

CECCHETTI INTERNATIONAL CLASSICAL BALLET



Newsletter No. 8, 2002

Mission Statement:

- *To foster the development of the method*
- *To develop training for the future*
- *To keep alive the essence of the method's historical tradition*
- *To raise the profile of the method world-wide*
- *To encourage the profession and the art of dance by interaction between members and the international dance profession*
- *To enhance the status of dance in the context of the arts and education*

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

What a difficult year we have had, at Cecchetti International Classical Ballet. I was disappointed that some of our founding corporate members found it necessary to resign from the fledgling organisation, but we intend to continue on towards an international Cecchetti association in which all those with allegiance to the Cecchetti Method can be involved in some way.

We are all very grateful to Sheila Kennedy for this newsletter. It was the newsletter that originally brought us all together, and it is heartening to see it continue, with such interesting articles.

Our next task is to consider the next Cecchetti International Competition and

all the attendant publicity and interest which this will engender. We will shortly be putting a proposal to all our original FCM's regarding the competition, and we trust that you will consider sending your young Cecchetti dancers to compete, remembering those beautiful young men and women who competed in Australia.

In light of the recent terrible catastrophes which have engulfed the world, and which seem to be changing the way we think and live, I think it is important to continue with our lives and our plans. Cecchetti International Classical Ballet intends to progress with its plans for incorporation, and we hope to be able to involve all our original FCM's in some

way in the future.

Please note that Robina Beard has moved. Her new address is:

79 Midgeley Street, Corrimal
2518 NSW Australia

Tel:/Fax: 02-4283-2860

Email unchanged:

robina_cecchetti@bigpond.com

Both fax and email have had a period of being "out of order" but are up and running again.

Comments, suggestions, articles and photographs, worldwide Cecchetti pioneers, for the next newsletter are welcome at any time. Please send to hskn@coastnet.com

Upcoming events 2002 – 2003

Italy

International Cecchetti Summer School
for students & teachers

June 28 - July 5, Civitanova Marché, Italy
International Faculty

Classical Ballet, Repertoire, Pas de Deux,
Pointe Work, Contemporary Dance, Spanish
Dance, Classes for children from Grade IV

Contact: Stefania Sansavini,
President of Danzare Cecchetti ANCEC Italia
email ateneodanza@libero.it

Britain

Junior Summer School & Students'
Summer Course

July 26 - Aug 2, Tring, UK
Teachers' Summer School

August 2 – 9, Chichester, UK
Contact: Daphne Cooper, 30 Woodmere Av.
Watford, Herts WD24 7LN UK

USA

CCA International Summer School
Hope College, Holland, Michigan USA
July 6-19 (students), **July 13-19** (teachers)
Gillian Hurst teaching Cecchetti syllabus
& Flamenco. Contact:

Gail Choate-Pettit, CCAinfo@aol.com
Visit CCA's new website www.cecchetti.org

THE CECCHETTI LEGACY VIDEO/ DVD PROJECT

An update from Veronica Tennant, October 27th 2002

As communicated over recent months; I have committed an extensive proportion of time (and expense) during the months of September/October - and continuing-into November — to apply to the Monaco Dance Forum, held from December 10 - 14, 2002 in Monaco.

- This: **1 / Performance Gathering, 2 / Prominent Audition of Senior students for all international major companies; AND; the 3 / IMZ Dance Screen a competition for dance films and videos** - is the most prestigious and comprehensive international event centering on dance - It is only held every 2 years. Illustrious Juries, Artistic Directors from the worlds major companies, plus the companies themselves, and several Teachers attend and offer a week of performances, competitions and forums.
- This year, Monaco Dance Forum together with the Banff TV Festival, is inaugurating an international PITCH session for new Dance Video, Film, Television and DVD projects.
- Ten successful applicants will be chosen to present/pitch their project to a formidable gathering of international programmers, sponsors, broadcasters. Everyone of influence and power, in all markets who has a mandate and or venue/outlet for film, video, dvd - DANCE-based - will be there. They will advise on the financing plan, and in some cases become involved. This is how international co-productions begin their deal-making process.
- I have been putting together the lengthy application which

also requires letters of financial support - totaling one third of the budget - as proof of the seriousness of the project. The regulations clearly state that 'proof' will be accepted in letter form with the statement - **should the rest of the financing be raised** clearly high-lighted.

- **The deadline was September 30th:** I was given until October 15th to pull in the financing letters of confirmation.
- Raymond, Jean Fulton, and I have been in close consultation.
- I have to date; the commitment from Cecchetti Society Inc. USA - for \$33,000 US, and from Mary-Jane Duckworth, Chair of Cecchetti Society Trust for £4,000 sterling, both with the qualifying clause **should the rest of the financing be raised** - Thank you!
- We are awaiting a letter from Erminio Marinelli, Mayor of Civitanova

Marche committing to hosting the production cast and crew for the 2 week shooting period. The accommodation, food, administration, and locations costs translate into line items in the budget which would more or less bring us to the 1/3 projected target of raised financing.

