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Forsythe, Laban and a debt

Contents

Editorial

- 1 **William Forsythe, Rudolf Laban and a debt**
by Dr Ann Nugent
- 2 **'Keeping Up Appearances'**
by the Editor
- 8 **Laban Inspires Youth Theatre**
by Ed Crosthwaite
- 9 **Looking Ahead**
by the Editor
- 10 **The Actor's Movement**
by Warren Lamb
- 12 **Movement Pattern Analysis**
by James McBride
- 13 **Dance Drama Appreciation Award**
Adjudicator: Judith Mackrell
- 14 **Dance: No Age Barrier or Excuse**
by Judy Smith
- 14 **A Fabulous Evening at Kilmington**
by Claudette Miles
- 15 **LUTSF: Making Friends and Achieving More**
by Cindy Cox
- 16 **Motus Humanus**
Per Nordin Seminar: 'To be Someone Else'
by Dr Carol-Lynne Moore
Movement Analysis at St Olaf College
by Susan Bauer
- 20 **Laban Lecture Revisited**
by Dr Marion North CBE
- 23 **Dance Centre: Finding a Place for Laban**
by Dr Lorraine Nicholas
- 25 **Resourcing Unique Expression**
by Cathy Washbrook
- 26 **High Quality Teaching and Learning in Dance**
University of Bedfordshire
by Louisa Webber
- 27 **Dance Education Masters Unit**
by Maggie Killingbeck
- 28 **Reviews of Dr Carol-Lynne Moore's new book:**
'The Harmonic Structure of Movement, Music and
Dance according to Rudolf Laban'
by Sally Archbutt, Dr Dick McCaw and Anna Carlisle MBE
- 31 **Review of 'Living Architecture' DVD**
by Uma O'Neill
- 32 **Obituaries:**
Dr Betty Redfern by Dr Mollie Davies
Carol Woolridge by Maggie Killingbeck
Christa Haring by Dr Alan Salter
Miriam Osborn by Nancy Smith
- 34 **Letter from LInCC**
by Susi Thornton
- 35 **Training Committee Report**
by Ann Ward
- 36 **Council Report**
by Mary Cormack
- 36 **Events Diary**
compiled by Sadie Hunt



Editorial

This second extended issue, with its wider circulation, once again reveals the sheer diversity of Laban-inspired activity at home and abroad: - from 'magnificent' *Centro D'Ompio LinCC* holiday courses in Italy to the 'complex and conceptual' choreography of William Forsythe in Frankfurt, London and world-wide, - from 'Inspired Youth Theatre' work in Suffolk to 'Creative Research Programmes' in Chicago, - from 'A Fabulous Evening at Kilmington' Devon to 'High Quality Teaching' and higher degree work in Bedfordshire, - from *Movement Pattern Analysis* in UK and the USA to philosophical reflections on 'Keeping Up Appearances' in Kent – not to mention: Movement for Actors, letters from Laban, revisitation of a Laban Lecture, reviews of an important new book and tributes to former revered colleagues. So prolific have been the contributions to this issue that we have been obliged to flag up a number of pieces for the next issue.

Sadly however, there has been little response to our *Dance Appreciation Awards*, but our adjudicator has been able to propose one award (see page 13); we hope that future competitions will attract a much wider interest – to include Drama!

Your Editor, following consecutively: 20 years voluntary service as Chairman of the former NATFHE Dance (with its large scale conferences and guest speakers including Martha Graham, Kurt Jooss and Alwin Nikolais), six years as Chairman of the Laban Guild and most recently 5 years as Editor of the Guild's Movement and Dance Magazine, now feels that it is time for him to retire gracefully and enjoy some domestic life and some long neglected philosophical research. This issue, therefore will be his last and he would wish to express his most sincere thanks to all of those who have contributed so ably to the content and production of the Magazine – which he believes is the one (and only one) vehicle which can bring to *all* members the vibrancy of the Guild's activities.

My warmest good wishes to all our readers and production team for 2010!

Gordon Curl

Cover credits

Front: William Forsythe
Photo by Stephan Floss
Nowhere and Everywhere at the Same Time
shown at the Tate Modern during the *Focus on Forsythe* season
Photos by Dominik Mentzos
Dancers: Christine Burkle, Alessio Sylvestrin,
Amancio Gonzalez and Yoko Ando
Back: *Nowhere and Everywhere at the Same Time* - as
front cover
Photo by Dominik Mentzos
Dancers: Amancio Gonzalez and Christine
Burkle

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Swimming Upside Down

William Forsythe, Rudolf Laban and a debt acknowledged

(Dr Ann Nugent has just completed a manuscript for publication entitled *Reading William, Writing Forsythe: a critical approach to William Forsythe's choreography. This follows a doctoral thesis (University of Surrey) and some 40 published articles and papers on Forsythe's work. She is a senior lecturer in dance at the University of Chichester and a freelance dance critic.* Ed

PART 1: Background

It is more than three decades since William Forsythe emerged as a choreographer. At the time he was a dancer with the Stuttgart Ballet, and *Urlicht*, his 1976 duet, began life as a workshop piece for the company. *Urlicht* means primal light and the title came from the fourth movement of Mahler's second symphony. The dance emphasised the woman's plastic athleticism and the man's strength, but it wasn't just about display. It was also about a shared experience, notably when the movement was halted for an extended period of stillness. As the dancers held a sculptural pose at centre stage, with the woman balancing on pointe in a backbend supported by her partner, the soaring melancholy of the alto singer was connected to the beauty of the movement's stasis to produce what felt like a perfect harmonising of sound and sight.

Finding the power that can connect dance to music in this way was the achievement of an authoritative choreographic voice. In the Stuttgart Ballet, moreover, everyone knew, as dancers always know, that *Urlicht* was something special. It was taken into the repertory, and Forsythe was straightaway appointed Resident Choreographer (one of four). It was soon evident that he was not so much a nascent choreographer as fully-fledged driven by beliefs – often controversial - that he had been turning around in his head for years. He went on to create a total of 13 works in Stuttgart; moved to a brief period as a freelance choreographer and, in 1984, took on the directorship of the Ballet Frankfurt for 20 extraordinary years. Following the demise of the Ballet Frankfurt – and a much-charted story of funding withdrawal – he launched his current Forsythe Company. Once again based himself in Frankfurt.

Frankfurt is concerned more with commerce than art: but the noise made by Forsythe and his company was a clarion call picked up not just by the dance world but by the wider world of the arts as well. Forsythe was challenging the boundaries of dance, and ballet in particular. Searching for a different language, and new kinds of knowledge, he was breaking the rules of politesse, and moving into areas of the complex and conceptual. People got to hear on the grape vine about the revolution in dance that was going on in Frankfurt, and it was not only dancers who travelled to the city to work with him, but also musicians, designers, architects, dramaturges, and those who were curious about the arts and wanted to engage in discourse.

The studios he works in are like experimental laboratories where anything can become material for dance, and where he can call on knowledge deeply imbued in his dancers' physical/psychical being. He developed ways of working that investigated the human body's potential in a myriad of changing orientations and co-ordinations. Wrestling ballet from its classical confines, he deconstructed the system of turnout and verticality to discover new geometries. His emphasis on proprioceptive awareness triggered cognitive knowledge about how different parts of the body could move in different rhythms. His algorithms connected points and lines in the body in a systematised logic reliant in execution on intensely co-ordinated dancers.

He is a prolific choreographer, having created well over a hundred works – or too many works to count realistically since every performance is a discrete entity in its own right. His improvisatory structures, and the importance to him, and to his dancers, of being able to respond to new ideas and new circumstances meant that no performance was, or is, ever quite the same two nights running. Everything is recycled and reworked, as new ideas occur and are woven in.

From the beginning, Forsythe was inspired by Laban's kinesphere, and its relationship with the icosahedron, and a body held by the intersection of the axis through muscular tension that was destined to return to a vertically opened and centralised physicality. In this he recognised a model for 'a kind of pure text in dance'. Indeed, it became his departure point, for he saw that if the body were no longer compelled to return to a centred organisation, other movement values would emerge. Moreover, the limitations of the body's relationship in space could change if the concept of the kinesphere, with all its points and lines, were to be succeeded by the idea of multiple kinespheres.

For the dancers, highly developed proprioceptive awareness helps to let go of the calculated approach to knowledge and opens up the possibilities for improvisation and continuing initiatives. It is dependent on building trust in muscular memory, in the knowledge of what movement feels like, and with knowing how to link this with a choreographic task so as to make the moment of delivery consummate. It is not just history that is summoned because of what the body already knows, but also what the body is able to discover in the immediate present. Nothing need be transitional, intermediary or extraneous: every movement matters.

Forsythe has developed a massive methodology, a way of continually finding new ways in which the body can move. In this Rudolf Laban's work was a major force helping him to form a strategic approach to the relationship between space and the moving body. I met Forsythe in Frankfurt to ask him about this.

PART 2: Forsythe's debt to Laban

AN: In 1971, when you were a dance student in New York, you injured your knee and had to stop dancing for a period. For most dancers, this would be a disaster, but you turned



You Made Me a Monster - The Forsythe Company
photo by Stage Picture

it to your advantage because you read Laban's *Choreutics* - and this changed your life. What was it that you saw in *Choreutics*?¹

WF: It made proprioceptive experience visible. And for me, because I have this mathematical inclination, it was right up my alley. I felt space that way, and I felt motion also: it was nice to see that motion had a kind of manifold framework. There is a manifold and complex framework of motion that is for Laban best demonstrated by the icosahedron.

AN: And through what you read, and the icosahedron in particular, you saw the potential for development?

WF: I saw it from the beginning as dispersed, like law. It wasn't about the rules of choreutics; more important was the fact that it suggests infinite organisation. It implies a mathematical universe and that's enough. That's what any kind of mathematics does. There is a basic algorithm in it and a basic equation, and this equation's very very sophisticated. What Laban suggests is incredibly arrogant and economical, and that's the beauty of it. I guess it carries over from 18th century neo-Platonism ... reduction is extremely valuable. This is one of the tenets of abstract art. Art and the abstracted body is the body we are dealing with in dance, and in Laban's dance the body is abstracted, or at least in dialogue with (not subservient to) an overtly mathematical universe, which is the kinesphere.

AN: You saw not just the one kinesphere but multiple kinespheres?

WF: Well I just thought - well I didn't even think, I just said, 'let's make a kinesphere on the elbow and hip' and see what happens in the range of that motion. It's basically a 'what if we?' situation. What if I we were to ... engender motion that would be different, and then eventually one could jettison that because one had moved on to a new model of thinking about physical space.

AN: Laban's dream body has become your dancing body ... what the body would be able to do if it were in flight.

WF: I keep swimming because I'm always doing free Labanesque skills. Tumbling upside down in the water, that's one of my favourite things to do and I just hold my breath and move through space.

AN: - Did you at any point ever study notation?

WF: - Yes, in 1971 I did a correspondence course ... I just enjoyed learning it. I thought it was tremendously difficult to apply and, much as I admire notation, I think *Choreutics* is a far greater accomplishment.

AN: You have said that your work is hard, if not impossible, to notate. There is something about the phrasing that cannot be captured; something about the way the dancers interact with each other 'in the moment'.

WF: Yes, that's the whole point. You can't notate the timing; it's dependent on coordinations.



Decreation, the evening long dance work shown at Sadler's Wells during the *Focus on Forsythe* season. Photo by Dominik Mentzos

AN: ... and each performance of each of your works is so different anyway.

WF: ... yes and contingent upon [the dancers'] perceptions, and the mobility of the framework.

AN: What does dance mean to you? Given what you see as the indivisibility between dancer and dance, how do you characterise dance?

WF: It's a state of being. It's ontological. And it is heuristic. The body has to invent itself in being dense and there is no truth. It's not a fiction either; it's just that there is no context for true or false. So what I mean by heuristic is that we encounter situations where there is neither a right nor wrong. We have to, it seems, invent a way of being ontological heuristically, and to the dancer it's metaphysical. It is very real.

PART 3: Art of the city

Forsythe's perception of dance, combining the nature of being with what can be discovered, means that for him and his company it is as a way of being that is always evolving. The same is true of the way he views choreography, which is intrinsic to his identity. There are no divisions between public and private persona, for the ontological cannot be repudiated.

That identity, however, and the work he makes, is never static. The Forsythe Company now is a smaller and more versatile ensemble than its predecessor,² one that is able to develop a range of projects taking dance from the theatre to the warehouse; from studio to art gallery; from installation to live filming in the

street - capturing casual passers by and projecting their forms as dancing images. It is art of the city, and London's three-week season *Focus on Forsythe*, in the spring of 2009, was organised by Sadler's Wells to take this into account. There were experiences to be had not only in the theatre, and its satellite Lilian Baylis Studio, but also at Tate Modern; South London Gallery; Midlands Goods Shed (King's Cross), and at East London's nightclub Fabric. It was an unforgettable season, and what I remember most forcibly was the event at Sadler's Wells, where the audience generated the performance, becoming co-producers of motion for the oddly named *You Made Me a Monster*.

Indeed, we assembled on the stage, cut off from a darkened auditorium by a gauze curtain, to stand at tables laden with long sculptural shapes. We folded paper cut-out models into sections of the human skeleton, and after we had bent the buff bits of cardboard into ribs and femurs, we positioned them on the sculptures, almost as if we were adding branches to trees. These though were symbolic 'bodies' and the unseen Monster was cancer, which in 1994 had caused the death of Forsythe's 32-year old wife. Two men and a woman from the Forsythe Company translated the bodies into dance, moving among us in such intimate proximity that we could feel their breath on our skin.



You Made Me a Monster - The Forsythe Company photo by Marion Rossi

Out of that quiet space emerged a roar of grief, with the decibels of human yet inhuman vocalisations enlarged by microphones affixed to each dancer. Out of inactivity, suddenly in our midst came movement that was plastic, boneless and fast, and given an embodied craziness that involved apparent surrender of the ego. Divisions between the public performer and the private individual were no longer distinguishable, for a metaphorical journey was taking place, travelling between the stilled objects and the mind/body of the dancers. It seemed as though there were a monster seeking to escape through every pore of every body.

This was in contrast to *Scattered Crowd* which took place in the Midland Goods Shed, a derelict London warehouse, where the arbitrary movement of members of the public turned thousands of helium-filled balloons hanging from on high into a dancing universe. Here too the combination of textures, tones, and light in relation to the re-organisation of a vast space proved extraordinary. It extended beyond the bounds of dance, art gallery or theatre, which, like *Monster*, pointed to a philosophical enquiry into the nature of dance.

In the 33 years that separate *Urlicht* and the most recent works, Forsythe has become one of the most sought-after choreographers on the globe, with companies everywhere clamouring for works by him. He agrees to only a small number of his ballets being performed by other companies, for his driving energies remain focused, of course, on his Forsythe Company. None of this would have happened if it had not been for Laban, and the pathway opened out by *Choreutics*. Encountering Laban's work was, as he is always pointing out, something that completely changed the course of his life.

Ann Nugent

¹ Rudolf Laban. (1966) *Choreutics*, annotated and edited by Lisa Ullmann. London: Macdonald & Evans.

² The number of dancers working with Forsythe at any time fluctuates, but there are approximately 18 dancers in the Forsythe Company, whereas there were around 34 in the Ballet Frankfurt.



Scattered Crowd photo by Dominik Mentzos

'Keeping Up Appearances' in the Arts

The Editor re-visits a well-worn topic in aesthetics, namely: the distinction between 'appearances' and 'reality' - in our experiences of, and discourse about, the arts. (A version of this slide-presentation/paper was given at the Laban International Conference on 'The Dynamic Body in Space', under the title of 'Virtualities in the Arts', held at LABAN Creekside in October 2008). In re-visiting this topic, it is believed that such philosophical debate has some continued relevance for current theory and practice in dance, drama and the other arts, and in particular for the status of Laban's influential concepts in those fields.

Priority of Appearances

'Aesthetic understanding is essentially directed towards appearances, with a view to seeing in those appearances the meanings that give them intrinsic value ...'.¹ Roger Scruton

Hyacinth Bucket (Bouquet if you please!), in TV's 'Keeping Up Appearances', has captured the imagination of world-wide audiences with her pretentious 'candle-lit-suppers' - not to mention her sister Violet's Mercedes and 'paddock with room for a pony! But keeping up (and prioritising) appearances, is not just a basic principle of social climbers, it is also paramount for artists and connoisseurs; appearances, we must confess, constitute the basis of our aesthetic encounters with the arts.

Whilst history bears witness to a plethora of instrumental purposes for dance and drama - from magical rites of passage, birth, death, fertility, harvest and war, to social, sexual, educative, therapeutic, religious and cosmic practices - their emergence as autonomous public art forms necessarily privileges *spectacle and listening*, (objects to be *looked at and listened to* - for their own sakes), embracing as they do many virtual aspects created for our aesthetic perception. But virtual aspects beguile their actualities, and confusion is often rife when we fail to distinguish between these two complementary modalities, for as one philosopher reminds us:

*'To speak of sculpture (a painting, a piece of music, a poem, a dance) as an aesthetic object would be to speak of it in respect of its perceptual qualities; to speak of it as a physical object would be to speak of its other characteristics.'*²

Consider: 'Alice in the Looking Glass':
 What kind of 'space' is in the mirror?
 It looks like 3-dimensional space - but the mirror is only a flat piece of glass and has no depth!



'Virtual Space'

So what kind of 'space' do we see in the mirror?
 Scientists call this 'Virtual Space'

A Prima facie case for 'Virtualities'

So what are 'virtualities', 'virtual aspects', 'virtual realities' - both in general, and in the arts in particular? Let us hear how one eminent aesthetician distinguishes between *virtualities* and the *realities* which underpin the

ultimate art form, for example in dance - equally applicable to drama. Susanne Langer declares that:

*'The dance is an appearance ... it springs from what the dancers do, yet it is something else ... Everything a dancer actually does serves to create what we really see; but what we see is a virtual entity. The physical realities are given: place, gravity, body, muscular strength, muscular control ... light, sound, properties ... All these are actual. But in the dance they disappear; the more perfect the dance, the less we see its actualities'*³

So what appears in the dance? According Langer:

*'what we see when we watch a dance is a display of interacting forces; not physical forces, like the weight that tips a scale or the push that topples a column of books, but purely apparent forces that seem to move the dance itself. Two people in a pas de deux seem to magnetise each other; a group appears to be animated by one single spirit, one Power. The stuff of the dance, the apparition itself, consists of such non-physical forces, drawing and driving, holding and shaping its life. The actual, physical forces that underlie it disappear. As soon as the beholder sees gymnastics and arrangements, the work of art breaks, the creation fails.'*⁴

Doris Humphrey, (that doyenne of dance), many years ago emphasized the distinct nature of stage-space, which she says:

*'has attributes and dimensions and purposes quite different from other space... It differs radically', she says, 'from the physical and psychological space of the studio, where (the dancer) has learned about his body for so many years...'*⁵ *The stage space, by contrast, is 'a magical space where dreams will come alive'.*

Mary Wigman, (the legendary dancer and former student of Rudolf Laban), is forthright in her opinion about the nature of dance space; she states that:

*'... Space ... is the realm of the dancer's real activity ... (but) It is not the tangible, limited, and limiting space of concrete reality, but the imaginary, irrational space of the danced dimension, that space which can erase the boundaries of all corporeal reality ...'*⁶

We might well ask whether contemporary theorists similarly subscribe to these strange ideas about the 'magical' and 'imaginary, irrational space of the dance dimension' - its virtual, illusory aspects? Perhaps we should call up Dr Valerie Preston-Dunlop to bear witness. She declares, variously, that:

*'Virtual spatial forms are lines/forms in space that are perceived to be there but are not there', and that in 'spatial body design ... the human being's physicality 'disappears' ...'*⁷

On the face of it we seem, in both art and science, to be coerced into thinking that 'virtual space' (an appearance), is radically different from 'real space' (the space of concrete reality). So, if arts enthusiasts ask: 'Which kind of space belongs to an aesthetic experience of drama, dance, sculpture, architecture, paintings, the answer would seem to be 'virtual space' - rather than 'real' space!

Sceptical Intellect

There is little doubt that all these metaphysical claims - made on behalf of virtual aspects, (the products of perception and imagination), are extremely vulnerable to the sceptical intellect. Why should we put our trust in 'illusions' and 'apparitions' - rather than in down-to-earth stable objective realities to be found in the arts? Why indulge imaginatively in 'magical space(s) where dreams come true', or the 'shift from the mundane to the dream ... from the real to the illusion of reality'? Surely, there is an

abundance of accessible factual material in dance and the arts without recourse to what Kant calls 'far-fetched' and 'esoteric' theories? As Professor Louis Arnaud Reid has reminded us:

*'The 'apparition' language ... is too attenuated: the word 'virtual' ... still more ghostly!'*⁸

'Virtualities' - a Vindication?

Who better to vindicate (or otherwise) the case for virtualities in the arts than the down-to-earth scientist himself? We find that the range of visual appearances (seemingly in conflict with reality) is nowhere more thoroughly explored than by Rudolf Arnheim in his *Art & Visual Perception*⁹; readers will be familiar with his startling discoveries - from simple objects, drawings and events to sophisticated art works. He concludes, variously, that:

- visual balance does not correspond to physical factors of balance -
- visual weight depends upon size...isolation makes for weight -
- regular shape is heavier than irregular shape -
- visual speed depends upon the size of objects -
- weight is perceived through colour -
- the weight of a compositional element will attract things in the neighbourhood and thus impose direction on them -

The list of anomalies is prolific, and the implications for artists enormous - whether painters, sculptors, architects, dramatists, musicians or choreographers; their artistic commitment to virtualities in visual/aural perception is sovereign! (Take each of Arnheim's principles in turn and ask just how it affects the appearance of actors and dancers as they move on-stage - to the eyes of producers, choreographers and audience. This is not to deny the vast importance of the underpinning actualities themselves - without which the virtual images would not appear). Let us seek enlightenment from students of the arts.

