

MOVEMENT AND DANCE



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EDITORIAL

It is appropriate that the year in which our organisation formally changes its name to *The Laban Guild* should also be marked by a celebration day of dance in honour of two of its founders, Sylvia Bodmer and Lisa Ullmann. In recognition of their continuously important role in the Guild this issue devotes most of its article space to their reflections on their own work.

Margaret Dunn, our president, has herself been a member of the Guild since its foundation in 1946. She is in the enviable position of being able to comment, from her own experience, on the work that Lisa and Sylvia have done in Britain.

The two subjects of this celebration issue have chosen to talk about aspects of their work which may not be immediately familiar to readers. Sylvia Bodmer recalls her dance career in Germany in the nineteen twenties and how this developed when she came to England and settled in Manchester. Lisa Ullmann draws on her extensive experience of Laban's work throughout the world and considers some of the international repercussions for dance and movement in Britain.

It is also pleasing to note that the first issue of a newly titled magazine, *Movement and Dance*, coincides with remarkable developments for movement and dance in this country. An indication of the way in which the cause of dance is being furthered is given in the article by Judith Chapman and June Layson. An important development for the Guild, the Leaders' Training Scheme, is comprehensively reported by Margaret Longley.

One result of this increased national and international activity is that there is more to do, more to see, more to read about and consequently more to consider. To accommodate this wealth of material the quarterly Newsletter was inaugurated this year. In addition, the reports and reviews section of the Magazine has been expanded. This has meant a reduction in the size of the typeface in this section in order that as many topics as possible may be included.

The Guild congratulates Sylvia Bodmer on reaching her eightieth year and Lisa Ullmann on reaching her seventy fifth. We look forward to the Birthday Celebration Day of Dance in Manchester in May and wish both of them all the best for the future.

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THE LABAN LECTURE: SYLVIA BODMER AND LISA ULLMANN

MARGARET DUNN

This as you all know is a special year for the Guild for we are celebrating the birthdays of two very great ladies, Sylvia Bodmer and Lisa Ullmann. Without them, members of the Guild, and indeed many others, would have been denied a richness of experience which few societies and groups can have enjoyed to the same extent. They were prime movers in the founding of the Guild; they served for over 35 years on the council, as president or chairman or adviser, they gave unstintingly of their time and energy and hospitality and, from the start, and over all the years they have won our affection and loyalty and gratitude.

In this 'Laban Lecture', however, it is not my intention to give a list of their achievements, nor to give an historical record of their lives and activities. I would rather try to enlarge a little on 'the extraordinary thing they gave to movement and dance', if I may misquote Mary Wigman when she spoke of Laban. Much of what I have to say is personal, partly because I came in at the beginning of their work in this country and have, therefore, been especially privileged, and partly because I think my own experience has been similar to great numbers of others who have learned from them.

First, I would like to comment on the way we learned. It was not a form of drill, nor by dictation, nor by force — it was because they abhorred such methods that they left Germany — it was a learning which each of us could make her own and through which we could grow as individuals. It seemed to me, therefore, that in this appreciation I should include some thing about my own growth.

But where do I begin? When I think of Lisa, what do I select from a life lived so abundantly, so fully, with such variety and with such enthusiasm. In her last address to the Guild as president only two years ago she spoke of her visit to Brazil and described the people she had taught. What she said, seems to me, to be so true of herself.

There was always a spontaneous element of wonder and surprise, they anticipated the work eagerly and when it was finished there was an afterglow.

These qualities have been present in all Lisa's work, in her teaching, in her lectures and in her discussions. Her enthusiasm is infectious though sometimes it runs away with her and has to be curbed! One has only to look through Guild Magazines and other papers and journals to recognise the extent of her knowledge which, I may say, includes "Architecture and Freemasonry — elements of Laban's ideological debt"! Above all she more than any other has, through her work, and through translations of his writings, made available and more understandable to us, the work and ideals to which Laban devoted his life.

I must mention, also, Lisa's work in the field of notation, although, I am no scholar myself. She initiated and organised in 1959 the first international conference of Kinetography Laban out of which was founded the "International Council of Kinetography Laban" commonly called ICKL — a

council which, year by year, has gained in strength and international repute. International is a description which can rightly be used of the founder herself for she has, since her retirement from the Studio at Addlestone extended her influence, through her travels, far beyond the shores of this country.

It is however as a teacher that I, and probably most others, think of Lisa and it is to her teaching that I owe my greatest debt. She taught my body to move, she taught me to think with my body and she taught me to breathe life into my body. It was sheer agony, often, to begin with. The precision she demanded, the endurance needed to hold on and to 'do it again' was almost more than I could manage. I had been through what, in those days, was considered to be a good training in physical education at Dartford but when I came to Lisa my body was asked to do something different from anything it had done before. I joined Lisa's first course at Newtown in Wales where she and Laban made their first home at the beginning of World War II. There we worked on a lawn, which we shared with the hens. A friend of mine, who came with me to enjoy the countryside and recuperate after an illness, watched one or two classes at Lisa's invitation. After one of them she said to me "I don't know why you bother to go on, you'll never be able to do it". But I persisted, perhaps like the man, quoted by Dr. Johnson, who married a second time revealing a triumph of hope over experience.

In recent years as you will all know, there has been considerable emphasis on the teaching of technique for dance, and I have to agree that something was needed to counteract the imprecise and sloppy movement one often saw in schools and colleges. But technique in isolation achieves little more than the performance of movements. It is the awareness of the body which needs to be taught and it was Lisa who helped me to discover what the different parts of my body must do if I were to gain the quality needed for dynamic action, for spatial awareness and harmony, for relationship with others and with myself. I stress again, body awareness, and Lisa with her vast and precise knowledge and her acute observation saw my need to pay attention to particular parts of my body if I were to experience what Ruth Foster called 'knowing in my bones'. I can think of many occasions of willing myself to respond to her demands. It took me a long time and much concentration to experience the flow of movement through to my finger tips because I could not master the outward rotation of the shoulder which was needed to give freedom for the movement to ripple through. In class we often worked on 'gathering and scattering', on moving with an inner concentration alternating with a flow of movement to the periphery. This required mobility in the spine, particularly in the dorsal or chest region, for the rounding of the spine embraced the movement in and the lengthening of the spine opened out the movement. Those of us who were 'physically educated' found this extraordinarily difficult. I cannot remember his exact words but Laban during a vacation course arranged for physical educationists said,

You people have backs like walking sticks, beautifully balanced to remain erect but if you could only bend and come off balance as well, how much more you would know.

A particular and prolonged struggle for me was the attempt to master the diagonal scale. To recognise the eight corners of the cube and even to gain some intellectual understanding of its significance was simple compared with moving into it. In every class we had, some part of my body was not able to respond and I am pretty certain that were I to go through the scale today, Lisa would be dissatisfied. When, however, the demands are met, one is rewarded with a glorious sense of harmony and wholeness.

This is not intellectual thinking about movement, nor is it the body demonstrating suppleness or strength or lightness or a succession of movements linking for example, the door, table and wheel planes; it is something deeper and it has a significance which is impossible to put into words because words are limited in their meaning. I found amongst my jottings a quotation by Alfred Adler the psychologist, which seemed apt but even this, I maintain, can only be understood by those who have experienced the whole. The quotation is:

There is a logic from the head, there is also a logic from the heart and there is an even deeper logic from the whole!

In all the years I have lived and in the many technique classes I have attended in recent years, I have never had such demands made on my body as Lisa made, nor have I learned as much. Sadly I have to say that as the years have gone by, awareness and efficiency of the body seems to have been left out in so much of the work that we call, or did call Modern Educational Dance. This, I am sure, has been an important reason for the upsurge in recent years, of interest in technique training. But those of us who were taught by Lisa how to use our body were indeed fortunate.

My debt to Sylvia is no less than that to Lisa. From her many gifts and her excellence of mind, outstanding for me is that she taught me to dance, to dance with a group and from her I learned something of the choreographer's art. The spark which fired us to dance with Sylvia's insistence on an inner motivation without which the dance had no power, as she wrote in one of her articles. I recall in particular, the years of the Modern Dance Holiday Courses when everyone came together in a movement choir to dance with Sylvia. She seldom began by telling us exactly what to do, to go here, to go there, to take so many steps, to move to the right or to the left. That sort of pattern emerged as time went on. First we all as individuals had to learn to respond to an inner motivation. Again, words are limiting but an example might help. On one of the courses at Moreton Hall we met on a beautiful summer day on the lawn. Sylvia wanted us to breathe in the sun and the warmth, to be nourished by it and to allow ourselves to respond. We were rather foxed by this for, remember, most of us were physical educationists but we watched her and we tried to copy her movement. This was not what she wanted. We watched again and noticed that she tended to close her eyes and although we thought this was too emotional we tried it! She kept tapping her chest in explanation and said it begins here. We tried again and again and again. Some of us went into a whole lot of movement to show how much we enjoyed the sun and the warmth but that was over indulgence, superficial and affectation. But at the end of a session of two hours I, for one, began to be aware of an inner feeling of nourishment to which I could respond. Then

when later we came together as a group, so much of the concentration had to be given to the awareness of each other, to being open to receive and to give from one another. This kind of sensitivity is not concerned with what to do but with an inner feeling which in turn evokes the motivation to move. It was because Sylvia so patiently brought us to greater feeling and sensory perception that we were able, at the end of a course, to take part in and experience some wonderful choral dances. She came to the courses with an idea and the imagery for its conception in dance form. She brought also the music she wished to use or, if she had Adda Heynnsen to compose for her, she gave clear direction as to what she wanted but the dance was not worked out in detail of steps or pattern. To give just two examples — on one occasion we moved from captivity and confinement, as perhaps experienced in Nazi Germany, to release and a sense of freedom and it was a most moving dance which ended with a feeling almost of ecstasy. At another course, Sylvia used the music of William Walton's "Spitfire Overture" for the film "The First of the Few" and her response to it was an image of a bird of prey which we as a group symbolised. She shared her imagery and her ideas with us, largely through her own movement so that our movement imagination became caught up with hers and gradually, as we became more sensitive, the form of the dance emerged — and the pattern too. I mention pattern because at one course I was invited to be her assistant. We met each day before her class and she would say what she hoped to do and would try out various phrases of movement. I listened and observed as carefully as I could taking note of where she placed her feet and arms. When it came to the class I would try to help by going around whispering comments such as "she really wants 3 steps here, not 2" or "You should be lifting your arm there" and so on. But seldom, if ever, in her session, did the pattern work out as planned beforehand. For me, however, it was a privileged experience to observe the way Sylvia worked and indeed, the way most artists work. I watched the idea taking hold and how she worked on her medium, in this case movement, and how, sometimes, the human body was not immediately sensitive and able enough to respond to her. But eventually, the form and the pattern came through and had meaning.

If Sylvia's life had been devoted to working with movement choirs alone, she would have made an enormous contribution to dance but she has done so much more. Only two years ago she wrote of her studies based on crystalloid forms. These are studies and investigations which have absorbed her interest over many many years. As a young woman she was to have become a teacher of mathematics but she came under the influence of Laban and changed her course. But the pure logic of mathematics and the art of dance united in this one person makes Sylvia unique. It is not for me to expand on this aspect of her talents, I could not do so anything like adequately. But I have sat on many occasions listening to Sylvia talk and discuss for she is always so generous in her readiness to share her knowledge. There have been occasions when I have not understood, when my own knowledge and ability was nothing like adequate enough to comprehend what she spoke about, I can only draw attention to the greatness of the mind of this remarkable woman. In fact, we have two

remarkable women. They are today as active, in their way as they were when I first met them. We greet them on their birthday and hope that they will continue to enliven our minds and bodies and spirit for many years to come.

