

"AGNUS DEI: A SUITE OF THREE ORIGINAL MODERN  
DANCE COMPOSITIONS BASED UPON SELECTED  
PARTS OF THE ROMAN  
CATHOLIC MASS"

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We hereby recommend that the Thesis prepared under

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## CHAPTER I

### ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

#### Introduction

Dance, an expression of emotions or ideas through rhythmic movement, has been a means of communication throughout this vast universe. For this reason, the origin of dance is found in the natural tendency of humanity to employ gestures either to supplement or to replace speech.<sup>1</sup> Also, strong emotions which excite the organs of the body to a pitch of exaltation reveal themselves spontaneously through bodily movements.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, these bodily movements developed into the art of dance in the same manner in which speech developed into the arts of poetry and of song.<sup>3</sup> In this connection, Curt Sachs states that:

Before man used substance, stone and word to give expression to his inner emotions, he created in his own body through dance, rhythmical patterns of movement, the plastic sense of space and the vivid representation of a world seen and imagined.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Joost A. M. Meerloo, The Dance (New York: Chilton Co., 1960), p. 42.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Curt Sachs, World History of the Dance (New York: W. W. Norton Co., 1937), p. 3.

Dance has served man also as an outlet for surplus energy, as a medium of self-assertion, and as a means of supreme enjoyment.<sup>1</sup> According to Meerloo, a man who cannot dance is imprisoned in his own ego and does not live well with other men. He lives, instead, in cold thinking and with deeply repressed feelings.<sup>2</sup> In many instances, this same man tends to attach himself to the earth and may never know the ecstasy which may be experienced through the movements of dance.<sup>3</sup> Individuals who have the capacity to make use of the dance agree, however, that it is a primary source of fulfillment and that, because it is an art product, it may afford a complete emotional satisfaction which could never be obtained through less meaningful activities.<sup>4</sup>

Dance is an art form which, in the opinion of the investigator, surpasses all of the other related arts existing within the world of man. According to Ellis, there are only two primary art forms--the art of dance and the art of architecture.<sup>5</sup> He explains further that dance, the first primary art form, is the source of all arts which are expressed within the human person. Other expressive arts within the

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<sup>1</sup>Walter Sorell, The Dance (New York: Grossett and Dunlap, 1967), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Meerloo, op. cit., p. 42.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ted Shawn, Dance We Must (London: Dennis Dobson Limited, 1946), p. 10.

<sup>5</sup>Havelock Ellis, Dance of Life (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1929), p. 34.

human person include those of music, poetry, and drama--sister arts to the dance. The second primary art, architecture, or the art of building, is the source of all arts which lie outside of the human person. Arts of design--sculpture and painting--lie within the art of building.<sup>1</sup> Sachs elaborates upon the importance of dance as surpassing all other related arts by stating that:

The dance is the mother of all the arts. Music and poetry exist in time; painting and architecture in space. But the dance lives at once in time and space.<sup>2</sup>

Because of her interest and background in the area of modern dance and her deep experience as a member of the Roman Catholic Faith, the investigator became interested in the relationship between dance and religion and in the use of dance movement in the Roman Catholic Church. A discussion of these topics follows in order to orient the reader to the background of the thesis undertaken by the investigator.

#### The Relationship Between Dance and Religion

The close association of the words "dance" and "religion" may seem strange to the contemporary reader despite the fact that a harmonious relationship has existed between the two words since prehistoric times. According to Ted Shawn, the origin of dance lies in religion; at first they were one and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 3

the same activity, with religion comprising the content and dance the form.<sup>1</sup> The very essence of primitive man's religion was expressed through movement in that he used the persuasive rhythms of dance to attain common ecstatic experiences with his gods. To primitive man, all of the forces of the universe--the cyclone, the thunder, the lightning, the flood, and the avalanche--were manifestations of malevolent deities.<sup>2</sup> Through dance, he attempted to reach a state of God-consciousness and thus cope with these angry gods. The dance was also an expression of primitive man's religious desires.<sup>3</sup> In clarification of this statement, Meerloo states that, "The combination of rhythmic chant and movement became a religious rite directed toward the liberation of man from the fear and burden of separateness and death."<sup>4</sup> Since dance is an art in which the physical, emotional, and intellectual aspects of self are integrated completely and simultaneously, it is only fitting that man's religious consciousness be expressed in the art of rhythmic movement.<sup>5</sup>

Religious dance is an art which must be expressed by each individual in accordance with his beliefs and with his

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<sup>1</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>Doctor Anne Schley Duggan, Class notes from History and Philosophy of the Dance, HPER, 531W.

<sup>4</sup>Meerloo, op. cit., p. 42.

<sup>5</sup>Margaret Palmer Fisk, "Religious Dancing," Dance Observer (May, 1951), p. 68.



specific forms of worship. It is, therefore, each individual's right to interpret the words of any hymn, psalm, religious prose, or poetry with the symbolic movement which he chooses.<sup>1</sup> America, founded upon the principle of religious freedom, entitles each individual to an opportunity to express his ideas of God without interference or intolerance. In this connection, Ruth St. Denis states that:

Religion means to me, an abiding faith in God and man; a reverence for the Creator and the created, and a special dedication to holding high the dignity, the beauty, and the immortality of man, of which I hold the dance as his greatest symbol.<sup>2</sup>

In the opinion of the investigator, there is no reason why an individual should not dance his religion if he feels so inclined. Fisk states that, "it is only right that we 'Praise the Lord with the dance' in the same manner as our vocal choirs 'Praise the Lord with songs.'"<sup>3</sup>

The dance, with its potentiality for embracing all of the experiences of man, and religion, with its concern for the individual's complete awareness, have discovered a stimulating partnership in religious dance. Although this form of dance was once considered a primitive expression, it is now being accepted as a contemporary religious art.<sup>4</sup> The

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ruth St. Denis, "What Is the Religious Dance?" Dance Observer (May, 1950), p. 51.

<sup>3</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 68.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

use of religious subject matter by dancers is quite common, and the use of dance as a means of religious expression in programs and in churches as part of the worship service has become a regular occurrence today in many parts of the United States. Dances based upon religious themes have been choreographed by many concert dance artists. According to Smith, "The Bible was the literary source used more frequently than any other one [literary] source as inspiration for choreographers during the period of 1929 through 1959."<sup>1</sup> In the opinion of the investigator, religious dance can contribute appreciably to religious worship today.

A discussion of dance movement in the Roman Catholic Church will follow in order to acquaint the reader further with the thesis as a whole.

#### Dance Movement In The Roman Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church is the largest church in Christendom with approximately 575,000,000 members throughout the nations of the world.<sup>2</sup> The Holy Catholic Apostolic Roman Church recognizes the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, as the Vicar of Christ on this earth and as the Head of the Church. It traces its origin from the naming of the Apostles. The

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<sup>1</sup>Nancy Warren Smith, "Modern Dances Based Upon Literary Themes" (unpublished Doctorial dissertation, College of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, Texas Woman's University, 1960).

<sup>2</sup>"The National Catholic Almanac" (Paterson, New Jersey, 1964), p. 7.

authority of Peter as Head of the Church is exercised by his successors as the Bishops of Rome.<sup>1</sup>

The doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church are derived from the faith given by Christ to His Apostles. This faith is sustained by the Holy Scriptures and also by the traditions of the Church. The doctrines are both defined and safeguarded by the Pope when he speaks "ex-cathedra," or as the Head of the Church, stating that he is speaking as such on matters of faith and morals.<sup>2</sup>

The Mass is the principal form of worship in the Roman Catholic Church and is celebrated daily. The three primary parts of the Mass are "The Offertory," "The Consecration," and "The Communion." The liturgy is conducted primarily in Latin although the sermons, the instructions, and the Scriptures are in the language spoken by those comprising the congregation in various countries.<sup>3</sup> The Church commands its members to hear Mass on Sundays and on Holy Days of Obligation.

The Roman Catholic Church is encouraging the appreciation of the religious implications of the arts in the United States, in Europe, and in the mission field. The presentation

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<sup>1</sup>Benson Y. Landis, World Religions (New York: E. E. Dutton and Co., 1965), p. 89.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Reverend John O'Brien, History of the Mass (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1964), p. 3.

of religious dance-dramas is definitely a result of this encouragement. Hugh Benson, a layman in the church who later became a Roman Catholic priest, has written, "We have no more right to condemn the language of the hands and arms than the language of the tongue."<sup>1</sup> The Roman Catholic Church welcomes the native art forms and the artists of the countries into which it goes to conduct its missionary program. For example, in the mission field of Sudan, Africa, seminarists have organized dances to celebrate the various festivals of the Church.<sup>2</sup> The same approach has been used in the more sophisticated cultures of London and Berlin. Roman Catholic seminarists in these two cities have supervised youthful rhythmic groups in performing "Everyman" and in a symbolic choral interpretation of "Rorate" and "Adeste."<sup>3</sup>

Although the art of the religious dance may not be accepted in the sanctuary of all churches, its spiritual attributes can be recognized through the dance productions of various schools, colleges, and universities as well as through public performances.

Renee Foatelli, who has created liturgical dances in France, urges the use of the dance in pageants which interpret

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<sup>1</sup>Hugh Benson, "Papers of a Pariah" (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1907), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Josette Foatelli, Methode de danse religieuse Chretienne (Bruges: Desclee De Brouwer, 1941), p. 19.

<sup>3</sup>Margaret Palmer Fisk, The Art of the Rhythmic Choir (New York: Harper Publishers, 1950), p. 142.

the Mass and suggests that this be done through the art of rhythmic interpretation such as that performed in the Roman Catholic Schools and Universities of the United States.<sup>1</sup> Students in the Oakdale Country Day School in Philadelphia have utilized the art of rhythmic interpretation in their study of the Roman Catholic, Protestant, Quaker, and Jewish faiths.<sup>2</sup> Grailville, a School of the Apostolate for Catholic Young Women in Loveland, Ohio, at one time offered not only a one to two-year course which included creative and devotional study, but also a course in the "interpretative dance."<sup>3</sup> At this same school, the late Dom Ermin Virty, O. S. B. of St. Louis, then editor of Caecelia Music Magazine, taught courses based upon the chants of the church and encouraged the symbolic interpretation of religious music through movement.<sup>4</sup> In 1948, the students of Grailville created a dance-drama entitled "The Rhythmic Festival."<sup>5</sup> The next year, they presented "Everyman" in which there was a rhythmic choir which interpreted in movement selected Psalms set to the music of Gregorian Chants.<sup>6</sup> Xavier University in New Orleans, Louisiana, has presented interpretative dance-dramas on many occasions

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<sup>1</sup>Foatelli, op, cit., p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>Fisk, op, cit., p. 170.

<sup>3</sup>Marie Sutter, Instructor at Grailville, School of the Apostolate for Catholic Young Women, Loveland, Ohio.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.                      <sup>5</sup>Fisk, op, cit., p. 170

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

in conjunction with the celebration of special Feast Days and Holy Days.<sup>1</sup>

In the celebration of the Roman Catholic Mass, there are definite, stylized movements and postures which lend themselves to interpretation through dance. The action of the Roman Catholic Mass creates the effect of symbolic movement which closely resembles disciplined, sacred dance. In this connection, Father Benson states that, "It [the Roman Catholic Mass] is no less than a sacred dance."<sup>2</sup> In a recent drama, Father Malachy, a Roman Catholic priest, remarked, "But, after all, Holy Mass is really a dance, isn't it? A beautiful dance upon the altar to Gregorian Music."<sup>3</sup> The priest and altar boys perform symbolic movements in the transferring of candles, books, and censers and in the execution of formal patterns of walking and kneeling. Jacques Maritain, sensitive to the beauty of the disciplined movement within the Mass, has written, "There is nothing more beautiful than a High Mass, a dance before the Ark in slow motion."<sup>4</sup>

Mary Grice,<sup>5</sup> dance enthusiast, with the assistance of a priest and the Wichita Dance Guild of Wichita, Kansas,

<sup>1</sup>Janice Howard, Former Student at Xavier University, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1965.

<sup>2</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 171.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Jacques Maritain, Art and Scholasticism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939), p. 32.

<sup>5</sup>Mary Grice, "The Drama of the Mass in Dance," Dance Magazine (August, 1953), p. 59.

produced and presented "The Drama of the Mass in Dance" in 1951. The dance-drama was based upon the idea of a communicant's recalling his first Mass. Singers and dancers participating in this presentation came from various Wichita churches, both Protestant and Catholic. Father Celestine Baumann, O. F. M., Assistant Pastor of the St. Anthony's Church in Wichita, Kansas, constructed and arranged the stage level to be used with the altar and enacted the role of the celebrant in the dance production. Principal parts of the Mass which were danced were the "Kyrie," "Credo," "Offertory," "Sanctus," "Consecration," "Elevation," and "Communion." Gregorian and polyphonic musical scores, in addition to the traditional music for the Mass, were used as accompaniment for the dance-drama. The performance was presented before a capacity audience in the Wichita University Auditorium and received local and national radio and newspaper publicity.<sup>1</sup> Later, a film was made of the performance for presentation on television and for rental services through The Sacred Dance Guild, supported by the Department of Worship and Arts of the National Council of Churches.<sup>2</sup>

According to Fisk, all religious art stems from man's desire to reveal his awareness of God; the Roman Catholic Church respects the revelation of this awareness manifested through sacred music, painting, sculpture, poetry, and drama

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



as well as through symbolic movement.<sup>1</sup> A true Christian art, however, knows no barriers of creed or dogma; it is neither exclusively Roman Catholic nor Protestant.<sup>2</sup> Although dance is one of the neglected arts of the church, it may be used effectively to reveal spiritual truths and to deepen the participant's own devotional living.

#### Statement of the Problem

Because of the investigator's particular interest in choreography based upon religious themes, the present study was undertaken. It entailed the development of AGNUS DEI: A Suite of Three Original Modern Dance Compositions Based Upon Selected Parts of the Roman Catholic Mass, the writing of the narration which was utilized as a transitional device for unifying the suite of three original modern dance compositions, and the production and the presentation of the suite entitled AGNUS DEI in three public performances. Finally, the investigator developed a written report of the study as a whole, including a description of the three original modern dance compositions entitled "The Offertory," depicting the offering of one's self to God in the form of bread and wine; "The Consecration," depicting Transubstantiation in which the substance of the bread becomes the substance of the

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<sup>1</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 172.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



Body of Christ and the substance of the wine becomes the substance of His Blood; and "The Communion" depicting the receiving of Our Lord in the form of Bread and Wine.

#### Definitions And/Or Explanations of Terms

The following definitions and/or explanations of terms were established to clarify basic terminology utilized throughout the study:

A. Modern Dance: The investigator accepts the explanation of Turner, who states that:

Modern, or contemporary dance, is an art form that uses movement as a medium of expression. It is the result of intentional ordering of movement by a choreographer. The movement is created in response to the re-experiencing of emotional values, which are thus given a new existence. The expressive movement is highly selected, spatially designed and organized through rhythmic structure; the result is the communication of an idea, mood, feeling, state or situation.<sup>1</sup>

B. Dance Composition: Margaret H'Doubler adeptly defines dance composition as:

The way in which inner experience is brought into existence by technique not only as skillfully executed movement but as artful relating and integrating of these movements so that their organization results in a dance symbolizing unity between content and the form of its expression.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Marjery J. Turner, Modern Dance for High School and College (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1957), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Margaret H'Doubler, Dance A Creative Art Experience (New York: F. S. Crofts and Company, 1940), p. 146.

*note*

C. The investigator accepts the definition of "suite" established by Isaac K. Funk as "a succession of things forming a series; a set of things having a certain dependence upon each other and intended to be used together."<sup>1</sup>

D. The investigator accepts the definition of "choreography" by Turner as "the art and craft of composing a dance; the construction and ordering of movement phrasing, rhythm, design, and dynamics."<sup>2</sup>

E. The investigator accepts the following definitions and explanations of "Roman Catholic Mass" by Bishop Fulton J. Sheen and Henri Daniel-Rops who state that:

The Mass is the application and the projection through space and time of the redemptive love of Christ on the Cross.<sup>3</sup>

.....

The Mass is the summation and complement of all man's hopes and good purposes.<sup>4</sup>

.....

The Mass is par excellence a drama in which is ceaselessly enacted before us a tragedy ever-lastingly prolonged.<sup>5</sup>

F. Religious Dance: The investigator uses the term religious dance interchangeably with such terms as sacred dance and dance and religion to denote all dances based upon religious themes.

<sup>1</sup>Isaac K. Funk (ed.), New Standard Dictionary of the English Language (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1951), p. 2418.

<sup>2</sup>Marjery J. Turner, Dance Handbook (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1959), p. 128.

<sup>3</sup>Fulton J. Sheen and Henri Daniel-Rops, This Is the Mass (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1959), p. 16.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

### Purposes of the Study

The general purpose of the present study was to choreograph a suite of three original modern dance compositions based upon selected parts of the Roman Catholic Mass, to produce and present the original suite of dances in one or more public performances, and to prepare a written report of the thesis as a whole. Specific purposes underlying the study included: choreographing a suite of three modern dance compositions based upon selected parts of the Roman Catholic Mass--"The Offertory," "The Consecration," and "The Communion;" writing the narration which was utilized as a transitional device for unifying the three original modern dance compositions comprising the suite entitled AGNUS DEI; producing and presenting the suite of three modern dance compositions in one or more public performances during the academic year of 1966-1967; and preparing a written report of the thesis as a whole, including a description of the suite of three modern dance compositions with respect to the choreography, the accompaniment, the narration, the costumes, the stage properties, and the lighting.

### Limitations of the Study

The choreography for AGNUS DEI was limited to three modern dance compositions based upon selected parts of the Roman Catholic Mass--"The Offertory," "The Consecration," and "The Communion." A further limitation of the study was

that all of the dances were choreographed by the investigator in accordance with her technical proficiencies and those of the subjects participating in the study. A minimal time limit of twenty minutes was established for the presentation of the suite of three original modern dance compositions. A further limitation was the selection of nine performers chosen from among the private dance students taught by the investigator.

### Survey of Previous Studies

Although a survey of completed research studies disclosed that the present investigator did not duplicate that of any other investigator, the following related studies were examined closely since they were concerned with the development of original dance compositions.

Osborne<sup>1</sup> choreographed, produced, and presented in a series of public performances a suite of five modern dance compositions based upon a prism of emotions as seen through selected symbolic associations with identifiable objects utilized as stage properties. The suite, which was entitled Through a Glass Darkly, was comprised of five dances in the sequences in which they were listed: "The Vacuum," "The Point Center," "The Tendrils of Restriction," "The Knife-Edge," and "The Common Bond." The suite of five original

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<sup>1</sup>Kay Osborne, "Through a Glass Darkly: A Suite of Five Original Dance Compositions Based Upon A Prism of Emotions as Seen Through Selected Symbolic Associations with Identifiable Objects Utilized as Stage Properties" (unpublished Master's thesis, College of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, Texas Woman's University, 1965).

modern dance compositions was structured as a group of parts indicated by the letters ABCDE. The unifying theme was a prism of emotions ranging from the total lack of communication between human beings, illustrated in "The Vacuum," to the mutually enriching relationships between human beings, depicted in "The Common Bond." Musical accompaniment for the suite of dances was composed by an assistant professor of Music at the Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia. Narration was utilized as a transitional device for unifying the five separate dance compositions into the suite as a whole. Participants for the study were selected from among the students comprising the Agnes Scott Contemporary Dance Group.

In the written report of the study, Osborne included a description of the suite of original modern dance compositions with respect to the choreography, the accompanying narration, the costumes, the make-up, the lighting, and the stage decor. She included, also, illustrative photographs of the various dances comprising Through A Glass Darkly.

The purpose of the present study is similar to Osborne's in that the investigator choreographed, produced, and presented a suite of modern dance compositions in a series of public performances. The two studies differ with respect to their thematic sources, the subjects participating in the studies, and the composition of the accompaniment. The present investigator used a religious thematic source based upon selected parts of the Roman Catholic Mass whereas Osborne

used thematic material based upon a prism of emotions as seen through selected symbolic associations with identifiable objects utilized as stage properties. Participants in the present study were selected from among private dance students taught by the investigator in Dallas, Texas, whereas Osborne selected students from among those comprising the Agnes Scott Contemporary Dance Group in Decatur, Georgia. A further difference between the two studies obtains in that Osborne worked closely with a member of the faculty in the Department of Music at the Agnes Scott College in the composition of the accompaniment for her suite of dances whereas the present investigator worked closely with the Director of Music at Christ The King Catholic Church in Dallas, Texas, who composed the musical accompaniment for the suite of dances developed in conjunction with the present study.

Nicoll<sup>1</sup> choreographed a suite of dances based upon selected phases of Mexican life. Her suite of original dances, entitled Pinturas Mexicanas: A Suite of Original Dance Compositions Based Upon Selected Phases of Mexican Life depicted the growth and synthesis of two religions in Mexico and selected aspects of the lives of Mexican women--the monotony of corn-grinding, the capriciousness of young girls, the abandonment of the women during the Mexican revolutions, the

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<sup>1</sup>Marion Nicoll, "Pinturas Mexicanas: A Suite of Original Dance Compositions Based Upon Selected Phases of Mexican Life" (unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, Texas State College for Women, 1951).

mourning of the women for their men lost in the revolutions, and the subsequent confusion evidenced in the transitional state of life in Mexico. Subjects participating in the study were selected from among the students comprising the Modern Dance Group of the Texas Woman's University (formerly the Texas State College for Women). The accompaniment for the suite of modern dance compositions was composed by the accompanist-composer of the Modern Dance Group of the Texas Woman's University. In the written report of her study, Nicoll included a description of the suite of dances produced with respect to the choreography, the accompaniment, the costumes, the make-up, the lighting, and the stage decor. Further clarification of the overall stage production was effected by the inclusion of illustrative photographs. The suite was presented in a series of public performances on the campus of the Texas Woman's University and in a number of other cities during the 1951 Spring Tour of the Modern Dance Group of the Texas Woman's University.

The purpose of the present study is similar to Nicoll's in that the investigator developed, produced, and presented in a series of public performances a suite of original modern dance compositions. A further similarity between the two studies obtains with respect to the use of a religious theme. The present study and that of Nicoll differ, however, with respect to the subjects participating in the studies, the thematic development, and the composition of the accompaniment.



Nicoll selected the participants for her study from among the members of the Modern Dance Group of the Texas Woman's University whereas the participants for the present study were selected from among private dance students taught by the investigator in Dallas, Texas. The two studies differ also in that the investigator worked closely with the Director of Music at Christ The King Catholic Church in Dallas, Texas, in the development of the accompaniment for the present study whereas Nicoll worked closely with the accompanist-composer of the Modern Dance Group of the Texas Woman's University in the composition of the accompaniment for her suite of original modern dance compositions.

Smith<sup>1</sup> choreographed, produced, and presented a dance-drama, entitled Te Deum, at the St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in Denton, Texas. The dance-drama was based upon part of the Episcopal Liturgy, Te Deum Laudamus. Smith also composed the musical accompaniment for her dance-drama, music which was scored for two voices--soprano and baritone--and a soprano recorder.

Smith selected participants for her study from among the members of the parish of the St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, the School of Music at North Texas State University (formerly the North Texas State Teachers College), the Denton Dance-Art

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<sup>1</sup>Eloise Hanna Smith, "A Dance-Drama with Original Music and Choreography of the Te Deum" (unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, Texas State College for Women, 1956).



Studio, the College of Fine Arts and the College of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation of the Texas Woman's University. (formerly the Texas State College for Women).

In a written report of the study, Smith included a description of the dance-drama produced with respect to the choreography, the accompaniment, the costumes, the make-up, the lighting, and the stage decor.

The purpose of the present study is similar to Smith's in that the investigator produced and presented, in a series of public performances, original modern dance compositions based upon a religious theme. The present investigator structured her suite of dances in the form of a group of parts whereas Smith choreographed Te Deum in the form of a dance-drama. The present study differs further from Smith's in that the participants were selected from among private dance students taught by the investigator in Dallas, Texas, whereas Smith selected participants from the parish of St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, the School of Music at the North Texas State University, the Denton Dance-Art Studio, and the College of Fine Arts and the College of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation of the Texas Woman's University. The composition of the accompaniment for the dance-drama was developed by Smith whereas the present investigator worked closely with the Director of Music at Christ The King Catholic Church in Dallas, Texas, in the development of the accompaniment for AGNUS DEI.

Moss<sup>1</sup> conducted a study in which she traced the relationship between religion and dance and described the use of religious motifs in dance in contemporary church rituals through the media of poetry, prose, song, and organ music. Moss made a cursory survey of religious dance as thematic material among concert artists. In the final chapter of her study, she offered suggestions for the use of religious motifs in modern dance in education. Moss' sources of data were limited to books, periodicals, newspapers, and unpublished materials.

The present study is similar to that of Moss in that both are concerned with religious dance. It differs, however, in that the present investigator was concerned with the choreography of a suite of modern dance compositions based upon a religious theme whereas the study by Moss was a historical study in which she traced religious dance from primitive to contemporary times, utilizing bibliographical sources of data only. The present study differs further from that of Moss in that the investigator was concerned with presenting, in a series of public performances, a suite of original modern dance compositions based upon selected parts of the Roman Catholic Mass whereas Moss was concerned primarily with developing implications for the use of religious

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<sup>1</sup>Mattie Moss, "An Historical Study of Religion and Dance with Implications for the Use of Religious Motives in Modern Dance Education" (unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, Texas State College for Women, 1943).

motifs as bases for choreographing modern dance compositions in education. The present investigator relied in part upon human sources of data whereas Moss utilized documentary sources of data only.

Lewis<sup>1</sup> made a study of modern dance as a means of worship in the United States with emphasis upon the history, the development, and the contributions of Rhythmic Choirs and the Sacred Dance Guild. She surveyed the role of modern dance as a means of worship in the United States from 1900 to 1963. She identified outstanding individuals associated with religious dance in the United States and described their contributions to contemporary religious dance and to the development of the Sacred Dance Guild and of Rhythmic Choirs.

The present study is similar to Lewis' in that both are concerned with religious dance. It differs from that of Lewis in that the investigator was concerned with the choreography of religious dances whereas Lewis was concerned with the history and development of religious dance. The two studies differ further in that Lewis' study of religious dance emphasized the history and development of the Sacred Dance Guild and of Rhythmic Choirs whereas the present study included the choreographing of a suite of modern dance compositions based upon selected parts of the Roman Catholic Mass.

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<sup>1</sup> Marilyn Lewis, "A Study of Modern Dance as a Means of Worship in the United States with Emphasis Upon the History, Development, and Contributions of the Sacred Dance Guild and of Rhythmic Choirs" (unpublished Master's thesis, College of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, Texas Woman's University, 1965).

### Sources and Methods of Collecting Data

The data utilized in the development of this thesis were collected, studied, and assimilated from both documentary and human sources. Books, periodicals, newspapers, films, and other published materials related to methods of research and to all aspects of the study were employed. Theses, dissertations, films, research studies, and other unpublished materials related to all aspects of the study were utilized also. Human sources of data included members of the investigator's Thesis Committee; selected Roman Catholic priests from the St. James and Holy Cross parishes in Dallas, Texas, members of the Fine Arts Department at the University of Dallas; private dance students from among those taught by the investigator; and selected authorities in the field of dance, music, costume design, and construction of stage properties who gave helpful assistance, guidance, and information to the investigator in the development of the study.

