

# *At One Time: The 2015 Marian Chace Foundation Lecture*

**Marylee Hardenbergh**

**American Journal of Dance Therapy**

Publication of the American Dance  
Therapy Association

ISSN 0146-3721

Volume 38

Number 1

Am J Dance Ther (2016) 38:101-124

DOI 10.1007/s10465-016-9210-8



**Your article is protected by copyright and all rights are held exclusively by American Dance Therapy Association. This e-offprint is for personal use only and shall not be self-archived in electronic repositories. If you wish to self-archive your article, please use the accepted manuscript version for posting on your own website. You may further deposit the accepted manuscript version in any repository, provided it is only made publicly available 12 months after official publication or later and provided acknowledgement is given to the original source of publication and a link is inserted to the published article on Springer's website. The link must be accompanied by the following text: "The final publication is available at [link.springer.com](http://link.springer.com)".**

## At One Time: The 2015 Marian Chace Foundation Lecture

Marylee Hardenbergh<sup>1</sup>

Published online: 19 April 2016  
© American Dance Therapy Association 2016

### Introduction

*I am fascinated by time and timing. My title, “At One Time,” has different meanings such as:*

*At one time, I was a student of Irmgard Bartenieff, studying Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) with her at her first intensive certification program in New York City. I fell in love with Irmgard. She was so brilliant! At that time, she was studying body attitude and the use of trunks: (1) the single-unit trunk, such as in Europe; (2) the two-unit trunk, such as in Africa; and (3) the four-unit trunk, such as in India. My favorite story of her was during a dance/movement therapy (DMT) session, where a young woman burst into the room leaping, jumping, and dancing about. After 5 min, she collapsed on the floor and did not join in the rest of the session. The next time, the same thing happened. The third time, Irmgard brought in folk music (which she didn't always do because she wanted to encourage people's internal rhythm to emerge), and when the young woman entered the room, Irmgard took her by the hand. They went around the room with Irmgard saying, “Let the rhythm support you... let the rhythm support you.” The young woman was able to participate for the entire session.*

*At one time, I was a student of Penny Lewis Bernstein in her DMT master's degree program at Goddard College in Vermont. Penny was the newsletter editor for the ADTA. I remember Edie Israel, my classmate in our small but mighty group of Penny's first-time students, typing the newsletter. We all helped send it out. This was long before computers.*

*I also want to mention two other dance/movement therapists from Minnesota who are no longer with us. Alice Bovard-Taylor, my teacher and supervisor, was a*

---

✉ Marylee Hardenbergh  
director.gsp@gmail.com

<sup>1</sup> 315 SE Main St. #526, Minneapolis, MN 55414, USA

*founding member of the ADTA in 1966. Kathleen Devereaux was my friend and colleague who went with me to Sarajevo and was instrumental in other dances.*

## Time

I am a time gal. I love time. I love using aspects of time in my work. I adore coincidences. You have to be in the right place at the right time, and then it is as if the universe winks at you. I looked up time-related words and when they were arising in the English language. Guess what? The words coincide with the emergence of clocks. Just like today, we have vocabulary words from computers—for example, a friend of mine said the other day, “I don’t think I have enough bandwidth for that.” The words arose with advances in timekeeping. In 1656, the invention of the pendulum clock made a huge leap forward in accuracy. Synchrony was first used in 1848. In 1954, Carl Jung created the word synchronicity. It is fun to ponder: what was happening in our field in 1954? Was it synchronicity that DMT was arising in separate pockets? It was an idea whose time had come!

In Laban terms, time is an integral element of the rhythm state and of the passion drive.

Laban's Time Factor    - ' -

Rhythm State    - | -

Passion Drive    - | -

So, in Laban terms: No Time, No Rhythm, No Passion.

In Schmais’ (1985) seminal article, “Healing Processes in Group Dance Therapy,” she describes three kinds of synchrony: (1) rhythmic; (2) spatial; and (3) Effort. All three require rhythm. Therefore, all three require time.

Time is a force; it has power. I like to think that rhythm is the handmaiden of time. I love synchrony. Within group dance/movement therapy sessions, my favorite moments are when synchrony happens. I learned that synchrony was something that could only last a split second in frame-by-frame analyses. But who says? I know that in Laban terms, the time elements of abruptness and sustainment can only last a moment, but are there not times when synchrony can last more than a moment?

I also love unison. Large numbers of people moving together in harmony brings joy in my body. Hey, I was at Woodstock so I come by it honestly. What is the difference between unison and synchrony? I took a poll of dance/movement therapists, who all said they had never thought about the question before. Everyone seems to agree that unison is doing something at the same time, whereas synchrony goes deeper; it takes place in the shared unconscious. It is about connecting, and it is definitely about attunement.

Let us now do a movement experiment. Repeat the same short phrase nine times. The first three focus on the count, doing it at the same time, simultaneously with the other audience members. The next three times we do the movement, aim for unison, a feeling of being together. The last three, invite synchrony to occur—a sense of attunement with each other.

