

Laban Guild...

CREATIVE MOVEMENT PLAY OR 'WOULD YOU LIKE TO SLITHER TOO?'

Christina Gray

Laban texts abound with introductory references to wriggling, reaching, rolling babies and running, clambering, tumbling toddlers. 'The experience of movement is fundamental to children's development', to this I would add only that the children's movement has been, for me, a developmental experience in the fundamentals of movement. Joan Russell (Creative Dance in the Primary School 1965) describes the 'total stir' of children's movement, and indeed this phrase springs to mind in the presence of small children. Coming as I did ten years ago from working with disaffected teenagers the kaleidoscope of moving energy presented by the under-fives was at first terrifying. I, like the teenagers, have an affinity for bound flow, indicative in my own case of a desire for clarity, caution and control! How was this enthusiastic throng to be CONTROLLED? In learning how to work constructively and creatively with the free flowing, open energy of the under-fives I am indebted to the structure provided by Laban's analysis of movement.

This is not, of course, uncharted water. Laban practitioners have pioneered work in the developmental aspects of movement. I, with many others have been fortunate to have been influenced by the work of Maggie Kirby, early years and dance specialist and her then colleague at Bristol Polytechnic, Veronica Sherbourne. In her book (Developmental Movement for Children, Cambridge University Press, 1990), Veronica suggests that children have two basic needs, to feel at home in their bodies and to be able to form relationships. This approach focuses on whole body actions (with weight, in space) and relationships (teacher-children, children-partner, children-children etc).

As with all practitioners, my own approach reflects individual interests, notably in creative dance and drama, child development and working with groups. In describing this work, I have come to adopt the phrase Creative Movement Play, (yes, yes, I know it's a tautology!) having long ago dropped the term 'dance' because of the confused expectations it aroused. There is, none the less, the occasional upset when some little tot, dressed optimistically in a lilac tutu, gets to the end

of the session and bursts into tears because it was most definitely NOT what was expected!

He turned slowly, looked at me very hard and said quietly 'Why?'

This does not mean that movement play does not include elements of 'dance'. Laban suggested that 'dancing' is a nonfunctional activity, expressive of inner life, feeling and mood. The National Curriculum suggests



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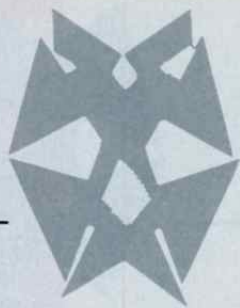
Volume 16
No. 3
Autumn 1997

for movement and dance

Reg. Charity No. 266435

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WORKING ON COUNCIL

EDITORIAL

In this magazine we have a lot to offer on the education front. If you are in teaching don't miss a page. As well as interesting articles from teaching toddlers to teaching older children there are contributions of class warm-up material which have sprung from Jeannie Sheirs article at the beginning of the year.

FUNDING

This is a focus that Council has at the moment. Three members of the Guild have been struggling with the maze of funding opportunities, many of which are hidden, selective, and bureaucratic. They have sent in a substantial (for us) request for funding from the National Lottery, based on the Guild's work to develop both a Foundation Course and a Therapy Course. We are at the point where we sit and bite our nails so we would like you to join us in that activity. You may do it privately in your own homes - no public gnashing of teeth is needed. The belief is that, for Laban's work to grow, we must be at the forefront of that growth, and we must be party to the spreading of the 'word'. The members of the Guild are the very people who know best Laban's fundamental principles and their involvement in developing both stages of the Community Dance Course has been key. The development of the new courses will happen in the same way AND, hopefully, the courses will also be supported by FUNDING. Su Johnston talks in her column about the pain of it all.

Great news of some advance publicity of the Guild Annual Conference. The new organisers of the event have decided that the Conference will now come to you, the members. And this will happen for the next few years. The date remains about the same - Saturday March 14th and the venue for 1998 will be **Cambridge**. Put this in your diaries now.

Lydia Everitt

COPY DATES

Material should be sent to:

LYDIA EVERITT,
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SHAFESBURY,
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 AUGUST 1997

I have 'just returned from a committee meeting of the Drama Company to which I belong. During the meeting I was struck several times by the debt they owe the Guild Council for their current smooth running; since I joined the committee I'm sure I have bored them silly with suggestions which began "The Guild Council find it very helpful to..." or "The Guild Council find it more efficient to" But as a result, jobs are allocated, action taken and outcomes monitored more effectively through clear, concise minutes and meeting management strategies. I have yet to get them circulating reports in advance of a meeting so everyone can ruminate on suggestions and arrive prepared and updated and I think they would freak at the thought of a Su-styled movement focus/tuning-in session to start a meeting but come the millennium....?!

It was always a pleasure to attend Guild Council meetings, not only to meet up with friends and like minded colleagues but also because the atmosphere engendered and cultivated there was always one of open debate on real issues to do with progressing Laban's ideas and work. With each successive Chairperson the range and style of discussion might change but those discussions were consistently purposeful and culminated in action.

They were always more than just business meetings and although I often returned home with a daunting list of "things to do", I never felt pressurised into taking on more than I could cope with; there was great respect shown to each council member and an understanding that people work best when they are motivated and feel part of something long term.

Everybody on Council has a specific role and although jobs and interests overlap, I appreciated that each person was given time and space to express themselves and contribute from their own perspective. Su Johnston, with her Action Profiler's background, is skilled at breaking major projects into reasonable tasks within realistic time scales. Lydia's business acumen and experience also kept meetings running efficiently and with Lorraine De Oliveira as a

lynch-pin secretary, keeping everyone in touch and informed, there was a reassuring feeling that the work was in safe hands. Both Pam and Barry, our Treasurers, produce brilliant visual displays/handouts which clarify the complex world of finances in a way columns of figures never can. Just because a valuable member couldn't be present at every meeting never daunted Council either; Anne Ward would send her contributions and be available at the end of the phone to answer questions during the meeting (a kind of primitive phone conferencing!)

Although I often returned home with a daunting list of "things to do", I never felt pressurised into taking on more than I could cope with.

Our last Chairperson, David Henshaw, stirred things up with exciting challenges which the Guild vitally needs to fertilise its growth and I was grateful to be part of that initiative. He and the rest of Council always made me feel appreciated and supported for my work on the Training subcommittee and since I've stepped down from Council, to put my energies into a new job, I've missed that stimulation. At work and on other committees, I often feel energies are being wasted by people trying to manipulate others, follow their own agendas and pursue short term goals without long term objectives and at those moments I hanker for a few hours at a Guild Council meeting!

Janet Lunn

STOP PRESS

A date for all members' diaries:

SATURDAY 14th MARCH 1998

what?

Guild Annual Conference

where?

