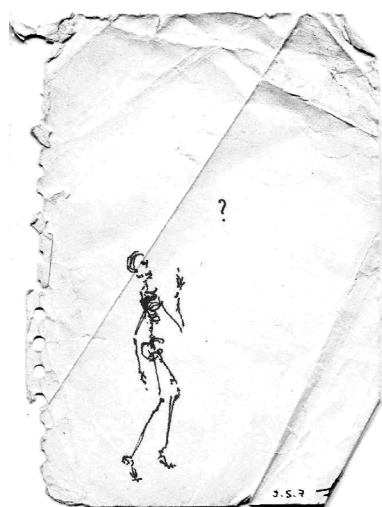


Reflections on the Shape realm of Laban Movement Analysis and how symbols are used to represent it



27th International Council of Kinetography Laban/Labanotation –
Budapest, August 2011

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² Certified Movement Analyst.

*My thanks to Angela Loureiro
for her support,
for our "flexible" discussions
and for her always-valuable advice.
... and to Jacqueline Challet-Haas, who convinced me and help me to attend this conference.*

"A moving body acquires the same amount of space as it loses."

Leonardo da Vinci

PREFACE

The reasons for this project

When I discovered Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) at the CNSMDP (Paris Conservatoire) during my training in kinetography, I was struck by the complementarity of the various disciplines started by Laban³ and continued by his followers⁴. Some knowledge of these disciplines that are "peripheral" to notation, however succinct, seemed to me highly advantageous in learning about kinetography itself, mainly because of the bodily experiences it requires and the logic and development of human movement observation that forms the common core of all these subjects. Each of these disciplines, in its own way, helps us to sharpen our observation, guide our opinions and experience movement in accordance with an impressive span of qualities and pathways.

I therefore wished to follow in the footsteps of my predecessors so as to remain both true to my own speciality and in harmony with the Laban system as a whole. I have observed that each area of Laban studies calls for a high degree of specialisation (which means that each specialist has to focus more on his or her own discipline than on the transverse connections between disciplines), and that from the very beginnings of the Laban system there has been a strong tradition of cooperation between researchers, teachers, dancers and other movement professionals (through international exchanges, the organisation of conferences such as LIMS and IMS, and ICKL in particular, etc.).

After teaching several courses covering an introduction to Labanotation and the tools used in Laban analysis, alongside discussions between Noëlle Simonet⁵, Angela Loureiro⁶ and myself, I became aware of some lines of inquiry specific to the Shape category which further oriented the subject of this research.

The common core of Laban disciplines was one of the main reasons why I decided to begin this project: an interest in human beings in all their subjectivity, taking account of their body organisation patterns, natural adjustments, motivations and internal driving forces, as well as the existence of symbols based on a common system. All the foregoing makes it possible to discuss and share ideas with various specialists, especially through reading symbols that many people can understand, regardless of their language or speciality.

In fact, one of the major strengths of the Laban system as a whole lies in the logic that underpins the symbols, the graphical precision and simplicity of the system, and the abstraction of the symbols thus devised.

³ LMA (Body, Effort, Shape, Space) and Kinetography.

⁴ Warren Lamb for Shape and Albrecht Knust for Kinetography, for example.

⁵ Head of Kinetography Education at the CNSMDP

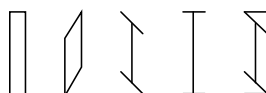
⁶ See biography in Appendix 2.

Key concepts used in devising Laban symbols

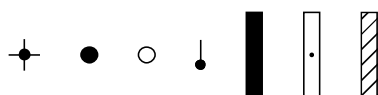
The symbols used in Laban-inspired disciplines use some basic figures that often enable their meaning to be recognised even if one is not already familiar with them. The following list of figures is not exhaustive but gives some idea of the constituent elements of a symbol and the way those elements are put together.



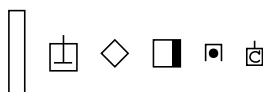
The action stroke, which combines the presence of a line with some information about movement. From this principle, it is clear that the absence of any graphical sign means an absence of movement.



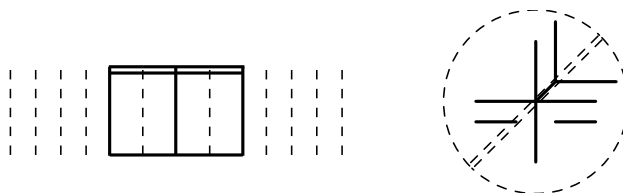
The concept of place, from which the concepts of spatial movement and rotation are derived. The spatial movement symbols used in kinetography and Motif Writing are based on this principle. The resulting rule is that a line drawn at right angles to the main stroke indicates a straight movement, whereas a line at an oblique angle to the main stroke indicates a curved movement.



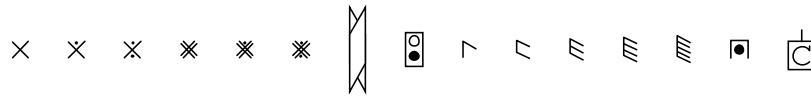
Gravity, a natural force to which we are all subjected. Because of this fundamental law, Laban pays particular attention to the vertical dimension. The result is the concept of level (black shading shows what happens at a low level and cross-hatching what happens at a high level, while a dot in the centre of the motif indicates the mid-point) and the signs for lateral movements used in kinetography and Motif Writing (on the right for the right-hand side of the body, on the left for the left-hand side).



The rectangle or square, used to indicate a surface or volume. It may be used to indicate "place", but is also used in some signs for parts of the body, in Front signs or to represent the surface on which the action takes place (in floor plans). The square may also indicate the constant cross of axes and some secondary crosses of axes, as well as space in a general sense (the diamond).



The combination of symbols that go together in the same area. This idea is found in the use of columns in kinetography (an arm beside a wrist, beside a hand, etc.) and in the two sides of the Effort graph (with the "indulging" elements on one side and the "condensing" elements on the other).



The principle of variation and combination. This method of devising symbols has been used on many occasions to develop new signs. It is therefore possible to be creative while respecting the basic principles of the system: "head" + "volume" + "pin" to indicate which surface of the volume is involved = "face" / "rotation to the right" + "rotation to the left" = "parallel" or "cancel rotations" / various forms of the amplitude signs, parts of the arm / etc.

A short history of the Shape realm

Early on, Laban showed great interest in the Shape category, even though he himself did not call it that.

