

WHEN

WE

DANCED

Kildare County Council

Dance Development Programme *1998-2008*



When We Danced

Kildare County Council

Dance Development Programme

1998-2008

Published by Kildare County Council

Written by Louise Costelloe

Photography by Adrian Melia and
Mel McDermott/Adrian Melia Photo

Edited by Nicola Dunne

Design by Cooke Design

*This publication was produced with
the support of The Arts Council of Ireland*

PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

Kildare County Council Dance Development Programme Timeline:

- 1998 - 2001 Appointment of Dance Artist in Residence, Cathy O'Kennedy
- 2002 Laban Guild Community Dance Leaders Course, Level 1
- 2003 Kildare Dance Summer School, NUI Maynooth
- 2005 Laban Guild Community Dance Leaders Course, Level 2
- 2005 Kildare Dance Summer School, NUI Maynooth
- 2006 Laban Guild Community Dance Leaders Course Level 1
- 2006 Toolbox of Dance, Workshop led by Colm Gallagher (AMICI Dance)
in association with SCJM Moore Abbey Services
- 2006 Launch of "Making Inroads: An Arts Development Plan for
Kildare County Council 2006-2011"
- 2007 Kildare Dance Summer School, NUI Maynooth
- 2007 Appointment of Arts in Health Specialist with responsibility for Dance
- 2008 Laban in Practice, Dance Development Weekend, NUI Maynooth

SETTING THE CONTEXT


A 2005 Arts Council discussion paper stated that *‘The status of dance in Ireland is not helped by a lack of documented evidence of past and current activity. In a country where dance is marginalised, setting up an archive will support the artform by presenting evidence of dance activity in the past, and it will lead to an awareness of the importance of collecting contemporary work’*. Taking cognisance of this, Kildare County Council committed to documenting its Dance Development programme, in visuals and the written word.

The archival element of ‘When We Danced’ is complemented by the author, Louise Costelloes’ more personal writing, responding both to the work of Rudolf Laban and to her experiences as a Laban Guild Community Dance student. Louise received a Dance Criticism award in 2005 from the Laban Guild for her critique of a dance performance, which led to this writing commission.

The catalogue of images from the Dance Development Programme, by sports photographer Adrian Melia selected for this publication capture the essence of the work. The full photographic archive is available on www.kildare.ie/artsservice.

‘Making Inroads: An Arts Development Plan for Kildare County Council 2006-2011’, is centred around the development of strategic partnerships. The support of the Arts Council and the Laban Guild was essential to the success of the Dance Development programme to date. Armed with the information, knowledge and experiences gathered, we look forward to further developing, extending and refining our work.

Lucina Russell,
Arts Officer, Kildare County Council,
February 2008

A woman with curly hair, wearing a light blue tank top, is shown in profile with her arms raised high in a dance studio. The background is blurred, showing other people and a green wall.

*Through dancing,
a person states:
“Here I am world.”*

Rudolf Laban₈

PLACING DANCE IN OUR LIVES

What do we think of when we think of dance? Festive occasions perhaps, beautiful dancers on stage, maybe children playing? What does it feel like to dance, to move with rhythm, with others, with music? When you find your toe tapping to the radio, or your hips swaying to music in the supermarket, is that the beginning of a dance?

The concentration that dancing requires, whether it is through set movement or creative movement, allows us to live in the moment, in the present tense. We acknowledge that modern life is stressful and frenetic, it is easy to see why activities involving meditation or concentrated movement are now in demand.

As children we learn by physical movement, it comes before language. Young children use gestures to communicate, they investigate and engage with their environment through touch and action and,

unlike adults, have the patience to repeat a movement over and over again in the full confidence that they will perfect it.

The impulse to dance is connected with a state of feeling; the rituals that grew out of this impulse may have been part of a group's dramatisation of their myths of origin and an exploration of man's relationship with nature and god-like forces. This is evident in the themes and movement of Indian Kathak and Kathakali dance and Balinese/Indonesian Puppet Theatre, which are rich in symbols and intricate movement. It is likely that dance was an integral part of religious ceremony in prehistoric and ancient times. The spiralling and whirling that can be seen in dance in Sufi and Indian cultures engendered feelings of ecstasy in the dancer which was thought to bring about a mystic transformation and a connection or "oneness" with the universe.