Cambridge

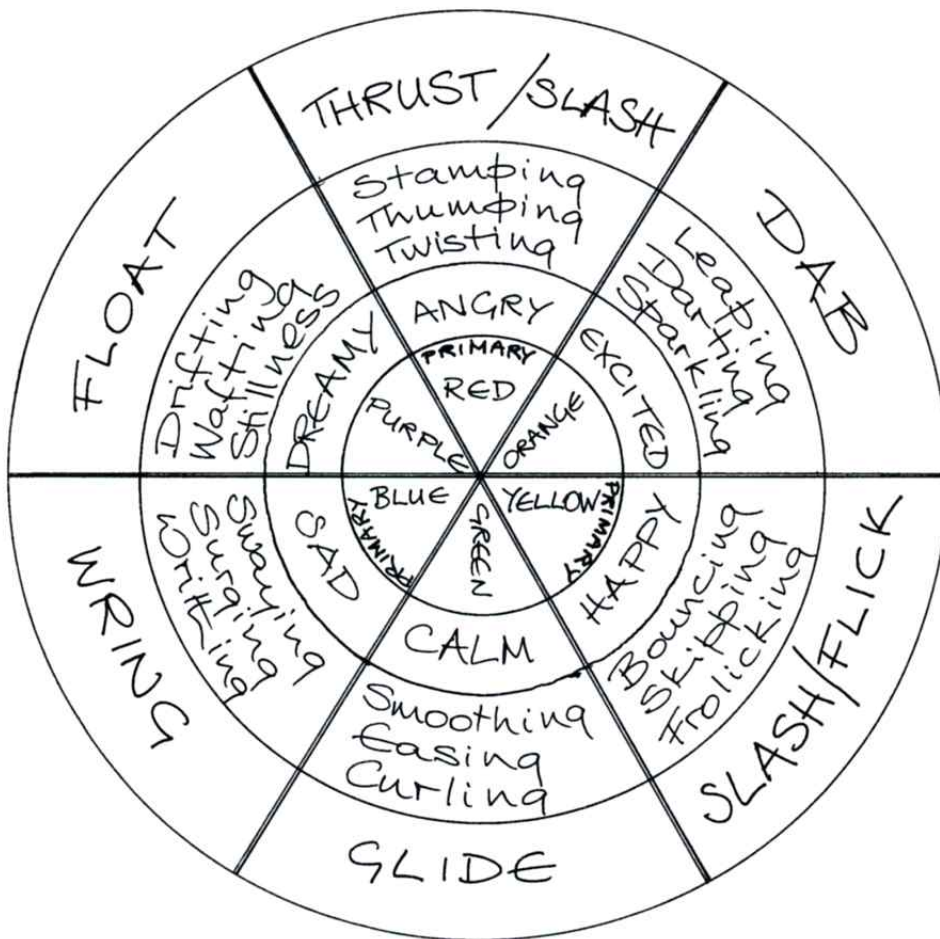
how?

By train, car, punt...!

We'll keep you posted

COLOUR MOVEMENT

Wendy Hermelin



that sometimes I changed my mind about which went with what. I want to follow this through and see where it goes. Other aspects to look into would be further mixing of the colours and finding associated efforts, exploring the different wave lengths of each colour and how this could affect movement, dynamic interactions between people responding to their most or least favourite colour; the paths are many and endless.

There were overlaps six colours yet eight effort actions, and often one mood evoked two effort elements.

I worked on these themes on the Sharing Day of Improvisation and Dance in Taunton and will possibly continue the development at LINC in Eastbourne this summer. Obviously these are my personal feelings about the colours and other people might make different choices, but I am finding the subject fascinating. I'll let you know how we got on. ■

Wendy Hermelin

Having been asked to take a dance session with a class whose project was colour, I shuddered and all I could think of was angry red stamping, as this was how I felt about it - "I don't want to do this! How can I make a dance lesson on colour?"

Well if angry red is stamping what about all the other colours? I remembered from my A level art course, the three primary colours, red, blue and yellow and the secondary colours, purple, green and orange which come from combining the primaries, and I drew out the colour wheel as shown in the centre of the chart.

Red would be angry now, for me. Stamping is an angry movement and is a dynamic movement which interpreted in Laban's effort actions would become firm, sudden and direct which would be a thrust. What were my personal feelings about the other colours? Could this be the basis of a simple effort lesson for this class, which could be developed in many different ways? The process became intriguing and I became

involved, eventually planning far more than I could use with my class of seven year olds.

The chart shows briefly the fascinating conclusions I came to from my personal choice of mood for each colour, which then dictated what kind of movements could be performed, which then dictated which effort or efforts would colour those movements. In some cases it was very clear but in others there was more chance of a wider interpretation and I had to make choices.

To my great surprise when I filled the movements and efforts in around the colour wheel I discovered that opposition colours on the wheel had contrasting moods and that the primary colours tended to elicit firm efforts and the secondary colours elicited fine touch efforts. This is obviously open to discussion and debate.

It became clear that there were overlaps as there are in life, and that so far there were six colours yet eight effort actions, and often one mood evoked two effort elements, and

THOUGHT FOR THE QUARTER



Reflect On

DANCE IN EDUCATION THE VALUE OF PERFORMANCE

Trish Fitzpatrick

"In schools where art education is fostered, it is not the artistic perfection or the creation and performance of sensational dances which is aimed at, but the beneficial effect of the creative activity of dancing upon the personality of the pupil."

Rudolph Laban (1948)

I first began teaching dance in education in 1990 and in my early years the above quotation was at the core of my philosophy. I wanted to awaken in young people the joy of dancing. My motto was 'dance is fun - get involved!' My chief concern was that my students would be given opportunities to create dance in a way which contributes to enjoyment and learning for each child. I was focused solely on 'the beneficial effect' of the creative process of dance. Through my programmes of dance I introduced the students to basic Laban principles of Body - Space - Dynamics - Relationship and encouraged them to explore and experiment with movement ideas generated by same.

As time went by and both my students and I became more familiar with the principles of movement we began to shape the idea into dances. It seemed to be the next step in learning. Now I was entering a new phase in my teaching. The role of performance had to be addressed. Fundamentally, I still held fast to my belief in the words of Laban above, and I know that I did not want to focus on producing 'sensational dances' i.e. the product of dance, but I began to wonder if I could find a middle ground between what at first appeared to be two opposites or extremes in dance - product and process

- the performance of dance (product)
- and
- the exploration of movement to create dance (process)

I began to experiment with my programmes of dance and include tit-bits of performance and I concluded that if treated in a sensitive manner the experience of performance could be a very valuable one for my students. I began to suspect that the performance of dance which resulted from the process of creating dance had an important role to play in dance in education. Recognising this to be true did not shift my emphasis from the child's learning but in fact became a tool for further development and learning.

Today I believe that for me dance in education continues to have one clear aim - to educate children through dance. How? I believe this answer to be two-fold with both parts serving as important halves of a whole equation.

