Dancing Digital Project:
Creating National Access to Digital Dance Resources

Rebecca Salzer and Carlson H. Coogler
University of Alabama
March 31, 2021

Table of Contents

Introduction

The Dancing Digital Project, led by Rebecca Salzer at the University of Alabama, involves a team of dance artists, educators, scholars, archivists, and legal and systems design specialists, working together to create and improve access to more searchable, complete, equitable, inclusive, sustainable, and forward-thinking dance resources online. This Final Position Paper reflects findings from the project's planning stage, supported by a Level I NEH Digital Humanities Advancement Grant titled *Creating National Access to Digital Dance Resources*.

Background

Dance expresses and communicates history and culture. One of the great challenges for dance scholarship and education has been its intangibility. Despite the existence of several notation systems, dance remains largely an oral tradition, transferred from teacher to student and performer to performer. Film and video recording technologies revolutionized dance education and spurred the field of dance scholarship, with film and video now serving as one iteration of dance "text," expanding opportunities for both preservation and analysis. But technological progress has not been matched with corresponding improvements to access because of specific challenges in the field. Prominent among these challenges are the intellectual property complexities inherent in dance performance and the custodianship of dance legacy by a decentralized constellation of individual choreographers and small arts organizations, all of whom lack the resources to preserve and share their assets. These particular barriers to the dissemination and preservation of dance works have meant that while digital dance archives[1] and online dance technology resources[2] continue to develop, much of the dance accessible online remains heavily excerpted and geared toward publicity and fundraising. Broad access to *full-length* recordings of dance, needed for dance scholarship and education, is not yet available.[3]

The sudden emergence of Covid-19 and the resulting shut-down of live performances globally have transformed the dance landscape. Long-held fears that releasing recordings will discourage live audiences and promote intellectual property theft have given way to the realization that, during this time of social distancing, digital dance recordings are the lifeblood of the field. Artists and companies now stream entire season's worth of full-length recordings in place of canceled performances, and dance educators, having moved to online instruction, are completely reliant upon them.

---

[1] Seminal examples of digital archives for dance include *Siobhan Davies Replay*, www.siobhandaviesreplay.com/ (2009), and David Gordon's *Archivography*, www.davidgordon.nyc/, (2016). *The Mark Morris Dance Archive* (www.studentwork.prattsi.org/foundations/2018/12/11/digital-archives-and-preservation-at-the-mark-morris-dance-center/) is a dance archive-in-progress, and the University of Maryland is currently developing an archive for Liz Lerman's work with NEH support (www.arhu.umd.edu/news/digitizing-future).

[2] Online resources devoted to exploring dance technology include *Synchronous Objects*, www.synchronousobjects.osu.edu/ (2009), and *Motion Bank,* www.motionbank.org/en.html (2010-2013).

[3] At the time of this writing, *Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive*, www.danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/, which does integrate scholarly contextualization with dance video and film, has not yet been able to support the streaming of un-excerpted dance recordings outside of its immediate geographical area. National access to full-length dance recordings is a key and differentiating aspect of this proposal. *Motion Bank*, www.motionbank.org/en.html, also includes a selection of full-length recordings of works by choreographers Jonathan Burrows, Deborah Hay, Bebe Miller, and William Forsythe, a model this project seeks to broaden.

While the pandemic has highlighted the value of recorded dance, it has also exacerbated the instability of dance's recorded heritage. Before the pandemic, the funding and infrastructure to preserve and grant online access to recorded collections was the province of only the most elite cultural institutions. Now, with the survival of organizations large and small threatened by the global shut-down, recorded dance legacies are at unprecedented risk, and the need for a more informed and energetic approach to access and preservation of dance recordings has never been clearer. Dancing Digital continues to approach access and preservation issues on the macro level, taking stock of the broad needs of national and international dance communities, and on the micro level of how to practically build better online dance resources. Strengthening how dance is represented, shared, and preserved online will not only help move the field through this unprecedented time but also support the re-emergence of live performance when that is possible; simultaneously preserving the past and choreographing the future.

Project Activities

In response to the longstanding need for better national and international access to recorded dance, which began long before the pandemic, the work for this planning project was divided into three phases. Phase I (January-May 2019) included preparation for a 3-day symposium at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. Phase II consisted of the symposium itself, which took place May 13-16, 2019, and brought together nineteen dance scholars, educators, archivists, curators, and legal and systems design specialists[4] to survey the environmental landscape, review the history of related efforts, and discuss steps toward creating more complete, equitable, discoverable, and sustainable access to recorded dance. In addition to short presentations and roundtables, the symposium also included time for discussion and brainstorming with the goal of arriving at defined next steps. Phase III of the project (May 2019-Dec 2020) focused on disseminating the ideas generated in the May 2019 Dancing Digital Symposium and on continuing to research, network, and gather feedback to lay the groundwork for pilot design/implementation. The Project Director and working group have pursued these goals largely through panel presentations at national conferences, targeting a wide variety of constituencies. Between October 2019 and February 2020, the working group presented the project and gathered feedback at four national dance-specific conferences and one national digital humanities conference.[5]

Along with the public presentations that were part of Phase III, the working group

---

[4] Symposium attendees included Melanie Aceto, Harmony Bench, Patrick Corbin, Lane Czaplinski, Alison D'Amato, Shana Habel, Sybil Huskey, Peter Jaszi, Eugenia Kim, Hannah Kosstrin, Sali Ann Kriegsman, Ann Ladyem McDivitt, Susan McGreevy-Nichols, Laura Pettingbone Wright, E. Gaynell Sherrod, Libby Smigel, Imogen Smith, Lynne Webber, and the Project Director.

[5] Salzer, Rebecca. "Dancing Digital." Presented at the Digitorium Conference, Bryant-Denny Conference Center, Tuscaloosa, AL, October 2019.
Aceto, Melanie, Meg Brooker, Rebecca Salzer, E. Gaynell Sherrod, and Lynne Weber. "Envisioning Digital Dance Spaces for Diversity and Inclusion." Presented at the Women in Dance Leadership Conference, Drexel University, Philadelphia, October 2019.
Brooker, Meg, Shana Habel, Hannah Kosstrin, Laura Pettibone Wright, Rebecca Salzer, E. Gaynell Sherrod, and Lynne Weber. "Dancing Digital: A Future Online Dance Resource." Presented at the National Dance Education Organization Conference, Hyatt Hotel, Miami, FL, October 2019.
Mason, Gesel, Rebecca Salzer, and Norah Zuniga Shaw. "Envisioning Dance in Digital Space." Presented at the Joyce/NYU American Dance Platform 2020, New York University, New York, NY, January 2020.
Lee, Anthea, Rebecca Salzer, and E. Gaynell Sherrod. "Dancing Digital: A Future Online Dance Resource." Presented at the IABD/Philadanco 32nd Annual International Conference of Blacks in Dance, Doubletree Hotel, Philadelphia, PA, January 2020.

disseminated the project's findings via the Dancing Digital progress blog.[6] Blog entries outlined the project's mission and vision, provided information on how the project fits into the history of efforts to improve access to online dance resources, and summarized findings from the May Symposium sessions. Additional posts provided insight from veteran digital dance resource pioneers on what creating an online resource requires in terms of funding, people, and infrastructure. In addition to these informational blog posts, the progress blog provided a "Resources" page with an up-to-date compilation of existing online resources that feature dance recordings. In April 2020, as dance education rapidly transitioned from in-person to online, the blog had an average of 700 visitors per week. Since publication in August 2019 and as of this writing, the Dancing Digital progress blog has had over 7,500 page views,[7] underscoring the current need for this work. Furthermore, this final position paper will also be shared on the progress blog and disseminated to the National Dance Education Organization via its member listserv.

Findings

As the planning phase of this project closes, the working group has found that the need for centralized, accessible, equitable, searchable, and sustainable dance resources online is even more profound and urgent than originally understood in the 2018 grant proposal. With the NEH's support to gather experts in the field, the Dancing Digital working group has been able to construct a clearer picture of this need, its implications for dance scholars and educators, and how this project might best apply the Digital Humanities Advancement Grant program's ideas of "experimentation, reuse, and extensibility"[8] to remedy it.

Summary Findings:

- A meaningful step, micro in scope but essential to progress on a larger scale, is the creation of a new online resource that:
    - models a pro-access approach to intellectual property rights, including the granting of public access to full-length dance recordings.
    - is designed and configured for future expansion and aggregation with other online dance collections.
    - models equitable and inclusive curatorial practices.
    - models sustainability of technology, content, and funding.
- The group recognizes the importance of designing features for this new resource in conversation with scholars and educators to facilitate and activate use of full-length dance recordings.
- On a macro level, Dancing Digital sees the need for a national and/or international archive to stabilize the precarious condition of dance legacy and promote dance scholarship and education through lasting, collective action.

---

[6] Salzer, Rebecca, *Dancing Digital Progress Blog* (blog), Alabama Digital Humanities Center, accessed 18 June 2020, www.dancingdigital.org.

[7] Statcounter, "Web Analytics Made Easy", accessed 28 March 2021, statcounter.com/p12088383/summary/daily-psvn-labels-bar-last6months/.

[8] National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), "Digital Humanities Advancement Grants", accessed 25 January 2020, www.neh.gov/grants/odh/digital-humanities-advancement-grants.

Ideally, this archive would also have a laboratory component that would support artists experimenting and innovating new ways to translate dance work to screens. Such an archive/lab could be supported long-term by a consortium of public and private funders, collection-holders, universities, and public institutions.

Following is a more detailed account of these findings organized by a set of guiding questions that have shaped Dancing Digital's research.

Question 1) Is a new online dance resource needed, or is it possible to enhance and connect existing online resources to remedy problems of access, curation, and discoverability?

While this project's goal was to identify new solutions to address major gaps in national access to recorded dance materials, it also recognizes that Dancing Digital is the continuation of a 30+-year effort[9] and that existing online dance platforms, despite their limitations, represent herculean efforts, often by small organizations, to preserve and share dance art. They have moved the field forward, and there is much to learn from them. For example, *Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive*, a pioneer in creating online access to a dance organization's recorded archive, models user-friendly searchability, including multiple ways to browse using controlled vocabularies: by genre, by decade, by artist, and in playlists grouped by shared characteristics.[10] *OntheBoards.tv* has expanded access to recordings of contemporary performance while developing innovative compensation models for contributing artists. *Motion Bank* documents and elucidates process through its inclusion of scores and interviews and its development of free and open-source video annotation software.

Notwithstanding the forward strides these resources represent, lack of searchability *across* them limits their reach. Built to reflect each organization's separate programmatic priorities, these platforms use different digital repository platforms and organize/identify their assets differently, making cross-resource discoverability and aggregation a challenge. For example, documentation and recordings of choreographer Bebe Miller's work are represented on all three online platforms. However, a Google search for Miller's videos only brings up a short excerpt from her 2007 work, *Landing/Place* from *Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive*, even though a full-length recording of Miller's *In a Rhythm* is featured on *OntheBoards.tv* and process documentation of Miller's *TWO* can be found on *Motion Bank*.

Dancing Digital's long-term, aspirational goal of a centralized national or international dance archive could aggregate across these different platforms. It could also counter the vulnerability inherent in placing an artist's recorded legacy in the hands of multiple, small organizations during a time of unprecedented funding scarcity.

As the working group gathered feedback at national conferences and in conversations with scholars, educators, and directors of organizations, it saw the same kind of vulnerability repeated on a large scale. The group saw individuals holding

---

[9] Members of the Dancing Digital working group bring knowledge of this history from their own key roles in these previous efforts, including Sali Ann Kriegsman, through her work at the Smithsonian, the National Endowment for the Arts, Jacob's Pillow, and Alberta Arthur's Digital Dance Library Planning project; and Libby Smigel, as director of Dance Heritage Coalition, and as Dance Curator at the Library of Congress.

[10] Some examples of these playlists include "Solo Women in White," "Vocal Music," and "Numerical Titles."

invaluable recorded collections without the means to preserve or share them. Collections that had succeeded in creating an online presence appeared to be plagued by fragmented and orphaned content resulting from insufficient technical and archival guidance during the publishing process (both symptoms of funding scarcity). These problems, which are not new, have been chipped away at by multiple projects run by individual organizations over the last two decades.[11] However, no individual organization has shown the capacity to match the field's need, especially given the current pandemic-driven state of emergency in dance. A national and/or international archive for dance could preserve and stabilize the field's legacy while promoting and accommodating content growth; this is a long-term goal to which the Dancing Digital team is committed.

As an immediate step, the Dancing Digital team sees value in applying and testing the project's legal, technical, and content ideas through the creation of an online prototype built around a small collection. Discoveries from this practical, granular exploration will inform the project's larger vision.

Question 2) If a new resource is needed, what features are primary/essential?

Rectifying the lack of access to full-length dance recordings is a central goal for this project. While scholars and educators in every other art form can access complete images, recordings, scripts, and scores from all over the world, dance scholars and educators frequently find themselves limited to referencing short video excerpts and edited trailers analogous to one corner of a painting or a few sentences of a novel. These excerpts leave the full ideas and complete artistic gestures of dance artists out of reach.

While access to full-length dance recordings is an acute and immediate need among scholars and educators, providing that access alone is not enough. The Dancing Digital working group recognizes that, ideally, these recordings should be activated and facilitated by a variety of features and interlinked content to create multiple points of entry and drive use. In thinking about specific content and features to serve this purpose, the group considered not only the artistic and historical content of recordings, but also how to prompt discussions about the process of documenting dance, bringing attention to how dance is translated from live performance to the screen with the goal of expanding digital literacy and skill development. The group's preliminary list of suggested features, all of which would need further development to suit the specific needs of scholars and educators, is shared below:

- Video contextualization by contributing artists, scholars, and educators in written form or through:

---

[11] Dance Heritage Coalition (DHC) was founded in 1992 to "preserve, make accessible, enhance and augment the materials that document the artistic accomplishments in dance of the past, present, and future." Since its loss of funding and dissolution as an independent organization, some aspects of DHC's mission have been continued by Dance/USA, into which it was integrated in 2017. These include the Artist's Legacy Toolkit, and fee-based consultations to assist with the organization and planning of recorded legacies. Dance/USA's Archiving and Preservation department also convenes regular meetings of an Affinity Group for key dance collection holders including Jacob's Pillow and the New York Public Library. The Library of Congress is also dedicated to preserving and granting access to recorded dance legacies through its Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound (MBRS) Division and the Music Division.

