

BÁLINT SÁROSI: Egy Fővárosi étterem népi zenekara és közönsége (The Popular Orchester (i.e. Gipsy Band) and Its Audience in a Budapest Restaurant).

RUDOLF VIG: Dur-kvintváltó dallamok a magyarországi cigányok népzenejében ("Fifth-Changing" Melodies in the Folk Music of Gipsies in Hungary).

Yours faithfully,

JOHN S. WEISSMANN.

47, Witley Court,
Coram Street,
London, W.C.1
1.6.61.

DANCE NOTATION

April 19th, 1961.

DEAR SIR,

The articles on dance notation in the IFMC *Journals* of 1958 and 1959 have only recently come to my attention. I was very pleased to learn of the extent of the interest in and acceptance of this indispensable tool. I would like to add a few items of information on the activities in this field here in the U.S.A.

The Dance Notation Bureau, founded in 1940, has devoted itself to the development and propagation of the Laban system—here called Labanotation. For the first time a choreographic work (the dance sequences from *Kiss Me Kate* by Hanya Holm) was accepted for copyright in Washington, D.C., in 1952—made possible by this standardized and recognized notation. Since then many dance-works have been so protected.

The general use and acceptance of the system is growing at a great rate. Ethnologists—notably Dr. Gertrude Kurath and John Mann have found it a useful adjunct to their research.

The application of Labanotation to Folk Dance is a recent development here. Folk material has been used for some time as a means of teaching reading and writing in notation, but its use for collecting, recording, etc., has been less actively pursued. However, there is a tremendous interest in the practice of all types of folk dance in this country and leaders have felt the need for a common language and a permanent one. The recent book—*Ten Folk Dances in Labanotation*—has found a good welcome and is being used extensively. I have just completed a course for folk dancers and hope to start another in the fall—and will present it at Pinewoods Camp, the summer school of the Country Dance Society of America, this August. Additional books of folk dances in LN are being planned—a volume of English Country Dances as well as those of other nations.

In your discussions on Labanotation the question of difficulty was raised. Albrecht Knust commented that the system could be simplified. I would like to stress this point. Since the study starts with a general description of movement and progresses to any degree of subtlety and detail, the novice or amateur can write correctly from the beginning, amplifying as knowledge or movement-awareness increases. *Ten Folk Dances in Labnotation*, written for the beginner in notation, is in the most simple and general terms. It does not show arm- or body-movements or any stylistic detail. All of this can be added later, and there will be nothing to re- or un-learn. Children as young as five or six accept and use the simple descriptions:—direction, level, timing, quick-fast, etc.

We hope this information may prove interesting and useful to your members. Any inquiries or news on this subject will be heartily welcome.

Sincerely yours,

MIREILL BACKER,

Vice-President, Dance Notation Bureau.

Secretary, Country Dance Society of America.

Dance Notation Bureau, Inc.,

47, West 63rd Street,

New York 23, N.Y.