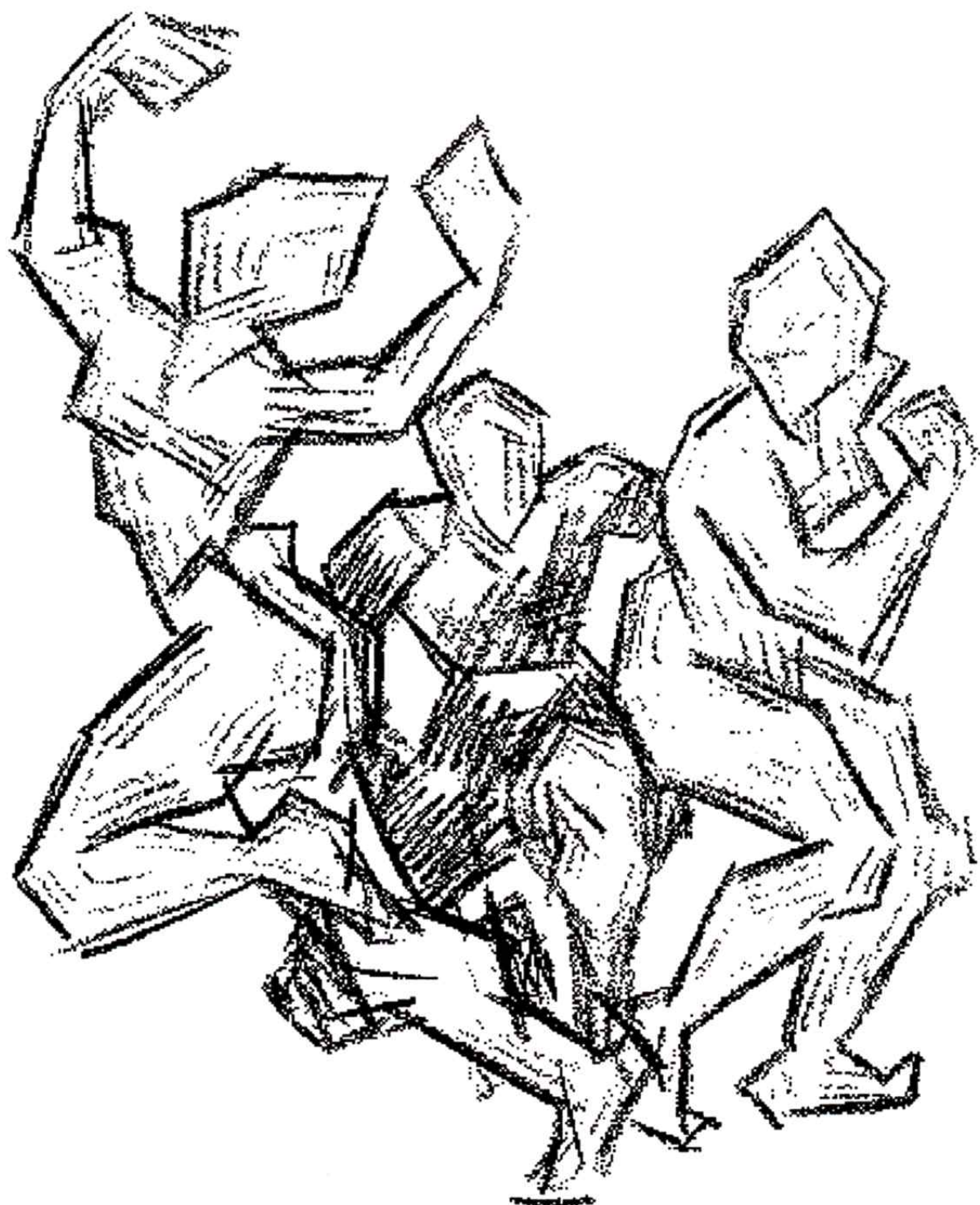


# Movement & Dance

Quarterly magazine of the Laban Guild



**INSIDE**

Laban & Choreological Studies 1926 to 2001  
Donate a Dance  
Meet High Spin

Volume 20

No 1

Spring 2001

Reg. Charity No. 266435

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Cover illustration from 'A Vision of Dynamic Space' by Rudolf Laban





**"Demon Machine"**. Corrections: In the last magazine on page 14 we referred to one of Gertrude Bodenwieser's works as "Dream machine". This should have read "Demon Machine" which is clearly quite a different title. We apologise for this error.

In our last magazine we published an article from Janet Hamburg "Movement Therapies for people with Parkinson's disease". If you would like to contact her regarding this article her address is Professor of Dance, University of Kansas, Department of Music and Dance, 452 Murphy Hall, Lawrence, KS 66045-2279, USA. Email: [jhamburg@ukans.edu](mailto:jhamburg@ukans.edu). Janet also gives us news of a new book in the 'Dummies' Series. For those of us used to them under such titles as 'Internet for Dummies' you will be surprised to read this one is titled 'Mind-Body Fitness for Dummies' and is published by IDG Books Worldwide. Janet's own contribution to this book was as the consultant for the 'Moving and Motivating with Laban Movement Analysis' section. This introduction of Laban Movement Analysis for a general audience follows the descriptions of Alexander Technique and the Feldenkrais Method. Janet is hoping to let us have a copy of this book to review in a later edition. If anyone would be interested in reviewing it for us we would be pleased to hear from you. Please contact the Editor. The contact details are on page 2.

## Laban Guild Conference 2001 24 March - Trinity College, Dublin

Come and meet the members, friends and guests of the Laban Guild in Ireland, in the historic setting of Trinity College, right in the heart of Dublin.

Guest of honour will be Helen Lewis, giving the Laban Lecture, workshop sessions will be taken by some of our leading young practitioners.

Further details may be obtained from Ann Ward (0) +28 7776 2120 (UK)

What do you think of the new look magazine?

In discussions in Council we saw a need to change the face of the magazine a bit so it becomes attractive to more people than our members. So with input from many people we have come up with this layout.

Firstly the front page will no longer contain text. We intend to use it for impact with photograph or illustration. Also we have a contents page so you can find your way to the articles or regular features that particularly interest you.

You will see we have moved some of our regular material like the Diary of Events to the Centre pages, and added new, like the listings of classes as distinct from workshop events. The Council news moves to the inside back page.

Lastly we have tried to put less on each page so it is less draining on the eye. Those of you who read Hilary Matthew's column a year ago will remember this was something she bemoaned. It was all too squished up!

Let us know your views here, your comments will be gratefully received.

N.B. The Editorial address and phone number has changed but the Email address remains the same. Please address copy to me at Studholme, Sandley, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 5DZ.

One regular article we have been pleased to run for several years has been a commentary column from one of our more well known members. Su Johnston started this for us, Hilary Matthews took over for a year and now we are pleased to welcome Warren Lamb to that slot with a perspective from America. I would like to take this moment to thank Hilary for her insight and good pushing in her column last year. It was most refreshing.