- ○ Video annotation (comments and information situated within the video).
- ○ Synchronized audio commentary (similar to watching a director's cut of a film).
- Recordings of multiple generations of artists performing the same work to illustrate the evolution of choreographies over time as well as changes in dance training and interpretation.
- Video with synchronized, scrolling Labanotation, to assist in the study of dance notation.
- Video examples that tie into and augment existing digital humanities resources in dance, such as *Movement on the Move*[12] and *Choreographic Lineage*[13].
- K-12 participatory features and teacher-sourced options such as inviting teachers to upload student "reactions" to choreographic works.
- Lesson plans and prompts that bring the recording methods used to capture works into focus. Such materials might ask questions such as
  - ○ How many cameras were used?
  - ○ Do we see less or more because of these choices?
  - ○ How might the piece be different live?
  - ○ Was the choreographer involved in making the recording choices?
- Raw footage from multiple cameras with an invitation to "remix" and share.

The goal of activating dance recordings is not to supplant live performance, but to inspire and inform a future in which dance offered on screens and in live performance work together to elevate the field. In augmenting full-length recordings with choreographic, historical, biographical, comparative, and technological features, the above list attempts to do more than share recorded history. The list also intends to leverage recorded materials for the generation of new scholarship, new education, and new art.

Question 3) What is sustainability for an online resource and how can it be planned for?

In our May 2019 symposium, educator, scholar, and founder of *Video Collaboratory*, Sybil Huskey offered a simple definition of sustainability as "the use of resources without those resources running out." While it is easy to understand how difficult it would be to keep tangible resources such as water or fuel from running out, for many outside the field of computer science, the internet offers the illusion of infinite capacity and boundless possibility with few material or financial ramifications. Adding to this illusion is the seamless user experience created by large technology companies such as Google, Facebook, and Amazon, whose thousands of developers rarely come to mind when we indulge in the online ease and speed to which they contribute. Indeed, the many low-cost, off-the-shelf solutions for video sharing and web design offered by tech giants increase confusion for independent artists and organizations seeking to grant access to their collections online. It can be difficult to conceptualize the future

---

[12] Bench, Harmony and Kate Elswit, "Project: Mapping Touring", Movement on the Move at The Ohio State University, accessed 18 June 2020, movementonthemove.osu.edu/project-mapping-touring.

[13] Aceto, Melanie, Choreographic Lineage, University of Buffalo, accessed 18 June 2020, www.choreographiclineage.buffalo.edu/.

implications for cost and sustainability of using these off-the-shelf solutions, versus investing in bespoke software development.

In an effort to clarify this decision-making process, the Dancing Digital working group identified three common and interrelated pitfalls in the field's current approach to sustainably providing access to its online offerings.

1) A reliance on limited-term funding

Funding scarcity is such a persistent and assumed condition in dance that it almost does not bear mentioning. However, one symptom of this scarcity, limited-term funding, has been especially mismatched to the development of online dance access and preservation projects, which require decades to properly design, build, test, and refine. Symposium attendees discussed two major dance access projects, funded during the last two decades to engage experts across dance, archival, legal, and computer fields. After providing proof-of-concept for delivery systems, the implementation of fair use principles, and artist involvement, these projects saw their funding discontinued before full implementation and public release.[14] The National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities have been supportive of online access and preservation projects in dance, but given their own challenges in stretching annual budgets to support diverse and competing priorities, they are not able to sustain specific digital projects in perpetuity.[15] It is less clear why private funders chose to abandon these efforts after years of investment. For-profit online resources provide another example of long-term funding sustainability that aims to bypass such funding pitfalls. However, paywalls present a significant barrier to public access, and commercial curatorial goals do not align well with diverse public needs.

All of these conditions point, again, to the need for a national or international dance archive and lab, funded collectively by multiple sources and designed to support the long-term development and maintenance required for improved access, preservation, and innovation on digital platforms. Such a collective effort might pull in support from a consortium of national and international university stakeholders along with public and private funders. What is clear is that continuing to rely on limited-term funding is a colossal waste, analogous to investing in the design and construction of complex and innovative brick-and-mortar buildings and then leaving those buildings abandoned and unused.

2) The omission of sustainability considerations in initial project planning

Scarce funding often means that dance access and preservation projects are conceived with a lack of technical and archival support; and without this expertise, project creators may inadvertently overlook the need to plan for sustainability, focusing

---

[14] These projects were the Digital Dance Library Planning Project (DDLPP), funded from 2002-2003 by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and led by Alberta Arthurs; and DHC's Secure Media Network pilot funded by both the Mellon Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts from 2007-2014 and led by Barbara Drazin and Libby Smigel.

[15] For example, the National Endowment for the Arts supported the creation and development of the two largest and most comprehensive non-commercial online dance resources in the United States, *Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive* and *OntheBoards.tv* beginning in 2012. Over the next seven years, that funding dwindled and finally disappeared completely in 2019, limiting the potential of these promising collections.

instead on simply getting the resource built. Dancing Digital constructed the following list of necessary ingredients an artist or organization should prospectively take into account when deciding how to create online access to its recorded resources. Ingredients worth considering when building a sustainability plan for an online resource are:

1) Scholarly/educational staff dedicated to developing and updating content in conversation with the resource's users and stakeholders.
2) Software developers to build both the front end (user interface) and back end (server, application, and databases).
3) Information technology staff to maintain, update, and migrate all of these components to prevent digital obsolescence.
4) Physical servers on which to house the resource.
5) Regular backup systems (to restore data to how it was at a certain point in time).
6) A plan to archive the resource (long-term storage of the digital framework and data). The Internet Archive[16], the Library of Congress, and a variety of collections and museums regularly archive web resources.

In addition to identifying these tangible ingredients, the working group came to understand that adaptability may be the most essential element in ensuring that digital structures and content remain relevant and used in this rapidly-evolving environment.

3) A failure to build and maintain consistent audience use and demand

In her 2019 symposium presentation, Dr. Libby Smigel emphasized that previous dance access projects had fallen short by failing to cultivate endorsements and ongoing input from the people and organizations benefiting most from them. A new online resource should, ideally, have solved the previously-mentioned funding and adaptability problems, employing long-term staff to nurture user/stakeholder relationships and adapt technical features and content to respond to user needs. While putting all of these conditions in place may be an ambitious goal, it is integral to reaching an audience and driving use and demand. Other necessary ingredients for sustaining online resources include clear ways to measure and communicate impact, and a willingness to engage in difficult conversations regarding uncomfortable collections, such as those that preserve art that draws on racial stereotypes.[17]

Question 4) In considering what online features and materials will benefit scholars and educators, how can we balance thoughtful curation with inclusivity and open-access?

Barriers to access are also intertwined with challenges to equitable representation. Recorded archives are not neutral reflections of the past but substantiate societal judgments about whose work deserves to be preserved and seen.

---

[16] Internet Archive, accessed 25 February 2021, www.archive.org.

[17] Kim, Eugenia, "On Sustainability and Access", *Dancing Digital Progress Blog (blog),* February 21, 2020, adhc.lib.ua.edu/danceprogress/on-sustainability-and-access/

In *The Theory and Craft of Digital Preservation*, Trevor Owens writes, "Recognizing that much of digital preservation to date has been situated as a highly technical field largely pursued by the most elite of elite cultural institutions, this ends up meaning that many of these stories are about a privileged class of mostly white men working to preserve the work and legacies of other privileged white men."[18] As an exercise, the group engaged in a quick and superficial snapshot of gender representation in three of the most widely-used online dance resources, *Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive*, Alexander Street Press's *Dance In Video*, and *OntheBoards.tv*.[19] Among these three online resources, only *OntheBoards.tv*'s collection appeared to represent male and female artists equally. A search for artist names on the other two resources resulted in a list that appeared to be 60% male for *Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive* and 70% male for *Dance In Video*. More troubling still in these two resources was that each choreographer the group labeled as male was represented by more works on average than their female counterparts. This meant that in *Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive's* and *Dance In Video*'s collections, 64% and 75% of works represented, respectively, were attributed to male choreographers. While a thorough and complete study of gender, race, ethnic, and stylistic representation in online dance offerings is outside the scope of this project, such a study would be a worthwhile tool for the field. Based upon anecdotal experiences, however, the group perceives a strong Eurocentric bias in what dance recordings are available online and places more equitable representation high among its central values moving forward.

In seeking to identify an ideal collection of recorded dance for a pilot online resource, Dancing Digital determined that the collection must satisfy the project's equity goal of creating access to historically-underrepresented, under-documented, and under-preserved dance artists and forms. It should also have the potential to serve as the seed for an outgrowth of interconnected material, thereby reducing any perception that the initial collection represents an essential dance canon.

Question 5) What intellectual property issues have applied and currently apply to making recorded dance publicly accessible, and how can this project best approach them?

In examining both the history of previous access efforts and current trends in how cultural materials are made available to the public, it is evident that dance collection-holders have tended toward licensing: a conservative approach that has and continues to form the highest barrier to accessing recorded dance—especially full-length works.[20] This restrictive strategy has also skewed what is publicly available toward what people have the means to license rather than what is actually representative of an aesthetic period, artist, or style. The fact that dance works are often collaborative and involve multiple copyright holders—including choreographers, music composers, music recording artists, and lighting, costume, and set designers—contributes to the barrier, as

---

[18] Owens, Trevor. *The Theory and Craft of Digital Preservation* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018), p. 10.

[19] This snapshot was incomplete and superficial in that it was based on a binary gender model as well as the team's existing knowledge and assumptions about each choreographer's gender identity. It did not include verification of those identities.

[20] Center for Media and Social Impact, *Statement of Best Practices in Fair Use of Dance-Related Materials: Recommendations for Librarians, Archivists, Curators, and Other Collections Staff* (2009), p. 4

the effort and funding needed to obtain permission from these many rights-holders is often beyond the reach of resource-strapped dance artists and organizations.

While Dancing Digital prioritizes artist control and compensation, it seeks to do so without losing sight of the public purpose of copyright: to promote the making and sharing of culture. Continuing the important work of DHC's 2009 *Statement of Best Practices in Fair Use of Dance-Related Materials*,[21] Dancing Digital envisions the creation of a new prototype online dance resource as an opportunity to demonstrate pro-access doctrines applied to online sharing of dance recordings. In connection with this demonstration, documentation of this process would benefit the field. Such documentation could eventually produce a guidance document that systematically examines intellectual property rights as they apply to multiple dance-specific circumstances.

Evaluation

Because this was a planning grant intended to gather information in order to meet broad goals, development and evaluation occurred continuously and in tandem rather than during discrete periods or in response to a particular product. Through periodic Zoom meetings, online feedback mechanisms, and presentations at national conferences, the Project Director and working group members gathered instrumental feedback that informed the environmental scan and their design of the project's implementation phase. While a great deal of informal feedback was cultivated in Phase I, the symposium in Phase II was designed intentionally for feedback. An immediate feedback loop that intertwined planning and evaluation, the symposium alternated between short panel presentations given by experts and group conversation. The resulting collaborative problem-solving yielded important products: the preliminary list of features included under *Question 3* as well as large and small-scale implementation goals. Aware of the need to reach stakeholders without limiting the conversation by the geographic, financial and temporal constraints of conference attendance, the team also created a blog that disseminated findings and included both a "contact-us" function and a Qualtrics survey. At conferences, the project director encouraged feedback by providing multiple methods of accessing the survey, including licensing a simple URL that was printed and handed to conference attendees on business cards and providing paper versions of the survey before and after conference presentations. She also passed out index cards to garner free-form feedback. The resulting body of feedback, though smaller and less standardized than anticipated, upholds the need among dance scholars and educators for better access to comprehensive, equitable, and complete dance recordings. It also suggests that Dancing Digital's nationwide presentations provoked important discussions and an interest in contributing to a new online dance resource.

---

[21] Center for Media and Social Impact. *Statement of Best Practices in Fair Use of Dance-Related Materials: Recommendations for Librarians, Archivists, Curators, and Other Collections Staff* (2009). https://cmsimpact.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/DHC_fair_use_statement.pdf
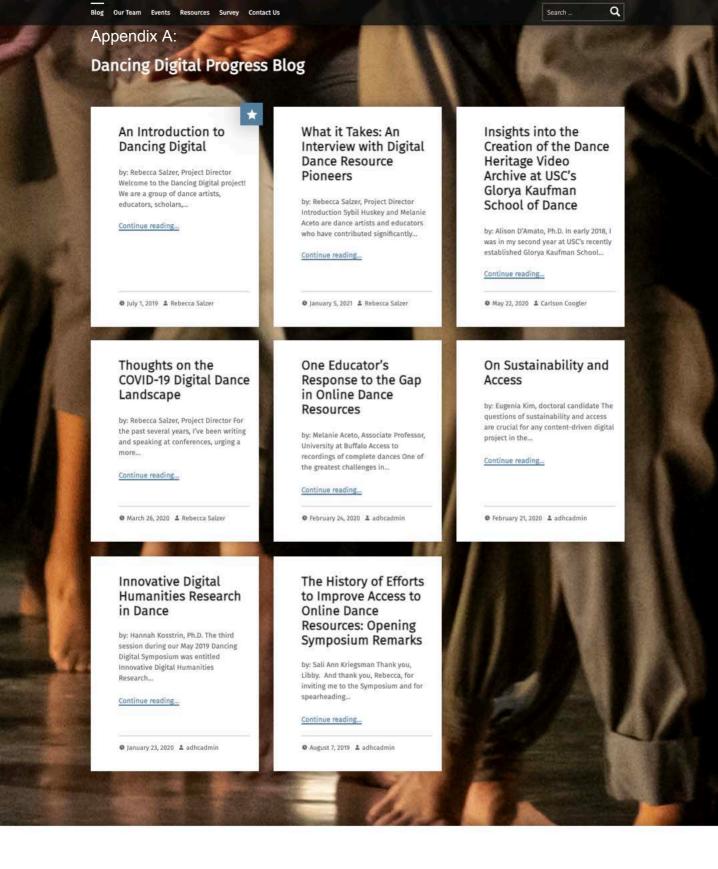
Continuation and Long-term Impact

By bringing together key contributors to current and previous dance access and preservation projects, Dancing Digital has synthesized important lessons learned while prompting collective problem-solving toward possible next steps. In doing so, this project has outlined a multi-level approach that moves toward meeting the access needs of dance scholars and educators.

