

Marquette University
e-Publications@Marquette

Philosophy Faculty Research and Publications

Philosophy, Department of

1-1-1998

Foreword in "International Encyclopedia of Dance"

Curtis Carter

Marquette University, curtis.carter@marquette.edu

Published version. "Foreword," in *International Encyclopedia of Dance*. Eds. Selma Jeanne Cohen. New York; Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1998: ix-xv. [Publisher Link](#). © 1998 Oxford University Press. Used with permission.

FOREWORD



THE GENESIS OF THE *INTERNATIONAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF DANCE* WAS IN 1974 AT A meeting of the Dance Critics' Association when conference speakers Arlene Croce, dance critic for the *New Yorker*, and Selma Jeanne Cohen, then editor of *Dance Perspectives*, independently cited the need for a comprehensive scholarly encyclopedia for the field of dance. Shortly thereafter, an *ad hoc* committee chaired by Selma Jeanne Cohen met in New York to begin to define the parameters of a world dance encyclopedia. Members of the committee included Selma Jeanne Cohen (chair), Leon Braun, Nancy Goldner, Marcia Marks, and Nancy Reynolds.

HISTORY OF THE PROJECT

In 1976, Dance Perspectives Foundation, Inc., the publisher of *Dance Perspectives*, established by A. J. Pischl and Selma Jeanne Cohen as a series of monographs in 1960 and continued until 1976, was awarded a grant of \$24,859 by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to fund a planning conference of leading dance scholars. The conference was held in December 1976 in New York. A questionnaire had been circulated to approximately twenty-five consultants from around the world prior to the conference, inviting their responses to the project and a series of questions concerning its structure and content. A compilation of the results had been sent to conference participants for study prior to their arrival, and conference attendees had been asked to come prepared to comment on the proposed outline for the encyclopedia, to consider illustrations, and to identify experts to serve as advisers and authors for the project. Lincoln Kirstein, general director of the New York City Ballet, gave the conference keynote address. Mr. Kirstein expressed the hope that the encyclopedia would represent the views of consultants with expertise in various fields. He warned against basing the encyclopedia "either on the rarefied euphoria of dance buffs and balletomanes or on the amateurism of critics whose overly specialized monologues speak mainly to themselves" (*New York Times*, 3 January 1977).

Among those participating in the planning conference were international scholars such as Erik Aschengreen (University of Copenhagen), Marie-Françoise Christout (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris), and Horst Koegler (dance critic, Berlin) as well as American representatives, including Genevieve Oswald, curator of the Dance Collection of the New York Public Library, Martha Hill, director of dance at the Juilliard School in New York, anthropologists, and scholars from various disciplines relating to dance. Others such as Elizabeth Souritz and Vera Krasovskaya (Russia), Yasuji Honda (Japan), Mohan Khokar (India), Ivor Guest (England), and Gedeon P. Dienes (Hungary) responded to the questionnaire but were unable to attend the conference.

The meeting set the tone for what would become the guiding philosophy of the encyclopedia. The following criteria were established for the future development of the encyclopedia:

1. The encyclopedia would be a multivolume work.
2. Coverage would be international, with entries on all forms of dance in all countries of the world, but entries on persons would be selective.
3. Editorial control would be vested in a small board of American dance historians, supported by consultants with expertise in worldwide geographic and thematic areas.
4. The encyclopedia would be designed to bring joy as well as enlightenment.

The conferees determined three major areas of dance to be covered in the encyclopedia: Western theatrical dance, theatrical dance in the non-Western world, and ritual and recreational forms of dance. An extensive list of consultants representative of the many aspects of dance to be included was established to assure the fullest range of knowledge of the field. The consultants were intended to form a link between the broader perspectives of the editorial board and the expertise of specialized writers. The initial proposal called for an encyclopedia consisting of eight volumes of 848 pages each with five thousand illustrations. In 1977 the NEH made a supplemental grant of \$13,464 for additional small-group meetings to refine the concepts and subject matter.

