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DNBulletin

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Dr. Guest Celebrates Her Birthday and Updated Book Launch by Jessica Lindberg

On November 6th, Dr. Ann Hutchinson Guest co-founder of the Dance Notation Bureau, founder and director of the Language of Dance Centre (LODC), UK, and co-founder of the LODC, USA, highly acclaimed author and a leading researcher in the world of movement analysis celebrated her 89th birthday and the launch of her updated book, *Your Move: The Language of Dance Approach to the Study of Movement and Dance*, with co-author Tina Curran. The event also marked the 40th Anniversary of the LODC, UK and the 10th Anniversary of the LODC, USA. In classic, yet original style, the guest of honor wore a one-of-a-kind black skirt decorated with brown and white appliquéd motif symbols matched with a black sweater, a large silver necklace and silver earrings with high-heeled shoes. "She really looked elegant and stylish. It was great fun!" remarked Curran. Guest's sense of fun and style is magnetic, drawing inspired and loving friends to her through out her life.

Born Ann Hutchinson in New York City, on November 3, 1918, Guest was educated in England and began her studies in modern dance at the Jooss-Leeder Dance School in Dartington Hall, England when she was 17 years old. "My...[classes] included space harmony, dynamics and dance notation (Laban system). I spent a fourth year notating [Kurt] Jooss' ballet *The Green Table* and other works," states Guest.

In 1940, a 21 year-old Guest returned to her birthplace ready to pursue a professional career in dance. She accepted Hanya Holm's invitation to teach and began instructing Holm's advanced students in the Laban system of movement notation. (Guest would not coin the term 'Labanotation' until the 1950s.) Guest's first students were Janey Price and Eve Gentry (Henrietta Greenhood). Conversations among the three women quickly began to show differences in the understanding of Laban's system. Helen Priest Rogers, who had studied the Laban system in Germany with Albrecht Knust, heard about the classes and soon joined these theory conversations, uncovering still more differences.

New York Times dance critic, John Martin, encouraged the four women to create a bureau where discussions on dance notation could take place with a focus toward establishing a unified notational system for the preservation of dance through the Laban system. Hanya Holm echoed Martin's encouragement and one Sunday in May, Martin published his column with the title, "Dance Notation Bureau Formed." Guest recalls, "The Dance Notation Bureau began life in an abandoned elevator shaft. Yes, it is true! ... The space was about 8' by 12'. ... [W]e each contributed \$10 to a kitty to buy note paper and stamps."

Through the next 20 years, Guest directed the DNB, without pay, while dancing professionally on Broadway (1942 – 1950), teaching at the

High School of Performing Arts (1948 – 1949, 1957 - 1961) and instructing the students in the Dance Department of The Juilliard School of Music in Labanotation (1951 – 1961). "In 1953 I wrote the first definitive textbook on Labanotation, preparation for publication being aided by a Rockefeller grant," says Guest. When the book was released in London, England in 1954, the publisher invited one of the book's reviewers, noted dance historian Ivor Guest, to the release party. Ivor Guest shared with Curran that he had "expected the author to be someone older with a gray-haired tight bun in the back of her head" and instead met a young, "effervescent, beautiful blonde woman." There was an instant connection as both realized they had grown up attending boarding schools in the same area of England.

"In 1962 I married Ivor Guest, the British dance historian, and moved to London," Guest says. She would found the Language of Dance® Centre in 1967, in London, England, as a way of continuing her effort to expand the educational exploration into Labanotation. The Language of Dance® methodology breaks the Laban system down into basic movement concepts or motifs. Guest began calling these basic ideas the Movement Alphabet® in her 1983 publication, *Your Move: A New Approach to the Study of Movement and Dance. Your Move* has now been updated and was re-released in London, October 25th at the Sloane Club and in New York City November 6th during a celebration hosted by Dance Education Laboratory Founder and Director, Jody Arnhold.

As the event in New York City began to come to an end, Guest treated the remaining guests to an improvised dance performance set to her favorite jazz music. Curran sets the scene: "She had the dance symbols on her skirt swinging as her Broadway persona came shining through in the partnered twirls and dips with long time friends George Dorris and Jelko Yuresha, under the ever adoring gaze of her husband, Ivor. Ann was dancing on a cloud, responding to the joy of family, friends and colleagues all coming together to celebrate in this special event."

