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Janet Harrison - Council Member Jenny Haycocks - Council Member

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Contributions:

Email: magazine@labanguild.org

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Advertising copy:

Email: jill_goff100@hotmail.com

Phone: 01483 763214

Editorial Team:

Pam Anderton

Jill Goff

Bronwen Mills

Advisers:

Anna Carlisle

Gordon Curl

Geraldine Stephenson

Janet Whettam

Membership Secretary:

Janice Anderson

7 Surridge

High Leigh

Nr Knutsford Cheshire

WA16 6PU

Email: janice anderson@btinternet.com

Courses Officer:

Ann Ward

7 Coates Close

Heybridge

Maldon

Essex

CM9 4PB

Email: awardglenkeen@bigfoot.com

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Pam Anderton

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Erratum:

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'Lorna Wilson Reminisces'

P. 15 Para 3 line 5 'Adda tended to use odd harmonies'

letter



Gordon Curl with Marion North, Valerie Preston-Dunlop and Warren Lamb at the Diamond Jubilee AGM

So many members have expressed their appreciation for the Diamond Jubilee edition of the magazine Movement & Dance that I felt I must thank them all on behalf of the Editorial Team for their support with both their cogent written material and their lively images. Non-members have also written expressing their admiration - including William Elmhirst, who played such a crucial role in purchasing the Art of Movement Studio at Addlestone in 1953. We now welcome William as a new member of the Guild and are delighted that he has accepted an invitation to contribute to this issue. We look forward to further contributions in the August issue on the topic of his parents' (Dorothy and Leonard Elmhirst) massive initiative in creating the worldrenowned Centre for the Arts at Dartington and the arrival of Kurt Jooss and Rudolf Laban

It will be recalled that in my Reflections on The American Invasion 1962-72 DVD P.29, I paid tribute to many members who had made highly significant contributions to the development of Laban's work; but such a list was far from exhaustive and tributes will continue to be paid - not least to the inspired teaching, writing and administration of Joan Russell MBE, whose contribution was monumental and whose recognition in this Jubilee Year is therefore most appropriate. There will be others whom members will wish to recognise; I am sure my successor will be only too pleased to acknowledge them.

Since the announcement of my retirement as editor, I have continued to receive contributions which I have passed on to the Editorial team; they include, sadly, the obituaries of three Guild members, namely: Elma Casson, Elma Thompson and Christine Long. I forward them on with a sad heart (I knew Elma Casson so well).

May I wish my successor every good wish, in what is undoubtedly an onerous (but rewarding) task.

Gordon Curl

fantastic job.

with her critics.

gordon curl's legacy

Comments on the magazine received by Gordon during his three years as Editor

I am very impressed by this edition of the Guild Magazine and send congratulations and thanks to you and your team

Ann Hutchinson Guest

You have certainly done justice to my humble contribution and I have to say that I am most impressed by the quality of the magazine itself. I enclose a cheque for my membership of the Guild. With all good wishes and gratitude for your dedication in furthering Laban's work.

William Elmhirst

Many thanks for Movement & Dance Diamond Jubilee Special Edition. It is a splendid publication. It is amazing

Thank you for the Magazine and there is a lot in it. I am

sorry you are not continuing with it as it has become so

much better - although I still yearn for something more

on a professional performance level! You have done a

Congratulations on a splendid celebratory edition of the Guild magazine. It has a spectacular cover, carries so many messages and is full of debate, reminiscences, information and inspiration that collectively do total justice to the significance of the moment in time and all that has gone before. You should feel justifiably proud.

What an impressive number of distinguished contributors you managed to recruit! I feel privileged to be in such company and thank you so much for the opportunity.

I am more than happy with the way my own contribution is presented. Thank you for the pertinent illustrations you have included. I hope I haven't offended anyone and that I won't have stirred up too many angry responses. I would love to send a copy of the whole magazine to my former PE colleagues.

Don Buckland

what energies Laban released. I hope VPD was pleased

Peter Cox

Vivien Bridson

Congratulatory phone calls on the Diamond Jubilee Special Edition came from:

Lady Jesse Clegg, Martial Rose, Maggie Semple, Hilary Corlett, Lorna Wilson, Geraldine Stephenson, June Layson and Betty Redfern.

..through the on-going fascination with the implications and potential applications of Laban's movement analysis and other ideas, through the hard work of the Guild Council and recent Chairmen and Presidents, and, in my view, above all through the inspired editorialship by Gordon Curl of the Guild Magazine, Movement & Dance, with its lively artistic presentation and range of stimulating, thought-provoking articles, the Laban Guild has survived to flourish again in the 21st century and celebrate its Diamond Jubilee.

Sally Archbutt

janet whettam chairman 2003 - 2006

Working for the Guild for the last three years has provided me with a new focus on Laban's work and all that the Guild does and might do to further the study of the Art of Movement. Another raison d'être of the Guild is to keep in touch with those who study Laban's work and to support and inspire them. Being involved in both these aspects has been stimulating, challenging, rewarding and very enjoyable.

I have particularly enjoyed visiting training courses and meeting members taking part. Enjoyable too was attending conferences and functions on behalf of the Guild, as well as meeting many people in other dance and movement Many have infectious enthusiasm and organisations. are a positive influence, offering pertinent advice and information and providing us with useful contacts.

Write to us at info@labanguild.org and messages will be forwarded appropriately. Letters are equally welcome.

Finally, I wish to thank all who have encouraged and supported me during the three years adding richness and the best possible 'continuing professional development'.

diamond jubilee agm report

A successful function tells of careful and thorough preparation and this was overwhelmingly true of the Guild's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations on 11th March at the University of Surrey. The organisation on the day itself was faultless, particular plaudits being accorded to Jill Goff, Sue Grover, Lydia Everitt and the NRCD staff, Helen Roberts and Chris Jones, who were our hosts. The programme represented many aspects of Laban's work promoted by the Guild during the 60 years of its existence.

The inspirational choice by Anna Carlisle of this year's Laban Lecturer introduced us to a fascinating and challenging presentation entitled 'The Application of Laban's Analysis to Kathak Sacred Dance Forms' by Mira Sievert MA, a post graduate student at the University of Surrey. Sound academic study was brought to life in the form of a lecture demonstration including dance solos, duos with Ojasi Sukhatankar and music played by Mira's partner, Christiaan Beckaert, as well as video illustrations and audience participation! Further consideration of this unique performance, of which there is a transcription in this magazine, must surely be obligatory for all serious students of Laban's work.

The Annual General Meeting had been well prepared by Gillian Hibbs enabling its efficient execution including the appointment of a treasurer, Andy Moir and new council members Jenny Haycocks and Jenny Moir. The festive atmosphereoftheoccasionwasenhancedbyanentertaining and delightful appreciation and a presentation by Janet Lunn to the retiring chairman of a crystal jug and a piece of smoky quartz, reflecting the day's theme of 'Crystals'. The meeting finished early allowing members to admire the display arranged by Carol Wallman and Elaine Mills of Guild memorabilia and to purchase sets of notecards with photographs of Guild members in performance, designed by Pam Anderton and specially printed for the occasion.

There are some sets left.

An outstanding feature of the day, occasioned by the venue, the National Centre Resource Dance, was the fascinating exhibition of Laban Archives - including many of Laban's drawings - and the splendid guidance and elucidation by Chris Jones, archivist. This was a great privilege and much appreciated.





Janet Whettam with Valerie Preston Dunlop

After lunch members enjoyed workshops directed by Anna Carlisle and Wendy Hermelin. Anna encouraged us to think about and perform patterns arising from the spatial frameworks of Laban's crystalline forms, emphasizing the cube, building them into a group sequence representing the word 'crystal'. Wendy Hermelin engaged her groups in flowing movements across the room, developing into an exploration of the crystalline forms.

Our special guests were members of the Suffolk Youth Theatre, directed by Michael Platt, which enchanted us by performing an extract from their current production, 'Yerma'. Their use of voices and props as well as their imaginative group movement, which was very skilfully choreographed, presented a tantalising preview of their forthcoming performances in Ipswich in May.

The movement choir planned and rehearsed by Susi and Sam Thornton involved everyone including the Suffolk Youth Theatre members in a unity of thinking, sensitivity and the flow of movement - full participation in an activity particularly reminiscent of Laban's work with large groups of dancers. Movement choirs have been produced for many years by Sam and Susi and more opportunities to take part in this unique and enjoyable experience of dancing in a movement choir would be most welcome.

The evening ended with a finger buffet during which Geraldine Stephenson presented Gordon Curl with a crystal in appreciation of his three years as magazine editor. Janet Whettam was given another crystal and she in turn presented crystals to all involved in running this most enjoyable day and to all members of Guild Council.

agm participants' comments

When I joined a local Laban based dance workshop, little did I know that I would be performing in one of Susi and Sam's movement choirs at Surrey University in front of an audience! Although I do not come from a 'dance' background, I teach dance as part of my job as a primary school teacher and I really love art and creativity in the Arts. I found the whole experience thoroughly enjoyable and would certainly love to do it again! The atmosphere was incredible and I met so many warm, friendly people that it felt as though I had known them for years!

Mira Sievert's lecture was very informative about her research into how she had developed a connection between Laban teaching and Indian sacred dance. She combined theory with a beautiful, practical demonstration of music and dance.

