

APPENDIX C

INDICATIONS FOR FREEDOM OF INTERPRETATION

by

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

There has been general acknowledgement among practitioners of Labanotation and Kinetography that there are many inconsistent uses and meanings of the *ad libitum* sign both within each system and between each system. This workshop is intended as a presentation of existing meanings.

The basic terminology of KIN/LAB has come from the German language in which there is only one meaning for the term *ad libitum* - beliebig nach Belieben: as one chooses. This is the meaning used in KIN.

Laban took the *ad libitum* symbol from mathematics, where it is used as «ungefähr» (approximate, nearly). This is one of the meanings used in Labanotation.

The shortened English version, «ad lib.» introduces another meaning, «act extemporaneously.»

From the beginning of our systems more than one meaning has been given to one symbol. Its usage is spread too thinly with too many interpretations. As a discipline, ICKL may give any appropriate meaning to the *ad libitum* sign. What was once sufficed does not anymore. Like the thinking behind Motif Writing that has developed into a discipline, so *ad libing* has developed from its early usage to a complete means unto itself, as seen in contact improvisation.

2. DICTIONARY AND THESAURUS MEANINGS OF RELATED WORDS

- 2.1 Key Words: extemporaneous
improvise

ad libitum
approximately
similar
any
either
unspecified

2.2 There are many diverse meanings given to these words in the English language. Following is a list of sample meanings taken from Webster's Dictionary, Webster's Thesaurus, and The Oxford Companion to Music. Meanings that were conflicting or repetitive have been omitted (except for the word «similar».)

- 2.3 Extemporaneous: Marked by or as if by no previous thought.
 Performed without previous study or preparation.
 «ex» - out, «temp» - time
- Improvise Not planned.
- Ad libitum As one desires, as much as one pleases.
 Vary the strict structure.
 To include or omit part of.
- Approximately Nearly correct or exact.
 To be near to
- Similar Exactly corresponding
 Having characteristics in common.
 Having a general resemblance, not exactly the same.
 Comparable, related.

3.0 SUMMARY

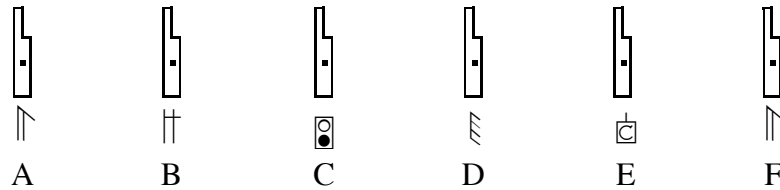
3.1 The sign } indicates the liberty or freedom to vary the given frame of movements or positions within the context.

The given frame of movement may be varied in three ways and these three ways are the three basic meanings of the *ad libitum* sign.

The basic meanings of the *ad libitum* sign are:

- a. Improvise as one chooses, as one desires, extemporize, movement may be in a prescribed style or not. Improvise may be on either known or unknown material

- b. Approximately; Approximately refers to movement or position that must already be known or understood
- c. Similar, comparable, somewhat alike, having a general resemblance to something already known.
 Similar must also refer to movement or position that is already known or understood.
 The interpretation often depends upon one's background; e.g., examples (B) - (F) may all be thought of as being similar to example (A).



- 3.3 Example (F) is identical to (A) but falls within the dictionary meaning of similar which is 'the same' or 'identical.' This is also the meaning given in Labanotation under Analogy Signs
- 3.4 Of the meanings from notation standard texts there are four which do not come under the key words (2.1) and these are;
- Perform in the simplest way
 - Natural movement should not be hindered
 - Abbreviation.
 - Continue in a like manner

READING SESSION ON *AD LIBITUM*

- 4.0 Opening thoughts on the symbol.
- 4.1 As notators we often come to movement that does not quite fit the meaning of the symbol and we add the *ad libitum* sign. However the reader does not know exactly how to interpret this combination of symbols nor does the reader know if the choreographer would accept the result. There has to be a boundary of interpretation.
- 4.2 We too often interpret the symbol the way we were taught. For example the *ad libitum* sign through a series of forward middle support symbols (or following) has been taught as - run pell - mell (Kin) or run freely forward. However if we were to take the meaning to be improvise, approximate or similar then we could, or would have to address everything that the symbol addresses, i.e. the body part,

direction and level, timing and quality. And what if the instructions given to the dancer was to improvise on all except level? Would we add the notation for – do not include?

