

# Laban Guild...

## DANCE AS DAVID DANCED

Kate Woodman

The slow prayerful movements of the dance to Adoramus te Domine lend themselves to self-expression and a closeness to God and those who are sharing the experience. In the King James' Version of the Bible, dance is mentioned 22 times and even more frequently in others. Hebrew words such as 'CHORUS' (meaning a band of dancers), 'CHAGAG' (to move in a circle or procession) and 'KARAR' (to whirl around) are all examples of the importance attached to dance in worship in Old Testament times. The psalmist wrote "Lift up your hands in the Sanctuary and bless the Lord" and refers to the word 'YADAH' meaning to worship with extended hands. As a

*'The beauty of liturgical dance is that anyone can do it and it provides many blessings'*

Christian who loves dance, I find such references so encouraging especially if anyone doubts the suitability of using dance in church.

Recently a nun who was speaking at a wives group was asked if she had ever been involved in liturgical dance. She answered 'yes' with a beaming smile. Sister Francis explained how she had worked with a group of children on the theme of 'the elements' and confessed to performing the dance while the resident priest was away! However, he returned earlier than expected and was seen standing at the back of the church, the children in full flow, with a look of disapproval written all over his face. He has apparently remained silent on the subject to this day! Sister Francis was delighted with the children and received many positive comments from the congregation. She did her best to avoid catching the priest's eye after the event though. If, however the priest had been familiar with church history, he would have known that the first dances in the early church were performed by monks.

In a Mystery Play at the Theatre Royal, York, beautiful angels dressed in fabulous floaty blue costumes, complete with elaborate wings and stunning halos, danced so beautifully it was hard to imagine them as anything else. In a small church just beside the majestic York Minster, familiar music was drifting out into the

spring sunshine from Michael le Belfry. Three dancers were rehearsing for the next service. How long had they been dancing in church? "Oh, we've had dancing as part of our worship here for twenty years." And I almost fell off the pew. As we talked, she kindly offered to send me information on liturgical dance and within a few days a six page document arrived through the letter-box; an invaluable resource enabling me to focus on the spiritual dimension of the work and learn more about it. A wonderful book entitled 'Steps of Faith' by Geoffrey and Judith Stevenson has been irresistible. It includes sacred dance, choreography, dance ministry and mime - a must for anyone interested in liturgical dance. It mentions also the many biblical references to dance and explains its importance to the Israelites as they worshipped.

I was gradually putting together the exciting jigsaw. A

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Freespirit

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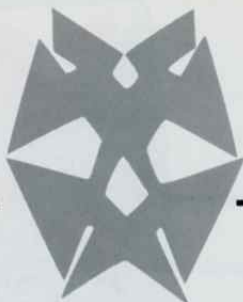
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## EDITORIAL

### What Workshop?

It was sad that we had to cancel the Guild workshop we had planned for September. It is all about balances in life, really. Your various needs that you have to balance and the Guild's.

At our end of the plan we, the Guild Council, believe we have a duty to help promote the work of Laban. This might be by doing it ourselves, like organising workshops for members and others; it might be more remote like advising on funding, which Su Johnston has been doing so ably. But we have to balance what we feel we need to do, with what will be well received. We have to take chances. We believe that workshops to enable us to DANCE (which must be what we're all about) are valuable. But, the balance is, we can't throw away money. If we only have £100 paid up front, and we know we will have to pay out £300 or more, we have to cancel the event. It does not make financial sense to do otherwise.

But the other side of the balance is yours, the member's side. You were not able to respond, in advance, to the latest workshop in sufficient numbers to keep it on the floor. And I can see the dilemma. We have so much to choose from in our daily lives these days it is very hard to commit to a Saturday with all the other pressures of family and work etc.

What do we do? Well - we promote the benefits of supporting these workshops. You really are getting top class, Laban soaked, up to date tutors with varied, new and looking-ahead ideas. Take advantage of them. Seize the chances to work with them. Make the workshops work for you. Book your place in advance.

Thank you for listening. I knew you'd see my point. And I look forward to seeing you, in London, with Caroline Mummery in January.

*Lydia Everitt*

#### COPY DATES

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## PEN PICTURE

Nearly fifty years separate these photographs in time, while the space has been filled with education and work and personal weight has somewhat yo-yoed.

The infant school was the place to dance for pleasure and enjoyment and the junior school where it became more structured and senior school where it died into sport only. Apart from a brief dalliance with ballroom dancing during my teenage years dance and movement went underground and out of my life for the next 25 years. I belong to the generation of boys where dancing was not encouraged and dancing careers unheard of.

Then in 1979 along came the film Saturday Night Fever and John Travolta strutted his stuff. If he could get away with it so could I, and off I went to disco dance classes, then followed by ballroom and Latin American dancing. This pathway took me into Rock-n-Roll dancing and into a dance teaching career in the aforementioned styles. Now, was the time I decided to expand my dance horizons and stumbled into Laban's work via a Community Dance Leaders Course in Portsmouth. Aged 45 and back into the swing of movement and dance for pleasure. I can't say that I feel at ease with Laban contemporary or Laban community dance because it requires dance training and technique that I do not possess, however it gave me a new dance vocabulary and wider knowledge of movement and dance. I tend to thrive on Social Dancing and get considerable enjoyment from French Jive, Argentine Tango, Lindy Hop and Salsa. I

think these dances give me such pleasure because of the "raw" native and naturalness of the music.

Dancing has played a big part in my life for the last 20 years. It has kept me in touch with myself and allowed me to escape from myself. During this time I have needed to explore personal therapy and blended



Barrie



.. and many years later

dance and therapy into becoming a qualified Dance Movement Therapist in 1994.

The non-dancing years were filled with education and working in Chemicals, Banking, Social Work, Farming, Counselling and Personnel Administration. I did not know at the time that banking could be useful in dance but 30 years later it has made me the Treasurer of the Laban Guild. Most of the other parts of my life have found expression in dance but I am still working on the Chemical and Farming connections!!

*Barrie Hudson*

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# JOURNEYS INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

## ORIENTAL DANCE



*This article starts a series which asks members how Laban's work is evolving for them and those people they work with.*

Twenty years ago I had my first contact with oriental dance and immediately I loved it and was fascinated - as I am still fascinated today. The movements seemed to me strange, but also very familiar. So I liked to practise and I spent hours and hours a day in order to do them in the right way.

It is not possible to learn oriental dance in a normal general study programme, you have

*'Laban came in contact with the orient already when he was a child, and he saw the dance of the Dervishes which has a special character'*

to follow an individual course of study. Therefore I took part in a lot of courses in different cities and I had a lot of teachers who were also very different. It took me years to find good teachers I trusted and then - twelve years ago - I started to teach myself. Now a problem I had from the beginning with oriental dance became very evident. On the one hand you have single movements like the circle with the pelvis or the chest and you practise them, on the other hand oriental dance is normally taught in choreographies in the western culture: you have to count, you never have enough time to enjoy the figures, and the dance often looks very strange.

I decided to learn all about the dance, so I began to read books about the orient, to visit exhibitions and to travel to Turkey, Morocco, Syria and naturally - Egypt. Today I think this helped me to get an idea of the atmosphere of the orient, and also of oriental dance.

The second thing, which was very necessary, was occupying myself with other kinds of movements and dances; I learnt a lot of the character of dances and about the way to practise them. In my lessons I tried new ways of teaching: not choreographies related to ballet. But I had never been really content, so I often changed the method and I tried to improve the lessons.

It was in 1992 I heard of Rudolf Laban and his ideas for the first time. From thereon I was fascinated by his system of movements. I took part in courses and I read nearly all the books Laban had written. All this time I was teaching oriental dance in four or five classes, and I noticed that the method changed slowly and imperceptibly. I began

to notice and record the experiences I had when practising, for I think more people should teach in this way. On the other hand teachers of dance and sports should know what is the real meaning of oriental dance, its technique and its character.

If people hear the word oriental dance "or belly dance", they often have associations like striptease or prostitution. But why? The reason lies in history: in 1798/99 Napoleon conquered Cairo and one consequence was that travellers visited the East, and these travellers were usually men and they wanted to see not only the country but also the women who seemed to them very exotic and appealing. In their dance they showed unclothed parts of the body and they moved their torsos, their bellies. And this all at a time when it was not possible to speak words like leg, even leg of a chair. The amazing description details of the oriental women and of the harem depend on these travellers tales - from a forbidden place, a place of fantasy where all our wishes, desires and nostalgias find their home.

Oriental dance creates a space for women, where they can meet and dance together, and I would hope not in a competitive way but in a form of sisterhood as in the Orient. There is a theory that oriental dance has its roots in childbirth. All the women of a tribe or village used to take part by making movements which supported the facts of the birth. It was a very good training for themselves and a very nice way of dancing together, enjoying the movements.

