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Benefit Toast at Graham

On March 10 the DNB hosted a benefit at the new studios of the Martha Graham Company, to celebrate the Graham repertory. Part of the proceeds will be used to record more of the historic Graham dances.

The champagne reception was led by honorary Co-Chairs Francis Mason, Lee Traub and Judith Schlosser. Elizabeth Auclair performed *Lamentation* with pianist Lawrence Reed Hansen. Ilene Fox moderated a panel on how the Graham work was made and how it is being saved, with Stuart Hodes, Graham Co-Artistic Director Christine Dakin, and Director of Restaging Leslie Rotman, who notated the only full Graham score, *Diversion of Angels*. Through the courtesy of Lloyd Morgan and the Barbara Morgan Archives, a show of Morgan's photographs of Martha Graham was on sale to benefit the DNB.

Staff Moves

Administrative Assistant Beverly Jensen, who has been a dearly appreciated bulwark of the DNB for almost 17 years, has decided to spend more time with her family at home. We send her the deep gratitude of a General Manager, 2 Executive Directors, a Director of Notation, a Director of Restaging, 9 Librarians, an Archives Consultant, a Director of Special Projects, a Director of Education, 2 Notation Associates and too many Notators and Board members to count. Jensen conceived and brought into being the Note-8 Cards, several of which she also designed. We will always have with us her kindness, warmth, devoted and able

organization, elegance in representing the DNB to the world, and regularly wicked humor.

The DNB welcomes Doris Caravaglia to the position of Administrative Assistant, as an old friend and colleague. Caravaglia was Membership Coordinator and Office Manager of Circum-Arts, which shared our premises for many years on 21st Street and 30th Street.

Spotlight: Dual Notators

One works with LabanWriter, one works by hand, and they live on opposite coasts. They are two of the DNB's most sophisticated Notators, and together Mary Corey and Sandra Aberkalns invented a collaborative notation process. They are now finishing the DNB's first Jerome Robbins score, *Dances at a Gathering*, as set by Susan Hendl and Victor Castelli on San Francisco Ballet.

Outside of Notator training, it is now rare for two people to tackle a score together. As the restager works in the studio, the notator sits nearby, taking information as fast as the dancers do. The DNB accommodates artist practice as it records work. But what if the restaging is by a team, and their practice is to work simultaneously with separate groups, or even in separate rooms?

Presented with this challenge, Ilene Fox sent out two Notators. They prepared to record the men separately from the women or any other division of labor the restagers might choose. In the end Hendl and Castelli usually worked at the same time, with different dancers, in different areas of one studio, each attended by a Notator (at times this placed Corey

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right in the middle of the room among the dancers, so as to hear her restager).

Frequently one Notator would take over an entire section. But in the duet *Wind Waltz*, which they called their significant test, Aberkalns wrote the woman's material and Corey the man's. Together they edited the whole, sometimes altering or adjusting their writing for coherence in lifts, sometimes melding their writing into a third version. Often they adopted each other's solutions to problems that turned up in both drafts. Aberkalns suggested, "You need to put in *grasps*; I need to take out *surfaces*, [to make consistent the recurring hands-on-hips figure]. During a post-rehearsal session their working relationship was direct, quick, visibly based on mutual understanding. Aberkalns, surprised by their consonance: "that's how I've been doing it too, that's the analysis I used." Corey handed over a page with a wry, "here's something you're not going to like." [It wasn't so.] "Would you try to see if you can figure this out?" They examined each other's drafts for shared steps written differently, hands dancing on the table. "You wrote the transitions much better than I did," noted Aberkalns. Corey: "Gee, beautiful floor plans, Sandra—ah, nice. These floor plans are like a work of art." "There are differences in the way we write, but I think they're minor enough and distinctive enough that [readers] will just think, this is Mary, this is Sandra. And we're consistent enough that I don't think it will be a problem," Corey reflected. They kept recalling how much they liked the choreography, and both called this their favorite notating experience, for the sharing of challenges and laughter in nightly post-rehearsal dinners.

