



MERCE CUNNINGHAM  
DANCE COMPANY  
DECOR & LIGHTING  
  
DOVE BRADSHAW



MERCE CUNNINGHAM  
DANCE COMPANY  
DECOR & LIGHTING

1984-1991

DOVE BRADSHAW

A Limited Edition





# P H R A S E S

Premiere: City Center, New York, 1990

Choreography

MERCE CUNNINGHAM

Music

DAVID TUDOR

Set

WILLIAM ANASTASI

Decor and Lighting

DOVE BRADSHAW

## P H R A S E S

The title, Cunningham said “is actually quite descriptive—the piece is made up of 64 phrases.” As usual the sequence of these phrases was determined by chance, he said:

“This one wasn’t made for the camera, but I worked on it as though using a camera. It was divided into four sections, and in each section I thought about the camera. For section A, I wrote ‘seen in huge confusion, because there was so much activity.’

Section B was ‘seen in segments,’ section C seen ‘in detail,’ like a hand, or whatever; section D ‘seen in huge nonconfusion.’ I’m not sure I followed this, but still.

Using chance operations, I made movement categories for each section—a gamut. I allowed for possible crossings from one section to another, also done through chance operations. And there was a possibility for variation if a phrase repeated—there were about five variations.”

In 1984 after Mark Lancaster’s tenure, William Anastasi and Dove Bradshaw were appointed jointly as the company’s Artistic Advisors. *Phrases* was their first work. “William Anastasi,” Anna Kisselgoff wrote, “has designed a backdrop with a rope-like line that cuts from top to bottom and then rises upward at a diagonal. The lighting creates a luminous grayish backdrop against which fourteen of the fifteen-member cast initially [stand] out in bright solid-colored leotards by Dove Bradshaw.

After Mr. Cunningham joins in [dressed in a gray jumpsuit], the dancers add black ankle- or leg-warmers to their red, white, yellow or greenish [sic. turquoise] costumes and later some add trousers, sweaters and shirts.”

David Vaughan

Merce's hint here consisted of one syllable: clown. William's two syllable inquiry: happy? Merce countered, “But clowns can be sad too” leaving us back on square one.

A few days later, I happened upon an exhibition which presented the colored squares that Mondrian had placed around his studio to affect the architectural space: five red, three yellow, three turquoise, two white and one primary blue. They added up to fourteen, the number of dancers in the company. There was a fifteenth square of unpainted cardboard. The arrangement suggested dressing the dancers in color—each in a monochrome unitard—Merce in gray. Since the reds were made up of two large and three small, they naturally fell to two men and three women. The set followed in gray. Merce asked for two changes of costumes. Thinking of Mondrian's paintings, the first change translated his black bands into black belts, leg-warmers, striped sweaters, and neckbands; for the second change Mondrian's white rectangles became white shirts. The morning of the premiere Bill awoke with the thought of stretching a rope into a right angle which he cocked at a diagonal behind the scrim, its corner implied below stage. At the premiere it was back-lit, but later the line was painted.

Dove Bradshaw

## Dancers

### *First Image:*

Dennis O'Connor  
Susan Quinn Young  
Karen Radford  
Robert Swinston  
Alan Good  
Patricia Lent  
Rob Remley  
Chris Komar

