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Movement, Dance & Drama

Walli Meier at the 'Open Door Centre' in Athens

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Editor: Dr Clare Lidbury
43 Bittell Road
Barnt Green
Birmingham
B45 8LU
Email: c.lidbury1@gmail.com

Editorial Team:
Dorothy Ledgard
Pam Anderton

Correspondents:
Committee: All Trustees
Email: trustees@labanguildinternational.org.uk
Subscriptions: Ann Ward
Email: secretary@labanguildinternational.org.uk
Drama: Darren Royston
Email: drama@labanguildinternational.org.uk

Pre-printing Production: Pam Anderton
Email: magazine@labanguildinternational.org.uk

Printing: Mickle Creative Solutions
30 Simmonds Road, Canterbury CT1 3RA
Phone: 01227 780001

Distribution: Dorothy Ledgard
Email: DRLedgard@gmail.com

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ERROR CORRECTION

Please accept our apology for the incorrect information on the front cover of the 2021 Autumn issue - Vol 41 should have read Vol 40.

Contents

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Editorial

This edition of the magazine is focussed on Walli Meier. The wonderful tributes to her as a friend, teacher and mentor make remarkable reading; my hope is that she was aware of her tremendous impact on those who knew her. Her thought-provoking Laban Lecture (from 1998) is republished here, and, as an example of Walli's belief in the benefits of creativity to well-being, we are also republishing Dr Jenny Elliott's article on Arts Care, an Arts and Health organisation based in Northern Ireland.

Other items in the magazine include a report on the health of the new hubs that have been developed and a brief case study on the application of Laban Movement Analysis in Movement Psychotherapy, both of which make interesting reading.

All the trustees of Laban International have contributed to this magazine, but it would be truly beneficial if subscribers and readers would contribute too. Perhaps you could write something on a Laban-based teacher/mentor who made an impact on you, or a Laban-based practitioner whose work has influenced yours? Maybe we should say thank you to these people while we have the chance.

Occasional Series: Recent Publications

Dr Clare Lidbury (LGI Trustee)

There is a tendency, perhaps particularly in the UK, to think that Laban's work has had its day but a brief survey of publications from the last year reveals that for many his work, in movement analysis, education and notation for example, is still relevant. Thus, "Troubling the Frame: Laban Movement Analysis as Critical Dialogue" by Crystal U Davis, Selene Carter and Susan R Koff in the *Journal of Dance Education*, October 2021, examines "the effects on student learning when Laban Movement Analysis is promoted as a universal tool for all dance forms rather than as a particular cultural perspective on how to perceive dance". It clarifies "terminologies and their biases, the cultural context in which Rudolf Laban developed his principles and system of movement analysis, and [discusses the] ramifications and potential solutions for how best to apply Laban Movement Analysis across dance forms". (See the full abstract and link to the article at https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15290824.2021.1971673)

Susan R. Koff's *Dance Education: A Redefinition* (New York: Methuen Drama, 2021), although focussed on dance education in the USA, examines Laban's significant contribution to the development of movement and dance education in the context that dance education is part of the foundations of a well-rounded education for all. The 5th edition of *Learning to Teach Physical Education in the Secondary School,* eds. Susan Capel, Joanne Cliffe and Julia Lawrence (London: Routledge, 2021) is aimed at all student secondary physical education teachers; Maggie Killingbeck and Margaret Whitehead's chapter, "Observation in Physical Education", ensures that Laban's theories have their place. As is now quite common this book has a useful companion website available at https://routledgetextbooks.com/textbooks/9780367209629/

Despite Labanotation having fallen out of favour in the UK, it flourishes elsewhere hence the need for *Body Variations*, issue 10 in the Advanced Labanotation series (London: Dance Books, 2022) by Ann Hutchinson Guest, Raymundo Ruiz González and Andy Adamson. Although seemingly for advanced notators some fundamentals of the system are discussed thus it will be useful to many. At the other end of the scale an introduction to Labanotation is presented in "The communication of movement, a movement of communication," (*Good Sport Magazine* issue 5, November 2021). Dutch Breakdancers/choreographers Rose van Zijl and Nas Hosen used Labanotation as an initial point of interest in their work *Reposition,* and in the transcribed conversation they discuss with Clare Lidbury how dancers and choreographers communicate and the value of Labanotation in capturing movement intention.

Margareta Ingrid Christian's *Objects in Air: Artworks and Their Outside* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2021) discusses how Laban, as one theorist amongst many, "drew on the science of their time to examine air as the material space surrounding an artwork, establishing its 'milieu,' 'atmosphere,' or 'environment'" (https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/O/bo85901741.html); chapter 4, "The "Kinesphere" and the Body's Other Spatial Envelopes in Rudolf Laban's Theory of Dance" focusses specifically on Laban.

Finally, *Tribute to Kurt Jooss* was part of the on-going Insiders/Outsiders festival (on-line, December 16, 2021). It focused on one of Laban's principal followers who, with Sigurd Leeder, applied Laban's theoretical work to developing a meaningful dance/theatrical language. Marion Kant fronted the discussion, and the main contributors were dance historian Laure Guilbert (*Danser avec le IIIe Reich: Les danseurs modernes sous le nazisme*, Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 2000) and biographer Patricia Stöckemann (*Kurt Jooss und das Tanztheater* (Munich: K. Kieser, 2001). Rather than a tribute it was a verbal biography, with little sense of acknowledgement, gratitude or admiration of Jooss's work conveyed. Nonetheless, for those now familiar with Jooss, it was informative and can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIf_e_be27s

LGI Hub Update

Darren Royston (LGI Trustee)

I am pleased to report that many online discussions have occurred to initiate collaboration and interaction between practitioners who share similar aims and work in the same professional field. If you would like to connect to these hubs, please do get in touch with each separate organiser. You may decide you wish to create an autonomous group to focus on another area of dance and movement and bring others together on a shared theme or topic.