- (1) **by helping children to learn through dance** - about their bodies, their thoughts and emotions, about their environment and the people in it.
- (2) **by helping children to learn about dance** - dance as an artform, which like other artforms can serve as a means of communicating ideas.

I believe now that dance in education must involve children in both creating and performing dance if they are to be given a balanced 'education through dance' which I for one, seek for all of my students.

Two years ago I was delighted to come across

Jacqueline Smith-Autard's brilliant book "**The Art of Dance in Education**" (1994). After reading the first chapter of the book I began to find answers to many questions. Smith-Autard writes of two models of dance the "**educational model**" where emphasis is on "**the expression of the individual's personality in the process of dancing**" and of the "**professional model**" where emphasis is on "**the product**" of dance. She then suggests a "**mid-way model**" where there would be "**equal emphasis on both quality of process and quality of product**". Thus dance in education should seek to involve children in "**creating, performing and viewing dance**". I was immediately struck with Smith-Autard's use of the word 'mid-way model' as this seemed to encapsulate for me the middle road which I had been seeking for some time with regards to the "process versus product" dilemma of "creating versus performing" dance. I believe that my "middle road" or Smith-Autard's 'mid-way model' is a means of utilising both process and product in a way which can greatly benefit the child's education in dance.

The experience of working with others to present a performance (however informal) contributes in a very positive way to group morale, co-operation and team spirit.

The following thoughts on dance performance in dance in education are the result of my personal experiences over the past few years.

- From the onset it must be emphasised that performance must come from the children's ideas. In this way it will be more meaningful for them and the idea of performing is not a big issue but rather the natural conclusion to the initial step of experimenting with ideas to create a dance.
- There will be occasions when students have no desire to perform but are content to stay with the process of creating dance. It may not be appropriate to the needs of the students to introduce performance to the equation and that too - is o.k!
- I find that most children if introduced to the notion of performance as a 'sharing of ideas' are quite willing to become involved. But the timing of discussing the performance is very important. At the beginning of term we concentrate on the process of making dance. It is important not to begin a dance programme fixated on the idea of a performance.
- Often the performing

of dance can be a short extract which one pair perform for another pair within a class group. The idea of 'formal' performance as the only way to experience dance performance is a very limiting one.

- With very young children 4 - 7, I often perform with them and always in an informal setting. Perhaps we will invite another class group to the school hall to be our audience while we perform and 'share' our dance with them.
- Many of my students' experience of performance takes the form of an end of term year group sharing. For example, in some schools I work with two or three classes of the same year group. We choose together a theme to work on for six or eight weeks and we then gather together to perform and to view the dances of others.
- Some of my students have been working for four, five or six years with me on a regular basis. With such groups I discuss the notion of performing in a more formal setting - end of year school ceremonies, inter schools arts festivals etc. and to date the response is always very positive. I make sure students know that teacher is always close at hand during these performances.
- The use of simple props such as masks, hats, sunglasses, scarves etc. can help provide a focus for the nervous or shy child when performing.
- The use of video as an audience can be very valuable. It helps give the children a sense of being observed without the eyes (and comments!) of a real-life audience.
- Helping children to learn about viewing performance is as important as the role of being the performer. Not only is it important that children learn to distinguish techniques of performance but often children need to learn about being part of an audience. One of the many side effects of our young people's over exposure to television is that it encourages them to think that it's o.k. to chat and munch crisps while you watch! This may not disturb the people in t.v. land but it is not very considerate in the presence of live performance, be it at the theatre or in the school hall.

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COMMUNITY DANCE LEADERS STAGE 1 COURSE

from Heidi Wilson

Education

Powys Dance's decision to run the Laban Guild's Community Dance Leaders course grew out of a need to nurture a network of qualified tutors in Powys who could use an approach which reflected and was sympathetic to the aims of Powys Dance.

The course is half way through and we fully anticipate that it will lead to an increase of quality dance activity in Powys. It has helped to develop the infrastructure of dance in Wales by providing an accredited dance training within our own borders.

The course offers opportunities to develop movement skills with a theoretical underpinning, it allows students to explore a variety of teaching styles and approaches appropriate to different community situations, exploration of choreographic skills and the nitty gritty of community dance - advertising and marketing, health and safety, equal opportunities.

Below are reflections and comments from some of the students.

Driving to the first weekend; totally apprehensive. They would all be young, superfit and slim. What was an overweight 46 year old doing on a dance course? Opening the door was a revelation. They were all ages they all looked worried, and no-one was doing cartwheels along the floor. Now I find myself looking forward to each weekend.

An oasis in a desert! I am very grateful to Powys Dance for hosting this event and getting the funding to make the course possible. The whole group is enthusiastic and revelling in its variety, physically and intellectually!

Reasons for doing the course; to give me the confidence to develop a dance group within my work; to rekindle a love of dance from many years ago; to be able to be physical and creative at the same time - which one can't get from 'normal' night school classes.

I think that doing more dance, understanding the vocabulary and language of expressing through dance, will help me be more effective as a painter. It will give me further reasons to discover the relationships between objects, figures etc and how they fit together as subject matter for painting.

Dance has always been a journey for me. An amazing adventure of discovering myself and why I am alive. The course is tailor-made for my work and I have used the Laban movement language for many of my

workshops, lectures and choreographic pieces this year.

My hand, my body, my soul, my mind,
I moved, I danced,
In my own rhythm and time.

I stretched, I travelled, I opened, I swayed,
Intimate, joy, tiring and fun
I sensed myself in every way.

Thoughtful, deep, alive and being
People coupled then moving free
A warmth that sensed thank you
I'm being me.

I love movement and transformation and working with people. I am learning to be what

from the dance it is a most enjoyable social get together - I'm sure we will maintain friendships after the course has finished.

Being a community dance leader means to me having an active role in shaping our social world - giving people access to develop their creativity and providing room to express themselves. As a wheelchair-user and woman of size, it is important to me to change traditional notions of disability and passivity, of traditional dance and notions of beauty. All of these lofty ideas can't be put into practice without a good foundation in the languages of the body. I hope to learn more and more about making dance work for everybody.



I am and It is great to be giving and receiving.
Dance on!

The course is all I wished for and more. Having had two children (now 2 and 4) I've had to blow out the moths and cobwebs and oil all moving parts in the brain and body - and it feels wonderful!

I came on this course to refresh my thoughts, express my feelings and share with others.

I think Laban philosophy is ideal within an educational context where, inevitably, you are faced with mixed ability / mixed experienced classes. It is accessible to all. Everyone can work to their own standards and are afforded the scope to be creative and to use their imagination. I have not been disappointed in the course to date! Weekends are exhausting but packed with very useful, well structured practical work. Quite apart





DANCING AROUND

NEWS FROM THE CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR PHYSICAL RECREATION

The Chairman of the Movement & Dance Division welcomed the new government's policy on sport which closely resembled that of the CCPR particularly those clauses which stated "that Labour supports the teaching of competitive team games, but that there should also be a range of other sports activities available to suit the needs of every child including aerobics, movement, dance and outdoor pursuits"; and "that the previous functions of the Sports Councils, such as promoting mass participation, health promotion, informal recreation and leisure, be restored to the English Sports Council."

