

# PERFORMANCE!



## *The Newsletter of* **the Society of American Archivists’ Performing Arts Roundtable**

**Issue for Summer 2006**

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*[The Performing Arts Roundtable: Encourages the exchange of information on historical and contemporary documentation of music, dance, theater, motion pictures, and other performance media. (from the SAA Web site)]*

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*Visit the Roundtable Web Site: [www.archivists.org/saagroups/performart/](http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/performart/)*

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***Message from the Roundtable Co-Chair***

## Roundtable Transitions

*By Karen Spicher*

As my term is ending in August, and this will be my final newsletter column, I first want to thank the Roundtable for the opportunity to serve as your co-chair. I’ve enjoyed working on our programs, and especially getting to know our talented membership. And speaking of our creative members, continuing co-chair Helice Koffler has been hard at work developing new programming ideas, which came to fruition this spring in co-sponsorship with the Archivists Roundtable of Metropolitan New York. See below for a report on this panel presentation by two music archivists in New York City. We’d like to do more co-sponsorships of the kind, so if you are aware of possibilities in your city or area, please suggest them (volunteer venues or speakers are welcome!).

Another collaboration is in store for our August meeting, as we combine with the Recorded Sound Roundtable for a program of speakers. Thanks to Recorded Sound’s chair Nathan Georgitis for suggesting a repeat of this format, which we have successfully done in the past. This will be a chance for our closely-related groups to network together, and is also an answer to the problem of concurrent roundtable meetings, always an unavoidable consequence of SAA’s busy conference schedule. Please see the agenda below for full information about the meeting, and check the website for updates. And please especially consider signing up for the tour of the University of Maryland’s Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library (MSPAL) on Wednesday morning (details below). Staff of the University of Maryland’s Performing Arts Library has generously offered to host this tour, which promises to be an interesting and enjoyable trip.

I’ve been very pleased to see the Roundtable grow in a number of directions over the past several years, from the newsletter, website, and listserv, to programming at our annual meeting and beyond. I’m looking forward to future developments; keep up the good work everyone!

## **Agenda for the Performing Arts Roundtable Meeting**

*By Helice Koffler*

This year's Performing Arts Roundtable annual meeting will take place on Wednesday evening, August 2, from 5:00-7:00 P.M. Following a brief business meeting, the Performing Arts Roundtable will host a joint meeting with the Recorded Sound Roundtable featuring two presentations on issues relating to audiovisual materials and collections. The speakers will be Peter Brothers, President of SPECS BROS, an expert on magnetic tape preservation, restoration, and disaster recovery, and Ryan Semmes, Archivist of the D.C. Community Archives in the Washingtoniana Division of the District of Columbia Public Library. Peter will discuss a seven-step physical inspection to identify magnetic tape that is endangered and requires conservation to prevent loss. The inspection is part of standards AES49-2005 and ISO 18933, developed in 2005 by the International Standards Organization and the Audio Engineering Society. The inspection is performed without playback equipment, does not require previous knowledge of audio/visual materials, and can be used equally on audio, video and computer data tapes. Ryan will give a presentation on the Washington Area Performing Arts Video Archives (WAPAVA). Established to document local area stage performances, WAPAVA is one of the most heavily used collections in the Washingtoniana Division. In late 2004, WAPAVA signed a co-location agreement with the District of Columbia Public Library and the University of Maryland Libraries that brought its collection of nearly 400 recorded live theatre productions to the Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library at the University of Maryland. Following these presentations, there will be time for more informal discussion between the two roundtable groups.

A special tour of the Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library (MSPAL), which also houses the Jim Henson Collection, has been scheduled for Wednesday, August 2nd at 9:30 A.M. Our hosts will be Judy Markowitz, Theatre and Dance Librarian for MSPAL and Donald Manildi, Curator for the International Piano Archives (IPAM). Attendance will be limited to the first 20 people who RSVP. If you are interested in participating, please e-mail Helice Koffler ([hkoffler@nypl.org](mailto:hkoffler@nypl.org)). Please also note that because of the travel time involved, the group going on the tour will have to be ready to leave the conference hotel by 8:15 A.M. Directions and other details regarding travel arrangements to the University of Maryland's College Park campus will be sent out on the listserv later in July and also appear on the PAR Web site.