Lydia Everitt

### BACK ISSUES OF MAGAZINE

Many articles published in **Movement & Dance** are as relevant today as when they were written. Details of all articles can be found in the Magazine Index, this is free to all Guild members. It is available to non-members:

☐ £4.50 UK ☐ £5.00 Overseas

Back issues, where available, please state *Volume and Issue*:

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### COPY DATES

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TELEPHONE: 01747 826007

EMAIL: [lydia.everitt@btinternet.com](mailto:lydia.everitt@btinternet.com)

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 MARCH 2001



**C**horeology appeared on the curriculum of Laban's Choreographisches Institut (Institute of Choreography) when it opened in Würzburg in 1926. This significant institution included the Central Laban School and his performing company the Tanzbühne Laban. Laban stated that the Institute "operates as a master's laboratory of choreology and the art of dance." Vera Maletic summarises the meaning of the word "choreology" at that time as the study of "the logic and balancing order of dance".<sup>1</sup> During his lecture tour of 1929 he named four areas for the theoretical and practical study of dance: *dance for the layman* (including the training of teachers), *the science of dance* (choreology and notating), *the art of dance* (creating and performing choreographic works), and *dance pedagogy* (the training of professional dancers). Laban schools throughout their existence have concentrated on one or more of these areas. Since Marion North's leadership Laban Centre London has prioritised the last three areas while under Lisa Ullmann's leadership the first was emphasised. Choreological Studies, attending to the priorities of LCL, articulates and debates the "logic and balancing order(s)" of the making, performing and appreciation of the art of dance as it presents itself today.

Over the years several further definitions of choreology have appeared: Gertrud Snell, "the science of movement laws, choreutics and eukinetics,"<sup>2</sup> Laban, "a kind of grammar and syntax of the language of movement dealing not only with the outer form of movement but also with its mental and emotional content."<sup>3</sup>

Laban's perspective on choreology fluctuated between dance study and the study of expressive movement. These are distinct, especially in today's choreography and theatre practice when many other elements combine with movement. Although

his own works and his school curriculum (Tanz, Ton, Wort, Plastik) embraced a wide medium, it was the movement that he researched. He was working in a period when for the first time the expressive movement content of a dance work was perceived to be a possible and worthy study area. In the USA Doris Humphrey and

flowing from it.<sup>5</sup> Laban's choreutic scales formed the basis for his technique, known in the 1920s as "the swings", while oppositional and successional designs with symmetry and asymmetry were favoured by Humphrey, with spirals and off-balance, for example, by Graham. The innovations of all three artists are in use today in professional

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*'The excitement about working in Choreological Studies is that, like Laban, we are working at the cutting edge of dance art and dance study. To have stayed only with what he discovered would have been a travesty of his legacy.'*

---

Martha Graham were two outstanding practical researchers in dance as a theatre art working almost concurrently with, but separated from, Laban. All three came up with new movement vocabularies for their art, each based on eukinetic (rhythm and dynamics), choreutic (spatial form) and aesthetic criteria. In eukinetics Laban favoured rhythms

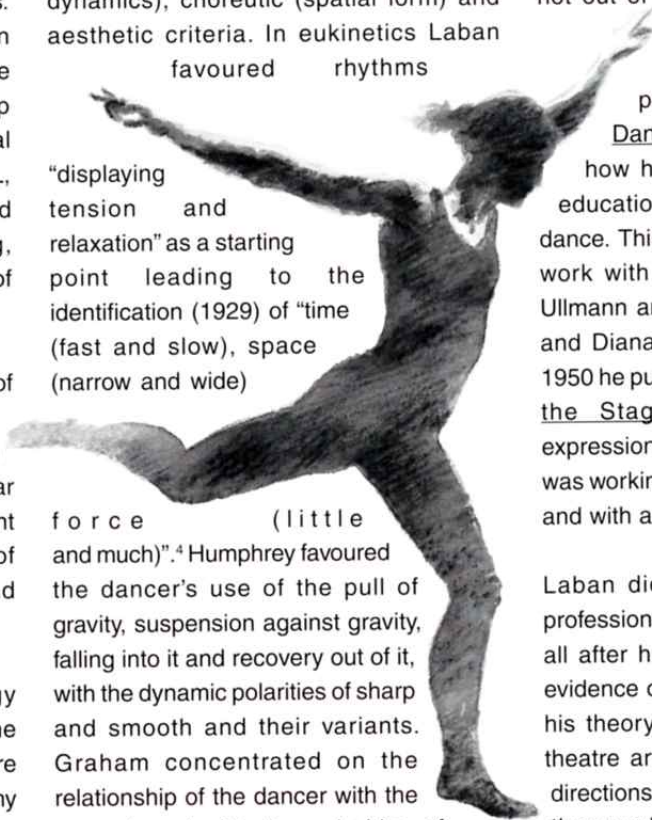
"displaying tension and relaxation" as a starting point leading to the identification (1929) of "time (fast and slow), space (narrow and wide)

force (little and much)".<sup>4</sup> Humphrey favoured the dancer's use of the pull of gravity, suspension against gravity, falling into it and recovery out of it, with the dynamic polarities of sharp and smooth and their variants. Graham concentrated on the relationship of the dancer with the ground, and with the polarities of contraction deep in the pelvis and release

dance and thereby all are included in Choreological Studies.

It was not until 1947 that Laban published his developments in eukinetics, which, as is well known, he called Effort. They emerged not out of studies in dance but out of his work with Fred Lawrence in industry. By 1948 he had published Modern Educational Dance which outlined very broadly how his ideas might be used in the education of children through creative dance. This emerged from the pioneering work with teachers undertaken by Lisa Ullmann and educationists Joan Goodrich and Diana Jordan, guided by Laban. By 1950 he published Mastery of Movement on the Stage, on dynamic movement expression in the theatre, at a time when he was working at the Bradford Theatre School and with amateur drama groups.

Laban did not work in the domain of professional dance as a performing art at all after he left Germany so we have no evidence of how he would have developed his theory as appropriate to dance as a theatre art. His researches were in other directions. Depending on the field in which they worked, second generation Laban trained people expanded Laban's basic



<sup>1</sup> Maletic, V. 'Body Space Expression', Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, 1987. <sup>2</sup> in 'Schrifttanz' 1929.; trans. in Preston-Dunlop/ Lahusen, 1990. <sup>3</sup> in 'Choreutics' (written 1939, published 1966) <sup>4</sup> Maletic, V. ibid. <sup>5</sup> Humphrey, D. 'The Art of Making Dances', New York, Reinhart and Co, 1959; Graham, M. 'The Notebooks of Martha Graham', New York, 1973.



material. The following are examples. Although not calling her work choreological, Ann Hutchinson Guest with others developed Laban's notation as Labanotation, Roderyk Lange (taught by Albrecht Knust) developed it as Kinetography Laban and opened the Institute of Choreology in Poland. Irmgard Bartenieff opened the Laban/Bartenieff Institute in New York using her expertise in the movement therapies, Warren Lamb went on from his work with Laban on movement observation to research Action Profiling. Kurt Jooss developed his technique combining Laban's eukinetics with ballet's steps and introducing 'central and peripheral' in place of 'wide and narrow' (or of the later 'direct and flexible'). I published Motif Writing as an adaptation of Labanotation for kinetic improvisation.

