous phrase, nor necessarily part of the following phrase. Deciding between these analogies means deciding between two different impressions – one of overlap and one of separation. This adjudication is, for one thing, a subjective perception on the part of the analyst, and for another, perhaps dependent on the musical cues that I’ve temporarily barred.

Still, this moment of ambiguity points to a potentially important issue in the assessment of choreographic form – an issue that is not unfamiliar to analysts of musical form. Namely, different parameters of choreography may suggest different formal boundaries when taken in isolation. A given attribute – e.g., the fluidity of steps – may suggest one reading of form, while another attribute – e.g. overall direction of movement – may suggest another. In their co-authored analysis of Siobhan Davies’s *Rushes*, Stephanie Jordan and Helen Thomas isolate choreographic attributes in order to describe various aspects of the piece’s form (Jordan and Thomas 1998). One attribute they isolate, for example, is “level,” by
which they mean the height in vertical space of dancers’ bodies. So, for example, Jordan and Thomas observe that partnered lifts, in which a dancer is raised high into the air by another dancer, constitute moments of “climax,” because, in terms of level, lifts are exceptional in Rushes (Jordan and Thomas 1998, 243). At the same time, the authors note that lifts often provide a sense of “resolution,” as compared to the moments that precede them, in which a high degree of tension is expressed in a different parameter – counterpull (Jordan and Thomas 1998, 243). Counterpull is characterized by “forces pulling in different directions to create spatial tension,” and, in Rushes, dance partners often pull against each other, creating counterpull, immediately before lifts (Jordan and Thomas 1998, 242). Isolating attributes of choreography provides clearer justifications for analytical decisions with regard to form, but any given sequence of choreography, when taken as a whole, may permit multiple or conflicting readings of form.

One additional concept in the analysis of choreographic form will prove useful to our discussion – that is, formal function. In music, certain gestures, such as cadences, can have a formal function (e.g. closing); they serve a rhetorical purpose in addition to whatever else they do, like provide harmonic resolution. In dance this can also be the case, and like other formal considerations, these functions are contextual, and it is only within a given piece (or, at the most broad, within a specific genre of dance) that a given gesture or bit of choreography will serve the same function. At times function may be determined by generic conventions, but often, the function of a movement is determined by repeatedly
being used in the same way within a piece. If, for instance, we already have a sense of how choreography is segmented into phrases (perhaps according to some of the criteria discussed above), we might notice that every phrase ends with the same movement, and by virtue of that fact, decide that this movement serves a closing function. Once such a function has been established, however, it can become robust enough to contribute to segmentation/grouping decisions. As in music, a particular sequence of steps, a gesture, or a choreographic idea can become thematic or motivic when given sufficient emphasis or repetition. Observing that a particular movement or sequence of movements functions as a theme or motive allows the analyst to point to that bit of choreography as an instance of something larger or as significant in terms of form.

In movement-music interactions, one medium’s form may influence the way the other medium’s form is perceived. For instance, it may be of interest to the analyst to show that, say, closing-functioning movements usually coincide with closing-functioning musical gestures and therefore reinforce that perception. Or an occurrence of the closing-functioning dance gesture gives an impression of musical closure that the observer might not otherwise have. In other instances, the form of each medium may come through sufficiently strongly that a lack of coincidence or agreement between the media’s formal organizations could be perceived as a kind of discord or mismatch by the observer. In any case, by establishing some of the considerations that might influence the analysis of
choreographic form on its own, we can offer sharper observations about the role of form in music-movement interactions.

**The “Rose Adagio”**

In the following analysis, I will examine a 2006 recording by the Royal Ballet of the “Rose Adagio” from Tchaikovsky’s and Petipa’s *The Sleeping Beauty*, focusing on the interaction of musical and choreographic form and on the role of kinesthetic empathy in movement-music analysis (MacGibbon 2007). The “Rose Adagio” occurs in the first act of the ballet when Aurora, performed by Alina Cojocaru, is presented with four suitors by her father as part of her sixteenth birthday celebration.

The opening phrase lasts six measures (mm.19-25/1; Video Example 2), including an introductory measure before the entrance of the melody. During the introductory measure, the dancer prepares for the movement phrase, and the introductory character of the music is reflected in her relative lack of activity. Once the strings enter with the melody, the harmony begins to move quickly; after two measures, the music has already progressed from tonic to predominant (ii⁴₃) to dominant (V₆₃) harmony. The dominant harmony is extended through a chromatic voice exchange that brings the V₆₃ chord to a V₇ chord on the third beat of m. 23, after which the V₇ chord is prolonged for a measure and a half before resolving on the downbeat of the following phrase.

If I allow kinesthetic empathy with the performing body (in other words,
with Cojocaru’s body) to guide my analysis, I come to a reading of the choreographic form as a gradual, mild build in intensity that packs the action towards the end of the phrase. To a degree, the choreographic form here is determined by the existence of four dance partners. After the preparatory measure, the dancer repeats the same brief section of movement four times, once with each partner. The first arrival of dominant harmony \( V_{6}^{\flat} \) occurs in the middle of her second repetition, and as such, it isn’t assigned a great deal of weight. When she reaches her final partner, the repeated action is quickened so that the dancer can prepare for a pirouette on the downbeat of m. 24, the event to which the foregoing movement phrase appears to be leading, after which some transitional material prepares for the start of next phrase. This, incidentally, initiates a trend throughout the variation wherein pirouettes serve a closing function at the end of phrases.

The overall impression I get of the choreographic form is of a roughly four-and-a-half-measure-long phrase from mm. 20-24/2 (that is, from the first piqué soutenu to the développé a la seconde that ends the pirouette), which is surrounded on both sides by introduction-functioning and transition-functioning material. The movement phrase proper exhibits a gradual increase in intensity until the pirouette, both climax and end point, from which it takes a measure and a half to come back down so that the second phrase may begin. The movement phrase corresponds, not so much with the complete musical phrase, as with the gradual progression to the root position dominant chord. The dominant does not resolve
until the start of the second phrase in m. 25, and yet the movement phrase seems already to have ended, or at least to be winding down. The movement phrase maintains a focus on the increasing musical intensity, from mm. 20-24/2, provided by the steadily rising melodic contour, the crescendo, and the harmonic drive of the chromatic voice exchange. As far as the choreography is concerned, root-position dominant arrival is arrival enough, as the pirouette moves seamlessly into the transitional material, without making much of a fuss over the tonic arrival. In fact, the pirouette does not deliver fanfare directly to the root-position dominant arrival either, occurring three beats afterwards. When paired with the choreography, the driving force of the passage becomes the chromatic voice exchange itself, which, as a non-functional omnibus progression, might otherwise not seem to accomplish very much. The passing dissonances in the voice-exchange take on much more expressive weight alongside this reading of the choreographic phrase.

While some aspects of the foregoing description of the phrase's choreographic form seem indisputable, such as the observation that the phrase includes four repetitions of an observable unit of movement, other aspects are more of an interpretive leap. The suggestion, for instance, that the movement in mm. 20-23 exhibits a gradual build in intensity, is not predetermined by the formal property of repetition. Indeed, one might argue just the opposite – that repetition gives a phrase a static quality. I attribute the impression of gradual building that I read into the phrase to my own embodied sense of the movement – that is, to
kinesthetic empathy. My experience of the movement depends, not in small part, on my personal history, having studied ballet from about age 5 to 20. While I was never especially talented at ballet, and I doubt I was ever capable of pulling off this variation, I have a relatively immediate sense of what it would feel like to try. This sense contributes a rather strong dimension of my experience of the dance in at least two ways.

On the one hand, my embodied engagement with the piece amplifies its affective and expressive aspects. For instance, I may feel very moved, in the figurative sense, by a moment in the choreography whose execution strains the body in a particularly poignant way. On the other hand, and perhaps of more immediate relevance to the present discussion, my kinesthetic empathy with the dancing body affects my perception of the movement’s structural and formal elements. My analytical observations depend in some part on an embodied knowledge that may suggest a sense of phrasing, or assign weight to a given moment, or imbue higher or lower degrees of energy to sections of choreography. Though a given reader may not have a similar embodied knowledge of the feeling of ballet technique, the interpretation of the piece that I present here can, I imagine, be intersubjectively shared by any reader willing to be guided through an alternate perspective. My hope is that the process might enrich a reader’s own experience with the piece, and that it might provide, by example, a possible model for approaching the analysis of movement-music interactions.

In my assessment of this first movement phrase, I asserted that the main part
of the phrase spans mm. 20-24/2, which is flanked by less focal material. My sense of m. 19 as introductory and mm. 24/3-25 as transitional is shaped in part by the conventions of ballet choreography and in part by kinesthetic empathy. In m. 20 the dancer steps at a relaxed pace onto her right foot, leaving her left foot in *tendu derrière* and opening her arms into a low second position before stepping back onto her left foot and bringing her right foot into *tendu devant* and arms into fourth position to prepare for the following *piqué*. Both of these movements are conventional preparations in ballet. Having formed the pose the dancer takes in the second half of m. 19 countless times myself, I can feel the pre-*piqué* anticipation in my body as I’m watching. Given the many demands of ballet technique, even these simple movements require high energy and muscle tension, but comparatively speaking, this is a relaxed, low-exertion moment. These factors all combine such that I am inclined not to include it in the choreographic phrase proper.

Similarly, my experience of the repeated movements that comprise most of the phrase invoke my embodied empathy with the dancer. My felt understanding, whether accurate or imaginary, of what that movement might feel like shapes my sense of the phrasing. The unit that is repeated four times over the course of the phrase consists of the following series of movements: *piqué, sous-sus, soutenu, développé à la seconde*, and then a brief balance in which the dancer holds the *à la seconde* position independent of her partner.

Within the unit itself, there is a brief crescendo in energy expenditure on the
part of the dancer. From the initial plié the dancer lightly propels herself into the soutenu. The tops of her pointe shoes do not pose a great deal of friction that would impede the turn, and the momentum from the piqué is plenty to sustain the unhurried spin. The first small spike in effort, as I see it, comes when the dancer must stop the turn in a tight sous-sus, legs turned out, muscles tensed. From there, the slow développé à la second would invoke even more muscular exertion, as the dancer must hold all other parts of her body in place while drawing the right leg up, using a complex of muscles at the back and inside of the thigh, through passé into a high second position. The dancer’s balance is aided only slightly by her partner who holds her right hand above her head. Finally at the climax of this brief movement series, the partner lets go of her hand and the dancer briefly holds the position, maintaining her balance while extending all parts of her body. I can feel this simultaneous stretching and tension in my own body as I watch, and, although the dancer hardly moves – simply extending her newly free right hand – this moment is the most active and high-energy of this brief section. Bracketing the human component and speaking about the dance in purely visual terms, this section starts out energetically, with a quick turn, and then slows down, with a long développé, but my actual sense of the change in energy level is precisely the opposite – from low to high – thanks to the embodied sensations that pervade the experience of watching dance.

On a larger scale, the repetition of this series of movements has a similar effect. It may not initially seem intuitive to posit repetition as a criterion for a
gradual building within a phrase, but this experience of the phrasing arises from an affective sense of the dancer’s repeated bodily exertion. Just as the third sit-up at the gym is marginally harder than the first, the third slow développé à la second possesses a mildly more intense feeling than the first. The sense of building to a climax is reinforced by the fourth repetition, which is slightly faster than the first three, giving the impression that some kind of destination is close at hand. And indeed this suspicion is quickly confirmed as the fourth repetition gives way to a rapid transition into a partnered triple pirouette. The dancer comes down off of pointe into a plié that initiates a piqué into rapid bourrées, her quickly moving feet continuing to build energy towards the pirouette.

In the absence of music, I experience the pirouette as a dual-functioning climax and endpoint of the main phrase, and once again my embodied knowledge contributes significantly to this sense. The triple pirouette is fast, energetic and difficult, perhaps not for a professional dancer, but again, that does not necessarily bring a whole lot to bear on my interpretation of the phrase; her actual experience is not and can never be accessible to me. I can imagine the force and energy of springing up out of a deep plié into a fast spin, and I can also imagine the muscle tension involved in maintaining balance. The pirouette ends with a final, much quicker développé à la second, like a presentational flourish before the transition into the next phrase.

As I suggested earlier, all of this leads to an overall impression of the musical phrase as gradually building to a climactic V7 chord in m. 23. In fact, I can actually
hear this phrase in two ways. In one hearing, the crucial harmonic activity is packed towards the front of the phrase, and the $V_6^5$ chord strikes me as the important dominant arrival, so that mm. 21/3 – 24 simply serve to prolong the dominant and bring it into root position. In the other hearing, the most significant dominant harmony is the root position chord in m. 23, and the $V_6^5$ chord is just one in a series of steps that builds up to that point. There is musical support for both interpretations. On the one hand, after the conventional, diatonic P-D-T succession from I to ii$^4_2$ to $V_6^5$, the voice exchange can sound like a dramatic, but ultimately frivolous extension of the phrase’s basic structure. It is as if the melodic motive that first occurred over the $V_6^5$ chord gets carried away for a moment, climbing up in pitch and away from the key area before being wrangled back in by a restatement of the dominant seventh chord. The first inversion voicing of the first dominant seventh simply gives the bassline somewhere to go during the melody’s excursion. On the other hand, the $V_6^5$ chord is a stop along the way of an overall descending stepwise bassline from E-flat to B-flat, and the $V_7$ chord receives quite a bit of emphasis by virtue of the fortissimo dynamics, the fuller texture, and the peak in the melody’s contour.

The ballet’s choreography guides me towards one or the other hearing depending on my empathetic alignment. If I choose to align myself with the performer, I am more inclined, as I have just described, to place the structural dominant in measure 23. But what if I imagine, not that Cojocaru is dancing, but that Aurora is fairly and thoughtfully assessing four suitors? What kind of
empathetic sensations would I experience, and what effect would those sensations have on my interpretation of the music-movement relationship? For one thing, if I align myself with the character, I am more inclined to place the structural dominant in m. 21.

Considering Aurora’s perspective, or rather, considering my own perspective as Aurora, the repetitiveness of the opening movement phrase projects somewhat less of a sense of increasing intensity. My sense of her repeated movements, which unfold over a relatively long period of time, takes on a slightly more rote and serene quality. Alongside her, I feel myself moving calmly from one partner to the next, giving each equal attention. In this reading, her calm confident upper body, including her facial expression, open chest, and fluid arm gestures influence my embodied engagement much more than they did previously. The even-tempered and repetitive aspects of the music now come through strongly. The arpeggio figure in the harp and woodwinds helps to project a calmness and continuity that underlies the more lyrical melody in the strings. The melody itself takes on a slightly different quality as well; I now hear the repeated motive in the melody, not so much as a way of articulating the voice-exchange, but as a point of focus in its own right. It’s as though a question is posed – “will this guy do?” – and then repeated with a slight variation – “how about this fella?”

If I strip away the feeling of exertion, the slow développé à la seconde takes on a different feeling as well. If I imagine achieving the position effortlessly, I can empathize with the unrestrained, yet poised sensation of gracefully thrusting her
leg high into the air. One such thrust is simultaneous with the first-inversion
dominant chord, and with nothing much in the choreography now to point me
towards the root position dominant as the dominant, I find myself sensing more
musical activity in the diatonic T-P-D progression, and less in the voice exchange,
which now seems to extend a point of arrival.

I find I can also make more sense now of the sudden drop in choreographic
activity after the root-position dominant in m. 23, which previously seemed
premature given that the tonic cadence had not yet been accomplished. Because of
my attentiveness in this hearing to the arpeggio figure in the harp and woodwinds,
when the texture changes and these arpeggios drop away at m.23/3, I get the sense
of something ending, and the pirouette closure of the movement phrase no longer
strikes me as indifferent to an aspect of the musical phrase.

Because of the now untethered quality of the repeated développé à la seconde, the dissonances that arise as a result of the voice exchange change slightly
in tenor from tension to mild excitement. Still though, I have the sense, by
imagining myself as Aurora, that I’m being subjected to something. Aurora’s even-
temperedness seems to be a matter, to some degree, of patriarchally enforced
social niceties. Aurora’s participation in the Adagio, which prepares an occasion
for Aurora to be passed from her father to one of four suitors, feels mandatory.
Especially when considered against the effusive, girlish quality of the solo that
immediately precedes the Adagio, this quintet appears restrained. The movement
is not entirely effortless, as she has to politely placate the suitors and the
spectators at the party. The late-Romantic effusiveness of the melody and orchestration strike me as somewhat affected when I orient my body this way.

Let us toggle back now to engagement with the performer’s body. The next phrase more acutely highlights the role of kinesthetic empathy in perceiving the movement-music relationship (See Video Example 3). For most of the phrase, the dancer balances in attitude derrière en pointe. Taking the dancer’s body as a moving shape, rather than a dancer, this phrase is visually rather static. The kinesthetic empathy that I experience, however, renders the choreography energized and dynamic. Arguably, this is among the most technically impressive moments in the variation, as the dancer must hold the position for a long stretch of time and maintain her balance independent of the four partners who switch out, one by one. I can imagine the sensation of my lower back heavily engaged, helping the left inner thigh and buttocks to support the leg position. I feel my arms stretch, as though they extend outwards from a strong center point between my shoulder blades. I recall also the feeling of clenched abdominals, and the physically satisfying feeling of balancing my weight over my standing leg. The overall effect is an intensity that is not quite matched by the second musical phrase.