She had written to the new minister for Sport and received an encouraging reply.

Dance Events

Please come and support the Guild at the following events.

Blitz 97 "Movement Generation" at the Royal Festival Hall on Sunday, 10th August where Jeannie Shiers is leading a workshop. Entry is free. The focus of the day is dance and the older person.

Danstyle 97 at the Norbreck Castle and Conference Centre, Blackpool, on 30-31 August, the weekend when the famous lights are switched on.

Weekend of Movement and Dance at the Moberley Centre, Kilburn Lane, London W9 on 18-19 October.

This will be an opportunity to try dance of different kinds and nationalities, such as Line dancing, Indian and Irish dance and many more. Entrance is free. There will also be workshops for primary school teachers on dance in the national curriculum, Key stages 1 and 2. Gillian Hibbs will be leading one of these.

Bronwen Mills
CCPR Representative

LOTTERY CHALLENGE FOR LUTSF

The Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Fund has, over the last ten years, become an established dance charity and grown beyond the fondest dreams of its founders and many of its supporters.

The policy of the Scholarship Fund is different from that of most charities in that generally the money raised is used rather than left to accrue capital which would generate interest for use. Unless otherwise specified all donations will be

used as income, i.e. they can be given in grants immediately. Administration costs are negligible as there are no staff cost or overheads. All the work is done voluntarily by committee members.

It is now possible to seek Lottery funding. Like many others you may be worried about the vast amount of Lottery money being put into major buildings with little as yet going to individuals who might perform in those buildings. I am sure you agree that the LUTSF is exactly the kind of fund that the Lottery should favour in this next phase because it supports people not buildings.

To qualify for Lottery funding we need to show that we can raise a percentage of the total, what is called Partnership funding. For example, if we were to make a proposal to spend, over three years, £100,000 then we would have to raise at least 10%, i.e. £10,000. In other words if we can raise what seems to be a reasonable target for us, then the fund could be put into a really secure financial position.

A successful appeal to the Lottery will not change the purpose of the Scholarship Fund. It will continue to support the same kind of recipients by meeting their travel needs. However, a larger annual budget would enable us to increase the level of support, including financing travel from place to place within a foreign country as well as from the UK to that country.

At present, at the start of each year, we are uncertain about the amount of money that we have available to give to applicants. For the next three years, and beyond, we would like to have a regular income that will enable us to lever other funds (including from the Lottery) and to engage in more forward planning. Our target for this appeal is to raise at least £3,000 in each year over the next three years.

HOW CAN YOU HELP

There are three ways in which you could help: by regular small donations, by a larger gift or by a bequest. We would value particularly regular small donations as these allow us to plan ahead and are a way in which many people can contribute without making too great a sacrifice.

Covenants and Gift Aid are ways of making a gift to LUTSF that allow us to reclaim any income tax that you may have paid and thereby add almost one third to the amount we receive without costing you a penny more.

Now that there is the possibility of us seeking lottery funding it is an exciting time for all those involved in the LUTSF! I hope you will wish to join in and contribute to the continued growth. We intend to keep all donors in touch with the work of the fund through an annual newsletter and more frequent events.

For details contact

Judith Chapman, Tylosand, Jumps Rd, Churt, Farnham. GU10 2LB

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MEMBERS

The end of term, the end of classes, the end of the your summertime R and R!

I'm writing this at the beginning of July, but you beginning to think about next year's work.

The Guild is half way through the Stage 1 course! Cork in October, aiming to pilot our new foundation our collected breath to see if our Lottery applica

One thing we are all going to have to think about

THERE IS A LEGAL REQUIREM

if we are using commercially produced sound rec out is no longer a sensible option as you could b

BUT THE GUILD CA

If you run fewer than 200 classes per year, the li the Guild this is reduced to £48.48. These figur classes, and we have confirmed that dance age

YOU ONLY NEED A LICENCE F

but if you are employed to teach by someone else, should hold a licence. Obviously you do not need tapes or discs,

BUT PLEASE FILL IN DE ON THE ENCL

Distinguish clearly between classes for which you those in which you use commercial accompanime tapes or live music etc. Details can be given in se do not need to be investigated (their spies are eve

SEND THE FORI

at the usual address below and I will forward to t ask me to collect it, so do not send money until

BE SAFE, BE LEGAL, BE LICENSE

Have a good summer

Ann Ward
Membership Secretary

Subscriptions: UK ordinary and affiliated m
UK student, retired and unw
Please make cheques payable
Ann Ward, 30 Ringsend Road, Lim
Tel. 015047 62120

academic year and, hopefully, the beginning of

ll be reading it in August and probably already

Wales, planning the next course due to start in
course and dance therapy course - and holding
n is successful!

as we make our plans is that

NT TO HOLD A PPL LICENCE

dings in our classes. Hoping you won't be found
fined several thousands of pounds,

SAVE YOU 20%.

ence would normally cost you £60.59, but with
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cies or organisations can benefit as well.

OR YOUR PRIVATE CLASSES

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licence if you do not use commercially produced

AILS OF ALL CLASSES

SED FORM

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ywhere!), but can check on local authorities etc.

S BACK TO ME

m to PPL. They will calculate your liability and
u hear from me.

D THROUGH THE LABAN GUILD.

members £12.50 pa. Overseas £15.00 pa.
ged £6.50 pa. Overseas £7.50 pa.
The Laban Guild and send to
yady, Co. L'Derry, N. I. BT49 0QJ
Fax 015047 68433



A HISTORY OF YORKSHIRE MOVEMENT AND DANCE

Y.M.D., a voluntary organisation facilitating dance practice in Yorkshire, based at Woolley Hall, Wakefield, pays tribute in this publication to the pioneering spirit of its founder members, the dedication of its leaders and the inspiration of many guest teachers. This is a history of fifty years of dance that encapsulates many changes in dance in education, new directions in dance for performance and recreative dance in the community. It is a valuable resource for the study of dance and a means to remember good times for all those connected with Y.M.D.

We look back over fifty years of teaching, learning and dancing by members of Yorkshire Movement and Dance - initially the West Riding Movement Study Circle and celebrate its achievements. If in the 1990's, Yorkshire is the most important British centre for dance outside London, then this is either directly or indirectly a result of the pioneering work carried out by past and present members of Yorkshire Movement and Dance. Several key companies and institutions are now based here in Yorkshire. There is the internationally acclaimed Phoenix Dance Company that is based in Leeds where it shares premises with the Yorkshire Dance Centre. Not more than a mile away is the Northern School of Contemporary Dance founded by Nadine Senior which offers degrees in dance and currently has in residence the dance company RJC. Down the motorway a short way from Leeds at Bretton Hall University College there is another dance degree where the dancer and choreographer Janet Smith is based, and where Random Dance Company was first formed by Wayne MacGregor an ex-student at Bretton who has recently risen to national prominence. This brief and partial survey

of some of the more important parts of the Yorkshire dance scene shows both its richness and its national and international importance.

