

# Laban Guild

## OUR CONFERENCE GOES TO THE MEMBERS

Over 70 people were at our Annual Conference in Cambridge in March this year, a turnout we were delighted with. It has proved to us the benefit of doing what we promised - taking the Conference to the members. Jane Fisk gives an overview of the day for her and some quotes give you a flavour of the views of others. Enjoy again, or second hand the contributions from Walli Meier and Maggie Semple.

Ed

When the Winter edition of the Guild magazine arrived I was pleased and excited to see that the '98 Annual Conference was to be in Cambridge. Living near Great Yarmouth I hadn't been to a Guild event for a long while, but after reading Maddy's article I decided it would be a great opportunity to dance again and what a superb day it was.

I did wonder how I would feel, would I be able to meet the challenge of dancing again but I needn't have worried. As soon as I arrived Liz was there welcoming us and immediately I was meeting old friends and getting to know new ones. Walli Meier began the day with the Laban Lecture, she not only entertained us with a wonderfully lively presentation but provided much to think about and be inspired by, I knew I was getting back in touch with movement and ready to dance again when her lecture concluded.

We enjoyed superb classes by Rosemary Lee and Michael Platt. I went to Rosemary's class first, she allowed us time to feel calm and unrushed, to begin focusing on our bodies and communicating with each other, it was a very refreshing session, I felt really stimulated by her class. After lunch I found Michael's class quite contrasting but equally exciting, he used photographic images of dance as inspiration and we worked on partner and group ideas to interpret these. Michael's expert teaching and interesting music enabled us to achieve much in a 1½ hour session that flew past.

The AGM was made lively by Maggie Semple telling us about her new job involved in the Millennium celebrations and the day ended with students from Hills Road 6th Form College showing some of their dance pieces, at times very moving and dramatic and lovely to have had a chance to work with them during the classes earlier in the day.

Many congratulations to the

organisers, superb venue and a very well balanced day, I'm so glad I made it to Cambridge, taking part made the Guild feel real to me again, where's the next one going to be?

*Jane Fisk*

### SOME QUOTES FROM THE DAY.

*A wonderful venue, excellently organised, Diamond studded Laban lecture. A lively, fun, deep dancing day.*

*Thank you - marvellous speaker, right on my interests and terrific dance leaders.*

*This is one of the best AGMs for years, such liveliness and energy and a wonderful mix of people. Wonderful to see new faces. Both workshops excellent; perfectly pitched and very stimulating.*

*Well worth the 3-hour drive. Thought provoking - wonderful range of ages and experience working together.*



*Rosemary Lee's workshop was excellent. It was the first time I've actually let my body control my mind. (Age 12)*

### ADDRESS FROM MAGGIE SEMPLE, PRESIDENT.

The Guild Annual Conference is always a time to take stock, to celebrate and think ahead.

Thinking ahead is a major preoccupation for me at the moment. Indeed for the next two years I will be thinking ahead because my current work is UK Head of Education for the New Millennium Experience Company - the company building the Dome! We have a major task and mine is to engage all learners in projects, which will enable them to participate in the UK celebrations for the millennium.

The millennium raises several questions. Is the millennium really in two year's time? Whose millennium is it? We know that there are many world religions that have been established for longer than two years. Why build a Dome?

The Guild will be interested in a few facts about the Dome. Guild members have danced in the Albert Hall. The Dome is the size of 13 Albert Hall - roughly 20 acres big. Visitors will be



Workshops

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for movement and dance

Volume 18

No 2

Summer 1998

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## PEN PICTURE

### EDITORIAL

What a wonderful day we had in Cambridge. Do read all the offerings about it in the magazine because there is so much information; Walli's lecture, Maggie's address and an overall view of the day from Jane Fisk. If you don't want to miss out next year, keep your eyes open in the August magazine to book the date and venue.

Warren Lamb has challenged the Guild to covering the aspect of Movement Profiling and Top Team Planning more. And I would say he is right. We rarely have articles in this field of Laban's work, and we would welcome more. But maybe, if you look at the article Journeys into the 21st Century you will see what the Guild is planning in terms of a way to study and investigate Laban's work.

We are sad to have had to move our magazine publishing and printing away from Limavady Printing in Northern Ireland. This has come about because our finger on the pulse in Limavady, Ann Ward, can no longer follow the magazine through the process. We have had a good relationship with them over many years and I have been delighted with the quarterly magazine they produced. We thank them for their professional help and friendliness. Having said all that, though, I am pleased to say we have found an excellent replacement in Somerset. Our publication will be done by a small operation in Crewkerne and the printing will also be done locally. Distribution will happen in Bristol. From your point of view you should see nothing different, just the first class magazine you know and love.

*Lydia Everitt*

#### COPY DATES

Material should be sent to:

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Typescript please, on one side of the paper, ready for the scanner if possible.

NEXT ISSUE IS AUGUST 1998

I can't remember a time when I didn't dance and if at times I find myself drifting away from it my life goes off the rails. Aged four, I insisted on going to my older sister's dance class and was admitted on condition that 'I was a good girl and stood at the back'. And so it went on. In my early teens I wheedled my way into the Belfast Ballet Club, (again under age). They gave performances, and when the major ballet companies came for their two-week seasons we went every night and had classes from the dancers and I loved it. In the Ballet Club I began to meet people with a wider vision of dance, such as Hugh Murray and later David McKittrick. And then Helen Lewis started teaching in Belfast, bringing her Laban dance training, and that was that for me - no more ballet.

Of course it wasn't that simple or straight-forward. I trained as a physiotherapist - a proper career! I worked in Canada and then came to live in Cambridge. Dance was always there for me. I became a member of the University modern ballet group, giving performances, feeling my way into new dance forms, meeting and marrying our conductor Alan and gaining my one and only dance review, which was written by Peter Brinson. It was a wonderful time.



*Maddy Touque*

My return to Belfast coincided with Helen's most creative period. I owe all my performance opportunities there to Helen. In between having children there were dance recitals, opera, theatre and television. We were always rehearsing for something. All through the worst times in Belfast, dance and Helen kept me sane.

I have lived in Cambridge again since 1994 and all sorts of dance opportunities have come along. I especially love the closer contact with the Laban Guild and its work, and once again dance has given me the gift of friends. What is particularly satisfying is finding my clinical skills in movement analysis

coming together with my dance experience, and taking me in a different direction altogether. Also Alan and I now run Camus Arts, a production company formed to stage choral works using dance as a major element when appropriate, so the future looks exciting.

*Maddy Touque*

*Maddy is a member of the Guild Council and, with Liz Norman, arranges the annual Guild Conference. Ed*

## OUR CONFERENCE GOES TO THE MEMBERS

*.. continued from page 1*

amazed at the scale of exhibits, they will be entertained and they will have time for reflection. There has never been a project of its size before in the UK and the possibilities for new thinking and practice are enormous.

It is interesting that I find myself drawing on Laban's philosophy so much more in my new post. I am helped to undertake my work because I believe that I am a creative, flexible person both physically and mentally. This is an enormous asset as each day brings new challenges that require me to demonstrate a suppleness of mind. I have to find ways of moving around, over and under people some of whom are quite difficult.

Much of my work is to gaze into the future, which of course I enjoy. I am naturally a person who spends little time in the past, a little longer in the present but is always looking to the future. Future gazing is fascinating and full of risks and again my Laban understanding has been useful in approaching challenges in many ways.

I think that by the millennium small

communities will be increasingly important and these communities will not be determined necessarily by location but probably more by interest and lifestyle. More people will be more mobile not only through travel but through technology and communication systems.

There is a challenge here for the Guild. Membership is constant and growth is desirable if the Guild wishes to implement its many good plans. But perhaps the Guild core membership is to remain smallish with people belonging to the Guild in different ways. One example could be through a Laban Guild web site on the Internet.

If communication is going to be easier and more accessible by the year 2000 then there is a great opportunity for the Guild. The Guild is in a unique position because its subject matter is all about communication. Our communication content is Laban's philosophy and analysis. Our communication mechanisms involve the Annual Conference, the excellent regular magazine, our training courses and days of dance plus the many

*continued on page 6 ..*



# MOVEMENT AS A COMMON DENOMINATOR

WARREN LAMB

Analysis

When the Laban Guild was formed in 1946 three categories of membership were established, Art, Education and Industry. I discussed with Laban some of the problems which this categorisation would cause such as, for example, where would Therapy be placed, or Sports? The answer given was that every field of application could be included under one or other of the three headings; Therapy would come under Education and Sports under Industry.

The categories have disappeared but the principle so dear to Laban still remains i.e. that the Guild should represent a broad field of Movement Study.

*While it can be said that Art and Education are alive and well in the Guild this is clearly not the case with Industry.*

Currently the emphasis in Guild activity is on the teaching of dance and on recreational dance performance. That the dance performances are primarily recreational/educational would be particularly satisfying to Lisa Ullmann. As director of the Art of Movement Studio she told audiences at the end-of-year showings of work that they were invited to be a part of a normal day's activities and in no way were they there to watch a presentation or performance. Of course, the audience could not help but receive and assess the presentation in terms of how well it had been performed according to standards associated with dance. The line between Art (Dance) and Education was obscure.

The reason why I am recalling the early days of the Guild is that it simplifies the comment I want to offer. While it can be said that Art and Education are alive and well in the Guild this is clearly not the case with Industry. Laban devoted much of the last fifteen years of his life to applying his Effort concept with workers at industrial plants. His collaborator, F C Lawrence, a management consultant, opened up the opportunity for him and their book "Effort" (1946) was the first published account. Laban very much wanted this field of application, and further development within it, to be an integral part of the Guild.

