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Les Salons du Bureau, II

The second fund-raising party of the year, called *Expanding the Legacy*, was hosted by Lynne Weber, Alice Moorhead and Hillary Gal, and featured Notator Ray Cook. He gave a compelling account of the artistic values that distinguish Lin Hwai-min's *Legacy* and made him offer to notate it without fee and then try to set up performances in Asia, the U.S. and Europe. Cook showed video of the choreographer and the dancers in performance to fill out his vivid picture, along with an eloquent rendering of the sound of Lin shouting to the dancers "More! More! More!" for all the world like Anna Sokolow.

Spotlight: Tudor's Planets Redivivus

We know notators capture and write a work accurately from the stager's presentation to dancers. The best notating situation is one in which set choreography is being taught to a cast unfamiliar with the work, so that the dancers' natural questions are all elicited in the notator's presence.

Sally Brayley Bliss, Trustee of the Antony Tudor Ballet Trust, threw senior Notator Muriel Topaz a more difficult challenge. She was asked to interview a long-retired dancer in England on Tudor's "lost" 1934 ballet *The Planets*, and to produce a score from reminiscences and demonstrations alone, sans dancers. The success of Topaz's work only emerged some 8 years later, this spring, when dancers at Duke University performed two sections of *The Planets*, Tudor's fifth major work premiered on Ballet Rambert.

Bliss initiated this effort and persuaded Topaz to accompany her to research sessions in England with Elisabeth Schooling, Sally Gilmour and Maude Lloyd, veterans of the original cast. Schooling taught material to Bliss and Topaz took notes; the sessions were also videotaped. Later Schooling's colleagues came in to prompt her legendary powers of recall.

The score rescues large portions of the "Venus" and "Neptune" sections for soloists and corps (at that point there was no time to undertake the section called "Mars"). It was coordinated with its Gustav Holst score, also titled *The Planets*, and was completed several months after the research trip, and then laid aside in the Trust and DNB archives.

Years later Bliss resumed the quest to recover *The Planets*. The National Endowment for the Arts awarded Duke University one of its National College Choreography Initiative grants to mount the sections available in score. Topaz taught what she had recorded, and Bliss recognized the need for new choreography to fill in blanks left by Schooling, who had since died, and her colleagues. Bliss turned to Donald Mahler, who regularly restages and coaches Tudor revivals for the Trust, to create stylistically appropriate material for the groups. He coached the dancers along with Celia Franca, another Tudor authority and early member of the *Planets* cast. Well-received performances by the Duke dancers in Durham and then at New York's Hunter College in May demonstrated the viability of this unusual process. Bliss said her major reaction to seeing the ballet on stage was "it's not dated, not at all."

Work now continues on "Mars" in hopes of completing the restoration of

DNBulletin

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this Tudor treasure. Topaz has been in the Ballet Rambert archives working with detailed contemporaneous word notes and drawings made by Rambert corps dancer Rosemary Young. Once the three initial sections are in hand (a final section, titled "Mercury" and added in 1939 for Tudor's own London Ballet, is believed to be unretrievable) Bliss hopes for a full professional revival of the ballet.

Profile

a series on DNB's people and allies

Sally Brayley Bliss first encountered Labanotation right before she encountered the work of Antony Tudor, when she began her training in summer school at the National Ballet of Canada. The school had provided notation, though Miss Brayley was deemed "too young", at 13, to take the course. In due course she progressed into the company, dancing a number of Tudor roles in Toronto: her description is "I *inhaled* Tudor there." She then moved to the Metropolitan Opera Ballet in New York and the opportunity to work directly with the choreographer. Her friendship with Tudor developed a level of trust that culminated in her appointment as executor of his will and Trustee responsible for the continuing performance of his ballets through the Tudor Trust. Bliss has the special advantage of knowing the work from the inside. Tudor created a number of roles on her.

Tudor's work was first notated through the influence of Muriel Topaz, who had been his assistant. Bliss has her eye on several more efforts similar to *The Planets*. She would like to reconstruct *Descent of Hebe* (1935) and *Concerning Oracles* (1966); section 2 of this ballet was created in 1951 as a trio called *Les Mains Gauches* and is being researched by Sallie Wilson for remount on Diana Byer's New York Theatre Ballet. *Knight Errant* (1968) is a forthcoming project of Millicent Hodson and Kenneth Archer. American Ballet Theatre is considering *Romeo and Juliet*.

