Movement, Dance & Drama

2016
70th Anniversary
of the
Laban Guild
for Movement and Dance

AGM 2016 - Celebrating the Guild's 70th anniversary at Trinity Laban, Creekside on 2nd April

Elements of Analysis in Dance Making and Reconstruction



Laban Lecturer: Maggie Killingbeck

Workshops:

Alison Curtis-Jones - based on Laban's analysis in performance using her work in recreations

Lea Anderson - based on her work with Mary Wigman's choreographies

Guest speakers:

Ann Hutchinson-Guest Susi and Sam Thornton Walli Meier Gordon Curl

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Editorial

2016 is the 70th year since the founding of the Laban Guild and we shall be marking this in the magazines throughout the year. In this edition we focus on Laban's work in the theatre re-printing seminal articles from past magazines on this subject together with new articles on how Laban's theatre work is being explored currently. It is excellent to see the work of key practitioners, such as Warren Lamb, Geraldine Stephenson and Valerie Preston Dunlop, brought together in this way.

I hope it will be of interest to read Laban's address to the first Annual General Meeting of the Guild in August 1947 and the response from Anna Carlisle on how the Guild continues to respond to Laban's aims, advice and hopes: Maggie Killingbeck's report as Chair of the Guild is a timely reminder of all the work that goes on, both publicly and privately, to support the Guild's activities.

Happy reading,

Clare Lidbury

After her years working in the Dance Department at Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, USA - Vera Maletic died peacefully on October 15

An obituary will be published in our Summer issue. f any Guild member has recollections they would like to share, please contact: susi@thorntonclan.com

Sally Archbutt MPhil

Our Guild President, Anna Carlisle MBE and our Chair Maggie Killingbeck together with all Officers and Members of the Guild, wish to congratulate Sally Archbutt firstly on her election by Council to an Honorary Membership and secondly on her 90th birthday which took place on 29th January.

Following classes in ballet, training at Bedford College of Physical Education, Modern Dance Holiday Courses and then full-time at the Art of Movement Studio in Manchester, Sally has had a distinguished career as a dancer, teacher, notator, writer and dance administrator. She was elected a Fellow of the International Council for Kinetography Laban (ICKL) and became a Principal Dancer, Notator and Co-Director of the British Dance Theatre and Hettie Loman Theatre, and Co-**Director of Comtemporary Dance** Theatre Toynbee Hall and Centre for Dance and Related Arts, Croydon.

For many years Sally was Principal Lecturer and inspired teacher and Head of Dance at Nonington College of Physical Education where she worked closely with choreographer Hettie Loman, former Director of, and choreographer for, British Dance Theatre. Hettie - a former Guild member - took her Diploma and worked with Laban at the Art of Movement Studio in Manchester before joining the staff with Sally at Nonington College.

As a colleague of Sally's I witnessed many of the large-scale dance productions at Nonington and in London Theatres which Sally directed and Hettie Loman choreographed; they were memorable occasions.

The seminal contributions

wider world of theatre dance - with a strong conviction for disciplined dance training. Her critical mind has always been a sharp reminder to her students that easy acquiescence in current assumptions was to be eschewed in favour of clear observation of the bigger picture of dance as an art form with its related arts.

We wish Sally many more years of fruitful involvement in Guild affairs as an Honorary Member - with her wideranging knowledge and fascination for dance, which (to use her own words) is 'the love of my life'.

Gordon Curl

Vera Maletic

2015 aged 87.

Sally also assisted Lisa Ullmann and Ellinor Hinks with the cataloguing of the Laban Archives which were subsequently deposited at the National Resource Centre for Dance.

and influence of Sally within the Guild are not difficult to see in past Guild magazines with: detailed analyses and intricate drawings of Choreutics; penetrating reviews of dance publications; perceptive Questiontimes on Labanotation; and knowledgeable surveys of the Guild's history. Sally has never subscribed to the notion that the Guild was in some way a mutual admiration society nor that Laban's work was 'set in stone'. On the contrary, she has always looked ahead to modes of development of Laban's work and to see how it relates to the

> The trend of our time is, indeed, to foster the awakening interest concentrated mainly on industrial operations. In education we can confidently say it has led to acceptance of the necessity for training of the "body-mind", while in art the growing enthusiasm points to, what may be called, the renaissance of dance.

Meeting in Chichester on 27th August 1947 As I have the honour to be your life-long President, I am here today to welcome you at this, our first General Meeting.

Rudolf Laban's address to the First Annual General

I think first of all I would like to remind you of the aims of the Association as they are set out in the Constitution:

"To establish the status of teachers and practitioners of the Art of Movement, whether in connection with education, industry or art.

"To foster the exchange of ideas and experiences of those interested and engaged in this work, and to publish any records which may be of general interest to the community.

"To inspire inquiry and research into the field of Effort-Training as used in education, industry and art, as well as the Art of Movement.

"To put into effect any practical measures likely to further the ideas of the Guild.

"To collaborate with appropriate national and international Associations or to institute work of an international character when and where it appears opportune."

Our progress an as Association is dependent upon the continual study of the Science of Movement and appreciation of the need for systematic movement training in all walks of life.

If we look back over the history of human civilization it reveals the rhythm of periods of enthusiasm for the cultivation of movement study, alternating with periods of disinterest and neglect. I will mention in this connection, Jean George Noverre, who, as early as the 18th century, had visions of dispensing with all the artificialities and cramping formalities of movement of his time as he saw it in the dances of the Court circles. He told his pupils to go into the streets and market squares to watch the people in their everyday actions. He was not able to achieve his purpose fully, but he struggled, all those years ago, to reach an understanding of the importance of movement which we ourselves approach today.

Many of you, I am sure, would like to hear how this Guild came to be formed. A small group of teachers met together under the direction of Miss Ullmann, to study over a long period, the new approach to movement training. They were joined by industrialists interested in training workmen, and in the observation of industrial rhythm. Then theatrical artists, actors, amateurs and producers paid increasing attention to the recent discoveries in modern movement research. This nucleus of interested people felt the need to form a professional association, both to safeguard the standard of work and as a means of spreading the study of the art of movement in this country. And so a Guild has been formed of people working in these different fields of activities.

I have been asked to give the Guild my name. because of my share in the discovery of the new approach to movement and its use for practical purposes in all these fields. I have warned the Council members that a living man is all too apt to err and to develop, so that his personal opinions might not serve as a definite basis for principles. The first condition of my collaboration is, that you must grant me the privilege to continue to try, and to err, because trial and error is the basis of all healthy development.

I think the first step towards the achievement of the aims of the Guild is an impartial consideration of all trends in the cultivations of movement which can be based on past achievement. The second is an equally impartial acceptance of all contributions towards the future development of the cultivation of movement. Looking back we see a very valuable tradition of historical dance,





Sally Archbutt in A Marriage has been Arranged Choreographed by Hettie Loman British Dance Theatre 1950

which we shall always treasure. We see also early investigations of the role of movement in educational methods. In the organisation of work, the traditional form of time and motion study can give a lead to further development. Today, there is a general endeavour to adapt these traditions and methods to present day needs. In the future we must be sure that these developments keep pace with time and so we must not limit our vision by narrow preconceptions and prejudices.

The development of dance notation will be, perhaps, a good illustration of what I mean. As you know this kind of notation was initiated as early as the fifteenth century. To that simple beginning, and its growth throughout the centuries, I contributed my notation in a form suited to present day needs in education, art and industry.

During the war it was impossible to keep in touch with all the branches of these activities. which have been established in all parts of the world. They did not fade away but went on living, developing. The presence of Ann Hutchinson at this meeting is a testimony to this. The other night. the told us of the recent developments in Laban Notation in America, and we in our turn, are telling her about the modifications and alterations we have found necessary in the intervening years. It happens that we have happily developed on very similar lines which shows the logicality of this method of notation. Ann Hutchinson has already told you the extent to which dance notation has been put to use in recording such ballets as "The Green Table" and such alterations as they have made have arisen from practical needs of the work in America.

Another example can be seen in the early Motion Study which I have developed into what we now call Industrial Rhythm. This new form of work research has also its notation derived from dance notation. In the new form of movement control in which this notation is used the factors of our rapidly growing industrial civilisation have been taken carefully into consideration. Growth consists of a continuous flux and adaptations to new needs makes any stagnation of methods impossible.

All schools or styles of dance in which the basic rules of organised body-mind movement are used should be accepted in our circle without bias, whether they spring from ballet, modern dance in Europe, modern dance in America, acrobatic, or exotic dance. This principle must also guide us in accepting all schools of motion study in industry and also in the various forms of movement study in schools.

I feel it to be my personal task in all these affairs to smooth out differences in the various camps and to stress the importance of he common denominator of movement. This principle will also guide me in my contribution, as President of the Guild.

Yet another of my tasks is to help, though my international and inter-occupational connections to spread the work of the Guild. This I have already started to some extent, during my last trip to the continent. Bearing these principles in mind I must again emphasise the need for an objective and impartial consideration of all groups so that the Guild may be a centre of encouragement for the people who are dealing with all aspects of movement. Besides the furtherance of skill and healthy use of movement, there are certain forms of welfare work directed towards rehabilitation, in which modern effort training has been applied. Doctors and nurses have also profited from the knowledge gained in contemporary movement research. Other fields of human activity, which can profit from modern movement research have to be explored.

A further principle, which may sometimes be overlooked, is that the Guild shall not undertake any profit-making courses or schools or enterprises of any kind, nor shall it directly advertise any special method. You will realise that it is thus impossible for any officer of the Guild or its name-giver, to use the Association for the promotion of personal material advantage. As for myself, I look upon my activity as a freelance artist and research worker, who, for many years, has not had a private school or a fixed method of teaching. In my lectures given impartially to such widely differentiated audiences as ballet dancers, modern dance experts, engineers, accountants, workmen, managers, doctors, etc., I stress the central interest which movement has in our time, in all its practical aspects.

I feel this viewpoint could be a guiding principle for the Guild and it is in this sense that I am ready to accept the great honour to be your life-long President and to associate my name with your organisation.

Rudolf Laban



The President's Address, 1947 A response from the current President, *Anna Carlisle*



Laban's first address to the Guild was written at a time in post-war Britain when the nation was struggling to emerge from the devastation of the Second World War. Yet there was hope in the air for the future - an expectation of renovation, innovation and social and political change. Laban was fortunate; his ideas resonated with the push towards modernism, towards Progressive education and cultural innovation. Between his arrival in England in 1938 and the inception of the Laban Art of Movement Guild, his work had begun to make a small-scale impact on dance education, the theatre, therapy and industry. The climate then was set for the creation of a formal organisation to act as a focus for the many people inspired, interested and engaged in his work. In the spring of 1946, the Laban Art of Movement Guild was born and Laban was elected as its life-long president. His first address to the Guild sets down the aims of the Constitution, his directives, hopes and advice for the future.

This year we celebrate the 70th anniversary of this organisation. The changes that have carried us into the secular, technological and multicultural society we know today could not be envisaged in that post-war period. How have they impacted on the history of the Guild? Has the Association been able to hold true to Laban's original aims and directives for the future?

