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DNBulletin

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**An interview with new directors:
Nancy Allison and William Kiley**

Oona: Bill and Nancy, what are your 3-month, 6-month and one-year goals?

Bill: I have been at the DNB since the last week of October 2006. On a technology side going out six months, short term, my goals are mainly tactical and to some extent strategic. One goal is the enhancement of the office's local area network where we have in effect a bona fide file server on a network that can store important data and documents in addition to keeping a copy, if people wish, on their local machine, desktop or a laptop. This would facilitate the back up and recovery of all of our data. Back up of data files is now done manually machine to machine. There is no centralized storehouse and automated back up of our files. The centralized approach is relatively easy to set up and is not expensive. It will take some time on my part to do the set up and teach people how to use it.

Oona: What kind of money are we talking about?

Bill: This could be a machine that costs as little as five to six hundred dollars and my time. Another high priority strategic item is a long overdue upgrade to our accounting software. One of our board members, Carla Guggenheim will provide this software. This has to be done within the next three to four months. On the technology side these are my short-term projects. I also want to maximize the revenue from our book sales. There are other things in line with financial accounting of non-profits that we need to track very carefully on a project-by-project basis such as the money that is being drawn down against grants and assure that money is being drawn legitimately and correctly. We need tools to track precisely how grant money, specifically foundation and government money, is being applied to projects to which it is granted. I want to have a one-page synopsis, which shows where we stand with each grant at a point in time, cumulatively, and what the cash flow, the burn rate is on with respect to each project.

Nancy: I started on January 2nd so I am in a different place than Bill in my transition in terms of what my awareness of both our assets and our processes. My goal, for at least the first three months, is to familiarize myself, as completely as possible, with our current and potential assets and our current and potential processes, e.g. the means by which we function. My three-month goal is to do that while I am doing many other things. Senta left the organization in much better shape than what she found it, with files that have made my job now much easier for assessing our assets and current procedures. Lynne Weber, our Acting Executive Director is a walking organizational history, and Bill has working knowledge from all the time he spent here. And the staff is fantastic. They, too, have tremendous passion and dedication for the work they are doing and that makes my transition here easier and certainly very pleasant. But nevertheless, I still have to go through the transition.

Oona: What kind of programs does the DNB have?

Nancy: We have four major areas of programs or projects: notation projects, staging projects which are closely linked, educational projects and library projects which are also closely linked. I think that in all four of them we need to reevaluate how we have been working.

(Continued on next page)

The DNB has often functioned in a state of dire circumstances. In terms of a long-term goal I would like to see this organization functioning not in dire circumstances and I think we have a role to play in that. In all of these four areas we need to have processes in place that we can track and then only do what we can reasonably do. I believe we can do a lot. We must make sure that we are planning for ourselves in a way that makes it possible to do what we can do well. It's a long-term goal.

Oona: Does the DNB have an image problem? Do you sense a changing attitude to the DNB in the field?

Nancy: I've heard some negative things and I've heard some very positive things about Labanotation from the field. Some people in the field don't believe Labanotation works. We have to help create more situations where it works well for companies and colleges. Then, if company A does it and it works for them, they will tell company B and C and D. It's simple marketing philosophy. I went through the era where choreographers had to choose whether or not to video tape their dances in the '80s. Now, no one debates that anymore. I think we may be in the same place with Labanotation now.

Oona: What are your most current notation projects?

Nancy: We are committed to a three-year project with the Martha Graham Dance Company with the generous support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. It is a three-year grant to notate up to seven Martha Graham dances. I am working with Janet Eilber, the artistic director and LaRue Allen, the executive director to try to locate suitable environments. Who is doing Graham dances and where are they being staged? Is this a staging we can work with? Who can we send there? Is it happening in Texas, Paris or elsewhere? Who do we know there? How can we do this? This can be a full time job, but this is very exciting.

Oona: Any other projects we should know about?

