A Developmental Study of the Choreographic Works of Erick Hawkins Including a Guide to Available Literature

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A DEVELOPMENTAL STUDY
OF THE CHOREOGRAPHIC WORKS OF ERICK HAWKINS
INCLUDING A GUIDE TO AVAILABLE LITERATURE

By

Jane Ellen Thornbury

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment
of the
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Jane Ellen Thornbury
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A DEVELOPMENTAL STUDY OF THE CHOREOGRAPHIC WORKS OF ERICK HAWKINS INCLUDING A GUIDE TO AVAILABLE LITERATURE.

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY, M.A., 1979

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance and Background of the Study

Erick Hawkins became a member of the modern dance community in 1938 when he joined the Martha Graham Dance Company. After leaving her company in 1951, Hawkins became a major performer and choreographer in his own right. New York Times critic, Anna Kisselgoff, considers Hawkins a revolutionary dance figure along with Balanchine, Graham, and Cunningham.¹

Kisselgoff points out that "Hawkins and his collaborator Lucia Dlugoszewski are teaching us to see modern dance in a new context that is neither psychological nor abstract."² In addition to giving people a new way to look at modern dance, Hawkins has also researched and developed a new technique. Critic Robert Sabin said, "It has now been established that among the things he has done is create a new technique, a new way for training the body to move, and with this a new vocabulary of movement."³ Hawkins was concerned with preventing strain


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and injury in dance, and he studied the human body and the way it moves in order to develop a new way of training the body. A man who was interested in taking proper care of the body was quite uncommon. Critic Marcia Siegel points out that "in his preoccupation with the body, Hawkins has been rare—a male entering where few men in this country had ventured before."  

Hawkins' choreography has also been recognized as unique in the modern dance world. His dances are different from those of any other modern dance choreographer. Critic Elliot Norton has said, "This is dance that suggests poetry without pretense, done to music that is provocative in simple costumes, under lights that are artfully designed to make the whole experience rich and full." The importance of his work has been recognized by the dance world as evidenced by his recent selection as a recipient of the 1979 Dance Magazine award for outstanding contributions to dance.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the development of Hawkins' choreographic style and provide differentiating and noteworthy information on each dance. A chronological listing of works, along with the composer and designer for each dance, will be included. The study will examine Hawkins' choreographic development in four sections:

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the first period (1937-1949), initial exposure to ideas that would influence his work later; the second period (1950-1960), development of his philosophy and technique; the third period (1961-1967), expansion of his choreographic style to include quartets; and the fourth period (1968-present), restructuring of his choreography to include six to nine dancers, scores by many different musicians, and designs by many different designers.

In addition, the study will locate and categorize literature available concerning Hawkins, his philosophy, and choreography. The study will also provide biographical data pertinent to the development of Hawkins choreography.

Need For the Study

Unlike other major artists of his time whose works are discussed in books, there is little comprehensive literature available on Hawkins' work. Articles and information on Hawkins are only available through diverse sources. Since understanding the Hawkins philosophy of movement is of major importance in understanding and appreciating his choreography, location and organization of available literature is important in furthering that understanding.

Limitations of the Study

This study will not attempt to analyze the technique of Erick Hawkins, nor attempt to deal with his past dance experiences, except where pertinent to the study of choreographic development.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES AND LITERATURE

Literature concerning Erick Hawkins is available if one searches diligently. Only one book is devoted wholly to Hawkins, Norton's *On the Dance of Erick Hawkins*, and it is no longer in print. However, a few copies are available in private collections. Articles from various other sources are particularly helpful in studying Hawkins and will be reviewed in this chapter: articles written by Hawkins, articles on his collaborations with other artists, articles by authors who have analyzed Hawkins' choreography, and articles discussing his philosophy of movement and technique. Sources of pertinent biographical information are also covered and finally, there is a partial listing of reviews for Hawkins' dances.

Primary Sources: Articles by Hawkins

The best source of information on Erick Hawkins is the artist himself, and Hawkins has written several articles in an effort to help people understand his work. In "a little house to understand and protect it," printed in *Dance Observer* in 1960, Hawkins first attempted to explain the direction his artistic growth was taking at that time. It is a bit disjointed in that Hawkins takes a complete page to state and restate his point and, in the end, the point remained unclear. But when the essay is considered in context with later articles and interviews discussed here, the ideas remain quite
consistent. In a later article, "The Body Is a Clear Place," Hawkins explains the direction of his artistic growth toward developing a new way of moving and therefore a new form of dance, as opposed to choreographing new works using the existing modern dance movement vocabulary. Here, he also provides empirical evidence in supporting his departure from traditional dance technique and cites several contemporary philosophers in support of his aesthetic philosophy.

Perhaps the most concise and easily understandable article written by Hawkins, "What Is the Most Beautiful Dance?" appears in Walter Terry's book, The Dance Has Many Faces. The article answers the title question in almost poetic form, using layman's terms which clearly incorporate Hawkins' philosophy. In addition, Dance Magazine has printed a transcript of a Hawkins lecture, "Erick Hawkins Addresses a New-To-Dance Audience." Because he is speaking to a group unfamiliar with his work, Hawkins expresses his views in simple, straight-forward terms.

Secondary Sources: Articles on Collaboration

Erick Hawkins' collaboration with composers and artists is a well-publicized fact, and several articles have been written on this topic. Florence Pennella's article, "The Vision of Erick Hawkins," discusses Hawkins' collaboration with sculptor Ralph Lee on both costumes and set. An article by Alan Hughes, "And Miss Dlugoszewski

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Experiments . . . A Lot,\(^2\) examines the collaboration between composer Dlugoszewski and Hawkins. "To See What Is Before Us,"\(^3\) an article by artist Ralph Dorazio, looks at collaboration with Hawkins from Dorazio's viewpoint.

In a Dance Magazine article by Anne Boynton Grausam, "Erick Hawkins: Choreographer As Sculptor,"\(^4\) the author looks at some of Hawkins' more recent collaborations with artists Stanley Boxer and Ralph Lee. The Complete Guide to Modern Dance\(^5\) by Don McDonagh contains a section on Hawkins which discusses his collaboration with Ralph Dorazio. Another McDonagh book, Martha Graham,\(^6\) discusses Hawkins' work with Isamu Noguchi on his early pieces. Finally, the reviews listed later in this chapter almost unanimously discuss both music and set and costume design as an integral part of Hawkins' dances.

Secondary Sources: Articles on Choreography

Recently, quite a bit has been written discussing Hawkins' choreography from different points of view. Some in-depth studies have looked at the oriental influence, as well as the American Indian


Finally, Don McDonagh's Complete Guide to Modern Dance has a particularly good section on Hawkins with a detailed examination of "8 Clear Places," "Classic Kite Tails," "Greek Dreams, With Flute," and "Cantilever."

Secondary Sources: Philosophy and Technique


Secondary Sources: Biographical Information

The most complete and concise biography of Erick Hawkins was

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compiled and printed by Dance Magazine this year when it was announced that Hawkins had won the 1979 Capezio Dance Award. This information is further augmented by Don McDonagh's biography of Martha Graham. This book provides little-known yet important facts concerning Hawkins' work while he was a member of Graham's company and discusses the Graham-Hawkins relationship in detail.

