

CECCHETTI INTERNATIONAL CLASSICAL BALLET

Newsletter No. 10, 2004

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*

Enrico Cecchetti as
Kastchei in *L'Oiseau de
feu* (Firebird) with the
Ballets Russes, at the
Paris Opera, 1910.
Photographic negatives
by Raffaello Bencini.
Photo courtesy of Dance
Collection Danse



Letter from the Chairman

Dear Members and Friends of Cecchetti International - Classical Ballet (CICB)

It is with great delight that we can tell you that our international organization is now a legal non-profit entity. We were incorporated in Canada on July 2nd, 2004 and we thank the Canadian delegates for facilitating this. Congratulations to everyone, and welcome to Cecchetti International - Classical Ballet.

The Corporate Members of CICB have had an inaugural teleconference. Matters needing clarification were discussed, and over all it was an excellent meeting. Hereunder are set out the categories of membership of our new International Society, so that all our members can understand their standing in the new organization.

a) **Corporate Members** - there are six corporate members who have come together to promote the Cecchetti Method and comprise the Board of CICB.

Cecchetti Societies of: Australia, Canada, Southern Africa, and USA
Cecchetti Council of America, Danzare Cecchetti - ANCEC Italia
also represented are Korea, Malaysia, Namibia, New Zealand Thailand and Zimbabwe

b) **Represented Members** - we are all Represented Members if we belong to one of the six Societies above and are in good standing with that society. We are therefore members of our own individual societies, and also non-voting members of CICB

c) **Affiliated Members** - this category includes three types of membership

- (i) *Qualified Cecchetti Teachers* who are not Members of one of the six Corporate Member societies may join as a single "Affiliated" member for a fee of \$20 (Canadian) and will receive the newsletter and any information regarding CICB activities.
- (ii) *Supporting members* who shall be known as "Friends of CICB"
- (iii) *Honorary members* who are honoured members of the dance profession, invited to be honorary members of CICB

We would be delighted to receive any inquiries about Affiliated and/or Supporting members, and we will be inviting Honorary members very soon.

We are also anxious to receive any articles or information about Cecchetti work around the world which might be included in our newsletters. Please see page 2 for contacts

Once again, welcome to your new international organization. We look forward to a long and fruitful life of Cecchetti excellence.

Robina Beard

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www.istd.org - UK & Europe
www.cecchettiballet.org - Australia
www.cecchetti.ca - Canada
www.cecchetti.co.za - Southern Africa
www.cecchettiusa.org - Cecchetti Society Inc.USA
www.cecchetti.org - Cecchetti Council of America

NEEDED: suggestions for further Cecchetti Pioneers, comments, articles, photographs, videos, web sites, book & music titles for the next newsletter. Please mark CICB and send at any time to hskan@coastnet.com

Upcoming events 2005

Australia

January 5 - 11, Summer School, contact Sandra Allan
03 9783 6804, bookings essential

July 1, Lucie Saronova Memorial Awards, Brisbane

July 2 & 3, Cecchetti Society of Australia
38th Annual Congress, Brisbane

Canada

August, Royal Winnipeg Ballet School
cecchetti_society@telus.net or tel. 204-943-4612

CCA

July 10 - 23, Student summer program, Holland, Michigan
July 17 - 23, Teachers' course, Diane van Schoor scheduled to
teach, ccainfo@aol.com office ph: 734-379-6710

UK

March 6, Mabel Ryan & Barbara Geoghegan Awards
at The Place, London

July 17, provisional date for Cecchetti Day, London

July 30 - August 5, 50th Annual Summer School, Chichester,
organiser Elisabeth Swan, elisabeth@westonschools.co.uk

USA. Inc.

July, Sarasota, Florida, chaconne.hb@verizon.net

Obituaries

Betty Oliphant, July 12, '04

Please see page 3 (Cecchetti Pioneers article)

William Carse, July 25, '04

After a short battle with cancer. 'Bill' will be forever in our memories as a wonderful teacher, choreographer, examiner and inspiring friend.

Noelle Aitken, August 23 '04

After a long illness. Noelle will long be remembered as one of the Founding Members of National Council and for her invaluable contributions to the Society.

"Whomsoever you follow, however great he might be, see that you follow the spirit of the master and not imitate him mechanically"
— Mohandas Gandhi

CECCHETTI PIONEERS

Stanislas Idzikowski 1894 - 1977

The Forgotten Dancer

submitted by David Adams



Teacher, dancer and choreographer, co-author with Cyril Beaumont of the Cecchetti Manual.

Born in Warsaw in 1894, he studied under Gilbert, Vilzak and Cecchetti. Formerly with Anna Pavlova's Company, he joined Diaghilev's Company in 1914, remaining until 1926, dancing many leading roles, including Harlequin in Carnaval, Petrouchka, the snob in La Boutique Fantasque, the Spark in The Three Cornered Hat and many others. He rejoined Diaghilev in London in 1928 and toured Great Britain and danced in every European capital. He danced with the Vic Wells Ballet in 1933 creating one of the leading roles in Les Rendezvous, and dancing Harlequin in Carnaval, Blue Bird and Grand Pas from Aurora's Wedding, etc. He taught at his own studio in London, with Madame Wanda Evina his faithful friend and pianist. Many famous dancers were numbered among his pupils. He also worked for the R.A.D. He retired after the death of Madame Evina. I first made contact with Idzi as I shall now call him, in 1947. I had recently been made a Member of the Junior Sadler's Wells Ballet Company at the Sadler's Wells Theatre on Rosebery Avenue in London England. The occasion was Twelfth Night, it was customary to have a special celebration in the London theatres on this night. It was also customary to invite a celebrity to these occasions. Idzikowski was the celebrity for that night in 1947. I was introduced to him at the beginning of the evening, backstage. I am six feet tall. As I approached Idzi, he smiled, because I was a dancer in the company, but also because he came up to my shoulders in height. I reached down, to shake his hand. My next encounter was with the Metropolitan Ballet Company, on tour in the British Isles. Idzi had been brought in to teach Spectre de la Rose to the company. I was not cast to dance that role, but I managed to observe the process from the back of the front of house. He began by opening a bottle of Rose perfume for the cast to smell. Spectre is for two dancers, but six were learning it. He said that he wanted them to feel the aroma. This was a daily process. Later in my time with the Metropolitan Ballet, I asked to dance that role, and, by default, one of the dancers was sick, and I did make that role part of my repertoire. Study with Idzi in London was another matter. The word amongst the dancers was, "if you want to learn how to move quickly, do class with Idzi". I tried, but I could not keep up with him, I gave up eventually and went back to Vera Volkova. He taught class in a suit, with the stiff collar, the vest, and spats and street shoes. With all of this on, he could still do a double tour en l'air and land in a perfect 5th. I did not

get to know this man, I knew his reputation from books and from other dancers. Why Idzi? That was what Madame Evina called him. He was in most cases, the understudy to Nijinsky, but was as good, in every way, as the great man himself.

Extract from Margot Fonteyn's Autobiography: "During my unusually long career I must surely have attended more classes with more teachers than any other dancer in history. Even in the early years at Sadler's Wells we had several guest teachers. My favourite was Stanislas Idzikowski, affectionately known as Idzi, a brilliant dancer who had been with the Diaghilev Ballet. He was diminutive, dapper and precise, speaking rather good English with a clipped Polish accent. Severe but never unkind, he knew exactly what he expected of his students and explained clearly how to achieve it. He demonstrated all the steps himself, even in pas de deux class, and he could deftly swing one into a lift supported only with one arm. What incredible strength and knack to partner, so airily, lumpy teenagers taller than himself! Forty years later [1976] he is still as slim and precise as ever, his face scarcely changed at all. I do not remember ever seeing him without a waistcoat to his neat grey suit."

Memories from Brian and David Scott.

