

# Laban Guild...

## MY INSPIRATION

*Darshan Singh Bhuller and his favourite teacher spill the beans about each other*

**Age:** 37.  
**Occupation:** Choreographer and director of Singh Productions.  
**Where they met:** Harehills Middle School, Leeds.

I loved Harehills, and the proof is I missed only one day in two years. Our PE and dance teacher, Nadine Senior, had everything to do with this. She was amazing. She got our respect and attention straight away - and we were quite a rowdy bunch. I knew she was really special.

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*'We were coming up with all sorts of shapes that lent themselves to contemporary dance. But we didn't know we were dancing'.*

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We were just normal kids, but because of Nadine quite a few of us went on to dance professionally.

Before I went to Harehills the only form of performance I knew was the cinema. My first memories of the cinema are from Punjab, where we lived until I was six. I remember sitting surrounded by steamy bodies. Cinemas in Leeds had just the same feel about them, apart from the temperature!

My friends and I were into sports, particularly football. My first experience of dance started as a normal gym lesson when we were set exercises to certain scenarios. Nadine said "Be a tree!" and "How does it feel to be chased?!" We made up little stories and expressed them with our own physicality. We were coming up with all sorts of shapes that lent themselves to contemporary dance. But we didn't know we were dancing.

That's how we went on, with Nadine's emphasis not on serious dance techniques but on pure creative work. I had no idea what to aspire to, but dance was the most exciting thing I could do — dance and football. I never felt like a sissy. All the tough boys were dancers at Harehills.



When Nadine took us to see The London Contemporary Dance Theatre, I was hooked. I was so intrigued by them and completely into their movement. I remembered the dancers and eventually, when I joined the company years later, I ended up dancing with some of them.

Nadine was so sad to see us leave Harehills. On our last day she said: "You can call me Nadine now," and we said "All right, Miss." I can remember the image of her fighting her tears, waving us goodbye as we legged it out of the school — free for the summer.

**Nadine Senior was senior mistress and taught physical education at Harehills School from 1972-1984. She founded the Northern School of Contemporary Dance in 1985.**

I'm really proud of Darshan, he's a wonderful role model and one of the first Harehills pupils. He was very popular, especially with the girls. He was enthusiastic, committed, hardworking and extremely talented - what more could a teacher ask for?

Darshan and I both started in the first year of Harehills. It had been an all-boys secondary modern up until 1972, when Leeds changed from a two-tier to a three-tier system and it became a mixed middle school. The wonderful headmaster wanted me there because he'd seen the value of dance in my previous school, which had been multiracial and in a relatively deprived part

*continued on page 12 ..*

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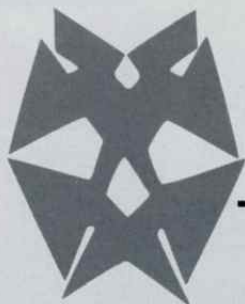
Spring  
1999

INSIDE

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Roots and Shoots**

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## EDITORIAL

The time for Council Elections comes close again. The date for the Day of Dance in Bath is March 20th and the AGM is on the same day.

I have worked on the Guild Council for about 6 years and edited the magazine since 1993. In all that time I have been impressed by the work Council members put in. And they actually DO. No-one on the committee sits back. This is reflected in the courses that have been around over the many years, the one day workshops, the 'overnighters', the annual Day of Dance, the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Dance Leaders Courses and the new Introductory Course; the information we get about funding and VAN; the AGM; the magazine; the availability of the photographic exhibition; the management of the cash flow; our ties with the CCPR and Ballroom Blitz. All these things happen because many people make them happen. And behind the Council group itself there must be up to 20 people in sub-committees or simply helping out.

Could you be one of this small army of ants? Would you want to be part of it? We're not parochial at all, the Council members themselves come to meetings from the edges of this circle - Cheshire, N. Ireland, Dorset, Portsmouth, Canterbury, Suffolk and Cambridge. Council members meet three times a year (maybe four if needed) and outside those meetings they get on with making things happen. Other sub-committees meet four or so times a year.

If you can offer some DOING why don't you contact one of the Council members and tell us what you can give the Guild?

Thank you.

*Lydia Everitt*

### COPY DATES

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### Copy dates are:

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

NEXT ISSUE IS MAY 1999

## PEN PICTURE

### — VERA CURLING. GUILD COUNCIL MEMBER - RETURNED —

In 1956 I joined a newly formed "modern ballet" section of one of the oldest and well renowned amateur societies in Belgrade. The tutor and choreographer was Smiljana Mandukic. She decided that only those whom she could use in the first performance of "Pier Gint" could stay, and I did. We danced mainly to the classical music. It was from Mandukic that I first heard of Rudolf Laban and his work about which she had learned while studying ballet in Vienna where she grew up. Many performances led to my road to stage with affection.

On their round the world tour Jose Limon and his troupe performed in Belgrade. As they did not allow anyone to observe their rehearsals he and two of his assistants came to see how we worked. He was very encouraging and his first assistant came to take us through paces of their kind of class. Impression they left on me was very deep. In 1960 Mandukic was invited by Bojan Stupica, the director of Atelje 212, a prominent avant-garde theatre, to form a small professional group affiliated to the theatre. There were no other such groups in Yugoslavia at the time. On the whole our performances were hailed positively.

My interest in human consciousness was always very strong and in early 1970's it led me to take the psychology degree course at Goldsmiths' College London which I did on a part-time basis. In 1979 Chloe Gardener organised a meeting for a Laban therapy group at the Institute of Education, London, where I was working in administration. I telephoned her and this resulted in my getting in touch with the Laban Guild. Lisa Ullmann, Joan Russell, Susi and Sam Thornton, Valerie Preston-Dunlop, Veronica Sherbourne, Geraldine Stephenson, Chloe Gardener, Warren Lamb and many other eminent Laban exponents, including LINC, The Laban Centre and NRCD revealed a new Laban to me. I had known only about his early work. At the Laban Guild AGM week-end in 1985 Rosie Manton and I volunteered to edit and produce the Newsletter. Su Johnston became the Guild's Editor so she edited the magazine. At that time the Guild had Regions: ten in South England, eight in North England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland and the representatives. Rosie's support and Sheila McGivering's wise guidance proved invaluable to me.

My husband-to-be, Claude, and another

scientist friend, John New, were planning to run workshops on "new alchemy" to explore consciousness using guided imagery. While listening to their resume, Laban's love for movement and the four factors common to all movement leaped in my mind to join the four alchemical elements. Jokingly I suggested "alchemy in movement" when they were wondering how to enliven their sedentary weekend workshop. They took me



*Portrait of Vera*

seriously and in January 1984 AIM was born surprising the participants, and myself, with an extraordinary depth for exploring consciousness using body as a vehicle of expression. I continued running workshops here and abroad and used the material while working for several months in the Priory Hospital Day Centre, London. How grateful I was also to Laban for his positive influence radiating especially out of his wonderful book "Mastery of Movement"!

*Vera Curling*

### THOUGHT FOR THE QUARTER

The Landscape is always changing

Only in the silence the word  
only in the dark the light  
only in the dying life  
bright the hawk's flight  
on the empty sky.

*The creation of Ea (source unknown)*

# OBSERVATION, NOTATION, ANALYSIS

BY E A SLATER

# Analysis

When we see something that we know little about what we perceive is usually also little. To the uninitiated the gestures at an auction, the social groupings at a party, and the involuntary mannerisms of deception are vague blurs. The expert eye identifies salient details and patterns and makes deductions. So a sequence in a familiar dance technique is easily coded and remembered, whereas the unfamiliar is either learned parrot fashion or gradually elucidated by the trained application of basic principles.

All humans are skilled social observers within their own culture, but confidence in this unanalysed ability can go astray in other cases. The therapist automatically notes how family members distribute themselves in a room, how gestures indicate initiation or deflection, alliance or opposition, the rerunning of well-worn disputes; all these are marked by largely unconscious movements. Some conceptual framework or taxonomy facilitates such recognition, or at least there is a checklist of clinical signs.

The observation and notation of dance is a rather special case, for here we normally take all movements to be choreographically intended and aesthetically relevant.

## Telling Things Apart

It will simplify explanation to set up two extreme cases. In the first, the choreographic repertoire consists of a limited number of fixed distinct segments (the stereotype of ballet or folk dance): In the second, any and all possible movements may be choreographic (the stereotype of free dance or improvisation). The first is 'discrete', with no confusion of identity between segments, and any intermediary event is discounted as a mistake. The second is 'dense', for all variants are legitimate and tiny differences have to be considered for possible significance.

