# THE LABAN ART OF MOVEMENT GUILD MAGAZINE

FORTIETH NUMBER
JUNE, 1968

Price : Five Shillings

## CONTENTS


| | Page |
|---|---|
| Officers of the Guild | 3 |
| Editorial | 4 |
| Presidential Address | 5 |
| 25th Anniversary Celebration 1970 | 9 |
| Announcements | 11 |
| A Language for Movement | 12 |
| Philosophic Foundations (Part IV) | 27 |
| Forthcoming Courses | 39 |
| Letter to the Editor | 40 |
| Book Review | 42 |
| Rhythm, Music and Education | 44 |
| The Phenomenology of Dance | 45 |
| The Dance through the Ages | 46 |
| Guild Membership | 47 |

## OFFICERS OF THE GUILD

President:
SYLVIA BODMER

Chairman:
JOAN RUSSELL

Hon. Secretary:
BETTY OSGATHORP
3, Patten Road,
Wandsworth, S.W.18.

Hon. Treasurer:
DONALD JENKINS
23, Plover Way,
Bedford.

Vice-President:
F. C. LAWRENCE

Hon. Assistant Secretary:
GILLIAN WILLIAMS,
10, Hillside,
Wimbledon, S.W.19.

Hon. Editor:
ELIZABETH SMITH
3, Beech Grove,
Burton-on-Stather,
Scunthorpe, Lincs.

## COUNCIL MEMBERS

Margaret Bodmer
Jean Carroll
Mollie Davies
David Henshaw
Olive Chapman
Dawn Wells
Lisa Ullmann
(Past President)

Reg. Howlett
June Layson
Sheila Moore
Lorna Wilson
Elizabeth Drake
Pat Bowen-West

## EDITORIAL

The resignation of Miss Redfern as Editor of the magazine was received with regret. She managed to cajole much stimulating and some provocative material from members of the Guild and under her editorship the magazine experienced a "wave of change". She will be missed.

When Mrs. Causley offered to write an article on the Benesh system of movement notation for this magazine, she expressed some doubts as to whether we would publish it. We feel that Guild members need to be informed of any development in the field of movement and hope that this will provoke criticism, discussion, or at least comment. An editor cannot work in a vacuum.

Advance notice of all Guild courses for the year are given in this issue. Detailed information will be circulated later, but members are asked to note the dates now.



## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Given at the Annual Conference, Addlestone, 1968

Since this is my last address as Guild President, it seems appropriate to make an assessment of the Guild's work over the years. As in any effort assessment, one can detect those features which are constant and those which are temporary, and in the Guild we have constant and changing features which act side by side.

Amongst the constant features we find in particular the pursuit of aims and objects as outlined in the first Constitution: 'To further the exchange of ideas and experience, to inspire inquiry and research, to publish any relevant records, and to collaborate with other organisations.' The Membership and Publications Committees have functioned from the inception of the Guild, whilst others, for example the Courses and Conferences Committee, have been added and maintained. The statement concerning those whom we welcome to Guild membership stands in the present Constitution as it did in the first :— 'The Laban Art of Movement Guild incorporates all those who recognize and uphold the basic principles of the art of movement as discovered and formulated by Rudolf Laban and which underlie and penetrate every activity of man.'

As temporary features we have seen the initial idea of establishing a professional status for practitioners of the Art of Movement, in the fields of education, industry, or art, gradually change into a concept of promoting understanding and practice of the wider cultural and social aims and interest in art of movement, to which everyone is invited to contribute. Other temporary features have been activities in connection with Regional Groups, Junior Section work, and Overseas Bulletins.

Balance between constant and changing factors is essential to the life of any organism. A too linear development of constant features will prove unable to support big dynamic changes, and a too tentative ripple of new impulses will not stir an inflexible foundation; the first will result in disintegration, the second in stagnation.

The Guild has been experiencing its waves of change and you, and all of us in the Guild, elect the Officers and Members of the Council for the purpose of steering our Association safely through the manifold kinds of waves which we encounter. I have had the honour and pleasure of working from

the inception of the Guild, first as its Chairman, and later, after Laban's death, as its President, with this body of helmsment who have at all times been a lively, stimulating and active group to whom I feel a great gratitude for all I have learnt from them, and for their unselfish devotion to our cause.

As you know, in recent years the seemingly intangible body of Fellows of whom I am one has been increased in number. Between us we cover a wide range of activities in the field of art of movement and all of us have worked with Laban himself. It is our job to keep the finger on the pulse of the Guild's life and to have our feet firmly on the ground so that we can assist Council with sound advice and give to the Guild that spiritual leadership which is expected of us.

We are an art movement Guild, which means that we believe in change, change which is guided by an inherent order and skilful manipulation. The waves of change are carrying us along in a flux which embraces both an inward and an outward going stream; both tendencies are simultaneously present and whilst one predominates, sight of the other must not be lost.

The Guild originated from a centre, Laban, and moved with the ideas for which his name stands, in an outwardgoing trend. This is the only movement possible when starting at the centre, unless one remains there, yet it has the possibility of a multitude of directions all related to the point of departure. As with the movements of our limbs in gathering and scattering, an outward trend is followed by an inward one, balance and continuity are maintained by oscillation between these two trends. The Guilds' initial outward going was followed by an inward looking which probably found its climax in the immediate years after Laban's death, and it seems now that we are again turning our attention outward.

I thought it might be appropriate to read you some excerpts from the first Presidential address which Laban gave at the first General Meeting in Chichester on the 27th August 1947, which may help to elucidate what I am trying to say.

"I have been asked to give my name, because of my share in the discovery of the new approach to movement and its use for practical purposes in all these fields. I have warned the Council members that a living man is all too apt to err and to





develop, so that his personal opinions might not serve as a definite basis for principles. The first condition of my collaboration is, that you must grant me the privilege to continue to try, and to err, because trial and error is the basis of all healthy development.

"I think the first step towards the achievements of the aims of the Guild is an impartial consideration of all trends in the cultivation of movement which can be based on past achievement. The second is an equally impartial acceptance of all contributions towards the future development of the cultivation of movement. Looking back we see a very valuable tradition of historical dance, which we shall always treasure. We see also early investigations of the role of movement in educational methods. In the organisation of work, the traditional form of time and motion study can give a lead to further development. To-day, there is a general endeavour to adapt these traditions and methods to present-day needs. In the future, we must be sure that these developments keep pace with time and so we must not limit our vision by narrow preconceptions and prejudices." And later:

"All schools or styles of dance in which the basic rules of organised body-mind movement are used should be accepted in our circle without bias, whether they spring from ballet, modern dance in Europe, modern dance in America, acrobatic, or exotic dance. This principal must also guide us in accepting all schools of motion study in industry and also of the various forms of movement study in schools.

". . . . I must . . . . emphasise the need for an objective and impartial consideration of all groups so that the Guild may be a centre of encouragement for the people who are dealing with all aspects of movement.

"I feel it to be my personal task, in all these affairs, to smooth out differences in the various camps and to stress the importance of the common denominator which is movement. This principle will also guide me in my contribution, as President of the Guild.

"In my lectures to such widely differentiated audiences as ballet dancers, modern dance experts, engineers, accountants, workmen, managers, doctors, etc., I stress the central interest which has in our time, in all its practical aspects.

of the Guild. A Financial Committee consisting of the following people has therefore been formed in order to raise funds from Guild members themselves:—

John Pool (Leicester), Treasurer

Anne Latto (Reading)

Meriel Glynne Jones (Bishop Stortford)

Sheila McGivering (Retford)

Brian Morgan (London)

PLEASE WATCH THE GUILD MAGAZINE for further news of the Celebration and see how best YOU as a Guild member can contribute to this unique enterprise.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### PRESS OFFICER
### VOLUNTARY HELP NEEDED FROM MEMBERS

In answer to a long felt need the Council has recently appointed Miss Olive Chapman to be its first Press Officer. The duties of the Press Officer will be:— 'To take note of and catalogue for reference all articles or press correspondence which are relevant to the work of the Guild. To reply to or make comment on the above where appropriate. To initiate action to make the activities of the Guild known to a wider public.'

In order to facilitate this work we hope to set up our own Press Cutting service, and help is urgently requested from Guild members. Volunteers are needed to read regularly national and local newspapers and magazines and to send cuttings to Miss Chapman so that she may deal with them in the ways indicated above.

If you would be prepared to read even one publication daily, weekly or monthly, (perhaps a publication which you already take), please write immediately to:—

Miss O. M. Chapman,
5, Lilac Gardens,
Shirley,
Croydon. CRO 8NR.

### AFFILIATED GROUP SECRETARIES

**Please** send your reports to Mrs. Pam Green, 29, Eastern Green Road, Eastern Green, Coventry, CV57LG, before 5th July. Late entries often entail considerable re-organisation and are very time consuming.

# A LANGUAGE FOR MOVEMENT

By MARGUERITE CAUSLEY

In her admirably objective and discerning article on the summer course in "Choreology in Education and Dance" (published in the November 1967 issue of the Magazine), Sally Archbutt stressed the need for more informed literature on notation, and urged Guild members to be interested in many systems. She stressed above all the need for scientific objectivity in the evaluation of notation systems: as she said, "Let us, in the true spirit of scientific enquiry, be genuinely interested in the different systems." In this article I am concerned to provide Guild members with some basic facts about Benesh Movement Notation, so that they can understand how it works and see its relevance to their own work.