Brian: My main impression of Idzi as we affectionately called him was that he was always well mannered and a gentleman though at times we gave him good reason not to be!!! He was always impeccably dressed, neat and shoes polished to perfection; I could never imagine him to be muffled no matter what the difficulty. He would teach what I thought was an extremely difficult enchaînement and after an unsuccessful attempt he would look sad and shake his head and say, "NO, NO, gentlemen, please, it is not difficult" and he would demonstrate with speed and accuracy ending without the least displacement of his dress nor even out of breath. We would then see it wasn't difficult after all. He would stand quite close to me and ask for a double tour, 5th to 5th, straight up and down, and he would explain how. Then I would take a step back, he would take a step forward, this was repeated until the wall was behind me, he would say plié, and, I was afraid of hitting the wall, and I would not dare hit Idzi so I went straight up and down, good he would say. I always remember Madame Evina, his pianist who had been a dancer with Idzi in the Diaghilev Company; she was very petite and looking of the past era. She always gave wonderful introductions to everything and it used to amuse me that sometimes as you passed the piano after an enchaînement or whatever she would whisper a correc-

tion which you had to acknowledge very surreptitiously because if Idzi saw he would glare at Madame Evina. His classes and directions were very clear and made you think, you were always informed not only on what was necessary and logical but the quality of movement needed. I never thought of them as "Cecchetti" classes. I don't think anyone did, it wasn't until much later that I realized that fact.

David: Both Brian and I had a background of Cecchetti so I was prepared for Idzikowski's style and enchaînement but I thought that class would be more free as all professional classes were in London at that time. So after the first surprise it took a while to get used to the short, fast set barre and then repeating it all again in the centre. For many classes I 'fell about' especially if we had just returned from a month's tour, but in the end it came together and I got great benefit from it. He tailored his enchaînement to professionals and his classes were built up during the week finishing with the most difficult on the last day. The enchaînement were always repeated four times which was another thing which gave us great benefit after a while. Madame Evina always built up the music to push us through the fourth time, and sometimes we really needed it. Another benefit was that for the boys the fourth time always finished with a pirouette. Idzi had the most beautiful arms in demonstrating adage; I have never forgotten his elegance. He was also a great believer in getting us to jump straight up and achieve height from a stationary position. I remember one day he was standing by the upright piano exhorting us to jump, when suddenly he did a demi-plié and the next instant he was sitting on top of the piano with not a hair out of place. I am sure that it is not necessary to describe how we felt.

Betty Oliphant 1918-2004

written in cooperation with Nadia Potts

As many will probably have heard, Betty Oliphant passed away peacefully on July 12, 2004 at St. Catharine's, Ontario. A true pioneer - so many dance related institutions thriving in Canada and elsewhere in the world today owe their beginnings and bear witness to the vision, dedication and genius of this remarkable lady.

Nancy Elizabeth Oliphant was born on August 5, 1918 in London, of English and Scottish ancestry whose motto was 'seek higher things'. There was much sadness and pain in her life, however she spent a happy childhood in London and Scotland especially enjoying the outdoors. Her mother gave her a rich exposure to the London theatre: Diaghilev's Company & other visit-



ing ballet companies; Modern Dance, Mary Wigman and Kurt Joos; D'Oyly Carte Light Opera; Indian Classical Dance, Uday Shankar and Ram Gopal; Flamenco Dancers, Argentina and Argentinita. She saw Anna Pavlova dance 30 times, including her last performance at the Golders Green Hippodrome, enjoying most the dramatic numbers like Amarilla and The Dying Swan. She also saw Tamara Karsavina, Marie Rambert and many others famous dancers. She loved reading poetry.

At 5 she was put into ballet classes to strengthen her lungs after her third bout of pneumonia. Her teacher, Miss Sheen had taken classes with Laurent Novikov and Mme. Pruzina, both of whom had emigrated to London from Russia. Novikov had partnered Anna Pavlova and Tamara Karsavina and his time at the Imperial School, St. Petersburg, dancing with Pavlova and Diaghilev all coincided with Enrico Cecchetti's performing and teaching. From Miss Sheen, Betty received Russian training based on the original teachings of Cecchetti. Another student of Miss Sheen's had been Phroso Pfister, who became Principal of the London College of Dance. Meeting Betty later she reminded her of a recital at the Scala Theatre, London, when she had been one of four chickens and Betty the mother chicken. At 7 Betty was taking daily ballet classes fitted in with her schooling and back to the studio for Pointe, National, Greek or Character classes after school. Her mother was insistent that her education should not be neglected.

When Betty was about 15, the ballet world started to decline, Diaghilev and Pavlova had died and Betty's mother thought she might need to be more versatile. She sent Betty to The Joan Davies and Zelia Raye School of Stage Dancing where she studied tap, acrobatics and musical comedy. After a few months of learning not to

be a ballet snob Betty found these new dance forms very interesting and excelled in them. Joan Davies and Zelia Raye soon discovered her talent for teaching and gave her teaching and responsibility far above her age. Missing her ballet training, classes with Marie Rambert and later Tamara Karsavina were also fitted into her day. Miss Sheen had been a very technical teacher, from Karsavina Betty learned true artistry. She was also performing in shows, her first professional engagement was in a restaurant cabaret in the Strand at 14.

By 16 she was tall for a dancer in those days and realized that she was destined to become a teacher and would need some kind of certification. The RAD and Cecchetti were the only choices at that time and Betty considered Cecchetti as being closest to her training. She was introduced to Margaret Saul who had studied with Margaret Craske. Miss Craske had carried on Cecchetti's teaching when he left London for Italy. It was discovered that Betty had taught Miss Saul tap at Zelia Raye's studio! Betty felt she had made the right choice, for the first time she had discovered a systematic method of training. Miss Saul claimed she never gave Betty a correction twice, it was always applied the first time. In 1935 with daily classes for a year Betty passed two major Cecchetti exams and under Joan Davies she took the Intermediate Stage Branch exam. The ISTD had just created this new branch, the syllabus arranged by Zelia Raye and Joan Davies with Betty as guinea pig. The following year she was the first person to pass the Advanced Stage exam in all subjects, and at 21 became the youngest Fellow and examiner of the ISTD Stage Branch, and Licentiate, later an examiner, of the Cecchetti Society Branch.

In 1936 at 18, with capital from her father's trust fund, Betty opened her own studio in London where she taught ballet, tap, musical theatre and acrobatics. At this time a group of teachers were working together exchanging their expertise to attain ISTD qualifications in the different branches. Betty taught Stage, Marian Lombard taught Greek and Margaret Saul, Ballet. When the war broke out in 1939 they all went into the armed services or war work, with Betty driving an ambulance. She also ran the dance side of the Blue Pencils, a musical review that entertained the troops. She choreographed and danced in all the dance sequences for that show and taught the performers classes to keep them in shape.

In 1947 Betty moved to Canada as a war bride for the benefit of her two children, one of whom was suffering from tuberculosis of the spine. She settled in

Toronto where she arranged dances for a production of Humperdinck's opera Hansel and Gretel.

In 1948 she opened her own school and taught ballet, tap, acrobatics, musical comedy and ballroom dancing. A few years later she bought a house and converted the ground floor into two studios. There she only taught ballet. Reaching out to improve the level of dancers and dance teachers, Betty founded the Canadian Branch of the Cecchetti Society under the ISTD London, England and became chairman in 1949. She established Canada's autonomy and set up summer courses, workshops and examinations in the Cecchetti method across Canada that continue to this day. The standards she set have led many dancers and teachers to strive for excellence reaching further than they would have believed possible. The same year, Betty and other Toronto dance teachers founded the Canadian Dance Teachers Association (Ontario Branch).

In 1951 she encountered Celia Franca who had been brought over from England to form the National Ballet Company of Canada, and Betty became their first ballet mistress later becoming Associate Artistic Director (1969-75). 1971 marked the Company's first performances in Europe. Betty and Celia soon realized that to produce a first class professional company with a consistent style they had to have a good school to feed it. In 1959 they co-founded the National Ballet School in Toronto. Betty was determined that this school would combine academic education and professional ballet training, a facility that had not been available to her. She wanted the education to be of such high quality that the students would not feel trapped into a career in ballet, or, if they chose, they would be equipped in retirement to follow a second career. The school started out in a Quaker temple and later expanded to include a number of the surrounding buildings. In 1988 after years of work Betty celebrated the opening of the R.A. Laidlaw Centre consisting of teacher training facility, residences and the Betty Oliphant Theatre which provided the school with its own performance space. Artistic Director for 30 years, Betty retired in 1989 but continued to teach for several more years. Her teaching was based on the Cecchetti method because she admired his logical development of movements, and believed in exams. She considered the use of head, the port de bras and the 8 body positions were the greatest gift given to us by Enrico Cecchetti. "There never has been such a teacher," she said. Nevertheless, having studied in England, Russia, Denmark and France she was continually searching, analyzing and questioning how to give the

ultimate to all who trained under her.