What has changed is the name of the Association for in the early 1990s, with a falling membership (due to a complexity of reasons), Laban's work was viewed to be both out of date and limited in the field of Dance as an Art form. It was considered by Council that the title, 'The Laban Guild for Movement and Dance' would be more descriptive and accessible in the contemporary climate.

What has not changed significantly is the drive over this 70-year span, to encourage the exchange of ideas and the promotion of Laban's work through workshops, summer schools, conferences, training courses and the tri-annual publication of the Guild magazine. Albeit packed with a rich range of material, the early Guild magazines were modest editions of paper booklets.

Today the Guild magazine, developed by gifted editors, collators and advisors, is a publication its members can be proud of. Reflecting the huge growth in technology the Guild also has a website and a monthly e-flash which publicises current events, courses and reports of Laban related activities, while young members of Council maintain Laban's profile on social media such as Twitter and Facebook.

Laban's aim that the Guild should collaborate with national and international organisations was realised in 2008 when collaboration with the American organisation, Motus Humanus, was initiated. Set up by Carol Lynne Moore, a colleague of Warren Lamb and a leader in the field of Movement Pattern Analysis, Motus Humanus hold a group Guild membership and send material for the magazine on conferences, courses and research findings. In addition, there has been collaboration and funding support from the University of Bedford for summer schools and research projects, and from TrinityLABAN and the University of Surrey for the Guild's traditional annual AGM conferences.

For many years, a strong connection with Laban's work and ideas for the value of Community Dance has been ongoing in Northern Ireland and Eire. Introductory and developmental courses have inspired many participants to apply his work to the fields of Community Dance and Therapy. In particular, Kildare County Council has been instrumental in a sustained hosting and funding of courses since 2007.

It is important to remember that over the past 70 years countless people have worked, and are working, in a voluntary capacity to keep Laban's work and invaluable legacy alive. As President of the Guild, and on behalf of the Guild Council, we extend thanks to all those who have been, and are, dedicated to this aim. Particular thanks are due to those who have worked on the most current initiative - a major Heritage Lottery Bid designed to ensure that Laban's work will be promoted, reactivated and sustained for the future.

The Extraordinary Thing Laban Gave to the Dance Mary Wigman

Movement - in all its possibilities and varieties, in its utmost simplicity as well as in its intricate extravagance, in its natural appearance and in its symbolic abstractions. In its spontaneous outbursts and its controlled functions - movement, and movement again - that is the extraordinary thing Laban gave back to the dance, so that once more we can understand and experience it, can read, write and speak it as an artistic language of its own.

When, over half a century ago, Laban started his work in practical and theoretical research, the traditional dance, the classical ballet, had become somewhat tired and even a bit dusty. Steps and positions in more or less artificial combinations were fixed and polished to such a degree that dance had become hardly more than a convention. The original qualities, the deeper sense: to move and be moved, seemed to have gone out of it and to be lost for ever.

Though Laban had thoroughly studied the discipline of the ballet and even used the five classical positions as a starting point for his special research, he never based his ideas on their typical forms. His interest was focused on the human being and the human body. So he went back to the very roots of dancing, or better, to life itself from where dance sprang.

What else is movement but the living breath which, when made visible through the human body, helps the dancer to find out about the qualities of his naturally given motions and emotions? Helps him to discover the deeply rooted relationship between the utmost contrasts, between tension and relaxation, between strength and delicacy, activity and passivity; and helps him to climb up, step by step, the steep hill where movement undergoes the change from everyday use and expression to dance gesture and dance form, where individual outlet is surpassed by its super-personal symbols in time and space, and there becomes: dance.

Movement is the one and only material of the dance. In developing and mastering its spiritual and emotional values as well as its organic functions, the dancer is enabled to build up his own body, so that it becomes what it should be: the ideal instrument of the dance. Dance is born out of movement and irrevocably bound to it.

Therefore it should not even in its utmost abstractions lose the stronghold of this, its



Witch Dance choreographed and perfomed by Mary Wigman

origin. If its sense and meaning are kept alive and pure, the language of the dance can be understood by everybody.

This is what Laban gave and taught us. And though there were other people who worked more or less in the same directions, it was Laban who out of his complete vision rounded it all up and, from playful

jest to hard professional work, from recreation and adjustment to the art of dance itself, opened up the tremendous field of movement to all those who wanted and needed to move or to become what nature hall meant them to be; dancers.

The dancer of today takes all this for granted. Not having been a witness of the late dance evolution himself, he does not know whom he has to thank for it.

He should be reminded, from time to time, that it was Laban who, like an ingenious gardener, fertilised the soil for him so that, to whatever discipline of the dance he might belong and believe in, he can stand, work, dance solidly on it, and may gather the ripening fruit.



Rudolf Laban Man of Theatre

Laban Lecture 2012. Dr Valerie Preston-Dunlop

It was January 1985 when I spoke with Lisa Ullmann. It was the last day of her life, she in a hospital bed. I shared with her the need to rediscover Laban's career as a man of theatre in Germany for we knew almost nothing about it. Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Merce Cunningham were household names in dance. American names, American pioneers. Laban as the European pioneer had been overlooked catastrophically annihilated when he fell foul of the Third Reich in 1936. I asked Lisa Ullmann where I should start to look. "Go to Vienna and find Fritz Klingenbeck" was her advice. At that time I had no idea who he was and she was too weak to tell me.

I found him, in his 90s, but with a rich memory of his time as a member of the Laban circle from the mid 1920s. He set me off on a voyage of discovery as I traced Laban's legacy. I travelled across the major cities of Europe over a three-year period. What I found was astounding, copious, incredibly varied, enthralling. During his time in England he had said almost nothing about his time in Germany, always involved with the present not the past. In this paper I am focusing only on his theatre work leaving aside his schools, his books, his lectures, his Rosicrucianism, his notation system, his family.

To grasp the breadth of his dance theatre output I use my fingers. The thumb is for his collaborations in the Opera House world. Dance as a theatre art had almost no place in Germany in the 1920s beyond incidental dances in operas and a few solo dance recitalists. First finger is for his Tanzbühne, his own dance theatre company with whom he made full length performance works and toured. Middle finger is for his Kammertanzbühne company, his chamber dance group, with whom he worked collaboratively making small works, solos, trios, quartets. Ring finger is for his **Bewegungchöre**, movement choirs of amateur dancers, with whom he made large participatory works in celebration of community. Little finger is for his research centre the Choreographisches Institut, his Berlin centre where he developed Choreology alongside Choreography. Lets follow how he came to choose these five.

My first journey from Vienna took me to Munich, Monte Verita and Zurich.

It was from here in 1912 that Laban set out to explore what might be an adequate dance theatre form for the industry driven 20th century. We know the date from a letter to his lover Suzanne Perrottet in which he wrote that he had put away his paintings, through which he earned his living, and would from that day devote his life to developing dance. The impoverished dance scene of the period clearly was not adequate, in his view. It consisted in incidental story ballets for operas and solo touring dance recitalists, mostly women. What a colossal task he gave himself. For the seven years from 1912-1919 he experimented radically, profoundly, in an attempt to discover the first principles of the

movement arts: the arts of Dance, of Sound, of Word and of the Plastic Arts. All are produced in practice through movement of the human body.

What were his influences for he was well read and alert to culture? What priorities went into his theatre making? One figure was the philosopher Friedrich **Nietzsche** who called for awareness of *Individualität* and *Personlichkeit*, championing the power of each personality. Remember this was a time of industrial mechanisation that strangled individuality. Laban had come away from his days in **Paris** as an architecture student with a strong sense that the class system of society must end and that championing the equality of each individual was the way forward.

Laban attended the lectures of the anthroposophist Rudolf **Steiner** who called for a release from the restrictions to personal liberty promoted by an out of touch Christian church, out of touch theology, that diminished the status of the layman to one who required a priest, a leader, someone who thought for them. Another influence was Wassily **Kandinsky** whose experiments in abstract art intrigued him. Kandinsky's search was how to embody the higher spirituality of human life in the visual arts. Laban started to ask the associated questions. Is abstract dance possible or does dance always have a narrative? Does dance embody the spirituality of the human being?

His work was disastrously interrupted by the First World War but not before he had dismissed as irrelevant three hugely well known people: Emil Jaques **Dalcrose** and his Eurythmics, Isadora **Duncan** and the celebrity culture surrounding her, Vaslav **Nijinsky**'s choreographic radicalism. Why? Because all three were dominated by and dependent upon music, so reducing dance to a second rank art form. That, believed Laban, was not good enough for dance for the 20th century. Dance was too important for human wellbeing to remain bottom of the performing arts pile. Dance must become a theatre art on its own terms.

Of course this was greeted as audacity, lunacy, but Laban persisted. His first post-WW1 opportunity came in 1921at **Mannheim's Opera** where the archives there showed me that he had struggled with an entrenched star system and rigidly trained ballet dancers. His preferred way of working was collaborative creativity whilst theirs was "tell me what to do that is suitable to my rank and I'll do it, but do not expect me to create anything, that is your job". In the end his own somewhat undertrained but impassioned new group took the stage and wowed and confused the critics. "Not the usual conservative stuff", wrote one, "a brilliant dance poet", wrote another, "somewhat untidy", wrote a third.

This experience propelled Laban into setting up training towards forming his own dance theatre company. He achieved it by Dec 1922. The **Tanzbühne Laban** opened in Hamburg providing three evening-long

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works, each to a sold out house, an extraordinary accomplishment. Each was an experiment in what dance theatre might become. None were intended as a work to be kept forever but as exploration of possibilities. *Der Schwingende Tempel* was created as a symphony in movement and colour. In 1952 the title was translated as *The Swinging Cathedral*, but swinging has all sorts of connotations that Laban did not intend and he and Ullmann replaced temple with cathedral. One wonders why.

Most of the work was without music. It explored Goethe's theory of the expressivity of colours through the interactions of red, white, black, yellow, green and blue groups each with distinct ways of moving and collaborating. The dancers create a sacred space in which the interplay of their dynamics presented through the celebration of differences, their inevitable conflict and their cosmic resolution. The performance was greeted as beyond comprehension but something visionary of a future theatre form. 'An Eroica in dance' on a par with a Beethoven symphony, said one critic, 'A Parsifal' on a par with a Wagner opera, said another.

Fausts Erlösung (release) was a symphony of spoken word and movement. words of Goethe, the demigod of German culture, spoken by a speech choir, situated in groups around the stage. Goethe set to movement by Laban, this relatively unknown choreographer? 'What audacity' was the expectation. Such a mixture of voice and movement, on stage, had never been tried before. But the performance was received by long applause and critical bewilderment but acclaim.

The third work *Die Geblendeten* had been presented first at the Mannheim opera.

A political satire, this version was an extension. It explored the theme of the downfall of upstart political leaders. Performed in the years of cultural chaos after Germany lost the war when the communists, the pro-Kaiser militia, the socialists, all vied for power in ugly skirmishes in the streets and town halls, this theme was dynamite. The idea that dance, pretty dance, could deal with political themes was new, quite confusing but also exciting. Expressive dancers became the medium for political power.

With this extraordinary variety of choreography the Tanzbühne Laban set out to tour.

1923 as you will know was the year of the catastrophic monetary inflation, inflation such as had never before been dreamt of where a theatre ticket bought this morning for 50 Marks would this evening cost 500 Mark, until every day needs were costing millions of Marks. Laban's large company lasted in this financial climate until mid 1924 when his backing grant became worthless and the dancers were stranded in Zagreb.