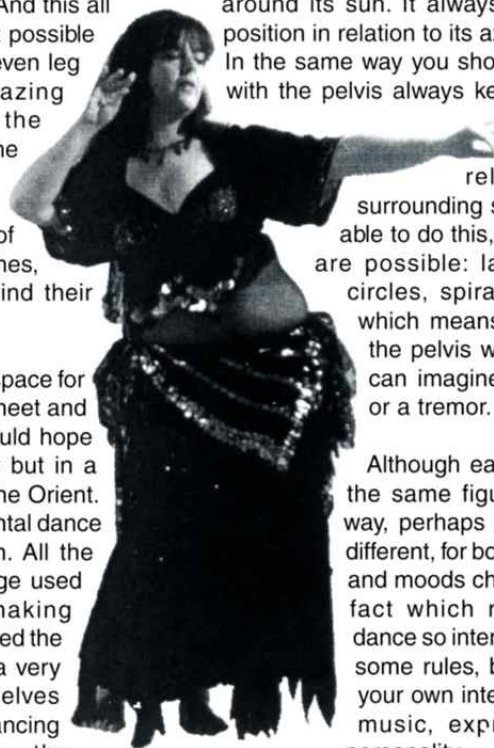
The oriental dance exists in many variations depending on the country or the region and on the time in which it developed. For this you should know such a lot of things about this dance, which one life is not enough. The second possibility is the specialisation in different kinds of oriental dance or dance of one country. But this was not what I wanted: I wished to understand the character of the oriental dance and its influence on the female body and personality.

Rudolf Laban spent his whole life for developing a system of movement which is very clear and includes oriental dance. It is not exaggerated to say particularly oriental dance, for Laban came in contact with the

orient already when he was a child, and he saw the dance of the Dervishes which has a special character.

The idea of eucinetics helps to explain a very important aspect of oriental dance: I think the dance is essentially a dance expressing the qualities of movement which can be described by the "efforts" of the Laban system. There are in oriental dance some basic movements and a lot of variations, for example the circle of the pelvis: You have to do this figure in a very special way, different from the natural circle of the hips based on anatomic rules. Imagine a planet which moves in a circle around its sun. It always keeps its own position in relation to its axes and equator. In the same way you should do the circle with the pelvis always keeping the same position of the bones in relation to the surrounding space. If you are able to do this, many variations are possible: large and small circles, spirals or shimmies which means vibrations with the pelvis while circling. You can imagine an earthquake or a tremor.

Although each woman does the same figure in the same way, perhaps a circle, it looks different, for bodies are different and moods change. This is the fact which makes oriental dance so interesting. There are some rules, but you can give your own interpretation of the music, express your own personality.



Barbara

Oriental dance contains a lot of things: Women improve their posture, they enlarge their repertoire of movements by learning possibilities of expression, figures and gestures of different parts of the body, including the pelvis and the chest which are very female parts. They learn how to isolate individual parts of the body and to combine different rhythms, for example using the arms slowly in an ornamental manner and pushing the hips in a fast way by emphasising the rhythm of the music. This flexibility applies not only to the body but also to the brain. The women come into contact with their inner selves in a process of development.

*Barbara Stuiber*



*Elma Casson trained as a specialist teacher of physical education.*

At the Bergman Osterberg Physical Training College (later Dartford College of P.E.), the work covered all major games for women; swimming, dance and gymnastics and a great deal of anatomy and physiology, massage and remedial exercises. Gymnastics was based on the Swedish System and consisted of a series of isolated movements for the different parts of the body in turn, with the object of increasing mobility of joints and strengthening muscles. Movements were performed in class unison with exact conformity in position, shape, speed and rhythm; even marching and running were taught with the whole class proceeding in single file round the room in one direction to the teacher's counting. Work on the apparatus formed quite a large part of the lesson and was similarly directed into specific vaulting, swinging, heaving, and climbing movements where little account was taken of individual physical differences, the whole aim being to conform to a pattern directed by the teacher. With this type of work the job of the teacher was quite straightforward, having set the pattern she then used her powers of

Then in the New Year of 1941 I attended what must have been one of the very first Holiday Courses in "Central European Dance" (later to be called Modern Educational Dance) which was held at Moreton Hall and where I met Laban, Lisa Ullman, Diana Jordan, Sylvia Bodmer and Joan Goodrich and many others and it was here that my introduction to Laban's Principles of Movement took place. After this, and throughout the war years, I continued to attend many such courses and to teach dance based upon these Movement Principles more and more as I absorbed them myself. Nothing was written at this time, and so the only way to learn was by working directly with Laban at his newly established Studio in Manchester or by attending these courses. All the work was expressive in nature and led to dance or dance-like movement, sometimes stressing the performing aspect and sometimes the social aspect of dance. I cannot remember any instance of the principles of movement being used to analyse movement of a purely practical nature, or for applying these same principles to the teaching of gymnastics - nothing was further from my mind at the time! In fact it was some considerable time before I began to question the differing methods of teaching which I used in the gymnastics lessons and the dance lessons. I remember quite vividly an occasion

when our HMI, Ruth Foster visited the school and demonstrated to me what one of my own classes could do if freed from the restrictions of explicit directions and given a wider framework within which to work. The resulting diversity was quite electrifying to me and I have never forgotten it! From then on I began to try to relate the Principles of movement to gymnastics, and so to question the whole meaning of gymnastic movement as distinct from dance movement.



*Holiday course at Moreton Hall - 1941*

observation to detect faults and to see those who were "out of line" in terms of bodily shape, timing or rhythm and set about correction of individuals or the whole class as appropriate. As a rule it was quite easy to see what was "wrong" and to work to get it "right". In dance, we followed an elementary course in ballet technique as a basis for Scandinavian Folk Dance and English Country Dance which were considered suitable for schools. We also learnt Madge Atkinson's "Natural Movement" in which the set movements were accompanied by music and in which there was sometimes an opportunity to choose your own manner of expression.

In 1936 I completed my training and taught for the next eight years in a large girls Grammar School. I taught a mixture of the various types of dance which I had learnt at college and was greatly helped by having an excellent visiting pianist to accompany the lessons. Meantime my teaching of gymnastics continued to be based on the Swedish method.

In 1947 I was appointed as one of the physical education advisors under the West Riding Authority. Our Chief Education Officer Mr (later Sir) Alec Clegg was getting together a team of advisors who would introduce more child-centered methods of teaching into the schools. He had earlier, as he said, "been deeply moved" to witness the "total absorption of the children" in their work in drama and in dance in the two schools where Mr A Stone and Miss Diana Jordan respectively had been teaching, and he had persuaded them both to join his staff. At the same time he also appointed advisors for art and for music who were promoting the same approach to teaching. Diana Jordan joined the physical education section of the staff, with particular responsibility for dance, and it was not long before the men and women of that section were studying and practising Laban's "movement training" under her influence and taking their ideas into schools. It was a time of much experiment and enrichment for all concerned. Laban and Lisa were frequent visitors joining in our discussions, taking

practical classes and sometimes coming into the schools to see how the work was progressing. But of course such new ideas took a long time to be generally adopted and for the teachers to feel truly confident in using them, and much help from the advisors was needed in running courses and visiting schools as frequently as possible. That the work continued is borne out by the words from

*'The former practice of requiring all children to perform the same exercise or gymnastic feat at the same time has given way more and more to giving each child an understanding of bodily movement'*

Sir Alec's Report on the ten years 1954/64 under the heading "Physical Education" in the Authority's schools:-

*"The former practice of requiring all children to perform the same exercise or gymnastic feat at the same time has given way more and more to giving each child an understanding of bodily movement and a training in it which is helpful in games, gymnastics, dance, dramatic movement or whatever physical activity he may choose to pursue"* and again from the same report:-

*"Generally speaking physical education is moving away from the limited and specific muscular achievement towards the encouragement of each individual child to discover, understand and exploit his own resources"*. But the Report also acknowledged that the work made greater demands upon the teacher - again from the Report:-

*"Physical education as it is now being taught at its best is difficult, it is far easier to set a class on to a specific performance, devise a range of exercises and put the children through them and announce measurable results"*

Meantime, during those early years, a good many of the teachers training colleges were still working on the old methods although in some of the women's specialist P.E. Colleges the work was changing. Sir Alec Clegg and others saw the need for a radical reform in the actual training if teachers were to be produced to forward the new approach. To this end he persuaded the West Riding Authority to set up two new colleges "to nourish this new development" as he put it. So, in due course, Bretton Hall College was founded to bring together a creative mixture of dance, drama, music and art, and very soon afterwards Lady Mabel College was formed with the express intention of promoting a more creative approach to physical education based upon Laban's Principles of Movement. Two of Sir Alec's team of advisors were appointed as Deputy Principals in these two colleges - Margaret Dunn to Bretton Hall, and I to Lady Mabel.

As Lady Mabel College grew we were helped by many visiting lecturers from the Studio and were able to appoint to the Staff people fully



trained from there. We felt very honoured when Laban himself consented to act as one of our first two External Examiners, and later on when Lisa became an examiner for our dance courses. In both colleges, students were given a fundamental training in Movement, correlation between the Principles of Movement and the particular subject they were going to teach was emphasised continually throughout the course. In the case of Lady Mabel College, Chris Meads has written elsewhere "we were totally saturated in Rudolph Laban's Principles!"

*Elma A Casson*

### TOO HOT TO MOVE

**H**umid air, burning sun, cooling breeze, buoyant water; the sun's rays touched my skin, the foreign sound waves touched my ear, the rays of light touched my eye; all these reminded me of Laban's claim that the body with its functions is 'the only and absolute reality which mankind possesses'. My awareness of the features of the physical environment arose from my kinaesthetic sense and in particular the 'external part of kinaesthetics, the sense of touch' (Alder, 1991). When it was too hot to move I reflected on my work as a lecturer in the teaching of Physical Education and Dance. I thought about the ways in which I aim to develop my students' kinaesthetic awareness and so

heighten their ability to perceive and respond to the world around them. I also reflected on how Laban's work is still essential in my teaching of movement.

