Welcome to the third edition of the Bill Evans Teachers Intensive newsletter, a journal devoted to the “many possibilities” of dance and somatic movement pathways inspired by educator, choreographer, and performer William (Bill) Evans. As the oft-quoted Irmgard Bartenieff stated, “Life is Movement and Movement is Change,” a phrase that has special resonance now as the 2014 summer schedule features new BETI venues (Edinburgh, Scotland) familiar places (Moraga, CA and Fort Worth, TX) and the end of an era: the last Brookport BETI. As many of you know, William is leaving Brookport August 1st to move to Providence, RI where the phenomenal Dr. Don Halquist has accepted the position as Dean of the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development at Rhode Island College. Never one to rest on his laurels, William will be teaching at nearby Dean College in Franklin, Massachusetts and will continue to travel the world as a teacher, performer, and choreographer. For a complete listing of this summer’s workshops and conferences, see the end pages of this newsletter and/or www.billevansdance.org

We hope you will enjoy the June 2014 BETI newsletter and look forward to dancing with you in the near future!

Cynthia Williams

Certified Teachers Profile

Congratulations to Falon Baltzell and Andrea Vázquez-Aguirre certified Evans Laban-based Modern Dance Technique teachers, summer 2013. Falon and Andrea were asked to describe their teaching and dancing lives. Here are their responses:
Falon Baltzell:
*Journey of Transformation*

What I am most certain of is that change has occurred on a continuum throughout my life, and as a BETI life-long learner, I have invited myself to be actively aware of change during my journey of transformation. My journey began four years ago when I participated in William’s modern technique class. “Grow and shrink; become as small as possible; allow change to occur; let go of what you no longer need” were some of the phrases William expressed throughout class. I quickly became frustrated as a participant because I did not experience immediate change and I simply could not articulate why. Somehow I survived throughout class, but as soon as class concluded, I quickly found a small hiding spot to crouch down and cry; not because I was hurt or sad, but because a revelation occurred to me: William’s work would inspire me to become a better version of myself, as a mover in the classroom and in everyday living. My intuition was absolutely correct, and after three years at Brockport following William around like a shadow, soaking in all of the knowledge he offered, I finally discovered the power of change.

After attending BETI for the first time, I made the decision to become a participate in the program because I knew I had potential to grow as an artist through studying William’s work, and in light of that, my teaching would also grow. I realized I had to invite internal change within my body in order to encourage my students to do the same. I became overjoyed that there were many possibilities to grow as an individual through the BETI program. I knew summers at BETI would help me achieve internal change through a new language of Bartenieff and LMA, an integrated vocabulary that invited different approaches to work through movement as a process rather than focusing on a final product. I had a thirst for change, and I knew the BETI program would foster my growth in an efficient and supportive way.

The knowledge I have received from the BETI program has taught me how to have a more enriching dancing life. I have learned how to move with intention, from within to without, allow change to happen, and to trust the process. During my time studying William’s work, I have allowed movement concepts to filter into my personal life. For example, I began applying lengthening and growing while sitting at my computer desk and typing. I slowly began to notice during modern technique classes that I began lengthening and growing more often. Once I made this connection, I invited movement concepts into my daily practice of living. BETI work has influenced my artistic practice of dancing, teaching, and my way of living in the world. I allow life to happen rather than forcing change. When students come to me for life and/or dance advice, I always refer back to what I have learned at BETI and from my studies as a graduate student. Another piece of knowledge the program has brought me, is that I may
continue to change and grow throughout my dancing career through investigating movement in a conceptual way. My teaching is now moving in a direction that challenges students to develop individual expression by questioning values, norms, and beliefs that influence their social paradigm. I do this by asking thought provoking inquiries extending beyond yes and no answers, in which students develop divergent thinking. As their teacher, I hope student feel supported throughout their artistic journey. I encourage students to have autonomy and strength with their voices, and as a life-long learner, I am educated by students during teacher-student discourse because I value students’ opinions and beliefs. I am beginning to realize how I teach, and what I teach, have been heavily influenced by my values and beliefs. In light of this, I offer knowledge to students for them to interpret how they choose.

BETI has been the most enriching journey I have ever experienced, and I am thrilled to continue my transformational process throughout the workshops, and into my daily practice of being a person.