Movement Choir Hub
This hub continues to create Movement Choir projects for all to participate in. The group plans both online and face-to-face events to bring people together to explore themes in a creative way, using various elements of Laban's harmonic theory in practice. Using the online forum Zoom, participants respond in their own way to tasks directed by leaders. Some sessions are conducted as large groups, with opportunities for smaller break-out rooms, before coming together to create a continuous performance to recorded music at the end of the event. Contact susithornton38@gmail.com for more information

Movement for Well-being Hub
This Hub recognises the importance of Dance and Movement as part of the current focus on Wellbeing, considering physical social contact, mental health and rejuvenating the human spirit as we look to a future after the pandemic. *Susi Thornton* explains the current activities of this Hub: "The members of this hub are exploring aspects of creativity which enable us to feel motivated, excited and give us a sense of purpose and well-being. We have been able to see wonderful work with children in Austria and to share our experiences. We have been pondering what we want to give and receive from this Hub. It is a place for people of like mind to come together and share their common interest in movement, creativity and how it can be used and experienced for well-being. This is proving to be a privilege and delight."

Darren Royston has had opportunities while being employed in Bangkok, Thailand, to develop movement training using the "thyrsus" (sticks made from bamboo canes) to interpret Laban's sequences within spatial scaffolding. Based on Laban's choreutic scales and inspired by stick-dances performed by demon-characters in Thai Khon classical dance-drama, this work develops awareness of social distancing and finds architectural connections through the extended kinespheres of participants. Participants work together in one group yet maintain a 2-metre distance around each other. He has termed this 'Harmonic Interactive Healing'.

This Hub is looking at ways to use the funds ring-fenced for training and practical courses with The Sesame Approach (Drama-therapy). It is hoped that a training event, a wellness workshop, can occur later this year on in 2023, and that this event can pay homage to the work in therapy by Walli Meier. For more information on the Well-being hub contact susithornton38@gmail.com

Movement Notating Hub
(Motion Capture, LMA, recording and reconstruction)
Raymundo Ruiz González has agreed to coordinate this newly formed hub, with the aim of considering projects that continue to explore Rudolf Laban's focus on how movement and dance can be analysed and recorded, using different media and technologies as well as the internationally recognised Labanotation. Raymundo worked for many years as assistant to Ann Hutchinson-Guest and was a contributor to her new book *Body Variations*, Number 10 in the Advanced Labanotation series (London: Dance Books, 2022). Raymundo is currently based in Paris, researching new technologies and motion capture, in order to analyse and record UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. Initially, the hope is to connect those individuals working as notators, reconstructors, movement analysts, and researchers in the history of notation systems. Contact Raymundo Ruiz González rayrojo3@hotmail.com for more information on this hub

Moving Actor Hub
(Dance and Movement as a Dramatic Art)
We have now started to connect people together who are using the Laban approach in theatre, TV, film, opera, musicals and all forms of dramatic performance, as well as those involved in drama training for professional actors, youth theatre, and school drama curriculum. Online communication has enabled practitioners to share their experiences. We would like to hear from you if you use Laban-based ideas in your work in drama as an actor, director, choreographer, teacher or theatre practitioner. Current hub members are busy: *Olga Blagodatskikh* is continuing online Shakespeare play reading, and developing a one woman show as an actress, using Laban's Approach as developed by Brigid Panet; *Sue Dunderdale*, former Head of Masters' Courses at RADA, has recently published her book *Directing the Decades: lessons from fifty years of Becoming a Director* (London: Routledge, 2021) – Sue, who worked with Jean Newlove and supported the work of Rudolf Laban in actor training, will contribute to this magazine later in the year; *Jonathan Parr* is currently studying for his M.A. in Acting at the Theaterakademie, Munich and is working on a movement project, incorporating effort study; *Cecilia Dorland*, Artistic Director of Scena Mundi, will direct a production of Shakespeare's *Richard II* for the "Staging Royalty" Festival at the Sorbonne, Paris, France in April 2022 - the rehearsal process will use Laban-based movement training to explore character, develop moving tableau and re-imagine the medieval idea of the "danse macabre" as a physical motif throughout the tragedy; *Dr Kiki Selioni* **(**Affiliate Research Fellow**,** Royal Central School of Speech and Drama**,** University of London) continues to consider the value of Laban-based ideas in actor training in her research and practical events; and Darren Royston plans to involve Laban-based workshop at the forthcoming Bangkok World Theatre Festival in 2023.

At the "Acting Methods Reconsidered: New perspectives in Acting Practice in a Metacovid World" Conference, in Marathon, Greece, (14-30 July 2022), the Moving Actor Hub are proposing to present sessions to consider Laban's legacy in actor training, with a focus on significant Laban Guild individuals, such as: Marion North - Dramatic Personalities (actors awareness of the meaning in shadow movements); Geraldine Stephenson - Historical Styles (using a Laban approach to create period dance & movement for performance); Jean Newlove - Dramatic Dynamospheres (using the scales in actor training); Gordon Curl - Platonic Modes (creating crystal structures as stagecraft); Walli Meier - Psychological Types in Effort (therapy and drama link); and Warren Lamb - Shape/Effort interactions (shaping the character). The Hub hopes also to consider concepts such as the Movement Choir in developing ideas of the Satyr Plays as ancient dance theatre performance, using a Laban approach to dance drama. (Physical exploration of the Satyr Plays was initiated by Professor Yangos Andreadis at the University of Athens in 2009, when Darren Royston was invited to direct a movement project based on Sophocles' fragmentary satyr play, *Trackers*.) Actors interested in being involved should contact Darren directly, as should those interested in any aspect of this hub. darrenroystondance@gmail.com

UNESCO International Dance Council News

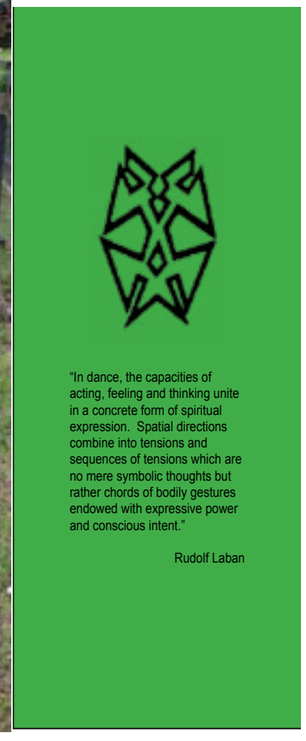
Laban Guild International is a member of the UNESCO International Dance Council. We are particularly interested that the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage continues to identity eligible dance forms. Darren Royston has been attending performances of Khon dance-drama in Thailand (inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2018), and the 2021 committee has now inscribed the Southern Thai dance drama, called 'Nora', see - https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/nora-dance-drama-in-southern-thailand-01587

As noted elsewhere in the magazine, Raymundo Ruiz González is researching ways to use motion capture and Labanotation to record Intangible Cultural Heritage dance cultures.