Musically, this phrase is a varied repetition of the first phrase. When she lets go of the first partner’s hand she is suddenly in a very precarious position, which strongly influences my kinesthetic response – I am on the edge of my seat in those unsupported moments. Yet the music has not done anything so far that we did not hear before. The movement helps to create the expectation that the music
might go somewhere else. And, indeed, it does. This phrase differentiates itself from the previous phrase with a change in the harmony and melodic pitch in m. 24/3. The moment that started the voice exchange in the first phrase, now initiates a departure from exact repetition; instead of the chord-tone, Bb, we get an accented dissonance on its way to a non-diatonic B-natural, which participates in an applied dominant to C minor. The balance in the choreography dramatizes the anticipation of the move towards chromaticism, and the tonicization of C minor seems appropriate to the anxiousness with which I watch this second phrase. Or perhaps the physical feat of holding the balance dramatizes the change in mode.

The second phrase also features a brief voice exchange between first inversion and root position dominant harmonies. This time however, the upper voice that participates in the voice exchange is not prominent in the melody, but is somewhat buried in an inner voice. Still, the melody climbs in contrary motion to the chromatically descending bassline. The voice exchange brings about a half cadence in C minor that ends the phrase. As the duration of the balance becomes more pressing in terms of kinesthetic empathy, the sense of harmonic drive is intensified by the voice exchange. Before reaching the harmonic goal of G major, however, the melody reaches a climax and falls back down. The choreography draws attention to the melodic contour rather than the harmonic arrival, as the dancer extends her arms and legs into an energetic arabesque at the moment of the melodic climax, after which she moves quickly into a pirouette.
The choreographic form acknowledges the repetitive relationship between the first and second musical phrases only at the end of the second movement phrase, when the dancer closes the phrase with another partnered *pirouette*. As the musical phrase achieves the half cadence, the dancer comes off of *pointe*, and I empathetically feel relieved and triumphant. What was climactic in the first phrase (the partnered *pirouette*) is a relief in the second phrase by comparison with the long held balance, and the end of the musical phrase feels a bit like a foregone conclusion.

Let us try on Aurora’s perspective again. If ballet is the fictional character’s natural movement language, then balancing for a long time becomes more like a polite, measured weighing of options. She remains in the same place for a long time, allowing the suitors to come to her this time, as she calmly and patiently assesses each one. Still the sense of building conveyed by the music is robust enough to withstand my empathetic change. It is at the moment that she places her hand in the second suitor’s that the music departs from a repetition of the first phrase. Whereas, in the Cojocaru-based reading, it seemed that the tensed movement created a sense of expectation for this musical change, in the Aurora-based interpretation, the dissonant chord that first signals a move to C minor seems to hint at some inner agitation of the outwardly placid character. I cannot quite read this agitation as excitement. Even when I imagine that the dancer’s movements are an easy and natural part of being a be-tutu-ed princess, I cannot
help but experience this situation as a needless and tiresome exercise in patriarchy, and Aurora’s prolonged motionlessness strikes me as tepid.

Over the course of the variation several choreographic motives are established. The variation draws on a relatively small repertory of ballet moves that are repeated and varied. The clearest impression of large-scale repetition, though, comes towards the end of the variation when altered versions of these first two phrases return. Near the end of the variation the dancer traverses the stage along a diagonal in a series of partnered **développé à la seconde** and **pirouettes** to music derived from the opening theme (See Video Example 4). In terms of musical form, an observer of the complete piece will so far have heard, roughly speaking, the opening theme (the first two phrases), a departure from the first theme, a return to the theme, and another departure. This section presents the third large-scale return of the opening theme in the music. This is the first time in the choreographic form however, that we have seen anything that so closely resembles the opening phrase; contrasting choreographic themes have characterized all of the intervening material. For the first time since the opening two phrases of the variation, the large scale choreographic and musical forms roughly coincide.

The music here provides a truncated version of the theme, and the choreographic phrase is also abbreviated to fit this fragmented and repeated version of the musical phrase. The **développé à la seconde** serves as a choreographic motive that signals an identifiable return to the opening theme, especially in combination with the partnered **pirouette**. At the same time, this motive
undergoes development over the course of the piece. The *developpés* move much faster, and my kinesthetic impression of them (both in Cojocaru and Aurora terms) is more of an energetic flinging into the air, than a controlled tension. This new flinging quality in the *développé* contributes a sense of accelerated activity and gaining momentum in the big picture of the complete piece.

In the final moments before the coda, very high-energy music, which further fragments the opening musical theme and builds harmonic tension towards the piece’s final cadence, accompanies choreography that draws on and combines various choreographic themes from earlier in the variation.

Presently, the climactic final cadence arrives, and during the coda that follows the cadence, the choreography presents a varied return to the second choreographic phrase – the long balance in *attitude derrière* (See Video Example 5). Cementing its function as a closing gesture, the piece ends with a final partnered *pirouette*. This time the long balance is even more difficult, as the dancer must hold the position while performing four *promenades en tournant* and balancing without a partner four times.

Thanks to my kinesthetic empathy with the performing body, this sequence is the climax of the choreography’s large-scale form. The music possesses a somewhat epic quality, as a result of the grandiose orchestration, but otherwise the music is rather static, pounding out tonic harmony under motives from the first theme. On the one hand, it seems that kinesthetic empathy does a lot to allow semi-redundant music to serve as a moment of climax. On the other hand, the
triumphant arrival of the tonic and the static quality of the music serve to highlight the remarkable nature of the difficult choreography. If Aurora does not have to try especially hard to carry out this action, then the emphatic music suggests a strong emotional reaction to the situation.

I find that, whichever way I read the dancer’s body, my attention is drawn to the two melody notes in the trumpet that borrow from the minor mode (b^6 and b^7). If I align myself with the performer’s experience, these brief instances of mixture seem to reflect my unease as I watch the long, tense sequence. When scale degree seven is raised on the way back up to Eb, they give the impression of reassurance. If I align myself with Aurora instead, the flattened scale degrees seem to belie the half-heartedness with which a sixteen-year-old might approach forced socialization.

This example points both to the importance of kinesthetic empathy as a part of experiencing music-movement interactions and to a view of kinesthetic empathy as malleable and dependent on the perspective of the observer. New music-movement perceptions arise according not only to different features of the piece, but also, significantly, to different ways of attending to the same features. While the “Yonkers” music video demonstrated the ability of movement to suggest a new interpretation of the music, the “Rose Adagio” shows the variability of the music-movement relationship itself. Though they were not foregrounded in this analysis, we might also notice how the analytical tools from the previous chapter remained at play here. Imagining features of Aurora’s personality, for instance,
depended in part on body language, and synchronization was a requisite part of
my observations about form. Out of a desire to maintain the focus of the following
chapters on new analytical tools, I will not directly address my embodied
sensations, yet I believe that some degree of kinesthetic empathy undergirds most
of my analytical observations. While each analytical tool can be isolated, we can
also begin to develop a view of them as interrelated.
Space and Effort in “Duet” from Lar Lubovitch’s Concerto Six Twenty-Two

Space

Indulge me in imagining a few scenarios involving movement and music. Niamh is feeling blue and anxious, so she puts on Chopin’s Prelude in E minor, Op. 28 No. 4 and paces slowly between opposite walls of her small room. On each beat she takes a small step, putting one foot just slightly in front of the other, and she changes direction every fifth step. Shoulders hunched, gaze downcast, she wraps her arms around her chest. Somewhere else in Niamh’s apartment building, there is a party where James is dancing, just drunk enough to be unselfconscious. The voice of iLoveMemphis blares from the speakers, instructing, “hit the Quan!,” and James obediently “get[s] down low and swing[s] [his] arms,” jutting his pelvis forward on roughly every offbeat, and clearing a wide path on the dance floor.28 On the roof of the building, a very cheesy couple listens to the Titanic theme song while staring into each other’s eyes. Parvati suddenly decides to reenact the famous “flying” scene. She runs across the roof to the waist-height wall at the edge of the roof, lifts her chin and chest, and dramatically thrusts her arms out to her sides at a high-point in the melodic contour as Céline Dion belts “Nooothing I fear.”

28 The Quan is a dance move attributed to rapper Rich Homie Quan that became extremely popular in the spring and summer of 2015 due especially to the spread of the dance move on social media and to iLoveMemphis’s hit song, “Hit the Quan.” The music video can be found on YouTube. See iLoveMemphisVEVO, “iLoveMemphis – Hit the Quan (Official Video).” YouTube. Online video clip, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrCUEjSzLaK (accessed 24 January 2017).
We might productively analyze these movement-music relationships in the terms that have been outlined in previous chapters. Certainly synchronization, body language, form, and kinesthetic empathy could play important roles in the way these scenarios are perceived. Of particular interest in the present chapter, though, is these imaginary movers’ use of space. By this I might mean two things. On the one hand, Niamh paces back and forth in the external space of her room, and because she can cross the small room in four steps, she changes direction at the start of every measure. This use of space might highlight the repeated rhythmic motive in the melody, or give the impression of a consistent whole-note harmonic rhythm, suggesting a passing function of mid-measure harmonic changes. On the other hand, while Niamh repeatedly changes direction with respect to the room (or the earth), she is constantly walking forward with respect to herself. Maybe Niamh could draw out those mid-measure harmonic changes if she took two steps forward and then, continuing to travel towards the same wall, two steps backward. Niamh is also very drawn into herself. Regardless of where she happens to be in the room, her head is always down, her steps are small, and her upper body is folded in on itself. This use of space might also play a role in music interpretation, say by mirroring the narrow range of the melody, or the close, continuous, block-chord texture of the left hand.

For any movement, spatial orientation can be defined in at least two ways: first with respect to an external reference, and second with respect to the mover’s body. In the first case, moving forward and backward could be equivalent to
moving “downstage” and “upstage,” “closer to the observer” and “farther from the observer,” or “to the front of the room” and “to the back of the room,” etc. In the second case, forward and backwards always means “in front of the mover” and “behind the mover.” Both kinds of space are relevant to the analysis of movement-music interactions, and in order to differentiate the two, I will use the terms E-Space (externally-defined space) and P-Space (personal space). Though space has already been an implicit part of the descriptions of movement in foregoing chapters, here I will isolate space as a parameter of movement and outline some vocabulary, taken from Laban Movement Analysis, for describing P-Space.

As I mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation, Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) is a system for studying human movement originally formulated by Rudolf Laban in the early twentieth century and further developed by subsequent dancers and dance theorists. Rather than providing a thorough examination of Labanian theories, I will invoke LMA concepts selectively, when they facilitate description.\textsuperscript{29} The Labanian concept of Space refers exclusively to P-Space.\textsuperscript{30} In Labanian terms, Space describes the location of gestures within a mover’s personal sphere, and directions are oriented with respect to the mover’s torso. While a mover’s use of E-Space might be most usefully described through

\textsuperscript{29} Similarly, though one of Laban’s most well-known contributions is the notational system he developed for conveying movements, known as Labanotation, I will not be addressing it here.

\textsuperscript{30} Because Labanian Space refers only to P-Space, when I refer to the concept of space in general, I will not capitalize the word, as my usage of space includes meanings that are not included in Space.
ordinary language (e.g. the man strode across the room to reach the door), LMA provides an easy vocabulary for quickly describing a mover’s use of P-Space.

Imagine the body divided by three two-dimensional planes: one horizontal (left to right), one sagittal (forward and back), and one vertical (up and down). The planes cannot extend infinitely because they are bound by the dimensions of any given body; a mover’s height and limb length define the extremities of their personal space. The Labanian system intuitively names regions of each plane. The vertical plane is divided into High, Medium, and Low Space (sometimes called Deep Space), the sagittal plane is divided into Front and Back Space, and the Horizontal plane is divided into Left and Right Space. These terms can be combined to quickly refer to different positions within a mover’s personal space. If, for instance, we imagine placing the mover in a cube whose limits are defined by his reach, then the corners of the cube would be called High Right Front, High Left Front, Low Right Front, etc. In the middle of each vertical edge of the cube would be four more regions, Medium Right Front, Medium Left Front, Medium Right Back, and Medium Left Back. Eight more regions fall in between the corners, e.g., High Front and Low Back. And Four more regions fall in the centers of each of the cube’s vertical sides, e.g. Medium Front and Medium Left. These regions are somewhat roughly defined, but the advantage of the labels lies, not so much in precision, as in ease of reference.

So turning now to James, we might use this vocabulary to describe his dance move with more specificity; His arms swing, over the course of two beats,
from his Low Back Left Space, through his Medium Front Space, to his Low Back Right Space, while his hips articulate the sagittal dimension at a faster rate – on every beat. The Labanian vocabulary helps us to observe the degree of spatial complexity inherent to the Quan, and opens up subsequent lines of inquiry about how this complexity interacts with the music. In Rich Homie Quan’s music video for his song “Flex,” for instance, the divergent use of space in the upper and lower body exhibited in the Quan has the effect of both reinforcing and offsetting accents in the vocal flow. For instance, his forward thrusting hips at 1:10 emphasize “walked in thirty thousand,” while his slightly freer arms place the emphasis on “walked in” when they reach his Low Back Space. The way that James cuts through the party-goers, traversing the room, might also have an effect on musical perceptions. Whereas Rich Homie Quan’s short shuffling steps might draw an observer’s attention to the quick, dense, and percussive snaps and claps in the beat, James’s imaginary movement could bring more focus to the long, low notes in the bass.

This example also points to the other sub-concepts what might be contained in the idea of E-Space. First, the space in which dancing takes place (e.g. a room, a roof, a theatre) could matter. While James’s and Parvati’s movements both take up a lot of their personal and external space, their divergent contexts could have very different effects. James’s expansive body movements take place in

a cramped house party, and the contrast might give a viewer the impression of confined energy; The phrase “bouncing off the walls” comes to mind. Parvati and her partner on the other hand have the whole roof to themselves. Confined only by the low wall, Parvati’s big movements might have a free, unfettered quality. Just like the bow of the ship in the movie, this spatial context and the resulting perceptions about movement quality are likely to have an effect on an observer’s musical impressions. The perception, for example, that her movement is unfettered might dramatize the peak in melodic contour.

These examples also point to the possible importance of another subcategory of E-space – that is, the spatial relationships between people. The space between movers, like the changing distance between dance partners, or the shapes that a group of movers make, like the formations of a marching band, can interact with music in ways that we might want to account for in music-movement analysis.

**Effort**

Another Labanian concept that is useful to the analysis of movement-music interactions is Effort. Effort, and its associated descriptors, provides a relatively simple framework for conveying something of the quality with which one carries out a movement. While Space relates to locations, positions, and directions of movement, Effort relates to the qualitative sense of what the movement is like; that is, the style, attitude, or comportment with which a movement is carried out.
A given action can be carried out with drastically different Effort qualities, and, conversely, a mover can maintain a given Effort quality while performing infinitely many body actions. Consider, as an example, a passage from the introduction of Laban’s *Mastery of Movement*:

Eve, our first mother, in plucking the apple from the tree of knowledge made a movement dictated by both a tangible and intangible aim. She desired to possess the apple in order to eat it, but not solely to satisfy her appetite for food. The Tempter told her that by eating the apple she would gain supreme knowledge: that knowledge was the ultimate value she desired.

Can an actress represent Eve plucking an apple from a tree in such a way that a spectator who knows nothing of the biblical story is made aware of both her aims, the tangible and the intangible? Perhaps not convincingly, but the artist playing the rôle of Eve can pluck the apple in more than one way, with movements of varying expression. She can pluck the apple greedily and rapidly or languidly and sensuously. She can, too, pluck it with a detached expression in the outstretched arm and grasping hand, in her face and in her body. Many other forms of action are possible, and each of these will be characterised by a different kind of movement (Laban 1960, 1).

While some of the differences involved in making the apple-grab appear greedy as opposed to languid may well have to do with spatial positions or pathways (e.g. Eve’s upwardly outstretched arm, or the direction from which the branch is approached, etc.), as might be described in terms of E- or P-space, minute deviations in body attitude or movement quality that account for these differences can be articulated more effectively with recourse to the concept of Effort.

Notice that Laban refers in this passage to the mover’s intentions or motivations. According to Laban, Effort, translated from the German *Antrieb*, is an outward expression of some inner state, and it describes the attitude with which one approaches a movement, in addition to the quality with which one
carries it out (Dell 1977, 11-12). Laban asserts that certain impetuses, impulses, or emotions result in ways of moving, such that a mover “expresses himself and communicates through his movements something of his inner being” (Laban 1960, 75). The concept of Effort is used to describe these ways of moving, and as such, gets at something of the mover’s internal feelings and drives. Effort, perhaps more than any other movement parameter in the LMA framework, is understood as being intimately tied to the expressivity of the body.

Laban acknowledges, however, that reading a movement as an expression of a thought, feeling or psychological state is an inherently intersubjective business. Referring to the Eve example, he states, “In defining the kind of movement as greedy, sensuous, or detached, one does not define merely what one has actually seen... The impression of greed or sensuousness is the spectator’s personal interpretation of Eve’s state of mind in a definite situation” (Laban 1960, i). For Laban, the interpretation of a movement as an expression of something reflects, as Marion Guck might put it, “a meeting between an individual [viewer] and some [movement]” (Guck 2006, 194). As we have observed in previous chapters, reading expression into body movements involves both a visual/formalist component and an interpretive component that can depend on the viewer’s personal history, the particular context of the performance, and so on.

For the present study, I will largely sidestep questions about a mover’s intention or inner feelings. Qualitative differences in the way one moves, as opposed to overt differences in choreography, constitute an important dimension
of movement-music interactions. Given that my foremost aim is to consider approaches to the analysis of these interactions, the concept of Effort is useful primarily insofar as it offers a systematic, simple, and easily communicable vocabulary by which to refer to ways of moving. For the most part I will extract the descriptive power of Effort, leaving Laban’s emotional and psychological associations behind.

Effort operates within four Effort Factors: Flow, Space, Time, and Weight, and each Factor is understood as a continuum between two Effort Qualities that are opposing extremes. The Flow Factor pertains to what one might think of as tension, and operates on a continuum between Bound and Free Effort Qualities, where Bound movements are restricted and highly controlled, and Free movements are unconfined and fluid (Dell 1977, 13-14). If you were trying to lower a very full bowl of soup onto the table you would be likely to use Bound Effort, whereas if you were shaking excess water off your hand you would be likely to do so with Free Effort.

