

DANCE PRESERVATION ARCHIVES:
RELATIONSHIPS, ACCESS, AND
TECHNOLOGY

BY KATHRYN A. DUSELL

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**DANCE PRESERVATION ARCHIVES: RELATIONSHIPS, ACCESS, AND
TECHNOLOGY**

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Kathryn A. Dusell

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DEDICATIONS

To my husband, Cecil, who has supported me throughout this process.

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ABSTRACT

Organizations that archive dance documentation assert that the use of archival materials can benefit many aspects of the creative process as well as the education of future dancers and choreographers. This thesis explores the relationship between choreographers and archivists and how current technology has affected access.

This research looks at four different types of organizations to examine the state of dance preservation. I gathered data through phone interviews and reviewed online archive databases of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, the Library of Congress, Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee Theatre Research Institute at Ohio State University, and Jacob's Pillow Dance. For archivists, keeping up with changing technology will be an ongoing challenge. Archivists will need to start working with choreographers and dance companies earlier in their careers to preserve digital materials before they disappear.

INTRODUCTION

Dance disappears in the moment of becoming.
– Linda Murray

Many dance organizations do not plan for the preservation of performance video and associated materials for the future. Organizations that archive dance documentation, however, assert that preserving dance for future generations is essential for legacy building, dance history, and academic legitimacy. The use of archival materials can benefit many aspects of the creative process as well as the education of future dancers and choreographers.

I have some personal experience with documenting dance, but was not aware of the protocol for long-term preservation of this material. As a teacher and choreographer for a color guard program, I record videos of choreography with the purpose of sharing them with the students I work with. Color guard involves using equipment, most commonly a flag, with dance in competitive performances. Students are able to watch the videos outside of practice to review what they have learned. I also find it useful in case I have forgotten a part of what I have choreographed. After all of the performances and the competition season are over, the competition videos I have recorded and the photographs I have taken are compiled and burned onto a DVD for each of the performance members to keep.

In my experience, dance documentation is a casual act with the purpose of creating material as a keepsake for the students to possess to remind them of the past

competition season. Everything I use is kept digitally in folders on my computer after the season is over; however, I have only been casually documenting dance for the past five years. There are previous seasons that I wish I had a record of, but, at the time, recording was overshadowed by the demands of managing a live performance.

Reflecting on this loss catalyzed my interest in learning about the preservation of dance materials. More specifically, what is the relationship between choreographers and archivists? And how has current technology affected access?

Within the past decade, there has been an important push from dance archivists to preserve the legacies of choreographers and dance companies. There are many obstacles facing those who realize the benefits of preserving dance including intellectual property rights, rapidly developing technology, and access to archival materials. Despite these obstacles, the dance community needs access to archival materials to choreograph new dances, re-stage dances, teach dance history, and expand the body of literature (Johnson and Fuller 1999, 16).

The very nature of dance as an art form makes it a challenge to capture through traditional documentation because of its transient nature throughout its lifetime. Dance is transmitted by speech and body memory through a human chain from choreographer to dancer (*Beyond Memory* 1994, 1). Performances happen to be multidimensional and very complex to capture on a two-dimensional format, such as photographs or video, without loss of depth or quality of the dance. George Balanchine, who was afraid that his works would lose their integrity without his guiding hand, stated, "I don't want my ballets preserved as museum pieces for people to go and laugh at what used to be. Absolutely not. I'm staging ballets for today's bodies. Ballet is now" (Yeoh 2012, 224). This

perspective has hindered the documentation and subsequent preservation of dance by choreographers who think that subsequent restaging would degrade the qualities that make their choreography theirs.

Dance fills a unique cultural niche in society. Under the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), dance is considered intangible cultural heritage and should be safeguarded for future generations. According to UNESCO's "Frequently Asked Questions" webpage, "this is intangible cultural heritage, a living form of heritage which is continuously recreated and which evolves as we adapt our practices and traditions in response to our environment." UNESCO does acknowledge that dance should remain relevant and continuously evolving rather than fixed or frozen without any sort of evolution in technique.

UNESCO encourages the dance community to collect documentation for preservation because the community is best suited for making decisions about what is considered valuable ("Frequently Asked Questions" n.d.). There is a huge body of literature from the outside, i.e. researchers and scholars, looking in, but very little from the inside, i.e. choreographers and dancers, looking out (Saaze and Dekker 2013, 106). At a Chicago forum on dance, documentation, and research, dancers expressed frustration with unclear texts written by dance theorists, supporting the evidence that not many from within the dance community write literature (Moore 2002, 127). UNESCO does suggest a middle ground where outsiders are able to help with collecting and recording information since the community may not be proficient enough in these areas. However, the dance community is the experts on what's happening within their sphere.

Documentation and preservation of dance has a greater cultural importance than just transmission. New dances are able to transmit values and create dialogues that reflect society's present issues while classical dance is a product of the evolution of technique and understanding. "Dance is one of the potent factors in the improvement, promotion, or strengthening of tradition" (Cariaga 2014, 72). If the changes are not captured within any record, future dancers will not be able to appreciate how and when technique and styles have evolved.

Dance historians agree that the act of preserving moments in dance is important; its significance is rivaled by the importance of access to archival materials. Increasingly reliable access will affect public support and funding for all forms of dance as people become more familiar with the art form and its language (Smigel et al. 2006, 7). For historians, the ability to observe dance history visually and in rapid succession can be used in comparative analysis that is often overlooked in text based materials (Moore 2002, 126). The impact from visualizing the material can be much greater in an educational setting.

The archival materials can also be used as a "boundary object" that "serves as an interface, a stimulus of communication between different communities, disciplines, users and professionals" (Saaze and Dekker 2013, 102). This can serve to establish a shared vocabulary, create insight into the artistic and working processes, and help reflect on methodologies. Dance directors, choreographers, and teachers can use this type of documentation for guidance to reconstruct or update dance based on the environment or production (Cariaga 2014, 81). It also creates a discussion between the choreographer and the dancers for motivations behind the dance to be better understood.

The use of archival materials also carries an educational component for dance students, helping them to contextualize a piece on a conceptual level (Saaze and Dekker 2013, 108). More generally, archives ensure the transfer of knowledge, skills, and meaning from one point of past authority to the dancers currently learning choreography, history, or theory (“Frequently Asked Questions” n.d.).

One of the challenges facing dance preservation is a lack of academic legitimacy because it is a relatively young field as an area of academic study in the United States. According to Nancy Moore, dance scholarship has grown over the last 20 years, but books on dance are few. This creates the impression that dance does not have a history, which in turn creates a stigma in a culture where the past legitimizes the present (Johnson and Fuller 1999, 1). The fact is that dance overlaps with many other library and archive categories such as music, anthropology, and the arts resulting in “hidden documentation” of dance under other categories (Johnson and Fuller 1999, 3). At the “Chicago Forum on Performance Ephemeral Evidence: A Conversation on Dance, Documentation and Research,” Nancy Moore noticed that there is no one single, definitive volume of dance history or theory that everyone is familiar with and has read. There is “no easy way, via quotation or footnote, of keeping the dance in view amidst the mass of references to critical theory that a scholar must make in order to establish his or her authority” (Moore 2002, 127). Another point of resistance to documentation is a lack of shared vocabulary and methodology across dance forms. These deficits would seem to invalidate dance as a subject for scholarly inquiry (Moore 2002, 125).