You are invited to attend the UNESCO International Dance Council WORLD DANCE CONGRESS in Athens, Greece between 6 – 10 July 2022. http://2022congressathens.cid-world.org

Renovation of Rudolf Laban and Lisa Ullmann's Grave

Pam Anderton (LGI Trustee)



The renovation, held up due to Covid issues, is due for completion by the end of February. The central section is to be replaced by a stone slab with the logo and inscription, and the headstone will be renovated. The logo was designed by Laban in 1939; he gave permission for it to be used by the Laban Guild in 1953 (see the letter from Lisa Ullmann in *Movement and Dance*, October 1972, p.15). The text is taken from *A Vision of Dynamic Space* (p. 52), a compilation by Lisa Ullmann of Laban's drawings and sketches, published in 1984 but long since out of print.

The LGI trustees propose setting up an event to celebrate the renovation of the grave possibly on 1st July, the anniversary of Laban's death in 1958. The trustees also propose producing an ebook from *A Vision of Dynamic Space* to launch around the same time.

Laban Movement Analysis and Dance Movement Psychotherapy

Constance Novis

As a recently qualified Dance Movement Psychotherapist, I find Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) a useful means of communicating very precisely and succinctly with my supervisor about the quality of movement I have seen a client using in a session: it is not judgemental but purely descriptive.

I do not have a dance background; I spent many years on the stage singing principal operatic soprano roles before pivoting to a career in psychotherapy. LMA was completely new to me when I first encountered it as I studied for my MA in Dance Movement Psychotherapy at Roehampton University. “Dance Movement Psychotherapy is a relational process in which client(s) and therapist use body movement and dance as an instrument of communication during the therapy process. [It] is an empathic creative process practiced as individual and group therapy in clinical, community, and educational settings, as well as in private practice” (https://admp.org.uk).

To help organise the concepts in my mind and in my body, I compiled my own LMA Effort Bank. I undertook this is a creative activity using different colours to categorise the effort qualities, states, and drives. I also came up with an acronym to help me remember the effort states Weight, Time, Flow, and Space. The metaphors that describe effort qualities are a rich resource for me to draw upon as I put myself in my clients’ shoes (except we normally work barefoot or in socks to stay in better contact with the floor and therefore remain more grounded in ourselves). LMA helps me answer the question I ask myself every time I see a client: what’s it like to be you today?

In my studies I was also struck by the way Laban related Jung’s Four Functions of Consciousness to the four LMA effort factors, for example, that Flow corresponds to emotional feeling; Weight with physical sensation; Space with thinking; and Time with intuition. As well as extra weekend workshops at Roehampton University with Layla Smith, my learning about LMA was enhanced by a day-long workshop at the Labanarium at the University of Surrey with Dr Katja Bloom. Here we embodied States and Drives. I learnt from Dr Bloom that LMA is good for clinical preparation, not so much during a session, but then again afterwards to describe what did and didn’t happen. She also taught me that knowing where I am in weight, time, space, and flow helps me get a feeling of where a client is.

Here is a brief clinical example of how LMA is helping me build a therapeutic alliance with an 8-year-old boy I will call J. We have recently begun to work one-to-one on a secure telehealth platform. J has a 3-year-old sister and his parents have recently split; he is much loved by each parent and well cared for. He has a slow working memory, low self-esteem, and strong anger. He has also been diagnosed with ASD and ADHD. He is a great mover and takes lessons in a martial art. He loves to swing his head and shoulders so fast side to side that he blurs on the screen in front of me. He says he feels like a tornado is inside of him, and ‘If I go slow, I’ll die’. When I see him move and move with him, my impression is that bound flow, quick time and strong weight are his preferred efforts, though there is a sense of timelessness about this movement, which is not in the here and now but could go on forever. There is only the movement and no thinking.

As I continue to work with J and reflect upon my observations, using LMA to describe these qualities makes communicating with my supervisor easier. The people in the multidisciplinary team do not know about LMA so I think of different ways to describe what I am seeing and feeling in my body when I move with J. Here is where the metaphors in my Effort Bank are helpful.

Constance Novis (B. Mus, MA) graduated in music from the University of Toronto and has had a career as an opera singer performing with, amongst others, English National Opera and Opera Holland Park. Now, following post-graduate study in the Department of Psychology, University of Roehampton, she works as a qualified Dance Movement Psychologist. For further information see https://humanbeinghumanmoving.com

Lockedown Locked In Update

Recently we featured an article by Barış Celiloğlu on her film *Lockedown Locked In.* It was an international project on domestic violence which attracted over seventy writers, actors and directors, created and filmed during lockdown, and informed by Celiloğlu’s experience on the Laban Foundation course.

Since publishing the article the film has won more awards – in addition to winning Best Experimental Film at the Berlin Indie Festival, best poster at the Barcelona International Film Festival, Best Original Script and Best Sound Design at the Athens International Art Film Festival, the Award of Merit in Social Justice and Protest category at California’s IndieFest, it has now won an Honourable Mention at the Tokyo International Film Festival and the Audience Choice Award at the London Lift-Off Film Festival.

Walli Meier 1925 - 2021
Tributes from colleagues and friends

Susan Scarth

Walli Meier arrived in England from Berlin in 1934, aged nine. She followed her mother and stepfather who had landed in London a year earlier, the year Hitler came to power in Germany. Walli’s early years were full of uncertainty, loss and confusion and it was in 1935, aged 10, that she was sent to Buckhurst Hill, Epping Forest, where she stayed with a Mr Linder and his sister Catherine. They were a Quaker family who ran a small school, and it was the influence of Mr Linder, an engineer with a love for the arts, that stayed with Walli all her life. After a year or so, she was sadly taken from Mr Linder and sent to a Quaker school in Stockport, and then from there to Westcliffe Boarding School, Weston Super Mare. Walli was not a ‘good’ pupil, she was energetic and practical, wanting to organise games with the younger children and build things. Despite the academic challenges Walli managed to leave school with sufficient qualifications in Physical Education and other subjects and sought work as a trainee teacher. In 1945 she gained a place at Nonington College of Physical Education where she trained to become a professional teacher of Physical Education. Nonington was an innovative college influenced by Swedish gymnastics and dance. Walli spoke fondly of those years, the education – especially Lorne Primrose’s dance classes - and the friends she made there. Once a graduate Walli gained employment at several London Schools, including Honor Oak School in South London, where she was noticed by the then Schools Inspector, Ruth Foster. Miss Foster clearly recognised Walli’s creative talents and recommended she take a year’s secondment at the Art of Movement Studio in Addlestone, Surrey.

