

# The Dance Creation for Rhythmic Gymnastics in the International Competition Level<sup>1</sup>

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this research is to develop a dance routine for rhythmic gymnastics at the international competition level. There were fourteen people in the sample group: eight of them are dance specialists, while the other six are experienced national gymnasts. The tools used for primary research were documents, textbooks and personal interviews, and the researcher analyzed every alternative to create her performance. The results showed that all eight components of dancing (story design, choreography, choosing the cast of performers, music composition, costume design, prop design, performance area, and lighting design) are the foundation that helped the researcher develop a whole picture in order to choreograph the dance to its full potential. She was able to combine all of these things to create an appropriate routine in line with the rules of international gymnastics. Other than the collected results and data, the researcher was able to match up all of the different areas of awareness in gymnastics: awareness of rules, standard dance as art movements, performance time, creativity in dance as art movements, variety of dance as art movements. Combining these five awarenesses with the eight components mentioned above, the researcher was able to choreograph

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more dance varieties to be developed into new performances in the future.

**Keywords:** Dance; Rhythmic gymnastics; Choreography; Competition

## **Introduction**

The development of rhythmic gymnastics has been of great interest to all audiences, thus routine phenomena has become a key factor for each area of the sport. Therefore, there are – and never will be – a halt to the development of choreography. The Federation of International Gymnastics categorizes rhythmic gymnastics as one of the seven gymnastics types, and it has been placed within two distinct categories: competing as an individual and competing as a team. The primary focus of this study is on the individual competitions, which are opened for people from all areas of life. Four main types of props are used in these competitions: a ball, clubs, ribbons and hoops, and these props must be incorporated into three groups of movement – jumps, balances, and turns. The researcher selected nine movements from each group to perform alongside musical accompaniment, with each performance lasting approximately 1.50 to 1.30 minutes.

Rhythmic gymnastics shares many qualities with dance as an art form, the primary similarities being the complex choreography, the music used during the performance, and the costumes worn by the performers. This type of gymnastics was first practiced in order to place emphasis and focus on the skills necessary for the body to be able to perform. Thus, development of new techniques and maneuvers continues to this day as the sport evolves and grows more complex with each passing year. In the present era of competition, the Federation of International Gymnastics adjusted its rules in 2013, with further developments to be considered and added by 2016. The adjustments made center around synchronization between the routine and its musical accompaniment, or in layman's terms, how well these two items fit together. Since this synchronization plays a vital role throughout the entire performance, it is easy to overlook that it is often part of the true inspiration and purpose behind the performer's

routine.

As the researcher mentioned above, the development of new techniques in rhythmic gymnastics has become crucial for the continuation of the gymnastic industry. Due to this, the researcher has been frequently inspired to incorporate facets of dancing as art into the sport; in addition, the researcher has also been inspired to review the rules in the hopes of adding new ideas or subtracting unnecessary ideas to provide a path for further developments in the future. The researcher, then, will present these new ideas surrounding creative choreography, and these new ideas will be in tune with the current set of rules proscribed for rhythmic gymnastics. Following this, she will give solid proof for her theories by detailing her experiments with each creation and path at national rhythmic gymnastics competitions to further extend the possibility of their eventual inclusion in the future.

### **Objectives**

1. To create a concept that blends dance as art and rhythmic gymnastics for international competitions.
2. To develop and implement innovative ideas for the aforementioned concept that can be used in international competitions.

### **Research Methodology**

This study, aptly named the Dance Creation for Rhythmic Gymnastics in International Competition, combines both creative and qualitative research conducted via the following steps:

1. Steps of the Research
  - 1.1 Utilize both primary and secondary resources at the national and international level for source material.
  - 1.2 Interview professors of dance, dance as art specialists, and rhythmic gymnasts.
  - 1.3 Attend and study dance as art performances.
  - 1.4 Analyze the information from 1.1 – 1.3 in order to incorporate it into a functional and logical dissertation.