The Laban Lecture was given by Margaret Dunn at the A.G.M. of The Laban Guild on March 6th 1982.

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Sylvia Bodmer: a recent photograph

In January I travelled to Manchester to talk to Sylvia Bodmer about her long and distinguished career in dance. We decided to talk about her early career in Germany in the nineteen twenties and thirties and her return to dancing in Manchester with the Dance Circle, the Art of Movement Studio and the Guild. This was used as a starting point to explore some topics which are particularly important to her and which, it is hoped, will be of interest to readers.

We discussed many, many things. The following is an edited transcript of our afternoon's conversation. In places additional information has been appended in brackets or in footnotes.

MICHAEL HUXLEY

M.H. Perhaps we can begin by talking about how you started dancing.

S.B. It will be interesting for you how I came to the dance because it's a little bit of an unusual way. I started studying mathematics but then I began taking evening (dance) classes with Käthe Wulff. She worked with Laban for many years.

In Zurich?

It was in Zurich. I went for several weeks to these evening classes and then I said to my mother I will do this dancing instead of mathematics. Actually, my great interest came through Laban's harmony forms — the scales which he had designed out of crystalline structures.

And this is what Käthe Wulff was teaching?

No, she was not teaching this, she was teaching Laban's dance. I mean its a technical basis. I will come to it later. When I came to this dance, you know, after six weeks we gave a performance. It was quite a new art form. That's why I also came to dance with the Dadaists.

Was that in Zurich?

Yes, that was in Zurich. Wigman gave performances at that time, she had just become very well known. Our teacher was keen that we should give demonstrations of our dance. We did a combined evening with the Dadaists — (Berthe) Trümpy had a studio and at our studio there was this evening where the Dadaists said poems and we danced. I had not been doing dance long but it was an inspiring evening.

That was presumably during the war years?

The war was over. I was 18, it was 1920. There was a sort of link between what Laban's dance meant and the Dadaists and all the Bauhaus people. The new ideas had something in common, like a new art form, a more experimental art form. You see, ballet had the old tradition and was set in its way but this new thing . . . like we now have in Edinburgh on the Fringe, groups coming in who do experimental work.

My real interest was with these harmony forms and I said to the teacher that I had never seen Laban. I wanted to go to this man who had these scales and that's how I went to Germany. I went to Stuttgart and I was supposed to have an interview with him and my teacher had not notified him and it was really awkward. But Laban was a fantastic man and he said all right you come this afternoon and join in my class. So I went to the class and I thought it was absolutely wonderful. Laban gave very inspiring classes. He also expected you to come out with your own creative qualities. And so he said to me why don't you join my Tanzbühne then.

Who was he working with at that time?

After the war he left Switzerland and Wigman and the group he had worked with before had all dissolved and he had not been working. He was just forming a new group. Kurt Jooss was, for example, one of these, and Aino

(Siimola). They were people keen to do this kind of dance form and so it was entirely new. A very interesting group, very good dancers. About 24 of us then went to Gleschendorf, which was in the countryside near East Germany, north of Hamburg. We prepared a programme to be performed and there I really worked with Laban. It was very inspiring. He had so many ideas, so full of ideas.

What were the sort of dances you were working on at Gleschendorf?

We did dances like *Die Geblendeten*¹, a few big performances, and there were very many what you call dance dramas. It is perhaps now different but in the ballet, on the whole, the woman was high and light and a swan or a sylphide. But we were character dancers. Laban stated — and this I find is a basis of the work — the three different types of movement which you have by nature through your body build and characteristics.

That's the high, medium and low dancer?

Yes, and this really built up the compositions because we performed our parts in our characteristics. We were very well integrated, we were really a group. It was marvellous teamwork which came out through your individualism. But we had all this training — the basic training. Laban gave very good classes but this teamwork gave me, I would say, the greatest impression.

When you were putting these dances together how did you work? What sort of a day did you have?

Usually Laban gave us a session, a very good session. We danced in the open and we had no lawn. Afterwards, for the whole day we would work partly on ourselves and partly Laban came and put it all together.

These pieces that you were working on in Gleschendorf were then taken to Hamburg I believe.

Yes, we performed in Hamburg. Later we performed in Berlin and also we toured. At that time it was very little known and we didn't always get good critics. But we were all convinced that *that* was dance. We believed it you see. It is very little known over here how it was really quite like bringing a new art form. The dancers came from many different countries which was also very interesting. It was entirely, I would say, an international group: people came from France, Switzerland, Poland, from Germany, from all over. There was a great variety of different dance forms that we gave. There was the small, the Kammertanzbühne Laban; there was the big dance drama; and there was the movement choir forms where lay people joined in.

The professional dancers were full-time dancers, the lay dancers were brought in for particular performances?

That was for a special occasion when we did, for example, Goethe's *Faust*². But on the whole all of the performances were really professional. You were engaged in it full time.

And the Kammertanzbühne Laban?

A few people did the small or more intimate dances which were similar to recitals and there was a group who did the bigger performances. They were both interrelated.

And they presumably played in different sorts of theatres.

We not only played in different theatres but played in halls, we were so keen, wherever we went. If there was only a barn hall or something we played. Everywhere. But we had the big performances in the Frankfurt Opera House, the Berlin Opera House. It was a great variety. You got to be very skilled at performing in different ways.

And what were the sort of audiences that came?

We had, at the beginning, quite hostile audiences because it was so new. But people were interested in this new dance form. There were some critics in Berlin who liked Laban's work and wrote about it and so it became well known. But when I first joined Laban it was not.

And the company toured throughout Europe.

Yes, but I left then because I had a friend who wanted to open a school and I personally felt that I couldn't tour all of my life. I did not really like this so much. You know, going on different tours; I wanted to settle somewhere. So I left Tanzbühne Laban and shortly afterwards it broke up for financial reasons. I founded the professional dance school with my friend (in Frankfurt).

That was Lotte Müller?

Yes, Lotte Müller. It was a professional school. I didn't train teachers, I taught dance teachers and dancers. Our dancers were engaged at the ballets of the opera companies. They were keen on this kind of dance.

Like the Frankfurt Opera.

Yes, but that was special. We were at the Frankfurt Opera not as the ballet group but our movement choir was especially engaged in big performances.

For the operas?

Yes, for the big operas. There was a big demand for this kind of dancing. Of course, you know, people always talk here (in England) about technique. Now if you do a three year course, training every day, you get a different technique than if you just come to recreational classes. In ballet you go for seven years and under three years at that time you wouldn't have thought that somebody could become a dancer and go on the stage.

And, of course, you had your Laban Diploma. Where did you gain it?

That may be very interesting because at that time Laban gave the diploma and very few people got it. When you had your own school and had established yourself for a few years you could apply for the diploma. My

friend and I had our school and what Laban gave us as a test was to (study and stage) a whole evening performance of *Don Juan*³. We taught our students to do the group movements, we ourselves were soloists. It was quite a job.

Could you tell me a little more about the dance. Had you danced it previously with Tanzbühne Laban?

I had not done it with Tanzbühne Laban. Laban had done it with several groups of his — in Hamburg and I think in Berlin — and they were different people. It was a full evening dance. He came to us and said we should study the group movements with our pupils. The solos we were taught, and he was Don Juan. He brought two or three of his pupils who were in it. It was all worked out and we were working on the group compositions with them. It was in the form of a dance drama. You did not do a set story but you had scenes with Don Juan and then with the groups. He had a group of women round Don Juan; dancing with him, soloists. I also had a solo part. Laban was very versatile, he changed things according to where you were. He had a great gift for seeing the variety of the movement and didn't stick to one (interpretation) and say this is how to be but he would vary his compositions accordingly. Like we did with our pupils.

Your school. You were saying that it was very specifically a training for dancers. Could you tell me a bit about how you worked there.

We worked on Choreutics and Eukinetics⁴. My friend and I — she took Eukinetics, I took Choreutics. We gave them a very good bodily training. We worked out ourselves how we would train our pupils. You see, Laban, at that time, didn't say you had to do this or that: he was more specific with teachers later on. But he left it to you to use your knowledge in your own way, which I liked very much. We had technique classes and we had a movement choir and we had recreational classes. We went through the whole range of professional training.

But, of course, it all went when Hitler came. You see, when Hitler came I was married — my husband was Jewish — and I went out of my school. The school belonged to me and my friend but I said I didn't want to be . . . you know? You don't know what Hitler did. The dance schools. When Hitler came you had teachers who would give their dance pupils National-sozialismus⁵. You know?

Yes, and that happened from about 1933 onwards?

Yes, 1933, and I went straight out because I didn't want to be involved with the system.

You shut the school?

No, my friend took it over.

But you stayed in Germany for a while.

Yes, we were lucky to get out in '38 because my husband had a (doctor's) practice and we had three children. But I'm not a German. I grew up in

Switzerland and I have not gone back to Germany because I have seen what Hitler did. What we did was absolutely against what Hitler wanted. I mean it was freedom of expression — relationship not dictatorship. That's why Laban also had to flee from Germany. They managed really to absolutely eliminate all this kind of work which had been everywhere. That's what you can do if you have a dictatorship.

Can we perhaps return to happier times before that happened? Back in Frankfurt, as well as the movement choir attached to the Opera House, you also had a small chamber group.

Yes, my friend and I, we were very opposite types. She was a high dancer whilst I was deep. Edgar Frank, who had been with the Tanzbühne Laban too, came to us and taught at the school. So we had a group of three of us and that was what you call chamber dance. We did duos and solos and trios. We did lyrical dances or the dramatic, but it was more the lyrical or the finer aspects of movement in the chamber performances.

And these were like the Kammertanzbühne Laban, performed as concert recitals?

Yes, it was for the small theatre. It was actually a smaller theatre than the Frankfurt Opera House. Edgar Frank was a very good dancer, he was first class and the three of us had very good performances.

Did you work with any particular musicians?

Yes, we had a nice musician work with us and we had the connections with the Opera.

I believe you used a lot of percussion.

Oh yes, percussion of course. I've a great collection of marvellous percussion instruments because even when we worked here (in Manchester) at the Studio I used it. I have some wonderful Chinese cymbals, drums, Chinese gongs and skulls that I have collected.

And, of course, you danced with the percussion. Laban was, of course, one for the dance without music. People always ask how it is; what you do with music. I never put a piece of music on and just dance to it. I know what kind of dance I want to compose. I look for music which has the mood and quality — dynamic and rhythmical — and is suitable for dance. You don't just interpret music, you make a new . . . like a song has words and the music blends, so the dance and the music must blend. We danced a lot without music, and with percussion.

Did the members of the group play the instruments?

Yes, we played it ourselves. It was not that we had a percussion band. You not only played, you danced with the percussion instruments. I've done quite a few compositions here also where you dance with it. Its very different than if you just stand and make the percussion.

During that time, the twenties, Germany didn't have its own major ballet company, did it? Not in the sense that we have the Royal Ballet.