Leslie Rotman, DNB Director of Restaging, observes significantly that "Sally trusts the score." Bliss herself says "the little course work I've taken shows me that Labanotation's great strength is its *musicality*. The score is so musical you can't go wrong, as you could in learning [musical cues] from a person or a film."

Bliss has made the Tudor Trust one of the DNB's most important and valued supporters. Its grants have sustained our operations and with the NEH and other funders enabled the recording and restagings of 23 Tudor works, out of a total of the 56 known ballets (not counting opera and other media). Tudor Trust support of the Maria Grandy Circulating Collection of scores extends all the DNB's resources to the dance field. Without Bliss's generous initiative the DNB would be a poorer organization and the dance repertory would be deprived of the treasured Tudor heritage.

A French Champion for LN

Do yourself a favor and take a look at <http://notation.free.fr>. Notator Marion Bastien runs this website from her base in Paris. It offers basic introductions to Labanotation and Benesh. Bastien is a web and multi-media designer now, but continues to champion notation in a variety of ways, along with having offered the DNB her expert help on the revamping of our own site and the design of the new LabanRing feature.

Bastien recently ran interviews on the site with Jill Cirasella, Sandra Aberkalns and David Ralley, programmer for LabanWriter at IRCAM in Paris and the OSU Extension in Columbus. Cirasella was quoted on the scope of the DNB Library and organization of the Maria Grandy Circulating Collection. She also discussed the strengths and weaknesses of technologies advancing on libraries. She observed, "I studied computer science, and I strongly support digitization projects. But, as DNB Librarian, I am asked to protect visual information, and right now I have complete faith only in what can be read by the human eye—without the assistance of advanced technology." Aberkalns discussed the working process of the notator, the kinds of thinking that are required to produce a good score, and the reasoning behind her introduction of color into the notation of William Forsythe's *Artifact II*.

The Ralley interview illuminated his partnership with LN software pioneer Lucy Venable on LW 4, as they blend computer expertise with notation theory. He wrote of the valuable ideas (and bug alerts) he receives from users,

and their priorities for the next version.

Bastien's website and interviews were reviewed enthusiastically in the French magazine *Danser*.

ICKL Calls for Papers

The International Council for Kinetography Laban requests proposals for papers to be given at two Asian conferences in the summer of 2003. The 23rd Biennial will be held in Beijing July 25-31, and a Joint International Conference of CORD, World Dance Alliance/Asia Pacific and ICKL with the National Institute of the Arts will meet in Taipei August 1-4. Information on where to submit proposals on both technical and non-technical topics can be found on the ICKL or CORD websites: www.ickl.org and www.cordance.org.

The DNB will co-sponsor a 3rd conference in Taipei with the Chinese Cultural University immediately following the CORD/WDA/ICKL meeting. Details will be available soon from the DNB.

The Library

Jill Cirasella has won a Fulbright Fellowship to pursue graduate study in logic at the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands, and will leave the DNB in July. We regret losing her, but cannot presume to compete on such a level, and congratulate her for this distinction. She has greatly advanced the website, reorganized the Archives and handled the complex bookselling operation with graceful efficiency. Together with Ilene Fox and Lucy Venable, Cirasella is working on a proposed new structure to manage the Library. A dual position is under consideration, with an entry-level staff person and a consultancy by an experienced cataloguer.

The section of the website devoted to restaging has been redone. A set of Frequently Asked Questions has been added, and photos now illustrate the Solos to Stage. Another innovation on the site is LabanRing, a system of links relating to specified topics of interest that will direct a visitor to sources of more information.

The popularity of the theory bulletin board has been rising steadily. Curator Charlotte Wile reports receiving

over 100 postings, all still available on the website.

OSU Extension News

MFA graduate Ursula Payne will teach at the American Dance Festival this summer under the auspices of the Margot Lehman Project in Dance Notation. 2 of Payne's students are now studying in the Extension's graduate program, one of them among the 7 MFA students who have chosen a special focus on notation.

The revised Teacher Certification course has enrolled 11 students, with a faculty that is both larger and drawn from more outside schools than in previous years. 6 teachers from OSU, Southern Methodist University, Florida State University and the DNB will conduct the sessions.