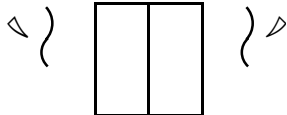
4.3 When teaching and writing I think that it is true to say that one searches for alternate words to describe what one is trying to get across. It adds variety, but without having checked the dictionary meaning of the words a different intention is unintentionally given as with *the ad libitum* sign. For example, the English meaning for pell-mell is - in a jumbled, confused manner. Frantic, disorderly, haste etc.

5.0 A section from *Ulysse* recorded in Kin by G. Reynaud in 1998 was read in which there were 6 different uses of the *ad libitum* sign. Following are comments on the six examples.

Ex.1 More or less 1/8 How does the reader know if it is more or if it is less? Does it matter? A plus or minus sign could be added.(Ray Cook)



Ex.2. *Ad lib* arm



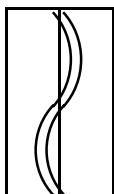
The *ad lib* sign could be read as «do anything» with the arms (RC)

You have to do movement that is similar to what has been written before. (Leslie Rotman)

With no previous exposure to style or choreography the reader not does know the boundaries of interpretation. (RC)

Often as notators we are writing process which the choreographer may not want as the final result.(Mary Corey)

Ex. 3.



We must revisit the meaning of the wavy line which does not mean *ad lib*. (Ann Hutchinson)

Ex. 4. *Ad lib* timing



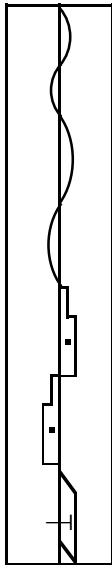
We need to distinguish between the *ad lib* symbol and symbols derived from the *ad lib* symbol. Here the *ad lib* is for timing but in Ex. 6 it is for something else. (Tom Brown)

Ex. 5.



This brought forth no comments as it was unknown to L/N people.

Ex. 6.



This is a case where we go back to class thinking and do what we were taught. There is nothing there that says not to include the turn. Current practice is to use a dotted horizontal line to isolate the movement to be acted upon. (RC)

This means continue in the same manner (Billie Mahoney)

It has reference to the number of steps. (Marion Bastien)

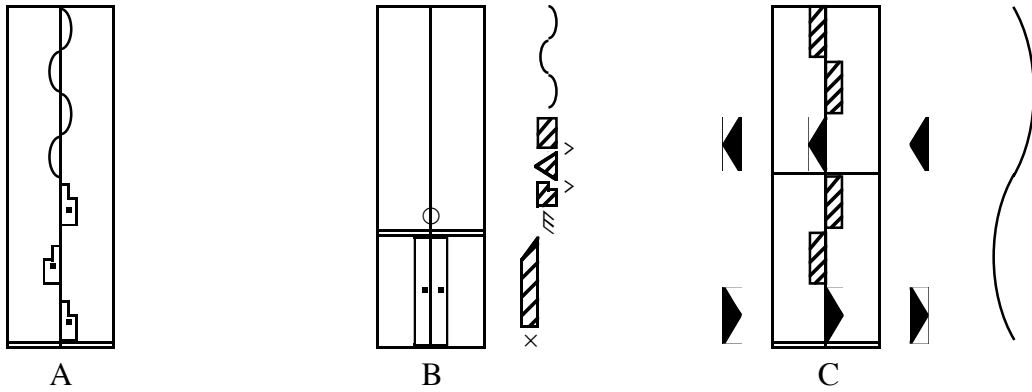
It's a convention that is not written anywhere. As a writer you want to write what will be easily read. (MC)

When we were performing «Ulysses» some people were on the beat. The *ad lib* symbol as shown here means do not be aware of the beat unless it is written differently. (AH)

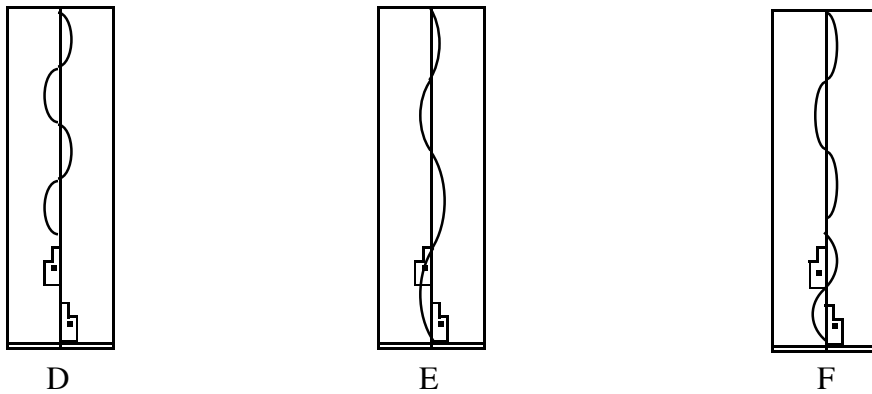
If you want previous steps to be in free timing, draw *the ad lib* sign through the symbols. (BM)

