

Movement, Dance and Drama

Quarterly magazine of the Laban Guild

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*A Midsummer
Night's Dream*

Photo by Mike Kwasniak

Directed by Michael Platt with original music by Pat Whymark



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In response to the question: 'As Patron of the Laban Guild what developments would you like to see in the Magazine?' - Bernard Hepton replies in this issue (with feeling): **'much more about acting and actors!'**

When we realise just how much interest Laban took in the relationship of movement and drama, it is not surprising that Bernard Hepton's *crie de coeur* is one which finds resonance in many members' minds. Laban's published work: *The Mastery of Movement on the Stage* (1950), and his previous and subsequent theorising and teaching of young actors, confirms his deep commitment to drama. The expansion of the title of our Magazine to: *Movement, Dance and Drama*, therefore, must seem a natural - if not overdue step to take; it should also announce a welcome to all drama enthusiasts - young and old, students and researchers, theatre-goers and critics!

The prevalent trend to 're-brand' the names of institutions would seem to be the inclination of those wishing to 'keep-up-with-the-times'; this fashion has not escaped the Laban Guild - which we find is busy soliciting ideas for a change of name from 'Guild' to whatever name captures the liveliest interest. The proposals to-date are numerous (and the polling booths are still open). But in these pages, Sally Archbutt sounds a warning note which may remind members (new and old), that the heritage and legacy which the term 'Guild' carries with it, cannot be ignored.

New readers of this Magazine may well be surprised at the sheer breadth of topics which appear in these pages - topics which consistently pay tribute (tacitly or explicitly) to the broad church and inspiration of Rudolf Laban's ideas: youth theatre, professional actors, community dance, professional dance, dance in education, healthcare and therapy, movement analysis, - not to mention historical, psychological research and philosophical debate (the last of these on 'the harmonic structure of movement, music and dance' to be found in this issue).

But such contributions (and visually striking images) are not just plucked out of the air, they have to be volunteered and submitted by enthusiasts, solicited, encouraged and presented to Magazine Correspondents and the Editorial Team. It is therefore gratifying that the Guild Council has identified members who will act as Correspondents for Council, Community Dance, Dance Theatre, Drama, Book Reviews, Photographics, Advertising and Diary of Events and Listings (see back page). But there are still more Correspondents to be identified - not least in Movement Pattern Analysis, Movement Therapy, Research and Philosophical enquiry - that is if the Magazine is to continue to help fulfil the Guild's published aims and objectives.

In addition to the change of title, Council has resolved that future Magazines will be distributed **termly**: January, May and September. It is felt that this will be in the best interests of economy as well as ease the editorial process, provide contributors with more time to respond to important issues raised, and encourage new members to become acquainted with the wide range of topics to which we hope they will respond with lively articles and images for publication.

Gordon Curl

Front Cover :
'A Midsummer Night's Dream' by Suffolk Youth Theatre
Photo by Mike Kwasniak
Back Cover:
Photos of Laban Guild Patron. (Bernard Hepton's private collection)

Movement, Dance and Drama

(Laban Guild Magazine)

announces open awards for the best critical appreciation, by students, of a current professional theatre performance in dance, dance-drama or physical theatre.

There will be three awards of:
£150 (first); £100 (second) and £50 (third)
for the best pieces of criticism of a work performed in
any professional theatre
between September and December 2009.

All three award-winning pieces of criticism will be
published in the Spring 2010 edition of
'Movement, Dance and Drama' magazine.

Submissions will be adjudicated by a professional
critic.

Conditions:

Length of criticism: 500-1000 words

Date of submission: by 7th December 2009

To be sent by email to: Gordon Curl (gfcurl@globalnet.co.uk) stating your name, address and telephone number, together with the venue and date where and when the work was seen and the college/university at which the writer is a student.

Winners will be informed by 11th January 2010.
(Supporting images may be submitted if available)

'Passion, Jealousy, Revenge, Comedy and a Touch of Magic!'

(The Editor highlights a few magical moments in the production of Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream, performed at The New Wolsey Theatre Ipswich 20th - 23rd May 2009 by Suffolk Youth Theatre - directed by Michael Platt with original music by Pat Whymark)

'Passion, jealousy, revenge, comedy and a sprinkling of magic' was the alluring pre-performance publicity of Suffolk Youth Theatre's production of Shakespeare's play: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – presented to capacity audiences at the New Wolsey Theatre Ipswich in May. We were warned in advance that 'if you think you know the play you might be surprised by the sheer physicality and darker undertones of this captivating and vibrant version'. We were not beguiled - for few who witnessed this amazing event would deny the startling elements of 'surprise' – not to mention the overwhelming 'physicality' of this 'captivating and vibrant version', directed by Michael Platt with original music by Pat Whymark. The audience was in thrall!

Since 1605, there have been myriad adaptations and inspired interpretations of Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* by film-makers (Max Reinhardt and William Dieterle, Peter Hall, Adrian Noble, Michael Hoffman, Peter Bowker), musicians (Henry Purcell, Felix Mendelssohn, Carl Orff,

Vaughan Williams, Benjamin Britten), choreographers (Marius Petipa, Frederick Ashton, George Balanchine), TV producers (Jonathan Miller), musical theatre creators, even Disney World animators - these historical events only indicate the limitless scope in this play for imagination. The originality and execution of Suffolk Youth Theatre's interpretation was well in the tradition of unique productions. It was also a landmark in the development of SYT over the past 14 years.

Without detracting for one moment from the highly sensitive, expressive and mature dialogue of these teenagers (difficult enough for professional actors), perhaps we can highlight a few moments of its claimed 'sheer physicality'!

Witness the Palace of Theseus in Athens against a backdrop of golden draperies and a chorus of dazzlingly costumed and imposingly head-dressed courtiers celebrating the forthcoming marriage of Theseus (Sam Doran) and Hyppolyta (Emilia Petryszyn); the courtiers danced in perfect unison with immaculately clean lines, paying homage to Theseus and his forthcoming bride in their midst - at the same time chanting a haunting melody of invocation:

*'Come all ye who sleep under the silvery moon,
Come with the blessings to honour the bride and groom,
Come ye.'*

The scene, brilliantly lit, precisely choreographed with wide gestures and off-balance steps was intensely ceremonial, majestic!

In sharp contrast, the vexatious tribe of Hermia's people shattered the courtly celebration with their wild haranguing of Theseus - their bitter and accusatory movements matching their anger as they demanded that Hermia be betrothed to Demetrius and not to Lysander (whom they say had bewitched her). Their agitated movements punctuated Shakespeare's lines which were amazingly well articulated - a phenomenal feat for such young actors.



A whirling, tumbling, leaping and wheeling of bodies ensued as Puck chased the fairies - here, there, and everywhere - accompanied by thunderous noises, drums, flashing lights, all of which served to remind us of the supernatural present in this play.

The 'Lament for the chaos in the world' by the fairies, was a stunning piece of stagecraft - led by a drifting, slow-wheeling soloist who floated from the wings – harnessed and coiled around with a long line of white lycra. She slowly unwound herself to the accompaniment of an aching melody of lamentation, pausing mid-stage at the same time pouring forth a mournful song – tied by her taut harness. Figure after figure followed her from the wings – all tethered, unwinding, straining at their halters, singing a sonorous three-part chorale; it was sheer magic.



But the melancholic lament was shattered by an attack on Titania's fairies – who were pursued by the violent spirits of Oberon; action escalated into a *melée* of choreographed grappling-tussling, cable-pulling, lifting and a hurling of bodies. Puck seized one of Titania's sprites and a frenzied drumming heightened the madness of this raging battle - culminating in a spectacular twin-tableaux deadlock. A violent tug-of-war ensued - tight white streamers transformed the stage into an image of incredible tension - only to collapse and disintegrate into a (skilfully choreographed) free-for-all!

As if this 'sheer physicality' were not enough, the combatants continued to hurl verbal abuse at one another. Oberon, (Aaron Seaman), King of the Fairies, entered - his minions forming a 'bodily' step-ladder and plinth to stand upon (no need for stage furniture here – superhuman bodies catered for all such earthly needs). What was so impressive about this and subsequent interplay, was the superb manner in which the dialogue of the principals was echoed, endorsed and supplemented by the tableaux, gestures and expressions of their respective followers - crouching, kneeling, shadowing, slow-moving, rapid changing, freezing - and the intense focussing of eyes and bodies; actions here spoke louder than words – notwithstanding Oberon's eloquence!

'Come, now roundel and a fairy song; Sing before we sleep ...' - Titania entreats her entourage. They ease into an enchanting close-harmony lullaby - moving

to a slow side-stepping phalanx with a beautiful and talented Titania heading her troupe:

*'Philomel, with melody,
Sing in our sweet lullaby:
Lulla, Lulla, Lullaby; lull, lulla, lullaby;
Never harm, nor spell, nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh;
So good night, with lullaby.'*





Jazell Johnson, Scarlet Saunders, Sasha Venmore-Rowland, Emilia Petryszyn, Jazelle Johnson, Scarlett Saunders); they all excelled themselves – not least in the red-hot contested scene of thwarted lovers ('Out dog! Out, cur! Thou drivest me past bounds' - spat Hermia!)

One can only imagine the hours and hours of tireless rehearsal-time which must have taken place (and the many humorous and anguished moments of such a physical production). Jo Leeder (Production Manager) and his team: Helen Leeder, Mandy Cooper, Richard Legatt, Will

Evans, Ed Yetton - must all be congratulated on a landmark achievement. The composer and Musical Director Pat Whymark and Director Michael Platt deserve at least – Youth Theatre 'Oscars'!

But if a touch of magic was wrought, it was in the smooth transformation of this spellbound fairy-inhabited woodland into an early 21st century *Strictly Come Dancing* showcase: high heels! deft quick-steps! slinky fox-trots - and oh yes – seductive tangos! All that was needed was a panel of judges – a consensus accolade of '10'!

Gordon Curl

Photos by Mike Kwasniak

Humour and pathos (and bathos) abounded in the antics of Bottom (Bryn Fitch) and his versatile 'mechanicals' - not least in the spellbinding moment of Queen Titania's obsession with Bottom as an ass who is harnessed, bewildered, reticent and dragged by the fairies to Titania's bed - accompanied by one of Pat Whymark's most beautiful songs. The imagery, lighting and sound were hypnotic:

... To have my love to bed and to arise,
And pluck the wings from painted butterflies,
To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes,
The moon, the moon looks with a glistening eye,
... Let him come softly to my bower.

Add to this touching satirical romance the extravagance and unmitigated hilarity of *'The Opera of Pyramus and Thisbe'* (Madam Quince - Nancy Smith, Snug - Steve Withers, Bottom - Bryn Fitch, Flute - Liam Johnson, Snout - Orlando Mednick), and we witnessed a range of acting, singing and dancing comedy seldom seen in any youthful – or indeed adult – production; it was side-splitting! But without doubt the binding cement of such success, was the undercurrent - and at times full-throated singing and dancing of the chorus: their hymnal and secular harmonies (composed by Pat Whymark) brought the qualities of 'passion, revenge, comedy, magic' - and of burlesque to a peak of perfection.

Whilst we have concentrated on the sheer physicality and musicality of this production and have only in passing mentioned the highly sensitive, expressive and mature understanding and delivery of Shakespeare's challenging lines. Demetrius (Ed Crossthwaite), Theseus (Sam Doran), Hermia (Martha Loader), Helena (Natalia Mednick), Hippolyta (Emilia Petryszyn), Oberon (Aaron Seaman), Madam Quince (Nancy Smith), Titania (Lucy Tomlinson) - and of course the mischievous Puck (Joe Reed, Rose Lucas, Chris Yarnell), Bottom (Bryn Fitch), Flute (Liam Johnson), Snout (Orlando Mednick), Snug (Stevie Withers) and the fairies (Rosie Davies,



(Our Patron, Bernard Hepton, will be known widely as Actor, Producer, Director, TV and Radio Guest. His prolific career includes principal roles in: 'Emma' (Mr Woodhouse), 'Bleak House' (Krook), 'Mansfield Park' (Sir Thomas Bertram), 'Ghandi' (GOC), 'An Inspector Call's (Inspector Goole), 'Secret Army' (Albert Foiret), 'Blood Money' (Det Chief Supt Meadows), 'Tinker, Tailor, Solider, Spy' (Toby Easterhase), 'I Claudius' (Pallas), 'Colditz' (The Kommandant), 'Henry VIII and His Six Wives' (Cranmer), 'Elizabeth R' (Archbishop Cranmer), 'The Elusive Pimpernel' (Chauvelin), 'Son of Man' (Chaiaphas High Priest of Jerusalem) and many more. His productions include 'The Wednesday Thriller' and 'Coriolanus' and his guest appearances are too numerous to mention – but 'Midsomer Murders', 'Bergerac', 'Some Mothers do 'Ave 'Em', 'Troubleshooters', 'Saturday Night Thriller' are but a few – see internet for more details. See also back cover of this issue). Ed.