In 1967 her abilities as both a teacher and director inspired Erik Bruhn to invite her to reorganize the Ballet School of the Royal Swedish Opera and in 1978 Henning Kronstam invited her assistance for the Royal Danish Ballet School. She was a guest in Russia on four occasions and was invited to teach the graduating class at the Bolshoi Ballet School. She was Guest of Honour at the 1st International Ballet Competition, Moscow (1969), a member of the jury for the 3rd and 4th Competitions (1977 & 1981), and member of the jury for the Prix de Lausanne (1991). After a trip abroad there would be changes made, sometimes to stay, sometimes rejected. She had strong views on preventing over developed, gripped muscles from her own early training; a very distinctive use of the floor, body placement and jumping from the backs of the legs.

Intimidating to many, Betty was a brilliant and passionate teacher. Through her teaching and directional skills the National Ballet School of Canada's training has earned worldwide recognition and continues developing today from the base that she established. She created a generation of famous dancers, directors, brilliant choreographers and highly regarded teachers who are working all over the world. Clement Crisp, dance critic of London's Financial Times, put it so aptly when he wrote: "Betty Oliphant's idealism and her dedication to the training of serious, well-rounded dance artists have given Canada a grand academy for classical ballet, which must be the envy of many nations. The future of ballet in Canada, rests, in part, upon the splendid foundations of the National Ballet School as Betty Oliphant shaped and guided it."

She has won numerous awards, honorary doctorates, Officer of the Order of Canada (1973), Canada's highest honour, that of Companion of the Order of Canada (1985), and was one of the first female recipients, and only the third Canadian to be presented with the Order of Napoleon by the Maison Courvoisier, France (1990). Recollections:

Shirley Tetreau - I started studying with Betty in 1949 at the age of 12. She always encouraged us and our parents to attend the symphony and opera, to visit art galleries and museums, to go to the Stratford Festival when it started, and to attend as many dance and musical theatre performances as were visiting Toronto in those years. Of course, we all went to see the National Ballet Company when it began. She also stressed the importance of playing an instrument or singing to become more musically knowledgeable. All of this, according

to Betty, was most important as we were to become artists and not simply good technicians of dance. The other vivid memory I have is of Betty telling me that I had a gift for teaching. She would have some of us be her assistants and demonstrators in younger students' classes. I loved this as it meant that we received more personal coaching as we demonstrated for her. Then when I was 14 she had me share with her the teaching of a couple of younger students' classes and this was the greatest mentoring I could have received. Betty really developed our "eye" for line, for placement and alignment, for dynamics and style in movement. To develop our rhythmicity and musicality we studied tap with her. She was an amazing tap dancer herself and constantly challenged us to keep up with her accuracy and speed. We all took Flamenco with a teacher she hired to give us the experience of a different style of dance. We also all took our Cecchetti examinations. Betty would tell us that the strong, clean technique Cecchetti studies developed would also give us the ability to be molded by choreographers into dancers that could move in anyway their creativity demanded. She also reminded us over and over again that no dancer could cheat or fake their technique as Cecchetti studies put us under a microscope and we really had to work hard to understand our physiques, our capabilities and work with our limitations. She kept saying that we had to have a passion for hard work and that we should enjoy experiencing our development from year to year. However, she was not impressed only with our improving technical skills. She wanted us "to emote" to put our heart and soul and feelings into everything, starting at the barre. Often she would say "I'm getting bored watching you. Let your dance speak to me. Show me you love what you are doing".

Nadia Potts - I am one of the few students who had Betty Oliphant for my very first ballet class. I started studying at her Toronto studio at the age of 7. I immediately liked and responded to her teaching because I felt that I was learning the "real thing" right from the start and that I could, by working hard, achieve tangible results. I loved her dry English sense of humour, her logical approach as well as her demand for perfection. I continued to study with her from the time that the National Ballet School first opened in 1959 until I joined the National Ballet Company 6 years later at the age of 18. She gave me an extraordinary foundation on which to build both as a dancer and as a teacher. Betty's teaching style is difficult to describe. She was not loud or demonstrative but was, in many ways, soft and gentle in her manner but also

very persistent and demanding. She had a terrific sense of humour and would often laugh in class. She always demonstrated with her arms floating in space as though suspended in the air. When someone didn't do what she wanted or forgot a correction she pulled herself up tall and, looking down her nose would say, "Didn't I just tell you not to do that" and the poor student she was after would rarely make that mistake again. Her approach to ballet technique was extremely logical. If something didn't make sense to her, she didn't teach it. She was a meticulous, patient teacher and spent a great deal of time instilling in her students the importance of working on line, placing, and technical detail.

Jane Wooding - Miss O's classes were brilliantly constructed. Carefully crafted and challenging both intellectually and physically, her exercises were memorable and are still a valuable resource for many dancers and teachers. The main focus of the work was to increase one's self-awareness and responsibility. The barre, usually quite long and complicated, was developed and repeated over a two-week period. Classes were stopped frequently as errors were not tolerated. Heaven forbid, someone might make an error near the end of an exercise and it would all start again! Centre work usually started with port de bras; adages were long with many promenades in attitudes and arabesques; pirouette exercises and tendus en tournant, both en dehors and en dedans were used to maintain correct alignment and sustain turnout. Much class time was spent jumping, and usually ended with traveling enchainements or turns from the corner. It was often her difficult and sometimes deliberately awkward preparations that empowered the end result. Her combinations gave the dancer no place to hide - one simply could not cheat. The alignment was square, the turnout was absolutely equal and without torque, port de bras was unadorned - pure technique that could adapt to choreographers of every style.

Further reading: *Miss O: My Life in Dance* by Betty Oliphant ISBN 0-88801-210-1

Mabel Ryan

by Margaret Valentine

Mabel Ryan, a South African, born in Cape Town, she went overseas to study ballet. In the 1930s the Craske-Ryan School opened at 26 West Street, off Cambridge Circus, London, England. Both Margaret Craske and Mabel Ryan had been pupils of Cecchetti and were totally dedicated to his method and memory. The school became the world centre for the Cecchetti Method. Many famous dancers of the time, perform-

ing or residing in London attended the professional classes in the mornings that were taught by Margaret Craske, with Mabel Ryan often participating as a pupil. Miss Ryan taught the Intermediate and Elementary students, (now Adv. 1 & 2 or Inter. & Adv.) and the children's classes which were held twice a week. The personalities of the two great teachers complemented each other perfectly - Craske was admired, respected and loved by her students but many of us have admitted that we were rather overawed by her. Mabel Ryan was more emotional and outwardly affectionate. Miss Ryan's corrections were frequently prefaced by "Maestro used to say -". Though she expected hard work and improvement from her pupils, she knew when praise and encouragement were most needed and corrections were given with humour and kindness. One of her frequent remarks was "It is when I don't scream at you that you should worry", but she showed sincere interest and concern for all her pupils, and frequently gave extra help to those who needed it. South Africa gained a direct link with Mabel Ryan and Margaret Craske through Eileen Keegan. According to Miss Keegan, who was one of their South African pupils, Mabel Ryan was a wonderful person who not only saw to her pupils dance education but also to their welfare, particularly those far from home. Affectation and insincerity were frowned upon, and she considered that festivals encouraged these undesirable qualities, particularly in children. Miss Ryan went to Maher Bebar in India with Miss Craske in 1933 (ref. *Heroines of the Path* - Filis Frederick on Margaret Craske).

My first teaching experience was as her assistant in the children's classes and I shall never forget the tragic day that Miss Craske telephoned me to tell me that Mabel had died, and I must take the class on my own, and not to tell any of the other students. Her early death from cancer was a sad loss to ballet and particularly the Cecchetti method. Those of us who were privileged to be her pupils should be truly grateful to have known a great teacher and wonderful person.

Awards are held annually in her memory, in London since 1949, and expanded to include the Northern Awards in 1980. In South Africa, all Gr. V (Gr. VI) examination candidates who receive Honours (A) or Highly Commended (B) participate in the Mabel Ryan Award competition held in each of the main branches, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban and a winner is given the Mabel Ryan Award, which is a medal. In the smaller centres the examiner awards the Mabel Ryan medal on the strength of an outstanding examination.

Cecchetti Summer Courses, 2004

Chichester, UK by Daphne Cooper

The 49th, attended by delegates from the UK, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, S. Africa, Spain and USA. It was organised by Elisabeth Swan who gave a warm friendly welcome to everyone. She was never too busy to deal with any queries or problems that arose throughout the week.

