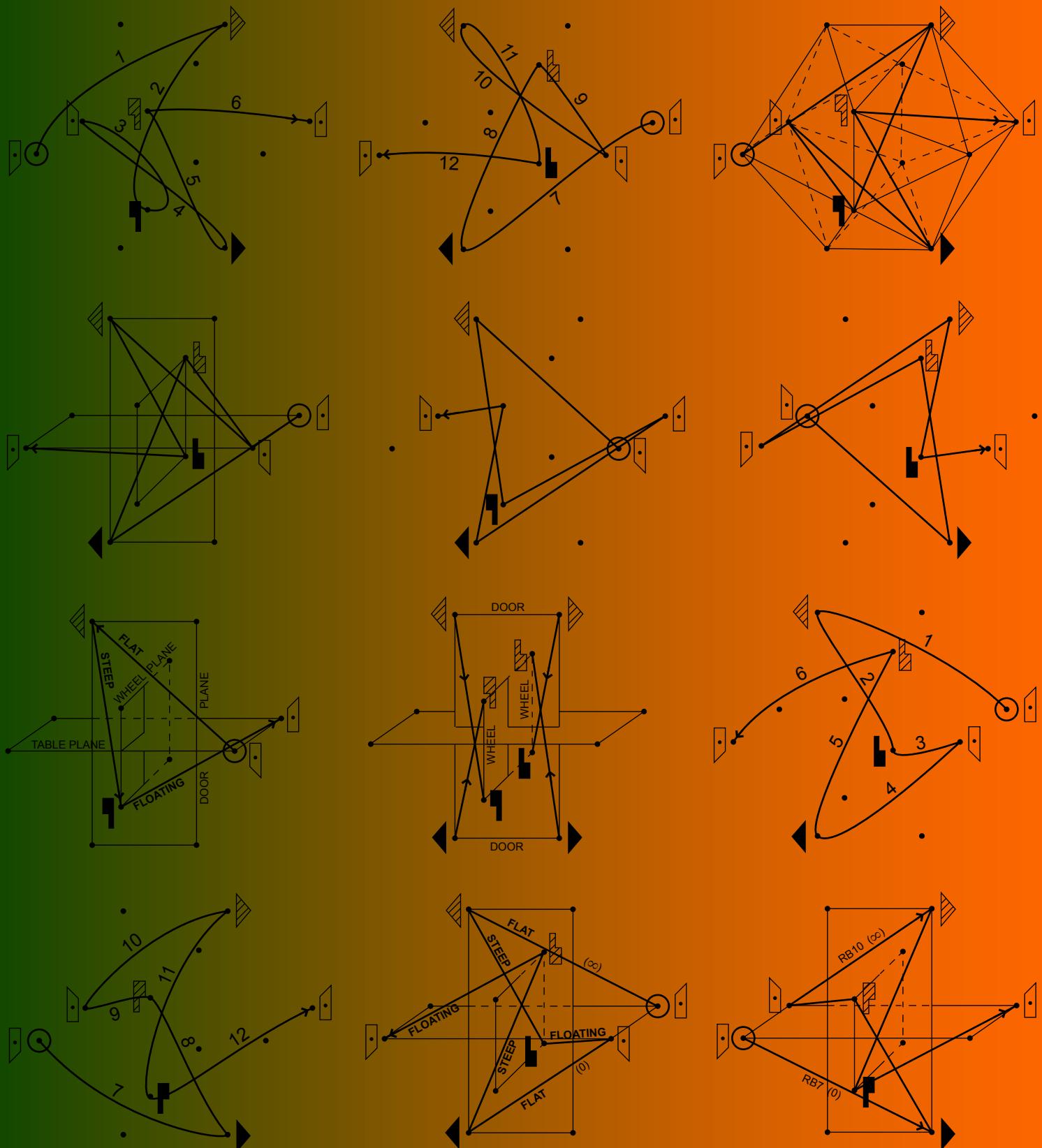


Movement, Dance & Drama



The Laban Scales and Rings



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Contents

Editorial	3
New Subscription Rates	3
Teaching Dance Virtually Maggie Killingbeck	4
You've been framed - LMA in online therapy Bridget Poulter	5
Lockdown - locked in Bariş Celiloğlu	6
Facilitating group sessions combining movement and writing sessions online Lani O'Hanlon	7
Laban Guild International Virtual Summer School	8
Ann Ward, Kirsten Kaluzynski, Jackie Richards, Urszula Borowska	
Olga, Laban and Shakespeare Darren Royston and Olga Blagodatskikh	9
Growing Old with Dance Madeleine Tongue	11
Mollie Davies PhD MBE FRAD 23rd January 1928 - 24th March 2021	12
Jean Jarrell, Dorothy Ledgard	
Report from the Trustees September 2021	15
Pam Anderton, Clare Lidbury, Darren Royston, Ann Ward	
Members' Classes	15

Editorial

I wonder how many people before lockdown in March 2020 had heard of Zoom: now it seems that everyone is using it (other videoconferencing apps do exist). If this edition of the magazine is anything to go by, using it has expanded people's practice, enabled participation, and brought people together from different countries and time zones to meet, move and dance, creating communities in ways unimagined by most of us. It is exciting that so many people have written for the magazine about their experiences of working with Zoom, highlighting how they have made using it work for them. It will be interesting to see how these experiences impact on face-to-face teaching, therapy, dance-making and so on, when, or perhaps if, we return to traditional ways of working.

Whatever aspects of Laban's work with which you engage do, please, continue to share your thoughts and practice, whether it is online or in person; I look forward to hearing from you.

Embodiment in Acting Practice



Copenhagen International School of Performing Arts, Copenhagen, Denmark

Organised by Dr Kiki Selioni Post-doc Researcher Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, Artistic director of The Makings of the Actor, CISPA (Copenhagen International School of Performing Arts), Labanarium, and hosted by CISPA.

Conference Venue: CISPA – Copenhagen International School

www.labanarium.com

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All individual subscriptions, with 6 online editions of our magazine, will be £20.00 (GBP) p.a.
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All current members will be contacted before the end of the year.
Enquiries: secretary@labanguildinternational.org.uk

Teaching Dance Virtually

Maggie Killingbeck

Teaching dance sessions on Zoom during lockdown has been an interesting experience. A significant advantage has been the fact that participants can access dance events from far and wide - for example, the Laban Movement Choir Project has recruited dancers from Ireland, Spain, Austria and Japan. Similarly, my Dance Exercise group includes weekly participants from Scotland, Wales and England. Another advantage is the fact that participants can be working on their computer, knitting, gardening or walking until a few minutes before the session is due to commence, change quickly and then engage: Zoom helps individuals use their time with maximum efficiency and for those participants who are time poor this is invaluable. A further advantage involves those participants who lack confidence in their ability. For such individuals working without observation by classmates is an attractive option. Indeed, in a Dance Exercise class for third agers, I have participants who have rarely, if ever, danced/exercised in their lives and would not dream of attending in-person sessions. Recognising that activity is good for them, knowing that the sessions address age related issues (posture, balance, strength, coordination, memory) and that they will be alone in their own homes, they are happy to join in. Moreover, the additional possibility that they can turn off their videos (risk assessment for such eventualities having taken place) makes all the difference. For some individuals, often those for whom exercise is very necessary, this is an exceptionally attractive option.

