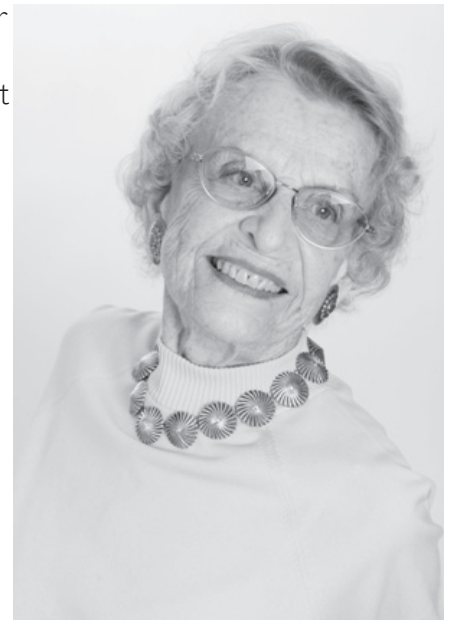


Dr. Ann Hutchinson Guest
Dancer, Teacher, Writer, Researcher, Visionary

A multi-faceted person, Dr. Ann Hutchinson Guest has achieved much in her chosen field and shown exceptional and admirable tenacity in steering her energies toward her ultimate goal - that of achieving dance literacy in the art of dance. Stumbling across dance notation early on in her dance studies she discovered that reading and writing dance itself was extremely rare in the dance world; indeed, the very idea was laughed at.

Experiencing personally the benefits derived from dance literacy, she was determined to spread its use so that all might benefit. Earning her living as a dancer and later as a teacher, she devoted her spare time to establishing an understanding and appreciation of the Laban system. One of the founders of the Dance Notation Bureau in New York in 1940, she directed that organisation for 20 years without pay, inspiring others to contribute to the cause. Seizing opportunities to record important choreographic works, she led the way in recording many pieces from the American dance heritage, particularly works by Doris Humphrey, notwithstanding the lack of funding for such notating. Subsequently she and her colleagues were commissioned to notate several of Balanchine's ballets, works by Antony Tudor, and later, choreography in Broadway shows.



Dr. Guest is the author of the definitive textbooks on Labanotation (as the Laban system for recording movement is called - a term she coined) and has written countless teaching courses and educational manuals. A grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities has supported her writing a series on Advanced Labanotation, each topic being published as it is completed.

She has been a leading researcher into the development of the Laban system itself, writing numerous papers for the biennial conferences of the International Council of Kinetography Laban (ICKL), an organisation for which she is both Honorary President and Honorary Research Panel Member. Her pioneer work has also been directed toward integration of the use of notation with the study of dance, the symbols and their meaning being introduced at the time that children first experience the basic 'alphabet' of movement in their dance class. Her codification of the prime actions (the verbs), her development of the 'Family Tree' of verbs has provided a structure and organisation making comprehensible what to so many is a vast array of movement possibilities. She has broken new ground in her work with children, and has extended the same ideas for older students, thereby enriching their previous understanding of dance and providing a basis for experimentation in movement composition leading to choreography. To this end, Dr. Guest established the Language of Dance Centre in London, England in 1967 and, in 1997, inaugurated the Language of Dance® Center USA in Connecticut, both organisations aiming to raise the profile of this innovative and pioneering approach to dance teaching. The book which she wrote on this approach, entitled *YOUR MOVE - A New Approach to the Study of Movement and Dance*, published in 1983 by Gordon & Breach, with a second edition in 1995, has been welcomed by teachers around the world.

Having stumbled on one system of movement notation, she became curious about other systems and began a comparative study of systems past and present to determine their scope and relative value. This research led her to many countries to seek out the originators of contemporary systems for first hand study, the individuals ranging from a Stigmatine priest to a former night club dancer. The result of years of such investigation was two books: the first, a general introduction to the subject of dance notation *DANCE NOTATION –The Process of Recording Movement on Paper*; published by Dance Books in 1984; the second *CHOREO-GRAPHICS: A Comparison of Dance Notation Systems from the 15th Century to the Present* published by Gordon & Breach in 1987 carefully investigates the fundamental principles of thirteen leading systems and how each of them records the same basic movement patterns. With three or four systems in use around the world, the availability of this basic information is of particular value.

Her study of old systems has given her a unique access to the dance heritage handed down in notated form. As a result of her research, the dance which Fanny Elssler, a leading ballerina of the Romantic Period, made so famous, *La Cachucha*, was revived and has been performed by present day ballerinas. Through Dr. Guest, the *Pas de Six* from *La Vivandière* was revived from another old notation and subsequently performed professionally, notably by the Joffrey Ballet and the Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet. Her most recent breakthrough has been the deciphering of Vaslav Nijinsky's system of dance notation and the subsequent revival of his ballet *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* from his score. For her work in this field she received the Vaslav Nijinsky Medal in 1996.

It is not enough to find treasures, they must be made available. Through her work in producing books containing Labanotation, she has mastered the skills of book production, preparing camera-ready copy for publication. In such a specialised field it is only through such volunteered skills that it has been feasible for such materials to be published. As a result of such dedication, she established *The Language of Dance Series*, published through Gordon & Breach, thus making available important notated choreographies in both classical and contemporary dance styles. She has contributed to the dance heritage and dance scholarship through the recording and publication of classical ballet training as established by the Bournonville School, the Cecchetti method, syllabi of the Royal Academy of Dance and the Karsavina Syllabus.

Through her pioneering efforts and influence together with the work of many dedicated colleagues who have followed in her footsteps, there now exist collections of dance scores and study materials in libraries which make possible comparative research in choreography and in styles of dance in various cultures around the world for degree studies. We have seen the advent of the dance equivalent to musicology - choreology - of which Ann Hutchinson Guest has been the first outstanding practitioner.

For her contribution to the art of dance she has been awarded two honorary doctorates. She has received several Lifetime Achievement Awards, as well as an Outstanding Contribution to Dance Research Award from the Congress on research in Dance. Dr. Guest is also a generous mentor, giving many young dance scholars opportunities to learn and train alongside her as part of her vision of furthering dance literacy.