

THE LABAN
ART OF MOVEMENT
GUILD

News Sheet

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THE LABAN ART OF MOVEMENT GUILD.

EDITORIAL

It will be a very brief editorial this time, for there is very little to say. We hope that members will agree that our second News Sheet is a worth-while publication for circulation amongst Guild members. It contains interesting material which is not suitable for inclusion in "Movement," since it is of a rather intimate and even specialised nature.

The Committee hopes that each Guild publication will stimulate a stream of contributions, but Guild members seem to be shy. They generally let us have articles or news only if they are asked personally. There must be many people who, in a small or large way, have activities or experiences to report. Do not hesitate to send your news to Nancy Broome, I. M. Marsh College of Physical Education, Barkhill Road, Liverpool, 17. Doris Ransome is anxious to receive subscriptions any day now. Her address is 54, Banner Cross Road, Sheffield, 11.

Our apologies are due to eleven members whose names begin with "W." By an unfortunate mishap they were omitted from the end of the alphabetical list in the last News Sheet, so they are given a special list at the end of this number.

L.A.M.G. CONFERENCE

On Thursday morning, April 1st, at 10.0 a.m. the first Guild Conference began at Buckingham Gate School. Mr. Milligan found us this convenient and central spot and we are most grateful to him for his help. It was intentionally a small and informal gathering. This decision to start on a small scale (for we are still a young association) proved to be a wise one. We were fortunate in having Adda Heynssen to play for us all the time.

The first practical session each morning was taken by Miss Auerbach.. She taught five short contrasting studies, and when on the last morning we danced them all straight through, we realised what a lot she had given us in a short time. The first day she took a strong, sustained study followed by a calm, light one; the second day a quick, strong one and then a quick, light one, and on the last morning a formal study. We all appreciated the clear way in which Miss Auerbach presented each sequence and then helped us to understand the inner mood.

Joyce Turner talked to us for the last half of Thursday morning about her work with mentally unbalanced people. She gave us a vivid picture of her problems by illustrating her particular approach with different patients, and emphasised the fact that most of the distressing cases she had to deal with could have been avoided if the individuals

had been helped during their school days to develop harmoniously. At the end the audience was eager with tentative suggestions as to how to approach some of the most resistant cases. As someone remarked afterwards, it helped us to see our own small problems in perspective and we all felt a great admiration for the way in which Joyce tackles such a truly harrowing task. It is comforting to think that she only does it for sixteen hours during the week and that in between whiles she gets refreshment in teaching healthy children.

Thursday afternoon was given up to children's work. Joan Heath and Joan Carrington each brought along a group. It really was a delightful session. All the children seemed quite undisturbed by the audience and showed a remarkably rich movement imagination. Their energy was boundless and their complete spontaneity and adaptability when dancing together was most refreshing. It was very noticeable that their training produced a confident and unfussy manner in both groups. Nothing special had been arranged and there was no anxiety or tension.

To round off the afternoon Mrs. Loeb offered to experiment with colour and movement. She was, perhaps, not expecting to do it at such short notice, but she courageously took children and adults together on lines which she had tried before with children only. This session contributed considerably to the success of the conference, as it led to most lively discussions, which continued in the changing rooms, down the road, and were finally rounded off next morning. Mrs. Loeb may have felt a little disappointed at the time because she did not succeed in bringing out what she hoped. The child's conception of colour is relatively simple compared with the adult, who thinks more in terms of variations and shades of colour. This, combined with the fact that the concrete and the abstract were somewhat perplexingly intermingled, led to some confusion of feeling. At the end the children did it without the adults, and with their simple approach they obviously achieved more.

On Friday morning, after Miss Auerbach's class, the Birmingham Group showed some of their work. K. Garvey explained that when Miss Soelberg left Birmingham they found themselves without an expert advisor, so they had to carry on for themselves. At first it was agreed that one member should take the whole evening, but this was found to be rather too much strain. They then decided to divide the evening into three parts and arranged at the beginning of each term who should undertake each part for a certain number of weeks. Their total membership is about twenty, and they generally have about fifteen present each week. Only seven were able to come to London. They showed technical practices, movement studies and some interpretation of music. The last group-study they were still working on, so everyone joined in and K. Garvey taught it as far as they had gone. When it was all over Miss Ullman congratulated them on the sound lines on which they were working, and we all hoped that our appreciation made up a little for the anxieties and apprehensions they had expressed the night before. Many other small groups or dance circles should be inspired and encouraged by the Birmingham Group. They have achieved a great deal and show a real group spirit.