On a micro level, Dancing Digital has secured continued support from the National Endowment for the Humanities[22] to conduct a practical and granular examination of current preservation and access issues through the development and publication of a small prototype online archive, including concurrent documentation of the process. In collaboration with artist and scholar Gesel Mason, who will serve as Project Co-Director, the team will create an online archive to house Mason's collection *No Boundaries: Dancing the Visions of Contemporary Black Choreographers*.[23] The team's goals in building the new online archive include: providing online access to the *No Boundaries* materials in a format that supports Mason's vision of celebrating and making visible the legacies of historically-underrepresented Black choreographers, including providing access to full-length recordings of selected works; modeling how to imaginatively combine these full-length recordings of dance with innovative features and supporting materials that enrich dance study across humanities disciplines; and creating a scalable, replicable, open-source, digital framework that broadens the focus from one choreographer's work to the possibility of an interconnected field-wide archive.

In tandem with this practical exploration, Dancing Digital will continue to work with and move artists, organizations, universities, and public institutions toward collective action that will stabilize, improve, and expand access to dance online.

---

[22] HAA-277185-21 Prototyping an Extensible Framework for Access to Dance Knowledge

[23] *No Boundaries*, Gesel Mason Performance Projects, accessed 25 February 2021, www.geselmason.com/no-boundaries.

Appendix A:

Dancing Digital Progress Blog

An Introduction to Dancing Digital

by: Rebecca Salzer, Project Director
Welcome to the Dancing Digital project!
We are a group of dance artists,
educators, scholars,...

Continue reading...

🕐 July 1, 2019   👤 Rebecca Salzer

What it Takes: An Interview with Digital Dance Resource Pioneers

by: Rebecca Salzer, Project Director
Introduction Sybil Huskey and Melanie
Aceto are dance artists and educators
who have contributed significantly...

Continue reading...

🕐 January 5, 2021   👤 Rebecca Salzer

Insights into the Creation of the Dance Heritage Video Archive at USC's Glorya Kaufman School of Dance

by: Alison D'Amato, Ph.D. In early 2018, I
was in my second year at USC's recently
established Glorya Kaufman School...

Continue reading...

🕐 May 22, 2020   👤 Carlson Coogler

Thoughts on the COVID-19 Digital Dance Landscape

by: Rebecca Salzer, Project Director For
the past several years, I've been writing
and speaking at conferences, urging a
more...

Continue reading...

🕐 March 26, 2020   👤 Rebecca Salzer

One Educator's Response to the Gap in Online Dance Resources

by: Melanie Aceto, Associate Professor,
University at Buffalo Access to
recordings of complete dances One of
the greatest challenges in...

Continue reading...

🕐 February 24, 2020   👤 adhcadmin

On Sustainability and Access

by: Eugenia Kim, doctoral candidate The
questions of sustainability and access
are crucial for any content-driven digital
project in the...

Continue reading...

🕐 February 21, 2020   👤 adhcadmin

Innovative Digital Humanities Research in Dance

by: Hannah Kosstrin, Ph.D. The third
session during our May 2019 Dancing
Digital Symposium was entitled
Innovative Digital Humanities
Research...

Continue reading...

🕐 January 23, 2020   👤 adhcadmin

The History of Efforts to Improve Access to Online Dance Resources: Opening Symposium Remarks

by: Sali Ann Kriegsman Thank you,
Libby. And thank you, Rebecca, for
inviting me to the Symposium and for
spearheading...

Continue reading...

🕐 August 7, 2019   👤 adhcadmin

NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
HUMANITIES

College of
Arts & Sciences
Department of Theatre and Dance

University of Alabama Libraries Logo
ua.edu
Disclaimer

ALABAMA
DIGITAL
HUMANITIES
CENTER
Alabama Digital Humanities Center

13

Dancing Digital Progress Blog

Posts from adhc.lib.ua.edu/danceprogress. Printed on March 28, 2021 using [Print My Blog](#)

An Introduction to Dancing Digital

By Rebecca Salzer
July 1, 2019
Categories: Uncategorized

by: Rebecca Salzer, Project Director

Welcome to the Dancing Digital project! We are a group of dance artists, educators, scholars, archivists, and legal and systems design specialists, working with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities to create and facilitate more centralized, accessible, equitable, and forward-thinking dance resources online.

Our project seeks to move toward solving the following vast problem: despite advances in the technologies that allow recording and sharing, significant barriers still prevent access to diverse and high-quality recorded dance materials. Current dance materials online are fragmented and difficult to find, excerpted rather than complete, and heavily Eurocentric. These issues profoundly impede dance scholarship and education and limit the potential for artists to reach audiences.

Our work builds upon and acknowledges previous efforts, including the Digital Dance Library Planning Project led by Dr. Alberta Arthurs (2001-2003), the Dance Heritage Coalition's (DHC) Secure Media Network pilot project led by Libby Smigel (2007-2014), and the DHC's fair use forums that convened the field on how to balance the needs of dance scholars and educators with the rights of creators, resulting in their 2008 *Statement of Best Practices in Fair Use of Dance-Related Materials*.

The lack of access to recorded dance materials has complex causes, from a tangle of intellectual property concerns to the funding limitations of individual artists, companies, and collection holders. To move the needle on these larger issues, this project has narrowed its focus in the following ways:

- Dancing Digital begins by addressing the needs of dance educators and scholars because these needs – which, in themselves, are vast – are immediate. They include improvements in the quantity, production-value, curation, diversity, completeness, and searchability of recorded dance works. With so many within the field of dance working fluidly between practice, theory, and education, addressing the needs of dance scholarship and education will impact the field as a whole.
- Dancing Digital's focus in this phase of the project is on modeling innovative and transformative uses of dance recordings rather than on collecting or aggregating a large corpus of recorded dance works. The hope is that this model will inspire collection-holders, dance companies, and individual artists to grant access to their holdings, resulting in a sea-change in the field's attitude towards sharing work online and greater access.

With support from a Digital Humanities Advancement Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, nineteen working group members and advisors convened at the University of Alabama for a three-day symposium in May 2019. Our goal was to address a series of guiding questions in order to survey and evaluate the online dance resources that currently exist and envision a new resource that would build on or augment them. The blog posts that follow will provide a summary of six panel discussions driven by these guiding questions, and addressing the following topics:

- The history of efforts to improve access to online dance resources
- The needs of dance scholars and educators
- Current, innovative digital humanities research in dance
- Intellectual property, fair use, and artist involvement
- Curation & inclusion: creating a diverse and contemporary collection
- Sustainability and open access

Follow this blog to read summaries of these sessions, learn about our upcoming public presentations, and get involved. We are currently in the project's planning phase, moving toward publishing a position paper (a term we prefer to "white paper") and seeking funding for the project's implementation. Dancing Digital is about field-wide cooperation. While our project is

14

developing new models, we also seek to aggregate and amplify existing archival and sharing efforts. We welcome your feedback and interest.

The History of Efforts to Improve Access to Online Dance Resources: Opening Symposium Remarks

By adhcadmin
August 7, 2019
Categories: Uncategorized

by: Sali Ann Kriegsman

Thank you, Libby. And thank you, Rebecca, for inviting me to the Symposium and for spearheading this effort. Though I haven't been active in this aspect of the field for some time, I thought I could shed some light on previous efforts to broaden access to moving images of dance, efforts I have been involved with over many years.

This is by no means a comprehensive survey of projects undertaken nation-wide. There are many more individuals and organizations whose critical work has informed and led us to this moment.

Almost fifty years ago, in 1970, my husband, Alan M. Kriegsman, and I co-authored an article titled "The Unstudied Art" in Cultural Affairs Journal. We asked: "How is it that educated men and women can be conversant with the plastic arts, music, drama, and literature, yet grossly ignorant of dance?"

We saw an urgent need for revolutionary advances in notation and recording techniques and noted that an American Film Institute was just founded in response to "a growing sense of need for a national organization devoted to the art of film." (I was working at AFI at the time). And we said that "the benefits that could accrue from a comparable center for the preservation, study, and dissemination of dance should be obvious."

In the early 1980's, as dance consultant for the Smithsonian, I curated a series of public programs that included Merce Cunningham speaking about and showing his innovative videodance investigations, Ernie Smith, private collector of rare tap and Lindy footage, showing film clips of Bill Robinson at the National Portrait Gallery, and live performances of veteran tap artists along with the film "No Maps on My Taps."

During the 1980s and 1990s at burgeoning tap festivals, artists and a few interested parties (myself included) would stay up all night in a hotel room binging on grainy videos of tap artists. When technology democratized and could be held in our hands, tap artists were among the first to glom on, to trade and share clips of legendary and contemporary dancers —it was how they learned the history of their art, alongside living tap elders telling their stories–and it spurred a new generation's creative work.

At the National Endowment for the Arts, the Dance Program's dance/film/video category supported a wide range of creative and documentation projects, and collaboratively with the Media Arts program, funded TV broadcast series such as "Alive from Off-Center" and "Dance in America."

In 1990, "Images of American Dance: Documenting and Preserving a Cultural Heritage" was published.   This report, based on a study co-sponsored by the NEA's Dance Program and the Andrew E. Mellon Foundation, surveyed for the first time the existing system of dance documentation and preservation nation-wide, how transactions were conducted within the system, and to what extent the needs of the dance community were being met.

Our focus was on users, and the need to equip artistic and archival communities in their efforts to build, strengthen and extend dance documentation and preservation efforts at the local, regional and national levels in order to assure that the legacy of dance would endure.

Among the study's conclusions most relevant to our symposium is this one:

"'Access'" has become everyone's byword—for the artists who create the work and records of it, for the repositories that house those records, and for scholars and others who want to use those materials. ….Video cameras and computers have raised everyone's expectations of what should be available on demand…"

It identified among barriers to easy access, "the incomplete records of what collections exist and what is in them, the conflict between some needs of archive users and the limitations on physical property rights and intellectual rights, and the tension between the need for 'hands-on" use and long-term preservation concerns."

16

And it concluded: "Outreach, education and broad public access to the field's rich and varied traditions are essential if dance is to overcome its persistent marginalization among the framework of America's artistic and intellectual discoveries."

The study spurred the creation in 1992 of the Dance Heritage Coalition which, in its first decade, made major strides cataloging and coordinating efforts among its principal member archives and collections and accomplished much much more in the years that followed. Another result was the Pew Charitable Trust's funding of the National Initiative to Preserve America's Dance (NIPAD) 1993-2000, and in 1998-2000, the UCLA National Dance/Media Leadership Project.

When I left the Arts Endowment in 1995 for Jacob's Pillow, Norton Owen and I made the Pillow's archives and the potential of its holdings a priority. It was through the Pillow's unique setting and mission that I could clearly see the rich connections to be made between practice, performance, making work, preservation, and access to dance's live and recorded history.

In 2001, Dr. Alberta Arthurs former Director for Arts and Humanities at Rockefeller Foundation, met with me to discuss the challenge of providing access to moving images of dance. By then collections had become better known and accessible for study and new streaming technologies showed great potential. But access to these materials was limited to the physical premises of the holders.

Dr. Arthurs secured a one-year grant from the Mellon Foundation to explore issues involved in building a "Digital Dance Library"

The proposal to the Mellon Foundation grew out of the need, acknowledged by the dance field, for an accessible collection of full-length recordings of historically and aesthetically important works of American dance. Although such images were essential for scholarship and teaching, they were not available in a way that encouraged discovery and learning.

The Digital Dance Library Planning project went "live" from March 2002-June 2003.   It was designed to find out whether it could be possible, using digital technology, to stream moving images of dance in a curated, organized, protected, technically accessible system, to the educational institutions, teachers, students and practitioners who need them.

Not only, we proposed, might a Digital Dance Library advance dance literacy but it could greatly enrich scholarship and learning in the humanities and other disciplines where dance has largely been absent, and it could fuel and inspire artistic development and creativity**.**

The project was, I believe, the first, to bring artistic, technological, intellectual property legal and business sectors together to study needs, capacities and barriers.

The challenge of envisioning a streamed dance library was undertaken by a team of researchers working from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. I was one of four principal investigators, each working in an area of expertise relevant to the study. Dr. Arthurs led the effort. The investigators (each of us directing a specialized sub-team or group) were: Stephen Brier, co-director of the New Media Lab at the CUNY Graduate Center, on technology; Andrew Taylor, director of the Bolz Center at University of Wisconsin-Madison on the business model; Jane Ginsburg, faculty director of Columbia University's Lernochan Center for Law, Media and the Arts on intellectual property issues, and yours truly on artistic content.

The process was enriched and also complicated by the use of specialist teams who knew little about each others' specializations, and were located at distances from each other. (This was before Skype). Much of what was being studied had not been studied in this inclusive way before.

The team asked these questions, among others:

- What full-length works could best be used to test the concept of a core library of American dance? I should clarify that this first group was never meant to serve as a canon. Of course, any selection of material will have deficiencies; I can go into how the database of works was compiled later if anyone would like.
- Would libraries purchase or license an inventory of moving images?
- Would dance professionals contribute to a single streamed archive?
- What is the potential for classroom use of such images?
- Could rights holders, ranging from home video to Hollywood moviemakers, from costume designers to dancers, be categorized and reached, and would they agree to cooperate?
- Was technology available to accommodate the demands of the project or would it need to be invented?
- Could marketing and sales systems be designed to promote sustainable operations of such a project?