The notation of such discrete dance is obviously easy assuming both choreographer and performer are clear about their repertoire: any equivalent list of signs (arbitrary numbers, conventional pictograms etc.) in a one to one match will do. But such signs should themselves be unmistakably distinct, discrete in their own design. If instead we attempt to draw more naturalistic pictures of the dance, then poor drawing or technical problems such as angle of view may create problems. A pictorial rendering is drawn on a dense surface where any number of marks are possible.

So notations themselves may be characterised as discrete or dense, the signs being considered both as meanings and as marks. Most forms of stick figure or pattern drawing are dense and are based on a notion of pictorial resemblance (put briefly, n-Benesh is R-n).

Laban's kinetography is fundamentally discrete and uses a formal sign system (so n-laban is F-n). It does have certain analogue features (the staff layout relating length and duration, left and right, stance on axis) and these much assist use but do not interfere with its discreteness. This is easily seen in the Laban direction signs. If we differentiate only the six dimensional cross possibilities the sign meanings and designs cannot be confused, while more precise notation implies equal accuracy of performance. If choreographic intention is broad ('close up anyhow', 'reach towards each other anyhow') then the notation should be equally broad, ignoring the inevitable specificity of any particular performance.

Analysis is inherently difficult with marks freely drawn in a dense notation, for there is no certain way to decide which are the same or to categorise and quantify differences. n-laban also makes analysis possible at different levels of generality. If

we are interested in movement distribution between the three planes, notation can be at that level; equally interest in flexion and extension or in relative placement and focus can be targeted. Therapeutic, forensic, kinesiological, ergonomic and other concerns set their own targets and it may be possible to adapt n-laban to a specific purpose (my Support Writing for gymnastics and Visual Choreutics for space studies are examples).

## Understanding Dance

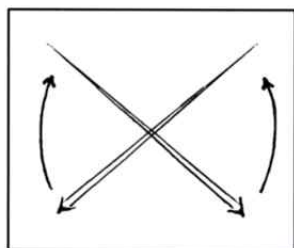
A revealing test for any notation that claims historical adequacy is recycling: performance - notation - reperformance - renotation. A discrete notation stabilises performance (even of the more difficult dense dance forms), whereas a dense notation (though it may suffice for a discrete dance form) can endlessly drift away from its original. Such stability (typical of F-n rather than R-n) underpins a notion of correctness of performance - important for both artistic practice and philosophical theory - and is a great advantage of n-laban.

Resemblance notations have a naive visual appeal through pictoriality. But this is deceptive both for the immediate task of performance (except as a temporary aide-memoire, rather like my SpinMan figures) and for subsequent study and analysis. To classify and count, compare and contrast, the movement content of dance or of any activity requires a discrete notation (rather as digital data has the advantage over analogue).

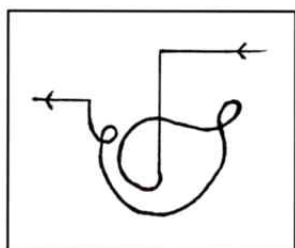
Observation, notation and analysis are inter-related. Ideally observation begins with an unprejudiced mind, but there is an interplay between seeing and conceptualising ('bottom up' and 'top down' respectively) which enables the forming of hypotheses

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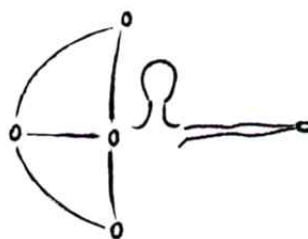
## FLOOR PATTERNS



Basic stage pattern  
alternating stronger and  
weaker address

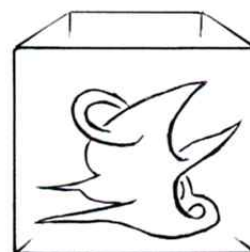


Pattern suited to  
alternation of stable and  
labile passages



Basic gestural paths -  
dimensional relationship of  
arms and body presence

## AIR PATTERNS



Spatial aggregate -  
penetrating and  
surrounding motifs

.. continued from page 3

which are explanatory and testable. Equally it is best if the notation is neutral in the sense of not imposing a dominant, perhaps inappropriate, framework which distorts rather than reveals (the way language can distort has been made familiar by feminists and philosophers alike). If notation is inadequate or unreliable so too will be the data it records. The general tasks of analysis, to illuminate and inspire, can hardly proceed without the firm evidence of scores. Dance has suffered enormously from its

ephemerality. In practice only a few works that enjoyed immediate and continuing success have survived albeit distorted, dance education has been handicapped and academically marginalised, and the art has lived in a continuous present. Dance scores are potential treasure houses, not merely for the preservation of creative endeavour within culture, but for the education of appreciative and creative abilities.

Stylistic analysis can establish characteristics of period and genre, choreographer and technique. Even more interestingly it seems possible to reveal the

essential form of works, that which gives aesthetic identity and embodies expressiveness (and my notion of works of art as quasipersons is relevant here). Such explanation of our interest in and relationship with the dance would be a triumph of critical understanding.

*E A Slater*

**References:** My thesis *Dance and the QuasiPersonal in Art* (PhD CNA) contains an extensive development, while my *Perspective On Notation* (Laban Centre) provides background and examples.

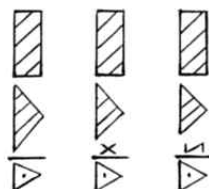
### NOTATIONS



Discrete positions - dense or discrete transition?

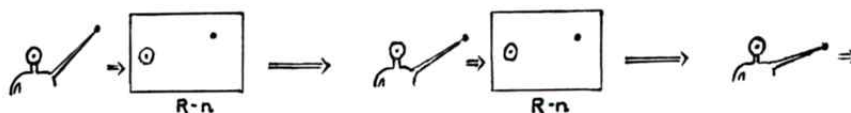


R-n path lines closely similar

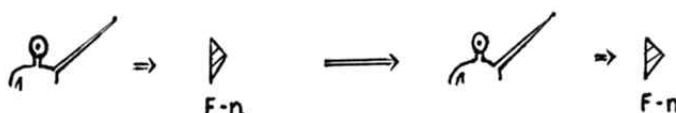


F-n signs clearly distinct

### RECYCLING



Unstable system - dense notation allows drift towards horizontal



Stable system - discrete notation excludes dimensional zones

## EVENTS FROM THE GUILD

### THE FIRST YOUTH DANCE PERFORMANCE DAY

Five groups are to perform their dance pieces, on Sunday March 21st, the day after our Bath Annual Conference, at the Bristol Dance Centre.

This is the first part of the "Reaching Out" project for encouraging regional dance groups to produce performance-standard original works, for young - and older! - people.

The Esmée Fairbairn Trust has granted us enough money to run this scheme for one year. We aim to have a Laban Guild dance groups' repertoire in place in 1999 and 2000, so that a variety of dance

groups dancing high quality original pieces is on call for all regional Days of Dance who want performances and demonstrations. Their teacher-choreographers will have a grant towards producing original dances during 1999.

But March 21st is a preliminary getting-together, forming a network, and getting to see each others' work and discuss it. There will also be a short workshop on getting funds locally (which as you know is the most likely source for the voluntary arts). In 1999 we also have the prospect of two major showcases, at Ballroom Blitz and the PEA Albert Hall 100th

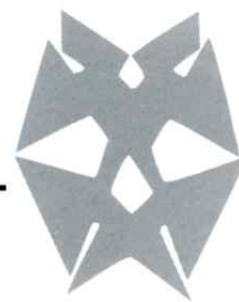
Anniversary. These may also involve the groups - plans are fluid at the moment.

If you are coming to the ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1999 in Bath, please strongly consider staying on to the next day and popping the 12 miles down the road to Bristol to see the YOUTH DANCE PERFORMANCE GROUPS and encourage them. You will also have a good time, seeing the performances at 12 noon, and can have your lunch at the Bristol Dance Centre's café afterwards.

*Su Johnston*

# DANCES OF THE SOUL

WITCHES - OCTOBER 1997



The number of schools I have visited and dance classes I have attended where the theme has been witches, and everybody has put on their black hats and grim faces, is too many to count.

Let me tell you of something about witches. Witch means wise woman. The wise women were the herbalists and midwives of old. They inherited and carried hundreds of years of European herbal tradition which died with them in the burnings.

The herbal tradition included chants and songs, poetry, dance and ceremony. This was called honouring the wise plants and their gifts to mankind. Honouring the seasons, the sun and the moon. Honouring and thanking the Great Mother Earth Herself. Let me give you an example.