Instead of the boiler suit image that "Industry" suggests it might be better to refer to this category as Work. Indeed, much of Laban's writings refer to effort rhythms of workers whatever their place of work, be it a factory, home, sports arena, circus, farm,

or even the actual work aspect of a school or dance company. That everyone has his or her own working rhythm, individually distinct, was a prime message, irrespective of where that place of work might be.

Pursuing this message takes us well beyond any classification of "Industry". Looking at how people move at work takes us into realms of personal effectiveness, work satisfaction, avoidance of unhealthy stress, self fulfilment and social conscience. Not only sociology but other disciplines are relevant - psychology, anthropology, ergonomics, for example. There is growing recognition within these disciplines that how people move carries meaning which is relevant so long as the movement can be rigorously observed, recorded, analysed, explained and applied.

The search for meaning identifies us with research into non-verbal behaviour, body/mind and the brain. One theory advanced is that a dichotomy of body and mind is now outmoded; there is simply body movement. Writers propounding the latest research often refer metaphorically to the 'dance' or the 'choreography' of sub-atomic particles. Maybe we, who know something about dance and choreography, can take it for real and contribute in some way. Searching for 'The Meaning in Movement' could be a category in itself.

If "Industry", in the broad context which I suggest, was more alive in the Guild now then Laban's original aim would be more fulfilled. He talked of movement as a "common denominator". How do you work with movement as a common denominator if it is limited by narrow categorisations? Dancers work (in fact they are usually highly industrious and hard working) and teach, teachers dance, and everyone does some sort of work according to some sort of rhythm

*I would like to suggest, that the Guild does seek to promote more activity associated with "Industry" in such a way as to make it attractive to the growing number of professionals in many fields*

of movement.

Within the context of other disciplines, if we are to follow Laban's vision our subject is Movement, unqualified by any reference to dance, education, industry or any other field

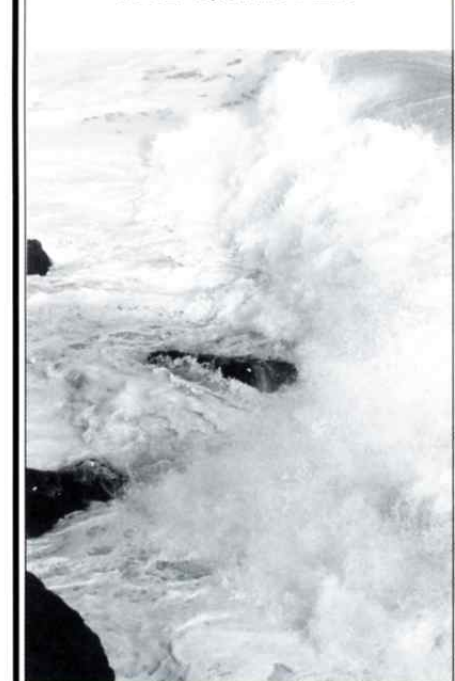
of application. Indeed, this is what they are - fields of application for Movement Study and not themselves Movement disciplines in their own right.

I would like to suggest, firstly, at one level, that the Guild does seek to promote more activity associated with "Industry" (i.e. work; being industrious) in such a way as to make it attractive to the growing number of professionals in many fields who are discovering body movement as something which needs to be studied and incorporated into their discipline. In brief, can we broaden the Guild to invite interest and contributions from, for example, sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, physicists, ergonomicists and medical specialists? All these people are interested in the meaning of movement. Perhaps we can help provide it.

Secondly, as a beginning towards making this happen, that we in the Guild aim to cultivate an outlook which conceives dance teaching, and recreational dance as examples of a bigger purpose - the purpose of establishing the discipline of Movement Study.

Warren Lamb

## THOUGHT FOR THE QUARTER







# EARTH

JACKIE HASLETT

Wood gives birth to fire,  
Fire gives birth to **earth**,  
**Earth** gives birth to metal.  
Metal gives birth to water,  
Water gives birth to wood.

Veith, 1949 in Barta and Ne'eman, 1993. (*Italics* and **bold** print mine).

"EARTH" is viewed in several contexts. It is identified as the third smallest planet in the universe. It is a word that is often described as "Mother." It is also the word which is synonymous with "dirt." Earth, as dirt, nurtures the foundation of earthly existence and has therefore been given the title, "Mother Earth." But "Mother Earth" does not exist independently. According to Quantum Theory, "earth" is interrelated with all other elements, including fire, water, and air. In fact, Capra (1984, p. 57) writes, "Quantum theory thus reveals a basic oneness of the universe. It shows that we cannot decompose the world into independently existing smallest units."

Each of the world religions have a concept of creation, and regardless of one's religious persuasion, considering the views of other religions can be enriching. The Western world generally views creation according to the Judeo-Christian concept. In the Judeo-Christian biblical explanation of creation, one reads that God made "heaven and EARTH" as well as the waters and the air.

The elements of water, fire, and air are often the outward symbols of spiritual vitality. Earth, as "holy ground," is expressed in many of the world's religions. In Japan, Mount Fuji is regarded as a sacred mountain, having been formed by volcanic action creating "earth" with volcanic magma and ash. The pagodas of Japan, symbolic

of Buddhism, usually are five-tiered. Four of the tiers symbolize earth, water, air, and fire. Water is used as an outward symbol of cleansing, or of purifying, and not in contrast with the use of water to physically cleanse the body. For some of the Oriental religions, fire has significance. Historically, Hinduism regards fire as a symbol of sacrifice and a medium by which the worshiper relates to the gods (Hopkins, 1971, p. 17). Fire has been used to personify miracles of God. The Bible tells the story of Moses and the burning bush. In Christianity, the Bible speaks of "tongues of flames" when believers received the Holy Spirit. In the Anglican tradition, there is a well-known hymn, in which the first line reads, "Breathe on me breath of God. . . ." In this case, the "breath" is air and is the spiritual fulfillment for human beings. But "Mother Earth" is the stage for the other elements.

Firstly, Earth is the substance upon which people are "grounded." The familiar expression, "S/he is so 'down to earth,'" is regarded as complimentary. It means that the person is "grounded" and does not put his/her "nose in the air," and views oneself as an ordinary, humble, person, and is usually one who is admired. Thus, to view "earth" as a "place for grounding" can be equated with "a place for humbling," and the humble gesture of bowing, puts one deep and toward the "earth."

The body is meant to be in harmony with one's mind and spirit. "Mother Earth" was not meant to mold only the mind, but was meant to mold and nourish a healthy body with a healthy mind and a healthy spirit, and to provide for harmonious living. The dancer is aware of earth when s/he leaps his/her body (water) into space (air) with robust energy (fire) and with the spirit (air) to give the expression of his/her intent. But "Mother Earth" calls him/her to return to her abode, by gravitational force, where the body/mind/spirit is secure, and where it can be replenished to make the next movement of intent.

Laban, the integrationist that he was, saw the interdependence of all things; a Jungian follower would be. This is the mark of genius. His analysis of body movement coordinated all the involved elements of harmonic movement. First, his development of spatial scales, effort and relationship definitions, and body organization, were based on human movement in relationship to "the earth." He connected movement with the three dimensions of space (air), comparable to the dimensions of the earth's three-dimensional spherical shape. Like the planet Earth the movement patterns and scales take into account the earth's rotation around an axis, and from which the vast number of air pattern combinations emerge (Choreutics, 1976). The air patterns emerge from the movement scales which are directly related to the three-dimensional concept. The air patterns (matching the floor, or earth, patterns) are made in reference to the earth's surface.

Secondly, "Mother Earth" supplies the animal kingdom with sustenance from which energy emerges and is expended fostering productivity and human expression. "Mother Earth" is "energy." Her energy comes in different forms: e.g., thermal energy, atomic energy, chemical energy, etc. Mass (or weight) is "bundles of energy" (Capra, 1984, p. 188). While these various forms of energy are generated from and on the earth, there are, likewise, different forms of energy utilized by the human being and emerge

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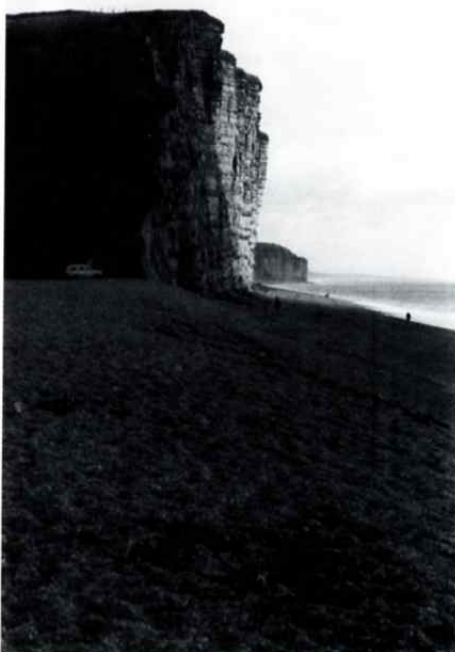
*To view "earth" as a "place for grounding" can be equated with "a place for humbling;" and the humble gesture of bowing, puts one deep and toward the "earth."*

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from the motion factors which Laban expressed as "natural accidents," (Laban, 1980, p. 114). One way of expressing the meaning of "natural accidents" is to say that each motion factor -- time, weight, space, and flow -- is an indestructible form of all creation. They are absolute; in other words, the fact of time, the fact of weight, the fact of space, and the fact of flow, are each indestructible. For example, when using fire to burn paper, the fire causes a change in the paper's properties to ashes and gases, each of which still contain weight. Thus, the properties of weight change, or transform, but the fact of weight still remains indestructible. Likewise with time and space; ad infinitum, each has always existed beyond the human imagination, and forever will exist, and therefore indestructible beyond all end. The fact of flow exists in the "flow of molecules," or "molecular attraction" which keeps substance together. Regardless of the property, the fact of molecular attraction cannot be destroyed. While this view may be argued, the point is that "Mother Earth" not only is energy, but gives forth energy in various forms, and energy itself is indestructible.

