



**The
Laban
Art of
Movement
Guild
Magazine**

Price 40p.

Fifty-first number
November, 1973

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EDITORIAL

The idea of asking members to write articles with an 'historical' theme for the magazine, was developed when, while considering the reminiscences offered by Eileen Akester, we realised that we were on the brink of many changes. To enumerate only a few — Lisa Ullmann is no longer Principal of The Studio; The Studio, by its link with Goldsmith's College, will become a different place and, with the boundary changes and new local government areas, many of our 'strongholds' will cease to be separate authorities. The people who have undertaken the writing of more factual articles have needed time for research and we hope that their contributions will be published in May. The articles in this issue are much more personal, but we feel that these recollections are important and should be recorded.

We have not yet found anyone who was at The Studio in Manchester who is willing to write an article about it; it would be interesting to read of Laban's connection with Esmé Church and the Bradford Theatre School. If we can provoke articles from these or other areas it is possible that this 'historical' theme will continue for three issues.

We were sorry to hear of Mary Wigman's death and are indebted to the Editor of 'The Daily Telegraph' for his permission to print in the magazine the obituary which appeared in that newspaper. We also reprint the article which Mary Wigman wrote for the Kaleidoscopia Viva programme when we were celebrating the Guild's twenty-fifth anniversary.

The magazine articles may be looking backward, but with it you will receive papers asking for nominations for Council. The Council must look forward. Will you nominate a candidate who, if elected, will help to plan the Guild's future.

LISA AND SYLVIA — AN APPRECIATION

In the early years of World War II Rudolf Laban and Lisa Ullmann came to live in Manchester, not far from where Sylvia Bodmer and her family had already settled. Lisa, who had been training the Ballet Jooss, was known in a number of Colleges of Education for her courses of dance training in what was then called "Central European Dance". Sylvia, who previously had a dance school on the Continent, had started her own group of "Young Dancers" with a view to production and performance.

It was the chance coming together of these two distinguished one-time pupils of Laban that provided the opportunity for the partnership and collaboration that has now continued for well over thirty years.

The debt that members of the Laban Guild owe to Lisa and Sylvia is impossible to estimate. From the beginning their joint influence and their work have been far reaching, penetrating and continuously sustained throughout the last thirty years. By both example and teaching they have given to many members a deeper understanding of human relationships and a personal enrichment that cannot adequately be expressed in words. From the beginning too, Lisa and Sylvia complemented each other in their discussions and teaching. Both were dancers and teachers in their own right and each interpreted and developed Laban's ideas of movement in her own inimitable way.

In the early years of the Studio, of the Manchester Dance Circle and of the many week-end and vacation courses that quickly became established, individual students, members of recreational groups and movement choirs found their interest and enjoyment enhanced, not only by the variety of approach to movement and dance adopted by the staff—led by Lisa and Sylvia—but also by the sympathetic goodwill, understanding and gaiety that permeated the courses and produced a harmonious atmosphere and congenial friendly relationships. News of the courses available quickly spread and students came to the studio in Manchester from many countries in Europe and America to study with Laban, Lisa and Sylvia.

Laban's arrival in Manchester came at a time when fundamental changes were in progress in education and new methods and ideas were being tried out. Emphasis was put upon the needs and capacities of children and on the encouragement of their individual powers of expression in such subjects as art, language, music and drama. In Physical Education the limitations of current schemes, particularly of those of gymnastics and dance were being critically assessed. The urgent need for change was recognised. In such circumstances, Laban's ideas of movement, with its richness and variety and its significance as a means of expression, evoked an immediate response in those who attended the courses taken by Lisa and Sylvia. As the result of greater knowledge and understanding of the Art of Movement, and after much trial and error,

Physical Education, especially in girls' and mixed primary schools underwent a vital change. Stimulated and encouraged by changing attitudes to children in general education all over the country, the Physical Education teachers' attitude also changed, Modern educational dance was taught and has continued to develop in more and more colleges and schools and drama, with a stress on movement, became part of the curriculum for many schools.

Lisa, as Principal of the studio in Addlestone, a post she has held for the last twenty years, has exerted a strong influence, not only through the Studio itself, but also through her lectures on the value of the Art of Movement in Education, and through her willingness to discuss and advise on many problems raised by lecturers and teachers. She has been an Examiner for students taking special courses in many colleges. Students came to the Studio not only from Europe and America but also from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Rhodesia, Israel, Iceland, Brazil and Korea. While Laban was still alive Lisa worked with him in the application of his movement principles to industry and to therapy. A number of one-time students are now working in these fields with considerable success.

Sylvia because of her family has remained in Manchester, but for some years she regularly visited and taught at the studio in Addlestone. After thirty years she is still Artistic Director of the Manchester Dance Circle, to which many people from varied walks in life, come. Through the "Production Group" which she has developed and trained to give performances of dance to children and students and others interested, she has helped in many areas to encourage an interest and appreciation of dance and a desire to participate. Her love of dance, her inimitable sense of humour and her masterly skill as a teacher have given joy and encouragement to many able and less able dancers and to young and old alike. Her Dance Dramas and movement choirs have been a feature of many summer schools of the past.

The Manchester area has been particularly fortunate in having both Lisa and Sylvia together for the annual week-end courses. The occasion invariably shows their collaboration at its closest and best as one after the other they take over the group of enthusiastic members and develop the theme of the course in very different ways. How many times they have ended these and other courses by together leading the famous Polonaise!

Both Lisa and Sylvia are now "semi-retired" but everyone hopes they both will continue to participate for many years in Guild events and in other activities outside the immediate sphere of the Guild. It is hoped that they will continue to inspire and delight those whose love of

dance brings them back to refresh their knowledge and renew the enjoyable experience of creative dance.

Gratitude for all that Lisa and Sylvia have done is best expressed perhaps by the increased growth and understanding of Laban's ideas which is clearly to be seen in many fields of study; also by the efforts to obtain scientific assessments of the value of Art of Movement in human life, and last, but not least by the spread of dance both as a performance and as a recreation in which to find refreshment and enjoyment.