The Dance Perspectives Foundation undertook sponsorship of the *International Encyclopedia of Dance (IED)* in fulfillment of its mission to encourage awareness and understanding of dance as an artistic tradition of great historical import and as a significant cultural force in contemporary life. The Foundation is concerned with aiding students, scholars, and the general public in their efforts to provide accurate information on dance in all of its forms, including theatrical, ritual, recreational, therapeutic, folk, social, and popular dance from cultures throughout the world. The encyclopedia is intended to address a need arising from the growing popularity of dance and the number of readers seeking information about dance.

One of the first tasks of the Foundation was to constitute an editorial board for the encyclopedia. Selma Jeanne Cohen was appointed editor in chief, and George Dorris, Nancy Goldner, Beate Gordon, Nancy Reynolds, David Vaughan, and Suzanne Youngerman were appointed to assist her as area editors. This board was empowered to plan the contents of the encyclopedia, covering all forms of dance throughout the world. Areas of editorial responsibilities were divided as follows: Cohen (aesthetics, reference, Russia, and various countries); Dorris (dance and music, 1400–1800); Goldner (modern dance and twentieth-century ballet), Gordon (Asian dance); Reynolds (dance and technique up to 1400 and modern ballet), Vaughan (British ballet, avant-garde dance, film and video, and social dance), Youngerman (anthropology and folk dance).

As the project evolved, the subsequent plan for the encyclopedia called for a four-volume work, containing between seven hundred and a thousand illustrations, with a fifth volume to include an index and chronologies. Its contributors were to include some 230 scholars. The contents were to consist of articles on the history of dance in various countries, interpretive essays on historical subjects and thematic motifs, including such topics as aesthetics, criticism, dance works, film, music, lighting, genre, education, companies, and dance organizations, and biographical sketches of dancers, choreographers, composers, designers, impresarios, and writers.

In 1980, the Dance Perspectives Foundation entered into conversations with publisher Charles Scribner's Sons, which resulted in development of a project budget and an agreement to publish the encyclopedia. In addition to planning the con-

tents, the *IED* editors were charged with the following duties: to identify qualified contributors for the articles planned; to commission the articles; to review, edit, and approve manuscripts submitted; and to deliver approved manuscripts to the publisher. Of the initial project budget of \$738,000, Scribner's agreed to bear \$562,000. To complete the project, the Dance Perspectives Foundation would be required to raise an additional \$221,000. The National Endowment for the Humanities again came forth with \$109,883 to launch the project, and the Foundation made plans to secure the additional support required. Major grants from several national foundations, a bequest from Mr. Frank Tick, and generous contributions from other foundations and many individuals (all of whom are acknowledged below) rounded out the necessary funding to complete the project.

Work on the *International Encyclopedia of Dance* began with high enthusiasm and expectations on the part of the editorial board, the publisher, and the Foundation. Endorsements for the project came from scholars and artists in the field including Rudolf Arnheim, Agnes de Mille, Dame Margot Fonteyn, Gene Kelly, Lincoln Kirstein, Jerome Robbins, and Walter Terry. A reception at the Century Club in New York, hosted by Scribner's on 11 January 1982, celebrated the launching and heightened interest among potential funding sources and the press. The guest list included Charles Scribner, Jr., members of the *IED* editorial board and the board of directors of the Dance Perspectives Foundation, members of the press, and various luminaries of the dance and philanthropic communities, including Lincoln Kirstein and Jerome Robbins, as well as representatives of the Ford, Mellon, and Kress Foundations and others interested in the success of the project.

The encyclopedia stirred excitement because it was a pioneering venture. There was in fact no deep tradition to draw upon in the newly emerging field of dance scholarship. The enthusiasm of the *IED* editors and authors was refreshing to the NEH program officers, who normally worked in more established scholarly disciplines. The writers commissioned for the encyclopedia included acclaimed international authors in dance history. Others were scholars in fields other than dance with an interest in some aspect of dance. In some instances it was necessary to draw upon authors who were expert practitioners but who had less experience as writers or scholars.