DANCE DOCUMENTATION

Dance documentation actually has a long history that is now creating a large push for more and better preservation. “Visual and written documentation provides fragmented glimpses of the presence and significance of dance throughout the history of humankind” (Johnson and Fuller 1999, 5). In earlier centuries, Western dance documents consisted of drawings or painted illustrations with text. Later in the Renaissance period, many dance masters began recording their dance steps to create ownership of their style and methods (Johnson and Fuller 1999, 6). This evolved in the Baroque period to also include floor plans. None of these notation writings were standardized in any way and varied from choreographer to choreographer.

Documentation would not change again until the mid-1800s when photography was invented. Even with the advancements of photography since its development, still images failed to capture the quality of dance movement (Moore 2002, 126). It was not until film was invented in the early 1900s that dance could be captured quickly and completely. The 1940s brought smaller, lighter, and easier to use cameras that changed dance documentation through video, becoming a critical body of literature (Johnson and Fuller 1999, 7).

The 1940s also heralded the first form of dance notation: Labanotation. This writing system contains different symbols for how the body is placed in each position during a dance. The Dance Notation Bureau was established in the United States to function as a custodian of archiving this type of notation. Later in 1955, Benesh Movement Notation was also created in the United Kingdom separately from Labanotation using a different set of symbols. These systems were highly planned and

accurate in capturing the steps, shape, and/or pattern of movement that could be used for reconstruction (Smigel et al. 2006, 8-9).

In 1967, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) included dance as a subcategory of fine and performing arts, making it an area of support for funding (Johnson and Fuller 1999, 5). A decade later in 1976, United States copyright laws included choreography as a separate entity partly due to the standardization of notation methods (Johnson and Fuller 1999, 7). This was a significant step in legitimizing dance and changing academic and legal views in the United States. A large shift in focus from material to immaterial culture also occurred around this time, which may have contributed to the changing views (Brown 2005, 41).

The advent of videotapes in the late 1970s to early 1980s expanded the use of dance documentation because you can fast forward and rewind the tape as well as freezing selected frames (Johnson and Fuller 1999, 8). This capability was not something earlier film formats could accomplish.

The growth of electronic media in the 1990s and the scramble to document choreography in a community greatly affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic brought ever-greater options for dance documentation (Johnson and Fuller 1999, 11). The LabanWriter software created at Ohio State University allowed for faster capture of notation; the use of digital video cut down on associated costs; and three-dimensional animation and motion capture were developed (Smigel et al. 2006, 8, 11, 15). This progression in technology has affected the documentation process in ways the field as a whole is still adapting to.

Technology has played a significant role in the history of dance documentation. The most beneficial aspect of technology is the ability to have “instantaneous access to information without real location constraints, data transport at the speed of light, and effortless reproduction of the original without any loss of quality” (Burri 2010, 33). Organizations from all over the world are able to collaborate without location or time constraints. The Digital Age “allows for the expression of each and every type of content...in a line of zeroes and ones and thereby creates a universal code for all information (Burri 2010, 34). The standardization of information makes it much easier to share and store information in a central place.

There are downsides to relying on technology, particularly on rapidly changing formats. It is important to keep current with the preferred formats for sustainability and interoperability (Burri 2010, 47). However, most of these digital formats are a question mark when it comes to long-term stability (Johnson and Fuller 1999, 31). As technology changes, formats must be updated and many old films and videotapes need to be converted before they are lost. This is an ongoing challenge that affects archives maintaining digital formats.

Another consideration is the intellectual property (IP) rights of information. The ability to make perfect copies can be dangerous if dance documentation is not properly protected through copyrights (Brown 2005, 44). When creating documentation or archiving materials, it is essential to review contracts and release forms to ensure that the creator or group will retain their rights (Kim 2012, 228).

Finding a suitable archive to preserve dance documentation on a long-term basis is an important component of the preservation process. Archivists will also be able to

consult on which materials are significant enough to keep (*Beyond Memory* 1994, 4).

There are a variety of materials created while documenting dance that archivists will know how to maintain in the environment needed for preservation. Damage from a poorly maintained environment can be expensive and impossible to restore (Johnson and Fuller 1999, 32).

There is a history of tension between the dance community, archivists, curators, and librarians. The dance community feels that it should have complete and open access because they feel a sense of ownership (Johnson and Fuller 1999, 16). Libraries, however, may lack the materials or the permission for access to meet demands. It is especially important for the creator of documentation and the archivist to work together to address the minimum standards of preservation while addressing the essential needs of the dance organization (Burtis 2009). The archivist should advocate for open access while ensuring the documentation is not in violation of legal or ethical regulations that might prevent distribution (Kim 2012, 232). This may include copyrights on the music used in dances, further complicating the process. A delicate balance needs to be maintained by archivists between protecting artist copyrights and allowing access to dance materials.

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

This research looks at four different types of dance preservation organizations: a public library, a government facility, an educational institute, and a dance festival. These four organizations respectively are the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, the Library of Congress, the Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee Theatre Research Institute (TRI) at the Ohio State University, and Jacob's Pillow Dance.

I found all four organizations through the Dance Heritage Coalition, which is an alliance founded in 1992 of major institutions that house dance collections (Johnson and Fuller 1999, 13). The Dance Heritage Coalition mission statement as defined on their website (www.danceheritage.org) is “to make accessible, enhance, augment, and preserve the materials that document the artistic accomplishments of dance of the past, present, and future.”

Head curators from each organization were selected for phone interviews that lasted approximately 30-60 minutes and were digitally recorded. At the conclusion of the interview, I inquired if there was anyone else that I should contact. A couple of organizations gave me additional recommendations. During the interviews, I asked the following:

- Who are your target audiences and how do they use the archives?
- What difficulties do you face preserving and updating older materials?
- What dance groups do you work with and in what capacity?
- Are there general considerations or guidelines about legality and IP rights?

In addition to conducting these interviews, I reviewed each organization’s online archive database to get a sense of what materials they collect and how they catalog and organize archival materials. In the case of Library of Congress, I was able to visit the Performing Arts Reading Room in person.

The combination of interviews, online archive databases, and a review of the literature provided a comprehensive examination of how choreographers and dancers interact with archives today. Technology is changing that relationship in such a way that it was central to discussion of archival materials.

There were several limitations of this study due to time restrictions. The largest is that I was unable to interview Libby Smigel, the dance archivist in the Music Division for Library of Congress. I did, however, visit the Library of Congress Performing Arts Reading Room in place of the interview and corresponded with her through e-mail.

Another limitation was that I was unable to visit all the archive sites in person. Though I would have liked to browse through the collections in person, I limited myself to reviewing the online archive databases instead.

The final limitation is that the scope of this study focused exclusively on the curators and archivists of these organizations. I did not ask any choreographers or dancers that work with the organizations for their perspective or opinions. This perspective could be an excellent area for further research in dance preservation.

CHAPTER ONE – DANCE PRESERVATION ARCHIVES AND CURATORS

Before delving into the themes and concepts discovered through the interviews, I would like to briefly introduce each organization and the participants. Because each organization is different, establishing their unique perspective will assist with analyzing the information gathered from speaking with their respective curators and archivists.

