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New Foundation Support

The Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation has awarded the DNB \$25,000 for the notation of two works. In addition the DNB has received a \$5000 grant from The J.P. Morgan Chase Foundation for general operating support, that most valuable but underserved category. Ilene Fox expressed the gratitude of the organization to both new friends of the DNB, and gave credit to Development Consultant Janine Veto, who has been working with the DNB under a special grant from Board member Alice Moorhead.

Spotlight: an Enhanced Artist/LN Restager Collaboration

One of the most important and delicate relationships the DNB builds in the dance field is that between DNB restagers and the style coaches who are, or represent, the choreographers. A number of artists still voice concerns about using scores, even after more than 60 years: “your restagers would put my restagers out of the job.” The earlier conviction that artists will endure indefinitely to supervise their own revivals is, however, gradually fading as time removes dance’s founding figures. Now even some of the first generation of successor coaches are contemplating their own responsibility to the long-range future.

Director of Restaging Leslie Rotman has heard the reservations. Her usual realm is arranging revivals from score where the artist has authorized notation restagers to preside. But she also works with artist restagers, and her recent

experience with the Tudor repertory gives cause for optimism.

Sally Bliss of The Tudor Trust puts strong faith in scores to preserve artistic information. In 1983 the Joffrey Ballet revived Tudor’s *Offenbach in the Underworld* set by Celia Franca, who had worked with Tudor for his 1956 production at the National Ballet of Canada. Franca was working from memory, although a score had been made at the Joffrey in 1975 by Lynne Weber. Franca requested DNB help on some forgotten passages, and Rotman was called in to read the notation; at first directly to Franca and later on to the dancers. She also revised the Weber score.

For a 1998 revival at the Kansas City Ballet the Trust sent out former Tudor dancer Donald Mahler as its representative along with Rotman. Her initial mandate was to set all the material on the dancers, preparatory to Mahler’s coaching. This is the customary collaboration with an artist’s representative; the notation restager presents some or all of the choreography in detail to the dancers, ready for the artist’s advanced work on performance.

Mahler has expanded the notation role, and increasingly calls on Rotman to coach style as well as teach steps. She brings a special background to Tudor, and especially to *Offenbach*. Her ballet training with Elaine Wilson was founded on Tudor style. Wilson created the role of The Queen of the Carriage Trade in Tudor’s original 1954 cast. Mahler chooses not to work alone, but to require her as his assistant; in the American Ballet Theatre revival in October he listed her in the program as Assistant Director.

This developing partnership, which reflects Mahler’s growing

DNBulletin

Dance Notation Bureau
 151 West 30th Street, Suite 202
 New York NY 10001
 Phone: 212/564-0985
 Fax: 212/904-1426
 e-mail: notation@mindspring.com
 website: www.dancenotation.org

Executive Director: Ilene Fox
 Librarian: Mei-Chen Lu
 Archives Consultant: Joey Smith
 Notator: Sandra Aberkalns
 Director of Restaging: Leslie Rotman
 Administrative Assistant: Beverly Jensen
 Notation Associate: Mira Kim
 Technology Advisor: Scott Sutherland
 Director, Dance Notation Bureau Extension for Development and Research, The Ohio State University: Sheila Marion

Editor: Senta Driver

confidence in Rotman's command of Tudor, could be a model for the future. The company restagers now at work command unique experience and understanding of the artists and styles they handle. How can they perpetuate their coaching insights and foster their own traditions? What happens to the work in the generation that follows them?

The DNB aims to preserve choreographic information, and its qualified restagers can do the job alone where artists permit. They do it better in collaboration with coaches who personally know the style, and will take on any role, small or larger, preferred by an artist restager. If more artist representatives find how they can be helped by notation restagers, and develop them as partners, the quality of restagings will only rise.

Profile

a series on DNB's people and allies

When web or motif-related projects are discussed around the DNB, the name of Charlotte Wile usually gets invoked fairly early in the game. "Charlotte was there when it was designed," will be said, and "We'll have to ask Charlotte how to do that," and "perhaps we could persuade Charlotte to take this on."

Wile comes from the generation of Notators trained in the early 1970's by Muriel Topaz, Ray Cook and Jane Marriett. She says of her very first exposure at Juilliard, "Something about LN stirred me so much," and still feels "of all the jobs I've had, I never tired of the notation work; thinking of it, talking about it. Something in it feeds my soul." She has acted on this attachment by inventing herself as a sort of permanent Post-Graduate Fellow at the DNB, contributing to theoretical discussions of Labanotation, Motif and Laban Movement Analysis here, at LIMS and on line alike. She feels, "Ilene gives you freedom to be creative here, there is support here."

