

Sample Press, Blogs, and Articles related to the Dance Heritage Coalition “Foundations of Dance Research” Hidden Collections grant

Dance Notation Bureau (DNB) : Dance Notation Bureau History: 1940 to the Present collection – article in *DNB Library News*.

Wegmann, Mary. “Processing the DNB History Files: An Adventure in Organizing.” *Library News* vol. 7: no. 2, February 2013, pp. 3-4. Article by Dance Heritage Coalition Fellow Mary Wegmann about the process of making the DNB History collection accessible. Illustrated.
http://www.dancenotation.org/news/Library_News/library_v7_n2.pdf

Library of Congress: Marge Champion collection – blog posting

“Pic of the Week: Calling all Choreographers Edition.” Music Division blog 15 June 2012, illustrated. Guest posting by Nicole Topich, Dance Heritage Coalition Fellow assigned to process the Marge Champion collection under the Hidden Collections grant. <http://blogs.loc.gov/music/2012/06/pic-of-the-week-calling-all-choreographers-edition/>

Ohio State University, Theatre Research Institute: Hidden Collections blog

Riggs Leyva, Rachael M. “Dance Heritage Coalition Archive Fellow @ OSU.” Blog covering June to August 2012 processing of OSU Hidden Collections. <http://dancearchivefellow.wordpress.com/tag/clir-hidden-collections/>

UCLA Library: Ruth St. Denis collection – notices and uses of the collection (samples)

“Lionel Popkin Investigates Ruth St. Denis & Modern Dance's Past: Questioning the acts of cultural sourcing, representation and transmission.” *The Dance Enthusiast*. <http://www.dance-enthusiast.com/onthewire/all/view/474/> Advance notice of performance at Dance Place, Washington, DC.

“Lionel Popkin – Pittsburgh Premiere.” 91.3 WYEP. <http://www.wyep.org/event/lionel-popkin-pittsburgh-premiere> Advance notice of performance in Pittsburgh.

“New Work Pays Homage to Modern Dance Pioneer Ruth St. Denis.” *East Liberty Post* 27 Feb 2013. <http://www.eastliberty.org/node/893> Advance notice of performance in Philadelphia.

Salisbury, Greg. “Jewish Dancer Examines His Indian Side.” *Jewish Exponent* 5 Mar 2013. <http://www.jewishexponent.com/jewish-dancer-examines-his-indian-side>

Squires, Pamela. “In ‘Ruth,’ choreographer Lionel Popkin engagingly dismantles St. Denis’s Orientalism.” *The Washington Post* 4 Mar 2013. Review. http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-03-04/entertainment/37428462_1_lionel-popkin-ruth-dance-place

Totino, Adrienne. "The Kelly-Strayhorn Welcomes Lionel Popkin in 'Ruth Doesn't Live Here Anymore!'" *Examiner.com* 11 Mar 2013. <http://www.examiner.com/article/the-kelly-strayhorn-welcomes-lionel-popkin-ruth-doesn-t-live-here-anymore>

Weisz, Steven. "Lional Popkin premieres Ruth Doesn't Live Here Anymore." *The DANCEJournal*, a publication of PhiladelphiaDANCE.org. 28 Feb 2013. <http://philadelphiadance.org/blog/2013/02/28/lional-popkin-premieres-ruth-doesnt-live-here-anymore-dance-trio-grapples-with-popkins-multiracial-identity-using-a-cultural-patchwork-of-fabric-through-lens-of-dance-icon/>

Theater & Dance

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In 'Ruth,' choreographer Lionel Popkin engagingly dismantles St. Denis's Orientalism

By Pamela Squires, March 04, 2013

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Los Angeles-based choreographer Lionel Popkin premiered his latest work, "Ruth Doesn't Live Here Anymore," Saturday at Dance Place. "Ruth" proved inordinately engaging. It was sprinkled with jewels of movement sequences, striking visuals and thought-provoking moments. At the same time, it ho-hummed in spots like an interesting public speaker going on a bit too long.