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY (NYPL) FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

The Jerome Robbins Dance Division, which is one of four divisions at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, is the largest and most comprehensive dance archive in the world. Dance collections were first acquisitioned in 1944 by the music division. Starting in 1947, the dance archives were overseen by Genevieve Oswald, who began as part of the music division, but eventually devoted all of her time to the dance archive after 1950 (Brooks 2011, 448).

Oswald laid the groundwork and processes for how the world should go about building dance archives. She created roadmaps for describing and cataloging dance as well as what materials should fall within the scope of archives. She also made an effort to include as many different kinds of people from as many different places in the world as she could. Oswald began collecting American modern dance and ballet archival materials. She then expanded the dance archives to include the Asian Collection. The collection now includes modern, ballet, ethnic, social, and folk dances. The Jerome Robbins Dance Division is now a cornerstone in the dance archival world thanks to their first dance curator.

Having previously worked at the Library of Congress, the current curator, Linda Murray, is only the 5th dance curator for the New York Public Library. Oswald retired in 1987 after 40 years of work on the dance archives (Brooks 2011, 448). Murray now oversees all aspects of the dance collections and interactions with the public. She affirms that she is inspired every day by Genevieve Oswald and the protocols she put in place. She says that if Oswald had not done it, “I don’t know where we would be on the international field with dance preservation.”

One of the programs that Oswald started in the 1960s that the Jerome Dance Division continues today is partnering with choreographers and dance companies to document their work through photo-shoots and video. The dance group receives a copy of the documentation and another copy goes into the archives. Another such program is the audio history project started in the 1970s to capture the life stories of choreographers and dancers.

Other archival material varies in type and format because the Jerome Dance Division is a subject-based archive. These include books, manuscripts, correspondence, journals, photographs, costume and set sketches, moving image, and audio. The archive does take some 3-dimensional objects like models of sets, but they no longer take costumes. One unique type of documentation they include is negatives of photographs. Most archives will only take prints.

The Jerome Robbins Dance Division Digital Collection includes audio, video, and images from their dance archives. However, a comprehensive collection of their onsite materials is not available. Many entries only contain the location of the materials onsite and a bibliographic citation.

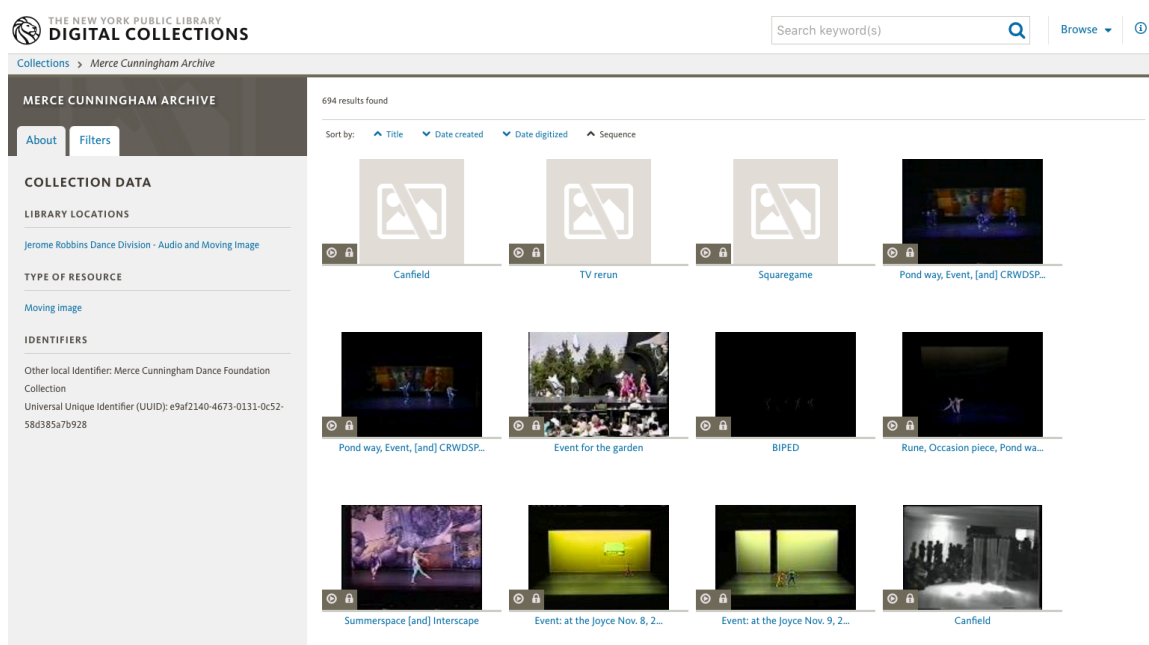


Figure 1 – Screen shot of the Merce Cunningham archive in the Jerome Robbins Dance Division Digital Collection.

A number of different people use the NYPL dance materials. One of the largest populations is dance researchers, which includes anyone who is researching or writing about dance. Documentarians also use the moving image collections for their use in films. Most importantly, dancers and choreographers from around New York City use these materials to research roles, get inspiration for new works, or restage old works. The location of the library at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts brings in a lot of nearby students from The Juilliard School, American Ballet Theatre, and New York City Ballet.

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Library of Congress, located in Washington, D.C., is the United States' first cultural institution and the largest library in the world. The Library was founded in 1800 inside the Capitol building. The first separate building, the Thomas Jefferson building, was opened in 1897 followed by the John Adams Building in 1938 and the James

Madison Memorial Building in 1981. The Music Division, which holds the dance collections, is in this last building.

The Performing Arts Reading Room is the access point for the Music Division for almost 500 special collections. The Music Division was formally created in 1896. Archival materials of dance documentation was limited at first and focused on dance as a cultural aspect. “Due to its ephemeral nature, theatrical dance in America has been poorly documented, and until recently the art was not treated seriously as a potential area of scholarly inquiry. This state of affairs has left libraries and archives with documents that have been preserved by virtue of their relationship to another field, such as music, theater, or cultural history” (*Music, Theater, Dance*, 1993). The Performing Arts Reading Room will be undergoing renovations in the next year to expand their storage space. The reading room will also be combined with the Recorded Sound and Moving Image research rooms.

The revision of copyright laws as they apply to choreographic works spurred more choreographers to submit materials to the library, especially with the advent of video. The ease of technology and the growing use of video by choreographers has prompted the Library’s increased interest in preserving dance documentation.

The Library has every possible type of documentation including audio, books, dance manuals, drawings, microforms, moving images, photographs, posters, prints, and sheet music. Performing arts materials can be found in several divisions besides the Music Division such as the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division, the American Folklife Center, the Manuscript Division, the Rare Books and Special Collection Division, and the Prints and Photographs Division.

There is also an online guide to onsite performing arts resources as well as digitized materials called the Performing Arts Encyclopedia. Here visitors can view upcoming concerts and events, special presentations, and browse collections, resources, and exhibitions by subject, name, or title. There is a disclaimer that most resources are only available onsite and some resources may need to be retrieved from offsite storage facilities.