Three techniques were particularly important: interviewing, modeling and convening.

We each conducted interviews, whether surveys (with dance scholars, with potential users) or interviews with individual experts (particularly in the law and in technology). Because information and data were located in so many closely held sub-fields, getting information directly and individually turned out to be quite important.

Models were produced. Examples included: a model database of essential dance materials, a template of legal concerns, descriptions and analyses of information technology business models, the design and demonstration of the actual digital delivery system. Whether in written form, in charts or on spreadsheets, or were physically constructed – models proved to be useful tools for communication from one area of expertise to another, and they tended to make synergies, connections, and gaps easier to see.

In November 2002, the team brought together forty leading professionals in the field at the CUNY Graduate Center in New York City for a daylong presentation and exchange of findings and ideas. A demonstration showed the potential and possible features of such a library.

(After watching our demo, which used as examples moving images from Jacob's Pillow's archives, an artist exclaimed how moving it was to see her forbears, and said she'd want her work to be included if the project was a "go".)

Wrapping up our study, we prepared full reports on our process and work and issues to be further explored. The Mellon Foundation encouraged an application for a pilot phase in which we would build out and test a full working model. Application was made. Unfortunately, Mellon did not support the next phase.

Today we see tremendous advances in technologies, robotics, streaming, and the threshold possibilities of AI. Legal guidelines regarding fair use have been thoughtfully laid out for testing more broadly.

These major challenges remained: where to house, develop and maintain a sustainable, protected system; intellectual property rights, access for and to whom.

The technology is here; privacy rights, ownership, fair use and compensation are being fiercely debated in other sectors; dancers are creating work using new technologies. But the lingering deficit of readily accessible full-length recordings of dance remains a major challenge both for the dance community and for the public.

I have a couple of broad questions I hope we can explore here:

- For and from whom can national access be achieved?
- How broad or narrow are the constituencies to be served?
- Where and how can such a system be supported and sustained—financially and administratively?

Before I yield to my colleagues, I want to give a shout out to the many individuals, organizations and efforts that I haven't named here, whose dedicated work has led us to this moment.

Innovative Digital Humanities Research in Dance

By adhcadmin
January 23, 2020
Categories: Uncategorized

by: Hannah Kosstrin, Ph.D.

The third session during our May 2019 Dancing Digital Symposium was entitled Innovative Digital Humanities Research in Dance. Its focus on digital research tools for dance yielded discussion about the kinds of modalities Dancing Digital might consider for a project. The panel members presented a range of projects, from different kinds of mapping dance data to analytical video annotation to dance notation software. The projects each build on a set of analog or kinesthetic data points off which researchers can build their analyses.

Each of the presenters detailed their current digital projects to address these objectives:

- Investigate novel approaches to digital dance scholarship
- Consider how a resource could connect to and enhance these approaches
- Examine select case studies and subsequent discussion

The panel members included:

Melanie Aceto, University at Buffalo

- Project: Choreographic Lineage
  - http://choreographiclineage.buffalo.edu/

Harmony Bench, The Ohio State University

- Projects: Mapping Touring and Dunham's Data
  - https://mappingtouring.osu.edu/visualization/route
  - https://www.dunhamsdata.org/

Sybil Huskey, University of North Carolina Charlotte

- Project: Video Collaboratory
  - http://videocollaboratory.com/

Hannah Kosstrin, The Ohio State University

- Projects: KineScribe and LabanLens
  - https://kinescribe.org
  - https://labanlens.osu.edu

Eugenia Kim, City University of Hong Kong, Moderator

The following question arose from this session:

- Is "digital dance scholarship" largely restricted to historical preservation and analysis? Or, like digital scholarship at large, can it be about using digital technology to transform existing works, how they are accessed, how are they disseminated, how they are alternatively preserved and promoting interdisciplinary collaboration?

The following ideas addressing this question grew out of the conversation:

- Representation of dance history versus analysis versus creation
- How digitally-transferred embodiment supports dance history
- How to make existing work more available through existing platforms
- How to create unique works through digital technology
- How to encourage user participation and data contribution

The main question and the ensuring discussion impacts the kinds of digital modalities and resources that the Dancing Digital project might consider. For example, many traditional digital humanities projects analyze existing data sets, whereas these presenters' projects generate digital dance data that open new avenues for analysis. What might a digital dance platform offer that includes both dance documentation and tools for analysis? How might we harness users' digital interactivity to bring them into a dance work through active engagement instead of passive viewing? How can digital tools enable analysis alongside documentation? How do the kinds of questions these researchers ask through their projects enable new ways of engaging with dance data? Since the fields of dance and dance studies have a practice of valuing non-traditional research output, there is considerable potential for digital dance projects to generate a research niche that speaks across disciplines.

The Dancing Digital project is exploring many points of articulation for interacting with these projects specifically and also to advance the ideas, modalities, and data sets that these projects introduce.

On Sustainability and Access

By adhcadmin
February 21, 2020
Categories: Uncategorized

by: Eugenia Kim, doctoral candidate

The questions of sustainability and access are crucial for any content-driven digital project in the 21st century. They are also som
of the most difficult questions to answer.

It was toward the end of two long but fruitful days that we sat down to listen to and discuss several presentations on these two
topics. Our moderator was Sybil Huskey, and our panelists were (in order of presentation) myself, Libby Smigel, Lane Czaplinsk
and Susan McGreevy-Nichols. This particular combination of presenters reflected a wide range of experience and perspectives.
As such, rather than simply reporting the events of the session as they happened, I have briefly summarized each presentation and
identified key points that were raised by various members of the group.

Sybil began the discussion by establishing a definition of sustainability and access. There are, of course, many aspects of access,
and it is important to note that our session did not focus on access as it specifically pertains to ADA regulations, nor to open
access of software, e.g., the shared development of code. She defined these various types of access and focused our conversation
on several main objectives. A selection of these definitions and objectives included:

Definitions:

- Sustainability: the use of resources without the resources running out
    - Five roots: capacity, fitness, resilience, diversity and balance
- Access: being able to get to what you need

Objectives:

1. Discuss what is needed for a pilot's "digital home." (e.g., What functions are necessary?)
2. Discuss how resources will be obtained and maintained.
3. Discuss financial sustainability of the project.

After Sybil's opening, my presentation focused on how sustainability is often where a digital project fails. Several factors are
responsible for this, including the omission of sustainability considerations in initial project planning, a frequent reliance on
limited-term funding, and the challenge of building audience use and demand. In light of these factors, I offered two suggestions:
1) to no longer think of sustainability as making something "in perpetuity," and 2) to refresh content and interface in order to
maintain relevance.

Libby followed up with a perspective formed by years of working with non-profit organizations. She suggested focusing on
building effective partnerships with organizations that have good user networks, as they are in touch with what content the
general public is interested in. Other important points included (1) rethinking accessibility in terms of technology, (2) finding
ways to measure the impact of digital dance repositories on community, and (3) learning to discuss uncomfortable collections,
such as those that preserve art that has drawn on racial stereotypes.

In the third presentation, Lane focused on the value of video as a primary form of performance documentation for the future and
the need for sustainable ways to create access to this documentation. For *OnTheBoards.tv*, which he founded, Lane's strategy wa
to take an off-the-shelf mentality to starting up their services instead of developing bespoke solutions. He also expressed a
particular interest in bringing attention to marginalized populations, specifically artists whose work or stories are not often given
exposure.

Susan wrapped up the session by showcasing the Online Professional Development Institute (OPDI) developed by the National
Dance Educator's Organization. The OPDI could prove useful to the Dancing Digital Project as it distributes content to users wh
might not normally be able to access it. Pairing OPDI courses with new content from Dancing Digital could also help build
enthusiasm for the project.

After the presentations, the panel opened discussion to the other attendees. Some key points that were raised during this
discussion were:

- The importance of understanding what artists may or may not be doing as part of their practice and how this empowers them (Lane);
- Preservation through propagation of materials online, specifically with the logic that it is better to have a lot of copies many places in case one source goes down (Harmony Bench);
- The cost of video storage is much higher than text for multiple reasons, including that video also requires accompanying text, not just metadata (Harmony);
- Given the variance in size of video files depending on quality, uncertainty as to how many videos can be stored within a given block of set storage; similarly, questions of how to allocate percentages of that block based on type of content (Libby);
- That fungibility is a key element of sustainability, as something that's unalterable has a shorter life (Peter Jaszi, Rebecca Salzer);
- The need for users to be enticed to use a resource, feel self-empowered, and excited (Susan, Imogen Smith);
- That curating content for users can serve to guide and excite users about content that they were not aware of (Shana Habel);
- That there are still challenges in identifying and collecting content for legal use, and the problem of needing initial content to entice new users (Melanie Aceto).

From the beginning, the Dancing Digital team knew that sustainability and access were going to be complicated. This symposium session clarified the complexity of sustainability as an issue and brought to light ideas that we, as a group, may not have previously considered. Although there were no clear answers as to how to guarantee a steady stream of funding or increase the user base, the additional issues raised in this session continue to help inform the team's approach.

One Educator's Response to the Gap in Online Dance Resources

By adhcadmin
February 24, 2020
Categories: Uncategorized

by: Melanie Aceto, Associate Professor, University at Buffalo

Access to recordings of complete dances

One of the greatest challenges in teaching dance technique and composition that I have faced over the past 15 years is my limited access to recordings of complete dances. In this post, I share a bit about my needs and challenges as an educator in an effort to begin to address some of these deficiencies as part of the Dancing Digital working group.

When I started teaching dance composition 15 years ago, I was not interested in showing my students the handful of professionally published DVDs of the reputed pioneers of modern dance that I saw in dance history class many years prior. I wanted to show them the works of the artists I had just left in NYC. So, I called up David Dorfman, Brian Brooks, Monica Barnes, Kate Weare, David Parsons, Ron Brown, Doug Varone, Sean Curran, Stephen Petronio, and many others, asking them to share their work with me. Most did. These DVDs were largely recordings of recent complete concerts typically sent to presenters and granting agencies. At first, I worked with the library at the University at Buffalo where I was on faculty. The library would purchase the DVDs for a small fee, incorporate them into their catalog, and make them available for in-library viewing only. In an effort to make works even more easily accessible for my students, the works were later sent directly to me by the artists in online links with passwords, under the agreement that I was only sharing these works with my composition classes. For a few years this worked well, but it quickly became challenging to show a current body of work that was also diverse. For instance, some choreographers would only share works that were 10 years old or more. In addition, as years passed, some choreographers grew in fame and were no longer responding to my emails. I was having to navigate increasingly through management companies instead of communicating directly with the artists. The pay-off was very little for the great effort it took to connect with artists and managers for records of work. Through this process, it became evident that my early success in acquiring works to show was based on my personal relationship with these artists, not on the choreographers' eagerness to share works with my composition classes. Personal relationships are great for acquiring resources, but they often too narrowly reflect of our own training and aesthetic biases and are difficult to maintain over time. I largely gave up on acquiring new works from choreographers in the U.S and started purchasing Dance for Camera DVDs because they were easy to obtain, affordable, and showed complete works. It was during these "I give up" years that I was put in touch with Rebecca Salzer at the University of Alabama who shared my passion for the need for accessibility of dance for teaching in higher education.

Access to live dance presentations

I have found that it is not easy to see live dance while residing on most college campuses, the majority of which are not situated in urban cultural centers.

I was straight out of New York City my first year on faculty at the State University of New York (SUNY) College at Brockport. Brockport brought in guest artists each semester for full evening performances. One hour west of Brockport was The University at Buffalo's (UB) Center for the Arts, which brought in companies as well. In an effort to expose my Brockport students to more live dance, I arranged for tickets and carpools to the dance concerts at UB. Two years later when I took a position at the University at Buffalo, I arranged for tickets and carpools to the dance concerts at Brockport. This proved unsustainable. The students were unfamiliar with the companies that were performing, so not many were eager to spend the time and money to see the concerts. If the dancers had a weekend night free from rehearsals and performing, they did not want to drive one hour to see a performance. Even though students were concerned that they were unfamiliar with artists in the field to know who they wanted to work with when they graduated, they were not able or willing to put in the effort during the academic year to see the few artists that were "nearby". I no longer wanted to press students to go – so I now go alone.

I am still on faculty at UB, and I drive one hour to Brockport or the University of Rochester, 1.5 hours to Nazareth college (Rochester), two hours to Toronto, two hours to Alfred University, three hours to Cleveland, and seven hours to NYC to see live dance. That is a lot of work to see live dance. I feel it necessary to note that I do not have children or aging parents to care for. I can more easily afford the "luxury" of seeing live dance than can those who must attend to family.

Access to streaming of dance events

What is it that I am hoping for? Starting with concert dance, something in the model of Met Opera on Demand would provide much needed access to complete dances from around the globe. While I would still make the drive to dance events "nearby," more access would allow me to experience the diversity of the field as well as share that with my students. The thought of being able to pull up a dance as easily as I can play a piece of music is invigorating. Sharing lectures, sports games, public events, gaming, music concerts, and many other events in real time has been made possible by fields enduring growing pains and addressing problems of access. I envision the same for dance. The ability to easily access the vast richness of my own field would sustain me for another 15 years of teaching!

Access to repertory

It is typical in higher education for students to learn complete dances (repertory) from a primary source dance maker or a secondary source répétiteur. Although I understand that this method allows for dance to be transmitted in a way that attends to concerns about appropriation, attribution, and authenticity, it reaches only a limited number of students. I wonder about new ways of sharing repertory via video that would meet the needs of both educators and dancemakers. With younger artists more and more comfortable sharing, and the internet becoming the center of information exchange, I am hopeful that thoughtful new ways to transmit repertory via video might be possible.

Access to archives

While individuals, public and private institutions, and universities are moving to publish more recordings, photos, written materials and physical articles, I have not found a centralized way to search these archives, and I have found it especially difficult to find complete recordings of dance. I would like easy online access to these rich archives that exist throughout the world. Being able to make use of what is already available would be a huge step forward in terms of access.