Falon Baltzell, a native Mississippian, is a choreographer, dancer and educator. Baltzell has most recently premiered her works in Ohio, throughout NY state, and in NYC where she was commissioned by the Society of New Music, 2013. She continuously develops and presents her choreography, which explores a distilled vision about the spatial landscape and unveils limitations on the body. She completed her BFA and K-12 Certification in Dance Education from The University of Southern Mississippi, and her MFA in Performance and Choreography from The College at Brockport, SUNY where she served as a graduate teaching assistant. Baltzell now splits her time as the Director of Dance at Hathaway Brown School (where she instructs high school students in modern dance technique and choreography) and performing (The Movement Project, Bill Evans Dance, and others).

http://fbaltzell.wix.com/falonbaltzell
Andrea Vázquez-Aguirre:

*Inner change: my journey through the Bill Evans Method*

On a chilled and calm night of spring at Strasser Studio, the dimmed lights and Faure’s requiem are my only company. It is 2:00 am. I am lying on back. I am rehearsing *Velorio: A Vigil for the Deceased*, a piece influenced by medieval and renaissance religious art that portrays the journey of losing a beloved one. I am going through the internal changes of my breath that will support the complex and nuanced choreography. I have one more opportunity to perform this piece. My intent is to deliver it with the utmost honesty and clarity. The process of learning and performing this piece has been beautiful and painful. I faced my deepest insecurities, but also my deepest sense of connection within myself, the dance and my fellow dancers. This happened four years ago. However my journey learning from Bill initiated six years ago. I came from Mexico City with the curiosity to study with this renowned figure. My first summer intensive was a life-changing experience. Not only did I decide to re-direct my professional path by auditioning for the graduate program at SUNY Brockport where Bill is part of the faculty, but also, I met whom ended up to be my life and creative partner, pianist James J. Kaufmann.

Throughout my years as a BETI student, I absorbed Bill’s, Don’s, Debbie’s and Suzie’s wisdom. I had the opportunity to grow as an educator in a nurturing environment. I was motivated to shape my voice as an artist. I connected with a community of thoughtful and dedicated teachers. I found truth and beauty and possibilities...

I am now in a position of nurturing and inspiring others. I am proud to be passing on a legacy. I have committed to help others find their potential. I strive to give the best of me with generosity and love because that is what my mentors and peers at the BETI modeled. I find myself ‘at home’ in active quietness; indulging in the inner changes of my breath. From that place the possibilities are endless!
Andrea Vázquez-Aguirre earned a BFA in choreography from Escuela Nacional de Danza Clásica y Contemporánea in Mexico City and earned her MFA from The College at Brockport, SUNY, as a scholar under FONCA, the government council for the culture and arts in Mexico. She has danced in professional companies in Mexico and the United States, such as Bill Evans Dance Company, Geomantics Dance Theatre, Dramadanza and Jaguar de Agua (now Compañía Artes Transformáticas). She complements her work as an educator in the art of dance with a multidimensional approach to the physical body, along with interdisciplinary projects. She often draws inspiration from poetry, prose and visual arts. Currently, she is serving as visiting assistant professor at The University of Texas at El Paso. She is a proud certified teacher of the Evans Method.
Bill Evans Dance Teachers Intensive

Denise Purvis, MFA, is an Assistant Professor of Dance at Southern Utah University where she teaches ballet, modern, jazz and tap technique, composition, creative dance for children, K-12 methods, dance kinesiology, and dance history. She is also founder and artistic director of Shifting Velocity Dance Company in Cedar City, UT. Prior to joining SUU, she designed and directed the dance program for the Chesterfield County Specialty Center for the Arts at Thomas Dale High School in Chester, VA. From 2008 until 2012, Purvis danced with Starr Foster Dance Project in Richmond, VA, and she has consistently worked with various free-lance choreographers since 1999. Denise received Evans certification in 2011.

What’s in my pocket?

Though I currently run the dance education program at Southern Utah University, I spent eight years teaching dance in grades 9-12. I taught a wide variety of students, from freshmen who had no experience with dance to highly trained technicians who auditioned into my four-year honors program. I constantly sought to engage this population in ways that suited multiple learning styles and skill levels. One of my favorite and most successful activities is a dance scavenger hunt.

In tap class I take my students on a “field trip” around the school. We are as quiet as possible as we walk through the hallways and around school grounds. I lead silently, stopping when I notice interesting sounds or silences. Students are instructed to listen. They are to commit to memory rhythms, cadences, lengths of silence, etc. I walk past classrooms where teachers lecture, the main office where phones ring, the empty commons where a custodian sweeps, a football field where gym class practices. When we return to the classroom, students work in groups of 3-4 to recall the sounds that most intrigue them and recreate those sounds with their bodies. Feet are emphasized, but clapping, snapping and vocalizations are also encouraged. Students then to put their rhythms together into a short group dance. Polyrhythms are encouraged, but not required. Each group then performs their dance for the class and explains what sounds inspired their movement choices.

I also use the scavenger hunt idea for my composition students. For this project, I incorporate smart phone technology, utilizing QR codes. This is a pretty complicated activity, taking several days to prepare. If you don’t have time for that, I encourage you to choose one or two of your self-directed students to build the hunt and you can simply proof the project before they post everything.