Popkin's works frequently explore his Indian heritage. (The Hindu elephant god Ganesha figured in his 2009 "There is an Elephant in the Room," for instance.) "Ruth" focuses on the insensitive way that modern dance pioneer Ruth St. Denis created her Orientalist works.

Popkin delved into St. Denis's journals, photos, programs, sketches, costumes and notes, and "Ruth" is fueled by annoyance at what he found. There wasn't much truly Eastern about the dances. They were stereotyped and hyped and created with a nose for what sells, albeit artfully. Popkin disliked her cavalier attitude to Indian culture, so in "Ruth" he deconstructed these Orientalist dances' false magic.

Dancers Popkin, Emily Beattie and Carolyn Hall shattered St. Denis's noble bearing by moving in a relaxed manner. They crossed the border between performer and viewer using eye contact with audience members. To break the bubble of magic that envelopes a stage and separates it from the audience, Popkin periodically stepped forward and spoke to the audience in the casual manner of two neighbors chatting over a fence. These chats effectively broke up the no-intermission work into several, shorter parts.

Popkin has a flair for originality that periodically has you realizing that you are smiling to yourself in the dark. In one instance, three prone figures rolled like pool balls that scatter, knock into each other and slowly cruise to a stop. It was magical. He tossed yards of fabric (signifying St. Denis's costumes) into the air, enlivening the space above the dancers' heads.

All in all, the segments could have used some editing so that you didn't feel like Popkin was determined to get out everything he wanted to say without being interrupted. Still, "Ruth" kept your interest, even if at times you weren't sure why.

Squires is a freelance writer.

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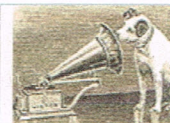
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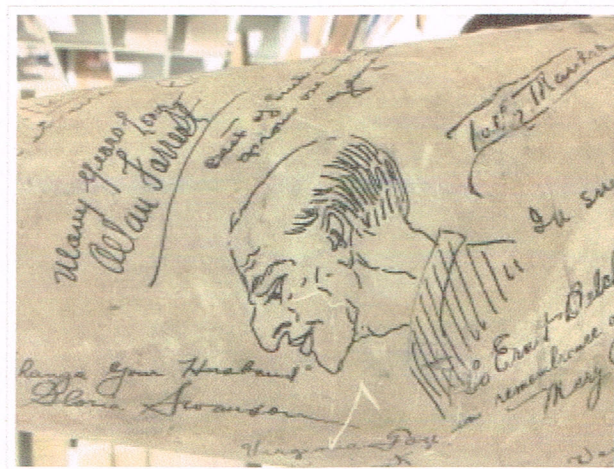
Pic of the Week: Calling all Choreographers Edition

 June 15, 2012 by [Pat Padua](#)

The following is a guest post by Dance Heritage Coalition Fellow Nicole Topich.

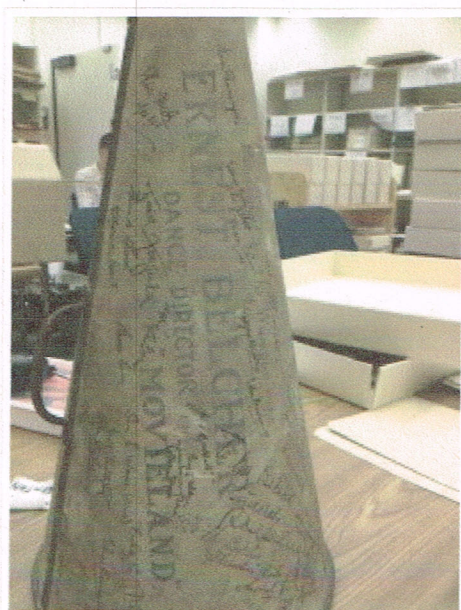
Processing the Marge Champion Collection in the Music Division has been one of the most exciting archives jobs I have held. The collection is not very large, but almost every item I found was interesting or historically significant. Because the collection has such rich material, I have spent a lot of time focusing on the description, content, and context of the collection.