### ***News Notes***

#### **Sessions of Interest at the SAA/CoSA/NAGARA Conference**

Here are sessions at the SAA conference that will be of interest to members of the Performing Arts Roundtable:

Session 409 – Putting Primary Sources to Music: The Thomas Hampson Teacher Institute

Session 609 – Not Just a City: Recapturing the History and Culture of New Orleans

## **Gathering at SAA to Remember Leslie Hansen Kopp**

Edie Hedlin has posted an announcement that friends and colleagues of Leslie Hansen Kopp, who passed away in May, are “invited to celebrate Leslie’s talent, wit, and zest for life at an informal gathering on Friday, August 4, at Timberlakes Restaurant. Timberlakes is located at 1726 Connecticut Ave., NW, near the Washington Hilton. We will congregate at 8 p.m. for food, drink, remembrance, and laughter all of which were dear to Leslie.”

Editor’s Note: See also Kit Leary’s brief note on Leslie Hansen Kopp on page 13 below.

## **NYART Meeting Featured Performing Arts Materials**

The June meeting of the New York Archivists Round Table featured presentations by two performing arts archivists – Dave Stein from the Kurt Weill Foundation, and Michael Cogswell from the Louis Armstrong House and Archives.

### ***Kurt Weill Foundation***

Stein’s primary responsibilities as the foundation’s archivist are acquisition, reference, and publications. In an effort to aid researchers, Stein’s acquisition approach is “if Weill put it on paper, the Foundation wants a copy.” He also regularly checks eBay and relies on sellers who do not know what they have. One lucky find was a first edition piece of sheet music for only two euros.

However, access to the collections is less than ideal. There are no online finding aids, and only a few items catalogued on RLIN. Stein often personally guides researchers through the series to point out letters or other documents that would otherwise be missed. The publications side of Stein’s work meets the other goal of the foundation – to promote Weill’s works. Because the foundation owns the copyrights, more promotion equals more money from royalties. In addition to traditional publications like biographies, Stein contributes text to CD liner notes, exhibitions, and runs a website devoted to the *Threepenny Opera* (<http://www.threepennyopera.org>).

Preservation of the collections is a major issue that Stein faces daily. There is no collection-wide plan to preserve the audio and video components; tapes are dubbed by chance, because Stein must first notice a tape’s quality before he can transfer it to a more stable medium. The more valuable performances have already been transferred to DVD, and the oral history cassettes are slowly moving to gold CDRs.

For more information about the Weill-Lenya Research Center, visit:  
<http://www.kwf.org/pages/wlrc/intro.html>.

### ***Louis Armstrong House and Archives***

Michael Cogswell, Director of the Louis Armstrong House and Archives, began his presentation by playing a home recording of Armstrong speaking. That unmistakable voice, speaking so informally, set the mood for Cogswell’s discussion of the Louis Armstrong House. In 1942 Armstrong’s bride, Lucille, purchased and decorated their new home while he was on tour. Mrs. Armstrong’s tastes in interior design, from the silver foil wallpaper to the modernist turquoise

kitchen, draw visitors that might not be interested in jazz. While touring, visitors can experience the sounds of the Armstrongs at home through a hidden audio system. The house is almost unchanged from when Louis and Lucille lived there, except for the removal of items to be preserved in the Archives.