In 1954 Walli embarked on this very special year of education, tutored by Lisa Ullman and an ailing Rudolf Laban, and never looked back. Walli really connected with the material and, being assessed by Laban one day, he asked her why she was always fighting and suggested it would serve her to find more softness in her expression. She was somewhat shocked by this very personal remark, but she listened and often spoke candidly of her ‘fighting’ Effort life – after all she was a survivor.

So, Walli survived many years as a teacher in schools, establishing a particular way of working with children with special needs. She was greatly influenced by Veronica Sherborne’s Relationship Play model of dance in special education. Sherborne was herself a pupil of Laban. One of Walli’s pupils at Queensmill School whom she remembered with great warmth was Stephen Wiltshire. They met many years later at his 2007 London art exhibition, when Stephen recognised her immediately as “Walli Dance!”

The next important step Walli was to make was gaining a post as Senior Lecturer at St Gabriel’s College in Camberwell. Although she prevaricated over this decision – never thinking she was good enough – during the next seventeen years (1956 – 1973) Walli enjoyed some rich years of teaching, supervising, and developing her ideas about special needs and dance. She also persuaded Jean Clark, her life-long friend and travelling companion, to join her at St Gabriel’s as a lecturer in Education. It was Jean who some years later brought Walli to Suffolk to join her in retirement.

I had the pleasure of meeting Walli in 1988 at the Laban Centre in New Cross where she held the post of Principal Lecturer in Dance from 1973 until 1985. She was in charge of the One-Year postgraduate

course, developed the Movement and Dance in Special Education introductory course, and taught Choreological Studies and Movement Observation. In her last years at the Laban Centre Walli was instrumental in encouraging Dr Marion North to bring the MA in Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) from Hahnemann University, USA. In 1988 she was a part-time lecturer teaching Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) on the DMT course, which she continued until 1993. It was so exciting to witness her shifting her body's Shape, employing dynamics (Effort) to emphasise characteristics, and occupying different levels and planes in Space to demonstrate how personality is revealed through movement.

This summary of Walli's life cannot truly illustrate the immensely positive impact she has had on generations of dancers, teachers, counsellors, psychotherapists, arts therapists, and special needs dance teachers. I should also add shop keepers, painters and decorators, army colonels, actors . . . the list goes on. Before and since her 'retirement' Walli influenced people's lives through workshops, summer schools and short-term residencies across the world - in Cologne, Halifax in Nova Scotia, Athens, Tromsø in Norway, Sao Paulo, Edinburgh, and Milden Community Hall in Suffolk.

Walli was so much more than a teacher – she was an artist and a dance therapist. She exuded creative energy, and it was this creative vitality that found her facilitating workshops at the Champernowne Trust Summer Retreats, invited to introduce LMA to Nordoff Robbins Music Therapy students for ten years, choreographing at the Open-Door Summer School in Athens, for people with cerebral palsy, and training bereavement counsellors in Movement Observation skills. Following her move from London to Suffolk in 1998, she became an active member of the community dance network, keeping a keen interest in Dance East as this new organisation made its mark on the Suffolk dance scene. It was this connection that brought Walli and Michael Platt together, with whom she collaborated over many years at Suffolk Youth Theatre. During these Suffolk years Walli worked alongside Anna Carlisle and the Laban Guild to develop the Phoenix Project, bringing an elite group of dancers together to learn Laban Fundamentals to enrich their teaching and performance work, and hopefully teach future generations.

Walli's energy never ceased, she was teaching and offering therapeutic sessions from her 'retirement' home in Suffolk well into her 80s. Above all, Walli was an honest and loyal friend – maintaining strong bonds with people over many years. Walli has led a rich and creative life and on her journey through the labyrinth of education, work, and relationships, she has touched many people's hearts, minds, and moving bodies. In Walli's words "I am proud to be a consultant and mentor to so many of my colleagues. My greatest pleasure is when someone lifts the phone or knocks on the door and says, "Walli – Please . . . ?"

Michael Platt

[Many of us] have had the privilege and pleasure of knowing Walli as a loving friend, a critical friend, a teacher and mentor, an inspiration, an expert, a wise woman. Walli was all these things to me. Let me share some special moments of my own journey with Walli, hoping my words will resonate with your memories of our dear friend.

I first met Walli in 2000 at the Suffolk Youth Theatre Millennium production *The Turning Tide*, in Ipswich. For many years our productions enjoyed the interest of key members of the Laban Guild, including Gordon Curl and Geraldine Stephenson. In 2000, as director, I met another prestigious Laban Guild member.

After the show, with much trepidation, I encountered the formidable character of Walli and her taciturn companion, Jean. Heartfelt congratulations from Walli were followed by an insightful critique of the performers' use of space, their understanding of dynamics and their ability to convey relationships. As director for six years, I received positive and negative comments - no one had ever given me a Laban Informed critical response - followed by an invitation to visit for an in-depth chat. It felt like an audience with the Queen!

Winding roads and narrow lanes led me to a quaint, thatched cottage in deepest Suffolk. In this beautiful, serene environment I learned about Walli, learned from Walli and became her friend. I relished each opportunity to discuss the movement challenges of a production with Walli. Her unwavering response was to strip back an idea to the basics of Laban Movement Analysis and then grow from there. Walli's ability to shape and adapt her Laban expertise to suit the 21st century youngsters and context of the production was remarkable. The young people adored her and were delighted when, in 2006, Walli agreed to become Honorary Patron of Suffolk Youth Theatre.

My first meeting with Walli over twenty years ago had a significant impact on my teaching and my approach to making theatre.

