

THE ART OF MOVEMENT DESIGN

The Elements of Choreography

Body · Space · Time · Energy

INTRODUCTION TO CHOREOGRAPHY — PER 2624

What Is Choreography?

Choreography is the deliberate *art of designing movement* — organizing the body in space and time to create meaning, emotion, and form. It transforms individual gestures into a coherent performance, whether in Thai, Eastern, or Western dance traditions.

Design, not accident

Every movement is chosen, shaped, and sequenced with intention.

A language of the body

Movement communicates ideas words cannot express.

Rooted in tradition

Draws on classical vocabularies while inviting new creation.

Shaped by context

Purpose, occasion, and audience guide every choice.

The Four Elements

All choreography is built from four fundamental elements. Master them, and you hold the vocabulary to design any dance.

I

Body

The instrument — what moves, and the shapes it makes.

II

Space

Where movement travels — direction, level, and pathway.

III

Time

When and how fast — rhythm, tempo, and duration.

IV

Energy

How movement feels — force, weight, and flow.



ELEMENT ONE

Body

The body is the choreographer's instrument. It shapes lines, curves, and angles; it acts as a whole or in isolated parts — a hand, the gaze, the torso. In Thai dance, refined hand and finger positions carry meaning that defines the entire form.

SHAPE

GESTURE

POSTURE

ISOLATION

II

ELEMENT TWO

Space

Space is the stage the body inhabits. It includes direction and facing, high and low levels, the size of a movement, and the pathways dancers trace on the floor. Formations and floor patterns turn a group of dancers into a single, legible design.

DIRECTION

LEVEL

PATHWAY

FORMATION



ELEMENT THREE

Time

Time governs when movement happens and how long it lasts. Tempo, rhythm, accent, and stillness give a dance its pulse. Choreography lives in dialogue with music — whether classical Thai melody or contemporary score — matching, contrasting, or playing against the beat.

TEMPO

RHYTHM

ACCENT

STILLNESS

IV

ELEMENT FOUR

Energy

Energy — or dynamics — is the quality of movement: its force, weight, and flow. The same gesture can be sharp or sustained, heavy or light, bound or free. Energy is what gives a dance its emotional colour and reveals the intention behind every motion.

FORCE

WEIGHT

FLOW

QUALITY

Form & Structure

Elements become a dance through structure. Choreographers organize movement into phrases and sections, using time-honoured devices to give a work unity and momentum.

01

Motif & Development

A signature movement, then varied and elaborated.

02

Repetition

Recurrence that builds emphasis and familiarity.

03

Contrast

Opposition of speed, level, or energy to hold interest.

04

Climax & Resolution

A shaped arc that rises to a peak and settles.

FROM IDEA TO STAGE

The Choreographic Process

Creation moves through clear stages — from a first idea to a finished performance shaped for its audience.

1

Concept

Define the theme, purpose, and occasion of the work.

2

Explore

Improvise and generate movement material.

3

Compose

Select, sequence, and set movement to music and space.

4

Refine

Rehearse, edit, and polish for clarity.

5

Present

Perform and reflect for the audience and context.

"To choreograph is to think in movement —
to give form, in space and time, to what the body has to say."

BODY · SPACE · TIME · ENERGY