Dramatic places and spaces

Drama devotees have little problem with the notion of 'virtual' places and spaces - for whilst actual stage-space is the space of concrete reality, its transformation variously, into: 'Hamlet's Castle' at Elsinore, a 'blasted heath' in *Macbeth*, a Dionysian orgy in *The Bacchus*, a war-ravaged Europe in Brecht's *Mother Courage* - or the ancestral estate of a Russian aristocrat in Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard* - are all experienced as virtualities: 'virtual places', 'virtual spaces' - created for our perception and imagination. And the characters who inhabit such virtual places, engage in pretence - play-acting; they are all virtual personalities exhibiting virtual emotions, virtual gestures and virtual relationships; they exist in a world of virtual time, virtual physical and social forces, virtual states of mind and virtual historical environments. Even the places occupied by characters on-stage (the drama student would tell us) are charged with dramatic forces - some stage places are strong, other places weak and insipid; producers and spectators are highly sensitive to such virtual power-play!

Painted Appearances

Visual artists also claim to create worlds of virtual spaces - spaces discontinuous with real space: Turner's painting *Snow Storm* hangs motionless on a brick wall and has no actual motion, but nonetheless presents violent movement - a voluminous blizzard and a turbulent seascape, whilst the sheer depth and luminosity of his *Fighting Temeraire* is breath-taking.

A Cezanne interior engages our kinaesthetic sense of space, for we find ourselves 'bumping about those rooms, circumnavigating with caution those menacingly angular tables, coming up to those persons who so massively occupy those chairs ... fending (ourselves) off with (our) hands ...'.¹⁰ And yet the painting is a mere flat canvas - covered with paint smooches! Ah, yes, the

sceptic still insists: 'But these virtualities are representations; what about abstract paintings? Surely these exhibit *par excellence* the pure realities of line, shape,

The "Fighting Temeraire" by Turner, Joseph Mallord William (1775-1851)
 National Gallery, London, UK/ The Bridgeman Art Library



size, and colour?' Of course they do - but are these not the basic actualities from which spring a gamut of emergent virtualities - not least: visual balance, visual weight, light, movement, tension, attraction, direction, depth, volume, forces, energy, power, climax, speed, solidity, inertia, restlessness, repose, resistance, animation, stillness, viscosity, elasticity, enclosure, dissipation and expression, all apparent - all to be sharply contrasted with the realities of those aspects? And what about music which penetrates dance and drama?

Virtual Musical Movement

*'When we hear music as music we do not simply hear changes in the basic parameters of melody, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, and timbre ... we hear motion or movement, of an imaginary or perhaps metaphorical sort, in music: we hear music rising, falling, soaring, plunging, expanding, shrinking, advancing, retreating, rushing, lingering, trudging, leaping, swelling, subsiding, and so on. It is scarcely possible to overestimate the importance of the phenomenon of musical movement, without which much else of interest in music would simply evaporate ...'*¹¹

In reality, of course, nothing moves in music apart from a few vibrations, and the emotions which are made to appear in music are also *virtual*, whether they be joyous, triumphant, tender, melancholic, agitated, calm, angry or serene - all are created for our aesthetic perception.

Living Architecture

Architecture, similarly, creates for our aesthetic perception, virtualities out of piles of inanimate masonry: the imagined Druid rituals in the sacred circle of Stonehenge, the upward-striving pillars of the Parthenon, the over-reaching fan-vaulting in the nave of Chartres Cathedral, the 'massive heaviness and free rising' of Michelangelo's dome of St Peter's in Rome - or even the mirrored dance spaces at LABAN Creekside; all are real places - but all create their own special virtual animated spaces.

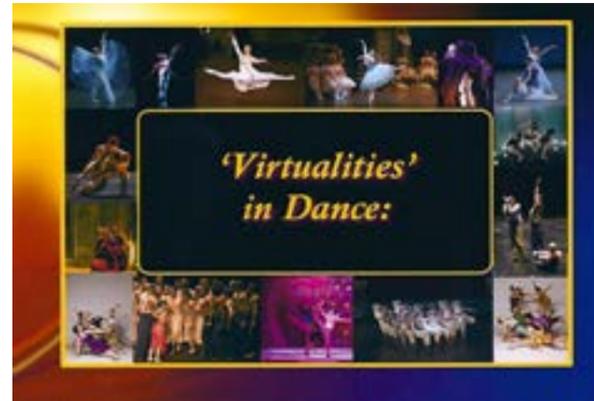
Virtualities in Dance

*'One hundred and sixty pounds of weight on the scales will not exist if to the eye (the dancer) has the winged lightness of a dragonfly ...'*¹² Rudolf Arnheim
 Edwin Denby referring to Markova's 'soaring rise and floating descent which looks weightless', says '... no one else in the world can fly quite as perfectly as Alicia Markova'. But the sheer actualities of this 'flight' are in a quite, quite different category from their appearances. Denby explains:
'the leap itself is an incredibly difficult thing ... the propulsive

strain of the leap must be taken up by the muscles around the waist, the back must be straight and perpendicular, as if it had no part in the effort ... the back muscles have to be kept under the strictest tension to keep the spine erect ... the shoulders have to be held rigidly down by main force, so they won't bob upward in the jump. The arms and neck, the hands and the head, have to look as comfortable and relaxed as if nothing were happening down below. Really there's as much going on down there as though the arms and head were picknicking on a volcano ...¹³

(Images from Movement & Dance Magazine Vol 27 No.1 Spring 20

Here then are the brutal underlying physical facts, the



actualities of movement - all of which, it is held, must 'disappear' if the ephemeral appearance of weightlessness and effortlessness are to appear! Small wonder that Langer remarked that 'the more perfect the dance, the less we see its actualities'. The actual and the apparent - whilst indissolubly linked, are categorically distinct - for it takes enormous effort to achieve effortlessness, great strength to achieve weightlessness and with them the 'perfect' performance. (Through empathy we identify ourselves with Markova's ethereal lightness - rather than with her tremendous bodily exertions)

The Critic's 'virtual aspects'

Perhaps we should consult the critics to see if they subscribe to virtual aspects in the dance. Most of the following descriptions are mentioned in Judith Mackrell's scintillating book *Reading Dance*;¹⁴ they remind us just what kinds of virtual aspects are to be found.

Imagination - a pre-requisite

These are but a few of the countless number of choice imaginal

Dance can change space
- by the power of its composition
Dance dramatises the air
- the stage can become electric with desire
Cunningham is master at animating space
- the space becomes alive and elastic
Space is never inert
it is full of extensions and echoes of the choreography
Space connects the dancers
- is yielding or resistant

Resistant body language - makes the air between dancers a solid wall
When dancers become still - there can be a profound feeling of the air settling around them, forming a halo
We can feel the dancers breast the air
- like swimmers ploughing through water
When dancers whip their limbs around in collective fury - you feel they are slicing the surrounding air into tatters
The play of invisible lines - exaggerates the speed, the light and shade, the sculptural depth of movement

Choreographers play with time - drive it forward, freeze it, compress it or make it race
In Graham's Deaths and Entrances
- time is elastic, past and present exist simultaneously or rapidly alternate
When dance rhythm is fast clock time flies, while at other moments it seems to be stilled
A dancer's gaze can cut through distance - as if it were butter
In a grande jete - the air seems momentarily to become a cushion or a cloud on which the dancer rests
In Pas de Quatre Alicia Markova sits collectedly in the air - as if she were at a genteel tea-party
(Edwin Denby)

experiences vouchsafed to the performer and spectator; but if the sceptic still objects that such images are irrelevant, the aesthete would respond by saying on such matters that: 'imagination obeys not only a rule of relevance but a rule of decorum' and that 'it may be that a work of art is precisely the kind of thing which calls for an imaginal and personal response'¹⁵ and (after Kant), that 'Imagination ... is a powerful agent for creating ... a second nature out of the material supplied to it by nature'. And do not the arts create our 'second natures'?

'... the design that hangs in the air around (the) body ...'
(quotation from Carol-Lynne Moore's new book)¹⁶



Laban's Taxonomy - 'actual' or 'virtual'?

Following our excursions into the pros and cons of critical appreciation and its spotlight on virtual aspects of dance - we must surely ask about the status of Laban's taxonomy of movement. Do, for example, his taxonomies in both *choreutics* and *eukinetics* involve both actual and virtual properties in the dance (and drama)? Are, for example, his eight basic effort actions perceived by the spectator and performer as *real* or *virtual*? Do Laban's scales, vicariously, do duty as both actual and virtual sequences?

These are crucial questions for teachers, performers, choreographers, and spectators. (Laban, we might note, has been charged by Professor Langer with a 'failure to distinguish between what is actual and what is virtual in the making of the symbol'). So what do the commentators have to say? Valerie Preston-Dunlop would seem to prioritise virtualities - on the assumption perhaps that they have been under-played in Laban's work; she says that 'virtual forms are too important to pass over, for they are fundamental to performance ... and are the hallmarks of choreographers and dancers' - and she adds, significantly, (after Langer) that:

'... *Choreutics* have no significance for actual space, but for 'virtual space', no significance for actual power but for 'virtual power' ... *choreutics'* aesthetic function must be to show ... the emergence of the illusions of the art of dance ...'¹⁷

Vera Maletic would seem to maintain a unity of the actual and the virtual in Laban's work when she claims that:

'the concept of *Effort* unifies the actual, physical, quantitative, and measurable properties of movement with the virtual, perceivable, qualitative, and classifiable qualities of movement and dance'¹⁸

Carol-Lynne Moore, in her impressive new book, veers towards a bi-partite exposition of actual and virtual (with perhaps more emphasis upon the actual - ie on the anatomical, proportional and geometric); she says:

'... the choreutic models seem to be literal - to represent actual movement trajectories. However ... when (Laban) modelled *Eukinetics* ... the forms chosen appeared to be figurative rather than literal ...'¹⁹

Laban's finesse!

If we require some peace of mind from all these bewildering semantic distinctions, then perhaps we should console ourselves with Susanne Langer's remark that:

'To keep virtual elements and actual materials separate is not easy for anyone without philosophical training, and it is hardest for artists, to whom the created world is more immediately real and important than the factual world'²⁰

Surprisingly, (or not), Laban's philosophical acumen was far greater than many would have us believe - despite his own disavowal that:

'I hope that ... better men than myself will form the words which will give the dance a common linguistic basis ... This applies especially to scientific, philosophical and other matters - strange to me ...' Rudolf Laban²¹

Notwithstanding this modest disclaimer, we find in his later writings that he demonstrates a very keen sense of discrimination between actual and virtual aspects of movement - for he states in *Mastery of Movement* that certain kinds of experiences

'have no objectively measurable properties and can only be classified with regard to their quality, their intensity and their rhythm of development'.²²

And again, Laban - quoted by Moore:

'... there are two seemingly incommensurable things ... the purely mechanical functions of our bodies which follow the laws of physics on the one hand, and on the other, the stream of ideas and feelings ... which are intangible in themselves and seem to follow laws often directly in contrast to those of physics'.²³

How much clearer could Laban be on the issue of the actual and the virtual than this?

Coda

There is little doubt that Laban's English taxonomic vocabulary, (despite his Austrian origins), has helped to provide some invaluable tools for movement analysis, dance teaching, dance technique, choreography and dance criticism. It is a language expressed in anthropomorphic action terms: - perceptual, sensory, kinaesthetic, tactile, orientational, muscular, emotional, phenomenological, existential. It is applicable to both the actualities and the virtualities of movement and is eminently suitable for describing, analyzing and evaluating those aspects - **provided** (and it is a big proviso) **that its users are fully aware when to apply them literally, and when metaphorically** - an all too dangerous territory for the unwary! (To pursue the literal meanings of metaphors - whether 'analogic' or otherwise, is hazardous - rather like conducting an autopsy on *Richard the Lion Heart* in order to discover whether he had a real lion's heart!).

Laban was a catalyst, and he would have deplored any retreat into a narrow obsessive Laban fundamentalism - a fundamentalism in which his ideas all too readily fossilize - and that would undoubtedly include his flagships *Choreutics* and *Eukinetics*.

There is, however, abundant evidence that Laban's ideas have not fossilised - whether in dance and drama training, notation, movement pattern analysis, therapy, aesthetics of dance, or choreography - thanks to his dedicated followers. In choreography, we are reminded by Ann Nugent in the preceding article, that 'Rudolf Laban's work was a major force in helping (William Forsythe) to form a strategic approach to the relationship between space and the moving body which led to 'the revolution in dance' and the world-wide acclaim of the Forsythe Company.

There is little doubt, also, that the liberating and expansion of Laban's classification of movement - through the recognition of *virtual aspects* has enhanced our thesaurus of valuable descriptive predicates - without, that is, the need to resort to pseudonyms and acronyms to formulate new over-tightly-knit categories!

'Keeping up appearances' in the arts, relies on the support of an extensive use of aesthetic concepts (mostly metaphors) - to be found in our rich language and in good criticism, which, we are reminded:

'... lays out the terms and parallels of appreciation from the outside in order to commit itself of internal intimacy; it names and arranges what it knows and loves and searches endlessly with every fresh impulse or impression for better names and more orderly arrangements ...'²⁴

Such devoted commitment must surely assume the ability, and inclination, to recognise 'virtual aspects' in art works - but then we are reminded by Ludwig Wittgenstein (no less) that some folk may be 'aspect-blind', for

'they have an altogether different relationship to pictures (dances, sculptures, music, architecture) from ours'²⁵.

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Suffolk Youth Theatre Laban Inspires Youth Theatre



(Nineteen year-old Ed Crosthwaite has been a member of Suffolk Youth Theatre for 4 years. Here, in the first of a series of articles for the Guild, he discusses how Laban's work influences the rehearsal process and the development of character). Ed.

Suffolk Youth Theatre has for sixteen years provided young people in Suffolk with the opportunity to take to the stage and perform classic plays as a tight-knit ensemble. Under the directorship of Michael Platt, 6 months of rehearsals lead to unique performances of plays such as *Metamorphosis*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Fuente Ovejuna* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The originality of Suffolk Youth Theatre's shows comes from its blend of traditional acting with music, song, dance and movement. While these media are sometimes used in isolation, it is the way they complement each other and influence the acting, characters and staging of the shows, which ensures that Suffolk Youth Theatre take on a play as a completely new one.

The Suffolk Youth Theatre production for April 2010 is *The Country Wife* by William Wycherley. The range of characters within the play is vast; bawdy but wealthy men-about-town, prim and proper ladies with scandalous secrets and reputations to keep, upwardly mobile and self-absorbed businessmen and gossiping servants all feature prominently. All of these different types of people have distinctive characteristics and it is important that the young cast can convey these to an audience without words; the way they express themselves through gesture, shape and weight, how they respond to other people, their stance, gait and posture are the first examples that spring to mind.

For any actor, understanding body language is key to successfully portraying a character. Michael's way of addressing this task with a group of more than twenty 16 to 20 year olds is to use movement exercises and ideas inspired by the work of Rudolf Laban, firstly to aid him in casting the play and then to help the actors develop and flesh out their characters.

At the start of our first term of rehearsals, beginning at the end of October and going through to Christmas, our sessions took the form of workshops. One of the main themes explored in these initial sessions was the idea of space around the body and the

ways you can hold it. The six main areas explored through what Michael calls "musical scales, but for movement" were lightness, solidity/strength, closure, openness, retreating and advancing. The movements were led by a part of the body and were also linked with a direction (up, down, left, right, backwards and forwards respectively).

Admittedly these exercises don't immediately appear to lend themselves to in-depth character development (unless you are a long standing member of SYT, in which case you can see where it's going). However, the development of these large, obvious, sometimes challenging movements quickly demonstrates how much power and suggestion there is in even the smallest actions. From leading with the right hand, we move on to leading the exercise with the nose, the chin, an elbow, a shoulder, a knee. The same movements performed with different body parts suddenly convey a range of emotions and characteristics; a forwardness lead from the chest is provocative, showy and confident, but from the nose it is inquisitive, nosy, even slightly irritating; closing the body with the shoulder could be seen as coy, tempestuous and flirty, whereas the same movement led by the chin is shy, sweet and innocent.

Another exercise, of which I have noticed Michael is fond, is animalisation. This follows on smoothly from the "movement scales" as different animals obviously occupy the space around them in a myriad of different ways. Small groups of the cast are, amongst others, dogs (earthy, chest lead, open and strong), flamingos (high, light, heads tilted back with chins leading, looking down on those around them) and chameleons (low, slow, heads forward with long necks). Then suddenly into the groups are thrown individuals quite clearly the opposite of those they are meeting; slinky, winding, smooth cats, nosy, bland, earthy hens and light, zippy, inquisitively buzzing flies.

Now the exercise takes on another meaning. It's not just about movement, but movement with dramatic intention. How does your group react to the entrance of this

outsider? Are you a pack, intimidating and aggressive but loyal to your fellows, or just good friends who remain cool and calm under pressure? We don't even know who we'll be playing yet but, for those who know the play, it is easy to see characters starting to shine through, believable and real because of the thought and effort put into these initial, ice-breaking exercises.

The layering of other aspects of the characters then begins following casting. How does your character walk? How do they use weight?

How does their stance influence their expression, or does their expression influence their stance? And how does the work we've done with body, space and movement help you to decide on answers to these questions?

With so much general groundwork already done, we as a cast now have much to draw upon when creating our characters and if we hit a dead end, there is always someone else to say, "Hey, remember that bit we did with the dogs? It might work well here...".

The process Michael uses at this stage of rehearsals is to help us build up a bank of experiences and ideas which we can use and come back to for the entire rehearsal period. It also helps to develop a shared movement vocabulary. As a group, as an ensemble, we have created a solid foundation from which we can proceed to build our characters. It is a gradual process of building a character and bringing the text to life, one layer at a time, always remembering that each person is different, has different personalities and different experiences. The use of movement to develop characters in Suffolk Youth Theatre is key to its style and has always been an integral part of ensuring that the acting is plausible, believable and utterly convincing.



Ed Crosthwaite

Suffolk Youth Theatre's production of William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* will be at the *New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich* from Wednesday 28th April to Saturday 1st May, 2010. For more information contact the Box Office on 01473 295900

Looking Ahead

For the next issue our frequent contributor Dr Alan Salter has provided an article entitled: **Aesthetics, Existentialism, Dance**

Since going to production with this issue, the Editor has received two more contributions which will be published in the next magazine.

A Report by Dilys Price OBE BEd MEd of her teaching/workshops/seminars in Hong Kong entitled:

A Gift to Share: a revolutionary Touch Trust programme for children and adults with profound multiple disabilities - based on Laban's work.

The Laban Guild Council has a number of current research initiatives, one of which is Laban's 'Spirituality' - a topic which stems from Anna Carlisle's and Valerie Preston-Dunlop's DVD *Living Architecture*

Cathy Washbrook MA is involved in this research and writes cogently on the subject



The Actor's Movement



(Warren Lamb, our long-established correspondent and author of 'Posture and Gesture', responds to the Editor's request for his words of wisdom on movement for actors). Ed.

In the 1950's a play was produced in London's West End in which two male actors were required to express a special relationship before speaking a word. The two characters in the play had never before met and they simultaneously entered from opposite sides of the stage. The nature of the special relationship was that they had to recognise each other's homosexuality while other characters remained unaware of it. It was quite a challenge for heterosexual actors at a time when there were issues affecting the legality of gay expression. While direction, staging, preparatory dialogue all contributed to the effectiveness of the scene, the actors' movement was paramount. How they gave **ATTENTION** from first seeing each other to being introduced had to be more than the movement of just making eye contact.

Philip the Bastard in Shakespeare's play *King John* feels threatened by enemies and proclaims "Come the three corners of the world in arms and we shall shock them." Whether or not the actor interprets his role as strong or weak, Philip is not expressing much attention and is demonstrating his **INTENTION** to act if and when England is attacked. If his voice is powerful and his legs wobbly he will be seen as weak; if there is consistency and harmony in the strength of voice and body movement he will be seen as resolute.

An actor moving similarly to James Bond would be no good in the first, Attention-oriented example. Bond gives almost no attention to the technical features of the weapons prepared for him, then, in the heat of action, he always seems to press the right button. He obviously keeps himself poised for **DECISION**, not just saying what he is intending to do, like Philip, but actually doing it – making the Commitment to action.

In his book *Mastery of Movement on the Stage* (Macdonald and Evans, 1950) Laban advises actors on the different Effort required for expressing Attention, Intention, or Decision. He says nothing about these terms being understood as a decision-making process but how each can be applied to situations such the three examples above:

ATTENTION	Space effort
INTENTION	Weight effort
DECISION	Time effort

While all three will be present in a movement phrase, the inference is that one or the other can be emphasised according to the situation. Bernard Hepton speaks of the value of training in the "effort actions" (see the interview with him in *Movement Dance and Drama* Autumn 2009). Whatever the actor's degree of natural kinaesthetic sense, such training can greatly enhance it. Then the actor can use his/her enhanced movement awareness as he/she feels appropriate for the role. However, there are two ways in which movement analysis can take this further:

Firstly, although Laban spoke primarily of Effort when working with actors or in the fields of industry and therapy he also took

account of Shape (which includes Space Harmony depending on the context and should not be confused with Space used as an Effort term). For example, the following quotations come from three of Laban's books which emphasise Effort:

... these actions appear in specific sequences having shapes and rhythms of their own ... "Mastery of Movement" (page 97). *The rhythms and shapes produced by a series of movements* "Effort" (page 51)

In *Effort Recovery* (unpublished script in the Laban Archives at the NRCD, University of Surrey) he states that his *observations consist of Effort/Shape*. There is so much reference to Effort and Shape in relation to each other that the script would be more appropriately entitled "Effort/Shape Recovery"

It is strange that Laban promoted Effort predominantly on its own when he actually observed Shape so much in relation to Effort. The actor will be emulating Laban if he/she seeks to become aware not only of the process of making Effort but also of how it is being Shaped. One understanding of great value to the actor, for example, is the theory of affinities advanced by Laban between Effort and Shape. It basically differentiates between aspects of harmony and discord and is important for the actor to be aware of, particularly in respect to the relationships he/she is seeking

to portray.