*“...the impulse to dance
probably occurred
when an individual or
group were so affected
by emotional stress,
fear, exaltation, hope
or depression that they
moved in response”*

Lois Ellfeldt₃

Different kinds of movement would have performed different functions, many Native American rituals involved imitation and worship of animals and forces of nature that were crucial for their survival. There are dances for birth and death in African culture, welcoming spirits into the world and guiding them away. War dances brought warriors together and strengthened the group. Rhythm, patterns, shapes, formations such as circles and space were all tools of expression in these rituals, the traces of their meaning can be seen in ethnic forms of dance today, but perhaps we underestimate the power of movement in bringing people together in ancient times and the part it played in how people explored their relationship with the world. The rhythms and patterns of their working lives were celebrated and explored in dance and music as illustrated by themes in Scottish traditional dances which relate to working practices such as “waulking the tweed” Discovering historical dances is not an easy task. Dance is by its nature ephemeral and immediate, it exists in the bodies of the dancers and it is passed from person to person through observation and practice. We can only trace their existence in the survival of folk dances through practice in communities and through representation in ancient art.

“...folk dance is a communal, sharing, participation activity in which all people join. It is closely related to folk song, folktale, folk costume, folk craft, language, work habits, weather, environment, food and politics”

Lois Ellfeldt₃

As civilisations grew in the ancient world, the way in which humanity expressed itself changed and new ceremonial traditions came into being. Drawings and evidence from ancient civilisations in places such as Egypt show dances led by priests expressing the order and harmony of the stars. The increasing complexity of life and society saw all forms of art moving from representation to abstraction. In the Vedic tradition of Indian art, it was perceived that the god “..Shiva, the image of his rhythmic play as the source of all movement within the cosmos” (Coomaraswamy, cited in Ellfeldt 1976). In ancient cultures dance could be seen as the representation of and also the presence of life in the universe.

“...cultures containing art have outlived and replaced those that have not, because art adapts the psyche to the environment, and is therefore one of the conditions of the development of society”

Lois Ellfeldt₃

In 2005, in an article for *Archaeology Ireland*, a folk dance enthusiast, Alan Nowell, discovered similarities between ancient folk dances in Britain and illustrations in the Book of Kells, the Toghers-town Bronze and the Kells Market Cross. His theory opens up the possibility that dance formed a part of Celtic Christian rituals, as a means of expressing devotion. The designs in the Book of Kells bore resemblance to dances consisting of interlocking groups of men, moving round in a circle. It would not be surprising considering the part that we know was played by dance in ritual and ceremony in ancient cultures to find it was part of the ceremonial life in the early Christian Church in Ireland.

In the last decade in Ireland, there has been a renewed interest in movement and dance. This has been reflected in all styles of dance from the reinvigoration of native Irish dancing and its representation on a global stage, to the growth of contemporary dance companies in Ireland. Since 2002 Ireland has hosted an international dance festival, which occurs biennially and showcases some of the great dance companies from around the world. Dance productions are also becoming an increasingly popular element of the Dublin Theatre and Fringe Festivals. The boundaries between physical theatre and

dance are being crossed in order to find ways of expressing ourselves differently, to find new vocabularies. The popularity of yoga and tai chi classes indicates a desire in people to explore the therapeutic and health giving qualities of movement.

There is a social aspect to moving together. It encourages us to build relationships with each other, through touch, eye contact and the sharing of rhythms. Dance provides challenges for the mind as well as the body. Dance provides us with a chance to integrate our minds, bodies and social selves into one activity.