The weather was unusually hot but the temperature did not diminish the energy of those attending anxious to dance in as many classes as possible. The entire vocational syllabus from Pre-Intermediate through to Enrico Cecchetti Diploma was covered during the week as well as the revisions to the children's grades. For these classes the faculty was Cara Drower, Susan Handy, Gillian Hurst, Gillian Robinson, Kate Simmons, Diane van Schoor and Elisabeth Swan. All these classes would not have been possible without the two excellent pianists, Derek Downes and Peter Jones, who lifted everyone's spirits throughout the day.

In addition there were also practical sessions on Health and Safety by Thoreya Swagge, Dance Injury Prevention by Jennie Morton, and a lively Flamenco class by Gillian Hurst. The week finished with a relaxed and enjoyable evening "Latin with Linda" taken with her usual bubbling enthusiasm by Linda Davies.

Las Vegas, Cecchetti Society Inc. USA

Guest teachers were Ross Alley, Kirk Peterson and Trinette Singleton, with over 150 attending. We had teachers classes and many teachers new to the method attended and are now interested in the method and organization.



Natalie and Marco – Las Vegas

Edmonton, Canada

Teachers and dancers came from across Canada, from British Columbia to Newfoundland. Guest teachers included Anita Young, Nancy and Murray Kilgour. Two students from Quebec City traveled for 55 hours on a bus each way. Although they would never do it again they said their week was very worthwhile. They particularly appreciated their good fortune to work with such wonderful teachers of international repute, their expert knowledge, professionalism, generosity of spirit and the considerate approach that was given to each student personally.

They also enjoyed the delicious lunches, which were so well prepared to meet dancers' needs. Other students' comments: The word "cool" literally means the absence of warmth. Have you ever noticed that the people who strive to be "cool" appear to care about nothing, and have little, if any, emotional response to anything? In the same manner, warmth is associated with passion – "They had a heated argument"; "She's a warm and caring person"; "It made me feel all warm and fuzzy inside"; "I'm burning with love/hate/rage/excitement." How lucky are we as dancers that, while the world tries desperately not to care about anything, there is a place we can go where emotion is not only allowed, it is applauded! Generally the world teaches us that emotion is dangerous and scary and causes vulnerability. I believe that this is true. But I also believe that the ability to show emotion makes people stronger, happier, and more aware and fulfilled. Because emotion is a scary place, dancers must be brave. There are levels of technical precision that can be at-



tained through athleticism alone, but once you add that key ingredient, it becomes what it was always meant to be – an art form. I have enormous respect for anyone who can muster the confidence to make herself vulnerable by caring. And how wonderful that we have a safe place to care! This summer I saw people take risks and receive applause regardless of the outcome. Shame on

anyone who brings the attitude of the world into the studio and points fingers that belittle passion! It takes confidence to take risks, and good for anyone who does. To not take advantage of this safe, encouraging environment is almost a crime. Having said all this, I have been so impressed by the passion and dedication shown this summer. Let's hold onto that and keep it alive and growing! *Danica Smith*. Anita showed us the simplicity yet elegance of classical ballet dancing in true harmony with music and rhythm. *Judy Chan*. I don't think I ever fully understood the art of dance. Anita taught us that dance isn't only movement of the body; it is a sensation within yourself that you feel for the music. Murray and Nancy Kilgour's style and technique also opened new doors for me. Their enthusiasm taught me to be more bold and outgoing in the presentation of movements in dance. *Katarina Stoochnoff*

News from Australia

The Cecchetti Society of Australia is fast approaching the end of its first year of independence having left the umbrella of the I.S.T.D. as of the 31st of December 2003. Independence was not the original intention of the Society but evolved over a period of eighteen months and eventually became the only option as their National Council was finding the payment of 50% of the subscriptions from the members to be a real financial burden. To remain within I.S.T.D. Australia would have had to sacrifice their new Grade syllabi and Australian government ac-

creditation, both of which have taken years to achieve and at great expense. Chairman Carole Hall says: "The word Independence now conjures up a wide spectrum of emotions for me from the initial apprehension of the uncharted waters we were about to enter to the excitement and anticipation in this the 70th year of the Cecchetti Society in Australia as we move into the next era, proud of the heritage we have inherited and determined to continue with confidence into the future."

News from USA

As of January, 2005 the Cecchetti Society Inc. USA will become an independent society. Over the last several years the many procedural changes and requirements placed upon them by the ISTD and the QCA have made the administration of the society and ISTD Cecchetti exams no longer viable in the United States. This decision was not made lightly and their Board intends to sustain an ongoing association with the ISTD as individual members, looking forward to continued professional relationships with their many colleagues around the world.

Malta – The End of an Era by Mary-Jane Duckworth



Sadly, after 65 years, the Tanya Bayona Princess Poutiatine Academy of Ballet in Sliema, Malta, has closed. The premises will become an Academy of English and Culture, and although the beautiful studio will still be retained, regretfully, it will no longer be

the home of the Cecchetti Method of teaching classical ballet. The first ballet school established in Sliema by Princess Poutiatine was the home of Russian Ballet and was where Tanya Bayona had her early training. In due course she took over the school and although it continued to support a wide variety of dance disciplines the main very strong emphasis has always been on classical ballet. In 1965 she introduced the Cecchetti Method of classical ballet training and has subsequently trained almost all of the current Principals of the

ten Cecchetti Method classical ballet schools which are now operating in Malta. Through her dedication and commitment the method has developed into one of the main ways of training ballet dancers in Malta and she must be justly proud of what she has achieved. All supporters of the Cecchetti Method owe her a great debt of gratitude for ensuring that it flourishes so strongly in Malta. We are very sad that she has decided it is time to retire but we wish her well in all her future activities.

A Note from Miss Tweedie O.A.M.

In 1952, Sydney born Valrene Tweedie returned to Australia after dancing for 12 years in North and South America with Col. De Basil's Ballet Russe, Serge Denham's Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and Ballet National de Cuba. She was appointed choreographer and principal dancer of Melbourne based National Theatre Ballet Co. in 1953. During this time she was persuaded by Madam Saronova and Jean Alexander to join the Cecchetti Society. Valrene opened her Sydney studio in 1956 and taught there for 29 years. Also during these years she choreographed variety shows and classical ballet programmes for ABC television, founded Ballet Australia to promote Australian choreographers, became a Fellow and Major Examiner of the Cecchetti Society and was occasionally guest teacher for both the Australian Ballet and Sydney Dance Co. In 1990 Valrene retired from teaching, but not from Dance. In 2001, Valrene performed again with the Australian Ballet in Stephen Baynes new ballet Requiem.

As we enter our year of independence, so aptly named by our National Chairperson Carole Hall, I would like to express my thought on the Cecchetti method with which I have been associated for 68 years, as I did my first exam in 1938.

For me, two words describe the Cecchetti quality. They are PURE and SIMPLE. The whole beauty of the work lies in simple, unaffected NATURAL style and pure clean line.

This is not easy to achieve. It demands constant work and dedication. One must eliminate any unnecessary movement and be on guard always for anything which breaks the line, even one little finger. To achieve this both the teacher and pupil must have "The Eye". In other words, be able to see that a head is too far turned, or tilted or not turned or tilted enough. I have observed over my many years with the Cecchetti Society and its examinations, that it is easy to learn the steps, sequences and counts but very difficult to achieve the correct qualities required of a truly good dancer. And that really has nothing to do with how high the legs can be lifted nor how many turns can be achieved.

In the striving for this pure, clean beautiful line and quality we have one big enemy. This becomes very apparent in our examinations and I feel sure that many examiners will agree with me.

What is this monstrous enemy, which destroys what could be good beautiful work? It is exaggeration.

Over 50 years I have watched the beauty of our method often spoilt by exaggeration of the headlines, body lines and finger lines. Also we all agree that a flat dead expression is unattractive, but a flowery, over affected false expression is equally unattractive. We must "to our own self be true". Our expression must be sincere, not painted on like a mask. Are we mesmerized by the high leg and forceful attack so much that we miss the beauty of the subtle, natural and unaffected?

Barre work is the simple preparation of the body so that our line, balance and control will be there for us when we commence our centre work. There we work through movements to perfect this line, balance and control, so that very difficult movements can be executed with ease. Only then can we consider interpretation and the expressive qualities of classical dance.