## West Coast Dreaming

*The land lies bare under the  
Clean sweeping winds,  
But along the shore  
She threw her green cloak  
Around me and whispered.  
Oak for strength  
And alder for endurance  
Against the rains.  
Willow for pain  
And hawthorn to heal  
The broken heart.  
Aspen for courage  
And hazel to feed  
The sweet tooth.*

*Ask for tools  
And sycamore to make  
The fiddle-beck  
And sing the Celtic songs.  
Nettle for spring tonics  
Honeysuckle for warm summer  
nights.  
Blackberry for winter warmth  
Dog rose for tenderness  
Elder heals all.  
The gale caught the tree tops.  
In the centre all was calm.  
I could hear the music  
And I knew the steps.*

Never dishonour this ancient tradition. Let us give our thanks and respect to the spirits of those brave women who died for their dances, songs and wisdom.

Blessings Be.

*Hilary Matthews*

## 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**?

Join our international dance community for a range of courses at undergraduate or postgraduate levels, including **BA (Hons) Dance Theatre, Diploma Dance Theatre, Graduate Diploma Performance, Graduate Diploma Visual Design for Dance, MA Dance Studies, MA or Postgraduate Diploma Dance Movement Therapy, Professional Diploma Community Dance Studies, MA or Postgraduate Diploma Dance Management and Development, MA Scenography, MPhil and PhD Research Degrees**.

**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) 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.

For a prospectus and/or details of our **International Summer School** and **Easter School** contact:

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OF ENGLAND



Photo: Chris Nash



**LABAN  
CENTRE  
LONDON**

Geraldine sent us her article as part of the 'Roots and Shoots' series, but between us we were pressed to identify individual people whose work had been directly influenced by her. There is, of course, a certain amount of modesty in that statement. However it is true we don't know when we have made a difference to someone else's life unless they tell us. Because of this dilemma and because the whole piece is so splendid, we persuaded Geraldine to let us publish as it stood. Part One was in the last edition and here is the other half. If you know anyone who was inspired to take a further interest in Laban's work because they worked with Geraldine please let me know. Thank you Ed.

*'I know that I could never have done, or still be doing, the variety of movement work I have encompassed without a thorough grounding in Time-Space-Weight-Flow, and Relationship, as taught by Laban'.*



York Mystery Plays 1951 - Lazarus rises from his tomb. Photograph: Roger Wood

One day, when I was returning on the train from Bradford with Laban, I commented on the fact that I was exhausted with all the teaching that I was now doing. "I'd love to dance myself", I said. He immediately replied "Invent some solo dances and make up a Solo Recital!" I had seen Chladek give one at the Swiss Course but they were not known of over here as far as I knew. I gasped at his suggestion ... and felt even more exhausted. But this led to the **FIFTH HAPPENING** and a year or more later I had a recital ready. A change is as good as a rest perhaps? Laban never intervened in my solos, but seemed pleased to see my first concert given at the Studio in

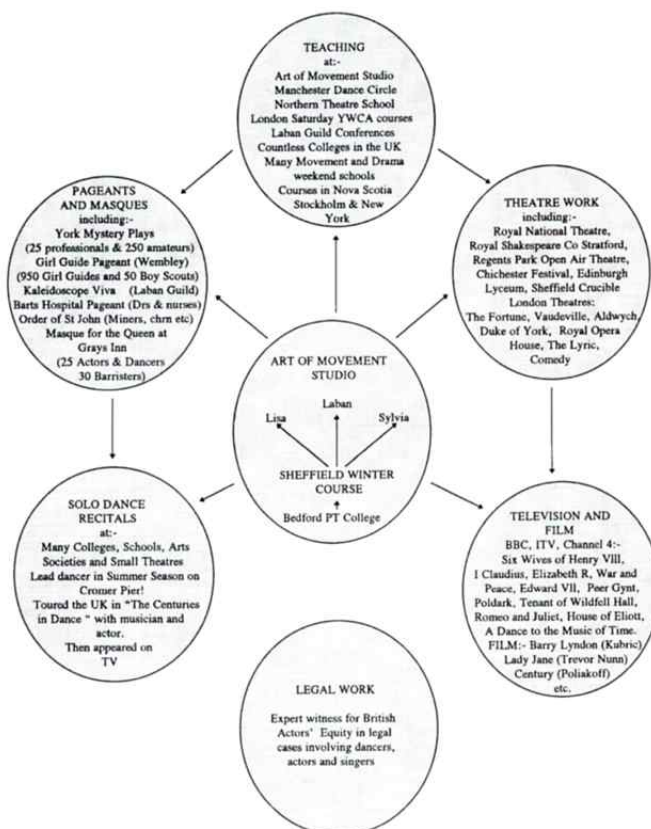
Dream, for which I had written the music and also created strange sounds. I recorded this accompaniment and then performed the dance for the BBC at the Alexandra Palace. It went out live, there were no video machines in those days. Some forty years later I came across a dance critic's comments on it. She did not like it, did her best to knock it but, at the end of the notice, she said

*"One would not perhaps like to see such a thing too often nor for too long; but, as it stood, it was a very interesting and quite enjoyable piece of entertainment, and a solid paving stone in the path of teleballet".*

Apart from my terror on the day the performance taught me much about the hazards and discipline of TV and the exceptional concentration it requires. I remember returning in a taxi with John Gilpin and the famous ballerina, Natalie Krassovska, who held a magnificent bouquet, and I just sat clutching a tiny icosahedron inside which, through trick photography, I was told I appeared to be dancing in the air! I worked again several times with this innovative director until his early death. But the major television programmes were not to emerge until much later.

The **SIXTH HAPPENING** came close upon the fifth. 1951 was the Festival of Britain year. Amongst many other events there was to be a revival of the medieval York Mystery Plays. The men students from Bradford were to be cast as "devils" and the women to feature in "bit" parts and as "crowd". As I was still teaching at the drama school, I was asked to help with the movement. My brief was to coach Lucifer (a London actor) and the devils to fall down a great flight of stairs as they were banished by God from Heaven to Hell. I also had to arrange an "Angel Dance" around the Manger with children

I even went down to London to audition for television. I presented five or six solos and sometime later I was asked to appear on a programme called "Choreography for Cameras". The Director, Christian Simpson, had selected an avant-garde eight minute number called The



from the Mount School in York. As the devils thrashed about on their way to Hell I was asked to work out a bit of "horseplay" with them. This turned out to be highly entertaining, so much so that the Director, E. Martin-Browne, asked us to tone it down as otherwise it would "steal God's thunder!"

It soon became apparent that I was expected to direct all the many crowd scenes in the production. The "crowd" was 250 valiant people from York. I had never dealt with such large numbers before but once again Laban came to the rescue by suggesting that I made the Bradford students "leaders", each with a small group under their control. In this way I tackled hoards of jubilant people celebrating Palm Sunday, venomous packs of people mocking Christ during the Crucifixion and, finally, the Last Judgement. Here "Good Souls" rose to Heaven (up the same staircase), whilst "Bad Souls" surged across the stage to escape the devils who drove them hither and thither, before tossing them into hell-fire. We all had a wonderful time!

I loved every minute of this great enterprise with the mixture of professional and amateur actors. It was so varied, challenging and dynamic. I knew that **THIS** was what I had been looking for. I wanted to dance myself for as long as possible, and become a choreographer movement director. It had taken me from 1943 to 1951 to find this out - but there was still one more **HAPPENING** to come, the seventh.

1953 saw the Art of Movement Studio move from Manchester to the south of England. This was what Laban and Lisa had longed for, the countryside peace and quiet, and green trees surrounding the Studio practice rooms. As soon as I saw Addlestone, I knew that it was not for me. I lasted there for just one year. Manchester, Bradford, York had given me a taste for different adventures, I was bursting to get into London, bed-sit land and city life! Thence I still went happily two days a week to the much loved Studio ... and much needed income!

Through contacts made in the Mystery Plays, many avenues opened up. I was asked to teach at a Religious Drama Summer School. On the last night, two other teachers there, an actor, Norman Ayrton, and a musician, John Dalby, and I were asked to give a short entertainment. We "threw together" a little concert. Norman taught me a couple of historical dances he had learned at drama school. I did two solos that fitted with the periods of the dances and John accompanied these and also played

one or two solo pieces. Norman read a couple of suitable poems. This became the springboard for a threesome recital *The Centuries in Dance*, where "modern" and "historical" dance flourished side by side. It was an innovative and exciting programme,

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Souls" rose to Heaven,  
whilst "Bad Souls" surged  
across the stage to  
escape the devils. We all  
had a wonderful time!'*

involving a lot of research for me on the historical aspect which was later to become invaluable. We toured the Show throughout England and A.V. Cotton, a dance critic of the day, called it a "daring charade". We also found ourselves on television in a crazy little programme called *500 years in Five Minutes*.