### Summary

Because of the investigator's particular interest in the area of choreography in modern dance and her background in the Roman Catholic Faith, she became intrigued with the existing relationship between dance and religion and in the use of dance movement in the Roman Catholic Church. This interest culminated in the undertaking of a creative thesis entitled, *AGNUS DEI: A Suite of Original Modern Dance*

Compositions Based Upon Selected Parts of the Roman Catholic Mass in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts degree to be conferred by the Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas. In order to orient the reader to the background of the study, a brief explanation concerning dance, the relationship between dance and religion, and dance movement in the Roman Catholic Church was included in the introduction to the study.

Dance, an expression of emotions or ideas through rhythmic movement, has been a means of communication throughout the universe. The origin of dance is found in the natural tendency of humanity to employ gestures either to supplement or to replace speech.<sup>1</sup> In the same manner in which speech developed into poetry and song, the bodily movements of man developed into dance. According to Sachs, man created within his own body through dance, rhythmical patterns of movement long before he used substance, stone, and word to give expressions to his inner emotions.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the ages, man has been aware of the tremendous catharsis and creative inspiration dance brings to those lost in boredom, despair and frustration.<sup>3</sup> Men who cannot dance are imprisoned in their own egos and cannot live well with others whereas men who can dance agree that the dance is

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Meerlo, op. cit., p. 42.

Sachs, op. cit., p. 3.

Meerlo, op. cit., p. 24.

a primary source of fulfillment, an art activity which provides a complete emotional satisfaction which could never be obtained through less meaningful activities.<sup>1</sup> The dance is a prime satisfier--similar to food when one is hungry, water when one is thirsty, and sleep when one is tired.

A harmonious relationship has existed between dance and religion since prehistoric times. Strange as this may sound to the twentieth century reader, the origin of the two words--dance and religion--are closely associated. According to Shawn, the origin of dance lies in religion; at first they were one and the same activity, with religion comprising the content and dance the form.<sup>2</sup> Primitive man's religion was expressed through his dances. He used many persuasive rhythms of dance to attain common ecstatic experiences with his gods, thereby trying to control the universal forces--the thunder and floods, lightning and avalanches--which he did not understand. Through dance, primitive man attempted to attain the God-consciousness and thus cope with these angry gods.<sup>3</sup>

Dance is an art form in which the physical, emotional, and intellectual aspects of self are integrated completely and simultaneously. For this reason, it is only fitting that man's religious consciousness be expressed in the art of rhythmic movement.<sup>4</sup> Religious dance is an art which must be

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<sup>1</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 68.

expressed by each individual in accordance with his specific beliefs and with his forms of worship. America, founded upon the principle of religious freedom, entitles each individual to an opportunity to express his ideas of God without interference or intolerance. Elaborating upon this statement, Ruth St. Denis states that:

Religion means to me, an abiding faith in God and Man; a reverence for the Creator and the created, and a special dedication to holding high the dignity, the beauty, and the immortality of man, of which I hold the dance as his greatest symbol.<sup>1</sup>

The Roman Catholic Church is encouraging the application of the religious implications of the Christian arts in the United States, in Europe, and in the mission field.<sup>2</sup> Whether the art of the religious dance is accepted in the sanctuary or not, its spiritual values can be experienced in schools, universities, and through public performances. Dance-dramas depicting sections of the Mass and choral interpretations have been performed in many parts of the world. Many of these performances have been accepted meaningfully as religious implications of dance by members of the Roman Catholic Faith.

Renee Foatelli, who has created liturgical dances in France, urges the use of the dance in pageants which interpret the Mass and suggests that this be done through the art of rhythmic interpretation such as that performed in the Roman

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<sup>1</sup>St. Denis, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>2</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 142.

Catholic Schools and Universities of the United States.<sup>1</sup> The students in the Oakdale Country Day School in Philadelphia have utilized the art of rhythmic interpretation in their study of the Roman Catholic, Protestant, Quaker, and Jewish faiths.<sup>2</sup> Grailville, a School of the Apostolate for Catholic Young Women at one time offered not only a one to two-year course which included creative and devotional study, but also a course in the "interpretative dance."<sup>3</sup> At this same school, the late Dom Ermin Virty, O. S. B. of St. Louis, then editor of Caecelia Music Magazine, taught courses based upon the chants of the church and encouraged the symbolic interpretation of religious music through movement.<sup>4</sup>

In the celebration of the Roman Catholic Mass, there are definite stylized movements and postures which lend themselves to interpretation through dance. The action of the Roman Catholic Mass creates the effect of symbolic movement which closely resembles a disciplined, sacred dance. In this connection, Hugh Benson, who became a Roman Catholic priest, states, "It [the Roman Catholic Mass] is no less than a sacred dance."<sup>5</sup> The priest and altar boys perform symbolic movements in the transferring of candles, books, and censers, and in the

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<sup>1</sup>Foatelli, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 170.

<sup>3</sup>Sutter, op. cit.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 171.



execution of formal patterns of walking and kneeling. Jacques Maritain, sensitive to the beauty of the disciplined movement within the Mass, has written, "There is nothing more beautiful than a High Mass, a dance before the Ark in slow motion."<sup>1</sup>

Because all religious art stems from man's desire to reveal his awareness of God, the Roman Catholic Church respects the revelations of this awareness manifested through sacred music, painting, sculpture, poetry and drama, as well as through symbolic movement.<sup>2</sup> A true Christian art, however, knows no barriers of creed or dogma; it is neither exclusively Roman Catholic nor Protestant.<sup>3</sup> Although dance is one of the neglected arts of the church, Fisk feels that it may be used effectively to reveal spiritual truths and to deepen the participant's own devotional living.<sup>4</sup>

Because of the investigator's particular interest in choreography based upon religious themes, the present study, *AGNUS DEI: A Suite of Three Original Modern Dance Compositions Based Upon Selected Parts of the Roman Catholic Mass* was undertaken. It entailed the developing of the choreography for the suite of dances, the writing of the narration, and the production and presentation of *AGNUS DEI* in three public performances. The study also entailed the developing of a written report of the study as a whole, including a description

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<sup>1</sup> Maritain, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Fisk, op. cit., p. 172.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

of the three original modern dance compositions entitled "The Offertory," "The Consecration," and "The Communion."

Definitions and explanations of modern dance, dance composition, suite, choreography, and the Roman Catholic Mass were established to clarify basic terminology utilized throughout the study. Specific purposes underlying the study included choreographing a suite of three modern dance compositions based upon selected parts of the Roman Catholic Mass--"The Offertory," "The Consecration," and "The Communion;" developing the narration to be used as a transitional device for unifying the three original modern dance compositions comprising the suite; producing and presenting AGNUS DEI in one or more public performances during the spring semester of the academic year of 1966-1967; and preparing a written report of the thesis as a whole including a description of the suite of modern dance compositions with respect to the choreography, the accompaniment, the narration, the costumes, the lighting, and the stage decor.

The choreography for AGNUS DEI was limited to three modern dance compositions based upon selected parts of the Roman Catholic Mass--"The Offertory," "The Consecration," and "The Communion." A further limitation of the study was that all of the dances were choreographed by the investigator in accordance with her technical proficiencies and those of the subjects participating in the study. A minimal time limit of twenty minutes was established for the presentation of the

suite of three original modern dance compositions. Nine participants were selected from among private dance students taught by the investigator in Dallas, Texas.

The following selected studies related to the present one were surveyed: (1) Kay Osborne's creative thesis entitled "Through A Glass Darkly: A Suite of Five Original Dance Compositions Based Upon A Prism of Emotions As Seen Through Selected Symbolic Associations with Identifiable Objects Utilized as Stage Properties"; (2) Marion Nicoll's creative thesis entitled "Pinturas Mexicanas: A Suite of Original Dance Compositions Based Upon Selected Phases of Mexican Life"; (3) Eloise Hanna Smith's creative thesis entitled "A Dance-Drama with Original Music and Choreography of the Te Deum"; (4) Mattie Moss' historical thesis entitled "An Historical Study of Religion and Dance with Implications for the Use of Religious Motives in Modern Dance Education"; and (5) Marilyn Lewis' historical thesis entitled "A Study of Modern Dance as a Means of Worship in the United States with Emphasis Upon the History, Development, and Contributions of the Sacred Dance Guild and of Rhythmic Choirs." In discussing each of the foregoing studies, similarities and differences with respect to the present study were pointed out by the investigator.

The data utilized in the development of this thesis were collected, studied, and assimilated from both documentary and human sources. The documentary sources comprised books, periodicals, newspapers, films, and other published materials

related to methods of research and to all aspects of the study. Theses, dissertations, research studies, and other unpublished materials related to all phases of the study were utilized also. Human sources for data included members of the investigator's Thesis Committee; selected Roman Catholic priests from the St. James and Holy Cross parishes in Dallas, Texas; members of the Fine Arts Department at the University of Dallas; private dance students from among those taught by the investigator; and selected authorities in the fields of dance, music, costume design, and construction of stage properties who gave helpful assistance, guidance, and information to the investigator in the development of the study.

In Chapter II of this report, the investigator will present the heritage of religious dance from the time of primitive man through the contemporary period with emphasis upon religious dance as a part of worship in Christian Churches.

## CHAPTER II

### THE HERITAGE OF RELIGIOUS DANCE FROM THE TIME OF PRIMITIVE MAN THROUGH THE CONTEMPORARY PERIOD WITH EMPHASIS UPON RELIGIOUS DANCE AS A PART OF WORSHIP IN CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

#### Religious Dance in Primitive Societies

Religious dance has a rich heritage, stemming from the time of primitive man and recurring as an integral part of the lives of all peoples in all periods of civilization. Shawn corroborates the idea that the dancing of primitive man was largely of a religious character when he states that:

The first ecstasy of the first self-conscious man probably lasted a very short time; then the pressure of his environment and his own lesser nature closed in upon him. He probably heard his child cry out in fear, or he became hungry, or tired and desired sleep; so the first spell was broken but eventually he again had leisure, remembered his joy and desiring it again, danced. Once more he became aware of the God-within, who could only be known through this rhythmic movement, and so was born man's religious consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

Dancing, to primitive man, was of primary importance in the life of a group; it was neither a diversion nor a form of entertainment. Having no verbal language through which to communicate with others, primitive man danced about

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<sup>1</sup>Shawn, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

every activity of any importance in his life.<sup>1</sup> Dance to him was both an expression of man's relationship to man, and of man's relationship with the unknown.<sup>2</sup>

Among primitive peoples, dance magic was the first means of dealing with the unknown.<sup>3</sup> Through dance magic, primitive man sought to identify himself with the forces of the universe, to become one with the cosmic powers and, thereby, to control these forces for the benefit of himself and his fellow men. There were many inexplicable forces which permeated the life of primitive man and he expressed his reaction to each of these forces by dancing.<sup>4</sup> As Martin points out, "Lacking the verbal means of expressing these feelings, he turned to movement, the most elemental expression of life, and also the basic substance of the dance."<sup>5</sup> Thus, being propelled to movement by the elements of magic and religion, primitive man developed rhythmic patterns of bodily expression through which he attempted to communicate his inchoate feelings, his desires, and his responses to his environment. In this connection, Sachs writes:

In the ecstasy of the dance man bridges the chasm between this and the other world, to the realm of demons, spirits, and God. Captivated and entranced he bursts his earthly chains and trembling feels

<sup>1</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>John Martin, The Modern Dance (New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1936), p. 8.

himself in tune with all the world...The dance, inherited from savage ancestors as an ordered expression in motion of the exhilaration of the soul, develops and broadens into the search for God, into a conscious effort to become a part of those powers beyond the might of man which control our destinies. The dance becomes a sacrificial rite, a charm, a prayer, and a prophetic vision. It summons and dispels the forces of nature, heals the sick, links the dead to the chain of their descendants; it assures sustenance, luck in the chase, victory in battle; it blesses the fields and the tribe. It is creator, preserver, steward, and guardian.<sup>1</sup>

As the structure of primitive society developed from the individual and his family unit to tribes, primitive man faced new problems and emotions. In trying to solve these new problems and to understand these emotions, he continued to dance. Certain individuals in the tribes demonstrated superior powers in their dance and were recognized with respect and authority; such an individual was called "the Shaman" or the "medicine man."<sup>2</sup> These premier dancers were singled out because it was felt that they could attain a greater degree of ecstasy or more nearly perfect union with the God-within than that experienced by other dancers.<sup>3</sup> They acted as high priests and served as instruments of intercession between the material world and the spiritual world of primitive man.<sup>4</sup> According to Sachs, "His [Shaman's] duties are to banish evil spirits, to ward off misfortune, to heal the sick; and his principal medium is the ecstatic dance."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 141.



As man emerged from pre-history into a period of recorded history, he continued to dance the themes inherent in the dance of primitive man. In this connection, Ellis states that, "Among certain Bantu tribes, instead of inquiring as a man would today with respect to another's business, the question one stranger would pose to another was: 'What do you dance?'"<sup>1</sup> When a man danced, he communicated his tribal life, his social customs, and his religion. Elaborating further upon this statement, Ellis quotes an anthropologist as saying "a savage does not preach his religion, he dances it."<sup>2</sup>

Primitive man danced for every occasion. According to Sachs, he danced for "birth, circumcision, the consecration of maidens, marriage, sickness and death, the celebration of chieftains, hunting, war, victory, the conclusion of peace, spring, harvest and pork festivals."<sup>3</sup> It is obvious, too, that these universal themes, with appropriate variations in style, rhythm, and purpose, have been utilized by every subsequent generation, thus making dance, rooted in the religious consciousness of primitive man, the universal art which is so satisfying to the soul.

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<sup>1</sup>Ellis, op. cit., pp. 35-36.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Sachs, op. cit., pp. 55-56.



## Religious Dance During the Age of Egyptian Civilization

Egypt, land of the Pharaoh and of the Nile, was the first country to produce a great civilization, and here we find evidence of the dance as the chief medium of religious expression. Kirstein points out that "as far back as the First Dynasty [ca. 3000 B.C.] a wooden relief of the King Semti shows dancing as plastic prayer,"<sup>1</sup> and the Kinneys state that, "Egyptian carvings of six thousand years ago record the use of dance in religious rituals."<sup>2</sup> Traces of majestic choreographic poses on the columns of a temple have been found by sculptors, indicating that the religious dances of Egypt reflected a feeling equivalent to the spirit of the Pharaohs' monumental architecture.<sup>3</sup> The Kinneys cite further evidence of Egyptian dancing when they state that, "A carving in the Metropolitan Museum of New York shows Anubis and Horus kneeling, their arms completing a pose that is seen to this day in the dances of Spain."<sup>4</sup>

In the earliest period of Egyptian civilization, dance was an important adjunct to the temples where the members of the priesthood were all-powerful.<sup>5</sup> They conducted the rituals and guarded the temples in which dance was performed

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<sup>1</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>Troy and Margaret West Kinney, The Dance (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1924), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

by special dancers or by the members of the priesthood themselves.<sup>1</sup> Plato relates that:

The priests danced in definite, especially designed movements around the temple altars and the dance formations which they executed were intended to represent the movements of the planets, the constellations, and the fixed stars in the heavens.<sup>2</sup>

Lucian agrees entirely with this symbolism. He states that, "The march cadence revealed by the stars, the harmony and the euphony of the movements of the heavenly bodies are the models in which the art of dancing had its origin."<sup>3</sup> These astral dances appear to have been the most outstanding form in the rituals of religious dance among the ancient Egyptians.<sup>4</sup>

As the Egyptian towns grew, each settlement built its own temple and worshipped its own special god. The chief god, worshipped by all Egyptians, however, was Osiris.<sup>5</sup> Through the worship of Osiris, the Egyptians explained the forces of nature about them, particularly the annual overflow and the recession of the waters of the river Nile. Osiris, son of Zeus, ruler of heaven and earth, and Niobe, who was cursed for having so many children, was designated by the Egyptians as both the brother and the husband, of

<sup>1</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>E. Louis Blackman, Religious Dances (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1952), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 7

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

the goddess Isis.<sup>1</sup> The Egyptians believed that the tears of Isis, falling in reaction to the death of her husband-brother who had been killed by Typhon, the god of evil, resulted in the annual overflow of the Nile.<sup>2</sup> In the temples, this legend became the central story of the Egyptian religion and was re-enacted constantly in dramatic dance form.<sup>3</sup> The Egyptians produced numerous dance-dramas both within and outside of the temples in honor of their many gods and goddesses. In a discussion of the dance-drama of Hathor, Oesterley states:

Hathor, for example, was the goddess of music and dancing, and is often depicted with a small boy rattling a sistrum in front of her...The King, in the capacity of Hathor's son, similarly rattles a sistrum in front of her and is called 'goodly Ihy' (the goddess's child) of the golden one of the gods.<sup>4</sup>

Each temple maintained its own group of religious dancers who were prepared for the special roles which they danced before the Egyptian Kings and Queens during religious festivals.<sup>5</sup> The Egyptians also recognized and appreciated the artistic dancing gifts of the African dwarfs and imported them to Egypt to participate in the ceremonies in honor of their various gods and goddesses. Sachs points out that,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>4</sup>W. O. E. Oesterley, The Sacred Dance (Cambridge: The University Press, 1923), p. 60.

<sup>5</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 11.

"It was the highest mark of esteem for an Egyptian subject to bring the King a dancing dwarf from the south, from the land of Punt."<sup>1</sup> These dwarfs were masters in the performance of all forms of dance which prevailed at this time, but they excelled in acrobatic dances, religious in purpose, which were performed before the Kings and Queens.<sup>2</sup>

The Egyptian tribes conducted many ritualistic processions in which they honored their dead.<sup>3</sup> It was customary among the peasants of Upper Egypt for the female relative and friends of a deceased person to meet together outside of his home on each of the first three days after the funeral to perform a lamentation and a strange kind of dance.<sup>4</sup> Some of these dances continued for an hour or more and were performed two or three times each day. The people of Egypt exercised great care and concern in their preparation for life after death.<sup>5</sup> They believed that this preparation was essential since their religion denied that death ended the existence of a person who had led a good life.<sup>6</sup> Blackman points out that, "The King of Egypt, who was also the High Priest of the cult of the gods, was obliged to perform in a procession in honor of the dead."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

<sup>3</sup>Oesterley, op. cit., p. 210.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Blackman, op. cit., p. 2.

He states further that, "A representation of the dead person, sculptured or painted, was carried or had been erected at the entrance of the tomb."<sup>1</sup>

The Egyptians observed many important religious festivals which often required the performance of dancers who had at least a degree of preparatory training.<sup>2</sup> Again, the goddess Hathor, frequently represented with the attributes of Isis, presided over these dances.<sup>3</sup> In this connection, Kirstein states that:

At Thebes and in other places, on Hathor's annual festival, her priestesses, after the conclusion of the temple services and parades, marched in the streets, and accompanied by male priests of the cults, stopped at the houses of the people and bestowed Hathor's blessing by singing and dancing, holding out the necklace-emblems of the goddess to be touched for the sake of fertility.<sup>4</sup>

Among the most important of all Egyptian festivals-- one which shows the survival of ancient fertility rituals-- was the ceremony in honor of the consecration of the sacred bull, Apis.<sup>5</sup> Priests exercised considerable care in choosing the sacrificial animal; they adhered to the belief that the animal selected could be fertilized only by a shaft of moonlight and that, at its birth, certain unmistakable signs revealed its divine selection. The bull must be black with a triangular white patch on his forehead and another on his right flank, representing the crescent moon in the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

black night.<sup>1</sup> There were many other requisites which had to be met, all of which were approved only by the priests. After the official announcements were made, the bull, Apis, was placed in an especially designated and prepared sacred place. For four months he lived in this sacred place, being fed on milk and attended to by forty nude virgins "who pleased his eyes."<sup>2</sup> Later, the priest transferred Apis, or the sacred bull, to Memphis where he was greeted with music, dances, and the shouts of the people. He was conducted in pomp to the sacred Apeum where his domestic servants performed secret dances in his honor, enacting the adventures of the god of whom the bull, Apis, was thought to be the living image.<sup>3</sup>

There can scarcely be any doubt that Egypt, the first country to produce a great civilization, was also a great dancing center.<sup>4</sup> In this connection, Ellis states that, "Egypt is the mother country of all civilized dancing."<sup>5</sup> Elaborating upon this statement, Kirstein states that, "Egypt, in relation to dance, is interesting as the first great culture which used the practice of the magic of tribal civilization in the development of a great homogenous nation."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ellis, op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 11.

## Religious Dance During the Biblical Period

Dance was an integral part of the ceremony of worship among the ancient Hebrews<sup>1</sup> and, in the opinion of the investigator, pre-determined, to a large extent, the custom of dancing in the Christian Church today. The dances of the Hebrews were influenced directly by those of the Egyptians. The Biblical description of the dance around the Golden Calf has its prototype in the worship of the Egyptian bull, Apis.<sup>2</sup> Vuillier states that, "As early as the year 2543 B.C., we find traces of the choreographic art. Dances bequeathed by the priests of ancient Egypt were held high in honor among the Hebrews."<sup>3</sup>

According to the Old Testament, the offering of sacrifices in the worship of Jehovah, were definite occasions for dancing among the Hebrew people. In this connection, Oesterley has listed eleven ancient Hebrew root words which connote attributes of dance as it is referred to in the King James Version of the Bible.<sup>4</sup>

Sāhag - - - - - "to laugh," "play," "merry making," "dancing," I Samuel ... "and the dancing women answered one another and said..."

<sup>1</sup>Blackman, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Gaston Vuillier, A History of Dancing From the Earliest Ages to Our Own Times (London: William Heinemann, 1898), p. x.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Oesterley, op. cit., pp. 44-51.



Tzāhag	- - - - -	- "plaything," "sporting," "dancing" Exod. 6: "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to dance."
Hul	- - - - -	- "whirl," "twisting," "whrithing," Isa. 17: "writhing" or "twist- ing" of a woman in travail.
Pazaz	- - - - -	- "leaping" II Sam. 14-16: Idea of agile leaping as part of the dance.
Karar	- - - - -	- "whirl about," "rotate," II Sam. 14-16: David dancing before Jahwe.
Ragad	- - - - -	- "to skip about" Isa. 21: expresses the idea of agile leaping as part of the dance.
Sabab	- - - - -	- "going around" I Chron. 29: going around the altar.
Dalag	- - - - -	- "leaping" and "dancing," II Sam. "skipping" leaping as a part of the dance.
Tzala	- - - - -	- "limping dance" Gen. 31, 32: A ritual dance--"limped upon his thigh."
Pasah	- - - - -	- "to denote a religious per- formance" Exod. 13: "...and when I see the blood <u>I will</u> <u>pass over you</u> ."
Hagag	- - - - -	- "to make dancing movements" Ps. 27: "to go around in a circle." <sup>1</sup>

Further proof of the dances of the Hebrews is to be found in numerous descriptions of dances in the Old Testament of the King James Version of the Bible. For example, the before mentioned dancing around the Golden Calf was a

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<sup>1</sup>Oesterley, op. cit., pp. 44-51.



circular of ring-dance and was symbolic of the God of Israel who led the Jews out of bondage.<sup>1</sup> References to processional dances can be found in II Samuel, 6:14-16; the story of David's dancing before the Ark is told, "And David danced before the Lord with all his might...Michal Saul's daughter looked through the window, and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord."<sup>2</sup> Among the Jews of the Talmudic period, the dance was a part of the burial rites.<sup>3</sup> The funeral dances took the form of a stamping dance which the Sephardic Jews of Spain and Portugal have retained among their funeral rites of today.<sup>4</sup> According to Blackman, "They [Sephardic Jews] marched in processions round the dead."<sup>5</sup>

During the first century following the birth of Christ, a Jewish sect known as the Therapeutae possessed a highly developed form of dance.<sup>6</sup> This sect, whose origin and fate alike are unknown, is believed to have settled during the first century in the vicinity of Alexandria, Egypt.<sup>7</sup> The members, both men

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>II Samuel, 6:14-16, King James Version of the Bible.

<sup>3</sup>Oesterley, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>4</sup>Blackman, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ellis, op. cit., p. 40.

<sup>7</sup>"Jewish Sects," Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th ed., Vol. XIII, p. 1052.

and women, devoted their time to prayer and to study. In this connection, Philo states:

They prayed twice every day, at dawn and at eventide, the interval between being spent entirely on spiritual exercise. They read the Holy Scriptures, from which they sought wisdom...For six days a week members lived apart seeking wisdom in solitude. On the sabbath they met in the common sanctuary, where they listened to a discourse by the members most skilled in their doctrines.<sup>1</sup>

In noting the extent to which the Therapeutae employed movement in their worship, Sorell quotes the following observation by Eusebius, who is known as "the father of Church history." Eusebius, in turn, based his description upon that of the philosopher, Philo:

After the banquet they keep the sacred festival. And this is how they keep it. They all stand up in a body, and in the middle of the banqueting-place, they first form two choroï, one of men and the other of women, and a leader and conductor is chosen for each, for one whose reputation is greatest for a knowledge of music; they then chant hymns composed in God's honor in many metres and melodies, sometimes singing together, sometimes one choros beating the measure with their hands for the antiphonal chanting of the other, now dancing to the measure and now inspiring it, at times dancing in procession, at times set-dances, and then circle-dances right and left.<sup>2</sup>

It appears that there was some connection between dance and the Church in the very early period of its organization.<sup>3</sup> Kirstein tells of the Gnostic "Hymn of Jesus" as

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Sorell, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>3</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 61.

early as the year 160 A.D., dealing with the Lord's Supper, and states that, "In it, instead of the traditional breaking and sipping of wine, they [the disciples] danced."<sup>1</sup> It is obvious, therefore, that dance was accepted as a part of Christian ritual as early as the first century.

### Dance During the Hellenic Age

Dancing during the Hellenic Period of civilization has been associated always with the worship of gods and goddesses.<sup>2</sup> The greatest of all Greek gods was Zeus, who originated in Crete, a Grecian island in the southern Aegean Sea approximately eighty-one miles from the mainland of Greece.<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note what a tremendous influence Zeus and this Cretan island had upon dance among the ancient Greeks. Because he was the most powerful of all of the Greek gods, Zeus was the supreme ruler of heaven and earth, of all gods and men.<sup>4</sup> He was married seven times, and it is small wonder that Hera, his seventh wife, is said to have been the most jealous wife in mythology because the extra-marital affairs and children of Zeus were thought to be numerous.<sup>5</sup> Zeus is said to have changed himself into many forms in order to gratify his passions.<sup>6</sup> Apparently, the Greeks were aware of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>J. E. Zimmerman, Dictionary of Classical Mythology (New York: Bontam Book, 1964), pp. 292-293.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

his lasciviousness but they also respected his power and his sense of justice.<sup>1</sup> The Cretans were extolled by the Greeks as exceptional artists and acknowledged as their superiors in the dance.<sup>2</sup> According to Sachs, the best Greek dancers in modern times still come from among the descendants of the Cretans.<sup>3</sup>

Greeks in all stations of life are known to have participated in the dance on all occasions.<sup>4</sup> The militant Spartans insisted that dancing was essential to the development of a good soldier; the Athenian lovers of beauty deemed it essential for the sound development of body, mind, and soul; physicians prescribed dancing for its therapeutic values; philosophers encouraged their students to practice dancing as the best medium for total development; and great men were not uncommonly known to dance in public.<sup>5</sup> It is obvious, therefore, that the attitude of the early Greeks toward dance was one of respect and enthusiasm. As a result, it is not surprising to find that choreography during this period reached a very high state of excellence.<sup>6</sup>

A great deal of light is shed upon the nature of the Greek dance through its representation upon ancient Greek pottery.<sup>7</sup> Oesterley states that, "On a vase-painting in the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Sachs, op. cit., p. 238.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Kirstein, op. cit., p. 33

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Oesterley, op. cit., p. 66.

