

Containers, Magic, And the Ineffability of Balance:

A photograph of two dancers in white, flowing outfits performing on a stage. The dancer in the foreground is wearing a long-sleeved top and leggings, with a large white fabric draped over her head and shoulders. She is holding the hand of the second dancer. The second dancer is wearing a long-sleeved top and wide-leg pants. They are both barefoot and appear to be in motion. The background is a brick wall.

**A study of the effects of LMA language on finding the
intangibles in dance**

**Final Project
Alexandra Beller
May 2015: YLP/LIMS**

Table of Contents

3	Overview
6	milkdreams
7	Creation of Ivo 1:03 Original and Ivo 1:03 New
11	Analysis of Original Company 1:03 in Comparison to Ivo
13	Appendix E: Shifting to LMA/BF Language for re-Teaching 1:03
15	Conclusions: Teaching 1:03 Through LMA/BF
18	Analysis of NEW Company 1:03
20	Continuing Qualities for the Company/Performance Agenda
21	Teaching Motif to CMAs
23	CMA Experience of Learning from Motif B
25	Effort Phrasing: A three-part analysis of 11 seconds of movement
27	Effort Phrasing Comparison between Ivo, Original Company, and NEW Company
28	Research Journey
33	Final Conclusions
36	Table of Contents: Appendices
38	Appendices

Overview

I have been involved in choreographing an evening-length work for my professional dance company, Alexandra Beller/Dances, for over two years. For the “milkdreams” project, we took the dances of my 14-month-old baby and 5-year-old boy and meticulously recreated them, later deriving additional movements, namely partnering sequences, based on the original material. The project attempts to find something of the intangible, ineffable essence of our precarious balance in the world as humans. It attempts to bypass much of the stabilizing, equalizing, righting actions that we employ to feel “balanced” in favor of the disequilibrium, the constant dynamic alignment, and the psychic and spiritual *not knowing* that I believe underpins us all the time. It is trying to peel off the veneer of ego, training, and security to find the intuition and freedom of a less “advanced” body.

Artistically, the reasons for this are primarily metaphorical: the idea of watching someone, someone small, find balance in an unstable landscape, the concept of connecting to bodily information that we inhibit and bypass in favor of the learned information of the world. We are looking to uncover universal, not taught desires and to experience the spirit through the body in a way that turns towards primal, intuitive, deeply rooted sensations. This all sounds a bit ethereal, and it could have been executed as such. But rather than relying on authentic movement or improvisation scores (which might have arrived at a similar location), we went down an intensely structured path. In learning the baby (and child) dances in explicit detail, we aimed to get into a physical patterning devoid of words, instructions, and critiques, a vocabulary driven by instinct, desire, curiosity, and authenticity.

In creating the work, before having been exposed to any understanding of LMA or BF, I worked primarily with Body Action and Spatial Directions and Rhythm, as well as profoundly probing the biomechanics of Weight Shift and following some of the less tangible sensing aspects of the movement (trace forms in space as well as internal embodied pathways). I found great success with this and fell in love with the movement vocabulary and its ability to probe our outer layers of control at the service of this disequilibrium and constant seeking of balance. But something intangible remained that was still too contained about our version, and I searched for a way to break through another layer.

In this project, I have analyzed a short section (1:03 minutes) of the 14-month-old (Ivo)'s dance for many elements of LMA and BF. Before I went further with the project, I did a considerable revision of the Motif because I realized I had Motif-ed based on non-LMA ideas (like Basic Body Actions and Spatial Directions or, in "non-LMA terms, verbs and places) rather than the more complex ideas of Effort, Shape and Disequilibrium. I then analyzed a video of the Company doing the same material before introducing any additional LMA/BF language. In comparing the two videos (Ivo and Original Company), I noticed the gaps in the Company's interpretation of the material. I hypothesized about what, on a meta-level, Ivo was trying to do in each moment and then extrapolated what the LMA/BF might be that would lead to greater authenticity of quality. This became a chart (Appendix E).

Next, I revised my cueing and re-taught the phrase to the Company, using newfound LMA language to guide them towards new qualities, and I videotaped that phrase. Then, I analyzed this new phrase and compared it to their first version to discover what unique qualities had emerged.

Finally, I gave the (revised and updated) Motif of Ivo's one-minute dance to two CMAs. I asked them to create a phrase together from what they read to discover what elements had been communicated from the Motif and how much of the sense (not the specifics) had been conveyed by the Motif. I had two sessions with them, where I revised the motif for greater accuracy. I eventually videotaped them, analyzed what I saw in them qualitatively, and collected their personal experiences anecdotally.

Included in this paper are Motifs of all four analyses: Ivo's original dance, called "Ivo 1:03 Original" (named for its length), the revision of Ivo's 1:03, called "Ivo 1:03 Revised," "Company 1:03 Original" (before any LMA/BF language), and "Company 1:03 Revised" (post LMA teaching.). Since the CMA video was ostensibly the same as the Ivo Revised Motif, I did not Motif it but have discussed it here, and the videotape is included in the DVD (*Appendix F*).

This paper follows the discovery process in using LMA and BF, a form of quantitative and qualitative analysis, to affect some of the most intangible aspects of dance, including metaphorical qualities, such as "seeking," which are notoriously challenging to cue and describe. A secondary

goal was to develop greater fluency in language use to communicate with dancers during learning. It also follows a journey of deepening an understanding of how to use not only the language of LMA and BF verbally but also the pictorial language of Motif as an expressive act.

The agenda behind having the CMAs learn the motif is to allow us to visualize a Motif and see if any intangibles, particularly around expressivity and disequilibrium, find their way through analysis, then through the motif, and eventually back into the body.

My work has long involved ideas of *translation*. I translate language into dance and describe dance through language. I am frequently called upon to write about dance or talk about dance. I teach, explaining (and often showing) dances to inspire their manifestation. I make dances describing ideas, relationships, and spatial pathways to create meaning. I market and promote my dances to funders, presenters, and the general public through descriptive language. I help students write about their dances and sometimes critique dance in public forums.

I believe that quite often, language, particularly the English language (my native tongue), fails dance. The writing we do to describe, sell, promote, critique, coach, and create dance is a facsimile of the expressive, intuitive act of movement. Yet we know that movement is meaning, as is language. My question is: can LMA, and in particular, Motif Writing, act as a conduit between what we *feel* when we watch dance and what we think, know, believe, intuit, and imagine about the world and typically express through verbal or written language?

This research project attempts to translate my desire as a movement-maker through LMA and BF to communicate with other artists. Ultimately, it will help me define an ability to reach my collaborators in a way that has sometimes eluded me.

This paper is presented chronologically to mimic my discovery journey and give the question/answer process in real time.

milkdreams

I have been creating dances for professional dancers for 15 years. I love working with trained dancers and reveling in all they can accomplish. And yet, I am often foundered by the “wall” that training creates between a dancer’s body and their humanity. “Technique” should, in the best circumstances, give us more ability to communicate who we are and what we need. But, similar to how more communication technology can sometimes isolate us from one another, I believe that more dance training can rend us from what we are trying to say. For years, I have been seeking a way to bypass this training while still being able to collaborate with adults who have intense body knowledge.

“milkdreams” is my attempt to strip the performers of their veneers of ego, agenda, and shame, laying bare their need, contentment, and the authenticity of their present moment. Through the process of creating and through the work itself, what is the phrase attempting to communicate, and how can Motif manifest it? This is the physicality of a baby, a child. To mine this territory, we have meticulously recreated the dances of my 14-month-old and five-year-old children. We are collaborating with Developmental Movement experts, including Cheryl Clark (BMC, CMA) and Martha Eddy (BMC, CMA), to aid the process. We are also engaging in a creative process in which we use the baby material to create a unique vocabulary that bypasses our intellectual and neurological patterning and reveals a dimension to our movement that is magical, unconscious, and utterly personal.

