

**APPLICATION OF LABAN MOVEMENT ANALYSIS TO
A MOVEMENT FOR ACTORS TRAINING PROGRAM
(Excerpts from a teaching collaboration)**

“...the body can provide a direct route to the emotions...” “In every physical action, unless it is purely mechanical, there is concealed some inner action, some feeling.”

Constantine Stanislavski (p228)

CONTENT:

- I. Introduction
- II. Context and Methods
- III. BESS (Body, Effort, Shape, Space)
- IV. Findings
- V. Conclusions
- VI. Appendices
 - 1. Biographies of researchers
 - 2. Bibliographies
 - 3. Literature overview and comments
 - 4. Summaries of workshops and participant evaluations
 - 5. Student comments and blog site reactions
 - 6. Future Possibilities
 - 7. DVD Content and Overview

(As this report is intended to give an overview of what we did and to act as a resource for further work, the length of the Appendices reflects this and provides pointers for further development.)

I. INTRODUCTION

In February 2005 we - Kedzie Penfield and Judith Steel - applied to PALATINE, the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for dance, drama and music, for a Development Award to bring JS to Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh [UK] to collaborate with KP in training first and second year undergraduate students in the acting programme. Monies were awarded for travel, accommodation, audio and visual recording and copying costs. Both of our institutions agreed to support the project through administrative support and research leave. The motivation for this project came from professional curiosity and personal questions: although we both work in conservatoire programmes where philosophical approaches to the training are shared with colleagues, neither of us have had the opportunity to explore the LMA (Laban Movement Analysis) framework while teaching with an experienced practitioner in the same field of training performers' bodies. Dialogue was needed in and out of the studio in order to articulate and codify pedagogies, re-energise and extend our teaching practice, see if new practical or theoretical LMA material could be developed and disseminate that to other practitioners interested in the field.

History

Rudolph von Laban (1879-1958) was a dancer, choreographer, architect and painter from central Europe who developed theories and systems of movement notation, (Labanotation) Spatial theories (Choreutics) and qualitative movement analysis (Effort/Shape) in the first half of the last century. While struggling to capture movement in writing, he uncovered basic principles of form, sequence and dynamics. Irmgard Bartenieff, a dancer and student of his, brought his work to New York in the 1950s where it has continued to develop throughout the USA and Europe. Mrs. Bartenieff did a second training as a physiotherapist (her skills as a German Expressionist dancer were not welcomed in post WWII America) and, combining that training with her experience as a dancer, she evolved a system of body level work known as Bartenieff Fundamentals. The qualitative (and therefore expressive) aspects of this framework were also developed by Warren Lamb, (U.K.) Judith Kestenberg (USA) and many others.

The qualitative description and observation of movement based on Laban's work is affectionately known as BESS (Body, Effort, Shape, Space) and differs in some ways from the British based Laban work. Here we are using what we will call LMA (Laban Movement Analysis) to differentiate it from the Laban work in the UK. The latter development of Laban's work does not include some aspects of work such as Warren Lamb's Shape contribution or the Bartenieff Fundamentals. We are not comparing it with other frameworks such as Feldenkrais, Stanislavski or various training systems that are used and worthwhile. Rather we want to explore how we can use LMA in actor training.

More recent applications of LMA in the United States include non-verbal communication and somatic studies, team building in businesses, police work identifying "lying", diagnostic work with mental and physical pathology and disability. As modern practitioners in an academic and practical training environment we want to add to the development of LMA applications – in this case to the training of actors.

II CONTEXT AND METHODS

Context:

The context in which this teaching took place is very specific: QMUC is a small Higher Education institution in Edinburgh, Scotland and the programme is housed in the School of Drama and Creative Industries. The course consists of three years undergraduate study with 22 students in each year. (There is a fourth year for BA Honours students but few, if any, students elect to take it as their primary interest is to be performing, professional actors.) Tutorials, assessments, visiting lecturers, examiners and production coordination of such a course takes place through the core teaching team: Head of Voice, Head of Acting, Head of Movement Studies and two part time acting teachers. Visiting Lecturers cover specific areas of expertise not covered by the permanent staff such as mime, mask work, accent and dialects, stage combat, historical and ballroom dance.

The students are, for the most part, aged 18 – 25, British and often very young and inexperienced. Usually there are one or two older and a couple of international students who add a steadying influence on the younger members of the group. These young people usually enter the training from school or similar environment where they are told what to learn then graded on what they produce. In some cases where we are trying to look at the movement style of the individual (see below) we find we are dealing with people who don't know who they are yet – much less how their movement is different from someone else's. They are asked to learn – and think – about themselves without judgment; they are not to grade themselves but rather to explore, observe and learn about their own and their colleagues' movement. This is seen as a challenging and sometimes even frightening prospect for the young person who wants to be told exactly how to “do it” – i.e. become the next big star of stage and screen.

Method

The time line for this project was Autumn semester, 2005: 14 weeks of teaching and coaching with two workshops at the end in which we presented much of the findings in this report. We had two one and a half hour classes a week with the first year students in half groups – i.e. 11 in each class. Similarly we had split groups with the second year but only met with them once a week. We attended rehearsals of the second year's Shakespeare productions when we could and gave 15 minute coaching sessions for character work in those shows. Both first and second year groups were also required to attend a half hour limber before classes every morning which we often led; another opportunity to re-enforce what had been introduced in class time.

The syllabus for movement work is left very open; module descriptors include “practical classes using improvisation, discussion and tutorials” to support the skills of “physicalising” character, observing movement and knowing one's own body in order to warm up appropriately for any task given. In the “expressive movement “ classes we usually started with body level material taken from Fundamentals and then wove Space and Effort into the classes as soon as the students seemed ready for it. Our discussions, observations and debates after each class formed the basis of our findings. (see below)

The structure of the QMUC acting course is to “front load” (i.e. give as much of a skill base as possible as soon as possible) the curriculum in the first and – to a lesser extent – the second years so that the skills learned can be applied to projects (in the 1st year) and productions (in the 2nd year). Thus we tried to introduce as much of BESS as possible to the first year students in the first semester but we had to “cherry pick” the elements we saw as most helpful as there was not enough time to cover everything. We chose to focus on body, space, shape and effort in that order. The second year students began with Shakespeare so we applied the framework to their work with sonnets and the two productions they were performing: *All's Well that Ends Well* and *Love's Labour's Lost*.

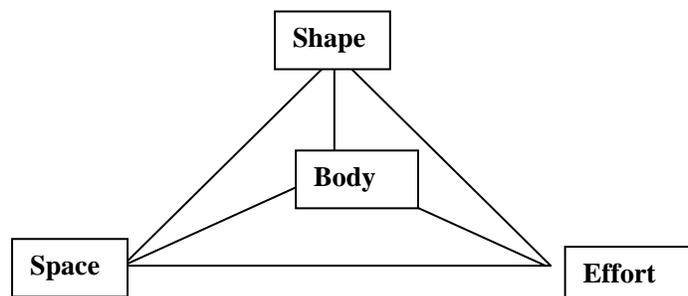
Documentation:

A blog site was created as a means to document the teaching process and to create space for dialogue and interaction amongst other practitioners in the field. (See <http://blog.vcu.edu/jsteel> and excerpts from it in Appendix 5 below.)

In order to provide another potentially useful resource for disseminating the information to Higher Education institutions, PALATINE made funds available for filming a class a week and both workshops. The recorded material was edited down to a half-hour DVD which is available from PALATINE (<http://www.lancs.ac.uk/palatine>) and the authors. (e-mail addresses in biographies Appendix 1 below)

III. BESS: Body Effort Shape Space (excerpt from classes using Fundamentals to get into Space can be seen on the DVD)

These are the four categories of movement description we look at in the LMA framework:



They are diagrammed into a tetrahedral form to indicate that they are equal categories. We chose to put the “body” category in the centre as it can have both meanings – one category or concept of “BESS” and the physical aspect of ourselves.

Body - We organized this category around the experience of *Bartenieff Fundamentals* which emphasizes physical connectedness, refinement in use of the body, movement efficiency, clarity, and sensory-motor connections utilizing maximum core and breath support. Some examples of physical connectedness follow:

- Breath
- Core-Distal connectivity
- Head/Tail connectivity
- Upper-Lower connectivity
- Body Half connectivity
- Cross Lateral connectivity

In this photograph you see two people in the knee-lowered position of the fifth basic sequence. The cross lateral connectivity is less observable on the man's body than the woman's: his torso is almost straight and there is little diagonal connection through his torso as he has simply twisted the lower unit rather than allowing his body parts to be taken into a diagonal configuration



The use of fundamentals in the acting class--(See "Basic 6" handout below)*

Lower initiation – sequences that support the actions of going sitting, then standing; i.e. principles of changing level

- Head tail connection – looking at this in relation to postural baseline, body attitude, its presence in moving through space and changing level
- 3D full bodied movement – used as a warm-up- used as a 'value' in movement assessments
- Falls and rolls – practice in using these in movement class and in scenes derived from stage combat class - [\(Several applications of this are evident in the DVD\)](#)

Effort – the dynamics of movement identified through weight space time and flow; organized in patterns of exertion and recuperation or other kinds of phrasing.

The use of effort in the acting class

- Playing with different effort possibilities for a character and deciding on the particular movement qualities of a specific character.

Shape – internal attitude shapes external form; how form relates to the environment (for instance whether the body action relates to the space around the body at all or pokes or carves through it). Shape is the “container” for the effort or dynamics of the movement - described as growing/shrinking; linear or arc-like pathway; shaping/moulding space around body.

The use of shape in the acting class-

- As a support for Fundamentals (breath support for all actions)
- As a support for any actions of the body and its effort life (the changing relationship of the body's shape in response to the mover's inner attitude)
- As a support for the process of moving into space; how the body accommodates a changing form, direction or pathway)

Space Harmony- movement related to geometric form and architectural structures similar to crystalline forms found in nature- dimensions, planes, diagonals, cube, octahedron, icosahedron. The approach to one's personal kinesphere, how we access the space around us; use of spatial qualities and spatial intent. Below we have participants using the sagittal dimension to relate to each other or to a prop.



The use of space in the acting class –

- Attention to possibilities of pathways, level change, the use of dimensions and planes, the possibility of 3 dimensional movements and the difference in feeling and look of such movements in space for different characters.
- The use of vertical dimension to address alignment issues: head, neck, back relationships, the torso righting itself from a level change, etc.
- The use of all dimensions to address core strength and alignment: head tail connectivity, - relationship to external surroundings in terms of up-down, side-side, forward-back, diagonals. (some application of these is on the DVD)

The above four categories of movement were used for students to explore their own movement preferences so that the awareness of what movement qualities (body type, gesture systems, etc.) were available to them in order to further articulate and explore in their acting work.

***Handout of Basic Six: *Bartenieff Fundamental sequences* given to first year actors in fourth week of first semester:** (The first two movements described are preparations for the first Basic sequence.)

HEEL-ROCK – lying on back, legs extended and in parallel, arms by sides

- *Gentle rock set up from ankle flexion/extension*
- *Heel is the anchor point, toes and metatarsals arcing fwd and bwd*
- *Notice movement: nodding in head, weight of pelvis rocking fwd and bwd,*

Partners; assist with rock initiated from feet- gently pull and release

PRE-THIGH LIFT- begin with body extended lying on back

- *Slowly draw foot toward pelvis; sitz bone on same side till foot is planted on floor and knee is bent 90 degrees*
- *Imaging the pelvis is the anchor and the leg is the freely moveable distal end that folds and unfolds*
- *Breath cycle – inhale, move on the "hollowing" exhale, inhale, extend back to length on exhale*
- *Alternate legs*

1- THIGH LIFT- begin lying on back with knees bent 90 degrees, feet on floor, and legs in parallel

- *Pure femoral flexion- hinge leg maintaining position at knee*

- *Imagine drawing an arc in space with the kneecap*
- *Pelvis maintains neutral position of floor- no shifting in hips*
- *No tightening of opposite leg*
- *No tightening of lower back*
- *Release tension in neck, shoulders, jaw*
- *Breath cycle- inhale, flexion occurs just after (hollowing) exhale begins*

2- FORWARD PELVIC SHIFT - begin lying on back with knees bent 90 degrees, feet on floor, and legs in parallel

- *Simultaneously shift whole pelvis forward and high initiating with lowest point on pelvic girdle- sitz bones, coccyx*
- *Observe knees moving over shins, ankles flexing; moving slightly forward following the forward shift*
- *Breath cycle – inhale, fwd pelvis shift occurs on (hollowing)exhale*

3- LATERAL PELVIC SHIFT - begin lying on back with knees bent 90 degrees, feet on floor, and legs in parallel

- *Simultaneously shift the whole pelvis forward and high initiating with lowest point of pelvic girdle- sitz bones, coccyx(as 2 above but not as far – just clear the floor)*
- *Maintaining the pelvis in the horizontal plane; shift laterally to the right- through the greater trochanters- to the right side*
- *Crease in the hip sockets and return sacrum to floor*
- *Shift the whole pelvis forward again toward the direction of the right foot*
- *Realign the pelvis back to center (tailbone aimed between the feet) and creasing in the hip socket, bring the sacrum back to contact with the floor*
- *Repeat on other side – going left.*

4- BODY HALF – begin in the big X

- *To establish the midline between right and left halves of your body sense the spine as centre line of the body*
- *Initiating with elbow and knee of the same side, bring right body half together(bring elbow and knee together)*
- *Stay as flat as possible*
- *Initiating with fingers and toes, return to big X position*
- *Repeat on other side*

5- DIAGONAL KNEE LOWER (or REACH)- begin lying on back with knees bent 90 degrees, feet on floor, and legs in parallel; finding a clear diagonal pull of upper against lower

- *Initiate outward rotation of the right thigh bone, opening knee towards floor; or reach knees to lower over to one side pulling your torso into a diagonal configuration.*
- *Initiate inward rotation of left thigh towards right thigh*
- *Adjust upper body to place left arm in line of diagonal pull to lower*
- *Breath cycle; inhale, then on (hollowing) exhale initiate the return of the knees to center bringing sacrum to floor leading with tailbone; actively engaging pelvic floor*
- *Repeat on other side*

6- ARM CIRCLE - begin lying on back with knees bent 90 degrees, feet on floor, and legs in parallel

- *Initiate a diagonal knee lower to the right*

- *Find diagonal pull with left arm*
- *Begin a counter clockwise arm circle beginning with the left arm; palm up-which faces floor as arm goes overhead; returns to facing ceiling as arm crosses thigh. Keep fingers on floor as much as possible.*
- *Maintain the diagonal pull in the lower while completing the arm circle (parallel to the floor)*
- *Reverse directions of the arm circle*
- *Return pelvis back to center with exhale; leading with tailbone/Repeat on other side*

IV. FINDINGS

In discussion with our voice and acting colleagues we came up with the following list to identify what an actor's physical training should achieve:

The ability to develop a free, expressive, and spontaneous body.

The ability to activate the imagination in movement-making [creative play].

The ability to access space in a dynamic and integrated manner.

The ability to 'tune-in' to oneself as well as others- develop a relationship with oneself as well as connections with another

The ability to find variation, accent, and modulation in one's movement choices.

The ability to match one's inner sensations and feelings with an expressive and articulate outer form through the body in the context of enacting a role.

The ability to build a character out of one's movement possibilities

The ability to integrate voice, movement, acting

The ability to develop a personal working process – including how to warm-up, how to work out solutions to a problem in movement, how to 'body-listen' as a way into the process of learning and expressing oneself through movement.

In this paper we do not want to discuss the most effective way of teaching LMA, rather we want to address as specifically as possible how LMA can contribute to an actor's training and work within the context as described above. We have chosen four areas of investigation to share here.

Body Level Work

Irmgard Bartenieff maintained that the main physical problems that occur for individuals in modern life, in her experience as a physiotherapist, were:

- Breath that is blocked or held
- Head disconnected from the rest of the spine/head-tail connection not integrated
- Lower initiation is underused – emphasis in our society of reliance on the upper; not using lower for support or for propulsion through space.

The actors in the movement class proved to be no exception to these overall observations of 'individuals in modern life'. (Hackney 6-7). We therefore chose to emphasize the following practical work in the first semester with the first years:

- Lower initiation – sequences that support the actions of going from sitting, then to standing
- Head tail connection – looking at this in relation to one's postural baseline, body attitude,

- and its presence in moving through space and changing level
- 3D full bodied movement – used as a warm-up and also used as a ‘value’ and an assessment tool in movement projects
- Falls and rolls – ongoing practice with using these skills as a way to reinforce a fundamental body practice, as well as for use in scenes using stage combat material.

Explorations of Bartenieff’s Fundamental body connections helped students to discover movement possibilities, to investigate their own movement habits and to develop greater efficiency and clarity in their physical actions, which then had an impact on the expressivity of those actions. The Fundamentals work (including Space and Effort) provided reinforcement for the idea that the core of the body (the centre of the torso and pelvis) is the support for all peripheral actions; that changing level from the floor to sitting, to kneeling, to standing is a complex activity that requires a strong awareness of head/tail connection and core support without which the expressive result of the body moving is accidental, uncontrolled and sometimes unhelpful.

Pedagogically, this ties in with developing a students’ personal process. How one person goes about exploring possibilities, making choices, understanding and associating to the ‘feel’ of different movements could be vastly different from another’s. Valuing and encouraging these differences through their explorations promotes one’s personal development and strengthens their potential as actors. We used videotape to show students how they looked doing ordinary as well as large, full-bodied movements. Observation assignments were given through which they brought in notes and observations of their own and colleagues’ gestural habits, physical tendencies and movement patterns.

An example of a first year student comes to mind: L is a very pretty, slender young woman who moves from a weight-flow base. Her flexible body often seems like a piece of energized, alert spaghetti; she speaks with much hand waving, which combines free flow with quickness, directness but little weight effort. She can play the hysterical mood well and is discovering a talent for comedy that she did not know she had. When she first came she had no sense of her center; little sense of grounding, no core strength and gave an impression of vulnerability and physical weakness which did not allow for stage presence or any robust sense of the roles she tried to play. It took her a couple of months to even understand what we meant by “core strength” but she could see that her arms were never supported by her postural movement and that she could not do some simple sequences without “being floppy” as she called it. (e.g. walking on feet and hands without allowing the waist to collapse; using her breath for more postural support; actively using space to arc herself up in the big X from lying to sitting).

She did participate well in classes however and began to feel how different her body was if she related clearly to a vertical dimension, stayed connected in her movements and tried actively reaching through space or rarifying her weight. As she began to apply these qualities of movement her feeling of herself changed: she could access a different expressivity that had more variation and control than before and that could be taken into different roles. She became more aware of, and articulate with, her body-movement self which enabled her to expand her ability to enact different characters from within.

As Hackney states:

“There is a tendency in our movement training to encourage ourselves and our students to imitate an outward form rather than making the movement live comfortably from within.” (p. 24)

Barrel Turns

The most complex and physically demanding technical movement we teach in this programme is a barrel turn: a horizontal plane jump which should have the sense of going over a barrel as the performer does it across the space. Actors usually do not do movement for its own sake, nor do they necessarily need to perform barrel turns in an audition so students ask, “Why do we have to learn this?” Although we can all agree that ‘being physical’ is good, and required in the training process, the answer lies in thinking about how the barrel turn skill was taught. It actually evolved in increments; taking place over the entire class period which was devoted to a fundamental and developmental approach. Taking the students from basic movement patterns to more complex forms in space, time, and effort, was a challenging and eventful process. The amount of concentration and exploration it took to investigate avenues of ‘body level connectedness’ was highly focused and consuming. The ability to discriminate and focus on subtle shifts in sensory-motor learning presented the student with an opportunity to discover choices in ‘how’ they use their body with the added bonus of enhancing self-confidence as a mover. (Extracts from this teaching process is in the first chapter on the DVD)

Abstract Movement

Many students derive inspiration from imagery which is stimulated by Body, Effort or Space and through the image can more fully activate their imaginations. The process supports them in creating their own personal and embodied connection to the underlying intention of the piece. Using Shakespeare’s Sonnets, second year students were asked to devise a one to two minute movement piece that expressed an image, thought or narrative taken from one or more lines in the sonnet. They could begin wherever they wished: with an image, feeling, gesture – anything that came into movement stimulated by the sonnet. Some began with a spontaneous movement they then investigated, developed and polished through applying LMA; others began with what they saw as the dynamics in the text and worked through LMA to the movement statement.



A second year student (whose piece is on the DVD) performing several lines from a Sonnet.

As a movement task it was an effective way to expand the notion of expressive movement choices fulfilling a specific intention inspired by text. As an acting exercise it gave the students another way of understanding the poetry. (Several said they understood “what Shakespeare was on about better after doing the movement work to it.”) Another aspect of the *Moving Sonnets*, as we called them, was that class members became observers as well as performers. As they watched each other, they were able to see a wide range of interpretation and creative expression that expressed the performer’s truth of the source material. (see DVD)

We used abstract movement as a focus for the first years when they were asked to devise a 1-2 minute movement piece based on the character they were studying in acting class, from the short play **Abortive** (by Sarah Churchill). They were asked to use a prop (e.g. a newspaper, piece of food, a table or chair, a towel, a piece of clothing) and exaggeration to come up with abstract or functional movement material. (e.g. sitting in a chair then changing the chair into something else). They used their intuitive and creative talents to come up with movement ideas which they then refined with LMA tools (sharpening the dynamics through applying effort, clarifying the spatial aspects through shape and space, improving the physical accuracy through body category). One female student took a hair brush, using it naturalistically at first then more abstractly, devised a movement sequence where she is pulled in different directions by the hair brush. Besides producing an interesting movement statement about the character, she said she learned something more about the character of Roz being so invested in her looks – perhaps being “pulled” around by a desperate need for her make-up, hair brush and other accoutrements of beauty. (see DVD)



In the photo to the left, a first year student is working with a table which she used to indicate a kitchen counter. She mimed mixing ingredients in a bowl: taking the turning movement of the lower arm into her whole upper torso. Her frenetic, whirling movement expressed the inner life of moments of Roz’s character at a higher energy level than she had ever previously used. She found she could then take that into her performance of the scene with more possibilities of expression simply having put her body through the experience of playing with a higher physical energy level in her abstract movement.

Not having a lot of experience with the LMA system often meant that students could not begin the creative act with this system. Many, however, valued the variety and fullness they achieved through experimentation with it. Perhaps most importantly some were able to take what they learned (particularly the feeling states behind some of the movements which LMA work had enabled them to embody) and apply it to their work on those characters in their acting class. This use of abstract, sometimes dance-like movement also engages the students’ in developing a more differentiated use of their energy. Classes where students are required to find physical

extremes – e.g. falls, rolls, extreme change of levels and high energy dance combinations – allow students to become familiar with a broader range of physical choices and experiences. In addition to the actual physical challenge, this teaching approach has a direct effect on the skill of increasing or decreasing energy levels when it is integrated into an acting context. Emphasizing more energy and full-bodied participation allows the student to fully experience the body's involvement. It then becomes apparent that the size or range of physical action can be controlled – a large broad stroke or a subtle presence. It teaches the actor that the awareness and control of one's physical participation can enhance and define the quality of the expression. It offers the opportunity to gain more specificity and more discrimination in integrating movement and meaning.

“Once you have found your full expressivity – it is easier to cutback than never to have found it at all” ... Stephen Wangh

Notes on coaching for roles in the Shakespeare plays

Coaching actors on their personal choices demonstrates the specificity and immediate challenges in understanding how body movement in LMA terms supports a character. We coached the second year students in their Shakespeare roles and LMA gave us a way of asking questions which helped the students explore the non-verbal language and character of their roles:

Do you initiate movement from the core, distal or mid-limb?

What kind of body attitude do you hold? What is your alignment?

How can your postural movement support your gestures and vice versa?

How can you use time, weight, space/focus, flow to depict changes in attitude and intention?

If your character goes through a transformation within the play, how do you physically track those changes? What baseline does your character move from? What stays the same? What is different?

If you use a prop, is it an extension of your character? Did you have time to play and experiment with the essential qualities of the prop? Does the prop suggest anything to you?

How do you use focus? Do you allow yourself space to choose how you take in the environment and interact with those in it? If your costume, shoes, accessories etc. shape and design the body in a very specific stylistic manner, how do you accommodate that within your character's essential qualities?

How does the style of the play affect your physical self?

Or, in this next example:

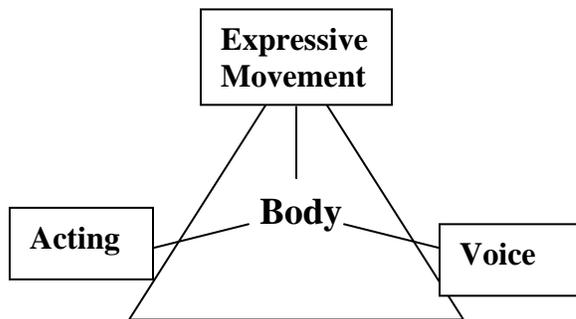
How can you get your core to be active and support the text you need to say but at the same time be clearly ill and suffering?

The question above outlined a large problem for a young actor playing the French King in the first part of *All's Well that Ends Well*. The student actor tended to use his weight very passively in his portrayal of the sick King sitting in a wheel chair. The director wanted a vital, kingly character even if he was ill; the problem seemed to be how to get the actor to actively play an old, sickly king without losing performing energy or the authority of his character. Another aspect of this was the student's own movement preferences: as a tall (6'3") willowy young man often operating at a low energy level he had a very concave body attitude and a sustained, uni-focused (direct) effort preference. Using his sustainment as a bridge, so to speak, to verticality

and multi- focused (indirect or flexible) attention, he found a way to attain and renew an active relationship to being vertical in his sitting and to being inclusive in his spatial attitude (multi-focused). This physical experience gave him a clear sense of how the king could be regal which he then took into his enactment of royalty diminished by illness. Having established a physical movement presence he overlaid it with the emotive quality required.

A 3-dimensional warm-up allows for a more full use of the voice

In the split group teaching, one half had voice while the other had movement, then the groups switched. With the first group we happened to be working on three dimensional level changes and access to space. (Spirals etc). When the second group came into class they seemed centered and warmed up which seemed logical as they had just had 1 ½ hour voice work which, that morning, had been about breathing in different ways. This work tended to be planal or dimensional with no three dimensional movement. We found the second group – though warmed up vocally and dimensionally – were not able to get into the spirals we needed without added preparation. This makes sense but what we had not expected was the voice teacher’s reaction after seeing her second group. (i.e. our first group who had been working three dimensionally.) She was surprised at the access they had to their voices and asked what had we done to affect this? After discussion we concluded that it was the three-dimensional movement work – a demand that the full body be used in the most complex way in relation to space- that also brought the voice into a more full use. One explanation could be that the spirals and breath support needed to produce them also released and opened the musculature around the ribs, especially the intercostals. This gives the ribs more flexibility and range, thus increasing breath support. These kinds of examples show the possibilities of integrating all movement work with the other aspects of actor training: the body is the instrument through which the learning and expression happens. If we put this idea together with the three main practical strands of our acting course we get the following diagram:



V. CONCLUSIONS

Perhaps LMA gives actors a safe way to change – a process that any training will require the student to do. A new skill is to be acquired but in that acquisition comes loss of what was before; one cannot move the body two different ways at the same time. Movement itself is about the muscles changing in order to achieve motion; the quality with which this is done is controlled by the brain. It is therefore essential to have a system, a framework such as LMA, to describe what is occurring so that it can be investigated both mentally and physically. The very process of

investigation will change the mover's relationship to himself so that even if the choice made is to stay with a previous alignment or movement quality it is different when done with awareness— i.e. after an investigative process which will allow the actor to renew his commitment to moving in a certain way or to change it and move in a new way. Once this process has been experienced in terms of finding one's own movement style (alignment, effort, shape, space and phrasing preferences) it can be applied to character work and provide the actor a way of “getting inside” the role from a physical approach.

*“Everything is movement, even a thought.”- Robin Wilson –Head of Acting and Course Leader
Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh, Scotland*

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Biographies of Researchers

Kedzie Penfield trained as a dancer, dance therapist and movement analyst in NYC in the early 1970's. After moving to the Borders of Scotland in 1975 where she has lived ever since, she worked as a free lance choreographer and dancer; a therapist, supervisor and trainer in private practice and in the NHS. She directed the first LMA training programme in Europe at the Rotterdamse Dansacademie in 1986 and in 1996 trained as a psychoanalytical psychotherapist in Edinburgh. In 2002 she took a permanent post as Head of Movement Studies in Queen Margaret University College's Acting Course where she teaches student actors physical skills and expressive movement. kpenfield@qmuc.ac.uk



Judith K. Steel, is a dancer, choreographer, and currently an Associate Professor in the Dept. of Dance and Choreography at Virginia Commonwealth University in the U.S. where she teaches in both the creative and technique tracks. She holds an M.A. degree in Dance from the University of Colorado, and is a practicing C.M.A.(Certified Movement Analyst) through the Laban Institute of Movement Studies in NYC. She has been on the dance faculties of Ohio State University, SUNY Brockport, the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance in London, and the National School of Contemporary Dance in Copenhagen, Denmark. Ms. Steel was a company member of the contemporary dance company *Pittsburgh Dance Alloy*, as well as a choreographer for numerous works with collaborators in visual arts, new music, and video. jsteel@vcu.edu



Appendix 2: Bibliographies

References that include mention of LMA or Laban's theories as applied to actor training (partial list)

Adrian, Barbara “*An introduction to LMA for actors: a historical, theoretical, and practical perspective*” **Potter, Nichole (ed) Movement for Actors pp.73 -84 Allworth Press; NY: 2002**

p.73 begins an article by Barbara Adrian entitled; “An introduction to LMA for actors: a historical, theoretical and practical perspective. “LMA is a process by which the actor can become so precise in his physical choices that he optimizes the possibility of revealing the story to the audience in ways unique to the character and the circumstances” .p.73 Stanislavski was interested in organic movement of everyday life. (p. 74) the birth of BESS/LMA stimulates the same idea of moving with an awareness of movement integrated with function and expression ...

SHAPE = the link between effort and space

CPT= Central, Peripheral, Transverse= spatial pathways that are intersections of shape and space

LMA and acting = the framework that LMA provides is an important partner with acting processes

Conclusion: LMA does not have a history of tried and true exercises...a series of ideas and theories can become unfocused if not directed toward a visceral and specific focus. Coaches of LMA must temper the analytical aspects of the work. The visceral level experience is important to involve and ignite the imagination. It is impossible to spot a ‘laban trained’ actor. Because of LMA’s inherent universality...it is not an end unto itself but a support to increase potential and expressive power.---author acknowledges the universality o LMA and the potential for it to be misunderstood....the inclusion of Body and Shape as an addition to Effort and Space is a nice inclusion that separates it from most material written for actors...

Bloom, Katya and Rosa Shreeves **A Sourcebook of Ideas for Body Awareness and Creative Movement, Performing Arts Studies, Routledge: 1998**

References to LMA

Bloom, Katya *Moving Actors, Contact Quarterly, Vol 28, no. 1pp 11-17 Winter Spring 2003*

Summary of the author’s use of LMA in the actors training program at RADA in London, UK

Notes: Extensive emphasis is placed on effort theory-Fundamentals, and Shape theory and practice are not included as supporting elements in LMA framework.

Callery, Dymphna, Through the Body: a Practical Guide to Physical Theatre; Routledge NYC, 2001 (Great Britain Nick Hern Books, London 2001)

Maps the field of physical theatre; mentions Lecoq, Feldenkrais (freedom of choice), Alexander, some mention of Laban, Meyerhold, contemporaries Peter Brook (the neutral state)Author states the need for gathering of collective wisdom –also includes 40-50 useful exercises and games. Recognizes a need for body/mind connection in physical training...the need for the actor to recognize choice over habit... LMA provides a language...Alexander assumes there is a faulty sensory feedback at work...our feelings are accustomed to our habits...therefore we cannot rely on our kinesthetic feedback for ‘ correct’ action Actor as Creator is the underpinning rather than Actor as Interpreter...

Casciero, Thomas (1998) PhD Dissertation Laban Movement Studies and Actor Training (unpublished)

Consagres, Maria {Certificate project for Laban Institute of Movement Studies} Fluido – reflections on Iben Nagel Rasmussen’s Physical Training for the Actor Aug. 1996 (unpub.)

Emphasis on mobility and motion based risk taking. Author discusses this in relation to LMA theory

Gonzalez, Gabriela MA Laban Movement Analysis and Actor training: on the teaching choices. *Dissertation for Somatic Studies and Labananalysis Master Course -2003-2005*, (unpublished); Dance Department, Surrey University and Labanotation Institute at Surrey University.

Hodgeson, John Mastering Movement: the life and work of Rudolph Laban; Routledge, NYC: 2001

*Body and vocal language/,Effort and character....inner approach and movement psychology are mentioned.
Sources: Mastery of Movement on the Stage, MacDonald and Evans, London 1950
Turning theory into practice...background info*

Laban, Rudolph The Mastery of Movement 3rd ed. Plays Inc; Boston: 1971

Reviews theories of weight, space, time- asks 4 questions related to actors awareness:

1. Which part of the body moves?
2. In which direction does it move? Through which direction of space is it exerted?
3. At what speed?
4. What degree of muscular energy is used?

Discusses inner participation in relation to:

Attention – space Intention-weight Decision-time Progression- flow

Lecoq, Jacques The Moving Body: Teaching Creative Theatre Routledge, London: 2002

Mentions Laban as an example of one system that trains an actor to expand movement possibilities

Newlove, Jean Laban for Actors and Dancers: putting Laban’s movement theory into practice- a step by step process Routledge; London: 1993

Preeshl, Artemis (2005) “Manifesting the Mind Through Movement” (Unpublished)

Sabatine, Jean Movement Training for the Stage and Screen Back Stage Books; NY: 1995

Author blends the “method’ with other types of body practice. Basic concept= moving from mind to emotion to body/ the organic connection. A brief mention of Laban’s work as a theorist; explorations of space, energy,time.

Sellers-Young, Barbara Breathing, Movement, Exploration; Applause, NYC/London: 2001

Synopsis- author uses LMA (E/S) intermittently with and without the whole system...

Focuses on effort and the continuum of effort qualities...

Teases out Laban qualities and puts this in discussion with other work and exercises...

Organizes book into sections on Awareness and Application-Emphasizes body connections, breath support, dynamic alignment, imagery, as it relates to creating character

Stevenson, Geraldine and John Dalby Laban for All Nick Hern Books, London: 2004

Book not necessarily devoted to acting but simplified with sketches and pictures of LMA theories in action. Includes Crystals, Scales, Voice, Movement, Efforts

Theatre Research International “Somatics processes: Convergence of theory and practice” Theater topics 8/2 Sept. 1998 pp.173-187 “Technique and the Embodied Actor”, Theatre Research International 24/1, (Spring 1999) pp.89-102

Additional References that address movement for actor training not specific to LMA

Becker, Jonathan K. The Body is Text –Movement Training as Applied to the Dramatic Act; A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts Degree at Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA May, 2005

Bogart, Anne and Tina Landau The Viewpoints: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition Theater Communication Group; NYC: 2005

Gelb, Michael J. Body Learning : an introduction to Alexander technique 2nd ed. Henry Holt and Co; NYC

Lewis, Dennis Free your Breath, Free your Life,

Author devotes entire book to breathing techniques in both eastern and western traditions....also a lot of body awareness exercises

McEvenue, Kelly The Actor and the Alexander Technique Palgrave MacMillan, NYC: 2001

Putting the principles of Alexander tech to work in the theatre; good overview and organization A reminder that Alexander work is directional...you are always moving up and out...even with costumes and props

Pisk, Litz The Actor and His Body, Harrap, London: 1975

Ideas and movement experiences developed by Ms. Pisk as a theater movement teacher through her work at the Old Vic, RADA, and Central School of Speech and Drama. Author investigates themes that explore the relationship between movement and meaning.

Rubin, Lucille S. Movement for the Actor Drama Book Specialists: NYC: 1980

7 essays/articles written about different techniques, theories, and systems for teaching actors; premise of the book hinges on the body/mind connection-not a how to guide...

Today there are systematic studies of the language of movement and its relevance to personality and mood.

Take a look at the chapter on Alexander technique (Crow), and Jennifer Martin's article.

***No direct discussion of LMA but finds overlap in the Alexander section....*

Wangh, Stephen An Acrobat of the Heart A Physical Approach to Acting Inspired by the work of Jerzy Grotowski, Vintage Books NY: 2000

Zaporah, Ruth. Action Theatre: The Improvisation of Presence. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1995.

Exercises and metaphors geared toward the body's awareness of the present moment.

Zarrilli, Phillip B. (ed) Acting Reconsidered Routledge; London and NY: 1995

pp.71-196 "On the Edge of a Breath Looking: author talks about the body/mind connection in the work of the Asian/Experimental Theatre program

(For further Sources related to Movement for the Actor– see ATME web site (Association of Theatre Movement Educators); <http://www.asu.edu/cfa/atme/index.html>

Appendix 3: Literature Overview, Notes and Comments

Historical grid looking at physical training and the actor:

Delsarte; provided an early investigation and inquiry into the nature of ‘realistic’ and authentic movement –he based his teachings upon observations of behaviors of people in realistic situations. His goal was to rid acting of artifice and convention, and to reconnect actors with the emotional and physical truth of the action. He understood that the body can provide a direct link to the emotions.

Stanislavski’s classic theories and ideas on acting influenced subsequent generations. His comment is below:

<i>Stanislavski (Russia) “in every physical action unless it is purely mechanical, there is concealed some inner action, some feelings” - developed the ‘emotional memory’ exercise</i>								
↓		↓		↓				
Jerzy Grotowski <i>picked up where Stanislavski left off- introduced his vision of a body-centered acting training</i>		Students: <i>Stella Adler & Lee Strasberg (the American ‘method’)</i>		Michael Chekhov <i>expanded upon Stanislavski’s physical exercises. Developed the ‘psychological gesture’</i>	<i>These 2 men were both in the UK at the same time</i>	Rudolph Laban <i>Provides the actor with choice—the organic movement of everyday life</i>		

The controversy between the “internal” and “external” theories of acting parallels a similar dispute between “mental” and “physiological” theories of psychology.

Michael Chekhov’s approach aligns itself beautifully with most practitioners of actors’ movement training. In his first chapter on “the Actor’s Body and Psychology” he writes about the dangers of resorting to “all sorts of theatrical tricks and I” (p 3) rather than the possibility of “real creative excitement on the stage.” He appeals to the performing artist to be honest and protective of “his body and voice (which) are the only physical instruments upon which he can play” and (p4) “the actor’s body must be molded and re-created from inside.”

*Michael Chekhov’s work with imagination is very rich: for instance catching images of one’s minds eye and following it with one’s body. Exercises which discipline the mind to “fulfil” (p32) an action, identify “features” of a character and thus incorporate the body with the psychology of a role sound effective in the hands of the charismatic teacher. He also addresses the other concerns one has in teaching acting: relationship to fellow performers p41 (“the dramatic art is a collective art therefore ...the actor...will not be able ...if he isolates himself from the ensemble, his partners. The “psychological gesture” is a wonderful phrase to consider and he gives the actor clear examples of how to use it. His application to **King Lear** at the end of the book is wonderful and fulfils all the practical application of his vision.*

Jerzy Grotowski:

Notes taken about teachings in training actors

*Source: Notes taken from Acrobat of the Heart by Stephen Wangh Vintage Books; NYC:
2000*

Author studied with the director/teacher and comments about the training

- *A training to remove personal blocks you may bring to the work...contrary to a 'method' of acting. Three principles to consider:*
 1. *the actor must use himself, his own feelings, thoughts, and opinions in the work*
 2. *all acting is to be thought of as a series of 'units of exchange', moments of listening and reacting that could be scored as one might score music*
 - 3 *the actor, if he is to reveal something significant, personal, and profound, must reach into the depths of himself through whatever psychic or physical blocks might impede such expression.*

" the actor will do, in public, what is considered impossible" JG

- *On warm-ups – physicality emphasizes flowing movement, off-balanced and dynamic forms while finding a centered place from which to move*
- *On space – the actor's space is not empty but filled with imagery one projects into.*
- *On the act of doing – Everything the actor does is not so much an act of doing, as it is a response to a real or imagined partner.*
- *On the physical body – emotion comes as a result of being fully aware of the sensations in the body. The physical details will reveal emotional truth.*
- *On focus – there is no time to anticipate cues or to be self-conscious; sets up a situation where there is an intense physical as well as imaginative focus*
- *On the nature of acting – the actor is not merely a conveyor of information held in a script, but undergoes a personal transformation by investigating sound, gesture, movement, and personal imagery, which then has impact upon an audience.*
- *On the authors thoughts of why Grotowski's work is not used today. Grotowski did not believe in developing systems, language, and words. His fear of creating a form to be followed by others stemmed from the belief that it would nullify the work by creating exercises that were devoid of underlying imagery. He wanted to explore the idiosyncrasy in each actor.*
- *On character and text – goal was to teach actors the tools to bridge the gap between body and emotional life.*
- *On Via Negativa – undoing*
- *On embodying the thinking – bring the body to the mind and the mind to the body...both work together interchangeably*
- *On imagination – the image and the thought become the reality- imagination and the body are linked*

*Source:Thomas, Richard At Work with Grotowski on Physical Actions Routledge; London:
1995*

The author studied with Grotowski and describes physical actions and acting. Grotowski set out to investigate how to develop a technique to fix a living process and the ability to repeat it..distinguishes between ACTIVITY and PHYSICAL ACTION. Grotowski emphasized the HOW

and the WHY of scoring physical actions. A score is to be memorized and followed like a musician. Extends Stanislavski's work in physical actions in development of character...utilizes observations of behavior, scoring of movements in "living action" ... observes Space and how it is enlivened and utilized with an attitude towards the objective and quality of physical action.

Source:

Encyclopedia information about Jerzy Grotowski

The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition Copyright © 2003, Columbia University Press. Licensed from Columbia University Press

The notion of a 'poor' theatre

Grotowski was a revolutionary in theatre because he caused a rethink of what theatre actually was and its purpose in contemporary culture. One of his central ideas was the notion of the 'poor' theatre. By this he meant a theatre in which the fundamental concern was the work of the actor with the [audience](#), not the [sets](#), [costumes](#), [lighting](#) or [special effects](#). In his view these were just trappings and, while they may enhance the experience of theatre, were unnecessary to the central core the meaning that theatre should generate. 'Poor' meant the stripping away of all that was unnecessary and leaving a 'stripped' and vulnerable actor. What was important to Grotowski was what the actor could do with his or her body and voice without aids and with only the visceral experience with the audience. In this sense he overturned the traditions of exotic costumes and stunning staging that had driven much European theatre from the [19th century](#). This is not to say that in public theatrical performances he completely disregarded lights and sets, but these were secondary and tended to complement the already existing excellence of the actors. Grotowski's training regime was devised to:

1. *Eliminate not teach something (Via Negativa).*
2. *Enhance that which already exists.*
3. *Create all that is needed for the play in the actor's body, with little use of props.*
4. *Promote rigorous physical and vocal training of actors*
5. *Avoid the beautiful if it does not foster truth*

Appendix 4: Summaries of workshops and participant evaluations:

Observations and summary of the Laban Centre workshop:

Programme:

- ✚ Introductions and setting the context
- ✚ Summary of research questions.
- ✚ Fundamentals – an introduction
- ✚ Excerpt from a scene
- ✚ Handouts and discussion
- ✚ Video viewing of student work
- ✚ Question and answer period

The Laban Centre workshop consisted mainly of dancers, choreographers, and 3 faculty members from the Centre. Interest in our topic was made evident by questions related to how teaching dancers is different from working with actors. Our discussion of how we used LMA was also of interest in light that specific elements lend themselves more fully to our purposes. Emphasis was made on the experiential nature of our approach. To go in through the body and then to reflect with the thinking and processing was a theme that we emphasized. Practical experience with the work is necessary for comprehension to be fully integrated and internalized. The application to the acting process and the relevance of the movement work to this goal was also part of our discussion.

Observations and summary of the QMUC workshop:

Programme:

- ✚ Setting the context – introductions- posing some of the questions that we began to explore in our teaching i.e. basic questions that arise as to what to include in a movement training program for actors in a 3 year conservatory-style drama school where our focus is Level 1 and Level 2 acting students aged 18-20
- ✚ Active warm-up – improvisational based movement that began to stimulate both movement possibilities and imagination
- ✚ Introductory experiences in the BESS model of LMA:
 - [BODY] – Experiences in Fundamentals – basic principles of connectivity; taking the class from floor to standing; enhancing physical potential for a greater range of movement
 - [EFFORT] – Play with diversity of movement qualities – workshop participants explored the effort elements giving everyone a baseline of experience in working with the connection between ‘inner attitude’ and ‘outer form’ – a clear correlation to the acting process
 - [SHAPE] - Experiences in getting into the body, find connection to weight, to the floor, breath, and imagery – finding sensory connection to one’s inner state and imaginative processes; a tool for actors
 - [SPACE] – Introductory experiences in the concept of space harmony – finding dimensional and diagonal physical possibilities in space – relating space to physical actions that allow one to bridge from self to others and the environment.
- ✚ Discussion/ Commentary:
 - Reflecting on what BESS has to offer:
 - How does LMA support the acting process?

How do you cherry pick from the system?

How does LMA interface with other methodologies in actor training?

How does the language used in acting class interface with LMA language?

✚ Application to a scene:

Introduction to the scene – *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller- written in the early 1950's as a response to the McCarthy era. Characters: Proctor, Hale, Elizabeth

The workshop participants got into triads; read the scene a couple of times; determined tensions, attitudes, body level actions of individual characters.

- Reconnect with BESS. Individuals were asked to select a prop, and to develop an abstract movement phrase out of the character's inner life
- Reconnect with triads and find a way to overlap, structure, and mesh material that now has become an abstract movement 'scene' on its own
- Showings – Each group showed their work. Participants discussed the effectiveness of use of prop and movement choices as well as what was learned about the characters that was not initially as overt or evident from the reading of the text.

Results of doing the scene: Each group devised imaginative and physically expressive responses to this exercise. Many insights were gained by using abstract movement as a vehicle for reflecting the subtext of a scene. Participants were creative with the prop, as well as finding interesting spatial, rhythmic, and qualitative choices to support the relationships between the characters in a unified 'image' of the underpinnings of the scene. This exercise has broad potential to be used as a tool for actor training.

✚ Showing of video material from the classes taught at QMUC

A viewing of:

Level one in a fundamentals class that emphasized developmental view of learning barrel turns on class. [goal: working with 3d physicality and movement through space]

Level one movement assessments of creating an abstract movement piece in a 'scene outside of the play'

Level two excerpts from the Moving Sonnets

Workshop feedback: the tape of students doing the work put it all in context- this was an effective visual tool- it showed students learning a complex physical task, illuminated issues in student learning, and showed student performances where they devised movement scenes that were driven by image and intention with a value of using full physical expression.

✚ Discussion – workshop participants added comments, questions, and summed up experiences. Evaluation sheets were distributed. Some were returned immediately and some will be forwarded to Kedzie Penfield.

Summary of evaluations
Laban Workshop Seminar Evaluation Sheet
Laban Centre London UK
November 24, 2005
7-9 PM

How did this evening change, add to, or otherwise enrich your view of Laban work with actors?

- Very interested to find out about differences between working with dancers and actors
- That this body [approach] could give so many more possibilities in defining a character (telling it through body story).
- It was very interesting to connect with the subjects I am having here at Laban, but it was too quick
- With little previous knowledge, it provided some understanding of this field
- Opened a new direction for me, different way to approach acting training (body movement)
- My first experience of Laban and acting. Very impressive.
- Emphasized the connection between all the different disciplines in training and approaches to acting.
- It has enriched me very much as a PDDS student at Laban because I am very interested about the differences between Laban work for dancers and for actors.
- I found some links

How might you incorporate some of these ideas into your own work?

- Actors use imagery more, while dancers work with dynamics and the specifics of movement itself
- I do, but this was confirming and interesting to participate...for a change
- I don't know yet, I need time to think as it was too fast...but yes, it can be part of my process
- It would not be directly relevant
- I need to deepen more into the topic
- Back to basics – BF- have gone deeply into somatics with BMC – need to remember the simplicity of developmental organization of the body. Have worked often with dance students and the approach was enlightening
- Use of the floor to divide the body and build up awareness of lower/upper
- Actors use imagery much more while dancers learn more about the dynamics [et al]
- It is a guideline of how we can teach actors

Was there one thing that particularly interested or surprised you?

- The idea that abstract/movement can be used with actors in order to understand the character better
- How expressive the voice can be
- I am personally interested in Body Fundamentals...would love to do more!
- How a 3 dimensional body warm-up changes body conscience
- It was good to see another perspective
- How expressive and integrated un-trained movers/actors were in their movement.

- The emphasis on observation rather than ‘feeling’ [or interpreting]
- The approach to bring actors to create dance-movement pieces in order to understand the character more.
- How expressive the voice can be

Any other comments on the presentation?

- Far too shortbut relaxed, informative, and generous
- Glad to know you are here...come back again!
- Thank you very much

Summary of evaluations

Laban Workshop Seminar Evaluation Sheet

QMUC/Gateway Edinburgh, Scotland

December 3, 2005

12-6PM

How did this evening change, add to, or otherwise enrich your view of Laban work with actors?

- I had some basic knowledge of Laban – so it was helpful to enrich my knowledge
- I had no knowledge of Laban and it was a very useful introduction.
- Was fundamentally an introduction to Laban work – awareness of space (importance of)

How might you incorporate some of these ideas into your own work?

- We already work in these ways but really great to work with others
- I’m directing a physical theatre piece (1st time director) and I think I have learned a lot of things to do with my cast to use as gateways to inspiration.
-

Was there one thing that particularly interested or surprised you?

- No, but thanks.
- How profound and moving a 10 minute exercise can be using just a prop.

Any other comments on the presentation?

- There was a good mixture of different activities – practical/discussion etc. so that there was time to reflect and absorb the work. Thanks.
- Would have liked to do even more practical stuff – maybe a 2 day workshop would allow ideas/expansion to develop.

Appendix 5: Comments: by QMUC students and comments taken from the Blog Site

Two third year students no longer in our classes were asked what the value of LMA was for them and if they used it in their work now.

Male third year student:

I have always liked to approach my work physically. I have always had the ability to connect my outer physical actions to my inner motivation – plug it in so to speak. I see actors who don't do that – who copy something from the outside but nothing has happened inside and you can tell. Not that that's always bad - there are other options – but for me that makes things real: “plugging in” what you see or learn from the outside to the inside. Laban helped me advance my natural ability to do this by expanding it. For instance by giving me a way of describing and doing a character one way I could then try doing it the opposite. In fact the opposite could go bigger, smaller, and any number of ways. The range and understanding greatly increased – although the Laban work is largely unconscious now in my work: I don't think specifically of Effort for instance.

The Laban classes allowed me to explore opposites – it's a framework which opens range because it invites you to go different ways and can be very detailed – like specifics of the body: a tiny thing like how you hold your wrists can be really different for one character or another; how I hold my body - the shape and nature of it.

If you've grown up on a ship your ceiling is high while if you've grown up in an office your body will be more squashed – I can understand that better through Laban.

Female third year student:

I found that the Laban work most useful when we put it into practice – for example in the Great Expectations project. In it we had to play several different characters and I remember we would start with the walk of the character – you would ask us to concentrate on one aspect of movement then another – adding one layer onto another at a time. I found that useful because it got me thinking but slowly – it happened more naturally that way – you realised the differences between the characters.

I use it most consciously when I play different characters in a play. For instance, Laban helped me with differentiating the characters in Midsummer Night's Dream where I had to play Helena and play a fairy - I needed to make those two characters as physically as different as possible: Helena was more stropky – so I consciously played with strength and quickness for that character and it really helped.

The Bartenieff Fundamentals did not help me as much: I had come from a lot of dance and movement work so I felt I knew my own body and what it could do. Also I didn't understand where it was going – it didn't engage me until we put it into practice. Then it did start to make more sense. I hadn't thought about using my body in different ways to help me figure a character out. One of the most useful things – which I use constantly now – is observing people in the street. I'm always seeing things I might want to use.

Blog site reactions:

This is a selection of comments that started e-mail conversations – for the full exchange see the blog site. www.blog.vcu.edu/jsteel

2005.09.23

This is very exciting. As I am new to academia, and just about to begin a module with 3rd year students that is an introduction to the Effort System, this research comes as a surprise and welcome resource for myself. I will be working through the medium of the Welsh language and I am already having struggles in finding the vocabulary and syntax for appropriate translations. However, the basic premise for my bringing this work to the university is the need to help students develop those 'open spontaneous and expressive bodies'. I am so pleased to hear of this research and will be following this site and all developments. I begin my module with much trepidation next week. Best wishes.

2005.09.23 Thank you for posting this on the CMA listserve. I am currently working on how LMA supports Chekov psychological gesture and am grateful to find this site. Congrats!

2005.09.26 It is exciting to see the application of LMA and Movement for Actors training growing. I have been working in this area since I finished my CMA in 2001. At The University of Mississippi I am fortunate enough to Team Teach Studio Acting classes with the voice and acting teacher. The class meets for several hours during the week, during which time the students receive intensive training in all areas, and then are evaluated in their scene work by each instructor simultaneously. The movement work is all based on LMA, is a 3 year sequence beginning with Bartenieff Fundamentals, working through Body Organizations, Effort, Shape and Space. It is quite amazing to see the transformation from sophomore to senior year and I look forward to learning about others' work in this area, as well as sharing methods and strategies I use here at Ole Miss.

Jennifer

2005.10.06 I am having to work very slowly with my students. How on earth are you getting all of this done?!

Appendix 6: Future possibilities generated from this project:

There are many areas to be explored further even in this specific application of LMA. Some that interest us are:

Laban as a Way of Understanding the Body's Role in Acting

Use of Laban framework as a way to engage inner processes of actor. Also further exploration of areas not covered in this work such as use of transverse and other Spatial Scales in acting training.

Somatic Knowing

A definition of 'somatic' is from the Greek which means *lived body*. Actors and performers who embody their work in the moment of performing practice a mind/body connection that reflects a fully expressive and integrated intention with their physical actions. Underlying this work is the integration of the functional capacity of body movement with its expressive component: LMA (in particular, Bartenieff Fundamentals) gives us a framework through which to address these issues.

A comparison with Other Frameworks: Chekhov, Grotowski

A development of Appendix 3 on reviewing selected literature. Many approaches to acting include ideas on training the physical with the intentional life behind acting. The paper could map out the LMA framework along some of these other philosophies and methods.

Other areas that should be addressed but our situations have so far not allowed time for us to explore them due to advanced nature of the material involved:

The use of motif as symbols to help comprehension

The use of Transverse Space Harmony scales (eg. A&B scales)

The use of Shape more particularly rather than just as a supporting category.

Workshops/Seminars/Conferences

We now have the experience of two brief workshops (one day long, one two hours) in which we piloted our presentation format of the material from this project. From that experience we feel confident in offering it –or a version of it – to a variety of conferences and institutions.

Appendix 7: DVD Content and Overview

The first theme in this 29 minute DVD is Irmgard Bartenieff's Fundamentals of Movement: concepts such as core strength (developed through movement sequences) giving access to space (particularly a three dimensional use of kinesphere) and connectedness. The following concepts are included and run through the material presented:

1. "Access to connectedness" – a correctly aligned body, moving with ease, allowing for an integrated connection between body parts, moving through whatever functional or expressive action is required. The process of learning about his own body connectedness gives the actor more control of, and therefore access to, his physical self.
2. "Access to space" means reaching with a limb (usually arms but can be legs, head, or any body part) through the kinesphere in an active way with an awareness of the quality of the connection to space, rather than shoving the body part through the air. This active relationship to space builds on and increases the "connectedness" described in point 1 above and gives a different use of the body. Perhaps most importantly for the actor, it puts him in relationship to the work and people around him. (see paper)
3. "Access to and awareness of a wider range of movement" -The use of abstract movement allows for a fuller physical investigation of a larger palette of movement , and creative thinking about – in this case – Shakespeare's Sonnets and the characters in a play. Students explore more movement options before refining and clarifying their choices.(see paper)

Content of DVD: (29 minutes in total)

Chapter 1

Excerpts from movement classes with first year students autumn semester 2005. Additional material is of Kedzie demonstrating some Fundamentals sequences, and work with one student called "Sandy" plus several others six months later. These excerpts are cut into the class activities that explore Bartenieff Fundamental principles. This chapter finishes with an application of these principles to stage combat partner work.

Chapter 2

Three second year students do their *Moving Sonnets*, as we call them – two are performed with voice-overs, and the other reads the lines that inspired him before he performs his movement study.

Chapter 3

First year students present their prop/character study. The second study shows two women doing their "Choreographies" simultaneously although they are not related to each other – two solos in the same space.