

DNB Bulletin

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Dance Notation Bureau New York

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Happy Anniversary to Us

Today we are sixty.

This is a milestone reached by only a handful of dance organizations in the world today. The DNB would like to bow to the Martha Graham Dance Company, American Ballet Theatre, the Royal Ballet, the Royal Danish Ballet and the Kirov Ballet, among others with whom it shares both age and heritage. Many of these companies have made use of scores, or had them created. We hope they will do more in the future, for we can say with some confidence now that the DNB is here to stay.

It was on 15 May 1940 that John Martin, dance critic of the *New York Times*, began decades of support for notation by inventing the name of the Bureau as he sat in on a meeting called by Ann Hutchinson, Helen Priest, Henrietta Greenhood [later Eve Gentry] and Janey Price. On the 22nd of May 2000 the DNB presents its John Martin Award to six women who helped the organization grow, continued their support uninterruptedly and made us what we are today: Ann Hutchinson Guest, Lucy Venable, Muriel Topaz, the late beloved Maria Grandy, Alice Moorhead and Ilene Fox.

We would like to add that, rare as it may be to see a dance organization reach sixty years, it is rarer still to have a

founder present at the party. We commend to your attention Ann Hutchinson Guest, still leading notation both theoretically and practically, and this from a base on two continents.

L'chaim.

The Guest of Honor

Ann Hutchinson Guest is, among other things, an expressive mover, with her own charisma and an impetuous, even fanciful side. It may be this quality that makes possible her extraordinarily effective outreach to artists. Guest has led notation to an established position and acceptance by dance across sixty years, through her persuasiveness with choreographers quite as much as through her formidable intelligence and

AHG ON THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY

"I remember the excitement when the Bureau celebrated being ten years old. How wonderful now to look back on sixty years of dedicated work to further the art of dance through the use of notation, and to recall the many achievements by so many people"

imagination about how we might write out the future.

Students note the way in which she teaches focused solely on the work at hand. Colleagues note the series of visionary ten-year plans she framed for them to execute before she moved to London in 1961. Observers of dance

DNBulletin

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Librarian: Bob Shapiro
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Technology Advisor: Scott Sutherland
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education note the unsuspected depth of her influence, such as the prevalence of Laban-based language that entered common usage through her example. Many agencies have recognized her scholarship with grants and fellowships in the U.S. and England. Notators know her keen interest in the evolution of Labanotation to meet new needs, and her expressed concern for maintaining a supply of theorists who will continue to develop the system.

The world will know her by her works, when they see dances from the past intact before them again.

Guest remembers herself as the youngest and most sheltered of the group that came together in 1938-40 to talk about differences in the Laban 'dialects' they had learned. Janey Price, Eve Gentry and especially Helen Priest Rogers seemed worldly, experienced and protective of her, and she roomed with Rogers in the New York apartment that served as the DNB's second address. She learned management strategies from Rogers, and appreciated the patient optimism of a woman she found a "mother figure."

But Guest was the leader. She studied other notation systems. She proposed developments of the theory and published the first textbook, which will soon be augmented by advanced texts. She acted as peacemaker on occasion between Laban and Knust. She wrote the first score, with Rogers and Anne Wilson. She restaged works from score, beginning with *Shakers* in 1957. She notated Broadway shows in which she was dancing: meticulously, only when she had permission in advance. She taught generations of students, some of whom turned into acclaimed (and notation-friendly) choreographers, such as Paul Taylor. She taught notation to George Balanchine and persuaded him to permit the scoring of his work. She researched lost versions of Nijinsky's *Après-Midi d'un Faune*, and *Robert le*

Diabole, and Fanny Cerrito's signature *La Cachucha*.

After she moved to London leaving one notation organization behind, she founded another to be its colleague, the Language of Dance Centre, with a special focus on notation in the dance education of children. She published the first scores, pressed for copyright protection, and pressed for the availability of scores for students to read in the years when artists were still mistrustful of anyone seeing their work off their own stages.

It is hard to find new language for all the occasions when Ann Hutchinson Guest's career and contributions are discussed. Without her, few dances and almost no other forms of movement would be recorded. Without her, we would none of us be here at all.

Thank you, Ann. From all generations.

Now see what you've started?