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MY MEMORIES OF MR. LABAN

It was in 1923 when I first met Mr. Laban and the Art of Movement. There was a three days' conference in Berlin where various systems of gymnastics and dance were demonstrated. This was a first class opportunity to compare one method with another. At that time I was still rather more interested in the Physical aspect of movement as I only recently had passed my Physical Education exams. This was the reason why Mr. Laban's lecture and the display of his male students seemed rather strange to me. I remember him talking about space-orientation, dimensions and scales, performed by his students; but all this was then far above my understanding. Dr. Bode's method shown at the same conference appealed to me just then as it had strength, beauty and rhythm. I became a student of his under Mr. Medau's tutorship. I enjoyed the short course, but at the end it left me unsatisfied.

So after much thought I made up my mind to visit the Berlin Laban School under Herta Feist. I watched a class in progress and remember students, this time women, studying the dimensional scale. I must confess I did not understand much more about it than when I had seen it performed the first time; but I decided I would give it, or rather give myself, a chance, and I enrolled tentatively for two evenings a week. All gymnastical efforts and physical exercises came easily to me and the studies in space I copied from the others. I just could not accept the pure intellectual approach but felt vaguely there was something else behind it. And then one day when practising alone in one of the large studio-rooms it happened; suddenly I knew what it all meant. I felt uplifted and became part of the space in the widest sense. It just was a glorious feeling of knowing and understanding and being. It had taken me three full months to reach this point. From that moment on I could dance and threw myself wholeheartedly into my studies.

There came a day when Mr. Laban visited the School. He saw each student privately. It was my turn, and I entered the room timidly. He very kindly pointed out to me that my movements did not yet travel through the whole of my body, but that I kept my head bent most of the time. So Mr. Laban put both his hands round my face and lifted me up in the air thus demonstrating to me the urgent improvement of my posture. The experience was a kind of shock and revelation at the same time. I never forgot it. This first personal encounter showed me Mr. Laban as a kind and understanding teacher who could immediately detect and remedy a student's weakness.

During my full-time training we had various holiday-courses in Berlin under Mr. Laban's tutorship. During one of these courses Laban explained to us the relationship between music and movement. He gave us examples of music by Bach and Beethoven which he played himself and pointed out the difference between them. Bach's music flowed mainly on melodic lines while Beethoven's had a more accordic character. This, we found, was a beautiful illustration and gave enormous

MY MEMORIES OF MR. LABAN

scope not only for individual progressive movements — one after another — or at the same time together — but also for solo — and group dance. All those holiday-courses had a most stimulating and uplifting effect on all of us.

At another course we studied the "Three-Rings". Their beautiful space-pattern is known to all Laban students, but it fell to us to study a more complex pattern. Each arm had to do a different Three-Ring while one leg had to add a third one, all at the same time. To my dismay and embarrassment I was chosen to demonstrate. I just fumbled through it.

Our school used to have regular annual dance-festivals, during which we showed some of the work we had done, solo — as well as group-dances; but the main feature was improvised group-dancing in which we young teachers took the lead with one or the other percussion-instrument. It was Mr. Laban's dearest wish and concern to create a new festival culture through group — and choral dance. What fun it was and how much happiness it gave us all! At one of these festivals, with Mr. Laban as our guest, I had to perform a solo dance of a lyrical but lively character after which I had the pleasure to receive Mr. Laban's special praise and thanks. He congratulated me kissing me on the forehead. It made me immensely proud. Years later a teasing friend told me I should never have washed my forehead again.

There came a day when I had my first private lesson from Mr. Laban. This was a very special occasion, and naturally I was looking forward to it with great joy and excitement. Mr. Laban asked me to choose between three aspects of movement, the physical, rhythmical and artistic one. Of course I knew I could have benefited by every one of them but chose the rhythmical. I knew there would not be any music and I was curious to learn on which lines Mr. Laban would develop rhythm without any instrument. I soon found out and was completely bowled over. Mr. Laban based rhythm simply on shapes, the 4/4 beat was a square, the 3/4 beat a triangle. Each I had to step out in a regular beat, then vary the movements by twists and turns. It was a revelation and excited me enormously. My hair, normally straight and tidily rolled back into a bun, came down, my hairpins had dropped out, I looked like a gipsy — but what a happy one!

Then came the day when Mr. Laban started the first rehearsal of his Dance-Drama "Don Juan" with us to music by Gluck. This was an unforgettable experience. He assembled us all round him, looked at us for a few minutes and then divided us into various groups of high, medium, and low dancers. We were taken into different halls of the school and started practising under the leadership of an experienced dancer one of whom was Mr. Laban another was Albrecht Knust whom he had brought along, as Knust had taken part in a previous performance. In a few hours the whole "Don Juan" was completely sketched.

Of course after this the rehearsals proper began. The excitement grew with each one. Herta, our head-teacher, was "Donna Elvira", Laban of course "Don Juan". There were four ladies-in-waiting and two favourite slaves, danced by my colleague, Seraphine Kinne, and myself. Sera was a negress I was a Spanish girl.

The first performance — we had five I believe — in one of Berlin's theatres brought us all sorts of surprises, not all pleasant ones. One of the four ladies-in-waiting twisted her ankle and kept on dancing in great pain. I ripped the hem of my red and gold dress with my first step on the stage and had to continue with the hem hanging down. It was a miracle I did not fall. My colleague Sera was less lucky. She slipped at her entrance and fell absolutely flat at Laban's feet. He had the great presence of mind to pick her up by the hair; she responded at once and was lifted with her arms and legs outstretched in all directions. There was a great outbreak of mirth and laughter — small wonder! At one of the following performances the devils, a group of men on each side, pulled so hard at Laban's sleeves, trying to destroy him, that one sleeve was completely ripped off his coat. We had indeed a lot of fun.

It was during my first year in England, while working as a parlour maid in the Cotswolds, that I heard of Laban's arrival in Dartington Hall. As I knew Jooss had his studio and group there, I wrote to them asking whether they needed help in the Studio. The answer came, they wanted somebody in the office for shorthand and typing. With great disappointment I wrote my regret. It never occurred to me that this may have been a disguised request asking me to come and teach there. During war-time we refugees — still foreigners — were not allowed to take any teaching post. Only some years afterwards when I met Laban again in Manchester, he told me the true meaning of that letter.

