
N E W S

L E T T E R

DNBulletin

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INSIDE

Peter Quanz	1
Mounting <i>Steps</i> at OSU	2
News from the DNB	2
News from the DNB Extension	3
Interview with Sandra Aberkalns	3
2008 Global Laban Celebration	4
DNB Wish List	4

DNBulletin

Dance Notation Bureau
151 West 30th Street, Suite 202
New York, NY 10001
email: dnbinfo@dancenotation.org
website: www.dancenotation.org

Executive Director: Lynne Weber
Director of Programs: Nancy Allison
Director of Finance and
Administration: William Kiley
Senior Staff Notator:
Sandra Aberkalns
Director of Library Services:
Mei-Chen Lu
Notation Associates: Mira Kim,
Jennifer Garda
Office Manager: Doris Caravaglia
Technology Advisor: Scott
Sutherland

Editors: Oona Haaranen and Jessica
Lindberg

Peter Quanz – Choreographer’s Journal by Oona Haaranen

Peter Quanz, a native of Ontario, has choreographed for the Kirov Ballet, American Ballet Theatre and the Royal Ballet. He is currently staging his ballet, *Kaleidoscope* (2005) for Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal as Mira Kim captures it in Labanotation.

Quanz keeps a choreographer’s journal in which he notates “spacing, how dancers are arranged on stage and how a pattern evolves and changes”, because those elements can sometimes be complicated. “I work out which leg somebody is standing on and which way they are facing, so that in rehearsals it is all very clear. If the music is complicated I will write down the number of phrases to allow for rapid analysis of the structure of a particular passage.” While keeping this journal takes time, Quanz feels that “when you are working with many people and there is a big pattern, you want to be in rehearsal with a clear idea where they are going and how long it will take them to get from point A to point B. I’d rather spend the time working on the steps than trying to figure out the pattern. That is my job at home; I hate having forty people standing there and looking at me while I try to think.”

Quanz first heard the music for *Kaleidoscope*, Camille Saint-Saëns’ *Piano Concerto No. 5, Opus 103*, on December 4, 2003. “That night I had had the premiere of my ballet *SpringScape* with the ABT Studio Company. The premiere went well and I was too excited to sleep. In the morning I was going to hear the *Piano Concerto No. 5* in concert. I thought that before I heard the concert that I should listen to it. I thought that it would help me get to sleep. As I was listening to it, I started to see a ballet. In January 2004, Kevin McKenzie invited me to make *Kaleidoscope* for ABT; the *Piano Concerto No. 5* seemed like a perfect musical choice. In August of 2005 I started rehearsals and premiered the ballet October 20, 2005 at City Center in New York. Here in Montréal it is the first time I am working with the ballet since then. I am keeping much of the choreography, but there are significant parts that I am changing as I have grown considerably as a choreographer and a ballet master. I am very excited about this challenge of staging it again.”

“I do sometimes see actual steps in the music,” says Quanz. “In *Kaleidoscope*, there is a section in the third movement that sounds like the engine of a ship. Saint-Saëns was in Egypt when he wrote the concerto and got ideas from the sounds of the boats going up and down the Nile.”

There are also parts that sound like crickets and there is a love song that the boat men were singing as they were rowing down the river. These musical details suggest strong visual images. However, the strongest musical element for me is the rhythmic feeling or the shape of the melody.”

“I know that video tape is fast, successful and easy, but it records many mistakes and there are so many times when you have to discuss which person to follow, who is right, and if there is a problem with musicality. I consider video to be a useful tool, but one that is very dangerous, if you rely on it completely. You must have knowledge of what the piece was before it was filmed. It is not safe to use video to stage something if you have no prior knowledge of the piece. I am completely behind notation because I can see how Mira is really capturing my work. I am proud that we will have this document that will preserve the ballet.”

Kaleidoscope, by Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal, opens on May 22, at the Théâtre Maisonneuve de la Place des Arts in Canada. After *Kaleidoscope* Quanz will be working with the Pennsylvania Ballet on a new piece to Mozart’s *Jupiter Symphony*, No. 41. It will premiere on June 6th at the Academy of Music, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This coming summer he will be working on a new ballet in Russia. In March 2009 Quanz will premiere a new work for the National Ballet of Canada in Toronto.