One of the things which makes the subject of movement notation urgently topical today is the introduction of the B.Ed. Degree, with its requirement that work at Colleges of Education in all fields should reach university standards of academic respectability. In the Plowden Report we read that "the universities are rightly anxious that high academic standards should be established in the B.Ed. degrees." In all academic disciplines however a satisfactory notation is an essential tool not just as a record but also as a means of thinking, talking and writing about the subject. Imagine the serious study of English without the alphabet; of music without music notation; or of any branch of mathematics without its appropriate notation. Movement needs such a tool as much as any other subject; being itself a language, it needs (as the world-famous cybernetician Doctor Gordon Pask made clear in a lecture at the Summer Course) a meta-language in which we can think and talk about it. It is essential that a notation should be taught to students of movement if we are to meet the new standards required by the B.Ed., thus achieving the same academic levels taken for granted in other fields: it should be made an integral part of all their work, playing the same vital role as other notations in other disciplines.

The subject of notation is important to all of us in Movement Education. For we are much concerned with the creative process, and we need a language in which we can analyse and talk about the creative aspects of movement. As Susanne Langer says,[1] "The dance defies discursive formulation and therefore verbal expression." The creative process in movement as in all other fields, is not primarily

1. Prof. S. Langer. "Philosophy in a New Key"





intellectual, but once the subtle creative thought has achieved objectivity it becomes subjected to conscious thinking. One all-important function of notation is to provide an objective record of movement and a common denominator for thinking and communication, independent of any theory, style or technique: in fact a universal language.

Scientists, in their creative work are constantly evolving new theories and testing them against reality and they realise that their recording tools and languages of thought should be neutral to all theories i.e. must not incorporate or take for granted any theories: otherwise fresh creative thinking about scientific problems is impossible. In art and science of movement we need a universal objective language if we are to develop our work in harmony with the needs and achievements of a world which is changing with bewildering and ever increasing speed.

Universability and neutrality towards all theories are two of the many qualities essential for a movement notation which is to be as efficient in use as the alphabet, music notation, the symbols of symbolic logic, etc. It must also be precise, complete, fast, economic — requiring a minimum of paper and writing to record the most complex movements of the body in three dimensions of space and one of time. These various requirements seems contradictory, yet they must be solved if the notation is to be used with the same facility as other notation systems, as an integral and essential part of normal work.

Rudolf Benesh solved these problems when he invented his notation in 1947. As is normal with any major scientific achievement his invention was based on a profound appreciation of the nature of the problem and the bringing together of a number of apparantly unrelated ideas from many sources. He also showed a profound understanding of ergonomics, the new science which studies the efficiency of the systems in which men and their tools interact.

(a) As an artist, familiar with the laws of perspective, he made the notation completely visual, using simple marks on a matrix to record salient position of limbs, avoiding any proliferation of symbols.

(b) As a musician, he drew on centuries of development in music notation to record changes in time, while taking account of the fact that movement is by its nature essentially different from music (being continuous rather than discrete).

(c) He developed movement lines which summarise an infinite number of positions of limbs between salient positions.

(d) He applied the concept of redundancy which is fundamental in information theory (a branch of cybernetics): in each branch of the notation he reduced redundancy to a minimum, giving only the information needed for a clear and unambiguous record.

Another essential requirement is logicality: the notation must grow in a logical way from its basic elements, with every branch kept in harmony with every other branch. This principle was applied with the greatest rigour in developing the notation, tackling the movements of every part of the body and all qualities and aspects of movement, including turns, twists, inclinations and displacements of the head and trunk, various parts of the body, hands, fingers, eyebrows, location, direction of facing and of movement, movement of groups, contact with self and others and with objects, rhythm, phrasing, dynamics etc.

In the same way that speech notation is phonetic (derived from the nature of speech) and music notation is derived from the nature of music, a movement notation must be what one might call **choretic** — i.e., derived from the nature of movement. Not only must it reflect the fact that movement is continuous (not discrete like music); it must also conform to the way we think about movements, putting together patterns of neural impulses to form kinaesthetic images of our bodily positions and movements. Recent developments in neurological research in fact make clear that the Benesh Movement Notation gives a remarkably true account of our kinaesthetic imagery.

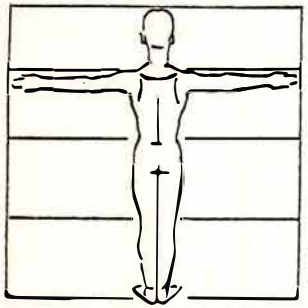
A movement notation should correlate easily with music notation and the Benesh Notation offers no problems as the movements are written on the horizontal five-line stave of music from left to right in a series of imaginary squares. If music is involved it is written on staves above the movement stave or staves, and the bar lines running down the page guide the eye just as they do in a musical score. This arrangement also makes it easy to correlate a number of simultaneous patterns of movement (with or without music).





## HOW IT WORKS

The five-line stave of music proves an ideal matrix for the human figure. Figure 1 shows how the lines of the stave intersect the body: note that the mover is seen from behind, and that with his arms extended he fits into a square.



The line of the head.

The line of the shoulder.

The line of the waist.

The line of the knees.

The line of the feet.

Figure 1. The five-line stave as a matrix for the human body.

Imagine the mover standing against a wall on which the five lines are marked: if a mark is put by the hands and feet a visual record of the limb positions remain.

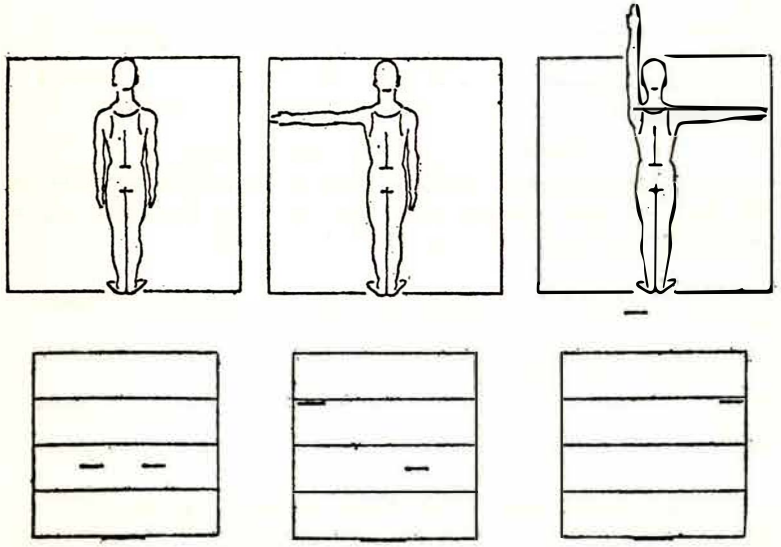


Figure 2. Positions of feet and hands level with the body.

These marks show positions of hands and feet in the plane of the wall. Other signs are used to show positions of hands and feet in front of the plane of the body (vertical strokes) and behind it (dots). These mark the projection of the positions on to the plane of the body: because the limbs are of fixed length, they give a precise record of the positions.

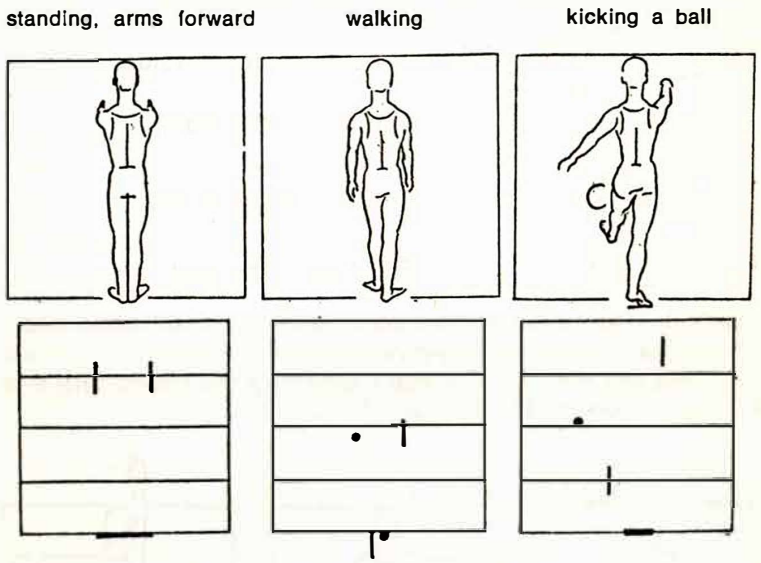



Figure 3. The three basic signs.

If the limbs are bent the positions of the elbows and knees are marked with crossed signs derived from the three signs for hands and feet. This gives six basic signs.

| | *Hands and feet* | *Elbows and knees* |
|---|---|---|
| Level (with the body) | — | + |
| In front (of the body) | \| | + |
| Behind (the body) | • | X |

This simple alphabet of six signs can record **any** positions of the limbs: no matter how complex or strange the patterns, style or technique, and whether the movements are completely free.





In the same way that the basic signs record any possible positions of the limbs, the movement lines record any pathways of movement between salient positions, whether level with the body or extending in front of or behind the plane of the body.