Synchrony is like a good party. We can bring all the right ingredients together, but we can't make it happen. Over the last few months, I've been talking a lot about synchrony. Many really smart people mistake synchrony for synchronicity. The photo of the fleur-de-lis is an example of synchronicity. Several months after my performance on the Housatonic River, a man contacted me. He said he was an aerial photographer, and happened to be flying over to shoot this photo (Fig. 1). It took him months to find out who I was, but did I want to buy the photograph. He called it a fleur-de-lis, which is what the six guys on the jet skis also called this pattern. Synchronicity happens also in our field. I am particularly thinking of authentic movement moments. It's a spiritual moment, which can be invited, but there's no guarantee.

Synchrony is one of the amazing skills in a dance/movement therapist's toolbox. Here is my main message: the world is hungry for our DMT tools. I personally feel our best tool is synchrony. We have the ability to take a group from "zero to synchrony" in a few minutes. Our skills include rhythm, synchrony, and also an ability to tolerate uncertainty and ambiguity. Additionally, we have the ability to set strong intentions yet remain open to what unfolds. In real estate, you know what

**Fig. 1** Housatonic "River Dance", commissioned by Jacob's Pillow and Concerned Harbor Users of Milford Photo by Morgan Kaolian





they say are the three most important things about your house? Location, location, location. In our field, it is intention, intention, intention.

Sometimes, however, things happen far outside our intention. For instance, my very first year at the University of Minnesota teaching DMT and LMA, I felt so proud to be sitting at the dance department faculty meeting. The head of the department asked, “Who will choreograph for the faculty recital in February?” Everyone slunk down in their chair, but I was eager and said I would. I asked twelve dancer friends of mine, and three weeks before the show, I was kicked off because my dancers seemed under-rehearsed. I went home devastated. Luckily, one of the visiting artists told me to just perform it when my dancers were ready. Another lucky thing was that one of my dancers was an architectural historian. She suggested performing it at the Landmark Center, in the interior courtyard. So, the next month, the spring equinox was on a Sunday and the show went on. Since the dance was only 11 min, we asked the audience to watch it once at eye-level, and then a second time from the fourth or fifth floor (Fig. 2). When I saw the video, taken from above, it really opened my eyes. I would never go back to the proscenium stage. For me, one of the most mortifying events ended up changing my life.

A few months later, I was walking over a bridge across the Mississippi River, and I spied round concrete structures. I thought to myself, “Wouldn’t those make marvelous stages, one dancer on each?” After quite a bit of research, I found out that the United States Army Corps of Engineers owned those structures. When I telephoned, without thinking I asked if I could speak to someone with an open mind. The person on the other end said, “Oh you must mean Roger.” I invited Roger out to lunch, and told him of my vision of placing dancers in the river. He told me to send him two or three pages and he would “kick it upstairs.” It was nearly a year later when I answered the phone and some guy said, “They said yes.”



**Fig. 2** Performed at Landmark Center, “Kinetic Cromlech” on spring equinox

“Who is this?” I said.

“It’s Roger, and the Colonel said yes!”

Not only did they end up saying yes but also they ended up ferrying the dancers out to the mooring cells. There were nine dancers, one on each mooring cell. They wore costumes the shape of the mooring cells (Fig. 3).

The day after the performance, a stranger called me and said, “I just wanted to tell you thanks for giving the river back to the people.” Another audience member said, “Didn’t you see the sense of community on that bridge? No one wanted to leave.” These reactions were surprising to me. In my mind, I was only creating beauty on the Mississippi River. I was a dance/movement therapist before I became



**Fig. 3** “Solstice Falls on Friday,” performed on summer solstice, 1985, on the Mississippi River in Minneapolis, MN. Costumes reflect the round “stages” (*top*). Army Corps of Engineers staff ferry the dancers (*bottom*)

a choreographer, so perhaps what came through, without my conscious intention, were some healing aspects. Their comments about my performances got me thinking more about the concept of the performance. I was a little leery at first. At one time, I took classes from Blanche Evan, who said, “a frustrated performer makes a poisonous dance therapist” (personal communication, July 1973). But then, I knew that Marian Chace had performances at St. Elizabeths Hospital, and there were also many others such as Trudi Schoop and Liljan Espenak who held performances as well.

There is power in performance. I think it is magic. These performances have the power to transform how people feel. Performance is an idea that is easily understood. Performance as a concept is psychologically accessible. When I went to Sarajevo, I did not say I was going there to do therapy, I said I was going to do a performance. In many countries there is a stigma about therapy. When I call embassies, I ask to talk to the cultural attaché. The idea of performance is palatable to all (although not always immediately). I was invited to create a dance for the groundbreaking ceremony of the new art museum at the University of Minnesota. I choreographed a dance for eight bobcats and eight women in white skirts. The bobcat operators were chosen for their skills. They performed well at competitions where they have to pick up a raw egg in their bucket and race it over to a small circle. At our very first rehearsal at 6:00 a.m., they folded their arms and spat on the ground when I tried to teach them about the cannon form I wanted them to execute. They went back to their boss and said, “What the heck have you gotten us into? This is stupid!” Fast-forward ten days later, after the performance: they came up to me and told me that if I wanted to take this dance on tour, they were ready (Fig. 4). Another operator after the performance said, “This art stuff isn’t so bad.” I have found over and over again that the performers go through a change of heart during the rehearsal process.