Back in Hamburg, with a smaller company, he set about creating shorter works.

The **Kammertanzbühne Laban** flourished for the next five_years. It was an extraordinary experiment. The city gave them use of the main hall in the Zoo, the Zoo being bankrupted by the inflation. They became a

resident dance theatre group giving performances more than once weekly to a season ticketed audience that came again and again, passing the elephants, baboons, penguins en route. The company functioned much as Eastenders or Emmerdale functions today, a soap opera in dance with short works featuring the same characters, interspersed with solos and duos created or improvised by company members. It was hugely popular. You can read about it in Laban's biography *A Life for Dance* as well as many critiques of it in the Hamburg press.

You have to remember: no TV, no radio, no canned music, so you went out for your entertainment.

Here are several of the short pieces. Presented in 1924. **Mondane**: imagine a faded celebrity past his prime, in a dinner jacket, playing to his few remaining fans to a tango.

Marotte: imagine a half clad man, in a square of down light, clearly obsessed, engaged in repetitive rituals, which ultimately end in his demise.

Orchidée: imagine a seated woman naked from the waist up, rose tinted on a dais, engaged in exotic hand and arm gestures, folding and revealing.

Ekstatische: imagine two mature tall men dressed in long robes, strangely masked, engaged in ritualistic gestures of expansive ecstatic engagement with the cosmos, redolent of ancient Egypt, Sufi whirling dervishes, and Greek Orthodoxy.

Krystall: imagine two women, in silver tight-fitting garments, shooting in angular paths and gestures of virtuosic choreutic athleticism.

Rosetten: imagine a woman in rose red, engaged in voluptuous turning, leaning, almost opening to the audience only to close again and disappear.

Bizarre: imagine two bare-chested young men in grass skirts, one wearing spectacles, who engage in a hilarious rivalry of showing off to each other.

The range of theatre making of the Kammertanz was extraordinary. Laban writes of the responsibility he felt towards his public. He wanted to reach ordinary men and women unlike the Diaghilev Russian ballet that played to sophisticated Parisians. He wanted to reach hearts and minds, imagination and each soul, to cause them to laugh and smirk and weep and be awed by what they saw. And he succeeded with the help of his devoted creative dancers.

1927 was the year in which he again presented 3 contrasting works in one weekend. It was in Magdeburg at the first Dancers' Congress, organised by Laban.

Ritterballett (the Ballet of the Knights) was a safe story ballet to Beethoven's score of the same name, rehearsed in the Mergentheim castle that inspired Beethoven. It had been received well by the original spectators, the overweight spa ladies at Bad Mergentheim, but transferred to the Dancers' Congress the reception was surprise at its conventionality but with acclaim by the ballet critics.

Nacht was another thing altogether. 'A dynamic materialisation' not a dance. Laban intended to hit his audience with the dark side of city life, make them

confront the excesses of their own culture, as he put it, their "love of dollars, deceit and depravity". He did it through scenes of celebrity shallowness, stockbrokers greed, night life eroticism, et al, contrasted with the worklessness and penury of the masses, all danced to a cacophony of atonal jazz. It was uncomfortable viewing, the spectators booed. On reflection Laban thought it was one of his strongest works.

Titan was a huge work for **Movement Choir**, amateur dancers, expressing collaboration and hope, a spiritual work on his belief in the human need for communities of committed individuals to play a major part in culture. It was received with rapturous enthusiasm by the participants and ignored by the critics. Laban saw *Titan* as a dance of the future, *Nacht* as a dance of the Weimar Republic's unpleasant present, *Ritterballett* as a dance of the historic past.

The next year he presented a quite other work *Die Grünen Clowns*, a satirical Kammertanz suite, created through improvisation, based on behaviour patterns. On the same day he presented for the first time his notation as a way of making it possible to capture a dance, study it and thereby create a historical record of dance as culture on a par with music and the sister arts. But his own art making denied the veracity of his own claim.

In 1930 after devoting his energy to setting up his research centre the **Choreographisches Institut** in Berlin and concentrating on movement choirs, and his notation method, he returned to dance theatre in the opera world. He was offered the top post in German dance, Choreographer and Movement Director of the Prussian State Theatres including the prestigious Berlin Opera House at Unter den Linden. Why did he take this on for he was entering the lion's mouth?

The reasons for his acceptance of the post were complicated. He was essentially his own man, not cut out to be an employee which is what he became. Maybe losing Dussia Bereska, his right hand woman, was a reason. Being jewish she saw the danger signs in German politics and left for France. Dussia had been with Laban since Monte Verita. She directed rehearsals, she ran the Kammertanzbühne, she led workshops. Without Dussia he would have had difficulty running all his operations. Maybe it was the financial crash started in Wall Street in 1929 that ricocheted through Germany as the American funding dried up so that he could not finance his Choreographisches Institut.

After a successful summer season at the Bayreuth Wagner Opera House, the summer residency of the Berlin opera, creating the **Bacchanale in Tannhauser**, assisted by erstwhile student Kurt Jooss, regarded as a test for every choreographer, he started in Berlin. He immediately had problems with the soloists at the opera ballet for he challenged their star status and set up the opera ballet as an ensemble. The six soloists left setting up their own small company.

Laban had mixed success at the Berlin opera primarily because it was centrally in the orbit of the traditional

ballet critics. Apart from the *Polovtsian Dances* in Prince Igor in his first season for which he received rave reviews, the critics slated his innovations. In any case Nazi politics were interfering with art making from midway through his tenure at the Opera. His championing of the individual, his penchant for satirizing pompous leaders and frauds would lead to his downfall before long, which it did in 1936 with his colossal choral work *Tauwind und der Neuen Freude* with which he fell foul of Dr Goebbels and Adolf Hitler.

Laban never made a theatre work again and by 1938 was in England, pushing forward with quite other priorities.

My research had made me curious about Laban's choreographic method. How did he make? What went on in the rehearsals? How did his choreutic and eukinetic principles of space and dynamics serve him choreographically? That is where Fritz Klingenbeck and the other Tanzbühne dancers that I located and interviewed were invaluable. Kurt Jooss, Sylvia Bodmer and Albrecht Knust, whom I knew well, had been with Laban from 1921. Ilse Loesch whom I located in East Berlin had danced in Nacht, Aurel Milloss the Rome opera choreographer had seen Laban perform Marotte. Herta Feist and Gertrud Snell, interviewed in senior citizen care homes in Hanover, were Kammertanzerinen, and Lola Rogge, in Hamburg, was leader of the Hamburg Movement Choir. Beatrice Loeb, whom I found in Wintertur, was a student at the Choreographisches Institut. And so on.

And I had been a student of Laban's for three years as the Art of Movement Studio opened in post WW2 Manchester. That was a period when Laban drew on his choreographic ouvres in workshops. I recall learning material on ancient Egyptian ritual that I now realise came from the *Ekstatische* duo, although he never said so and group work that I now see came from the war scene in *Die Grünen Clowns*. With the oral accounts from the original dancers, archive materials, and my own experience of working with Laban altogether for 12 years, it was my view that we had to make this material known for 21st century dance artists and for audiences.

Here were incredible experiments by this man, the founder of European modern dance from which came such artists as Mary Wigman, Kurt Jooss, Hanja Holm, and from them Pina Bausch's revolution in Tanztheater. A team of us at Trinity Laban are moving forward in making known the extraordinary theatre legacy so far *Green Clowns, Nacht, Der Schwingende Tempel,* the *Kammertanz Solos and Duos*. Who knows what will be next.

(Since publishing this paper Alison Curtis-Jones has reenvisaged Laban's *Ishtar's Journey into Hades* and *The Dancing Drumstick*, both from 1913)

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Transmission: Re-Imagining Laban. Contemporising the Past, Envisioning the Future Alison Curtis-Jones



Drunstick re-imagined by Alison Curtis-Jones. Summit Dance Theatre in rehearsal 2015. Photo by Alison Curtis-Jones

Over the last two years, I have been researching two 'lost' works, Ishtar's Journey into Hades and Dancing Drumstick, choreographed by Rudolf Laban¹ in Monte Verita, Switzerland, 1913. Following the Swiss 'Dance as Cultural Heritage' award from the Swiss Federal Office of Culture, I worked with my company, Summit Dance Theatre², to mount these two 'new' works for performances in Switzerland.

Dancing Drumstick and Ishtar's Journey into Hades were premiered in Teatro Del Gatta, Ascona, October 2015, as part of Laban Event, an international conference arranged by Nunzia Tirelli, in Monte Verita, Ascona, overlooking Lake Maggiore, in the Italian region of Switzerland, where Laban first conceived the works and where Laban established his dance school.

Gathering material remains was an interesting process, leading me to UK archives, the second Dalcroze International Conference in Vienna, as well as the Kunsthaus in Zurich. Documents and letters written by Laban to Susan Perrottet (1889-1993), between 1910-1914, were translated for me by Laban's great, great, grand-daughter, Miriam Perrottet, who I met in the Kunsthaus. in 2014.

Material remains of Laban's dance works are scarce, there are only photographs, drawings, sketches and writings. With such limited resources, particularly in relation to *Dancing Drumstick* and *Ishtar's Journey into Hades*, how is it possible to mount the works for performance? 'A complete exhumation' of work where little evidence of the original surface form exists is almost 'impossible'. My work is not about exhuming relics, it is using live arts practice to contemporise the past and envisage the future - bridging archival gaps to create

what I call a new 'living archive'. This transmission process from archive to production uses performance as a tool for translation and transformation.

Archival evidence of Laban's early choreography is not readily available and though much has been written about Laban's theatre practice (Preston-Dunlop, 1998, 2013; Dorr 2008; McCaw 2011, Bergsohn & Bergsohn 2003, et al) embodied practical (re)creations of Laban's works are scarce. Views on Laban's existence, the vegetarian colony and the emerging philosophies evident in his work which took place in Monte Verita is documented in a number of sources (Green 1986, Preston Dunlop 1998, et al) and it is this context which provides much of the inspiration for my re-imagining of Dancing Drumstick and Ishtar's Journey into Hades. The terms used here to describe the process of mounting the works are problematic. I use the term re-imagine, or the term (re)creation to imply a creative process which generates a new form. The tension here is the wider issue of identity, which goes far beyond the parameters of this article, I will, however discuss the terms used in relation to my work. Very little 'actual' evidence of Dancing Drumstick and Ishtar's Journey into Hades exists, so according to Professor Patrick Primavasi's categories of 're', discussed at the Laban Event in 2015, it is not possible to reproduce, remake or restage as there are too few sources to draw from, nor could I stage a reconstruction, restoration or re-enactment as there are no notation documents to rely on. My work aligns with Primavesi's category of re-creation, re-invention, re-imagining or re-envisioning where an artist has more freedom to explore and develop their own viewpoint on the work and how the work might be. By placing these re-imagined works in the public domain, could they be viewed as re-vivals, where

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works come back into focus? Other terms, such as review, research, re-evaluate, rethink, respond, which could be linked to this process of looking back and re-presenting work are also interesting, each posing a different perspective.