As regards disadvantages, in my experience both as participant and teacher/facilitator the most significant disadvantages involve observation. A particular challenge for the dance teacher/leader/facilitator is the difficulty of seeing individuals' responses. The observation of participants' movement responses is central to insightful guidance/nuanced comment/bespoke feedback/the development of appropriately incremental progression/well targeted motivational input (see Maggie Killingbeck and Margaret Whitehead "Observation in Physical Education" in Susan Capel, Joanne Cliffe and Julia Lawrence (Eds) *Learning to Teach Physical Education in the Secondary School 5th ed* (London: Routledge, 2021) pp.241-26). Seeing the physical responses of participants not only informs the verbal commentary of the movement/dance leader, it gives the dance teacher/leader/facilitator information about his/her impact on the group. In so doing it enables the facilitator to hone his/her practice in order to achieve maximum effectiveness with the group. Without the opportunity to see the dancing/moving bodies clearly the dance leader/facilitator can only make generic comments that may or may not be relevant to individuals within the group. In the longer term this can result in groups that lose interest, lack motivation, feel that they are not making progress/are unsafe and then disengage. Clearly, given the health and well-being advantages of dancing, this is wholly undesirable

This lack of ability to see virtual dancers in any detail has further implications. Body language/non-verbal messages (movement, posture, facial expression, vocal tone/volume) is significant in communication:

Body language is a silent orchestra, as people constantly give clues to what they're thinking and feeling. Non-verbal messages including body movements, facial expressions, vocal tone and volume, and other signals are collectively known as body language. Micro expressions (brief displays of emotion on the face), hand gestures, and posture all register in the human brain almost immediately—even when a person is not consciously aware they have perceived anything. For this reason, body language can strongly color how an individual is perceived, and how he or she, in turn, interprets others' motivation, mood and openness. *Psychology Today* <https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/basics/body-language>

Without the ability to observe participants' body language the interaction between dance facilitator and participant is compromised, and, is more exhausting as a result. Given that only 7% of our communication results from the words we use (see https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/Body_Language.htm [accessed 14.09.21]), this leaves both participants and leader with a lot of additional effort to understand each other. Assuming that participants are on speaker view, and given the requisite strength of vision and audition, they can see and hear the dance leader and, at the very least, they are able to engage with the dance/movement tasks. Their responses may be compromised however by insecure understanding. Words not reinforced by micro expressions and clarity of posture and gesture leave a lot of room for interpretation. Moreover, dancing alone at home means that participants are not reassured of the appropriateness of their responses because they cannot easily see the responses of others, and the security, motivation and stimulation that occurs when dancing with others is no longer available. As a result, participants often find themselves compromising their movement responses by staring at the screen throughout; an experience singularly lacking in satisfaction.

During lockdown the opportunity to dance virtually was a very positive experience and, depending on the nature of the event, virtual movement/dance activities may continue to have a role to play. Going forward however to celebrate the advantages and overcome the disadvantages those involved will need to adjust their practice. For example, greater repetition will enable participants to gain confidence in their dance/movement responses so that they are able to dance with freedom

from the screen. Reassurance that 'variations on the theme' are wholly acceptable is likely to ensure that participants experience the dynamic colouring and spatial orientation of the dance task more fully than compromising their movement response by the need to be accurate. Qualifying feedback is likely to be helpful also - 'good', apart from boosting confidence briefly is not helpful; 'Good you have captured the width in the

table plane clearly' is more helpful because it reminds participants of the movement focus. And finally, the more ambitious the teacher/facilitator's use of language, (images, sounds and descriptive comments) attached to the what, where and how of the content, the more rewarding, and possibly less exhausting, the experience is likely to be for all.

You've been framed - LMA in online therapy

Bridget Poulter

"Stay home": those words from March 2020 still send a chill down my spine. At a stroke, all my work ended and, with uncertainty about when I might practice again, I felt uprooted. Furlough on 80% of pay was not going to happen for a self-employed sessional psychotherapist working with body and movement. I was bound, stuck, earthed – and not in a good way.

After a week of cleaning everything in sight the charity I work for allowed us to offer online therapy to adult clients. A glimmer of hope but, I had to let go of my dementia groups and child clients. I felt I had abandoned them and had a physical ache from loss and separation. My elation at being able to practice was short lived, however. Would online body-oriented therapy 'work'? Could I be present, attune to clients and embody emotion without the connection felt in person? I began Zoom classes for my dance students, many of whom live alone, as it felt vital to continue our community, to be together whilst physically apart.

Teaching from my 'Utility Room Studio' initially felt really disconnected and exposing - although being able to see and hear others was infinitely better than making a video and effectively performing to myself.

My Zoom initiation complete and, having absorbed a recent book and online research into the dynamics and special considerations for delivering online/remote therapy, I felt more confident in contacting my clients to suggest we continue in this way. At the first session I am not sure who felt more nervous, although I aimed to give an air of containment and competence, which technology decided to scupper. Cue more abandonment and attachment issues... I am grateful and proud of my two women clients, one of whom feared technology, for taking a step into the unknown with me. Surprisingly, this shift from in-person to online facilitated some change and insight perhaps faster than with a 'traditional' space, strengthening collaboration and our therapeutic alliance. Working via Zoom was intense for both parties as facial expression and subtleties of gesture and posture were magnified, whilst the lower body and limbs were hidden from view but, the screen gave a spotlight to the heart zone bringing this symbolic sear of our emotions into sharp focus. That was exposing, tender and connecting.

As the weeks progressed, so did my curiosity and confidence in using this channel and I started to experiment with the confines of the screen, welcoming the containment and framing it gave the client, but also playfully exploring elements of boundaries and personal space by reciprocally moving closer and further from the screen and approaching from different angles. We each took this in turns or in unison observing how this felt both in body and mind. I also amplified use of the 'body scan' as part of the check-in process. For those unfamiliar with this mindful activity, one 'scans' the body from top to tail noticing but not dwelling on what can be sensed, felt, observed in our joints, bones and organs - my nose is itchy, my right hip aches, my knees feel cold etc. Bringing attention to our bodies without censor can reduce feelings of anxiety, ground, and centre, something we all needed in lockdown.

One client had embraced spontaneous movement in sessions and so we continued this online, using flow and shaping movements of hands, arms and torso to create a sense of relationship and empathy. We stood up, spreading arms wide, expanding our kinespheres, making space around us to breathe and replenish energy. With a small wellbeing group, I was able to initiate 'pass the movement' with one creating a rhythmical or flowing sequence we all followed and then 'passed' to the screen for the next person to take, change and develop. This worked well, inviting playfulness into the frame and enhancing a sense of emotional connection, the digital connection enabling us to join in synchrony and relatedness despite physical separation. Mirror neurons and kinesthetic empathy were at work evoking the sense of being seen, heard and understood - without words.