Learning about Walli's life, it seems that she too experienced many serendipitous meetings which opened new pathways, new directions and new lifelong friends. One example is the inspirational Mr. Linder who helped Walli to express her emotions and her creativity. She was inspired to pursue a vocation in Physical Education at Nonington, which led to, in her words, "a wonderful awakening of the beauty and magic of dance", through the inspirational Lorne Primrose; Veronica Sherborne's Laban based approach gave Walli the experience to develop skills with young people with autism; Patsy Howell-Hall opened Walli's eyes to the therapeutic value of visual art, leading to teaching at the Champernowne retreats for people in the caring professions; Dr Marion North guided Walli to the Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy National Centre where she worked for ten years experiencing 'the power of music and its therapeutic effects'; teaching on the Art and Psychotherapy course in Athens led to a meeting with Daphne Economou - and another opportunity - working with children with cerebral palsy and volunteers at Daphne's Open-Door Centre in Athens (Walli was so proud of these special times and was still leading the way at 90); Walli's long association with the Laban Centre culminated in her returning to teach on the MA programme in Dance Therapy from 1986, with course leader, Jaqui Blatt; Anna Carlisle, Susan Scarth, and so many others have all played vital roles.

So, a life of chance meetings and opportunities which Walli embraced with gusto, curiosity and passion. Through these unexpected pathways, Walli deepened her understanding of people and enriched her knowledge of the healing power of the arts and, in turn, passed this wisdom on to us.

I would like to share five images of my own special memories of Walli.

The Gardener: Walli created a piece of paradise in Suffolk. Tea and cake with Walli, Elsie and usually a cat, on the terrace overlooking the magnificent garden, was such a pleasure. She adored her garden. But was never quite satisfied with it!

The Entertainer: When the situation arose Walli always rose to her audience! She was an entrancing performer. Once, at the Ship Inn, Levington, Walli gave a memorable, impromptu rendition of 'Mack, The Knife'. At 90, wearing a jaunty fedora and wielding a sharp knife, she sang, in German, to our small table of friends and then entertained the rest of the pub -to rapturous applause -whisky in hand, of course!

The Friend: Over many years, when facing my own challenges, I could always speak openly and honestly about my feelings and concerns. In her cosy sitting room, she would offer consolation, invaluable advice, support and love.

The Expert: Walli was at her most captivating and passionate when she was teaching. A piercing attention to detail, empathy with her students, regardless of age or ability, enabled Walli to engage with all who worked with her.

The Devoted: Walli and Elsie were devoted to each other. So many of our memories of Walli's strong, vivacious, independent, life-loving spirit were only realised in later years through Elsie's unwavering love and commitment to Walli - equalled by Walli's devotion to Elsie - their bond, an inspiration to us all.

Anna Carlisle

Small of stature . . . yet great of character and personality.
Walli had a way of standing, of drawing herself up that commanded attention, yet only in situations that demanded it.
She could be very quiet.
She had a unique way of listening: her patience with people was remarkable: she measured her words carefully and those words were mostly very wise.
She loved cats.
She loved doing things well.
She loved her evening glass of whisky - sometimes two.
She loved summer visits to Glyndebourne Opera House.
She loved plants and gardens.
And she loved mending things.

She was a wonderful host: solicitous of your comfort, generous with her care.
She would climb to your bedroom with morning tea; set a stylish table; open wine, cook Hungarian goulash. Conversations were lively: often philosophical,often psychological

She could be very stubborn.
She had her breaking points.

She disliked pretension, false emotion and fuss. She stood up once in the middle of a restaurant and told a difficult student that his attitude was unacceptable . . .that he was superior and arrogant . . . and that he was not to her liking.
She could indeed be very forceful, loud as a sergeant-major; completely fearless.

Occasionally, she would decide to make a public appearance. Her speciality - German cabaret songs - performed solo - most often in restaurants and Suffolk public houses.

Occasionally she spoke of her mother . . . who escaped from Germany with a young Jewish physician, Walli was left behind. She remembered arriving to join them later . . . Victoria Station in pre-war London. The three of them lived in a
room in Hampstead. It had a table and two chairs; Walli slept in a wooden drawer.

Her mother was a tailoress. She would take her daughter to Liberty's in London in search of remnants of expensive and exotic material - these to be transformed into evening dresses for the ladies of the British aristocracy. Walli was not a seamstress, but she did sculpt wonderfully life-like animals in clay. One November she fashioned a set of Christmas deer for my grandchildren. They still treasure them. They were made of pipe-cleaners.

Walli's life-long passion was teaching. Her career was underpinned by her commitment to the

therapeutic work of the Movement pioneer, Rudolf von Laban. This was her practice over sixty years; this was her expertise, and this was her great gift to those she taught and those she knew.

She had a marvelous sense of humour, a childlike sense of fun that sometimes edged towards the wicked: she could be sardonic, ironic, and then suddenly innocent - suddenly light up the world with a burst of joy.

We can remember her boundless zest for life, the flame of her spirit.

We shall miss her.

Caroline Southgate

What I didn't know when I first met Walli was that the distance from a waiting room to a clinic room, a professional hello and a smile of encouragement was enough for her to have summed up your whole forty years of life, to have decided on your qualities, your weaknesses and, importantly, whether she liked what she saw and was about to take you on as a new challenge, a new friend and a member of a most privileged group of people who would benefit from getting to know this remarkable woman. Luckily for me, Walli decided very quickly that she liked something about me (or she saw a challenge) and mutual admiration set us off on a long friendship which has lasted sixteen years. To only know someone in their 80s and 90s might for some feel like you missed out on the best bit of their life, but that would certainly not be true with regard to Walli. Her positivity and energy were contagious and youthful, even childishly playful, but with a wisdom and willingness to share knowledge and listen intently which defied any age-related stereotype.

Invariably our catch-up visits at the old Bakehouse involved the rituals of freshly ground morning coffee beans, tea and stollen or if the time was right a tipple of whisky with the accompanying nuts and nibbles. From her corner of the sofa, or under the shade of a parasol, she would settle in to hear all about relationships, family dilemma, triumphs, challenges, and business plans. She helped shape my new business in 2011 by making sure I included her work in my staff training; her insight and reflections on giving and receiving care were invaluable.