Mounting Steps at Ohio State by Jessica Lindberg Coxe

In 1968, Anna Sokolow choreographed and premiered *Steps of Silence* for Repertory Dance Theatre (RDT) in Salt Lake City, Utah. This nine-dancer work focuses on “the social political themes of oppression, being trapped, the disposable-ness of humanity” states Valarie Williams Mockabee, Associate Professor, Department of Dance at The Ohio State University (OSU). Mockabee stated that the “political climate of today seemed to invite that this work be performed,” and she selected a cast of dancers willing to “reach into their own lives to find a point of connection and to *create* the work so that it is relevant now.”

Leigh Lotocki, a sophomore in dance at OSU, was “excited to work on a piece with such a great history. This [dance] is 40 years old, but is still relevant today and I think in a way will always be pertinent. I really appreciated that [Mockabee] recognized us as dancers in 2008, not dancers in 1968 when [*Steps*] premiered.”

Lorry May, Director of the Anna Sokolow Foundation, assisted the cast with connecting to Sokolow’s movements. “[May] brought new life to the piece, it would not be the same otherwise,” states Lotocki. “While she was here she expected a lot of us, but she was so positive. Her energy was tremendous, it just charged the

studio. She made what might have been uncertain sections of the piece meaningful and revealing.”

Lotocki had never studied notation before starting at OSU and “I had... certainly never learned an entire piece from score before... The [dance], I’ve learned, is more than what we learn from the score... it takes another lens to embody the piece and let it become what it was in its original form...our group has been able to preserve the integrity of the piece while making it meaningful to us today...[this] has been an incredible journey from the pages of a notation score.”

For more information check out the DVD *Reflection: Anna Sokolow’s Steps of Silence* at Insight Media, www.insight-media.com, Item #MDAQ57-55 \$179.00. Proceeds are split between RDT and Anna Sokolow Foundation.

Report from the DNB

DNB Awarded NEA Save Treasures Grant

In December the DNB received news that it was awarded a 2007 Save America’s Treasures grant by the National Endowment for the Arts in support of the Martha Graham Dance Notation Project for \$94,993. The DNB was one of 31 grantees selected from 340 eligible applicant organizations nationwide in the competitive grant program. Bill Kiley, Director of Finance and Administration who together with Executive Director, Lynne Weber prepared the application compared the process to “trying to get into Harvard“. This hard won award completes the funding goal for the project, which was initiated with an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant. Kudos to Bill and Lynne!

Labanotation as Visual Art

With support from the DNB and the Antony Tudor Trust, Loyola University Museum of Art (LUMA) in Chicago presented an exhibit called...*point...to line...to plane: Labanotation and Antony Tudor’s The Leaves are Fading* from February 16 through April 27. The exhibit which coincided with Tudor centennial celebrations displayed two excerpts from Airi Hynninen’s notation of Tudor’s 1975 masterpiece: Gelsy’s Solo, created for Gelsy Kirkland and an ensemble section. The exhibit focused on how the translation of the three-dimensional art of dance to the two-dimensional form of Labanotation creates works on paper that can be viewed as an art form itself. An example of a transcription from Hynninen’s handwritten autography to the computerized LabanWriter version, transcribed by DNB Notation Associate, Mira Kim was also displayed.

Notation Project Updates

Work continued on the **Martha Graham Notation Project** as data was collected for two iconic group works to be added to the growing list of notated works by this twentieth century choreographic giant. In October DNB Notation Associate Sandra Aberkalns was at Southern Methodist University as Yuriko staged Graham’s 1931 masterwork, *Primitive Mysteries*. In January,

Aberkalns captured data for the score of *Appalachian Spring* as Terese Capucilli, staged this ode to American idealism and love on students at The Julliard School, in NYC [See notator interview].

In mid-April the DNB said bon voyage to Notation Associate Mira Kim, as she headed to Montreal where **Peter Quanz** is staging his ballet *Kaleidoscope* on Les Grands Ballets Canadiens. Kim is notating this dance as her certifying score project. [See cover story]

Staging News

On February 7, 2008 Helen Tamiris' *Dances for Walt Whitman*, staged by Linda C. Smith of Repertory Dance Theater (RDT) began a seven performance run at Utah Valley State College sponsored by a Dance/USA American Masterpieces: Dance College Component grant. RDT also renewed licenses for Yvonne Rainer's *Continuous Project-Altered Daily* (Chair Pillow Dance and Couples) and Helen Tamiris' *Negro Spirituals* insuring that those two dance classics will remain in active repertory for two more years.