In the Spring of 2002 you gave the 'Laban Lecture' at the Guild's AGM - held at Richmond Community College - when you told us about your early training as an actor at Bradford Civic Theatre School under the Directorship of Esme Church. Miss Church, you recalled, invited Rudolf Laban to teach her pupils 'the importance and intricacies of movement', and you were one of those pupils in 1947 – over 60 years ago. What are your lasting memories of those encounters with Laban?

My first encounter with Laban was when he walked into the room and was introduced by Esme to us all, and I was very surprised to find how Laban – only a small man with a military moustache – was walking really quite slowly and obviously terribly alert to where he was and looking just slightly nervous. Now I put that down to what I was told at the time: that Laban was beginning to work in a new area for him – with actors as opposed to dancers (although by 1950, I understand he had published his influential book: *Mastery of Movement on the Stage*). But I think at that time (1947), training young actors was a fairly new role for him; what he did was to give us an alphabet of movement – all of which can relate to the human condition. Now people refer to 'efforts', but I am not entirely sure that they are the same as the 'alphabet of movement'.

Are your referring to 'effort actions'? (demonstration):

Yes, we called that the 'alphabet of movement' and that was in 1947. We started lying on the floor – learning how to relax in his way and gradually over the weeks we were beginning to understand, to feel, what muscles in our body do: when to relax, and when to tighten, so that we became aware of what muscles in our bodies did. This was over a period of months of course and then we started the efforts. We did them in a very outgoing way first, and put them together in a sort of dance; they followed each other as a dance around the body: floating first then slashing, etc., etc., – unforgettable, totally unforgettable! The whole point, we discovered much later, was to minimise these movements so that people would not notice them. And that went with what Laban often said: 'You can dance with your eyebrows!' *Dance is not just a series of steps, it is meaningful movement!*

Now that meant a great deal to me: – you can dance with any part of your body. But the whole point at the beginning - of relaxing and tension, and relaxing and tension - was to make yourself aware of what you can do with your body and what your body is saying to the spectator – people now say 'body language'. So that was my first experience of Laban. But

Patrons Questiontime the Editor interviews Bernard Hepton



Kommandant in *Colditz*

as you know he got rather busy in Manchester and became rather ill and sent his lieutenants to look after us – including Lisa Ullmann and Geraldine Stephenson.

In summary, what did Laban offer you as a pupil actor?

Well, we became aware of our bodies in the sense that we could express things in a minimal way – not in a dance way and not in the abstract. Actors have to have the text to follow: we have to go back to the text to see what sort of person we are supposed to be. And then we can re-apply what Laban taught us – for instance the character *Ariel* or *Lear* (shall we say) from Shakespeare. I'd love to know what Macbeth would be as a 'floating' person, for instance!

You talk about minimalising your movements, but am I right in saying that in some cases, on stage, actions are not just ordinary human movements, but are perhaps exaggerated in some way – for the sake of projecting to an audience?

This is a difficult question, because it depends entirely on the style in which you are performing – for instance period plays, where you have lots of costume to cope with - you may have to exaggerate quite a lot to convey the meaning across to the audience. It depends on the style or the period you are trying to portray.

Were there aspects of Laban in your training to which you had specific recourse, in your long and distinguished career?

I think I might flatter myself by saying that I had no need to - because they had become part of me; I studied them so long - not just in my initial training - but later when I continued to train my body.

There was a time on television, however, when I was portraying a prison-of-war camp Kommandant. I used to carry a stick when I walked, and I had a very slight limp in my right leg as part of the character. I wanted to give *another reason* why he was a Kommandant and not a fighting officer, so I acquired the little limp. From then on I carried the stick whenever I could, but I didn't limp, and I wondered whether anybody noticed; I discovered they didn't but they kept on saying: 'such a subtle little limp'. Now that's very interesting to me, for not only did I refer to what Laban told me about what I and the spectators were thinking, but, from the point of view of presenting something to an audience, I had learnt that it's the *audience* that has to take part as well; they have to do their work, *but you have to give them enough for them to do their work*, and in this particular little instance - the audience worked, because they had already been given the cue.

When Laban was indisposed or busy at his Studio in Manchester, you reminded us that Lisa Ullmann taught you, but the person who spent the most time with you (in your own words) 'shepherding (you) to some understanding of applying Laban's teaching - was the (now) Guild's Vice-President Dr Geraldine Stephenson'. Can you tell us something about Geraldine's influence on you whilst you were in training?

I am full of admiration for Geraldine, because she was the sort of person who explained things to us and *showed us* what she wanted, and as far I was concerned I tried to emulate what she showed us. She was a student at the time and was very very keen not to say anything that was too far away from what Laban had said to her; I liked Geraldine very much indeed! And such a wonderful artist!

Subsequently, when you were acting in period costume plays, did your own and Geraldine's paths cross – because Geraldine was always in demand to choreograph the many lavish ballroom scenes in the stately homes where many of the period dramas were created?

Oh yes, we met quite often in the same play, but I was one of the old codgers who sat and watched the dances whilst she choreographed (for example, when I was Mr Woodhouse in *Emma*); but I never actually danced myself.

It was amazing how she managed to get non-dancing actors to dance so convincingly.

Yes, she did; she did miracles with them!

In your prolific career (and I have never seen so much detail as can be found on the internet), which roles did you find most satisfying: acting, producing, directing on stage, or those roles in film and television? What about directing, for instance?

Whenever I watch a football match on television, I always see the manager on the side-line – going through the whole gamut of emotions - but there is not much he can do; and that's like directing in the theatre. If the set falls down, the actor who is there can at least hold it up, but the director has to sit and watch and he can't do a thing. But when it was going well, I enjoyed directing in the theatre very much. Playing in, or directing films or T/V is very different from the theatre.

One particular play (*One Way Pendulum* by N. F. Simpson) I saw in London and when I got back to Birmingham Sir Barry said to me: 'Have you actually read this play?' - and he gave me a copy. I read it and never laughed so much in my life. The husband was intent on building the Old Bailey in his house! I rang Simpson and said: 'Am I right in thinking that this play has really got to take place in a very ordinary house?' 'Yes'



Toby Esterhazy in Smiley's People

he said, 'exactly!' - 'because what I saw in London when the curtain went up was a box set where furniture, which wasn't actually used, was painted on to the set which had a yellow background. As soon as I saw it I thought: 'something very odd is going to happen in this house'. And then the play started, and something very odd did happen; but this particular set put the mockers on it. It was a comedy which hardly got a laugh. So, when directing the play myself, the designer made a wonderful design of an *ordinary house* – complete with the Old Bailey in Part 2, and it was a big success.

What about your experience of Shakespeare – which you both played and directed?

The interesting thing about Shakespeare (and I love Shakespeare – there's no doubt about that) - is that I enjoyed actually *playing* in Shakespeare; but when it came to *directing* Shakespeare, I suddenly was at sea. Now I don't quite understand why: perhaps it was the sheer breadth of Shakespeare which I couldn't contain. But when *playing a character* in Shakespeare, I could concentrate on my part within the play.

What particular character in Shakespeare did you find most challenging?

Richard II - an early one, when I was with Esme at the end of my training at the Theatre School; we had three weeks' rehearsal and she said at the end of the first week: 'everyone else go home. 'Alright Bernard?' she asked. I replied: 'Yes, thank you'. But there was no encouragement – no nothing. The second week she said to me: 'Bernard, can you play this part?' I said, 'Yes, yes I can'. I wondered what was going on, and then at the end of the third week she said: 'I don't think you *can* play this part, but you are great walker on the hills aren't you?' I said 'Yes'. She said: 'Go for a long walk on Sunday before you come to dress rehearsal. So I did, I went for a long walk, and after the first night, which seemed to go quite well, she said: 'Now you've done very well but there's one basic trait in Richard's character which I didn't even mention to you'. I replied anxiously: 'Why not, why not, what is it?'. She said, 'It's his loneliness'. And I said: 'I think I know what *loneliness* is'. She said: 'You don't - you're not old enough, and I hope you never will'. Now that's very interesting!

I am often puzzled when we are told that unless we have experienced something personally in real life, that we cannot in fact act it effectively - because there must be a gamut of experiences which one has not actually experienced (whether as armed robbers, murderers, royalty, mad people – or even extreme 'loneliness'). Is it

not the case, therefore, that it is the *imagination* which supplies the actor with his material for acting rather than prior personal experience?

Yes, I totally agree with you, but imagination isn't enough - because the situation is different on the stage. I have a photograph here which you might like to use which has a bearing on the point you are making (it was when I played The Kommandant of the German Prisoner-of-War Camp at *Colditz*).

Tell us about this!

When I was asked to play it by the Producer, I said: 'There's no point in re-creating a heel-clicking Nazi, because it has already been done - and any way it's too late; it was a long long time ago'. 'What I would like to present is a professional soldier who has come up from the ranks, was in the first-world-war and slightly wounded, and was too old for active service – a professional soldier who doesn't belong to the Nazi party'. That is what I want to do, and the Producer agreed and said: 'Good!' So that is what I tried to portray.

You were obviously so successful - for the one ray of light in this otherwise oppressive camp was the Kommandant, who seemed to ride above all the inhumanity and occupied a higher moral ground than the rest - which came shining through.

Well, I'm glad about that because it did seem to work. I had loads of letters, one from a lady who told me that she had lost quite a lot of people in the war – including her husband and her son. She said she hated Germans and couldn't bear them; she was told to watch *Colditz* which made her cry and said that my part had changed her mind. I thought that's wonderful – that's what theatre is all about! I was very touched and proud of that.

Yes, I suppose that had you been a hard-bitten, violent and vicious Nazi - you would have generated an utter distaste for your part as Kommandant - whereas in actual fact viewers came to identify with you as an independent mind.

(The internet describes your portrayal as follows: 'The Kommandant ... is a moderate, honourable, and soft-hearted Oberst (Colonel) of the Wehrmacht. He holds to the Old Army ways of respecting enemy officers, and adheres to the Geneva Convention to the best of his ability. He has difficulty believing that any authority but the OKW is legitimate, and often finds himself in dilemmas over orders he gets from the Waffen-SS or Reich Security. ... he constantly works to prevent the SS from taking control of the camp'.)

There was another letter from a Manchester man who wanted to know who my corsetier was!

The internet *Wikipedia encyclopedia* also cites you as being 'a particularly versatile character actor'. In these days when 'type-casting' seems to be the norm rather than the exception, how did you achieve such 'versatility'?

I think that quite a lot of producers and directors looked at me with my bent nose, and said 'Where can we put him?' I am sure that is what they thought. Now I took, and still take acting very seriously, simply because it affect people's lives; what I do affects other people – whether good, bad or indifferent; if it's indifferent then I've failed. I think a lot about the character I'm playing – and here Laban does come into it quite a lot because it depends how the actor walks, how he sits - and an awful lot of tiny little things – all of which he has to be aware. Each person is different, and it seems to me to be the perfectly obvious way of working - and a lot of actors don't even try.

So you take immense trouble to enter imaginatively into all the traits and characteristics of the person you are portraying – every little part of them!

Yes, the difficulties of this task are very well put by Sadie Hunt in her article in the last Magazine in which, she says that the actor has: 'To act, to move and speak realistically as another person that the audience must believe in, empathise with even hate ...'. How do you do that without a great deal of thought?

Coming on to your plays, which of the plays did you enjoy doing most and why?

- a) the plays based on period novels?
ie *Emma, Bleak House, Mansfield Park, Middlemarch, Great Expectations;*
- b) historical themes?
ie: *I Claudius, Mary Queen of Scots, The Six Wives of Henry V111, Elizabeth R;*
- c) War/espionage themes?
ie: *Colditz, Kessler, Secret Army, Smiley's People, Tinker, Tailor, Soldier Spy;*
- d) Detective themes?
ie: *Bergerac, Blood Money, A Inspector Calls, etc*
- e) Others?