In 1991 the scrapbooks, audio recordings, and the like were moved from the house to Queens College and dubbed the Louis Armstrong collection. It features 650 reel-to-reel tapes that Armstrong made - sometimes telling "risqué" jokes, or dubbing albums from his record collections. Almost every box was hand decorated by Armstrong, and showcases his talents as a visual artist. The collection includes handwritten catalogs and indexes (showcasing his talents as a librarian?). The other primary collection is the Satchmo collection, which includes all recently acquired items and is growing at the rate of approximately 100 items per year.

For more information on the House and the Archives, including answers to burning questions like "Is it pronounced 'Louie' or 'Lewis'?", visit: <http://www.satchmo.net>

### **Theatre Museum Update**

The Theatre Museum has won a temporary reprieve from closure. Following a meeting on May 18, 2006, the Board of Trustees at the Victoria and Albert Museum voted to defer a final decision about the future of the museum until the fall of 2006. In the meantime, the Trustees are allowing the Theatre Museum to continue to try to work out a partnership with the Royal Opera House to develop a new facility that will display collections and offer educational activities in the Covent Garden area. While this outcome holds some promise, it is still very unclear what sort of a museum would emerge from this potential partnership. The Trustees are scheduled to meet again in July. Supporters are advised to keep checking the Theatre Museum's Web site for information on developments. A member of the Theatre Museum staff has conveyed to me that they are extremely grateful for all of the expressions of interest and support that they have received from numerous individuals and organizations.

The link for the Theatre Museum's discussion forum is:

[http://theatremuseum.org/news\\_and\\_views/forum.php?PHPSESSID=05be5ca47519c71b55e0e77ac488ea53](http://theatremuseum.org/news_and_views/forum.php?PHPSESSID=05be5ca47519c71b55e0e77ac488ea53)

## ***Reports from the Field***

**Editor's Note:** This section is intended to be an avenue for the exchange of information to members of the roundtable about collections or other topics of importance for archivists in or with the performing arts.

The reports in this issue examine from different perspectives the overlap between access and outreach. The first describes the richness of theater archival materials at Yale University, how

these collections grew over time, and how uncovering the parts of Yale's rich "hidden resources" can be tied together and given access today through the wonders of computers and digitized images. The second discusses outreach activities at the Souza Center at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, including a special half-time show during a Big Ten football game.

## **Theatrical Riches: the "Unlocking Collections" Initiative at Yale**

*By Susan Brady*

The "unlocking collections" initiative at Yale is a project to process, preserve, and make accessible collections that have been acquired over many years but either have never been processed or need additional their challenging formats.

In my position as project archivist in the Arts Library I am in the process of "unlocking" a number of collections within three of the Library's four units: the Art and Architecture Library, the Arts of the Book Collection located in Sterling Memorial Library, and the Drama Library. Currently, I am working with materials in the Drama Library, which serves the Yale School of Drama and the undergraduate program in theater studies. The Library holds more than 30,000 volumes, including plays by American and foreign playwrights, books on the history of theatre, theatre architecture, dramatic criticism, acting, directing, costume and stage design, stage lighting and production, theatre management, biographies, and related reference books. Periodical holdings range from scholarly theatre journals to weekly trade papers. In addition to theatre, there are materials on film, dance, radio, television, and opera. The master's and doctoral theses produced by Drama School graduates are held by the Drama Library, and often include original artwork. Special collection items, including set and costume designs, unpublished

playscripts, and prints and photographs, document the history of performing arts and the history of the School of Drama and its impact on the world of theatre, radio, television, and film. These materials also illustrate the interconnected-ness of special collections throughout the Yale campus.