Dance people working in ethnology and anthropology encountered Labananalysis and Kinetography Laban, subsuming them into their own discipline, and from there founding ethnochoreology as a discipline for the study of indigenous dance forms.<sup>6</sup> In dance as a theatre art the only study that was overtly choreological was the introduction in the 1960s by Rudolf and Joan Benesh of their notation system, now widely used in the notating of classical ballet. The career of choreologist was born and took the form of notator / reconstructor specialist of theatre works, or folk dance/ethnologist/ anthropologist specialist. Serious work on the choreology of dance as a theatre art lagged behind.

At Laban Centre London, Laban Studies ran through the entire curriculum until the 1980s

when it became impossible to reduce choreology to the work of one man when many other researchers and artists had contributed to the discipline. It became essential to follow Laban's practice of developing his own work according to context, to introduce a branch of choreology that focused on dance as a performing art, since there was no such thing extant. He had done it for his time and we had to do so for ours. Now, after nearly 20 years of Choreological Studies teaching and research, a choreologist may be a notator, a choreographer, a teacher, a dancer, a video-maker, a director, a writer, but essentially, in any of these fields, a practical dance person capable of researching their subject through practical dance specific methods.

<sup>6</sup> See Peterson Royce, A. 'Choreology To-day' in 'CORD Research Annual VI' 1972. The Int. Folk Music Council named ethnochoreology as a branch of musicology in 1962 on accepting Labanotation as the notation for their folk dance research.

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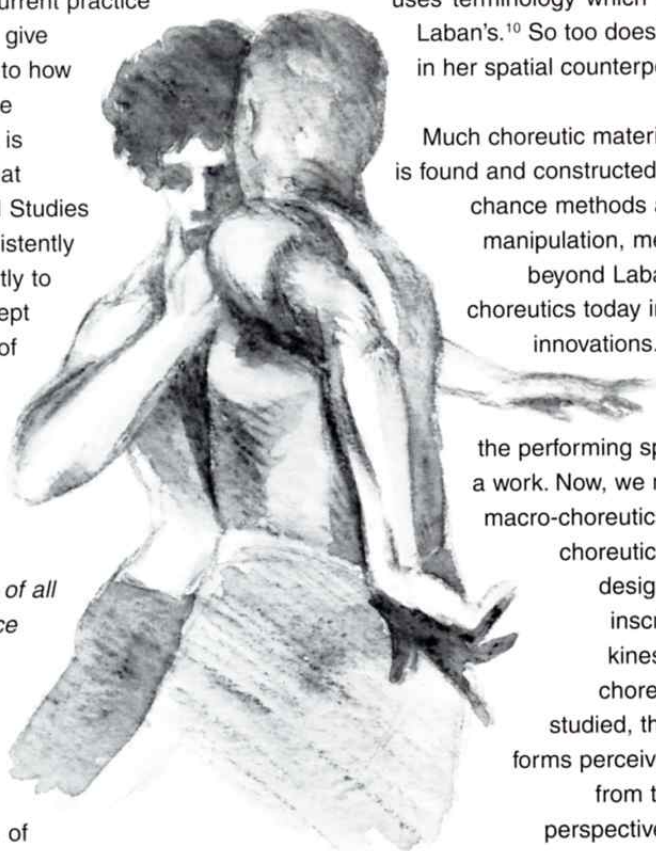
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It was from the USA that seminal development in professional dance ideas came, through Merce Cunningham<sup>7</sup> and the experiments of the Judson Church groups<sup>8</sup>, and, in Germany, through Pina Bausch and her Tanztheater innovations.<sup>9</sup> These brought dance out of the expressionist phase in which it had been so successful in both Europe and USA in the first half of the 20th century, a phase in which Laban's eukinetik and choreutic theory and practice emerged. Post-modernism in dance arrived and with it a change in the "balancing order" within a work. Since Laban's death in 1958 forty years of dance innovation has taken place. Laban's theories simply cannot embrace all current practice although they give guidelines as to how these might be studied. What is essential is that Choreological Studies adheres consistently and vehemently to Laban's concept of the theory of dance (choreology) being a practical-theoretical study of embodiment, of all forms of dance art, with its own methods. This complements other studies of dance, aesthetics, sociology of dance, cultural study of dance, history of dance, each bringing their own methods. Choreological Studies includes as basic an introduction to Laban's movement analysis.



At post graduate level that is contexted in other dance theatre approaches to rhythm and dynamics, breath rhythm from Humphrey, dynamic colouring from H'Doubler, action rhythm from Cunningham and Vandekeybus, organic rhythm from Taylor, metric rhythm. In choreutics, the harmonic principles in Laban's scales and rings can be abstracted to hold good independent of the practice of the scales and rings themselves to provide a starting point for the study of spatial counterpoint in contemporary choreography. William Forsythe is the current choreographer of international repute who has taken Laban's choreutic principles and deconstructed them, opening them out to provide him with an improvisation method from which he can find highly innovative choreutic material. He uses terminology which complements Laban's.<sup>10</sup> So too does Trisha Brown in her spatial counterpoint pieces.<sup>11</sup>

Much choreutic material these days is found and constructed by deliberate chance methods and computer manipulation, methods clearly beyond Laban's. Teaching choreutics today includes these innovations. Laban writes little about the use of the performing space of and in a work. Now, we refer to this as macro-choreutics while micro-choreutics refers to the design (traceforms, inscriptions) in the kinesphere. Virtual choreutic forms are studied, these being the forms perceived to be there from the spectator's perspective, forms in the space between the dancer's body parts, between dancers, beyond the dancer into space.<sup>12</sup> These complement identification of the actual forms for which Laban's analysis is essential.

In his 1926 curriculum Laban included "mimetic". Today this is referred to as non-verbal interaction or body language. Laban had a good deal to say about it and so do

*'Vera Maletic summarises the meaning of the word "choreology" at that time as the study of "the logic and balancing order of dance".'*

many other writers and practitioners.<sup>13</sup> How choreographers use "mimetic" variously is a subject for choreological investigation. Laban used it his way through effort, Twyla Tharp took non-verbal signs and sandwiched them between virtuosic dance material in *Push Comes to Shove* (1976), Lea Anderson observed the minutiae of behaviour to collect, deconstruct, reconstruct movement of eyes, cheeks, thumbs, chin in *Flesh and Blood* (1988). Geraldine Stephenson combines behaviour with historical dance forms, using effort, in several of her dances in costume dramas for TV. Laban facilitates the observation and collecting of behaviour but we need to study how choreographers make use of it by their structure and transformation devices.

