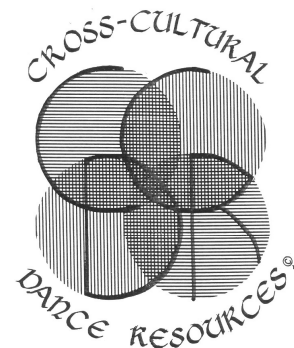


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CCDR Newsletter

Number 28

January 2008

NADIA CHILKOVSKY NAHUMCK (1908-2006)

Nadia reminisces on the telephone June 28, 1999, May 4 and 5, and July 28, 2001

Joann W. Kealiinohomoku edited, and abridged her notes to commemorate Nadia's centennial January 8, 2008. Concluding this document is Nadia's resume.¹

Impressions of Nadia

In 2001 I was astonished by Nadia's youthful appearance and voice. She had smooth skin, wore a beautiful wool dress (she said she made her clothes). When I visited her in her hotel room, she was sitting on the bed with her feet tucked under her like a young girl. She was 93 years old! I thought "this woman is a powerhouse. Her power belies her petite stature."

About herself

"Many tell me I do not look like I am 93, but I am. They also think at my age I should not remember anything, but I do."

She has CHF (congenital heart failure), and at times her heart "does a jig." An ambulance takes her 50 miles to the hospital at Temple University. Whenever she goes to the hospital the nurses and doctors ask her about the notation she is working on while she is there. She conducts "seminars" on dance notation, choreutics, answers questions, and "now the whole area is talking about dance. The more they talk about dance the better I like it. ... Then I ask them how to boil potatoes" [apparently her husband was the cook].

Isolated where she lives, there is no public transportation or taxis. "No complaints, it just means that anyone who wants me to go any place has to provide transportation ... for example, when I presented the Duncan materials in New York, and when I was a guest in Greece, someone had to drive out in the country to pick me up." She stressed she lives in Pennsylvania Dutch country with "only a few neighbors and they are not terribly close by."

Nadia has never driven. Many years ago she asked her husband Nick to teach her to drive to get to the Philadelphia Dance Academy every day. "The first driving lesson was a disaster." She backed into a fence and, trying to correct, went forward into something else. "Nick said, 'That's it! No more driving!' and he drove me wherever and whenever I wanted to go. It was great and fun and Nick was always there for me."

Now, she does not leave her home very often. She "never walks more than 6 steps. ... I can always dance a jig because it is in my heart." A friend shops for her, and colleagues, neighbors and former students visit her often. She said "she never goes to bed until daylight," and then she "sleeps until noon. ... I started to play the piano again. ... It is good for arthritis and I practice two hours a day."

About the 2001 SEM meetings

The last time I was with her was in Michigan at the 46th annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, November 2001. Planning a panel to honor Gertrude Prokosch Kurath, I invited Nadia to participate because she knew Gertrude in the early days of SEM (see *CCDR Newsletter 18*, winter 2001). Conveniently for Nadia, SEM presented the Nahumck Fellowship for the first time in 2001 (to Joanna Bosse). "Everything is coming together" she enthused.