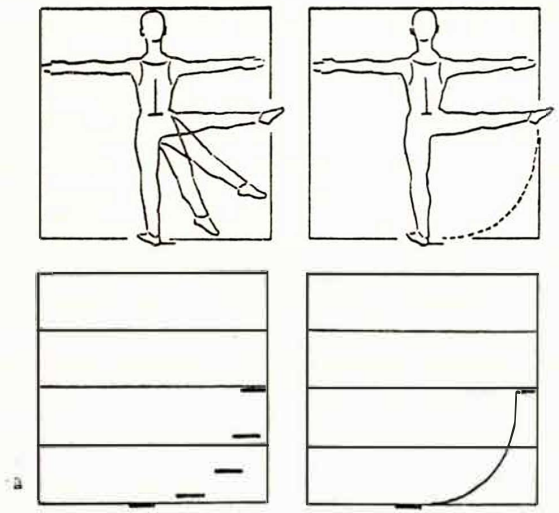


Figure 4. The movement line shows the leg rising to the side, summarising a series of salient positions of the foot in the plane of the body.

Arm movements are shown in a similar way.

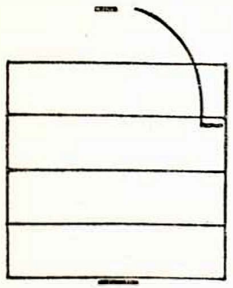


Figure 5. The Arm moves from directly above the shoulder out to the side finishing just below shoulder height.

Thus movement lines trace the path of movement between salient positions, thereby summarising an infinite number of intermediate positions. The five-line stave of music provides a matrix which is ergonomically perfect for guiding the eye

and hand. Each movement is plotted in its "frame" so that the eye moves from "frame" to "frame", left to right along the stave. Once the eye learns to measure the squares the "frame" marks are dispensed with.

So far we have considered salient positions or specific movements in isolation. When linking movements in rhythms and phrases the stave can be divided into bars.

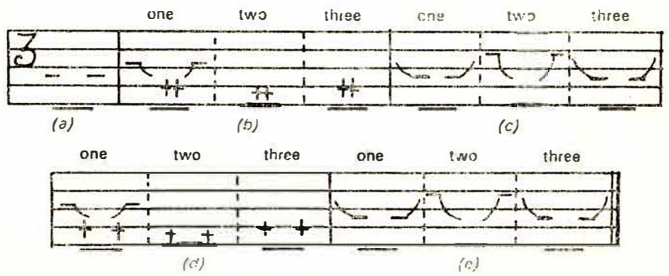



Figure 6. Shows four bars of 3/4 rhythm. In this example the beats are written above the stave and the bars are divided into beats by dotted lines; these are for guidance only, and are not part of the notation. The starting position is given at (a). On beat one the knees bend forward, touching each other, whilst the arms move out to the sides finishing just above waist height, beat two shows a full knee bend with a rise of the heels, on beat three the legs regain the position held on beat one. The arms do not move on beats two and three. In bar two the arms come back to the sides whilst the knees straighten, then there is a rise on to the balls of the feet whilst the arms rise sideways to just below shoulder height; on beat three the arms come back to their original position and the heels lower. In bar 3 the arm sequence is the same as in (b), and there is a similar action in the legs except that the knees are very wide apart. Bar 4 is exactly the same as bar two.

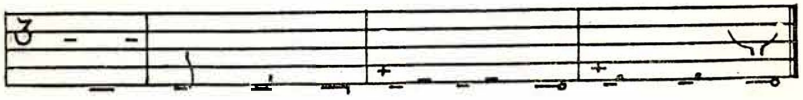


Figure 7. Shows another series of movements with three beats to the bar; here the beats and dotted lines are omitted. It can be seen that the eye readily measures off the "frames".





There is no confusion with movement going backwards in time, since the movement lines belong only to one particular frame, indicating movement within it.

The starting position is given at the beginning of the stave. In bar 1 the right foot swings forward and up; then the foot comes back to the floor on to its tip and closes in front of the the left foot flat on the floor. Bar 2 shows the left knee bending to the side and right foot moves to the side on the tip of the toe. The left knee then straightens and the right foot closes behind flat on the floor. In bar 3 the left knee is again bent to the side and the right foot is behind with the toe touching the floor; the knee straightens and the right foot closes behind, whilst the arms at the same time swing down in front of the body, finishing in front of the thighs.

Stepping, jumping, running sliding are shown by combining the basic signs and the movement lines. The movement line can be qualified by adding front or back signs.

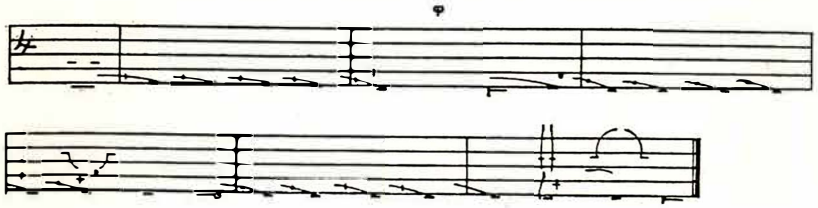


Figure 8. Shows six bars of stepping, forward, backward and in place. Bar one shows four steps, right (the movement line comes from right side of sign for 1st position) left, right, left. Bar two shows a right step with the left foot held forward at knee height. This position is held for one beat. The left foot closes in front and then the left foot steps in place, whilst the right foot moves backwards to a position at just below knee height. The dots on the movement lines in bar three indicate backward steps. The right foot must step first as it is the only foot free to step. Readers may like to try and read the other three bars for themselves.

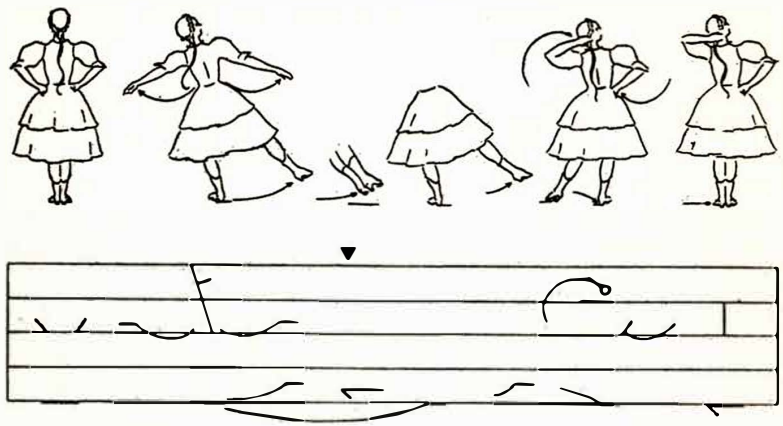
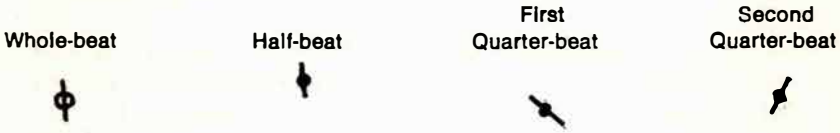


Figure 9. Mazurka step showing a "jump-line" indicating a jump in the air. The blocked in triangle above the stave indicates an audible sound; movements of the spine and head are also written. Adaption of the basic sign illustrates contact of the hands on the body, behind and to the side.

The development of a special notation for movement rhythms was of great importance—for Mr. Benesh found that methods used for recording music rhythm were quite unsuited to movement. In fact he developed a system of notating movement-beats (recording whole beats and fractions of beats) which proved applicable to every type of movement.

Movement beats are shown as follows:




In accordance with the principle of economy (redundancy-avoidance) beats are only shown when necessary: if it is obvious where the beat would come, it is not marked.

Figure 10 shows how some extremely complex Indian dance-rhythms are notated, with half-beats, quarter-beats and solid triangles indicating strong accents.





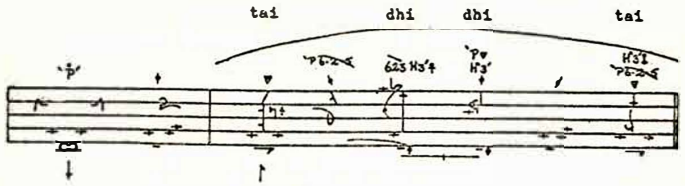



Figure 10. **South Indian classical dance (Bharata Natyam)** showing details of hand and head movements in rhythms different from those of feet. Positions of fingers in **mudras** (symbolic gestures) and eye movements are shown above the stave. The syllables written above the stave are **solukattu,** indicating the basic rhythm played by **mattuvanar** (dance-master) and drummer and beaten out by bell-clad feet of dancer. The rhythm notation, also written above the stave analyses the dance rhythm in more detail, showing sub-beats of hands, eyes, etc., and preparatory movements.

To show phrasing a phrase mark is used. The shape of the whole movement is written in the final "frame" which has movement lines and basic signs indicating a final position. The "time" occupied by the movement is shown by the phrase mark which begins where the movement begins and ends over the final "frame".


Figure 11. The feet take up four different positions on each whole beat but the arm movement takes up the whole four beats as indicated by the phrase mark.

Dynamics are shown by adapting the expression marks of music thus recording the finest shades of effort, changes of effort, and other qualities of movement. Effort actions can be notated. The spatial element is shown by the movement pathway. The technical Italian words used in music notation are used to indicate character, mood or speed, and the expression marks of music indicate degrees of strength.

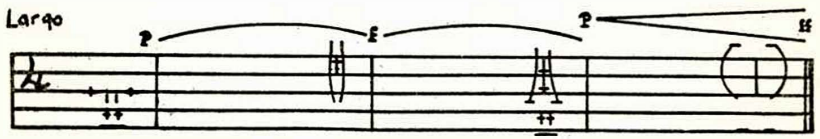



Figure 12. Bar 1. A glide—arms move softly upwards through a direct pathway.