To understand dance as a theatre art I introduced the theory of the nexus of the *four strands of the dance medium, the performer, the movement, the sound score and the design of the space*, a choreological concept now developed by my colleague Ana Sanchez-Colberg and widely adopted. To research the crux of some artists' innovations one has to articulate the way in which each of them radically connected and disconnected the strands of movement and sound. Laban freed movement from the domination of music by introducing silent dance, Cunningham agreed with John Cage that each would work independently to a time frame, the sound and the dance meeting for the first time at the performance.

<sup>7</sup> See his BBC documentary 'A Life of Dance', 2000 <sup>8</sup> Banes, S, 'Terpsichore in Sneakers'. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1980 <sup>9</sup> Servos, N & Weigelt, G. 'Pina Bausch Wuppertal Dance Theater', Cologne, Ballett verlag, 1984 <sup>10</sup> See CD Rom Forsythe's 'Improvisation Techniques', Ballett Frankfurt, 1998. <sup>11</sup> See the BBC 'Dancing Around: Trisha Brown' 1998 <sup>12</sup> Preston-Dunlop, V. "Choreutic concepts and practice" in 'Dance Research Vol I No 1'. 1981 <sup>13</sup> See Laban's 'Mastery of Movement', 3rd Ed, 1971; Michael Argyle, 'The psychology of Interpersonal Behaviour'. Penguin, 1967; Albert Schefflen, 'Body movement and Social Order', Prentice Hall, 1972; Warren Lamb's 'Posture and Gesture', 1965.



For Balanchine the music came first. He connected his movement to the music, not note by note, but by anticipation, canon, synchrony, rhythmic counterpoint, phrasing. In Choreological Studies these ways are experienced practically, by performing them, experimenting with them and by looking at dances that embody such connections. Just as in Laban's day, practice generates theory, in this case nexial theory.

The nexus between the performer and movement are studied. Bausch does not create the movement, she elicits it by a Bauschian method from her performers. What method? Forsythe creates a sketch of a solo through his own choreutic method with the dancer, and gives the dancer responsibility to work at it to turn the sketch into material. How? Lloyd Newson, in his recent piece, deliberately presents bodies of every sort from obese, to bald, to classic dancer physique, to physically disadvantaged, each with highly skilled, highly individual material. Why? Laban's prioritised the male dancer, included nudity, enjoyed all ages and body types, Why? All these are studied theoretically / practically, choreologically.<sup>14</sup>

Similarly the movement/space nexus is studied since the spaces for dance today include art galleries, alfresco space, video space, cyberspace, as well as theatre space. Laban Centre London offers a postgraduate qualification in Scenography where lighting, costume, set design, site specificity are studied, combining Choreological principles with those of Design principles.

Laban writes in *Choreutics* of the need to study dance from several perspectives to begin to get beyond the outer form to the "mental and emotional content." To this end the semiotic content of dances is studied (performed, created, observed) as is the phenomenological experience of dance engagement. Laban touched upon semiotics, especially in his ground breaking insights into the manner in which the motion

factors embody the psychic functions identified by Carl Gustav Jung. Much has been researched in semiology since Laban's death, in Linguistics, Theatre and Performance Studies. Currently I include Jean Jacques Nattiez's and Roman Jakobson's semiotic studies to help articulate and debate the layers of meaning in a dance work while Sanchez Colberg complements these writings with those of performance phenomenologist Patrice Pavis.

The excitement about working in Choreological Studies is that, like Laban, we are working at the cutting edge of dance art and dance study. He was leading the

choreological field in his day and we are in ours, in dance as a theatre art. To have stayed only with what he discovered would have been a travesty of his legacy. Perhaps one has to have a sense of his history, his innovations, his constant rewriting of his own discoveries, his insistence on paying attention to his own cultural context, to understand why and how Choreological Studies has developed and will continue so to do, working in it as he did, as artist researchers.

*Valerie Preston-Dunlop*



<sup>14</sup> See the video '*Preston-Dunlop Presents Laban Dances 1923-28*', Recreations of his Kammer tanz works.



## NEWS FROM THE CCPR

A large folder of congratulatory letters confirmed the success of DANCEFEST 2000 at the Royal Albert Hall in September. It was suggested that such a show should become a regular event perhaps incorporating international performers. The Guild was most grateful for the skill and dedication shown by Wendy Hermelin and her group of young dancers. They had to get up very early in the morning to travel from Somerset to Kensington in time for their rehearsal. Their performance was a delight.

The NSPCC is running a fundraising campaign called FULL STOP. They are aiming to raise enough money to end cruelty to children. A WEEK OF SPORT will run from 11-17 June 2001 and members are asked to organise fundraising events. The promotion will be supported by Blue Peter, the media, national and regional newspapers and websites. Any leader or teacher wishing to take part can get more information from Rob Woods on 020 7825 1312.

The Whiteley Report commissioned by Sport England last year recommended that movement and dance organisations should have professional marketing support. Sport England is therefore funding a full-time Marketing and Promotions Manager for Exercise, Movement & Dance and partly funding a part-time Marketing & Promotions Assistant. The Manager, Portland Green, is working not only for the division but for the whole sector. Members of the Laban Guild Executive Committee met her to discuss how she might assist the Guild in promoting itself.

One way in which the Laban Guild keeps itself in the public eye is by appearing at such events as BLAZING at the Royal Festival Hall. To do this we need a list of members keen to run workshops or bring their dance group to give a performance. Please let me know if you would like to do this. It provides a goal to work towards with your group and you get free entry to the event. My telephone no. is 01737 842834.

Brownie Mills

## VOLUNTARY ARTS NETWORK (VAN)

For further information about any item mentioned please ask at your local library for the relevant update or briefing sheet.

### Update Issue 24

Article: Cultural Policies (the effect of devolution and benefits for the voluntary arts sector)

Opportunities: Studio space in Manchester; the National Network for the Arts in Health (NNAH)

Network News: Audience matters NFMS workshops

Funding News: RALP; New Media Training Bursaries for Artists; Foundation for Sport and the Arts; Community Economic Development Fund; The Nationwide Foundation; The Paul Hamlyn Foundation  
Training News: Training & Learning Seminars 2001; VAN Community Grid for Learning; Continuing Professional Development; VAN Conference, Spring 2001; Free Training for Voluntary Arts Organisations in Wales

### Briefing Sheets

No 49 Making Change Work

No 50 'Action Learning' an introduction

## DEGREE PRESENTATION CEREMONY 2000

Rosemary Butcher gave a poignant speech at Laban Centre London's annual Degree Presentation Ceremony on 2nd December. The Choreography Co-ordinator spoke of her delight at being awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Music from City University. She was presented with a DMus at Guildhall on 4th December in recognition of her distinguished work in choreography.

At the LCL this year over 40 students achieved a BA Hons in Dance Theatre. More than 15 students gained a Professional Diploma in Community Dance Studies, there were over 10 passes in MA Dance Studies, 3 passes in the Postgraduate Diploma Dance Movement Therapy and 4 passes in MA Dance Movement Therapy. One senior student was awarded a PhD. This was the first year that the awards of Undergraduate Diploma Dance Theatre and Professional Diploma in Community Dance Studies were presented at the Ceremony, following validation of the courses by City University, London.