They are:

Bleak House (Krook): mainly because I played a man who had black teeth - and died of 'spontaneous combustion'; I was really somebody else - could not recognise myself!

Great Expectations (Wemmick): I enjoyed simply because I had been a director and producer for such a long time, and everyone thought I was still that, and I decided I didn't want to do that any more - I wanted to go back to acting.

Six Wives of Henry VIII (Archbishop Thomas Cranmer): that particular production caused quite a stir; I thought Keith Michelle as Henry VIII was magnificent. I enjoyed that and was the only person who was asked to play Cranmer again in *Elizabeth R* and the feature film *Colditz* – we've talked about.

Secret Army: we did 36 episodes (3 lots of 12) located in a broken down café which became a posh café: *Candide* (frequented by the Nazis). The interesting thing about *Secret Army* was that the underground people who actually did it – the real heroes – saw quite a few episodes and approved, generally speaking, suggesting that this is how it was; but, they said: – 'You didn't laugh enough!'. Now, isn't that interesting? What they meant was that you need laughter in such a situation - and it didn't even occur to me. I wish it had.

But surely, there was not much to laugh about – especially when you were invited to a tea-party to watch the Nazis execute your compatriots?

No, I was sick then!

Tinker Tailor and Smiley's People (as Toby Easterhouse): I loved the character; I adored playing with Alec Guinness. I'm really quite a shy person and I'd never met him before. The first scene together was in Switzerland on a little pontoon on a lake. He was always there spot-on, and I was making my way to him and hoping he was nice and he said: 'Did you ever know Noel Coward?' I said 'No, I didn't'. He said: 'When we were in Trinidad his man came to him and said: What would you say to a little fish tonight?' And Noel replied, without any hesitation at all: 'I would say: Hello, little fish!' And I nearly fell into the water. From then on we were friends! That was the measure of the man – he made himself available, but he was very shy, as well.

As Patron of the Laban Guild what developments would you like to see in the Magazine?

Much more about actors and acting!

Drama Correspondent Appointment

(The addition of 'Drama' to our Magazine title, calls for a more systematic coverage of this important aspect of Laban's legacy. Darren Royston – a member of Council - has accepted this responsibility. He holds an MA in English Literature from Cambridge University and an MA from LABAN London. Darren was awarded the Bonnie Bird Choreography Award in 1997 and his freelance career includes work in opera, theatre, music, circus, TV and film. He teaches dance and movement at RADA, choreographing productions and teaching Period Dance as a dramatic art. Darren is Artistic Director of Nonsuch History and Dance Company and in 2002 established the Nonsuch Education Unit, leading workshops in schools throughout the UK). Ed.

Darren writes:

I believe the Laban approach to movement is so valid for all aspects of drama. I myself have found immense inspiration from the Laban approach when working with actors, with opera singers, choreography in theatre, and as a director of productions. It is important now to make a link between all levels of drama, including drama for children and youth theatre, to amateur theatre groups, and to professional actor training and theatre companies. The Laban approach offers training which can support actors through their career, and I hope we can offer opportunities for professional actors to attend ongoing classes as a way of keeping their technique alive and their bodies alert and aware of the movement possibilities in performance. Movement Choirs and group movement work is vital for ensemble work, and the approach can offer a shared way of working which has great benefits to directors, choreographers working with actors, and anyone involved in creating theatre from devised and improvised work, including writers, dramaturgs and performance art theatre makers.



Darren Royston dancing in *The Virtuous Wife* – a 17th Century intermezzo to the music of Purcell)

I gain inspiration from the Laban as a choreographer in theatre and opera; as a teacher of movement, dance and acting at drama schools (including The Actors Centre and RADA, which includes the Laban Approach as a module of the MA in Text and Performance with King's College London, Course Director: Sue Dunderdale) and as an artistic director creating new projects which combine dance, drama, theatre and opera. I would be very keen to connect to others who use Laban ideas in their work in the field of drama, to discover how they have developed their own way of working based on Laban's ideas, or to explore ways to introduce a Laban approach into their work.

Darren Royston

NB: Please contact Darren with Magazine drama contributions at darren_royston@hotmail.com

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Community Dance A Work Force for the Future

(This is an edited version, by Ann Ward, of an article written by Ken Bartlett, the Creative Director, Foundation for Community Dance, which first appeared in *Animated*, Spring 2009. It is reproduced by kind permission of Ken Bartlett). Ed.



Ken Bartlett

Community Dance as a manifestation within the dance ecology of the UK has now been established for some 30 years. As circumstances and funding opportunities, as well as the aesthetics of dance have changed over this time, so have the outward manifestations of community dance. However, the overriding aims of the community dance sector have largely remained the same: to increase access and widen participation in dance, and are based on a fairly consistent set of values about the practice:

- Placing the participant at the centre of the activity
- Respect for difference
- Dance as an empowering tool for participants in the dance and the rest of their lives
- Being inclusive rather than exclusive.

It seems to me that in accepting a wider range of practices, purposes and contexts within community dance, that the definitions of what community dance is have themselves become blurred. It has become increasingly difficult to establish a cohesive idea of what the professional community dance sector is - how it works and what it can achieve for those taking part. Though we know this "thing" called community dance exists, because we're all a part of it.

I am seeking for us to consider a 21st Century pedagogy in community dance that has art-making as its focus - and the participants at the centre of that, operating themselves as creative artists with control over content, form and context. A pedagogy concerned with facilitating people to make meaning through the art of dance not drilling people in how to dance in a particular style or tradition or fit into the learnt aesthetics of the established dominant modes of dance or learning a set of steps. A pedagogy that is concerned as much with how the dance feels as much as how it looks. People are vessels that are full of dance, not empty and waiting to be filled with our view of what they need to become. What I want is a much more complex journey that will demand a different pedagogy than that learnt from the established order.

So what kind of pedagogue and pedagogy am I looking for in the 21st Century?

We should be accepting people as potential artists when they enter the dance space, and placing them and their aspirations, ambitions and ideas at the centre of the process. We should also be bringing a range of aesthetics to the fore, rather than privileging a narrow historical perspective. I don't want to see community dance practitioners with an obsession about identifying the talented and gifted against narrow criteria, but operating as people who are prepared to take the time and make the effort to unearth potential and develop it, rather than spot it and train it.

I think we really need to become people who are experts in the body – what it can do/can't do – what it wants to do and doesn't want to do. A pedagogy based on much more than a short course in anatomy and physiology – one, as Miranda Tufnell suggests in the book *What Dancers Do That Health Workers Don't* (Jabadao 2000) "that develops a deeper connection to the experience of the body and a personal creative language, widening the field through which we perceive and experience ourselves and the world around us." One more concerned with whether it feels right rather than what it looks like; one that understands the body's development through our ages but doesn't stigmatise what people can do because of their age or other condition; one that celebrates what they can do rather than what they can't or what we think they can't. One that demonstrates we are experts in the body.

I am interested in developing a pedagogy that puts content and meaning back into the dance mix, saying things in dance truly meaningful about the human condition. Now don't get me wrong, I'm happy to be witness to dance that simply creates ripples in the air around me; nor am I banning people just having fun putting their bodies into interesting shapes, positions and gestures to see what will happen. However, I am more interested in us passing on what I'm calling the "deep rules" of dance - not its many outward forms, supporting people of whatever body size, shape, fitness or age to explore together, asking "I wonder what will happen if..." and then becoming highly skilled in manipulating the massive potential of the tensions between those deep rules of stillness and movement, silence and sound, darkness and light. People who are interested in supporting the making of meaning through dance rather than imposing their dance on people.

We still need to recognise the need to name distinctive dance practices, yet as American choreographer Liz Lerman has suggested over the years, recognise that they are only separated by a permeable membrane. In other words, stop configuring dance as a pyramid or even a continuum that indicates that some forms and approaches are more important and intrinsically valuable than others.

So how do we move from the expressive wriggle of the two year old into the more conscious, controlled, embodied and communicable piece of dance, apart from relying on them to begin to make the move to consciousness as part of the natural progression of child development?

I would suggest the first step is to unearth and identify the content that the community dancer(s) want to communicate

Laban Guild and LinC Community Dance Courses



and from there we can begin to identify the form that best serves the content and the dancers. We need to become more intuitive, curious and knowledgeable about what specific bodies might be able to do and the risks we can ask those bodies to take, and indeed whether we can include what they do within our frame of reference as dance. It seems to me that if artists choose to work in this way they have to possess a rich understanding of what the body can do, what it is safe to do and how to protect it long term.

In summary then, I see a pedagogy that needs more educated dance artists who can: engage with current issues facing their dancers and the wider world; a pedagogy based more on negotiation than instruction and which fully embeds its values in the practice; one which gives more value to the making of meaning, art-making and content within the process; one that has a multi-dimensional view of what constitutes art and dance as art, and has a multilingual, multicultural knowledge of dance and dances. This needs to be concerned with passing on the deep rules of dance – the grammar not just the vocabulary;

dance artists that have the skills knowledge and competence to call themselves experts in the body; a pedagogy that doesn't make careless assumptions about what is appropriate for individuals or particular groups of people and finally a practice that has a more sophisticated set of quality benchmarks than a simple like or dislike.

I would like to see attention to these qualities and perspectives included in all the undergraduate courses for community dance. Our aim at the *Foundation for Community Dance* is to embed them in the development of our *National College for Community Dance*. Perhaps through this, and as people progress through their careers and acquire these skills, knowledge and abilities, the suggestion that community dance practice is mediocre or just politically correct will seem like something very much from the last century.

Ken Bartlett

Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Fund The 'GODS' Fly South

(Anna Carlisle MBE reports on an 'inspirational' over-50s day and 'a wonderful fund-raising evening'). Ed.

On Saturday 27th June 2009, the *Company of GODS - Growing Older (Dis)Gracefully* - arrived in Devon to perform an exciting and dynamic dance programme at a fund-raising event for the Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Fund. Lisa would have been delighted!

The Company, formed in 1997 for a Liverpool initiative to promote activities for the over-50's, has been working ever since. With the inspirational leadership of Judy Smith, their range of performances and projects has included site-specific works and the making of a dance film at Speke Hall.

The *GODS* describe themselves as an amateur dance group with an age range between 45 and 75 years. Membership - currently at around 30 dancers - is open to all in the belief that everyone should have access to dance: that for older dancers it plays a significant role in diminishing the effects of ageing; that it enhances personal satisfaction and self-esteem and that it promotes a positive image of the creativity and capability of the older dancer.



This latter claim was certainly highlighted by the end of this wonderful fund-raising evening. Twenty-one dancers - should we call them goddesses - descended on the small, secluded village of Kilmington (near Axminster) to contribute to the creation of a true Community Event. Facilities at the splendid village hall; catering, the bar and flowers were all generously provided by village members and publicity and marketing ensured the support and participation of a packed audience of over a hundred.

Superbly organised by Judith Chapman and BJ Lewis, Officers of the Fund, the audience enjoyed a gourmet supper interwoven with six choreographies ranging from the lively to the lyrical. There was a joyous, energising tap-shoe opener to 'Singing in the Rain' with startling yellow raincoats, umbrellas and some great rhythmic sequences.



There was 'Class' - a beautifully danced work, both a celebration and tribute to the choreographer, Irene Dilks, who performed with the Company six weeks before her death in 2000. 'Next' offered a mimetic, witty comment on our experience of Waiting Rooms and "Shimmer" by the Indian choreographer, Sri Sarker - especially commissioned for the Company by Chaturangan - was a challenging work to Indian music, full of Indian Dance references. The GODS of course rose to meet the challenge. Mastery of the material and the enthusiasm, verve and integrity of the performance was impressive. The two final dances built to a resoundingly successful climax. Crosby Beach was inspired by Anthony Gormley's installation of a hundred life-sized statues on Crosby Beach and the finale - *Where Past and Future are Gathered* - incorporated quotations from the comical, iconoclastic poem, 'Warning' 'When I am an old woman I shall wear purple ..' - the inspiration for the name of the Company.