- Since the Italian letter has been promised as forthcoming, Stefania has advised me to send the 2 Cecchetti Society letters which I did on **Thursday, Oct. 24**. As you can see we are past the deadlines, but I am counting on my personal reputation, success with award-winning dance films and credibility to gain us the extra time. SO-
- This is where we are. Of course in addition, there are the splendid letters of support for the project, from an array of Artistic Directors of the world's best companies together with the offer of their dancers. The Societies have sent enthusiastic letters and there

is a thick file of endorsement accumulated, including from The Rudolf Nureyev Foundation in London.

- Ross Alley has been working like a Trojan to gain an on camera interview with Dame Alicia Markova - to our knowledge, the last living student of Enrico Cecchetti. Ross has generously offered to take on a portion of the up-front costs of the interview. The production budget if/when established, would reimburse him.
- I firmly believe that this is our single chance to really make **THE CECCHETTI LEGACY VIDEO/ DVD PROJECT** on the level it deserves, and was conceived by Raymond and so many of you. November update: a further \$20,000 US has just been donated!

Chosen to be presented December 10 at the Monaco Dance Forum.

CECCHETTI PIONEERS

We are compiling a collection, please send us suggestions

Lucie Saronova 1900 - 1988

by Athol Willoughby O.A.M.

Madam Saronova was the founding organiser and first chairman of the Australian Cecchetti Society Branch of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing; her term of office covering a record span of 37 years from 1934 - 1971. Born in Mill Bank, London her associations with Australia go back to 1916 when she set sail for a 3 year tour of Australasia and the Far East with a company which revolved around the talents of English actress and variety star, Ada Reeves.

Madam's future husband, Mr. Harry Jacobs, was the musical director and conductor for the company. Although a student of the Maestro Enrico Cecchetti, Madam was already a trained dancer and well seasoned professional of some 8 years before joining the London classes

of Cecchetti following her return from the Southern Hemisphere tour. It was on her 9th birthday that her mother took her daughter Lucie for her first dancing lesson. For 3 years she studied with Paul Valentine, a French dancing master of repute who had settled in London; at the same time she also took classes with the Italian dancer Rita Zalmame thus receiving an introduction to the Cecchetti set work.

A pupil of talent she was soon leading a busy life as a child performer in both pantomime and variety, the only venues where English dancers could perform prior to the First World War. Appearing as "Little Lucie", she was soon being noticed by London critics who even in 1911 noted what were to become her strong points as a dancer - namely a strong virtuosic technique, coupled with much versatility.

Her first overseas performances were

given during 1917 in India; leading on to her Australian debut at the Tivoli Theatre, Melbourne. The Company Manager for this tour being Mr. T.J. Holt father of our future Prime Minister Harold Holt, through whose influence the Australian Ballet was founded in 1962.

Before the end of 1919, "Little Lucie Linda" as she had been known professionally became Lucie Saronova due to the vogue for Russian dancers. No dancer without a Russian name would have been able to gain employment for many years.

It was in this same year that Madam was accepted by the Maestro Cecchetti for instruction in his famous method of dance training, now that he had retired from touring and had settled in London to teach.

Soon Saronova had a big decision to make. After giving her one of the few certificates awarded to his English pupils, which proclaimed her right to teach his

method, Cecchetti arranged for an audition with the famous director of “Les Ballets Russes”, Serge Diaghilev; however at this same time Harry Jacobs proposed marriage. After much soul searching, Madam decided on the latter course - a decision, which she was never to regret as her marriage, gave her one-month short of 67 years of happiness.

Accompanying Ada Reeves for her 3rd tour of Australia in 1921, Madam and Mr. Jacobs decided to settle in Melbourne where the former opened a dance school teaching for many years, also acting as both choreographer and leading dancer in the ballets which proceeded films at both the Capitol and Regent Theatres; whilst Mr. Jacobs became conductor of the Palais Orchestra, St Kilda.

Upon her retirement as a performer Madam made one last return to London during 1934 in order to catch up on further developments in dance, before a return to Melbourne where she settled down to solely teach and so pass on the precepts of her beloved Maestro Cecchetti to successive generations of Melbourne dance students. With the advent of the Second World War, she closed her studio but was brought out of retirement by Miss Jean Alexander, the director of the National Theatre Ballet School in 1949.

It was in this final phase of her career that she taught a number of students who were instrumental in seeing that her devotion to the precepts of Cecchetti were carried forward, Miss Lorraine Blackburn, along with Messrs. William Carse and Athol Willoughby, O.A.M. are 3 of her former students who are still on the Panel of Examiners, after others have retired.

Always devoted to her dear Maestro, Madam taught his work with skill, along with joy in dance. Thanks to her determination alongside the pioneering efforts of the original Cecchetti teachers in South Australia (Wanda Edwards) and N.S.W. (Estelle Anderson), the Method has become a well-respected



force in dance training in all states of this country.

