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

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**SUMMER 2016 NEWSLETTER OF THE SAA PERFORMING ARTS ROUNDTABLE**
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Cover: Ruth Page and Paul Du Pont in *The Flapper and the Quarterback*, photo by Eugene Hutchinson, 1926

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Thanks to news contributors: Jane Cross, Alex Johnston, Laura Schnitker, and Matt Snyder.
Greetings PAR members,

We hope everyone is starting to look forward to getting together in Atlanta in August for SAA 2016!

The current governance issue that will impact PAR is a proposal by Council to make changes to the structure of affinity groups. We sent out a message to the PAR listserv notifying members of SAA’s request for feedback from Nancy Beau- mont, SAA Executive Director. Since these proposed changes will affect how PAR operates in the future, we hope you will respond to this call for comment to ensure the Performing Arts Roundtable membership’s voice is heard! Council has promised to reach a decision at their August 1st meeting.

Please follow our Facebook page and look for updates to our SAA microsite and our listserv for tours and other events around the annual meeting! We are working on a performing arts-specific repository tour and would also like to point out the following sessions that may be of interest:

102: Remain in Light: Archival Practice for Popular Music Collections (August 4, 11:00 AM-12:00 PM)

110: Growing the Next Generation of Archivists through Residency and Fellowship Programs (August 4, 11:00 AM-12:00 PM)

203: We Can Work It Out: Building and Maintaining Donor Relations (August 4, 2:00-3:00 PM)

509: Tales from the Crypt: A Story of Educational Collaboration Among Archives in Mississippi (August 5, 3:00-4:00 PM) will illustrate how students have used primary sources as “interpretive tools” to conduct original research in the archives and present their findings as artistic performances.

Progress on improvements to the PAR microsite is moving ahead. You should see some changes between now and the annual meeting. For example, did you know that our first newsletter was called Muse, and that an incomplete run is held in the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Archives as part of the Society of American Archivists Records?

By the time this newsletter goes live, you should have received in your e-mail inboxes a ballot for a slate of new steering committee members, including a new co-chair. Please look for it and take time to vote. If you haven’t received this ballot yet, please let us know so that we can make sure everyone has an opportunity to vote.

See you in Atlanta!

Kate Crowe and Scott Schwartz
Co-Chairs of the Performing Arts Roundtable

University of Illinois
Department of Dance

Buffy Barfoot and En-Ning Chuang performing Reika Randall’s *Incumbant* (2005)
Why did you decide to found the American Dance Machine of the 21st Century?

Nikki: I was working with Chet Walker on the early stages of his Jack Cole project, and we were looking at many films choreographed by Jack Cole. In the process, I began to look at a lot of other work of great choreographers such as Hermes Pan, Gower Champion, Michael Kidd, Agnes de Mille, Onna White, Michael Bennett, Bob Fosse, Jerome Robbins, among others, and I thought, “Why just focus on Jack Cole?” Yes, Jack Cole is considered “the father of theatrical jazz dance.” He did all this incredible work, but mostly for film and some night club work. I felt that if we want to bring it to today’s audiences and to perform it live, a lot of the film work may not translate. I started thinking about the possibility of re-starting American Dance Machine. I danced there in the eighties, and I began to look into what became of it. I researched and found that the trademark had been let go following the death of its founder and director, Lee Becker Theodore. I reached out to her remaining family, but they weren’t interested in renewing it. So I trademarked our new iteration as “American Dance Machine for the 21st Century” and then met with a group of significant people who were involved in the original American Dance Machine, the “elders.” There was a lot of interest in reviving it. They were extremely helpful to me in restarting the company.

Was your background in musical theatre?

Nikki: No, my background was in ballet, but I was fortunate at New Jersey Ballet to have the opportunity to study with Matt Mattox, a protégé of Jack Cole, when I was fourteen years old. His style of jazz was very balletic and at the same time very earthy, into the ground, and highly stylized. I was in heaven! When I came to New York City, I studied at the Joffrey Ballet School as a trainee and danced there briefly, then transitioned to doing more jazz dance and musical theatre, ending up at the original American Dance Machine. I loved the way Lee Theodore constructed her classes. Each day would be a different era: the twenties, the thirties, the forties. She had a standard warm-up and then the-
across-the-floor section would reflect the period of the repertory that we would be learning—cakewalk, jitterbug, lindy—it was amazing! Our current aim is to start a training facility in order to introduce these styles to today’s dancers. I feel that young dancers haven’t been exposed to that type of training, and it’s the root of everything, including hip-hop.

What attracts you to working with ADM21?

Gina: How long have we known each other Nikki, now?

Nikki: A while! You came in when I was working with Chet. I brought in some dancers from New York City Ballet who I thought would be easily able to cross over, and Gina was one of them.

Gina: I dance at New York City Ballet. I’m classically trained, but I grew up learning all these other types of dance. I always enjoyed African class. I really enjoyed tap. There was a minute there where I was super-obsessed with Celtic dance and tried to teach all my classmates in Altoona! I’ve really been drawn to making myself a well-rounded dancer. I never in a million years thought I would be able to sing. That opportunity didn’t come my way until I had the chance to play Anita in West Side Story Suite, our abridged version at New York City Ballet. Then I met Nikki, and she would tell me: “I really want to introduce you to this other project that’s happening.” When I got into the studio, I recognized these Jack Cole dances. I couldn’t place where, but I did feel this sense of “Wait a minute, I’ve seen these before!”

My upbringing in Altoona, PA, wasn’t musical theatre-based. The first time I saw West Side Story was in fifth grade during a free period; it seemed no other classmates were as captivated. I couldn’t shift my gaze. I did some exploration and found more movies like that. And American Dance Machine is basically this idea expanded into bringing this choreography alive again in the studio...

Nikki: …is bringing that wonderful musical theatre choreography to today’s dancers and audiences!

Gina: …is getting to learn all these lost dance sequences. I think it’s a wonderful mission. As a


This page: Above: Lee Theodore biography from West Side Story souvenir program, Lincoln Center Music Theater (1968)

Left: Jack Cole biography from Ziegfeld Follies of 1953 souvenir program
dancer who wasn’t exposed to the many types of styles of movement, I would love the class that Nikki describes Lee Theodore gave. I would pay to experience that, which is rare, for a professional dancer to want to go out of my busy schedule to take an extra class! It also provides a knowledge that I can bring back to ballet; to take whatever I’ve learned there and apply it to what I’m doing now.

Nikki: It’s so interesting that you took African dance in high school. I took Bharatanatyam, Afro-Cuban, and Graham when I was in high school.

Gina: I would have loved all those things!

Nikki: I was so curious to experience as many dance styles as possible. I even studied with Meredith Monk briefly when I came to New York because I wanted to see what it would feel like to howl and feel that primal energy while moving.

How do you choose the repertory?

Nikki: I’m naturally drawn to works that I love. I’ve looked at so much at this point. Before this past Joyce season, I had a list of 177 pieces that I found by numerous choreographers that I felt needed to be preserved. We haven’t even begun to scratch the surface yet. This show had a pretty wide variety, but there’s so much more to come. Basically, it’s a matter of curating it and seeing what goes well with what in terms of showing it and presenting it. I do try to choose works that I feel are historically significant too, but really a lot of it’s based on what grabs me in my heart and soul.