We are talking about and putting two different ideas together – pattern of feet and timing. (Tina Curran)

6.0 The following examples were put on the board for discussion.

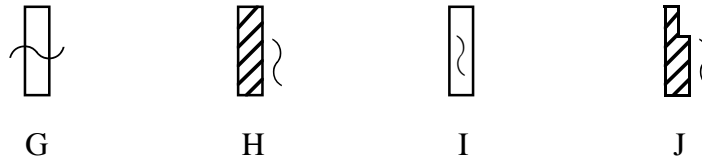


- A. In the support column the *ad lib* means – run freely forward.
- B. In the arm column the *ad lib* means continuous arm movement of this kind.
- C. Out side of the staff the *ad lib* means freedom to improvise in this same general vein of movement.



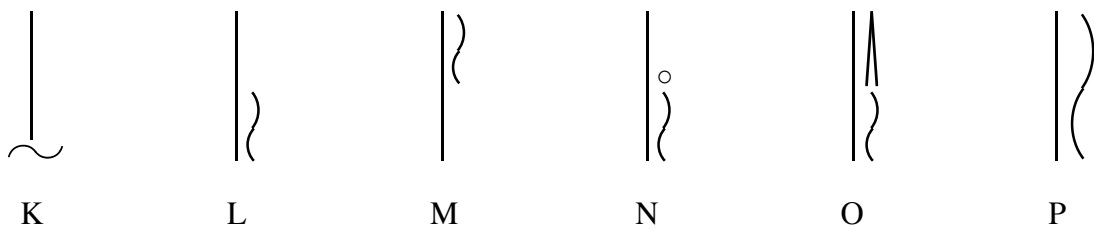
- D. Do exactly as written and then run freely forward.
- E. Do approximately what is written and continue with the same kind of movement.
- F. Do approximately what is written and then run freely forward. (Note that there are 2 *ad lib* signs.)

The placement of the *ad libitum* sign also changed the meaning of the symbol to which it referred according to where it was placed.



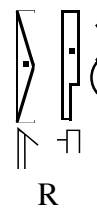
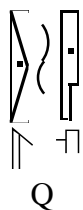
- G. Horizontally through the symbol – any direction.
 - H. Beside the symbol, up, but not exact.
 - I. Vertically within the symbol, any level on a vertical line.
 - J. Beside the symbol, more or less forward high.
- Note that G and I have same meaning as do H and J.

7.0 Other suggestions for placement were;



- 7.1 These examples generated discussion as to whether *the ad libitum* had time value. As used today it sometimes has time value and sometimes has not. If it always had time value then our writing could be richer by being more accurate, for example;
- K. Timing would be as for any presign followed by a movement indication.
 - L. Only the beginning of the movement would be approximate.
 - M. Only the end of the movement would be approximate.
 - N. Hold the idea of approximately until cancelled.
 - O. The beginning of the movement is approximate. The approximate then disappears.
 - P. The entire symbol is modified.

8.0 In the following two examples it was not clear to what the *ad libitum* sign referred because there is no rule for its placement beside a symbol.



9.0 Altering the shape of a symbol was also suggested.



S



T

S. Do the necessary flexing to achieve a result – as in partnering. (It does not mean any.)

T. Do approximately the same as dancer X.

10.0 GENERAL COMMENTS.

10.1 Do we need to write one *ad libitum* symbol for each body part or use an exclusion bow. (RC) We can place an *ad libitum* symbol in an addition bracket to distinguish time. (AH)

10.2 If the *ad libitum sign* is small it pertains to the symbol it is connected to (AH)

10.3 It is a dangerous practice to rely on the size of a qualifying symbol for information. (RC)

10.4 If Labanotation is to live on we need to know that interpretations will change and we need to let them. Some historically accurate performances are dull (MT) Who however is making the choices for these interpretations? Director, dancer, notator? (MC)

10.5 There is not a one size fits all solution for this problem. Use the glossary. (Sheila Marion)

- 10.6 The misreading of Fox's notation of the Sokolow piece pointed up the necessity of reading all word notes as they apply to the use of the *ad lib* sign.
- 10.7 We need a symbol for «what ever you want». (AH)
- 10.8 Some of these symbols are meant to be vague and we need to have the flexibility to use them this way. (LR)
- 10.9 We often write the *ad lib* sign to write something we think is difficult. (MC)

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Rearranged by Ray Cook