Each performance has a beginning, middle, and end. I like to think of it as a “bowl of time,” in which people come together. The performers and the audience members are all there at one time. For me, a performance is like Noah’s Ark. It brings together disparate elements in the community, puts them in the same container, and everyone disembarks at a new shore. Performances are healing. There are several common healing elements of DMT and site performances. I’ll touch on a couple of them here.<sup>1</sup>

- **Inclusivity**—We fit the choreography to the level of the performers. We find a role for everyone. For instance, for a young dancer in Israel who was too old to be one of the children but not mature enough to be a beach dancer, we sewed a new costume for her to be a butterfly and she was very happy to have her own role. The president of the Brooklyn Borough, Marty Markowitz, who had originally declined to participate in any rehearsals, had a small role in the piece where he was walked down the steps by two of the dancers. As I was watching the performance, the only time I get to see my own work, I felt a tug on my

<sup>1</sup> For a list of healing elements as presented by Marylee Hardenbergh and Jenny Moore for Orit Waisman’s Dance Therapy class at David Yellin University (Jerusalem), please see Appendix (excerpt: *Rain or Shine: A Community Based Site Specific Dance in Portland*).





**Fig. 4** Bobcat operators at rehearsal (*top*), and performance (*bottom*) at the Weisman Art Museum, University of Minnesota

sleeve. "The president would like to be in the finale!" So, although unrehearsed and unexpected, we found a way to work him into the choreography so he could participate and feel included (Fig. 5).

- **Building Relationships**—After the Bobcat performance, one of the women said that she now trusted men more as a result of rehearsing with the Bobcat operators. "He would never move his machine until he knew exactly where I



**Fig. 5** The Brooklyn Borough President, Marty Markowitz surprised everybody by joining in the finale of “Dance Ascending: The Steps of Borough Hall”

was. He was very considerate of me and wanted to protect me.” There were particular moves when the women were backing out and the bobcats were advancing, and as the choreographer I was always frustrated during the early rehearsals that they wouldn’t come in on the beat. Later I learned why.

### Site-Specific Dance

My form of art is outdoor site-specific performance. These are created especially for a specific outdoor site. The costumes, the movement vocabulary, and the music are all designed for that one particular site. I find a local composer to create the music for the dance and a radio station to broadcast the music so that dancers and audience members alike, no matter how far apart, can hear the exact same beat at the exact same moment. Sound travels at 1100 feet per second; if there were to be a single source of music when the dancers are so far apart, being one whole second off from each other makes a big visual difference in unison movements. Another added benefit in the early days was that the audience became the sound system when they all brought their own portable radios. All my performances are free and open to the public.

I go to the site every day for 30 days, at different times of the day and different light, as well as in different weather. When I go to a foreign place, I try to be there for a minimum of three weeks. The site is my boss. I ask myself, “What does the site want? Who comes to the site? What colors already exist at the site?” If roller bladers come to the site, I ask them if they would like to be in the performance. When the rehearsals start, I ask the dancers to tune into the environment, and to let



some movement phrases emerge from the site through their bodies. I work these into the final choreography. I never bring dancers with me. I bring one colleague at most, but I feel that it's best to have dancers that are from that site, not brought with me. Sometimes the site itself gets a costume. I like making particular spatial lines visible through the use of fabric. Then, at a certain point in the music, the fabric unfurls (Fig. 6).



**Fig. 6** Fabric making certain site lines visible in Acre, Israel, on the Mediterranean (*top*) and on the Aerial Lift Bridge in Duluth, MN, on Lake Superior (*bottom*)

Again and again, even after 20 years, people still comment to me about how they never see the site again in the same way as a result of the performance.

Stemming from the performance in Duluth, “Bridge Dance,” comes the example below of what I like to call “Art from Art.” One of the men on the Aerial Lift Bridge snapped a photo during the performance (See Fig. 7). Afterward, he sent it to me and said, “It was scary how strong the wind pulled the fabric on the bridge.” I think it’s a beautiful photograph. It feels both validating and nurturing that people often create their own art via photography or mobiles using the vehicle of these performances as a way for each person to create their own art form.

In addition to site-specific performances, I like to do time-specific performances. Speaking of rhythm, there is a steady cadence in our relationship between our Earth and the sun: equinox, solstice, equinox, solstice. It is a totally reliable beat. The same reliable beat is also with the full moon, which appears faithfully every twenty-nine and a half days (Fig. 8).

These choices are not random, even though sometimes audience members come up to me after a performance and say, “Oh, you were so lucky that the full moon rose!” The truth is, I am lucky because it wasn’t cloudy. But in this instance, at a dance at a waste water treatment plant, I had timed the fire truck hose to arc over the rising moon at precisely the right moment.