### *Second Image:*

Helen Barrow  
Susan Quinn Young  
Robert Swinston  
Catherine Kerr

*Third Image:*

Allan Good

Megan Walker

*Fourth Image:*

Dennis O'Connor

Patricia Lent

*Fifth Avenue*

Rob Remley

Helen Barrow

*Sixth Image:*

Robert Swinston

Catherine Kerr

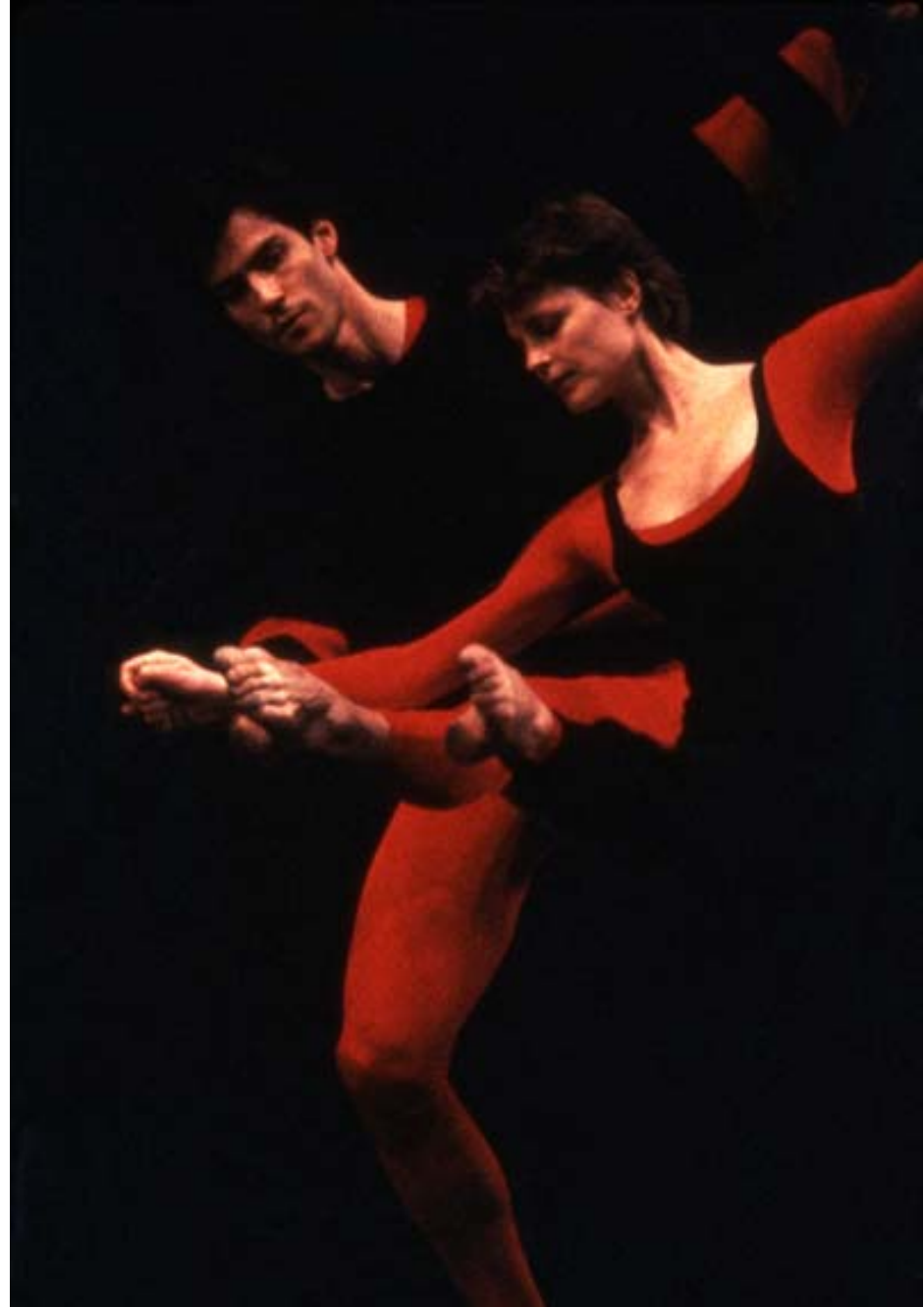
*Seventh Image:*

Kathy Kerr

Merce Cunningham



























# A R C A D E

Premiere: City Center, New York, 1985

Pennsylvania Ballet, Philadelphia, 1986

Choreography

MERCE CUNNINGHAM

Music

DAVID TUDOR

Decor and Lighting

DOVE BRADSHAW

## A R C A D E

Merce Cunningham choreographed the dance on his own company; Chris Komar then taught it to the Pennsylvania Ballet. The choreography, divided into quartets, duets, solos, and so on, was made with the ballet dancers in mind, the rhythms, for example, being very defined: “I counted out the phrases in a way I don’t often do.” (When he worked on the piece with his own dancers, Cunningham “stretched” the rhythms and “let kinds of freedom take place.”) In the opening section, the slow extensions of a group of four women were contrasted with an almost acrobatic series of lifts and catches performed by a female soloist and three male partners. Later there was a more sustained adagio sequence for a man and a woman, their movements echoed by two subsidiary couples. Cunningham used musical notations alongside his own choreographic notations, “so they [the ballet dancers] wouldn’t look stunned.” Even so, the dancers of the Pennsylvania Ballet did not hear the music {Cage’s *Etudes Boreales I-V*, Played by Michael Pugliese) until the final rehearsal.

Dove Bradshaw’s set featured a single white pillar in front of a white backcloth on which were painted three gray rectangular panels of unequal size. The idea for this design, Cunningham has said, came from being in Barcelona that summer: “I went to look at the Gaudi architecture, and there was this beautiful

series of archways, very long, very elegant—they didn't get in the way of what you were looking at." Bradshaw's costumes were slate gray or blue leotards and tights, daubed with white X's.