First I determine the path of the scavenger hunt and the movement problems I want my students to solve. For example, I might require students to go to a certain set of lockers, count the lockers there, and create a movement that repeats the same number of times. I might give an administrative assistant in the office a list of nursery rhymes and ask him/her to choose a rhyme and have the dancers replicate its cadence through their movement. Or I might ask a geometry teacher who has planning to give students a simple problem to solve, then represent the problem and its solution through their movement. Next I go to any free QR code maker site such as the-qrcode-generator.com. The website prompts me to add text connected to the QR code. This includes the criteria required for a specific location. After I complete codes for every location on the scavenger hunt, I print them off and post them. On the day of the hunt, I divide students into groups of 3-4 and give each group a unique list of clues to follow. This prevents a traffic jam in the hallways. Students must have a QR code reader app, which is free and available through the app.
store. With their lists and smartphones in hand, they are off on an adventure of movement discovery. At each stop, they add on their newest movement phrase, creating a long and very involved dance. When they return to the studio, they share their dances with the class, and we discuss how each stop challenged them to think and move in new ways, and how they might take this experience into future choreography projects.

I love these projects as movement experiences, but I also enjoy their potential for advocacy and student engagement. My students love taking their art outside the classroom, as it reinforces that dance is something worth sharing in a multitude of settings. Lights and costumes not required. I always incorporate administration and faculty from other departments into the hunt, as it draws attention to the importance of dance within non-arts settings. And this project is just plain fun. It gives students a break from the normal routine while pushing them to think creatively and apply what they are learning in the studio to the outside world. Hmmm... doesn’t that fulfill some of those standards we talk so much about?

Why didn’t the skeleton dance at the disco?
He had no body to dance with!

How many dance teachers does it take to change a light bulb?
Five!...Six!...Seven!...Eight!

A grasshopper walks into a bar.
The bartender says, "Hey, we've got a drink named after you."
Grasshopper says, "You've got a drink named Steve?"
What does the Bill Evans pedagogical approach bring to you?

Dancing has always been very personal ever changing ride for me and right now I would have to say that Evans pedagogy continues to bring me longevity, safety in movement and many inroads for enjoying my dancing self into (and hopefully long past) my 60’s! In witnessing William’s evolution as a teacher, looking back over these 30+ years, I’ve enjoyed every phase. His early classes were consistently aerobic, more demanding from an athletic conditioning standpoint. They moved at an energetic clip which fed me during that phase of my life. There is something to be said for that kind of deep warmth and for being challenged beyond what you believe you are capable of, to be told how to dance. It offers clarity and safety during certain stages of learning. The flow of that sort of class carried me in those days along with the presence of his company dancers and the concepts of relating to space he was working with at the time. Those were all big influences. I sort of grew up as a dancer alongside William’s pedagogical evolution. He was just beginning to learn the LMA material and was working out how to marry it with his teaching concepts. Every year something new and different unfolded in his approach that was woven into the mix and of course other bits were peeled away and discarded. Today, the focus, pace, intention and structure of his classes can vary so greatly that one could say his pedagogical approach borders on encyclopedic. The understanding and material at his command require this constant shifting and sifting, otherwise the new learning doesn’t become integrated. Each new insight so elegantly informs the others, creating an accumulative improvement across the scale no matter which aspect we are currently exploring.

William brings at once rigorous clarity, dynamism and an open heart to his approach today. Is this a pedagogical approach or just who he is? Whatever it is, these intangibles inspire me to polish up my self image, wake up my latent expressivity and transform a precise battement into an unfurling scarf or a magic lightning rod! This imagination and variety brings me closer to the fun loving child within, connecting me more deeply to my humanness and to that of others. As colleagues, we have had an ongoing and rich dialogue throughout the years about what and how it is we are teaching through movement; the social responsibility of being a teacher. As each year passes this aspect of being in a position of leadership, the role of any teacher, becomes ever more of an imperative in my own class prep. The discipline of verbal precision he maintains in articulating movement, anatomically and conceptually, challenges a different part of my brain and it “ups” the entire health of my organism. This pedagogical approach (much informed by the many adventurous and exceptional dancers that have been an integral part of its making) leave me with a bump up
in my understanding, aliveness, self image, and a great big appetite for more!

**How has your long association with William changed you as a dancer/teacher/person?**

When I first came into contact with William and the members of the Bill Evans Dance Company back in the 1970’s I was struck and inspired by the daring tactile use of space and the powerful kinetic responses that the work elicited in me as both a young dancer and an audience member. I wanted to learn to dance like that and I knew that how I had been training would not allow me access to the kind of “universal” movement I was witnessing. I use that word because there is such an exciting and elegant art of harnessing the physical forces of the universe in William’s vocabulary and phrasing. I loved the madness of some of the pieces and also the incredible beauty, choreographically, musically and in how the dancers brought the dances to life. From those days onward, the bar was raised.

