

## IN MEMORIAM

### *Ingrid Brainard*

Strikingly attuned to scholarship that depends upon historical details, Ingrid Brainard was always very much in the present moment. She was keenly aware of her body and the space around it—she loved the sun, her garden, and feeling her bare feet upon the earth. I saw her gleeful, mischievous smile grow upon hearing the first few bars of raucous medieval music in rehearsal. In pure enjoyment she began to move her shoulders, hips, and knees with the looseness of an African dancer, completely contrary to the pulled-up, noble Renaissance postures she taught so well. Ingrid relished watching others in their moments, too: from Margaret Daniels' lightness and ease practicing *pas de passacaille* on the sandy Massachusetts beach near Castle Hill, to Madeleine Nichols' industrious, focused handspinning during a Society for Dance History Scholars conference members' luncheon in Albuquerque. As I remember the encounters I shared with her, I realize only now that I've lost the opportunity to learn more about Ingrid's own past—her years growing up in Germany, her choice of musicology as a field, how she came to study dance, mime, and gesture, and how it must have felt to be so close on the heels of the monumental German musicologists of the early twentieth century. I am left with only a few brief comments she made during our conversations spanning over twenty years.

Ingrid was astonished and excited in 1961 to have come upon the Giorgio manuscript of Guglielmo Ebreo's treatise through a New York Public Library exhibit. The manuscript, soon to be housed at The New York Public Library's Dance Division, was on display for the International Musicological Society meetings and Ingrid hoped to produce an edition of it following the completion of her work on Domenico. She offered an early workshop at the Dance Notation Bureau in 1969, some twelve years before I was to arrive there as librarian. She gave numerous workshops, papers, and panel presentations, and regularly attended and contributed to the International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo.

Ingrid was concerned that her reconstructions became too "fixed" when set down in Labanotation, and that those texts would not reflect the latest changes she incorporated based on her continuous study and re-studying of the manuscripts themselves. She was further concerned that the integrity of her work would be threatened by careless students, who might cavalierly learn her reconstructions at a two-hour workshop and subsequently perform them without permission and far below her standards.

I remember once telling her, frustrated, that working with early dances was like seeing part of a painting, and she firmly told me that was all right—that there is a place in this world for parts of paintings. Ingrid mused frequently about the stagnation inherent in codified, unchanging approaches to the material, likening some (admittedly pioneering) practitioners "across the pond" to mother hens, settling smothering feathers over young chicks in their nests who had begun to chirp, "Treatise! Treatise!"

She was perhaps most pleased at discoveries in the treatises themselves that opened her eyes and body to the translation of words into movement. One of her favorites was a *continenza* based on a description in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nürnberg [Nuremberg] Ms. 8842 (Hie Innen sindt geschriben die wellschen tenntz, 1517) of treading organ bellows. I was grateful that she clambered up the stairs to the stage to demonstrate it at last year's Society of Dance History Scholars roundtable on the Il Papa manuscript.

Her writings have been an inspiration to me, as has she herself. The next issue of *Dance Research Journal* will offer a preliminary bibliography with additional memories of Ingrid from her extended family of colleagues. If you would like to contribute, please e-mail [ForIngrid@dancehistorystudio.org](mailto:ForIngrid@dancehistorystudio.org), or send regular mail to Patricia W. Rader, 120 Bennett Ave., Apt. 3-B, New York, NY 10033-2318.

*Patricia Rader*  
The New York Public Library

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## *Memories of Ingrid*

Ingrid Brainard had a wonderful way of sniffing out, and spurring to action, those young scholars who might follow her in the path of early dance scholarship. I have many memories of Ingrid—each one etched as a clear picture of friendly greeting, intense exchange, and warm parting.

Ingrid first approached me when I, a very raw young grad student, was invited to speak on my still quite naïve research plan at an early (second?) conference of The Society of Dance History Scholars, at Barnard College. Looking back at what I was talking about then (or thought I was talking about), I wonder that she even bothered with me; but Ingrid made a point of coming up to me after the panel, introducing herself, and encouraging me. That was an enormous boost to me, since Ingrid was already a *grande dame* of the early dance world. Who was I to draw the notice of such an accomplished scholar? That exchange spurred me to seek out Ingrid at a Castle Hill Early Music and Dance Week. That week of study under Ingrid—so full of discovery, so joyous in its unfolding, so rich in information—was fundamental to orienting me in any functional way to the tasks facing a researcher in early dance. Ingrid was not content, however, in prodding and poking me (or others) along professionally. She became an inquiring and ever vigilant friend and personal advisor, remembering whatever I told her about my family, my career thoughts, my home.