Thirdly, successful human relationships require "down-to-earth" attitudes. "Mother Earth" is the habitat of all earthly creatures, providing an interdependent relationship among them. The destruction of any group of her living creatures adversely affects all other creatures. The interdependent relationship of "Mother Earth's children" -- beasts, humans, fish, fowl, and plantlife -- all depend upon air, water, and fire. The human being focuses on one's own relationship within his/her own environment -- or with his or her own connection with "Mother Earth." One needs to realize one's own air (space), one's own "innerfire" (effort), and the water of one's own body content.

Fourthly, the body's organization is akin to the ecological organization of "Mother Earth." The interdependence of "Mother Earth's





# EARTH

JACKIE HASLETT



children" is necessary, and in the same manner the interdependence of all body parts is necessary for efficient movement. This is the foundation of coordination. And if a person is handicapped with one or more dysfunctional body parts, the organization of the interdependence simply changes so that harmony of movement can still take place. The body's parts come into harmony with the organization of efforts to perform a movement efficiently and effectively, and in relationship to "Mother Earth's" supply of other people or other creatures, physical objects, and air (space).

The movement principles organized in opposition are parallel with the concept of yin and yang. Like "Mother Earth," the body is stretched between two poles: north and south (Choreutics, 1976). North and South are the Yin and the Yang of the planet, "Earth" (Bartal and Ne'eman, 1943). Laban organized the "Yin" (feminine) and "Yang" (masculine) of movement principles, and are indicated in the body's organisation (e.g., symmetry, asymmetry, traveling and gesturing, traveling/gesturing and stillness, etc.). Yin and Yang are found in effort (e.g., suddenness and sustainment, firmness and fine touch, directness and flexibility, free flow and bound flow). Yin and Yang are found in space (e.g., high and deep, left and right, backward and forward) and the other opposing space points. Finally, Yin and Yang are found in relationships (e.g. self and another, or others, or things). "Mother Earth" provides all that is necessary for the

harmonious and balanced life for which humankind was created. The interdependence of the elements and the interdependence of the movement principles fulfills the nature of quantum Theory: the "oneness of the universe."

*The interdependent relationship of "Mother Earth's children" -- beasts, humans, fish, fowl, and plantlife -- all depend upon air, water, and fire.*

Wood burns to make  
Fire whose ashes decompose into the  
Earth where are born the mined  
Metals which when smelted become  
Water (liquids) which nourish trees and  
plants.

In Bartal and Ne'eman, 1997, p. 90. (*Italics and bold print, mine*).

Jacqueline G. Haslett, Ed. D  
University of Massachusetts Boston, U.S.A.

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*Jackie Haslett received the Joseph P McKennedy Award this March. This is the highest award bestowed by the Massachusetts Association on Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance and in Jackie's words, "it is a very enviable award, and I was so surprised when I was notified of this prestigious award". Ed.*

# BE A PART OF THE FUTURE OF DANCE

Are you thinking of a future in professional **dance**? Do you want to train in **performance, choreography, dance movement therapy, community dance, costume and lighting for dance, dance teaching**, undertake **research** or become a member of **Transitions Dance Company**?

Our courses range from undergraduate qualifications in **BA (Hons) Dance Theatre** or **Diploma Dance Theatre**, to postgraduate qualifications in our **Graduate Diploma in Performance, MA Dance Studies, MA or Postgraduate Diploma in Dance Movement Therapy, MA Dance Management and Development** or **Professional Diploma in Community Dance Studies, MPhil and PhD Research Degrees**.

Laban graduates are world leaders in all fields of dance, for example: **Matthew Bourne** (choreographer/director of

*Adventures in Motion Pictures*), **Lea Anderson** (choreographer/director of *The Cholmondeleys* and *The Featherstonehaughs*), **Sophie Constanti** (dance critic and writer), **Nikki Crane** (dance officer, South Eastern Arts) and **Jane Mooney** (director of Suffolk Dance Agency).

For our prospectus including details of our **Easter School** (23-27 March 1998) and **International Summer School** (20-31 July 1998) contact Laban Centre London quoting ref: LG.

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# OUR CONFERENCE GOES TO THE MEMBERS

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events organised by our members. We are already ahead.

However being ahead means that we understand our past and we must remember that what was said, done and written some 10, 30 or 50 years ago was of its time - it was contemporary thought and action. We know that Laban's work arose from the political, social and cultural values of the time and that the work has changed throughout the decades because of changes within society.

Transforming and developing Laban's work would not be possible without the generous volunteer work of its Council members. Each Council member brings a different type of communication skill and our excellent Chair provides the guidance and leadership at every meeting. I would like to thank all Council members for their hard work during the last year. They are caring people and full of fun.

*Maggie Sample*

## NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION WALLI MEIER

MARCUS FABIVS QUINTILIANUS, a professor of rhetoric wrote a compendium of twelve books on "The Formation of a Public Speaker". The eleventh volume gives detailed information about rhetorical Body Language in Roman times. Most of this is concerned with gesture and posture passing meticulously from head to foot including eyes, eyebrows, nose (you may not gesture



with the nose), arms, hands and so on through the rest of the body. He goes into particular detail with move-ments of the hand and fingers which accompany the spoken word and have precise meanings.

His dress must be immaculate, his posture is held with a Manly bend of the body, indicating strength, valour, will power and self control; some one who deserves to be honoured. His gesticulating must be slow and measured. On entering he must not speak at once, he must pause, even pat his head, wring his fingers summing up his energies, admit to nervousness with a deep sigh. Then standing quietly upright, shoulders relaxed, his face stern and right hand slightly

extended with the most modest of gestures, thus he may begin. The hands may move from right to left, no further than the left shoulder, no higher than eye level and no lower than the chest. The whole speech may then gradually escalate to a full crescendo in size, speed and sound. The gestures of the hands have significant meanings such as anger, slap the thighs, emotion, slap the breast, or show surprise, fingers fan across the palm. There must be



Walli Meier

a moderation in movement. The orator must not have frenetic movements with frequent nods, jerking of shoulders or wild gesticulations, only slaves run, free men have leisure. Outer appearance reflects the inner character.

In Ancient Atheneian times Homer speaks of the Hero's stride - "Paris appears armed to the teeth with long strides", Ajax rushes forward with a grim smile and long strides, his voice reaching the heavens. Aristophanes advises his father to swagger with legs apart.

And what about the other gender? Hera and Athena when appearing before Troy resembled in their steps the timorous doves. Provocative courtesans walk with small steps in a wiggling manner flicking their hips like a lizard's tail.

It is improper to walk in the streets of Athens with careless gait when one may do it gracefully. To them who walk with dignity comes full measure of honour. While they who see it have pleasure and life has its Grace.

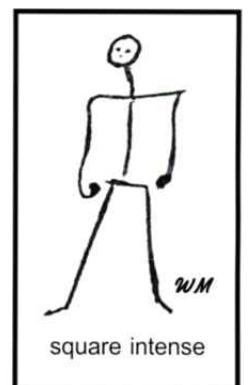
Joaneath Spicer writes delightfully about posture and gesture of the late 15th century in her chapter on the "Renaissance Elbow" and illustrates her observations by pointing us in the direction of the Dutch painters of the period. The male elbow in gesture is indicative of boldness and control, both

protective and controlling in society and the family.

The Standard Bearer's stance oozes Maccho self-assurance. The casual hip-shot stance, hand on hip, left arm resting nonchalantly on the pole of the flag. All other painting shows a family group. The man the possessive protector and the wife demure and passive obedience and two little girls sit obediently on a step below holding hands. A painting by France Hals of the officers of St. George is positively bristling with elbows rather like a photograph of a successful football team of today. Different parts of the body and their significance are of particular interest to me, why is it all fingertips and toes today? why are there no hands and no faces? and these people haven't got any knees! The significance of the elbow has not changed. Haven't you experienced "the battle of the elbows in theatre seats?" Get there first and hold on like grim death.

So you see there is nothing new in the study of Gesture (by the way when I say gesture, in this sense I mean body movement). It has continued throughout the ages and particularly so in the last 50 years or more where there has been an increased interest in the study of non verbal communication or body language as some people like to call it. It seems to be a counter reaction to ever increasing technology ruling our lives and need to understand and stay in touch with our humanity (humanness) and value it. Disembodied voices speaking to us through machines.

Those of you interested in studying History would be advised to get into the gestural context of that period, the con-ventions of the society, the attitude to the body the religious influences of the time. It was the Quakers who intro-duced the hand-shake into Britain. They would not literally



Bow to the conventions of the time of doffing their hat and the ladies curtsy. Instead they introduced the handshake as a symbol of brother-hood and friend-ship. History of dance of course gives us a great insight of the particular period, particularly if taught by Geraldine Stephenson who has a natural common sense way of saying what they wore and why and how you have to move in on them as you do, and why they behaved as they did.