Actors can find the following Framework of the components of movement helpful, first published in *Posture and Gesture* by Warren Lamb (1965, Duckworth).

Laban's terms Space and Weight are replaced by Focus and Pressure for better understanding that it is a process which is being studied. The terms Horizontal, Vertical and Sagittal refer to Shaping so as to flatten the kinaesphere (in Laban terms "table" oriented), elevate it ("door" oriented), or propel it into a torpedo like shape ("wheel" oriented).

Flow has to be treated separately rather than as a fourth Effort element, with recognition that there is also a Flow of Shape. Some sense of how both Flows combine with Effort/Shape processes can be very helpful. The actor has a lot to learn! It all comes from Laban. Actors can use this Framework to sensitise themselves to the range of choice in movement, to their own range of individual movement, and how their own movement relates to that of other actors.

Secondly, it is a good discipline for the actor to be aware which part or parts of the body are doing the movement. And does the movement progress from one part to another part and eventually, perhaps, to the body as a whole? Or, like Philip the Bastard (quoted above) are there two separate and perhaps contradictory processes going on, one of the voice producing parts of the body together with facial "shadow movement" together with arm gestures, and another process confined to the legs? An actor playing Philip might actually **feel** integrated even though there

is this contradiction and the audience **is** aware of it – with adverse reaction. More awareness of movement can help to correct this.

An actor might see Philip as a weak, irresolute man and deliberately choose the contradictory movement. Of course, many factors will influence his interpretation. But if he **sees** him as a strong, resolute man, then **moves** in the contradictory way, he is a bad actor.

Hamlet exhorts the players who act the murder of his father "Do not saw the air thus..." It is a good example of isolated Gesture movement which does not become merged with Posture movement i.e. into the whole body moving consistently. Hamlet wants to see more merging of Gesture movement with Posture movement. No doubt Shakespeare knew that this was more sincere and convincing. On the other hand, some roles may be interpreted as requiring mostly Gesture movements with little merging into Posture. It depends on the play, the culture, individual interpretation and perhaps what the playwright wants. Having terms of movement enables a choice to be made.

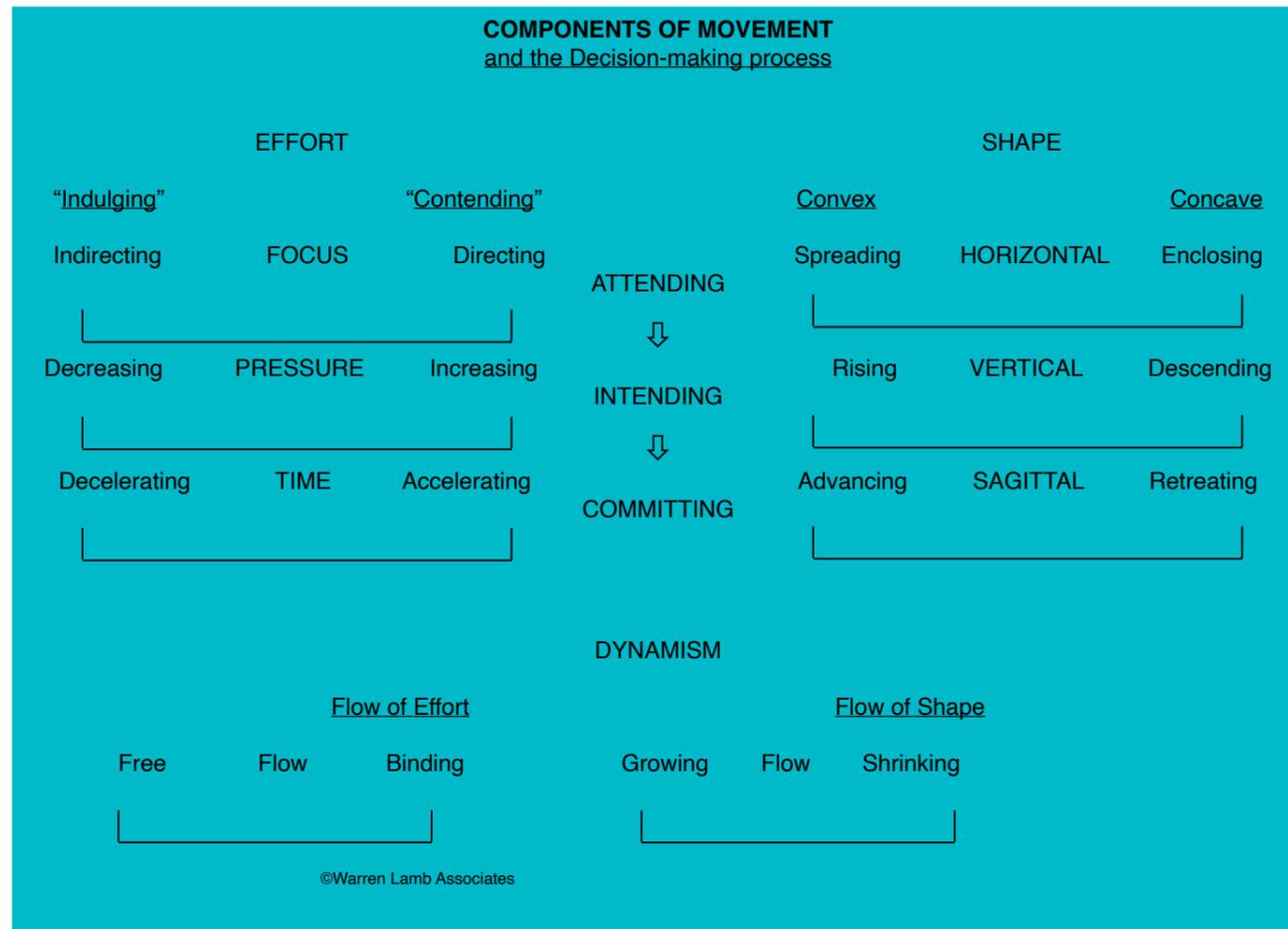
Every actor has his/her own distinctive individual pattern of movement. Going against it is bad acting because it will seem false. But interpretations of many roles can be played so that the actor mostly stays within his range. Moving outside the individual range is happening all the time and actors displeased with their performance usually do not know why. Few have the remarkable range of Laurence Olivier who, despite being initially unrecognisable in highly contrasting roles nevertheless continuously kept his Gesture movement periodically merged with his Posture movement so as not to stray outside his individual range.

Laban described *dancing with your eyebrows*, mentioned by Bernard Hepton, as "shadow movement". It is difficult to apply the Effort/Shape terminology to a tiny eyebrow movement. Laban believed that a generalised training based on the diagonal scale (Floating, Punching etc) will help develop a sense of how such a small movement relates to the body as a whole. Is the eyebrow movement a signal for some extreme action, like exploding a bomb? Is it a quizzical reaction to a comment at a party? Is it accompanying an expression of despair? There are innumerable possibilities, all with different meanings according to the context of whole body (Posture) movement of which they are a part.

The more aware an actor becomes of his/her specific individual movement pattern, as well as a generalised awareness, the richer his/her range of expression. A teacher can help by means of observation and analysis of how an actor is moving during rehearsal. Either then, or subsequently at a separate session, points which will help the actor to improve performance can be worked on. The teacher/adviser has to be completely in the service of the actor for this to be successful, rejecting any attempt to impose his/her own view of the movement required, and to avoid self-consciousness. The actor is simply helped to try things out and find his/her own way.

Such guidance is most effective when all components are taken into account, Shape as well as Effort.

Warren Lamb



(James McBride MA is a teacher, choreographer and MPA Consultant in Copenhagen; he will also be known as a member of the Phoenix Project. James took his MA at LABAN Creekside). Ed.

Movement Pattern Analysis (MPA) is a comprehensive system for assessing an individual's core motivations in decision-making processes, based on the disciplined analysis of nonverbal behaviour. MPA has a wide range of applications, from management consulting to career guidance, and over 30,000 individuals – primarily those involved in senior management – have made use of MPA-Profiles over the last 50 years.

Motivational Analysis

MPA maps out how people are intrinsically motivated to take action and interact throughout all stages of a decision-making process. "Intrinsic motivation" refers to inner drive, as opposed to extrinsic motivation – responding positively or negatively to external factors (e.g., wages, punishment). "Decision-making process" refers to the whole chain of actions involved in thinking through, making choices and implementing decisions.

By identifying intrinsic motivations, MPA helps individuals and teams to take full advantage of their potential strengths, while learning to complement or compensate for areas of lower motivation. Many companies use MPA to ensure compatibility between people and areas of responsibility and to improve team-balance.

Applications

Professional MPA-Practitioner training has allowed MPA to spread to a wide range of fields, although its main application has been in management consulting, spanning over 30 countries. Some companies and multinational corporations have continued to use MPA consistently for over three decades, which is rare in the often trend-seeking private sector. A long list of clients includes, among others, Bank of America, Bank of England, Royal Bank of Canada, IBM, Philips, Kodak, Master Foods, Colgate Palmolive and Saatchi & Saatchi.

The US Department of Defence has also been using MPA for a number of years to analyse foreign officials and heads of state – in order to better understand potential strategies for negotiation and military planning. Since MPA is based entirely on the analysis of nonverbal behaviour (specifically of "Posture-Gesture Mergers"), it is possible to transcend barriers of language and culture – hence the particular interest for the US and more recently also the UK Ministry of Defence.

History

MPA was developed by Warren Lamb in the 1940's and '50's, building upon the innovations of Rudolf Laban and one of the UK's first management consultants, F. C. Lawrence. Warren Lamb assisted Laban and Lawrence in their groundbreaking research within British industry – first among factory workers – then focusing on management.

Laban and Lawrence realised early on that certain aspects and qualities of thinking are echoed in other kinds of bodily movement – and vice-versa. Warren Lamb went on to synthesise these and his own findings and develop a solid framework and consistent method – now known as MPA – for analysing core initiatives in decision-making.

While developing the grounded theory that underpins MPA, Warren Lamb discovered important distinctions to be made between gestures, postural movements and what he dubbed

"Posture-Gesture Mergers" or "PGMs". While isolated gestures and certain postures could potentially be controlled or even faked, PGMs could not. These "...unselfconscious moments of postural adjustment, when a fleeting congruence of posture and gesture occur" reveal the "essence of a person", at least in terms of preferences in decision-making (Moore 2005: 39).

Posture-Gesture Mergers

While gestures can vary from context to context and from culture to culture, the relative proportion of an individual's PGMs remains constant over time – indeed throughout adult life (as far as MPA's last 50 years have demonstrated). MPA-Profiles have been made of over 30,000 individuals in over 30 countries, and individuals appear to vary as much in one culture as across cultures. In other words, each individual MPA-Profile is a unique composite of the same universal factors, relating to basic human functioning (in terms of *effort* and *shape*).

For example, we humans are able to position ourselves vertically and vary our shape around a vertical axis in order to gain access to a wide-ranging view and auditory/olfactory field. We are also able to focus our attention (muscularly and cognitively) in order to distinguish and define shapes, movements, colours, sounds, odours, distances, etc. All humans share the potential capacity to vary effort and vary shape, with varying degrees of bodily integration. Precisely which effort and shape qualities people prefer, however, is unique to each individual. This is the basis of the MPA-Profile, and indeed relates back to one of Laban's main tenets.

While gestures or postures may have some cultural or social significance in a particular context, MPA is only concerned with movements that transcend cultural and contextual specificity: PGMs. And because MPA seeks to identify enduring patterns rather than isolated events, an MPA-Practitioner needs to observe an individual (during an interview) for a period of about two hours – in order to gain a statistically valid sample. We all do a little of everything, so it takes time and systematic observation to distinguish what we do most from what we do least – revealing our preferred patterns of movement. Findings from each interview are then calculated and interpreted systematically to establish an individual's MPA-Profile, which then is related back to the client in written and/or verbal form.

MPA has been used methodically and consistently in management consulting and other fields for over a half a century. Warren Lamb's unique contributions (and notably, the identification of "Posture-Gesture Mergers") are unprecedented and still unparalleled in the field of nonverbal behaviour.

James McBride

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Regrettably, insufficient entries were received for a viable assessment of awards. However, our adjudicator Judith Mackrell (the eminent Dance Critic of the Guardian) has indicated that: 'Jennifer Teale's review of Candoco, which is descriptive, cogently argued ... deserves some recognition'.

We, therefore, have great pleasure in awarding a £100 prize to Jennifer, whose submission is printed below. It is hoped that a future competition (to include drama) in our Magazine will encourage more entries. (Ed.)

(Regrettably neither the Editor or the Adjudicator can enter into correspondence in relation to the competition).

Candoco at Arts Depot, North London

The Perfect Human/ Still

Pentland Theatre, Arts Depot, North Finchley
Thursday 15th October 2009

Bravely inviting different prominent choreographers to create work for them each season, pioneering, inclusive dance company, Candoco take on two ambitious works by Hofesh Schechter and Nigel Charnock in their current season.

Created in 1991 by Celeste Dandeker and Adam Benjamin, London based Candoco are a professional dance company, specialising in the integration of disabled and non-disabled dancers. Their current double bill consisting of two highly contrasting pieces; *The Perfect Human* created by rising star Hofesh Schechter and *Still* created by DV8 founding member Nigel Charnock, takes the audience on a rollercoaster journey which is at times moving and at others simply ridiculous.

Schechter's creation for the company, *The Perfect Human* is typically dark; reminiscent of his previous works such as *In Your Rooms* and *Uprising*. The ensemble of seven are seen wearing de-humanising white masks as they convulse and writhe on stage to the sound of rhythmic drums, creating a pulsating energy. Lead by the eerie contortions of former Diversions Company dancer, Chris Owen, the obsessive, gritty movements of the cast build into ritualistic, tribal travelling sections evocative of pack behaviour; urged on by haunting sound bites taken from Jorgen Leth's 1967 film *The Perfect Human*.



An animalistic, un-nerving piece, questioning the notion of perfection, *The Perfect Human* should be a particularly poignant work given the ethos of this highly talented company. Taking inspiration from Leth's film of the same name, Schechter challenges the audience's view of the 'perfect human' with some success but falls short of creating something truly original. Whilst thought provoking and entertaining, after touring for over a year the work, at times repetitive, still feels underdeveloped.

Deliberately not making use of all the varied bodies and skills of this exceptional dance company in a piece titled *The Perfect Body* appears to be a strange decision. An undoubtedly talented choreographer, Schechter has failed, in this instance, to explore the diverse talents and personalities of the Candoco dancers, which leaves the audience feeling a little short-changed.

In contrast, the company come alive in Nigel Charnock's work *Still*. In a piece that is anything but immobile, Charnock incorporates screaming, shouting, stripping and even some light bondage to create a fun, hedonistic exploration of people and their relationships.

A difficult task to accomplish, the work is both funny and clever. In a whirlwind of passion Charnock juxtaposes the beautiful and sentimental with the vulgar and silly; creating an intimate relationship between the dancers and the audience, resulting in a piece which is a surreal but surprisingly realistic action shot of love and relationships in the 21st Century.

The eclectic soundtrack to this fast paced work ranges from heavy metal to classical and sometimes simply the breath of the dancers. The delicate tinkling of music boxes is contrasted with the thrashing around of the female cast telling neurotic tales of disastrous love affairs, whilst a violently sexual duet danced by Owen and new company member, Annie Hanauer, is accompanied by the tender vocals of multi-talented dancer, Victoria Malin. The dancers are uninhibited and engaging throughout.

Only occasionally does Charnock go too far with an overly-long audience interaction section and a seemingly irrelevant vomiting scene. Chaotic, sexual, energetic and at times confusing, it is hard to imagine any two performances of *Still* being alike. Performing this demanding piece with an infectious enthusiasm the dancers are a pleasure to watch. *Still* is a vibrant patchwork of physical theatre, contemporary dance and ballet which leaves the viewer feeling violently attacked by the movements and ideas that appear to be bursting straight out of Charnock's head and on to the stage.

The energy and focus of Candoco Dance Company set a high standard for inclusive and non-inclusive dance companies alike. A company always willing to take on new challenges, I eagerly anticipate their next adventure in the forthcoming season.

(<http://www.candoco.co.uk/> for further details about the company and information on future tours)

Jennifer Teale

Dance: No Age Barrier or Excuse

(Coordinator Judy Smith reports on an Liverpool-wide inspired initiative to promote a 'feeling of community' for the over fifties, over sixties and beyond) Ed.

Growing Older (Dis)Gracefully Dance Company is a group of twenty five to thirty women, all amateurs, all but one over fifty, half over sixty and two considerably older. The group came into existence in 1997 as part of a Liverpool-wide initiative to promote activities for the over fifties, they have met continuously ever since. The dance experience of members is very varied, some have not danced since their childhood, some have been involved with dance all their lives and for others this has been a totally new experience. It is a magic mix of people all of whom bring something special to the group and this enhances the total experience.

We meet specifically to create dance and to share the created work in public performance. Even those who have only been for a few weeks are integrated into the next event, (provided this is what they want,) it is our firm belief that it is the role of the group, together with the choreographer, to structure work so that everyone can be involved, feel confident, and look good in what they are asked to do. As one member, asked after only four weeks, 'can I have a walk-on part?'. It is here that the experienced have a vital role to play; by placing them alongside the newcomer some of the anxiety of a first performance is diluted and the exhilaration allowed to come through.

We meet weekly with additional rehearsals before some performances, sometimes meetings will be workshop-based allowing us to enjoy a range of dance styles, others will be devoted to revising previously learned works, including making provision for the new members, and yet others will be for creating new works. We are committed to using professional choreographers (preferably from the local area) wherever



possible, and this has proven to provide new challenges which always enable the group to rise to new levels of both skill and performance quality.

We have been fortunate in obtaining funding from both the Arts Council and from Liverpool Capital of Culture. This has had a significant impact on the quality of work we can achieve as we have been able to pay highly skilled choreographers and film-makers, all of whom maximise the not insignificant talent of the group. Furthermore we have been invited by many organisations to participate in existing events or to make our own contribution. Without opportunities to perform and/or share our work there would be no purpose in creating the dance. We have had fantastic experiences; we made a dance on a beach, a dance film in the grounds of Speke Hall (our local Tudor building), danced in Liverpool's main street with 300 others as part of the FlashMob event, went to Blackpool for a cycling sponsorship event, staged hour long shows in local theatres, made a contribution to Liverpool's Vogue Ball and most recently performed at an NHS event.

We meet primarily to make dances, we also share camaraderie, we have lots of fun, laugh a lot and generally feel refreshed however physically demanding the session. Everyday worries are left at the stage door, replaced by concerns about which foot goes where, thus allowing the brain to forget, for a few hours, the pressures of normal living. Our dancing inspires a feeling of community and togetherness which is reflected in almost total commitment to rehearsals, often over twenty at an extra meeting on a Saturday afternoon. We get some vigorous exercise, engage in rhythmic movement and are very social. A passion for dance, remarkable physical achievement, self esteem and pride in what we achieve, are visible to all who see us perform, and all of this goes well beyond the dance studio and enhances our everyday lives.

Judy Smith

A Fabulous Evening in Kilmington

(Claudette Miles is a potter of considerable renown. In the summer of 2009 Claudette together with her husband, also a potter, daughter, a stained-glass artist, and son-in-law, a photographer, hired the White Space Gallery in Axminster where they staged a very successful exhibition of their work. Claudette enjoys dance and other forms of theatre as an audience member.) Ed.

Growing Older (Dis)Gracefully lived up to its title and provided an evening of sheer delight and inspiration. The dance company consisted of twenty-two mature women of all shapes and sizes who provided an entertainment that exuded a vitality and energy that was utterly engaging. The performance flowed with an easy sparkling

grace using the limited space very effectively. The costumes and the simple props added a witty and humorous touch that was a perfect compliment to music and choreography. The dancers evidently enjoyed performing and they took the audience with them inspiring many of us with the wish to emulate them. Also showcased during the evening was a delightful musical entertainment by Christopher Benstead performing on some unusual instruments he had collected during his travels round the world on his Scholarship. The evening of course included a delicious supper expertly cooked and served on beautifully decorated tables in a transformed village hall by the multi-talented Kilmington troupe. A big thank you to the organisers of this inspiring event and please can we have more of the same next year.

Claudette Miles

Making Friends and Achieving More The Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Scheme

(Cindy Cox is the Programme Manager for CCE: Creative Partnerships, part of the University of Sussex, as well as working freelance for South East Dance and Hampshire Dance. As a LUTSF committee member, she leads on the Friends Scheme. She graduated from the University of Surrey with a BA (Hons) degree in Dance and Culture and has since held education and community orientated roles for South East Dance and The Place.) Ed.

For over two decades, the Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Fund has been sustained by many friends and supporters, often with a personal connection to Lisa and Laban. This support for our ethos of enabling individuals to pursue a personal passion, has led to close to 400 practitioners, both emergent and established, being given the chance to travel, train and develop away from home.