The Space Factor pertains to the mover’s spatial focus, and operates on a continuum between Direct and Indirect Effort Qualities. Direct Effort is characterized by attentiveness to a particular spatial direction or destination. Indirect Effort is characterized by spatial attention that is divided between multiple directions and often involves roundabout or circuitous movement (Dell 1977, 28-30). If you saw your train pull up to the platform just as you arrived at the station, you would probably aim your brisk walking with Direct Effort to the
closest open door of the train. On the other hand, you might move with Indirect Effort while on an aimless walk through the park in nice weather.

The Time Factor is a continuum between Sustained and Quick Effort Qualities, which are characterized by contrasting temporal attitudes. Sustained movements have the “quality of prolonging or stretching time out,” while Quick movements have a hasty quality (Dell 1977, 25). Differences in Time Effort are not necessarily synonymous with differences in the speed of movement, however. Rather, the difference between Quick and Sustained is a qualitative sense of urgency and briskness on the one hand and languidness, delay, or deliberately protracted action on the other. If you accidentally touched a hot stove top, you would likely retract your hand with Quick Effort. You might move with Sustained Effort while trying to trace a drawing with as much precision as possible, or when getting out of bed with a hangover.

The Weight Factor is the qualitative sense of the degree to which a mover “indulge[s] in gravity” (Newlove and Dalby 2004, 119), and operates on a continuum between Light and Strong. Strong movement gives the impression of being firm, grounded, and weighty, while Light movement gives the impression of being airy, delicate, and unburdened. It is important to note, however, that Strong Effort is not necessarily characterized by lethargic, passive heaviness; rather, it is a downward-focused, powerful attitude towards carrying one’s own body weight, as opposed to the upward-focused, lightness that characterizes Light Effort. You
might use Strong Effort while flattening something with your palm, while you would use Light Effort to carefully dust something valuable.

Despite the qualitative and somewhat broadly- and flexibly-defined nature of these terms, they provide a shorthand for rough descriptions of various bodily attitudes and ways of moving. Example 4 gives a summary of all eight Effort Qualities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EFFORT FACTOR</th>
<th>EFFORT QUALITY</th>
<th>OPPOSITE EFFORT QUALITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FLOW</td>
<td>BOUND controlled, tensed</td>
<td>FREE slack, fluid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPACE</td>
<td>DIRECT moving through space with directed attention</td>
<td>INDIRECT moving through space indirectly, or circuitously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME</td>
<td>SUSTAINED drawn out, languid</td>
<td>QUICK hasty, abrupt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEIGHT</td>
<td>STRONG grounded, weighty</td>
<td>LIGHT airy, delicate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Example 4: Effort Factors and their polar Effort Qualities.

This vocabulary enables an analytical focus on the dimension of movement-music interactions that lies in a particular movement style or way of carrying the body, beyond choreography alone. Any movement always involves all of these Effort Factors, and in principle one could locate the movement somewhere on all four spectra. Often, however, a given movement will suggest a particular focus on one or two Effort Factors at a time. For example a mover might at one moment
seem particularly sensitive to their use of Weight, such that it seems intuitive to isolate the Weight Factor in an analysis of the movement. Or, in the case of movement-music analysis, a change in one particular Effort Factor might seem especially important in relation to a musical event. While changes in Effort can occur at a very minuscule level, it is usually possible to attribute an Effort Quality to a time-span that is sufficiently long (e.g. a gesture, a choreographic event, etc.) to render the concept of Effort useful in analysis.

Laban’s theory of Effort extends far beyond the Effort Factors and Qualities outlined above to include additional concepts and terms, as well as ideas about the relationship between Effort and human nature and psychology.\footnote{In Laban’s system, for instance, different Effort Qualities can be combined to form eight Basic Efforts (such as Wringing, Dabbing, and Slashing), and attention to particular Effort Factors results in bodily attitudes that he terms Drives and Modes.} In the interest of supporting movement-music analysis, however, I will forego a thorough outline of Laban’s theory in favor of providing the reader with these relatively simple and functional descriptors, which make for ease of reference in the analysis of movement quality. For the purposes of the present study, a basic understanding of Effort Factors and Effort Qualities will suffice.

Returning briefly to the Eve example, we might now formalize the differences between different apple-picking attitudes in terms of Effort. If, for example, an actor playing Eve wanted her to appear greedy, she might employ Direct and Quick Effort. Whether she used Bound or Free Effort in addition to Direct and Quick could have different expressive effects; with Bound, Direct, and
Quick, she might appear greedy and determined or purposeful, while the combination of Free, Direct, and Quick Effort Qualities might make her appear greedy and impulsive or rash. Contrasting Sustained and Indirect Effort might make her appear languid, ambivalent, detached, or sneaky. Variations in the Weight Factor could communicate something of her sense of reverence towards the apple; she could tenderly and nervously pluck it with Light and Bound Effort, or she could forcefully grab it with Strong Effort. If choreography is analogous in some ways to the notes that make up a piece of music, then we might say that Effort is like the expressive markings, dynamics, orchestration, and nuances of performance that give the piece its particular character. Effort can play a particularly important role in the expressivity of a movement and in a viewer’s interpretation of or empathetic engagement with it. The resulting effect of Effort on music-movement interactions is significant.

Still, it might be reasonably asked what advantages are to be gained by recourse to the concept of Effort and its associated terminology when other qualitative descriptors, such as “languid” or “greedy,” might be just as effective in conveying a sense of what a movement is like. Arguably, Effort terminology can be used with a higher degree of consistency and precision, while temporarily suspending interpretation, in so far as that is possible. Effort terms certainly seem to carry an interpretive valence of their own, and different viewers may disagree about the application of Effort terms to a single movement, but, not unlike music-analytical labels like roman numerals and standardized formal types, Effort
terminology can help crystallize analytical perceptions and put those perceptions into more easily shareable terms. A single adjective, like “languid,” could in principle characterize a range of different movement qualities, and Effort might provide a vocabulary by which to describe those differences in more detail. As in music analysis, however, sometimes invoking analytical terminology for its own sake obscures a more vivid account of a movement that might have been achieved with adjectives or metaphors. Rather than eschewing ordinary language in favor of technical terms, then, it may be best for the two to coexist. Perhaps the most productive aspect of Effort as a concept, is not so much its associated terminology, as the focus that it encourages on the qualitative, rather than choreographic, dimension of movements.

In a dance scene from the 1985 film White Nights, Effort and space play an important role in suggesting interpretations (Hackford 1985). In the film, Mikhail Baryshnikov plays Nikolai Rodchenko who, like Baryshnikov himself, defected from the Soviet Union to pursue a career in dance with an American ballet company. On his way to a performance in Tokyo, Nikolai’s plane crashes over Siberia, and though he tries to conceal his identity, he is spotted by the film’s antagonist, a KGB officer named Colonel Chaiko, who recognizes Nikolai from his earlier dance career with the Kirov Ballet. Colonel Chaiko (Jerzy Skolimowski), hoping to reclaim Nikolai for the Kirov, imprisons him in Siberia with Raymond Greenwood, played by Gregory Hines, and convinces Raymond to watch over
Nikolai. Raymond, who sought refuge in the Soviet Union after defecting from the American Army during the Vietnam War, lives a bleak and heavily controlled life, confined to tap dancing in a Soviet theater. Eventually the dancers are moved to Leningrad so that Nikolai might start training for performances at the Kirov. Nikolai and Raymond’s conflictual relationship develops over the course of the film into a conspiratorial one, as they plan an escape from the Soviet Union along with Raymond’s wife Darya (Isabella Rossellini), formerly his Russian interpreter. In the aforementioned dance scene, a crucial encounter between Nikolai and his ex-colleague and lover, Galina Ivanova (Helen Mirren), sets their escape plan in motion. Initially, Galina is enlisted by Colonel Chaiko to help persuade Nikolai to rejoin the Kirov, but, in large part thanks to Nikolai’s emotional dance sequence, choreographed by Twyla Tharp and Mikhail Baryshnikov and set to Russian bard Vladimir Vysotsky’s “Koni Priveredlivye” (“Capricious Horses”), she decides to help him flee instead.33

Nikolai’s dance gives the overall impression of a high degree of tension and strain. In a rather drastic contrast to the ballet example from the previous chapter, this dance emphasizes, rather than conceals, the physical exertion involved, and the piece gains a great deal of expressive power from the observer’s embodied engagement with Nikolai’s apparent labor and even pain. Several times during the sequence Nikolai puts his full weight on the tops of his toes, unprotected by pointe

shoes, and the camera zooms in to show the dramatic, pained arch of his feet as he mashes his toes heavily into the ground. The pervasive feeling of tension and physical labor is a function, not so much of the choreography, but of the Effort Qualities with which the choreography is carried out. There is hardly a moment in the entire piece that is characterized by Free, Light, or Indirect Effort, and as a result, Nikolai’s movements generally appear taut, agitated, and powerful.

Even before the dance sequence starts, during the instrumental interlude between Vysotsky’s strophes, Nikolai’s aggravated march, Quick and Direct to the front of the stage with tense arm gestures, sets the tone, and it gives the listener a stronger sense of the interlude’s preparatory function than of its closing one. Though the two-measure interlude is working its way towards a tonic cadence after the end of the vocal line on ^7, Nikolai’s Effort Qualities help the observer to predict that the point of musical arrival will also be a beginning. (The closing function of the tonic cadence does seem to be reflected in Galina’s resignation as she finally turns her tear-stained face to watch him dance, however).

The first movement of the dance maintains the strained and tense quality. Rather than falling to his knees passively, he rolls over the arches of his feet and sinks down in a highly controlled way, and his arm stretches, rather than flails, dramatically upwards. Maintaining the Bound, Strong, and Direct Effort Qualities but suddenly switching his spatial focus, Nikolai thrusts his arms and knees outward, turning to face Galina in a confrontational pose. The emphatic gesture
falls on the third beat of the first measure during a pause in the vocal line, maintaining energy and tension across the short break in the phrase.

Even movements that might not actually be especially difficult to do from a technical perspective, such as running across the stage, appear tense and exhausting as a result of the Effort Qualities with which Nikolai carries them out. At 2:32, for instance, he slides across the stage on his knees. Rather than a rock star’s reckless stage slide however, Nikolai’s slide remains Bound, Strong and Direct. As he loses momentum to friction with the floor, he springs off his shins, contracts his core muscles and, with sudden Quick Effort, pulls his elbows and clenched fists vigorously towards himself. The gesture itself might not have involved much physical exertion, if performed with different Effort Qualities, but as it is, the movement gives the impression of intense strain. The subsequent arm gestures – stretching one arm out then the other and then clasping hands – might actually appear foolish for their simplicity were they not so fiercely performed. Nikolai strains himself apparently to the breaking point by the end of the sequence when he fights gravity to the last possible moment while falling face-first onto the stage.

This constant physical tension draws my attention to the tensed and strained quality of Vysotsky’s vocal timbre. In fact, a few details about the scene help to draw an explicit link between Nikolai’s movement and Vysotsky’s voice. Often moments of emphasis in the choreography coincide with dramatic swells in the vocal line as if motivated by them. In the dialogue leading up to the dance,
Nikolai arrives at the Kirov theater to find Galina quietly playing “Koni Priveredlivye” on a cassette. He asks, “You still listen to Vysotsky?,” to which she replies, “Oh yes, of course.” He saunters casually over to the boom box, protesting with wry humor, “But he’s an outlaw. He’s unofficial. Vysotsky’s songs can’t be played in the theatre.” The two characters argue briefly. Galina continues in her attempt to persuade Nikolai to re-join the Kirov, while Nikolai insists that he could never be truly free while dancing under Soviet control. Nikolai finally strides back over to the boom box shouting, “It’s like Vysotsky! You whisper his songs! I won’t whisper what I feel! I want to *scream* like he does! I can’t lie anymore!” He presses play and cranks up the volume before walking back to the middle of the stage to perform a choreographic anti-Soviet “scream,” which moves Galina to tears and convinces her to help him escape. The start of his dance coincides, not with the downbeat of the next strophe but with the vocal entrance just before that.

In fact Vysotsky’s voice comes out, not so much as a scream, but as a pitched shout with a harsh, gritty quality, not dissimilar to Nikolai’s own impassioned shout. In her article “A System for Describing Vocal Timbre in Popular Song,” Kate Heidemann describes vocal timbres in terms of the physical configurations of the body that go into producing them (Heidemann 2016). Vysotsky’s vocal timbre sounds to me like a combination of three vocal techniques that Heidemann outlines: belt, overblow, and growl. All three techniques are characterized, according to Heidemann, by a high degree of muscle tension or bodily engagement. Belting is “produced with high airflow or pressure,” and, as a
result, “communicate[s] a sense of full body engagement due to the energy required” (Heidemann 2016, 3.27). The hoarse quality of Vysotsky’s voice is an effect produced by “tens[ing] his vocal folds and then ‘overblow[ing]’ them” causing them to vibrate in a “rough aperiodic manner,” which creates a harsh timbre (Heidemann 2016, 3.8). Growl is produced through “intense vibrations near the vocal folds,” which, like overblow, is often damaging to the voice (Heidemann 2016, 3.10).

Heidemann argues that vocal music can give listeners an embodied sense of what it might feel like to produce the sound, and that this form of engagement “contribute[s] significantly to both the immediate pleasures and conceptual meanings afforded by this music” (Heidemann 2016, 1.1). She writes,

vocal timbre telegraphs the interior state of a moving body, presenting the listener with blueprints for ways of being and feeling. In listening to vocal music, we may involuntarily mirror the actions we imagine the performer undertaking, thereby ‘catching’ the affect of a performance (Heidemann 2016, 1.1).

An important mode of engaging with Vysotsky’s song, then, might be through some embodied knowledge of the intensity, exertion, and perhaps even pain that go into producing his vocal timbre. Nikolai’s danced “scream” similarly draws, through kinesthetic empathy, on the observer’s embodied engagement with his tense, even overwrought movements. Vysotsky’s strained vocal timbre and Nikolai’s strained dance mirror each other, and this relationship amplifies the emotional effect of both. Nikolai’s pent up frustration comes through more viscerally than could have been conveyed by dance or song alone.
Accepting Heidemann’s proposal that the experience of listening to a voice already provides us with information about the physical activity that produced it, as well as some suggestions for how it might be interpreted, we might conclude that the impression of Vysotsky’s voice as tense and strained, as well as the emotions that implies, might be readily available without Nikolai’s dance to point us towards that hearing. To a degree, that seems likely, but, in any case, the dance certainly amplifies such a perception. Other ways of hearing the song are possible, and most of these possibilities go more-or-less undeveloped by the dance. For instance, in conjunction with the simplicity of the instrumental texture, it is possible to hear the pushed-too-hard vocal timbre as unhampered, invigorated, or triumphant, rather than frustrated, laborious, or pinched. In fact, Nikolai, by comparing Vysotsky’s honest “scream” to Galina’s deluded “whisper,” seems to suggest just such a reading of the song. And yet Nikolai’s dancing hardly seems to reflect such audacious freedom of expression. His rather extreme use of Effort qualities points, by engaging the observer’s body, to those aspects of the music which are physically exhausting, and helps to shape the observer’s interpretation of them as tormented and longing for freedom.

Though the dance and the song highlight each other’s physically demanding aspects, they do not preclude the impression that both are unrehearsed. Especially thanks to their co-occurrence, both the song and the dance maintain a careful balance between a sense of strain and effort on the one hand and unrefined, unaffected spontaneity on the other. In the narrative context
of the film, the dance sequence is presented to the viewer as though it were an unfiltered, improvised expression of some uncontainable feeling, and Nikolai’s unconcealed physical exertion, only amplifies the impression of authenticity. At times, the simplicity of the choreography seems to express a frustration that is too raw to be articulate or elegant. For all of the dance’s aggression, it still gives the impression of intense vulnerability. At 1:33, for instance, Nikolai lies with his upper back on the floor, fists clenched, while he kicks his legs up into the air. The pace of the kicks starts out slow, with the first two taking up half a measure each, and then speeds up, as the next three fall on three consecutive beats. The overall effect resembles a child-like tantrum, like kicking at bed sheets. And yet his core muscles are tightly clenched keeping his pelvis off the ground and the movement lacks the reckless Free, Indirect Effort of a flailing, wild tantrum.

Rather than flailing, the tantrum is tense and highly controlled and all the more expressive for it. The “stripped-down” quality of Vysotsky’s style, with its “low-tech and accessible form (grounded in ‘bad singing’ and mediocre guitar playing)” projects an image of amateurness and relatability – an image which played a large role in Vysotsky’s vast popularity and iconoclastic image – at the same time as extreme tension is readily apparent in Vysotsky’s voice (Platonov 2012, 84). The mutually reinforcing relationship between vocal strain and

34 The unconcealed effort in combination with autobiographical similarities between Baryshnikov and Nikolai, might also significantly close the gap between performer and character for some viewers, magnifying the perception of authenticity.
movement strain also helps the impression of spontaneity, as if the laboriousness of Nikolai’s dance is an unedited response to the force of the song.

For Nikolai, Vysotsky’s song seems to represent a freedom of expression for which he, stuck behind the Iron Curtain, now yearns. Vysotsky’s music, like American choreography, is prohibited under the Soviet regime, a fact to which Nikolai alludes in his argument with Galina, and Vysotsky’s apparently raw, unsophisticated vocal and instrumental style (by contrast with the typically well-kept and showy Soviet-approved singers) helps to give the impression of brazen dissidence. Still, Galina, who continues to work for the Soviet-endorsed Kirov theater, also enjoys Vysotsky’s music. Though Galina is not portrayed as fully sympathetic to the regime, and ultimately her secret collaboration is crucial to Nikolai’s escape, her career at the Kirov depends on a certain level of compliance with Soviet politics, and most of her initial interaction with Nikolai is characterized by attempts, direct or subtly manipulative, to persuade him to dance in government-sanctioned performances. Vysotsky’s work is perhaps uniquely suited, in fact, to appeal to the taste of both characters. Though Vysotsky is associated in popular discourse with oppositional politics and an anti-Soviet Russian identity, his work actually maintained a delicate balance in a grey area between government approval and prohibition (Platonov 2012, 38-53).

