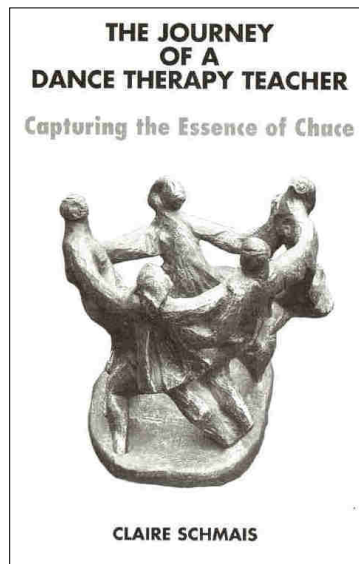


Book Review:

THE JOURNEY OF A DANCE THERAPY TEACHER Capturing the Essence of Chace

Claire Schmais

Published by Marion Chace Foundation of American Dance Therapy Association Columbia, Maryland. Available directly through the ADTA office at www.adta.org Cost Aus\$15 dollars, postage to Australia Aus\$15. Total price Aus \$30



We are delighted to have received a copy of this book for the DTAA to review. Claire Schmais is well known to Australian Dance therapists as someone who has played a major role in the development of the profession in the U.S. - as therapist and teacher - having taught at Hunter College for 25 years. Who better to 'Capture the Essence of Chace', having studied and then interned with her at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington in the early 1960's. In the preface Schmais says that it was only in sharing the work with her colleagues that she came to understand the subtleties of the approach.

The Forward by Elissa White, also a student at that time and who has worked with Schmais for over 40 years, sets a scene that gives a real sense of the history of dance therapy and the early pioneering years, whilst putting the overall into context. She pays tribute to Schmais saying of her that 'her teaching is an art'.

Schmais describes the experiential portion of two dance therapy theory and practice classes over one year at Hunter College of the City of New York in the early days of the programme. Schmais describes how

she attempts to teach the skills that come together in the "capable, competent and creative dance therapist." The method of teaching dance therapy that Schmais describes, rooted in the Chace approach, includes concepts central to Chace's work such as body action, symbolism, the therapeutic movement relationship and rhythmic group action. This choice reflects Schmais' desire to focus on how students actively incorporate the necessary skills and competencies required in practicing dance therapy. We found this book to be extremely user friendly and engaging. Schmais understands the "deep divide" between practicing dance therapy and teaching it. Each stage of the teaching process is clearly designed and communicated to the reader at a glance.

We are indebted to Schmais for undertaking to share her way of working and highly recommend this book.

Anna Schlusser
Professional Member DTAA and teacher
International Dance Therapy Institute of
Australia.