



# Performance!

The SAA Performing Arts Section encourages the exchange of information on historical and contemporary documentation of music, dance, theatre, motion pictures, and other performance media.

WINTER 2019

NEWSLETTER OF THE SAA  
PERFORMING ARTS SECTION

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# Message From the Co-Chairs

Greetings PAR members,

## In this issue

Welcome to a new membership year with this latest issue of Performance!

It was good to see many of you at the SAA Annual Meeting in Austin this past August. For those of you who were not able to attend, the Performing Arts Section held a very productive meeting, which featured two outstanding presentations. Gabryel Smith, Director of Archives and Exhibitions of the New York Philharmonic discussed the organization's recent project to digitize a large collection of press scrapbooks dating between 1903-1979. Tom Claeson, Senior Digital & Preservation Services Consultant at LYRASIS gave a progress report on their Performing Arts Readiness Project, which assists performing arts organizations in planning and developing resources and capacity for emergency preparedness at the local and regional level.

In addition to the business meeting, we fortunate to be able to offer Section members and Annual Meeting attendees a special tour of the Harry Ransom Center with Eric Colleary, Cline Curator of Theatre and Performing Arts. Eric was a fantastic host! In addition to our group having a chance to look at the Stories to Tell exhibition (which included an "Inside the Arthur Miller papers" display) and go on a whirlwind tour of the stacks and processing areas (with a glimpse at the recently-installed Harry Houdini bookcase), Eric had thoughtfully prepared a selection of some treasures from the Ransom Center performing arts collections (such as George Bernard Shaw's fingerless gloves and a risqué postcard to Jule Styne sent from Ethel Merman while visiting Italy). Thank you again, Eric! A special thank you also goes out to SAA Gov-

ernance Manager Felicia Owens and our Council Liaison Steven Booth for facilitating our Section's use of an SAA Annual Funding grant to cover the cost of hiring a minivan to transport our group to and from the conference hotel and the Ransom Center on what proved to be an extremely hot day in Austin – and many thanks as well to our driver, Tasha, for getting us there safely and back so punctually!

Election results also were announced at the Section business meeting. With Brenna Edwards making a transition from Steering Committee member to Co-Chair, we are pleased to welcome Libby Smigel to Section leadership as our new Steering Committee member. We are extremely grateful to outgoing Co-Chair Elizabeth Surles for all her hard work (and her willingness to serve an additional term). Elizabeth is in the process of finalizing a date for a webinar in which Eric Harbeson will give a presentation on the copyright issues for archivists around the recent Music Modernization Act.

The Steering Committee agreed upon this topic in response to the results of a survey we distributed last year. We plan on reaching out again in the coming months via the mailing list, update the content and design of the Section microsite, and possibly start some social media engagement. In the meantime, if you have ideas for other projects that you would like to see the Section to pursue, or if you are interested in volunteering, please do not hesitate to contact any of us on the Steering Committee.

Helice Koffler and Brenna Edwards  
Co-Chairs of the Performing Arts Roundtable

## *“The About Faces”: Correspondence Shows a Musician’s Experience During World War II*

by Andrew Harman

Andrew Harman is the Archivist at The Center for American War Letters at Chapman University

Right: The About Faces



Corporal Paul James Parks, United States Army Air Corps (4/29/1908 - 10/6/1984) was born in Coffeyville, Kansas and attended high school in Centralia, Washington. He met Sylvia Noreen Robbins and they dated for three years before marrying in 1929, moving to California and having a child by 1934. Parks was a family man and an accomplished musician before the world went to war and his talents were

needed in the North African Theater in 1944.

The Center for American War Letters Archives (CAWL) recently received a donation of correspondence sent by Cpl. Parks’ to Sylvia during the war. It includes approximately 170 letters, composed almost daily from training until just before his discharge. He also sent memorabilia, including money and

a Moroccan bar set complete with a corkscrew and bottle opener. CAWL specializes in American war correspondence, as well as

and eventually brought his talents with him to Washington when the economy forced his family to move. During his senior year of high school in 1927, he was caught entertaining classmates at lunchtime with “boogie-woogie,” blues and jazz, rather than the appointed music curricula. One of his first gigs after high school was with the Dale Johnson Band in 1928 and he met his wife playing a Grange music gig, where she played violin. All the while, Parks worked at a lumber mill, playing music on the side until he landed a professional position in a band playing at the Rose Room of the Butler Hotel in Seattle. He and Sylvia married and moved to California, where he continued to play professionally and was even a favored piano player for films in the early 1940s, including *Phantom Lady*, a movie he ended up seeing again in French while overseas in Morocco.

Left: The About Faces newspaper clipping

Bottom: Luggage tags from Paul Parks’ travels with The About Faces



photos and other memorabilia, and those collections illustrate a wide range of wartime experiences; from combat to support, the home front, the fear, and the celebrations. Among over four hundred processed collections, Parks’ letters stand out.

As a musician, his experience is almost unique. In his unit, there were only seven or so, often changing, members of his music group, “The About Faces.” Even their military training was condensed, learning enough to be able to react in a combat situation, though that was unlikely. They produced a show, practiced, and honed their act until it was ready to go overseas and entertain the men and women in what were by then rear areas of North Africa. By 1944, when they arrived, the war effort had long since moved into Italy, which kept them out of harm’s way. But it is through these letters that historians can ascertain the importance the U.S. government placed on musical performances for troop morale.