Happy Birthday Ann! We wish you MANY more dances ahead.



Tina Curran, Ann's husband, Ivor, and Ann at the book party. (photo: Don Perdue)

ICKL 2007: New Mixture and Lively Presentations by Oona Haaranen and Jessica Lindberg

This past July, approximately 40 Laban practitioners from around the world gathered for the 25th International Council of Kinetography Laban (ICKL) conference at the National School of Classic and Contemporary Dance in Mexico City, Mexico. To give you a firsthand perspective on this stimulating conference, we asked several participants to share what made the 2007 ICKL conference interesting and successful.

"New mixture and lively presentations," inspired Lucy Venable. "This was the first time that the conference took place in Latin America." continued Venable. "Being in Mexico and having so many Mexican and Brazilian participants most of whom were Laban Movement Analysts was exciting." Venable found the workshop by Maria del Carmen Legaspi, 'Continuing Movement, Dance on Wheels' particularly interesting.

Jorge Gayon also found it "nice to have all new attendees from Latin America. This was certainly an important step to widen our presence in this area of the world. It seems that the ICKL conferences are becoming an important forum to share experiences and practices on the application of Laban's movement approach." Gayon also observed that "[t]his was the second conference where ICKL invited all Laban practitioners to share their work... this invitation fills a need in the Motif field."

"[T]here was a marked difference between the papers that presented issues relating to Labanotation/Kinetography Laban and those relating to Motif Writing." observed Miriam Huberman. "While the first ones focused on how to best identify, notate and document an action, the others presented the different ways they were teaching Motif Writing to various types of students or using it for choreographic purposes, but without bringing forth any issue that dealt with Motif Writing as a documentary method." Huberman gave an example of this issue: "a specific, predetermined action was assigned to a Motif symbol but it was not explained why Motif Writing -which was originally an open-meaning system- was chosen to document such a section instead of using Labanotation/Kinetography Laban."

Janos Fugedi, a 20-year member of ICKL, also observed some 'hot' discussions. "Quite a 'hot' debate took place on how to understand and notate the very quick passing sliding movements."

Susan Gingrasso, first time attendee and presenter, "was excited just to be there and [to] have the opportunity to get to know the people who have furthered the development of this field. Of all of the amazing sessions, two resonated with me deeply: Macias Guzman's, 'The concepts of destination-motion in flamenco dance as a tool for the flamenco teacher' and Miriam Huberman Muniz's, 'Choreology and the Choreographic Process.'"

Shelly Saint-Smith found two sessions connected with her own practice and research: "Susan Gingrasso's 'Scaffolding Language of Dance and Laban Movement Analysis Concepts to Teach Dance Technique' and Tina Curran's 'Developing Dance Literacy through Motif and Masterworks.' Additional highlights included debate (often heated!) and discussion of future developments of Labanotation and ICKL itself; catching up with former colleagues and establishing new relationships; recognition of the strength of the field, despite the various challenges it faces; and, of course, Mexico City with all its vibrancy and rich cultural heritage."

Tina Curran found a number of presentations "thoughtprovoking." "From a creative perspective, I was inspired by Ligia Tourinho's workshop presentation of her interactive dance-making approach she calls 'Choreographic Game.' Ligia's game provides the audience with basic knowledge about dance components during the dancers' warm-up demonstration. This is followed by the audience being invited to apply what they've learned by playing the role of dance creator and being able to see their verbal instruction embodied by the interpretive performance of the dancers. I also found Shelly Saint-Smith's presentation compelling," continues Curran. "[Saint-Smith] developed a way to weave new information into the Labanotation score... to layer additional information related to interpretation, style and alternative choreography in colored text serves two functions: first, to maintain the integrity of the score by adding to rather then altering the original notation and second, to benefit and pass forward to future readers valuable information gained during the staging experience. [Saint-Smith]'s method is an approach to maintaining our notated literature as a living document."

"What I found most interesting about the conference was the multiple offerings." stated Valarie Mockabee. "We experienced everything from educational Motif workshop-labs, to stimulating theoretical notation discussions, to scholarly papers that investigated Laban's Effort and aspects of the Labanotation system."

