# The Golden Oldies

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Further articles about Healing Dance® are available for free download at Alexander's web site, www.healingdance.org and his original web site, http://aquaticwritings.tripod.com. Several YouTube videos of Healing Dance can be most easily searched under “Georgeakopoulos”. Alexander may be contacted directly at healingdance@hotmail.com.
Introduction

It is said that in the making of a movie, there will be blood on the editing room floor, meaning that good scenes have to be cut. And so it was with the Healing Dance trainings over the years. A lot of moves got cut from the sequences, not because they didn't have merit, but because the courses needed to be streamlined. The Golden Oldies are a potpourri of techniques resurrected from the editing room floor that can have a place in your sessions. Many of the moves have three-dimensional shapes, traveling not only on the horizontal plane but up and down, as well. This use of the depth of the pool reflects the early influence of WaterDance. One of the moves was designed for the ultra-buoyant receiver, while others require a fair degree of flexibility. And out of nostalgia we have included some fun stuff that isn't strictly professional, yes those crazy moves that were of dubious therapeutic value but carry the original flavor of Healing Dance before it was tamed.
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**Chagall**  This is one of the original “warm pool” moves out of the early 90's, but instead of the romantic (and somewhat invasive) double embrace, we are refurbishing it, reversing the arms so that it is easier to reach to the hara and the overall effect is that of a hara-heart energy hold.

- Begin in Under Head Position with the head on either shoulder. Interlace your arms under partner's arms, your head hand resting on the sternum and your other hand palming the hara.
- Weave backwards with Geisha Steps in a figure eight. Bank around the loops of the eight low in the water, alternately with your cheek or partner's cheek in the water. Imagine that you circle around your lower shoulder in each turn. Practice moving by example by rounding your back and keeping partner's back also rounded in flexion the entire time, guiding from the hara. In the moment of transition between loops, take care to traction the hara down and away. This will create a stretch in the neck if the head is well anchored on your shoulder, preventing hyperextension as the head rolls to the other side.
- Think of the figure as a dreamy energy hold, nurturing and leisurely.

**Interlaced Head 8**  This is another “Left Behind” move that we are rescuing and redesigning. It's actually quite a good head traction.

- As you walk the Geisha 8 doing Chagall, transition into the Interlaced Head 8 in this way: during the loop in which the receiver's cheek is in the water, shift your hara hand to palm her exposed cheekbone, reaching a bit farther through first with your arm so as not to pin her arm as yours bends. Begin the next loop with the weight of partner's head supported in your palm, the zygomatic bone fitting nicely into the hollow of your hand. As her body starts flowing around the curve, reach through with your head arm under hers and palm the other cheek. You are holding the head in both hands now, your thumbs supporting the occiput but not flapping the ears.
- Continue the Geisha 8 pattern of footwork, except now, each time you cross between loops, stand up a bit and lift the head slightly with a C-curve forward and up. You will be able to give the neck a pleasing stretch with the head still near to the water's surface.
- After you have repeated the Interlaced Head 8 a few times, stop traveling and sink into a Deep Horse Stance. Lay the head back onto either shoulder in preparation for the next figure.
Ribcage 8  This Golden Oldie uses the three-dimensionality of the water, going deep and shallow in synchrony with the receiver's breath. With her eyes closed, the receiver can easily imagine she is fully underwater.

- Reach under the arms to hold the sides of the ribcage. Create an eight on the vertical plane out in front of you, partner's back remaining rounded, leading the movement. Establish the move in Horse Stance with a 45º swing to either side out over your knee. Time it so that the upswing of each loop happens on the receiver's inbreath, the downswing on the outbreath. Let the Eight be full and deep, breaching partner’s hip on the upswing and descending to the level of your knee on its downswing. Keep partner’s upper body submerged, only one shoulder at a time coming out of the water.

- Arriving at the surface on the side. Lower partner all the way, still at the side. Ascend on the diagonal sweep across in front of you to the other side. So both the highest and lowest point of the eight are to the side out over your knee. Take care in the moment of rolling from one side to the other that the neck does not hyperextend.

- Develop the figure by swinging partner from Warrior Stance to Warrior Stance, a 180º sweep. Think of the Warrior Stance as both the highest and lowest point of each 8. Start high in Warrior Stance waiting for an inbreath. As partner exhales push straight back on your front foot and lower partner. As partner inhales pivot on the back foot to the other Warrior and ascend partner on the diagonal in front of you.

- Be sure to time it to the breath, as you will need both partner's sinking and buoyancy to make the figure work. Trying to lower partner when she is still breathing in will prove difficult and motivate you to follow her breath rhythm impeccably.

- After the last time you sweep the body up on the diagonal, switch to walking directly backwards to begin the Rib Wave.

Rib Wave  This wave appeared in Healing Dance II before it fell through the safety net. Like every other move up until now in this smorgasbord, it utilizes the water's depth to create a fuller shape.

- Finding the breath, begin walking backwards with Geisha Steps, guiding partner’s trunk down on the outbreath and letting it surface on the inbreath. The water resistance generated on the underside of the body by walking backwards assists it in ascending in each wave. If this isn’t enough, you can use your forearms on the sides of the ribcage without shifting your grip.
• Coming to a wall, as often happens, round the body on its side and Geisha around hydrodynamically to change directions.