In the early 1920s, George Pierce Baker taught a groundbreaking playwriting class at Harvard, where his students included the playwright Eugene O'Neill. In 1925, Baker was hired away from Harvard to chair a Department of Drama at Yale. The first graduate program in theatre in the United States, the Department of Drama was established in 1924 as a part of the School of Fine Arts. While drama had been taught as part of literature programs in American universities (and student theatricals were not uncommon), theatre production was not considered a serious subject of academic study. At Yale's new drama school, not only were the history and theory of theatre and drama part of the curriculum, but acting, directing, and scene, costume, and lighting design were included as well. Students wrote, produced, acted in, and designed productions in the University Theatre main stage and on the experimental stage in the basement. Through the years the program, which became the School of Drama in 1955, has had a distinguished, and sometimes controversial, faculty, and has had students

who have had successful careers in all aspects of the performing arts. In 1966, The Yale Repertory Theatre was formed as part of the School of Drama, and illustrious directors, designers, and actors have been associated with the Rep's productions over the past 40 years.

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Special collection materials documenting theatrical performances at Yale, in the U.S., and throughout the world have been a part of Yale's libraries since the early 20th century. Today, these materials are found in Manuscripts and Archives; the Beinecke, Music, and Divinity libraries; and the Center for British Art, as well as the Drama Library.

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A Drama Library was established at the same time as the Department of Drama and had its first home in the green room of the University Theatre Building. As its reputation grew, the Drama School, and hence its Library became a repository for special materials documenting its own performances and activities. It also was seen as a worthy recipient for materials from others who wished to make their books, programs and playbills, fashion plates, and original designs available to students and faculty of such an important school of drama. Limited resources, however, meant that for many years the special collection materials were given only basic housing and descriptions.

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Yale's libraries since the early 20th century. Today, these materials are found in Manuscripts and Archives; the Beinecke, Music, and Divinity libraries; and the Center for British Art, as well as the Drama Library. Closely related materials may be found in several of these repositories for a variety of reasons. These include the Crawford Theater Collection of theatrical programs, photographs, and clippings and other ephemera on all aspects of the theatrical arts which was donated to the University Library by Yale English professor Jack Crawford in 1918, and is currently overseen by the department of Manuscripts and Archives; and the Carl F. Grieshaber collection of hundreds of 18th and 19th century playbills and programs which was given to the Drama School at approximately the same time. Over the years most of the Grieshaber material became a part of the Crawford Theater Collection, and the photographs and clippings relating to design from the Crawford Collection were transferred to the Drama Library for use by the design students and faculty there.

Among the set and costume designs that are currently housed in the Drama Library are those of Donald Oenslager, a Tony Award-winning scene and lighting designer and the creator of the first theatrical design program in the United States at Yale in 1925. Oenslager designed the original Broadway productions of Cole Porter's *Anything Goes* (1934), Kaufmann and Hart's *You Can't Take It with You* (1936) and *The Man Who Came to Dinner* (1939), and Garson Kanin's *Born Yesterday* (1946). The designs at Yale were given to the Library by Mrs. Oenslager after her husband's death in 1975. They include initial sketches, watercolor renderings, and paint elevations. Additional designs were given to the New York Public Library. Oenslager's personal papers, which include materials relating to his Yale

teaching career, were donated to Manuscripts and Archives by Mrs. Oenslager.

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It is hoped that by “unlocking” these collections additional connections will be found between performing arts collections in the Drama Library and other repositories at Yale, as well as with repositories throughout the United States and abroad.

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I am currently processing scene and costume designs of Rollo Peters which include designs for early productions of the Provincetown Players and the Washington Square Players, two companies for whom Peters designed and acted in his early years in New York City, beginning in 1917. Peters designed for theatre, opera, and dance on Broadway, in summer stock, and for theatre festivals, and also directed and acted in numerous productions. He stipulated in his will that his designs were to be given to the School of Drama, and after his death in 1967

the material was placed in the Drama Library. Letters of Peters, as well as theatrical programs and clippings regarding his work with Lawrence Langer (who was a member of the Washington Square Players and founder of the Theatre Guild and the Westport Theatre), are held within collections in Yale’s Beinecke Library.