After a decade building a family, Parks enlisted in the Army on February 14, 1944 and served in the Special Services of the Army Air Corps, first training at Camp Sibert in Alabama, then relocating a few times before deploying overseas. The collection of correspondence he sent to Sylvia begins in March 1944, as Parks

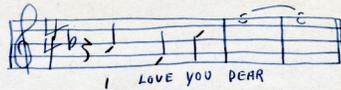


Growing up in Kansas, Parks was mostly self-taught on the piano, though his sister Vera also played but was known more for her singing. He played for his church and school

was headed to training in Alabama by rail. Upon arriving in Camp Sibert, he endured military training, including marksmanship, for which Parks received the highest score. He

Right: Letter from Paul Parks

wonderful?  
 So I guess she say see you tomorrow darling.  
 Christmas Holiday was as bad as ever I was surprised  
 tho because they had a whole screen personal shot  
 of me in the print I saw last night that wasnt  
 in the other pictures I saw. They probably slipped it  
 in while Darbin wasnt looking. Oh well. He He.  
 So goodnight again baby hum. Im like the guy playing  
 the wolin solo and somebody had stole his ending.  
 I cant seem to find my ending on this letter. So I will  
 just have to write one.



Daddy

wrote Sylvia almost daily and described his activities, including his music, the trips he would take off base, and the men with whom he served and played music. He played with Ed Fleming, Charlie Fiorini, Bob Olson, Augie Cundari, and Guy Kingsford (he was in the 1943 movie *Sahara*, starring Humphrey Bogart), among many others that shuffled into the group as the men travelled.

After finishing their training, they had a short reassignment in Camp Luna, New Mexico and a longer assignment in New York, during which Parks recounts in a letter all the places they had seen and how wonderful the city was. He even saw the Rockettes at Radio City Music Hall, played for the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), and after a few drinks with Ed Fleming they went to the NBC studios to play on their piano for a couple hours. Soon after, the unit deployed to North Africa.

The band were stationed in a "home" base but quickly got to work, spending several days travelling to other parts of the region, including places such as India and what is now Pakistan, playing for troops and honing their show. They even played on British Royal Air Force (RAF) bases. Parks' letters contained the mundanity of daily life in the desert, but he was verbose in his excitement at the sights and people he met. "I could write a book on what I've seen already and I haven't started yet," he told Sylvia in one of his first letters home from Africa. He described the landscape and the voluminous stars in the night sky. He described his trips to the Arab markets that looked "like a circus parade" filled with camels, cows and donkeys carrying goods and wares. He talked about the superior pianos he played on that were left by the Germans and how their show just was not the same while Fiorini was out with an illness. He seemed relieved to hear that they were losing a guitar player who was "found to be nuts."

Parks was also very interested in telling Sylvia about the "natives" wherever they went and the "wild" Arabs of Algeria that showed great fondness for the Americans, while he showed some disdain for the more acculturated French Arabs. He refers to many of the native peoples as "the help," and even praises the black African "help" over the Arabs in the north, though he could not divulge specific locations for many of their bases due to the ongoing military censorship of correspondence. The landscape and people were foreign to him, but his fascination kept the homesickness at bay regularly. "It sure gives you a funny feeling to sit and watch our modern movies while a few feet from you is a road people are travelling on exactly the same way they

did thousands of years ago,” ending his anecdote with a common phrase of his, “What a life. Ha Ha.”

The “newness” of places wore off at times and Parks enjoyed the mobile nature of their work; moving from base to base, city to city, town to town. Plane rides and nights in the barracks gave the men plenty of time to perfect the show and write new material. In October 1944, after less than a month overseas, Parks wrote a new song called “I Got What I Got in Rabat.” Occasionally, the men were confronted with the war, but in a more hopeful and jovial manner than a reminder of its terrors. They went through Egypt and saw where many big battles took place, likely referring to El Alamein, and occasional letters hint at rumors of the war nearing its end, though this frustrated him later when the seemingly inevitable German surrender had not arrived.

As time wore on, Parks showed his frustration more often. By December, he exclaimed to Sylvia that the entire war must not be over because of a “big business deal,” and that he would gladly pick up a rifle if it brought him home any sooner. Two days before Christmas, he wrote to Sylvia:

“The Only thing I hope or wish for now is for some true word of what’s gone wrong in the German front. At this rate I can look forward to spending another year in Africa at least. Great! God bless the British. I just get pretty fed up when I think of me being away from you like this for political reasons. If its for the defeat of an enemy of the U.S. I’m ready. But if is [sic] so Britain can jockey herself in to being able to bluff a big extra hunk of the world it burns me up.”

A couple letters later, however, he tells of his excitement flying over “the real garden of Eden” in Iraq. The adventurous travel aspect of his journey continued to keep his mind off the

negative elements.

“The About Faces” continued to play in the North African theater until after the war and the men finally joined many of those who fought in returning home to the States, and not a moment too soon. They had travelled an entire theater of war, recognizing the need for high energy, up-tempo music and performances with practical joking. But these men were like all others in that they were away from home and they missed their loved ones and the creature comforts of civilian life. Parks’ letters show his understanding that the Army placed a high value on musical performances for the troops and he continued that work until the very end and beyond.

Parks, who was a private during most of his service, discharged as a corporal on February 27, 1946. He continued to play music as a solo artist and as a pianist in nightclubs, hotels and restaurants while he and his family remained in California for the rest of their lives. His son, Gary, was in the 4<sup>th</sup> Armored Division US Army Band later in life, also playing the piano. Sylvia worked at Lockheed during the war and continued well after. After an eventful life filled with love and music, Cpl. Paul J. Parks passed away on October 6, 1984 and is interred at Rose Hills Memorial Park in Whittier, CA.

#### **A Note on Processing**

Much of the information above comes from the donor, Paul Parks’ daughter-in-law, who was given these letters and the surrounding stories by Paul and Sylvia. However, part of CAWL’s mission is to assist researchers by familiarizing ourselves with these materials. These niche collections, as opposed to records and family papers, require a closer eye to make the stories accessible. As archivists process a collection, we read through the letters to understand what is being said, where a soldier has been, and with which units they served. Historians can later search our collections to find exactly what they need, and often what they did not even know they needed. These stories are invaluable to understanding the American soldiers’ experiences of war, and Corporal Paul J. Parks of the United States Army Air Corps and “The About Faces” stands out in an unexpected, yet delightful, way.