Secondary Sources: Criticism

Reviews of Hawkins' choreography abound. Anna Kisselgoff, dance critic for the New York Times, has become one of Hawkins' strongest supporters and has reviewed nearly all of his dances over the years. Another Times critic, Clive Barnes, has been particularly critical in his reviews. Of particular interest is his review of "Angels of the Inmost Heaven" in which he claims that he is beginning to understand Hawkins' choreography. Barnes said, "It was just his choreography that I couldn't warm up to. Now for me, at last, enlightenment seems to have come." Cincinnati Enquirer reviewer, Janet Light, provides a very sensitive commentary on the April 19, 1979 premiere of Hawkins' most recent work, "Plains Daybreak." The review also covers "Early Floating" and "Parson Weems and the Cherry Tree" which were included in the program.

The following list is a selection of reviews along with the dances they cover. These reviews provide specific data on each individual dance and were helpful in completing this study.

*McDonagh, Martha Graham. op. cit.*
SELECTED REVIEWS

Citation | Dances Reviewed
--- | ---


"openings of the (eye)"

"To Everybody Out There"
"Cantilever"
"Geography of Noon"
"Early Floating"

"Dazzle On a Knife's Edge"
"Lords of Persia"

"Cantilever"
"John Brown"

"8 Clear Places"
"Tightrope"

"8 Clear Places"
"Tightrope"
"Geography of Noon"
"Naked Leopard"

"Black Lake"
"Of Love"

"Of Love"
"Naked Leopard"

"Early Floating"
"Tightrope"
"Naked Leopard"

"Geography of Noon"
Citation


Dances Reviewed

"Dawn Dazzled Door"
"Angels of the Inmost Heaven"
"Classic Kite Tails"

"Meditation On Orpheus"

"John Brown"
"Hurrah!"
"Meditation On Orpheus"
"Death Is the Hunter"

"Death Is the Hunter"
"Classic Kite Tails"
"Meditation On Orpheus"
"Hurrah!"

"Here and Now With Watchers"

Other articles listed in the bibliography provided information, but they were minimally helpful in preparing this thesis. The literature discussed in this chapter, however, should prove especially beneficial to readers interested in seeking additional information.
CHAPTER III

THE FIRST PERIOD

Hawkins' dance career reflects the influence of his background environment, education, and his early modern dance training. Both environment and education provided inspiration for many of his dances. His years with Martha Graham gave him performance experience in modern dance as well as an opportunity to choreograph new works. In addition, Hawkins was introduced to many new artistic concepts and to the managerial aspects of running a dance company through his work with the Graham group. These ideas and experiences would be extremely useful to him when he formed his own company.

The Years Prior to Modern Dance Exposure

Hawkins was born in Colorado and spent his childhood years in the American Southwest. He has continued to have a strong interest in that part of the country and its culture, in particular, the American Indian. It is interesting to note that prior to committing himself to a dance career, Hawkins returned to the Southwest to study the native Indian dances to "see and feel if a grown man could dance without being a fool." The search proved successful, since, over forty years later, he is still dancing and choreographing. He found dance to be a valid career for a man in a field that, at that time, was almost

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entirely dominated by women. A man could dance and still be a man. Besides affirming this idea, the time Hawkins spent in the Southwest also affected his choreography. The Indian influence is still a part of his work as evidenced by his most recently performed piece, "Plains Daybreak."^2

Another early influence in Hawkins' life was the study of Ancient Greece. He graduated from Harvard with a major in Greek Literature and Art. ^3 His education helped to make him a skilled writer and also gave him numerous sources for substantiating his theories. He has drawn upon his background in Greek studies for choreographic subject matter as well. "The Strangler," a piece based on the Oedipus legend, and "Greek Dreams, With Flute," a dance with Grecian costumes and a traditional Greek Theatre format, can both be related to his major studies at Harvard. ^4

**Early training**

Hawkins was first introduced to dance while he was still studying at Harvard when he attended a performance by modern dancer Harald Kreutzber. Kreutzberg was a European dancer who came to the States in the 1930's and met with considerable success, giving "American audiences generous glimpses of his faultless dancing and his unique

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characterizations, some macabre, others frothy, still others poetic."\(^5\) Hawkins was apparently impressed for he then began his search for the validity of men as dancers.

Hawkins' next step was to commit himself to a career in dance. He enrolled at The School of American Ballet where director/choreographer, George Balanchine, considered Hawkins "his most promising beginning choreographer."\(^6\) Hawkins was a strong, tall man whose athletic body was well-suited to the rigors of ballet training. In 1936, with his budding talent as a performer and choreographer, he was asked to become a member of Lincoln Kirstein's newly formed Ballet Caravan. This new touring group offered members an opportunity to choreograph as well as to perform around the country.\(^7\) Hawkins' first work for the company was an abstract ballet, "Show Piece." Included in the dance was a virtuoso solo for Hawkins; one which used his talents to the fullest. The work became a part of the Ballet Caravan touring repertory.\(^8\)

**Introduction to Modern Dance**

It was in "Show Piece," with its impressive solo, that Martha Graham first saw Hawkins perform. The occasion was a Ballet Caravan


\(^6\) Sabin, "What Comes After the Avant-Garde." op. cit., p. 46.


\(^8\) McDonagh, *Martha Graham*. op. cit., p. 128.
concert at the Bennington College Summer School in 1937. Following the performance, she went backstage to greet the company, in particular, Hawkins. Ballet was not popular at Bennington, the bastion of modern dance. That Graham would single out Hawkins, a ballet dancer, for a compliment pleased and surprised him.

Hawkins remembered this meeting, and being somewhat dissatisfied with his progress under Balanchine, he decided to investigate Graham's work. In 1938, he enrolled in one of her technique courses "to see firsthand what she was doing and whether there was anything that would be of help to him." Aggressive and bold, Hawkins asked for permission to watch the rehearsals for Graham's new work, "American Document," and after a period of time, he even requested a walk-on part. In four weeks, she revised the dance. Hawkins became the first man to appear in one of Graham's works and the first male member of her company. As Mazo so succinctly put it, "Hawkins was to become Graham's leading dancer (second to her), assistant, lover and, for two years, husband, before the relationship tore and he set out on his own as a choreographer."

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9McDonagh, Complete Guide to Modern Dance. op. cit., p. 359.
10McDonagh, Martha Graham. op. cit., p. 118.
11loc. cit., p. 131.
12loc. cit., pp. 132-133.
Working With Graham

During his tenure with Graham, Hawkins learned much about the business end of running a dance company. In becoming a member of Graham's group, he also became its bookkeeper. In addition, he took over the responsibility for the Company's personal luggage and costumes while touring in an effort to systematically organize this operation. Another responsibility that Hawkins took over was soliciting funds to keep the Graham Company solvent. Money was needed to pay for costumes, an orchestra, theatre rental, publicity, and hopefully, wages for the dancers. These experiences gave Hawkins a head start in dance management when he formed his own company.

Collaboration with other professional artists was a new concept for Hawkins during his years with Graham. She had been collaborating with professional musician, Louis Horst, for many years. Hawkins, however, was responsible for bringing Isamu Noguchi, the sculptor, and Martha Graham together for their effective collaboration on "Herodiade" and "Appalachian Spring." Hawkins also worked with Noguchi on his own early works, "John Brown" and "Stephen Acrobat." Noguchi designed sets that were not directly representational but provided the essence or idea behind the dance.

Hawkins was also responsible for raising funds that allowed Graham to have an orchestrated score for "Deaths and Entrances"

\[14\] McDonagh, Martha Graham. op. cit., pp. 144, 153.
\[15\] Grausam, op. cit., p. 39.
rather than using only a piano and percussion. The use of orchestrated scores and live music was to become a Hawkins trademark in the future. Finally, he encouraged Graham to schedule a week on Broadway with a hired orchestra, an idea unheard of in 1944. The season was successful enough for the company to break even. It was a major step for modern dance to survive on Broadway. Hawkins continued the idea of collaboration with other artists in all of his dances as well as insisting on the use of live music, and full orchestras whenever possible, when he began working on his own.