Bar 2. A press—arms move strongly downwards through a direct pathway.

Bar 3. Shading between a glide and a press.

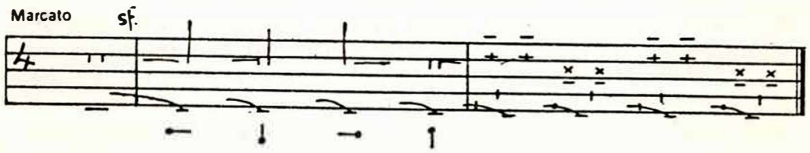



Figure 13. Sf (sfarzando) is used with much the same significance as in music. It indicates a movement with the quality of a punch or kick. Signs below the stave show direction of facing.

There is not space to go into a full account of how every part of the notation works. Readers requiring more information should refer to my book **"An Introduction to Benesh Movement Notation"** published by Max Parrish 1967.

## CHOREOLOGY

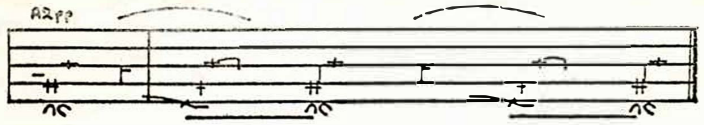
Miss Archbutt mentioned the word "choreology" in her article. This word was invented to embrace the study through notation of all the scientific and aesthetic aspects of human movement. Work in choreology is co-ordinated by the Institute of Choreology. There are now many varied fields of study which have developed since the notation was first made public in 1952. The immediate need for a workable notation was felt in the professional world of ballet. This led to misapprehensions in the early years that the notation was suited only to ballet. Trained choreologists record ballets for the company repertoires and later reproduce the works from score when required. This results in great economy in rehearsal time and has had great artistic advantages: the original choreography being reproduced





without loss or distortion. All over the world ballet companies employ full time choreologists who are constantly writing, recording and reproducing ballets, as well as modern dance works. The scores in the Institute library enable students to study and analyse the great choreographic works in the same way that music students study the great works of music and literary students study the great works of literature—drama, poetry, novels.

Although Benesh Movement Notation was first applied in an intensive professional way within the world of theatrical dance, demands for its use soon began to emerge in a number of other fields; and today work in theatrical dance is only one of a number of major branches of choreology. One of the earliest to develop was work study, and Rudolf Benesh has done a great deal of work in this field, developing the notation to meet the specific needs of industry. Another very important branch of choreology is in medicine: physiotherapists are being trained in the notation in a number of countries, and for some years a major research project has been in progress in neurological research. This project is conducted by the Centro di Educazione Motore in Florence, under the direction of the great neurologist Professor Milani. The study of movement is all-important in the diagnosis and treatment of cerebral palsy in spastic children, and the use of Benesh Movement Notation has made possible major advances in this field. Figure 14 shows the walk of a spastic child, recorded at the Centro di Educazione Motore.



Ethnochoreology is the recording and analysis of folk and national dances. Here research work is developing in many directions, including the study of the various classical styles of Indian dance. Work is also developing in collaboration with the German Institute for Scientific Film on the preparation of scores showing both the music and the choreography of African dances. Ethnochoreologists write down movements in two ways: in a complete form which anlyses every movement of every part of the body in extreme detail, and in a more condensed way, one which assumes that the reader is familiar with the technique in question.

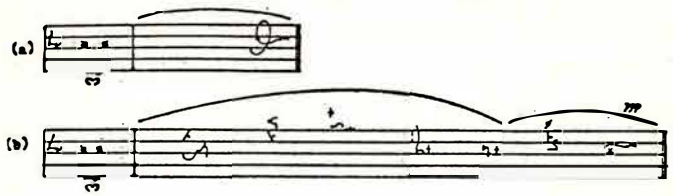


Figure 15. Shows an Arm movement in Chinese classical dance—

(a) Normal condensed version, assuming a knowledge of the style and technique in the reader.

(b) Fully analysed version, showing in detail the direction and flexion of hand and wrist on the beats and sub-beats of the music. The expression mark at the end, ppp means very soft.

## EDUCATION

For the past five years I have been concerned with finding ways in which the notation could be of use in Physical Education. It is possible to draw on certain aspects of work which exist—notably theatrical modern dance, national and folk dance and historical dance. Like all teaching, the teaching of notation in Physical Education must be done in close connection with the study of the movements themselves; notation cannot be taught in the abstract, any more than the reading and writing of English and music. I have concerned myself with developing methods of notating all the various branches of Physical Education. Once this is accomplished, syllabii for teaching the notation can be worked out. As Miss Archbutt mentioned we need to have more people interested in notation so that an extensive literature can be built up in all the systems.

As in all branches of choreology the notating of the various movements in the various branches of Physical Education requires the solution of the equivalent problems of "spelling" and "grammar", I have applied each major section of notation theory to modern educational dance, gymnastics, swimming and games, and work is now going ahead on building up reading material in each field. (Readers are an essential tool in the teaching of notation: though the alphabet





can be quickly mastered, the student must do a good deal of reading and writing and doing to master the "spelling" and "grammar" characteristic of his own field).

Composition on paper is still in its early stages, but already it is clear that such work leads to patterns unimaginable before the developments of this use of notation. I have found that children and students using notation achieve a clarity and vision far in advance of their previous work.

Figure 16 shows the record of a sequence of movements worked out and presented as part of final assessment work by Meg Prestige, student at Chelsea College (Autumn 1966).

The Benesh Notation also has a system of generalised programming. This is used in exactly the same way as "motif-writing". The children or students respond to the "outline" and once they have composed their sequences they fill in the full details. I then collect in the "compositions" in written form. I find it is possible to assess the standard of creativity present in the work: the concepts behind the movement-patterns, the quality of the thinking, whether or not the children or students have come to grips with the task, the structure or lack of it, and so on. Those studies which are alive and well thought out stand out clearly from the rest.

I have found that children and students respond to these tasks in three main ways. Some compose entirely in movement, finishing the task and then analysing and writing down what they have done. Others sit and think, try some movements out in practise, write them down, and then proceed as before. A third group write out the whole sequence and then put what they have written into practice.

Composition on paper is of great value in bridging the gap which often arises in students between moving and thinking. Sometimes there are the good movers with natural ability who are unable to relate their thoughts to what they do, and

on the other hand there are the intellectual types with little natural ability: with notation, both types of student can integrate their thoughts and their movements.

Looking to the future of movement education, I feel that notation can play a vitally important role in helping us to see where we are going and formulate clearly our ideas and theories. Words are only of limited use in this field, for the essence of movement escapes them. As Chrystel Trump writes "Observers often look for a verbal meaning in modern dance. A dance may have an idea that can be verbalised, but that is not the complete meaning. The total meaning of a dance is the sum of thematic material and the non-verbal visual auditory and movement qualities". Translated into the meta-language of notation these themes can be grasped, thought about, analysed, and related to each other and to the auditory material.

For the lecturer, teacher and student, notation is invaluable in many ways; Planning lessons, note taking, explanations, recording results of research, teaching practice, comparative analysis, study of movement scores, writing of essays, dissertations, thesis, examinations, providing papers, articles, books, composition exchange of material: the list is endless.

At this stage the choice of notation is less important than the fact that we concern ourselves with the need for using a notation. Individuals will select and develop within the various systems. We should, however, try to understand all points of view and make an attempt to acquaint ourselves with the various systems.

Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 16 — taken from my book "An Introduction to Benesh Movement Notation" Max Parrish 1967.

Figures 9, 10 and 15 — taken from "Journal of the Society for Ethne Musicology" Volume XI, No. 2, May, 1967.



# 'PHILOSOPHIC FOUNDATIONS" (Part 4)

GORDON F. CURL, Chelsea College of Physical Education.

## *THE CRYSTAL AND ITS CORRESPONDENCES**

"In the entire process of the development of the crystal there is a highly remarkable agreement with the development of the human mind and the human heart . . . "

Friedrich Froebel,

"Education of Man" (EM 172)

The crystal is for Laban, as for Froebel (and all pythagoreans) the 'philosopher's stone'; its 'laws' are manifest in molecules and cosmic motions alike, and its universal significance can be gathered from Laban's reference to:

"the glorification of the great and general order of crystallisation"' (GD 115)

It is just this vague 'generality' however, that makes any precise description of his crystal theories difficult. Apart from the word itself, we find in Laban's writings, numerous derivatives and compounds. 'Crystalline', 'crystallisation', 'crystallographic', 'crystal-space', 'dance-crystal', crystalline power', 'invisible crystal', 'gestural crystal', 'thought crystal', and many more. What do they all mean? Let us seek firmer ground in "The Shorter Oxford Dictionary": 1. Ice, clear ice; 2. A mineral, clear transparent like ice; 3. A piece of rock crystal . . . esp. one used in magic art; 4. Crystal glass . . . high transparency . . . ; 5. A form in which molecules regularly aggregate by the operation of molecular affinity . . . has a definite internal structure with the external form of a solid enclosed in a number of symmetrically arranged plane faces . . . ; 6. Wireless. A mineral used for 'rectifying' an oscillatory current.