**T3** This move never fell from favor. We are simply needing a transition to First Position right now and T3 does the job.

• Stop traveling and take a Deep Warrior Stance with your head foot behind you in preparation for a pivot. The head is still on your shoulder. Sink your shoulder deeper into the water, so that as you ease partner sideways with your foot hand on her side, the head can float out into the elbow crook of your head arm.

• With your same hand on the side, tilt partner 45° toward you and start pivoting Warrior to Warrior, tractioning the head with the Hand Mirror.

• As you reach the other Warrior, take over “angle control” with your head hand on the far shoulder. This keeps the body at 45° and frees your foot hand.

• Having completed the Warrior to Warrior pivot, walk backwards in a small Geisha Circle, letting there be space between the two bodies. With your now free foot hand, grasp the near arm just below the elbow and tuck it around behind your back. Let it be a “full service” tuck, not leaving any of the movement for the receiver to complete.

• With the arm behind your back, you have reached First Position and may stop circling and come under the pelvis with the back of the forearm of your foot arm.

**Near Leg 8** Here we are again, utilizing the water's three-dimensionality, this time transforming a Watsu Near Leg Rotation into something quite different. The image that comes to mind is a droopy Salvador Dali clock on a sweltering Catalan afternoon.

• This Figure Eight consists of two dips and two floats to the surface. The mnemonic to help you remember is "Horse dip, Warrior float." Begin in First Position with the back of your wrist under the near knee. Do a normal Near Leg Rotation on the surface once for the sake of contrast, turning 180° from a Foot Warrior headward, then 180° footward back to Foot Warrior.

• Now begins the Near Leg Eight. On partner’s exhale, rotate in the direction of the head into Horse Stance and guide partner's knee down toward the pool bottom at a 45° angle. It may be necessary to lean on partner to bring her low in the water. The head stays at the surface; it's the hips that go deeper. Without holding the shoulder, hook the occipital bone in the elbow of your head arm and traction the mouth out of the
water. The neck and head are nearly vertical. Mouth dipping tends to activate hyper-vigilance. This is the “Horse Dip”.

- Keep turning to arrive in Warrior Stance and allow partner’s inhale to float her to the surface. This is the “Warrior Float”.
- For the second dip, lean sideways and guide the knee again toward the bottom as you rotate footwards into Horse Stance. Your foot arm will remain straight. With your head hand hold partner's shoulder and continue to support the occiput rather than the neck. Keep the cheek wet, avoiding over-supporting the head. This is the second “Horse Dip”.
- Finally allow partner to float up in the initial Foot Warrior.
- This marked ascending and descending from her own breath can be a source of pleasure for the receiver. Tune into the changing sense of weight and buoyancy as you guide the near leg.

**Swing & Dip** We stopped teaching this move a few years back, but here it is again with a new name and as appealing as ever. (I never stopped using it in sessions; it makes a perfect transition into the Wall Finish.) Think of it as a three-dimensional fantasy based on Watsu's Rotating Accordion.

- Transition out of the Near Leg 8 into Swing & Dip by completing the last rotation footwards. Pivot 180° headward for the Humus Dip, in which you come under both knees, tractioning the head around and sinking your foot shoulder to allow you sweep under both knees in one clean movement.
- Begin the Pendulum with three steps back, starting with your foot foot and hollow the front of your body out so the pelvis has room to dip and swing in toward you. Then take two steps forward starting with your foot foot again, guiding the body so that it dips down and then floats up and away on the outswing. Repeat this cycle of three steps back and two steps forward.
- After the last step forward and outswing, turn in the direction of the feet to the other Warrior. Traction the body open and at the surface, supported on your upper arm and levered with the back of your hand against the calf. The head hand pushes the far shoulder back to keep the chest open as you traction the legs around.
- Turn 180˚ to the other Warrior Stance. As you finish, guide the knees down with the body still open and lower partner to the outside of your foot leg into a sitting posture.
- Continue the movement flow by rolling her away from you and folding her together as you rotate her back in the opposite direction, as in the first half of a Rotating Accordion. Add in a final dip of your knees to begin the next pendulum with a dip.
Think, "Pendulum, Parachute, Sit, Fold, Return and Dip."
Do a final Pendulum away and toward you before repeating the Swing and Dip.

**The Fan into Knee Wave into Total Release**  A sequential release for ultra-floaters.

- Begin in Horse Stance in First Position from a folded up Accordion. Reach through beneath the knees to overgrip the far wrist or higher up on the arm, and press partner against you. Rotate side to side around your own axis.
- Begin turning rotating footwards into Warrior Stance as you lead the movement tractioning the arm. Pulling from above the wrist, slide the head half-weighted out along your arm and smoothly into the water, where it floats unsupported. Reaching Warrior Stance in your rotation, release the wrist next. After each release be mindful to keep tractioning the body footwards to maintain the flow and rhythm.
- After releasing the wrist, switch to Back Crab Steps to travel footwards creating a lateral wave from under the knees, the **Knee Wave**. Remember to plan ahead before starting so that you have room in the pool to travel this wave footwards.
- Next release the far leg, taking care not to break the flow of the turn as the far leg catches the water's resistance. You may need to accelerate slightly.
- Finally release the near leg for the **Total Release** and, if possible, allow partner to float on her own. Intervene quickly if the head or legs show a tendency to sink. With an ultra-floater, you can pull and release a wrist or foot to let her coast by you, renewing the sensation of freedom. Of course, it won't work with a sinking head.
- Come in under the head and sacrum to finish.