Early Choreography

Hawkins continued to choreograph during his years as a member of Graham's company, but it was not until she allowed him to show "John Brown" on her spring program in 1944 that Hawkins received much critical notice, and that first review was rather negative. Success around such a prominent star as Graham was not easy to attain.

In a few of his early pieces, Hawkins was able to work with some of Graham's design collaborators. In 1940, Edythe Gilford, already a successful costume designer for Graham in such works as "American Document" and "El Penitente," designed the costumes for his "Liberty Tree." Charlotte Trowbridge, who designed the costumes for Graham's

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16 McDonagh, Martha Graham. op. cit., p. 165.
18 loc. cit., p. 184.
"Punch and Judy" and "Land Be Bright," worked with Hawkins in 1940 on another dance, "Yankee Bluebitches."\(^{20}\) Although he did not continue working with these same women after leaving Graham, he did continue the practice of working closely with his costume designers.

Hawkins also began a tradition of working with the music of American composers during this period. Some examples include the use of Hunter Johnson's music in "Yankee Bluebitches,"\(^{21}\) and Aaron Copeland's music in "Curtain Raiser," both choreographed in 1942.\(^{22}\) This practice of using the works of American composers was also one he would continue using when he began creating dances for his own company.

Two of Hawkins' pieces from this period have received considerable critical and historical attention, while the rest of his works choreographed during the time he was still a Graham dancer have been largely lost or ignored. These two pieces, "John Brown," mentioned earlier, and "The Strangler," were probably recognized and remembered because they were part of programs presented by Graham.\(^{23}\) She was one of the most popular and well-known dancers at that time and anything she was involved with received considerable attention. "John Brown" was based on the story of the leader of the 1859 raid on Harper's Ferry.\(^{24}\)

\(^{20}\) loc. cit., p. 513.  \(^{21}\) ibid.  \(^{22}\) loc. cit., p. 123.

\(^{23}\) McDonagh, Martha Graham. op. cit., pp. 184, 209.

"The Strangler" was based on the Oedipus legend. It is interesting to note that Hawkins experimented with using an actor to read lines as the dancers performed in both of these dances, an idea Graham was working with at the time. 25

Another reason "John Brown" has received attention is that it has remained a part of the Hawkins repertory as an example of dance in its second function. 26 Dance in its second function is dance that attempts to tell a story or convey a meaning while first function dance is simply movement for its own sake. Hawkins now works almost exclusively with dance in its first function.

Critics and historians have found Hawkins' work during this time to be highly imitative of Graham's choreography, indicating her strong influence on him. McDonagh points out that "'John Brown,' with its concentration on an American theme and the use of spoken text, bore a strong resemblance to Graham's work, and it was impossible to beat her at her own game, both intrinsically and in the eyes of others." 27

Therefore, his success as a choreographer was not to occur during his years with Graham even though he gained a reputation as a talented performer.

Graham and Hawkins had begun their tempestuous relationship in

25 McDonagh, Martha Graham. op. cit., p. 209.
27 McDonagh, Martha Graham. op. cit., p. 184.
1939. She made use of him as a male dancer who could add great depth to her work. He learned much from her both as a performer and a choreographer. After working together for ten years, they married in 1948 when Hawkins was 39 and Graham was 56. The marriage may have been a final effort by them to mend their tenuous relationship, but it was difficult for two such dynamic and opinionated people to work together, let alone make a marriage successful. After a mercurial relationship, Graham and Hawkins, on a foreign tour in 1949, had an argument that in effect ended their marriage, although the divorce was not finalized until 1953. Certainly their professional and personal relationship had a profound effect on Hawkins' dancing and choreography.

Dance critic Marcia Siegel has compared Hawkins' career to the career of Ted Shawn, one of Hawkins' predecessors and the co-founder of the Denishawn dance company. Shawn was the husband and partner of Ruth St. Denis, one of America's earliest modern dancers. He eventually found himself unable to work with her and left to found his own all-male company. It is an interesting comparison and one that sheds some light on Hawkins' work when he was involved with Graham. Siegel suggests that both men were trying to find validity as a "dancing male," and that both were working with an extremely dominant female. In addition, both men were personally involved and

28 loc. cit., p. 140.
30 loc. cit., p. 217.
married to their respective partners. Shawn's answer was to form his own company and work only with male dancers; Hawkins' answer was to "avoid all aggressiveness and conflict." For both men, the answer required a significant change in their style of dancing.

While Hawkins learned much from his association with Martha Graham, his meeting with Lucia Dlugoszewski in 1948 would prove to be perhaps even more significant in his artistic development. They met when Hawkins was looking for a composer to work with him on a new piece of choreography. She was to become one of his strongest supporters and his composer as well as his collaborator in the direction he would take following the Graham years.  

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32 Hughes, "And Miss Dlugoszewski Experiments . . . A Lot." loc. cit.
CHAPTER IV

THE SECOND PERIOD

Hawkins' choreography changed dramatically after he ended his personal and professional relationship with Martha Graham. He began to fully expand on some of the ideas he discovered while working with Graham, and also to investigate some radically new ideas. He started to develop a new, complete philosophy of dance which included a new technique. Aiding in the development were two new artistic collaborators, Lucia Dlugoszewski and Ralph Dorazio.

From 1950 to 1961, Hawkins' choreography consisted of solos and duets. All music for these dances was specifically composed for the dances by Lucia Dlugoszewski, and all set and costume designs were done by sculptor Ralph Dorazio. For Hawkins, it was a time for experimenting and testing his new philosophy. He spent more than three years developing his ideas, and presented his first concert on January 1, 1953.

Philosophy

Hawkins began changing his philosophy because he felt that


"new choreography [was] not enough any more." All that was happening in modern dance at that time was the creation of new dances using the same technique and choreographic concepts that had been used over the past thirty years. The last introduction of a new direction in modern dance had been Martha Graham's choreography and technique. Hawkins saw that modern dance was stagnating and needed the infusion of new ideas.

Hawkins stated that his "purpose as a choreographer was to restore pure poetry to movement." That initial idea, that dance should be poetically beautiful, was his starting point. He believed "that pure dance art is never diagrammatic nor ideologic—rather it is poetic in preserving the 'initial innocence of the sensuous.'" He found that poetry in movement did not exist in Graham's work, nor did it exist in any other Western dance form. Achieving his purpose, to create poetically beautiful movement, would require a shift in his philosophy and a new technique.

To do this, Hawkins removed narrative from his dances. Rather than trying to tell a story, he began using associated movement sequences to create a concept of feeling. He felt the use of a

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6 McDonagh, The Rise and Fall and Rise of Modern Dance. op. cit., p. 43.
story line detracted from the audience's appreciation of the beauty of the movement. As Hawkins himself says,

The fact is that with the use of abstractionism all the arts have two levels on which to work. In other words, in many dances there is nothing to understand—no message, no story—simply movement in all its beauty of design, fluidity, and exciting dynamics.7

Therefore, he did away with the concept of second function, discussed previously, and began working strictly with dance in its first function; concentrating on the beauty and flow of the movement of his dances.

