

CONTENTS

Relationships
African Eagles
LMA and Group Process
Pen Picture of Jean Newlove

RELATIONSHIPS

Through Dancing Together, We Learn - Helen Lewis

'We live in a world of movement. The universe is in a state of constant motion, of ebb and flow. Man must move in order to live. In movement, man at a very early stage expressed his hopes and fears, his joy and grief in religious and ritual dances and ceremonies. Dance was the fundamental art of man.'

Through Laban's teaching, we have become aware of the truth that the fusion of physical action, thought and feeling in Dance, increases our consciousness and our power of communication. We also acquire greater vitality, stronger creativity and achieve more sensitive relations to others in art and in life. Therefore, through dancing together, we learn about living together.

We do not after all talk to strangers about our feelings. But in dance we learn to shed our inhibitions

By giving artistic form to every individual's expression, dance has a civilising influence on society and its cultural life. Dancing together is a way of exploring and building up relationships within a group until its members become attuned to each other's style, personality and feelings. This special sensitivity and respect for each other carries far beyond the studio or the stage, into daily life and personal relationships. A relationship can be formed through a sudden unexpected encounter or through careful slow planning. It can be stormy, even violent, or tentative first, becoming gently supportive. It can take the dancers into unknown places, new dimensions, or remain rooted on the spot.

gentle, serene sequence of gestures. Improvisation on suggested themes is usually the start of 'dancing together,' always preceded by a thorough warm up. It is a magic way of involving individual dancers by allowing them to reveal their own ideas and personal feelings through movement.

For beginners this is not always easy: we do not after all talk to strangers about our feelings. But in dance we learn to shed our inhibitions and to evolve a new language that we can understand. I personally have witnessed these developments over many years. Newcomers, who had previously experienced movement only as a form of physical exercise or in games and sport, and who were naturally shy with each other, opened up and blossomed soon into a group

of happy dancers. Through classes and, later on, rehearsals and performances, lasting friendships have developed, bringing people together who otherwise would never have found a way towards each other. Differences in upbringing, in social, cultural and religious background become unimportant and even meaningless when people get to know each other by dancing together.

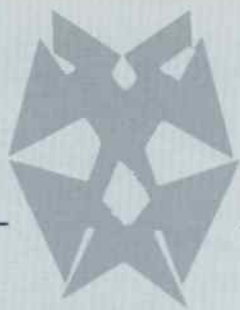
All this was evident in the working rhythm and mutual understanding of the members of the Belfast Modern Dance Group. Not only did this group fulfil my own high hopes, it also collaborated successfully with musicians and theatre directors, on tiny intimate stages as well as in the vast

Continued on page 12



The Dance of Anne Frank with Emma McKee, Anne Gilpin, Debbie Kohmer and Nick Bryson from the N.I. group.

The dance can become a wild whirl or a



LETTERS

EDITORIAL

I have just returned from another wonderful day of celebrating the Guild's 50 Anniversary in Swindon. Sessions were lead each in their own expert way by Anna Carlisle and Jan Nicol (Fear). We worked hard physically and mentally, and talked hard with each other in the breaks, discussing, giving each other information, and planning more meetings for this year and next year. It was a really happy day. Laban's work taught well always provides me with some magic gem to take away and use. As Anna said his work must not die. If you weren't there, join us next time helping us to build on this relationship!

Congratulations to Jan on her recent marriage.

Our Winter Magazine is about relationships. Have you thought of your relationship with the Laban Guild? How has it ended for you this year? Are you happy with it or can you help the Laban Guild become more creative for you?

Have you been able to meet, write or speak on the telephone to any members of the Guild? Have you written to the magazine? The Magazine Committee do hope that you have made some contacts.

I have enjoyed getting to know so many of you, new and old members, learning about your occupations, ideas, experiences. All this information helps the committee to begin to know what you would like to read in the magazine. We cannot produce appropriate material for you without this information.

Let us next year go on to develop an even better relationship with each other and the Laban Guild.

Christine Meads

COPY DATES

Material should be sent to:

LYDIA EVERITT,
3 LAYTON LANE,
SHAFTESBURY,
DORSET SP7 8EY
TELEPHONE: 01747 854634

Copy dates are:

1 January, 1 April, 1 July and 1 October.
Typescript please, on one side of the paper,
ready for the scanner if possible.

NEXT ISSUE IS JANUARY 1997

May I begin by thanking you and the council members for all the hard work that goes into producing the Laban Guild Magazine. I am constantly surprised by its contents, especially the new areas of work that have been explored, and the opportunities which have been created for people to experience Movement and Laban's philosophy of the body in space.

I smiled as I read Dr. Vi. Bruce's article 'Space' remembering as a young teacher being visited by Dr. Bruce, then a P.E. Organiser for the West Riding of Yorkshire. Her enthusiasm for Dance, and her great desire to encourage me to go on a course and try it for myself. It is many years ago now, and it is obvious she is as enthusiastic as ever.

But, (and alas there is a 'but'!) in this celebratory year, the 50th anniversary of the Guild there does not appear to be any mention of those Guild members who made the Guild possible. How many of say, the original members whose Guild number will be under 100 are still alive? Who are they? Is there to be any recognition of their efforts to form the Guild, who helped it process in the early days of its management, giving their time, energies and expertise to run courses and establish it as a recognised authority of Human Movement? For any organisation to develop and process it must look forward to the future and not cling to the past, but at the same time on such a special occasion such as this, could we not remember those who made it possible for there to be a Laban Guild and say 'thank you'.

Joe Buckle

In reference to the work of Betty Meredith Jones I want to write to say how important her work with Parkinson's Patients is. I had the privilege of visiting her with Walli Meir in February 1995 in her home in Wales.

I was completing my M.A. work on Dance Movement Therapy and Parkinson's Disease. I had run groups with Parkinson's Disease patients in a Midlands hospital and had heard of her work.

It was a valued insight in seeing her work on videotape and saw my own work as a continuation of a tradition which had started with Laban and

had passed to her.

Using his principles we both had developed ways of helping Parkinson's Disease patients. I feel Laban's ideas benefit these patients, giving them a better experience of weight, space and time. Laban's ideas of dimensions and planes give them and the therapist a structure. I too have seen patients begin to move freely in sessions and begin not only to move their bodies, but to engage in relationships with others and seen their attitude to life changed.