Nancy: The digitization of our materials is another major project that we are involved in right now. One of the major assets of the DNB is clearly our library containing approximately 750 scores. Many of these are old, handwritten scores that are difficult to read. With funding from NEA, NYSCA and private foundations we are in the process of transcribing these scores from paper, hand-written versions to electronic versions using the LabanWriter computer program developed at the Ohio State University Extension Center. We will still save the original scores, storing them in acid-free boxes. Some of these are museum quality works! From the digitized version we will be able to produce circulating copies as needed. These easy to read copies will contain the publication-ready graphics that only the Labanwriter program produces.

The grants are also funding the transfer of important supplemental materials such as VHS videotapes of dance performances to DVDs and audiocassettes of musical or sound accompaniment to CDs. And finally the grants also fund the cataloguing of these digitized versions in our database that will allow for greater access to this material for dancers, staggers, educators, scholars and students throughout the world. The project was begun in 2005. We currently have funds to support work on it through the end of June '07. Obviously the NEA and NYSCA recognize the value of Labanotation, otherwise we wouldn't have gotten these grants. In fact, we were one of a very few digitization projects funded by

NYSCA. So there's a good example of a positive attitude towards notation.

Mei Chen Lu, our director of library services and both of our notation associates, Mira Kim and Jennifer Garda are working on this project. It's really massive. In the summer we will have two interns, masters students from the library science program at Pratt Institute, working with us on it as well.

Oona: Anything else you'd like to tell us?

Nancy: I also want to make sure that everyone involved in our community who uses our services whether they are a notator, a stager or researcher, is aware of what our procedures are, so that they can follow them easily and that we can service their needs more easily and we can find out from them if we have done that. It's hard for me, at this moment, to tell you what are the goals beyond that. You know, I'm not a notator. I only took one very basic course in Labanotation, as an undergraduate. I am CMA, so I'm certainly part of the broader Laban community, but I have so much to learn about the Labanotation community in general and the DNB community in particular.

Southern Methodist University Becoming a Notation Education Center by Jennifer Garda

Over the past fourteen years, Southern Methodist University (SMU) has been establishing itself as a Labanotation (LN) education center. Patty Delaney, head of LN studies, began teaching at SMU in 1991. It was former SMU Chair, Jill Beck who inspired Delaney to pursue her LN studies, culminating in her certification as a professional notator in 2003. The SMU undergraduate students are required to take one semester of elementary LN. Intermediate LN is available as an elective. The undergraduate students also use motif notation in their composition class. Graduate students are required to complete their certification of both elementary and intermediate LN and are given the option to study advanced level. Several SMU alums are continuing their work in notation, including Tina Curran and Jessica Lindberg.

Delaney, organizer of the DNB Web Library for Teachers and the Alliance of Notation Educators, has been integral in developing SMU as a LN education center. She has contributed several scores to the DNB Library including José Limón's *La Malinche*, Alison Chase and Moses Pendelton's *Alraune*, and Leni Wylliams's *Sweet in the Morning* that Delaney created with Leslie Rotman during her notator training.

In her interactive DVD of José Limón's *La Malinche*, Delaney illustrates both the historical and cultural significance of Limón's work. In addition to the dance and LN score, the DVD includes discussions with company members, dance and cultural historians, and musicians.

Delaney has presented her work with LN at both national and international conferences. She received the Silver Remi Award in the interactive/educational category at the Houston International Film Festival for *La Malinche*. The DVD costs \$30 and is available by e-mail at pdelan1@sbcglobal.net

Report from DNB Extension for Education and Research at OSU by Jessica Lindberg

Graduate students Jaclyn Thompson and Jeffrey Fouch included two repertory works in their master of Fine Arts performance. OSU professor John Giffin staged "The Partisan," from *The Green Table*, choreographed by Kurt Joss (1932), for Thompson, for which she received coaching from Odette Blum. Jaclyn made a video, which was sent to Joss' daughter, Anna Markaad in Chicago where she was rehearsing *The Green Table* with the Joffrey Ballet Company. Markaad agreed to meet with Thompson to discuss her rendition and also invited her to watch a rehearsal of the work. In addition, Thompson and Fouch performed "Sweet Betsy" from *Folksay*, choreographed by Sophie Maslow (1942), which they learned from the score. Lynn Frelinghaus in New York coached them, via video. Frelinghaus, the mandated artistic coach for Maslow's work, danced in *Folksay* under Maslow's direction.