**Pegasus**  We use the flying horse to create a smooth transition into the Heart Wave Toward.

- Overgrip the near leg in Horse Stance, but instead of having the near arm behind our back as we normally would for Pegasus, we will have it in front of us, as the final figure in this mini-sequence, the Hara 8, needs it there in order to work.
**Heart Wave Toward**  This was always one of the most technically challenging moves of Healing Dance. With the release from Pegasus as a preparation, getting into it will be easy. This wave activates the heart, touching it. Energy will be released and then channeled out through the feet by the streaming "virtual currents".

- Discover the moment in the movement flow of Pegasus when you bring partner's knee closest to her chest. Tilt partner 45º upward already to be in the correct alignment for the coming Heart Wave. Accomplish this tilt with your hand on the back and by lifting the knee to the surface.
- At precisely this moment release the near leg and transfer your hand directly to her heart or lower ribcage for the Heart Wave Toward. Maintain rhythmic continuity as you seamlessly shift from Pegasus to the Heart Wave Toward. With your head hand between the shoulder blades you have a sandwich grip and good control of the wave.
- Walk backwards around the circle with Godzilla Steps, partner's back oriented to the outside of the circle. Let your hands and arms be free of tension, soft, warm and sensitive, with awareness of the person who lies between them. Create the wave shape from your legs, from the weight transfer. Keep your head elbow lifted so that the angle of your arm, the head and neck are in alignment with the rest of the spine as it descends slightly toward the feet. Keep the body angled at 45º in relation to the surface as you wave it. The body is oriented at a 45º angle to keep the chest open and to prevent the top shoulder from collapsing forward. If a man’s shoulders are well muscled, this may tend to roll the face downward into the water, even.
- Apply fascial countertraction in the heart sandwich to accentuate the shape of the wave. Overall though, keep the wave well-tractioned and long rather than wide.
- As with the Hip Wave, "give elbow", tractioning the head in the rounded phase of the wave and thereby pulling the body through the curve. In contrast to the Hip Wave, the head slides farther out onto your arm to rest in the crook of the elbow and you walk somewhat higher out of the water. The near temple lodges against the biceps muscle of your head arm.
- There is more movement for the spine in this wave than in Hip Wave as the point of articulation lies more superior. This also means there is less support for the legs and they will tend to sink more easily than in the hip waves, so you may need to travel more quickly.
- You may wish to begin gently, gaining partner’s trust, before opening up these waves into their fullness.
**Hara 8**  The way we did this 8 in the past tended to be a little hard on the body, but thanks to gains in technical understanding in the last years, we are able to safely re-introduce this figure into use.

- Out of the last rounding of the Heart Wave Toward, continue rounding with your head hand switching from between the shoulder blades to do the Hand Mirror Traction, while your hand on the lower ribcage in front goes down to the hara. The receiver is still facing toward you as you walk around backwards in a circle with Geisha Steps.
- As you complete this first loop of the 8 and it comes time to cross to the other direction, roll the body away from you from the hara while you traction the head. Make sure it is partner's head that rolls on your arm to the other side, rather than her neck. In other words, keep the traction on the occipital bone rather than on the atlanto-occipital joint. Tractioning the hara away from your head traction will help safeguard the neck. If necessary, your hara hand can switch to the far hip bone to manage the roll away.
- Geisha Walk backwards in this loop now with partner rolled away from you. To transition to the first loop, use your forearm across the near hip bone to lever the body toward you, all the while tractioning the occiput.
- Follow the breath if you can, so that the figure ascends and descends. In this figure you will walk backwards in an 8 with Geisha Steps, keeping partner's back rounded the entire time.

**Carousel**  This circling wave was good for creating the illusion of space in the crowded Harbin warm pool. The name derives from the ride at the county fair with the painted horses going up and down. It resembles the Pegasus Wave, having better head support, but requires the giver to be lower in the water.

- Set up with the head on either shoulder, overgripping the near thigh and using the Shot Put Grip under the head.
- Now for the footwork. Turn continuously in the direction of the feet repeating this cycle: Count 1: a big step backwards into a Warrior Stance with your foot foot as partner ascends from the bottom of the wave. Count 2: a pivot toward that foot as partner rolls over the top of the wave. Count 3: partner descends to the bottom of the wave as the weight transfer completes to the other Warrior. Count &: closing your head foot behind as partner is at the bottom of the wave, while falling backwards into the next identical cycle.
• Emphasize the pull of the knee on count 1 ascending and on count 3 descending; emphasize easing the back over the top with your forearm on count 2.
• Keep the head at the same level in the water the entire time. Avoid lifting it out of the water by thinking of keeping the cheek wet.
• Anticipate the rhythm of partner's body with your legs to eliminate a momentary pause as partner ascends at the beginning of the cycle. You pre-set your leg base to take the upwards float into the next wave. It helps to do the steps “&” and “1” (close behind, big step back) in quick succession, rhythmically linked, as it were.
• After the last arch, turn headwards, shifting to an undergrip to come under both thighs. Fold the body together and pass the head across to your opposite chest, so the back of the head rests on your collar bone. Then distribute the legs, one to each hand.

