

Amos Hetz

Movements



Born 1933 in Tel Aviv. After completing a teacher's training college and the Tel Aviv School of Painting, he studied movement and movement notation with Noa Eshkol (1958-65) and took lessons from Moshe Feldenkrais (1960-63) and in the Alexander Technique (1965-68). Extensive teaching experience. Since 1979 he has been Senior Lecturer at the Jerusalem Rubin Academy of Music and Dance (1982-85 Head of Dance Department). Numerous performances and workshops in Israel, the USA and Europe as well as lectures and articles. — Address: The Jerusalem Rubin Academy of Music and Dance. Givat Ram Campus, Jerusalem 91904, Israel.

When I arrived at the Kolleg and was asked to put in writing my plans for this year, I listed chronologically all the items of work which I had planned to accomplish. Since I was relieved of my teaching obligations at the Academy, and exempted from the burden of rehearsal with the dance-ensemble under my management, I presumed that my social obligations would be reduced, and I would be a master of my own time with nothing to prevent me from fully dedicating myself to work and thus realize everything that I had planned to do.

However, things turned out differently. I did not take into consideration that the new "liberated" way of life entails power, rhythm and attraction which sweep and dictate their own will, which is a good thing per se.

Despite the new, curious and tempting environment, which demanded alertness and offered a variety of possibilities, including a good measure of comfort, I found myself working at an unprecedented rhythm and enjoying it. I was able to harness myself to work without feeling any obligation towards other people (students at the Academy, or dancers at the studio). While living this routine on a daily basis in the studio, I worked on a dance composition combined with music to Eric Satie's "Socrat". I collected the material for that dance, which is a set of variations of 16 gestures, in the course of four years and edited it to Satie's music. After completing the score of the dance, I deleted Satie's music and decided to perform the dance with "Cheap Imitation" by John Cage, which had also been based upon Satie's "Socrat". Until one month prior to the end of the year at the

Kolleg, I was not quite sure whether I would finish this work. To my astonishment and joy I managed to accomplish it.

A second mission which I took upon myself was to write an article explaining the necessity for a special course in movement and movement-notation at the Dance faculty of the Jerusalem Rubin Dance and Music Academy. There has been a struggle going on for years between two approaches in the Dance faculty. According to one approach a dancer has to be trained and become skilled in one style, similar to the way dancers are being trained in numerous institutes all over the world, while other aspects are relegated to a secondary role.

My colleagues and I try to explain the need for a course in which the following four aspects will be regarded as equivalent:

1. the Eshkol-Wachman movement-notation;
2. ability-improving methods (Alexander, Feldenkrais, Todd and others);
3. the combination of language extension, the dancer's skill and his creative ability;
4. imparting western and extra-European dance traditions.

The article contains historical surveys of innovators in the realm of dance during the 20th century, the development of dance-notations and a survey of innovators in ability-improvement methods and care of the movement mechanisms. It ends with conclusions regarding preferable teaching methods with respect to all the above-mentioned.

While writing the historical survey, it became clear to me that the conflict is not local, but goes far beyond it. Throughout the history of dance in this century, we encounter the development of dance and the discovery of new ways which display a marked tendency to isolate the new aspect and deny all other new aspects and discoveries.

The search for the language, via improvisation, was enacted by dancers who danced and appeared alone. Introducing changes into the stage dance language, based on classical ballet of the 19th century, was mainly done in group dancing. Ability-improvement methods were introduced mainly within a setting of therapist and patient, disconnected from dance work and in most cases, only after an injury of the movement mechanism.

The invention of dance-notation also tended to serve one style without including the other numerous expressions of human movement. This trend of isolating a phenomenon and concentrating exclusively on it is clear to us when we observe the mode in which movement differentiation is acquired in the human body. Every learning of a body skill is involved in focusing and isolating a group of the acting limbs from other parts of the body and ignoring the parts which are subjected to inhibition. The process

of integration itself, is achieved through repetition of the action, although its phases are unclear to us, so that it is accompanied by blindness and a considerable amount of inefficiency.

Throughout the present century, we encounter trends which tend to combine more than one factor, yet it seems that the need and the ability to link them only becomes possible upon the invention of the Eshkol-Wachman movement-notation, through which it is possible to watch the various styles of dance without becoming a victim of contradiction in the way of learning them. Through notation, we may even relate them to the non-artistic movement aspects and even to animal behaviour.

From the outset, I intended to include in the article a survey of the trends in dance-teaching — as reflected in the disciplines of general education, and contemplate the common and differing elements; however, I did not accomplish this (despite the significant help which I was given at the Kolleg's library). I have vowed to continue working on this item in the near future.

During Easter '92, I was asked by the Head of the Jerusalem Academy to make haste and complete the article, and send it so that it could serve as an explanation and background for the establishment of a movement and movement-notation department, which indeed was opened during the academic year 92/93. Thus, I actually accomplished much more than I had really hoped for.

The lecture that I had to deliver in the Kolleg during the weekly colloquium bothered me quite a lot. How could I present my work within one hour, when it was obvious that I had to introduce its background, which is dance in the 20th century, and simultaneously emphasize the tight link between my ever-accumulating experience, while undergoing many processes and changes. I also had to explain how a new dance and concepts are born by using the Eshkol-Wachman movement-notation, which is an objective analytical tool.

The gap between the people who are active in dance and body culture, and all other people who are active in other cultural expressions frightened me. I imagined myself in the Kolleg facing my colleagues, who came from various disciplines, knowing that none of them consciously includes movement within his academic discipline.

The fact that I had one weekly movement lesson in the Kolleg helped me to overcome this feeling. When I arrived at the Kolleg, I proposed to give a weekly movement forum to any of the fellows who wished to participate in it. Surprisingly, this suggestion was enthusiastically accepted. In time, this lesson had become a matter of considerable interest and a great challenge for the teaching of personal movement experience within a framework of activity which is a part of the totality of our expressions: curiosity,

enquiry, examination and thought are possible in this context, just like any other field, its emphasis being the movement and not just "keep fitness".

This weekly hour enabled me to take the leap and bridge the gap existing in the concept of movement and present it in my lecture as an equivalent expression to other expressions of the human spirit.

This movement lesson was for me an element of great experience, namely being introduced to fellows from other fields. The need to communicate, to make contacts, to learn the other touch upon numerous various topics, and conceive personal modes of work of other people, demanded an increase in tolerance. We were faced with common problems — various manifestations of the surrounding culture, reactions to cultural or political expressions which depended on our personal world conception (our attitude to Wagner was expressed many times, under both predictable and unpredictable circumstances), prejudice, different mentalities and styles among the people in the Kolleg, which were expressed in the colloquium and other settings — I found all these to be a great and continuous experience.

Upon my arrival at the Kolleg, I combined German lessons with my daily routine and these too, coloured the rich and complex rhythm of my activity. Thanks to my perseverance, contacts in and outside the Kolleg became concrete, thus playing an important role in this celebration.

The richness offered by Berlin was the background to all the above. The need to learn the unknown and fill in gaps—inaccessible to me in the past — such as the opportunity to watch the "Ring", or listen to concerts of contemporary music within the "Inventionen", all these became part and parcel of my daily routine and helped me to fuse and link it to the cultural texture within which I live.