In 1950, he noted that "*gestures crossing several directions create specific movement shapes. Of spatial movement shapes, round, angular and twisted shapes may be considered elementary.*"⁷

Laban, who never separated his theories from practical experience, even invited readers to observe "*how body movements such as flexion, extension and rotation, and combinations of them, come into play when a person creates those shapes.*"⁸

While these are directional movements or processes for changing the shape of the body in space, Laban also talks about what would later be called "Still Forms" and which he here calls "attitudes": "*It is interesting to observe the various attitudes the body may adopt when standing, kneeling, sitting or lying down. These are strongly influenced by structural and functional factors, such as:*

- a. *the spinal column and extensions of it, similar to a pin;*
- b. *left-right symmetry of the body and its surface area, similar to a wall;*
- c. *the limbs and their respective regions describing curves and circles in the shape of a ball;*
- d. *the shoulders and hips twisting in opposite directions, like a screw.*"⁹

Some years later, after close study of the interactions of the moving human body with weight, space and time, Laban entrusted to Warren Lamb the task of expanding on these observations in deeper and more independent ways. Laban's theories are presented in detail in two seminal books: Effort in 1947 and The Mastery of Movement in 1950.

Lamb, meanwhile, published Posture and Gesture, the first work of reference devoted to Shape, in 1965. It included a few symbols sketched by hand, as well as tables and some valuable analysis drawing parallels between Effort and Shape.

The Effort/Shape relationship enables attention to be focused on two aspects of body movements: on the one hand, "*how kinetic energy is expended in space, force and time within functional and expressive behaviour*"¹⁰, and on the other, "*the form of the movement, or how the body changes and moves through space*"¹¹. In his research, Lamb established a correlation between Effort and Shape. "*His concept was largely drawn from the affinities of certain effort qualities with specific dimensions of space*"¹². Lamb devised a series of symbols for Shape based on these affinities, which he matched with the Effort symbols.

The relationship between Effort and Shape, and therefore the selection of similar symbols for both, is very clearly highlighted by Irmgard Bartenieff: "*The interrelationships of shape and effort result from a complex of biological factors which include body structure, instinctual processes, the constant struggle with gravity and the senses of sight, hearing and touch. These affinities are, however, primitive relationships; the more complex the activity or expression, the less consistently do they appear together*"¹³.

⁷ in The Mastery of Movement, R. LABAN, p. 63

⁸ op. cit.

⁹ op. cit. p.95

¹⁰ in Effort-Shape Analysis of Movement, the unity of Expression and Function,

I. BARTENIEFF & M.A. DAVIS, p. 6

¹¹ op. cit.

¹² in A Primer for Movement Description, C. DELL, p. 6

¹³ in Effort-Shape Analysis of Movement, the unity of Expression and Function,

I. BARTENIEFF & M.A. DAVIS, p. 15

In the 1960s, Judith Kestenberg was one of Lamb's followers who made her own fundamental contribution to developing the Shape category. She devised the KMP (Kestenberg Movement Profile), making it possible to combine behaviour patterns and movement shapes with the child's psychomotor development phases. Her observations regarding primordial needs, feelings of comfort and discomfort, and relations with oneself and the environment strongly influenced the Shape category tree structures currently in use. Thus a classification of the category will often begin with Flow (combined with more internal drives made up of outward and inward impulses), then, in liaison with external stimuli, going outwards towards the environment (directional movements and carving). It is this principle of combining that I have decided to adopt for the proposed tree structure presented in this document.

Some comments on the symbols and terms used

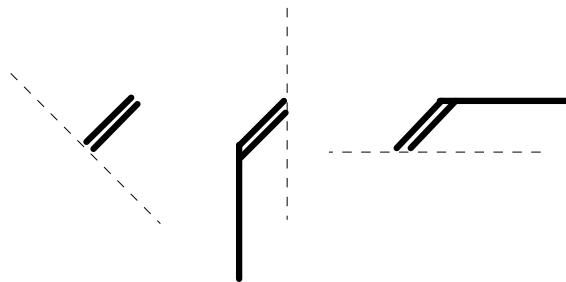
The double bar line

Commenting on the diagonal line used by Laban in his Effort graph, Lamb says: "*There is nothing particularly brilliant about this shorthand. Laban himself experimented with many different systems. For observation purposes the aim is to use a form of shorthand which can be written very quickly. If we show a double diagonal line for the 'Flow' of Shape.*



a similar shorthand can be used."¹⁴

The only drawback of the double bar line is that it is graphically imprecise. It can be found in various books drawn in different ways, aligned according to the point on the graph it is attached to:



Three ways of aligning the double bar line used for Shape (highlighted here by a dotted line which is not usually drawn).

One has to admit that a good symbol should always be the same, while retaining the basic qualities of being simple and quick to draw.

Comments and questions by Peggy Hackney

In 1993, in an article entitled "Shape: What's shaping up?", Peggy Hackney raised several issues concerning Shape. These were discussed again in 2001 at a symposium on Motif Writing: Symbols of Our Community... Moving Forward with Motif¹⁵.

Her first comments were about the terms used (growing/shrinking, advancing/retreating, etc.), tied in with the general tree structure for the Shape category which she suggests and with ideas for clarifying and harmonising them. In this respect she was asking similar questions to Warren Lamb who, after publishing Posture and Gesture, wondered about the relevance of the terms used ("*These terms seem appropriate – others might be thought more appropriate.*"¹⁶). To these judicious points I would add the issues arising from translation of the English terms when Shape (and indeed other LMA disciplines) is being studied in another language.

A second comment concerned the name that should be given to what is now called "carving" or "Molding", which Hackney preferred to "shaping".

¹⁴ in Posture and Gesture, W. LAMB, p. 57

¹⁵ Symposium sponsored by Motus Humanus, The Language of Dance®, and the Ohio State University, Columbus, 2-4 August 2001.

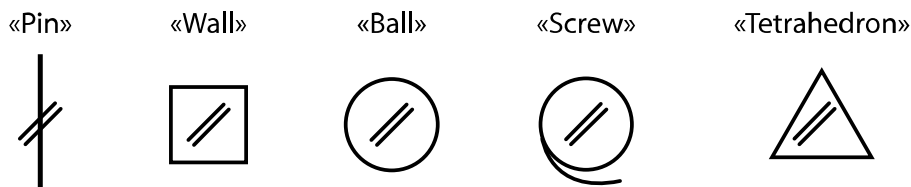
¹⁶ in Posture and Gesture, W. LAMB, p. 58

Next she noted several possible uses and combinations of symbols, especially those for "directional movements", and the sign used for "carving":



For me, this symbol is the most open to question because it strongly resembles the "ad libitum" sign used in kinetography and Motif Writing for many years, and with a very different meaning.