Two focal points were pagination and the glossary. When interviewed, Corey was laying out the pages to receive each Notator's drafts and inserting necessary blanks: "Which side did you finish your section on? Oh, good, I started on the other side". They noted that score layout has important implications for ease of reading and clarity. There is a sense that as they write, both are constantly communicating with the future restager.

The implications of their different writing tools came into relief. Both agree that LW affects how they think. Corey said "LW does not permit you to 'squish' symbols into a space. This could be helpful in preventing

overwriting, cramming in too much detail that is more than the mind can absorb...Abbreviations [amplified elsewhere] are one answer. LW makes me find another way to express it, perhaps with word notes." Aberkalns values the hand's freedom to resize symbols within dense writing. She can then move information right where the logic needs it most. She also finds that handwriting her symbols creates a direct kinetic connection with the choreography, "like jumping into the skin of the dancers."

The intellectual organization of the glossary got careful attention. One can see the choices notators make by examining even the order of their glossary entries. Aberkalns: "You've convinced me to list supports and leg rotations first—usually I've done the arms—because leg work is what the restagers look at first..." Corey: "... and there are major style implications." They return frequently to a few major questions: whether to change the degree of turnout when the dancers run; whether a hand cocked behind the head is folded or relaxed; whether they should be changing the conventions for ballet arms, using folding rather than contraction; "We're assuming that middle-level steps are toe-heel, have you been writing that out?" The plan is to glossarize, where appropriate, separate analyses of the same material, all to aid clarity and a complete record.

This process underlines how notators command more information about the substance of a work than other viewers. Critics who do not read notation are confined to judgments based on their memory. This even used to seem the natural order of things. But those who analyze the physical detail, who record stagers' instructions and demonstrations, have invaluable information about what is actually in the choreography; exactly what the dancers are doing and with what artistic values they are operating. With precision they can identify themes and prove references. They have much to offer scholars and critics alike.

Profile

a series on DNB's people and allies

The DNB Library is staffed this year in a new way. After 38 years of professional supervision the databases and archives bore the marks of the many hands that built the systems. They also reflected the changing electronic data-

keeping methods over the years since scores began to arrive and require housing, conservation and tracking.

Mei-Chen Lu joined the DNB staff in 2002. She is the first Librarian to have a full command of LN. Lu grew up in Taiwan, with a conservatory-level dance training in junior college. Her principal teachers were Mo-Shi Liaw, who taught her the value of enthusiasm and patience, and OSU graduate Ra-Yuan Tseng, who introduced her to the concepts of notation and the OSU dance department. She danced with several companies, but then looked overseas for a broader education. This brought her to New York to study English, finish college and dance with H.T. Chen.

Lu completed a dance degree at Hunter College, relishing access to the work of Ron Brown, Sara Pearson and Tharp. Ready to leave New York, she was directed to Ohio State by the Hunter faculty. There she found the intensive training and comprehensive curriculum she wanted, and she concentrated on performance and notation with some computer dance technology for her Masters degree. Her first LN course won her the special encouragement of Extension Director Sheila Marion and Valarie Mockabee, and she earned certification as an elementary LN teacher and as restager.

Lu was a friend of Mira Kim, presently the DNB's Notation Associate, who was then working part-time in the OSU Music and Dance Library. She joined Kim on the job, and in 2 years became Student Supervisor, handling shelving, check-in, cataloguing and circulation. She was also a Teaching Associate for undergraduate elementary and intermediate LN; she was looking for teaching positions on graduation when Marion recommended her to Ilene Fox as full-time Librarian.

With the base in LN, Lu is an effective complement to Archives Consultant Joey Smith. She learned the cataloguing system as it was built, and eased the process of meshing movement scores into library practice. The system has to accommodate special items: folk dance material that does not circulate, notated baroque dances, scores that lack full identifying information, even some information that lacks scores. Where once she had to search a shelf of boxes to find out what the DNB had on a certain topic, she can now call up a database.