DANCE IN A COMMUNITY CONTEXT

*“It is a community
of no age at all,
no boundary, no
opinion. Of moving
now, here, now. Of
the effect of being
moved, and for a
moment moving”*

Angus Balbernie₁

Community dance, as we understand it, is inclusive, in that it caters for people of all abilities, it is for dancers and non-dancers, and builds and explores relationships through dance. It is creative and allows people a chance to express themselves through movement. The physical activity can contribute to our well-being, both physically and mentally. The stimuli for making a dance can come from anywhere, a piece of music, a myth or ancient story, the patterns in an abstract painting or the rhythms and activities of daily life, anything in fact that interests or inspires us, allowing us a chance to place ourselves in the process of making art. We can trace in folk dances the concerns and activities of the communities that engendered them, with themes from their working lives, the rural environment, social groupings and seasonal changes.

A community dance group using improvised or creative dance gives different people an opportunity to come together and explore common themes regardless of their experience in movement. It is a chance to discover the ability of one's own body and explore our interaction with our environment and the people in the group.

*“How closely linked are our emotional
worlds and our physical bodily states”*

Chris Crickmay & Miranda Tufnell₂

There is meaning in movement. It is about something, a feeling, our character, a place, a mood, or a story. We can glean information from the way a person moves about their physical and mental states. We can express ourselves through dance, become a physical embodiment of

“...Laban explained that true dance had lost its way, becoming an artificial art form and a pale reflection of earlier times when it fulfilled an important role in society.”

Jean Newlove₇



how we think and how we feel. We can release inner tensions or find balance and control, creating and revealing images of ourselves.

Dance is immediate, it is not just a representation, it happens in front of our eyes, it brings into physical existence the integrity of our mind, body and spirit. It is also simple, all we require to make a dance is our own body, the body is the instrument, creating rhythms, shapes and patterns. A dance can happen with just one person moving, with no music, no set, no lights, no costume, however, that instrument, the body, is so complex, it is like a whole orchestra in itself, the movement of joints, muscles, ligaments, tendons and the electrical impulses of the nerves.

When we dance we make decisions, where to go, how we move, how we re-

act to others. Dance is an expressive art form, capable of carrying the stories and concerns of our time. The variety of dance styles that we encounter show a response to a social or artistic need arising out of the social or historical context of the time, whether it was the court dances of Europe that grew into ballet, or the marrying of African, Scottish and Irish ethnic dances that grew into the jazz and tap which reflect the social history of the United States in the 20th century.

Dance, as art or physical activity offers us an opportunity to reconnect with our bodies and with the people around us and to make a statement about ourselves and the world we live in.

RUDOLF LABAN AND THE LABAN GUILD



Rudolf Laban in Montparnasse, Paris 1903 – 1904
Laban Library and Archive.

*“To primitive man,
the language of
the drum seems
nothing other than
the rhythm of his
body made audible”*

Rudolf Laban₆

From Dartington Hall to Kildare

The far-reaching legacy that Rudolf Laban has left in dance notation, dance education, art therapy, performance and choreography brings people from many different spheres together at summer schools and courses, looking at many different applications for dance and movement theory. The tradition of a summer school which Laban started nearly sixty years ago has continued throughout the UK and Ireland with the Laban International Courses (LinC) in Southeast England and summer schools in Belfast and Kildare

The Laban Guild continues its work to this day and provides courses in Community Dance which enable dance leaders to bring this legacy into their communities in order to provide an experience of dance for everyone, non professional and professional dancers alike, regardless of

age and ability. The Guild also provides support for dance therapists, movement analysts, dance notators, choreographers and teachers.

The Laban Guild Community Dance Leader Courses in Newbridge and the Laban Summer Schools in NUI Maynooth provide opportunities for people from different backgrounds to come together and share their enthusiasm for dance and learn new ways of approaching dance and movement. Participants who have successfully completed these courses have been able to bring this experience into their work as community dance artists, theatre practitioners, educationalists, dance teachers and movement therapists, widening the scope of their activity and bringing new sources of inspiration into their work.