It is the broad Physical Education curriculum we focus on developing youngster's physicality. Their movement experiences in dance, gymnastics, games, athletics, swimming and outdoor and adventurous activity all contribute to enhancing their kinaesthetic awareness. This sense enables pupils to appreciate where the body is in the space and to be sensitive to the tension within the muscles and tendons, which bring about

*'Children have an inner urge to move in order to explore and gain mastery of their bodies and control over their environment'*

movement control. Enjoying the physical sensations of these actions is an important part of the experience. This appreciation of physicality is a vital dimension of learning in Physical Education which can lead to positive attitudes to self, others and the environment (DFE, 1995).

Children have an inner urge to move in order to explore and gain mastery of their bodies and control over their environment. 'Look what

I can do' is often called out by children as they become excited by seeing the results of their actions on a ball or by their success in controlling their rolling action along a narrow surface. They can also become fearful when they recognise their initial limitations in relation to such challenges. Here their primary focus is on the outer effect of their actions on the environment.

In order to develop their understanding of how to move more effectively I encourage youngsters to reflect on the inner physical sensations of their movement. This also enhances the quality of the actions. For example, to develop children's jumping, attention can be given to asking them to feel how the strong push against the floor helps to send the body high into the air. Thus teachers need the ability to appreciate how the movement elements combine to create an action, keen observation skills to identify aspects of the movement to be developed and a vocabulary with which to discuss this. So Laban's movement analysis continues to be an essential teaching tool.

When performing and observing any movement, the sensory information which we receive, select then respond to is dependent on our level of awareness. This is always

*continued on page 11 ...*

## BE A PART OF THE FUTURE OF DANCE

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**Laban graduates** are world leaders in all fields, for example: **Matthew Bourne** (choreographer/director of *Adventures in Motion Pictures*); **Lea Anderson** (choreographer/director of *Cholmondeleys* and *Featherstonehaughs*); **Jamie Watton** (choreographer/performer, *Edwards & Watton*); **Sophie Constanti** (dance critic); **Nikki Crane** (dance officer, Eastern Arts Board) and **Jane Mooney** (director of *Suffolk Dance Agency*). Laban graduates have founded and performed in many established dance companies including AMP, CandoCo, Divas, Momix, SCAP and V-Tol.

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# GERALDINE STEPHENSON

## THE LONG STORY IN A BRIEF SERIES OF HAPPENINGS

**S**ocially retiring at the age of four, I was taken to the local dance school to "mix" with other children. Classes progressed into ballet, Greek, musical comedy and tap. An academic high School offered strict discipline, general subjects (including Latin and Greek), games, gymnastics and country dancing. Later, another dance school heralded Royal Academy exams. and I eventually became an "Elementary" member, passing by two marks given by the ferocious examiner, Adeline Genée, who had been a famous ballerina.

When the war was at its height in 1943, I went for a three year course to Bedford Physical Training College. Discipline was strict and work carried out with convent-like vigour. But one must remember that there was a blackout each night, the possibility of air raids, and the American Army stationed in Bedford!

However, a shining light was switched on in college in the form of Joan Goodrich who taught Central European Dancing. It was different, new and based on the ideas of

Rudolf Laban of whom few people had heard. We did a lot of "central and peripheral" movement in addition to some improvisation. I was very excited by it all and lived for those classes which lit little beacons along the tough route of PT. One of those propelled my room mate (Joan English) and me to attend a winter dance course at Sheffield (New Year, 1946).

This was the **FIRST HAPPENING**. An explosion of dynamic and extraordinary movement hit me like a hurricane. *Why?* Because the staff, in addition to Joan Goodrich, consisted of Laban, Lisa Ullmann, Sylvia Bodmer, Diana Jordan, Lilla Dauer ..., all exceptional teachers. Never had I experienced anything like it. There were some hundred participants, teachers, housewives, psychologists, actors, dancers ... Joan English and me. *The variety of movement expression, the meaningful nature of movement and the way one was so involved in the texture of movement* were unforgettable.

In retrospect, one knows that Laban was formulating his ideas on "EFFORT". He was trying them out on us. We leapt, thrusting

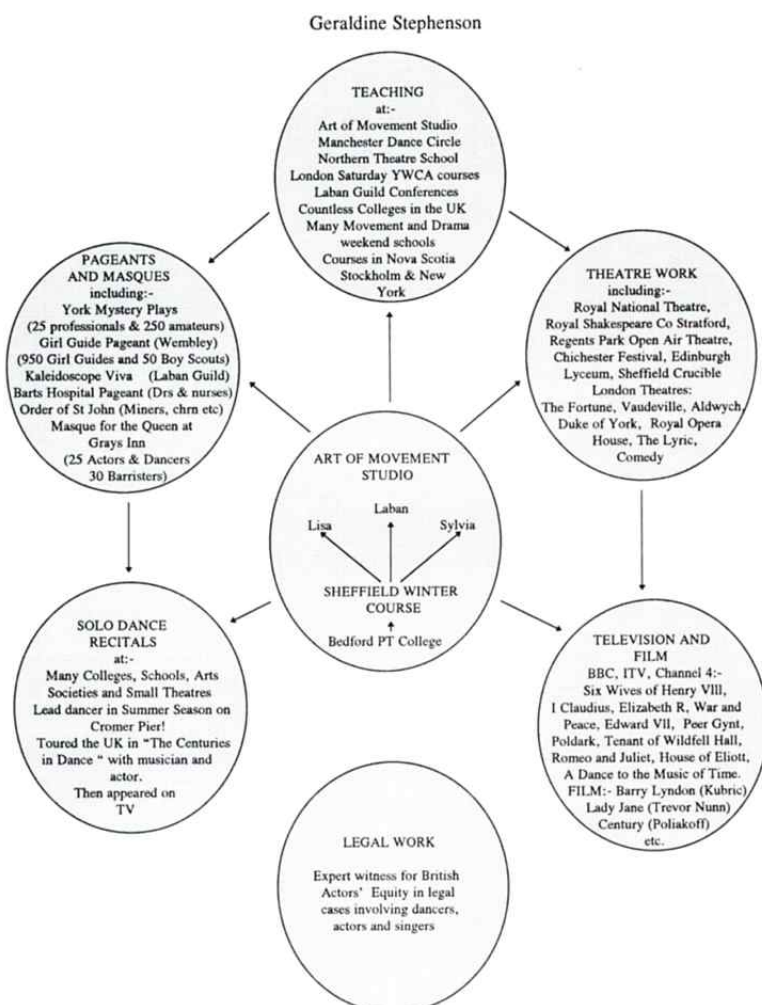


Geraldine as 'The University Student'

into the air. We writhed and twisted on the floor like devils in hell, then lightly floated up high. Sylvia Bodmer wielded us all into my first experience of Group Dance/ Movement Choir. How wonderful to be part of a group that could shrink or expand; heave up and down, all of us breathing as one creature; to be in the centre, then on the periphery, to break away, find a space and proceed to interweave and meet everyone - no doubt in one of Sylvia's right or lefthand chains! All this was new experience for me. Lisa taught some sequences of Space Harmony. I was spellbound by her voice and by the way that she extracted so much meaning from the simplest movement. Diana Jordan, already involved in Educational Dance, gave simple movement ideas for work with children and Lilla Bauer (ex Jooss Dallet Company) in her enchanting, white satin tunic, *conjured* dance out of all of us. "Magical" was the word to describe her and magical was the whole experience of the course. It was heady brew for me and at that very conference, amidst great excitement, the LABAN ART OF MOVEMENT GUILD was founded. I enrolled at once.

Bedford had been an "hors d'oeuvre" to the Sheffield experience. This totally changed me and my perception of dance. It told me in my heart and body that what I wanted to do was MOVEMENT based on Laban's ideas. Just how I was to do this or earn a living by it was a mystery.

I returned to College "on a high" determined to seek out my future. After countless ups and downs, with Joan Goodrich's unfailing support, plus that of my anxious parents, and with a scholarship from my former High







School in Hull, I enrolled for one year at the newly founded Art of Movement Studio in Manchester. Lisa was the Director, with Laban and Sylvia Bodmer on the staff. On leaving College, because I was not going in to a school to teach Physical Training, I was called before the Principal, and told that I was letting my country down.

In Manchester in 1946 the **SECOND HAPPENING** erupted. The Studio was throbbing with vitality and invention. Every day revealed a new horizon. We did not train to be teachers or dancers or therapists. We trained in MOVEMENT and its many aspects. We studied Eukinetics, Choreutics, Dance composition and Dance Drama. Laban experimented with Time, Space, Weight and Flow. Lisa, using the Icosahedron, created fascinating Space Harmony studies and Sylvia devised extraordinary dances, often with percussion - everything from a drum to a tin of pins via a teacup. Very Harrison Birtwhistle.

A new world opened up where movement pervaded all things. We began to analyse it in actions as simple as standing up and sitting down, a handshake, sweeping the floor, washing up, going to sleep. We observed it in paintings, sculptures and all forms of nature - from trees to chimpanzees. Life was being transformed in a small room that we, exaggeratedly, called "the Big Studio" because, unbelievably, there was an even smaller one. As we continued to dance and extend our movement vocabulary, we gave occasional "demonstration classes". The majority of the outside world, particularly the classical ballet enthusiasts, thought that we were primitive, undisciplined and grotesque.