Being in London, life gained a new dimension. Many strands of movement and experience came together - from Regent's Park Open Air Theatre to Girl Guide Pageants; from *The History of Rochester Cathedral to Toad of Toad Hall*; from *The Duchess of Malfi to the Johann Strauss Galas*; from Shakespeare to Tom Stoppard, and when colour television arrived and presented its first drama *Vanity Fair*, I was asked to choreograph the Ball scenes. The Director was David Giles, a former student from Bradford! He greeted me with open arms and through him and this production I was launched

into choreographing countless television dramas with countless different directors. But that is another story.

Times have changed. People have changed. Theatre and television present different challenges. I can say now after forty years that I have earned my living through dancing, choreography and movement direction although, originally, I trained and practised as a teacher.

I have met a lot of antagonism towards Laban's work and it has seldom been easy. Because I did not come from the Royal Ballet School or the Rambert Dance Company or the London Contemporary Dance School, I have often been thought "suspect". The scenario on the taxi journey long ago when Krassovska held her bouquet and I my icosahedron has seemed prophetic!

I know that I could never have done, or still be doing, the variety of movement work I have encompassed without a thorough grounding in Time-Space-Weight-Flow, and Relationship, as taught by Laban.

A few years ago I led some sessions of historical dance in New York. One of the



*The Masque of Teilo - Llandaff Cathedral 1965  
Directed by Geraldine with students from the Art of Movement Studio  
Photo: Stanley Travers*

advanced students came to me and said "you have made me realise the historical dance is not just a subject to study, but that these dances were actually danced by *real people*".

I have Laban to thank for that... and so much more.

*Geraldine Stephenson*



# DANCING AROUND

## LABAN CENTRE LONDON

### VICTORIA TODD AND WILLIAM ELMHIRST HONOURED

Director of National Campaign for the Arts, **Victoria Todd** was amongst those honoured for their services to dance at the Laban Centre London during the Centre's annual Graduation Ceremony on 5 December 1998. Victoria Todd was presented with an Honorary Fellowship by the Centre's Director, Dr Marion North.

**William Elmhirst** was also awarded an Honorary Fellowship but was unfortunately unable to attend. The award was made in his absence by Dr Marion North, who expressed her gratitude for his support to the Centre over the years. William Elmhirst is a former student of Rudolf Laban and was benefactor to the Centre at a crucial stage in its development during its early years.

In attendance was The Worshipful the Mayor of Lewisham, Councillor Mark Nottingham and Sir Walter Bodmer, the Principal of Hertford College Oxford. The degrees were conferred by Professor David Rhind, Vice Chancellor and Principal of City University - London, the validating body for Laban Centre London degree courses.

This year over twenty-one students achieved BA (Hons) Dance Theatre with twenty-three passes and four distinctions in MA Dance Studies, Postgraduate Diploma - Dance Movement Therapy and MA Dance Movement Therapy.

## NATIONAL LOTTERY FUNDING

### LABAN CENTRE LONDON AWARDED STAGE 2 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

Laban Centre London announced today that the Arts Council of England has confirmed a Stage 2 Project Development award of £557,634 from the Lottery Capital Programme which will enable the Centre to develop plans for a new building at Deptford Creekside.

The new Centre will act as a key focus for the physical and social regeneration of the Creekside area, complementing other proposed new developments, including a major new housing development and international cruise liner terminal. It will also serve as a further catalyst for the development of the cultural and creative industries in Deptford and South East London.

The new building will offer a range of facilities, including: dance studios; a 300-seat theatre; a library and multimedia centre; a unique dance and health facility, including a dance movement therapy clinic and dance health centre; and an outdoor amphitheatre and garden.

This award is for Stage 2 development. Completion of the building is dependent upon a further bid to the Arts Council for Stage 3 funding, in early 1999.

### CANDOCO RECEIVES ARTS 4 EVERYONE AWARD FROM ARTS COUNCIL OF ENGLAND

CandoCo's recent £83,188 A4E award will give the company the opportunity to initiate a two year integrated dance development programme at its new rehearsal studio at the ASPIRE National Training Centre. CandoCo's blueprint facility is the perfect environment in which to launch this exciting new satellite programme of integrated education work.

The company's education work has always been an integral part of its artistic aims. The success of CandoCo's integrated dance training in the UK and abroad has been central to the company's significance at a national and international level. The A4E award will allow us to offer a pioneering programme of integrated dance training. This will include outreach initiatives, platform performances and showcases, choreographic residencies and commissions with the company and guest artists, intensive weekend courses, INSET training and open workshops. In Year Two, this will lead to the establishment of an Integrated Youth Dance Company based at the CandoCo studio.

With a dedicated staff team to lead this new venture, the company plans to launch its programme during Harrow Dance Week in March 1999.

## VOLUNTARY ARTS NETWORK

VAN, the UK development agency for the voluntary arts, is celebrating a £329,000 Lottery award from the Arts Council of Wales to set up a national development team.

The money will be used to fund a three year development project with five staff working across Wales to provide mentoring and training for local and national voluntary arts groups from the Drama Association of Wales to the smallest local festival.

The new team will make the information and training services available to local organisations supporting participation in the arts in Wales for pleasure and personal development, not payment. The end result

# MEMBERS

## A HAPPY, PEACEFUL, PROSPEROUS AND

- and many thanks to all of you who have already arranged to pay by bankers order.

Do remember that you can reclaim an income tax credit will be sending a formal acknowledgement of it - so please don't think I have suddenly gone missing and look forward to hearing from you more of you.

We really appreciate membership support and our very welcome new members, numbers and recruit a friend or colleague to the Guild. If you have publicity material, please let me know.

We are getting increasing numbers of inquiries but dance agencies are a little nervous about **TAKE PART IN OUR STAGE COURSE**, do go ahead and host it. I can supply all the written back up material. Jan Nicol, to talk to them.

If you have already completed this course and would like to write to Heidi Wilson at Powys Dance, Arlais Fawr, to talk to them.

Meanwhile, I am still enrolling members for our

**PLEASE** remember that subscriptions for 1999 are due. The better the service we can offer!

*Ann Ward*

Subscriptions: UK ordinary and adult, Overseas (including UK Student, retired and Overseas (including

Please make cheques payable to Ann Ward, 30 Ringsend Road, Limavady, Co. Londonderry. 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, Jan

of the development will be a stronger infrastructure for the non-professional arts in Wales, that organisations themselves develop to a point where they can take on staff and provide more and better opportunities for the people of Wales to participate in the arts and crafts. VAN currently works with a Network of more than 300 umbrella bodies for the voluntary arts from large, funded organisations like the National Federation of Music Societies to small and wholly voluntary groups like the Welsh Folk Dance Society. Members receive a quarterly magazine as well as regular updates on VAN's activities and are eligible to attend free or subsidised training courses.

FINANCING NEWYEAR TO ALL OUR MEMBERS!

already paid your subscriptions for 1999, or have

tax rebate on your subscription. To this end, I  
receipt, with any personal message on the back  
all stuffy! I love being in contact with all our  
everyone again in 1999 and, hopefully, meeting

the subscription rises in 1998 but, in spite of  
e still slipping. Do use the enclosed form to  
ou are hosting an event and would like more

about our Community Dance Teachers Courses,  
taking the course on. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO  
and ask your local dance agency to consider  
material and we can send our course negotiator,

would be interested in doing Stage 2, please  
road, Llandrindod Wells, Powys, Wales.

next Stage 1 in Belfast, starting in February.

are now due; the more members we have, the

ated members	£20.00 p.a.
(airmail)	£25.00 p.a.
and unwaged	£10.00 p.a.
(airmail)	£15.00 p.a.

The Laban Guild and send to:  
LDerry, BT49 0QJ. Northern Ireland (U.K.)  
5047 62120

n, Secretary: Lorraine De Oliveira, Membership  
ditor: Lydia Everitt, Members: Vera Curling, Gill  
ine Pasch, Maddy Tongue.

## A MESSAGE FROM OLAF UPTON

I want to be working towards making an  
opportunity for us many dancing individuals  
to flow into a more recognisable group and  
with people connecting on more levels when  
possible.