I was forever altered in the way I viewed dance as a spectator and how I approach performance. Before I had been quite “wowed” by detailed pyrotechnics and tricky steps. Overnight, it seems, I completely lost interest in that aspect of the performances I was seeing. Dance became for me so much more about the flow and the phrasing, the relationships of dancers to dancers and of dancers to the space and time. An interest in the weight effort came later. Once I could see in others and feel in my own viscera that rich dynamic interplay, there was no going back. William’s dances are by no means void of precision and challenge, but there is an organic unfolding of those aspects in his work that comes from a very different set of values and attitudes.

Someone recently put a theory forward that big leaps of learning happen, not necessarily because we are in the presence of a genius or because we are particularly brilliant, but they occur when we are in a particularly open state in ourselves. Then, no matter who we are around and what the activity, the learning spikes. There is always an invitation to open myself into a fuller me when I think of or am around William, Don Halquist, Kitty Daniels or Debbie Paulson.

As a teacher, I access the spirit, humanity and humor they bring to their classrooms. I don’t think that I’ve ever met anyone who has done as much to move the quality of dancing and dance pedagogy forward than William has. I, just as many of my teachers and colleagues, hold this high on our list of values, but William has been more willing than most to boldly call into question his own and other’s theories or beliefs about how we should move and teach others to move. All in a spirit of, and for, our common good as a community of movers. There is an authentic compassion for those who choose this path and who make incredibly difficult life choices sometimes to pursue a life of dancing which continually inspires me.

For some of us who came from an older style of training, he has also led the way to recovery from our “abusive childhoods” of trying to train our bodies to behave under a more slavish model. I resonate with his natural flow and ease of building from simple to complex, creating satisfying but surprising rhythmical choices, and composing a rich arc of experience within the time allowed. William’s quest for clarity in movement, his ability to help us laugh and show kindness to ourselves as we strive to be our best, serves as an anchor for my teaching style. What I love most is the ongoing curiosity and appetite for a deeper understanding; a genuine respect for what each individual brings to the mix. Every time I get to spend time around William, and our growing community of dancers, refinements, new ways of languaging, or new prompts emerge, to move us all further along our way!

When you have a long history with someone, in and out of your life, who has served as mentor, colleague and friend the influence is so woven into who you are as a person, that to dissect what that is can only be a
guess. I can say that when I moved back to the US in 1997 and William asked me to teach with him in Ohio after several years of being out of touch, I found a man completely changed. We all go through these “learning moments” when life throws tragedy and strife our way. It crushes some people. The depths of the darkness he was willing to explore and to come out the other side with a wisdom and generosity of spirit has always stayed with me. Here was someone who truly embraced change. Something I continue to reach for and admire. That same summer, fresh from completing my Feldenkrais Teacher Certification, I began sharing Moshe’s perspective and material with him, eager to mine that wonderful body of work with other dancers. It has been a true delight to see how fully and seamlessly he has integrated those profound concepts into his already rich approach. This constant commitment to experimentation and inclusiveness has etched a deep impression in my psyche.

What individual uniqueness do you bring to William’s approach that makes it your own?

Well for starters, I’m a woman. A smaller frame and a different center of gravity, lever length, etc. all play into my personal movement signature. There is a way that I meet and hold the world energetically as a woman. My innate movement vocabulary is less successive and maybe more linear. It took some time for me to value these aspects; to feature them. I enjoy mixing what I strive for in his phrases with my own. And even when I dance William’s phrases, I naturally feel the emphases in different places than how he created it. When teaching, I like elegant simplicity and the thread of my classes can also be weighted more heavily on the research side of things. I tend to mine a concept for longer duration and use reflection for recuperation. This comes perhaps from my Feldenkrais background and my own desire for time to process. It fits well with my current situation of teaching people who are more interested in figuring out how to move, than those who are on a career path through the galaxy of sophisticated and challenging accomplishment.

What recommendations do you have for certification students as they try to assimilate William’s concepts and approach into their own teaching style, so that they honor his pedagogy and continue to develop as individuals?

There is rich nectar in William’s phrases and dances! Drink it in. Make note of the language he uses. It is not insignificant. It is full of the answers to many puzzles. Go play with the movement and the LMA and Somatic ideas. Use them in your teaching until they are really in your bones, until the words come easily. Share your own learning moments and stories with your students or friends. You will refine what you are learning even as you stumble and stutter for awhile. Try on concepts and luxuriate in the ones that are delicious for you, even enhance them with something more. Experiment with new ones, even when they are uncomfortable and once you have grounded yourself in the areas that are “home” for you, take “movement vacations” from the Evans approach. Days or weeks when you move only according to your own impulse and inner drives or emotions. Write your process. Decide what you want to create in your classrooms, in your dancing or dances and practice that every chance you get. Allow lots of missteps, be brave and kind in your judgement of your level of success. These are lofty ideals and sophisticated concepts to master. Be patient and bring anyone who will listen to you along for the ride. There is no better way to learn than to teach.
June 20-23, 2013 marked the first International Conference on Teaching Somatics-Based Dance Technique, held at the College at Brockport in Brockport, NY. Hosted by Bill Evans and Cynthia Williams in association with the Dance Departments of The College at Brockport and Hobart and William Smith Colleges, the conference featured two dozen presenters from across Canada, Mexico, and the United States; two dance concerts, and nearly seventy participants engaged in moving, learning, teaching and dancing together. The experience was truly magical and wonderfully enlivening, a rich feast of movement for the mind, body, and soul. A few photos below, courtesy of Marlene Leber, provide a glimpse into those four days, while William’s keynote address, delivered June 21st, 2013 celebrates his journey through somatic education that many of us are privileged to share.
The evolution of one approach to teaching somatics-based dance technique.