The degrees were conferred by Professor David Rhind, Vice Chancellor of City University.

# Diary of Events

FEBRUARY

**23-25th INTRODUCTION TO MOVEMENT PRACTICE**  
During the course movement experience, observation and reflection will be used to help participants recognise significant non-verbal communication in the decision making process.

Course leaders are Warren Lamb and Dr. Patricia Lamb  
Contact: Carol Schouboe, 9709 35th Avenue NE  
Tel: (206) 527 9890 Email: clschouboe@aol.com

MARCH

### 3-4th NOTATION IN-SET WEEKEND

Introducing teachers to the skills and competences of the new AS and A2 Dance syllabuses.

Contact: Kerry Chappell Tel: 0208 692 4070. Email: kerry@kerrychappell.co.uk

### 24th LABAN GUILD AGM

LABAN THEN, LABAN NOW, LABAN FUTURE  
Laban Lecture given by Helen Lewis and practical demonstration  
Contact: Ann Ward, 30 Ringsend Rd, Limavady, Co. Londonderry, N.I.

APRIL

### 25-29th RELOCATING THE SACRED IN CONTEMPORARY DANCE

Can we still describe ourselves as the guardians of the sacred from it by the pressure of market forces? This weekend will explore this debate and collaboration within an atmosphere of workshops, papers, discussions and forum debates.

Enrique Pardo.

Contact: Sally Edmundson, University of Central England

JUNE

### 2-3rd LINC TUTOR TRAINING PROGRAM

The first of eight weekends, run over two years, will introduce the International Summer Courses. Course content includes: Choreography, Improvisation etc.

Contact: Laban International Courses, Ivy Cottage, 8PF. Tel: 0044 (0) 1784 433480 Email: mail@laban.co.uk

### 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th

Four fun-filled, creative, evening workshops, focusing on the fundamentals and culminating in a group devised performance.

Contact: Wendy Hermelin - Tel: 01460 76829

JULY/AUGUST

### JUL 28th - AUG 5th LABAN INTERNATIONAL

Annual Dance Summer School: Dance and Laban. Choose your choice of special topics according to your interests. Laban's work is not essential.

Tutors will include regular favourites plus Olufur Gunnarsson  
Contact: Laban International Courses, Ivy Cottage, 8PF. Tel: 0044 (0) 1784 433480 Email: mail@laban.co.uk

SEPTEMBER

International Symposium: Tanzwissenschaft und Choreographie

## LABAN BASED DANCE COURSES

Cambridge, Maddy Tongue

Tuesday 6pm

Wednesday 7pm

Contact: 01223 313131

If you would like to advertise your regular class in our magazine, please contact: 01223 313131





## JANUARY

### PATTERN ANALYSIS

SEATTLE, USA

...ation practice and theoretical discussion will be  
...ovement behaviours and how these relate to the

...ia Marek  
...E, Seattle, WA 98115.

## MARCH

LONDON

...ies need to notate and record elements of the

...ail: k.chappell@laban.co.uk

DUBLIN

...al workshops.  
...erry BT49 OQJ. Tel: 02877 762120

## MAY

### TEMPORARY PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

PRESTON

...of an ancient art form or have we been divorced  
...five-day conference is designed to encourage  
...re of practice and academic rigour. Practical  
...es. Guests include Phillip Zarrilli, Nicolas Nunez,  
...Lancaster, Preston PR1 2HE. Tel: 01772 892250

## JUNE

### JUNE

EGHAM, SURREY

...for any person interested in tutoring on Laban  
...ill include Laban Fundamentals, Dance Training,

...e, Clockhouse Lane East, Egham, Surrey TW20  
...an.org

SOMERSET

...wing a theme throughout, underpinned by Laban  
...d dance.

## AUGUST

### AL COURSE

EASTBOURNE

...an Analysis - Dance training and technique and  
...personal field of interest. Previous experience of

...vo and Megan Reisel.  
...Clockhouse Lane East, Egham, Surrey TW20 8PF.

## SEPTEMBER

...ite

## CLASS LISTINGS:

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## Book reviews



## WRITING DANCE, RIGHTING DANCE

Dance is about movement in time and space, and touch and sight are two of its important elements. So when I picked up this book, I found it immediately appealing, as it has a smooth, firm, waxy cover, inviting you to touch and smooth it, and an interesting photo with plenty of white space around, inviting more than just a passing glance.

Printed in landscape, a first flick through reveals words and pictures that dance about the pages; large letters, small letters, a single comment on the word space, spread across two pages, the rest white, words on the diagonal, filling the space, surrounding the space, cutting through the space, framing pictures, describing pictures, ignoring pictures.

Then settling down to read the words, one discovers this to be a fascinating account of a project, which took place in Cork at the Firkin Crane Dance Centre. In 1996 Righting Dance was set up as an "...opportunity and challenge to Irish choreographers to commit themselves to a process of research, where their aesthetic vision and choreographic craft would be laid bare, examined, pushed and moved in new directions..." Two choreographers, Paul Johnson and Mary Nunan work with five dancers and mentor Tedd Senmon from Canada. Tedd sets tasks for Mary and Paul to work on with the dancers who they swap between them. Then he challenges their ways of working, setting more tasks to push them into new processes and directions.

The pages follow the ups and downs of the choreographic process. The feelings of the dancers and choreographers involved; the frustrations, the joys, a day's work leading to nothing, and the second-long bleeps of sheer ecstasy, that come now and then. There are many phrases, comments that ring so true about the creative process. Paul Johnson, choreographer, says, "For me it has been a process of elimination and trial and error to discover what exactly I want to say". There are philosophical thoughts, practical questions and answers, some task examples, descriptions of interactions, expectations, motivations, the relationships between dancer and choreographer - is the dancer just a body or can he/she choose the work they do, should we show the work so far and therefore spend time rehearsing, or continue to improvise, select, develop and move on! For anyone who has danced or choreographed, this book illuminates the process of choreography, exposing warts and all! It is a beautifully choreographed book.

*Wendy Hermelin*

Compiled by Diana Theodores, publisher: Firkin Crane Dance Dev. Agency  
ISBN 0-9538394-0-0



What bliss, after driving for 4 hours into an Atlantic squall, to be told to rush round the space as if the air could pass right through you and then to become sticky, running free only to be caught on a spot and held there even for a split second. Add jumping, falling, rolling, rising, focused, flexible and I was lost in the freedom of experiencing different ways of moving through space.

Wendy Hermelin had devised a wonderfully varied weekend of Laban, integrating work on body awareness individually to developing relationships with partners and groups. Icebreaking was achieved through a fun game of tag which cured muscle stiffness and post-travel tiredness, followed by a relaxing session of leaning on a partner - amazing how many different body surfaces become available for mutual resting.