If one looks back at the series of events that have led to the present state of dance here, the 1970's undoubtedly stand out as a key period, and in particular the two residencies in Yorkshire by the London Contemporary Dance Theatre under the direction of Robert Cohan. Many of those in the company who were involved in these residencies - the first of their kind they had run - remember that the connections they made in Yorkshire were deeper and more fruitful than any they made elsewhere. When one looks at this from the point of view of the 50th anniversary of Yorkshire Movement and Dance, when London Contemporary Dance Theatre came to Yorkshire bringing with them American modern dance based on the technique developed by Martha Graham they found here teachers, students and pupils who had already learnt a European approach to modern dance initially developed by Rudolf Laban; this grounding in Laban Modern Educational Dance had given them an excellent preparation for the acquisition of what then appeared the new and exciting skills of contemporary dance - and the rest, as they say, is history.

To bring the booklet together, interviews with prominent educationalists, head teachers, dance teachers, lecturers and key figures in the Yorkshire region were recorded in order to build an archive of the history of the group from 1947 onwards. It is this material, together with written scripts from invited guests. That inform the publication of '50 Years of Dance' a history of the Y.M.D.

Ramsay Burt

DANCING AROUND Continued

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NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTRE FOR DANCE (NRCD)

The National Resource Centre for Dance (NRCD), as a National Archive for Dance, is currently involved in the development of its special collections. The NRCD is fortunate to have been donated a number of particularly valuable dance company and organisation archives which include, most recently, Shobana Jeyasingh, V-TOL and Harlequin Ballet. Development work on the special collections has involved extensive organisation, conservation, and entry onto the new electronic catalogue. These archives are available for research to visitors at the NRCD.

As well as the internationally recognised Laban Archives that were deposited there in 1985, the NRCD also holds these.

In 1998 Janet Smith and Dancers, who had been

a company of international acclaim since 1976, disbanded. A year later their archive material was deposited with the NRCD. The collection includes video footage, company programmes, photos, publicity materials, press coverage and so on.

Extemporary Dance Theatre, formed in 1975, also, have their archive material placed with NRCD. Extemporary were a company that had instant success and remained at the forefront of experimental dance in this country. Many choreographers associated with Extemporary have become highly respected in their own right, Micha Bergese, Janet Smith, and Emilyn Claid to name just three.

For further information concerning the archive collections, visits to the centre or general enquiries please contact the: **Information Officer, The National Resource Centre for Dance, University of Surrey Guildford, Surrey GU2 5XII. Tel: 01483 259316. E-mail: m.roebuck@surrey.ac.uk**



Su Johnston's View AMATEURS ARE NOT WORTH ANYTHING

No one but professionals gets funding- You don't even deserve it, think of it, look for it. The local authorities will never give any amateur or voluntary arts any money to put anything on - courses, performances — oh no. They haven't appointed an arts development officer, have they? Well she's only interested in the Festival in September, and that's always at the wrong time of year for a group to have prepared anything for it.

There's no list of local voluntary arts organisations at the Council Offices, or the Performing Arts Library, or the Library. Only some of them get into the list of Village Halls. There isn't a local arts policy is there? Oh, there's going to be, I see.

What's going on with the County then? They've never got a Festival of youth dance going, I don't believe it. They never tell you anything. As for even finding the Regional Arts Board Offices - they positively hide them, Oh no, they wouldn't give you advice about anything, or put you in touch with other people with your interests.

Voluntary Arts Network, what's that? No. I don't think for a minute that they have any influence on anything. Funded by the Arts Council? Really? They say the climate for funding is changing, and we can all present a case for participatory arts being "Just as good as" professional performances?

Go and talk to the local authority arts department? Where do I find it? What do you mean, it could be hidden in Leisure Services - Parks and Gardens - Amenities - and I have to look?

CHUCK OUT THE IDEA THAT YOU ARE ONLY AMATEUR. You can go down to the Council and talk to the arts officer. If there isn't one, ask your Councillor why. He relies on your vote to stay in office; he will listen. If there is an arts officer, work out together what you want to do, and play nice with her or him.

Help set up a creative dance class for 50+. If 50+ is the flavour of the year, or the policy of the council. If there isn't a list of arts organisations in the area, volunteer a bit of your time in exchange for publicity for your Organisation on the cover of the list; you research, Council types up and prints the list. Troubled by having no youngsters participating inside your group, but vandalism around your venue? Talk to the arts officer about setting up a youth drama and dance group with her publicity, plus local youth drama teachers, and your own group's help backstage for the young people's show - and go find funding.

Or get some ideas of your own, and go for them. These were mine.

PEN PICTURE OF CHRISTINE MEADS



I have always had a vivid imagination from friendly dwarfs and gnomes on my bedroom curtain rail when I was only four to pretending and longing to become involved in circus life after avidly watching a high wire and trapeze act.

My love of dancing has always been with me. It was wonderful to escape into a world of imagery with music but too much like hard work when my German ballet teacher tapped her cane on the bar saying, 'if you don't practice you will never become a ballerina.'

My next venture was to involve my friends with the plays I wrote charging our neighbours when they came to watch. It was a small cast. I directed so the players had quick changes sometimes still wearing half a beard if the copydex was accidentally used. At school there was no dancing. Games became important, and of course the unique end of term form plays performed, written, and directed solely by us, the pupils.

I had decided at the age of twelve years that I wanted to teach physical education as it would incorporate all the subjects I loved. I applied to Lady Mabel College of P. E. where we were totally saturated in Rudolph Laban's Principles. We experienced them throughout

our games, gymnastics, swimming, drama, dance. It was a way of life for me and became an essential part of my teaching in schools, and later my work with the elderly disabled helping them to discover creative ways of expressing physical energy. I explored with them their emotional feelings through imagery, poetry, music, journeyed back with them into their past and shared their memories and experiences which would return so clearly. I used various techniques. One was relaxation putting them into physical situations with visual imagery, and another was physically repeating working actions. The elderly became so alive that some forgot their physical handicaps and tuned into forgotten energies of the past.

During this period of time I trained in Transpersonal Psychology Counselling which goes so well with Laban's theories as it is Jungian based. I have worked for many years in stress management and still Laban's principles never fail me. Each session is always different, something new to learn. All I have to do is tune into the group, observe, listen and sense into their needs and the session just flows.

Over the last two years three of us meet to write, poetry, and prose. Again 'old Laban' seems to want to join us. It is proving to be an exciting journey. Su perhaps we ought to make a date for this poetry, Action Profiling workshop! Join us!