Can you describe—either one of you, from your different perspectives—what’s involved in the process of reconstructing a dance?

Nikki: We can both share on that from both sides. Usually if the original choreographer is no longer living, we try to find the dancer on whom the choreography was set; for example, with Michael Bennett’s work, Donna McKechnie so graciously taught and coached “The Music and the Mirror” [from A Chorus Line], which Gina had the opportunity to learn, so she can tell you all about that. That was a thrilling experience for her, and a thrilling experience for me to observe, because it really is like the living mission statement of the American Dance Machine: having the
works passed on by the original artists in order to preserve the nuance and the intent of the original choreographer as close as possible.

In addition to Donna McKechnie staging Michael Bennett’s work, Robert La Fosse staged Jerome Robbins’ works for us. For this recent show he staged “Cool” from West Side Story and “Mr. Monotony” from Jerome Robbins’ Broadway. He’s also staged “Charleston” for us from Billion Dollar Baby for our 2014 Joyce season.

This year we added a work by Agnes de Mille. We were extremely lucky to have Gemze de Lappe—who is ninety-four—provide the intent and nuance, ensuring that the steps were accurate as well [“Laurey Makes Up Her Mind” from Oklahoma].

Gina: And Marge.

Nikki: And Marge Champion. We performed “Someone to Watch Over Me” choreographed by Jack Cole last year at the Joyce and “Smoke Gets in Your Eyes” by Hermes Pan at an earlier studio showing.

Gina: I love those. I love her presence.

Nikki: It’s breathtaking! You just sit in a room and experience this legend passing on what she learned and how she danced the piece. When we did a number from The Act last year, Albert Stephenson, who was the dance captain for the show, staged it. To our astonishment, [composer] John Kander, came in and actually played for one of our rehearsals! It was like living history!

Gina, you should talk about how it was to work with Robert and Donna.

Gina: Reconstructing these pieces as a dancer, and as a dancer from a certain generation that doesn’t have this exposure to all these unique styles, at first, is really daunting. It’s a lot to embrace a different style of movement; for instance, to learn the Michael Bennett style. And, not to mention, Donna comes in, and it’s Donna McKechnie! Once you get over that realization and start really getting into the material and looking at it on the video, you’re like, “OK, I’ve got this!” Then suddenly there’s an avalanche of information. What’s so great about these particular coaches—and I will say this isn’t always the case in my dance world—is that they’re so giving of the knowledge they have and where the thought behind their choreography came from: Why did she look in the mirror and look at this hand? What was her thought behind that? Why Michael chose to do this a certain way, instead of that. What also was great about Donna was she gave me some freedom to bring me as a dancer/
artist to this piece. She wanted my take on it. That was the experiment in me taking on Cassie. What would it be like to have a ballet dancer do that? It really was fun to see how that turned out and transpired.

I’m more used to working with Robbie because he still does character roles at New York City Ballet, but having him set “Mr. Monotony” on us was a great experience. I like to call myself a Robbins dancer. I’ve always been drawn to Robbins’ choreography, and I get cast in a lot of his work at New York City Ballet. Robbie really understood how Jerry worked. He would keep me natural without affectation. We focused on keeping movements honest and simple. For instance, he noticed that I had more flexibility in my hip, and if I relaxed totally into one side, my body portrayed a totally different look than what he wanted. So Jerome Robbins was very interesting in that I found myself pulling the reins back. You almost had to mark everything.

There’ve been so many amazing people I’ve had the opportunity to work with, but the person who sticks out in my mind from the very recent program we did is Gillian Lynne. Dame Gillian Lynne came to teach me Cats. It was literally a half an hour! Between both of our schedules, we could do a half an hour of teaching the solo! This was another instance in which my arrogance fooled me. I watched the solo a number of times and I said to myself: “Easy peasy. Done.” But, foolish, foolish, foolish Gina! It’s one of the hardest solos that I have ever attempted to perform! The solo has so much nuance. I learned it was the very last thing she choreographed in the show because it meant so much to her. I remember meeting her outside. Here she
is, this woman who looks so frail, and then she stepped into the rehearsal studio and she's stronger than I am! She could still, and with aplomb, demonstrate all of the movement and tricky poses! I was just mind-blown! That is the really special and singular experience of American Dance Machine: getting the exposure to all these different styles of dance and getting this knowledge as firsthand as possible. And passing that down. I feel like I've gotten some secrets. But I won't keep them secret. I will share them if I have the opportunity. I can impart what was given to me to the generation following me.

Is it more challenging to do a number without having done the character in the whole show than, say, it is doing a stand-alone ballet?

Nikki: That's a great question.

Gina: Is it harder? I don't necessarily think it's harder, but I found it very interesting. The way the program was set, the Cats solo, “The Naming of Cats,” came right after this crazy, exciting excerpt, “Turkey Lurkey Time.” I'm in the wings, and I'm bouncing along because I can't help myself when I see friends dancing, and this number is so high-octane! Then, almost instantly, in the matter of a light cue, I have to bring myself down, calm myself. I have to become very weighted, very grounded, very unsure, but very heightened of the senses, become this cat-like character. I had to portray this character, yet keep it simple enough so it didn't look completely out-of-the-blue, and I was not dressed as a cat so my character couldn't be literal. So that was very interesting—and hard—to juxtapose. I think the beauty of dance and the beauty of these solos is that you can take them out of context. They were constructed to help move a plot along, not necessarily essential to storyline. I think maybe it would be harder to take a spoken scene out of context. To start off hysterically crying seems to be harder to me than to start off at this point where Victoria is in Cats.

Nikki: Although it's out of context, many of these great works stand alone quite well. We have this “passing it on” or “process” on film—and it's just beautiful—Gina working with Gillian Lynne for example, describing to Gina the nuance of this young adolescent cat, exploring her foot, stroking it, and she takes you into the character. And the same holds true for Donna McKechnie teaching and coaching Cassie; the dance doesn't come out of nowhere. Dancers learn the monologue that precedes the dance so it feeds right into it. Each one is like a complete little scene unto itself. There is a storyline that the dancers learn so it's not just doing steps and a style. There's actually intent and all of that information that influences how the work is danced.

What do you enjoy most about this whole process of reconstructing dances?

Gina: I enjoy getting to work with this caliber of artist. I would never get a chance to work with Donna McKechnie and Dame Gillian Lynne otherwise. Robbie La Fosse, I do have chances to work with him, but, this was different. These coaches open my eyes to all these styles, and I get to try them on physically and actually perform them. It's far different than me teaching myself a Celtic routine and then doing it in a studio!
Nikki: And you got to do Jack Cole.

Gina: And Jack Cole, right. American Dance Machine develops another facet of myself that I can use, and that’s what I find so special about it.

What does ADM21’s being a “living archive” mean to you, and do you refer to more traditional archives in your work as well?

Nikki: We film all of the dances that are reconstructed. We film all of the performances, which are also archived. The two Joyce shows are archived at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts in Lincoln Center. Our little tagline is: “Preserve, present, educate.” We are preserving these works by reconstructing them, presenting them to today’s audiences, and therefore educating audiences and young dancers alike on the history of these styles, preserving them for generations to come. My concern is that these great works and the styles that went with them might be lost, as choreography has changed a lot during my lifetime.