After one year I still had no idea what I was going to do with all these new experiences. However, Lisa agreed to my staying on for a further year in exchange for my accompanying some movement classes on the piano. (I had learnt the piano for many years as a child and a teenager). Now I found that music had taken on a new dimension so that I could improvise on the piano and even compose music. I taught some Anatomy (knowledge acquired from Bedford) and also Music Appreciation. There followed another year, then another, and during the next few years I became a fulltime member of staff and was even allowed to teach some MOVEMENT! These were wonderful days of learning, listening and doing with much experimentation and enjoyment. I loved working with the Studio students. We had lots of laughs, which I think brought a light touch to our intense study and endeavour.

In the late 1940s, I heard about an event which brought about the **THIRD HAPPENING**. This was an International Summer School, the first of its kind since the war. The list of eminent staff included Kurt Jooss, Mary Wigman, Harold Kreutzberg, Hans Zullig and Rosalie Chladek. I enrolled.

Hans Zullig taught the Sigurd Leeder technique; Mary Wigman, long-skirted and with a strangely haunted expression, taught dynamic witch-like movements which I loved and wallowing, sentimental ones which I did not. Harold Kreutzberg, completely bald (pre-Yule Brunner) and dressed from neck to foot in black slinky, silk trousers and long-sleeved tunic, danced like a panther. Enthralled by his sinuous, flowing movements, we followed him "up the room", trying to imitate his liquidity. Kurt Jooss taught sections of solos from *The Green Table*. Chladek had been advertised as taking classes in "Elevation", a subject after my own heart and from which I expected lots of leaping and bouncing about. But we spent 99% of the time lying on our backs, doing exacting leg and stomach exercises until the very last day of the course when we were allowed to do little runs across the diagonal!

It was a tremendous experience to mix with such a vast number of dancers from so many countries with such diverse backgrounds, and all of them doing dance other than classical ballet. When the Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Fund was formed, I remembered vividly how valuable I had found the Zurich experience and I backed the LUTSF at once.

Typical of Laban's interest in other people's movement ideas, he felt, on my demonstrating some of Chladek's exercises, that they could contribute to a regular morning training session for the Studio students. We worked on this until a suitable pattern emerged of "Bending, Stretching and Twisting". Thus, an energetic morning limber-up session was established, loved by some and hated by others because it was so strenuous.

It was when Laban fell ill with typhoid fever that I succumbed to the **FOURTH HAPPENING**. With only one day's notice I was catapulted into teaching actor students at Esme Church's Northern Theatre School in Bradford. I was terrified. I had never met an actor before let alone worked with one. The First Year class was 2-1/2 hours long, the Second Year was 1-1/2 hours. As for the Third Year group, this consisted of fully fledged, experienced actors - to be taught for one hour. I got by on Laban's brief message via Lisa ... "Do some warming-up, some Effort work, then improvisation of scenes". I survived on these basic ideas and found the students delightful and talented. I was kept on as Laban's assistant when he returned and in all stayed five exciting years. It was a totally new adventure. I was amazed to see the dynamic effect of Laban's work on the students. At that time in England most of the drama schools only did Ballet, Greek Dance and Fencing, whereas Laban's approach was so different. It alerted the students to a rich movement language which informed all their acting through motivation



Summer School in Zurich 1949  
Left to right: Rosalia Chladek, Mary Wigman, Hans Zullig, Harold Kretzberg, Kurt Jooss

and characterisation. Even today, some forty or fifty years on, when I meet former students, they still remember with great affection some of the revolutionary work we did, and speak of its value to them. Sir Robert Stephens had been a Bradford student and, towards the end of his life, in an interview with Melvyn Bragg, he spoke about the Seven Efforts. He had lost one along the way!!

*Geraldine Stephenson*

*Geraldine's story will be concluded in the next magazine.*



## DANCING AROUND

## LABAN IN SOMERSET

Laban in Somerset got off to a resounding start with a group aged between 6 and 60. The first free session encouraged many and a strong core are committed to the season, with many more still expressing interest.

Wendy Hermelin's creative dance workshops, held near Yeovil, are a welcome contrast in the West Country to the usual keep fit, aerobic and dance technique classes. The creative opportunities allow people with diverse experiences to really dance. Those of you who know Wendy's work will understand how the group will be enjoying the freedom and encouraged to dance to their utmost, shedding self-consciousness.

If these evenings are the sort of thing you're looking for there are still spaces, so phone Mark on 01460 241679.

**LABAN INTERNATIONAL  
COURSE 1998**

1996 the year I discovered Creative Dance, the temptation of Summer School hovered in front of me, but I resisted citing money, time and holidays. Again in 1997 I was even more hooked on the dance, but again resisted. 1998 arrived, I was broke, had more reasons not to be tempted but I knew I had no choice but to dive in and I experienced what so many had before me the exquisite freedom of mind, spirit, body and soul. and the joy of dance.

Driving along the lovely wide, quiet, leafy streets of Eastbourne and arriving at the Dance Centre was a lovely introduction. There was a relaxed atmosphere with no formality. Following a Swiss girl, Danish man and a German girl to Queenswood House where we raced around choosing our rooms I had my first taste of just how many nationalities were represented. The feeling of warmth and happiness was something that was immediately obvious and became stronger as the week continued.

People just loved getting up and sharing and sometimes showing off!! A wonderful miming act with suitcases, umbrellas and other appendages! A German holiday singing troop entertained us with naughty songs we couldn't understand. Norwegians in their black plastic bags had us curled up with laughter and a very sultry Tango silenced us. Our celebration-masked dinner was quite something. Everyone came up with some kind of mask from flowers around glasses, feathers and grasses to beautifully hand-made masks. I leave the singing to the last because with a wonderful contingent from Ireland who sang as much as they danced and cried, how could we not all willingly be drawn into singing most evenings and well into the night.

But we came to dance and this we did from 9-5. I found the variety stimulating and challenging starting with a choice of warm ups for the first hour with different teachers we then moved to our choices. I had chosen introspective subjects which helped me express feeling and ideas I had not been able to before. I learnt to completely let go yet be very aware of the movement and other dancers. I learnt to take a chance and that 'things' just happen, ideas pop into your head, you can do so much if you just free your spirit and let it happen. Both body and mind were challenged. The beginners' Laban Studies classes were interesting and fun. Knowing very little about Laban I was interested in its structure and form, and the thinking and purpose behind it, also the history and learning about the man who had given us so much. Learning about the movements opened up the dance for me and I can now hang my dance on something, some structure which makes it much more enjoyable and opens more possibilities. Dancing with different people in that secure space created bonds that will remain. There were continual challenges for the experienced dancer as well as the novice, teachers were demanding and we were always being stretched, fed with ideas and thoughts and being asked to share with others.

Plato, in "The Laws", said education is identified with the completely mastery of the art of dance. The educated man is one who has properly mastered this art while the uneducated man is one who is without dance. Can we have more?

*Judy Criag* (a novice)

## NEW CHAIR FOR THE VOLUNTARY ARTS NETWORK

Tony Pender, the chair of Northern Sinfonia and vice chair of the Arts Council of England's National Lottery Panel, is to take over the chair of the Voluntary Arts Network - the UK development agency for the participatory arts.

Tony, 55, will take over from VAN's current chair Denys Hodson in October. He said "I have been involved in VAN since it first began, through my work with English Estates, and have watched its growth with great interest. I feel very honoured to be asked to chair VAN and feel it is an organisation poised for greatness. The coming changes in the arts funding system will offer amazing opportunities to the Network and I am looking forward to helping VAN meet the challenges which will come its way over the next few years".

Over the last ten years Tony has served on the Board of various arts organisations including Northern Arts Board, ABSA and the Newcastle Playhouse Trust. His involvement with the arts began with his work at English Estates where he worked for 15 years as Chief Executive and as a

## MEMBERS

Another year draws to a close, and what do we

Well- it has been a good year for the Guild and those who have successfully completed our Stage to have taught the first weekend and then assess the outcome of two years hard work from course. The part played by the latter is often underestimated together over that length of time. So congratulate Mary Adams, Jill Bunce, Julian Chandler, H Goulding, Jane Harrison, Jacqueline Knight, but not least, Rachel Neyland, who was eight hope we have another course baby on the board seeing them collect their certificates at the AGM.

Most of the tutors on this course were experienced from the Guild's Stage 2 Course, so to see the level shown by the course members is a very satisfying experience. Carlisle and Susi Thornton on Stage 2, and our other tutors, too - and particular thanks to Sheila. The wisdom, support and encouragement is of invaluable help.

Next weekend - 10/11 October - I am off to Co. Irish courses are obviously particularly dear to me - not least for the Irish hospitality - a point which LINC summer school together with a large contingent of the course to attend next year! The bonds for Judy coming up to Powys from Somerset to take Petra at LINC.

Next - another course is planned for Belfast in 1992 and there is the possibility of further courses in 1993.

All this, together with trips to Summer School Canaria, have obviously been taking up most of Valerie Preston-Dunlop's biography of Rudolf Nureyev. It's on your bookshelf but you haven't yet got round to it, yet got it order it from Dance books. More on the

As usual at this time of year, all members need makes life very much easier for us, and usually If you haven't already taken one out, a form is cheque, the rates are quoted below and cheque and sent to me.