Christine Meads

DANCE IN EDUCATION, THE VALUE OF PERFORMANCE

Continued from page 4

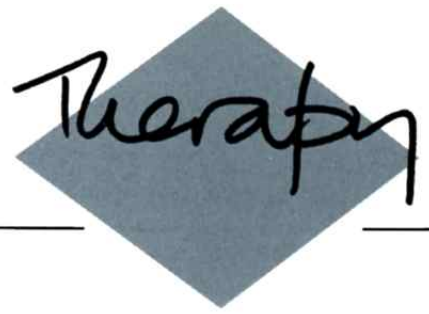
Following on the thoughts expressed above I wish to refer very briefly to what I believe are the values of introducing the experience of performance (where appropriate) to dance in education.

- Children begin to learn more about the craft of making dance when viewed through the eyes of a performer and hence this heightens their understanding of dance as an artform.
- There is a tremendous sense of pride and achievement for children in being able to present their ideas through dance performance.
- The concentration and focus needed for performance is a powerful teacher of self-discipline.
- The experience of working with others to present a performance (however informal) contributes in a very positive way to group morale, co-operation and team spirit.
- For many children the dance performance gives them the opportunity to communicate with the body in a way they cannot do through

verbal or written channels of communication.

In conclusion, Smith-Autard writes that "**Teachers should reflect upon and develop their own practice so that dance teaching is always dynamic and responsive to change**" (1994). I believe many aspects of my teaching of dance in education have changed since I first began in 1990. Such is the nature of dance - and of teaching itself. I teach therefore I learn! I return regularly to the words of Laban regarding art education and today more than ever I agree that it is "**the beneficial effect of the creative activity of dancing**" upon the student that is of paramount importance. I do not aim to create "**sensational dances**" for performances, but my students are capable of creating such dances and it is an important part of their dance education that they be given opportunity to perform such dances whenever and wherever it is appropriate for them to do so. I now believe that both creation and performance are part of the "**creative activity of dancing**" - both process and product can be called upon as the resources to achieve my ultimate aim in dance in education - the education of young people through dance. ■

Trish Fitzpatrick



BEYOND THE TEA DANCE

CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 1996

Jasmine Pasch

In Touch...

For successful development, the human being needs to be:

- * thought about
- * felt for
- * felt, held or physically touched

(Valerie Sinason, Tavistock Lecture, October 1996)

Thus we need to be in touch, intellectually, emotionally, physically, and I would add socially. In our culture we find it difficult to think about, feel for and physically relate to older people, the more so if they are disabled, have intellectual disabilities, are mentally ill or become confused.

However, we are all getting older.!!!

Background and context

In 1981 I received a telephone call from an organisation called SHAPE asking me to visit a residential home called Ilchester in Kensington with a view to setting up a movement group. They offered the home a 12 week trial period, after which if the pilot was successful, the home would look for sources of funding for the work to continue. Fifteen years later the work is still continuing.....

Over that period of time the work has been funded by: Local Adult Education, Campden Charities, Residents Amenities Fund and now Kensington District Nursing Trust.

There was a change in management in the mid eighties. In 1992 the residents and staff moved to Alan Morkill House, near Ladbroke Grove to accommodation where each person has their own small kitchen, bathroom and bed-sitting room, and where they live in small units.

Getting started..... The Melamine Years...

I saw with my own eyes in 1981 a large pot of tea with the milk and sugar already in it being poured into melamine cups, served by staff in nylon overalls. Things are very different now, I am pleased to say.

March 1982

The residents live mostly in single rooms, or sit in "their" armchairs around the perimeter of the lounge, or along the corridor, sleeping, reading, knitting or just looking blank, rarely chatting or communicating freely with one another. Before even thinking of getting a group started I had to get to know each person, visiting them in their rooms and building relationships. I enjoyed meeting and chatting to each person, and they loved having a new face around, someone from the outside world, but it was an almost impossible task getting them to come together as a group. This, I discovered, was to do with

how they felt about themselves, and one another, and about their situation. These feelings effectively stopped them communicating with one another.

There are feelings of resentment about being in a home. Communal living, but not living as a community, has its drawbacks, for example loss of independence, lack of choice, and erosion of personal dignity. Some feel betrayed. Decisions taken over their heads "for their own good" landed them in a home where they would rather not be. Matron warned me that they despise group activity of any sort. Many times I heard "I'm not coming then if she is".

Some feel as if they are waiting to die, and don't want to do anything. They are lonely, and isolated. They feel ugly and redundant, believing all the harmful, inaccurate stereotypes associated with age, and this lack of self-worth stops them reaching out to make friends, or communicating with one another.

I saw with my own eyes a large pot of tea with the milk and sugar already in it being poured into melamine cups.

Care staff at the home are busy and have little time to sit and talk to the residents. The residents feel they have things "done to" them, I feel that whatever the staff did, they could never fulfil everyone's needs, and receive an unfair share of the blame when the real problem lies in the artificial environment of the residential home.

I don't think old peoples' homes are very good for older people, and nor do the residents.

Some of my own feelings were of frustration and despair at times. I felt overwhelmed, but determined not to give up.

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE?

One resident, Margo do Glossop, was keen on the idea of a group right from the start, and she took me round and introduced me to some of the other residents, helping me to break the ice. Her support was invaluable. It would have been impossible to go in cold.

Margo died last November, and was with the group she helped form for 14 years. I stressed right from the start that the group would not happen if they did not want it. It was their choice, and I would never, ever allow anyone to be "wheeled in".

Some thoughts on adult learning.

* It is important to draw upon and use students' own experiences. Malcolm Knowles says "As

an individual matures, he/she accumulates an expanding reservoir of experience that causes him/her to become an increasingly rich resource for learning, and at the same time provides him/her with a broadening base to which to relate new learnings"

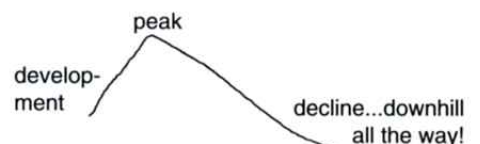
*Adults have a deep-seated need to be what Knowles calls **self-directing**. They need to make their own decisions, to be treated with respect, and to be seen as unique human beings. Adults frequently underestimate their own ability, and devalue their experience, and so the balance has to be sensitively handled. A learning climate has to be established where adults are accepted, respected, supported, and the teacher really LISTENS TO WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY. I would add that the room should be comfortable, private, and free from interruptions.

*Sensitivity to timing is crucial to catch what Knowles calls the **teachable moments**. These are the moments when people are ready to learn something that they need to because of their developmental phase, or social role, for example moving into a residential home. It is not appropriate to try to teach everyone everything, but allow for maximum flexibility. Each person will take away something different from the same session. Afterwards, something may become clear on further reflection. The penny may drop. Further questions may arise.