It is to definition 5 that Laban's usage approximates most closely, although other meanings appear at times to merge into his general concept — particularly the ideas of 'high transparency', 'magic art' and even 'oscillatory current'. But whilst the chemical and mineralogical connotation is prominent, especially the theme of 'molecular affinity', it is essentially the mathematical significance which proves of paramount importance — the 'definite internal structure, with the external form of a solid enclosed by a number of symmetrically arranged plane faces'.

Of the numerous crystal forms which assume a symmetry of plane faces, it is the 'regular' solids which claim priority in Laban's theories; they are the five perfect forms whose discovery is attributed to Pythagoras—those transcendental Forms of Plato, the cube, tetrahedron, octahedron, icosahedron and dodecahedron. Of these, the iscoahedron provides a prototype for systematic analogy in human biology, psychology, physics, cosmology and choreography. In order to understand Laban's philosophy, we must envisage the whole of nature as one vast series of crystal correspondences, from the minutest molecule to the 'cosmic crystal' itself. Man —that supreme being—occupies a central position in the great Chain of Being, he is the archetypal form from whose structure a host of correspondences can be deduced.

"The human skeleton", says Laban, "is the crystal of all crystals". (GD 115).

* We have given precedence to this topic of "The Crystal and its Correspondences" and hope to continue in our next article with the topic of "Ecstasy" referred to in our last article.

From this premise (a venerable Pythagorean assumption) Laban proceeds to make his detailed series of correspondences between the mathematical crystal shape and the human body. So complete are his congruences that skeleton, musculature, circulatory/digestive and nervous systems, together with all bodily movements and psychological processes find exact analogies in the 'angles', 'inclinations', 'opposites', 'tensions' and 'pathways' of the crystal; its angles are "typical and absolute constructions of the body . . . (and) . . . can be proved in all other forms of natural life." (GD 94).

The skeletal framework "a scaffold of chalk crystals formed into bones" (WD 65), joint by joint, according to Laban, corresponds to the structure of the crystal—in particular the icosahedron. (CS 107) Even the 'triangular' shape of the scapulae and pectoral muscles finds precise correlation (with supporting diagrams) with the equilateral triangles which form the upper part of the icosehedron. (CY 41) That some 'law' or 'laws' provide authority for Laban's persistent analogies is evident from his frequent reference to 'crystalline laws', and these it appears are embodied in the mathematical proportion known as 'The Golden Section'—a proportion known to exist in the five perfect crystals. The Golden Section is, according to Laban, considered to be the 'ruling proportion between all the different parts of the perfectly built





human body, and throughout the ages its mathematical law has been closely linked with aesthetics" (CS 108). Also, "it appears to be the basis of all ratios which give us the feeling of a beautiful and harmonious movement" and plays a great part in "astronomy, botany, mineralogy, architecture, music . . . " (WD 32). Finally, Laban invokes the authority of Pythagoras to confirm the absolute law of the Golden Section. He states:

> "Pythagoras proved that the human body is built according to the Golden Section" (CS 108).

If, for Laban, the anatomy of the body has its parallels in the structure of the crystal, then so likewise has its physiology. There is the "crystalline nourishing fluid of the skin" (WD 84), and the fluids of the body which force their way in directions analogous to the 'directions' of the crystal; "They are in shape and order guided by the directions which give to the skeleton a picture of a shape from which speaks the law of tension of all Nature". (WD 59) The nervous system also is conditioned by a 'crystalline' network of pathways which carry "strange impulses that want to be obeyed" . . . (and . . . "individual impulses like the aim within the crystal towards certain directions" (WD 59). The sense organs are crystals in miniature, which create conscious states; their neural activity is likened to the electrical forces operating in molecular structures: "What trembles in strange appearances"' says Laban, "what rebounds off them, hits the senses, creates tensions which live as crystalline changes, become conscious. A fairy story world of tensions whose collective name is Phantasy, is created out of impressions". (WD 98).

And so Laban's persistent analogies find psychological application: processes of cognition and states of feeling are intimately linked with the 'directions' of the crystal. Each of man's faculties — 'thinking', 'feeling' and 'willing', are found to have a predominant direction in space related to the crystal (cf. Rudolf Steiner — Part 2), and therefore, by means of blending gestures, a blending of the faculties ensues (WD 50); new cognitive states can be induced by appropriately ordered gestures and feelings and 'attitudes' can be promoted in accordance with 'crystalline laws'. Laban states: " . . . travelling some of these paths (in the icosahedron) produces harmonious and serene and gay feelings and impressions while following other paths evokes feelings and impressions of anger unhappiness and disharmony". 'Attitudes' may

also be 'mastered' "through the conscious traffic along the mysterious network of crystalline shapes within the icosahedron". (GM S 51).

From Laban's 'psychological' premises, there follow a number of consequences for muscular activity, for the body "is built according to the laws of dynamic crystallisation" (CS 105). Perhaps the simplest explanation of Laban's 'kinesiology' lies in his frequent reference to the 'centre of gravity'. This he postulates is a central magnetic force which holds both the crystal and the human body in a state of tension. "Individual muscles round into ball-like shapes, they pull the limbs towards the body so that the body forms itself into a ball". (WD 71). "This space forming force compels man to pull together all parts of the skeleton to which muscles are attached . . ." (GD 115).

Laban's gravity centred spherical image of the human body (undoubtedly the cosmos in miniature — a microcosom) is further developed: "In the innermost gravity lives! Around this is built the crystal towards which the gestures strive" (WD 71). Here the morphology and dynamics of the crystal and the human body are completely fused—all activity follow the same 'crystalline laws of tension'. (WD 91). For Laban even the intercostal muscles carry out "direction pulls in which are mirrored the just mentioned crystalline laws . . .". This crystal analogy, embracing the whole of man's physical and psychological make-up, extends also to the **whole of Nature,** but Man remains the archtypal form for all such cosmic correspondences. "The skeleton is a picture of shape from which speaks the law of tension of all Nature . . . (there is) no thought, no sensation, no force, which is not pre-drawn in the skeleton — the human skeleton is the crystal of all crystals". (WD 98). "The mighty rhythms of nature around us and the humble dance of the individual creature are closely linked by the same rule". (GM M59 28). It follows for Laban, as a prescription for practice therefore, that: "one should really devote one's energy to the regulation of the crystalline form of the body" (GD 99). "The study of crystallinity of movement gives understanding of the natural harmony of movement". (GM S51 10).

So convinced is Laban, that by means of his crystallographic 'discoveries', he has unlocked the secret of Nature herself, that he confidently declares that the "modern science of dancing" can offer Science some major revelations. "It





will be the duty of the modern science of dancing", says Laban, "to show the mastery of the harmonious law of tension in the whole of nature". (WD 60) Science will therefore, have to look to its laurels and take heed of the profound 'knowledge' to be found in the Art of Movement. Laban expands:

> " . . . activity with dance leads to the observations, which have hitherto escaped science. Biology, anatomy, psychology, dynamics, kinetics, mathematics, astronomy must give more attention to the phenomena of the tensions of directions which are unveiled in the artistic sciences of movement and forms". (WD 224)

Comment

> "The writings of the most thoughtful dancers are hard to read because they play so freely across the line between physical fact and artistic significance. The complete identification of fact, symbol and import, which underlines all literal belief in myth, also besets the discursive thinking of artists, to such an extent that their philosophical reflections are apt to be as confused as they are rich. To a careful reader with ordinary common sense they sound nonsensical; to a person philosophically trained they seem by turns, affected or mystical, until he discovers that they are mythical. Rudolf von Laban offers a perfect instance; he has very clear ideas of what is created in dance, but the relations of the created 'tensions' to the physics of the actual world involves him in a mystic metaphysics that is at best fanciful, and at worst rapturously sentimental".
>
> Professor Susanne Langer
> "Feeling and Form" (FF 186)

It would be both tedious and superfluous to examine in detail the bizarre attempts of Laban to link Man—his make-up movement and dance gesture—with crystals and motions of the universe; anyone with but a nodding acquaintance with the human sciences, must recognise these as specious; they are a naive transposition of Pythagorean doctrine as exemplified in Plato's Myth of Creation "Timaeus", and as such are to be regarded in this day and age as a fantastic piece of mythical thought. Laban's literal belief in myth marks him as one who fails to distinguish between 'physical fact' and 'artistic significance', between 'symptom' and 'symbol', between 'nature' and 'art', and this "mythical consciousness"

(to use a phrase of Professor Cassirer's), accounts for the wildly speculative nature of Laban's philosophic **and** 'scientific' views.

It is often alleged that Laban 'observed' the congruences between man's movements and the 'perfect' geometrical forms, but it has become abundantly clear from his speculative anatomy, physiology, kinesiology and psychology, that there has been anything but an empirical approach (and certainly we are favoured with no experimental evidence in his published works); no, he adopts a cavalier attitude to real science and an arrogant regard for a prior speculation. Once enamoured by the Pythagorean dream of 'World Harmony' and 'perfect geometrical bodies', there becomes no aspect of Man or Nature which **cannot be made to fit** the pre-conceived mathematical universe with its 'uniform circular motion' and polyhedral construction. This, we may recall, was a typically Greek characteristic, for as Professor Burnet observes: "No sooner did a Greek Philosopher learn half a dozen propositions . . . than he set to work to look for law everywhere in nature, and with a splendid audacity, almost amounting to a hybris, to construct a system of the universe" (EGP 29).

