

## Czech Dance Camp 2005

In 2003 the seed was sown for this Czech Camp, now held for the second time. The simple philosophy behind is that a region will grow through training (depth & understanding) and a camp (attract more people).

The Dances have been around for quite some time already. Lida, up to now the only certified Dance teacher in the Czech Republic, is dancing for over ten years and has been supported by her mentor Gita Onnen, her Sufi guide Britta and husband Hauke (as Gita Berlin based) and by the visits to Prague of Saul Baradowski.

Gita and Britta did a lot of training in the past and after Lida invited us for the first time, Gita actually suggested us that we would continue working the Czech republic additional to her work and that of Britta and Hauke. As Lida is the only formally certified Dance teacher, we decided to offer feedback sessions in the morning sessions of the camp. This would both allow for further training and would give the camp a distinct Czech flavour with Czech teachers leading who cannot yet be invited in the staff. This year we continued the same way and we may hope in some years the teaching staff will depend less on us foreigners.



Many felt that the Camp has grown compared to last year. We all felt it as very positive to work with the same team. For 2006 both us (Ariëne and Wali), Barbara and Lida were again asked to be on staff. We all agreed. As Barbara is a voice and sacred dance teacher in her own right with a world-wide reputation, we add here that for this camp she offered voice work in the afternoon and proved a reliable teacher of Dances of Universal Peace in the shared evening sessions. All benefited from the voice work, which we see as a good start towards more musical training in the Czech Republic.

With an excursion halfway the camp (a trip by foot to a local church to chant Taizé and other Christian chants with the priest of the parish listening in) and an evening of Camp fire sing along in which all took lead, we bonded as a group and got a flavour of the Czech countryside. Worth to be repeated in some form!

After the 2004 Camp, the emerging teachers were looking for more possibilities to train and they started the *Dance Labor* (Dance Laboratory), co-mentoring each other. This initiative of Renée bore fruit, growing to some 20 participants per weekend. On our request she gives a short summery at the end of this report.

All in all, the excellent work done by Gita, which is still continued by Britta and by Lida herself, who for many years travelled widely with the Dances in the Czech Republic and has some very promising mentees, seems to receive extra fertilization from the Camp, thus proving the original policy to be right and actually broadening the radius of the Dances.



We were fortunate to again be able to work with Findhorn Barbara Svetina and Czech Lida Chrastan. Barbara used the afternoons mainly for chanting (Taizé and the like), while Lida showed her accomplishment as a Dance teacher by sharing a very well received evening program. As usual, we invited more people in the staff as further training for them and \* to help us out\*. Last year Fateah was happy to join us, this year we invited Mariel Valentini (Argentinian, now French based).

All in all the Camp with some 60 participants was larger then the first year. With 2 participants from Poland, 3 from France, 5 from Germany and some 7 from the Netherlands, it had a distinct

international and European flavour. The number of Czech people made sure the overall feeling of the Camp was Czech.

In the Czech Republic there are still strong sentiments towards Germans (Second World War) and Russians (Communist oppression after the war). Some of the German participants had a Polish or Czech ancestry. For some it was emotional to return to the roots of their parents. For all, both German and Czech, this resulted in understanding, forgiving and healing. So on a very small scale, the Dances and this type of Camps can add to Europe becoming one, just as the Baltic camps have done the Baltics and the Russians.

All mornings were training oriented: feedback sessions and on request, one morning led by us with SAM Dances. In the feedback, we went deeper into the leadership styles, types of Dances and typical issues and background features of the Dances and Dance leading. All participants very much enjoyed these sessions. Apart from supervision, these sessions also allowed us to go deeper into the philosophy and spirituality behind the Dances. Apart from Dana (see her feedback) all leaders who have a regular group led Dances. All felt they benefited from this. At times people were invited to play drum during the Dances. At some point some extra focus on instrumental skills would be welcome.

At the camp we handed over the financial responsibility of the camp to the Czech Camp management. So Renée and her team were responsible for the decisions in our honoraria (Wali & Ariëne, Barbara, Lida) and made the budget, which is actually quite close to the budget we made for Oneness.