David Vaughan

When Merce told me the Gaudi idea I found myself also thinking of de Chirico's painted arcades with sculptures punctuating a town square. He asked for a prop leaving the shape to me. Years earlier I had made sculptures inspired by Neolithic menhirs whose shapes were suitable here. I was then working on a series of miniatures taken from aquatint landscapes reproduced in an old book. After obliterating the prints with a razor blade, I painted them a lead-white that would turn a blue-gray from the ink. The white borders suggested the walls of a colonnade. Merce had seldom been this specific in his instructions, but the Barcelona impression was clearly still alive. His title also suggested that one of these small works become the plan. At the premiere Eugene Schwartz, an art lover who supported the company, said that the set fit perfectly into the current movement, *Neo-Geo*—a thought that had not occurred to me. The slate and blue costumes derived from the paintings—their X's echoing the razor marks.

Dove Bradshaw

## Dancers

### *First and Second Image:*

Alan Good  
Catherine Kerr

### *Third Image:*

Alan Good  
Catherine Kerr  
Patricia Lent  
Karen Radford  
Neil Greenberg  
Susan Quinn Young

### *Fourth Image:*

Susan Quinn Young  
Neil Greenberg  
Karen Radford

### *Fifth Image:*

Rob Remley  
Neil Greenberg  
Dennis O'Connor  
Karen Radford  
Susan Quinn Young

*Sixth Image:*

Alan Good  
Victoria Finlaysen  
Rob Remley  
Helen Barrow  
Patricia Lent  
Robert Swinston

*Seventh Image:*

Rob Remley  
Neil Greenberg  
Karen Radford  
Robert Swinston

*Eighth Image:*

Susan Quinn Young  
Dennis O'Connor  
Victoria Finlaysen  
Karen Radford

*Ninth Image:*

Karen Radford  
Victoria Finlaysen  
Dennis O'Connor  
Susan Quinn Young



















































# POINTS IN SPACE

Première: BBC Broadcast, 1986

Choreography

MERCE CUNNINGHAM

Music

John Cage

Set

WILLIAM ANASTASI

Costumes and Lighting

DOVE BRADSHAW

## POINTS IN SPACE

The title comes from Albert Einstein's statement "There are no fixed points in space," a favorite [statement for] Cunningham. The phrase also refers to Cunningham's perception of the nature of space in video, which he [felt], offers the possibility of multiple points of view instead of a single one. The original version was made for video involving the full company, including Merce. It was the first time he had taken part in one of his...dances for...camera. The piece was divided into seven parts, their tempo alternating between fast and slow. After rehearsing in the Westbeth Studio the company moved to the BBC studios in London to record. The first part of the broadcast, made by producer Bob Lockyer, was a half hour documentary on Cunningham focusing on the creation of the piece. John Cage's, *Voiceless Essay* realized at the Center for Computer Music, Brooklyn College and at Synesthetics, Inc, employed computer-generated chance operations to select groups of words from his text "Writing through the Essay: On the Duty of Civil Disobedience [by Henry David Thoreau] in a section from his lecture "The First Meeting of the Satie Society." Like many of Cage's writings, this text takes the form of a series of *mesostics*—a kind of vertical acrostic—on the title of Satie's *Messe de pauvres*. Only the sounds of the consonants were retained. In performance it was played by each of the musicians by muting the taped cassette recording for varying durations of between thirty seconds and two minutes.

Anastasi's decor, a panoramic backcloth in three sections, was adapted from collage drawings he had made in the 1970s. In the documentary, Anastasi says that Cunningham told him to "think of weather." The costumes, by Dove Bradshaw, were unitards dyed in one of two ways; either in colors divided horizontally, or swabbed with a sponge to give a *tachiste* effect, with clear areas created by patches of masking tape that were then peeled off.

David Vaughan

Anastasi's three sets were each eighty feet wide, forty feet high. They derived from details of three different "unsighted" drawings with collage elements, one predominantly red, the second leaning toward yellow, the third mostly blue. The spirit of the original gestures had been maintained despite the immense scale increase. Merce divided the cast into two asking for a distinctly different set of costumes for each. We usually embraced John Cage's adherence to Artaud's dictum—every part of theater is treated separately from every other part. Music. Dance. Sets. Costumes. Lighting. But here the camera would be moving as well as the dancers, so my impulse was to relate the costumes to the drop. I selected sympathetic colors, dipping one set of unitards from either its feet or shoulders allowing the color to fade to white toward the opposite end. The colored parts were then partially re-dipped in black up to calves, wastes, or shoulders, relating them to Anastasi's smudged or erased lines. By contrast the other set of costumes were given a staccato effect adapted from rubbed patterns taken from sedimentary rock rippled from a river bottom.