Keynote Address
International Conference: Teaching Somatics-Based Dance Technique
The College at Brockport, June 21, 2013

Text by William (Bill) Evans

I took my first dance class in 1948, and studied continuously thereafter. However, I didn’t hear the word “pelvis” in a dance class until 1966, when I was serving as an apprentice to the Harkness Ballet Company in New York City. Janet Collins, the first African American ballerina to perform at the Metropolitan Opera House, was one of the amazing teachers hired to teach us (in the 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. schedule of dance technique courses we endured, six days a week). She asked us to lie on the floor, elevate our feet, rest them against the wall and notice the “bowl of the pelvis.” Because we were used to being put through our paces with endless steps that pushed us to our limits of endurance, we wondered what Ms. Collins was up to. “Resting? Pelvis? What has this got to do with dancing?”

As a Master of Fine Arts candidate at the University of Utah from 1967 through 1970, I had multiple opportunities to study with Margaret H’Doubler. Elizabeth R. (Betty) Hayes, my mentor and the founder of the U. of U. Modern Dance Program, invited H’Doubler—who had retired from the University of Wisconsin at Madison and was living in Tucson, Arizona—for frequent visits to Salt Lake City, during which the renowned somatics pioneer would spend a few days teaching a variety of classes to both graduate and undergraduate dance majors.

She was very thin, wiry even, and appeared a little frail physically, though she exuded enormous intellectual and spiritual power. Wearing a tailored gray or navy dress and high-heeled shoes she would enter the third-floor dance studio in the old Department of Women’s Physical Education carrying a little model of a human skeleton. After reminiscing about the days when she made the switch from biology and basketball to dance, she would enchant us with eloquent descriptions of the potency of kinesthetic learning and communication.

Betty required H’Doubler’s book, Dance: A Creative Art Experience, for her course in dance philosophy, and we were all acquainted with H’Doubler’s theory of the three phases of movement. The first phase, feedback, she described as bringing information from the muscles, joints and tendons. The second, associative, takes place in the brain. The third phase, feed-forward, is the process of sending messages back to the muscles.

Both H’Doubler and Hayes emphasized the importance of engaging our future students kinesthetically in the process of learning movement phrases through the use of anatomically-based imagery. They seldom demonstrated what they wanted students to experience and never encouraged the use of mirrors in the learning process. (There was just
one small—and warped—mirror at the far end of the studio in those days, and it was often covered by curtains.)

Even though I had been a member of Orchesis—performing the choreography of Shirley Ririe and Joan Woodbury, and even choreographing my own works—as an undergraduate English and ballet major at the University of Utah (before spending two years in the U.S. Army and two years dancing professionally in New York and Chicago), I was still very much a “bun-head” when I entered the Modern Dance MFA Program at the age of 27.

H'Doubler’s classes were transformative for me, directing my focus from the mirror, or an imagined audience, to my internal awareness. I was exhilarated, and my love for dance and movement were profoundly deepened. I began to understand the relevance of movement investigation to every aspect of life, and to comprehend the oneness of mind and body, probably for the first time.

The late 60s were a rich time for me. Not only was I pursuing the MFA, but I was also dancing full-time with the newly-established Repertory Dance Theatre and teaching evening classes for advanced teenagers in Virginia Tanner’s Creative Dance Program, also based at the University of Utah.

In those early years, RDT offered its 11 members the extraordinary experience of numerous full-day, month-long residencies with New York City-based teacher/choreographers, including Alwin Nikolais, Murray Louis, José Limón, Anna Sokolow, Donald McKayle, Betty Jones, Ethel Winter, Paul Sanasardo, Viola Farber, Jennifer Muller, Lucy Venable, Richard Kuch, Richard Gain, John Butler, Glen Tetley, Matt Mattox, Alfredo Corvino and others.

I tried to synthesize the movement concepts and practices passed on by these iconic artist/teachers with H'Doubler/Hayes concepts of kinesthetic learning and teaching. And then I tried to explore these new ideas with the Tanner teenagers. For more than five years, those young dancers—including Debbie Poulsen (who later joined my company and danced with me for more than 15 years), Tina Misaka and Mimi Silverstein (who both later danced with RDT for many years) and Jacquie Lynn Bell (who has become a prolific and successful international choreographer)—served as a living laboratory for my explorations of how and what to teach.