No, that was because it was not so specialised maybe. For example, Darmstadt was a very famous opera house, and Frankfurt and Mannheim. All the bigger towns and their own old opera house which were first class, Stuttgart, everywhere. It was not concentrated in one place like the Royal Ballet. Here everything is really in London. On the continent the towns supported the opera houses and supported the dance companies. You did not have to make entertainment. I saw the famous Brecht/Weill *Mahagonny*, *Die Dreigroschenoper*; *Wozzeck*. They were all performed at that time. We had this in Frankfurt in the opera house. Here nobody knew. Its fashionable here now but not years and years ago.

It appears to me, as an outsider looking back, that this was a particularly fertile artistic time . . .

Yes, that's a very good word.

Were you aware at the time how big a new artistic movement there was?

Yes, we were well aware of it. All the dancers who came to Tanzbühne Laban — because Laban at that time was not well known — came because they knew there was something new they absolutely believed in and wanted to do. You know, there were dancers, male dancers, who just knew what they wanted to do. And the same with me. I wouldn't have gone to any other form. I wouldn't have done ballet. Of course, I actually did Dalcroze at music school but that was to learn music and not for dancing. I think everybody was very aware and we also stood up for what we believed in. I mean, it was in a way experimental work in a new art form which was very, very exciting. I don't think there was anyone who wouldn't have realised that it was something.

You left Germany to come to England and settled in Manchester in 1938.

I settled in Manchester because my husband got permission. He had friends in Manchester and we also had three boys and wanted a good schooling and so they actually went to the Manchester Grammar School and did well.

Did you think you had left your dance career behind you?

I said I'd never any more have a chance to dance, but I took my percussion instruments with me and I had a special costume for teaching. I had not realised how quickly, how comparatively soon I would come back into dancing.

Obviously the situation over here was very different to the one you'd left in Germany.

It was very, very different. The teachers came who were interested in teaching children. When they give it to children it's quite different than when you have people training in your professional school. I learned a lot here. How to approach things differently again.

That was when you became involved with teachers here?

Yes, I jumped in, so to say, into the water. They had the second holiday course at Moreton Hall⁶ and Laban was supposed to teach and he suddenly got ill and he phoned me and said can you take over my part of teaching. I agreed and that was very successful and that's why I came into the holiday courses and then I always taught there.

That was where you met people like Joan Goodrich and Diana Jordan.

Yes

And Lisa Ullmann again.

Yes, Lisa Ullmann and I had met before. I had been with Laban five years earlier (than her) and had my school. I met her once, she came to Frankfurt to collect something for Laban. So I had known her and then I met her here.

And you both taught on that summer holiday course?

I have actually a very good photo of Lisa . . . I did group dance movement. I have always been good at composition. When I went away from Laban I said I'd like to make my own compositions. I remember I did dance composition — high, medium and deep. You see, all based on the harmony of the different types of movement. Spatial aspects and so on.

How did you find this was received by people on the course?

That was well received. They liked it. I liked very much that the teachers had, at that time, a very independent mind. They wanted to give their pupils, their children, the best possible. So they were quite critical. They were often quite experienced teachers. They had been at training colleges and they were lecturers. Joan Russell, Lorn Primrose and Betty Meredith-Jones; they were the first teachers I taught.

Did you find initially that it was very different to the teaching you had been doing in Germany?

I learnt quite a lot. I was used to expecting people to come in and be expressive very quickly. People nowadays are much freer but at that time they were very used to not touching each other. Of course, on the continent we had been this way, much freer in a way.

On the continent it had been much more teaching people for a stage career.

Yes, that was it. You taught for this way. The people who came here, the teachers, really wanted to use it to teach their children, which is very good.

The Manchester Dance Circle . . .

When Laban and Lisa came with students to Manchester. That's when I founded together with Lisa the Manchester Dance Circle (in 1943). There were a few people . . . Elsie Palmer . . . a group of people. Lisa had actually given some teachers' courses with them. We came back together with these people and said it would be nice to form perhaps a group where people could come and do the dancing.

And that was, to start off with, on a recreational basis.

At that time it was on a recreational basis — evening classes. They were nearly all teachers who came. They got grants to come to holiday courses. They also got grants to come to our courses. So we had mainly teachers who were teaching children and that was, in a way, a pity because it was a very one-sided group of people. I mean, they were dedicated to teaching their children. We had the Production Group as a side line.

I was going to ask you about that because you did a number of performances.

We did quite a lot of performances. I thought it would be quite a good idea to have a small group of people who wanted to dance more. Actually I have people now who have come for over twenty years.

My friend and co-director, Enid Platt, has worked with me for more than twenty five years and has helped me with the Dance Circle and the Production Group. She is also now our president.

When you took dance programmes out to schools how were they presented?

I don't believe in just having a little programme. I believed in introducing before an item, so that they would have a little idea of what was coming. And a talk at the beginning saying what our kind of technique was. That we couldn't, without training, do these dances. We had a special way of trying to bring over . . . a live contact with the audience. A small group in a small performance can do this.

That was different from the performances you did in the theatres?

Yes, we had a combined performance with the Studio in the town theatre (Whitworth Theatre). We had also connections with the theatre workshop at that time in the Library Theatre. We had performances in the Library Theatre too. That was combined with the Studio. With Lisa and I together.

Perhaps that's an appropriate time to move on to the Studio.

You know the Studio⁷ came and they had rooms that were rather, a little bit primitive, but it was a very nice group of eight students. The first eight who came to the Studio, they wanted to dance. Actually, very much through Kurt Jooss's performances, he was well known here. I worked a lot with these dance people. Laban was very keen that they should have dance.

Laban, of course, was teaching there as well.

I always tell people that Laban taught them for a long time nothing but the diagonal scale. People always think you have to have a basis. The scales and the curves and the circles give you the training. It's not just that you can do what you like. It's not everybody who can do it. If I hadn't had a very long training and a professional career too I wouldn't have been able to do it in the same way. You have, like in the music, to know the harmonies in your body. Then you can use the disharmony if you want. You have to know them in your body.

Of course, the people . . . A lot of these teachers had jobs as well. They couldn't come full time. At the Studio they came and they also came specifically to train to teach children. They didn't come for just, you know, how to dance. They had no chance to get in professionally here. There was all the ballet. That's why I had this small amateur group. Our production group was like an amateur dramatic society, a lot of them were teaching during the day so they were only free in the evenings.

Was the choreography that you did with them different to what you had already done in Germany in your earlier career?

Yes, when Laban asked me to have a group first at the Studio it was meant to perform for children. We did mainly performances for children for years and I learned a lot because I had not made performances, compositions to show to children, on the continent. That was for adults really. I enjoyed very much doing compositions meant to appeal to children. The children actually were very observant. Marvellous. A very nice audience. We did humorous, fantastic, dramatic, abstract compositions. We did all the different compositions in one evening to show the variety of what you can do. Now this is hardly done anywhere — people don't distinguish between these different forms of art representation. They really wanted to be a professional group and the problem was that you couldn't get enough engagements if you didn't go into schools. Purely financial. If you wanted to exist, you see. That's the trouble now with all the small groups. If you want to exist you give performances in schools.

There are quite a few groups now coming up. But you see — this is my personal belief of course — I don't think that a mixture of all the different techniques really works. I think that you have to have one basis for what you are really doing. For example, if you mix ballet with our dancing. For a woman you have to go on pointe as a rule. Your whole body posture is tilted from the normal way you move. So our movement can't be done by a ballet dancer, a really good ballet dancer. She can't move the same. The male dancer can do it better because they don't entirely go on their toes. So the man can combine, in a way, the more modern dance with the classical ballet.

You are now saying, very specifically, that there is a need to not mix techniques.

That's my personal belief, yes.

A lot of people have said that Laban's technique, or rather his theories, underlie all dance. Are we now distinguishing between a technique for performance and the theory that underlies it?

You see, teachers were taught the 'art of movement'. I don't think the 'art of movement' is the same as dance really. But that is personal. They were taught 'art of movement' because they were giving it to children — to move in all different ways. When you dance, when you dance the way we did with Laban, I think you have this basis of the technique based on harmonic structures and dynamics. To know absolutely how to harmonise your body,

how to get your balance, which is not absolutely essential in theory when you become a teacher of children. You can be a very good teacher of children and not move very well yourself. You let the children do it. They have a natural ability.

I have always taught, myself, what I call dance and not movement. A lot of people have taken Laban's work, of course, but when Laban himself founded it first he called it *Die Welt des Tänzers*⁸.

The world of the dancer.

The world of the dancer. That's why I came to Laban. Too few people do Laban's work and see the dance in it. Because they have not trained and if you have not been trained as a dancer you have not been into the dance. You can't do the dance if you know it only in theory, it's a technique. But I personally believe that by blending all the techniques you get something that is many sided.

What do you think that they lose by doing this?

You don't gain the basic understanding of how your body moves and how things relate to each other, to space. They don't get the basis of what movement expression really means.

Manchester was obviously a very exciting time; the Dance Circle, the Studio and then the Guild . . .

I've always supported Laban's work. I'm also not doing exactly the same as other people with Laban's work. Everybody develops individually with his or her own way of presenting it. So I have my own way. For me, the basis in Laban was the art of the dance. That's why I came to support the Guild.

The Guild has always been a wide ranging body . . . Do you think this is particular to Laban's work?

It accommodates all the different possibilities. Geraldine (Stephenson) has specialised more in the theatre. Joan Russell has taken more the educational side. But I have always been concerned with the dance side, and with myself as a dancer and I have never tried to do anything else.

I must come on to what is, of course, terribly important. The basis of the work is that you have relationship in the dance. Without relationship the dance cannot exist. We had such a marvellous relationship when I was in the Tanzbühne Laban. We had such teamwork. For example, at one time one of the dancers who danced the main role missed the train. And we did the whole performance without him. You could do it. And we in the Dance Circle always stress relationship. Dance is a marvellous thing for relationship.

The Dance Circle are going to have a special event in honour of your eightieth birthday in a few days' time. What have you been doing with the Circle recently?

This autumn I have not been doing so much. I have done a very nice dance which I probably want to do at the Guild thing in March. It's on five rings and the axis and is going to the peak of the five rings. I had a nice dance study

on that and I did that with them. Last year we performed at a charity performance. There were two hundred people and twenty groups taking part, in Wythenshawe. We did perform two dances with our group, which was nice. But I'm not taking the recreational classes a lot. At my age you don't get so much time to finish. At the holiday courses I've asked to have the advanced group where I do something definite which they get to know.

The Dance Circle has been going for . . .

Since '43

Nearly forty years. Do you still find there is enthusiasm for the work?

Yes, but it is not so easy you know. We always had quite a lot coming in (from outside Manchester) and we had the hall in the centre of town. Now we can't have it anymore. It's difficult. So here we are at the (Manchester) Teacher's Centre. We have a nice group, what you call a centre of people who come regularly. You know, it's quite interesting. I talk with my friend Enid (Platt) about why people like disco dancing and tap dancing and keep fit so much. They have not to involve themselves. Now in our dancing people really have to get involved with their personalities. It's amazing how many people are afraid of that. They'd rather do something where they can hop about a little bit and enjoy themselves, which I can understand. (Our work) is more, because it needs the artistic individual, this creative thing which some people will always tremendously enjoy. Others try to evade it.

Are there any particular changes in dance that you have noticed over your career?

Yes, it's very different. It has changed quite a lot. On the whole people are freer, when they do disco dancing. But they are very much on their own. It is freer, but I would say, to be frank, it's more a kind of, a little bit of a sexual outlet. They enjoy it and they are freer and why shouldn't they? But of course the moment you take dance as an art form, it's like in drama, you expect more from the person who participates. People have to come out and relate and bring their personal response to it. That makes it interesting.