But in the post-Pythagorean period, Laban has not been alone in his obsession for geometrical bodies and 'World Harmony'. One, Johannes Kepler, we may recall, conspired to make the orbits of the planets fit the five perfect forms. "And lo, they fitted! or at least they seemed to fit . . . " (AK 252) (see Part 2). There can be few more striking parallels than that between Kepler and Laban, but we should have to substitute 'the orbits of man's movement in the kinesphere' for 'the planetary orbits in the celestial sphere' —'choreography' for 'astronomy'. But when Nature and Art are One, such distinctions must seem superfluous!

"Kepler's misguided belief in the five perfect bodies", Koestler observes, "was not a passing fancy, but remained with him, in a modified version, to the end of his life, showing all the symptoms of a paranoid delusion; and yet it functioned as the **vigor motrix,** the spur of his immortal achievements . ." (AK 254). The strength of Laban's belief in the five perfect bodies, can clearly be discerned in all of his theorizing, and is aptly illustrated in the remarks of a Bavarian Schoolmaster:





> ". . . one thing I shall never forget, and that was the mysterious little box with crystal shapes which he (Laban) guarded like a magician, and only opened when he wanted to give final emphasis to his words. He carried the box around with him through thick and thin, until he arrived and could make further use of it in England".
>
> (GM 54 22)

Laban's life's pre-occupation with these crystal forms, undoubtedly links him with that long history of cosmic theories, which, as Arthur Koestler suggests, "may without exaggeration be called a history of collective obsessions and controlled schizophrenias". But — and this must give us pause — we know that were it not for Laban's inspiration, the European tradition of modern dance (and with it the educational repercussions in this country) might never have begun. The precise nature of Laban's contribution to education has yet to be spelt out in clear unmistakable terms; we can only begin by painstaking enquiry into his 'philosophic foundations'.

Plato's directive for educational practice (as reflected in the dialogue of the 'Timaeus') we may well remember, was that we should take care to proportion our movements, and take as our model the 'harmonious circuits of the universe' (T119). Such a recommendation also carried very strong religious implications, for: "the motions in us which are akin to the divine, are the thoughts and revolutions of the universe" (T119). That this is the very heart of Pythagorean doctrine there seems little doubt. "It is by copying" says Lodge, "imitating (if you please) the mathematically perfect regularity of the celestial orbits, that they (the Pythagoreans) can hope to develop an ideally cosmic moral law within. The true way of life for the initiates will thus be a ritual forthshowing of the systematic implications of the Pythagorean triangle inscribed within its circle". (PP 47)

Can it be that 2,500 years after such Pythagorean ceremonial, we are witnessing in our dance studios today "a ritual forthshowing of the systematic implications of the Pythagorean triangle inscribed within its circle"? — three-rings, six-rings, polyhedral exercises, icosahedral circuits? Can it be that twentieth century students of dance are "coying, imitating (if you please) the mathematical perfect regularity of the celestial orbits"? What does Laban say?

"Our body is the mirror through which we become aware of ever-circling motions in the universe with their polygonal rhythms". (CS 26)

"It cannot be said too often, and is a unique conception to be stressed repeatedly and to be remembered: movement, the path in our surroundings, the path as a sign, a symbol of the complex pathways of the universe, — it is to this that today we are directed, and from which we await . . . enlightenment . . . and inspiration . . . " (DK 48)

Is the "wisdom of circles (which) is as old as the hills" and "has its roots in magic" (CSvii) the life-spring of 'choreutic' practice today? Does 'space harmony' with its icosahedral exercise vouchsafe to its performers 'enlightenment', 'inspiration' and a communion with the 'ever-circling motions of the universe'? Certain it is, that of all the emblems that would bring Laban's name to the lips of educationists throughout this country, it would be that of the regular crystal, the icosahedron — that figure of twenty triangular faces which can be inscribed within a sphere. There can scarcely be a College of Education where the Art of Movement is taught, in which one could not find a matchstick, straw, cardboard or cane replica of that Pythagorean figure. Life-sized teaching models, student 'Special Study' models and meticulously drawn two dimensional diagrams (in colour) — all to be found where 'space harmony' is taught. But for what purpose? For technical perfection? For mathematical precision? Harmony? Or for genuinely aesthetic aims?

Do practitioners today share with Laban, the ancient cosmic beliefs that underlie his choreutic and crystal theories? Or have new 'philosophic foundations' been 'laid' which share the Pythagorean heritage, but reject the fundamental principles? Laban's principles are Pythagorean — a mixture of myth, religion and mathematics; are these implied in our syllabuses and university handbooks? These are the questions which might well confront present-day practitioners in the Art of Movement. Laban, we learn, believed that through circular exercise and harmonious sequences the child not only "tries to identify himself with the world . . . and with the infinite but also to weave bonds between the infinite and the world . . . (and) even tries to influence the world around him . . . " (DK 126). Such cosmic and mystical practice must lead us with Plato to question the rituals of the Pythagorean Brotherhood, and by inference, those of Rudolf Laban also. Plato remonstrates:





"But such copying of behavioural patterns, however cosmic the patterns, is merely fanciful . . Is not it claimed that, as ritual, it somehow affects, by sympathetic magic, the motions of the celestial bodies themselves? Surely the net result of all such imitations, objectively speaking is precisely zero; although such rituals may have some slight social-psychological value for the group: in strengthening their morale, encouraging the Brothers to keep on playing their group game". (PTA 29)

We shall need to look more closely at these implications for practice; but have we not forgotten the Golden Section? Surely we have here one of the crucial factors in the choice of 'harmonious sequences' which, although based on the regular solids have little to do with cosmic motions? The Golden Section — that sacred mathematical proportion — has for millennia been the criterion of all good art, and is it not abundantly evident in the 'angles' and 'inclinations' of the regular crystals? Such was Leonardo da Vinci's belief we may recall; and did he not declare: "all perfect harmonious, concordant movements in the universe were reducible to these five regular solids"? (L M/52) Let us see what Sir Herbert Read would say. He writes:

"Since early days of Greek philosophy men have tried to find in art a geometrical law, for if art (which they identify with beauty) is harmony, and harmony is the due observance of proportions, it seems reasonable to assume that these proportions are fixed. The geometrical proportion known as the Golden Section has for centuries been regarded as such a key to the mysteries of art, and so universal is its application, not only in art but also in nature, that it has at times been treated with religious veneration".

But Sir Herbert adds a little later:

"Greek vases do confirm to exact geometric laws, and that is why their perfection is so cold and lifeless. There is often more vitality and more joy in an unsophisticated peasant pot".

"The Meaning of Art" pp. 21/24
Herbert Read

The notion that 'harmony of movement' — even supposing we know what this is to mean — resides solely in gestures made according to the proportions of the Golden Section,

must surely be open to the same charge as that made of the Greek vase. Art precludes any strict mathematical formula; it concerns itself with the conception and formulation of 'felt' life — an inner world which cannot be encompassed by geometrical bodies or circular motions; its dimensions are altogether different from the world of physics or the Euclidean realm of abstract forms.

Two final comments must be made concerning the crystal and its alleged intimate association with the human form; they may serve as riders to our rejection of the mythical and 'crystallographic' assumptions of Laban's work. Charles Bunn's remarks must serve as overwhelming evidence from a contemporary crystallographer, that "on the whole the individuality of behaviour of living organisms prevents the formation of the primitive type of order we call 'crystalline' ". In his book "Crystals Their Role in Nature and in Science" he writes:

> "The vague borderland between the living and the non-living which the viruses represent is also the boundary of the crystal kingdom, for these are the most complex substances which crystallise, as far as we know. The capacity to pack in a regular repeating space pattern is common among simpler substances which crystallise, **but higher organisms do not exhibit this type or order.**
>
> . . . the shapes and symmetries of crystals are characteristic of 'dead' matter: they represent the most primitive kind of internal organisation, a monotonous repetition of the same pattern unit in all directions in space. A living organism higher in the scale than a virus consists, not of many identical units, but a variety of different units, each having its own form and function; so crystalline shape and symmetry in an individual organism are not to be expected. Large numbers of identical organisms could in principle form crystalline arrangements, even if they had an intricate or assymetric shape; but while something resembling crystalline order can sometimes be discerned in 'colonies' of bacteria or in regiments of soldiers, on the whole the **individuality of behaviour of living organisms prevents the formation of the primitive type or order we call 'crystalline".** So it is fitting that as we proceed up the scale of complexity, from atoms to simple molecules, the last crystals we come to are those





> of the viruses, which are at the threshold of life. **In higher organisms the parts are differentiated in form and function, their shapes and symmetries are of an altogether more subtle type, and the behaviour of individuals works against any monotonous repetitive arrangement".**
>
> Charles Bunn
> Royal Institution
>
> "Crystals Their Role in Nature and in Science"
> (my bold) p. 281

The 'mythical' element in Laban's 'crystallography' (outside the Pythagorean Myth of "Timaeus") cannot be dismissed with such ease, for myth is non-theoretical in essence. "The mark of genuine myth", says Professor Langer, "is its power to impress its inventor as literal truth in the face of the strongest contrary evidence and in complete defiance of argument. It appears to be so sacred a truth that to ask in what sense it is true, or to call it a figure of speech and to destroy it is to destroy an idea in its pristine phase, just when it dawns upon people. That is why mythic beliefs are really sacred. They are pregnant, and carry an unformulated idea". But as Mrs. Langer concludes, "the idea must mature some day, and taking logical form, emerge from the fantastic matrix. When this happens, it first begets factions of believers and scoffers, the latter simply at a loss to understand how anyone can hold to its absurdities. In the end no serious thinker questions the myth any more . . . " (FF 81)