Having become thoroughly familiar with each other, both anew and afresh, and having caught up on all our news over tea, Wendy then metamorphosed us into the most amazing exotica. Beginning with rainforest creepers, weaving and writhing together to form a tangled landscape for animals and birds to come. Regal antelope-type creatures with expressive antlers, cautiously peering from the undergrowth before venturing out to graze or drink. Generously plumaged birds preen and pose

before soaring up and then sweeping down across a watering-hole. Working with a partner we created an animal or bird of choice, deciding on its character and how it would interact with its fellows. It is surprising what aggressive tendencies friends can show when given free rein! We were spellbound - time flew - another tea-break.

The final session of the day. We were all wilting after our efforts. However, Wendy had come up trumps once more. Stand in a small circle. Think about "dark", say one word which "dark" conjures, then one movement to describe it. Teach the rest of the group your movement. Learn theirs. Link them lyrically. Then become a concentric circle with the other 2 groups. All do our own "circle dance". See what happens. Initially appears to be chaotic, but by moving someone here and a slight adjustment there and, amazingly, a dance begins to develop.

Repeat the above sequence for the word "light". Link the "dark" and the "light" with an imaginary candle, a tiny flicker to begin, growing into sunrise. I am bewitched as the dance comes to life - a fitting end to a very creative day.

Sunday morning we meet bright-eyed and bushy-tailed and eager to join in with whatever Wendy has in mind for the day. We begin working through our slightly stiff bodies with a gentle, stretching warm-up. We then work with partners on particular combinations of effort actions, push, pull, stroke. Lean, entangle, slide. Time for tea again.

Wendy had spent many months working with a group of children on a dance about the legend of King Arthur. During this time she decided that she would like to work on some aspects of this dance with adults - and we provided the ideal opportunity. So Sunday was to be devoted to Arthurian legend - and those particular words describing effort actions were to be used to create the battle at which Arthur was crowned King of Britain. However, first things first, we must find Excalibur. In the beginning the Lake, mist drifting, swirling, rising, sinking - the sword shooting from its depths by magic and given to Arthur. Then that battle, clashing, pulling, pushing, entangling, leaning, sliding - ending in victory.

Another motif- the country at peace. Except at Camelot a love triangle. Arthur has his queen, Guinevere, and his friend Lancelot, who falls in love with Guinevere and she with him. A triplet of dances - each one excluding one character as their relationships ebb and flow.

The final motif. Begin with a step pattern

which ends with a turn. Find a partner. Teach them your step pattern. Learn theirs. Find another couple and repeat. Link the four patterns to make a dance. Dance in unison. Dance in cannon. Then each individual

*'On the way home I felt  
as if I could take on the  
world! Laban studies  
should be made available  
on prescription!'*

leaves the group and dances the whole sequence alone. A country at peace, then slowly civil unrest develops into civil war. Families, friends and neighbours in conflict - we wrestled with each other - then slowly the pattern reforms. Conflicts forgotten, we come together again in a final, joyful, circle dance. I will never cease to be amazed at the way dances emerge from the ether, a consequence of the group's imagination and energy working together.

The weekend is over. We must say goodbye again to friends - till next time. Thank you Wendy and everyone else involved in organising the Laban in Somerset weekend, for providing accommodation and hospitality for those of us who travelled long distances. I wrote a list of adjectives to help me write this article. They include imaginative, creative, energetic, stimulating, fun, expressive, explosive, rewarding and particularly relevant to me - energising. On the way home I felt as if I could take on the world! Laban studies should be made available on prescription!

Sue Grover

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**H**igh Spin is a company of dancers with and without learning difficulties, who are about to take their latest work, *Rice Rain* on tour in the South of England. The company is the flagship project of Brighton based charity Carousel, an organisation which runs a variety of arts projects for people with learning difficulties, mainly in the Brighton and Hove area.

## Background

High Spin began life in 1993 as a project that grew out of Carousel's pioneering performance work, which has been awarded both a Barclays New Stages Award and a Time Out Dance Umbrella Award. High Spin's first show - *Sinking Dreams* - premiered in 1996 and saw the company working with international choreographer Laurie Booth. This set a trend and High Spin has continued to work with various top Choreographers ever since, including Ben Craft, Liz Aggiss and Billy Cowie.

Central to High Spin's philosophy is the fact that each dancer is closely involved with the choreography. Each member of High Spin takes an active role in the company's development and is fully involved in decisions about how to work and with whom and every choreographer who works with High Spin works in collaboration with the company themselves. The final dance pieces therefore, strongly reflect the dancers own feelings and life experiences.

High Spin has produced a short video documentary 'We are High Spin', about the way they work and the philosophy behind it. The video is available to buy and you can order your copy from High Spin Video, Carousel, Community Base, 113 Queens Road, BRIGHTON, BN1 3XG. For more information please call 01273 234734, or email [carouselcharity@hotmail.com](mailto:carouselcharity@hotmail.com), alternatively you can visit the Carousel website at [www.carousel.orq.uk](http://www.carousel.orq.uk)

## Recent Funding

In 1998 High Spin was awarded an Arts Council Lottery Arts for Everyone Award. This three year funding has enabled the company to tour exciting new dance pieces to professional theatres, providing a platform where dancers can perform to new audiences and achieve recognition in the wider arts world. 'Frog Shark Shark Shadow', choreographed by Ben Craft was the first of these pieces. In Spring 2000 High Spin toured the second, the widely acclaimed 'The Surgeon's Waltz', choreographed by Liz Aggiss and Billy Cowie. This piece was also presented, in a shortened form, as part of Rich Mix, a

*'High Spin are very keen to use their work, not only to bring disability dance to the fore in the arts world, but also to encourage people with learning difficulties to the theatres.'*

celebration of dance by South East Dance Agency and part of the Brighton Festival.

## Rice Rain

The current show, the last under this funding, is 'Rice Rain', again choreographed by Aggiss and Cowie. This is the eighth show by High Spin and the most ambitious tour yet to date. It will open in Bexhill on the 8th of March and will then visit London, Brighton, Littlehampton, High Wycombe, Crawley and finally, Redhill on the 9th of May. For more details on performance times and ticket prices call us at Carousel's offices on 01273 734234.

Rice Rain is influenced by images of contemporary Japan and takes the audience on an unexpected journey, full of emotions, laughs and surprises. Aggiss and Cowie described the piece like this, "A *Hi Falutin, Hi Stepping, Hi Light of dance, Hi Energy music and visuals. Functional as a futon, convoluted as origami, explosive as Mount Fuji and delicious as sushi, Rice Rain is a Hi Atus in your performance calendar. After the infamous Surgeon's Waltz we head east for inspiration for an even more exciting show. Rice Rain will feature on stage TEN bicycles, TEN dancing fish and TEN sesivIE (if you don't know what sesivIE are you'd better come along and find out). All accompanied by the gorgeous singing of Japanese Popstar Kaori Murakami.*"

## Audience Development

High Spin are very keen to use their work, not only to bring disability dance to the fore in the arts world, but also to encourage people with learning difficulties to the theatres. Traditionally theatre and dance are

not seen as activities suitable for people with learning difficulties, either by the groups themselves or by venues. By taking our performances into mainstream venues we both encourage the venues to experiment with marketing techniques to reach these groups and introduce local people with learning difficulties to venues which they may not have thought of visiting before. To support this, Carousel's marketing worker liaises closely with venues and leads them in a marketing strategy.

