

To: LISA ULLMANN TRAVELLING SCHOLARSHIP FUND
Report by Julie Deal

The Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Fund paid the travel costs for my final module of the 5 Rhythms Teacher Training Programme with Gabrielle Roth and the staff of the Moving Center School USA. This enabled me to go to California, complete the training, and begin to teach the 5 Rhythms as a qualified 5 Rhythms teacher.

The training took place over 1 year and consisted of 3 modules, the first module was in New York in April 2004, this was my first time in the USA, and so it was a big adventure! The second module last October, was closer to home in Devon, and the 3rd and final in April 05 in the San Francisco Bay area of California. Each module was 10 days – 2 weeks long, and very intensive.

Although the training began only last year the preparation began some years ago. The pre-requisites were a minimum of 2 years practice of the 5 Rhythms, 400hrs of workshops, 200 of which had to be with a core member of staff, another 50 hours of another kind of workshop again with core staff, and two other workshops of about 10 days each. The application process was tough and even tougher for those who did not get on to the training.

There were 78 of us on the training from all over the world, it was very inspiring to work with so many people with as much commitment to the practice of the 5 Rhythms as I have. Different backgrounds, language and culture and yet a shared goal to train to teach and share the dance practice with others that had such an impact on our lives.

The 5 Rhythms is a breakdown of how waves of energy move through our bodies in dance and in life. As teachers we were taught to share and teach this practice to others drawing from our individual and unique experience of the practice, learning to use our bodies and ourselves as a resource for teaching, whether it's where we get stuck or find it difficult or where we find our fluidity and freedom in the dance. It is not about being a perfect dancer.

We learnt to teach the physical practice, which consists of 5 basic natural rhythms, flowing, staccato, chaos, lyrical and stillness. Although there are ways of teaching this, each person has their own unique expression of each rhythm, both as a dancer and teacher. People often have a home rhythm they find easier and one that is more of a challenge.

We covered many topics related to teaching the practice, from the nitty gritty practicalities to making teaching a spiritual practice. Gabrielle is a challenging teacher, very funny, she totally embodies what she is teaching, and following her flow you never quite know where she will take you next. You never knew from one minute to the next when you would be asked to lead the group in some way – quite scary with 77 experienced peers – she kept us awake!

The training was mainly of an experiential nature and has affected me at a deep level. I feel as though I have been taken apart and put back together again, I know that I am different but I need time to embody and articulate this. I feel different when I teach, connected to a supportive body of work and network of fellow teachers. I also feel more inspired by what I am doing than ever before.

Now that I am a teacher I have deepened my own practice of the 5 Rhythms and dance almost every day if I can. I figure that if I am teaching others it is important to stay in contact with my own learning edge. It is clear to me that this is an ongoing study that can never be wholly mastered. I intend to continue to dance with other teachers when I can and am assisting experienced teachers when I get the opportunity.

I am now teaching a class once per week, all is going well and I am getting good feedback. In the autumn I have two daylong workshops and 12 classes planned to run through the local Adult Education Programme. I am also organising a dance weekend for women.

When I have some more experience, and have established myself as a teacher in my local area, I plan to offer workshops and classes to specialised community groups. I have past experience of working with teenage mothers and I would like to develop ways of working with them with 5 Rhythms dance. I am also interested in working with young women in general. I have also been asked to work with children and am considering this.

In the last few years I have also assisted my husband (he is also a 5 Rhythms teacher) working abroad. We have worked in Greece, Germany and Israel. I intend to continue getting experience working abroad and have been asked to do some work in the Czech Republic and India. I feel very excited about the prospect of running workshops abroad and have only recently been able to consider this, now that my children are old enough.

I think that travelling to the USA to complete the training has given me more confidence to travel and broaden my horizons. The area where I live in Cornwall is very poor, there is a lot of need for community work here, but it is difficult to make a living. I am committed to working in my local area and developing work that is of benefit to my local community, and in addition to this I can see myself working abroad.

The training has exceeded my expectations, Gabrielle Roth is an extraordinary teacher, the training is of a very high quality and the form an ever growing and changing dance practice that more and more people from all over the world are discovering, and through it enhancing and transforming their lives. I am very grateful for the opportunity to partake in the training, and for the support the Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Fund has given me. I hope you will consider funding others for this in the future.

Many thanks – Julie Deal