Other special collection materials housed at the Drama Library include the 80,000-item Yale-Rockefeller Theatrical Prints Collection; a collection of over 300 Japanese Noh theatre pictures and prints; a slide-cassette tape series of lectures of Drama School professor A. M. Nagler’s theatre history course; a number of film scripts and film reels donated by the actor Paul Newman; costume plates; and various ephemera. It is hoped that by “unlocking” these collections additional connections will be found between performing arts collections in the Drama Library and other repositories at Yale, as well as with repositories throughout the United States and abroad. In addition, perhaps future digitization projects will allow these collections to be united virtually and shared with researchers throughout the world.

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## **Discovering America’s Voice: Arts Preservation in Action**

*By Scott Schwartz*

Archivists and curators can no longer cloister themselves among the past’s

hallowed relics quietly scribing aids for penitent researchers seeking enlightenment.

While few of you would disagree that archives exist to be used it is not as evident to many in our profession that the music within our collections must be heard. The act of preservation is never passive and the conservation of our nation's music heritage without some element of realization through performance is little more than silenced sound. Nowhere is this more relevant than for today's music archives and particularly the University of Illinois' Sousa Archives and Center for American Music.

The Sousa Archives and Center for American Music, established in 1994 as the Sousa Archives for Band Research, today supports and facilitates research, education, and public engagement by preserving and providing access to the documentary evidence of this country's music and fine arts heritage. It is home to the world's largest collection of original and published music of John Philip Sousa. Our archives of papers, records and artifacts document America's wind band traditions, electronic music legacy, and scholarship by University of Illinois faculty on the music of the world's indigenous societies. We strive to cultivate better understanding of America's diverse culture through the musical arts by working collaboratively with other music archives and historical institutions from across the nation.<sup>1</sup>

An essential element of the Center's mission is the development of public engagement programs that make the material culture of our past physically, intellectually, and emotionally accessible. These include exhibitions, concerts, lectures, and workshops directed to a variety of

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<sup>1</sup>In 2004 the Sousa Archives and Center for American Music began working with the Smithsonian Institution, Library of Congress, and the United States Marine Band Museum.

audiences. This programming, derived from our historical collections, enables us to simplify the complexities of America's music and culture without simplifying the essence of its history. This form of cultural tourism through visual imagery, melodies and words enables us to bring to life the past's men and women who can speak across the ages to today's public, according to Yale University's Sterling Professor Emeritus of History, Edmund Morgan.<sup>2</sup>

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November 2004 provided a unique opportunity for the University's Sousa Archives. In tribute to the man who created soul-stirring, heart-pumping fanfares for and about Americans the Sousa Archives and Center for American Music successfully produced a month-long celebration of America's music, "Stars, Stripes, Sousa: Celebrating the John Philip Sousa Sesquicentennial," in conjunction with the 150th anniversary of the birth of John Philip Sousa. The University's participation in this national celebration began with the creation of United States Senate Resolution 459 and State of Illinois House Resolution 761, declared November as American Music Month to celebrate the contributions of Sousa and other musicians in America. It was the first of many steps taken by the University's Music Center to ensure national

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid. p. 41 William Tramosch, "Heritage Recreated in USA: Colonial Williamsburg and Other Sites," @ *Cultural Tourism* (1994): 27-41.

recognition of America's music was part of this Sousa commemoration.<sup>3</sup>

Working collaboratively with members of the University and several organizations around the country a broad range of exhibitions, performance programs, clinics, and lectures were created to highlight the diversity of America's music and culture. Such programming included an exhibition of the original parts and the piano score to Sousa's most recognized march, *Stars and Stripes Forever*, and a football game halftime music spectacular entitled "Stars, Stripes, Sousa" that was televised during the Illinois vs. Indiana home football game. Much of the national and international coverage, particularly the November 7th airing of a two-minute spotlight on *CBS Sunday Morning* highlighting the University's Sousa collections and the halftime field show, were the result of the unique collaborative relationships the Center developed with other music archives and museums across the country.