Finally, Hackney commented on the lack of symbols for certain elements of Shape, such as the "Still Forms", and also "concave" and "convex". Since then, symbols have been put forward for the "Still Forms":



These symbols are also problematic in my view in that they are insufficiently abstract: they are more representative than symbolic.

Hackney also expressed the wish that more thorough research should be done into experiences of Shape, and especially the combination of several factors, as had already been done for the Effort category.

I will return to these issues in greater detail as I talk about the new tree structure for Shape put forward here. It seems to me most inappropriate to pay attention to only one detail (such as reviewing a symbol) without reconsidering the category as a whole, incorporating whatever experiences and observations may be necessary.

This is why, for greater clarity, the various symbols suggested and the reasons for suggesting them are listed in an appendix, along with a comparison with the tree structures and terms currently in use.

Specific comments on comparing the terms used in the Effort and Shape categories

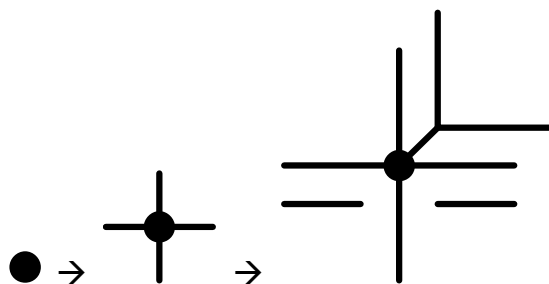
It is noteworthy that the terms used in the Effort category are adjectives: strong, light, direct, flexible, etc. They indicate in a way the limits of each element, within which lies a range of possibilities of physical involvement.

With Shape, on the other hand, it is a present participle (part of a verb) that is used to describe each experience of movement (rising, sinking, advancing, retreating, etc.). The emphasis shifts to the ongoing process rather than the state that describes the experience.

This is why, in my analysis, I have decided to use a different vocabulary to that used in the Effort category to refer to the various elements of Shape. With Effort, we speak of three **factors** (weight, space, time) and the **elements** they are composed of (light, strong, etc.). With Shape, I will give three **planes** (vertical, sagittal, horizontal) and the relevant **processes** (rising, sinking, etc.).

Proposal for a new tree structure for Shape

The general Shape graph



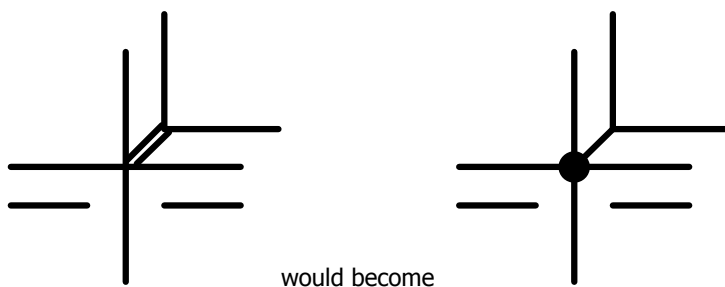
The centre of gravity, the focal point of the standard cross of axes, forms the basis for this new proposal.

As I mentioned earlier, the double bar line suggested by Warren Lamb and used subsequently is effective in terms of speed but not very practical in terms of reproduction. It even looks rather unconventional when used in combination with several parts of the general graph, as is shown by certain reproductions of symbols in books on this category (see bibliography).

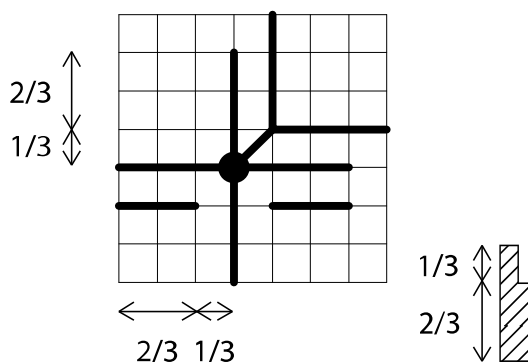
After several workshops on "growing" and "shrinking" with Angela Loureiro, the connection between the Shape category and the body's internal drives, breathing and the deep centre linked with personal involvement proved a very sensitive issue.

It is the intentions of the person performing the movement that generate these spatial transformations. I therefore felt it was logical to combine the Shape graph with the black circle representing the centre of gravity, which also echoes the cross of axes.

Just as quick to draw and easy to recognise, it also retains a similarity with the Effort graph while adding an element of kinetography, and therefore a binding factor combining several Laban disciplines.



Looking more closely, one may also observe the one-third/two-thirds split sometimes found in kinetography:



The tree structure presented below is organised as follows:

- **Shape flow** is linked with breathing, focus, the self. This is in a way the "guiding thread" of Shape, just as Flow is in the Effort category, to which one may pay special attention or combine with directional elements or various pathways;
- **Shape qualities** (incorporating the Shape Flow Support suggested by Peggy Hackney) are linked with the external and internal dimensions, opening and closing, the fact of reaching for something or drawing it towards oneself;
- **Directional movements** (spokelike and arclike) are linked with movement pathways and a more external space;
- **Plasticities of Shape** (Carving, Shaping, Molding) is linked with the body's subtle adaptation to the environment;
- **Attitudes of Shapes** (Still Forms, Basic Forms, Shape Design, Total Body Attitude) are linked with the occasional appearance of recognisable body attitudes that are the result of all these changes.

Although the Attitudes of Shape are somewhat separate as they are the observable outcome of an ongoing process, the order suggested for the other sub-categories (Flow > Qualities > Directional movements > Plasticities) follows a process going from the most primary body experience, closest to oneself, to encounters with external space and the most complex ways of adapting to the environment.

Just as Effort Flow is distinct from weight, space and time (the other elements of Effort), Shape flow is distinct from the vertical, sagittal and horizontal dimensions that are the other parameters in the Shape category. Because this is a vital, primordial factor, at work in all the processes of body change and adaptation, it may (or may not!) be the subject of special attention in each of the experiences suggested by this tree structure. It should be pointed out that the final group of experiences suggested (Plasticities) requires a subtle attention to the environment, in liaison with oneself, and that the resulting subtle intention requires the constant presence of attention to Flow.

1. **SHAPE FLOW**



In conjunction with proprioceptive attention, internal relinquishment and the deeper self, Shape flow involves a willingness to embrace the existence of change, to prepare for inconclusiveness. It is intimately connected with breathing and therefore with growing and shrinking. Shape Flow is not unrelated to feelings, and shifts between growing, comfort, attracting and absorbing on the one hand, and shrinking, discomfort, repelling and expelling on the other.