## Outreach

As a further support to audience development High Spin dancers lead outreach workshops in support of the tour, bringing High Spin's methodology to local dancers both with and without learning difficulties.

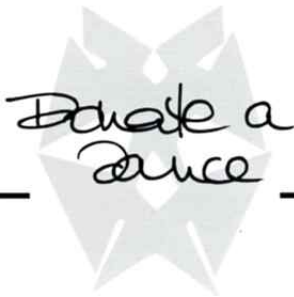
These workshops are led by the High Spin dancers and offer a taster of High Spin's techniques and style of working.



Although Outreach Workshops are primarily offered as part of High Spin's touring on occasion they are offered independently as one off workshops or residencies to groups, organisations and venues who are interested in finding out more about our work.

High Spin's plan for the future include, holding a conference on disability dance in Spring 2000 in a joint collaboration with the South East Dance agency and the Foundation for Community Dance, continuing to develop new work and tour more widely than ever and continue to promote best practice in the field of disability dance.





To help and support Guild members who teach young children in Primary schools or in a community dance setting we are pleased to announce the launch of the Laban Guild Primary Dance Project. This project is based on unlocking the expertise of our members and sharing their ideas. The project has 3 stages -

- Stage 1. "Give & Take" starts now (see below).
- Stage 2. "Request & Receive" for members who would like materials, but cannot donate ideas (from Autumn 2001).
- Stage 3. "Publication" for those outside the Guild (from late 2001).

**Give & Take:** By donating a dance idea you can both contribute to and benefit from the project. Between now and Easter, send in your idea, then, during the summer you will receive a bank of resources ready for use in the Autumn term. A similar format would be best, so it would be helpful to include the following:

- Resource list eg. suggested music, photos of animals etc - ie. to support the teacher's planning and teaching.
- Word bank eg. wriggle, pounce, slither etc - ie. words to stimulate and enrich the response of the children.
- Lesson content - a dance idea which can be developed over 3 to 5 lessons would be great.
- Warm-up and cool-down - if they are specific to the work.

Please donate your idea (along with your name address, telephone, email in case there is a query about the work!)

Send to: **The Laban Guild Primary Dance Project** c/o Jan Nicol 34 Tower Road Twickenham Middlesex TW1 4PE  
Tel. 020 8892 5132 Email: jannicol@tinyonline.co.uk

### NOTICE TO MEMBERS OF THE LABAN GUILD: DATA PROTECTION

The Laban Guild for Movement and Dance holds information about its members which is recorded on a computer system. The information is mainly used to provide you with the Guild magazine, details of courses and other events, and your name and address will be included in the membership list which is published annually to Guild members.

All personal data about you is treated in confidence and will not be disclosed to any third parties, except where you have given your consent in advance eg: to be included on the register of Guild teachers and tutors.

If you would like to continue to be included in the published membership list, you need take no further action. However, if you would prefer not to be part of it, please tick the box below and return the slip to Ann Ward (Membership Secretary).

Under the terms of the Data Protection Act, you may request a copy of the details we hold about you on our computer system. At present we do not charge a fee, but we reserve the right to do so and may charge the maximum fee of £10.00 as allowed by the Act.



#### Published membership list opt-out

If you do not want your name and address to be included on the published membership list, please let us know by ticking the box ☐ and returning the form to Ann Ward, 30 Ringsend Road, Limavady. Co. Derry, N. Ireland BT49 0QJ

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Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Telephone number (inc. STD code) daytime \_\_\_\_\_ evening \_\_\_\_\_



# MARY WIGMAN

## THE LIFE AND WORK OF A GREAT DANCER



*Certain passages pertaining to Wigman's work with Laban, from the book by Hedwig Muller (published originally by Akademie der Künste) have been translated for us by Terry Oliver. These extracts include some of Mary Wigman's diary entries.*

Dance-sound-word was an expression known to Mary Wigman before she came across it with Laban.

Whilst Mary Wigman was doing business with Dalcroze and Reinhardt, and also considering the experiments of Claudel, she started on her own movement studies, but her inner turmoil increased. She composed dances without music and even presented Jacques Dalcroze with one of three studies called "Lento".

She also performed her choreographies to Emil and Ada Nolde and these two eventually gave her the decisive push: they drew her attention to the fact that there was a man living in Munich, called Rudolf Laban who was putting forward there, in his school for the art of movement and dance, the same ideas as herself. At the same time Wigman was told by Suzanne Perrottet, Dalcroze's assistant, who was worshipped in the Hellerau academy as an idol of rhythmic exercises, that she, Perrottet, had decided to finally turn her back on Hellerau.

"And she said that she was leaving Dalcroze and going to a man who did wild things and who let his pupils dance completely without music. That was what I was doing myself" There lay the attraction: body rhythm - freedom from music. If even an authority like Suzanne Perrottet was leaving Hellerau, then Mary Wigman also wanted to venture forth. Temporarily anyway, for a contract was going to be sent on to her, Poste Restante, Ascona, Switzerland, for there Mr. Von Laban had set up the summer residence of his school. Mary Wigman wanted to do a course with him. Perhaps thereby the unrest could be mollified.

After his first visit to the community, Dada poet, Hugo Bell, remarked that Mount Verita, the hill above the small fishing village on Lake Maggiore, was a place 'where rather a lot of Germans stayed in the guise of Nature's people'. At that time something like a life-enhancing tourist industry had, to a large extent, covered up the original aims of the founders. The Garden of Eden, as they had imagined it, in which people might live

in natural harmony with one another, had changed into a health resort for the world weary.

Since about 1909 it had been the done thing to be seen in the summer on the mountain and to disport oneself for a while as a man of nature. But along with the summer casuals, there had always been, since the inception of the community in 1900, an influx of artists and intellectuals of all shades of opinion- from anarchists to occultists, who discussed new world orders on the basis of free personal development.

As part of the individualistic co-operative of Mount Verita, which the founders Ida Hofmann and Henry Oedenkoven had brought into being, was the Art school directed by Rudolf Von Laban. In line with the precepts of the school the aim was to introduce pupils to all forms of expression of the human genius; and on all levels of activity and expression those eager for development and expression should become acquainted with the new forms of a simple and harmonious life by working alongside teachers and fellow pupils.

For fifty Swiss francs tuition fees per month, courses were offered in four disciplines: "Art of Movement", "Art of Sound", "Art of the Word" and "Art of the Form". The "Dance" department which dealt with the "Art of Movement", was where Laban personally taught, as did sometimes Suzanne Perrottet who soon became her new master's assistant after leaving Dalcroze.