LMA also appeared in a concrete way through the act of using controls and touchscreen to connect. One dabs or presses buttons or the screen, glides to enlarge or shrink an image, slashes the laptop lid down (in frustration) at lost Wi-Fi, and uses direct focus to dial, and indirect when walking and talking on a mobile. Then there is twisting away to avoid bad news or punching a non-responsive hotspot. I'm sure we have all been there.

Covid and lockdown have been unkind, forcing disconnection (when all instincts urge us to cleave

together) and disrupting our lives and living. Yet, it has also shown the resilience and adaptability of the human spirits. For my practice, I feel enriched and more competent from having to embrace a different way of working and experiencing how core elements of Dance Movement Psychotherapy can and do 'work' remotely. Intersubjectivity – a way of feeling 'in' a situation with another whilst also maintaining objectivity – has been a key concept in supporting my online work, as has understanding the frustrations of technological meltdowns and impact on both sides, and the surreal quality of moving and speaking together from our homes and meeting in cyberspace. Furthermore, having a body-oriented approach and the frame or containment of LMA amongst other models, helped anchor myself and my clients in the here and now and in reality, reducing the risk of dissociation and depersonalisation digital media can bring.

Lockdown, locked in

Bařiš Celiloğlu

Last year, when the lockdown first started, news of domestic violence and incidents of femicide began to pour in from London and Istanbul; as a woman, I felt the horror of the situation very deeply. In the first two weeks of the lockdown I learned that 14 women in London and 21 women in Istanbul were killed by their husbands/boyfriends at home. I immediately decided to make a digital theatre project on this issue so that it would come to the fore because at first it was not covered in the news in every country, it was just mentioned on social media. First, I talked to writers and actors in Britain and Turkey, and they were very interested; at that time we were all confined at home and such a socially responsible project was urgent and important to us all. These actors and writers were artists who I have worked with over the years, and they knew my work well in one way or another. Later I thought of including Spanish, Australian and Greek writers and actors I knew, and I asked Victor Liapin, a Russian writer, to help me reach some Russian actors and he kindly put me in contact with some. Then I met Russian writers through John Freedman, an English director who worked in Moscow for years, and I approached poets and visual artists from Cyprus, Britain and Turkey. When they accepted to join us, the project suddenly became a big international project; the total number of artists finally involved in the project was over 70.

It took almost ten months to put the whole project together. For the first three months, I had meetings with writers on Zoom and asked them to research specific incidents of violence against women in their own country by briefing them on the subject. Then I asked them to write monologues in various styles: after meetings the monologue drafts were changed or shortened, and they were finally ready. Zoom rehearsals started with the actors and my recently

Bridget Poulter (MA Goldsmiths) is a Registered Dance Movement Psychotherapist and Private Practitioner, and UK Council for Psychotherapy trainee. She is also a Keep Fit Association teacher and attended modules of the recent Creative Dance Leaders Course to enhance her practice.

Dance Movement Psychotherapy (DMP) is a relational process based on the body/mind link, with the body seen as both an implicit and explicit tool for communication. Laban Movement Analysis helps therapists identify clients' patterns of movement that reflect/affect their emotional state and ways of relating and, through expanding their repertoire, effect shifts in both body and mind for improved wellbeing.

at the International Barcelona Film Festival, 'Award of Merit' to me and the whole Ensemble in the Social Justice category at the IndieFest of California and 'Best Original Script' for all our writers and 'Best Sound Design' for our sound designer Ceren Ayşe Özbudun, at the Athens International Art Film Festival. More attention is to come: a digital platform in Australia might screen it in the new year; digital platforms in the UK are very interested; there is the possibility that our project might be shown on Greek national television next year; and film festivals have been greatly interested in our project. After these film festivals take place, I would like to deliver it to many women's organisations all over the world so that they can show it. I hope that this project will make femicide more visible as an issue in all countries where it is screened, that it can create new conversations and put pressure on those who make and enforce laws.

I am truly grateful to every single artist who helped me realise this project. Without their intense and passionate work, this project would not have been possible.

Bařiš Celiloğlu is a graduate of The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, London. She migrated to London in 1997 after acting and directing on stage for a few years in Istanbul. In Britain, she has performed in venues such as The Young Vic in London and at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. She has recently directed The Parade by Loula Anagnostaki (for which she was awarded "best director" by Direklerası Audience Awards of Turkey), Two Lost in a Filthy Night by Plinio Marcos and Death and the Maiden by Ariel Dorfman staged at the Etcetera and Arcola Theatres in London as well as touring to Istanbul, Athens and Thessaloniki successfully. She has completed the Laban Guild Creative Dance Leaders' Course and wishes to advance her skills in Laban's work to utilise it further in her devising work.

Facilitating group sessions combining movement and writing sessions online

Lani O'Hanlon

acquired skills in Laban (I had had the chance to do the *Laban Guild Creative Dance Leaders' Course*) were utilised. After a few rehearsals, the actors began recording themselves and sending the recordings to me. By giving advice on light and camera angles on Zoom after a short number of takes we achieved successful videos. This process took a few months but finally the editing process started: this was the most difficult and the longest process.

The project is a mini-series of eight episodes which relates to the homicide timeline of domestic violence. This was very important to me because I learned from women's organisations in England that men kill their wives in eight stages. The first two stages are when men develop the relationship quickly by treating the woman like a queen in a short time; during the third stage they begin to restrict a woman's freedom (such as talking on the phone with their loved ones) and may start controlling all their relationships and their movements (eg the times they can go out shopping); verbal and emotional violence begins in the fourth stage and turns into physical violence in the fifth stage; in the 6th stage, the beating increases; in the 7th stage, the man plans to kill; and in the 8th stage he kills. Knowledge of this timeline affected me deeply: I wanted the project to reflect the stages of violence in conjunction with the escalation of dramatic tension. Using these eight stages has caused the film to be very long but I did not mind that at all because I was aware that it was going to be a record of our times, and of lockdown, in terms of recording the facts about domestic violence and femicide.

So far, our digital theatre project has won the 'Best Experimental Film' award from Berlin Indie Film Festival, 'Best Poster', for our designer Çiğdem Boru,

I have been leading workshops in Creative Dance and Creative writing for the Waterford Healing Arts Trust along with a panel of artists who deliver aspects of the Iontas arts (see <https://www.iontascastleblayney.ie/index.php/about-us>) and the mental health programme for Waterford and Wexford mental health services. I normally lead a one-hour session in either the Dept of Psychiatry or on the longer-term therapeutic and creative programmes, working closely with the Clinical Nurse Manager, Lesley Power. Over time I have built a relationship with participants and developed a particular structure in dance sessions - working with warm-ups, working in pairs, smaller groups and then altogether using Laban fundamentals, circle dances and other fun dances. In creative writing sessions, we have produced a pamphlet of poetry and the participants have become skilled in their use of metaphor and the senses.