### ***Evaluation***

As usual we asked some of the participants for feedback. We attach the results below after the body of this text. On the last evening we had a meeting with the Czech people, explaining the structure of the Network, how the Czech Republic could grow towards a region and asking people to step forward to service. This caused a correspondence with one of the dance teachers (Iva) about the Czech fear for organizations. This fear has grown historically due to the oppression in the country's recent history.

In this respect the Dances and the Network faces the enormous task of providing a new role model for organizational structure and leadership. Murshid SAM wrote about this in Spiritual Brotherhood, but it would take more and more conscious effort for us all individually and as organization to actually walk & talk along these lines and showing a new paradigm by living it out. We won't include the correspondence here, as it is outside the scope of this report. On the request of those who read this, we're open to send you the correspondence on this with two Czech students. Meanwhile we'll brood on making this discussion a more public one within our families.

### ***Lessons learned***

1. The Slavic mind is open to the Dances and as such can be a teacher to many of us Westerners.
2. It's good to be aware that when you enter a country as a Dance teacher (or Sufi guide), some will see you as a role model for leadership, your organization (INDUP, SRI) as a role model for spiritual organization.
3. It pays to study and be aware of the psychological effects of a country's history on its inhabitant's history ('the karma of the country')
4. Fear of organizing and organizations unfortunately makes a lot of sense and is hard to overcome.
5. Feedback session can be fun and entertaining.
6. Serving the legacy of Murshid SAM is rewarding and brings you to places.
7. It fills one with awe every time the magic of the dances works again (Yes, SAM was a pied piper!) and with gratitude that one may serve this cause.

*Heure, September 2005  
Ariëne & Wali vd Zwan*

### ***Feedback from participants***

This year's Camp in Czech Republic was as big event as the last year Camp. I don't think only the number of participants, but the atmosphere and meaning. I'm a dancer, like singing and to be with friends and these three areas are nicely connected in dances. The most important for me is transformation process, that comes immediately. This year as organizer and participant in one person I felt very deep Ya Mohamed, Abdullah... It was very instructive to see how Ariëne and you create atmosphere. And was pleasant for me that music(God) and dance have no border. Thanks and have a good day

Martina Hourová, Plzeň

\*\*\*

The Dances were led by Ariëne a Wali van der Zwan and by Lida Chrastanska from the Czech Republic. We also sang and danced with Barbara Swetina from Findhorn. This was a great experience for me. For the first time I experienced that people meet and sing in harmonies. without training and without problems. They simply sang.

The whole camp had several peak moments for me.

One of them was the evening devoted to honour all religions. We met in specially decorated tent and together we experienced the benefit - contribution of each religion for each of us. This was for me a deep and moving moment, to dance one dance for each religion.

Another peak point was a walk through the valley to the local village church. We could sing christian harmonies in this very special atmosphere.

Then there was an evening with Lida Chrastanska, with christian sources and Big Mother Goddess. You could really feel the presence of God there.

And another evening we were sitting round the fire with guitar and folk and other songs in different languages. Each nation brought some. When the rain came we went on inside the Mlyn (= Mill).

During the whole camp I had the feeling of being accepted, being with close people, in safety, like in a family. It was a big gift for me to be there.

I learned and recorded some new dances, I got from Wali the information how to play the cords, I had supervision.

As a Czech I felt very honoured that meeting different nationalities came true in such a beautiful way in Tunechody.

Iva, Brno

\*\*\*

In this dance camp I learned many new dances. Others, that I danced before, I now know so well now, that I can start to teach them.

Further the contact with Wali and Ariëne, my mentors, was very helpful for me. We spoke about my next steps (e.g. working on repertoire from the handbook, play drum with some dance-music) and some problems I encountered (e.g. what to do with my feelings towards Islam connected with terrorism, which are so different from my feelings to Islamic dances, which have a special place in my heart).

And it was a new and great experience this year to be one of the musicians: I drummed with some of the dances. This I sure want to do more. It needs to be trained a lot, but I loved it. I was also one of the organizers of the camp this year, and in this field I learned a lot as well: how to keep overview, how to motivate and encourage others, how to understand people better, how to go on and on. And it was a very satisfying experience to have such a wonderful camp, after all that had been done.

Renée Grønning, Tunechody Mlyn