Access to supporting materials

In addition to recorded performances, I would also love access to process footage, rehearsal footage, annotated footage, artists' notes, interviews, essays, and commentary for current and historical works. These materials would undeniably inform the study of dance past and present for me and my students, as historical, cultural, and contextual resources offer a unique window into understanding, responding and connecting to dance.

Moving Forward

I acknowledge the unique complexities that dance presents as a time-based, visual, and largely collaborative form. Concerns about navigating intellectual property rights for online materials are very real, and misunderstandings of legal issues (such as Fair Use) and attitudes within the field contribute to the dearth of access. However, I believe that, fundamentally, artists want to share their work with audiences. I maintain that it is possible to approach legal, ethical, and aesthetic obstacles to access with communal energy and with inspired, creative thinking.

---

https://www.metopera.org/season/on-demand/

I acknowledge that embedded in this need is the assumption of the ability and desire to record the dance. Not all dance should be wants to be, or can be recorded.

Thoughts on the COVID-19 Digital Dance Landscape

By Rebecca Salzer
March 26, 2020
Categories: Uncategorized
Tags: COVID-19 dance, dance education, Dance online, dance resources, dance sharing, digital dance

by: Rebecca Salzer, Project Director

For the past several years, I've been writing and speaking at conferences, urging a more open-minded approach to making full dances available online. My credo has been that in order to stay relevant in a quickly-changing world, dance as a field needs to think through, understand, and drive:

1. The processes by which dance is recorded
2. The crafting of spaces in which recorded dance is received
3. The ways in which we provide access to recorded dance – including how we respectfully and equitably represent artists, contexts, and styles

Watching the explosion of live and recorded dance online over the past ten days has been truly incredible. It is a testament to the strength of our community and our commitment to keeping our artform vital.

There is also something deeply upsetting about seeing these video riches after spending years chronicling the sparseness of full-length dance recordings available to educators, many of whom are still relying on VHS tapes of *Free to Dance*. It feels similar in some ways to how internet providers told us that data limits were necessary for the system to function. But now, miraculously, courtesy of our national emergency, we all suddenly have unlimited data.

The swift transition has also raised some concerns that I feel are important to voice, not just for this unprecedented moment, but for where we find ourselves once we're able to reconstruct our public lives.

First, as much as I've been pushing for accessibility, the panic of the last ten days has, in many cases, involved broad sharing of art for free. I think this is generous and wonderful and soul-sustaining in these difficult times. I also wonder if it sets a precedent that will make it more difficult for artists to be compensated for digital manifestations of their work in the future. Whatever your feeling toward dance on screens, digital space is a key performance venue. It will certainly continue to exist alongside live performance, and its importance in terms of both exposure and compensation is only growing.

I've also been troubled by the here-and-gone/Snapchat mentality with which many of these videos are being shared. I understand that artists, presenting organizations, and collection-holders may feel that making recordings available temporarily is a way to keep audiences interested without completely giving away the art (see monetization point above). But, let me tell you, it hamstrings educators.

I can't teach with your temporarily-available video. If I could watch your work repeatedly, I could share it with my students. Actually, seeing your amazing work has given me an idea for an entire unit – no wait, an entire course! I want to hire you to do a residency at my university! When are you next scheduled to perform it, because I would like to bring my class to see it performed live? I'm also looking for a topic for my senior thesis/graduate dissertation/monograph, and I'm deeply inspired by what you're doing!

And, dear artist/presenting organization/collection-holder, please know that even now, on lock-down, I'm still not going to have the chance to watch your temporarily-available video. I will look at the title, get excited, bookmark the page, and then have to resume home-schooling my kids, dealing with my new online work universe, and rationing squares of toilet paper.

In all seriousness, though, I realize I'm just highlighting problems. The solutions are not easy, and this is why the Dancing Digital Project is just the latest chapter of a 30-plus years push to better preserve and create access to dance recordings. If nothing else, this current moment reveals the kind of community and cooperation that are necessary ingredients to any solution. Especially now that this panic-sharing has given us a glimpse of the wonderful dance recordings that exist, we need to work together to turn our increasingly fragmented artistic landscape into a sustainable, accessible, and connected legacy.

Insights into the Creation of the Dance Heritage Video Archive at USC's Glorya Kaufman School of Dance

By Carlson Coogler
May 22, 2020
Categories: Uncategorized

by: Alison D'Amato, Ph.D.

In early 2018, I was in my second year at USC's recently established Glorya Kaufman School of Dance, mostly teaching lecture courses in dance history and dance studies. When I heard that Kaufman was collaborating with the USC Libraries to acquire a collection of over 1,200 video recordings (largely digital assets drawn from at-risk media formats such as Beta, Umatic, and VHS), I jumped at the chance to get involved alongside my colleague, Patrick Corbin. Despite having recently finished a dissertation on contemporary choreographic scoring that necessitated deep-diving into theoretical issues around preservation, documentation, and dance's complicated relationship to the archive, I hadn't, at the time, thought too intensely about the lives and afterlives of dances in an evolving digital landscape. Two years later, having had the pleasure of engaging with brilliant colleagues through *Dancing Digital*, as well as being immersed in USC's project, it seems like a terrific time to reflect on the recent past and to consider what might be possible in the future.

Early on in my involvement with the USC project – now officially named the [Dance Heritage Video Archive](#) (acronym: DHVA; colloquially pronounced: DIVA!) – I talked it up excitedly to all who would listen, emphasizing the impact that such a collection could have on teaching and student research. I detailed some common challenges, familiar to most educators: relying on advertiser-interrupted YouTube clips lacking contextual information, searching in vain for full-length recordings, butting up against paywalls. Yet even as I listed these problems, I realized that I had complacently accepted them for as long as I had been teaching and researching – living with a "this is just how it is" mentality, relying on old standby DVDs and, increasingly, frenetic "trailer" videos that could give my students fleeting glimpses of contemporary works.

When Corbin and I travelled to the University of Alabama for 2019's *Dancing Digital* symposium, I was stunned to hear about the long history of leaders in the field combatting the state of affairs that I had naively assumed was unyielding. (Much of this is detailed in Sali Ann Kriegsman's illuminating post on this blog.) In addition to Kriegsman, I was excited to meet Libby Smigel and Imogen Smith, integral figures in developing and maintaining the collection of videos that USC was in the process of acquiring, materials that had been painstakingly sourced by the Dance Heritage Coalition as a part of their Dance Preservation and Digitization Project. Bolstered by a deepened sense of historical context, as well as a collective desire to enrich the digital dance landscape, I returned to USC excited about "phase 2" of our work – namely, acquiring new materials focused on the particularly under-acknowledged realm of Southern California dance history.

At this stage, we have completed the publication of all of the DHC materials, 400 of which are available for public access. (The remaining videos are accessible with log-in credentials, provided upon request for educational use). We have also selected 156 new recordings representing significant contributions to Southern California dance. Though all of the phase 2 contributions are tremendously exciting, users can get a sense of the breadth of the new acquisitions from these highlights: videos featuring the work of site-specific choreographer Heidi Duckler, the blend of modern and traditional Mexican dance of Pacifico Dance Company, and West Coast hip hop veteran Ali "Legendary" Shabazz.

Corbin and I, along with library collaborators, also put together a vibrant event through USC's *Visions and Voices* program, titled *Dancing the Archives: Emerging Choreographers and Living History*. On a warm February afternoon, audiences from on and off campus watched site-specific performances by early career, Los Angeles-based artists Chris Emile, Jinglin Liao, and Marina Magalhães. All of these works were informed by their research into the DHVA materials; the three choreographic approaches could not have been more different, but each demonstrated the incredible potential of archives like DHVA to spark creative possibilities and dialogue for the present moment. After the performances, we enjoyed a panel discussion led by the incredible Bebe Miller, herself no stranger to digital innovation in the sphere of choreographic archives.

As exciting as all of this is, I find myself mulling over questions about what's next for DHVA, and how we can fine-tune it to maximize relevance and accessibility. For one thing, I wonder a lot about context. A diverse, robust collection of choreographic works deserves equally well-developed framing. I'm thinking here about the DHC's invaluable "100 Dance Treasures," which paired photos and video clips with historical analysis written by leading scholars. Or the engaging "multimedia essays" on Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive. Not to say that DHVA's videos can't stand alone, but I do dream about education tools that fully mine the potential of each contribution. Additionally, I wonder how existing models for digital presentation will resonate with the typical experience of undergraduates in years to come. Students and researchers can certainly access DHVA's "browse" function

26

but what would it take for them to really get lost in the collection, discovering something they didn't know they were looking for I'm not necessarily suggesting that we need to mimic the social media scrolling that helps them "discover" new artists on Instagram or TikTok, but is there a way to translate that flexibility and tap into their curiosity outside of social media? Ultimately I'm glad to sense a responsive community in the field who is eager to mull these questions over, propelling resources like DHVA as well as those we haven't yet dreamed up, into the future.

What it Takes: An Interview with Digital Dance Resource Pioneers

By Rebecca Salzer
January 5, 2021
Categories: Uncategorized

by: Rebecca Salzer, Project Director

Introduction

Sybil Huskey and Melanie Aceto are dance artists and educators who have contributed significantly to the planning phase of the Dancing Digital Project. Part of why they have been invaluable members of the working group is that each of them has experience designing and realizing a novel online resource for dance. Sybil is one of the creators of Video Collaboratory (http://videocollaboratory.com/) and Melanie created Choreographic Lineage (http://www.choreographiclineage.buffalo.edu/). Their full biographies can be accessed at https://adhc.lib.ua.edu/danceprogress/bios/. Working with Sybil and Melanie over the past few years it has become clear that their collective knowledge and experience is not only useful for Dancing Digital but would also be helpful for other dance artists inspired to expand dance knowledge online – an especially relevant concept during the Covid-19 pandemic. With this in mind, we set up a conversation about their experiences developing Video Collaboratory and Choreographic Lineage. What follows is a transcript of our conversation on August 11, 2020.

Rebecca: Could we start with a summary of your projects for those who may be unfamiliar with them? Please give us an elevator pitch.

Elevator Pitches

Video Collaboratory

Sybil Huskey: The Video Collaboratory is a web-based private platform for collaborating around video documents, much like you would use Google Docs for collaborating around text. It allows you to put a comment in a very specific point in the video without referencing the timeline. So it's very easy.

Rebecca Salzer: Can you elaborate on how the commenting functionality works?

Sybil Huskey: As the video is going, you select the comment function and click where you want to say something. The comment box appears, and you type a comment and/or make a drawing. This also adds a little marker on the timeline. When you click on either the comment or the marker, it takes you back to that specific place in the video. If it's a point comment, it'll loop for about four seconds so that you can look at it multiple times without having to scrub back and forth. Those are two of the really good things about the system: that all the comments are accessible alongside the video; and you can go to any comment and corresponding time in the video by simply clicking the comment or the marker. Plus, you can also color code your comments.

Rebecca Salzer: In what other ways does Video Collaboratory activate sharing of video online?

Sybil Huskey: Video Collaboratory allows you to upload your own, or your students' videos, or you can link to Vimeo or YouTube. If it's a video that you posted, you can change the speed, if you need to see something go slower or faster. As we've developed this – because it is always in development – we've added other kinds of functionality, like filtering. If I wanted to see all the comments that mentioned something about arms, for instance, I could type in "arms" and see all of the comments that have to do with arms or arm gestures. There's also an analytics part that we added in so you can see what part of the video people are watching and where the interest is not as great. Another feature – one we have a patent on – is that you can set up a whole segment of the video so you can make comments. That has been very, very helpful especially in teaching workshops. In a workshop I did, we put all the video segments that we wanted these teachers to watch. They didn't have to go hunt for them in the larger videos. They could just go right in, click the comment marking the segment, and it would take them to it. Plus, everyone who has a membership to Video Collaboratory has a workspace that allows you to be part of any number of projects or classes. So it's very easy to navigate. Once you go into your project, you will see thumbnails of the videos. Once you click on a thumbnail, you're into the actual platform where you can begin to comment.

Choreographic Lineage

Rebecca Salzer: Thank you! Melanie, can you please describe Choreographic Lineage?

Melanie Aceto: Choreographic Lineage is an interactive web-based network illustrating connections between dance artists, their teachers, their students, their collaborators, and people they were influenced by, like musicians or authors. It's intended as a global resource for investigating artistic influences, career paths, choreographic connections, and complex and obscure relationships.

Rebecca Salzer: Where do the data on these relationships come?

Melanie Aceto: It's user reported. If you studied with a person, danced for them, etc., then you would report that. That has its drawbacks. It is possible a user might not report a relationship for whatever reason, and that may obscure the influence. But, I think that's okay because the point is to see the relationships overall, not the minutia. For instance, why a person's work looks a certain way – hopefully, you can use Choreographic Lineage to say, "oh, this person danced in this company for 15 years." And it could even be that their work looks very different from those they're connected to, that they went the opposite way. Choreographic Lineage is flexible enough not to have to imply a specific type of influence. It is also unique because it tracks those relationships that may not show up otherwise: people you haven't danced with or for, but seeing their work has influenced you substantially, what your work looks like or how you think about what you make. So I wanted to allow for that.

Rebecca Salzer: Where do you see Choreographic Lineage filling gaps in dance knowledge?

Melanie Aceto: The thing that keeps me excited about it is that a resource like this doesn't yet exist as far as I know: the ability to find out where someone studied, who they started with, who their influences were. You can't find that unless you call the person up or if there's some sort of documentary film made about them to learn about their lineage. It could really be the departing point for a researcher wanting to learn more about an artist's work. I see Choreographic Lineage as not the ultimate source, but as a point of departure, like the first place you would go to find out, in general, a sketch of this person's life.

History of Development

Video Collaboratory

Rebecca Salzer: Great. Tell me about the development of your projects.