The dance that you, and Laban, were involved with in Germany is often referred to as free dance. Here you are talking about freedom in a different sense.

A very different sense! When you taught in Germany you could throw them straight away in at something expressive and here, (in England), they were resisting. But the people I watch now also don't express themselves. They want to have enjoyment, which I can understand is very nice. But it's not an art form.

Because they are not expressing anything?

No, not expressing anything. Enjoying their bodies. It's right, why shouldn't they. But it is a different kind of thing when we do dances.

About the Guild, which you have been a member of since you helped found it . . .

I was number two. We met in this house for Guild meetings and I've always supported it. The Dance Circle — I've always based it on the principles of Laban. I believe that we have to cultivate this. It's a pity that too few people really cultivate it. A lot of the very best, good teachers from training colleges, have retired and don't do anything at all any more. I'm nearly eighty and I'm still doing it. Practical work. I believe that you have to keep on, especially if you have done it for a long time and you are more experienced. You have to give it on to the younger people.

Do you have any particular advice for our younger members?

Ideally, that they can attend as many courses or weekends of the Guild or anything like that. Because they acquire more knowledge about Laban's work in practical sessions. They get a much better relationship with people at the courses. But, of course, what you should tell young people is that they shouldn't think that if they have been once or twice to a course they shouldn't go back. Some say that now we do contemporary because we have done Laban. You know you don't get into something unless you go on with it. The good teachers in contemporary dance have also done it for a long time.

Everybody who is good in his field or her field has done it for a long period. That's why I'm still teaching — because I love it and it keeps me alive!

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Footnotes

1. *Die Geblendeten* was first performed at the Mannheim National Theatre in 1921. The title might be translated as "The Blinded" or "The Deluded".
2. Goethe's *Faust*. Laban's version, *Faust Part II*, in collaboration with Vilma Mönckeborg-Kollmar, was staged at the Ernst-Merck-Halle in Hamburg in 1922.
3. First performed in 1925 by Kammertanzbühne Laban.
4. *Choreutics* refers to Laban's work on spatial forms, as in the book of the same name published in England (1966). *Eukinetics* was the term used in Germany at that time to refer to its complement, dynamics, later developed in England as "Effort" — the kinetic as opposed to spatial aspect of dance and movement.
5. *Nationalsozialismus*. National Socialism, the ideological teaching of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazis). During the thirties this became a compulsory curricular subject in all schools, including dance schools.
6. In 1942. The first Modern Dance Summer Holiday Course took place at Newtown, Montgomeryshire the previous year.
7. The Art of Movement Studio opened in January 1946.
8. *Die Welt des Tänzers*, the world of the dancer, was the title of Laban's first book. von Laban, R. (1920) *Die Welt des Tänzers*. Stuttgart: Walter Seifert.

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It is hoped to reprint an article * by Sylvia Bodmer on space harmony in a future issue. The following select bibliography is of articles and books on subjects touched on during the conversation.

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Lisa Ullmann teaching in Brazil

Photo: © Ruth Toledo

LISA ULLMANN IN CONVERSATION

This article is an edited transcript of a conversation I had with Lisa Ullmann in February.

Lisa has written extensively in the Guild's magazine and a select bibliography is enclosed. We decided to discuss some topics that she was not written about recently and these focussed on international developments of Laban's work and the current dance scene in this country.

MICHAEL HUXLEY

M.H. *I gather that you have just returned from Switzerland where you have been doing some teaching. Perhaps we could begin by talking about the work you have been doing there.*

L.U. Yes, actually it was a very interesting time. I had two courses. They were two one-week courses with different groups of people. The whole affair was organised by Claude Perrottet and his Art of Movement Studio in Zurich. There was a course which he called a "general course" meant for people with previous experience, extensive previous experience, who came from different countries. The second course was for his own dance students who are now in their second year. In the first course there were mainly people from Switzerland, Germany and Holland, and I think two from Austria — in all thirty three people. Very interesting people. All of them were experienced either as teachers or choreographers or dance school leaders. One or two were still starting out on a career in the dance world either as dancers or dance teachers.

Well. The content of the course was centring, of course, around Laban's work, Laban's ideas. I taught every day for four and a half hours, it was quite strenuous for me. I was quite pleased that I could really do it. The topic of the course was "Dance as spatial-dynamic interaction between people". So we included work on dynamics: it was actually centred around the dynamics which are contained in spatial forms. We studied the two roads in, into dance expression. The more formal side on the one hand — in which the spatial relationship of people is important — and then the other side where it's really the effect that comes from within and manifested through the body. Very successful. I was pleased because people took it up so eagerly, both sides. We had also some sessions on group improvisation and there we could apply, or they could apply, the integration of the two aspects which we had been studying.

Did you find that the people who came to the course, the international participants, had done Laban's work before, or knew of his work?

They knew of Laban's work. There were, indeed, also some people who were old students from many, many years ago and others who had trained at the Leeder School — that would be in the Laban tradition. And then there were people who were strange to it. So it was thoroughly mixed, also in ages, abilities and sizes.

And Claude Perrottet, of course, has links going back to Laban.

Yes, but he did not work with him personally. He was a student at my studio — The Art of Movement Studio here in Addlestone. He has also studied at other places, for instance at the Folkwang High School.

In Essen.

In Essen. And he has done some ballet too in Switzerland.

I remember meeting him at the Laban International Symposium in 1979.

Oh yes — Then the second course was for his students. That was very interesting for me because last year Claude had to undergo an operation and I sort of jumped in to replace him. I went over there for three weeks to work with his students and this year I met them in their second year. And this was nice, to have a certain continuation and also to find how they are shaping. What interested me was how people find, through further study, their own particular trend which they want to pursue, and do pursue.

So they are not all intent on being the same sort of dancer?

Oh no. They are a very mixed group in age as well as in aim. Very mixed. Some are interested in therapy — it is actually interesting that so many people follow that trend these days — others in teaching of dance or dancing themselves.

This is something we seem to find throughout the world. You mention therapy. I know there are a number of people doing a great deal of work in therapy in the United States. Have you met these people in your travels recently?

Oh yes. I am, for instance, in touch with LIMS: you know, the Laban Institute for Movement Studies (in New York). I'm on their Advisory Council. Actually, this autumn I visited them. It was really a sad circumstance because Irmgard Bartenieff had just died. We had our ICKL (International Council of Kinetography Laban) conference in the States and I took the opportunity of travelling afterwards. I travelled around the States and then on my journey back I came through New York. I just happened to be in New York when LIMS' new course started. So I was invited to come and talk to the students. The directors were anxious because Irmgard had just died and the students did not really know about it yet. They felt it would be a great disappointment to come to the Institute where the person they had come for . . .

These were first year students?

They have only a one year course. It was a new set of students starting.

Well, in a way, it was a good coincidence that I just happened to be there. It was very pleasing to me to be with the students and to tell them something about Laban's work, and the work they are in for during the year. So we had a — if I may say good opening — a good opening in the sense that they had an opportunity to link up with some tradition which is in the Laban work.

Did you do any teaching?

No, because I came back to Europe the next day. The year before I did: I was a fortnight there at LIMS. They had especially asked me to work on movement choir ideas. It is strange how things develop, you know. the waves that come to the fore. It seemed that the interest in movement choir work came just to the fore in the States. It was already apparent three years ago — The Laban Centenary year. At the Centenary festivities in New York they had asked me to lead a movement choir. So I did this in the final session with all the participants joining in.

I get the impression that the Laban tradition in the States has not only been carried on very well but that the growth of interest is expanding.

Yes.

That more and more people are going to LIMS, for instance.

Yes.

Do you find that this is happening in other parts of the world that you've visited or that you know of?

Well, as you know, I have been to Brazil and there, of course, there is an overwhelming interest which is not only one of recent nature but which has been developed over many years by one of our early students from before the war — Maria Duschenes¹.

She has stimulated this interest. It was also surprising . . . When I got there I found some old students had been before, students of Laban in the nineteen twenties. Maria was a student of mine at the Jooss-Leeder School in Dartington Hall before the war. So quite a bit had gone on in the various parts of Brazil from time to time over many years. It is, of course, such an enormous country. If something happens in the north nobody knows about it in the south.

And whereabouts were you visiting?

I was in São Paulo.

What sort of work has been carried on in South America? We know that people have developed Laban's work in various ways. Is it concerned with education? Theatre?

Well, in São Paulo, the people I had in my course were very mixed indeed. I had quite a number of professional dancers, dancers who had never done anything in the Laban work, who were busy in the theatre at that moment. Then I had dance students who did train in Maria's school and who were working on the basis of Laban. Then I had physiotherapists, psychotherapists and social workers. I also had a whole group of psychologists who were working at the University.

Oh, splendid.

That was an interesting session.

What did you teach them? Did you do anything that was of particular interest to psychologists?

Yes, of course. As you know our work is deeply concerned with the psychological implications of movement. There was a tremendous crowd of people in a very small room and I set out trying to awaken them to this fact. I gave them an experience of moving themselves as well as perceiving movement as done by others. Reacting to one another and moving together. So somehow it opened a little door and to this very important thing for psychologists — how a human being expresses self through bodily movement.

Yes.

I also had a separate course with teachers of different types of schools

In Argentina, I understand, there's also something going on. I know this through the fact they have translated Laban's *Modern educational dance* into Spanish. Equally, in Brazil, they have translated Laban's book, *Mastery of movement*, and that is translated into Portuguese².

I didn't know that.

Yes, I have these books. I even gave some advice on the Portuguese translation when I was in Brazil.

People in this country don't usually associate the work that we do here with South America. It seems to me that there is, perhaps, a need for greater communication between Laban practitioners.

Yes, yes. Yes, you are very right. This is what I feel very strongly and I always think that the Guild is really the organisation which could bring that about. I know the Guild has many members overseas but I don't think they are aware of one another or have sufficient benefit from the Guild other than the one communication which they do get, which is the magazine. It would be so desirable if people in Australia knew there is somebody practising on a similar basis, or even the same basis — though in a different way of course — in South America, or in Canada, or in the States, or in Europe.

Yes, I know that we have subscribers throughout the world. At the moment we have the magazine and the newsletter. The latter being very much of a news format for people in this country to keep them up to date with local events. Do you think, perhaps, there is a need for the magazine to have a broader international appeal?

I very strongly feel that. In my travels I sometimes say to people, well, first of all, do you know about the Guild? If not, I tell them about it, but then I'm a little stuck. How to go about making them feel this is something where they can contribute. I say you do all this nice work here, why don't you write something and send it in to the Guild editor?

People are very, very shy about it. It's a pity because very good work is going on. It is also good to hear not only about accomplished work but also about the things people are struggling with and what they are hoping to do.

What they are intending to do and are prevented from doing for this or that reason. There is so much that one comes across, and I don't only mean if you are teaching or if you are dancing but in your own life. I believe very strongly that a certain personal liberation can be accomplished through physical performance of movement and dance. Also new vistas can be opened up.

I would certainly hope that readers overseas will read this issue and take note of your words. As editor I would encourage people to write to the magazine, to let us know what they are doing³.

I think it would be important also that they don't necessarily write a beautiful article. Not everybody has the gift of writing. It is difficult to put pen to paper and try to convey to people you don't know at all something about your ideas and experiences.

As editor I would like to hear news. Any news is better than nothing. For instance, had I not talked to you I wouldn't have known what is going on at Claude Perrottet's school. A few brief lines will tell me that something is happening.