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# THE INFLUENCE OF RUDOLPH LABAN ON THE TEACHING OF KEEP-FIT IN BIRMINGHAM 1945-1998

Community

RENEE WATERMAN

I first met Rudolph Laban at a series of week-end sessions in Birmingham organised for teachers by the Birmingham Education Committee in 1945. It was wartime and blackout so the sessions had to take place during daylight hours. I had taken over as Principal of the Birmingham Athletic Institute Women's Department in 1944, following the death of the previous Principal Mrs Eileen Harper. The B.A.I was a unique Institute in the country at that time. It had been started by a group of influential businessmen in Birmingham in 1889 at the time of the industrial revolution. Men and women were working long hours in appalling conditions and it was essential that some form of physical recreation was provided. The history of the Institute is an interesting one. In the early years, members had to pay one penny each time they attended classes and had to take with them a character reference from their employers! During the First World War the numbers dropped because men were called up and it was decided in 1918 to give the Institute to the city provided that it would be used for physical recreation activities for "the man in the street"

The B.A.I premises were used for Mr Laban's sessions as the gymnasium was good, the premises central and easily accessible. My own pianist played for him and had to improvise all the time. She was a marvellous pianist but she had great problems understanding his English pronunciation! I had the privilege of taking Mr Laban back to the station after the sessions. As we walked through the blackout one evening he gave me a full analysis of my personality through having watched me working in his classes. And it was accurate! Those sessions with Mr Laban had a profound effect on my attitude to movement training.

I joined the staff of the B.A.I in 1942 at a time when many schools were evacuated and there was a dearth of teachers of physical recreation to take evening classes in clubs and evening institutes. The education committee decided to open two-year part-time training courses in physical recreation and to open them to girls from 16 years of age upwards. All the applicants had a rigorous interview with members of the city council and the first course opened with twenty-four members with ages ranging from sixteen years to thirty years - some of course being married with young children.

The course was heavily subsidised by the city and as far as I can remember the members paid no tuition fees at all! Because of frequent air raids the course was held at weekends in daylight at the city's newly opened sports centre away from the city and surrounded by playing fields. The course included Keep-Fit, movement using hoops and balls, dance skipping, national dance,

*My experience of working with Mr Laban convinced me that it was essential to introduce his theories of time, weight, space and flow into training courses in Birmingham. It was a radical step and I moved slowly.*

basic anatomy and physiology as well as outdoor games - netball, hockey, tennis. It was an 80 session course each session lasting three hours. These courses became a regular commitment of the education committee and the last course run by the Local Authority ended in 1974. Almost all classes held in Adult Education Centres, community centres and clubs were manned by staff trained under the education committee schemes.

I was primarily responsible for organising



Movement Choir

these courses. Following Mr Laban's visit to Birmingham I attended each year the summer courses under his guidance. The first of these was at Dartington Hall, subsequent ones were held in among other places Chichester, Dartford, Eastbourne and London. When Art of Movement Guild was formed I became one of its first members.

The first three leaders' training courses were run on the methods of established physical recreation lines. Everyone working in unison and systematically working each part of the body separately e.g. arm swings, body swings, body bending and turning, hip exercises and abdominal exercises and always finishing each class with either an indoor game or simple folk dance.

My experience of working with Mr Laban convinced me that it was essential to introduce his theories of time, weight, space and flow into the training courses in Birmingham. It had to be introduced with great caution as otherwise I would lose the students' co-operation, it was a radical step and I moved slowly. The first few months were tricky and I lost some of the course members who could not face the free expression, however, once the students lost their self-consciousness and learned the joy of experimenting with changes in speed, shape and energy to their own individual satisfaction then the battle was over. The big problem came when they had to get this alien approach over to others in their teaching practice. They had to learn a completely new vocabulary. Students who were naturally creative were at an advantage but even those without this natural aptitude through understanding the workings of their bodies were able to inspire

their classes. It was an uphill climb and there were casualties - these I expected. Once the first training course in the new method had succeeded, there was no looking back. Every training course which followed continued in the new method and the greatest compliment for its success was when I visited local institutes of adult education and saw the leaders producing free movement within their own classes. The members were totally absorbed in the tasks they were given to do and group relationships of two three or four people were produced with amazingly different interpretations of the same theme.

The personal performance of each leader was greatly improved through greater understanding of their own body experiences in time-weight-space and flow. This I am sure accounted for the fact that in 1949 a team of leaders from Birmingham

*continued on page 10 ..*





## DANCING AROUND

## MEMBERS

### ANNUAL NATIONAL YOUTH DANCE PLATFORM 1998

A National Youth Dance Platform took place at Laban Centre London, on Saturday 7 February 1998 with one hundred and thirty young people (16-25 years) participating in dance classes and performances. This year, young men were encouraged to take part and consequently twenty five per cent of the participants were male.

Attending groups included Tan Dance (Wales), Knowsley Men and Knowsley Youth (Liverpool), Commotion (Buckinghamshire), Positive Action (Peterborough), Stantonbury (Milton Keynes), Dame Allen (Newcastle), Poynton (Stockport), Hertfordshire Youth and RJC (London). Each group participated in classes in contemporary technique with Jayne Pope (*Edwards & Wattan*), jazz dance with Keith O'Brien, African dance with Frederick Curry from New York and contact improvisation with Helen Baggett (*ex-Candoco*).

A productive and busy day was followed by a lively evening of performance at the Centre. Each group performed a ten-minute work in the Bonnie Bird Theatre, creating an exciting and diverse programme that indicated the wealth of future talents in the world of contemporary dance.

### NORTHCOTE HOUSE EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHERS

Northcote House Educational Publishers have a standing offer of a 10% discount, post free, to Guild members for any of their Laban related books. This of course includes the biography of Laban referred to in the last magazine - *Rudolph Laban*, by John Hodgson and Valerie Preston Dunlop.

### POSTCARDS FROM THE ROUNDTABLE

Northfield, Minnesota, the home to contented cows, St Olaf College and the third Motus Humanus' Roundtable on Professional issues. Early June 1997.

Question: Who is the former Broadway gypsy, author, teacher, reconstructor, notator, pioneer in the promotion of dance literacy and second recipient of the Motus Humanus' Lifetime Achievement Award? Ann Hutchinson Guest. At the Roundtable she guided us through the fascinating

detective story of how she decoded Nijinsky's own notation of "Afternoon of the Faun" showing us how the notated version differs from reconstructions based on memory.

Relationship was a theme in Peggy Hackney's session on Bartiniéff Fundamentals. We explored developmental movement patterns as a way of relating to a partner. We even used the wall as a partner to stimulate our own core support. Keynote speaker Vera Maletic led participants on a journey from oral tradition "which we need" to technological extensions "which complement live movement", previewing the CD-ROM produced by Ohio State University that documents the choreography of Victoria Uris. Imagine, this encyclopaedic work utilises 195 photos, 36 audio interviews, 30 diagrams and 315 entries of text. CD-ROM for dance documentation. Lifeforms for on-line choreography, computerised coding for movement observation.

Jeffrey Longstaff explained how ballet is conceptually dimensional and actually diagonal. Brian Batzli and Greg Sebald really brought trademark and copyright law to life.

Cate Deiecher artfully arranged a group movement piece that we performed outside on the lawn. What a beautiful way to close Roundtable.

### ALUMNI RESEARCH PROJECT

Laban Centre, London is keen to contact former students for an Alumni Research Project which it is undertaking as part of its 50th Anniversary celebrations in 1998.

**Did you train at Laban Centre, London? What have you been doing since you graduated?**

Laban Centre, London celebrates its 50th Anniversary in 1998. To mark the occasion, it has initiated a research project which will trace the careers of former students and assess the impact that the Centre's work has had on the dance profession and related spheres of activity.

The research is being carried out by Rachel Gibson who is keen to hear from people who have studied at Laban Centre, London (formerly Laban Centre for Movement and Dance) at any time over the past 50 years. For further information please call Rachel at Laban Centre. London on + 44 (0)181 692 4070

A big THANK YOU to all those men promptly this year; it makes my job so much sleep easier at night! If yours is still out there if you are having temporary problems we will see what we can work out.

One of the nice things about being men is that so many of the members personally. For me it put even more faces to names - it was a pleasure to see the work of Hazel Francomb's students.

Once again, the BT Creative Dance competition since the first year the competitive element, some groups are eventually invited to perform at the celebration. We had a wonderful evening with a piece by one of our members, Christine. Please let us know how you got on.

Christine also organises a Day of Dance for groups from near and far to take part in dancing together at the end of the morning. It's just gone up and up and we are hoping for stage similar events.

Youth Dance is very much to the fore in 1998. We will be taking part in a "Colloquium" at the end of March, to discuss the development of the initiative from both Arts Councils, with regard to Crane is, of course, the venue for our third weekend will be taking place at the same time "dancing" instead of "marching" here, the brighter - we'll keep trying! (See Su John's article) And you can read about our new FOI elsewhere in the magazine.

By the time I write my next column I shall be at school - doesn't time fly! But don't leave your applications are going to choose, do get your applications in.