Why then do I see, so often, the complete range of emotion in a simple combination of plies and port de bras at the commencement of class. It is like looking at four acts of Swan Lake condensed into five minutes and quite unnecessary.

Why do we see so many broken wrists, dropped elbows and either pokey fingers or flat dead ones? Are our eyes missing these details in our effort to jump higher, turn more or lift the legs higher? Or perhaps we are selfishly enjoying ourselves dancing and ignoring the beauty of pure line and natural movement.

Because the Cecchetti method is, or I believe should be, pure, simple and unaffected, it is a method which should produce dancers capable of adapting easily to any style of dance.

Diaghilev discovered this in the early 20th century when he found Cecchetti was the best teacher for his company because his choreographers, Fokine, Nijinsky, Massine, Bronislava, Nijinska, Balanchine and Lifar were producing new and different works at the same time as his company excelled in the classics such as Les Sylphides, Sleeping Beauty etc.

However, classical ballet is a theatrical art and we must remember we dance not for ourselves but for others, our audience, without whom classical ballet cannot exist. By all means let us advance with the times and keep up with the rest of the world but let us never forget or forsake our heritage.

To close, might I add that it is my firm belief that these principles apply to good dancing no matter what style, method, period or place.

CECCHETTI SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA INC. GOLD MERIT AWARD 2004

The Grade Panel members were the much deserving recipients of the 2004 Gold Merit Award, with the following letter from Mr Carse read immediately before the presentation.

During all the drama of leaving the Imperial Society and adopting new ways to teach the work for the children, very few of us have considered the intense work and effort put into this new syllabus during the past five years. Nobody likes change, no matter how necessary it is, and criticism comes far more rapidly than appreciation before we see the final impressive outcome. Most of us simply waited to find out what was next, never really considering what had been involved in creating it.

Compiling a syllabus that provides sound training and still develops from level to level, both in style and content, keeping in mind the needs of the later student, is complicated and requires complex thought and planning. The ladies involved met repeatedly during the years to decide on the content and the reasons for it, sort out suitable music with the pianists and then teach the work to the rest of us. It took a great deal of time, thought and effort that I doubt anyone else has considered. And how many of us would contemplate giving up so much personal time and energy for our peers? This new work is likely to affect us all for some years to come and these ladies deserve to be congratulated for their unselfish energy, their forethought regarding the work and their patience in devising developments in the steps and combinations.

Our congratulations and admiration must go to Ms. Sandra Allen, Sandra Clack, Carole Hall, Diane Pokorny and Valerie Jenkins who have worked so tirelessly to create both practical and stimulating syllabus work for the Australian Cecchetti Society. It is due to their careful planning and efforts that this new syllabus has provided us with such an excellent means of teaching for the years to come.

- William Carse



photo by Wendy Cliff

FROM WHERE I SIT – WORKING WITH A NEW PIANIST by Ross Alley

How many of you have ever received any training in developing an effective working relationship with a dance accompanist? Is it hit and miss or do you know the shortcuts? Is it productive and progressive or static and unsatisfying? In this article I should like to tell you some of the observations I have made over the years from where I sit.

Most ballet pianists begin by playing for children's syllabus classes – the music is provided and generally not too difficult to play – my own first experience was no different. I struck my first chord as an accompanist for a ballet class as a first year university student. I remember I was seated at the piano, knuckles clenched tightly around the handles of the stool, with my palms growing moister by the minute as the ominous moment approached when I would be 'on my own' for the three and three-quarter hour schedule of classes that day.

What was the cause for this irrational fear? I had observed these four classes the previous week and had had seven days to familiarise myself with the syllabus music – ample time, given the nature of the music. Well, there were two aspects of the work for which I felt unprepared. First, I had always been very shy about playing in front of other people – now even a class of seven year old girls seemed threatening – and secondly, it was the rhythmic aspect of the job which worried me. How was I to find the right tempo for each of the numerous exercises? How was I to keep it rhythmically steady, even though it may be a tempo which felt 'wrong' to me musically? What if my fingers misbehaved and I slithered to a halt; I had been warned repeatedly by a colleague that above all else, I must keep the rhythm going.

Is it possible, I hear you ask, that playing for a dance class might be so daunting an experience? Naturally, I cannot speak for any of my colleagues but only relate to you my personal experiences. What is absolutely true is that nothing in any aspect of my training had remotely prepared me for the task ahead of me. I felt like a fish out of water.

What is the problem?

The first important point I wish to draw your attention to is that a pianist's training concentrates traditionally on the acquisition of a sound keyboard technique, according to time-honoured methods, coupled with the development of an artistic sensitivity to the stylistic characteristics of music in the historical piano repertoire, particularly that of the 18th and 19th centuries. This means Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin and Schumann etc.; it does not generally embrace the study of ballroom dance rhythms such as waltzes, polkas and galops. Yet it is exactly this latter type of music that is eminently suitable as rhythmic accompaniment to the classical ballet technique and the simplicity of the music itself often deceives many pianists into thinking that there is nothing more to it; they cheerfully play it all in quite the wrong style. Would you know how to go about adjusting this?

Where to begin?

As I was inheriting the job from an experienced pianist, I was fortunate in having someone to help prepare me which was a great relief for the teacher. On the other hand, I imagine many of you have had to train the pianist yourself which is not always easy with a busy schedule of classes. What do you say to an inexperienced pianist in the limited time available? For me, the question of tempo was of major importance. If you are an orchestral player, you must play at the tempo set by the conductor. If you are a pianist, and have had no experience at accompanying or playing in chamber music, then the selection of a tempo has always been very personal. However, we have all experienced community singing and if you ask the pianist to think of themselves as a member of a choir (or orchestra) with you as the conductor, then perhaps they will understand the necessity of everyone working together. What is also extremely important for the new pianist to realise is that they must maintain a constant tempo during an exercise (unless otherwise specified). This brings up another point which sometimes confuses pianists: that for the set exercises there is no single tempo irrevocably locked into a metronome marking. You will need to explain that the tempo may need to be slightly faster or slower as you feel necessary. I have played for over 250 teachers and know that there is no such thing as an ideal tempo for pliés (or any other exercise). In every lesson, you must set the tempo clearly – not the whole exercise, four to eight bars should be sufficient.

Dancers counts versus musical counts

Another area for confusion is in the different ways dancers and musicians count the music. This discrepancy has arisen because trained musicians learn music through reading a noted score whereas dancers respond to what they hear. Both methods have advantages and disadvantages: the musician may be inclined to concentrate more on the interior detail (the visual division into bars) whilst the dancer is attuned to the exterior (the aural separation into phrases). These differing perspectives can lead to a variety of misunderstandings. Yes, the number of beats in the bar is important but, as the distinguished conductor Sir Thomas Beecham was fond of saying, "Remember that the bars are just the boxes in which music is packed. Phrasing is all!" A bar of 4/4 may contain four crotchet (or

quarter note) beats, and there are a few pieces like Chopin's Chord Prelude which are definitely counted 4 beats to the bar, but generally, only the first and third beats are accented. Therefore, the dance teacher's counting of the bar as "1 and 2 and" is perfectly legitimate. There are even pieces of music in 4/4 where there is a feeling of only 1 count to a bar, but these are quite rare.

Getting to know you

It goes without saying that you will introduce your new pianist to the class (and by the name which they prefer). The old-fashioned discipline and politeness of the ballet class is one of its greatest charms and I think all pianists are absolutely flabbergasted when, at the end of their first class, the students curtsy to them. It is also encouraging for a pianist to feel that they can contribute in more ways than just providing a rhythmic support. I remember the shock I felt when one day, after a few months of playing, the teacher suddenly said "Ross is helping you girls." As I was not doing any such thing consciously, I was dumbfounded by this remark, but obviously my sensitivity to the movement of the dancers was beginning to strengthen.

Discovering exactly what it was that I was doing proved to be and still is fascinating. It is now over thirty years since those first tentative experiences in dance accompaniment yet just this year, at the Cecchetti Society of America's Summer Course in Las Vegas, an intriguing question in the teacher's classes led to the formulation of a completely new concept in using musical counts for pliés which has stunned me. It is revolutionary and thus may prove extremely controversial but I am convinced of its musical 'rightness'. However you'll have to wait to hear about that in a further article.