We often hear complaints that dance is alternately dull and pretentious or superficial and facile. What alchemy allows the audience to have an expansive emotional and intellectual space? I have long been deeply concerned with narrative and its function within a work. I want to intensely probe what I believe to be true about the narrative of the physical body and to deconstruct storytelling to its material components. It is a dangerous departure for me, as I have long been the creator of narratives that rely heavily on speaking. We are experimenting with the fragile space between invention and memory, between the ephemeral and the constant. The work comes from the experience of watching my baby sleep/dream. Witnessing him in this state inspired ideas

about the creation of memory and the viscosity of the present and how those states function through the action of dance.

Creation of Ivo 1:03 Original and Ivo 1:03 New Motifs

One of the questions I was attempting to answer with this aspect of the project was:


Can LMA/BF, particularly Motif Writing, communicate some of the ineffable aspects of dance and how meaning is imparted better than traditional dance language?

Ivo 1:03 is the name I gave to a video (one minute and three seconds long) I filmed of the Company as they follow the improvisation of 14-month-old Ivo in a dance studio. We were attempting to gather movement material for our piece, and I brought him into rehearsal for research and inspiration. The resulting video was deeply analyzed (and became a viral sensation on the internet, currently at approximately 1 Billion views).



There were two distinct analyses of Ivo 1:03. The first was before exposure to LMA, Motif writing, or BF. I analyzed it from September 2012 to September 2014 to teach it to my dancers, and I have subsequently introduced it to other students. Without any LMA to scaffold my findings, I primarily analyzed basic body actions and spatial directions. I hypothesized the reasons (regarding equilibrium, momentum, and general relation to gravity) for various falls and off-center movements. I observed body parts in great detail, especially concerning Initiation and Sequencing. I dealt with the material almost entirely through the Body and a minimal amount of Space (regarding BESS). Although I was unable to Motif when I analyzed it, I have since written a Motif of Ivo's material that initially reflected how we approached 1:03. The Motif itself is new (created in December 2014 and January 2015 for this project). Still, the theory behind it is drawn from our first non-LMA analysis. (*See Appendix A: Ivo Original Motif*).

The second analysis was near the end of the Year-Long program at LIMS. It included all categories of BESS, adding Shape and Effort but also adding great attention to Developmental Patterns, Body Organization, Spatial Intent and, mainly, I started Motif Writing, Equilibrium, Weight Shift, and the anatomy of imbalance. (*See Appendix B: Ivo Revised Motif*).

The first analysis yielded the “steps.” We got the primary fundamental material regarding body parts and their corresponding actions, the body’s facings in space, and a decent handle on rhythm and timing, and it offered us a lot of potential for unison dancing. We did not focus much on off-balance material but observed much flexibility and extension, particularly in the proximal leg. We watched a body posture that was multi-unit, sequential, and often led from the Center of Gravity (chest).

As you can see from the Motif in *Appendix A*, there is a lot of attention to Weight Shift and body parts, and rhythm is described through the stepping and size of individual motifs concerning one another. There is no attention to Phrasing, Shape Change, Falling/Righting, and not much attention to the torso, mainly through the lens of Shape Flow (). There is no indication of organ movement (also possible through a lens of Shape Flow), and having had limited observation of the body through the idea of Planes, I missed many of how Ivo leaves Vertical through tilting, shifting, tipping, and leaning. Therefore, the initiation and sequencing were not nearly as complex as they might have been.

In the original Ivo Motif, there is also a democracy of prioritizing where to place attention. Rather than a mostly Vertical motif, with a few modifiers on the Horizontal, the original Motif equalized all aspects of movement and spread Horizontally with abandon. It did not create a *container* for the material to access meaning. It used more of a Labanotation perspective and tried to communicate everything, essentially communicating very little. From this Motif, we got the steps but not the gestalt.

Once LMA and BF entered the palette, I saw that the entire study was motivated by a Shape Flow relationship and experience. In examining the reasons for the disequilibrium, I observed the axial body often in a Bulge, either forward or back (). This offset the torso from the pelvis enough that, with the destabilizing element of a heavy head, he was often in a state of off-balance (). We also noticed more reasons for the appendicular body to offset itself: survival (navigating counter-balance). This was an essential shift in our attention, for metaphor and the expressivity of his movement were at the forefront of my agenda for recreating the dances.

The new Motif (*Appendix B*) relies heavily on Shape Change, usually dealing with Shape Flow, and depends primarily on motifs around Equilibrium rather than Weight Shift. In creating the Motifs, Weight Shift implied more predetermination and premeditation than the ideas of Equilibrium (shifting, falling, recovering). Further, the revised Motif indicates Phrasing, which eliminates the need to detail each step, preferring to prioritize directional pathways and quality at the heart of the meaning of the movement.









The introduction of Phrasing (at the suggestion of Kathleen Shea, CMA) brought in ideas of desire and curiosity. I had reservations about including Phrasing because there is a sense of Ivo's movement, riding on Shape Flow, having continuity, an ongoingness that seemed important. It hinted at some of the more significant metaphorical issues I was trying to touch: a sense of "not knowing," a state of constant adaptation and growth, a sense of Weight Shifting that was in constant communication with gravity. But, ultimately, the sense of overcoming gravity, with its attendant weight sensing, head righting, organ initiation, and off verticality, seemed served by adding Phrasing and outweighed the attachment to showing the ongoing-ness in this particular way. Showing the phrasing gave us other, different, metaphorical ideas we had previously missed. By seeing the movement in phrases rather than as a continuous thread, I could suddenly see the shifts in Ivo's attention. These shifts in attention point to some intangibles I seek to recreate and address, including capturing the sense of alive-ness that comes from being wholly rooted in the present, with no sense of goal, planning, or predetermination.

The original Motif often looked at the results of the Initiation, like appendicular movements (arms and legs), but missed some of the more Axial Initiations. The revised motif indicated the torso and pelvis in particular and attended to details around the direction of the head and pelvis. The effort also came into the second motif more definitively. Although Ivo traffics more in Pre-Effort than Effort, there is an Effort life to him, and since Pre-Effort is not something with which I have experience, Effort was added here to clarify quality.

The real question that needed to be answered when revising the original Ivo 1:03 Motif was: *What is this phrase attempting to communicate, and how can the Motif support that act of making meaning?*

My answer to that question was that Ivo was attempting to:

- Locate his balance within a state of disequilibrium
- Connect with, seek, and relate to his neighbors
- Affect a change in the people with whom he is dancing
- Experiment with locomotion and its effect on his environment

Using Falling and Shifting symbols such as: , , , , , ,  allowed me to access more ideas of balance and disequilibrium. Using specific parts of the head (namely the eyes and face () in conjunction with Spatial points allowed me to connect more with the relationship to his neighbors. Noticing phrasing, particularly his suspended time between phrases, allowed me to intimate ideas about his sense of mastering the room and having some control over his surroundings. This idea holds deep meaning for the more extensive work. Using the larger locomotive symbols instead of each step allowed the larger sense of his place in the room and interest in his moving through space to enter into the phrase.

I will go into greater depth of the questions that opened this section when we discuss the CMA response to the Motif. Still, I will open the discussion here by saying that the Motif, through these shifts suggested above, became more expressive and personal and developed a *point of view* in a revelatory way. Some ineffable aspects, such as desire, relationship, curiosity, fear, and awareness of the performer, became clearer through just the revision of the Motif.

Analysis of Original Company 1:03 in comparison to Ivo

I taught Ivo's phrase to the company about two years ago. It was some of the first material we learned. Because the video from which we were learning went viral on the Internet, I saw the original video upwards of 400 times. I had a good sense of what the phrase wanted to be, and we were not getting there.

The company was doing a beautiful job of performing the actions I'd taught them in the correct directions, with a particular soft quality, staying in remarkable unison with one another. But they were missing the sense of instability I was seeking. I was looking for the sense of *not knowing*, an almost spiritual practice that I believed could be accomplished by doing the movement phrase. In watching the company, every move seemed entirely known, predetermined. They were usually on their vertical axis. They had very little disintegration of their organ/abdominal support, meaning the organs stayed neatly in the abdomen, supported by robust Core Support. According to BESS, these were my findings of how the Company was performing the phrase pre-LMA:

(Body) The Company did a lot of Weight Shifts and Changes of Support but needed to be more engaging in what I would call Falling. We were developing rhythm through numbers of steps in some temporal proximity to one another rather than ideas of equilibrium, particularly regarding Initiation and Sequencing. What this means is that often, with Ivo, the gaze would lead, or the head, or the organs (to be discussed further in Shape), and this leading with body part would create a Sequence of events that would lead to disequilibrium, which would result in a fall.