Nadia continued on page 3

Message from Pegge Vissicaro, CCDR Board of Directors President –

Happy 2008 to all of you! We are so grateful to receive such an excellent response to our membership letter. Our constituency continues to grow and thanks to your generosity, CCDR is realizing its vision to advance as one of the premier international organizations dedicated to dance research. One exciting initiative that we are moving forward is the redesign of “Notes from the Field,” a special feature on the CCDR web site to promote and link dance research worldwide. Arizona State University Herberger College of the Arts is providing the technological infrastructure to host our web site along with the most current social networking applications. A paper presentation about this project will be delivered at the Dance Research Forum Ireland International Conference in Limerick, June 26-29, 2008. Another collaboration between ASU and CCDR involves working with the International Student Office to coordinate events on campus such as the upcoming 20th World Festival on February 20th from 10:30-2:30pm at Hayden Lawn and free open classes focusing on African and African influenced dance styles taking place every Friday night from 7:00pm to 8:30pm in the Fine Arts Center Studio 122. Our intent is to facilitate development of dance and music cultures in the ASU community and Phoenix metropolitan area as well as create a database to map areas of the world that participants in these events represent. Since it is important that you are aware of all CCDR activities, we will regularly post monthly updates on new and existing projects as well as organization business to CCDRNET, our membership listserv. One additional announcement that I want to share pertains to CCDR Executive Board changes. Elsie Dunin continues to serve as Vice-President and Joann Keali‘inohomoku as Treasurer. However, Danielle van Dobbin has agreed to take the Secretary position, while Adair Landborn returns to the Board of Directors, which also includes Gina Marie Harris and Jessica Yu. Thank you to each of our Board of Directors and to Kathleen Williamson, CCDR’s legal counsel and longtime supporter. Also I want to extend my appreciation to Joann for contributing her important article to this newsletter commemorating Nadia Chilkovsky Nahumck’s centennial January 8, 2008 and to LaShonda Williams, the CCDR-ASU Graduate Research Assistant/Office Manager for her excellent work coordinating and disseminating CCDR membership correspondence, including production of our newsletters. Wishing you and your family a wonderful year filled with happiness, good health, and success. Warmly, Pegge



Meet Simon Dove, the new Department of Dance Chair at Arizona State University–



Simon Dove left his home in the Netherlands to join the Herberger College Dance faculty as chair in August 2007. He is a highly creative and experienced artistic leader, combining a passionate engagement with international contemporary arts practice; a visionary approach to commissioning, programming and education; rigorous financial and organizational management; extensive experience of strategic planning; and an empowering leadership style. In the Netherlands, Dove provided individual coaching for post-graduate students in the Amsterdam High School for the Arts’ Choreography Masters Programme. Since 1998, Dove was also artistic and general director of Springdance, the international contemporary dance festival held in

Utrecht, Netherlands. Dove’s extensive experience includes director positions at Harbourside Centre in Bristol, U.K.; and Yorkshire Dance in Leeds, U.K. He also founded and directed Vivarta – Contemporary South Asian Performance Festival, U.K.; and held positions at the Arts Council of Great Britain, Tara Arts Centre and the Bhavan Centre, all in London. Additionally, he has contributed articles to various journals and publications, co-wrote and co-presented a six-part series on the relationship between dance and music for the BBC, moderated discussions, given lectures and advised artists on their projects. He has also traveled extensively around the world, researching new developments in dance and performance.

Nadia continued from page 1

About Nadia and Gertrude

At one time I urged Nadia to write about her recollections of Gertrude for the CCDR Kurath archives. Nadia agreed, but she did not. In 1999 I asked her again. Nadia directed "well take notes on what I am telling you now because, I don't really write well, it is very stiff and I never learned to write like I speak."

Nadia met Gertrude in 1926. Gertrude had just graduated from Bryn Mawr. Nadia had just graduated from high school.

Nadia's teacher was of the Duncan School. Nadia began studying with her teacher when she was 11 years old. The husband of her teacher had been Isadora's pianist. Nadia assisted with the night classes. By 1926 the Duncan classes were in Carnegie Hall. Across the street in Steinway Hall were the Wigman classes, and that was where she met Gertrude (still Prokosch). Nadia took classes there, too, and it was "easy for me because all I had to do was change costumes and walk across the street! In both places the music was superb."

Gertrude showed up at one of Nadia's classes. Gertrude and a friend organized a company and Nadia went to some of the rehearsals. Gertrude and Nadia danced in the pond in the garden [at Steinway Hall?] "Gertrude's mother was a concert pianist. She rolled an upright piano into the garden and played beautifully, composers such as Debussy."

Young Nadia admired Gertrude. She thought Gertrude was a "Greek Amazon." Although, she laughed, "of course I did not know what an Amazon looked like, whether Greek or from the South American Rain Forest) and Gertrude was absolutely beautiful; an oversized nymph! Two people (Gertrude and her mother) all looked like Amazons to me. ... Gertrude was so big and I was so little. Gertrude had an important face, full of knowledge and willingness to share."