In the afternoon we enjoyed two excellent dance workshops. Wendy Hermelin began by teaching us how to explore sudden and sustained movement, with some very fast movement, as we darted in and out of the crowd without touching one another. It was amazing how we all managed to do this without crashing into one another! She created a novel idea of us running like cheese graters! This seemed hilarious but very apt when we tried it out. as the wind just seemed to flow through us! She helped us to develop creative tableaux of movement through the elements of fire, wind, earth and water. The music mirrored so perfectly the movement of each element that it was easy to become lost in the performance as we moved from performing individually to performing in a group of 3, 5 and then 6. It was incredible how much we achieved in the space of only one hour!

The second workshop was led by Anna Carlisle, the President of the Laban Guild. This time we worked in three large groups to form huge crystals, performing synchronised diagonal movements to each corner of the crystal. This led us to creative movement through the letters of CR- YS- TAL in our groups of 3, before returning to our crystal to repeat our original composition. Using the 26 letters of the alphabet was a brilliant idea!

It was an extremely exhilarating and enjoyable day. The only thing missing was a video, as I would have loved to revisit the workshops and the Movement Choir dance. Rudolf Laban had the insight to video his success and I feel that we should follow his lead and provide a record for future generations and who knows, one day we may form part of the Laban Archives!

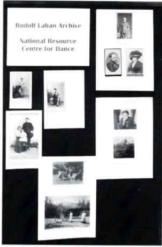
Hazel West



Anna Carlisle with Warren Lamb

Many congratulations to all concerned for such a superb day. It was beautifully put together and as a participant I came away feeling so inspired by the event.

It was such a positive and exciting day, bringing together the past, the present and hope for the future. The programme was beautifully balanced; academia, choreography, drama and community dance, and the added bonus of seeing Mr. Laban himself on film!



Congratulations also to Gordon Curl and Pam Anderton for producing such a thought-provoking magazine to mark the event. Here's to the next sixty years.

Liz Norman

...the gentle tones of the lecture and the flat, slightly bowing hand in the movement demonstration... simplicity and clarity... the beauty of form as captured in Laban's drawings and the rather stern looking people in the photographs... Anna's workshop... platonic dimensions reiterated... finally I can feel some depth as the middle of my spine pulls backwards into the C-curve ... points of the salt crystal... a simple spatial form and a simple sequence so I can concentrate on quality... shoulder rotation, dip, arms raise in opposition, return to place ... four corners... spelling CRYSTAL in trios by placing the letters of the alphabet at points in the crystal... she found a framework and stuck to it and so must we... the creative tension starts and the framework challenges our bodies and minds as we are stretched to look in new ways... Vanessa holds me... she holds me upside-down and it is exciting...Wendy's workshop... images... sliding through ...darting between... stopping suddenly... stopping with sustainment, like smoke... this is fundamentally important I think... there are so many ways of doing the (apparently) same thing... Walli talks about 'stop and arrive', 'stop in readiness'... free flow and running as if you are a cheese grater... Wendy's choreography starts with stillness except for the direction 'Ignite the spark', I love that... into 6's, the cube, pressure from all sides, contact and release... we contacted straight on, hands, shoulders, arms and then tilted it, I wouldn't have thought of that... tilting it... then Suffolk Youth Theatre... we saw them put under the sheets to form a vast bed but it was still dramatic when 4 people on stage suddenly became 20 as the sheets were pulled off!... the dynamics in their voices; fine and lilting, firm and booming... the washing and drying of the sheets; scrubbing, pummelling, wringing, the shapes across the stage, twos on one side swing their sheets up as the other side floats theirs down and then floats and swings... then all of us together sharing the dance in the Movement Choir... the Community of Dancers and I have a place in that community as I slip between the faces of the crystal... Thanks everyone.

Jenny Haycocks

comments from michael platt's group

(Suffolk Youth Theatre gave an inspiring performance of part of their production 'Yerma'. It was wonderful to have so many young people to join us for the day and from their comments below they obviously gained a great deal from the experience themselves.)

Saturday left me able to think about my body and spatial awareness much more confidently than previously. I am not usually a movement thinker. However, I found the workshops completely out of the ordinary and inspiring! I have never thought about the way the body can resemble and represent something so earthy as the elements. It truly was like taking movement back to the beginning of dance, creating beautiful movements! I was so happy with the response we received from the *Guild* members. In front of so many men and women who have such high standards. It was an honour to perform and a thrill that they enjoyed the performance. We got such positive feedback. It was amazing and I feel we all left Surrey feeling exhilarated and ready to march onward towards the final performance.

Stefanie

It was great to work within the disciplines of Labans' ideas. I loved using shape to form my dance. The opportunity to perform in front of a live audience was invaluable and will help me to better my performance in the final production. The members of the *Laban Guild* were great to work with. They were fun, energetic and created a brilliant environment to work in.

I found the workshops inspiring and it was interesting to work with many different people with different abilities. I think it was good for the company to have the opportunity to perform. I felt it was a performance although I didn't feel nervous and was quite confident as all the people made us feel so welcome.



I found the way in which we used 3D shapes to influence our dance improvisations useful and a different way of working, which I will value in the future.

Kate Neudecker

The experience of the workshops awakened my passion for different styles of movement. I was inspired by the variation of individual styles and I have taken on board aspects from all that I witnessed on the day. The opportunity to perform was amazing. To know that you are performing in front of established dancers and teachers was at first daunting, yet to be given such positive feedback and advice from our

peers taught me a lot about my engagement throughout our piece and the impact it had on the audience.

Sarah



- •The people who ran the workshops were great.
- ·Nice to work with older people.
- Never thought of doing the movements in the workshop
- •The staff were good.
- ·Was an extremely enjoyable event
- •Good to have the chance of working with different age groups.
- •The different types of dancing and movements that we did were a new experience.
- •A memorable aspect of the day was running like a cheese grater!

I found sharing ideas with people of different age groups and various backgrounds and experiences exciting. By combining ideas I found we could create unique ideas that expressed our different viewpoints.

Dancing in the workshops helped with becoming more aware of space and how it can be manipulated. This is useful in both technique for dancing and spatial awareness, from dance to acting.

I loved the workshops. It was a chance for me to participate in some exercises that I never could have seen myself doing. The reception we got after the performance gave me a real buzz and gave me a preview to the sort of reception we would receive in May. I found the day an exhilarating experience.



I enjoyed the workshops, particularly the first one because I felt strangely content afterwards. I thought that our performance went well and that the audiences' comments gave me more confidence for the real performances.

Andrew

It was invaluable to experience, first hand, the teachings of Laban and his legacy. The workshops encouraged me to evaluate the psychology behind movement and helped me to develop a sense of self-awareness.

- •Good to work with such a wide variety of characters.
- •Workshops were very different from anything else I have previously done and I learnt many different things.
- ·Very enjoyable
- •Great, memorable and interesting experience!
- Creative
- Beneficial
- Good to work with a range of people
- Fun! Especially performing to such an appreciative audience

Saturday was so much fun. I felt everyone made us feel very comfortable and it was so good to work with people that were not the same age group as us. I have learnt quite a bit about movement and Rudolf Laban.

It felt very exciting to perform for the first time to such an appreciative audience, it really helped my confidence towards the show.



- ·Helped me be more creative
- Learned new techniques to help my dancing and general movement
- Much more confident

- ·Really enjoyed the final group work
- •Helpful -because it was different from my usual workshops.
- •It built up my confidence to work with people I didn't know and of all different ages
- ·Everyone was friendly and welcoming
- •There were many new and original ideas about crystals and their shapes



It was very interesting to see other people of a variety of different ages expressing themselves through movement and to get the chance to work in a group situation with people I was not used to working with. There was a very friendly atmosphere. Everyone seemed uninhibited and welcoming which allowed me to feel relaxed and able to perform freely. Thank you for a wonderful experience.

Nancy Barnes



the Laban lecture 2006 by Mira Henrike Sievert MA

'A New Sacred Dance Practice' Relating Laban's Movement Harmony and Indian Kathak Dance

Introduction

In this lecture I present to you what may be called a **spiritual** or an **esoteric** interpretation of Laban's movement harmony, by relating Laban's concept of harmony to an Indian holistic worldview that underlies the contemporary practice of "classical" Indian dance forms. Between the two different traditions there are striking parallels concerning the use of geometrical symbols in creating a **sacred** dance practice. You will recognise that **crystalline forms** play an eminent role in this.

My argument is based on Carol-Lynne Moore's reinterpretation of Laban's choreutic theory in her PhD thesis *The Choreutic Theory of Rudolf Laban: Form and Transformation* (University of Surrey, 1999), Chapter 9. Carol-Lynne writes about Laban's book on *Choreutics* (1966):

In the foreground is an exoteric study of the traceforms of human movement ... in the background there is a mystical universe-in-flux, governed by Rosicrucian principles and shaped by **sacred geometry**.

As a result of her analysis of Laban's choreutic forms (looking at hundreds of drawings in the Laban archives), Carol-Lynne concludes that Laban envisioned a new form of **sacred** dance practice for contemporary western society. She points out that Laban dreamt of "another life for dance", one that belonged neither to the theatre stage nor to the communal holiday, but that restored the "sacred" power of dance ritual:

It is possible that Laban intended choreutics to be not only a secular practice but also a sacred one, not only a study of form, but also a means of transformation.

(Moore, 1999, p.262)

With a totally different focus Marion Kant (2002) has also pointed out that Laban had an urge to "create dance anew" (Kant, 2002, p.46). Kant bases her findings on Laban's early German book *Die Welt des Taenzers* (1920). She states that "The book is a summary of Laban's mission to find and then formulate the criteria for a spiritual dance." (Kant, 2002, p.52). She states that Laban attempted through the study of crystals and their inherent harmony to establish a cultic dance practice in which the dance served as "a means of transcendence" into "a spiritual world beyond the visible" (Kant, 2002, p.48).