The screenshot shows the digital object entry for an original Russian Ballet notebook in the Performing Arts Encyclopedia. The page is titled "Library of Congress > Performing Arts Encyclopedia > Search results > Manuscript Display". The main content area displays the following information:

- Title:** "Original'nyi Ruskii Balet / 1932-1952." [Original Russian Ballet (i.e. Ballets Russes) / 1932-1952.] [2], [notebook]
- Type of Material:** manuscript
- Genre:** notebook
- Form:** manuscript
- Physical Description:** 224 unbound handwritten pages, in ink, 9-11/16in. x 7-3/8in.
- Note:** page marked "Predislovie" [preface] is unnumbered and consists of a single page; subsequent pages are numbered 1-224.
- Subject:** [Grigoriev, Sergei Leonidovich, 1883-1968](#)
- Repository:** [Music Division](#)

On the right side of the entry, there is a thumbnail image of a handwritten page from the notebook, showing musical notation and text in Russian. The page is titled "Предисловие" (Preface) and dated "1932-1952".

At the bottom right of the entry, it says "Last Updated: 12-10-2014". At the bottom left, there are links for "Display XML: MODS Bibliographic Data | METS Object Description".

On the left side of the page, there is a sidebar with the following navigation options:

- PERFORMING ARTS ENCYCLOPEDIA
- Search encyclopedia
- More Search Options
- MANUSCRIPT VIEWS:**
 - [Description](#)
 - [Page Turner](#)
 - [Contact Sheet](#)
 - [PDF for Printing \[91.0M\]](#)
- FROM:**
 - [Ballets Russes](#)
 - [Performing Arts Encyclopedia](#)
- [Encyclopedia Home](#)
 - [About the Encyclopedia](#)
 - [Contact Us](#)
 - [Help](#)
 - [Copyright](#)

Figure 2 – Screen shot of digital object entry for an original Russian Ballet notebook in the Performing Arts Encyclopedia.

Libby Smigel is the Dance Archivist for the Music Division department. She previously worked at the Dance Heritage Coalition as the Executive Director before taking a position at the Library of Congress in August 2015. As I mentioned previously, I

was unable to speak to her although she did correspond with me briefly through e-mail. There are a number of procedures set by the Library of Congress before senior management can approve an interview or site visit. Time restrictions further complicated the matter.

**JEROME LAWRENCE AND ROBERT E. LEE THEATRE RESEARCH
INSTITUTE (TRI) AT OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY (OSU)**

The Theatre Research Institute (TRI) at The Ohio State University (OSU) is the part of the Department of Theatre where archival materials documenting the performing arts are acquired and preserved. This includes the “Mime, Dance, and Movement” collection. Other divisions at OSU that support dance documentation include the Department of Dance, the Advanced Computing Center for the Arts and Design (ACCAD), the Wexner Center for the Arts, and the Dance Notation Bureau (DNB) Extension for Education and Research.

The academic body largely uses the archives as an educational component in classes. One of the more popular projects to conduct is a digital humanities project creating a module about a certain aspect of the collections. Outside of the academic body, the archives are open to the public where dancers, choreographers, dance companies, and families and friends of the previously listed utilize the collections. Most people use the archives for a particular reason rather than in preparation for creating something new.

The original TRI collection was created in 1951 by Dr. John McDowell and was made up of 450,000 frames of microfilm from European collections documenting theatre history of the Western world. Over time, original archival materials were collected including 3D models, books, brochures, costumes, journals, manuscripts, newspaper

clippings, painted drops, photographs, posters, programs, and scrapbooks. Currently, the TRI has a preservation initiative to collect more design technology such as theatre costume designs, lighting design, and theater technology materials. In addition to housing the archives, the TRI published an annual journal called “Theatre Studies” from 1954 to 2001 and hosted a number of theatre history conferences.

OhioLINK Finding Aid Repository

Home | Return to Search Results Search this Item [Persistent Link](#) | [Print View](#)

Bebe Miller Collection

[Descriptive Summary](#)
[Biography of Bebe Miller, b.1950](#)
[Scope and Content](#)
[Statement of Arrangement](#)
[Indexing Terms](#)
[Related/Separated Materials](#)
[Administrative Information](#)
[Detailed Description of The Collection](#)
[Series 1 - Costumes](#)
[Series 2 - Press](#)
[Series 3 - Engagements](#)
[Series 4 - Original Company Folders](#)
[Series 5 - General Administrative](#)
[Series 6 - USA/SA Folders](#)
[Series 7 - Technical/Production](#)
[Series 8 - Touring Information](#)
[Series 9 - Funding Foundations, Boards of Directors, NEA, Fundraising](#)
[Series 10 - Video and Audio Media](#)
[Series 11 - Photographs](#)
[Series 12 - Binders](#)
[Series 13 - Announcement Placards](#)
[Series 14 - Props and Sets](#)

Finding aid for the Bebe Miller Collection

Title: Bebe Miller Collection
Repository: The Ohio State University, Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee Theatre Research Institute.
 Phone: 614-292-6614
<http://library.osu.edu/sites/tri/>
Creator: Bebe Miller Company
Dates: 1980-2005
Quantity: 65 boxes
Abstract: Administrative and other company files from the Bebe Miller Company, including photographs, video, and audio media, costumes and assorted set pieces and props.
Identification: SPEC.TRI.BBM
Location: Thompson Library Special Collections The Ohio State University
Language: The records are in English

Figure 3 – Screen shot of a finding aid for the Bebe Miller Collection in the OhioLINK Library Catalog.

Nena L. Couch was hired in 1986 as the Head Curator of the William Oxley Thompson Library Special Collections when the TRI became affiliated with University Libraries. The Thompson Library focuses on humanities and social sciences including art and music. Couch is also a certified dance notator in Labanotation and a founding member of the Baroque dance troupe Les Menus Plaisirs. She has been an active member of the Dance Heritage Coalition since 1992 and serves as the chair on their board of directors.

Valarie Williams is the Associate Dean for Arts and Humanities at OSU and the Executive Director of the Arts Initiative at The Ohio State University. She is also a certified dance notator in Labanotation and a dance professional.

Rachael Riggs Leyva is a dance archivist who processed and digitized materials for the dance collections in the TRI during a fellowship funded by the Dance Heritage Coalition in 2011 and 2012. She also worked as an embedded archivist with the Bebe Miller Company whose collection is located at OSU. Leyva is also a certified dance notator in Labanotation.

JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE

Ted Shawn founded Jacob's Pillow in 1933, which is the oldest dance festival in the United States (Owen 2011, 215). The main focus of Jacob's Pillow is the festival that runs ten weeks in the summer with performances by dance companies from all over the world. At the same time, a training program is offered for young dancers. The archives document and preserve the history and activities of the festival and its founder.

Ted Shawn launched the Denishawn Company with Ruth St. Denis in 1915. After the company dissolved in 1929, Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers launched in 1933. Shawn filmed himself and his dancers, creating the foundation of the Jacob's Pillow Archives. He also kept most of his correspondence and business papers.

The Jacob's Pillow Archives are open and free to the public during the run of the festival. Over 80,000 people attend the festival each year (Owen 2011, 217). Also, the federal government in 2003 has acknowledged the archives by naming them a National Historic Landmark. This is the first and only landmark that recognizes dance in the United States (Owen 2011, 218). Most of the visitors to the archives are people who are

seeing the festival performances. Exhibitions of performing companies from previous years and the history of Jacob's Pillow are on display in a nearby building. There is also a reading room where visitors can watch performance videos.

A dance school teaching programs in ballet, contemporary, and social dances also runs concurrent with the festival. The students of those programs will also use the archives to watch as many videos as they can while they are onsite. The moving image collections tend to be the biggest draw for any user of the archives.

Outside of the festival, mostly researchers and scholars use the archives on an appointment basis. They host somewhere between five and ten researchers on site at a time. There are also residencies for dance companies that may use the archives to view older performances from their companies.