In these last years I have been to Canada twice. I have been to Germany, East Germany also. Everywhere there are people who are occupied with similar ideas. The Guild is a composition of people who have a common interest and this must somehow, I don't know, be brought out. Otherwise the Guild has no justification to exist. I have always the impression that Guild members wait for what is coming to them and they read their magazine — perhaps. But how can we share, how can one more vividly share this common interest one has.

A lot of people are only able to read the magazine but there are, of course, a number of international courses. The courses that you teach on, for instance, outside Britain. It may be that people may actually think of going to one of them (if they knew of them).

Yes.

And we have our own Laban International Courses in England every summer.

Yes, the courses which we are at present holding at Dartford are organised by the Laban International Courses. This organisation, LINC, is actually a continuation of the first holiday courses we ever had. They were called Modern Dance Holiday Courses which Diana Jordan and Joan Goodrich and myself originated.

Back in the forties.

Back in '41. Sylvia, of course, and Laban, were also much involved in them. Ever since we have been having these courses. In 1961 we had to give up the MDHC as an organisation. I took its continuation on at the Laban Art of Movement Centre when we were in Addlestone. So they became the Laban Art of Movement Centre Holiday Courses before the more recent

establishment of LINC. The present Laban Centre for Movement and Dance (at Goldsmiths' College) are also running holiday courses but rather more on professional lines. With quite a different aim. We are catering, at the Dartford courses, for the non-professional dancer, the teacher, the therapist, the student of dance, and you might say, the layperson to whom movement and dance is a necessary experience for him/herself and for his/her profession. Professional dancers come too. The courses are entirely based on Laban's insights and practices.

Of course, there are optional courses so that if you are a complete beginner you can still go along.

Yes.

And if you have a lot of experience you would do a more advanced course.

Yes, we divide, as we always have done, the students according to their experience. So there are different groups. At these we have people from many countries with very different backgrounds. We get an enormous influx from the Scandinavian countries which is very exciting.

I remember that from one of the courses I went to.

Yes, and it is still so. In the Scandinavian countries a lot of work goes on that is based on Laban. With them it is more applied to physical education and rhythmic gymnastic kind of practices.

Scandinavia is not an area that we have talked a lot about. Have you been there yourself, teaching?

I've only been to Finland. So we have Finnish people coming here too.

I gather that over the past few years, in particular, there has been a reawakening of interest in Laban's work in Germany.

You may be interested to know that his book *Modern educational dance* has been translated into German and it has actually appeared just now⁴. This is the first book in German since the war about the work that he, and we, did here in England. That's very encouraging. Of course, there are his early German books but they have been out of print for a long time. In Hamburg is a school which was originally started by Laban in about 1922. Laban then handed it over to Albrecht Knust, and Knust handed it over to Lola Rogge and it is still in existence, now under the leadership of Lola Rogge's daughter. So that school is still in Hamburg, working.

Then, I had, for instance, a German choreographer at the Swiss course, quite a well known choreographer who is now working in West Berlin. He has been dancing for twenty, twenty five years . . . He had already been, once before, at one of my courses, when I taught in Köln. He was so fascinated by the whole "Laban stuff" that I did there that he came down to Switzerland to continue with it a little bit further.

Who was he?

Gerhard Bohner.

Although there have been schools like the Lola Rogge school which have been going since before the war there was quite a substantial gap . . .

There still is . . .

When people knew very little about Laban's work at all.

There still is, it's only just beginning that people seek to fill this gap.

But there is now no organisation in the way that we have the Guild in this country, no organisation that brings people together.

This is what I hope, that the Guild can assume perhaps a broader international function. As I tried to say earlier on, the Guild can only represent what the members bring in to it. The Guild is not something which just sends out ideas, stimuli and advice to a list of members. I personally see it, have always seen it, as an organisation which lives and has justification for its existence only by what is being brought in to it and asked from it.

Why do you think it is after all these years there has been this resurgence of interest (in Germany and the U.S.A.)?

I don't know. I really don't know. I can only see, as it happens with everything, there are rhythmical waves. You see, when we started — I'm now thinking about this country — there was really little awareness of the expressive power of movement . . . and that this could be available to everybody. There were, of course, people like Margaret Morris and others who had worked extensively in the field of movement. But I did not come across much of its rich possibilities as a vehicle for human expression and artistic activity. One felt that one had to arouse interest in this notion of expression, and the fact that the human being expresses self naturally through movement . . . and that one had to alert people to the potentials of dance in human unfolding. This was, for instance, what I wanted to do in education. But one had, of course, to demonstrate that dance can be a means of education. People had felt that something was missing. So their interest really surged up and they became enthusiastic. There was a very vibrant atmosphere around the whole idea of movement as an expressive medium.

You asked why a revival? If something is established after it had been created more or less out of nothing, as the 'new' dance had early this century, there is the danger that it becomes routine and stagnant. Because there is no longer the first impact. The creative drive gets lost when things get dished out ready made. I was thinking about it just lately. There is now what we and Laban have fought for, hoped for, that people become movement conscious. Now these days people are very movement conscious. Aware that there is an art of dance.

In fact, what you are talking about is these 'waves', as it were, in movement and dance in general. In which those people who are involved in Laban's work play a specific part. That brings me quite conveniently to the situation in this country. One thing that most commentators have mentioned is that at the moment we are in the middle of what is loosely called a 'dance explosion'. There has been a great increase in general

dance activity over the last five years or so. Have you felt this yourself, have you noticed any particular changes?

Oh indeed! Indeed, it's tremendous. It's such a... Well, on the one hand it is enormously pleasing to experience that what one has fought for has come into being. People are aware of movement, appreciating dance, searching out dance experiences. This I find very exciting. On the other hand, I don't really know how I can express it, but the dancing seems very mechanical to me. Very overstressed by technicalities. It is fantastic what people can do these days — much more than I have ever experienced in former times — what people can do with their bodies. But it seems that this has taken over and the dancing doesn't seem really to come from within the person. Rather more from what I can do with my body. And also very much influenced by outer impressions, things we see in television, films and so on.

The emphasis is more on virtuosity than what is actually being danced about?

Yes. And you see, to me dance is a thing that concerns everyone. Everybody. Not only the stage artist. That is a special profession, a very special area when I can be a spectator but not a participant. All my life I have worked with people trying to liberate them in their expressive power, through dance. It is, in my opinion, not sufficient that people are now dance aware, dance conscious. This awakening is not sufficiently exploited. Because it is, again, fettered in certain types of dance. You do this type of dance or that type of dance but we don't dance.

It seems to me that when we are talking about the dance explosion we are talking, on the one hand, about people who are interested in watching dance...

Yes.

and that audiences have become bigger and there are more professionals actually performing for these audiences. There is also the case that a lot of people do want a dance experience, a participatory dance experience. They go along to classes and many of these are geared towards a training for the stage — which is fine and good and right for that kind of experience. What I would like to ask you to comment on is what the Guild ought to be providing. What particular function it might have in this country.

If I may make one comment on this dance explosion. I think that this dance explosion hasn't come out of nothing. It has come out of all that has gone before. I am pleased because I feel I have contributed something to the ploughing of the field, putting the seeds in. I think the Guild could play a very important part here. In some ways it has done so throughout the years by providing recreation for groups of people through dance on an artistic plane and organising dance festivals. But it could organise some more dance festivals for people from different parts of the country. It's unfortunate that it's not always possible to welcome members from abroad, although several have come over from countries like Holland.

Of course, we do have the festival that will be coming up in Manchester in May.

Oh yes. It is marvellous that it is in Manchester because, as you know, we started the Guild in Manchester. Do you know how the Guild came about?

Well, I have heard various stories but I would be quite happy to hear it again.

Actually, it's very, very simple. There were a number of teachers in Manchester who came, during the war, to study three times a week over a number of years.

That was at the Studio? The Dance Circle?

No...

The teachers' courses...

Yes, they were teachers' courses under the education authorities. After these people had worked for about three years, part-time courses, they thought how best to distinguish themselves from all the people who came just for their own recreation. So, out of this necessity, in a way, to distinguish people who had really studied, who had a good deal of experience and had also introduced dance in schools, we founded a Guild to which they belonged. Of course, there is a long and varied history of the Guild, but this is how it started.

That was based on people who were, at that time, participating in dance specifically.

Yes. Now, you asked whether the Guild could contribute something (specific) in a participatory sense. This has actually always been. We have had movement choirs, dance circles and clubs and we organised dance festivals. In a way we had more of that earlier on than we are having at the moment.

Why do you think that is?

I don't know.

Do you think that it is because, in a way, the Guild is a little more diffuse these days; that it doesn't have a specific centre in the way that at that time it was centred on Manchester.

You know, I think it is that, possibly. And possibly also that there are no proper leaders. And therefore I welcome so very much the Leaders' Training Scheme. The leaders' course. What happened, you see, there was Sylvia (Bodmer) in Manchester. Then I came to Manchester and together we founded the Manchester Dance Circle. Then there was Diana Jordan, she was first in the Midlands, Worcestershire, and then in Yorkshire. Then there were other people, Margaret Dunn was one of these. Then there was Louise Soelberg in Birmingham. The Birmingham Contemporary Dance Club is still in existence which was created in 1940 by her. So there were individuals who created dance circles or movement choirs or whatever.

People who came later were more professionally engaged as school teachers and college lecturers and had, and still have, such dance groups but within their colleges and schools and not always open to the general public. And there are too few people, even facilities. I mean, where do you get a hall from? To hire a hall these days is enormously expensive.

There are, of course, a few people at the moment . . .

Oh yes.

So in some areas the tradition is alive. You quite rightly said that we now have the Leaders' Training Scheme and that is very specifically geared to training leaders to set up small dance groups.

Yes.

What occurs to me is that the work that has been carried on from Laban's work in this country and abroad has gone into many areas. I wonder if what has happened in the process of diversification is that they have tended to go away from just dancing.

On the contrary, in the early days (of the Guild) we had different membership categories such as industry, education, art, science. Now members tend to think of the Guild as an association of only dancing people. But what I want to say is . . . is there a need for just dancing?

That's what I'm asking you.

I see . . . that also brings the question up of what I have always met with Guild members when they have reached a certain age. When they retire they think "Oh I will now also retire from the Guild". This I must say was always, and still is, surprising. There is, to me, something which goes beyond personal satisfaction that I dance, that I express myself. It has nothing to do with my personal expression only. I want to experience something in dance even if I don't dance myself. I can experience something if only by thinking about it, or reading about it, or writing about it, or looking at it. I experience something. I would be sorry if the Guild would be just an institution for people who want to hop around.

I certainly didn't mean just dancing in that sense.

I have the impression that there is a notion that we in the Guild are concerned with something which is called Laban dance. I would say that this would be very contrary to his ideas because he was concerned with dance as a universal force. For Laban, dance was dance whatever type or style. He never had the limitation that it must just be as he saw it but that it had to be brought out of the individual people and out of communities . . . different forms in different periods.

And different countries.

And different countries, different cultures. For instance, if nowadays people do a lot of disco dancing it is at least something that belongs to the world of dance.

At a particular time.

Yes, I mean it will always be different. This is what one should welcome. Where one is, of course, concerned — and is hopeful — is that they will also gradually wish to understand it, penetrate into this thing of dance, which is part of life. Will penetrate more deeply and understand it also as a resource for spiritual activity so that the art of dance is raised as an art on the one hand and as a communal affair on the other.