*The Pendulum* Just as in the Near Leg 8, the receiver has the clear experience of her breath creating her movement.

• Think of this as a position more than a movement, only giving a direction to the movement created by partner’s breath. Still holding the backs of the thighs under the knees, tilt partner slightly past the midline, waiting at “the bottom of the breath”. As partner breathes in she will float up to the side on her own. Lean with her, mirroring her movement. As she exhales, guide her down across the midline to lean slightly to the other side, where you will wait for the next inbreath and upswing to that side. This is moving by example.
• Repeat several times, letting the last upswing be footwards.

*Leg Leg Rock* I'm afraid this was one of the wilder, “what were we thinking of?” moves; too much white water, too much leg opening, too often the head lolling back and forth unsupported. This tamer and penitent version is guaranteed not to frighten or offend.

• Begin after the last swing footwards, pulling the far knee headwards in flexion, bending it toward the chest. Turn in your stance to a Head Warrior. Hold the near leg neutrally, allowing it to stretch slightly back in extension on account of water resistance.
• Turn in the other direction to Foot Warrior, pulling the near leg in flexion footwards, allowing the far leg to stretch back into extension.
• After repeating this headward-footward cycle, try staying in Horse Stance, rotating side to side while doing syncopated circles with the knees in front of the hips.
• After all the action is past, release one leg and come under the pelvis with your free hand, then release the second leg and come under the pelvis with that hand, too. You are ready to perform the transition, T3, to take you back into First Position.

**T3** We used this transition earlier in the sequence to get from Under Head in the Rib Wave into 1st Position. You may have already read the description, but in case you've forgotten, here it is again verbatim.

• Take a Deep Warrior Stance with your head foot behind you in preparation for a pivot. The head is still on your shoulder. Sink your shoulder deeper into the water, so that as you ease partner sideways with your foot hand on her side, the head can float out into the elbow crook of your head arm.
• With your same hand on the side, tilt partner 45° toward you and start pivoting Warrior to Warrior, tractioning the head with the Hand Mirror.
• As you reach the other Warrior, take over “angle control” with your head hand on the far shoulder. This keeps the body at 45° and frees your foot hand.
• Having completed the Warrior to Warrior pivot, walk backwards in a small Geisha Circle, letting there be space between the two bodies. With your now free foot hand, grasp the near arm just below the elbow and tuck it around behind your back. Let it be a “full service” tuck, not leaving any of the movement for the receiver to complete.
• With the arm behind your back, you have reached First Position and may stop circling and come under the pelvis with the back of the forearm of your foot arm.

**Bad Attitude Spin**
Aka “Yogini's Delight”, one of the most exhilarating moves in the Healing Dance to give and receive, but beware, you may be accused of "show-boating" if you use it too often in public! We begin with the easier "Too Bad Attitude"

"**Too Bad Attitude" Spin** For the average, not so flexible receiver. Thank you, Healing Dance Practitioner Yavelow of Harbin Hot Springs, for naming this move.

**Far Leg Rotation**
• Begin doing Far Leg Rotation. Have the leg in the crook of your elbow to make the coming reach to the ankle easier. Try doing an elongated twist on the return rotation toward the feet by pushing the shoulder away as
you pull the far calf toward you with the back of the hand. With your head elbow impart a C curve to the neck and head.

- The last time you rotate toward the feet in the Far Leg Rotation, supinate the palm of your foot hand, reach down to grasp the lower leg from under, then slide around to an overgrip around the ankle. (If you let the leg free fall for a moment, the ankle will drop directly into your hand, rather than trying to sliding out to it and getting stuck.) Next place your head hand between the shoulder blades to facilitate the coming arch to the back. Another way to capture the foot is to just fold the shin across your belly from an overgrip, which places the foot within easy reach.

- Begin turning toward the head with backward Geisha steps in a small circle and bring the leg behind partner's back, grasping the foot and lifting your elbow over partner's far knee and far arm. Slowly bring the foot farther behind partner's back, as far from the buttocks as possible; in other words, with your arm extended. Be careful not to lift the foot out of the water while turning, as that would torque the knee and strain its medial collateral ligament.

- Complete a full turn with the foot behind partner's hips and your other hand between the shoulder blades embracing partner's chest to you. Top off the Geisha circle with a final acceleration by stepping backwards into a Warrior with your foot that is outside in the circle. Pivot rapidly to the other Warrior, creating a white water moment.

**Far Arm Side Change**

- At the end of this surging pivot, release the foot and perform the Far Arm Side Change. That is, using a 'pinky grip' on the wrist (thumb pointing down, little finger on top), traction the arm vertically to unweight the head and glide it into your palm as you transfer your weight forward into a Warrior Stance.