Jacob's Pillow Dance creates its own dance documentation each season by recording one or two performances for every company. One copy goes into the archives and another copy goes to the dance company for their personal use. For Jacob's Pillow Dance, the use of video is a priority that started in 1982, since then amassing about 8000 videos to date. In addition to the performances, "PillowTalks" are also recorded. These are post-performance talks where the choreographer or artistic representative talks about what the audience just saw.

Norton Owen first started working at Jacob's Pillow in 1977. He did not begin to regularly work with the collections until 1982 when the organization received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (Owen 2011, 220). It was not until 1991 when an official curator position was created for him.

In contrast, Brittany Austin, Associate Archivist and Librarian, started in spring of 2015. Her main focus is digitizing archival material and cataloging it in an online database for public use. Because of the newness of the project, there have only been a few collections digitized so far. More of the archival material is available onsite, especially the majority of the video due to copyright and lack of digital space. The online database will detail what materials Jacob’s Pillow Archives have and where to find them.

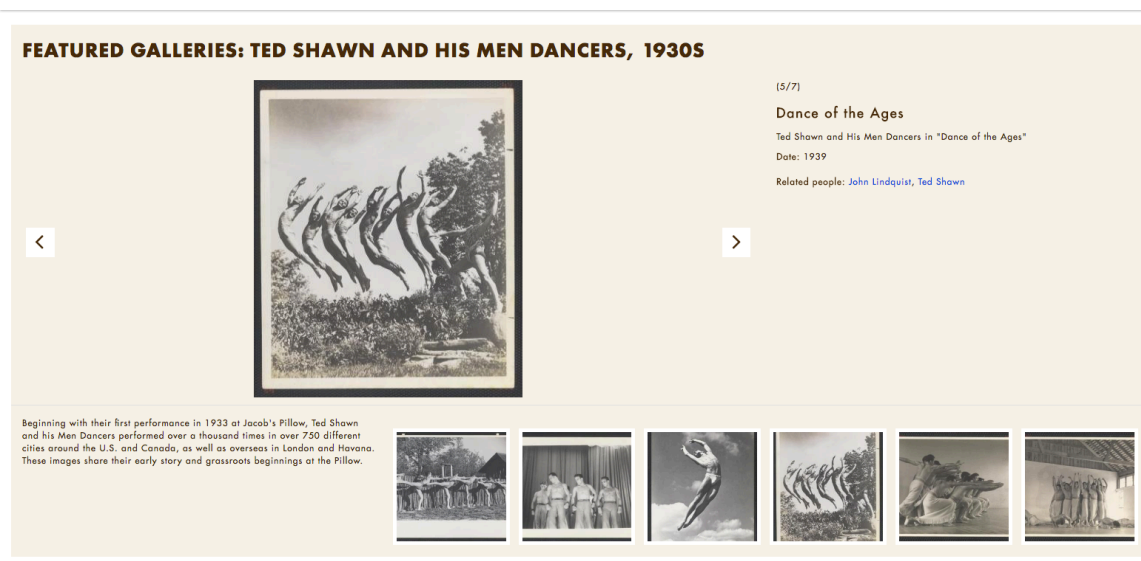


Figure 4 – Screen shot of the “Featured Galleries” on the front page of the online Jacob’s Pillow Dance Archive.

In addition to film and video, the archives also have audiotapes, board minutes, books, correspondence, scrapbooks, photographs, posters, and programs. Most of the correspondence and business related papers are pre-digital age. Currently, Jacob’s Pillow is trying to determine how to capture their e-mails and other digital missives as part of the archive.

CHAPTER TWO – CREATOR/ARCHIVIST RELATIONSHIPS

Across all of the interviews, a number of curators and archivists spoke about how important it is to cultivate relationships with creators of dance. Sometimes these relationships start with acquisitions, but more recently they start at documentation. The archivists have mentioned that they need to change where the process begins to meet creators where they are for the future preservation of the dance field.

New York Public Library (NYPL) for the Performing Arts works with choreographers and dance companies in New York to set up professional film shoots throughout the year. One copy of the photographic prints or video goes to the company and another goes into the archive. Linda Murray said that NYPL reaches out to creators to inquire whether they would be interested in doing a shoot in addition to shooting companies that request it. NYPL focuses on creating a more complete record by reaching out to smaller, less well-known companies because those companies don't have the resources to document their work. Dance documentation can be used to apply for grants as evidence of what they can achieve in addition to retaining a copy for their personal archives. Major, established companies tend to have the resources for documentation and NYPL will ask for copies of their documents to archive.

Audio archives are another important component for the NYPL. In the early 1970s, an audio oral history project was undertaken that continues today. It became especially important during the AIDS crisis in the 1990s. The dance division advocated for additional funding to capture the stories of young choreographers and dancers before they disappeared forever.

The TRI at OSU does not do direct dance documentation, but they do their best to enable it. The institute has an embedded archivist program that will take up residency with a company, usually OSU alum, and help organize and document their creative works. In one example, the Bebe Miller Company has a collection at the TRI and used that dance documentation to create a new work called “A History.” Miller used the old archival materials to revisit movements and the creation process. Rachael Riggs Leyva worked as an embedded archivist, documenting the process of creating the new work from the old ones. This led to an artist-driven archival creation as well. The Bebe Miller Company published an eBook called “Dance Fort” that documents “A History” in addition to the creation of a new work.

OSU also has a motion capture laboratory at the Advanced Computing Center for the Arts and Design (ACCAD) that has been used to capture dance movement for reconstruction works. Valarie Williams spoke of the example of reconstructing “Steps of Silence” by Anna Sokolow from the notation score. “We realized in reviewing it, you have the notation score which tells you where everything is placed... It would be beneficial to be able to see that from multiple perspectives.” Williams went on to say that motion capture does not provide quality of movement, but it can still be beneficial to look at complicated movements and partner positioning from various angles.

Jacob’s Pillow Dance does all of their own documentation of dance performances and post-performance talks with choreographers or artistic representatives. The focus of the Pillow is primarily what happens at Jacob’s Pillow. However, as Norton Owen pointed out, a large number of dance companies go to the Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival every year from all over the country, even some international companies.

The Pillow works closely with each company so that the company can benefit from the services offered by the Pillow. Each video is mixed live to cut out post-production time and includes wide shots and close-ups. This work process also ensures that the video is available immediately to the dance company to use however they wish. If for some reason the company is not happy with the video, the Pillow will be able to document it again at another performance during the festival. The Pillow also makes their raw footage available to each company at a nominal cost.

In addition to performances, the Pillow also records post-performance talks. Owen stated that these talks are “perhaps even more important than what we’re capturing in terms of performances” because they are totally unique.

In a similar avenue, acquisitions of already-created documentation materials from dance companies also require a certain amount of interfacing to achieve the best option for both sides. All of the organizations’ curators and archivists talk about the perceived value of the objects and how respectful one needs to be to the creator or holder of the objects.

The process for acquisitions at NYPL is similar to that of dance documentation outreach. Interested choreographers or dance companies will either approach Linda Murray or she will reach out to one to start a conversation about bringing their collection to the library. Afterwards, Murray will determine if the materials hold research value, represents the dance community in a particular moment in time, and also reflects who the contributing creator was. She mentions that there is a cost in taking materials because the archive is promising to maintain and preserve this item for hundreds of years. It is not just the initial cost of bringing the materials in for processing and preservation one time.