I would like to quote hear something which Laban said in 1934⁵. He said:

Genuine dance has only one basic form and one fundamental endeavour. The basic form originates from the human body if it is moved perfectly, that is according to the full range of its natural possibilities, and with sense. The fundamental endeavour is to be expressive of one's own time with its spiritual and mental contents.

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Footnotes

1. Maria Duschene's work in Brazil and Lisa Ullmann's visit in 1978 are both described in earlier Guild magazines:
Duschene, M. (1980) "Forty years in Brazil", *Laban Art of Movement Guild Magazine* 65, November pp. 8-15.
Ullmann, L. (1979) "President's address", *LAMGM* 62, May, pp. 5-6.
2. Laban, R. (1978) *Danza Educativa Moderna*. Buenos Aires, Argentina: Editorial Paidós.
Laban, R. (1978) *Dominio Do Movimento*. São Paulo, Brazil: Summus Editorial.
3. For instance, there will be a report on dance in Holland in the next issue of the magazine.
4. Laban, R. (1981) *Der moderne Ausdruckstanz*. Wilhelmshaven, Germany: Heinrichshofen Verlag.
5. Translated from the German by Lisa Ullmann.

Bibliography

Lisa Ullmann has written extensively and has been responsible for editing, translating and annotating much of Laban's published work in this country. The brief bibliography given below is of selected articles that may be of interest to readers unfamiliar with her work.
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— (1952-7) "Space harmony: parts 1-7" *Laban Art of Movement Guild News Sheet* 9, 10, 11, 12; *Laban Art of Movement Guild Magazine* 14, 15, 18.
— (1956) "Recreative dancing in the movement choir" *LAMGM* 16, March, pp. 20-27.
— (1958) "Rhythm and harmony in movement as a re-creative activity". *LAMGM* 21, November, pp. 18-20.
— (1960) "Laban lecture: movement education". *LAMGM* 24, March, pp. 19-28.
— (1964) "Laban and education through movement". *LAMGM* 32, May, pp. 20-26.
— (1971) **Some preparatory stages for the study of space harmony in art of movement*. Addlestone: Laban Art of Movement Guild.
— (1976) "Diana Jordan and the modern dance holiday courses". *LAMGM* 57, November, pp. 5-7.
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*This booklet is still available for 50p from: Chris Willits, 32 Blythe Avenue, Meir Heath, Stoke on Trent, ST3 7JY.

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**THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTRE
FOR DANCE AND RELATED ARTS**

**Judith A. Chapman
June Layson**

The establishment of the National Resource Centre for Dance and Related Arts is a key recommendation in the report of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation inquiry into "Dance education and training in Britain" (1980, p.182). During the period of the inquiry discussions took place with representatives of the University of Surrey about the possibility of a major development in dance studies at the university. Part of this development was identified as the establishment of the National Resource Centre for Dance and Related Arts which was subsequently funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation for an initial period of three years.

In October 1981 June Layson took up the joint post of Director of Dance and Director of the National Resource Centre for Dance and Related Arts at the University of Surrey. She was joined in January 1982 by Judith Chapman as Research Officer for the National Resource Centre. Plans are already being made to attract further funding in order to appoint additional staff with specialist skills in, for example, notation, film/video and the preparation of materials for teaching. The University of Surrey is a particularly appropriate place to site the National Resource Centre since it has excellent computing and audio visual services, together with well established expertise in the production of computer assisted learning programs. The projected development of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in dance and a research commitment to dance will also contribute to the work of the National Resource Centre.

The purpose and structure of the National Resource Centre for Dance and Related Arts

The Resource Centre is committed to meeting the requirements of those working in all aspects of dance by making information about dance easily accessible. It is envisaged that the Resource Centre will offer something of interest for arts administrators, choreographers, community workers, dance critics, dance historians, dance therapists, dancers, notators, students and teachers. All types of dance will be encompassed with a particular emphasis on dance in the United Kingdom thus forming a means through which the richness and variety of dance in its many manifestations in this country can be kept alive and studied.

The structure plan for the Resource Centre and the timing of different phases of development are in the early stages of planning. The intention is to establish a broad framework within which there is flexibility to meet the changing needs of those involved in dance. In general terms the structure plan for the National Resource Centre has three strands:

1. The establishment and development of a data base for dance.
2. The establishment of a dance archive consisting of notated, sound, visual and written materials, particularly emphasising dance of the United Kingdom.
3. The preparation and publication of teaching and learning materials for dance.

The establishment and development of a data base for dance

This is regarded as necessary in order to make resources for dance more easily accessible than at present. The first stage in establishing a data base is to identify, locate and analyse substantial holdings of materials on dance in the United Kingdom. Ultimately the data base will be computerised in order to provide national and international users with on-line facilities and print-outs of up-to-date information on dance and related arts. Information from libraries, museums, institutional and, where possible, private collections will be collated in order to form the computerised dance data base. When computerised the information will be retrievable in a variety of ways to meet consumer needs and interests.

The Resource Centre will provide a service whereby an individual can obtain a computer print-out on a particular dance area through, for example, a college/school computer, or alternatively information may be obtained by written or telephone request. The data base will also enable a more general service to be offered in the form of regular publications of information bulletins and bibliographies on selected topics. In addition, the data base may be used to gain access to many kinds of source material all relating to one item. For example, it would be possible to obtain references to a notated score of a dance, a film/video version of it, critics' reviews of various performances of the dance and oral recordings of different dancers' memories of performing the principal roles in the dance. This would provide fascinating materials for study, perhaps by a choreographer wishing to re-stage a work choreographed some years before, or a young dancer studying how a particular role has been interpreted by others.

The establishment of a Dance Archive

The Dance Collection of the New York Public Library has become a repository for all kinds of information about dance and, similarly, it is planned that the National Resource Centre for Dance will become the national archive for dance in the United Kingdom. It is envisaged that the Centre will complement the work of existing organisations, such as Cecil Sharp House, the Theatre Museum and the Arts Council, by providing access to the location of their resources through the use of the data base and by collecting, holding and generating dance materials not available elsewhere. There is a policy to avoid duplicating provision unless there is a particular reason for so doing. For example, there will not be a collection of costumes at the National Resource Centre since this kind of memorabilia is preserved by the Theatre Museum.

For the development of a dance archive gifts, donations and bequests are, of course, essential. A publicity campaign will be launched to make known the role of the Resource Centre, and appeals made for materials and finance to establish specific collections within the dance archive. The establishment of the dance archive, which will reflect the richness and diversity of dance in the United Kingdom, can be achieved only by the vision and generosity of people who donate materials and funds. Much of the United Kingdom dance heritage has already been lost or has found its way to other countries, and while the dance archive would benefit from the donation of large dance

collections, it is envisaged that the growth of the archive will depend on gifts of just one or two items.

In fact the Resource Centre has already begun to establish an archival collection of materials to provide information about dance in the United Kingdom. Publicity leaflets, facts about repertory and any other information on companies, large or small, national or regional, are being collected and catalogued. A clippings file of newspaper reviews has also been started. Small undertakings as these may be, the material constitutes a record of current dance activities in community, education and theatre, and marks the beginning of a national archive in the United Kingdom.

An essential aspect of the work of the National Resource Centre is to make notated scores of dances available for study and analysis. This will be a long term project since the aim is not only to collect and produce scores in the major dance notation systems but also to have these available on computer. Such a plan will entail much research and development work.

At a later stage in its development the National Resource Centre plans to collect and record archive and resource materials on film, audio and video tape. A programme will be initiated to undertake the filming and/or video-recording of all kinds of dance, including traditional dance, and the repertory of dance theatre companies, both new and established. In this way a record of current dance activities will be preserved for future generations and the film/audio/video collections will provide students of dance with the kind of material hitherto unrecorded. Audio recordings in the form of interviews and general reminiscences will provide an unparalleled source of information about dance and the related arts. Key figures in the dance world will be encouraged to talk, to discuss, to record for posterity their particular perception of dance in their time.

The preparation and publication of teaching and learning materials

An immediate project for the National Resource Centre will be the preparation of selected materials for publication. Initially these will be basic listings such as bibliographies, choreochronicles and sources of films available in the United Kingdom. It is likely that such materials would be particularly useful to teachers developing 'O' level and CSE courses in schools. While the Resource Centre is funded for its first stage of development, it must eventually become at least part self-financing. The production of materials for sale or loan in response to consumer demands will be one source of income. Market research will be carried out in order to explore consumer needs and to identify priorities amongst the many types of topics and formats which could be prepared. Collected articles, slides, and packages combining notation, sound, visual and written materials will be produced. It is also intended to develop computer assisted learning programs in dance which will enable individuals to carry out choreographic and/or performance analysis in progressive stages.

The timing of developments

Work in all three areas is likely to be concurrent although it is expected that at certain times there will be an emphasis on one development in

particular. As well as the preparation of basic materials for publication, another immediate task is the identification and analysis of all existing United Kingdom dance resources in order to form the computerised dance data base. It is hoped that the structures for this will be clarified during 1982 and 1983. The locating of materials, classifying and storing of data is a continuous process and as previously unknown resources are discovered or become available and as new materials are created so the data base will be updated.

The longer term plans, such as the creation of film archives and the preparation of computer assisted learning programs, will demand specialised staff, techniques and additional funding. When fully operational the Resource Centre might also undertake to help teachers to set up their own resources, small companies to establish archives, offer courses on the use of dance resources and on dance archive management and provide training for dance archivists.

The Resource Centre is situated in offices at the University of Surrey. It is planned that it will eventually move into purpose-built accommodation on the University campus. This will be equipped with computer terminals, have an exhibition area, facilities for viewing film and video, and provide access to special collections and archives.

The intention is to establish a 'living' resource which reflects dance as it is, and was, in its many manifestations, and with a particular emphasis on dance in the United Kingdom. A National Resource Centre for Dance and related arts must be sensitive to, and respond to, the needs of those in the community, education and theatre whose dance interests require that they should be up to date, informed and knowledgeable about dance.

The purpose of this article is not only to share our plans and ideas with colleagues but also to invite Guild members to send us their comments and suggestions of ways in which the National Resource Centre for Dance might help them in their work.

May I encourage Guild members to note the possibilities that the National Resource Centre will have for dance in this country and suggest that they may wish to take up the authors' request for comments and suggestions. Please write to either:

- June Layson, Director of the National Resource Centre for Dance and the Related Arts,
- or Judith Chapman, Research Officer of the National Resource Centre for Dance and the Related Arts,
- at University of Surrey,
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(Editor)

REVIEWS

THE STUDY OF DANCE by Janet Adsheed, published 1981 by Dance Books at £7.50 (hardback).

Dr Violet Bruce

Those involved in the teaching of dance at any level will greet with anticipation a book called *The study of dance*. It comes at a time when there is so much expectation, together with some anxiety and confusion, in the minds of teachers, who look to and from theatre to children or students, and lecturers who endeavour to write and fulfil the demands of the written syllabus.

This is nicely produced book which gives pleasure in the handling. The English is easily comprehended and one does not need to re-read constantly in order to fully understand. It looks at dance with relevance for today, pointing to history, to the origins and development of problems, reviewing that which has happened over the years to bring us to our present interesting state.

Educational planning has been, and still is, in a process of great change. This is inevitable for any area of legislation for human behaviour and so any statistics are immediately out of date. Nevertheless one must pause at one moment to survey and this has been done.