When I had changed my post and residence and came to Cambridge I heard Jooss and Leeder had their Studio in the next street to mine. I got in touch and enrolled in a course as I was out of practice. I went there regularly on my free afternoon. How glad I was to get back to movement again! After a while I felt — I had now changed by parlour-maid post to a cinema-operator — I wanted to dance again. So I hired a small hall and started regular dance-composition on Sunday mornings. Fortunately I had found a fine pianist, Lotte Schoeps, and with her prepared a dance programme which I performed eventually to a group of friends.

Betty Meredith Jones, a former Laban student, was lecturer for dance in Homerton College, Cambridge. Laban who wanted to help both of us introduced us and asked me to take Betty for some private lessons and further study which he thought she needed. Later on he came to visit Homerton College in order to see the students' progress under Betty. As I knew about his visit I asked him to see my new dances if

he could spare the time. He very kindly agreed and his judgement proved to me most valuable. Later Lisa wrote down one of my dances, the "Dance of Sorrow" which Laban liked best. When I told Laban about my hobby "Astrology", he said he realised now that he often observed a certain shape in my arm-movements which depicted the three-pronged planet Neptune. This planet by the way is my ruler of birth! Laban then suggested to me Holst's "Planets" for dance-composition which I used later on with College students with great success.

Thinking back I find that Laban very often has been my guardian angel. My first school — as well as College — engagements I got through Betty Meredith Jones's recommendation — Laban from the background. My second College post, again via Laban, when Lilla Bauer suggested me as her successor in Portsmouth Training College. Laban had introduced us. On one of our annual Open Days we had the great pleasure of receiving Laban and Lisa as our guests. After having watched some dances to Moussorgski's "Pictures of an Exhibition" Laban congratulated us in his kind and understanding way on the performance of the students who were thrilled to bits — needless to say, so was I.

When Laban had moved to Manchester I spent one of my first fortnight's holidays in that city. It was on a nice Sunday afternoon walk with Laban and Lisa along the river that Laban told me why and how he got out of Germany. Dr. Goebbels had asked him to act as adjudicator for the dance-display of the Olympic Games in 1936 under one condition that he would give the first prize to a German dance-group. Laban found it impossible to agree, and so, as was the rule under the Nazi government, he was immediately put on the "black list", and his friends advised him strongly to leave the country at the earliest opportunity. This he did.

He arrived in Paris rather ill and without luggage. Unfortunately his former master student and solo-dancer, Dussia Beresca, the only person he knew there, was away, but he had the 'phone number of her friends whom he contacted. They of course knew him by name and asked him to wait for them at the station. So they collected him and took him home where he first of all was put to bed. Slowly he recovered, Beresca returned and Laban started lecturing in French, a language he knew from childhood. Before the German invasion Laban was able to leave Paris for England owing to Jooss' grant for him.

It was at Bishop Otter College, Chichester that old and younger Laban students met for the first Summer-Course. I remember this occasion especially for two reasons. I had enrolled, just having enough money to pay for the course when my naturalisation came through. For this I had to pay about the same sum. Naturally I was thrilled to become a British subject at last. My only chance was to ask Betty Meredith Jones to come to the rescue and lend me the money for the course which I was able to repay very soon after getting my last term's salary from

College. She very kindly agreed and so I could join this very memorable course where the Laban Art of Movement Guild was founded. It was a great moment!

Some of the practical sessions were taken in the lovely College grounds by Sylvia Bodmer. We had a delightful dance-play with all sorts of creatures from the Kingdom of nature where Neptune, danced by Dr. Kosterlitz, jumped down on us from a branch of a tree. The evenings were taken up by social gatherings or some gay entertainments. I believe it was during this first meeting that Laban gave us a splendid demonstration of an old-fashioned ballet-master with a small group of members acting as ballet students. One evening, perhaps during the same meeting, we had a lovely period of old English dances; we all joined in, including Laban, and enjoyed this improvised session very much. During one of those Weekend-Courses Laban told us about his first school in Switzerland, this was before the first World-War. At that time he had 65 men-students of various nationalities. All of them were called up, and the terrible thing was none of them returned home any more. Laban used to travel a good deal and at one of our courses he told us about his remarkable experience in China. It was in a park where he observed a number of older men performing certain exercises in a dance-like fashion with great concentration. He then found out the name for those movements — to his great surprise it was "The Art of Movement".

Here I should like to mention two of my own experiences:

Once, when our Berlin school had been requested to show our style of dance to a very distinguished visitor, the Indian poet Rabindranâth Tagore and his party, I was told by a young Indian student that our movements seemed not at all strange to them, but reminded them very much of their own. Only years later I could judge this for myself when I saw Ram Gopal and his group. Also in the "Ballet Nègre" I could recognise certain movements of Laban's B. scale. This showed me how widely Laban had travelled and observed the movements of other nations and races.

The dances we studied at Weekend- or Summer-Courses were very varied. One beautiful theme was about the relationship between colour and efforts. As far as I remember we had six groups, each representing one special colour. White was direct and bright, thrusting and gliding; black, pressing and wringing; red, wild, thrusting, jumping with flicking; blue, floating gently; green, flicking and fluttering (like leaves); yellow, I think, was slashing.

Another time our theme was about a shipwreck. First we loaded the ship (working movements, efforts used), then came the sailing of the ship, the group joined hands in the shape of a ship (facing outwards). The ship started moving up and down, swaying from right to left and back again as if gently floating on the water. Suddenly a storm broke, wild

slashing movements representing the waves, and eventually the ship was torn apart. From there, on the ground, the people started swimming to safety or were rescued by others, pulled or carried ashore. A lovely theme especially for boys. "The Railway Station" was another exciting theme, based on more individual movement expression, walking carrying luggage, missing the train, resigning yourself with a sigh and wait and rest; sudden alarm, departure of another train from another platform, rushing, suddenly stopped by a guard, then rushing on and reaching the train.

Once Laban gave us a historical theme "Columbus' departure", group-work with some solo-parts. This was mainly about the Spanish court, the Queen's order to go on his voyage. I can only remember a line of dancers cutting off and preventing him from leaving, strong direct sharp sideways movements. Besides dramatic or funny themes we had others e.g. based on patterns; large groups formed circles weaving in and out, very much like flower-designs, direct and indirect.