These girls had danced all their young lives and were passionate, open, individually expressive and artistically courageous. “Technique” had not been of concern to them in the Tanner Program before they became my students, but Virginia had decided that they were at an age (12 and 13 when I first taught them) when they needed “technique” if they were to pursue the dance careers that most of them hoped for.

I would try out my perceptions of Sanasardo, Sokolow or Farber movement patterns and ideas on these beautiful young artists, and then watch and listen carefully to witness the results. I was “teaching what I wanted to learn,” a process that forced me to analyze, wrap words around and figure out a way of integrating new ideas and movement experiences into classes that had congruency and helped these dancers move forward. When my students were enlivened by a thought or experience, I made note of it and repeated it, gradually integrating it into my evolving personal movement language and pedagogy. When something seemed to confuse them, I stepped back and investigated it further before trying it out with different language or in a new context.

I found that some of the ideas and patterns I was experiencing as a professional modern
dancer didn’t resonate with me or my students, and I pushed those to the back of my body-mind or just dropped them altogether.

- When the ballistic stretch sequences we had learned from the mesmerizingly charismatic Alwin Nikolais activated the stretch reflex mechanism in my muscles—making me tighter, while simultaneously stretching the ligaments of my RDT colleague Gregg Lizenbery—making him less stable, I stopped giving bouncing stretches (which were then very popular in modern dance classes) and experimented with slow stretches during which I encouraged “lengthening” and “letting go of tension.”

- When I had to visit a sports-medicine doctor in New York City for a cortisone injection in my immobilized neck before a 1969 week-long RDT engagement at the Delacourte Theatre in Central Park, I was forced to realize that my years-long habit of pressing back in my neck had diminished my cervical curve to such an extent that I had lost shock absorption. I then began experimenting with thoughts and practices that would help me regain a neutral spine and learning from those among my young students who allowed the curves of their spines to express themselves.

- When I developed snapping in my sartorial tendon in the hundreds of passés (turned-out and parallel) that filled the dazzling classes of the astonishing dancer Viola Farber, I discovered that encouraging full femoral flexion, rather than stopping the foot lift at the knee, allowed both me and my students to lessen an over-reliance on the sartorius and quadriceps and find an easier hip-fold and more core support for leg lifts.

- I discovered that if I visualized my bones moving themselves, imagining that I had no muscles, only breath, to lift my leg, that I could increase my range of motion and ease of movement, and I encouraged my young students to do the same.

- When experimenting with the various degrees of spinal flexion asked for by our various teachers of Limón Technique—Betty Jones, Jennifer Muller, Carla Maxwell and Daniel Lewis—I discovered that asking my students to roll all the way through the spine and hang from the hip fold, while sending the sitz bones toward the ceiling and keeping the weight evenly distributed throughout the whole foot, allowed them to find hamstring/quadriceps balance as well as more articulation of the spine.

- When Betty Jones shared with us the “imagined movement” of her colleague from the Juilliard faculty, Lulu Sweigard, I asked my students to lie in constructive rest position early in my classes and visualize a ribbon wrapping around each femur, or to lie in the child’s pose, let their breath out slowly with hissing and visualize grains of
sand seeping out their gluteal sand bags.

- When Anna Sokolow told us that the sternum is the most expressive part of the human body, I started encouraging my students to allow the sternum to slide toward the head and then toward the pelvis, to find softening of the chest and to allow a greater range of mobility throughout the whole shoulder girdle.

- When H'Doubler and several of our Graham teachers told us that the arms should move from the back, I experimented with a series of phrases in which rotation of the spine initiated rotation of the scapulae, which then initiated spreading and rising of the arms.

I tried-out each new pattern and image on my young students and took careful note of their interpretations. I discovered that encouraging mobility of the sternum and initiation of arm gestures in the spine and shoulder girdle caused these students to find a fuller use of breath, and I watched in delighted amazement as Debbie Poulsen increased the size of her kinesphere by fully mobilizing her skeleton through deeper breathing. It wasn’t long before students were calling my work “breath dancing.”

By 1974, when I left RDT to teach full-time at the University of Utah and founded my own company, I was on a path I have traveled for [now] 40 years—in retrospect, I recognize it as a journey of wanting to honor bodily wisdom, seeking ways to encourage personal uniqueness and striving to develop strategies to heighten kinesthetic awareness.

By 1976, when my dance company was in residence for the full six weeks of the American Dance Festival (then based in New London, Connecticut), the main-stream modern dance I thought I was teaching was called the “Evans Technique” by students—their term, initially, not mine. Even though I was building my work on my understandings of ballet, the classic modern techniques I had studied (Graham, Humphrey/Limón, Cunningham, Nikolais) and the musicality and flow I had experienced in rhythm tap, students were finding my classes essentially different from what they were experiencing with other teachers.