British Museum, a triumphal dance procession is portrayed; it is in all probability intended to be taking place in honor of Dionysus."<sup>1</sup> Dionysus was the god of wine and revelry, and the youngest of the twelve great Olympians.<sup>2</sup> The Greeks danced in ecstatic rituals in honor of Dionysus and often enacted primitive sacrificial rites concerned with the death and rebirth of various Dionysian gods.<sup>3</sup>

Of all Greek dancing, the religious rituals were the most impressive. These religious dances may be classified in four main groups: the Emmeleia, the Hyporchemia, the Gymnopedia, and the Endymatia.<sup>4</sup> The Emmeleia and the Hyporchemia were deeply religious in nature and are among the most ancient of the Greek dances.<sup>5</sup> The origin of the Emmeleia is attributed to Orpheus, the mythological musician and poet. The movements characteristic of this group of dances were slow and stately and were performed without choral accompaniment.<sup>6</sup> The Hyporchemia comprised some of the oldest Greek dances performed by both men and women and are noted for their use of choral accompaniment, the most characteristic accompanying feature of Greek dancing. Examples of these choral dances may be seen today in Megara

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Zimmerman, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>3</sup>Radir, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>4</sup>Kinneys, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 33.

near Athens where they are performed on Easter Monday.<sup>1</sup> The dances comprising the Gymnopedia and Endymatia were less religious in nature than those comprising the Emmeleia and the Hyporchemia. According to the Kinneys, the Gymnopedia, depicting athletic feats, were usually danced in honor of Apollo by nude youths.<sup>2</sup> The Endymatic dances were costumed brightly and were used for general entertainment purposes. The Kinneys state that, "In connection with this group [Endymatia] we find the first allusion to the highly modern institution of dancers, private engagements, and professionals aiding in the entertainment."<sup>3</sup>

The dances comprising these four main groups of ancient Greek dances were common to different localities and usually celebrated the worship of a god, a victory, or some act of heroism.<sup>4</sup> For example, the Dionysian dances were sacred to Bacchus, the god of wine, the Iambic dances were dedicated to Mars, the god of war, and the Caryotis dance was dedicated to Diana, goddess of hunt, as was the Harmos of Sparta.<sup>5</sup>

It is obvious that the Greeks gave to the world greater cultural momentum than any other country during the early periods of civilizations. The Greeks were outstanding in

<sup>1</sup>Kinneys, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Vuillier, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.



the development of dance, reflecting the Greek ideal of beauty which permeated not only dancing but also all of the related arts--literature, drama, painting, sculpture, and architecture. In this connection, Vuillier states, "Thus we see Greece, with her fine simplicity of thought, set patterns from which was cut the civilization of Rome."<sup>1</sup>

### Dance During the Period of Roman Supremacy

The dance suffered various stages of degradation at the hands of the Roman people and, because of the ultimate decadence of Rome, the development of religious dance was retarded for at least a thousand years.<sup>2</sup> The early Romans were not a very dance-conscious people.<sup>3</sup> They seized upon the dance and all of the other arts developed by the Greeks.<sup>4</sup> Of the sacred dances borrowed from Greece, Vuillier states:

...The Romans borrowed from the Greeks, the Bacchanalia, whose origin in Hellas, was religious. These were at first reserved for the priests and priestesses of Bacchus, but later on they became the accompaniment to nuptial feasts, every citizen took part in them and having lent a lustre to worship and a grace to love, they degenerated into lascivious performances.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps the most sacred of the Roman religious dances were the dances of the Salii--or the Priests of Mars. There were numerous orders of such dancing priests appointed by

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Kinneys, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Vuillier, op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Numa Pompilius, the second King of Rome, to honor the gods through dance and to care for the Ancilia--the sacred shields of Mars.<sup>1</sup>

Elaborating further upon this statement, Kirstein states:

The Salii, the priests of Mars, twelve in number, were instituted by Numa. Their dress was an embroidered tunic, bound with a girdle ornamented with brass. They wore on their head a conical cap, of a considerable height; carried a sword by their side; in their right hand a spear or rod, and in their left, one of the Ancilia, or shields of Mars.<sup>2</sup>

Holy processions of the Salii were held during the months of March and October with ritualistic ceremonies lasting as long as three weeks.<sup>3</sup> The most solemn procession was held during the month of March commemorating the time when the sacred shield was believed to have fallen from heaven during the reign of Numa.<sup>4</sup> On other solemn occasions, the Salian priests paraded through the Capitol and other public parts of the city while dancing and singing sacred songs said to have been composed by Numa.<sup>5</sup>

Other sacred dances became at best a display of agility to amuse rustics. In this connection the Kinneys state that, "They [Sacred dances] fell into the services of sex allurements, not the suggestive, nor the provocative, but

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<sup>1</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.



unbridled depiction of what should not be revealed, and of things that should not exist."<sup>1</sup> As the religious life of Rome gradually decayed and became orgiastic, so the religious dances became occasions for unbridled licentiousness and sensuality.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, the Church nurtured the little religious dancing which survived. The Kinneys state further that:

...in the hour of humiliation, the dance gained the respect of the only earthly power that might reasonably hope, in such an extremity, to save it from a miserable end. It was taken under the protection of the Christian Church.<sup>3</sup>

The Romans were great organizers, conquerors, lawmakers, and governors, but, in the field of the arts, they cheapened what they borrowed.<sup>4</sup> With the final capitulation of Greece to her more barbaric conquerors, the Romans proceeded to help themselves to those aspects of Greek culture which pleased them.<sup>5</sup> Dancing never played as important a part in the national life of the Romans as it did in that of the Greeks.<sup>6</sup> Dance to the Romans was primarily a past time which respectable Romans regarded as inconsistent with their dignity.<sup>7</sup> Although this viewpoint is not reflected by the opinions of all writers, it is thoroughly consonant with that of Cicero in his reference to the Romans in which he

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<sup>1</sup>Kinneys, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

states that, "No man who is in a sober state and not demented would dance either privately or in decent company."<sup>1</sup>

### Religious Dance During the Middle Ages

During the Middle Ages, the Church became rigidly authoritarian and attempted to regulate all forms of dancing and religious activities.<sup>2</sup> The early Christians were opposed to the Roman practice of using religious dance as a form of entertainment and, therefore, ordered the Church to pass rigid legislation against all ribald or indecent dances.<sup>3</sup> In this connection, a decree was issued by Pope Zacharias in 744, forbidding the performance of such dances as those performed in honor of Bacchus, the fabled god of wine.<sup>4</sup> But even with the Church regulating all religious activities, there was still a great deal of opposition to the use of any type of dance as a part of the ritual of worship.<sup>5</sup>

Two men connected with the early Church who compiled valuable material on the dance during the Middle Ages were Father Menestrier and Jehan Tabourot.<sup>6</sup> About 1682, Father Menestrier, a Jesuit Priest, wrote an important book on dancing with reference to the fact that men, "sang and

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Oesterley, op. cit., p. 73.

<sup>3</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 103.

<sup>4</sup>Vuillier, op. cit., p. 56.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Vuillier, op. cit., p. 56.

danced the praises of God, using the choir as a stage."<sup>1</sup>  
 Tabourot, the Canon of Langres, also known as Thoinot  
 Arbeau, wrote an authoritative work entitled Orchesography.<sup>2</sup>  
 In this invaluable book, he refers to the opposition of the  
 Church toward dance and expresses the opinion that, "those  
 who object to the use of dance...deserve to be treated like  
 some hind-quarter of goat and put into dough without lard."<sup>3</sup>

In spite of all protests, however, religious dance continued to spread during the Middle Ages. An interesting example of the perpetuation of ritualistic dance are the Cathedral dances of Spain, some of which are continued to the present day.<sup>4</sup> In Toledo, the Council suggested that the Archbishop of Seville present a "ritual rich in sacred choreography."<sup>5</sup> This ritual later became a part of the Holy Mass known as "Mozarabe" and is still celebrated in the Cathedral in Seville today.<sup>6</sup> It is known to contain slow and stately dance movements similar to those of the Pavane and the Sarabande.<sup>7</sup> Still danced in the Cathedrals of Spain is the famous "Dance of the Seises" performed by the

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<sup>1</sup>Kinneys, op. cit., pp. 29-31.

<sup>2</sup>Jehan Tabourot, Orchesography (Brooklyn: Dance Horizons, 1965).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 26

<sup>4</sup>Kinneys, op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>5</sup>Vuillier, op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>6</sup>Kinneys, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

choir boys. At one time the Pope ordered it to be discontinued but, after the dance was performed in his presence, he revoked his decision in this regard.<sup>1</sup> Since that time it is danced three times each year--in March, on Shrove Tuesday preceding the penitential season of Lent; in June, as a part of the Feast of Corpus Christi; and on December 8, as a part of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.<sup>2</sup> Like the dances in the Mozarabic Mass, the "Dance of the Seises" is performed in a slow and stately style.<sup>3</sup>

Religious dance continued to spread throughout the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries in Italy, in Germany, and in England.<sup>4</sup> Fisk points out that:

The Flagellants appeared in northern Italy in the eleventh century and spread across to Germany and later to Spain and England. People of all classes and ages formed long processions which were headed by priests carrying crosses and banners.<sup>5</sup>

These exhibitions were symbolic of repentance and have reappeared in Mexico and in the United States on various occasions. Martha Graham's dance entitled "El Penitente"--which is concerned with the problems of sin, penance, and salvation--has a close relationship to the Flagellants.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Anonymous, "Church Dances at Seville," Living Age, Vol. CXIII (May 28, 1892), pp. 575-76.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 108.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

In the latter part of the twelfth century, the Church decided to permit dramatic portrayals.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this decision was to evoke public interest in the services of the church through the introduction of choral songs and ceremonial dances performed by the choir. A religious play entitled "Planctus" was introduced as a part of the Mass.<sup>2</sup> This religious play was concerned with the sorrows of the three Marys and was accompanied by a musical score. Mystery and Miracle Plays based upon religious themes soon became a part of these dramatic portrayals.<sup>3</sup> The plays were first presented inside the Church before the altar, and later transferred outside the Church to the ballatoria--a dancing area in front of the Church--or at the west door of the Church where awnings were hung.<sup>4</sup> According to Matthew Paris, the first Miracle Play was entitled "St. Catherine."<sup>5</sup> It was written by Gregory, a Norman, who later became an Abbot of St. Albans.<sup>6</sup> The Mystery Plays grew out of the Miracle Plays, and, when the former ceased to be presented, the Morality Plays were substituted.<sup>7</sup>

It was customary to celebrate special religious occasions such as festivals and Saints' Days with some form of dancing.<sup>8</sup> During the vigil of a Saint's Day--or a day of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Vuillier, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

prayer, of silence, and of penance--some form of dancing was included.<sup>1</sup> Some of these dances continued until as late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. According to Vuillier, the dances in Langvedor, Spain, which included dancing in the churches and cemeteries on feast days, existed until the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>2</sup> In the seventeenth century on the feast of St. Martial the people and the clergy danced and sang in the Church of St. Leonard.<sup>3</sup> Vuiller, in describing a dance called the "Pela" which was performed in Gallacia on the Feast of Corpus Christi, states that, "A very tall man, carrying a magnificently dressed boy on his shoulders, danced at the head of the procession."<sup>4</sup> According to Ellis, in Paris, Limoges, and elsewhere in France, the priests danced in the choir in the celebration of Easter up to the seventeenth century, and in Rovissillon, France, up to the eighteenth century.<sup>5</sup>

Many pagan dances appeared during the Middle Ages, some of which became a part of the traditional church festivals. One called the Tripettes originated in France in 1350 and is still danced today at Barjols in Provence, France.<sup>6</sup> It is performed at the patronal feast of St. Marcel.<sup>7</sup> The Christian and the pagan merged originally when the people of Barjols, in France, bringing the body of St. Marcel to their

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ellis, op. cit., p. 42.

<sup>6</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 116.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

church, met a group of fellow townsmen taking part in a traditional festival associated with the sacrificing of a bull.<sup>1</sup> In France today, the Tripettes combine both the roasting of a bull and several days of dancing in the church.<sup>2</sup> An ecstatic dancing sect known as the "Chorizantes" originated in Germany with a thousand members, comprised of persons of both sexes.<sup>3</sup> They first appeared during the festival of St. John the Baptist during the midsummer of 1374.<sup>4</sup> The most ancient of the pagan dances were the fire dances performed on the eve of St. John's Day, June 24, in Brittany, Provence, and England.<sup>5</sup> The "Brandons," a torch dance accompanied by chants and prayers, was performed in England on the first of May and at Pentecost.<sup>6</sup>

Also developing during the Middle Ages were dances of an orgiastic nature which were characteristic of an epidemic which seemed to spread throughout Germany, Italy, and other parts of Europe.<sup>7</sup> These frenzied dances, usually performed in the churchyards, have been referred to as the danseomanie or dancing mania, and the danse macabre, or the Dance of Death or Totentanz.<sup>8</sup> Authorities were never and are not now in agreement in explaining these dances; some feel that they are one

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<sup>1</sup>Kinneys, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 88.

and the same while others speak of them as two different elements of Medieval culture. Whether these forms of dance are spoken of as dancing mania or as Dance of Death or as Totentanz, they typify the emotional state which prevailed among the peoples of the Medieval Period. These peoples had been harrassed by plagues, long wars, and many misfortunes which, perhaps, provoked this dance madness.<sup>1</sup> Priests stood by helplessly as the hysteria spread among the people. In this connection, Sachs states:

...there are increasingly numerous reports that on days when somebody dies or at Christian festivals men and women begin suddenly and irresistibly to sing and dance in the churchyard, disturb divine service, refuse to stop at the priest's bidding, and as a result are finally cursed to dance the whole year through until a sympathetic archbishop removes the ban.<sup>2</sup>

A form of dance mania called tarantism broke out in Italy during the last two centuries of the Dark Ages and existed until the eighteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Tarantism was thought to be caused by the bite of the Apulian spider and only wild jumping about after the bite was thought to bring temporary relief for the victims.<sup>4</sup> In Germany, about the middle of the fourteenth century, another uncontrollable dance madness which is known to physicians as Chorea Major and to laymen as "St. Vitus's dance," broke out.<sup>5</sup> Elaborating upon this

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<sup>1</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 253.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 178.

<sup>4</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 253.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.



type of dance, Sachs states, "Singly or hand in hand they circle and jump in hideously distorted choral dances for hours at a time, until they collapse foaming at the mouth."<sup>1</sup> This evil lasted for months, resisting all attempts at cure by physicians.

Although, in some instances, the purely religious dances were overshadowed by the frenzied and grotesque dances prevalent during this period, balance and beauty in the dance were to be restored with the advent of the Renaissance.

#### Religious Dance from the Renaissance Through the Contemporary Period

Religious dancing, like all of the other arts, was revived during the Renaissance which originated in Italy during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>2</sup> The furthering of the arts by the Church and by the patronage of royalty can be seen throughout these two centuries. The period of rebirth of the dance is said to have started with Dante who, in his Divine Comedy, refers to dancing as the activity engaged in by those in Paradise.<sup>3</sup> The Renaissance is also the period of Shakespeare, Boccaccio, Michelangelo, and many other great creative artists whose works reflect the character of the Renaissance as a period of cultural awakening and expansion.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>Sorell, op. cit., p. 120.

The Renaissance also marked the beginning of dissension between church and state.<sup>1</sup> This schism developed ultimately into overt rebellion which culminated with the Reformation in 1517.<sup>2</sup> The nations unaffected by this movement included Spain, Portugal, and Italy because these three countries remained Roman Catholic nations. The result of the Reformation is felt by some churches today, however, in that they are opposed to dancing of any sort.<sup>3</sup> These churches represent many of the varied Protestant sects which grew out of the Reformation.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, persons of royal and aristocratic lineage were evolving a choreo-dramatic dance form which gave rise to the development of the ballet. Kirstein provides the following information with respect to the origin of the word "ballet:"

The word 'Balletti,' diminutive for 'Ballo,' a dance, is used to refer to dances performed in a ballroom. In the beginning, 'balletti,' as a term, had no special theatrical meaning, but meant merely performance of danced figures, not unlike a developed English Morris, which was greatly in vogue among high life of Milan. Not until de Medici had established the Italians in France did it acquire specifically dramatic significance.<sup>5</sup>

In the Italian courts, dukes and princes devised elaborate pageants in which the courtiers danced in fancy dress,

<sup>1</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 135.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 135.

often symbolic, or enacted the characters of men, beasts, or mythical gods.<sup>1</sup> These extravagant entertainments reached their height when Catherine de Medici married Louis XIII and became the Queen of France.<sup>2</sup>

From the choreo-dramatic form, the ballet evolved into the ballet-opera form in which a theme or plot was developed dramatically and interspersed with dancing.<sup>3</sup> In Italy, these forms of entertainment were presented in conjunction with the many luxurious court banquets.<sup>4</sup> At one such banquet given by Cardinal Pietro Riario, Kirstein states that "After the food, there was a 'worthy morisco' or a mimed and dance action."<sup>5</sup>

Many of these ballet forms were used to celebrate the canonization of Catholic Cardinals, thus stressing the Roman Catholic Church's interest in dance.<sup>6</sup> Because of such an active interest in its development, in 1609, a great ballet spectacle was organized by the Church of Portugal for the beatification of Saint Ignatius Loyola.<sup>7</sup> This ballet was widely danced in churches of both Portugal and France.<sup>8</sup>

The ballet continued to flourish in both religious and theatrical forms during the remaining part of the

<sup>1</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 135

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Sorell, op. cit., p. 122.

<sup>7</sup>Vuiller, op. cit., p. 82.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

eighteenth century. Catherine de Medici and Louis XIV are said to have been responsible for the development of the highly stylized ballet form which became more and more a part of the theatre.<sup>1</sup>

Early America was not entirely without its form of religious and secular dancing despite the fact that the early Puritans frowned upon all expressions of worldly joy or pleasure. That the peoples coming to America found freedom of religious expression is attested to by the variety of religious faiths developing within and outside of the various colonies.<sup>2</sup> Of these many sects, the Puritans and the Quakers in New England were the most adamant against dancing; despite the fact that it was not encouraged, however, dancing was not forbidden.<sup>3</sup> Many isolated groups and cults used symbolic movements in their religious rituals.<sup>4</sup>

One of these new cults was a sacred order called "The Free and Accepted Masons" which originated in England in 1717 from a meeting of a guild of Masons who were building English Cathedrals.<sup>5</sup> They came to America in 1767 and are considered today one of the largest and oldest fraternal organizations in the world.<sup>6</sup> The Masons base their moral

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<sup>1</sup>Sorell, op. cit., p. 123.

<sup>2</sup>Charles M. Andrews, Pilgrims and Puritans (New York: Yale University Press, 1919), p. 122.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 136

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

code upon the symbols of the building professions and describe God as the "Great Architect of the Universe."<sup>1</sup> They hold secret meetings and use elaborate rituals in connection with initiation ceremonies and the conferring of degrees.<sup>2</sup> During these ceremonies, the members sit around the edge of the hall, leaving the center space for special marches and the execution of floor patterns of special designs.<sup>3</sup> The "Eastern Stars," an active sister group to the Masons, also perform various movements in their rituals.<sup>4</sup> Some of the designs which the sister group performs include those of a cross, a circle, or more complicated symbolic representations of the sun, the moon, or the Pleiades.<sup>5</sup> With respect to these organizations, Fisk states:

The members find a psychological value in taking part in the marches and formations, for it provides them with a bond of common action. Each one feels that he has a special place to fill.<sup>6</sup>

Another group which has always employed creative, symbolic dance movement in their form of worship is the Shakers.<sup>7</sup> This group originated in England in about the year of 1706.<sup>8</sup> They came to America in 1774 and settled throughout the east and middle west, about six thousand in

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 141.

number, of which only a few active communities comprised chiefly of elderly members now survive.<sup>1</sup> The Shakers welcomed all who were tired of "futile creeds, formal worship, and the evils of a corrupt society."<sup>2</sup> Their beliefs are derived from certain Huguenot sects which employed dancing as an active part of the adoration of God.<sup>3</sup> Their movements included walking the floor while singing and passing each other with staccato movements.<sup>4</sup> They used rapid up and down movements with the hands, with a staccato wrist action. As the groups of Shakers continued to spread throughout the east and middle west, their original movements developed into shuffle steps forward and backward in a series of parallel lines, weaving in imaginative designs, a fabric of union and love.<sup>5</sup> There is always a high degree of creativity present in the movements of the Shakers, reflecting the individual use of the hands, the feet, the tongue, and the whole body.<sup>6</sup>

The Negroes, brought to the United States during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, welcomed Christianity and, as it became their adopted religion, they interpreted it creatively through the singing of spirituals and in rhythmic motion because they felt "moved by the spirit."<sup>7</sup> Characteristic movements of the Negro included a swaying motion backward and forward as he listened to his minister

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<sup>1</sup>Kinneys, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 137.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

and responded to him with the periodic reiteration of the words "Amen" and "Hallelujah" and with the clapping of his hands.<sup>1</sup> Fisk describes the "ring shout," another typical form of movement, in this manner, "The prayer of one man becomes a chant, the chant becomes a shout, and the shout becomes a movement."<sup>2</sup> Meerloo gives perhaps the best explanation of the origin of the movement of the Negro when he writes that, "The enslaved Negro could only bear his captivity by dreaming of the rhythms of his old fatherland."<sup>3</sup>

Many churches today are encouraging religious dance in the United States, in Europe, and in the mission fields of various denominations. Credit is given to Ruth St. Denis and to Ted Shawn as the originators of dance inspired by religious themes in the United States.<sup>4</sup> Other contemporary personalities and organizations have followed these two great artists in the performance of religious dances.<sup>5</sup>

Ruth St. Denis has been the leading contemporary pioneer in the art of the religious dance.<sup>6</sup> She has interpreted many religious truths and has made a lifetime study of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 141-142.

<sup>3</sup>Meerloo, op. cit., p. 42.

<sup>4</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>5</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 153.

<sup>6</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 32.

symbolic religious movements. In describing the religious dance, she states:

I mean a dimension of the free moving of our devine selfhood in any direction, in any posture, in any gesture or rhythm that releases our highest and most harmonious existence. The rhythms and sacred cultural forms may be Catholic or Protestant, symbolical or allegorical.<sup>1</sup>

Miss St. Denis has studied to discover the spiritual truths in many religions of the world, and she has interpreted them, through her religious dances, to American audiences.<sup>2</sup> In 1934, she founded the Society of Spiritual Arts in the City of New York.<sup>3</sup> This organization later developed into the "Church of the Divine Dance" which was established in Hollywood, California, in 1947.<sup>4</sup> The membership comprises individuals who are interested in dancing as an expression of religion. In 1940, at one of the largest churches in New York, the Riverside Church, she presented her "Masque of Mary" which is the story of the Nativity.<sup>5</sup> Two of the clergyman read the Scriptures, Miss St. Denis and her group danced, and the choir sang.<sup>6</sup> Since that time, she has given several similar performances and, in every instance, the congregation has filled the entire church.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 135.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.



Among Miss St. Denis' other religious dances are "Hymn of Joy," "Psalms 142 and 150," and "Doxology."<sup>1</sup> In 1904, her interest in Oriental religion led her to present her Hindu Temple Dance, "Rahda" which teaches that spiritual power and peace are attained only through renunciation.<sup>2</sup> This was the first attempt by Miss St. Denis to present the religious aspect of the dance to modern audiences but, perhaps, because she choreographed it in Hindu idiom, the religious content of the work was overlooked.<sup>3</sup>

Ted Shawn, studying for the ministry in his early youth, can indeed be called a minister in body, mind, and soul. Throughout his professional career, he has promoted the idea of religious dancing. Illustrative of this idea are references to religious dance in his many books and articles, his speeches delivered at colleges and universities, before civic and religious groups and, above all, in his long career as a teacher.<sup>4</sup>

The art of dance in the church had its origin in this country when Ted Shawn decided to present a Protestant worship service in dance form.<sup>5</sup> In 1917, he presented such a program at the First Interdenominational Church in San Francisco, California, with the Reverend Doctor Henry Frank

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<sup>1</sup>Fisk, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>4</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 156.

<sup>5</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 33.

lecturing on the relationship between dance and religion.<sup>1</sup>  
 The performance was so well received that Shawn went on tour with his Dance Church Service in some thirty American cities.<sup>2</sup>  
 The performance included the dancing of "The Doxology," "The Gloria," and "The Benediction."<sup>3</sup>

In 1931, Shawn established his dance education center at Jacob's Pillow near Lee, Massachusetts, where guests, dance artists, and students today share a deep experience not only of movement techniques but also of the basic philosophies of the nature of man expressed through the dance.<sup>4</sup>  
 Among the notable works taught to his students is a dance entitled "The Evolution of Prayer" depicting the development of prayer from primitive fear, through the stages of covenants, mystical awareness, and finally, vital, outgoing dedication.<sup>5</sup>

Shawn organized the first company of men dancers and, with them, gave many programs.<sup>6</sup> Among his religious dances presented in concert are: "Nobody Knows De Trouble I've Seen," "Invocation to the Thunderbird," "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring," "Job," and "St. Francis." "The Dreams of Jacob" was presented by Shawn in 1949 at Jacob's Pillow, and will be long remembered not only as the familiar Bible story of

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 156.

<sup>4</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 95.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

Jacob, but, according to Shawn, "as a testament to any individual who aspires to rise above mediocrity."<sup>1</sup>

Martha Graham, making her debut as an independent artist in New York in 1926, became one of the most successful exponents of modern dance.<sup>2</sup> One of her most important works of a religious nature is entitled, "Primitive Mysteries."<sup>3</sup> This dance is in three parts, "Hymn to the Virgin," "Crucifixus," and "Hosannah." Although "Primitive Mysteries" resembles a Miracle Play in structure, it depicts the feelings of the early Christians.<sup>4</sup> In this connection, Sorell states that, "It is a tryptich of pagan origin executed with a fascinating simplicity and earthy strength in its movement."<sup>5</sup>

Doris Humphrey contributed to the development of dance not only as a dancer and choreographer but also as a theorist.<sup>6</sup> Arthritis forced her to retire as a dancer in 1945, but she continued to teach and to choreograph for other concert dancers until her death in 1958.<sup>7</sup> Among her dances based upon religious themes are, "The Shakers," and "Passacaglia in C Minor." In "The Shakers," Humphrey made use of the ritual of "dancing one's sins away" and used this dance for theatrical presentation accompanied by speech, song, and the accordion.<sup>9</sup> According to Sorell, in

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Sorell, op. cit., p. 190.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

"Passacagila in C Minor," Humphrey "translated the architectural beauty and the spirit of religious ecstasy into movement as pure and simple as Bach's music."<sup>1</sup>

Working closely with Doris Humphrey in the 1930's was Charles Weidman who also choreographed dances in religious idiom.<sup>2</sup> Before discovering that his creative forte lay in humor and in pantomime, Weidman choreographed "The Happy Hypocrite," "David and Goliath," and "Pilgrims," all of which were based upon religious themes.<sup>3</sup> Representing the modern dance world in church ritual, Weidman, in 1937, appeared in two solos at St. Marks in-the-Bowery Church in the City of New York.<sup>4</sup> The first of these solos was a dance based upon an American Indian Ritual, and the second was entitled, "A Cult Ballad" dealing with Rome's foundation of our Christmas.<sup>5</sup>

Credit should be given also to Lil Leandre and Erika Thimey for their contributions to religious dance. Lil Leandre created dances to the accompaniment of the words of the Scriptures, and danced at the "Camps Farthest Out" in Redlands, California.<sup>6</sup> Among her many religious works are "Trampin," "Be Still and Know That I am God," and "The Twenty-Third Psalm"<sup>7</sup> Erika Thimey stems from the Wigman

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 156.