I therefore propose to make available a  
frequently updated resource directory,  
where dancers can publicise resources they  
offer or things they want to get involved in.  
Some initial examples could be:

Peer groups, practice groups, other dance

groups, classes, events, explorations, music,  
voice, rejoice, theatre, fun, counselling,  
Reiki, massage...

Book review, exchange, writing, child care,  
education, travel, outdoor clothes, living  
space, transport, know-how, skills, materials,  
health foods, building, repairing things,  
design...

To put your entry into this directory please  
phone Olaf 01260 298420

To get a copy when available, please send  
a self-addressed envelope to him at  
Fenbridge, East Bergholt, C07 6UT.

# REVIEW



## LOOKING AT DANCES VALERIE PRESTON-DUNLOP (VERVE PUBLISHING, 1998)

At first glance **Looking at Dances. a choreological perspective on choreography** appears to be a poem. An illuminated manuscript fills the pages. Black and white images of dancers twirling, falling, leaning, reaching and supporting interlace chapters, sections, verses and lines. This book is intriguing to look at for its visual composition and certainly made me ask myself how this poetic presentation related to looking, choreology and choreography. Clues lay in the Introduction.

We are told that this book is written particularly for choreographers and dancers with the expressed intention to offer practical strategies for developing and performing choreographic ideas. And, though theoretical material is introduced involving semiotics, communication, and choreological analysis, only that which is proven to have practical application has been included.

As readers we are encouraged to explore the content of this book in a non-linear fashion by starting from the chapter or section which is most familiar to our personal area of interest. We can choose from "Communicating Through Dance", "The Performers Perspective", "The Movement Perspective", "The Movement/Sound Nexus", "The Movement/Space Nexus" and a "Conclusion" which ties together and demonstrates one way to utilise the information and content of the preceding chapters.

At the conclusion of each chapter there is a short annotated list of material which has stimulated the ideas presented within that chapter. Located at the end of the book there is a list of the dance works cited in the text as well as a suggested reading list. The entire volume is designed for dynamic creative interaction between content and reader. Though the stated goal of the book is to reach choreographers and dancers its content has value for teachers of technique,

composition and critical analysis. And, its poetic structure has consciously been designed to support the activities necessary to fulfil all of these roles. To quote from the Introduction "You cannot work in the studio with a page full of theory in your head but you can have one idea, or two, and make them work for your body, your mind and your eye. Hence the break up of the text into many small chapters and short lines."

How does the material in **Looking at Dances** reach an audience whose interests range from dancing and choreographing to teaching and mentoring? One reason is that the content and structure of the book has been generated through choreology, the study of dance specific activity which explores the logic of what movement feels like, what movement looks like and the meanings in the dances which have been created through the work of choreography. Another key to this broad base for interest is that the book is consistent in its focus on dance as a performing art, made by choreographers with many and different intentions, and through acknowledging this creative individuality maintains a perspective whereby every genre and style of contemporary dance theatre can be considered.

How is the interactive aspect of **Looking at Dances** initiated? When it comes to looking, through the eyes of a choreographer or teacher, or through the body of a dancer **Looking at Dances** offers a multitude of items to include, consider, weigh, reject and focus on. Items which, when attended to in relationship to any work under consideration, generate challenging questions, avenues for answers or proposals for exploration, all the while marrying theory with practice. Definition, practical strategy, limits of use based on practical knowledge have all been touched on.

**Looking at Dances** is a book which is inclusive. It is about theory and practice of dance as a performing art; it honours the physical and theoretical work of choreographers and dancers; it links to other methods and points of view, especially in semiotics and communication; and throughout it maintains its focus on the knowledge which is particular and unique to dance. It is a resource which expands and at the same time integrates understanding of dance specific art by presenting a truly global view of what constitutes choreographic activity. Its content is of use to choreographers, dancers, teachers, mentors and critics alike. It comes highly recommended.

*Pamela Harling Challis*

Chair, Laban Guild Courses Sub-Committee

more Reviews on page 15..

*This is an interesting journey of Laban's work in notation.*

#### ELIZABETH PAVEY

Currently a lecturer at the University of Wolverhampton, I have the pleasure of working alongside dance education specialist Dorothy Ledgard. Dorothy once said that the first time she saw me perform in a practical teaching situation she could instantly tell from my use of a full range of dynamics that I was someone who had studied the work of Rudolf Laban. Clearly 'it takes one to know one' yet this did get me thinking about how and why Laban's theories have influenced my life.

As a child training in ballet I can remember being perplexed and somewhat frustrated by reports that my dancing 'lacked changes in dynamics'. To my young mind and body this seemed rather a vague, and even upsetting, personal criticism. It was also when I made one of the most important discoveries of my life: my desire to become a choreographer. I say 'discovery' as I believe the wish had always been there, I just hadn't given this activity the name 'choreography'. As a small child my ambition had been to become a ballet teacher, not due to a want to teach but rather to realise on the bodies of others my wild visions for end of year shows. The person who helped me become aware of my choreographic goals was Anna Sanchez. She taught our course in GCSE Dance and provided me with a taste of

something else I would go on to hunger for more of: a knowledge of Labanotation.

Labanotation was on the curriculum at Lewisham College and also at the University of Surrey where I later went to pursue a degree in dance. This was a four-year 'sandwich' course. In the third year my peer group dispersed across Britain to follow work placements and courses in dance education, management, special needs work and community dance. Motivated partly by my growing interest in Laban's work, partly by a desire to travel and partly by a dread of the 'real world', I leapt at the chance to spend the year studying at The Ohio State University (OSU), USA.

Training at OSU was something like soaking in a huge bath of Laban's principles. Almost the whole faculty, be they technique, choreography or notation teachers etc., were experienced in some aspect of his work. I had the opportunity to study Advanced Labanotation with experts Odette Blum and Sheila Marion, and Vera Maletic's 'Effort' classes began to uncover possible answers to the question of what was meant by changes of dynamics. Suddenly I had a clear and logical framework, Laban's Effort theories, by which I could understand and articulate both physically and mentally this concept which had always seemed somewhat elusive. A light had been switched on which has illuminated my dance technique, performance and creative skills ever since. Rather than blindly submitting to my natural preferences I could now make informed decisions concerning the energy and quality with which I formed and performed movements. A significant dose of objectivity had been given to an aspect of dance that had previously seemed uncomfortably personal.

My time in Ohio also offered another avenue of interest to me: an appreciation of the value of Motif Description, or as it is called in Britain 'Language of Dance'. On the annual Motif summer school I watched and moved wide-eyed as Lucy Venable and Ann Kipling Brown introduced children to dance and to this simple system of Labanotation. I could not help but be impressed by the ease with which the children could perform, record and discuss their dancing focusing on basic concepts of dance movement and unhampered by a reliance on emotional or metaphoric references.

On return to England I wanted to pursue this new interest further and so enrolled on the

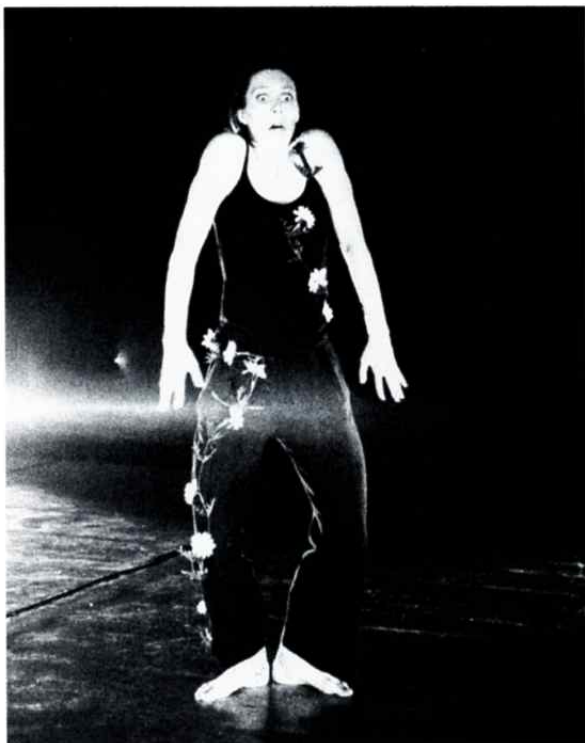
Language of Dance Foundation Course. The teacher was Jane Dulieu. Through Jane's patient and hugely thoughtful approach I have been able to learn much about how Language of Dance can transform a knowing about movement and choreographic structures as explored in Dr. Guest's seminal text *Your Move*. Jane never imposes her own ideas on you but creates a space for you to make your own discoveries and to benefit from the adventures of your fellow learners.