The two Shape Flow processes are:

GROWING



SHRINKING



... in the vertical plane (with a preference for the vertical dimension)

... in the sagittal plane (with a preference for the sagittal dimension)

... in the horizontal plane (with a preference for the horizontal dimension)

Attention to Shape flow causes two types of change:

A bipolar change, made up of movements towards a dimension and returns to oneself. So this change takes account of **three-dimensional space as an element of attention to movement**.

And this bipolar change is only the beginning; it requires a specific development known as **SHAPE QUALITIES**.

This development, like any learning process, lays out a map of movement experiences that also makes it possible to abandon this bipolarity in favour of a specific direction.

The relevant vocabulary and related symbols are presented in detail in the next chapter.

A unipolar change, which focuses on the direction of a dimension, thereby putting the emphasis on awareness of the environment, as opposed to oneself.

Body changes within the environment result in specific attention being paid to movement pathways. These are called **DIRECTIONAL MOVEMENTS**.

The vocabulary and symbols related to these movements are presented in Chapter 3.

2. SHAPE QUALITIES



This general symbol for Shape qualities enables us to differentiate it from a Pin symbol.

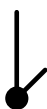
The dot next to the stroke indicates an emphasis on attention.

This point is already used in the Effort category to emphasise one of the elements.

The six main Processes

Shape qualities are classified in three planes: vertical, sagittal and horizontal.

IN THE VERTICAL PLANE:



Rising



Sinking

IN THE SAGITTAL PLANE:



Advancing

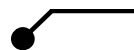


Retreating

IN THE HORIZONTAL PLANE:



Spreading

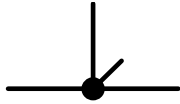


Enclosing

Adding attention to flow

These qualities are therefore presented graphically in separate ways. However, they may be experienced paying specific attention to flow, with each spatial process having an affinity with one of the flow processes. As pointed out on page 3, the processes located on the same side of the graph (the top-left half and the bottom-right half) will have affinities in common: attitudes **reaching out** to the world outside, and those **returning to oneself**. The combination of processes located in the same parts of the graph will be described here as **natural** attitudes, while those located in opposite parts of the graph will be described as **antagonistic** attitudes.

IN THE VERTICAL PLANE:

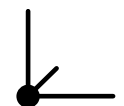


rising, with attention to flow, which could be interpreted as a greater personal involvement than simply "**rising**" (which would be more fundamentally spatial). This combination corresponds to the experience of "lengthening" in the "Shape Flow Support" category suggested by Peggy Hackney (in which Shape Qualities + Shape Flow = Shape Flow Support).

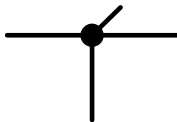
On the other hand, this combination could be further refined by selecting only one of the two flow processes as the object of attention, i.e.:



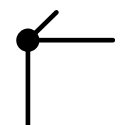
for "**rising, growing**" (more natural attitude)
soaring¹⁷



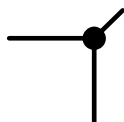
for "**rising, shrinking**" (more antagonistic attitude)
fading



for "**sinking + flow**" – shortening, subdivided into



for "**sinking, shrinking**" and
smouldering

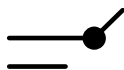


for "**sinking, growing**"
subsiding

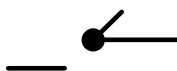
IN THE SAGITTAL PLANE:



for "**advancing + flow**"» – bulging, subdivided into

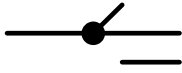


for "**advancing, growing**" and
quickenning

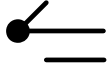


for "**advancing, shrinking**"
penetrating

¹⁷ The descriptions in italics are only suggestions, and suitable terms have not been found for all the combinations. Other expressions could obviously be used.



for "**retreating + flow**" – hollowing, subdivided into

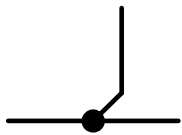


for "**retreating, shrinking**" and
being swallowed

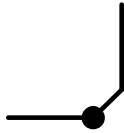


for "**retreating, growing**"
pumping out

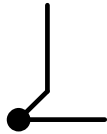
IN THE HORIZONTAL PLANE:



for "**spreading + flow**" – widening, subdivided into



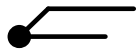
for "**spreading, growing**" and
generous



for "**spreading, shrinking**"
proffering



for "**enclosing + flow**" – narrowing, subdivided into



for "**enclosing, shrinking**" and
waning

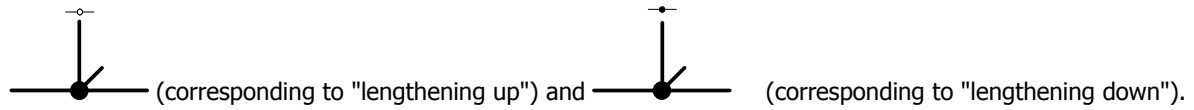


for "**enclosing, growing**"
coiling

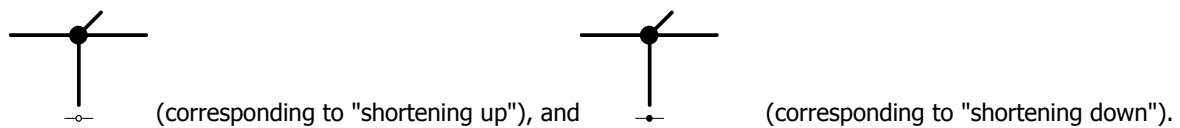
Coordination with the Kestenberg system

Further details may be added to these symbols in order to coordinate the bipolar and unipolar aspects of the experiences with the Kestenberg movement analysis system (as mentioned earlier, although Shape qualities are originally the result of bipolar attention, they may logically – through progress in learning and body experiences – focus on a single direction and therefore develop in a unipolar manner). In that case, I suggest adding a Pin to the end of a stroke to indicate the chosen direction:

IN THE VERTICAL PLANE:

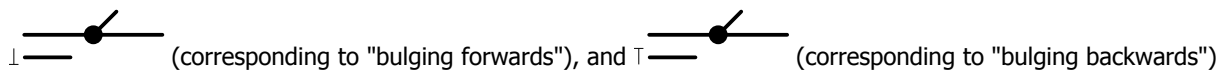


One might suggest to indicate a free choice.

