



## *Congress 2000* *Rudolf Benesh Remembered*

### *Tributes*

#### **Kenneth Norman L.I.S.T.D A.R.A.D A.N.E.A - My involvement with Benesh in the early years**

My first contact with the Benesh system was in 1955 when I applied to enrol for the 'Benesh Correspondence Course' while serving as a Conscript Soldier with the Royal Signals in England. To this day, I still have all my original Correspondence Course papers!

Prior to conscription, I had passed my Royal Academy of Dancing Examinations to Advanced level while enrolled as a full time student with the Bush-Davies School and on leaving the Royal Signals at the end of my term, I gained a scholarship to the Royal Ballet School. There I met both Rudolf and Joan Benesh who were teaching Benesh Notation at the school, and became keenly interested in the notation.

I became very good friends with Rudolf and Joan, and they would invite me to their home so that I could discuss and learn about the latest developments Rudolf was constantly making to the notation.

While at the Royal Ballet School, I assisted with the teaching of Benesh Movement Notation to students. It was at this time I had the idea to embark on a special project, the notating of the complete 'Dictionary of Ballet Terms'. Joan Benesh helped me with the checking of this work, which in 1958 was entered into an exhibition of 'Dance Notation from Around

the World' at the Royal Festival Hall. I remember with pride my completed 'Notated Ballet Dictionary' being displayed in a glass showcase in the foyer of the theatre. I followed this project with a more ambitious one, the notating of the 'Balletic Mime Gestures' as set down in the Royal Ballet School curriculum for students. Once again, Joan helped me with this challenging project.

At this time (with Benesh slowly emerging as the system of choice by ballet companies, but always in direct competition with the Laban system), I was asked by Sir Frederick Ashton to attend private rehearsals with Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes, to notate the pas de deux in the ballet *Ondine* that he was choreographing. I will always remember the kindness and consideration I received from Miss Fonteyn. Throughout every rehearsal she would come up to my desk, where I had all my notation papers spread out, and ask me how I was managing, and would I like any of Mr Ashton's newly choreographed sequences repeated for me!

I can say with considerable pride that I have always found the Benesh system to be of great value to me as a dancer, choreographer, teacher, and now as International Dance Administrator (for the ISTD in the South Pacific Region since 1987), and I am still promoting its virtues.