I sent Walli a Mother's Day card a few years ago, I told her that mothers came in all shapes and sizes and that I loved her for being the mother person I needed in my life. I know from Elsie that she was moved by this, and I am glad I was able to express that to her. I am sure there are lots of other children and grown-up children who benefited from her warm acceptance and deeply safe affection in her career and in her personal life, perhaps you are one of them too?

When I thought about speaking today, I imagined that others would clearly outline her life history, I wanted to pay my personal tribute to the woman who became my friend and shared herself with me. Thank you, Elsie, for allowing me this indulgence.

To thank her and to say farewell, I hope that you will all take away from this service a little light from Walli who, in her last days, allowed me the great honour of really finally learning stillness. If I may I would ask that as you sit there thinking of Walli that you remember the quality that she most admired about you, did she love your lightness, your power, your movement, your voice, your pottery, your pictures, your smile. Take your best version of yourself back out into the world as a tribute to this remarkable tiny woman and hear her chuckling at you and smiling at all that you do.

Thank you Walli for your love and warmth.

Ann Ward

I had known Walli since the early 1990s, indeed she came over to Northern Ireland to teach for me on behalf of the Guild, but it was not until I moved back to the UK and was living in Essex that she became a friend as well as a mentor. Walli loved to be in the thick of things and to get to know new people. She was passionate about training and was involved with the Laban Guild's Essex Creative Dance Course - based in Chelmsford at the start of the new millennium. She went on to be even more involved with two follow up courses, on choreography and further Laban studies. These were held in the Village Hall at Monks Eleigh, negotiated for us by Walli, and as well as being involved with the students, Walli also offered hospitality to tutors.

Each year, Walli taught a six-week course in Ipswich for Dance East and, being within reach, I was privileged to be able to take part. Walli's knowledge and understanding of Laban's work was immense, but she always made you feel that it was she who was privileged to have the opportunity to share her experience, rather than that she was handing down wisdom from on high. She would sit on the floor to chat, offer wonderful experiences – including the rigour of scales - but still be a friendly critic encouraging you to do more, to be more accurate and, most of all, to understand the meaning of what you were doing. This came out even more in the private sessions I had with her.

Although we realised that she could almost certainly read us inside out, if you went to her with a problem, she would always guide you to identify the exact nature of the problem yourself and find your own way to a possible solution. Never, for one moment, did you feel that she was being judgemental. She liked nothing more than to be asked to share her knowledge and experience and could then be a stickler for getting you to reconsider the meaning of every single movement, even the simplest. This had an enormous influence on my own teaching, and I only hope that I was able to convey a fraction of what I learned from her to my own students.

So many people owe so much to Walli but, more than that, she was bubbling with enthusiasm, generous in all she did, welcoming, outgoing, a very good friend and a force to be reckoned with! She leaves a legacy that everyone who knew her will want to carry forward, but there will never be another Walli - and she will be sadly missed.

Laban Lecture (1998): Non Verbal Communication

Walli Meier

MARCUS FABIUS QUINTILIANUS, a professor of rhetoric wrote a compodium of twelve books on " The Formation of a Public Speaker". The eleventh volume gives detailed information about rhetorical Body Language in Roman times. Most of this is concerned with gesture and posture passing meticulously from head to foot including eyes, eyebrows, nose (you may not gesture with the nose), arms, hands and so on through the rest of the body. He goes into particular detail with movements of the hand and fingers which accompany the spoken word and have precise meanings.

His dress must be immaculate, his posture is held with a manly bend of the body, indicating strength, valour, will power and self control; someone who deserves to be honoured. His gesticulating must be slow and measured. On entering he must not speak at once, he must pause, even pat his head, wring his fingers summing up his energies, admit to nervousness with a deep sigh. Then standing quietly upright, shoulders relaxed, his face stern and right hand extended with the most modest of gestures, thus he may begin. The hands may move from right to left, no further than the left shoulder, no higher than eye level and no lower than the chest. The whole speech may then gradually escalate to a full crescendo in size, speed and sound. The gestures of the hands have significant meanings such as anger, slap the thighs, emotion, slap the breast, or show surprise, fingers fan across the palm. There must be a moderation in movement. The orator must not have frenetic movements with frequent nods, jerking of shoulders or wild gesticulations, only slaves run, free men have leisure. Outer appearance reflects the inner character.

In Ancient Atheneian times Homer speaks of the Hero's stride - "Paris appears armed to the teeth with long strides", Ajax rushes forward with a grim smile and long strides, his voice reaching the heavens. Aristophanes advises his father to swagger with legs apart.

And what about the other gender? Hera and Athena when appearing before Troy resembled in their steps the timorous doves. Provocative courtesans walk with small steps in a wiggling manner flicking their hips like a lizard's tail.

It is improper to walk in the streets of Athens with careless gait when one may do it gracefully. To them who walk with dignity comes full measure of honour. While they who see it have pleasure and life has its Grace.

Joaneath Spicer writes delightfully about posture and gesture of the late 15th century in her chapter on the "Renaissance Elbow" and illustrates her observations by pointing us in the direction of the Dutch painters of the period. The male elbow in gesture is indicative of boldness and control, both protective and controlling in society and the family.

The Standard Bearer's stance oozes maccho self-assurance. The casual hip-shot stance, hand on hip, left arm resting nonchalantly on the pole of the flag. All other painting shows a family group. The man the possessive protector and the wife demure and passive obedience and two little girls sit obediently on a step below holding hands. A painting by Franz Hals of the officers of St. George is positively bristling with elbows rather like a photograph of a successful football team of today. Different parts of the body and their significance are of particular interest to me, why is it all fingertips and toes today? Why are there no hands and no faces? And these people haven't got any knees! The significance of the elbow has not changed. Haven't you experienced "the battle of the elbows in theatre seats?" Get there first and hold on like grim death.

So you see there is nothing new in the study of Gesture (by the way when I say gesture, in this sense I mean body movement). It has continued throughout the ages and particularly so in the last 50 years or more where there has been an increased interest in the study of non verbal communication or body language as some people like to call it. It seems to be a counter reaction to ever increasing technology ruling our lives and need to understand and stay in touch with our humanity (humanness) and value it. Disembodied voices speaking to us through machines.