The University's 2005 American Music Month celebration, "Music Bridging Culture," focused on the influences of cultural cross-pollination on America's popular music, and the affect of science and technology on yesterday's and today's music performance. The highlight for last year's celebration was a series of performances and lectures by Dr. Walter van de Leur, Artistic Director of the Dutch Jazz Orchestra, who documented through music and words the impact of jazz legends Billy Strayhorn and Mary Lou Williams on Duke Ellington.

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<sup>3</sup>State of Illinois House Resolution 761 was passed on June 1, 2004 and U.S. Senate Resolution 459 was passed on October 10, 2004.

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In some respects the greatest benefit of our "preservation-in-motion" programming has been our ability to make our historical collections come alive and the promotion of grass-roots knowledge of archives among the general public.

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This year's music celebration will introduce audiences to a rare exhibition of the Axelrod String Quartet consisting of Antonio Stradivarius' matched set of ornamented instruments (2 violins, a viola, and a cello) at the University's Krannert Art Museum. This exhibition and public programs, mounted by the Krannert Art Museum and Sousa Archives and Center for American Music in association with the Smithsonian Institution from October 26-December 3, 2006, will be the first time these unique instruments have been exhibited at a university and only the third time they have been displayed together outside of Washington, DC. The historical instruments, loaned by the Smithsonian Institution to the Krannert Art Museum for the 2006 event, will highlight the visual artistry of one of the most recognized Italian luthiers of the 17th and 18th centuries. This unique exhibit also will include 17th and 18th century paintings from the Krannert Art Museum's collections and two public performances on this string quartet by the Smithsonian Institution Chamber Ensemble.

Our 2006 celebration highlights the violin family's unique and varied heritage, and illustrates the dynamic impact of string instruments on American music and culture. Both classical and popular music will be explored in concerts, dance performances, and lectures as well as several smaller exhibitions of historical artifacts and

documents from the Sousa Archives and Center for American Music which will include the recently acquired Joseph Olivadoti Music and Papers and the Eddie Alkire Papers and Hawaiian Guitars. In addition to this year's planned events there will be the American String Festival, a day-long educational program for public school music students and teachers that will explore creative music performance, a traditional fiddle concert highlighting local musicians, and the Champaign Youth Fiddle Contest.

Tim Ericson reminded many of us in his 1990-91 *Archivaria* article that our outreach initiatives must be part of our normal daily work and its planning and implementation ongoing each year. Public programming is essential to the Sousa Archives and Center for America Music. It impacts every aspect of our archival program, from the acquisition of new collections to the development of additional funding resources. In some respects the greatest benefit of our "preservation-in-motion"

programming has been our ability to make our historical collections come alive and the promotion of grass-roots knowledge of archives among the general public. Such public awareness is our professions' most powerful tool for saving America's music heritage. Through a combination of sound preservation and engaging programming the Sousa Archives and Center for American Music provides our public with an active link to our musical past.

I hope you will take a moment to identify your silenced music collections and join us in our quest to give voice to America's musical past. For further information on how your repository can participate in this great adventure and annual celebration of America's music heritage contact Scott Schwartz at 217-333-4577 or [schwartzs@uiuc.edu](mailto:schwartzs@uiuc.edu). A complete listing of events and exhibitions for the University of Illinois' 2006 American Music Month Celebration can be found at [www.library.uiuc.edu/sousa](http://www.library.uiuc.edu/sousa).

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## ***International Notes***

The following is the second for this relatively new section of the newsletter. It is the Editor's hope to continue with informative articles and statements about archives and the performing arts outside of North America. In this article Michelle Potter writes about national-level strategies for collecting dance materials across the globe in Australia.

# The How and Why of Collecting Dance Materials at the National Library of Australia

By Michelle Potter

The National Library of Australia appointed a Curator of Dance in 2002. It was seen as a bold step and generated some debate. Why a dance curator? Why not a Curator of Sport given Australia's love affair with sports of all kinds? Well it's a long story. But it's one that says much about the grit and determination of the Australian dance community and one with a very happy ending.