A belief in the intrinsic unity of dance theory and practice is central to the ethos of Dance Studies at the University of Wolverhampton. This unity is what has impacted me most in good application of Laban's work and is what Dorothy Ledgard and I aim to offer students in the module that we team-teach. This is a first year undergraduate module that seeks to explore Laban's frameworks and terminology. We hope to develop the student's physical knowledge and their ability to verbalise and write about this knowledge through learning in contemporary dance technique, choreographic skills and appreciation of dance of others.

My own choreographic ambitions also continue to flourish. Misnomer, the company that I run with Anna Brown, has just had a very successful year. We are now preparing to present a new work 'Xgen' in Resolution (Evolution) at The Place Theatre in January. This new piece will, like all our previous work, be indebted to the invaluable teachings of Rudolf Laban. ■

#### JANE DULIEU

I started dancing at Walthamstow High School for Girls, London - we had modern educational dance once a week. I loved it - no rigid exercises, just the freedom of moving. I later discovered that all our P.E. teachers came from Nonington College of Physical Education, an institution at the forefront of this method. I have particular memories of a Nonington student teaching the eight basic effort actions, naming them, explaining them and of creating an effort dance. One teacher, Judith Mackley, was particularly influential, she recognised our need to dance and continued to teach us Laban theory, leaving us to choreograph a dance on a particular theme. To me this was the stuff dance was made of and I wanted to learn more. I moved on to Alsager College of Education in Staffordshire in the early 70s. It had a strong dance department and my tutors: Ken Goodall, Shirley Jones, Kate Salmon and Pam Norbury left lasting impressions on me. Our course was wholly based on Laban's work - steeped in Choreutics, the sixteen basic movement themes and Kinetography Laban. I learned



Elizabeth Pavey in 'Curiouser Still'  
Photograph: Ian McNee

much about performing, choreographing, qualities and dynamics in movement but best of all, I stepped into the magical world of dance notation. This informed all areas of our course work. Preston-Dunlop's *Readers in Kinetography Laban* were core texts; we were encouraged to notate sequences we had created in Labanotation classes; we used notation flash cards to create "chance" choreography; we reconstructed pieces from dance scores. My years at college were truly magical: so much performing, but how was I going to put that theory into practice as a primary school teacher?

This was the heady era of "drop out" so I decided to head for the Art of Movement Studio in Addlestone, Surrey (now the Laban Centre) to participate in the new Dance Theatre course instead of pursuing a B.Ed. I had a great time - it opened up the real world to me, it gave me life experiences. However, the magical world of notation still beckoned, briefly through a lecture by someone called Ann Hutchinson Guest and also by a young teacher from the USA, Patty Howell. Patty encouraged us to delve deeper into notation and the highlight was a performance in which we had reconstructed extracts of dances by Humphrey, Tamiris and others entirely from the notated scores. During that time Dr. Guest floated briefly back into my life. She encouraged anyone interested in Labanotation to attend meetings at her flat in Holland Park. I remember attending one rainy Sunday afternoon but I was shy and overawed by such knowledgeable people discussing notation issues of which I knew nothing. However, I must have filed this place in my subconscious because nine years later my career was shaped by that meeting.

Eventually, I determined **not** to teach but to be a dance notator. But where to start? It came back to me - the author of that *Labanotation* textbook might be able to help - what was her name? Oh yes, Ann Guest, she lived somewhere in Holland Park. I'd look her up in the phone book and give her a call! I did just that! Another Laban Centre student answered the phone and at her suggestion I began notation classes at the Holland Park flat, known as the *Language of Dance™* Centre (LODC). I was intrigued that during this time, Dr. Guest was never in sight. I didn't get very far with my studies because my skills were so rusty. I had a break and then tried again. This time, Dr. Guest answered the phone and offered to teach me herself. My current career had begun. Dr. Guest recognised I wasn't ready to tackle Advanced Labanotation and suggested I renew my skills through

*Language of Dance™* using the definitive text *Your Move - A New Approach to the Study of Movement and Dance*. I opened the book and knew this was the answer to my dance teaching and all thoughts of being a notator flew out of the window.

I had been teaching dance for special needs part-time in a primary school. The children were having great fun in class creating



Jane Dulieu on the left in action. Photograph: Matthew Farrant

dances but what were they learning? Everything we did seemed ad hoc, I was becoming exhausted for ideas! I learned the three-strand approach to making dances and used this as a model, it helped but my dissatisfaction didn't disappear. As I re-encountered Motif Description, I realised the depth to which Dr. Guest had developed the work. She had codified a range of movement concepts and each concept had further ranges; I could use this approach to create

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and to describe their  
work. I was excited!'*

a long-term curriculum for my children from Reception to Year 6; I could relate the concepts to other areas of the curriculum and create dance frameworks to support these areas; the children would discover a wealth of movement vocabulary and the icing on the cake - have symbols to represent these

movements in a concrete form giving them the opportunity to share and record their dances and to describe their work. I was excited!

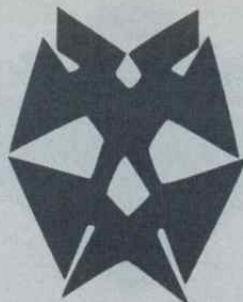
Twelve years later, I am Associate Director of the LODC and the *Language of Dance™* has expanded into schools and the community. Classes are run for adults and children, INSET is offered and courses are in the process of accreditation. This is due to Dr. Ann Hutchinson Guest who at 80 this year continues to show admirable tenacity in steering her energies to her ultimate goal: establishing dance literacy in the art of dance. Dr. Guest is an exceptional mentor having given me the opportunity to learn and train alongside her. She has supported me in disseminating the work at international conferences and teaching at Southern Methodist University. I will always be grateful to her for her generosity in sharing her work and I hope that I can continue her vision in the *Language of Dance™* for many years to come. ■

## ANN HUTCHINSON GUEST

**B**ecause my parents thought that studying dance at Dartington Hall, a lovely country estate, rather than in London, was desirable, I was, unbeknownst to me or to them, exchanging a future in ballet training for the Laban based experience of the Jooss-Leeder Dance School. Thus it was sheer fate that, at just 17, I went down to Totnes, Devon. The repercussions of this choice shaped my life as a professional dancer, teacher, notator, writer and developer of the Labanotation system.

I arrived at Dartington in January 1936. From the first day notation entered the picture. "Script class next" said a fellow student. "What is that?" I asked. "You'll find out!" she replied, and indeed, I think I have been finding out ever since. The logic of the system appealed to me (I had enjoyed mathematics and geography in school), I saw it as a language. I and another young girl, Joan Tarvin, used in our spare time, to copy out neatly the classroom studies we had been notating. It must be realised that at that time there was very little notation literature, all we had to read were each others' homework. Strangely, what notation literature existed was never shown to us, not even to me when it was evident that I had

*continued on page 14..*



## Su Johnston's View

### THE POWER OF LETTERS

Yes, the ones with stamps on that you write, envelope, address and stamp, and shove in the pillarbox. What happens then? Well if the letter is to a friend, they read it, reply or not, and eventually it ends up in the bin.

Not so when you write to your MP. He must give it a form of immortality, by recording that it has been received, what it is about, and then, what impact it has on the consultations and statistics which go to change government policy.

You guessed already - I am asking you to write to your MP! And you guessed right again - it should be about the funding of the Voluntary Arts. But what?

Most MPs just do not know that voluntary means, voluntary ie not paid for. They do not know that the people involved in the voluntary arts, who participate in and teach them and administer them do so with their own equipment, in their own time - after their own paid work - and from several different private addresses, having no office and no office staff. Yet of all people in the UK who take part in the arts, 80% are voluntary and do it for enjoyment only.

But light dawns in this murky wasteland. The Voluntary Arts Network, with its membership of arts umbrella bodies, is constantly vocal on our behalf, as you will have read in the last Quarterly. Government is beginning to realise that voluntary arts means cash, and arts cash might mean more voters for those that acknowledge that need.

Please back up this trend with a letter. Think how popular demand has changed the provender in the shops, the attitude and legislation about the environment, the attitude to war, and exert the power of the letter!

Points to address:

Voluntary arts need support to actually run themselves: financial support so that part-time paid administrators can be employed

The new clarification of "audience" as including participants has enormous implications for those seeking partnership and charitable grants; please confirm it.

The existing UK-wide umbrella organisations like the Laban Guild need financial help if they are to re-organise according to the existing EC regions of the UK in the mid-term future.

State support of the arts must surely include the 80% of those involved in the arts who are active but are not doing it for wages.