Another very interesting pattern that stuck in my mind was a slow majestic straight line of dancers, very slowly walking and pausing while another line ran quickly and lightly through the gaps, weaving in and out, another beautiful example of direct and indirect combined with slow and quick movements.

One course was mainly based on rhythm. Here we learned something of male and female approach in contrast, e.g. short with long giving more masculine emphasis — long followed by a short beat a more feminine one, based on the ancient Greek poetry (see Laban's "The Mastery of Movement on the Stage").

A theme with many variations was "The Days of the Week" Monday was washing-day; washing, rinsing, wringing, putting up the line and hanging the washing, always combined with playful dance movements. Unfortunately I have forgotten the other activities except for great cheering crowds for either coronation day or another parade.

"Statues in a garden" was another theme. The statues were represented by individual dancers in various shapes while others walked around admiring them. Gradually the statues began to move, first hardly noticeable until they changed into wild horrible beasts or ghosts attacking and conquering the unhappy visitors.

When the Studio had moved to Addlestone Laban and Lisa invited me to come and see it, I was much impressed. They showed me over the house and garden. I remember with how much pride and pleasure Laban pointed out the beautiful lawn where he hoped to have students perform open air dancing; and indeed I have seen them there several times on "Open Days" moving to percussion instruments. When I visit the Studio today I am conscious of Laban's presence, and this besides seeing films and photos of him. I am sure he is still taking part in the life and progress of the Studio.

LOTTE AUERBACH

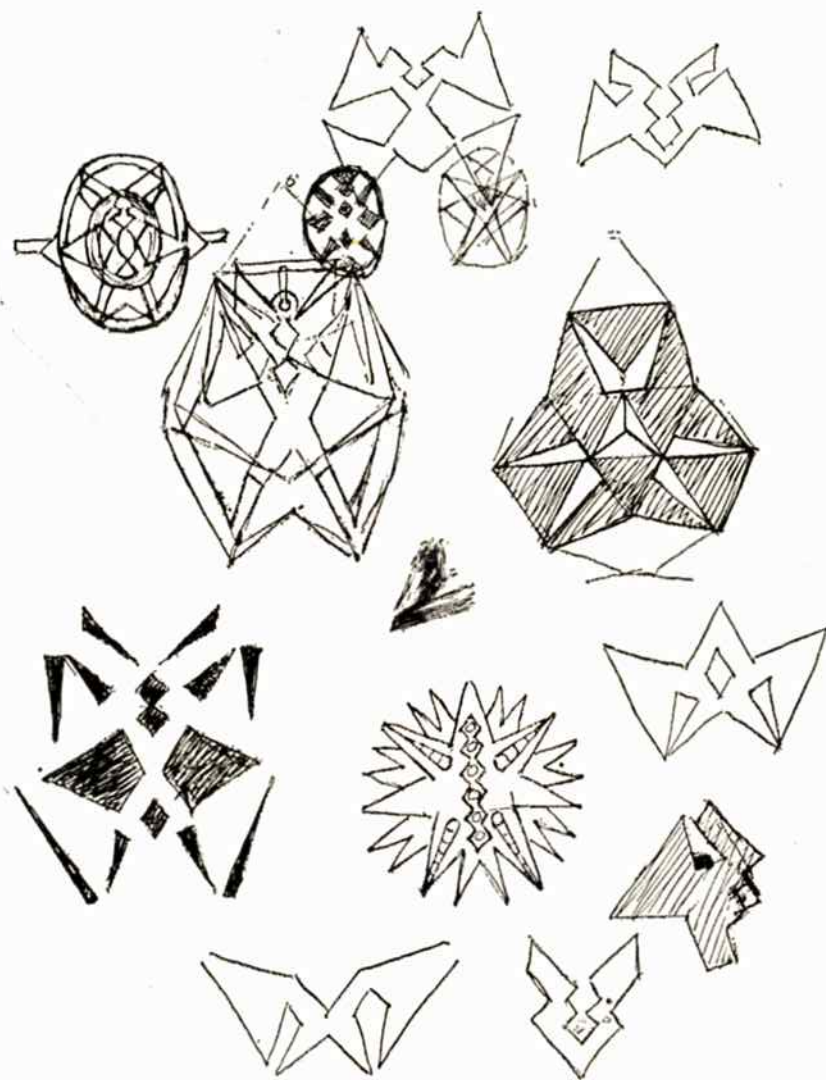
Dear Editor,

You have asked me about the meaning of the symbol which we use for the publications of the Guild. I thought it will be best if I send you a copy of Laban's sketch which I think is self-explanatory and I hope it is good enough for printing in the Magazine for the sake of the readers who enquired about the figure.

Laban made this design in 1939 as an ex libris for himself. In 1946 when I founded the Art of Movement Studio he presented it to me for the letter head of the Studio writing paper. A number of years later, namely in 1953 I gave, with Laban's consent, permission to the Guild to use it as well when through an outward sign they wished to demonstrate our common ideals. The symbol was introduced for the first time in March 1953 by the Guild for the 10th number of their bi-annual publication, the then called "News Sheet".

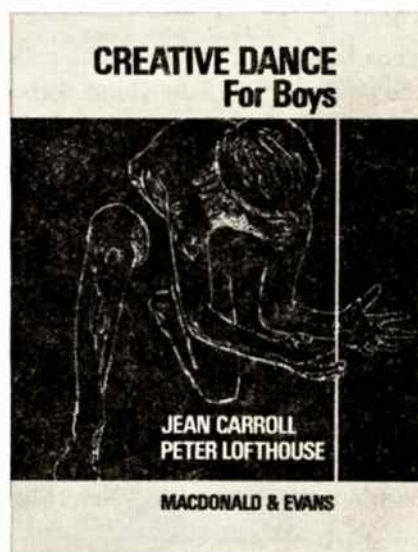
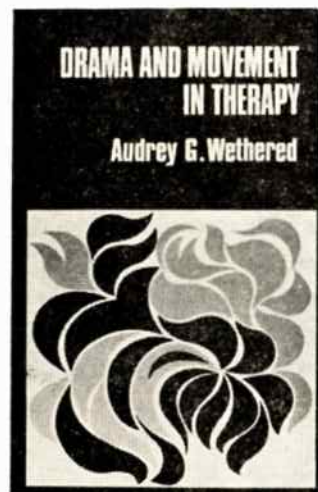
Yours sincerely,

LISA ULLMANN



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A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF PRE-1950 DANCE

I cannot claim to be an authority on any form of Dance Movement since I have merely 'dipped in passing' during the passage of a varied life. Interest, however, has always been present. With the renewal, after some twenty years, of practical contact with LAMG members at Derby in April 1972, I was pleased to realise that the tenuous thread, forged in the 'forties and early 'fifties, had more of steel than of gossamer. So I am taking up the challenge thrown out by David Henshaw, and will attempt to recall something of those distant days. Though what I write must inevitably be personal and somewhat parochial.