<sup>4</sup>New York Times, January 24, 1937, p. 22.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 158.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

School of Dance in Germany and has worked with church groups in Chicago, in New York, in Boston, and in Washington.<sup>1</sup>

Thimey has specialized in religious solo dances which include "Who Art Thou?," Invocation," "Pieta," and "O Spirit of Man."<sup>2</sup>

Many organizations have made contributions to the field of religious dance. These include the Modern Dance Group of the Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas, which, over a period of years, has presented many programs of religious dance in churches of various denominations.<sup>3</sup> Contributing also are various youth organizations, such as, the Y-Teens of the Young Women's Christian Association and Girl Scout groups which have found new and wider horizons of spiritual understanding through the medium of modern dance.<sup>4</sup>

A national organization recognized in the field of religious dance is the Sacred Dance Guild.<sup>5</sup> This organization is dedicated to the art of religious dance activities of the Rhythmic Choirs.<sup>6</sup> Its growth and importance reached such a point that, in October of 1956, a convention of Sacred Dance Choir Directors was held at the Arlington Street Church in Boston, Massachusetts.<sup>7</sup> This convention was attended by choir directors, ministers, dancers, musicians, religious

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Lewis, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

education directors, social workers, and eight rhythmic choirs from the Boston area.<sup>1</sup>

The Protestant Churches in the United States today are sponsoring a revival of religious dance through Rhythmic Choirs.<sup>2</sup> Many churches throughout the United States have rhythmic choirs taking part in the regular church services. There are five such churches in St. Louis using rhythmic choirs in processions which is one of the most ancient forms of dance; in pageantry on special occasions where there is freedom to use more dance movement than in the processions; in parts of the worship services--the call to worship, hymns, prayers, reading of the scriptures, offerings, and benediction; and in the presentation of dramatic dances based upon Biblical and suitable non-Biblical material.<sup>3</sup>

Church leaders who have contributed to the field of religious dance and who are closely associated with the Sacred Dance Guild and Rhythmic Choirs, includes the Reverend Robert A. Storer, Mrs. Margaret Palmer Fisk, the late Reverend Doctor William Norman Guthrie and daughter, Phoebe Ann.<sup>4</sup> The Reverend Storer has worked with Motion Choirs in Dorchester, Massachusetts, since 1937, and Fisk,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Claudia Chapline, "Dance and Religion," Journal of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (March, 1957), p. 39.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 156.

a minister's wife has worked with the rhythmic choirs since 1934 in Chicago, Hanover, Washington and various other cities.<sup>1</sup> Fisk has added to the scant literature on the subject of religious dance with her books entitled The Art of the Rhythmic Choir and Look Up and Live.<sup>2</sup> In The Art of the Rhythmic Choir, the chapter on the history of dance in the Christian Church is especially noteworthy.<sup>3</sup> Look Up and Live is a do-it-yourself type of book which offers simple movement patterns to religious music for persons with no knowledge of dance.<sup>4</sup>

The late Doctor Guthrie, Rector of St. Marks in-the Bowerie, in the City of New York, was a well known exponent of the use of dance in religious ritual and, despite a great deal of criticism and rebuke from some church officials, he continued this practice in his Church until he retired.<sup>5</sup> His daughter, Phoebe Ann, author of "The Dynamic Motivation of the Dance," a thesis written in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts Degree, Teachers College, Columbia University, in the City of New York, in 1926, worked closely with her father in the sponsoring of dance in church rituals.<sup>6</sup> She directed a group of young dancers who performed regularly in conjunction with special church services at St. Marks in-the Bowerie.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Chapline, op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Moss, op. cit., p. 42-43.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.



### Summary

The investigator has reported in Chapter II the heritage of religious dance from the time of primitive man through the contemporary period with emphasis upon religious dance as a part of worship in Christian Churches. Because of such a rich heritage, careful consideration was given to each period of civilization in tracing the history of religious dance. Emphasis was placed upon specific contributions to religious dance during each period of civilization as well as the important personalities, and festivals. In discussing the rich heritage of religious dance, the following periods in history were surveyed: Primitive, Egyptian, Biblical, Hellenic, Roman, Middle Ages, and Renaissance through the Contemporary.

The dancing of primitive man was largely of a religious character. Dancing, to primitive man, was of primary importance in the life of a group; it was neither a diversion nor a form of entertainment. Having no verbal language through which to communicate with others, he danced about every activity of any importance in his life.<sup>1</sup> Dance to him was both an expression of man's relationship to man, and of man's relationship with the unknown.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 31.

Among primitive peoples, dance magic was the first means of dealing with the unknown.<sup>1</sup> Through dance magic, primitive man sought to identify himself with the forces of the universe, to become one with the cosmic powers and, thereby, to control these forces for the benefit of himself and his fellow men. There were many inexplicable forces which permeated the life of primitive man and he expressed his reaction toward each of these forces by dancing.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in time, he came to worship not the manifestations of these forces--the lightning, the trees, the waters, and other natural phenomena--but, instead, the powerful spirits which inhabited them.<sup>3</sup> His religion required that he attempt to control, through magic and mysteries, these forces over which he had no control.<sup>4</sup> Dancing was his way of communicating with the spirits with which he peopled the supernatural world in which he lived.

As the structure of primitive society developed from the individual and his family unit to tribes, primitive man faced new problems and emotions. In trying to solve these new problems and to understand his emotions, he continued to dance. Certain individuals in the tribes demonstrated superior powers in their dance and were recognized with respect and authority; such an individual was called "the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 6.

Shaman" or the "medicine man."<sup>1</sup> These dancers acted as high priests and served as instruments of intercession between the material world and the spiritual world of primitive man.<sup>2</sup>

As man emerged from pre-history into a period of recorded history, he continued to dance the themes inherent in the dances of primitive man. It is obvious, too, that these universal themes with appropriate variations in style, rhythm, and purpose have been utilized by every subsequent generation, thus making dance, rooted in the religious consciousness of primitive man, the universal art which is so satisfying to the soul.

In Egypt, dance again was the chief medium of religious expression. Kirstein points out that, "As far back as the First Dynasty [ca. 3000 B.C.] a wooden relief of the King Semti shows dancing as plastic prayer,"<sup>3</sup> and the Kinneys state that, "Egyptian carvings of six thousand years ago record the use of dance in religious rituals."<sup>4</sup> Traces of majestic choreographic poses on the columns of a temple have been found by sculptors, indicating that the religious dances of Egypt reflected a feeling equivalent to the spirit of the Pharaohs' monumental architecture.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Martin, op. cit., p. 8

<sup>2</sup>Shawn, op. cit.

<sup>3</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>4</sup>Kinneys, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

In the earliest period of Egyptian civilization, dance was an important adjunct to the temples where the members of the priesthood were all-powerful.<sup>1</sup> They conducted rituals and guarded the temples in which dance was performed by special dancers or by the members of the priesthood themselves. Plato relates that:

The priests danced in definite, especially designed movements around the temple altars and the dance formations they executed were intended to represent the movements of the planets, the constellations, and the fixed stars in the heavens.<sup>2</sup>

These astral dances appeared to have been the most outstanding form of dance in the rituals of religious dance among the ancient Egyptians.<sup>3</sup>

As the Egyptian towns grew, each settlement built its own temple and worshipped its own god. The chief god, worshipped by all Egyptians, however, was Osiris.<sup>4</sup> Through the worship of Osiris, the Egyptians explained the forces of nature about them, particularly the annual overflow and the recession of the waters of the river Nile. Osiris, son of Zeus and Niobe, was designated by the Egyptians as the brother and husband of the goddess Isis.<sup>5</sup> The Egyptians believed that the tears of Isis, falling in grief because of the death of her husband-brother who had been killed by Typhon, resulted in the annual overflow of the Nile.<sup>6</sup> In

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Blackman, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Kirstein, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Shawn, op. cit., p. 17.

the temples, this legend became the central story of the Egyptian religion and was re-enacted constantly in dramatic dance form.<sup>1</sup> The Egyptians produced many dance-dramas both within and outside of the temples in honor of their numerous gods and goddesses.

The Egyptian tribes conducted many ritualistic processions in which they honored their dead.<sup>2</sup> It was customary among the peasants of Upper Egypt for the female relatives and friends of a deceased person to meet together outside of his home on each of the first three days after the funeral to lament and to perform a strange dance of lamentation.<sup>3</sup> Some of these dances continued for an hour or more and were performed two or three times each day. The people of Egypt exercised great care and concern in their preparation for life after death.<sup>4</sup> They believed that this preparation was essential since their religion denied that death ended the existence of a person who had led a good life.<sup>5</sup>

The Egyptians observed many important religious festivals which often required the performance of dancers who had at least a degree of preparatory training.<sup>6</sup> One of these festivals, which illustrates the survival of ancient fertility rituals, was the ceremony in honor of the consecration

<sup>1</sup>Oesterley, op. cit., p. 210.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Blackman, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

of the sacred bull, Apis.<sup>1</sup> Priests exercised considerable care in choosing the sacrificial animal and adhered to the belief that the animal selected could be fertilized only by a shaft of moonlight and that, at its birth, certain unmistakable signs showed its divine selection. The bull must be black with a triangular white patch on his forehead and another on his right flank, representing the crescent moon in the black night.<sup>2</sup> There were numerous other requisites which had to be met, all of which were approved only by the priests. The bull, Apis, was placed in a designated sacred place for four months after which he was transferred to Memphis and was conducted in pomp to the sacred Apeum where his domestic servants performed secret dances in his honor.<sup>3</sup> These dances enacted the adventures of the god of whom the bull, Apis, was thought to be the living image.<sup>4</sup>

There can scarcely be a doubt that Egypt, the first country to produce a great civilization, was also a great dancing center. In this connection, Ellis states, "Egypt is the mother country of all civilized dancing."<sup>5</sup> According to Kirstein:

Egypt, in relation to the dance, is interesting as the first great culture which used the practice of the magic of tribal civilization in the development of a great homogeneous nation.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 230.

<sup>6</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 11.

Dance was an integral part of the ceremony of worship among the ancient Hebrews, and in the opinion of the investigator, pre-determined to a large extent the custom of dancing in the Christian Church today. The dances of the Hebrews were influenced directly by those of the Egyptians. Vuillier states that, "As early as the year 2543 B.C., we find traces of the choreographic art. Dances bequeathed by the priests of ancient Egypt were held high in honor among the Hebrews."<sup>1</sup> According to the Old Testament, the offering of sacrifices in the worship of Jehovah were definite occasions for dancing among the Hebrew people. In this connection, there are eleven ancient Hebrew root words describing dance in reference to its use in the Old Testament.<sup>2</sup>

During the first century following the birth of Christ, a Jewish sect, known as the Therapeutae, possessed a highly developed form of dance.<sup>3</sup> This sect, whose origin and fate alike are unknown, is believed to have settled during the first century in the vicinity of Alexandria, Egypt.<sup>4</sup> The members, both men and women, devoted their time to prayer and study. They prayed twice a day, at dawn and at the close of the day, and spent the remaining hours during each day on spiritual devotional

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<sup>1</sup>Vuillier, op. cit., p. x.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ellis, op. cit., p. 140.

<sup>4</sup>Encyclopedia Britannica, op. cit., p. 435.



exercises.<sup>1</sup> According to Sorell, at special banquets, the Therapeutae performed hymn chants, and processional dances, in choroï of men and women.<sup>2</sup>

It appears that there was some connection between dance and the Church in the very early period of its organization.<sup>3</sup> Kirstein tells of the Gnostic "Hymn of Jesus" as early as the year 160 A.D., dealing with the Lord's Supper, and states that, "In it, instead of the traditional breaking and sipping of wine, they [the disciples] danced."<sup>4</sup> It is obvious, therefore, that dance was accepted as a part of Christian ritual as early as the first century.

Dancing during the Hellenic Period of civilization has been associated always with the worship of gods and goddesses. The greatest of all Greek gods was Zeus, who originated in Crete, a Grecian island in the southern Aegean Sea, and about eighty-one miles from the mainland of Greece.<sup>5</sup> It is interesting to note what a tremendous influence Zeus and this Cretan island had upon dance among the ancient Greeks. The Cretans were extolled by the Greeks as exceptional artists and acknowledged as their superiors in the dance. According to Sachs, the best Greek dancers in modern times still come from among the descendants of the Cretans.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Sorell, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>3</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Sorell, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>6</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 238-239.

Greeks in all stations of life are known to have participated in the dance on all occasions. The militant Spartans insisted that dancing was essential to the development of a good soldier; the Athenian lovers of beauty deemed it essential for the sound development of body, mind, and soul; physicians prescribed dancing for its therapeutic values; philosophers encouraged their students to practice dancing as the best medium for total development; and great men were not uncommonly known to dance in public.<sup>1</sup> It is obvious, then, that the attitude of the early Greeks toward dancing was one of respect and enthusiasm. It is not surprising to find that choreography during this period reached a very high state of excellence.<sup>2</sup>

Of all Greek dancing, the religious rituals were the most impressive. These religious dances may be classified into four main groups: the Emmeleia, the Hyporchemia, the Gymnopedia, and the Endymatia.<sup>3</sup> The Emmeleia and the Hyporchemia were deeply religious in nature and are among the most ancient of the Greek dances.<sup>4</sup> The origin of the Emmeleia is attributed to Orpheus, the mythological musician and poet. The movements characteristic of this group of dances were slow and stately and were performed without choral accompaniment.<sup>5</sup> The Hyporchemia comprised some of the oldest

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<sup>1</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>2</sup>Kenneys, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

types of Greek dances performed by both men and women and are noted for their choral accompaniment, the most characteristic accompanying feature of Greek dancing.<sup>1</sup> The dances comprising the Gymnopedia and Endymatia were less religious in nature than those included within the first two groups of dances. The Gymnopedia, depicting athletic feats, were usually danced in honor of Apollo by nude youths.<sup>2</sup> The Endymatic dances were costumed brightly and were used for general entertainment purposes.<sup>3</sup> The dances comprising these four main groups of ancient Greek dances were common to different localities, and usually celebrated the worship of a god, or a victory, or some special act of heroism.

It is obvious that the Greeks gave to the world greater cultural momentum than any other country during the early periods of civilizations. In the development of dance, the Greeks were outstanding, reflecting the Greek ideal of beauty which permeated not only dancing but also all of the related arts--literature, drama, painting, sculpture, and architecture. In this connection, Vuillier states, "Thus we see that Greece, with her fine simplicity of thought, set patterns from which was cut the civilization of Rome."<sup>4</sup>

The dance suffered various stages of degradation at the hands of the Roman people and, because of the ultimate decadence of Rome, the development of religious dance was

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<sup>1</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Vuillier, op. cit., p. 14.

retarded for at least a thousand years. The early Romans were not a very dance-conscious people.<sup>1</sup> They seized upon the dance and all of the other arts developed by the Greeks.

Little can be said about the religious dance performed by the Romans. The Romans were great organizers, conquerors, lawmakers, and governors but, in the arts, they cheapened what they borrowed.<sup>2</sup> As the religious life of Rome gradually decayed and became orgiastic, so the religious dances became occasions for unbridled licentiousness and sensuality.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately, the Church took over what little religious dancing remained.

Perhaps the most sacred of the Roman religious dances were the dances of the Salii or the Priests of Mars. There were numerous orders of such dancing priests appointed by Numa Pompilius, the second King of Rome, to honor the gods through dance and to care for the Ancilia--the sacred shield of Mars.<sup>4</sup> Holy processions of the Salii Priests were held during the months of March and October with ritualistic ceremonies lasting as long as three weeks.<sup>5</sup> The most solemn procession was held during the month of March, commemorating the time when the sacred shield was believed to have fallen from heaven during the reign of Numa.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>3</sup>Kinneys, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>4</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

Dancing never played as important a part in the national life of the Romans as it did in that of the Greeks. According to the Kinneys, with the final capitulation of Greece to her more barbaric conquerors, the Romans proceeded to help themselves to whatever of the Greek culture pleased them.<sup>2</sup> Dance to the Romans was primarily a past time which respectable Romans regarded as inconsistent with their dignity.

During the Middle Ages, the Church became rigidly authoritarian and attempted to regulate all forms of religious activity, including the dance.<sup>3</sup> This aspect of the ritual was attacked severely by the Christians who opposed the Roman practice of using religious dance as a form of entertainment, and, therefore, ordered the Church to pass rigid legislation against all ribald or indecent dances.<sup>4</sup> Two men connected with the Church, Father Menestrier and Jehan Tabourot, compiled valuable material on the dance during the Middle Ages. About 1682, Father Menestrier, a Jesuit Priest, wrote an important book on dancing with emphasis upon the fact that men "sang and danced the praises of God, using the choir as a stage."<sup>5</sup> Tabourot, the Canon of Langres, also known as Thoinot Arbeau, wrote an

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Kinneys, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Oesterley, op. cit., p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> Fisk, op. cit., p. 103.

<sup>5</sup> Kirstein, op. cit., p. 63.

authoritative work entitled Orchesography.<sup>1</sup> In this important book, Tabourot refers to the opposition of the Church toward dancing.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of all protests, however, religious dance continued to spread during the Middle Ages. An interesting example of the perpetuation of ritualistic dance are the Cathedral dances of Spain, some of which are continued to the present day.<sup>3</sup> In Toledo, the Council suggested that the Archbishop of Seville present a "ritual rich in sacred choreography."<sup>4</sup> This ritual later became a part of the Holy Mass known as "Mozarabe," and it is still celebrated in the Cathedral in Seville today. Still danced in the Cathedrals of Spain is the famous "Dance of the Seises" performed by the choir boys. It was once ordered by the Pope to be discontinued, but the order was rescinded and it is now danced three times during each year--on Shrove Tuesday, The Feast of Corpus Christi, and the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, respectively.<sup>5</sup>

In the latter part of the twelfth century, the Church decided to permit dramatic portrayals.<sup>6</sup> The purpose of this decision was to evoke public interest in the services of the church through the introduction of choral songs and ceremonial

<sup>1</sup>Tabourat, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>3</sup>Kinneys, op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Anonymous, op. cit., p. 575.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

dances performed by the choir.<sup>1</sup> Mystery and Miracle Plays based upon religious themes were a part of these dramatic portrayals. These plays were presented at first inside the church before the altar, and, later transferred to the ballatoria--a dancing area in the front of the church--or at the west door of the church where awnings were hung. According to Matthew Paris, the first Miracle Play was entitled "St. Catherine."<sup>2</sup> It was written by Gregory, a norman, who later became the Abbot of St. Albans.<sup>3</sup> The Mystery Plays grew out of the Miracle Plays and when the former ceased to be presented, the Morality Plays were substituted.<sup>4</sup>

Many pagan dances appeared during the Middle Ages, some of which became a part of the traditional church festivals. One--called the Tripettes--originated in France in 1350 and is still danced today at Barjols in Provence, France.<sup>5</sup> It is performed at the patronal feast of St. Marcel. The Christian and the pagan merged originally when the people of Barjols, bringing the body of St. Marcel to their church, met a group of fellow townsmen taking part in a traditional festival associated with the sacrificing of a bull.<sup>6</sup> Today in France the Tripettes combines both the roasting of a bull and several days of dancing in the church.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Vuillier, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Kinneys, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.



The most ancient of the pagan dances were the fire dances performed on the eve of St. John's Day--June 24--in Brittany, Provence, and England.<sup>1</sup> The "Brandons," a torch dance accompanied by chants and prayers, was performed in England on the first of May and at Pentecost.<sup>2</sup>

Dances similar to the frenzied dances of the savages and that of the "cult of Dionysus" in Greece developed also during the Middle Ages.<sup>3</sup> Some have described these dances as "orgiastic" and characteristic of an epidemic which seemed to spread throughout Germany, Italy, and other parts of Europe. These dances were said to have been religious in origin during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries.<sup>4</sup> Priests stood by helplessly as the hysteria spread among the people. These dance manias were called different names in different parts of Europe. In Germany, about the middle of the fourteenth century an uncontrollable dance madness which is known to physicians as Chorea Major and to laymen as St. Vitus's dance, broke out.<sup>5</sup> In Italy, at the same time (fourteenth century) and on into the eighteenth century another dance mania, Tarantism, evolved.<sup>6</sup> This dance was thought to be caused by the bite of the Apulian spider--Lycosa Tarentula--and only wild jumping about after the bite of the spider was thought to bring

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>5</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 253.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

temporary relief.<sup>1</sup> The Dance of Death, also known as Danse Macabre and as Totentanz, originated in the churchyard on days when someone had died or at a Christian festival.<sup>2</sup> Men and women began suddenly and irresistibly to dance and sing.<sup>3</sup>

Although in some instances, the purely religious dances were overshadowed by the frenzied and grotesque dances of the Middle Ages, their balance and beauty were restored with the advent of the Renaissance. Religious dancing, like all of the other arts, came to life again with the Renaissance which originated in Italy during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>4</sup> The furthering of the arts by the Church and by the patronage of royalty can be seen throughout these two centuries. The Renaissance is the period of Dante, Shakespeare, Boccaccio, Michelangelo, and many other great creative artists whose works reflect the character of the Renaissance as a period of cultural awakening and expansion.

The Renaissance also marked the beginning of dissension between church and state.<sup>5</sup> This schism developed ultimately into overt rebellion which culminated with the Reformation in 1517.<sup>6</sup> The nations unaffected by this movement included Spain, Portugal, and Italy because these three countries remained Roman Catholic nations. The result of the Reformation

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>5</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 135.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

is felt by some churches today, however, in that they are opposed to dancing of any sort. These churches represent many of the varied Protestant sects which grew out of the Reformation.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, persons of royal and aristocratic lineage were evolving a choreo-dramatic dance form which gave rise to the development of the ballet. In the Italian courts, dukes and princes devised elaborate pageants in which the courtiers danced in fancy dress, often symbolic, or enacted the characters of men, beasts or mythical gods.<sup>2</sup> These extravagant entertainments reached their height when Catherine de Medici married Louis XIII and became the Queen of France.<sup>3</sup>

From the choreo-dramatic form, the ballet evolved into the ballet-opera form in which a theme or plot was developed dramatically and interspersed with dancing.<sup>4</sup> In Italy, these forms of entertainment were presented in conjunction with the many luxurious court banquets.<sup>5</sup> At one such banquet, given by Cardinal Pietro Riario, Kirstein states that "After the food, there was a 'worthy morisco' or a mimed and dance action."<sup>6</sup> Many of the ballet forms were used to celebrate the canonization of Catholic Cardinals, thus stressing the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 136.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

Catholic Church's interest in dance.<sup>1</sup> In 1609, a great ballet spectacle was organized by the Church of Portugal for the beatification of Saint Ignatius Loyola.<sup>2</sup> The ballet was widely danced in churches of both Portugal and France.<sup>3</sup>

The ballet continued to flourish in both religious and theatrical forms during the remaining part of the eighteenth century. Catherine de Medici and Louis XIV are said to have been responsible for the development of the highly stylized ballet form which became more and more a part of the theatre.<sup>4</sup>

Early America was not entirely without its forms of religious and secular dancing despite the fact that the early Puritans frowned upon all expressions of worldly joy or pleasure. That the people coming to America found freedom of religious expression is attested by the variety of religious faiths developing within and outside of the various colonies. Many isolated groups, sects and cults used symbolic movements in their religious rituals. One of these new cults was a sacred order called "The Free and Accepted Mason" which was organized in 1717.<sup>5</sup> This group originated from a meeting of a guild of Masons who were building English Cathedrals and is still active in many parts of the world.

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<sup>1</sup>Sorell, op. cit., p. 122.

<sup>2</sup>Vuillier, op. cit., p. 82.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Sorell, op. cit., p. 123.

<sup>5</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 136.

They base their code upon the symbols of the level, the compass, and the plumb, and describe God as the "Great Architect of the Universe."<sup>1</sup> They hold secret meetings and use elaborate rituals in connection with initiation ceremonies and the conferring of degrees.<sup>2</sup> During these ceremonies, the members sit around the edge of the hall, leaving the center space for special marches and the execution of floor patterns of special designs.<sup>3</sup> The "Eastern Stars," an active sister group to the Masons, also perform various movements in their rituals.<sup>4</sup> Some of the designs the sister group performs are those of a cross, a circle, or more complicated symbolic representations of the sun, the moon, or the Pleiades.<sup>5</sup>

Two other groups employing creative, symbolic movement in the form of dance are the Shakers and the Negroes. The Shakers, originating in England about the year of 1706, came to America in 1774 and settled throughout the east and middle west. They welcomed all who were tired of "futile creeds, formal worship, and the evils of a corrupt society."<sup>6</sup> Their movements included walking the floor while singing, and passing each other with staccato movements. Their beliefs were derived from certain Huguenot sects which employed dancing as an active part of the adoration of God.<sup>7</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Kinneys, op. cit., p.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

Negroes, brought to the United States during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, welcomed Christianity and, as it became their adopted religion, they interpreted it creatively through the singing of spirituals and in rhythmic motion because they felt "moved by the spirit."<sup>1</sup> Characteristic movements of the Negro included a swaying motion backward and forward as he listened to his minister and responded to him with the periodic reiteration of the words "Amen" and "Hallelujah" and with the clapping of his hands.<sup>2</sup> Fisk describes the "ring shout," another typical form of movement, in this manner: "The prayer of one man becomes a chant, the chant becomes a shout, and the shout becomes a movement."<sup>3</sup>

Many churches today are encouraging religious dance in the United States, in Europe, and in the mission fields of various denominations. Credit is given to Ruth St. Denis and to Ted Shawn as the originators of dance inspired by religious themes in the United States.<sup>4</sup> Other contemporary personalities and organizations have followed these two great artists in the performance of religious dances. The establishment of the Denishawn School of Dance in Los Angeles, California, in 1915 by Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn is one of the great landmarks in the history of American Dance.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Fisk, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

From its ranks have come three of the greatest of Contemporary American Dancers, namely, Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, and Charles Weidman. Each of these dancers has contributed richly to the field of religious dance. Notable organizations which have added to the interest in religious dance includes: The Modern Dance Group of the Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas, which over a period of years has presented programs of religious dances in churches of various denominations; Youth Organizations such as the Y-Teens and Girl Scouts; and the Sacred Dance Guild, a national organization engaged in the modern religious dance and in the activities of the Rhythmic Choirs.<sup>1</sup>

Church leaders who have contributed to the field of religious dance includes: the Reverend Robert A. Storer who has worked with Motion Choirs since 1937; Margaret Palmer Fisk, a minister's wife and author of two books on religious movement entitled The Art of the Rhythmic Choir and Look Up and Live; and the late Reverend Doctor William Norman Guthrie, rector of St. Marks in-the Bowerie Church in the City of New York and daughter Phoebe Ann.<sup>2</sup>

Because of the many contributions of such outstanding personalities and religious organizations, dance as a part of worship is being accepted in many churches today. In the opinion of the investigator, religious dance, because of

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<sup>1</sup> Lewis, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Moss, op. cit., p. 42-43.



such a rich heritage, has much to offer today as well as in the future, in church ritual of all denominations.

In Chapter III of this thesis, the investigator will present the procedures used in the development of the study.