Meanwhile, Happy Dancing

Subscriptions: UK ordinary and adult £5.00  
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Telephone: 028 2634 1111

### COUNCIL MEMBERS 1998 - 1999

Chairman: Gordon Curl, Vice-chair: Su Johnston, Secretary Ann Ward, Treasurer: Barrie Hudson, Hibbs, Bronwen Mills, Elizabeth Norman, Jane





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owing our wonderful AGM day I can now  
reat meeting you - and really inspiring to  
nts.

petitions are upon us, though fortunately  
ent has been played down and, although  
form in London, the emphasis is more on  
of performances here in Belfast, including  
e Hutchinson. If YOU have entered an

locally in her school, inviting other school  
We had 160 youngsters there - and all  
g. Since we started this the standard has  
to encourage schools in other areas to

my mind at the moment, particularly as I  
e Firkin Crane Arts Centre in Cork at the  
of Youth Dance in Ireland. This is a joint  
representatives from North and South. Firkin  
Stage 1 Course in Ireland and our fourth  
e time. If only we could get more people  
prospects for peace might be that much  
ston's column. Ed.)

NDATION COURSE for young people

ll be getting ready to set off for summer  
till the last moment; which ever one you  
on off soon.

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nine Pasch, Maddy Tongue.

## LABAN BARTENIEFF

### 10 YEARS EUROLAB

We really have a good reason to celebrate: from 7 founding members we have increased to 80 members most of whom are CMA's. We have published journals, information brochures, formed a small library, held yearly conferences and have held two certificate programs. Most of this was done through work on a honorary basis (ehrenamtlich) with no financial support from other agencies. I want to thank all members who have put time and effort into the Association - especially those who have worked in the Executive Committee, the different Conference Committees and the Education Committee.

### OPEN HOUSE

On Saturday 21st February 1998 we had our open house (Tag der Offenen Tür) at Tanzfabrik. We had about 40 people during the whole day, while usually about 25 people were present at a given time in the studio. We got some press, so we had lots of newcomers. The program was very full and rich, the guests really got a good taste of what the Laban/Bartenieff material is and were it can be applied.

We really got people interested - five people are even considering doing the certificate program. Thank you to all the teachers who presented on this day for free. Thank you also to the Tanzfabrik who gave us the space for half the normal price.

## JOURNEYS INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

Over the next two years the Guild will be presenting **two** series of events for its members and other interested parties. We will be calling these Journey's into the 21st century.

### Roots and Shoots

Recently many of you enjoyed a series of workshops covering Laban's work in more depth than usual. These were ably organised and run by Heidi Wilson and Anna Carlisle and are an excellent introduction to our **first** series. We know we need to get into the work of Laban in more depth, so we plan to move on now to a slightly more adventurous route. The next series of events will involve looking back and forward; referring to those long-standing practitioners, our 'gold' and those practising now.

We want the 'gold' to unpack their treasures and share them with the young. Maybe the present practitioners need a bit of steering - "If you don't know where you're going, any road will do." We want to know what people are doing with their present ideas. We could see these two groups as the Roots and Shoots.

The plan for these events is this. Critical debate and reflection. We will give time to dig deep into a focus topic looking at it from both Laban's and other points of view. As the key to the understanding is **DOING** the critical debate will be followed by trying out the theories. To this end we intend to invite speakers and doers from these differing areas to speak and help us do. The focus areas we want to start with are:

**Focus on Children**

**Focus on Adults - Therapy and Psychiatry**

**Focus on Choreography and Performance**

**Focus on Education**

**Focus on Behaviour**

We would want to set up maybe 5 events in the next 18 months with a format something like this

**Subject:** Focus on ....

**Time:** a short weekend. 4.00pm Sat - 4.00pm Sun (or Fri/Sat)

**Venue:** Residential, probably in the Home Counties.

**Objective:** Critical debate and reflection. (Publish papers/arguments in advance) To dig deep into a focus topic looking at it from both Laban's and other points of view and following it with the key to the understanding - **DOING**

**Format:** 4.00-7.00 Debate and Discuss "Declare your principles and describe how you use them" The discussion would be from two angles (or perhaps 3) and would be led by 2 people with a strongly Laban viewpoint and 2 who come from a different starting place on the subject. Dinner Drinks and general discussion. Overnight accommodation. 9.00-4.00 Practically exploring based on the previous nights discussion. Lunch and other breaks included.

There **will be** publications from these events to go, certainly into the magazine and, into a single overall publication, and possibly into other publications.

### Dancing with the Shoots

These events will be days of dancing for pure pleasure. We are asking the 'shoots' to run 4 days of dance over the next year, in London. I apologise now to those of us who find London a bit of a journey, but we have to face the fact that we get better attendance in London. However, I do hope you will feel excited enough to come on down since the price will be right!!

You will hear about these days in a small flyer we will be sending you shortly. Look out for it and join us for the sheer pleasure of dancing

*Lydia Everitt*



.. continued from page 7

was chosen to represent Great Britain as an elite team at the Lingiad World Physical Education festival in Stockholm. This festival was held every ten years and was regarded as gymnastics' counterpart of the Olympic Games although it was for demonstration rather than competition. Twenty leaders travelled to Sweden and gave two demonstrations of movement using hoops and dance skipping.

Within the normal curriculum of the B.A.I modern dance classes at all levels were organised from 1946 onwards. These were well attended by a cross-section of the community. Teachers, professional workers, office workers, factory workers and housewives worked together with obvious enjoyment. Special classes for teachers in primary schools were also held. National



Birmingham Athletic Institute, Womens Dept.

Dance was another activity hugely popular. The teaching of this work was approached through "free-flow - bound-flow" suddenness and sustainment. The quality of the resultant work was very obvious.

Throughout my teaching and organisational time in Birmingham I pursued my belief in the theories of Rudolph Laban. I believed implicitly that there was no better way of teaching movement and the colleagues who worked alongside me were equally dedicated. In 1946 I formed the "Birmingham Dance Group" to give performances of modern dance ballets both within the B.A.I and outside Birmingham. The highlights were ballets given in

Birmingham Town Hall with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. The Birmingham Dance Group gave its last performance in 1980. Many of the members were also leaders of Physical Recreation in Birmingham.

*The work in Birmingham has maintained it's high standard of performance and it is good to know that in the local Keep-Fit evening classes the work is still based on the theories of Rudolph Laban.*

The leaders formed a Keep-Fit Association in 1956 and I have remained it's President until the present day. In 1959 they were invited to Munich to give performances at a refugee village for the "Children and Families World Community Chest Organisation" and in 1961 a team of leaders toured towns in Holland to demonstrate the development of Physical Recreation in Birmingham. In 1966 through the organisation of the Council of Europe I took two trained leaders to a Swiss sports' school to take part in a four week "International Summer School" for physical recreation. The course included both indoor and



outdoor activities. At that course I taught daily classes in Modern Dance to the multinational group. The work for some was an entirely new experience.

Since I retired in 1975 the work in Birmingham has maintained it's high standard of performance and it is good to know that in the local Keep-Fit evening classes the work is still based on the theories of Rudolph Laban. The majority of the leaders who trained in the early years of the training course scheme have now retired but there is still one leader now nearing seventy years of age who was in the first of the Laban method courses.

It is my sincere hope that Laban's theories will continue to influence the training of movement in recreative classes long after I have passed on.

*Renee Waterman*

## THE JABADAO EXPERIENCE

JABADAO is the National Development Agency for Specialist Movement Work. What they offer is a unique approach to Movement and Dance which is applicable to a wide range of different groups though JABADAO is most known for its work with people with learning disabilities and elderly people. Their guiding philosophy is that moving... dancing is a fundamental part of being human and that all people can and do dance regardless of their physical abilities or strength

JABADAO offer a modular course in learning disability The programme is composed of ten two-day modules covering the different aspects of their approach. Through practical movement work participants become acquainted with their principles, philosophy and practice and are encouraged to relate it to their work context

I am half way through the course being organised by Somerset Dance Connections in Taunton. Participants on this course have different backgrounds: teaching, learning disability & dance mainly. My own field is that of Physical Theatre and I teach creative drama and dance to groups of all ages and abilities. For me the JABADAO approach is at the heart of everything in my teaching work and is part of an ongoing learning process for me, which is about understanding the language of movement and the ways we can express ourselves and communicate through the body.

JABADAO invite us to see movement as something ordinary in the sense that everyone does it, that it is an expressive language like verbal language and yet generally ignored because in our society intellect takes precedence over Body. Moreover it supports different ways of thinking and knowing, of understanding ourselves and the world, which are of particular relevance to those who have limited speech but which are needed by all of us in order to reclaim our intuition and a deeper connection with ourselves.

As part of the course we observe movement - really looking at what is there without judgement or objective analysis. Each person has a unique way of expressing themselves through movement and

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# A NEW COURSE FOR THE LABAN GUILD!

ANN WARD

Education

For some time now the Guild has been keen to make provision for Youth and College groups who would like a certificated introduction to Laban's work, so we are now delighted to introduce our new FOUNDATION COURSE.

*The long term aim is that these young people will now be enthused about dance and inclined to seek out Laban work, or at least recognise it if it is presented to them.*

This is a thirty-hour course, piloted in Limavady College in N Ireland with the second year BTec Sports and Leisure Studies students.

The course is very flexible and can be delivered at any rate from between one hour a week over a year, to a one-week blockbuster, as in this case. I don't know who was more nervous on the first day - me or the students - or who was most exhausted at the end of the week, but we had a MARVELLOUS TIME!

By the end of the course the students were expected to demonstrate the ability to perform a simple dance exercise based mainly on the dimensional scale; the ability to create and perform a simple dance motif, with a partner, based on a set task, and the ability to participate fully in a group dance session. Needless to say, this last

requirement was a very essential part of the course, but the students, whatever their technical ability, were expected to recognise that a Laban approach to contemporary dance does have very physically and intellectually demanding requirements.