In March ARKE, a dance company in Turino, Italy, premiered a production of Doris Humphrey's *Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor* staged by Leslie Mains. In the US Antony Tudor Centennial celebrations were in full swing with performances of *Little Improvisations* staged by Amanda McKerrow and John Gardner on Ballet Tucson in AZ and the Jacquelyn Kennedy Onassis School at American Ballet Theater in NYC.

April brought performances of Anna Sokolow's *Magritte*, *Magritte* staged by Karin Hermes of Hermesdance in Bern, Switzerland. And May brought Doris Humphrey's, *The Shakers* in a production staged by Gail Corbin for Columbia College in Chicago.

Beginning June 13 audiences in Washington, D.C. will have the opportunity to see Sophie Maslow's *Folksay* in a production by CityDance staged by Greg Halloran and coached by Lynn Frielinghaus in consultation with Ana Marie Forsythe. Dance/USA American Masterpieces: Dance Professional Company Grant sponsors this revival. In July audiences in Durham, NC will have a chance to see Hanya Holm's *Jocose* when Sandra Aberkalns stages and Don Redlich coaches it on students at the American Dance Festival. The DNB is delighted to support the companies, schools and individuals who keep these dance treasures alive and onstage!

Spotlight on Teachers

In 2007-08 school years Labanotation teachers around the world have graduated students in Elementary and/or Intermediate Labanotation using the DNB exams as assessment tools. We applaud Ra-yuan Tseng at Taipei Physical Education College in Taiwan, Judy van Zile at the University of Hawai at Manoa, Valerie Henry at Franklin & Marshall College in PA, Patty

Delaney at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, TX, Rachel Duerden at Manchester Metropolitan University in Chesire, England, Amanda Thom Woodson at Goucher College in MD, Sheila Marion and Valarie Mockabee at The Ohio State University, Amy Stodart at University of Orgeon, Greg Halloran at the University of Idaho, Julie Brodie at Kenyon College in OH and Jean Johnson Jones at Laban/London and the DNB Correspondence Course tutors, Sandra Aberkalns, Mei-Chen Lu, Mira Kim, Jennifer Garda and Allison Smith Parsley for introducing a new generation of students to Labanotation.

2008 DNB Survey

Thanks to everyone who has returned the 2008 DNB Certified Labanotation Teacher Survey that was mailed out in February. If you still have a blank copy sitting on your virtual or real desktop, please take a moment to fill it out and mail it back to us today. Your responses will help us support all the great work you do.

BOOK SALE!!

Effective immediately through June 30, 2008 50% OFF all books, including our Rare and Fine Books! For a complete list scroll to "Book Sale" on our web-site <http://www.dancenotation.org>

Digging Deeper

For more in-depth information about the articles in this newsletter check the DNB website at <http://www.dancenotation.org> or the dnblog at <http://dancenotation.blogspot.com>

The Dance Notation Bureau Extension Update by Jessica Lindberg Cox

The Dance Notation Bureau Extension, located on the campus of The Ohio State University, has been very busy this spring. Associate Professor Valarie Mockabee staged Anna Sokolow's *Steps of Silence*. Professor Emeritus Odette Blum completed her notations of Margaret Morris Movement (MMM) in preparation for publication of her book on the remedial dance technique. This summer Blum will be working with Jim Hastie to include recent photographs in addition to her Labanotation to fully illustrate this early modern dance technique. Margaret Morris (1891-1980), an early pioneer of dance, quickly realized she had a passion for teaching and opened her own school and company in London, England at 19 years of age. Today MMM is taught around the world and Blum's book will help to further expand its audience.

Interview with Notator Sandra Aberkalns by Oona Haaranen

What was your first notation experience?