*Adults have a **problem-centred** approach to learning. They want to be able to apply what they have learned immediately to their situation, and deal with problems they are facing now. What they learn has to be relevant, and meaningful.

These four assumptions indicate a **PERSON CENTRED** rather than a subject centred approach, engaging the whole person intellectually, psychologically and physically. They indicate a relaxed, yet attentive and perceptive approach. In adult learning, there is a mutual relationship between teacher and learner. **BE YOURSELF..... AND LET THEM BE THEMSELVES**

Paula Allman tells us that cognitive decline is not a natural consequence of ageing, challenging the existing evidence and persisting stereotype of inevitable and irreversible decline.



It is now recognised that development, or lack of it, during adulthood is inextricably linked to

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

the degree and quality of individuals' interactions with their social and historical contexts, and environment. Since such interactions could fluctuate the pattern of development could as well. This model of development has been called the plasticity model.

peaks



This is a much more hopeful picture. There is potential for development across the entire life span. Physiological decline need not mean intellectual decline. Any decline is reversible, and **change** is possible.

Our attitudes towards older people can positively contribute towards the development of a more positive self-image (as well as the opposite) How we see people affects how they see themselves.

I combine exercise with conversation, gentle massage, partner work, individual attention, the occasional burst of song, tears and laughter. We conclude the morning with a choice of tea or coffee (in china cups).

A glimpse of what we have been up to for fifteen years, bearing in mind it is not **WHAT** you do, but **HOW** you do it.

Alan Morkill House
1996.....

I arrive at about 10.30am. I go and ask each member individually if they would like to come to the group that morning, and have a brief chat. They know that they can take weeks off if they like, and I can usually tell whether or not to gently persuade people to come if they say no at first. Some people need help physically

to get along to the group, and this affords further opportunities to talk, and find out how people are feeling, catch up on their news, and give the all important 1:1 **personal attention**. I leave them in the room as I go off to greet another member, and they talk among themselves. This never used to happen, and they all used to sit in silence waiting for me to come. Now they do talk to one another much more. Following the recent death of one of the group, we spent quite a while remembering all the things we liked about her, and how sudden and unexpected her death was and how everyone really missed her. It was very unusual for the group to talk so openly about death at all, and to express such strong and good feelings about one of the members. (Think back to the first extract). Membership of the group is open to anyone who wishes to come, and I encourage group members and staff to let newcomers know about it.

We gently exercise for about an hour together, to music. **Movement aims:**

To break into the destructive cycle of inactivity, where the less you do the less you are able to do.

In order to motivate them, movement must bring **pleasure** rather than discomfort. The work must be geared to **individual needs**, so get to know them well, and listen. It must be **relevant**, and useful in everyday life. It must be enjoyable, flexible, creative, spontaneous, **fun!!**

I combine exercise with conversation, gentle massage, partner work, individual attention, the occasional burst of song, tears and laughter.....

We conclude the morning with a choice of tea or coffee (in china cups) more conversation, and this week with a discussion on what they enjoyed about coming to the group.

What they said:

They **LIKE IT**. They like the atmosphere, describing it as friendly and warm. They like coming together to **DO** something. They like having somewhere to go.

They like the small size of the group (between 4 - 8

They feel better afterwards, and enjoy the exercise. It relieves aches and pains.

They like the music, the dancing, the **PEOPLE**, they enjoy themselves.

Staff report that the social aspect is of great value, and that residents love to have an outsider coming in especially for them, and not connected with the daily routine of the residential home.

When I am away, they love to have colleagues such as Barbara Kane (Isadora Duncan Dance Company), Kiki Gale (with her young son), Stanley Hamilton, Tracey Brown, and in the past Richard Blanco to cover for me.

Further developments.....

Many of the residents love music, and comment on the selection that I bring in on tape. This inspired the idea for a series of concerts at Alan Morkill House, since residents were unable or unwilling to venture out, due to poor mobility, lack of confidence, incontinence, or the time of day (evenings usually).

To date we have had all professional musicians, and funding for the concerts was generously provided by North Kensington Arts, and the Orpheus Trust.

Future plans include inviting Tina Turner to sing (she lives locally), and inviting the Jiving Lindy Hoppers to perform, and dance with residents. This follows a successful afternoon when a group of residents and staff from AMH were invited to a local day centre where I was leading a short term project with the Jiving Lindy Hoppers. And inviting the Isadora Duncan Dance Company to perform.

As you can see, things have changed considerably over the years due to a combination of factors. The result is that people are more **IN TOUCH** with themselves, with others, and to a growing extent with the outside world. ■

Jasmine Pasch

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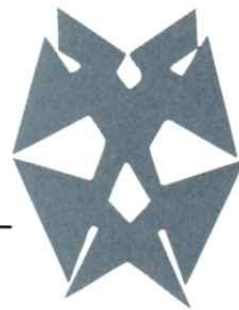
from: Course 1. September 30th 1997 to March 24th 1998

Course 2. October 7th 1997 to April 1st 1998

at: Garden Flat, 133 Petherton Rd., London N5 2RS

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION Ring 0171 359 9932

"BADGER OUT OF THE WINDOW" !



A couple of years ago I completed a Stage 1 Community Dance leaders course. I have a background of drama teaching both in youth theatre and currently in an 11 - 16 Community School and have had an interest in and love of dance and movement for many years. I would like to take this opportunity to tell you about a community project I am involved in. Half way through my dance leaders course I was approached by the Director of Community Education where I work and was asked if I would like to teach an adults special needs dance class "for six weeks". He assured me if I did not feel comfortable about it I could stop at the end of the term with no compulsion to continue the next academic year. I had no experience of working with this particular client group but decided to "give it a go".

I always aim to work creatively and so I let Laban's work inform me and help me as I plan a session.

The group comes from a Day Centre in Taunton called Six Acres and gradually over the years I have been more and more pleased that I took that first cautious step. Their enthusiasm and their willingness to try their best, even when limited by physical

disabilities, has been a lesson in endurance to me. I have met some hugely interesting characters:-

Barry who finished each class with "Do the dancing next week?"; Julia who puts so much effort into everything in spite of real difficulties even in walking; Andrew who reassures me I am quite potty as he casts me a sceptical look; Margaret at 65 and unable to speak but communicates so much with her desire for physical contact; Lee who is really quite gifted both expressively and creatively.

I have felt challenged as I have worked with this group. How do I create work that is accessible and meaningful for them? I have found my study on the Community Dance leaders course to be vital. I often refer back to my file; it has given me a framework and a very strong base from which to work. We have considered use of the body and specific actions. Explored space in relation to ourselves and the others in the group. Dynamics have been interesting as it is sometimes difficult for certain individuals to use any other dynamic than their own personal dominant ones.

