Reflections about Marian Chace: An Interview with Catherine Pasternak and Marion Gibbons
By Ann F. Lohn, M.A., ADTR

Catherine Pasternak and Marion Gibbons had a long and close working relationship with Marian Chace, the woman often considered the founder of dance/movement therapy. Together they provide an in-depth look at Chace’s impact on the development of dance/movement therapy.

Cathy is often credited with carrying on Marian Chace’s legacy. Working longer with Marian Chace than any other dance therapist, Cathy’s skills, ability to work with patients, and her personality earned her the chairmanship of the dance therapy section upon Marian Chace’s retirement. Cathy received her B.A. in psychology from Ohio Wesleyan University and began her full-time dance therapy work at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital in 1963 under Marian Chace. When Cathy left the hospital in 1968, she had served as chief of the dance therapy section for two years. A charter member of the American Dance Therapy Association, Cathy served as the Association’s first secretary. Most recently, Cathy founded and has been directing three liturgical dance companies; she also conducts workshops in the use of the arts in church and choreographs high school and community theatre musicals.

Marion Gibbons first became interested in music therapy during his service in World War II. He entered the Baldwin-Wallace Conservatory and graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in music. In 1955, he began work in music at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital with the Chaplain’s branch on a part-time basis. The following year he was hired full time by the recreation branch of the hospital and served there until 1960 when he transferred to the dance therapy section. He left St. Elizabeth’s in 1970. Currently, he is the director of music at the First Church of Munson in Massachusetts.

Ann Lohn received her B.S. in psychology from Purdue University and a M.A. degree in dance education from George Washington University. She was interviewed and hired by Marian Chace in 1966. Since Marian’s retirement coincided with Ann’s employment, her supervision and training were conducted by Cathy Pasternak. Ann worked at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital full time from 1966 to 1979, serving as chief of the dance therapy section from 1969 to 1979. After leaving St. Elizabeth’s Hospital, Ann joined the faculty of the dance/movement therapy graduate program at Goucher College.

Requests for reprints: Ann Lohn, P.O. Box 189, Prior Lake, MN 55372.
She has also worked at Gundry Hospital and Springfield Hospital. Ann was secretary of the American Dance Therapy Association from 1968 to 1970, treasurer from 1970 to 1972, and member of the registry committee from 1972 to 1977. Currently Ann and her husband own and operate a fishing resort in Ontario.

AL: Cathy, how did you happen to train with Marian at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital in Washington, D.C.?

CP: I had attended Ohio Wesleyan University and majored in psychology, not dance. They did not have a dance therapy program. They did, however, have a very active extra-curricular creative dance program and that was the direction I took. All my time, other than that set aside for academic subjects, was devoted to dance. As I was studying psychology, I became aware that mental illness has a great deal to do with a lack of ability to communicate with emotional expression. And, at the same time, as I studied dance I discovered that it is a basic form of expression, of communication. I kept thinking that these two things should go together, but I did not know dance therapy existed. It was not until I was a senior, in 1962, that I wrote to Karl Menninger and asked about putting these things together. He directed me to Marian Chace. When I wrote to Marian, she sent me all her information, articles, bibliographies. She said there was a possibility of a position in the dance therapy section at St. Elizabeth’s for the summer after I graduated in 1963, so I went to Washington, D.C. for an interview with her and was hired as a temporary summer employee. I had intended to go to George Washington University for a master’s degree in psychology that fall, but by the time fall came around there was a dance therapy position open at St. Elizabeth’s. I began in September. I did not go on to graduate school because the programs were not suitable to the direction my training was taking; I decided I would learn more from Marian.

AL: Gibby, what about you? What led you to St. Elizabeth’s in the first place?

MG: I first became interested in music therapy during World War II. I had already been in conservatory and after the war I continued my music study. My interest in music therapy kept coming up. In my sophomore year in college, I wrote to Michigan State or the University of Michigan because they had a course in music therapy and I wanted to transfer. They wrote back saying, yes, they had a course but unfortunately there were no jobs in the field. I decided not to pursue it because I needed some means of support.