News from the DNB

Since the last DNBulletin, the DNB has been a constant whirl of activity. Here are a few of the highlights of our work.

DNB Joins the Blogosphere

As a result of discussions at the October Professional Advisory Committee meeting, librarian Jill Cirasella designed and hosts the DNBlog: News and Moves from the Dance Notation Bureau. This window, open to the world 24/7, is full of informative articles about all aspects of notation. Written in Jill's wonderfully inviting, conversational style the articles introduce topics and then link the reader to other resources such as the DNB Theory Bulletin Board, the DNB website and other dance notation and preservation organizations. Check it out at http://dancenotation.blogspot.com (And don't forget to subscribe for a direct feed by pressing one of those little "Feed Buttons" in the upper right hand corner of the page!

On-line Data Base and Staging Application

Bill Kiley, Director of Finance and Administration has been evaluating the DNB archives and using his information technology savvy to research how the DNB can upload all the

publishable data about our scores onto the web. By listening to the needs of the DNB community as relayed to him through the DNB staff, board and Professional Advisory Committee he has formulated and submitted a specification to computer technology companies for two different online, Internet accessible applications of the data; a detailed listing of our complete score library for researchers and educators and a particular application for stagers that will be searchable by various categories such as style of movement, number of performers, and difficulty of technique. Meanwhile, Mei-Chen Lu, Director of Library Services working closely with Bill, has supervised several library interns as they enter all the data concerning the DNB scores into a master file. Once we receive and evaluate the proposals. including budget estimates for the project, Bill will apply for grants to help make this dream of moving the DNB into the 21st century, a reality.

Two New Dances Available for Staging

Barrelhouse Blues and Choros I, choreographed by Katherine Dunham, are now available to be staged from Labanotation score. Marie Christine Dunham-Pratt, Dunham's daughter and heir, and Director of Programs, Nancy Allison began negations this summer and have just recently completed the licensing agreement. Cleo Parker Robinson will serve as the mandated artistic coach for all productions of these American modern dance masterworks. The scores, created by notator Sandra Aberkalns, are now available for educational and research use. For more information about staging please contact nancyallison@dancenotation.org

Stagings from Labanotation Score

Since publication of the last DNBulletin, twelve additional companies or schools licensed dances through the DNB. In July, Bonnie Oda Homsey staged **Go Down Moses** from Helen Tamaris' *Negro Spirituals* for fifteen performances, as part of Shakespeare Festival/Los Angeles. In late November, *Negro Spirituals* was on view, once again, as Bridget Roosa staged several sections of the work at Agnes Scott College in Atlanta, GA. An avid stager in the university environment, Roosa will continue to use Tamiris' work as a focus for study throughout the year culminating in performances of the complete dance in the spring.

Also in November, Leslie Main and Gail Corbin set Doris Humphrey's *Passacaglia & Fugue in C Minor* for Momenta, of Oak Park, Illinois. According to Artistic Director, Stephanie Clemens, the company, founded in 1982 in Humphrey's hometown, was delighted to finally present this major work of the American modern dance pioneer and long-time supporter of Labanotation.

Parisian audiences enjoyed six American modern dance classics staged from Labanotion score in November as Noëlle Simonet's Compagnie Labkine performed Charles Weidman's *Traditions*, Valerie Bettis' *The Desperate Heart* and three solos from Helen Tamiris' ever popular *Negro Spirituals* and students of the Conservatoire National Superieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris performed Charles Weidman's *Lynchtown* under the direction of

Jean-Marc Piquemal. Both performances were at the beautiful new Centre National de la Danse.

In December Valerie Henry's Dance Mosaic will perform Charles Weidman's *Brahms Waltzes*. In February Anthony Tudor centennial celebrations take center stage as his ballet *Continuo* will be performed at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, PA, Brigham Young University in Provo, UT and at the Boston Conservatory. Amanda McKerrow and John Gardner will be staging for Muhlenberg and Brigham Young, while Donald Mahler stages in Boston. BU and Boston will also present Tudor's *Little Improvisations* with McKerrow and Gardner staging for BU and Lance Westergard in Boston.

Also in February, Laurie Lowry and Jacyln Thompson will stage Rosalind Pierson's *A Gift of Wings* at Saint Mary's College of Notre Dame, IL. In March, Mary Corey will stage and Don Redlich will coach Hanya Holm's *Rota* at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, NM.