And there was more: a jewel of a performance by the distinguished musician and composer, Christopher Benstead! Defining his space with four unusual musical instruments collected on his travels round the world, Christopher held the audience spellbound with descriptions of their contexts and riveting compositions with voice accompaniment as he moved to play one after the other. His generous support for the Fund has its origins in his own successful scholarship application to travel to Indonesia to realise a long-held dream to study the music and dance of the Balinese culture.



Tributes to the professionalism, skill and expertise of the performers were unanimous. Energy was on a high as audience members were leaving. Pam Woods, a LUTSF scholarship winner in 2006 voiced the resolution to consider forming such a Company in Exeter and a number of audience members' comments can be summarised by the numerous questions: 'Will it happen again next year? With a total of around £700. raised for the Fund, it seems that an annual recreation of such a celebration of Dance and Music might be hoped for!

Anna Carlisle

Chair LUTSF

For information on the work of the Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Fund, requests to make donations and the new Friends of LUTSF Scheme go to www.lutsf.org.uk or contact the Secretary: Judith Chapman, Breach, Kilmington, Devon EX13 7ST (see above right).

Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Fund

(A note from Dr Judith Chapman;
Secretary LUTSF)

As Laban Guild members will know, LUTSF was established in 1986 in memory of Lisa Ullmann, performer and distinguished teacher. Scholarships are awarded annually and, since giving its first awards in 1987, the Fund has awarded 392 scholarships totalling about £178,000. The awards support a wide range of journeys, assisting individuals at different stages in their careers to travel to enrich their practice and pursue a personal passion. Application forms are available from 1st September and the closing date for submitting an application is 25th January annually. Awards for 2009/10 include:

- Edinburgh to Lisbon to explore the collaborative relationship between choreographer and composer;
- Manchester to Chennai to attend a music and dance festival and the Natya Kala conference;
- London to Hamburg and Antwerp to take part in the European professional development programme 'Dance Beyond borders';
- Plymouth to Perth to attend the International Performance conference 'Boom or Bust' and Bodyweather site-based workshops.

Full details of projects supported this year, reports from previous scholarship winners, guidelines for making an application and

information about Lisa and the setting up of the Fund are all available on the LUTSF website www.lutsf.org.uk. LUTSF has this year set up a *Friends of Lisa Ullmann Scheme* - details are available on the website or from the secretary of the Fund. We already have many *Friends* from the Guild and we would, of course, welcome more! *Please join.*

Many Laban Guild members have, over the years, attended fund-raising events organised by LUTSF to help maintain the level of money available to award scholarships each year. This year, the event was an evening of dance and music held in the village hall in Kilmington, East Devon. The 'gods' from Liverpool, and LUTSF scholarship winner and committee member, Chris Benstead, provided an exciting evening which, in the Kilmington tradition, was interspersed with an excellent two-course supper and wine, all provided by members of the village.

Anna's article offers an account of the evening whilst Claudette, a Kilmington resident, shows us an audience member's reaction.

Judith Chapman

Secretary LUTSF

The Final Phoenix!

(Anna Carlisle MBE marks the final meeting of
the much acclaimed
Phoenix Dance Group) Ed.



- **The Phoenix Project final week-end Workshop** in Laban Studies for practitioners took place at a week-end in April 2009;
- **Venue:** Lewes College Sussex;
- **Participants:** Amanda Banks (England), James McBride (America), Uma O'Neill (Wales), Mai Sievert (Germany), Fumiaki Takana (Japan), Dawn Turner (England), Cathy Washbrook (England);
- **Tutors:** Dr Marion North and Walli Meier;
- **Course Content:** Eukinetics and Choreutics;
- **Impact:** The group was delighted to have this opportunity: it was a great privilege to have such tutors; they were brilliant!
- **Comments:** 'Marion was on the top of her form!' (Walli Meier);
'these professional dancers were enthralled by the concepts of 'Effort' and 'Space Harmony' and applied them with high intelligence! (Walli Meier);
Walli is a master at character observation! Alarmingly accurate concerning the Phoenix Group! (Dawn Turner)
Marion's mind seems as sharp and focused as ever! concerning Laban's work.
It's great to be part of such a diverse group of people from different countries and cultures! working together as part of the Phoenix Group. (Dawn Turner)
- **Sponsorship:** Generously supported by the Laban Guild;
- **Organiser:** Anna Carlisle MBE;
- **Future decision:** to run a Summer School in 2010 in Laban Studies

Final Phoenix Session with Marion North: Observations and Contrasts to Movement Pattern Analysis (MPA)

(James McBride MA – a teacher, choreographer and MPA Consultant in Copenhagen, compares and contrasts the finer details of movement observation, presented by Marion North in the final session of the Phoenix Group, with those of Movement Pattern Analysis. James took his MA in Dance Studies at LABAN Creekside). Ed.

The Phoenix Project, initiated by Anna Carlisle and funded by the Laban Guild, had as its principal objective to continue the refinement and propagation of Laban's principles, bringing together up-and-coming Laban practitioners and revered Laban educators (most notably Walli Meier, Geraldine Stephenson and a long list of guest lecturers). The practical "bringing together" was greatly the result of the organisational efforts of Gillian Hibbs.

Although the project came to completion over a year ago, a final weekend-workshop was organised for the 4th and 5th of April 2009, with Marion North as guest lecturer. This also allowed the former Phoenix participants to meet again and exchange their latest experiences of teaching Laban in a wide range of applications.

For those who had previous experience or preconceptions of Marion North as arch-director of LABAN (or The Laban Centre), there was almost a slight trepidation in the air as she entered the studio space in picturesque Lewes, East Sussex. This quickly dissipated, however, as soon as she greeted the assembled group with a genuine enthusiasm to share her knowledge and experience.

The initial and predominant part of the session focused on effort: from inner impulse to outer expression. As we experienced in guided explorations, inner attitudes are not always immediately visible to the observer. A sense of urgency, for example, may sometimes appear to manifest itself in decelerating movement; yet a closer look (and perhaps a good portion of physical empathy) may reveal an inner "ticking" or readiness to take off.



This seeming juxtaposition echoes much of what I also experience in my work with Warren Lamb's Movement Pattern Analysis. When observing clients, we are looking for processes of variation between, for example, accelerating and decelerating, yet it can sometimes be difficult to discern which (if any) end of the scale dominates – since they often occur consecutively in one phrase of movement. What becomes obvious is a motivation to play with time – to make a variation between accelerating and decelerating, where one occurs in order for the other to follow. The same is true in all the effort and shaping processes we observe in MPA, for example between advancing and retreating. Sometimes a client seems on the onset to be advancing, but in actual fact is positioning him- or herself in order to retreat. What becomes obvious is a preference for shaping with a sagittal orientation – in which there is an inherent potential (or readiness) for both advancing and retreating.



While Marion North seemed to stress the potential for oppositions in the experience and observations of effort variation, she then went on to insist that variation occurs between one effort factor – for example directing – and a state of neutrality (or passivity), rather than between two polarities of the same (active) process – for example between more direct action and more flexible action. In the context of MPA, my experience is that both kinds of processes are possible. But since we are only concerned with active variation in effort and shaping (for the purpose of identifying core motivations in decision-making), passive attitudes receive relatively little focus in MPA.

Another and undoubtedly the most significant point of contention between Marion North's approach to movement observation and Warren Lamb's methodology in MPA came out in later discussions of Marion's movement observation applied to "personality assessment." When asked if she makes a distinction between gestures and integrated movements, she replied "No." She explained that degrees of bodily integration are not significant for the purposes of her observation and analysis.

By contrast, Posture-Gesture Mergers (or integrated movements) are the essence of Movement Pattern Analysis – indeed this is the only movement behaviour we deem significant for analysing core motivations that do not change over time. MPA sees a direct correlation between degrees of bodily integration and degrees of authenticity – of being "oneself." Research demonstrates, for example, that when people have sincere intentions and tell the truth, they make more integrated movement and they are also perceived as being more honest, even by people unable to discern integrated movement (PGM's) from gestures or postural movement (ref)

Early in Warren Lamb's work with Laban and Lawrence, he noticed that people could to some degree control

their gestures or postural movements, but not what he came to identify as Posture-Gesture Mergers. While gesture or postural movement may have some cultural or social significance in a specific context, it became clear that they had no relevance for identifying intrinsic (inner) motivations that are enduring over a whole lifetime.

Marion North's observation of infants, however, seems to have focused as much on their reactions to their immediate environment as on their inner attitudes, at least from what Marion explained during the session. Since MPA is only concerned with patterns of intrinsic motivation, and since these patterns are apparently not in place until adulthood, one can say that not only the methods, but also the objectives differ greatly between MPA and Marion North's earlier work in movement observation.

After discussions of nonverbal behaviour and after having explored effort and, to some degree, shape variation, Marion finished the session by facilitating the performance and observation of individual dance sequences. We were led to identify the predominant focus of each solo, be it effort, shape or "body."

Interestingly, from both an MPA and choreographic perspective, the latter usually consisted of specific actions performed as non-integrated gestures, and for this reason seemed less engaged or engaging (at least to me). This, I believe, is a point worthy of further exploration and indicative of the general feeling of inspiration that followed Marion North's generous contributions to the Phoenix Project.

James McBride

Winter, Deborah Du Nann, Carla Widell, Gail Truitt and Jane George-Falvy (1989). Empirical Studies of Posture-Gesture Mergers. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 13 (4).

Photos of previous Phoenix Workshops by Richard Washbrook



Dance Mirrors: Embodying, Actualising and Operationalising a Dance Experience in Healthcare Part 2

(This article articulates Phase 2 of Dr Jenny Elliott's PhD research in Dance in Health, exploring the impact of a Laban-based programme of dance on a group of men with enduring brain injury and the staff who care for them. It follows on from the previous article in the May Issue of Movement and Dance (2009) and focuses on the implementation of the design and methodological instruments, analysis and findings of the study. All elements of the study emerged from a deep exploration of her Laban dance practice). Ed

A combined quantitative and qualitative approach of the evaluation of participant experience was adopted for the study. The journeys of the service users and staff through process to performance were mapped.

Specific areas of well-being defined for the study by the participants were:

1. Improvement in functional and expressive qualities of movement of service users
2. The "feel good factor" that participants may experience during the Creative Dance Programme
3. Desire to be part of the wider community

The research study also sought to explore healthcare staff confidence in using Laban dance within their practice.

Aims of the study

- Design a creative dance project based on Laban Principles of Movement for use with people with brain injury and the staff who care for them. Creating a Dance Company comprising of nursing staff and service users was an integral part of the project.
- Illustrate how a Laban-based dance project can enhance the well-being of persons with enduring brain injury

components:

1. **Component 1**-Healthcare Staff Creative Dance and Movement Training Programme-Six day introduction to the skills of creative dance
2. **Component 2**-Four-week Service Users/Staff Creative Dance Project/Performance

"Live Data Text" articulated through Study Performance Location of Study

- The Creative Dance Programme took place in dance studio in a healthcare setting, Belfast, N.I.
- Community theatre

Participants

- Seven service users with enduring brain injury, resident in the Neuro-Behavioural Rehabilitation Unit
- Three members of staff who care for them
- Audience who attended performance

Consent

Initial consent was obtained from all the participants with support of families and the multi-disciplinary healthcare team. Process consent was undertaken daily during the project to ensure that service users with limited memory re-call fully understood their involvement in the study.

Ethical permission was secured regarding authorization to utilize professionally edited film footage as part of final thesis text.

Pilot Study

A short six-week pilot study was carried out to assess the face and content validity of the relevant measurement and analytical tools.

Data Collection Methods

The following data collection methods were utilized across the two components of the study:

- Reflective personal diaries
- Film recordings
- Specifically designed, Laban-based Functional and Expression Quality of Movement measurement Framework
- Questionnaires

Data Analysis Procedures

Thematic analysis was undertaken of data collected in Components 1 and 2. Key themes were identified and examined, revealing the outcomes of the questionnaires. Quantitative data from questionnaires and from Functional and Expressive Quality of Movement Measurement scales were analyzed using descriptive statistics alongside the data derived from more than 40 hours of film data to achieve integration of findings.

The lack of research in the area of film documentary text was challenging providing a catalyst to explore the development of a specific analytical evaluative framework for the systematic analysis and production of the film footage. This framework

was embedded in theories of film analysis derived from Henley 1998, Schmais & Diaz 1998, Nowlan 2001. Identified themes were considered by the focus group and verified or rejected as significant from their perspective.