Artistic Director of Scottish Dance Theatre, Janet Smith captures the special value such opportunities can have in an excerpt from her report following her scholarship trip to the USA. Here Janet attended a Master Residency at the Atlantic Center for the Arts, Florida, visiting the dance department of the programme of World Arts and Cultures at UCLA and exploring the contemporary dance scene in San Francisco during 2008.

'I was seeking to step away from the day-to-day management responsibilities with Scottish Dance Theatre and look at the bigger picture; to refresh my vision as an artistic director and as a dance maker and answer personal questions, looking forward, about my life in art. I chose to experience a range of different approaches in differing locations. I find travelling in itself jolts my thinking in very useful ways.

As well becoming more informed through seeing a range of work and observing rehearsals I have renewed professional contacts and friendships and discovered new friends and colleagues – an enriching and enduring impact of my travels. These travels in dance will, I know, resonate over time and on many levels. Many pebbles, many ripples.

For me this underlines the importance of the Lisa Ullmann Travel Scholarships – one of very few such funds to which dance artists can turn for help, in pursuit of learning, throughout their careers'.

Janet Smith, Artistic Director, Scottish Dance Theatre



Scottish Dance Theatre - Photo by Chris Nash

In the same year as Janet Smith travelled to the USA, Oxford-based dance practitioner Ruth Pethybridge travelled to Argentina, building on a new found passion for Tango, refining her skills, but also researching the impact of this dance form in a community context. She spent time in a palliative care unit in Enrique Tornu Hospital, Buenos Aires where classes are open to patients, their families, friends, carers and any of the doctors and nurses who work at the hospital. Following the trip she reflects:

'I continue to practice and learn my own tangos and feel there will always be more to learn, another level to go to, I am consistently surprised by it and it nearly always brings me back to my body in the most immediate way. I would love to experiment and play with it more, marry it with my training in contact improvisation to explore this intimacy and generosity of touch; while also recognising and valuing its original form. Thus my own love affair continues...

As a dancer and a teacher this trip gave me a chance to engage with a new form and feel what it was like to be a student again in an intensive way: humbling, frustrating, exciting, stimulating, boring, exhausting, thrilling. The souvenirs I bring into the dance studio from Argentina are much more than my gorgeous tango shoes, they are innumerable and immeasurable'.

Ruth Pethybridge, Freelance Dance Practitioner

Our Friends Scheme

Until now, LUTSF has relied on informal networks, on donations, bequests and fundraising activity to realise travel experiences like those above. Over the years many friendships have been made. We now feel the time has come to offer the opportunity to formalise the relationship between the Fund and future and existing supporters, hence our new Friends Scheme.

Individuals and organisations can become Friends of the Fund for a regular annual or monthly donation. In return we will share news and developments through our new e-news, publications and events, and perhaps more importantly, know that we can rely on the financial support of our friends to continue to provide these very special travel opportunities.

A limited number of Best Friends, donating in excess of £100 in any year, qualify to **adopt a traveller** – having the opportunity to select from a detailed shortlist of awardees whose journey they would like their donation to support, and receive details of the trip and its outcome.

If you'd like to formalise your support for LUTSF, why not become a Friend?

For more information or to join the scheme email: friends@lutsf.org.uk

or write to: Friends Scheme, Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Fund, Breach, Kilmington, Axminster, Devon EX13 7ST

Cindy Cox

Per Nordin Seminar: "To Be Someone Else" by Carol-Lynne Moore

Twenty-one participants from across the United States had the rare opportunity to experience the work of theatre pedagogue Yat Malmgren at the Motus Humanus advanced seminar, "To Be Someone Else: The Actor's Journey to Character through the Techniques of Rudolf Laban and Yat Malmgren." Co-sponsored by Columbia College Chicago, the two-day seminar held June 20-21, 2009, was taught by Per Nordin, Professor of Acting, Academy of Music and Drama, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.



Per Nordin (center) makes a point about the Yat Malmgren technique to actresses Alison Henderson (left) and Kelly Lynn Hogan (right).

theoretical grasp of effort theory, delivered orally and transcribed by acting students in what is known as "the book."¹ These lessons are linked to separate movement classes that focus on connecting observation and self-awareness to movement experience. Students develop devised scenarios based on variations of inner drives, writing dialogue and performing these scenes. Eventually, movement psychology techniques are applied to full length dramas.

For example, Professor Nordin drew upon Strindberg's *Miss Julie* to illustrate how the "Yat Technique" could be applied. Participants were asked to select an inner attitude for each of the three characters. Then two people volunteered to play a short scene from the play in which Miss Julie teases Jean, her father's valet. The scene was replayed several times, employing different inner attitudes. The exercise provided a fascinating glimpse of the rich and complex approach to character analysis that Malmgren synthesized from the movement explorations of Laban and Carpenter, the psychological theories of Jung, and the acting techniques of Stanislavski.



Alison Henderson (left) and Kelly Lynn Hogan (right) experiment with different effort states and drives in a scene from *Miss Julie*.

Notes

1. Malmgren relied upon oral transmission and physical experience to convey effort theory. He wrote nothing himself. The most complete account of his pedagogical approach can be found in the unpublished dissertation of Vladimir Mirodan, *The Way of Transformation: The Laban-Malmgren System of Dramatic Character Analysis*. Royal Holloway College, University of London, 1997.

The Creative Research Project Process. Movement Analysis at St. Olaf College by Susan Bauer

The St. Olaf College Dance Department, Northfield, Minnesota, USA, for approximately 25 years, has taught a course titled Movement Analysis based on Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) and Bartenieff Fundamentals material. While the course is required for Dance majors and is offered through the Dance Department, it also fulfills college General Education requirements in Writing, Oral Communication, and Artistic Studies, and Disciplinary concentration requirements in Linguistic Studies, Women's Studies, and Bio Medical Studies. These non-dance students taking the course are students majoring in Biology, French, Asian Studies, Psychology, Exercise Science, Music and Women's Studies, among others, and often gain significant insights into their career objectives with the LMA and Bartenieff Fundamentals material. Below is a discussion of the semester-long Creative Research Project (CRP). Interspersed in italics throughout the discussion are comments and textual material from the students and LMA colleagues.

- Project topic: Block Starts: *A New Look at Improving Performance*

"[While taking this course] I realized how much material from movement analysis I found very intriguing and I can see integrating into future work, particularly as a physical therapist. The idea that movement is fundamental was very interesting for me. That we learn patterns of movement as a young child, and those patterns become our unconscious movement habits I find very interesting from a physical therapy standpoint."

-a Junior, Biology and Pre-Physical Therapy major

The student above is a typical General Education student at St. Olaf College who enrolls in the course Movement Analysis. The St. Olaf College catalog states the course is an "[i]ntroduction to Rudolf Laban's system of movement analysis [that] provides a framework for observing, describing and analyzing human movement patterns and understanding non-verbal actions and communication. The course is appropriate for all students for whom movement observation is important to their career objectives, e.g. dancers, therapists, counselors, anthropologists, journalists, nurses, musicians and actors".

The course texts are *Beyond Words, Movement Observation and Analysis* by Carol-Lynne Moore and Kaoru Yamamoto, and *Making Connections, Total Body Integration Through Bartenieff Fundamentals* by Peggy Hackney. Deidre Sklar's article "Five Premises for a Culturally Sensitive Approach to Dance" also provides an additional theoretical framework. The course is a movement course with each class period focused on a particular aspect of Body, Effort, Space, Shape and Relationship and/or Bartenieff Fundamentals and developmental movement patterns. In addition to the CRP, students are assigned several short essays requiring movement description. In the syllabus, the following student outcomes are stated: (a) students will define and describe aspects of the movement theory Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) theoretically and kinesthetically; (b) students will apply and analyze LMA concepts and vocabulary related to specific contexts from a first person (Participant) and third person (Observer) perspective; and (c) students will demonstrate an ability, using LMA, to synthesize experiential and theoretical aspects of a selected research topic. This last outcome, satisfied by the CRP, is outlined and discussed in this article. An important aspect of this project is the way colleagues certified in LMA become mentors to the students. The CRP is in seven sections spread throughout the 14-week semester.

Creative Research Project Section #1

Crp #1 has three parts. Part A asks for a description of the topic, research question, tentative thesis statement and the contexts the student will use to answer his/her question. For example, if competitive ice-skating is the topic and movement event, gender and judging attitudes may be two contexts used. Part B articulates the movement event and whether they are going to be a participant observer of their own movement, use professional video (or YouTube!) of the movement event, or observe as a spectator and/or participant observer during a real event. Part C asks for a beginning bibliography of books, journals, websites, and a discipline-specific encyclopedia. Topics have ranged from autistic children, domestic and sexual abuse victims, performance improvement or injury prevention in various sports, yoga and pregnancy, childbirth methods, Hmong healing rituals analyzed to incorporate into Western medicine, performance improvement and injury prevention for musicians, vocal and instrumental, or various dance/movement forms such as salsa, capoeira, and tango.

- Project Topic: *Language Acquisition and the Nonverbal Movement: How a teacher's movement in the classroom affects motivation and language acquisition*

"Thesis: By understanding the Critical Period Hypothesis (based on Chomsky's work) in the context of the adolescent brain, a teacher can use specific teaching methods that employ gestures and nonverbal movement conducive to language acquisition.

Research Questions: What shape qualities and effort intentions make for an effective teacher? How are the teaching movements related to teaching objectives? What types of gestures are most effective for creative "coat hooks" for language acquisition?

Movement Source: Spectator Observer: Watching host teacher, as a spectator observer, in a Spanish language class and observing as a participant observer as a student teacher in the class."

-a Junior, Spanish major and Linguistic Studies concentration

If faculty connected their students with movement professionals around the country, the movement/dance community might have broader support. This year, I had the pleasure and honor to mentor the above student; she began with a very sophisticated thesis: "Through understanding the psychology of language acquisition and pedagogy methodology and their affect on an adolescent brain, teachers can implement specific body movement in many areas of their lesson plan that affect student's attitude toward learning and language acquisition capabilities." The student's presentation of her work and responses to my observations and suggestions prompted me to think about movement applications, particularly in pedagogical practice, very deeply. I had to use all of the Movement Analysis skills and processes, particularly those concerned with attunement to provide the student with meaningful feedback.

-LMA mentor, Susan Gingrasso

Creative Research Project Section #2

CRP #2 is the actual academic research needed to understand the topic. Students are providing information on the movement event for an audience that may be unfamiliar with it, e.g. if the topic is ice-skating, a student must answer the following questions: What is competitive ice-skating? Where does it take



Kelly Lynn Hogan (right) confronts Alison Henderson (left) in a scene from Strindberg's *Miss Julie*.

Professor Nordin guided participants through Malmgren's application of Laban's effort theory to characterization. Malmgren's approach privileges the effort states or "inner attitudes" (dream, awake, near, remote, stable, mobile) as a starting point for evolving character. Each of the four effort combinations for each state are defined and elaborated by everyday examples and reference to characters in famous plays. These inner attitudes are then linked to action drive combinations through which the character's inner life can be made visible on stage. For example, a stable inner attitude of strong directness, defined as "commanding," would find expression in punching and pressing actions. The contrasting stable attitude of delicate indirectness, described as "receptive," would link with flicking and floating actions. Malmgren's "movement psychology" curriculum is based on a firm



Alison Henderson (right) turns her back on Kelly Lynn Hogan (left) in a scene from *Miss Julie*.

place? Who does it? Several other lenses and/or contexts are also required, e.g. a student may examine the gender differences in competitive ice skating and question what criteria do judges use and what attitudes may be embedded in the criteria. The goal is for students to have two or more experts at a round table and to carry on a conversation with each of them, to read and listen carefully, gather in the various perspectives, and then synthesize what is appropriate.

Creative Research Project Section #3

While Laban Movement Analysis and Bartenieff Fundamentals provide the basis of the movement vocabulary, CRP #3 asks them to become “multi-lingual.” It has been my experience that some students tend to become defensive when asked to look at the complexities of movement. They respond by saying the movement experience is ruined for them if asked to describe it in detail. Asking them to discover the movement vocabulary used by experts in their topic’s field eases this defensiveness. They look for and list verbs used by the primary sources in their bibliography and put them in the base verb form, e.g. ‘they dominate the stage’ to ‘to dominate.’ After they have a list the student decides which verbs seem to carry some aspects of meaning that are interchangeable and puts those verbs together into categories. The final step is to place a name or title on the category that is descriptive of the category’s relationship to the topic. This piece of the CRP process enables students to see “movement” in the various topics and disciplines they are exploring and to begin exploring what the various movement vocabularies embody as it relates to their topics. This process usually opens them up to new ideas and/or ways of seeing their topic. Often times the categories do relate to specific elements of LMA, Body, Effort, Shape, Space, Relationship, but the intent of the assignment is not to “make this happen.” The intent is to be “multi-lingual”, in the sense of seeing how movement is referred to in other disciplines, if at all.

- Project Topic: *An Exploration of Gender Performance*
“The experts in the fields of drag performance and gender performance use words that fit into three general categories. The first category is words that deal with power. Another category is words that describe the performers as objects. Next, the experts used words that deal with people who are performing as someone unlike their own self. Looking at the three categories, we can learn a lot about cultural knowledge in regards to gender studies. The first category of power is discussed a lot in gender studies and helps the reader to better understand how society functions. For instance, the words to dominate, to overthrow, and to reinforce show the struggle of control.”
 -a Senior, Math and Women’s Studies major

This same exercise is used with news articles. Once the categories have been established with like-words, students are asked to move spontaneously through each word one at a time, e.g. to dominate, to overthrow and to reinforce. They are both spectator and participant observers as they compare and contrast their different movement responses to each word. In most cases movement interpretations are similar but variations also appear and are discussed. The LMA vocabulary is used to describe their responses reinforcing their kinesthetic and theoretical understanding of LMA and demonstrating how movement vocabulary culturally embodies particular movement responses.

At this point in the process students present to the class their topic and research information through a discussion of their topic-specific movement vocabulary and categories. The goal is for the students to become multi-lingual, and more important,

to see that movement is a pervasive aspect of what they read and write and to be conscious of the choices expert voices make.

The process thus far takes approximately seven weeks. During this time they are clarifying their research question and thesis statement as well as experiencing, in class, the various elements of LMA and the Bartenieff Fundamentals.

Creative Research Project Section #4

In CRP #4 they devise their coding sheet for analysis of their movement event, do their analysis, and then write it up in narrative form. It is at this point that they discover the “what they want to know and why” of their movement event. Because this is about process and students are new to movement studies and analysis, the “what to know and why” is not always clear until this section. A coding sheet and analysis of a movement event is modeled in class, then students are asked to devise their own based on the LMA elements and any elements of the topic’s movement vocabulary that is relevant and observable. One-on-one conferences enable the student to articulate more clearly the “why” of their observation and to devise a coding sheet that is appropriate and manageable for their beginning level of observation and analysis.

The important piece of CRP #4 is the pairing of each student with a volunteer LMA colleague. An email is sent out to colleagues explaining the course in a liberal arts, general education college, listing the student topics, and then asking for colleagues to volunteer for particular topics. Colleagues have approximately four to five weeks to converse with the student. After the pairs are determined, colleagues receive an email with the student’s name, major and topic. The student at the above one-on-one conference gets the name and email address of the LMA they are to converse with. The student initiates the conversation with an introductory email explaining who they are and the focus of their topic and movement event. The students are given a Protocol statement that encourages professional courtesies and timely responses. The students’ initial email is often difficult as they are so new to the material it is often hard to know what the questions are. This is not a certification level course so some aspects of the elements are only briefly mentioned. Colleagues take that into account.

- “An important role I played in the conversation was to encourage the student to broaden her perspective and way of viewing and analyzing the movement event. She seemed to narrowly define her framework for analysis. Asking the student questions and providing other viewpoints was important.”
 -LMA mentor, Rachelle Tsachor

- Project Topic: *The Pain of Playing: How Movement and Expression Can Help or Hinder Oboists*
Ms. Tsachor commented on my project and suggested tips for thinking more about Effort factors and shaping qualities, as well as the necessity to look at not only visible, obvious movement, but stabile movement as well. In her second email, she gave suggestions for my coding sheet, which helped me adapt it to allow more focused and appropriate observation.”
 -a Junior, English Major, Linguistics Studies Concentration,

“Matched with students doing projects that were personally or professionally relevant to me, I could provide specific and nuanced feedback. Even over the phone, I could hear from the students’ reactions and questions how they were beginning to understand applying LMA. It was a challenge to modulate Simple-Complex. These Intro students needed usable guidance now and something to spiral back into later.

I found being present with Flow flux in an Active, Strong Weight with Direct Space Effort as I spoke or composed written responses was essential for me.”
 -LMA mentor, Ana Morel

- Project Topic: *Perceptions of Latinos Through Analysis of Salsa Dancing*
“It is partly the movement of the hips, spine and shoulders, that makes an outsider of the salsa perceive salsa as sensual. Much of the movement occurs in parts of the bodies that are identified with reproduction, and with a modern societal emphasis on sex, sensuality that is what outsiders perceive, and this movement is also atypical for movement from the United States. Morel, A Dominican and Certified Laban Movement Analyst, said that relating to sensuality to moving the hips, spine, and shoulders is about you the observer, not about the movement. ‘Sensuality has to do with the inner intent of the mover or the observer. There is not a one-to-one relationship between this movement and sensuality.’”
 -a Junior, Dance, Biology major and concentration in American Race and Multi-Cultural Studies, Africa and Americas emphasis

Creative Research Project Section #5

This Section integrates the movement observation and analysis and the academic, contextual research. The theoretical and the experiential are now at the table together discussing how the research informs the movement event and/or how the movement event provides concrete descriptive support as examples of the theoretical. As students integrate the coding sheet, narrative and research material, the writing task is to move from a more analytical style of writing to a more descriptive style. This is at times a fine line, but the goal is to write for the general audience so that they begin to understand how movement plays a role in the particular topic and why it is important.

- Project topic: *Hmong Healthcare: Culturally Responsive Healthcare*
“The shaman’s presence in the trance state is much stronger and imposing than when out of trance. Light, controlled, and sustained movement qualities characterize pre- and post-trance movement. In contrast, movement while in the trance is strong, quick, and sweeping. Since trance movement reflects the journey and battles in the spirit world it is not surprising that these movements are more aggressive, forward, and expansive in nature.”
 -a Senior, Biology, Pre-Med major,

- Project topic: *The Long distance Runner’s Guide, A Look at Gender, Knee Injuries, and Proper Running Form*
“I learned that Effort plays a huge role in running. According to my experts, running should look and feel “effortless,” but thanks to my knowledge of LMA, I knew this term didn’t actually refer to a lack of effort qualities, but instead to aspects of effort different from what we tend to consider “effortful” or demanding. As I observed myself running on flat surfaces, I came to realize that “effortless” translates to light weight, direct use of space and sustained time.”
 -a Senior, Biology, Pre-Physical Therapy,

Creative Research Project Section #6

The second presentation to the class asks the students to ponder the essence of their movement event and then construct a movement experience for the entire class to participate in. As they present this movement experience they are to use the LMA vocabulary as they explain the movement event to participate in, observe carefully, and ‘coach’ their peers in the experience, as well as discuss and summarize at the end. Time and time again the students are amazed at the range of movement possibilities and how pervasive movement is in our lives.

“To further explore and verify the results I observed in myself while playing [the oboe], I devised some similar experiments for my movement class to try. My goal was twofold: to allow the class to experience the tension involved with playing the oboe on the fundamental level of breathing, and to understand how movement can both aid and harm musical accomplishment and the body itself. I asked the class to first breath deeply, remaining relaxed and taking into account all the proper breath discussion we have had throughout the semester. The room was calm, and all appeared to be relaxed and at ease. Next, I had them breathe in for the same amount of time and exhale through a small coffee-stirring straw to simulate the resistance of blowing through a double reed. The affect was universal: everyone commented how much harder it became, and the breaths (both in and out) became audible and more labored as they struggled to expel all the air from their lungs. Students commented that they felt tension in their jaw, chest, and throat, and that it was much harder to remain relaxed and mentally focused on proper breathing. These results were just what I was hoping for: breathing is the most fundamental and essential aspect of oboe playing.”

- From Oboe project above

The student whose topic was Salsa Dancing (see reference above) taught the class the basic salsa step and then gave them two contexts, (a) dancing outside in a family backyard with extended family, and (b) dancing at a club “trying to get the attention of someone that you are attracted to.” Along with her own observations she led her peers in a discussion of the differences they noticed moving from one context to the other.

Creative Research Project Section #7

Every Section thus far has been read and commented on by me and this final writing is the final exam for the course. At this point the student identifies a hypothetical audience and structures the material accordingly. Some have written the final as a portfolio piece for a future job, internship and/or graduate school interview; as a training/coaching manual for a particular group of people; as an orientation manual for an international studies program; or as presentational information for their peers.

As described by the student at the beginning, the impact of the course makes a lasting impression. The student whose topic was Hmong Healthcare is now in medical school and states “[i]n Montana and Washington issues concerning Hmong health care are less prevalent than those concerning Native American health care. I have started to look at the delivery of Native American health care with the same process I developed my Hmong research.” She is also very aware of the cultural context and states, “[h]owever, the fundamental historical difference, that the Hmong were our allies and the Native Americans were our enemies, introduces an overwhelming element of antagonism to my current studies.” And from the student whose project was Gender Performance, “I learned better how to read and observe people’s body language in Movement Analysis, but more importantly I learned the importance of placing a cultural context into how one observes people moving. I think that another thing from Movement Analysis that will help me with my work will be how conscious and aware of my body language and movement I am and how that affects those I work with.”