The book endeavours to point the way to study, to "proper study" appertaining to dance. As the author indicates in her writing and bibliographies it is no final treatise. Readers may be set off in a direction clearly enough, but it is one which they themselves must pursue. The aims and methods of the book's procedure are clearly set out.

"Does dance need theory?" One would be tempted to say "certainly"; but it would seem that such theory remains to some extent in obscurity and truly dance does find it difficult to be accepted as a serious art is some circles. Chapter one brings together thoughts about the philosophy of knowledge and focusses such thought upon dance for the reader. It seeks to clarify dance as an area of knowledge, as a subject for study, and as an art form of substance with its techniques, composition and appraisal.

The book proceeds to put dance into place historically as it concerns dance theory, giving a brief view up to 1900 and, in the educational context, from 1900-1970. We have reference to Arbeau, Playford, De Lauze, Weaver, Noverre, Blasis, to Delsarte and so to the link with the Twentieth Century. The second part of this chapter deals with the growth of dance

in education as it was influenced profoundly by the work of Rudolf Laban and his colleagues and pupils. There is discussion of the assets and problems arising from the situation of the physical education umbrella which embraced dance in education in many cases. As an interested party I would have wished to have added a word about the exceptions. However, this exciting and rewarding period does need to receive serious examination, which is given in terms of what was claimed for children and the areas of experience which it served and neglected. One is made to focus on the need for theory — that of movement and ultimately that of dance — as this art takes its place with some surety in education in our country.

The author suggests that the reader may wish to pass over, presumably temporarily, chapter three. This is in order to allow continuity of flow of theoretical thought, by-passing researched material concerning the structure and application of dance teaching plans in our institutions. This chapter has much which is very interesting in terms of reasons given by teachers and lecturers. It does, as the author indicates, offer some comprehensive understanding of the present situation to which theories of dance study must apply. One might go swiftly over the tables and keep the thought flowing, to return to them later. There is, as the author clearly states, immense diversity in institutions. So much is dependant on staffing; and quality, so difficult to define, defies categorisation. The reader will find an account of the kinds of courses and the procedures of validation which is interesting and thought-provoking. Such information is not readily available (elsewhere) and produces a canvas to which one can attend for a wide vision of a particular period.

Chapter four proceeds with the real 'meat' of the writing. We enter into vital arguments which concern "dance as movement" and "dance as art". We are led to think about the basic tools necessary for dance; the study of concepts for its analysis, of choreography, performance and appreciation. "What is a clear basis for study for the art of dance?" Here one finds discussion which brings to a head what has been waited for. We use the term choreography so readily and so loosely. This writing offers depth of thought about technique, style, form, performance, understanding and critical enquiry. A dancer can learn about dancing in the act. An appraiser might learn about dancing in another way.

We are urged to a clear, disciplined approach to the study — in choreography, performance and appreciation — thereby finding relevant criteria for success. We are entering an enquiry into the application of scholarship; of insight which searches for knowledge and discipline.

Dance exists at a particular time and in a particular place and has to have its own function. The author proceeds to these contexts and gives proposals for dance study which are clear and concise, setting out pathways and topics which teachers might follow.

This book strikes one as a prelude to many topics. No one topic is complete. However, the book itself points to the need for study, for research, for books, for video tapes, for notation material, but also for courage of conviction and independence of thought by the many.

Dance, as with all arts, poses problems when we endeavour to slot it into a system of academic stringency. These are those who dance, those who study dance but do not take part in the act, those who venture into both fields. All are in the possession of knowledge. This book surveys some of the most vital problems. It classifies them in a way which can only bring quality to the work which goes on — work which is often in an aura of uncertainty, sometimes superficial though of earnest endeavour. We need to look critically and to have a breadth of vision of what we see.

This book is welcome. It helps the breadth of vision and offers the student and teacher (particularly in higher education) the stimulus of challenge and suggestion. We must approach the future with clear thinking and we need people with courage, with knowledge which leads to analysis and sound scholarship; provided that we leave room for the artists and even those who dream.

BODY MOVEMENT: COPING WITH THE ENVIRONMENT by Irmgard Bartenieff with Dori Lewis. Published by Gordon and Breach (1980).

Chloe Gardner, Dip. C.O.T., S.R.O.T.

As one reads this book one realises more and more what the world has lost by the death of Irmgard Bartenieff. She was born in 1900 and first met Laban in 1925. In her preface she says: "His work was a focal point for my background of swings between biology, art and dance." She taught dance and toured her own dance company in Europe before going to America in 1936.

In America she developed her work in notation, and also trained as a physical therapist (physiotherapist in the UK). Into this field of work she brought her deep knowledge of Laban's analysis, using it in the treatment of, first, polio patients and later those suffering from cerebral palsy.

In the first part of this book she gives a detailed explanation of Laban's principles and points to their specific application in physiotherapy. In the section called "Dance Therapy" she discusses the treatment of psychiatric patients. She does not describe the treatment of any illness but gives an account of the treatment of several people, and in doing so she gives the reader such a clear picture of them that not only their diagnoses but also their individual variations are recognisable. Her therapeutic theory emerges from the examples she gives of her handling of actual cases and the vital importance of Laban's Effort/Shape analysis as a therapeutic tool is clearly demonstrated — in the assessment of treatment aims, planning of the therapeutic programme, and moment to moment response to the patient during dance sessions. People working in this field would like this section to be longer and more detailed and, in fact, a text book of the author's methods and principles would be welcome. However this is not a handbook. The use of dance in therapy is dependant upon much personal experience of Laban's work. It is this understanding and sensitivity which the author demands of the therapist in her advice on touching and handling a sick or disturbed person.

The other sections are relevant to therapy, as all aspects of movement are. But the chapters on walking and ethnic gaits are particularly interesting. It is not surprising that such a thorough practitioner as Irmgard Bartenieff should include a chapter on basic anatomy, with useful, clear diagrams.

This should be a help to anyone trying the Bartenieff Fundamentals. These cannot be called a set of exercises, merely. The author meticulously describes the method, the body participation and the inner experience involved in each one, designed to enrich and deepen one's understanding of movement.

The book is well presented and the text is illustrated by lively photographs of ordinary people doing the things that ordinary people do.

I strongly recommend it to anyone working in the therapeutic field.

(Editor's note: it had been hoped to include two reviews of this book from different points of view. Chloe Gardner offered to write specifically from the point of view of dance in therapy.)

LABAN CENTRE PERFORMANCE
Laban Centre for Movement and Dance
at University of London Goldsmiths'
College, December 1981.

Rosemary Brickell

In December 1981 the Laban Centre's first term sharing of students' work was presented in the studio theatre.

The programme consisted of solo and group dances choreographed largely by second and third year students. In the same programme were three works by teachers in charge of the Foundation Course; Dance Theatre third year repertoire and B.A. second year students.

It is too easy to expect more maturity in a dance performance than the student nature of the pieces entails. Within the student context, however, and as a means to composition, there was a noticeable emphasis on relating thematic material to other arts works in sculpture, painting and music. There were attempts to compensate for the limitations in the depth of the work by the device of performing individual studies concurrently. An example of this was the two Dance Theatre second year students who presented their studies, based on separate Rousseau paintings, within the same dance. The shades of the keenness and strength of a hunter and the sinister movements of a jungle tiger in the choreography were rather thwarted by the contrived and uncomfortable relationship between the dancers. Eye contact where there was no suggestion in the movement of such connection and tabla music imposed on top

for 'atmosphere' rather than as an integral part of the choreography.

The B.A. second years brought nine students together more decisively by juggling their sculpture-based studies in different time and spatial combinations. Overall the effect was too plodding to be exciting despite the variety and surprises. It exhibited the formal side of dance composition in contrast to the emphasis on performance competence that a Dance Theatre second year student impressed me with. In a dance based on "Self Portrait" by Van Gogh the dancer threw himself behind the role with a self assurance that never acknowledged his limited experience.

This leaning towards the emotional and deliberately communicative, rather than abstract-based dance, was seen again in "Renaissance" by B.A. third years. It was a sweeping, graceful duet by David Monroe's Early Music Consort. In "Shy Hide Away" the dancer/choreographer accompanied the dance with her own poetry, describing her personal experience at a party. "Variations on Pitch", a lively inventive dance for five, was based on the well-used theme of sport — this time cricket. Its use of rhythm was refreshing; shared with ease, as it was, amongst the performers. The Dance Theatre third year dance, "One More Time", to music by Stefan Grapelli, was successfully lighthearted. Four girls synchronously falling over themselves in their efforts to co-ordinate a dance line-up.

Another Dance Theatre third year solo, "Strolling", achieved a whimsical quality in its swinging walks that cried out to be taken further in its development. We were treated to the strong, articulate dancing of a second year student in the solo "Degasio" to Ravel, which exploited a flowing, lyrical style rooted in its subject, Degas. Dance Theatre third years similarly performed the lyricism of tutor Patty Phillip's choreography "To a theme of Paganini" with its ebb and flow of movements in an interchange of groups in variations closely allied to the musical themes and variations. It too had an ease but was never musically illuminating. Here there was the openness and suggestiveness of body line and curves characteristic of a Cunningham based way of moving. How different to the characterisation of the second year Foundation group with the rather stilted movement of the dance "Bondi" to refer to the depiction of a beach scene. Livelier movement content was to be found in "Break Time at the Dance Factory", choreographed by visiting

American teacher Richard Haisma, using the strong infectious rhythms of Jeff Armes, movement accompanist at the Centre. In this composition the full contingent of B.A. second years were co-ordinated in ever changing combinations and sequences using swinging and punching webs of rhythm that filled the stage to overflowing and became, eventually, cramped and unclear.

The teaching emphasis on performance at the Laban Centre is becoming evident in the confidence of student work. The raising of technical entry standards also contributes to this new confidence, as must the purposeful approach grounded in a knowledge that jobs are now available in dance.

By the very nature of the institution the experimental is discouraged, however. Promotion of the Centre's concerns, as thrashed out in the continual formal and informal evaluation and self-criticism that the staff participate in, has inevitably led to a recognisable style. Choreography seems to be fastidiously designed and hung together in a self-conscious manner. There is inventiveness in this style but experiment beyond it is not yet in evidence.

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REPORTS

THE LABAN GUILD LEADERS'
TRAINING SCHEME

A report on the first weekend of a two-year training course for leaders of recreative dance groups.

Margaret Longley

A new part-time course organised by the Guild began its life on a bright and sunny weekend in mid-November last year. The Cambridgeshire countryside was resplendent in its autumn colours as we assembled for the first six weekends which form the basis of a training scheme for prospective leaders of recreative dance groups. The venue for the whole course is a primary school in Little Paxton.

Each weekend will focus on a particular area of Laban based study; the emphasis being on practical work, supported by theory. The syllabus outlines the various aspects of the course which include individual study and assignments, and advice on the organisation and administration of a dance group. There will be assessments of the practical and written work. On completion, successful participants will be registered as group leaders in the Laban Guild register and will receive a certificate.

The main theme for the first weekend was 'The Body' with the subsidiary theme of 'Relationships'. Tutors were Vi Bruce and John Rockett. Vi has a fascinating background of both teaching and studying. She seems to have worked everywhere and with all types of people, yet she is so unassuming and approachable. Her vitality and enthusiasm for dance appear to be inexhaustible. John has experience of teaching dance within the educational and recreational spheres, and he closely links music with dance in all his work. He has produced some outstanding shows with boys and girls of primary school age. One tutor from each weekend will be involved in the following course, thus ensuring an element of continuity and validity. John teaches in February along with Sam Thornton.

