

Excerpts from Enigma Variations

Lecture-Demonstration

Peter Wright

As a finale to the Ashton conference, Peter Wright and dancers from the Birmingham Royal Ballet presented excerpts from *Enigma Variations*, which had recently been revived for the company by Michael Somes.

Peter Wright: I can't claim to be a great expert on the choreography of *Enigma Variations*. It was choreographed by Frederick Ashton for the Royal Ballet at a time when I wasn't around, but from the first performance I saw I have always loved it; I think it is one of his greatest works. I like to think of it as a ballet about friendship, but about family too - a 'family' of friends. In practically every classical ballet you have the idea of 'friends'. Swanilda has her friends, Giselle has her friends, Juliet has friends - the Prince always manages to have a friend somewhere! But they are incidental, and there are hardly any ballets that go into the depth and feeling of true friendship, and I think this ballet really does. It also goes into a lot of other deep and significant emotions between artists and companions to artists. It also has so many opportunities for characterisation - which I tend to find is on the wane at the moment, though I'm sure it will come up again - which calls for artistry and interpretative qualities that are, for me, so important to classical ballet. Technique isn't everything. Someone said (I think it was Pavlova) that technique is only a means to a beginning: it should never be regarded as an end in itself. I think this ballet demonstrates wonderfully that whole focus of what classical ballet really is about and the opportunities it gives the artists.

Enigma Variations has a subtitle taken from Elgar's subtitle for the music: 'My Friends Pictured Within.' The introduction to the programme reads:

Some time before the action of the ballet takes place, Elgar had sent the score of the *Enigma Variations* to the famous conductor Richter in the hope of interesting him in the work. The characters — intimates and friends of the composer - dance their individual variations, at the end of which a telegram arrives from Richter, addressed to their mutual friend Jaeger, agreeing to conduct the first performance.

This is, of course, what Elgar had been longing for, but would never allow himself to believe was going to happen.

It was the success of the *Enigma Variations*, which was to bring international fame to Elgar and immortality to the friends pictured within. The action of the ballet takes place in Worcestershire in 1898.

Our approach to this lecture-demonstration is based on how we at the Birmingham Royal Ballet have brought the ballet to life. I like to think of this, of course, as a tribute to dear Sir Fred and this great masterpiece, but I also regard it as a tribute to Michael Somes and what he has done in keeping Fred's ballets alive. We were incredibly lucky because not only was Michael supervising everything, but also we had magnificent help from Anthony Dowell, Antoinette Sibley, Monica Mason and Deanne Bergsma. That was invaluable - sometimes confusing, but invaluable! Sadly, Derek Rencher, who has danced the role of Elgar in every performance, was going to help with this production but was taken ill.

In the case of a ballet like this, the question of casting is all-important. When we decided to do it and Tony Dyson, who owns the ballet, had agreed and I'd had discussions with Michael, I did my casting as I thought would be right. I did it very quickly, as it all seemed pretty obvious to me. After that I discussed it with a lot of people, including Michael, but we didn't always agree. However, we agreed on most things. You have to be careful with a ballet like this that you don't just cast it according to the artists who did it originally rather than the characters they are

playing. This ballet had the most wonderful original cast, including Svetlana Beriosova, Antoinette Sibley, Anthony Dowell, Wayne Sleep, Derek Rencher, Alexander Grant, Georgina Parkinson, and Deanne Bergsma - but you still have to remember the characters they are portraying. This can be very difficult, because the ideal person may not have the technique to dance it, and vice versa. In the end, my very quick-thinking shortlist turned out to be the one that we did. We have got a second cast and some others that are studying it. However, we all did agree on the first cast. It's not always like that with casting, especially a famous ballet with famous interpreters.

Excerpt 1

The two key figures of *Enigma Variations* are Elgar and his wife Alice, Lady Elgar - danced here by Desmond Kelly and Sherilyn Kennedy. The duet establishes the extraordinary and wonderful relationship between the husband and the wife, the artist and the companion. It establishes at once so much about the characters and the relationships in the whole ballet. It didn't happen overnight, it is the result of many rehearsals, and it was often difficult to get things just right - especially with Michael Somes!