Dai Ailian

by Richard Glasstone, UK

CECCHETTI IN CHINA

The history of the Cecchetti method in China is inextricably bound up with the personal history of one remarkable woman: Dai Ailian. Born in Trinidad some 85 years ago, of expatriate Chinese parents, Dai Ailian came to England in 1930. Initially a pupil of Anton Dolin's, she went on to study classical ballet throughout the 1930's with Margaret Craske (who had taken over Cecchetti's London School when the Maestro retired), as well as Modern Dance at Dartington with Kurt Jooss and Sigurd Leeder. At the outbreak of war, Dai Ailian moved to China, where she began her extensive research into the wonderfully rich traditions of Chinese folk dance. Madame Dai was also one of the first people to perform and teach classical ballet in China. From 1949 she directed the Central Dance and Folk Ensemble and, in 1954, she was the Founding Principal of the Beijing Dance School (now the Beijing Dance Academy). Having miraculously survived the vicissitudes of the notorious Cultural Revolution, this remarkable lady now continues to champion the cause of ballet in China and, on her regular annual visits to Europe and America, Dai Ailian - acting in her advisory capacity to the Chinese government - seeks to encourage greater co-operation between ballet in China and ballet in the West. Which is why I was invited to teach in China in January, 2001. From the mid-fifties to the early sixties, Soviet Russian influence was dominant in the Chinese ballet world, with some excellent teaching as well as staging of the classics. However, initially, Dai Ailian's teaching in China had been largely based on the Cecchetti principles she had learnt from Margaret Craske. Following the withdrawal from China of all Russian experts and the subsequent wilderness years of the Cultural Revolution, Dai Ailian felt there was a need to

return to some teaching methods she had learnt in London. As she put it to me, there is an old saying in the East that “when you have lost your way, go back to where you started from.” So, when I was invited to teach in China, my brief was to re-introduce elements of the Cecchetti method at the Beijing Academy. I found both the students and their teachers greatly interested in the Cecchetti principles and writing in the souvenir programme for the Tribute to Ashton and Cecchetti, Dai Ailian said: “Through Margaret Craske's teachings I am forever indebted to Enrico Cecchetti, the great Master whose teaching method - passed down by dancers from generation to generation - is so important to the world of classical ballet. We in China are very proud to be part of that great heritage”.

Footnote: Nancy and Murray Kilgour, currently teaching at the Alberta Ballet School, Canada, went to Beijing in 1985, on a British Cultural Exchange, representing the Royal Ballet School, London. They took two students with them, one boy and one girl. The school was the Beijing Academy which included their National Ballet as well as their Chinese National Dance. Before going they had dinner at the Chinese Embassy where they met Madame Dai. They had a wonderful time in Beijing and also on their return, working with both teachers and students visiting the Royal Ballet School. It was a very special time that they will always remember.



1996 on her 80th birthday at the Central Ballet, supported by Sun Xuejing

AN AMERICAN at TRING

by *Jessie Hurwitt*

I traveled to England with my dance director Betty Seibert and two other students. At sixteen, stepping off an airplane into a country you have never visited before can make you nervous and excited and of course there is the adjustment to the native language, although it is easier to decipher the speech of the English than say the French. England is a beautiful country, the people are friendly and it is full of wonderful sites to visit. We spent two exciting days in London: the changing of the guards, shopping, Don Quixote by the Royal Ballet and a Broadway play, 'My One and Only'. At Tring I loved every minute of the course, it was challenging, intense and included different forms of dance. I think my favorite part was getting to work toward the performance at the end and show off the skills we had developed. I am so glad I was able to take in so much from my time in

England. I am very grateful that I had the chance to go, because it was one of

the most wonderful experiences of my life.



L-R *Jessie Hurwitt, Sierra Boyea, Eliza Quigley*

RESOURCES

Classical Ballet Terms – An illustrated dictionary by Richard Glasstone

This dictionary traces both the historical background and linguistic origins of ballet terminology and addresses the problems of correct spelling regarding gender.

Available from Dance Books Ltd.
The Old Bakery, 4 Lenten Street, Alton,
Hampshire GU34 1HG UK
WEBSITE www.dancebooks.co.uk
Price £10.00, plus postage

Rhyman's Dictionary of Classical Ballet Terms: **Cecchetti** by Rhonda Rhyman

A Dictionary of contemporary classical ballet terms
Clear concise word descriptions of over 900 ballet terms
with pronunciations
Includes historical notes from Maestro Cecchetti's 1894
Manuel

Available from Dance Collection Danse, 145 George
Street, Toronto M5A 2M6 Canada
publisher of Livia Brillarelli's *Cecchetti: A Ballet Dynasty*
TEL: 416-365-3233 FAX: 416-365-3169
EMail: talk@dcd.ca
WEBSITE:
<http://www.dancecollectiondanse.on.ca/dancecol>

Cecchetti's Enduring Concepts and Modern Dance by Janet Hagsivas

Presented at the Australian National Cecchetti Congress, July 2001
Booklet and Video \$55.00 Canadian, plus postage
\$5.00 in Canada \$13.00 outside Canada, available
from:
Janet Hagsivas, 45 Annette Crescent, St.,
Alberta T8N 2Z8 Canada
TEL: 780-458-2141 Email: edmsballet@aol.com

*We would like to share more valuable resources with our readers, please send information to hskn@coastnet.com

DISCOVERED TORINO MANUSCRIPT

by Ross Alley, London, 2002

It was with some excitement and greater curiosity that I learned of the discovery in Torino by Enrico Cecchetti's descendants of a handwritten copy of the Cecchetti syllabus music dated 1909. I eagerly awaited the opportunity to examine it and was not disappointed. Here, for the first time, I was able to discover the identity of the composer of several of the pieces of music which had previously remained anonymous - that composer was E. Cecchetti. Here too was a much more comprehensive range of music than the usual selections that are used over and over again within what I know as the 'set' music. However, the appearance of these additions also raised some questions but, before I attempt any answers, let me retrace my steps.

