

Claymont Society for Continuous Education

Exploring Gurdjieff's Sacred Dances through the Lens of Performance

May 16-19, 2024



Observing the movements practice in the Dalcroze studio: Gurdjieff, Thomas de Hartmann (barely visible on the piano), Alexandre de Salzmann, Madame Ouspensky, Mrs. Nicoll and Maurice Nicoll, August 1922.

100 years ago, public demonstrations of Gurdjieff's Movements were given at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, at Carnegie Hall in New York, and also in theaters in Boston and Chicago. These were gala events on a large scale: the performances lasted as long as 4 hours, and included not only the dances, but also instrumental music and "religious phenomena." The dancers had worked for many years in preparation, and the quality of their execution was remarkable. In Paris champagne flowed from the fountains outside, along with colored lights. Trays of baklava were offered to the guests in the foyer. The press was invited, and from the newspaper reviews we read that the audience was enthralled.

Today, performances of the Movements are very rare. Of those that are given, almost none are shown to the general public: more often than not they are presented only to those already connected with Gurdjieff's teaching.

And yet, in J. G. Bennett's book, The Sevenfold Work, manifestation is considered the fourth line of Work, in which the performer becomes a channel for something higher to enter an event. The participation of the audience is implied and essential. An action can then occur which would otherwise be unavailable.

The primary activity for the seminar will be the presentation of a number of Movements for performance. This will enable us to also address the following issues:

- Three Lines of Work as they relate to the Enneagram and the process of preparing and performing the Movements.
- The role of the audience in contributing to an event: how to move from passive observer to active participant in the search for meaning.
- The interrelationship between the Movements and the Movements music.
- Utilizing improvisation as a tool for understanding the underlying structure of the Movements.
- Talks/discussions on a wide variety of subjects, including the history of the Movements, the intelligence of the moving center, and much more.

In this seminar, three diverse but kindred spirits – Deborah Rose Longo, a well-known teacher of the Movements; Elan Sicroff, a pianist who has worked extensively with the music of Thomas de Hartmann; and Anthony Blake, writer and student of J.G. Bennett - who was a leading exponent of Gurdjieff's ideas - will come together to ask questions, experiment and encourage a fresh exploration of many different aspects of the Movements.



Copying Positions in Canon. Lily Galumian (front) gives the positions to be copied by the group. 1922

The seminar will be held in the historic Claymont Mansion and begins with dinner at 6:30 pm on Thursday May 16, and end after lunch on Sunday May 19.

The cost of the event including meals and lodging is \$495. (\$450 if registered and paid before April 1.)

For participants not staying in the Mansion, the cost is \$340 (\$325 if registered and paid before April 1.)

For more information and to register please contact, the registrar, Amy Silver
Claymontgathering@hotmail.com

For more information about the Claymont Society go to www.society.claymont.org