The role of Vysotsky’s song in the scene, however, is to represent the squarely anti-Soviet, and Galina’s engagement with his song is framed as timid and disingenuous. Her meek, feminine-coded tears become an inadequate and
ineffective emotional display in the face of Nikolai’s barefaced, masculine-coded dance. Not unlike Vysotsky, Nikolai, who longs to escape government control, expresses both his desire for artistic freedom and his pent-up frustration in a dance that balances wildness and tightness, not by meeting in the middle, but by showing both extremes.

The two extremes are also conveyed through Nikolai’s use of space. Spreading outwards as far as possible to completely fill his personal space is a constant theme in his choreography. For instance, in the opening gesture that I mentioned above, while his whole body moves down into his Low Front Space, the expansive reaching of his upper body in the opposite direction creates a high degree of tension that sets the tone for the piece, and in the next abrupt move, he fills out the horizontal dimension of personal space. Nikolai’s expansive use of space is made especially vivid by contrasting moments in which he balls up, retreats, or appears constricted. Just after thrusting his arms out to the side at the start of the dance, he pulls painfully into himself before jutting his limbs outward again. At 1:28, he falls from an arched position that spans all four corners of his personal space into the fetal position on the floor. At times, a single movement will exhibit contradictory uses of personal space, such as the turning jump at 2:18 when Nikolai’s widely extended right leg counteracts the hunched contraction of his upper body and left leg.

Nikolai also tends to traverse as much of his external space as possible, sprinting dramatically across the diagonal, flying through the air, and sliding
across the stage to land within inches of Galina’s face. This tendency, too, is highlighted by contrasting moments when Nikolai’s position remains fixed or when he drags himself laboriously across a short distance, such as at 1:21 and 1:11. Galina’s stillness also serves as a counterpoint to Nikolai’s boundless movements. These uses of space, which favor extremes over moderation, also engage the observer on a kinesthetic level, and draw attention, in turn, to Vysotsky’s vast vocal register, loud dynamic level, and overblown vocal timbre.

The space in which the dance is performed is also worth noting. While the grandiosity of the Kirov theatre gives Nikolai ample space in which to perform his rant, it also serves to remind the viewer of the Soviet institution that aims to constrain him. The afterhours emptiness of the theater, in conjunction with other signifiers like the boombox and Nikolai’s street clothes, transforms the official, public space into a private, informal “backstage.” This feeling is strongly paralleled in the vibe of Vysotsky’s song. Key to the success of Soviet era guitar poetry like Vysotsky’s was the impression of “intimate and unmediated interaction” that relied on the curation of just such intimate performance spaces (Platonov 2012, 72).

Invoking Erving Goffman’s theories of region behavior (Goffman 1959), Rachel Platonov argues that performances of guitar poetry took place on the metaphorical “backstage of Soviet culture,” in spaces that were unassuming, utilitarian, and familiar (Platonov 2012, 73). Because of its popularity, guitar poetry moved from the private settings in which it originated to the stage, yet bards and their audiences nonetheless managed to preserve the confidential, domestic intonations and the amicable, unpretentious
atmosphere of kitchen and campfire to a significant extent: no matter what the setting, as Vysotsky observed, “there is no flashiness, elevation, staginess, estrangement from the auditorium – [there are] no footlights” in guitar poetry (Platonov 2012, 73).

The boombox from which Vysotsky’s song emanates in the scene replicates this intimacy and informality, as does the semi-private setting of the dance. In the simple act of directing his performance at Galina, and turning to face the unlit back curtain, Nikolai similarly creates a small, anti-Soviet backstage on a large and official Soviet stage. In so doing, he augments the dance’s sense of authenticity and extemporaneity, while highlighting the feeling of confinement against which the dance rages.

The song and the dance are in a symbiotic, mutually reinforcing relationship overall. The song serves to highlight the dance’s meaning within the film’s narrative, and the dance suggests particular ways of hearing the song in terms of that meaning. Both rely on a strong kinesthetic response that is achieved through Nikolai’s use of Effort and space on the one hand, and Vysotsky’s vocal timbre and unpolished musical style on the other.

In this example, as in many earlier examples, the experience of watching dance affected my hearing of the music. Nikolai’s movement guided an interpretation of Vysotsky’s timbre as having a particular kind of affect and even suggested inferences about musical genre and musical meaning.

In the next example, “Duet” from Lar Lubovitch’s 1987 piece Concerto Six Twenty-Two, dance sensitizes me to multiple hearings that are available in the
music. To a degree, the *White Nights* scene and Lar Lubovitch’s piece, which is set to the Adagio movement of Mozart’s Clarinet Concerto K. 622, share dance aesthetics. Both are, broadly speaking, modern dance with elements of ballet, and the works are separated by only two years. But, while the *White Nights* scene achieves its fervor through its apparently unrehearsed quality, the duet’s intensity is a function of carefulness, formality, and a sense of meticulous control. Among other things, the two examples showcase two very different effects of Bound Effort. While keeping one eye on Effort and space, the following analysis will focus, less on narrative interpretation, and more on dance’s ability to encourage a sensitive engagement with even very harmonically and formally simple music. Additionally, because the opening phrase of the Adagio returns towards the end of the movement, this example provides an opportunity to examine how different choreography can suggest subtly divergent hearings of very similar music.

“Duet” from Lar Lubovitch’s *Concerto Six Twenty-Two*

The first musical phrase in Lubovitch’s “Duet” is a relatively simple modulating sentence. The dance begins with m. 9 of the Adagio so that the opening solo is omitted and the first presentation of the opening theme occurs as a tutti section. If the duality of soloist and orchestra, or of the individual and the collective, is a defining feature of the concerto genre, then this omission lets the collective speak

first. The sense of togetherness that the orchestra might be said to convey is reflected in the choreography of the first phrase (0:00-0:40), where the two dancers perform near mirror images of each other's movements. This choreographic unity, though, develops gradually over the course of the phrase.

The dancers begin with their arms over each other's shoulders, walking parallel to each other (as in right, left, right, left, etc.), as opposed to mirroring each other (as in inside legs, outside legs, etc.). As the phrase continues they begin to make symmetrical (mirrored) gestures with their arms. By initially walking in parallel, the two dancers convey a somewhat greater sense of individuality than independence from each other, even while moving at the same time and in the same way. Before their arms begin to move, we might simply read their movements as relatively natural walking, without a special focus on coordination. As their arm gestures form symmetrical shapes, the sense of unity between the two becomes stronger; the dancers become more like parts of a whole. Eventually, as the musical phrase approaches the cadence, the two men stop walking, terminating the action that originally lent them some independence, and they form a symmetrical shape which is closed off and inward-focused. The distinct identity of the clarinet as soloist is blurred both by omitting the opening solo section, and through this modulation in the choreography, wherein the relationship between the dancers transitions gradually and subtly from one of individuality to one of unity.
During roughly the first three-fourths of the opening phrase, the dancers walk slowly and directedly downstage in a straight line. Many aspects of the music here are static or undriven; the melody is repetitive and returns to the same accented pitches, resting in between swells, and the harmony is largely tonic-prolonging, oscillating between I and V until the last beat of the sixth measure. Walking presents a continuous action that reflects, to some degree, the unchanging nature of these musical features. The perpetual walking also draws attention to the steady stream of eighth notes in the second violins and violas. I am somewhat more inclined, though, to feel through-motion and a sense of progression in their walking, which highlights the building, or intensifying aspects of the melody and the harmonic drive towards the eventual tonicized half cadence at the end of the phrase. The dancers’ walking moves past the moments of repose in the melody on the third beats of measures 10 and 12, maintaining the energy-level, and the sense of the swell in contour in mm. 11-12 as an intensification of the swell in mm. 9-10 is helped by the dancers’ forward motion. The combined sense of forward motion and continuity also highlights the increase in musical activity provided by the new metrical emphasis on V in mm. 13-14, while maintaining the pivotal quality within the tonicization of V.

The simultaneous qualities of stasis and development are created, not so much by the mere act of walking, but crucially by the particular movement qualities of the dancers’ walking, in other words, by their use of Effort. Indeed, the dancers might have walked with slackness, inconsistent speed, lack of focus or any
number of other qualities that would not have been as effective at maintaining the sense of progression that overrides, to some degree, the musical aspects conveying stasis or breaking up the larger arc of the phrase into smaller formal units. This section can be characterized in large part by Bound and Direct Effort Qualities. Their walking is not loose and casual, but highly controlled, and its spatial focus is singularly forward. Similarly their arm gestures are restricted and are very attentive to achieving spatial clarity. Take, for instance the first gesture of the inside arms from 0:13 – 0:21 in the video. The dancers articulate their High Space with a particular economy of movement that is both Bound and Direct. Imagine the effect of opposite Effort Qualities, which would lack this movement’s tension and spatial focus, and would therefore be less convincing in maintaining the energy level that perpetuates the expectation of an eventual arrival at some not-yet-reached destination, both musical and choreographic. In this sense, Lubovitch’s choreography responds to the economy of means by which the musical phrase, while initially taking time to explore a melodic idea and establish tonic harmony, is ultimately cadence-driven.

The dual sense of progression and stasis projected by the opening bars is reinforced by the downward focus of the dancers’ gaze and heads. This focus is rather insistent, persisting in spite of forward walking, which typically demands that one look where one is going, and provides a counterpoint to the arms that articulate the movers’ High Space. The insistence of the downward focus further conveys a sense of plodding onward or un-distractibility from a goal. At the same
time, it reflects the unchanging, aimless aspects of the prolongational harmony and undulating melody.

The dancers respond to the approaching musical cadence, signaling the nearing goal through increased activity and change. One of the ways in which this development is realized is simply through increasing the number of moving body parts over the course of the phrase, which activates different regions in their P-space. Initially, the dancers move only their legs, until m. 12 (0:13) when the inside arms arc upwards. At m. 13 (0:21) the outside arms begin to move, followed shortly by the heads at m.14 (0:28). Notice that these movements all start from a state of relative rest. The inside arms initially rest on each other’s shoulders, the outside arms hang at their sides, and the heads start in alignment with the neck. These changes also mark a progressive increase in the spatial dimensions articulated. By walking forward, the dancers explore their Sagittal Dimension, then their inside arms articulate their Vertical Dimension, and finally their outside arms explore their Horizontal Dimension, consequently activating the laterality of the heads, which tilt outwards at 0:28, so that they gradually spread through the space around them.

On the last beat of m. 14, the music gives a ii\(^6\)/V, moving, by virtue of the added seventh, out of harmony that could be easily interpreted as prolonging the tonic, and instigating the tonicization of the dominant. At precisely this moment the dancers stop walking (0:29), giving the sense that the expected destination is close at hand. Simultaneously, the outside arms move into the dancers’ Low
Space, arriving in the space that has been their visual focus from the start of the phrase. In m. 15 (0:30), when raised \(^4\) decidedly sends the music into a different local key area, the inside arms also descend into this space, as if all the parts of the body are finally heading to the place where some important nucleus has resided all along.

At the cadential arrival (m.16 or 0:36), the dancers achieve a shape, which is momentarily held, accessing the dimension of the musical cadence that is in a state of relative relaxation and finality. This shape is completely symmetrical across the axis that runs vertically between the two dancers. It is also very closed and self-reliant, with the dancers pointing in to one another. There is a circularity and infinity to this pose; you could imagine tracing the shape formed by their arms and chests indefinitely. At the same time, there is a high degree of tension in this shape. The dancers are awkwardly crossed, and they maintain flexion in their arms, core, and neck, bending at the elbows, waist, and upper spine, and rotating their palms to face each other. Thus the shape also reflects the dimension of the musical cadence that is in a state of tension and incompleteness as a function of being on the dominant. The end of this movement phrase presents both a return and a departure: a return in so far as they reach a state of relative stability and repose, as in the beginning, and a departure in that they move from independence to unity and that they achieve this new movement goal. Similarly the musical phrase returns to its starting pitch class, and returns to a place of relative inactivity, but also realizes a tonicized half cadence, which requires resolution.
Over the course of this phrase, P-space is used to articulate aspects of musical form in a number of ways. The first four measures of the phrase emphasize tonic harmony and $^5$. Both of the swells in the melodic contour in these measures start on $^5$ and reach $^5$ at their peaks. In this section the dancers move their inside arms, arcing them up above their heads (0:13 – 0:21). In the next two measures, the music metrically emphasizes dominant harmony and stresses $^2$. Reflecting this change, the movers switch their active arms, now using only their outside arms (0:21-0:29). In mm. 15-16, when the important pitch of the melody again becomes $^5$, the dancers once again move only their inside arms. In this cadence, however, A is re-harmonized with Cad$^{6}_{4}/V$ followed by V, giving it a different quality from its first appearance as a member of the tonic triad. Similarly the movement of the inside arms now participate in the construction of the final shape and the focus on Low Space, differentiating them from the initial use of the inside arms. Arguably, the simple act of switching arms is very useful in bringing out this aspect of the musical phrase structure.

Notice also that in m. 13 the change in direction of the outside arms cuts the measure in two at the point where the eighth notes start. This emphasizes the eighth notes which allows me to hear the phrasing in mm. 13-14 as placing a slight accent on the last beat-and-a-half of each measure as opposed to on the downbeat. One could imagine delaying the change in direction in a way that encouraged the opposite interpretation of the phrasing. Compare the treatment of the three eighth notes in m. 13 to that in m. 11. In m. 11 the inside arms take 5 beats, corresponding
with the rhythm of the melody, to complete their arc, dancing right past the eighth notes so that they seem much less accented than the downbeat on which the arms begin their movement. The movement phrasing of m. 13 sets up an expectation for the last beats of subsequent measures to be places of action, which indeed they turn out to be. The last beat of m. 14 introduces the predominant of the new key area, and this change is reinforced in E-space by the dancers, who stop walking. The last beat of m. 15 gives a dominant seventh harmony in the new key area and the first instance of raised ^4, pulling strongly towards the resolution.

On a slightly larger scale, the dancers’ use of their arms also help to articulate the formal division at m. 13 between the first and second halves of the phrase. The upward motion of the inside arms that occurs within the first half of the phrase possesses a great deal of energy. The arms are crossed, creating counter-tension, and the relative exertion involved in lifting the arms upward, in combination with the increase in height of the space filled by the dancers, brings out the sense of these first four measures as ascending to a kind of climax. The climax is reached by the start of m. 13, when the music reaches a metrically strong V and the melody focuses on E5, which is higher in pitch space than the previous focal point of A4. In the second half of the phrase, both the music and the movement descend (metaphorically and literally) from this climactic point. By virtue of a change in Effort, the casual breathing gesture of the outer arms carries a lot less tension and energy than the preceding movement of the inner arms, signifying the relaxation and descent. The inner arms continue this relaxation by
falling down to a position which involves slightly less exertion and which collapses
the space of the dancing bodies. The halfway point of the musical phrase is marked
in the movement by a subtle change from climbing and tensing to sinking and
relaxing.

Just after the cadence in m. 16, the violins play descending stepwise eighth
notes in parallel thirds by way of transitioning into the start of the next phrase.
Very similar transitions occur at the end of four other phrases in the piece, and
each time their treatment in the dance is different. The movers assign rather
diverse phrasings and functions to each of these different transitional moments. In
m. 16, the dancers take the transition as a moment in which to unwind, as if from a
knot that they’ve created. Though we have just arrived at a cadence, a moment of
relative stability and relaxation, the transition highlights how much tension was
held in the static shape of the phrase ending. The dancers release energy, letting
their arms fall to their sides and untwisting from each other. Their Flow becomes a
bit more Free, and Space is a much less significant aspect of their Effort in this
movement, which concentrates more on setting up the next big action than on a
spatially defined destination. This movement transition is active, accomplishing
almost as much change as occurred in the entire first phrase in only a few seconds.

The musical transition is paired clearly with a movement transition. The
main function of the action is to arrive back-to-back so as to prepare for the lift
that begins the next phrase (which returns in large part to the Effort qualities of
the opening.) Compare this, however, to the musical transition in m. 24 (1:10). In

m. 24, one of the dancers lies down in a position of repose on the leg of the other dancer, who kneels stably. They achieve this position by the end of the transition at 1:16, but it takes them four musical beats to get there, meaning that they dance past the cadence. Rather than responding to the cadential arrival, the dancers extend our sense of the musical phrase to include the transition, changing its function from transition to a kind of slipping extension of the cadence.

Having the concept of Effort in mind helps us to notice that it’s not simply the duration of the action that has this effect, but the Bound and Light Qualities with which the dancer on the left leans back. The cadence coincides with the moment at which this dancer sits on the floor, an action which is characterized by relatively Free and Strong Effort. As he leans back however, the dancer seems suddenly to resist the pull of gravity, stretching the gesture out a bit unnaturally as he unfurls onto the other dancer’s outstretched leg. The effect is to keep the foregoing phrase alive, despite the cadence. A floppier, heavier unfurling, even given the same duration, might not have achieved this effect. The kneeling dancer’s simultaneous arm gesture also contributes to the sense of an extended phrase. After the cadence, with Light and Quick Effort, his elbow moves upward, as if carried by a brief gust of air, which dies away as his elbow, then wrist fall back down with Sustained and Free Effort.