Gina: But dance, I think, is having a renaissance in a lot of things right now. This is a wonderful time to expose dancers. Yes, you’re aware what’s happening now, but to take dance into the future and to make it viable, we still have to include what has happened in the past. There’s so much that may have gotten lost that we can reinvigorate with the added technique. It’s not just about turns. It’s not just about how high your jump is. There’s this thought process. I keep coming back to style! It’s style; it’s a thought and an intent behind the movement that changes it. You teach that to every person in the room and then all of a sudden you have seventeen dancers doing the same thing, but it all has a cohesive movement, which is very interesting. Everyone is working together.

Would you ever consider reconstructing a piece when there is no direct link to the original choreographers or performers anymore? Do you think it’s even possible?

Nikki: Before 1969, most Broadway shows weren’t filmed, so without a direct link, it would be impossible to reconstruct. Translating choreography from film and television is difficult. Pieces choreographed for camera work need to be re-staged for a live performance. If the original choreographer or direct link to the choreographer is no longer alive, it’s very difficult to ensure authenticity. Wayne Cilento brilliantly choreographed sequences that were “missing” in “Beale Street Blues” for example, preserving as much authenticity as possible.

Gina: But even that was difficult. Upon first glance looking at the “Beale Street” video, you don’t notice that there’s a camera cut. Then when you’re trying to block however many dancers are in there—you’re surprised, wait a minute, how did this group move to this group in literally a second? It became a real process. It actually took the most time.

Nikki: And Gina had the good fortune to be coached by Chita Rivera, which we filmed. It was amazing!

Gina: I can’t believe it. Chita Rivera. Gillian Lynne.
Nikki: It’s been quite a year! Gina really got some gifts.

Gina: Yeah!

**Did you have that experience at all when you did *On the Town* on Broadway? Did you have that opportunity to go back to do research?**

Gina: Working with someone in particular? No, my experience with *On the Town* was so rapid-fire and so: “Hey, do you want to do this?” I literally had two rehearsals before I went in for my first performance.

Nikki: She learns very fast.

Gina: It was very learn-as-you-go. But that experience was also very special. I’m glad I had it and that I jumped on it. I would have liked to have been able to do a little more research, but I wasn’t afforded the opportunity. And that was a different approach for me.

**Do you do additional research when you prepare for a role—beyond the coaching?**

Gina: I try to do additional research for everything that I dance if it’s possible. Obviously it’s hard to do additional research on things that are created on you. For example, the other day I was looking at [George Balanchine’s] *Symphony in Three Movements*. I was trying to look at old videos. I was trying to look at how the choreography has morphed a little bit. They say that a great ballet is something that withstands the morphing of time and the changing dancers. It also helps me find my own voice in reconstructing how I want to approach something. And the part in *Symphony in Three* is not a character role by any means. It’s very much a black-and-white ballet. There’s no story, but for me there is; there is always a thought behind it.

**We touched on this before, but how are you documenting your own process? Are there any materials you save or collect?**

Nikki: It’s all filmed. It’s all on video. It’s all video-archived.

**You don’t use notes at all or anything like that?**

Gina: Some of the stagers had notes.

Nikki: Yes, when we reconstructed “Beat Me Daddy Eight to the Bar” a few years ago with the Verdon Fosse Legacy, they brought in several original cast members from *Big Deal* to the studio. Linda Haberman, one of the original cast members,
provided copious notes which were all laid out on a table. Everyone brought their memories. They had Linda’s notes, they had the film to look at—from the Tonys—and they had their memories. Each dancer brought something to the reconstruction process. And we filmed all of it. We filmed them in the studio, with Linda’s notes, with their memories, laughing and rolling on the floor at times. It was a really joyous experience. Then there was the joy of teaching what they had reconstructed to our dancers who were thrilled to be learning it from the “originals.”

Also when “Turkey Lurkey” was reconstructed by Donna, Margo [Sappington], and Baayork [Lee], we filmed their entire reconstruction process. They referred to the video when they needed to, and they drew on their memories for the style. And for each one to re-set their part on the new dancers was thrilling for all.

Do you see this training as being for all age levels?

Nikki: Yes, eventually, we would like to hold classes for children and adults. There seems to be a lot of interest on many levels.

Gina: It seems a certain generation has a nostalgia and they want to relive that fondness. Then there’s this brand new generation that hasn’t seen any of this…

Nikki: …and they’re like, wow, I want to try that!

Gina: …and they’re literally just flabbergasted by some of what they’ve seen. They want to touch it and feel it, feel what it’s like to put on a style like that.

Do you have any dream pieces or dream roles you want to do?

Gina: I keep on telling Nikki that I want to do more Bob Fosse. I just love that trio, “There’s Gotta Be Something Better Than This,” from Sweet Charity. It’s so funny. Basically, anything Chita Rivera has ever done.
Anything you have in the works?

Nikki: Aside from what I mentioned previously, I am looking at reconstructing choreography of Michael Kidd, Hanya Holm, Onna White, Peter Gennaro, George Balanchine, and many more for future presentations. There’s another rare Agnes de Mille piece that was introduced to me by Anderson Ferrell of the de Mille Foundation. It’s called “Lady in Waiting.” It was danced by Pat Stanley [in Goldilocks], and she won the Tony for her work in it in 1959. It’s a gorgeous piece and it’s very atypical of de Mille. So there’s lots out there to do.

Does de Mille still have a lot of stagers who can do her work? It was kind of sad that ABT didn’t do much of her work when they celebrated their 75th anniversary.

Nikki: De Mille’s work is very difficult to stage. But yes, this young woman, Elena Zahlmann, who dances with New York Theatre Ballet, who has learned from Gemze, is being groomed to stage the work. The Agnes de Mille Foundation is committed to having stagers who can pass the work on.

And is it a big challenge to find people who can really teach the much older styles—like from the 1920s or even earlier?

Nikki: It really is. I am constantly searching for people who had some sort of access to the much older styles. Carmen de Lavallade has been very helpful and generous in leading me to people who might be good resources (including herself!)

That makes your mission a very vital one.

Nikki: Yes, it’s very vital. Funding is critical to keeping our mission alive.

On another note, I would like to mention several current choreographers who have lent tremendous assistance to our mission. Susan Stroman not only has been incredibly supportive of our mission, but she has been so generous in allowing ADM21 to perform her wonderful work.

Gina: Right.

Nikki: We’ve presented two of her works. This year we performed “Slap that Bass” [from Crazy for You], and previously we have performed “Simply Irresistible” (“The Girl in the Yellow Dress”) from Contact. Susan was so generous in providing stagers, as well as coming into the studio herself and talking to the dancers and stagers about how she developed the whole concept for Contact, which was fascinating.

Jerry Mitchell, Rob Ashford, Andy Blankenbuehler, and Warren Carlyle have been incredibly generous as well in their support and allowing us to perform their work. We are interested in preserving great works of musical theatre choreography, including works of today’s choreographers, as well as great choreography of the past.