# Preserving the Ephemeral Workshop with Carolina Performing Arts

By Anicka Austin & Jessica Venlet

*Anicka Austin is a Carolina Academic Library Associate, and Jessica Venlet is the Assistant University Archivist for Digital Records and Records Management, at UNC at Chapel Hill University Libraries, Wilson Special Collections Library*

## Introduction

Archiving the creative process of a performing artist often poses more questions than answers. However, outreach and discussion about how performance organizations and individual artists preserve ephemeral works can help demystify it. The outreach program we will discuss here was an “Archiving for Performing Artists” workshop for local artists and community members. We created activities and facilitated discussion aiming to further prepare and encour-

age artists to infuse record keeping practices into their creative process.

## Building relationships

The University Libraries at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill are invested in creating and supporting performing arts programming. The Carolina Academic Library Associates (CALA) Program provided a unique avenue for collaboration between the University Libraries and CPA. The [CALA program](#) supports the professional development



Right: Workshop  
group  
discussion

of graduate students and links the School of Information and Library Science to the University Libraries by placing selected students in a special project related to their interests. Anicka's CALA position was designed to create opportunities to explore performing arts archives through hands-on archival work with University Archives collections and outreach work with UNC-CH's performing arts departments. This two-year term position is situated in the Libraries within the Wilson Special Collections Library. Anicka works twenty hours a week as part of the University Archives team.

As UNC at Chapel Hill's performance presenting organization, Carolina Performing Arts (CPA) connects faculty to performances relevant to their curriculum, hosts residencies and fellowships from renowned artists, links artists to students and community organizations, and curates thought-provoking performance from around the world.

Over the past year, Wilson Special Collections Library and CPA have explored new opportunities for collaboration and performing arts promotion. We have hosted deep listening workshops facilitated by artist Abigail Washburn, processed a Carolina Performing Arts collection, and created library guides for individual performances in the 2019/20 season in collaboration with the Music Library. We hope that these initiatives will encourage scholars and researchers to dive deeper into historic and contemporary examples of artist and campus engagement at UNC-CH. As dynamic institutions of learning, research, and performance, becoming more deeply involved with each other has been positive and mutually beneficial.

### **The Commons resident artists**

In addition to the events listed above, the Wilson Special Collections Library also had an opportunity to contribute to CPA's new The Commons program. The Commons was an "initiative devoted to supporting performing

artists and fostering local creative community and discourse in and around the Triangle" area of North Carolina ([The Commons 2019](#)). It featured a four-week residency for three artists, billing in a festival hosted at CPA's CURRENT ArtSpace + Studio, and pairing with local writers for unique critical feedback on their work. As part of The Commons, we created a personal archiving workshop for the resident artists as well as an open session for Festival attendees. Other professional development opportunities within The Commons included grant-writing workshops and round table discussions on writing and criticism.

### **Creating the workshop**

After an initial brainstorm, it became clear to us that there are as many possible ways to design a workshop as there are ways that artists think of their archive and documentation process. In order to better organize our thoughts and clarify our goals for presentation and interactive elements, we created a lesson plan. The lesson plan helped us think in terms of blocks of time and variety of workshop activities. The reality of time constraints helped us be selective in what we wanted to share and what we hoped the artists would gain. We decided on a 1.5-hour workshop with three basic sections. The opening section was a discussion of what a performing artists' archive might be like. The middle section focused on the practicalities of digital files and digital storage, as well as descriptive and inventory strategies. The closing section consisted of a reflective exercise to imagine a future archive.

Once the plan and timeline were drafted, we spent some time learning about each artist from their artist statement, CV, bio, and videos of past performances. It was helpful to have more perspective on their backgrounds, be able to refer to previously created work, and have an idea of the types of materials they may be interested in preserving.

We were also knowledgeable about the focus of The Commons. During their residency, artists would be challenging traditional audience/performer roles, focusing on the artistic process as much or maybe more than the outcome of the process, and operating with social justice practices as a component of their work.

**The workshop introduction**

We began the first workshop by unrolling rose-colored paper on the Carolina Performing Arts' conference room table. We asked each artist to briefly write down their goals for the session, the "hats" they wear (such as Arts Administrator, Dancer, Choreographer, Social Media guru), and where they see themselves or their work in ten years. We read the answers aloud and talked about what they think makes up an archive of their work based on their hats and goals.

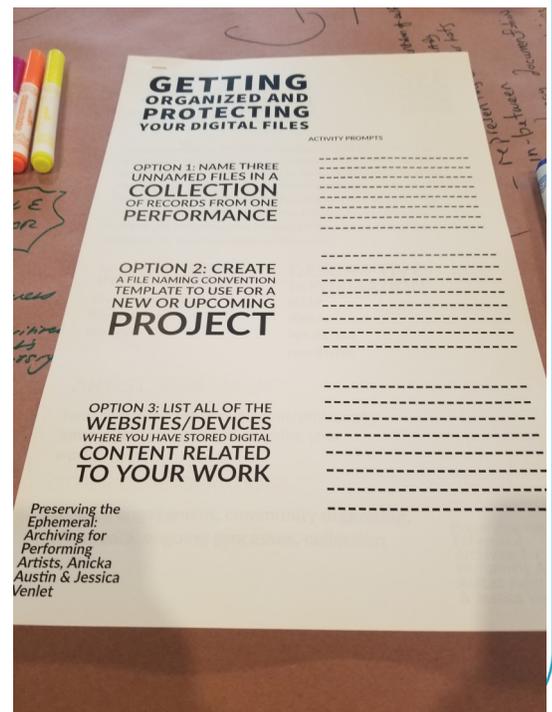
Part of getting to know the artists was also asking how they use archives in their practice. One artist in the first workshop used Merce Cunningham's archives extensively and both artists had used video to reconstruct choreography. When asked if they document their own work as thoroughly, both artists expressed interest in documenting their work more, though one artist relayed that she does record each of her rehearsal sessions and documents the details of performances thoroughly.