Looking back over forty years to the time before Laban is like looking through the wrong end of a telescope. Individual events, clearly defined in miniature, spring from a hazy background. A little ballet training, some Greek Dancing, a touch of Margaret Morris Movement, even a period of tap dancing, came my way in out of school activities.

In Educational Establishments, conditioned as we were, to P.T. and English Country Dance — all pointed toes and floor pattern — the first impact I recall with a more relaxed movement was Kenneth Clark's softer foot-floor contact and consequent less bound flow in performing Country Dance.

In 1936/37 we were introduced to a form of Central European Dance. It was brought to us, under the auspices of the then P.T. Organiser of Birmingham, by a teacher of dancing who had spent a little time studying in Germany. She was Mrs. Eileen Harper, later Principal of the Birmingham Athletic Institute. I believe the original Central European Dance owed much to Laban's early work, but after the Anschluss it was filched by the growing Nazi powers for their 'Health with Joy' movement. It was this version, I believe, which had influenced the teacher, and which was brought to us as Modern Dance.

Bare foot and minidressed, we learned to advance up the hall in serried ranks, 'wave upon wave of an unthinking sea of lissome zombies!' That is how I described it, at the time, in a letter to my sister. But perhaps that was very unfair, since the exercises were attractive, and we enjoyed the feel of continuous flowing movement, with its moments of rest as we walked back to take our places in the next surge forward. The figure of 8, which was the basis of many of the exercises and studies, engendered a feeling of in Space, very different from the over-controlled effort of much of our previous Physical Training. We learned to side-sit; to relax; to leap over imaginary springs flowing at convenient intervals across the hall; to mazurka; and to enjoy group performance of dances devised by the teacher. But little came from ourselves. Everything was imposed, and cheerfully accepted. We performed before the Queen Mother — in 1938, and were honoured to do so.

We trained our adolescent girls in the same way, and enjoyed their acceptance of our teaching. They too gave their displays in various

halls, excitedly enthused to perform to perfection. The 'little revolution' spread through the City's girls' classes, bringing an awareness of graceful body movement which was entirely feminine, a change of emphasis to be welcomed, since the earlier work in girls' gymnasia had been based almost entirely on the training given to boys and men.

Dance was still a subject on the time table, to be looked forward to, but having little connection with any other subject in the curriculum — a watertight compartment for the improvement of physical attributes to keep the body healthy for mental alertness. 'Mens sana in corpore sano' in fact — like an attractive wrapping for a more precious consignment. When later we were introduced to Mr. Laban's work we were grateful for this phase in our dance experience, for it had given us increased suppleness of body and some awareness of Space and Flow.

Our initial contact with Mr. Laban's work was in September, 1941, through Louise Soelberg, a ballerina of the Kurt Jooss ballet. Her approach was quite foreign to us. She asked us to sit in a wide circle around her, and, standing in the centre, began a steady quiet beat on her tambour.

"When you feel you want to, get up and move," she said. For what seemed a very long time no-one moved. What did she want or expect? In the brief moments of silence between the slow tempoed beats one could almost hear the clicking of our conditioned mental processes! Eventually someone got up and began to walk, followed by other in ones and twos, until all were walking in a circle. All except me. Instead of finding release in this simplest of exercises I became fixed to the spot with embarrassment. In time I overcame this early resistance, but did not join that first moving circle. Today's young people may find it quite impossible to understand this attitude to Movement, though doubtless they have their own 'up-tight' situations.

Through demonstration, discussion and question-and-answer Louise helped us towards some knowledge of Mr. Laban and his work and to a tentative understanding of his basic belief that Movement should lead to an integrated personality. We were further helped in this by her booklet 'modern dance, what is it?' (T.R.T. Publication, Number One), from which I take the following quotations.

"It is a characteristic of the teaching of modern dance to create dance-forms and sequences of movement which have their roots in the life of our time . . . In the creating of dances and sequences the teacher's first consideration is . . . that they can be fully enjoyed by the pupil. Enjoyment will be shown in different degrees by different age groups, and the teacher must be aware of the varied demands of the individual aptitudes of the pupil . . . In order to carry out the demands of educative dancing, there must also be something in the dances which leads the pupil a step further towards the main

goal. This goal is the development of his whole personality." and again

"Movement, which is the substance of dance, is an event in space, and the study of space and an awareness of its significance can give rise to a mastery of the whole of the delicate processes which constitute our physical and mental life."

In practice, Miss Soelberg's most difficult task was to get us to change from the strong tendency to move always peripherally to an understanding of movement from the centre. But with her guidance W.S.T.F. began to have a deeper meaning.

As with any new concept, be it religious, political, or artistic, there comes a time when opinions differ as to interpretation. This happened in Birmingham, and a small group broke from under the umbrella of the Local Education Authority, and formed the Birmingham Contemporary Dance Circle. Among these were Kay Garvey, Kay Tansley, Beatrice Freeman and Doris Nock, whose deep interest and enthusiasm kept the group going during the very difficult war years to flourish again afterwards. The group welcomed anyone from other walks of life, thus widening interest and saving itself from becoming 'precious'.

In the May 1967 issue, Kay Garvey wrote fully of the birth and growth of the Birmingham C.D.C., and I will take the liberty to quote from her article.

"One cold, grey Saturday afternoon in December, 1941, a group of people met in the Birmingham Athletic Institute to discuss the possibility of founding a Dance Course sponsored by the Birmingham Education Committee under the direction of Miss Louise Soelberg . . . it was decided that there should be two types of membership, Associate and Active . . .