1.5 Experiment with forms of dance as art choreography based on the seven movements of dancing.

1.6 Employ an art as dance specialist to examine and correct any mistakes in the choreography.

1.7 Organize the show in order to explain its purpose and collect comments and advice.

## 2. Equipment for the Study

2.1 Primary and secondary source documents, textbooks, interviews and dance as art specialists.

2.2 Electronic devices including computers, a voice recorder, and numerous videos.

## 3. How Information was Gathered

3.1 The researcher combed through source documents and textbooks in order to find relative information.

3.2 The researcher gathered each article of information via interviews with professors, dance as art specialists, and rhythmic gymnasts.

## 4. Steps of Analyzing the Information

4.1 The researcher analyzed the information from each source document and field observation.

4.2 After Section 4.1 was completed, the researcher mapped out the routines and included each component found in dance as art: the choreography, the music, the gymnast, the costume, and the prop.

## **The Result of the Study**

The information of this dissertation can be split and summarized into two distinct parts: an analysis of the routine created for rhythmic gymnastics and components borrowed from dance as art; and, the various ideas of dance as art creation, which are categorized as follows:

1. All international gymnastics competitions require any performance to include the following eight components borrowed from dance as art:

### 1.1 The story design

Performance stories are not essential at the start of a show, but as the routine goes on story is considered key to the success of any performance. This is due to the fact that the story gives the audience direction and makes the show easier to follow; in addition, it makes the routine easier to choreograph. Furthermore, story adds a unique perspective to each show, and it can also be used to include the culture and lifestyle of the gymnast.

1.2 Choreography – The researcher categorized the choreography into two parts:

#### 1.2.1 Imaginative Choreography

An imaginative choreography must come solely from the choreographer's ideas without the presence of any external stimuli ; if, however, there are any external stimuli, they must come from the choreographer's surroundings. The researcher studied and analyzed this area thoroughly by observing the performers, and she was also aware of the importance of combining imagination with the choreography at all times. She also experimented with the choreography using her own ideas and stimuli.

#### 1.2.2 Performance Skills

The researcher combined movement motivation (balance, turns, and jumps) with the seven traditional movements of in order to analyze which direction or movement the gymnast should take to get from one point to the next point.

### 1.3 Casting the Performers

The researcher divided the casting sessions into two types: those performers who already possessed experience with international gymnastics competitions did not receive prepared routines; other performers were selected after routines had been prepared to fit them.

### 1.4 Music Design

Music was chosen for inclusion in the study only if it followed the guidelines and rules set down by the Federation of International Gymnastics. The performers were allowed to dance to a piece

of music that included words, and only one prop was allowed with any performance. The researcher selected the prop via the surrounding forms of stimulation.

### 1.5 Costume Design

The researcher designed each costume according to the regulations imposed by the Federation of International Gymnastics: the leotards were required to fit the performer's bodies snugly, and the fabric of each leotard must provide the performer with ease of movement and flexibility. The researcher designed the costumes by selecting from her influences and inspiration, making sure that each was appropriate for its performance.

### 1.6 Prop Design

The prop were designed based on what is allowed for use by the Federation of International Gymnastics.

### 1.7 The Performance area

The floor design did not follow the regulations set forth by the Federation of International Gymnastics, and instead was influenced by the art and site-specific theory. The performer ensured, however, that the floor was in sync with the performance so as not to be distracting.

### 1.8 Lighting Design

The researcher designed the lighting scheme to be in sync with the performance, thereby enhancing the quality of the routine and creating new perspectives that can now be used in future rhythmic gymnastics routines.

2. Different areas of awareness and ideas were used and expressed when the researcher created her routine for dance as art for international gymnastics competitions.

### 2.1 Awareness of Rules

Since this study strived to create a routine that was both practical and usable on the world stage, every aspect was designed and implemented with the full awareness of all rules and regulations.

### 2.2 Awareness of Standard Dance as Art Movements

Every routine included in the study was choreographed

with the awareness of standard dance as art movements: jumps, turns, and balance. Therefore, the continuity of each routine with traditional movements was assured and guaranteed.