There are significant materials in the collection related to Champion's father, Ernest Belcher. Belcher was also a dancer, and began his own dance school in LA in 1916. He became involved with Hollywood choreography in 1918 and worked on 200 films before 1931. He is credited with 70 percent of all dance sequences in movies before the early 1930s, including landmark films such as *The Phantom of the Opera* and *The Jazz Singer*.



<http://blogs.loc.gov/music/files/2012/06/belcher-megaphone.jpg>

A caricature of Ernest Belcher drawn on a megaphone. From the Marge Champion Collection. Photo by Nicole Topich



<http://blogs.loc.gov/music/files/2012/06/belcher-21.jpg>

Photo by Nicole Topich

Belcher was given this megaphone when he was named the Dance Director of Movieland by the Western Association of Motion Picture Advertisers in 1925. You can see the signatures of many Hollywood actors and actresses on the megaphone, such as Sam Warner, John Barrymore, Harry Myers, Lina Basquette, Gloria Swanson, Derelys Perdue, Ramon Novarro, Dolores Costello, Sally Rand, Marion Davies, and Colleen Moore.

Much more research needs to be done on Ernest Belcher, and the information presented here is from one of the few pieces to focus on Belcher: Prevots, Naima. "[Ernest Belcher and American Dance \(http://www.jstor.org/stable/1567642\)](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1567642) ." *Dance Chronicle* v.10, no.2 (1987): pg. 170-222.

Dance Heritage Coalition

Archive Fellow @ OSU

Tag Archives: *CLIR Hidden Collections*

JUNE 18, 2012 · 1:41 AM

CLIR Processing Fellow 2012

Twenty-twelve is summer number two for me as an archive fellow for the Dance Heritage Coalition at the Theatre Research Institute (TRI) at The Ohio State University. Last summer's adventure: archivist in the studio and creating an EAD finding aid for the [Bebe Miller Company archive](#). This summer's adventure: CLIR processing fellow under a CLIR Hidden Collections grant.

What is CLIR, you ask? CLIR stands for Council on Library and Information Resources. The Hidden Collections Program funds archival projects to make accessible materials previously unknown or inaccessible and of high value to researchers and scholars. You can check out more about this program and previously funded projects here — [About the Hidden Collections Program](#). At TRI I will be working with several Dalcroze archives – the Dalcroze School of Music (New York) collection, the Dalcroze Society of America collection, the John Colman collection, and the Irwin Spector collection. Tasks will range from uploading and cleaning existing finding aids to the EAD, creating new finding aids for the EAD, and processing materials for cataloguing (into EAD finding aids). As time this summer permits, I will work with additional non-Dalcroze related dance collections, but Dalcroze is where the journey starts.

I have already completed a week of work, which I will soon post about. A lot can (and did) happen in a week, and this is the first chance I've had to get the blog rolling. For now, whet your archive appetites on the following links:

Dance Heritage Coalition — <http://danceheritage.org>

Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee Theatre Research Institute — <http://library.osu.edu/find/collections/theatre-research-institute>

Theatre Research Institute Archive Project 2012 — <http://dhcfellow2012osu.wordpress.com/> (the blog of yet another DHC archive fellow at OSU, Tara Davis, from the very prestigious [IMLS grant program](#))

But especially, you should check out Tara's blog — she's working with the materials for newly acquired the Marcel Marceau collection.