In the last part of the discussion, we addressed the artists focus on their residency. Based on the focuses of The Commons we posed the questions:

- How would you want to document audience and performer

relationships within this residency and beyond?

- Are there any special considerations for your audience? How is this engagement showing up in the record of your work?
- How do you document the role of organizing around social, political and cultural movements in your work? Is it important to capture any documentation specific to this?
- Are ongoing creative processes allotted a particular type of documentation? For example, are you documenting how many times the name of a work has changed?
- Based on the hats you wear, where is one aspect of your work more documented than another?
- How does that affect your work?



Bottom: Workshop worksheets

This discussion lasted around twenty minutes. Artists were engaged and discussed generously.

**Getting Organized and Protecting Digital Files**

With ideas about what an archive might include fresh in the participants' minds, we transitioned to talking about organization and preservation strategies. This discussion was framed around three facets of protecting digital files: what is it, where is it and where is it going? To begin, we discussed the importance of identifying what types of digital records fit their concept of their archive. This could include broad categories like photo, video, or Tweets. It could also be more specific to their work like notes,

external drives) can fail over time, as well as the risks of relying on third party cloud services. Lastly, we discussed planning for where past and current records might go for more managed and intentional storage. For the hands-on activity, participants were asked to inventory all their digital storage locations (past or present) or create a file-naming convention for an upcoming project. Artists could choose the activity most relevant to them. This section was about fifteen minutes.

**Making Meaning: Description and Inventory**

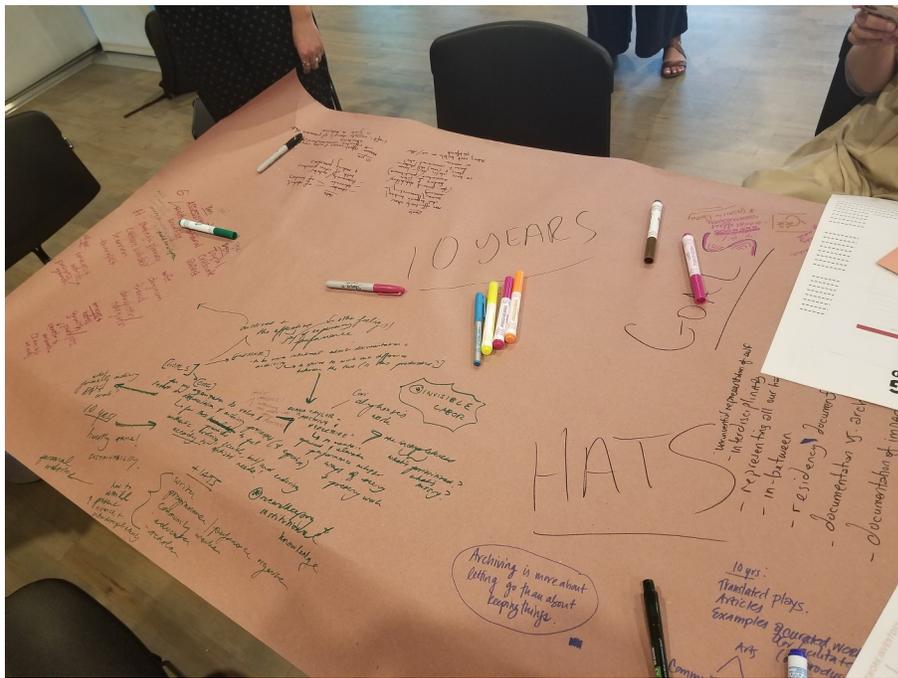
In this section of the workshop, we showed examples from the [Dance Heritage Coalition](#) and the artist-run company, [Getting Your Sh\\*t Together](#). Their inventory templates were helpful additional resources that artists could use in the future and were a testament to all the work being done in this area already. These templates are thorough and helpful, so we didn't have to reinvent the wheel by creating our own templates. This allowed us to focus more on tailoring the workshop to our local community.

**Bringing the information home: visualization**

The workshop ended with a visualization writing exercise

correspondence with other artists, or promotional materials. From there, it is critical to know where digital materials are stored currently and where items were stored previously. Leaving performance records from 2003 on an optical disc or forgetting about the Drop-box account from a few years ago will impact long-term access and preservation. We discussed how storage media (like CDs or

that prompted artists to consider what their archive would look like in ten years. We gave them floral-designed cards and asked them to write a letter to their future self. They could describe the composition of their archive, where it's held and what events led up to the making of the archive. This was an opportunity for artists to imagine how their work and performance style contribute to where they