Also, an examination of the concept of time in dance became a part of Hawkins' new philosophy. By redefining his concept of time, he also redefined his concept of space. Hawkins believed that time should be sensed instant by instant; both in the movement itself and in its relationship to sound.8 This concept meant dealing with sound differently. The composer and choreographer, in creating a dance that experienced movement and sound instant by instant, had to work together intimately. In addition, Hawkins found that time and space are directly related. He says, "Actually if time is sensed intuitively instant by instant, the space is created automatically point by point."9 He added this idea, that time directly affects the accompaniment and the space created by the movement, to his new philosophy.

7 Nadel and Miller, op. cit., p. 208.
9 Ibid.
Related to Hawkins' concept of time was his concept of immediacy. This idea of immediacy required the dancer to have "complete presence and awareness of mind and body in moment-to-moment relationship, simultaneously here, now." Dlugoszewski, in the dance composition class which she teaches for Hawkins, provides an excellent example of the immediacy concept. She describes a Buddhist monk who, as he is walking, constantly says "Now I am walking," with each step he takes. He is completely focused on the action he is doing. As Hawkins says, "For me, the momentness (sic) of dance is one of its most precious gifts." But Hawkins also required his audience to experience his choreography using this concept of immediacy. This requirement can be directly related to his decision during this time period not to choreograph second function dances. He did not want the audience to look for meanings in his pieces, but instead to experience the dance moment by moment as it happens.

Hawkins' concept of immediacy is based in Oriental thought which perhaps accounts for the difficulty Western audiences have understanding it. Dlugoszewski explains that "what is happening is the building of a new tradition embracing a world based on the most sophisticated Western thought as it joins with Oriental Wisdom."  

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12. ibid.  
His use of musicians onstage as a part of the dance is also an Oriental idea taken from traditional Japanese theatre. Hawkins believes that,

the Western dance artist is ready to learn from the oriental that his function is to present ideas of enlightenment, and in this way to reconfirm the intuitions that each member of the audience has latent within him about how he can mature and fulfill all the possibilities of a complete and meaningful life.14

Hawkins attempts to show us through his choreography that Oriental and Western ideas can combine to provide better dance.

Finally, Hawkins incorporated a common, but important idea into his philosophy of dance by involving himself in every aspect of any of his dances. His close collaboration with his composers, set designers, costumers, and lighting designers assures that his idea for a dance is complemented by every aspect of production.15

Technique

Hawkins had to change his style of moving in order to fulfill his new philosophy. Neither his ballet training, nor the technique of Martha Graham, were suitable tools for conveying his ideas. After carefully examining both, Hawkins went on to develop his own technique.

Of ballet, Hawkins decided that "it was too much like a diagram and, for me, too much of the indescribable pure poetry of movement

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14Cohen, The Modern Dance: Seven Statements of Belief. op. cit., p. 44.

15McDonagh, Complete Guide to Modern Dance. op. cit., p. 360.
had to be left out."\textsuperscript{16} He also found that ballet did not allow for the sensuousness of the human body "in technique, costume and subject matter."\textsuperscript{17} Ballet did not use the strength and suppleness of the spine, its costumes were stiff and unnatural, and its subject matter required artificial relationships between men and women. Therefore, Hawkins' first goal was "to develop a style, to define a quality of movement that would go beyond the balletic dogma laid down by Noverre ... of dancing as 'an imitation of perfect nature.'"\textsuperscript{18} Though ballet had existed for more than one hundred years, longevity and popularity were not enough to make ballet technique "right" in Hawkins' eyes.

Hawkins also found many things wrong with Graham's style when he examined it. He felt that her style involved strain and injury which was not necessary in dance. Both Graham and Hawkins had sustained injury while working in her technique: Graham in 1949 while on her European tour, and Hawkins during rehearsal in 1948.\textsuperscript{19} In addition, he found that the Graham technique was based on stressed energy which he found to be contrary to basis kinesthetic principles, and resulting in strain and injury to the body. Thus, he began to work on the concept of the flow of energy.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{16} Cohen, \textit{The Modern Dance: Seven Statements of Belief}. op. cit., p. 39.

\textsuperscript{17} loc. cit., p. 43.

\textsuperscript{18} Woodworth, "Opening the Eye of Nature." op. cit., p. 8.


\textsuperscript{20} McDonagh, \textit{Martha Graham}. op. cit., p. 218.
Because his past dance training did not satisfy his choreographic and philosophic needs, Hawkins began to search for a dance technique that would eliminate stress and injury and promote the flow of movement and also carefully studied the principles of Mabel Ellsworth Todd, one of the first researchers and teachers of body mechanics and kinesiology.\(^{21}\) Hawkins was determined that his technique and philosophy would be based on careful research.

Hawkins also drew from Oriental thought in the development of his technique. He believed that he could fuse Western thought with that of the Orient, and he began to specifically examine Zen philosophy. He found that Zen philosophy reinforced his idea of letting the movement happen, rather than investing it with "psychological willfulness and physical tension."\(^{22}\) All of this investigation led Hawkins to develop a technique that tried to use the body intelligently and efficiently through the use of kinesthetic principles. He also concentrated on working with the cyclical use of energy, or "free flow," rather than Graham's concept of bound flow energy.\(^{23}\)

Hawkins began to watch the natural movement of animals with his new concepts of poetic, natural movement, free flow energy, and kinesthetically correct movement in mind. He found animal movement to be effortless whereas men used too much effort, so he began to

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\(^{22}\) loc. cit., p. 318.

\(^{23}\) loc. cit., p. 317.
search for the "animal body within himself." Using the movement of animals as an example and his knowledge of kinesiology, Hawkins tried to discover the natural way for the human body to move. He found that the strength of the body is in the pelvis and that all movement of the spine and extremities could be initiated from the pelvis.

Using this information, Hawkins began to reevaluate the traditional dance concepts of gravity, dynamics, and flow. Instead of trying to conquer gravity, Hawkins tried cooperating with it. His dynamics became subtler with more degrees between high and low. He also found that the flow of dance did not have to be percussive, that instead, there was beauty in smooth transition from movement to movement. The use of these new concepts necessitated the development of new ways of moving.

The end result of Hawkins' work was a new technique that was consistent with his philosophy of dance and provided him with a movement vocabulary for his choreography. He was no longer producing new choreography that used an existing technique, he was working with a totally new way of dancing and choreographing. According to Rochlein, Hawkins was applying perception to technique, "creating, thus, movement that is especially purely sensed as compared to movement

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26 McDonagh, Martha Graham. op. cit., p. 281.
expressing some thesis, emotion, or visual diagram." This was consistent with his new philosophy. Hawkins now had a philosophy of dance and a new technique with which to choreograph.

Specific Choreography

After leaving Graham and her company in 1949, Hawkins choreographed a new dance called "openings of the (eye)." Applying his new philosophy and technique, he created a dance that was characterized by supple, flowing movements and sustained balances. The dance was performed by Hawkins and another dancer, Nancy Lang. Working closely with scenic designer, Ralph Dorazio, Hawkins costumed the dance in simple leotards that revealed the human form. Lucia Dlugoszewski composed a flute and percussion accompaniment after the dance had been choreographed. The dance had no storyline, and was made up of five sections, using solo and duet passages. Many reviewers, looking vainly for a meaning or storyline in the dance, simply dismissed it as being "little more than pretentious." Hawkins' next work, choreographed over a period of four years, was a little more successful, both critically and philosophically. In this dance, "Here and Now With Watchers," he was able to more clearly communicate his philosophy and technique. Even the title

29 Turner, op. cit., p. 15.
related to his concept of immediacy. Since this dance had no story line, it was also a first function work. It was made up of eight sections, with alternating solos and duets.\(^\text{30}\) The duet sections were performed by a man and a woman, but this fact does not become pertinent until the final three sections. The final duet is a love dance which becomes "an exploration of male/female poetic eroticism."\(^\text{31}\) Hawkins was clearly trying to convey the essence of love between man and woman.