Brief History, in Milestones

Irma Otto Betz begins correspondence course with Rudolf Laban, 1926; she meets Laban student Irmgard Bartenieff and they begin notation classes at the Hanya Holm Studio, c1935; Helen Priest studies LN with Albrecht Knust, 1935; Ann Hutchinson studies LN with Sigurd Leeder, 1936
New York Times critic John Martin tells founders, "You girls ought to start a dance notation bureau as a center for information...", 15 May 1940; publishes report they have done so, 9 June 1940
 maturing the theory: 1940-1947
 writing the first score: 1942
 beginning the teaching operation: classes from 1942; Bonnie Bird named first Director of Education, 1973; school accredited by U.S.

The first score written under DNB auspices was Eugene Loring's *BILLY THE KID*, notated in 1942 by Ann Hutchinson Guest, Helen Priest Rogers and Anne Wilson

Department of Education, 1980; school closed 1986
 formalizing the corporate and staff structure, 1952; Muriel Topaz named first Director of Labanotation, 1970
 building the score collection: Ballet Society commissions four Balanchine scores, 1948; Doris Humphrey's works begin to be scored, starting with *Shakers*, 1948; Hanya Holm requests the scoring of *Kiss Me Kate*, 1950; Paul Taylor company appoints staff notator, 1977; NEH grant to record Tudor, 1981; NEH grant to notate Balanchine, 1984
 formalizing the Library: New York Public Library begins microfilming scores, 1950; Lucy Venable first Library volunteer, 1952; Susie Watts Margolin first titled Librarian, 1965; Library endowed, 1982; Pat Rader, MLS, appointed first professional Librarian, 1981
 beginning the certification of teachers, 1948; of notators, 1961; of scores, 1972
 creating the Extension at Ohio State as an education and research center and Library safeguard, 1968
 creating a publication arm: first newsletter, 1943; agreement with M. Witmark Publishing for co-productions, 1950's; first Labanotation textbook written by AHG, 1954; Executive Director Herb Kummel secures the DNB's first grant, from the Ford Foundation, to professionalize publication, 1975; *Dance Notation Journal* appears, 1983-1989; works of Doris Humphrey published,

1978 and 1992

expanding outreach: first National Notation Conference, 1959; first ICKL conference, 1959; first International Notation Conference, in Israel, 1984; Carl Wolz introduces LN to Hong Kong Academy curriculum, 1983; Labanotation Society established in Tokyo, 1997
mechanizing the means of notation: first graphics editor for LN developed at University of Pennsylvania, 1975; LN ball developed for IBM typewriter 1973; LabanWriter software, drawing on this and developed at the Extension, is released, 1990; translation software for LW/Life Forms animation in development, 1999
building the restaging program: first full restaging from score, 1951; Leslie Rotman appointed first Director of Restaging, 1986

The Notators

128 men and women, including Rudolf Laban and Albrecht Knust, have notated scores in the Library collection. These are the people at the center of the DNB's work over its lifetime. Of the 128, some 30 were Certified, after formal certification began in 1961. Certified Notator Training is necessarily rigorous, as its graduates must be equal to any sort of assignment, given the constant concern of every artist that *this particular* work at hand 'cannot really be notated at all.' They may expect to work with limited time, limited explanations and the unexpected challenges usual in professional dance situations or in nontheatrical field work.

Notators tend to be proud of each other's skill and resourcefulness. It would seem they are right, for in the cases where they leave the field, DNB

notators appear to move on to positions of distinction and achievement in business and academe. Several have, in addition, become significant financial supporters of the Bureau, to our continuing gratitude. The intellectual discipline of analyzing and writing physical activity is a lasting foundation for personal ambition; the only field currently unexplored by notators seems to be politics, which could use them.

The first generation trained themselves with their colleagues, at once defining the language and putting it to use. Subsequently Ann Hutchinson Guest, Lucy Venable, Helen Priest Rogers and Muriel Topaz trained the next generation in apprenticeship fashion. By the early 60's Carl Wolz remembers himself and Ray Cook in formal notator training sessions conducted by Venable and Topaz under a grant at Juilliard. Lynne Weber recalls herself and Jane Marriett together in the first Certified Professional Notator courses.

Leslie Rotman describes being in a class some eight students strong, and relishes memories of the staff notators' working atmosphere in the Eighth Avenue offices; with seniority commanding desks with a river view, and a sense that they were treated as the 'artists' of the Bureau. They took the new assignments in turn, by "who's up next", although some did work regularly with the same choreographer. The notator training course and certification of notators continues, but it is usually on a smaller scale today. The DNB leadership is mindful that our present and future notators are the core asset of the Bureau, and its vital center.