Left: Hats activity

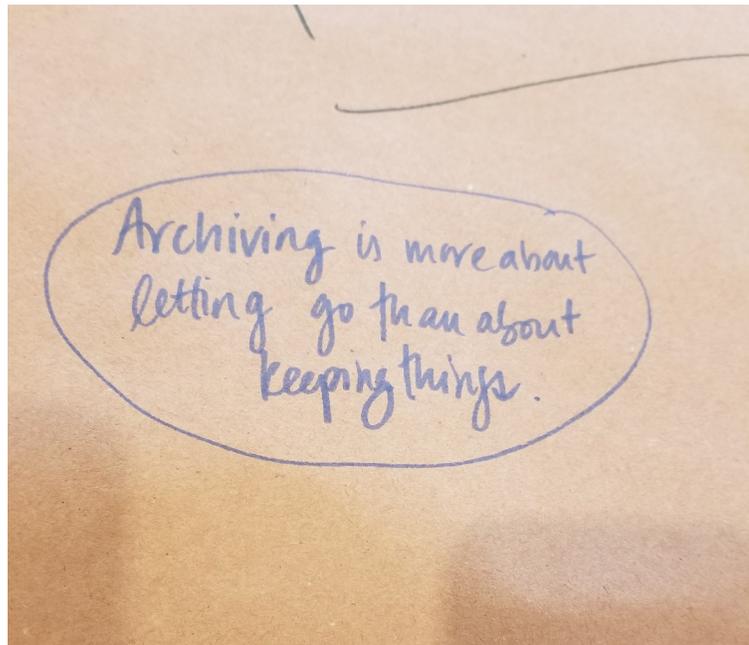
will be in ten years as well as considering integration of archival practices into their process and personal archiving as a narrative tool. We concluded with a recap of the workshop and casual discussion. This section was also about fifteen minutes.

The second iteration of the workshop took place during The Commons Festival and was attended predominantly by people working in arts administration at universities. We used the same workshop materials, but also tailored the discussion to topics relevant to arts administration and records management in addition to personal archiving. We shared a Google Drive folder with the worksheets we used, additional resources, and the Power-Point presentation with attendees of both workshops. Some of the additional resources included a workbook created by UNC SILS and Art History dual degree graduate students as part of the ongoing [Artist Studio Archives](#) project. We also sent a survey through Google forms that could be answered anonymously. Though we did not receive any of our surveys back, we did receive positive verbal responses and requests for more workshops.

## Conclusion

Future iterations of this workshop might involve working with an artist's specific materials. In such a case, there might be several more in-depth workshops with the same group of artists. The artists would be able to put theory into practice during the workshops or through more personalized consultations. We could also explore collaboration with other departments in the library. For example, UNC at Chapel Hill Libraries' Sloane Art Library has done extensive work around artist archives, as previously mentioned, and may be interested in future partnerships.

Not only were the workshops a success in terms of advocating for the upkeep of performing artist records, they were also an enjoyable experience. Partnering with artists to



help them develop their personal archiving and records management skills is a form of arts advocacy that might go unseen. We would like to thank Alexandra Ripp and the artistic team at Carolina Performing Arts for spearheading a program that focuses on local artists. We learn more about what makes communities survive and thrive when the work that artists do with communities and the impact they make on our social, political and cultural environment is documented and preserved.

## *From Onscreen to Onstage: An Archivist's Perspective on a Weekend at the Pillow*

By Stephanie Neel

Stephanie Neel is the Archive Project Manager for the Mark Morris Dance Group



Right: The Dance Group in costume for *Falling Down Stairs at Jacob's Pillow*, 1994. Photo by Cylia Von Tiedmann

There are many exciting aspects of working on an archive project for an active dance company, especially if the original choreographer and/or artistic director is still active as well. For starters, if you have a question, any question at all -- from “what year did that dancer join the company?” to “what was Mark (Morris, the artistic director and choreographer of Mark Morris Dance Group, where I manage our archive project) listening to around the time he was choreographing these

works?” -- they are usually answered, quickly and with shocking accuracy (at least for those more-objective, less-subjective metadata inquiries), by any number of people on staff or around the Mark Morris Dance Center in Brooklyn. Another advantage is working directly with former company dancers -- we refer to them as our content specialists, and these part-time positions were directly written into our grant to assist archives staff in selecting the best video representations of

specific works. (The archives staff had the distinct pleasure of watching these content specialists identify dancers on screen by the shape of their feet; laughing at moments they felt they were off the music; and hearing stories about performing *Gloria* on an outdoor stage in 1986 during a thunderstorm.) The best part, though, is getting to see the company perform - live - all those works you've been watching and cataloging on monitors throughout the duration of your three-year project, which, in our case, has been generously funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. In July 2019, the Dance Group performed



*Prelude and Prelude* at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, a nine-minute piece from 1984 set to music by Henry Cowell (*Set of Two for Violin and Harpsichord*) that hadn't been performed since 1992 and, until this past summer, had only been performed nine times in total. Videos reveal that the costumes have changed over time: first it was white leotards at the Seattle premiere in 1984; then varying degrees

of partial nudity at Dance Theater Workshop in 1985; and finally, the black camisole-style leotards that are worn today. "We had to cover up for *Dance in America*," former MMDG dancer Tina Fehlandt said, referring to the 1986 episode of the WNET-produced show that featured a 30-year-old Mark Morris and many of the original company members. Teri Weksler, another one of "the ancients," the colloquial term used to refer to founding Dance Group members, came to New York in June to set the piece on the current company. "Mark doesn't announce who is dancing the solo until right before you go on stage," June Omura recalled while watching the 1992 Manhattan Center Grand Ballroom performance, the last time the piece was performed before this summer. June was the soloist in *Prelude* during that performance: at the beginning of the piece, while the rest of the dancers stand in a line executing a series of motions that incorporate folding fans, the soloist slowly backs out of the line, staring at their open fan, and performs a separate choreography from the other dancers. Then, a blackout (hesitant applause follows), and the music (which is, in fact, the prelude to the Cowell piece, hence the work's title) repeats, only this time the soloist remains in the line, and the rest of the dancers perform the soloist choreography at varying paces. "You decide how quickly or slowly you want to go," June said. There was some disagreement as to what the line is doing based on video recordings. "I think you have to get through a certain amount of choreography, but you can reverse it?", one content specialist said. "I think some people start at the end of the phrase, and some start at the beginning," said another. "It's a retrograde," said a current company member, referring to a choreographic device in which movements are performed in reverse order. My favorite explanation: "Everyone does something and somehow ends up in the same place at the end." Makes sense.