In his program notes for "Here and Now With Watchers," Hawkins tried to clarify for the audience his intention for the dance.

> In the choreography itself far below the level of words I would like to show the miracle of two people, the perfection of the other and the poetry of the space between them.\(^\text{32}\)

The dance had elements of ritual, humor, mystery, and love. It was viewed by some to have a ceremonial Eastern flavor and related directly to the Oriental influence in Hawkins' philosophy. As critic McDonagh points out, the dance "clearly indicated his own individual creative direction."\(^\text{33}\) Nearly everything about the dance was remarkable. In giving the dance a fine review, critic Lillian Olinsky said, "I had just seen a dance that took an entire evening with intermission, involving only two dancers and a startling

\(^{30}\) Popkin, op. cit., p. 125.

\(^{31}\) McDonagh, Complete Guide to Modern Dance. op. cit., p. 361.

\(^{32}\) ibid.

\(^{33}\) loc. cit., pp. 360-61.
juxtaposition of music performed by only one performer (Dlugoszewski)."\textsuperscript{34} Obviously Hawkins had begun to achieve his goals.

Hawkins' next major work, "8 Clear Places," also used music composed by Dlugoszewski. The dance was again made up of eight sections, but in it Hawkins dealt with the phenomena of nature for the first time. He subtitled each section using phrases such as "pine tree," "squash," and "inner feet of the summer fly." The dance was first function since it simply portrayed the essence of these phenomena rather than trying to imitate them.\textsuperscript{35}

Another dance choreographed during this time, "Sudden Snake-Bird," has apparently been lost. No reviews or information concerning this dance were available.

**Collaboration: Music**

An integral part of Hawkins' unique philosophy required that each dance have music composed for it and played live. In Lucia Dlugoszewski, Hawkins found a highly trained musician and composer who could create accompaniment using both her own original instruments as well as traditional scores.\textsuperscript{36} Dlugoszewski had studied music composition with such artists as Felix Salzer and Edgar Varése and had received her piano training from Grete Sultan, all highly regarded in their respective areas in the field of music.\textsuperscript{37} These

\textsuperscript{34} Olinsky, op. cit., p. 123.
\textsuperscript{35} Popkin, op. cit., p. 123.
\textsuperscript{36} McDonagh, Complete Guide to Modern Dance, op. cit., p. 361.
\textsuperscript{37} Norton, M. L. Gordon, op. cit., p. 5.
contacts certainly qualified her to collaborate with Hawkins as a composer.

Because of Dlugoszewski's skill as a composer, Hawkins could work on the total idea for a dance, and then have her compose the music. In this way, he was able to choreograph his dances in silence without being hindered by having to choreograph to an existing score. Dlugoszewski based her music on Hawkins' concept for the dance, following his time structure but not duplicating it. The result was two works of art that worked together, but neither was subordinate to the other. 38

Dlugoszewski has been successful as both a composer for dance and a musician and composer in her own right. Critic Parker Tyler says of her work that her "phonetically inventive and resourceful music scores form an emphasis and a counterpoint for the human abstractiveness of Erick Hawkins' dance." 39 It was and continued to be a successful relationship for both of them.

Collaboration: Set and Costume

Continuing his tradition from the 1940's of working with professional artists on set and costume design, Hawkins began working with sculptor Ralph Dorazio on the dance, "openings of the (eye)." He continued this collaboration with Dorazio on "Here and Now With


Watchers" and "8 Clear Places." For Dorazio, costumes and set become sculptures. He said, "The dance sculpture costume does not come alive until it is seen together with the movement as an exciting totality, the result of a close and unique collaboration."

Dorazio has also worked closely with Dlugoszewski in designing 101 instruments for her use in composing and performing the music for Hawkins' dances. Not only do these instruments provide new and interesting sounds, but they too are pieces of sculpture. The final result of this collaboration between these three artists is three individual works of art that combine to give the audience new choreography, new dance.

Criticism

Although Hawkins had achieved his goal of developing a new philosophy and technique for dance, he had another problem: public and critical acceptance of his work. His ideas of dance were revolutionary, and many people found him difficult to understand, possibly because they were trying too hard. Walter Terry said of Hawkins' early work, "Perhaps he will prove me wrong and at a later date show that he has really developed a valid style of dance, but at present writing he is unable to clearly project his ideas."

For many years, Hawkins received harsh reviews from many critics

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40Dorazio, op. cit., p. 42.
41Ibid.
including *New York Times* critic Clive Barnes. Those harsh reviews began to become more positive when Louis Horst, Martha Graham's former music director and respected dance critic, recognized and praised Hawkins' "Here and Now With Watchers." Horst saw in Hawkins' work "a new invisible virtuosity which was always at the service of the form and poetry."\(^{43}\)

Gaining acceptance for his work would be a difficult battle for Hawkins. Over the next several years, he would continue to refine his art and build on his initial philosophy and technique.

CHAPTER V

THE THIRD PERIOD

From 1962 to 1966, Hawkins clarified his philosophy and continued his choreographic experimentation. To help people understand his philosophy, he published his poetic article, "What Is the Most Beautiful Dance," and his essay, "Pure Poetry." Choreographically, he began to create dances for four people. This greatly increased the choreographic possibilities he had to work with, in both spatial and temporal relationships. These two developments began to help Hawkins create a dance form that the public could understand and appreciate.

Articles Published by Hawkins

"What Is the Most Beautiful Dance," printed in a collection of dance essays by Walter Terry, was Hawkins' clearest explanation of his philosophy to date, and it was in a form that most people could understand: a series of sentences in simple poetic terms. Hawkins explained his concept of gravity by pointing out that to him, the "most beautiful dance" is "Dance that hangs and falls rather than fights." Hawkins was relating his concept that dance should work with gravity rather than against it. He also reinforced his concept

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by saying that beautiful dance is "Dance that knows you must have live musicians as well as live dancers or you have dead music and dead theatre."\(^2\)

In this essay, Hawkins made a rather strong comment about other dance forms which are recognized for their rather acrobatic style. He said that beautiful dance is "Dance that uses virtuosity only in the service of 'poetry,' not as acrobatics misconceived as art."\(^3\) Hawkins also tried to explain his concept of momentness (sic) in the essay. He said that beautiful dance should sense itself "instant by instant," and that it "can be, should be, and is a way of saying now."\(^4\) Through these ideas, he attempted to make his philosophy and technique understandable to the layman.

In another publication entitled "Pure Poetry," Hawkins discussed a problem that people seem to have with modern dance and his dance in particular. He stated that "it is clear that if we do not solve the conflict between men and women, our culture will destroy itself."\(^5\) It was evident from Hawkins' choreography that he was attempting to deal with the conflict from his dances such as "Of Love" and "Angels of the Inmost Heaven" which will be discussed in Chapter Six.

\(^2\)loc. cit., p. 243.
\(^3\)ibid.
\(^4\)loc. cit., p. 242.
\(^5\)Cohen, The Modern Dance: Seven Statements of Belief. op. cit., p. 43.
Specific Dances

Hawkins' first dance using four dancers was entitled "Early Floating." It was choreographed in 1962, and it was a first function work. The dance was "not an organic representation of anything biological even in terms of specific zoological indications - it is not even 'man' though man is the medium." The dancers conveyed the quality of floating through their movement. Critic Diane Heintz said of the work, "'Early Floating' was a prime example of this quality - pure, abstract motion for its own sake, rendered very human and humane by the sense of wonder with which the four dancers experience it and the tenderness with which they related to one another." Again, as in his second choreographic period, Hawkins collaborated with Dlugoszewski and Dorazio on music and set.

