

## Rudolph Laban

### European Dance Theorist

**Rudolf Laban** (1879-1958) was born in Austria-Hungary (now in Slovakia) and died in Surrey, England. He was a dance theorist and teacher whose studies of human motion provided the intellectual foundations for the development of Central European modern dance.

Originally interested in painting and architecture, Laban began to study dance in Paris. After choreographing ballets and directing several art festivals, he established his Choreographic Institute in Zürich in 1915 and later founded branches in Italy, France, and Central Europe. In 1928 he published *Kinetographie Laban*, a practical method for recording all forms of human motion, now commonly known as Labanotation. In 1930 he became director of the Allied State Theatres of Berlin, where he choreographed many works for large “movement choirs.”

During World War II, Laban made a number of studies of industrial efficiency, devised a series of corrective exercises for factory employees, and published *Effort* (1947). In 1953 he moved to Addlestone, Surrey, where he continued his teaching and research; with Lisa Ullmann, he also conducted the Art of Movement Studio.

#### The Eight Efforts and Their Four Components

Laban’s EIGHT EFFORTS are Punch, Dab, Press, Glide, Slash, Flick, Wring, and Float. Each effort utilizes a combination of FOUR COMPONENTS, having two possible elements: Space (direct or indirect), Time (quick or sustained), Weight (heavy or light), and Flow (bound or free).

	SPACE	TIME	WEIGHT	FLOW
<b>PUNCH</b>	Direct	Quick	Heavy	Bound
<b>DAB</b>	Direct	Quick	Light	Bound
<b>PRESS</b>	Direct	Sustained	Heavy	Bound
<b>GLIDE</b>	Direct	Sustained	Light	Free
<b>SLASH</b>	Indirect	Quick	Heavy	Free
<b>FLICK</b>	Indirect	Quick	Light	Free
<b>WRING</b>	Indirect	Sustained	Heavy	Bound
<b>FLOAT</b>	Indirect	Sustained	Light	Free

Examples from WVC repertoire:

- **Punch** – *1941* pages 6-7, mm. 30-43
- **Slash** – *My People Are Rising* pages 9-11, mm. 42-58
- **Dab** – *Faith is the Bird* pages 1-2, mm. 1-14
- **Flick** – *Now Let Me Fly* pages 5-6, mm. 25-36 (also punch where accented)
- **Press** – *I Sing That My Voice May Be Heard* page 3, mm. 10-12
- **Wring** – *The Peace of Wild Things* pages 3-4, mm. 19-25
- **Glide** – *The Tree of Peace* pages 2-3, mm. 12-18
- **Float** – *Swing Low: A Spiritual Medley* pages 5-6, mm. 16-24

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Rudolf-Laban>