Dove Bradshaw

## POINTS IN SPACE

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Dove Bradshaw



William Anastasi  
*Without Title*, 1984  
Graphite, crayon, tape, newsprint  
Circa 12 x 5 6/8 inches





## Dancers

### *First Image:*

Alan Good

Megan Walker

### *Second Image:*

Patricia Lent

David Kulick

Catherine Kerr

Dennis O'Connor

### *Third Image:*

Chris Komar

Robert Swinston

Karen Radford

### *Fourth Image:*

Catherine Kerr

Robert Swinston  
Helen Barrow

*Fifth Image:*  
Megan Walker  
Catherine Kerr  
Merce Cunningham  
Helen Barrow

*Sixth Image:*  
Merce Cunningham  
Helen Barrow

*Seventh Image:*  
Catherine Kerr  
Alan Good  
Susan Quinn Young  
Helen Barrow



















William Anastasi  
*Without Title*, 1984  
Graphite, crayon, tape, newsprint  
Circa 12 x 5 6/8 inches















William Anastasi  
*Without Title*, 1984  
Graphite, crayon, tape, newsprint  
Circa 12 x 5 6/8 inches















# F A B R I C A T I O N S

Premiere: City Center, New York, 1986

Choreography

MERCE CUNNINGHAM

Music

JOHN CAGE

Set

WILLIAM ANASTASI

Costumes and Lighting

DOVE BRADSHAW

## FABRICATIONS

According to Cunningham, the title refers to both meanings of the verb “to fabricate”: to combine parts to form a whole, and to invent or concoct, even to lie. It was a full company work, including Cunningham. Once again a chance process was used based on sixty-four phrases of varying lengths, from one count to sixty-four counts (the number of hexagrams in the *I Ching*). The continuity of the phrases and the number and selection of dancers in each phrase were chance determined. Durations of each phrase remained constant, though the phrases could overlap. Nonetheless, the dance had an undeniably dramatic, elegiac quality, even though there was no narrative content. To some, *Fabrications* seemed to be a memory piece, like certain works by Antony Tudor or Frederick Ashton (*Enigma Variations*). Clearly the dance gave the lie to those who claimed that Cunningham’s dancers made no connection with one another: they looked like lovers, or friends, and his own role seemed to be that of a revenant, revisiting scenes from the past. In an especially potent passage, he stood gazing into the eyes of one of the dancers for a long moment.

The music, *Short Waves 1985*, by Brazilian composer Emanuel Dimas de Melo Pimenta, was a taped electronic composition, combined with a taped short-wave radio mixed in performance by David Tudor. No doubt fortuitously, the sounds of muffled voices or snatches of music added to the dance’s



dramatic effect. The music consisted of two separate compositions, the first about fifteen minutes, followed by a silence of about six and a half minutes, the timing of which was made precise in performance; the second piece began at the end of a solo entry by Cunningham. Unusually, Dove Bradshaw costumed the company's women in dresses, the men in shirts and trousers. The dresses were made of silk prints which added to the "period" sense of the dance...

David Vaughan

In the fall of 1986 I asked Merce whether the costumes for one of the season's new dances might include dresses. Over the decades tights had ruled—rendering the dancers somewhat androgynous. Merce gave it some thought, then agreed they might work in one of the dances. Consequently, the men were dressed in loose pants and shirts that had a tropical feel; the women wore variously patterned silk dresses styled after a vintage WWII dress. Both sets of costumes were in reduced Constructivist colors: red, blue, black and white. The fabrics ranging from Orchard Street thrift to 57th Street couture might have had something to do with the title. Merce used the full skirts to great effect at the end with slow turns as the women were swept up in their partner's arms. The backdrop was a detail from a collage-drawing on wood with images taken from medical, architectural and mathematical books. They had been ripped apart, painted and drawn over—the looming shapes often mistaken for two hearts, are actually inner ears.