In 1983, I was invited to re-edit the music published by the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (I.S.T.D.) in London as accompaniment for the (major) examination syllabi in the Cecchetti method. This edition is still the most recent version and is used by teachers of the Cecchetti method throughout the world. The idea of an examination syllabus dates back to 1930 when former pupils of the Maestro (including Ninette de Valois, Marie Rambert, Margaret Craske, Derra de Moroda and Mary Skeaping) formed a committee in London under the chairmanship of Cyril Beaumont. Most of the music which formed the accompaniment to the first examination syllabus was drawn from 72 pages of neatly written manuscript given by Maestro Cecchetti to Margaret Craske in 1927, bearing the dedication 'A mon chère élève Margaret Craske pour faciliter ses leçons de danse. Souvenir affectueuse de son maestro Enrico Cecchetti'.

Curiously, those same pupils of Cecchetti saw fit to replace some of their maestro's approved choices of music with 'better' selections of their own,

drawn mainly from the German/Austrian repertoire of Beethoven, Schubert and Schumann. It is my belief that this decision was prompted by Massine's use of symphonic music for his ballets at this time, and by the aims of the newly formed Camargo Society, in which both Ninette de Valois and Marie Rambert were prime movers. Their choice of Schumann's *Wiegenlied* for the set sequence of Port de bras was a happy one; the use of the slow movement of Beethoven's 9th symphony for the *Pas de l'Alliance* much less so.

Obviously, not all teachers were satisfied with these musical substitutions, especially those who had also studied with the Maestro himself and finally, in 1962 under the musical editorship of Kenneth Skeaping, the excised pieces were returned to the music book, albeit in a section of their own at the end. (One of my aims in the 1983 edition was to place the alternative choices of music next to each other.) In the preface to the 1962 edition, Cyril Beaumont thanked Cecchetti's sons for permission to publish and edit the returned selections.

But the source music for Cecchetti's exercises neither begins in 1927 nor ends in 1962, as I was to discover. In 2000, a young Canadian teacher (and musician), Candice Helm, chose to research the history of the 'set' music for her 'Fellowship' paper. Naturally, I gave her full access to all the materials I had collected but, while she was in London, Candice also obtained copies from the Theatre Museum of a 68 page manuscript in Cecchetti's own hand entitled "Musique Pour les Exercices de Danse Methode Cecchetti" which he had given to Anna Pavlova in 1908 (the dedication reads: Mlle. Anna Pavlova. Souvenir de son Professeur Devoué Enrico Cecchetti 1 Août 1908). The detailed chart made by Candice comparing three sets of

musical selections the 1908 Pavlova and 1927 Margaret Craske manuscripts and the I.S.T.D. publication (in my 1983 edition) is illuminating.

Earlier in this article, I mentioned that it was the 1930 Committee in London who chose Schumann's *Wiegenlied* as suitable accompaniment for the Cecchetti Port de bras. What therefore did Cecchetti himself use? In both the Pavlova and Craske manuscripts, the Port de bras is performed to the same music as that of the *Pliés* (composed by E. Cecchetti, as I have now found out). Imagine my surprise, on examining the Torino manuscript, to find Mendelssohn's piano piece 'Spring Song' as the choice. In fact, there are many 'new' choices of music in the Torino manuscript which teachers will find intriguing, including a different Minuet for each of the Monday to Saturday *Révérances*. In total, there are 84 numbered pieces of music, and a few additional unnumbered selections, in the manuscript but whereas the Barre, Centre Practice, Pirouettes and Adage selections bear titles indicating the set exercise they accompany, the Allegro selections are mostly untitled although they are grouped in the six Days of the Week sections. (Curiously, Tuesday begins with 'Tutti Sisonne' and Wednesday with 'Tutti Jeté' which is a departure from Cecchetti's later division of the Allegro steps.) I also note that some of the pieces of music are ascribed to G. Cecchetti who may be Enrico's brother, Giuseppe.

It is important to recognize that Cecchetti varied his enchaînements to suit the particular attributes of some of his students. He also revised and developed many of the exercises during his lifetime. It is only natural, therefore, that his use of music to accompany the sequences of movement was similarly flexible. In fact, many of Cecchetti's

pupils recorded how he often taught ballet class with no musical accompaniment whatsoever; instead he whistled and beat time with his cane on the floor. Whether this was for financial reasons or for want of an accomplished and sympathetic musician, I do not know. Regarding Cecchetti's own musical abilities, we know that he played both the violin and the piano, and photographic evidence even shows us his playing and teaching at the same time. In the Pavlova and Fornaroli manuscripts, only the melodic line is notated, indicating that the music was written to be played on the violin, whereas the Margaret Craske manuscript is in pianoforte notation (although

not in Cecchetti's hand). Perhaps some of the musical selections were even provided by pianists who were working with Cecchetti at this time.

