



The Benesh Movement Notation score

In many respects a Benesh Movement Notation score resembles a music score: The notation is written on a five-line staff that is read from left to right and from the top of the page to the bottom.

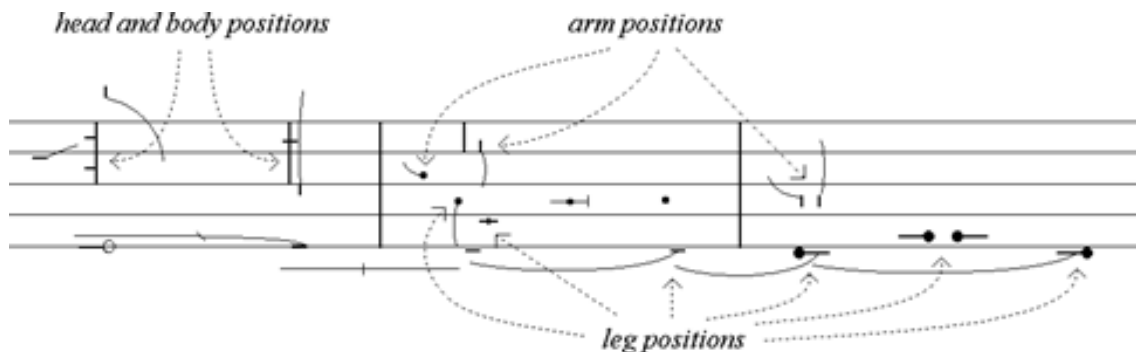
Giselle Act I, Peasant Pas de Deux, Male Variation

Choreography: Coralli / Perrot / Petipa

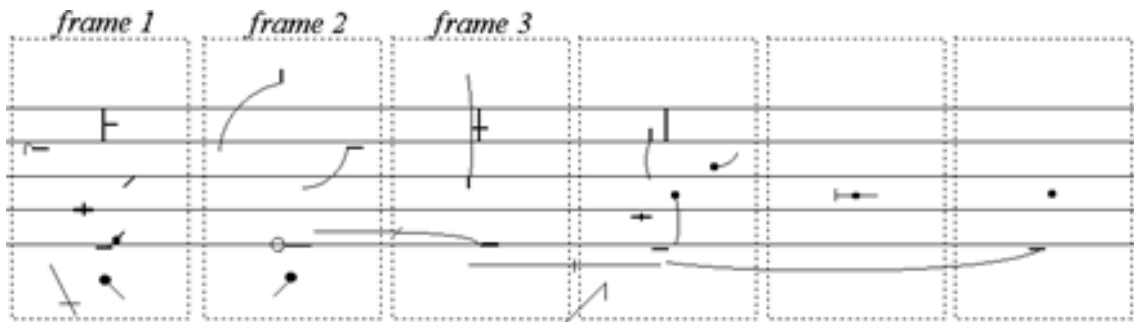
Allegretto

The image displays a Benesh Movement Notation score for the Male Variation of the Peasant Pas de Deux from Act I of Giselle. The score is written on seven five-line staves. The first staff begins with a '2' in a box, indicating a second ending. The notation consists of various symbols: dots for feet, lines for arms, and curved lines for legs, all connected by horizontal lines to show movement paths. There are also vertical lines and arrows indicating specific actions or directions. A '3' in a box appears on the fourth staff, indicating a third ending. The score is marked 'Allegretto' at the beginning.