Murray talked about how excluding materials from the archives often weighs heavy on her: “I’m denying that person or that family or whatever it may be, a place in history. Every time I say no, you don’t get to come into the archive, I’m negating it. So that weighs heavy on me. So I think about how our archive really needs to be an inclusive archive and represent a totality of genres and communities and genres and experiences. And that it’s not all that we consider to be the best example of dance, but the broadest examples of things. So that we represent on a societal level, different ethnicities, different parts of the world, different abilities, different genres of things, all these things have to be accounted for or else they get forgotten.”

Nena Couch from the TRI at OSU spoke about the process of collecting dance materials. She first cultivates a relationship with the creator of the collection to find out what the desires are for the collection. Most potential donors are OSU alumni and reach out to the TRI to donate materials. Then, Couch will usually go to the house or storage place and do a preliminary inventory and then a first cut. Most books on dance will have been already acquired by the TRI so the curators do not want duplicate copies. Primary documents from the creator are always the preference for acquisitions. Also, the inventory will help the creator sort through what they have and keep the materials that they do not actually want to donate. It is more costly for the TRI if the creator changes their mind about some materials later and wants them back.

Valarie Williams added that it is important to be respectful of the creator or the creator’s family contributing their work to the TRI. Archival materials should be useful and utilized in the archives, which is what the creator would have wanted in sharing their materials. Having something sit in a box on a shelf, not viewed by anyone is not the

objective for someone donating to a public archive. She sums it up by expressing “it’s a wonderful experience and type of relationship that you build with either the family donating to archives or the artist or dancer themselves donating to archives and sort of working with them to determine what would be best utilized here, how it could be best utilized, and really delicately massaging that relationship to make sure that everybody wins.”

Jacob’s Pillow Dance is in a unique situation where the materials they acquire are ones that they have created themselves. Norton Owen also said that Ted Shawn saved “every scrap of paper or so it seems” so they already had a strong foundation to build their archives without going to outside parties. Again, because of their focus on Jacob’s Pillow exclusively, they do not make acquisitions except in very rare circumstances.

While making acquisitions, it is important for the curators and archivists to discuss with the creator about the level of access to the materials and the intellectual property (IP) rights. IP rights of the creator versus the level of access granted to the general public happen to be a point of contention between creators and archivists. Generally, archives are meant to share knowledge and resources with the public for the greater good and other lofty ideals. Creators want to know their materials will not be appropriated and that they will retain copyright protections on their work.

Murray from NYPL put the issue of IP rights concisely: “The central tension of being a librarian is pushing as hard as you can to allow everybody, regardless of background, to have the same ability to access knowledge while protecting the knowledge of intellectual property. And that is heightened in a performing arts library where you have personal relationships with the artists who are entrusting their life’s work

to you and who are also incredibly protective about their work.” Public institutions like the NYPL are obligated to provide open access to the public.

When creators make a contribution to NYPL, they have the choice between a non-exclusive deed and an exclusive deed. The non-exclusive deed means that the creator maintains their IP rights and they are giving permission to NYPL to store their materials in the reading room, but it is not widely available for viewing outside of that. This also excludes any form of digitization and posting on their website. An exclusive deed means that the creator is giving NYPL their copyright. However, Murray points out that obtaining one copyright does not necessarily clear the material for wider circulation. For dance archival materials, just one person typically does not make every aspect of a dance. The choreographer, dancers, lighting designer, costume designer, set designer, etc. all retain IP rights when looking at the overall picture. The copyrights that all these people hold need to be cleared before something can be made generally accessible outside of the reading room.

Similar to the NYPL, the TRI at OSU has an obligation to make archival materials accessible to the general public as a public educational institution. Couch stated that they would not take materials that would be permanently restricted from viewing. They do allow creators to restrict access to a portion of their collection for a certain period of time. She used the example of someone in the process of writing their own book and they restrict access to certain materials until their book comes out. This could even mean years of restriction, but it could not be forever.

The TRI also has a deed of gift form similar to NYPL’s deeds. Couch points out that they often run into materials that the donor does not necessarily have IP rights for.

She mentions that those materials would remain within the library for onsite viewing and would not be available for digitization. The TRI does not typically go out and find the IP rights holder to get permission for digitization unless it is something extremely special that they want to make available in some other way. Couch said that it is very costly and time consuming to track down all the correct IP rights holders and then persuade them to clear the materials in question.

Leyva mentioned that the level of access they have to their collection sometimes frustrates artists. When she was working as an embedded archivist with Bebe Miller on the “A History” dance, Miller was trying to take some things out of the collection to view outside of the library in order to create the new work, but was unable to. Creators feel a certain right to their archival materials, but once it has been given to the archive, it turns into a midpoint position where it is yours, but it is not yours.

Another example about using the archives at the TRI is about the Bebe Miller Company restaging “The Hendrix Project.” Caroline Beasley-Baker had painted dance performance flooring in psychedelic patterns that would change colors depending on how light shone on the floor. The Company was able to use the floors in her restaged work called “The Hendrix Redux,” but there was a lot of resistance from the archives because the dancers would be standing on these floors. The TRI limited the amount of time that the Bebe Miller Company could use the floors so they would not wear down or decrease the longevity of the archival material. In this case, they could only be used for a certain number of performances. Leyva muses, “It’s sort of funny. It’s a floor. It’s meant to be stepped on. It’s supposed to be used. But at the same time, it’s also a form of archive material; a piece of history.”

Another frustration is where choreographers have expressed a concern about how their materials are presented. They feel as if they should have some say in preservation whereas traditional archivists are looking at their requests and seeing how that would not preserve their materials long-term. The artists would like their materials almost like in an exhibit with an interactive component similar to seeing performing arts live. However, it would be very hard to maintain physical materials in this way. Perhaps once technology becomes more interactive, archivists and choreographers can work together to create exhibitions without harming the original materials. Another concern is for IP rights and the level of access. As mentioned above, multiple people would need to clear certain materials for something to be widely viewed.

There are also barriers with accessing materials even if they have been made available. Leyva used the example of The George Balanchine Foundation. The foundation wants anyone who accesses their materials to ask them first before viewing a dance, score, etc. In her experience, Leyva has never been told no when she or her students have wanted to look at something. The foundation just wants to know who you are and why you want to look at something before you do. This method of tracking who sees what delays the time from when a researcher can view material. This could frustrate choreographers or dancers who are not familiar with traditional archives.

For Jacob's Pillow Dance, all dance companies sign a contract before they are included in the festival. The staff at Jacob's Pillow is willing to walkthrough and explain the documentation rider in the contract if anyone pushes back about their performance being recorded and archived at Jacob's Pillow. Most companies that know of Jacob's Pillow are familiar with their video documentation online. Some companies are even

enthusiastic about being recorded because maybe they cannot afford to be professionally documented.

If a researcher wants to use a video from Jacob's Pillow Dance, they would still need to receive permission from the artist for its use because Jacob's Pillow Dance does not retain any rights to the work in the moving image. Most of their videos can only be viewed onsite as a result. For the new Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive site, they are operating under fair use and have not had any problems yet. The site is still very new and not a year old yet. The site consists mostly of video clips and post-performance talks with a few full-length performances.