"Cantilever," a dance choreographed in 1963, was another first function work. Dorazio created a suspended set piece and costumes using leotards made up of geometric patterns in red, black, and white, while Dlugoszewski composed the music for the dance. Hawkins used "all thrusting movements in nature" as his concept for the movement in the dance. It remains part of Hawkins' repertory today, and is a dynamic, exciting dance to watch. Anna Kisselgoff, in reviewing a 1974 performance of the piece said,

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6Tyler, op. cit., p. 22.


8Norton, Elliot, op. cit.
At one time its rejection of the modern dance creed that movement should express psychology and dramatic incident, as well as Mr. Hawkins' own 'free flow' vocabulary of minimal tension, were highly disconcerting.  "Cantilever" has withstood the test of time and become a popular work.

In his first attempt since "8 Clear Places" to convey some type of concrete theme in his work, Hawkins choreographed "To Everybody Out There" in 1964. As critic Alan Hughes pointed out, "'To Everybody Out There' had something to do with friendship and the lack of it." Hawkins was trying to convey the idea of friendship to the audience without using a story line, keeping the dance in the first function tradition.

Also choreographed in 1964 was "Geography of Noon," a strong example of Hawkins' use of metaphors in his choreography. He said, "In 'Geography of Noon' the dancers are four butterflies. The dance just uses the metaphor of the butterfly, and then makes beautiful movement with it." This idea, that concepts or things can suggest movement yet still not be directly representational, was to become a Hawkins' trademark. The dance used two men and two women and was shape oriented. The dancers did not try to imitate butterflies, they became them. Again, Hawkins collaborated with Dlugoszewski and Dorazio on the score and set design.

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11 Nadel and Miller, op. cit., p. 211.
12 Popkin, op. cit., p. 124.
Hawkins used four male dancers for "Lords of Persia," choreographed in 1965. Ralph Dorazio costumed the dance in stylized polo costumes and gave the dancers polo mallets to use as props. The dance almost seemed like a reaffirmation of Hawkins' early idea that "men can be beautiful dancing and still be virile." Critic Robert Sabin commented, "Seeing 'Lords of Persia' one is aware of a new dimension in speed, a particular largeness and nobility of movement with a sweep of freedom about it." Although the dance used polo as a starting point, it was not an attempt to portray a polo match. It was purely beautiful movement performed by four men.

An exception in Hawkins' choreography during this time was a solo dance entitled "Naked Leopard." Hawkins choreographed the dance in 1965 and performed it himself. He used an already composed score for cello by Zoltan Kodaly as accompaniment. "Naked Leopard" was the only solo choreographed by Hawkins during this time and also the only dance using an existent score. Ralph Dorazio, however, created the costume, a primitive loin cloth. The dance examines the animal man, an integral concept in Hawkins' philosophy. Critic Diane Heintz points out that "'Naked Leopard' uses a caged leopard as a symbol of the animal innocence locked inside man." Again Hawkins had used an animal metaphor to convey a concept from his philosophy of dance.

13 loc. cit., p. 126.
14 Sabin, "What Comes After the Avant-Garde." op. cit., p. 58.
15 Heintz, "Hawkins Dance Company Dazzling." op. cit.
To clarify the difference between first and second function dances for his audience, Hawkins began showing "John Brown" with his new works. The dance was choreographed in 1945 and was discussed in detail in Chapter Three. The dance, which told the story of the American historical figure, John Brown, was obviously a second function dance. It enabled audiences to better understand Hawkins' new philosophy and technique, and the idea of first function dance. Unfortunately, this practice hurt Hawkins critically at times. Critic Marcia Siegel, upon seeing a program that included "Cantilever," "Early Floating," and "Lords of Persia," as well as "John Brown," said in her review, "'John Brown' has a much more communicative range of movement."¹⁷

Criticism

Hawkins still had trouble with dance critics during his third period of development. If his dances were reviewed, the opinions were lukewarm at best. One of his dances, "Dazzle on a Knife's Edge" choreographed in 1966, was not even covered by the major dance publications such as the New York Times or Dance Magazine, perhaps because his work still had not gained much public acceptance.

Critical support did come from Harvey Rochlein who, in his book, Notes on Contemporary American Dance, pointed out that "The methods of Hawkins and Dlugoszewski, because they are primarily concerned with


perception, are delicate and subtle in a way that is often difficult to put into words."\(^{18}\) Rochlein proceeded to try and do just that. He understood that Hawkins had discovered a new technique and movement vocabulary. Rochlein recognized what Hawkins was trying to do for his audiences. In the same book he says, "With Erick Hawkins' radically new movement quality of 'free flow' we become perhaps more human than we ever dared as a culture to become before—more tender, more sensitive, more open."\(^{19}\) Rochlein's comments were the beginning of the critical acceptance, and in some cases, acclaim, that Hawkins would receive in the 1970's.

\(^{18}\) Rochlein, op. cit., p. 14

\(^{19}\) loc. cit., p. 6.
CHAPTER VI

THE FOURTH PERIOD

During this period, Hawkins continued writing and published "The Body Is a Clear Place" in 1969.¹ He also continued his choreographic experimentation by increasing the number of dancers he worked with from four to between six and nine. As before, the increased number of dancers allowed him to work with a broader range of temporal and spatial relationships. In addition, Hawkins began using scores that called for a larger number of musicians, at times even full orchestras.

"The Body Is a Clear Place"

This article is Hawkins' most articulate explanation of his technique and philosophy. He fully documents support for his philosophical concepts with empirical research. He points out that, "Only through scientific knowledge, through obeying the laws of nature in human movement, can one avoid ineptness, limitation, dysfunction, and injury to the organism."²

In the article, Hawkins goes on to explain the errors in other dance philosophies, carefully verifying each error with scientific evidence. He says, "The error consists in believing that because it

²loc. cit., p. 34.
is possible, it is desirable."³ From this generalization, Hawkins points out the three errors he sees in dance theory: an incorrect kinesthetic concept of the body, the concept that dance must make movement happen rather than letting it happen, and the practice of excentering, or holding the body out of alignment, rather than letting it remain in its natural posture. He concludes from this research that "scientific truth, correctness, efficiency in movement can be the only keystone to beauty."⁴

Hawkins adds the idea of love to these concepts. When put all together, he finds that he has a definition of beautiful dance. "Beautiful dancing is, then, always about love told with love which is with the most heightened perception, with effortless, free-flowing muscles that can both feel and love."⁵

Specific Dances

"Tightrope," choreographed in 1968, had a score for orchestra composed by Dlugoszewski. Many reviewers were still looking for dramatic overtones in Hawkins' work and thought they saw suggestions of myth in the dance. However, as critic Diane Heintz said, "Numerous components of 'Tightrope' are resonant with mythical overtones, yet the work is valid as pure dance."⁶

³ibid.
⁴loc. cit., pp. 34-35.
⁵loc. cit., p. 39.
⁶Heintz, "Hawkins Dance Company Dazzling." op. cit.
Hawkins' next work, "Black Lake," is considered by many to be a masterpiece. The dance, choreographed in 1969, used six dancers and was divided into eight sections. The idea for the dance came from an examination of natural phenomena. The title of the dance, "Black Lake," was a metaphor for the night sky. The sections were subtitled with poetic titles such as "sun setting," "night birds," and "moon with clouds." Rather than telling a story with natural phenomena as the realistic subject, Hawkins tries to convey merely the essence of these elements. Critic Parker Tyler points out that "'Black Lake' is the human in charade as natural organic and inorganic elements, all concerted to a semi-narrative order of movement."^9