### 2.3 Awareness of Performance Time

The rhythm of the accompanying music is one of the most vital aspects of choreography, as it is a key method by which a performer can capture the heart of the audience. The performer must seek to create various emotions within the audience during the routine, and thus selecting the right moment for the music to begin, build, and end is necessary to capture the highest quality of any routine. In addition, time awareness can also inspire when a movement happens into the routine and when the prop should be used.

### 2.4 Awareness of Creativity in Dance as Art Movements

The researcher prioritized creativity as one of the most important aspects of this study, as it has often been cited as the core for developing any performance. Creativity must be applied to the routine, the sound, and the prop in equal measure or the performer will risk losing the audience.

### 2.5 Awareness of Variety in Dance as Art Movements

The researcher used several types of dancing: improvisation (having the performers dance according to the researcher's ideas as they occurred), experimental dance, and post-modern dance.

## First Choreography for the Performance



**Figure 1:** First and Second Main Poses (The Researcher)

## Second Choreography for the Performance



**Figure 2:** The Connection between Shifting the First Main Pose to the Second (The Researcher)

Figure 1 demonstrates the prompt continuity required between the first and second main poses. Figure 2 demonstrates the process of creating a seamless and beautiful dance move when transitioning from the first main pose to the second main pose.

## Third Choreography for the Performance

Using Personal Stimuli to Create Dance Moves



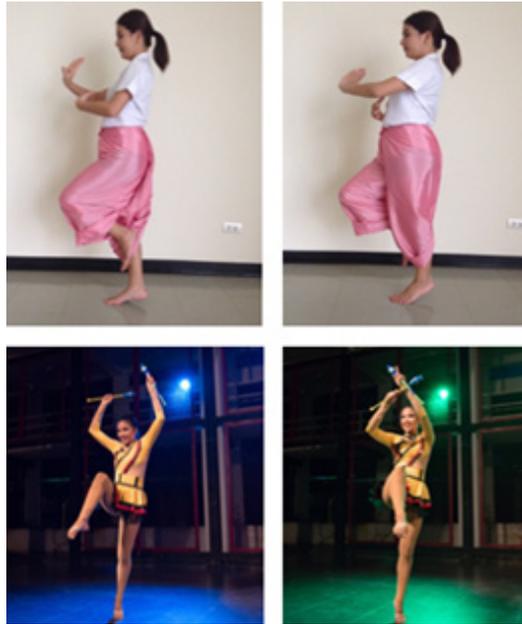
**Figure 3:** Creating Dance Moves with the Ball via Ideational Stimuli (The Researcher)

Improvising a Cat's Sleeping, Waking, and Growling Postures into the Dance Routine via the Ball



**Figure 4:** An adaptation of a cat playing with a ball movement to dancing routines (The Researcher)

In the four figures, the performer bent her body downwards and placed her hands in front of her. In addition, she also bent her knee and stretched her right leg in order to achieve the correct posture. The researcher was inspired to incorporate this movement into the routine after seeing a cat playing with a ball and moving around the ball as it rolled from side to side.



**Figure 5:** Creating Dance Moves with the Clubs via Auditory Stimuli (The Researcher)

The researcher was inspired to use clubs with traditional North-eastern Thai music; she also improvised Serng dance moves (traditional Northeastern Thai dance moves) into the performance.



**Figure 6:** Creating Dance Moves with the Ribbon via Visual Stimuli (The Researcher)



**Figure 6:** Continued

The inspiration to incorporate the ribbon into the dance moves came from lines drawn in a painting by Professor Dr.Tawun Dudchane.