Susan Bauer

The Laban Lecture Revisited



(Dr Marion North CBE, PhD, D.Litt, D.Arts, D.Mus, FTCD, FRBC – formerly Chief Executive and Founder-Principal of LABAN Creekside, gave this Laban Lecture to the Guild over 45 years ago in 1964. Our President Anna Carlisle MBE, MA, with our Editor, believes that it has much to offer our present-day readers in so many ways and have therefore re-visited it with Dr North's permission). Ed.

We are familiar with the idea that all created things move in ordered pattern and rhythm, the theme of Havelock Ellis' book, *The Dance of Life*. We accept this idea glibly, but what does it really mean? We rarely stop our own mechanical busy lives to consider why we are interested in movement, why we teach others, and what we are really doing. Most of us were drawn to this sphere of study and work by an attraction which appealed to a deeper side of our natures, and it might be worth while to consider what this somewhat mysterious attraction is. Laban talks of the "spiritual food for which people crave" in relation to audience needs, and there is surely this need in all of us whether we are conscious of it or not.

If we go beyond our personality influences, we find a whole world of being which is usually accepted and used, without much knowledge: that is, the participation in movement patterns, rhythms and forms, and as Laban himself pointed out in one of these lectures, the special human ability to interfere with or stop a mechanical movement pattern.

Because we are generally unaware of these subtle patterns and rhythms, we are unable to take the next step of understanding that these rhythms are inter-related at all levels and on all scales. That is, happenings, symbols, visual manifestations, rhythms are related both cosmically and in the microscopic. They are also related at the simple level of material, as at the level of the non-material. Laban was able to recognise and to some extent help us to become more aware of how cosmic laws or principles appeared in movement rhythms and shapes. It should therefore not surprise us when we chance upon what is to us a familiar movement principle in other spheres of life. Rather we should be surprised if we did not. In *The Mastery of Movement on the Stage* we read " ... penetration into the mysteries of life is intimately connected with the acquisition of well-defined qualities of the feel of movement."

Recent work on X-ray of microscopic shadows, virus crystal shapes and patterns, seems familiar to us from our work in space harmony - of course it should! Laban did not discover the icosahedron or any of the other crystal forms, symbolic

patterns and shapes or rhythms. These have been known and used and passed down through generations from ancient times. But he did see their relationship in a new way, in a way related to movement, and was able to bring what, to our knowledge, is a fresh approach to the study of man and his universe. I dare to say that movement study is not an end in itself, but suggest that one of its values is that it can be a means through which man can become more awake and aware of himself, his relationships with others, and his world. Formulae familiar from other spheres of study become more meaningful and relevant when we can observe them through our own particular sphere of interest.

Basic principles of movement study are available for everyone, and it must be recognised that there is the element of craftsmanship in the Art of Movement, as in any art form. In Modern Educational Dance we read "Instead of studying each particular movement, the principle of moving must be understood and practised". Movement knowledge is the tool and material; the creative activity of composition can be at a simple primitive level, or at the level of conscious art. All levels serve a purpose, but the highest level of the mastery of the art of movement goes beyond the acquisition of knowledge to the stage of knowing. How to reach this stage of knowing? This will vary for each one of us, and we shall not all reach the same goal or depth of experience, for this depends largely on our own individual perceptive quality and gift, and stage of development. We can all recognise these differences in our own teachers. When something is conveyed to us beyond our own capacities, we may not be able to define or describe, we may only respond. The response is our own contribution, and judgement is always a risk, for frequently we may not be able to appreciate experiences which are too far removed from our usual mundane approach to life. We can also too easily confuse presentation with content, and miss the essence in criticism of presentation.

Some of us will approach these experiences through another art form, others through experience of human relationships, therapeutically or educationally, or through a work situation in industry, yet others through an interest in scientific research, historical studies, philosophy - indeed through any sphere of life. For the exciting truth is that all processes, living creatures and matter are in motion, according to laws and principles and relationships, most of which are waiting to be discerned. But why should this interest us? To accumulate facts at their face value will not take us very far, and indeed could well lead to stagnation. There is also the danger that in our constant striving for logical definitions of these facts we risk the defeat of our own aims by achieving inexactitude of deeper meaning. We have seen, however, that in the true study of the art of movement the facts will be a related part of a far greater experience which is more difficult to define until after it is known, and even then it can only be described to some extent. Just as it is possible to describe a picture, let us say a great work of conscious art, in terms of colour, texture, pattern, content, it is not simple, indeed it is perhaps impossible, to convey in words its full meaning. You may not even be able to say what impact the picture had on you when you saw it, and what of it has been retained. Similarly, an experience of a movement composition of high quality can only be lessened through verbal description of it, and (I quote *The Mastery of Movement on the Stage*), "Experience of the symbolic content and its significance must be left to the immediate apprehension of the person who watches the movement ... and of the person who participates in the movement" could be added).

" Any verbal interpretation of this inner feeling will always be something like a translation of poetry into prose, and will remain on the whole unsatisfying."

Nevertheless, in seeming contradiction to this statement, I am convinced that the understanding of basic laws and principles can be furthered by discussion after participation and practical experience.

The art of movement, whether in dance form or mimetic style, uses the medium of rhythmic movement which is far removed from a routine of repetitive external pattern of body activity, or, as Laban says, "The methodical approach to the universal forms of movement is bound to be different from that needed for the mastery of a particular stylisation of movement embracing only a relatively small section of human movement expression." Only through a real awareness of the inner content of the movement phrase, based on these universal forms, can there be a meaningful connection between the moving person, the expression of the composition, and others in relation to whom he moves.

The aim of the composition has to be clear, for the selection of appropriate movement phrases depends upon this knowledge. We may wish to communicate an idea, an experience, an action, to others. This demands a clear and precise participation and portrayal. In *The Mastery of Movement on the Stage* we read "Language (here meaning words) expressing feelings, emotions, sentiments or certain mental and spiritual states, will touch the fringe of the inner responses which the shapes and rhythms of mime evoke. Movement can say more, for all its shortness, than pages of verbal description ... That only a few of these movements have acquired a conventional meaning does not alter the fact that meaning is conveyed by movement ... The actor-dancer ... arranges (movements) into rhythms and sequences which symbolise the ideas that inspire him."

To communicate successfully, we must also have an understanding of those with whom we wish to communicate, either in the dance or as audience. There will, therefore, be no stereotyped form. Styles change (recognise how we scorn or nostalgically remember the "old-fashioned" style of the 1930s, or the "postwar" fashions) and communities are different in cultural background, racial tendencies, and so on. Time, temperament, cultural heritage will all influence response. "The spectator distils in his own way the material presented, although he does so to a great extent subconsciously (*The Mastery of Movement on the Stage*). Only by a living and constantly adaptable form can we communicate appropriately. The essence is the same, the style different.

We may wish to develop an awareness, an experience, in the moving people, without considering, except incidentally, communication to others. Here the need for constant understanding of every changing individual is obvious, not only his different moods and states, but the knowledge that anything truly experienced changes the person. We are never the same as we were before. Not only this awareness, but the recognition of correct timing is vital. What can be experienced (whether we are concerned in the field of education, therapy, or indeed in everyday life) has its own rhythmical development which can be shattered or hindered by insensitive driving. This development might rest at the level of conditioning, which has its own value in sensitising and extending, or it might reach higher levels of experience wherein we can accumulate new and real knowledge.

Movement and dance have traditionally been a vehicle for symbolic action, as much as, say, numbers, shapes, colours are symbolic, and have contained and sometimes conveyed deeper meanings. The most obvious examples are probably ritual and religious dances. For example, Laban quoted many symbolic actions from the dervishes, a Sufi group founded about the twelfth century.

We should recall that symbols of different kinds have been used since ancient times for the transmitting of knowledge from generation to generation, and that we have a rich heritage if we can understand it. It seems likely that the East has retained a greater capacity than the West for understanding symbols, as success there is traditionally related more to achievement of what is generally termed "spiritual" maturity than to material prosperity, although this may already be changing because of Western influences.

A symbol could be described as a synthesis of knowledge which serves a person for expression and transmission. He must simultaneously recognise (through experience) many related meanings, for the symbol to be meaningful or useful.

We, are therefore fortunate in our chosen field of study, that not only can we see these symbols, but we can move in them, and so capture within ourselves as much of the essence as we are capable of receiving or mastering. Symbolic actions appear in "specific sequences having shapes and rhythms of their own." In expressing the endless diversities of meaning, a symbol possesses an endless number of aspects from which it can be examined. Even if, for the purpose of illustration, we limit ourselves to a consideration of spatial patterns only, we can see relationships between other symbols and movement pattern, a study of which could enrich our own understanding of movement.

For instance: the idea of duality, symbolically represented by two parallel lines or the law of three, symbolically represented as a triangle.

The first associations are with partners; opposition; parallelism; two-sidedness; male and female; complementariness and so on. The American Pueblo Indians show their cultural attachment to the idea of duality by such visual symbols as their buildings always having two towers, one higher than the other, their ladders having one longer and one shorter upright. Many other examples can be found throughout the world, as this is one fundamental law of life.

The second example of the trinity; of three equal parts; the smallest group; a possibility of unity; of three-ring space-scales; of action, response and result; of the family and father, mother and child; is similarly a universal law.

The symbolism of a star evokes a response according to upbringing, tradition and experience: the Christmas star; 5-ring harmony; the six-pointed Star of David, which is two interlocking 3-rings, or triangles, and is also connected with freemasons; the axis scale and equator scales, and their relationship. Religious significances can be read in many books. Whether the inner meanings have been retained, or have been sentimentalised, will probably vary according to area, community and time. The debasing of a symbol is inevitable as it becomes further removed from any real teaching or understanding.

I should like to mention only one other example of a number, shape, movement and sound vibration symbol. That is the law of seven, the octave, one of the fundamental laws of the universe, which, amongst other meanings, represents the following: progression in rhythmical intervals of an orderly and characteristic nature, i.e., two equal stretches (intervals, tones) followed by a smaller (semi-tone shock), followed by three new tones or stages, and a further shock, leading to the attaining of a new octave.

We must always remember that symbols translated with ordinary language become rigid and confined within dogmatic limits, and so their use is decreased.

There are many forms of symbols, geometric forms and numbers, which are closely allied to our space harmony knowledge, colours, letters, words, pictures, alchemy, astrology, speech. In some systems, or attempts to capture and convey universal knowledge and truths, many of these symbols are combined.

The Tarot pack of cards is an interesting example for many reasons. It is generally agreed that it originated in the Middle Ages. The first designs which now exist date from about 1390, although its invention was probably earlier; about 1200 in Morocco, where wise men of all nations gathered at the famous literary and scientific capital of the world, Fez. These men chose the number and letter system from the Kabbalah, or Secret Wisdom of Israel, and combined pictures and patterns, probably based on Chinese symbols.

Our usual present knowledge is, of course; the degenerate form of the social game of playing cards. These cards exclude the tarot cards themselves but retain the suits.

Here is card No. 10, from a pack of cards which are copies of earlier designs. I will quote a description of this card by Papus, a French author, not because it described the whole meaning but because it gives a hint of some of the content in movement terms. It is called the 'Wheel of Fortune': "Everything goes, everything returns; eternally rolls the wheel of being. Everything dies, every thing blossoms forth again; eternally runs the year of being".

"Everything breaks, everything is united anew: eternally builds itself the same house of being. Everything parts, everything meets again: the ring of being remains eternally true to itself".

"Being begins in every NOW, around every HERE rolls the sphere of THERE. The middle of everywhere-crooked is the path of eternity."

Other aspects of the wheel are described: the circles indicate different levels of being, the centre is the archetypal world.

Represented by the letter I (of the word symbol IHVH of the Kabbalah) is the world of pure ideas "inherent in the innermost nature of the universal conscious Energy". To it is assigned the element fire, universal radiant energy.

The inner circle is the creative world.

Represented by the letter H, here the ideas of the archetypal world are specialised as particular patterns. To it is assigned the element water, fluid plasticity.

The middle circle is the formative world.

Represented by the letter V, here the creative patterns are brought forth into actual expression, the plane of processes and vibratory activities. To it is assigned the element air, representing the life energy which has been associated with breath.

The outer circle is the material world.

Represented by the letter H (the second H) is the plane of actual forms which affect our physical senses. To it is assigned the element earth, representing solidity and tangibility of physical objects.

The eight spokes, the eight-pointed star, represent universal radiant energy of outpouring and returning to the centre.

I shall not be so bold as to try to relate Laban's analysis of movement content, his effort elements, drives and attitudes, directly to the above interpretations, or to the colours, and directional signs incorporated in the symbol, though there are some analogies which are difficult to avoid. A hint has already been given of other spheres of symbolic representation which can be found and which are obviously linked with our studies. In one of the magazines of the Guild you may remember an article on the 'Art of Movement in Ancient China'. It is difficult to miss the similarities. Also the Chinese symbols of fire, water, air and earth are paralleled with the Tarot suits.

fire - clubs (or wands)
water - hearts (or cups)
air - spades (or swords)
earth - diamonds (or coins)

Similarly, the meaning of colours, and alchemical substances and many other symbolic forms are all related to the central study of man and his universe.

In the example of the Tarot pack of cards we see the degeneration of symbols when inner meaning becomes obscured or lost. So it seems that there is some law of movement, and movements and cults in general, that in the course of time and without constant adaptation to contemporary needs, the essence of any system is lost.

This should be a warning against any tendency to rigidity and too rigorous holding on to the outer form at the expense of the inner content. Knowledgeable change, which is movement, is essential if our work is to survive, and every new group, every new year, brings a new situation which cannot be handled as last year's problem. We must be awake and alive to this.

One sure way to keep alive is to continue learning and knowing. Perhaps our primary concern should be: "KnowThyself." If we could truly know ourselves we should know much else besides. Given self-knowledge, we should have a starting point from which we could begin to learn something about our relationship with the rest of life in all those aspects which we now fail to perceive, or of which, perceiving, fail to see the significance. Laban showed us a way, an opportunity, to know ourselves. The more we see our movement work in relation to the whole of life, our own and other people's, the more meaningful our efforts will become. This is not to imply that we should embark on a study of Chinese pictures, Hebrew words, numbers and symbols! Nor is it necessary to know intellectually in great detail a vast amount of information of all the possible relationships (or kinships - as Laban himself liked to call them) of effort and space. Alone it is meaningless. Even our most simple studies show that man is not only intellect, but that intellect is only a tool, or one aspect of his being which in our contemporary civilisation is probably over-indulged! We must cultivate and begin to trust our intuitions and feelings, not through indulging, but through mastery and harmony. That is, in allowing each aspect of our being to play its rightful role-intellect when needed, feeling when needed, and so on. Just as we tend to overvalue intellect in our present western civilisation, so, Laban says, "A certain form of the art of past times, using imagination and intuition, has often neglected intellectual knowledge and thinking out of the conditions of mental happenings, with the result that its products become an empty fancy, subject to individual whims. This does not satisfy us any more, especially in the art of movement. What we demand from the art of movement of our time is that it may vitalise life in all domains where movement is used in the working sphere of man, as well as in his educational and rehabilitative endeavours."

To every individual, the personal integration for which he aims

could offer at least some opportunity of freedom and choice: freedom from his own restrictions of disintegrated being, and freedom to choose to be part of life in a fuller and more whole sense by his increasing and developing awareness.

We claim that the value of the art of movement is that it incorporates and reveals universal patterns, forms and rhythms to which we have fairly immediate access; so let us widen our vision and look beyond the mundane details and try to find our real selves through our gradually unfolding awareness and harmony of action.

The Dance Centre: Finding a Place for Laban

(Dr Lorraine Nicholas was initially trained at the Art of Movement Studio Addlestone in the late 60s - followed by Graham technique at London School of Contemporary Dance. Lorraine completed an MA in Dance Studies at LABAN followed a PhD in dance history at Roehampton University where she is currently on the staff of the Dance Programmes. Lorraine is author of *Dancing in Utopia: Dartington Hall and its Dancers* published in 2007. Ed.

"If we want to be recognised as the source of the Modern Dance in England, it is up to us!"

Letter from Louise Soelberg to Leslie Burrowes, 30 April 1941

It is always tantalising to analyse a moment in history without benefit of hindsight, looking for the possibilities that seemed to be available to the principal parties, taking into account only what they knew at the time. Rarely can we get any real insight into how events pan out moment by moment and how opinions are formed. Personal letters can give an intimate window into the past and sometimes reveal the difference between 'history', which is constructed logically by those who write it, and the messy and incoherent state of events as lived through in the past.

As we know, the *National Resource Centre for Dance* holds a number of archives relevant to the *Guild*, the Rudolf Laban and Lisa Ullmann collections being most well-known. Mainly, I will be referring to the *Leslie Burrowes Collection* which has been recently donated. Fortunately, it includes many letters from the period around 1940/41 when Laban and Ullmann first came to the attention of the educational authorities. These letters are important because they reveal problems and power relations being played out over a period of months in the development of what was seen as a necessary institution for promoting modern dance education. We know that the institutions that eventually came about were the Modern Dance Holiday Courses, the *Art of Movement Studio* and the *Laban Guild* but there was a moment in history when it seemed that the future for Laban, Ullmann and their work would be collaborating in quite a different institution with dancers of quite different backgrounds. It is this moment I wish to explore through exchanges of letters.

My opening quotation joins two women who had certainly done a great deal to develop modern dance in Britain and yet their names in the historical record have been swamped by those of Laban and Ullmann. The dance backgrounds of Leslie Burrowes and Louise Soelberg are diverse, but together offer insights into the modern dance culture of the 1930s. Burrowes was a star pupil of the *Margaret Morris School* in London while Soelberg

I end with a quotation from Laban's writing in *The Educational and Therapeutic Value of the Dance*, where he speaks of the future of movement:

"It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the line of development of the language of movement as well as of the ideas expressed in this language will lead to the scientific dance of a scientific epoch."

And we should consider carefully what he meant by "scientific".

Marion North

was an American from the *Cornish School* in Seattle who also had quite a wide European training including being a certified teacher of Dalcroze Eurhythmics. What joined these two together was Dartington Hall in Devon where Burrowes had been the first dance teacher in 1928 and Soelberg arrived to teach alongside Margaret Barr in 1930. Both Burrowes and Soelberg then found European role models. Burrowes was subsidised by Dorothy Elmhirst of Dartington to train with Mary Wigman (1930-31) then becoming Wigman's official representative in London, opening her own studio in 1933 and performing as a recital soloist. Soelberg enrolled in the *Jooss-Leeder School* when it arrived at Dartington (1934) and then performed with *Ballets Jooss* before settling in London to teach. Both being students of his students, Laban referred to them as his dance 'grandchildren', perhaps feeling the need to deal tactfully with the established dancers. As events proved, the arrival of Laban and Ullmann on the scene opened up tensions. While Soelberg responded positively to their work, Burrowes found the Laban approach less flexible than the improvisational Wigman mode in which she taught.

So how was it that in 1941 Soelberg was urging Burrowes to action as in my opening quotation? The answer has something to do with the complicated history of modern dance in Britain in the 1930s and 40s. By the late 1930s, initial interest had largely ebbed away and against this background Burrowes and Soelberg decided to join forces in 1938 to create the *Dance Centre*. The idea was a comprehensive one: it offered professional and amateur training, performances, lectures and discussions, aiming to be a hub for modern dance activity in London, albeit carried out at their two separate studios pending finding better premises. Douglas Kennedy, Kurt Jooss, Alexander von Swaine, Derra de Moroda, Harald Kreutzberg and Agnes de Mille were amongst the performing and speaking guests. Significant members of the group were Joan Goodrich and Diana Jordan, both dance educators out of *Bedford College* who had also trained extensively with Burrowes. Jordan in particular was deeply involved in the *Dance Centre*, performing with its dance group and being on its board of directors. The letters I draw on are between Burrowes, Soelberg and Jordan and relate to the role of the *Dance Centre* in promoting modern dance in the early 1940s.

Hardly had the *Dance Centre* got going than war started in 1939. In June 1940 Laban and Ullmann came to London, forced to move following the banning of 'enemy aliens' in Devon and Ullmann started to teach under the umbrella of the Dance Centre. Burrowes had to leave London with her family (she was married to the oboist Leon Goossens) while Soelberg attempted to continue *Dance Centre* activities. Letters reveal tensions between Burrowes and Soelberg regarding control of the *Dance Centre*. Soelberg felt that she should be allowed

to make decisions herself whilst Burrowes demanded to be consulted. With regard to *Dance Centre* control, Jordan sided with Burrowes, but like Soelberg she wanted to support and learn from Laban and Ullmann.

The times were inflicting huge pressures on people who feared for themselves and their families and at the same time were at a nodal point in the development of their art form. Burrowes was upset at the developing alliance between Soelberg, Laban and Ullmann. She saw the latter two as suspicious foreigners, which might seem strange in the light of her unfading affection for Mary Wigman but not unlikely in the context of the times as bombs rained down on London. By this time the Blitz had begun in earnest. Burrowes wrote to Soelberg in defence of her suspicions:

Art is international, but as you know Art has been used now for some time politically. These days are not normal ones and to face them we must lay down some 'beloved tools' and take up ones alien to our better selves.

