

July 2006

Dear LUTSF

Please find enclosed two copies of my report and a copy on CD. I completed my Gyrokinesis Foundation Training in New York City between Friday 30th June and Friday 14th July. I have achieved my foundation training and have now been accepted into the apprentice period. Following this I will review, and finally certify, hopefully in February. Being in New York City was an exceptional learning experience in terms of Gyrokinesis, as highlighted in my report.

The scholarship has enabled me to complete this stage of my training at this time, and this fact will be published through my work with Dance Bristol.

Sincerely

Ashley Russell.

Report for the Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Fund

GYROKINESIS Foundation Training, New York City.

The purpose of my trip to New York City was to complete my GYROKINESIS Foundation training, which I did successfully. Having trained as a GYROTONIC instructor previously, I thought I knew a fair amount about this technique. What was surprising to me was how much deeper this technique goes, really allowing the body a pathway to development and understanding. Many techniques, such as traditional yoga, encourage an opening of the body (the physicality), the mind and the spirituality, but GYROKINESIS seems to leave the body with great strength and vitality.

GYROKINESIS also encompasses many levels of engagement. Depending on what a person is looking for or at which stage they are at, GYROKINESIS seems to offer something to grasp hold of. Clearly it works on a physical level, lengthening and toning the muscles, allowing postural muscles to function more effectively, and creating space at joints. GYROKINESIS also frees the mind, aiding relaxation and concentration. On an energetic level, it encourages flow of energy through the body, especially due to its 'continually moving' nature. Stagnant energy is encouraged to move, and the body feels pumped and primed.

During my stay in New York, I was not only able to gain great benefit from my Master Trainer, Young-ah Kim, but I was also able to take other Master Trainer classes in GYROKINESIS. This was a great opportunity for me, which is not available in the UK, certainly not in Bristol! To experience the differences and similarities of the various teaching styles allowed me to better grasp and separate the technique from the teaching style. This gave me a sense of purity in the technique, and offered me the insight into the benefits of one teaching style over another.

From this varied experience of class situation I was able to get a flavour of the culture for GYROKINESIS in New York City. NYC is almost a 'Mecca' for GYROTONIC/GYROKINESIS with so many Master teachers there, right in Manhattan. With this broad range of teachers, many people come to NYC to train and reap the benefits of having so much information in such a small area.

As in any other discipline, be it yoga, Pilates etc, there is always a culture, a way of being that surrounds it. It was interesting for me to be a part of that, and to see how it functions. Also interesting was seeing how each studio ran their classes, how they dealt with the public, finances, practicalities etc. Even interesting to me was what type of mats they had, and how tall their stools were!

This is of course very relevant to me coming back to Bristol to set up my own classes, as I am the first to teach GYROTONIC, and now GYROKINESIS in Bristol.

From participating in these different class situations I was interested to note the following:

- How a teacher enters a room and greets their students
- How to prep a beginner
- How to pace a class for beginners and more advanced students
- How much demonstration to give in any one class
- How much verbal correction to give
- How much hands on, and how to approach a new student with hands on
- The difference between a more verbal or more silent class
- How to pace the different element in a class
- How to teach dancers and non-dancers
- How to end a class
- How to deal with questions
- How to time manage
- How to set professional boundaries.

Now that I have returned to Bristol I must start teaching. I have to teach 30 class hours, as part of my apprenticeship period. During that time I have to return to NYC to take a review course before I can register to certify with Juliu Horvath, the creator of GYROKINESIS.

I am excited to start teaching here in Bristol. There is a strong yoga and Pilates community here, and I am also eager to share GYROKINESIS with the ever-expanding dance community. With dance in Bristol having a recent boost in the form of Dance Bristol, I am keen to offer GYROKINESIS as a way to nurture and train dancers here. I hope also that GYROKINESIS will help to bridge the gap between dancers and the general public, as both sectors are able to gain from this class.

Overall my experience in NYC this summer has been one of continued exploration and realisation of extended possibilities. I have succeeded in completing my training, and the grant from the Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Fund has gone a long way to helping that aim. I am grateful to the Fund for helping to enable this to happen, and I will highlight this throughout my work with dance in Bristol.

Ashley Russell