The course content, assessment criteria, and financial structure are now being fine tuned by the Training Committee, but we hope to be able to offer this course from Autumn 1998, taught by any of our tutors or



Students in action

Stage 1 graduates. We see it as being particularly applicable to Youth Groups, Recreative Groups, BTec Performing Arts or BTec Sports and Leisure Studies students. As a Governing Body of Sport, the Laban Guild is empowered to offer an externally validated certificate which students can add to their portfolio, but the long term aim is that these young people will now be enthused about dance and inclined to seek out Laban work, or at least recognise it if it is presented to them.

But back to our course in Limavady College.

Most of the students had little or no experience of creative dance and spend most of their time up mountains, in boats or on sports pitches, so we progressed in easy stages from "line dancing", through "dance by chance" to the "Olympic Games" and on



to a thematic piece on justice and freedom to the music "Gotham City". Every day began with "class" and included a wide variety of activities. By the end of the week everyone had gained in confidence, awareness, ability, commitment - and was dancing!

If you would like to know more about this course, write to Ann Ward and we will send you further information as soon as it is available.

*Ann Ward*

.. continued from page 10 ..

JABADAO call this their 'homebase'. Getting to know our movement preferences, what they are for ourselves and for others is the first step in acknowledging the language of movement. Developing skills of observation is about learning to recognise our subjective responses and to use kinesthetic as well as visual awareness to understand another's movement. When we work with someone through movement we enter into a relationship with them and a conversation takes place, what JABADAO call 'movement dialogue'.

Working through Relationship is an important area of study on the course, it is according to JABADAO the most direct form of learning which goes back to the developmental stage of mother and baby and yet is a stage which never stops, we need feedback from people to know ourselves. Building a relationship through movement means tuning in to who and how that person is, seeking consent, making overtures and deepening the relationship

when appropriate. JABADAO acknowledge the different kinds of relationship that exist which can be categorised as: Caring, Sharing and Against. Against relationships are often avoided in life and yet they exist and need to be given expression, they and are equally important to our growth and development.

The JABADAO training has informed and influenced my work in lots of ways. There is a person-centred approach which resonates with the way I like to work; through the training I am learning to develop my awareness of individuals, and to enter more fully into a process of exploration with them, feeling more secure in the open-ended approach which this implies.

JABADAO have also given me lots of ideas and structures to work with. They make use of an array of exciting and colourful props; ribbons, scarves, parachutes, stretch fabric, elastic, balloons, fans and more. These are wonderful for initiating and sustaining movement work and for encouraging

different movement qualities; light and flowing scarves, strong and sustained movements with the elastic etc. There are props, which help bring a group together as with the parachute where co-operation is necessary and others which focus attention on individual body awareness. The groups I work with whether very young children, physically disabled adults or older people all have responded keenly to these props.

JABADAO is challenging my role as a teacher. I am not there to teach people how to move but rather I am working with the natural ability everyone has to express themselves and communicate through their bodies. I am learning how to give attention to those I teach and at the same time observe myself in relationship with them. It is calling on my intuition, self-awareness and an intelligence, which is other than intellectual.

*Annabelle Macfadyen*





# OUR CONFERENCE GOES TO THE MEMBERS

## Su Johnston's View MAKING PEACE

The Yanomamo Indians are in the news because their forests are burning, in Brazil. They have pretty recently become farmers, and the burning of woodland to clear it for crops is a familiar primitive method of cultivation, which El Nino has caused to be disastrous.

However, another behaviour is quoted in Terrence Deacon's "The Symbolic Species". The Yanomamo live in many different small villages, all of which constantly raid each other, yet as the gardens in the village clearing lose their fertility, they must move on and make another clearing and village. This is a time when they are particularly vulnerable to attack. How can they get co-operation from neighbours, and decrease the chances of raids? If one village makes overtures of peace, how can they be sure that another village understands exactly what they mean by "peace". So they have invented a ritual.

It is known as a Feast. The hosts who wish to establish peace prepare a meal. They then hide all their weapons, and recline in their hammocks. The guests arrive, dressed for war, and carrying weapons, chanting and dancing, stopping before each host. They ritually threaten them, raising their weapons. The host keeps his cool, remains unmoved, shows no fear, takes no offence at provocative remarks. After this has gone on for a while and no one has risen to the bait, the roles are reversed, the guests hiding their weapons and reclining in the hammocks, and so on. Finally, when it is quite clear that nothing untoward is going to happen, they stop, the guests are offered food, and the Feast begins. There follows barter, exchange, and even may arrange a marriage.

They have taken a concept - peace, and re-established its actual, on-the-ground meaning, in actual movements. They have created the opportunity for violence, and have re-coded their reactions.

How could this be done in the world about us? What repetitive conflicts are there around your life that could possibly be re-coded? Could we find a way through movement to an answer?

I would love to see the Marching Season in Northern Ireland become transformed into a Peace Feast.

*Su Johnston*

*.. continued from page 6*

NVC has been studied from many angles stemming from Darwin's evolutionary theories. We have modern Ethnologists who stress the similarities between humans and animals to express hostilities, dominance, territorial boundaries, and also the universality of facial expressions and emotions which they believe to be biologically inherited. Some thought Gesture was a universal natural language (which helped us to barter with the natives), used for conducting trade between Europeans and the natives of other climes. Others, e.g. Marcel Mauss states Gesture is not a universal language but a product of social and cultural differences and therefore the way we sit and stand and use our hands varies greatly from society to society. Birdwhistell, who, incidentally, coined the phrase "Kinesics" when studying communication through movement, believes if a child is to become a member of society it must learn the movement patterns of that society. Effron noted how Europeans who emigrated to the USA changed their body movement as they became integrated.

In some respects the meaning of posture and gesture have remained the same to this day. To be upright with the head erect indicates authority, dignity, detachment. Gravity and impassivity are evidence of self-control and self-respect associated with rule and superiority. To lower the eyes is a sign of modesty and or inferiority. On the other hand symbolic meaning of gesture has changed remarkably. When Quintilianus slapped his thigh it meant anger not "that was a good joke" and when Charlemagne stroked his beard it symbolised grief, not that he was in deep thought. Much of that sign language is lost and replaced by new e.g. the V sign for victory. The English people were the least gesturing nation in the world. When I first came as a child I found it very difficult to understand them. Not having the language gave me very little left to read. Nowadays the study of NVC is mainly the concern of Anthropologists, Linguists, and Social psychologists and within those sciences are many subdivisions of interest concerning movement.

What do we mean by communication anyway? To be simple, sharing and distributing information. Non verbal communication indicates that we are doing the same thing, only it is without speech, hence, for us, "Body Language", which may, or may not, accompany speech. Gestures accompanying speech add vast amounts of detailed information - size, shape, space and of course we get some indication of the feelings of the speaker. We have communication, which is intended to be shared, to be decoded and understood by the recipient. But we also divulge information unconsciously - not intended to be shared but leaked, if you like, by our body attitude, stance, gesture, facial expression, tension, pitch of voice etc. Whether we are understood depends on the recipients

understanding the same language literally and comprehending the movement language of our culture.

I maintain 80% of communication is movement and when in doubt; trust the movement. The way we move is indicative of our personality and that is brought about by our personal history. MOVEMENT REVEALS THE PAST.

The Genes we come from  
The gender we arrive with  
The country we were born in  
Its Geography  
Climatic conditions  
The social strata  
The political climate  
The quality of nurturing as a child  
Placement within the family, where in the order of siblings, fight for attention.  
I believe all these things are reflected in our moving being.

So how do we see and recognise these things? From within the long list of movement investigators I have mentioned all of who have given us a vast amount of knowledge is of course the namesake of our Guild Rudolf Von Laban. He and his eminent followers such as Warren Lamb, Valerie Preston Dunlop, Marion North have developed his teachings to the refined body of knowledge which it is now. It is the basic tool with which I function professionally and I must add, to my delight and appreciation of the world around me in my leisure. You all know what we have inherited from Laban. You have been working with his theories since you joined the Guild if not before. He developed a classification of movement which enables us to have a systematic approach to studying movement in all its manifestations. He and his followers have given us a means of Observing, Analysing, and Recording movement in great detail. HE HAS GIVEN US A TOOL FOR CREATING AND MAKING DANCES. A TOOL FOR SEEING, CHANGING AND CREATING ANEW - RECREATING. In what way is all this information applicable to us? I think in terms of EXPRESSION and IMPRESSION. By expression I mean looking at movement - Observing Kinaesthetically, my favourite word Apperception, meaning an integrated understanding of what you have seen.

Where is the group? In their heads and in their body, scattered? lethargic? Where is the child with Downs syndrome, the Actor, the Opera singer, the Clown, the one parent mum in your class? Who ever it is you are working with. What is their attitude, how are they feeling what are they wanting to do? or not do? LOOK and you will SEE.

By impression I mean, what do I do to promote change from what I see, to the mood, the attitude I want in order to achieve my goal, the aim of the class. Take as an example having to go into the garden on a cold windy February day to prune the roses, which is the last thing you want to do. You don't feel like it but you make yourself go,

*continued on page 16 ..*



# Diary of Events



1998

MAY

## **LABAN CENTRE AUDITIONS FOR TRANSITIONS DANCE COMPANY**

**LONDON**

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Contact: Karenne Griffen, Laban Centre, Laurie Grove, New Cross, London SE14 6NH

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7 tutors from 3 countries will cover Dance and Movement Technique, Body Training, Dance Choir and a variety of choice subjects. Guest tutor Wendy Hermelin.