Ivo exhibited a constant adaptation off verticality, mostly successive, with some sequential movement, an extremely multi-unit trunk, and the appendicular upper body as a stabilizer during off-balance moments. Due to the adaptive nature of his seeking balance, he had an extremely mobile trunk and a sense of non-stop movement.

(Effort) Surprise is one of the most essential elements of the work. The sense of having no control but being fearless in the face of it is one aspect that we are attempting to manifest. One tangible way to look at our navigation around surprise is to look at Time Effort throughout the phrase. Their "falling" moments were often preceded by a Sustained Time moment that gave the viewer a

sense that they knew they were about to fall. Combine that with their lack of Quick Time on the actual fall, and there was a distinct paucity of surprise.

Since the original material is from a 14-month-old baby, there is no preponderance of Effort. The material lives mostly in Pre-Effort, but there are moments where Effort is visible. Most of these are in moments of imbalance, where he attempts to avoid a fall. Naturally, in dealing with instinct in this way, Time Effort dominates. Additional discussion of Effort appears below, in the section titled *"Effort Phrasing: A Three-Party Analysis of 11 Seconds of Movement."*

The most significant difference between Ivo and the original Company version regarding Effort was his use of Free Flow and both sides of Time Effort, which the Company often needed more.

(Shape) Overall, Ivo's dominant Initiation through Shape Flow is the most crucial factor in BESS. He mostly moves from Indulgent aspects of Shape Flow (Lengthening, Widening, Bulging) and uses his Condensing properties usually through reflexive, survival-based actions (catching, grabbing, regaining balance). His Condensing is often associated with an attempt to return to the midline after going too far away for balance. His Shape Flow was more Planal than Dimensional (discussed below in Space) since he rarely stayed pure regarding Direction. The Company lived much more inside directional movement, both spoken and arc-like, and that indicated a lack of inner and outer volume, which was reflected in their lack of relationship to either self or space.

(Space) Ivo's movement appears predominantly inside the Icosahedron, using Planal Shape Flow, whereas the Company seems more in the grounded, balanced, symmetrical cube. Although the cube can be mobilizing, it can also be balancing, and they used it in such a way. Ivo existed more in the Axis scale: off balance and attempting to adapt to the shifting perspectives of his landscape. You can see his Icosahedron clearly in his tilting, inclined counterbalances and the Company's cube in their equilateral Diagonals.

The following chart is a document I made in order to keep track of my thoughts about how to coach the Company on the phrase.

Appendix E: Shifting to LMA/BF Language for re-Teaching 1:03

Event/Time code (Company)	Action/Intention	Intention/Gestalt	LMA/BF Language
1st weight Shift	Equal arc side to side	Finding center, holding onto upright. Finding oneself in an unstable landscape.	Shape Flow, Dimensional Lateral shift, vertical lift, right knee circle
Falling to upstage	Successive Sagittal movement taking the body backwards	Instability, giving in, letting go, going for a ride.	Shape Flow, Bulging, lose scapula connectivity
Step to upstage	Even phrasing	Catching to balance, survival, and success.	Quick Time on step
Cross reach before walk	Equal spatial pulls	Finding equilibrium, acknowledging the world, making a decision between two things.	Sustained then Quick Time before step
Getting down to floor	Even phrasing/single unit trunk	Responding in the moment to Gravity.	Descending/Sequential Body parts, Shape Flow
Shifting left	Pelvis leads	The small affecting the large. Cause and effect. David and Goliath, Big world, little man.	Dimensional Horizontal, multi unit trunk, many body parts. Add head circle, then Fingers against floor lead. Move Rt hand to left Weight Shift
Reach arm & leg	Rebound/swing phrasing	Disequilibrium, Seeking balance	Shape Flow: Grow and Shrink
Getting up	Body and weight shift and arm simultaneous	Surprise, Flight, Power, Affecting the Universe.	Arm precedes weight shift, then Quick Time on jump
Falling forwards to SR	Comes to vertical, then fold	Falling, Icarus and the wax wings	Stay towards Sag Diameter, Reach Forward High with Head, Quick Time steps, then Fold
Body shape around corner	Right angle/parallel to floor	Leading the world in action, exploring, changing perspective	Wide stance, Body half organization, Mostly vertical, Weight shifting constantly

Event/Time code (Company)	Action/Intention	Intention/Gestalt	LMA/BF Language
Quality before Descent	Lengthening on the up, even Phrasing on the down	Surprise and choice making, Going to the end of the choice and rebounding from it.	Shortening on the up, lengthening on the down (Disaffinities), quicker Time on the down
Floor action before Falls	Knee drop, weight shift to left hand, swing legs around	Suspense, Flirtation, Coyness	Knee drop (Dimensional, Horizontal) direction shifts on the down already, then legs extend into UR corner, and add hand gesture (Shape Flow) Sustained Time Effort
Quality of 3 falls at sitting	Even weight between sitz bones	Research, Cause and Effect	Left hip takes Weight, True Disequilibrium, Hollowing, Tilt Left
Gestalt of Supine material	Arms and legs leading materials	Experimentation, Sensation, Reaction	Strong weight on first leg action, add turn of head before clap, Gathering/Scattering, Soft core body leading material (Shape Flow)
Turning over	Simultaneous full body rotation leads up, no momentum	Interest, Curiosity, Discovery	Lead with Head, then shoulder, then Knee to find Cross lateral
Getting up	Balance, Core Support, Even Phrasing	Excitement, Interest, Desire	Multiple overlapping body parts and phrasing
First fall to SL	Two steps with rotation, even Phrasing	Intention, Space and Desire	Turn before fall. Chin reaches to Front, then Reach to Front High with Head (Diameter of Sag Plane), go through full pointe on floor to fall. Quick Time on 1/2 steps. 4 Steps. chin continues to lead Forward Middle.
Knee Drop	Knee leads to pelvis to shoulders and head, balanced weight shift	Coming to self, containing	Tilt left precedes shoulders/hands then knee cross body
Walking Round corner	Controlled flow, Even Phrasing	Labile/Unstable, correcting and re-correcting, Playful, Free, Following Flow	Indirect Space Effort, Body half (no CL Organization)

Event/Time code (Company)	Action/Intention	Intention/Gestalt	LMA/BF Language
Walking/Foot shape and Quality	Mathematical, even phrasing, vertical axis alignment (except "7/8")	Tentative, distracted, focus shifting Shifting attention between Self and Not Self	Separate walks into: 6 = coming back in. 3 sideways = adjusting. 2 = Direct Space Attention. 19 = modulating from Inner to Outer.

Appendix E: Shifting to LMA/BF Language for re-Teaching 1:03 Pg. 2

Teaching 1:03 Through LMA/BF

I spent an hour teaching 1:03 anew to the Company. Having already learned all the Basic Body Actions, Rhythm, Spatial Directions, and some ideas of Effort (though there is predominantly Pre-Effort in the phrase), the teaching was entirely qualitative. We spent the time going over the *why's* of the phrase. The hope was that this would bring in some of the ineffable quality of seeking, searching, being fully present, spontaneous and allow us to see the mover as someone in a completely unpredictable landscape responding without fear or pre-meditation.

I first completed the analysis of Ivo 1:03, which (as described above) I revised to include much more Shape, Equilibrium, and added ideas of Phrasing. I then analyzed the Company's non-LMA directed video and Motif-ed it. (See Appendix C). My next step was to synthesize the information about what was missing based on comparing the Company's Motif to Ivo's revised Motif. I gathered my findings in a chart (see Appendix E above), in order to help me streamline my teaching.