The music perhaps lends itself harmonically to this alternative phrasing. In the transition at the end of the first phrase, the music had more to accomplish in the sense that there was a need to get from tonicized V back to I by lowering $^4$ to
its diatonic state. After the second phrase, the transition has no harmonic work to do as the cadence and start of the next phrase both express tonic harmony. The contrasting functions of the movement draw out these musical differences.

The opening eight-measure phrase returns towards the end of the piece (m. 61 or 4:05), this time as a solo section, where the Clarinet carries the melody alone. The movement that accompanies the repetition of the opening musical phrase in the third large section of the piece provides both a sense of return and a new interpretation of the same music.

Though the start of the musical phrase in m. 61 is quite clear, the movement phrase flows smoothly from the previous material. After the cadence in m. 60, there is a long ornamentation, which fills the space notated as a fermata on a rest in the score, during which time the second dancer continues performing his first solo. Just before the return of the opening theme the dancer turns in second arabesque, completing about two-and-a-half rotations before falling off balance to be caught by the other dancer. This turn initiates the next movement phrase as the falling dancer rolls onto the floor, finding there an imaginary object that becomes the focus for the ensuing movement phrase. The determination of precisely where the movement phrase starts is difficult and perhaps not as important as noting that it begins somewhere in the fermata before the start of the musical phrase, weakening to some degree the fanfare typically afforded the return of the opening theme.
Still, the start of the musical phrase coincides with a return to the same Sustained, Bound, and Direct walking as the start of the piece. This distinctive walking strongly links this phrase to the one that began the piece. This musical return also signals a return to duet, as opposed to solo, choreography. This phrase and the first phrase of the piece are set apart in particular, not only because the choreography here comprises duets – a feature which also describes mm. 17-33, mm. 69-84, and mm. 90-end (0:40-1:52, 4:48-5:56, and 6:23-end) – but especially because, in large part, the dancers move together, nearly mirroring each other. The duets in these phrases stand out from the active, lift-heavy, contrapuntal duets of mm. 17-33 and m.69-84.

This phrase also brings out a sense of returning to the opening through the focus on Low Space, especially by the dancers’ looking downward and bending the neck. Here, however, there is an object of focus that contextualizes their unwavering gaze. Only when the object moves up and down do their heads and gazes shift, following it. In the middle section of the piece, the solo clarinet reflects the solo choreography, emphasizing the individuality of each dancer (the differences in whose characters are articulated by musical “moods,” roughly). With the return of the opening material, the clarinet stands out as a soloist in a way that emphasizes the singularity of the imagined object (i.e. in the dancer’s hand) and their singular focus on it.

As the musical phrase begins, the dancers employ gestures that signify in a narrative or literal way, acting out an interaction with the imaginary object.
Through movement, they continue to forge multiple and shifting relationships with the sound. Initially, the dancer who first picked up the “object” articulates details of the musical form very precisely with gestures of his hands and head, dramatizing the phrase structure. He slowly marks out the first swell in the melody in mm. 61-62 by circling his right hand over the object, apparently petting or inspecting it. Notice that the gesture only takes 5 beats to complete so that the mover articulates the arc in the melody and the return to tonic harmony as opposed to simply keeping time by marking out the first two measures. Even within this small gesture, the dancer employs his fingers to add a nuanced interpretation of the phrasing. Around the second melody note, he sequences through his fingers, twisting them slightly. This puts emphasis just before the peak in pitch, slightly offsetting its climactic nature and dulling the stress of the downbeat. In the last beat of m. 62 his hand pulls in towards his torso, lilting slightly to make a kind of inhalation out of the rest in the melody.

At the beginning of m. 63, the dancer flips the orientation of his palm so that it faces upwards, indicating that a new action is starting, which divides the first four measures into two and maintains forward motion despite the musical repetition. As he slowly lifts the object out of his left hand, he maintains dramatic focus on it and continues to perform with highly Bound Effort. In m. 64 the dancer tosses the object upwards. This time, through the precise timing of the flick in his wrist, he aligns the climax of the musical arc with the downbeat, as opposed to the arrival of the highest pitch. The imagined object falls quickly back down, landing
back in the dancer’s hand with a great deal of passive weight by the end of the melodic shape (again leaving room for the rest on the third beat of m. 64). A high degree of contrast is created between m. 63 and m. 64 through an abrupt change in Effort. The dancer performs the toss and catch with very Free Effort in his right arm, helping to show details of the physical characteristics of the object.

The weighty fall of the object imbues the descending contour of the melody with a great deal of momentum. Compare this moment, with the analogous moment in the first phrase of the piece when the dancers slowly raise their arms in a gesture whose speed remains constant and whose Effort remains Bound for the duration of the complete melodic swell. The difference in performance significantly alters the sense of the musical phrasing. The slow, controlled movement in mm.11-12 also brings out a hearing of the harmony as tonic-prolongational, where the intervening V on the downbeat of m. 12 functions largely as contrapuntal neighbor and contrasting sonority. In mm. 63-64, however, the inertial quality of the arm gesture makes the arrival of I on the second beat of m. 64 sound much more like a resolution.

The other dancer helps to catch the imaginary object, transitioning smoothly across the midpoint of the phrase, which is marked by the change in the object’s handler. Subsequently, at the downbeat of m. 65, the second dancer begins to lift the object again and then tosses it on the downbeat of the next measure. Musically, the midpoint of the phrase presents a perceptible change, but this repetition in choreography across the midpoint complicates a rigid sense of the
phrase structure. One could imagine changing the choreography here so that the second dancer imitates the first dancer entirely, starting by petting the object for two measures and then beginning to lift it in m. 67. In such a re-composition the midpoint of the phrase would constitute a kind of starting over, overlaying a periodic movement phrase structure onto the sentential musical phrase structure. By omitting the first gesture, however, the second dancer maintains the sense of forward progression in the phrase (also reflected in their walking).

When the second dancer tosses the object, he does so without quite as much change to his Effort qualities as the first dancer. The object seems to float away on its own such that the flicking action, characterized by Free, Quick, and Direct Effort, is not so necessary. The first toss presents a departure, differentiating the height of the melodic swell from its beginning, so that the toss and fall reflect the contour of the melody. The second toss, however, in not offering as much contrast from the preceding movement, allows for a sense of the downbeat of m. 66 as a return to that which was heard on the downbeat of m. 65.

Up to this point the movement in this phrase has shown a very strong connection between the dancers’ head/gaze and their hands, a feature that has been driven by the fact that they closely follow the location of the imaginary object with both body parts. After the second toss the object apparently floats away. Rather than follow its trajectory with their heads/gazes, as might be expected from the narrative-driven movement heretofore, the dancers maintain their head-hand connection, following the descent of the second dancer’s hand. Suddenly, they lose
focus on the object to which so much significance has been assigned by their watching it so keenly, and by the material presence ascribed to it through mime. This change occurs at the end of m. 66 where the harmony begins its transition to the dominant, giving a predominant in the new key area. Not unlike in the first instance of this musical phrase, the choreography responds to the strengthening expectation for a cadence.

Up against this gradually intensifying sense of progression are the fluid, metrically imprecise, and floating gestures of the second dancer. Beginning with his rather weak toss, the second dancer moves, in contrast with the first dancer, past or through the music. While the first dancer articulated rhythms and phrasing of the clarinet melody very precisely, the second dancer more closely reflects the undulating, unchanging nature of the upper strings’ accompaniment. Upon bringing his left hand back down, he waves his hand across his face with Free Indirect effort. At first, this fluid gesture seems to roughly perform the eighth-note rhythm in the melody from the end of m. 66. It does so, however, a bit too slowly, and not at a constant rate. His hand continuously accelerates and decelerates, so that his gesture is never quite synchronized with the eighth-note beat. In m. 67, he continues to wave his hand while the clarinet holds A4 for two beats, so that his gesture seems retrospectively to have been following the violin rhythm, though, even with that, it is not quite synchronized. The second dancer loses touch with the music, complicating the sense of drive projected by the harmony. Only at the very end of the phrase, when the dancers come together and
the music gives $V^7/V$ and its resolution, do the movements click back into rhythmic precision.

This movement phrase interprets the tonicized half cadence in a similar way to the opening. The cadence again presents a coming-together of the two dancers. Whereas they begin the phrase moving independently of one another, near the cadence they work together to form a nearly symmetrical shape, becoming more like a single unit. As the music approaches the cadential arrival, the dancers stop walking and turn from strongly narrative movement to more abstract choreography. Like the first instance of the musical phrase, the shape the dancers form at the cadence is crossed, closed-off, and inward pointing, as if they have arrived in a relatively stable, conclusive state. Their outstretched arms, raised chins, and forward reaching stance, however, gives away the underlying tension and unrest of the harmonic situation. This is perhaps even truer here than in the first instance of the phrase where the dancers’ gaze remained downward-focused even in their eventual shape. This shape creates a diagonal from their left feet in tendu derrière (which notably break the symmetry of the pose) up to their outside hands. The diagonal is subtly replicated by the tilt in their heads and slightly outward-leaning chests. This shape possesses symmetry and stability at the same time as the expansive use of P-space creates counter-tension and energy.

The transition after the cadence in m. 68, unlike in m. 16, does not offer a much of a sense of releasing this energy. Though their arms spring open, it is over the span of three choppy, rigid gestures that exhibit Bound and Quick Effort, and
which coincide precisely with the eighth-note rhythm of the violins. These gestures place a great deal of emphasis on this short, peripheral transition, making something of a mountain out of what would be a musical molehill. Not only do these gestures heighten the overall perceptual significance of this moment, but they also contrast with the legato articulation of the stepwise descent. This transition prepares the dancers for the next phrase while maintaining the tension of the half cadence, allowing the succeeding phrases to bring the piece to a close.

In the final cadence of the piece, the dancers form a slight variation of the shape that ended the opening phrase. Where V was once a cadential arrival and point of rest, it now serves to bring the music back to the tonic. The dancers embody the tension of the dominant harmony in repeating the energy-filled pose, and then eventually relax back into the arm-in-arm walking of the opening as the music achieves the concluding tonic.

Perhaps the thing that strikes me most about the Lubovitch example is the amount of writing it elicits on just eight measures, without invoking any especially sophisticated music-theoretical concepts. This straightforward modulating sentence and its repetition served as the topic of nearly half of this chapter – a fact that points, I believe, to the potential richness of dance-music experiences. I am inclined to put it this way: Lubovitch’s choreography revealed to me just how much there is to say about the musical phrase beyond the observations I think I would ordinarily make. Examining the choreography led me to a somewhat more detailed account of how the modulation in the phrase happens. The differences in
choreography between the two instances of the phrase helped me to hear the modulation in two slightly different ways.

Lubovitch’s duet and Baryshnikov’s “Koni” solo present two rather different types of dance – one that projects a clearly formal and choreographed quality, and the other that projects an improvised, raw quality. Still, in both cases, movement significantly affects the way I hear the music, and even shapes my sense of musical genre. Baryshnikov’s Effort Qualities suggest an interpretation of the song’s genre as acoustic, intimate, and amateur, rather than polished for the Stage. Lubovitch’s choreography offered a different way of hearing the relationship between soloist and orchestra in the concerto genre. Considered alongside previous chapters, these examples speak to the variety of musical aspects whose perception movement can affect, as well as to the diversity of movement styles that are capable of such perceptual alteration.
Body

Body is the third major component of Laban Movement. The Body category focuses on describing movement in terms of actions, and terminology belonging to the Body category helps to describe movement in terms of actions and to specify how many and which body parts are active in a given movement, as well as in what order. For instance, a movement analyst might want to make a distinction between two different ways of marching, one with high knees at ninety degrees, and one with straight legs at forty-five degrees. Though Space and Effort might factor into descriptions of either marching style, we might first make the more fundamental observation that each marching style requires a different body action: one march involves lifting the knee, while the other involves jutting the foot forward. Within the Labanian system, this sort of description is covered best by the Body category.

In his 1950 text, *The Mastery of Movement on the Stage*, Laban describes Body this way: “Bodily actions produce alterations of the positions of the body, or parts of it, in the space surrounding the body. Each of these alterations takes a certain time, and requires a certain amount of muscular energy” (Laban 1950, 25). For Laban, Body concerns the basic mechanics of movement, and his discussion often scientistic: “The weight of the body follows the law of gravitation. The *skeleton* of the body can be compared to a system of levers by which distances and directions in *space* are reached...” and so on (Laban 1950, 21). In order to arrive at
an accurate description of a body action, Laban suggests that the movement analyst ask the following questions:

1. Which part of the body moves?
2. How much time does the movement require?
3. What degree of muscular energy is spent on the movement?
4. In which direction or directions of space is the movement exerted?

(Laban 1950, 25).

As an example of a description that would answer such questions, Laban supplies the phrase, “a thrusting kick of the right leg in the forward direction” (Laban 1950, 25). Of concern for Laban, though, is the ability of such a statement to transmit choreography with a degree of precision sufficiently high that a movement could be accurately repeated or imagined without ever seeing it. This concern provides significant motivation for Laban’s notational system and his investment in systematically categorizing body parts and body actions. Body-related terminology in Laban Movement Analysis, in conjunction with Labanotation, provides a means of replacing such prosaic descriptions with more precise representations.

Because my primary goal is to facilitate movement-music analysis, however, I do not share Laban’s concern for repeatability, notation, and precision. For my purposes, prosaic descriptions such as “a thrusting kick of the right leg in the forward direction” convey quite a lot about what movements are like and refer the reader to relevant bits of choreography. As we will see shortly, Laban’s Body concept contributes a useful analytical lens, but a thorough exegesis of all of Body’s associated terminology and notation will not be as productive for movement-music analysis as simply devoting attention to body organization, body actions,
and a manageable set of descriptive terms. In my view, the Body-related concepts developed by Laban and his successors that will best facilitate analysis include Initiation, Sequencing, and Organization. Each of these concepts gives way to a collection of descriptive terms.

Initiation pertains, as might be intuited, to the way a gesture or some unit of movement begins. There are three categories of Initiation in LMA. The first category is Proximal Initiation, meaning that the movement starts from the core or torso of the mover. The second category is Medial Initiation, or any movement that starts from the medial joints – the knees or elbows. The third category is Distal Initiation, or movement that starts from the outer joints or limbs – e.g., wrists, toes, head. One way of differentiating between bent- and straight- legged marching styles is on the basis of Initiation: bent-legged marching is Medially Initiated, and straight-legged marching is Distally Initiated. These descriptions do not necessarily map on to the actual mechanics of the body. In fact, I suspect that Initiation is much too simplistic a concept to deal with the complex processes by which muscles activate gestures. But, again, because my main concern is description, I will use Initiation terminology to give a clearer sense of my experience, or of how we might meaningfully conceive of a movement’s mechanics.
Sequencing describes the order in which body parts are activated within a given unit of movement. For instance, Successive Sequencing describes movement in which an action moves through adjacent joints or body parts, such as in “the wave” dance move. Sequential Sequencing occurs when individual body parts are activated one after the other, but those body parts are not necessarily adjacent. If someone threw you your keys and you stuck your arm out, realized they were traveling in a slightly different direction than you thought, and took a step to the side to catch them, you would have moved in a Sequential way. Simultaneous Sequencing describes movement in which two or more body parts move at the same time. A march step where the right leg and the left arm move at the same time is an instance of Simultaneous sequencing.

Another set of Labanian terms that may prove useful are those that describe general patterns of Body Organization. Imagine a square sheet of paper. You can fold it in half vertically, horizontally, or along the diagonal. This image is a rough

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analogy for three of Irmgard Bartenieff’s Patterns of Total Body Connectivity. In Homolateral movement the entire right or left side of the body moves together, avoiding twisting or crossing, but keeping the body open. In Homologous body organization, movement in the upper body is completely independent of movement in the lower body. By contrast with both of these, marching is typically Contralateral; the right arm and left leg move together, so that the upper body moves in the opposite direction to the lower body. Contralateral movement usually involves twisting or crossing the body.

Descriptions based in terminology from the Body category help me to sharpen certain observations about Ciara’s dancing in the music video for her song “Ride.” Successive Sequencing features heavily in her movement, and Successive movement is often combined with Free Flow, creating fluid, snaking gestures. Her neck movement at 0:11 – 0:13, stomach roll at around 0:46, the hip swivels at around 0:52, the hand movement at 1:04, the whipping action from 1:14-1:21, and the body rolls at around 1:50 are all examples of this. In many cases, these movements are Proximally Initiated, coming from the core or pelvis. These kinds of movements signify in a rather sexual way, and the thinly veiled innuendo suggested by the phrase, “ride the beat,” comes pretty easily to life in light of these

37 Irmgard Bartenieff was a student of Laban’s whose writings and ideas have come to be included in Laban Music Analysis. She is credited as a critical interpreter of Laban’s work and with significantly developing his theories.

movements. They can also bring to life, or at least render more dynamic, the sustained notes of the bassline which emerges prominently through the dense texture.

Example 5: Ciara, “Ride” – repeated bassline.

The rhythm of the bassline often determines the timing of Ciara’s movements. For instance, at 0:52 each individual hip circle lasts a half note, and she swivels three times, using the last half note of the second measure to transition to the next part of the choreography, and these swivels imbue the bassline with a more dynamic quality, bringing out the EQ sweep that shapes each note.

By comparison, the frequent, but brief moments of Medially-Initiated, non-Successive, jerky movements in the video bring out different layers of the musical texture. At 3:28, for instance, she rapidly turns her knees in and out while maintaining a deep plié, bringing out the sharp timbre and force of the drum hits with which they coincide. The movement finishes with her knees turned out on a fourth drum attack at the downbeat of a new phrase. Precisely on this downbeat she begins another pelvic-initiated successive movement. Her left knee continues turning in and out, providing some continuity with the previous phrase, but now the fluidity and slow control of the same gesture draws attention away from the drum beat and back to the vocals and the sustained bassline.