I feel deeply saddened by Betty's death but privileged to have seen her and her work. Despite being frail she expressed in her eyes the joy of life and conveyed to me what it was to be a pioneer. She gave me the will to carry on and to develop my ideas in my M.A. I feel it is due to her that it is now on the shelves in the Laban Library for she inspired me to maintain and carry on a tradition.

I feel her work has much to tell us of work with Parkinson's Disease patients and I would like to thank her and Walli for a memorable trip to her cottage on a wild and lonely spot which spoke of the power of movement and dance.

Jill Bunce

Dance Movement Therapist Ecclestone, Staffs

Re the last magazine and May 25th. A comment, "... like more Laban-type teachers next time ..." Fascinating! My team are trained by me and I was trained by Laban (with Lisa and Sylvia helping). But I worked daily with him over a much longer period than the teachers at the A of M Studio whose training was also influenced by educational needs. Before planning the day, I read some of Laban's letters to me about his hopes for my future work. I only mention this to put forward the facts. Most of the training in Britain was educational via the A of M Studio so I imagine the confusion has arisen from the fact that Laban himself was not specifically educationally orientated - rather theatrically biased. In other words my approach is probably very different.

Jean Newlove

THOUGHT FOR THE QUARTER



Relationships

RELATIONSHIPS

by Shelia McGivering



Did you see the lovely dance which was choreographed by Sam Thornton and performed by Guild members in the Royal Albert Hall in September last year? The dancers themselves helped in the creation of the dance. Choreographed dance comes alive when dancers relate to each other with awareness and not merely as moving bodies in space.

How does this awareness come about? Can it be trained? Does it just happen through the experience of moving together? Undoubtedly it develops through experience and a group of people who frequently dance together, will develop a degree of sensitivity towards each other which would not be achieved by the same dancers in different groups.

The development of sensitivity to the movement of others was an outstanding feature of the work at the Art of Movement Studio, in Manchester, where I was a student in 1950-1951. It was also significant in the Modern Dance Holiday Courses. So it has continued wherever dance is described as "Laban based".

How did one begin? Lisa Ullmann began by directing us to rub our hands together, very vigorously, and then to draw them apart and repeat the action. I think that she believed that an electric current was created which could be felt between one's two hands. In Lisa's case it probably could. The next stage was to hold the palms of the hands close to those of a partner and to move together in the now-familiar mirror exercise. Most people begin this exercise with actual touch, instead of the hand rubbing. I think that this is more effective.

The establishment of the partner relationship led to short improvisations which would last only as long as the experience could be sustained. Other movement knowledge informed these improvisations as work on Body Awareness, Effort and Space progressed. This led to the creation of movement sequences, which could be repeated, and might be regarded as little dances. We were constantly urged to MOVE, rather than speak, when we were creating a dance.

The books on notation, which describe the structure of partner work, were not available to us at that time.

Group work might begin with close crowd formation, with touch. A common rhythm of breathing would be established, which would give rise to a rise and fall within the group in unison. This rising and sinking might be enlarged and then, perhaps, take the group into travelling. Another beginning might be swaying, which would lead readily into travelling. The group

might scatter and reform. Different rhythms might arise.

What goes on in a group that gives rise to any development? Surely someone must emerge as a leader?

An intention to use movement as a means of communication, or to establish and sustain relationship, involves outward flow. Since relationship is a two-way thing, there must be receptivity or inward flow.

Once, when I was about other lawful business, I left a Third Year class with the task of exploring this approach to group work. They reported that they had had a tough time. Their group rep., whose enthusiasm and sense of responsibility outweighed her sensitivity, had effectively prevented any development by reiterating, "Somebody pushed. Start again". They claimed to have endured this state of affairs for about an hour, whereupon they spontaneously erupted, scattering throughout the available space, cavorting in euphoric abandon. (I was sorry that I did not see it.) They realized that they had, eventually, fulfilled the task.

In another college group, leadership passed easily from one to another as the group changed direction. Then one student, who had an exaggerated belief in her powers of leadership,

moved three quarters of the way across the hall before she realized that she had left the group behind.

So what does go on? It is necessary to concentrate entirely within the group, attentive to the most subtle cues, ready to respond at once. Is there in this a common mind? In the first example I have described, which was an irregular crowd or cluster, the impulse is likely to come from the centre, where there may well be a common mind. Those positioned on the periphery will respond to the impulse which reaches them without actually being part of the common mind. In a fairly large group it may take as long as a second for the peripheral people to respond. This is a 'real life' situation.

In the second example it is supposed that the group had adopted a regular, if changing, formation such as a diamond, wedge or arrow. As the group moves and turns someone is placed in the obvious position to lead. Being at the front, however, the leader has to be acutely aware of the intention of the whole group in order that they may move together. The unfortunate student in my example had missed this point. I rather suspect that she had merely been playing follow-my-leader all along.

Albrecht Knust collected together group formations: the block, the hollow square, the circle, the line, the irregular cluster, with

Continued on page 5

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AFRICAN EAGLES

by Jasmine Pasch

I was invited by the dance director of the Playhouse Company in Durban, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa to work with their two dance companies to introduce them to the possibilities of dance in special education, and to work in schools in and around Durban myself with children and their teachers. The visit took place in March 1996. The dancers from the Playhouse Company, and from Siwela Sonke Company took part in some of the school workshops as part of their training experience. In addition to schools for deaf children, children with learning difficulties and schools for children with physical disabilities, I was asked to work in two "places of safety", called Valley View and Ocean View and wondered what these were as I had never come across the term before. These were places where street children lived.

I believe that dance is movement with meaning; that in dance we literally embody thoughts and feelings.

Street children are children from various backgrounds and circumstances whose reason for being on the street vary widely. Many of them are working on the streets, sent out by their families to help supplement the family income, and they return home at night. Others stay for much longer periods, returning home when they want to. Some, however, actually live on the streets, and are victims of poverty, abuse, neglect and violence. KwaZulu Natal was badly affected by recent political violence, and many young people ran away or became separated from their families, were orphaned when their parents were killed, or were abandoned. Some suffer from mental illness, and the effects of traumatic experiences. Street children can be as young as two to three years old, up to eighteen years, and are of both sexes. The places of safety that I visited attempt to locate family members so that children can return home, and to offer basic schooling, counselling and support. Even coming from the centre of London, where I feel ashamed to say I am used to seeing homeless adults and teenagers, nothing prepared me for the shock I felt seeing young children wandering the streets of Durban, begging, sheltering and sleeping even in the doorways of the Playhouse Theatre where I was working. I felt

apprehensive about working at the places of safety, but agreed to visit before taking the workshops, talk to staff, meet the children and get a feel of the place in order to plan the forthcoming sessions.