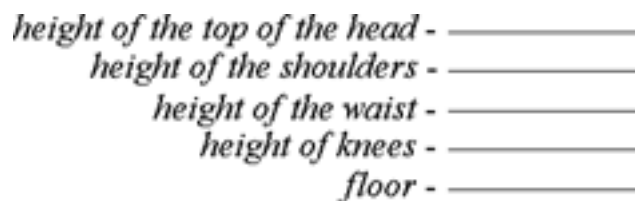
All information about body and limb positions is shown within the five-line stave:



Positions are recorded in a series of frames, similar to the build-up of a cartoon film:



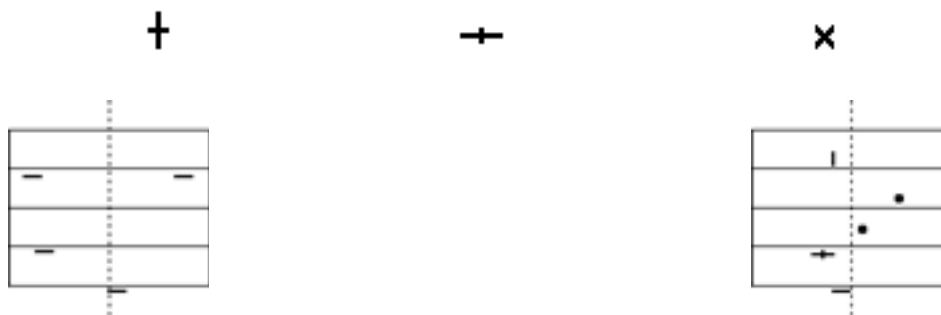
The stave lines coincide with visually distinctive features of the body:



The positions of the hands and feet, relative to the body, are represented by the three basic signs:



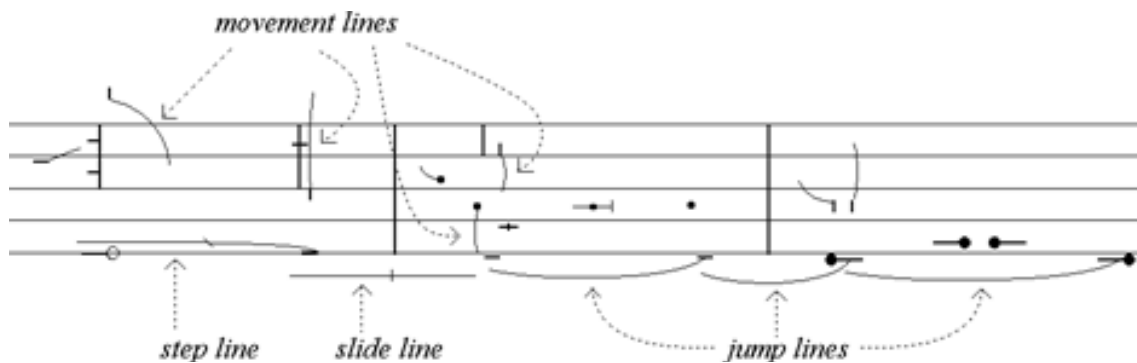
From these are derived a further three signs for plotting the positions of bent elbows and knees:



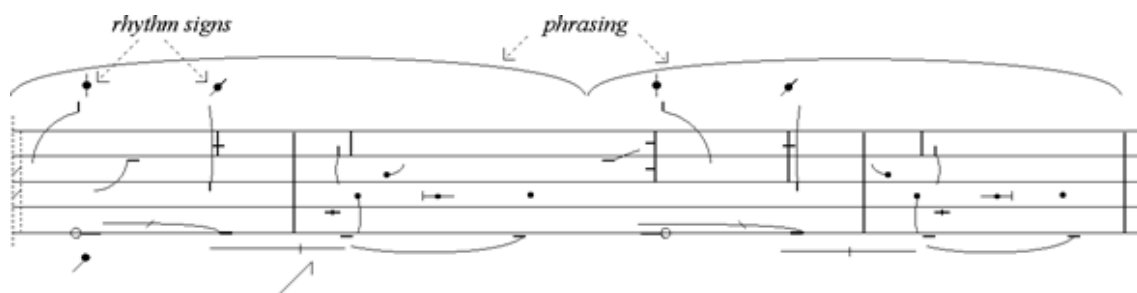
Standing on the right foot, left foot 'level' at just below knee height, hands 'level' at just below shoulder height. (The positions of the extremities are plotted in relation to the centre line of the frame, which is not normally shown but is included here to aid reading)