Excerpt 2

Jessica Clarke and Duncan de Gruchy dance the two characters in this duet: Isabel Fitton, who was always described as young and romantic, and Richard Arnold, the son of Matthew Arnold, a fairly studious scholar, quite serious but obviously very much in love. This again is not an easy duet to realise, especially today. Fred's idea was about love shining through the restraints of the period. Today we tend to go for it, and relationships develop very fast. In those days they didn't do that: they were very careful about how they behaved. That is far harder choreographically than doing everything full out - you often have to unlearn before you relearn. These ballets grow from performance to performance - you learn and discover by performing. You can go a certain length in rehearsal, but it is not until you get on stage with the audience that you really understand, get your timing right. There are a lot of interesting things in this duet: Ashton's use of music, phrasing, playing with the music sometimes.

Excerpt 3

This is a complete contrast: the Troyte variation, danced by Kevin O'Hare. Kevin had to build up his stamina for this solo: it's a killer, it's non-stop at the same level. Troyte was a very close friend to Elgar, outspoken and brusque. The boisterous mood is mere banter. I know people like this sometimes: they come and they talk and talk and they go on and on and get very excited. And when they've gone, you wonder: what was all that about? I think Troyte must have been a bit like that.

Excerpt 4

Now another contrast: Alain Dubreuil as Jaeger, with Desmond and Sherilyn as Elgar and his wife, in the Nimrod variation. One of the most moving parts of the ballet, this is very much about the relationship between Elgar, his great and dear friend Jaeger, and Elgar's wife too. It expresses this quite superbly, with absolute economy of movement and steps - Ashton brought it right down to the minimum. Its very understatement makes it even more telling and moving. I'm sure everyone always reads different things into different ballets; I find it very moving that Elgar's wife understood so well that there are areas between artists and their friends that one can't intrude on. For instance, this particular variation illustrates when, on a summer evening, Elgar and Jaeger would discuss Beethoven and other music, and also their professional world. Although all three were very close, they were not necessarily close on everything. One of the great qualities of Elgar's wife was that she was always there and understood that he also had his own world - the world of the artist who is not lonely, but alone, and has to follow his or her own way always. Even after seeing the ballet many times, I still find it very moving.

Excerpt 5

We are going on now to the Dorabella solo created by Antoinette Sibley, danced here by Sandra Madgwick. This solo demands a great deal of body movement. One of the things about watching Sir Fred take rehearsals was the way he was forever prodding people: 'Use your back dear, bend, go, more!' He never wanted people to be rigid. There is a misconceived idea about classical ballet being as though dancers have corsets on - this is certainly not true of Ashton.

There have been many interpreters of this role, and it is can be quite hard for artists sometimes when they have got different versions coming from all sides. Fred was wonderful, because he was quite flexible in a way. He wanted the steps and the timing accurately done, but he always wanted his artists to look right, so he would sometimes give way a bit, saying, 'No, you look better doing it that way.' Even with notation and word of mouth you still get conflicting opinions about how it was originally done and how it may have slightly changed.

The solo is absolutely fiendish in terms of stamina, accuracy of timing, musicality - everything. Originally Sir Fred wanted Dorabella to feature in the next number, which was the one about George Robertson Sinclair, or rather, his bulldog - the scene with the dog barking at the children, originally created by Wayne Sleep. Poor Antoinette, after that variation she couldn't move, and so Fred had to give in and Dorabella - understandably! - does not feature in the next section.

Excerpt 6

We now come back to Elgar and Lady Elgar, the final duet, which in this demonstration we will run going straight into the Lady Mary variation, the real 'Enigma' variation. I've put them together because in the original - which we checked in the films made by Edmee Wood when it was first done - Lady Elgar exits at the same time that Lady Mary, the 'Enigma', enters. Lady Mary was a very enigmatic person that Elgar saw on a sea voyage; whether she was a real person or a vision in his head, we don't know. Over the years the choreography changed somehow, and Lady Elgar and Lady Mary didn't meet. Michael Some thinks it's right that they should meet; other people think they shouldn't, and we don't really know what Fred wanted. Now that we've been performing it a bit, we've evolved our own slight compromise: you're never quite sure

whether they meet, look at, or see each other. These are the kind of things that happen when you revive a ballet, even when it's been constantly in the repertory, as this ballet has been, over many years.