Dove Bradshaw



*Set Design:*

Dove Bradshaw

*Without Title*, 1986

Oil, liquin, caryan d'ache, china marker,  
graphite, colored pencil on mylar, 36 x 52 inches  
Collection of Gina and Dexter Williams, Los Angeles





## Dancers

### *First Image:*

Robert Remley  
Robert Swinston  
Dennis Kulick  
Karen Radford  
Chris Komar  
Merce Cunningham

### *Second Image:*

Patricia Lent  
David Kulick  
Karen Radford  
Alan Good

### *Third Image*

Karen Radford  
Patricia Lent  
Alan Good  
Victoria Finlaysen

### *Fourth and Fifth Image:*

David Kulick  
Karen Radford

Helen Barrow  
Alan Good  
Patricia Lent  
Chris Komar on left fifth image

*Sixth Image:*  
Karen Radford  
David Kulick  
Kristy Santimyer

*Seventh Image:*  
Catherine Kerr  
Helen Barrow  
Patricia Lent  
Karen Radford  
Rob Remley  
Victoria Finlaysen

*Eighth Image:*  
Karen Radford  
David Kulick  
Kristy Santimyer

*Ninth Image:*

Robert Swinston

Kristy Santimyer

*Tenth Image:*

Robert Swinston

Susan Quinn Young

Karen Radford

Helen Barrow

Dennis O'Connor

Patricia Lent

Alan Good

*Eleventh Image:*

Merce Cunningham

Helen Barrow

Patricia Lent

Victoria Finlaysen

Karen Radford

*Twelfth Image:*

David Kulick

Chris Komar



Dennis O'Connor  
Catherine Kerr

*Thirteenth Image:*  
Robert Swinston  
Catherine Kerr

*Fourteenth Image:*  
Robert Swinston  
Alan Good

*Fifteenth Image:*  
Carol Teitlebaum  
David Kulick

*Sixteenth Image:*  
Helen Barrow  
Carol Teitlebaum  
Victoria Finlaysen  
Rob Remley