Friday afternoon was taken up with the Annual General Meeting of the Guild. Details of this will be reported by Miss Stevens, whose work as Secretary contributes so much to the success of all our activities. It was encouraging to see that about sixty people attended, and some who could not come to the whole conference managed to support us for that afternoon.

Mr. Laban in his presidential address gave an inspiring picture of the immense field of influence of the Art of Movement, especially on the lines of rehabilitation. Benedict Ellis told the meeting what he hoped to achieve as Editor of the Guild periodical "Movement." He outlined the policy and pleaded especially to members to make suggestions for contributions, so that we should cover the whole wide field of interests in which movement plays a fundamental part. He pointed out that a magazine of this type is not paid for by the people who buy it (members will receive a copy free); that is only a drop in the ocean. The financial success is dependent upon a healthy number of advertisements. This is where members will be able to help, by suggesting firms, organisations, etc., who might consider taking a space in "Movement." The response on this side is in turn dependent upon a large and varied list of contributors. People will not spend money on advertisements unless they are convinced that they will be read by a wide and representative public.

Some helpful suggestions were put forward by members at the meeting. It is hoped that everyone will feel a desire to help in every way to launch "Movement" successfully.

Saturday morning, after Miss Auerbach's class, Miss Bodmer rounded off the conference with a lively session. We danced together, meeting one another in every conceivable fashion, and then we joined in a group dance led by percussion instruments. As the crescendo of rhythm and movement gradually faded to a quiet stillness, we were suddenly revived again into a lively and spontaneous tarantella. We finished breathless but exhilarated.

THE ART OF MOVEMENT STUDIO

By Hettie Loman

To give a résumé on the work of the Art of Movement Studio since its opening in Manchester in January, 1946, is a task for a Hercules and not a poor lay-student like myself, struggling to acquire the vast knowledge and understanding of what the Art of Movement really means. Having taken upon myself this very difficult task, the movement of the mind must open wide the portals of the subconscious and pour forth the little knowledge it has retained.

Such a vast field of movement themes has been spread before us in the two short years, that to grasp the immensity of the whole and to realise that which you know is right makes it more difficult for me to begin.

The Studio opened in Manchester under the directorship of Lisa Ullmann, in collaboration with Mr. Laban and Sylvia Bodmer. They undertook to train students in the study of choreutics, eukinetics, space and body awareness, rhythmic and dynamic movement qualities, group work, basic efforts, industrial rhythm and dance notation.

The work was new and of our own times. Deep and profound was the philosophy underlying the whole work. It soon became evident that it was a training of students in all the arts. When I speak of the arts, I wish to make it quite clear what I mean by art. Art is not just confined to poetry, drama, dance, painting, music, architecture, etc., but to education, industry, health, psychology, handicrafts. I think I am entitled to include all these in the arts, for it has been proved that even in the making of a cake a work of art can be produced.

The first students to start at the Studio numbered four in all, but letters of inquiry were pouring in from all parts of the globe. As we all know, the works and teachings of Mr. Laban were already well known and made famous throughout Europe and America. Soon the Studio could account for members from Norway, Switzerland, Egypt, New Zealand, America, Palestine, and many from our own country, all with different aspirations—some for drama, some for stage dancing, others for education, and also industrial rhythm.

Here was a system with a difference. No studio could offer to its students the fundamentals of life as shown in movement as was being taught at the Art of Movement Studio. Here one did not come to learn how to execute a dance step in a pleasing manner, or show how the body could move through space in a perfected technique. Technique is, of course, very important to us all if we wish to attain the perfection in movement with which the body can be enriched, and which gives to the spectator, whether it be a classroom of children, a group of workers in a factory or an audience in a theatre, that experience and understanding which is essential. Surely it is not enough to have a body technique only. What of the mind? What of the understanding of man and his relationship and responsibility to his fellow-men? You will ask what this has to do with movement. If you mean by movement just the physical, then I say, nothing at all. But if you mean that which will render valuable assistance in breaking down the barriers which divide man from his inner creative powers and the knowledge of his own ability to re-create the rhythmic force within him, then I say, yes. This awakening and strengthening of the creative power is the most valuable part of our work done at the Studio, and emphasised again and again by Mr. Laban, Miss Ullmann and Miss Bodmer.