Valley View Place of Safety, as the name suggests, overlooked a spectacular African valley. As I was walking around, thinking about the children and the most appropriate activity for them, the idea of EAGLES came to me. Here were children literally "in flight" from something that hurt them. Eagles are strong and brave, and something told me instinctively that these children were too. I later read something that backed up my intuition. 'Street children should not necessarily be seen as drop outs of society. Instead they should be recognized for the exceptional fortitude, creativity and astute

knowledge of human nature that they must possess to survive life on the streets.' (Swart 1988) I was assured by staff that the children would love a dance and movement activity, and were full of energy!

It is always difficult to describe dances in words, and I have included here a diagram of the type I use to brainstorm activities and ideas stimulated by the central theme I have chosen. The activities were planned for a group of eight to twelve year olds, with staff support. In the dance workshop at Valleyview I attempted to provide the following:

- * Activities which the children could undertake independently.
- * Activities with a child or adult partner.
- * A sense of connecting to the centre of the body

AFRICAN EAGLES

LEANING INTO THE WIND
Soaring balances with a partner

CATCHING THE LITTLE EAGLES (running towards....)
Adult partners welcome eagles hurtling down the room, catch them, lift them and spin them up high.

FLYING LEAPS
running and jumping taking turns using a diagonal pathway.

LEARNING HOW TO FLY LIKE EAGLES.
"leg and wing" rides.
Adult partners, using the *helping hand* grip swing children round, giving the sensation of flying.
Heavier children can have the same experience using the stretch cloth.

Read clockwise from EGG.....

EGG
curling up tight around the centre of the body adults to pick up the little eggs carefully rolling eggs onto their sides and spinning them testing eggs for firmness...no runny ones!

HATCHING OUT
struggling to be free

NESTS
cradling children gently encourage them to leave the nest and find a new home. Repeat a few times, and then return to their own nest.

TRYING TO FLY
rolling back and using the momentum to jump up.

RUNNING LIKE THE WIND (running away.....)
Tag game with "eagle catchers"
When tagged, players fall to the ground, roll, spin, and reach out for the *helping hand* to release them. Any free player can extend a helping hand, releasing the tagged player with a pull into a big jump into the air. The player is then free to rejoin the game.

Jasmine Pasch 1996

AFRICAN EAGLES

Therapy

- * Nurturing or containing experiences, with gentle and stronger energy
- * Experiences of leaving, and returning, (gentle) and struggling free (strong).
- * High energy activities incorporating the familiar one of running away, turned into a tag game for fun, with the added ingredient of the helping hand. Children are asked to reach out for help, and reach out to give help. The helping hand grip is a double hand to wrist grip for extra support.
- * The sensation of flying, with all the risk and excitement that involves. The child lies spread-eagled on the floor, and the adult partner grips one hand and one ankle, sliding the child around, and taking off into a "leg and wing" ride. A prop such as a sheet of lycra can be used to lift and swing heavier children.
- * High energy activities incorporating running towards or to someone. I sensed a desperation in the familiar running away energy, and wanted to give a sense of there being someone to run to. Again I built it into a fun game. Catching those little eagles as they hurtled down the room, and spinning them up high was a joyful experience for children and adults alike.

- * A quiet activity to centre the children again, this time involving a partner in a counterbalance requiring trust, soaring over the African valley with their wings spread wide.

I told the children how looking over their valley had made me want to spread my wings and fly, and had inspired the idea of eagles for their lesson. They all looked very proud, and very beautiful.

The dance workshop combined elements of Sherborne Developmental Movement, with high energy games, and elements of pure dance inspired by the context I was working in. The children were extremely agile, very self-contained and moved with great skill. I believe that dance is movement with meaning; that in dance we literally embody thoughts and feelings. My role as an artist and teacher is to create with the group that sense of shared meaning. A teacher commented that the work had been "psychologically valuable", and she could see the benefits.

Most of the children at Valley View were

Zulu speaking, and I am extremely grateful to my percussionist Thabani Sibisi for translating for me, as well as accompanying the dance workshops. I would also like to thank Lynn Maree, the dance director of the Playhouse Company for the invitation to work with her department, and Gerard Samuel, the dance education co-ordinator from the Playhouse Company who organised the workshops, and was my companion, driver, and helping hand throughout my stay in South Africa.

References

Swart, Jill. "Street wise: Opening the Way to Self-actualisation for the Street Child" *Africa Insight*. Vol 18, no 1, 1988. quoted in: Taylor, Jyll. "All the Children must go to School" A study of the non-formal education of South African Street Children. This research was done at the University of Durban, Westville in 1993. Michael Samuel of the Education Faculty acted as the advisor for the study. ■

Jasmine Pasch 1996

RELATIONSHIPS

Continued from page 3

variations on these basic forms and further elaborations when considering the different positions of the individuals making up those formations. He also considered the possibilities of the movement of the groups' formations. This work is recorded in his book "Kinetographie Laban" Volume E. I was fortunate to be able to attend the Easter course in London, where he presented some of this work, during my Studio year. Knust has provided a structure for group work which can be brought alive by the quality of movement and the sensitive interaction of the people taking part.

In our second term at the Studio Sylvia Bodmer demonstrated the power of our developing awareness by asking us to perform a 'grand chain', a task which we had found difficult early on in our course. (Sylvia's instructions had not helped at that time. One had to grow accustomed to Sylvia's teaching style before one appreciated her brilliance.) On this occasion we had to perform the grand chain backwards. As a development to this we moved backwards without



touch and with our eyes closed. To our amazement, we succeeded. We supposed that, at some deeper level, we were aware of the air in motion which informed us of our relative positions.

I suggested to a class of about a dozen students that they should stand back to back with a partner and gradually move away, coming to a pause when they felt the contact diminish. I recall the delighted expression on a student's face when she paused and found that her partner was more than ten feet away. Although the six couples were working at the same time they did not become confused. The task required intense concentration. Working out of doors does not produce similar results.