Alongside the specialised field of the "Art of Movement" Laban also offered courses in "The Word" and the "Art Of Sound", to be precise, "How to speak and present lectures either individually or in groups", as well as "musical exercises" and "accompanying instruments". Henry Oedenkoven and Ida Hofmann only determined the programme in the "Art of Form" with its arts and crafts subjects like "Art of Building", "Weaving", "Shoemaking", "Dressmaking", "Painting" and "Creation of Form". The pupils came from all parts of Europe, but predominantly from Germany, a voluntary body of people with artistic natures who perceived the real essence of life in the community. From eight to ten o'clock in the morning and from four to half past five in the afternoon daily teaching was given, but in between, pupils had free rein with their studies. Laban's

pupils lived, as did the other guests and inhabitants of the community in small rented wooden houses which were dotted around amongst trees and hedges. Demands for comfort were not catered for, since the huts were generally used only in the summer, when the weather was warm and sunny and the roof above one's head must at best have provided protection from a rain shower.

Mary Wigman arrived into this world in the summer of 1913. The second part of her odyssey had begun: in conversation she reminisced, 'Yes, and so I travelled down south, third class, my case as a pillow, aching limbs after the long journey, got out in Locarno in the middle of a heat wave at midday. With my case in my right hand I trod the dusty path from Locarno to Ascona. At least an hour on foot. Having got there: 'Where is Mount Verita!' I said. "Up there!" came the reply. God almighty, I thought, now I've still got to get up there! Anyway eventually I arrived up there. All around it was an enchanting place. Pretty as a picture. Overgrown untended parkland with small houses dotted around, where apparently the summer guests lived. Really I had no conception, no idea of what lay ahead of me."

She looked for the way to von Laban's school. She was told that the "Master" was teaching in the Ladies air bath and someone pointed to the wooded hill on the other side of the lake. "So I followed the path down and hadn't reached the Ladies air bath, when I heard the sound of a drum from the distance. "Aha a drum! That could be Laban" I followed the sound of the drum and came upon a meadow and at the other end of the meadow a man was standing dressed in a white shirt and short trousers, holding a drum in his hand accompanied by a couple of young ladies and a dwarf who were moving about. I was fascinated: I stood and stared and Laban looked round the corner and said "Well what do you want then!" "I want to join in," "O.K. then, take your clothes off behind the bush and come over here." That's what I did and it seemed as if I had come home. This wonderful feeling I had, has always remained unforgettably with me, when I stood and suddenly felt happy and blissful under the direction of a drum beat. ■



# WARREN LAMB

## A VIEW POINT FROM AMERICA

A recurring theme in discussions with Americans is the need for greater unity between all the various practitioners and representatives of Laban's teachings. I hear more concern expressed in the U.S. than in the U.K. about fragmentation and losing connection to a "core". It may be inevitable, especially as Laban did not create a system, and even desirable, in that Laban's principles spread into new fields and develop new forms, which is what he said he wanted. However, it would be helpful to have some sort of consensus on what it is that Laban has offered the world.

Laban himself did not encourage such consensus. He almost encouraged separate development when, in forming the Guild, he designed categories of "Art" (which included Dance), "Education" and "Industry". A category for "Therapy" came later. It is difficult to promote a united Laban front when it seemed we were encouraged to wear a label indicating our specialised credentials.

That a knowledge of Laban's principles of movement can be valuable in many walks of life seems nevertheless to be more apparent in the U.S. than the U.K. The scale of Laban studies is much greater in the U.S. of course. The Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies has been responsible to a great extent, but the association of the Bartenieff name, whose "Bartenieff Fundamentals" is known as a body practice

comparable with Alexander or Feldenkrais, with that of Laban, may obscure the breadth of Laban's teachings. So far as I know Laban's name stands alone in the U.K. and I hope it will remain so.

This may help to explain why many Americans I meet seem to be searching for the "core" Laban more than is the case in the U.K. Of what does it consist and where can it be found? How can it be explained to someone unaffiliated with any specialism and just wants to know what Laban studies is?

Interest in Laban the man, which seems to have been growing in recent years both in U.S. and Europe, can help to provide a unifying thread. The more biographies which get published the better.

A prerequisite for any unifying thread - and this is what I hear strongly expressed - is that there should be more support for unity on the part of all the various factions which have devolved Laban and more readiness to see the potential good in each others' work. Some people think there is a tendency for each faction to promote its own interpretation of theory, and methods of practice, as exclusive, superior, or the one unique core. There will always be disagreements on theory and practice, of course, but it is being said that they should be more constructively discussed while some common cause is sought among those who are professionally using his work.

I also hear complaints that Laban

*'Some people think there is a tendency for each faction to promote its own interpretation of theory, and methods of practice, as exclusive, superior, or the one unique core.'*

practitioners are increasingly presenting their theories according to Laban in ever more excruciatingly and complexly defined details as to be beyond the comprehension of the 99.99% of the population which does not understand how movement can be studied at all, and even to some who do. While rigorous research is necessary to clarify the body of knowledge deriving from Laban, and some way of co-ordinating what is done would be helpful, there should be a level at which those who use Laban's name can present a common front to the outside world.

Is there a prospect of achieving such a level, perhaps by one centre becoming a recognised world forum? At least a gathering towards a unified body of knowledge perceived as core Laban could be aimed for, rather than accept a scattering into a multiplicity of fragments. The Guild could be a candidate in setting a lead and there are other institutions both in the U.S. and the U.K. with similar potential. Ironically, there is inevitably competition between institutions seeking to establish unity by means of their own leadership. Nevertheless, if people perceived there is value to them in Laban the man becoming more universally a topic of interest, then there could be more gathering and less scattering.

This is what I think and hear coming from America, where competitiveness is perhaps more embedded in the culture than is the case in Europe. And if it is true that there is growing interest in Laban the man and what he stood for then talk of unification need not just be wishful thinking.

Perhaps someone with the aim of promoting unity will succeed in setting up a world-wide Laban Conference. It will be interesting, if it happens, whether the initiative comes from the U.S. or somewhere else. ■

### HONOURS

Two of the Laban Guild members received honours in the New Year List.

Maggie Semple, our recently retired President received an OBE for services to the Learning Experience and Arts Education.

She also recently received an Honorary Doctorate from de Montfort University, East Midlands. This was a Doctorate in Education in recognition of her outstanding work in arts education and training.

Penny Greenland, the Founder Director of Jabadao received an MBE for services to Dance. Many congratulations to them both.



Maggie Semple





## CIRCLE OF REMEMBRANCE

dance review



*Photographer: Roger Taylor*

The Circle of Remembrance was the Dome's contribution to Armistice Day - 11 November. The Royal British Legion commissioned Maggie Semple and her creative team to produce an event that would make relevant the themes of conflict to young people. The production that included performers, film and music not only moved the Legion on 5 years but contributed to raising £1m for the Poppy Appeal.



Point ...click ...move!

...visit our website at [www.labanguild.org](http://www.labanguild.org)