Sybil: The Video Collaboratory was originally called The Choreographer's Notebook. It began as a research tool for us. It grew from a need to be able to talk about the details of rehearsal videos when we were not in the studio. At the time, I had a National Science Foundation grant with some computer scientists to do real time sensing choreographic projects over a three-year period. Because it was a research project, we were trying different hardware, different software and different kinds of applications for the dancers. Each iteration was trying something new. So, of course, it didn't always work perfectly the first time. What we found was that we really needed to be able to look at the rehearsal video from the last run of the previous rehearsal and be able to talk about that when we weren't sitting in the studio. We started out always showing the last rehearsal, and it was using up this valuable studio time to go "well, this should maybe go here. Oh, let's rewind that." It was very time consuming. So, one of the computer scientists said, "Let's see if we can't do something about that." So one of the PhD students, who is now a co-founder, was charged with doing some coding to develop a solution so that everyone could see the rehearsal video before the next rehearsal: the dancers, the technicians, the computer scientists, the lighting designer, the visual artists involved with us, even the costumer, who was intimately involved because of where these hardware pieces had to be embedded relative to the movement. So, everybody had access to that, and people could post questions at very specific places in the video. They could respond to each other and basically have an asynchronous discussion. In this way, at the next rehearsal, we were starting with a good foundation. We didn't have to backtrack; a lot of problems had already been solved. Sometimes the dancers would even solve some of the performance issues on their own. So, that's where we started.

Rebecca Salzer: What year are we talking about?

Sybil Huskey: 2010 was the start of it.

Rebecca Salzer: So, your collaborators were also academics at this point, and the person coding for you was a graduate student?

Sybil Huskey: Right. We had three different PhD students working on this project with us because it was a multi-pronged project. Part of the project was also using galvanic skin response to looking at audience responses to the dance. So, at this point, there were three PhD students, two computer science faculty, me, and one dance undergrad.

Rebecca Salzer: And who are your partners now? How is it structured now?

Sybil Huskey: After we finished with the NSF project – in which we had used this program, The Choreographer's Notebook, to create all these dances – several people looked at what we had made and said, "Well, this could be really great for a lot of fields that use video, not just dance." And since video was being increasingly used in a variety of fields, they said, "you really should

29

get a provisional patent." So, we applied for a provisional patent, and we received it. Then we decided that, since it's obviously going to have applicability outside of dance, to change the name. We chose "Video Collaboratory" because it's like you're working in a laboratory; you're collaborating; and, the medium is video. Ultimately, we got two patents on Video Collaboratory, and around 2015 we formed a Limited Liability Corporation. And, because this was developed out of a university, albeit with grants that we wrote, we had to license the technology from the university because we had used university space and resources in the process. So, we have a licensing agreement from the university to which, of course, we pay royalties. It's a very complicated document, but it also talks about how much money the university gets if we're bought out. It's been complex, and it's way more complicated than I would ever have thought. Certainly, having it as a business has been very, very challenging.

Choreographic Lineage

Rebecca Salzer: Melanie, what's the history of Choreographic Lineage's development?

Melanie Aceto: Choreographic Lineage started in 2011 with a focus group. So, I think I had the idea, you know, 2009, 2010. I don't remember exactly where it came from, but it's not a new idea. I'm just trying to solve the problem of how you can't know much about a choreographer's influences on their work from their biography. They don't often include that information. So, I thought, "Wouldn't it be great to have a network that connects everybody in terms of who they've studied with, and who their influences are?" I got some funding through University at Buffalo to assemble a focus group of students, a couple artists in the field, a librarian, a computer scientist, and Maura Keefe who is a dance historian, as well as myself, to see if there was interest. They were all from UB, my small network, aside from Maura Keefe who was at SUNY Brockport and now is at University of Maryland; Monica Bill Barnes who I brought in from New York City; and Libby Smigel, Dance Archivist for the Library of Congress. We met for a full day and brainstormed, and we talked about the possibilities and the idea. Since the feedback from the focus group was positive, I moved forward with trying to find a collaborator. That was my biggest challenge. I just had the idea but not the ability to build it. So, we brought in one company from the city of Buffalo to talk about what it would cost to build something like this. Not only was it cost prohibitive, but we quickly ran into concerns about maintenance. The company said, "you know, this is a live thing. If we build it and give it to you, how are you going to make changes and update it?" So, it was immediately apparent that I had to have someone work with me throughout this entire process. That it wasn't really hirable in the sense that I could outsource it. So, I started knocking on doors. Although it seems pretty obvious to me now that I needed a computer scientist, a coder, at the time I didn't even know who to ask. In 2011, I didn't even know I needed a coder. I didn't know if I needed a mathematician or a statistician. I just ended up finding a collaborator through my network. I knew Robyn Sullivan at the University at Buffalo. She has many different titles and has played many different roles at UB, but I think at that time she was working in the Teaching and Learning Center. It was a great resource center for faculty that sadly no longer exists. But, she said, "why don't you talk to Dr. Bina Ramamurthy", a woman in computer science. So that was the first time I had a specific name for someone who would have a conversation with me. All other emails and literally knocking on doors were dead ends. So I had a conversation with Bina, and she said, "I'm interested. And I have graduate students that I could put on this." Plus, she was experienced in getting funding for her own projects. So that's how it started – with a focus group and then finding a collaborator. And I don't know exactly when I met her, but it was shortly after the focus group. Like 2012. After that, we didn't go around with too many names. We did go around some with trying to decide what to include. Is this just dance? Is it just modern dance? But we didn't get hung up on those details. I added a graphic artist to the group, and a user experience guy.

Cost of Development

Rebecca Salzer: Do you recall at all how much you were quoted by the outside company to build the resource that you were describing?

Melanie Aceto: The company was called Algonquin. In February 2011, they quoted a minimum billing of $4,000 and a safe estimate of $4000 to $10,000 for the requirements analysis. That was how they would figure out what I needed and wanted. That was step one. Step two was a structured spec, which would include an additional fee for making the actual site. So, yeah—lots.

Rebecca Salzer: Can you elaborate some on the ongoing and set-up costs you had, Sybil?

Sybil Huskey: Well, let's see. Um, there's cloud computing. We had to have Amazon Web Services, and that is a monthly charge even if no one absolutely no one is working on the platform at the time. It can be anywhere from $300-$500 a month with no users.

Rebecca Salzer: And that is server space?

Sybil Huskey: Yes, it's video processing and storage. It's sort of the third component that makes everything work. So you have to have it. It's what most online platforms run on, you know, have their engines running on a cloud provider. Ours is, of course, Amazon Web Services. And then, of course, we had – I'm just going to go to the bare bones – taxes and that usually also means you have to have an accountant charging you something every month to keep your books. If you have an employee, then you pay a payroll company to take care of all of the various withholding taxes and workman's comp and all of those complications. And

then costs like your domain name. A Google suite, also a monthly charge which you really have to have if you have a business. And insurance, which is every month because you can't run a business and not have insurance, certainly with software. As far as coding goes, after we had made Video Collaboratory, we got a quote from a company in Durham, North Carolina, to see what it would cost to speed up our development. I think it was like something like $80/hour to outsource the coding work. Because coding takes forever. That was a few years ago, so I don't know for now. But it could be a ballpark.

Rebecca Salzer: Okay. Yeah, I've actually seen much higher rates recently. So, some of those are relevant to your business, specifically. Which costs might someone expect to have for an online resource that isn't a business?

Sybil Huskey: It's hard sometimes to separate them out. But, if I'm thinking in terms of just the software, just the platform… Certainly you'd need cloud computing, and someone to keep up with it. Somebody to fix something if it breaks or to add to it. Whether you have a business or not, that is certainly part of it. Obviously, if you are offering it as a free service, then probably you would not need insurance. Just a domain name, I suppose. You probably wouldn't have any legal fees, unless you're worried that somebody might come back and sue you. So, you might need some sort of disclaimer, depending on the resource — something users sign to acknowledge their responsibility in participating, saying that they give you permission to have that information. Otherwise, someone might decide suddenly, "Wait a minute. I don't think I put that on there." And, then they can come after you. We had quite a lot of legal preparation to prevent something like this. I think that cost us about $4,000. I guess we would have done that even if it had been open source. I don't know.

Problems Experienced

Sustainability/Scaling

Rebecca: Melanie, when you were talking about what the web company said about your site being live and needing to be updated, you brought up some of the things I was hoping to get at. Over the last four years or so, I've gone through a learning process to better understand this idea that you're building something living, something that requires continual maintenance. And, the meaning of the word "sustainability", which is thrown around a lot. I still probably don't have a full concept of it, but I'm beginning to understand it more in a digital context. It's at the heart of what I wanted to talk to you both about. I think sometimes we think, "oh, look, I can throw up a free Wix page for that." Or like, "I can make a website. I can embed my Vimeo link in it, and we're done." I know that you both are working on or have worked on projects that have much more innovative functionality than that. But, that was one of the key points of the conversation that I wanted to get to.

Melanie Aceto: I can chime in that there were many people who said, "Oh yeah, that's easy. You don't need to hire anybody. You can just…You can just…" They kept saying, "You can just, you know, use this platform", or "That's super easy." And I just kept coming back to the fact that what was available was not what I needed. The genealogy software out there was not appropriate, because it only offered two parents. I was looking for four relationships: people you studied with, people you danced for, people you collaborated with, and people you were influenced by. In a way it was general — like I don't think it's field-specific by any means. But, I felt like what I was after originally was a much bigger ask than just connections. Originally I also wanted to include in the network the duration of your relationship with someone, and the times of those relationships. When you studied with them. When you collaborated with them. Now, we've had to give up all of that, because it was paralyzing for a couple reasons. It was just too big of a project to start with all that. And, the people I was working with didn't have that level of knowledge. So we've had to scale down. But that's to say that, even in what I'm considering as it's "simple" form, it was never something that I could just "just do", or piggyback on something that already existed.

Rebecca Salzer: And can I add to that. If I understand the concept behind Choreographic Lineage, you want this thing to grow and grow and continue to work. So it's really got to have the right coding to allow it to be expandable like that.

Melanie Aceto: Yeah, and that's becoming even more of an issue now. There's the database part that has to be able to continue to grow, but we haven't worked on yet how the visualizations grow. So that's a whole kind of additional part: there are two chunks to Choreographic Lineage, the database part and the visualization part. Rendering 500 names is one thing. Rendering 500,000 names is a different thing. So, there's the issue of scale. Since it's living, it's growing. And when it grows, you have scaling issues for sure.

Privacy

Rebecca: What sort of issues were you concerned with when designing Video Collaboratory?

Sybil Huskey: I think that the aspect of privacy was the most important to us. We knew people were putting things on YouTube, but we wanted people to know that if they were working on a project, that those videos would only be accessible to the project members. And of course, obviously, since we were dealing with college age dancers, we especially did not want these images to be out everywhere.

Reality Versus Expectations

Rebecca Salzer: If I were to give you a multiple choice question – "This experience has been (blank) what I expected 10 years ago," and your options are: A) much easier; B) about what I expected; C) much harder; D) something entirely different – how would you answer? What's the reality been in relation to the expectation, when you first had the idea?

Sybil Huskey: Business is complicated. You know, I think if we had just decided to make Video Collaboratory open source, we would have been done working on it by now. But, I think all of us felt like it was valuable, and you shouldn't just give everything away. Even though we had very good guidance from the National Science Foundation (because we had subsequent grants from them: first as researchers, second as a small business in their business program), it was harder than we expected. We were so excited about it and so committed; it was our child, and we just kept pushing on. But, it's not just hard work. There's also a bit of luck with it, as to how well a commercial platform sticks, what kind of traction it gets, who's interested in investing. It is all so complicated. And, in the middle of all of that, you have costs to continue to run the platform, even if you're not doing further development on it – just monthly costs that are substantial, actually. So, I think it's hard. That's why they always say 97% of startups fail. Or, I don't think "fail" is a good word, but they don't manage to get enough traction to make enough to keep going, basically.

Rebecca Salzer: Okay, thank you. Melanie?

Melanie Aceto: It's harder than I thought. In my life, most everything else I've tried to do, I could do myself with a little help. Like, I figured out how to buy a house with a little help from the bank. Choreographic Lineage, though, was me having an idea without the abilities to do anything else. I didn't even know what questions to ask. I was at the mercy of other people. So, to answer your question, it was much more difficult than I expected, because of all the things I didn't know or didn't realize early on. Like, now it's so clear to me that I needed an equally interested collaborator. I didn't need someone to build something for me or someone to work "for" me. I needed someone with at least partial interest and investment in the project to work "with" me. For years, I arranged for graduate students to work on this project as a side project. So not only did they have very little time, but I didn't have the knowledge to oversee their work. So, it was me working with a computer science graduate student, and I knew nothing. So, this thing was being built in the back end with no oversight. I had no idea where it was stored, if it was stored, if it was secure and stable. A million things like that. Looking back, though, I wouldn't change a thing because of how much the process revealed to me over the years. I lucked out when UB hired a Professor of Practice in computer science, whose entire job is to provide graduate students in computer science and engineering with real world projects. I pitched Choreographic Lineage, and they put a team of graduate students plus a faculty mentor on it. They worked on it as part of the coursework, not an extra project. That was invaluable. From that experience, I learned that I needed people who had dedicated time coupled with the oversight. I still cannot make anything happen. I'm still in a position where I'm requesting that things happen. That's a really hard role for me because nothing else in my life is like that.

Moving Forward, Advice, and Working with Coders

Rebecca Salzer: I have three more questions. We're running out of time here, so I'm going to give them all at once. You can decide what you respond to. They are:

1) What's the future of this look like, and how are you feeling about it?

2) What one piece of advice would you give to someone else in a dance field with an idea that would require some sort of online access or the creation of the new online resource?

3) How do we deal with imbalance in the relationship between the artists and the coder or other individuals who have the know-how to make these online resources function? I've heard so much related to what you've said earlier. Hearing feedback such as "That's easy." It's not like sending a man to the moon in terms of technology, but it's also not easy. The functionality or platform doesn't exist, and somebody has to build it.