"During the first few years, Associate Meetings were held three or four times annually and our visiting dancers and speakers included Lisa Ullmann, Sylvia Bodmer, Lilla Bauer, Lucas Hoving, Yoma Sasberg, Martin Penny, Pola Nirenska, Renate Kuh, Lilian Harmel, Beryl de Zoete, Terence Morgan and Peter Goffin . . . The Active Group met weekly and, from the first, members were encouraged to take responsibility for leading the work and for organising the group's activities." Louise Soelberg was, from the beginning, most encouraging and agreed to become the Circle's artistic director.

When my husband was killed (R.A.F. 1942), I left teaching and went into factory welfare work in Birmingham. In 1943 I was invited to go to Hull to restart the Reckitt and Colman Day Continuation school, which had been bombed in 1941. The work entailed travelling between the main factory and two temporary subsidiaries, where we worked in the canteen areas. To get the interest of the women workers in move-

ment, I spent a good deal of my non-teaching time in watching them at work on their machines, and used the actions so observed as bases for dance movement. One group, however, resisted all my efforts in this respect. From them came the idea of using the then popular Jitterbug as a starting point, with encouraging results. My time in Hull was brief, but whilst there I started the Hull Dance Circle. One of the highlights was a visit from Terence Morgan who gave a display of Indian Dance. I wonder what happened to the Dance Circle? I left Hull to go into para-military work which took me to Belgium, Holland and finally Germany.

On my return from Germany at the end of 1945 I took a post at the Thomas Coram School, in Berkhamstead, a residential co-educational school for deprived children. It was, in fact, the final development from the Foundling Hospital, which had been granted its charter in 1741, after years of effort by the sea captain after whom the school was named. At first children were taken into the foundation from birth, but in the early 1900s the system was changed, so that they came into the school at five, after having been fostered out, and remained there until they were fifteen. Summer holidays were taken in seaside school camps. Even these had been suspended over the war years, and the children had hardly left the spacious grounds. The restriction had played havoc with the nerves of staff and children alike, as was made apparent by the stories — often exaggerated no doubt — told by the children when they came to trust us. The Dame Curtis Report resulted in the school being taken from under the aegis of the Home Office and transferred to the Ministry of Education. With this change came, in April 1946, complete reorganisation, and an influx of new staff, under a Head Master replacing the former Headmaster and Headmistress.

This rather detailed description of the school is given in order to explain, in some degree, the reaction of the children to dance. Beyond the Maypole and some English Country Dance they had little dance experience. They welcomed what I could give them at first with caution, but later with delight. I was able to encourage them to experiment with movement, not only in dance, but with small, and later with large, apparatus in the gymnasium. The first reaction in Dance Movement was an extensive use of strong, twisted movements, as though in an endeavour to get free from some intangible restraint, often followed by explosive leaps and jumps. Group work came slowly, and even then the preference was for aggressive efforts. The uninhibited enjoyment of lightness and freer flow came later. Continued contact with these children from dawn to bedtime, and even beyond when night duty called, offered untold opportunities for observing reactions in every phase of a day's living. I may have given them something of value. They certainly taught me much, not least the value of movement in bringing release to emotions which, under more normal living circumstances, would not have been pent-up.

Further moves took me first to Somerset, then to Lancashire to the Washington Hall E.T.C., where Joan Goodrich gave me invaluable help, and where I again worked in courses taken by Lisa, and finally back to the City of Birmingham as organising tutor for P.E. at the Emergency Training College.

Between 1940 and 1943, and again during the years 1946 to 1950, I became almost a 'camp follower' of Modern Dance Movement, attending short courses in a variety of places. I cannot recall dates, but know that I travelled to Manchester, London, Doncaster, Birmingham and Sheffield. I joined the Guild in 1948 and attended the Dartington Hall Summer Course in 1949. It was there that I and many others of the Birmingham C.D.C. had our first real working sessions with Mr. Laban. It was there, too, that we heard his fuller explanation of what he meant by 'Movement is Life; Life is Movement', and that a deeper understanding of this precept could lead to the harmonious working of the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual into an integrated being. The varying degrees of understanding of this teaching, at the time, remain of interest. There were those who, like swimmers, dived in at the deep end. Some came up spluttering, confused and despairing. Some rose gracefully, with scarcely a ripple of non-comprehension. Others, like myself, tested the water carefully and slowly accustomed ourselves. Yet others rejected the whole concept and later dropped from view. My most vivid recollection of Mr. Laban's first practical session with us was his covering of the eight basic efforts. He began by demonstrating from the rostrum, but very quickly was down among us, encouraging and chivvying, until we were fully extended. By the end of the session we may not all have been sure of the quality of a punch or a whip; a dab or a flick; but we were certainly aware of the great vitality of this very unusual man.

In spite of the fact that the Art of Movement was distilled and developed by a great man after world wide research, the interest of men in Britain was a very long time in coming. This may have been due in part to the fact that it was the indefatigable Miss Lisa Ullmann who introduced the work to so many women teachers. (Without being accused of being a radical 'Women's Lib.' advocate, perhaps I will be excused for interpolating here that it was women's forward looking intelligence which recognised the wide beneficial implications of the basic concept!) In the very early days with Louise Soelberg in Birmingham, one lone man, Mr. Stone, joined us. His 'Hiawatha' production in the early 1940s, at the school where he was headmaster, drew many accolades, and may have been the first primary school project ever developed through Dance Drama in this country.

At the City of Birmingham Training College I was fortunate in having a male colleague who showed great interest in dance movement, and encouraged his advanced group to attend with him some practical

sessions with me. From this beginning came co-operation with the Music, English and Art departments, lecturers and students alike showing growing interest. The men's preference was for recreational dance-drama and their interpretations were often delightful and original. Having come to teaching after experience in wartorn areas in this country, and from the forces overseas, they were mature and completely uninhibited in burlesque.

The following excerpt from a published criticism in 1950 gives an idea of how the three departments worked together.