The first part is very deep and moving, because Elgar's wife is trying to help him with his feelings of insecurity. He doesn't know how to finish *Enigma Variations*. The ending was always a problem. There are, in fact, two endings - a long one and a short one. In the end, Elgar opted for the long one, but Fred chose the short one, which worked better theatrically. Fred had difficulty, too, getting the finale right. Everything else went through very quickly, but when it came to the finale, it took much longer. In this duet, Lady Elgar tries as hard as she can to help and support Elgar. It's as though she says, 'Go on, believe in yourself, think positive, get on with it.' You can only go a certain way with that and you can't push it. You can only help as much as you can and then let the artist get on - as in the Nimrod variation, where Elgar is worried, and Jaeger says, 'It will be all right, believe it,' but Elgar is still concerned and worried, and then he has to fight the battle on his own. This occurs again in this very beautiful pas de deux at the end, which is followed by the Lady Mary variation, danced here by Cathy Batcheller. Cathy came to us from the Stuttgart Ballet, where she was a principal dancer. She had no Ashton background at all, never worked in an Ashton ballet. Deanne Bergsma and Michael Somes helped her, and Monica Mason too - who I think was the second person ever to dance the role of Lady Elgar - and with that sort of support behind her, she took to it at once.

Discussion

Peter Wright: Desmond Kelly was very close to the production right from the start - he's my assistant director - and worked very closely with Michael Somes. I'd like him to talk not only about the rehearsals, but also about the role of Elgar.

Desmond Kelly: When Peter first broached it to me that we might do the ballet, I thought that we didn't have the people in the company to do the characters. I could still remember the original production from when I was with the Royal Ballet, and memories of the artists in it were vivid in my mind. When we sat down and began talk about it, I realised, as Peter said, that we shouldn't look for people who were like the original dancers, but should find people who were like the characters in the ballet. But we still had to have something of what had been before, so we had to balance it out. It was like a blessed project from the beginning, the casting went well. Before Michael Somes came, we were taught the ballet from the Benesh notation and the Edmee Wood film. We scheduled an hour and a half for the pas de deux, one hour for Troyte - it went very quickly. Then Michael came and put the finishing touches to it. He was very meticulous. For example, there are three walks forward for Elgar, and as soon as the music began and I started to take the first step, Michael yelled 'Stop!' It took hours to get this simple walk just right. Then it came to the same walk at the beginning of the pas de deux. This time Michael suggested that we had to make it different, and we had to try various head positions - it all took a very long time. In the end I thought that Derek Rencher had been so good in the role that I wasn't going to be able to do it. I watched the film and then I thought, 'I can't be like Derek - I'm just going to have to be myself.' Then things started to happen. Peter gave me a wonderful picture of Elgar, and I thought that with a bit of imagination I might be able to look a bit like him. So I parted my hair on the wrong side for me, which was Elgar's side, rather high, and patted it down. I added a moustache, and from then on it was wonderful for me.

Wright: No role comes easily. You have to unlearn before you learn: one comes in with preconceived ideas. We made a point of letting all the artists have a video so that they could study it. Sometimes this is good, sometimes not so good. Some people are very good imitators and will copy too much, some not enough. You never quite get it right, although in this case it worked, generally, very well.

Sherilyn Kennedy: I found Michael a little intimidating. I'd watched the video lots of times, and his biggest criticism was that I was too facial for the style and the era it was set in. Every time I would do something he would shout, 'Stop, too much face - more natural, less is best!' Then Monica Mason came along, and that was wonderful, because I was a little too balletic still, instead of just being a natural human being. Monica was wonderful with me, and with the second cast (Samira Saidi), in helping us be natural.

Wright: A lot of it was trial and error, because certain things that Svetlana had done you ended up doing the way she did, but in the meantime you tried a lot of things that Michael suggested, with more arms or less arms.

Kennedy: He kept saying that I wasn't moving enough in the beginning steps. I'd move a lot, and he didn't like that, and he would suggest more hips. In the end we got it back to subtle movement, but we tried lots of things. Every dancer is different, and what looks best on one doesn't necessarily suit another.

Wright: Duncan and Jessica - I was talking about the pas de deux earlier on and the difficulties of capturing the period, the restraint. Did you find that a problem, having to tone it down and understate?

Jessica Clarke: I think Michael wanted more of it to come from within - he kept driving us to do this.

Duncan de Gruchy: One thing comes to mind at the beginning in relation to the sense of frustration about not being able to express things full out. Jessica goes away from me, so my natural instinct is to stop her quite forcibly, and Michael didn't want that - he wanted it done quite subtly. But I couldn't find a way of doing that - I found it one of the hardest things. I still don't know if I've got it right. It's just one example of something that you want to do naturally, but you can't.

Wright: I think there is also a sense in the pas de deux that comes out choreographically - you are always looking around to see if you're being watched. You look from side to side sometimes before looking at each other. That illustrates a lot. I like Ashton's musicality - his phrasing. There is a particular step, which created, I think, certain problems. The way Fred finished it made it a very difficult step to do; and you can't do it terribly fast, so there had to be a certain compromise with the music. It's meant to illustrate laughter, but it ended up being a very light and difficult step with the music taken slower.