Those of you interested in studying History would be advised to get into the gestural context of that period, the conventions of the society, the attitude to the body the religious influences of the time. It was the Quakers who introduced the handshake into Britain. They would not literally bow to the conventions of the time of doffing their hat and the ladies curtsy. Instead they introduced the handshake as a symbol of brotherhood and friendship.

History of dance of course gives us a great insight of the particular period, particularly if taught by Geraldine Stephenson who has a natural common sense way of saying what they wore and why and how you have to move in on them as you do, and why they behaved as they did.

NVC has been studied from many angles stemming from Darwin's evolutionary theories. We have modern Ethnologists who stress the similarities between humans and animals to express hostilities, dominance, territorial boundaries, and also the universality of facial expressions and emotions which they believe to be biologically inherited. Some thought Gesture was a universal natural language (which helped us to barter with the natives), used for conducting trade between Europeans and the natives of other climes. Others, e.g. Marcel Maus states Gesture is not a universal language but a product of social and cultural differences and therefore the way we sit and stand and use our hands varies greatly from society to society. Birdwhistle, who, incidentally, coined the phrase "Kinesics" when studying communication through movement, believes if a child is to become a member of society it must learn the movement patterns of that society. Effron noted how Europeans who emigrated to the USA changed their body movement as they became integrated.

In some respects the meaning of posture and gesture have remained the same to this day. To be upright with the head erect indicates authority, dignity, detachment. Gravity and impassivity are evidence of self control and self-respect associated with rule and superiority. To lower the eyes is a sign of modesty and or inferiority. On the other hand symbolic meaning of gesture has changed remarkably. When Quintilianus slapped his thigh it meant anger not "that was a good joke" and when Charlemaigne stroked his beard it symbolised grief, not that he was in deep thought. Much of that sign language is lost and replaced by new e.g. the V sign for victory. The English people were the least gesturing nation in the world. When I first came as a child I found it very difficult to understand them. Not having the language gave me very little left to read. Nowadays the study of NVC is mainly the concern of Anthropologists, Linguists, and Social psychologists and within those sciences are many subdivisions of interest concerning movement.

What do we mean by communication anyway? To be simple, sharing and distributing information. Non verbal communication indicates that we are doing the same thing, only it is without speech, hence, for us,"Body Language", which may, or may not, accompany speech. Gestures accompanying speech add vast amounts of detailed information - size, shape, space and of course we get some indication of the feelings of the speaker. We have communication, which is intended to be shared, to be decoded and understood by the recipient. But we also divulge information unconsciously - not intended to be shared but leaked, if you like, by our body attitude, stance, gesture, facial expression, tension, pitch of voice etc. Whether we are understood depends on the recipients understanding the same language literally and comprehending the movement language of our culture.

I maintain 80% of communication is movement and when in doubt; trust the movement. The way we move is indicative of our personality and that is brought about by our personal history. MOVEMENT REVEALS THE PAST.

The Genes we come from
The gender we arrive with
The country we were born in Its Geography
Climatic conditions
The social strata
The political climate
The quality of nurturing as a child
Placement within the family, where in the order of siblings, fight for attention.
I believe all these things are reflected in our moving being.

So how do we see and recognise these things? From within the long list of movement investigators I have mentioned all of whom have given us a vast amount of knowledge is of course the namesake of our Guild Rudolf Von Laban.He and his eminent followers such as Warren Lamb, Valerie Preston Dunlop, Marion North have developed his teachings to the refined body of knowledge which it is now. It is the basic tool with which I function professionally and I must add, to my delight and appreciation of the world around me in my leisure. You all know what we have inherited from Laban. You have been working with his theories since you joined the Guild if not before. He developed a classification of movement which enables us to have a systematic approach to studying movement in all its manifestations. He and his followers have given us a means of Observing, Analysing, and Recording movement in great detail. HE HAS GIVEN US A TOOL FOR CREATING AND MAKING DANCES. A TOOL FOR SEEING, CHANGING AND CREATING ANEW - RECREATING. In what way is all this information applicable to us? I think in terms of EXPRESSION and IMPRESSION. By expression I mean looking at movement - Observing Kinaesthetically, my favourite word Apperception, meaning an integrated understanding of what you have seen.

Where is the group? In their heads and in their body, scattered? lethargic? Where is the child with Downs syndrome, the Actor, the Opera singer, the Clown, the one parent mum in your class? Whoever it is you are working with. What is their attitude, how are they feeling what are they wanting to do? or not do? LOOK and you will SEE.

By impression I mean, what do I do to promote change from what I see, to the mood, the attitude I want in order to achieve my goal, the aim of the class. Take as an example having to go into the garden on a cold windy February day to prune the roses, which is the last thing you want to do. You don't feel like it but you make yourself go, at least just for half an hour. You go,wrapped up to the ears and get cutting. After a little while you get warm and take your scarf off, then your jacket and so on, look at your watch, much longer than half an hour but you are enjoying it, you have got into the mood for going on. That is Impression.

For example let us take a Recreative Dance group. First observe and see how they come into the room. Do they hover at the door, slide in along the wall, or burst into the centre of the room, or wind their way in and out to where and with whom they want to be? Do they stand, sit, or lie about, warm up or dither about anxiously, darting towards or away from people? Are they alone or in pairs or groups? How are they relating? are they near? touching? have they got eye contact? or are they inward avoiding eye contact? How are they relating? sitting or standing? high, low, symmetric, labile, slouching, upright and tense or lethargic NO TENSION NO INTENTION and so on. Just this image has taken many sentences. You will take all this in a flash, instantaneously. Then your attention will be caught by someone perhaps they are moving differently from normal pattern and you wonder what is up! Some one else is literally "High" a sort of frustrated urgency all over the place scattered, fragmented. Perhaps the whole group is infected by this. There are those so out of their minds in passion drive overwhelmed with feelings we have to get their attention by orientation in space. There are those so much in their heads (vision drive) we have to remind them of their bodies. You will however, by looking, get an overall impression of the mood of the group. I am not here to give you an observation lecture but I hope I have indicated how our particular knowledge can help us to suss out and get in touch with where the group or the individual is. This is the material with which we have to make our impression.