With publication initially anticipated in 1983, work had begun in earnest upon the awarding of the third grant from the NEH. Manuscripts were edited by the *IED* editorial board, approved, and eventually delivered to the managing editor at Scribner's. It then became apparent that the emergent state of dance history was having an unexpected, adverse effect on the project. Because much of the research was original material, completed manuscripts frequently posed problems for the Scribner's copyeditors, who were accustomed to "fact checking" by verifying information from existing sources. Apart from varying standards of scholarship among English writers, no consistent standard for scholarly content or format existed among the writers of different nations, some of whom did not write in English. These problems needed to be addressed through costly translation and sometimes extensive rewriting. As the project grew, the editorial board found it necessary to expand the number of commissioned articles to adequately meet its objective of worldwide coverage. As the complexities of the project became more apparent, and as problems of communicating with contributors in distant parts of the world became increasingly difficult, the anticipated publication date was advanced, as it would be many times over the next decade.

The project ultimately passed through two publishing houses before it came to fruition in 1998 at Oxford University Press. The project remained with Charles Scribner's Sons from 1981 to 1986, when Scribner's was sold to Macmillan Publishing Company. During this period the project passed through the hands of three managing editors: Kirk Reynolds, James F. Maurer, and Michael McGinley. In 1985, Marshall de Breuhl resigned his post as head of the Reference Department at Scribner's. A physical move of the Scribner's offices to the Macmillan building resulted in the loss of manuscripts and important mail concerning the project. These changes, together with other problems, did not bode well for the encyclopedia.

Differences intensified between the *IED* editorial board and the editors at Scribner's, who apparently lacked the necessary background in dance to give the project proper direction. The publisher became increasingly discontented, citing problems relating to progress with copyediting and costly rewriting, disagreement over editing responsibilities, an expanding list of manuscript commissions, and delays in the delivery of the final manuscript. On its side, the editorial board found unsatisfactory Scribner's administration of the project, editing, and the failure to provide constructive feedback as to the publisher's expectations. By the end of the year, the editorial board had expressed serious doubts about remaining with Scribner's. When negotiations failed to resolve the difficulties, Allan Wittman, a senior vice-president of Macmillan Publishing Company, notified the Foundation in March 1987 that the agreement to publish the encyclopedia was terminated.

Although disappointed, the Dance Perspectives Foundation and the *IED* editorial board were determined to find another publisher and to complete the project. Various options were explored, including the possibility of turning over the project to the Society of Dance History Scholars for completion. This was a low point for the project. Tensions between the Foundation board and the *IED* editorial board emerged; fundraising and editorial progress were at issue. Editors and contributors alike began to feel that the project might never be completed, and their interest languished.

Hope was restored in 1988 when the University of California Press agreed to publish the encyclopedia. Alain Hénon, senior vice-president, and Doris Kretzmer, project manager, were responsible for overseeing the project at the press. Jane-Ellen Long was named managing editor, and was subsequently replaced by Sandria Freitag. The terms of the contract with the University of California Press provided for additional compensation for the *IED* editorial board as well as funds to pay for illustrations, indexing, and all other anticipated costs. Joint funding efforts of the Foundation and the press produced additional revenues for the project. Based upon the prior years' experience, the agreement clearly delineated the respective duties of the Foundation and the press with respect to future costs for illustrations, editing, and other administrative details that had plagued the previous publishing agreement with Scribner's and Macmillan.

The manuscript moved toward completion at the University of California Press, and additional funding was provided to the *IED* editors from the press and the Foundation. These advancements were nevertheless accompanied by continuing problems centering on communication between the *IED* editorial board and copyeditors at the University of California Press over substantive questions, matters of usage, copyeditorial style, timely return of copyedited manuscripts, and other issues. These matters, exacerbated by the familiar, basic problem of copyeditors' lack of knowledge of dance history and coupled with other, serious problems with the selection and sizing of illustrations, securing permission for use, and writing

appropriate captions further delayed production. In July 1991, the project again came to a halt, as communications had further deteriorated, and it was apparent to the University of California Press administration that continuation would require additional funding on the part of the press. An agreement was reached between the Foundation, the editorial board, and the press to continue the project. The project remained with the University of California Press until budget cuts by the state reduced funds for the university system and forced the press to abandon the project in August 1993.