There were fifteen members on the course, all with varying backgrounds, experiences, and inevitably, ideas. One worked in occupational therapy, a number were dance teachers from both schools and adult education, myself, a music specialist, and three who taught Laban-based keep fit.

The heavy schedule began on Saturday morning at 9.30 a.m. with a warm welcome from Janet Whettam (Course Manager) and brief details of the weekend's activities.

This was swiftly followed by the first practical session with John which focused on whole body actions such as stretching, turning and locomotion. Work on individual body parts followed, kinaesthetic awareness gaining in importance. Individual tasks were set and the subsequent short dances were performed to partners for observation and comment.

After coffee Vi took the group, and her gentle method of warming up by 'softening' parts of the body was widely appreciated! Once eased back into working shape, we progressed to more strenuous tasks based on elevation and locomotion. The emphasis was on flow, and a good deal of time was spent in discovering and experiencing different pulse rhythms in relation to flow. This was felt to be a most worthwhile exercise. The work on successive movement proved difficult and pointed to the need for technical expertise if total body control was to be achieved. This led to the interruption of flow through hesitation and suspension. The session concluded with a dance to a Scott Joplin rag which incorporated the various elements on which we had worked.

Lunch was a quiet affair as everyone was weary and in need of the opportunity to sit down and rest aching muscles.

John's second session was a logical development of the first as it mainly focused on partner work. There were initial explorations into symmetrical and asymmetrical body shapes which served to present further movement ideas in terms of levels and space. Then we had the opportunity to work with a variety of partners and to experiment with some of the numerous possibilities offered such as mirroring, leading and following, supporting, action and reaction. An individual travelling motif took us into a new space, and then we had to approach and retreat from each partner in a different way, producing a sequence of movement with each. The main problem here was not lack of ideas, but reaching agreement with a partner as to what combinations of movements to use.

From work in twos, we encountered group relationships in Vi's following session. Here, sensitivity was the vital factor as we joined hands and moved round the room, made shapes in response to a person, and led a 'blind' partner round the room before manipulating him or her into a strange shape. Music was then introduced and used to great effect, providing the structure for individual and group work or choral

movement. We had fun when Vi 'conducted' two groups of movers, each hand giving instructions to one of the groups. Our musical awareness and response was tested in the final task when half the group danced with a leader and the other half accompanied with appropriate sounds and rhythms on percussion instruments.

Dinner was even quieter than lunch had been: everyone was ravenous and the food was delicious. We were exhausted and grateful for easy chairs in the staff room and revitalising cups of hot coffee.

The evening discussion was longer than expected but fruitful and valuable. We gave a detailed introduction of ourselves, outlining our backgrounds, dance experience, particular interests in the course and what we hoped to gain from it. Our needs were various; ranging from the building of self-confidence to the sharing of ideas, to teaching methods to the technique of encouraging members of a group to use their own ideas and adapt material. Those who already ran recreative dance groups found that they encountered similar problems in terms of finding source material and suitable music, and catering for people with different needs and abilities. These points were interesting and helpful to everyone. The most crucial point raised was, of course, the meaning of the term 'recreational dance'. It appeared that we all had differing ideas and opinions about it so it was suggested that we should attempt to formulate our own concept of 'recreational dance' for discussion at the next weekend. Feeling that the evening had been most beneficial, we retired to our lodgings armed with a paper on Rudolf Laban written by Vi Bruce which we were asked to read in preparation for the following day.

Vi's energetic Sunday morning session concerned movement motifs, with the emphasis on flow and phrasing which had formed the basis of the previous day's work. Bodyswings were used for the warm up. Then rhythmic phrases were given and we had to devise motifs using stepping, the whole body, and body parts to different rhythmic phrases. A Norwegian folksong with the traditional pattern of verse and chorus was used to link all these ideas together. The chorus motif was taught and the verse provided the opportunity for individuals to create three movement phrases, each clearly defined in the music. Finally, the use of different body parts leading movements formed an introduction to John's work on tension.

Being asked to divide our bodies into two, lengthways, with one side tense and the other flowing, demanded more of us than most could give by this stage in the weekend's proceedings. We were so relieved when we could then choose which kind of movement to develop. The last activity was a dance in three sections using ideas from the poem "The City of Yes and the City of No" by Yevtushenko. We accompanied the dance with our own vocal sounds and it was generally considered to be a success.

After lunch we had a concluding discussion and clarification of 'homework' tasks. There was considerable concern shown amongst the group members for knowledge of the body, its muscles, limbs, danger spots and so on. It was suggested that perhaps tutors on the course could be asked to emphasise this kind of information in their warm-up sessions.

The weekend had served to highlight people's difficulties, deficiencies and preferences for certain types of movements, levels, spaces and plans. Although we were aching and tired, there was a certain sense of satisfaction at having learnt and achieved something, having resolved some problems and raised many questions, but essentially, having danced for pleasure.

I think the course members would agree that the first weekend of this new training scheme had proved to be enjoyable and satisfying. On behalf of the group, I should like to express thanks to all those who had helped to make it so. Careful planning and organisation was evident from the catering to the coherency of the practical work, and I feel sure that the course is going to be successful. I look forward to the next weekend, and indeed, the rest of the training course.

RESIDENTIAL DANCE COURSE AT LEEDS UNIVERSITY

Sheila McGivering

The course held at Leeds, 17-20 September 1981, was entitled "The Study of Dance: Structures and Issues". It was attended by lecturers in higher education, teachers in schools and in dance academies, representatives from the major English dance companies and others with similar interests.

Janet Adshead, in her opening lecture, presented an overview of dance in higher education awards, illustrating the present situation by a diagram showing the

proliferation of degree courses and indicating the part played in them by dance studies and the proportion of time which this occupied in relation to other components. This varied between 5% and 100%. Dr. Adshead showed her concern for the study of dance itself rather than the study of dance through other disciplines.

This concern was the focus of three sessions in dance analysis. Pauline Hodgins presented a chart which provided a framework for the skills and concepts involved in the description, interpretation and evaluation of dance. Michael Huxley explained how the chart could be used to help course members, in seminar groups, to study two dances through the eyes of a critic by reference to written criticisms of "Dark Elegies" and "Stabat Mater". At a second seminar we considered our own reactions to a performance by Janet Smith and Dancers which we saw the previous evening.

Valerie Briginshaw presented a paper on the dance artist in education which was a factual statement of the roles of teacher and artist and the issues involved. This was followed by a video presentation of pilot projects in two schools. This prompted lively discussion of a positive nature. The roles of artist and teacher should not be confused.

Supporting lectures were given by Patricia Mitchinson, Joan White and Gordon Whalley on dance examinations in schools (state and private). Robin Alexander and Janet Adshead lectured on the validation of courses in higher education.

June Layson concluded the conference by speaking on postgraduate study in dance. The standard of higher degrees is circumscribed by the quality of the first degree. Ms. Layson outlined the range of dance topics that could be studied in different ways (practical and theoretical) which gave scope for postgraduate work.

The whole course was conducted in an objective manner which accommodated the varied views and backgrounds of the members. This promoted a warm and friendly atmosphere in which there was a free and open exchange of ideas.

The well-prepared and excellently presented course came at the end of Ms. Layson's pioneering work in establishing dance as an important part of the Leeds University M.A. in physical education. Members wished her well as she took up her appointment as Director of Dance at the University of Surrey.

PUBLICATIONS

Back issues: The last issue of the magazine omitted the address for Guild publications. All these, including back issues nos. 47, 49, 50-55, 57, 58, 59, 61-66 @ £1.00, are available from: Chris Willitts, 32 Blythe Avenue, Meir Heath, Stoke on Trent, ST3 7JY. Please make cheques payable to *The Laban Guild*.

Dance books: All the publications reviewed and Sylvia Bodmer's book, *Studies based on crystalloid dance forms*, can be obtained from Dance Books, 9 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4EZ. New additions to their stock which may be of interest include: Sue Leese and Moira Packer's handbook *Dance in schools*; an anthology of poems for movement edited by E. J. M. Woodland—*Poems for movement*; and a wide range of recent books on all aspects of dance.

GUILD EVENTS

Birthday celebrations: The National Celebration Day of Dance will take place on May 8th at New Century House, Corporation Street, Manchester. Members may wish to take the opportunity to informally meet the editor and discuss the magazine.

LINC: A reminder that there will be the regular summer course at Dartford College. Details from Sam Thornton, Ivy Cottage, Clockhouse Lane East, Egham, Surrey TW20 8PF.

NOTES

The Treasurer would like to remind members that they can greatly assist The Guild by making sure that subscriptions are paid on time and by recruiting members.

The Editor reminds contributors that the copy deadline for the next magazine is August 31st 1982. Contributions for the Newsletter are always welcome at any time.

NEWS

Laban International Symposium, July 19-23, 1982. I gather that a number of Guild members will be contributing to this symposium. **Margaret Dunn**, our president, will be giving a key-note lecture. The symposium should be of particular interest to members who wish to know more of the international aspects of Laban's work.

Community dance at the Laban Centre.

The Laban Centre announces the appointment of **Peter Brinson** as Head of the new Department of Research and Community Development at the Centre. He will take up the post next autumn. Peter Brinson has been Director of the Gulbenkian Foundations's United Kingdom and Commonwealth Branch for the past ten years. During this time he has been closely involved with dance activities and has seen many Gulbenkian-funded and Gulbenkian-initiated projects come to fruition under his directorship:- including the report on *Dance education and training in Britain*, the Dance and Movement Fellowship at the University of Leeds and recently The National Youth Dance Festival. He has assisted dance in the University sector through his involvement in setting up the National Resource Centre and the new dance department at the University of Surrey. Equally, under his directorship the Gulbenkian Foundation has been increasingly involved with awarding funds to community arts projects, particularly in the inner cities.

The Laban Centre says that one of the first developments of his new appointment will be the expansion of the course for trained dancers who wish to work in the community. This will be in line with a number of developments in this area of work at the centre. At the same time the centre is extending its premises to include new studios and other facilities. We wish both the Laban Centre and Peter Brinson well in this new venture.

NATFHE Dance section are currently organising a Conference on Dance-Music Relations to be held in Manchester at the Royal Northern College of Music in October. Details to follow in the News Letter.

Diana Lange. We are sorry to have to report that Diana Lange (née Baddeley) died on 6th December 1981. She was a long standing member of the Guild who will be missed by many Guild members. We send our condolences to Roderyck Lange and his family.

STOP PRESS

The Guild is holding a **Related Arts Weekend** from June 18th-June 20th, 1982, at Pendrell Hall College, nr. Wolverhampton. The course, led by Janet Goodridge, Anna Haynes and Dorothy Madden, will be concerned with the practical exploration of dance with music and art. Details from Ena Eades, 21 Ravensdale Gardens, Walsall, WS5 3PX.

The **British Society of Aesthetics** and the **N.A.T.F.H.E. Dance Section** are holding a conference on "**Aesthetics and Dance**" at Ilkley College from August 20th-23rd. The Conference includes papers from a number of people and the provisional programme lists Dr. H. B. Redfern, Dr. Valerie Preston-Dunlop, Jacqueline Smith, Gordon Curl and Chris Challis amongst the presenters. Details and applications form from: C. Hamby, Senior Lecturer in Performing Arts, Ilkley College, Wells Road, Ilkley, West Yorkshire, LS29 9RD.

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