

P I L
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"RULES @ PLAY"

PILOBOLUS DANCE THEATRE
2021-22 STUDY GUIDE



Photo credit: John Kane

RULES@PLAY: HOW WE PUT THIS PERFORMANCE TOGETHER

For Pilobolus, the idea of “rules” was a jumping off point in creating a theme, just like in a book, as a means of tying a group of dances together to create a performance, in this case, the one you are about to see.

So, let's start at the beginning. We're pretty sure you know what the word “play means” but what exactly are rules?

According to Merriam Webster, rules are a prescribed guide for conduct or action; an accepted procedure, custom, or habit.

Closer to “home,” for example, in order to get to school on time, there might be a rule about when your alarm should be set so you're not late. There are rules around homework; if you don't do it, your grade may be affected. There are also situations when rules may be bent or stretched. And therein lies the “ah ha” moment; for Pilobolus, creating rules that may appear to constrain an idea, became the perfect challenge for their collective creativity and the overarching theme for this performance.

Throughout life we all encounter rules, and we usually view them negatively. Rules @ Play explores how rules actually present opportunities in order to solve problems and overcome challenges.

- Pilobolus

Here's the rule they gave themselves: **create a series of dances where a rule is set forth, which may constrain some element of their art form, but ultimately, results in a piece that is both fun and playful.** And then, just for good measure, they added one more rule: **they must connect with you, the audience.** Often, when you come to the theatre for a performance, the performers are on the stage, and you sit facing them.

In Rules @ Play, the company bent and stretched this rule, by not only interacting with you, the audience, but also presenting an opportunity, or two, to collaborate with them.

Now, sit back, and read about the dances, and the rules upon which they were formed, in Pilobolus' Rules @ Play.

Enjoy!

RULES@PLAY: MEET THE DANCES

If you haven't read about how *Rules @ Play* came to be, you might want to go back and do so; that article explains how *Pilobolus* landed on the theme for this performance and the "rule" behind each dance.

Rules @ Play ends with a full company Q&A.
Full Show running time:
48 - 55 minutes

Walklyndon, the oldest *Pilobolus* piece currently performed, showcases the challenge the original company members faced when they were forced to stick to an unusual rule: **Make a dance without dancers.** Also, make note that this is the only piece without any music or sound; might that have been another rule? Running time 12 minutes.



The Transformation (2007) is an excerpt from a larger piece, *Shadowland*, which is currently touring all over the world. In this piece, *Pilobolus* had a rule imposed on them by someone other than themselves, forcing them to reach beyond their normal ways of doing things, resulting in magical discoveries. The rule for this piece: **Make a dance in Shadow.** Running time 10 minutes



Pseudopodia (1973) is introduced by starting with an onstage experiment which calls for audience volunteers to collaborate, improvise, and surmount a self-imposed rule; the same one that was applied in the creation of this piece:

Make a dance without using your feet on the floor.

Running time 17 minutes.

All Is Not Lost (2011), the last piece in this performance, is a collaboration with the rock band "OK Go." The rule: **Make a piece that "appears to" break the rule of gravity.** Figuring out how to make it "look like" this rule was broken, resulted in creative solutions that enhanced this fast-paced, tech-heavy piece, helping to create what is now a *Pilobolus* fan favorite.* Running time 12 minutes.

RULES@PLAY: THE PILOBOLUS DICTIONARY

Here are some words you might hear at the performance and those that are part of the company's toolbox when they make a dance:

Collaboration (noun): one of the foundations of the way in which Pilobolus works, by working together...in tightly knit groups/teamwork.

Improvisation (noun): often the manner in which Pilobolus creates a dance: by trying things out and/or inventing new movement; the art of creating something without advance preparation.

Partnering or **Weight Sharing** (verbs): in Pilobolus, the physical process of connecting one or more dancers together by taking and receiving weight. In doing this, new shapes are created which may or may not move as a single unit.

Pilobolize/Pilobolizing: (verb): to make something the way Pilobolus would.

Pilobolean (adj.): to act or be like a Pilobolus dancer/company member.

Piloboli (noun): more than one Pilobolus dancer/company member.