**Fig. 7** Artistic photo taken by one of the men on the Aerial Lift Bridge during the Duluth performance







**Fig. 8** “Urban Sky Harvest,” performed on the fall equinox and the full moon, which coincide every 29 years

What about more than one performance at the exact same time? Simultaneous sites at one time. To be intentionally simultaneous from a distance carries a power. As a child, I would go climbing with my cousins in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. My grandmother stayed at the house down in the valley, and at a certain point she would flash a mirror up to us and we would flash a small mirror back. This was so thrilling to me.

Bartineff encouraged us to “hook onto the spatial lines. They can hold you” (I. Bartenieff, personal communication, January 1974). She called this ability to lean on the lines a part of spatial intention. What if there is—in addition to spatial intention—time intention? Or temporal intention? 1 day I had a vision of audiences standing on forty bridges along the length of the Mississippi River. The audience stood with arms overhead, each making the shape of the eye of a needle. Then an invisible thread of energy would connect the whole river. A few friends told me to “get real,” so we ended up with seven sites along the Mississippi in a project entitled “One River Mississippi.” Each site had a dance/movement therapist, in addition to a choreographer and an environmental organization. Below is the list of each site and its dance/movement therapist:

- The Headwaters, Itasca—Tracy Moroney
- Minneapolis—Annie Kirschmann
- Quad Cities—Pam Margules
- St. Louis—Paul Sevett and Emily Zallen Sevett
- Memphis—Sarah Campbell Arnett

- New Orleans—Susan Kierr
- Plaquemines Parish—Sharon Chaiklin

The template for each site was that there were two sections. The first section was site specific; each local choreographer created the dance and chose music that was of local significance. For example, New Orleans used jazz and Louie Armstrong, while Memphis used blues and Elvis (Fig. 9).

The second half of the performance consisted of unified music and choreography. The choreography was created at the two choreographers' summits that we held, where we were all able to go down to the river and create our own individual phrases. The exact same music was played at the exact same moment, courtesy of the radio stations at each site. There is magic in multi-site unison. The common intention grows exponentially.

Out of "One River Mississippi" grew a worldwide event focusing on environmental water issues, called "Global Water Dances." It all began when Karen Bradley brought the film of "One River Mississippi" to a conference she had called in England for Laban movement analysts who were interested in the environment. After Karen showed the film, everyone said they wanted to do something like that too but make it worldwide, and we decided to focus on water. Whereas, for "One River Mississippi," all the choreographers traveled and met each other, for Global Water Dances we relied entirely on the Internet. If it were not for computers, we would not be able to have organized this worldwide event. Global Water Dances used the same template so that there are two sections: one local, and one global. It takes place on a single day, on six continents, in sixty to eighty cities, and is growing strong (Fig. 10).

Now I call what I do community-inspired site-specific dance. At one time, I would come to the first rehearsal with the choreography all worked out (Fig. 11).



**Fig. 9** "One River Mississippi" site dance in New Orleans, soon after Hurricane Katrina. The props hold local significance



**Fig. 10** Sites around the world for Global Water Dances, a biennial event that has taken place in 2011, 2013, and 2015, and which will continue in 2017

