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Library News

From the Dance Notation Bureau

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Dance Notation Bureau Library

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Phone: 212/564-0985
Fax: 212/904-1426
Email: library@dancenotation.org
Website: www.dancenotation.org

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Library

Notation Associate:

Mei-Chen Lu

Committee:

Senta Driver

Sheila Marion

Lucy Venable

Advisors:

Jill Cirasella, Reference Librarian and
Bibliographer
Brooklyn College, The City University
of New York

Nena Couch, Curator

Lawrence and Lee Theatre Research
Institute at The Ohio State University

Patricia Rader, Acting Curator
Jerome Robbins Dance Division
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Performing Arts Library

Score of *Dance for Walt Whitman*

by Lucy Venable

Choreographed by Helen Tamiris (1958)

Notated by K. Wright Dunkley (1992)

Music by David Diamond, *Round for Strings*

Donated by Repertory Dance Theatre, UT (2005)

Recently we were given the score of *Dance for Walt Whitman* by Helen Tamiris. Here is the story. While sorting through boxes that were donated to the University of Utah library; Linda Smith, Artistic Director, Repertory Dance Theater (RDT), Salt Lake City discovered a deteriorating reel-to-reel film of *Dance for Walt Whitman*, which was staged by Helen Tamiris in 1961. Smith decided to recreate the dance for RDT at Brigham Young University. Daniel Nagrin, who assisted Tamiris when she created the work, provided additional coaching and historical perspective. K. Wright Dunkley was brought in to document the work in Labanotation.

The choreography is eighteen minutes long and uses fourteen female and nine male dancers. A narrator reads excerpts from Walt Whitman's poem "Leaves of Grass" in different sections of the piece. The words used in the poem are comparable to the dance itself -- they both truly speak to and reflect the American spirit. The connection between the dance and the poem was so profound that the Utah *Deseret News* reported, "In fact as the dancing flowed fluidly across the stage tears streamed down some faces in the audience."

We contacted K. Dunkley and found him retired and well in Hooper, Utah living near his family. He was one of our first notators, hired by the DNB in the early 70's. During the time of his employment he happened to attend a Charles Weidman rehearsal to watch a friend, Janet Towner. When he was introduced as a notator, Mr. Weidman said, "Why aren't you notating my dances???" K. reported this to Muriel (Mickey) Topaz, then director of the DNB, who immediately assigned him to the task, and as a result we have, *Traditions* (1935), *Flickers* (1942), *Dance of the Streets* (1960), *Christmas Oratorio: Quartet and Finale* (1961), and *Brahms Waltzes* (1967).

Subsequently K. spent 20 years teaching at the New York State University at Potsdam where, as Chair of the Department of Dance, he developed a unique major with Labanotation as the core of the curriculum.

More recently he has notated other works: Hanya Holm's *Homage to Mahler*, Phyllis Haskell's *In Passing*, and the Tamiris work.

As he recounts in the introduction to *Dance for Walt Whitman*, Allan Miles' DNB class of apprentice notators (Judith Bissell, Odette Blum, Diana Rosenberg, and Barbara Walden) helped coordinate the timing of the music and the movement. The class had recorded the Opening Section, three phrases from the Boys' Dance and themes from the work while it was being taught at the High School of

Other Acquisitions

Scores

- *Sea Dreams* (1982)
choreographer Victoria Uris
notator Yim Fun Tsang, 1998
- *Swan Lake, Act II, "White Swan"*
Pas de Deux (1895)
choreographer Marius Petipa
notator trainee Mira Kim, 2006

Transcribed Score

- *Children on the Hill* (1982)
choreographer Mose Pendleton
notator Terri Richards, 1982
transcriber Mira Kim, 2006

DVD

- *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* (1912)
choreographer Vaslav Nijinsky
stager Yun-yu Wang, 2005
coach Ann Hutchinson Guest
Taipei National University of the
Arts, Taiwan

Thank you!

**for services donated or
equipment provided to our
library which makes our job
so much easier:**

Marion Bastien
Jill Ciraselle
Nena Couch
Senta Driver
Deborah Friedes
Jennifer Garda
Oona Haaranen
Bill Kiley
Brian Knott
Margot Lehman
Jessica Lindberg
Mei-Chen Lu
Billie Mahoney
Sheila Marion
Lucy Venable
Lynne Weber
Charlotte Wile

Performing Arts in New York City in 1964. K. says he used their timing of the movement in relation to the music to confirm what was unclear in the synchronization between sound and picture in the Tamiris record film they were using for the revival.

There are many scores like *Dance for Walt Whitman*, that are not produced by the DNB. We are pleased to see that dance companies and organizations are taking the initiative to record historical and significant works in Labanotation. These scores, however, are inaccessible and unknown to the general public. Please send us information of any such scores so that we can try to acquire a copy for the DNB Library.

Loïe Fuller's *Fire Dance*

by Mei-Chen Lu

Choreographed by Jessica Lindberg after Loïe Fuller (2003)

Notated by Jessica Lindberg (2003)

Music by Richard Wagner, *Ride of the Valkyries*

While Loïe Fuller, a legendary dancer at the turn of the twentieth century, left us glimpses of her dances through critical reviews, paintings, drawings, lithographs, photographs, motion picture footage, and sculptures, none of her works were recorded in a way that would inform future generations as to her intention or her motivation regarding these works.

Jessica Lindberg, currently on the dance faculty at Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, chose to bring Loïe Fuller's *Fire Dance* back to life as her MFA thesis. Lindberg's research took her around the world including Paris, New York, and San Francisco. She not only reconstructed and performed the choreography, but also recreated the special costumes and the unique lighting effects, which made Fuller's works so exciting not only in her time but for today's audiences as well.