### CHAPTER III

#### PROCEDURES FOLLOWED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY

Because of her particular interest in choreography in modern dance, the investigator chose to develop a creative thesis which would entail a study of the relationship between dance and religion and the use of dance movement in the ritual of the Roman Catholic Church. The choreography and production of AGNUS DEI: A Suite of Three Original Modern Dance Compositions Based Upon Selected Parts of the Roman Catholic Mass, was the result of her research. The investigator developed the creative thesis during the academic year of 1966-1967 and 1967-1968 while she was employed as a teacher in Dallas, Texas. Her development and presentation of the suite of original modern compositions, entitled AGNUS DEI, entailed frequent conferences with the Director and other members of her Thesis Committee as well as the periodic transportation of her group of nine dancers to the campus of the Texas Woman's University in Denton for presentation of, and guidance in, the development of the choreography in progress.

#### Approval of the Study

Permission for the development of a creative thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts

degree at the Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas, was obtained from the investigator's Director, Doctor Anne Schley Duggan, Dean of the College of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation at the Texas Woman's University. Because the investigator selected the subjects who would participate as dancers in the study from among private dance students taught by her in Dallas, Texas, permission was obtained also from the parents of these participants to travel to and from the campus of the Texas Woman's University periodically during the spring semester of the academic year of 1966-1967 for the evaluation and criticism of the choreography and for the presentation of AGNUS DEI in a concert in the Redbud Auditorium on the campus of the Texas Woman's University on May 22, 1967. A copy of this program may be found on page 210 in the Appendix of this thesis.

#### Survey of Background Information

In order to choreograph and produce a creative thesis, the investigator collected, studied, and assimilated information from all available documentary sources of data pertinent to all phases of the project--the relationship between religion and dance, dance movement in the Roman Catholic Church, and the heritage of religious dance from the time of primitive man through the contemporary period with emphasis upon religious dance as a part of worship in Christian churches. These sources of data were supplemented by visits to dance programs

and religious concerts, lectures, and workshops where the investigator gleaned important information concerning the composition of the thematic material in an abstract rather than in a representational form. The investigator compiled the information pertinent to the various phases of the study to be developed, and outlined the thematic content for AGNUS DEI: A Suite of Modern Dance Compositions Based Upon Selected Parts of the Roman Catholic Mass.

#### Presentation of a Tentative Outline and the Development of a Topical Outline

The investigator developed a tentative outline of the proposed study and presented it in a Graduate Seminar in the College of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation of the Texas Woman's University on February 22, 1967. With the approval of the members of her Thesis Committee, the investigator revised the outline in accordance with their recommendations and those made by others participating in the Graduate Seminar, and filed the prospectus of the study in the office of the Dean of Graduate Studies of the Texas Woman's University. A topical outline, encompassing all aspects of the study to be included in the written report, was developed as a guide to the investigator in her writing of the following five chapters into which the written report was divided: (1) "Orientation to the Study," (2) "The Heritage of Religious Dance from the Time of Primitive Man Through the Contemporary Period with Emphasis upon Religious Dance as a Part of Worship

in Christian Churches," (3) "Procedures Followed in the Development of the Study," (4) "A Description of the Three Modern Dance Compositions Comprising the Suite Entitled AGNUS DEI," and (5) "Summary of the Study and Recommendations for Further Studies."

#### Choreography of the Compositions

The choreographer created the movement motifs for each of the three modern dance compositions based upon the outlined analysis of its thematic content, developed the movement motifs into phrases, arranged the phrases into a specific form selected for each composition, and assembled the compositions into a unified suite of dances. AGNUS DEI was structured as a group of parts, indicated by the letters ABC, with narration serving as a transitional, unifying device. The various movement motifs developed for each of the three modern dance compositions were shown to the members of the investigator's Thesis Committee for their evaluation and criticisms. The investigator revised the movement motifs for the three dance compositions in accordance with their suggestions.

In compliance with the requirements for creative theses completed through the College of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation at the Texas Woman's University, the investigator scheduled the presentation of her creative study for May 22, 1967, in the Redbud Auditorium on the

campus of that institution. With this definite commitment in view, the choreographer established the following criteria for the selection of subjects to participate in the study: (1) interest in the project, (2) adequate level of skill, (3) willingness to expend the necessary amount of time requisite to rehearsals and performances in conjunction with the development of the study, and (4) willingness to travel to the campus of the Texas Woman's University for the members of the Thesis Committee to see the dance compositions in progress and to present the completed suite of dances entitled AGNUS DEI in a public performance on the campus of the Texas Woman's University. Twelve dance students of senior high school age--who were private dance students of the investigator in Dallas, Texas--were taught the movement motifs for each of the three original dance compositions. Nine girls from among these twelve students were selected in accordance with the criteria established. Rehearsal schedules were developed and given to each of the participants in the study.

#### The Teaching of the Original Dance Compositions

In orienting the subjects to the significance of the study, the choreographer presented all pertinent information in regard to the purposes and backgrounds of the three original modern dance compositions. She discussed with the participants the theme, form, rhythmic patterns, and designs established for each of the dance compositions to facilitate their understanding of the concept of the suite as a whole. As the

choreographer taught and directed the dance compositions comprising AGNUS DEI, special attention was given to the nuances and shading of the movements in relation to the content and form of each dance and to the time limitations established for the presentation of the suite of dances as a whole. Constant revision of the elements peculiar to the medium of modern dance were made in order to heighten the action, to clarify the meaning of the compositions, and to modify movements in accordance with the levels of skill of the dancers.

When the subjects participating in the study showed sufficient understanding of the choreographer's intentions and attained adequate proficiency in performing each dance composition, the choreographer arranged for the dancers to travel to the campus of the Texas Woman's University periodically during the months of March, April, and May of 1967 for the purpose of presenting the original dance compositions in progress to the members of the investigator's Thesis Committee. The evaluation included numerous questions concerning the movement, design, rhythm, form, and communicativeness of each of the three modern dance compositions, and of the suite as a whole. The constructive criticisms and helpful suggestions offered by the members of the Thesis Committee were accepted by the choreographer, and each dance was revised in accordance with their recommendations.



### Development of the Accompaniment

All three of the dance compositions comprising AGNUS DEI were completed before the musical accompaniment was composed. Mr. Arthur Smith, Director of Church Music at Christ The King Catholic Church in Dallas, Texas, agreed to compose the accompaniment for the dances choreographed. A skeletal framework--which included the meter, tempo, form, theme, and dynamics of each of the three modern dance compositions--was given to Mr. Smith by the investigator.

The choreographer worked in close alliance with Mr. Smith as he composed the musical accompaniment for AGNUS DEI. She established a schedule of visits to his home and to Christ The King Catholic Church with participants in the study for the purpose of his observing a performance of the three dance compositions in relation to the music which he was composing to afford an opportunity to the investigator as well as to the dancers to familiarize themselves with the musical accompaniment and its many variations. Because AGNUS DEI was based upon selected parts of the Roman Catholic Mass, the musical accompaniment was played upon the organ and was based upon Gregorian Chants and appropriate melodies in religious idiom. Two special sessions were scheduled for the purpose of rehearsing and of recording on tape the musical accompaniment for AGNUS DEI in its final form.

### Development of the Narration

The investigator developed the narration for AGNUS DEI as a means of unifying the three separate dance compositions into a suite and of illuminating further the thematic content of each composition. Consideration was given to the poetic images which would complement and highlight the ideas presented in dance form as well as provide a suitable introduction to AGNUS DEI as a whole and an appropriate transitional device between the three dances comprising the suite. The form of writing for the narration chosen by the investigator was that of a series of prose poems. The completed four original prose-poems served, in turn, as the introduction to AGNUS DEI and as a prologue to each of the three modern dance compositions comprising it. A copy of the narration may be found in the Appendix on page 192 in this thesis.

### The Design and Construction of Costumes and Stage Decor

Costumes for AGNUS DEI were designed to allow freedom of movement and, at the same time, to enhance the effectiveness of the choreography. The colors of the costumes were chosen to suggest specific elements of the thematic content for each of the three original modern dance compositions. After a discussion of sketches of costumes drawn by the investigator with several authorities in costume design in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, the costumes decided upon were a white leotard and a basic ankle-length white dress. The

dress was designed in an A-line pattern with long, full sleeves suggestive of those of a surplice and with the side seams opened below the hips. The dress and leotard were supplemented by hooded, hip-length capes of three different colors--green, red, and white--one for each of the three respective modern dance compositions comprising AGNUS DEI. The investigator chose from the materials available those of texture and color which would suggest most effectively the content of the compositions. A white cotton fabric was chosen for the A-line dress pattern, and green, red, and white rayon were chosen for the three hooded capes, respectively. After purchasing the material, the investigator gave the fabric and the sketches of the costumes to a professional seamstress who completed the construction of the costumes. Sketches of the costumes for each of the three compositions are included in the Appendix on page 195 in this thesis.

The stage decor for the production of AGNUS DEI was very simple and consisted of a white panel, attached to the backdrop of the center stage, upon which was outlined in shades of brown, a large cross and an altar. The services of an art student in Dallas, Texas, were secured in constructing the backdrop in accordance with the sketch which the investigator had developed. A picture of the backdrop may be found in the Appendix on page     in this thesis.

### Development of the Lighting

Lighting effects for AGNUS DEI were created by Miss Janice Davis, a student in the Department of Speech at the Texas Woman's University. Miss Davis observed two rehearsals, originated, and executed all of the stage lighting under the supervision of the investigator. The lighting for AGNUS DEI was designed to heighten the movements of the dancers, the colors of their costumes and, in certain instances, to provide a special dramatic effect in emphasizing the thematic content of each of the three original dance compositions.

### Presentation in Public Performances

The suite of three original modern dance compositions entitled AGNUS DEI was presented in three public performances. The participants and the investigator traveled to Denton, Texas, to present AGNUS DEI on May 22, 1967, in a formal concert in the Redbud Auditorium before an audience comprised of members of the investigator's Thesis Committee, instructors and students from the College of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation and from other components of the Texas Woman's University, and visiting patrons. On May 23, 1967, an informal concert was presented to the members of the faculty and student body of the Hamilton Park High School in Dallas, Texas. AGNUS DEI was also included in an informal concert at the Hamilton Park Methodist Church on June 26, 1967, in conjunction with the Annual Conference of Youth for the State

of Texas. Programs of two of these three public presentations of AGNUS DEI may be found on page 210 in the Appendix in this thesis.

### Final Procedures

Among the final procedures followed by the investigator of the present study were the preparation of a written report of the thesis and the development of the Appendix which includes pictures illustrative of the choreography of AGNUS DEI and other materials related to the thesis as a whole.

Final procedures also included revisions of the written material, chapter by chapter, with a final approval by all members of the investigator's Thesis Committee during the academic year of 1967-1968, ending with a final oral examination and submission of four copies of the thesis to the Dean of Graduate Studies in time to be read and approved by him, prior to the conferring of the degree of Master of Arts with a Major Sequence in Dance and Related Arts during the Commencement Exercises of the Texas Woman's University on August 23, 1968.

### Summary

The investigator has reported in Chapter III the sequence of procedures followed in the development of her creative thesis entitled AGNUS DEI: A Suite of Three Original Modern Dance Compositions Based Upon Selected Parts of the

Roman Catholic Mass. The investigator developed the thesis while out of residence in the fulfillment of her professional duties as a teacher in Dallas, Texas, during the academic years of 1966-1967 and 1967-1968. The procedures followed in the development of the study included: collecting, studying, and assimilating information from all available documentary sources of data pertinent to various phases of the project--the relationship between religion and dance, dance movement in the Roman Catholic Church, and the heritage of religious dance from the time of primitive man through the contemporary period with emphasis upon religious dance as a part of worship in Christian Churches; outlining the thematic sources for each of the three modern dance compositions which were based upon the three principal parts of the Roman Catholic Mass; developing a tentative outline; presenting the tentative outline in a Graduate Seminar in the College of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation of the Texas Woman's University on February 22, 1967; revising the outline in accordance with the recommendations of the members of the Thesis Committee and others participating in the Graduate Seminar; filing the approved prospectus of the study in the office of the Dean of Graduate Studies of the Texas Woman's University; creating the movement motifs for each of the three modern dance compositions based upon the outlined analysis of its thematic content; developing the movement



motifs into phrases, arranging the phrases into a specific form selected for each dance composition, and assembling the compositions into a unified suite of dance compositions; presenting the movement motifs to the members of the investigator's Thesis Committee for their evaluations and criticisms; and revising the movement motifs in accordance with their evaluations.

The procedures also included establishing criteria for the selection of the subjects; teaching twelve private dance students of the investigator specific, progressive technique sequences to facilitate their performance of the actual rhythmic patterns, phrasing, and movements developed for the study, selecting nine of the twelve students to participate in the study in accordance with the criteria established for their selection; orienting the students with respect to the significance of AGNUS DEI; teaching the students the compositions comprising the suite as a whole, arranging for the dancers to travel to the campus of the Texas Woman's University during the months of March, April, and May of 1967 to permit the members of the Thesis Committee to view, evaluate, and criticize the choreography as adapted to the selected dancers; revising the choreography in accordance with their evaluations, outlining a skeletal framework of the musical accompaniment to be composed by Mr. Arthur Smith, Director of Church Music at Christ The King Catholic Church in Dallas, Texas, for each of the three original dance compositions;



arranging periodic visits with Mr. Smith for his observation of the compositions as performed by the dancers and for familiarizing the investigator and the dancers with the musical accompaniment of AGNUS DEI which was played by Mr. Smith upon an organ; arranging a session for recording the music on tape to be used for the public presentation of AGNUS DEI; developing the narration to be utilized as a unifying device for the suite of original modern dance compositions; designing and constructing the costumes and stage decor; supervising the lighting effects to be used for the performance of AGNUS DEI; and presenting the suite of three modern dance compositions in a formal concert on May 22, 1967, in the Redbud Auditorium on the campus of the Texas Woman's University; in an informal concert on May 23, 1967, at the Hamilton Park High School; and at the Hamilton Park Methodist Church on June 26, 1967, in conjunction with the Annual Conference of Youth for the State of Texas.

Final procedures followed in developing the present study entitled AGNUS DEI were the preparation of a written report of the thesis and the development of the Appendix which included a classified Bibliography and pictures illustrative of the choreography of AGNUS DEI and other materials related to the thesis as a whole. Final procedures also included revision of the written material chapter by chapter with final approval by the investigator's Thesis Committee during the academic year of 1967-1968, ending with

a final oral examination and submission of four copies of the thesis to the Dean of Graduate Studies for approval by him prior to the conferring of the degree of Master of Arts in Dance and Related Arts during the Commencement Exercises of the Texas Woman's University on August 23, 1968.

In Chapter IV, the investigator presents a description of the three original modern dance compositions comprising the suite entitled AGNUS DEI: A Suite of Three Original Modern Dance Compositions Based Upon Selected Parts of the Roman Catholic Mass.

## CHAPTER IV

### A DESCRIPTION OF THE THREE ORIGINAL MODERN DANCE COMPOSITIONS COMPRISING THE SUITE ENTITLED AGNUS DEI

In choosing the thematic content for the development of the choreography for AGNUS DEI: A Suite of Three Original Modern Dance Compositions Based Upon Selected Parts of the Roman Catholic Mass, the investigator surveyed, studied, and assimilated resource materials pertaining to the relationship between dance and religion, the heritage of religious dance from the time of primitive man through the contemporary period with emphasis upon religious dance as a part of worship in Christian Churches, and the use of dance movement in the Roman Catholic Church. AGNUS DEI was selected as a title for the suite of original modern dance compositions because it is symbolic of the drama which is enacted in the three principal parts of the Roman Catholic Mass.<sup>1</sup> AGNUS DEI, meaning LAMB OF GOD, is a three-fold prayer traditionally established for the children of Old Israel by Moses when he required that the posts of their doors be marked with the blood of a lamb on that Paschal night while they

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<sup>1</sup>Sheen and Daniel-Rops, op. cit., p. 147.

were still in Egypt.<sup>1</sup> It was by this sign that the children of Israel were spared from the plague put upon Egypt by the Lord's Angel.<sup>2</sup> The Last Supper was the observance of the Paschal ceremony in which the Paschal Lamb was eaten in remembrance of the freeing of the Israelites from Egypt.<sup>3</sup> According to Hoever, the Paschal Lamb has since represented the Divine Redeemer whose Body is one's Food in the church rite designated as Holy Communion.<sup>4</sup>

The three modern dance compositions comprising the suite entitled AGNUS DEI were choreographed by the investigator, and entitled, respectively, "The Offertory," "The Consecration," and "The Communion." The suite was based upon the premise that the Mass commemorates the Supreme Sacrifice of Christ Who died to give man freedom from the tyranny of sin.<sup>5</sup> In the opinion of the investigator, it is justifiable that memorial days be designated for those who have died to preserve human freedom and to relieve the oppression of men. For example, almost every country institutes a Memorial Day in memory of the supreme sacrifice which its patriots have made in defense of country and civilization.<sup>6</sup> There are

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 147-149.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Rev. Hugo Hoever (ed.), Saint Joseph Sunday Missal (New York: Catholic Publishing Co., 1957), p. 15.

<sup>5</sup>Sheen and Daniel-Rops, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

many differences, however, between such patriots and Christ.<sup>1</sup>

In this connection, Sheen and Daniel-Rops state:

Not one of them [patriots] was born to die, but to live, and for each death was a brutal interruption. But Christ came to die; it was the goal of His life and that which He was seeking. For no other purpose came He into the world than to redeem sinful humanity.<sup>2</sup>

In the Roman Catholic Church, the memorial for this Supreme Sacrifice Christ made for man is called the Mass.<sup>3</sup> The significance of this memorial is shown clearly in the three principal parts of the Roman Catholic Mass--"The Offertory," "The Consecration," and "The Communion." In determining the sequential order of the three original dances comprising the suite entitled AGNUS DEI, the investigator relied entirely upon the order in which these three parts are performed in the traditional Roman Catholic Mass.

The following description of the three modern dance compositions comprising the suite as a whole is not analytically detailed with respect to every movement developed by the choreographer; the choreography, however, is described with respect to the narration utilized as a transitional unifying device within the suite; the thematic content, the basic movement motifs, and the structural form selected for each composition; the lighting, the costumes, and the accompaniment for each dance; and the stage decor used throughout the suite.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

### Narration

The narration utilized as a transitional unifying device in the choreography was comprised of four brief prose-poems which served as an introduction to the suite as a whole and as a prologue to each of the three respective modern dance compositions. Each composition in the suite was preceded by a blackout which provided an opportunity for the dancers to move on and off the stage. The narrator sat on a wooden stool at stage left in front of the proscenium using a hand microphone in order to project her voice effectively. A pool of blue light was focused upon her as she read the prose-poems which introduced the suite as a whole and each of the three modern dance compositions in turn. At the conclusion of each prose-poem, the light upon the narrator was brought down, and the lighting design developed for each composition was transferred to the stage area. The prose-poem related to each of the three modern dance compositions is included in the description of the respective dances. The following is the introduction to the suite as a whole:

Sheep led away to be slaughtered, Lamb  
That stands dumb while it is shorn,  
No word from Him.  
It is but one sign by which you shall know me,  
Seated on the clouds of Heaven and surrounded  
By the blinding light of Thy glory in which all  
Hidden things will lie revealed.  
It is the sign of the Lamb, the sign by which  
Thy Blood will blot out forever all the hatred

And spiritual unrest seated in my heart;  
 And grant that in the strength of Thy sign, the mark  
 Of the Lamb, I may gain for you the whole world,  
 That which Thou has promised to those who are gentle  
 and forbearing.

### "The Offertory"

"The Offertory" is the first of the three most important parts of the Mass. As the title suggests, "The Offertory" portrays the offering of one's self to God in the form of Bread and Wine.<sup>1</sup> The dance was developed for and danced by all nine of the dancers. In the prose-poem which served as a prologue to the composition, the thematic content was further illuminated by the following poetic images in the narration:

I desire that this Bread and this Wine, I now  
 Bring before Thy altar, to be in Thy sight as  
 Truly Bread of mine, as truly Wine of mine.  
 It is I myself who now unite in offering  
 Bread and Wine to you.  
 For I wish to join in this unbroken offering.  
 It is my wish to be among my followers, to  
 Be a sharer in the society that finds  
 Its link of union in you.  
 To be among Thy flock, so that in seeking  
 My own salvation I may also be of  
 Avail in effecting the salvation of all mankind.

Underlying the central theme--offering of one's self to God in the form of Bread and Wine--were three ideas: (1) the bringing of the gifts of Bread and Wine to the altar, (2) the offering and blessing of these gifts, and (3) the offering of one's self. The investigator organized these

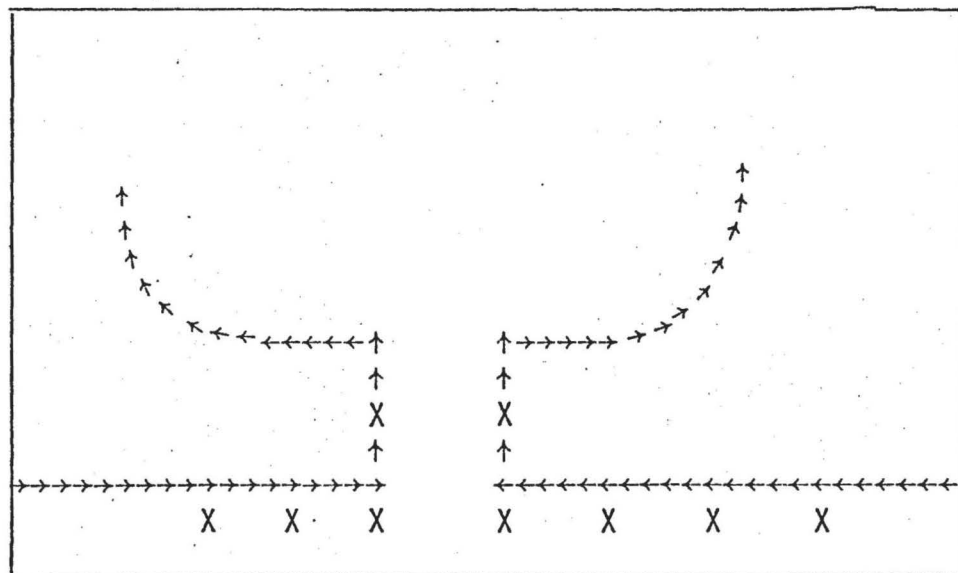
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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.



three ideas into a three-part form indicated by the letters ABC. The first and second ideas formed sections A and B of the composition, respectively, and the third idea comprised section C of the composition.

The dancers' costumes for "The Offertory" consisted of a basic white leotard under a white, ankle-length, A-line dress, accented with a hip-length green, hooded cape. Radiant green lights were focused upon the dancers at the conclusion of the prose-poem introducing the composition. The color of the dancers' costumes and the green lighting which flooded the stage were chosen for "The Offertory" in order to intensify the underlying ideas of humility, penitence, and forgiveness.



The above diagram indicates the floor pattern which the dancers followed for the processional part of "The Offertory."

"The Offertory" opened with the dancers entering in processional design, moving with slow walking steps from the downstage right and left wings, respectively. As they met at the center downstage, they proceeded in twos upstage toward the panel upon which were pictured the Cross and the altar. The contour of the arms and hands of the dancers suggested the bearing of gifts. Each dancer genuflected as she approached the center downstage area and focused upon the Cross which was used as a focal point throughout the composition. At the conclusion of the processional, the dancers moved to form a semi-circular design in front of the altar.

As the music changed to a soft 3/4 melody, the dancers knelt to begin section B of the composition which portrayed the offering and blessing of the gifts--Bread and Wine--to be used in the Sacrifice. In carrying out this idea, the dancers executed horizontal pendular swings of the arms and upper torso. Then, still kneeling, and with hands folded in a prayerful position, the dancers executed deep backward and forward sways of the upper part of the torso. The music accelerated as the dancers rose from their kneeling position and lunged forward toward the altar as if to place on it the gifts which were to be used for the Sacrifice. Executing gliding steps away from the altar, the dancers traveled to the downstage area. As they completed their last gliding step, they executed a low jack-knife turn to face the audience.

In a triangular design, three of the dancers, located downstage center, sank to the floor on their knees; the other six dancers in groups of threes, and located upstage right and left, respectively, lunged forward on their right feet toward the audience. Remaining in this triangular design, all nine dancers in unison performed arm swings to the right and left sides of the body and ended section B with an arm gesture indicative of a Roman Catholic celebrant bestowing the sacred blessing--"the sign of the Cross."

At the beginning of section C of "The Offertory," based upon the offering of one's self, the character of the music changed to a light, ethereal quality as the dancers executed a sharp turn to face the altar. Standing in "second position" with hands clasped over their heads, they executed a series of deep knee bends. As they touched the floor on the last knee bend, the lights changed from the radiant green to a soft light green to enhance the desired effect of the humbling of one's entire self. Following this expression of humility, the dancers climaxed their floor movements with a series of rapid lunging steps upstage toward the altar. Focusing upon the Cross again, the dancers, now in a semi-circle facing the altar, lowered themselves to the floor with a sustained knee bend. Repeating movements from section B, the horizontal pendular swings of the arms and torso and the extended forward and backward sways, the

dancers ended section C of the composition with the hand gesture based upon the "sign of the Cross" which was introduced in section B. The lights dimmed to a complete black-out as the dancers completed this last gesture.

The movements choreographed for section A of "The Offertory," were based upon the rhythmic patterns of a Roman Catholic chant entitled "Lord Have Mercy." In the Roman Catholic Mass, this chant is referred to as the "Kyrie." This chant is written in 2/4 meter and served as the musical background throughout "The Offertory." Accompaniment for sections B and C of the composition was based upon original melodies written in 3/4 meter. The only variations in the dynamics of the music were crescendoes from soft to moderately loud, followed by diminuendoes to the original quiet quality.

#### "The Consecration"

The second composition in AGNUS DEI--"The Consecration"--was developed for all nine of the dancers. It was based upon the idea of the Transubstantiation in which the substance of the Bread becomes the substance of The Body of Christ, and the substance of the Wine becomes the substance of His Blood.<sup>1</sup> In the following prose-poem which served as a prologue to the composition, the thematic content was illuminated by pertinent poetic images.

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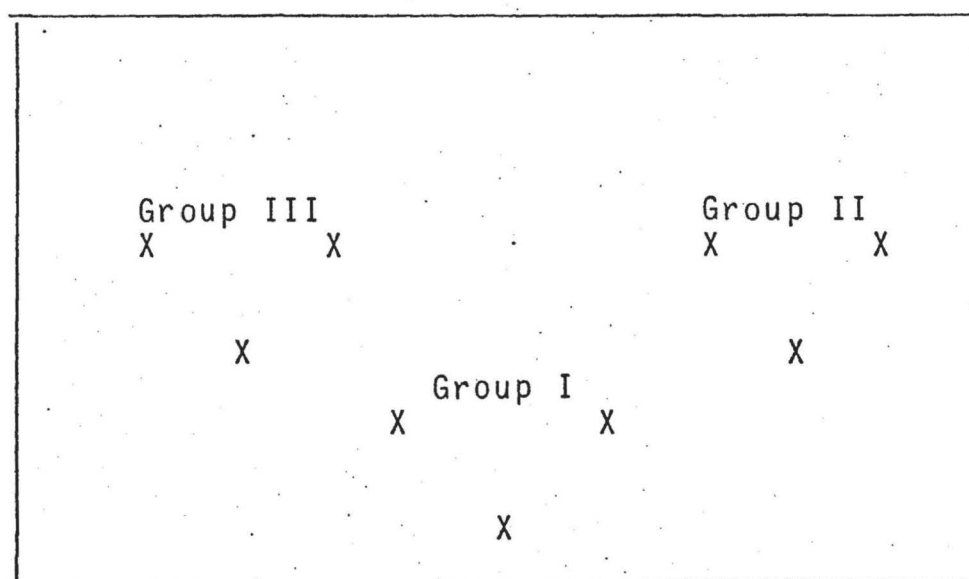
<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

If you have naught else to lay before the Lord,  
 Deliver unto Him at least your labors and your pains;  
 Many are the men who have striven mightily that  
 Fragments of Bread might rest here upon the paten.  
 If your hands are empty and your voice stricken dumb,  
 Offer at least your wounded heart and all that it has  
 Borne, That this Chalice might hold this wine,  
 Was it not needful that the grapes be crushed and  
     yield its all?  
 If you have nothing but sin and bitterness, A life  
     that is  
 Tedious and full of sharp distress, hold before  
     Heaven your hands  
 So pitiably laden, manifesting to the Divine Mercy  
     your needs to be  
 Received at His table.  
 If you lack the mere strength to pray and entreat,  
     If there  
 Is naught in your heart but emptiness and disorder,  
     then  
 Silently yield into the hands of another all your  
     beings and  
 You shall find in Him both gift and giver.