The proposal of re-imagining, actualising or re-viving archives creates an interesting tension; are they at odds? The debate around the notion of the 're'; of re-staging in particular, is relevant in today's dance practice. The practice of re-imagining has a unique contribution to the current debates on transmission, transformation and transmutation (Lepecki 2010) reconstruction, construction (Franko 2001) re-creation (Preston-Dunlop, Sayers 2013), re-invention (Burt 2003) re-imagining (Lepecki 2010), re-staging, (Pakes 2016, Barba 1999) retrievability (Pakes 2016) and requires further investigation.

The wider contextual issues surrounding these works draw from Lepecki's returning as a method of experimentation. Choreographically experimenting by turning back or in turning back dance without, what Lepecki describes as 'Orpheus's curse of being frozen in time'. (2010) This is particularly relevant when contemporary dancers are contributing to the

process and I draw from their current movement practices when generating and shaping movement material. These dancers are not pretending to be dancers from 1913 and I am not imitating Laban's 1913 approach but I am influenced by my understanding of it. What exactly then, is this process of re-imagining another's work?

I have devised a method of practice using choreology to mount the works, established through my previous re-creations of *Nacht* (1927)⁴ in

2010, 2011, 2014 with Trinity Laban dancers and Summit Dance Theatre and *Green Clowns* (1928)⁵ in 2008, 2009, 2014, 2015 with Trinity Laban dancers and Transitions Dance Company. I have also drawn from my close work and previous collaboration with Valerie Preston-Dunlop as living archive. I use Laban's Choreutics (1966) and Effort (1947) to make and shape the work. It is important to point out that these methods were not yet established by Laban in 1913, I use these methods retrospectively and I have developed the principles in a way that is relevant to my practice today as a contemporary dance artist. These established principles published in 1947 and 1966 are evident in Laban's early works as a way of experimenting to define his thinking of space and time. I have the advantage of looking back to these early works with an in-depth understanding both theoretically and corporeally of Choreutics and Effort today and have developed the theories further for the contemporary practice of re-imagining. I work with dancers to facilitate an embodied understanding of spatial principles and the significance of dynamic phrasing in movement. Dancers work within an improvisational framework to create interpretations of the dance works originally created by Laban based on my interpretations of available sources.

My role in re-imagining these works requires a certain amount of detective work, of finding evidential remains, then deciding how I will use this information to discover and understand the works further through interrogation of practice. It is this theoretically informed and embodied practice that creates a deeper understanding of the possibilities and potential of the work. My understanding of Dancing Drumstick and Ishtar's Journey into Hades is formed through a number of ways using different sources, through engagement with historic references, cultural contexts and use of archives. How archives are used is a source of debate with Lepecki claiming they place works under house arrest, Foucault's proposal on the other hand, suggest that using archives as a way to find, foreground and produce difference, (or invent or make) difference encourages new-ness and moves away from same-ness. This virtual inventiveness comes through the practice of making and intangible thought processes existing in the mind of the creator and how this is transmitted to the dancer in order to activate or facilitate the translation of ideas in embodied practice creates a new form. The use of choreographic activation of the dancer's body as an endlessly creative, transformational archive, provides limitless opportunities to access new modes of working. (Franko,

1989) My work aligns with the view that archives are a place of creative exchange and the involvement of the dancer as a means to experiment with, to facilitate movement language, correlates with Foucault's and Franko's view of the body as a creative, transformational archive.

I use Laban's known methodologies; improvisation, Space Harmony and Effort, but translation of ideas and distance from the time the works were created and my interpretation of sources suggests the work materialises in a new form. Dance historian Lesley Ann Sayers

states, 'at issue here is not the simple case of one work being inspired by an earlier one, but a more complex one in which a new work emerges from a close analysis and creative dialogue with an earlier work and its contexts.' (Preston-Dunlop & Sayers, 2011). This emergence of the 'new' from existing materials has led me to examine my process of creative interpretation in this context.

The challenge of re-creating lost works includes interpreting the work's performance potential. (Pakes 2016, Jordan 1987) Leslie Main discusses the extent to which creative imagination should be employed and the notion of contemporary interpretation in her reconstructions of Doris Humphrey works (2014). Hodson³ and Archer pose similar questions regarding their reconstruction of Nijinski's *Le Sacre du Printemps*. Contemporary interpretations of Lepage's *Hamlet (1997)*, Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake* (1995) Ek's *Giselle (1982)*, all challenge the re-creation/reconstruction debate.

I continue to interrogate the issues of re-imagining, the role of the archive and intangible processes in studio practice through my doctoral research and refer now to some of the contextual research of the era which informed my view of

Drunstick re-imagined by Alison Curtis-Jones.

Summit Dance Theatre in rehearsal 2015.

Photo by Alison Curtis-Jones

¹ Rudolf Laban (1879-1958), thinker, artist, innovator and fundamental in the rise of Central European Modern Dance, is known for his Dance Notation system but less so for his dance theatre works.

² Summit Dance Theatre is made up of nine professional dancers, taught through my method of technical training at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. Composers Oli Newman and James Keane are TL Faculty and play live. Producer, Nunzia Tirelli, is a TL alumnus of the Specialist Diploma in Choreological Studies. Costumes designed by Mary Fisher of The Royal Opera House, London.

³ Millicent Hodson, Kenneth Archer 1997 – Sacre du Printemps.

⁴ *Nacht (1927)* is a political satire, exposing the underbelly of the Weimar Period – a tumultuous period in history. Laban refers to his distaste for 'dollars, deceit and depravity' and the work examines the superficialities of social etiquette in Smart Set, the greed of stockbrokers, the way Tanz Bars were used for political propaganda, and the monotony of work and labour.

⁵ *Green Clowns (1928)* is Laban's anti-war piece dealing with dehumanisation of the body through repetitive work and industrial machine-like imagery, the horrors of war, the fragility of relationships, the humour and mindlessness of following political leaders. This work was the pre-curser to Kurt Jooss' Green Table (1932). The BBC filmed a section of Green Clowns for a documentary programme on Modern Dance, 'Dance Rebels' screened in 2015

Dancing Drumstick and Ishtar's Journey into Hades.

It was 1910 when Laban moved to Munich, a centre of artistic activity and philosophical thought, where he began his ideas about the nature of bodily rhythm through the separation of movement, from music. Laban's movement influences during this period also included the body-culture approaches of Bess Mensendieck, (1866-1959) Rudolf Bode (1881-1970) and Emil Jaques-Dalcroze (1865-1950), all of whom were part of the physical, spiritual and expressive culture of the whole that was prominent in Munich at that time.

Bradley and Preston-Dunlop write that Laban's approach was in contrast to the music centric theories and practices of Dalcroze's Eurhythmics work and moved beyond the unrestrained, free flowing movement that dancer Isadora Duncan performed to Chopin and Beethoven. Laban was searching for something more specific. Dalcroze based his method on his observation that the body was inclined to

respond to music by moving. Dalcroze taught movement as the externalisation of the form inspired by sound, but Laban was interested in the movement itself, its content, meaning and relationship to the human spirit. Despite what might seem to be similar philosophies regarding sensory experience of the body by both Laban and Dalcroze, Laban was not concerned with the embodiment of music or a particular aesthetic ideal; he preferred movement that was expressive of itself. Dalcroze's method for him, it seems, didn't allow for the body's expressiveness.



Ishtar's Journey into Hades (2015). Summit Dance Theatre. Re-imagined by Alison Curtis-Jones Photograph: © Alison Curtis Jones, 2015

In 1912 Marie Steiner proposed a new prayerful movement art, Eurythmie, where vowel and consonant sound are translated into a series of gestures so that poetry or biblical stories could be 'danced', as 'visible speech, visible song'. (Preston Dunlop 1989) For Laban, according to Preston-Dunlop, this was derivative. Following Laban's viewing of Dalcroze's production of Orfeo and Euridice and the accompanying published paper 'How to Revive Dance' where Dalcroze proposed a way forward for dance through 'music visualisation', Laban's view of movement for its own sake was solidified.

Preston-Dunlop and Selma Odom write about Laban's meeting with Suzanne Perrottet in 1912. Perrottet (a trained pupil and teacher of Dalcroze method) abandoned the 'music bound' Dalcroze method in order to pursue more radical movement experiments with Laban.

Odom states Perrottet reflected that after working with Dalcroze 'she could not move for a long time' because she had been formed by set gestures and exercises that now seemed false to her. She found Laban's ideas about the body in space, how the parts of the body function; how their range of motion relates to geometric form; how open ended way of exploring through improvisation can lead to movement invention. Like Laban, she was fascinated with musical dissonance and percussion, areas that, at the time, did not interest Dalcroze.

It could be said that Suzanne Perrottet was able to convey first-hand understanding of Dalcroze's work, methods and theories and was thus instrumental in helping inspire and solidify Laban's thinking in relation to movement, rhythm and sound. My research of archive documents including Suzanne Perrottet's letters at Kunsthaus, Zurich, reveal how she used her new found method pedagogically to challenge dancer's

rhythm and develop skills, technically and creatively. Laban asked Perrottet: 'what if I take music away from dance?'

Perrottet joined Laban's school in Monte Verita in 1913 along with Mary Wigman, giving up her post at Dalcroze's school where she had been a pupil in Hellerau. Wigman went on to establish 'Absolute Dance' (autonomous dance, independent of music and steps) and became an acclaimed figure in German Expressionist Dance, following her choreography of Witch Dance in 1914. This era included the premiere of Stravinsky's Le Sacre du Printemps (1913) in collaboration with Valsav Nijinsky and Nicholas Roerich, along with Dalcroze's student Marie Rambert who served as both performer and dance mistress. The experiments in Ascona 1913, included at least two works, *The Dancing Drumstick* and Ishtar's Journey into Hades. Dancing Drumstick was 'the rhythm of the body made audible' and is Laban's attempt to shift dance away from the constraints of music. Counterpoint of movement and sound proved interesting for Laban and

> he moved away from set codified steps to reveal its potential, exploring how rhythm and patterns of the mind and spirit manifest in movement. The division of time in the natural movements of the human being 'has nothing to do with metric rhythmic systems'... they follow another law'. (Laban, 1912). Laban used the term 'Free Dance' (der Freie Tanz) meaning free from musical constraints, from dramatic narrative and set steps, therefore the dance material was made up of freely juxtaposed rhythms and

My re-imagined Drumstick, is an attempt to show Laban's shift to arbitrary rhythm - a materialisation of extreme and subtle dynamic changes, where dancers establish their own felt rhythms and work together in unity without sound and make stillness resonate. Musicians accompany the dancers, playing in response to what they see, not the other way around; it's not radical today, but it was in 1913! This work was a radical departure then and I believe, is a direct result of the rebellion of the established method of Jacques Dalcroze, his music visualisation and music inspired movement. Drumstick rejects the Dalcroze method of music visualisation, by replacing the reliance of dancers on music, meter and sound cues, with sensed group rhythmic changes in the body and general space. Musicians James Keane and Oli Newman follow the dancers with sections of live improvisation in performance, responding to dancer's movement in real time. I challenge dancers and musicians with complex nonmetric, arbitrary rhythmic phrases, which are sensed and not counted, encouraging group cohesion through acute sensory awareness and phenomenological responses. I refrain from using counts in rehearsals and when setting technical warm up exercises, so that dancers don't rely on numbers, experiencing the movement phrasing corporeally instead. Dancers use breath and vocals to create a cacophony of sound, juxtaposing with the dynamic resonance of the body to create inorganic forms and musicians work with polyrhythms as a way of contrasting what they see with what we hear.