The Library

At first it rejoiced in one and a half file drawers of material, which Lucy Venable undertook to sort into usable order with the advice of Genevieve Oswald, first head of the New York Public Library's Dance Collection. It is now comprised of the Marjorie Isaac Archives, with shelves of acid free boxes containing pencil scores and originals; the master collection housing acid-free copies from which rental copies are made; the Maria Grandy Circulating Collection which members use for research and restagings; and a large collection of educational materials, books, photographs, videotapes, audiotapes, musical scores and miscellaneous artifacts, serving the notation and dance history communities and many others. The Library has been run by professionally trained staff since 1981. It was privately endowed in 1984 by a far-seeing anonymous donor. Part of the archive is housed on permanent loan at The Ohio State University, with copies of these pre-1968 scores in the New York office. In 1950 the NYPL began to microfilm DNB scores for safeguarding in its own collection.

Today the librarian works to meet the needs of researchers and restagers; provide archival preservation of the varied collection, and manage the databases and expanding website. The

PREMISES

215 West 11th Street (Hanya Holm Studio)
33 West Eighth Street (AHG apartment)
430 Sixth Avenue, two spaces on contiguous floors in a former freight elevator shaft
35 West 20th Street
47 West 63rd Street
8 East 12th Street
19 Union Square West
305 Eighth Avenue
31-33 West 21st Street
151 West 30th Street

catalog of notated dances is available for download on DNB's website.



Helen Priest Rogers, Eve Gentry and Ann Hutchinson Guest, c1940

Shepherds

Three women stand out from the crowd of able people who have fostered Labanotation in the U.S.. Each served as Executive Director of the DNB, and each has made fundamental contributions to the development of the language, its reach into the dance community, and the security of the DNB, its American parent organization.

Lucy Venable succeeded a founder, which is its own special challenge. From 1961-1968 it was her task to organize a business structure and carry out the plans for the DNB's growth. This she did while maintaining an active performing career in the José Limón Company. During her tenure she personally worked on 7 scores. Irmgard Bartenieff, Forrestine Paulay and Martha Davis developed Effort/Shape theory and its certification program during this period. Every June a conference was held to bring together notation practitioners from other states and from abroad. Medical doctors were invited to observe Bartenieff's work. The Library, which Venable calls "my baby," acquired its first staff Librarian.

Venable credits Maria

Nicholson, the stalwart secretary and only full-time salaried hand, with using her management skills to hold the organization together. In 1959 the first National Notation

Conference took place, an event Venable calls of great importance to the field.

The combined pressures of the school, score production and Library then pushed the DNB into one of its recurring overexpansions. In response, Venable helped to plan the creation of the Extension at Ohio State and the transfer of the score collection to Columbus. In 1968 she became Director of the Extension, beginning the second phase of her extraordinary leadership with the foray into Labanotation on the computer.

Along with her pioneering research into software, Venable has remained a vigilant supporter of the Library. She served as chair of the International Council on Kinetography Laban from 1981-1984 and as vice chair in 1979-1980 and 1985-1996. She has presented seven technical papers at ICKL, including a 1995 paper with Sheila Marion on validity. But she is probably above all the most visionary expander of the computerization of notation.

Muriel Topaz came to notation through classes at Juilliard in 1951, and was the first Director of Labanotation, from 1970 until 1978, at which time she followed Herb Kummel as Executive Director. She has said of her aim at the

time, "I was always conscious that I was planning for the long term." Topaz presided over an expansion of the Bureau's structure and activity, with staff notators, Directors of Development and Education, and a publishing initiative combined with a bookstore. She built the Board of Directors to a new level of active support, with the strong assistance of her Chairman Earl Ubell. She pressed forward on the issue of copyright for scores. She steered a careful course between protection of choreographers' rights over their work and the need for reading material to train students. She pioneered an outreach to ballet masters called *Ballet Directors Course* (now *Page to Stage*), which gave intensive training in reading ballet scores to the company staff who were already in charge of repertory. Maria Grandy was in the first class. She created the Professional Advisory Committee in 1982, to bolster DNB relations with the artist and teaching communities. She went through the exacting application processes that brought in two major NEH grants to notate the work of Antony Tudor and George Balanchine. Topaz structured the training of Certified Notators and saw the placement of one on staff at the Paul Taylor company begin to bear fruit. She served as Chair of the New York State Council on the Arts dance panel, bringing the DNB's work to wider notice within the field. In 1984 she helped convene the first International Notation Conference, in Israel, and brought all the staff notators there to participate.