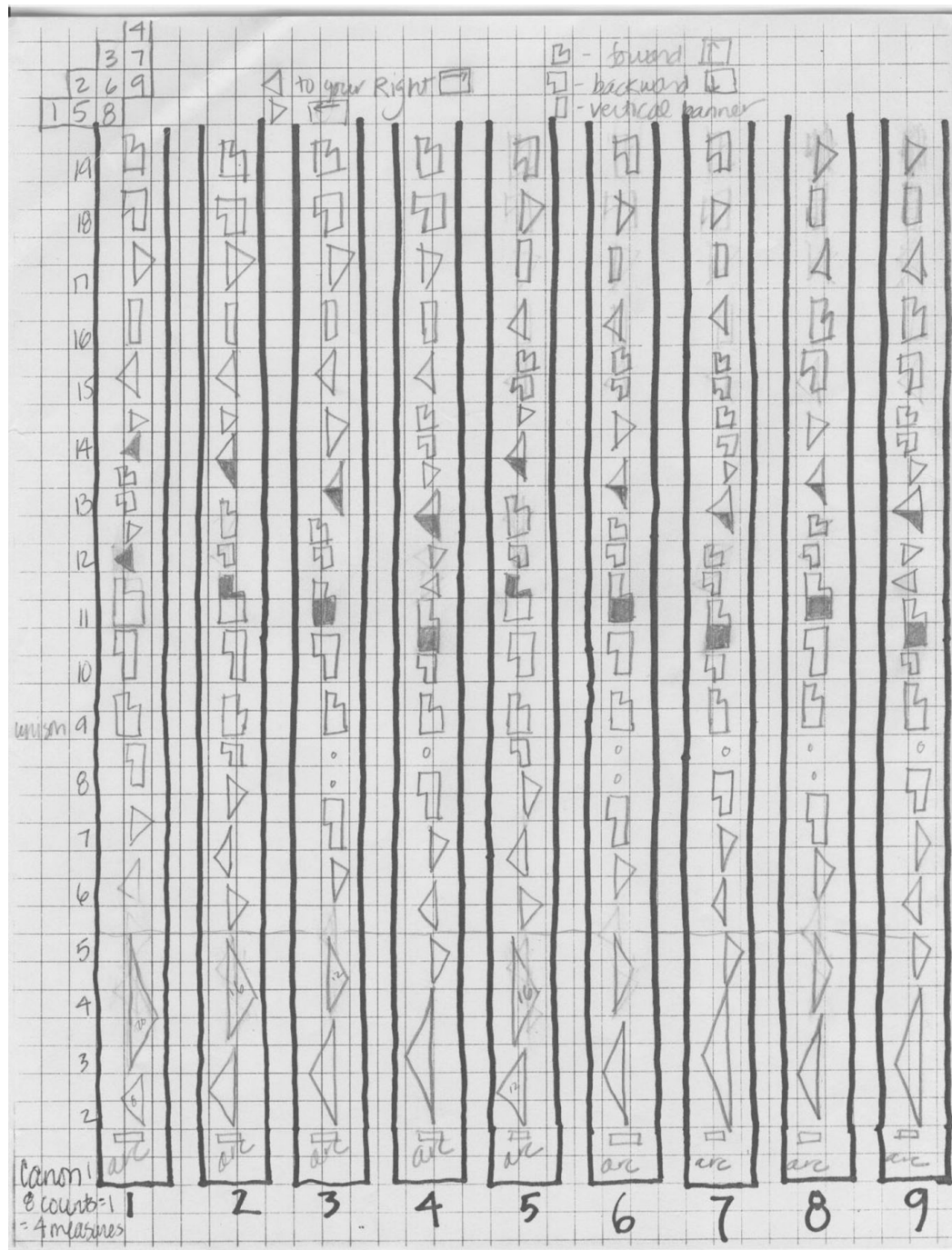
Now I work directly with the dancers and have a lot more faith in the process. This is not unlike my growth as a therapist. With the performance as a containing tool, we can address community needs, meeting the community where they are. In Sarajevo, I was told that other artists before me had come and said, “I’m here to help you,” but that I was different—I came and said, “I need your help.”

Kathleen Devereaux and I arrived 2 months after the last shot was fired. We ended up going there because I had a little voice saying to me, “Hey, why don’t you go over to Sarajevo and use your DMT skills to bring the three religious groups together?” I poo-pooed this idea, but the little voice kept persisting. I finally told a friend, and I was hoping she’d say, “That’s a crazy idea, who do you think you are?” But instead, she said, “Oh, I just got goose bumps.” As we were setting up the auditions, the community begged us not to ask for “Muslim, Catholic, Orthodox Christian dancers.” They said, “Please don’t separate us into religious groups like that; we never did so before” (Fig. 12). So the choreographer can be a witness to the whole community, responding to the specific needs and wishes of community members. We are able to leave our agenda and follow our bigger purpose of serving the community. After the performance, an audience member came up and said, “Those dancers up on the roof looked like angels. This is the first time I really believed that peace will come.” (Fig. 13).

It is an honor to be working with different communities. In Minneapolis, I’ve been able to work with the Dakota Nation. As part of the annual “Solstice River” performance, we raised the four sacred colors to the Dakota Honor song. It was poignant that the colors rose up along the grain silos, because this area was a Dakota sacred site that was ultimately destroyed and taken over for use by the milling industries (Fig. 14).

It was also an honor to work with the men staying at the homeless shelter in Raleigh, North Carolina in October 2001. They had their own dance, and then were joined by dance/movement therapists. The men’s faces were shining with applause from the audience. Afterward, one of them came up to me and said, “Andy Warhol was wrong. It was more than fifteen minutes!” (Fig. 15).





**Fig. 11** Example of a dance score for one of my early choreographic processes

One of the benefits that the *performance* offers is a sense of being seen by one's community. One important aspect of the work is the desire to valorize different community members. The performance itself is an effective vehicle where the witness-mover relationship between the audience and performers is made palpable.

For the Housatonic "River Dance" in Milford, Connecticut, I was told that I would never get the scow owners to participate in the dance because they are