It will be January before I am talking to you :  
October - **HAVE A HAPPY CHRISTMAS!**

Ann Ward

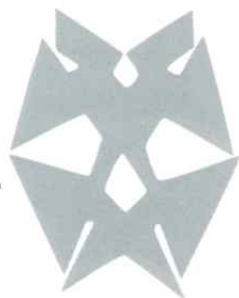
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### COUNCIL MEMBERS 1998 - 1999

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





have to show for it'

We are delighted to be able to congratulate all 1 course in Powys. I was particularly privileged and at the final weekend, so seeing the wonderful members, tutors and administrators alike. The but I know how much it takes to keep a course ons to Heidi and Louise and congratulations to en Flawn-Powell, Amanda Gilmore, Mandy tra Koppers, Steve Parry, Dee Stolt and, last and a half months pregnant by that weekend! I s by now, and that we'll have the pleasure of in Bath.

ed "Labanites" who have also graduated from of understanding and application of the work g justification of our courses, the work of Anna nvestment in the future. Congratulations to all cGivering, our Moderator, whose knowledge, mable value to us.

again for their mid-course assessments. The e and I'm really looking forward to the weekend will be appreciated by all those who attended gent from Cork; we can't wait for the other half ed on this course are epitomised by Mark and part in the assessment weekend after meeting

999, with an information session on 14 Nov.. S. Ireland and in Norfolk.

nd visiting family and my "hideaway" in Gran of my time, but I have still managed to read ban. It's a un-put-downable fascinating; so if nd to reading it - pick it up now! If you haven't in the next issue.

to think about renewing their membership. It or members, if this is done by Banker's Order. nclosed with this issue. If you prefer to pay by s should be made payable to the Laban Guild

ain, so although it grieves me to say this in

ted members	£20.00 p.a.
irmail)	£25.00 p.a.
nd unwaged	£10.00 p.a.
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itor: Lydia Everitt, Members: Vera Curling, Gill  
ne Pasch, Maddy Tongue.

board member.

VAN is funded by the four UK arts councils, European structural funds and the Esmée Fairbairn Charitable Trust to promote participation in the arts and support those who already participate. It works with more than 300 national and regional umbrella bodies for the voluntary arts providing information and training and acts as an advocate for the sector to the funding system.

Members of the Network range from large, funded groups such as the National federation of Music Societies and Foundation for Community Dance to smaller organisations run entirely by volunteers such as the Lace Guild and Society for international Folk Dancing.

### USING THE SCHOLARSHIP - SKINNER RELEASE TECHNIQUE.

Caroyln Roy received the Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Fund and used it this year.

I went to Seattle to take part in a two week ongoing intensive in Skinner Release Technique. Classes were held daily in a large airy studio just off Broadway. I should say that I very much enjoyed the freedom and chance to truly focus that came with training in an unfamiliar city. Seattle is green and lush, generally peaceful, and easy to travel around. A perfect place for contemplation and the assimilation of new material.

Skinner Release Technique is a kinaesthetic training which uses poetic imagery as a key to both the perception and performance of movement. Images formulated by Joan Skinner, are given verbally and briefly. She likens them to haiku in the sense that they are brief, but also that their interpretation relies on them having a resonance or reverberation in the receiver. This means that each person has an individual response to a given image, which in turn generates a variety of dance improvisation. However, the images are not solely a basis for improvisation. They are part of a process of understanding alignment, discovering neuro-skeletal relationships and our body's relationship with space. Some images are taken from nature, others are more systematic 'checklists' which guide one through different parts of the body to an awareness and releasing of patterns of tension. In releasing this tension, growth and change can take place.

Underlying SRT are the principles of multi directional skeletal alignment - a dynamic process of continual adjustments of weight in space, and multi directional balance - the notion that there is no constant centre of balance, that it shifts with your weight. Also a focus on both an economy of energy expenditure in a given movement, and the autonomy of different parts of the body.

Much of the exploration of these principles is done through working with partners in a series of partner graphics.

The ongoing intensive presumed an understanding of these principles, so the work was a more in depth exploration. It was a tightly knit series of classes, taught by Joan Skinner, Robert Davidson and Stephanie Skura, with a focus on releasing the area at the back of the neck, expanding the lower back, releasing the large muscles of the haunches, and an exploration of spiral forces in movement. We spent long periods improvising with imagery, sometimes in an almost under conscious state, barely moving, but all the time changes were taking place. At other times an image would unleash a contagious energy leading to a wild improvisation. Nothing was predictable, and the intensity of concentration within the group was wonderful. Partner graphics, supporting and exploring different given images and alignment possibilities with a partner were a major part of the process. We were also introduced to a series of kinaesthetic rituals. These are minimal exercises exploring various reverberations between movement in different parts of the body, developing an awareness of patterns of energy. One can do them alone, in any sequence, without being in a dance studio. They seem to compound the essence of Skinner Release technique - a tool for refreshing the body's memory.

I experienced a lot of changes in alignment and as a result a new freedom to explore non-habitual movement. Also the strength and confidence to move expansively without relying on muscle force. This was very important for me as I have noticed over the years in dancing that I have developed a facility in certain movements and a tendency to rely on these as a movement vocabulary. When I returned from Seattle I went straight into rehearsal for an improvised performance with five other dancers, and recognised this new confidence to experiment in my dancing.

Next I go to France to do a performance project with four European dancers. Part of the project is a sharing of working processes and they are interested in Skinner Release Technique. So the dissemination begins.

I feel that I benefited immensely from this period of research, and that it will feed my future work. Thankyou LUTSF for enabling me to undertake it.

*Carolyn Roy*

*N.B. To apply for an award from LUTSF contact Vivien Gear: 01244 345741. The deadline for applications is 25th January 1999.*





# JOURNEYS INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

## ROOTS AND SHOOTS

*Again, we trace today's participators back to the source of their work, Laban himself.*

### MARK RUSSELL

**The inspirations which unlocked deep desires to dance into freedom ....**

At the age of 35 I had never been to dance classes. For many of those years I would not have dared go, even if I had the inclination, peer pressure on boys was too great. I have always loved music around me at home and I ensure that I do plenty of weekly exercise, but I had never really put the two together. Well maybe I had closed the curtains and let the music take me occasionally, but nothing serious.

The trigger to take action was when I moved house from Hertfordshire to Somerset. I wanted to make new friends. The dance idea germinated. I found the dance directory (Somerset Dance Connections) in the library and searched for my options. My eyes alighted on Creative Dance, with a teacher in the area I was looking to buy a house. I registered my interest in the new season of weekly classes and thought no more about it while I went through the stress of looking for and buying my new house.

Imagine my surprise when the letter arrives to say that the hall for my dance classes is to be 200 yards from the house I am buying and classes start within a week of me moving in. This is a meant to be. I only took one day off from work while I moved house by myself. So my stress levels were running high when I walked into my first dance class. I was the only man, however my attitude had changed, this was now appealing, especially since I would not have to tell my peers. It looked as though there were some experienced dancers. But we were all welcome, the atmosphere felt safe to just be. The exercises switched on my sense of imagination and fun, so I took up the excuse to just let go. Floating, swirling, exploding all seem to come easily and I knew I was hooked. So, like Laban dance which works best when the unconscious is let loose, I believe it was my unconscious mind that had made the decision and found the path to Laban. New friendships started with and without the usual talk.

My new home was so close, we had to have a couple of parties. The energy of the group grew such that when the season came to an end, I was at a loss. Summer school provided the answer. Though it made me think that I would never have dreamt of doing

this a year previously. Now, a whole week of Laban was a dream come true. The reality of the week surpassed my dreams, there is nothing like the enthusiasm of a new convert and I went for it with every ounce of energy I could find.

Walking in to work after my dance week, I was on a complete high, I bounded around with enthusiasm and laughter. Some people were completely taken aback and had to do a rapid reassessment of who I was. My photographs arrived and I even took them into work and showed them openly. I was amazed at the positive reaction I got, even with the wild coloured clothing I had been wearing.

The Laban week also made me realise that all through the weekly dance lessons, I had been taught to explore many aspects of the breadth of Laban movement without ever hearing any technical terms. I am sure that as a complete beginner I was much more able to explore the freedom of movement in an uninhibited way, while I was fed with visions I could relate to. Now with my imagination set free, I can use the knowledge of the extremes of movement types to enhance my interpretation. I believe if I was given the theory too early, it would have restricted my sense of what is Laban.

Where does this lead to now? I am now on the organising committee of the classes. At the start of the new season, we find out the results of our marketing. Plans are afoot for a Somerset Dance weekend to organise for the spring. Then there is the new dream of exploring mime and playing at carnivals. My box of what I thought was acceptable and what I thought I could do, has been well and truly crushed, exploded and blown away. Yes, I have felt uncomfortable at times, as I was encouraged to leap into the unknown. But I have always walked away with a smile on my face. Here is looking towards the next nudge into the exciting unknown.

Thank you Laban.

Thank you  
Wendy Hermelin.

### WENDY HERMELIN

The three black queens reach down to lift Arthur into the boat. They turn towards the cross marking his grave midst broken abbey walls, sky above dark and brooding. Bearing him away across the lake, reaching his burial place, the darkness is ripped apart by a lightning flash and the air with a crash of thunder. Hearts stop, faces look up, what elemental force have we tapped into rehearsing *Morte d'Arthur* here in the ruins of Glastonbury?

Three crones dressed in black search for bones, leap on one another's backs, reach, stretch, curl and cackle, singing the bones alive in front of a curious audience at Tavistock College. Was this their teacher and who was she dancing with?