Processing the DNB History Files: An Adventure in Organizing

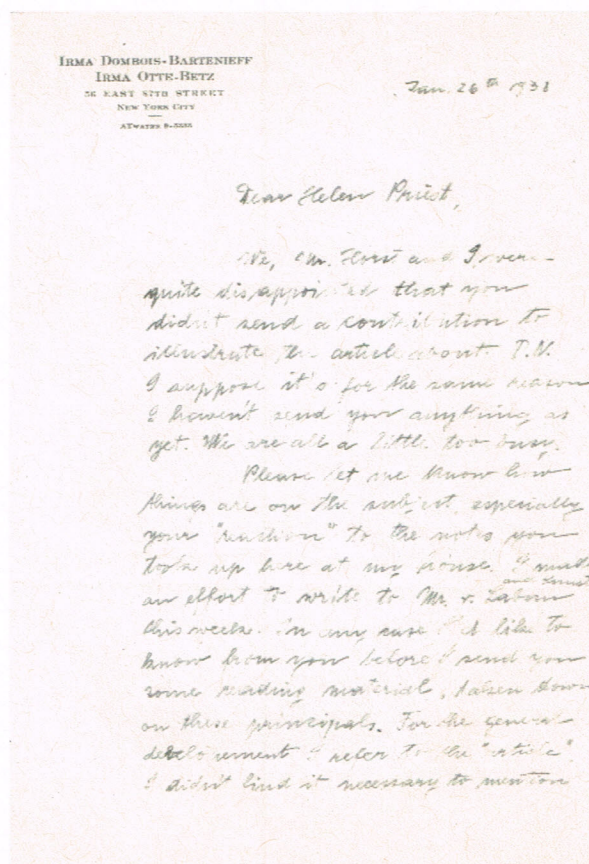
by Mary Wegmann

Most people know the Dance Notation Bureau (DNB) as the creator and manager of a vast library of notated dances. These scores are carefully cataloged, arranged, and cared for by the DNB's librarian, Mei-Chen Lu. While these scores comprise the bulk of the DNB's collections and contribution to dance preservation, another important collection of records documenting dance history sits hidden amongst the notated dances. Since its inception, the DNB has been saving correspondence, financial records, conference proceedings, and other administrative materials related to the operations and events of the organization. As the Dance Heritage Coalition's (DHC) Archival Processing Fellow working at the DNB, I had the unique opportunity to organize, describe, catalog, and create a finding aid for these materials; these documents will soon be accessible to those who want to research the history of the Bureau.

From June to October of 2012, I processed the DNB's research, photograph, and history archival collections. The Dance Heritage Coalition, a national alliance of cultural heritage institutions that hold archival collections documenting the history of dance, of which the DNB is a member, provided the funding for this project. In 2011, the DHC received the Council on Library and Information Resource's Hidden Collections grant. The goal of this grant is to provide processing assistance to organizations that have archival collections of significant research value that remain "hidden" because of their lack of organization and cataloging. The collections at the DNB were prime candidates for this opportunity; filed away in cabinets interspersed around the office were letters from Rudolf Laban, Labanotation curricula designed by founding members including Ann Hutchinson Guest, and other unique documents that trace the history of the DNB and its effort to preserve dance and dance history.

Beginning in the 1940s, the DNB has created and saved valuable documents pertaining to the organization and dance notation. Typed letters on thin blue writing paper sent between Helen Priest Rogers, Ann Hutchinson Guest, Eve Gentry, and Janey Price divulge the excitement of embarking on the adventure to develop and refine a language for notating and preserving dance, in a series of makeshift offices around New York City. Correspondence from leaders in the dance community, such as Irgard Bartenieff, Lincoln Kirstein, George Balanchine, Merce Cunningham, and Paul Taylor reveal how dance notation was received in the field. Long, legal-sized, handwritten letters between Ann Hutchinson Guest, Muriel Topaz, and Mária Szentpál hash out discrepancies in Labanotation and work towards standardizing the language and the system. Meeting minutes and promotional materials detail the various courses, conferences, and events in which the DNB participated. Taken together, this collection of materials dating from 1936 to 2012 tells the story not only of the DNB and Labanotation, but also of the relationships that developed over a shared passion for preserving dance.