“...Laban technique dealt with the basis of movement rather than consisting of a series of technical movements”

Rudolf Laban₈

Beginnings

Rudolf Laban (1879-1958) was a dance performer, choreographer and movement analyst who, through his work in dance education and with diverse groups of performers, advocated a creative approach to dance. Throughout his life he looked for “a systematic analysis of movement in relation to the dynamic use of space” as a foundation for the creation of dances and the development of movement for expressive and therapeutic purposes. The development of this system resulted in “Laban Technique” and “Laban Movement Analysis”

“...the release of human energy into action and expression” ...“a whole vocabulary of movement”

Margaret Dunn, Past President, the Laban Guild

Laban was born a Hungarian national, and while he was a young man he left his army commission to study as an artist, eventually coming to live in Paris and study art and architecture in 1900. It was a time of shifting boundaries, morally, socially and in art. He must have been aware of dance innovators such as Isadora Duncan who performed extensively in Europe during this period. Duncan believed in freedom of expression in dance, releasing herself from the confines of the technique of classical ballet. She also saw dance as a higher art form that was a worthy vehicle for human emotions, truth and beauty. These radical departures in how dance was perceived at the time were influential in both Europe and America. One thing that she and Laban would grow to have in common was the belief in the importance of dance in the

education of young people.

Laban spent the years during and after the First World War in Switzerland and Germany, where his reputation as a movement analyst and teacher grew, setting up schools and touring his dance productions in Germany and Eastern Europe. Many of his pupils went on to become famous performers and teachers in their own right, including Mary Wigman and Kurt Jooss, which precipitated the birth of a whole movement of contemporary dance in Central Europe. This was during a time when there was a flowering of new approaches to different art forms including dance, fuelled perhaps by the upheaval of the war and the precarious social order that followed. There was a need for new expressive forms and vocabularies. Laban also came into contact with major European art movements such as

“Movement concerns the whole person; not mere motion, but movement is the great integrator, with all its spiritual implications.”

Rudolf Laban₈

Symbolism, Expressionism and Dadaism, his own work often complemented their exploration of new artistic freedoms.

His keen observation and interest in the natural movement of people led him to develop his own approach to dance and creative movement, abstracting a framework of principles of movement. He worked with large groups of non-professional dancers through his use of “movement choirs” and directed choreography for operas and large-scale theatre productions, opening up opportunities for the art of dance. During this period he worked to consolidate his schools and provide an accredited approach to learning Laban technique and also to develop his system of dance notation in order to preserve his dance works and ideas of movement.

The Legacy in Britain

The Laban Guild was set up in 1946 under the leadership of its first president, Rudolf Laban, in order to preserve the dance legacy of Laban and his followers. Laban had fled to England in February 1938, having fallen out of favour with the Nazi regime in Germany. He was assisted by former pupils Kurt Jooss and Lisa Ullman and through their contacts in Britain he met with those who were interested in the art of movement. He was initially taken in by the Elmhursts at Dartington Hall in Devon who were already patrons of Kurt Jooss, Sigurd Leeder and their dance company, Ballet Jooss. Dartington Hall was an experiment in rural community living, attracting and welcoming many artists, dancers and craftspeople, not unlike Laban’s summer sojourns in Monte Verita in Switzerland before the

First World War. During the Second World War, he used his analysis of movement, in association with the industrialist F.C. Lawrence, to improve production in the factories and farms of Britain by economising their physical effort in order to maximise production. He continued to teach and share his ideas, and summer schools such as the Modern Holiday Dance Courses were organised in order to provide an opportunity for people to experience Laban’s theories in practice, beginning at Rock House in Wales in 1941.

In 1913 Laban went to Monte Verita, near Ascona in Switzerland for the summer months with his pupils, siting their performances in the open and in nature. There was an artistic colony here endeavouring to be self-sufficient. There was a spiritual dimension to this and an opening out to and observation of the forces

of nature. The dance plays which were performed during these summers held the seeds of the movement choirs which Laban went on to develop with many different kinds of groups from workers' guilds to local festivals. Although interrupted by the First World War the tradition of a summer school continued in Germany in subsequent years. When Laban began researching and teaching again this tradition was revived through the courses held at Dartington Hall and the Modern Dance Holiday Courses and continues to this day with the Laban International Courses (LinC) and the Kildare Dance Summer School.