*Seventeenth Image:*  
Dennis O'Connor  
Helen Barrow





















































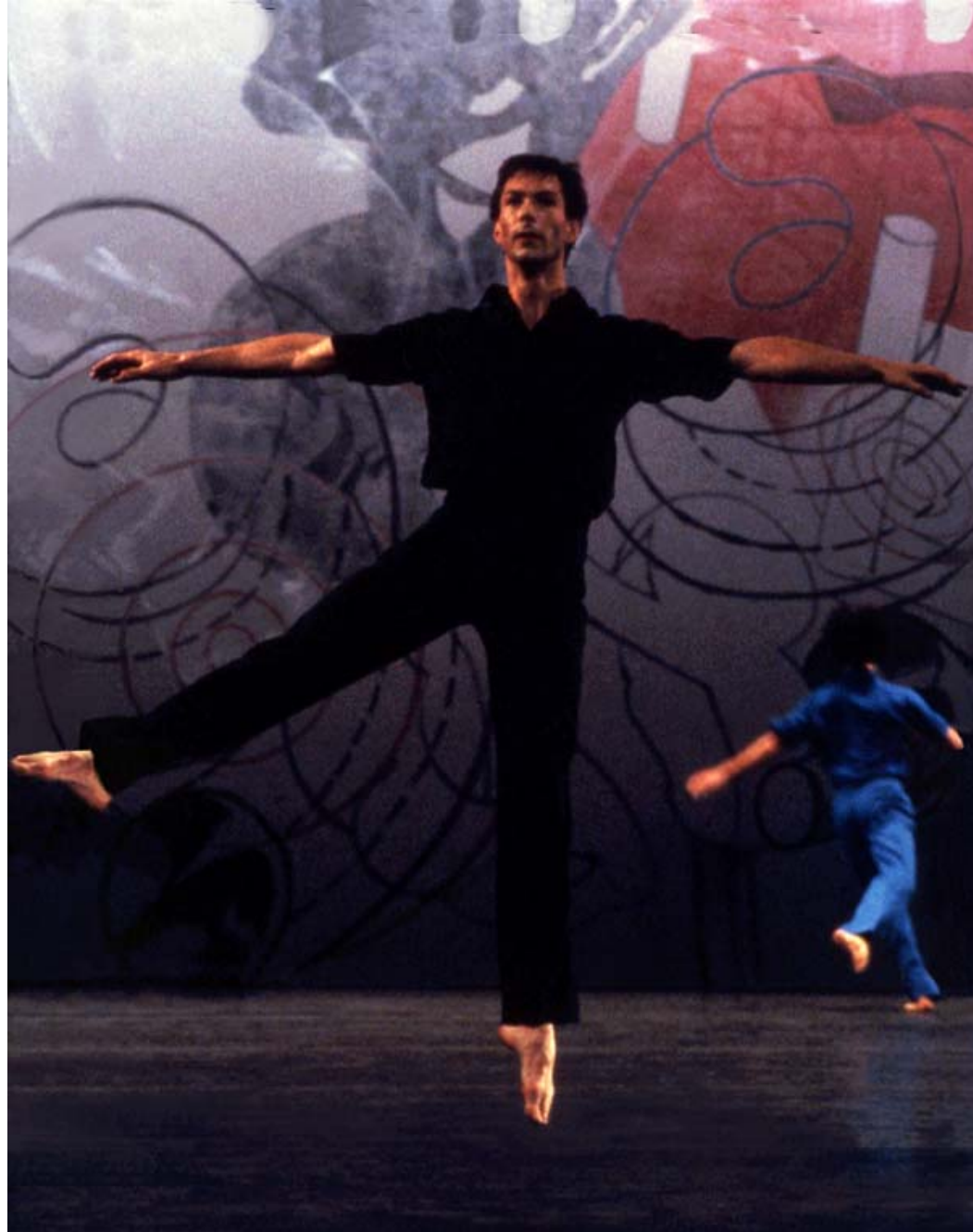
































# C A R G O X

Premiere: University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1989

Choreography

MERCE CUNNINGHAM

Music

TAKEHISA KOSUGI

Decor and Lighting

DOVE BRADSHAW

## C A R G O X

This piece was the first product sponsored by the Sharir Dance Company at the University of Texas, Austin, directed by Jacov Sharir. [It] was a work for seven dancers [with two alternating casts]. The title had no particular significance, Cunningham told an interviewer: "It can mean anything. Cargo means something going around and moving around, although it doesn't have anything to do with the dance. And I thought that if I added an X that would confuse it all even further." The most important decorative element was a ladder, which stood at the back of the stage and also played a part in the choreography; the dancers moved it during the piece, tilting it, laying it on its side, or carrying it from one place to another. They left the stage only to fetch plastic flowers, which they attached to the ladder...Although, the prevailing mood of the dance was light hearted, the activity around the ladder also gave the piece an eschatological feeling.

Merce recalled, "My idea was a ladder about 6 or 7 feet tall...we were touring in France in Toulon...and I walked into the theatre and there was a beautiful ladder...like a children's idea of a ladder...it had been built around 1900 and it's hand-made...The [crew] chief...didn't feel this [heirloom] should leave Toulon...'But you have to understand," explained [our] crew leader, 'that this would mean that a bit of Toulon would go around the world;'...after the second performance, they liked what we did so...they were glad we had the ladder."

The dance had three possible endings; Cunningham...planned five but only three were ever finished. He would decide which ending when he saw the stage...If there was no room in the wings, an ending in which the ladder was carried off...could not be used.

Dove Bradshaw costumed the dancers in [unitards] selecting the colors from her palette...at that time, including dark gray, green, purple, intense pink and gold. She decided which dancers would wear which colors after watching rehearsals. Takehisa Kosugi's music was entitled *Spectra*. "My meaning for the word 'spectra,'" he told an interviewer, "is the kind of after-image or echo. That idea includes the after-image of sounds." The writer added, "...Kosugi brings together very simple, natural sounds and very sophisticated electronics. He runs various sound sources through digital processing equipment." Among the objects used to produce the sounds were several small tops and some highly polished pebbles. Kosugi also used tape recordings of a flamenco singer, and vocalized himself during the performance, in imitation of them.

David Vaughan

An unspoken company rule—no stars. Since theater demands contrast, it was challenging to work within this context. This time however since the seven dancers never left the stage, I dressed one in electric pink; two in electric yellow; the other four in dark colors. In dimmed lighting the darkly dressed dancers blended into the charcoal scrim. When a brightly clad dancer was lifted by her dark partner, she appeared to be flying.

Dove Bradshaw



## Dancers

### *First Image:*

Robert Wood  
Larissa McGoldrick  
Emma Diamond  
Kimberly Bartosik  
Dennis O'Connor  
Kristy Santimyer

### *Second Image:*

Dennis O'Connor  
Emma Diamond  
Larissa McGoldrick  
Robert Wood  
Carol Teitelbaum

### *Third Image:*

Kristy Santimyer  
Rob Wood  
Larissa McGoldrick  
Emma Diamond  
Dennis O'Connor

### *Fourth Image:*

David Kulick

Emma Diamond  
Rob Wood  
Dennis O'Connor  
Kristy Santimyer

*Fifth Image:*

Rob Wood  
Larissa McGoldrick  
Dennis O'Connor  
Emma Diamond  
David Kulick  
Carol Teitelbaum

*Sixth Image:*

Rob Wood  
Kristy Santimyer  
Larissa McGoldrick  
Emma Diamond  
Kimberly Bartosik  
Dennis O'Connor

