

World Dance Therapy News

In our last issue we began a new series on dance therapy around the world, with a great contribution from Jenny De Leon in New Zealand. Since then we have had a warm response from dance therapists overseas, willing to write for the Dance Therapy Association of Australia Quarterly and we look forward to an exciting series giving a global perspective on dance therapy.



From Buenos Aires to Australia – Dance Therapy in Argentina

Diana Fischman

It is a pleasure for the Asociación Argentina de Danzaterapia (AADT) to greet the Dance Therapy Association of Australia and to have the opportunity to exchange information about DMT in different parts of the world through your newsletter. We congratulate you on your initiative and thank you for your interest and your invitation to share with you the AADT development and allow us to know about yours.

Since 1995, a DMT Training Program has been developed in Buenos Aires at Brecha, a Centre for psychoanalytical body-oriented therapy. After some groups graduated, the need of continuing and gathering to spread the seeds of DMT and organise the profession, arose.

Harris and Sharon Chaiklin, who came down to our country to give workshops encouraged us to develop an Association, by telling us about how the American DMT organization was built. We know that DMT as a profession needs to be recognised as a community in a community. We are very thankful to them for that support.

We knew that, besides our students and staff, there were many other people using dance with different populations: children with Down's Syndrome, deaf, eating disorders, etc. Our goal was to gather all the people who were interested in the use of movement and dance with healing goals in different settings, such as therapeutic, educational and developmental.

A small group of us founded the Association in the Year 2000. During that year we worked on legalizing it and had

some meetings and workshops to gather and invite new people to join us. We really are a small group. We were only 14 at the beginning and now after 2 years there are close to 40 members.

During 2001 we worked for our 1st AADT Conference. To our surprise, 12 workshops were presented: DMT and body image, working with people with eating disorders, DMT in psychiatric settings, violence within families, non-verbal communication, dance and the ritual of fire, the body and the emotions, etc. 40 people took part. The gathering was a celebration. The exchange was rich and people shared their experiences working with movement in different settings.

We also had two presentations: Patricia Celis Venegas, an anthropology expert in non-verbal communication, and Dr. Alejandro Odessky, a medical doctor specializing in traumathology* working with Eutony** who shared his ideas about the body-mind connection and muscular tone.

A discussion forum ran on all DMT interests: developing a profession, training, certification, relations with institutions, advertising, marketing etc. We were satisfied, a lot of work was done.

We hope to go on with the AADT although these are very difficult times for our country with economic, social, and political instability. There is a deep crisis and we wish to be useful to the community as dance therapists. We know how it affects on a body level and how good it can be to share and heal collectively through movement and have a possibility of processing the unfortunate events and difficult times. Renewing energies and celebrating life, which is movement in itself.

We feel a door was opened when Heather Hill invited us to write something for your newsletter. We are happy to offer you our contribution by opening also a door to our Association and to our dance therapy members, with all its symbolic metaphorical meaning.

It's good to know that there are people who share the "DMT spirit" so far in this huge and tiny world.

Ed. Notes:

- *traumathology – Was not sure of the equivalent term here, but broadly it is a speciality which works with people who have broken their bones or have bone problems.*
- *Eutony. (Here's a summary of what I found from the Eutony website, www.eutonie.com/ You'll need to understand French, German or Spanish though if*

you want to check it out yourself.) *Eutony* was developed in the 1930s in Germany by Gerda Alexander. The word *Eutony* comes from the Greek "eu" meaning good, harmonious and "tonos" meaning tonus or tension, translating the idea of a muscle tonicity harmoniously balanced and constantly adapting to fit the situation or the lived reality. *Eutony* is a method of body work based on the observation of our sensations/perceptions. By becoming conscious of our sensations, we encourage the natural process of the autonomic systems of muscle tonus, circulation and respiration. Through practicing *Eutony* one allows oneself to truly listen to and respect the body in stillness and in movement. Book reference: *Eutony. The Holistic Discovery of the Total Person* by Gerda Alexander. Published by Felix Morrow. 13 Welwyn Road. Great Neck, New York 11021 USA Distributed by The Talman Company 1985. H.H

And now the experience of Diana Fischman, Argentinian dance therapist and pioneer of Dance Therapy training and clinical application in her country.

I'm licensed in Psychology and Educational Sciences. I did a post-graduate degree in Psychoanalysis. I'm working on my Doctorate at Palermo University in Buenos Aires. In 2000 I got my ADTR by the ADTA.

As an adolescent I took contemporary dance classes at María Fux's Studio. She was the first in Argentina to name her work "Danzaterapia", Dance Therapy. She used to work with Down's Syndrome children and deaf people. She was a pioneer in the field and left a seed in me which many years later appeared again in Maralia Reca's voice. She was trained in the United States with Liljan Espenak and back in our country she gave DMT classes. I experienced group and individual sessions with her for some years.

Since 1979 I've been working clinically with children, families and adults. I felt something was missing, as someone who'd undergone psycho-analysis and as a therapist searching for new tools to help people deal with their difficulties and pain. So I did a 3 year training on Body-Mind Integrative techniques, where I learned : Feldenkrais, Alexander, Bioenergetics, massage , *Eutony*, etc. I went to the United States to meet Dr.A.Lowen and to be trained by Dr. Leonard Hochman, from the Bioenergetic Institute of New York.

By the time Dr. Marcia Leventhal came to Buenos Aires and after attending workshops of hers, I decided that DMT was what I wanted and needed. That is how the DMT Training Program began in Argentina at Brecha; "energy-movement & change," an Institution that I founded. Marcia Leventhal, Fran Levy, Sharon Chaiklin, Joan Chodorow, Susan Loman, Janet Siegel, Laurel Thompson, William Free-

man and Dianne Dulicai gave wonderful workshops in our Program.

With DMT knowledge we create Enacción: "Abordajes psicocorporales para la Empresa", that means psycho-body oriented approaches to work in companies on burnout prevention .

I'm completely committed to the idea that movement and dance is the organic way of learning about ourselves, about others, about contexts, about the world.

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