Laban himself alludes to a spiritual dance experience in his autobiography (*A Life for Dance*, 1975). He describes how the dancer perceives "another, entirely different, world" behind the "external events" (Laban, 1975, p.89):

There is an energy behind all occurrences and material things for which it is almost impossible to find a name. A hidden, forgotten

landscape lies there, the land of silence, the realm of the soul, and in the centre of this land stands the swinging temple, ... which is built of dances which are prayers.

Laban called these dances in German Reigenwerk (circle works). Carol-Lynne suggests that he gave an outline of their spatial forms in his choreutic theory. She explains how Laban used principles of sacred geometry and occult anatomy to compose the choreutic scales in form of symmetrical circular chains that oscillate rhythmically around the body center. In his autobiography Laban states that the experience of these Reigen dances leads the dancer and the viewer to a deeper perception of the self and the nature of phenomena. It seems that he thinks of the whirling dances of the Sufis that impressed him as a boy when he writes

Whirling movements of a Sufi and of a Kathak dancer

"As a rapid turning movement makes the surrounding objects vanish in a whirl, so dance-like thinking and feeling brings about a consciousness of one's innermost self."

(Laban, A Life for Dance, 1975, p.177f.)





Indian Kathak dancers typically perform large numbers of rapidly turning movements around the vertical axis of the body (chakkars). Spinning and spiralling in combination with a strong footwork in high speed is the most striking characteristic of Kathak dance. The history of Kathak dance during the Muslim rule at the courts in North India since the fifteenth century suggests that there is a relationship with the Sufi tradition.

In my PhD project I am using Laban's geometrical model of movement harmony as a foil to better understand principles of composition in Kathak dance. In the intercultural exchange with Indian Kathak dancers I am experiencing that Laban's method of "thinking in terms of movement" stimulates a process of reflection and a somatic dialogue that is new and exciting for both sides. I am happy that my Indian dance friend and collaborator Ojasi Sukhatankar is today with us and that she will also show some movements. She has studied Kathak dance with Srimati Rohini Bhate in Pune where I met her for the first time. And she came to Surrey University last year to do her Masters in Dance Studies. Also with us is Christiaan Bekaert from Belgium who is my partner. We lived in India together for five years where he studied classical Indian music and Ayurveda while I learned Kathak dance at Kumudini Lakhia's institute Kadamb in Ahmadabad/Gujarat. He is going to accompany our movement demonstrations on the tabla and with his voice.

A few remarks concerning the notion "esoteric"

To prevent prejudices, let me start with a few remarks concerning the notion esoteric. The concept of Western esotericism evolved as a consequence of the European history of religions since the Renaissance. Throughout the antiquities and during the middle ages there was no need to talk about an esoteric or secret tradition of thought, as the realms of physics and metaphysics were not divided. The prevalent view of the universe was integrative and holistic. Religious experience and intuitive knowledge were not opposed to scientific experimentation and mathematical description of natural phenomena. (This is still the case in India today, certainly concerning the background of the traditional art forms. What we consider as esoteric ideas often belongs to the common view of the people in India, where the gods are still worshipped at crossroads and where marriages are arranged according to astrological calculations.)

Pythagoras and Plato were the first philosophers in the West who discovered the value and the power of geometry to describe universal laws of movement. Their visions of the universe combined mathematical description with speculative thought and spiritual insight. Laban acknowledges that the **wisdom of circles** (choreosophia) that forms the roots of his choreutic theory is based on Pythagoras and Plato. (Laban, 1966, Foreword)

Beginning in the twelfth century, a gradual separation took place in Europe between the sciences of nature and theological knowledge. This development was accelerated when the philosophy of Aristotle began to prevail over Plato's cosmology. At the dawn of the renaissance, however (end of the fifteenth century), Plato and his successors, the Neoplatonians, were rediscovered (in original) by some humanist philosophers in the circles of Cosimo the Medici in Florence, namely by Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola. Concentrating on the interface between metaphysics and cosmology, they attempted to develop a kind of **extratheological** method for giving an account of the relations between the universal and the particular.

(Faivre, 1998, p.112)

For this purpose they collected a variety of ancient sources including Hermetism, the Stoa, Gnosticism, Pythagoreanism, Neopythagoranism, Plato, Neoplatonism, Astrology, Alchemy, the Jewish Kaballah, and *philosophia occulta* or *magia* (a magical vision of nature understood as a living being replete with signs and correspondences, which could be deciphered and interpreted). The term *philosophia perennis* was coined for designating what was believed to be the core of all these different traditions. They became a more or less autonomous body of reference that was soon considered as **esoteric** with respect to the **exoteric** religion of the denominational churches. Rosicrucianism emerged as a new current within the **esoteric** tradition at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Western esotericism is thus a broad historical current within the European history of religion that is based on a Pythagorean/Platonic worldview. According to Faivre it can be considered as a form of thought identifiable by a number of six fundamental characteristics or components. These largely correspond to the principles of Rosicrucianism that Carol-Lynne has identified in Laban's work. And they correspond to the fundamental aspects of an Indian

worldview that underlies a unified vision of the traditional Indian art forms according to Kapila Vatsyayan, Ananda Coomaraswamy and others.

Combining Antoine Faivre's and Carol-Lynne Moore's principles of an **esoteric** worldview, I will define six components that underlie **sacred** dance practice according to Laban and Indian aesthetics. The same ideas recur in the different traditions in form of different images and symbols.

Six principles of an "esoteric" worldview and sacred dance practice

(according to Moore, 1999, p.192ff. and Faivre, p.119f.)

The principle of correspondences.

This is the old idea of the microcosm and the macrocosm. "As above, so below; as below so above." Each part of the universe mirrors the whole. The human body mirrors the body of the Cosmic or Divine Man (purusha). The movements of the human body mirror the movements in the universe. *Quote Laban (Second Fact of Space-Movement): "Our body is the mirror through which we become aware of the ever circling motions of the universe".

2. The principle of vibration or living nature.

The whole of existence is a continuum extending from the material to the spiritual. Nature is permeated by the light of consciousness. The whole universe is creative vibration. Space and time and movement and energy are inseparable. Differences in the planes of being are due to differences in their rate and character of vibration. Each vibration expresses itself in a definite geometrical figure. a definite colour, and a definite sound and rhythm. Within the layering of vibrational rates, the human form consists of different bodies with increasing subtlety from the outer physical body to the innermost self that is one with the concentrated energy of the universal consciousness. Understanding is based on the network of sympathies that weave together nature and man. *Quote Laban (Sixth Fact of Space-Movement): "So far the experience of the interdependence of dynamospheric and kinespheric sequences has shown us that the conventional idea of space as a phenomenon that can be separated from time and force and from expression is completely erroneous." "Matter itself is a compound of vibrations." (Introduction to Choreutics)

The principle of polarity and the centre.

All phenomena manifest polarity of contrasting qualities (male/female, matter/spirit, vertical/horizontal, up/down, light/darkness). Through duality, the Oneness of the universe manifests itself. Through the crossing of opposites new forms are created. Rhythm creates periodic change from one pole to the other. The initiate finds peace and bliss in a balanced centre between the pairs and poles of opposites. ("He who finds the Centre of Himself, finds the Centre of the Cosmos. For, at last, they are One!" Magus Incognito.) *Quote Laban (First Fact of Space-Movement) (after he has established the polar spatial directions and the three crosses of axes) "Innumerable directions radiate from the centre of our body and its kinesphere into infinite space."

4. The principle of imagination and mediations Through imagination and mediations of all kinds such as rituals, sacred dances, symbolic images and geometrical forms the initiate develops a knowledge (gnosis) of the

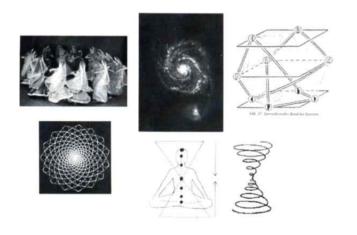
invisible structure of the world and the deeper relationships between the particular and the universal. *Quote Laban (Fifth Fact of Space-Movement): "We should not forget that every gesture and action of our body is a deeply rooted mystery and not a mere outward function or trick, as many regard it in modern times. It was thus that tumbling or standing on the head could once have been a sacred play."

The principle of transformation

The process of knowing entails a transformation of the whole being, including a refinement of the senses and a spiritualisation of the body. *Quote Laban (Autobiography): "The dancer saturates his living self, his human body, with forces otherwise perceptible only separately from it and thus when he places his body before us, it appears in a transcended form. Through this form we can see the source, we can see the very reality of another higher world which we otherwise sense only in our conscience." (Laban, 1975, p.180)

The principle of cycles and spirals

There is a tendency for all things to move in circles around a centre that mirrors the centre of the universe. Progress occurs in spirals. The world materializes and man spiritualizes along the same spiral path. The entire universe is the spiral manifestation of the still centre: as it rotates it expands, and while still rotating, it contracts and



disappears to the source whence it came like an infinite process of contraction and expansion, of breathing-in and breathing-out (Purce, 1974). *Quote Laban (Chapter 9): "All movement is an eternal change between loosening and binding, between the creation of knots with the concentrating and unifying power of binding and the creation of unfolding lines in the process of loosening and unwinding... with the intermediary state of a lemniscate."