Further evidence of this shift away from Dalcroze by Laban is seen in 1915, in Laban's publicity material for his summer school Tanz-Ton-Wort (Dance-Sound-Word) which explains how his approach to movement education is through the individual finding of his own movement rhythms: through the principles of swing, tempo, beat, order, structure, and is quite different from Dalcroze's early eurhythmics, where the body submits to musical rhythms.

'Dance has things to say and express that cannot be said through music or acting, and in a deep way. It is the music of the limbs.' (Laban 1924)

Dalcroze Eurythmics and Laban's principles of Choreutics and Eukinetics are associated with a number of different fields, health, well being, therapy and education. Laban's work continues to evolve in a number of disciplines including theatre and dance practice. I have drawn from these principles to establish a practice to train contemporary dance artists in contemporary dance technique. My practice encourages dancers to embody movement somatically, through imagery, meaning and intention rather than specific steps and counts. Imagery is used throughout my rehearsal process to help dancers find sensation, authenticity in movement and to clarify intention. Laban refers to 'inner attitude' and connection with this inner sense or intention encourages expressivity.

Dancers learn by doing and discovering rather than observational practice such as use of mirror, they become mindful of bodily sensation and feel the movement first, before it is given shape or form. I prefer to facilitate movement without influencing dancers responses with recordings of previous re-creations and encourage group cohesion through proprioception; raised consciousness and sensorial awareness of the ensemble, moving together with organic solidarity, affiliation in shared space, mutuality and collective consciousness, so that unison work is felt and sensed corporeally, rather than seen objectively from the outside or adding counts. When dancers engage in cognitive responses (decision making - 'where shall we go in the next space, who's leading?') or they begin counting, movement becomes mechanical rather than organic, and cerebral rather than

Laban's Ishtar's Journey into Hades is fundamentally about the body, experimenting with different ways of using the body and its surfaces. The depiction of the mythical goddess and her followers as she descends into the Underworld is used as a means to explore how the body can express the narrative. The Queen adorns an item of jewellery or clothing at each of the seven gates to enter the Underworld. The body part associated with the piece of jewellery or item adorned, is the starting point for movement, encouraging surfaces of the body to engage with space and initiate traceforms, shape and form. Use of scale and perspective of space are significant to illustrate the idea of the journey into the Underworld. The Queen's choices result in no return; she is left naked, alone, isolated, vulnerable... powerful. Ishtar evolved through a series of studio experiments where I investigated issues of sacrifice and ritual, materialism, loss of the soul, struggle, both physical and emotional in an attempt to redeem and regain self. The piece emerged as a parody, dealing with dramaturgy and narrative. It moves away from taught set codified steps by finding movement solutions for set improvisation tasks, which I devise for the dancers.

These 'new' works become fragments of performance ephemera which in turn, create new archival traces, in the bodies of the dancers and in the minds of the viewer. My use of actual evidence, (that is, actual material remains available in archives) and subsequent translation (potential evidence through interpretation) leads to provision of new images of the work, creating associations with Laban's work that potentially. along with seeing the live works, add 'being' to Laban. By providing photographic images of my re-creations of Green Clowns, Nacht, Drumstick and Ishtar, I am providing new images which are associated with the original works and therefore provide a particular perspective of the work in the mind of the viewer.

Can seeing re-imagined Laban works live in performance therefore potentially change perceptions of existing archive materials and perceptions of Laban's work as an artist...?

Re-imagining past dances with embodied corporeal knowledge in practice provides a different insight to the work for dancers and audiences in a way that studying materials alone cannot provide. Using the body-as-archive (Lepecki 2010) and working with dancers and collaborators to actualise my (and their) interpretations, re-imagining is not about the past that was, which is impossible to retrieve, it is about the

I will expose more insight to Drumstick and Ishtar in due course⁶ and hopefully, audiences will see the work performed live in the UK in the future!

Alison Curtis-Jones

⁶ Drumstick was performed by members of Summit Dance Theatre outside in Monte Verita and filmed by German TV company ARTE on the site where Laban's early dance experiments took place. A Swiss film company captured the process and performance of Drumstick and Ishtar in 2015, a documentary film will follow.

Alison Curtis-Jones, Artistic Director of Summit Dance Theatre, winner of the Swiss 'Dance as Cultural Heritage' award 2014-15 and Lecturer in Dance at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, London. Ali's specialist areas include Choreological Practice, contemporary technique, choreographic practice and dance pedagogy. Ali is leading exponent in the re-creation of Rudolf Laban's dance theatre works and contemporary developments of his principles and practice. Ali teaches freelance and master classes in the UK and abroad and presented her research at conferences internationally. Her most recent paper: From Impressionism to Expressionism: how the Dalcroze method inspired Laban's theories and practice of the dynamic body in motion was presented at the Dalcroze International Conference, in Vienna, July 2015.

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Ascona Event 2015 Review by Helen Roberts

For 3 days in October 2015, over 50 artists, practitioners, academics and archivists gathered at the stunning and historic lakeside location of Monte Verità, Ascona, Switzerland for the Laban Event 2015. This was the third year of the event which celebrates and explores contemporary research and practices derived from the heritage of Rudolf Laban. The focus of this year's event was 'The Re-', particularly ideas related to re-imagining or recreation.

The event included workshops, presentations and discussion groups. The workshops on the first day were led by Alison Curtis-Jones (UK) and translated by Nunzi Tirelli (Italy) and focused on the practices Curtis-Jones engaged with during the process of re-imagining, re-creating and staging Laban's dance theatre works. Drawing upon Curtis-Jones's approach of using Laban's principles and choreological perspectives, and working practically to gain an embodied understanding of spatial principles and the significance of dynamic phrasing in movement, participants worked within an improvisational framework to create interpretations of sections of two dance works originally created by Laban. On the second day, Maria Consagra (Italy) delivered workshops which took a particular approach to movement for actors and performers using Bartenieff Fundamentals, Effort Theory and use of the voice to create 'Figura' or simplified character through their own movement.

There was also a series of lectures which presented a range of projects involving different methods of reenvisioning and presenting dance works. Stefano Tomassini (Lugano) discussed three interpretations of Sacre by Christina Rizzo. The first (2008) was with an all-male group and focused on unity and qualitative energy of the group; the second in 2012 was presented as a video installation on six screens, each delayed by 10 seconds, which presented a counterpoint in the music and spatialization of the linear time creating perspectives of duplication, repetition and simultaneousness; the third (2013) was a solo which was a performative reflection on the deceptions of the usual time and space devices, with the audience listening to the expected music but Rizzo dancing with headphones on to different music. Karin Hermes (Zürich) discussed the artistic-methodological research on restaging Kurt Jooss's Big City (1932). Hermes emphasised that for recreation/reconstruction one needs to decide what materials will be used as sources (eg. only the score if it exists or whether to look at a range of other sources too), and consider the layers of appearance within working techniques, such as developments in physical approaches. She suggests that recreation is hermeneutic, there is no set structure. and that individuals revisit work in a spiral form, picking up different elements and, as hidden information is revealed, perceiving the work differently.

These presenters also engaged in a panel discussion with Patrick Primavesi (Leipzig), Alison Curtis-Jones and Valerie Preston-Dunlop (UK) which considered different approaches to 'The Re-'. It established that there are a number of approaches and terms, all with different subtleties, linked to the idea of 'Re'. Primavesi suggested four groups of approaches. Firstly that of reproduction, remaking or restaging where works are not lost completely and there are sources to draw upon; secondly, that of reconstruction, restoration or re-enactment where perhaps they are fading away and hearsay and documents have to be relied upon; thirdly the idea of recreation, reinvention, re-imagining or re-envisioning where an artist has more freedom to explore and develop their own viewpoint on the work and how it might be; and finally revival where works come back into focus or interest. Many suggestions were made by the panel and audience of other terms such as review, research, re-evaluate, rethink, respond - which could be linked to this process of looking back at and re-presenting work.



Looking out to Lake Maggiore from Monte Verità.

Photograph: © Helen Roberts, 2015.

It was emphasised that a good understanding of the nature of the original work is necessary especially as sometimes there is no outer form such as a notation score, photographers or living dancers, but there may be other material traces, such as writings or images of contemporaneous works, that can inform how a recreation of a work develops. The original intention of the artist themselves is significant, as is the influence of the culture at the time alongside awareness of how culture has changed over time. It is important to engage with the past, be open to different approaches and reflect on critiques of the work for perspective.

Another element of the event brought together archivists and individuals who oversee collections with holdings related to Rudolf Laban – including National Resource Centre for Dance (Surrey), Trinity Laban (London) and Leipzig Tanzarchiv (Germany) – and heritage enthusiasts interested in preservation of and engagement with this past. The discussions aimed to explore and advocate existing archive resources, identify other potential collections of value, and consider ways in which custodians, academics and artists may

work together in the future to further preserve this heritage as well as exploit the potential of its use in research and creativity. Much useful discussion was had and Cyrille Bochew, Laban's great grandson (from Dussia Bereska), indicated several private collections linked to family and associates. A number of participants from these discussions plan to meet again to pursue ideas and collaborative initiatives. Valerie Preston-Dunlop addressed the concept of 'Archeo-choreology' as a process for finding and bringing a completely lost dance back to performance. When there are no material remains (eq. film, notation, people) then different approaches need to be used to re-discover the 'essence' of a work and reimagine it. She emphasised the importance of scholarship and artistry working collaboratively to create a work in this way. A scholar will look at the evidence found about a work, then interpret it in the light of the culture in which it was made before making it appropriate to the understanding of the culture

in which it is to be remade and presented to the public. Therefore, it is a three stage process: finding the remains (archives are required for this); scholarly interpretation; and artistic creation that speaks to today's audience.

Preston-Dunlop focused on the creation of Ishtar's Journey into Hades and Dancing Drumstick, the works to be premiered at this event. The idea for recreating these lost works began at the Laban Event 2013 with the recognition that it was 100 years since Laban created them during his time at the experimental Monte Verità artists' community (which also included dancers such as Mary Wigman and Suzanne Perrottet). Alison Curtis-Jones and Valerie Preston-Dunlop then began the process of researching what evidential traces they could find to inform how these works might be presented. There were no material remains in the form of film, photographs, scores or other key documents; however, letters were found in the Kunsthaus archives in Zürich between Laban and Suzanne Perrottet which talked about the work, there were photographs of other works from the same year which gave a feeling for how they might look, and a chapter in Laban's 1935 book A Life for Dance (Ein Leben Für Den Tanz) discussed

both works describing them as 'a play with a purpose'. Thus, these sources provided key information which pointed towards the motivations behind the works.