"In 1981, I was a student at the Benesh Institute of Choreology in London, Millicent Hodson had just begun researching Nijinsky's

Le Sacre de Printemps and had made arrangements with a local dance school to set—and test out—a couple of the sections. I was asked if I was interested in notating what she had reconstructed to that point and I said, yes. Little did I know then that I would notate the same sections—in Labanotation—when she set the entire work on the Joffrey Ballet in 1987.”

How did you get interested in notation?

“I first learned about dance notation as a 16-year old student at Rosella Hightower's Centre de Danse in Cannes, France. In the evenings, a Frenchman taught Benesh [notation] to anyone who wanted to learn. Years later, after an injury that had become chronic, I had to make some life choices—to do something completely different or find a way to stay connected to dance. I remembered those notation sessions, and thought notation could be the answer I was seeking. My training, knowledge, and experience would be utilized in a way that was appealing and interesting to me. I gravitated towards Benesh, as it had been my first experience. At 23, I left for London.”

How did you hear about Labanotation?

“When I left the Benesh Institute I returned to the U.S. and approached Jill Beck, who was in charge of the DNB's school. She thought it would be a good idea if Labanotation students experienced a different notation perspective—so I taught a basic Benesh course. The students kept using Labanotation terms whenever answering my questions and I wasn't sure if they really understood. I joked that I would need to learn Labanotation so I could understand what they were saying and the next thing I knew I was in notator training!”

What is your favorite part of notating a work?

“Actually, I have two favorite parts—the first is being in rehearsal. Not only is it a privilege to learn a dance from the inside out, but I also get to meet and work with some of the most gifted choreographers and staggers of our time. As a former dancer, being in a studio is like being home. Writing the bows at the end of the score is my second favorite part. It's a long haul with some of these scores and the bows are literally the icing on the cake!”

What are the most memorable pieces you have notated?

“There are pieces that you remember because the overall situation was: fun and relaxed, technically challenging, a fascinating historical perspective, or it was simply an easy score to do. However, of all of the works that I have notated, two in particular have touched my heart. It's not simply that they are beautiful dances, or that unusually strong bonds were forged during the rehearsal period. It's the absolute joy I feel every day when I sit down to work on that score. The first time I felt this way about a score was in 1995 with Edward Stierle's, *Lacrymosa*, which was staged by his muse, Lisette Salgado, at the North Carolina School of the Arts after his death. Even though I haven't started yet on the final manuscript of [Martha Graham's] *Appalachian Spring*, I already know it will be a very sad day when I have to turn that score in. Sometimes the most profound magic happens in the

studio without an audience. Watching stager Terese Capucilli and the Juilliard dancers at work was one of those magical times.

What have been the most interesting moments in your work?

“Oftentimes the best moments are outside the studio. Sitting with Talley Beatty in the garden at American Dance Festival and just talking with him about his life or why black dancers had to be able to do it all, or dinner conversations with Sophie Maslow or Kate Johnson. Playing Tetris in a French café while Mark Morris was hovering over my shoulder choreographing my every move was a little nerve-wracking.”

What future projects are you interested in doing?

“I would love to notate some of the "overseas" choreographers such as: Ohad Nahrin—the first movement of *Anaphaza* is a killer, Nacho Duato, Graeme Murphy, James Kudelka (more across the border than overseas), or Jiri Kylian... The list is endless.

2008 Global Laban Celebration

- June 23-27 2008 – A Celebration in Manchester between LABAN, the Zion Arts Centre and the Manchester City Schools Dance Council, Manchester, England www.laban.org
- July 4-10 2008 – Symposium on Movement and Ecology and Dance Residential Celebration, Dartington, England www.limsonline.org
- October 24-26 2008 - International Conference, London, England www.laban.org/conference.phtml
- November 14 -16 2008 – Laban in All Walks of Life, New York City, USA www.limsonline.org.

DNB Wish List (When more than one item is requested, we welcome donations for any number.)

- \$29 **Mac Keyboard**
- \$200 **Blank DVDs and CDs @\$40/pack**
- \$200 **250 GB External Hard Drive** for library video and e-files
- \$350 **DNB Brochure** printing costs
- \$400 **Hard Drive Camcorder**
- \$400 **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**
- \$2,000 **MAC laptop** for notation projects
- Any **Airline miles** to assist notating, checking and staging productions