- Take three steps backwards, starting with the foot foot. (Your weight is on the head foot after the pivot to Warrior.) Open up a space between you and partner. In that space pull partner's head across in front of you and pivot into a Matador. If partner's near arm misbehaves and doesn't clear out of the way, do an arm wave or two traveling in the direction of the head and it will drop conveniently down and allow the cross.

- Use the Oar Grip (an open C Hand) supporting the arm from underneath as you lower it into the water. This allows the arm to rotate comfortably as it needs to.
**Matador**
- Re-grip above the wrist once the arm is in the water. Some Matador variations: 1) Press partner's palm against your side rather than holding the wrist. This allows more contact and a stronger, effortless traction of the arm. 2) Grasp the elbow instead of holding the wrist and lean back against partner's side while turning. This provides more contact.
- Thread over the arm and under the neck to get to 1st position. Balance the arch of "Bad Attitude" Spin now with the soothing back stretch provided by the **Power Accordion**.

**"Bad Attitude" Spin**  Here it is, at last! For the yoginis, dancers, acrobats, contortionists and otherwise loose of limb, as well as for many of us humble mortals. The name will be explained in class...
- All is the same from the Far Leg Rotation. Now you want to put partner's head up on your shoulder. As you rotate toward the head, reach under the far leg to take the far wrist; as you rotate toward the feet, traction the arm and thereby slide the head into your head hand. Place the head on your shoulder and stabilize it there by putting your head hand between the shoulder blades.
- Just as in the "Too Bad Attitude" Spin, acquire the foot, bring it behind partner's while walking backwards toward the head with a Geisha circle. Here's the tricky part that requires the flexibility: grasp the foot with your head hand. Quickly traction the far arm vertically, using the lift to re-position partner's head even higher onto your shoulder, which places the back in a more spacious arch. (A scarf tied around the ankle allows you to handily reach the foot of not so flexible receivers.)
- Do a complete turn with the backwards Geisha circle, then pivot from Warrior to Warrior for a surge. Finishing in Warrior Stance, pull the head across in front of you from your grip on the wrist. (This exciting resolution of the turn was originally Minakshi's idea.) It will slide off your shoulder into the water as you lean backwards in Warrior Stance. As it floats off your shoulder across in front of you, release the foot and come under the head with that hand for the Matador. This hand that had the foot goes quickly under the body to the occipital ridge, making the Horns of the Bull with thumb and forefinger. The same forearm supports underneath partner's upper back. Always finish with the Power Accordion.

**Side Saddle**  This position offers the same upright posture of the body and the possibility for massage as does the Open Saddle, but without the risk of crossing the receiver's boundaries.
• The Power Accordion has brought the spine into balance after the extreme extension of the Bad Attitude Spin. Now release the legs and overgrip them, setting up for the Mermaid 8. Start turning headwards in Horse Stance and swinging the pelvis headwards low in the water while folding the knees to the chest; then turn footwards and open the legs toward the surface. If you have the pelvis too high in the swing headwards, the neck will go into hyperextension as the back rounds—to be avoided. Repeat a few times.

• On the last turn headwards, pivot farther around yourself as you lower both legs to the outside of your head leg. Maneuver your head leg under the legs and set partner down on this thigh. Drape partner's far arm over your foot shoulder and hold her head out away from you in the crook of your elbow. You have arrived in the Side Saddle.

• In this position you may use your foot hand to do the following massage techniques: 1) knead the trapezii muscles one by one; 2) apply the push and pull Shiatsu technique on the longissimus muscle bundles on both sides of the back, pushing with the heel of your hand, pulling with your fingers; 3) Pet the Cat, stroking from the crown down the neck and spine to the sacrum; 4) Circle the sacrum, palming it and stretching it away, down and toward. This combines an articulation, a compression and a stretch.

• To exit from the Side Saddle, reach with your foot hand under partner's arm that is draped over your shoulder and take the side of the head. Tilt the weight of the head into your hand and take the other side of the head with your head hand. Traction partner across in front of you, changing sides and placing the head in the water, come into First Position.

Arabesque  We did promise you some funky stuff...

• Arabesque begins as would a Far Leg Parachute, holding the head with John the Baptist and overgripping the far thigh.

• To get into the Arabesque position, traction the head and swing the body headwards as you bend the knee toward the chest. Hold the body out away from you so that you can maneuver around the far foot and bring the back of the far thigh against your abdomen. Lift your foot thigh to bring partner's near leg within reach. Hold the front of the near thigh in your foot hand, using a C Hand with your thumb on top.

• To do the Arabesque, Geisha Walk backwards in a small circle away from the near thigh, which you are stretching out away from you with a straight arm. The head you still hold in your other hand. As you begin your circle and lean back, let the far calf „click“ into place against your back.
The finish has you speeding up at the end of the circle with a Warrior to Warrior pivot. At the end of the pivot, re-position your foot hand to the back of the near thigh, and ease the leg under and across as you transfer the head over and across. This is a side change that utilizes the momentum you have built up in the turn. As the head comes over, your foot hand will finish giving the near thigh its impulse and can take the head. Traction it around, turning around yourself and come into First Position.