Joey Smith is from Pittsburgh, and studied history at Indiana University

of Pennsylvania. Interested in archiving, she joined the Pittsburgh Historical Society and worked on the papers of the United Electrical Radio and Machine Workers' Union. After graduate work at San Francisco State University in American social and cultural history, she made her way to New York where she found a position exactly one day after arriving, with the Winthrop Group. The Group provides services in archiving and historical writing, for instance in creating corporate histories.

Smith endorses the two-pronged staff concept. "Design and implementation are the hardest part. Once you get a [suitably sophisticated] system in place it is easier to maintain and add to. I wanted to make the database visually pleasing and visually organized as well, so that you can easily find what you need and not get lost scrolling down 50 fields of information." She works on three fronts: designing and now tweaking the databases, reviewing the data and correcting mistakes and omissions, and refolding the scores. Duplicated materials are being culled, and a project to remove scores from somewhat tired file cabinets onto archival shelving is in the works.

There will now be three linked databases. A list by dance title collects all available information relating to a score which the DNB now has. A master file, as yet incomplete, gives details about the contents of each folder for a specific work in the Archives, such as costume or lighting designs and supporting material. The circulation list records all materials in the Maria Grandy Circulating Library. Smith explains it will now be faster for Lu to lay hands on what is requested, such as the many different versions of a work like *Sleeping Beauty*. She notes that her transfer of the database into Filemaker permits export in Java, a step toward making the catalogue finally searchable on line.

The Library

Scores have come in from Leslie Rotman (Leni Wylliams' *Sweet in the Morning*) and Ray Cook (Paul Taylor's *Black Tuesday* and Lin Hwai-min's full *Legacy*).

Proceedings of the 2002 Motif symposium at OSU are now posted on the theory bulletin board on the website.

Several research projects received Librarian assistance. Ebonie Pittman at

Ohio State learned a solo from Alvin Ailey's *Lark Ascending* and studied other Ailey scores at the DNB for a senior project. Kathrina Ferrugia of the Royal Academy of Dancing in London is using the score of *Agon* for a dissertation about Balanchine's influence on William Forsythe. Liz Shaw in Thessaloniki, Greece is working through the RAD Distance Learning project on Tudor's *Dark Elegies*.

OSU Extension News

Jessica Lindberg reconstructed Loie Fuller's 1896 *Firedance* from reviews, photos, film fragments, sculpture and Fuller's own words about her legendary lighting effects. Lindberg danced the work in a recent OSU performance, and is now preparing a written thesis, notation score and a DVD produced by dance film expert John Mueller, who brought his Dance Film Archives to Columbus on joining the OSU political science faculty.

With two productions of Susan Hadley's *Commonplace*, Kim Jensen will become authorized to coach the work as well as restage it. Jensen is mounting the work from score at Utah's Repertory Dance Theater, with Hadley coaching; later the notator, Yim Fun Tsang, will mount it in Hong Kong with Jensen herself as the coach.

Helen P. Alkire, founding dance Chair and initiator of the Extension, appeared in Hadley's extravaganza *Ballet in Scarlet and Grey*, made for Ballet Met, OSU dancers and the University Marching Band. As the Band drew up in place to spell out "Ohio", Alkire drove out from the wings to tip her cap in center stage, her wheelchair sporting a license plate that read her role: "dot the i".

Debugging LW 4.4

Mira Kim has been working since August 2001 on the transfer of older pencil scores in the archives into LabanWriter, on an NEA-funded project first begun by Gina Jacobs. This exacting work has turned up a side benefit: she is recognized by Lucy Venable as the person who uses LW most heavily on a daily basis, for the most complex writing. Kim has become in effect a one-woman testing lab, and worked with the pre-release version of LW4.4. Her increasing