Description of Study

The conceptual basis of this programme was structured on a community dance programme framework. The programme was a single-case study design. It consisted of two integrated

Key Findings: The Role of the Dancer



The study provided a viable framework through which a concept of creative relationship development between dancer/artist, service user and staff was realised within an arts cultural context in a healthcare setting (Figure 1). The study demonstrated that dancers working in healthcare environments can facilitate through their creative practice:

- An understanding of the contribution of the independent dancer/artist to cultural life within healthcare settings
- The construction of a creative-based pro-active, democratic public platform of representation for those availing and working in healthcare
- Alternative cultural arts-based perspectives and values for consideration in developing rehabilitation and recovery focused programmes for populations with enduring brain injury
- Opportunity to develop concepts of participatory arts as practiced in wider community settings to fulfill cultural right of individuals within healthcare environments
- Production of high quality dance works including live performance that emanate from within the core of the healthcare community
- Increase in audience attendance and understanding of inclusiveness through public performance
- Provision of creative educational frameworks that encourage life-long learning for service user and staff
- Opportunity for personal growth and empowered relationships for service user and staff through creative engagement
- Development of a philosophy that offers alternative concepts of service user and staff involvement by implementing radical creative identities as tools to enhance well-being e.g. development and sustaining of a Dance Company in Health such as that modelled in this study
- Generation of new constructs of research knowledge developed from the core of the artist/dancer's professional and personal practice
- New considerations of ethical codes regarding use of film within constructs of research text

Key Participant Findings: Education and Relationship

Two primary themes, education and relationship drawn from the key findings were found to best reflect the central core of the participant dance experience. The study discovered that the conceptual framework developed and employed in the dance

programme (Figure 1), offered all the participants a creative experience that impacted positively on their relationships and levels of well-being by contributing to service users, staff and audience cultural and health education (Freeman 2006).

The educational and relationship themes emerging from the study offer further support to Moriarty's (2003) debate regarding the educational and cultural value of arts integration into all aspects of community living. The concept originally proposed at the outset of the study promoted a community model of dance practice as a valuable cultural tool to support programmes of well-being within existing healthcare programmes. This concept is verified in the study

findings through investment in reflection of the relationship and educational benefits of dance participation and acknowledges the role of the community dance practitioner within healthcare programmes, independent of models of dance therapy practice.

Performing Live Research Text of Dancer/Service User Relationship in Health



Conclusion

The dance experience has been the creative educator in the study, developing a rigorous methodology through reflexivity and interpretation accessed through creative expression and drawing specifically on Laban's Principles of Movement. Rudolf Laban's practice, theory and philosophy have been an integral part and an informant of the documentary text design, accounting for overall design, methodology and content of the study as well as the different perspectives of the participants' experience. It has prompted a self-understanding and critical inquiry primarily through body knowledge encouraging reflection on professional practice and lived experiences of each other within a creative relationship in a residential care setting.

From the staff perspective, learning to develop a creative reflective practice through a Laban-based framework has given them meaningful tools through which to examine how they care for a group of service users with brain injury. From

the service user perspective, reflective practice has proven to be empowering, offering an alternative means of expressing their life experience and affecting change. By reflecting and interpreting through creative engagement, a creative understanding of the service user/staff relationship has been modelled, articulated and facilitated through the study bringing insight to interdisciplinary collaboration.

The study underlines the important contribution that an independent creative space offers with regard to developing a meaningful cultural life within residential healthcare settings and impact on well-being. It is anticipated that the evidence of this study will offer support for the development of participatory arts in healthcare programmes and a creative-based critical inquiry model that utilizes community-based art spaces and development of independent dance spaces within healthcare environments.

I concluded my thesis by returning to where this whole investigation initiated, in the clarity of the dance experience and reflection. All of us who participated in the dance experience were offered an intimate opportunity through the study to stand in front of our own metaphoric and physical mirror. There, in that place of creative reflection and interpretation of the dance each of us observed a changing self and therein celebrated the diversity and inclusiveness of our humanness.

Jenny Elliott

(This work is subject to copyright and the contents, analytical and measurement tools generated through this PhD study cannot be reproduced without permission of author, Jenny Elliott: j.elliott774@btinternet.com)

(In our last issue, the reviews of the DVD 'Living Architecture – Rudolf Laban and the Geometry of Dance', produced by Anna Carlisle and Valerie Preston-Dunlop, have prompted further responses - this time by Warren Lamb and Dr Carol-Lynne Moore - with interpolations by the Editor).

Elliott, J. (2008) *Embodying, Actualizing and Operationalizing a Dance Experience in a Healthcare Context*. Unpublished PhD, University of Ulster, Jordanstown.
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http://www.uwec.edu/ranowlan/an/questions_crit_documentary.htm [Last accessed 03/12/06].
 Schmais, C. & Diaz-Salazar, P. (1998) *Bern-A Method for Analyzing Dance/Movement Therapy Groups*. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 25(3):159-165.

* The Healthcare Staff Laban-based Training Programme has since been accredited by the University of Ulster. Dance Company Maine emerged out of the study and continues to flourish.

My thanks to everyone who participated in and supported my PhD journey especially Arline Balmer, a member of the Laban Guild who facilitated the role of the Independent Laban Dance Advisor on the study. Thank you to all the Laban Guild tutors who many years ago on the course in Belfast opened a major life opportunity for me to pursue a career in Laban Dance Practice.

Critical Debate

WL: Warren Lamb; **CM:** Dr Carol-Lynne Moore; **GC:** The Editor.

GC: Warren, what aspects of the DVD 'Living Architecture' stood out for you?

WL: There are three aspects that stand out:

1) Professor Critchlow's contribution, 2) a certain beauty in the dancers' performance, and 3) the brief mention of 7 rings.

1) Professor Critchlow brings down to earth any concept of *sacred geometry* to be found "embodied" in Laban's "space harmony". Indeed, he seems to be making out a case that the Platonic solids can be associated with *living architecture* but not necessarily with anything sacred in the spiritual sense for which Anna Carlisle and Valerie Preston-Dunlop seem to be aiming.

2) The movement is primarily performed in slow motion by dancers who are able to move beautifully. However, lack of pace and its effect on flow and the dynamics generally makes the performance lack vitality. Presumably this choice was made because slow motion is used by the church to induce solemnity and authority. The scales are also taught point to point, contrary to Laban's principles, which further restricts the movement. His interest in joining the Rosicrucians was to convert them into an acceptance of his ideas with regard to movement and the cosmos

and he would certainly not have eliminated time and flow. To inhibit the movement and then for Valerie to claim "if we don't say it, it will be lost" presupposes that "it" consists of doing a few scales in somewhat static form to demonstrate that "space harmony" is religious. In fact she need not worry. Laban's work is being kept alive and richly developed by other people. There is no fear that anything will be lost.

3) A potentially illuminating section of the DVD is the fleeting introduction of 7 rings. It is almost impossible to do these rings in slow motion and a more dynamic performance is inevitable. More emphasis on their significance would have been relevant.

Whatever it is that Valerie claims is "embodied" in Laban's "space harmony" has not been revealed in this DVD. It fails to show how Laban understood sacred geometry in terms of movement.

GC: Carol-Lynne, based upon your own construction of an intellectual history of Laban's Choreutic theory¹, perhaps you would comment on "Living Architecture – Rudolf Laban and the Geometry of Dance," the DVD recently produced by Valerie Preston-Dunlop and Anna Carlisle.

CM: I watched the DVD with great interest, and I should like to begin by commenting on its good points. The film is well-produced. The dancers are lovely. Their demonstrations of Choreutic forms in slow motion are clear. Similarly, the choreographic adaptations are relatively simple, so the relationship of these studies to Choreutic forms is fairly obvious. It is a coup to have snared notable scholars like Keith Critchlow and Christopher McIntosh, whose interests lie somewhat outside movement and dance. Their comments, along with those of Preston-Dunlop and her interlocutor, Carlisle, are thought-provoking. Nevertheless, I find the production to be a strange mixture of elements, and I remain bemused as to its aim and intended audience.

Is "Living Architecture" meant to be an intellectual history, linking Laban's space harmony forms to the mysterious Rosicrucian movement and its geometrical iconography? Or is the film a lecture-demonstration about Choreutics, promulgating the forms as a design source for choreography? Then again, do the producers want to promote Laban's work as a spiritual practice for dancers? Or are they recasting the Choreutic forms as "sacred" movements appropriate for Everyman?

Admittedly, Rudolf Laban's personal interests were quite wide-ranging, and there is no reason why a film devoted to the corpus of his life work should not be equally broad in scope. Nevertheless, the current production is more provocative than definitive. Things said, things implied, and things left unsaid raise my concerns for several reasons.

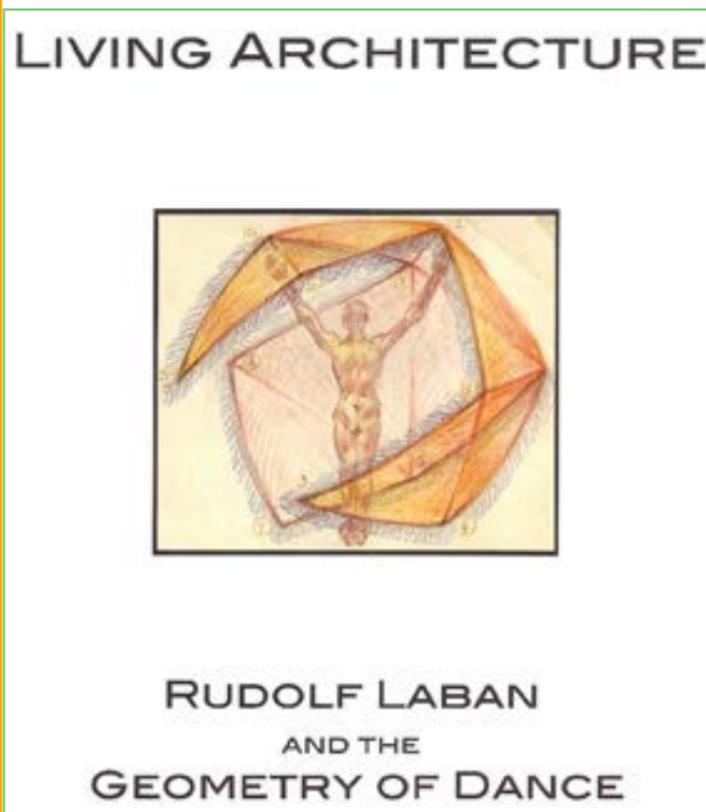
GC: How so?

CM: First, the film appears to address Laban's metaphysical worldview, a perspective frequently subjected to critical comment.² Previously, the Laban community has reacted to such criticism, either by denying the significance of Laban's involvement in esoteric groups, or, as was the case in Preston-Dunlop's earlier writings, declaring Laban's cosmological interests to be "irrelevant" to the "logical forms" outlined in his Choreutic theory.³



Since philosophers of science now generally agree that aspects of a researcher's personhood such as his "religion, or his metaphysics, or his sense of humor"⁴ may have an influence on his theorizing, Preston-Dunlop's reversal of position is both sensible and refreshing. Nevertheless, "Living Architecture" provides too little historical and cultural detail. I fear that the casual viewer will fail to grasp the Rosicrucian worldview, which is subtle and paradoxical at best. Links between sacred geometry and Laban's Choreutic theories are likely to prove even more difficult to follow, particularly since much is implied but little is delineated beyond superficial generalities, even by experts such as Critchlow.

Secondly, promulgating Choreutic forms as a design source for dance is neither new nor revolutionary. While the film does a good job of showing some elegant examples of how this can be done, it stops short of really explicating the compositional principles involved. For example, the planar studies would be enhanced by narration detailing the various approaches to physical embodiment employed, as well as the instances when transverse movement from plane to plane occurs, or when, for example, the horizontal plane study actually ends in another plane (the door plane). Viewers from other disciplines may have difficulty "seeing" the Choreutic forms once they have been rotated, taken apart, or sequenced from different starting locations. Further explanation would make these creative transformations more "user-friendly" – but perhaps such elucidation is secondary to promoting Choreutics as a spiritual practice.