Next Hawkins choreographed two dances that have been termed his "love dances," "Of Love" and "Angels of the Inmost Heaven," both in 1971. Though he costumed them in G-strings, the dances did not suggest sexual overtones. Rather, they dealt with the beauty of sensuousness. "Angels of the Inmost Heaven" is basically a celebration of the human body, and it should be appreciated for just that. "Of Love," on the other hand, is remarkable for several reasons. The set was designed by Helen Frankenthaler and was made up of floor-to-ceiling, hand-painted panels. The score, composed by Lucia

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7Popkin, op. cit., p. 127.
9Tyler, op. cit., p. 22.
10Popkin, op. cit., p. 130.
Dlugoszewski, has been called "the most exciting to reach the public in three decades." The dance is about love, but, again, there is no story line involved. Critic Deborah Jowitt said of the dance, "Serenely formal passages make the dance into a kind of ceremony that celebrates an innocent and unashamed sensuousness. There is no attempt to depict any sort of sexual consumation; the dance is an extended haiku of caresses."

Hawkins choreographed two new dances in 1972: "Dawn Dazzled Door" and "Classic Kite Tails." "Dawn Dazzled Door" was a reflection of the oriental aspects of Hawkins' philosophy. The dancers were costumed in kimonos by Ralph Dorazio and the score was by Japanese composer Takemitsu. In reviewing the dance, critic Anna Kisselgoff said,

On a literal level, Mr. Hawkins is presenting us with a facsimile of an Oriental ritual but actually he has created something completely original: A dance in ceremonial form where the slowest turn of the wrist, the scurrying of feet, the deepest of bows, the surprise and swiftness of a fall or turn can bring to mind both the order of the celestial bodies and the place of man in that order.

"Classic Kite Tails" was an antithesis of the oriental influenced "Dawn Dazzled Door." The dance had the All-American flavor of a hoedown and has been called "an appealing hymn to lilting movement."

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11Barnes, "Dance: Hawkins and Tharp—At Home on Broadway. op. cit.


14McDonagh, Complete Guide to Modern Dance. op. cit., p. 364.
The dance had humor and appealed to many critics who had previously been unable to appreciate Hawkins' work. He chose a score by David Diamond and had Stanley Boxer design the dresses and stylized suits for costumes. Critic Deborah Jowitt said, "'Classic Kite Tails' is a party dance, festive and loving: and for pure exuberance and beautiful surprising dancing it has no equal in Hawkins' repertory."\(^\text{15}\)

Hawkins drew upon his studies of Ancient Greece as a starting point for his next dance, "Greek Dreams, With Flute." The costumes and set were designed by Ralph Dorazio, Raya, and Tad Taggart, and each of the six sections had accompaniment selected from the works of six different composers. The dance was basically six vignettes that celebrated ancient Greek life and culture. McDonagh says, "The dance does not purport to have great depth, but, as an idyl of the classical period, it has a great deal of charm."\(^\text{16}\)

In 1974, Hawkins choreographed another dance with Ancient Greece as a theme, "Meditation on Orpheus." The dance was based on the Orpheus myth, but made no attempt to retell the story. It was exactly what the title said it was, a meditation. In reviewing the dance, Alan Kriegsman said, "Hawkins' dance, like the beautifully poised and melodic music which accompanies it, has a sense of ecstatic serenity which is wholly characteristic of his creative impulse."\(^\text{17}\)


"Hurrah!" choreographed in 1975, was based on a "turn-of-the-century Fourth of July celebration in the West." The designs for the dance were by Ralph Dorazio and Nancy Cope with the score by Alan Hovhaness. Many critics saw similarities between "Hurrah!" and "Classic Kite Tails," since both dances had an American flavor. Deborah Jowitt says, "I think that one of the reasons I wasn't crazy about the new 'Hurrah!' was that it expresses picturesquely what 'Classic Kite Tails' expresses with profound simplicity."

Hawkins returned to the Oriental influences in his philosophy when he choreographed "Death Is the Hunter" in 1975. The dance had exquisite masks and costumes by Ralph Lee and Willa Kim and a score by Wallingford Riegger. Kisselgoff said that the dance was "the totally successful integration of onstage musicians and sets—presented as works of art rather than functional decoration." She called "Death Is the Hunter" "a perfect jewel of a theater-piece, enormously moving in what it has to say and totally imaginative in how it says it." The dance shows Death methodically shooting the dancers with his arrows. "Hawkins shows us death as the inevitable completion of nature's endless cycle. It is an Eastern view of mortality, consonant

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21 ibid.
with Hawkins' larger aesthetic outlook."\(^{22}\)

"Parson Weems and the Cherry Tree" was Hawkins' Bicentennial dance. It had a commissioned score by Virgil Thompson and delightful props and paper costumes by four different designers, Ralph Dorazio, Ray Sais, Frank Boros, and Ralph Lee. The dance is Hawkins' version of who really chopped down Washington's cherry tree—George's alter-ego costumed as a clown, and its humor is broad and wonderful. The dance provides comic relief in a concert that contains some of Hawkins' more serious pieces, yet it still contains the characteristic 'freeflow' movement. Critic Janet Light pointed out that "the piece proved that even a choreographer concerned with enlightenment can be entertaining on occasion."\(^{23}\)

"Plains Daybreak" has its roots in the ceremonial dances of the American Indians, yet it is not an attempted imitation of those dances. The dance, choreographed in 1979, shows figures costumed with beautiful masks as animals. Each animal is recognizable by a characteristic thing, such as bird wings for the hawk, and by signature movement statements. The dance is Hawkins' poetic view of "man and his place in the universe."\(^{24}\) His program notes for the dance called it "a ceremony that takes place on the American plains


\(^{23}\)Light, op. cit.

on one of the days at the beginning of the world."\(^{25}\)

Hawkins' newest work, "Agathlon," was premiered during the Company's summer 1979 tour of Italy. The score for the dance was by Dorrance Stalvey and designs are by Hawkins' longtime collaborator, Ralph Dorazio. Unfortunately, there is currently no available review of the work.\(^{26}\)

**Criticism**

During the fourth period, Hawkins began to gain more critical attention and acclaim. His support came first from Anna Kisselgoff, head dance critic for the *New York Times*, and Mark Woodworth, an assistant editor for *Dance Magazine*. Of particular interest is the support Hawkins received from Deborah Jowitt of the *Village Voice*, a youth-oriented paper. This support reflects the almost cult following Hawkins currently has among younger audiences. Lucia Dlugoszewski points out, "What has troubled audiences in the past with Hawkins' dance, his curiously disturbing serenity, is now being easily understood by young audiences who do not resist effortless movement."\(^{27}\)

Another interesting critical development at this time was the reception received following a revival of Hawkins' early work, "Here and Now With Watchers." When the dance was performed in 1976, there was an overflow crowd. This dance, over fifteen years old, was

\(^{25}\) Light, op. cit.

\(^{26}\) Letter to Erick Hawkins, September 1, 1979.

\(^{27}\) Dlugoszewski, "Erick Hawkins: Heir to a New Tradition." op. cit., p. 28.
misunderstood or ignored at its premiere, yet the new audience was very appreciative.  