*Opposite page:
Above
ADM21 company members in Susan Stroman’s “Slap That Bass”

Below:
Flier for Crazy for You (front and back, circa 1993)

This page:
Promises, Promises ticket order form (front and back, circa 1970)*

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**Nikki Feirt Atkins** is a dancer and an M.D. Nikki studied ballet at the Garden State Ballet, New Jersey Ballet and at the Joffrey Ballet School in New York as a trainee. In addition, she studied Graham, Horton, East Indian dance (Bharatanatyam), jazz with Matt Mattox, Luigi, and Betsy Haug, with whom she performed. Of note, Nikki studied with Lee Theodore, founder of the original American Dance Machine. After a brief career as a professional dancer, Nikki went on to obtain her B.A. Magna Cum Laude in Biology and Performing Arts at New York University. She subsequently earned her M.D., completed her residency and fellowships at New York Presbyterian Hospital/Cornell and Columbia and become a practicing pathologist and researcher at Columbia University Medical Center. While working as a part-time pathologist in private practice, Nikki became the Director of New Artistic Programs and Outreach at the Joffrey Ballet School. She subsequently worked with Mr. Chet Walker on several projects, including the early stages of The Jack Cole Project. In February 2012, Nikki founded the American Dance Machine for the 21st Century.

**Georgina Pazcoguin** is currently a soloist at New York City Ballet, where she has danced since 2002. She is featured in the film NY Export: Opus Jazz, which won the Audience Award at the 2010 SXSW Film Festival. She also is a featured personality on the AOL TV Series City.Ballet. Recipient of the Mae L. Wien Award for Outstanding Promise in 2001, Pazcoguin’s many NYCBS credits include Anita in West Side Story Suite. Her American Dance Machine for the 21st Century credits include: Cassie in A Chorus Line; Jerome Robbins’ “Mr. Monotony”; Margo Sappington’s “One on One” from Oh! Calcutta! She can next be seen playing Victoria in the revival of Cats at the Neil Simon Theatre. Instagram: GeorginaPazcoguin; Web site: GeorginaPazcoguin.com.
From the Newberry Stacks: A Ballet as American as Toothpicks and a Grant Project Update

by Catherine Grandgeorge

When you think of ballet, you probably think of ballerinas in tutus doing pirouettes, and not a stylish flapper and a football quarterback.

In a classical dance world dominated by tradition, pioneering dancer and choreographer Ruth Page sought to develop something new: an American ballet. With the Roaring Twenties as her backdrop, Page drew inspiration from novelty dances like the Charleston and the emerging “co-ed” attitude on college campuses to create one of the first ballets to revolve around American themes: The Flapper and the Quarterback. Premiering in December 1926 at the Eighth Street Theatre in Chicago, it was hailed by reviewer Ruth Peiter of the Toledo Times as “American as ice-water, toothpicks and slang.”

Peiter’s review traced the ballet’s influences to the images of American cartoonist, printmaker, and illustrator John Held, Jr. Page explained that she created the ballet because “we didn’t have a single genuinely American thing on the program. The John Held cartoons inspired it—what could be more typical of American college life…The dance succeeds, I think, because it is really a bit of contemporary American life. But that is always the most difficult subject for interpretation.”

A 1938 clip of the ballet from the Chicago Film Archives reveals the whimsical nature of the dancing. The footage shows Page and dancer Paul du Pont performing or practicing the piece, and aptly confirms an early description of their movements: “With reckless abandon, the two characters gyrate and tumble through a series of episodes which include hints of all that is modern in ballroom dancing, and much that is modern and bears no relation to dancing.
Some parts of the dance are sly and subtle, others are burlesque, as broad as the lower campus."

Although the footage has no sound, the Newberry Library holds an original piano score written by Chicago-based musician and composer Clarence Loomis, whom Page commissioned to create the music.

Ruth Page (1899-1991) was born in Indianapolis. After meeting famed dancer Anna Pavlova in her early teen years, Page started studying dance with Jan Zalewski in Chicago. She continued her training with Adolph Bolm (a former dancer with Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, who had established the Ballet Intime) in New York City, and eventually toured South America with Pavlova. Along with Bolm, her many collaborators included Bentley Stone, Katherine Dunham, and Harald Kreutzberg. In addition to her active performance career, Page founded the Ruth Page Foundation and School of Dance, the Chicago Opera Ballet, and served as ballet director for the Ravinia Opera and the Chicago Grand Opera. Among Page’s works are: Frankie and Johnny (1938), Carmen (1939), The Bells (1946), Billy Sunday (1946), The Nutcracker (1965), and Romeo and Juliet (1969).

Items related to this ballet and many others can be found in the Ruth Page Papers, a recently processed collection in the Midwest Dance Collection at the Newberry Library. The Ruth Page Papers and the Ruth Page Foundation Records were both processed as part of an ongoing grant from the Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation and are available for research.
The Newberry’s Midwest Dance Collection began in the 1980s, when dance critic Ann Barzel donated her collection of dance materials to the Newberry, making it a significant center for the study of 20th-century dance history in Chicago and the Midwest. In thirty years, the Newberry has acquired a wide range of personal papers, ephemera, books, and archives of major dance studios and companies in the Chicago area, as well as material relating to local performances of national and international companies.

The ever-growing collection now comprises over 80 discrete collections, including personal papers and memorabilia of individual dancers, journalists, photographers, and choreographers, as well as the records of dance companies, schools, festivals, and advocacy groups. Spanning the era of the World’s Columbian Exposition to the present day, dance genres represented include ballet, modern, vaudeville, and traditional Spanish. These materials provide rare insight into Chicago’s vibrant and diverse dance community and are regularly used by dance and local historians, practicing dancers and choreographers, and the education departments of local performing arts groups.

Starting in September 2015, with funding from the Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, Newberry archivists began a two-year project to arrange, preserve, and describe 13 of the largest unprocessed collections within the library’s dance collections.

The Ruth Page Papers (93.5 linear feet) and the Ruth Page Foundation Records (25 linear feet) were the first two collections to be completed through the project. Archivists are nearly finished with a third collection, the Hubbard Street Dance Chicago Records (HSDC; 190 linear feet). Founded in 1977 by Lou Conte, Hubbard Street is an internationally acclaimed Chicago-based troupe that combines balletic strength and precision with elements of jazz and contemporary dance. From the beginning the company featured outstanding and accessible dance, much of it choreographed in the early years by Conte, and later by major choreographers, who have included: Nacho Duato, Daniel Ezralow, Margo Sappington, Lynne Taylor-Corbett, and Twyla Tharp. From 2000-2009, under the artistic direction of Jim Vincent, HDSC featured innovative and highly popular performances to live music with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and other organizations.

The final major collection to be completed in the first year of the project will be...
the records of the MoMing Dance and Arts Center (90 linear feet). MoMing, a neighborhood center for dance training and avant-garde performance, was formed in 1974 by Jackie Radis, Jim Self, Susan Kimmelman, Eric Trules, Kasia Mintch, Tem Horowitz, and Sally Banes. Located at 1034 W. Barry Avenue in a building owned by the Resurrection Lutheran Church, the Center continued for 16 financially turbulent years to provide local and visiting artists with a small-scale performance space suitable for experimental work informed by the visual arts. As the Harper Theatre Dance Festival had done with modern dance in the mid-1960s, MoMing introduced Chicago to the nation’s leading postmodern choreographers, including Trisha Brown, Bill T. Jones, and Meredith Monk. After many financial crises, MoMing failed just after its most promising achievement—the 1989 festival “German Dance: Living Memories with a Future,” conceived by Peter Tumbelston and Julie Simpson.