DVD sleeve - image by kind permission of NRCD

Unfortunately, the distinction between dance as theatrical spectacle and dance as sacred ritual is blurred in this presentation. Dance historians and ethnologists alike acknowledge that dance often loses its magical significance when placed on stage and transformed into a spectator sport.⁵ Laban was aware of this. In the concluding chapter of *A Life for Dance*, he distinguishes among three types of dance: choric or festive community dance, theatrical dance-drama, and *Reigenwerk* (literally, "circle work"). The first two categories are self-explanatory, while the mysterious *Reigenwerk* is described as a non-narrative form that "brings about a consciousness of one's innermost self."⁶ Laban implies that such dances are transformational, allowing perception of "another higher world that we otherwise sense only."⁷ While it is difficult to know exactly what Laban means by this, his statements indicate a clear differentiation between dance composed for the stage and dance performed as a sacred ritual.

Various comments made by the producers and Critchlow imply that Choreutic forms (such as the mixed seven-rings) are *Reigenwerk* that have something to do with the journey of the soul and what could be seen as a practice aimed at spiritual transformation. Yet, I have difficulty construing the dancers' demonstrations as anything approaching a "sacred practice."

GC: For what reasons?

CM: Because most sacred practices are based upon some notion of "another, supernatural world of divine beings"⁸ whether this is one god, a pantheon of deities, or, in the case of Pythagoreanism, an abstract notion of universal Oneness. As a point of fact, the *fin de siècle* Occult Revival movements in which Laban was involved were syncretic, combining Eastern and Western spiritual traditions.⁹ These esoteric groups developed complex philosophies and cosmologies in stark contrast to the virulent fundamentalism and sectarianism of many contemporary religions. Nevertheless, in Laban's time, the "spiritual" still stood for something beyond human life, something non-human.

By extension, a spiritual encounter through dance must necessitate a direct, physical experience with something supernatural and "totally other." As characterized by Berger, "the sacred impresses man as an overwhelming, awesome, and strangely fascinating power."¹⁰ Sufi rituals witnessed by Laban during his adolescence seem to have impressed him in just this way.¹¹ Perhaps this is why he later lamented that "the European has lost the habit and capacity to pray with movement."¹²

GC: In what respects can dance be used as a sacred ritual?

CM: I am sure that dance can be used as a sacred ritual. I am prepared to accept that the circular Choreutic forms are an outline for what could be developed into a Gnostic ritual of spiritual encounter. But I am not prepared to accept the definition of the sacred given by Critchlow in the film as "whatever" is most meaningful and essential "to human life." Surely the sacred is transcendent and related to whatever lies beyond human life. I find it difficult to construe the Choreutic sequences performed on the DVD as spiritual dances or sacred rituals -- deep seriousness, slow motion, and vibrating gong tones notwithstanding. How can dance be a spiritual practice if there is no direct or indirect reference to spirits? Despite the producers' good intentions, this film treatment mystifies ordinary choreographic process while equating spiritual practice with creative self-expression.

GC: Is Laban's reputation enhanced by his alliance with Rosicrucianism?

CM: I am not sure that Laban's reputation gains much by associating him with Rosicrucianism as a spiritual movement only. As the intellectual historian Frances Yates points out,

Rosicrucianism anticipates the Age of Enlightenment and the Scientific Revolution. The movement "expresses both the scientific outlook, of penetrating into new worlds of discovery, and also an attitude of religious expectation, of penetrating into new fields of religious experience." Knowing that they hold in their hands the potential for great advances in the understanding of material reality, the Rosicrucians simultaneously are "concerned to integrate these into a religious philosophy."¹³

If Laban is to be linked to the Rosicrucians, then the integrative perspective of this philosophy should be highlighted. To represent Choreutic theory vaguely as a kind of sacred practice of dance is as one-sided as to discount this dimension and only laud Laban's work as "logical forms." Surely, if we wish to extend the full range of Laban's interests and theoretical pursuits, we must accept movement as a complex phenomenon -- one open to reasoned inquiry and one also possessing transcendent powers that surpass human understanding. What we can explain, we should. What we cannot explain "we must pass over in silence."¹⁴

Endnotes

1. Carol-Lynne Moore, "The Choreutic Theory of Rudolf Laban: Form and Transformation." Ph.D. Thesis, University of Surrey, 1999.
2. Critics have included dance historians, philosophers, and scholars such as Lincoln Kirstein, Suzanne Langer, Gordon Curl, and, more recently, Marion Kant.
3. Valerie Preston-Dunlop, "Choreutics: The Study of Logical Spatial Forms in Dance," in *Dancing and Dance Theory*, ed. Valerie Preston-Dunlop (London: Laban Centre, 1979), p. 141.
4. Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method* (New York: Verso, 1993), p. 11.
5. Jamake Highwater, *Dance: Rituals of Experience* (New York: Alfred van der marck, 1978).
6. Rudolf Laban, *A Life for Dance* (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1975), p. 178.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
8. Peter Berger, *A Rumor of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1970), p. 3.
9. James Webb, *The Occult Underground* (LaSalle, IL: Open Court Publishing, 1974).
10. Berger, *Rumor of Angels*, p. 2.
11. Laban, *Life for Dance*, pp. 50-51.
12. Rudolf Laban, *The Mastery of Movement* (Boston: Plays Inc., 1971), p. 5.
13. Frances Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London: Routledge, 1972), pp. 225-226.
14. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), p. 74.

GC: The debate on the DVD *Living Architecture Rudolf Laban and the Geometry of Dance* continues unabated; we shall therefore be publishing further comments in our next edition - including a valuable contribution from Uma O'Neill. Further contributions are also invited.

DVD available from Dance Books Tel: 01420 86138



University of Bedfordshire

(Sadie Hunt - one of three new members on the Laban Guild Council - reflects on her impressions of the new MA Module in Dance Education she is undertaking at the University of Bedfordshire. Sadie graduated from Roehampton University with a BA (Hons) in Dance Studies and gained her MA in Choreography from Middlesex University; she works as a freelance dance teacher specialising in GCSE and A level Dance and choreographs dances for her own company: Shunt Dance Company.) Ed.

As teachers it is often the case that we want to continue our studies. As dance teachers in secondary education, if we decide to take the plunge and embark on a higher degree what course do we choose? There are a host of performance and choreographic higher degrees, and some excellent options in community dance and dance therapy. However if your profession is secondary teaching - are these the most beneficial for you? I was, therefore, very excited when the opportunity arose to take an MA module in Dance Education at the University of Bedfordshire. This module is one option as part of a whole Masters degree; it is aimed at educational professionals who wish to undertake study at a post graduate level. Due to the modular nature of the course one can choose whether to take just one 30 credit module (gaining a University Certificate of Professional Development) or more, leading to a Postgraduate Certificate (60 credits), Postgraduate Diploma (120 credits) or the full Masters qualification (180 credits). The flexibility of the course is very appealing as you can study at a rate that best suits your situation.



(Rebecca Tyrell reflects on her experience - having attended a Forsythe Workshop at Bedfordshire University. Rebecca graduated at the London Studio Centre specialising in Contemporary Dance and was a member of the College Company 'Intoto'. She then freelanced as a dancer for two years before taking a PGCE in dance at Bedfordshire University; Rebecca now teaches dance at The Nobel School in Stevenage.) Ed.

MA Module in Dance Education

The Dance Education module focuses on Laban Studies, taught by Anna Carlisle MBE MA and tutored by Maggie Killingbeck MPhil. The key feature of the module is to undertake action research within your own educational setting. Following the first Saturday workshops, we identified an area of our teaching, or our students' learning, which we wanted to improve. We then considered how we could use the Laban activities and skills which we had learnt in the workshops, to enable our research. Each of us has chosen a different area of dance education to investigate, each a different age group or specification - ranging from specific GCSE assessments, A level dance teaching, to delivering BTEC performing arts.

The mode of assessment for this particular module is through verbal presentation - beginning with two formatively assessed shorter presentations, building to the final longer presentation. You are required to:

- Contextualise your research through 'astute and extensive evaluation of national and local contextual factors influencing the study focus.'
- Complete and present a thorough and detailed literature review, demonstrating your understanding of a wide range of sources that underpin the thinking behind your study.
- Choose suitable research methodologies as a result of extensive reading that enable you to undertake ethical and valid research.
- Finally, you must be able to present your findings and the analysis of your data appropriately and give a clear, well structured and innovative conclusion discussing potential for further research.

So far, as a group, we have presented some fascinating ideas, and the breadth of study and research taking place is incredibly exciting. We all feel very strongly that through a more explicit use of Laban theories in dance education, we can encourage more high quality dance in the young people we teach and we aim to prove this through our research.

Sadie Hunt

Forsythe Workshop
led by Alison Curtis-Jones
at University of Bedfordshire
July 2009

When I received the itinerary for the workshop, I panicked. Terms such as Choreutic Operations, Choreutic Modalities, Transformation Techniques and Double Transformation Techniques sent my brain into turmoil. As a PGCE student who had just completed the course it felt somewhat humiliating not to know and understand these terms.

The workshop began with becoming familiar with one's own

physicality and exploring the space around the body through the use of the planes. This evolved into crossing over the centre line, a technique, we were informed, frequently utilised by Forsythe. Indeed throughout the day we were given an insight into William Forsythe's thinking and his approaches to choreography. For me a particularly interesting part of the one day workshop was when we 'ruptured' ballet vocabulary to create material far removed from the starting point. This is a strategy, we were told, that William Forsythe often uses to create new material with his dancers. Through our exploration of choreutics in the style of William Forsythe, new and exciting material was created. It became clear that the creation of dynamic and exciting choreography requires dancers/teachers/choreographers to 'review' rather than 'reinvent the wheel'. As a newly qualified teacher, the Forsythe workshop has inspired me and made me want to build on William Forsythe approaches to choreography, and emulate Alison Curtis-Jones approach to teaching this material. I would like to pass on this knowledge to the pupils that I teach in the hope to inspire them in the same way that Alison Curtis-Jones inspired me throughout the William Forsythe workshop.

I am excited about going back to work in September and 'wowing', or more realistically panicking my pupils, (as I was panicked at the beginning of the workshop) with words such as; double transformation, spatial tension, virtual designs, actual designs, mini zones and super zones. I only hope that, at the end of my classes, my pupils will feel as fulfilled and appreciative of this new choreographic way to work as I did after the workshop.

All of the dance teachers attending the workshop agreed that it had been invaluable, and, would inform their writing of new choreography-based schemes of work. Alison Curtis-Jones guidance in relation to how William Forsythe uses space as a choreographic tool was insightful. Indeed I now view this as an essential way to approach choreography, as it encourages the dancer/ choreographer to experiment with space in ways that most of the participants had not considered before. The material created by all participants at the workshop was extremely innovative. When performed, the choreographic snippets were almost magical; space explored in this unique way appeared to produce such intricate and interesting material which when layered with rich dynamic content revealed personality and became almost breathtaking. The possibility of facilitating such incredibly varied outcomes from the same starting point excites me as a teacher of Secondary Dance. I feel enthusiastic about how the use of space can entice an audience to watch the most intricate movements. This workshop has made me look at how I teach choreography and as a result I am writing new schemes of work incorporating what I learnt at the Forsythe Workshop led by Alison Curtis Jones. A truly valuable experience recommended by all who attended.

Rebecca Tyrrell

(Dr Margaret Whitehead - Associate Head of School, De Montfort University (Rtd), Tutor: British Ballet Organisation, Former President PEAK), highlights some significant remarks in Modell's writings). Ed

Imagination and the Meaningful Brain Arnold H. Modell MIT Press 2006

When a clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard writes the following, it is not surprising that a dance enthusiast wants to read more!

'We know that rhythmic motion such as dancing fosters a sense of relatedness and union. All human societies (ancient and modern) bond together by means of dance.'

'Kinesthesia should be recognised as a medium of communication,. We innately reverberate to the movement of others'.

'Rhythmic kinaesthetic sensations promote bonding'.

'The roots of empathy are in the body'. (p186)

Modell is a psychologist who has also studied philosophy. One of his goals is to demonstrate how wrong Descartes was to separate the body from the mind. His approach is to show how meaning is created via our embodied interaction with the world. He is principally concerned to explain the role of metaphor in making sense of the world. Modell defines metaphor as a process that occurs below the level of consciousness and effects cross modal mappings of experience, drawing from perceptions from all our sensory domains. This, importantly, includes proprioceptive information. He goes on to explain that imagination is the product of metaphor and is a distinctive human attribute and also refers to corporeal imagination.