'The major operation of the year has been the Evening of Movement devised and produced by Mrs. Eileen Akester. The programme comprised the work of a large federation of classes and marginals, and the items were evolved in the spirit of group experiment, with little concern for presentation. The performances inevitably became "theatre", and for this reason a certain amount of self-consciousness appeared for the first time, especially among the ladies. Inevitably, too, the items varied in effectiveness as stage pieces, but all were interesting as showing the application of Movement to a wide range of ideas and purposes, varying from abstract studies to set dances, and from Movement with incidental elements of Drama to Drama approached through analysis of Movement. Typical of the whole programme was the inclusion, at the last of all minutes, of a cricket scene which the stage-hands were discovered enacting behind the scenes in parody of one official item. The rhythmic basis of Movement was throughout strongly emphasised, and the performance was fortunate in having so versatile and creative a musician as Miss Melling to select, extemporise, compose and play accompaniments. The evening concluded with a Polish Mazurka, danced with a finely controlled abandon, in which we were able to feast to the full on the sight of Mr. Hill's torso in action.

'Only those who know the workings of an E.T.C. will appreciate fully the task which Mrs. Akester undertook in seeking to co-ordinate and bring to a point the work of more than 50 members of the College, divided into many overlapping groups. Her success was as much a tribute to her endless patience as to her fine and sincere artistry.'

Whether any of these men progressed in any branch of L.A.M. later I have no idea, for my next leap was to East Africa, and I lost touch. But I had learned much from them.

Of the concept that Movement can integrate the physical, mental and emotional towards a harmonious whole, I am certain. But the spiritual? I am still to be convinced.

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A ten-week full-time course in Creative Dance for teachers serving in Primary and Secondary Schools will be provided in the Summer Term of 1974. Those accepted will be eligible for secondment on full salary for the period of the course.

The course will be under the personal direction of Miss Joan Russell.

Prospectus giving details of the course and application form may be obtained from The Registrar, Worcester College of Education, Henwick Grove, Worcester, WR2 6AJ.

OBITUARIES

MARY WIGMAN PIONEER OF MODERN DANCE

Two schools of serious dancing now flourish in the Western World, classical ballet and the techniques usually called modern dance. Mary Wigman, who has died aged 86, was a fountain-head of the German branch of modern dance.

As a solo dancer and choreographer she has had as much influence in America as in Europe and her native Germany. But she had to overcome fierce hostility and incomprehension when she began her professional career in 1919.

Shunning feminine grace or sex appeal, she translated into forceful, even tortured, extempore movement, the promptings of a powerful intellect. The Berlin critics derided the performance as ridiculous and idiotic.

Her first stage appearance, in 1919, was the fruit of eight years' study, first of rhythmic gymnastics with Dalcroze, then of theories of movement of Rudolf von Laban. Later she was greatly influenced by Oriental styles of dance, and sometimes used masks inspired by those of the Noh Theatre of Japan.

Mary Wigman was creating an entirely new language of dance and originally danced to no music at all. Later she used simple percussion accompaniment of gongs and later still had music composed for her dances.

In 1920 she opened a school in Dresden to teach the expression of the deepest human feelings through movement alone. She attracted pupils from all over the world, many of whom later became internationally famous.

She gave considerable stress to improvisation and creative activity in her teaching, and this helped her pupils to develop on their own lines when they set up on their own. But she had such a powerful personality that those dancing in her group had little chance to develop as individuals: to do this, they had to break away from her.

She established a dance group in 1923 and made her first London appearance in 1928. She now had a following who hailed her as a genius while some critics saw her influence as destructive.

The Nazis had little time for her advanced theories of dancing and she was kept a virtual prisoner in her own school. After the war the Russians too, with their commitments to ballet, offered scant encouragement and in 1949 she moved to West Berlin where she re-established her school. By now, however, the pendulum was swinging in Germany very strongly away from modern dance towards ballet, and she became a relatively isolated figure, with little influence on post-war German developments in dance.

OBITUARIES

She made her last appearance as a dancer in 1953 when 66 but her choreography and direction continued. In 1957 she choreographed a new production of Stravinsky's "Le Sacre du Printemps". Altogether she created more than 500 dances. She staged and choreographed Gluck's "Alceste" at Mannheim in 1958 and his "Orpheus & Eurydice" in West Berlin in 1959.

Her ideas have remained very much alive in the United States, where modern dance has continued to develop, having absorbed much from her; her influence on American modern dance was transmitted first through her American tours with her group in the early thirties, then through the teaching and choreography of her pupil Hanya Holm, who settled in the United States.

Mary Wigman's ideas about dance were given definitive exposition in her book "The Language of Dance", published in Germany in 1963 and (as translated by Walter Sorell) in the United States and Britain in 1966. By permission of The Editor, "The Daily Telegraph".

JOHN MACDONALD . . . an Appreciation

John Macdonald died in December 1972. He was not known personally to many people in the Guild, but his work has had a great influence on the thinking of all people concerned with Movement. His death after a long illness should not go unmentioned.

He was the Managing Director of the Publishers 'Macdonald and Evans' and many years ago when Laban was formulating his ideas on Effort, it was John Macdonald who had the vision — and courage — to undertake the publishing of Laban's first book in English. Since then, many books on Movement have flowed from his office and the 'Listen and Move' records owed much of their popularity to the way John Macdonald organised this series.

When 'Kaleidoscopia Viva' was in the early stages of development, John Macdonald immediately offered encouragement — and money — to get it off the ground.

He has, indeed, been a friend to the Guild and although the work of Macdonald and Evans continues to flourish, those of us who knew John personally are much saddened by the loss of such a warm hearted, practical and considerate friend.

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THE EXTRAORDINARY THING LABAN GAVE TO THE DANCE

Movement — in all its possibilities and varieties, in its utmost simplicity as well as in its intricate extravagance, in its natural appearance and in its symbolic abstractions. In its spontaneous outbursts and its controlled functions — movement, and movement again — that is the extraordinary thing Laban gave back to the dance, so that once more we can understand and experience it, can read, write and speak it as an artistic language of its own.

When, over half a century ago, Laban started his work in practical and theoretical research, the traditional dance, the classical ballet, had become somewhat tired and even a bit dusty. Steps and positions in more or less artificial combinations were fixed and polished to such a degree that dance had become hardly more than a convention. The original qualities, the deeper sense: to move and be moved, seemed to have gone out of it and to be lost for ever.