Upon termination of the publishing agreement with the University of California Press, Selma Jeanne Cohen contacted Claude Conyers, an editor knowledgeable in dance who had become editorial director of the Scholarly and Professional Reference Department at Oxford University Press. Encouraged by his interest, the Foundation entered into formal negotiations with him, and an agreement between the Foundation and Oxford was signed in April 1994. Elizabeth Aldrich, a respected dance historian, was named managing editor. Three distinguished dance historians—Elizabeth Souritz, in Russia; Horst Kogler, in Germany, and Richard Ralph, in England—and Thomas F. Kelly, a noted music historian in the United States, were formally engaged as editorial consultants to the project, and a large international group of scholars was enlisted in an advisory capacity.

The agreement between the Foundation and Oxford called for additional subventions for the *IED* editorial board and provided for all costs of continuing and completing the project to be covered by Oxford, with only a modest sum to be charged against the Foundation's royalties. While at Oxford, the project was substantially revised and expanded: virtually all manuscripts were retyped to restore articles to their original state; articles were then copyedited in accordance with a well-developed, rigorous style scheme and returned to contributors for review, approval, and updating; bibliographies were reconstructed and updated; an entirely new illustrations program of more than two thousand illustrations was created; and approximately three hundred new articles were commissioned to fill gaps in the initial program. The result was the expansion of the encyclopedia from four volumes of moderate size to six large volumes in oversize format.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

An undertaking of the magnitude of the *International Encyclopedia of Dance* is the result of years of work by many people. First among these is the founding editor in chief, Selma Jeanne Cohen, whose pioneering vision and initiative on behalf of dance scholarship launched the encyclopedia. On behalf of the board of directors of the Dance Perspectives Foundation, I would like to express particular gratitude to Selma Jeanne Cohen for her steadfast determination to ensure excellence for dance regardless of obstacles, and to the other area editors, George Dorris, Nancy Goldner, Beate Gordon, Nancy Reynolds, David Vaughan, and Suzanne Youngerman, for their scholarly efforts and perseverance, and to Brian Rushton, who served briefly as managing editor in 1986. The members of the editorial board frequently provided expertise in publishing, fundraising, and other matters well beyond their editorial duties. They leaped into the project, learning over the years the demands of time and the financial resources required to produce an encyclopedia of the scope envisioned. The emerging state of scholarship twenty years ago when the project began, and the lack of experience of writers and publishers alike with the demand of melding so many aspects of dance from so many cultures, as well as

limited funding, undoubtedly contributed to the arduousness of completing the project. The process has been a laborious, sometimes infelicitous process for all who were involved. Nevertheless, through such efforts, the field of dance as an area of knowledge has been substantially advanced.

Without the willingness of the three publishers to chance their fortunes on an uncharted field whose scholars were still finding their way, this project could not have proceeded. For their courage and support of the developing field of dance scholarship, Charles Scribner's Sons, the University of California Press, and Oxford University Press deserve high praise. Thanks are due to Charles Scribner, Jr., Marshall de Breuhl, James Mauer, Michael McGinley, and Kirk Reynolds at Scribner's and to Alain Hénon, Doris Kretschmer, Jane-Ellen Long, and Sandria Frietag at the University of California Press for the various roles they played in moving the project forward. But of course the highest honor accorded to the publishers is reserved for Claude Conyers, Elizabeth Aldrich, and the project staff at Oxford University Press, who, building upon the considerable achievements of the editorial board and the authors, have succeeded admirably in bringing to fruition a most challenging project. Their commitment to the project and their professionalism based on Oxford's long tradition of excellence in publishing have brought to the encyclopedia the highest standards for the production of scholarly reference works. Given their efforts, I am confident that the encyclopedia accurately represents the state of dance scholarship as an evolving field and that it provides a framework into which future disclosures of knowledge concerning dance can easily be incorporated.