From that point onward, I was in touch with Ingrid periodically throughout my career. We crossed paths at many dance conferences, and corresponded on and off, especially when I was living in Europe, writing my dissertation. I always wondered why and how someone of Ingrid's breadth of knowledge and ever expanding scholarship found time for me, but I now know that Ingrid was as stimulated by the young colleagues whom she helped to train as we were by her. Upon my return to the U.S., Ingrid invited me to Kalamazoo several times to give papers at the International Congress on Medieval Studies. It was wonderful to be with Ingrid in a setting where she flourished so freely, and where we could share our passion about early dance in a larger setting of scholars with such a wide range of expertise. In 1991, Ingrid was the Lecturer in Dance at the Aston Magna Academy, held at Rutgers University, focusing on the Foundations of the Italian Baroque. In addition to Ingrid's multilingual lectures at Aston Magna, we had early morning classes in galliards and other Italian Renaissance dances where Ingrid was a big, lively, bustling energy in those sun-drenched summer studios.

Wherever we found ourselves together, Ingrid and I always parted with wishes that we'd find time for a visit to one another's home and family. Alas, that time never arrived. I'm so grateful for the many books and articles of Ingrid's that fill my shelves, for the many encouragements she gave me, for the exposure to such a powerful mind and enthusiastic spirit as hers. Ingrid was one of the great mentors, a monument in and of herself to scholarship, erudition, and the deep joys of dance and dance history.

*Lynn Matluck Brooks*  
Franklin & Marshall College

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The following review by Tobi Tobias, reprinted here with her permission, first appeared as part of her article "Family ties" in *New York Magazine*, Oct. 13, 1986.

A second evening in the "Jews and Judaism in Dance" conference [Sept. 22, 1986, at the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street YM-YWHA in New York City] was devoted to the Renaissance. It opened with a lecture by the historian Barbara Sparti on Guglielmo Ebreo (William the Jew), an Italian dancing master of the fifteenth century whose manual on the theory and practices of his art has made possible contemporary reconstructions of choreography from that period. The dances themselves were demonstrated by a Boston-based sextet, the Cambridge Court Dancers, whose director, Ingrid Brainard, prefaced the showing with a brief explanation. "Such manuscripts [as Ebreo's]," she pointed out, "do not relinquish their contents without a struggle"; she cited the problems of dealing with a foreign language, difficult handwriting, technical vocabulary, and involved and ambiguous notations.

She might also have added that the passage of several centuries and our living in a cultural milieu that is light years apart from the context in which the dances were originally done makes it difficult not only for scholars to retrieve them and dancers to perform them authentically, but also for viewers to see them with the right understanding and sympathy. If, for instance, many of the Ebreo dances look alike to us today, it is probably because we are unfamiliar with subtle distinctions in just the areas in which the choreographer is making them. In the twenty-fifth century all tangos may look alike.

Despite the obstacles, there is a great deal to enjoy in the pieces. Though their vocabulary seems limited, even tame, to eyes conditioned by the virtuoso capabilities of present-day classical ballet, the very simplicity is refreshing. The dancing—at least in the examples chosen for this program—alternates between a little stream of steps executed with gentle buoyancy and brisker, lustier adventures for the feet where they skip or chase one another. The arms remain soft and elegant, now creating an arbor under which a partner circles, now extending with a flexed wrist, so that the palm can touch the partner's palm. (For contained eroticism this last gesture is pretty hard to beat.) Floor patterns are important; one longs for a bird's-eye view of the evanescent scrolled designs the couples trace on the ground. There are lots of formal social courtesies and plenty of leisure for impromptu social byplay. Brainard's dancers take every opportunity to look tenderly or flirtatiously into one another's faces, and if the fleeting intrigues in some of the pas de trois look contrived where they once must have been spontaneous, at least they are acknowledged.

The dances were accompanied and augmented by period music from the excellent Boston Shawm and Sackbut Ensemble, who also explained what they were up to at the beginning with the information that their instruments, wind and brass, were the ancestors of the oboe and trombone. Dancing, Ebreo held, was born from music and is an outward show of its true nature. The cooperation of the music and dance ensembles, their friendly performance style and purity of intent, suggest that the family relationship has held firm.

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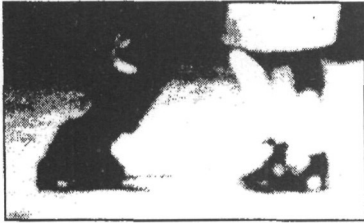
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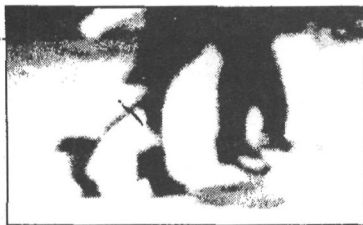
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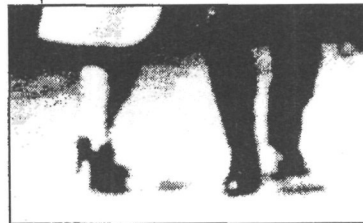
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