



Benesh International Congress '25

**ROYAL ACADEMY
OF DANCE**



Welcome to our Congress daily overview and highlights. Throughout the week, we will explore the versatility of BMN through a range of insightful discussions, hands-on workshops, and interactive presentations. The Congress will highlight the many ways BMN has been applied in research and performance, with dedicated sessions examining its role in documentation, education, and choreography.

Monday 30 June

Overview

Monday's programme at the Benesh International Congress 2025 delves into the rich, multifaceted world of movement notation. The day highlights how Benesh Movement Notation is applied across cultural dance contexts - from folk and Morris traditions to Chinese dance—while also emphasising its value beyond choreology, showcasing its broad relevance through transferable skills in teaching, research, and project management. Alongside this, the day explores other notation systems such as the Beauchamp-Feuillet and Labanotation, inviting reflection on how different conceptual frameworks shape what we see - and record - when bodies move.

Highlighted Session: Beyond Benesh

Dora Frankel's *Beyond Benesh* is an unmissable session for anyone interested in the bigger picture of movement notation. It challenges the idea that Benesh is only for recording choreography, showing how its principles have value across other dance professions. This presentation is a provocation and is a compelling case for the versatility and contemporary relevance of notation.

Highlighted Sessions: Exploring Other Notation Systems - Beauchamp-Feuillet & Labanotation

Together, Sessions 4 and 7 offer a compelling journey into alternative movement notation systems that expand our understanding of how dance is documented and perceived. Barbara Segal's engaging workshop on the Beauchamp-Feuillet system invites participants to step into the intricacies of 18th-century Baroque dance, decoding elegant symbols that chart movement, music, and expression. Later, Melanie Clarke's session

examines Labanotation through the lens of somatic practice and Cunningham Technique, questioning how our conceptual models of the body shape what gets notated. Together, these sessions highlight the rich diversity of movement recording systems and how each reflects distinct cultural, historical, and philosophical perspectives on the dancing body.

Tuesday 1 July

Overview

Tuesday at the Benesh International Congress 2025 explores the far-reaching applications of Benesh Movement Notation across education, ethnography, and interdisciplinary research. The day highlights how BMN fosters visual perception, motor skills, and even cognitive mapping, especially in young learners and research contexts. From Tanzanian dance studies to using BMN as a tool for analysing thought and social phenomena, the sessions collectively emphasise how notation transcends performance documentation. The day also embraces broader investigative approaches - like haptic perception, embodied data analysis, and archival exploration - expanding our understanding of movement through physical, sensory, and intellectual lenses.

Highlighted Session: In Conversation with Christopher Wheeldon

A major highlight of the day - and of the Congress - is the session with Christopher Wheeldon, award-winning choreographer and President of Benesh International. In *Working with a Choreologist as a Choreographer*, Wheeldon offers rare insight into how BMN plays a crucial role in his creative process, collaboration, and the reconstruction of ballets. His reflections on the choreographer–choreologist relationship will resonate deeply with both practitioners and enthusiasts, making this a must-attend for anyone interested in the future of dance notation and its role in world-class productions.

Highlighted Session: Exploring the Archives

A standout feature of the day is the opportunity to delve into the Wolfson Library Archives, with our very own Library and Archives Manager, Rebecca Blackbourn. This session opens up the world of Benesh Movement Notation through rare scores and materials that chart the evolution of dance documentation. More than just a tour, this is a chance to engage with the historical and intellectual legacy of BMN in a tactile,

immersive way. With a Benesh-specific installation available throughout the day, attendees can explore at their own pace and connect past innovations with current practice - a must for researchers, students, and notation enthusiasts alike.

Wednesday 2 July

Overview

Wednesday brings a strong focus on education, collaboration, and the often-unseen creative labour behind choreography. Through a mix of research-led insights, student showcases, and professional reflections, the day examines how Benesh Movement Notation can reveal, support, and enrich choreographic and pedagogical processes. From academic research on hidden labour to the lived experiences of students at the CNSDMP in Paris, the sessions celebrate the diverse voices shaping the present and future of movement notation.