People interested in our work outside the Studio expressed a desire to see our accomplishments. The Manchester Dance Circle invited us to give a demonstration at Birchfield School, which we did after only one term's work. A broad outline of our work was presented, and the results were fair. This was the first of many performances which were to follow.

Our second performance was held at the Studio itself on February 15th, 1947. There were dance studies, a display of basic efforts, industrial rhythms, group work and solo dancing. This performance aroused the interest of those watching, and a lively discussion followed in which the group feeling of the students was remarked upon. Group work is one of the most important parts of the students' training; to be part of it and yet develop the individuality of the person within the group. This is not as simple as it sounds. There are groups in all walks of life—in factories, schools, theatres, homes, etc.—but are the individuals aware of each other within that group? It is a giving and taking; acquiring such space awareness that one is able to be so sensitive to those around and to move oneself harmoniously, both individually and collectively.

Invitations came to the Studio requesting Mr. Laban and Miss Ullmann to lecture and demonstrate their work at drama schools and theatres. Factories were already being enriched and helped by Mr. Laban's teachings. He showed them how to eliminate strain and fatigue by using the right efforts, to lessen tension and cramp by the proper relaxation.

Through the study of efforts Mr. Laban gave the actor an understanding of the collaboration of movement and speech, as well as how to produce expressive movements in his character studies.

In the schools the teachers were given an insight into the development and creative qualities of the child's mind; to enrich his imagination as well as his body with movement flow. The inhibitions and set habits of the teachers soon disappeared and a new approach and understanding developed between teacher and child.

With each new term the work developed, and Miss Bodmer and Miss Ullmann enriched the work with their knowledge. Students were given individual attention, new forms gave new experiences to both the performer and spectator.

The Studio's next performance was held at the Whitworth Theatre, Oxford Road (by the kind permission of Mr. Sladen Smith, of the Unnamed Theatre, who is a keen admirer of our work). This programme revealed a new form of scenic art which cannot be expressed as adequately through other forms of art, using a comprehensive study of movement in lyrical, comical and serious scenes. It consisted of dances with and without musical accompaniment, the latter using various percussion instruments. A dance study consisting of three group scenes—"Chaos, Fight and Liberation," with choreography by Lisa Ullmann and music by Eric Hudes—showed the depth and a profound understanding of life. "The Coming of Spring," by Sylvia Bodmer, was rich in the colour of sound accompaniments of voice and percussion instruments. Other items included Mr. Laban's "Dance Ritual," an exciting, dynamic piece of work. Lisa Ullmann give us the pleasure of seeing her dance for the first time. The control and beauty of movement expression proved her powers as a performer and an artist. Miss Bodmer also performed an interesting hand study. The Press reported the significance of the work and recognised the range of emotion of which the human body is capable through moving in significant patterns.

The Studio was again invited to give a programme of dances at the Whalley Range High School, for 600 children whose ages ranged from eight to sixteen. The children loved the work and proved to be the best audience the studio had ever had. They shrieked in excitement, laughed and clapped for more, as the little fawns romped and did acrobatics on the stage. Since then many of these children have become acquainted with the Art of Movement itself in the schools and have done some excellent studies. Great interest was taken in the educational possibilities of the work, and more teachers came to be trained.

Then came the most important event of all: Miss Ullmann's acceptance to take part in the International Dance Contest, held in Copenhagen, June 5th, 1947. It was a most important undertaking for a studio of only one year's standing. The programme was decided upon: a ballet, lasting twenty-five minutes, called the "Forest," or Cycle of Life. Plans were made involving extra work for staff and students. Costumes had to be made; funds were needed, as the whole of the Studio—staff, students and composers—had to be transported abroad. Appeals were sent out to all those interested in our work. The response was immense and the willingness to help overwhelming.

The choreography was done by Lisa Ullmann and Sylvia Bodmer, with music by Eric Hedes. It was a real work of the Art of Movement showing ". . . man, the worker and realist, felling a tree. He falls asleep and dreams that the hungry locusts invade the forest in their greedy search for food; then the shadows appear, arising from the dying tree; an owl in a magic dance calls the dark spirits of the forest. The nightmare turns into a rising dawn; spirits of the light awaken the forest with their flutes; dream flowers, surrounded by romping sprites, dance in the clearing and lead a joyous procession through the forest."