**Knee Slides to Neck**  ...and even more funkiness...

- Set up holding the head in your hand and reaching under the near leg all the way to the head. You now hold the head in both hands and the near leg is bent toward the chest. In practice we soon realize this figure is size and flexibility graded.
- Swing partner headwards, then immediately footwards crossing the head, causing the far leg to remain headwards. As you cross the head, do a Judo Trip with your head leg to come inside the far leg. Take the front of the now near thigh with your C Hand, sink down low in the water and witness how the now far knee slides along your upper arm to slam against your neck!
- Turn once around yourself in this position, just as in Arabesque, backing up in a small Geisha Circle away from the current near leg that you hold at arms length. Finish with an accelerating Warrior to Warrior pivot and bring the leg under and head over as in Arabesque.

**The Mobius Strip**  The Mother of All 8's, this one dates from the early 90's and was Alexander's very first one. Though it soon got sorted out of the Healing Dance curriculum, it lingered for years in the Harbin pools.

- The starting position is Free Float, the near arm in front of you, holding the head in the John the Baptist grip while undergripping the near thigh. Have the body open initially.
- In an arcing movement that is the first loop of an eight, fold the body together and pass the head under your foot arm. Back up to help the body roll toward you. Your head hand rotates to the other John the Baptist and your under grip on the near leg transforms into an overgrip on the same leg, but it has become the far leg.
- Back up headwards in a circle for the second loop. To complete the shape of the eight, bring the head back out under your arm and open the body, arriving at your starting position. Repeat.
In summary, your head hand rotates from John to John and your foot hand stays exactly where it starts, an undergrip on the near thigh that becomes an overgrip on the far thigh.
A Short History and Overview of Healing Dance®

In 1990, while a resident at Harbin Hot Springs, Alexander studied Watsu from its founder, Harold Dull. Following the course he began experimenting and improvising in the Harbin warm pool, influenced by his background in dance, by his experience as a practitioner of Trager Work, and by the qualities of water itself. After studying WaterDance in 1993 from Arjana Brunschwiler, a new spaciousness and three-dimensionality appeared in his experimental moves. By then, Alexander had created a side branch of Watsu, something flowing and dancing. Healing Dance, as the technique he innovated is now called, has had to refine itself down from the sheer joy of movement to discover its full therapeutic potential. Since 1999 Inika Sati Spence has collaborated closely with him in defining and growing the work into a distinct modality. Mary Theri Thomas joined the roster of teachers of Healing Dance in 2003, having already made significant contributions to its development. Since 2007, Kathrin George’s perspective as a physical therapist has brought further refinements.

Healing Dance has many aspects, all based on the healing power of movement. The practitioner establishes an empathetic connection with the receiver and is trained to mirror any incipient kinetic impulses. Like an orchestra conductor, he establishes a rhythmic field at the beginning of the session through his breath, movement and state of mind. He looks for the rhythm of awareness in each moment that allows the receiver to feel the psychological reverberations of the movement in her being. Movement is understood as medicine and carefully dosed, intermixed with restful pauses to allow for integration of its effects. The practitioner ‘dances’ the receiver, who has an experience of grace and beauty, sometimes leading to deeper emotional releases. Healing Dance could be understood as silent music, consisting of rhythmic impulses of pressure, touch and movement played upon the body’s proprioceptors. The dance is between the subliminal message within each movement and the receiver’s subconscious mind. That
which has slowed down or ceased to move within the psyche is inspired to awaken into playful participation. Thus, the healing comes from within.

Healing Dance’s wide variety of original techniques reflects how water and the body naturally move together. It sees the human body as hydrodynamic and at home in water. Blocked energies are opened up by more than thirty waves and spirals, as well as various spatial mandalas in the form of circles and figure 8’s that free and re-animate the body. Healing Dance takes advantage of the full three-dimensionality of the water with broad dynamic movements. A variety of advanced body mechanics techniques such as moving by example, creative imbalance and traveling through the pool help to create not only bigger movements, but also subtler and more sensitive ones. Though the essence of Healing Dance is flow, freedom and lightness, there is also much of stillness and nurture in the Healing Dance, an array of positional sanctuaries where one may expand into oneself while being safely held. As their vocabulary of movements expands, students become more confident to relate and mirror, supporting and affirming the unwinding and soul dance of their receivers.

About Alexander

Alexander George came to the holistic arts following a 25-year career as a ballet and modern dancer, teacher and choreographer. In 1980 he began the study of holistic massage at the International School of Professional Bodywork in San Diego, completing the 1000 Hour Massage Therapist Training in 1983 and Associate of Science degree in 2004. Alexander went on to become qualified as a Trager Practitioner in 1986, subsequently studying with Milton Trager himself. In 1990 he became a Watsu Practitioner at Harbin Hot Springs in northern California under the tutelage of Harold Dull, the originator of Watsu. In 1993 he studied WaterDance from one of its co-founders, Arjana Brunschwiler. Alexander developed the techniques of Healing Dance and Flowing Touch Massage. He is a certified instructor of the Worldwide Aquatic Bodywork Association, and for nine years taught at the School of Shiatsu and Massage at Harbin Hot Springs. Alexander has led over 300 week-long 50-hour intensives in Anatomy, Massage, Barefoot Shiatsu, Watsu, Healing Dance and WaterDance. Alexander presently leads trainings in Germany, Holland, Italy and the US, teaching in English, German or Portuguese as required. He has written over seventy-five articles on teaching and aquatic bodywork available for free download at http://aquaticwritings.tripod.com. The official web site for Healing Dance is www.healingdance.org. Alexander presently lives in Germany.
The Healing Dance® Trainings