Any reorganisation of the Arts Council must retain its central role to nurture both the individual artist and the UK-wide organisations, while financing the art and culture of the whole country regionally.

The arts are inclusive: any and all who consider themselves part of cultural life must have a voice in regional arts policy.

According to a European declaration, every person has a right to express their cultural heritage. How better than by providing a per capita sum for this purpose, to be distributed regionally.

Test the power of the letter - write to your MP!

## MY INSPIRATION

.. continued from page 1

of Leeds — just like Harehills.

I'd never taught boys dance and I wasn't sure how they would respond. Initially boys and girls were split up but after around six weeks boys started turning up to what they knew were girls' lessons. So we just put them all together. The kids at Harehills had had no previous exposure to dance. As far as boys like Darshan were concerned, it was part of PE.

I based my dance work on the Laban method, which is not concerned with learning steps and classical lessons but with movement. I would work through movement concepts with the children, and what they turned that into was up to them. Now it seems the national curriculum is geared to learning about dance, how to admire it from afar. What we were about was getting rid of this mystique that dance is only for "special" people.

In the 12 years I taught at Harehills 50 of my pupils became professional dancers. At one point three of the 10 men in London Contemporary Dance Theatre were Harehills students. Harehills was just one small school in Leeds so that gives an idea of the potential talent out there.

I'm convinced it was the strong arts programme that made Harehills a wonderful school. Once the council phoned us up and insisted our attendance record must be

wrong. We were an inner-city school, so how could it be so high?

The national curriculum and league tables mean this couldn't happen today. Darshan was so bright, and unbelievably talented, but under the league table definition he would have been a failure.

Darshan's whole year group were exceptional. They set the standard that was

*'After around six weeks boys started turning up to what they knew were girls' lessons. So we just put them all together. The kids at Harehills had had no previous exposure to dance. As far as boys like Darshan were concerned, it was part of PE'.*

to continue. The best dancers were the "right on guys", the footballers, the popular kids. The little ones looked up to boys like Darshan and couldn't wait to get their tights on!

Interviews by Emily Moore

This article was first published in the Guardian Education on September 8th. We reproduce it with their permission.

## OPEN DAY OF DANCE & A.G.M

SATURDAY 20TH MARCH, UNIVERSITY OF BATH

Now that the festivities are over and 1999 is well under way the Guild Council hopes that you have penned in your diary the above date.

Last year we had over seventy attending our Day of Dance and A.G.M. This year we hope to see everyone again and also those who were unable to make it to Cambridge. If you can persuade a non-member friend to come and keep you company, even better.

Bath is a beautiful city, so what could be more exhilarating than a day's dancing followed by a sight-seeing tour of this splendid spa city!

Our day will conclude with a short performance from DNT Dance Company and we are also delighted to inform you that the Powys Community Dance Leaders Stage 1 will be presenting a specially choreographed piece.

So do come and join Fergus Early, Caroline Mummery and fellow dancers. We look forward to seeing you.

Members £20, Non-members £22, Concessions £15.

Cheques to Laban Guild: 10 Kielder Grove, Holbrook, Gosport PO13 0ZA.

# Diary of Events



**1999**

## **FEBRUARY**

**6th-7th** **GCE A/S AND A Level** **UNIVERSITY OF SURREY**  
Study of performance: Prescribed solos - Modern (NEAB)  
Contact: National Resource Centre for Dance, University of Surrey, Guildford, GU2 5XH.  
Tel: 01483 259316 Fax: 01483 259500 E-mail: h.roberts@surrey.ac.uk or sally.lewis@surrey.ac.uk

**20th** **MAKING DECISIONS**  
The first of 5 one day courses on Saturdays.  
Course Tutors: Lydia Everitt - MEd Training and Development, Su Johnston - Action Profile Trainer  
Contact :- Mrs Su Johnston, 2 Brockham Warren, Box Hill Road, Tadworth, Surrey KT20 7JX.  
Tel: 01737 843108 Fax: 01737 844102 e-mail: Bill-F-Johnston@compuserve.com

**21st** **ALL LEVELS** **UNIVERSITY OF SURREY**  
Safe and effective Practice for Dance Teachers. Contact: NRCD as above

**25th-28th** **INTERNATIONAL DANCE AND TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE (IDAT99)** **ARIZONA**  
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

**27th - 28th** **TECHNICAL ART WORKSHOPS** **LABAN CENTRE LONDON**  
Photographing Dance.  
Contact : Ross Cameron, Laban Centre London, Laurie Grove, London SE14 6NH  
Tel: 0181 692 4070 Fax: 0181 694 8749 e-mail: info@laban.co.uk Website: www.laban.co.uk

## **MARCH**

**3rd - Wednesday at 7pm** **LABAN CENTRE LONDON**  
'Artists Torque : Movement in the First Speed Age'  
Presented by Jeremy Millar, Curator of Speed : Visions of an Accelerated Age at the Whitechapel Photographers Gallery.  
Contact: Box Office: 0181 692 4070

**7th** **GCSE** **RIDGE DANYERS COLLEGE, CHESHIRE**  
Study day - focus to be confirmed. Contact : NRCD address University of Surrey as above.

**20th** **LABAN GUILD ANNUAL CONFERENCE** **BATH**  
Continuing to bring the Conference to the members.  
Contact : Maddy Tongue, 17 Aylestone Rd, Cambridge, Cambs. CB4 1HF - Tel: 01223 302030  
Liz Norman, 2 Prospect View, Lavenham, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 9RJ - Tel: 0787 247871

## **APRIL**

**17th** **GUILD WORKSHOP** **COLLEGE OF NORTH WEST LONDON**  
at : 10.00 - 5.00 pm Tutor: Michael Platt  
Contact : Mrs Clare Firth, 2 Layton Lane, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 8EY - Tel: 01747 85413

## **JUNE**

**5th** **MAKING DECISIONS**  
Contact : Su Johnston. Information above

## **JULY**

**26th-30th** **SUMMER COURSE** **UNIVERSITY OF SURREY**

**MAKING DECISIONS** will also be held on September 11th and November 13th. Contact Su Johnston. Information above

.. continued from page 11

an ability and was showing a particular interest in the system. Indeed, I stumbled on Laban's first books on the system, *Schrifttanz*, published in 1928 and 1930, in New York late in 1940. In my third year at Dartington Sigurd Leeder was our teacher and his love of the notation, his creative use of it to express the idea of the movement, must have rubbed off on me. Certainly being invited to his house to help work on the score of his group piece *Danse Macabre* cemented my involvement. When years later he published this score he was generous in giving me credit for my contribution.

But a career as a notator was not for me, I **wanted to dance**. That 'bug' had definitely bitten me. When, at the end of my third year Kurt Jooss asked me to stay on to notate *The Green Table*, I saw this as a stepping stone into the company. What a foolish idea! One does not come to such a professional training program as a pudgy 17 year old with little serious previous training and expect to be a professional in three years. My year spent notating four of Jooss' ballets proved, in the long run, to be very valuable. I gained fluency and experience, even though there was no notator training program and no one was overseeing my work. But, to tell the truth tears would pour down my cheeks as I sat neatly copying my rough notes into a score, I wanted to dance! "You can always take class" Jooss pointed out unsympathetically. Before I left Dartington I met with Laban who gave me his blessings to do what I could to spread notation in the United States. But no one at Dartington believed I had any talent for dance, except, perhaps, the musician Clifton Parker who composed a piece for my solo dance *Kleptomaniac*. I sailed back to New York, just 21, with absolutely no intention of continuing with notation.

Without making this a lengthy biography it should be known that any such ideas were thwarted by my meeting Hanya Helm the leading Wigman teacher who had settled in New York. Could I work with two of her more advanced students, Janey Price and Henrietta Greenwood (later to be known as Eve Gentry)? We were soon joined by Helen Priest who had studied in Germany with Albrecht Knust. To our dismay we soon found differences in our understanding of certain meanings and application of the symbols. At a meeting with John Martin, the New York Times dance critic who strongly supported the idea of notation, he suggested that we four girls should form some sort of organisation - a 'dance notation bureau', an information and teaching centre where different usages could be sorted out. And so, with his announcement soon after in his Sunday Times column, the Dance Notation Bureau was formed.

Although I was much the youngest I was the most experienced and much of Leeder's

usages filtered through to become the foundation of Labanotation. With ethical behaviour in mind, we felt we could not plunge into spreading the use of the system until we had ironed out all the minor differences. "Not so," said John Cage, the composer, who for a while, together with Merce Cunningham, was on the DNB board.