Topaz reflects, "I think the thing I am proudest of that got accomplished on my watch was the change in focus of the DNB from primarily a research organization to one that legitimized the profession of notator and was active in amassing dance scores." She also feels fortunate to have been Director at the time when the DNB was enabled to establish a viable and funded Library.

Topaz moved the DNB to the 21st Street offices which it held for 15 years. She left to become head of the Juilliard Dance Department, and to begin the career as a writer that has won her a Guggenheim Fellowship and an imposing list of articles and books published, including a forthcoming work on Antony Tudor, whose assistant she had been. From 1996-1999 she was chair of ICKL.

Muriel Topaz carries the day as the most prolific notator of the three. She has contributed fully 42 scores to the collection, including 5 that were worked while she was Executive Director.

Ilene Fox, in her years as staff notator, Director of Labanotation, acting Executive Director and, from 1991, Executive Director, is probably the most active theorist of the three. She has delivered theory papers at every ICKL conference from 1981 to the present, with the exception of 1997. With Jane Marriett she developed a new theory, of "angling, or approaching the surface of support in different directions," adopted in 1983 (only 5 years after she had begun to study LN).

We believe Fox is the only DNB Executive Director who is licensed to pilot a plane. The intrepid capability this demonstrates has probably helped her steer the DNB through the aftermath of the 1986 downsizing and restructuring. She observes, "We benefited from streamlining early, before everyone else had to as well. At the time it seemed a disaster; but really it was a re-evaluation of our mission: what could be done elsewhere, and how we could continue what we do best using other resources. We would not still be here without the efforts, during the downsizing, of board member Alice Moorhead, who then went on as General Manager to get the DNB into sound shape." Hiving off the school and the bookstore freed energy to move the central notation work forward,

especially into technology. Fox's practical eye bolstered fiscal discipline and a new sense of stability that allows planning with confidence for the future. The Board responded in 1999 by setting up the Bureau's first general Endowment Fund.

One landmark in Fox's time has been the translation interface between LabanWriter and the computer animation program LifeForms, a tool used by a number of choreographers (most prominently including Merce Cunningham). This project, funded by the National Initiative to Preserve America's Dance and the National Endowment for the Arts, is Fox's personal favorite among the milestones in her Directorship. She feels, "It will allow those who don't read notation access to the dances in our archive."

Other notable things the DNB has achieved in her time include the Fund for Dance Notation, which allows choreographers to apply to have their work recorded without charge to them; the New York Foundation for the Arts-funded project to plan creation of a multi-media database shell that could gather all production and notation information needed for a given work on one CD-ROM; the start of Saving Americas's Treasures, a millennium project with government funding to notate 10 important works; the notation of more works by African-American choreographers, including Alvin Ailey's *Revelations*; a project to document works at risk by choreogra-

phers with AIDS or HIV; and the positive energy generated by the move to new premises with two partner organizations, Circum-Arts Foundation and Movements Afoot, who have proven welcome friends and reliable colleagues. The DNB is able to share with the consortium the costs of more powerful business equipment than it could have on its own.

Fox regularly gives papers at both notation-related and general dance conferences. In July at the *Dancing in the Millennium* conference she will do a lecture-demonstration "From Pixel to Pirouette." She has also published a number of articles in the DNB's own *Teacher's Bulletin*. She wrote 18 scores on her own and in collaboration with trainees. In 1998 she was approached by the New York Urban Glass Center, which wanted her to notate the moves of glassblowers, who work in teams within precise parameters and use special equipment to create works of art. She has also scored the Chinese Classical Dance Syllabus. Fox is on the board of the World Dance Alliance: Americas Center.

We have been fortunate in these three leaders, each with a special distinction. In spite of occasionally heavy odds they have shaped the Bureau over time into a resilient, practical and progressive organization.



Muriel Topaz, Ilene Fox and Lucy Venable, 1999

The DNB Extension for Education and Research at The Ohio State University

It all started with a job offer. Helen P. Alkire, the visionary founder of the dance department at Ohio State University, was building notation into every aspect of a new curriculum in 1965, and offered a faculty position to Lucy Venable—who turned it down on the grounds she had work in New York to finish. A year later, they ran into one another at a dance performance intermission (where so much dance business has historically been transacted). This time their conversation extended to bringing the DNB out to Columbus along with Venable. Alkire, a member of the Bureau's Board, was aware of the periodic precariousness of its finances, which is a tradition in non-profit life, and she saw a way to protect the work and the Library while advancing her own goals for the department. The DNB Library as of 1968 would be moved to Columbus and housed in the OSU Library's Special Collections, with copies sent back to the DNB and the Dance Collection of the New York Public Library.