"The next time" she was with Gertrude was 30 years later. "Gertrude was interested in North American Indians, and she told me about the Society for Ethnomusicology." Gertrude contacted her and asked her to join SEM, too. Gertrude was "tired of being the only dancer."

She noted that Gertrude was "always a friend," and "now that she is gone she seems to be there for me. Sometimes I turn around and think Gertrude is there. A shadow."

About music and dance

"SEM (Society for Ethnomusicology) was the first to believe in humanism. I met so many warm people, like David McAllester, Alan Merriam, and Rose Brandel" people she then "knew all my life."

"Dance Notation Bureau was the first in the United States to establish an organization to promote notation as a system to record human movement, but notation was not the only objective in my mind, and that is why I selected SEM and not DNB for the award."

"Dance flourishes in association with music"

"Three things about the music/dance interconnection:

1. Importance to human life
2. Dance and Music emanate from the same source and interest
3. Each independent as an expressive art form as well as interdependent. These two arts work together, but do not need each other, do not necessarily meld"

About the young adult

Nadia saw Martha Graham dance shortly after Duncan died in 1927. That was her first experience with modern dance. She studied with Louis Horst every Sunday morning and at five with Martha Graham. She described her own choreography as "intermediate between Duncan and American Modern Dance."

As a young dancer in New York she prepared a script and submitted it to the WPA (Works Project Administration established by Franklin D. Roosevelt during the Great Depression) for the Federal Theatre Project. "This was the most wonderful and the most awful time. ... Three dancers were selected for the project. One was Sophie Maslow who did folk dance. There was a man who was very balletic." And of course, Nadia.

She prepared a tale about Mother Goose – "Mother Goose on parade." "The Hero was Yankee Doodle; the Victim was Mother Hubbard. Little Dog was leader of the picket line; the 'heavy' was 'Tiny' King Cole. There were four actors, sets, music for the piano and three fiddlers." They did 75 performances at 46th Street Theater and in the boroughs. The show was rented for parties.

"This was before agencies and subsidies, and it was the first time the U.S. poked around in the arts." For "Mother Goose on parade" Nadia as choreographer and director, was paid \$40 a week, and the performers and helpers \$20 a week. Regarding auditions for performers, the "WPA was interested in feeding folks, [but] the other judges judged more strictly." Mother Goose needed 29 dancers. "If they couldn't dance I would teach them." Eventually she and the WPA argued about quality of dancers. She said, "I'm resigning [even though] I love it – but you like to choose hungry people."² Then a friend suggested "go write a dance – then take it to Julliard and ask for Ann Hutchinson. I did and got a scholarship!"

About the Philadelphia Dance Academy

"I started the school in Philadelphia in 1946." The City of Philadelphia gave Nadia a building for a school – "a huge enterprise." Nadia established the Philadelphia Dance Academy and in 1959-1960 it became the Dance Department for the Academy of Performing Arts. The headlines in the newspapers said "Philadelphia Dance Academy goes to college" but the Dance Academy was really grade one through college. Classes were not only in dance but included a complete accredited academic curriculum. In addition to dance literacy, Nadia's students studied French, Russian, and later, Spanish. In 1977 the Dance Academy merged with the Philadelphia College of the Performing Arts (PCPA), and Nadia was made Dean of the School of Dance of the PCPA, until retirement in 1978.

By 1956 there were 400 students at the Philadelphia College of Performing Arts, for academics and music, later with dance and language. Fanny Brandel, a sister of SEM member Rose Brandel, came to teach in the academic section of the Academy and stayed for several years. [See reference 1994b.]

"The building had a vaulted ceiling. Mrs. Efraim Zimbalist had the old organ in the building repaired and restored. ... At an organ concert – the organist's feet literally dance." Her school also had a grand piano and two Steinways.

The Academy was in the building for 20 years. Nadia gave the school and the building to the University of the Arts – as the City of Philadelphia had given it to her.

About notation

She prefers the name "Kinetography Laban." She "hates" the name "Labanotation," but "it was coined early in Ann Hutchinson's little apartment in New York, and caught on in America." Ann Hutchinson was teaching at Julliard at that time, and she founded the Dance Notation Bureau.