Kevin O'Hare: I don't know if I'm so keen on this idea of the casting being done from the original characters: I saw a picture of Troyte and he was a bit of an ugly chap - I'd rather it was based on Anthony Dowell! Anthony came in at the very beginning before we had learnt it, so he was able to show us exactly what each step was. We'd had half an hour with the notator beforehand, who taught us the steps, but Anthony showed us that it wasn't all so upright. He explained that the very first steps shouldn't be done with the body upright: you should let the upper body fall back on itself and then get it round onto the other side. There was the other problem that Anthony is a left-turner and I'm not, but we decided to keep it on the left side because if we made too many changes it would alter the shape of the solo.

When Michael came he had no sympathy at all, because he had never done it, and he made me do it about three times in a row. We decided that the best way to get the stamina was that I should have five minutes every day, and do it two or three times without a break. So after class, while everybody else was having a coffee break, I would have my five minutes. We started quite slowly. We decided that it was going to be about 80 beats on the metronome. We started at about 70, and worked our way up. By the time we got to the stage call I was going faster than the orchestra. They gradually got faster and faster, which was good, as Anthony thought it was easier to do faster. It's very different from most male solos: usually you do one step and walk to the side and then you do another step, but with this one you just keep going.

Wright: With most classical solos you can do the last diagonal the way you turn best, because you can run to either corner. But with a solo like this one, which is choreographed a special way, you can't suddenly change one particular bit and turn to the right.

I don't know if any of you have got anything to say about Nimrod - it's so self-explanatory.

Kelly: The programme says that it is based on moments in an evening spent discussing Beethoven with Jaeger. I think it's much deeper than that. It seems to relate more to the ending of the *Enigma Variations*, when Jaeger persuaded Elgar to change the ending and put in the extra music. He didn't want to, but he did it, and then he knew it was right. There was a lovely letter that he wrote saying, 'My dear friend, you were right, it is much better.' All that comes into it.

Wright: I'd like to invite Leslie Edwards from the audience to join us in the discussion. Leslie came up to Birmingham when we put on *Enigma*, and danced Nevinson, the role he created. Fred had very cleverly interwoven the character right through the ballet. This character was a very good amateur cellist, and in the final duet he sits at the side of the stage and plays the cello. Leslie didn't, of course, really play the cello, but he looked very convincing. He was also with us throughout the production, and I know that he has some comments, particularly about the finale. We have already discussed how Fred had certain difficulties with this, as had Elgar himself.

Leslie Edwards: All geniuses have trouble with finales, and we did have slight trouble with this one. I must call upon Alexander Grant to help me out here.

Alexander Grant: Fred was always bothered by finales. With *Beatrix Potter* he'd choreographed the whole thing except the finale, and all through the filming he was very worried about it. He had to do the finale in one afternoon. Finales were obviously a special thing with Frederick.

Edwards: I always enjoyed all the cameo roles I did with Fred, especially *Enigma* because the whole cast was so wonderful. When I was up in Birmingham I had the marvellous experience of going with Michael Some to see the birthplace of Sir Edward Elgar, so when I opened in Birmingham, I thought, 'Good gracious, I'm appearing at his "local"!' I thought that maybe he had visited that theatre to see Sir Henry Irving or Dan Leno in pantomime. When I saw the little house where he was born, I felt a human warmth, and I realised why we are so moved by the music and the ballet. I do think it's important to understand what the work you are interpreting is about, and every one of these items throughout *Enigma* gives you a sense of pausing for thought.

Grant: I don't know how widely it is known that many years ago Frederick's most unfavourite composer was Elgar. When he said he was going to do *Enigma Variations*, I said, 'But that's your most unfavourite composer!' Frederick always had his pulse on the moment, and said, 'The time is right now, and I'm going to do it.' He had a wonderful memory, and he recalled that, many years before, Julia Trevelyan Oman had sent him a script and designs for costumes for *Enigma Variations*, and he suddenly remembered them when he thought the time was right.

Wright: Sandra, I know you wanted to talk about some difficulties you had with Dorabella, especially that there were several people rehearsing you in the role.