Her road has wound all through the dance field. One profoundly moving experience was touring in a production of *Hello, Dolly* for a month through war-time Vietnam. The dancers temporarily ranked as Army Majors; although they were as well protected as possible, at one time they came under direct fire. Wile was later serving on the Brooklyn College faculty when she sought to

develop her teaching skills at the DNB. Her curriculum combined Notator and restaging work; during the training process she produced two certifying scores, Anna Sokolow's *Moods* (assisting Ray Cook) and Gerald Arpino's *Partita for Four*, and assisted Ray Cook in mounting Humphrey's *Shakers*. Her own later restagings have included Sophie Maslow's *Folksay*, Humphrey's *Water Study* and Weidman's *Brahms Waltzes*. She went on to write Kurt Jooss' *The Green Table* with Muriel Topaz, and *Pavane on the Death of an Infant*, and Donald McKayle's *Blood Memories*, in the midst of producing a family.

Wile completed LMA training and taught at LIMS, and recalls using Effort/Shape concepts when casting *Folksay*. She decided to match roles to the dancers' movement profiles rather than their physical types. The Effort work advanced Wile's interest in the question of style coaching. She was also influenced by watching Anna Markard teach the Jooss material, which she was directed to write very precisely to Jooss' ideas of performance style. This gave Wile a sense she cherished of having almost first-hand contact, not only with Jooss' perspective through Markard, but also through Jooss back to Laban.

Wile is consulting on the use of Motif writing for the score in progress of Jerome Robbins' *Dances at a Gathering*. She designed and now curates the web theory bulletin board addressing questions and proposals in both Motif and Labanotation. She values the bulletin board because it opens theory development to all interested readers, at various levels, without the constriction of meetings; "Also, you can see the development of the theory in the string of comments."

Community teaching of all ages, especially children, has always been a focal point for Wile. She ran her own studio in Manhattan, and has spent 15 years on the faculty of Ballet Hispanico. "Whenever I am allowed, my work includes improvisation around major themes from the Laban paradigm. We do motif notation sequences: students mix and match and learn concepts, but also symbols, and learn to see the patterns and overall form of a sequence. The advantage of using the notation is that they can see it all at once. And there's something about using visible symbols that makes them understand the movement in a different way. The children love this. The

parents, especially those not speaking English, love it because it gives a literate dimension to the work." She also finds a professional advantage: "after I teach a sample class like this, I'm asked 'You do this in every class?' 'Yes.' 'You're hired.'"

Her teaching success is reflected in the experience of Hannah Silverman. Silverman took a single children's class with Wile, as part of videotaping a library of teaching methods for use in the revised Teacher Certification program. Since then Silverman has been using the symbols on her own to create dances. Her interest prompted her to seek private tutoring with Ilene Fox and to produce a number of dances on paper, one reproduced on page 4. Silverman also contributed 3 holiday designs to the Note-8-Card series. The daughter of Administrative Assistant Beverly Jensen, her credit line reads "Staff Member Child since birth 1993".

The Library

After years of tinkering by many hands, the Library's information management is receiving an advanced-level upgrade. A new staffing is in place, to address intellectual reorganization of the databases and create a new cataloguing system for the complex archives while maintaining services to users of the Maria Grandy Circulating Collection and other DNB resources. Ilene Fox, Lucy Venable and departing Librarian Jill Cirasella reviewed the collection's needs and status, and Mei-Chen Lu has been appointed full-time Librarian. Joey Smith, a professional archivist with the Winthrop Group, has joined the DNB as part-time Archives Consultant.

Lu comes from Ohio State, where she completed an MFA in Performance with certification as an elementary level LN teacher and restager. She handles regular member services and the website. Smith is redesigning the database software to draw score records and related holdings, such as music and score supplemental information, into a coordinated whole. Her work will provide a more sophisticated approach to our archive management. The ultimate goal is to make our holdings accessible to DNB users in searchable format on line.

The Library has acquired a CD burner, enabling Lu to provide score renters with music on their choice of tape or CD.

OSU Extension News

The Dance Department mounted a photo exhibition in April covering the history of dance at OSU, including the establishment of the Extension. Founding chair and former DNB Board member Helen P. Alkire, who championed LN at OSU, was honored at a reception at the exhibition's close.

The first class of teachers has emerged from the newly revised LN Teacher Certification Course, taught in June by Jack Clark, John Giffin, Patty Harrington Delaney, Valarie Mockabee, Leslie Rotman and Sheila Marion. They are Lydia Estela Martinez-Campos, M. L. Colvin, Leah F. Glenn, Kimberly A. Jensen, Hannah Joy Kosstrin, Mei-Chen Lu, Catherine Marie Sherer, Chien-Ying Wang, Tracy Syphard-Chaner and Jessica S. Lindberg. One more will be certified in December on completion of his project. Initial certification is at the elementary level; to add the intermediate level they complete the intermediate exam and LN assignments, without further course work.