In order not to get clinical about it, and maintain my agenda of seeking a magical essence through Motif and LMA verbal language, I added a column that was about the metaphorical, emotional, relational ideas I saw in Ivo in each movement event. (See column 3 in Appendix E). This column included ideas like: "Tentative, Distracted, Focus shifting, Shifting attention between Self and Not Self." and "Leading the world in action, Exploring, Changing perspective." This column helped me to navigate and define the appropriate LMA/BF idea to get at what I was seeking qualitatively. Something like curiosity might lead to a Body Action we had missed (as in *Turning Over*, which required us to lead with the head, affecting a more curious quality), or Shape Qualities/Shape Change we had missed (as in *Quality Before descent*, where the metaphorical directive was "Surprise and choice making, Going to the end of the choice and rebounding from it." which lead to Shape Change of Shape Flow, and Quality of the disaffined Shortening upwards while standing and Lengthening on the descent). The metaphor column was deeply instructive to me in narrowing the lens to an appropriate pedagogical choice.

Very often, my concern with the Company was an even-ness of phrasing and, rather than overlaying a rhythm, I wanted to discover the reason for the rhythm in Ivo. The metaphors also helped here. On *Step to Upstage*, I felt the Company was using “even phrasing,” and looked at the metaphor column for clues. It read, “Catching to balance, survival, success.” Looking more closely, I noticed he was using Quick Time Effort on the step, and added it to the teaching.

Sometimes, there was a more nebulous even-ness, which often turned me to Shape Change/Quality. On *Falling to Upstage*, the company was doing a Successive body movement from lower to upper (almost a body roll), which was shifting the weight backwards rather than forwards. This gave the movement a balance that Ivo was missing (and seeking). I looks to Shape Change (Shape Flow) and particularly Bulging, shifting the organs off their base of verticality to offset the equilibrium forward, necessitating a “catch.” The metaphor of “Instability, giving in, letting go, going for a ride” seemed to support this idea.

Often the Body Organizations were not efficient. In *Turning Over*, I found the Company to be in “Simultaneous full body rotation leads up, no momentum.” The metaphorical directive here was, “Interest, Curiosity, Discovery.” This led me to decide on “Lead with Head, then shoulder, and then Knee to find Cross lateral.” Curiosity often signaled “Head” to me, as this seemed to be a theme with Ivo, leading from his Senses (often also signaling a use of the Horizontal Plane).

Sometimes all of these things would come together. My most difficult thing has been accessing a walk that feels as though it is not pre-determined. There is a seeking, sensing, spontaneous quality to Ivo’s walks that signal a present moment depth that we are often missing as adults. Yes, we know how to walk. Walking is reified. We know it. What if it wasn’t? What would we signal to the world about our openness if walking were un-reified, unfamiliar? This is not a drunken walk. It is a highly aware movement through what must feel like an unstable landscape. Our body integration has made us inhibit our understanding of the world as unstable. I am attempting to reconnect with what feels to be a metaphorical truth: we do not know what will happen on our next step.

In analyzing the walking, I found that in *Walking, Foot Shape and Quality*, I was seeing “Mathematical, even phrasing, vertical axis alignment (except “7/8”)” The metaphor related to this event was, “Tentative, distracted, focus shifting

Shifting attention between Self and Not Self.” This led me to break down the walk based on a few different ideas: Rhythm, Shape Change (Shape Flow being the decision here), Shifting Attention through Effort (adding Direct Space Attention in a specific part of the walking brought in the idea of desire) and a somewhat less tangible directive based on Shape Flow to express an Inner/Outer Theme.

I taught the entire phrase again, dealing almost entirely with Shape, Weight shift (rather than Change of Support), Falling (also instead of Change of Support), and dealing with ideas about what body part is leading or initiating. In the new Motif of Ivo, there were numerous instances of all of these motifs/ideas.

The main words I used in teaching were:

- Bulge/Hollow*
- Quick/Sustained Time
- Organ shift to destabilize*
- Tilt (in this case, offset the shoulder girdle)
- Lengthen/Shorten*
- Focus leading*
- Gather/Scatter
- Overlap (indicating sequential actions and overlapping phrasing)

*Shape Flow was the predominant idea that had been missing from our vocabulary.

Analysis of NEW Company 1:03

The Company's rendition of the phrase changed significantly after the teaching through LMA terms.

(Body) The Company was engaging in much more off-balance work, culminating in small falls (small in terms of adult scale). The Rhythm seemed to now stem more from ideas about Equilibrium (meaning that the adaptation to gravity and loss of balance inspired rhythmic dynamics). This, in turn, stimulated more complex Initiation and Sequencing. With the gaze leading, or the head, or the organs (to be discussed further in Shape), the shift would create a Sequence of events that would lead to disequilibrium, which would result in a fall. They were more attuned to Vestibular sensation than they'd previously been. Although this is not specifically Motif-able, there is a sense of the head being an active agent in the locomotion. They exhibited more off verticality, mostly successive, with some sequential movement, an increasingly multi-unit trunk.

(Effort) I noticed more Effort (to be discussed further in the section entitled "*Effort Phrasing: a three part analysis of 11 seconds of movement*"), throughout, particularly Time Effort (both Quick and Sustained). The use of Quick Time in a reflexive manner, similar to Ivo's use of Condensing Efforts in his survival mode, gave the falling more authenticity.

The biggest difference between the original Company version and the new one in terms of Effort was their use of Free Flow, which the Company had previously lacked. The original, while not steeped in Bound Flow, had lacked Flow to a degree. With Shape Flow as Ivo's dominating initiator, Flow is exceedingly important to the phrase. Although the Company got there a bit more through destabilizing their verticality, and using more overlapping phrasing and sequential body actions, than through Shape Flow, they did get to Free Flow effort, which often aligned with either quick or Sustained effort through acts of falling and re-stabilizing.

(Shape) In the new version of the phrase, I noticed much more motivation through Shape Flow in the Company. There was also now Initiation through Shaping, and less Directional Shape Change. In terms of their use of Shape Flow, they mirrored Ivo's structure in that they tended towards the

Indulging Qualities, using Condensing Qualities more to catch themselves, save themselves, or reach for something. My interpretation of the use of Shaping is twofold:

- Their awareness was becoming more three dimensional, and volumetric
- Their sense of relationship building was starting to activate

(Space) The Company's movement in the new version appears to happen inside the Icosahedron, although they sometimes revert to the cube. Their Icosahedron became clearest in their tilting, inclined counter balances, and their locomotive patterns.

Although they already had the spatial directions in their bodies, the Effort and Shape ideas generated more motivation for going to those predetermined locations and made them appear *less* predetermined. They were using more vestibular, kinesthetic and visual motivation to travel through space, which lent more sense of discovery, present moment invention, and seeking.

Earlier, I asked the question, "Can LMA/BF, and Motif Writing in particular, actually communicate some of the ineffable aspects of dance, some of the ways that meaning is imparted, better than traditional dance language?" and I said that, preliminarily, I did discover that there was a shift in the qualitative choices of the dancers based on ideas in the Motif, that enhanced their "ineffable" properties, namely their ability to impart meaning through only the body. Here, we got to see more of the result of this experiment.

The Company's newfound use of Shape Flow as a motivator, increased use of Time Effort, and loss of Verticality, leading to truer falls, gave a very clear sense of impermanence, imbalance, spontaneous reactions, and an inability to control one's environment. These were all essential aspects of the final work, which this process was intended to deepen. I could see visibly the difference in meaning that was imparted through the introduction of LMA/BF language, specifically as I analyzed it through Motif Writing.

I also asked, at the beginning of this process, "*What cues, if any, does traditional dance language omit?*"

The obvious answer is Shape, and the specificity of Effort. Many dance teachers/choreographers imply Effort through other language, but the specific clarity of naming the Effort combinations, and Effort Phrasing, shed light on the material in a way nothing else seems to.