Laban-based dance had already gained a foothold in Britain thanks to early practitioners such as Joan Goodrich who had studied with Mary Wigman in Germany. Lisa Ullman became his assistant

and was instrumental in the setting up of the Art of Movement Studio. The new social order in Britain after the war and the effect of the egalitarian spirit of the war effort brought new energy and innovation into all spheres of life and people working in the arts and education were primed to take on new ideas. Those who came into contact with Laban at this time went on to become influential innovators in contemporary dance, theatre, dance in education and therapeutic movement in Britain. People such as Lisa Ullman, Kurt Jooss, Jean Newlove, Marion North and Valerie Preston Dunlop contributed greatly to the development of dance in Britain and the influence of Laban analysis in the spheres of modern dance, the theatre and education.



A PERSONAL JOURNEY THROUGH DANCE

It is likely that the diverse group of people who began the Stage 1 Laban Guild Community Dance Leaders Course in the Riverbank, Newbridge in 2002, had different expectations from the course, especially considering our differing ages and backgrounds as dancers, dance teachers, actors, psychologists, movement therapists, architects, teachers and youth workers. However, a common focus emerged to bring the influence of Laban's principles of movement into our work and to absorb the ethos of community dance. Our work together as a group over three years doing the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Courses widened the focus of our work and allowed us to discover wellsprings of creativity.

There was a strong creative and improvisational element to our sessions, which involved a level of interaction with other participants that was unfamiliar to

me from more conventional dance classes. Each weekend was taught through creative work, exploring the theories and ideas that were introduced by the tutors and involved working in groups. There was also a challenge to look at the elements of movement from a different perspective.

The fundamentals of movement, which Laban identified as the body, space, dynamics and relationships, were identifiable elements which made up movement. This was a structure, an analysis of movement that encompassed all the elements of dance; body design, rhythm, dynamics, time, the relationship of the body to the space it is surrounded by and moves in, the relationship with other bodies and choreographic design. It provides a framework capable of holding different styles and techniques and for evaluating all kinds of movement.



Thinking about things in this way didn't just provide tools for creating movement but an ability to analyse what happens when we move. It is both personal and universal. The way we move can reveal information, not just about ourselves as individuals but also our relationship with the world around us.

Sharing ideas with other people was also intimidating at first, however, after a few sessions I began to lose my inhibitions about my creative responses and feel more expressive. I became aware that my body, as well as being an instrument for practising and perfecting steps or choreography could express a feeling or an idea in a way that was uniquely mine. I became more accepting of input from other people through improvisation and contact, which was developing my senses and awareness, not just of my own move-

ment but also of the movement of other people. Through observation of our work at the sharing at the end of sessions, I became aware of the rich and varied responses that can come out of a very simple stimulus and learned how choreographic ideas can develop.

The Kildare Dance Summer School at NUI Maynooth in 2003 was a turning point for me. Throughout the week there were workshops in choreography, developmental movement and Laban studies. It was a chance to put new ideas into practice and add to our knowledge and to dance! The potential for creating dances and offering people different experiences of movement was clear. I remember creating a dance piece in two days on the four elements; earth, wind, air and water, accompanied by the happy accident of a violent thunderstorm, working on a site-

specific piece in the gardens and performing a dance-drama outside in the natural amphitheatre of the gardens. It was liberating and energising to find new spaces to dance in and to respond to our environment through movement.

Working with so many people in such a short space of time was intense but also rewarding. There was never a chance to get "cosy" in your own movement. It was always challenging to respond to the stimulus of others. Over five days it is possible to meet people in the most intimate way, acknowledging how they move, their reservations about moving in some ways, their passion about moving in others. We learned to negotiate our movement and ideas with other peoples', often without having to say very much at all. This non-competitive environment had been created and managed skilfully



by our course leaders reflecting the different background and skills each participant might bring.

The Movement Choir – A Reflection

The week at the summer schools culminated with the movement choir led by Sam and Susi Thornton and assisted by other tutors. Movement Choirs were developed by Laban and are a form of communal art, combining the elements of festivity, movement and art. They were an extension of his original choric plays and in early examples sometimes combined professional soloists with an amateur corps.