It was most interesting to meet the various groups from other countries and to exchange ideas with them.

The winning ballet, "La Cellule," by Jean Weidt and his group from France, was a dance drama, both powerful and gripping in its intensity. Man, condemned to death, reviews his tragic mistakes in the past, through to his eventual death. Ivor Cramer, second prize-winner from Sweden with his ballet "Message," revealed the fine dancer he was, and the Biblical theme based on the life of Christ was beautifully portrayed and danced. Maggie Grippenbergh from Finland, third prize-winner with her ballet "Mislead," presented the best instructed group of free dance. The ballet consisted of dramatic incidents within a welfare home. Boris Milec, fourth prize-winner, from Czechoslovakia, with his ballet "Jamais la Guerre" reminded one of Kurt Jooss' "Green Table." The Art of Movement Studio was awarded an honorary diploma for the most progressive work. Rolf de Maré, who adjudicated the competition, thanked all the participants after the evening's performance of winning ballets. The competition revealed the influence of Mr. Laban's work in most of the groups participating.

Rich with its recent experience the Studio returned to England, and a week later performed the "Forest" and many new items at the Bradford Civic Theatre on June 15th, 1947. Esmé Church, producer of this

theatre, had been collaborating with Mr. Laban in the development and training of actors for the Children's Theatre. Very fine work is still being done there.

Again, on July 5th, the Studio gave a recital at the Central Library Theatre, and the improvement of the group, technically and mentally, aroused the attention of all. Here I must add that not all the performers were training for the stage; some were teachers.

Mr. Laban and Miss Ullmann were then invited to Switzerland to teach and lecture at a course with Harald Kreutzburg, one of the most prominent dancers in Europe.

In October the Unnamed Society invited Miss Ullmann to do the choreography for "Midsummer Night's Dream." Students from the Studio did the fairy sequences, which lent an added attraction to the production.

With the growing influence of the Art of Movement in schools, children's classes were arranged at the Studio for those children wishing to further their experiences of body awareness and creative abilities. This gave the student-teacher the chance to put into practice some of the theories learned. Miss Ullmann guided and helped the faulting student, encouraged and advised all the while. It was a splendid opportunity for the trainee as well as the child.

Miss Ullmann was invited with Mr. Laban to lecture and give a demonstration of their work at a conference held in London by the Ling Physical Education Association on dance for the school-child. Many groups, as well as ours, took part in demonstrating their work and ideas. Mr. Laban lectured to a crowded audience, basing his talk on the historical development of dance, from the primitive movement of man, through the various stages in life, to the present day. One of the students assisted Mr. Laban by illustrating in movement part of his speech. The group from the Studio also followed his talk with a history of dance, an Egyptian study, dances with percussion and dances based on the new contemporary movements of our time. Children, under the leadership of Miss Stevens, headmistress of Manchester Upper Lloyd Street School, also took part in the demonstration. A very lively discussion followed—many questions were asked, many were puzzled, yet all recognised the vitality and dynamic quality of our work. It was an interesting event and should play an important part in the future of the work in schools.

After two years' work a stage group has been formed of former members of the Studio, to be called "The Young Dancers' Group," and they perform in schools and different towns, demonstrating the value of our work for children, seen from another angle. The first performance of "The Young Dancers' Group," standing under the artistic direction of Sylvia Bodmer, was held at the Studio. The art of speech, drama, dance, movement and mime in new forms displayed the experimental side of the work. There were sketches taken from life and dramatised, some comical, some lyrical and some serious; in excerpts from Kipling's "Just So Stories," in dances with percussion and individual solos. The

precision of the dancers, the new ideas of movement and sound, showed great possibilities for the future influence of the work in the theatre. Also on this programme a film was shown, illustrating the use of efforts in industry and dance, and for the first time we saw the strength of our work displayed by two visual arts—the stage and cinema.

Side by side with the teachers and dancers, choreographers are being developed and given free reign to experiment and work out their ideas with the group at the Studio.