I believe the manuscript is not in the hand of Enrico Cecchetti as I have examined examples of what is believed to be Cecchetti's musical handwriting from two sources, one is a single page in the private collection of Dr. Giannandrea Poesio in London (a transcription made by Cecchetti in 1887 of Romualdo Marengo's music for *Excelsior*); the other is the Cia Fornaroli Collection in the Research Libraries of the New York Public Library. Two distinct features common to these manuscripts are firstly,

the attaching of downward stems to the noteheads on the right rather than the left side, and secondly, the use of a diagonal line to separate the two numbers of the musical time-signatures. In neither the Torino manuscript nor the Margaret Craske are these two highly individual features present.

Whose hand notated the Torino manuscript may still remain a mystery but the wealth of alternative choices of music in this collection is as refreshing as it is welcome and I encourage teachers of the method to put it to good advantage.

CONGRATULATIONS

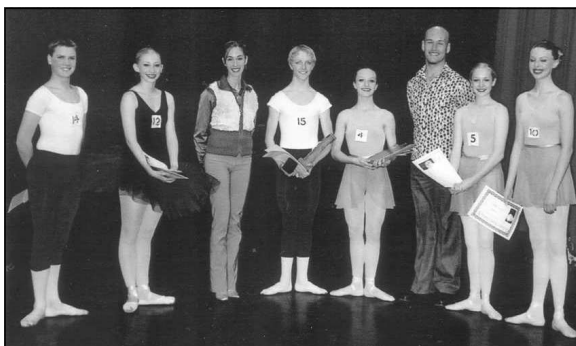
to the Cecchetti Society of Australia Inc. on becoming a Registered Training Organisation in Australia

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Congratulations to Jean Spear FISTD who received this surprise presentation in Toronto, on November 16, 2002 from the Cecchetti Society of Canada

THE LUCIE SARONOVA MEMORIAL AWARD

In 1999 the National Council of Australia introduced a National Competition for students from all States and Territories throughout Australia to compete together. It will now be called The Lucie Saronova Memorial Award.



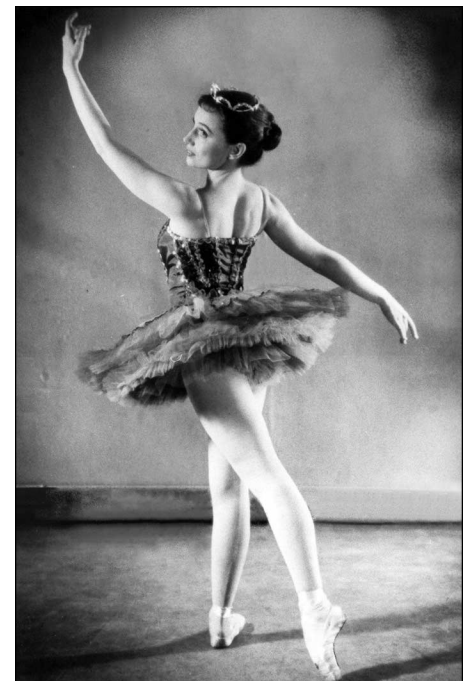
2002 Memorial winners – The Lucie Saronova Memorial Award

L-R David Hammond, Ashleigh Forde, Rachel Jensen (Judge), Steven McRae, Lauren Wellman, Peter Furness (Judge), Halina Hughes, Jenna Hughes

ROSE MARIE FLOYD FISTD

'a reunion of friends'

on December 27, 2002 many former students who have danced professionally return to Detroit, USA to honor their first teacher.



CELEBRATION IN CANADA

by Marnell Himes, USA

Canada's celebration of the Cecchetti Society's 80th anniversary was a week of inspiring classes and an exciting Gala. We were privileged to have guest teacher Kate Simmons from England teaching with her usual great energy and clarity. Her Diploma classes reminded me again as to why I love the Cecchetti work. This was my first time to see Glenn Gilmour teach and all of the wonderful things I had heard are certainly true. His classes were enjoyable and challenging and his men's pedagogy classes showed the development of the work in such a logical way that it all seems possible! It is always enjoyable to participate in Ross Alley's music classes. He not only presents much valuable information but manages to involve everyone in the class and he inspires us all to think! The teaching staff also included Joyce Shietze who gave wonderful "pointers" to those preparing for their qualifying exams as well as to those who are helping teachers prepare for these exams. Stéphane Léonard brought a wonderful calm and thoughtful approach to his classes, challenging students with some different ways of using the head and arms. Although I was unable to personally observe all classes, Judith Kruggel and Kimberly Ross (fellow teachers from California) enjoyed

classes with Hanne Livingstone, Sheila Kennedy and Christine Richardson.