Summary: sacred dance practice is conceived as a means to embody and to become aware of the universal power of movement. Sacred dance forms typically represent the basic structure of the universe that is conceived in form of geometrical symbols. The practice of sacred dance leads towards altered states of consciousness and bodily presence in which the primary energy of the universe, the divine life-force, transforms the individual human being and provides a glimpse of eternity. Many sacred dance forms create circles or spirals that symbolise the creation of the cosmos as well as the spiritual journey of man from the source outwards and backwards again in a process of concentration. Jill Purce in her book on *The Mystic Spiral* (1974) says:

Infinity is thus reached through a process of

ordering and concentrating. The **One** who is everywhere can be found in the centre of being: a concentration of the **One** as everywhere into the **One** as centre. This organization and concentration is implicit in the diamond, whose constituent carbon atoms, while the same as those of graphite and coal, have here reached a state of maximum order and perfection. It is the clarity gained by such an ordering that is the goal. The spiral journey ... comes to its final transparency in the perfection of the diamond.

(Purce, 1974, p.16)

Before we consider the crystalline spatial forms of sacred geometry, let's have a look at different cultural images/symbols of the divine energy, the **dynamics** of creation.

Images of the universal power of movement, using the human body

Creator Spiritus and Shiva Nataraja

The universal power of movement envisioned as the life-force of the divine creator





In the Christian tradition the Father enlivers the cosmos through the vibrations of his breath (pneuma, spiritus).

In the Indian tradition Siva creates, preserves and destroys the universe through the vibrations of his rhythmic dance (sakti, prana).

In the Christian tradition the Holy Spirit (Greek pneuma, Latin spiritus) manifests the divine life-force. It is conceived as the breath of the Father. Together with the ordering power of the Divine Word or Logos the Holy Spirit governs the evolution of the natural world as well as the process of salvation.

The Indian tradion has envisioned the manifestation of the universe as the **cosmic dance of Shiva Nataraja**, "the king of the dance". Shiva's dance symbolises his power of creation/his energy or **shakti**, that is embodied in his divine consort, Parvati. The active power of God is perceived as the feminine principle of reality. In tantric teaching the **shakti** is identified with **prana**, the universal life-force or "breath of life" that becomes manifest in the human body as the physical breath.

In another terminology the absolute spirit behind the visible universe is conceived as *purusa* who remains untouched by movement and change, while the creation occurs through the all-embracing womb of his feminine counterpart, the *prakriti*, who represents the material cause of existence as well as the power of movement. According to the imagery of the Vedas and the Upanishads the Cosmic Man (*purusa*) stands in space like a pillar within the periphery of a circle.

He forms a **vertical axis** that is related to the (universal) concept of the *axis mundi* which ensures communication between earth and sky. The body of the *purusa* extends

into all parts of the universe, and from his different limbs and organs all other beings are created. The human body as the microcosm mirrors the shape of macrocosmic Man in Space.

The cosmic man in space and the first position of Kathak dance (sama)





The same image of man in a circle with the central median as his vertical axis reoccurs in the teaching of the old Indian drama, the *Natyashastra*, where the first position of the dancer/actor, called *sama*, is described as a vertical stance of perfect balance, the feet on the ground and equidistant from a hypothetical vertical median (*brahmasutra*) and the navel in the centre. The two extended arms form a horizontal axis, and all movement and action starts from this moment of perfect equipoise and and returns to its stillness. The movement energy flows out of the centre, creates beautiful forms in the space around the body and returns back into the centre (Vastyayan, 1997).

MOVEMENT DEMONSTRATION for all:

 Mira: Vertical alignment, becoming aware of the energy centres (chakras) along the vertical axis.
 Feeling how we connect earth and sky through the upward extension of our body. Becoming aware of an upward spiralling flow of energy inside.

Ojasi: Creating the shape of the purusa.

The cosmic tree in Islamic iconography, a symbol of organic growth.

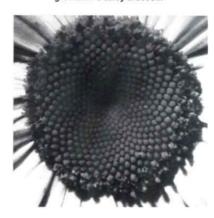




In many traditions the vertical axis becomes the tree of life. As such it is prevalent in Muslim iconography that avoids anthropomorphic images of the divine and instead uses organic, biomorphic imagery. The movement technique of Kathak dance might have been inspired by Islamic organic imagery. Within the Sanskrit tradition the image of the cosmic tree is related to the power of the seed (*bija*) that grows into a plant and a tree that flowers and bears fruit and becomes a seed again.

The example of the daisy shows a pattern generated by two Golden Spirals that move in opposite directions. Through the joining of the opposites in a spiral pattern something new is born.

The Golden Spiral as a pattern of organic growth in a daisy blossom







MOVEMENT DEMONSTRATION by Ojasi, all are following: Let the limbs of the upper body grow out of the central axis of the body like the branches, blossoms and leaves of a flowering tree. Feel the movement of *prana* that flows from the body centre through the different limbs into the periphery of the body and through the extremities into space and back into the body centre again.

Sacred anatomy

In the tantric worldview the human body has become an image of the cosmos. It is seen as a tool, or *yantra*, to enable awareness of the divine power of creativity. It consists of different layers of subtlety. The physical body is permeated and surrounded by the *pranic* body. The *prana* or divine life force flows in the subtle body through



The fourteen energy channels (nadis) of the pranic body.

a complex system of energy channels, the nadis.

The central channel (sushumna) corresponds to the vertical axis of the spine. The universal Shakti sleeps in the human body at the base of the spine in form of a coiled snake (kundalini). Yogic practices aim at awakening this energy so that it rises and spirals upwards along the vertical axis. During its upward journey the kundalini energy awakens a number of seven energy centres (chakras) that are placed along the spine.

Each of them is envisioned in the form of a lotus or a wheel and is the seat of a cosmic element. At the crown of the head the *kundalini* energy unites with the universal power of Siva, and the yogi experiences divine bliss (*ananda*) that permeates his whole being. Then the Shakti descends again into the root centre at the base of the spine.

The activation of the divine creative energy in the human body







The ascending circuits of the Sri Yantra and the corresponding planes of the body cosmos.



Dance as a form of yogic meditation

When Indian dance is practiced as a form of yoga (sacred dance), an analogous process of energy transformation occurs. I suggest that in Kathak dance practice the footwork with its swift rhythmical weight shifts from the left to the right in combination with the pivotal turns awakens the inner life-force and generates a spiralling upwards flow of the pranic energy that leads to an experience of inner freedom and bliss that is akin to a spiritual awakening. While the yogi activates the subtle energy through silent meditation and breath control, the dancer actively incorporates the creative vibrations and ordering movements of the



cosmos. Jill Purce says that the dancer's body becomes the universe, his movements its movements; and when these are harmonious, then he is not only in harmony with himself, but with the universe which he has become.

It is perhaps through the physical movement of our whole bodies that the spiral path may be most real to us. Every time we turn or circle we are activating the inner energies and their cosmic

counterparts.

(Purce, 1974)

Carol-Lynne assumes that Laban had some knowledge of



Laban's drawing of a seated figure in a dodecahedral scaffolding suggests that he had some knowledge of yogic meditation (Moore, 1999, p.257).



A tantric yogi in the lotus position

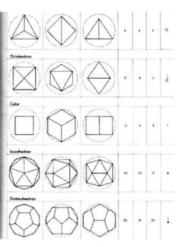
Indian yogic meditation. She compares a drawing by Laban that shows a seated figure in a dodecahedral scaffolding with the lotus position in yoga, suggesting that Laban's drawing symbolizes "the interrelations of inner and outer space, **dynamosphere** and **kinesphere**, microcosm and macrocosm" (Moore, 1999, p.258). The interrelationship

of the concepts of the dynamosphere and the kinesphere is crucial for the understanding of Laban's concept of movement harmony. But here we are going to concentrate on the spatial forms and the shaping process. To illuminate Laban's concept of spatial harmony let us have a look at Plato's cosmology following Keith Critchlow's (1980) interpretation of the *Timaeus*.

Laban's use of sacred geometry, following Plato's vision of cosmic harmony

When Laban "set out to recover the forgotten sacred power of dance", he did not attempt to adopt or to revive sacred dances of any cultural tradition. Like Kandinski, he opted for abstraction. In the process of abstraction he discovered proportional, geometrical correspondences between the structure of the human body and **Platonic solids** and other polyhedral forms. He discovered the same ratios in the spatial architecture of human movement. In **sacred geometry** these ratios are viewed as structural and universal, governing processes of formation, generation, regeneration and transformation.

In the western tradition Pythagoras was the first philosopher who discovered the symbolism of proportions, the laws of geometry and the principles of musical harmony. And Plato built his cosmology on the findings of Pythagoras. In the *Timaeus* he constructs a cosmic harmony through the



proportional relationships between the five regular solids, that were named after him the "Platonic solids"

the tetrahedron (fire),

the octahedron (air),

the cube (earth),

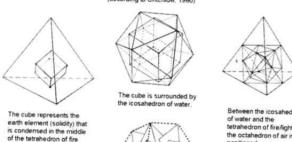
the icosahedron (water) and

the dodecahedron (space).

The concept of proportion is based on "ratio". The common Greek word for proportion is *logos*. According to Plato our cosmos is the work of an intelligent cause. The creator of the universe was overflowing with "goodness". And he knew that something intelligible would be more "beautiful" than anything that does not have reason. He thus created the cosmos as an image (*icon*) of the archetypal world of pure ideas in which the visible forms are eternally present as abstract geometrical symbols. And he created a world soul that permeated all that was bodily with a movement called *perichoresis*, the word for the sacred round dances of the ancient Greek mysteries, and thus gave an order to the movements of the visible world. All the elements are linked by the divine bonds of harmony or love (*philia*).