The gluteal isolations towards the end of the video (3:36, 3:57, 4:01, and 4:26) are very striking, in part because they display quickness and fluidity that
would be easier to achieve in Successive movements while moving Sequentially. They correspond very precisely with the sixteenth-note rhythm in the high-pitched synthesizer, also mimicking something of that line's contour. Until now, the activity in this instrument was more-or-less smoothed over by Ciara's movements, but the gluteal isolations make this layer of the musical texture more vivid.

**Shape**

The Shape category concerns the shape of the body and actions that result in a change of body shape. Say, for instance, Geoff did an abdominal crunch, first lying with his back flat on the floor and then lifting his shoulder blades slightly off the ground, such that his torso bent into a curve. In the previous chapter we considered space and Effort, concepts that might help us to describe certain aspects of this movement. If this were Geoff’s first crunch of the day, he might have the energy to carefully control the movement, but if it were the last of a hundred crunches, it might be rather more quick and sloppy. We could describe that difference in terms of Effort Qualities. If we turned our attention instead to space, we might focus on the fact that Geoff’s head, neck, and shoulders lift vertically off the ground. If we wanted to describe the change in Geoff’s spine from straight to curved, however, we would invoke Laban’s Shape category. In Shape terms, we could describe Geoff’s crunch as an instance of Hollowing, that is, a convex, inward curving of the torso.
In one sense, Shape is more closely related to Space than it is to Effort in that it does not necessarily convey an especially vivid sense of the quality of a movement, but rather helps describe the position of the body. Hollowing could be executed in a number of ways that each have very different qualities of movement and that signify in rather different ways. Hollowing might just as easily occur when you gracefully bend over a railing to pick a flower as when you grab your stomach from a sudden onset of imminent-diarrhea pain.

As we have seen in previous chapters, the shape of fixed body positions can bear significantly on our musical experiences and certainly warrants description. The Labanian concept of Shape, however, largely addresses movement that changes the body’s shape in time. Much of the shape-related terminology that Laban Movement Analysis offers takes the form of gerunds that describe processes rather than positions (e.g. Hollowing). We will want to be sensitive to both processes and positions, but much of the present chapter will be spent on Shape change, in the Labanian sense.

First, a quick word on Labanian terms for fixed shapes. Laban Movement Analysis offers a few general terms to describe fixed shapes, including, most commonly, Pin, Wall, Tetrahedron, Ball, and Screw; and there may be instances in which these terms are useful as shorthand. Pin is a straight up and down position, Wall is a flat position (such as standing with arms and legs outstretched like a starfish); Tetrahedron introduces the third dimension to Wall shapes (imagine sticking one foot out in front while otherwise maintaining the starfish pose); Ball is
a position in which the body is curled up and compact; and Screw is a twisted body position (like the wind-up in discus throwing). We will also want to admit our own ways of describing fixed shapes, however unsystematic, into the toolkit. I might simply describe someone’s arm as “slightly curved,” for instance, or I could characterize a movement style as generally featuring “angular lines.” The main point is that a focus on the shapes formed by the body can support analysis.

Shape change, on the other hand, occurs during motion. Shape change may be influenced by a mover’s surroundings. For instance, if someone were walking through a forest trying to avoid thorny branches at varying heights, he might have to duck his shoulders, then arch his back, then lean sideways, and so forth. Effort might certainly be a salient aspect of this movement – we might guess that a person in that situation would move with Bound, Slow, Direct, and Light movement, tiptoeing carefully and with special attention to space – but Effort does not provide the complete picture, and it can be productive to address Shape independently of Effort. Ducking and bending actions give a rather different sense of the movement than if all of the same Effort Qualities were applied to, say, walking a tightrope.

It can be productive also to address Shape independently of Space. Though ducking or bending can be described in terms of Space, the difference between, for example, crouching and limbo-ing under a branch can be better acknowledged by Shape-based descriptions. Eden Davies provides an anecdotal example that helps to isolate Shape from Space in his book Beyond Dance:
A General Manager of a subsidiary company, Mr. A, commented that he greatly respected his Group Chief Executive, Mr. X, for his handling a group of people. ‘When Mr. X is talking to a group of people I have observed him to take a step or two backwards to preserve a distance between himself and the group and this seems to set him apart as a leader. However, when I try to do the same thing people follow me.’ Actually Mr. X was Growing as he stepped back giving himself a bigger kinesphere and thus maintaining the same contact with his audience. Mr. A did not have the capacity to Grow his kinesphere and his group tried to follow him to maintain contact (Davies 2006, 49).

Davies example thus distinguishes between two different instances of moving backwards in space on the basis that each uses Shape differently. Mr. X subtly changes the shape of his body, appearing to expand, while Mr. A does not. Subtle changes that seem to inflate the body, like sticking out your chest and assuming a wide stance, might be awkward to capture in terms of Space alone (e.g. “moving his breast bone slightly towards his High Front Space, while extending each leg in the Horizontal Dimension”), where neater, more generalized descriptions in terms of Shape Change would do instead (e.g., “Growing”).

In fact, we can do a bit better than “Growing.” Laban’s Shape category offers somewhat more specific descriptors, a brief exposition of which may prove useful.

Generally, Laban Movement Analysis differentiates three modes of Shape Change – Shaping (also known as Carving), Directional Shape, and Shape Flow – on the basis that each mode involves a different degree of interaction with an external object or person. Shaping involves a “rich interaction between self and other” that is “constantly changing and responsive” (Bradley 2009, 115). Directional Shape occurs when movers perform single gestures that “bridge from self to environment” (Bradley 2009, 115), but which do not constitute a dynamic or
prolonged engagement with an external stimulus. Thrusting out your arm to shake hands with a business acquaintance might be an instance of Directional Shape (Bradley 2009, 115). Shape Flow does not indicate a particular awareness of the mover’s environment and occurs when the “body changes its form only in relation to itself” (Bradley 2009, 113). Shape Flow can occur almost absent-mindedly and is not normally associated with a significant attempt to communicate with, or physically reach something or someone else.

Consulting multiple writings on Shape, one finds disagreement about these definitions, however. Warren Lamb, a protégé of Laban’s to whom the codification of the Shape concept is often attributed, describes all uses of Shape as having to do with “how we feel about ourselves in relation to our environment” (Lamb 2012, 85). For Lamb, Shape Flow is any instance of “Growing or Shrinking,” that is expanding to fill your personal space or receding into yourself, and Lamb emphasizes the link between Shape Flow and communicative body language: “if we are nervous and ashamed we are inclined to make ourselves smaller and humbler, if we are confident and ebullient we will make ourselves bigger” (Lamb 2012, 85). Growing and Shrinking for Lamb can also constitute intentional interaction with others, as in the example of Mr. X.

For the purposes of the present study, we might simply consider the usefulness of isolating Shape as a dimension of movement and acquaint ourselves with some of the concept’s associated descriptive terminology, without any particular commitment to categorizing those terms according to degree of
interactivity. That is, we can describe the action of thrusting one’s hand outward, whether to shake someone’s hand or during a solo dance, as an instance of Directional Shape.

Instances of Directional Shape occur when a mover stretches out a limb towards the limits of their reach. One might invoke Directional Shape change when thrusting out an arm to stop someone crossing the street, or to wave to get the attention of someone very far away, or to kick a soccer ball. There are two sub-categories of Directional Shape, Arcing and Spoking. If you imagine the extremities of a mover’s reach or personal space as represented by a large ball, then we would describe actions in which the mover uses a limb to trace the outside of the ball as Arcing, and actions in which the mover extends a limb to a point on the ball as Spoking. Thrusting an arm out to stop someone crossing the street is likely to be a Spoking action, and waving at someone far away is likely to be an Arcing action. In the action of kicking a soccer ball, the mover might first jut their leg straight out to meet the ball, Spoking, and then follow through with an upwards swing, Arcing.

Illustration 16: Arcing - emphatic wave (left), and Spoking - Taekwondo kick (right).

In the opening moments of Red Velvet’s (레드 벨벳) dance for their song “Rookie” (“루키”), irregularly timed Spoking actions draw attention to multiple layers of the instrumental track. The second group member in the line flips her arms out to either side on the fourth beat of the first measure, emphasizing the clap that occurs there. The third member and the member at the front of the line reinforce the emphasis on fourth-beat claps with their simultaneous Spoking gestures at the end of the second measure. Just before that, the front member’s punches to either side of her mid-reach draw our attention to the kick-drum hit on the downbeat of the second measure and its sixteenth note anacrusis. On the downbeat of the third measure, the front member’s right arm coincides with the rearticulation of the bass synthesizer, but then gives similar gestures on the next two eighth-notes, highlighting the tambourine, and then the snare. The third member’s right arm then reaches up into the air, again drawing out the kick drum, before jutting both arms out to the front, helping us to notice the hypermetric emphasis provided by the slight change in the beat at the fourth measure, which now gives a clap on the third beat as well as the fourth.

We might invoke Shape Flow, on the other hand, to describe general changes in body shape that involve the torso. The two most general subcategories of Shape Flow are Growing and Shrinking. These subcategories can be further

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divided according to the direction of Shape change. Growing and Shrinking along
the vertical dimension are called Lengthening and Shortening, along the
horizontal dimension, Widening and Narrowing, and along the sagittal dimension,
Bulging and Hollowing. If a mover were to take a deep breath in and then exhale,
she could lift her chest upwards and then let it sink back down, or she could
expand her lower abdomen out in front of her before collapsing it back in. These
two different types of breathing would invoke different types of Shape Flow, the
first Lengthening, the second Bulging.

Illustration 17: Lengthening - thoracic breathing (left), and Bulging - diaphragmatic breathing (right).  

Note that in both cases, though, the terms seem to denote simultaneous
motion in opposite directions. These shape changes are primarily achieved by
moving part of the body in one direction, e.g. the chest up, or the belly out.
According to the Labanian system, these Shape Flow terms theoretically describe
symmetrical expansion, but it is hard to imagine how a person could, say, grow his
belly and his back out at the same time, or inflate sideways at the waist. (Well, in a

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*Images retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xb_SiAMSwDc.*
movement, anyway. I can inflate my waist by way of doughnuts easily enough). We might say that Growing, Shrinking, Lengthening, Shortening, Widening, Narrowing, Bulging and Hollowing are terms that describe a general quality of Shape Flow without foreclosing any of the multiple possible ways that such Shape Flow could happen. We can describe how the body moves to achieve different kinds of Shape Flow with recourse to the third category of Shape change: Shaping.

Shaping is the hardest of the three modes of Shape Change to pin down, and most definitions seem to revolve around interaction. Cecily Dell puts it this way:

Suppose you are sitting on the floor and next to you is a large ball, about two feet in diameter. And suppose you have at your disposal all the movement elements discussed so far; all the effort elements plus shape flow, the growing (opening) and shrinking (closing) of your body, and directional movement, spoke-like and arc-like. If you begin to play with the ball, you will find that you can open yourself toward it, or close yourself away, that you can reach toward it, push it from place to place with many different dynamics, perhaps even pull it toward you with a spoke-like directional movement backward. But if you begin to allow your hand to spread itself over part of the ball’s volume, and especially if you mold your arm around it and allow your trunk to accommodate its shape, you are beginning to introduce the quality of shaping into your movement repertoire (Dell 1977, 54-55).

Central to Shaping is the complex combination of Shape changes that take place when adapting to a set of physical circumstances. Molding clay, giving a hug, building a sand castle, stirring sauce in a pot, holding a baby, greeting an audience, and draping fabric on a mannequin are all cited as examples of Shaping (See Dell 1977, 55-56; Bradley 2009, 114; and Lamb 2012, 87). And yet, Dell allows that Shaping can occur in movement that is abstracted from any adaptive context or
attempt to do something, especially as in dance. For Dell, Shaping occurs when, “the form results from the body clearly molding itself in relation to the shape of space, whether it creates the shape of the space, as in dance, or adapts to it, as in many work movements” (Dell 1977, 44). For us, perhaps the primary usefulness of the Shaping concept is that it offers another set of descriptors: Shape Qualities.42

Shape Qualities specify the unilateral direction of Shape change. In other words, in which direction does the movement grow or shrink? Shape Qualities include, Ascending, Descending, Advancing, Retreating, Spreading, and Enclosing, which correspond to the six directions along the three-dimensional axes: up, down, forward, backward, right, and left. Ascending, Advancing, and Spreading are said to be different ways of Growing, while Descending, Retreating, and Enclosing are different ways of Shrinking. There is a non-obvious suggestion here that certain directions of Shape change make the body bigger or smaller. When it comes to the sagittal and vertical dimensions, this suggestion may roughly correspond to intuition, at least under certain constraints. One can imagine giving the impression of Growing by shaping the body generally upwards and outwards. This might well be the kind of Growing that Mr. X was good at, for example. Still though, this relationship does not seem inevitable.

Even more difficult to grasp is the notion that movement to the right should appear more like expanding the body than movement to the left. Such are

42 Some authors define Shape Qualities as a function of Shape Flow, not Shaping, but there seems to be more agreement on the idea that they qualify as Shaping, and this categorization makes the most sense to me.
the quirks of the Labanian system, which tends to privilege completeness, symmetry, and parallelism in its taxonomy. Cecily Dell’s discussion of Directional Shape notation offers a clue here. The caption underneath the notation for right-directed Spoking reads, “sideward out,” while the caption for left-directed Spoking reads, “sideward across” (Dell 1997, 52). Though it is not explicitly stated, these captions suggest that Shape change is defined in terms of the right side of the body, and, as such, leftward Shaping would be naturally enclosing. This makes a fair amount of sense, but then I wonder how to account for left-directed Shape change that is perfectly open and expansive. Certainly we might want to distinguish between pointing to the left with the left arm and pointing to the left with the right arm, but, as we have seen, the Body category is relatively well-equipped to deal with such a distinction. In the case of Shape change that involves the trunk of the body more overtly, crossing the right side of the torso over to the left invokes a twisting action through the sagittal dimension, and it might be best to define twisting Shape change separately from Shape change in which the torso moves side to side.

Given that our main aim here is to facilitate movement description in service of movement-music analysis, I propose the slightly less obfuscating, though dryer, terms, Left-Side Growing and Shrinking and Right-Side Growing and Shrinking. This will introduce two additional terms, making for eight, rather than six total Shape Qualities, but rids us of the confusing association between leftward Shape change and expanding and rightward Shape change and contracting.
Now, though, we might wonder how to draw a distinction between Right-Side Growing and Left-Side Shrinking, and vice versa. The boundary between the two is surely blurry, and I do not feel it necessary to draw a hard line, but Right-Side Growing might generally give a stronger impression of jutting the right side to the right, while Left-Side Shrinking would feel more like curling the left side inwards. Right-Side Growing might be a relevant descriptor in the case of a rib isolation, while Left-Side Shrinking might more accurately describe bending in at the waist.

Illustration 18: Left-Side Growing – rib isolation.\[43\]

Illustration 19: Left-Side Shrinking – bending at the waist.\[44\]

\[43\] Images retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCUL1offids.
Still, the words Enclosing and Spreading strike me as no less descriptive of Shape change than, say, Advancing and Retreating. And Enclosing and Spreading seem different enough from Narrowing and Widening that we may want to keep them on as descriptors in the analytical toolkit. To my mind, they might do especially well in attempts to describe movements that Grow or Shrink in multiple directions simultaneously or movements that extend beyond the torso, like collecting the body into a tight ball and then splaying out into a starfish shape. In order to remain somewhat more consistent with Labanian terminology and to avoid confusion, however, rather than repurposing Enclosing and Spreading, I will use the terms Closing and Opening to refer to this kind of Shape Change.\(^{45}\) This use of terms aligns with Cecily Dell’s, who writes:

> The other perspective from which one can describe shape flow emphasizes the limbs. In this case, a change in the flow of shape can be described as folding, or closing toward the center, or unfolding, opening out from the center (Dell 1977, 46).


\(^{45}\) In fact Warren Lamb tends to use the terms Enclosing and Spreading in exactly this way, but still I find Opening and Closing to be clearer.

\(^{46}\) Image retrieved from http://www.womendailymagazine.com/best-ab-workout-summer/
Given my decision to distinguish between Left-Side Shrinking and Right-Side Growing, we might reasonably wonder whether it would be useful to make such distinctions in the sagittal and vertical dimensions, introducing four new Shape Qualities to the collection. Despite the appeal of a higher degree of specificity in descriptions and a more symmetrical taxonomy, the addition of these terms seems, to me, fussier than it is worth.

My main concern when it comes to the terms Enclosing and Spreading is that, as English words, they inherently supply a picture of a body shape that an analyst might not necessarily mean when he wants to convey that the torso moves left or right. Descending and Ascending, on the other hand, are rather more neutral descriptions of moving up and down.

Similarly, it is hard for me to imagine how a mover might draw the torso backwards without creating a convex shape – captured well enough by Hollowing – nor how he might push the torso forward without doing some form of Bulging. Perhaps the analyst would want to focus separately, though, on arching the back (which one might think of as shrinking or contracting from a certain perspective) and sticking out the gut, or, conversely, on rounding the back (which one might think of as growing or expanding) versus sucking in. To my knowledge, Labanian Shape terminology does not straightforwardly accommodate this desire. There is nothing to stop us supplementing the Labanian system with any number of descriptive terms that facilitate analysis, including, for instance, arching, rounding, and twisting.
That a single movement might be described as either Hollowing or Rounding, depending on perspective, points to a general observation about the nature of Shape analysis. In the example that opened this chapter, I described an abdominal crunch as an instance of Hollowing. In fact, it’s slightly more complicated. If I were being pedantic, I might observe that an abdominal crunch is not so much Hollowing of the torso as Advancing in the shoulders which, sure, results in a hollowed out torso shape. Is that the same? Like adjudicating between Hollowing and Rounding the back, telling the difference will often depend on the analyst’s perspective and commitments. Depending on which aspect of the movement the analyst happens to be focusing on, he might see the body shape as one thing or the other. He might have analytical reasons for describing shape change in the shoulders, or for describing the convexity of the torso. For our purposes, we do not need movement descriptions to serve as instructions for reproducing choreography, nor as a means of creating an accurate mental image of movement in the absence of a real image, so definitive rules about how movement ought to be conveyed are not so necessary. There might well be good reason to apply descriptive vocabulary according to analytical commitments.