Although the National Library of Australia (NLA) had been collecting dance materials in something of an ad hoc way over several decades, building on a particular strength in the wider performing arts, it had never given specific focus to dance. But in 1997 on an initiative from Ausdance, the peak industry body for dance in Australia and a strong advocacy organization, a grant was awarded from the Australia Council for the Arts to the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) and the NLA to partner with Ausdance to consider a strategy for the long term preservation of Australia's dance heritage. Each institution had particular preservation strengths and each complemented the other. The preservation needs and collecting formats of crossed both institutions and the dance community through Ausdance had the foresight to see how the institutions could work together.

The project was initially located at the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) and there was in the first four years a strong focus on locating, preserving and copying dance film and video material. Some was already in the collection of the NFSA and just need preservation treatment. But a good

deal more came to the NFSA from choreographers, dancers, collectors who had been waiting for just such a project. Out it came from garages, from under beds, from all kinds of places. All was special. But a real highlight of this period was the acquisition of footage on 16mm film taken by two medical doctors between 1936 and 1940. Keen amateur cinematographers, Dr Joseph Ringland Anderson, a Melbourne-based ophthalmologist, and Dr Ewan Murray-Will, a Sydney-based dermatologist, were fascinated by the Ballets Russes companies on tour in Australia and recorded many hours of footage of performances, classes and leisure time activities. It came to the collection of the NFSA courtesy of the copyright owners. It is now seen as a real treasure and has found its way into many documentaries already, including the recent Geller/Goldfine release, *Ballets Russes*.

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The NLA's role in these early years was to establish a database of this material, organized according to subjects, and to link in this online service the film with oral histories, pictures, manuscript items, programs and other ephemera from its own collections. It was the start of a virtual dance

collection located in two institutions but linked conceptually in electronic form.

After four years the project moved to the NLA and since 2002 the Library has made dance an area of special focus. It has rebuilt the original database into a much more sophisticated portal, Australia Dancing [www.australiadancing.org](http://www.australiadancing.org), and has watched with pleasure as this service has grown beyond expectations. In 2005 visits to Australia Dancing generated 2.1 million page views and current initiatives are to build a companion site based on a wiki model to give those many artists and companies who are not represented on the current Australia Dancing site space to write their biography or give historical information and to add images. Eventually digital sound and moving image will also be delivered over the services.

But what are the guidelines for collecting? The Library works on the policy that dance is one of the major performing arts in Australia in historical, contemporary, Indigenous and multicultural settings and has long formed a highly participative social activity in the community. However, since dance by its nature is not well represented in notated forms, it is necessary to actively encourage the systematic documentation and collection of Australia's dance culture. The focus of collecting is upon unique Australian dance resources across a broad spectrum of dance styles, including folk and multicultural dance. The acquisition of Australian dance materials includes personal archives, organizational papers and oral histories of significant dancers, choreographers, and people involved in dance production and performance, notated dance scores, archival sound recordings of folk dance music, pictorial material and ephemera documenting dance history and practice, as well as materials that support

research and study of Australian dance. The question of what is significant of course is a delicate one and curatorial expertise is sometimes drawn upon to make decisions, which may not always be popular. But human resources are scarce and budgets not just to acquire but to maintain for the long term are limited, as they are everywhere, and it is impossible to accept everything. But nevertheless, the Library's dance materials have grown into a major collection and the organization is highly regarded for the comprehensive way in which it has approached building its dance collection.