The great objective of this work is to bring to man once again the awareness of the dance within him, and the re-creating of his own personal rhythms embedded into the common experience of group feeling. Miss Ullmann and Miss Bodmer are the pioneers in this important work here in Manchester, and the spread of knowledge since the studio opened will, I hope, bring forth others who will go out fresh from their training and carry on the teaching and performing of the Art of Movement in schools, in industry and on the stage.

CHILDREN'S REACTIONS TO A DANCE RECITAL

(Compiled from investigations by the Research Department of the Art of Movement Studio, Manchester, by Molly Burn)

One hundred and fifty children between the ages of 11 and 14 years attended a dance recital given by "The Young Dancers' Group." Afterwards they were asked to write an essay on what they thought of the recital. This every child did, and I had the privilege to analyse their essays. What impressed me most was the keenness of the children's psychological participation in the dance. In practically every essay there was at least once dance the child had particularly noticed and appreciated.

Generally speaking, the children were more observant and appreciative of the characteristic behaviour of the dancers than of sound, music, movement and facial expression, though by no means were they unappreciative of these details.

Forty per cent of the children liked the "Elephant Child" dance¹ the best; the other two "Just So Stories" (Kipling) were also very well liked. Here I quote excerpts from various essays which reveal their tastes: "I liked how the elephant got his trunk because there was speaking in it. I liked the magician one because the music was good and it was frightening." . . . "I liked the elephant because she spoke in a squeaky voice. I liked the bicoloured rock snake because he slithered about as though he was a snake." . . . "The dance I liked best was the elephant child because the baby elephant looked cheeky and

¹ "Just So Stories." Words: Kipling. Music by Cyril Scott.
How the Elephant's Child got his Trunk.
The Elephant's Child.
The Bicoloured Python.
The Crocodile.

acted cheeky. The bicoloured python rock snake gave you the feeling of a snake slithering its way round and round as if it were under a charm. The next I liked best was the crab.² The opening was very mystic. The crashes and booms in the background gave a good effect. The fish's dress was flowing like a fish's gill. The crab moved her claws gracefully."

This last response is excellent; it gives a vivid idea of the action of the child's imagination in response to her impressions of the background, percussion and behaviour of the dancers. Knowing such things will help our understanding of children and enlighten future ideas for children's performances.

Thirty per cent of the children liked the "Spiv" sketch³ the best. Here again I quote from their essays: "The spiv acted very well. The way he had his hat pulled over his eyes and the way he pulled the stockings out of his pocket was proper spiv-like." . . . "In the dancing display I was impressed by the reality in some of the acting and dancing. What I liked about the spiv was that he looked the part and there was an atmosphere of slickness such as the barrow boy or spiv has to-day." . . . "Ronnie was comical as the spiv. He walked just like one, swayed his shoulders as well." . . . "The best part was when he gave the lady a stocking." . . . "I liked the black marketeer; the way he played his part was very good. He turned away to pull out the nylon and the way he gave it to the lady and slyly checked the coupons."

Here it is the characteristic behaviour of the black marketeer⁴ which means most to them. They recognise him as someone within their realm of life; not necessarily a character they personally know, but a familiar type often portrayed on the films, which I regret to say are an influential factor in their lives. The spiv is real to them, and they like realism. In the same way the "film actress" sketch⁵ appealed to them. I quote: "I thought the film actress was the best because it was well acted and it looked as though they were interviewing a person for the films." . . . "I liked the film star best because she acted very good." . . . "The film star sketch was good because it had a lot of movement and action in it."

²"The Crab that Played." The fish swims happily, the crab disturbs the play. The magician sees the troubled water and brings the crab to reason.
The Magician.
The Crab.
The Fish.

³"On the Street." Quite a lot happens on the street from morning to night. Here are a few scenes which tell for themselves:
"The Black Marketeer."
The Spiv.
The Girl.
The Custom's Officer.

⁴"Filming."
The Assistant.
The Press Photographer.
The Star.

The other sketches did not have much response. Perhaps the subject matter of "Men at Work"⁵ was too near their hearts, many of the children's fathers being road menders or in similar jobs, and over-emphasis on the negative qualities of stupidity and laziness hurt their feelings. Because of this over-exaggerated caricature of "men at work" the sketch was unreal to them. This thought can only be deduced because of their lack of positive or negative response, but I think we have here a lesson to learn that children are acutely aware of their own individual sense of proportion of reality.