Vibrations of the air and floor may play some part in communication, but they do not explain or convey relationship.

So what is involved in relationship, in the personal sense in which we have been using the word?

An intention to use movement as a means of

communication, or to establish and sustain relationship, involves outward flow. Since relationship is a two-way thing, there must be receptivity or inward flow. There is a constant alteration of inward and outward flow. This was illustrated by Laban's model of the lemniscate, or, more simply, by the Mobius band. In practice it was illustrated by Sylvia's frequently chosen theme of gathering and scattering. Mr Laban often spoke of the inner self and of engaging with the outside world. Through strengthening an awareness of self an awareness of others may grow.

There were only about twenty six of us at the Studio in 1950-51. We had five hours of practical work a day, plus one evening and our own practice time. It was a unifying experience, which we felt would be of lasting significance. I still believe that the place of relationship in a scheme of training is of the utmost importance and it is very encouraging to see how the work continues today. ■

Sheila M. McGivering



DANCING AROUND

MEMBERS

Laban International Course July 1996

Greetings from Canada where we drive on the right side of the road and call trousers, pants !

As a newcomer to England, my initial impressions of the LinC '96 programme were of surprise. I wasn't expecting such a wide range of ages and abilities, although it was like 'Old Home Week' for many who've been coming for years, the new students were welcomed warmly from the 1st minute.

It didn't take long to get a sense of what this Summer School was all about - it was that Laban's movement was accessible to all types of people, bodies, and experience. The absolute aim for a week like this is that the younger students feel that they can converse on equal ground with the more, let's say... experienced and that young or old can learn from each other. This must be upheld in the truest sense of what Laban himself would have hoped for in the original dance forms.

On leaving, I have visions of Frankie talking about "nothing" which is something Wendy Cook's fly in and out of an afternoon where I may never look at a chair the same way again Hilary's molecules and sore bum which combined to give us a gift we'll never forget that Mitch is a fountain of knowledge with a gift to make us all clowns and Chris, so full of magic and inspiration.

Signing off to say "See You Again" - Been there, done that, got the beautiful T-Shirt !

Love U

Search for Talent

As part of its ongoing SEARCH FOR TALENT PROGRAMME The Royal Ballet School's NATIONAL AUDITIONS TOUR will take place this year from the end of November 1996 through February 1997.

We are looking for youngsters with the talent and potential to become classical dancers and hope to see as many young dancers as possible at various centres throughout the country. However, as some of these youngsters possibly might not attend Local Ballet Schools, nor read the Dancing Times and therefore not be aware of our auditions, I am writing to you to ask for your assistance. The Auditions are free of charge but potential applicants must return a completed application form prior to auditioning.

All persons wishing to audition for any of the Royal Ballet School Courses should write as soon as possible to the Auditions Department, The Royal Ballet School, 155 Talgarth Road, Barons Court,

London W14 9DE, (giving the applicants date of birth) for an application form and prospectus.

THE ALIVE KIDS POSITIVE ARTS COMPANY

Visit to London July 1996

Lampton School in Hounslow recently hosted an extraordinary event.

The young people from KwaMashu, a township near Durban, KwaZulu Natal, and their company, The Alive Kids Positive Arts Company, formed in 1994 under the direction of Edmund Mhlomo were performing excerpts from their 90 minute show "We Are Alive Kids".

The show was devised to bring attention to the plight of street children in Durban. It is in the style of music theatre, with traditional Zulu dance and choral singing, performed to the backing of the K. Alive Band, comprising two guitars with that unmistakable South African sound, drums and synthesizer. Twenty young men and women aged between eleven and twenty one years sing and dance in the show. Some have had direct experience of life on the streets themselves. KwaMashu was described to me as a "fearful" township, with high unemployment, violence and family breakdown, though there are changes for the better taking place. The show was electrifying. The conviction, warmth and energy of the young performers radiated out, and was reflected back in the rapturous applause of their young audience at Lampton School. I found it very moving. Following the performance, the Lampton youngsters organised themselves into small groups and took their visitors for a tour around the school, followed by lunch together. In the afternoon workshops, company members taught dance routines in small groups, and those who wanted to played with the band. Staff, with great sensitivity, kept a low profile. This was an afternoon for the two groups of young people from such different backgrounds, and with such different experiences, to freely share and learn together in their own style. I was impressed by the self-discipline of the company.

There were just three performances in England: a show and workshop at the Royal National Theatre, and shows at Paddington Arts Centre and at Yaa Asantewaa, plus a bit of impromptu gumboot dance busking in Covent Garden to supplement their funds. Lampton were the only British school to have had this unique opportunity. The company were off to Denmark for a further sixteen performances, plus television appearances before returning home.

The Alive Kids Positive Arts Company are outstanding young ambassadors for the new South Africa.

Jasmine Pasch

ANOTHER YEAR nearly over and time to look back. I have been concentrating on articles by leading people on the major topics of BODY, SPACE, EFFORT, TIME, SOUND, bound, presentation set as a reminder of the year. If you, student, just send a cheque for £5.00, made out to the Guild.

Best Wishes to Audrey Bambrugh who has recently retired. Wishing to get in touch with Audrey may apply to the Guild.

NOW TO LOOK FORWARD - next year we plan to run another series of WORKSHOPS, run more workshops to help members in the REGIONS to establish their own links to members and forge more LINKS with other members.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN OUR STAGE COURSE starting shortly but there may be a few places left. If you are interested in a STAGE 2 COURSE AT THAMESDOWN IN 1997, please contact these possibilities and details of the courses can be found in the next issue.

AT LAST - DANCE AND THE OLDER DANCERS - "no boundaries", but now it's official! The Foundation conference on this topic at the Riverside Studio in 1997, beginning of much wider provision of dance for older people.

WANT TO BE PART OF THE SCENE IN 1997? THE GUILD TO CONTINUE ITS WORK? If you are interested, please contact the Guild.

This will be the last year at the current rates, so please contact the Guild.

Subscriptions: UK ordinary and affiliated members £5.00, UK student, retired and unwaged £3.00. Please make cheques payable to The Guild, Ann Ward, 30 Ringsend Road, Lincoln, Ph. 015047 62120.