Counteracting these feelings were the intense expressions of interest coming from the physical educational community in which Goodrich and Jordan were prominent and making much of the availability of Laban and Ullmann. Of greatest significance was the conference set up in April 1941 under the auspices of the *Ling Physical Education Association* to discuss the future for dance in education. Goodrich, Jordan, Laban, Ullmann and Soelberg were present. Burrowes could not attend but her importance to the outcome was recognised with attempts at least to have her name as an endorsement on the programme. We are lucky to have, courtesy of the archives, both typed up notes of the discussion and the report by letter from Soelberg to Burrowes, quoted at the head of this article. Several issues were on the agenda. Firstly, what was to be the name of this kind of dancing; secondly, how would it be promoted in schools and last but not least, what organisational structures would be needed to train teachers. Not part of the official record but probably underpinning the positive outcome was Laban's well-known charisma. Soelberg reported how he had escorted grey-haired female delegates individually around the garden, simultaneously impressing on them his philosophy for dance education.

The archives fix this as the moment in time when the previously labelled 'central European dance' (which included both German and Viennese versions) officially became 'Modern Dance' (later to have the word 'educational' inserted). Soelberg would attempt to clarify the name by publishing a leaflet the following year: *Modern Dance...What is it?* In discussions, Soelberg emphasised that the *Dance Centre* was still a valid force and the meeting agreed that the combination of *Dance Centre* and *Ling* membership would form a strong nucleus for getting backing from the *Board of Education*. The *Dance Centre* was asked to arrange teachers' courses and Ullmann revealed that summer courses were already planned. As can be imagined, problems arose because Burrowes as co-founder of the *Dance Centre* was not present. It seemed to her that Soelberg and Ullmann (without knowing how sensitive this might be) were hijacking the *Dance Centre* by arranging courses without her consent. At the meeting, Jordan supported the notion of the *Dance Centre* being at the heart of development, but subsequently became concerned at Burrowes' apparent exclusion. Soelberg was full of hope that this development would really establish the *Dance Centre* and, as we have seen, wrote to Burrowes urging her cooperation.

Over the following months of 1941 the correspondence sizzled. Soelberg had now left London as part of the *Travelling Repertory Theatre* directed by her husband, Basil Langton. At the end of May she wrote to Jordan, still very positive that the

Dance Centre could be a functioning umbrella organisation under which she and Jordan, Laban and Ullmann and even Burrowes if she wished, could work together to further modern dance. She was certain that Laban and Ullmann would collaborate, or at the very least be part of an advisory committee. She had plans to get funding from *CEMA* (the body that would grow into the *Arts Council*). Still trying to persuade Burrowes, she wrote on more than one occasion of her growing perception that Laban and Ullmann were being seen more and more as the ultimate authorities on modern dance: the *Dance Centre* needed them in order to be a credible organisation.

Inevitably during June 1941 Burrowes and Soelberg dissolved their partnership. By now Laban and Ullmann had decided that they could not work with the *Dance Centre*. Why was this? Certainly the archive suggests that they now understood that all was not harmonious within it and this would have hindered their own progress. Probably also their desire for independence was a guiding principle. They had left London for Newtown in Wales, which immediately became a magnet for the dance educators including Soelberg and Jordan. Both Laban and Soelberg advocated forming a new organisation and this was the way forward suggested by a further meeting at the *Ling Association* on 20th June. What Soelberg had in mind was an organisation rather like the *Dance Centre* but bigger, with a large membership of supporters kept in touch through a newsletter, promoting the art of modern dance more generally as well as having a distinct educational section that would run courses for teachers. This idea quietly folded after a few newsletter editions and Laban and Ullmann themselves took the initiative in setting up the *Modern Dance Holiday Courses*. From now on the organisational structures, eventually including the *Laban Guild*, would be in their own hands and those of their close allies. As an interesting sidelight, Soelberg did not give up on the *Dance Centre* idea totally. While working with the *Travelling Repertory Theatre* in Birmingham she founded the *Birmingham Contemporary Dance Club*, conceived rather like the *Dance Centre*, as she described it in a letter to Burrowes.

So between 1940 and 1941 the *Dance Centre* failed from the combined influences of wartime consequences and personality clashes. Soelberg returned to America in the postwar period and Burrowes continued to teach but the Wigman approach that she pioneered in Britain no longer had the prominence of the Laban/Ullmann work or the Jooss-Leeder technique that Leeder transmitted through his London school. The *Dance Centre* controversy shows how keenly the need for an organising body for modern dance was understood. But was something missed when the *Dance Centre* ideal went to the wall? Might it have provided a broadly based artistic environment, combining different perspectives on modern dance, and encompassing professional performance, audience education and training for educational dance? We can only guess at the answer. The latent ideas of the *Dance Centre* had little chance to develop their full potential and the historical record has generally given insufficient credit to the pioneering spirit, tenaciousness and high ideals of Leslie Burrowes and Louise Soelberg.

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Lorraine Nicholas

Resourcing Unique Expression

(Cathy Washbrook MA PGCE - a Free-lance Dance Artist and Director of Dance Vibe - reports on her research at the University of Bedfordshire. Cathy will be remembered for her vital role in the Phoenix Project; she also serves on the Guild Council) Ed.

This year I undertook the *MA Dance in Education* module at *University of Bedfordshire* which examined and explored the potential of Choreutics and Eukinetics as principles in delivering high quality through dance in education. My area of research was entitled *Resourcing Unique Expression*, which sought to foster greater autonomy in pupils' learning in performance and choreography. It was a welcome opportunity to revise and revisit my training as a teacher in the child-centred "mid-way" model (Autard-Smith) with the outcome of a richer more diverse pedagogy.

I proposed a new model for dance in education through four key themes; application, experiential learning, resourcing students and reflective learning. The project was two-fold in that it sought to examine and develop my role as a teacher/practitioner as well as pupils' learning. Application, in this context meant making relevant their learning consistent with inner motivational resources as posited by self-determination theory (Reeve 2006) and Foucault's personal autonomy and education (Marshall 1996). To resource the students I drew on their own motivational resources and aspirations in an attempt to see what made them tick; I attempted to find out their core values, interests and goals and then make relevant the work through Choreutics and Eukinetics. This was done by a questionnaire at the start of the project; I used the information to consider my teaching approach toward personalised learning (Garnett 2008), a current education initiative.

Using this information I applied the Choreutic and Eukinetic tasks to pupils learning to make relevant the tasks to performance and choreography but also to their own goals and aspirations. For example; one of the activities was to perform within a cluster and then move from the cluster into general space, this enabled students to experience and really feel the power of working in close proximity to one another and then feel the expanse of the space when they moved out from the cluster, to promote their sensitivity as a dancer - but also to enhance their understanding of space through close proximity and opening out into general space. In another activity students were able to apply their knowledge of space through: learning and exploring the cube, to an architectural stimulus, and photographs and writings about Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum, Berlin. The architecture is cube-like but strong diagonal lines and shapes disrupt the usual box like structure. Pupils were able to refine their embodiment of the cardinal directions and explore the diameters and diagonals



Photo by Richard Washbrook

through body shape and design as well as spatial progression and projection (Preston-Dunlop 1998).

I wanted to foster pupils experiential learning, which is somewhat minimalised in the formal education system. It is holistic and offers an inside-out approach to learning, consistent with Laban's approach.

"Laban seemed to favour knowledge that was gained experientially. His concepts were considered as fluid and evolving, leading to a non-systematic format of pedagogy ... This highlights his flexibility and adaptability to adjust to each student for their optimum learning." (Laban Project circa. 2008)

In order to facilitate this way of working, I offered pupils experience of improvisation, somatic experience of the body in space - with a sense of connectedness to the floor and feeling the support of the air when exploring the kinesphere. Hence

drawing attention to the body-space nexus or the body-in-space and heightening sensing and attending as performers (Preston-Dunlop 1998). I led improvisation tasks to allow pupils to become curious about their body as a tool for performance, about the space in which they dance and the quality with which they dance. Many of the tasks allowed pupils to explore, experiment with new possibilities for movement to be created for choreographic material. This is not a new phenomenon in itself, but in making the

task relevant to the exploration of space it opened up new ways of knowing their bodies and the space. For example one of the tasks was to paint the space, or inscribe the space in a 3-dimensional way using different body parts and surfaces; this allowed the dancers also to own or claim the space in a more embodied way, drawing attention to the phenomenology of dancing. Pupils' recorded their experience through written or drawn scores (Anna Halprin style) in notebooks which lead to new ways of recording dance in an experiential rather than an analytical way, allowing them to understand and embody their dancing.

My research expressed a desire to resource students in order to foster greater autonomy, but equally as a teacher I wanted to challenge my role, so I researched theories of facilitation (Hansgen 2001), learning styles (Kolb & Kolb 2005) and autonomy enhancing styles (Assor, Kaplan & Roth 2002) and fostering relevancy. Students were required to reflect on their work, but equally I reflected on my practice toward greater integration of my ability to foster their individual learning goals and aspirations.

The outcome of the project was very successful. Pupils felt that the learning had addressed their goals and ambitions

in dance/performance aspirations; they felt empowered, and they learned more about themselves and their personal style and artistry. They were wholly engaged, interested and keen to learn and felt they had had a high quality dance experience. They felt the project was most successful in dance performance, choreography, and the application of Choreutics and Eukinetics to developing their personal artistry and unique expression. It was least successful in learning through experience (experiential learning). My interpretation of this is that experiential learning is infrequently used in education in general and therefore is a new experience for them (particularly for those not so used to my teaching style). The level of engagement and success for each individual was consistent with their level of experience in dance and in my approach to teaching. Other findings concluded that the project was rather complex for the time available; however, I would like to continue to research areas of the project in more depth and as smaller discreet projects in the future.

The MA Dance in Education course was rigorous, demanding and hugely enjoyable. It was refreshing to be amongst like-minded professionals who were questioning their practice and learning new approaches to dance pedagogy. Maggie Killingbeck and Anna Carlisle complemented one another; Maggie delivered challenging theories of research methodology; the action research approach, whilst Anna made Choreutics and Eukinetics wholly appropriate to the secondary/tertiary age range. We were challenged intellectually, creatively and in dance technique and through the application of Laban's principles to all areas of dance practice.

I have been working with Laban's principles and practice for the last 3-4 years more rigorously as a result of the impact of the *Phoenix Project*, funded by the *Laban Guild for Movement and Dance*. However, this more recent course offered me an opportunity to deepen my practice as a dance in education

specialist as well as a Laban practitioner, so in essence it was two-fold. I am continuing to teach as a freelance dance specialist, mainly with students in the primary and secondary sectors. The study of the MA Dance in Education module has given me a depth and breadth of experience, so that I find work imbued with Laban in an unconscious way - for example if I am choreographing a new warm up, I realise afterwards that it is in the dimensional scale, or when choreographing a dance it automatically includes moments of spatial progression and spatial projection. I hope that there will be an opportunity to develop this work in a further dance in education module in 2010 - 2011 academic year. Nevertheless, I will be continuing to develop my practice through further implementation of Choreutics and Eukinetics in all classes that I teach.

Cathy Washbrook

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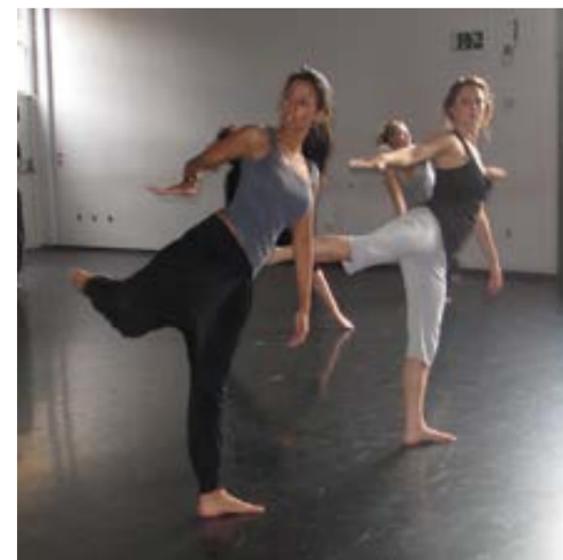
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Laban Project [online] available at www.labanproject.com

for all types of learners. As a result we extended our subject knowledge whilst exposed to a fantastic example of how we should deliver lessons in order to get the most out of our students.

Louisa Webber

PGCE Dance
University of Bedfordshire



Workshop photos by Richard Washbrook

High Quality Teaching and Learning in Dance University of Bedfordshire Monday 21st September 2009

Before joining the PGCE Secondary Dance course at the *University of Bedfordshire* I studied at Bretton Hall and was awarded a BA Hons Dance Degree. Previous to my undergraduate studies I trained for fifteen years in ballet, tap, modern, and jazz. I had always aspired to teach and looked forward to the challenges associated with a PGCE training.

In September I was privileged to participate in a dance workshop led by Alison Curtis-Jones from LABAN Creekside. It was a motivating day in which my subject knowledge was seriously challenged. The focus for the day was high quality teaching and learning in dance, and in particular, the extent to which Laban's analysis of movement facilitates a high quality dance education. Accepting that all of those present were familiar with body/action, space, dynamics and relationships, Alison guided the participants through an in depth exploration of just one aspect of the analysis; space/choreutics. During the five hour workshop it became increasingly clear that attention to the spatial aspects of movement could make a significant contribution to communication/expression. Alison introduced and explained new terminology and through a series of progressive tasks guided participants to an appreciation of their relevance for high quality dance education.

In schools, Laban's movement analysis is used by dance teachers to enable all ages and abilities to access dance. This workshop demonstrated the value of in depth knowledge, skills and understanding of Laban's work as a means of facilitating high quality teaching and learning in dance. This was exemplified by the content of the workshop and the method of delivery. At all times content was both achievable and challenging whilst including a range of activities suitable



Dance Education Masters Unit

The Dance Education Masters Unit ran for the first time this year. It developed as a result of the interest generated by the *Laban Research Project* undertaken in the summer of 2008. The cohort comprised some ex research subjects, a *Phoenix Project* participant and a small number of local dance teachers. All approached the unit with industry and commitment. The unit demanded that each student apply the Laban studies content of the workshops, led by Anna Carlisle, to their own teaching in the context of action research. The range of applications was varied; the value of Laban's work was explored in relation to contact improvisation, performing the *GCSE Set Study*, developing innovative choreography and fostering more autonomous/resourceful dancers. Without exception the students discovered that their increased knowledge, skills and understanding of given Laban concepts enhanced the quality of their pupils work. Many were critical of current notions of high quality dance espoused by the examination boards, *QCA*, the *PCESSYP Strategy* etc. In all cases the research resulted in changes in the participants own teaching practice. All of the students passed; a number with high grades. The tutors [Anna and myself] were delighted with the outcomes and the assessment moderator and the External Examiner were extremely complimentary about the high standard of the students' investigations. Arising from this very successful project it is hoped that the masters' students, with some of their pupils, might be persuaded to contribute to a conference at which they and others share their approaches to developing high quality dance in education.

Maggie Killingbeck

My research identified the improvisation requirement of the A level specification as something that was not taught well at A level. Through teaching a group of A level students explicit Choreutic workshops we then explored improvisation using Laban's spatial terminology. Through an enhanced and deeper understanding of space the students' improvisation was of a better quality and they had more authority and confidence in the use of improvisation as a method. This in turn directly impacted their choreographic work regarding the innovation, originality and integrity of the movement they created which is often lacking at A level.

Sadie Hunt

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, Ltd. 2009 Lampeter, Wales.

- Chapter 1 Laban's journey: Art, Dance and Beyond
2 The Artist/Researcher at Work
3 Visual Representation of Movement: Tradition and Innovation
4 Space: The Outer Domain of Human Movement
5 Effort: The Inner Domain of Human Movement
6 On Harmony
7 Tone, Scale, Interval, and Transposition
8 Modulation and Harmonic Phrasing
9 The Harmonic Unity of Form and Energy

With Preface by Janet Lansdale, Emeritus Professor, Dance Studies, University of Surrey who states, "This articulation and further development of Laban's 'beautiful' but 'analogic' theory of movement harmony makes a unique, original, and impressive contribution to scholarship."

Review by Sally Archbutt M.Phil

This excellent book by Dr Carol-Lynne Moore is an intriguing account of her doctoral and post-doctoral research from 1994-2002 into the ideational bases of Rudolf Laban's thoughts about movement and dance, "aiming to locate him more precisely in streams of 20th Century thought and culture." As Guild members know, Laban's ideas have made a significant contribution to movement thinking in diverse contexts such as education and therapy in addition to dance and theatre world-wide, and there is already much written about his life and different aspects of his work. However, diversity of application and academic rivalries and snobberies have, over the last thirty years, led to misunderstandings of Laban's aims, his simple yet complex and profound theory of movement, and a distortion of the practical and conceptual dance bases which originally led so many exceptionally gifted students (such as Wigman, Knust, Jooss, Bartenieff, Gleisner, Bereska) to work with him and take part in his researches. Irmgaard Bartenieff later emigrated to the United States and Carol-Lynne acknowledges her as her teacher, "who introduced a generation of young Americans to Laban's ideas, not as received wisdom from the past but as theory belonging to the future."

Of all Laban's ideas, his notion that dance has a structure analogous to that of music "has received the harshest treatment from critics and both friends and foes." Although often discussed in these pages, the idea has usually been written off as serving no purpose. This book aims to redress this view and "open the general public's mind more widely to the value and appreciation of the dance and art phenomenon."

Although the book is very detailed, Carol-Lynne's case is impeccably presented and easy to follow. Previous knowledge is not assumed and the extensive references after each chapter are even more enlightening than the main text. The book is refreshingly objective and unselfish. It contains something for everybody. The necessary explanation of Laban's basic theory is clear and easy to understand for the less intellectually interested/qualified reader. There is also much for other advanced movement and dance practitioners and researchers to learn and ponder upon.

Carol-Lynne's research utilised three sources: 1. Laban's published Writings. 2. Reports and hearsay of "Colleagues". 3. Original Examination of unpublished Archive Materials from 1938-1958,

housed at the *National Resource Centre for Dance in the University of Surrey*. She acknowledges the generous support from the *British Arts and Humanities Research Board* which allowed her "to extend the breadth and dept of her archival research on Laban's unpublished materials", the staff of the *NRCDC*, and Professor June Layson. The book also sheds more light on Laban's own research methods which she later explains and validates.

Examination of the Archive Materials revealed thousands of Laban's drawings. Discovering that Laban's research technique used consistent procedures for modelling both effort and space, but that the forms were used in *figurative ways* to explore formal relationships between movement qualities in *Eukinetics*, and in *literal ways* to represent actual movement pathways in *Choreutics*, was a break-through to understand how Laban constructed his ideas of the harmonic relations of ENERGY AND SPATIAL FORM. Carol-Lynne emphasises Laban's desire and determination from the beginning of his interest in movement to develop a graphic notation that would allow dance to be recorded. This he regarded as fundamental to gaining respect for dance as a serious art and for all aspects of movement study and practice. This desire to find ways to capture and represent the elements of movement and their combinations graphically is basic to his observational method of research and work throughout his life.

There has in recent years been a tendency to make claims to improving Laban's taxonomic scheme. Where some of these are examined the ideas may be found to be already embodied in the concepts used in *Kinetography/Labanotation*. Credit is not always given where credit is due:

What Carol-Lynne has to say after examination of Laban's drawings is to me the most fascinating part of the book, which will be an excellent addition to any dance library. My only criticism is that it contains some uncalled for remarks about Lisa Ullmann, without whose devotion and support Laban would not have survived to continue his work in England. He trusted her completely and was not misguided in this, for many greedy hands were trying to get hold of his records after his death and her own.

Sally Archbutt

Review by Dr Dick McCaw

'An Imaginary Excursion'

If you visit the *National Resource Centre for Dance (NRCDC)* regularly then you'll hear tales about some of its more frequent visitors. One such story is of Carol-Lynne Moore constructing icosahedra and other solid forms from card and wooden sticks. Moore's experiments were part of her painstaking post-doctoral research into Laban's unpublished writings and drawings that are lodged at *NRCDC* and which form the basis of her extraordinary book on Rudolf Laban.

The first section of her book sets out the thesis that Laban used to think about dance by either drawing or constructing solids to explore the possibilities of movement in space. She notes that apart from the 1200 drawings catalogued in the *NRCDC* archive, there are hundreds more under other headings:

Taken altogether, these materials not only represent the breadth of Laban's graphic work, they also demonstrate how Laban systematically drew upon his first career

in visual art to develop theoretical models of human movement. [...] In this sense, these drawings are explorations of choreutic theory, Laban's systematic examination of the relationship between bodily range of motion and the types of designs a dancer can trace in the surrounding space.¹

In Laban's elliptical autobiography, *A Life for Dance*, he recounts how his first love was art, but when asked to create some tableaux for a local celebratory pageant, he realised that he was more interested in moving than static images. Although these *tableaux vivants* provide a bridge between art and dance, Moore argues that this early art training was not 'an episode of minor importance in a lifetime of more significant accomplishment', but that these hundreds of drawings 'stand in silent testimony to his continued involvement in art as a means for theorizing dance'². She quotes Joan Littlewood's observation that while Laban 'did not want his work intellectualised', paradoxically 'he spent his life on system research', and then adds that this 'systematic research'³, can be traced better through his artwork than through his writings:

These visual models demonstrate a much more consistent approach to theoretical development than most colleagues credit Laban with employing.⁴

In a sense, his continuing production of the drawings could be seen as a counterpart to his life-long struggle to create a script for dance and movement.

Moore makes a crucial distinction: that, for Laban, art was a form of *thinking about* movement, not simply a means of representing it, and she explains how.