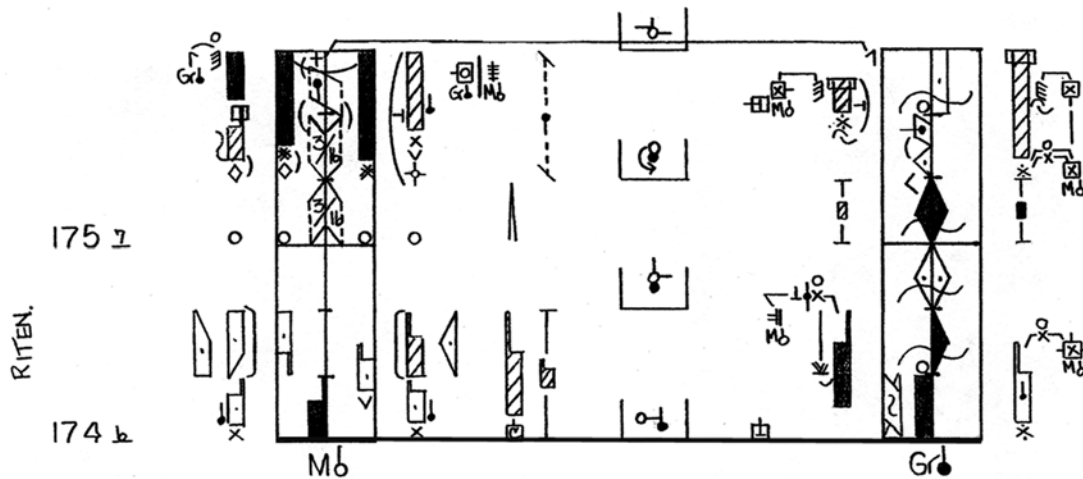
expertise permits Venable and David Ralley at Ohio State to do advanced-level debugging. "She's the sharpest," noted Venable, "the fastest of anyone I know." The two spent some days in New York in the fall working intensively together (the verb Venable actually uses is "playing"), as they push the software possibilities and locate areas that need more work to make 4.4 as useful as possible to notators.

Taiwan Conference's Draw

A call for papers issued by the DNB/Chinese Cultural University conference in Taiwan elicited an unusually broad response. Proposals have come in to date from Mexico (5), Taiwan (5) Utah (2), Austria, Brazil and New Jersey. As always there is strong representation from Hungary and from Columbus, Ohio. The meeting follows the ICKL biennial conference in Beijing. Further information is available on the enclosed conference flyer.

Broadcast News

National Public Radio broadcast a December interview with Ilene Fox, Sandra Aberkalns and Ray Cook on preservation of dance, with an unusual twist. Cook was pre-recorded in a studio as he set material from score on a dancer, and his teaching was run as quiet background to the subsequent interviews. Cook got in a crisp response on whether film was the best permanent record: "What they don't stop and think about is that you're going to have 100 videos, 100 different angles—of the *wrong* choreography. Videotaping it from 100 positions doesn't make the performance of it correct." Fox pointed out a particularly useful aspect in notating "a Pilobolus piece where the women come in perched on the men's shoulders. I had a whole page of notation before they entered the stage, just to say how they're up there and what they're doing to stay up there. A certain part of the foot had to be on the shoulder; they couldn't be too far forward or too far back. Those are all things you can't see on a videotape." The interviewer paid special attention to the look of a page in Aberkalns' score, describing for listeners the graphic beauty of her autography both for symbols and word notes.



LIFT NOTES:

1. M'S JETÉ CANNOT BE FLAT. IT MUST GO →. THE MAN HAS TO CATCH HER ON THE WAY UP.
2. ON THE FLIP THE MAN CAN NOT USE TOO MUCH FORCE. IT'S USING JUST ENOUGH MOMENTUM TO BRING HER UP.
3. "IF YOU HAVE TO 'SETTLE HER' THEN DON'T STOP TO DO IT — DO IT AS YOU'RE TURNING."
 I.E. IF SHE HITS RIGHT ON THE SHOULDER JUST RUN OFF (NO TURN).

IF SHE DOESN'T QUITE MAKE IT (SHE'S MORE ON THE UPPER ARM AND I WILL HAVE TO DO AN EXTRA HEAVE TO FINISH GETTING HER UP) THEN, TO DISGUISE THAT ACTION, DO IT WHILE ↓, THEN CONTINUE ↓ TO EXIT.

excerpt from the score of Jerome Robbins' DANCES AT A GATHERING (see story page 1). The left staff is Sandra Aberkalns' notation for the woman and the right staff is Mary Corey's for the man

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