FIVE TIPS FOR NEW PIANISTS

(FOR SYLLABUS CLASSES)

- 1 Listen carefully to the tempo as the teacher sets the exercise.
- 2 Try to maintain the same tempo throughout – you are not giving a concert.
- 3 Watch the dancers as often as you can.
- 4 Keep your foot off the sustaining pedal during the light 2/4s and 6/8s.
- 5 Do not practise the next piece between exercises; teachers find this very irritating.

FIVE TIPS FOR TEACHERS

(WORKING WITH A NEW PIANIST IN A SYLLABUS CLASS)

- 1 Mark the exercise at the exact tempo required.
- 2 Use your voice to convey the quality and dynamics.
- 3 Explain how you will start the music.
- 4 To adjust the tempo, say 'faster' or 'slower', rather than 'too fast' or 'too slow'.
- 5 Try not to talk continuously over the music; it makes our role pointless.

FIVE SOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL MUSIC

- 1 Strauss family (waltzes, polkas, galops etc.)
- 2 Schubert dances (waltzes and écossaïses)
- 3 Chopin (waltzes and nocturnes)
- 4 19th century opera scores
- 5 19th century salon music

FIVE PLACES TO FIND A NEW PIANIST

- 1 Put up a notice at any local college/university.
- 2 Contact a private music teacher who may have a suitable student.
- 3 Contact the head of music at a local secondary school.
- 4 Include a note with the invoices to the parents.
- 5 Advertise – supermarket, music store, community board.

RESOURCES

<http://www.dancebooks.co.uk/homePage.asp> - Dance Books
www.dancelog.com - a web site focusing on the Canadian dance scene with news and resources
www.ribernet.es/gdpmusic - see music below
www.dancecollectiondanse.on.ca/dancecol
<http://physics.dickinson.edu/physicsdance> see book below

Videos:

1. Ballet Floor Barre - A warm up and conditioning programme by Nicole Vass
2. Maria Fay's Floor Barre - 3 sample classes including 70 exercises and enchainements demonstrated by Christina Beskou

Music for Ballet Class - Graham Dickson-Place 2004-2005, new DVD, CDs & Sheet Music
Avda de Trueba 5-H-5º-B, 28017 Madrid, Spain Tel./Fax.+34 91 377 5547 or 34 91 234 9187 email gdpmusic@ribernet.es

Physics and the Art of Dance, Oxford Univ. Press, 2002 by Kenneth Laws

Scheduled for release in 2006, **Betty Oliphant: The Artistry of Teaching** compiled and edited by Nadia Potts, DanceForms illustrations by Rhonda Ryman, published by Dance Collection Danse Press/es. It will be the first in a series of manuals that cover the range of Oliphant's 60-year career as a teacher renowned for training some of the world's most remarkable dancers. Nadia Potts has spent the last five years working with Betty to record her unique approach to ballet training. The collection of Oliphant's classes, will include descriptions of exercises supplemented by her views on the influence of Enrico Cecchetti, Class Structure and Preparation, Dance Examinations, Auditioning Students, and many more of her observations and teaching concepts. Peppared with captivating photographs of Oliphant's years at the esteemed National Ballet School, the book will provide a DanceForms figure to illustrate the exercises.

MY WHITE LODGE EXPERIENCE

by Angelique Harris (age 12) South Africa August 2004

For quite some time I have been watching videos from my teacher of productions of The Royal Ballet. When my teacher suggested I apply for the 2004 Royal Ballet School Summer School I was very excited. It seemed like forever before the reply letter from London arrived. Like a dream come true, the letter told me I had been accepted. Two nights before we left for London I was scared out of my wits that I was going to look foolish. My teacher helped me through this and told me to be an ambassador for my country by performing everything I had been taught to the best of my ability. The flight was extremely long but enjoyable and my one day sight-seeing was way too short.

I took a taxi from the inn at which I was staying to White Lodge in Richmond Park. Driving through the park I saw hundreds of red and fallow deer under the huge trees, just before the school's entrance. I sat on my luggage and watched shyly whilst all the other dancers arrived. They all seemed so confident, many of them had friends with them whilst many of them seemed to have been before and knew one another. After registration, we went up to our dorms and I met my room-mates, three from Italy, one from Greece and Adele Pope from England.

In the two week period we took ballet and pointe work classes with Ms. Harvey, Ms. Dobsyn, Ms. Sadie, Ms. Dumont, Ms. Vere and Mr. Jolley. We also did contemporary with Ms. King and Mr. Tharp. Aqua dance was taken by Carmen. Repertoire was conducted by Ms. Vere

and Ms. Dobsyn and character was taught by Ms. Fairbairn.

Every morning after breakfast we started the day off with an hour and a half ballet class. We then had a half an hour break followed by another hour and a half class. Our lunch break was followed by three one hour classes with fifteen minute breaks in between. There were morning and evening meetings to discuss schedules. Our evenings were great fun, filled with activities and socializing. We needed this as the dance classes were normally intense!

Our outings included an evening to Sadler's Wells Theatre to watch "Singing in the Rain" (with Adam Cooper), Greenwich Village and Kingston. The theatre was magnificent! At Kingston I stuffed my very own teddy bear and at Greenwich Village we stood on the meridian line.

A talent show was organized and on the "final day display" my Diamond Group performed pointe work, contemporary, jazz, character and for repertoire we danced cygnets from "Swan Lake" and the adage and waltz from "La Bayadere"

During the two weeks we worked hard, played hard, made wonderful new friends, worked with fabulous teachers and had the most unforgettable time ever.

The best part of all is that I will be attending school at White Lodge as a full time student in the near future and am most grateful for this rare opportunity and the special people who have made it possible.

C.C.A. Offers College Credit

by Ann Parsley

For those seeking academic achievement, the Cecchetti Council of America now offers college credit for their International Summer School's Teacher Seminar. The CCA, which holds its seminar on the campus of Hope College, has partnered with Hope so that a participant who registers for the college credits can receive one credit for academic study and/or one credit for the study of technique. The academic study consists of intense research and training in body placement, active and passive turnout, and causes of injuries in dancers. For the credit in technique, the candidate is observed partaking of the classes in the Teachers' Seminar and receives a ballet assessment that considers alignment, traveling and transitional movements, applied core strength, and artistry, including focus, musicality, expression, phrasing, texture and dynamics. The course finishes with a final meeting, not a test. The candidate receives an assessment portfolio that can be referred to and added to as the years go on. Jackie Pederson Kriens, who holds the CCA Advanced Teachers Certificate and a BA in Elementary Education and Special Education took the course to transfer to Augustana College where her 2 credits will be applied to her continuing education credits which are required to maintain her teacher certification in South Dakota. According to Jackie, "It was all very valuable as it pertained to what I do in my dance studio. The required projects and resulting handouts will be beneficial to everyone at my studio."

Hope College, Dance Dept. Chair Maxine DeBruyn, who leads the academic portion of the intensive, says that this course enhances the CCA study. "Examinations in ballet are a culmination of study. Our assessment is an ongoing process that can continue to evolve year after year. They compliment one another." For more information call the CCA office at 734.379.6710 or visit the CCA website at www.Cecchetti.org

Syllabus Revisions

Australia

The new Grades are completed and in use.

Canada

Revised Standards Primary - St. 3 are in use. Sts. 4 - 6 are being introduced this year.

CCA

The new Grade IV syllabus was presented at the 2004 CCA teachers' course, the new CD was recorded by Nina Pinzarrone. The CCA is also currently recording a new CD for the revised pre-gr. 1.

In addition to the yearly examiner meetings held at the CCA National Seminar, the CCA will hold an intensive 3 day examiners' meeting in the fall of 2004. All examiners will come to the Detroit area to discuss syllabus, continuing education, exam evaluations, and examiner training.

UK

Revised children's grades were presented at Summer School.

Physics Goes to my Head

by Kenneth Laws Prof. Emeritus of Physics, Dickinson College laws@dickinson.edu <http://physics.dickinson.edu/physicsofdance>

Imagine this interchange in a ballet class with a group of students striving to improve their technique:

Teacher: Come on, Robert, you can get that fourth turn in your pirouette!

Robert: I'm trying, but I just can't quite get around for that last turn.

Teacher: Try this: When you feel yourself slowing to a stop, just whip your head around and spot one more time. Your body will follow, and you'll have your quadruple pirouette!

Robert: But why would that help? I don't understand.

Teacher: Just try it. Dancers have been doing that for 200 years, and you've seen lots of quadruple pirouettes.

Robert: But I can't figure out why it should work! I want to know why!