“Recreation is achieved through a creative, artistic, integrated experience”

Rudolf Laban₈

Guided by the tutors, it was a joy to work quickly and instinctively, working together to create the pieces. Using the structures of Laban’s scales to begin an exploration of the space, rising, sinking opening, closing, providing a beginning for a pattern of movement that grows out of ourselves and into the space. The music and themes were introduced by the tutors and their dynamics were absorbed into the movement through repetition and feedback from the leader. It was a concentrated effort in creation and required total absorption. It was a strange feeling to be moving in this way with thirty other people separately but also together, I think that the fact that while our movements were similar in this early section, as they were based on the same theme, they were our own choice of movement which changed the quality of

how we danced, a sense of the movement flowing outward from each person. This is a very different experience from learning a set routine where your focus starts outward at the teacher or other dancers and moves in toward yourself.

The dance elements we explored included movement from ground to air using all different levels, geometric/elemental patterns, different relationships in groups and between groups, touch and voice and a complete exploration of the space. We went from our initial solos rising from the ground, exploring and setting the experience of our uprightness before twisting and eventually turning into the space and towards other dancers. We moved using contact and patterns into groups and from them into larger groups, exploring ways of coming together. We finally flowed and resolved



into larger geometric patterns such as triangles, circles, lines, concentric circles. The progression from solo to final group was a wonderfully harmonious experience, which involved changes in dynamics and different uses of the space as you moved from group to group. All of these elements gave us an intensely satisfying dance experience which was emotionally cathartic.

This beginning in Laban studies has assisted in giving some depth to my idiosyncratic dance experiences, and an awareness of the processes involved in creativity and movement. This was contrary to what I'd learned in classes before, where I had learned a lot of interesting things that I could do with my body, but wasn't always sure why we were moving a certain way or felt inadequate because I didn't conform to a certain physical type best suited to that kind of technique.

While continuing to train in and appreciate different techniques and styles, I felt I had more acceptance of my body and respect for what it could do, but most importantly I was beginning to understand the why of movement, how to make choices about how I danced or how we danced together. The variety of stimuli which the tutors brought to our sessions was a spark for my own creative impulses. It was obvious that dance was an important medium of expression for them in which they connected other artistic and intellectual concerns in their lives.

The creative work, observation and the interaction with other people had an effect that I was not really prepared for. It unleashed my creativity and re-ignited my interest in music, poetry, visual art, performance and theatre as well as making me look at dance movement in a different way. I felt that I didn't just look

at the body moving but was aware of the space it occupied, the relationships it had to other people and the environment it moved in. It is interesting now to look back over that period of time and see how much more keenly I observe the world around me and make connections with our social and natural environment and other art forms. The lines of enquiry and work required by the courses opened up my body and my mind and engaged me in a very direct way with the people I met and danced with. I was excited about the possibilities of dance as a creative tool and a communicative art form. It was as if someone had given me a key to things I had struggled to understand before. It was good to begin work as a dance artist by drawing from this wellspring of inspiration, which has proved to be a constantly expanding resource.

“An action involves many combinations. Those of body, muscle, tissue. Those of instance, recognition, response. Perhaps there is a looser community of dancers and choreographers who think of their work more as ongoing research than entertainment, who work with social process, people, the whole damn mess of community”

Angus Balbernie₁





A COMMUNITY FOR DANCE

When we dance, there is something happening in the here and now; we are not recreating an event in the past; we are living that moment through the effort of the dancer. When a choreographer engenders the dance in dancers, it takes on a life of its own, because we own our own movement.