And finally, in May, Gail Corbin stages Doris Humphrey's *The Shakers* for the Dance Center of Columbia College in Chicago, IL. The DNB is delighted to support the companies, schools and individuals who produce these concerts. We applaud their efforts to keep these dance treasures alive and onstage!

Notating Martha

The Martha Graham Notation Project is moving forward, thanks to multi-year funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, our dedicated professional notators and generous friends and supporters across the country. Scores for three solos, *Satyric Festival Song* (1932) and *Serenata Morisca* (1986) notated by Sandra Aberkalns and *Lamentation* (1930) notated by Mira Kim, funded in part by generous contributions from former principle Graham dancer, Myra Woodruff, are now available for on-site research at the DNB library. (Licensing of these dances is handled exclusively through the Martha Graham Center for Contemporary Dance.)

In October, funded in part by the Martha Hill Fund, Sandra Aberkalns began the process of notating *Primitive Mysteries* (1931), collecting data as Yuriko staged the work at Southern Methodist University. As Elizabeth McPherson notes in her upcoming book, currently titled *Martha Hill: Secret in the Middle of Twentieth Century American Dance* (The Edwin Mellen Press) 2008 "Hill spoke passionately of the premiere of *Primitive Mysteries* saying, 'We got twenty-three curtain calls. It was a smash! It was beautiful!'

If you've ever taken a Graham Technique® class, enjoyed a performance or had the opportunity to dance in one of Graham's remarkable works please help us capture this historic repertory by making a special donation to the DNB, earmarked for the Martha Graham Notation Project. All contributions are tax deductible and contributions of \$1,000 or more will be acknowledged on the scores themselves.

DNB Courses

The DNB is currently formalizing plans for a three-week course in **Advanced Labanotation** from July 28 – through August 15, 2008 in New York City. The course, taught by two Certified

Labanotators will focus specifically on developing writing skills and is a pre-requisite for Certified Notator Training. Classes will be held at the DNB offices, and in a nearby dance studio with field trips to dance classes and rehearsals throughout the city. Registration is limited. For more information, or if you would like to reserve a place in this rarely offered course, please contact nancyallison@dancenotation.org.

News from the DNB Extension at The Ohio State University by Jessica Lindberg

Valarie Mockabee and Sheila Marion presented papers at the 2007 International Council of Kinetography Laban (ICKL) conference held in Mexico City this past July. Marion also taught the Teacher Certification Course in Taiwan this summer with Ilene Fox, Ra-Yuan Tseng, Yun-Yu Wang and Wendy Chu.

Amy Schmidt presented her MFA Directing from Score project, "Holiday in Israel," November 13th as a lecture / demonstration in Sullivant Theater. Merry-Go-Rounders Company originally performed "Holiday in Israel" and Lucy Venable, who was a member of the original cast, notated the work. Venable coached Schmidt in the project.

Valarie Mockabee is currently in rehearsal for her direction of Anna Sokolow's "Steps of Silence." Odette Blum traveled to England this summer to work on her notation of the Margaret Morris Movement technique.

2008 DNB Survey

In an effort to improve our services to Labanotation specialists throughout the country the DNB and its' Extension for Research and Education at The Ohio State University are preparing a survey of Certified Labanotation Teachers. This survey will help us update our records of how and where Labanotation and other Laban studies, such as LMA and LOD, are being taught and what the needs of Labanotation specialists like you really are. Look for it in your virtual, or real, mailbox in January. Please take a few minutes to fill it out and send it back to us as soon as you receive it. We're really looking forward to hearing from you and learning how we can better support you in all the great work you do.

Interview with Notator Ray Cook by Oona Haaranen

Describe your first notation experience?

When I joined Australia's Borovanska Ballet I stood in the wings to write a scene from *The Sleeping Beauty* being rehearsed. After spending two hours trying unsuccessfully to remember a section, the ballet-master, "Algi", saw what I was doing and admonished me to commit it to my memory.

How did you become interested in notation?

In 1958 an Australian dancer, Meg Abby, returned from studying notation in NYC and gave a lecture at Victoria's Ballet Guild. When asked if she could notate something she obliged by notating the position of a man sitting crossed legged and smoking. I was hooked and started classes the next day. I corresponded with the DNB and was told that if I could get to NYC somebody would give me a scholarship. (Thanks, Ann)

What is your favorite part of the notation process?