PPL - THE LA

If you use recorded music in your sessions with children at school, or your own home, you may need to be licensed.

The Guild is now able to offer a reduction on this licence if you are working for an Education or Health Authority. YOU SHOULD REGISTER YOUR CLASSES WITH THE GUILD for a licence.

Write NOW, to me, Ann Ward, (address above) for thousands of pounds!

LABAN GUILD V

January 18th 1997, at a workshop on Pina Bausch, taken by the Guild. For full details, ring the Guild.

SHIP NEWS

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actioners using Laban's analysis and covering
AND RELATIONSHIPS. If you would like a
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to the Laban Guild, to Ann Ward.

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COURSES, build up contacts with MEMBERS,
own centres of dance, improve our SERVICES
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COURSE IN SOUTH WALES? This will be
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AGE 1 COURSE IN EAST SUSSEX? -OR A
WINDON? We are currently investigating both
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ORKSHOPS 1997

Central London venue.
y Ana Sanchez of the Laban Centre.
idi on 01597 822536

50th ANNIVERSARY in SWINDON



Jan

Anna

Some of the Group

DANCING AROUND Cont.

"Understanding Movement Patterns" MOTUS HUMANUS

This advanced seminar was led by Warren Lamb, with Card-Lynne Moore at the University of Colorado, in August.

This 4½ day advanced seminar delved into the psychological implications of movement behaviour. The seminal Movement Pattern Analysis work of Warren Lamb and its corollary application by Dr. Judith Kestenberg and others provided a focus for kinesthetic and conceptual

explorations. The seminar did not deal with the technical construction of movement profiles. Rather, rich movement experiences were interwoven with observation and discussion to address broadly the issue of interpreting movement behaviour. Due to the nature of the workshop, participants had to have a basic understanding of Laban Movement Analysis to be eligible to participate.

LABAN MOVEMENT ANALYSIS AND GROUP PROCESS IN DANCE MOVEMENT THERAPY

by Kedzie Penfield

Notes from a Workshop Demonstration at the First International Conference on Dance / Movement Therapy in Berlin September 1994.

As dance movement therapists we learn much of our craft through theoretical constructs which come out of verbal work. Many of us have combined these theoretical models with movement based ones - our own non-verbal experiences, dance or other physical training, notation systems, etc. I use the Laban analysis system and I should like to share my experience and application of this system in my work as a facilitator of psychodynamically based movement groups.

In my work I use movement to facilitate group and individual processes. In fact I see movement as the process itself rather than as expressive of it. The expression and the movement are one and the same phenomena. The body movement of all the members give the dynamics and character to the group containing the emotional, expressive, creative and psychological levels. Movement gives direct access to these processes to heal, understand, share, grow and ultimately change as individuals and as a group.

Although I find many of the theories about Group Process which have come out of verbal work extremely illuminating (eg Yalom and Boysen) as a movement person I also need a framework which is specifically oriented towards movement as a phenomena with its own grammar, logic, rhythm and language distinct from the verbal version of these patterns. Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) gives me such a framework: an analytic system that provides glasses through which I can see the parts, or qualities of movement while appreciating the whole. The transition from words to movement and visa versa is made through symbols and kinaesthetic experience so that movement can be understood in its own language rather than by interpretive description, aesthetic judgement or other forms of perception.

The other element of dynamic group work is, of course, the style of the facilitator. As the facilitator in a group, my personal movement preferences influence the selections I make as the group progresses.

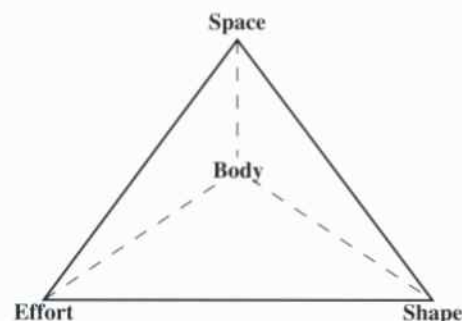
Here again, LMA gives me a framework through which to understand my part of the complex interrelationship between me and the groups that I lead. Parallel to the verbal training of an analytic group leader who may take years of self-exploration to prepare for this role, I feel dance movement facilitators need awareness of their movement selves and their impact on others through movement. The training developed in the New York Programme now offered in Berlin by Eurolab requires each trainee to become well acquainted with this aspect of themselves. Although very humbling to a highly trained movement practitioner and often emotionally demanding, I feel a deep knowledge of one's movement self through some disciplined form is essential preparation for this work.

LMA has given me a language through which I can understand, to some extent, how I lead a dance movement therapy group.

LMA

Rather than give a full introduction to LMA, I will simply outline the four areas or categories which come from the work of Rudolph Laban, Warren Lamb, Judith Kestenberg, Irmgard Bartenieff and her many colleagues at the Institute in New York. I will then use examples drawn from these areas applied to specific incidents and processes in my group work over the years.

We use a tetrahedral model to chart the four aspects of movement that we are looking at:



Body

Under this category we include such concepts as: body attitude, body part relationships, initiation, posture/gesture and

sequencing. Bartenieff Fundamentals and Body-Mind centring draw heavily on this aspect of the system.

In terms of group work, I find I rely heavily on this aspect of movement in the introductory, warm up period of a group. Relationships can be set up, physical energy (literal "warming up" of the muscles) can be generated and trust established or distanced.

Effort

Many people see this as the "dynamics" of the movement: the speed, strength, delicacy etc. of the action. We see this as a continuum within each factor or "colour" which has a range from one extreme to the other:

Weight factor: Strong - - - - - Light

Space (focus) factor: Uni-focus - - - multi-focused

Time factor: Quick - - - - - Sustained

Flow factor: Bound - - - - - Free

The way a person organises his dynamics - eg starting a movement quickly with an explosive quality, progressing through a delicate, multi-focused and finishing with a held, controlled flow - might be a characteristic pattern repeated in different body actions. We call this "effort phrasing" and I often see it as a musical signature for an individual..

The descriptive words we sometimes use to characterise a group of individuals are often translations of predominant effort or patterns of efforts: "They jumped right in"; (time factor of quick or sudden) "They seemed very cautious" (flow factor of bound) "They certainly were playful" (quick, light combinations perhaps with multi-focus).