I would not have thought that it was possible in this setting to work online but because of super-human effort by Lesley Power, we managed. Online I was working with a new group, who happened to be in one location, and it took a lot more effort to connect without the liveliness we usually have in person. Although some of the participants had been in my creative writing class and a couple in the dance workshops many had not so did not have that experience. I began with creative writing, as we thought this would work well, but some of the group felt sluggish and it took a lot of effort on my part to keep coming up with themes that would interest them and, as many were new to this, they wrote only a line or two and did not continue; I needed to come up with quite a few creative stimuli for one hour. Technically

it was difficult to hear people and understand what they were saying and, as I had to rely on Lesley to repeat what they said, I felt a little removed. In addition, we were not able to communicate through body language in a natural way as we would normally. When we combined movement with creative writing there was more interest and vitality. As the group were confined to one place and in lockdown, Lesley was determined to make it work and we persisted with Trojan efforts from her side. She gathered laptops and microphones and eventually positioned the laptops and screens in such a way that I was able to see each one around the table; eventually we learned to pass the microphone around like a talking stick. Although we got better at working remotely this could never compare with being in the space together.

In creative movement sessions Lesley, once again, positioned the screens so I could see each participant. I began using basic warm-ups for body awareness, agility, strength, control and coordination, and Laban Fundamentals to experience, observe, understand and create. I also used movement prompts that relate to known movements in life and childhood (eg. games, work, playing on the beach, cleaning the house etc.) so the muscle memory could be rekindled and recalled. Rather than passively imitating the dance leader each participant assumed leadership and control of their gestures and saw them mirrored back by the other participants.

When I am physically in the space, participants build on the first movement to create a sequence of three to

four movements, teaching a partner and them creating a movement sequence of eight to ten movements and more in the bigger group. Online each participant was limited to a couple of gestures, but we built sequences by combining all of our movements and this increased movement memory and vocabulary. When I asked which movements they liked best participants mostly said their own but over time they picked another participant's movement. This subtle change showed that they had come to relax enough to be able to observe and appreciate the other's movement and to experience what it was like to move like the other, building relationship with themselves and the other through the body. Limited and contracted movement became a little more expansive and creative but, online, participants were unable to touch and connect body to body. When we were dancing together in the space, I would see how this softened and relaxed the body, the jaw releasing and letting go, shoulders dropping and the weight coming down more into the feet. Often there were moments of exquisite stillness and beauty when the rest of the group paused to witness two participants moving together. This was not possible online as we all felt more observed because we were on screens and with staff coming in and out.

Progressing into writing after dance I found that participants were more energized and less passive, the writing work often mirrored the movement. For example, if our movement stimulus was being on the beach, digging and making sandcastles, paddling, splashing, swimming, skimming stones etc. we then wrote about being on the beach; over time participants wrote more and their confidence increased. Participants wrote about their lives, the work they did in the past, places and people they knew and loved, and again this built relationship within the group as we discovered more about each other with personal information and physical work experience exchanged through the writing and movement practice. I also shared poems with a rich vocabulary and varied rhythm often mirroring the rhythm we used in the movement session. Participants rose to this challenge taking turns to read these poems and then writing themselves.

Laban Guild International Virtual Summer School 21st August 2021

Ann Ward:

Following last year's successful day by Zoom, we asked Maggie Killingbeck if she would set up a repeat experience for our members; our thanks go to Maggie for organising this. The first session was taken by Maggie, the second by Viv Bridson and the afternoon by the members of the Movement Choir Project – Susi Thornton, Janet Lunn and Maggie.

Although there were not quite as many participants as last year - we had a lot of apologies from people who were taking the opportunity to take a staycation away - we still had people from Scotland, Ireland and

I had not combined movement and writing practice with this group before as in my mind they were two separate disciplines, however, having explored this over the last year I found more and more ways of combining creative dance and the written word. Studies show that the most successful therapeutic practice of dance has come from the combination of speaking and movement used together, and I saw this beginning to work well with this group and saw future possibilities. I was also glad to hear that the participants loved the work and that it felt nourishing and supportive.

Online can work well with regular creative writing groups as participants can tune in from home for a two-hour session. For this particular group, the advantage was that they were not left without their arts programme during the different lockdowns, and I did not need to drive to classes as I usually do. Although working online with this group is not a long-term solution, the participants said they appreciated the contact and enjoyed the online groups; I do not underestimate how essential that was. But, when we meet in person, magic happens, a magic that is hard to name or quantify but has everything to do with presence, touch, breath, movement, communication, connection and relationship.

Lani O'Hanlon is an experienced dancer, movement artist/teacher/trainer, writer and award-winning poet. She integrated Laban Fundamentals into her work after completing a two year training course in Kildare. She is currently facilitating creative writing and movement programmes in mental health, late-stage dementia and palliative care with the Waterford Healing Arts Trust and body centred creative writing for Waterford Libraries, the Arts Office and The Molly Keane Writers Retreats; she facilitates creative writing and movement retreats online and in the natural landscape and is the author of Dancing the Rainbow-Holistic Well-Being through Movement (Mercier Press 2007). laniohanlon.com

correctly in our bodies and teaches the movements at a pitch perfect pace; I found both the moves and the music inspiring. She had very cleverly incorporated all the different planes and levels to move us physically in a creative way, warming up the muscles gracefully. I was loving the dancing, without realising we were still just on the warm-up part. I particularly liked the way she opened up the thoracic area in her 'winged angel' little medley as I call it. I asked Maggie afterwards for the music she used as I wanted to incorporate her warm-up bodywork into a morning routine for myself (far more fun to dance it than doing my yoga asanas). A big thank you to everyone.

Jackie Richards, Viv Bridson's session
This session was inspired by the writings of Rumi, about being in a beautiful garden - exploring it, experiencing the beauty in our heart as well as through the senses - then a sensation of suspicion and unease which led to great panic and dashing around seeking help, as if in a war zone, which eventually resolved itself as we found the 'safety' of our 'seat' and came to rest again.

I was looking forward to the 2021 Laban Summer School and wondered what the day would be like. Viv Bridson was the guest presenter so set the scene for the day following the warm-up. I first knew Viv at the Laban Art of Movement Studio at Addlestone in 1966 where she was a lecturer with responsibility for first year students, including me, so it was a delight 50 years on to attend her session. She was enthusiastic, kind, very knowledgeable and thorough. What impressed me most was the seriousness of her topics and themes and how she so skilfully enabled us to explore the themes in meaningful dance motifs and movement. We had clear guidance but also were able to incorporate our own preferences and forms of expression - and we could relate to others as well. Her session went so far beyond dance being just for having fun and recreation or for keeping fit and mentally alert. This session was

so much more, covering serious topics about important issues facing humanity today, with challenging tasks. All participating dancers could get fully involved and have meaningful, thoughtful, emotional and/or spiritual experiences with topics and dance sequences that were adult in content, important, timely and challenging. I was inspired and appreciated Viv's session; thank you Viv.