So, what does it mean to process an archival collection? While the end result of processing a collection may be a shelf of orderly boxes and organized folders, the process involves a lot of sorting, piling, pondering, and paper cuts. Most mornings I was the first to come to the office. I would flip on the lights, place my coffee out of spill range, and settle down into the folders and stacks of papers that comprise the DNB's history. My workstation was the wooden conference table where I imagine many of the meetings whose minutes I indexed took place. Sitting in the center of the bustling Bureau gave me an intimate understanding of how the DNB functions, a privilege I was fortunate to experience. It was not uncommon that I would be reading a letter written in 1976



The earliest historical documentation preserved in the DNB History Collection – A 1938 letter to Helen Priest, a founding member of the DNB, from Irma Otte-Betz who introduced Laban's system from Europe to the United States in the 1920s and 1930s

and then answer the phone to hear the writer's voice on the other end, or that I would be indexing the points of discussion in a staff meeting from 1984 and hear the same concerns voiced at the desk across from me. These parallel experiences gave depth to the records I was working with, and provided me with the perspective to organize and catalog them in a way that reflects and represents the way the DNB operates.

While the goal of processing a collection is not to read every letter and catalog each item, it is necessary to delve into the materials so that the archivist understands how the office functions, who has been influential to the organization and her relationship with others. This familiarity with the materials allows the archivist to recognize how seemingly disparate items in the collection are related to each other and how they might best be organized. The organization and description of the documents in an archival collection is the archivist's primary challenge; the archivist must strive to organize the materials so that they accurately represent the ways in which they were created and used by the DNB and then create a finding aid, or written guide to the collection, for future researchers. In order to create continuity between archival collections, archivists follow a standard set of rules and naming conventions when arranging and describing materials. One of the most common standards, *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* or *DACS*, provides a structure that instructs the archivist on what information to provide in the finding aid, rules about indexing terms, and methods to follow when organizing the documents. When starting to process a collection, archivists attempt to maintain the "original order," or the original organizational scheme established by the records' creator. This means that instead of completely rearranging the materials in a way that makes sense to the archivist, she will keep the materials ordered in the manner in which the creating organization or individual saved the materials. The purpose for maintaining this original arrangement is so the researcher will be able to understand the documents in their original context and envision how the creators used the records in their daily operations.

Based upon my discussions with Mei, observations of current workflows within the office, and archival training, I grouped the materials into categories such as articles, correspondence, financial records, and promotional materials in chronological order. After separating these groupings into labeled, acid-free folders to prevent deterioration, I created a spreadsheet to catalog the contents. Information in the spreadsheet includes the title of the grouping, a description of what is included in the folder, the number of items, date range, and the names of individuals and organizations that are referenced in the documents. This spreadsheet will serve as a surrogate for the physical materials; when researchers wish to use the collection they will be able to identify relevant materials prior to viewing the collection.

Future researchers, employees, and colleagues of the DNB will find conference papers and research reports, correspondence concerning notation theory development, and documents outlining administrative and financial decisions. The decades of contributions from staff and volunteers dedicated to fostering Labanotation contained in the DNB's History Files provide relevant historical context for the Bureau's current operations; from this evidence, we can see where the organization has been, where it has succeeded and failed, and how that has informed current priorities. As the Dance Notation Bureau continues to grow, it will not only be with the knowledge of its past, but with confidence that the past is carefully preserved for posterity, in acid-free folders.

Note from the DNB Librarian: Some DNB historical materials, including original scores, teaching materials, photographs, scrapbooks, reel-to-reel films, and various meeting minutes, have been transferred and now deposited at The Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee Theatre Research Institute at The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH. To access these materials, please contact Curator Nena Couch at couch.1@osu.edu

Directing the Dance Legacy of Doris Humphrey

Leslie Main published *Directing the Dance Legacy of Doris Humphrey* as part of the series of Studies in Dance History in June 2012. She is the Head of Performing Arts and formerly Principle Lecturer in Dance at Middlesex University, United Kingdom, and she specializes in Humphrey dances and techniques. She completed her Labanotation training by staging *Passacaglia* from the score at Trent Park College. *Directing the Dance Legacy of Doris Humphrey* features Doris Humphrey's four major choreography—*Water Study* (1928), *The Shakers* (1931), *With My Red Fires* (1936), and *Passacaglia* (1938). This book covers Leslie's experiences in performing and reviving these dances from Labanotation scores.

The book is published by the University of Wisconsin. It is available at Amazon.com at \$29.95 (new) and Kindle edition is \$9.99.