Modell further debates the role of physical interaction with the world as the essential foundation of language development and the significant part played by our embodied dimension in the realisation of empathy. The role of our embodiment in the functioning of mirror neurons is a key consideration here. Embodiment and our embodied experiences are, he argues, the foundation of the ability to empathize with others. The quotations above are taken from this section of the book. While this is a challenging book, it is immensely satisfying to read, again - and again.

The study of language development is addressed in detail in *Philosophy in the Flesh* George Lakoff and Mark Johnson Basic Books 1999. The role of mirror neurons is explored in *How the body shapes the mind* Shaun Gallagher Oxford 2005

To finish on another inspirational quote from Modell:-

'As a mode of cognition, metaphor is doubly embodied, first as an unconscious neural process and second in that metaphors are generated from bodily feelings so that it is possible to speak of corporeal imagination.' (p27)

Margaret Whitehead

The Harmonic Structure of Movement, Music and Dance According to Rudolf Laban An Examination of his Unpublished Writings and Drawings by Dr Carol-Lynne Moore The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter

(A Review copy of this book by Dr Carol-Lynne Moore with a Preface by Professor Janet Lansdale has been received by the Editor. It is hoped that full reviews will appear in our next issue; the following are highlights from Professor Lansdale's Preface). Ed.

Professor Lansdale writes in her Preface to this book: that whilst Laban's 'ideas have inspired movement practitioners in many domains and across many countries over more than half a century, we have had to wait for a thoroughgoing assessment of his theory of movement harmony ... but also for a practitioner/theorist such as Carol-Lynne Moore to emerge, whose special strengths and knowledge, combined with persistent and long, long familiarity with the material have been vital for the insightful development found in this book'.

We are also reminded that 'whilst recognising the diverse

and difficult nature of (Laban's) exploration, Carol-Lynne Moore brilliantly explicates and pursues his lines of argument with great sympathy and clarity'. We are also told that Carol-Lynne 'does more than justice to Laban's materials, getting inside his work and bringing new life in a manner appropriate to the present-time'; and that 'this book reinvigorates Laban scholarship' with 'further development of Laban's beautiful but analogic theory of movement harmony (which) makes a unique, original, and impressive contribution to scholarship'.

The book contains 22 coloured plates and photographs of Laban's drawings and captions, reproduced with permission from *Rudolf Laban Archive at the National Resource Centre for Dance at Surrey University*.

Further information can be found in the inserted leaflet in this issue.

Gordon Curl

Exploring Legacy Steining Festival May 2009

(Members continue to be fascinated with the Laban benefactors - Dorothy and Leonard Elmhirst of Dartington Hall fame (and of course with our own Patron William Elmhirst). Celia Muggridge (Writer) in this review discusses with Tessa Wyllie Martin Sharp's play 'Legacy', presented by the Theatre of Angels, which reveals the inspiring true-life story of Dorothy Whitney Elmhirst who 'created an outer world of extraordinary creativity, optimism and spiritual searching, co-funding the creative community at Dartington Hall and forming friendships with Mahatma Gandhi, Eleanor Roosevelt, Martha Graham, Cecil Beaton, Henry Moore, Benjamin Britten and Aldous Huxley' - and we might add: provided a refuge for Rudolf Laban following his flight from Nazi Germany in 1938). Ed.

backdrop a drape of mauve veils, behind it a single spotlight - a search light for the truths behind the veils of anecdote and privacy. The play is a two-hander between Dorothy Elmhirst and her Biographer. The play opens with Dorothy writing a memoir in 1959 and the biographer seeking to discuss with her the "evidence researched" facts about her life. He hopes to flesh these out, to get to the truths behind the facts. To lift her veils.

She writes: "At some point the obligation comes surely to try and sort out for one's own satisfaction, what the permanent influences have been. Although I do sense one's life is mysterious." Watching the play, I found that Sharp's elegant dialogue and the skill of the two actors revealed those permanent influences and gave us a sense of the mystery of the woman- it left me thinking how impossible it is ever truly know another person and yet the spirit of the woman is revealed in the space of two hours. There is a lightness and energy in the piece, the opening minutes charged with the poetry of Wordsworth and Shakespeare - her loves and influences - others' words, which she uses as masks and pointers. The biographer is also skilfully revealed - we discover his own sorrows and demons while he reveals hers and makes her face the truths she may have buried.

The dialogue opens up questions of the ethics of biographical writing and the whole process of remembering. She challenges him "It sounds as if you're trying to invent a story, make me fit a plot."

Kyle Riley, in a vibrant and versatile performance, while playing a forceful American biographer, in order to unmask

How do you write a biography? How do you breathe life into the ghosts of our past? What is the legacy we leave behind us? These are some of the questions that Martin Sharp poses in his new play "Legacy" on the life of Dorothy Elmhirst, the inspirational founder of Dartington Hall in Devon. Dorothy conceived of Dartington as a school "for adventure", a place which would "provide opportunities to develop the life of the imagination, and to offer the means of its expression through arts."

The stage is set as a beach terrace in the Bahamas: the

her, also impersonates a range of key characters in her world, bringing past conversations to life: leaping on a chair to present her childhood best friend on a string telephone, and donning a hesitant, crumpled Englishman for her second husband Leonard Elmhirst. His range and vigour is impressive, counterpointing the delicate ethereality of Dorothy. Kathryn Pogson, as Dorothy, expresses the wisdom, practicality and generosity of spirit of a woman in old age contemplating her life, while also capturing for us both the sensitive, luminous quality of herself as a child and the young woman, idealistic and ambitious, still alive within her. It is a masterly performance.

The play has a timeless quality. By breaking with the conventions of the unity of time, Sharp allows dialogue between the past and the present. The production makes this shift comfortable and believable for the audience. Dorothy's costume a 1950's style dress, in a floral print which one could buy today, echoes this bridge.

Sharp makes us query the value of writing as against an oral tradition. The Greek philosopher, Socrates, was suspicious of literacy as he felt it would fix ideas and that we only reach true understanding through talking and dialogue. The play's discussion leads the audience to contemplate the emotional mysteries behind the story of a life. The play is full of movement both emotionally and physically. Michael Chekhov is like a ghost in the background of the play. His views permeate the production. When the biographer suggests, "Shall we sit?" Dorothy replies, "Mischa would say "Do it on your feet." Life is movement and experience. Experience the movement". Maria Pattinson's sympathetic direction echoes this ideal. The play moves with lightness and energy, the actors almost dance around each other in an exploration of the past, like a courtship. The subtle softness of the lighting creates an airy lightness, a sense of summer and openness, allowing the exchange of ideas to flow. A moment of spotlighting him alone, writing, reminds us that he is recreating her.

The moment when she reveals to us her love for Chekhov and her dream of acting is complex .. We feel an identification with her fears, her final coming to terms with her shadows. "I wanted to say I realised how it is the shadows which add so much to the beauty and depth of everything." This phrase had a very powerful effect on the audience – challenging us to see the shadows in our lives as ways of giving structure – essential to the beauty of the whole, in a life as in a garden. Kathryn Pogson's revelation of the pain and the depth of Dorothy's emotions is so subtly done that we feel for her in a way that one relates to a moment in Shakespeare. This play is a fine example of good historical writing, that captures the moment and breathes life into it, beyond facts, beyond specifics, giving a new energy and understanding, touching us with a recognition of the universality of what it is to be human.



Photo of Dorothy Whitney Elmhirst by Cecil Beaton © Sothebys

The biographer, as Leonard, as Tagore says "To release the imagination, to give it wings, to open wide the door of the mind, this is perhaps the most vital service that one being can render another". This production certainly achieved this, it caught our love of theatre. This production has the wow factor! This is the way theatre works for people who love theatre, allowing us to follow the layering of stories and experience the reality that they reveal.

The photograph of Dorothy by Cecil Beaton, presents us with a reserved, introspective woman, but Sharp's play, Pogson's sensitive portrayal, and Maria Pattinson's fluid direction, reveal to us the spirit of a woman open to the wonders and adventures of the world. What a legacy!

Celia Muggridge

'Legacy' played at Taunton Somerset, Great Torrington Devon, Trowbridge, Brighton Fringe Festival, Barn Theatre Dartington Hall, Steyning Arts Festival, Tenterden Kent, Carshalton Surrey, Oxford Playhouse, Hampstead London, Newport Isle of Wight, New Milton Hampshire from May to July of this year.

A Tribute to John Wright



(Guild Member Don Buckland – former Staff Inspector for Physical Education - is well placed to pay tribute to John Wright, having capitalised on John's Laban-based teaching skills on DES Courses over the years. Don himself attended many Modern Dance Laban Courses not least as one of two men delegates - himself and the Editor) Ed.

A celebration of the life of John Wright was held on 17th July in St Mary the Virgin Church in his home village of Eastry, near Sandwich in Kent. He was 79. It was a joyous occasion which John had planned in the months before his death. The packed church included many from the Physical Education profession who came to express their thanks and admiration for one of the most influential figures in the training of teachers and in the development of a creative approach to the teaching of Gymnastics that sought to make the process accessible to everyone.

There were warm tributes from Alan Gibbon, who had long supported John's work and treasured his close friendship, and Val Rimmer, who had first been inspired by John as a student at Nonington College and had recently helped to put together a DVD of John introducing his understanding of gymnastics and giving an astonishing performance that belied his age. The service included moving musical and poetry contributions from John's children that revealed a hugely talented family, Jonathan (violin), David (clarinet and saxophone) and Lysetta, who joined the grandchildren and friends in giving an exquisite selection of poetry readings reflecting John's commitment to peace, love and the natural world. Marjorie, John's wife for 50 years and partner in all his passions and achievements, graced the occasion wonderfully.

John was trained at Worcester College in the 1950s where Joan Russell was developing her approach to the teaching of gymnastics based on Laban's principles of movement. Following a year at Loughborough College, John taught in primary and secondary schools in Nottingham, Hull and Grimsby. Then in 1966 he joined the staff of Nonington College where he stayed until the College was closed in 1986 after the reorganisation of teacher training that saw many colleges merged with larger institutions and names that had long histories in the training of teachers of physical education disappear completely.

At Nonington, John found an inspirational spirit in the person of the Principal, Ellinor Hinks, who supported him in developing his approach to gymnastics that came to be called by some, the "Wright Way".

In 1974, John was seconded to study for his MA in the Philosophy of Education at Hull University. He became in great demand as a lecturer on national courses for serving teachers

at Blackpool and Winchester, and at annual conferences organised by the Physical Education Association and the British Association of Organisers and Lecturers in Physical Education. He was also a significant contributor to the regular Teachers' Short Courses that Her Majesty's Inspectors ran at Woolley Hall in the West Riding. Through his contribution to in-service training John became a national figure.

John was particularly influential in helping to bridge the gap between boys and girls' physical education, especially when Nonington pioneered the training of men and women specialists alongside each other.

Ellinor was succeeded as Principal by Stanley Beaumont from Carnegie College and joined by other male and female colleagues, several of whom were present at the Celebration Service. Notable among these was your esteemed editor, Gordon Curl, who revealed that he had taught John to play the trumpet. The author of this piece well remembers visiting Nonington when John, then Principal Lecturer in charge of Movement Studies, would present the annual show of the students' work. Much of the creative Gymnastics involved trios showing sequences on self-chosen apparatus. Invariably, the point would be reached where John would say something along the lines of, "In this next trio, Cynthia has sprained her ankle so I will be taking her place. It is, however, Cynthia's own work I shall be showing". He then performed with all the zest of the twenty year olds he was joining.

In his retirement, John developed his life-long interest in poetry and with the encouragement of Alan Gibbon, began to write his own poems. A first selection of these was published in 2006 as "Reflections from the Deep End". Some are light-hearted, some are serious, but all go to reveal John's insights into the human condition. One, he wrote to mark the wedding of another considerable contributor to the professional development of teachers, Sharon Robinson. Val Rimmer summed up our thoughts at Eastry when she said in her tribute, "John has just completed the most amazing master-class in how to live life with purpose and passion, commitment and compassion, humility and humour". Thank you, John.

Don Buckland

(Sally Archbutt responds to the proposal by the President, Anna Carlisle MBE at the AGM in March 2009 (held at RADA and reported in the Summer issue of the Guild Magazine Movement & Dance), that the word 'Guild' should be omitted from the title of the organisation, as it sounds too 'grand' and 'old fashioned' to interest the youth of today, and more young members are needed).