Melanie Aceto: The idea that this was "easy" was the main point of frustration for me with Choreographic Lineage in the beginning. I knew this was not new technology: it was a database and data visualization. What I'm looking for – even at its fullest version in my head – had to be possible with all the technology that was already available. In that sense, I knew it was "easy." But, that was frustrating, because it was "simple" in that way but not at all simple, because it was this very specific application. I needed to figure out how to bridge the artists and the technology and the person who can make the technology work. Figuring this out is wrapped up in my one piece of advice: if possible, you need to find yourself a collaborator, someone who is genuinely interested in your project. Not in working "for" you. Now I have that. The same faculty member who manages the projects for the graduate students has taken an interest in choreographic lineage. So he's not just simply like checking in on their code. He's invested. He's like, "Melanie, you ought to do this. Look what I made." He's added to the site himself. So my piece of advice is to find someone who can work with you and who has ideas as well. I couldn't possibly think of the things that Alan was thinking of because I don't have that knowledge base. When it comes to the future, I feel like I'm on a roller coaster. I

32

start to think like, "oh, this is going to be great. We're in a great place. I can collect so much lineage." And then two people will use it, and something will come up. Not even a glitch. But some issue will arise. We'll realize that we hadn't thought about that permutation of whatnot. At the moment, we're going to keep moving forward with this project. It will be pitched again in the fall for another team to work on it. My future looks like it will continue to be graduate computer science and engineering students chipping away at this at a snail's pace, but I'm feeling optimistic because we're in such a better place. We're in a place where we can collect lineage, and we're starting to shift to look towards the visualization network, which is frankly the piece that everybody would be interested in, now that we have the data collection form figured out. So, I'm optimistic, but I realistically will still move forward inch by inch.

Sybil Huskey: I feel everything you said, Melanie. I agree that having a collaborator is really key. When we first started out, Vikash Singh sat in on all of our rehearsals. Even though he was the original coder on The Choreographer's Notebook, he didn't really know anything about dance. He had just come to the United States from India to start his PhD program, and his mentor threw him into the dance studio, which we all still laugh about. And, he really cared about the project, along with another graduate student. They were really the technologists that masterminded the different software relative to the hardware we were using. When they weren't writing the code, they were making suggestions. The main coder that we hired was just out of undergrad, but he'd already worked for the Department of Computer Science. And he was very good, but he was slow, because he had to learn a different coding language. That's something that people don't always take into consideration: not all coders can code everything. When you're setting up a system, figuring out how your back end talks to your front end, you have to figure out what languages you need. So, I agree that you want someone who's genuinely interested, who can also, like Melanie said, make suggestions. The same is true of the computer science professors who became involved. They developed an interest in dance and provided really helpful suggestions. Now we have a really developed platform. Of course, though, you can always do more. We have the patent to be able to further develop. So we could have voice commenting as opposed to text and drawing. But that costs a lot of money to develop. So right now, we're happy with where the platform is. It's really super functional. It's been through lots of fires. Now, we're looking to partner with someone, maybe a bigger company who wants to take Video Collaboratory with its license and its patents and all of that and and pretty much just absorb it into their operation. But, that's not easy either. Nothing is easy. We have all these leads, and we talk to them, and get all these emails going back and forth. Then you have some face to face meetings, but then it sometimes just kind of fizzles out. At one point, we thought that a sovereign nation fund was really interested in us. We had several meetings and lots of emails and phone calls, and talks of in-person meetings in California, for almost two years. But, then the fund representative realized that we were not TikTok, that we weren't going to reframe ourselves that way. You have to be willing, I think, in order to really get a platform out there, to knock on a lot of doors and have most of them shut in your face. Maybe not right away, but ultimately. Of course, I'm not making it sound fun. The truth is I've had a grand time. I mean, it's been hard, but being hard doesn't mean it's not been fun. That sounds counterintuitive, but I have been thrilled with all the extra learning and the people and the problem solving I've had to do, and the humility I have had to admit. Because I'm not a computer scientist, and I don't know coding. For me, you know, it's been so different, especially having this company and doing this commercially. It's so different than being in academia and so different from being a dance person. So, yes, it has been very hard. I've had some stomach issues over this through the years. But, I wouldn't go back and say that I wish I hadn't done it. I am very grateful for the opportunity because it's also given me a lot of respect for people who do build big companies, who go through all these same things. Nobody is just suddenly a Google.

Events

August 8, 2019

Digitorium

"Dancing Digital"

Friday, October 11, 8:15-9:00AM, Tuscaloosa, AL

Digitorium

Women in Dance Leadership

"Envisioning Digital Dance Spaces for Diversity and Inclusion"

Friday, October 18, 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM, Philadelphia, PA

2019 Selected Panel Discussions

National Dance Education Organization

"Dancing Digital: A Future Online Video Resource"

Thursday, October 24, 11 AM – 12 PM, Brickell Ctr., Miami, FL

http://www.ndeo.org/

Joyce/NYU American Dance Platform 2020

"Envisioning Dance in Digital Space"

Saturday, January 11, 2020, 10:30-12, New York, NY

http://joyce.org/movingforward

IABD/Philadanco 32nd Annual International Conference of Blacks in Dance

"Dancing Digital: A Future Online Video Resource"

Friday, January 17, 9:30-11:00 AM

Doubletree Hotel, Philadelphia, PA

https://www.iabdassociation.org/mpage/conference2020

Resources

June 25, 2019

To further Dancing Digital's goal of improving the accessibility of online dance resources, our working group members pool and share our knowledge of what is currently available. This list, which is by no means authoritative, includes online dance resources that extend beyond the work of a single dance artist or company. We welcome suggestions for additions and changes and hope you find this useful!

Resources Made Available During the COVID-19 Crisis:

Dancing Alone Together: https://www.dancingalonetogether.org/

Permanent Resources:

92Y: Fridays at Noon: https://www.92y.org/fridays-at-noon#archive

Accelerated Motion: http://acceleratedmotion.org/

Alexander Street Press *Dance In Video*: https://alexanderstreet.com/products/dance-online-dance-video

Brooklyn Academy of Music Archives: http://levyarchive.bam.org/

Chicago Dance History Project: https://www.chicagodancehistory.org/

Chocolate Factory: https://vimeo.com/chocolatefactory

Dance Heritage Video Archive (USC/Glorya Kaufman): http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/p15799coll105

Dance Notation Bureau: http://dancenotation.org/

Dance-tech.net/*Choreography or ELSE:* http://dance-tech.tv/2011/12/18/choreography-or-else/

Google Arts and Culture (dance): https://artsandculture.google.com/search?q=dance

Hemispheric Institute (social justice/politically-engaged performance in the Americas): https://hemisphericinstitute.org/en/

Isadora Duncan Archive: http://www.isadoraduncanarchive.org/

Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive: https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/

Kanopy Films Streaming Service: https://kanopy.com/

Kennedy Center, ArtsEdge (geared toward K-12): https://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/themes/arts-resources-dance

The Kitchen: https://vimeo.com/thekitchen

Marquee TV: https://marquee.tv/

MotionBank: http://motionbank.org/

Music Center/Artsource (geared toward K-12): https://www.musiccenter.org/education/Teacher-Resources/Artsource-Curriculum/Available-ArtSource-Units/

Numeridanse.tv: https://www.numeridanse.tv/en/home

OhioDance Virtual Dance Collection: https://vdc.ohiodance.org/

OnTheBoards.tv: http://www.ontheboards.tv

OSU Dance Digital Archive: https://osudancearchive.com/

Portland Dance Archives: https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/pda/

UbuWeb: http://ubuweb.com/dance/

Our Team

June 25, 2019

(Dr. E. Gaynell Sherrod attended remotely and is not pictured)

Melanie Aceto is a modern dancer, choreographer and educator. Her creative interests are in interdisciplinary solo and large group works. Melanie's choreography has been performed nationally and internationally in Toronto, Guatemala, Germany, and Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival; in New York City at The Kitchen, the Studio Museum in Harlem, Ailey Citigroup Theater, and John Ryan Theater, among others; and, in Buffalo at venues including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery and the Burchfield Penney Arts Center. Melanie's research interests include investigating models for teaching dance composition and modern technique and creating resources for both. Her research has been published in the *Journal of Dance Education* and has been presented at National Dance Education Organization conferences and the joint Society for Dance History Scholars/Congress on Research in Dance conferences. Current research projects include Choreographic Lineage, a web-based resource presenting the lineage of dance artists (www.choreographiclineage.buffalo.edu). Melanie earned her Master of Fine Arts degree in dance from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and is currently an Associate Professor at the University at Buffalo teaching all levels of modern technique, improvisation and choreography. www.melanieaceto.com

Meg Brooker, Assistant Professor, Middle Tennessee State University, stages and performs Isadora Duncan repertory and new choreography in the United States, Europe, and Russia. Meg has presented scholarship for Dance Studies Association, Society of Dance History Scholars, Congress on Research in Dance, National Dance Education Organization, and Women in Dance Leadership. Meg is a founder of the Isadora Duncan International Symposium and former Lori Belilove & Company dancer. In 2016, she received an NEH Preservation Assistance grant for her work with Noyes School of Rhythm Archive and her current scholarship frames Noyes Rhythm as an early 20th century somatic practice. http://www.isadoraduncanarchive.org/

Harmony Bench is Associate Professor in the Department of Dance at The Ohio State University and co-editor of The International Journal of Screendance with Simon Ellis. Her writing has appeared in the *Oxford Handbook of Dance and the Popular Screen*, *Choreographies of 21st Century War*, and *Dance on Its Own Terms*, as well as *Theatre Journal*, *The International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media*, and *Performance Matters*, among others. Current projects include an open-access book in contract with University of Minnesota Press, *Dance as Common: Movement as Belonging in Digital Cultures*, as well as the digital humanities projects Mapping Touring, which focuses on the performance engagements of early 20th century dance companies, and Dance in

Transit, a collaboration with Kate Elswit that considers transportation infrastructure and support networks in Katherine Dunham's dance touring of the 1950s. Both of these digital works in progress can be found at http://movementonthemove.osu.edu/. She and Elswit recently received a three-year Arts and Humanities Research Council grant to continue their data analysis research on Dunham's touring, travel, and support networks. https://harmonybench.wordpress.com

Carlson Coogler is a doctoral student in Educational Research with a specialization in Qualitative Methodologies a The University of Alabama. She is interested in interdisciplinary and artful approaches to learning; embodied, new materialist and more-than-human theories; and exploring methodologies that entangle theory and practice. A National Science Foundation CADRE Fellow from 2018-2019, she is especially interested in researching environmental/ecological ethics, practices and literacies. She is a graduate of Samford University, where she earned an MSE in English Language Arts and a University Fellows Honors BA in English with a minor in biology. Previously, Carlson taught secondary English, biology, and chemistry, and has worked in higher ed administration and admissions.

Patrick Corbin is a performer, maker, and educator whose experience spans a lifetime and includes studying diverse dance forms and histories. In 1989, after being a member of the Joffrey Ballet for four years, Patrick joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company where he became one of its most celebrated members and danced there until 2005. Patrick was featured in five PBS Great Performances between 1988 and 2004 and the 1998 Academy Award-nominated documentary *Dancemaker*. In 2001, Patrick was the recipient of the New York Performance Award (Bessie) for Sustained Achievement with The Paul Taylor Dance Company. Patrick founded his company CorbinDances in 2003 and stages his work as well as the work of Paul Taylor on companies throughout the United States. In 2015, Patrick received an MFA in Dance from NYU Tisch School of the Arts and later that year joined the faculty of USC Glorya Kaufman School of Dance as Assistant Professor of Contemporary Dance. https://kaufman.usc.edu/faculty/patrick-corbin

Alison D'Amato is a researcher, choreographer, and performer based in Los Angeles. She is currently Assistant Professor of Practice at USC's Kaufman School of Dance, primarily teaching dance history and theory. In 2015, she graduated from UCLA with a PhD in Culture and Performance, completing a dissertation on contemporary choreographic scores (*Mobilizing the Score: Generative Choreographic Structures, 1960-Present*). She also holds an MA in Dance Theater Practice from Trinity Laban (UK) and a BA in Philosophy from Haverford College. Her academic and creative practices have long been intertwined and both tend to focus on choreographic scores. In particular, she investigates generative and indeterminate notation in order to investigate relationships between choreographic authority, inscription, agency and archival. Her writing on performance can be found in *Choreographic Practices*, *X-TRA Contemporary Art Quarterly*, and *Dance Research Journal*. Her dances and scores have been presented in Los Angeles at Anatomy Riot, Pieter PASD, The Hammer Museum, and HomeLA; in New York at Movement Research, the Tank, AUNTS, Waxworks, Dixon Place, and BAX/Brooklyn Arts Exchange; as well as in Philadelphia, the UK, and Poland. https://alisondamatodance.com

Shana Habel, MA, is a K-12 Arts Specialist for the Los Angeles Unified School District, where she helped initiate an elementary dance program in 1999. In her life before elementary, Shana taught secondary dance grades 7-12 and Creative Dance for Children at Loyola Marymount University. She is a past-president of the California Dance Education Association and served as a member of the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards writing team in dance. She is active in dance and arts advocacy in California. Shana received a BA in Dance from BYU and an MA in Dance History from the University of Utah.

Sybil Huskey's career in dance spans more than four decades, during which time she has been guest artist and permanent faculty at various universities and has served in administrative positions in academia and professional organizations. For the past decade, her work has focused on collaborative choreographic research intersecting with dance technology. She was recently presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award by the National Dance Education Organization. Sybil has received Fulbright Senior Scholar awards for work in Finland and New Zealand and was the UNC Charlotte Director at London's Kingston University where she co-wrote the first dance curriculum. Sybil has been the Co-Principal Investigator on multiple National Science Foundation grants for interdisciplinary research and production and is currently the Principal Investigator on a NSF STTR phase one small business award.