(To be continued)

**Abbreviations and References**


| | |
|---|---|
| EM | Friedrich Froebel, 'Education of Man' |
| GD | Rudolf Laban, 'Gymnastik und Tanz fur Erwachsene' |
| WD | Rudolf Laban, 'Die Welt Des Tanzers' |
| CS | Rudolf Laban, 'Choreutics' |
| CY | Rudolf Laban, 'Choreographie' |
| GM | 'Laban Art of Movement Guild Magazine' |
| FF | Susanne K. Langer, 'Feeling and Form' |
| EGP | John Burnet, 'Early Greek Philosophy' |
| AK | Arthur Koestler, 'The Sleepwalkers' |
| T | H. D. P. Lee, 'Plato Timaeus' |
| PP | Rupert C. Lodge, 'The Philosophy of Plato' |
| DK | Rudolf Laban, 'Des Kindes Gymnastik und Tanz' |
| PTA | Rupert C. Lodge, 'Plato's Theory of Art' |
| L M/52 | Edgar Wind, 'The Listener' |

**Note on Translations**

For purposes of research, all of Laban's German books have been translated in their entirety by professional translators. In the early stages of work, however, extracts were most kindly translated by Miss Hilda Brumof to whom I am most grateful.



## FORTHCOMING COURSES

**Saturday, 15th June, 1968**

Day course for Masters and Fellows at the Art of Movement Studio, Addlestone.

**Wednesday, 4th to Sunday, 8th September, 1968**

Residential course in Recreative Dance at Lilleshall National Recreation Centre, Shropshire. (Open to men and women who wish to use their knowledge of Art of Movement in recreative work. Only 20 places available).

**Friday, 25th to Sunday, 27th October, 1968**

Refresher course for Masters and Graduates at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire.

**Friday, 1st to Sunday, 3rd November, 1968**

Residential weekend course for Associate members and non-members at Crystal Palace National Recreation Centre, S.E.19.

**Saturday, 15th to Sunday, 16th February, 1969**

Annual Conference at the Art of Movement Studio, Addlestone.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Madam,

The reading of Marquerite Causley's book "An Introduction to Benesh Movement Notation" raised several questions which I could not include in my review. These questions are I think important because as yet they remain unanswered.

Most Guild members, if they use any system of movement notation in their work, probably use Kinetography. Accepting the fact that a system of notation is desirable in the study of movement (a point well argued since the seventeenth century but not as yet proved) is the Benesh system superior, as good as, or inferior to Kinetography and its offspring Motif Writing? Few of us have the time or inclination to study all the modern systems of movement notation (and one would want to include that of Eshkol in such a study) so on what grounds do we make our choice?

I.C.K.L. and the Institute of Choreology are committed and, regrettably, elsewhere there is a lack of informed opinion and research on the comparision of different systems. Articles by Ann Hutchinson (L.A.M.G. Magazine nos 37 and 38) point to the strengths and weaknesses of various systems and the ensuing correspondence between Marquerite Causley and Ann Hutchinson (L.A.M.G. Magazine nos 38 and 39) raises many fundamental issues. One line of argument was the method of indicating time in the Benesh system. Ann Hutchinson's insistence that a movement of the left side of the body is shown moving "backwards in time" is valid if one accepts the Benesh stave as a left to right time continuum, but Marquerite Causley's point that there is no time/space confusion because of the succession of squares or frames from left to right would appear equally valid to the non-expert. Again one asks on what basis can the selection of a system of movement notation be made?

In her book Marquerite Causley refers to a notation research project she is carrying out at Chelsea College of Physical Education with Gordon Curl and it is to be hoped that the results will be available soon. Perhaps, though, a much more ambitious research project is needed. In the past, time has been the arbiter of systems, but to-day valuable time, money and energy are spent in many colleges of education in teaching students movement notation. Are these students learning the best system? does it help them in their study of movement? do they use it in their teaching? should schoolchildren be able to use movement notation?





Is it too much to hope that the Department of Education and Science or some other influential body might be persuaded to show interest in promoting an investigation into the uses of movement notation in education?

Yours faithfully,

June Layson.

## BOOK REVIEW

Marquerite Causley "An Introduction to Benesh Movement Notation. Its general principles and its use in physical education" Max Parrish (Publishers)

Price 15s.0d.

Ideally a reviewer should be able to claim expertise in the subject matter of the book under review. Unfortunately I cannot make such a claim but I hope that my knowledge of Kinetography Laban has enabled me to bring some understanding of the basic problems confronting any system of movement notation to the reading of Marquerite Causley's book. The title "An Introduction to Benesh Movement Notation" invites the beginner and it was as a beginner in this particular system that I worked through the book.

The typography is attractive and the juxtaposition of notation and explanatory notes makes for easy cross-reference. The first chapter which deals with the stave and basic signs is written simply and clearly giving the beginner the comforting impression that essentially the system is straight forward and that progress will be possible. In the second chapter the recording of basic positions is explained although I suffered a slight setback in that the positions of the feet in figure 4 page 14 do not equate with those in figure 2. I assume that the level (with the body) sign for the feet in the latter figure is misprinted and should be below, instead of on the line. The rest of the chapter is well presented and the immediate visual recognition of symmetric and asymmetric positions in the notated examples is a spur to learning.

Chapters three, four and five deal respectively with movement pathways, rhythm and locomotion and the use of "movement lines" which trace movement from one position to the next has considerable visual impact when reading the notation. I found the recording of rhythm in this system difficult but this may be a normal stage for the beginner (one has seen similar situations with students who have been taught Kinetography badly). The notation of locomotion seems logical and it would appear that a beginner could in fact use the book as a "teach yourself manual" up to this point.





The next four chapters explain the use of direction signs, the notation of movements of the head and trunk, dynamics and how to deal with various forms of support such as in kneeling and lying. To the notator these are complex movement happenings and I found myself wanting more detail and explanation and in need of expert help. Marquerite Causley has anticipated difficulties in the notation of dynamics for those familiar with Laban's terminology and given some guidance but the section on dynamics is short and one cannot determine whether or not the system is capable of dealing with this problem.

Essentially in the Benesh Movement Notation the mover is viewed from behind and spatial pathways are drawn on a stave, similar to that used in music, which is read from left to right. Because the mover is imagined superimposed on the stave there is no need for special body signs and there are comparatively few basic signs to learn.

In her Introduction Marquerite Causley deals objectively with relevant important aspects such as the need for a movement notation system in order to facilitate study, the basic requirements of such a system and the ways in which the Benesh Movement Notation meets these demands. There are many implications here worthy of further discussion and study. One such point of interest is if a culturally determined pathway of the eye and hand over a page (for as left to right) can be the basis of a universal system.

The final chapters similarly provide much food for thought As well as some timely information on choreology there are many examples of how this system can and has been used in physical education as well as in the fields of ethnochoreology, medicine and physiotherapy, etc. The bibliography should be of value to those wishing to pursue their study.

The overall impression is that this book succeeds in its aim to introduce the Benesh Movement Notation and that any persevering reader would gain insight into the general principles of the system and its use in physical education.

June Layson.

## RHYTHM MUSIC AND EDUCATION

By EMILE JAQUES DALCROZE

This book has been revised and published by the Dalcroze Society (inc.) to mark the centenary of the author's birth. It was first published in 1921, and, to quote Mr. Keith Faulkener who has written the introduction to this revised edition, "To-day we can realise what a great impact Jaques Dalcroze has had on educational thought and practice and how fundamentally his principles apply to the needs of the present and the future".

On reading this book one realises that Dalcroze was ahead of his time not only in creative thinking and in the teaching of music, but also in movement education, though we in the field of movement would not agree with all his principles because he was primarily concerned with the musical approach.

Like Rudolf Laban, Dalcroze expresses the importance of 'mind and body' and he realised that the education of what he called 'tomorrow' was before all else, to teach children to know themselves. In his chapter on 'Music and the dancer' one is struck by his understanding of the importance of the movement itself and the feeling behind the movement. In dance he saw that conventional ballet concentrated only on harmony and grace without insisting upon the particular mental state of the dancer. He goes on to say that the attitude arrived at seems more important than the movement itself.

Dalcroze sets out in this book to record his ideas, failures and achievements, and in chronological order the chapters record these ideas as developed from 1887 to 1921.

It is thoughtful reading for anyone who is interested in musical rhythm, though there is much to argue in his application of the learning of rhythm through movement.

E. S. Moore.



## THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF DANCE

By MAXINE SHEETS

(University of Wisconsin Press 1966, 38s.0d.)

Perhaps the justification for Maxine Sheets' using the word phenomenology six times in a paragraph consisting of eight lines (p.9) lies in the fact that she knows her approach to be an unusual one. People familiar with Jean-Paul Sartre's existential philosophy may be prepared for this book; others will get a thorough grounding in phenomenology and soon understand its relevance to dance.

'Dance is a particular kind of phenomenon: namely, one which moves, one which is kinetic.' The author continues to explain the kinetic nature of the phenomenon of dance by describing the total lived experience of any kinetic phenomenon: time and space.