Nadia calls dances taken from a score "reconstructed dances" because, she says, "a dancer has to interpret from a score just as a piano player has to interpret Bach – each rendition is different according to the pianist. Still, that is not understood by many dancers who want their dances to be exactly as they conceived them."

The Bureau gave Nadia a plaque after 20 years. By then her school had 600 students, and was affiliated with the University of the Arts.

About the NAHUMCK Fellowship

The January, 2000 issue of the SEM Newsletter, has an article and a 1952 photo of Nadia, husband Nicholas, and James DePriest, composer, conductor of the Oregon Symphony and a nephew of singer Marian Anderson.³

The SEM article announced: "Longtime SEM member Dr. Nadia Chilkovsky Nahumck donated \$50,000 to endow The Nadia and Nicholas Nahumck Fund, the proceeds of which will fund a fellowship to support research on a dance related subject." The Nahumck Fellowship was funded by invested book royalties. Originally Nadia wanted the fellowship to be awarded to someone who was literate in dance notation, but Kay Shelemay (then President of SEM) convinced her not to limit the award to dance notation literacy.

About her book on Isadora Duncan

She said, "My papers and writings are spread out on tables around me because I am still working." She was preparing a pamphlet to go with the Duncan book, on how to interpret the Laban symbols to reconstruct the Duncan dances from the score. She noted that "Nick inked in all the figures in this (500 page book that weighed 7 1/2 pounds), but now Labanotation can be done on a typewriter."

She was also working on a postlude to the Duncan book; "it would have been too long in the original book". [JWK: if these were completed, I do not know their whereabouts.]

"I am very fond of you [Joann Kealiinohomoku] and will bring a copy of *Isadora Duncan: the dances* to the SEM meetings in Michigan and inscribe it to you. The introduction is in English and the rest of the book in notation [see reference 1994a]."

About Nadia's other books

In 1954 – Witmark & Sons published her first books *Three R's for dancing 1* and *Three R's for dancing 2* [see references 1954]. They asked her to write them. Then Mrs. Efraim Zimbalist purchased three copies of the books. Many students bought them as gifts. In fact, thousands of the books were sold.

Theodore Presser Company published *Ten dances in Labanotation* [see reference 1955a] and called it an "historic treasure."

In 1970, *A comprehensive curriculum in dance for secondary schools* [see reference 1970] was funded by the United States Government.

In 1978, the year she retired from the Dance Academy, she went to South Africa at the invitation of David McAllester to attend meetings on Black dance.⁴ They published her *Introduction to dance literacy*. "Now the book is insufficient – it was a good idea but not a good book."

About ballet

"I love your article about the ballet" ["An anthropologist looks at ballet as a form of ethnic dance"]. "The concept of ballet has to change ... otherwise the balletic tradition is just for research and history."

I [JWK] told her "someone asked me why I hate ballet, but I do not hate ballet; in fact I love it." Nadia replied, "Well I do not love ballet, especially when it deprives the students from knowing about themselves."

She is "back to the beginning" when she instructs anyone who will listen. "The body is the origin of both music and dance. As soon as the voice extended, so did the body. The body is the oldest instrument in the world. Everyone has one."

About her films⁵

In the 1960s she filmed dances from several cultures to develop the curriculum for her book on *A comprehensive curriculum for dance in secondary schools* [see reference 1970]. One film documented Pennsylvania Dutch dance (in Kutztown, Pennsylvania). "It included a Ring Dance with ... tops and long skirts. ... When I invite them to look at the film, they will not do it, because they feel the material is too personal. I promised I wouldn't show it to anyone. ... These Pennsylvania Dutch people like old precepts, but even so, some have computers."

Her project of the films was "never completed" especially of the Scottish dance with bagpipe.

About the young Nadia

For her debut in 1925, at age 14, she danced two pieces choreographed by Duncan with music by Gluck. The Philadelphia orchestra accompanied her with Stakowski conducting.

About Nadia's childhood

She was born in the Ukraine on January 8, 1908, and her family left in 1914 to join her father in Pennsylvania who had worked for seven years to bring the family to America. Nadia was raised by her sister, Dora, because her mother was very ill.