During that summer, Peggy Hackney and Irene Dowd were also in residence at ADF, teaching Effort/Shape and Ideokinesis, respectively. Both of them took my afternoon course in modern technique. At the end of the six weeks, we noticed that the dozen or so students who were enrolled in courses with the three of us had made quantum leaps of understanding and embodiment, while those who were studying with me, Mel Wong (teaching Cunningham)
and Denise Jefferson (teaching Graham)—both masterful teachers—seemed to have defended themselves so much from the apparent contradictions in our various approaches to understanding movement and the body that they made little perceivable change.

Peggy, Irene and I conferred and agreed that the combination of our three approaches appeared to serve students well. I made a decision there and then to learn more about applied kinesiology and Laban/Bartenieff concepts so that I could integrate them into my future teaching of modern dance technique.

Peggy was so interested in the possibilities of our combined work that she decided to leave her practice and life in New York City and join my company and school in Seattle. The following years during which she danced and taught as a member of my company were very stimulating.

She started sharing Laban and Bartenieff theory and practices in our daily rehearsals, and I immediately saw the relevance to me and others in my company. We started to develop a common language that I could draw on when choreographing and directing rehearsals, as well as a more refined level of body knowledge and a more objective awareness of expressive possibilities. Most excitingly, I discovered that these “new” theories allowed me to stay on my pathway of investigation, while giving me conceptual lenses through which to more deeply perceive what I was doing and language through which to discuss and share it.

Starting in 1977, we produced the Bill Evans Seattle Summer Institutes of Dance, which attracted as many as 350 young dancers from around the world for six weeks of classes, repertory workshops and performances. All participants started each day with a three-hour session in Bartenieff Fundamentals combined with Evans Technique, taught collaboratively by a Certified Laban Movement Analyst from LIMS (Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies) in New York City and a member of the Seattle-based Evans Dance Company. Most students were invigorated by this experience and many said they “felt like part of an exciting, grand experiment.” We also offered courses in Effort-Shape, Space Harmony and dance kinesiology, as well as ballet, jazz, tap and musical theatre. We couldn’t persuade Irene Down to join us, but she sent her assistant Gretchen Langstaff, who taught for us until she encouraged me to hire one of our students, Karen Clippinger, in 1978. Gretchen told me, “she knows more than I do.” Karen, then moved to Seattle herself, and became a long-time member of the faculty of the Evans Company/Dance Theatre Seattle School and a transformative influence in the Seattle dance community. She is now, of course, a professor at Cal State Long Beach and the author of the remarkable textbook Dance Anatomy and Kinesiology.

Those Seattle summers were amazing. Every few months I run into someone who made the
journey to study with us during those years. Becky Nettl-Fiol, here this evening, was one of a group of Ohio State dance majors who attended one of our first institutes.

Gregg Lizenbery, a founding member of my company, became our resident certified Laban Movement Analyst when Peggy moved on to become a full-time member of the University of Washington dance faculty. Janet Hamburg became Laban certified even earlier, and was member of my summer workshops faculty for many years. I finally became Laban certified in 1997, through Peggy’s Integrated Movement Studies Program, and—a few years later—through LIMS as well. Over the decades, I am proud to say, I have influenced countless dancers and dance educators to seek certification in one of those programs.

For the past decade, Suzie Lundgren has integrated her approach to the Moshe Feldenkrais work into our workshops, and others have integrated the work of F. M. Alexander, Sondra Fraleigh and various approaches to Yoga as well.

Nowadays, no matter where I go—including Guatemala City, where I am halfway through a multi-visit Fulbright project with 43 professional dance educators—I see modern technique teachers starting their classes with variations on Bartenieff Fundamentals. It’s hard to believe that just 35 years ago, when we first started doing so in Seattle, it seemed so revolutionary.

Our dance majors here at Brockport expect somatics content in all their technique classes and most of my pedagogy students, grad and undergrads, begin their classes with somatics explorations.

When I returned to Peggy’s sphere of influence in 1996, after having continued her work in my own way for over 15 years, I was struck by how much more articulate, exploratory, patient and inclusive she had become, and—especially—by the degree to which she had incorporated the work of Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen into her teaching of Bartenieff Fundamentals. In the 70s, Peggy started BF classes with the pre-thigh lift. In 1996, she started with shrinking and growing from the big X to the O and back again—exploring cellular respiration.

By leading an ongoing investigation and evolution of Bartenieff Fundamentals and by writing about it so clearly in Making Connections—Peggy has given dance teachers wonderful tools that we can share with students in all our courses—recreational or professional.

A few years ago, Martha Eddy and I were invited to serve as keynote presenters at an International Laban Conference in Mexico City, hosted by the inspiring Mexican LMA pioneer Pilar Urreta. During that conference, I was thrilled to witness Martha’s clear embodiment of the developmental patterns as practiced in Body-Mind Centering and then in Irmgard’s Fundamentals.