Ann Hutchinson Guest

"It is only through applying the system and teaching it that the appropriate decisions and usages will fall into place." How right he was! The process was slow and we were hampered by the fact that legal restrictions existed because the rights to Laban's earlier publications held by Universal Edition in Vienna had been confiscated during the war. The delay in our being able to produce a textbook proved an asset in that much more unification progress was made. It took until 1952 and two visits to Laban in England before the legal question was solved.

During my 1947 visit to England - the first opportunity to return - Laban explained his recent codification of his Effort theories, a fascinating development with a different slant to his Eukinetik analysis with which I was familiar. His Effort work, developed from his war time work, focused on a different need, a different application. I could see that 'central' and 'peripheral', so much a part of Eukinetiks, had not been of value for industry; they had been replaced by the spatial aspects of 'direct' and 'indirect' (flexible). Later, through Warren Lamb, the Shape aspects of Effort/Shape were specifically codified. Laban's solutions to the particular notation questions I brought to him were very helpful and pointed us in what seemed the right direction. While tangentially interested, Laban was, as we know, involved with important new ideas and passed the responsibility of further developing the notation system on to Lisa Ullmann, Albrecht Knust, Sigurd Leeder and myself.

Early on I realised the degree to which Laban's spatial theories and movement

philosophy had become embedded in the notation system. If the system was to be universally applicable, one should not need to know space harmony to understand and use it. There were also practical considerations at issue. Without Orientation signs (where one is facing in the room) the reader can get lost in a sequence containing many turns and changes of front. Laban grudgingly conceded the value of such signs, but delegated them to being placed outside the staff on the left; only **movement** signs should be written within the staff. Knust similarly incurred a certain amount of disfavour in his development of the system. But practical needs had to be met. We were notating dance movements beyond the range of Laban's style, and, in New York, professional notators had to cope with the rehearsal situation, the movement concepts and requests of different choreographers. In meeting these needs, notation is a two-pronged tool. The movement awareness, understanding and analysis comes first, then the decision how best the chosen description can be expressed through the symbols. In this two-stage process, without question my movement background, my rich training at the Jooss-Leeder School proved immensely valuable. I had been exposed to the wonderful 'store cupboard' of movement possibilities. Of what is this movement composed? And that movement? Knowledge of the elements was an enormous advantage.

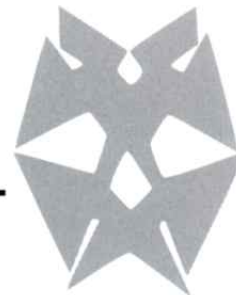
Then, one day came the moment of truth. A whole area of movement description was missing. Laban's system was based on spatial placement of the limbs. This was the beginning of realising that not all movement concepts were spatial and the importance of anatomical descriptions.

As a young dancer, training to be a professional, I became aware on my return to New York how much the rich Jooss-Leeder experience had equipped me with a valuable basic understanding of movement. But the instrument itself, the body, had not been sufficiently trained. In New York I stumbled on Graham technique and revelled in its detailed physical demands. It was while notating Graham technique, specifically the 'foot-on-the walk', that I met the need for the flexion signs for folding the joints. These provided a body-based description of the movement and were much welcomed by colleagues working in various forms of modern and ethnic dance.

Although I studied other dance forms and focused intensively on ballet for many years, my understanding of all I met was much enhanced and facilitated through that broad, rich early training. Over the years I notated dance materials and choreographies of many different styles, I developed further the notation system which was my 'native' dance 'language'. I also taught ballet and believe that my eye and ability to explain what was needed were much enriched from my Laban Jooss-Leeder heritage. ■

# EVENTS FROM THE GUILD

## — MOVEMENT AND DANCE FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS —



*We have two reviews of this very special event. We hope the first of many. Ed.*

An 'overnighter' course for teachers, leaders and others working in the field.

This short weekend course was held at Heathermount School near Ascot, Berkshire, which is a residential school for children with autism and Asperger's syndrome.

Our invited speaker and workshop leader was Walli Meier, and Stephanie Lord, the headteacher of the school, was invited to contribute to the weekend. Course participants came from a wide range of backgrounds including teachers, physical education specialists, students in training on dance therapy courses, drama and arts specialists, art therapists, a physiotherapist, and a lecturer from Japan visiting the Laban Centre this term. One Guild member travelled down from Glasgow to attend. There were thirteen participants, and ten Guild Council members taking part, together with Stephanie Lord and a colleague from Heathermount.

The weekend began with drinks in front of the roaring fire at Heathermount, followed by a delicious supper. Walli spoke about Laban's theories, setting the scene for the practical work to follow. Participants were encouraged to write up their own expectations of the weekend to guide Walli's thinking.

The Saturday morning workshop concentrated on Body Awareness, with plenty of lively discussion. Stephanie Lord followed this with an excellent lecture on autism, and a slide presentation of movement and dance work at Heathermount.

After a delicious lunch, and more lively discussion, Walli led a floor based session in the afternoon, examining possibilities for those with limited movement, and allowing participants time to find things out through exploration and discussion in small groups. This work was illustrated with a short video extract. Throughout the course, Walli gave handouts illustrating the points made, and serving as a useful reminder.

The response to the course was overwhelmingly positive. The high standard of tuition, the superb facilities at Heathermount, the warm welcome, the length and timing of the short weekend, the atmosphere of learning, exchange and friendship, the balance between practical work and theory...

So as not to get too complacent though, the Course Director felt that she could have

supplied more pre-course information regarding confirmation of places, travel arrangements and the programme. Thanks to course participants who completed their evaluation forms, these details will be rectified next time.

*Jasmine Pasch*  
Course Director

### **A Scottish perspective on the Movement and Dance course for Children with Special Needs at Heathermount School, Ascot. 6th/7th November 1998..**

As we grow older and probably more experienced, it seems that we become more critical of policy and teaching methods in the work place. It is therefore harder to find courses that provide innovative, exciting information containing genuine ideas and approaches to work. The course, "Movement and Dance for Children with Special Needs" at Ascot contained these worthwhile ingredients.

It has been some time since I have been to a movement class which concentrated on body awareness work in conjunction with the dynamic movement qualities of Rudolf Laban. I was made familiar with Laban when I trained as a teacher of Physical Education in Scotland and have used his theory as the basis for my movement sessions, as the means of exploring and varying movement. Now as a Movement Therapist, I still use Laban theory as a basis for movement analysis and assessment. I was eager to revisit Laban principles, explore the practical applications of his work in the knowledge that I would learn something new.

It was very special to meet Walli Meier, the prestigious dance teacher. She delivered a lecture on Laban's classification of movement on Friday evening and provided us with expressive movement demonstrations with charisma and enthusiasm. We were all introduced to "the what", "the how", "the where" and relationship play in an exhilarating way and were quite ready to leap around with Walli on Saturday morning in the practical session! Our various body parts were asked to bend, stretch, twist and wiggle in all manner of ways as we explored their capabilities. As you can imagine, there was a great deal of mirth as we performed our body awareness tasks, which clearly indicated how much fun and enjoyment there is in movement. Walli also gave us ample opportunity to experience and explore movement possibilities for people with the most severe physical and/or intellectual disabilities. It was important to get the

chance to engage in these sensori-motor experiences, such as being pulled or rocked in a blanket, before introducing them to the young people.

We were privileged to hear Stephanie Lord speak to us about working with children with autism. Stephanie was well qualified to talk on this subject as she is at present the Headteacher at Heathermount School - a school for children with autism and aspergers syndrome. She showed us slides and gave us starting points for using movement with her children. It was an information packed presentation which included a movement programme she offers to her staff, in an attempt to relieve some of the stress associated with working with children with the disability.

We are greatly indebted to Stephanie for the use of her school facilities and to her catering staff for looking after us so well. I also want to thank Jasmine, a member of the Laban Guild Council, for setting up and planning the course. Her wish was that we should engage in critical debate and leave the course with answers that would allow us to move on in our work. I think most of us took the leap forward.

The two days provided an opportunity for people working in the field of disability to come together and learn from shared movement experiences. It was well worth the trip south to take part in such a stimulating and enjoyable course and I look forward to the next installment.

*Lesley Gaigie*

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gritty and flighty,  
rising in clouds  
as feet brush their lairs.

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lilting and plashing  
murmuring brooks  
on the edge of ears.

A walk of sounds  
with vital potential for  
melody, rhythm,  
harmony,  
counterpoint.

Music in nature from dancing fields

- hear it, absorb it
- behold what it yields.