Although it is not possible to determine Laban's artistic decision-making process, it was clear that whilst he was creating work he was using improvisation methods and working with expressive movements that were not rhythmic and with expressive sounds rather than music. He did not want dance to be a subsidiary art to music. he wanted the two art forms to stand side-by-side and clearly he aimed to achieve this, particularly with the work Dancing Drumstick. Preston-Dunlop also recalled working with Laban and dancers from this earlier generation when she was a teenager and the open and collaborative nature of creative and rehearsal methods which was also key to finding the 'essence' of the works. Curtis-Jones and Preston-Dunlop also looked at other events that were happening in dance at the time in order to situate the works in their cultural context. Drawing upon these elements, the work then needed to be brought to life in the studio by Curtis-Jones as the choreographic artist, with her company Summit Dance Theatre. Curtis-Jones identifies the works do not aim to be and nor can they be a transcription of the original works, but by drawing on the traces found and through interrogation of contemporary practice with current dance artists for today's audiences, they form part of what she calls a new 'living' archive.

The pinnacle of the weekend was the world premiere of these two works at Teatro del Gatto in Ascona. Creation of the works was funded by the Federal Office of Culture through their prize for 'Cultural Dance Heritage in Switzerland', and performed by Summit Dance Theatre. In *Ishtar's Journey into Hades*, Ishtar, the queen, goes on a journey to the Underworld, in which the other dancers follow rather than influence. At each 'gate' she relinquishes items of enticement of civilization such as jewellery and clothing. At the end of the work she is naked, seemingly vulnerable but surprisingly strong as she faces her fate.

Dancing Drumstick was Laban's experimentation to move away from the restrictions of Émile Jagues-Dalcroze's approach to rhythmic understanding and music visualisation. He wanted to take away the constraints of music and explore the dynamics and rhythmic complexities of human movement, something which also changes the state of power between the two arts. Curtis-Jones worked with these ideas: the dancers drive the musicians not the other way around; rhythm is arbitrary and non-metric; the dancers establish their own felt rhythms and the sounds of the body are audible; dancers work in unity and the durations of stillness give resonance. In watching the dance the viewer is drawn to the whole rather than individual dancers and is aware of the shift between a definite rhythmic lead of the dancers to a merging of body sounds and drums and to polyrhythmic effects. There is a synergy between movement and sound (created by Oli Newman and James Keane) which creates unity and depth in the work.

The performances, attended by over 200 local residents and conference goers in a packed out theatre, received a standing ovation from the audience. Curtis-Jones, through her creative practice, doctoral research and working with students, dance artists and with Summit Dance Theatre, continues to further refine, research and explore reimagining Rudolf Laban's work. She uses her interpretation of Laban's Effort principles (1947) and Choreutics (1966) in her artistic practice to re-imagine his works and trains the dancers of Summit Dance Theatre using her approach of integrating choreological principles in technical training to enable them to perform the works.

The Laban Event is organised by Nunzia Tirelli, an alumnus of Trinity Laban's Specialist Diploma in Choreological Studies. To find out more visit http://www.laban.ch/en/home_en.html. The 2016 Laban Event is planned for 7-9 October with a theme of *Genius Loci*. You can also follow the work of Curtis-Jones and Summit Dance Theatre on Facebook.

Helen Roberts NRCD



The life-size Icosahedron sculpture by Miki Tallone positioned in the part of Monte Verità's grounds known as 'Laban's training area'.

Photograph: © Helen Roberts, 2015.

The Actor's Movement



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 guite 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 INTENTION DECISION

Space effort Weight effort 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 Framework below 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

COMPONENTS OF MOVEMENT and the Decision-making process **EFFORT** SHAPE "Indulging" "Contending" Convex Concave Indirecting **FOCUS** Directing Spreading **HORIZONTAL Enclosing ATTENDING** Û Decreasing **PRESSURE** Increasing Rising **VERTICAL** Descending **INTENDING** TIME Decelerating **SAGITTAL** Retreating Accelerating Advancing **COMMITTING DYNAMISM** Flow of Effort Flow of Shape Free Flow **Binding** Flow **Shrinking** Growing ©Warren Lamb Associates

Published in "Posture and Gesture" by Warren Lamb (1965, Duckworth)

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 guizzical 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.

Article reprinted from Movement, Dance & Drama Issue 29. Spring 2010

Dr Geraldine Stephenson - Choreographer

Laban's Influence on her Work, Dr Janet Goodridge

(Dr Janet Goodridge, former Principal Lecturer at Middlesex University, paid tribute to Geraldine Stephenson on her 80th birthday).

"An explosion of dynamic and extraordinary movement hit me like a hurricane". This is how Geraldine Stephenson recently described her first experience of Laban training to me. She went on to emphasise that the subsequent teaching she had from Laban and his colleagues was "the influence on my work".

Although now celebrating and looking back on an amazing career in choreography for theatre, opera. TV and film, Geraldine did not set out to be a choreographer: "I had no notion of it". Her early background was war-time England in the 1930s and 1940s. Born in Hull. Yorkshire, she was taken to dancing class as a child to overcome shyness. But she says she was too frightened to enjoy the experience! She continued into her more confident teens, though described her dancing at that stage as "very stiff". On leaving school in 1943, she was encouraged to join the Armed Forces, but instead went to Bedford Physical Training College. This marked the beginning of Laban's influence, since something called Central European Dancing was on the timetable relatively little known in England at that time. She described it as "the liberating of one's movement, with its emphasis on centrally generated body movement - so different from the ballet - full body use of the

floor, bare feet, wide-ranging spatial directions, and the totally new experience of improvisation, partner and group work."

Geraldine has written of her experience three years later when she attended a week's course led by Laban himself: "The variety of movement expression, the meaningful nature of movement and the way one was so involved in the texture of movement ... it totally changed me and my perception of dance". Group work again impressed: "How wonderful to be part of a group that could shrink or expand, heave up and down; all of us breathing as one creature, to be in the centre ... on the periphery ... break away ... and interweave. (*Laban Guild Magazine* 1998, Vol. 17, No. 4). Her enthusiasm led her on to the new, *avant-garde Manchester Studio* staffed by Laban with Lisa Ullmann, Sylvia Bodmer and other colleagues, which was "throbbing with vitality and invention".

By 1948, Geraldine had begun some teaching at the *Studio* when Laban became seriously ill - an emergency! She took over his classes at *Bradford's Northern Theatre School* and after he recovered she continued teaching in the mornings, with the opportunity to observe his work later in the day. She recalls how Laban's emphasis on movement variety and contrast impressed her. For instance, in what he referred to as "high", "medium" and "deep" characteristics. She gave an example: "A group of 10 or 12 actors as peasants - hoppy, jumpy, earthy - 'deep' dancers, exited into the wings and immediately re-entered, transformed, as aristocratic courtiers -

'high' dancers, heads lifted, elegant hand gestures". As in her own training, she also recalls Laban's emphasis on working expressively, systematically: "with the motion factors - time, weight, space, flow" which, together with the group and spatial work (shapes, patterns, directions), she has found to be an unfailing choreographic resource.

Around 1949, a heavy teaching schedule was proving exhausting, draining. Geraldine mentioned this to Laban, hoping for a reduced schedule. But his unexpected,

characteristically wise recommendation was: "Gerry, make for yourself a solo dance recital". So of course she did. A creative change was even better than a rest, and a new phase in her life began. The recital, first performed in 1950 at the Studio, later developed into small-scale tours for a number of years, adding new dances. It was pioneering, independent work.

Despite her recital debut,
Geraldine still had not considered
choreography as a career until the
following year when Laban offered
her work on her first theatre show.
This was for *Medieval Mystery*Plays in the ruins of St. Mary's
Abbey, York, a Festival of Britain
production. The performers were
professional actors, Bradford's
Theatre School students, townsfolk
and school children. It was an
opportunity to put Laban's advocacy
of dance for everyone into practice.

For this assignment, Geraldine was asked to design three sequences, including Lucifer's fall from heaven:

a backwards, sideways, staggering progress down a long curving flight of stairs to hell - with dialogue! It was typical of actors' problems which she later became famous for solving. Laban's unique teaching about rhythm was particularly useful at such times, designing dance to co-ordinate with speech, combining metrical steps with the free rhythm of words. Geraldine discovered she was also expected to direct numerous crowd scenes with 250 people, such as: Raising of Lazarus, Entry into Jerusalem, Last Judgment - no less! She was "really flummoxed" and sought Laban's advice. She still remembers his reply: "That is easy. Cut the group into two sets of 100, from each of these make three groups of 30, put the two spare tens together, halve the remaining 50 and you have nine groups. Plan it all with your Bradford students and have one or two lead each group". Perhaps "easy" for Laban, he was speaking from his considerable experience with large-scale opera, theatre and movement-choir performance in Germany, of a kind unusual in England. However, it all worked well for Geraldine, and she says she has adopted this procedure ever since, when faced with devising movement for a large group.

She found she loved the whole experience and realised choreography was what she wanted to do. She moved to London and was much in demand for her skill in using the effective group-work techniques and other Laban movement material. Work assignments in masques and pageants of all kinds followed, as well as dance in hundreds of plays for theatre, television, films and opera.

Geraldine can provide many examples of Laban's influence on her work. She spoke of how she particularly values his training in movement observation, for use in rehearsals and at other times. She made an unusual application of this when asked to choreograph Taverner's Opera Therèse at the Royal Opera House. Seated behind the composer at his first full piano play-through - a most challenging score, with few obvious clues for the choreographer - Geraldine said what really helped her was observing the tall Taverner's back-view as he played. She saw all the shades of meaning and expression she needed as a basis for her work conveyed in his back and shoulders: clear effort phrasing which she could use.

Whether designing dance for opera or plays, Geraldine told me she learnt from Laban always to consider the dramatic context first. Then to design dance to underscore the dramatic action, characterisation and relationships; taking particular care with what Laban called 'characters' supposed "inner attitudes of mind" and resultant effort phrasing. Although Geraldine studied historical dance with other teachers, Laban's

approach to period style, again via study of inner attitudes and effort qualities, was once more a prime influence. With an actor and a musician, she devised and toured two <code>Dance/Music/Poetry Through the Ages</code> programmes. Also, for many years, she devised, choreographed and directed the popular London and touring performances of the <code>Johann Strauss Dancers Company</code>, in period style, with orchestra.

As Geraldine discovered in her early training, Laban not only aimed to extend students' movement vocabulary - spatially, dynamically - from exaggerated gesture through to tiny shadow movements and stillness, but also to provide performance experience in a wide variety of dramatic, lyrical, grotesque, rhythmic-dynamic, comic, tragic, everyday, or even ritualistic performance themes. This breadth of movement expression and thematic range has certainly been mirrored in her own work.

There are hundreds of examples. For instance, a dramatic, violent dance scene of servants' mockery of their mistress in Strindberg's *Miss Julie* (BBC TV); an easy-going, rhythmic Irish dance in a sunny field in *Barry Lyndon*, the Warner Bros film; an extended comic, swinging "Keep Fit" routine for



Gordon Curl questions Michael Platt BEd(Hons) MA, on hls career as a dancer, choreographer, Community Dance Leader, Director of Suffolk Youth Theatre and his views on Laban's contribution to these.