In terms of group process I use movement games from this category combined with the Body level mentioned above for the warm-up section of a group.

Shape

The quality of the shape as it flows through the body is identified in this category: does the body seem to get larger, smaller, more

LABAN MOVEMENT ANALYSIS AND GROUP PROCESS IN DANCE MOVEMENT THERAPY Cont.

Analysis

linear, more round? Does it approach a point in the space around it or does it carve its way through the immediate proximity? We use the words shape, flow, directional, and carving to describe these different shape qualities, and their expressive support - or lack of it - of the body/effort/space aspects is worth noting. (eg a wide, vertical body attitude with an effortful attitude of strength is not supported by a narrowing, shrinking shape. The contradiction, so to speak, between the shape and the body statements are indicative of an ambivalence or contradiction between feeling and relating.)

I usually use this category in conjunction with others particularly in the warm-up or middle phase of a group. It is a good way to see whether the breath supports the movement; a certain quality of tension is clear if the shape cannot be "filled" so to speak with its appropriate quality. (eg width with an expansiveness in the body; narrowing with a closing or shrinking of the body, etc.)

Space

The architecture of the environment is addressed here: levels, kinesphere, planes, diagonals; 'space harmony' and concepts such as ever changing spatial tensions, spatial sequencing and the relationships built up through directionality.

I use this spatial aspect of LMA more in the middle of a group process often to clarify boundaries, organise a group theme (eg men vrs. women) or build completion of a complex emotional process. (eg a dance of bereavement)

SPECIFIC EXAMPLES FROM GROUP PROCESS

In looking at which LMA categories I use at each stage of a group process, I know that my own movement preferences affect the choices that I make. The notion that the facilitator's style will have a tremendous impact on the group is not new but we have not applied this very rigorously to the movement field. Because I am often using my body's movement to pull a group together, my body and effort preferences will be evident in how the group forms. LMA has been helpful for me to identify exactly what my style is and how it may or may not be useful in the group process.

Beginnings

For instance; my preferences lie in the Body and Effort areas of the LMA categories. So the beginning of a new group that I am leading will probably - and not surprisingly - be focused on movement qualities in those areas. Warming up is a body level operation from one perspective and flow is the attribute I can most easily use in order to move with, or get in tune with, someone else. I also select specific music which I feel has these "flow and body" characteristics in order to support the movement process.

Trust can also be developed effectively through body level work: eg. leaning, lifting, sensing each others' physical weight in various ways

Just to contrast styles: a colleague of mine whose movement preferences are much more centred in the Space area begins groups very differently. Instead of using body contact, interactive or flow based structures, she may suggest a spatial form and set patterns supported by music which she directs verbally from the side of the studio. She will develop interpersonal trust through clear spatial relationships or individually focused work rather than the weight oriented, more kinaesthetic avenues which are more 'home ground' to me.

Middle Phase

The facilitator's role in the middle phase of a group process is so varied that it is very difficult to generalize about it. I have taken "exaggeration" as one choice that I may make to facilitate the group process. Any of the four categories - or a combination of them - may appear.

For instance, let us say there is an aura of anxiety which is reflected in a least half of the group members' movement: a sense of "walking on egg shells" characterised by bound flow in the lower body; a feeling that everyone is holding their breath characterised by diminished shape flow in the upper body; a very small kinesphere or - conversely - an inappropriately large one.

I may emphasise that emotion both verbally and in movement: hunching the shoulders (body level); pulling away from the centre of the circle (space level); narrowing and

sinking (shape level) and perhaps even using the image: "Let's all walk on egg shells...".

Usually the act of emphasising a process through movement in this way shifts the emotional and therefore the group process. It certainly never stays the same; anxiety may reverse to playfulness, anger to aggression and then joy, and so on. ("Let's smash the egg shells!") As soon as the movement "story" is intensified it changes; taking with it the whole process of the group.

Because I am often using my body's movement to pull a group together, my body and effort preferences will be evident.

The category of Space is one I use to organise a group theme: I remember a large group of students made up of 11 women and 7 men who constantly avoided discussing the tension they felt in the sexual division of the group. I set up two lines - the line of men on one side of the room and the line of women on the other and gave them a clear way of interlocking arms and moving forward against each other. The two phalanxes approached and retreated several times with various kinds of vocal accompaniment which increased in volume. Eventually the two lines found ways of passing through each other and re-forming on the other side after which they collapsed in laughing heaps.

The process had contained aggression, anger - even violence - but the clear spatial form contained the physical and emotional intensity so that it transformed to trust, humour and a return to appreciating each other in a new way.

Endings

In the last phase of a group I tend to return to the body level; a sense of each person taking what they wish from the experience on an emotional, physical, spiritual level and departing from the process. My rationale for this is that their body takes them into the group, their body takes them out of it. Therefore I often invite participants to close their eyes, review their body sensations, "ground" themselves through a solid

Continued on page 12



PEN PICTURE OF A MEMBER

Jean Newlove

Relationships are like stepping stones, marking one's journey through life.

The summer in the Var is fading gently into a benevolent autumn. Early morning mists hang low until the rising sun disperses them and from a cloudless blue sky, there is suddenly a sparkling clear view across to the mountains.



Jean in her Spring

Most of the day I have been pondering over the emotive word 'relationship'. From what angle should I approach it? More importantly, what would interest Guild readers? Unbidden, there is a growing awareness within me of a very meaningful link. The autumn of the year corresponds with my own autumn. Perhaps it is time to take stock, go back to my beginning and to recall the most meaningful relationships that have sustained me in a long life of dance. I can only hope that some of the younger members will find these reminiscences of interest

My spring-time! My first dance class around three years of age, treble nought in dance shoes. My brother took me to and from the weekly class under sufferance. As for me, I was hooked from the first moment. By the age of seven years, the studio had moved uphill, opposite the cathedral. I logged up the steep medieval street on my own now. With my first exam came a new 'stepping stone'. An elderly gentleman took a few of us in a special class. He had impressive flowing white locks and wore white trousers and red kid ballet

shoes. Eduardo Espinosa. A kindly man with piercing eyes, he was especially good at teaching young children. It seems he offered me a place at his London school. A visit duly took place. Provision for accommodation and dance training was excellent. At the fatal words 'general education', he look nonplussed and then remembered there was 'a school around the corner'. We got the impression his pupils didn't visit it very often, if at all. Back home I continued as before.