Sandra Madgwick: I was taught Dorabella by our notator Denis Bonner, and was really having trouble picking up the steps because the combinations were quite difficult. Antoinette was coming in, and I was worried because I didn't feel I really knew it. When she arrived, she didn't care that I didn't have all the combinations in my head yet; she was more interested in getting the characterisation across. She explained that Dorabella was full of life, and had this great fun relationship with Elgar, and I really began to feel that everything was happening. Then Michael Some came and started to put all the actions in and made it even more of a conversation — at one moment I was darting this way, and then it was very soft. The jumps had to be very hard

and down, and then up and bright. He worked me very hard in it, and showed me how the body had to bend and how the back had to be very expressive. I wanted to get all these qualities together - everybody's contributions. Then another ballerina came in who had also done the role and showed me what she had done. I started to get confused with all the different versions and felt as though I was being torn between how I felt it, how Antoinette had set it, and how everybody else conceived it. Eventually Michael Some understood and told everybody to be quiet and let me do it the way I felt it, and to enjoy it.

Wright: Michael was very understanding, because he realised the quandary that you were in. On the other hand, it can be an advantage to have advice from people who have danced a role. Fred did change things for a particular reason, often to help an artist look right in a role. What is good for one artist, though, may not work for another - each artist has to find the right way. There was a particular step where nobody was sure which way the arm should be used; it drove us all mad. There was a quite a subtle difference, but it was important.

Madgwick: Antoinette was very definite that the chassé went down onto the front leg while the arm went sweeping up. Then it was remembered that because I was travelling so much forward, I ran out of space and I was coming too close to Elgar too soon. Then it was decided that the step would have to travel more to the side, and the arm was changed to a much faster movement, with the body inclining backwards. I began to get confused, so I ended up with a compromise - using an expressive upwards arm gesture but keeping the legs going sideways. That felt right for me.

Wright: The nice thing about the step is that as you go down the arm gestures strongly upwards - it makes the step more interesting; and then there's the speed of it too.

Grant: And there's the chassé again, the forgotten chassé!

Wright: Alain, is there anything you'd like to say about the Nimrod?

Alain Dubreuil: I think Desmond has said it all. It's about friendship. I felt it quite easy to do with Desmond. We've known each other for something like thirty years, so we have a great deal of rapport. We felt very comfortable doing that kind of work together - perhaps it is because we are friends or that we've had a lot of experience, rather than being new dancers, when just to walk on stage can be quite difficult. The music is also very beautiful and emotionally charged.

Wright: I felt very much that you established a sort of professional understanding between the two of you. Your professional lives have been very close, and I think the understanding of your art comes over.

Cathy, you are a newcomer into this world, having been a principal with the Stuttgart Ballet, although you slotted in wonderfully.

Cathy Batcheller: I had learnt the steps from the choreologist and I had an idea of what the Lady Mary role was supposed to be about, but I was interpreting certain things from the way I saw the movement, trying to find a meaning. Then Deanne Bergsma came in and talked about the role. The way she moved and spoke showed very clearly how I could change the interpretation. In the first entrance, there's a feeling of the bow of a ship cutting through the water, and the movement of the waves of the ocean. I started to feel comfortable.

Wright: Deanne had a lovely way of describing things.

Batcheller: Her manner was calm and tranquil. She was very helpful with the timing of certain actions - in connection with Elgar and the enigmatic qualities. When Michael came, we did the finale. That was my first experience of working with him and I was very nervous: I knew he was

going to be very exacting. I understood what he was trying to get out of us at rehearsal, although it was a different way of working, like being thrown into cold water. He wanted to get the most out of us all. When we worked on the solo, he felt that I understood the role from deep down and then it was just a pleasure, I felt I had the freedom from him to dance it.

Anon: What one reads about Lady Mary suggests she's supposed to be a dream, a fantasy. However, you were saying earlier that there was some dispute over whether Lady Elgar sees her, and yet in the finale this fantasy appears and dances with all the other characters.

Wright: That's the 'enigma'. You mustn't take the ballet too literally. There are excerpts representing different people. It's not as though they've all met on that particular day, as in the finale. I don't think there is an actual photograph - this is purely in Fred's imagination - of everyone together. It was a way of bringing the characters together, a sort of poetic licence. I feel as though Lady Mary is unreal - in Elgar's imagination - whereas Lady Elgar is very real. It is all about 'ideas', and one must be careful about being too specifically literal.

David Vaughan: Fred said the finale was partly for symmetry.

Wright: Yes. Somehow in a ballet of this nature, when you have a series of variations, it seems right for symmetry that you do reintroduce everyone at the end.

Anon: But she does go off the stage before everyone else.

