

CCDR Newsletter

Number 9

Winter 1990

CHALLENGES FOR DANCE ETHNOLOGISTS: OBSERVED DURING TRAVEL

By Joann W. Kealiinohomoku

After visiting the following countries fall, 1989, I believe that these dance cultures are under-researched:

JAPAN: Northern Hokkaido is the home for the indigenous Ainu. Although there have been studies about Ainu culture, little is available in English, and none focus on dance, to my knowledge. I am told that there is an important Ainu festival held every summer. Apparently there is at least one other indigenous but non-Ainu, group in Northern Japan that has a summer festival, also.

TAIWAN: Although the population of this island is predominantly Chinese, several indigenous tribes live on Taiwan as well. Many of these tribes present dance performances for tourists, in order to affirm their tribal identity while earning money. The fact that these groups maintain traditional dances, even though for tourists, indicate that the cultures are viable through adaptation, is a good topic for research. I am aware of but one study of a tribal dance culture in Taiwan, that of the Paiwan (Kwok 1978-79).

CHINA (HONG KONG): Through the courtesy of Carl Wolz,

Dean of Dance at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, I met Wen Jun-Ming, lecturer from the Beijing Dance Academy and brilliant performer of the dances from the 56 "tribes and minorities" as identified by the Republic of China. The Beijing Dance Academy includes Korean and Tibetan dances as part of this curriculum, in addition to dances of groups such as the Dai and the Meo. None of these groups traditionally perform Han type Chinese dances. Research of these and other dance cultures is devoted to archiving and development of repertoires (see Fairbanks 1986). Apparently holistic dance ethnologies of these 56 tribes and minorities are yet to be made.

MALAYSIA: Malaysia is supportive of its immigrant and indigenous cultures. Raihon H.J. Sulaiman, graduate dance student at the Universite Sains Malaysia enthused "our country is like the dance: many cultures, many dances." The nation includes thirteen states, of which two are on the island of Borneo that have retained animistic religions and dance rituals. National populations also include the Portuguese,

Chinese, East Indians as well as genetic Malaysians. The traditional Malaysian dance culture shares features with Balinese and Thai dances except that they accommodate Islam in their dance canons. For example, in the dance drama "Ma'Yong," the "hero" is a woman male-impersonator; the storyline requires that the hero must touch the heroine but Islam forbids public contact of males with females. The Universite Sains Malaysia in Penang has a program that focusses on traditional studies, and a dance program with Dr. Ghulam Sarwar, dancer and choreographer who presents modern dance concerts that adapt traditional dance motives. Malaysia is ripe for systematic investigations of its dance cultures, and I believe that the Universite would welcome serious dance ethnologists.

INDIA: While there is much research about classic dance forms, especially Bharata Natyam, there is little evident research about the numerous tribal groups, village folk traditions and street performance groups. The government of India is aware of tribal and folk groups, mentioned briefly in *India:*

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DAVID APPEL THIRD RESEARCH CHOREOGRAPHER-IN-RESIDENCE

Cross-Cultural Dance Resources warmly welcomes David Appel as the third recipient of the Halla Kaiulani Keali'inohomoku Memorial Research Choreographer-in-Residence. David's tenure in Flagstaff is from January through mid-May, 1990. He is residing in the Franklin house, pursuing an Independent Study at Northern Arizona University, and availing himself of the resources of CCDR and Arizona.

With a special focus on the significance of *place*, David is researching and pondering spatial components incorporated in dancing and choreography. He is investigating how the perception of the spatial environment evokes responses,

and also how movement heightens awareness of spaces and places. He is probing the nature of sacred or visionary sites to discover how their definition can be translated to the creative process and how conventional "theater" spaces can be transformed. He is questioning how limiting or opening of space affects movement, and finally, how the significance of place can be activated by both pause and motion.

David's previous work has led to his inquiries. For example, his three-part piece "Going Through the Motions," performed last August at the Williamstown Theatre Festival was done late at night with the audience traveling between three separate spaces. Expecting

that exciting new directions will arise from the residency, David is able to explore these ideas at CCDR with more leisure and less stress than his usual pace allows.

David has a Bachelor's degree in dance from Bennington College, and a Master's degree in dance from Goddard College. In addition he has trained in Alexander Technique, Bartenieff Fundamentals, voice, Polarity Therapy, Psychic Healing, T'ai Chi Ch'uan, Hatha Yoga and Aikido. His studies included Contact Improvisation with Steve Paxton and dance with Viola Farber, and summer program studies at Wolf Trap with Twyla Tharp, Paul Taylor, Don Redlich, and Murray Louis.

Two decades after the 1962 emergence of the Judson Dance Theater, David accepted the challenge of reconstructing, directing, and performing works by Steve Paxton, Simone Forti, and Yvonne Rainer, as part of "The Legacy of the Judson." Since 1973 he has choreographed and produced 83 works, and has been awarded three fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts.

He has taught and given workshops in Alabama, where he was in residence fall, 1989, and in Arizona, California, Delaware, Idaho, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, and outside of the country in Canada, England and Ireland and Austria.

On January 23, David conducted a Contact Improvisation workshop in Flagstaff. Few persons here were familiar with this form, although it is well known on the East and West Coasts. Asked to provide a description, David wrote: "Contact Improvisation is a movement form based on the

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David Appel performs "Open Wing"
silhougraph rendered from photo by Ginevra Portlock, 1982

INSIGHTS BY HELEN PELTON

CCDR'S SECOND CHOREOGRAPHER-IN-RESIDENCE

Editor's note: Helen Pelton concluded her residency by writing several insightful essays. Excerpts from two essays are presented below.

REPETITION AND INTERRUPTION

In all cultures there is a persistence of drum beat or other percussive action in much ritual ceremony. Drumming, sticks striking against one another, feet stamping, hands clapping, gun or cannon firing are such percussive actions. As Needham wrote, "There is no doubt that sound-waves have neural and organic effects on human beings, irrespective of the cultural formation of the latter. The reverberations produced by musical instruments thus have not only aesthetic but also bodily effects" (p. 315).*

At the Bean Dance at Shungopavi (Hopi) I experienced the collective percussive effects of drumming, singing, rattling, and foot stamping as compelling and demanding. The effect was particularly intensified by the closeness of environment in the small crowded space in the underground kiva, and the rush of the dancers toward the spacial pattern of the dance. To be an uninvolved observer is impossible in such a situation. Attention and participation are not choices to be made; they are involuntary, a physiological coordination with the whole event.

Is there a physiological phenomenon occurring which unifies the heart beat of each individual present with the beat of the song/dance? I attempted to check my own pulse against the pulse of the song/dance but found the effort a distraction and was unwilling to suspend or withdraw my complete involvement with the event in favor of analysis.

During the Yaqui Easter Ceremony I experienced another example of the compelling nature of insistent rhythms. This was the marching of the Fariseos and Chapayekas who struck Chapayeka dagger against sword. Two rows of perhaps one hundred men made a journey up each side of the plaza, crossed one another and continued down the opposite side of the plaza, all the while steadily marching, creating an even and long repetition of sound. This had a commanding, almost hypnotizing, even terrorizing effect. In fact, this march is a re-enactment of the Roman soldiers' search for Christ. Compare this with other images of military march: columns in formation; Hitler's goosestepping armies. Regardless of the implication of the event it is difficult to remain uninvolved at a fundamental, physical level. Whether the march of a holiday parade, the beat of the Shaman's drum or a passing car with blaring music, repetition of a pulse is compelling.

Inherent in these two experiences (Hopi and Yaqui) of long and mesmerizing repetitions was the subsequent power of the interruption. In the Hopi dance that interruption could be a pause - not even a full beat long; a change in meter or a sudden subdivision of the beat. At Yaqui it was an aural shift - after three days of the march being a tow-first shuffling sound, suddenly during "The Gloria" section they changed to a heel-first kicking sound. In both cases one's attention and participation is heightened, intensified and the vibratory shift has a deep and penetrating effect physically, emotionally and psychically.

*(Needham, Rodney. "Percussion and Transition." *Reader in Comparative Religion*, William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt, eds. New York: Harper and Row. 1979. pp. 311-317)

ENDURANCE/THRESHOLD

...In the creative process is it possible to be truly free of preconceptions? How deeply rooted is social and artistic conditioning? How *original* can one really be? ...By cross-cultural exposure to other beliefs and systems of behavior, one can be freed, to a greater or lesser extent, from one's own cultural and social conditioning. *Without adopting other conditions*, perhaps a greater range of expression can be achieved. What practices can be developed to guide the creative process toward this goal?

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Heritage of Dance (India Tourism Development Corp 1979, 1985). The publication does not acknowledge the street troupes. Nevertheless all non-classic performance groups - tribal, folk and itinerant are good resources for research (see Miner 1985, and especially Gargi 1966).

TURKEY: The dervish brotherhoods and "belly dancers" are the most completely documented Turkish dance groups in the English literature. There are, however, numerous other Turkish dance traditions. I saw performances of folk dances that differ greatly from the above.

Turkish friends assure me that Turkey has a rich complex of dance cultures, confirming Tosun's observation that knowledge about the "vast and varicolored panoply of Turkish dance" is hindered by the paucity of informative material... written the English language" (Tosun 1981). Turkish scholar, Metin And, published a monograph about Turkish dance, but there is much more to be researched by dance ethnologists (And 1959).

MOROCCO: Some studies have been made of the dancing brotherhoods, many of which comprise entire villages, but I am unaware of any research by dance ethnologists.

In the United States the most

famous brotherhood is Jahjouka, featured by Bryan Jones of the Rolling Stones in the 1960s. Jahjouka is in the spotlight again with a soon to be released record produced by Mick Jagger. According to Dr. Mohamed Chtatou (personal communication) religious sanctions require Jahjouka to be selective as they adapt to commercial demands. For example, Jahjouka is adamant that a young man must dance the role of the female jinn, "Aisha Qondisha," despite strong outside pressure to replace the man with a woman.

Dr. Chtatou is studying Jahjouka and we can look forward to the results of his studies. Despite ongoing interest in Moroccan dance traditions by Europeans Americans, Dr. Chtatou suggests that the field is scarcely explored.

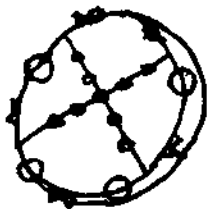
Many dances from Moroccan traditions are displayed in the annual Festival of the Arts held every year in late May or early June in Marrakesh. Videotapes and eyewitness accounts confirm that these dances are spectacular and culturally profound. For background information about Moroccan dances see *Arabesque Magazine* (1978) and Knapp (1988).

CONCLUSION: The research potentials of the above dance cultures are exciting. Perhaps some readers of this Newsletter will be inspired to make investigations. If so, please keep CCDR informed.

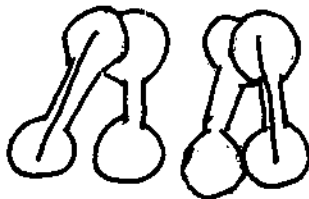
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Left - some contributions to CCDR from J. Kealiinohomoku, purchased fall, 1989.



Bubon - Ukraine



(Above) Krakeb clappers
(Right) Darabukke, Morocco



THE MEMBERSHIP PAGE

NEW MEMBERS AT CCDR

CCDR welcomes the following new members: Ann Carlson, Steve Creson, Denise Dovell, Catherine Elston, Elaine Heekin, Dr. Roderyk Lange, Gertrude Lippincott, Barbara Michaelson, H.A. Nimmo, Islene Pinder, Phillip Schafer, Kit Stepenson, Doris Veranne, and Bruce Walczyk.

NOTES AND NEWS

CCDR member Christine Tobias, an undergraduate student attending the University of Hawaii, is the first American to be invited to participate in the Beijing Dance Academy's two year certificate program.

* * *

Asha Gopal, East Indian dancer, and Laura Moya of the Institute for Hispanic Dance, with studios in Phoenix, and members of CCDR, have both been awarded major grants by the Arizona Commission on the Arts. Gopal and her company were presented in concert by the Coconino Center for the Arts on January 26. Laura Moya and Company along with special guest artist, Pablo Rodarte, will present a program of Flamenco, folk and classical Spanish dance at the Herberger Theatre in Phoenix on February 23 and 24.

* * *

As part of her doctoral studies at The Union Institute, Cincinnati, Ohio, Cynthia Knox is in Dharamsala, India where she is investigating healing techniques among the Tibetan Buddhists in exile.

* * *

AN OPEN LETTER

CCDR would like to thank all of its members for their ongoing and generous support of the H.K.K. Residency and contributions to the CCDR general and research funds.

Your generosity has resulted in CCDR being able to host its third H.K.K. Memorial Research Choreographer-in-Residence, to contract a part time staff person and purchase much needed research materials.

As with many non-profit organizations, our needs appear endless. Thanks to all of our contributors who have demonstrated to us that our goals are worth achieving.

The Board of Directors

Beverly Pollack choreographed and produced a dance presentation October 13, 1989 at the Lama Foundation in Taos, New Mexico. The work, entitled "Kiskya: Passage-way" is dedicated to the memory of Halla Kaiulani Keali'inohomoku, "Dancer, Creative Spirit."

Among the dancers in this performance was Travis Jarvis, another member of CCDR.

* * *

The Board of Directors welcomes two new directors: Holly Hamilton and Elson Miles.

* * *

With this issue CCDR Newsletter has expanded from four to six pages. Members are invited to contribute articles one or two pages in length as well as items to be included in "Notes and News."

* * *

Ou Jian-ping from Beijing has translated Kealiinohomoku's article "An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance" for publication in the Republic of China's dance journal Wudaoyishu. The journal's signature drawing and the article's translated title are reproduced below.



一位人类学家眼中的芭蕾
论芭蕾是一种人种舞蹈形式

(美) 蔡·基阿里诺霍姆著

WUDAOYISHU

DONATIONS

John Irwin, former member of the Board of Directors has donated two acid-free print files which now house a complete photographic and documental history of CCDR from its inception beginning in 1981. John prepared the collection, also.

* * *

A master thesis written for the Department of Physical Education, University of Arizona by CCDR member Kathleen Verity Shorr entitled "Dancing the Miao-Yu: Asian Influences in the Dance Arts of Merce Cunningham and Erick Hawkins" (1984) has been given to the CCDR library.

* * *

Drs. Edwin and Marcia Segal have contributed a video-tape of music and dance from Malawi where they have done extensive fieldwork. Accompanying it is the book *Malawian Music* by Gerhard Kubik.

* * *

Pamela Kihm donated a copy of "Chair Rhythmics with Pam," a video-tape that she produced, performed and markets.

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moment to moment communication and play of weight, balance, momentum, and energy between two people moving together through continually renewed physical contact. Through its practice we expand our individual movement awareness and physical/technical skills, while simultaneously discovering a wider range of possibilities in relating to and dancing with others."

The workshop was a satisfying experience for all who participated. While David is pursuing his research, Flagstaff dancers are benefiting from his presence.

For a generous contribution in support of this newsletter CCDR wishes to thank...



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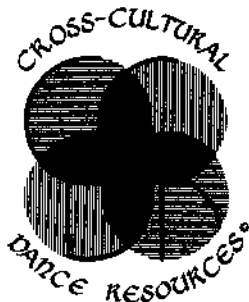
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RESIDENCY APPLICATIONS

Applications will be accepted through July 31, 1990 for the fourth H.K.K. Memorial Residency. On August 31, 1990 the 1991 awardee will be announced. Please inform interested choreographers so that they may contact CCDR at 518 S. Agassiz, Flagstaff, AZ 86001 or phone (602) 774-8108 for applications.

CCDR is actively soliciting contributions to help sustain the H.K.K. Memorial Research Choreographer-in-Residence program. We encourage you to help out with this drive. CCDR is a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization, and contributions are tax deductible. Thank you!

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