Healing Dance Introductory Weekend
This 16 hour weekend course is designed for entry level students of aquatic bodywork. The history, principles and applications of Healing Dance are covered on land, as well as terminology, communication, and the anatomy related to support of the head and pelvis. In the water, you will be given a direct experience of Healing Dance through receiving a mini-session. There the fundamentals of aquatic technique are taught, including how to sense the weight and breath of the receiver, knowing where to support, how to traction, how to be grounded in the stances that we stand in and how to bring our partner into flow with weight shifts and traveling steps. A simple practice sequence is learned with a clear beginning and finish that is the perfect preparation for taking Healing Dance I. You will discover how natural it is to share aquatic bodywork and how it can open a new dimension in relating. A written and photo manual are provided and a DVD of the sequence is made available.

Healing Dance I
Healing Dance I constitutes a paradigm shift for the student of aquatic bodywork. It sees the body as at home in the water and hydrodynamic in its form, healing in the flow of movement. It understands the psyche as needing not only nurture and closeness, but space, freedom and acceptance of self-expression, as well. More than anything else, Healing Dance I is the wave. In addition to seven full-body waves the sequence encompasses various circles, figure eights and releases, all balanced by the stillness of positional sanctuaries, and woven together with flowing transitions. The study of body mechanics extends beyond the familiar Horse and Warrior Stances to include different walking patterns that allow traveling across the pool. Healing Dance principles are discussed on land and practiced in the water. These include moving by example, creative imbalance, the rhythmic field and dosing movement. Finally, you are introduced to Relating and Mirroring, the goal of all technical study, the art of sensitively accompanying the movement impulses and unwinding of receivers. A written and photo manual are provided and a DVD of the sequence is made available.
Healing Dance II

Healing Dance II asks the question, “How do we earn trust and gain access to the body at the beginning of a session?” The answer it provides lies in the trance-inducing Back Waves and in our quality of touch. In this training we continue the study of spatial mandalas beyond the waves of Healing Dance I into the spiral, the eight and the spiral eight. Healing Dance II also focuses strongly on bodywork. It offers a toolbox replete with massage techniques and stretches integrated into the flow of movement. The course delivers the fullness of Healing Dance's surface repertoire with an entirely new set of mini-sequences including Seaweed II, The Starfish, Adonis Waves, Arm Waves, and Klimt. Healing Dance II carries further the emphasis on Relating and Mirroring by which students hone the all important art of responding to the kinetic and feeling states of their receivers. A written and photo manual are provided and a DVD of the sequence is made available.

Introduction to Healing Dance Underwater

The Introduction to Healing Dance Underwater (IHDU) is designed as a first underwater course for students who have already taken surface courses, such as Watsu I or Healing Dance I. IHDU is a 3 day course that specifically prepares you to take Shape and Space and Above and Below, the two major underwater trainings of Healing Dance. The transition to submerging receivers rather than merely supporting them on the surface entails learning several skills before one can take a receiver safely underwater. These fundamentals covered in the course include how to a) read the breath precisely; b) signal appropriately; c) offer and remove the noseclip; d) unweight the head on submerging; e) give the head freedom underwater; f) gauge the amount of time spent underwater; g) maintain the absolute space; h) soften the hands in grips; i) use one's weight and breath to create deep movements; j) travel in the pool, and k) pre-support the head on surfacing. Participants learn a surface warm-up followed by a sequence of thirteen submergings arranged in an order that could be used in a session. A written and photo manual are provided and a DVD of the sequence is made available.

Healing Dance Above and Below

This class is designed to bring the principles of Healing Dance into the underwater experience. Maintaining flow above and below the surface is integral; the material explores how to smooth out the moment of submerging and surfacing. When rhythm, movement shape and body position are pre-set at the surface, the receiver experiences a less radical change at the moment of submerging. The coursework begins taking Watsu’s Basic Moves
underwater and extends this idea to the whole session, introducing a variety of takedown moves from the repertoire of the Healing Dance. From the feedback of practitioners working with *Above and Below* we know that it is indeed making going under possible for people previously unable to allow themselves to be submerged. Taking the moves below the surface becomes a fluid dance, bringing the receiver to a place where there is no need of breath and bringing the giver to a joy in movement and presence. This class offers a copious toolbox of moves that are simple, elegant and intriguing to enrich your experience in the underwater. A written and photo manual are provided and a DVD of the sequence is made available.