Continuing Qualities for the Company/Performance Agenda

There was great progress made from our LMA session together. There is still more work to be done, clear from watching the videos of the NEW Company and Ivo. Although we will never get to the exact qualities of a 14 month old, an impossible task for adults with integrated functional systems, I believe we can get still closer. There is still more we can do to release our magnetism to verticality, to allow ourselves more of a Democracy of Space. In terms of BESS, this requires:

- BODY: less pelvic floor, more vestibular sensing, less visual orienting, more overlapping, sequential and multi unit trunk.
- EFFORT: more use of Free Flow, and Indirect Space Effort
- SHAPE: continuing work towards the Indulgent properties of Shape Flow
- SPACE: continuing to work towards leaving the stability of the cube and enter the mobility of the Icosahedron.

There is a sense of ongoing-ness to Ivo's material that we often miss in our attempt to create phrasing, in order to be together, and get our bearings. This desire to "get our bearings" hints, to me, at the reluctance we have as adults to be truly present. There is also the oxymoronic situation we find ourselves in, namely that we are making a dance, which DOES have a beginning, middle, and end which ARE known to us, and I have asked the dancers to do it in a somewhat similar manner each time they perform it. This is NOT an improvisation. It is a highly structured movement sequence, with inter-related pathways and spatial relationships, which have been established specifically. How do we create that deep awareness of the present, while still adhering to the demands of a set work? This is a question for us to consider as we continue in the next six weeks to the show.

Teaching Motif to CMAs

CMAs, and LIMS YLP assistants, Barnaby Orhstrom and Kathleen Shea agreed to learn the motif from Ivo 1:03, without coaching on what the material actually was. This was an attempt to glean what is legible from the actual Motif (we used *Motif B*), particularly through the lens of expressivity and equilibrium. I was curious to see if any of the expressive qualities, and any of the off-balance physicality was locatable through using the Motif itself.

We spent 90 minutes going over the Motif structurally, making sure the motifs were clear and comprehensible, shifting a few errors, and clarifying redundancies. We then we met for 2 hours, during which time I watched them create together, and did not advise. It was important to me that they receive no coaching on how to interpret the Motif from me. In full disclosure, they had seen the film at a previous event in class. They did know the tone and scope of the video, but I asked them to put that aside as much as was feasible. I set an agenda of using the Motif to explore Developmental Patterns in order to limit the scope and retain some of the original agenda.

The big revelations that came up in terms of revising the Motif were about adding Phrasing bars to the vertical Motif, which offered me more ability to coach Rhythm, and eliminating some redundancies in order to prioritize the actions. Sometimes eliminating a detail would help the Shape Quality assert itself more.

They later met for 2 hours on their own to create their version of the phrase, and eventually met for another 2 hours at my home to review and videotape the phrase. My analysis here comes from a version they performed during that session for video.

In watching them work, I made a few suggestions only as it related to accomplishing the Motif. These included reminding them when there was an effort or Shape Quality which they were not accessing, reminding them to keep additional Effort and Shape ideas out of the phrase, and reminding them that the idea of seeking and losing equilibrium was the key to the phrase.

The biggest thing I noticed in watching them was that were often adding Passive Strong Weight Effort where none was indicated in the phrase. In fact, Passive Strong Weight Effort was *never*

notated in the phrase, a fact that seems interesting to note given the amount of Falling that exists. I attribute this to the fact that Ivo never actually *does* “give up” his weight. Rather, he is in a constant dialogue to maintain, or gain, verticality, despite his limited ability to do so. I believe there is something that, as adults, we must give up in order to find the qualities of Ivo’s movement, but it is not our Weight. We must *weight sense*, but not *weight release*. We must let go of pelvic floor support and abdominal support (Core Support), but be very quick on the reflexes that right us. Normally these reflexes are so integrated that we do not need to kick them into gear again and again. But Ivo does, and that is one of the physical properties that give him such a present-moment engagement. *Anything* may happen at *any* moment, and he is fully lit up in the sensing of this. He doesn’t give up *anything*.

After asking them to omit additional Efforts, such as Passive Strong weight, they got clearer. The qualities they exhibited, as well as the pathways, body parts, and actions, were strikingly similar to Ivo. In some ways, the Motif interpretation was closer to Ivo’s material qualitatively, than the Company’s verbally taught version! I definitely witnessed them having a sense of meaning to the phrase that seemed to be about:

- Having forces at work on the body
- Having an inner spirit, or force, acting out expressively through the body
- Having a softness, and propelling the self through a soft body
- Seeking something outside the body for connection

CMA Experience of Learning from Motif B

I asked Barnaby and Kathleen to answer two questions.

- Once you had created and practiced the Motif, was there any sense of meaning to the phrase you danced and, if so, what was it?
- Was there any aspect of the Motif that gave you more information than any other in terms of sensation or meaning?
-

Here are there responses:

Barnaby:

1. I think the process itself, creating the motif in movement, was more about discovery for me than finding meaning. But I think this is part of the experience. What I mean specifically is, I think that finding the meaning would be the next step for me; I just happen to be in the discovery phase right now.

With regard to discovery, finding the moments in the motif that were unfamiliar, and not intuitive or perhaps even contradictory....these moments presented a search for movement within the context of an early period of life. I got the chance to think about channeling an infant boy. So, I'm not drawing the meaning yet, but finding sense in the motif drawn with youthful movement brought on a sense of learning, which ties quite naturally to what infants may be finding in their own movement explorations.

2. With further understanding of the motif I found the tempo juxtaposed with the falls, weight-shifts, and changes of support to be quite informative to experiencing/moving the motif. At the same time, the few moments of gathering and scattering drew my attention to the motivation of Ivo - I wondered about how the scattering benefitted his exploration and play. Perhaps it was recuperative... I'm not sure. Lastly, the Shape Flow periods of lengthening before slight falls...these really gave me information. Very distinct to the type of developing/learning/exploring steps of infants, I felt most connected with the piece initially through the Shape Flow and Center of Gravity constituents.

Kathleen

1) The task to create a sequence from Alexandra's motif was an interesting opportunity to try to distill meaning from basic ideas that each symbol represents. My challenge was to exhibit only what was included in the motif without adding any other of my natural tendencies or flourishes. For me, the biggest message that emerged was that there is an inherent relationship between actively exploring/initiating and needing to reestablish balance by responding to changes.

2) The motif that I turned into a new sequence had many shifts in weight, balance, and Space. The terms that gave me the most sense of meaningful expression were the Falls, Slight Falls, and Change of Support. These all were related yet different in subtle ways. Barnaby and I investigated how the performance of each of these three symbols would differ. In that exploration, I found different shades of the same general idea: finding Functional balance is only possible after we allow ourselves to venture into the unknown world of falling out of balance.

Effort Phrasing:

A three-part analysis of 11 seconds of movement

In this section I will compare the first 11 seconds of material from the original Ivo video, the old Company video and the NEW Company video through the lens of Effort Phrasing in order to infer some of the effects of using LMA on the teaching of the phrase.

As you can see in the chart that follows, there is a great deal of accented, impulsive and emphatic phrasing to Ivo's first 11 seconds (and it holds true throughout the material, though I will only discuss the first 11 seconds here). The original Company phrase demonstrates an even phrasing overall, and an even-ness to the individual actions internally as well, and they have shifted towards Ivo's phrasing in their second incarnation. Ivo is in mostly Free Flow, with Time Effort, and attention to gravity, either uplift, or down pull. In their original version, the Company exhibited very little Free Flow or Time effort, and in the final version, had greatly increased their use of both.

In the Company Original version, there was more of a gestalt of Effort, meaning a sense of Weight and Flow (Dream State), rather than really engaging in particular Effort Motion Factors (like Free and Strong within Dream State). This gave them a rather ambivalent quality, which their second version does not have. They seem to have more sense of going somewhere for a reason, indicated by their accented phrases, crescendo phrase, and down pull towards gravity at the end.

If you had no experience with Motif, and were given the following document, you'd be able to see immediately that the top and bottom rows bear a striking similarity that the middle row does not share. I interpret this to mean that, on some basic level, we have succeeded at arriving closer to Ivo's Effort life through the introduction of LMA language.