The key for the understanding of these relationships is that our human perception is governed by the same divine principles that constitute the order of the natural world. Because we are given a ratio and logical understanding, we perceive all movements in the macrocosm and in the microcosm according to the same proportional laws. This is what Laban alludes to when he says that our mind seems to perceive space in the light of the same laws of structure that govern the architecture of our bodies and the traceforms of our movements in space. He discovered that the same laws govern the structure of organic and inorganic matter from the growth of crystals to the movements of dance. And he concluded that the whole of nature seems to be governed by the same *choreutic* principles, the laws of interdependent circles (Laban, 1966).

Plato's geometrical model of cosmic harmony



The dodecahedron of the heavens contains the tetrahedron five times, giving rise to the Golden Mean spiral

Plato constructed the universe in such a way that he related each of the regular solids with one of the primeval elements, and he explained their relationship through the proportional relationships between the "Platonic solids".

The whole universe is based on the duality between the principles of solidity (earth) and light (fire), because whatever comes into being is tangible and visible. The solidity of the earth is manifest in the cube. Fire or light is associated with the tetrahedron which is the minimal expression of three-dimensionality in the emergence of our world like the radiant or light source. The cube/earth is condensed in the middle of Plato's model, surrounded by the light of the tetrahedron in such a way that the centres of the faces of the tetrahedron are the contact points of the eight nodes or corners of the cube. The cube is sorrounded by the waters, represented by the icosahedron in such a way that the centres of eight of its twenty faces hold the nodes of the cube exactly in position. Around the icosahedron, and related in the Golden Mean proportion, is the envelope of air represented by the octahedron that is in turn contained by the all-enveloping tetrahedron of fire. Water (icosahedron) relates to earth (cube) by the transcendental square root of three. Air (octahedron) relates to water (icosahedron) by the Golden Mean proportion. And fire (tetrahedron) relates to air (octahedron) by the transcendental square root of two. The dodecahedron plays a special role in that it contains the whole universe. It has been related to the fifth element of space (ether). Critchlow has shown that there are five ways in which the tetrahedron of fire that contains all the other elements may fit regularly inside the dodecahedron. If all five tetrahedra were were inside at the same time, the effect would be to have a five-pointed star or pentragram on or in each pentagonal face of the dodecahedron, thus giving rise to a Golden Mean spiral path to each face (Critchlow, 1980, p.166).

Lawlor in his book on Sacred Geometry (1982) mentions that the Hindu tradition associates the icosahedron with the Purusa. He shows how all the other forms can be generated within the icosahedron without touching it. The dodecahedron which arises first as the dual of the

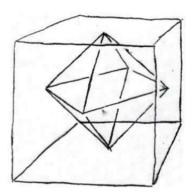
The Indian tradition has associated the icosahedron with the Purusha, the unmanifest spirit, and the dodecahedron with Prakrib, the ferminine power of creation and manifestation (Lawlor 1982 p. 10%).





icosahedron is connected with *Prakriti*, the Universal Mother. In the geometric construction the dodecahedron touches all the forms of creation "within her silent, observing partner" (Lawlor, 1982, p.103).

Laban experimented with the interrelationship of the



Dual relationship of octahedron and cube Sketch by Laban, unpublished.

different polyhedra to construct harmonious movement sequences. I suggest that the dynamic proportional relationship between the octahedron and the cube helps to understand the construction of Kathak dance sequences

MOVEMENT DEMONSTRATION by Ojasi and Mira: transformation of the dimensional cross of the octahedron into the diagonals of the cube, a creative reconstruction of a shaping process in Kathak dance, using Laban's model of space to choreograph an amad sequence.

Indian power diagrams (yantras)

The tantric tradition has used the basic geometrical forms to create *yantras* that are used for meditation. Like in Plato's worldview the geometrical symbols are believed to reveal the inner structure of the cosmos. Each *yantra* manifests an aspect of the primordial creative energy (*sakti*). It evolves out of the *central point* (*bindu*) or "seed" in a logic progression of forms. The most elementary shape

is the triangle that evolves out of the crossing of two lines.



The inverted triangle is the symbol of the creative feminine power (sakti). And the triangle with the apex upwards denotes the male principle (purusa, shiva). The interpenetration of both in form of a star-hexagon represents the interplay of both in the cosmic dance of creation, showing the fusion of

polarities: the male and the female, matter and spirit, the static and the kinetic in a perfect state of unity.

The most famous of all yantras is the Sri Yantra, a



vision of the totality of existence, that is formed by the interpenetration of two sets of triangles, four, apex upward, representing the male principle, and five, apex downwards, representing the female principle. In one of the books on *The Art of Tantra* (Rawson,

1973, p.67) I found an amazing picture of an icosahedron of rock crystal with the explanation that its triangular facets "condense the significance of the Sri Yantra, used for meditation". The initiate enters the yantra mentally on a spiral pathway of increasing concentration and ordering of all



inner movements until he reaches the central point. The **outer square** symbolises the substratum of the terrestial world that has to be transcended. The **circle** symbolises the cyclical forces, the contraction and expansion of the universe, and the round of cosmic rhythms. Within this image lies the notion that time evolves with no beginning



and no end (cf. the image of the snake that bites into its own tail). The lotus blossom illustrates the unfolding power of the divine essence. It 'out-petalling' represents the the soul flower in the process of spiritual realization. In the process of meditation the geometrical symbol, the aspirant and the universe become one. The Sri Yantra can be viewed as a composite image of the subtle body. A common practice is to equate the circuits of the yantra with the body chakras. The aspirant's lotusfield (padma-kshetra) is formed of the



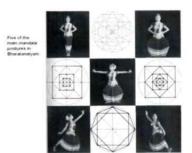


Indian Bharatanatyam dancer in the Sri Yantra

A drawing by Laban: extension of the human body in the kinesphere.

energy-centres of his *pranic* body. When projected threedimensionally, the circuits of the **Sri Yantra** become the pathway of an ascending spiral.

In tantric anatomy the whole body has been identified with the **Sri Yantra**. Indian dance scholars have projected the **Sri Yantra** onto the body of a Bharatanatyam dancer. The geometrical power diagram corresponds to the dynamic spatial architecture of the basic dance postures. The body centre coincides with the central point of the **yantra**. The figure resembles Laban's drawing of the human figure in the geometrical model of the kinesphere. The body



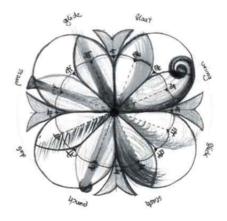
extends out of the navel centre into all directions of space. When performed as a form of meditation, the dance itself becomes a power diagram (sakti rupa) that makes visible the dynamic order of space.



In contrast to other Indian dance styles the basic forms of Kathak dance represent organic patterns of growth that are symbolised by the transformation of a dimensional cross of axis into three dimensional spirals.

A new form of 'Sacred Choreutic Dance'

I suggest using the Indian concept of the *yantra* as a tool to embody Laban's vision of a "new" form of sacred choreutic dance. What has happened is that living in India and trying to learn the Kathak dance technique, I have developed a somatic warm-up for myself using Feldenkrais movements,



yoga postures and Bartenieff Fundamentals. Reading about tantric philosophy and studying Laban's theory of movement harmony at the same time, my somatic warm-up developed into a "flower power diagram" that evolves out of a seed and grows into a blossoming flower while



spiralling upwards through different level changes into an upright vertical stance, using the power of the diagonals. I am going to show it to you. Developed as a warm-up

for Kathak dance movements, it has become a meditative dance practice of its own. I am starting to use it as a source base to improvise and to create little dance sequences that in the future might serve as a means to enliven the dialogue with Indian Kathak dancers. I am dreaming of creating choreographies, together with Ojasi, in which we combine traditional Kathak movements with Laban based choreutic forms.

Before we share our little "flower power diagram" with you, Chris will say a few words concerning the relationship between bodily movements and the shaping of sounds in Indian *dhrupad* singing. There is an underlying yogic practice of breathing (*pranayama*) through which he shapes the vocal sounds with the inner movement of the subtle life energy (*prana*). When the patterns of harmonic sound vibration are made visible, they occur in the form of geometrical power diagrams





Angelica Archangelica

In his own compositions Chris uses the Latin names of medicinal western plants as *mantras*, sound syllable sequences that manifest the healing power of the plants.

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Mira Sievert

view from america

A friend of mine who is a wine connoisseur agreed to order the wine as he and I started dinner at a rather ordinary restaurant. When I paid my share of the bill I was surprised to find that the one bottle cost over \$100. Americans, Californians in particular, seem to be even more serious (and extravagant) about wines than the French.

Many have big wine cabinets controlled to maintain an even temperature. Wine magazines sell in great numbers. And supermarket sales have been rising. Partly this is because of a recent film *Sideways* in which the two main characters go on a tour of Californian vineyards drinking vast quantities of wine in what seemed to me a crude manner. Americans really work at it and much of their earnestly applied energy is to convince everyone that Californian wine is the best.

The French do not seem to work at it very hard. They take it for granted that their wine is the best in the world. When you buy wines in France it is assumed that you know what you are buying. Everyone is relaxed. The French may now be forced to work harder, however. Sales of their wines in world markets are in decline while Californian, Australian, South African and even English are increasing.

As part of the process of adapting to the American way of life I mostly buy Californian wines when I'm there. Rarely do I feel that I have made a good buy. On the odd occasions when I buy imported French wines they also seem unsatisfactory — not as good as wines bought in France. I began to wonder whether it is the fault of the climate or some failure of adaptation or discrimination on

my part. However, I have now found an answer. I have ended up buying wine cleverly marketed as though it is from the prestigious Napa Valley (whose products are normally very expensive) at \$1.99 a bottle. It is consistently good. As I did not want to think I was a customer of 'plonk' I was pleased to have confirmation from *The Economist*, which published an article on this production and marketing feat, that the wine was remarkably good.

