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**Chapter 16: Application of Laban to Musical Line**

*James Jordan*

1. Laban believed “…the act of moving was a link between the physical and mental experiences of life.” Do you agree with this? Draw on citations from the reading to explain what Laban might mean by this and why you agree or disagree.

Drawing from my participation in choirs, I do agree that there is a link between movement and sound. Laban believed that children’s play is based on movement. On page 178 Jordan states, “As children each of us experienced the entire world of movement. In our play we ran, we jumped, we swung. We leaped and rolled and tumbled, skipped and hopped. Jordon also points out “As singers, our movements relay our innermost rhythm, musical line, and textural colors. Laban believed that because children experienced the world through movement that movement was natural or innate. People subconsciously draw from movement experiences to read body language, or in a singer’s case, mirror a conductor’s movement to create articulation, expressiveness, and phrasing. In my own experience as a preschool teacher and especially as an infant/toddler teacher I watch children learn large and fine motor skills. Infants and toddlers learn to grab, pick up toys, move markers, cut with scissors, stand up, walk, run, jump, and climb within two years. Preschool teachers focus their lessons on movement and social skills. Therefore, I do agree that movement is innate and that people to subconsciously draw from movement experiences to understand, read body language, and sing.

1. What are the four Laban elements? Describe each one. Be sure to reference their “extremes.”

The four Laban “effort” elements include flow, weight, time, and space. The first element, flow, is described as tension that underlies all other elements. In free flow, a person would move without tension or weightless. In bound flow, a person’s movements would be tense, and in the extreme of bound flow a person would be rigid and unable to move. Weight includes two categories, light and heavy movement. Jordan describes light movement as delicate and heavy movement as forceful. In music weight relates to rhythm. Time relates to tempo and includes sustained time. In music sustained time might be a slow tempo such as adagio, a fermata (lingering as the authors suggest), or slowing down/ritardando. Jordan describes quick time as a sense of urgency. Finally, the element of space is described as “the manner in which energy is focused in a movement.” Space includes indirect movement which involves less focus on the movement itself. Jordan states that indirect movement is “ a flexible but all-encompassing attention to the environment.” Direct movement is more focused and “channeled.” Jordan believes that direct movement is focused on a central point versus indirect movement which is dispersed throughout the body.

1. Choose one effort from four different categories on pages 184–189. List the movement and describe how it might be useful for accomplishing a specific musical or vocal development goal.

Wring includes indirect space, a heavy weight, and a sustained time. Some movements that incorporate the movement of wringing are twisting a washcloth or a sweater (wringing out the water), drying a sponge, or twisting off the lid of a jar, or squeezing an orange. It is interesting that some of the examples of wring vary in weight. The piece *Homeland* by Stroope is weighty in general, but especially demands weight at the ends of phrases in the 3rd section of the piece when the words “Homeland, homeland, renew your youth, restore your soul,” are sang. Asking students to make wringing motions could be used to accomplish an increase of intensity at the ends of phrases.