In an artist's hands, abstract geometrical concepts become tactile experiences, and shapes are not merely static entities but the culmination of carefully selected actions that impart form to the chosen medium. [...] Dance can be thought of as a moving picture in which the body is viewed against the canvas of space itself. Skills and techniques drawn from academic training and exposure to modern styles proved irrelevant to Laban in exploring themes with which he was preoccupied such as the geometry of the moving body in relation to the geometry of space, time and energy.⁵

In other words, in order to write her book Moore engaged in the same form of practical, plastic research as Laban did, to better understand his form of spatial thinking. This imaginative reconstruction of Laban's theory is the most impressive aspect of her work. She is candid about the challenge and limitations of any act of theorising:

...no theory ever provides a perfect explanation for a material phenomenon or an actual experience. Each theory is always an imaginary excursion, from the known to the unknown. While Laban's theory of harmony has the potential to extend understanding of the coherent nature of human movement, it will not fit in all particulars. Where it is not found to fit, new theory can be generated. It is by these means that knowledge is advanced in any field; dance and movement studies should not be exceptions.⁶

Laban was a pioneer and he has found a student who has been prepared to devote time, thought and energy to create a pioneering work of theoretical construction.

Next follows a history of the problem of representing movement in art. After a discussion of how Leonardo and Dürer wrestled with the representation of the three-dimensional body onto the two-dimensional space of the page she moves forward in time

to Rodin's critique of photography as a misrepresentation of movement since it lacked the dimension of time. While Muybridge was experimenting with *sequences* of stop-frame photographs to understand the nature of human and animal movement, Rodin argued that it is the single artistic image and not photography that more truly represents movement. The photograph is a mechanical reproduction of the spatial displacements of a body, a painting or sculpture is a created composition, an image of movement. Rather than parcelling out separate moments analytically, we experience the movement as a unified gestalt. Rodin explains how in one sculpture, "the eyes are forced to travel upward from the lower limbs to the raised arm, and, as in so doing they find the different parts of the figure represented at successive instants, they have the illusion of beholding the movement performed"⁷; the actual movement of the viewer's eye recreates the sensation of the represented action. The *structure* of the artwork recreates the *sense* of movement.

Moore reminds us that this distinction between the discrete snapshot and the image of continuous movement is at the heart of Laban's conception of movement: he refers to the 'snapshot-like perception of the mind which is able to receive only a single phase of the uninterrupted flux', and goes on warn that 'the sum of such snapshots is, however, not yet the flux itself'⁸. She adds that this 'snapshot-taking aspect of the mind interferes in the apprehension of a reality in which everything flows, everything endures and changes, and life is mobility'⁹. The process of artistic representation involves the selection and arrangement of significant details, creating a structurally unified whole. This process of artistic structuring returns us to Moore's thesis that Laban thought about movement through drawing, thought being the movement of an imaginary eye.

Earlier I quoted Moore: 'Dance can be thought of as a moving picture in which the body is viewed against the canvas of space itself'; now she explains this double representation of the moving figure. On the one hand, we are dealing with the starting posture of the dancer and then the pathway of his or her subsequent movements:

The figural pose simply represents one phase of this action, while the trace-form surrounding the figure maps the ongoing sequence of movements that will follow this first step. Presumably the dance can continue from the depicted starting position by tracing the design that hangs in the air around her body.¹⁰

The 'design that hangs in the air around her body' is an exquisite expression for a trace-form. The other aspect of the double-representation is the 'canvas of space' within which we see the dancer's movement:

When movement is mapped within a geometrical geography, the resulting angles of the trace-forms impose a rhythmic structure on the flowing curves of bodily motion through regularly occurring changes in direction. This is why Laban represents trace-forms as polygons, or, as he puts it, "circles in which there is spatial rhythm, as distinct from time rhythm."¹¹

Following Plato's description in the *Timaeus* of space as a chorâ, as room to be occupied or vacated, Laban considers space as a plastic medium which responds to movement: 'we must not look at the locality simply as an empty room, separated from movement, nor at movement as an occasional happening only ... space is a hidden feature of movement and movement is a visible aspect of space.'¹² This echoes a statement quoted toward the end of the book: that 'movement is man's magic mirror, reflecting and creating the inner life in and by visible trace-forms. And also reflecting and creating the visible trace-forms in and by the inner life.'¹³

Next she tackles the opposition between naturalism and symbolism, two movements that closely overlapped historically. For one, the truth was out there to be observed, catalogued and thus understood (the natural historical approach), for the other, the truth lay beneath the surface. Thus art began to represent the underlying structure and this often took a stylised, even geometrical form. Moore describes how Art Nouveau explored the 'design possibilities of stylization, working with flat surfaces, exploiting the interplay of foreground and background, and creating pattern and ornament through the skilful use of line. In the hands of these artists, "sinuous, sensuous, serpentine ... line defined fluid, attenuated forms, played over surfaces, and created abstract pattern."¹⁴ In the process of abstraction the features of a natural form are streamlined and flattened, certain curves exaggerated, until it bears no resemblance to the original thing.

Through these design processes, Art Nouveau artists escaped from the bonds of realistic depiction, and pioneered techniques that led to the development of abstract art.¹⁵

Albeit in a different key we are still dealing with the tension between three and two dimensional representation in art. We are also returned to her earlier observation that in the hands of an artist like Laban 'geometrical concepts become tactile experiences'. Later in the book she compares the evanescent trace-forms of the danced line, and the lines in visual art which 'can all be viewed simultaneously, creating an enduring gestalt'.¹⁶ Thus the sense of the plastic in movement art and fine art are quite different: one is a remembered action - *memné*, the other an actual shape, *morphé* (terms that Laban used at the beginning of *Die Welt des Tänzers*).

The link between the outer world and the inner experience is made through an act of empathy, which Moore summarises as follows:

The theory of empathy, then, opens the way for an aesthetic subjectivity which is based upon bodily identification of the viewer with formal qualities in the art object. Meaning is not grounded in the extent to which an objet d'art resembles the object depicted. Rather, the potential for meaning resides in the formal qualities of the mode of presentation, which are of necessity more general and more abstract.¹⁷

In a word, the meaning is in the form of the artwork and not the reference to the outside world. Once again, one can see how her theory remains close to Laban's practice and supports her thesis that he thought dance in drawing.

I have followed the first hundred or so pages of this book closely

Review by Anna Carlisle MBE MA

This is a work of methodical research and meticulous scholarship. Inspired by the discovery of hundreds of Laban's unpublished drawings in the *NRCD* archive at *Surrey University*, Moore's doctoral research centred on Laban's theories of *Choreutics*. Post-doctoral research offered the opportunity to examine the somewhat haphazard and incomplete documentation dealing with *Eukinetics* and models of kinetic energy. The discovery of what she calls 'the rosetta stone documents', setting down Laban's mature theory of movement harmony became the springboard for this dense yet lucid publication.

Here, her project aims to articulate the interrelationship and coherence of the multi-faceted strands of Laban's theory of harmonic movement. Her theme, Laban's observation that: "human movement has a harmonic structure analogous to that of music", will not be new to a number of Laban officianados. Nor will the notion that though *Choreutics* and *Eukinetics* can be studied as separate domains, in actuality, they constitute an indivisible field. To date, however, a thorough-going assessment and re-presentation of these ideas has not been attempted. What is refreshing and adventurous about Moore's approach, is her quest to reveal a consistency of logic underlying the complexity of Laban's advanced theories; a quest to translate the material with such clarity of exposition that Laban's contribution to movement research is afforded weight and credibility amongst the contemporaneous plethora of academic publications addressing movement study.

in order to give some indication of the depth and breadth of Moore's scholarship. The central section is a lucid account of choreutics and eukinetics – one you could feel confident in giving to your students since it is so elegantly explained.

The final section deals with the notion of harmony – a concept that resonates throughout Laban's early writings. In his draft translation Jeffrey-Scott Longstaff notes that the 'study of movement *harmony* [...] is one of the overlying themes of *Choreographie*'¹⁸. Moore's claim that Laban thought of movement in relation to music might seem far-fetched but it is borne out in a letter from Laban to his close friend Felicia Sachs written in January 1945:

I don't know if I told you that I have constructed a moving crystal model which shows exactly all planes of numerical sound harmony and at the same [time] the lines and shapes of the most harmonious body movements. It is a funny contraption: everybody likes it, to see and to play with.¹⁹

This is only an anecdote, but it clearly indicates that Laban was interested in musical and movement harmony and Moore's argument gives a much fuller and more detailed argument to support this claim. It is impossible in such a short article to give more than a flavour of this richly illustrated and annotated book. One of its most impressive features is that, at a time when theory is used as 'bling' (self-advertising decoration) in cultural studies and performance studies, here is an example of theorising that has been tempered and tested through practice, and supported by a formidable body of research. The result is a valuable and thought-provoking book.

Dick McCaw

References:

1 Moore 2009: 42 & 46	7 ibid: 78	13 ibid:281
2 ibid: 10	8 ibid: 84	14 ibid:92
3 ibid: 41	9 ibid: 83	15 ibid:92
4 ibid: 41	10 ibid:86	16 ibid:132
5 ibid: 52 & 56	11 ibid:87	17 ibid:94
6 ibid: 6	12 ibid:84-85	18 Longstaff 2000:25
		19 Laban 1945

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Lonstaff, Jeffrey Scott - Introduction to and Draft Translation of *Choreographie* (1926), in the Laban Archive, Trinity Laban
Laban, Rudolf - Letters to Felicia Sachs in the John Hodgson Collection in the Brotherton Library, University of Leeds

In the first half of the book, a revisiting of familiar material is amplified and illuminated by seminal cultural and contextual material. In particular, references to a Bergsonian perspective and to the theories of the *Jugendstil* artists make for fascinating reading.

A sustained and articulate explication of the theory of *Movement Harmony* moves like a red thread through the final sections of the book, leading the reader into innovative territories - Moore's own extension and elaboration of specific concepts aligned to the structures of music and her interpretation in the last chapter of Laban's struggle to reach to the lineaments of bodily action and expression - to explicate the "Harmonic Unity of Form and Energy". A valuable and exciting set of open-ended critiques and questions culminate at the end of this chapter. Moore points to the difficulties which adhere to the reading and translating of Laban's advanced theoretical work; to the lack of empirical evidence brought to substantiate the theories, and in the spirit of Laban's own pioneering genius, she raises a tranche of questions for further research.

This is an ambitious project, prompting serious study and further research. It will also raise critical questions on issues of omission considered by Laban adherents to be crucial to an understanding of his work. For this reader too, the production and presentation of the publication is disappointing. Though the inclusion of artworks and plates of Laban's original drawings are beautiful, the overall presentation does not have the allure of attraction which situates it in the design culture of 2009.

More importantly, for practitioners aware of Laban's insistence on praxis - that visceral, heady and experiential mixture of the alternation and interrelation of theory and practice - a lack of reference to this essential maxim will be seen to be missing. Missing too is a sense of the passion and vitality characteristic of Laban's life-long engagement in the manifestations of action and his unswerving belief in the educational efficacy of practice.

Musicians and composers drawn to the title of the book and to Laban's claim that "between the harmonic life of music and that of dance there is not only a superficial resemblance but a structural congruity" could well be disappointed. There are intriguing sets of propositions to consider in Chapter 7: "Tone, Scale, Interval and Transposition" but the material relating to music is heavily outweighed by the investigations into movement. Perhaps we can look forward here to another book?

A further important omission is mention of the neo-platonic philosophy at the heart of Laban's work. It is well known that the academic world exhibits a nervousness close to the pathological in regard to a consideration of the mystical/esoteric beliefs informing the work of a host of artists and writers of the period. But for Laban - and indeed for many

A few comments about *Living Architecture* by Uma O'Neill MA

We have here a very sophisticated and polished DVD that imparts knowledge to the viewer. Knowledge about Laban, about his beliefs, about Choreutics, about the scales and about what we as a viewer could possibly do with this information.

In the opening part of the DVD Valerie Preston-Dunlop and Anna Carlisle set out what the DVD is for, to draw attention to Laban's Choreutic practice and beliefs, to see what they look like danced and to promote Choreutics for future generations of people to understand, investigate and most importantly experience. The DVD is really a lecture demonstration on film. The questions to be posed are: Does it deliver what it sets out to deliver? Does it spark interest? Is it a useful resource? After watching it are you more knowledgeable about Laban, Choreutics, Spatial Harmony and the Scales?

Living Architecture provides the viewer with background information on Laban the man, historical context, Sacred Geometry and Choreutic practice cleverly weaving a web of interconnections allowing the viewer to grasp how the whole slots into place. The DVD sets out two strands of Choreutic use, the experiential and the choreographic. The choreographic is clearly visible through out the DVD showing an interested viewer how the points or forms can be developed and abstracted for use within choreography. The movement sequences within the DVD are clear, concise, sometimes ethereal, sometimes beautiful, sometimes dynamic but very much designed to promote Choreutics as a "professional" dance aspect. This I feel is a necessity and I am pleased that the material, including the scales, has such a professional look. The choreographic possibilities from the use of Choreutic forms and structures are very clear and come across admirably. It may well inspire a dancer / choreographer to dig deeper.

The interspersed discussions and commentary are also clear and they manage to draw you in. I feel Laban's underlying and underpinning spiritual beliefs in Choreutics comes across well, not at all "hocus pocus" and, I think Anna and Valerie are both to be commended for this achievement. As a viewer the scientific and geometrical thinking behind Choreutics is clearly visible, including the structure of the spatial figures and how it all interrelates in geometrical terms. Even the Golden Mean makes sense! I would urge anyone who has not yet watched the extras on the DVD to do so at the next given opportunity.

My only "niggle" is that everything is seen from the outside, from the view of an observer, as if a member of an audience. I find this problematic, especially as Laban continually affirms one of the most important aspects of Choreutic theory or practice is embodying the movement, living, breathing the experience, being in it. You can quite easily turn around to me and say "well is there any way film could ever give one an insight into living Choreutics?" The answer is possibly, no. But, we could have caught a glimpse. Perhaps we would have been urged to slow the image down,

of the luminaries – Moore' references throughout the book, the tenets of esoteric philosophies, were essential and integral.

Moore is undoubtedly familiar with the metaphysical foundations of Laban's work, but it is clear that she has taken a firm position with regard to the parameters of this hermeneutic explication of Laban theory. She states that:- "Dance and movement studies will never achieve their disciplinary potentials and be recognised as constituting legitimate bodies of knowledge until theoretical bases are better articulated. It is in the interest of furthering these fields that Laban's theory of movement harmony is presented here."

In the fulfilment of this latter aim, she has produced an impressively successful work - a work which constitutes a significant, valuable and much needed contribution to the paucity of scholarship pertaining to Laban's work. In this she has served Laban, the furtherance of his work, and the future well.

Anna Carlisle

stand in our living rooms and follow the dancer on screen, having a go, a taste of being in the ico moving through say, the A scale.

The DVD can be considered as a testament to Laban's Choreutic scales, it shows us what these forms look like when danced by someone else. My problem is that we can only see what it looks like from the distance of the audience, somehow it feels like we are kept a little bit at arms length and not from the perspective of standing in our ico willing to have a go.

This aside, I think *Living Architecture* is a valuable asset, testimony to the importance of Laban's work and a good source of knowledge and evidence. It does deliver, obviously there is so much more than could be included in one DVD. We could all say "Oh, but it does not include this, or, that". I guess, I'm seeing *Living Architecture* as, a choreography. We all understand that a choreographer will make choreographic choices relating to the nexus of the strand of the dance medium; the movement, the performers, the aural setting, the space and how the strands interlink, the flux of their relationships and the web that they create to bind the whole.

In *Living Architecture* the performers are made up of dancers, theorists and a virtual computer generated body. The movement is literal but also symbolic, including the information imparted or images used. The aural setting; created by the music and the commentary. Finally, the space. This space is a virtual one, created out of many spaces. How the themes are layered and where strands cross, parallel and mirror each other are all choreographic choices. *Living Architecture* is a virtual, complex, choreography and I hope it is appreciated as such.

My next hope is that it's only the beginning of such pieces of footage to preserve work that we are in danger of losing. I feel this would be a loss to the whole dance sector. It is imperative that people keep Laban studies alive; this can be done in the real and virtual worlds. Let's face it, doing is always going to be better than seeing or reading, but no method of recording this work should be over looked. Choreutics (the book) inspired me at nineteen. It continues to inspire me today. No doubt it will do so long into my life, but, we do need a body of work for future generations, so that they can "see it in action" and not try to learn it from the page. I was lucky; I had Sheila McGivering to help me understand what was written. In a hundred years time, who will there be to help the nineteen year old decipher the words? Well, there will be Valerie and Anna, even if they are virtual.

Uma O'Neill

Obituaries



Dr Betty Redfern

1923 -2009

(Dr Mollie Davies pens her memories and pays tribute to a wonderful colleague) Ed.

Betty's and my paths first crossed in 1957 at the *Laban Art of Movement Studio* in Surrey, where I was a student and Betty a teacher. Our backgrounds were already rooted in education and now here we were embarked on a very different sort of experience where, to say the least, living was at its most primitive. Betty reminded me recently that there was just one shower for all staff and students and it only produced cold water. With the spartan side of her character to the fore, and illustrating the British love of queuing, Betty waited patiently for her turn to shower while I, to my shame, sidled off to find a private washbasin elsewhere.

If, however, the living conditions were basic the education was rich. Little did we realise just how much those days working together with Rudolf Laban and Lisa Ullmann were to influence both our professional lives and our friendship. We could not have known that we were at the start of such an exciting and innovative era. Or that Laban's ideas and philosophy would one day be applied worldwide across a diverse range of activities including the performing arts, education, notation, personality profiling, therapy and research.

After we left the Studio Betty became increasingly well known as an academic; obtained her doctorate, wrote books, which have become classics of their kind, and contributed to numerous courses and conferences. It is significant that in her 86th year she was held in such high esteem that she was invited to speak at the International Conference celebrating Laban's work fifty years after his death.

Just as Betty's career developed, the *Laban Art of Movement Studio* itself continued to flourish, and on one glorious day in 2003, it officially opened in a new, magnificent building in Deptford, London.

Betty and Anne had been invited to the opening ceremony and arrived earlier that day to stay with me. Just as we were ready to leave for Deptford Betty knocked her leg on my coffee table resulting in a large gash, right through to her shin bone. She clearly needed to get to a hospital but Betty would not hear of it - she was here for the opening and she wasn't going to miss a single moment so we 'first-aided' it as best we could before setting off.

It was a wonderful occasion and as she joined the VIP party Betty was overwhelmed not only by the glorious building, but also by the warm welcome and respect she received as one of Laban's earliest students and teachers. She looked magnificent from head to toe - well, that is if you could manage to ignore the blood gently trickling down her leg. At the end of the celebrations we decided that Betty really must get hospital treatment but that again she would resist so we departed with her thinking we were going home and commenting with interest on the new route we were taking. It was midnight when we arrived at the hospital where, in company with the late night inebriants, we waited in a state of mild hysteria, until Betty emerged with her leg dressed, armed with antibiotics and strict instructions to rest. However, the next morning, rest did not feature on Betty's agenda and she instantly overruled our decision that we should give the Aztecs Exhibition at the Royal Academy a miss. She was really looking forward to it so, as a compromise, the visit was duly made with Betty in a wheelchair issuing Anne with instructions when to push her, when to stop and where to find the best view. It was a novel experience with which to end our celebratory weekend and one which I shall never forget.

There are, of course, many other non Laban contexts in which I shall

always remember Betty. For example, the way in which she travelled through each calendar year highlighting seasonal activities and personal rituals; such as picking strawberries, turning the apples and tomatoes for ripening and sitting, with Xippe on her knee, savouring that last glimpse of the setting sun. She never wasted a moment of daylight just as she never wasted an opportunity to walk her beloved fells. Betty's determination not to waste anything that was precious also applied to her house keeping. And for those of us who teased her about the way in which she measured the exact amount of water needed in her kettle we can rest assured that she had a far better carbon footprint than most of us!

Betty was seasonal too in other ways such as remembering important days and occasions; not just birthdays and Christmas but messages of warmth sent to friends on special anniversaries. And it was not only her friends who were recipients of her generosity but also the many charities that benefited from her goodwill. I remember well one occasion when she called me to discuss Christmas presents and she said 'Mollie how would you like a goat for Christmas'? For one awful moment I panicked - thinking where would I keep it - and it was a few seconds before I realised that she was talking about Oxfam and that she was going to send a goat to Africa on my behalf. From that moment onwards each Christmas we vied with each other as to whether we should send desks, books, lavatories, water - or more goats!

My living and loving memories of Betty range over 52 years and I can't think of any better way of finishing than with the words Betty sent to me on a fridge magnet when a dear friend of mine died eight years ago. I still have that magnet on my fridge. It reads:

*Some people come into our lives and quickly go.
Some stay a while and leave footprints on our hearts,
And we are never, ever, the same'.*

(Schubert)

Mollie Davies



Carolyn Woolridge

1945 - 2009

(Maggie Killingbeck remembers a friend and colleague who achieved 'vast amounts quietly and with humour') Ed.

Carolyn Woolridge and I had been friends and colleagues over a lengthy period. Carolyn had great respect for Laban's work and its value in dance education. She recognised the contribution his work could make to the quality of dance performance, composition and appreciation. In particular she was enthusiastic about the extent to which his analysis enabled dancers to explore movement in order to discover innovative solutions to choreographic problems. Her advocacy for dance generally and her recognition of the value of Laban's work in particular is a great loss.

