

10 Years of Dance Medicine

A Report From Dresden, Germany

by **Richard Gilmore**, Masseur, Stuttgart Ballet and member of the Board of Directors of TaMeD e.V.

The German Dance Medicine Association, TanzMedizin Deutschland TaMeD e.V., celebrated its tenth symposium in May 2008 in Dresden, Germany and met with interest and visitors from various countries including the United States, Holland, Switzerland, Austria, France, Finland, and Portugal.

Contributions to the symposium which were helpful for dance teachers were among the most interesting. This not only refers to the tips about how the ballet class can better accommodate anatomy and physiology, but also how to better use the voice in teaching or how we could use technical assistance to improve upon the mirror as a form of feedback.

The way different lectures complemented each other was excellent. Luis Xares Rodrigues, along with Sophia Serra Carvalhiero, leapt over linguistic hurdles to approach a question on the memory. Their dance oriented presentation, showing that experience makes it easier to remember steps, was followed by a highly scientific yet easily understandable discourse. In this, Dr. Claudia A. Krusche explained the basis of memory within the nervous system on the molecular level. Repetition and emotional involvement seem to be the key to this subject. These two lectures were exemplary in demonstrating how dance and medical science are growing together.

The lectures by Peter Lewton-Brain and Thom Hecht also sat well together. To learn that the turn-out is highly dependant upon the dancer's self-confidence and thereafter to hear about the broad spectrum of emotions in the ballet studio showed two sides of the same coin. Thus both teachers and students could learn more about their emotions and how to deal with them, so that aspects of dancers' technique can improve.

Changeable emotions were also evident within the symposium. Certain subjects were sometimes perceived as attacks on ballet teachers. We hope that everyone understood that such an attack was not intended by the association. Afterwards, those who participated in the workshop given by Javier Torres and Liane Simmel could witness these two specialists adjusting the class to retain the form yet improve the physiological sense of it all. This was no accusation of the instructors, but a support for them.

Support for the dancers could be found in the way Margot Rijven's Healthy Dancer Diary can be used for monitoring one's personal health. Dr. Boni Rietveld's methodical plan

The board of directors of TaMeD e.V., from the left, Gerd Mittag, JOM Dance director, Richard Gilmore, Masseur of the Stuttgart Ballet, and Dr. Liane Simmel, Dance Medicine specialist.



for guiding an injured dancer back to the class was also an important contribution. Other options of Yoga, Pilates, Feldenkrais, or the work of Eric Franklin also offered ideas for finding a balance to the strain of dancing.

Aside from the normal business of the Symposium, we also had a tenth birthday of the association and a new arrival to celebrate. Dr. Simmel showed pictures of the development of the German Dance Medicine Association. Her speech about the past 10 years provided the occasion to announce the formation of a Kuratorium, a group of renowned supporters of our work. The newest arrival was in book form. The former board member, Dr. Elisabeth Exner-Grave presented her German compilation, *Dance Medicine, the medical care of professional dancers*. It presents a spectrum of possibilities for doctors and dancers of all genres. Since many symposium visitors rushed to purchase copies, they soon were sold out. These events and the contact with many other dance medicine enthusiasts contributed to making the weekend in the Palucca School well worthwhile. ■

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