It was an unprecedented proposal for the University, and Alkire is grateful still for the support she won from Dean Lee Rigsby and Vice President John Corbally for the Extension. Alkire's thinking was that performance is the

BOARD LOYALISTS

Ann Hutchinson Guest (since 1952)
Muriel Topaz (since 1956)
Lucy Venable (since 1959)
Earl Ubell (since 1966)
Sheldon Soffer (since 1979)
Margot Lehman (since 1980)
Lynne Weber (since 1983)
Alice Moorhead (since 1984)

spine of a dance program and notation, which preserves the repertory, would work well with the repertory company also planned in the department. Notation

would additionally make available a body of literature for research, crucial to the development of a graduate program. But the project would require new funding for new faculty, operations and office space, which all arrived only in 1970, two years after the Dance Notation Bureau Extension for Education and Research was up and running. The original concept of an independent unit was astutely changed into a department program, to ensure a regular annual budget from the University and eliminate the need for constant fund-raising. Alkire notes, "I saw notation as a source of history, past and present. It adds a fundamental curricular dimension. No other university was doing much then with it. Lucy and I agreed we would add a certain amount of staff over 5 years: it took us 6." Alkire regretted that she could not move the University process faster to accommodate some of Venable's projects, but it would seem all the same that she made it jump quite smartly through new hoops.

The goals were to integrate notation into all facets of the program; to develop a research area at both undergraduate and graduate levels; to develop the department in unique ways; to record faculty and visiting artist work; and to present workshops demonstrating integrations of dance and notation.

Alkire encouraged faculty to attend these, to gain a shared knowledge regardless of how much or little they chose to use notation in their own teaching. This contributed to a sense of cohesion and shared mission among the faculty.

One of Lucy Venable's first ideas, shared with Alkire, was experimentation with computers. For Alkire it was the image of IBM, near neighbor of the New London campus of the American Dance Festival, that set her thinking. Venable examined the first generation of operating systems based on DOS and saw that Labanotation

on the computer would have to wait a little while for something better; which came in the form of the Macintosh. With it, Venable and her collaborators George Karl, Scott Sutherland, and now David Ralley created the LabanWriter software that enables notation to be written directly on the computer. The Extension offered workshops, including Teacher Certification, and Labananalysis, which addressed integration of Effort/Shape and LN in scores and in dance, along with the analysis of style.

Under Venable and her successor Odette Blum, the Extension provided an extensive LN curriculum for OSU dancers, and Teacher Certification for a larger body of students from the U.S., Europe and Asia. For the DNB the Extension checks scores, prepares revisions as necessary, and writes some works as they are mounted at the department by visiting artists. With the closing of the DNB school in 1986, much of education in notation now takes place under Extension auspices.

Odette Blum added to Extension priorities a strong focus on Motif writing, and succeeded in getting it adopted in the official curriculum of the Columbus Public Schools. She was joined in this by Venable, John Giffin and Vera Maletic. Maletic's 1981 appointment to the faculty added to the curriculum Effort and Space Harmony, and a seminar in choreographic analysis of style, co-taught with Venable and John Giffin. She also contributed two principal initiatives; a pioneering classification of phrasing types that can be used for annotating Labanotation scores, and the multimedia dance documentation project using LabanLink, a program that scrolls notation in synch with video, developed in Columbus by Joukje Kolff, in the collection of information about an artist's work on CD-ROM. This was funded at the Extension by the National Initiative to Preserve America's Dance as the OSU-Multimedia for Dance Prototype, by the

The first restaging of a dance from the Labanotation score was Roberta Krugman Halporn's setting, from her own score, of Sophie Maslow's FOLKSAY on the Cornell Dance Group, February 1951

team of Maletic, A. William Smith, Candace Feck and graduate associate Kolff.

Sheila Marion, the Extension's third and present Director, has led development of the forthcoming software LabanReader, with David Ralley and A. William Smith. This enables the user to gray out chosen columns of a score on screen in order to focus on the material of interest. With support from the Dance Preservation Fund, administered by OSU for an anonymous donor and dedicated to furthering the recording of dance, the Advanced Theory packet and Ray Cook's *Advanced Study Guide* have been put into LabanWriter, and Marion has secured funding to place tutorials on the basics of LN, using the Extension's movement-based approach, on a future OSU dance website. Her goal is to achieve a strong Web presence with easily accessible materials.