The French are aghast. Their Appelation d'Origine Contrôlée is strictly enforced together with high prices. It may be possible to get good wines at lower prices but the process is subtle and not a matter for conversation. But many Americans, some of whom I know could afford expensive wines, serve their guests with the \$1.99 variety and boast about what a good bargain it is.

I am not sure whether there is anything we can learn from Laban about this. My recollection from all the meals I had with Laban either while travelling or at his home is that he did not drink, or very rarely. His management consultant partner, F C Lawrence, was a most enthusiastic and discriminating selector of wine. If any aspect of the cult did attract Laban it would probably be the 'dance' which sommeliers perform when tasting a new wine. Holding the glass high right as they inspect the colour, raising the glass to their nostrils with light touch, swirling the wine around their throat with exaggerated gesture and, finally, spitting it out with a forceful, forwards/downwards thrust. The French do it more elegantly than the Americans.

Warren Lamb

the dance of the crystal and the gel

A study of movement origins in Evolution - Part 1

Following on from Gordon Curl's most informative article Charismatic Crystals I felt it might be a good time to explore Movement Origins.

It is true that crystals have fascinated people of all times; Laban was no exception. He, like the ancient philosophers, would be overwhelmed by their beauty and symmetry as being the most pure and perfect expression of matter in space. As a schoolboy I used to grow crystals in an almost competitive manner but soon learnt how sensitive their growth could be to initial conditions and exterior disturbance. We grew crystals of most salts with ingredients bought from local chemists. I met lcos for the first time when my dance crazy sister Cecilia (Lustig) who, circa 1948, had thrown away her ballet points to follow Laban on bare feet, nagged me into making a personal Ico full size for her use. I had to guess what she would look like as a big 'X' in a door-sized postcard - I was an engineering student at the time. She took it along to a Dartington Summer School. The result was an order list for 9 more. I remember many prominent names: a Miss M Dewey (HMI); Miss Betty Meredith-Jones et.al. At £6.10s.6d a pop this was fine business for me; all folks contented with a one-size-fits-all product! Cecilia became the first Laban pioneer peripatetic teacher for Lancashire.

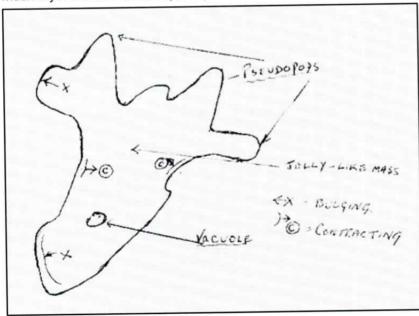
Strictly speaking crystals belong to the inorganic (none living) world. One thing is for sure; no crystals such as cubes, octahedrons even icosahedrons would have been floating about in the 'primordial' soup 3.5 to 4 billion years ago; physical conditions would not have been right. Most gems such as diamonds were created later under very strong geothermal pressures and temperatures as continents collided. Their particular shapes were governed by their atomic disposition and the super rigid Law of the Lattice and its endless repetitions; their weakness was fragmentation along cleavage lines ending up like silica crystals in sand. But never-the-less they were a joy to the ancient mathematicians who considered crystals to be pure spatialised matter. From which belief there arose much mysticism....too much perhaps!

Probably the most important influence in Evolution must be that of the **colloid**. Without colloids life would not exist. They function in macromolecules, proteans, thyroid function, blood plasma etc. Colloids are in fact suspensions of particles in fluids on a particle size scale of from 1 millionth of a millimetre up to mixtures of powder particles in common usage in cooking. Colloid suspensions are 'tacky' to touch; its name derives from the Greek 'colla' for glue. An internet search will reveal the countless applications of its properties from superglue and paints to medicines; colloids provide for a special science on their own. The ancients considered them to be mathematically 'untidy'!

It would thus appear that in the growth of life forms there are two influences or expressions of natural law: namely the crystalline ruled by the lines of the lattice i.e. life's weight-bearing structures such as shell protection for snails and bones of skeletons on the one hand and on the other the laws of the gel (an easier name for colloids). This accounts for the jelly-like containment of cell membranes which interface with the surrounding environment seeking information from neighbouring cells, also ambient temperature and pressure containment of cell membranes and nourishment. In the human form one could identify bulging and contraction of the muscles as a gel-like influence.

Gerard Bagley

(Co-founder and Director of British Dance Drama Theatre in Education for 27yrs; pupil of Laban 3yrs AMS Manchester; International guest teacher of Laban applications in education, therapy and theatre; obtaining support from Arts Council, Gulbenkian Foundation, British Council and others. Served on organising committee to found ASSITEJ (still existent) International Theatre Association for Children & Youth......Nearest dance interests before meeting Laban - motorcycle scrambling and mountain wild running.)



Gerard would like to receive members' comments on Part 1 of his essay; Part 2 will be published in the next edition of 'Movement & Dance'.

Amoeba Proteus Diagram

book review

Hitler's Dancers: German Modern Dance and the Third Reich

by Lilian Karina & Marion Kant translated by Jonathan Steinberg Berghalm Books New York/ Oxford ((2003) German Edition Verlagsgruppe Dornier GmbH (1996) Second updated Edition 1999

Karina and Kant's book attempts to fill a gap in the understanding of dance in Europe in the 20th century through shedding further light on the role of German modern dance in the emergence and consolidation of National Socialism in Germany. It is an attempt to find answers to some pertinent (and perhaps to some Laban Guild Members painful) questions:

1. Why was modern dance the only 'modern' arts genre the Nazis welcomed? Why was it not considered degenerate as was expressionism in graphic art, atonalism in music, and abstract formalism in architecture?

Why should dance be the exception to the general demolition of self-serving myths that protected Nazis in past-war Germany?

3. Why has a 'conspiracy af silence' been observed around the subject of German Modern Dance during the 1930 -1945 period?

4. Does it really matter now anyway?

To the last question the opinion of the authors is "Yes", because their researches have revealed how quickly artists can be corrupted by proximity to power or wealth, and how fictitious the idea of 'art for arts sake' actually is in practice.

Many opinions expressed by the authors are controversial. (To my knowledge some of them are definitely erroneous). They question established accounts and tarnish the accepted images of some very great figures in the history of dance, including Rudolf Laban. The book is in four parts.

PART 1 by Lilian Karina, an anti-Nazi professional dancer who worked in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s and went into exile in Sweden, questions why the German dance community accepted Nazi censorship and the exclusion of Jews from orchestras, ballet and dance companies without murmur or protest.

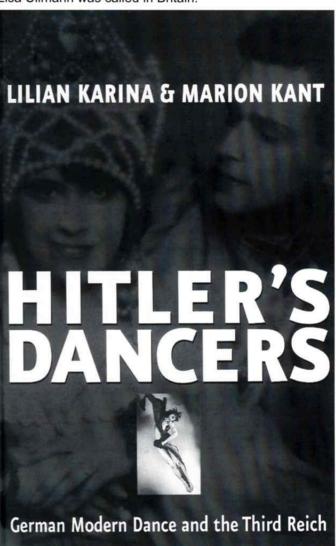
PART II by the dance historian Dr Marion Kant focuses on The Nazi Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, which gained absolute control of dance, opera and theatre in the 1930s.

PART III, also by Dr Kant, explores the ambivalence of the Nazi regime towards Jazz and swing dance.

PART IV is a very extensive Appendix of documents of source material, mainly from Federal German Archive sources, and also from theatre, opera and dance archives, including those in Cologne, Leipzig. Stockholm, the NRCD at Guildford and the New York Public Library.

First published in 1996 in German, the book created considerable debate and was discussed across Europe in nearly seventy reviews. It is now three years since the English edition was published yet I cannot recall ever having seen it mentioned in the Laban Guild Magazine.

Having been given a copy only very recently, the book came as s shock to me as I think it may be to many other Guild members who from the 1940s onwards became interested and involved in the practice of 'Modern Dance' or the 'Art of Movement' as the work of Rudolf Laban and Lisa Ullmann was called in Britain.



To me personally, the book was quite disturbing as it questions my acceptance of Laban and raises questions of ethical responsibility. Can artistic productivity abolish moral responsibility? In the 1940s I was just beginning my career as dancer and teacher. I was naïve, romantic, unrealistic, a politically ignorant dreamer that believed one should do things for interest and love and not for money. The Laban approach led me to a lifetime interest and career. I wept bitter tears when Laban died in 1958.

One cannot dispute the content of the enormous number of original documents displayed in the Appendix which make the book a valuable resource for those wishing to do further research. I think, however, it is valid to think more deeply about the motive of the authors whether: in the service of truthfulness in dance history; to emphasise the importance of morality in life; or to discredit present-day Laban institutions by discrediting Laban as a man?

Karina and Kant, in my view, show a certain arrogance, self-satisfaction, destructiveness and lack of compassion themselves in failing to consider more deeply what it must have been like for humane people to have to struggle to exist and work within the stranglehold of the Nazi state, where fear and cowardice and betrayal were survival tactics. Who knows how we ourselves would have reacted? By limiting themselves to the period 1930-45 and singling out Rudolf Laban, part of the (and his) story is missing. British and American views of him from the 1940s onwards do not appear to have been sought. We are only criticised for a 'conspiracy of silence'!