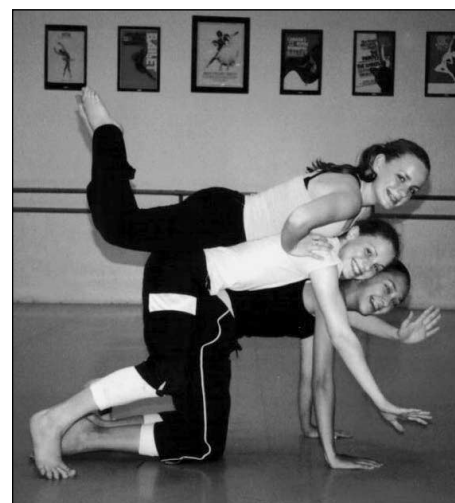
Students were also treated to classes in modern with Josée Garant, Improvisation with Claire Marshall, and Jazz with Kimberley Rampersad. It was a pleasure to again see Peter Pawlyshyn teaching Character. And what would dance be without music? Thank you to Ross Alley, Trevor McLain, Irena Gendelman, Jennifer Dumas and Mark Cameron for your beautiful music.

The Gala, co-ordinated by Sheila Kennedy and Suzanne Smith, took place at the Franco-Manitoban Cultural Centre. The evening was graciously emceed by Veronica Tennant, the Society's Honorary Patron, whose enthusiasm is always so contagious. Opening the program was a charming demonstration by young dancers from Manitoba, choreographed by Suzanne Smith and Debra Thiessen with Carol Piller at the piano. This was followed by a demonstration of the Cecchetti Major and Diploma work arranged by Sheila Kennedy, with music arranged and performed by Trevor McLean. This was beautifully presented, showing the layering of steps and culminating in the soloists work so clearly demonstrated by Vanessa Lawson and Dmitri Dovgoselets. In the second half of the program British Columbia was represented by Willow Jewett, performing "Right Angles" a contemporary work choreographed by Christine Richardson. Six dancers from Alberta performed "Visions" choreographed by Tina Colvin-Dewart. Manitoba presented "Echoes of Summer", choreographed by Janice Gibson. Manon LaCourse with her performance of "Winter", choreographed by Josée Beauséjour, and Olena Harasymowycz performing her own choreography, "For Movements Sake" represented Quebec. Glenn Gilmour staged a variation from "Don Q" for Katherine Long from Ontario. Tara Rogers and Joan-Marie Jamieson performed "Mist in the Narrows", choreographed by Sandra Blackmore to represent Newfoundland. The performance concluded appropriately with the Bluebird Pas de Deux from Act III Sleeping Beauty, performed by Vanessa Lawson and Dmitri Dovgoselets, coached by Stéphane Léonard. A special thank you

to the Royal Winnipeg Ballet for the donation of their beautiful studio space for the week of the conference and in the months leading up to the conference for gala rehearsals. Winnipeg was a lovely location for a week of truly refreshing classes. Especially as 'The Golden Boy' was on display while being refurbished before being set aloft once more on the Manitoba Legislature. Congratulations to the Manitoba council and organizing committee: Maggie Dalwood, Jacqui Davidson, Debra Thiessen, and Carol Piller on a truly successful Celebration.



Kate Simmons & Rachel McLaren



Lauren Shinnimin (top), Corinne Vessey (middle), Alexandra Scheween (bottom)



Glenn Gilmour

Challenges sent to the Celebration for the next 80 years:

“The relevance of the Cecchetti work to a true understanding of the stylistic qualities of Giselle and Les Sylphides cannot be overstated. However, the challenge for Cecchetti teachers in the 21st century is to look beyond this stylistic element to a better under-

standing of the movement principles in all our teaching, rather than merely repeating set sequences, must surely be the way?”

Richard Glasstone.

“Enrico Cecchetti taught the greatest dancers of his time. His method has influenced almost every major dance institution in the world. To maintain the

integrity and value of his legacy we must look to the future realistically and work with two distinct criteria:

- 1. the work must be taught at the highest professional level*
- 2. the work must be taught at a responsible amateur level.”*

Raymond Lukens and Franco De Vita

IMPRESSIONS of KOREA

I flew out of Sydney the week before Christmas, exhausted and ill, apprehensive of the problems I might encounter teaching and examining in a non-English speaking country. However, the minute I walked through the doors from Customs in Seoul airport I was surrounded with the warmest welcome anyone could wish for. Language seemed to become a secondary concern, as we communicated with gestures and laughter. This continued throughout my stay as I discovered what a warm, generous and hospitable people the Koreans are. Examining and teaching was a pleasure working with such an enthusiastic and focused group. It was a strange but welcome sensation to sit in a studio so far from home and to hear the Elementary music beautifully played and to see the

students execute the familiar exercises. Suddenly it hit me how truly international the Cecchetti method is. To examine the familiar work in a country where normal means of communication are difficult due to the language barrier was an amazing sensation. The evenings provided the opportunity to get to know the teachers, to experience their unending generosity, and to learn a little about their traditions. The first night they took me to a smorgasbord to end all smorgasbords! During the meal I was showered with gifts and it was wonderful to see the pride with which the meanings and tradition behind each one was explained to me. The second night I experienced my first traditional Korean restaurant. I was introduced to the amazing array of different foods and tastes (my first time with chopsticks)

by Carole Hall, Australia

all of which I thoroughly enjoyed. Then shopping – confronted with so much choice I only bought a few items, not like me at all. My last night in Korea, I was taken to a restaurant that had traditional Korean dancing. I was fascinated by the enthusiasm and pride shown in their heritage as they explained the food, dances and traditional decorations in the restaurant to me. The night ended with a visit to a teahouse. We sat on the floor and drank amazing flavoured teas out of beautiful cups accompanied by delicious sweets. I returned home with a kaleidoscope of memories of a hard working, enthusiastic people, generous beyond belief and a whirlwind of experiences which were so enriched by the explanations of all the traditions by a race so proud of their heritage.