Action with several people meant more than solo dances. The Rhapsody of Sound and Movement⁶ met with considerable response: "In the last act" where the three girls danced with bells, drums and clickers their dresses looked very attractive with all the pretty colours, and they were very light on their feet." . . . "I thought the bell-ringer in the last dance very graceful and she must have practised for hours getting it so in line."

This Rhapsody in Sound and Movement⁶ is exciting as a dance to the children. They were fascinated by the colourful costumes, the rhythm, the instruments and especially the originality of the idea: "I think the Hungarian Rhapsody dance was good really because they made it up themselves."

Both the butterfly dance⁷ and the "Backyard Children"⁸ dances appealed to the children very much. Though the action of catching butterflies is unknown to most of them, the gaiety of the dance won their response. I think many of the children recognised themselves and their pals in "Backyard Children" and were amused to see themselves in action on the stage: "The one where Maureen was the sulky one, she had the expression very well."

Of the solo dances, Maureen's shawl dance⁹ was the most popular. I think this is because this dance is within the personal experience of most of these children; because the desire to dress up and dance around

⁵ "Men at Work."

The Foreman.
Two Apprentices.

⁶ "Drums, Bells and Skulls." Music by Liszt.

A Rhapsody in Sound and Movement.
The Drum.
The Bells.
The Skulls.

⁷ "Catching Butterflies." Music by Allen.

The boy's butterfly hunter's dance. Two girls playing
Yo-Yo get into the little hunter's net.

⁸ "Backyard Children." Music by Henry.

Each child has its own mood. Neither cares for the other,
but marching and dancing brings them together.
The Sulky One.
The Lazy One.
The Kicker.

with a shawl is a universal desire in girls at some point in their development: "The scarf dance⁹ was very nice; she moved every part of her body, not just one part."

Pat's drum dance¹⁰ was appreciated for her body agility: "Pat was very acrobatic. I liked the way she bent her body backwards and played on the drum."

Clare's lyrical dance¹¹ had not much response. The abstract movement did not mean anything to the children. The emotional content of the Scriabin dance¹² was not understood by the children; therefore the dance was not appreciated. I think it is advisable to take notice of what these children have to say about dance performances if we want to know what to give them on the stage, and how to awaken their visual interest in movement.

The total number of the dances presented was sixteen. The four dances not mentioned in the text did not receive much response, except one other "Just So Story," which showed similar appreciation to the "Crab that Played." The age groups between eleven and fourteen years were evenly distributed.

A number of children have mentioned particular dances in their criticism, they are compiled in the following list.

Number in footnotes	Titles of Dances	Age Groups			
		11 years	12 years	13 years	14 years
1	The Elephant Child	19	9	14	7
2	The Crab that Played	11	6	11	2
3	Black Marketeer	15	12	14	15
4	Filming	7	9	5	6
5	Men at Work	1	1	0	5
6	Drums, Bells and Skulls	8	7	13	8
7	Catching Butterflies	2	5	7	7
8	Backyard Children	3	1	8	1
9	The Girl with the Shawl (solo)	12	9	10	1
10	Drum Dance (solo)	9	3	7	2
11	Lyrical Dance (solo)	2	1	1	0
12	Difficult Choice	1	3	3	1

⁹Solo: "The Girl with the Shawl." Music by Turina.

¹⁰Solo: "Pat's Drum Dance." Without Music.

¹¹Solo: "Lyrical Dance." Music by Henry.

¹²"The Difficult Choice." Music by Scriabin.
The Prince, the King's Daughter and the Shepherd's Child meet somewhere in the countryside. The Prince and the Shepherd's Child leave the King's Daughter alone and she dances sadness and solitude. The Prince and the Child dance together.

DANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

By Jennifer Craig

I have been asked to write this article on my School of Modern Dance in Capetown, South Africa, and also the various other forms of dance which are popular in my country.

Before explaining how I came to teach modern dance without any training whatsoever, I must explain that South Africa is a young country. Artistic development has been slow: it is only within the last few years that theatre has really come into its own. Professional companies have been formed, and only this year a National Theatre has been founded and has plans to tour the country with plays in both Afrikaans and English.

In the same way ballet has become popular. In Capetown there is the headquarters of the South African National Ballet, of which I am an executive committee member. This company is professional. In 1938 it was started as the Ballet Club, and has slowly grown and prospered until to-day it has dancers from all over the Union and Rhodesia. This company, besides presenting many of the traditional ballets, has encouraged young choreographers, and the work is of an exceptionally high standard.