Along with processing these collections and digitizing relevant audio-visual materials, the Newberry has actively worked to promote the collections through public programming and social media. In November 2015, the Newberry hosted the program “Sybil Shearer: Maverick of the Past, Muse of the Present.” This event included several performances by the Kristina Isabelle Dance Company, followed by a panel discussion. Sybil Shearer’s pieces, O Lost (1942) and Judgement Seeks Its Own Level (1969), were recreated, and Kristina Isabelle Dance Company previewed a work-in-progress inspired by Shearer called And the Spirit Moved Me.

Following the success of the first program, the Newberry hosted a second event for the public in April 2016. “Conversations on Chicago Dance: Founding and Sustaining a Company” included a panel discussion featuring longtime Chicago dance company founders and second generation leaders and a mini-exhibit of materials relating to these companies. Participants included Joel Hall of Joel Hall Dancers & Center, Dame Libby Komaiko of Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater, and Hema Rajagopalan of Natya Dance Theatre.

At the end of our two-year dance adventure, almost 80% of the Midwest Dance Collection will be fully processed. We are excited to provide greater access to these rich collections and are working on a parallel project to facilitate researcher access to audio-visual materials. Along with these initiatives, a culminating dance exhibit is being planned for 2019. We hope that you will come dance with us in Chicago.
Another First: The Arthur Mitchell Archive at Columbia University’s Rare Book and Manuscript Library

by Jennifer B. Lee

Jennifer B. Lee has held various positions at the Library Company of Philadelphia, the John Hay Library of Brown University, and the New York Public Library. She joined the staff of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Columbia University in the fall of 1999 as Head of Reader Services, Outreach, and Exhibitions. She is now Curator of the Performing Arts Collections, while retaining responsibility for the department’s exhibitions program. Her major current endeavors include working with the recently acquired archives of Arthur Mitchell, founder of the Dance Theatre of Harlem, and those of the Serge Prokofiev Family.

On February 27, 2015, the archive that dance pioneer Arthur Mitchell had kept throughout his career was delivered to Butler Library, the home of Columbia University’s Rare Book and Manuscript Library (RBML). The move that day consisted of over 100 bankers and larger-sized boxes, with 20 more that came in August from storage at Dance Theatre of Harlem. It is the first major dance archive acquired by RBML.

Instrumental in bringing this collection to RBML was Marcia Sells, a former ballet student of Mitchell’s. “Whether or not we made a career out of ballet, for so many of us the experience of studying with Mr. Mitchell at Dance Theatre of Harlem was transformational,” said Sells. “We are proud that Columbia will make it possible for the Mitchell archives to play a role in other young people’s lives for many years to come.” Sells, who used to be Columbia School of the Arts Associate Dean for Community Engagement, is now Dean of Students at Harvard’s Law School. RBML is hopeful that other Mitchell students and colleagues will add their papers to the Mitchell collection; RBML already has been contacted by a few of them.

“I believe that dance, and the arts more broadly,” Arthur Mitchell has commented recently, “can be used as a catalyst for social change—this is why I started the Dance Theatre of Harlem. With these materials now at Columbia, artifacts of American dance history and African-American history...
will be accessible to young scholars, academics and the general public, furthering this push for change.”

Speaking of his own early life growing up in Harlem, Mitchell chronicled the many challenges he faced that made future dance stardom an unlikely prospect: “My father left my family when I was twelve years old. So I took over. I had two brothers, two sisters, and my mom, so I have always held two jobs. I shined shoes. Sold newspapers. And I worked in the butcher shop delivering meat. And then I got paid in meat and gave it to the family.”

He was involved in street gangs, but an insightful guidance counselor suggested that he apply to the selective High School of Performing Arts. He was accepted, and after graduating in 1952, won a dance award and scholarship to study at the School of American Ballet (SAB), the school affiliated with the New York City Ballet (NYCB). In 1955, he joined City Ballet as the company’s second African-American dancer.

The Mitchell collection contains photographs, posters, programs, clippings, correspondence, financial records, early film footage, and video content, all of which tell the story of the trailblazing career that changed the landscape of ballet in America. In 1956, a year after joining NYCB, he became the first African American to become a principal dancer in a major ballet company. NYCB co-founder and ballet master George Balanchine created iconic roles for Mitchell in numerous ballets, many of which would become twentieth-century classics.

The first of these remarkable collaborations was Agon (1957). Set to a score by Igor Stravinsky, the ballet features a central pas de deux that quickly became famous. Thought to be the first interracial duet in American ballet, Balanchine’s pairing of Mitchell, a black man, and Diana Adams, a white woman, created more than a sensation. In a retrospective essay published for the 50th anniversary of the piece, New York Times dance critic Alastair Macaulay wrote: “the pas de deux is just the most dramatic section of a ballet that was already astounding, full of shapes, phrases, rhythms, sounds that hadn’t been encountered before but embodied New York modernism itself. In 1957, ‘Agon’ came as the climax of a Balanchine-Stravinsky ‘Greek’ triple bill, following ‘Apollo’ (1928) and ‘Orpheus’ (1948). The audience at New York City Center went wild. Marcel Duchamp, according to the critic Edwin Denby, said he felt the way he had after the 1913 opening of ‘Le Sacre du Printemps.’ Arlene Croce, later dance critic of The New Yorker, said she did not sleep for a week.”

The archive contains material relating to the development of Agon. News clippings describe protests at performances and venues in the South that wouldn’t allow Mitchell to appear. The collection also includes Mitchell’s handwritten notes from when he was learning Balanchine’s choreography, as well as later
Mitchell has recalled movingly the unequivocal support he received as an artist from NYCB's leaders, Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein: ‘At New York City Ballet, everybody was on my side, whatever we did. There were a couple of instances where we would do a television program and the producers said, ‘Well you can’t do that piece with the black guy.’ [...] Balanchine said, ‘If Mitchell doesn’t dance, New York City Ballet doesn’t dance.’ There were parents of some of the girls in the company who were upset about my dancing with their daughters, and Balanchine said, ‘Then take them out of the company.’ So I danced in every ballet, in Swan Lake, in Nutcracker—everything.

There weren’t roles that were consigned for black dancers. There were just roles for a dancer.’

In addition to its documentation of Agon, the collection includes material representing works from the great NYCB repertoire, including many that continue to be performed today, such as Balanchine’s Slaughter on Tenth Avenue (1936; 1968), The Four Temperaments (1946), Firebird (1949), Western Symphony (1954), and Bugaku (1962), as well as several no longer seen, like Todd Bolender’s The Creation of the World (1960); Balanchine’s collaboration with Barbara Milberg and Francisco Moncion, Jeux d’Enfants (1955); or his lost ballet to the music of George Frederick Handel, The Figure In The Carpet (1960).

Rehearsal and performance photographs show Mitchell, along with other NYCB colleagues, including Jacques d’Amboise, Gloria Govrin, Patricia McBride, Maria Tallchief, and Edward Villella. There are also photographs of Mitchell partnering such influential NYCB ballerinas as Adams, Tanaquil Le Clerq, Allegra Kent, Kay Mazzo, and Suzanne Farrell.