Standing on the left foot, left knee bent. Right foot behind at mid-thigh height. Left hand in front at just above shoulder height. Left hand behind at just above waist height. (Arabesque en fondu)

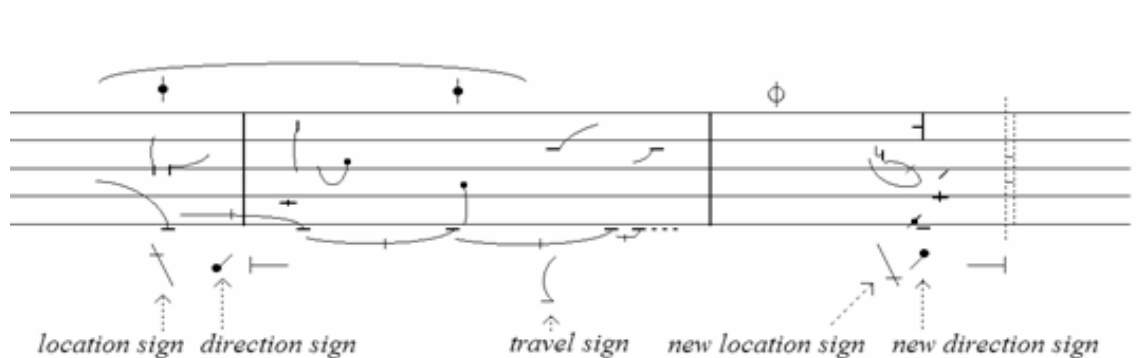
Transitions from position to position are shown by movement lines which describe the paths taken by the limbs from one position to the next, and by locomotion lines, which link the positions of the feet, showing whether the performer steps, jumps or slides from one position to the next.



Rhythm, phrasing and movement quality are shown above the stave:

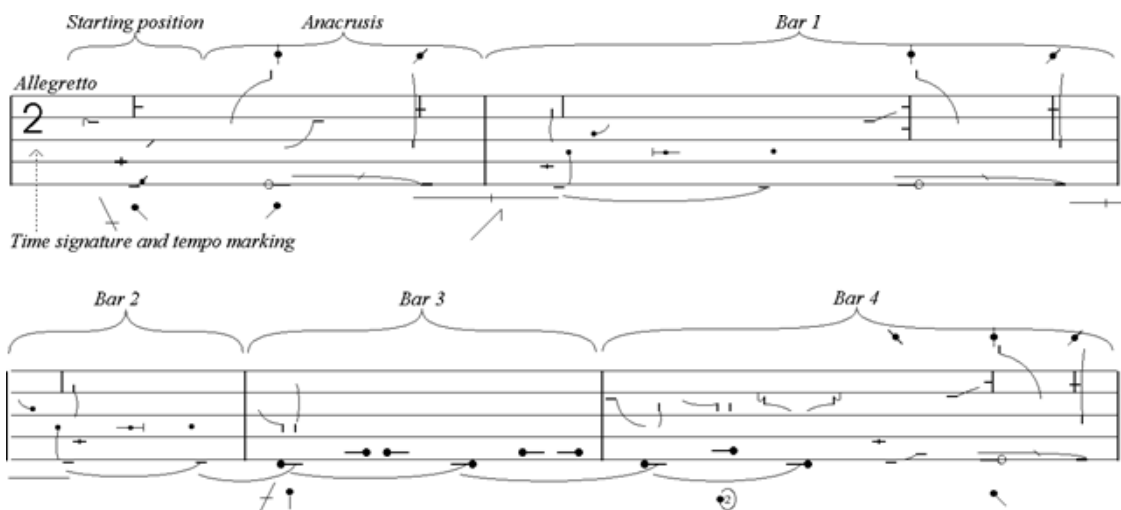


Direction faced, location within the working space, and paths of travel are shown below the stave:



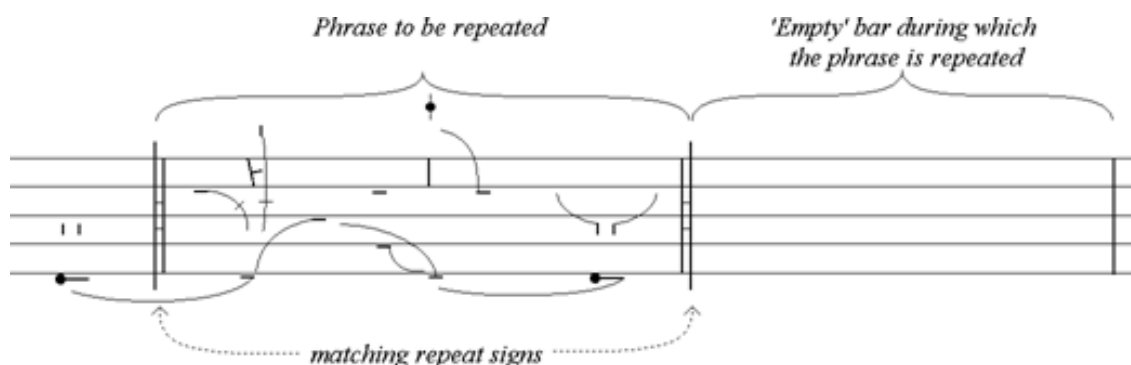
The direction sign  can be read as an arrow  that 'points' to the direction faced

Where movement is accompanied by music, the notation is divided into musical bars by vertical dividing lines, corresponding directly with the bar lines in the music score.



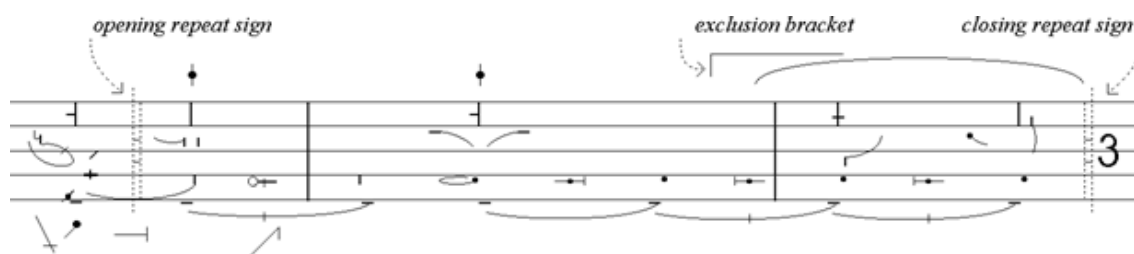
As in a music score, the movement score has a 'time signature', which shows how many beats there are in each bar and a 'tempo marking', which gives an indication of the speed of the movement. Where applicable, the language used for the tempo marking is the same as in the music score, providing a cross-reference point.

Repeated phrases are enclosed within matching repeat signs, but unlike a music score, the bars during which a phrase is repeated are shown in the movement score by a corresponding number of 'empty' bars.



The small horizontal dashes written within the vertical repeat signs indicate the manner in which the phrase is to be repeated, in this case, exactly the same again.

The repeat signs shown above coincide with the bar lines. Those that do not are drawn using dotted vertical lines. A numeral immediately following a closing repeat sign indicates multiple repeats.



The phrase written between the dotted repeat signs is executed three further times. The exclusion bracket embraces frames of movement that are excluded the last time the phrase is repeated.

Scores recording the actions of a single person or a number of people all executing the same movement are recorded on a single stave.

Scores recording the related actions of a number of people executing different movement are recorded on the required number of linked staves. Simultaneous movements are recorded on vertically aligned frames and the barlines extend down from the top stave to lowest stave, linking the set.