I am thrilled that Martha has asked to be part of our conference. Certainly there is no more powerful advocate for somatics-based movement education in the world today.

I am also thrilled, and humbled, that each of you so value somatics-based teaching that you did all that was necessary to find the time and resources to bring yourselves to Brockport for this conference. When Cynthia Williams and I decided to host this event, we hoped for 25 or 30 participants. We are astonished that 70 of you have joined us—and that several others have told us that they hope we do this again, because they would love to participate in such a conference in the future.
Thank you Cynthia, for agreeing to join me in this venture, and for doing the bulk of the organization!

I’m 73, and my journey is beginning to wind down, but I’m delighted to know that all of you are dedicated to learning from the living body and that you are evolving and sharing your own practices in your various corners of the world.

Thank you for that and for being part of this gathering.

As a Bartenieff Fundamentals practitioner, I would like to end by repeating words that I pass on to all my new students:

• Let’s return to the body.
• There are many possibilities.
• Life is Movement and Movement is Change.
• We are here to open ourselves to the possibility of positive change.

Thank you.

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Seeking submissions for the next issue of Bill Evans Dance Teachers Intensive Newsletter!

Have some insight for our Applied Pedagogy section, a tip to share for What’s In My Pocket?

A question about Bartenieff Fundamentals or Laban Theory you’d like to pose, or write about?

If you’d like to contribute to any of the current sections, propose a new column, or start a new conversation, please contact Cynthia Williams at williams@hws.edu.

We’d love photographs from any BETI-related activity!
BILL EVANS DANCE TEACHERS' INTENSIVE 2014

CELEBRATING 15 YEARS!

Five different intensives for Established and Emerging Dance Educators including college students in dance education programs.

FIRST SESSION
EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND, June 9 - 13
Bill Evans, Kitty Daniels and Don Halquist
Bartenieff Fundamentals, Evans Laban/Bartenieff-Based Modern Dance Technique, Anatomy for the Dancer, Anatomy-Based Ballet Technique and Seminar/Workshop in Developing a Personal Pedagogy of Dance Technique. In association with Julie Chilvers, Scottish Dance Artist and Teacher/Facilitator, and Dance Base, Scottish National Centre for Dance.

Five classes per day, M - F and two classes on Saturday.

Details to be announced. Contact billevansdance@hotmail.com.

SECOND SESSION
MORAGA, CALIFORNIA, June 23 – 27
Bill Evans, Debra Knapp, Suzie Lundgren
Somatics Lab, Evans Laban-Based Modern Dance Technique, Laban-Based Improvisation and Composition, Repertory and Dance Pedagogy Seminar/Workshop. In association with Saint Mary's College of California Department of Performing, Cathy Davalos Director (Located 40 minutes from the Oakland International Airport)

Four or five classes per day, M – F, and two classes on Saturday.

Contact: Hailey Yaffe, St. Mary's College, hailey.yaffe@gmail.com; billevansdance@hotmail.com

THIRD SESSION
BROCKPORT, NEW YORK, June 29 - July 5
Bill Evans, Jan Erkert and Claire Porter

Somatics Lab, Evans Laban-Based Modern Dance Technique, Dance Pedagogy Seminar/Workshop and Creation/Performance. In association with The College at Brockport, State University of New York, Department of Dance, Kevin Warner chair. Five classes per day for six days. Culminating performance featuring new Claire Porter piece for all participants.

Visit www.billevansdance.org for more information and/or contact Cynthia William, williams@hws.edu

FOURTH SESSION
BROCKPORT, NY, July 5 - 9
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: APPLICATIONS OF THE EVANS METHOD In Teaching and Creation
Sessions presented by Certified Teachers of the Evans Method and/or members of the Bill Evans Dance Teachers' Intensive Faculty or Bill Evans Dance Company In association with The College at Brockport, State University of New York, Department of Dance, Kevin Warner chair. Five 90-minute sessions per day for three days.

Visit www.billevansdance.org for more information and/or contact Cynthia William, williams@hws.edu

FIFTH SESSION
FORT WORTH, TEXAS, July 26 - 30
For Both Teachers and Advanced Modern Dancers
Bill Evans, Don Halquist and Kathy Diehl
Evans Laban-Based Modern Dance Technique, Evans Repertory, Ballet Congruent with the Evans Method and Dance Pedagogy

Kinections Dance/Movement Therapy
Rochester, New York
July 14 - 18, 2014

Five-day workshop in the Bill Evans Approach to Laban Movement Analysis.
Mr. Evans will introduce basic concepts and practices of the LMA areas of knowledge: Body, Effort, Shape and Space, as he has found them transformative in his life and work. Students will be mostly participants in the Dance Movement Therapy program led by renowned dance movement therapist Danielle Fraenkel.