Urszula Borowskah, Movement Choir
The movement choir title was "Together - It is Possible" and the themes were: devastation; harmony of nature; catastrophe; agitation → action, political persuasion → commitment to change; and finally, unity in renewed harmony. The Choir sequences gave the chance to interact, to observe and to talk "face to face" in the Rooms and in the larger Group.

It was a long time since I had worked with Laban Movement with others. I noticed that there was much movement around and above the body but that the participants did not often explore the deeper areas towards the floor although I "bounced" along close to the floor at times. Expressing a theme was much more of a challenge for me, choreographing for Movement to Music comes easier although I can mime and act, but to be able to compose the idea suggested within the remit, when I am used to abstract Movement, and to do so quickly, was a challenge and I would like to do again. I thoroughly enjoyed the entire day.

Kirsten Kaluzynski
I have also had the good fortune to join a few of the Movement Choirs with Maggie, Susi and Janet - all of which I have enjoyed immensely. I find myself constantly thinking 'why didn't I think of doing this before? - it's such fun' but that is what I love about the choirs. They teach, I follow, and the whole thing is effortless and joyful. To me this is the pleasure of dance - to be free in our bodies and not have to think!

Olga, Laban and Shakespeare Darren Royston

falling into madness, as past events keep re-occurring in her mind, and she replays the physical qualities of the murder scenes while sleepwalking.

Olga Blagodatskikh:
I first came into contact with the work of Rudolf Laban while studying at RADA in London. With Darren Royston we learnt the basics of Laban for Actors, considering movement in the techniques of acting, including dance and stage choreography and character work. Then, focusing on the plays of Chekhov and Ibsen while undertaking the European Greats RADA course, the lead tutors Andrew Tidmarsh and Brigid Panet introduced the ideas of Laban with a different viewpoint. They considered movement in a different sphere. The emphasis was working on a text of

Kirsten Kaluzynski, Maggie's preparatory session
I absolutely loved Maggie's Body Preparation session on the virtual summer school day. Maggie has this eloquent way of describing how to hold and stand

classical theatre and understanding movement not only as physical movement, but movement in any action at all, including mental actions, and most importantly, the interaction between people.

This dramatic application impressed me greatly. For example, on the course we explored one of Laban's "elements" of Force / Energy which Andrew Tidmarsh termed as "light touch" or "strong touch". He gave examples of how it appeared in common interaction in real life. He said:

When you want something from a person, what do you? You apply some energy or force in whatever form, not necessarily in a physical way of course. It might be in your speech, in your tone of voice, your gaze in your eyes, and how you position yourself to address that person.

Andrew gave an example of interacting in daily life with his own daughters, which I particularly related to, being a parent myself. We considered how, by being strict or giving orders, we sometimes put too much energy into the situation. Oftentimes, the result is then opposite to what we intended, and to what we actually wanted to achieve. By using the opposing effort, by using a "light touch" instead, we may actually create a different response and therefore produce another result. These same Laban elements could be applied in interactions in real life, some would say, as a social anthropological way of looking at movement.

As actors, we are concerned with this perspective: how human beings interact in real life. As actors, on a daily basis, we interact with others in performance, while imagining that we are standing in our character's shoes. It's not just me, Olga, interacting with my stage partner. It is also me, and my character, interacting with other actors and their characters. The Laban approach allows me to consider my own patterns of movement, and the choices I make for my character at each moment in the drama. I can consider how different characters may have different movement patterns, and how these interact with others – both the actor and the character. I have to be aware of how these patterns match the text – the lines that the playwright has given me. For classical drama, I believe this is particularly relevant.

The most recent project that I have been involved in was an online production of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, where I overtly used the Laban approach in the rehearsal process. This was part of the Shakespeare Play Reading Club that I have been running for the past two years, which was in effect a product of the pandemic. Basically, performed as a spontaneous sightreading online performance by professional actors from all around the world, the play is slightly edited to fit a three-hour session. We approach each Shakespeare play using different exercises or techniques in the process, so that actors with different experiences come to exchange their skills and knowledge, with the aim to discover new interpretations. It is informal and presented live online as an exploration

rather than a finished product, so it is a wonderful way to try different techniques. After two years I thought: could we try a Laban approach in such a situation?

At first, I had thought that the Laban approach might be too complicated for this type of online session, considering the extensive detailed material. This complexity had become apparent to me when I began translating Brigid Panet's book *Essential Acting: A Practical Handbook for Actors, Teachers and Directors*, (London: Routledge, 2009) into Russian. I was overwhelmed by the many exercises available for an actor to use Laban to study their role: in the process the actor dissects many areas of the movement and then restores everything into one cohesive performance in the moment.

Then, one day, I decided, well why not? The actors were willing to experiment – although few of them had any prior experience or knowledge of Laban. I suggested a very simple beginning, but the actors were very enthusiastic and actually we went deeper and explored more facets than I thought possible in such a short space of time.

We were able to do two sessions on the play *Antony and Cleopatra*. I began introducing one element (factor of movement) at a time, selecting it for each act or scene, and leading the actors in a short exercise before the lines were spoken. These exercises used physical movement, to enable the actors to feel the element with the whole body. We moved in our own space while connecting on Zoom. We played with objects as props to show the movement being expressed to the external world. Then we explored the text of each scene, considering how each character would move in space. After a few scenes, actors gave their feedback, and this was very revealing, as they had thought about things differently; they were thinking in terms of movement and they were keen to explore more using this method. The fact that text-based theatre could be inspired by movement-based work was a revelation to some of them.

Brigid Panet's book suggests ways to use the Laban approach with the Shakespeare text. The writing gives clues to the changes in character such as in rhythm, the pace, the breathing, the way linguistic structures such as with alliteration (repeating the same letter in a sequence), use of vowels versus consonants. It is very noticeable when the actor thinks about these textual things in terms of movement.

Darren Royston comments:

This ties into very much into my work this month in Thailand, with the Moving Toolbox. The young actors were asked to find different Laban qualities for different moments in the play. In particular, we considered the sensation of time. Time is experienced in a suspended sense when the mystical and ambitious thoughts take over the characters. Lady Macbeth has to use the power of words and images of power to convince her husband to move from the suspended dream state into an active drive. As Macbeth is alone again

the sustained quality dominates and leads him to hallucinations. Then as the adrenalin of the murder surges, the sudden efforts attack the drama – with broken lines, short phrases, sounds, overlapping sentences, unfinished sentences and disjointed ideas. The final mad scene of a sleep-walking Lady Macbeth then replays all these different states, being watched and analysed by the doctor and the lady-in-waiting, who can piece together the evidence to know now that she is guilty in the murders. This oscillation between sustained movement and sudden actions contributes in some way to what makes the Shakespeare play part of the horror genre. The plan is to give this studio presentation at Hallowe'en and invite the audience to feel these horrific energy changes, be they demonic, chilling, or nerve-racking.

Why should a movement approach be used with classical theatre, and in particular with Shakespeare? Olga has the last word on this question:

Olga Blagodatskikh:

After this long lockdown, where we have worked so much online, and so internationally, I believe there is now a need to expand more in physical space. The

Recently, musing on dance for the elderly, I have begun to wonder when, exactly, does old age begin. Is it a state of mind, or body or a cultural construct?