Nothing makes sense of these videos, these stories, or these choreographic notes, however, like seeing the real thing. I took my

Left: Olivia Maridjan-Koop (seated), Keith Sabado, and Tina Fehlandt at Jacob's Pillow, 1990. Photo courtesy of June Omura

front-row seat in the Ted Shawn Theatre (the show was nearly sold out by the time I decided to drive up for the weekend, save for one seat in the very first row) and looked back at the audience, slanting upwards and aggressively fanning themselves with paper fans handed out by the ushers along with programs. (There isn't air conditioning in the theatre, which is a converted barn, or heat for that matter: we have a video of David Leventhal and Amber Star Merkens performing *Italian Concerto* in sweatpants on an unseasonably cold summer evening in 2006.) Having spent the day doing research in the Pillow Archives - one of the few places at the complex with A/C - I didn't need a fan, but the moment the show began, the heat coming off of the stage lights was palpable. The curtains opened and there stood Mica Bernas and Domingo Estrada, Jr., statue-still in their positions for *Sport*, which had premiered a week earlier at Lincoln Center. The music, Erik Satie's *Sports et divertissements*,



a series of short piano pieces played by music director Colin Fowler, seated stage right, had not started, and the sound of waving fans flooded the space. Because of my position in the theatre, I could see the dancers in the wings, blotting their faces in between *divertissements* and hugging each other as they exited the stage following the tango section - private moments that would never have any reason to be recorded "for archival purposes." During the pause between dances, I texted the assistant company manager to ask why the



Left: Students at the Pillow performing *Prelude and Prelude* for a workshop led by Mark Morris Dance Group, June 1990. Photo courtesy of June Omura

Bottom: The dance group in a rehearsal studio for the School at Jacob's Pillow, 1990. Photo courtesy of June Omura

program order had been reversed for *Prelude and Prelude* and *Sport*. "Decided *Prelude* wasn't really an opener," she said, and I made a mental note to check past programs to see if *Prelude* had indeed opened any past shows. I chatted with the woman sitting next to me, who also drove up at the last minute for the performance: "I take Dallas's class every week," referring to company member Dallas McMurray's Wednesday night Intro to Modern class at the Dance Center. I told her the story about *Italian Concerto* in sweatpants to juxtapose against the heatwave we were currently experiencing and she thought that was wild. "We have it on video," I assured her. We watched Johan Henckens, the technical director, reposition the piano and the violinist's music stand for the next piece. Though no harpsichord was used for this show, past performances of *Prelude* have indeed included one; it's been a long time since the company hasn't performed to live music, so yes, harpsichords, theremins, and gamelan gongs all come along on tour if called for in the score.

Then the lights went down, we heard the first notes of the piano, and the lights came up again on a straight line of identically dressed dancers: *Prelude and Prelude*, otherwise known as "The Fan Dance" by "the ancients." Domingo started backing out of the line, staring into his fan, for he was the selected soloist that night. My eyes darted back and forth between Domingo and Lauren Grant, who stood at the front of the line, and therefore who I could see

most clearly from the edge of the stage. Was it a retrograde? How did the choreography Domingo was dancing relate to the line? A lengthy portion of the solo requires the dancer to hold the fan in their teeth, a feat unto itself and which reminded me of costume coordinator Stephanie Sleeper's answer in the affirmative to my question earlier that week: Are these the same fans from the 1980s? The first prelude ended, and somehow, indeed, everyone did something and ended up in the same place at the end. The next prelude was mesmerizing, as each of the dancers silently navigated their way through a series of decisions determining their individual paces in executing the choreography. I wondered how they knew what to do and where to go, and how long to hold a movement, about their spatial awareness of each other and how much was planned and not planned. Every time I see the Dance Group perform, whether it's on video from 30 years ago or in real time at the Pillow, I am in awe of their ability to make so many silent decisions individually and collectively during a single performance, in order to create the kind of ineffable magic onstage that even the most accustomed dance audiences - or a metadata-driven archivist - cannot resist getting lost in.



Left: Mark Morris and June Omura, *Jacob's Pillow*, 1990. Photo courtesy of June Omura

Bottom: The company on set in the Ted Shawn Theater for *Falling Down Stairs*. Photo by Cylia Von Tiedmann

I didn't watch the matinee the following day; I had more research to do at Blake's Barn, where the Pillow Archives reside, and was working on a tight timeline. When I stepped outside for a break, it was intermission and the line for iced coffees at the snack bar snaked around the courtyard. The assistant company manager came up to me, holding a bunch of wet hand towels. "I put these in the freezer and am going to pass them around backstage during *Grand Duo*," she said, which was the only dance in the second half of the show. "It's so hot in the theatre that they're keeping the doors open for air." I was offered a seat but decided to watch the beginning of *Grand Duo* through one of the open barn doors. *Grand Duo* has been performed no fewer than 240 times - the most-performed work of the Dance Group - and I had seen many rehearsals and performances of it on video throughout the archive project, in wide angles and multi-camera edits, but never through the open doors of a theatre in the middle of the afternoon, in the middle of the Berkshires, with a hundred hand fans flapping all at once (you certainly can't hear or see those fans in a video!) People kept walking past the theatre and many of them asked aloud, and loudly, what show this was, or simply started to walk into the theatre to find a seat mid-performance while ushers rushed over to tell them this was a ticketed performance and they could not just wander in. I thought of what Tom Brazil (who has photographed the Dance Group since 1985 when he was the resident photographer at



Dance Theater Workshop, and whom we invited to the Dance Center in 2017, early on in the project, to go through his photos with us) said when asked what initially drew him to Mark's work: "I think we have the same sense of humor."