Strong white light illuminates the smoking dry ice that billows from the side of the stage. Spasmodic music begins, the Crysalds turn, walk and turn again looking for the source of the sound. All finally reach towards the light, their rescuers have arrived and, as if in a dream, they make their sustained exit into the smoke and magically disappear.

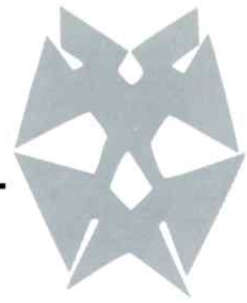
The Cottesloe Theatre, final venue for a performance of the Crysalds by the drama group from Hazelgrove School.

Who was this keen Swiss gentleman offering to carry my very, very heavy rucksack all the way from the dance studio to the station, enthusing all the while about the dance workshops he had attended throughout the week, and how he had only started dancing this year and was hooked; meanwhile beginning to droop visably at the shoulders? He was a student at the Laban Summer



*Morte d'Arthur, Glastonbury*





School in Zurich on which I had been teaching and making strong connections with the students through Laban's work.

Crack! Ouch! Oops! Broken foot and only a week to go 'til I am teaching. Doctor, rest, tears. How shall I get there? How shall I teach? I don't want to miss LInC. Christine - No problem, I'll drive you. Susi - No problem, we'll get you a wheel chair. So carefully eased into Christine's car I am chauffeur driven to Eastborne with lots of care and attention. On arrival a wheel chair appears and I glide, spin, do handbrake turns and generally feel like royalty. The workshop on flow flowed like a dream, aided by the smooth flowing movement of my wheels.

Now, where are the seeds of these experiences? 1. Performing on the lawn outside the headmistress' study in a blue tennis dress; 2. creating a trio based on changing leadership in a lesson; 3. holding candles in a procession through the school hall; 4. taking part in dance workshops somewhere in Bristol; 5. travelling up the M5, squeezed in the back of a van, to see a production. These are the memories of my introduction to Laban's movement principles, although at the time I had no awareness of his name and even less of his importance in the dance field.

So who sparked off all this? It was my teacher Penny Carter who enthusiastically provided the opportunities for dance not only in school, but after school. They fed my appetite and need to dance and choreograph.

Thank you Penny.

## PENNY CARTER

I was accepted at Dartford College of Physical Education and started in September 1955, there were 60 students in my year. A new dance tutor had been appointed since my interview; her name was Valerie Preston. She was one of the youngest lecturers and we took her to our hearts. She told us of Rudolph Laban, his vision, his concepts, his amazing insight into the language of life in movement and dance.

*'a whole week of Laban was a dream come true. The reality of the week surpassed my dreams, there is nothing like the enthusiasm of a new convert'*

Valerie taught us from scratch using the Basic Movement Themes. Our minds as well as our bodies had to be schooled, and I can remember well what a struggle it was sometimes to answer even a simple task. Once we had some movement vocabulary we were able to be creative - what a joy when we really started to dance! Valerie was very patient with us - having said that she did not suffer fools gladly! During a particularly difficult task she would watch us struggle with an impassive expression, then suddenly her face would become wreathed in smiles and with laughter she would lighten the mood, and find ways of helping us.

It was hard to get to know this very private talented lady. She always stayed overnight

in a hostel called Oakfield, and during our third year five of us occupied the attic rooms there. She sometimes came up after supper and had coffee with us, and for a while sitting on the floor, chatting informally, she became one of us.

In our final year, a wonderful new gymnasium was built and Princess Alexandra opened it for us. Valerie choreographed a magnificent dance to music by Ravel, using all 60 of us dressed in tunics of blue, gold, brown and green!! It was a splendid and uplifting occasion. I have a photograph somewhere of Princess Alexandra and Valerie - Valerie is wearing a posh hat and a polite smile.

On leaving college I joined the Laban Art of Movement Guild as an Associate Member. In those days one had to attend several weekend in depth courses and take a written and practical examination to become a Graduate Member. This I did and I have been a member ever since - as I write almost 40 years to the day!

Imagine my joy when I attended Summer School this year, and found that Valerie Preston Dunlop was to speak to us one evening on the life of Rudolf Laban! As I sat and listened, I recalled those early days when I was inspired by and caught up in Laban Dance by the lady addressing us so eloquently. This dance lies deep inside me and will always be there when my body is unable to leap any more. The hug we exchanged spoke volumes ...

## TWO PERSONAL VIEWS

... continued from page 5

dependent on our own frame of reference. Through the use of imagery teachers can focus pupils' attention on particular elements in the movement. The compressed spring beneath a jack-in-a-box illustrates the alternate contraction and relaxation in the muscles as the knees and ankles flex then extend to exert force against gravity when jumping. (This attention to the placement and co-ordination of the body and the use of timing and force leads to improved understanding and performance. This can be taught by focussing youngsters on the questions of the 'what, where, how, and with' in their movement - which makes up the framework to Laban's analysis.

An awareness of how the body moves gives an understanding of how to move safely alone and with others.(DFE 1995). The 5-year-old child that tells us that spongy knees

and ankles are needed to jump then land softly on the floor, but a spongy mat is needed to land on when jumping from a high table, shows such an understanding.

Just before leaving for my holiday I was impressed by the jumps, swings, lifts, falls, rolls and rebounds performed by 20 boys from an inner city school. These highly athletic actions clearly challenged, excited and provided movement sensations which enhanced their awareness of self. The vivacity of the dance resulted from the pace and physical power demonstrated by the young people. While dustbins were thrown across the space the youths co-ordinated their movement to meet, travel over and under them and each other. They had developed a high level of trust in each other which they expressed through their physicality. The clear motifs established rhythmic patterns which excited the ear while the spatial patterns challenged the movers' sense of orientation and ability to generate and control the flow. This dance showed young people taking risks in order to express their

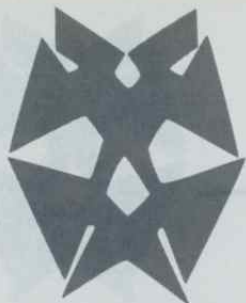
ideas about their identity and about the world in which they live.

In their lives young people strive to establish some order and pattern. In this dance a unity of form was clear to see. Their teacher had guided the youngsters to create a dance in which they introduced themselves by means of actions and dynamics which they performed fearlessly and which they felt were sensational. Knowing how and when to intervene to extend their appreciation of the significance of their movement and then challenge them to become more skilful and powerful in their performance requires a skilled teacher - a person who has keen movement observation and a sensitivity to the youngsters' thoughts and feelings for these are the life force of their movement.

It is the sensation of movement in and around us which creates our individual reality. In the heat of the moment of performing the dance

continued on page 14 ...





## Su Johnston's View

### REGIONAL YOUTH DANCE GROUPS NEW WORKS COMMISSIONED

Good news! We have got a grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Charitable Trust - who have thereby restored my faith in human nature - to put on our projected YOUTH GROUP PERFORMANCE DAY in 1999! On the same day there will be a Fund-raising Seminar for the participants, to help them increase their own funding.

The second part of the grant goes towards commissioning two performance pieces from four Regional Groups, for public performance and to a well-trained standard.

This project was a part of our ill-fated Arts 4 Everyone application, and the application's success is, I believe, because I was able to talk personally to One In Charge, and because she gave me valuable advice as to exactly what her charity wanted to hear. This is the name of the game.

The sum will cover travelling expenses to the PERFORMANCE DAY venue in July 1999 - and will subsidise teacher-choreographers to make the pieces for their groups, to be performed in 1999. The Guild will ask them to perform the pieces either at a Guild Annual Conference, or at a Day of Dance nearish to their home-base, or for a local Arts or Dance event.

The happy recipients are Caroline Mummery, Anna Carlisle, Ann Ward and Wendy Hermelin. A separate award goes to the Wooden Barn Arts Project in Scotland; Sheila Hargreaves will be appointing two Laban-trained tutors to teach on a summer school in Scotland, and we are funding travelling expenses for that.

Why these people? Because they replied to my January letter about setting up a PERFORMANCE DAY, and so they get the cash. At the same time, I should be DELIGHTED if other Groups and Teacher-choreographers come forward to ask for funds in exchange for Commissioned dance performance pieces, and I shall go on fund-raising on their behalf. If anyone would like to join in the PERFORMANCE DAY - JULY 1999, I shall be very glad to have them come along to perform for their peers, and discuss the way forward for Funding dance in the regional areas.

Let the Guild encourage you performance groups. Su Johnston, 01737 843108, Fax 01737 844108.

*Su Johnston*

# DANCE AS DAVID DANCED

... continued from page 1

vital piece of it appeared when I joined the Laban Guild in 1996. It opened up a wealth of new opportunities, contacts and dance friends. The teachers' section of the summer school with Jan Nichol was brilliant giving me fresh ideas. The annual conference in Cambridge was fantastic - a day to remember - basking in the love of dance.

My dance jigsaw grew. Our church drama group asked me to help out with the movement. I was happy to oblige. In fact I

*'...was seen standing at the back of the church, the children in full flow, with a look of disapproval written all over his face'*

got most of them dancing a short dance entitled 'Light Overcomes Darkness' using the amazing 'Also Sprach Zarathustra' by Richard Strauss. Having tracked down the sheet music, I found an organist and a lovely young percussion student from our church to play the tims. It is amazing how God provides. It made all the difference having live music, even if it was a struggle to get the enormous drums in and out of my car. We performed the dance in Rotherfield and our own church in Crowborough. It went down well and was a triumph of dance in church.