Items of special note from Mitchell’s NYCB career include the original art work for Al Hirschfeld’s cartoon of Mitchell and Farrell in Balanchine’s 1968 restaging of his Slaughter On Tenth Avenue and the three-sheet poster for the New York Philharmonic’s “Festival of Stravinsky: His Heritage and His Legacy.” Stravinsky, along with Leonard Bernstein and others, was one of the conductors at the festival, which ran from June 30 to July 23, 1966; excerpts from Balanchine-Stravinsky ballets were danced by Farrell with Mitchell.

Inspired by the changes sweeping America during the Civil Rights movement, and in the aftermath of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Mitchell wanted to provide young people in the Harlem community with the opportunity to transform their lives as he had done. He left full-time performing when soprano Dorothy Maynor invited him to start a
dance program at her Harlem School of the Arts. In 1968, for the first summer of the dance program, there were 30 students. Maynor and Mitchell left the doors open so that passersby could see what was happening inside. Within only a few months, attendance had risen to 400 students, and the facilities could no longer support the class sizes.

To provide additional space for the growing number of students, Mitchell remodeled a garage with his own money, raised funds with the help of Balanchine and Kirstein, and started his own dance school. He then asked his former ballet teacher Karel Shook to help direct what would become Dance Theatre of Harlem (DTH), the first permanently established African-American ballet company in the United States. DTH, which was formed to counter the prevailing prejudice that African Americans did not belong in classical ballet, made its official debut on January 8, 1971, in a concert at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, with a program that included three pieces choreographed by Mitchell. Several works by Balanchine and Jerome Robbins also were performed during the inaugural season.

Community outreach was consistently a priority for the company: “One of the strengths of Dance Theatre of Harlem,” stated Mitchell, “is that we must have done a thousand lecture demonstrations, going into communities that had not seen ballet or didn’t even know anything about it. They said Dance Theatre of Harlem is like a traveling university. Now you find basketball players, football players—they all are studying ballet. It’s the strongest technical base to make you better. Consequently, all those things add together to make for greater awareness of the art form.”

Following two tours in Europe and three tours in the United States, DTH had its first full season in New York City in 1974. Over the years, Mitchell assembled an eclectic repertoire for his company, ranging from Balanchine’s neoclassical-styled dances to items from the oeuvre of the Ballets Russes, as well as works by African-American choreographers, including Alvin Ailey, Tally Beatty, Garth Fagan, Geoffrey Holder, and Billy Wilson. The archive holds documentary footage in many formats, process notes, and research material for some of Dance Theatre of Harlem’s signature pieces. These works include Mitchell’s own Creole Giselle (1984), which transposes the story of Giselle (and the traditional steps, as staged by Frederic Franklin) to a community of free black plantation owners in Louisiana. It was the first American ballet to win England’s Laurence Olivier Award for best new dance production. Other acclaimed DTH productions included: John Taras’ version of Stravinsky’s Firebird (1982), with its stunning costume designs by Holder; a revival of Balanchine’s Bugaku (DTH premiere, 1987); and Holder’s own Dougla (1974).

Continuing to tour extensively, in 1988, DTH became the first ballet company invited to the Soviet Union as part of the U.S./U.S.S.R. Initiative, and, in 1992, the group traveled to segregated South Africa at the behest of Nelson Mandela in its “Dancing Through Barriers” visit.

In a recent interview, Mitchell celebrated the exceptional legacy of DTH: “The thing that I am most proud of regarding the company is the fact that it existed. Our repertoire was one of the best in the world because we had the best of Balanchine. Then when Mr. Shook passed away, we got Freddie Franklin [former principal dancer with the...
Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo] as an artistic consultant and we got the Diaghilev ballets, which had a great mystique. We did Les Noces [by Igor Stravinsky]—can you imagine a black company doing that piece with the score sung in Russian? It was like a little United Nations of dance in a sense.\footnote{8}

The collection offers unique insights into both the cultural and social history of Harlem, and the influential role the arts have played in international diplomacy for the United States. Archive correspondence documents Mitchell’s encounters with some of the leading artists of recent times, which, in addition to the aforementioned names, included Josephine Baker and Carmen de Lavallade, as well as numerous political leaders, such as George W. Bush, David Dinkins, Bill and Hillary Clinton, Mikhail Gorbachev, Nelson Mandela, and Charles Rangel.

The archive contains Dance Theatre of Harlem’s early administrative papers, mission statements, grant proposals, financial records, and dance curricula dating back to 1969. Performance and rehearsal photographs of celebrated productions feature many of the great DTH dancers such as Lydia Abarca, Stephanie Dabney, Charmaine Hunter, Virginia Johnson, and Ronald Perry. Later memorabilia commemorates the company’s special appearance on Sesame Street in 1996. Other photographs document the work of the Dance Theatre of Harlem School, which continues to provide excellent training in many kinds of dance today.

Additional highlights from the collection are travel-related artifacts from DTH tours abroad, as well as photographs and materials from Mitchell’s most recent return to Russia in 2012 as part of the “American Seasons in Russia” (a cultural festival held under the auspices of the Bilateral Presidential commission established by Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev). Also in the archive is the eight-foot-long three-dimensional puzzle made by artist Frank Bara, which was commissioned in honor of the 20th anniversary of DTH.

In addition to the world of ballet, Mitchell’s appearances on Broadway, as well as in film and television, are represented through memorabilia and photographs. Productions include the 1952 revival of Four Saints In Three Acts, which started on Broadway and toured to Paris with a cast that also featured Leontyne Price; House of Flowers (1954), which ran briefly on Broadway; and publicity photographs from the 1967 film, The Day the Fish Came Out, a science fiction satire with a large cast that also included Candice Bergen.

With the generous assistance of the Ford Foundation, the Arthur Mitchell Project honors his legacy by working to promote diversity in the arts and forging social change through education and equal access
to the arts. “Arthur Mitchell is a living legend and the archive we are proud to support will serve to educate future generations on the power of the artistic process,” said Darren Walker, president of the Foundation. “We understand the contribution of artists to effect social change, and the opportunity to study and learn from the groundbreaking global phenomenon that is Arthur Mitchell is one for the ages.”

To celebrate the 60th anniversary of Mitchell’s debut with the New York City Ballet, Columbia and Barnard College presented the Arthur Mitchell Project Symposium on October 26 and 27, 2015. Panel discussions brought together dancers, including Karen Brown, Carmen de Lavallade, Robert Garland, Virginia Johnson, Allegra Kent, Kay Mazzo, and Mitchell; dance historians and critics, including Anjuali Austin, Karyn D. Collins, Farah Jasmine Griffin, and Sarah L. Kaufman; and moderators Brent Hayes Edwards, Lynn Garafola, and Kendall Thomas.

The Mitchell archive will open to the public in 2017, when processing and cataloging have been completed. With Ford Foundation funding, Mr. Mitchell’s own archivist, Gillian Lipton, has been working through the over 150 boxes of material to pre-process the collection; RBML will complete the arrangement and description. To date, Columbia’s Preservation Department has been overseeing the digitization of the film portion of the collection, including treatment of some items that were showing signs of mold damage, the actual transfers being done by an outside vendor.