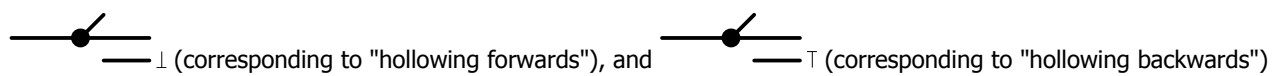


One might suggest to indicate a free choice.

IN THE SAGITTAL PLANE:

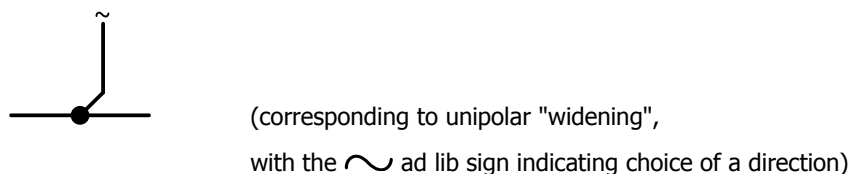


One might suggest to indicate a free choice.



One might suggest to indicate a free choice.

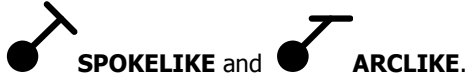
IN THE HORIZONTAL PLANE:



3. DIRECTIONAL MOVEMENTS

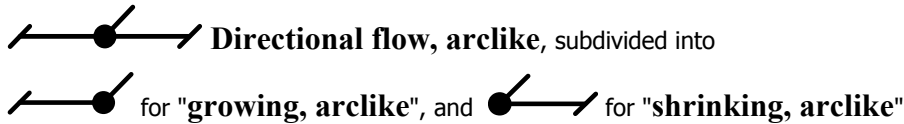
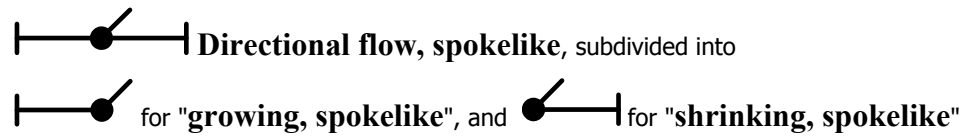
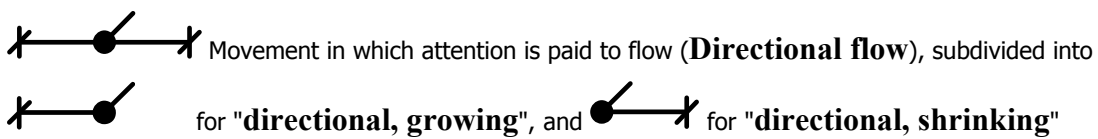


Directional movements, because of their attention to pathways, have a great affinity with both direct and indirect (or flexible) space in the Effort graph. These two main groups of movements are called



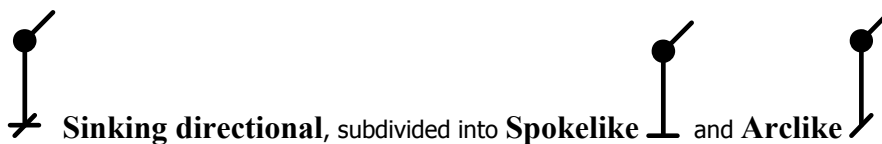
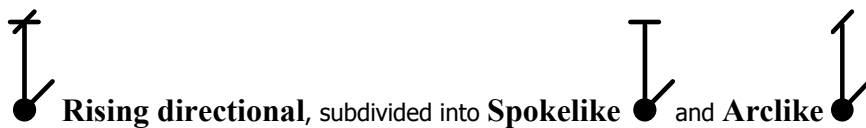
They are represented graphically in exactly the same way as Shape qualities. A perpendicular stroke is added to the main line for spokelike movements, and an oblique line for arclike movements (and both if the path of the movement is not indicated). This principle echoes the straight and curved movements in kinetography.

Specific attention may be paid to flow in the experience of directional movements. This results in the following variations:

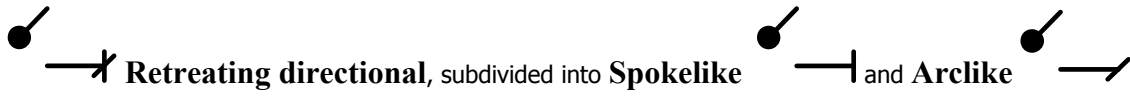
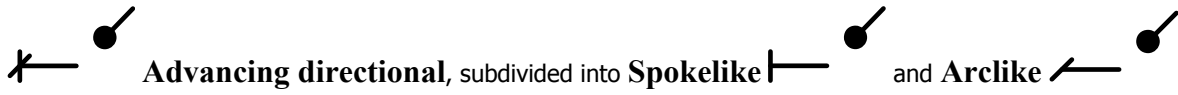


Like all the other experiences of Shape, directional movements may take place in three planes:

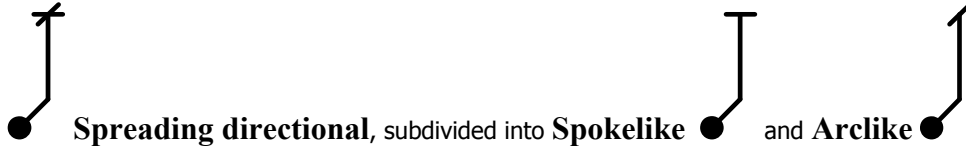
IN THE VERTICAL PLANE:



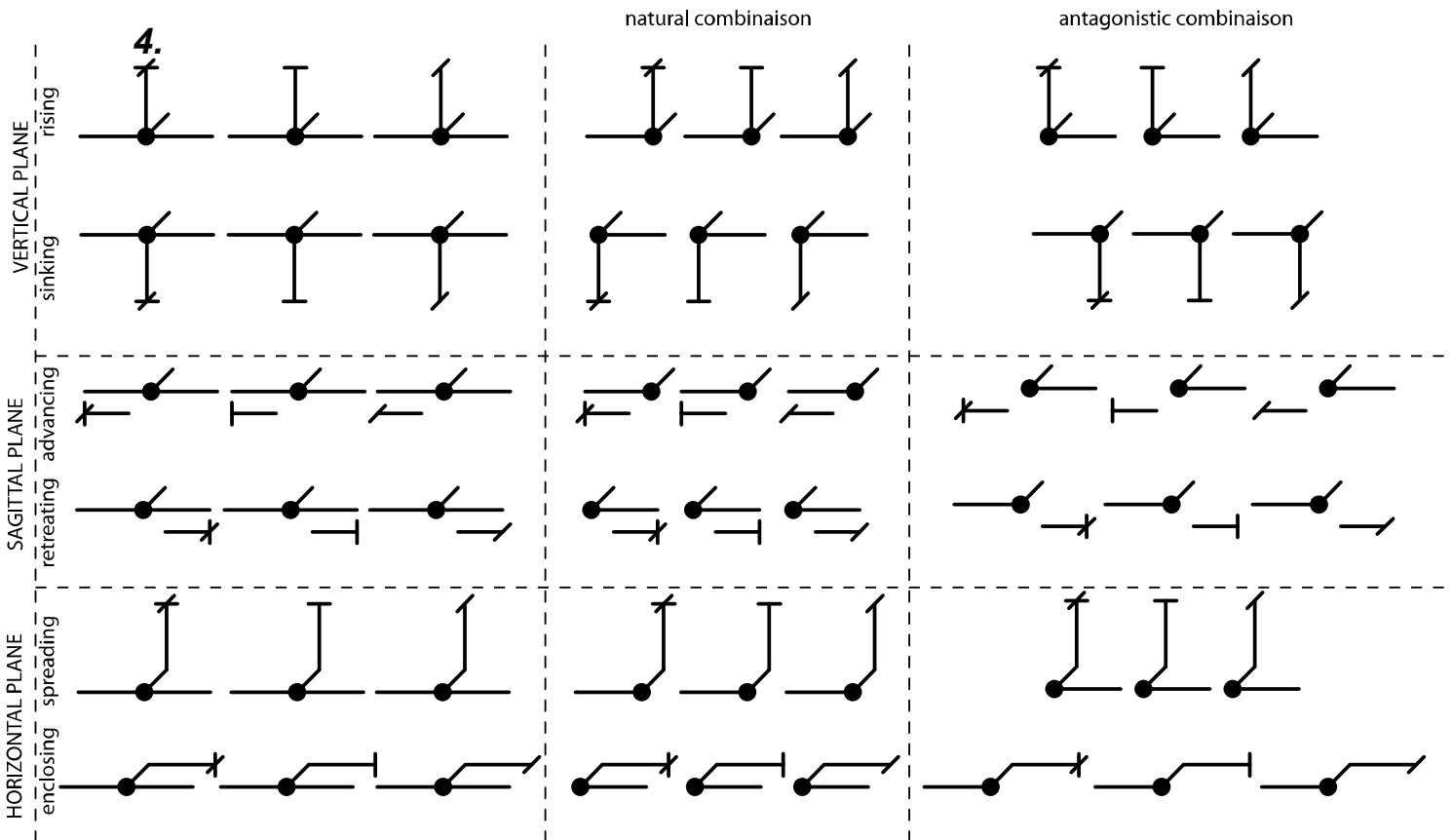
IN THE SAGITTAL PLANE:



IN THE HORIZONTAL PLANE:



Obviously, specific attention to Flow may be added to all these experiences.





In terms of human development, it is probably the directional movements that come last because they "define the child's emotional and physical self as a clear presence, completely separate, but still an active participant in the surrounding environment"¹⁸.

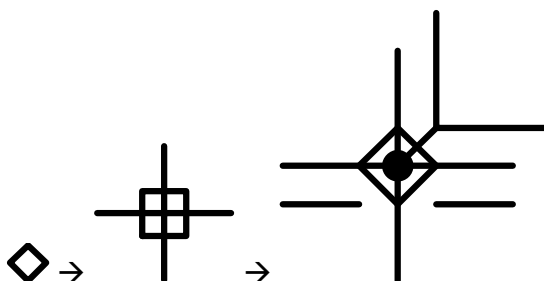
On the other hand, the experience of Shaping (or Carving), which occurs very early in the development process (sucking one's thumb, for example), calls for subtle attention to changes in the body when it is being explored: "Carving provides a quality of movement that leads to integrating the self and the world"¹⁹. Therefore it also requires very specific attention to be paid to the environment, and probably constitutes the most complete form of relational behaviour. The same idea may be found in contact dance, sculpture and modelling, and in affectionate behaviour such as caressing... This particular place in the tree structure is suggested for this category because it requires the most concepts to be incorporated at the same time.

Laban often mentions the plastic dimension of space, as well as the relationship of the person performing the movement with the environment: "The spatial tension of the dancer's body, charged with energy when he prepares to begin his changes, is filled with an awareness of dynamic space. He is aware of all the possible paths and directions he intends to use in his dancing."²⁰ "Solo dance is a duo between the dancer and his environment, or between the dancer and his inner world." "...an intense desire is born, that of entering into contact with an invisible space. This desire to reach out towards space is the pleasure of movement. All movement reaches out towards space, both the space around us and the space within us."²¹

Oskar Schlemmer, a contemporary of Laban, also mentions this plastic dimension of space in relation to the dancer's body: "Whether we start with the human body moving in space, or whether we imagine space as being filled with a soft substance that hardens once the movement is completed, the body's movements (twists, surges, etc.) remain as the plastic shape of the body in the substance that has solidified."²²

By choosing to list Shape categories (Qualities, Directional movements, Plasticities), I have therefore decided to name the latter with regard to the Shaping dimension of the relevant experiences.

A diamond, referring to the diamonds and squares used in kinetography when speaking about space (pausing in space, space, pausing in a specific place, the frontal sign, the constant cross of axes) is added to the centre of the Shape symbol to underline the importance of attention to the environment in all the experiences involving Plasticities of Shape.



The Plasticities symbol on the right is derived from the space sign on the left and the constant cross of axes.

In drawing this symbol, I decided to use the flow stroke systematically because this is such a vital element in the experience. This seemed to me the most logical solution, but one could also decide to omit the stroke in the interests of simplicity and rapidity; in that case it would be understood. On the other hand, the attention that causes the intention of the movement could be distinguished according to the two flow processes.

In the table below, I have once again drawn the symbols using the same reasoning: first the full flow stroke, next the natural combination, and finally the antagonistic combination. The simplified general symbol (without the flow stroke) is shown last.