I am still in my own springtime but there is a subtle change; a feeling of acceleration growth and a more questioning approach to dance. My new dance teacher did not have an enquiring mind. I put it down to the nuisance of her being in love. Dance exams and theory progressed satisfactorily but where was all this leading me? My parents never interfered, which suited me very well. For better or worse, I was able to plot my own journey. Only twice did they veto a choice giving 'general education' as their reason. Getting little sense from my pretty, besotted dance teacher, I took myself off to a friendly librarian, who was my next 'stepping stone'. The heavens must have been smiling on me when I asked for books on the history of dance. She supplied me with book after book. I began to learn about Russian ballets, leading dancers and choreographers. I read about the Bolshoi and Maryinsky theatres and their schools. Diaghilev's time in Paris, Pavlova in London and the de Basil company in Monte Carlo. (Virtually everyone had a Russian name). The classical ballet section was exhausted. Well, I'd better try learning Russian if that was where it was all happening. In my spare time I learnt the Russian alphabet and a few words.

Meanwhile I had been involved in several performances and was now being introduced to block ballet shoes. They hurt. Even the animal wool used initially for padding didn't ease my pain. I began to notice the feet of older, full-time students and found they were not a pretty sight. About this time, I bought a book in a sale called 'Borzo'. A brilliant read, all about a male dancer trying to continue his training through the revolution before escaping to Harbin in China. One of my last ballet performances was as a soloist with the full-time students, en pointe. They bathed their battered feet with pride. Such masochism was not for me.

The friendly librarian helped me on to another 'stepping stone'. She had found books on 'American Square Dance', 'Ballroom for All' and an insignificant volume on something called 'modern dance'. This last mentioned Rudolf Laban, crystallographer, theatre designer and dance teacher. What was 'crystallography' and what on earth had it to do with dancing? In the

next paragraph there was mention of his pupil Kurt Jooss and his ballet company. No pointe work! That was for me.

My own spring had now slipped away, giving way to the beginning of summer. Dance exams were finished and I took no further part in pointe work. I attended all sorts of dance courses, learnt various dances from books and tried to keep up the Russian. I was asked to dance for school staff and fellow pupils in the school library at lunch times. They were very supportive but I felt I was not learning anything and growing older by the minute. The stalemate in my personal life coincided with the declaration of war. Dance now seemed a very frivolous occupation.

I finally met Laban, the 'crystallographer', who had been my goal for so long.

My family were all engaged in war work. My brother escaped from Dunkirk, my mother assisted with operations on injured airmen and my father supplied all the aerodromes in Lincolnshire with fuel. Still at school, I joined the G.T.C. (Girls Training Corps). My next 'stepping stone' came unexpectedly when I was made P.T. Officer. P.T. gave way to my own version of modern dance. I also started an evening class for office workers and was then asked to teach ballroom dance to the All Saints Youth Club. The girl saints remained rooted to their chairs on one side of the room whilst the boys saints were even more firmly cemented to the benches on the other side. Finally I persuaded them to pair up but realised the tango was not a good choice. Fire and passion were lacking but we all had an hilarious time.

Another 'stepping stone' appeared out of the blue. Kurt Jooss was in Cambridge! I had continued to keep a low profile over my dance aspirations. Telling no-one, I saved my pocket money for a ticket and arranged an audition with him. Jooss invited me to join the company as a student dancer. My father counselled me about the inadvisability of not finishing my schooling. The war front was grim and Jooss's plans were uncertain. Regretfully, I didn't return to him but I was more determined than ever to keep dancing.

Not prepared to compromise, I refused two college places as the end of my school days loomed ever nearer. Then a letter arrived which was to be the major 'stepping stone' of all time and led to an inspiring and joyful relationship spanning some seventy years. The trustees of Dartington needed someone to study with Laban for three months and then take charge of three hundred women on the estate, the women would take part in regular movement sessions. I applied, not giving my

FROM DANCE TO ART

A New Relationship

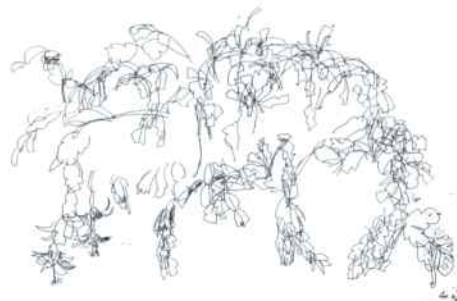


Art is all about relationships - of colour, shape, line, tone - but these are only the beginning.

Of far more interest, and the greater challenge to teacher, is the eliciting of a relationship between the student and their subject matter. The fact that you are trying to get the student to "see the world the way it is and not the way they think it is", does not mean that you are trying to negate a personal response. Ideally, sixteen drawings of a teapot will all be accurate representations, but still subtly different, as no one person sees the world in exactly the same way as anyone else.

In many art departments these days, there is very little emphasis on drawing or painting from observation, but without this the students become fixated on preconceived ideas and - all too often - preconceived images. Learning to look at whatever is in front of them through their own eyes and not someone else's is an important part of art education.

fascinating exercise in "looking" is to give the students something intricate like a section of a tightly curled cabbage or a Christmas cactus, and ask them to draw it without taking their eyes from it or looking at the page at all. Another,



An exercise in "looking"

emphasising that the total experience of a subject is as important as looking at it, is to take a variety of unseen objects into class, each in a plastic bag, and ask the students to draw them simply by putting one hand in the bag and drawing from touch only.

One of the problems for the art teacher in a sixth form college or its equivalent, is that students come into the course with a good GCSE and reasonable technical ability and think that they know it all. Everything has become "intellectualised" and there is little link between the eye that "sees" and the hand that "does". It is the body that comes between the eye and the brush - and an understanding and use of Laban's movement analysis which enables the art teacher to bridge the gap.

The forging of this link, through the use of movement sessions linked to the development of traditional disciplines, enables the student to bring a truly personal response to the challenge of multi-discipline projects, rather than the stereotyped and second hand response so often and so depressingly seen.

