Labanotation has now become rather widely accepted as the most flexible and logical system for recording human movement. This system was invented by Rudolf Laban and copyrighted in 1928 and 1954. (Supplementary symbols copyrighted by the Dance Notation Bureau, New York, in 1954.) Labanotation is now being taught at the following centers and institutions: Laban Art of Movement Guild, Surrey, England; Folkwangschule, Essen, Germany (Albrecht Kunst); Dance Notation Bureau, New York City; Philadelphia Dance Academy, Philadelphia, Pa.; and Institut für Volksbildung, Budapest, Hungary (Maria Szentpal). Gertrude P. Kurath, Ann Arbor, Michigan, uses Labanotation to record some of her observations of the American Indian Dance.

Labanotation is complete enough to encompass and to overcome the differences in style and terminology in specific areas of dance and is adaptable to the needs of field research. It is more than a dance notation. It is a movement notation. All motion possible to the human body can be notated. The collector's facility in using this recording method is of course in fairly direct ratio to his ability to observe and to analyze movement. However, since there is such a wealth of dance waiting to be recorded, even an elementary knowledge of this notation system can be of value. It is a case of part of the loaf being better than none.

Labanotation is not complicated. It can be learned in a few hours of diligent study. It can, if desired, be learned by correspondence. Instruction books on Labanotation can be secured through the Music Publishers Holding Corporation, 488 Madison Avenue, New York 22, New York.

However, the complexity of the human body and the incredible number of movement variations it is able to perform present the real problem, i.e., mastery of movement analysis. East Indian dance, for example, with its infinite variety of subtle glances and gestures, requires more time for observation than many folk dance forms. The latter can be notated rather quickly, particularly when stylistic details are omitted in favor of a general description of the main movements.

As a prerequisite to the actual use of Labanotation it is recommended that the notator develop the following minimum competencies:

1. Ability to recognize
   a. rhythmic structure (tempo, meter, beats)
   b. left and right sides of the main body segments and their fundamental movements (flexing, extending, rotating, inclining)
   c. basic group patterns (circle, line, file)
   d. direction of circling and turning (clockwise and counter-clockwise)

2. Understanding of the following terms
   a. INPLACE...at, directly over and directly below the point of support for the entire body or any limb. In normal standing position when the torso is upright and the feet are close together the center of gravity for the body is directly over the feet (point of support). We say, then, that we are standing IN PLACE.
   b. SUPPORTS...any part of the body which supports the weight. The feet are supports in walking or standing; the hips are supports when sitting; etc.
   c. GESTURES...any movement of the arms or legs other than those which support body weight. (This is a limited definition of GESTURE.)

The Labanotation staff consists of three vertical parallel lines. The center line represents the center of the body dividing its left and right parts (sagittal plane). Beats are marked off by placing equidistant ticks along the center line of the staff. Measures are indicated by drawing horizontal bar lines across the entire staff. Meter indications are as in music.

A pictorial sign derived from a single root—a rectangular shaped symbol representing the location IN
PLACE—indicates each main directional point. The shape of the symbol indicates the direction of the movement.

![Directional symbols diagram]

The relative length of the symbols indicates duration of movement. The shading of the symbols indicates level of support or gesture. Placement of the symbol on the staff indicates the part of the body which moves.

Left and right on the staff correspond to the reader's left and right. Labanotation is read from the bottom of the staff up. Steps on the left foot are written on the left side of the center line. Steps on the right foot are written on the right side of the center line. The dot inside the direction symbol for the step indicates that the knees are normally straight (middle level).

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The large volume of dance scores already available for study in the United States and Europe is hopeful testimony to the functionalism of this system. However, it would be wise to remember that dance is a complex of rhythmic, spatial, and dynamic elements; textural and stylistic nuances; great harmonic range of movement design; and countless arrangements of solo and group choreography. To notate quickly requires practice. A recent project (Chulkovsky, Nadia, American Bandstand Dances in Labanotation, M. Witmark & Sons, New York, 1959), notated on location, proved to the author that with sufficient practice intricate patterns can be notated with great accuracy.

There are a number of schools in which dance is already being taught as a recorded art. Notated scores, graded to meet all working levels, are used to train students in the techniques of movement analysis and notation concurrently with the development of movement skills. Such integrated study holds great promise for future dance researchers. For the present a combination of films and scores in Labanotation probably serves as the most practical archival record.