Dance historian and critic, Don McDonagh, may have discovered the key to appreciating Hawkins' choreography. He said, "The titles often make them seem more complex than they really are, and the secret of enjoyment is to relax and keep one's eyes on the movement." Certainly, this is what Hawkins has been trying to get his audiences and critics to do for nearly thirty years.

Critic Joan Pikula suggests another possible reason for the turn around of critical opinion. In a 1975 Dance Magazine review, she says, "His works no longer (if, indeed, they ever were) created as a representation of the philosophy, but rather are a natural extension of it."  

Whatever the reasons, Hawkins seems to be attaining a growing audience with whom to communicate his ideas, and he has done so without compromising his philosophy and technique. As Deborah Jowitt said, "I wish I could say something about the work of Erick Hawkins without using a single word."


30 Pikula, op. cit., p. 21.

31 Jowitt, "Erick Hawkins Dazzles Carnegie Hall." op. cit.
CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It was the purpose of this study to examine the development of Erick Hawkins' choreographic style as it reflects his philosophy of dance. This was accomplished through an examination of the information available in his own writings and those of others.

The study found that two major background experiences affected Hawkins' choreography: his childhood in the American Southwest, and his studies of Ancient Greece. Both items eventually influenced the themes he used for his dances.

In considering Hawkins' choreographic development, the study showed that his work could be divided into four developmental periods: his introduction to ballet and modern dance through Balanchine and Graham; his formation of his own company and the development of his current philosophy and technique; his publishing of articles and the addition of dancers to his pieces; and the creation of larger works for more dancers and larger orchestras, along with the continued publication of his ideas.

The first period was Hawkins' introduction to ballet and modern dance technique. The period also introduced him to the business aspects of running a dance company. These skills were helpful to Hawkins when he formed his own company. During this time, he also began to work in collaboration with other artists on set, music, and costume
design, a practice that he continued throughout his career. From the problems Hawkins had with ballet and Graham's techniques, he developed his own technique.

During the second period, Hawkins developed the dance philosophy and technique that were the basis for his choreography throughout the rest of his career. He continued collaborating with other artists, working with Lucia Dlugoszewski on music and Ralph Dorazio on costume and set design. The study showed that the key choreographic development during this time, along with the development of his philosophy and technique, was Hawkins' exclusive use of first function in his dances. Critical and audience acceptance of his work at this time was nearly nonexistent.

Hawkins continued to choreograph first function dances during the third period. He increased the number of dancers that he worked with from two to four, increasing the choreographic possibilities for his dances. Hawkins also wrote articles to try and further the understanding of his work. He continued his collaboration with Dlugoszewski and Dorazio. He gained support from critic Harvey Rochlein, but not from many others.

During the fourth period, Hawkins again increased the number of dancers he used, this time to between six and nine dancers. He continued writing in an effort to clarify his philosophy. In addition, Hawkins began working with different composers and designers. The dances continued to convey an idea without telling a story. Critically, Hawkins began to gain the support of several prominent authors and reviewers. The study also showed that Hawkins gained public
acceptance, and even acclaim from young audiences. The dance world
honored him with the 1979 Dance Magazine award, indicating their
recognition of Hawkins' contributions to dance. He continues to
choreograph using the technique and philosophy he developed in the
early 1950's.
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### APPENDIX A

**Chronological Listing of Choreography**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>&quot;Show Piece&quot;</td>
<td>Robert McBride</td>
<td>Keith Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>&quot;Liberty Tree&quot;</td>
<td>Ralph Gilbert</td>
<td>Edythe Gilford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Yankee Bluebitches&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Carlos Dyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>&quot;Trickster Coyote&quot;</td>
<td>Henry Cowell</td>
<td>James W. Harker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The Pilgrim's Progress&quot;</td>
<td>Wallingford Riegger</td>
<td>Phillip Stapp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Primer for Action&quot;</td>
<td>Ralph Gilbert</td>
<td>Carlos Dyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>&quot;Curtain Raiser&quot;</td>
<td>Aaron Copland</td>
<td>None used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>&quot;John Brown&quot;</td>
<td>Robert Richman</td>
<td>Isamu Noguchi</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Charles Mills</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>&quot;Stephen Acrobat&quot;</td>
<td>Robert Evett</td>
<td>Isamu Noguchi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>&quot;The Strangler&quot;</td>
<td>Bohuslav Martinu</td>
<td>Arch Lauterer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>&quot;openings of the (eye)&quot;</td>
<td>Lucia Dlugoszewski</td>
<td>Ralph Dorazio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>&quot;Here and Now With Watchers&quot;</td>
<td>Lucia Dlugoszewski</td>
<td>Ralph Dorazio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Composer</td>
<td>Design</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>&quot;Sudden Snake-Bird&quot;</td>
<td>Lucia Dlugoszewski</td>
<td>None Used</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;8 Clear Places&quot;</td>
<td>Lucia Dlugoszewski</td>
<td>Ralph Dorazio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>&quot;Early Floating&quot;</td>
<td>Lucia Dlugoszewski</td>
<td>Ralph Dorazio</td>
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<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>&quot;Cantilever&quot;</td>
<td>Lucia Dlugoszewski</td>
<td>Ralph Dorazio</td>
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<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>&quot;To Everybody Out There&quot;</td>
<td>Lucia Dlugoszewski</td>
<td>None Used</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Geography of Noon&quot;</td>
<td>Lucia Dlugoszewski</td>
<td>Ralph Dorazio</td>
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<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>&quot;Lords of Persia&quot;</td>
<td>Lucia Dlugoszewski</td>
<td>Ralph Dorazio</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Naked Leopard&quot;</td>
<td>Zoltan Kodaly</td>
<td>Ralph Dorazio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>&quot;Dazzle On a Knife's Edge&quot;</td>
<td>Lucia Dlugoszewski</td>
<td>None Used</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>&quot;Tightrope&quot;</td>
<td>Lucia Dlugoszewski</td>
<td>Tad Taggart</td>
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<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>&quot;Black Lake&quot;</td>
<td>Lucia Dlugoszewski</td>
<td>Ralph Dorazio</td>
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<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>&quot;Of Love&quot;</td>
<td>Lucia Dlugoszewski</td>
<td>Helen Frankenthaler</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Angels of Inmost Heaven&quot;</td>
<td>Lucia Dlugoszewski</td>
<td>Robert Engstrom</td>
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<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>&quot;Classic Kite Tails&quot;</td>
<td>David Diamond</td>
<td>Stanley Boxer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Composer</td>
<td>Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>&quot;Dawn Dazzled Door&quot;</td>
<td>Takemitsu</td>
<td>Ralph Dorazio</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>&quot;Greek Dreams, With Flute&quot;</td>
<td>Claude Debussy</td>
<td>Ralph Dorazio</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Ohama</td>
<td>Raya</td>
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<td>Edgar Varese</td>
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<td>Jolivet</td>
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<td>1974</td>
<td>&quot;Meditation On Orpheus&quot;</td>
<td>Alan Hovhaness</td>
<td>Ray Sais</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Raya</td>
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<td>1975</td>
<td>&quot;Hurrah!&quot;</td>
<td>Virgil Thompson</td>
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<td>Nancy Cope</td>
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<td>&quot;Death Is the Hunter&quot;</td>
<td>Wallingford Rieger</td>
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<td>Willa Kim</td>
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<td>1976</td>
<td>&quot;Parson Weems and the Cherry Tree&quot;</td>
<td>Virgil Thompson</td>
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<td>&quot;Agathon&quot;</td>
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