Though Laban had thoroughly studied the discipline of the ballet and even used the five classical positions as a starting point for his special research, he never based his ideas on their typical forms. His interest was focused on the human being and the human body. So he went back to the very roots of dancing, or better, to life itself from where dance sprang.

What else is movement but the **living breath** which, when **made visible** through the human body, helps the dancer to find out about the qualities of his naturally given motions and emotions? Helps him to discover the deeply rooted relationship between the utmost contrasts, between tension and relaxation, between strength and delicacy, activity and passivity; and helps him to climb up, step by step, the steep hill where movement undergoes the change from everyday use and expression to dance gesture and dance form, where individual outlet is surpassed by its superpersonal symbols in time and space, and there becomes: dance.

Movement is the one and only material of the dance. In developing and mastering its spiritual and emotional values as well as its organic functions, the dancer is enabled to build up his own body, so that it becomes what it should be: the ideal instrument of the dance.

Dance is born out of movement and irrevocably bound to it. Therefore it should not even in its utmost abstractions lose the stronghold of this its origin. If its sense and meaning are kept alive and pure, the language of the dance can be understood by everybody.

This is what Laban gave and taught us. And though there were other people who worked more or less in the same directions, it was Laban who out of his complete vision rounded it all up and, from playful jest to hard professional work, from recreation and adjustment to the art of dance itself, opened up the tremendous field of movement to all

those who wanted and needed to move or to become what nature had meant them to be: dancers.

The dancer of today takes all this for granted. Not having been a witness of the late dance evolution himself, he does not know whom he has to thank for it. He should be reminded, from time to time, that it was Laban who, like an ingenious gardener, fertilised the soil for him so that, to whatever discipline of the dance he might belong and believe in, he can stand, work, dance solidly on it, and may gather the ripening fruit.

MARY WIGMAN

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Perpetuum Mobile — An adult dance group geared to production of varied programmes which include dance drama, contemporary styles and jazzy. Next major production at the Woodlands Theatre, White Oak Arts Centre, Swanley, Kent on March 22nd and 23rd, 1974. Tickets 25p and 35p available from February, from Mrs. Pam. Howard, 10 East Hill, South Darenth, Kent, DA4 9AW.

Please send details of your dance group productions, recreational evenings, days of dance or any other activities which you would like included in this column, to Brenda Jones, 23 Bramley Avenue, Henrich Park, Worcester.

'VISUAL CHOREUTICS'

by Alan Salter

This is a 'kit' of 16 transparent diagrams or 'notational grids', together with an 8-page text. It is designed as 'an exploratory tool and as a teaching aid'.

The diagrams are drawn 'in an approximately naturalistic perspective' (i.e. in the manner of 'Choreutics') 'or . . . recording on a flat surface' (i.e. bird's eye view); the latter is stressed. There are master sheets of the octahedron, cube, and icosahedron (peripheral and transversal) which can be inserted into a transparent envelope together with sheets of scales. Instructions are given as to how the transparencies might be used to further choreutic knowledge, analysis and observation.

Alan Salter's approach to the subject is refreshingly devoid of cliché language and concepts. There is no metaphysics here. The cool eye of the intellect has been brought to bear in this work. In 'Choreutics' we have body/mind/soul; in this small volume we have mind alone. This necessarily involves a complete absence of the kineasthetic approach to choreutics. It may appeal to the more intellectual student but the average movement student, trained to perceive movement kineasthetically, may find himself unable or unwilling to approach choreutics on Alan Salter's terms.

V.P.-D.

"Drama and Movement in Therapy" by Audrey G. Wethered has been received and will be reviewed in the May issue of the magazine.

LIST OF COURSES

The Advanced Study Course, will be held at Digby Stuart College on March 16th, 1974 and will be directed by Mrs. Ann Hutchinson-Guest. The Course will be on Labannotation and will be aimed at B.Ed. level. The committee and Mrs. Hutchinson-Guest felt that both reading and writing were too much to attempt in one day so the course will concentrate on the reading aspects. The leaflet details have been approved by the committee and will soon be in the hands of the printer.

Easter Course 1974. Mr. David Henshaw will direct a course Movement in the Arts which is to be held at Bishop Lonsdale College of Education. This will not be a production course as at first envisaged as the College does not have facilities for such a course.

The Guild hope to organise a production course in the near future.

Recreational Courses. Miss Olive Chapman and Miss Bette Brown will direct one on 2nd February, 1974 at Digby Stuart College. Miss Jean Hurst will act as Course Manager.

Mr. Alan Bond and Sheila Dobie will direct their course at Notre Dame College of Education, Liverpool, early in the Summer Term, 1974.

Miss Joyce Spurgeon and Miss Brenda Jones have agreed to direct a course at Hereford or Madeley early in the Summer Term 1974.

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LABAN ART OF MOVEMENT GUILD

The attention of all members is called to the forthcoming elections, the results of which will be declared at the Annual General Meeting in March 1974.

In accordance with the terms of the Constitution, nominations will be required for the following Officers of the Guild - President, Chairman, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Editor, and for four Council Members.

The retiring President, Mrs. S. Bodmer, and the retiring Chairman, Miss J. Russell, are not eligible to stand for re-election.

The names of the present Officers are listed below. All are eligible to stand for re-election.

Secretary: Miss J. Holden
Assistant Secretary: Mrs. D.P. Wells
Treasurer: Mrs. K.M. Kershaw
Editor: Miss E. Smith

The 3 retiring Council Members are:-

Mrs. R. West
Miss G. Williams
Miss P. Woodeson

All are eligible for re-election. There are vacancies for FOUR Council Members.

NOMINATIONS

1. PLEASE ASCERTAIN THAT YOUR NOMINEE IS WILLING TO STAND FOR ELECTION and that he or she will be able to attend the FOUR Council Meetings held each year. (Usually on Saturdays in London).
2. Please note that every nomination must be seconded.
3. A brief statement should accompany each nomination giving the following information ...
 - a) Number of years' membership of the Guild.
 - b) Interest and experience in Art of Movement.
 - c) Participation in Guild Conferences and Courses.
 - d) Experience in Committee work.
4. Please make clear for which office each nominee is standing.

All nominations and brief statements should reach the Secretary, 24, Winnipeg Close, Lower Wick, Worcester, as soon as possible, but not later than 18th January, 1974.