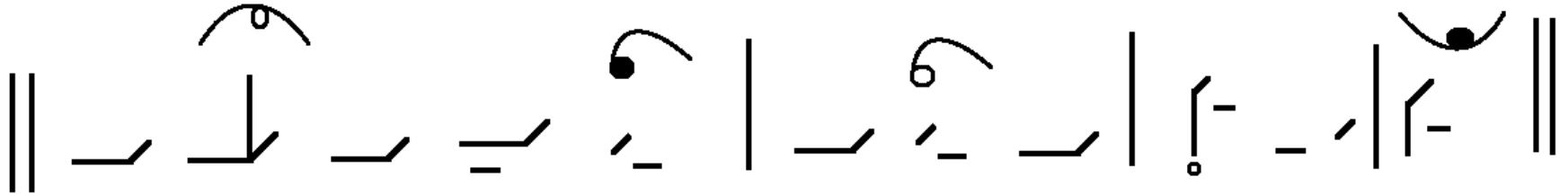
Much of the Motif for the Ivo and NEW Company is identical. Where it diverges is often where the Company substitutes Light Weight for Free Flow, often because they have stopped using Shape Flow as their engine. There is also a striking similarity of Time Effort, the Company using almost the same Efforts in each moment of the phrase (often alternating between Quick and Sustained,

giving the phrase an uplift and falling quality). Where we also diverge is the use of Bound Flow at the end as opposed to Strong Weight.

Although the Ivo indicated uplift and pull as opposed to Emphatic, or Accented Phrasing, they arrive at a similar sense of reacting to the environment, which the Company Original, with its Even phrasing, does not. There is a hint, with the proliferation of Free Flow in both the Ivo and Company NEW Motifs, at the ongoing-ness that has been discussed earlier, and the idea of Shape Flow as the motivator, which is absolutely true for Ivo. It is fascinating to witness how, through Motif, Shape can be implied only through the use of Effort and Phrasing.

Effort Phrasing Comparison between Ivo, Original Company and NEW Company

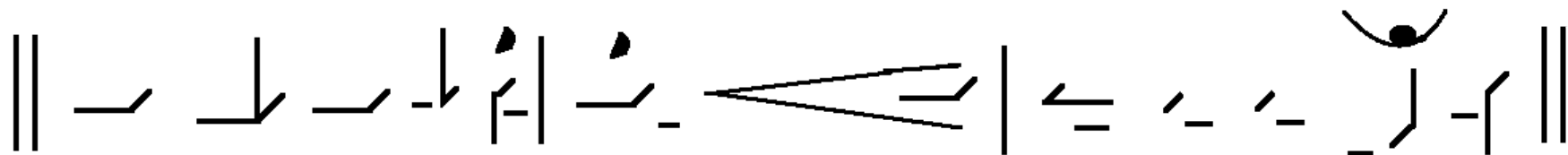
Ivo 1:03 Effort Phrase 0:00-0:10 Video #1:



Company 1:03 Original Effort Phrase 0:00-0:11 Video #2:



Company 1:03 NEW Effort Phrase 0:00-0:11 Video #3:



The Journey of Research

There were three major aspects to this project:

- Analysis of the material
- Motif research and experimentation
- Experiential/embodied research of the effects of both verbal and Motif-ed LMA language

They reflected three specific goals for how I would be changed by the project:

- Learn to *see* movement more distinctly through the lens of LMA/BF
- Learn to use Motif both fluently and expressively
- Connect the critical and analytical ideas of LMA to the expressive/metaphorical/improvisational ideas of Art-making and teaching

Analysis of Material

Learning to *see* through an LMA/BF perspective is clearly one of the major goals of doing the CMA education. I have many years of experience watching dancers, and facilitating their journeys, through Technique, Somatics, and Composition. I never felt lacking in my ability to communicate with my students. I am an articulate person, with a lot of poetic language available to me for the description of movement. But everything I said, and all the ways I witnessed, were subjective. They all stemmed from *me*, from *my* point of view, *my* embodied practice, *my* understanding of how the world, and kinetics within the world, operates. How could I take myself out of the picture, while retaining my sense of connectivity and instinct and understanding? Witnessing through a filter of LMA/BF was a radical decision.

There was a point in the process when I gave up on poetics in favor of a more clinical approach. It felt strong in its architecture, but weak in its life force. I craved a way to live inside both. I started thinking about perspectives, and how to give the dancer more permission to *find* themselves, and their own choice making, inside the instruction or invitation. That meant not leading them to feeling, or describing feeling and hoping they understand the way *I* approach feeling. It meant using the *body* to facilitate feeling, rather than the mind. I am discovering how Shape and Effort, Phrasing and Direction, Body Actions and Equilibrium, lead to sensation and meaning. If I want to invite rage, I can give the personal descriptions of rage, which are subjective, or I can analyze what

rage create in all of the aforementioned categories, and invite students into *those*, possibly inspiring the creation *from their own bodies and minds*, of rage.

This is particularly helpful in the act of witnessing. How can I watch someone actively, even passionately, without bringing my own biases, judgments, and habits to the process? LMA/BF were clearly inroads. How do I watch *my own child*, analyze his movement in order to make an expressive work of art, and get myself out of the way? Could anything be more personal? Is it possible to stay present, and leave myself apart, from such a process? My answer is, no, of course not; not entirely. But it did get me closer to the ability to see without impacting it as much with myself.

This idea obviously can telescope out to look at how we look at other people and understand them without getting caught up in our own mythologies, stories, and belief systems. How we can remove *some* of our judgments about gender, body size, age, race, sexual orientation, nationality, etc. We will *always* come up against ourselves, and I don't believe we will ever relieve ourselves of opinion or pre-determination. But, if the goal is to get closer to witnessing other humans with neutrality, and openness, clarity of mind, I do believe LMA/BF can be a vehicle to aid us.

Motif Research

The journey of becoming more fluent and expressive with Motif was arduous, but profitable. One of the biggest stumbling blocks was the lack of a digital system that was user-friendly. As with most obstacles, this eventually became my greatest teacher. It forced me into situations where I knew *exactly* what I wanted the Motif to do, and struggled to find ways to support that particular expression. It made me creatively problem solve how else I might be able to say something, and then sometimes realize there is only one way I *wanted* to say it, a true mark of expression and personal voice. I realized through fighting this unfriendly digital system, that I had a point of view, a personal perspective, and a voice.

When I first started Motif-ng, I did so with a clinical, analytic eye. This approach contradicts my innate relationship to dance as a communicative act, aimed at creating relationships to both the environment and other bodies, and at finding oneself in a visceral, sensate way, as part of a larger

landscape. How could I Motif based on actions and directions, and leave the act of communicating out? Yet, how do you Motif the ineffable properties of *relationship, communication, and sensation*?

As Ann Hutchinson Guest says in her Introduction to Your Move,

The act of dancing is a physical one, but behind it must be an intelligent awareness of what one is doing. Communication requires clarity based on a comprehensive understanding of the nature and facts of movement. The Language of Dance, like all languages, has the purpose of communication, communication through a common terminology and vocabulary, supported by the written form.¹

In my Motif journey, particularly through revising Ivo's Original and revised Motifs (*Appendix A* and *Appendix B*), I discovered the ability to express a point of view through Effort and Shape, and through micro choices (say, between Change of Support or Slight Fall). I have learned, through teaching dance for 15 years, that the choice of verb is immensely important in inviting Efforts and in satisfying goals around relationship and communication. To say, "extend the leg," as opposed to "lick the air" may not change the actual "step" but it drastically affects the meaning of the movement. In the first, you have a person doing a technical, physical action. In the second, they are trying to accomplish something in relation to their environment.