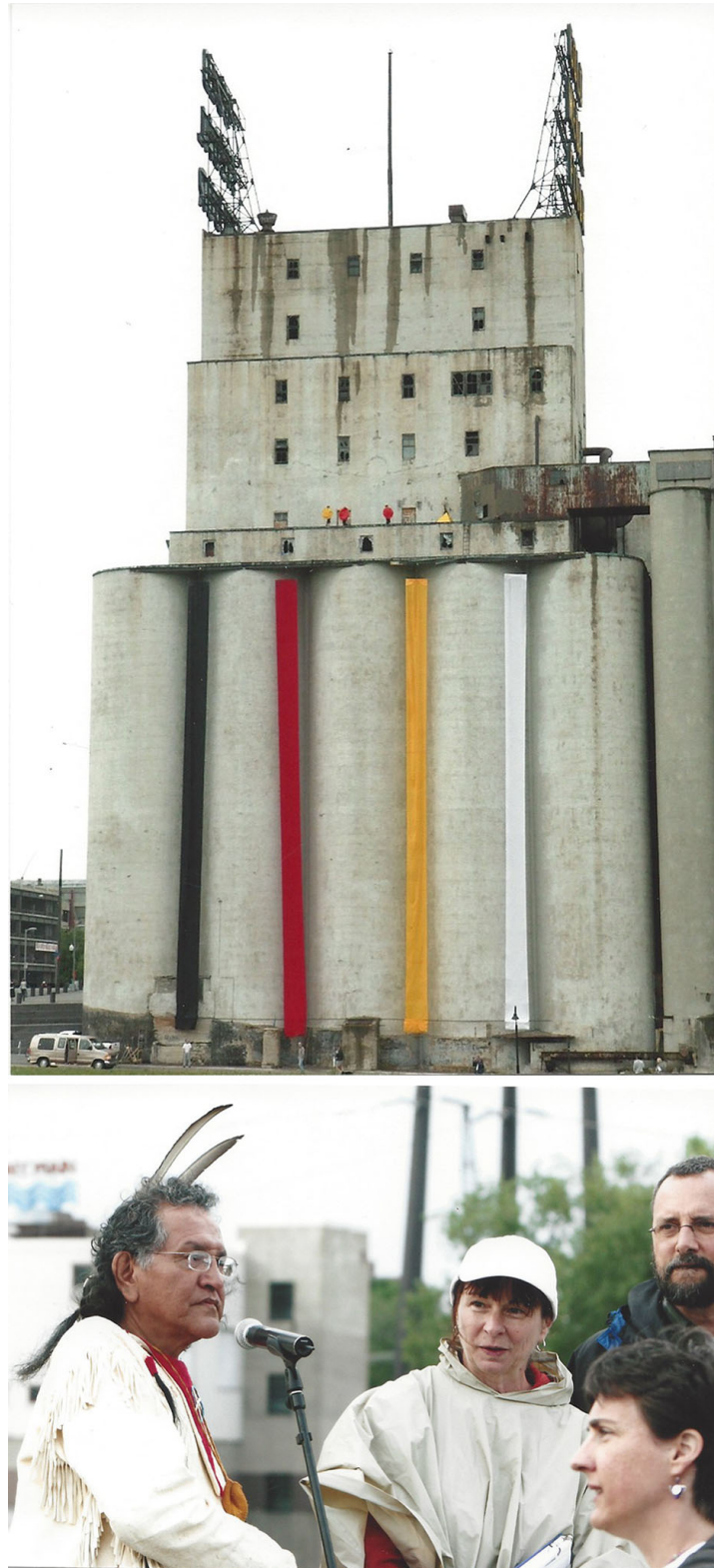


**Fig. 12** Dancers rehearsing on the roof of the bombed-out Parliament Building, Sarajevo, Bosnia



**Fig. 13** Performance in Sarajevo, Bosnia. Note the rising moon above the hills. The black structure the dancers are standing on glows golden in the setting sun. The bombed out Parliament Building is behind them

“rugged individualists and don’t even talk to anybody.” However, when I approached them at their own marina, I did in fact find four scow boat owners willing to not only rehearse, but agree to be in the performance. After some rigorous rehearsal, the boat owners finally learned to cooperate with each other and to keep



**Fig. 14** The four sacred colors of the Dakota Nation rise up during the Solstice River performance in 2005 (*top*). Medicine Man Glen Wasicuna from the Dakota nation and Dance Therapist Annie Kirschenmann in front of the audience (*bottom*). Photos by Bruce Goodman





**Fig. 15** Dance/movement therapists and Raleigh men coupled on the walkway. Photo by Gary Gartner



**Fig. 16** I love the title. From the *Connecticut Post*, June 13, 1993

equidistant as they created a large circle in front of the audience. The day before the performance, they painted their marina even though none of the audience members would see it. Our main intention for these performances was respect from the community. See below what the newspaper said the next day.

In the newspaper article shown in Fig. 16, it states that two young boys were coming to see their grandfather perform in his scow. Performances engender pride.

## Addressing Community Needs

As dance/movement therapists, we learn early on the basic intentions of connecting to self, connecting to others, and connecting to greater purpose. In community-based site work, connection expands beyond the individuals in each performance group to the site, the townspeople, and the environment. I believe that the environment is one of the most important community needs. In preparing for the “One River Mississippi” performance, I traveled to St. Louis over a year ahead of time. I invited environmentalists to come to a gathering; this was before I selected any choreographers, or had any idea where the dance would be held. But I went to St. Louis in order to meet with the environmentalists in order to ask them for their help in identifying which issues the dance should illuminate. At the gathering, a few people told me they had never been in the same room with the other environmentalists. I thought I would get information from them, but what ended up happening was that some connections were made between them. I think that offering to do a performance was in no way threatening to the different environmental organizations. There were no turf issues here, it’s “just art.”