I love the rehearsals. I like to see how the choreography works. What I never liked was not being able to film rehearsals. Now I won't start unless given permission to video, which, unlike the old days, is always forth coming.

How do you approach notating a work?

I notate supports first along with a few easy to capture movements. Then the floor plans with dancer's counts. I notate small phrases not knowing exactly how they are going to fit to the music. Except for a few notes, I seldom worry about exact timing during rehearsals. Too much detail can cause you to end up with so much information that the reader cannot see the movement. Until I find what I call the key to the piece, I have to start the final score two or three times because I must put myself into the choreographers mind set, otherwise you are just notating what you might see in a film.

What are the most memorable pieces you have notated?

I always liked notating Anna Sokolow's work because I knew her work as a dancer and I believed in what she was saying. Then there was the challenge of retrieving 'lost' Humphrey works, notating, and staging the final result. That was extremely satisfying. In Hong Kong I saw "Crossing the Black Waters" a section of Lin Hwai Min's full evening work "Legacy" which premiered in Taiwan on his company Cloudgate. At intermission I asked, where is the choreographer? I told him that I would notate that for nothing if he allowed me the right to stage the work. Two months later, a ticket to fly to Taiwan arrived. When I saw the whole piece I said we have to get funding to notate the whole work. In 2001, I was having coffee with Tom Brown from Hong Kong, Carol Walker from Purchase, and Nanette Hassel from Perth, Western Australia. They suggested that it would be interesting if their colleges, together with Taipei, each did one quarter of the work and then came together to perform the entire work in each of the four countries. With money raised, I spent three months in Taipei notating followed by teaching sections to the four dance companies. The entire work was performed in Düsseldorf.

What have been the most interesting moments in your work? I notated, from a silent film, Humphrey's "Fantasy and Fugue" another "lost" work. At the end of the first movement there were still four measures of music left, strangely, since I had related perfectly to musical cues. I searched several music publications and they were all the same. I looked at the film a hundred times. One day I must have not blinked because at the very beginning of the dance where previously there had been only grey blank film, one image, in one frame, of one dancer in the air flicked past. There were the four silent missing measures.

What has been the biggest challenge in your work?

Every dance has the same challenge, the responsibility of getting it right. What I write down is going to be part of our dance history.

What notation project would you be interested in doing?

I would like to get someone to help me finish the dance history book I am currently writing. It is a history of choreography based on primary sources including dance scores that go back to the fifteenth century. I would like the DNB to reach its full potential and become an active research center for historians and students.

Regrets?

I wish that motif writing had been developed early enough to leave a record of what was choreographed during the Judson Church years.

Limón Living Archive Project By Jennifer Garda

The Dance Notation Bureau Library houses over 750 scores, many hardly touched once they've been archived. In support of the DNB's mission to "connect dance professionals and Labanotation resources", the Dance Heritage Coalition awarded me a fellowship to work with the Limón Dance Company this past summer. For three weeks in July, I was in residence at SUNY Brockport where the company began remounting *The Traitor*, a dance for eight men choreographed by Limon in 1954.

Jane Marriett notated the work in 1978 when artistic director Carla Maxwell remounted the dance on the company. This time, former company member Clay Taliaferro would be setting the work, with assistance from Maxwell. My job was to attend rehearsals and read the Labanotation score, facilitating Taliaferro and Maxwell whenever memory escaped them or there were discrepancies between them

Walking into rehearsal the first day, I was met by odd stares from the nine male dancers who's presence made them seem like thirty! Maxwell quickly introduced me and I took a seat at the side of the studio where I remained, quietly observing and taking notes, for the first week of rehearsal. In addition to following along with the score during rehearsals, I also made notes about motivation and imagery that Taliaferro and Maxwell gave the dancers and noted, for an addendum, anytime that changes were made.

The beauty of Marriett's handwritten score instantly intrigued the dancers. Some of them had taken Labanotation in college, but several had never seen it before. With eight dancers, oftentimes all performing different material, these highly trained professionals were easily frustrated by the slow pace of the remounting process. They relished how quickly I could answer their questions about timing, pathways, and movement clarity by consulting the score.