I belong to the generation which saw professional dancers retiring from the stage around the age of 30, their careers in dance at an end. At the time, this seemed acceptable, and growing up I assumed that was the age dance came to an end. In my teenage years most of my friends gave up on dance so I wondered, was I already too old for dance? Then I found a way forward when Helen Lewis started her classes in modern dance and began training her students in Laban's work. Helen, who trained in pre-war Prague with Laban's pupil Milča Mayerová, brought his work to my native Belfast and so a new meaningful world of dance opened up, which continued when Helen created a performance group of her more talented students. Our training in Laban's approach changed us all, both in dance and outlook, and, when Helen began to choreograph her holocaust experiences, we understood how Laban's approach had given us the ability to interpret what Helen needed to say.

Dance in Belfast was not without risk, serious risk in the seventies and eighties, as civil strife was in full swing with bombs, no go areas, endless road-blocks and security checks. Getting to class or a performance had a certain amount of risk and family members often questioned whether it was worth taking. Helen and her dancers knew the value of dance and, although

danger is always that an actor's head can be divorced from their body. We need to join it to the whole body – thinking how the whole body moves and connects. I hope soon we can return to using the whole body and let this analysis infiltrate the whole physical performance. The Laban approach can be used from the very beginning and applied to the first readings of plays, to explore the role in a physical way from the beginning of rehearsals. We need to now put our body back onto our zoom head!

Olga Blagodatskikh is an actor, voice over artist, ballroom dancer and educator based in Moscow, Russia. Passion for classical English theatre brought her to London to study Shakespeare at RADA, where she played Lady Macbeth, the French King in King John, and Jacques in As You Like It. Olga is the founder and host of the Shakespeare Play Reading Club. Her recent credits include The Opposite Sex (based on The Women by Cl. B. Luce) with MIDAS Theatre, Shakespeare's All's Well That Ends Well with The Show Must Go Online, Richard II and Romeo and Juliet with 60 Hour Shakespeare.

Growing Old with Dance

Madeleine Tongue

struggling at times with the difficulties imposed by such conditions, everyone carried on.

In my fifties I moved to Cambridge and found no class that catered for my age group. I approached the University of the Third Age which hosts numerous classes to ask if I could start one as their remit opens classes to the over 55s. They expressed astonishment and suggested no one would be interested but indulged me and advertised Third Age Dance. The class was over-subscribed and I continued teaching until the pandemic closed it in 2020.

Now, in my eighties what do I see and feel? Over the decades there has been an explosion in classes for older dancers all over the country, all well attended. The Laban Guild has been hugely influential in underpinning this success with summer schools, movement choirs and workshops and this continues. Here, in Cambridge, we have had three independent practitioners teaching Laban based work and the University of the Third Age now offers seven dance classes in their 2021-22 prospectus.

As we age, the body and its abilities dictate what we might consider to undertake physically and yet the mind so often deceives us into accepting we are less able than we imagine. Families and society often reinforce this construct for those in their eighties and nineties and how easily we can succumb to their belief that 'dance' might be too much for us, or even not appropriate.

My own energy levels are unpredictable on any day, and I often find I grapple with the body/mind dilemma wondering which will win.

This summer I held a weekly class in August for those who have grown old with me. We found we could still physically dance but more importantly we still needed dance: this need exists irrespective of age, akin to appetite or the need for company. Our old bodies hold inside a movement language that needs to be

Mollie Davies PhD, MBE, FRAD 23rd January 1928 - 24th March 2021

Jean Jarrell

Mollie was born in Bristol to a typical working-class family; her father and one of her uncles were leather merchants. She learnt to read, she said, by tearing off the newspaper in her granny's outdoor loo however she always said she was grateful to her parents who encouraged her reading by giving her books even though there were no books in the house. Early schooling was another matter: as she said she would probably nowadays have been categorised as delinquent. One of her early reports stated, "Mollie is a born leader but unfortunately she tends to lead others in the wrong direction". She was suspended quite a few times and one of her disappointments was that she was forced to stay at home when the school was visited by Queen Mary.

During the war her mother refused to allow her to be evacuated and she spent many nights with her granny under the kitchen table eating cheese and pickled onions. Bristol of course suffered extensively during the war and Mollie's house was hit at one point although not destroyed.

Having obtained an undistinguished school certificate, she went away to Weston-Super-Mare for the sixth form. In the March of that year her father died and having left very little money, it came to Mollie to support both her mother and her aunt for the next 40 odd years. However, following school Mollie went to Nonington College of Physical Education for three years where, as she said, she sauntered through three unremarkable years not excelling at anything apart from teaching, which she loved. Following this she was employed at Saint Angela's Ursuline convent in the East End of London where she started dance classes which have continued to this day; it was a tough beginning, but she thoroughly enjoyed it. Because things were increasingly difficult at home, she reluctantly decided to go back to Bristol and live at home teaching first at Badminton School and subsequently at Redland Teacher Training College where she took over from Veronica Sherborne.

Around that time Mollie attended several dance courses relating to the work of Rudolph Laban and met Mary Wilkinson who was working at the Art of Movement Studio and who encouraged her to go there for further dance studies. Here Mollie came in contact with Marion

expressed and we ignore it at our peril. I know what I need, and I have to find it for myself in order to be me. As we began to move again those body parts that had been dormant for too long, we grew physically and emotionally, the empty dance space inside each of us was filled once more with the joy that dance brings.

Maddy Tongue is currently completing a book on Helen Lewis' story in dance.



Mary Magdalene circa 1959

throughout England and Scotland.

In the early 1980s Mollie became aware of the international organisation, Dance and the Child International, or daCi as it is widely known. Pursuit of opportunities for children and young people to dance had always been a dream of Mollie's and it was decided to investigate setting up a National Chapter, and in 1985 daCi UK came into being. Then it was decided to make a bid to host the international conference in the UK at Froebel College in 1988.

Mollie always had a strong belief in helping others to realise their potential in the same way she had been given opportunities to develop as a dance and academic professional. She was not afraid to appoint recent graduates who, with encouragement and mentoring, were allowed to flourish. Many of these former students/colleagues have gone on to make major contributions to the dance profession. At her memorial a frequent comment was "I would not have been able to do it without Mollie's encouragement."

Following her retirement Mollie helped to set up/ advise on dance degree courses in the private sector including London Contemporary Dance School, The Royal Academy of Dancing and Bird College Conservatoire for Dance and Musical Theatre. She tutored six doctoral students and wrote a revised second edition of her book *Movement and Dance in Early Childhood* (2003) where she integrated the theories of Rudolph Laban and those of Froebel and other early childhood theorists. In 1992 she was

awarded an MBE for services to dance education, at a time when honours were rare in the field of dance, and in 2005 a new dance studio at Roehampton University was opened in her name.