Highlighted Session: Making the Invisible Visible – Choreographic Labour and Notation

Kicking off the day, Aline Braun's session *Mapping the Hidden* sets a powerful tone. Drawing from her PhD research and artistic work exhibited at the Museum der Moderne Salzburg, Braun explores how movement notation - particularly Benesh - can expose the unseen, often undervalued labour that underpins the choreographic process. By shifting focus from performance to process, this session invites participants to consider notation not only as a tool of documentation but also as a means of artistic and political visibility.

Highlighted Session: Paris Perspectives – The CNSDMP Student Voice

Throughout the afternoon, a series of sessions led by CNSDMP students and faculty - including Logan Sandridge, Shaula Cambazzu, Éleanora Demichelis, and Romain Panassié - offer a valuable window into how Benesh is being studied, applied, and taught in Paris. From individual creative projects to institutional overviews of the CNSDMP programme, these sessions showcase the vibrancy of student work and the next generation of choreologists. For educators, prospective students, and curious practitioners, this is an inspiring look at how tradition and innovation intersect in movement notation education.

Thursday 3 July

Overview

Thursday offers a thoughtful and celebratory conclusion to the Congress, balancing theory, pedagogy, performance, and reflection. From the philosophical question of “What is art?” to hands-on score analysis and unique cultural practices from Guadeloupean carnival traditions, the day invites participants to reflect on the diverse dimensions of Benesh Movement Notation. The schedule showcases conversations with seasoned professionals, new teaching strategies, and closes with a captivating live performance and a social dinner - bringing the community together in both thought and festivity.

Highlighted Session: In Conversation with Jane Bourne FIChor

A standout moment of the day is *In Conversation with Jane Bourne*, an opportunity to hear from one of the most respected figures in the field of movement notation. With Diana Curry guiding the discussion, this session promises insight into Jane Bourne’s extraordinary career as a choreologist and her lasting impact on BMN. It’s a rare chance to learn from a pioneer whose work has influenced both repertory preservation and the practice of notation at the highest level.

Highlighted Session: Par le bout des doigts – Performance by Collectif Entre Lignes

The Congress wouldn’t be complete without live performance, and this special presentation by Collectif Entre Lignes delivers just that. *Par le bout des doigts* (At Your Fingertips) brings together a group of dancers and notators who explore the poetic and embodied potential of Benesh Movement Notation through movement. Performed by a talented collective including Johanna Classe, Laurianne Faure, Fabien Monroe, Helena van Riemsdijk, and Angela Vanoni, this piece brings notation to life - off the page and onto the stage.

Highlighted Event: Closing Dinner at Gazette

Thursday evening invites attendees to unwind at the Reception at Gazette, just a short walk from RAD HQ. With drinks, nibbles, and relaxed conversation, this informal gathering offers a welcome pause in the busy congress schedule. It’s the perfect chance to reconnect with colleagues,

share reflections from the week so far, and enjoy the community spirit in a warm, sociable setting.

(Note: £35 attendance fee applies and is paid at booking.)

Friday 4 July

Overview

Friday's programme at the Benesh International Congress 2025 offers a rich blend of cultural exploration, archival discovery, and practical skills development. The day emphasizes the broad application of Benesh Movement Notation - from ethnological perspectives to hands-on workshops - while providing unique opportunities to connect with the notation's history and its global relevance. It's an inspiring close to the Congress, with sessions designed to deepen your understanding of movement as both art and cultural heritage.

Hula Workshop: Embodying History and Spirit through Movement

Join Krysten Resnick for an engaging session that combines performance and participatory learning, delving into the historical, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of Hula. This workshop offers a rare chance to experience movement as a powerful expression of heritage, enriching your appreciation for dance as both art and living tradition.

What's in My Box? – Uncovering Hidden Treasures in the Benesh Archives

Discover the fascinating stories contained in one of Benesh International's archival boxes with Melanie Simpkin and James Groom. This session invites you to be part of the moment of discovery, exploring rare materials - some possibly dating back to 1956 - that reveal the rich history and ongoing legacy of Benesh Movement Notation.