Columbia will be hosting an array of ongoing public programs and events—with the very active involvement of Arthur Mitchell himself. Proposed plans include a major exhibition that RBML hopes will be mounted in the Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery, now under construction in the Lenfest Center, a part of Columbia’s new Manhattanville Campus at 125th Street and Broadway. As stated on the Web site for the Gallery, this location will: “propel The Wallach Art Gallery to a much more active role—not only by linking to the historical Morningside Heights campus five blocks south, but also by engaging more vigorously with the thriving cultural milieu that emanates from 125th Street.” An Arthur Mitchell exhibition fits this new mission to perfection, and, if funds can be raised, it is hoped the exhibition will be scheduled for the 2018/19 academic year.

Notes

1 “Columbia Library Acquires Dance Pioneer Arthur Mitchell’s Archive.” Columbia News. 14 May 2015. The present article is an expanded version of this earlier one to which the author was the main contributor.
2 Ibid.
6 Hutter, Victoria. “Giving Back to the Community.” NEA Arts Number 1, 2016, p. 16.
7 Ibid, p. 17.
8 Ibid, p. 17.
10 For a full list of participants please see the program.
11 Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery. “Our Move to Manhattanville.”
Founded in 1972, the Carson Brierly Giffin Dance Library (CBGDL) is a special collection in the University of Denver’s Special Collections and Archives dedicated to the documentation and representation of dance in Colorado and the American West. With significant materials on social dance, ballet, and modern dance, the collections encompass a broad spectrum of dance and the performing arts. The recently-opened exhibit, *Rising Stars: Denver Civic Ballet and Ballet Guild*, was co-curated by Nathalie Proulx (CBGDL Archivist) and Kate Crowe (Curator of the Carson Brierly Giffin Dance Library) and will be on display in the library of the University of Denver through November 30, 2016. Offering an overview of the history of ballet in Denver, this exhibit tells the story of the Denver Civic Ballet and its support organization, the Denver Civic Ballet Guild.

The city’s first semi-professional dance company, Denver Civic Ballet created a platform for high-caliber local dancers and paved the way for the establishment of professional companies in the future, many of which, such as Colorado Ballet, are still in existence. Denver Civic Ballet began in 1958 as the shared vision of the leaders of several area dance studios, each of whom believed that Denver was ready for a professional-level outlet for its dancers. Incorporated as the Metropolitan Denver Civic Ballet, the new company followed a trend of regional ballet companies sweeping the nation. During its 21-year existence, the company presented Denver audiences with programs that offered a combination of classical and original works. It also hosted guest artists and artistic directors from more-established troupes, including American Ballet Theatre (ABT), Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, and New York City Ballet.

Artistic directors such as the Cuban-born Enrique Martinez (who was a dancer and later a ballet master with ABT) and Milenko Banovitch (Zagreb Ballet) contributed to the growth of the company’s repertoire.
by choreographing new pieces and restaging classic works to fit the company’s needs. Like other “civic” companies, Denver Civic Ballet became a “testing ground” for these choreographers’ creations. Martinez’s most well-known piece during his time with the company was *Electra*, based on the Greek myth. Following a positive reception from Denver audiences in August of 1962, the ballet was brought back to ABT and became part of its repertoire. The creation of Banovitch’s *Cabriole* was subsidized through a grant from cosmetics company Elizabeth Arden, which was seeking to sponsor a work that would exemplify the “modern woman” in order to promote its new perfume of the same name. Ballets restaged from the canon of classical and Romantic ballet, included holiday favorite *The Nutcracker*, which was performed at the Denver Auditorium with the full Denver Symphony Orchestra, as well as *Les Sylphides* and *Coppélia*.

The Denver Civic Ballet folded in 1979, at which point the Denver Ballet Guild refocused its mission to support all ballet in Denver and the region. The Guild continues to provide access to dance and the performing arts for young people through its backing of local companies and programs such as the Young Dancer’s Competition, which provides dance scholarships to talented male and female pre-professional dancers in all age groups, and the Showcase of Dance, which brings young people from schools all around Denver to enjoy a free afternoon of performance with a rotating cast of companies.

The exhibit design and creative process required collaboration...
with other individuals and organizations at every step: Nathalie and Kate worked with institutions that held related collections, as well as former company associates and the current Denver Ballet Guild. Denver Public Library (DPL) has a large collection, which was donated by the company shortly after it ceased operations. In working with the archivist and staff members at DPL, Nathalie was able to view the materials frequently and obtain a loan in order to gather materials digitally for the exhibit. CBGDL itself owns some materials on Denver Civic Ballet, the majority of which come from the annual “Living Legends of Dance” oral history program, which had collected interviews with several company and guild members, as well as some of the original heads of the company.

The development of the exhibit also galvanized Denver’s dance community to donate materials to the library; past company
members, costume designers, and the former society editor of the Denver Post agreed to contribute costumes and photographs and to participate in interviews on the history of the company and guild. The curators were also able to draw from these first-person accounts and relationships to ensure quality control of the content in both the exhibit and a related thirty-minute documentary that they created about the company and the guild. This film premiered at the dance library’s annual meeting in June 2016. An “interview booth” was also set up so that attendees who had brief stories to share could participate in the project during the event itself. In addition, because many of the donors and participants were alumni of the University of Denver, where the collection is housed, the exhibit and the gathering drew some publicity from the Alumni Office and Marketing and Communications Department, as a way to showcase the University’s connections to the performing arts.

This outreach effort is part of CBGDL’s strategic plan to focus on a particular aspect of dance history each year and to spark interest in the community around developing collections, exhibits, and other programming related to the selected topic. In 2017, CBGDL’s exhibit will center on Festival Caravan, a free “performing arts experience” which ran in the summers during the 1970s and 1980s, and which brought local companies to all of Denver’s public parks, with the goal of providing equitable access to the arts to the whole city.

Above: View of “Classic Works” panel from the Rising Stars exhibit

Left: Paul Fiorino and Michelle O’Bryan stand in the wings during a production of Denver Civic Ballet’s The Nutcracker
Music for Moderns: The Partnership of George Avakian and Anahid Ajemian

Contemporary American music of the mid-20th century enjoyed a somewhat golden age: Multiple generations of jazz masters, such as Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, Dave Brubeck, and Sonny Rollins, were popular and active simultaneously, expanding the music’s horizons while still producing older styles. At the same time, a new coterie of modern composers, including John Cage, Lou Harrison, Frank Wigglesworth, Alan Hovhaness, and Ben Weber, were pushing the boundaries of what music could be. These two streams of musical modernism met in the marriage of the record producer George Avakian and the violinist Anahid Ajemian.

Active for over 60 years, Avakian in many ways helped redefine the record industry of his era and ushered to the world an enormous variety of popular and artistic music, often both at the same time. Anahid Ajemian, as well as her sister, pianist Maro Ajemian, dedicated her artistic life to nurturing and performing contemporary music, from Cage and Henry Cowell to Weber and, later in her career, Elliott Carter.

The exhibition, which runs from June 21-September 24, 2016, at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, is derived largely from George Avakian’s and Anahid Ajemian’s personal archives of photographs, recordings, memorabilia, oral histories, writings, letters, and other papers. It explores both of their careers and, through them, some of the most important musicians of all time. It also provides a unique way of viewing the important musical developments of their era through the lens of both artistic and commercial recording considerations, as well the development of the recording industry as a whole.

Shakespeare Through the Ages

The University of Delaware Library’s Special Collections will present “Shakespeare Through the Ages,” an exhibition held in commemoration of the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare’s death. The exhibition will explore the reception and treatment of William Shakespeare and his works from the author’s age to our own.