Michael Platt is well known in dance communities - not only for his large-scale Dance Productions, inspired teaching on Community Dance Courses, *NDTA* Conferences and *Inset* Courses at home and abroad, but also for his direction of some of the most *avante garde* and outstanding drama productions in the UK - productions which fuse dance, music



Le Mirroir du Couturier

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The Two Ronnies (BBC TV); lyrical waltzing in All's Well That Ends Well for the Royal Shakespeare Company; a ritualised entry for the court in The Duchess of Malfi; and a mysterious, grotesque dance of tempters in Havel's Temptation, (both for the National Theatre). She has choreographed numerous festive ball and other dance scenes with characters' interplay, such as in War and Peace and Vanity Fair (BBC TV), and a flowing forest-glade Farandole in As You Like It (also BBC TV). In contrast to all these and many others, an example of complete stillness at the end of a BBC TV series of Shakespeare's History plays. After the warfare with just 20 minutes to the end of filming, the Director made a surprise request for "a pile of bodies", a final tableau to include a hysterically mad Queen Margaret and her dead son. This with a large group of actors and to be held for three minutes. How did Geraldine achieve this? "Through improvisation" - an important feature of Laban training, long before it became standard student fare and also seen in performance work. She says she gave the actors an experience of quiet, sustained movement, "almost like a

ritual" as, one by one, from a distance, they gradually moved in and attached themselves, in utter silence, to the slowly forming group. All held position and then the camera work began.

Geraldine's words, and I hope the few other comments which I have been able to include, serve to indicate at least something of Laban's influence on her work. But I consider this is truly seen at its most obvious when she is rehearsing, working with performers, drawing effective, expressive movement from them. More than five decades of a life in dance, swiftly responding to the needs of the moment, and always sustained by her Laban training: "I owe it all to Laban".

Note: Revised from material first presented in the USA at a *Society for Dance History Scholars* conference, and from an article first published in *The Dancing Times*, September 2003.

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and drama to an acknowledged professional standard of performance. He is currently *Advisory Teacher for Dance* for *Suffolk County Council* and Director of the *Suffolk Youth Theatre*. Michael is also known for his writings in this Magazine, in *Dance Matters* and *Animated*. What Is perhaps less well-known, is his academic prowess, having gained a first class honours BEd and distinction MA in English and Drama It is small wonder that his practical dance and drama work are so deeply underpinned by his literary knowledge and skills. Michael undertook a post-graduate Certificate at *Bretton Hall College of Music Art and Drama* and has continued his

professional development with Guild Community Dance, Random Dance, Laban for Actors and DVB Courses).

Q1. Bearing in mind that

your own training was primarily In English and Drama, what led you to become so dedicated to movement and dance? When I began my career as a teacher of drama in Suffolk in 1987 I was fortunate to meet and work with an inspirational teacher and mentor: Scilla Dyke. In her role as the Advisory Teacher for Dance for Suffolk County Council Scilla offered a range of dynamic and stimulating training courses for people like me to whom dance was a new, unknown and rather frightening area of experience. I loved it and wanted more! Again, under Scilla's encouragement, I joined the County Youth Dance Company 'Splinters' directed by Caroline Mummer, where I discovered a new art form fusing creativity, expression and rigorous training. This weekly opportunity to dance, improvise, create and perform with others, was personally invigorating (physically and

imaginatively) and socially

liberating.



Metamorphosis by Suffolk Youth Theatre

Meanwhile, back in school as a new drama teacher, I found my new-found passion for dance was powerfully influencing and shaping my work with young people. I had been awakened to the importance of the body; I became fascinated with ways to nurture in my students a kinaesthetic awareness and body confidence - a being 'at home' in their bodies both individually and in relation to others - and the ability to express and communicate their ideas and feelings through gesture and movement. As my dance experience outside school increased so my confidence to experiment and taking risks with these students developed. The results were - and still are - tangible and overwhelming in their power. Dance educates people; it sensitises and ignites us - it has the capacity to connect our intellectual and physical dimensions through a current of imagination and lets us fly.

And then I discovered Laban! The Guild's *Leaders in the Community* training course was beginning in Ipswich and I signed up - completely unaware of what it was all about. Under the wisdom of Sam and Susi Thornton, Anna Carlisle, Maggie Semple and Janet Lunn I discovered an ethos of dance and movement, which I could inhabit. The course not only gave me an opportunity to dance, it also helped me to develop an underpinning philosophy and structure, which began to clarify, and unravel some of the intense sensations I experienced in and through dance. It gave me a language of words and movement through which I could articulate my ideas and thereby informed my ability to teach creatively and foster creativity in the responses of my students.

Q2. How would you make the distinction between movement appropriate to dance and movement appropriate to drama?

In my approach I see no distinctions in the initial stages of a project. I always begin from a movement base whether the focus is drama or dance. I use a combination of movement

games, physical warm ups, creative improvisations and technique exercises to address Laban Fundamentals of Body, Space, Dynamics and Relationships. I do this for the following reasons: - to discover the nature of the group - the individuals' and the chemistry between them - where we need to go to create a harmonious, trusting, and cohesive group to develop each individual's awareness of themselves as a unique body operating in space. The Fundamentals establish a sense of self within a team at the beginning of each session and requires each person to inhabit their body and take individual responsibility.

They develop a sense of community and shared responsibility within an ensemble by promoting interrelationships, spatial awareness, peripheral awareness and sensitivity. In my work the sense of group identity is fostered through movement. This is the movement training essential in all my work as a foundation and it will be ongoing - regardless of the drama or dance nature of the work. The difference arises in a dance context when the movement training will develop into a

rigorous technical training because the body will be the key means of communication and must be able to be articulated in order to express. The movement and the dancers are the key focus so the movement experience becomes more refined, more acute. In a drama context the movement experience must be matched by a corresponding vocal and musical experience, development of character and understanding of text, plot, genre, style. But my approach is to develop understanding of these aspects - vocal, textual, character - through the movement experience, movement observation and exploration. This is not to say the technical demands are any less in drama than dance.

In drama contexts I work deeply and thoroughly on Laban's Movement Fundamentals throughout rehearsals - the actors must inhabit their bodies, must be orientated in space, be able to draw on a range of dynamics and an ability to work intuitively with others. These Fundamentals are the ongoing training, offering each actor and the company a huge palette of choices - a range of possibilities - on which to draw. They offer the development of an ability to express and communicate from an informed body and mind. This movement training also fosters the link between an intellectual understanding of text/character and its vocal manifestation and an ability to physically inhabit the world of the drama and the space of the theatre.

As a director and choreographer crafting work for performance I see no distinction in my approach, whether I am directing a play or choreographing a dance. The organisation and placement of bodies in space to communicate an intention is always of paramount importance. The space as an architectural arena, inhabited by light and bodies really excites me. On reflection I realise that I choreograph a drama just as intensively as I choreograph a dance.

Q3 Do you think that the experience of aesthetic qualities 'for their own sake' constitutes an adequate justification for community dance?



Midsummer Night's Dream by Suffolk Youth Theatre

Within the movement experience of a community dance session it impossible not to experience aesthetic qualities of line, shape, pattern etc - these qualities are the foundations of our dance, the vocabulary we use, the 'alphabet'. We use these qualities to construct and choreograph dances that express artistic intention in the same way as we construct words into sentences to communicate meaning.

One of the responsibilities of community dance should be to educate dancers into an awareness of the power of aesthetic qualities so they are not used purely instinctively - without consideration - but from an informed standpoint whereby we can craft and select the appropriate aesthetic qualities which will enable us to articulate our movement ideas with clarity and impact. Sometimes the teaching of aesthetic qualities is submerged in the exciting energy of creating in response to a stimulus - of expressing, composing and improvising and being 'in the moment' of movement. This is an aspect of community dance, which is personal, social, creative and magical - but it is not all there should be. As movement practitioners we have a duty to learn and teach the fundamental structures, which underpin our practice. I feel there must be a balance between the experiential movement 'being in the moment' and of stepping back to analyse, to reflect and to develop an understanding of the importance of aesthetic qualities. I find The Art of Making Dances by Doris Humphrey is a very useful starting point for this reflective analysis of the power of aesthetic qualities to communicate intention. Agree or disagree with the author's strident comments on the rights and wrongs of dance making, the book provokes a reaction and an internal dialogue, a dynamic debate about one's own choreographic, movement and spatial

I mentioned the word balance - I think this is the key: that we experience aesthetic qualities and understand their significance - but that this is embedded within a context e.g. the exploration of a stimulus so that there is a clear intention to the application of aesthetic qualities. I think we should promote a willingness to pause in our movement explorations - to stand back - to analyse how we can use aesthetic

qualities to express and communicate our ideas.

Q4. What are the problems of choosing images which are too clear and concrete for dance interpretation?

Considering this question I reflected on those stimuli that have been particularly fruitful for me as a teacher and choreographer and also as a dancer. These are the stimuli which are like icebergs - the small percentage of which float above the surface of the water - this is the image or words which first jump out at you and awakens your interest and alerts your attention to the possibility of a starting point for dance. And then you dive deeper and discover the mass of the submerged ice below the surface - the enormous possibilities the stimulus has to offer. A dancer with a stimulus is like an archaeologist - we see the clue above ground and then begin to excavate, digging deeper. The most useful stimuli are those which lead to a labyrinth of possibilities and connect with other tunnels. Connections are important. They lead you back up to the surface to discover new images which act like signposts and send you scurrying down again to explore and uncover.

There are times when you think you have found a good stimulus and excitedly pursue it only to discover it just goes in one direction and then stops. This is the image or text which is too literal. Try as you might you can't take it anywhere else and the exploration becomes forced. When this happens I try a different approach and attempt to explore the image from a completely different route, often bringing in completely oppositional images or complementary ones that may spark off connections or contrasts and so move me away form a literal interpretation. If the image is too literal it means that you and the class have to work harder to explore its potential - or sometimes you must face reality and simply acknowledge that this particular stimulus is not the rich source you originally believed and move on to other sources!

Article reprinted from Movement & Dance Issue 23.3 Autumn 2004

Chair's Report Maggie Killingbeck

As 2016 marks the Guilds 70th year it is to be hoped that members of the Laban Guild for Movement and Dance have resolved to dance more in 2016. Further that they will have maintained that resolution until the AGM (2nd April 2016 at Trinity Laban) and the Summer School (19th – 21st August 2016 at the University of Bedfordshire). It is intended to celebrate this significant milestone at both events, including a movement choir able to accommodate 70 participants which is being planned for the final day of Summer School (Sunday 21st August) so please put the dates in your diary and celebrate with us!

Whilst enjoying yourself you could be enhancing your health and well-being. Studies have identified specific regions of the brain that are activated by dance; others have explored how the physical and expressive elements of dance alter brain function. Much of the research on the physical activity associated with dance shows benefits that range from memory improvement to strengthened neural connections. Mindful of how challenging times are Guild Council has establish a hardship fund a contribution from which it is hoped, will ensure that all Laban enthusiasts wishing to attend both/either event(s) will be able so to do. If you need support please get in touch with the respective organisers Selina Martin SMartin@LodgeParkAcademy.co.uk for the AGM and Ann Ward coursesofficer@labanguild.org.uk for Summer School.

The Heritage Lottery Fund bid team are finalising the documentation with a view to submitting at the end of January/beginning of February. Encouragingly we have received a number of letters of support including two from our patrons Bernard Hepton and William Forsythe. Plans for implementation are being developed. Sincere thanks go to all involved for the time and effort that they have given to this project. To Council members, notably Yael Owen-McKenna who has steered the process from inception to conclusion, and colleagues from partner organisations, particularly Helen Roberts from the National Resource Centre for Dance and Jane Fowler from Trinity Laban, we offer our grateful thanks; regardless of the outcome we have established partnerships which will continue into the future.