Underlying the central theme of Transubstantiation were three ideas: (1) the mystery of Transubstantiation, (2) the changing of the Bread into the Body of Christ, and (3) the changing of the Wine into the Blood of Christ. The investigator organized these three ideas into a Rondo form indicated by the letters ABACA. The first idea formed the A section which recurred throughout the composition; the second and third ideas formed the contrasting B and C sections of the composition, respectively.

The dancers' costumes for "The Consecration" consisted of the basic white leotard and A-line dress accented with a hip-length red hooded cape. At the conclusion of the prose-poem introducing the composition, brilliant red lights were

focused upon the dancers. The colors of the dancers' capes and the red lighting which flooded the stage were chosen for "The Consecration" in order to intensify the dramatic symbolism inherent in the mystery of Transubstantiation. The nine dancers were arranged on the stage in three triangular designs with three dancers near the center downstage and three dancers upstage to the right and left, respectively. The dancers performed their movements primarily in this design throughout the composition. For purposes of clarification, the investigator, when feasible, will refer to the center stage group as group one and to the upstage right and left groups as groups two and three, respectively.



The above design indicates the position of the dancers at the opening of "The Consecration."

As the composition entitled "The Consecration" opened, the nine dancers, standing in three triangular designs facing the audience, executed arm movements symbolic of the central



theme--the mystery of changing the Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. The dancers' arms moved slowly from behind the body to the front of the body and above the head. As the arms were lowered from this position, they crossed in front of the dancers' faces. Then, while executing a step-lunge to the side, the dancers moved their arms from the crossed position to the right and left sides of the body, respectively. The entire movement sequence was repeated twice after which, the dancers turned and knelt facing the altar. The highlight of section A, which signified the mystery of Transubstantiation, was a flowing movement with the arms and the body from a standing to a kneeling position, ending with a hand and arm gesture indicative of "the sign of the Cross." The dancers' costumes became an asset to the movement choreographed for the A section of "The Consecration" since the fullness of the sleeves enhanced the patterns of the arms as they moved slowly to a high level in "V" position.

In section B of "The Consecration," the movement motifs were based upon the changing of the Bread into the Body of Christ. All three groups of dancers traveled downstage, executing gliding steps, lunges, and arm movements illustrative of scooping and moulding the Bread. After completing this idea, the dancers, now facing the altar, executed broad circular steps from side to side with both arms raised high above the head. Finally, as if placing the Bread upon the altar, the dancers knelt on one knee and made a circling



motion with their arms and hands, signifying the final consecration of the Bread. Rising, they repeated the characteristic gliding steps as they returned to their original triangular designs for the repetition of section A.

Section C of "The Consecration" was based upon the changing of the Wine into the Blood of Our Lord. The nine dancers, in three triangular designs, executed reaching and clinging gestures with the arms and hands. Group one performed these movements for the first four counts while groups two and three executed eight counts of the same movements--clinging and reaching with the hands and arms. Turning and stepping slowly toward the altar, group one performed a circling movement with the right arm. The left arm was extended toward the altar and, as the right arm completed its circling movement, it crossed the left arm. Stressing the idea of changing the Wine into the Blood of Our Lord, groups two and three traveled the same floor pattern previously described by group one toward the altar and repeated the same arm and hand movements. Group one moved away from the altar and downstage as groups two and three moved upstage toward the altar. When all of the dancers had returned to their original triangular designs, they repeated section A of the composition. The lights dimmed to a complete blackout at the end of section A, thus ending "The Consecration."

The movements choreographed for section A of "The Consecration" were based upon the rhythmic pattern of a chant

entitled "Lamb of God" (Agnus Dei) which is sung in many Roman Catholic Church Services by the participants and officiants instead of being spoken at a specific time within the Mass. This chant is written in 2/4 meter and served as the musical background for section A. Accompaniment for section B of the composition was based chiefly upon a chant used also in the regular services of the Roman Catholic Mass and entitled "Holy, Holy, Holy" (Sanctus). The remaining portion of section B and all of section C were based upon original melodies written in 6/4 meter.

### "The Communion"

"The Communion," the third of the three original modern dance compositions comprising the suite entitled AGNUS DEI, was based upon the idea of receiving the Lord in the form of Bread and Wine.<sup>1</sup> The dance was performed by all nine of the dancers. In the following prose-poem which served as a prologue to the composition, the thematic content was clarified.

You are mine, and I am yours, wholly made one in  
 this Sacrament,  
 My soul worships You in stillness.  
 No merely human sense of gratitude even begins to  
 take account  
 Of this gift so far above the feebleness of human  
 insight.  
 No love can ever equal the love which has caused  
 Thee to make  
 This sacrifice. I ask that I may share in Thy  
 sacrifice, and that

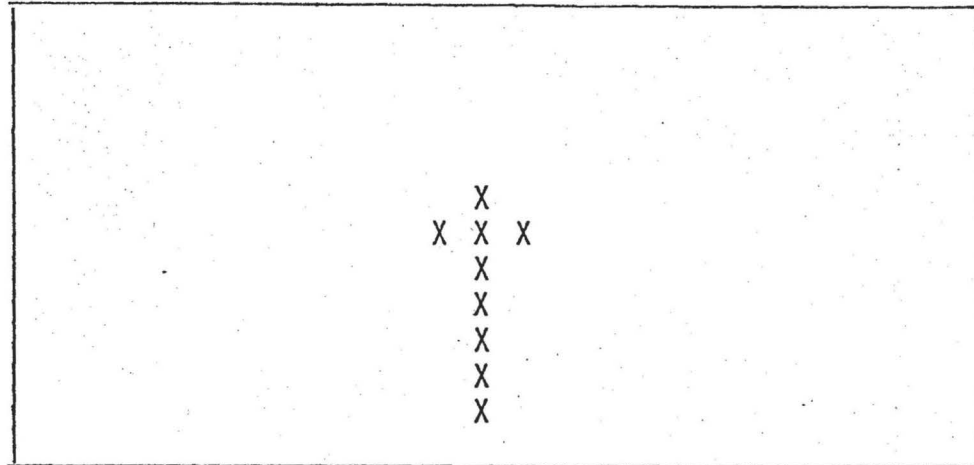
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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

Thy will be with me as I carry my Cross. As I go  
from sorrow to joy,  
From hope to fear.  
There is neither speech nor language, not even the  
language by which  
Heart speaks to heart, fit to express all that I  
would now say,  
My joy is beyond speech.

Underlying the central theme--receiving the Lord in the form of Bread and Wine--were three ideas: (1) preparation of one's self, (2) receiving Communion, and (3) rejoicing for having received Communion. The investigator organized these three ideas into a Rondo form indicated by the letters ABACA. The first idea formed section A which recurred after each contrasting part throughout the composition; the second and third ideas formed sections B and C of the composition, respectively.

The dancers' costumes worn for "The Communion" were entirely white and consisted of a basic leotard under an ankle-length, A-line, dress accented with a hip-length, hooded, cape. Soft blue lights were focused upon the dancers at the conclusion of the prose-poem introducing the composition. The unrelieved white costumes and the soft blue lighting which flooded the stage were chosen for "The Communion" in order to intensify the underlying idea of purity.



The above diagram indicates the position of the dancers at the opening of "The Communion."

"The Communion" opened with the dancers in the design of a Cross, with their upper torsos prone on the floor. At the opening of the A section, the dancers remained in this design as they executed arm and upper torso movements including the raising of the right arm slowly over the head and returning to the floor three times. Then, rising to a kneeling position on one knee, the dancers executed upper torso sways to the right and left sides, respectively. Still kneeling on one knee, they paused, focusing upstage toward the altar with hands folded in a prayerful position. The dancers then rose and turned to follow two girls, one on the left and one on the right side of the Cross as they moved toward the altar, stepping lightly on their toes. Section A ended by the dancers sinking slowly to their knees in three groups, each in a triangular design. This last phase of

section A was executed in succession, using nine counts of music. On the first three counts, the group nearest to the altar knelt; groups two and three knelt on the second and third groups of three counts, respectively.

The movements for section B of this composition were based upon the idea of receiving Communion. Having prepared themselves for receiving the Lord, the dancers rose from a kneeling position and moved around the stage executing lunging steps and low turns. Pausing in a semi-circular design, each dancer moved her head up and back as if receiving Communion, followed by the hand and arm gesture indicative of the "sign of the Cross." The dancers then returned to the center of the stage and formed the original design of the Cross to repeat section A of the composition. The idea carried out in section C of the composition was that of rejoicing after having received Communion. With an expression of this exultation upon their faces, the dancers executed a series of joyful skips, leaps, and turns counterclockwise which gradually took them into a complete circle around the stage. Moving in clockwise design, each dancer executed free swinging steps and ecstatic circular leaps. Still rejoicing, they repeated a series of lunging steps and turns introduced previously in section B of "The Communion." These lunging steps and turns were executed downstage in twos, and ended with the dancers standing across stage front in a "V" design. Still facing the audience, the dancers

again executed the hand and arm gesture indicative of the "sign of the Cross" and ended section C with ecstatic turns back to the original formation of the Cross for the final repetition of section A. At the completion of section A, the lights dimmed to a complete blackout and the curtain was lowered with the dancers still on stage.

All of the accompaniment for "The Communion" was based upon an original melodic pattern written in 4/4 meter. The only variation in the quality was a change in dynamics from loud to soft and back to the strong, exultant climax.

#### Summary

A description of the three original modern dance compositions comprising AGNUS DEI: A Suite of Original Modern Dance Compositions Based Upon Selected Parts of the Roman Catholic Mass, was included in this chapter. The three original modern dance compositions were entitled, "The Offertory," "The Consecration," and "The Communion," respectively. The description of the three respective compositions was not detailed analytically in regard to every movement developed for each composition but the dances were described with respect to the narration utilized as a transitional unifying device within the suite; the basic movement motifs; the thematic content; the structural form selected for each composition; the lighting, the costumes, and the accompaniment, for each dance; and the only piece of stage decor used throughout the suite.

AGNUS DEI, meaning LAMB OF GOD, was selected as the title for this creative thesis because it is symbolic of the drama which is enacted in the three principal parts of the Roman Catholic Mass.<sup>1</sup> The suite of three original modern dance compositions was based upon the premise that the Mass is a memorial of the Supreme Sacrifice of Christ Who died to give man freedom from the tyranny of sin.<sup>2</sup> In determining the sequential order of the three original modern dances, the investigator relied entirely upon the order in which the three parts are performed in the traditional Roman Catholic Mass.

A narrator, who sat on a stool upon the stage, in front of the proscenium, stage left, read four prose-poems which served, respectively, as a prologue to the suite as a whole and as an introduction to each of the three modern dance compositions comprising the suite. The stage area was unlighted as she read. A blue light was focused upon the narrator while she read each prose-poem and, as the light was brought down at the conclusion of each prose-poem, the lighting design developed for each of the three dances was focused upon the stage area.

The first composition in the suite was entitled "The Offertory" and was based upon the offering of one's self to God in the form of Bread and Wine.<sup>3</sup> The composition was structured as a three-part form indicated by the letters ABC.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



Underlying the central theme were three ideas: (1) the bringing of the gifts of Bread and Wine to the altar, (2) the offering and blessing of these gifts, and (3) the offering of one's self.

The dancers' costumes for "The Offertory" consisted of a basic white leotard under an ankle-length, white, A-line dress, accented with a hip-length green, hooded cape. Radiant green lights were focused upon the dancers at the conclusion of the prose-poem introducing "The Offertory." The color of the dancers' costumes and the green lighting which flooded the stage were chosen for "The Offertory" in order to intensify the underlying ideas of humility, penitence, and forgiveness. "The Offertory" opened with the dancers entering in a processional design, moving with slow walking steps from the downstage right and left wings, respectively. As they met at the center downstage, they proceeded in twos upstage toward the panel upon which were pictured the Cross and altar. The arm and hand movements of the dancers included gestures indicative of carrying gifts. Each dancer genuflected as she approached the center downstage area and focused upon the Cross which was used as a focal point throughout the composition. At the conclusion of the processional, the dancers moved to form a semi-circular design around the altar. In a kneeling position, they began section B of the composition which portrayed the offering and

blessing of the gifts. In carrying out this idea, the dancers executed horizontal pendular swings of the arms and upper torso. Still kneeling and with hands folded in a prayerful position, they executed deep backward and forward sways of the upper torso. Rising from their kneeling position, the dancers lunged forward as if to place their gifts on the altar, and then traveled downstage. Executing a low jack-knife turn to face the audience, three of the dancers sank to their knees as the other six dancers, in groups of threes located upstage right and left, respectively, lunged forward to face the audience. Remaining in a triangular design, they executed isolated arm swings to the right and left side of the body and ended section B with an arm gesture indicative of a Roman Catholic celebrant bestowing the sacred blessing-- "the sign of the Cross." At the beginning of section C based upon the offering of one's self, the dancers executed a sharp turn to face the altar. Standing in "second position" with hands clasped above the head, they executed a series of deep knee bends indicative of the humbling of one's entire self. Following this expression of humility, the dancers executed a series of rapid movements upstage toward the altar and again formed a semi-circle, focusing upon the Cross. Repeating movements from section B, the horizontal pendular swings of the arms and torso and the extended forward and backward sways, the dancers ended section C of the composition

with the hand and arm gesture based upon the "sign of the Cross" which appeared previously in section B. The lights dimmed to a complete blackout as the dancers completed the last gesture.

The movements choreographed for section A of "The Offertory" were based upon the rhythmic patterns of a Roman Catholic chant entitled "Lord Have Mercy." This chant is written in 2/4 meter and served as the musical background throughout "The Offertory." Accompaniment for sections B and C of the composition was based upon melodies written in 3/4 meter. The only variation in the dynamics of the music were crescendoes from soft to moderately loud, followed by diminuendoes to the original quiet quality.

"The Consecration," the second composition in AGNUS DEI was based upon Transubstantiation or the changing of the substance of the Bread to the substance of the Body of Christ, and the substance of the Wine to the substance of His Blood.<sup>1</sup> Underlying the central theme were three ideas: (1) the mystery of Transubstantiation; (2) the changing of the Bread into the Body of Christ; and (3) the changing of the Wine into the Blood of Christ. The organization of these three ideas took the form of Rondo indicated by the letters ABACA.

The dancers' costumes for "The Consecration" consisted of a white leotard under a white, ankle-length, A-line dress accented with a hip-length, red, hooded cape. At the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

conclusion of the prose-poem introducing the composition, brilliant red lights were focused upon the dancers. The color of the capes and the red lighting which flooded the stage were chosen in order to intensify the dramatic symbolism inherent in the mystic of Transubstantiation. The nine dancers were arranged on the stage in three triangular designs--three dancers centered downstage and three dancers upstage right and left, respectively. For the purpose of clarification, when feasible, the investigator will refer to the center stage group as group one and to the upstage right and left groups as groups two and three, respectively.

As the composition began, the nine dancers, standing in three triangular designs facing the audience, executed arm movements symbolic of the central theme--the mystery of changing the Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. The dancers' arms rose slowly from behind the body to the front above the head. As the arms were lowered from this position, they crossed in front of the dancers' faces. The dancers executed a step lunge to the side, moving the arms from the upraised position to the right and left sides, respectively. The entire movement was repeated twice, after which the group turned and knelt, facing the altar. The highlight of the composition entitled "The Consecration" was a sustained movement flowing through

the arms and body as the dancers moved from a standing position to a kneeling position, ending with the hand and arm gesture indicating "the sign of the Cross."

In section B of "The Consecration," the movement motifs were based upon changing the Bread into the Body of Christ. All three groups of dancers traveled from the downstage to the altar, executing gliding steps, lunges, and hand movements illustrative of scooping and molding the bread. Completing this idea, the dancers now facing the altar, executed broad circular steps from side to side with both arms raised high above the head. Finally, as if placing the bread upon the altar, the dancers knelt on one knee and made circling motions with their arms and hands, signifying the final consecration of the Bread. Rising, they repeated the characteristic gliding steps as they returned to their original triangular designs for the repetition of section A.

Section C of the composition was based upon the changing of the Wine into the Blood of Our Lord. The nine dancers, in three triangular designs, executed reaching and clinging gestures with the arms and hands. Group one performed these movements for the first four counts while groups two and three executed eight counts of the same movements--clinging and reaching with the hands and arms. Turning and walking slowly toward the altar, group one performed a circling movement with the right arm. The left arm was extended

toward the altar and, as the right arm completed its circling movement, it crossed the left arm. Stressing the idea of changing the Wine into the Blood of Our Lord, groups two and three traveled the same path as group one toward the altar and repeated the same circling arm and hand movements. Group one moved away from the altar, traveling to downstage center as groups two and three traveled upstage toward the altar. When all of the dancers had returned to their original triangular designs, they repeated section A of "The Consecration" and the lights dimmed to a complete blackout, thus ending the composition.

The movements choreographed for section A of "The Consecration" were based upon the rhythmic pattern of a chant entitled "Lamb of God" which is sung in many Roman Catholic Church services by the participants and officiants instead of being spoken at a specific time within the Mass. The chant is written in 2/4 meter and served as the musical accompaniment throughout "The Consecration." Accompaniment for section B of the composition was based chiefly upon a chant used also in the regular services of Roman Catholic Mass, entitled "Holy, Holy, Holy." The remaining portion of section B and all of section C were based upon original melodies written in 6/4 meter.

"The Communion," the third of the original modern dance compositions comprising the suite entitled AGNUS DEI

was based upon receiving the Lord in the form of Bread and Wine.<sup>1</sup> Underlying the central theme were three ideas: (1) preparation of one's self, (2) receiving Communion, and (3) rejoicing for having received Communion. The investigator organized these ideas into a Rondo form indicated by the letters ABACA. The first idea formed section A which recurred throughout the composition; the second and third ideas formed sections B and C of the composition, respectively.

The dancers' costumes worn for "The Communion" were entirely white and consisted of the basic leotard under an ankle-length, A-line, dress, accented with a hip-length, hooded cape. Soft blue lights were focused on the dancers at the conclusion of the prose-poem introducing the composition. The unrelieved white costumes and the soft blue lights were chosen for "The Communion" in order to intensify the underlying idea of purity.

"The Communion" opened with the dancers in the design of a Cross, with their upper torsos prone on the floor. At the opening of the A section, the dancers remained in this position as they executed arm and upper torso movements including the raising of the right arm slowly over the head and returning to the floor three times. Then, rising to a kneeling position on one knee, the dancers executed upper torso sways to the right and left sides, respectively.



Still kneeling on one knee the dancers paused, focusing up-stage toward the altar with their hands folded in a prayerful position. The dancers then rose and turned to follow two girls, one on the left and one on the right side of the Cross as they moved toward the altar, stepping lightly on their toes. Section A ended as the dancers sank slowly to their knees in three groups, each group of three in triangular design. This last phrase of section A was executed in succession, using nine counts of music. On the first three counts, the group nearest to the altar knelt; groups two and three knelt on the second and third groups of three counts, respectively.

The movements for section B of "The Communion" depicted the idea of receiving Communion. Having prepared themselves for receiving the Lord, the dancers rose from a kneeling position and moved around the stage executing lunge steps and low turns. Pausing in a semi-circular design, each dancer moved her head up and back as if receiving Communion, followed by the hand and arm gesture indicative of the "sign of the Cross." The dancers then returned to the center of the stage and formed the original design of the Cross to repeat section A of the composition. The idea portrayed in section C of "The Communion" was that of rejoicing after having received Communion. With an expression of this exultation upon their faces, the dancers executed a series

of joyful skips, leaps, and turns with which they gradually formed a complete circle around the stage. Moving in this circular design, each dancer executed free swinging steps and ecstatic leaps. Still rejoicing, they repeated a series of lunging steps and turns introduced previously in section B of the composition. These lunging steps and turns were executed downstage in twos and ended with the dancers standing across stage front in the design of a "V." Still facing the audience, the dancers again executed the hand and arm gesture indicative of "the sign of the Cross" and ended section C with ecstatic turns back to the original formation of the Cross for the final repetition of section A. At the completion of section A, the lights dimmed to a complete blackout and the curtain was lowered with the dancers still on stage.

All of the accompaniment for "The Communion" was based upon an original melodic pattern written in 4/4 meter. The only variation in the quality of the music was a change in dynamics from loud to soft and back to the strong, exultant climax.

In the following chapter, the investigator will include a summary of the thesis as a whole, and recommendations for further studies.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

#### Summary

Because of the investigator's particular interest in the area of choreography in modern dance and her background in the Roman Catholic Faith, she became intrigued with the existing relationship between dance and religion and the use of dance movement in the Roman Catholic Church. This interest culminated in the undertaking of a creative thesis entitled, AGNUS DEI: A Suite of Original Modern Dance Compositions Based Upon Selected Parts of the Roman Catholic Mass in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts degree to be conferred by the Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas. In order to orient the reader to the background of the study, a brief explanation concerning dance, the relationship between dance and religion, and dance movement in the Roman Catholic Church was included in the introduction to the study.

Dance, an expression of emotions or ideas through rhythmic movement, has been a means of communication throughout the universe. The origin of dance is found in the natural tendency of humanity to employ gestures to supplement

or to replace speech.<sup>1</sup> In the same manner in which speech developed into poetry and song the bodily movements of man developed into dance. According to Sachs, man created within his own body through dance, rhythmical patterns of movement long before he used substance, stone and word to give expressions to his inner emotions.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the ages, man has been aware of the tremendous catharsis and creative inspiration dance brings to those lost in boredom, despair and frustration.<sup>3</sup> Men who cannot dance are imprisoned in their own egos and cannot live well with others whereas men who can dance agree that the dance is a primary source of fulfillment, a art activity which provides a complete emotional satisfaction which could never be obtained through less meaningful activities.<sup>4</sup> The dance is a prime satisfier--similar to food when one is hungry, water when one is thirsty, and sleep when one is tired.

A harmonious relationship has existed between dance and religion since prehistoric times. Strange as this may sound to the twentieth century reader, the origin of the two words--dance and religion--are closely associated. According to Shawn, the origin of the dance lies in religion; at

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<sup>1</sup>Meerloo, op. cit., p. 42.

<sup>2</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Meerloo, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>4</sup>Strawn, op. cit., p. 14.

first they were one and the same activity, with religion comprising the content and dance the form.<sup>1</sup> Primitive man's religion was expressed through his dance. He used many persuasive rhythms of dance to attain common ecstatic experiences with his gods, thereby trying to control the universal forces--the thunder and floods, lighting and avalanches--which he did not understand. Through dance, primitive man attempted to attain the God-consciousness and thus cope with these angry gods.<sup>2</sup>

Dance is an art form in which the physical, emotional, and intellectual aspects of self are integrated completely and simultaneously. For this reason, it is only fitting that man's religious consciousness be expressed in the art of rhythmic movement.<sup>3</sup> Religious dance is an art which must be expressed by each individual in accordance with his specific beliefs and with his forms of worship. America, founded upon the principle of religious freedom, entitles each individual to an opportunity to express his ideas of God without interference or intolerance. Elaborating upon this statement, Ruth St. Denis states that:

Religion means to me, an abiding faith in God and Man; a reverence for the Creator and the created, and a special dedication to holding high the dignity, the beauty, and the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 68.

immortality of man, of which I hold the dance as his greatest symbol.<sup>1</sup>

The Roman Catholic Church is encouraging the application of the religious implication of the Christian arts in the United States, in Europe, and in the mission field.<sup>2</sup> Whether the art of the religious dance is accepted in the sanctuary or not, its spiritual values can be experienced in schools, universities, and through public performances. Dance-dramas depicting sections of the Mass and choral interpretations have been performed in many parts of the world. Many of these performances have been accepted meaningfully as religious implications of dance by members of the Roman Catholic Faith.

Renee Foatelli, who has created liturgical dances in France, urges the use of dance in pageants which interpret the Mass and suggests that this be done through the art of rhythmic interpretation such as that performed in the Roman Catholic Schools and Universities in the United States.<sup>3</sup> The students in the Oakdale Country Day School in Philadelphia have utilized the art of rhythmic interpretation in their study of the Roman Catholic, Protestant, Quaker, and Jewish faiths.<sup>4</sup> Grailville, a School of the Apostolate for

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<sup>1</sup>St. Denis, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>2</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 142.

<sup>3</sup>Foatelli, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>4</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 170.

Catholic Young Women, at one time offered not only a one to two-year course which included creative and devotional study, but also a course in the "interpretative dance."<sup>1</sup> At this same school, the late Dom Ermin Virty, O. S. B. of St. Louis, then editor Caecelia Music Magazine, taught courses based upon the chants of the church and encouraged the symbolic interpretation of religious music through movement.<sup>2</sup>

In the celebration of the Roman Catholic Mass, there are definite stylized movements and postures which lend themselves to interpretation through dance. The action of the Roman Catholic Mass creates the effect of symbolic movement which closely resembles a disciplined, sacred dance. In this connection, Hugh Benson, who became a Roman Catholic priest, states, "It [the Roman Catholic Mass] is no less than a sacred dance."<sup>3</sup> The priest and altar boys perform symbolic movements in the transferring of candles, books, and censers, and in the execution of formal patterns of walking and kneeling. Jacques Maritain, sensitive to the beauty of the disciplined movement within the Mass, has written, "There is nothing more beautiful than a High Mass, a dance before the Ark in slow motion."<sup>4</sup>

Because all religious art stems from man's desire to reveal his awareness of God, the Roman Catholic Church

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<sup>1</sup>Sutte, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 171.

<sup>4</sup>Maritain, op. cit., p. 32.



respects the revelations of this awareness manifested through sacred music, painting, sculpture, poetry and drama, as well as through symbolic movement.<sup>1</sup> A true Christian art, however, knows no barriers of creed or dogma; it is neither exclusively Roman Catholic or Protestant.<sup>2</sup> Although dance is one of the neglected arts of the church, Fisk feels that it may be used effectively to reveal spiritual truths and to deepen the participant's own devotional living.<sup>3</sup>

Because of the investigator's particular interest in choreography based upon religious themes, the present study, AGNUS DEI: A Suite of Three Original Modern Dance Compositions Based upon Selected Parts of the Roman Catholic Mass was undertaken. It entailed the developing of the choreography for a suite of dances, the writing of the narration, and the production and presentation of AGNUS DEI in three public performances. The study also entailed the developing of a written report of the study as whole, including a description of the three original modern dance compositions entitled "The Offertory," "The Consecration," and "The Communion."