*Seventh Image:*

David Kulick  
Rob Wood  
Larissa McGoldrick



Emma Diamond  
Kimberly Bartosik  
Kristy Santimyer

*Eighth Image:*

Kristy Santimyer  
Rob Wood  
Larissa McGoldrick  
Emma Diamond  
Dennis O'Connor

*Ninth Image:*

David Kulick  
Emma Diamond  
Rob Wood  
Larissa McGoldrick

*Tenth Image:*

Larissa McGoldrick  
Rob Wood (behind)  
Dennis O'Connor  
Emma Diamond  
Kristy Santimyer  
Kimberly Bartosik  
David Kulick















































# T R A C K E R S

Premiere: City Center, New York, 1991

Choreography

MERCE CUNNINGHAM

Music

EMANUEL DIMAS DE MELO PIMENTA

Decor and Lighting

DOVE BRADSHAW

## TRACKERS

This was the first work that Cunningham developed by using a three-dimensional human animation system called Life-Forms, devised by Dr. Tom Clavert, a professor of computing science and kinesiology at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, British Columbia. The title, coming from the computer button, “track,” also refers to tracking with a camera. Merce observed, “On the screen the body moves in relation to the space, as it does on stage, but if you press “track” you move in close, like a camera. The first thing I did was the walking sequence—which again was like tracking. Nearly thirty percent was worked out on the computer; sometimes it was just a stance, which I would put into the memory like a photograph. I’d put in one, then another, and I’d have to figure out how to get from one to the other. At that time the capability of making a whole phrase didn’t exist. The thing that interested me most, from the start—it wasn’t simply notation—but the fact that I could *make* new things. Sometimes I’d say, “Well that’s impossible. But, if I looked at it long enough I would think of a way it could be done, not exactly as on the screen, but it could prompt my eye to see something I’ve never thought of before.” Certain movements—angular movements of the arms performed in counter-rhythm to those of the legs—were recognizable as having originated in the computer. Merce’s method was to work out the legs first, then those of the arms and upper body, and finally put the two together. He taught the phrases in the same way. Passages when the dancers formed into cells and clusters were not computer-generated since this early software could



manage only one figure at a time. It was for eleven dancers, including Cunningham, who opened on stage at curtain-rise with two women. A sweeping gesture from him signaled action. Later he reentered two or three times, at one point carrying a portable barre, which he used as an aid in performing some of his movements, as he did in the studio. With its strange small incidents taking place at various points on stage—such as one in which a woman took a “bridge” position, bending backward on all fours, while a man crawled under her—sometimes it had the look of a Surrealist work, or even of proto-Surrealism, such as Hieronymus Bosch’s *Temptation of Saint Anthony*. Whether deliberate or not, this, and the “computer” sequences offered a very different character from previous dances. The music, *Gravitational Sounds* was by Emanuel Pimenta.

David Vaughan

The costumes, based on the look of certain tropical fish, ranged from brightly colored to quite plain—some might say homely. Merce had asked to see the set design possibly upon hearing the word ‘brown’. “Brown is never used in theater,” he said. I offered perhaps that in this half-hour piece, the opening might be shot with such intense red light that it would register red. Then purple light could slowly be introduced until at mid-mark the drop hovers at brown. By closing it would have reached full purple. Since this happened subliminally in performance, some viewers did not notice it at all, while others saw a violent sunset. At the demonstration, a swatch of plum-brown silk was shot with red and purple gelled flashlights.