¹⁸ in *The Dancing Dialogue*, S. TORTORA,

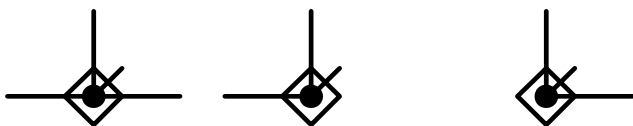
¹⁹ in *Making Connections*, P. HACKNEY, p. 222

²⁰ in *Le sens spatial de l'homme motorique*, R. LABAN

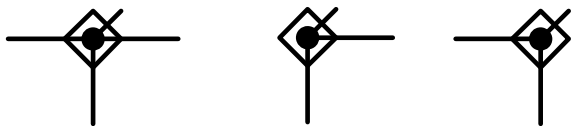
²¹ in *Vision de l'espace dynamique*, R. LABAN, p. 268/269

²² O. SCHLEMMER, quoted by Eric MICHAUD in *Fabriques de l'homme nouveau de Léger à Mondrian*, pp. 55/56

IN THE VERTICAL PLANE:



for **Rising Plasticity**



for **Sinking Plasticity**



IN THE SAGITTAL PLANE:



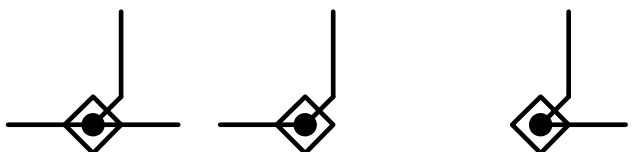
for **Advancing Plasticity**



for **Retreating Plasticity**



IN THE HORIZONTAL PLANE:



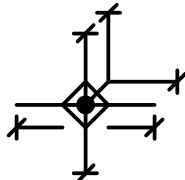
for **Spreading Plasticity**



for **Enclosing Plasticity**



It is possible to combine these signs with directional movements, either in a general way using the symbol which signifies shaping with attention to directional movement (or more specifically for spokelike movements and for arclike movements), or by using a perpendicular or oblique stroke drawn at



the conclusion of each process: . These combinations show that emphasis is being put on peripheral space and the path followed by an intense movement mindful of the space it is entering.

5. ATTITUDES OF SHAPES – Still Forms, Basic Shapes, Shape Design



A white circle, which refers to a pause in kinetography, is added to the centre of the symbol. This highlights the "arrested" nature of the movement and avoids confusion with Pin symbols.

As I suggested in the introduction, Attitudes of Shape are somewhat outside the mainstream because they are actually the observable preludes to or outcomes of a movement rather than an ongoing process. They are more a question of attitude than of investment in a particular plane. The various Shape categories form a kind of "subliminal" picture that describes a person or body posture: a small, plump woman; a tall, thin man; a completely eccentric person; attack and defence stances in martial arts, etc. Attitudes also enable us to pinpoint the nature of a character (compare the Black Swan and the White Swan in "Swan Lake"!), to notice which parts of the body are the focus of attention (someone who has difficulty moving may have stiff limbs and convoluted arm movements).

In this category we can also talk about amplitude, concave and convex shapes, curves and angles, all of them linked to a specific situation. In fact, "*Shaping movement is adaptation in the three dimensions of space [rising, retreating from, opening up to, gathering toward, etc.], all of which indicates ways of reacting or attitudes toward a situation.*"²³

Early on Laban designated four basic categories of shape forms. A fifth category (*Pyramid*) was proposed in the 1980s and has often been used since. The five categories are:

Straight attitudes	Spiral attitudes	Flat attitudes	Pyramidal attitudes	Spherical attitudes
<i>Pin</i>	<i>Screw</i>	<i>Wall</i>	<i>Pyramid</i>	<i>Ball</i>

I have chosen to use the general symbol for the category for these subgroups: , adding to it a descriptive symbol.

- , the sign for a straight path, is used for Straight attitude, , the sign for a circular path, is used for Spiral attitude – these two symbols are shown first because they concern a single line (a single direction for Straight attitude, a multidirectional line through space for Spiral attitude).
- I have chosen to represent a surface (therefore connected with Flat, two-dimensional attitudes), as Pin symbols are used in kinetography to represent a specific surface. So the ad lib sign above the square means it can refer to any surface.
- For the groups of three-dimensional forms (shown last), I have combined the volume sign () with those for circular paths used earlier: the straight path for Pyramid attitudes and the circular path for Spherical attitudes.

In Motif Writing, one may freely build on or improvise from these symbols, either alone or in combination with the other Shape symbols.

For example , to indicate Spiral movements within movement of Plasticity, or

for movements spreading or enclosing within a Flat Attitude.

²³ in Effort-Shape Analysis of Movement, the unity of Expression and Function, I. BARTENIEFF & M.A. DAVIS, p. 16

By way of conclusion...

This document, the result of my work with Angela Loureiro since October 2010, does not present to you my conclusions on Shape but the outcome of my reflections "here and now". I hope that the discussions that take place at this conference with people involved in the various Laban disciplines will enable me to continue my research in a spirit of sharing and understanding.

This research was made possible by a grant for "assistance with research and the dance heritage" from the French Ministry of Culture, through the Centre National de la Danse.

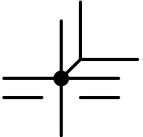




A public presentation of the research will take place at the Centre National de la Danse in Pantin, near Paris, France, on **Friday 13 January 2012**. A document will also be made available for consultation at the centre's media library.







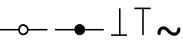
In addition, I wish to draw your attention to the existence of a "Kinetography Laban / Labanotation – LMA" group on Facebook, which brings together Laban practitioners of various nationalities. The description reads: "*Forum about movement notation (Kinetography Laban / Labanotation), and Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) open to everyone who wants to contribute to the development of those systems by posting questions, advices, information, etc. This group is not an encyclopedia! It's just a way to make relationships grow. Forum sur l'écriture du mouvement (cinétographie Laban / Labanotation) et sur l'Analyse du Mouvement Laban (LMA) ouvert à tous ceux qui veulent contribuer au développement de ces systèmes en postant leurs questions, leurs conseils ou leurs informations. Ce groupe n'est pas une encyclopédie! Il est juste un moyen d'aider à échanger sur ces domaines*". Perhaps it will enable some of us to continue the discussions started here at ICKL.




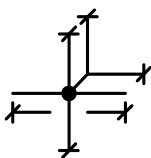

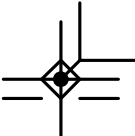






Thank you for your attention,

Raphaël Cottin

APPENDIX 1: Summary of symbols and the reasons for them

Symbol	Name	Reason or comment
	General Shape graph	The central ● refers to the centre of gravity, the standard cross of axes and the deep personal involvement at stake in Shape processes
	Shape Flow	Subdivided into  for "growing" and  for "shrinking"
	Shape Qualities	The dot calls for specific attention (also found in the Effort category) and avoids confusion with the Pin symbol.