As archivists, we talk about how preserving performance has a somewhat oxymoronic connotation. Videos, notes, programs, oral histories, and photographs can all communicate and confirm that a work exists or that a performance happened, but you are essentially constructing an archive around the absence of the thing itself. We also talk a lot about the embodied knowledge - a corporeal archive - inherent to the people performing the work. Similarly, being active within this active dance company - ushering at shows, taking classes, sitting in the audience, taking a last-minute Transit to Princeton to assist in a costume emergency (which has only happened once!) - means that I, too, now have some embodied knowledge of this intangible thing that I'm archiving. It is that aforementioned humor (of watching an iconic work get interrupted by fans, by heat, by the audience); that magic (of a work that hasn't been performed in 27 years "somehow ending up in the same place at the end"); all those small, silent decisions (about holding a pose, about the gesture of bringing ice-cold hand towels backstage during a heatwave); and the space shared by both the performers and the audience, that guide our digitization methods and cataloging standards and physical arrangements in the archive, so that 10, 20, and 100 years from now, people can still get as close to the stage as possible.



Top: Jeremy Alliger, founder of Dance Umbrella in Boston, stands behind Morris in this photo. Photo courtesy of June Omura



Middle: Balloon hats at Jacob's Pillow, 1990. Photo courtesy of June Omura



Bottom: (clockwise from bottom left corner) Joe Bownie (in overalls); Rachell Murray; Mireille Radwan-Dana (on violin); James Madalena (singer); Morris, and Shawn Gannon at Bucksteep Manor in Becket, MA. Photo courtesy of June Omura

## News

Dramatists Guild of America  
Archives Project

Right: First page of Tennessee Williams' Dramatists Guild Membership Application, 1939

Bottom: *Tapes Rolling: David Swedlow Records the Hollywood Bowl, 1954-1959*

APPLICATION FOR DRAMATISTS' GUILD FELLOWSHIP  
(Awarded under a grant from The Rockefeller Foundation)

Applications should be submitted to the 1938 Dramatists' Guild Fellowship Committee, in care of the Dramatists' Guild, 6 East 39th Street, New York, N. Y.

Note: Applications (with the exception of the signature) and all accompanying documents must be typewritten on standard size sheets, 8 1/2 x 11. Type your name on all sheets submitted. Wherever the space provided in this form is not sufficient to contain all the information required, applicants may use separate sheets referring to the particular section in question. Information supplementing this application, or amplifying this form, may be filed with the application, but do NOT submit manuscripts.

Name of Applicant..... Tennessee Williams  
Present Address..... General Delivery, Laguna Beach, California.....  
..... Telephone.....  
A Permanent Address..... Through my mother, Mrs. C. C. Williams, 42 Aberdeen, Clayton, Mo.  
.....  
Place of Birth..... FARM, BEAR ALIVE MOUNTAIN..... Date of Birth..... March 26, 1914.....  
Education and Experience..... University of Mo., Washington U.,  
.....  
1. College or University..... University of Iowa..... Degree, if any..... BA  
2. If you have had special dramatic training in any college or university, state where and give details, including the names of the instructors under whom you worked.  
I had one year in the Dramatic Dept. at University of Iowa where I studied playwriting under Prof. E.F. Conkle.  
3. Give details regarding any theatrical experience you may have had, either amateur or professional, and in what capacity. I have worked with the Mummies of St. Louis and in the University Theatre at Iowa City. Played small parts and assisted in productions.  
4. List the scholarships or fellowships you have previously held or now hold, stating in each case the periods of tenure and the amounts of the stipends.  
None.  
JUN 12 1939

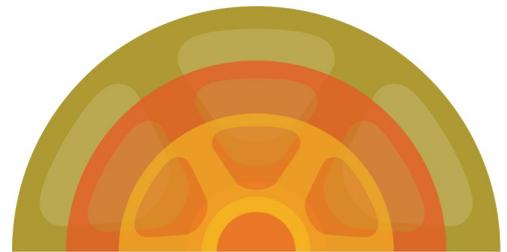
In recognition of its centennial anniversary, the Dramatists Guild of America has embarked on a project to preserve and process its archival collections. The Dramatists Guild is a membership association that promotes education and advocacy for American playwrights, librettists, composers, and lyricists. Reflecting the Guild's rich one-hundred-year-history, the 1,260 cubic feet of archival records document and protect the creative pursuits of theater professionals. The collection will also serve scholars as an important resource concerning legal, social, and economic history of American theater.

To date, the two Winthrop Group archivists working on the project have processed 5,208 theater production contracts related to renowned

Broadway shows, from 1949 to 2014 and including *Annie*, *Hello Dolly*, *Cabaret*, *A Raisin In The Sun*, and *Oklahoma!* and more than 500 contracts for major motion pictures dated 1926 to 2008. Other historical records include membership files (approximately 105 cubic feet) for artists such as Maya Angelou, Langston Hughes, Eugene O'Neill, Mae West, Richard Rodgers, and Oscar Hammerstein II. Audiovisual footage includes education events among which are panel discussions with notable creators such as those who collaborated on the original production of *West Side Story*.

Winthrop Group, an archives consulting and services firm that has worked with a number of performing arts-related organizations, anticipates completing work on the collection by Summer 2020.

## New Exhibition at the Hollywood Bowl Museum



## TAPES ROLLING

1954 David Swedlow Records the Hollywood Bowl 1959

David Swedlow was a spirited futurist who saw the world around him as full of possibilities. In both his personal and professional life, he fully embodied the optimism of post-war America. An entrepreneur par excellence, Swedlow helped mold and shape this bright future through his pioneering work in the

design and manufacture of acrylics. Beginning in the late 1930s, Swedlow Inc. and its predecessor companies had a far-reaching impact on the aerospace industry, supplying windows, canopies, and windshields for military and commercial aircraft.