One example may suffice to show the value of this approach. A group of Foundation level students had been asked to spend a week recording "the environment above them", when I was asked to do a workshop with them. The work they had produced was mundane, not to say banal, in the extreme. Everything "above" them had been brought down to eye level and recorded with no personal comment whatsoever. I took them into the gym and had them lying on the floor looking up, hanging off the wall bars looking down, piling in heaps on the floor, experiencing what it

was like to be below or above, yearning to reach the heights or oppressed by towering images, burrowing underneath with feelings of comfort and security or claustrophobic entombment. When I saw a display of their work a week later, I couldn't believe the difference the sense of personal involvement and experience which was shining through their work had truly revolutionised it.

So if you get a chance to integrate dance and art work, or have a friend in the art department with whom you can collaborate, do take up this challenge - it may be one of the most rewarding experiences of your teaching career, and will certainly be valued by your students for ever more. ■

Ann Ward



Absorbed in the task

PEN PICTURE OF A MEMBER Cont.

age. Short-listed with one other applicant, I was invited to Dartington.

I finally met Laban, the 'crystallographer', who had been my goal for so long. He asked me to dance for him. Then, as we chatted Lisa came in and asked me to follow some working actions. After a break I was invited to meet the rest of the trustees. Everyone was smiling. Apparently, I was too young for the post as it also involved social work but Laban had absolutely demanded that I became his personal assistant after training. A new post had been created and agreed. Soon I would work with them all Laban, Laban and Lawrence, in industry, Dartington trustees and the estate workers and Lisa. We shook hands all round.

My father had agreed to my new training and I met them all once again in London for a final

briefing. There was a surprise in store for me. I was escorted to the 'Gay Hussar' in Soho where a specially decorated table awaited us. A violinist played to me and the men of my party presented me with a bunch of red roses.

And now, more than half a century later, my classes start again next week. My 'autumn' has miraculously given way to 'summer' once more.

Postscript. All the stepping stones proved useful. I worked in the Soviet Union and with some more studying, got by in very basic Russian. I was a guest at the Bolshoi and represented Gt Britain as a judge of classical ballet, sitting next to Lavrovsky, the choreographer of Romeo and Juliet. Research into Highland Dance brought a prize in Warsaw; choreography, a medal in Moscow. 'Borzoi' is now a collectors' item. The tango? I was invited by Paul Robeson to improvise

with him during a celebration in his honour. ■

Jean Newlove

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Through Dancing Together, We Learn Cont.

continued from page 1

spaces of the Opera House, where they worked alongside actors and singers. The Belfast Modern Dance Group was privileged to have dance compositions written for it by three locally based composers, Havelock Nelson, Raymond Warren and Alan Tongue, which were successfully and happily performed on several occasions.

The human relationships that were formed in these years of dancing together have lasted in 'time' and 'space' and in 'intensity.' A young dancer from a far afield country, who loved dance, became a member of the Group. She integrated quickly, both on the artistic and personal levels, and is now my daughter in law. Such is the power of Dance!

Since these friendships, based on dancing together, are a strong force for harmony and peace in society, it is not surprising that dictatorial regimes have often rejected and

even banned Laban based Contemporary Dance, which promotes and supports democracy. An example was the progress and success of Ulster Youth Dance in Northern Ireland. Under the guidance of experienced and dedicated tutors, young dancers, who came from many different backgrounds in Northern Ireland, consolidated their skills, acquired new ones, and enjoyed the creative process in each other's company. Their work during the year culminated in the annual summer course under the inspired leadership of Royston Maldoom and in a most impressive performance. At the end, the dancers were in tears, they had become so fond of each other that they found it heart breaking to part. When the exhibition 'Anne Frank in The World' came to Northern Ireland, I was asked to open it with a dance drama based on The Diary of Anne Frank, a task of considerable responsibility. I chose four dancers from Ulster Youth Dance, who seemed to me to possess the right physical and expressive qualities for the parts of Anne, her sister, mother and father. My instinctive choice proved to be right. They

were such a sensitive and close knit little group that in no time they became a family, although before dancing together they had not known each other at all.

In 1994 The Dance Theatre of Duisburg in Germany decided, on Royston Maldoom's recommendation, to include 'The Dance of Anne Frank' in their programme that was to commemorate the end of World War 2.

I felt slightly uneasy when faced with the responsibility of choreographing and rehearsing the Anne Frank story with German dancers, and I knew that they too did not know what to expect from me, on a personal level. In any other medium there would have been psychological problems, but through dance workshops on relationships we found a way through dance to Anne Frank and to each other. As our doubts vanished, we realised how privileged we were to recreate together the spirit of Anne Frank through the language of Dance. ■

Helen Lewis

LABAN MOVEMENT ANALYSIS AND GROUP PROCESS IN DANCE MOVEMENT THERAPY Cont.

Continued from page 9

contact with the floor and, in their own time, open their eyes and get ready to leave. Sometimes we stand in a circle the same way we did at the beginning of the group, coming to rest with our internal and external processes before finding how we wish to say good bye.

However, the colleague I mentioned above often finishes with each participant visualising a clear form which he/she can fill or be carried by after the session. Another colleague ends her group assigning certain tasks; movement based "homework" that each member can practice and take away for future work and consideration.

The separation and departure process is as unique for each group and its facilitator as the other processes but again, LMA can identify the way this can be most effectively done in each instance.

Role of the Facilitator

It seems clear to me that I usually use the body and effort categories in the warm-up phase of a group process because those are where most of my movement preferences lie. This is appropriate: surely the therapist operates from where she feels safe and initially, in the getting to know and trust building phase of a group, this will be based in movement material in which she feels most "at home". From there she can build the safety so necessary for others to work together.

This addresses the whole issue of how psycho-dynamic work really is a process of relationship between therapist and client. My movement self influences the movement character of the group: my "space-based" colleague is able to build a great sense of safety for the group through directing beautifully constructed structures from her

pillow at the side of the studio. I, conversely, have to get my body moving with the other bodies moving in the space in order to build that safety for myself and the group members.

Conclusion

LMA has given me a language through which I can understand, to some extent, how I lead a dance movement therapy group and make my choices in the facilitation process. It challenges me to explore why certain areas are less comfortable for me; it identifies strengths and potential weaknesses in my style and it gives me an appreciation for differences in others. On a conscious, professional basis, the possibilities which flow from the insights of LMA provide the structure and grammar of movement that I need to do my work. ■

Kedzie Penfield