Mollie was in all senses a facilitator and was never happier than when she was helping others. As Dr Richard Ralph stated in his contribution to her memorial:

There was about Mollie Davies an aura of calm and rational kindness which exhibited itself in her facial expression and physical disposition. A smile was ever-present - indeed, Mollie often spoke when smiling, reminding me of Kenneth Clark's lovely phrase 'the smile of reason'. Mollie drew others to her and around her, for her physical presence and her intellectual gifts attracted her peers and gave them access to a world largely free of self in which all that mattered was the subject in hand. And the subject in hand usually concerned the welfare of children and their holistic development, the interests of young dance students and teachers pursuing their vocation, and the health of the institutions and staff members to whose care they had been entrusted.

A number of people have written of how Mollie impacted their lives.

Linley Campbell, former Lecturer in Physical and Health Education, Edith Cowan University, Western Australia:

In 1979 I was fortunate to be able to attend the Laban Summer School at the University of London. I enrolled for the Education stream and so I met Mollie Davies the teacher of this course. Mollie consolidated my understanding of the Laban Principles of Movement through a wide variety of practical dance experiences. Her ideas were not only shared with my Teacher Education (Primary) students in Western Australia



Early dance project at Froebel involving children and dance students

but served as a springboard for the creation of many classes over my teaching career. I will always remember Mollie for her warm, friendly manner and the enjoyment she brought to our sessions. She reinforced my belief in the significance of dance education and for that I am eternally grateful. RIP Mollie and thank you.

Susi Thornton:

I have very fond memories of Mollie who I met when I went to the Art of Movement Studio in 1958. Mollie, with her partner Mary, was starting a dance production group, Orchesis, and I was privileged to be invited to come into the company. We had a lot of fun but worked hard preparing programmes which we took to teacher training colleges up and down the country. Sam came and helped us by playing the tape recorder for our performances and one day Mollie said "Sam, you've got a good pair of legs, you must come and dance with us" and he had, and he did, and that was the start of his deep and enduring love of Laban's 'movement for all'.

Dorothy Ledgard, former secondary school teacher, dance specialist teacher in primary education, and PE and Dance Education lecturer at the University of Wolverhampton:

Mollie Davies influenced some of my teaching of movement through her book *Helping Children to Learn through a Movement Perspective* (1995) in which emphasis is on children's learning. The central message is that movement not only "helps to produce a well-tuned and articulated body but it also plays a role in the development of ... thinking and expressing and socialising skills" (p. IX). The book describes in detail ways in which movement activities can be presented to help children learn to move and move to learn.

This book draws on Davies' experiences of teaching at nursery, primary and secondary levels which informed her research into how the development of children's movement is of central significance in the learning process. She gives an analysis of movement using teacher-friendly language, uses this when analysing photographs of children's movement and in describing in detail examples of activities which demonstrate learning. The book is recommended for those working in the education of young children - in the planning, observing and recording of movement experiences.

From Davies' book I learnt that, when planning physical activities for younger children, the emphasis should be on a wider range of learning outcomes than those on which I had focussed when teaching older students – that is, on more than accurate performance and understanding of how to adapt physical skills in a range of activities. She highlights how teachers can help children learn how to move and also how teachers can support, extend and enrich children's movement through a variety of activities which enable children to move in order to learn.

Davies states that "Movement permeates the complex process of early growth and development unifying the physical, cognitive, emotional and social aspects of life" (p.49). A central concern of teachers when working with young children, in all activities, is to find ways of unlocking children's linguistic potential. Davies recommends planning movement activities which are accompanied with action words to extend children's verbal as well as movement vocabulary.

An example of this in practice occurred when one wet day my class of 5-year-olds had been denied outdoor play. They said they wanted to go out to play – to skip, jump, splash and kick in the puddles. So, our music lesson became a dance lesson which focussed on specific action words. Firstly, we sang new words to the tune of 'Here we go round the Mulberry bush'; we sang "We are going out to play... on a wet and windy day". Then we went into the hall where, at the children's suggestion, we began skipping around the puddles, striding over... creeping towards... tip-toeing through... jumping in the puddles.

The song gave a structure for repeating the actions to improve their co-ordination and balance. By adjusting the speed of the verses, I was able to suit the dynamics required for each action eg. strong jumps, light tip toeing. As we sang our song, we emphasised our pronunciation of the action words. We also recognised the size of the varied actions eg. large, wide strides, or bent knees to spring and land on two feet when jumping to make a big splash. We explored whether we felt happier when walking or skipping around the puddles and which action was the most fun. We learn the spatial words – around, towards, over, in - and the short or long length of time needed for each action.

This adult led activity started with the children wanting to play in the rain but gave them an extended movement experience by focusing on specific actions, structuring them into a dance which captured their imagination, and giving opportunity to explore and recognise their emotional responses to their movement. Each action word was written on the board, helping to label and preserve the movement experience (Gerhardt (1973) in Davies (p.31)) and, through responding to questions involving a range of vocabulary, their linguistic ability was being developed.

I knew that young children have a natural appetite for moving, that they respond to challenges they see in their environment, be it walking along a low, narrow wall, climbing on to gates, kicking and throwing, and moving for its own sake when spinning or jumping up and down; Davies' book helped to develop my teaching so that my pupils became skilled, creative and imaginative in a range of movement-oriented activities.

Helping Children to Learn through a Movement Perspective (London: Hodder and Arnold, 1995) was updated and revised as *Movement and Dance in the Early Years* (London: Paul Chapman Publishing, 2003).

Report from the Trustees, September 2021

*Pam Anderton, Clare Lidbury, Darren Royston,
Ann Ward*

Thanks to Zoom, the Trustees have been able to hold regular meetings, including Darren Royston from Thailand. We can now confirm that the Charity Commission has accepted our new name – Laban Guild International, also known as the Laban Guild, and the new Constitution

At the moment we are offering a free subscription for anyone interested in joining us and will be instituting the new rates from 1 January 2022 (see page 3). There will be one world-wide flat rate for all on-line subscribers. Hard copies of the magazine, which we plan to produce six times a year, will be available and for which there will be an extra charge to cover postage. All current members and potential subscribers will be sent a reminder in November, so that regular payments can be amended in good time.

Pam Anderton has now completed the scanning of all the A5 Guild magazines from 1947 to 1991. These are now available as pdfs on the new Magazine Archive page of the website and are an invaluable research tool. With the current use of Zoom, we hope to become a truly international resource for anyone looking for information concerning Laban and his work. We hope members/subscribers will make a habit of regularly checking out the website and contributing their own information on classes and workshops.

Progress has also been made on the possibility of restoring the grave of Rudolf Laban and Lisa Ullmann. Members may remember that back in 2013 there was concern about the neglected state of the grave in Weybridge cemetery. The grave had originally been purchased by Lisa Ullmann and she was the last known owner. At the time Guild funds were insufficient to justify the cost of renovation but now, with Geraldine Stephenson's legacy, the Trustees feel this would be a good use of a small portion of the bequest. Thanks to Valerie Preston Dunlop and Helen Roberts (NRCD), Pam is now in contact with a niece of Lisa Ullmann and a great granddaughter of Rudolf Laban. Both are happy that we should go ahead with the renovation. The work will go ahead as soon as possible.