Long-Distance Learning

The Board's Education committee enquiry into the present position of LN in dance education turned up two issues in particular: a need to interest more university dance departments in teaching Labanotation and the need to integrate it into the broader dance curriculum. As a result, redevelopment of the Teacher Certification course is underway, and the DNB is looking at an additional initiative to move toward these two goals. It will produce web-based distance learning modules usable in a variety of courses. The modules will present LN as a resource for information about the specific subject; showing how it can be used, rather than as a separate subject with no evident relevance to other course work.

Ilene Fox described a sample module designed for dance history. "We might create a course, perhaps two weeks long, covering the Judson movement. Subscribers would find content on the artists of this group and their activity and notated examples from the repertory, along with enough notation training to read that material. They could experience the movement directly and accurately for themselves. The DNB would provide a consulting tutor to take the students through the module, moderating a web-based discussion group, answering questions, assisting with the notation,

and providing and grading homework assignments."

The DNB is seeking funds to begin the project. A first step is to survey teachers of dance history, aesthetics, composition and similar areas for specific topics that they would like to see addressed.

Distance-learning is a natural method for LN training, with its computerized format and history of correspondence course work. Teaching on the web holds the promise of making LN more widely accessible, and modules such as Fox envisions can demonstrate what students in many courses can gain from a little more literacy.

Dance Notation (Speakers') Bureau

Sandra Aberkalns appeared on a panel at Hunter College in May as part of an event it called "Sharing the Legacy: Dance Masterworks of the 20th Century". Together with Sylvia Waters, Norton Owen, Madeleine Nichols, David Vaughan and moderator Wendy Perron, she addressed preserving the dance legacy through different media and the practices of various dance organizations. At an evening concert students from 6 colleges and 2 professional companies presented 10 historic dance works: of these, fully 6 are available in DNB scores.

Ilene Fox will present the Interface project in Providence at a joint meeting of the National Dance Education Organization and CORD, and in Miami at a meeting of NIPAD grantees at the Dance/USA Roundtable, both in June.

Fox travels to Brazil in August to deliver a keynote address at Encontro Laban 2002. She titles her speech "Trained Eye, Informed Body". She will also attend the World Dance Alliance Global Assembly in Dusseldorf, including a performance of Lin Hwai-min's *Legacy*, staged from Ray Cook's score.

Finally, the DNB Note Card Series

After a lengthy period of brainstorming and debate in cartoon form on the DNB office whiteboard, Beverly Jensen and the DNB Notators have come up with a plan to create special note cards, which will shortly be offered for

sale. Designs that realize in LN a variety of colloquial expressions will be printed on fine card stock. The cost will be \$15 per packet of 8 cards with matching envelopes.

Art has come in to date from Charlotte Wile, Leslie Rotman, Robin Hoffman, Siân Ferguson, Ilene Fox, Marion Bastien and Sandra Aberkalns.

LN Serving You, II

by guest writer *Patty Harrington Delaney of Southern Methodist University*

Catherine Sherer, an alumna of the Program in Choreographic Theory and Practice at Southern Methodist University, was recently named recipient of a Fulbright [joining Jill Cirasella, above]. She will be using this grant to study Ethnochoreology at the University of Limerick in Ireland. Sherer is among 4 grantees chosen to study in Ireland from a field of 56 applicants.

She completed her Elementary and Intermediate Certification in LN while she was a student at SMU, and this work played prominently in both her acceptance at the University of Limerick and her application to the Fulbright program. Sherer will be expanding her accomplishments in notation by attending the Teacher Certification course at OSU in June. She won grants to attend this course from both the Texas Commission for the Arts and the OSU Dance Preservation Fund.

We are exceptionally proud of Catherine and look for her to play a prominent role in the field of notation in the future.

Matchmaking ABT+DNB

Critic and editor Francis Mason misses no opportunity to remind the dance field of the value of written scores. He tells of "agitating for Balanchine revivals of forgotten work. One day I was in the DNB Library when someone from American Ballet Theatre came in. I said 'look in our files.' We had an unsuspected score of *Symphonie Concertante*; and they decided to do it."

violins run up

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*excerpt from Antony Tudor's 1934 ballet THE PLANETS,
notated in 2001 by Muriel Topaz
(see story, page 1)*

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