With their other site that is the archival digital database, they do have a number of photographs that need to be cleared before posting them publicly online. Another consideration is the program notes that the in-residence scholars write for the festival performances. Those also have to be cleared with the scholar about how they want the program notes presented and the level of access associated with them. On site, all archival materials can be viewed. It is only when it is translated to a digital platform that IP rights can be tricky to navigate.

CHAPTER THREE – CHALLENGES OF EVOLVING TECHNOLOGY

In our ever more connected world, technology is changing how we communicate with each other and how documentation is created. It is not only an important consideration when creating and promoting a dance, but something to consider afterwards when documenting and preserving materials. This has created a challenge for curators and archivists in how they collect, preserve, and interact with creators and archives visitors.

The preservation of traditional physical materials has not changed much over time. Murray from NYPL points out that the archival standard for paper has been stable for a long time. Practices have not changed substantially, making it easy to train conservationists because there is not a huge discrepancy in methodology between someone trained 50 years ago and someone coming out of school today.



Figure 5 – Digital image taken by Rachael Riggs Leyva of a scrapbook page in better housing in the Thompson Library at the Ohio State University.

Generally, paper-based materials go through the initial preservation process and get put in the appropriate housing, which is typically an acid-free box. Then, the materials are placed in a climate-controlled room and are now considered stable. The only other consideration for the material is how it is delivered to the reading room or an exhibit. Those considerations include how much light it is being exposed to, what pollutants are in the air, who is going to be handling it, the temperature it is going to be in, and how long it is going to be there. After considering all of these factors, the archivist can make a good determination of what the object can withstand to keep it stable.



Figure 6 – Digital image taken by Rachael Riggs Leyva of the Dalcroze Collections in the Thompson Library at the Ohio State University.

Less traditional materials include film and magnetic tape in moving images and audio formats. These also have a physical component in addition to the data stored on them. The method for preservation of these materials is constantly shifting. Murray mentioned that when she worked at the Library of Congress 10 years ago, the method for preservation at that time was to transfer all moving images to DigiBeta. Then, it shifted to DVDs and now at NYPL, she makes everything into digital files. Creating a digital

preservation copy is the current method of preservation for all moving image and audio material.



Figure 7 – Digital image taken by Rachael Riggs Leyva of piles of audio reels in the Thompson Library at the Ohio State University.

Leyva from the TRI also experienced firsthand the changes in technology. While working with the Bebe Miller collection, there was a variety of moving image formats

including Hi8 tapes, Beta tapes, VHS, mini HD DVDs, and DVDs. The collection ranged from 1985 to 2010, which is not that long of a time period. The concern with receiving all these different formats is that you also need the correct equipment to access the information. If the equipment no longer exists or works properly, that data is lost. Leyva elaborates on the importance of possessing the right equipment: “Is there a thing that can make that come alive again? Because when you have a photograph, you have a project’s piece of paper or you have a choreographer’s handwritten notebook or something like that, you can just access it by having that thing whereas the digital needs to have this intermediary that may or may not continue to exist.”

Austin from Jacob’s Pillow used the example of Japanese companies discontinuing the production of VCRs. This news broke a few days before our interview. Archival sites were sharing articles about it on social media. She elaborates that archivists deal with obsolete formats and the capability to access things a lot. She believes that it will only continue to become more of a challenge as older formats stop being produced. Time is a major factor in converting analog formats to digital ones.

Many archives practice the “Lots of Copies, Keep Stuff Safe” (LOCKSS) concept. The institution makes multiple copies and keeps a portion of them in a geographically remote storage facility. That is one method of keeping materials secure, however it does not take into account that digital files break down so you have to keep re-digitizing the copies, which is time consuming. Couch from the TRI also mentions that preserving video is expensive because of the different formats and the fact that there is just so much of it.

Murray comments that the workflow never ends this way. “We’re living in an era where libraries and archives are being asked to work with tighter budgets and fewer staff. So the work that it takes to preserve all of our audio and digital is substantial and it seems to be sustained. But it’s not something that when we do it, it goes away.” The current preservation methods themselves will eventually require updates. This is an ongoing challenge in the field that archivists will struggle with for a very long time.

However, there has been a huge shift away from physical material to digital material not just in dance, but also in culture at large. Digital items like e-mail, desktop emulations, electronic records, and digital files of moving image or audio are becoming more prevalent. Creators are moving away from writing things down and using technology more and more for correspondence, inspiration, and documentation. Most dance creation is happening virtually. Even press materials are sent through e-mail, social media, or a website.

“All of those methodologies by which we now promote our art and make our art, they’re not secure,” warns Murray. There is a general misconception that people believe when something is saved to the cloud, that it will be safe and secure. It is better if it is saved on a hard drive and there are multiple backups of files.

Couch adds that the digital preservation form takes up so much space. Austin also stressed this point. Sometimes working with the information technology (IT) department can be a point of contention because they have different priorities than the archivists. Austin says, “We want to save everything as much as possible, but video files are gigantic.” IT would rather make the files more efficient rather than capture everything at the highest quality possible.

Austin also said the number one challenge was time in any digitization project. The amount of time that it takes to digitize all these different video formats is immense. Editing what is essential and what is not included in a moving image can be difficult. Prioritizing what gets digitized first can be a challenge. All analog formats need to be digitized in real time. Most recorded performances are 1-2 hours long and digitization happens as it is running. When there are a large number of videos to digitize, this can easily turn into hundreds or thousands of hours.

In addition to the time, skill is also required to digitize video. People need to be trained to use the best software available to the organization. Since software can also update to new versions every few years, this can be another challenge to overcome when people need to be re-trained in new processes. Austin used the example at Jacob's Pillow Dance. The staff used to use FinalCut Pro to digitize and edit their video documentation. Recently, the entire organization switched to Adobe Premiere. Staying on top of new technologies and software by offering training to stay ahead of the learning curve can be difficult.

Even when the physical materials received are digitized, there is no guarantee that the quality will be good. The archive will receive as high a RPM that the digitizing unit, whether it is in house or sent to a specialist, can get. The age of the material and the amount of degradation will also lower the quality of the digital copy.

Formats of digital files can also be a concern. Leyva uses the example of Microsoft Word documents. She has received some that will not open because they are not compatible with the current version. People believe that since it is Microsoft and it has been around forever, that it will always be the best choice for saving notes. Leyva

also mentions PDF files that are considered standard currently. She expresses, “Who knows in the future if that will even be a file type we use anymore. And then what happens to all of it?”

The advantage of digital files over analog formats is that reformatting is a fairly quick process and not time-based. Owen from Jacob’s Pillow states that theoretically a digital file will last forever. Archivists need to stay proactive when new or updated formats become the standard.

Despite the changes in technology and the challenges that come with it, Williams sums up the responsibility of archivists by stating, “While the technology may change over time, what we need to collect remains constant.”

CONCLUSION

Curators and archivists may not always see eye-to-eye with dance companies, but they are attempting to preserve what they can with the help and collaboration of the creators. The relationship established between the archivists and the creators is one of the most important for the archives to have. Without that, there are no archival dance materials to preserve and share with the public.