Also in Capetown we have the University Ballet. This rather small group is amateur, and the dancers are all from the University Ballet School, where ballet may be taken as a full-time course.

In Johannesburg and Pretoria we find yet another Ballet Club, which is as yet on a small scale and still of an amateur status. In every case of these smaller groups their best dancers have joined the National Ballet School in Capetown.

Apart from ballet there are few teachers of other dance forms. In Johannesburg there is a Miss Teda de Moor, who teaches Martha Graham's method, but has a very small group and is rarely seen. In Durban there is a school of Margaret Morris Movement where I myself trained for four years. But unfortunately the remedial work is the main interest and the creative work is rather neglected. In Capetown there is an excellent teacher of Greek and Madge Atkinson Natural Movement. But from a creative angle both these methods leave one dissatisfied.

In 1944 I opened my School of Modern Dance. This was a risk. It was during the war. I had been unable to have overseas training and therefore had no qualification. All I had was four years' training of Margaret Morris Movement, including a thorough nursery school course, after which I did a good deal of ballet whilst studying drama for four years. This dramatic training has been of great value to me in my method of modern dance.

During these years it was my dream to become a dancer, but unfortunately, hampered by a severe knee injury and ill-health, I had to give

this dream up and try to turn my feeling towards teaching and production—apart from a continual interest in drama. During the last ten years I have done a considerable amount of straight acting and have studied the theatre from all angles with the Capetown Repertory Theatre Society. I have learnt stage management, lighting, etc., and have even painted and assisted in the making of sets. Due to this I became a member of the executive committee of this society two years ago. During this time I earned my living by making the costumes for the productions presented by the society, and also for the University Dramatic Society. These two groups have between them a Little Theatre, beautifully equipped, with a seating capacity of 250. So this was my background: a really excellent and inspiring knowledge of the theatre.

Besides the books which I read on modern dance, I knew nothing whatsoever about it. Yet it interested me, and through this I was inspired to try with all my might and main to convey this feeling to others.

So I opened my school. Six months later I was approached by two schools to teach my form of movement in their curriculum. In May, 1945, my method was accepted and passed by the Educational Department, and I have now eight different schools in which I and my two assistants teach curriculum and after-school dance classes.

In June, 1945, I presented my own choreography to a full house in our City Hall, holding over 1,000 people. This production was something entirely new to Capetown audiences and I had been terrified at the idea, but it was an immediate success. Straight after this I was asked to arrange the dancing in an enormous and lavish production, a Biblical Pageant presented by the Union of Jewish Women. This gave me a name, and since that time I have worked extremely hard, until now my school is well established and extremely successful. I have done many productions, all highly praised. In every case the entire cast has consisted of my own students and pupils.

Coming to England has meant a great deal to me. Besides studying for my L.R.A.M. in mime, attending various classes in dance and drama, I have met many interesting people who have encouraged me and given me a great deal of inspiration. But until I attended the Chichester Summer School I had not really seen modern dance. To me this was a strange experience: to find that for three years I have been teaching in a modified form the identical technique created by Laban. My deep regret is that, due to my knee injury, I will never be able to have the personal exhilaration from the work, but through my students I may see their inspiration and their love of the work. My ideal is to develop my school until I have different branches reaching right over the Union of South Africa.

"BLOOD" (Ballets Nègres)

By John Harries

A few months ago Les Ballets Negres gave the first performance of their new ballet, "Blood," at the Dolphin Theatre, Brighton. Anyone who has seen this company will remember it chiefly for the sincerity of the dancers, for their astoundingly pliable movements, and for their apparent tirelessness. That they do not always give an impression of precision is perhaps not such a grave criticism as it would be if we were peaking of the European tradition of dancing, for it is obvious that the emphasis here is placed on the spirit of the subject rather than on the making of an agreeable stage picture.

The repetition of certain passages is good when it has the effect of building up tension, but when it tends toward monotony, the method fails badly. It seems occasionally as though the choreographer feels he cannot rely on his audience to grasp something really quite obvious and repeats the whole thing several times to make sure it sinks in. This weakness sometimes upsets the balance of a whole scene. One cannot help wondering how much should be "read into" the ballets of this company. The theme of "Blood" is the irresistible attraction of a Voodoo ceremony for a Europeanised half-cast girl and her subsequent return to tribal ways followed by her white husband who tries at first to prevent the relapse. Both come to an unpleasant end at the hands of the tribe.