The DNB Announces New Edition of Elementary Level Labanotation Exam

The DNB notation associates, in consultation with the DNB Extension Center for Research and Education at OSU, have revised the exam for certification in Elementary Level Labanotation. The exam has not been revised since 1985. The new 2008 edition incorporates the most current ICKL approved theory. Teachers wishing to offer their students DNB certification in Elementary Labanotation must use a DNB approved exam. Responding to requests from teachers plagued by students copying each other's exams, the DNB notation associates have created three different versions that can be used for the same class. The new exams will be available for the fall 2007 semester. We hope they will be an inspiration to both teachers and students. For more information about the exams and the DNB grading service please contact dnbinfo@dancenotation.org

Sagittal Forward Progress Party

In January Dawn Lille hosted a party titled Sagittal Forward Progress, to celebrate Lynne Weber and Senta Driver for their triumphant efforts in reviving the DNB and to welcome new staff members, Bill Kiley and Nancy Allison. Members of the dance community gathered from across the country to show their support for the DNB. The festive event was a great start to the New Year. Direct results from this party were the introduction of Canadian choreographer Peter Quanz whose work the DNB intends to notate through a collaboratively funded program and an invitation to apply to a foundation to support the Martha Graham Dance Notation Project. Thank you Dawn!

Interview with Notator Valerie Mockabee

Oona: What is your first Labanotation experience?

Valerie: It was a notation class at The Juilliard School with Dr. Jill Beck.

Oona: Did you know anything about notation before that?

Valerie: No, I had never heard about notation before. I got to take it as a first year student at Juilliard. I loved it and enjoyed it and continued it throughout four years at Juilliard. By the time I was a fourth year student I was also able to take graduate courses at City University of New York where Jill was teaching. I was able to work out my schedule with Ms. Muriel Topaz who was director of the dance division then at Juilliard.

Oona: What was your first notation class? Was it a regular theory class?

Valerie: Notation One met two days a week. One day we were in a classroom learning theory. The second day we were in a studio dancing the theory. When we had history, Jill coordinated what we were studying in history with a dance we could read in notation. That was really fascinating to me to do the actual dances.

Oona: How did you get interested in notation?

Valerie: It made sense to me, and I really like that it is something tangible. I like also the access it gives me to pieces I have only heard about. It opened up a whole new world of repertory, vocabulary and esthetic for me.

Oona: What is the favorite part of notating a work?

Valerie: I have two favorite parts. First being in a studio with everyone because I am a social creature. The other part that I enjoy is the therapeutic dragging and dropping the symbols in LabanWriter and working in the early morning or late night when the house is quiet and being able to think through all of what I am trying to write.

Oona: What is your approach of notating a work?

Valerie: Holistic process. I believe that notation is the main vehicle for preserving the work, but I also enjoy gathering additional information such as video and photos and cultural context of what is going on in the creation of the work.

Oona: How do you make choices what to include and what to exclude?

Valerie: For me if someone directs the work from my score I hope that they will be able to get the ideal of the work of what the choreographer once wanted. That is my goal as a notator. That helps me to inform what I leave in and what I leave out. I put word notes along the score, which are sometimes hard to concentrate on as you are trying to get the movement. But sometimes we have a luxury of working over several years for a score. I have been able to cull out some of the words that Bebe Miller used with "Prey" and some of the ways of executing the movement, and I am able to put those in with the movement. I think that helps.

Oona: What are the most memorable pieces you have notated?