**Healing Dance Shape and Space**

*Shape and Space* is the fourth Healing Dance level to come into existence after the *Healing Dance I, II* and *Above and Below* trainings. It is made up mostly of material Alexander had developed as early as 1993 and first taught in the US and in Europe as an advanced level of WaterDance. *Shape and Space* consists of a beautiful and exciting repertoire of moves and an exploration of underwater improvisation. It is a collection of dives that embody a language with its own grammar and syntax. The key idea in *Shape and Space* is learning how to create pure, generous movement shapes that convey the receiver across the length and breadth of the pool, speaking their embedded messages to the receiver. The movements of *Shape and Space* are rooted in human developmental movement; in the animal movement of dolphins, seals, and snakes; in elemental movement patterns seen in flowing water, and in archetypal positions that reflect our biological genesis and relation to spirit. In addition, *Shape and Space* explores the art of adapting to and facilitating the interactive receiver. *Shape and Space* is for those practitioners who believe in the healing power of movement and want to learn how to dance with their receivers in the water. A written and photo manual are provided and a DVD of the sequence is made available.

**Healing Dance 100**

*Healing Dance 100* was created by Alexander in 2009. It consists of two 50 hour modules, *Aquatic Basics* and *Healing Dance Essentials*, taught over two weeks and is intended for spa environments and clinics. It leads to certification as a Healing Dance Provider. *Aquatic Basics* addresses the needs of spa clienteles and special populations, enabling Providers to accommodate first-time water clients as well as those ready to receive Healing Dance in its fullness. The „noodle work“ it includes is for receivers who initially require more space and time to accustom themselves to the water, who are not quite ready to be held in the arms of the practitioner. The
Training Sequence educates Providers in the basics of aquatic technique and is suitable for clients ready to be held and moved through simpler figures that require not so much flexibility and surrender. The Healing Dance material introduced in *Aquatic Basics* consists of hydrodynamic waves, flowing transitions, releases and nurturing holds. The second module, *Healing Dance Essentials*, consists entirely of Healing Dance, encompassing in an abbreviated sequence some essential movements from Healing Dance’s two longer surface trainings. These include a few of the favorites of receivers, such as the Matador, Vortex, and Pegasus, as well as further waves, figure eights, releases, holds and moves incorporating massage. The land work for *Healing Dance 100* covers such important topics as body mechanics, quality of touch, presence, breath, ethics and healing dance principles, so that Providers are thoroughly prepared to treat their clients. A written and photo manual are provided and a DVD of the sequence is made available.

**The Golden Oldies**

It is said that in the making of a movie, there will be blood on the editing room floor, meaning that good scenes have to be cut. And so it was with the Healing Dance trainings over the years. A lot of moves got cut from the sequences, not because they didn't have merit, but because the courses needed to be stream-lined. *The Golden Oldies* is a potpourri of techniques resurrected from the editing room floor that can have a place in your sessions. Many of the moves have three-dimensional shapes, traveling not only on the horizontal plane but deep and shallow, as well. This use of the depth of the water reflects the early influence of *WaterDance*. One of the sequences was designed for the ultra-buoyant receiver, while others require a fair degree of flexibility. And out of nostalgia we have included some fun stuff that isn't strictly professional, yes those crazy moves that were of dubious therapeutic value but carry the original flavor of Healing Dance before it was tamed. A written manual is provided.

**Relating & Mirroring**

*Relating & Mirroring* is a three day course focusing on perhaps the most important aspect of aquatic bodywork: that our receivers feel felt, and that as givers we are able to truly feel and mirror them in all dimensions—physical, emotional and spiritual. The recent discovery of mirror neurons in the brain has provided our generation with a scientific basis for empathy. In the training we will delve into this neurophysiological phenomena underlying our social interactions before focusing on how it translates into the water. On land we will experiment with dance mirroring exercises, authentic
movement and exercises to fine-tune presence. In the water we will develop the skills and perceptual framework to follow and support receivers in their movement and stillness. The principles we will explore include using the water, joining, extending, supporting, taking over, keeping up, staying in flow, setting impulses and giving space.

Not only will the course train us to better accompany our receivers, but it will also offer a setting in which we ourselves as receivers may allow our own unwinding and soul dance to unfold. Additionally, we will practice the verbal skills to create the invitation and safe framework for our receivers to flow into their own movement impulses.
Water Class Evaluation

Class, Date and Location:
In filling out this form, we ask you to be as honest as possible. As you rely on us to help and instruct you in learning the art of Aquatic Bodywork, we rely on your feedback to help us learn the art of teaching. It is in this spirit that we ask you to fill out this form.

Course Content: Did this course meet your expectations? In what way?
Please rate (circle one): Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor

What did you find most valuable for your personal and professional growth?

Was the material presented in a clear and interesting manner?

Were the land classes relevant and interesting?

What teaching techniques worked best for you?

Did the schedule meet your needs?

Any suggestions for the location or logistics to better support you in your learning?

Please continue on the back
Were the instructors and assistants knowledgeable, effective and supportive and is there anything you could say to help them teach more effectively?

Principal Instructor
Please rate (circle one):   Excellent      Very Good      Good      Fair      Poor

Assistants:
Please rate each assistant:   Excellent,  Very Good,  Good,  Fair,  or Poor

If we were to do this again, how would you have us do it differently?

Is there anyone you would recommend this course to?

Would you attend other courses at this location?

What courses are you interested in?

Additional comments:

May we list you as a student on the Healing Dance web page?

Name __________________________________________________________

Profession:______________________________________________________