A solo piece performed in church to Pie Jesu, led to us forming FREE SPIRIT, a liturgical dance group comprising myself and two friends who share my vision for using

dance in worship. We then merged with three other dancers from Tunbridge Wells through the CDFB (Christian Dance Fellowship of Britain) and now meet weekly to share dances, work on choreography and prepare presentations for local churches. This group has a special closeness.

We recently presented a programme of dance and mime at Christ Church, Tunbridge to an audience of old folks. It was a lovely occasion with dance, readings, mime, music, community singing and, of course, the great British tea and cakes. Our latest project is with the Christian Centre for Healing and Ministry who celebrated their golden jubilee in July. The theme of the service was celebration, Hebrew style, and we used banners as we entered and exited the beautiful church. It was a great privilege to take part with about 500 people there, including eminent doctors and bishops.

The beauty of liturgical dance is that anyone can do it and it provides many blessings. Being able to use our bodies naturally is one, but we have found that it also brings healing and often speaks directly to those who are watching us.

*Kate Woodman*



## THOUGHT FOR THE QUARTER



*Turbulent Lines*



# Diary of Events

## 1998 NOVEMBER

**31st Oct - 1st Nov**

**KALICHI**

Kalichi with his Liberation Dance Workshop - attention to breathing, movement, imagination, voice, touch, experiential anatomy, dreams, drawing and poetry.

Contact: Mailing List. Firkin Crane, Shadon, Cork, Ireland

**6th-7th**

**FOCUS ON CHILDREN**

**ASCOT**

A Guild run, short weekend, from 4pm - 4pm, looking in depth at Movement teaching for children with Special Educational Needs. It will include critical debate and reflection plus practical exploration. Guest Speaker and Workshop Leader Walli Meier.

Contact: Course Director. Jasmine Pasch, Laban Guild, 30 Quadrant House. Burrell St. London SE1 OUW Tel: 0171 928 3779

**22nd**

**A LEVEL**

**RIDGE DANYERS COLLEGE, CHESHIRE**

Study day focusing on Siobhan Davies and White Man Sleeps.

Contact: National Resource Centre for Dance, University of Surrey, Guildford, Surrey GU2 5XH Tel: 01483 259316 Fax: 01483 259500

**21st-22nd**

**WILD DANCE EVENTS**

**THE GLOBE REHEARSAL ROOM**

A Non-Residential Weekend of Mask work and Mythodrama with Marcello Magni and Richard Olivier.

Contact: BCM Box 8059, London WCIN 3XX. Tel/Fax: 0171 813 4260

## DECEMBER

**27th-31st**

**WINTER HOLIDAY COURSE IN MODERN EXPRESSIVE DANCE**

**ZURICH**

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

Contact: Zentrum fur Bewegungslust, Gotthardstrasse 49, CH-8002, Zurich

## 1999 JANUARY

**23rd**

**LABAN GUILD WORKSHOP**

**LONDON**

A day working with Caroline Mummery. Dance for the sheer joy of it

Contact: Mrs Clare Firth ~ 2 Layton Lane, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 8EY. Tel: 01202 363280 daytime or 01747 850413 evening.

**23rd**

**GCSE**

**UNIVERSITY OF SURREY**

Swansong Study Day. Developing ideas for using Swansong. Taught by members of the Rambert Dance Company Education Team

Contact: The National Resource Centre for Dance, University of Surrey, Guildford, GU2 5XH Tel: 01483 259316 Fax: 01483 259500

**24th**

**A LEVEL**

**UNIVERSITY OF SURREY**

Swansong Study Day

Contact: NRCD as above

## FEBRUARY

**6th-7th**

**GCE A/S AND A LEVEL**

**UNIVERSITY OF SURREY**

Study of performance: Prescribed solos - Modern (NEAB)

Contact: NRCD as above.

**21st**

**ALL LEVELS**

**UNIVERSITY OF SURREY**

Safe and effective Practice for Dance Teachers. Warming up, cooling down, stretching and identifying safe and effective exercises

Contact: NRCD as above

**25th-28th**

**INTERNATIONAL DANCE AND TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE (IDAT99)**

with exhibits, workshops, papers, roundtable discussions, lectures, demonstrations, panel topics and performances : Les Sang des Reseaux, a collective electronic art performance by artists Isabella Choiniere. Jimmy Lakatos, and Alexandre Burton: and Light Dance by Seth Riskin. Inner States of Drifting by Jennifer Predock-Linnell in collaboration with Rogulja Wolf, In Plane by Troika Ranch and Odyssey by Li Chiao-Ping.

Contact: International Dance and Technology 99. Institute for Studies in the Arts, Box 873302, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ 85287-3302 Tel: 602.965.6187 Fax: 602.965.0961

*continued on page 14 ...*



1999

MARCH

7th

GCSE

RIDGE DANYERS COLLEGE, CHESHIRE

Study day - focus to be confirmed.

Contact : NRCD address University of Surrey on page 13.

20th

GUILD ANNUAL CONFERENCE

BATH

Continuing to bring the Conference to the members, this event comes to Bath.

Contact: Maddy Tongue, 17 Aylestone Road, Cambridge, Cambs CB4 1HF. Tel: 01223 302030

Liz Norman, 2 Prospect View, Lavenham, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 9RJ Tel: 01787 247871

JULY

26th-30th

SUMMER COURSE

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

## LABAN GUILD ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Our 1999 conference is looking good. Liz and I are getting quite excited about next year's Day of Dance and AGM on **Saturday March 20th**. It will be held at the University of Bath, a new venue with a lot of potential to attract attendance from Bath, Bristol and further afield. We are again planning two dance sessions for all abilities and all ages, with Fergus Early and Caroline Mummery. For me this is the most exciting aspect of the Guild, bringing people together and giving them experience of dancing. Not just stumbling through feeling inadequate and having an exhausted, but truly wholesome and satisfying experience where everyone has something to offer and where they feel they have been dancing. Dancers with years of experience and those with none enjoy these sessions, as we know from feedback from last year's conference. And where else would you get an opportunity to have a class with leading dance professionals?

In Bath next March we will have **Fergus Early**, dancer, choreographer and innovator, known to all of us as founder and director of Green Candle dance company. The company works in community and educational contexts, devising and performing shows and projects for particular interest groups. They are currently working on a large scale community project in the London Borough of Islington. Fergus Early has been invited to give the Laban lecture and will talk about the issues around the

fusing of professional and non-professionals, with reference to this dance piece called 'The Road to Baghdad'. In his workshop with us he will look at these issues from a practical point of view, inviting participants to experience some of the dance material and choreographic processes involved in the production.

In recent years **Caroline Mummery** has done very exciting work for the Laban Guild and she will also be coming to Bath to teach a dance session. Caroline has worked as a freelance choreographer for twelve years having been a professional dancer for ten years and is a founder member and director of Panteknikon which is a company comprising of and collaborating with the work of other artists. She is also movement director for two youth theatre companies and has a wide experience of working with a diverse range of groups, from tots to senior citizens and prisoners. Her workshop in Bath will look at the difference in the dynamics of the flamenco and release techniques and is for those who love the sense and power of movement.

So make a note in your diary now - Saturday March 20th 1999 at the University of Bath. This is the opportunity to meet other Guild members and to bring along friends to experience a Laban Day.

*Maddy Tongue*

## TWO PERSONAL VIEWS

... contined from page 11

or in the moving stillness of a hot lazy afternoon our kinaesthetic sense determines much of what we experience of our environment. My relaxed rolling and tumbling in the cool sea was much less demanding than the boys' fast, daring movement combinations. But then I was on holiday and it was very hot!

Alder, J. (1991) **Dance Based Dance Theory** New York: Peter Lang.  
DFE (1995) **Physical Education in the National Curriculum** London. HMSO.

*Dorothy Ledgard*

*Dorothy Ledgard is Senior Lecturer in PE, Teacher Training for Primary School Teachers, University of Wolverhampton.*

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Taunton,  
Somerset TA3 7SN



# PROPOSAL FOR A NEW MARRIAGE



**R**ead on - even if the headline misleads you - this is and will be a vitally important new "marriage compact" between the Department of Culture Media and Sport, DCMS, and the Voluntary Arts - us and people like us. As in all marriage contracts - and I wish this was a contract, but you know what marriages are these days - the relationship is symbolic and the reality is, what about the money? Can we all afford it?! (Sorry about the cynicism).

The Voluntary Arts Network, VAN, recently called a meeting of their member organisations to discuss the DCMS proposals. VAN helps us by being a voice for the - always a bridesmaid, never the bride - small, large, voluntary, minority, amateur, unpaid, participatory arts organisations and their members - us, you.

VAN will report to the DCMS, after the informed and constructive discussions held at this meeting of member organisations: the organisations themselves have already given their thoughts to DCMS, and or will do so by October 2nd.

I summarise the meeting's conclusions:

## 9 REGIONS IN ENGLAND, PLUS SCOTLAND AND IRELAND

We need not uselessly debate whether or not the regional divisions of England are OK; that has been decided in Brussels and Westminster. As in so much else, we have to look at the situation as it is, and work the system. I am as fed up as anyone at having to jump through the current fashionable and PC hoop to reach the little bit of funding that voluntary arts need: but we are evolutionary animals, and we adapt and live, or go under.