Perhaps I want to analyze an exercise class with the goal of understanding how the instructor manages to keep students pushing through. I notice that on every downbeat of the class’s co-occurring music, the instructor has choreographed moves involving a hollowed torso. The moves do not have anything else in common, especially, but they are observably related by Hollowing, and the
repetition allows participants to find a groove, so to speak. Relevant to my analysis is the observation that this movement-music relationship helps participants follow along and keep up their momentum. It may be wholly irrelevant to this picture that on one of the many downbeats, participants are asked to move their shoulders forward. Not unlike in music analysis, perspective and interpretation can affect the “raw data” of description.

Shape plays an important role in the interaction between movement and music in the first phrase of “Ready” from Alvin Ailey’s Revelations, a modern dance suite set to African-American spirituals and gospel music. Over the course of the phrase, the singers deliver three repetitions of the words, “I wanna be ready.” At the start of each iteration, the dancer lifts his torso in a Homolateral, Hollowing motion Initiated at the center of his body, which rolls Successively through his upper back, right shoulder, arm, and out to his fingers. Each time the singers return to the tonic on the syllable “-dy,” the dancer abruptly moves back down to the floor in a Bulging motion. The sharpness of the singers’ articulation is accentuated by the dancer’s quick torso contraction and change in arm shape. Each repetition explores a progressively wider part of the dancer’s back-left space, before returning to his small, hunched starting position. This evolution gives a sense of the musical trajectory as progressing or forward moving, despite the repetitive phrase structure, frequent returns to the tonic, and the identical melodic

contour of the first and third iterations of “I wanna be ready.” Each time he lifts his torso and arm, he shapes the nearly musically static “rea-” with a visual crescendo.

On the word “Lord,” the dancer suddenly stretches his limbs Simultaneously as far as possible in every direction possible except the one he had been exploring with his left side, which remains crossed down to the floor, giving his body a Contralateral shape. These contrasts are striking, and they emphasize the musical change in the second half of the phrase as well as the word “Lord.” The lead singer gives a powerful belt in the pick up to the phrase, which is matched by the muscular Hollowing of the dancer’s torso. Hollowing and Bulging continues as choreographic motives through the end of the phrase and into the beginning of the next, respecting the musical repetition even while nearly every other aspect of the choreography in the second phrase is different from that in the first phrase.

As in previous chapters, I would like now to turn to a longer, more detailed analysis. In addition to showing a wider range of the concepts’ applicability, this analysis will demonstrate how Body and Shape might figure into narrative interpretations of dance-music works.

**Debussy’s Jeux**

*Jeux*, the 1913 ballet written for the Ballets Russes by Claude Debussy and choreographed by Vaslav Nijinsky, tells the story of a three-way sexual encounter between two young women (*les jeunes filles*) and one man (*le jeune homme*) set in the context of a tennis game. Unlike Debussy’s previous ballet, *Prélude à l’après-
midi d’un faune, which draws upon classical mythology, Jeux employs modern-day characters and themes. While both ballets explore “sexual ambiguity and desire,” Jeux re-contextualizes these threads in an athletic, contemporary setting so that, “the barbarism has been tamed, socialized into a vision of modern love” (Garafola 1989, 58). The particular conception of “modern love” expressed by Jeux is one of transience and flippancy, wherein, as Nijinsky’s wife Romola Nijinsky put it, “Love becomes, not the fundamental driving force of life, but merely a game, as it is in the twentieth century” (Berman 1980, 237).

Thanks to this plot and setting and to stylistic features of the music and choreography, Jeux has often been described as an exemplar of early twentieth-century modernity. Many theoretical and analytical discussions of Debussy’s late style, and especially his ballets, acknowledge the disjunct and quickly changing nature of the musical form. Rebecca Leydon characterizes Debussy’s late style as “mosaic-like,” exhibiting, “fragmented arrangements of heterogeneous motivic materials and free juxtaposition of tonal and nontonal pitch resources” (Leydon 2001, 221). Pierre Boulez is slightly more dramatic: “Debussy [especially in the late works] rejects any hierarchy outside the musical moment itself... [T]he fluid and instantaneous irrupted into music... [representing] a genuinely relative and irreversible conception of musical time” (McGinness 1998, 51). A commonly held perspective on Jeux is that it elevates the status of the immediate musical moment as opposed to large-scale formal designs. Laurence Berman argues that Debussy’s smooth transformations between disparate musical spaces “can and should be
equated for a disregard for the points of articulation which are at the core of any formal scheme. And it is therefore understandable that Debussy’s lack of concern about such schemes should strike Boulez as an eminently modern, even modernist tendency” (Berman 1980, 232).

Modernist aesthetics have also been attributed to Nijinsky’s choreography, especially in so far as it conceives of dance as a medium for emotional expression rather than narrative expression or technical display (McGinness 1998, 73), and departs drastically from the techniques of classical ballet (eschewing virtuosity, abandoning turnout from the hip in favor of parallel positions, and perhaps most importantly using the torso as a “locus of physical expression” (Garafola 1989, 57)). Unlike foregoing styles in ballet in the late nineteenth-century, Nijinsky pursued a “humanist approach” (Jeschke 1990, 104), in which movement was, “crucially grounded in personal expression” (McGinness 1998, 52).

Boulez exalts Jeux’s music as a masterwork and a precursor to high-modernism on the basis that, “a given moment is not merely regarded as the consequence of the previous one and the prelude to the coming one, but as something individual, independent and centered in itself, capable of standing on its own” (McGinness 1998, 73). Rather than reflecting the high-modernist ideal of abstraction, however, John McGinness argues that Jeux’s “moment-form” can be understood as deriving from its essentially one-to-one relationship with the choreography: “Debussy, playing his collaborative part in Jeux’s creation, fulfilled Dalcrozan ideals through an overall sectionalization of disparate rhythms and
harmonies based on the emotional juxtapositions of Nijinsky’s dance” (McGinness 1998, 73). McGinness’s claim rests largely on records of the working relationship between Debussy and Nijinsky, which indicate that Debussy had detailed knowledge of Nijinsky’s choreographic choices. McGinness only characterizes the movement-music relationship in vague terms, however, focusing especially on the moment-to-moment quality of both media’s forms. Here I think the Body and Shape concepts can contribute a higher degree of detail to an analysis of movement-music interaction in *Jeux*.

Two moments in the ballet in which contrasting movement styles are directly juxtaposed are particularly demonstrative of the “emotional juxtaposition” to which McGinness refers. First, let me provide a brief characterization of the contrasting styles.

The first movement style, I will call it Type 1, is characterized by Effort, Body, and Shape profiles. In general, the movement is angular and stiff, and exhibits vertical spinal alignment. Such movement is exemplified in a portion of the opening duet of the two *jeunes filles* (1/1:09-1/1:31). Effort of the *jeunes filles* in this section is relatively Bound and Direct. There is a high degree of control in

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48 A recording of the complete ballet can be found on YouTube. The recording is divided into three parts, and my timestamps refer to the YouTube videos. Timestamps take the form X/Y, where X specifies which of the three YouTube videos I mean, and Y is the time within that video. See mariste43, “Jeux Parte 1.” YouTube, Online video clip, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkZhDeBWoFA (accessed 8 March 2017); mariste43, “Jeux Parte 2.” YouTube, Online video clip, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=774MfmVqMmw (accessed 8 March 2017); mariste43, “Jeux Parte 3.” YouTube, Online video clip, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CiSU5ZTkVA (accessed 8 March 2017).
their movements, which are precisely articulated, with stops at each body shape, and most of the movements take direct pathways through space. The trunk of the body exhibits almost no Shaping or Shape Flow, and changes in overall body shape are the result of abrupt bending at the hips or of Arcing and Spoking. Many Type 1 movements are Distally or Medially Initiated, and Sequencing patterns are usually Simultaneous or Sequential.

The second movement style, Type 2, is characterized by curvature, wave-like movement, and misalignment of the spine. It rarely pervades long sections of the choreography, but rather offers evocative moments of contrast against Type 1. Observe in 1/0:24-1/0:49, the somewhat dramatic effect of the momentary slip into Type 2 movement provided by the jeunes filles hip swivel at 1/0:46, which contrasts the stiff movements that precede it. The movement from 1/4:05 – 1/4:16 is a slightly longer instance of Type 2 movement, provided by the jeune homme. Overall, the Effort here is much more Indirect and Free; the jeune homme’s movements create circuitous, noodling pathways, and, though the actions are relatively slow and drawn out, there is still a sense of relaxation or unwinding. Type 2 movements usually feature Successive Sequencing, snaking through adjacent body parts.

A direct comparison of two very similar movements may clarify the difference between Types 1 and 2. After the tennis ball is thrown onto the stage to end the prélude, the jeune homme opens the ballet by leaping on to the stage in a forward jeté with the back leg in attitude (at the start of the recording), and this move exemplifies Type 1. His Effort here is much more Bound than Free, providing
him with the control to land on his front leg while maintaining the lifted *attitude* in his back leg. Employing classical ballet technique, his spine remains more-or-less straight with his sternum facing upward. Even upon landing, his Shape change is minimal. The *jeté* is Initiated by the front foot, and the movement pattern is Non-Successive. All three dancers perform another *jeté* with the back leg in *attitude* at 3/1:52, which exemplifies Type 2. This *jeté* features more freely flowing Effort, a high degree of Shape change, first Bulging then, abruptly upon landing, Hollowing. The three dancers fold in half at the waist in a rapid Successive movement that is Initiated in the core and snakes through to their heads and back feet.

In the trio’s first and final encounters, juxtaposition of Type 1 and Type 2 movement styles helps to convey conflicts inherent to the characters’ shared sexual desire. Throughout the ballet, the expression of sexuality is usually problematized, postponed or attenuated, whether by contradiction within the body or by interaction with the musical form. Movement-music analysis provides compelling support for an interpretation of the ballet that acknowledges a pervasive, yet ultimately unfulfilled desire. Movement-music analysis also sheds light on the ever-changing and moment-focused nature of Debussy’s musical form. Motives are not developed to the point of satisfying exhaustion, but instead give rise to ever new musical moments, unprepared and unresolved, but the ballet’s choreography often helps these rapid and abrupt transitions to cohere.
One such moment, involving Type1/Type2 contrast, occurs just after the second stage entrance of the jeune homme. At 1/2:49 he re-enters, running backwards to the center of the stage and carrying the tennis racket. This entrance constitutes his first encounter with the jeunes filles, and the narrative significance lends the moment a degree of emphasis. As the jeune homme arrives at the center of the stage, the jeunes filles move radially outward from that point, as if disrupted by him. The symmetrical orientation of the jeunes filles around the jeune homme draws attention to him, and the large-ish space separating him from the other movers foregrounds his action, despite his being upstage. Pivoting on relevé at 1/2:53 with straight legs and arms, his torso remains aligned vertically, and his overall posture is straight and appears somewhat stiff. At 1/2:55 he quickly descends, bringing the racket down with straight arms, and maintaining the stiffness of posture. Here he hinges at his hips; his torso is bent, but not curved, the alignment of his spine remains intact. In other words, the jeune homme displays movement Type 1 here. Just after arriving in this pose, the jeune homme contracts his core dramatically, jutting his pelvis forward, knees up, and shoulders forward, causing his spine to curve, snake-like, and thus switching into movement Type 2.

Musically, this brief action occurs at a moment that we might not have thought of as especially significant. Before the entrance of the jeune homme, the jeunes filles had begun a movement phrase that corresponded with the beginning of the musical phrase starting in m. 186, when a descending chromatic motive that
first occurred somewhat more dramatically in m. 174, is repeated. After its initial statement in 174, the motive quickly dissipates into a new, though related, musical idea at m. 178, followed by an even further removed idea at m. 182. The repetition of the sinking chromatic motive at m. 186 interrupts this forward motion and feels a bit like an unmotivated jump backwards, almost like a stutter or a bumped-into record player. The repeated version of the motive departs from the original after four measures. Where originally it was overtaken by new ideas, in m. 190, it is elaborated, extended by an extra four measures that fragment the original idea, eventually trailing off into a transition before the next musical phrase at m. 196. It is during this fading extension of the motive (at m. 190) that the jeune homme enters. So, visually his entrance is significant, but it receives little fanfare in the musical accompaniment.49

The four measures after the jeune homme’s entrance alternate material borrowed from the initial motive with rapid tremolo between two major triads either a half-step or a whole-step apart. This new motive – alternating major triads – are given a spotlight in the next musical phrase at m. 196. Here, though, as it still mixed in with bits of the previous phrase, the triad motive has the effect of cross-fading between two musical ideas.

49 This is true of the recording to which this analysis has been referring. In fact, in the stage directions that accompany the score, the jeune homme is heard by the girls before he is seen. In the score, the jeunes filles notice rustling leaves at m. 192 and the jeune homme is visible to the audience at m. 196. He does not confront the jeunes filles until m. 207. I have chosen to analyze a recording rather than the score because doing so enables close reading of movement-music interactions.
Leydon has suggested that music of Debussy’s late style often employs formal tools analogous to those that were common in silent film at the turn of the century (Leydon 2001). Among these tools is the crossfade or dissolve. In film, the dissolve refers to a technique in which, “one image is seen to gradually fade away at the same time as a second image gradually emerges” (Leydon 2001, 221). Leydon suggests that Debussy’s music often features a musical cognate to the filmic dissolve, in which timbral blending or gradually shifting pitch collections create smooth transitions.

The transition in mm. 190-195 might be read as just such a musical dissolve. Measures 191 and 193 can be heard as part of the fading out of the earlier motive, and they do not constitute much of a musical disruption to the end of the phrase, but retroactively they can also be heard as preparing for, or even beginning, the phrase that comes fully into being in m. 196. The music transitions smoothly from one to the other, and the two ideas overlap in such a way that one seems to fade one out while the other fades in.

Perhaps more than anything else, however, it is in light of the choreography, which gives a simultaneous sense of a gradual ending and slow beginning, that the dissolve-like effect of the music is readily apparent. It is not simply the fact that the jeune homme enters at m. 190, but also the details of his movement that effect this hearing for me. Clarifying this point involves backtracking to the point at which the descending motive first occurred at m. 174.
A little surprisingly for all the buildup that preceded it, the start of the motive abruptly droops into a slow rhythm, low dynamic level, and slippery chromatic lines. The descending chromatic melody in the first violins sounds like a distorted echo of the flute, who plays a chromatic stepwise line with undulating contour that descends overall. When the motive first occurs, it is supported by a sustained G-sharp diminished seventh chord in the bass clarinet, horns, and second violin. The melody in the first violins descends over two measures from G to E-natural, at which point the diminished chord lets off. Though the motion in the melody from F (over a G-sharp diminished chord) to E gives the impression of a very weak resolution, the E does not sound like a point of stability, and the overall effect of the passage is more like continuous slipping and sliding, especially given the activity in the flutes as well as the high registers of both lines.

During this passage, the dancers perform slow stylized walks. Their movements are stilted, and their legs remain straight, while their arms form stiff angles at the elbows. Though all of these elements belong to movement Type 1, note the way the two dancers sink into their hip as they walk. First as they step out with their left feet, they sink into their right hips, and then conversely they shift their weight back to their left side as they step their right feet forward. The sunken hips present an instance of misalignment evocative of Type 2 movement, and the dancers combine the two movement types in a single gesture. The misalignment conveys a certain lameness of motion, almost a laziness or an inability to manage weightiness. Adding to the weirdness, unlike typical, functional walking, this
movement is Homolateral. Whereas the Bound Effort and angular lines conveyed by the stilted walking might otherwise impart a straightforward or square quality to the music, this languid attitude of the body created by the simple addition of the sunken hip draws out quite effectively the sinking, slippery chromatic lines of the first violin and flute.

As the phrase continues, the *jeunes filles* bend at the waist before going into a *soutenu* (1/2:28). On quite a small scale, there is an immediate contrast between the Hollowing in the torso, highlighted by bringing the elbows momentarily above the hunched shoulders, and the straight-backed turn. In the first iteration of the descending chromatic motive, the *jeunes filles* step at the beginning of each measure, naturally dividing the two-measure unit in two and doing nothing to disturb the sense of a 3/8 time signature. In the second iteration, however, the change in shape at the *soutenu* emphasizes the second eighth-note beat of m. 177, giving a sense of a 3/4 time signature where the two measures of 3/8 sound like one long measure, with a slow tempo.

When the descending motive repeats in measure 186 (1/2:43), it is accompanied by a corresponding choreographic repetition. So when the *jeune homme* enters, jogging backwards and turning into place with a sprightly hop, he presents a slight disturbance to the overall feeling of the *jeunes filles’* slow, stiff, and sunken walks. Measure 190 gives new material, but the rhythm and chromatic stepwise character of the flutes and oboes lends continuity. By starting another sunken walk, the *jeunes filles* emphasize that continuity, subtly smoothing over the
start of the musical dissolve. It is not until the next measure that the sense of departure becomes overt.

The hop with which the *jeune homme* switches direction and steps into the center of the stage coincides with the pizzicato at the beginning of m. 191, which introduces the new motive featuring tremolos between chromatically adjacent major triads. Measure 193 gives a repetition of m. 191, and the *jeunes filles* perform a similar gesture, pivoting away from each other and abruptly lifting their back feet to step forward. The buoyant energy that the *jeune homme* brought on stage ripples out to the *jeunes filles*, and emphasizes the new musical idea, even while the old one, and the old movement styles are still in play.