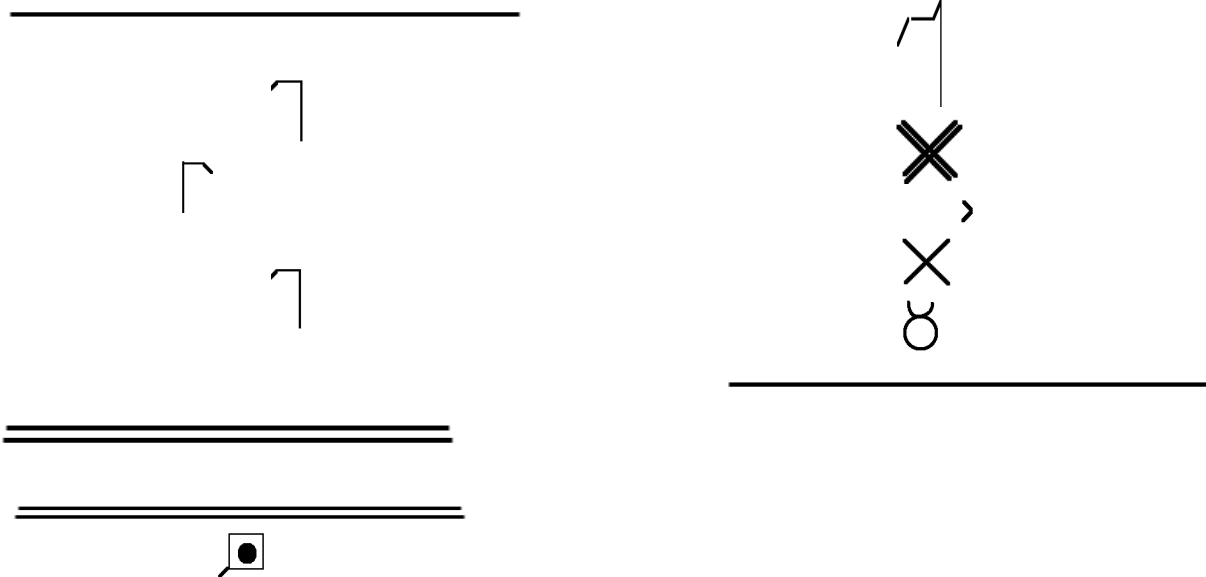
Yet, LMA, and Motif do not have this bank of words that we have in the English language. So, is it less suitable for teaching dance, less metaphorical, less poetic? In some ways, yes it is. Of course it is. It is a way to direct the body, not the mind or heart. But can we make invitations to the mind and heart *through the body*? I started to look at Effort and Shape from this director's point of view, rather than from the performer's. If I wanted to engage the performer in an experience that has meaning, creates narrative, and invites them to *feel*, how can I use Motif to create this situation? The answer is still developing, but here is the basic idea that has started to formulate:

Creating a sense of momentum, pull, resistance, desire, curiosity, and interest are possible through a combination of Effort and Shape within a construct of Phrasing.

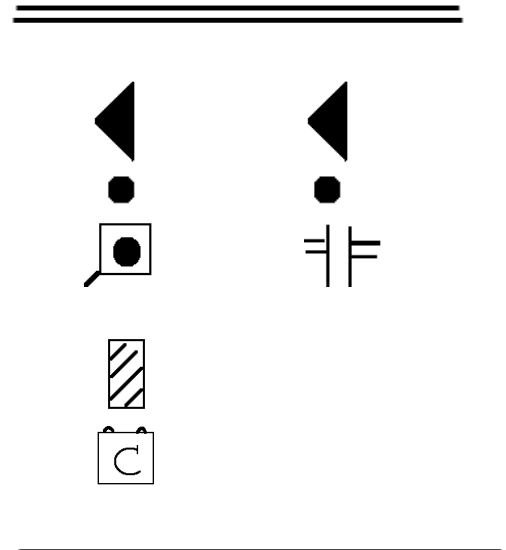
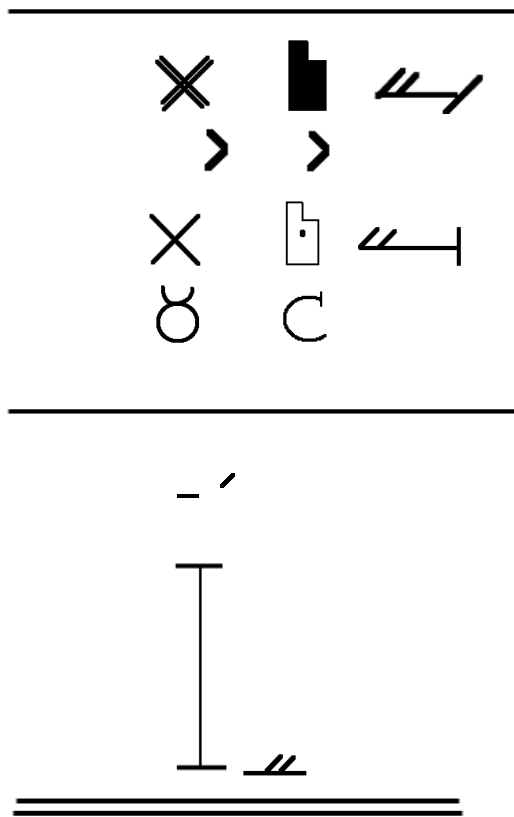
¹ Guest, Ann Hutchinson. Your Move. New York: Routledge, 2008.

What that means is that the combination of Phrasing (sometimes including, but not limited to, Time Effort), effort, and Shape create the dynamic landscape that affords us meaning. Effort and Shape don't do it by themselves, nor does Phrasing. But in relation to one another they tell a story. If you turn your head, then reach forward, the story could be anything, or nothing. You could be reaching for a glass, or pulling your child away from a fire. What gives us this context, or hints at it, is this interfacing of Phrasing, Effort and Shape. Let's go back to Ivo for a moment.

Here are two different versions of the same "material," one with no attention to phrasing, Effort or Shape, and the other with a more nuanced attention to the same aspects. In the first, you have these actions: Stepping (Right, Left, Right), lower body flexing, and then flexing more, changing support to the ground. The person might be going to pick up a piece of paper, and then sits down to read it. They might be going to investigate a hole in the ground where their pet disappeared, and then fall into a sinkhole. One is a completely pedestrian activity, the other a life-threatening crisis. Which is it?



Let's take a look at the same set of "steps" with the addition of Phrasing, Effort and Shape, and a more personal approach to verbs (Basic Body Actions).



Although we can never tell from a Motif exactly *what the story is*, we certainly get more of an essence here, an idea of relationship to the Inner/Outer (through both Shape Flow and focus change upwards), an idea of decision-making (through the moment of Sustained Time before the Descent), a hint at the sense of curiosity (through the head moving forward and down on the Descent), and an idea of equilibrium (through the use of Falling, rather than Change of Support).

The ability to narrate human relationships through Motif is probably one of the most important aspects of learning become an expressive Motif writer. This intersection between Time, both durational and Effort, with Shape and other efforts, seems to be a key to unlocking it.

Experiential/Embodied Research

Most of the discussion in this section has been about ways to set myself aside, remove my biases from the situation. The opposite is also essential to me, though. How can I use LMA/BF to deepen my embodiment, my *very* personal perspective? I mentioned that I was attempting to connect the

critical and analytical ideas of LMA to the expressive/metaphorical/improvisational ideas of Art-making and teaching. Ultimately, the goal of this project was to make *my artwork* better. I wanted to use the analysis of Ivo in order to find these magical properties I spoke of in the beginning of the paper.

Final Conclusions

This project was broad to begin with, and spread itself out into wider terrain as it unfolded. There are multiple planes on which we can draw conclusions, and it will be impossible to “sum this up.” It is, basically a life’s work of how my newfound information about LMA/BF and Motif Writing connect with, support, and challenge my lifetime’s understanding of human movement and human expression. However, there are conclusions to be drawn, though they are parts of a larger whole. Individual conclusions have been established in each section. We noticed things such as:

- It is absolutely possible, and in fact, essential, to develop a *point of view* when Motif-ing. This perspective allows you be expressive, personal, and have an opinion about what is important to *you*. It is a way to organize your thoughts, make decisions, invest in ideas, and invite inquiry
- Looking at the metaphorical/human/narrative properties of dance can help you access the physical components in a way that dissecting the material physically cannot. It has a Whole/Part/Whole process that requires both widening and narrowing the lens in order to get the most useful results. We cannot look only at the analytics, even through BESS. We must re-engage in the humanity and the mind wandering that initiates our curiosity about people enough to try and analyze them.
- The interfacing of Effort, Shape and Phrasing give a unique ability to communicate in Motif, and can offer possibilities for narrative, relationship, and some of the more magical, intangible properties of dance, possibly even better than language.
- The use of LMA/BF to witness and analyze dancers, or people in general, can offer us the opportunity to remain present but set aside some of our personal filters, including some of our biases, reactivity, prejudices, and habits. This can be an extraordinary teaching tool,

and helpful in the creative process, because not only does one want to get out of the way of one's students, but one absolutely must get out of the way of one's own art work.