Regional organisation is here in the EU to stay, and we shall be voting for Regional Assemblies - those of us who are around in say ten years' time. As Roger Fox, Director of VAN said, we have to look at the movement of devolution which has emerged as a global preoccupation. It is to the Regions that the distribution of arts money will be devolved.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

This is the organisation which gives most money to the voluntary arts at present. The Regional devolution trend will reduce the power still remaining to local government, including that of funding local activities.

## LOCAL AND NATIONAL ARTS ORGANISATIONS - US

Grassroots activity is often local in reality. Many activities nevertheless belong to "National" organisations, like the Laban Guild. We have very little chance of re-organising into Regional Groups effectively, let alone cheaply. This is the position of many other, similarly-sized minority interest organisations.

This is to be pointed out to the DCMS as likely to need funding: the management of change needs skills and cash.

## CENTRAL ARTS ORGANISATION - ACE?

VAN members at the meeting saw the need for a clear national voice to control and monitor Regional activities. The ACE exists,

let us reform it on these lines. The DCMS proposal suggests a merger with the Crafts Council of England. This has much to commend it, only excepting their different, exclusive attitude to voluntary, amateur participants. They see themselves rather as fostering the standards of excellence necessary to their members as (professional, paid) teachers and imparters of skills to others. This would need to be addressed as a clear issue.

## REGIONAL CULTURAL FORUMS

Have you ever heard of them? No one at the meeting had, because they are informal, though useful, networks of *officers* of local government and agencies, and the plus is that they get to know what is going on in their region. The minus is that they include no members even of those organisations which are tended by government, lottery, or ACE.

*'I personally would like to hear a clear principle of commitment from government on the importance of the voluntary arts'*

Nevertheless, this existing process could be expanded and used as a means of including not only funded arts organisations, but *all organisations and groups which considered themselves to be part of the cultural life of the region*, forming an inclusive and informative resource for officers, and for the voluntary organisation's own members.

The RCFs could act as a transitional body: from being informative, to clarifying needs and funding, and forward into forming a REGIONAL CULTURAL AGENCY which would work with the REGIONAL ARTS BOARD to distribute funding and support for the arts, including the voluntary arts. It could also include in its membership a member representing VAN to hold the wider issues in mind.

It is important to note that this would be a process over three years or so, evolving, organic, and not imposed by any central body. VAN commends this approach.

REGIONAL CULTURAL AGENCIES could thus be formed and processes evolved in relationship to local needs and desires; there need be no imposition of any one method or model for getting the work done *provided the principles are adhered to*.

As the Regional Cultural Agencies continued their work of administration, the inclusive membership of all cultural organisations in the region - an evolved REGIONAL CULTURAL FORUM? - would continue to feed back to it the continuing and changing needs of their members, thus keeping a lively convection of ideas, adjustment, and evolving views and processes.

## POWER

Power means how can we be sure we have a voice that is listened to and acted upon?

The voluntary arts are participated in by 53% of the population, of the voting population. Certainly we need more statistics on the real value of the arts to the health and well-being of the nation, the tourist and supply services financial plusses, and other convincing data, to back up our assertions.

## GRANT

Somewhere in the Human Rights documents there is a right to be happy! I personally would like to see support from government voluntary arts based on the right to a per capita amount for this purpose, devolved to the Regions for distribution, under the advice of the RCF to the RCA. A predictable, budgetable amount for the organisations you belong to would mean the ability to have the administration and marketing activities carried out by paid staff, and the artistic activities and fund-raising come higher up the level of energy-to-be expended.

God knows, volunteers make a pound - or a Euro - go further than most.

## VAN'S RESPONSE TO THE DCMS

Regional Cultural Agencies should be the medium of grant distribution, via expanded Regional Cultural Forums which would be inclusive of all cultural organisations in the region. VAN would support these organisations and these forums, as appropriate gateways to RCAs.

Arts Council of England should be defined as a clearly principled national voice, to control and monitor regional activities.

The Compact with the voluntary arts must be developed collaboratively, and must be a statement of *joint* aims, relationships, and actions, representing the *whole* of the voluntary sector, not just those who are funded.

## SU ADDS

I personally would like to hear a clear principle of commitment from government on the importance of the voluntary arts among and alongside the professional. This commitment would state a constant adherence to already-stated concepts: accessibility, of all sorts; audiences, in which term government now includes people who participate for pleasure; pursuit of excellence and innovation: nurturing of educational opportunity: fostering the arts as a key part of our creative industries.

I would add; support to enable voluntary arts organisations to afford paid help for administration, acknowledging that they have to continue to *be*, if they are to be innovative etc.: and provision of funding linked to three-year development plans, releasing the pressure of constant fund-raising and giving time for the months or years it takes to get responses.

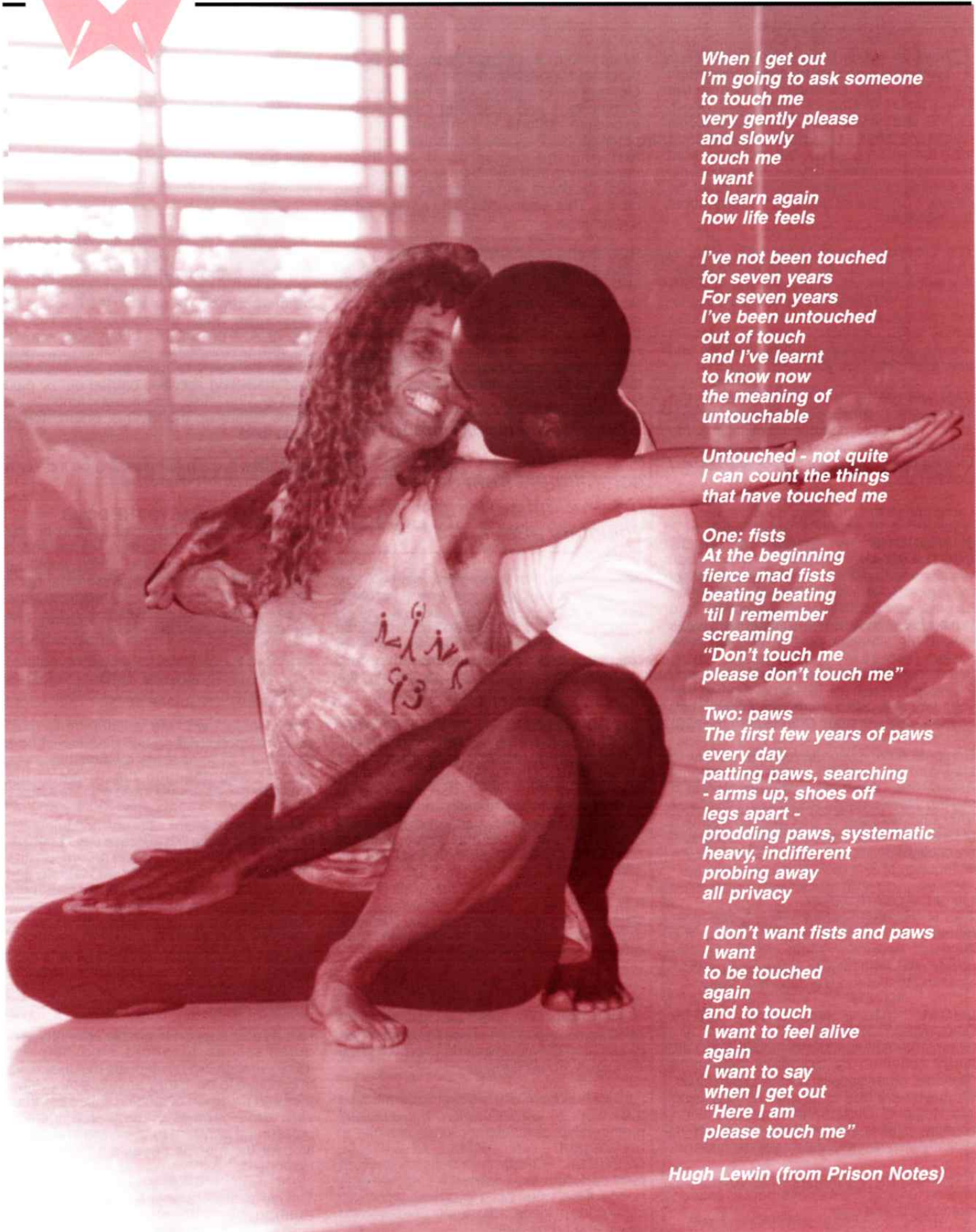
The certainties thus set out would make the relationship with private funders and businesses much easier to address, and to be successful with in forging financial partnerships.

*Su Johnston*





# TOUCH



*When I get out  
I'm going to ask someone  
to touch me  
very gently please  
and slowly  
touch me  
I want  
to learn again  
how life feels*

*I've not been touched  
for seven years  
For seven years  
I've been untouched  
out of touch  
and I've learnt  
to know now  
the meaning of  
untouchable*

*Untouched - not quite  
I can count the things  
that have touched me*

*One: fists  
At the beginning  
fierce mad fists  
beating beating  
'til I remember  
screaming  
"Don't touch me  
please don't touch me"*

*Two: paws  
The first few years of paws  
every day  
patting paws, searching  
- arms up, shoes off  
legs apart -  
prodding paws, systematic  
heavy, indifferent  
probing away  
all privacy*

*I don't want fists and paws  
I want  
to be touched  
again  
and to touch  
I want to feel alive  
again  
I want to say  
when I get out  
"Here I am  
please touch me"*

*Hugh Lewin (from Prison Notes)*