*“Feelings give rise to movement.
Movement gives rise to feelings.
This in-out and out-in duality,
Is the daily experience of dancers”*

Valerie Preston Dunlop₉



*“For dancers space is not merely occupied
physically but positively inhabited”*

Valerie Preston Dunlop₉



“Dancing is feeling-thinking-sensing-doing with imagination”

Valerie Preston Dunlop₉



"...and before our eyes there is revealed a world of inner drives, which we scarcely suspected would be so deep in its variety, power and beauty" Rudolf Laban₈

*“Through dancing,
a person states:
‘Here I am world’
Rudolf Laban₈*





*“To make a personal and
communal statement in
movement about that which
inspires and occupies us is
surely something entirely
independent from all other
forms of incentives”*

Rudolf Laban₈





We discover different ways of being
an investigation of potential
for existence
in different rhythms and spaces

It is not always necessary to have
to speak to communicate





Conversations

Moving together, we
negotiate, we exchange, we
come to an understanding

We establish a dialogue
with our surroundings

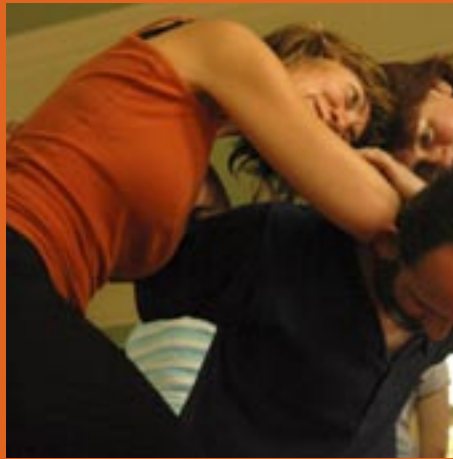


*“Creating becomes a conversation when we enter
into a dialogue with whatever we are doing”*

Chris Crickmay & Miranda Tufnell₂



When we dance we are
constantly interpreting
ourselves to the world
our bodies hold
information
that we are not always
willing to share
but that we cannot help
revealing



Allowing our impulses and
instincts to take over
a surrender to our
inner selves

The Dancers Inherit the Party

When I have talked for an hour I feel lousy-

Not so when I have danced for an hour:

The dancers inherit the party

*While the talkers wear themselves out and sit
in corners and glower*

*Ian Hamilton Finlay*₄

Among School Children

O body swayed to music,

O brightening glance

*How can we know the dancer
from the dance?*

*William Butler Yeats*₁₂





“The most ancient and most direct appeal to the dramatic sense is through the art of the dance, the special inheritor of body experience, the container of every movement man has ever made”

Doris Humphreys₅



*“...The dance is a language with which
man is born, the ecstatic manifestation
of his existence...”*

Mary Wigman₃



*“It is through the sensuous world of the
body, through our eyes ears skin, muscles
and organs, that we see, feel and respond
to what happens”*

Chris Crickmay & Miranda Tufnell₂





Breathing in, life into
our body
Awakening sensation
and feeling
The expansion of the
chest, the lift of the
diaphragm



*“There are notes to the body.
There are octaves of movement.
Communities of sound, of action,
of choice, of persuasion”*

Angus Balbernie₁



A duet with gravity,
taking our weight
with us



Awareness of the space
we're in and the spaces
within us

Thinking on your feet
Connecting
with the surface
And then
Released from the earth
Airborne – elevation
A brief escape from the
constraints of gravity
Into the realm of flight







Into your arms
Being held and holding
Giving your weight
to others
Allowing yourself
to be taken
To different places
Inside and outside
yourself



Sculptural
the shapes and spaces
of the human body





Striking images
satisfying proportions

The interconnection and contact of bodies
creating a new shape, a wider meaning





Architectural
A landscape of bodies
Line, direction in space
How we occupy the space
What happens to the space?
The spaces inside ourselves
The structure of our bodies in
Relationship to our surroundings





Images unreel in memory
As we move across the floor



Echoing shapes
Of our internal landscape



*“It is life itself as it chances to exist that
furnishes the stimulus for art”*

Ben Shahn₁₀






Through observation and exploration we translate our material into movement and image, allowing a journey of creativity and imagination.



*“Choreography and composition also consist
of acts of instinct, technique and recognition.
Of locality, observance and architecture.
Of tuned action. Of issues of self”*

Angus Balbernie₁





The touch of another begins a creative conversation,
the body and space is our canvas...