For her efforts she was awarded the prestigious Edward F. Hayes Graduate Research Forum for "Reconstructing, Labanotating and Performing Loïe Fuller's *Fire Dance*" in 2003.

A DVD produced to accompany the thesis contains a live performance and four studio performances with Lindberg, and her Labanotation score film clips of Fuller and her imitators, along with Lindberg's findings about Fuller's life and art. The DVD can be purchased for \$15 through John Mueller at 614/292-2407 or by email bbbb@osu.edu at Dance Film Archive, The Ohio State University.

Lindberg submitted a copy of her work, in MFA thesis form, to the DNB Library in December 2005. She is now compiling the supplementary materials to meet the DNB's Score Guidelines so the score can be ready for educational and research use in the near future.

This is our first Library Newsletter so we need your feedback. Do you find this interesting? What else would you like to know about the library? What materials would you like to read about? Or questions that you would like answered? Send your thoughts to library@dancenotation.org

DNB Extension by Mei-Chen Lu

The relationship between the DNB and the DNB Extension is unique. Although it is called "extension," it is more like a partner of the DNB. While the DNB's main mission is to preserve dances through the use of notation, the Extension has concentrated on education and research.

For people who want to have a thorough training in Labanotation, the DNB Extension for Education and Research at The Ohio State University (OSU) is the number one choice. It is the only place in the U.S., which offers all levels of Labanotation classes, the Directing from Score course, and holds the biannual Teacher Certification Workshop. In addition, the Extension has played a leading role in developing Labanotation technologies such as LabanWriter, LabanReader and LabanLab.

Over 300 original full and partial scores that were notated before 1968 are also housed in the Lawrence and Lee Theatre Research Institute at OSU where they are under the care of curator Nena Couch. These scores were brought to OSU at the time of the formation of the College of the Arts when Lucy Venable accepted a faculty position in the Dance Division. Helen Alkire, the Chair of the Dance Division and Board member of the DNB, knowing the financial insecurity of the Bureau at the time, suggested bringing the originals of our small library of notated dance scores to OSU to guarantee their protection. Copies were made and sent back to the DNB and to the Dance Collection at the New York Public Library at that time.

Since then the Extension has added copies of DNB scores to the Extension Library as students use them in relation to their courses and projects. The agreement between the DNB and the Extension allows the use of unrestricted scores for educational purposes. The DNB Library has benefited from comments made and errors discovered by the students, which help us to maintain the scores in better condition. There have been an increasing number of students who have notated works of OSU faculty choreographers and artists in residence such as Rosalind Pierson's *A Gift of Wings*, Victoria Uris' *Sea Dreams* and *Breakers*, and Susan Hadley's *Commonplace*. These have been added to the DNB collection.

New Acquisitions from the DNB Extension

We received 20 DVDs of stagings from score as performed by The Ohio State University Dance Company from 1978 - 1997 under the direction of Vera J. Blaine and later Rosalind Pierson:

- *Soaring* (1920) by Doris Humphrey, restaged by Lucy Venable, 1992
- *Flickers* (1942) by Charles Weidman, restaged by John Giffin, coached by Linda Mann Reed, 1983
- *Folksay* (1942) by Sophie Maslow, restaged by Odette Blum, coached by Sophie Maslow, 1989
- *Day on Earth* (1947) by Doris Humphrey, restaged by Lucy Venable, 1980 and Sheila Marion, 1995
- *Invention* (1949) by Doris Humphrey, restaged by Amanda Thom, coached by Betty Jones, 1989
- *There is a Time* (1956) by José Limón, restaged by Jennifer Scanlon, 1983
- *Quartet* (1958) by Ruth Currier, restaged by Sheila Marion, 1997
- *Rainbow 'Round My Shoulder* (1959) by Donald McKayle, restaged by Ursula O. Payne, coached by Donald McKayle, 1995
- *Aureole* (1962) by Paul Taylor, restaged by Liz Walton, 1987-1988
- *A Gift of Wings* (1969) by Rosalind Pierson, choreographer
- *Changing Steps* (1973) by Merce Cunningham, restaged by Karen Eliot, 1995
- *Moods* (1975) by Anna Sokolow, restaged by Julie Eder, coached by Anna Sokolow
- *Progression* (1978) by Vera J. Blaine, choreographer
- *Resettings* (1981) by Senta Driver, choreographer, 1983
- *Sea Dreams* (1982) by Victoria Uris, choreographer
- *Breakers* (1986) by Victoria Uris, choreographer
- *Bamboo Grove* (1988) by Ming-Shen Ku, restaged by Robin Moeller, coached by Ming-Shen Ku, 1992
- *Commonplace* (1996) by Susan Hadley, choreographer
- *Dances of Isadora Duncan* by Isadora Duncan, restaged by Julia Levine

DVD - *La Danse Libre de Malkovsky* (2006)

2 DVDs created by Suzanne Bodak, France; designed and directed by Frederic Allinne bring back to life the "Free Dance" style of François Malkovsky, a follower of Isadora Duncan and a precursor of modern dance. They provide present day performances (57 pieces) transcribed in Labanotation by Karin Hermes-Sunke, vintage footage of Malkovsky teaching, 47 exercises for practicing each basic movement of Malkovsky's style, 56 piano pieces, 700 pages pdf book, 28 pdf music scores and their MIDI files. Cost 40 euros plus postage. For more information and to order visit: www.malkovsky.com

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