By age ten she was giving dance recitals in her backyard, in order to raise carfare to go to her dance classes. She charged a penny admission.

About war

"Who is the victim? All are dragged into the fray."

About her life "now"

Living among the Pennsylvania Dutch, "I feel I belong to them. It is a good feeling!"

About her death

On April 23, 2006, in Blue Bell, Pennsylvania, Nadia died with a smile on her face while her niece Fai and friends were serenading her with folk songs and spirituals. "It was exquisite," Fai remembers.

Endnotes

1. Thanks to Fai Coffin, Nadia's niece and next of kin, for photographs and approval of this document. An informative obituary on the University of the Arts website is retrieved by Wikipedia at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nadia_Chilkovsky_Nahumck>.
2. "Mother Goose on parade" is discussed on page 102 in Ellen Graff's 1997 book, *Stepping left: dance and politics in New York City, 1928-1942*, Duke University Press.
3. Nadia had commissioned DePriest to compose a dance composition. It was performed by Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra. Nadia remembered "that was an exciting time when the photo was taken – a time of upheaval – for both Blacks and Whites."
4. In 1965 David McAllester selected Nadia to chair an invitational forum on bodily movement sponsored by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. David McAllester also invited Nadia to attend a program on dance in Black South Africa [see reference 1978].
5. The film positives are housed at the University of the Arts in Pennsylvania.. Nadia donated the film negatives to Cross-Cultural Dance Resources.

Resume (prepared by Nadia Chilkovsky Nahumck)

Nadia Chilkovsky Nahumck: dancer, dance educator, choreographer, dance notator, author

ACADEMIC STUDIES:

Open enrollment in various academic institutions coordinating schedules with dance – our arrangements: especially at Temple University, University of Pennsylvania, Combs College

Degrees: B.S. in education, course work for M.A., Doctorate in Music

DANCE STUDIES:

At age 14, dance debut with Philadelphia Orchestra, Leopold Stowkowski conducting.

1921-1931 theory and dance of Isadora Duncan in Philadelphia, PA, with Riva Hoffman; in New York City with Anna

Duncan, under management of Sol Hurok Studio 61, Carnegie Hall, Music studies with Sara Freedman, Philadelphia, PA

1931-1932 Mary Wigman School, Steinway Hall, New York City, full day studies with Hanya Holm and Mary Wigman:

theory and practice Wigman style, dance composition, percussion (drum, gongs, etc.)

1933-1936 studies of classical ballet with various teachers

1937-1939 Martha Graham daily advanced classes, weekly classes in dance composition with Louis Horst; Eurythmic's

intensive studies with Dr. Paul Boepple at American Dalcroze Institute New York City, piano studies with Loma Roberts

later years: ongoing piano studies with Sara Freed and Marian Thomas; 5 years of studio choreographing

POSITIONS

1946-1977 private schools; founded and directed Philadelphia Dance Academy

1957 organized college division in association with Philadelphia Musical Academy

1962 children's academic day division named The Performing Arts School, approved by Philadelphia State Department of Education accredited for grades 1-12 by UPASA

1977 Dance Academy merged with the Philadelphia College of the Performing Arts situated in the Schubert Theatre building.

The Children's Day Division became an experimental school for combining arts and academic education for grades 1-12

1978 appointed Dean of the School of Dance at PCPA. Served until retirement

ADJUNCT FACULTY POSITIONS

1946-1968 dramatic movement instructor in Voice, Department at Curtis Institute of Music

1958-1978 instructor in stage movement at Academy of Vocal Arts

1957-1963 dance instructor at Philadelphia Musical Academy

1944-1945, 1967-1969 dance lecture demonstrations at Tyler Art Institute, Temple University