Wright: She's not in the photograph, so she doesn't appear in 'the picture'.

John Percival: We had the comment that Sir Frederick had a problem making these finales. Surely the photograph is a metaphor for the whole ballet: it is 'my friends pictured' - so he has a picture taken - with, of course, one of the characters not in the picture because she's left the stage.

Anon: Speaking for the future of all of Sir Fred's ballets that we've heard about during this conference, I'd like to say that it is difficult learning from a choreologist, where you just learn the steps. You then learn the role and the meaning of the ballet from the various people who have come in to teach it. What do you feel is going to happen when the people who are so close to Sir Fred, who worked with him, aren't there to come and teach? What is going to happen to this legacy in the future?

Wright: We can only do our best. We went to endless pains with *Enigma Variations*, as we try to do with all choreographers' work. Notation is absolutely essential when teaching a ballet in the early stages, because it is so accurate. But you must bring in someone who really knows it well to polish it up. I think the ideal way is to have the expert there who knows and understands it at the same time as the steps are being taught - someone like Michael Somes. You can't create miracles; you can't suddenly produce another Ashton who will understand the former Ashton. You have to rely on who is around at the moment who can understand the work. We have a wealth of Ashton works, and I will always endeavour to make sure that everything is accurately recorded on video and notation and that we will have the right people present. There isn't anything more that one can do. One can have the example, as with the video, although one artist copying step by step, finger by finger, head by head, doesn't help that artist much. It can become a stereotype, it doesn't always 'live' - and that was one of the things that Ashton wanted, he wanted his choreography to live through the artist who was performing it.

Things won't always be the same. For instance, we revived Massine's *Le Tricorne* in the same programme as *Enigma Variations*, and unfortunately, Lorca, Massine's son, was unable to be with us until the last six days. We spent a long time unravelling different versions, and then finally when Lorca came along he had his own particular ideas. There was great confusion, and we ended up not having nearly enough time to bring the ballet to life.

These days the size of companies and the size of the activities and productions - whether it be the Royal Opera, the Royal Ballet, the Birmingham Royal Ballet - puts pressure on everything. There is so little time; although everything has grown, union rulings have meant that the amount of time that artists can work has been reduced. Everything is much larger and more expensive. We are luckier in Birmingham because we are much more our own masters. From my own experiences of working with the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden, I am aware of the pressures there, and the timescale of everything is a nightmare. Fred used to say, 'Please don't think that I want to see my ballets put on a lot - I don't. I would like to see them done occasionally, but done exquisitely.' I agree with that. The first part is not such a problem, but to have the right amount of time to get things really well done and to pay the necessary attention to detail certainly is. But we've got to get it right. We've got a great and wonderful heritage, and I feel optimistic because I think we are aware of the problems. The situation at Covent Garden is very different now from the way it was twenty years ago, and although some things are better, others are worse. I think we got our act together pretty well with our production of *Enigma Variations* in Birmingham - through the help of all our contributors - all aspects of it, design and everything. And I think, as Michael said, Fred would have been really pleased.

Monica Mason: I just wanted to mention that Robert Jude [Royal Ballet video archive] came across the film of Fred's retirement gala at the back of a cupboard in a box, and it was only saved a few weeks before it would have completely crumbled away. Robert made a recording of it, which has been shown at this conference.

I think that something that we've always wanted to do, and have begun to do now, is to develop the archive in an effort to try to record our ballets as accurately and as efficiently as possible. It is perhaps not widely known that to achieve some of these recordings we had negotiations going on with the Musicians' Union for over six years in order to get permission to record more rehearsals. So it's not that we don't try. Also, Robert and David Drew have been making private recordings of people; I know Leslie Edwards has contributed already by trying to get people to talk on camera about their lives, their careers and some of their roles, which I think will help younger dancers enormously.

Wright: I also wish that there was more real understanding of notation, and that dancers and choreographers were able to use notation as a musician is expected to use music notation. Notation is often acquired second-hand - learning from a notator who may not necessarily be the best demonstrator of the steps they are reading from the score. If you can understand notation, you can analyse movement and study it for yourself. You can also refer to the old scores - we've got nearly every ballet notated. This is not only important for a dancer, it is also very important for teachers who, I think, should use it much more.

Richard Glasstone: I agree with you about notation, and I think it has to go hand in hand with the human being. One of the most wonderful things in this conference has been the demonstrations we've just seen, because they were so detailed and so lovingly done. I'm sure it's those people in the future, as répétiteurs and teachers, who will hand it on.

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