**Figure 7:** Creating Dance Moves with the Hoop via Kinesthetic Stimuli (The Researcher)

The researcher observed a matador and was captivated by his ferocious and powerful movements, specifically the way the matador

walked and swung the fabric of his cape. The researcher used the hoop as a substitute for the fiery fabric of the cape, and when the performer went through the routine she did so in a graceful manner. Later on, the researcher imagined that there was a bull in the dance studio, and the performer adjusted to this imagining as if the eyes of the bull were on her and she was looking out for the bull. She did not act distracted and paused throughout the routine as if she were watching the bull. As a last bit of realism, the performer put all of her emotion into the act and made as if she were luring the bull in order to make the dance more rigid. These actions allowed the performer to enhance the mood of the audience, and they felt increased anticipation for what would happen next in the routine.

#### **Fourth Choreography for the Performance** Freestyle and Freeform Choreography



**Figure 8:** Choreography and Prop Design (The Researcher)

The researcher experimented with the main routines of gymnastics routines through the use of reforming prop. The prop was as flexible as the performer's body to ensure comfortable use.



**Figure 9:** Choreography with the Costume Fabric (The Researcher)

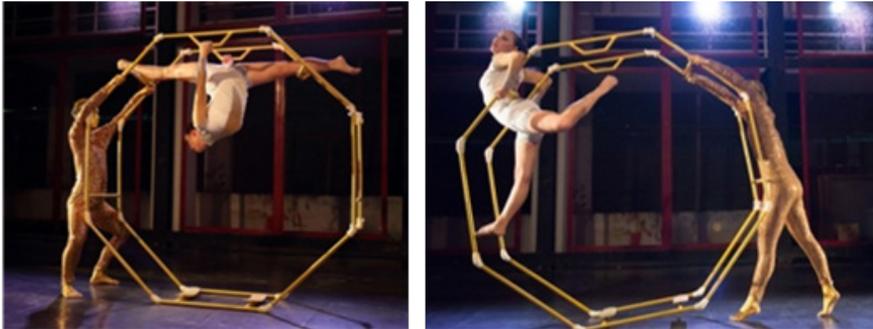
The researcher selected a beautiful fabric of flowing material, yet one that could still capture the ferocity of movement displaying the great energy of the performer. The performers were able to swing the fabric around while performing their routines on the dance floor.



**Figure 10:** Choreographing the Routine with a Fishnet (The Researcher)

The researcher was inspired to incorporate real equipment – in this case, a fishnet – used in everyday life into the dance. The performer had to imagine herself as a fish getting stuck within a fishnet and then

struggling to escape once caught. The researcher brought in two more performers to hold the fishnet down to simulate realism. According to the Federation of International Gymnastics, each performer on the team must be allowed to stand out, but the researcher selected only one performer to lead that specific routine. The rest of the performers were there to add variety to the show.



**Figure 11:** Choreographing the Routine with an Octagonal Prop (The Researcher)

Normally, gymnastics prop are small and fit the performers' hands perfectly, but the researcher was inspired by an acrobatic performance to use prop bigger than the performer. The researcher also adapted some of the acrobatic movements into the dance to create more variety.

## **Results/Conclusion**

### **Advice on the Study**

1. The choreography in this research was created according to the Federation International Gymnastics, which can be adapted for the international stage.

2. The researcher received evaluations for The Dance Creation for Rhythmic Gymnastics at the International Competition Level from a survey conducted in the form of multiple choice questions as well as a comment box. The audience consisted of dance professors, gymnastics

judges, gymnastics coaches, national gymnasts, and everyday people. The survey indicated that those surveyed agreed that the incorporation of props with the dance made for an impressive display. Gymnastics judges and coaches both agreed that using Thai traditional dance techniques benefited the technical dancing routines that were required for the competition. In terms of the national gymnasts' perspective, they admired the choreography and were willing to try the routines in their gymnastic competitions.

### **Recommendations**

By studying “The Dance Creation for Rhythmic Gymnastics in the International Competition Level”, the researcher has developed two recommendations for a future study, which are as follow :

1. The researcher would like to use this study in the future to create more creative movements and routines for groups competing at the international level.
2. The researcher would like to inspire others to incorporate other fields of arts into their research to create new and unique performances in the future

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