

## Distance and Size Thread

### Labanotation Discussions

Presented by Ann Hutchinson Guest - March 4, 2009

#### Distance of Leg Gestures from the Floor

Reference: Labanotation Textbook, 2005, page 154.

The question has been asked: why is the X or double X placed in a diamond? In the past this distance indication was just placed in the support column next to the gesture it modified, it was not placed in a diamond.

#### A Direct Statement

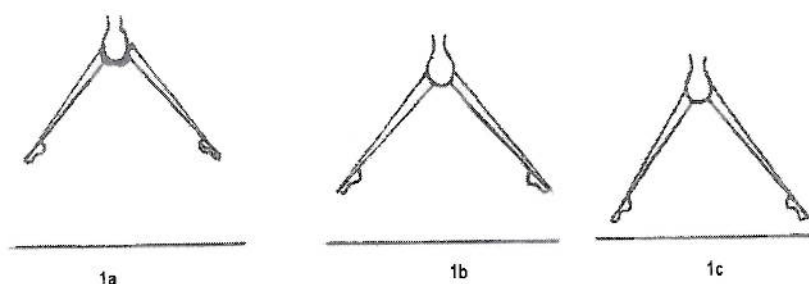
Students' learning difficulties have shown that the differences between the meaning of indicators in the support column and in the gesture columns have been a basic problem:

1. A black symbol in the support column means a bent leg; a black symbol in a gesture column (leg or arm) does not.
2. An X in the support column means distance of step; in a gesture column it means a bent limb. These facts need to be understood and learned.
3. The placement of an X in the support column next to a low leg gesture is another transference of meaning that people question and then take on board. Can we make this process easier? I believe it is better to add a clear statement rather than have rules or applications that have to be learned.

#### A Bit of History

Many years ago, when we had opportunities to meet between ICKL conferences, Maria Szentpál pointed out that our (then) use of the X in the support column to mean **both** distance from the floor **and the legs being closer** together than standard, did not make sense. She drew diagrams to illustrate her point.

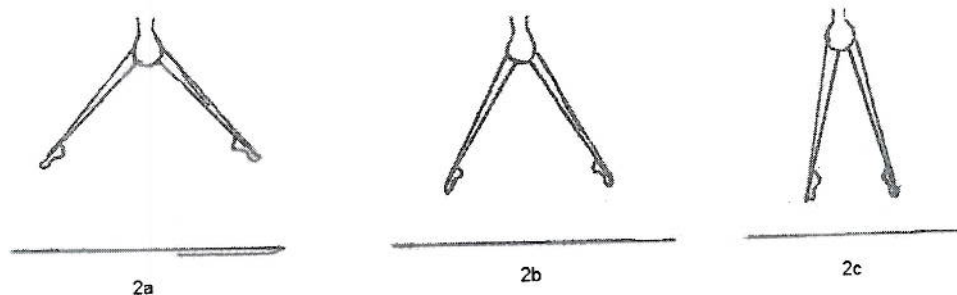
First, the distance from the floor:



- 1a. A standard height of jump, both legs gesturing side low.
- 1b. The legs the same distance from each other, but closer to the floor.
- 1c. The legs the same distance apart, but very close to the floor.

The next set of diagrams indicated a standard height of jump but with the legs getting closer together:

DISTANCE between the LEGS



- 2a. A standard height of jump, both legs gesturing side low (the same as 1a).
- 2b. The legs are slightly closer together, the jump is at the same height.
- 2c. The legs are definitely closer together, the jump is at the same height.

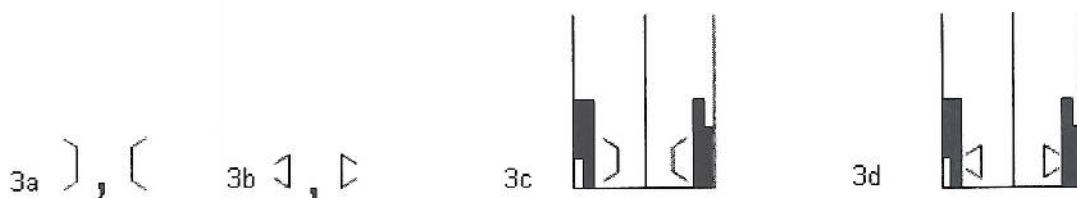
During the development of the system, we have seen general indications serving the general purpose, but with deeper movement analysis and the desire for more specific description, the need grew to be more exact in the use of signs. We now recognized that distance from the floor and distance between the legs were two quite different matters.

The **distance sign**. The use of a diamond (stating spatial aspects) with a narrow or wide sign to show spatial size, space measurement, spatial scale, has long existed in our system. See Knust 689a-d. Thus it made sense to add the diamond placed in the support column to indicate distance from the floor. Of course wide signs could also be used if the distance is to be greater than standard. The need, however, seems to have been to show a lesser distance.

The **Lateral Closing (Joining) or Separating**. These signs are used more frequently in the movement exploration undertaken in the Language of Dance movement investigation. They were, however, used by Knust (1979) in ex. 687a and b. They were also given in the LN Text (2005) on page 455, although no examples of their use were included in the book. If separation or closing in of the legs is the focus, then these signs immediately give the desired message. Thus 2b would be written as 2d below, and 2c as 2e.



**Sagittal Closing (Joining) or Separating**. Also applicable are the signs for sagittal opening (separating), 3a, or closing (joining), 3b, when forward and backward leg gestures are used. These sagittal signs have been developed for movement exploration needs and are included in Motif Notation. Ex. 3c shows increased sagittal separating, while 3d indicates sagittal closing in.



[Return to Distance and Size thread](#)

[Return to chart of all threads](#)