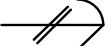

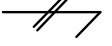

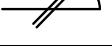














	<p>Rising</p>	
	<p>Sinking</p>	
	<p>Advancing</p>	
	<p>Retreating</p>	
	<p>Spreading</p>	
	<p>Enclosing</p>	
	<p>Pin and ad lib</p>	<p>These signs, used for unipolar attention, indicate a preferred direction (or "any direction" – right or left – when used with the ad lib sign).</p>

	<p>Directional Movements</p>	<p>Used with the sign for a straight path (I) or a circular path (J). This symbol may be subdivided into  for spokelike movements and • for arclike movements</p>
	<p>Directional Flow</p>	<p>+ all possible combinations</p>
		<p>+ all possible combinations</p>
	<p>Plasticities of Shape</p>	<p>Used with the space symbol (◇) and the constant cross of axes, representing attention to the environment</p>
		<p>+ all possible combinations</p>
	<p>Attitudes of Shape</p>	<p>Used with the pause symbol (O) to reflect static shapes.</p>
	<p>Straight attitudes</p>	<p>Used for straight paths</p>
	<p>Spiral attitudes</p>	<p>Used for circular paths</p>
	<p>Flat attitudes</p>	<p>□ and ~ together mean "any surface or volume", thereby respecting the three dimensions of the body.</p>
	<p>Pyramid attitudes</p>	<p>combination of volume and straight movement</p>
	<p>Spherical attitudes</p>	<p>combination of volume and circular movement</p>

APPENDIX 2: Comparison with other tree structures

Proposed new symbol	Existing symbol	Name / Comment
		Shape flow
		Shape Qualities
		Rising
		Sinking
		Advancing
		Retreating – Retiring
		Spreading
		Enclosing
		Lengthening
		Shortening
		Bulging
		Hollowing
		Widening
		Narrowing

		Lengthening up
		Lengthening down
		Lengthening up or down ~ shows free choice of a direction
		Shortening up
		Shortening down
		Shortening up or down ~ shows free choice of a direction
		Bulging forwards
		Bulging backwards
		Bulging forwards or backwards
		Hollowing forwards
		Hollowing backwards
		Hollowing forwards or backwards
		Widening, unipolar ~ shows free choice of a direction
		Narrowing, unipolar ~ shows free choice of a direction

		Directional Movements...
		... Spokelike
		... Arclike
		"Directional Shape Flow"
		known as Carving, Shaping, Molding...
		known as Still forms – Shape design
		Pin / Straight attitudes
		Screw / Spiral attitudes
		Wall / Flat attitudes
		Tetrahedron-Pyramid / Pyramidal attitudes
		Ball / Spherical attitudes

BIOGRAPHIES

Raphaël Cottin

Raphaël Cottin started his dance career in 1987 and later studied classical and contemporary dance at the *Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse Paris* (CNSMDP). He became acquainted with such famous names of the dance world as Cyril Atanassoff, Peter Goss, Jean Guizerix, Martin Kravitz, Wilfride Piollet and Odile Rouquet, and in 1999 obtained his Diplôme de Formation Supérieure in contemporary dance.

He has worked as a dancer for Christine Gérard, Odile Duboc and in particular Daniel Dobbels (1999-2007), and has performed some of Wilfride Piollet's, Jean Guizerix's, Andy Degroat's and Merce Cunningham's pieces.

Since 2008 he has performed in France and all over the world as a member of the Illico-Thomas Lebrun Company (which in 2012 will move to Tours as a Centre Chorégraphique National).

Cottin graduated in the educational science of contemporary dance, and now teaches Wilfride Piollet's technique, which offers a new vision of the understanding of movement and the autonomy of a dancer's working process. He holds two diplomas in kinetography Laban after studying with Noëlle Simonet at the CNSMDP.

In 2010 he was awarded a research grant by the French Ministry of Culture to study the latest symbols created in the Shape category of LMA, under the supervision of Angela Loureiro (CMA-LIMS) as regards his notational skills, and with additional support from Wilfride Piollet, Odile Rouquet, Angela Loureiro and Jacqueline Challet-Haas.

As a choreographer, in 1999 he founded his own company, RC2, to accomplish his personal projects, with a predilection for working with live music (Alexis Descharmes, Cédric Jullion, Joël Grare) and original compositions (David François Moreau). For several years he has worked with French soprano Patricia Petibon (2000-2004), with whom he organises recitals. In 2008 he met violinist Hélène Schmitt and devised with her "Sei solo", a double solo on the repertoire for violin only by J.S. Bach. His most recent pieces, "CURSUS" and "Le Scapulaire Noir" (two duets with Corinne Lopez), will be touring in France next season.

Angela Loureiro

Angela Loureiro discovered the Laban / Bartenieff system while working with Regina Miranda and her dance company, la Companhia Atores de Bailarinos do Rio de Janeiro, which she helped to set up in 1978.

As a dancer, assistant choreographer, coach and teacher, she has acquired experience in all fields of dance, theatre and cinema.

She holds a degree in history, specialising in the history of medicine in Brazil.

In 1995 she was awarded her Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) certificate by the Laban/Bartenieff Institute for Movement Studies (New-York / Seattle), under the supervision of Peggy Hackney.

In 1999 she graduated in kinetography Laban from the Paris Conservatoire, under the supervision of Jacqueline Challet-Haas, with whom she has worked on the notation of Irmgard Bartenieff's Fundamentals.

Angela Loureiro has lived in France since 1988. She works with many different population groups, including professionals and students from the worlds of dance, theatre and singing, trainee nurses, developmental therapists and elderly people. She has also contributed to making the Laban-Bartenieff system better known through her teaching, master classes, workshops and lectures.

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GOLDMAN, Ellen
Shape is not separate from content
(paper from Moderator of the Panel, see below)

KAYLO, Janet
Form is not separate from content

KENNEDY, Antja
Methods of movement observation with Laban/Bartenieff movement studies

TORTORA, Susy
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(Panel: Bratislava Conference, 6 October, 2006.)

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Space, Effort and the Brain

BEHNKE, Elisabeth A.
Space-Time Concepts as World-Dimensions

BODMER Sylvia
Harmonics in Space

DAVIS Martha
Movement as Patterns of Process

HALL, R.L. and COBE, V.E.
The World as Crystallized Movement

MICKUNAS, Algis
The Primacy of Movement

MILBURN Patrick
Movement and the Idea of Organism

NORTH Marion
The Language of Bodily Gesture

New York, USA, volume 31, no. 1 – September/October 1974



Tribute to Irmgard Bartenieff

A sampler of events of the second annual conference of the Laban Institute of Movement Studies.

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 DALEO, Mona
 DIAZ, Miguel Angel
 GLEISNER, Martin M.
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