Through performance, we can apply our tools to whole communities and further to more than one city at a time. What if the performance involved one dancer on each of the fifty state capital steps at the exact same time to the exact same music? Each dancer would be accompanied by one “talker,” who could hand out printed material and answer questions if necessary. Another idea for a performance is for strong, big women dancing at urban spots where violence has occurred; the performance would be acknowledging what had happened, honoring the people involved, and transforming the space. My personal favorite of performance at the exact same time would be to have dancers at sacred sites in Greece. If we were able to pay each choreographer \$500 or \$1000, this would bring money into the local economy. I did a pilot project this May with dancers at three very sacred sites at the exact same moment. The dance/movement therapist Theodora danced at Delphi, while another dancer was at Dilos, and I was at Dodone.

## Audience

I regard the audience as my client. I care about the audience. I want the audience to feel contained and safe. The audience must feel welcomed, just like clients in dance/movement therapy. I learned the hard way 1 year, when teenage boys handed out the programs at the entrance to a site performance. Half the audience never even received a program, and their attitude was somewhat disgruntled. The next year I invited middle-aged female friends of mine, and the audience felt warmly welcomed. I think this is akin to having a new client walk into a strange studio and not understand where they should go or what they should do.

One audience member who saw a performance in Minneapolis stated that “Downtown no longer feels so unfriendly to me” (Fig. 17). In Raleigh, NC, the performance took place in October of 2001. One audience member told me after the





**Fig. 17** “Opus on a May Morning,” Minneapolis, MN in 1987

performance that this was the first time she had felt safe in a public space since September 11. There is safety because there is a strong container, and that container is created as part of the performance. As dance/movement therapists, we know how to:

- Set the intention
- Build the container
- Let the process unfold

The intention is to serve the community, not bring our own agenda to the community.

As far as audience participation is concerned, I had been creating site-specific performances for 10 years before the penny dropped. What about including the audience moving as part of the finale? The performance proper is like a pebble dropped into a pond, creating ripples. The pebble is the dancers performing, and the pond is the audience. I do not ask the audience to start dancing right away. But toward the end, when the audience is in the mood, they more readily join in (Fig. 18).

Audience participation is not necessarily easy. It can often be more of the “nineteenths perspiration.” For the “Mother’s Day Dance,” (see Fig. 19), my friends and I made 700 wands. These were color-coded, with silver going to the great-grandmothers, yellow to the grandmothers, pink to the mothers, and green to “everyone who ever had a mother.” The audience was asked to form concentric circles with the great-grandmothers in the center. Audience members described



**Fig. 18** 1200-foot long blue fabric symbolizing the Mississippi River, with the audience helping to hold both “banks”



**Fig. 19** Audience finale at “Mother’s Day Dance,” Saint Paul, MN, 1999

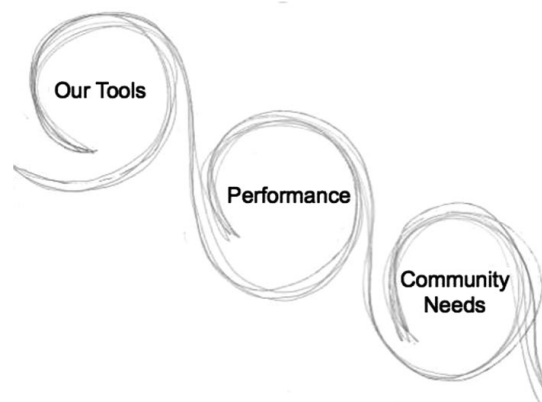
what a profound experience it was to be with their mothers and for their mothers to be publicly honored with beauty and respect.

Performances have the ability to harness the audience’s sense of collective purpose, and to direct it toward a chosen focus. By attending the same performance, each audience member stands side-by-side sharing the same center of attention (Fig. 20).



**Fig. 20** One example of audience participation. “One River Mississippi”, 2006, New Orleans

I believe there is a hunger in the world for our work and our skills. Where might your own vision take you? (In Laban terms, vision drive needs time also). We are all, each one of us, artists; our art form is not the same as theater dance. As I see it, community outdoor dance performances are to theater dance performances what a DMT group is to a verbal psychotherapy group. Because we deal with a much greater level of uncertainty when we deal with outdoor weather issues and community dancers, we must be skilled in tolerating ambiguity—much more so than when an audience is seated inside a theater with their chairs facing the stage. Leading verbal therapy groups creates a much more predictable structure than asking people to move and become involved in embodied psychotherapeutic processes.



This is a cumulative process. Our skills, such as synchrony, create the very toolbox by which we are able to build the container/the performance. The



performance itself becomes the very tool through which we can address community needs.

Let's claim who we are! Let's continue to take our amazing skills outside the proverbial box, build a public container, such as a performance, and address community needs... and see what the next 50 years bring.