This plastics pioneer was also an early high-fidelity enthusiast who imagined the future of sound recording. Swedlow sensed the changes that WWII would effect on society and foresaw the tremendous technological advances that wartime industries would generate. He was one of many passionate audiophiles who, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, began buying and assembling professional audio components, fostering a new industry in home high-fidelity equipment.

Swedlow purchased and customized an Ampex tape recorder for an extraordinary personal project: to capture the Los Angeles Philharmonic performing live. Beginning in July 1954 and continuing for six seasons, Swedlow recorded nearly the entire series of LA Phil concerts – a total of 246 – both at Philharmonic Auditorium and at the Hollywood Bowl, using his experimental three-track machine. The result is a collection of over 1,500 ten-inch three-track reel-to-reel tapes, which he donated to the Philharmonic in 1986. This exhibition documents the fruits of Swedlow's passion for music, offering audio selections from landmark performances that have only been heard by those who attended the concerts!

David Swedlow's collection is now considered the crown jewel of the LA Phil's archives. It is a rare surviving document of the orchestra's activities in the late 1950s. The collection includes performances by exceptional conductors including such legendary figures as Bruno Walter, Georg Solti, and Leopold Stokowski, as well as celebrated soloists Yehudi Menuhin, Renata Tebaldi, and Oscar Peterson. The concerts led by Dutch conductor Eduard van Beinum, the Philharmonic's music director from 1956 to 1959, are

a treasure for connoisseurs and historians and considered the high point of the collection.

*Tapes Rolling: David Swedlow Records the Hollywood Bowl, 1954-1959* honors Swedlow's trailblazing legacy and offers a new appreciation of the Los Angeles Philharmonic's analog past.

### **Theatre Library Association, Louis Rachow Distinguished Service in Performing Arts Librarianship Award**



The Louis Rachow Distinguished Service in Performing Arts Librarianship Award for 2019 was presented at a celebration in the Café of The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts in New York City, at 7:00 PM on Friday, October 18, 2019.

The Theatre Library Association (TLA) celebrates the excellence of our profession by bestowing the Louis Rachow Distinguished Service in Performing Arts Librarianship Award on individuals who embody its best qualities. Louis Rachow had a long and distinguished career in performing arts librarianship, highlighted by a quarter century as Curator/ Librarian of the Hampden-Booth Theatre Library at The Players, followed by another decade as Library Director of the International Theatre Institute of the United States. He passed away on August 28, 2017; he was 90. In recognition of his exemplary record of service, the TLA Distinguished Service Award was renamed in honor of Louis Rachow in 2013.

Right: Norton Owen. Photo by Bill Wright, 2016

## 2019 LOUIS RACHOW DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD WINNER

**Norton Owen** is a curator, writer, and archivist with more than 45 years of professional experience in dance. He has been associated with Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival since 1976 and has been Director of Preservation since 1990, overseeing the PillowTalks series as well as all activities involving documentation, exhibitions, audience engagement, and archival access. He is the curator of Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive, an acclaimed online video resource, and host of a new podcast entitled PillowVoices. In 2000, Dance/USA selected him for its Ernie Award, honoring "unsung heroes who have led exemplary lives in dance." He has also received awards from the Martha Hill Dance Fund, Dance Films Association, and the José Limón Dance Foundation, and he is a past chair of the Dance Heritage Coalition. In recognition of his 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary at Jacob's Pillow, the Norton Owen Reading Room was dedicated in his honor.

2019 Professional Awards Committee Members: Drew Barker (Chair), Susan Brady, Jeannie Chen, Karen Nickeson, Kevin Winkler.

### ***Inspired! Jim Henson at Maryland***

The Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library has announced the June 7, 2019 opening of *Inspired! Jim Henson at Maryland*, an exhibit exploring Jim Henson's experience as a student, artist, and entrepreneur at UMD from 1954-1960.

The exhibit provides a window into the profound impact Henson's experiences on campus, both in the classroom and in his extra-curricular activities, had on his creative and professional

development, laying the foundation for a remarkable career that included the creation of the Muppets and beyond. Featured are 25 pieces of original art created by Jim Henson (1936-1990), theatrical programs and ephemera, photographs, and an interactive digital archive of Henson's sketchbooks, student projects, and press clippings from The Jim Henson Company Archives, Special Collections in Performing Arts, and the University Archives. Video clips from the 1950s and 1960s demonstrate the breadth of Henson's genius, already evident in his early work on local Washington television.

Organized in collaboration with The Jim Henson Legacy and The Jim Henson Company, with additional support from The Jane Henson Foundation and the Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library Endowment, *Inspired! Jim Henson at Maryland* will be on view for the 2019-2020 academic year, timed to coincide with the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jim Henson's graduation from UMD. The exhibit can be viewed through May 26, 2020.

Visitors to the exhibit can also stop at the Stamp Student Union to visit the Jim Henson Statue, view material in [The Jim Henson Works](#) digital video collection in the Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library, learn about the UMD Theatre Department's [Jim Henson Scholarship for Puppetry](#) and puppet artist residency, and throughout the year, attend Henson programs across campus.

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## Image Credits

Cover: Mark Morris on the famous rock - the namesake "Jacob's Pillow" - in 1982, in costume for Mevlevi Dervish. Photo by Stephan Driscoll

Pages 3-6: Photos courtesy Andrew Harman

Pages 7-11: Photos courtesy Anicka Austin and Jessica Venlet

Page 12-16: Cylia Von Tiedmann and June Omura

Thanks to news contributors Kate Kirwan, Selena Chau, Francesca Marini, and Vin Novara