The directors, however, initially referred only to the video and their notes whenever they needed information. But over the next two weeks, I noticed a shift in attitude. Towards the end of the residency when Maxwell was setting the "Table Scene", she was running short on time and still had a large chunk of the piece to teach. Suddenly, she extricated me from my seat on the side of the

studio and told me that my new seat would be by her side, helping her with each dancer's part. By the end of the week, we were able to finish setting the entire "Table Scene."

After the workshop at Brockport concluded, we all returned to New York to enjoy a short break before resuming rehearsals for another three weeks. During the last week, Taliaferro had an epiphany while working on the same "Table Scene". He had changed some of the dancers' timings from the original and it was no longer working. Wanting to go back to the original timing, he shuffled through his notes with no success. Finally he turned to me in desperation, hoping I had the original counts. I looked at the notation and almost instantaneously; he had his original timing back.

It was great to be part of the thousands of people watching the premiere performance in Battery Park on September 7, 2007 as part of the NYC River to River Festival. I felt proud of the parts that Labanotation, the DNB and I had played in bringing *The Traitor* back to life on the stage. And I was particularly happy to receive a thank you from Taliaferro saying: "Thanks for you work, your manner, your interest, your active involvement, and your obvious caring about the work on which you are, in any given moment, scrutinizing. (This doesn't always happen, in our times of 30-second attention spans). Brava! And all the best, you're one of the 'good ones.' Many thanks."

In Memoriam

Dixie Durr

On September 2, 2007, the dance and theater worlds lost a great friend and mentor in Dixie Durr. Durr, 67, touched the lives of countless students and collogues at Michigan State University, and beyond, with her nurturing style of teaching and devoted friendship.

Durr earned her PhD. from The Ohio State University; an MA from Michigan State University; an MA from New York University; and a BA from Butler University.

A talented, recognized choreographer and a certified Labanotation teacher, Durr staged several works from Labanotation. She served on the DNB's Professional Advisory Committee from 1983 to 1985.

In 2004, Durr received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Michigan Dance Council and the next year retired from Michigan State University. However, Durr continued her active involvement with the university, regional and national dance organizations until she lost her battle with cancer.

Earl Ubell

Earl Ubell, 80, chairman of the DNB board from 1966-1985 passed away on May 30, 2007 of Parkinson's disease. A physicist by training, Ubell became a reporter on health and sciences for The New

York Herald Tribune, WCBS-TV and WNBC-TV where he earned two Emmys for best local broadcast. On the DNB board where he served until 2001, he was known for his optimism, ability to galvanize board members and to recruit donors. He guided the Bureau toward greater technological advancement, initiating the concept of the Labanotation ball to IBM for its Selectric typewriter and used his knowledge of public relations to expand awareness about Labanotation. His favorite achievements at the DNB were the "computerization of Labanotation" and the Balanchine Project.

Membership Drive

The 2007-08 Membership Drive has gotten off to a great start. Thanks to everyone who has renewed their membership and an extra-special thanks to those of you who have made a contribution to the DNB Wish List. For anyone who may have forgotten, please do it today! All membership and/or contribution checks dated prior to January 1, 2008 are fully tax-deductible against your 2007 income. Send your check to:

Dance Notation Bureau 151 West 30th St., Suite 202 New York, NY 10001

Or join on-line at

http://www.dancenotation.org/DNB/member/index.html All online donations are processed by PayPal. You will be asked for your shipping address, which will provide the information needed to acknowledge your tax-deductible donation. If you do not have a PayPal account, you can choose to make your donation with any major credit card through PayPal.

Wish List

(When more than one of an item is requested, we welcome donations for any number.)

- \$ 19 Mac Mouse
- \$ 29 Mac Keyboard
- \$200 Blank DVD's and CD's @ \$40/pack
- \$200 An exhibition table at National Dance Education Organization's Conference
- \$600 Flat 17" Computer Monitors @ \$200/monitor
- \$600 Contribution toward process of copying microfilm to microfilm @ \$40/copy. For additional access to scores through NY Public Library for Performing Arts, Dance Collection
- \$1,000 CD and DVD Jewel Cases @ \$1.00/case
- Any **Airline miles** (to assist notating, checking, and staging productions)