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AUGUST

## **25th-2nd LABAN INTERNATIONAL COURSE(LInC)**

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The 20th Anniversary year of this course, a favourite for many students. Studying core principles of Laban's work with a variety of optional areas of work. Tutors include LInC staff - Rosie, Hilary, Mitch, Wendy, Frankie and others, plus Carl Campbell.

Contact: LInC, Ivy Cottage, Clockhouse Lane East, Egham. Surrey TW20 8PF Tel: 01784 433480

## **27th-31st SUMMER COURSE**

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Contact: NRCD, University of Surrey. Guildford, Surrey GU2 5XH

DECEMBER

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Dance and Movement Technique, Bodily Training, Choice Subjects, Dance Choir. 5 tutors from 3 countries with Anna Carlisle as guest tutor.

Contact: Zentrum für Bewegungskunst, Gotthardstrasse 49, CH-8002, Zurich

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## **THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT**

**FOR FREE** - (we would want expenses) Two Business courses for small charitable groups.

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**THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT** - How to treat your customers, what their expectations of you are, why you need to keep them, how you should treat them on the phone and in writing.

### **MAKING GROUP DECISIONS**

How to make effective decisions both collaboratively and on your own.

Because we ourselves work for this small charity, the Laban Guild, we understand the pressures volunteers are under and the problems of making money stretch. Equally, we know that human beings, members, have the same expectations of voluntary groups as they do of businesses. They expect efficiency, courtesy, promptness and understanding, but at the same time are sympathetic to the fact

that we are volunteers. How do we balance the dilemma? How can we afford to train the volunteers in the business skills that we believe will help us be more successful. How can we give our members what they want in the way of good business practice when we don't necessarily know what it is?

If you are a volunteer for a small, tightly budgeted charity, we may be able to help you answer these questions.

As I am sure you will know, not all members of the Guild are practising dancers, therapists, educationalists etc. We come from a variety of backgrounds and currently have many different jobs.

For example, Su Johnston and I work with businesses, which are usually in a very NON movement environment - well the fingers move furiously across the keyboard - but that aside,

you know what I mean. Su, like Warren Lamb and Pamela Ramsden, works with Action Profiling. I am a Learning and Development Advisor in a big finance corporation. We both have a lot of experience of training in the business skills that look at people's behaviour - customer service, making decisions, handling angry people, selling and so on.

Combining our joint experience we have put together two courses, each one-day long, with a specific understanding of the roles of volunteers. If you are interested we will be happy to give you the best of our expertise, for free (but would want you to pay our out-of-pocket expenses, please). Let us know if you are interested. Tell us a bit about the group you work for and what you think you would be looking for. Phone either Su or me, or write to me (my address is on page 2).

*Lydia Everitt*





# JOURNEYS INTO THE 21ST CENTURY ROUTES

*Here we are tracing today's Laban work back to the source, Laban himself.*

## ANNE GILPIN

*"In pure dancing the inner drive to move creates its own patterns of style, and of striving after intangible and mostly indescribable values."*

The Mastery of Movement' - Rudolf Laban

I think I have always been a dancer. Since I can remember I have had an interest in using my body in some way. Inherently I have always been more comfortable with movement than vocal forms of expression.

I started Ballet when I was ten and from the beginning I had a sense of my body and what it could do but even then I found it quite restrictive. Countless times I would completely absorb myself in a fantasy world in our living room with music ranging from Strauss to current pop music and just dance my heart out.

*Creating, developing my own personal style and learning how to hold on to what I was creating - the most difficult thing to do in an artform as transient and intangible as dance.*

I found the opening to explore, realise and understand this other 'something' in Brenda McKee's Youth Dance Group every Tuesday evening. I remember the very first class so vividly. I had found a place that enabled me to dance the way I danced in my living room. I lived for this contemporary class each Tuesday. There was no competition, no exams, no pressure instead there was freedom, enjoyment, real communication and everyone, no matter how much previous training if any, just danced. It is only now that I realise I had discovered exactly what I wanted and needed to do and it was and is, in its rawest, most primitive state, the most natural thing in the world to me.

Brenda's classes weren't merely jumping around a studio (although this did happen on occasion in the many improvisation sessions). The classes were very clearly structured. It is only after training professionally for three years at the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance that I fully understand and can connect all the information she constantly gave us. Having been taught by Helen Lewis using Rudolf Laban's principles and philosophies, Brenda's classes provided a solid grounding and preparation for my training at the Laban Centre. We worked mostly with structured improvisation techniques such as leading the movement with various body parts or exploring space through dimensions (height,

width, depth). Brenda used the Laban principles of dimensional and diagonal scales in a more simplified and understandable manner. Most importantly we learned through movement, through actually experimenting and discovering for ourselves all the possibilities of the body moving through space. In these initial classes I learnt to understand, be conscious of and control my natural ability to move/dance. But most importantly I became aware and conscious of the movement I was creating, developing my own personal style and learning how to hold on to what I was creating - the most difficult thing to do in an artform as transient and intangible as dance.

*"The art of movement on the stage embraces the whole range of bodily expression including speaking, acting, miming, dancing and even musical accompaniment."*

The Mastery of Movement' - Rudolf Laban

These classes also led to small performances encompassing poetry, sculpture, music. We would illustrate the artwork not in a literal way but in a much more subtle and creative way, thus letting the movement take on a life of its own, become an autonomous work of art and therefore stand alone with or without the sourcework.



Helen Lewis' choreography of the 'Diary of Ann Frank' with Anne Gilpin and Brenda's daughter.

It was through these youth dance classes that I was introduced to Helen Lewis, who along with Brenda has had a tremendous influence on me and been a source of inspiration in the highs and very often lows of professional dance training. It was also through Brenda's class that I had the incredible opportunity and experience of the annual Ulster Youth Dance Projects led by Royston Maldoom. Although I had previous performance experience in very small scale, there was nothing that could prepare me for the experience of Ulster Youth Dance. I will never forget the initial days of rehearsals, lying on the floor in a mass of bodies and hearing that first heart stopping blast of the drum in Carl Orff's Carmina Burana. I knew then I had to have more, I

needed to dance.

It was also thanks to Brenda and Helen that I chose to go to the Laban Centre for my training. What I feel is unique to Laban is that it gives you a rich understanding of movement on an intellectual and physical level. In a sense it made movement more tangible. The Laban Centre's strong emphasis on choreography gives the student the skills to manipulate movement, it opens up all the spatial possibilities when choreographing that you may not be aware of and enables you to tune into movement intention. I feel in the three years at The Laban Centre I have developed in every respect - technically, choreographically, intellectually - my mind has broadened to so many possibilities within dance.

In 1995, I and four fellow students founded 'Backstage', a dance theatre company. We have just returned from Groningen in Holland, one of fourteen companies chosen for an International Competition for Choreographers, and we performed our new work '2000-2' on February 4th at the Place Theatre, London, as part of Resolution! (Evolution) Dance Festival.

As a dancer, developing your own style, movement vocabulary and expanding as a technician and performer is an ongoing process. The dance world is constantly changing and therefore it is important to discover more about dance in Europe. There is a constant flow of information filtering back to London about European companies and choreographers, but is necessary to experience it firsthand. I need to discover more about the style of teaching, choreography and performance in European companies and schools and hopefully get an opportunity to work with them. My priority is to dig out and consume as much information as possible in order to give as much as I can as a performer and teacher, thus enabling me to pass on all the knowledge I will gain to the next generation of dancers. Hopefully I can inspire someone who also has a passion for one of the most primal, mystifying and sensual artforms, in the way Brenda and Helen inspired me.

## BRENDA MCKEE

For as long as I remember, I have danced, or wanted to dance. My favourite story in Primary school was about a young girl dancing who "floated, twisted, and curled, like a leaf tossed in the wind". It was a while before I found a class where I too could dance like that. This was in a class taught by Helen Lewis.

Inherent in Helen's teaching were elements that I try to remember in my own teaching today. She somehow conveyed the belief that everyone has a special quality in movement. Not only was this quality to be enhanced and extended, but other movement elements were to be learned. Subsequently, the classes were not competitive. The only person you competed with was yourself.



# JOURNEYS INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

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## ROUTES

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We learnt Laban's principles of movement — knew them in our bodies before we could articulate them. Helen guided us through exploration to a realisation of what these ideas meant. Space, effort, time and flow, the wheel, door and table planes were the springboards for our creativity. There was also in Helen's classes the expectation of a high standard, both technically and creatively, and she was not easily satisfied. When you gave of your best, then she was happy. She gave us a very good technical training, but somehow made that fun. The technique was an important part of class, but cleverly

*Everyone has a special quality in movement. Not only was this quality to be enhanced and extended, but other movement elements were to be learned.*

incorporated, so that, very often, it became part of the improvisation. I often wondered how Helen made each class different, how each class was a journey taught with enthusiasm and an element of excitement because you never knew exactly where it would go.

We were taught that dance was not an isolated art form, that it related to others and was influenced by others. So when she founded the Belfast Modern Dance Group, it seemed only natural that we danced to poetry by Seamus Heaney, and to new commissioned music written by Raymond Warren and Alan Tongue. We performed in operas and plays as well as in Helen's choreographed dance work.

