

On Saturday afternoon we set out on a Grand Tour of early dance. Here Harriet Cox shares her thoughts.

What a feast! Almost overwhelming in its selection of performances from long ago right up to the recent past makes reviewing this a very demanding task! However, I will try, and what I can say most readily is that the festival overall demonstrated a great deal of talent and dedicated research from way before the millennium.

A more emotional response came from seeing people and places from years past bringing back many memories: of friends now gone, younger faces – all of us! – and venues we travelled to, danced in and where we revelled in each other's performances. Thanks must go to the EDC committee who put all this together: an admirable feat of organization! Their determination not to be defeated by a pandemic is to be commended. There were very few (& minor) technical hitches, but it will be wonderful to get back to a real festival next year – we hope!

Our host Bill Tuck described the Online 2021 event as a 'souvenir of past times', and so it was. **The Contretemps Academy** took us back to Denman College in 2014, with its oddly shaped room that provided a challenge to us all! Their entertainment, 'Gods and Mortals,' allowed newer students as well as experienced dancers to shine. From the 2016 Festival, I recognized our own Norwich hall and MC as the setting for **Dance Past** to show off some very complex

steps in *Il Canario*, as well as other interesting Renaissance dances.



A very fascinating performance came from Japan, offering food for thought; should we be more open to working with other styles and types of dance and music? It struck me how a traditional tale about Anju and Zushio combined so well with European early music. The traditional Japanese instruments created a mesmerizing

soundscape for dances adapted from 15th century European dance by **Nobuko Yuasa**.

Renaissance Footnotes brought us back to Europe. I enjoyed *Bianco Fiore* in particular, danced with flirty fun which gave it a life and meaning the footwork alone could not.

I hadn't heard of **Chestnut**, a Paris-based group. They sent an interesting video illustrating how they use many Playford and English country dances in their shows. It was wonderful to see such enthusiasm from across the Channel and reflects, I sincerely hope, a reciprocal feeling from us for European dance – perhaps we should be more vocal about our connectedness.

We then went even further afield, most happily to the Caribbean. At last we could jump out of our chairs and DANCE! And with what a wiggle and a shake! Were we more uninhibited because we were in the privacy of our own homes, I wonder? Caroline Muraldo was a wonderful tutor, taking us through a drummed warm-up and basic sequence of steps in Bélé style. She told