Definitions and explanations of modern dance, dance composition, suite, choreography, and the Roman Catholic Mass were established to clarify basic terminology utilized

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<sup>1</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 172.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

throughout the study. Specific purposes underlying the study included choreographing a suite of three modern dance compositions based upon selected parts of the Roman Catholic Mass--"The Offertory," "The Consecration," and "The Communion;" developing the narration to be used as a transitional device for unifying the three original modern dance compositions comprising the suite; producing and presenting AGNUS DEI in one or more public performances during the spring semester of the academic year of 1966-1967; and preparing a written report of the thesis as a whole including a description of the suite of modern dance compositions with respect to the choreography, the accompaniment, the narration, the costumes, the lighting, and the stage decor.

The choreography for AGNUS DEI was limited to three modern dance compositions based upon selected parts of the Roman Catholic Mass--"The Offertory," "The Consecration," and "The Communion." A further limitation of the study was that all of the dances were choreographed by the investigator in accordance with her technical proficiencies and those of the subjects participating in the study. A minimal time limit of twenty minutes was established for the presentation of the suite of three original modern dance compositions. Nine participants were selected from among private dance students taught by the investigator in Dallas, Texas.

The following selected studies related to the present one were surveyed: (1) Kay Osborne's creative thesis

entitled "Through A Glass Darkly: A Suite of Five Original Dance Compositions Based Upon A Prism of Emotions As Seen Through Selected Symbolic Associations with Identifiable Objects Utilized as Stage Properties"; (2) Marion Nicoll's creative thesis entitled "Pinturas Mexicanas: A Suite of Original Dance Compositions Based Upon Selected Phases of Mexican Life"; (3) Eloise Hanna Smith's creative thesis entitled "A Dance-Drama with Original Music and Choreography of the Te Deum"; (4) Mattie Moss' historical thesis entitled "An Historical Study of Religion and Dance with Implications for the Use of Religious Motives in Modern Dance Education"; and (5) Marilyn Lewis' historical thesis entitled "A Study of Modern Dance as a Means of Worship in the United States with Emphasis Upon the History, Development, and Contributions of the Sacred Dance Guild and of Rhythmic Choirs." In discussing each of the foregoing studies, similarities and differences with respect to the present study were pointed out by the investigator.

The data utilized in the development of this thesis were collected, studied, and assimilated from both documentary and human sources. The documentary sources comprised books, periodicals, newspapers, films, and other published materials related to methods of research and to all aspects of the study. Theses, dissertations, research studies, and other unpublished materials related to all phases of the

study were utilized also. Human sources for data included members of the investigator's Thesis Committee; selected Roman Catholic priests from the St. James and Holy Cross parishes in Dallas, Texas; members of the Fine Arts Department at the University of Dallas; private dance students from among those taught by the investigator; and selected authorities in the field of dance, music, costume design, and construction of stage properties who gave helpful assistance, guidance and information to the investigator in the development of the study.

In discussing the rich heritage of religious dance, the following periods in history were surveyed: Primitive, Egyptian, Biblical, Hellenic, Roman, Middle Ages, and Renaissance Through the Contemporary.

The dancing of primitive man was largely of a religious character. Dancing, to primitive man, was of primary importance in the life of a group; it was neither a diversion nor a form of entertainment. Having no verbal language through which to communicate with others, he danced about every activity of any importance in his life.<sup>1</sup> Dance to him was both an expression of man's relationship to man, and of man's relationship with the unknown.<sup>2</sup>

Among primitive peoples, dance magic was first means of dealing with the unknown.<sup>3</sup> Through dance magic, primitive

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<sup>1</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

man sought to identify himself with the forces of the universe, to become one with the cosmic powers and, thereby, to control these forces for the benefit of himself and his fellow men. There were many inexplicable forces which permeated the life of primitive man and he expressed his reaction toward each of these forces by dancing.<sup>1</sup> Thus, in time, he came to worship not the manifestations of these forces--the lightning, the trees, the waters, and other natural phenomenas--but, instead, the powerful spirits which inhabited them.<sup>2</sup> His religion required that he attempt to control, through magic and mysteries, these forces over which he had no actual control.<sup>3</sup> Dancing was his way of communicating with the spirits with which he peopled the supernatural world in which he lived.

As the structure of primitive society developed from the individual and his family unit to tribes, primitive man faced new problems and emotions. In trying to solve these new problems and to understand his emotions, he continued to dance. Certain individuals in the tribes demonstrated superior powers in their dances and were recognized with respect and authority; such an individual was called "the Shaman" or the "medicine man."<sup>4</sup> These dancers acted as

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>4</sup>Martin, op. cit., p. 8.

high priests and served as instruments of intercession between the material world and the spiritual world of primitive man.<sup>1</sup>

As man emerged from pre-history into a period of recorded history, he continued to dance the themes inherent in the dances of primitive man. It is obvious, too, that these universal themes with appropriate variations in style, rhythm, and purpose have been utilized by every subsequent generation, thus making dance, rooted in the religious consciousness of primitive man, the universal art which is so satisfying to the soul.

In Egypt, dance again was the chief medium of religious expression. Kirstein points out that, "As far back as the First Dynasty [ca. 3000 B.C.] a wooden relief of the King Semti shows dancing as plastic prayer,"<sup>2</sup> and the Kinneys state that, "Egyptian carvings of six thousand years ago record the use of dance in religious rituals."<sup>3</sup> Traces of majestic choreographic poses on the columns of a temple have been found by sculptors, indicating that the religious dances of Egypt reflected a feeling equivalent to the spirit of the Pharaohs' monumental architecture.<sup>4</sup>

In the earliest period of Egyptian civilization, dance was an important adjunct to the temples where the members of

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<sup>1</sup>Shawn, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Kinneys, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

the priesthood were all-powerful.<sup>1</sup> They conducted rituals and guarded the temples in which dance was performed by special dancers or by the members of the priesthood themselves. Plato relates that:

The priests danced in definite, especially designed movements around the temple altars and the dance formations which they executed were intended to represent the movements of the planets, the constellations, and the fixed stars in the heavens.<sup>2</sup>

These astral dances appeared to have been the most outstanding form of dance in the rituals of religious dances among the ancient Egyptians.<sup>3</sup>

As the Egyptian towns grew, each settlement built its own temple and worshipped its own god. The chief god, worshipped by all Egyptians, however, was Osiris.<sup>4</sup> Through the worship of Osiris, the Egyptians explained the forces of nature about them, particularly the annual overflow and the recession of the waters of the river Nile. Osiris, son of Zeus and Niobe, was designated by the Egyptians as the brother and husband of the goddess Isis.<sup>5</sup> The Egyptians believed that the tears of Isis, falling in grief because of the death of her husband-brother who had been killed by Typhon, resulted in the annual overflow of the Nile.<sup>6</sup> In the temples, this legend became the central story of the

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Blackman, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 17.



Egyptian religion and was re-enacted constantly in dramatic dance form.<sup>1</sup> The Egyptians produced many dance-dramas both within and outside of the temples in honor of their numerous gods and goddesses.

The Egyptian tribes conducted many ritualistic processions in which they honored their dead.<sup>2</sup> It was customary among the peasants of Upper Egypt for the female relatives and friends of a deceased person to meet together outside of his home on each of the first three days after the funeral to lament and to perform a strange dance of lamentation.<sup>3</sup> Some of these dances continued for an hour or more and were performed two or three times each day. The people of Egypt exercised great care and concern in their preparation for life after death.<sup>4</sup> They believed that this preparation was essential since their religion denied that death ended the existence of a person who had led a good life.<sup>5</sup>

The Egyptians observed many important religious festivals which often required the performance of dancers who had at least a degree of preparatory training.<sup>6</sup> One of these festivals, which illustrates the survival of ancient fertility rituals, was the ceremony in honor of

<sup>1</sup>Oesterley, op. cit., p. 210.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Blackman, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

the consecration of the sacred bull, Apis.<sup>1</sup> Priests exercised considerable care in choosing the sacrificial animal and adhered to the belief that the animal selected could be fertilized only by a shaft of moonlight and that, at its birth, certain unmistakeable signs showed its divine selection. The bull must be black with a triangular white patch on his forehead and another on his right flank, representing the crescent moon in the black night.<sup>2</sup> There were numerous other requisites which had to be met, all of which were approved only by the priests. The bull, Apis, was placed in a designated sacred place for four months after which he was transferred to Memphis and was conducted in pomp to the sacred Apeum where his domestic servants performed secret dances in his honor.<sup>3</sup> These dances enacted the adventures of the god of whom the bull, Apis, was thought to be the living image.<sup>4</sup>

There can scarcely be a doubt that Egypt, the first country to produce a great civilization, was also a great dancing center. In this connection, Ellis states, "Egypt, is the mother country of all civilized dancing."<sup>5</sup> According to Kirstein:

Egypt in relation to the dance is interesting as the first great culture which used the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 230.

practice of the magic of tribal civilization in the development of a great homogeneous nation.<sup>1</sup>

Dance was an integral part of the ceremony of worship among the ancient Hebrews, and, in the opinion of the investigator, to a large extent the custom of dancing in the Christian Church today. The dances of the Hebrews were influenced directly by those of the Egyptians. Vuillier states that, "As early as the year 2543 B.C., we find traces of the choreographic art. Dances bequeathed by the priests of ancient Egypt were held high in honor among the Hebrews."<sup>2</sup> According to the Old Testament, the offering of sacrifices in the worship of Jehovah, were definite occasions for dancing among the Hebrew people. In this connection, there are eleven ancient Hebrew root words describing dance in reference to its use in the Old Testament.<sup>3</sup>

During the first century following the birth of Christ, a Jewish sect, known as the Therapeutae possessed a highly developed form of dance.<sup>4</sup> This sect, whose origin and fate alike are unknown is believed to have settled during the first century in the vicinity of Alexandria, Egypt.<sup>5</sup> The members, both men and women, devoted their time to prayer and to study. They

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<sup>1</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>Vuillier, op. cit., p. x.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ellis, op. cit., p. 140.

<sup>5</sup>Encyclopedia Britannica, op. cit., p. 435.

prayed twice a day, at dawn and at the close of the day, and spent the remaining hours during each day on spiritual devotional exercises.<sup>1</sup> According to Sorell, at special banquets, the Therapeutae performed hymn chants, and processional dances, in choroi of men and of women.<sup>2</sup>

It appears that there was some connection between dance and the Church in the very early period of its organization.<sup>3</sup> Kirstein tells of the Gnostic "Hymn of Jesus" as early as the year 160 A.D., dealing with the Lord's Supper, and states that, "In it, instead of the traditional breaking and sipping of wine, they [the disciples] danced."<sup>4</sup> It is obvious, therefore, that dance was accepted as a part of Christian ritual as early as the first century.

Dancing during the Hellenic Period of civilization has been associated always with the worship of gods and goddesses. The greatest of all Greek gods was Zeus, who originated in Crete, a Grecian island in the southern Aegean Sea, and about eighty-one miles from the mainland of Greece.<sup>5</sup> It is interesting to note what a tremendous influence Zeus and this Cretan island had upon dance among the ancient Greeks. The Cretans were extolled by the Greeks as exceptional artists and acknowledged as their superiors in the dance. According to Sachs, the best

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Sorell, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>3</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Sorell, op. cit., p. 20.

Greek dancers in modern times still come from among the descendants of the Cretans.<sup>1</sup>

Greeks in all stations of life are known to have participated in the dance on all occasions. The militant Spartans insisted that dancing was essential to the development of a good soldier; the Athenian lovers of beauty deemed it essential for the sound development of body, mind, and soul; physicians prescribed dancing for its therapeutic values; philosophers encouraged their students to practice dancing as their best medium for total development; and great men were not uncommonly known to dance in public.<sup>2</sup> It is obvious, then, that the attitude of the early Greeks toward dancing was one of respect and enthusiasm. It is not surprising to find that choreography during this period reached a very high state of excellence.<sup>3</sup>

Of all Greek dancing, the religious rituals were the most impressive. These religious dances may be classified into four main groups: the Emmeleia, the Hyporchemia, the Gymnopedia, and the Endymatia.<sup>4</sup> The Emmeleia and the Hyporchemia were deeply religious in nature and are among the most ancient of the Greek dances.<sup>5</sup> The origin of the

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<sup>1</sup>Sachs, op. cit., pp. 238-239.

<sup>2</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>3</sup>Kinneys, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

Emmeleia is attributed to Orpheus, the mythological musician and poet. The movements characteristic of this group of dances were slow and stately and were performed without choral accompaniment.<sup>1</sup> The Hyporchemia comprised some of the oldest types of Greek dances performed by both men and women, and are noted for their choral accompaniment, the most characteristic accompanying feature of Greek dancing.<sup>2</sup> The dances comprising the Gymnopedia and Endymatia were less religious in nature than those included within the first two groups of dances. The Gymnopedia, depicting athletic feats, were usually danced in honor of Appollo by nude youths.<sup>3</sup> The Endymatic dances were costumed brightly and were used for general entertainment purposes.<sup>4</sup> The dances comprising these four main groups of ancient Greek dances were common to different localities, and usually celebrated the worship of a god, or a victory, or some special act of heroism.

It is obvious that the Greeks gave to the world greater cultural momentum than any other country during the early periods of civilizations. In the development of dance, the Greeks were outstanding, reflecting the Greek ideal of beauty which permeated not only dancing but also all of the related arts--literature, drama, painting, sculpture and architecture. In this connection, Vuillier states, "Thus we

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

see that Greece, with her fine simplicity of thought, set patterns from which was cut the civilization of Rome."<sup>1</sup>

The dance suffered various stages of degradation at the hands of the Roman people and, because of the ultimate decadence of Rome, the development of religious dance was retarded for at least a thousand years. The early Romans were not a very dance-conscious people.<sup>2</sup> They seized upon the dance and all of the other arts developed by the Greeks.

Little can be said about the religious dance performed by the Romans. The Romans were great organizers, conquerors, lawmakers, and governors but, in the arts, they cheapened what they borrowed.<sup>3</sup> As the religious life of Rome gradually decayed and became orgiastic, so the religious dances became occasions for unbridled licentiousness and sensuality.<sup>4</sup> Ultimately, the Church took over what little religious dancing remained.

Perhaps the most sacred of the Roman religious dances were the dances of the Salii or the Priests of Mars. There were numerous orders of such dancing priests appointed by Numa Pompilius, the second King of Rome, to honor the gods through dance and to care for the Ancilia--the sacred shield of Mars.<sup>5</sup> Holy processions of the Salii Priests were held

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<sup>1</sup> Vuillier, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Shawn, op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Kinneys, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>5</sup> Kirstein, op. cit., p. 46.



during the months of March and October with ritualistic ceremonies lasting as long as three weeks.<sup>1</sup> The most solemn procession was held during the month of March, commemorating the time when the sacred shield was believed to have fallen from heaven during the reign of Numa.<sup>2</sup> On other solemn occasions, the Salii would parade through the capital and other public parts of the city while dancing and singing sacred songs said to have been composed by Numa.<sup>3</sup>

Dancing never played as important a part in the national life of the Romans as it did in that of the Greeks. According to the Kinneys, with the final capitulation of Greece to her more barbaric conquerors, the Romans proceeded to help themselves to whatever of the Greek culture pleased them.<sup>4</sup> Dance to the Romans was primarily a past time which respectable Romans regarded as inconsistent with their dignity.

During the Middle Ages, the Church became rigidly authoritarian and attempted to regulate all forms of religious activity, including the dance.<sup>5</sup> This aspect of the ritual was attacked severely by the Christians who opposed the Roman practice of using religious dance as a form of entertainment, and, therefore, ordered the Church to pass

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Kinneys, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>5</sup>Oesterley, op. cit., p. 73.

rigid legislation against all ribald or indecent dances.<sup>1</sup> Two men connected with the Church, Father Menestrier and Jehan Tabourot, compiled valuable material on the dance during the Middle Ages. About 1682, Father Menestrier, a Jesuit Priest, wrote an important book on dancing with emphasis upon the fact that men "sang and danced the praises of God, using the Choir as a stage."<sup>2</sup> Tabourot, the Canon of Langres, also known as Thoinot Arbeau, wrote an authoritative work entitled Orchesography.<sup>3</sup> In this important book, Tabourot refers to the opposition of the Church toward dancing.<sup>4</sup>

In spite of all protests, however, religious dance continued to spread during the Middle Ages. An interesting example of the perpetuation of ritualistic dance are the Cathedral dances of Spain, some of which are continued to the present day.<sup>5</sup> In Toledo, the Council suggested that the Archbishop of Seville present a "ritual rich in sacred choreography."<sup>6</sup> This ritual later became part of the Holy Mass known as "Mozarabe," and it is still celebrated in the Cathedral in Seville today. Still danced in the Cathedrals of Spain is the famous "Dance of the Seises" performed by the choir boys. It was once ordered by the

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<sup>1</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 103.

<sup>2</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>3</sup>Tabourot, op. cit.

<sup>5</sup>Kinneys, op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

Pope to be discontinued but the order was rescinded and it is now danced three times during each year--on Shrove Tuesday, The Feast of Corpus Christi, and the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, respectively.<sup>1</sup>

In the latter part of the twelfth century, the Church decided to permit dramatic portrayals.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of this decision was to evoke public interest in the services of the church through the introduction of choral songs and ceremonial dances performed by the choir.<sup>3</sup> Mystery and Miracle Plays based upon religious themes were part of these dramatic portrayals. These plays were presented at first inside the church before the altar, and, later transferred to the ballatoria--a dancing area in the front of the church--or at the west door of the church where awnings were hung. According to Matthew Paris, the first Miracle Play was entitled "St. Catherine."<sup>4</sup> It was written by Gregory, a norman, who later became the Abbot of St. Albans.<sup>5</sup> The Mystery Plays grew out of the Miracle Plays and when the former ceased to be presented, the Morality Plays were substituted.<sup>6</sup>

Many pagan dances appeared during the Middle Ages, some of which became a part of the traditional church

<sup>1</sup> Anonymous, op. cit., p. 575.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Vuillier, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

festivals. One--called the Tripettes--originated in France in 1350 and is still danced today at Barjols in Provence, France.<sup>1</sup> It is performed at the patronal feast of St. Marcel. The Christian and the pagan merged originally when the people of Barjols, bringing the body of St. Marcel to their church, met a group of fellow townsmen taking part in a traditional festival associated with the sacrificing of a bull.<sup>2</sup> Today in France the Tripettes combines both the roasting of a bull and several days of dancing in the church.<sup>3</sup> The most ancient of the pagan dances were the fire dances performed on the eve of St. John's Day--June 24,--in Brittany, Provence, and England.<sup>4</sup> The "Brandons," a torch dance accompanied by chants and prayers, was performed in England on the first day of May and at Pentecost.<sup>5</sup>

Dances similar to the frenzied dances of the savages and that of the "cult of Dionysus" in Greece developed also during the Middle Ages.<sup>6</sup> Some have described these dances as "orgiastic" and characteristic of an epidemic which seemed to spread throughout Germany, Italy, and other parts of Europe. These dances were said to have been religious in origin during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries.<sup>7</sup> Priests stood by helplessly as the hysteria

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Kinneys, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

spread among the people. These dance manias were called different names in different parts of Europe. In Germany, about the middle of the fourteenth century an uncontrollable dance madness which is known to physicians as Chorea Major and to laymen as St. Vitus's dance, broke out.<sup>1</sup> In Italy, at the same time (fourteenth century) and on into the eighteenth century another dance mania, Tarantism, evolved.<sup>2</sup> This dance was thought to be caused by the bite of the Apulian spider--Lycosa Tarentula--and only wild jumping about after the bite of the spider was thought to bring temporary relief.<sup>3</sup> The Dance of Death, also known as Danse Macabre and as Totentanz, originated in the churchyard on days when someone had died or at a Christian festival.<sup>4</sup> Men and women began suddenly and irresistibly to dance and sing.<sup>5</sup>

Although in some instances, the purely religious dances were overshadowed by the frenzied and grotesque dances of the Middle Ages, their balance and beauty were restored with the advent of the Renaissance. Religious dancing, like all of the other arts, came to life again with the Renaissance which originated in Italy during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>6</sup> The furthering of the arts by the Church and by the patronage of royalty can be seen throughout these two centuries. The Renaissance is the

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<sup>1</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 253.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 18.

period of Dante, Shakespeare, Boccaccio, Michelangelo, and many other great creative artists whose works reflect the character of the Renaissance as a period of cultural awakening and expansion.

The Renaissance also marked the beginning of dissension between church and state.<sup>1</sup> This schism developed ultimately into overt rebellion which culminated with the Reformation in 1517.<sup>2</sup> The nations unaffected by this movement included Spain, Portugal, and Italy because these three countries remained Roman Catholic nations. The result of the Reformation is felt by some churches today, however, in that they are opposed to dancing of any sort. These churches represent many of the varied Protestant sects which grew out of the Reformation.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, persons of royal and aristocratic lineage were evolving a choreo-dramatic dance form which gave rise to the development of the ballet. In the Italian courts, dukes and princes devised elaborate pageants in which the courtiers danced in fancy dress, often symbolic, or enacted the characters of men, beasts, or mythical gods.<sup>4</sup> These extravagant entertainments reached their height when Catherine de Medici married Louis XIII and became the Queen of France.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 135.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

From the choreo-dramatic form, the ballet evolved into the ballet-opera form in which a theme or plot was developed dramatically and interspersed with dancing.<sup>1</sup> In Italy these forms of entertainment were presented in conjunction with the many luxurious court banquets.<sup>2</sup> At one such banquet, given by Cardinal Pietro Riario, Kirstein states that "After the food, there was a 'worthy morisco' or a mimed and dance action."<sup>3</sup> Many of the ballet forms were used to celebrate the canonization of Catholic Cardinals, thus stressing the Catholic Church's interest in dance.<sup>4</sup> In 1609, a great ballet spectacle was organized by the Church of Portugal for the beatification of Saint Ignatius Loyola.<sup>5</sup> This ballet was widely danced in churches of both Portugal and France.<sup>6</sup>

The ballet continued to flourish in both religious and theatrical forms during the remaining part of the eighteenth century. Catherine de Medici and Louis XIV are said to have been responsible for the development of the highly stylized ballet form which became more and more a part of the theatre.<sup>7</sup>

Early American was not entirely without its forms of religious and secular dancing despite the fact that the

<sup>1</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 136.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Sorell, op. cit., p. 122.

<sup>5</sup>Vuillier, op. cit., p. 82.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Sorell, op. cit., p. 123.



early Puritans frowned upon all expressions of worldly joy or pleasure. That the people coming to America found freedom of religious expression is attested to by the variety of religious faiths developing within and outside of the various colonies. Many isolated groups, sects and cults used symbolic movements in their religious rituals. One of these new cults was a sacred order called "The Free and Accepted Mason" which was organized in 1717.<sup>1</sup> This group originated from a meeting of a guild of Masons who were building English Cathedrals and is still active in many part of the world. They base their code upon the symbols of the level, the compass, and the plumb, and describe God as the "Great Architect of the Universe."<sup>2</sup> They hold secret meetings and use elaborate rituals in connection with initiation ceremonies and the conferring of degrees.<sup>3</sup> During these ceremonies, the members sit around the edge of the hall, leaving the center space for special marches and the execution of floor patterns of special designs.<sup>4</sup> The "Eastern Stars," an active sister group to the Masons, also performs various movements in their rituals.<sup>5</sup> Some of the designs the sister group performs are those of a cross, a circle, or more complicated symbolic representations of the sun, the moon, or the Pleiades.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 136.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

Two other groups employing creative, symbolic movement in the form of dance are the Shakers and the Negroes. The Shakers, originating in England about the year of 1706, came to America in 1774 and settled throughout the east and middle west. They welcomed all who were tired of "futile creeds, formal worship, and the evils of a corrupt society."<sup>1</sup> Their movements included walking the floor while singing, and passing each other with staccato movements. Their beliefs were derived from certain Huguenot sects which employed dancing as an active part of the adoration of God.<sup>2</sup> The Negroes, brought to the United States during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, welcomed Christianity and, as it became their adopted religion, they interpreted it creatively through the singing of spirituals and in rhythmic motion because they felt "moved by the spirit."<sup>3</sup> Characteristic movements of the Negro included a swaying motion backward and forward as he listened to his minister and responded to him with the periodic reiteration of the words "Amen" and "Hallelujah" and with the clapping of his hands.<sup>4</sup> Fisk describes the "ring shout," another typical form of movement, in this manner: "The prayer of one man becomes a chant, the chant becomes a shout, and the shout becomes a movement."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Kinneys, op. cit.,

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Fisk, op. cit., p. 137.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

Many churches today are encouraging religious dance in the United States, in Europe, and in the mission fields of various denominations. Credit is given to Ruth St. Denis and to Ted Shawn as the originators of dance inspired by religious themes in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Other contemporary personalities and organizations have followed these two great artists in the performance of religious dances. The establishment of the Denishawn School of Dance in Los Angeles, California, in 1915 by Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn is one of the great landmarks in the history of American Dance.<sup>2</sup> From its ranks have come three of the greatest of Contemporary American Dancers, namely, Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, and Charles Weidman. Each of these dancers has contributed richly to the field of religious dance. Notable organizations which have added to the interest in religious dance includes: The Modern Dance Group of the Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas, which over a period of years has presented programs of religious dances in churches of various denominations; Youth Organizations such as the Y-Teens and Girls Scouts; and the Sacred Dance Guild, a national organization engaged in the modern religious dance and in the activities of the Rhythmic Choirs.<sup>3</sup>

Church leaders who have contributed to the field of religious dance includes: the Reverend Robert A. Storer who

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<sup>1</sup>Shawn, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Lewis, op. cit., p. 48.

has worked with Motion Choirs since 1937; Margaret Palmer Fisk, a minister's wife and author of two books on religious movement entitled *The Art of the Rhythmic Choir* and *Look Up and Live*; and the late Reverend Doctor William Norman Guthrie, rector of St. Marks in-the Bowerie Church in the City of New York and his daughter Phoebe Ann.<sup>1</sup>

Because of the many contributions of such outstanding personalities and religious organizations, dance as a part of worship is being accepted in many churches today. In the opinion of the investigator, religious dance, because of such a rich heritage, has much to offer today as well as in the future, in church ritual of all denominations.

The investigator developed the thesis while out of residence in the fulfillment of her professional duties as a teacher in Dallas, Texas, during the academic years of 1966-1967 and 1967-1968. The procedures followed in the development of the study included: collecting, studying, and assimilating information from all available documentary sources of data pertinent to various phases of the project--the relationship between religion and dance, dance movement in the Roman Catholic Church, and the heritage of religious dance from the time of primitive man through the contemporary period with emphasis upon religious dance as a part of worship in Christian Churches; outlining the thematic sources for each of the three modern dance compositions which were

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<sup>1</sup>Moss, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

based upon three principal parts of the Roman Catholic Mass; developing a tentative outline; presenting the tentative outline in a Graduate Seminar in the College of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation of the Texas Woman's University on February 22, 1967; revising the outline in accordance with the recommendations of the members of the Thesis Committee and others participating in the Graduate Seminar; filing the approved prospectus of the study in the office of the Dean of Graduate Studies of the Texas Woman's University; creating the movement motifs for each of the three modern dance compositions based upon the outlined analysis of its thematic content; developing the movement motifs into phrases, arranging the phrases into a specific form selected for each dance composition, and assembling the compositions into a unified suite of dance compositions; presenting the movement motifs to the members of the investigator's Thesis Committee for their evaluations and criticisms; and revising the movement motifs in accordance with their evaluations.