The author of this book has obtained her Ph.D. in dance from the University of Wisconsin. She derives her aesthetic theories from Ernest Cassirer and Susanne Langer. Though her style may appear a bit involved to the non-scientific reader, it is often illuminated and enlivened by the fact that Maxine Sheet is a dancer and choreographer herself and her actual experience of dance helps her to be more comprehensible to dancers. The chapter on Dance Composition is most valuable and stimulating, giving a practical example to work with movement as a dynamic form-in-the-making. To Laban Art of Movement students, however, the practice of creating movement phrases is not new. What is said about dance education is rather controversial and provocative and could be argued much further.

'The Phenomenology of Dance' is an interesting book, and it ought to be available on college shelves to every serious student and lecturer of dance. The short foreword is written by Merce Cunningham.

Lilian Harmel.

*We regret that 'Readers in Kinetography' is not reviewed in this issue. A review will appear in November.

## THE DANCE THROUGH THE AGES

By WALTER SORELL

(published by Thames & Hudson, London, £4.4s.0d.)

This amply illustrated book (containing 250 illustrations) reads very smoothly whilst giving a good general survey, starting with the origin of dance in primitive rites, describing the dance of the ancient Greek and Hebrew civilizations, and the medieval Dance of Death tradition. The chapters on the Dances of the Far East and on the origins of the main national folk-dances, as well as the one on the Renaissance man, contain some interesting views; they make condensed and lively reading, capturing one's interest with a variety of non-pedantic information.

The chapter on the Diaghilev period is admirably concise, stressing the main phases of that particular flowering of theatrical ballet. The 'New Beginnings' of the 20th century, however, are overshort whereas the history of the American Modern Dance is more extensively treated; this can probably be explained by the fact that the writer was involved in that particular period as a contemporary dance critic.

Instead of a Bibliography, Sorell gives a very short selected Reading Guide (only 39 books). In the paragraph on Rudolf Laban's 'Quest' he makes a statement which is definitely misleading. He says that Laban's ideas of space patterns and harmonies led to expressionism in the modern dance. No one with a true knowledge of Laban's ideas and of Choreutics could agree here. A good 'afternote', however, is the inclusion of the chapter on 'Recording the Dance'; the author enumerates only a few of the many notations existing today and, ending his chapter with Labanotation, he gives it its due. A 'Cultural Chronology' at the end of the book gives an interesting link between the main events and personalities in Dance, Music, Theatre, Fine Arts, Literature, Philosophy, Science, and Politics from 1400—1950. Here again, the selection is most economic and convincing.

The colour photographs are enlivening but not as satisfying as the black-and-white modern dance photographs, which are plentiful and well selected. In short, 'The Dance Through The Ages' can be recommended as a reasonably priced book, containing a wealth of information for the dancer with little time to spare for reading.

Lilian Harmel.



## GUILD MEMBERSHIP

ASSOCIATES:—

Miss P. P. E. Adams, Hoddesdon.
Miss R. Allen, Bromsgrove.
Miss A. M. Anderson, Peterborough.
Miss M. E. Anderson, Glasgow.
Miss P. Anderson, Meonstoke, Hants.
Miss D. Andrews, Richmond, Surrey.
Miss J. M. Annibal, Croydon.
Miss V. Aplin, Havant, Hants.
Mrs. B. M. Baddeley, Dunnington, Warwicks.
Mrs. A. Bell, Reading.
Miss S. H. Black, Droitwich.
Miss J. R. Blackaller, Mitcham, Surrey.
Miss G. Bleackley, Bolton, Lancs.
Miss S-A. Blick, Birmingham.
Miss S. Brassington, Romford, Essex.
Miss J. Browner, Gerrards Cross.
Miss M. E. Bull, Lewes, Sussex.
Miss Y. M. Bartlett, Weybridge.
Miss A. Batten, East Molesey, Surrey.
Miss A. Booth, Godshill, Isle of Wight.
Miss E. Bowler, Goodmayes, Illford.
Miss S. Clarke, Liverpool.
Mr. G. Clay, Addlestone.
Miss D. Connor, Aylesbury.
Miss B. A. Cowdery, Esher.
Miss J. E. Crawshaw, Peterborough.
Miss C. M. Davenport, Coventry.
Miss A. J. Davies, Burnley.
Mr. J. P. Davies, Woking.
Miss L. Davies, Blackheath.
Miss M. Davis, Cheadle Hulme.
Miss B. Evans, Chester.
Miss M. N. S. Evans, Woking.
Mrs. M. M. Evans, Liverpool.
Miss P. A. Exley, Barnsley.
Mr. A. McK. Farmer, Kidderminster.
Miss M. A. Ferguson, Keighley.
Miss G. Ferris, Bristol.
Miss M. K. Fisher, Warley, Worcs.
Mr. I. D. Frampton, Weston-super-Mare.
Miss S. J. Freeman, London.
Miss G. Freshwater, Birmingham.
Miss M. A. Glynne-Jones, Crowhurst, Sussex.
Mrs. C. M. Gray, Manchester.
Miss J. H. Gutteridge, Kendal.
Miss R. M. Habgood, Cobham.
Mrs. M. Hale, Halesowen, Worcs.
Miss P. Halls, Bishops Stortford.
Miss H. A. Harness, Hyde, Cheshire.
Mrs. D. Harper-Wills, London.
Miss P. Hodgens, Retford.
Miss M. Hood, Lichfield.
Mrs. S. H. Howett, London.
Miss E. C. Hunt, Swansea.
Miss S. Hurdman, Birmingham.
Mr. K. M. Jackson, Sheffield.
Miss J. B. Jepson, Thames Ditton, Surrey.
Miss A. Johnson, Liverpool.
Miss L. E. Johnson, Stockbridge.
Miss P. Jones, Exmouth.
Mr. C. Kangoz, Weybridge.
Mrs. E. Kincaid, Bromsgrove.
Miss I. M. Koutsakindes, London.
Miss A. Kruger, Brentwood.
Miss I. N. Lachenal, London.
Miss C. E. Lennox, Birmingham.
Miss V. M. Lines, Swindon.
Miss Y. Lloyd, Coventry.
Miss C. M. Long, Retford.
Miss V. A. Lowe, Whyteleafe, Surrey.
Miss K. H. Lubek, Droitwich.
Miss J. M. McDowall, London.
Miss C. McKay, Hull.
Miss P. McMaster, Blaydon-on-Tyne.
Miss R. Manning, Liverpool.
Miss K. Marsden, Morden, Surrey.
Miss J. H. Matthews, Addlestone.
Mr. P. Meakin, Ilkeston.
Miss S. Melbourne, Belper.
Miss D. F. Miln, Axminster.
Miss W. Morrison, Chertsey.
Mrs. P. M. Mudd, Ipswich.
Miss S. K. Needham, Burton-on-Trent.
Miss B. L. Neel, Surbiton.
Mrs. M. Newby, St. Agnes, Cornwall.
Miss C-A. Onslow, Bristol.
Miss M. Page, Walsall.
Mr. R. Parker, Hampton, Middlesex.
Miss E. J. Parkin, Ripley, Derbys.
Mrs. V. Paulden, Lee-on-Solent.
Mr. R. Pawley, Loxley, Warwicks.
Mrs. S. Petrie, Bletchley, Bucks.
Miss B. M. Phillips, Weybridge.
Miss S. E. Ramsden, Bradford.
Miss V. A. Rawlinson, Stevenage.
Miss H. Reid, Coventry.
Miss A. Ridout, Stoke-on-Trent.
Miss S. Riggs, Herne Bay.
Miss J. S. Robertson, Leeds.
Miss J. L. Salisbury, Wallasey.
Miss N. Scuffam, Wakefield.
Miss B. Shaftoe, Addlestone.
Miss C. Simmons, Sturminster Newton.

Miss Jacqueline Smith, Huthwalte, Notts.
Miss M. A. Smith, London.
Miss C. A. Sparks, Solihull.
Miss C. A. Softley, Sheffield.
Miss J. Stevens, Hayling Island.
Miss S. Stubbings, Redditch.
Miss T. Swan, Cambridge.
Miss S. M. Turner, Frinton-on-Sea.
Miss J. Vallance, Ontario, Canada.
Miss M. Verstraeten, Hardingstone, Northants.
Mrs. S. M. Ward, Shorham, Sussex.
Miss D. J. Walters, Rhondda.
Miss H. Ward-Smith, Battle, Sussex.
Miss H. K. Warner, Cromer.
Miss J. M. White, Chertsey.
Miss G. Wignall, Bromsgrove.
Miss Y. M. Wilkes, Solihull.
Miss B. Williams, Crewe.
Miss C. Wills, London.
Miss P. J. Wilson, Birmingham.
Miss L. Wraight, London.
Miss H. Wright, Liverpool.

## AFFILIATED GROUPS:—

Cambridge Dance Club, c/o Dance Lecturer, Homerton College, Cambridge.

Bristol Dance Circle, c/o Mrs. P. Carter, The Gatehouse, Syston Court, Nr. Mangotsfield, Bristol.

Dudley College of Education, Castle View, Dudley, Worcs.

Sheffield College of Education, 44, Collegiate Crescent, Sheffield.

## NEW MASTER:—

Mrs. D. Davis (nee Gaumer), U.S.A.

## NEW GRADUATES:—

Mr. Sid Elliot, Cheltenham.
Mr. John K. Gorman, Formby.
Miss Sandra I. J. Green, Liverpool.
Mrs. S. Thornton, Barnsley.