Subsequently in m. 194, the music takes a more dramatic turn in the new direction. Though it still has a transitional quality, it departs completely from the earlier motive, expanding the new motive and lending it more power with a crescendo. At the downbeat of this measure, the *jeune homme* makes an abrupt change into Type 2 movement while sharply tilting up the tennis racket in a not-so-subtle phallic gesture. In a Hollowing movement Initiated by the pelvis, he lifts his heels, bends his knees and tilts his hips awkwardly forward, forcing curvature in the lower spine.
Upon first joining the *jeunes filles* on stage, the *jeune homme* uses Type 1/Type 2 contrast to suggest the sexual nature of their shared encounter. Part of what makes this pelvic thrust dramatic is the sense that it is not easy or relaxed. As his pelvis juts forward, he does not lean back in his upper body, but exerts his upper and lower abdominals to effect the Hollowing in the torso and shoulders. This difficulty, combined with the abruptness of the change, and the phallic tennis racket emphasizes the pelvic move, and conveys a sense of virility and (ostensibly) masculine power. At the same time, the hollowing out of the abdomen and hunching of the shoulders signifies in a self-effacing way, as if the lust emanating from the *jeune homme*’s pelvis simultaneously renders other parts of his personhood, symbolized by the head and chest, vulnerable.

His ensuing pivot to face stage left only further emphasizes the pelvis, which Initiated the gesture, and which remains in motion while his other body parts remain more-or-less still. Later at m. 195 (1/2:59), a new musical phrase
begins, and the *jeunes filles* replicate this hip roll, disrupting their otherwise Type 1 movement. Not unlike the hops in mms. 191 and 193, this movement appears to be the result of the *jeune homme* transferring something onto to them. This metaphor becomes slightly less compelling, however, when considered against earlier parts of the ballet. During their duet, the *jeunes filles* performed very similar choreography starting at about 1:0:41, including a pelvic thrust and hip roll, though with somewhat less Hollowing and without any particular reference to a phallus, at 1:0:48. Taking a wider view of the piece, the *jeunes filles* in fact anticipate the Man’s activity. If the hip roll is symbolically sexual, then sexuality between the *jeunes filles* was introduced before their encounter with the *jeune homme*.

![Illustration 22: Jeux, a jeune fille – pelvic thrust at 1:0:48.](image)

This reading is consistent with the narrative of the ballet conceived by Nijinsky (McGinness 2005). Lynn Garafola describes the ambiguity of the *jeune homme’s* status as sexual leader:
At the center is the Young Man, around whom, like moths circling an arclight... the Young Women symbolically orbit. Like the hour (dusk) and the setting (a secret garden) the protagonist exudes erotic expectancy. Yet for a hero he seems curiously diffident: what transpires is almost never the result of his agency (Garafola 1989, 62).

While our first look at mm. 190-194 might have lead us to believe that the jeunes filles become infected with “erotic expectancy” instigated by the jeune homme as a result of being in his “orbit,” sexual agency might ultimately belong to the jeunes filles, who expressed sexual desire long before their encounter with the jeune homme. On his body the pelvic thrust and hip roll might be said to convey virility and masculine power, but the gesture is equally open to the expression of sexuality on the part of the jeunes filles.

Obscuring a normative sense of the jeune filles’ femininity may not be unrelated to the conception of the ballet’s plot by Sergei Diaghilev as a veiled realization of a sexual fantasy involving himself and two boys (McGinness 1998, 60-61). For Garafola, the question of sexual agency morphs freely into a question of gender: “if [the jeune homme’s] diffidence dresses masculinity in the garb of femaleness, [the jeune filles’] vigor dresses femininity in the garb of malehood” (Garafola 1989, 63). In the original conception of Jeux, all three dancers were to wear pointe shoes, a practice typically reserved for women, indicating that the male protagonist was not intended to perform a traditionally masculine role.

Compelling additional support for the idea that Nijinsky was generally interested in blurring these lines lies in the fact that gender-obscuring choreography is also at play in Nijinsky’s earlier work, Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune, where, “an
interplay of Euclidian forms” both “stylizes Nijinsky’s protagonists” and “unsexes them” (Garafola 1989, 58).

In the earlier flirtation between the *jeunes filles*, Type 2 movement draws out particular features of the musical setting. At about 1:0:25 the *jeunes filles* enter from either side of the stage in stiff slow *bourrées* in parallel with angular arm movements (Type 1). The music here, mm. 84-99, gives a short musical phrase with a chromatic wave-like contour in the melody. The harmonic backdrop is relatively static and, while dissonant, has a bright quality, which might be accounted for by understanding the harmony as a C-major triad superimposed over an F-sharp major triad, a collection of pitches out of which the sound of an F-sharp dominant minor-9\textsuperscript{th} chord can be heard strongly. Despite the dominant quality of the sonority, the repeated C-sharp to F-sharp in the bass suggests F-sharp major as a tonal center. Still the dissonances and the figuration that enlivens the sonority lend a feeling of tension and activity. The melody is played in a high, brilliant register of the violins. The lightness and upward directed energy of the dancers in this moment, in addition to the sharply articulated arm movements, strongly help this sense of brightness and vitality.

By contrast, the next section, mm. 100-105, has a much darker, murkier quality. The melody is transposed down an octave, and is played by flutes and second violins only. The clarinet and bass clarinet add a rapidly moving chromatic counterpart below the melody, which has a muddying effect. The instruments mostly play in their middle to low registers, contributing to the murky quality. The
harmony here, largely created by planing densely voiced diminished triads at a constant interval with the melody, does not disrupt this feeling. Overall it sounds as if the original motive from m. 84 has been submerged in some kind of quagmire.

Accordingly, the dancers descend from relevé and begin low, grounded walks in plié with the arms and hands bent at lame angles. Still, by holding their arms in place, and maintaining Type 1 movement, they maintain a sense of continuity with the previous phrase. The sudden slip into Type 2 movement at 1/0:46, however, presents a discontinuity, and a weirdness. This moment is the first instance of Type 2 movement in the entire ballet, and seems (just as with the jeune homme’s hip roll at 1/2:56) to emphasize an ostensibly insignificant moment musically. The move to sinister quagmire music is not fully respected in the choreography until this strange and suggestive pelvis-initiated body roll.

The body roll occurs just before an unrealized musical expectation. Measures 104-105 give a repetition with slightly different orchestration of music that we first heard in mm. 100-101. We might expect a repetition of the full four-measure phrase, but at m. 106, a completely new musical idea interrupts the repetition, along with new and different choreography. In addition to invoking a movement style very different from the foregoing choreography, part of my sense of the body roll as disruptive is a result of its musical context, as it seems to cut off the chromatically ascending flute and send the music in a different direction. The contrast presented by the shift to Type 2 movement simultaneously confirms the
musical change that occurred in m. 100, and anticipates the musical change that occurs in m. 106. It belongs both to the sinister quagmire world and to the sense of disruption. With all this in mind, and seen under the light of the ballet’s sexual narrative, the significance of this movement, as suggestive, or devilish, or problematic, might come into sharper relief.

The proposition that Type 1/Type 2 contrast can convey sexual desire might seem stronger in light of the climactic triple kiss toward the very end of the ballet in m 677 (3/2:16). Just before the triple kiss, all three dancers perform a near caricature of Type 1 movement, beating their stiff arms frustratedly at their sides in time with straight-legged bouncing steps. At the moment of the triple kiss, the *jeune homme* stands tall with his arms set in strong right angles and his feet about shoulder-width apart, a Type 1 (and archetypically masculine) stance. The *jeunes filles* come into him at either side, replicating the symmetry of the trio’s first meeting, and their postures also exhibit Type 1 style. In a sudden shift to Type two movement at m. 679 (3/2:20), the trio seem to melt into each other, prolonging the moment of ecstasy.
The *jeunes filles* sink into their hips and bend their necks, foreshortening their previously straight, elongated lines. The *jeune homme* turns sideways and, while contracting his abdominals, rolls through his torso. He first sits back into his hips, then juts his pelvis forward in a move very reminiscent of that at m. 194. Notice also the expressive contrast between the *jeune homme*’s strong open chest (Bulging) at the moment of musical climax, and the slack, drooping quality of his torso as he changes to movement Type 2, enveloped in sexual pleasure. The three dancers remain in this pose until the end of m. 680 when, with a somewhat abrupt shift back to Type 1 movement, the three dancers straighten up and then fall to one knee with Bound Effort.

The momentary switch into Type 2 movement effects a prolongation of the climactic kiss in a way that seems, not so much mimetic of some action in real time, but rather, which extends a single moment, freezing time to elaborate some transient sensation or emotion. The Type 2 movement plays a critical role in
performing the culmination of the trio’s extended flirtation, thereby linking all previous instances of Type 2 movement to this eventual realization of (a rather queer) sexual desire.

John McGinness has noted that the musical climax in m. 676, at which point the triple kiss is meant to occur, is somewhat attenuated by the fact that musical elements from the previous section, characterized by conflict and tension, carry over into the moment of ecstasy:

Debussy evidently intended a transformation of the music symbolically identified with rejection and anger... into the music of ecstasy. The romance is undermined, however, not only by the relentless quality of the music leading to the kiss, but also by its thematic repetition in the kiss itself... The repeated G–A–A-sharp–B in mm. 673–76 is heard transposed at m. 677, G-sharp–A-sharp–B, the moment of the kiss, made still by a return to G-sharp in m. 678 (McGinness 2005, 570).

Notice also the strong resemblance between the motive in the violas beginning on F-double-sharp in 678-679 (also in the violins in mm. 680 and 683), and the motive in the violas and cellos in mm. 664 and 666, which is also heard in a faster rhythm in the strings in mm. 668 and 670. The repetition of this motive after the moment of climax carries some of the frantic energy of the preceding music into this section so that, as McGinness says, “all the activity at m. 677 [676?]—the arrival at F-sharp, the change of meter and tempo, the dynamic climax—does not quite transcend the uncertain character of the music that precedes it” (McGinness 2005, 570).

This attenuated climax is also reflected in the choreography. In the moments immediately preceding the climax, mm. 664-675 (3/2:04-3/2:14), the
dancers perform strongly Type 1 movements, in which lack of body curvature is exaggerated to the extent that there is almost no flexion in the joints whatsoever. While the musical climax at m. 667 is met with the dramatic arrival at the symmetrical pose (note especially the sharp movement of the *jeune homme*’s head and arms just after the downbeat of m. 676), the dancers maintain Type 1 movement, attenuating the climax slightly. The sense of physical release is delayed until the switch to Type 2 movement at 3/2:20. This sound/body mismatch ultimately prevents the triple kiss from having a fully cathartic effect. The consummation of their desire is thwarted soon thereafter by a second tennis ball, which bounces across the stage, startling the three players into fleeing the scene. With this last scene, the ball “salvages desire” by preserving fantasy, confirming the ballet’s essential theme: “the pervasiveness of desire and the avoidance of sexual entanglement” (Garafola 1989, 62-62).

The foregoing examination of *Jeux* demonstrates some of the ways in which musicology and music theory stand to benefit from movement analysis. In surveying the literature, McGinness notices the relative lack of writing on *Jeux* that acknowledges its conception as a work of dance. McGinness convincingly argues for the interdependence of composition and choreography in the ballet, suggesting another way of making sense of the music’s moment-oriented form. McGinness’s study, however, does not provide a detailed analysis of the movement itself. Shape and Body provide a means of describing the movement with a higher degree of precision and detail, and movement analysis provides further support for
McGinness’s claim. Movement analysis offers many opportunities to examine music for dance under new light. As has been shown in previous examples, however, movement can also facilitate different ways of studying and interpreting music generally, even when movement is paired with music after the fact of the music’s composition. Music and movement each provide a special vantage point from which to consider the other.
CONCLUSION

Taken together, the foregoing analyses offer a wide range of approaches to movement-music interactions. Motivated by the variety of ways in which music and movement can relate, this project aims to provide a flexible collection of analytical tools and approaches that might be suitable to a diverse array of works. I was drawn to this particular set of analytical examples for the rich movement-music relationships that they exhibit, and as a collection, they offer an eclecticism appropriate to the goal of developing an adaptable toolkit. This toolkit provides a means of constructing analytical representations, and, on that basis, can be taken as a theory of movement-music interaction. The multiplicity of aesthetic experiences provoked by movement-music works encouraged me to approach the theorization of movement-music interaction as a toolkit, rather than as an abstract model that would help to predict the content of analyses. I hope to have offered a toolkit that is versatile and robust without foreclosing possibilities for future expansion with additional tools.

This dissertation also aims to show how perceptions of structure or meaning in music and movement are permeable to multimedia environments in which the two are combined. Movement that is paired with music can selectively reinforce hearings that were available in the music on its own as well as it can suggest entirely new hearings that might not have been readily available to start with. Music, similarly, has the power to suggest interpretations of movement.
Such arguments may be familiar to readers who are knowledgeable of multimedia studies. Movement is a special medium among musical multimedia, in that it necessarily involves embodied sensation and signification. The toolkit outlined here moves beyond generalized study of multimedia by offering a means of directly addressing embodiment in movement-music analysis.

The disciplinary boundaries that separate music and movement and the technical knowledge required for full participation in either discipline have largely kept the analysis of music and the analysis of movement separate, despite the many ways in which the two art forms overlap. I intend this project to be another step along the way of bringing music study and movement study closer together. Earlier steps in this direction have tended to focus on socio-historical connections between movement and music, on the perspectives of composers and choreographers, or on behaviors of the brain, leaving gaps in the literature for analytical study of movement-music relationships and for studies that consider the perspective of observers. This project partially fills both gaps by outlining analytical tools and foregrounding the intersubjective, interpretative nature of movement-music analysis. Out of a concern for bringing movement analysis and music analysis a little bit closer together, I have tried to keep my analyses as accessible as possible to readers in multiple disciplines. I would be enthusiastic to pursue collaborative projects with dance and movement scholars in the future.

Speaking specifically to the field of music theory, though, this project also suggests opportunities for music theorists, who may not normally consider
movement to fall under the scope of their investigations, to begin to address it. One advantage to studying these pieces with a particular focus on the movement-music interaction is that such an approach often brings properties of the music into sharper relief. If one of music theory’s primary aims is to provide deeper understanding of musical perceptions, then dance and movement, influential as they are on musical experience, might constitute a vital and often overlooked part of music theory.

Although each of the foregoing analyses isolated and thematized aspects of movement, I am struck now by the diversity of musical aspects that these examples drew out, and this, too, may be of interest to music theorists generally. Tyler, The Creator’s video encouraged me to focus on rhythm, meter, and rap flow; The “Rose” Adagio drew my attention to harmony and phrase form; Baryshnikov’s “Koni” dance got me thinking about timbre and genre; Lar Lubovitch’s “Duet” sensitized me to different ways of hearing modulation; and Jeux helped me think differently about form and texture. Some of these musical aspects are not typically a point of extended focus in music analysis and a few are somewhat difficult to deal with using traditional music analytical tools. Moreover, and by the same token, movement often served as a useful entry point into musical styles and genres for which such tools are less developed.

The many motion-based metaphors that music theorists already use to describe and analyze music suggest another potentially fruitful application of
movement analysis tools in music study. Namely, the descriptive terms for movement that I have outlined might provide a new and rich vocabulary for characterizing music in metaphorical terms. Labanian Effort descriptors, for instance, strike me as provocative and compelling possible metaphors for musical activity. A cadence could linger on a suspension with Bound, Sustained Effort, or it could suddenly crash to a carefree close with Free, Indirect Effort. This kind of analytical approach might provide an extension to existing work on musical gesture.

This study may also be of interest to practitioners in music and dance disciplines who, rejecting the view of artworks as transcendent and ahistorical, look for ways of understanding music and dance’s structural properties as reflections of identity, social relations, politics, cultural values, and so on. One conclusion that my analyses suggest is that, not only are music and dance bearers of culture and history, but so is the interaction between them. The way a person moves given a musical situation, for example, might say a lot about who she is. The analysis of movement-music interactions, just as much as the analysis of either music or movement, could be a useful research tool in answering questions about the role of art in society.

This dissertation focuses on works of art that contain movement and music, such as music videos, ballets, and modern dance pieces, but music and movement

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50 Steve Larson’s Musical Forces examines in detail motion-based metaphors and concepts that are commonly used to describe music (Larson 2012).
interact in other, less formal contexts as well. Moving can be a powerful way of
processing music or shaping musical experience. A promising future direction that
this research could take is the examination of music-movement interactions in
everyday listening contexts. Recent years have seen the scope of music theoretical
and musicological inquiry expand to include music’s functions in everyday life,
personal relationships with music, and the technologies that enable music’s
mobility. I hypothesize that moving to music can be a crucial part of these
personal, everyday engagements with music, and I propose an extension of these
perspectives that explicitly addresses the role of dance and movement in music’s
affective power and in music’s ability to, for instance, effect a change in mood,
serve as a confidante, or become a locus of self-identification. Such a study could
color music’s role in the formation and maintenance of identity as a function,
not only of how it sounds, but also of the kinds of movement that it affords.

I believe that the potential applications of music-movement analysis are
quite broad, including possibilities to inform adjacent activities like dancing,
making music, and teaching. For now, I hope to have left the reader with a new or
renewed sense of the fascinating complexity of music-movement interaction.

51 See for example Cusick 1994a, DeNora 2000, Gopinath and Stanyek 2014, Guck 1997, Guck 2006,
Herbert 2011.


Eate, Penelope. 2013. “Scribblin’ Sinnin’ Sh*t: Narratives of Rape as Masculine Therapeutic Performance in the Strange Case For and Against Tyler, The Creator.” *Journal of African American Studies* 17: 529-545.


VIDEO RECORDINGS AND FILMS