On the face of it this does not seem to present a problem of much interest to an English audience except as an exciting story (and exciting it certainly is apart from the lapses into monotony mentioned above). However, every ballet makes a different impression on each spectator and, while for some this will be merely a exciting evening, it will undoubtedly find in others a deeper response.

Berto Pasuko, leader of the company, has a vivid personality and great dramatic powers which he uses with excellent judgment. One should also mention the tom-tom band; this alone would make a visit worthwhile. The idea of having it play on the stage during the interval instead of ground level as previously is very good. A warm reception was given to both dancers and musicians.

NEWS

Ada Hynssen's new book will probably be ready by the end of July. It is published by Messrs. Curwen, 24, Berner Street, London, W.1.

Lottie Auerbach gave a successful performance with students of Portsmouth Training College at their Open Day. Wearing light blue

tunics, they showed a programme of improvisations, studies and dances on a raised lawn against a dark green hedge. Second Years did improvisations and studies and one rather long dance, "Arabesque," by Schumann. The First Years showed the dimensional scale and a waltz study built on it. This was followed by various dances—gay, serious and even grotesque—"The Village Band" (Kurngold), "Tango" and "March" (Chopin Polonaise) with contrasting groups, which finished with a great crescendo in a common group.

Mrs. Owen took a group of sixteen girls to a youth Eisteddfod at the beginning of April. They came second in the Modern Dance Competition. The girls were members of a Youth Centre under the Glamorgan Education Authority, and they had not had any previous tuition in the Art of Movement. They worked with Mrs. Owen for one lesson a week for two terms only. The adjudicators especially mentioned the beginning of the dance, which was accompanied only by a tambourine, as being particularly effective.

Children taught by Joan Carrington are going to show some dancing at the Pre-Olympic International Congress in London in July. Adda Heynssen has composed a piece of music especially for them and Mrs. Foulger will play for them on the day.

The Young Dancers' Group gave their first public performances at the Central Library Theatre on June 28th, 29th and 30th. Their varied and lively programme was enthusiastically received, and from every aspect this venture was a tremendous success. Here are excerpts from the critics:—

Daily Telegraph, June 29th:

Four talented young people . . . danced their way through a wide range of styles with skill and verve. In all there was a grace and poetry of movement.

Daily Dispatch, June 29th:

Whole-hearted enthusiasm when these pioneers showed that the new dance form evolved by Sylvia Bodmer and Lisa Ullmann achieves its aim of satisfying the public's current imaginative needs.

Manchester Guardian, June 29th:

The Young Dancers . . . show a good deal more conviction and life than might have been expected. . . . Real feeling . . . a wide selection of styles, ranging from topical caricature to mimed illustrations from Kipling. . . .

Manchester City News, July 2nd:

YOUNG DANCERS ENTRANCED JUNIOR AUDIENCE.
Wide-eyed junior theatregoers, poised on the edge of their seats, watched entranced the debut of the Young Dancers' Group. . . . Effective use of music enhanced the movement pattern and heightened the satisfying impression of bounding vitality.

Evening Chronicle, June 29th:

ELOQUENT DANCES—AN ART EXPERIMENT.
There was something pure, simple and refreshing in the Young Dancers' Group performance. . . . Rhythmic grace and precision was maintained throughout. . . . It was an experiment in Modern Impressionist Dancing that deserves to be successful.

Manchester Evening News, June 29th:

The Young Dancers' Group danced lightly and happily, with conviction and considerable grace. . . . Satirical impressions amusingly well done.

At present the group is visiting schools and training colleges in Lancashire, Yorkshire and Scotland.

LIST OF MEMBERS

1. Walter, E., Lancashire.
2. Watson Lloyd, A. (Mrs.), Essex.
3. Williams, G., Glamorganshire.
4. Williams, V. G., Norfolk.
5. Wilson, B. M., Derbyshire.
6. Wilson, L., Kent.
7. Winbow, R. C. C. (Mr.), Surrey.
8. Winfield, K. M., Warwickshire.
9. Winnick, M., Lancashire.
10. Woodhead, B. M., Middlesex.
11. Workman, P B., London.