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Accessibility is in the 21st century an issue of strategic importance. The Library is keen to ensure that access is available to as much of its material as possible, copyright restrictions permitting, without the user having to sit in the reading room in Canberra. Australia is a vast country and the national collection is for all Australians. To address this issue, the Library is digitizing some of its most important dance collections, making them accessible through the Library's digital collections and services, including over its online general catalogue <http://www.nla.gov.au/> and over Australia Dancing. Some of the most recently digitized material reflects the Library's current involvement, through the Australian Research Council, with the Australian Ballet and the University of Adelaide in the Ballets Russes project:

<http://www.nla.gov.au/balletsrusses/index.html> Digitized material includes photographs, letters, items of ephemera, small monographs and albums of clippings and photographs including an album kept by dancer Harcourt Algeranoff recording his roles and activities during the south American interlude of Colonel de Basils' Ballets Russes:  
<http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview?pi=nla.ms-ms2376-6-134>.

From relatively modest beginnings, the National Library, working with other institutions, the industry and other partners has built itself an admirable collection of Australian dance materials. But while the story has a happy ending to date, it is in fact a never ending story. So stay tuned to NLA online services for new developments.

*Dr. Michelle Potter is Curator of Dance at the National Library of Australia, Canberra.*

## ***Special Note***

### **Leslie Hansen Kopp**

*By Kit Leary*

What I remember most about Leslie was her selflessness. She wanted to know how to help you and didn't spend a lot of time talking about herself. While I had been a professional archivist for six years, when I moved from Ohio to Oregon and became the archivist for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in 1986, Leslie was one of the first people I contacted. She was then the chair of the newly established Performing Arts Roundtable.

Though her interests were primarily dance and music, she took it upon herself to make others of us who had never worked in the arts field feel very comfortable. She answered questions and suggested other colleagues we might contact. I spoke on the phone with her several times before finally meeting her in person. She knew right away who I was.

I saw her at meetings many times over the years and learned of places she was consulting, what she was doing with Preserve, including the online symposium. I knew she lived in Washington area for awhile, that she and her partner Carolyn had adopted a daughter, Hanna, and that she liked baseball.

In recent years I even saw her in Lincoln, NE at a MAC meeting when she was an exhibitor for Safe Sound Archives. She was there again as an exhibitor the last time I saw her—in New

Orleans—at SAA. This time she was wearing a hat backwards. I noticed it and thought about cancer as a possibility, but I also thought she might just be making a jaunty fashion statement.

I knew we were close in age, I didn't know until now that we were born in the same year. Hers was a life well spent. I shall miss her smile and laughter.

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## ***News of Roundtable Members***

This is a relatively new section in *Performance!* Please pass along information to let others know of your changes.

Australia's loss is New York's gain: a contributor to this issue, **Michelle Potter**, will assume new duties at the New York Public Library in early August. Welcome to the Big Apple, Michelle.

## ***Editor's Corner***

### **Cataloging the Online Newsletter?**

A recent review of OCLC's World Cat catalog reveals that some section and roundtable online newsletters appear as cataloged periodicals. Publications such as the *Academic Archivist* fare well but others are not cataloged at all. Does it make sense to have all section and roundtable newsletter have a cataloging record? If so, your editor hereby challenges institutions with archival training programs (and student chapters of SAA) in particular to take the leadership role and have these records added to their OPAC (online public access catalog). Such a step would increase awareness of publications such as this roundtable's newsletter, *Performance!*

### **The Next Issue**

Unless things change the Fall issue will include a report on the Roundtable's business meeting in Washington, DC plus new **Reports from the Field**. Look for the next issue to appear in early December.

### **Invitation to Join SAA**

SAA's structure provides for roundtables that meet the needs and interests of small groups within the profession. This allows for both flexibility and linkages for shared interests in more specialized areas. So persons can join a roundtable without a requirement of membership in SAA. Even so, your editor hopes that those of you who are not members will consider membership in SAA. SAA's membership has been gradually growing and now stands at more than 4,600.

### **Newsletter Distribution**

The method for distributing this newsletter is as a Word document sent as an attachment to an e-mail message to the subscription list maintained by the Editor. The distribution figure is approximately 125 people. Following the distribution to the roundtable's membership the issue is turned into a .pdf file for placement on the roundtable's web site.

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