Teacher: Don't you trust me as your teacher?

Robert tries to spot his head one more time. He does get his head around to the side after his third rotation, but his torso is facing upstage, and the ending is not what one would want to see on stage!

Robert: See? I don't understand why it should work, so it doesn't work for me!

Teacher: Jennifer, you do pirouettes of four turns and more, and I notice you shaking your head. Do you think you have an answer for Robert?

Jennifer: Well here's what I learned in my physics class. My body has a certain rotational momentum, which gradually decreases because of friction between my shoe and the floor. Now if I complete three turns of my pirouette, and would only get around another half turn, then what would happen if I spot one more time? I would be using that remaining rotational momentum to make my head turn once more, which would leave the torso and the rest of my body having rotated less than it would have if I hadn't spotted that one more time. So spotting the head an additional time should prevent me from squeezing out that extra turn of my torso, not help!

Teacher: I have no idea what you are talking about. This is ballet, not physics! You don't think about it, you just do it!

This interchange is perhaps an exaggeration of the sort of questioning we hear more and more from dancers. In the tradition of classical ballet, students learn by applying the teacher's instructions, by trial and error, and by copying others – not so much by physical analysis. Teachers are now being challenged to prepare themselves for the “Roberts” we increasingly find in our classes (both ballet and physics classes). The teacher's final exasperated comment is understandable in the circumstances of a class being delayed by one assertive student's questioning. But can we find better ways of responding to dancers' queries?

What evidence is there that dancers, even young ones, are becoming more interested in the principles behind human body movement rather than purely the “do it this way” approach? And can they understand those principles?

Two years ago I offered a series of physics-based ballet classes at the Summer Program of the Central Pa. Youth Ballet. It started with an optional extra evening class that overlapped other classes, including partnering. I was hoping there were a few particularly science-oriented students who might be available and choose to show up. I was astonished when 94 dancers came to learn about the application of physics to ballet!

My experience with young people leads me to believe that they are more adept at understanding physical principles than we give them credit for, particularly if the emphasis is on the concepts, not the math.

Once I was watching some young people in the science museum at Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts in Harrisburg, PA. One visitor was playing with a hands-on exhibit entitled



“Why we have kneecaps.” She was pulling one rope and then the other. The ropes were attached to a model of a lower leg poised to kick; one rope pulled close to the axis of rotation of the leg around the knee joint, and the other was attached farther from that pivot axis. I chatted with the visitor for a short time, mentioning the connection between the reason we have kneecaps and the reason we open a door by pushing near the outer edge, not near the hinge. She looked at me with a puzzled look, followed by that exuberant glow of insight and comprehension. “Oh!” she said. “Then if we broke our kneecap it would be harder to straighten our leg! I can't wait to tell my parents!” She started to run off. “Wait a second. How old are you?” “I'm seven!” I stood there for a moment, marveling at the capacity of a child that young to grasp a significant physical concept, as she obviously had.

We know that dancers tend to be intelligent,

disciplined, analytical, and experimental, and are motivated to absorb any knowledge they think will help them improve their technique. They are therefore ripe for absorbing some basic physics, particularly if we catch them before they have “learned” from their elders that science is to be feared! And if we can demonstrate that understanding those principles helps them learn dance technique, then they are willing to jump in and engage their minds fully.

So what is happening in that pirouette? How should one help a dancer achieve the fourth turn? That analysis involves the total rotational momentum of the turning dancer, which depends on the rate of turn and on how the mass of the body is distributed relative to the vertical rotation axis. The initial momentum depends on the torque, or twisting force, and on the length of time the torque acts. A larger torque results from larger horizontal forces between the feet and the floor that produce the rotational motion. It is also larger if the feet are farther apart in preparatory position. The total acquired momentum is larger also if some of the momentum is stored in the arms if they start rotating before the push-off foot has left the floor, thereby extending the duration of the torque. (The same principle applies if some momentum is stored in the *degagé* leg for an *en dedans* pirouette.) After the turning motion is established, the slowing starts, rapidly for a sticky floor.

What determines the rate of turn once the rotational momentum is determined? That involves the ice skater effect: The closer the mass of the body is to the axis of rotation, the greater is the rate of turn for a particular amount of rotational momentum.

Aha! Perhaps that is one way Jennifer accomplishes her four or more turns in her pirouettes. If the arms are brought closer to the axis of rotation, ei-

ther in toward the body or overhead, then the rate of rotation can be maintained, or even increased, while the rotational momentum is being lost to friction with the floor. That additional turn will happen, as long as the dancer maintains balance.

Are there other ways of getting the extra turn? One clear technique is to exert a greater torque with the feet against the floor, either through greater horizontal forces exerted by the feet, or by using a wider preparation position. One can extend the duration of the torque by storing the momentum in rotatable parts of the body while the feet are still able to exert their forces.

But what about that spotting of the head? Does that really make it more difficult to squeeze out the extra turn? At this point some quantitative information is useful to tell us what proportion of the total rotational momentum resides in the head. That calculation, based on data about body segment masses found in the appendices of

Physics and the Art of Dance (Laws)¹, shows that the head rotating with the rest of the body in pirouette position carries about 2% of the total momentum. So when it rotates at perhaps three times the rate of the rest of the body during spotting, it is absorbing about 6% of the total rotational momentum, leaving the torso and the rest of the body with the remaining 94%.

Is that 6% a significant quantity? It's marginal. I suspect some sensitive dancers do sense that small difference.

We have been looking at the physical situation. Psychology is also important, and there might be some feeling that, if the torso is turning toward the direction the head is facing (after spotting), it is more comfortable and easier to maintain balance than if the torso is turning away from the head just before spotting that extra time.

So how do we respond to the teacher's approach in the interchange at the beginning? Clearly the best teachers are the ones who have both the experience that tells them what works even if it is not easily understandable or explainable, and the physical understanding that can be so effective in improving technique. Dancers are increasingly craving the second approach, so we need to prepare ourselves. Perhaps Jennifer will be one of those well-prepared teachers of the future!

¹Laws, Kenneth, *Physics and the Art of Dance*, Oxford Univ. Press, 2002.

Extract from Considering Style

a personal analysis by Diane van Schoor written for CCA

.... As for the relevance and continuance of the Cecchetti Method as a method of training in the 21st Century, it undoubtedly has much to offer, but needs to adopt a modern-day approach to imparting of the work. It is very relevant as a study and training for those adagio and allegro movements which are derived from the Romantic era and contained in the Romantic ballets and I believe that we should 'preserve' this specific tradition in our training for this purpose.

The remainder of the material I see as a compilation of an entire dance vocabulary which is as relevant today as it was in the 19th century, provided that it observes the changes and challenges in choreography today and grooms the future generation of dancers to be able to produce the requirements which companies and choreographers now desire.

The Cecchetti Method does not fall short of the necessary ingredients. On the contrary, it is all there. The work provides an overall and comprehensive technical and physical training and can well be translated into the essential needs of today's dancer when considering anatomical, neuro-muscular, cardio-vascular, proprioceptive, musical and theatrical

education. However, it is indeed unfortunate that the work is still considered to the 'period' and this should be addressed particularly from a physical and from a stylistic point of view.

It is best analysed thus: Professional companies still perform 'Giselle' and the two 'Sylphides' works, all of Romantic style, but within the same season or on the same bill, could also perform Balanchine, Neo-classical works and new choreographies which rely more and more on contemporary movement, acrobatic elements and works which show differing styles and techniques. This is the message that Cecchetti organizations should now try to convey – that the Method is versatile and that the Romantic period represents only one of the styles we are able to produce. As so many of the enchainements are extracted from many works other than those mentioned above, we need to 'see' the contrast and read the relevance – striving to retain the style of the period works, but at the same time developing the classical principles upon which the Method is based to produce more lithe, energetic and physically viable dancers for the future, remembering that dancers today are seen as 'Athletes of the Theatre'.

Ballet Principal, Royal Ballet School, White Lodge, U.K.

by Gail Myburgh, August 2004

South Africa is proud to congratulate Ms. Diane van Schoor on her appointment as Ballet Principal of the Royal Ballet School, White Lodge, U.K. Following a meritorious early ballet training in Cape Town, South Africa, under the mentorship of Ms. Jennifer Louw, Ms. van Schoor graduated with honours in both the Cecchetti method, Advanced II and the coveted Maestro Enrico Cecchetti Diploma examinations. Professionally engaged by the CAPAB Ballet Company for several years, she acquitted herself performing a wide international repertoire culminating with principal roles. After her retirement from the stage, Ms. van Schoor opened her own school of Classical Ballet, where for twenty-three years, she trained and coached students and prospective teachers to achieve successful recognition in examinations and awards.