The Extension is now more than half as old as the DNB itself, and has demonstrated extraordinary intellectual and technological leadership in sharing the parent organization's mission to create the means for, and the reality of, a collection of the great dance works and a literate dance field.

Professional Counsel

The DNB formed a Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) in 1982 to invite new insights on its programs and challenges, and to build support in the dance field for its mission. This group now numbers some 18 members who travel from around the country, and occasionally from abroad, for semi-annual meetings. It has

grown into a diverse, active and sophisticated force supporting the DNB's work. Members come from dance companies, the publications world, children's dance education, technology, college level dance and the library world. Most

encouragingly, there are representatives from 2 organizations working with LN as intensively as does the DNB: the Language of Dance Centre in Texas and the DNB Extension at Ohio State University.

PAC members receive reports from the DNB staff and the Extension that are useful opportunities to sum up progress; share information from the professional and educational dance worlds that can be helpful to DNB projects; and advise the staff on theoretical and technological issues. A mark of the PAC's current energy and morale is that current members sometimes ask to serve an extra term beyond the usual 3 years. At the last meeting they had 17 nominations to propose for 6 vacancies.

Laban Movement Analysis

Rudolf Laban's theoretical work included both a symbolic script for movement and a body of concepts for analyzing and writing movement dynamics and using them in creative work. Irmgard Bartenieff, an original member of the DNB and its Board, led the amplification of this latter material into the full development of Effort/Shape theory, later called Laban Movement Analysis. For the DNB's first 38 years the study and teaching of this work was part of the DNB's mission. By 1978 the Effort/Shape curriculum had grown into a need for an independent organization, and the Laban-Bartenieff Institute for Movement Studies, a

certifying body, was founded. LIMS has expanded nationally with its program for certifying Movement Analysts, and has realized a vital aspect of the possibilities originally outlined by Laban.

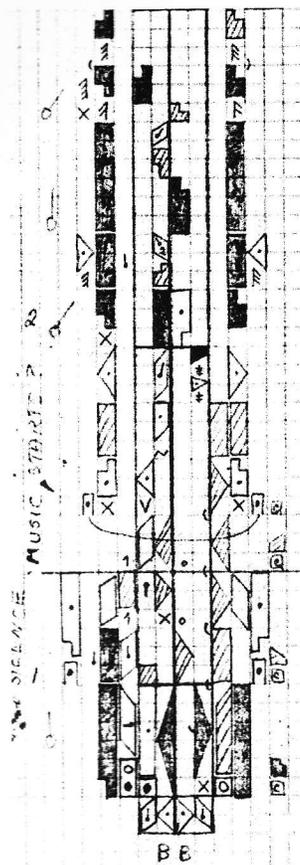
The School

By 1950 teaching was the single largest activity of the DNB. Classes were held on a limited schedule during the school year and more intensive workshops took place in the summer at many universities and summer festivals. In 1973 the appointment of Bonnie Bird as Director of Education signalled a new focus on teaching at the DNB, and certification of teachers began in the early 60's. After the departure of the Effort/Shape program to LIMS, Dawn Lille Horwitz introduced Labananalysis back into the notation curriculum, in the late 1970's, and the expanded DNB School received accreditation in 1980 from the U.S. Department of Education. Spreading use of Labanotation in departments of dance, and the recognition that this teaching could be done as well or better outside the DNB, prompted the closing of the school in 1986. LN is now taught in schools and colleges around the world and from here by correspondence course; an investigation of Internet-assisted distance-learning is underway. Teacher Certification is chiefly done by the Extension at OSU, and Certified Notator training is conducted by DNB staff notators in New York.

ILENE FOX ON THE FUTURE

"I'd like to see notation a part of every dancer's education. In addition to opening the door to a wealth of dance material, it helps train the eye and provides a richer understanding of what one sees. It is my goal to find ways the DNB can support the inclusion of notation in technical training, study of dance history, creative work, and all other aspects of dance study."

*excerpt from the score of BILLY THE KID,
the first dance notated under DNB auspices.
It was recorded in 1942 by Ann Hutchinson Guest
and Helen Priest Rogers, with assistance
from Anne Wilson*



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