Lindberg set Helen McGehee's *I Am the Gate* for her Directing from Score project. She and dancer Tiffany Cunningham worked for a week with McGehee, who expressed gratitude that this major work of hers had been written, as she felt she herself would have been able to remember the feeling but not the order of the piece. The choreographer is now setting the work herself from her newly score-refreshed memory, and said she would send dancers interested in future mountings to Lindberg. The OSU pair obtained a copy McGehee's film of herself dancing the role, and Lindberg will transfer Muriel Topaz' pencil score into LabanWriter, preserving the original version and adding a second copy with the choreographer's revisions

Margot Lehman Project: Standing Room Only

The 2002 American Dance Festival School offered a popular performance/creative course using elements of LN, Motif and LMA taught by Ursula Payne, an OSU graduate who had researched her Directing from Score project on Donald McKayle at the Festival. Payne attracted between 17 and 20 students each day to her workshop, which presented ways to use notation and

Motif symbols along with LMA concepts to stimulate choreography. She said, "when I showed a phrase and then symbols, they were intrigued. Visual representation on the spot helps improvisers make their intention clear. And they could use symbols to see patterns in their material. Sometimes students mistakenly think they have to become specialists to use [notation] at all. I wanted them to see how the notation symbols could unlock creative blocks." Payne's innovation parallels the new direction in LN Teacher Training, which looks at ways to incorporate notation into a variety of dance courses. She has used this range of materials in her own teaching at Slippery Rock University as tools for artistic development, adding Motif writing for the Festival version.

The course funding was contributed in honor of DNB Board member Margot Lehman, to encourage notation at the ADF. The Festival, and its Co-Directors Charles and Stephanie Reinhart, have a long-term connection with the DNB. Charles served years as a Board member, and Stephanie was an active member of the Professional Advisory Committee. In 1999 they shared the DNB's Distinguished Service Award.

The DNB mourns Stephanie's premature death this fall, and will miss her quietly effective personal leadership.

Dance Notation (Speakers') Bureau

Ilene Fox was invited to Brazil in August to deliver a keynote address at Encontro Laban 2002. She titled her speech "Trained Eye, Informed Body":

"What I discovered [in writing the Classical Chinese Dance syllabus in Hong Kong] was that anything I could write, I performed well. My trained eye informed my body. I had a tool for analyzing and understanding the movement that was presented to me. Notation skills improved my ability for accurate performance..."

"Even if we don't write the movement, the vocabulary of Labanotation and LMA give us a way to organize our thinking and performance..."

"Where can we go in the next 74 years and beyond? Let us dream together..."

"We are creating an interface

between dance notation and computer animation, designed to translate between LabanWriter and Life Forms. This will make the information in a dance score accessible to even those who do not read notation; providing to educators, historians, dance students and lovers of dance a means of accessing the wealth of material [in our archives]...

"Imagine attaching sensors to a dancer and capturing movement into a computer, which can then be translated into Life Forms animation and into Labanotation, producing a rough score directly from the dancers which needs only refinement by a notator..."

"We are also in the planning stage to develop distance-learning courses, modules with notation used to illustrate dance history classes, for composition classes, for all parts of the curriculum. Included in the distance-learning course will be tutorials on how to read the notation. This gives us a way to reach dance students even at academic institutions where there is no notation-literate faculty..."

"We need to change the perception that we are about symbols. We are about ideas. I ask you to think about what we have to offer, who might benefit from sharing our knowledge, and how we can reach out. I have shared some of my dreams with you; my dream of a notation- and LMA-literate dance world, my dream of using technology to help us save more dances, using technology to unite the notation community, my dream of a better understanding of our art [through] the concepts that are its building blocks, my dream of a legacy of dance that is alive and vital, with all dancers knowing something about where we came from..."

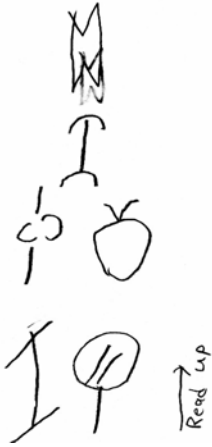
"Now I invite you to share your dreams with me."

Department of Enduring Fame

Roving correspondent Judy Van Zile e-mails that Labanotation is included in *10,000 Answers, the Ultimate Trivia Encyclopedia* by Stanley Newman and Hal Fittipaldi. The entry reads "Most popular system for notating choreography, introduced by Slovakian [sic] theorist Rudolf Laban in 1928."

Studies have shown that appearance in trivia collections is among the most influential public-relations opportunities to be had in mass culture.

By
Hannah
Spins and
twists



*Motif score made by Hannah Silverman, age 9,
for her personal dancemaking, following a
children's class with Charlotte Wile incorporating
Motif symbols into movement (see story page 1)*

*Miss Silverman, DNB staff member child since
birth, is one of the artists who designed
cards in the Note-8 series.*

Dance Notation Bureau
151 West 30th Street, Suite 202
New York, NY 10001-4007