GOLD MERIT AWARD

Australia



Robina Beard, Carole Hall

National Council decided at the beginning of this year to introduce it's own award for an outstanding contribution to their Society. The first Gold Merit Award was presented at in Adelaide to **Robina Beard** for her outstanding contribution in her fifteen years as Chairman of the National Council and for her hours of time given so unstintingly and so willingly to establish and bring the Society to where it is today. The Award was presented to Robina by the new Chairman, **Carole Hall**. Congratulations to both ladies.



Chichester, 2002. Guest teacher, Betty Seibert & Elisabeth Swan

THE RHYTHM OF LIFE

by Ross Alley



Rhythm is a curious phenomenon. We can all recognize it, yet find it difficult to express its meaning effectively and precisely in words. Dictionary definitions often do not help for, by nature, they must compress their meanings into a mere handful of well-chosen words resulting in an entry for the word ‘rhythm’ as: “the temporal pattern produced by the grouping and balancing of varying stresses and persisting succession of beats” (Webster’s Third New International Dictionary). That definition is actually quite amazing in the amount of information crammed within so few words, yet some of you may find it almost indigestible, so concentrated is its content. The Concise Oxford Dictionary is even briefer: “2. That feature of musical composition concerned with periodical accent & the duration of notes.”

Although rhythm embraces both the irregular (such as the exploding fireworks, construction work, human conversation) and regular varieties, it is the latter that is integral to music and dance. Why should this be? The answer would obviously be intimately connected with the fact that, as living beings, we are dependent on the continuance of a persistent heart beat. What is less understood, is our irresistible urge to tap along with a regular external beat and, what is more, the stronger the beat, the more we wish to move part of our bodies (foot, fingertips, head) in sympathy with it. Several theories have been suggested to account for this inexplicable and virtually involuntary behaviour but the one most favoured is that it is an attempt by the body to rationalize the speed of a disturbing external beat with the different tempo of our internal timekeeper.

Regular rhythm is dependent on patterning, that is, the ordering of the beats into regular groups by placing an emphasis on the first pulse beat in the group, and repeating this idea continuously, producing, in its simplest form, a type of rhythmic patterning called METRE. In musical notation, vertical lines (barlines) are used to separate the regular divisions

(bars) of the metre.

Theoretically, there could be an infinite number of different metrical patterns, but as the number of beats in a group increases, it becomes more and more difficult to recognize a recurring series. Therefore, all possible metres have been condensed, realistically, into just two: a metre of two (i.e. ONE two, ONE two, etc.) and a metre of three (i.e. ONE two three, ONE two three, etc.). A metre of ‘one’ serves no usefulness as a pattern it is just a succession of unvarying pulse beats while all the others are made up of a combination or alternation of the basic two: a metre of four is simply [2 + 2]; a metre of five [2 + 3]; a metre of six [2 + 2 + 2] or [3 + 3]. Perhaps our preference for metrical organization, and love of symmetry generally, derives from the recurring cycles and patterns in nature and, indeed, ourselves.

Biological rhythms

In fact, sometimes we forget the relevance of the human body to our perception of rhythm. For a start, our sensation of musical tempo is totally governed by the rate of the human heart beat. When we are excited, or engaged in strenuous activity, our heart beat rate increases dramatically; during peaceful sleep the level drops correspondingly neither the emotions are animated nor the physical activity. Thus fast music sounds ‘exciting’ while very slow music can send us into an emotional torpor. At rest, the normal heart beat rate is 60-80 beats per minute. Fit people, like dancers, should be at the lower end while the rate of the overweight and inactive will be much more (although the real test of fitness is how quickly the pulse-rate returns to normal after strenuous activity). Because of this, we judge musical rhythm that proceeds at 60-80 beats per minute as of moderate tempo while our sensation of slow and fast music is related to the rates moving outwards from this central range.

The heart beat is an involuntary physiological function and although a healthy human heart should beat in a

steady succession of pulses without any specific accents, if we play a metrical pattern alongside it, it feels more like duple than triple time. It is something to do with the halving and doubling-up effect inherent in duple metre whereby a beat splits so easily into halves, quarters, eighths and sixteenths and so forth, that the main beats can often be confused with the sub-beats. This is why you need never trouble yourselves about the difference between 2/4s and 4/4s; often it is just the whim of the composer! The heart beat is thus complementary to duple metre.