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plan a session. We have worked on a variety of projects, sometimes through a theme, eg water and sometimes a dramatic story. They never cease to amaze me how open they are to discuss quite profound concepts and ideas. One dance piece we created together turned to conversation on the creation of the world, trying to imagine a world without space and time and even death and resurrection!

The future looks good. I have recently worked with Jasmine Pasch for a week and found this an encouragement and great fun. Being part of the group - a larger group of students from Six Acres, including some of my own - I found an interesting and informative experience. It was highly enjoyable to work along side the students and I believe I gained a new perspective by doing this. Thank you Jasmine!

I am hoping to, in addition to my regular class, continue a performance group. So keep your eyes open for "Badger out of the Window Dance Company"! Don't ask!

Aileen St John

WARM UP IDEAS

Janet Lunn

Blowing up balloons using strength and blowing bubbles using lightness. All shapes and sizes - different levels.

Janet Whettam

Getting to know each other.

Travelling to a drum. Meeting someone face to face saying, "hello" and giving name. Travelling on to next person until everyone has met. Next time meeting asking "where do you come from". Everyone should have been able to meet the whole group.

Observing and copying.

Moving round room by oneself then deciding to move behind someone, following and copying that person without that person knowing. If discovered move away in another direction doing own movements as though one hadn't been following that person at all. There could be others following behind the second and third person as well.

Plenty of space - control.

Moving round room meeting a partner and

swinging round, letting go, and off to meet another partner swinging round, letting go, and so on.

Hot tired group.

Find a partner lean on that partner, go with that partner find another pair, change partners and repeat.

One that Lisa did that Janet remembers.

Inward and outward flow.

Both arms out in space. Curl one arm into centre then other arm curl into centre then both arms uncurl outwards - saying, "to myself to myself and far away

Jill Street

Shaking arms and legs, but not necessarily all at once. This breaks the ice and loosens the bodies as well. Starting with the arms use the timings of first 8 shakes per side, then 4, then 2 and lastly 1. Change to the legs. Combine what you like within practical reason. Add turns or jumps. Classes of youngsters particularly like this because it's

a challenge and often they can't do it. It's all too confusing.

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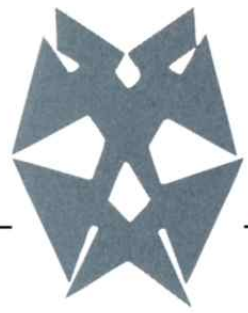
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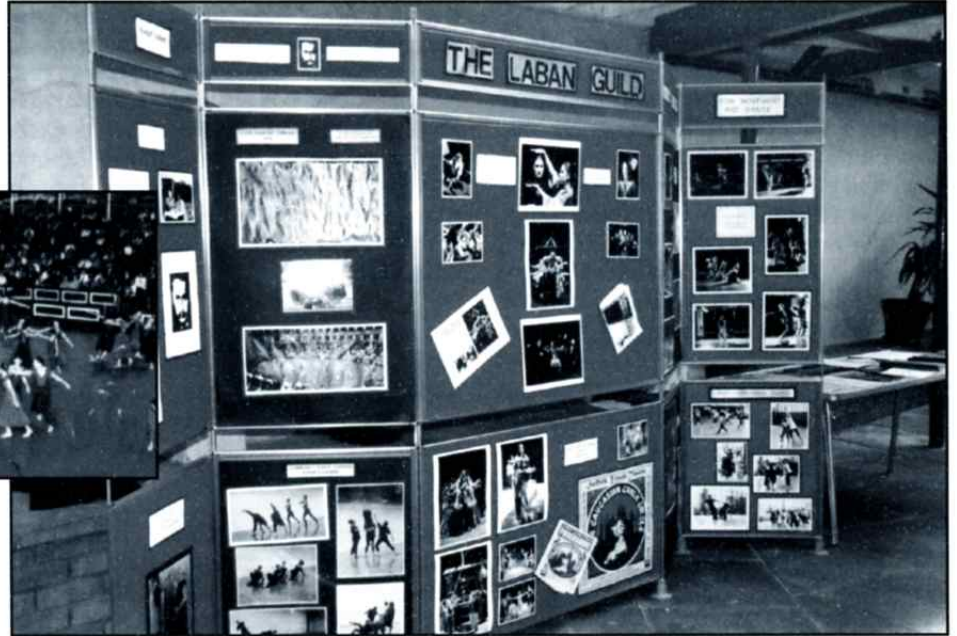
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THE EXHIBITION

As you can see from the two photos there is an exhibition of the work done in the Guild. We set this up on various occasions, Ballroom Blitz and LINC Summer School for example, and we do this to attract people to the work we do and the events we can be found at. Obviously it is a promotional pitch, we don't apologise for that, and we want to draw in new members from their interest. If you are running an event, Laban based and with people who would be interested in our work, YOU may borrow this set of stands at any time. It would be great to know that you too want to promote the work of the Guild and draw in a member or two.



Contact: Gill Hibbs, 9 Filbert Drive, Tilehurst, Berks. RG31 5DZ

'WOULD YOU LIKE TO SLITHER TOO?'

Continued from page 1

that dance is a creative, physical and intellectual activity with a structure consisting of a beginning, a middle and an end. The overall aim of Creative Movement Play is quite simply, first and foremost, to have fun! The 45 minute session begins together in a circle, saying hello. This is followed by a structured mix of movement activity, rhythm, rhymes and a gentle introduction to dance. The last part of the session consists of free or group play with a variety of 'props' (slides, ribbons, balls, hoops, net, parachute, bubbles etc.). We finish together in a circle to say goodbye. Adults are actively involved and babies join in too. Watching is fine, (Maggie Kirby impressed upon me the importance of acknowledging participation by observation) and last but not least, there is no 'right' way to do things.

Ideally a range of classes allows for

developmental progression. A starter class for 2-3 year olds with their carers focuses on physical activities such as, curling and stretching, hiding and popping, slithering and sliding, stepping and stopping etc. partner-work, involving pushing and pulling, bouncing and swinging, cuddling and rocking; percussion, music and song introducing an element of rhythm; and very simple movement sequences with music introducing an element of dance. At this age pace, repetition, physicality and structure are the key elements to which the children respond. A follow-on class, for over threes, (with or without their carers), will make more use of language and fantasy play, encouraging an exploration of the children's own ideas. In practise it doesn't always work out like this and mixed classes, including all elements, while offering something of a management challenge, have proved both workable and fun!

Having begun with the oft used quotes about the essence of movement activity in children's development, I shall finish with a tale which serves as a reminder that there are indeed no absolutes, and that children, like adults, are ultimately individuals. Working with a nursery group, I sat for a while with a new child watching the class engage in 'slithering, sliding and rolling' activity on the floor. After some time I asked the child if perhaps he would like to try some 'slithering on the floor'. He turned slowly, looked at me very hard and said quietly 'Why?'

Christina Gray

Christina Gray is a Community Development Worker with a background in social work and community dance. ■