Now, let's open the lens, á la Whole-Part-Whole.

Ivo's basic Theme is **Inner/Outer**. He is deeply motivated by Shape Flow, certainly an Inner idea. The movement of organs, the shifting of skeleton, and the unpredictable communication of firing muscles in such a young body, necessitate a very conscious sensing, a present moment experience. At the same time, he is deeply curious about the world, and learning with hungry, sometimes desperate, fervor. There are four dancers in the space with him, following him. He is both inspired to move for them, and with them, and he is clearly aware of his powerful effect on the room. He is noticing his impact on his environment in a potent way.

His co-attention to both Inner and Outer, and his vacillating use of one or the other as an engine, is what gives his movement such a uniquely mobile modus operandi. Which brings us to his second overriding theme, **Stability/Mobility**. Obviously, for a person of his development and size, his daily functioning is ruled by an attempt to find, and maintain Verticality. He is deep in his Righting Responses, Vestibular responses, which include the proprioceptors, interoceptors, and kinesthetic receptors throughout the body.² The Stability/Mobility theme is at the heart of what *milkdreams* is trying to accomplish: to show four adults in a state of disequilibrium, and their search for balance, with no attempts to control the future. That level of acceptance in an adult body seems miraculous and beautiful to me, and it is my goal to set that on a stage when we premiere the work in June.

The Company, on the other hand, is in a very different situation, and is dealing more deeply with Function/Expression. Trained in both, but in a particular manner, they are challenged to develop new processes of how they Function and how they Express. Normally, they function through their training, integration, and experience. However, in this situation, these skills only get in their way. Can they function as a baby might, inhibiting their natural righting responses, and kick back to

² Cohen, Bonnie Bainbridge. Sensing, Feeling and Action (Page 115). MA: Contact Editions, 1993.

reflex? Can they let go of what they know, or think they know, about balance? Can they *truly* sense the present moment, even within a movement event that I have established, and set? This means, they have somewhere to be, someone to interact with, specific actions to complete. Is it possible for them to function in a state of complete spontaneity and still accomplish these tasks? It is, of course, ultimately an impossible task, yet I ask them to attempt it.

Expression is a mainstay of the performer. We get on stage to *express* something about our inner life, our view of the world. But we often package, and prepare *what* we think is acceptable to express. How does Function support Expression, and Expression support Function? In this case, we cannot express any of the humanity that attaches itself to this movement vocabulary without finding the deepest functionality to scaffold it. It has taken us 2.5 years to learn these dances, because the function is so complex. At one point, we lost Expression. We got so functional with it that we lost the road to Expression. We had to lighten up our attention to the Functional, and with it, unison, exactitude of facing and timing, and some of the trappings of a “dance” in order to regain Expression.

How are Ivo, and the Company, each motivated, and by what? How do those desires interface?

Magic

There is, in dance, this thing I call “magic.” It is the ability for us to understand one another kinesthetically, without words, facial expressions, or universally understood movements or gestures. There is a magical communication of body to body that happens even without contact. You can *see* someone, and understand him or her *through* the body. Into *your* body, bypassing your Cortical processing. You understand them through Vestibular awareness and empathy. And you don’t really understand the things you “understand.” Hence, magic. It is a way that the human animal speaks to another that sheds the past thousand years of analysis and thinking, and returns to our primal, primitive, animal response system to one another. In a separate paper, I might go into the science around the Enteric Nervous System, the 100 Million Neurons in the gut, and some of the neurology around having a sense of “knowing,” but for now, I will leave it at this.

Babies, of course, have *only* this. Bereft of verbal language, they learn you and teach you through movement. They explore, express, fight, capitulate, challenge, reject and love you through

movement. They connect with you through movement. They trust you through *your* movement.

Babies are closer than we will ever be, until the nearing of our death, to whatever we *are not*. What exists beyond us? Why are we here? We spend our whole lives trying to answer these questions through philosophy, religion, parenthood, Art, science, meditation, inquiry, and activity. We may find answers, or believe we have. But we can never really *know*. But babies were just there, wherever *there* is. Another state? Nothingness? Divinity? They know, and their bodies know why we are here, and they spend their childhoods forgetting in order to latch on to this world, with its attendant *knowing*.

I describe Ivo's movement, his magical communication, as being about ***finding balance in an unstable landscape***. On a Body level, we see this in his loss of verticality, weight shift, locomotion, and rotation, his multi unit trunk, successive and sequential body patterns, and Upper/Lower, Head/Tail and Body Half Organizations. On an Effort level, we see it in his use of Time Effort (both Quick and Sustained), Free Flow, Passive Strong Weight, and Indirect to Direct Space attention. In Shape, we see it in his motivation through Shape Flow. In Space, his level change, falling, tilting, his Space Harmony through his use of Axis Scale-type transversals and shifting center of gravity.

I describe the Company as ***experiencing the spirit through a bodily, present-moment event***. This *is* the magic of dance for me. I think it is what we are trying to do when we improvise: to learn ourselves, and show ourselves, to learn the world and ask the world questions.

Containers

Our bodies are containers. Our minds are containers. Our community is a container, as is our family. How we read the container from the outside, what we imagine the contents to be, based on what we see externally, is the process of learning, empathizing, believing in one another.

Does the vessel contain love, fear, desire, resistance, rebellion, weakness, glory? We read these things from the outside, through movement, and we guess at the contents of the human in each moment we witness them.

If we go back to this idea that Ivo is attempting to ***find balance in an unstable landscape***, we can

say that his container is porous. He is negotiating with the world, through the Inner/Outer idea. There is constant movement between the Inner and Outer. How many of us, as adults steeped in inhibition, habit, and ego, can say that? His container is the softest of shells, untouched by consciousness, image, vanity, or resistance.

If the Company is attempting to *experience the spirit through a bodily, present-moment event*, they are striving for a similar container, a porous, malleable, impressionable chamber for the spirit to exist, and express itself through the body.

The Ineffability of Balance

Seeking balance in this world is futile and necessary. To find stillness, true balance, is to die. To live is to constantly be seeking the Dynamic Alignment of balance. A *moving* balance is in constant flux, and as such, is ineffable. We cannot *know* balance. We find it for a moment. Hesitate, even acknowledge it, and it is gone. Yet, we *must* seek balance. Without it, we also die. We fall to one side, give up on everything else, and lose our center, our constancy, and our gratitude. We spend our lives seeking this intangible, unknowable, unattainable thing we call balance, because we must, because the journey towards it, like the constant adjustment of riding a bike, is what keeps us moving forward. Without the commitment to adjustment, to shift, we cannot move forward.

Ivo has no disagreements with the world. The world seems unstable. So it is. Anything may happen at any moment. So it does. You ultimately have no control over the happenings, or what will come into your landscape. Yet he is unafraid. He moves through space based only on interest, excitement, and engagement, with no doubt or worry about *what will happen if...*

We seek this acceptance through this dance. We attempt to stop our negotiations with ourselves, our systems, with gravity. We attempt to accept the fallibility of the body in the face of the unknowable world. We try.

Appendices Table of Contents:

Appendix A: Ivo 1:03 Original

Appendix B: Ivo 1:03 Revised Motif

Appendix C: Company 1:03 Original

Appendix D: Company 1:03 New

Appendix E: Shifting to LMA/BF Language

Appendix F: Eleven seconds, three versions

Appendix G (on DVD): Video footage

1. Ivo 1:03

2. Company 1:03 Original

3. Company 1:03 New

4. CMA 1:03 Phrase

5. Ivo 11 Seconds

6. Company Original 11 Seconds

7. Company NEW 11 Seconds