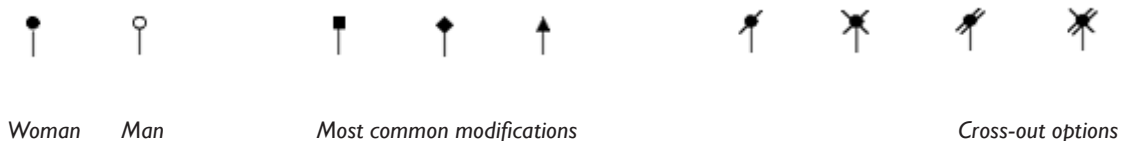
Soirée Musicale

Choreography © Kenneth MacMillan, London 1988. Notated by Julie Lincoln

Allegro brillante
Intro

The image displays a musical score for the 'Allegro brillante Intro' section, featuring choreography notation. The score is organized into two systems of staves. The first system includes staves for two 6¹ instruments and two 12¹⁻⁶ instruments. The second system includes staves for two 6¹ instruments, one 12¹⁻⁶ instrument, and one 12⁷⁻¹² instrument. The music is marked with 'Allegro brillante' and 'Intro'. The score is divided into measures, with some measures grouped by brackets and labeled with numbers in boxes: '1-8', '5', and '1-12'. The choreography notation consists of various symbols, including arrows, circles, and lines, indicating movements and poses. A legend at the bottom right explains some of the symbols: a box with '0' represents 'Music score 1 beat rest. (Intro)', a circle with a dot represents 'Ask for 3 beats', and a box with '12' represents a specific instruction. At the bottom center, there is a diagram showing a sequence of foot positions on a stage, with arrows indicating the direction of movement.

Each staff is labelled to show who is executing the movement recorded on it. Modifications of the direction sign are used to identify different individuals or groups of people. Women are normally represented by filled in identification heads and men by open ones, to which a variety of cross-outs may be added as required.

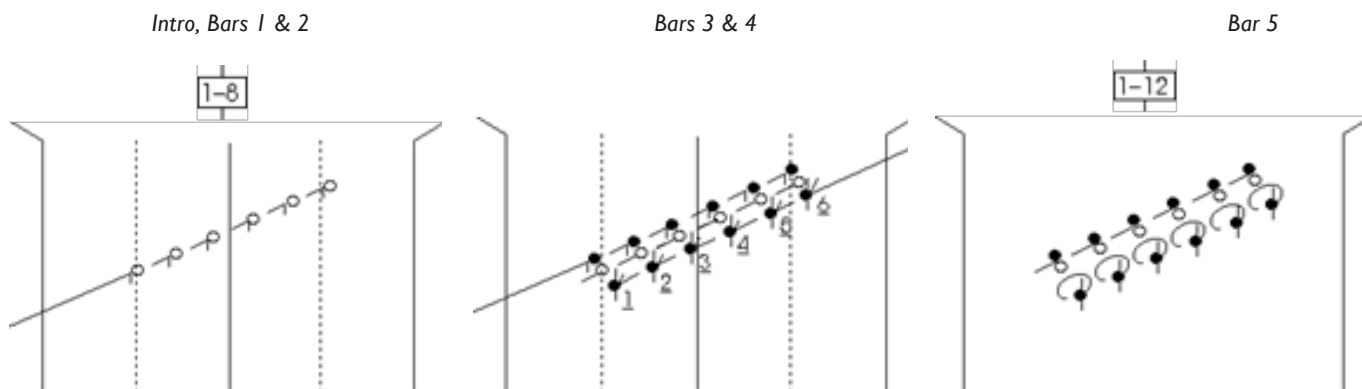


Where appropriate, brackets in the left-hand margin link the staves of people who are working together.

In multi-person scores, the relationships between people, their locations and travel paths are summarised between the top two staves of a linked set providing an overview of the floor plan. Where necessary the relevant information may be restated, or more detailed instructions given, beneath the relevant staff.

'Stage plans' which give an overview of the working space, may be used in addition to the below- stage summary of the floor plan, and to show the placement of furniture and other structures within the working space. Written in sequence, separately from the score, they can serve as a useful reminder of the floor patterns.

Sequence of stage plans corresponding to the Soirée Musicale excerpt above



Stage plans show the working space from the performers' point of view. The open side of the box represents the front (towards the audience).