1959-1960 instructor of dance and movement notation Swarthmore College

1976 weekly instructor in Related Art at Thomas Jefferson University

ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 1946 Dance Notation Bureau; 1956-1958 editor news Bulletin; 1958 voted Master Dance Notator
- 1955 Society for Ethnomusicology; Council 1958-1963; Life Member
- 1960 voted in Fellow National Council for Kinetography Laban
- 1973-1976 Research Associate in Ethnic Arts, Museum of the University of Pennsylvania; lectures on dance ethnology with live and film demonstrations
- 1956-1958 educational consultant; editorial board for Committee on Research in Dance (CORD)
- 1975 certified by International Graphoanalysis Society
- 1977-1979 editor newsletter United Private Academic Schools Association; board Accrediting Commission
- 1987 Council member Isadora Duncan Institute
- 1989 member International Movement Notation Alliance, Copyright Commission
- 1990 charter member, The National Museum of Women in the Arts

GRANTS, AWARDS

- 1960 from Mrs. Mary Curtis Bok Zimbalist of the Curtis Institute of Music, for dance research in England, France and Soviet Union
- 1965 from United States Office of Education to develop the first comprehensive curriculum in secondary schools (1965-1967) reported in *American education magazine*, Washington, D.C., June 1977, *Dance news* in New York City, 1967; and others.
- 1965 Invited by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research to organize the first conference on Human Movement as an Expression of Culture.
- 1966-1970 invited to research team by Fine Arts Department of the Bureau General and Academic Education, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to help create an integrated arts curriculum for secondary education schools
- 1965, 1978 grants from Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research to prepare a guide for methodology and procedure in movement research
- 1987 named a "Pioneer in Dance Education" invited to participate ADAGE lecture series New York University

Bibliography

Nadia Chilkovsky

- 1954a *Three R's for dancing-1*. M. Witmark & Sons
- 1954b *Three R's for dancing-2*. M. Witmark & Sons
- 1955a *Ten dances in Labanotation*. Theodore Presser Company
- 1955b *My first dance book (in Labanotation)*. M. Witmark & Sons
- 1956 *American bandstand dances in Labanotation*. M. Witmark & Sons
- 1956-1958 Ten articles in *Dance notation record*.

Nadia Chilkovsky Nahumck

- 1978 *Introduction to dance literacy*. International library of African music.
- 1970 *A comprehensive curriculum in dance for secondary schools*. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education - Bureau of Research.
- 1980 *Dance curriculum-resource guide: comprehensive dance education for secondary schools*. American Dance Guild, Inc.
- 1994a *Isadora Duncan: the dances*. The National Museum of Women in the Arts.
- 1994b "A dancer faces two worlds of dance: reality and illusion" Ellen Leichtman (editor), *To the four corners: a festschrift in honor of Rose Brandel*; pages 260-296. Michigan: Harmonie Park Press.

**Gertrude Prokosch Kurath (1903-1992)**

Dancer, and Doyen of Dance Ethnology

Silhougraphs® rendered from original photos
 "Expanses by the Sea," 1927 photo by Dorothy Myers



1930 "Mazurka" (Photo by Arnold Genthe)



Nadia teaching. (Photo by Nicholas Nahumck, about 1965)

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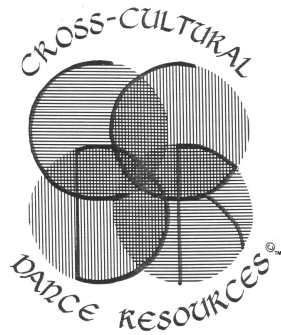
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 *** LIFE Members – Deceased

CCDR would like to express condolences to the family and friends of Dixie Durr



Dixie Durr, Ph.D. Professor Emerita of Dance, and chairperson of the Department of Theatre at Michigan State University, was a longtime member of CCDR and CORD. In addition to being a dancer, choreographer, teacher, and scholar trained in the anthropology of dance, Dixie earned Advanced Certification in Labanotation enabling her to notate dances from Kenya and to reconstruct works by Charles Weidman, Doris Humphrey and other well known dancers. In 2004, Dixie received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Michigan Dance Council.

CCDR Member and Special Friend
 Suzan M. W. Craig Greefkens
 December 30, 1963-January 25, 2008
 An obituary will follow in the next newsletter.



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Corrections Corner

Newsletter 26/27
Page 3, bottom paragraph,
 "suffix" should be "prefix"
Page 13, in the outlined box,
 appropriate spelling of name
 should read Charlotte Frisbie

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