With thanks to: Sharon Chaiklin, Ann Lohn, Jane Wilson-Cathcart, Julia Rice, Judith Bunney, Jody Wager, Jenny Moore, Jonathan Pinkerton, Robyn Cruz, Susan Simpson, Susan Saenger, Susan Kleinman, Louise Miner, Paul Sevett, Michael Gardos Reid.

#### **Compliance with Ethical Standards**

**Conflict of Interest** The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

## **Appendix**

Below are some of the identifiable goals of our dance performances and their correlation with therapeutic elements of dance/movement therapy. This was originally presented by Jenny Moore, BC-DMT, when she and Marylee Hardenbergh presented their work on site dance to a Master's Degree program class in DMT at David Yellom University in Jerusalem, Israel in spring 2009 (Hardenbergh & Wager, 2009).

(1) Inclusivity. There is a sense of belonging to community, and anyone who wants to be part of project can be. This includes non-dancers who want to perform; we find roles for them that are on par with their skill, and do not ask them to do arabesques where they will not be presented in their best light. We fit the choreography to the level of the dancers. The homeless men in the city of Atlanta invited to be part of the ADTA dance in 2001 had radiant faces after the performance. Other unlikely people to be included are the lock and dam staff at the US Army Corps of Engineers, the Park Service workers, the drawbridge operators. The whole performance is very much like the container we make for our Dance Therapy sessions, and people can come into the circle of activity if they want. We intend to make people feel invited.

(2) Shared purpose. Having a common goal that everyone is working toward creates the sense of: Here we are as a group, facing the same direction, moving together towards a deadline, creating something larger than any one individual could do alone. Because the container has been intentionally set, something bigger than the sum of its parts can come through because of this opening. To make an impact, to be part of something that will make the world a better place are shared goals, whether stated out loud or not.

(3) Expanded sense of self. Individuals are asked to take on another role. Step out of familiar, try on new movements, moving away from habitual patterns of movement, come out of one's routine and place in day-to-day life. Audience members also are asked to do this when invited to join in experiential movement in the Finale of the performance, and to expand their role from being passive spectators.



(4) Being seen and affirmed, in the performance, the audience can be seen as the witness. Performers are being seen as valuable members of this dance community, and being encouraged in this new valued role. This community-based affirmation supports not only who the performers are, but who they can become.

(5) Having a specified role. In the DMT group, each person is asked to see themselves as an important member of the circle, that without them, there would be a gap in the group. Having a role in the dance, i.e., being needed to fulfill an important task relative to the overall success of the project supports a sense of individual importance. Even the smallest tasks take on new meaning and importance, especially when done to music and within the container of the dance, since they serve a bigger purpose to the overall success of the performance.

(6) Creating beauty. Highlighting elements of the site allows all to see that familiar scene in a new, beautiful way. Beauty can be created externally or internally, such as the performers dressing up in a costume, feeling beautiful, being told by audience that they moved beautifully. Using fabric to bring out the already existing colors at the site, i.e. navigational colors, or adding colors to (re)present an historic element, such as the four sacred colors of the Dakota Indian Nation along the Mississippi River. Making the beauty of the site, of the individual, more visible.

(7) Reconnection to something larger. Through the dance, individuals find themselves connecting in a deeper way to the site, to other dancers, the audience, the Divine. These dances serves as a reminder that we are all connected, not isolated beings. This allows support to be given and received. This container gives people a certain amount of time to just be part of their environment, their community. A sense of belonging is fostered through this structure of time and place of event. Our dances are also “time-specific” meaning that we can connect to larger-than-ourselves events, events that are reoccurring, such as the rising of the full moon, Solstice, the setting sun, bringing a feeling of being connected to natural rhythms.

(8) Seeing self in new way. “I never thought I could do this.” Self-doubt, resistance, gives way to risk-taking, raised self-esteem with success of project. Challenges are offered through new tasks, such as offering movement to whole group to try, dancing on high rooftops gives people opportunity to conquer fear of heights, fear of water, men on machines.

(9) Giving something back. Here is what can bring a feeling of having something of value to offer. I have a role to fulfill, it’s expected of me. I can feel needed. The overall success of the dance depends on me (good kind of pressure). I will be missed if I don’t show up. I have a thread to weave into the overall fabric.

## References

- Hardenbergh, M. & Wager, J. (2009). *Rain or Shine: A Community Based Site-Specific Dance in Portland* [excerpt]. Intensive ADTA Conference.
- Schmais, C. (1985). Healing processes in group dance therapy. *American Journal of Dance Therapy*, 8(1), 17–36.

**Marylee Hardenbergh, BC-DMT, CMA, LICSW**

has been practicing dance/movement therapy for over 40 years, having been a student of Irmgard Bartenieff first and later Penny Lewis Bernstein. As a site-specific choreographer over the years, she has received numerous awards including Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, McKnight and Soros Foundation. She was extremely honored to have been a Marian Chace Foundation Lecturer.