The Laban Art of Movement Guild was founded in the 1940s in Manchester, UK by a varied professional group of dancers, actors, educationalists, therapists, industrialists, psychologists and other people, convinced of the importance of Rudolf Laban's (at the time) revolutionary approach to the art of dance, the serious study and practice of movement which formed its basis, and its relevance to the development of movement usages in their own fields of work and interest.

Many people had already been attending Courses in 'Modern Dance' led by Laban and Lisa Ullmann, and the need was felt for an organisation to support Laban and Lisa, to indicate the range of interest in his work both in the UK and internationally, to identify and legitimise teachers with knowledge of dance practices and his movement theories, and to provide a network and forum to link a diversity of types of members, professional and amateur, with a common interest in movement and dance.

The word 'Guild' was chosen as the overall title for this organisation. Laban himself had an influence on it choice and it was originally called the 'Laban Art of Movement Guild – LAMG'. Why was it chosen rather than the word 'Society' or 'Association'?

The word Guild certainly has medieval European connections. Its dictionary definition is: 'An association or corporation of people of the same trade, pursuits or interests, formed for their mutual aid and protection, the maintenance of standards, or the furtherance of some purpose. A medieval association of craftsmen or merchants'. Its nearest modern equivalent might be 'Trades Union' or 'Trades Association'.

The word Guild is said to be related to the word yield. This has three possible meanings: to produce or provide, deliver

or generate; to concede, give way to demand, pressure, argument; and amount or result yielded.

In my view, the choice of the word Guild was a clever one which embraced:

The historical and European background of Rudolf Laban's idea; the more serious C20th approach to the study of practical subjects like music, dance, drama and physical education by the universities; the diversity, professionalism and aims of its founder members.

It implies more than just a club or circle, or association, but maybe a special kind of association or society with an unusual focus, history and membership.

There are many calls on one's money these days. Membership fees is only one of many. There are many, many dance and/or movement organisations, sporting, artistic or therapeutic. There are many Centres, Colleges, Studios and Courses at different level where a version of the Laban approach can be experienced, with costs not covered by funding.

There are many textbooks available, elementary and advanced, on different aspects of Laban's work and usage in different fields, in addition to those by Laban himself. In many institutions there are good Library resources.

Whether the name of the Guild is changed or not, young people must accept that it is not just a club for people who only wish to enjoy dancing. It is an organisation for people who want to learn more about dance and improve their movement knowledge and skills for pleasure or use in a career. Being allowed or invited to join the Laban Guild should be regarded as an honour. (Rewarded perhaps with a free copy of the Magazine?)

In my view the way to attract more young members is not to change the name of the Guild, which may result in more long-standing member being lost than new members gained.

Sally Archbutt

Laban-based dance classes

Belfast, Crescent Arts Centre

Monday:
4.45pm - 5.45pm Crescent Youth Dance
5.45pm - 6.45pm Adult Movement and Dance
Contact: **Brenda McKee** 25 Malone Hill Park Belfast BT9 6RE email: brenadgm@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
Contact: **Kathy Geddes** 02793 463210

The Training committee met on 13 June and had a very productive meeting, attended by all members.

Suffolk Course: Unfortunately we do not have enough applicants to go ahead with the course at this time, but we have a pool of interested people and have planned a series of workshops to give those interested more experience of Laban work, and also to encourage past members to re-engage with the Guild. Several have expressed an interest. We plan to start the series from September – see diary dates.

Sussex Course: The introduction day has been postponed until September and dates adjusted accordingly so that the proposed course will still finish in November 2010. We need far more publicity in the SE Dance area and are pursuing this. Any advice or suggestions would be welcome.

Foundation Course: Congratulations to Siobhan Connelly and her students who have just successfully completed this course. Anyone interested in delivering this course, or our **Certificates in Dance** for younger dancers, from pre-school to KS3, should contact Ann Ward for further details.

Tutor Training is our next priority. We are currently planning induction courses for existing tutors and potential tutors from Phoenix. We plan to extend these in the future to increase our pool of tutors for our Dance Leaders Course.

Foundation for Community Dance: Ann Ward has been appointed as a member of the committee designated to draw up requirements and standards for the "National College". Members of the FCD expressed their appreciation of having the expertise of the Laban Guild to help guide them. We urge everyone to read the article by Ken Bartlett in this issue of the magazine – it encapsulates all that we are trying to achieve.

Laban events over the summer include Guild workshops, the Movement Choir offered by Sam and Susi Thornton, LinCC in Italy and the Kildare County Council summer school in Maynooth. Some will have already taken place. As people's lives get more and more complicated and everyone is affected by the recession, it is easy to say "I can't make this one, but I'll do the next". Unfortunately it doesn't work like that! Lack of support now means that workshops may not be offered in the future, so please, do try to "do it now"! The recharging of your batteries and ideas for future work – let alone enjoyment and refreshment, will make it all worthwhile.

Ann Ward

Courses Officer for the Laban Guild
Email: awardglenkeen@bigfoot.com
Tel; 01621 850441

Available from the Laban Guild

Dance Ideas: A pack of 12 lesson plans, aimed mainly at KS 1 and 2 but adaptable for other levels. Follow these tried and tested plans or use them as starting points for your own developments. £12.00

So you want to be a Leader? A home study manual covering all important aspects of leadership, including a section on Responsibilities of a Leader and Risk Assessment. £7.50

So you want to run a Dance Course? A: home study manual on Marketing your Course, workshop or day of dance, together with invaluable advice on planning and providing a successful dance event. £7.50

Policies of the Laban Guild: Code of Ethics, Health and Safety, Child Protection, Equality and more, including guidelines for their implementation. **Free to Guild members** via email.

Contact:
Ann Ward, email: awardglenkeen@bigfoot.com

Magazine Advertising Space

500 additional copies of this and the January editions are being sent to non-members - colleges and others. Take this opportunity to advertise to a wider readership.

Full colour: A4 page - £150; half page - £80; quarter page - £40
B/W: A4 page - £75; half page - £35; quarter page - £20

Classified adverts - 50 words at 20p per word
A5 flyer - £40, A4 flyer - £50

Please contact:
Advertising Team: Darrell darrelluk@hotmail.com; Sadie sadiejam@hotmail.co.uk
Vanessa vanessa@danceexplosion.co.uk

Diary of Events

Laban Guild

23 – 29 August:

Laban International Courses Continued in Italy.

Contact: www.laban-courses.co.uk

Sun 13 September

Laban Day of Dance with Caroline Mummery in the Dance Studio at The Seagull Theatre, Lowestoft.
Contact: awardglenkeen@bigfoot.com

Mon September 21st September

Laban based workshop with Alison Curtis-Jones.

University of Bedfordshire, Bedford.

Contact: selina_martin@lodgeparktc.com

Sun 27 September

Practical Information day introducing the Laban Guild Dance Leaders Course planned for Sussex, 2009 – 2010, in Bexhill.

Contact: awardglenkeen@bigfoot.com

Sun 8 November

Laban Day of Dance with Janet Lunn in the Dance Studio at The Seagull Theatre, Lowestoft.

Contact: awardglenkeen@bigfoot.com

Sat 14 November

Laban Day with Rosemary Brandt

at Lodge Park Technology College
Shetland Way, Corby, Northamptonshire
Contact: selina_martin@lodgeparktc.com

Laban Courses in Bratislava

For more information go to: www.lab1.sk

LABAN Creekside

Details not confirmed at time of printing, for more information go to www.laban.org

London

Sadler's Wells

Box Office 0844 412 4300

23 Jul – 30 Aug

Adam Cooper's Shall we Dance

SEPTEMBER

Sun 6 National Youth Ballet

8 – 12 Rosas

24 – 25 Lotte van den Berg

25 – 26 Akram Khan Dance Company

OCTOBER

1 – 3 Scottish Ballet

21 – 24 Morphoses/ The Wheeldon Company

27 – 31 Mark Morris Dance Group

NOVEMBER

Rambert Dance Company

10 – 14 Birmingham Royal Ballet

26 – 28 Akram Khan & Nitin Sawheney

DECEMBER

1 – 5 Carlos Acosta

10 – 24 Jan Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake

Regional

Bath, Theatre Royal

Box Office 01225 448844

Thur 12 – Sat 14 November.

Rambert Dance Company www.theatreroyal.org.uk

Cambridge Arts Theatre

Box Office 01223 503333

Mon 2 Tues 3 November

Richard Alston Dance Company

Chipping Norton, The Theatre

Box office 01608 642350

Weds 9 & Thur 10 September, 8.00pm Full Beam

Visual Theatre performing 'My Baby Just Cares For

Me' This sharp and poignant production explores the social phenomenon of the ageing population. How do we look after a generation more used to dancing to the Rolling Stones than playing dominos? £11, £9 concessions. Suitable for ages 14+ .

Wed 16 September, 8.00pm, Tangomotion

Tickets £13, £11 conc.

Thu 24 September 8.00pm

Anjali, the UKs leading company of dancers with learning

disabilities, Wild Night, 'pay what you think the show

deserved' (please reserve tickets in advance).

Oxford, Playhouse

Box Office 01865 305305

Fri 25 September 8pm

ENTITY

Wayne McGregor | Random Dance's

Tickets: £12, 17, 19

Norwich, Playhouse

Box Office 01603 598598

THE NUTCRACKER

Tues 20 & Wed 21 October 7.30pm

Tickets: £18.50, £16.50 concessions, £12.50 under-14s

Presented by The Russian State Ballet Academy of Perm

ADVENTURES IN ANTI-COOL

(Hip-Hop Dance/Breakdance)

Tues 27 October 7.30pm

Tickets: £10, £8 concessions, £7 student groups

Presented by Banxy, KnoLove Productions and makin projects

TANGOMOTION

Sat 7 November 7.30pm

Tickets: £17.50, £15 concessions

EGO SUM QUI SUM (I AM WHO I AM)

(Physical Theatre)

Wednesday 25 November 7.30pm

Tickets: £6.50 all tickets

Presented by Thalia Theatre Company

Thalia Theatre Company is an independent, educational 'arts' related learning provider for disabled people in the Eastern region. The company produces innovative, thought provoking theatre to challenge negative perceptions of disability.

Northampton, Royal and Derngate

Box Office 01604 624811

www.royalandderngate.co.uk

Fri 18 September 7.30pm, Derngate

Tango Fire

Tickets £25 £22 £18

Tues 20 & Wed 21 October 7.30pm, Derngate

Mark Morris Dance Group

Tickets £18.50 £16.50

Wed 2 – Fri 4 December

Rambert Dance Company

Evenings 7.30pm

Thu Matinee 2.30pm

Tickets £22 to £7, with concessions

Salford, The Lowry

Box Office 0870 787 5780

Sun 20th September

Tango Fire

Wed 21st – Sat 24th October

Matthew Bourne's Dorian Gray

Sat 21st November

Bounce – Insane in the Brain

Salisbury, Playhouse

Box Office 01722 320 333

Tue 27 October

Beneath the Banyan Tree

A fusion of theatre, tradition Indian and Western dance, puppetry and music.

Tickets £6

Sheffield, Theatre Trust

Tue 22 – 26 September

Matthew Bourne's Dorian Gray (Lyceum Theatre)

Fri 9 – 10 October

Laban Guild Patrons:

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Vice Presidents: Sheila McGivering, Dr Geraldine

Stephenson, Gordon Curl

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Bounce's Insane in the Brain (Lyceum Theatre)

Tue 10 – 14 November

Northern Ballet Theatre's A Christmas Carol (Lyceum Theatre)

Fri 20 November

If We Go On (Crucible Theatre)

Warwick Arts Centre

Box Office 024 7652 4524

2 and 3 October 7.30pm

Scattered by Motionhouse Dance Theatre: Post-Show Talk

Fri 2 Oct

£15.50 (£13.50), £17.50 (£15.50), £19.50 (£17.50)

Woking, New Victoria Theatre

Box Office on 0844 871 7645 **17th – 21st November**

Matthew Bourne's Dorian Gray

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Cranmer in 'Henry VIII and his Six Wives'

Dr. Crippin in 'Crimes of Passion'



Toby Esterhazy in 'Smiley's People'

Kommandant in 'Colditz'

Albert Foiret in 'Secret Army'



Laban Guild Patron Bernard Hepton