Carolyn and I first met many years ago whilst studying with Jackie Smith-Autard at Derby. We were both students on Jackie's two year part time Advanced Diploma course. Indeed we worked together on an appreciation assignment which focussed on Jiri Kylian's *Symphony of Psalms*. We were both members of the *National Dance Teachers Association [NDTA]* and as such continued to meet annually. When Carolyn chaired meetings of the *NDTA* Regional Representatives we met more frequently. From 2004 - 2008 she became my External Examiner for the PGCE Dance course at the *University of Bedfordshire* and for the last couple of years I worked with her on the Dance Links

programme. Indeed she popped in to brief the Dance Links team en route to a holiday in France. Carolyn's death is a huge loss to the dance world. She worked tirelessly to uphold standards, lobby for increased time, money and personnel for dance. She achieved vast amounts quietly and with humour. She was always approachable, reliable, passionate, well informed and extremely articulate in the name of dance. Carolyn's contribution to dance and to those involved in dance is to be celebrated. Nonetheless she will be missed.

Maggie Killingbeck



Christa Haring

(1921 - 2009)

(Dr Alan Salter pays tribute to an 'inspiring teacher') Ed.

Particularly through her *City Dance Theatre* in the 1960s, Christa made a worthy contribution to modern dance in this country. Her life was not strewn with good luck - a birthmark, the turmoil of Germany in the 30s and 40s, the hip operations for arthritis which abruptly ended her dance career - but to all matters she brought charm, good spirit and dignity.

Christa trained initially with *Medau* (and was one of the performers at the 1936 Olympics) and after the war came to England as a leading teacher of *Medau* movement, working also with amputees. She studied with Hettie Loman and Sally Archbutt at their Toynbee studio in London in the mid 50s (others included Molly Kenny and Timothy Hext who became enduring friends). Her performances in this *British Dance Theatre* repertoire included for example Hettie's *Catch Me a Hayride* celebrating Laban's 75th birthday.

Out of her own teaching at *City of London College* she developed *City Dance Theatre* which, despite very limited resources, itself began with performances, some at Toynbee, in the early 1960s. Her principal dancers were Alan Salter (also as choreographer and associate director) and the excellent Susan Saunders: those who also continued working in dance included Gwyneth Surdivall, Martin Blogg and Stina Grist. There was cooperation by herself or her dancers with the Leeder School, Lilian Harmel's company, Richmond Operatic and others. At that optimistic period creative dance flourished in schools and colleges of education, though disparaged by the ballet establishment dominant in theatre and public support.

Christa was a fine, inspiring teacher and a most capable choreographer, naturally at home with the lyrical but also composing well crafted dramatic and humorous works and a series of powerfully atmospheric pieces, some as solos. Her larger choreographies included *Prelude* (Scarlatti), *Tyl Eulenspiegel* (Strauss), *The Yoke* (Bartok) and *Contacts* (Lasry-Baschet). The movement invention had a quality of human expressiveness rather than intellectual contrivance, and staging and design contributed importantly. None of these works survive (though an experimental short film *Triad*, director Paul Nicholson, probably exists).

In later life she took up singing, operatic and choral (with the White Eagle community for whom she also wrote stories), and married (and was widowed as Christa Forbes). Settled in Petersfield, she maintained good friendships to the end.

A delightful person and a serious artist, Christa was part of an exciting period of European movement and dance that is now passing beyond living memory.

Alan Salter



Miriam Osborn

(Nancy Smith, former Senior Adviser, Wakefield Metropolitan District L.E.A., pays tribute to Laban Guild member Miriam Osborn - former H.M.I., with 'special responsibility for dance').

In August 2009 the death of retired H.M.I. Miss Miriam Osborn was announced and many *Laban Guild* members will have happy memories of Miriam as a friend and colleague.

Within the team of Physical Education Inspectors Miriam had special responsibility for Dance and her influence at the residential in-service courses run my H.M.I. at *Woolley Hall* and other centres was acknowledged by her colleagues and other course members for its clarity and thought-provoking style.

Miriam's initial training, from 1944 to 1947, was at the *Bergman Osterberg College (Dartford College of Physical Education)* where the rigour of the course, both physical and intellectual, was a sound basis for her varied career which followed,

By 1951, following four happy years as a resident staff member of *Cheadle Hulme School*, Miriam was already training teachers as a Lecturer on the staff of *Ripon Training College*. She introduced her students to the human movement principles of Rudolf Laban - applicable to both functional and expressive aspects of human movement; her students saw this as an interdisciplinary study. Work in drama, music and language was associated, and, through Miriam's teaching style, even young children in Infant and Junior Schools came to understand and describe their own movement sequences and, by careful observation, those of other children too. On occasions some Primary School children were known to describe the movement habits of their teachers and other adults by using Laban's terms.

In her next post as a *Local Education Authority* Adviser, and at a time of financial stringency, Miriam was successful in persuading the *Wakefield City Education Committee* to equip all its Primary Schools with advanced equipment for P.E. in school halls. She then ran in-service courses for all the 'generalist' teachers in the *L.E.A.* thus extending the skills and confidence of both staff and children.

Miriam's next appointment was to the staff of *Bretton Hall College* in the *West Riding L.E.A.* Students were trained for Primary and Secondary teaching with a particular emphasis on the Arts including Dance. This creative atmosphere was attractive to Miriam as staff from disciplines worked together in shared and cross-curricular projects. This model gave students practical insights to teaching methods both as learners and teachers.

A one-year secondment to the *Art of Movement Studio*, then under the direction of Lisa Ullmann, was a period of great professional nourishment for Miriam, particularly as she chose to couple it with a part-time course in Philosophy at *London University* led by Professor R S Peters.

Miriam's final post as H.M.I. took her on inspections to schools of all kinds in England and to the Army Schools based in Germany. She particularly enjoyed the teacher-training aspects of the work which, at that time, was part of the H.M.I. role. She retired in 1984 and continued to live near Richmond, North Yorkshire, keeping contact with many former colleagues and with the *Laban Guild*.

Nancy Smith

"why do you go on doing it, when it is so much work?"
"isn't it time you sat back and relaxed?"

"is it really worth giving out so much energy for a small group of people?"

These are challenges we have met over the last few years, but we soldiered on, our mission undimmed, to keep Laban knowledge and experience alive and well - until 2008, when we brought L.in.C to a close after 30 years under our sole administration. We were sad and sorry, but it really was too much work for just the two of us. We found it hard to face people not being able to commit themselves until the last minute, finding that we had to pass on to delegates steeply rising costs. The only people offering bursaries, to bring into the fold enthusiastic students or newly qualified movers, were ourselves. We were finding that if we were to develop as marketeers we would need to unravel the mysteries of *Twitters*, *Blogs*, *Facebook* and the design side of computing. We knew our end had come!

As Guild members will know, support appeared to keep the mission in sight. With the help of our German and Italian colleagues we were re-born as *L.in.CC* - *L.in.C in Continuation*. We know it is the right thing to do, to keep the opportunity alive for a residential Laban dance Course in which a community is formed for releasing creative energy, love and the opportunity to be together in all sorts of ways.

... this week has brought me back to my roots, has connected myself to this precious feeling, that dancing is an expression of life force. (1)

This is our mission. We know that through the growing understanding of ourselves, gained through awareness of our body, its dynamic expression, its journeys in, through and around its surrounding space, its communication with others in many different ways, we can find a way to touch that special energy that makes life worth living. When we do that for ourselves we can then share it with others.

... the challenge of physical existence is to gather as much life as we can, express it vibrantly in the short span of time allotted to us". (2)

This our Italian Adventurers certainly did. They danced, they swam, they walked, they relaxed, they talked, they gave themselves creative tasks, they meditated and they had a lot of FUN.

Greetings from a "still glowing Labanite in Italy". I'm back home to a fairly grey Ireland with lots of sunny memories: dancing the landscape with Wendy; whirling round the Pavilion with Rosie; belly-laughing with Mitch; a great sense of achievement as I was shown by Susi the beautiful movement possibilities of a spatial scale; the completeness and sense of oneness in Sam's movement choir; Darrell's infectious enthusiasm for dance and life in general! (3)

We had representatives from Austria, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, Switzerland, the UK.

Our two beautiful dancing spaces were round, tucked away in cool surroundings - the Pavillion and the Dome. The Dome was the smaller space and sound vibrated in it most amazingly. The Pavilion could hold all of us together for the Movement Choir which we learnt, practised and performed all in one day under Sam's able guidance with assistance from Wendy and Susi.

Sally Archbutt's inspiring articles in the Guild magazine plus the DVD *Living Architecture* was the stimulus for our space programme exploring the background scales which make up some of the 'mixed 7 rings'. This led to some beautiful creative work. The Effort programme was self-chosen by delegates by responding to a fascinating Japanese pianist, Ushida, - considering 'making an effort'; following 'elemental energies' and considering 'the place of effort in the art of acting'. Choice Topics were still part of the week's work, led by Wendy (Hermelin), Rosie (Manton) and Mitch (Mitchelson) and delegates could sample every programme, repeat a programme or 'be on holiday'.

Part of our mission has been to invite younger tutors to come and experience the way we work. This year Darrell Aldridge joined us and slipped into being a Labanite without any problems whatsoever. His enthusiasm was infectious, his body beautiful to watch and he led thorough and fluid bodywork each morning.

Letter from LInCC (Laban International Courses in Continuation)

... that one week in Italy has given me so much energy and hope for the future, it's hard to put down in words ... I want it to develop ... it would be great to branch out and see if we can bring together the world of therapy (initial emphasis of body), theatre (effort) business (shape) and dance (space)(4).

A new venture inspired by the magnificent setting of *Centro D'Ompio* was Creation Time. Delegates were invited to take risks, be spontaneous, listen to their heart beat, be patient for the tremblings of inspiration and find the Artist Within. It was an opportunity to wander alone amongst nature, 'to stop and stare', to remain in the 'here and now' moment.

... I found a hollow trunk - as I remained with it, the hollow became a receptacle for me, crying out to be filled. I searched for branches of various kinds and began to create my 'branch display.' Each day I added something, making connections as one touched another, finding ways of entwining, making bridges, going over and under. I was engrossed. I wanted others to share it with me ... I invited them to come and see, add something, make more connections." (5)

On the Sharing afternoon we were enriched by what was given to us by these artists - events that held us, moved us, made us see things in a new way. We were all truly blessed.

... This Laban Week was an wonderful inspiration for me. I had a performance one month later and the Creation Project gave me some ideas - so I could do my best performance ever. The Themes from the Creation Project opened my minds and so I could improvise with all my senses. It had given an synchronisation with the others - the ovie - the sculptures - and me.(6)

This fantastic day ended with a glorious bonfire and an amazing 'Happening.' Darrell showed us more of his talents in creating the magnificent blaze.

We had to have an outing - to go and visit Lake Orta which we

looked at every day from our bedrooms, or the terrace. Some walked down to Pettanasco, others were driven, meeting up at the place where we boarded the boat to the island housing a church, a monastery and a living community. We then went back to the mainland for a jolly meal at the Pizzeria. Kirsten, our Italian colleague, had arranged lake-side tables for us. We had enjoyed terrific food at Centro but some of us were really ready to fall upon some meat or fish! A much smaller party walked back but we met up on the Centro terrace to round off the evening.



Another high-spot of the week must be the disco. Centro put up lights, supplied powerful speakers and very stimulating music which got everyone onto their feet and kept some of the delegates still dancing at 3.00 a.m. Some of you Guild members will still remember the old days at Dartford and how we used to dance like that every night till the wee small hours - how did we do it?



We are convinced that now you know it is an amazing place, that we had a wonderful time dancing and being on holiday - we worked until 1.00pm and then a break until 4.15 so in that time you could sunbathe, swim in the blue pool, just let yourself go - YOU will want to come and join us on another occasion. That will be August 2011 as there are no summer weeks available at Centro D'Ompio in 2010 - only one week June 13-20 in 2010. If you have an interest in going there and June is a possibility for you, please let us know straightaway - if there is enough support we will follow this up.

It was such a lovely venue; beautiful work spaces, quiet wooded pathways, tranquil views of mountains and lake ... who wouldn't want to dance in a place like that! (7)

My husband Uli told me with enthusiasm about the Laban Courses he had attended and of the spirit of the teachers. Now I understand what he meant - I have known the great potential and the spirit of the Laban System (as shared at

Laban Guild Training Committee Report

The Autumn term has seen the start of the tutor-training days for tutors and potential tutors on the revised *Dance Leaders Course*. These are conducted by the Chair of the *Training Committee* - Janet Lunn and the Courses Officer - Ann Ward; needless to say, all members of the committee are involved at every stage of this training. Each day also includes generic sessions taken by senior tutors of the Guild; Sheila McGivering in Chester, Walli Meier in Suffolk and, yet to come, Susi Thornton in Surrey.

The uptake has been good and the discussions and feedback invaluable. The days are totally interactive and all tutors have been able to comment and advise on suggested revisions. Further discussions have followed and we are particularly grateful to Pamela Harling Challis for giving up extra time to advise us in the light of her experience in setting up courses for validation.

Ann Ward is a member of the *Foundation for Community Dance* working party for establishing standards for community dance practitioners and all advice and experience from both tutors and course members helps us in this process.

We are looking forward to the training day in Surrey in the Spring when we hope to welcome more members of the Phoenix group onto our tutoring team. Plans for new courses in Suffolk and

LinCC). (8)

This leaves us with where do we go in 2010? The Italian Labanites have been primed to search in their own countries. Perhaps Guild members have been to centres in the UK that they could recommend. We need two decent dancing spaces and accommodation though it could be self catering. A suggestion was put forward at one of the sharing meals that we need super-delegates in each country to spread the word and follow up after the Course with get-togethers and dancing together opportunities. Who would like to offer themselves for this role?

Guild members - how have you survived without your dancing week this year - don't deprive yourself in 2010. **We need helpers though for this Project else Sam and I will have to disappear.** Guild members voted overwhelmingly that the concept of the residential dance community should continue so please do what you can to ensure it does. If you want to know what is needed then just write or email us - we have a long list!

Susi Thornton

susi@laban-courses.co.uk

Ivy Cottage, Clockhouse Lane East, Egham, Surrey, TW20 8PF

References:

- (1) Angelika Wolf Voegelé - Austria
- (2) Emmy Duerzen Smith - "Everyday Mysteries"
- (3) Sylvia Lyle - Northern Ireland
- (4) Darrell Aldridge - UK
- (5) Susi Thornton - UK
- (6) Carola Schmidt Goeke - Switzerland
- (7) Sylvia Lyle
- (8) Carola Schmidt Goeke

PS. Just to let Guild members know that we have started a short course for Movement Choir facilitation. We will be offering a Movement Choir led by the group in the Spring/early Summer. A training week-end has been booked in February 2010. We will publish the date as soon as we can.

Sussex have had to be put on hold while we review our publicity in order to achieve more interest - we have people who know about the work who are really eager to see the courses run, but we need to reach those who are as yet unaware of our work. Any advice from members in these areas would be welcome.

We are, however, delighted to have been asked to provide another course for *Kildare Co. Council* in Ireland. Once an agency has experienced the benefits of hosting our course, they are usually very keen to continue their association with the *Guild*. This course is planned to start in May 2010 with a practical information day on 20 March. For further details, please contact the Courses Officer, as below.

If you are looking for schemes of work as an alternative to *GCSE Dance* or for after school clubs or similar, do contact the Courses Officer for details of our *Foundation Course* and *Certificated Courses* for children, relating to pre-school and key stages 1, 2, and 3.

For any queries or suggestions, please contact Ann Ward, Courses Officer annonhols@yahoo.co.uk

Ann Ward

Laban Guild Council Report

Council has been extremely busy since the last edition of the magazine. Time and energy has been devoted to restructuring Council in order to increase efficiency; the formation of more sub-committees, it is hoped, will make a significant contribution in this regard. Each sub-committee: *Youth, Drama, AGM & Conferences, Training, Research & Development, Laban in Places, Operational and Communication* has a nominated representative and each is working on a three year development plan.

Much discussion has been focused on the forthcoming AGM at Roehampton in March 20th entitled 'Movement and Meaning - Laban makes the difference'. This promises to be an inspiring and stimulating day with significant contributions from Dr Marion North, Michael Platt and Alison Curtis-Jones.

Following the success of the *Phoenix Project*, Council members are keen to organise a Summer School utilising the expertise of the Phoenix practitioners. Whilst plans are still fluid Council feels that this is an appropriate development and one that promises to be a rewarding experience for all involved.

Currently, the marketing sub-committee is working on redesigning the Guild's website.

Council are still debating a change of name. Convincing arguments have been made for and against maintaining the word 'Guild'. Many alternative suggestions have been made but as of yet no decision has been made. Council will keep the membership informed with regard to progress with this.

At our last Council meeting we were honoured and privileged to be joined by Dr Marion North. She kindly offered her time to help Council evaluate current progress and identify future priorities. This was extremely valuable and renewed Council's determination to sustain its drive and vigour in order to further Laban's work. Dr North suggested that, currently Council is trying to do too much given the size of the organisation and its dependence on volunteers, most of whom work full-time. This being the case, in its strategic planning, Council intends to balance ambition with pragmatism.

Mary Cormack

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Diary of Events

Laban Guild

Sat 27th February

MOVING WORDS a Drama Sub-committee workshop at RADA - A practical workshop using Laban Principles and Techniques to explore Text.

Saturday 20th March

LABAN GUILD AGM & CONFERENCE

Movement and Meaning: Laban Makes the Difference

Froebel College Roehampton Lane

For more information contact Sadie Hunt on sadiejam@hotmail.co.uk or download a booking form from www.labanguild.org

Saturday 20th March

Practical Information Day at NUI Maynooth for the next

Laban Guild Dance Leaders Course, hosted by Kildare

County Council Arts Service, Ireland, starting in May 2010.

For further information, please contact Nicola at nmdunne@kildarecoco.ie or

Ann Ward at awardglenkeen@bigfoot.com

Laban Courses in Bratislava

For more information go to: www.lab1.sk

LABAN Creekside listings

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

London

The Place

Box Office 020 7121 1100

RESOLUTION! 2010

Throughout January and February

Wednesday 13th January

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR BEING GOOD

Shunt Dance Company

Sadler's Wells

Box Office 0844 412 4300

Peacock Theatre

Until 10 January

THE SNOWMAN

Until 24 January

MATTHEW BOURNE'S SWAN LAKE

30 March to 11 April

Ballet Nationale de Cuba

London Coliseum

14 – 17 April

MARK MORRIS DANCE COMPANY

20 – 24 April

BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET

Regional

Cambridge Arts Theatre

Box Office 01223 503333

Mon 25 – Sat 30 Jan, THE 39 STEPS

The West End and Broadway sensation

Mon 22 – Sat 27 Feb, MY WONDERFUL DAY

Alan Ayckbourn's new comedy

Mon 22 – Sat 27 March, WIFE AFTER DEATH

Tom Conti starts in this hilarious new Eric Chappell play.

Fri 9 – Sat 10 April, BALLET BLACK

New work from Robert Hylton, Christopher Hampson and Henri Oguike.

Chichester, Minerva Theatre

Box Office 01243 781312

Thurs 4 & Fri 5 February £15

Motionhouse, SCATTERED

Scattered explores the amazing in the everyday in a meteor shower of unlikely moments combining Motionhouse's trademark highly physical dance theatre and mesmerizing

aerial imagery in a unique interaction between film and live performance

Wed 10, 7.45, £12

MAPDANCE – the University of Chichester MA students

One of Britain's most outstanding and unique choreographers, **Shobana Jeyasingh** uses influences from a range of contemporary and South Asian dance styles, mixing dynamic power with articulate gestures

Chipping Norton, The Theatre

Box office 01608 642350

Wed – Sat 13 Feb, 7.45pm, AFTER THE FALL

The Oxford School of Drama

Oxford, Playhouse

Box Office 01865 305305

Wed 6 Jan, ONE SMALL STEP

Gearing up for the world tour

Tues 12 – Thurs 14 Jan, THE SECRET LOVE LIFE OF

OPHELIA

Tues 23 – Sat 27 March, ANTIGONE

The Oxford Theatre Guild

Sun 28 March, ONCE UPON A DANCE

Tac-au-Tac Dance Theatre

Norwich, Playhouse

Box Office 01603 598598

Tues 19 – Sat 23 Jan MAN IS MAN

The Threepenny Opera perform one of Bertolt Brechts most powerful and funniest plays.

Fri 5 – Sat 6 March

ACE Dance and Music, SWITCH

Tues 16 – Wed 17 March

A Midsummer Nights Dream

Sat 27 March

Earnest and The Pale Moon

A chilling and atmospheric play

Northampton, Royal Derngate Box Office 01604 624811

www.royalalnderngate.co.uk

Fri 15 Jan ANTON AND ERIN STEPPING OUT at Derngate

Tues 19 – Sat 23 Jan MOSCOW CITY BALLET at Derngate

Tues 23 – Wed 24 March RICHARD ALSTON DANCE

COMPANY at Derngate

Salford, The Lowry

Box Office 0870 787 5780

Sun 31 Jan, £10 SHIVOHAMBY

Indian dance by Swah Raut

Thurs 4 Feb, £16 - £24 BAHOK

Akram Khan Dance Company

Tues 9 – Wed 10 Feb, £14 SCATTERED

Motionhouse

Mon 8 March, £16 BALLETTYOYZ PRESENT THE TALENT

A first rate company of male dancers

Mon 26 April, TRUST

Ad Hoc Dance Company

Tues 27 April, CANDOCO

Wed 28 – Fri 30 April EXTRA ORDINARY

Acclaimed actor and dancer David Toole partners Lucy Hind in this funny, moving and satirical duet.

Sheffield, Theatre Trust

Tues 26 Jan, THE LAND OF YES AND THE LAND OF NO

Bonachela Dance Company, £10 - £17.50

Lyceum Theatre

Mon 22 – Wed 24 March, TRACES

A high energy urban acrobatic display

£15 - £22