The participation of the National Endowment of the Humanities as the major funding source, apart from the publishers, represents an enlightened gesture toward the advancement of knowledge. Surely without this funding for the research and editing, the project would never have attracted the interest of publishers or of other major contributors. The grants and gifts of Mr. Frank Tick, The Ford Foundation, The L. J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation, Philip Morris Companies, Inc., and The Rockefeller Foundation were instrumental in keeping the project moving forward. Additional generous grants were received from Capezio/Ballet Makers Dance Foundation Inc., The Capezio Foundation, The Harry De Jur Foundation, The Howard Gilman Foundation, International Research and Exchanges Board, The Jerome Robbins Foundation, and The Roth Family Foundation. Other corporate donors were the Associates of the University of California Press, The Schwarz School of Dance, and Zivili: Dances and Music of the Southern Slavic Nations. Individual donors included Lynn Price Ager, Allen Albert, Robyn A. Bissell, Helene Breazeale, Mary Alice Brennan, Elizabeth Burtner, Curtis L. Carter, Judith Chazin-Bennahum, Lila Cheville, Andrew Crystal, Janice E. Day, Timothy J. Debaets, Jerry C. Duke, Judy Dworin, Patricia Egan, Vera L. Embree, Lynne Emery, F. Mary Fee, Mary J. Freshley, Leslie Getz, Janet Goodridge, Olive Holmes, Dawn Lille Horwitz, Judith Brin Ingber, Charlotte Irely, Nancy Celeste Nix Jones, Elizabeth Kagan, Ruth C. Lert, Greta A. Levart, Gertrude Lippincott, Valentina Litvinoff, Billie Mahoney, Mary Ann O'Brian Malkin, P. W. Manchester, Richard Marcuse, Kennetha R. McArthur, Katia McClain, Raphael F. Miller, Ruth L. Murray, Shirley C. Murray, Nadia Nahumck, Patricia Nanon, Anna Nassif, Karen Nelson, Martha Nishitani, Constance Old, Helen Priest Rogers, Bernice M. Rosen, Patricia Sandback, Luise E. Scripps, Sylvia J. Shaw, Barbara B. Smith, Estelle Sommers, Manon Souriau, Leslie Steinau, Ernestine Stodelle, Rose L. Strasser, Gloria Strauss, Lawrence Sullivan, Rouben Ter-Arutunian, Carol Téten, Rose

Anne Thom, Anne Tolbert, Muriel Topaz, Alice E. Trexler, Maria Butler Troiano, Margery J. Turner, Catherine Turocy, Judy Van Zile, Bessie Schönberg Varley, Lucy Venable, Patricia Welling, Shirley Wimmer, and Carl Wolz. To all of the foregoing, we extend our thanks.

The role of the Dance Perspectives Foundation officers and board of directors has been to oversee the legal and fiscal aspects of the arrangement with the publishers, to encourage and monitor editorial progress, and to assist with raising funds from foundations, corporations, and individual contributors. At the beginning of the project in 1981, the officers of the Dance Perspectives Foundation were Timothy DeBaets, president, Curtis L. Carter, vice-president, and Selma Jeanne Cohen, secretary. Beginning with the presidency of Timothy DeBaets (1980–1984), the board has actively guided the project. Robin Woodard, president (1985–1987), was particularly instrumental in seeking corporate funding and in steering the project carefully through troubled waters at the end of the Foundation's agreement with Scribner's. Curtis L. Carter, president (1988 to the present), led the negotiations leading to publishing agreements first with the University of California Press and subsequently with Oxford University Press. Through the years, numerous Dance Perspective Foundation board members have contributed to the completion of the encyclopedia. I would like to thank our present board members, Madeleine M. Nichols, vice-president; Hugh Timothy Dugan, treasurer; Patricia Egan; Jonnie Greene; Donald F. McDonagh; and Nancy Walters-Yvertes, along with our predecessors Allan Alberts, Reynaldo Gamboa Alejandro, Mary Bueno, Constance Old, Barbara Palfy, Audrey Ross, Brian Rushton, Fredrika Santos, and Violette Verdy, now honorary director, for their efforts.

—CURTIS L. CARTER
 President,
 Dance Perspectives Foundation, Inc.