The procedures also included establishing criteria for the selection of the subjects; teaching twelve private dance students of the investigator specific, progressive technique sequences to facilitate their performance of the actual rhythmic patterns, phrasing, and movements developed for the study; selecting nine of the twelve students to participate in the study in accordance with the criteria established for

their selection; orienting the students with respect to the significance of AGNUS DEI; teaching the students the compositions comprising the suite as a whole; arranging for the dancers to travel to the campus of the Texas Woman's University during the months of March, April, and May of 1967 to permit the members of the Thesis Committee to view, evaluate, and criticize the choreography as adapted to the selected dancers and; revising the choreography in accordance with their evaluations; outlining a skeletal framework of musical accompaniment to be composed by Mr. Arthur Smith, Director of Church Music at Christ The King Catholic Church in Dallas, Texas, for each of the three original modern dance compositions; arranging periodic visits with Mr. Smith for his observation of the compositions as performed by the dancers and for familiarizing the investigator and the dancers with the musical accompaniment of AGNUS DEI which was played by Mr. Smith upon an organ; arranging a session for recording the music on tape to be used for the public presentation of AGNUS DEI; developing the narration to be utilized as a unifying device for the suite of original modern dance compositions; designing and constructing the costumes and stage decor; supervising the lighting effects to be used for the performance of AGNUS DEI; and presenting the suite of three modern dance compositions in a formal concert on May 22, 1967, in the Redbud Auditorium on the campus of the Texas Woman's University, in an informal concert on May 23, 1967, at the

Hamilton Park High School, and at the Hamilton Park Methodist Church on June 26, 1967 in conjunction with the Annual Conference of Youth for the State of Texas.

Final procedures followed in developing the present study entitled AGNUS DEI were the preparation of a written report of the thesis and the development of the Appendix which included pictures illustrative of the choreography of AGNUS DEI and other materials related to the thesis as a whole. Final procedures also included revisions of the written material chapter by chapter with final approval by the investigator's Thesis Committee during the academic year of 1967-1968, ending with a final oral examination and submission of four copies of the thesis to the Dean of Graduate Studies for approval by him prior to the conferring of the degree of Master of Arts in Dance and Related Arts during the Commencement Exercises of the Texas Woman's University on August 23, 1968.

A description of the three original modern dance compositions comprising AGNUS DEI: A Suite of Three Original Modern Dance Compositions Based Upon Selected Parts of the Roman Catholic Mass, was included in the report of this thesis. The three original modern dance compositions were entitled, "The Offertory," "The Consecration," and "The Communion," respectively. The description of the three respective compositions was not detailed analytically in



regard to every movement developed for each composition but the dances were described with respect to the narration utilized as a transitional unifying device within the suite; the basic movement motifs; the thematic content; the structural form selected for each composition; and the suite as a whole, the lighting, the costumes, and the accompaniment for each dance; and the only piece of stage decor used throughout the suite.

AGNUS DEI, meaning LAMB OF GOD, was selected as the title for this creative thesis because it is symbolic of the drama which is enacted in the three principal parts of the Roman Catholic Mass.<sup>1</sup> The suite of three original modern dance compositions was based upon the premise that the Mass is a memorial of the Supreme Sacrifice of Christ Who died to give man freedom from the tyranny of sin.<sup>2</sup> In determining the sequential order of the three original modern dances, the investigator relied entirely upon the order in which the three parts are performed in the traditional Roman Catholic Mass.

A narrator, who sat on a stool upon the stage, in front of the proscenium, stage left, read four prose-poems which served, respectively, as a prologue to the suite as a whole and as an introduction to each of the three modern dance compositions comprising the suite. The stage area was unlighted

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<sup>1</sup>Sheen and Daniel-Rops, op. cit., p. 147.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

as she read. A blue light was focused upon the narrator while she read each prose-poem and, as the light was brought down at the conclusion of each prose-poem, the lighting design developed for each of the three dances was focused upon the stage area.

The first composition in the suite was entitled "The Offertory" and was based upon the offering of one's self to God in the form of Bread and Wine.<sup>1</sup> The composition was structured as a three-part form indicated by the letters ABC. Underlying the central theme were three ideas: (1) the bringing of the gifts of Bread and Wine to the altar, (2) the offering and blessing of these gifts, and (3) the offering of one's self.

The dancers' costumes for "The Offertory" consisted of a basic white leotard under an ankle-length, white, A-line dress, accented with a hip-length green, hooded cape. Radiant green lights were focused upon the dancers at the conclusion of the prose-poem introducing "The Offertory." The color of the dancers' costumes and the green lighting which flooded the stage were chosen for "The Offertory" in order to intensify the underlying ideas of humility, penitence, and forgiveness.

"The Offertory" opened with the dancers entering in a processional design, moving with slow walking steps from the downstage right and left wings, respectively. As they met at the center downstage, they proceeded in twos upstage

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

toward the panel upon which were pictured the Cross and altar. The hand movements of the dancers included gestures indicative of carrying gifts. Each dancer genuflected as she approached the center downstage area and focused upon the Cross which was used as a focal point throughout the composition. At the conclusion of the processional, the dancers moved to form a semi-circular design around the altar. In a kneeling position, they began section B of the composition which portrayed the offering and blessing of the gifts. In carrying out this idea, the dancers executed horizontal pendular swings of the arms and upper torso. Still kneeling and with hands folded in a prayerful position, they executed deep backward and forward sways of the upper torso. Rising from their kneeling position, the dancers lunged forward as if to place their gifts on the altar, and then traveled downstage. Executing a low jack-knife turn to face the audience, three of the dancers sank to their knees as the other six dancers, in groups of threes located upstage right and left, respectively, lunged forward to face the audience. Remaining in a triangular design, they executed isolated arm swings to the right and left side of the body and ended section B with an arm gesture indicative of a Roman Catholic celebrant bestowing the sacred blessing--"the sign of the Cross." At the beginning of section C based upon the offering of one's self, the dancers executed a sharp turn to

face the altar. Standing in "second position" with hands clasped above the head, they executed a series of deep knee bends indicative of the humbling of one's entire self. Following this expression of humility, the dancers executed a series of rapid movements upstage toward the altar and again formed a semi-circle, focusing upon the Cross. Repeating movements from section B, the horizontal pendular swings of the arms and torso and the extended forward and backward sways, the dancers ended section C of the composition with the hand and arm gesture based upon the "sign of the Cross" which appeared previously in section B. The lights dimmed to a complete blackout as the dancers completed the last gesture.

The movements choreographed for section A of "The Offertory" were based upon the rhythmic patterns of a Roman Catholic chant entitled "Lord Have Mercy." This chant is written in 2/4 times and served as the musical background throughout "The Offertory." Accompaniment for sections B and C of the composition were based upon melodies written in 3/4 meter. The only variation in the dynamics of the music were crescendoes from soft to moderately loud, followed by diminuendoes to the original quiet quality.

"The Consecration," the second composition in AGNUS DEI was based upon Transubstantiation or the changing of the substance of the Bread to the substance of the Body of Christ,

and the substance of the Wine to the substance of His Blood.<sup>1</sup> Underlying the central theme were three ideas: (1) the mystery of Transubstantiation; (2) the changing of the Bread into the Body of Christ; and (3) the changing of the Wine into the Blood of Christ. The organization of these three ideas took the form of Rondo indicated by the letters ABACA.

The dancers' costumes for "The Consecration" consisted of a white leotard under a white, ankle-length, A-line dress accented with a hip-length, red, hooded cape. At the conclusion of the prose-poem introducing the composition, brilliant red lights were focused upon the dancers. The color of the capes and the red lighting which flooded the stage were chosen in order to intensify the dramatic symbolism inherent in the mystery of Transubstantiation. The nine dancers were arranged on the stage in three triangular designs--three dancers in each group.

For the purpose of clarification when feasible, the investigator will refer to the center stage group as group one and to the upstage right and left groups as groups two and three, respectively.

As the composition began, the nine dancers, standing in three triangular designs, facing the audience, executed arm movements symbolic of the central theme--the mystery of changing the Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. The dancers' arms rose slowly from behind the body to the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

front above the head. As the arms were lowered from this position, they crossed in front of the dancers' faces. The dancers executed a step lunge to the side, moving the arms from the upraised position to the right and left sides, respectively. The entire movement was repeated twice, after which the group turned and knelt, facing the altar. The highlight of the composition entitled "The Consecration" was a sustained movement flowing through the arms and body as the dancers moved from a standing position to a kneeling position, ending with the hand and arm gesture indicating "the sign of the Cross."

In section B of "The Consecration," the movement motifs were based upon changing the Bread into the Body of Christ. All three groups of dancers traveled from the downstage to the altar, executing gliding steps, lunges, and hand movements illustrative of scooping and molding the bread. Completing this idea, the dancers now facing the altar, executed broad circular steps from side to side with both arms raised high above the head. Finally, as if placing the bread upon the altar, the dancers knelt on one knee and made circling motions with their arms and hands, signifying the final consecration of the Bread. Rising, they repeated the characteristic gliding steps as they returned to their original triangular designs for the repetition of section A.

Section C of the composition was based upon the changing of the Wine into the Blood of Our Lord. The nine dancers, in

three triangular designs, executed reaching and clinging gestures with the arms and hands. Group one performed these movements for the first four counts while groups two and three executed eight counts of the same movements--clinging and reaching with the hands and arms. Turning and walking slowly toward the altar, group one performed a circling movement with the right arm. The left arm was extended toward the altar and, as the right arm completed its circling movement, it crossed the left arm. Stressing the idea of changing the Wine into the Blood of The Lord, groups two and three traveled the same path as group one toward the altar and repeated the same circling arm and hand movements. Group one moved away from the altar traveling to downstage center as groups two and three traveled upstage toward the altar. When all of the dancers had returned to their original triangular designs, they repeated section A of "The Consecration" and the lights dimmed to a complete blackout, thus ending the composition.

The movements choreographed for section A of "The Consecration" were based upon the rhythmic pattern of a chant entitled "Lamb of God" which is sung in many Roman Catholic services by participants and officiants instead of being spoken at a specific time within the Mass. The chant is written in 2/4 meter and served as the musical accompaniment throughout "The Offertory." Accompaniment for section B of



the composition was based chiefly upon a chant used also in the regular services of Roman Catholic Mass, entitled "Holy, Holy, Holy." The remaining portion of section B and all of section C were based upon original melodies written in 6/4 meter.

"The Communion," the third of the original modern dance compositions comprising the suite entitled AGNUS DEI, was based upon receiving the Lord in the form of Bread and Wine.<sup>1</sup> Underlying the central theme were three ideas: (1) preparation of one's self, (2) receiving Communion, and (3) rejoicing for having received Communion. The investigator organized these ideas into a Rondo form indicated by the letters ABACA. The first idea formed section A which recurred throughout the composition; the second and third ideas formed sections B and C of the composition, respectively.

The dancers' costumes worn for "The Communion" were entirely white and consisted of the basic leotards under an ankle-length, A-line dress, accented with a hip-length, hooded cape. Soft blue lights were focused on the dancers at the conclusion of the prose-poem introducing the composition. The unrelieved white costumes and the soft blue lights were chosen for "The Communion" in order to intensify the underlying idea of purity.

"The Communion" opened with the dancers in the design of a Cross, with their upper torsos prone on the floor. At

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

the opening of the A section, the dancers remained in this position as they executed arm and upper torso movements including the raising of the right arm slowly over the head and returning to the floor three times. Then, rising to a kneeling position on one knee, the dancers executed upper torso sways to the right and left sides, respectively. Still kneeling on one knee, the dancers paused, focusing upstage toward the altar with their hands folded in a prayerful position. The dancers then rose and turned to follow two girls, one on the left and one on the right side of the Cross, as they moved toward the altar, stepping lightly on their toes. Section A ended as the dancers sank slowly to their knees in three groups, each group of three in triangular design. This last phrase of section A was executed in succession, using nine counts of music. On the first three counts, the group nearest to the altar knelt; groups two and three knelt on the second and third groups of three counts, respectively.

The movements for section B of "The Communion" depicted the idea of receiving Communion. Having prepared themselves for receiving the Lord, the dancers rose from a kneeling position and moved around the stage executing lunge steps and low turns. Pausing in a semi-circular design, each dancer moved her head up and back as if receiving Communion, followed by the hand and arm gesture indicative of the "sign

of the Cross." The dancers then returned to the center of the stage and formed the original design of the Cross to repeat section A of the composition. The idea portrayed in section C of "The Communion," was that of rejoicing after having received Communion. With an expression of this exultation upon their faces, the dancers executed a series of joyful skips, leaps, and turns with which they gradually formed a complete circle around the stage. Moving in this circular design, each dancer executed free swinging steps and ecstatic leaps. Still rejoicing, they repeated a series of lunging steps and turns introduced previously in section B of the composition. These lunging steps and turns were executed downstage in twos, and ended with the dancers standing across stage front in the design of a "V." Still facing the audience, the dancers again executed the hand and arm gesture indicative of "the sign of the Cross" and ended section C with ecstatic turns back to the original formation of the Cross for the final repetition of section A. At the completion of section A, the lights dimmed to a complete blackout and the curtain was lowered with the dancers still on stage.

#### Recommendations for Further Studies

In developing AGNUS DEI: A Suite of Modern Dance Compositions Based Upon Selected Parts of the Roman Catholic Mass, the investigator discovered numerous possibilities for

those interested in representing, through Modern dance, other creative studies of a religious nature. The following are specific recommendations for such studies:

1. The development of a suite of original modern dance compositions based upon the complete worship services of the Roman Catholic Mass.
2. The development of a suite of original modern dance compositions based upon selected parts of the Roman Catholic Liturgical year such as the three chief feast days--Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost.
3. The development of a suite of original modern dance compositions based upon selected Doxologies, such as the "Gloria in Excelsis," and the "Gloria Patri."
4. The development of a suite of original modern dance compositions based upon religious poetry.
5. The development of an original dance-drama illustrative of the content and form of the Mystery Play of the Middle Ages.
6. The development of an original dance-drama illustrative of the content and form of the Morality Play of the Middle Ages.
7. The development of an original dance-drama illustrative of the content and form of the Miracle Play of the Middle Ages.

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## APPENDIX

The following is a copy of the narration which was utilized as a transitional, unifying device in the creative thesis entitled AGNUS DEI: A Suite of Three Original Modern Dance Compositions Based Upon Selected Parts of the Roman Catholic Mass.

## NARRATION

### Introduction

Sheep led away to be slaughtered, Lamb  
That stands dumb while it is shorn,  
No word from Him.  
It is but one sign by which you should know me,  
Seated on the clouds of Heaven and surrounded  
By the blinding light of Thy glory in which all  
Hidden things will lie revealed.  
It is the sign of the Lamb, the sign by which  
Thy Blood will blot out forever all the hatred  
And spiritual unrest seated in my heart;  
And grant that in the strength of Thy sign, the mark  
Of the Lamb, I may gain for you the whole world,  
That which Thou has promised to those who are gentle  
And forbearing.

### Prologue to "The Offertory"

I desire that this Bread and this Wine, I now  
Bring before Thy altar, be in Thy sight as truly Bread  
Of mine, as truly Wine of mine.  
It is I myself who now unite in offering  
Bread and Wine to you.  
For I wish to join in this unbroken offering.-  
It is my wish to be among my followers, to  
Be a sharer in the society that finds  
Its link of union in You.  
To be among Thy flock, so that in seeking  
My own salvation I may also be of  
Avail in effecting the salvation of all mankind.

### Prologue to "The Consecration"

If you have naught else to lay before the Lord,  
Deliver unto Him at least your labors and your pains;  
Many are the men who have striven mightily that  
Fragments of Bread might rest here upon the paten.  
If your hands are empty and your voice stricken dumb,  
Offer at least your wounded heart and all that it has borne,  
That this Chalice might hold this Wine.  
Was it not needful that the grapes be crushed and yield  
its all?

If you have nothing but sin and bitterness, a life that is  
Tedious and full of sharp distress, hold before Heaven  
your hands

So pititable laden, manifesting to the Devine Mercy your  
needs to be

Received at His table.

If you lack the mere strength to pray and entreat, if there  
Is naught in your heart but emptiness and disorder, then  
Silently yield into the hands of another all your being, and  
You shall find in Him gift and giver.

### Prologue to "The Communion"

You are mine, and I am yours, wholly made one in this  
Sacrament,

My soul worships You in stillness.

No merely human sense of gratitude even begins to take account  
Of this gift so far above the feebleness of human insight.

No love can ever equal the love which had caused Thee to make  
This Sacrifice, I ask that I may share in Thy Sacrifice, and  
that

Thy will be with me as I carry my Cross. As I go from sorrow  
to joy,

From hope to fear.

There is neither speech nor language, not even the language  
by which

Heart speaks to heart, fit to express all that I would now  
say,

My joy is beyond speech.

The following color sketch illustrates the costume designed for the composition entitled "The Offertory."

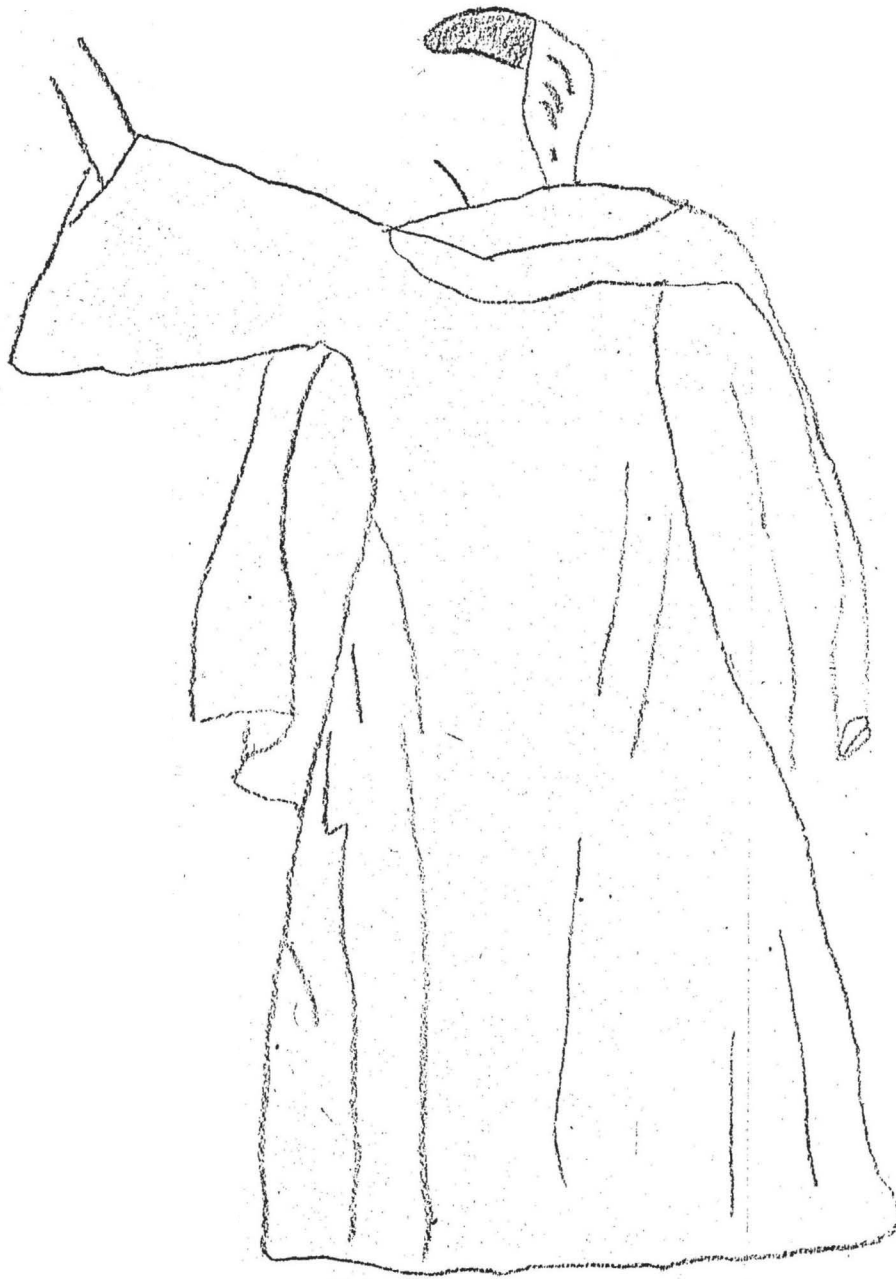




The following color sketch illustrates the costume designed for the composition entitled "The Consecration."

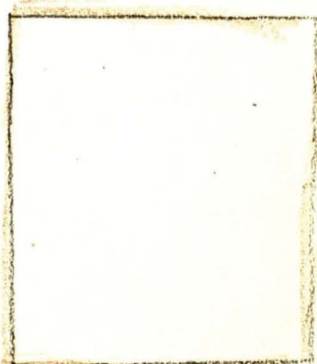
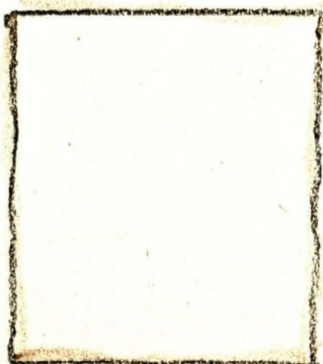
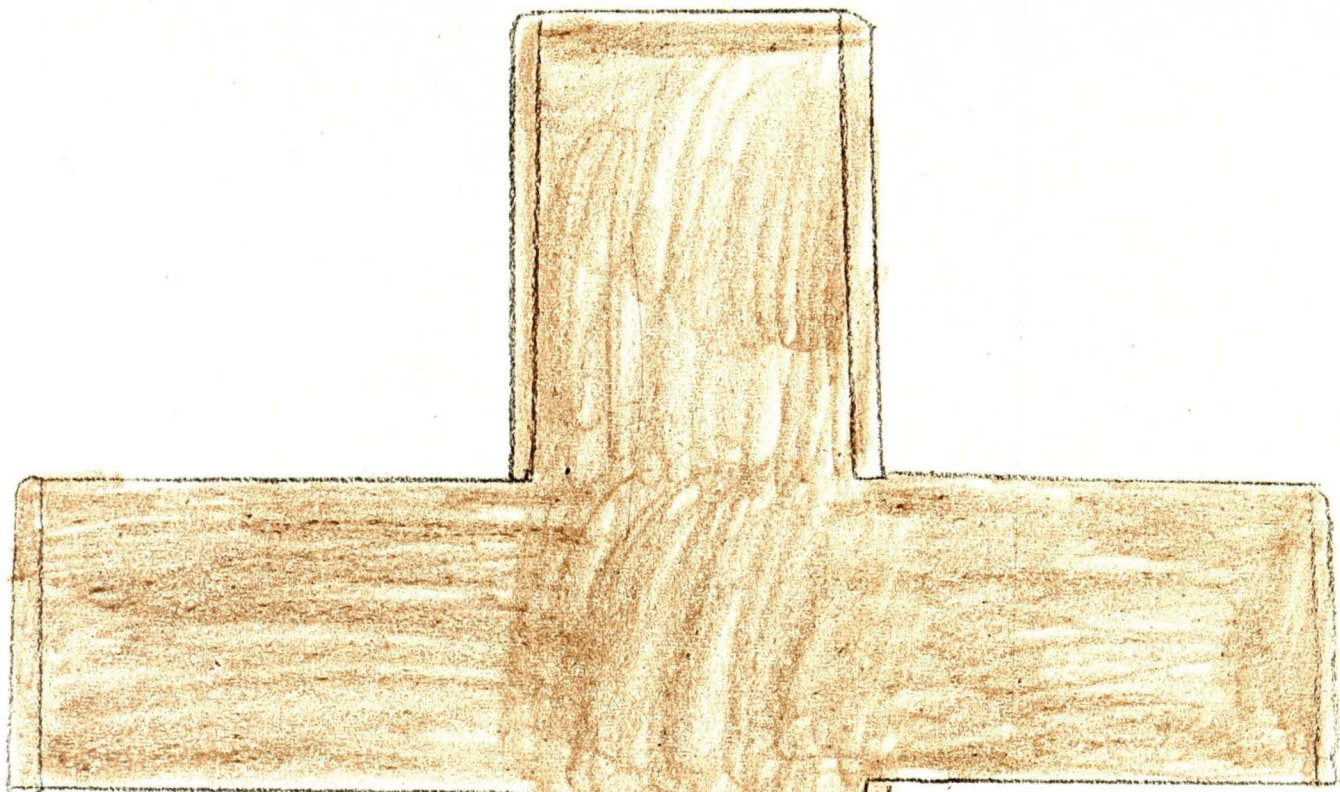


The following color sketch illustrates the costume designed for the composition entitled "The Communion."



The following is a color sketch of the only stage decor used in the suite of dances entitled AGNUS DEI.









The following photographs depict scenes illustrative of the composition entitled "The Consecration."





The following programs are illustrative of those used in the presentation of AGNUS DEI: A Suite of Three Original Modern Dance Compositions Based Upon Selected Parts of the Roman Catholic Mass.



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**THE COLLEGE OF  
HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, AND RECREATION**

—of the—

**TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY**

Denton, Texas

**P r e s e n t s**

Agnus Dei: A Suite of Original Modern  
Dance Compositions Based Upon Selected  
Part of the Roman Catholic Mass



**RED BUD AUDITORIUM**

**MONDAY, MAY 22, 1967**

**4:30 P.M.**

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**JOSEPH PRINTING CO. 2731-33 WARREN, PH. HA 8-9735, DALLAS, TEXAS**

## Agnus Dei

A suite of dances choreographed by Ann M. Williams, in partial fulfillment of the thesis requirement for a Masters of Arts Degree in Dance and Related Arts.

"The Offertory" .....based upon the offering of ourselves to God in the form of bread and wine.

"The Consecration" .....based upon Transubstantiation  
... the substance of the bread becomes the substance of the Body of Christ, and the substance of the wine becomes the substance of His Blood.

"The Communion" .....based upon receiving Our Lord in the form of bread and wine.

## Acknowledgment

Thesis Committee ..... Dr. Anne Schley Duggan, Director  
Miss Mary Campbell, Mr. Bert Lyle,  
Rev. Joseph N. Thomas

Accompanist and Composer (Taped) ..... Arthur Smith

Narrator ..... Zelda Simmons

Costume Designer ..... Grace McMillan

Wardrobe Mistress ..... Curtis Smith

Lighting ..... Janice Davis

## DANCERS

Pamela Chinn ..... Bridget Johnson

Shirley Darden ..... Sharon Patrick

Ivory Nell Graham ..... Sharon Strong

Mary Jackson ..... Arlane Ross

Sherlyn Yancy



# HAMILTON PARK HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

## Programme

Music.....	Hamilton Park High School Band
Prayer.....	Mrs. Ona Smith, President Hamilton Park P. T. A.
Pledge.....	Bobbie Blair, President Student Council
Dance-Solo.....	Shirley Jamerson "Troubles of the World"
Introduction of Speaker.....	Mr. Kay Pickerson, President North Dallas Parent League
*Dance-Drama.....	AGNUS DEI: A Suite of Three Original Modern Dance Compositions Based Upon Selected Parts of the Roman Catholic Mass
Remarks.....	Mr. E. V. Goss, Principal Mr. J. O. Griffin, Assistant Princ: Mrs. V. T. Starks, Counselor

\*AGNUS DEI is a creative thesis produced and presented by Mrs. Ann Williams in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in Dance and Related Arts from the Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas.