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LODA-News



Editorial

Eve Knights



Welcome to the winter 2008 edition of LODA News, your biannual publication for all things related to the Language of Dance.

Since our last edition of LODA the Language of Dance Centre has been busy with the expansion of numerous new LOD school clubs.

I would like to congratulate Ann Hutchinson Guest & Ivor Forbes Guest on receiving lifetime achievement awards from the American Society for Aesthetics. More details can be found on pages 2.

Warmest wishes to Ann on celebrating her 90th birthday on the 3rd November. After returning from her trip and celebrations in the US, the LODC UK held a surprise party attended by staff & trustees.



For the LODC UK, the new year will see the launch of two new community dance classes using the LOD approach; **Dance Wise** for the 50 plus and **Dance Play** for parent and toddlers.

If you would like to inform the Language of Dance community on a project you are currently involved in or have some interesting news that would be beneficial to others, and would like it to be included in the next edition of LODA, please contact me at eve@lodc.org

**I would like to wish
our friends all over
the world, a safe &
peaceful festive
season and a
prosperous
New Year on behalf
of the Language of
Dance Centre UK.**





LOD UK

THE LANGUAGE OF DANCE STAGE 1 COURSE, SUMMER INTENSIVE 2008

By Harriet Capps



The Language of Dance Stage 1 course ran in August at the ISTD2 studios in London.

The course, led by Valerie Farrant was an intensive two weeks involving practical classes and theory lessons to expand and develop participants' knowledge of Language of Dance. The culmination of the course was a theory and practical exam that resulted in participants gaining their Stage 1 certificate. Our participants came from a range of fields: dance therapy, teaching and psychology. This variety served well as participants could discuss and share ideas regarding LOD in different fields.

Each day began with a Martha Graham based contemporary class.



This warmed up the Stage 1 participants and allowed for anyone interested in Graham to attend. One course participant commented that the class was not only a good warm up but provided inspiration for choreography later in the day. Another remarked that the link between Graham's awareness of the body helped when studying LOD. For those who just attended the Graham classes it provided an opportunity to refresh ideas and enjoy a class over the summer holidays.

As someone who is new to Language of Dance, I found the few days I spent helping out on the course as a really useful insight into how Language of Dance can provoke us to explore our movements further in dance and everyday life.



One area I particularly found interesting was that of LOD's attention to detail. By providing your student with both choreography and the accompanying notation, the student not only will perform the steps but incorporate accents and stillness with out-flowing energy. And therefore be focusing on both sequence and detail immediately, rather than as often found, returning to the details later.

Overall it was a very successful and enjoyable two week course, resulting in four participants passing Stage 1 and two due for completion in the New Year.

ANN & IVOR RECEIVE PRESTIGIOUS RECOGNITION FROM THE ASA

By Eve Knights



On November 7th 2008, Ann Hutchinson Guest and Ivor Forbes Guest were awarded Life-time Achievement Awards from the American Society for Aesthetics (ASA), during their three day conference in Northampton, Mass, USA.

In 2007, The American Society for Aesthetics received a generous bequest from the estate of Selma Jeanne Cohen, a longtime member of the Society. In appreciation for this gift, the Board of Trustees of the Society voted to establish the Selma Jeanne Cohen Prize for work in dance theory, dance aesthetics, or dance history. The initial prize was to be awarded for lifetime achievement in dance scholarship, which was given jointly to Ann and Ivor and to Sally Banes.

The awards were presented following the presidents, Stephen Davies, address. The award included a monetary award and other recognition. These awards came as a pleasant addition to Ann's 90th Birthday celebration trip to the US, to which both Ann and Ivor were delighted.

THE LEEDER ADVENTURE Aug 29th - 31st, 2008

By Ann Hutchinson Guest

"Dear Alumni of the Sigurd Leeder School of Dance" the letter began, the message being that a viewing of all of Leeder's artistic heritage – the documents, notated materials, photographs, paintings, etc. – was being offered the last weekend in August and also the first weekend in September, before the collection went to the Swiss Dance Archives in Lausanne. The invitation came from Christine van Mentlen who had inherited the school after Leeder's close associate, Grete (or Gretli) Müller had passed away. With my long-term interest in notation and close association with Sigurd in times past, my instinct told me that I should go.

It was a short visit, travelling on the Friday and returning on the Sunday. At Zurich airport I phoned Christine to pin-point the train I would be taking to Herisau. Being non-English speaking, Christine explained that she had "rote haar" and in my broken German I mentioned "blauer mantel" so that I could wave my blue raincoat to get her attention. All worked well and we decided to go first to the school to get an immediate idea of all the materials. In the large studio were displayed Leeder's many paintings and drawings, on the stage were rows of tressle tables, covered with dark red cloth (a true sense of presentation was evident) and row upon row of photo albums, ring binders, boxes, and piles of papers. The amount of material was mind-boggling.



Leeder died in 1981, aged 79, a good life but – did he ever sleep? The productivity was difficult to comprehend. Although I knew of his deep interest in notation and his production of notated classroom studies as well as dance scores, I had no idea of how many. A large number are in clean, finished state, many more exist in pencil copy, some neat, and some only rough notes.

At that first look, I was carried nostalgically back to my Dartington Hall days, my three years of study at the Jooss-Leeder School, and, as a gifted notation student, Leeder's invitation to help with his score of *Danse Macabre*. Doubtless this involvement was what fired my interest in notating dance scores. As I looked through the materials, one complete surprise was to discover the three large notebooks in which he had written the choreography for *Donna Clara*, the ballet he had composed for the students during my last year. Had he made those notes ahead, prior to teaching the movements? Or had he written it afterwards? When did he have the time?

Gretli (as many of us called her) was not an organised person. Her splendid contribution was the tremendous support she gave Sigurd, freeing him from the day-to-day worries of running the school and of running a household. She provided the

perfect setting for him to be creative. When Christine von Mentlen inherited the school, she found that Gretli's family were not at all interested in all the materials Sigurd had left behind. Christine spent two years sorting them out; it was indeed a tremendous job. Among the boxes of his correspondence with various key people was his correspondence with me. Would I be interested in looking at it? After two evenings (seven hours) of swift reading, I had all the letters sorted out chronologically and had made notes of important dates and facts. The amount of correspondence was far more than I had remembered. In many letters Sigurd had revealed his very fine command of English, his delightful personal way of expressing himself, and his many moments of humour. He was gifted in so many ways. Extracts could make an interesting short article.

Saturday was a full day spent further organising the notation legacy. Evelyn Rigotti was able to join us, a great help as her English is very good. She is also a key person having done the full training with Sigurd, whereas Christine had her trained with Gretli. At lunch with Evelyn, I put forward to her my ideas as to what might be done, how this wealth of material might be used; how it could enrich the dance field, especially in the education of the dancer. How should we proceed? My thought was to start with the studies, to select those that could be more easily understood by today's dance students and teachers. Should Leeder's slight differences from the standard Labanotation 'spelling', his personal way of using the notation symbols, be left intact or updated?

I suggested we do not change his way of writing but provide a guide explaining the differences and the reasons behind them. This would be a task for me to do. Then Study Notes should accompany each classroom study, indicating the significant points Leeder was trying to get across, where the emphasis should be placed, and so on. To put out an English edition would seem to be the first move. Evelyn could be particularly helpful in establishing the English version. My suggestion was that these Study Notes should be a collaborative task, other key people being asked to review what is written and contribute their ideas. The core group responsible initially would be myself, Christine and Evelyn. It was then suggested that June Kemp, a long-time English associate of Leeder's should be invited to join. An outline contract should be drawn up with indication of plans and responsibilities. Evelyn explained all this to Christine and reported that she and Christine were in complete agreement with these ideas.

With focus on the Studies, the thought was to see how they might be integrated into actual teaching sessions, illustrating the value of what the notation contained. The emphasis would be on the movement experience with the notation serving as a clarification, a memory aid and as a check on full understanding.

The fact that Leeder spent his last decades in a relative 'back-water' of the dance world has resulted in mainstream dance not being aware of his incredible talent. Now is the time to open up and to take serious

steps to alter this situation. It will be the world's loss not to be aware of and have the chance to enjoy the richness of his legacy.

Two other important Swiss 'Leeder' people came on the Sunday morning and expressed interest and support. The whole atmosphere was so positive that it seemed a project well worth embarking on. Twice at NDEO conferences I have taught 'Gems from the Past', offering a Leeder warm-up followed by two of his contrasting Studies. The sessions were well attended and students and teachers clearly enjoyed this very different style of dance. I gave copies of the notated Studies to those who were interested. Two of these Studies had been tried out at the London Studio Centre where focus is on professional dance training. It was rewarding to see how much the sophisticated third year students clearly enjoyed them, the unfamiliar movements were a challenge to them. These experiences convinced me that this material had a place in present-day dance education.

EUROLAB CONFERENCE IN BERLIN

By Ann Hutchinson Guest

The facts: Eurolab (The European Laban Association) held a conference to honour Rudolf Laban and all he had contributed to movement knowledge on the 80th anniversary of the dance congress in 1928 where Rudolf Laban presented his notation system, the 50th anniversary of his death in 1958, and the 20th anniversary of Eurolab.

This event was held in Berlin, October 2nd – 5th at the Akademie der Künste (Academy of Art), a very fitting location as the extensive exhibition on show, entitled "Notation", covers many forms of linear art, including an early scroll of the Laban system with names of contemporary people involved with the notation written within the direction symbols.

Lectures and workshops were given in either German or English (if not a mixture of both), presenters coming from England and the USA, as well as Austria, Germany and Italy. The proceedings were opened by Antja Kennedy who, being bi-lingual (an Irish father, German mother) welcoming all. Dr Evelyn Dörr then gave a lecture on Laban's choreographic vision. Working from Albrecht Knust's notations, Thomas Schallmann presented a performance of an excerpt from Laban's major choreographic work "Titan". The opening session then moved to a panel presentation of Laban 'history' with Ann Hutchinson Guest, Vera Maletic and Evelyn Dörr, Antja Kennedy being the moderator. Personal anecdotes brought the man and his work to life.

The first full day began with the morning devoted to lectures on application of Laban's work to therapeutic fields. As these were in German I waited for the workshops that followed, sessions of improvisation based on the LMA teaching (called LBBS in Eurolab). Astrid Buchholz chose changes in music to explore fast use of body parts, contrasting with slower travelling, while Eva Blaschke gave the image of the sun shining on the person in front of each small group; thus 'illuminated', that person created movement patterns for the group to follow. Each

change of Front then produced a new leader.

My "Digging for Dance Gold" focussed on exploring the Movement Alphabet. Starting by dancing a sequence featuring the items on this list, the group following, each item was then performed individually and identified. Next, the sheet listing the Alphabet, translated into German that included the symbols, was given out. The performed sequence, given in simple Motif notation was then explored. The more detailed version was also given out for those interested and the book **Introduction to Motif Notation** was displayed. The session ended with explanation of and discussion on the idea of the Language of Dance Approach to movement experience and understanding.

Barbara Adrian's "Integrated Voice, Speech and Movement Explorations supported by Laban Movement Analysis followed. As two workshops were held at the same time, the workshops the next day were repeats giving people another opportunity to attend the one they missed. Vera Maletic's "Performance of Movement Dynamics" included film footage taken from her book and the accompanying DVD. Several people took part in physically exploring the different dynamic phrasing. This successful presentation was followed by Carol-Lynne Moore's "Effort Harmony Workshop" which featured modulating from one Effort to its opposite. Working in trios this task produced interesting results, which then were discussed. Thomas Schallmann used film excerpts to compare the choreographic 'language' of

Palucca and Dore Hoyer. A dip into past history was presented by Gunhild Oberzaucher-Schüller, whose recent research has been into the correspondence between Laban and the publishers of Laban's 1928 and 1930 **Schrifttanz** Books, the Universal Edition in Vienna. Preparation of the pages posed problems, the people actively concerned with solving them were Albrecht Knust, Dussia Bereska and others, not Laban. Not revealed was why the notation was printed horizontally, although the vertical staff was already established. I have always assumed that this placement was for practical reasons, as horizontal notation fits in more easily with horizontal text.

Saturday evening was devoted to performance. This started charmingly with young children dancing simple, appropriate choreography. Then the adults took over. What followed showed the love to dance, the humour, and the imagination of members of EuroLab. Antja Kennedy's slow, dignified noble lady in serene thoughtful mood ended surprisingly by her stepping on her long outer skirt and exiting in the black underskirt. The 'Master of Ceremonies' Holger Brün, then instructed the audience that we had to move to another location in the building, one in which we looked out onto the 'moonlit' garden where a figure in a flesh-coloured unitard cavorted amongst the trees, at first in serious mood and then becoming more and more playful. Yes, it was Antja! We were then moved to another location where two dancers, accompanied by a bass player, seemingly improvised an interchange

making use of a stairway, sliding down the banister being included. In another room four dancers interrelated while exploring the possibilities of a large low table and three chairs. The next location was one of darkness, the three pairs of performers dressed in black making use of flash lights to produce most interesting effects. In complete contrast was the danced autobiography of a lovely lady who declared that it was her 65th birthday (true) and told with movement how she became involved with dance, the whole being quite enchanting. It is impossible to convey the overall effect of this sequence of performances, but it was a most rewarding ending of the conference. Other dance-related conferences should take note! I am ignoring the fact that there were additional presentations the following morning. The planned Movement Choir in the Tiergarten in the afternoon had to contend with the rainy, blustery weather. I was not on hand and doubt that it took place. With fair weather, that indeed would indeed have been the perfect ending to a conference that was noted for its warm, friendly atmosphere.

MEG ABBIE DENTON: 1937 – 2008

By Ann Hutchinson Guest

The Labanotation community lost a valuable contributor, a strong supporter and a good friend when Meg Denton died after a heart attack on Friday 29 November, 2008 at the age of 71. Born in Sydney in 1937 as Margaret Abbie, she moved to Adelaide in 1945 and took ballet classes with veteran teacher Nora Stewart and then Dorothy Slane, a strong ballet

teacher who used Cecchetti-based technical studies. She danced for a time with South Australian Ballet Theatre. Going to London in 1955, she trained with Audrey De Vos, performed in a number of shows and studied Labanotation with me, her compatriot Harry Haythorne joining the sessions. When Doris Humphrey's *Shakers* was put on at the Sigurd Leeder School, both Meg and Harry were in the cast, Meg obligingly dancing as one of the men. I encouraged her to go to New York, where she worked for six months at the Dance Notation Bureau. During this time she was involved with the notating of Balanchine's *Agon*. She took classes with Antony Tudor at the Metropolitan Opera Ballet School and also spent time at Jacob's Pillow. She returned to Australia as a member of the cast of the musical *Grab Me a Gondola*. Meg joined the Victorian Ballet Guild and gave a lecture on notation, attended by Philippa Heale and Ray Cook, both of whom then studied notation with her, and both of whom later used it extensively in their dance careers. Meg also taught notation at Laurel Martyn's school. She danced in stage and television shows and began notating ballets, including Paul Grinwis's *Les Amants Eternels (The Eternal Lovers)* (1952) – her meticulous score is now in the National Library's dance collection. As the first pioneer dance notator in Australia, she became the focal point for information and subsequent activity there. Major surgery to her left leg in the 1960s forced her to abandon her career as a dancer.

In 1974 Meg married an accountant, Sam Denton, who predeceased her by

several years. While following a professional career as a physiotherapist in Adelaide she continued her interest in dance and in 1983 became the dance representative for the Performing Arts Collection of South Australia, for which she organized the dance materials making them available for the growing number of students researching South Australia's dance history. She was awarded a BA Honours History degree in 1970, her thesis being on Professional Theatre in Adelaide. Her MA thesis was a biography of Adelaide teacher and choreographer Johanna Priest (published 1993), for whom she had taught modern dance in the 1960s. Importantly, in 1986 she founded and generously supported the Australian Choreographic Project, which remounted significant dance works, including Laurel Martyn's *En Saga* (1941) and Dorothy Stevenson's *Sea Legend* (1943), with students from the University of Adelaide Dance Department. As part of the Project she also produced videotaped interviews with several dancers, choreographers and composers.



Meg Abbie on left with Maxwell Collis and Leonie Leahy in Collis's *Little Suite for Strings*, South Australia Ballet Theatre, 1955.

She was a foundation committee member of the

Friends of the Australian Ballet, established in 1993. In 1994 Meg agreed to be on the advisory board of *Brolga*, a specialist dance magazine for which she wrote the occasional article. In more recent years Meg was concerned with notating for posterity important Australian choreographies. She brought Ray Cook over on three occasions, the first time to finish her score for Beth Dean's *Corroboree*, the next two times to notate Rex Reid's *The Night is a Sorceress* from video and to up-date two scores notated by Cecil Bates, ballets by Walter Gore. In 1983/4, with Genevieve Shaw assisting her, Meg notated Gertrude Bodenwieser's *Demon Machine*.

Meg had a wide circle of friends within and beyond the dance community around the world. A lively person, so generous, and warmly enthusiastic about so many aspects of life, she had a warm heart and a quirky sense of humour that endeared her to many. She leaves a legacy of rich memories and a wealth of dance history. She had a great interest in dance history both from a local and a world perspective and amassed an enviable collection of dance books. She also acquired through interviews and dredging through newspaper articles an enormous amount of material relevant specifically to the history of dance in Adelaide. As a result of research for one of her theses, she re-discovered an early 1838 theatre which had become part of a motorcar showroom but still had the facade and some of the backstage area intact.

No-one knew it was there... thanks to Meg there is now a conservation order on what remains.



LOD USA

LODC USA Holds A Board Retreat, June 2008

By Susan Gingrasso

The LODC USA Board held a retreat in New York City, June 9-11, 2008. We enlisted the services of Sydney Skybetter, an up and coming New York-based consultant for non-profits as well as an emerging choreographer to facilitate our first full day.

The night before we started, we renewed our friendships at a dinner graciously hosted by Oona Haaranen and Sy Schorr in their midtown Manhattan house. As a result of Sydney's clear guidance, we made significant progress on developing a five-year plan and defining the steps necessary to achieve it.



L-R: Teresa Heiland, Tina Curran, Oona Haaranen, Susan Gingrasso

One of the most immediate results of our retreat was to have Rachel Wurman, our Executive Assistant, work with the UK staff to set up an online store through the LODC.org website. Having our own online store has increased the sales of LOD items published in the US. Rachel, in conjunction with the UK staff, also sorted the membership issues so that the two sister organizations will each be responsible for their own membership.

Thanks to Rachel and the LODC UK, we have made significant progress in achieving our initial objectives.



Ann poised to cut the LOD cake while Tina looks on.

Susan Gingrasso Teaches A 2 Week Summer Intensive In Composition At UW-Madison

Susan taught a two-week intensive at UW-Madison Dance Program, Composition through LOD Theory for 10 students that resulted in the creation and performance of a work using aspects of the LOD Movement Alphabet® and life journey as the inspiration for the choreographic process.

In teaching this class, she sought to familiarize the participants with aspects of the Movement Alphabet® so they could use the material more consciously.

She also wanted to help them find movement connections to life journeys they brought to the creative process.

Curran & Gingrasso Teach DEL Summer 2008 Intensives



Tina Curran and Susan Gingrasso planned and taught three one-week intensives for dance educators, July 7-25 in the Dance Education Laboratory Summer workshop program of the 92nd Street Y Harkness Dance Center.

Jody Arnhold provided scholarships for four students from the UW-Madison dance program to attend all three sessions. In the first week, Curran focused on Developing Dance Literacy. With the aid of Ann Biddle and Barry Bluemenfeld, she helped the 14 educators understand how use LOD concepts and the DEL LMA framework to scaffold lessons they created using the *New York City Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in Dance in grades Pre K-12*. In the second week, Gingrasso, with the help of Michael Richter (Stage 3 graduate) and Curran, helped the 17 participants discover relevant and practical assessment strategies that made use of the LOD and LMA concepts. We wanted participants to experience and understand some of the many ways assessment promotes student learning and instructional practices.

In week three, Curran and Gingrasso began what they thought would be a very interactive first week of a Language of Dance® Fundamentals Certification course. We quickly discovered that many of the 16

participants needed more time and practice with the introductory material in the LOD framework. While the focus of this course changed, it provided us with a valuable lesson about what concepts potential certification course Participants need to have prior to starting a Fundamentals course.

One of the most moving experiences in the three weeks occurred in the final week when we asked our participants to use the LOD Motif concepts to make life metaphors. Here are some they created:

Travelling can be the seeking. But often times, it is in stillness that we find our peace.

Sometimes we fall then Spring back up.

When U R doing to many things, be careful not to over extend yourself your destiny is not 1 destination.

Gingrasso Continues To Develop Choreographic Process Using LOD

By Susan Gingrasso

For the past 10 years, I have choreographed at least one work for a multi city Advent concert that takes place in the beautiful and modern sanctuary of a Catholic church in the community.