Some quotations (about Laban) from the book Hitler's Dancers:

- p.16 "Laban's readiness, and that of many other important dance artists, to accept the anti-Semitism of the Nazi regime as fast as they could makes later excuses of ignorance impossible."
- p.35 "Rudolf Laban's opinions on the African-American population in the U.S. and that in Africa reveal his racism and contempt for other ways of life and other races."
- p.17 "From 1934 onwards Laban declared his closeness to Nazi ideology again and again. He emphasized the 'German' in dance; on every occasion he displayed his anti-democratic attitudes."
- p.100 "Laban's 'emphasis on leadership and followers, his insistence on discipline and obedience ... the surrender of individuality and rationality, and delegation of individual will to a higher authority' ... may have arisen from his military experiences."
- p. 101 "Laban's book 'Ein Leben für den Tanz', with its overtones of vocation and sacrifice, created an atmosphere of cult leadership which Laban cultivated and which survives in Laban disciples still today."
- p. 102 "Both Laban and Wigman had already turned the 'German' in dance into the distinguishing mark of their artistic endeavour. Both were anti-Semitic and acted on their views".
- p. 19 In relation to Laban's dream of a Higher Institute of Dance "of course one could object to his rather one-sided and narrow conception of dance".
- p. 126 Laban too "despised anything 'intellectual'". His "entire dance theory incorporated spiritual, emotional, and sub-conscious energies and dismissed intellectual approaches as distorting and useless, or harmful and damaging".
- p. 20 "Laban considered himself above petty considerations and procedures. He was the genius who was lifted beyond normal constraints."
- p.101 In Laban, "Nazi meglomania had found the dance meglomaniac genius who could meet its insatiable need for show and spectacle, dressed up in the mystifying language of race, instinct, cult, bonding, hierarchy, subordination and self-abnegation".

p. 118 Martha Graham refused the invitation to dance at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. "She could neither travel to, nor dance in, Nazi Germany. She rejected a system that treated distinguished artists with the brutality and barbarity of the Third Reich ... She had expressed moral outrage, something her German colleagues had not even considered".

In the light of the derogatory statements made about Laban I think it is important that *Laban Guild* members should know about these, and consider why Laban was able to find a home in England during the war and why his ideas flourished here. The damage to the image of Laban as a man and the importance of his approach to movement study and dance which the book can cause is too serious to be ignored, but the book's statements must be known in order to be answered. A few of the most important ones are included above.

Sally Archbutt

report from the courses officer

Another new training course for community dance teachers! Eighteen new course members met for the first time on 8/9 April in Newbridge, Co. Kildare. It was an intensive, challenging, but, certainly for me and I hope for everyone else, a thoroughly enjoyable weekend. As usual we have people from many walks of life bringing a wide range of dance experience to the course and it is a great pleasure to welcome them into the Guild. We send you all best wishes for the course and look forward to getting to know you.

Our thanks go to Lucina Russell, County Kildare Arts Officer, and her assistant Brenda, who have invited the Laban Guild back for our second course there and made sure that everything ran smoothly, to Noeleen McGrath and Arline Balmer who conducted the introduction day, and to Paula O'Shaunessy who is course co-ordinator and looked after us all over the weekend.

We are now planning our next course which we hope will be taking place in South Wales, starting in the Autumn.

Students who have been studying for their Foundation Course Certificate or their Certificates in Creative Dance are now nearing the completion of their courses and we are looking forward to awarding their certificates. We appreciate all the hard work their tutors put into these courses, ensuring that Laban based work continues and spreads through the community. If you would like further details of these courses, do contact me.

We are very aware that when people complete our courses we need to have a comprehensive programme of Professional Development to offer them, and this is now a priority for the Training Committee, along with gaining formal accreditation for our widely acclaimed courses.

Another busy year for the Training Committee under the chairmanship of Janet Lunn!

Ann Ward

welcome

William Elmhirst

(Although he is a new member of the Laban Guild, we are only too aware that there is nothing 'new' about William Elmhirst's involvement in, and promotion of, Laban's theory and practice of movement and dance during the past 50 years. Many will know that in 1953 he made a gift of the Art of Movement Studio at Addlestone for the furtherance of Laban's work.

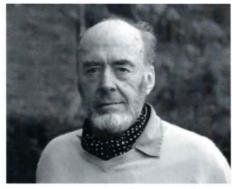
Furthermore, had it not been for the magnificent vision, hospitality and artistic enterprise of William's parents at Dartington Hall (Dorothy and Leonard Elmhirst), Rudolf



Laban and his work and ideas in Britain, might never have materialised. Perhaps few Guild Members realise just how crucial were the initiatives of the Elmhirsts in the educational and artistic development of movement and dance in Britain in the 20th century. Where better to remind ourselves and celebrate the enormous contribution made by the Elmhirsts than in this Diamond Jubilee Year of the Guild. It is hoped, therefore, that William will share some of his memories with us in our next edition together with his views on, and fascination with, 'sacred geometry'.)

In the meantime William writes:

"I wish to congratulate Gordon Curl on the Diamond Jubilee issue of the Guild Magazine for setting in motion,



and building upon, the successful launch of *The American Invasion* 1962-72 DVD. I understand that even Valerie was not clear of the role that Ruth Foster played in precipitating the 'invasion' until the film was put together so ably by Louis Espana. I hope that other contributors will feel inspired to share with the rest of us any new insights that have since occurred to them.

"There seem to be so many good developments taking place in many parts of the world that deserve to be applauded and I am thinking particularly of the appointment of Gavin Henderson at *LABAN*. It is through his interest in including a Laban element into his programme for the *Summer School of Music* at Dartington, that I am hopeful of re-establishing a stronger Laban presence at Dartington in the future. I feel sure that Ruth Foster, for one, would be delighted if this could be brought about, for she was not someone who wanted to cause dissension, just as Dorothy Madden was not.

"My own interest lies especially in promoting more research into Laban's spiritual development and how he related this to his understanding of human movement – the microcosm and the macrocosm. I feel that there is much for us all to benefit from learning more about sacred geometry and the role played by Plato and the Neo-Platonists in promulgating this. Perhaps Gordon Curl could expand on this from his own research before his well-earned retirement."

William Elmhirst



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obituaries

Elma Frances Casson (04.09.1913 – 14.02.2006)



Elma was educated at Sheffield High School and qualified as a teacher at the Bergman Österberg Physical Training College (later Dartford College of Physical Education) in 1935. Her qualifications included the College Diploma and the Conjoint Examination of the Chartered Society of Massage and Medical Gymnastics (later the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy). She returned to Sheffield teaching first at the Central Secondary School, at High Stars Grammar School and then at Abbeydale Grammar School.

During this time she extended her knowledge by attending courses run by Rudolf Laban and Lisa Ullmann. Throughout her life she was a member of the Laban Guild and served on its council when meetings were held at Sylvia Bodmer's house. Elma's personal interest in Modern Educational Dance and in particular Laban's principles of movement led to her appointment as a Physical Education Advisor in the West Riding of Yorkshire in 1947. At the same time Elma was invited by the Chief Education Officer, Sir Alec Clegg, to be a member of the team specially selected to carry out the initial preparatory work which led to the establishment of Lady Mabel College of Physical Education in 1949.

Elma was appointed as the first Deputy Principal and said "I realise how much tradition and custom help in setting high professional standards". The College opened at the time of 'Open Cast Mining'. Rumour has it that Elma joined the students in their nightly removal of marker pegs and accompanying string until the project for extending the mines across the front of the mansion was cancelled!

Following the resignation of Nancy Moller, the first Principal, Elma was asked by Sir Alec Clegg and Ruth Foster, HMI, in 1956 to become Principal. Her response was "So now, contrary to the original plans made back in 1948, the College had after all a physical educationalist as its Principal. I had not wanted this to happen and yet I was very much aware of the honour done me and the trust and responsibility I had assumed."

Elma now looked forward to seeing former Dartford students: Kit Blunden, Oonah Pim and Eileen Alexander at the meetings of the Association of Principals of Women's Colleges of Physical Education, which was, by its constitution, a unique body. Elma brought her charm, sense of humour, leadership qualities and selfless attitude to the regular meetings and chaired the Association from

1964-67. She also chaired, in her skilful 'light touch' way, many sessions at National Conferences organised by the Association.

Under Elma's Principalship, with the establishment of the three year General Course for men and women training to teach in Middle Schools, LMCPE became LMC of Education. By 1974 the College had grown from its first intake of 40 specialist physical education women students to an annual intake of circa 180 students.

In 1973 Elma said "I am building a house in Sheffield in the garden of our family home in readiness for my retirement which is not far off. Colleges of Education are going through difficult times of change which are stimulating if one can stay the pace."

Elma's determination, courage, foresight and fostering of excellent staff/student relationships had enabled her to 'stay the pace'. She wrote "One cannot tell where one's enthusiasms (i.e. for her, Laban's principles) will lead but I do believe that it is important to follow them wholeheartedly if one can do so." This she had done successfully.

Lady Mabel College developed a reputation for producing 'good teachers'. Old students respected Elma's wise counsel as President of their association for 50 years (1956-2006). In 1974 Elma enjoyed the 'delightful custom' of the APWCPE of 'dining out retiring members'.

Elma will be remembered for her sharp mind and sound judgement and her ability to express her opinions with equanimity. She was knowledgeable and fluent which helped to elicit respect from colleagues. Her interests were more aesthetic than sporting. She was successful in handling water colour and produced attractive paintings. Elma was sensitive to any qualities associated with dance. Her sense of humour was never far below the surface but she was always dignified. She had a presence which was as effective as it was admirable. Our world is poorer for the passing of such an eminent personality.

On Friday 24th February 2006, a very moving service "In Thanksgiving for the Life of Elma" was held at St John the Evangelist Church, Ranmoor, Sheffield. A 'Life of Service, generously given' will also be acknowledged in a memorial service at Wentworth to coincide with the reunion of old students later this year.