In August the Trustees asked Maggie Killingbeck if she would again organise a virtual day of dance and our thanks go to Maggie and those concerned for a successful day (see report elsewhere). Maggie is also piloting a new 50-hour online Foundation Course in Laban Studies, authorised by the Training Committee. This is an exciting new venture and could lead to furthering our international presence. We wish Maggie

and the course members every success and look forward to receiving reports on the course.

The Trustees are working to consolidate our new status and building for the future; we are already attracting enquiries from both home and abroad. So do remember to check out our website at www.labanguildinternational.org.uk

You can also contact the Trustees at any time at trustees@labanguildinternational.org.uk.

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Please contact: magazine@labanguild.org.uk

Members' Classes

Adult Movement and Dance in Belfast

Contact: **Brenda McKee**
Email: brendamckee@btinternet.com

'Third Age Dance' in Cambridge

Contact: **Maddy Tongue**
01223 302030

Weekly Drop in Classes

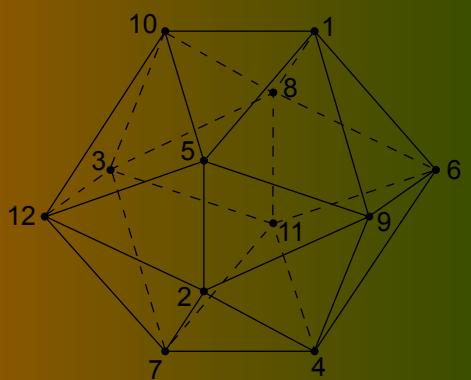
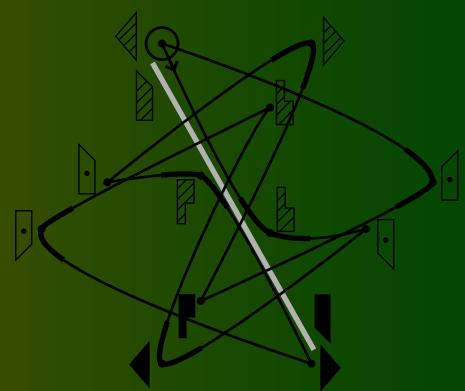
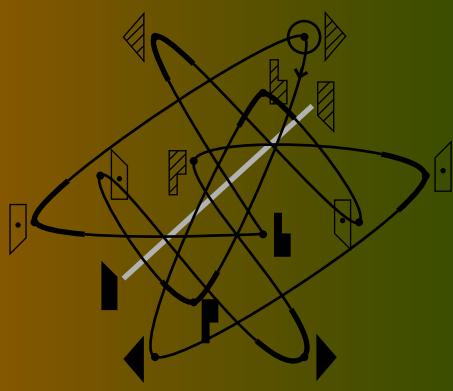
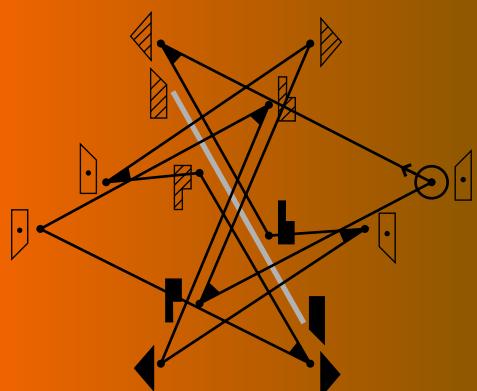
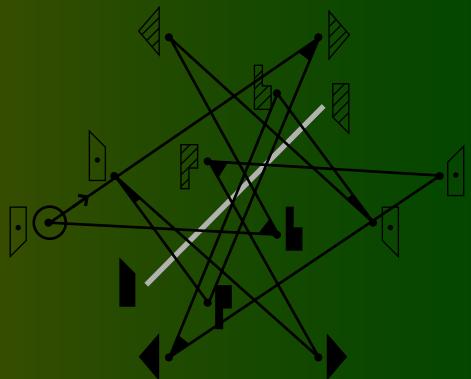
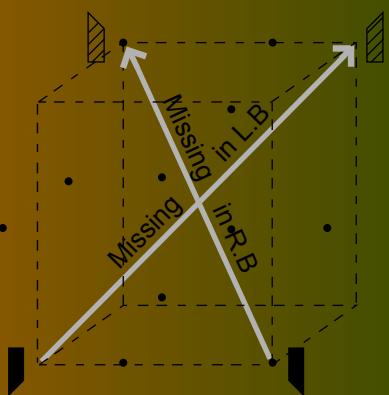
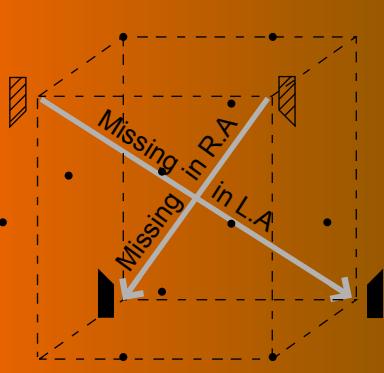
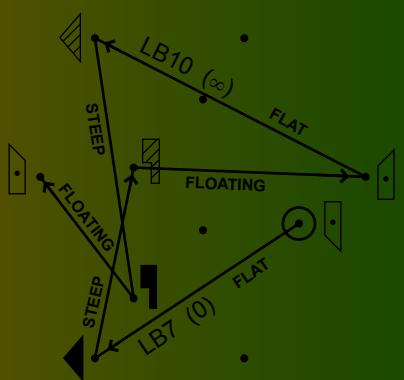
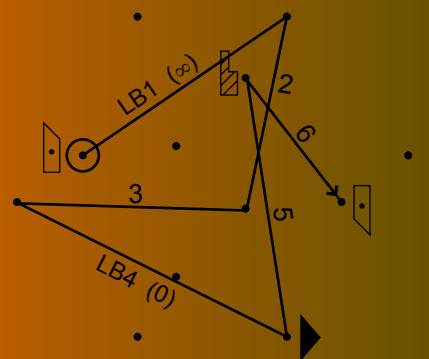
Led by **Viv Bridson**
Every Sunday at The Place (16 Flaxman Terrace WC1) from 12.00 – 13.30.

The class is for those who are trained or would like to be dancers, actors or performance artists. Viv does not teach Laban theory, rather, in the tradition of Jooss and Sigurd Leeder who developed their professional training from Laban principles, she uses her knowledge to structure the class and the material.

£9.00, concs £7.00, unwaged £5.00 – pay in Studio
Contact: danceprojects@btinternet.com

Weekly Workshops

Led by **Jenny Frankel**
Taking place on Tuesdays from 12 noon to 1pm at the Primrose Hill Community Centre, 29 Hopkinsons Place, Fitzroy Road, London NW1 8TN
Fee: £10 per workshop
Contact: 07970 536643
Email: jennyfrankel.laban@gmail.com



The Laban Scales and Rings