She is co-founder of the Video Collaboratory, LLC, a startup whose software platform enables detailed video discussion and annotation. www.videocollaboratory.com

Peter Jaszi is a Professor Emeritus at American University Law School. He writes and lectures about copyright law in historical and cultural contexts and was a founder of the school's Glushko-Samuelson Intellectual Property Law Clinic as well as its Program on Intellectual Property and Information Justice. Having served as a Trustee of the Copyright Society of the U.S.A., Professor Jaszi remains a member of its journal's editorial board. During 1993, Professor Jaszi served as a member of the Librarian of Congress's Committee on Copyright Registration and Deposit, and from 1994 to 2000, he was a principal organizer of the Digital Future Coalition. Since 2005, he has been working with Prof. Patricia Aufderheide to help creative communities develop fair use guidance documents that reflect their particular problems and practices. A new edition of their book, *Reclaiming Copyright*, was published in 2018 by the University of Chicago Press. In 2007, Professor Jaszi received the American Library Association's L. Ray Patterson Copyright Award. https://www.wcl.american.edu/community/faculty/profile/jaszi/bio

Eugenia Kim is Lecturer at the Hong Kong Academy of Performing arts and Co-founder of Leonardo21 Creative Consulting Ltd. She holds a PhD from the School of Creative Media at City University of Hong Kong. Her current research is in the creation of dances about illness for virtual reality environments, and her company provides digital humanities consulting services for academic institutions in Hong Kong. Prior to starting Leonardo21, Eugenia was a digital archivist/librarian in Hong Kong and the United States. Previous positions include Metadata/User Testing Specialist and Project Coordinator for the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation grant project at The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Visiting Data Curation Specialist at the Purdue University Libraries, and serving on the Board of Trustees for the Dance Heritage Coalition. Eugenia is also an active choreographer whose work has been shown in Hong Kong, Boston, and New York City. Her research publications span across the use of digital humanities technology for dance preservation, collective memory, and access, to providing frameworks for artists to preserve their own work. Eugenia received her BS in Electronic Media, Arts, and Communications from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and her MS in Information Science from the University at Albany, SUNY. www.leonardo21.com

Hannah Kosstrin is a dance historian whose work engages dance, Jewish, and gender studies, modes of movement analysis, and implications for historical and digital embodiments. At The Ohio State University, she is Associate Professor in the Department of Dance, affiliate faculty with the Melton Center for Jewish Studies and Center for Slavic and East European Studies, and participant in digital humanities faculty forums. Her research and teaching areas of expertise include dance histories of the U.S., Israel and the Jewish diaspora, Latin America, Europe, South Asia, and the African diaspora; gender and queer theory; nationalism and diaspora studies; Laban movement notation and analysis; and, digital humanities. She is the author of *Honest Bodies: Revolutionary Modernism in the Dances of Anna Sokolow* (Oxford University Press, 2017). She is project director for the dance notation iPad app KineScribe that is supported by a 2011 National Endowment for the Humanities Office of Digital Humanities Level Start-Up Grant, and she is on The Ohio State University research team for LabanLens, a HoloLens application for Labanbased dance scoring. https://dance.osu.edu/labanlens

Sali Ann Kriegsman has served as artistic adviser to the Digital Dance Library planning project, which was funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; president of the Dance Heritage Coalition; executive director of Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival; director of the National Endowment for the Arts Dance Program; dance consultant to the Smithsonian Institution; and, executive editor at The American Film Institute. Her book, *Modern Dance in America The Bennington Years*, a foundational history of the early years of modern dance, was hailed by the *New York Times* as "a vivid and human picture of a crucial chapter in American culture." Her articles, criticism and essays have been published in a variety of periodicals and reference sources. Her bio is included in Marquis *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in American Women*.

Anne Ladyem McDivitt is the Digital Humanities Librarian for the University of Alabama Libraries. She assists faculty and graduate students in creating digital projects at the University, as well as facilitating digital pedagogy in the form of tools and workshops. Her personal research is on the history of the video game industry in the 1970s and 1980s, with a particular interest in gender. She received her PhD in History with a minor in Digital History from George Mason University and her MA in Public History from the University of Central Florida. In her free time, she

plays video games and co-hosts a podcast about video games, anime, and manga. You can follow her on Twitter @anneladyem or on her blog at anneladyem.com.

Susan McGreevy-Nichols is the Executive Director of the National Dance Education Organization, a non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement and promotion of high-quality education in the art of dance. Her service to the field of arts education includes sitting on a number of national committees and task forces, including serving on the leadership team for NCCAS. She has contributed to the development of the National Core Standards in Arts Education, the NAEP Assessments, and the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) Model Standards for Beginning Teacher Licensing, Assessment and Development. She has also developed numerou online courses for NDEO's OPDI. As a teacher at Roger Williams Middle School in Providence, Rhode Island, from 1974-2002, Susan founded and developed that institution's nationally renowned middle school dance program. She is the developer of a cutting-edge reading comprehension strategy that uses text as inspiration for original choreography created by children. This literacy-based methodology combines the creative process with reading instruction. She is co-author of five books: *Building Dances* (1995) (2005), *Building More Dances* (2001), *Experiencing Dance* (2004) (2014), *Dance about Anything* (2006) and *Dance Forms and Styles* (2010). She has served on the editorial board of the *Journal of Dance Education* (JODE), is a former columnist for *Dance Teacher Magazine*, and has been an invited contributor to the *Arts Education Policy Review*.

Laura Pettibone Wright is pursuing in-depth research into the career of choreographer Erick Hawkins, publishing findings, and presenting at national conferences. She has restaged Hawkins' works and excerpts for professional companies and students of all ages for formal and informal presentation. A soloist with Hawkins' company, she toured nationally and internationally and was acclaimed for her musicality and poetic elegance. Her Hawkins-based technique classes reflect her on-going examination of Hawkins' principles of movement, aesthetic concepts and philosophic foundations. Ms. Pettibone Wright wrote dance curriculum based on National Standards in Dance Education for the Virginia Beach City Public Schools. She received her MA in Dance Education from Columbia University's Teachers College, where she was awarded the Artist/Scholar Fellowship, and a BA in Music and Dance at Beloit College. www.laurapettibonewright.com

Rebecca Salzer (Project Director) is Associate Professor of Dance and directs the Collaborative Arts Research Initiative at the University of Alabama. Rebecca is an intermedia dance artist and educator. Her work for the stage has been seen in Chicago, Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco, where she directed Rebecca Salzer Dance Theater for a decade. Her award-winning films and videos have been programmed in national and international venues and on public affiliate television stations KQED, KPBS, and WTTW. Salzer is a Jacob K. Javits Fellow. She holds a B.A. in Humanities from Yale University and an M.F.A. in Dance Theatre from the University of California, San Diego. www.rebeccasalzer.com

E. Gaynell Sherrod earned an M.Ed in dance education and an Ed.D in dance pedagogy from Temple University after 15 years of performing, touring, and teaching with groups including PHILADANCO and Urban Bush Women, Inc. Dr. Sherrod is a Fulbright-Hayes scholar in dance historical research. Her artistic and theoretical works are steeped in African Diaspora dance and music performance. As Director for Dance Education for New York City Public Schools (2000-2003), she founded and directed the New York City Department of Education *Dance Institute Based on Katherine Dunham Model*, for which she was awarded a DANA Foundation Grant. Dr. Sherrod is a lecturer and consultant in dance history and performance studies for school systems PreK-12 and higher education. From 2014-2016, she served as the Chair of the Department of Dance and Choreography at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), where she is currently a tenured associate professor. She is currently writing a book, *The Dance Griots: Reading the Invisible Script* – Mellen Press – August, 2018. https://arts.vcu.edu/dance/people/faculty-staff/gaynell-sherrod/

Libby Smigel AB MFA PhD, Dance Archivist, Library of Congress, was project director of Dance Heritage Coalition's copyright and fair use project in 2007-2009. Confirmed as Executive Director of DHC in November 2009, she oversaw the pilot phase of DHC's preservation-quality videotape digitization project that also streamed content to verified educational IP addresses. She also worked with dance companies to develop sustainable archival solutions for their in-house collections, and she also secured IMLS funding to expand the DHC intern program into robust multi-year fellowship program for early-career archivists, among other initiatives. Following completion of her doctorate from the University of Toronto in 1992, Smigel had a 15-year career as a faculty member, teaching

undergrad and graduate courses in drama/theatre and dance history at an array of higher education institutions, such as American University, George Washington University, the University of Maryland, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, York University, and Rochester Institute of Technology. An active dance researcher and editor, she has contributed entries for the *Dictionary of American Biography*, was consultant on antiquity entries for the *International Encyclopedia of Dance* (Oxford UP), served on the first board of directors of the Society of Dance History Scholars (now Dance Studies Association), and currently serves as an Associate Editor of the Journal of American Culture.

Imogen Smith, Director of Archiving and Preservation at Dance/USA, has more than a decade of experience as a specialist in archiving dance, and is a passionate believer that preserving artistic legacies strengthens and supports the art form. As Project Manager for Dance Heritage Coalition (DHC), she spent five years working with dance companies and independent artists around the country to assess, organize, and digitize their collections, and leading projects to process historical dance archives and create new online dance history and archiving resources. As Acting Executive Director of Dance Heritage Coalition, she oversaw the integration of DHC's archiving and preservation programs into Dance/USA. Previously, she worked on oral history projects and video archives in the Dance Division of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts and on visual arts collections at the Brooklyn Museum and the Morgan Library & Museum. Based in New York City, she is the author of two books on film history, writes for a variety of cinema and culture publications, and is a frequent speaker on classic film.
https://www.danceusa.org/imogen-smith-director-archiving-and-preservation

Lynne Weber, Executive Director of the Dance Notation Bureau, is a Certified Professional Notator and Certified Teacher of Labanotation; a Certified Movement Analyst; and a notator of works, including Joffrey, Massine, Posin, Wagoner, Sokolow, and full-evening length *Sleeping Beauty*. She received her BFA in Dance from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, and danced professionally with the Milwaukee Ballet Company as well as other ballet, modern, opera, and operetta companies. She has taught Dance and Notation, choreographed for the Public Theater, and served on the former Board of Directors for Congress on Research in Dance (CORD) and the American Dance Guild. In addition, she also holds an M.B.A. from the Wharton School and an M.S.E. in Computer Science from the University of Pennsylvania. She has managed consulting projects at what is now KPMG, was a Vice President at Goldman Sachs, and was a Professor in computer systems at Touro College. http://dancenotation.org/

Contact Us

June 25, 2019

We'd love to hear from you! Please use the contact form below.

Name *

First

Last

Email *

Comment or Message *

Website

Submit

If you were present at one of our presentations, please take the following survey: [Dancing Digital Presentation Survey](#)

Appendix B: Symposium Schedule

Creating National Access to Digital Dance Resources
A Symposium Supported by the NEH Office of Digital Humanities
The University of Alabama
May 13-16, 2019
Project Director, Rebecca Salzer

Schedule

Monday, May 13

12:00-5:00 PM	Attendees arrive in Tuscaloosa
5:30-6:00 PM	**Welcome** - Rebecca Salzer and University of Alabama officials
6:00-8:00 PM	**Opening Dinner, Hotel Capstone**

Tuesday, May 14

7:00-8:40 AM	**Continental Breakfast, Hotel Capstone**
9:00-10:30 AM	**Session I, Maxwell Hall** **The history of efforts to improve access to online dance resources, and a current environmental scan** Moderator: Libby Smigel, Library of Congress Sali Ann Kriegsmann, independent dance scholar Lynne Weber, Executive Director, Dance Notation Bureau
10:30-10:50 AM	Coffee Break (provided)
11:00 AM-12:30 PM	**Session II: What do dance scholars and educators need?** Moderator: Rebecca Salzer, University of Alabama Melanie Aceto, University at Buffalo Patrick Corbin, USC, Glorya Kaufman School of Dance Alison D'Amato, USC, Glorya Kaufman School of Dance Shana Habel, LA Unified School District Laura Pettibone Wright, independent dance scholar
12:30-2:00 PM	Lunch Break (on your own; list of local eateries will be provided)
2:00-3:30 PM	**Session III, Maxwell Hall** **Innovative digital humanities research in dance** Moderator: Eugenia Kim, City University of Hong Kong

Harmony Bench, The Ohio State University
Melanie Aceto, University at Buffalo
Sybil Huskey, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Hannah Kosstrin, The Ohio State University

3:30-3:50 PM   Coffee Break (provided)

4:00-5:30 PM   **Session IV: Intellectual property, fair use, and artist involvement**
Moderator: Libby Smigel
Peter Jaszi, American University Washington College of Law

Wednesday, May 15

7:00-8:40 AM   **Continental Breakfast, Hotel Capstone**

9:00-10:30 AM   **Session V, Maxwell Hall**
Curation & inclusion: creating a diverse and contemporary collection
Moderator: Harmony Bench, The Ohio State University
Lane Czaplinski, Wexner Center
Hannah Kosstrin, The Ohio State University
E. Gaynell Sherrod, Virginia Commonwealth University

10:30-10:50 AM   Coffee Break

11:00 AM-12:30 PM   **Session VI: Sustainability and open access**
Moderator: Sybil Huskey, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Libby Smigel, Library of Congress
Eugenia Kim, City University of Hong Kong
Lane Czaplinski, Wexner Cente
Susan McGreevey-Nichols, National Dance Education Organization

12:30-2:00 PM   Lunch Break (on your own)

2:00-3:30 PM   **Session VII: Designing the project blueprint**
Facilitator: Rebecca Salzer, University of Alabama
Objectives: This is a working session intended to synthesize ideas
generated from the symposium.

3:30-3:50 PM   Coffee Break (provided)

4:00-5:30 PM   **Session VIII: Next steps: moving the project forward**
Facilitator: Rebecca Salzer, University of Alabama
Objectives: In this working session, we will identify individual
assignments for drafting the white paper, for seeking funding to continue
the project, and for participation in sharing sessions that will help
publicize and gather support for the group's plan.

Thursday, May 16

7:00-9:00 AM   **Continental Breakfast, Hotel Capstone**

                      Guests depart

                      *Note: A follow up conference call for symposium participants will be scheduled to occur 2 weeks following the meeting.