“Only the individual can imagine, invent, create”

Ben Shahn₁₀



What is a dance made of?
The shape and image of the body
The patterns we set in space
Relationships/bodies/spaces in and between

*“Form in living things too is
the impinging of order upon
order, the slow evolving of
shapes according to function,
and, drift, and need. And
other shapes – the ear, the
hand – what mind could
devise such shapes”*

*Ben Shahn*₁₀







*“But dancing is moving
It is how you get from here to there
How you phrase it, rhythmicise it
This is what makes designs in time
and designs in the body”*

Valerie Preston Dunlop₉

*"At all times we must be aware that the dance art
is unique in its medium of movement..."*

*Unique, too, is its power to evoke emotion within
its vocabulary, to arouse the kinetic sense, to speak
of the subtleties of the body and the soul"*

Doris Humphreys₅





“Every movement made by a human being, and far back of that, in the animal kingdom, too has a design in space; a relationship to other objects in both time and space; an energy flow, which we will call dynamics; and a rhythm”

Doris Humphreys₅

Site specific work in NUI Maynooth sculpture garden –
*“challenges assumptions of where dance can
take place....evokes strong visual, emotional,
conceptual and kinaesthetic responses”*

Anna Carlisle – Choreographer





BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1 Balbernie, A. (2004) *The Nature of Skin*,
Animated Magazine, Autumn 2004, Foundation for Community Dance.
- 2 Crickmay, C. and Tufnell, M. (2004) *A Widening Field, Journeys in Body and Imagination*,
London, Dance Books Ltd.
- 3 Ellfeldt, L. (1976) *Dance from Magic to Art*, Iowa, Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers.
- 4 Hamilton Finlay, I. (2004) *The Dancers Inherit The Party – Early Stories, Plays and Poems*.
Edited and introduced by Ken Cockburn, Edinburgh, Polygon in association with Scottish Poetry
Library. Extract is reproduced by permission of Polygon, an imprint of Birlinn Ltd. www.birlinn.co.uk.
- 5 Humphreys, D. (1959,1987) *The Art of Making Dances*, London,
Dance Books Ltd. Copyright Charles H. Woodford and Barbara Pollack.
- 6 Laban, R. (1975) *A Life for Dance*, London, Macdonald and Evans Ltd.
- 7 Newlove, J. (1993) *Laban for Actors and Dancers*,
London, Nick Hern Books www.nickhernbooks.co.uk.
- 8 Preston Dunlop, V. (1998) *Rudolf Laban, An Extraordinary Life*, London, Dance Books Ltd.
- 9 Preston Dunlop, V. (1998) *Looking at Dances*, London, Verve Publishing.
- 10 Shahn, B. (1957, 1985) *The Shape of Content*,
Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press.
- 11 Sorrell, W. ed. (1992) *The Dance Has Many Faces*, New Jersey, A Cappella Books, 3rd Edition.
- 12 Yeats, W.B. (1928) 'Among School Children' from *The Tower* in *Yeats Selected Poetry*,
London, Pan Books Ltd in association with Macmillan London Ltd, this edition 1974.

Louise Costelloe, a graduate of the M.A. in Drama Studies, University College Dublin, is a dance artist and emerging choreographer, who completed the Laban Guild's Community Dance Leader's courses in Kildare in 2005. Louise has just completed a residency in Wigtownshire in Scotland developing dance programmes for young people, and is releasing her first dance film "Shade" in April 2008, which was inspired by her stay in the south west of Scotland. Recent work included performing in "Sweet Love" for Janis Claxton Dance. Louise returned to Ireland to take up the post of Dancer in Residence for South Dublin County Council in March 2008.

Acknowledgements

Kildare County Council Arts Service would like to thank The Laban Guild for Movement and Dance especially Anna Carlisle and Ann Ward, Cathy O' Kennedy, Colm Gallagher, Cher Mather, Sam Thornton, Susi Thornton, Wendy Hermelin, Noleen McGrath, Michelle Cahill, Paula O'Shaughnessy, and all the tutors and participants of the Kildare County Council Dance Development Programme.

Kildare County Council Arts Service
Riverbank
Main Street
Newbridge
Co. Kildare

e: arts@kildarecoco.ie

t: 045 448328

f: 045 432490

www.kildare.ie/artsservice



Kildare
County Council



Laban Guild