Our young technology team are bringing exciting possibilities to the table with regard to the use of social media - they have submitted plans to develop our Facebook, twitter, blog, Instagram and YouTube profiles over the next couple of years. I am given to understand that once set up these channels of communication should be relatively straight forward to maintain. Technology team thank you for the vision and energy that you bring to the Guild!

Happily I am able to report an increase in membership largely as a result of the training course in Lisburn and the Foundation Course in Bedford. The latter was an extremely positive experience insofar as ten students started and completed the course successfully. Moreover the students voiced their desire to continue their studies. The University of Bedfordshire is keen to host another Foundation Course; details will be circulated via eflash. Rhyan Parry has just enrolled on to the Foundation Course 11 students from Haberdasher's School in Monmouth while the Creative Dance Leaders Course based in Lisburn, Northern Ireland has fourteen committed members who have completed the first three weekends; Ann Ward reports that they are dedicated, hardworking and wholly embracing the work. Well done to all concerned and thanks to Ann for her sterling efforts in marketing and administrating these courses.

As regards membership I am very pleased to report that Sally Archbutt has accepted honorary membership of the Guild - her distinguished career is documented elsewhere in the magazine. Happy 90th birthday Sally.

Members are advised that Council proposes a shift to 'rolling membership'. We are aware that this involves ongoing activity for the membership secretary, however we understand that this is common practice for other membership organisations and an expectation from those joining. Janet Harrison our membership secretary assures us that this is her preferred option and that she anticipates that it will in fact make her life easier. We trust that the membership will support this change. Members may wish to note that, again in line with other similar organisations, Council has agreed to begin to phase out hard copies of membership cards. Instead, members will be advised of their membership number on line; this together with their contact details will be all that is required to obtain member rates for Guild events.

Again our finances appear to be in balance, that is currently income is covering outgoings. In order to continue into the future this has to be a priority. Special thanks go to Pam Anderton for the time and energy she has given to establishing a workable system for our accounts. Loma Lockie, whom members will be able to meet at the AGM, will be taking over as Guild treasurer although Pam will continue in a supportive role until the process of succession is complete.

Thanks go to Pam again and to Clare Lidbury for their excellent work in editing (Clare) and producing (Pam) the magazine three times per year. The magazine will be celebrating the Guild's 70th year throughout 2016. Thanks go to Sarah Semple also for distributing the magazine; the Guild is most grateful for the time that she has given to this role and we wish her well in the future. If any members have time to spare and would like to help please contact secretary@labanquild.org.uk

Sadly we will be losing two Council members this year. Rhyan Parry was co-opted for the year, but working full time and travelling from Wales proved to be more onerous than anticipated. Whilst not on Council, Rhyan will continue to be our regional representative for Wales. Similarly Liz Needham, a co-opted member of Council, has discovered that her voluntary roles elsewhere have become increasingly demanding. This being the case she has decided to resign. She also will keep in touch. We thank both for their contributions and wish them well. If any members with an expertise in marketing and/or fundraising have time on their hands or would like to enhance their CV please contact Louise Douse the Guild secretary secretary@labanguild.org. uk; we would be delighted to hear from you. Indeed if there are any members who would like to become involved with our sub committees or regional representation contact Louise and a Council member will be in touch.

As ever I would like to express my thanks to Council for their on-going support, generosity of time and energy in action. As Guild members are aware Council officers are wholly voluntary, many with full time working roles; they are indeed very special individuals without whom the Laban Guild for Movement and Dance would struggle to function; thank you all.

Training Committee Report Ann Ward

DANCE LEADERS TRAINING COURSE

The course in Lisburn has now completed the first four WEs on the fundamentals of Laban Analysis, as applied to leading creative dance sessions. The students have really engaged with the work and we are delighted with their progress. Michelle Cahill again taught an excellent weekend on "Space" and Ailish Claffey, new to the team, taught an equally excellent weekend on "Effort". After two weelends on teaching, taken mainly by Janet Lunn, the students will be ready for their mid-course assessments in April.

This course can be run wherever we have enough people to make it financially viable and we have possible venues in Surrey and Hertfordshire, so do register your interest if you would like to know more about a course near you.

FOUNDATION COURSE

Maggie Killingbeck has completed teaching her Foundation course with mature students at Bedford University and has enthused yet another group of "Labanites". We hope to meet some of them at the AGM and/or summer school. This course is highly adaptable and can be used in schools as the basis for after school dance classes or as an alternative for students who wish to continue dancing without entering for GCSE. For example, our Foundation Course is now a standard fixture at Haberdasher Monmouth School for Girls where Rhyan Parry has registered a new group

If you have a strong Laban background and would like to know more about offering this course yourself, please contact Ann Ward as below.

SUMMER SCHOOLS

There will be two Laban based summer schools associated with the Guild this summer; one in Maynooth organised by Kildare County Council, 18 – 22 July, and one run directly by the Laban Guild at Bedford University in Bedford, 19 - 21 August.

For information on any of the above or any aspect of training, please contact Ann Ward at coursesofficer@ labanguild.org.uk

Training Committee: Janet Lunn (Chair), Noeleen McGrath, Louise Costelloe, Sheila McGivering, Ann Ward,

Diary of Events

AGM and Conference

2 Apr 2016

Trinity Laban, Creekside, London

Contact: Selina Martin

Email: SMmartin@lodgeparkacademy.co.uk

Laban Guild Summer School

19 - 21 Aug 2016

University of Bedfordshire

Contact: Ann Ward

Email: coursesofficer@labanguild.org.uk

London

Trinity Laban Creekside

Box Office 0208 4699500 www.trinitylaban.ac.uk

9 Mar

Nora invites Aggiss, Burrows,

Fargion and Tanguy

13 Mar

U.DANCE 2016

16 Mar

Research Seminar - Dominic

Murcott (Trinity LABAN)

12 Apr

Zoe Dimitriou:The Chapter House

21 Apr

BA2 Choreography Show

The Place

Box Office 0207 1211100

www.theplace.org.uk

24 Mar

Divided 2016 - LCDS

15-16 Apr

Coal - Gary Clarke Company

12 May

Association of Dance of the African Diaspora

16-17 May

LC3 in performance - LCDS

19-21 May

LCDS International Week

EDge, Bodhi, Le Marchepied, Verve

11-12 Jun

The Casement Project - Fearghus O Conchuir

17-18 Jun Slap and Tckle - Liz Aggiss

23-25 Jun

London Contemporary Dance School presents EDge

Hiden Traces: Duke's Road & Flaxman Terrace -

Gabriele Reuter and Mattef Kuhmley

On Falling and Recovering - Hagit Yakira Dance

Sadler's Wells

Box Office 0844 412 4300

www.sadlerswells.com

3-5 Mar

Kaash - Akram Khan Company

6-9 Mar

Broken - Motionhouse

8-9 Mar

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Golden Hours (As You Like It - Anne Teresa De

Keersmaeker/Rosas

29-30 Mar

Stronghold, Mazur, An Italian in Madrid (premiere), Brisk Singing -

RADC 20-24 Apr

Life - BalletBoyz 22-23 Apr

JV2 - 2016

30 Apr - 1 May

Hip Hop Dance Theatre - Breakin'

Convention '16

4-21 May

Into the Hoods: Remixed - Zoo Nation Dance Company

5-6 May

Unison - Cecilia Lisa Eliceche

10-14 May

Tomorow and Terra Incognita -

Rambert

24-28 May

1984 - Northern Ballet

31 May - 1 Jun

Betroffenheit - Crystal Pite &

Jonathon Young

7-12 Jun

No Body - Lucy Carter/Michael

Hulls/Nitin Sawhney

20-21 Jun

Henri Michaux: Mouvements -

Marie Chouinard 24-25 Jun

Mixed Bill - LA Dance Project

29 Jun - 3 Jul

Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui/Russell

Maliphant/Arthur Pita - Natalia Osipova

6-8 Jul

barbarians - Hofesh Shechter Company

New Wimbledon Theatre

Box Office 0844 871 7646

10 May An Italian in Madrid, Burning,

Nomadic - RADC

Regional

The Atkinson, Southport

Box Office 01704 533333

Stronghold, Mazur, Brisk Singing -RADC

26 May

Life - BalletBoyz

Northcott Theatre, Exeter

Box Office 01392 726363

1 Mar

Imbalance - Joli Vyann 8-9 Mar

Stronghold, Mazur, Brisk Singing -

RADC

11-12 Apr

The Odyssey - Mark Bruce Company

15 May Life - BalletBoyz

Theatre Royal, Brighton

Box Office 0844 8717627

16-19 Mar

The 3 Dancers - Rambert

Churchill Theatre, Bromley

Box Office 0203 285 6000

21 Apr

Stronghold, Mazur, Brisk Singing -RADC

Deda, Derby

Box Office 01332 370911 21 Apr

EDge

The Brewhouse, Taunton

Box Office 01823 283244 26 Apr

An Italian in Madrid (preview), Mazur, Burning, Brisk Singing - RADC

Northern Stage, Newcastle

Box Office 01912 305151

4-5 May

An Italian in Madrid, Burning,

Nomadic - RADC

Gulbenkian Theatre, Canterbury

Box Office 01227 769075

3-4 Mar

Broken - Motionhouse

Yerma - Amina Khayyam Dance Co 10 Mav

EDge

28-29 May Breakin' Convention

The Courtyard, Hereford Box Office 01432 340555

6 Apr

Yerma - Amina Khayyam Dance Co 13 Apr

Dog Kennel Hill Project - Transitions

Dance Company

9 Jun **EDge**

The Point, Eastleigh

Box Office 02380 652333

17-18 Mar

27-28 Apr

An Italian in Madrid (preview), Nomadic (excerpts), Mazur, Dutiful Ducks, Stronghold (excerpts)

The Odyssey - Mark Bruce Company

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The Space, Dundee

Box Office 03001 231010 19 Apr

EDge

Theatre Royal, Glasgow

Box Office 0844 8717627 1-5 Mar go dance 16

Festival Theatre, Edinburgh

Box Office 0131 5296000

Triple bill - Phoenix Dance Theatre

22 May

Life - BalletBoyz

Hall for Cornwall, Truro

Box Office 01872 262466

17-18 May

Birmingham Royal Ballet inc MacMillan's Solitaire

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Box Office 01743 281281

5 Apr Sleeping Beauty - Matthew Bourne

21 Jun Unexpected - Jazz Dance Company

Laban-based dance classes

Belfast, Crescent Arts Centre

Contact: Brenda McKee

Monday: 5.30pm - 6.30pm **Adult Movement and Dance**

Email: brendamckee@btinternet.com

Cambridge Wednesday mornings 'Third Age

Dance' Cambridge U3A.

Contact: Maddy Tonque 01223 302030

Beehive Centre, Cambridge

Thursday: 2 - 3pm Contact: Filipa Pereira-Stubbs

Email: pereira-stubbs@vahoo.co.uk

Advertising Space

Back cover - £250; A4 page - £150; half page - £80; quarter page - £45

Classified adverts - up to 50 words at

A5 flyer - £40; A4 flyer - £50

20p per word

Please contact: magazine@labanguild.org.uk