Was all this work, all this teaching and choreography guided by Laban? Without a doubt it was — even down to relationships, which were an important part of each class. And the friends that I made in Helen's class have lasted a lifetime with our strongest bond being dance. It often mystified me how we can know someone very well through only dancing with them.

Not only did Helen teach me as a dancer, but she also guided me through my initial dance teaching and all permeated with Laban principles. I had qualified as an English and Drama teacher and was later to complete The Laban Guild Community Dance Leaders' Training Scheme, Stages 1 and 2.

When I teach dance, I try to give the pupils the enjoyment and the satisfaction that I received. My teaching is Laban based, because, after all, that is how I was taught. But also, there is my own personality and what I myself can give. This was also true of Helen. She taught us Laban Principles, but also added her own unique contribution. For these Principles are also about enhancing the power of the individual. Recently, I was teaching on the Laban Guild Dance Leaders' Training Scheme in Cork. One of the participants afterwards made a very

interesting comment. She said, "I have come from a background of strict rules and regulations. Recently I was in New York and visited many of the art galleries. I suddenly thought what freedom — there are no confining rules and regulations. Your class reminded me of that. Thank-you for giving me that freedom"

This was one of my most treasured compliments. Yet the thanks are due to Helen Lewis and ultimately to Laban.

### HELEN LEWIS

At the age of six, after my first ever dance class, I proclaimed that I was going to be a dancer. Twelve years later, I translated this childhood dream into reality. I moved from my little home town in Northern Bohemia to Prague, to find a dance school that would provide a full time professional education in my chosen art form. After attending one class at the School of Dance of Milca Mayerova, I knew that I had found what I had been searching for.

Milca Mayerova had been trained and educated in Dance by Rudolf Laban in Germany, in the late twenties, alongside Lisa Ullmann, Kurt Jooss, Mary Wigman and many others of fame and glory. Her school in Czechoslovakia was one of the first Laban schools outside Germany.

I had to audition for a place in her class for future professionals for a whole week, at the end of which she declared that I was a totally inexperienced beginner, but that I had talent, on the basis of which she would accept me.

In true, professional, dance terms, I knew nothing. However, Milca's teaching of Laban's 'Mastery of Movement' kept alive my love of Dance, and my hopes for a future in dance, in spite of tremendous difficulties. She had a fine gift of communicating the essentials of Laban's teaching and of convincing us of their absolute value in Dance and in life. She placed great value on a physically well trained body that would be able to express the meaning of movement.

In spite of my difficulties, I was always aware that through Laban and Milca I learned about myself and relations with others in a way that opened a whole new world to me.

At the end of my first year, there was a choreographic competition throughout the whole school, which I won. During the holidays, I seemed to have absorbed the year's teaching, both physically and mentally, and from then on I had no more problems. Space Harmony became my favourite subject, I remember taking an icosahedron home with me, to learn from and live with. Milca also loved music and knew very well its important role in Laban's teaching. She employed some very fine pianists to play for us in class, thereby adding another dimension to our education in the art.

In our second year we were introduced to teaching dance as part of our curriculum. I loved it, and as I progressed, I became more and more involved in it, ending up eventually as an assistant teacher at the School. I could not have known then of what value my teaching experience would be in the future. I also started to dance in the School's performing company, thereby adding a new, much loved, and very important dimension to my dance education.

Milca always talked of Laban with love, respect and great admiration. She did not see him again, but to us he became living legend. In 1937 The Ballet Jooss came, from England, on fortnight's performing engagement in Prague, and Milca received them as old friends and made them feel at home. They wanted to see the sights of Prague, and we, her students, became their guides. As a thank you gesture, we were given complimentary tickets for all their performances, and so I saw 'The Green Table' 14 times. To this day, I consider this one of the most precious experiences in my artistic development as a dancer and choreographer.

I graduated in 1938, full of hope for a happy future in dance. The war put an end to any kind of future and hope, but in the autumn of 1944, in the concentration camp of Stutthof, it was Dance that saved me from certain death in the gas chambers. (See my autobiography "A Time to Speak").

After my return to Prague in June 1945, I was too ill and weak even to think of dancing, but years later in Belfast, through a lucky chance, I was given the opportunity to choreograph the dances for Smetana's 'The Bartered Bride.' This opened new doors to me and I began to teach and choreograph again. I rediscovered my undiminished love for dance and Belfast discovered a new dance form — contemporary dance — that it had not known before. It was the right time and the right place.

In the late fifties I began to attend the Laban Summer Dance Courses in England (my first was in Ashridge) where I had the privilege of being taught by Lisa Ullmann. I felt strongly attuned to her and she recognised our common past in me. In Eastbourne in 1958 I had the incredible luck to meet Laban, who was himself delighted to meet a pupil of his own pupil, Milca Mayerova. We had a long chat, which was for me of personal and historical significance. He died shortly afterwards, but I was able to tell Milca of our meeting when I met her for the last time on a visit to Prague in 1967.

Since then I have had many wonderfully gifted and dedicated pupils who have continued the Laban dance tradition that I brought from a far away country, and who, on their journey into the 21st century, are still doing so. Watch out for their present and future.





# OUR CONFERENCE GOES TO THE MEMBERS

.. continued from page 12

at least just for half an hour. You go, wrapped up to the ears and get cutting. After a little while you get warm and take your scarf off, then your jacket and so on, look at your watch, much longer than half an hour but you are enjoying it, you have got into the mood for going on. That is Impression.

For example let us take a Recreative Dance group. First observe and see how they come into the room. Do they hover at the door, slide in along the wall, or burst into the centre of the room, or wind their way in and out to where and with whom they want to be? Do they stand, sit, or lie about, warm up or dither about anxiously, darting towards or away from people? Are they alone or in pairs or groups? How are they relating? are they near? touching? have they got eye contact? or are they inward avoiding eye contact? How are they relating? sitting or standing? high, low, symmetric, labile, slouching, upright and tense or lethargic NO TENSION NO INTENTION and so on. Just this image has taken many sentences. You will take all this in a flash, instantaneously. Then your attention will be caught by someone perhaps they are moving differently from normal pattern and you wonder what is up! Some one else is literally "High" a sort of frustrated urgency all over the place scattered, fragmented. Perhaps the whole group is infected by this. There are those so out of their minds in passion drive over whelmed with feelings we have to get their attention by orientation in space. There are those so much in their heads (vision drive) we have to remind them of their bodies. You will however, by looking, get an overall impression of the mood of the group. I am not here to give you an observation lecture but I hope I have indicated how our particular knowledge can help us to suss out and get in touch with where the group or the individual is. This is the material with which we have to make our impression.

Meet the class, the group, where they are - that which they have expressed. Veronica Sherborne always said, "The secret of teaching is relationships. We establish trust and empathy through showing understanding and acceptance, not through words but through movement. The best way of doing this is by synchronising with what we see; known in the therapeutic world as Kinaesthetic Empathy. Mirroring. E.G. Walking into a room of phlegmatic students tired, languid. Fatal to be all bright and

cheerful. Join them where they are Physically and find the transition. Start where they are - not literally mirroring but with the same quality echoing their attitude, perhaps with some verbal recognition they might even respond by telling you of where they are. They might even respond by telling you what has happened. Then select those movements, which will gradually bring them to where you want - The Process of Impression.

What is the process of impression? From our studies of Laban Analysis we know what combinations of movement to select which evoke the desired impression you want to make.

Getting into the Body - getting grounded.

Bereavement counselling - get into Feeling.

Veronica Sherborne's book 'Developmental Movement' is full of examples of movements to select to achieve specific therapeutic goals with people with special needs. Warren Lamb has made a very important contribution to the reading of NVC by introducing us to Posture Gesture Merging. Integrated movement, when postures and gestures merge to make an integrated meaningful whole as Ellen Goldman says, in her book, 'As Others See Us, The Moment of Truth, a Whole Hearted Connection'. Communicating with integrated movement is both affirming and confirming. I maintain 50% of the success of a class is real enthusiasm, this can only be expressed with full body integrated movement.

What we have to remember is, that while looking at Expression and thinking of how to make the Impression the class members are looking at us. Are you aware of what unconscious messages you are giving away?

Touch is the most powerful and immediate form of communication there is. It is the

most powerful means of establishing human relationships. There is more responsiveness from those who have been handled than from those who have not. The disclosure of the prevalence of sexual abuse in recent years has made touch a controversial subject. In situations where touch is most needed it has been forbidden - often where it is the most healing commodity - such as in schools and particularly in special schools, where in many cases comprehension of language is nil. Veronica Sherborne's notion of "feeding in" understanding through touch and holding cannot be implemented.

Touch is not only important with children, but vital with the elderly. Many of them, particularly those in institutions are deprived of loving caring touch. The only touching they experience is of a functional nature.

I believe our concern should be not so much whether we touch or not, but how we touch. It is the quality of our touch which speaks our intention. Male psychologists after a course thanked me for giving them permission to touch each other. A group of Movement therapy students whose course had come to an end and then was continued at their request said, "Walli we haven't touched each other for six months! The theme of touch always comes up in special needs courses and I always include a movement session on it whenever I can. It often makes a very good ending at the end of a Summer school leaving a good lasting impression on everyone before they go home.

Now finally The Roman Orator is allowed to look dishevelled - a little wild, his toga displaced, be allowed to mop his brow signifying the enormous effort he has just given out and exit from the podium.

*Walli Meier*



Hill 6th form college - Students performance at the conference

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