Among the items on display will be early printed editions of Shakespeare, his contemporaries, and his sources. Also on view will be some of the earliest American
printings of Shakespeare, while other sections of the exhibition will highlight private press editions from the nineteenth through twentieth centuries. The exhibition will also address how subsequent generations have reinterpreted, remade, and, in some cases, lampooned Shakespeare’s works, including examples of parodies, revisions, and children’s editions, as well as forgeries which purported to be newly-discovered texts by Shakespeare. Manuscripts, books, and ephemera from the Library’s holdings will demonstrate the many ways in which Shakespeare's works have lived on in the four centuries since his death.

“Shakespeare Through the Ages” will be on view in the Special Collections Exhibition Gallery in the Hugh M. Morris Library from August 30 through December 12, 2016. The exhibition is also held in conjunction with the Folger Shakespeare Library’s traveling show “First Folio! The Book that Gave Us Shakespeare,” on which the University Museums at the University of Delaware will be a stop from August 30-September 25. The University Museums and Library will be hosting a variety of related speakers and events throughout Fall 2016.

Heavy Metal Parking Lot: The 30-Year Journey of a Cult Film Sensation

In celebration of the 30th anniversary of the cult film phenomenon, Heavy Metal Parking Lot, the University of Maryland Libraries has launched an exhibition now on display in the Gallery at the Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library. “Heavy Metal Parking Lot: The 30-Year Journey of a Cult Film Sensation” illustrates the creation of the film by Jeff Krulik and John Heyn at the Capital Centre parking lot before a Judas Priest concert in Landover, Maryland, on May 31, 1986, and traces the film’s unexpected path from bootlegs to international fame.

The display also highlights the Jeff Krulik Collection, acquired by UMD Libraries Special Collections & University Archives in November 2015. Krulik, cited as “UMD’s most famous filmmaking graduate,” donated his research files and source tapes for more than a dozen documentaries, as well as photos, catalogs, magazines, guides, posters, ephemera, and audiovisual materials that document a lifelong fascination with the offbeat and unusual.

The opening reception was held at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center Pavilion on May 27, 2016, and featured a film screening followed by a Q&A with the filmmakers. Over 200 attendees, comprised of heavy metal fans, film scholars, archivists, librarians, and fans of the film, toasted the milestone with Heavy Metal Parking Lot beer from Union Craft Brewery in Baltimore and enthusiastically cheered for their favorite characters during the screening. The event was covered by a number of media outlets, including local NBC news Channel 4, WTOP, and the Washington Post.

Another screening is planned this fall for UMD students at the Clarice’s NextNOW Festival during the weekend of September 9-10, 2016. The gallery exhibit will be on display through May 2017, and a digital version is in development. For more information, visit: http://theclarice.umd.edu/events/2016/heavy-metal-parking-lot-exhibition-film-screening-and-discussion.

Left:
Heavy Metal Parking Lot installation, Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library, University of Maryland
The Marine Band Library’s mission is to support the full range of musical commitments tasked by the White House; the Director of Public Affairs, Headquarters Marine Corps; and the Director of “The President’s Own.” It is one of the nation’s oldest and largest performing music libraries, with holdings exceeding 100,000 music titles for band, orchestra, chamber ensembles, dance band, and piano as well as books, periodicals, and reference recordings. Yet is also an archive in which thousands of photos and documents related to the unit’s storied history are preserved and used daily for research. More than 1,200 artifacts are curated in conjunction with the National Museum of the Marine Corps, including Marine Band uniforms and instruments, that help illustrate the organization’s history.

The majority of artifact and archival holdings are related to the Marine Band’s legendary 17th director John Philip Sousa, who served from 1880 to 1892, before forming his own civilian ensemble, The Sousa Band (1893–1932). Over the course of many years with this renowned ensemble, the famous director developed his own large library collection and a unique programming style. One aspect of that style for which the showman was famous was the inclusion of encores throughout his performances. During an interview with the Washington Star newspaper in 1900, Sousa said: “If I can please my audiences with more, I am willing to please them. It is the work that I was put in the world to do.” It was tradition in the Sousa Band to play two
or more encores after each program selection, which meant that a program with 10 pieces on it could expand into 25. These encores were announced to audiences by placing a large card on an easel at the front of the stage. According to the late Sousa scholar Paul Bierley, “Upon sensing the need for an encore, Sousa would indicate his choice to the bandsmen close to him. The word was rapidly passed through the band, because he was quickly up on the podium again and ready to begin.” The encores contrasted with the preceding piece and could be popular songs or short classics, but most often they were Sousa’s marches. The music was pasted into ledger-sized books. Older members of the band played from memory, while new members relied on the encore books.

The Sousa Band library was likely the largest privately owned collection of its time, and when not used for touring, it was stored in warehouses in New York City. It is believed that this collection ultimately ended up in five segments. In 1931, Sousa gifted a portion to Victor Grabel, a bandmaster at the Great Lakes Naval Training Station during World War I. These titles dated from 1892-1897. Grabel eventually sold part of the collection to Louis Blaha, who left the music to J. Sterling Morton High School in Cicero, Illinois, and is now at the Library of Congress. The remaining portion Grabel later donated to Stetson University in Deland, Florida. In 1969, Stetson transferred it to the U.S. Marine Corps, where it was stored with the Marine Band. Also during 1931, Sousa gifted a small portion of his library to Albert Austin Harding, the first Director of Bands at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. This collection contained a few dozen works that were mostly Russian. Following Sousa’s death in 1932, his widow gave what was thought to be the remaining portion of her husband’s collection to the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. This lot, the bulk of his personal library, contained 40 trunks and 18,000 pounds of music. But, unbeknownst to the family, there was still a portion of the collection unaccounted for, including a set of the precious encore books. These encore books were considered missing until about 1940, when they were discovered in two trunks in a warehouse in New York. Since these items were considered unclaimed articles, they were purchased for the minimal cost of the storage price. The buyer was Reginald Walker, a neighbor of the Sousas. Walker left these possessions to his son Charles Hyde Walker, who used the music from the encore books while playing in his high school band in Port Washington, New York. In 1967, he donated the music to the U.S. Marine Band. The gift included 100 compositions and a set of encore books. The encore books contain 91 tunes and 30 complete band arrangements (marches), concert programs, and sheet music. The most valuable part of the collection is the original manuscript of “The Liberty Bell.”

Until May 2016, the fragile encore books only have been available to researchers and scholars able to visit the Marine Band Library. In an effort to make these materials more accessible and to help preserve the content, the librarians had the 44 books digitized to make them available online to a much wider audience. The books include occasional notes from Sousa Band members and many pieces are the earliest known editions of these marches. The books have helped the Marine Band and researchers understand Sousa’s performance practice and instrumentation choices, which have proven invaluable as the organization works on The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa recording project. The Sousa Encore Books can now be accessed for free in their entirety on the Marine Band’s Web site: http://www.marineband.marines.mil/About/Library-and-Archives/Encore-Books/.

Chief Librarian Master Gunnery Sergeant Jane Cross joined “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band in 1997 and was appointed chief librarian in 2008. In 2003, she earned an MLS from the University of Maryland. She is a member of the Major Orchestra Librarians’ Association, the Music Library Association, the American Alliance of Museums, and SAA.