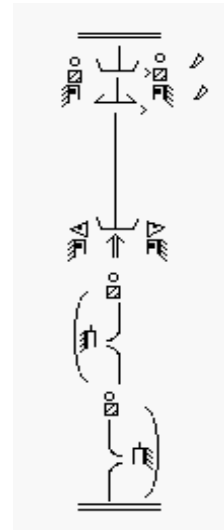
I use dancers (middle to high school age) from local studios and the Point Dance Ensemble who are available the first Sunday of Advent, which is also Thanksgiving

Sunday. As my rehearsal time is very short, about 4 hours to create and rehearse a 3-minute work plus a run through with the choir and chamber orchestra, I draw on my LOD skills to work quickly, clearly and efficiently: I create a set of movement phrases using Movement Alphabet® concepts that I manipulate.

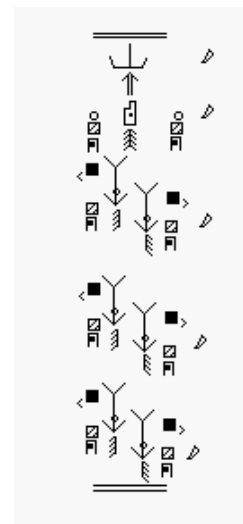
There is nothing new about that idea. But this year, I found my self in a very different position in preparing to create the material. As I had foot surgery in October to remove a bone chip from my right big toe, I was in no position to demonstrate the movement I wanted. So, I called more heavily on my LOD skills. After doing a thorough analysis of "And, the glory of the Lord" from Handel's *Messiah*, sitting in my chair, I devised and notated three gestural movement motifs, one for each of the three phrases.

Taking the time to notate my ideas enabled me to be very clear with the eight cast members about the vocabulary, particularly the facing of the palms and what body part led the movement. I taught each motif to the cast and watched as they travelled with it, manipulated it and experimented with different ways to time the movements. The piece took shape very quickly and the dancers performed it with the joy this music requires. I attribute their success to my ability to understand and notate what I saw in my mind's eye and felt in my body's kinaesthetic capabilities. I discovered that palm facing, the change of palm facing and what part of the body leads has significant import and must be built into the choreography.

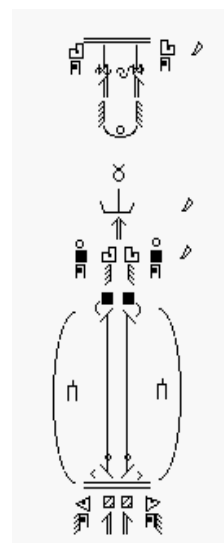
I include the three notated motifs to show the importance of these ideas.



Motif 1: And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed.



Motif 2: All flesh shall see it together.



Motif 3: And the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.



LOD Courses

Special Educational Needs LOD Courses 2008

By Eve Knights

After the success of our one day intensive course for Special Educational Needs teachers in earlier in the year, the LODC UK held another on the 6th Dec 2008.

Led by Lucy Lush, LOD Specialist and teacher at Brocenhurst College, the day was extremely successful.

Language of Dance® can be applied to a variety of contexts and has proven to work with outstanding results, particularly in this field. The day provides teachers with ideas and resources that can be used in the classroom, as well as being an introduction to LOD and its methods.

For further information about our one-day intensive courses, please contact the LOD centre UK.

Stage 1 + 2 Courses

Language of Dance® Fundamentals & Develop Language of Dance® Principles

Tutor
Valerie Farrant, Director of
Language of Dance® Studies

**If you are interested in
one of these courses,
please contact the LODC
for further information:**

info@lodc.org or
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to increase the support!



LOD CLASSES



Dance Wise

Experience a dance class with a difference where you can stretch your mind as well as your body. A relaxed class that is suitable for all abilities.

Open to all those aged 50 plus.
£2 per class. Every Friday 11am



Dance play

Discover storytelling and fun through dance with this unique class for parents and toddlers to move together. This class encourages interaction while promoting a healthy lifestyle.

For parent/carers and child aged 2 - 5 years.
£2 per class. Every Friday 10am

Please come wearing comfortable clothing and soft flat shoes or barefoot.

**Venue: Latymer Christian Centre,
116 Bramley Road, London, W10 6SU**
Nearest tube - Latimer Road, Hammersmith & City Line

For further details please visit www.lodc.org
or call the Language of Dance Centre on 0207 603 8500




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Lastly, but by no means least,
I would like to take this
opportunity to thank the
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