Lorna M Wilson Ida M Webb (DCPE Staff 1944 - 54)

(DCPE Staff 1955 - 67)

Elma Thomson

Former HMI of schools in Scotland and long-standing member of the Guild died on 8th January 2006. During her term of office from 1951 - 81 Elma did much to encourage and develop the teaching of dance in Scottish schools and colleges. In conjunction with the Scottish League for Physical Education she organised many courses and conferences focusing on Laban's principles.

Mollie Clifford

obituary

Christine Mary Long (06.12.1933 - 14.03.2006)

Christine was born in Brighton, Sussex, a circumstance which she always explained by saying that it was due to the fact that her parents lived there at the time. She should have been born in 1934, but she was always impatient, even then. She had a great gift: that of making friends and of maintaining friendships throughout her life. Her caring and acts of kindness enriched the lives of many people around the world and evoked a warm response in the hundreds of cards, letters and e-mails which she received during the course of her illness.

Mathematics and Primary Education were her specialisms for her Teacher's Certificate and her Diploma in Education. After teaching in schools she was appointed to a lectureship at Eaton Hall College, where she had received her own training. She moved on to become an adviser in thr West Riding of Yorkshire (later to become Wakefield Metropolitan District). Whilst there she was asked to go to Sabah, Borneo, to teach primary mathematics to senior teachers, under the auspices of the British Council. With her usual thoroughness Christine set about learning Malay. She concluded her introductory address to the students with the fruits of her study: her "Goodnight. I will see you tomorrow" was received with cheers, clapping and stamping of feet. Such was her success that she was invited to teach another course the following year. Twenty years later, on one of our many trips abroad, we visited one of the headteachers. Finally, after five years as a Cenacle Sister, she was head of a primary school until she took early retirement.

Whatever Christine undertook she worked with enthusiasm and persistence. She enjoyed a challenge and 'had to get it right', whether learning to play a musical instrument, performing in a play, dancing, writing songs for end-of-course parties or mastering a new skill.

As a member of the Laban Guild she was able to say, "I was taught ballet by Beryl Grey." This referred to one of the sessions at an AGM in Addlestone many years ago. Dancing in one of Geraldine Stephenson's magnificent large group dances at Crystal Palace was an



unforgettable experience to which Christine often referred in later years. More recently, when the Guild was in urgent need of a treasurer, Christine enrolled in a computer class, equipped herself with computer and printer and, helped by Pam Anderton, looked after the Guild's accounts for over a year.

Passionately concerned for humanity, Christine worked tirelessly for Fair Trade and CAFOD, raising money and taking part in demonstrations in UK and Europe. Her funeral, which she planned herself, was a triumphant witness to her profound faith. The service was conducted by the Roman Catholic priest who ministered to her the day before she died and by the Vice-Dean of Chester Cathedral who knew her through the Cathedral Friends. Together they carried out Christine's wish for a happy funeral, which was attended by nearly 200 people, many of whom attended the Celebration afterwards, at which people spoke of Christine's contribution to their group.

Sheila McGivering

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TRINITY LABAN

new to council

Our New Chair

It is an honour, unsought, to become Chair of the Laban Guild. It seems to me that Laban's work needs to be shared more now than at any other time. Because it is not at the heart of education in the way that it once was many young people involved in dance have little or no knowledge of his work or its significance. Initiatives like the Phoenix Project, Laban

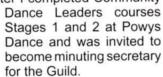


in Places, the Community Dance Leaders Training Courses and LinC go some way towards addressing this situation. I would like to think that during my term of office I can contribute to augmenting these developments such that those involved in dance recognise the value of Laban's work for education, recreation and health. Given the current national agenda it seems to me that the time is ripe for further developments.

Maggie Killingbeck

Having acquired a B Ed. in Drama and English I chose to teach in a rough and ready Secondary Modern school in Hayes, Middlesex. This baptism by fire has stood me in excellent stead throughout my 33 years in the profession.

My involvement in Laban Dance began in 1976 when I moved to Harrow and joined the same amateur dramatic group as Sam and Susi Thornton. By this time I was teaching dance as part of recreation studies but I needed to acquire a more formal training in technique and choreography and the 1979 Laban Summer School at Dartford seemed to be the answer. Some 15 years later I completed Community





Having spent my entire working life encouraging others to pursue their ambitions and perform of their best I recently presented myself these same challenges when I decided to train to act professionally. In 2005 I graduated from The Actors Company in London and now am endeavouring to

establish myself in the industry. I still teach on supply of course (I need to eat!) but I also need to share my passion for the arts with others and can't imagine a time when this isn't a major driving force in my life.

Janet Harrison

(Maggie has an M.Phil from De Montfort University Bedford. Maggie's thesis explored the significance of practical participation for developing knowledge skills and understanding of dance in the context of secondary education. She is a Senior Lecturer at De Montfort University Bedford. She is the Strand Leader for the PGCE Dance course and she teaches the Major and Minor dance modules on the Secondary BA PE QTS degree course.

Maggie has taught dance at all levels from primary through to higher education in addition to dance inset courses for the NRCD, NDTA, BAALPE, Sadlers Wells and a number of local education authorities. Maggie wrote the dance interpretation of NCPE (95) for PEA UK. She has written dance materials for the BBC Radio Workshop also. Currently Maggie is a member of LUTSF Management Committee, Regional Representative for NDTA (Home Counties West) and organiser of Bedfordshire Dance Teachers Network. Recently Maggie received notification of funding to lead a small project concerned with the production of interactive tutorials to help students with their understanding of conventional mainstream choreography and planning units of work for dance. Alongside this she has been invited by the PE ITT Network to collaborate with a small team of dance-in-education lecturers to develop support materials for PE students teaching dance. Maggie has been a moderator for GCSE Dance for many years.)

... love from family... excitement of dancing shows... creative dance 'The Dove that flies from the Arc'... inspired... Psychology degree... eyes wide open... dissertation 'Protective Factors in People's Lives', reason



'Unconditional Positive Giroscope Regard'... Co-operative... Workers renovating community... houses ourselves for and other disadvantaged groups in Hull... the power of empowerment... Dob ... constancy and love... chaos and weakness of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome ... serene reflection meditation... peace and clarity... Norfolk... returning to supporting children learning difficulties... letting go... becoming ordained Buddhist... Lay a gratitude... working in a further education Outreach

Centre with young adults who have multiple and complex special educational needs... Halima Nichols 'Like a Mirror' my boss...inspired... PGCE in Post Compulsory Education... inspired... students motivated to dance and sing... including Dance in the Curriculum... introducing accreditation for students creative abilities... Kate... Edward... Sam... Community Dance Teachers Course... course mates... course teachers... inspired LinC... the Laban Guild ... the Committee... thrilled...

Jenny Haycocks

new to council

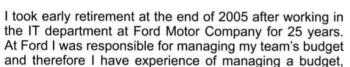
Once I was a jaded French teacher, with a not-so-secret love of dance. Then I took early retirement, retrained as a Keep Fit Association teacher and fell in love with Rudolf Laban. So when Ann Ward ran a Laban Guild Community Dance Leader course taster day here in Chelmsford in

2002, there I was panting at

the door.

The magic combination of the application of Laban's analysis and improvisational work soon had me hooked, and now I'm determined to do all I can to support this marvellous heritage.

Jenny Moir



keeping track of expenditure and reporting on the financial

My wife, Jenny, is an experienced Keep Fit Association teacher and she recently qualified as a Laban Guild Community Dance Practitioner. It is through supporting her activities that I became aware of the Laban Guild and the Guild's need for an honorary treasurer.



laban based dance classes

Belfast, Crescent Arts Centre

Monday:

4.45pm - 5.45pm Crescent Youth Dance

5.45pm - 6.45pm Adult Movement and Dance

Brenda McKee 25 Malone Hill Park Belfast BT9 6RE email: brendagm@aol.com

Bromley

Wednesday afternoons and Thursday mornings Community Dance classes for people with learning difficulties Contact:

Avril Hitman 020 8467 3331

Cambridge

Wednesday mornings over 55s - open class Contact:

Maddy Tongue 01223 302030

Swindon

Saturday mornings, three separate classes for 4-5 years, 6-8 years, 9-13 years

Kathy Geddes 02793 463210

diary

may

The first four events below are part of the 'Made in Deptford' weekend at LABAN Creekside; all by Brazilian

Saturday 20 + Sunday 21 May, 1300hrs, 1600hrs + 1900hrs

Gustavo Ciriaco + Andrea Sonnberger Aqui Enquanto Caminhamos £6 (no concessions)

Saturday 20 May, 1400hrs Michel Groisman Sirva-Se £6 / £4 (concessions)

Saturday 20 May, 1930hrs Marcela Levi + Michel Groisman Massa De Sentidos + Porta Das Maos (mixed bill) £12 / £8 Concessions

Sunday 21 May, 1400hrs Michel Groisman £6 / £4 (concessions)

Tuesday 30 - Wednesday 31 May, 1930hrs Bock & Vincenzi

Here, As If They Hadn't Been, As If They Are Not £12 / £8 (concessions)

LABAN Creekside Box Office 0208 469 9500

june

Woking, Surrey - June 10th 2006

Day of Dance 10.15am - 4pm Theme- Crystals Come and join Jill Goff, Sue Grover and Julie Weston for a day exploring the shapes, colours and dreamlike qualities reflected within a crystal.

Contact: jill_goff100@hotmail.com Phone: 01483 763214

july

Eastbourne July 30th - August 6th

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Contact: susi@laban-courses.co.uk Phone: 0044(0)1784 433480

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