All of the interviewees expressed a need to preserve dance because of the nature of the art form being ephemeral. There's no score and no script that perfectly captures dance in the moment. A recorded performance is not the same as a live one, but documentation still can be useful for learning about the culture at the time, inspiration for new creative work, and restaging older works. Williams from the TRI at OSU explains the ephemerality of dance: "While we can preserve dance from many angles and using as many different media as possible, you're never going to be able to capture that moment when a dance is first performed. There are all sorts of historical and cultural contexts surrounding first performances and dance works and according to the way dancers are trained in that moment of time. You can never sort of transfer that ephemeral knowledge to the future. You can pull the fragments out of that performance and you can sort of pull the artifacts left behind, but you're never going to be able to completely recreate a dance work in its entirety, in that historical framework and in that cultural context."

Owen from Jacob's Pillow Dance used an analogy to illustrate the importance of preserving dance. "Suzanne Carbonneau, when she was asked about the value of the recorded image – she teaches at George Mason University so she was speaking from her

standpoint as a college professor and why she found it of value to use the moving image when she's talking about dance in the classroom. And she made the analogy of it would be as if, think about an English class and maybe the topic is *Moby Dick* and rather than being able to assign the class to read the book and to experience it firsthand, instead the only way to communicate anything about it would be to let the professor describe the book. Well, let me tell you about this book and here's what it's about and it boggles the mind in terms of not having the primary document, the primary work available to be able to be looked at and discussed. And I think that's what we're talking about here. If you do not have 'the dance' and not just a review of it or a photograph of it or a description of it then that is lost to time."

Choreographers and dancers are using the archives in these motivations.

However, more dance researchers than dance creators are utilizing the archives for their means. Perhaps in the future it would be possible to involve the dance community more.

Murray from NYPL mentioned that when dancers are trained, they learn technique and choreography, but she says that in her experience they do not learn dance history or theory. This is unlike training to be a musician or in theatre. As a result, dancers know very little about their own discipline and the people that came before them. Archives could potentially grow the next generation of the dance community through education.

The growth of technology and interconnectedness has also affected how dance companies use archives. A lot of moving image and audio clips can be found online, but most materials are still only available on site. The legalistic reasons why can be confusing to some who just wants to see something without bad intentions. Those reasons

have become complicated with the ability to reach a wider audience without as much regulation by the archives.

However, digital files are becoming the new normal and are easier to share and reformat if necessary. The unproven nature of the formats is daunting to the archivists that have promised to preserve the data. But the availability to choreographers and dancers to record data on their phones, tablets, or computers, make documentation quicker and easier, preserving more aspects of dance than were previously able to be preserved.

The dance preservation field may never catch up to the newest technology, but processes need to be in place to handle what to do when adapting to a new format. Often, there needs to be a balance between the latest technology and what's been tried and remained popular and stable. This can be difficult to judge. But as creators try out new technology to help create, understand, and reshape dance, archivists need to stay ahead of the learning curve in order to collaborate effectively in documenting and preserving dance.

In the course of speaking with the curators and archivists from every organization, they shared their opinions on what the dance preservation field should focus on in the future. Most have to do with technology challenges and how that will create changes in documentation and preservation processes. I would like to end with some recommendations for archivists and dance creators who need to continue collaboration for the success of dance preservation.

Linda Murray from NYPL suggests that archives need to rethink their policies on when to reach out to creators for assisting in documentation. The traditional method is to

wait until someone has stopped working and then go out and collect their materials that they have amassed over the course of their career. Digital materials may disappear after five years and certainly it may be very hard to find certain files after 10 years.

Institutions will need to develop policies on how to assist creators in preserving their work throughout their careers. In return, the creators will need to take ownership of their responsibilities. They will need to educate themselves on how to best use technology to collect and archive materials digitally. Dance educators could teach young dancers and choreographers about the importance of documenting and archiving their work so they can be in a better position to preserve their creative works as they enter their careers. Creators will also need to use some sort of system when cataloging their files. Murray asks, “Are they putting it in specific folders by project, are they sorting things out by year, or is everything just higgledy-piggledy on the desktop and nobody will ever be able to make sense of it when they’re gone?”

Libby Smigel from the Library of Congress had similar thoughts on documentation and preservation going forward. She also stresses the importance of creators keeping their materials in order to use them for anniversaries, exhibits, grant applications, teachings, and restaging. However, most creators do not have the education or capacity to preserve their materials. This is where archivists need to step in and assist. Right now archivists are too isolated at their respective organizations. This collaboration can help create what Smigel calls a “living archive.” However, for this recommendation to succeed, an entire culture shift will need to occur in both the archivist and dance communities.

Speaking on culture, Nena Couch from the TRI at OSU emphasizes that dance is a part of cultural heritage. She uses the example of a hula dancer who looked at some of the Labanotation scores of hula dance in the Thompson Library. The scores were recorded in the 1970s and when this young woman reviewed the scores, there had been a technique change in the arm movement. Without the documentation of this kind of critical piece of dance and its subsequent preservation, no one would have known there was a change in the performance of hula.

Another point Couch brings up is that rights issues associated with moving image are particularly problematic for dance. She hears repeatedly from dance faculty that it is important for students to see the major companies and choreographers, but there is not a large selection of moving image material available. The Dance Heritage Coalition has worked on creating a fair use document for moving images of dance. However, most archivists are being cautious and only using it for short excerpts and not full works. Ultimately, this is a larger issue that the dance preservation community is not going to be able to champion on its own.

Leyva also talks about access restriction to materials because of rights. Physical materials cannot be digitized because of copyright holders not granting free access or being absent. This means that a majority of dance archival materials can only be accessed on site. This can be very difficult for the dance community to access if they are not in the local area of the archive. There needs to be a way to open up access, which is not what digitization has achieved. This will be an ongoing question that needs to be continually weighed and balanced between open access for the public and protection of IP rights for the choreographers.

Documentation is only the beginning step towards preserving dance materials. Owen stresses the importance of creators using documentation however they can to record their creative processes and performances. Instead of comparing themselves to another archival institution or dance company, creators should use whatever they have even if that means a pencil and paper. As long as it is something that will not disappear before someone can get to it for preservation. He uses the example of José Limón. All he had was a pencil and several legal pads where he wrote the beginnings of an autobiography. Now those writings are a book.

Austin expanded on Owen's recommendations to creators. She says that culture now seems to be about capturing everything. People are more aware of dating something. It has become ingrained in us through social media sharing. The technology now is more conducive to capturing something easily as opposed to just a century before.

The challenge with the major influx of digital materials is whether they are properly labeled and categorized. If archival materials are not correctly identified, then no one can find and learn from them. Austin states that is why it is important to have artist-driven and crowd-sourced archives. People who know or were there are able to identify materials even if the creator is gone.

The importance of dance preservation is just as important as preserving any part of culture. The challenges of time and technology are only the newest hurdles in the preservation of an ephemeral art form. For the future of dance preservation, it is apparent that creators and archivists will need to collaborate and learn from each other to grow the reach of the field. Hopefully in the future, dance education and documentation will take up a larger station in the dance community for the betterment of future dance generations.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) What types of materials are typically being archived?
- 2) What difficulties do you face preserving and updating older materials?
- 3) Who are your target audiences and how do they use the archives?
- 4) What dance groups do you work with and in what capacity?
- 5) What challenges do you face working collaboratively with choreographers wanting to contribute to the archives?
- 6) Are there general considerations or guidelines about legality and IP rights?
- 7) What are the benefits of preserving dance?
- 8) Do you have any recommendations for the future of the dance preservation field?
- 9) Is there any one else I should talk to about your archives?

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