Meet the class, the group, where they are - that which they have expressed. Veronica Sherborne always said, "The secret of teaching is relationships. We establish trust and empathy through showing understanding and acceptance, not through words but through movement. The best way of doing this is by synchronising with what we see; known in the therapeutic world as Kinaesthetic Empathy. Mirroring. e.g. walking into a room of phlegmatic students tired, languid. Fatal to be all bright and cheerful. Join them where they are Physically and find the transition. Start where they are - not literally mirroring but with the same quality echoing their attitude, perhaps with some verbal recognition they might even respond by telling you of where they are. They might even respond by telling you what has happened. Then select those movements, which will gradually bring them to where you want - The Process of Impression.

What is the process of impression? From our studies of Laban Analysis we know what combinations of movement to select which evoke the desired impression you want to make.

Getting into the Body - getting grounded.
Bereavement counselling - get into Feeling.

Veronica Sherborne's book 'Developmental Movement' is full of examples of movements to select to achieve specific therapeutic goals with people with special needs. Warren Lamb has made a very important contribution to the reading of NVC by in introducing us to Posture Gesture Merging. Integrated movement, when postures and gestures merge to make an integrated meaningful whole as Ellen Goldman says, in her book, 'As Others See Us, The Moment of Truth, a Whole Hearted Connection'. Communicating with integrated movement is both affirming and confirming. I maintain 50% of the success of a class is real enthusiasm, this can only be expressed with full body integrated movement.

What we have to remember is, that while looking at Expression and thinking of how to make the Impression the class members are looking at us. Are you aware of what unconscious messages you are giving away?

Touch is the most powerful and immediate form of communication there is. It is the most powerful means of establishing human relationships. There is more responsiveness from those who have been handled than from those who have not. The disclosure of the prevalence of sexual abuse in recent years has made touch a controversial subject. In situations where touch is most needed it has been forbidden - often where it is the most healing commodity - such as in schools and particularly in special schools, where in many cases comprehension of language is nil . Veronica Sherborne's notion of "feeding in" understanding through touch and holding cannot be implemented.

Touch is not only important with children, but vital with the elderly. Many of them, particularly those in institutions are deprived of loving caring touch. The only touching they experience is of a functional nature.

I believe our concern should be not so much whether we touch or not, but how we touch. It is the quality of our touch which speaks our intention. Male psychologists after a course thanked me for giving them permission to touch each other. A group of Movement therapy students whose course had come to an end and then was continued at their request said, "Walli we haven't touched each other for six months!" The theme of touch always comes up in special needs courses and I always include a movement session on it whenever I can. It often makes a very good ending at the end of a Summer school leaving a good lasting impression on everyone before they go home.

Now finally The Roman Orator is allowed to look dishevelled - a little wild, his toga displaced, be allowed to mop his brow signifying the enormous effort he has just given out and exit from the podium.

Sustainable Creativity in Healthcare

Arts Care 21 Anniversary Conference, Belfast

Dr Jenny Elliott

Students from the University of Florida dance at the Showcase event

Arts Care CEO, Jenny Elliott, choreographs members of Cairnshill Primary School and Black Widows dance company

In May 2012 Arts Care celebrated its twenty first anniversary by hosting an International Arts in Health Conference at the stunning Lyric Theatre, Belfast. Arts Care is a unique Arts in Health charitable organisation based in Northern Ireland and has, over the last twenty one years, delivered programmes of high quality arts activities which include dance, music, performance, visual arts, sculpture, drama and photography, amongst other creative activity programmes such as research and education across all the Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland.

The three day conference "Sustainable Creativity in Healthcare" attracted a wide range of delegates from many parts of the globe including Canada, Australia, United States, Holland, Finland, United Kingdom and Ireland. The delegates included academics from diverse perspectives including neuropsychology, mental health, medical education, nurse education, medical humanities, as well as many practitioners including dancers, community artists, arts therapists, clowndoctors, musicians, medical and health practitioners and arts officers.

The critical role of Laban dance practice and research in health featured prominently in the conference and the Arts Care's integrated Orbit Dance, Kompany Maine and the Black Widows Dance Company staged several thought provoking performances throughout the conference programme. The performances were well received by the international audience and showcased the many benefits that dance offers within a range of key healthcare services.

One of the highlights of the conference programme was the partnering of the Arts Care Dance Companies with Indepen-dance Dance Company, Glasgow and Amici Dance Company, London, under the direction of London-based choreographer Cheryl McChesney, to create a stunning series of dance performances for the Conference Performance Showcase at Stranmillis Theatre Belfast. The diverse range of ability, age, skill and professionalism witnessed in the performances brought the international audience to their feet with sheer delight and appreciation, some delegates experiencing integrated dance performance for the first time.

Wolfgang Stange also facilitated a magical Master Class of integrated dance for delegates, patients and healthcare staff in one of the Lyric Theatre's new studio spaces. The participants were taken through a journey of creative dance exploration, creating through improvisation and skill-building a series of solos, duets and thought provoking group dances.

Dr Jenny Elliott, CEO of Arts Care, in the conference opening address and in the concluding conference discussion, focused the audiences by drawing on the Principles of Laban Dance as a critical experiential and theory-based framework through which artists and researchers from different disciplines can vision, explore, investigate and develop best Arts in Health practice and research development.

The rich textures and multiple layers of the conference were all the richer for the Laban-based dance and research contributions which continue to enhance, critically inform and transform the current agenda of the wider international Arts in Health field of inquiry and practice.

The Arts Care Board and Chief Executive wish to thank Ann Ward and the Laban Guild for their support of their anniversary conference and the on-going support of Arts Care's Arts in Health Programme.

Dr Jenny Elliot, a student of Helen Lewis, completed the Laban Guild's Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the then Laban Guild Community Dance Teachers Course in Belfast. This set her on a new career path followed, after a lot of hard work and experience, by a PhD and appointment as the CEO of Arts Care. All of Jenny's work is totally Laban based and she has introduced many others to Laban's work.

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

Dance Books:

David Leonard

To start the new year we have three new titles: Constant Lambert's 'Music Ho!', a provocative study of music in the first part of the 20th century, Chris Nash's beautiful collection of colour photographs of the Richard Alston Dance Company, and the 10th volume of the indefatigable Ann Hutchinson Guest's series of Advanced Labanotation textbooks.

As usual, you'll find full details and ordering facilities on our web site: www.dancebooks.co.uk

Black Widows dance company and Cairnshill Primary School