Valerie: The biggest piece for me is Bebe Miller's "Prey." That work became such a connection to Bebe. It allowed me to become her friend and colleague. I have learned so much from that experience, issues in timing and how we talk about music

that has no relationship with the movement and the timing and how to deal with floor plans and three and four page layouts. It became quite elaborate to have fifteen people on stage. One of the fun things about that was how the improvisation builds into movement phrases and how to be specific enough so that the movement can get created but that still allows freedom for people to improv in that movement structure.

Oona: What has been most interesting moments in your work?

Valerie: Most interesting moment of my work is when I hand someone a page that I have written. They read it and perform it. And it is the moment. It never ceases to amaze me. It is always such delight to see the movement come off the page and into the body. It allows you to know that notation continues to help us to live our history, our century. We know that it always continues to do that for us. It continues to be sustainable.

Oona: What has been the biggest challenge in your work?

Valerie: Not having enough time. That is probably my biggest challenge.

Oona: What is a notation project you would be interested in doing?

Valerie: I have at home Yvonne Rainer's "We Shall Run." It is on yellow legal pads – a rough notes form, I would be interested in finishing that up at some point and have a concert of Rainer's works that have been notated.

Read on!. You can find the full interview at:

<http://www.dancenotation.org/DNB/news/index.html>

Announcements from DNB

Help the Martha Graham Notation Project

If you are the director of a company or a college dance program where a Graham work will be staged in the next three years you can be invaluable to this important notation project. Please e-mail or call us as you plan your rehearsal schedule, so that we can send a notator to capture this historic repertory. You can also help by considering a donation to the project. If you've ever taken a Graham Technique® dance class, enjoyed a performance or had the opportunity to dance in one of Graham's remarkable works yourself please consider making a donation to this special fund. All contributions are tax deductible and contributions of \$1,000 or more will be acknowledged on the scores themselves.

New Stagings

Five dances have been staged from DNB scores in concerts across the globe in the first four months of 2007. *Trio A*, choreographed by Yvonne Rainer, notated by Melanie Clarke and Joukje Kolff, was staged by Satu Palokanges on Zodiak, a professional dance company in Helsinki, Finland and performed in January. "Sweet Betsy" from *Folksay*, and "The Partisan" from the *The Green*

Table were staged and performed at OSU as reported on page three. *Sea Dreams*, choreographed by Victoria Uris, notated by Yim-fun Kim was staged by Ra-yuan Tseng on students of Taipei Physical Education College in Taiwan. It was coached by Ms. Uris and performed in April. And *New Dance, Variations & Conclusion*, choreographed by Doris Humphrey, notated by Els Grelinger, revised by Ann Hutchinson Guest and Lucy Venable was staged by Ina Hahn and performed in April by Karen Peterson & Dancers in Miami. We were delighted to support the companies, schools and individuals who produced these concerts. We applaud them and their efforts to create a living history of dance. If you are interested in staging a work from score for your student or professional dance company please call (212) 564-0985 or e-mail (nancyallison@dancenotation.org) for more information.

New Library Service

The DNB recognizes the importance of high quality published materials that include Labanotation for dance scholars and students. As the copyright holder for the more than 700 scores stored in our library the DNB is in a unique position to aid in the development of these new books, CDs or DVDs and electronic publications. We are happy to provide the service of transcribing Labanotation excerpts from our scores into PDF, JPEG, or GIF for a minimal fee of \$20/per hour. If you are planning a publication please contact Mira Kim to learn more about the materials and services we can offer at (mirakim@dancenotation.org)

Open Theory Discussion Group

The DNB now holds Open Theory Meetings on the first Monday of every month from 10:30AM – 12:30PM. Hosted by Charlotte Wile and attended by the DNB notation associates these meetings are open to all members of the Laban community. Whether you are a certified professional notator or a CMA with an interest in motif writing you are welcome to attend these lively forums on notation theory. For more information please contact Charlotte at CharlotteWile@aol.com