

inventor of a system of notation widely used in conjunction with sign language for the deaf, was most generous in sharing both her system and ideas. Maria Szentpal from Hungary not only gave a paper, but carefully analyzed the concepts presented by others. Wu Chi-Mei and Kao Chun-Ling of the Peoples Republic of China could not be present to give their paper, but it was read by someone else.

The extra touches in Barry Swersky's almost faultless organization included the evening performances and the outstanding guide on the two day excursion into and out of Jerusalem. The opening night party included ducks in the pool, a Bedouin making coffee while seated on a rug next to his donkey, and Yemenite dancers.

The reception in the courtyard of the Rubin Academy in Jerusalem (Mayor Teddy Kollek was present - Mayor Lahat of Tel Aviv came on opening day) concluded with performances by Kurds, Arabs and Yemenites in which we all eventually joined.

If there were disappointments, they related to lack of time

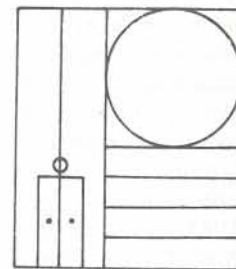
in which to continue discussions, although a great deal went on in the reading room between sessions. Monica Parker (who, with the rest of the Benesh contingent taught us much and proved to be marvellous company) felt sorry that the second week did not allow for small, more intimate exchanges.

This was the first Congress, but more will follow. At the closing session it was decided to hold another congress in 1988, probably in England. A working committee was formed and suggestions were accepted for further investigation. These included notation in dance education for children, development of the individual notator, employment and the need to explore linguistics and perception with some experts in the field.

Who knows what kind of computers will exist in 1988? Henrik Neubauer of Yugoslavia agreed to edit an international newsletter on notation, assuming some sort of minimal funding can be obtained. What a promising way to end an exceptional Congress and how exciting to be able to anticipate the next! ■

Congress participants at a notation class

שיעור בכתב־תנועה למשתתפי הקונגרס



# THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON MOVEMENT NOTATION

by Dawn Lille Horwitz

The First International Congress on Movement Notation was conceived because Noa Eshkol, co-inventor (with Abraham Wachman) of the Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation system, expressed a desire to be able to hold lengthy discussions with experts in other notation systems (especially Benesh and Labanotation) and to ask questions and share problems. This wish was made in the presence of the Dean of the Faculty for Visual and Performing Arts of Tel Aviv University, who immediately offered to house the event. I was also present and undertook the responsibility of contacting Muriel Topaz, Executive Director of the Dance Notation Bureau in New York City. She, in turn, contacted Monica Parker, Director of the Institute of Choreology (Benesh) in London. Eventually Barry Swersky agreed to handle local arrangements in Israel, a committee with representatives from Eshkol-Wachman, Benesh and Labanotation was formed, ITI agreed to support the concept and the first planning session was held in London in the fall of 1982. Dawn Lille Horwitz was chosen as chairperson and the general aims and outlines of the Congress were decided upon. With each of the three major systems (Eshkol-Wachman, Benesh and Labanotation) responsible for obtaining their own funding for travel, planning and mailing, it was agreed that all written material would go out only after approval and/or corrections by the others. This system of letters, telephone calls and telexes was in operation until the second planning session in the fall of 1983 and continued until the Congress itself opened on August 12, 1984. This international cooperation was amazing!

The full program and copies of the papers presented may be found elsewhere; it can be seen that the topics covered a wide range, as did the backgrounds of the presentors. What cannot possibly be understood from just reading both is the excitement generated by each session – the extraordinarily high level of the presentations, the intense audience concentration, which remained undiminished throughout both weeks, and the intellectual interplay which took place continuously. If we were exhausted at the end, we were also exhilarated.

Over 250 participants, dancers, notators, philosophers,

theater people, anthropologists, scientists, choreographers historians, writers and teachers from 21 nations reviewed the past, discussed the present and projected the future, while learning from each other.

As Jan Moekle, a practitioner of Labanotation, put it after several hours of film analysis, she was already looking at movement differently: she found herself thinking of a body part as above or below other parts (Benesh) and had discovered a new way of describing the shape of a movement (the Eshkol-Wachman cone). Everyone wanted more of the daily classes in notation.

The outstanding moments? In a congress of such high calibre many stood out, but who can forget the “Overview of Benesh, Eshkol-Wachman and Labanotation” during which there was frantic writing on the board, followed by increasing shouting and arguing. When it was announced that the buses were waiting, someone yelled “Let them wait!” There were the scientific papers, among them that by Ilan Golani, one of the world’s outstanding authorities on animal behavior. Abraham Wachman, now the Dean of Architecture of the Technion in Haifa, spoke about space in a way that astounded many. Father Marcel Dubois, the head of the Department of Philosophy at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and a Dominican priest, spoke in Jerusalem about movement in Christian liturgy to a room that almost exploded with his combination of intellect and humanity.

By the end of the conference most of us understood that the brilliant and enigmatic Noa Eshkol was talking about more than a system of notation: hers is a philosophy of life with the movement of the human body at the center. Earl Ubell, Science Editor of CBS television and chairman of the Dance Notation Bureau, who gave an excellent summary at the end of the first week, was most fascinated by the technological possibilities for the future. Ann Hutchinson Guest, Director of the Language of Dance Centre, London, and one of the world’s authorities on notation systems remained unruffled when her opening lecture was beset by three malfunctioning slide projectors, and she engaged in vigorous debate throughout the two weeks. Valerie Sutton,