

## UNIT TIMING – FURTHER THOUGHTS

by Ann Hutchinson Guest.

### Spring Points

In the Minutes of the June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008 Meeting, the group's exploration of the timing of spring Points was reported. I am sorry I was not there to witness the physical performances. It is important that we are not looking at artificial renditions but at what happens when less-trained bodies, such as children, perform this step. Wear tap shoes and you can hear the rhythm!

When do we write the correct facts of life and when not? Does the reader want to be spoon fed or does s/he want to know – and see written down – what is actually happening? In my two examples here two spring points are followed by two gallops forward with accompanying claps on each main beat. This sequence is written in Unit Timing (UT) and then in Exact Timing (ET).

### Unit Timing Notation

UT looks simpler and is easy to read. The hand claps are within each unit of each count 1, 2, etc. so they occur on the count 1, 2, etc. The toe hooks have to be at the end of the direction symbol because they are terminating touches. The hand claps are in line with the toe touches, so they happen together. On the gallops there is a stamp on the forward step. The hand clap should coincide with the stamp, but if the contact bow for the claps is moved down to coincide with the stamp, it would alter the look of the even timing of the claps, so the claps were put at the end of units 3 and 4, but, as they are still within those units, they happen on those beats. Note that the landing on the left foot on the 'u' subdivision **before** the gallops **can't** be left out, it would change the movement into a "step forward, hop forward."

### Exact Timing Notation

ET is not quite so easy to read. The hand claps are right at the start of each beat, they also coincide with the toe touches, **and** they occur at the end of the arm gestures which need to move ahead in order for the arms to arrive on the beat. This is also true of the torso tilts. The landing on the left foot for the spring points occurs on the 'u' division of the count, the landing being before the right leg contacts the floor. It is the same timing (on the 'u') as needed for the two gallops. With tap shoes on, one hears the "u 1, u 2, u 3, u 4."

For the ET version, it would help the reader if the support sign on the 'u' were just one square long (as it is before each gallop) so that it is more separated from the toe touch symbol. This would not change the rhythm but would suggest a more staccato landing on the left foot.

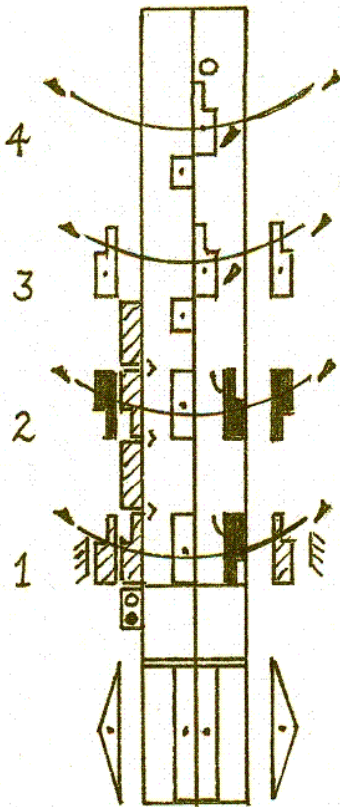
### If You Don't Need to Know, then Don't Learn it

In January I had a very interesting discussion with Rhonda Ryman who was commenting on the difficulty that dance teachers (ballet in particular) have with understanding the way they use timing. If we write the timing **the way they think it is**, e.g. spring points, then they would not find Labanotation so difficult to learn. I have always thought that the more intimate understanding of timing was a valuable education that would be appreciated. But most people do not have enough background already established to appreciate the intricacies. Where and how can we simplify timing so that these people feel comfortable and want to learn more? This, I think, underlies Janos's quest for simplicity.

### Tap Dance Needs

Tap dance notation the **must spell out the correct rhythms**; this is true also of Spanish dance zapateados. How much does UT help such notations? The writing of them and the subsequent reading? Billie Mahoney and Philippa Heale need to come in on this discussion.

### UNIT TIMING



### EXACT TIMING