Triple metre, on the other hand, creates a ‘swinging’ effect through its unequal subdivision, which also makes the main beats stronger. Just as there is a physiological complement for duple metre in the heart beat, so the action of the lungs harmonizes with triple metre. Try it for yourself: breathe in and out deeply while tapping your fingers on a table two slow beats to inhale, and two beats to exhale. Now try it tapping out three beats for each. The cyclical feeling of impulse and suspense of the expanding and contracting breathing movements seems perfectly in harmony with triple metre.

Moving from metrical associations with involuntary physiological functions to voluntary movements, we note further interrelationships. The most basic body movement that corresponds with duple metre is walking. Two feet walking, marching or running fit comfortably to duple musical subdivision. Similarly, the most basic body movement that corresponds with triple metre is swaying. Try it and see. Swinging movements always feel fuller and juicier to triple metre. The extra sub-beat encourages a moment of suspense at the end of the swing before gravity pulls the weight downwards again. The skip is also bounciest on a fast triple metre (6/8).

Adage movements

Once the basic relationship between body movement and musical metre is understood, it is time to experiment with the effect of how the duple/triple antithesis can be used to enhance balletic movement quality. First, let’s take a slow movement such as a grand plié performed in four

counts. Try doing a few pliés while counting One-and, Two-and, Three-and, Four-and; now try again while counting One-and-a, Two-and-a, Three-and-a, Four-and-a. As long as the counts (or, better still, music) are sung (or played) with the same smooth and continuous quality, both metrical subdivisions are legitimate; yet something feels very different. Do you have a preference, and can you explain why? As a bold generalization, music in duple metre feels more 'rigid' and the corresponding movement more 'controlled' ('academic', even) than that in triple time which is 'rounder' and seems more flowing. Use these two qualities to your advantage: for the student who drops into the demi-plié too quickly, perhaps the slow duple metre will encourage greater evenness in the timing throughout; for the student who looks too rigid, perhaps the triple metre will help phrase the movement. These same effects can be used to enhance all Adage movements.

Allegro movements

One of the exercises I use when exploring the duple versus triple antithesis with my students is to ask them to perform a series of simple jumps (sautés or changements) while I accompany them on the piano. Halfway through, and unbeknown to them, I change my metrical subdivision of the beat from quick duple to triple without altering the tempo. I then ask the students to tell me what they noticed. Most are aware that a musical change took place but find it hard to articulate the difference they experienced, although they often comment that the sec-

ond half, the triple time subdivision, felt slower. Fortunately, there's always at least one student, usually who has had the benefit of learning a musical instrument, who can explain the metrical switch I made. Identifying the change is not the purpose of my exercise however; rather it is the correct movement response to it that concerns me. This is a fundamental, yet generally poorly appreciated aspect of developing musicality in which I seek your active support, as teachers of classical ballet. Petit allegro elevation should not look the same in quick duple time (i.e. 2/4) as it does on quick triple (i.e. 6/8) for the dynamics of jumping are fundamentally related to metrical subdivision. When you are watching ballet on television or video, it should be possible to turn the sound off and see quite clearly whether the performers are dancing to duple or triple time. Sadly, this is not always the case.

In duple subdivision, you can spend equal amounts of time in the air and on the ground:

jump-land jump-land
& - 1 & - 2

This is typical of terre à terre elevation, and is especially appropriate for creating nimble footwork in petit batterie enchaînements.

In triple subdivision, however, there is an extra sub-beat to allow suspension in the air:

jump-suspend land jump-suspend land
& - a 1 & - a 2

The uneven subdivision lends itself to ballon elevation: a higher jump is created by the longer time now spent in the air.

It is important that you experiment with both these subdivisions so that simple jumps do not look the same on a 2/4 time signature as they do on 6/8. If you have a pianist, ask them to switch from a 2/4 to a 6/8 after four or eight counts (but without altering the tempo), allowing your students to practise altering the height of their elevation accordingly. You can also practise this exercise using your voice alone or by clapping the sub-beats.

This same effect can be achieved at the barre performing a series of battements glissés or dégagés to second position. Try doing four of each, ensuring that the students achieve a hold in the second position on the 6/8:

out-hold-in out-hold-in etc.
& - a - 1 & - a - 2

Without your guidance, the students will cheerfully perform the battement glissé or dégagé movement to the two metres with absolutely no change whatsoever. I believe that practising this response to the two basic musical metres in alternation should be an integral part of class teaching and would do wonders for assisting the development of musicality. Which examining body will be the first to incorporate such an exercise within their syllabus?

BARBARA GEOGHEGAN

A tribute by Kate Simmons

I have known Barbara Geoghegan for the past sixteen years. I first met her when I started to enter children for the Northern Area and London Mabel Ryan Awards. As a new teacher and one that had just retired from a company she gave me great encouragement and help, nothing was ever too much trouble and she always made newcomers feel welcome to the Awards. Ms. Geoghegan was exceptional with children of all ages, having run and organised Cecchetti Scholars for many years her expertise and careful eye developed scholars into the wonderful scheme it is today. Children and students adored her, not only for her warmth and kindness but for the way she made every child feel special. We must not forget that Ms. Geoghegan was a super teacher and pianist, she was also a composer of several pieces of music for solos. I for one, miss her a lot and I am truly grateful for all the time and chats we had together.



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