Dove Bradshaw



*Choreographic drawing:*

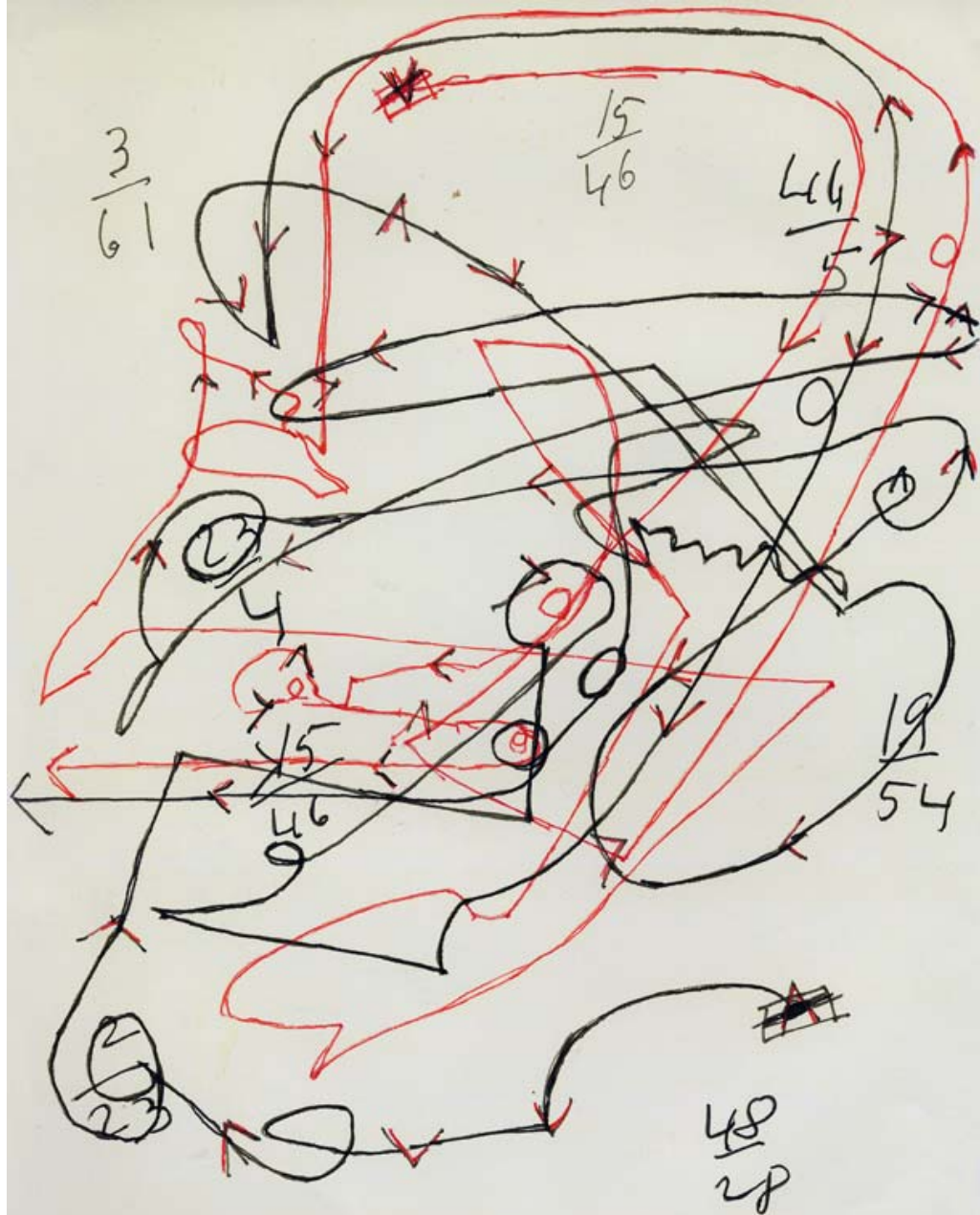
Merce Cunningham

*[Trackers]*, 1991

3 ½ minute duet

Colored ink on paper, 11 x 8 ½ inches

Collection of Dove Bradshaw, New York







## Dancers

### *First Image:*

Helen Barrow  
Kimberly Bartosik  
Emma Diamond  
Carol Teitelbaum  
Randall Sanderson  
Jennifer Weaver

### *Second Image:*

Helen Barrow  
Kristy Santimyer  
Kimberly Bartosik

### *Third Image:*

Carol Teitelbaum  
Helen Barrow

### *Fourth Image:*

Carol Teitelbaum  
Kimberly Bartosik  
Helen Barrow  
Kristy Santimyer  
Emma Diamond

*Fifth Image:*

Michael Cole  
Carol Teitelbaum  
Randall Sanderson  
Kimberly Bartosik

*Sixth Image:*

Chris Komar  
Carol Teitelbaum  
Jennifer Weaver  
Emma Diamond

*Seventh Image:*

Michael Cole  
Carol Teitelbaum  
Emma Diamond  
Jennifer Weaver

*Eighth Image:*

Jennifer Weaver



Randall Sanderson  
Kristy Santimyer  
Emma Diamond

*Ninth Image:*  
Kristy Santimyer  
Joseph Lennon  
Rob Wood  
Helen Barrow  
Kimberly Bartosik  
Chris Komar  
Emma Diamond

*Tenth Image:*  
Emma Diamond  
Randall Sanderson  
Chris Komar

*Eleventh Image:*  
Merce Cunningham





















































## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Merce Cunningham Dance Company  
David Vaughan, text adapted from  
*Merce Cunningham Fifty Years*,  
Aperture, New York, 1996  
William Anastasi

## PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS

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