Whilst resident in South Africa, Ms. van Schoor was a pro-active member of the Council of Management of the Cecchetti Society of Southern Africa for fifteen years. She was elected to the position of Artistic Director in 1995 and held office until her resignation to accept an invitation to join the Royal Ballet School staff in the United Kingdom, where she worked in both the lower and upper schools. At this time, Ms. van Schoor was presented with the South African Dedication Award for her notable and magnanimous contribution to ballet in South Africa.

Fellow of the Imperial Society of Teachers

of Dancing, London, (Cecchetti Society Faculty), Ms. van Schoor currently serves as a respected international examiner, in which capacity she has presided at Amateur, Vocational, Professional and Status examinations for many years.

As a lecturer, educator and international master teacher of Classical Ballet, she travels extensively, guesting frequently at vocational institutions, professional companies, dance society workshops and summer school training programmes.

A literary ability resulted in Ms. van Schoor's appointment as consultant during the publication process of the "Ryman's Dictionary of Classical Ballet Terms, Cecchetti". She was editor of the Cecchetti Society of Southern Africa's newsletter magazine for approximately eleven years.

Ms. van Schoor is an Honorary committee member of the Wayne State University for Fine and Performing Arts and an advisory panel member for the Margaret Saul Scholarship, Canada. Created an Honorary Life Member of the Cecchetti Council of America in 2004, she has also recently been appointed Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

Friends, colleagues, examiners and council members of the Cecchetti Society of Southern Africa extend best wishes to Ms. Diane van Schoor for a happy and fulfilling tenure in her new position.

The Lucie Saronova Memorial Award 2004

Presented by The Cecchetti Society of Australia Inc.

Shore College, NSW, Friday, July 9th 2004
Sponsored by Energetiks

Adjudicators: Lucette Aldous and Robert Olup rehearsal director, Miss Valrene Tweedie.

Silver Medal

11 competitors from NSW, Queensland, S. Australia, W. Australia, Victoria and Northern Territory. Winner Imogen Chapman – WA
Runner up Alessia Delvecchio – WA
Honourable Mention Kirsty Corea – VIC

Gold Medal

9 competitors from NSW, Queensland, W. Australia, Victoria and S. Australia
Winner Sarah Williams - NSW Runner up Chelsea Portelli – VIC
Honourable Mention Francis Lawrence VIC

2004 Gold and Silver Winners and Runner ups with Miss Lucette Aldous and Mr Robert Olup. photo by Wendy Cliff

LIST OF MAESTRO CECCHETTI DIPLOMA HOLDERS

Australia

Sandra Allan 1978
 Mia Ballenden 2004
 Natalie Blenheim 2004
 Kathleen Butler
 Jane Cameron
 Sandra Clack
 Denise Coghill
 Michela Dent-Causon 1996
 Rita Eicens 1982
 Meryle Elliott
 Caroline Ettienne 1994
 Jane Farrelly
 Peter Faux 1995
 Monique Feain 2004
 Denise Fisher 2000
 Andrzej Godles 2004
 Carole Hall 1992
 Janice Heale 1996
 Val Jenkins 1992
 Shirley Jones
 Rhyl Kennell 1977
 Annette Langham 2000
 Jane Moran 2004
 Diane Pokorny 1987
 Fiona Porteous
 Andrew Pronger
 Shelley Rae-Aris 1984
 Robyn Ross 1991
 Cherill Rowston 1978
 Edmond Stripe 1991
 Toivo Taves
 Valrene Tweedie
 Athol Willoughby

Canada

Terri-Lynne Banfield 2000
 Amy Blake 1995
 Rosalie Brake 1987
 Christina Burrows 2004
 Evelyn Finlayson 1997
 Jean Geddis-Zetterburg .. 1987
 Sheila Kennedy 1981
 Gilian Kilgour 1978
 Nancy Kilgour 1965
 Jannette Lindley 1997
 Peter Moir 1996
 Suzanne Plante-Hobbs ... 1991
 Christine Richardson 1987
 Joyce Shietze 1996

Jean Spear 1981
 Shirley Tetreau 1987
 Heidi Zolty 1995

Cecchetti Council of America

Betty Bandyk
 Lisbeth Brown 2000
 Terri Butkovich 2004
 Linda Butler 1978
 Gail Choate-Pettit 2000
 Kathy Cooke 2003
 Aleta Davis 1978
 Rose Marie Floyd 1972
 Suzanne Gray-Granger (A)
 Cathy Jones 2000
 Lee Ann King 1997
 Laurie Krasnicki 1997
 Laura McCarthy 2000
 Julie Merkle 1997
 Pamela Moore 1977
 Ann Parsley 1997
 Tomi Sue Pollock 1991
 Marjorie Randazzo 1989
 Pamela Rutledge 1997
 Elaine McHale Seidman 2000
 June Smith 1997
 Patricia Suto 1991
 Kathleen Tenniswood ... 2004
 Kimmary Williams Rice 1983

Cecchetti Society USA Inc.

Greg Bomke 1998
 Susan Brooker 1989
 Louanne Davies
 Marnell Himes 1981
 Raymond Lukens 1989
 Betty Seibert 1988
 Janice Smith 1995
 Raymond Smith 1996
 Deborah Vinton 1995
 Franco De Vita 1992
 Heidi Wright 1996

Italy

Rita Gramigni
 Brenda Hamlyn
 Claudia Mazzini
 Leonarda Raimondi
 Evelina Ricci
 Gillian Whittingham

Southern Africa

Yvonne Barker 1974

Jeanette Barlow 1970
 Diane Baumann 1985
 Gillain Behr 1984
 Shannon van der Berg
 Beth Caballero 1999
 Joy Cooper 1975
 Patricia Durham 1973
 Diane Elsworth
 Mervynne Fernie
 Lynne Fouché 1970
 Alison Hazel 1988
 Jennifer Klipfel 1994
 Karen Koen-Jooste 1999
 Daphne Kruger 1971
 Barbara Lewis 1971
 Suzette van der Linde 1976
 Timo Liston 2001
 Jennifer Louw 1998
 Nicolette Loxton 1990
 Gail Myburgh 1993
 Noleen Nicol 1991
 Lana Paladin 1978
 Susan Perry 1983
 Jose Pretorius 1963
 Joyce Rabinowitz 1971
 Graham Rees 1988
 Wendy Reinhardt 1985
 Diane van Schoor 1979
 Denise Schultze
 Pauline Shaw 1985
 Joy Shearer 1971
 Dudley Tomlinson
 Diana Ward 1970
 Lynne Wesson 1986

UK and Europe

Alison Allen
 Christine Axton
 Rosina Baker
 Tanya Bayona
 Brian Berscher
 Jacobus Johannes Blokdijk
 Greet Boterman
 Melanie Bull
 Victoria Chappell
 Lisa Christian
 Maureen Christie
 Diana Cremona
 Jacqueline Davenport
 Gillian Dawson

Alison Dos Santos
 Cara Drower
 Mary-Jane Duckworth
 Ronald Enblem
 Yukie Fujino
 Raquel Gaviria
 Richard Glasstone
 Heather Goltman
 Susan Handy
 Rachel Heywood
 Lynn Hollamby
 Elaine Hubbard
 Gillian Hurst
 Deborah Jellis
 Penny Kay
 Janet Kinson
 Jacqueline Langman
 Eve Leveaux
 Patricia Linton
 Jocelyn Mather
 Tracey Moss
 Thérèse Oswald
 Carolyn Parker
 Daphne Peterson
 Eve Pettinger
 Linda Pilkington
 Lucy Pohl
 Gustavo Beserra Quintans
 Gillian Robinson
 Penelope Robinson-Debatin
 Juan Sanchez
 Sofia Santiago
 Kate Simmons
 Richard Slaughter 2004
 Mary Stassinopoulos
 Elisabeth Swan
 Lynn Wallis
 Sarah Wells
 Ann Whitley
 Julie Wood
 Terry Wright

Please notify Cecchetti International Secretary, Carole Hall cdunstan@ozemail.com.au of any spelling errors, names missed or new Diploma holders to allow her to complete her records. Dates will be added as received